# IPSOS GLOBAL TRUSTWORTHINESS MONITOR

## IS TRUST IN CRISIS?

# Contents

# Foreword
# Trust in 2021

**In 2019, Ipsos released "Trust: The Truth" – a report which was designed to address three main narratives as a response to the way trust was being discussed by journalists, business leaders, and politicians.**

The first narrative was that trust was in an unprecedented "crisis" and that we were living through a period in which trust in business and the major institutions of society was collapsing.

The second narrative, and often closely associated with the first, was that trust is a relatively simple concept that could be easily improved with a "silver bullet".

The third, and far less controversial, narrative was the critical role that trust plays in the day-to-day interaction between us, as citizens and consumers, and the brands and organisations with which we interact.

Using data from the first edition of the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor, a lot of desk research, and data pulled from as many other sources as we could find, Ipsos concluded that:

- There was no evidence to suggest that trust was in "crisis". While trust may have been low for many organisations, sectors, or professions, there was little evidence that this had changed much in recent years. Trust may well need to be rebuilt, but there has been no new crisis to address.[1]
- Trust was a complex concept with many, varied, statistically significant drivers. These include everything from core competence and product quality, to acting responsibly and a sense of whether an organisation will take advantage of you or not.[2]
- What we did agree with though, is that trust is a hugely important concept that all organisations and professions need to take notice of. That said, we concluded that the focus should not be on whether consumers trust you (which you cannot control); it should be on what steps you have taken to be trustworthy (which you can control).[3]

Since 2019 a lot of things have changed. To name a few, we have seen the rise in importance of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, an increased focus on Net Zero, more high-profile instances of fake news/misinformation, and of course the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it has had on society and the economy.

In many ways, this is the perfect time to revisit this work and explore the same concepts again, not only to see if these trends and events have changed anything, but also because the same misconceptions we wanted to counter in 2019 are still prevalent, especially the idea that trust is in crisis: a narrative now boosted by the impact of COVID-19 and the rise of populist politicians.

This year, just as we did in 2019, we have concluded that the evidence does not support the narrative of worsening trust, be that a new crisis or an ongoing older one. Levels of trust in key societal institutions are not great, but they often never have been. Trust in politicians and the media is low, but that has also barely changed over the decades and has not moved much over the last three years. The pandemic has impacted society and the world in ways we can't yet predict, but it has not yet had a major impact on how much the people of the world trust the institutions and industries with which they interact.

The focus of the global elite on trust is likely to reflect the increasing scrutiny that governments, institutions, and industries are under from an increasingly vocal global population. People are no longer quite so deferential and are prepared to hold to account the institutions that hold society and the economy together, for example by embracing political populism or by protesting increasing socio-political inequality (or both).

Certainly, the number of protests around the world since 2009 has increased[4] (and is now as high as it was in the 60s) and a contributor to many of them is a lack of trust in the institutions that hold society together.

But what is to be done? Accepting that the world, communication, news and the flow of information, has changed, even if trust has not, is a good starting point. Taking it further, those in positions of leadership need to accept that deference is dead, and trust must be earned. Critical to this is that instead of looking to rebuild trust back to mythical levels of the past, organisations, governments, and industries need to critically appraise whether they are acting in a trustworthy manner, according to the criteria that global citizens and consumers expect, and react accordingly. Only once they possess the traits of the trustworthy, demonstrated repeatedly over time, will trust flourish.

**Carl Phillips**
Director, Ipsos Global Reputation Centre
carl.phillips@ipsos.com

# **Methodology:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor

**These are the findings of an Ipsos online survey conducted between 25th June – 9th July 2021.**

The survey was conducted in 29 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system in 29 countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China (mainland), Colombia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States. The headline index results for this year are based on the full 29-country sample while trend results look back to previous waves of the survey focus only on the 22 countries which have featured in all three waves of the survey.

The results comprise an international sample of 21,503 adults aged 16-74 in most countries and aged 18-74 in Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, Turkey and the United States. The samples consist of approximately 1,000 individuals in each of Australia, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland), France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain and the U.S. and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey. The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and United States can be taken as representative of their general adult population under the age of 75. The samples in other countries (Brazil, China, Chile, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey) produce a national sample that is more urban and educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.

Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent country Census data.

The "Global Country Average" reflects the average result for all countries and markets in which the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country and is not intended to suggest a total result.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the difference appears to be plus or minus one point more or less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of "don't know" or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to plus or minus 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to plus or minus 5.0 percentage points. For more information on the use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website. The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

Fieldwork dates of previous waves:
2018: 21st September – 5th October
2019: 20th September – 4th October
2021: 25th June – 9th July

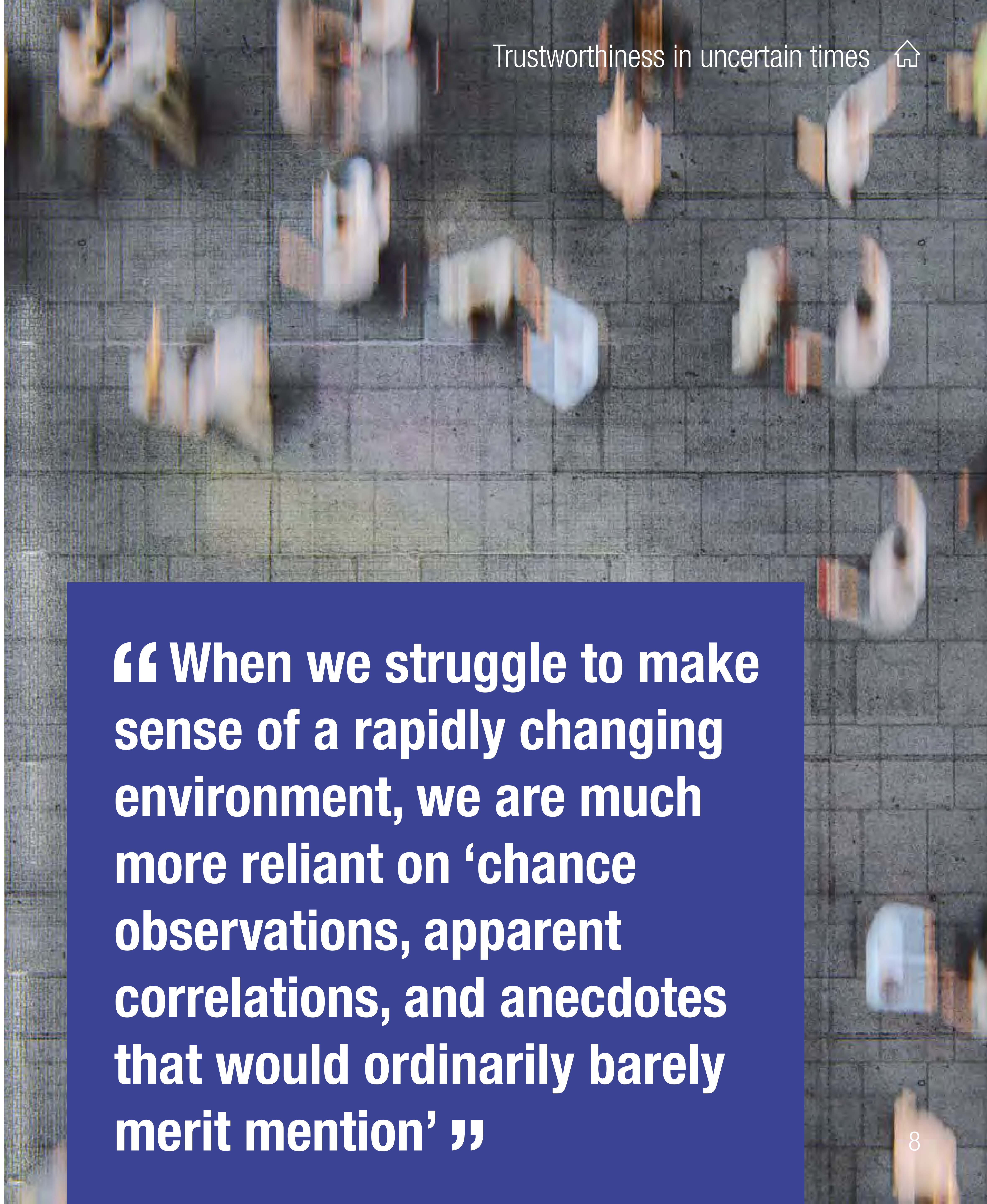
# TRUSTWORTHINESS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

**We need trust when our world is uncertain – if we had perfect information, we would not need to rely on this very human trait to manage risk and uncertainty. Trust offers us a valuable means to manage a world where we simply cannot have access to full information.**

To introduce our own information here, we are drawing on our latest research, the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor, which we consider critical to understand when, where and how trust is evolving.

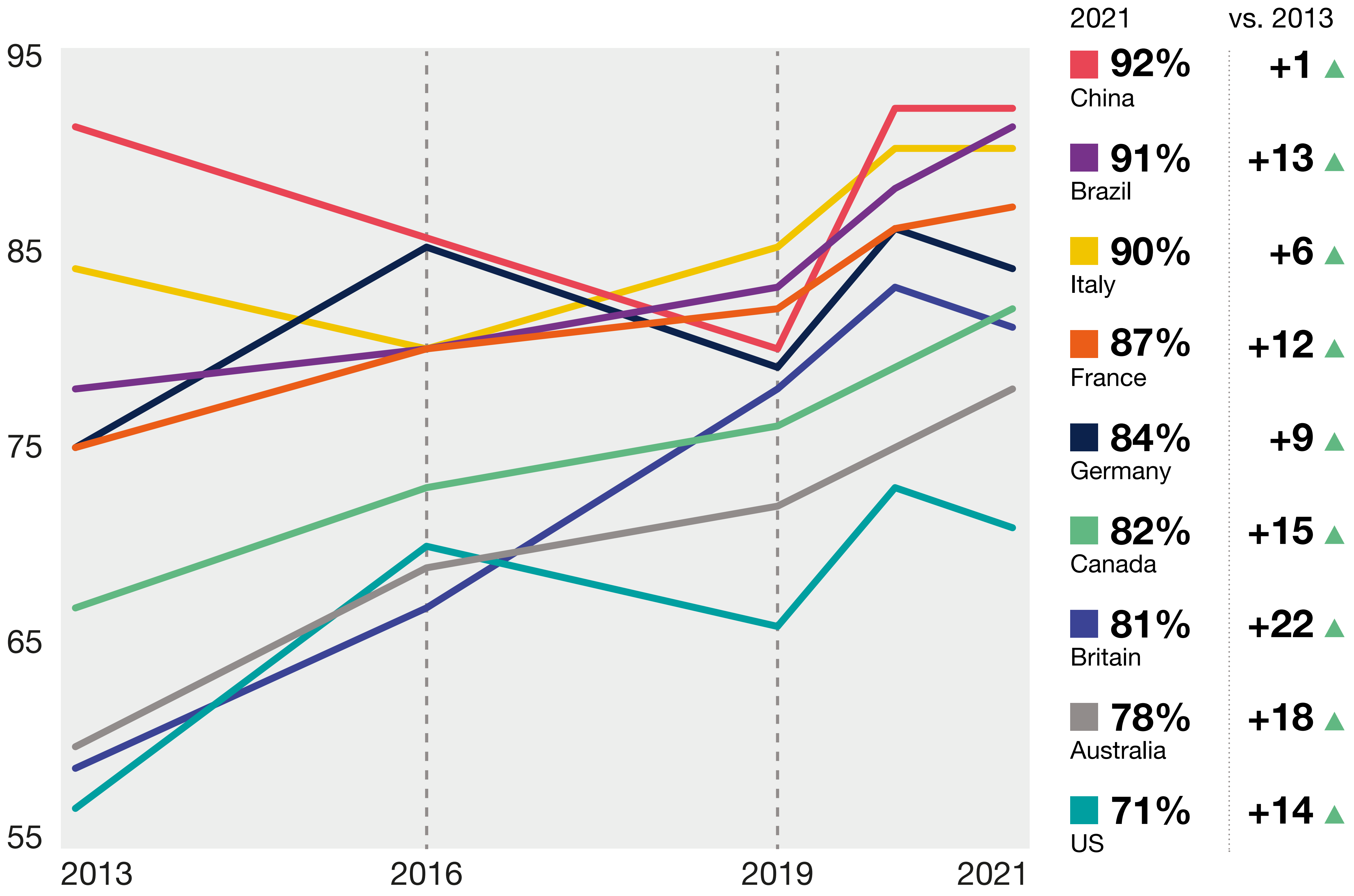
More than ever, the convulsions of climate change, COVID-19 and technology have meant we are living in a period of radical novelty and uncertainty. Some of the certainties of the past are no longer relevant, and the routines and rituals that once offered mastery of the world make less sense.

As philosopher of science Lorraine Dalston put it, when we struggle to make sense of a rapidly changing environment, we are much more reliant on ‘chance observations, apparent correlations, and anecdotes that would ordinarily barely merit mention’. We are patching together the best course of action to navigate the world and manage risk as best we can. Trust is the glue, a means of ‘knowing’ (the ‘epistemological unit’) that allows us to do this – to bridge the gaps created by the risks and uncertainties we face.



> **“When we struggle to make sense of a rapidly changing environment, we are much more reliant on ‘chance observations, apparent correlations, and anecdotes that would ordinarily barely merit mention’”**

## Climate concern remains key




**Q:** Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying in your country?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trends Series: 500-1,000 adults aged 16-75 (18-75 in US and CA) per market per year

In just one example of this, in recent years the climate emergency has forcefully climbed up the global agenda. The population are more concerned than ever about the apocalyptic future that is awaiting unless we take dramatic action on climate change. Ipsos' latest Global Trends Survey reveals that climate concern is key, with a vast majority of countries globally agreeing that we are heading for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly: China 92%, UK 81% and US 71%.

It's clear that people want to act, but Ipsos' climate change and public opinions observatory research indicates that the population are more confused than ever about what they should do and what impact their actions might have. Unpicking the right course of action in a world of constant flux and misinformation makes this job harder than ever – therefore trust in world leaders is critical to help people navigate this and make the right choices.

Governments and brands need to engender trust in their leadership – not only to demonstrate that they will deliver on their promises (**Basic Trust**) and ensure that harm is not done (**Active Trust**) - but there is a more significant type of trust needed. The highest level of trust (**Interactive Trust**) is built when at least one party involved in an interaction explicitly places their trust in the other. This creates an environment of virtuous mutual support that can drive serious behaviour change. If, for example, a brand has the courage to point to the risks that they are taking to offer products that are designed to deliver net zero then being explicit about their vulnerability, they may well reap greater rewards.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably tested the trust we have in our fellow human beings in a way that most of us never properly understood before, and arguably, in some ways at least we can say that this test has been passed. The invisible nature of the virus means it is often only

## The Foundations of Trustworthiness[5, 6]

**Basic trust**

- It is reliable/keeps its promises
- It is good at what it does

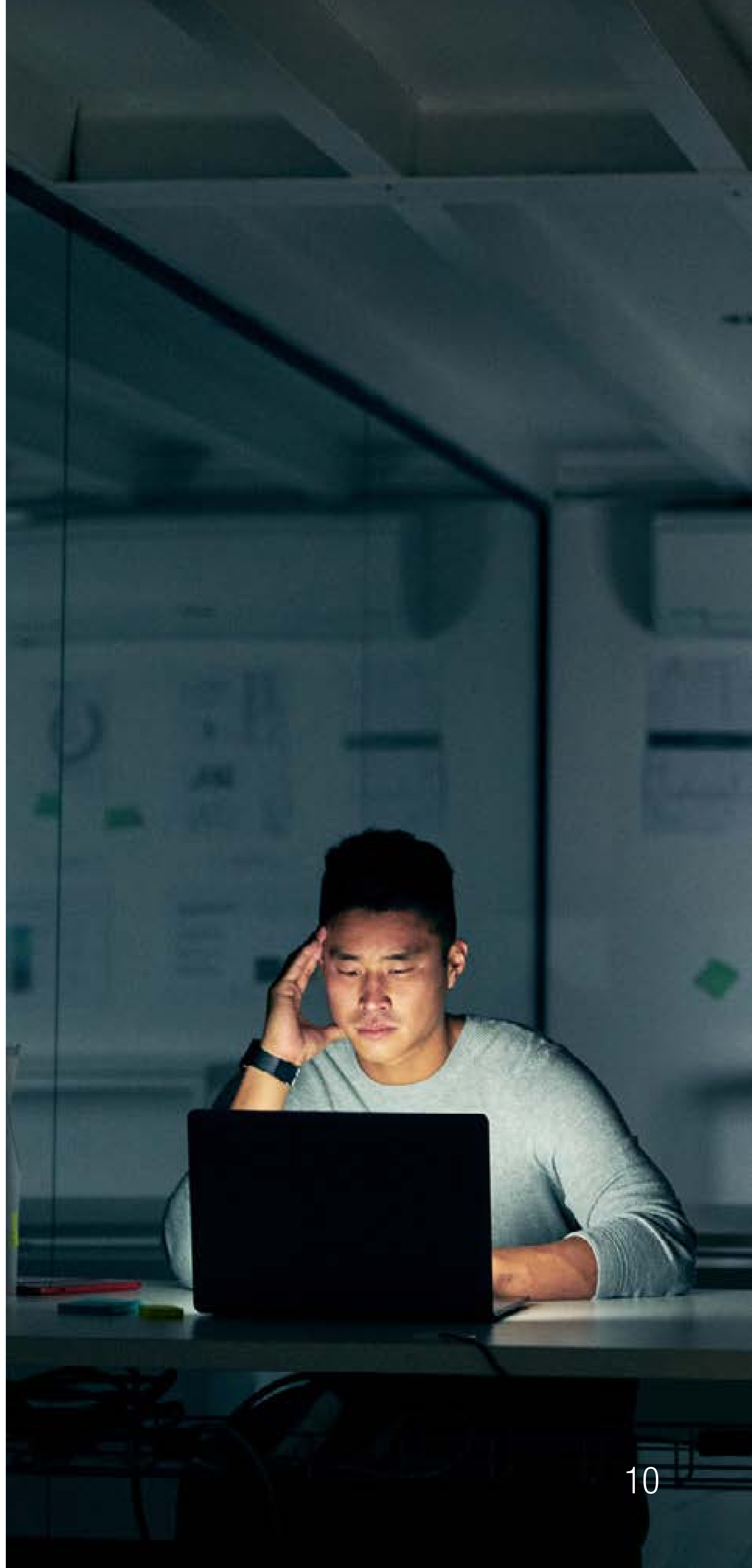
**Active trust**

- It behaves responsibly
- It is open and transparent about what it does
- It is well led

**Interactive trust**

- It does what it does with the best of intentions
- It shares my values
- It would try to take advantage of me if it could

seen through data and models – the need for trust in public health bodies and governments to collect this information and use it in a way that has our wellbeing at heart has never been greater. This calls on our "**Active Trust**" – are we confident that the data that has been collected and the restrictions imposed on our freedoms are done for our own wellbeing or for nefarious purposes? For some of the population this is by no means certain, as lockdown protests have testified. But perhaps a wider challenge is whether we trust that collective and individual exposure and responsibilities are aligned. The virus operates in a communal way where each of us must trust our fellow human beings (**Interactive Trust**) to operate in a way



that is consistent with this feature. Therefore, the need for shared values is fundamental if we are to place trust in one another and demonstrate that we can do what we are obliged to do – which has never been so contested.

In our exploration of trust, we noted that technology has increasingly become an integral part of our lives in a way that some have suggested facilitates trustworthiness. Technology commentators such as Rachel Botsman, have argued that access to information about each other means we can generate the trustworthiness needed to: hire each other's homes, step into strangers' cars and so on. Although this is only part of the answer, as when information is provided then this is a transaction rather than trustworthiness – we are no longer seeking to bridge the gaps created by the risks and uncertainties. Instead, the bigger issue is the general public's trust in technology itself. Ipsos research consistently shows that the general public commonly see social media as a key source of problematic attitudes and behaviours. It is seen by many as the means by which misinformation is generated and damaging conspiracy theories are born and perpetuated – indeed only 27% agree that social media works to prevent the spread of misinformation. In a world where technology is the means by which we seek to understand the world and is the platform we use to manage our relationships – the erosion of Active Trust (that it will 'do no harm') is surely a challenge for our collective and individual wellbeing.

## The importance of trust to understand and shape the world

There are many lenses we can use to look at the disrupted world we inhabit – using trustworthiness to unpack behaviour and address the challenges we face is one of many we can draw on from the social sciences. However, we argue that this very human activity is one that offers us powerful explanatory value by helping us to make sense of what is going on around us. And not only that, but it also offers a framework of actions that governments and brands can use to engage people and drive participation for a positive outcome.

In short, our world of ground zero empiricism, where most of our normal life has been uncertain, means we cannot each individually always know the right course of action – we must trust each other as individuals and institutions as we strive to shape new ways of living.

To find out more, please contact:
**colin.strong@ipsos.com**

**"The COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably tested the trust we have in our fellow human beings in a way that most of us never properly understood before"**

# WHO DO WE TRUST SINCE COVID-19?

**You could be forgiven for thinking that the experience of life under the pandemic would have a notable impact on the trustworthiness of different types of professions.**

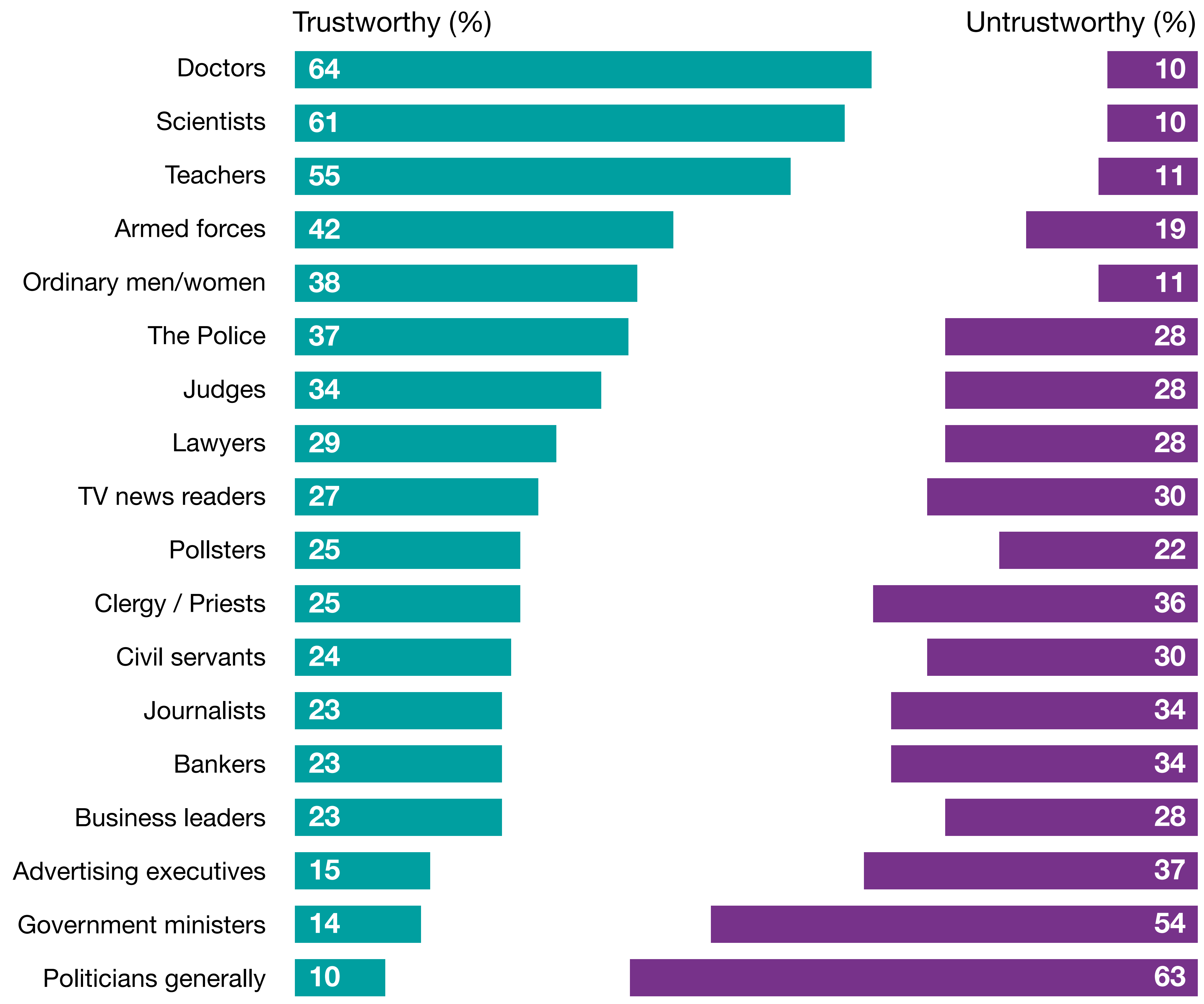
The extent to which they feature in daily life has certainly changed: in many countries politicians and scientists have been a near-constant presence, providing advice on how to avoid spreading the disease. In some, the police and the armed forces have taken an active role in enforcing lockdowns and distributing vital supplies of vaccines and medical equipment. And, in following social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines, many will have wondered just how far they trust their fellow citizens to do the same.

Yet the third wave of the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor reveals that at this stage in the pandemic, the level of trust accorded to most professions is very close to the level they earned before anyone had even heard of COVID-19. Trust is still and will always remain important, but it is has not fundamentally changed nor does it appear to be in crisis.

## Movers and shakers

The exception to this rule is a notable rise in trust in doctors. This year doctors have displaced scientists at the head of the list of the most trustworthy professions, occupying top spot in 19 of the 28 countries polled. Overall, 64% consider them

## Global trustworthiness ranking 2021



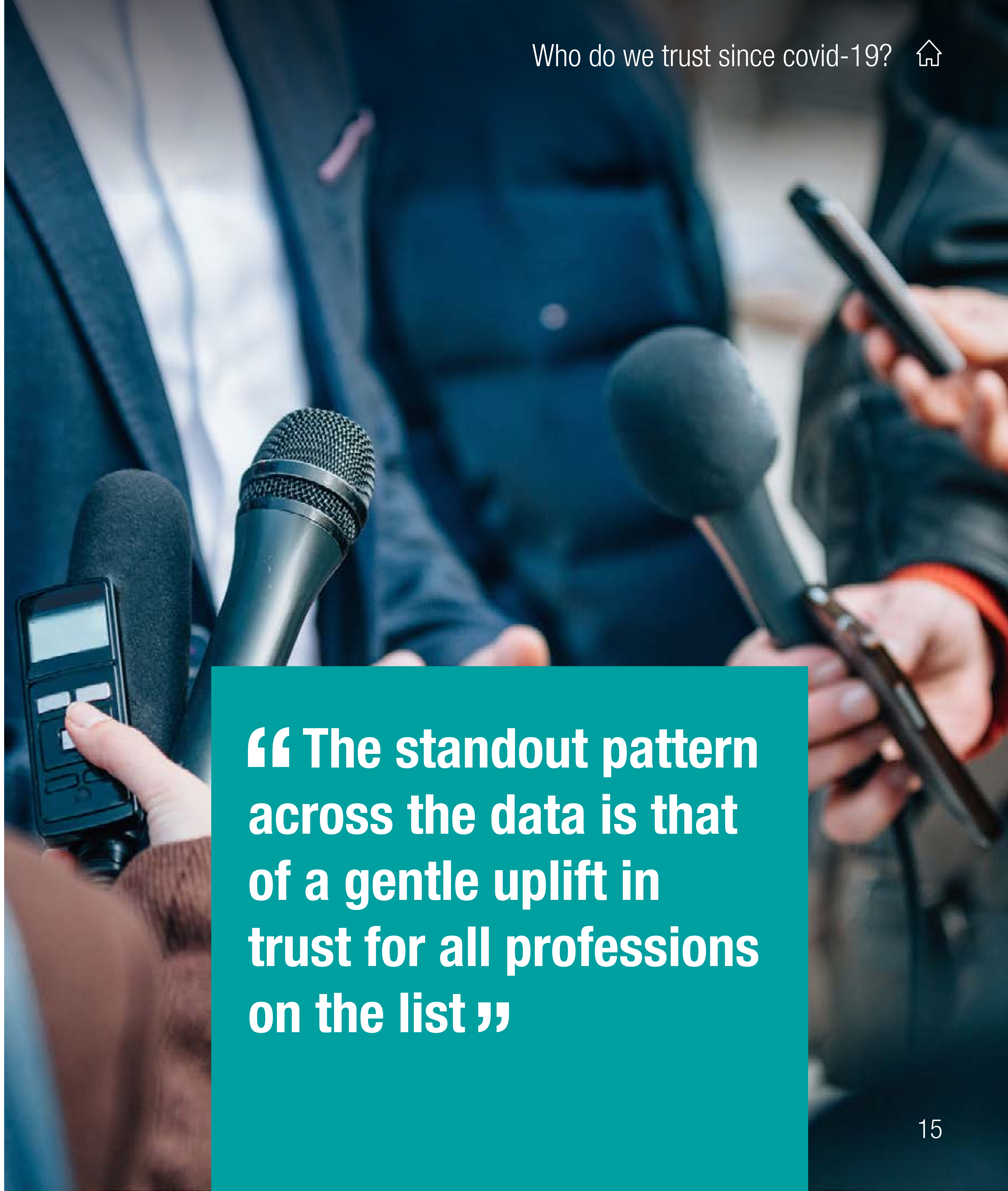

**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of people. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy in your country?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor 2021 – 19,570 participants across 28 countries, interviewed online 23 April – 7 May 2021

trustworthy (Global Country Average), ahead of scientists (61%) and teachers (55%).

Looking back at previous waves of data we can see that ratings of doctors' trustworthiness have risen significantly during the pandemic. We record a seven-percentage point increase in the Global Country Average rating them as trustworthy between 2019 and 2021, which is by far the biggest change during the pandemic. One rationale could be that doctors have benefitted from being the ones on the frontline treating people with COVID-19, as well as being closely involved in the provision of vaccines. This is a potentially galling development for the scientists who developed the vaccine who have yet to see a corresponding increase in their (albeit already high) public standing: in all three waves of the poll scientists have been considered trustworthy by six in ten of the global public.

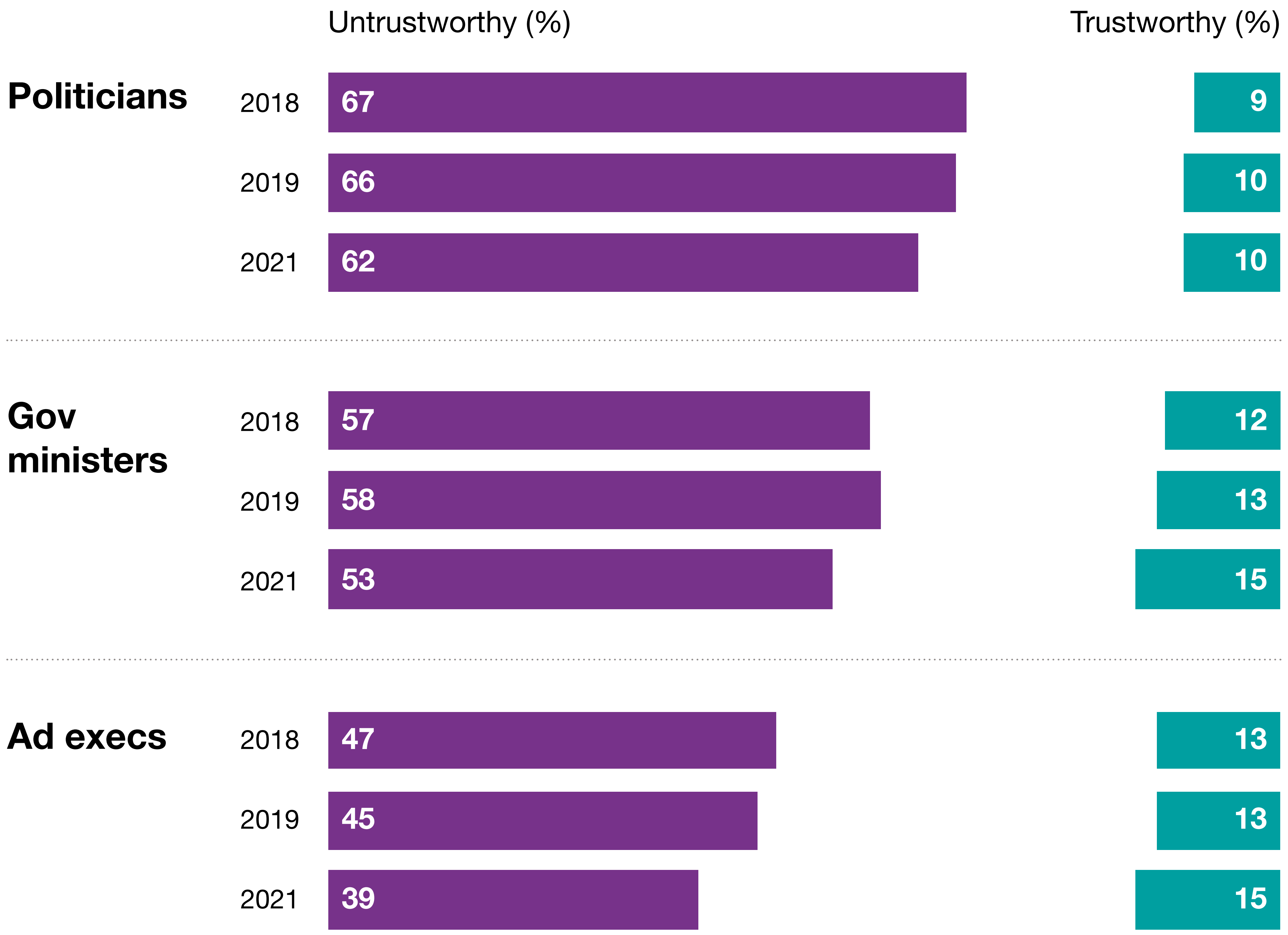
At the other end of the global pecking order there is little change: politicians and government ministers are marooned at the bottom with only advertising executives for company.

Only one in ten people across 28 countries consider politicians to be trustworthy, with scores especially low in Latin America. Just three per cent of Argentines think politicians are trustworthy, alongside four per cent of Colombians and six per cent



**"The standout pattern across the data is that of a gentle uplift in trust for all professions on the list"**

## Three least trusted professions 2018-2021




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of people. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy in your country?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Scores presented here are based on a 22-country average covering only those countries which have participated in all previous waves of the survey. The figures differ slightly from the 28-country average presented elsewhere

of those in Peru, Chile and Brazil. The highest scores can be found in the Netherlands, Malaysia, Sweden and India – but even here less than one in five say they think politicians are trustworthy.

These low scores for politicians and government ministers are in line with previous years' findings, despite the fact that we have seen a slight increase in perceptions of the trustworthiness of "the government" as an institution this year.

But perhaps there are glimmerings of hope for all three: they have become less actively distrusted. For politicians and ministers we have seen slight falls in the proportion who think politicians are untrustworthy between 2019 and 2021: this has fallen from 66% to 62% for politicians and from 58% to 53% for ministers. So, although politicians remain far from being considered trustworthy in most places, we see signs that the pandemic can have an impact on even the hardest-baked perceptions.

# Trust is still and will always remain important, but it has not fundamentally changed nor does it appear to be in crisis

“This is a challenge to narratives that suggest a crisis or a rejuvenation of trust in recent years”

## Where does the average person fit?

Containment of a communicable disease like COVID-19 can feel like a test of collective action. The restrictions placed on daily life such as wearing face coverings or remaining at home for extended periods of time are most effective only if a critical mass of citizens are willing to do the same. For many this will present a key question – do you trust others in your country to do the right thing?

Broadly, the answer appears to be yes, but with not much enthusiasm. Four in ten people across the world say they consider the “ordinary man or woman” to be trustworthy (and just one in ten say they are untrustworthy), putting them fifth in the 2021 rankings. Russians hold the average citizen in particular esteem with two-thirds saying they are trustworthy (67%), ranking them alongside teachers and doctors and behind only scientists – and well ahead of the police and judges.

In line with other findings from the series, the view of the ordinary person hasn’t changed through the pandemic, with four in ten rating them as trustworthy in all three waves of the survey – suggesting that the experience of the pandemic has led neither to an enhanced sense of community and fellow-feeling, nor to a breakdown in the social glue holding our societies together.

## Global trustworthiness trends 2018-2021

| | 2021 Trustworthy (%) | vs. 2019 | | vs. 2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctors | 64 | +7▲ | 57% | +9▲ | 55% |
| Scientists | 61 | +2▲ | 59% | +2▲ | 59% |
| Teachers | 55 | +2▲ | 53% | +3▲ | 52% |
| Armed forces | 44 | 0 | 44% | +1▲ | 43% |
| The Police | 40 | +2▲ | 38% | +1▲ | 39% |
| Ordinary men/women | 38 | 0 | 38% | +1▲ | 37% |
| Judges | 37 | +4▲ | 33% | +5▲ | 32% |
| Lawyers | 30 | +2▲ | 28% | +5▲ | 25% |
| TV news readers | 27 | +2▲ | 25% | +3▲ | 24% |
| Clergy / Priests | 26 | +2▲ | 24% | +5▲ | 21% |
| Pollsters | 25 | +2▲ | 23% | +2▲ | 23% |
| Civil servants | 25 | +2▲ | 23% | +1▲ | 24% |
| Journalists | 23 | +1▲ | 22% | +2▲ | 21% |
| Bankers | 23 | +2▲ | 21% | +3▲ | 20% |
| Business leaders | 23 | +1▲ | 22% | +1▲ | 22% |
| Advertising executives | 15 | +2▲ | 13% | +2▲ | 13% |
| Government ministers | 15 | +2▲ | 13% | +3▲ | 12% |
| Politicians generally | 10 | 0 | 10% | +1▲ | 9% |

**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of people. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy in your country?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Scores presented here are based on a 22-country average covering only those countries which have participated in all previous waves of the survey. The figures differ slightly from the 28-country average presented elsewhere.

## Trust – what's changed?

Our exploration of the state of trust in professions reveals that the COVID-19 pandemic has not proved to be a catalyst for major changes in social values (at least, not yet). This is also highlighted in our latest Global Trends Survey, which reveals that public attitudes and values have changed less than might be expected under pressure from the pandemic, and that the changes we do see tend to be driven by long-running trends in public opinion that pre-date COVID-19.

Many professions have seen little change since 2018, let alone between 2019 and 2021. This is a challenge to narratives that suggest a crisis or a rejuvenation of trust in recent years.

The standout pattern across the data is that of a gentle uplift in trust for all professions on the list. At a global level the worst we see, for professions including politicians and the armed forces, is the maintenance of existing levels – while doctors, judges, lawyers and the clergy have shown notable increases over time. Government ministers and bankers have shown modest increases in trustworthiness as individuals, while views of the trustworthiness of the government and the banking sector have been more substantial. While the direction of change in trustworthiness tends to reflect that of the wider sector, the extent of the change can vary. Trust is a complex concept, but we see hopeful signs of increases for a number of professions around the world.

This uplift reveals a similar ordering of countries to 2018 with optimistic emerging markets like Malaysia and India close to the top, followed by Nordic and anglophone countries and then the rest of mainland Europe. The countries in negative territory are familiar from the series too, including Hungary, Poland and South Korea. Echoing wider research exploring their enduring low levels of trust,[7] Latin American countries dominate, with four of the five lowest-scoring markets hailing from the continent.

Yet several countries are in notably more positive territory compared with the 2018 monitor: this year 18 of 28 countries have a positive monitor score, meaning they rate more professions as trustworthy than untrustworthy, compared with just nine of 22 markets in 2018. Some of the markets to cross this line include Italy, Brazil, Turkey and Russia.

To find out more, please contact:
michael.clemence@ipsos.com

# TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: THE COVID-19 EFFECT


**Low levels of trust in government are a long-term, endemic condition in many countries around the world. Lack of faith in politics is not a new problem, but it is an important one, with implications for politicians, policy-makers, public services and citizens. However, the coronavirus pandemic has thrown a renewed focus on the importance of trust, both on understanding the role trust has played during the COVID-19, but also on how the pandemic itself has had its own impact on trust.**

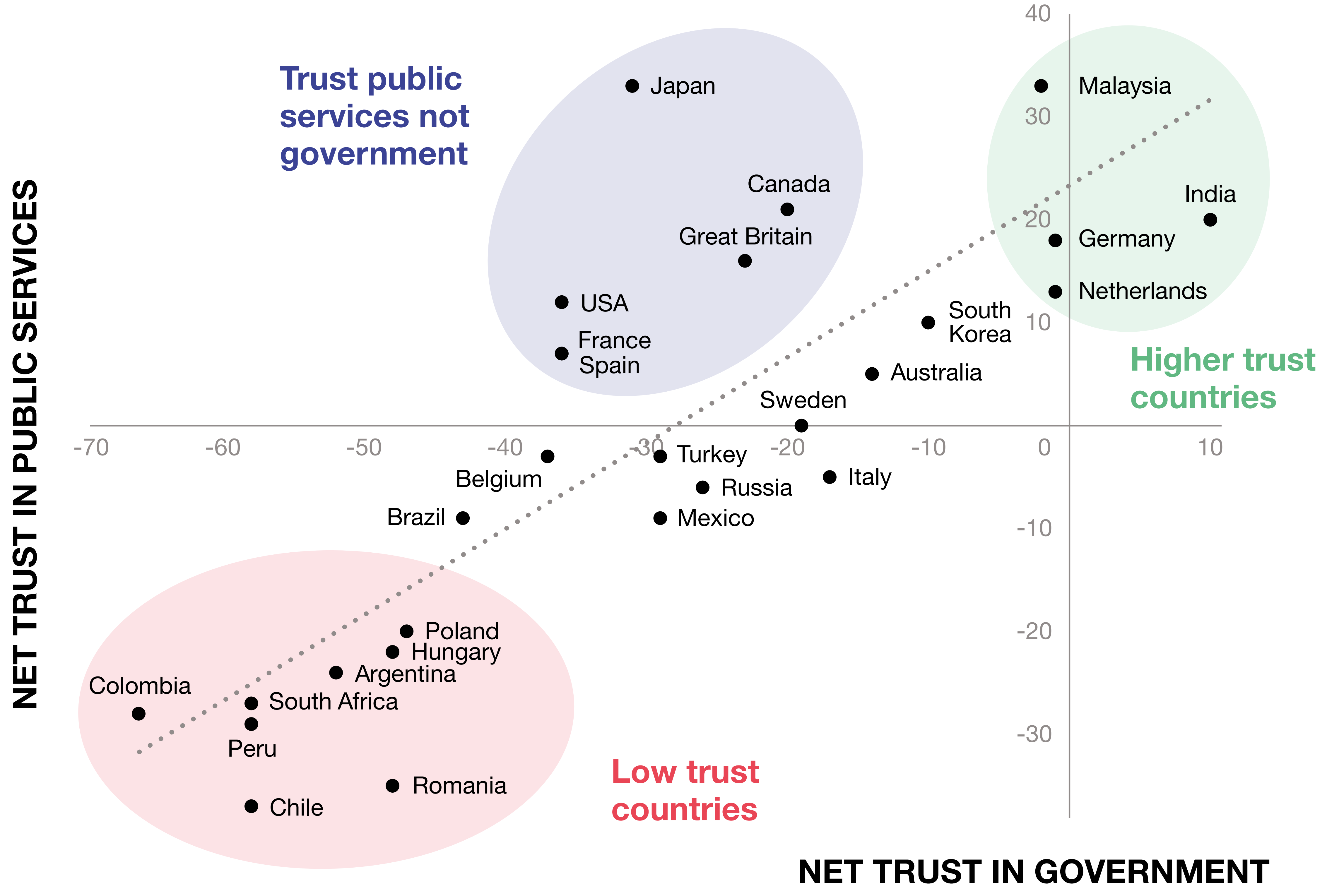
Overall, governments are still seen as less trustworthy than many other sectors, and what is particularly noticeable are the high negative ratings governments receive. Over twice as many of the population rate their government as untrustworthy rather than trustworthy, by 50% to 20% (Global Country Average, on a scale of 1-5). Public services on the other hand are relatively mid-table, with as many positive as negative (27% vs 29%), and four in ten neutral.

When we measure trustworthiness though, we need to be wary of a broad-brush approach, and there are clear differences at a national level – these can be seen in the chart on the right. There are three groups of countries that stand out. Firstly, there are those where government and public services are seen as relatively trustworthy (or at least as far as the government goes, where views are not noticeably negative) – two from Asia (India and Malaysia), and two from Europe (Germany and the Netherlands).

We also see another group of countries with positive views of public services but negative about government – including Japan and a handful of Western nations (Canada, the UK, the US, France and Spain).

Finally, there are those countries where both government and public services are not seen as very trustworthy, primarily from Latin America (Columbia, Peru, Chile, Argentina) and Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Romania), plus South Africa.

## Trustworthiness of government and public services

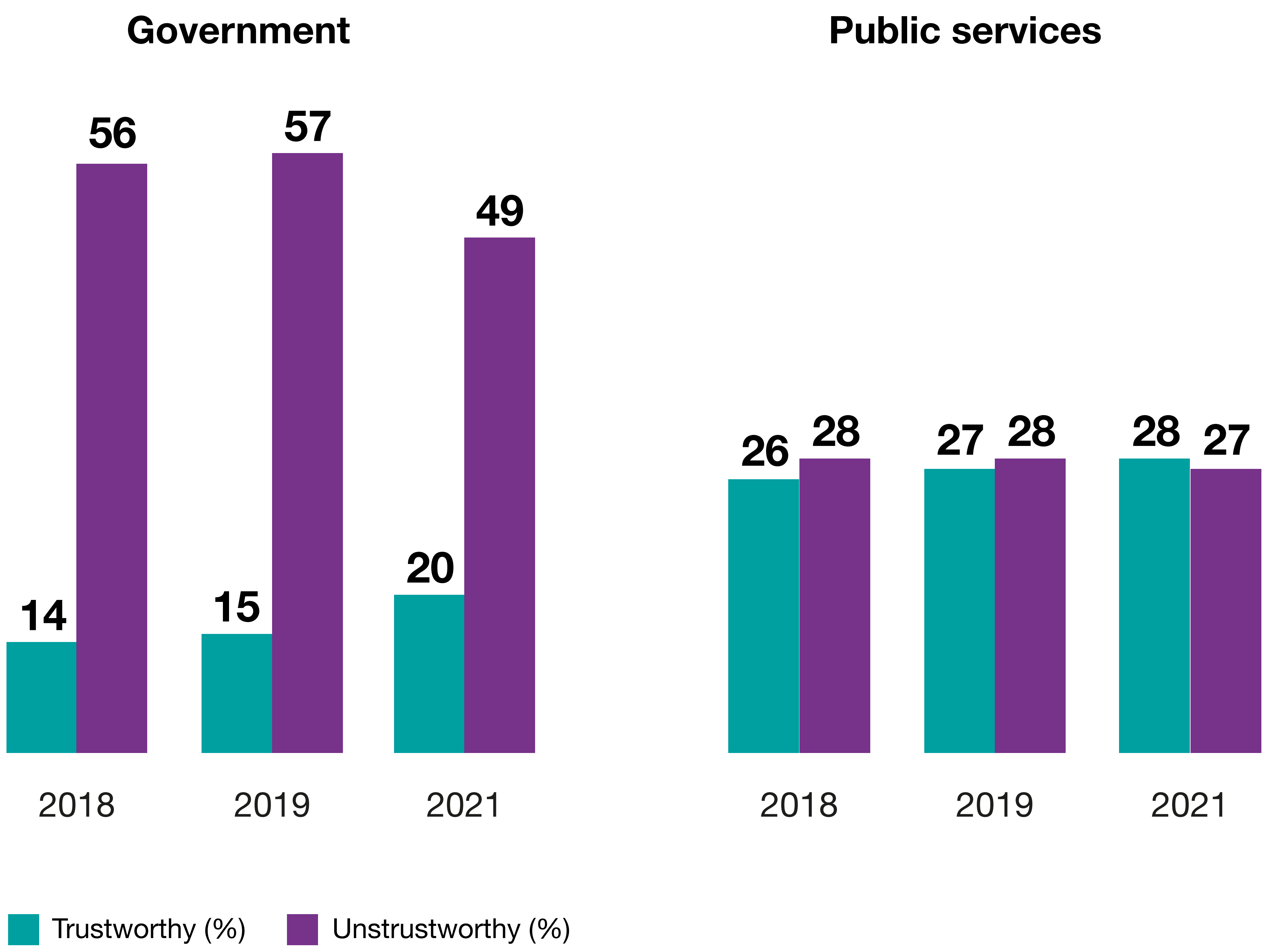



**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 20,003 online interviews across 27 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

But what has happened to trust during the pandemic? Here the picture is a little more positive, with a rise in perceptions of government trustworthiness since 2019. Looking at the trends in the Global Country Average across 23 countries since then, there has been a five-point rise in trustworthiness and a similar eight-point drop in perceptions of untrustworthiness. Improvements have been seen in many countries, including; France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Britain, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Argentina, Canada and the US (although there are falls in Hungary and Turkey).

Of course, there will be individual country factors which might explain some of this change (for example, some of these countries have changed administration over that time). But there was no equivalent across the board increase between 2018 and 2019, and this does match other research which suggests there may have been some "rally round the flag" effect because of the pandemic, at least at its start – something that has also been seen at previous times of crisis.[8] It is also consistent with our statistical analysis of the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor to discover which individual factors are drivers of overall views. This shows that the way government and public services have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the factors affecting perceptions of trustworthiness – not necessarily the most important one, but nevertheless something that people think has an impact when asked outright, and which also has a statistical relationship in the underlying data.

## Trustworthiness of government and public services: before and after COVID-19

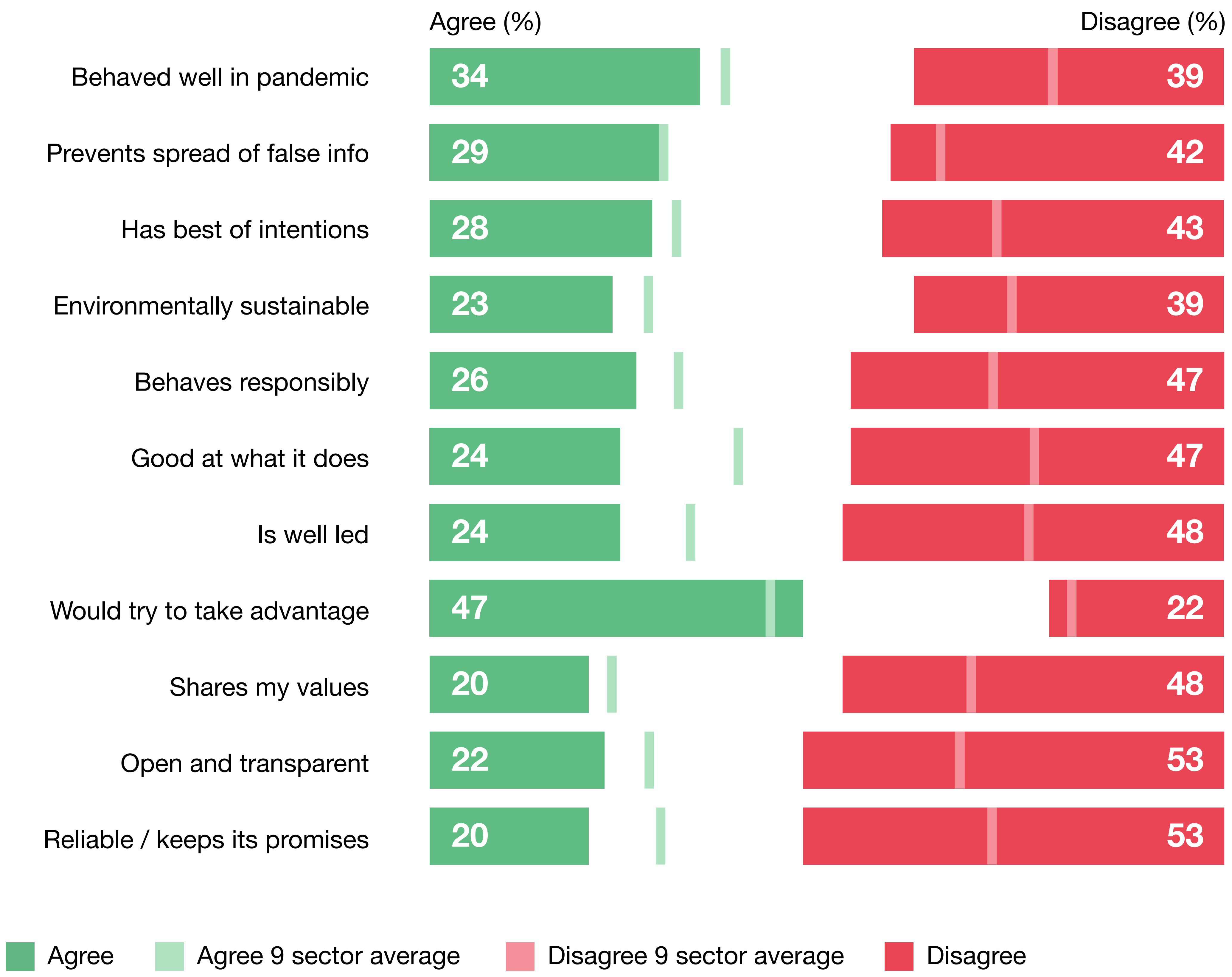



**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 20 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2020

In fact, for both government and public services, ratings on how they have behaved in response to the pandemic are one of the better scores they get on the individual drivers of trustworthiness, with 34% and 38% respectively positive about each in the Global Country Average (and even for governments not that many more are critical – 39% - while only 23% are critical of public services). More broadly, as seen in previous waves of our Global Trustworthiness Monitor, there are a wide range of drivers of perceptions of government trustworthiness. These include traditional pillars of trust such as competence, having good intentions, and behaving responsibly and reliably. But they include wider factors too, even beyond the specifics of the coronavirus response just mentioned – such as transparency, leadership, and values. Other research has also probed into which factors may be particularly important to trust in a government to take care of its citizens during COVID-19, with one study highlighting competence, social trust and levels of patriotism[9], while others note that different trust levels in different countries reflect the actual experiences of dealing with the pandemic, as well as other factors such as a willingness to listen to experts.[10]

Beyond all this, the coronavirus crisis has also reinforced just why perceptions of trustworthiness are so important. We already know that social trust has been linked with a range of public goods, from

## Drivers of trustworthiness: Government

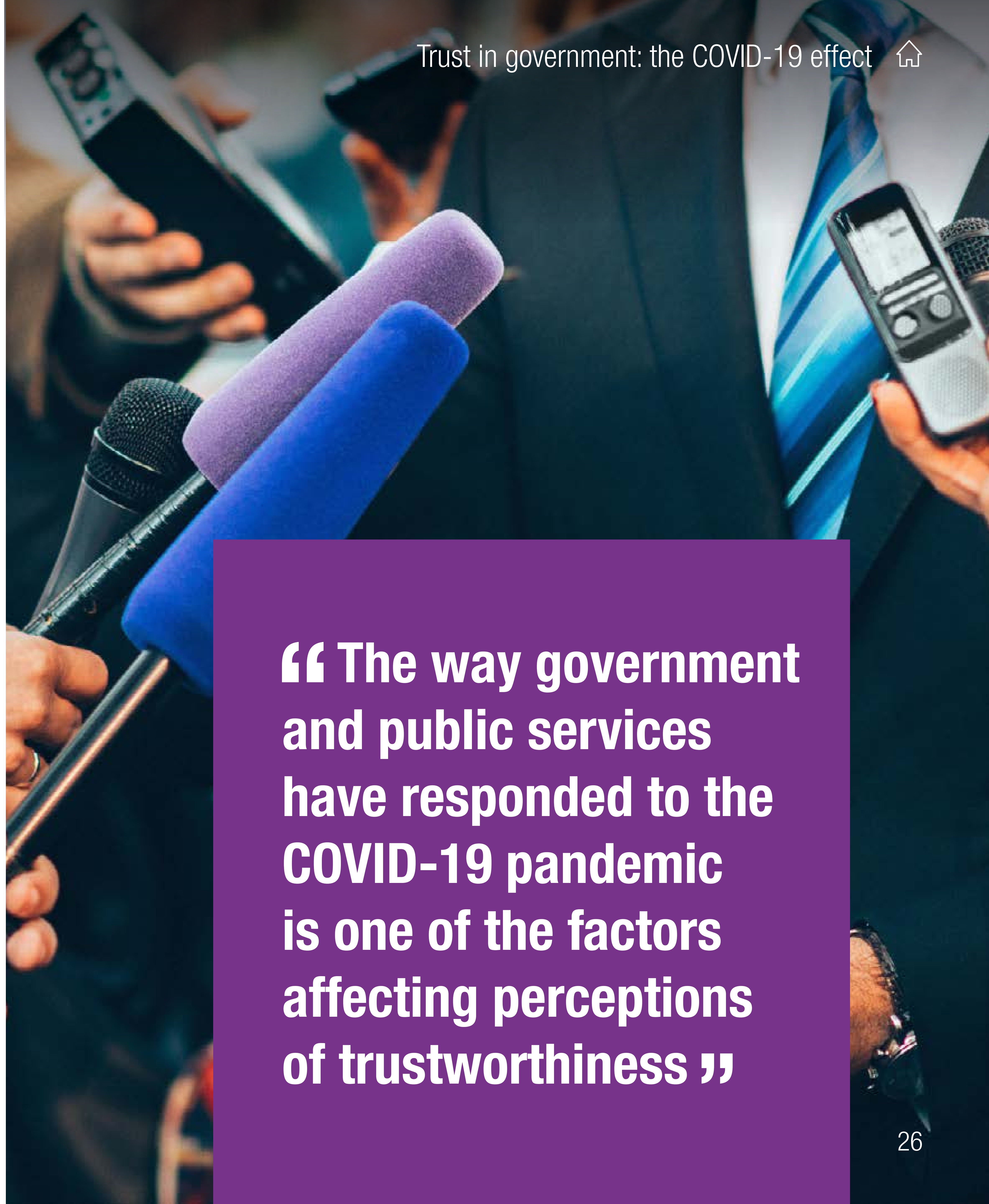



**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 20,003 online interviews across 27 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

democratic engagement, economic growth, quality of life, and specifically for governments, to compliance with the law and their ability to pursue redistributive policies.[11] But of particular importance for the pandemic, which has led to a need for state intervention on a unique scale, research suggests that trust is also related to willingness to follow government restrictions such as social distancing.[12] As always though, trust is not quite as simple as that – there are indications that higher levels of trust might have led to lower levels of risk perception[13], while other confounding factors like political partisanship and trust in other actors who may give conflicting messages also get in the way.[14]

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised once again why it is important to have a sophisticated understanding of trustworthiness and what drives it, while also in turn seeming to have an impact itself on trust in government around the world. The big question future research will need to answer is whether we will return to the traditional low levels of faith in the system – as previous experience suggests is most likely – or if this could be the start of a new relationship between government and citizens.

To find out more, please contact:
gideon.skinner@ipsos.com



**“The way government and public services have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the factors affecting perceptions of trustworthiness”**

# TRUST IN BUSINESS: TRENDS AND CONTEXT


**In the 2019 'Trust: The Truth' report, Ipsos challenged the narrative that trust in business is in a unique crisis and getting worse. Using a range of data sources, we showed that trustworthiness in major companies has been remarkably stable.**

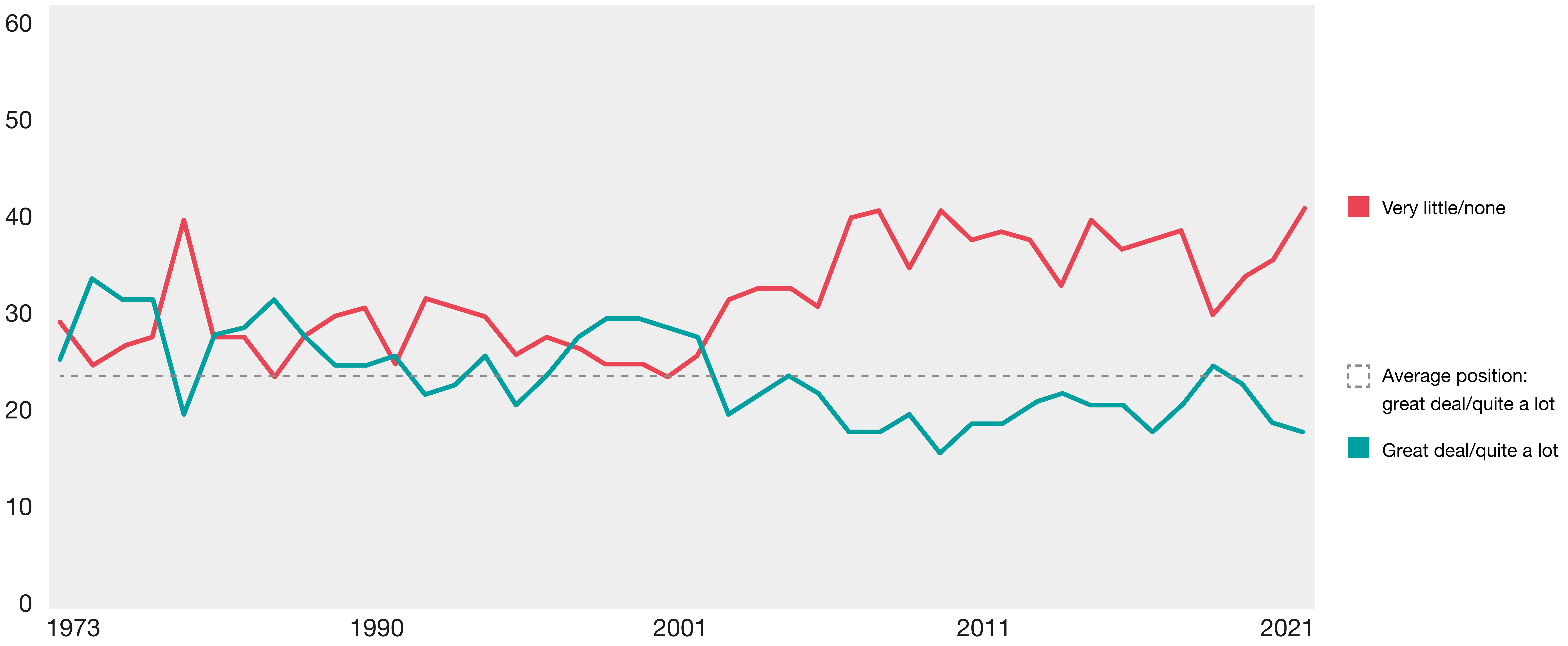
Despite the scandals that have affected individual companies, and even entire sectors, trust is more stable than most might have believed. That is not to say that trust isn't low, but that the idea of trust currently being in crisis does not stand up to scrutiny.

However, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have been transformational. Lockdowns and restrictions around the world have challenged businesses, with economies around the world suffering – affecting consumer incomes and confidence. For companies, the difficulties faced have varied, depending on how they serve and interact with their customers, their reliance on supply chains and the nature of their workforce. The importance consumers place on different types of businesses have also shifted, with sectors such as supermarkets justifiably elevated to providing key services.

COVID-19 has the potential to re-define the public's perception of companies – not just based on traditional metrics such as reliability, openness, and transparency, but also judgements on how they reacted to the pandemic. Fundamentally, what impact has the pandemic had on perceived trustworthiness?

In answering this question, a historical analysis is important to frame the results we see in 2021. Long term analysis done by Gallup is helpful to set the scene. An important caveat here is that historic trends for trust are few and far between. Therefore, similar concepts such as confidence in business must serve as a useful proxy for trust in business. While by no means a perfect comparison, it does offer us a useful point of comparison that gives a directional view.

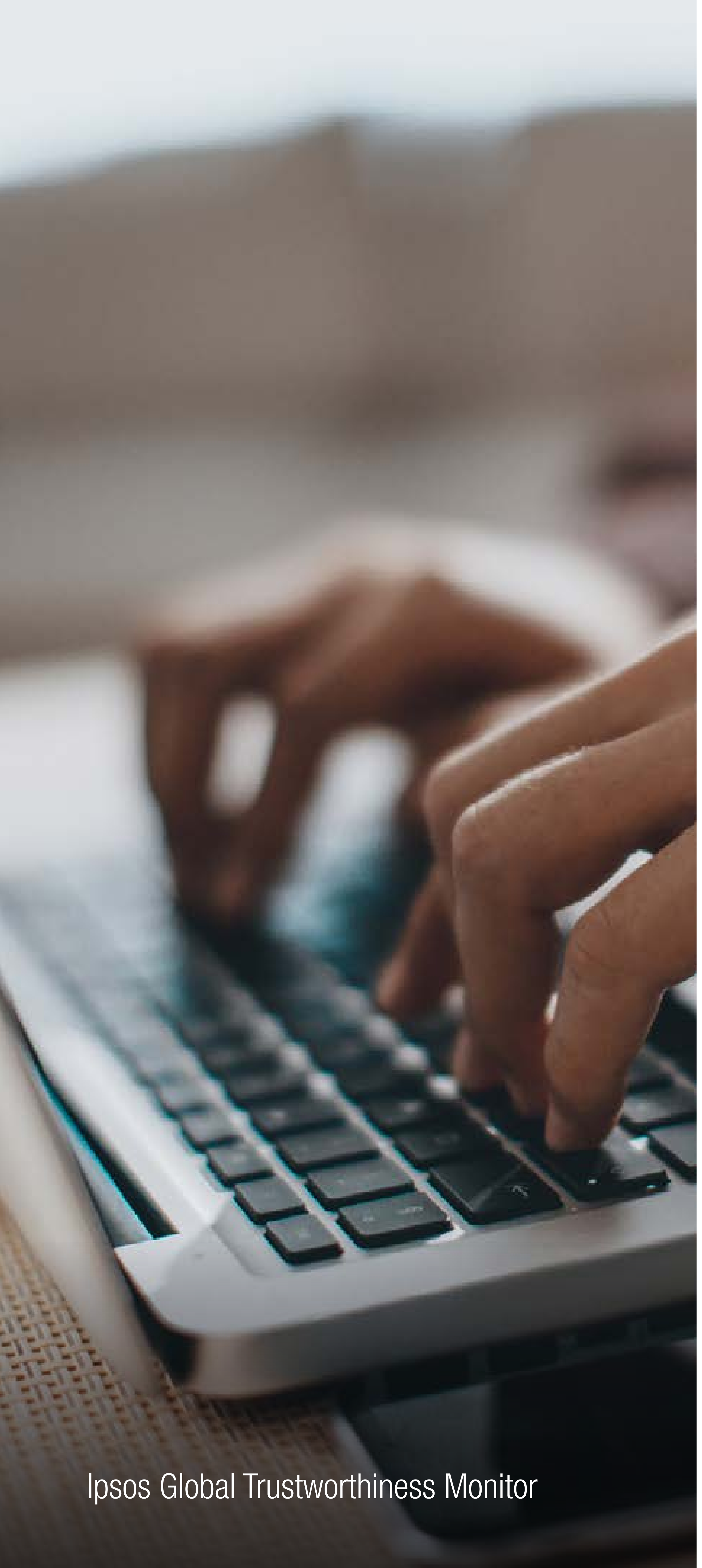
## Confidence in big business




**Source:** Gallup, USA data only. Results from Gallup Survey https://news.gallup.com/poll/5248/big-business.aspx

Gallup's research highlights America's stability of confidence in business over the past two decades. When we last compared this data in 2019, there was a marginal improvement in confidence in business. While the intervening years has seen a small decline, this actually represents a return to the norm seen in the 2000s and early 2010s, suggesting the small rise previously seen was a brief surge in confidence that has since subsided.

Edelman's Trust Barometer also shows there has been little change in the level of trust in global business over the past 10 years. Their trend data, looking at trust in different sectors, shows a picture of remarkable stability. The only exceptions to this are the technology sector, which has seen a nine-point



## Trustworthiness (%) in industry sectors over time

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 10 yr. Trend |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Technology | 77% | 74% | 77% | 74% | 76% | 76% | 75% | 78% | 75% | 68% | -9 ▼ |
| Healthcare | - | - | - | - | 64% | 67% | 65% | 68% | 67% | 66% | - |
| Food and beverage | 64% | 64% | 65% | 64% | 65% | 68% | 64% | 69% | 67% | 65% | +1 ▲ |
| Telecommunications | 59% | 61% | 62% | 60% | 61% | 64% | 64% | 67% | 65% | 61% | +2 ▲ |
| Automotive | 63% | 66% | 70% | 67% | 62% | 66% | 63% | 69% | 67% | 60% | -3 ▼ |
| Consumer packaged goods | 58% | 61% | 62% | 61% | 62% | 64% | 61% | 65% | 62% | 60% | +2 ▲ |
| Energy | 54% | 58% | 57% | 57% | 59% | 62% | 63% | 65% | 63% | 59% | +5 ▲ |
| Entertainment | - | 63% | 66% | 64% | 66% | 65% | 63% | 68% | 65% | 59% | - |
| Financial services | 44% | 47% | 49% | 48% | 52% | 55% | 55% | 57% | 56% | 52% | +8 ▲ |

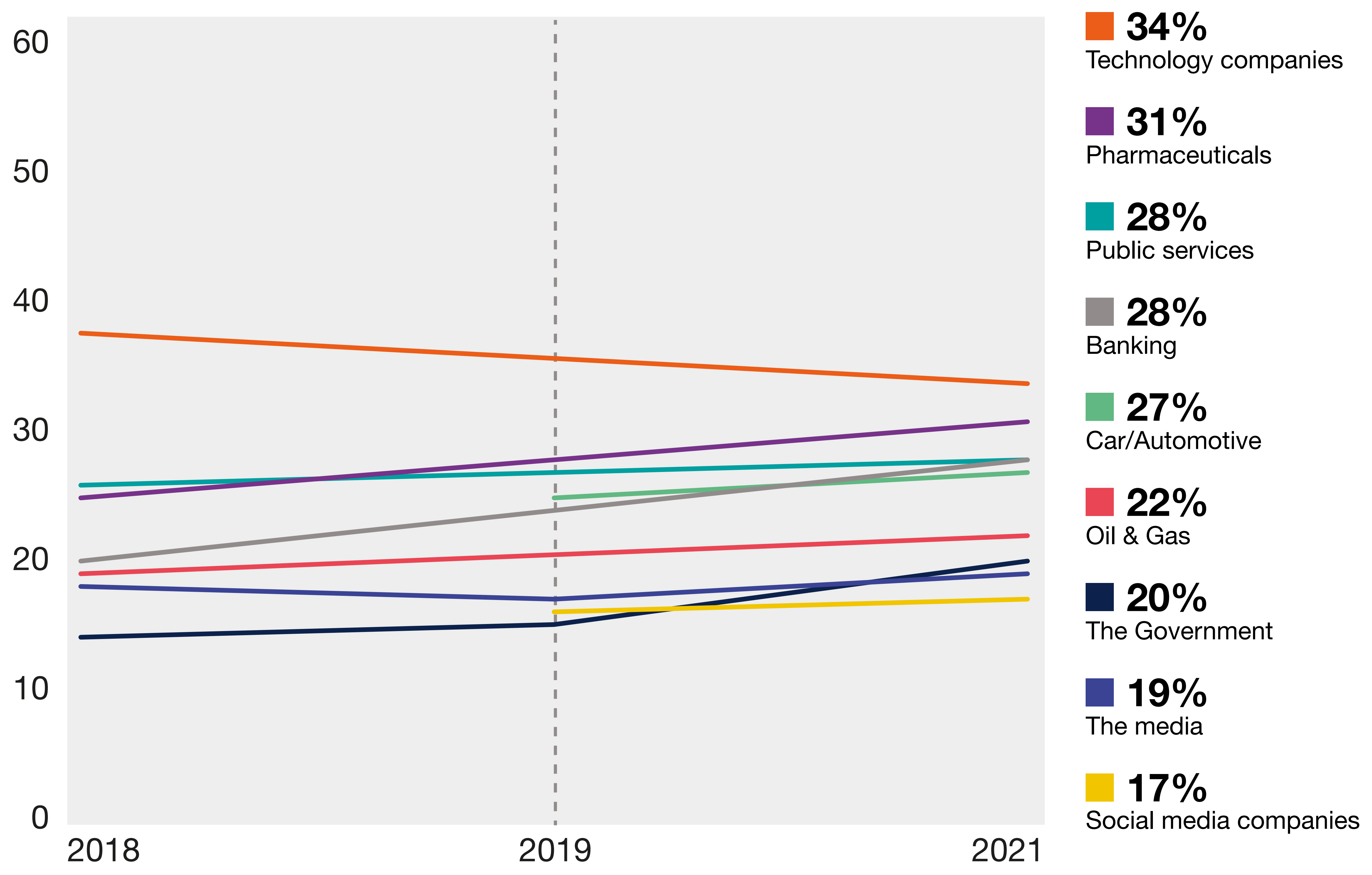
Trust Distrust Neutral

**Source:** 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer. TRU_IND. Please indicate how much you trust businesses in each of the following industries to do what is right. 9-point scale; top 4 box, trust. Industries shown to half of the sample. General population, 22-mkt avg.

decline over ten years which is in fact driven by a seven-point decline over the past year while the previous ten have been stable, and financial services, which has risen eight-points over the ten years but has been broadly stable since 2016. As a general pattern, trust in the different industries is slightly lower in 2021 than in 2020, though these often appear to be within the margin of error and not outside the bounds of the norm which we see over the past ten years.

Ipsos' Global Trustworthiness Monitor paints a similar picture. When examining different sectors some have seen a net increase in trustworthiness since 2019. Looking across the 23 countries surveyed, there have been

## Global sector trustworthiness (%) over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

notable increases in trustworthiness for pharmaceutical (25% 2018 vs 31% 2021) and banking companies (20% vs 28%). Indeed, almost all sectors have either seen increases in perceived trustworthiness or are stable, with the only exception being technology companies (a decline from 38% in 2018 to 34% in 2021).

When taken in the round, this data suggests we need to move away from a framing of trust in business as always being in crisis. While the trustworthiness of different sectors is certainly low, there does not appear to be any significant decline in opinions of business either in the long-term or since the pandemic.

What does this mean for our understanding of trustworthiness in business and how it has changed following the pandemic?

Crucially, it suggests that trustworthiness in business is broadly consistent with 2019 and examining Gallup's longer-term trends, in line with levels seen in the 2000s and early 2010s. That is not to say that companies or sectors are seen as trustworthy, there is clearly still work to be done on this, but it has not taken a step-change for the worse.

It also confirms that we need a more sophisticated understanding of what "trust in business" really means. Two industries stand out for their increases in trustworthiness in 2021: pharmaceuticals and banking.


The reasons behind this increase can be seen across each of the factors we know drive trustworthiness, with the public increasingly agreeing with positive statements related to the performance of pharmaceutical and banking companies.

As one example, pharmaceutical companies are increasingly seen as good at what they do (46% 2018 vs 51% 2021) and a similar story is played out for banking, though to a lesser extent (41% vs 44%). By comparison, as the only sector that has seen a clear decline in trustworthiness, there has been a five point drop in perceptions that technology companies are good at what they do over the same period (54% in 2018 vs 49% in 2021).

This is a trend that is played out across the different factors that influence trustworthiness, with consistent declines for tech companies and increases for pharmaceutical and banking. What is perhaps most important about this is that both pharmaceutical and banking companies appear to be converting those who have previously been neutral towards them to be trustworthy, while those who saw them as untrustworthy appear to be increasingly neutral – as we set out in our 2019 report, the conversion of neutrals into supporters is a fruitful strategy for companies to adopt. As in 2019, a significant proportion of the global public is neutral towards all companies and institutions measured and it is here that efforts to improve trustworthiness can have the greatest impact.

The pandemic has offered companies an opportunity to highlight their value to society, to show how they can be beneficial partners and deliver a common good. This is perhaps most clearly seen among pharmaceutical companies which have been at the forefront of the fightback against the pandemic with the development of vaccines. This is evidenced in the data by increases among the public who agree pharmaceutical companies are reliable/keep their promises (30% 2018 vs. 39% 2021), do what they do with the best of intentions (33% vs 41%) and behave responsibly (33% vs 40%).

**COVID-19 has clearly had the potential to re-define the public's perception of companies – not just based on traditional metrics such as reliability, openness, and transparency, but also judgements on how they reacted to the pandemic**

An increase in trustworthiness for banking companies (20% 2018 vs 28% 2021) shows a similar story. They have faced a long, hard road from the low depths of their reputation following the 2008 banking crisis to being at the vanguard of providing financial support for people and businesses across the world. In comparison to pharmaceuticals, which have seen some clear increases in specific areas that drive trustworthiness, increases for banking companies are more consistent, with uplifts of between three and four points across each factor. While the trustworthiness of banks is still low, it seems the road to their rehabilitation may have begun.

Apart from pharmaceuticals and banking, the pandemic appears to have had limited impact on the perceived trustworthiness of businesses. Most sectors are stable since 2019, seeing limited increases in trustworthiness at best and stability at worst.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, the capacity to maintain such standards in trustworthiness remains to be seen. However, we can say with confidence that there is greater cause for optimism than might be presented elsewhere.

To find out more, please contact:
james.allen@ipsos.com
tom.cox@ipsos.com

**“While the trustworthiness of banks is still low, it seems the road to their rehabilitation might have begun”**

# DOING WHAT YOU SAY: TRUST AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**There are two key reasons why trust, or the quality of being trustworthy, is such an important concept and measure for so many of Ipsos' clients. And why it's so often adopted as the 'dependent variable' as we help clients understand their connections with stakeholders.**

Firstly, it's almost impossible for transactions of any kind to occur without it. People rarely operate completely independently and have imperfect knowledge of the world – trust allows people to shortcut these limitations.

Secondly, once it has been built, trust unlocks various benefits. If someone believes an institution to be trustworthy, they are more likely to purchase from it, believe what it says, seek out its advice, value its experience and judgement, and give it the benefit of the doubt. In these ways, trust and reputation are very closely related concepts.

As we discuss elsewhere in this report, Princeton University theorist Phillip Pettit's model of trust is instructive. The foundational level in his model is Basic Trust: the result of a person, institution or organisation doing what it says it will do. This is the bedrock upon which organisations build their reputations for being trustworthy. Without it, there can be no relationship.

The most important aspect of Basic Trust is how it grounds an abstract concept – trustworthiness – in a very tangible and simple transaction. And one that involves the core raison d'être of a business or organisation. An organisation's purpose or value proposition is presented to stakeholders – a question is posed that can be fairly easily answered through experience. Did you do what you said you would do? This gives trust its anchor point.

The importance of Basic Trust is reflected in the claimed drivers of trust this year. Being reliable and keeping promises and being open and transparent, are globally the most important reasons given by the public for trusting different types of organisations or institutions.

## Pettit's Three Forms of Trust

### Basic trust

- Will the other party do what they say they will do?

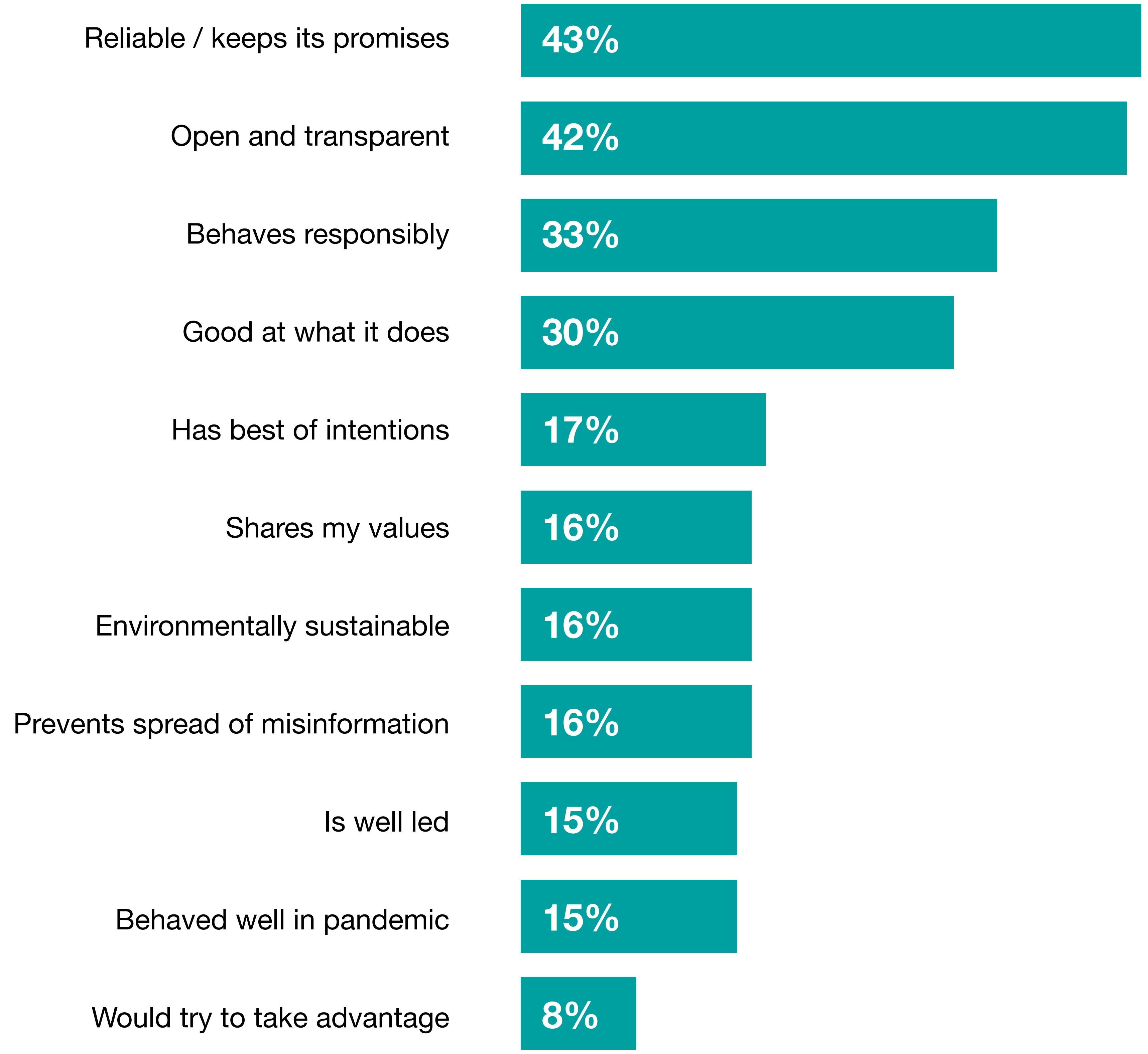
### Active trust

- Will the other party treat you well, and have your wellbeing in mind when they make decisions and take action?

### Interactive trust

- Does your trust in the other party strengthen or reinforce their existing reasons to do what you rely on them to do?

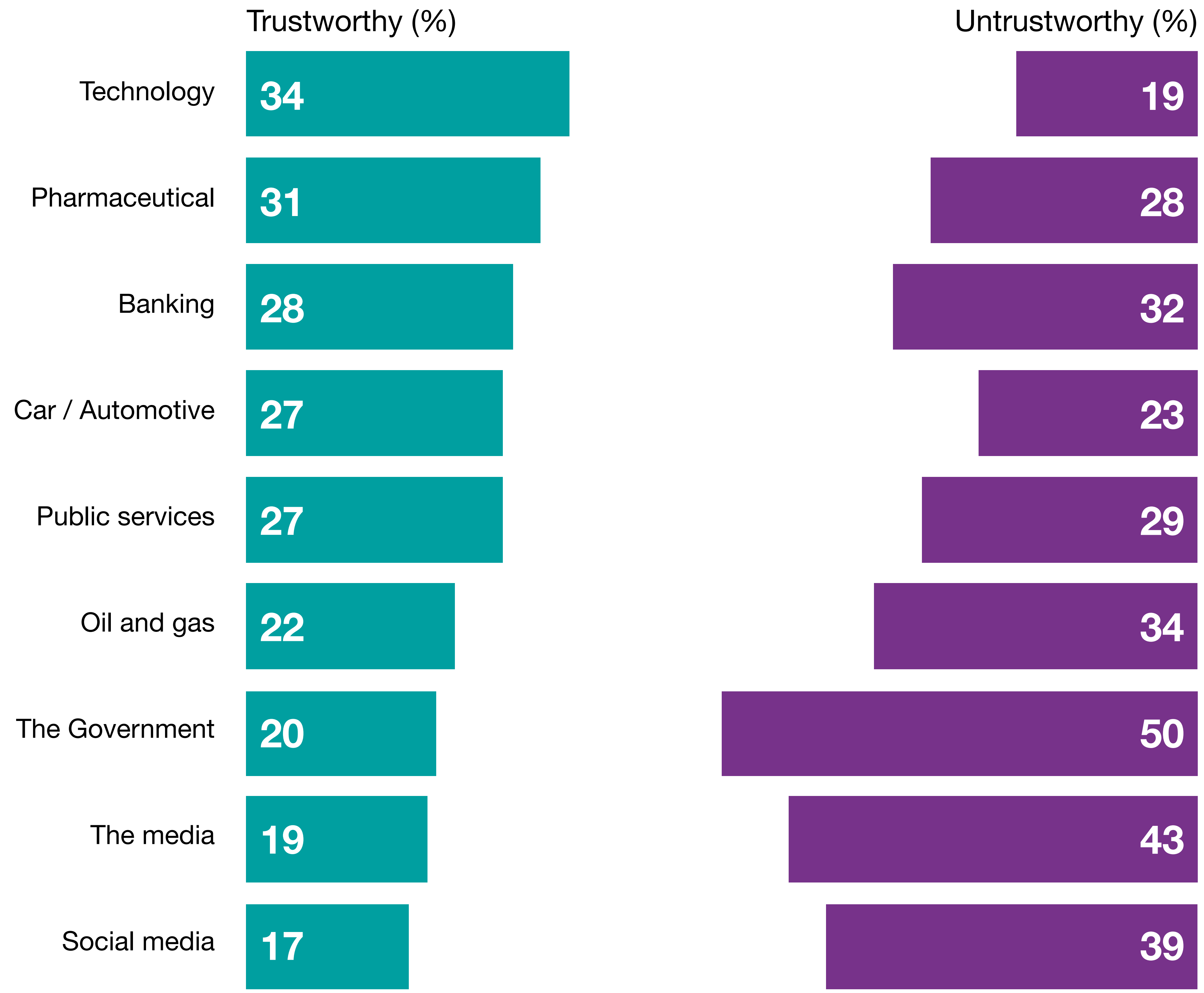
## Global trust drivers by importance




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

> **“ In these ways, trust and reputation are very closely related concepts ”**

## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

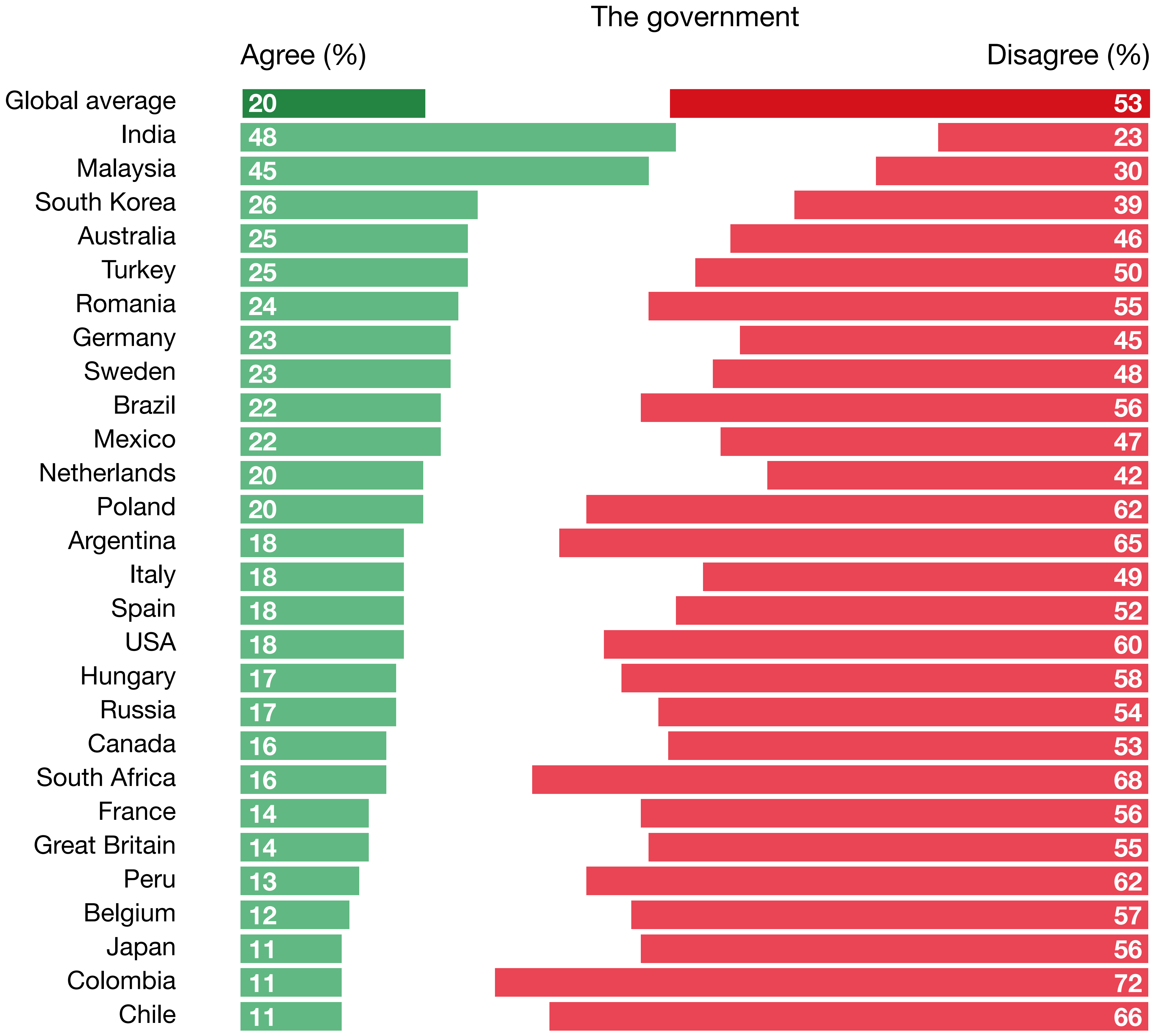
## “Institutions would appear to be failing on the level of Basic Trust”

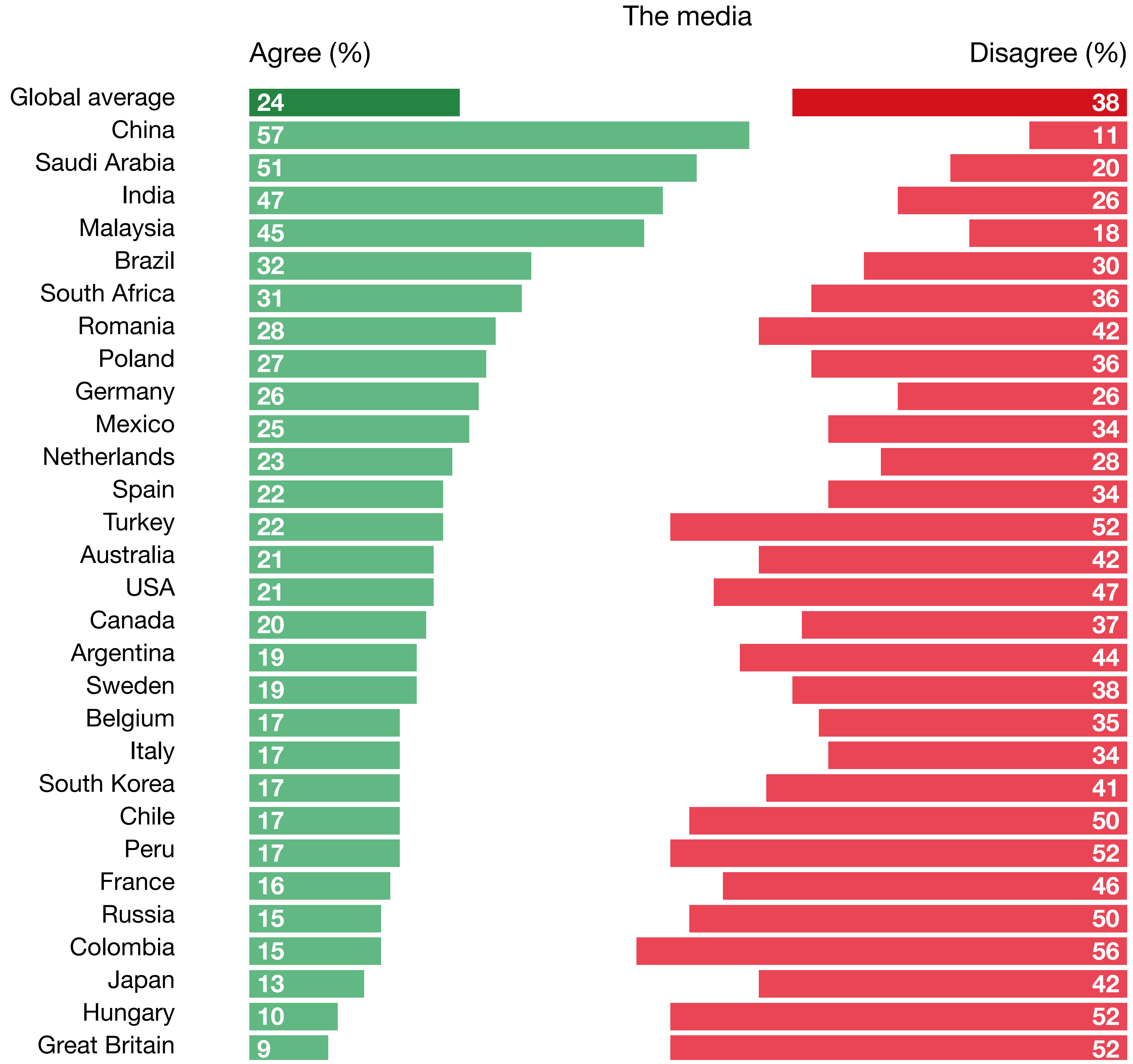
### The trust deficit remains with us

Overall, trustworthiness continues to be low across many institutions. While views are different across the range of sectors, none get very high scores, with 17 percentage points difference between the most trustworthy (technology companies, 34%) and the least trustworthy (social media, 17%). Many sectors covered in the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor have more negatives than positives – technology, pharma and automotive companies the main exceptions – with government, the media and social media the most untrustworthy.

Institutions would appear to be failing on the level of Basic Trust. Results from our survey chart the perceived failure of institutions, particularly government and the media, to deliver on the promises they make.

# The government and the media: are reliable/keep their promises




**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 20,003 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## The sustainability paradox

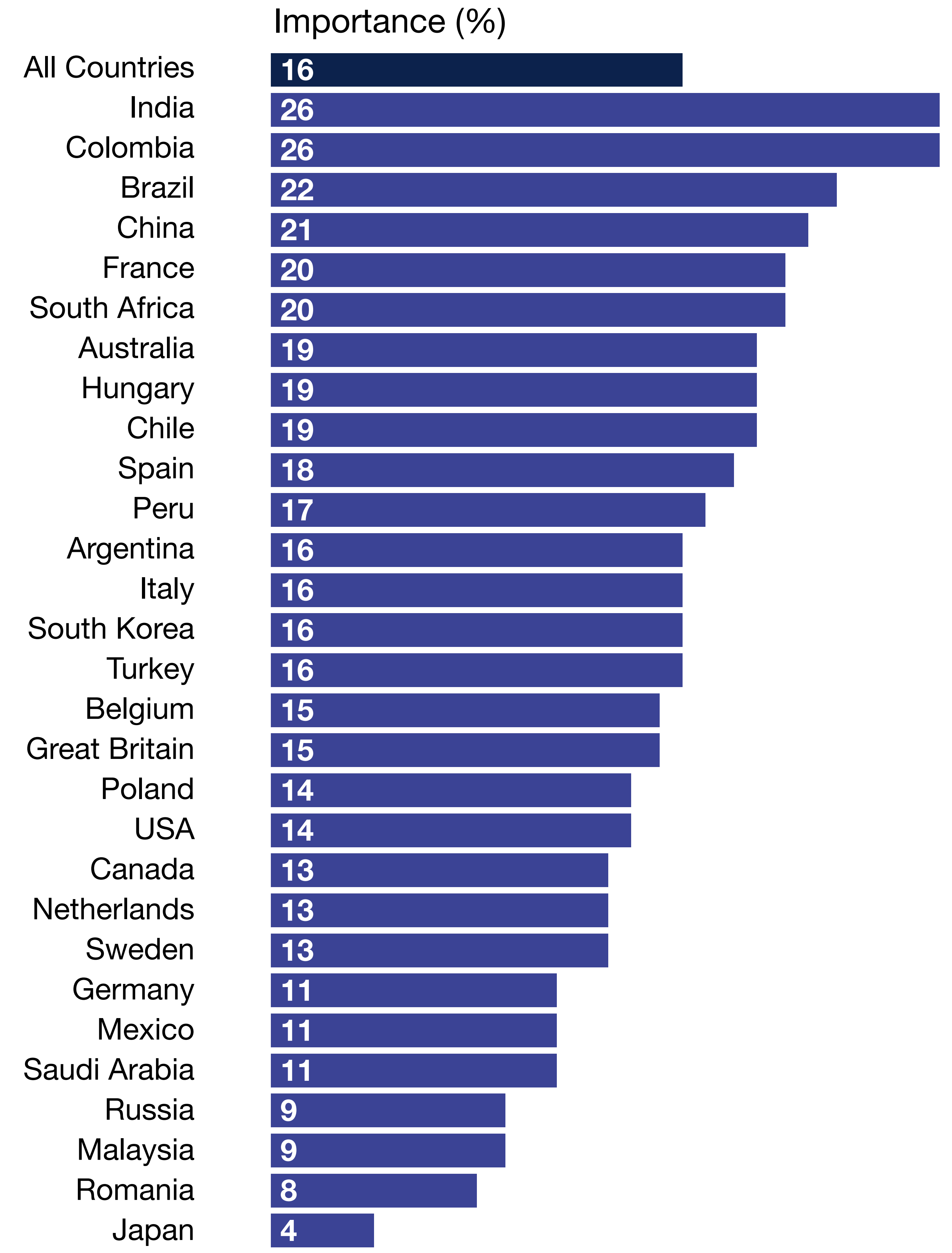
Being environmentally sustainable is not, currently, a major stated driver of trust. Only 16% of people globally say that environmental sustainability is among the most important criteria when they decide whether or not to trust an organisation or institution. Given the importance of Basic Trust – the result of an organisation fulfilling its core promises or purpose – in the public's decisions about the trustworthiness of different institutions, this is perhaps not surprising. For most organisations, environmental sustainability will currently sit outside their basic proposition to stakeholders.

At the same time, Ipsos' Earth Day research[15] shows that 65% of people globally say that if their government does not act now to combat climate change, it will be failing the people.

A further 68% agree that if businesses do not act now, they will be failing their employees and customers. Latest results from Ipsos' Global Reputation Monitor show that the public believe responsibility for protecting the environment is split evenly between government (39%), companies (32%) and citizens / consumers (29%).[16]

This could appear to be more evidence of the notorious "say-do gap" – that while people say they want to see interventions and initiatives on climate change, relatively few will

## Importance of trust driver 'if it is environmentally sustainable'




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021




actually go out of their way to change their behaviour, or really demand it of organisations. And this poses a problem for organisations, who are already ***"finding it quite hard after the first wave of enthusiasm for green topics ... to embed that into what they actually do day to day."***[17]

After all, why make fundamental changes to an organisation – to policy, products, business models etc – if it's not going to significantly improve your reputation or your trustworthiness for this key group of stakeholders? It could be tempting to ignore, or at least delay action which might be disruptive and costly.

## Stakeholder pressure to act

One good reason to act, beyond the broader ethical dimension, is the pressure that is increasingly coming from other stakeholders, including investors and employees. Ipsos' recent Shaping 2025 & Beyond report has the climate emergency as one of the macro forces shaping the planet.[18] And in his 2021 and 2020 letters to investors, Blackrock CEO Larry Fink put it that, ***"there is no company whose business model won't be profoundly affected by the transition to a net zero economy"*** and that climate change has "become a defining factor in companies' long-term prospects."[19] (And this is to set to one side the other UN Sustainable Development Goals, covering 16 other areas of sustainable development).

## Articulating a promise – and keeping it

The question then, is how to better leverage sustainability commitments to improve trust?

The first lesson we can learn from the Pettit model is that at its heart, trust is based on the articulation of a promise and – through one's actions – the fulfilment of that promise. To apply this more broadly, in whatever an organisation is seeking to achieve, articulation is crucial.

## Not having a clearly articulated position on sustainability and not fulfilling commitments made will increasingly become a liability

Ipsos' Perils of Perception survey shows that while people are concerned about climate change, they are "often mistaken in thinking that they know what they can do and that many do not grasp the scale of the challenge."[20] People, for example, underestimate high-impact actions such as taking flights, and overestimate lower-impact actions such as avoiding excess packaging.[21] So, there is an extra onus on organisations: they not only need to articulate what they are doing to embed sustainability, but also explain to the public exactly why this is an appropriate, credible and effective thing for them to be doing.

In the long term, organisations and institutions will benefit from this approach, as sustainability commitments become increasingly important for all stakeholders. Not having a clearly articulated position on sustainability and not fulfilling commitments made will increasingly become a liability. Again, from Larry Fink's 2021 letter to CEOs:

***"Companies with a well-articulated long-term strategy, and a clear plan to address the transition to net zero, will distinguish themselves with their stakeholders... But companies that are not quickly preparing themselves will see their businesses and valuations suffer."*** [22]

The most effective articulations when it comes to building Basic Trust, while also setting the platform for the more demanding aspects of active and interactive trust, will be the ones that embed environmental sustainability in an organisation's core value proposition – what it promises to do – either as the proposition itself or as a co-benefit. One of the biggest lessons emerging from Ipsos' Reputation Council over the last two years, is that the companies perceived to be performing best on, and that receive the biggest trust boost from sustainability, are those which are moving towards ***"a sustainable approach that is not an add-on but is integral, integrated to their business and their strategy and their purpose."*** [23]

To find out more, please contact:
**henry.archer@ipsos.com**

# THE REPUTATION OF PHARMA – HAS THE PANDEMIC MADE A DIFFERENCE?

**The pharmaceutical industry has been in the spotlight over the last 18 months helping us move from a society dominated by COVID-19 and lockdowns to one with more freedom. Historically, the pharmaceutical industry has not always generated end-to-end trust nor exhibited transparency. But, as the sector continues to play a vital role in the development of vaccines and treatments, the tide seems to be slowly turning in favour of pharmaceutical companies. Is this upturn sustainable? Or could gains in trust ebb away once COVID-19 moves from pandemic to a note in the history book? What is driving the changes that we are seeing?**

## Doctors and scientists - our anchor in the storm

The last 18 months have changed the way we live drastically, including the way we interact with healthcare professionals and manage our health. Doctors and scientists have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis and serve as a constant reminder that this group of people have been working tirelessly to try and put an end to this pandemic. While they have always been in the top two most trusted professions across markets, this year sentiment is as strong as ever, with 64% (Global Country Average) saying that doctors are trustworthy (+9 points vs 2018) and 61% scientists (+2 points).

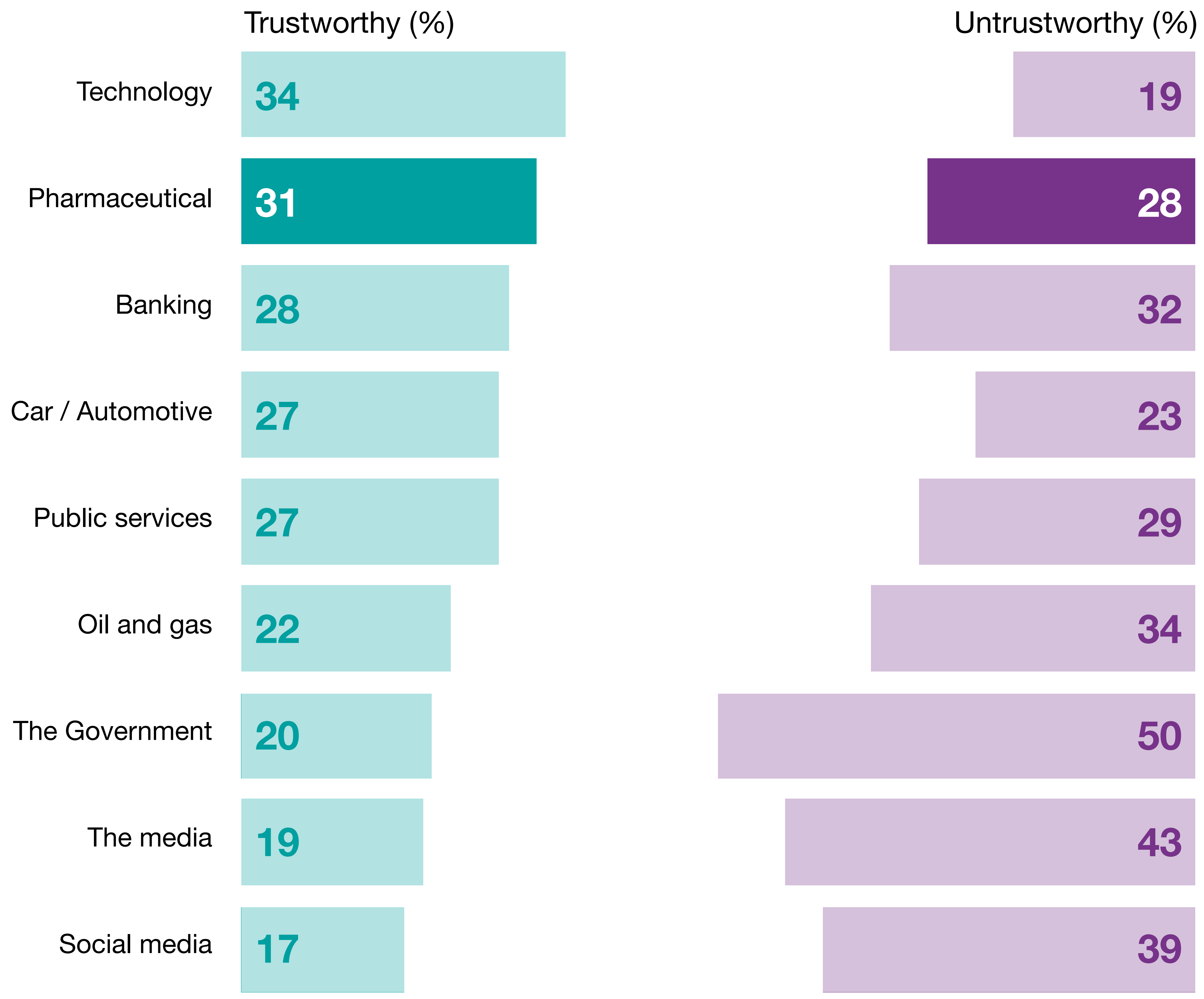
# Distrust in pharmaceutical companies is more likely to stem from historically deeper-rooted factors

While this increase in trustworthiness in doctors might not come as a surprise to many, the trustworthiness of the pharmaceutical industry is showing an interesting dynamic. Pharmaceutical companies have also been pivotal in developing COVID-19 vaccines, but this has also come with controversy and their image among citizens is not always one of transparency (just 31% agree). 42% globally also agree that pharmaceutical companies would take advantage of them if they could.

## Pharmaceutical companies – an improving but still complicated relationship

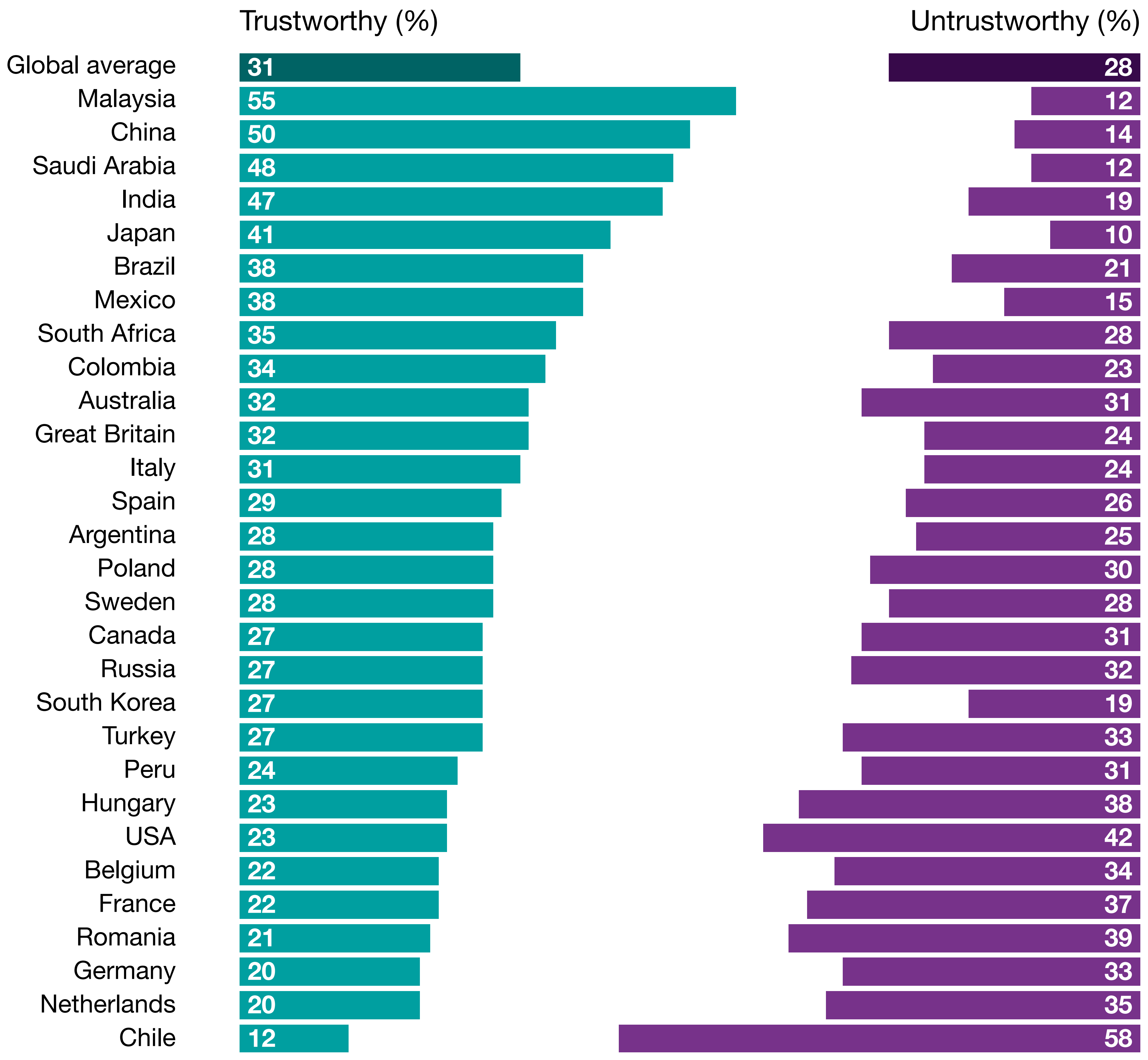
In 2021, 31% of respondents globally said that pharmaceutical companies are trustworthy, up from 25% in 2018 – ahead of banking, oil and gas companies, public services and the government. In line with this trend, 49% of respondents globally think pharmaceuticals companies are good at what they do, 40% think they do what they do with the best of intentions, and half (51%) think they behaved well in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, perceptions tend to vary greatly by regions, with levels of distrust and scepticism remaining startlingly high in certain countries. USA (42%), Hungary (38%), France (37%), Germany (33%), and Australia (31%) are five of the countries most distrusting of the pharmaceutical industry. These

## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## Trustworthiness in pharmaceutical companies




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

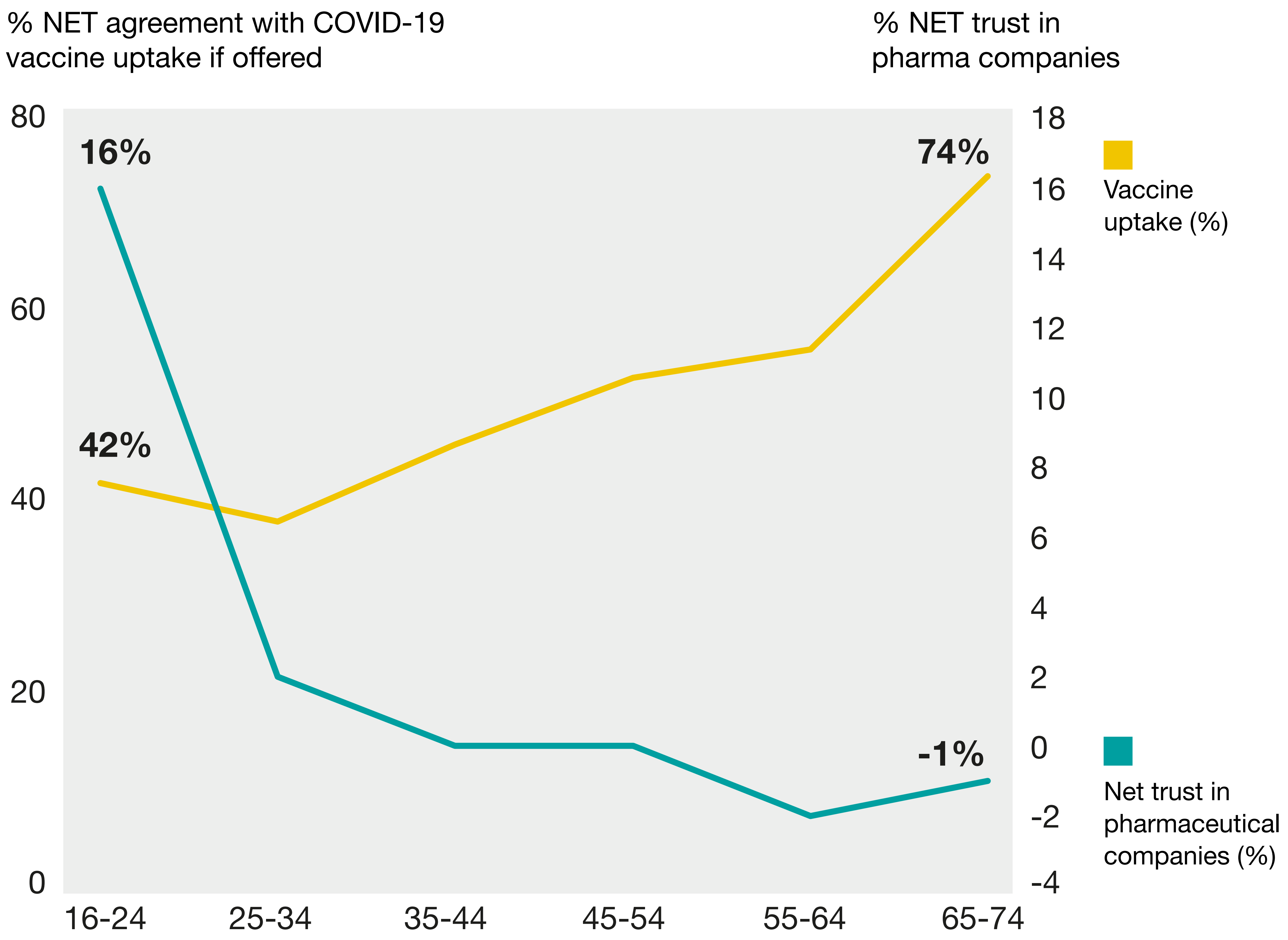
countries' experience of COVID-19 varied greatly in terms of case numbers per population, vaccination availability and their individual approaches to handling the pandemic. This suggests that perceived untrustworthiness of pharmaceutical companies is more likely to stem from historically deep-rooted factors.

A lack of transparency and reliability are the main driving forces for distrust in the pharmaceutical industry; those who see pharmaceutical companies as untrustworthy are least likely to agree with these attributes (15% and 19% respectively). Despite this, perceptions of the pharmaceutical industry have improved, with perceptions of the industry as transparent up seven-points from 2018.

However, two in five (41%) agree it would take advantage of them if it could. While this has seen a small decline since 2018 (45%), this would suggest that more work needs to be done to convince the public that pharmaceutical companies are trustworthy and are working for the common good.

Whilst pharmaceutical companies have benefited from this crisis, people are willing to recognise the critical role they have played. Half of people in the Global Country Average (51%) think it has behaved well in its response to COVID-19 pandemic – however is this alone enough to really change the perceptions of the whole industry in the long term? Only time will tell, but there is a real opportunity for pharmaceutical

## Trust in pharmaceutical companies vs uptake of COVID-19 vaccine by age




companies to capitalise on this positive trend and do more to show the public that they are open and transparent in the years to come.

## Trust & COVID-19 vaccination – a generational gap?

Trust in the pharmaceutical industry is most evident among the young, particularly those aged 16-24 who show both significantly higher levels of trust for pharma and significantly lower levels of distrust than every other age group – a generational divide seen consistently across markets. Conversely, we also see that willingness to be vaccinated against COVID-19 increases with age. Creating an interesting dichotomy that those who are most willing to get vaccinated are also the least likely to trust the industry creating the vaccines. Does vulnerability to the virus lead to this trust in the product, despite believing those behind its creation to be relatively untrustworthy? Or are the older generations more resistant to sway in their opinions on the pharmaceutical industries despite their efforts in tackling the pandemic? Being more aware of the unethical historical behaviour by the sector, their deep-rooted scepticism towards the pharma industry could also explain this gap in generational attitude. The older generation know they need medicines and are willingly taking them to stay

**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements? If a vaccine for COVID-19 was offered to you, you would take the vaccine? Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

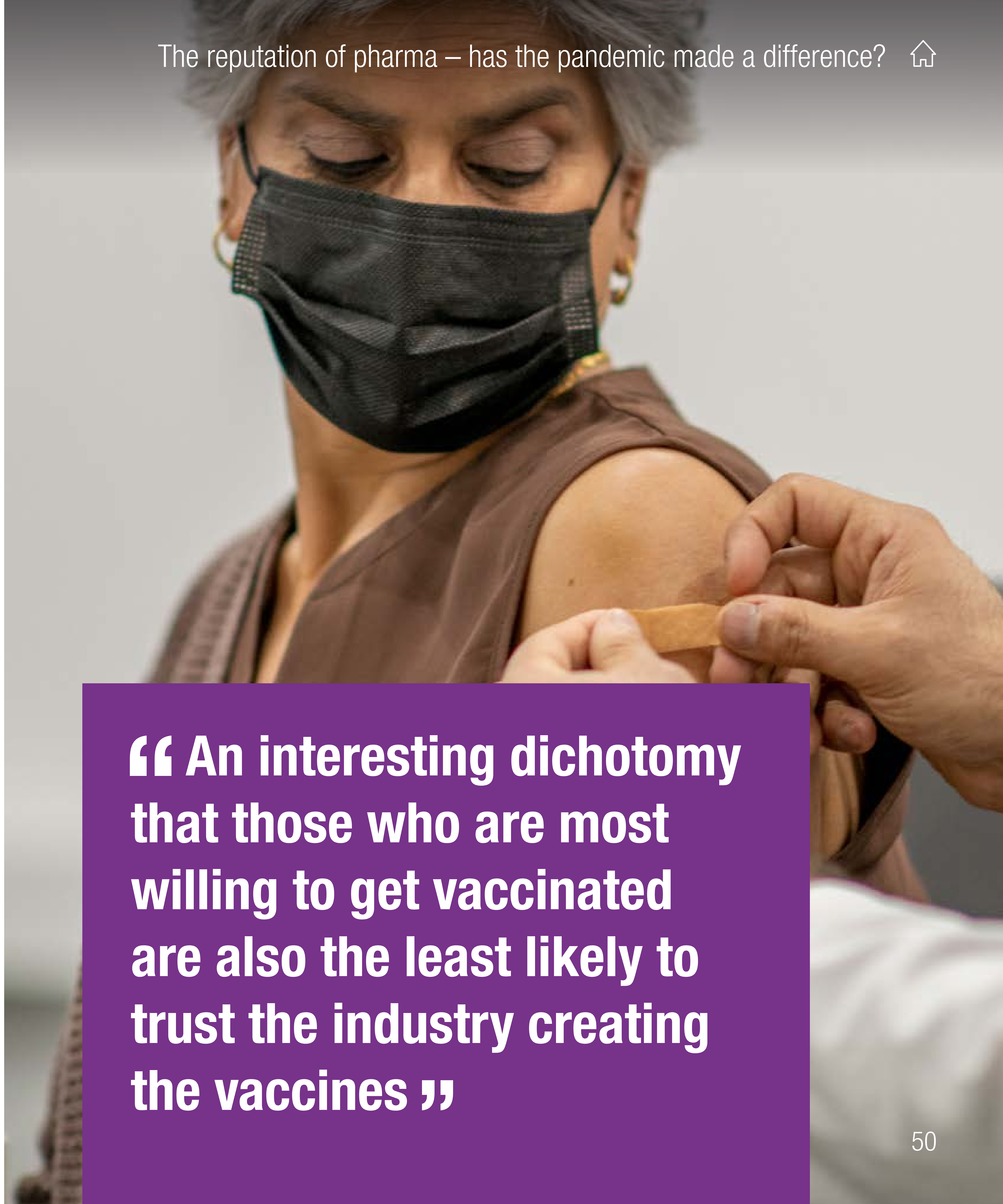
healthy – however they still distrust the industry which is developing them.

Interestingly the reverse is seen for scientists and doctors, where older age groups are much more likely to see these professionals as trustworthy than younger age groups in 2021. Over the last two years we have seen small increases in trust for scientists (+2 points since 2018), whilst trust in doctors sees a notable 9-point increase in 2021. Are people attributing the response to COVID-19 mainly to doctors for their treatment and care of the sick, rather than to scientists for their development of vaccines and treatments? If so, what could be driving the increase in trustworthiness in pharmaceutical companies?

Whilst pharmaceutical companies are increasingly seen as trustworthy – we can’t yet conclude if it’s on an upward trend. Will COVID-19 leave a legacy that impacts the trustworthiness of the pharmaceutical industry in the long run - overriding years of distrust and dislike? It remains to be seen how the pharmaceutical industry can apply the halo effect of the COVID-19 vaccine success to their companies and wider industry, and whether the industry can uphold this benchmark and continue to build upon the global acceptance of its endeavour and united response.

To find out more, please contact:

**caroline.aurensan@ipsos.com**



**“An interesting dichotomy that those who are most willing to get vaccinated are also the least likely to trust the industry creating the vaccines”**

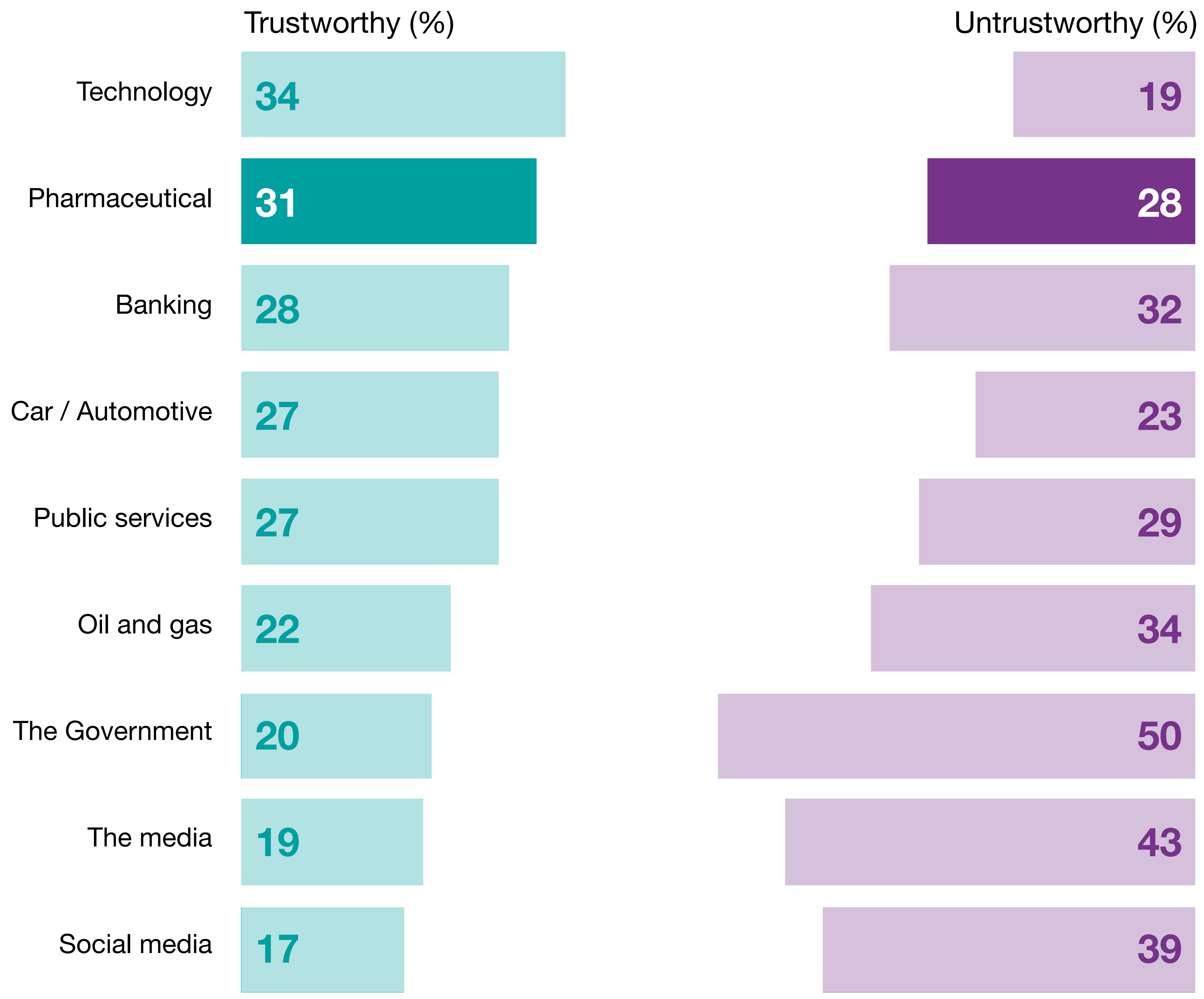

# **TRUST IN PHARMA –** AN OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR IN 2021

**The COVID-19 pandemic has, at least for the moment, reshaped how we go about our daily lives, our work and how the economy will operate for years to come. The creation of a vaccine to combat a disease, totally unknown to humanity, in less than a year, is a significant achievement by the pharmaceutical industry - a triumph of collaboration and innovation.**

While some have praised the pharmaceutical companies that have led this achievement, the sector has a reputation that is often tarnished by bad press, be it around pricing or the behaviour of some bad actors in countries such as the USA. While the interaction between pharmaceutical companies and people is fundamentally different all over the world, the globalised nature of medicines and treatment mean that stories have a global impact.

Has the past year changed the perceptions of trustworthiness of pharmaceutical companies? The latest research from Ipsos' Global Trustworthiness Monitor, shows that the sector's response to COVID-19 has had a positive effect. Across 23 countries, trustworthiness of pharmaceutical companies among the public increased from one in four (25%) in 2018 to three in ten (31%) in 2021. Untrustworthiness has also declined by 8 points: 35% in 2018 vs 27% in 2021.

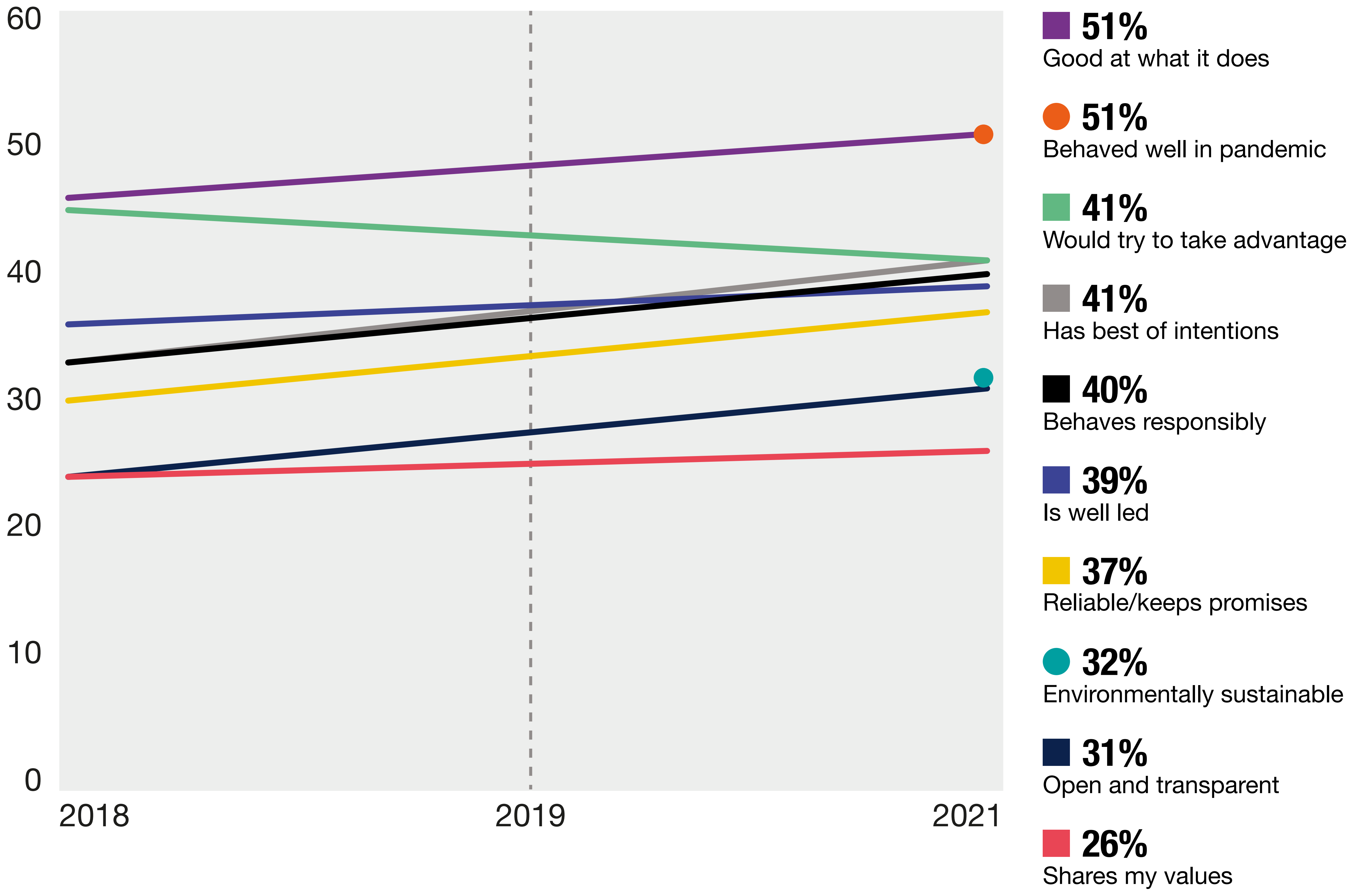
## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021


**It’s clear that the pandemic has had a positive effect on the public’s perceptions of the industry. This opens up new opportunities for trustworthiness in an industry that is critical to the world**

## Global pharmaceutical companies' performance on trust drivers over time (% agreement)




**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 10,814 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

This positions pharmaceutical companies as the second most trusted type of organisation amongst those we measured - just behind technology companies on 34%.

Importantly, net trustworthiness (the percentage who see them as trustworthy minus the percentage who see them as untrustworthy) has now increased into positive territory at +4 compared to 2018 when it was at -10. Those who sit on the fence remain consistent at 37% in 2018 and 38% in 2021. The stability in neutrality, increase in trustworthiness and decline in untrustworthiness, may suggest that those who considered the sector to be untrustworthy have shifted their opinions and are now impartial towards the sector, while those who sat on the fence have been convinced of the sector's trustworthiness.

Positive perceptions of pharmaceutical companies have increased across the board, with 37% of the global public agreeing that the industry is 'reliable/ keeps its promises' (30% in 2018), 'does what it does with the best of intentions' (41% vs 33% in 2018), is 'open and transparent about what it does' (31% vs 24% in 2018), 'behaves responsibly' (40% vs 33% in 2018), and there is a decline in those who agree it would 'try to take advantage of me if it could' (41% vs 45% in 2018).

It's clear that the pandemic has had a positive effect on the public's perceptions of the industry. This opens up new opportunities for trustworthiness in an industry that is critical to the world.

While the overall picture we are seeing is strong - this does mask underlying issues that the sector will need to address if it is to undergo a trustworthiness rehabilitation. In particular, there has been limited change in the perception that 'it shares my values' (24% 2018 vs 26% 2021) and that 'it is well led' (36% vs 39%). Pharmaceutical companies could focus on shifting expectations to being 'value-led' companies, who put back into society, specifically looking at research and development, manufacturing medicines and vaccines, that are vital to help people and fundamentally save lives. Public trust and support for pharmaceuticals could then allow for useful business outcomes, such as fewer roadblocks with regulators and policy makers and greater public support for pharma's ability to make a profit and re-invest it in R&D.

When addressing some of the behaviours that have led to the sector's often tarnished reputation – leadership is something to highlight. Looking at other sectors, loud leaders can be both a boon and a drawback to a company and the industry as a whole. CEOs from some of the most

**"Loud leaders can be both a boon and a drawback to a company and the industry as a whole"**

renowned pharmaceutical companies became significant figures that had greater exposure than perhaps had ever been seen before, including regular news appearances and magazine interviews that delved into individuals in greater depth. This is an example of leadership enhancing the reputation of its organisation and boosting the trustworthiness of the sector in which they operate.

Despite the overall strong results, there are also some countries that have not shifted their perceptions of trustworthiness. China's scores remain almost level with 2018; 50% viewing pharmaceutical companies as trustworthy, vs 52% in 2018. In Russia it's 30% vs 27%, and a similar story emerges in Belgium – 23% vs 22%. This highlights that trustworthiness is not something that is easily gained, but must be worked for, nurtured and built up over time, with repeated demonstrations and behaviours of trustworthy activity.

The rise in trustworthiness that we have seen in our latest research suggests that this has been caused by the reaction to one event: the industry's response to the pandemic. This increase in trust and improved perceptions of the pharmaceutical companies may be temporary and last as long as we need vaccines to defend ourselves against the disease.

## Trustworthiness in pharmaceutical companies


**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

The old adage of 'trust takes a lifetime to build and seconds to destroy' is one that stands true, and pharmaceutical companies should remain vigilant of anything that may negatively impact their trustworthiness.

**"The old adage of trust takes a lifetime to build and seconds to destroy is one that stands true"**

What happens next? How can pharmaceutical companies cement and build upon the trustworthiness that they have at least temporarily gained?

Ipsos' Bayes Network (IBN) analysis of our latest research shows that 'behaving responsibly' and 'being reliable/keeping its promises', are the two factors which have the greatest impact on trustworthiness for pharmaceuticals. Companies operating in a highly sensitive space such as healthcare need to be clear that responsible activity is critical for building and maintaining trustworthiness. For pharmaceutical companies specifically, this may be a proxy for ethical standards and behaviour which is so critical for any healthcare provider. A history of irresponsible action, such as Perdue Pharma with their drug OxyContin which was seen to have played a role in fuelling America's opioid crisis, or the use of Thalidomide with pregnant women in the 1950s and 60s - means that this is of fundamental importance for the sector. The sector's response to COVID-19 and demonstrations of responsible behaviour during this period, may give the industry an opportunity to turn a corner and emerge in the future as responsible and reliable corporates.

COVID-19 has been devastating for the world, but has offered pharmaceutical companies a platform and the opportunity to re-define themselves and the sector. The challenge now is how to ensure that this change is not just fleeting and lays a foundation which can be built upon. The increase in trustworthiness opens a door; now is the time when people are more receptive to messaging from the sector or those who would advocate on its behalf, increasingly willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. This all helps to increase knowledge and awareness of the pharmaceutical companies and gives them the ability to tell their side of the story. This is what fundamentally has the potential to solidify long-term trustworthiness.

To find out more, please contact:
**james.allen@ipsos.com**

# FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION: THE BARRIER TO TRUST FOR MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**The purpose of the media is to inform, influence, and entertain. To be listened to, read, valued, and ultimately paid for - the media must operate from a platform of trust.**

The speed at which content is produced, spread, and discussed means the reliability of sources is increasingly coming into question. In the 1980s, CNN changed traditional media forever by launching 24-hour news. Rolling updates set a precedent for on-demand media and a shift from factual delivery to punditry analysis. The rate at which content was produced and delivered sped up accordingly. The advent of social media massively increased connectivity so that content can now be shared almost instantaneously around the globe, again expediting the speed at which content is produced and delivered. Beyond simply extending reach, changes to the media landscape also impact audience tastes. Research shows that attention spans are narrowing, as people generally have more things to focus on, and often less time to focus on them.[24] Appetite for content is likely to increase as more-and-more information is made available, and screentime is only likely to increase. The rise of new media sources has led to increased demand for commentary and soundbites at the expense of long-form analysis.

Traditional media outlets have a legal responsibility for the content they produce. They are kept “honest” to a greater or lesser extent when it comes to the reporting of news by the threat of legal action. Social media has no legal responsibility for the content it hosts, a legal difference that has accelerated the surge of fake news and misinformation over the last five years. This has not gone unnoticed by the public; a 2021 study by Ipsos for Full Fact (an independent fact-checking organisation in the UK) found that three-in-four British adults are worried about misinformation, and one-in-four agreed that they had falsely believed a news story was real before later finding out that it was false.[25]

As the volume of misinformation and fake news continues to rise, the onus is increasingly on consumers to fact-check what they see and hear. Many aren't suitably motivated or equipped to do so, with just 26% of Americans saying they are very confident in their ability to recognise fake news.[26] Research undertaken by Ipsos on behalf of Google, finds that nearly a third of Europeans say that they find it difficult to tell the difference between true and fake news and current affairs information online. There is a strong and currently unmet demand for online media literacy education and training, with three-in-five Europeans interested in learning about how to use tools to distinguish between true and false information online.[27]

Fake news and misinformation can have serious consequences and are alleged to have had significant impacts on; election results (Trump 2016), referendum decisions (Brexit 2016), the exacerbation of health risks (COVID-19), and environmental risks (climate change). The question of trust in media (and social media) companies is as crucial as it has ever been. Drawing on recent global research on the levels of trustworthiness of both the media and social media sectors, and what attributes are driving opinions, can help these sectors think about what they can do about it.

## Is distrust in the media new?

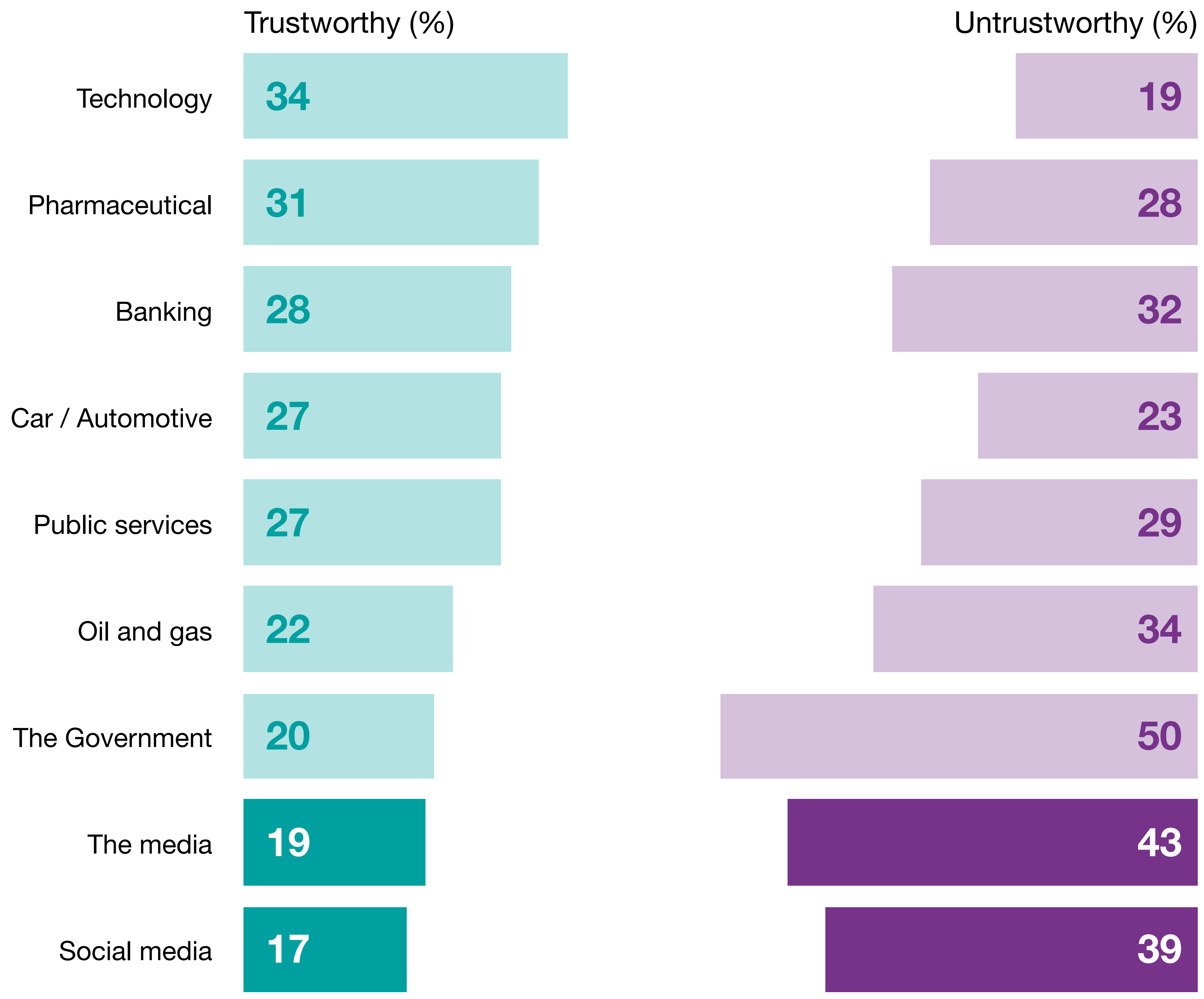
Since Ipsos' last Trust publication in 2019 (Trust: The Truth), the world has been shaken by some major events, not least of which has been the COVID-19 global pandemic; riots broke out in the US leading to the storming of the Capitol; The United Kingdom left the EU after a very divisive Brexit period, and the murder of George Floyd by a policeman sparked mass protests and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. Recent studies by Ipsos[28] and PEW[29] show that people feel the world the world is seemingly becoming more and more divided, and it could be argued this division is both exacerbated and reflected by the media. The consensus is that news sources are increasingly partisan, resulting in rising distrust in mainstream media[30] as people cluster around the news sources that they think best reflect their own worldview.

Social media companies have also struggled to contain the spread of fake news and disinformation. The start of the COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by a huge surge of information being circulated about the new disease - often false and misleading - undermining the public health response to the crisis and creating mistrust in health authorities. Another high-profile example is President Trump, who is now banned from Twitter.

Following this, Ipsos' most recent Global Trustworthiness Monitor shows trustworthiness in the media remains very low, with just 19% globally considering the media as trustworthy. The proportion who think the media is untrustworthy outweighs those who think it is trustworthy by 2:1 (43%). Only distrust in the government is higher (half the world does not trust their government). We also find that journalists are not considered particularly trustworthy (23%). Just 17% consider social media companies trustworthy, lower than traditional media and lower than any other organisation surveyed. And those who consider social media companies trustworthy are also heavily outweighed by those who find it untrustworthy (39%).

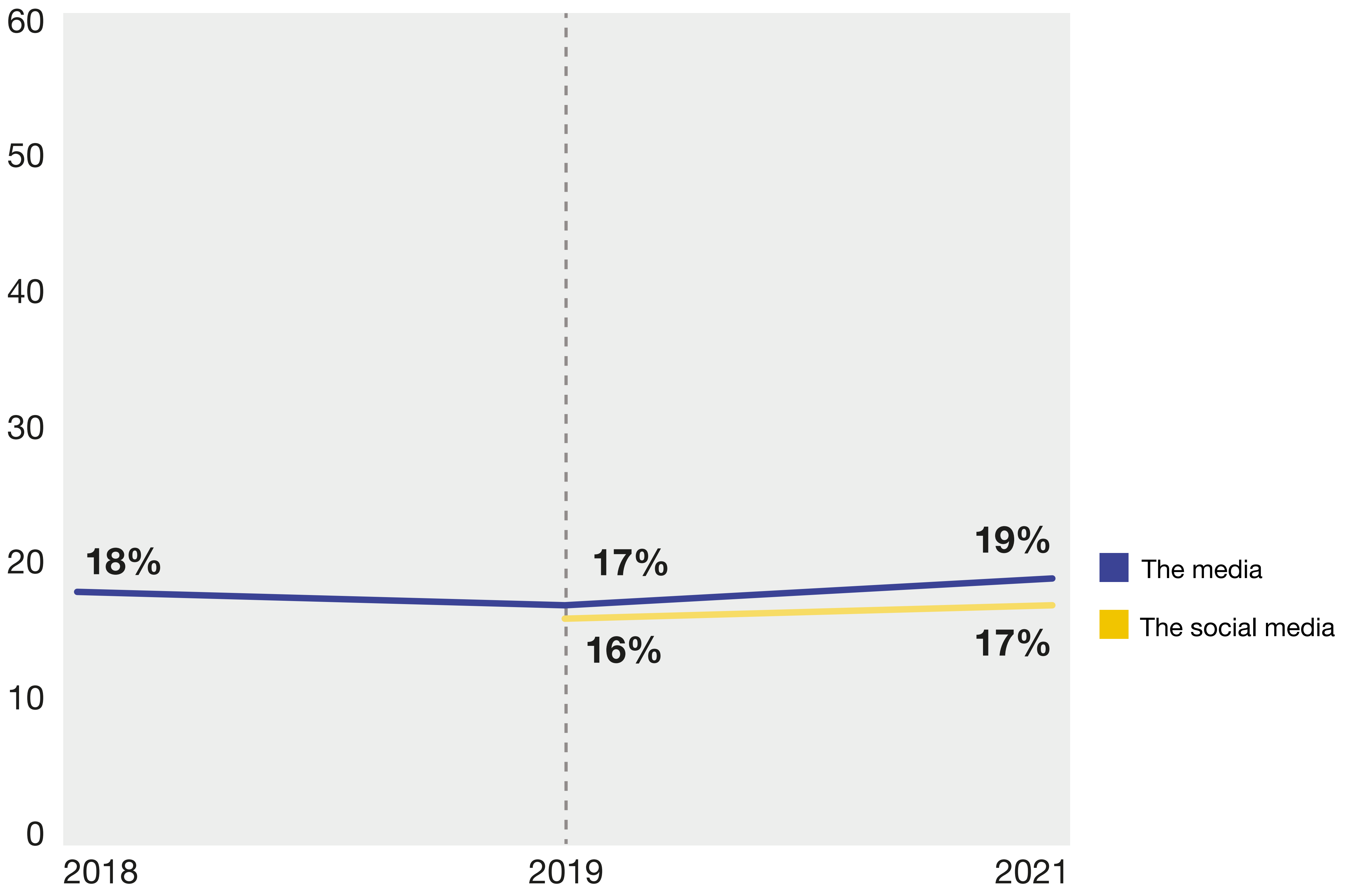
Against the recent media backdrop, it is perhaps surprising to note that while trustworthiness in other sectors has changed over the past

## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## Global sector trustworthiness (%) over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

three years (Government +6 points, Pharmaceuticals +6 points, Banking +8 points, Technology -4 points), trustworthiness in both traditional media (+1 point since 2018) and social media (+1 point since 2019) have remained stable. Even in countries we might expect to be most impacted by the above issues, there is little evidence of change. In Great Britain, media trustworthiness remains stable (+2 point since 2018) and social media trustworthiness remains stable (+2 point since 2019). In the US, trust in the media is unchanged since 2018, while trust in social media remains stable (-2 points).

The trust drivers help to explain why trust in the media and trust in social media is so low overall: they both perform weakly across all the main drivers of trust. Performance has declined on two out of seven trendable drivers for media and across four out of the seven trendable drivers for social media. Although linked in terms of the broad roles they perform, the types of issues each sector faces varies: while the challenges of fake news and misinformation are common, these are more prominent for social media companies, which also have to contend with issues around data protection, user privacy, and child protection. It is interesting that the performance of both is remarkably similar, normally within one or two percentage points of each other.


**The speed at which content is produced, spread, and discussed means the reliability of sources is increasingly coming into question**

## Global media and social media trust driver performance over time

| | Media | | | Social Media | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2018 | 2019 | 2021 | 2019 | 2021 |
| Reliable/keeps its promises | 20% | 24% ▲ | 24% | 24% | 23% |
| Open and transparent about what it does | 21% | 26% ▲ | 25% | 26% | 24% ▼ |
| Behaves responsibly | 22% | 26% ▲ | 26% | 26% | 24% ▼ |
| Good at what it does | 34% | 38% ▲ | 36% ▼ | 42% | 36% ▼ |
| Does what it does with the best of intentions | 24% | 27% ▲ | 27% | 26% | 26% |
| Shares my values | 18% | 21% ▲ | 21% | 22% | 21% |
| Environmentally sustainable | - | - | 26% | - | 27% |
| Works to prevent the spread of misinformation | - | - | 28% | - | 26% |
| Is well led | 25% | 29% ▲ | 27% ▼ | 32% | 29% ▼ |
| Has behaved well in its responses to the COVID-19 pandemic | - | - | 34% | - | 32% |
| Would try to take advantage of me if it could | 44% | 45% | 44% | 38% | 47% |

▲▼ Statistically significant difference since previous wave

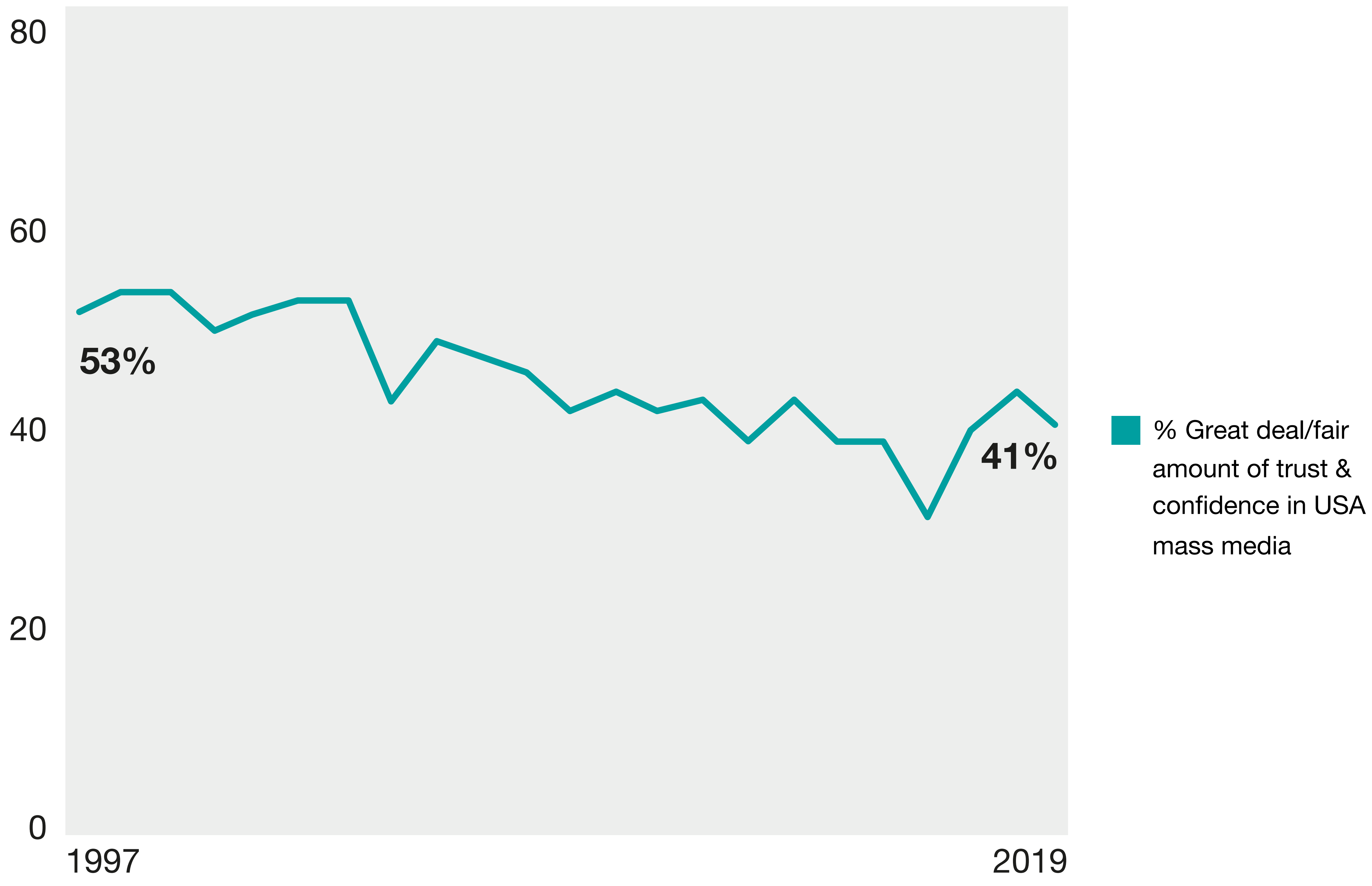
**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021. Table ranked by order of driver importance.

Slightly more than a third think that the media and social media are good at what they do and only around three-in-ten think the media and social media are well-led. The media and social media's performance on both have fallen, indicating that although overall trustworthiness in these industries remains stable, there are perhaps growing competency concerns and concerns about their leadership.

Just a quarter think that the media and social media are open and transparent and that they behave responsibly. Social media performance has fallen significantly since 2019. The driver most associated with both sectors is a negative one - that they would try to take advantage of me if they could (media 44%, social media 47%). It is evident that there is a concern that both the media and social media are not totally honest, and that they do not have their customers' best interests at heart. It is not surprising then that just 28% think the media works to prevent the spread of misinformation and only 26% think the same of social media. In the consumer's mind, they aren't doing enough to protect them or show a duty of care.

Trust in the media remains stable at least in the short-term. But how does it trend more long-term? If we look at a 20-year trend for the US, we can see that while trust in the media can fluctuate, in the short-term it has remained largely stable for the last 10-15 years.

## Americans' trust in mass media




**Source:** Gallup, USA data only. 'In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media – such as newspapers, TV and radio – when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly? https://news.gallup. com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx

## Trust in the US media has remained largely stable over time[31]

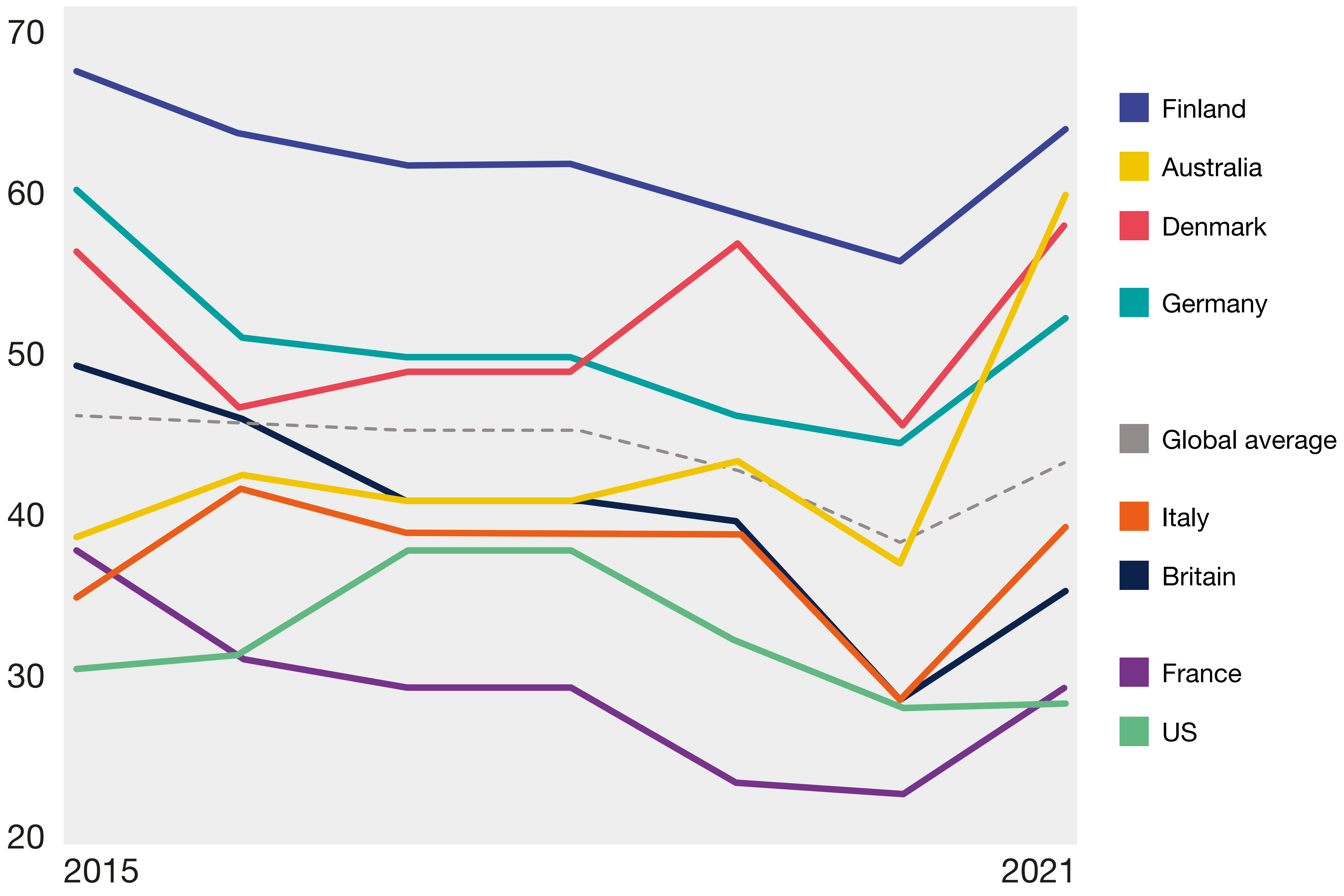
Further, data from Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism again shows that trust in 'most news' is stable over time in several markets around the world over the past 5+ years. If anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a recent increase in the value of reliably sourced information which in some cases has the potential to even improve trust.

Although the question is phrased differently in the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor (where the global picture remains one of stability), the data does show an increase in media trustworthiness in certain countries since 2019. This includes some of the countries worst hit by COVID-19, e.g. Brazil (+10 points) and India (+9 points), and some countries commonly recognised for having a good response to COVID-19, e.g. South Korea (+ 4 points), Australia (+5 point).

## Trust in 'most news' has increased in many countries since the outset of COVID-19[32]

So why is there so little change? While the frequency and intensity with which we hear and read about populist movements and social and racial injustices has increased over the last

# 'I think you can trust most news most of the time' (% agreement)




**Source:** Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Agreement ratings for the statement 'I think you can trust most news most of the time.' https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/06/28/trust-in-the-media-has-increased-in-the-past-year

decade or so[33], these events are not new. Mark Duggan was killed by police (2011), sparking the London riots, and the #metoo movement following Harvey Weinstein's arrest in 2017 preceded the #BLM movement. There have been populist presidents before (Jair Bolsonaro elected 2018 and Viktor Orban 2010). The world and news media has been divided for a long time, recent turbulence and divisions are likely to be seen as a continuation rather than something new and they haven't been enough to impact trustworthiness in the media.

Similarly, social media companies were not without their issues too. In 2018 Christopher Wylie, a former Cambridge Analytica employee, disclosed that they had used data harvested by Facebook without user-consent for political advertising. The data was allegedly used to affect the outcome of the 2016 US election and 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK.

Perspective is key. The very nature of the news and current affairs is to focus on the here and now. Social media can polarise and intensify debate, often generating more heat than light. It is easy to get caught up in this and believe that trust in the media is at a critically low point, but in truth, trust in the media has been poor for a very long time. While it is tempting to say that trustworthiness in the media and social media is facing rapidly changing circumstances right now, the reality is that they can't get much worse and seem to be reluctant, right now, to make the kind of radical changes to improve things. These low trustworthiness levels should be of great concern for both those involved in the media and social media alike. However, for those involved in the media the immediacy of the issue is likely to be less intense because it's been the reality for a long time.

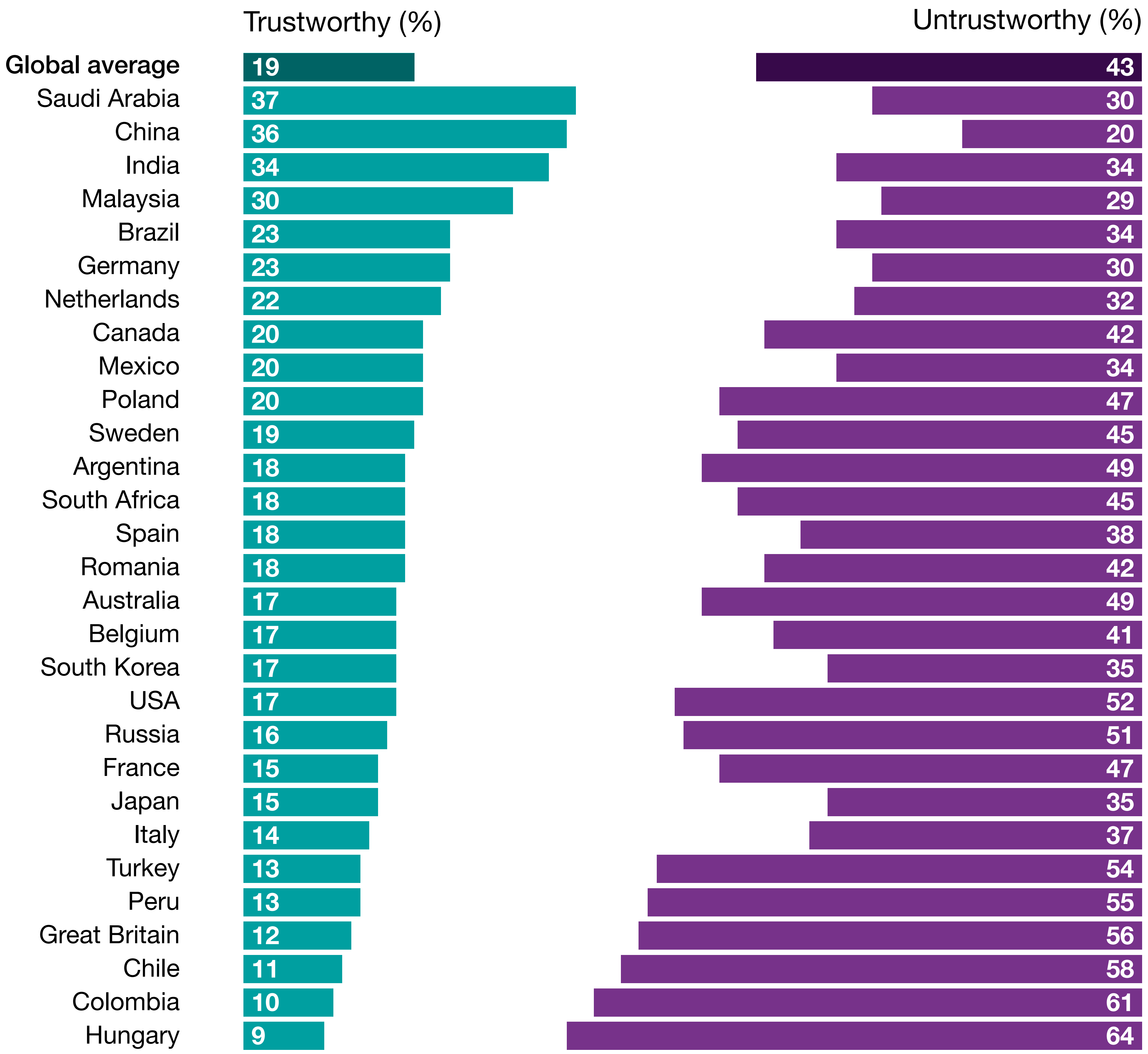
While low trustworthiness among social media companies is unlikely to be anything new, the tone of the wider debate about misinformation and fake news has changed. The fundamental lack of trust in both sectors is likely to be the result of a lack of regulation and oversight.

## What differences are visible between countries?

The data shows that the perceived trustworthiness of the media is low in countries with free press, including the US (17%) and Great Britain (12%). Britons (12%) and Americans (20%) are among the least likely to think that the media is open and transparent about what it does (compared to 25% globally). Britons (57%) and Americans (54%) are also among the most likely to think that the press would take advantage of them if they could (compared to 43% globally).

Trust is higher in countries with state-controlled press which does not come

## Trustworthiness in media companies




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

under the same level of public scrutiny, notably Saudi Arabia and China (4th and 5th respectively on the CPJ list of most censored countries list[34]). People in Saudi (56%) and China (69%) are among the most likely to think that the press is good at what it does (compared to 34% globally). People in Saudi (49%) and China (54%) are also among the most likely to think that the press does what it does with the best of intentions (compared to 27% globally).

## Trust is higher in traditional news sources

Trust in media channels to provide accurate information about politics and current affairs is slightly higher for traditional sources such as printed newspapers (20%), online newspapers (21%), radio (21%), and television (22%), and lower for newer, less established, and lightly regulated sources such as social media (15%), video-sharing websites (15%), online blogs or forums (12%). Despite there being little difference in trust between the traditional news sources, usage varies quite significantly: printed newspapers (24%), radio (35%), online newspapers (43%), television (61%). Beyond trust, other factors such as price, and convenience are likely to dictate usage.

Trust is considerably higher amongst those using the media channels than those who are not. Those using traditional news sources (printed newspapers, radio, and television) are typically twice as likely to trust them as non-users. Those using new media sources (video-sharing websites and online blogs) are almost three times as likely to trust them.

## The young are more trusting and use more sources

Younger people (age 18-35) are more likely to use a mixture of traditional and new news sources: television (51%) and social media (50%). Older people (age 55-74) are far more likely to use traditional news sources: television (75%) and radio (44%) than they are to use new sources, such as social media (29%). Data from the UK from

Ofcom[35] shows that 18-34 year-olds are likely to use more news sources (an average of 7.4 sources in 2020, up from 6.9 in 2018) than those aged 55+ (who used on average 6.2 sources in 2020, unchanged from 2018). The young have adapted and learned to integrate the growing number of sources available to them into their news consumption habits.

Younger people are consistently more trusting of different media channels than older people, who have perhaps had more time to become more cynical and discerning, having lived through countless scandals and holding extra reference points for being let down. As people age it is perhaps unsurprising that they become less trusting of news sources.

## The young are more trusting and use more sources

| | Total | | | | 18-34yrs | | 35-54yrs | | 55+yrs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Printed newspapers | 24% | 20% | 34% | 16% | 19% | 24% | 24% | 18% | 31% | 15% |
| Online newspapers or news websites or apps | 43% | 21% | 24% | 19% | 39% | 28% | 45% | 19% | 46% | 12% |
| Radio | 35% | 21% | 32% | 16% | 28% | 25% | 37% | 20% | 44% | 17% |
| Television | 61% | 22% | 27% | 15% | 51% | 27% | 62% | 21% | 76% | 16% |
| Magazines | 11% | 13% | 31% | 11% | 11% | 16% | 11% | 12% | 12% | 8% |
| Social media | 41% | 15% | 22% | 9% | 50% | 20% | 40% | 13% | 28% | 7% |
| Video sharing websites | 16% | 15% | 28% | 12% | 19% | 20% | 16% | 14% | 11% | 6% |
| Online blogs or forums | 12% | 12% | 26% | 10% | 14% | 17% | 13% | 11% | 8% | 5% |
| Colleagues, friends or family face-to-face | 33% | 27% | 38% | 21% | 34% | 31% | 33% | 26% | 33% | 21% |
| Colleagues, friends or family via private messages | 29% | 23% | 36% | 18% | 32% | 29% | 28% | 22% | 25% | 14% |

Use media source | Trust media source | Trust media source (regular user of that media source) | Trust media source (non-regular users of that media source)

**Q:** Below is a list of different media channels. To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of these to provide you with accurate information about politics and current affairs? And which of the following, if any, do you use regularly as sources of news and information? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor. Sample size: 21,503 Fieldwork dates: 25/06/21-09/07/21

## Education impacts trust in traditional media

There are also differences according to education levels. Those with a higher level of education are more trusting of traditional media sources such as printed newspapers and the radio than those with lower education. Those with a higher educational background are likely more engaged with the media and more confident in their abilities to discern whether a media source is credible or not. In contrast, there is little difference in trust in newer media sources such as social media and online blogs between those with lower and higher levels of education.

Ipsos research carried out on behalf of Google also shows that, those with higher levels of education are more motivated in taking responsibility to improve their ability to identify and recognise false information sources.[27] Those with a high level of education attainment (63%) are far more interested in participating in learning about how to use tools to distinguish between true and false information online in the future than those with low education (44%).

## Looking forward

The mainstream media is largely trusted by those who use it regularly. The key here is for the major traditional news channels to secure their revenue model. The Australian 'New Media Bargaining Code' for example, is a law designed to make large technology platforms that operate in Australia pay local news publishers for the news content made available or linked to on their platforms. This could be adopted and adapted more widely. The media should focus on its core strength, being good at what it does, while mitigating against problems – especially the idea that the media has an agenda (and is taking advantage of users and manipulating them). More balanced coverage will help with both counts.

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasised the importance of good journalism and trusted news sources. Trust is at the core of the media, and traditional, regulated media has an advantage - as social media has shown (very publicly) that they are unable, or perhaps even

**“The media should focus on its core strength, being good at what it does, while mitigating against problems – especially the idea that the media has an agenda (and is taking advantage of users and manipulating them). More balanced coverage will help with both counts.”**

to some extent unwilling to deal with fake news and misinformation. For all the added competition and disruption new technology brings, traditional media has its place (the BBC is the world’s oldest broadcaster and still the largest broadcaster by number of employees). The Times (1785) and the Guardian (1821), published in the UK, are among the world’s oldest newspapers, adapting to the internet age by adopting different paid-for methods online to maintain readership.

In comparison, social media has the monopoly on speed, connectivity, and network reach. We have explained how social media companies have an enormous task on their hands if they are going to become a trusted source of information, if they are to be trusted as a news source. In a world of ever-diminishing attention spans, making an outlandish unsupported statement, presenting a polarised opinion, and turning productive debate into argument are all ways to attract attention. However, these all threaten trust. To restore trust, companies will need to do more to help fact-check and take responsibility for the content on their sites. We have seen there is an appetite among consumers themselves to have more knowledge on how to separate truth from falsehood and companies can show support here. Social media companies need to present more balance in their reporting and less reliance on clickbait. They should take measures to prevent debate escalating into abuse and trolling, and act against users that engage in this behaviour. People do not think social media companies are responsible and do not think they do what they do with good intentions – so there is an opportunity for a company to lead the way here.

To find out more, please contact:
**carl.phillips@ipsos.com**
**tom.cox@ipsos.com**

# TECHLASH CONTINUES

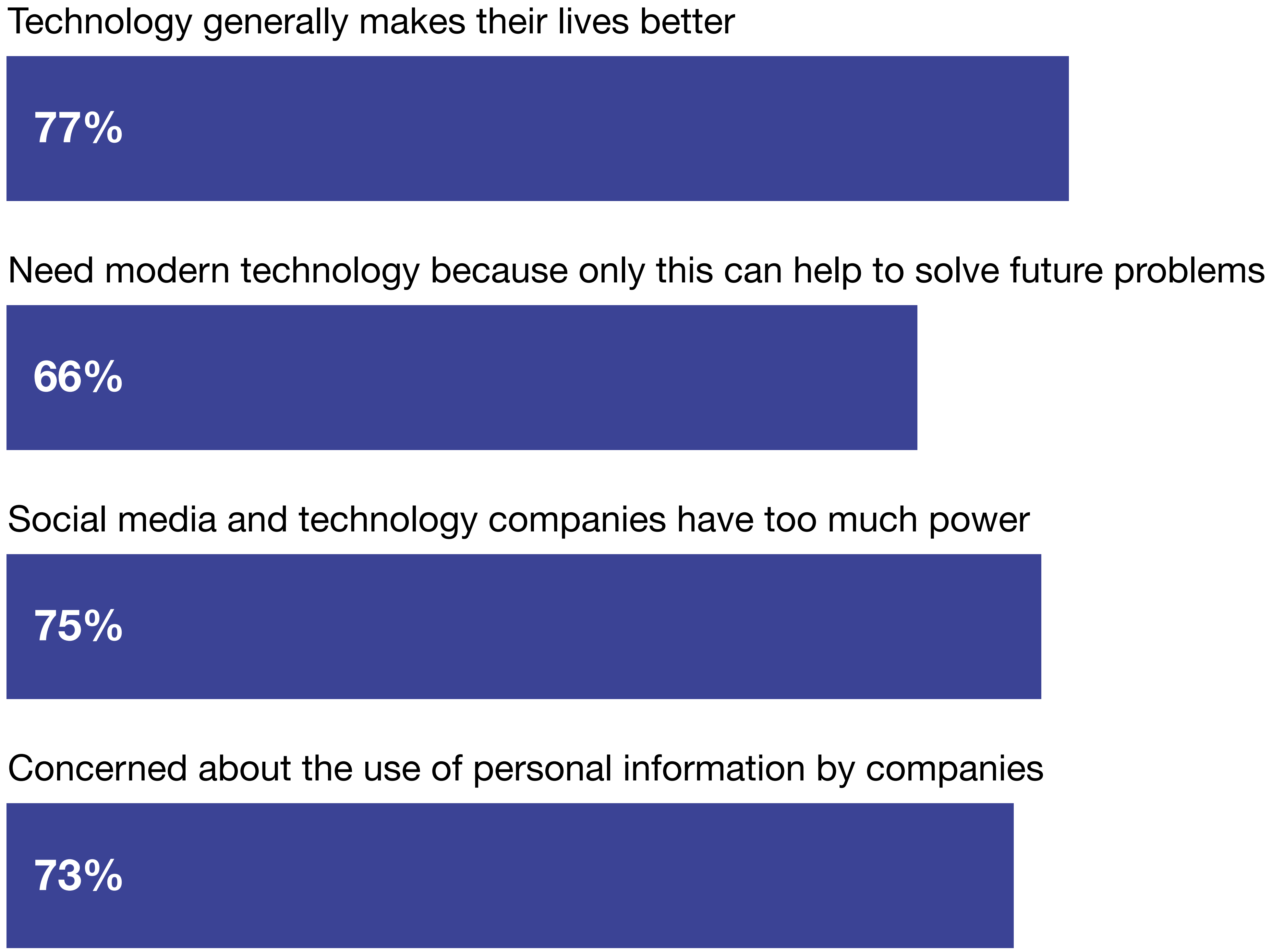
**For years the technology industry was the world's most trusted industry. Technology companies held the top spots of trust ratings and the industry as a whole was far ahead of all others.**

In 2019's Trust: The Truth report, technology companies were 17 points ahead of the average of other industries, now they are just nine points ahead. However, in recent years, the phenomena of 'techlash' has begun to eat away at trust in the industry, in part due to its association with social media. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic which forced millions of people to change the way they work. Technology was a main enabler of the shift to working from home, but would it pay off in increased trustworthiness?

The answer is "no". Trustworthiness in the technology industry continues to regress toward the mean of other industries, and social media the least trusted industry of all.

While a large portion of the world was leveraging technology to keep their careers and livelihoods going during the pandemic, the psychological push and pull between people's reliance on technology and their confidence in technology to keep their data safe persists. A vast majority of people globally (77%) say that technology makes their lives better, and fully two-thirds (66%) say that we need modern technology because only technological innovation can help to solve future problems. But a vast majority (75%) also say that social media and

## People are conflicted about the role of technology in their lives



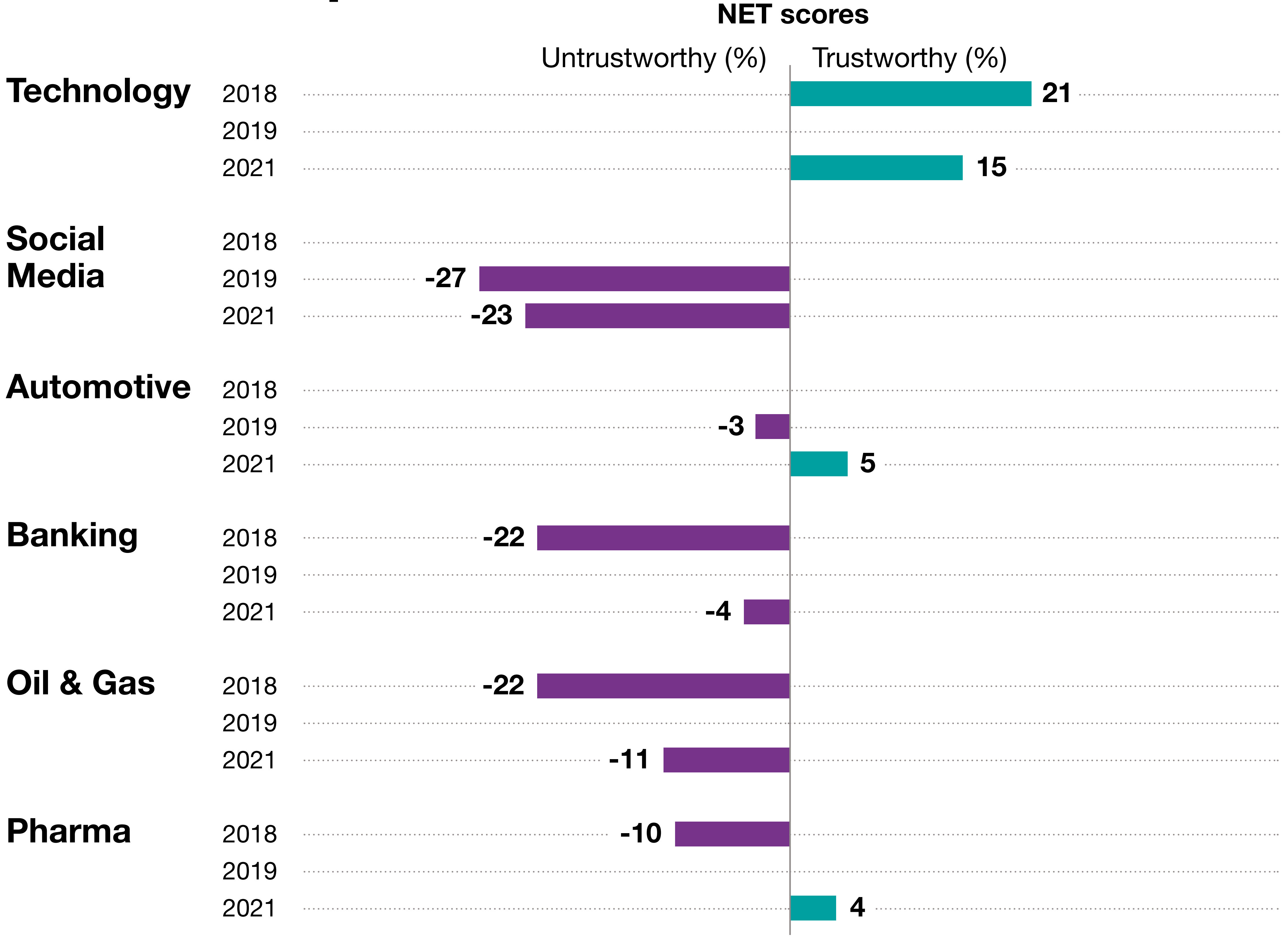

**Source:** Ipsos Global Trends: 22,114 adults aged 16-74 across 32 countries, interviewed June – July 2019 technology companies have too much power and that they are concerned (73%) about how their information is collected and used.

The everyday relationship with technology and the innovations that make technology so integrated with what people do and how they interact, has also driven people to question how that data is used – only 35% globally say they have a good idea how much personal data companies hold about them and only 33% say they know their rights over the way companies handle their data. The push/pull of our dependence on technology on one hand and our distrust of technology on the other leads to cognitive dissonance and internal conflicts.

The competing forces that affect trust in the technology sector is evident in the perceived trustworthiness of the industry over time. Net trustworthiness has increased over the last two years for every industry except technology. And while trust in social media has increased, this is from an extremely low base of trust – when you're standing at the bottom of a well, every direction is up.

Social media companies are less trusted than any other industry. While time and the COVID-19 pandemic have served to rehabilitate the reputations of the banking (+8) and pharmaceuticals (+6) industries; social media languishes in net negative trustworthiness.

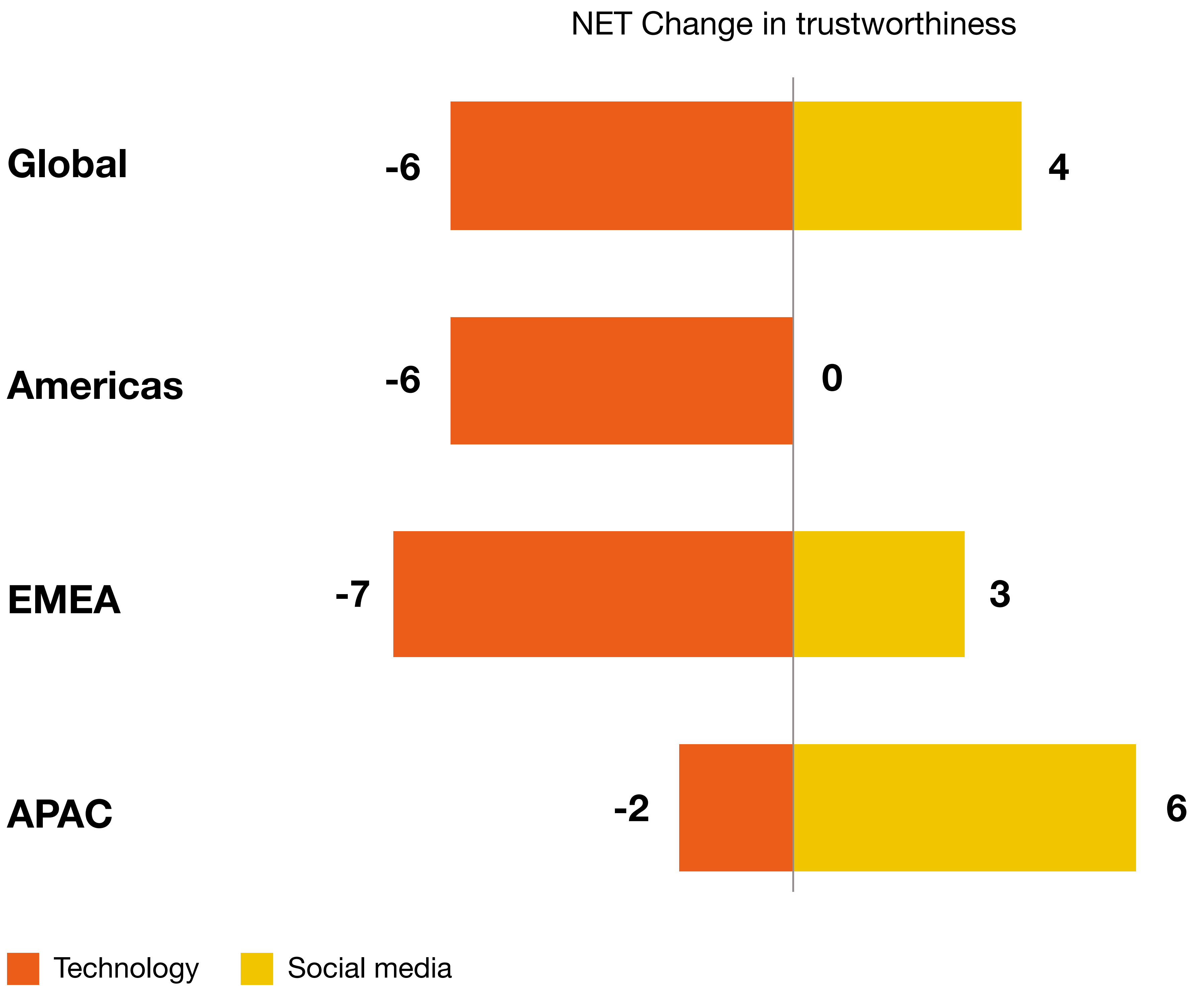
## Trust in technology has declined while other industries improved




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

**In recent years, the phenomena of 'techlash' has begun to eat away at trust in the industry, in part due to its association with social media**

# The technology industry has been falling while social media has been holding steady or improving slightly




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

Active untrustworthiness of social media companies is nearly double active trustworthiness. The net decrease in the trustworthiness of the technology industry can be seen across regions with significant decreases across the board, except APAC.

It is important to note that this study does not stand in isolation – the results from the Ipsos Global Reputation Monitor from 2020 shows the same pattern with APAC being more forgiving than other regions. Technology is beginning to look like other industries with net trust remaining above others but regressing to the mean. The data at hand is not the only indication of this regression as our Ipsos Global Reputation Monitor shows the same trend. The likeliest explanation is that people are becoming increasingly sensitive to, and uncertain about, how the data collected by these companies is used, alongside ongoing concerns about misinformation and harmful content online.

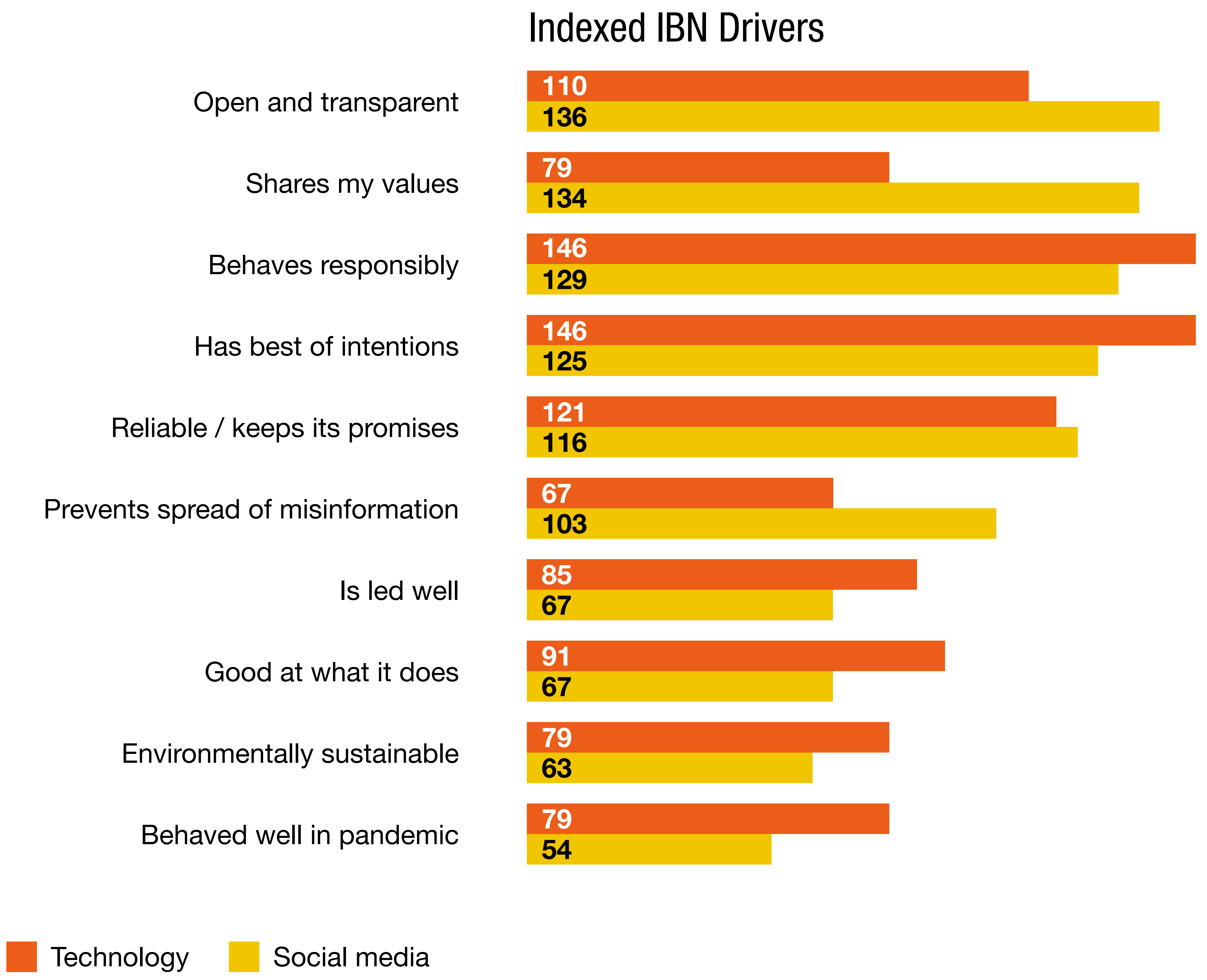
The lack of perceived trustworthiness of social media companies is very personal, while the regression of technology companies to the mean is more external. The drivers of trustworthiness in social media companies differ significantly from technology companies. Drivers of trust in social media funnel through “shares my values” which is a very personal measure of a company’s performance.

On the other hand, acting responsibly and acting with good intentions are the funnels for trust in technology companies. While these are also "softer" measures, they are very much focused on the activity of companies rather than how that company aligns with personal beliefs (like shared values). The nature of social media makes the relationship with the companies more visceral, and the low trustworthiness ratings reflect the sense of violation that people feel when they feel that these companies do not align with their values.

In more detail, behaving responsibly and acting with the best of intentions are important for both technology companies and social media companies; but they are the top drivers for technology companies. The importance of shared values is clearly demonstrated for social media companies as it is the second most important driver (and is the gatekeeper for the other metrics per the slide to the right). Social media is also held to higher scrutiny than technology companies when it comes to the spread of false information. The trustworthiness of technology companies is driven much more by core business metrics like being well-led and being good at what it does. Technology companies also get more credit for, and derive more good will from, their reaction to COVID-19 than social media companies.

The relatively higher trustworthiness of technology companies is due to

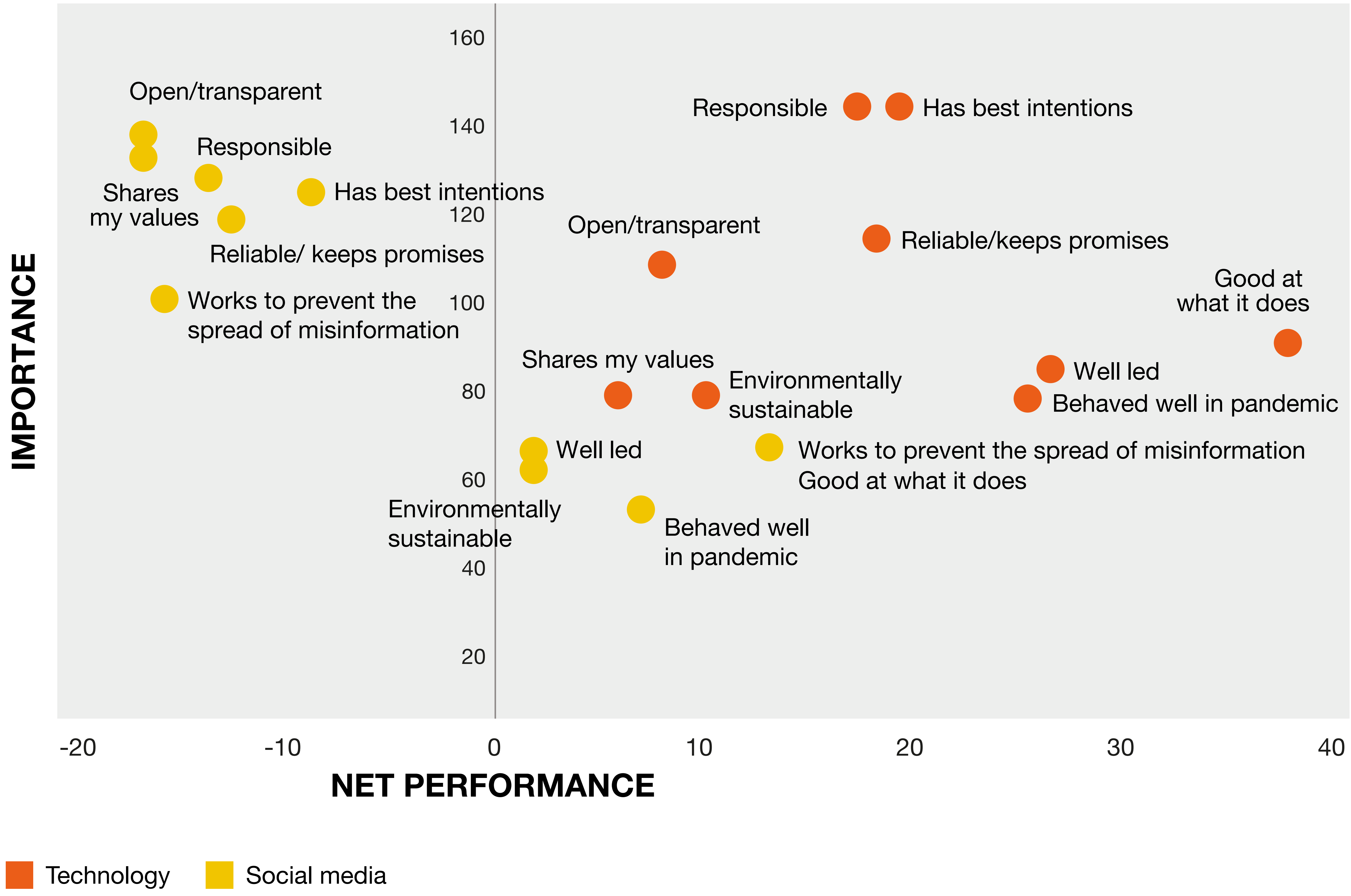
## Drivers of trust in social media focus on values and transparency




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

## Social media has important weaknesses

Indexed IBN Driver Importance vs Performance on Drivers




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

their higher scores on the underlying image metrics compared to social media companies. Technology companies have moderate scores on the image metrics that matter the most – acting with good intentions and being responsible. The biggest strengths of technology companies (being good at what it does, well led, and reaction to COVID-19) are less relevant. Technology companies need to utilise their strengths to improve their weaknesses by drawing an explicit connection between the two. Social media companies on the other hand receive very poor (net negative) scores on each of the image metrics that matter most to driving trust. This is perhaps not surprising given the very low trustworthiness scores of social media companies. The items that matter most are the ones where social media has the least traction. Social media companies either need an overhaul of their business model or need a way to change the conversation.

From the technology industry perspective, being proactive could mean strengthening self-regulation and working with policy makers on solutions that protect consumers while enabling technology companies to compete on an even playing field. A crisis of trust for one company could have a cascading effect on the entire Internet-based technology industry, and no enterprise can be immune from it. From the perspective of individual enterprises, they must be clear that users care not only about actual security, but also about the perception of security. Social media companies have a more challenging road ahead, as they need to not only convince users of their bona fides as it relates to data security, but also about the values they hold as a company.

The decline of trustworthiness in technology companies (and the struggles of the social media industry) should serve as a cautionary tale for all companies. In the information age, almost all companies can be called data companies to some extent. Many companies collect and analyse users' data in business operations to understand their preferences to provide more targeted and personalised services. A vast majority (86%) of the senior corporate communicators in our Reputation Council expect Techlash to impact their own company in some way in the future. These Reputation Council members say that there are two keys to dealing with Techlash. The first is to be proactive – companies need to stop playing catch up both in terms of policy and communication. Second, companies need to increase their transparency. Companies as a whole need to be more transparent about how consumer data is used and what protections are in place. As previously noted, the vast majority of consumers have no idea how their information is used or what protections they have – an information vacuum is dangerous and can easily be filled by groups spreading disinformation and unwarranted anxiety. Consumers would likely be less concerned if they understood the lengths that companies go to protect their data, which would in turn inoculate companies against the declines in trustworthiness currently being experienced by the technology industry.

**“The vast majority of consumers have no idea how their information is used or what protections they have”**

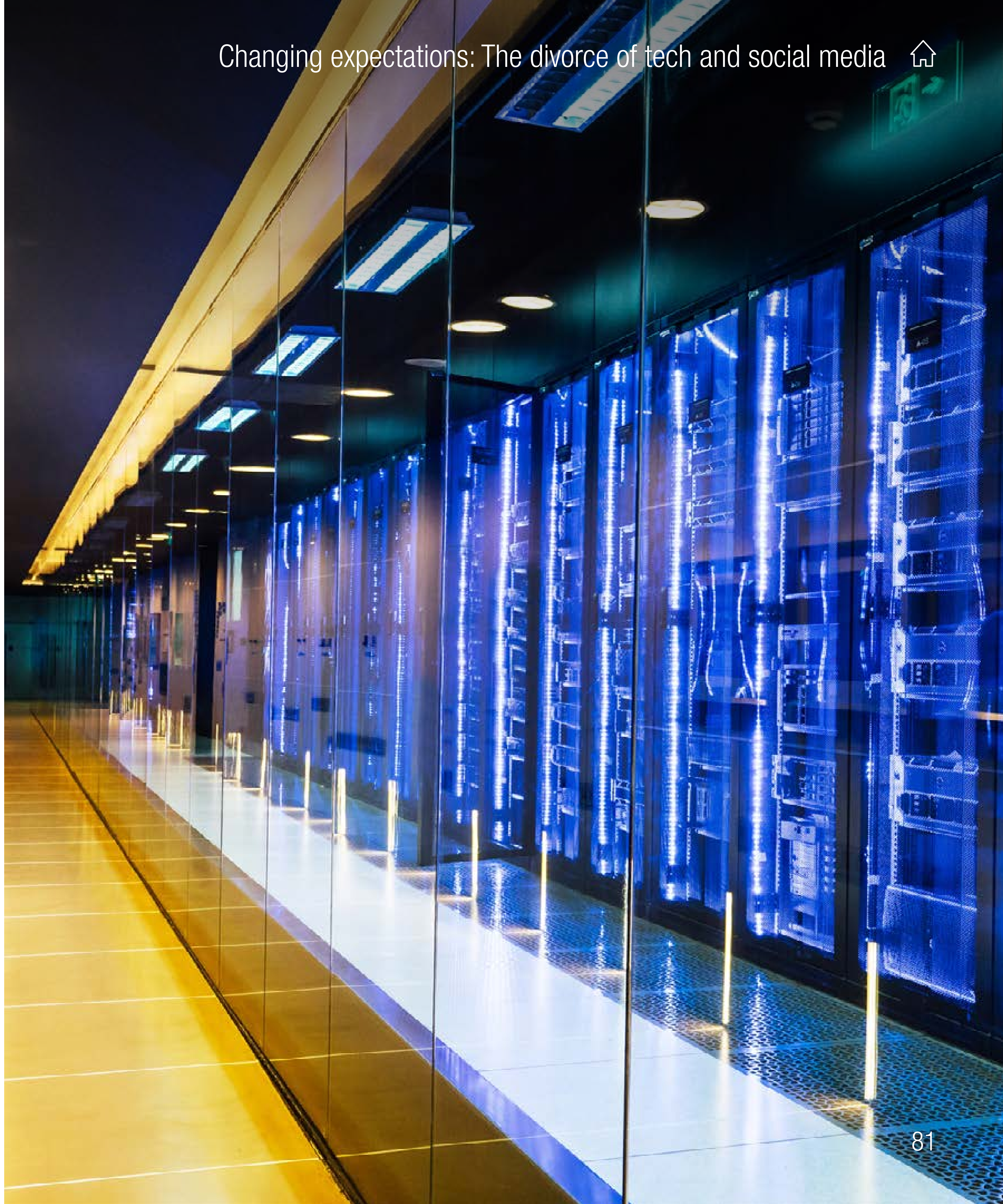
To find out more, please contact:
**trent.ross@ipsos.com**

# CHANGING EXPECTATIONS: THE DIVORCE OF TECH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**The 'tech sector' is now a concept so broad that it has begun to lose definition and identity, creating confusion as to how the brands within it link together. This is causing problems for anyone trying to understand how the issues facing the sector and the companies within it interact.**

For most industry sectors the interplay between the major players and sector is close, clearly delineated and united around common products or services and sector issues. But within the tech sector, while core issues like data protection are near universal, many of the secondary issues and daily customer experiences differ wildly. Google's products and services are very different to Microsoft's, which in turn are very different to Twitch's. And that is before you start comparing them against B2B, SaaS and hardware companies. The poorly defined "boundaries" of what it means to be "a tech company" make discussions about the sector increasingly complicated.

One of the biggest sub-categories within tech is social media. Certainly, ten years ago most people would have agreed that social media companies, like Facebook or YouTube, were major players in the tech sector. But, as social media has grown, the differences between the companies in that space and others in the wider tech sector has increased and trying to apply the same judgement criteria used for the tech sector to social

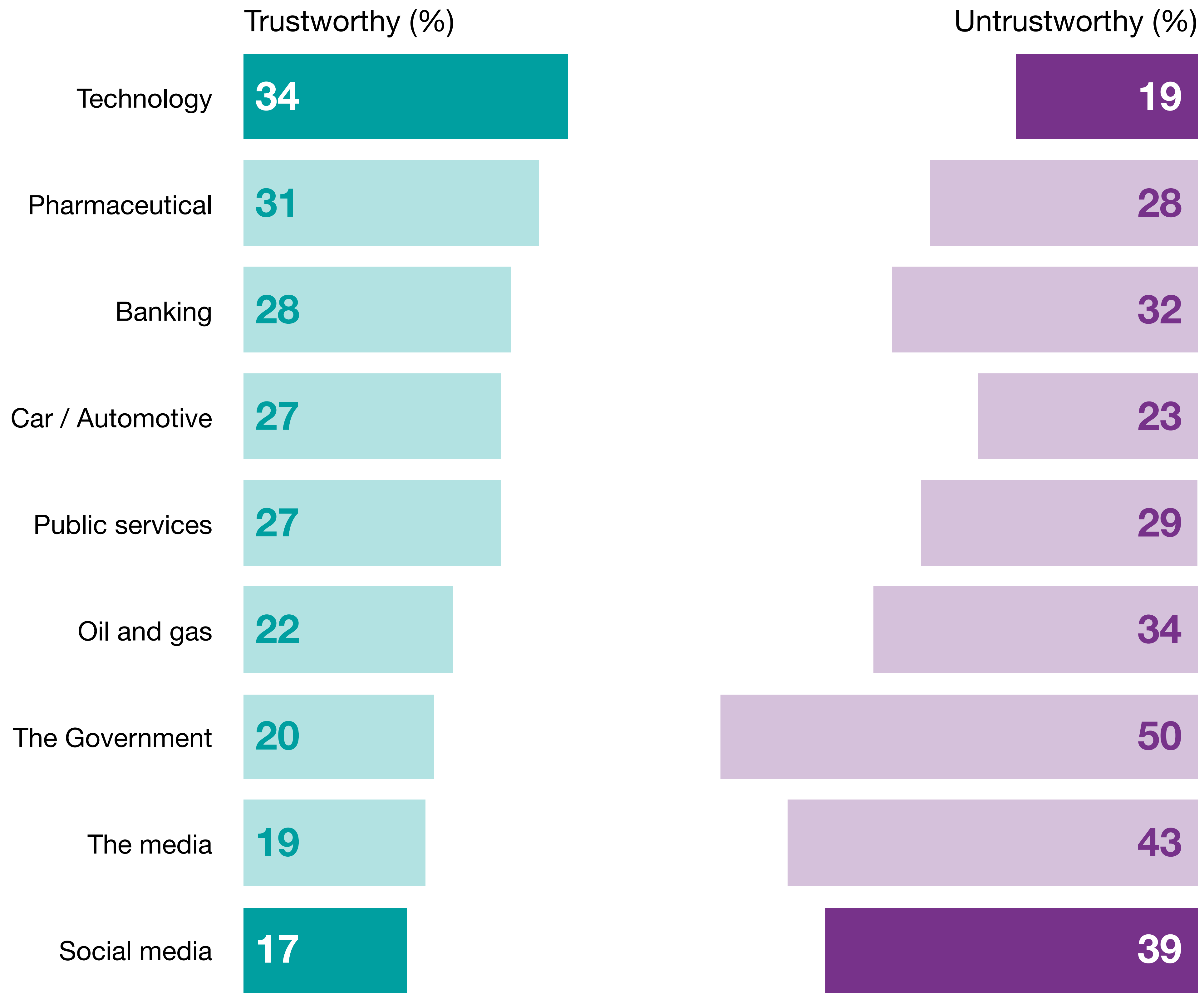


media companies is increasingly problematic. This is because the public judge tech and social media according to different criteria and trust them in different ways and at different levels. Bucketing them into one sector causes problems in understanding the basic nature and driving principles of both, which makes planning and strategy substantially harder. The way forward for communicators within the sector must be to separate social media from tech and establish it as a sector in its own right with as much space between them as possible.

Data from the 2021 Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor clearly shows the gulf in overall trustworthiness levels between the two. On one hand you have tech, seen as the most trustworthy of the sectors measured and one of only three sectors measured with higher levels of trustworthiness than untrustworthiness. On the other you have social media, with the lowest trustworthiness rating of the sectors measured and with untrustworthiness far outstripping its trustworthiness. That said, both the mainstream media and the Government, as sectors, attract higher untrustworthy ratings than social media.

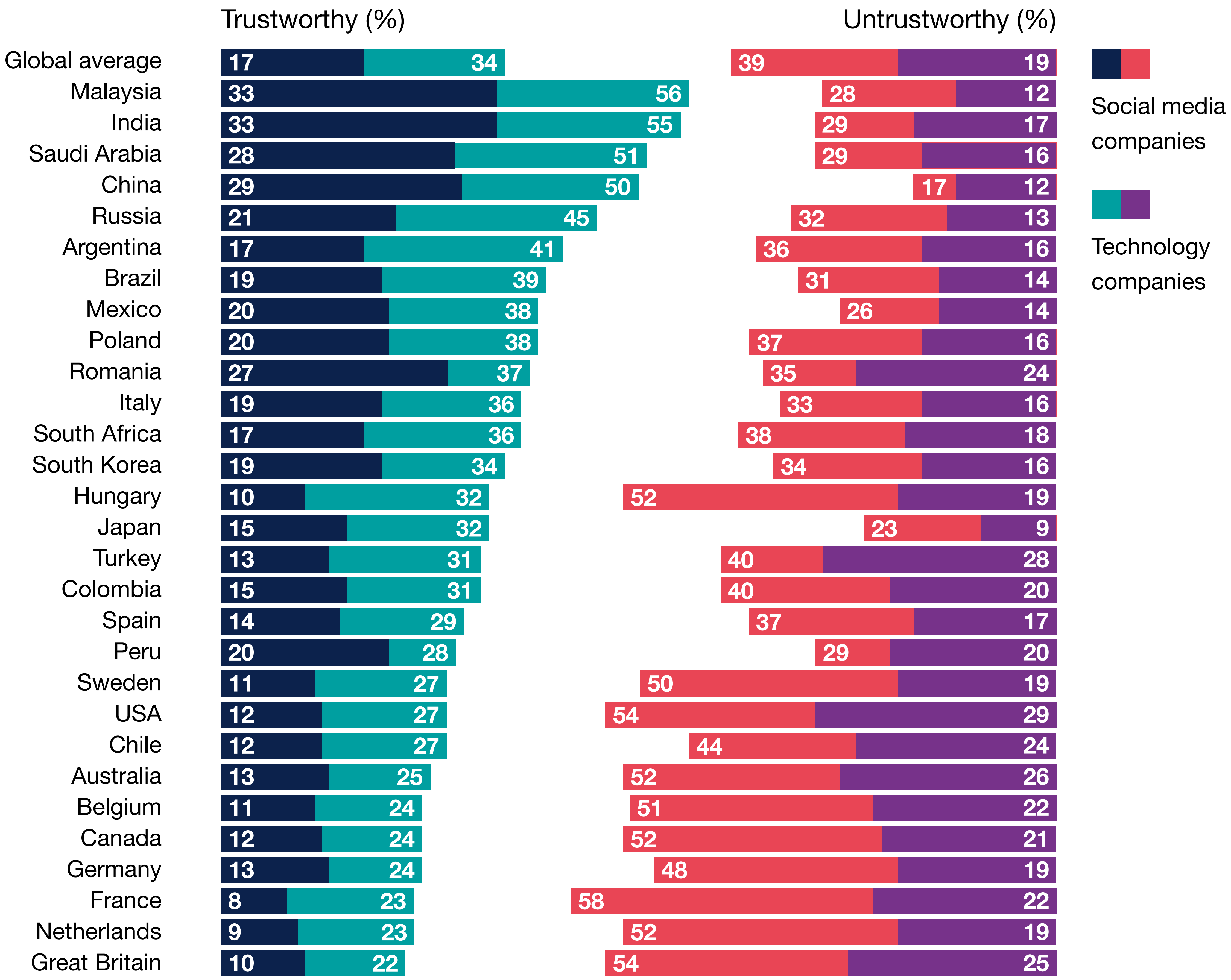
Looking at the variation in trustworthiness levels across the world shows that this pattern is the same globally, with tech rated as far more trustworthy than social media.

## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

# Trustworthiness by country




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

Malaysia and India rate both sectors highest on trustworthiness, closely followed by China, while Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands rate both the lowest. As a general pattern, countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America are more likely than the rest to see these sectors as trustworthy in absolute terms (although the gap between the sectors is constant), while Western Europe is the least. Italy is the most trusting of the Western European countries, in the top half for both sectors. This pattern is long established – the West is increasingly worried about the major issues plaguing the tech and social media sectors, from data privacy through to fake news and misinformation, while Eastern markets are less concerned and focus more on product experience. This is not a difference of opinion as much as a lag – many of the major APAC markets are now engaging with these issues in the same way as the West. Japan and Korea, for instance, have both introduced legislation to curb the power of big tech, and both have strengthened the power of regulatory agencies to prevent further abuses.

While the problems facing the social media sector are common knowledge, from issues of fake news and misinformation through to user privacy and child safety, it is not as though the wider tech sector has escaped scrutiny on many of these same issues. Given the blurred lines that separate the tech

**While the problems facing the social media sector are common knowledge, from issues of fake news and misinformation through to user privacy and child safety, it is not as though the wider tech sector has escaped scrutiny on many of these same issues**

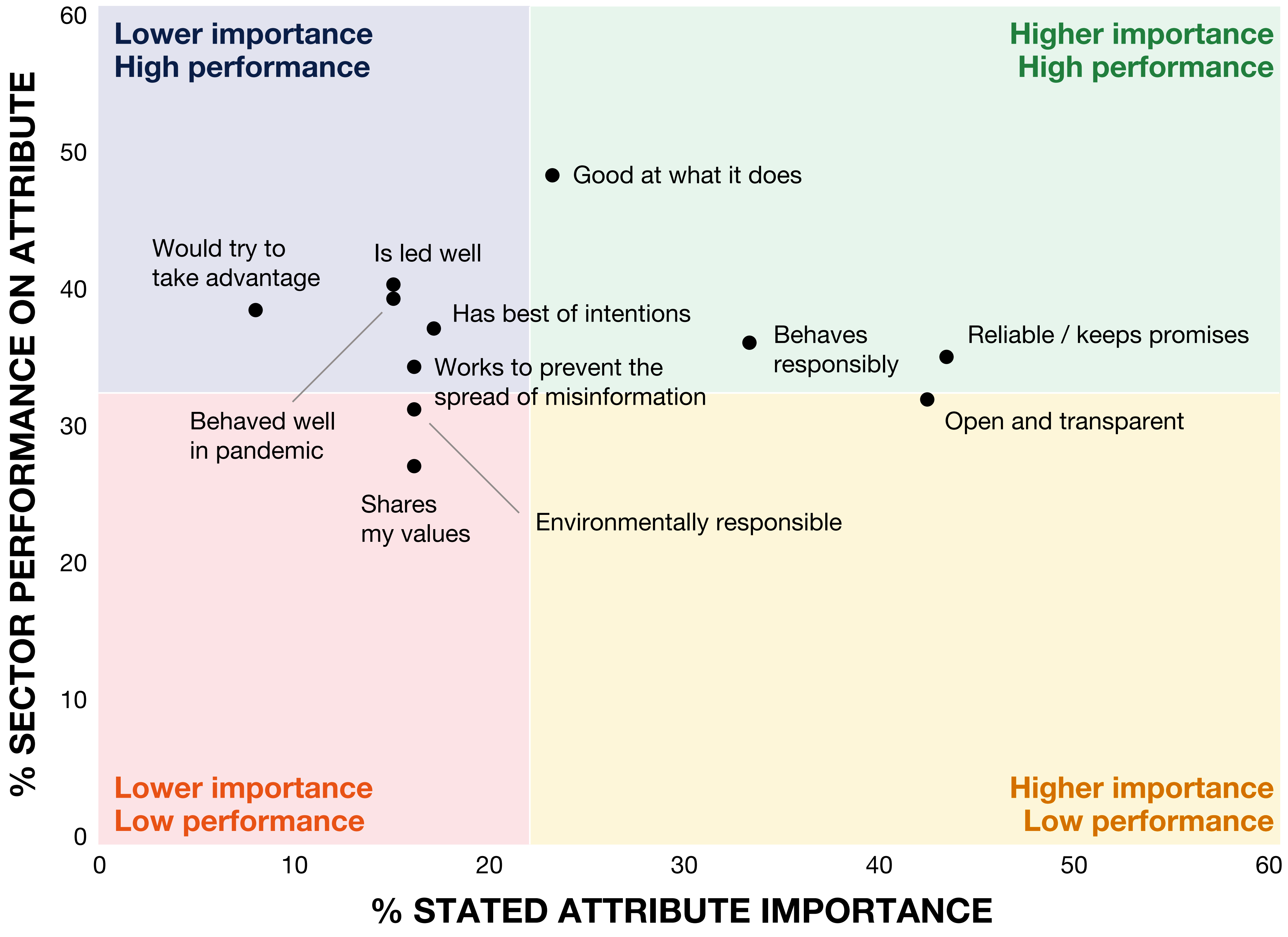
and social media sectors, especially when several of the major players in the sector straddle both, the difference in trustworthiness between the two is a little surprising. While the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor lacks the detail to probe into the specific issues each sector faces, looking across the drivers of trustworthiness and mapping their stated importance with how each sector performs on those metrics goes a long way to explain the differences between the two sectors.

The tech sector performs strongly, above the mean, on eight of the eleven key drivers of trustworthiness that the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor identifies as critical to the understanding of sector level trustworthiness. More importantly, on three of the four metrics tech performs strongly, especially on the metric linked to the sector's historical core strength of product excellence – "is good at what it does". Furthermore, the sector is also seen as reliable, responsible, well led and with good intentions. It is no wonder the tech sector performs so strongly on trustworthiness globally with these kind of ratings.

In contrast to tech, social media performs strongly on three of the trustworthiness metrics although one of them, being well led, is a negative. Consumers are prepared to accept that the social media sector is well led and good at what it does, its core functional competence. But the fact the sector is perceived to perform poorly on three of the four top drivers

## Global trust drivers mapped - technology companies

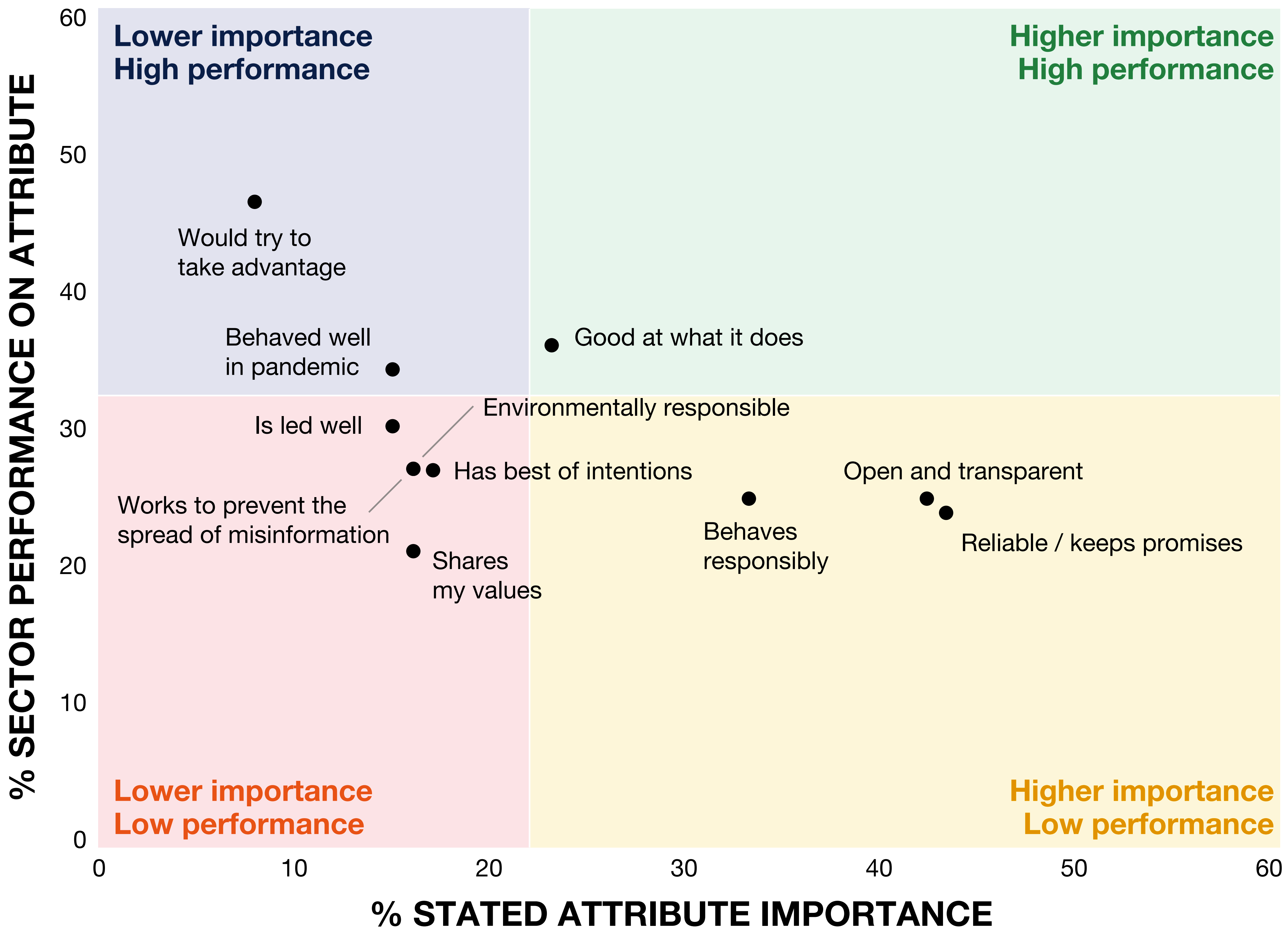
### Driver importance vs performance on drivers




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## Global trust drivers mapped - social media companies

### Driver importance vs performance on drivers




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

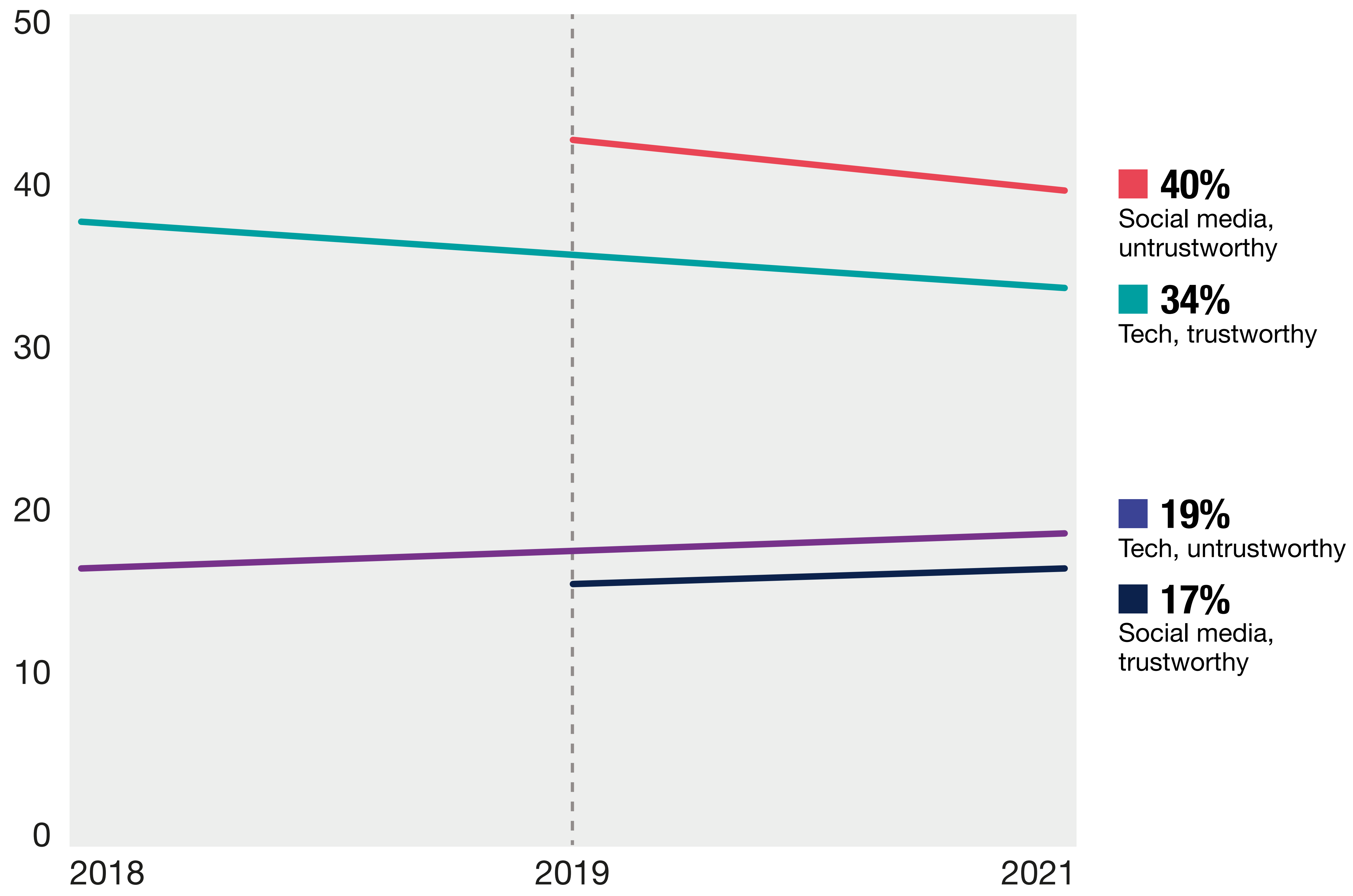
of trustworthiness is a major problem for the sector to overcome and a clear explanation why social media is seen as less trustworthy than the tech sector.

While the attribute "would try and take advantage of me it could" is the least impactful of the metrics measured, the differences between the two sectors here encapsulate the divergence between the two. While two fifths (38%) of consumers agree that the tech sector would try and take advantage of them if it could, that is more than balanced out by the sector's strong performance elsewhere. The same cannot be said for the social media sector. For them, the fact that nearly half (46%) of consumers think that the social media sector would try and take advantage of them if it could stands out, as the sector is not rated positively on other metrics in a way that might mitigate it. This is despite tech and social media arguably having the same underlying problems that could drive this metric – the mass collection and use of user data.

Thinking about the common issues facing both sectors, and how these issues are seen as increasingly prevalent over the last couple of years, it is valuable to look at how perceptions of both sectors have changed. While the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor goes back to 2018, it is still enough to show that overall trustworthiness in tech has fallen while untrustworthiness has risen. While neither change is huge, it does show that perceptions of the tech sector have a certain trajectory. It is interesting therefore to see that trustworthiness in social media is static over the last twelve months, while untrustworthiness has fallen. This is despite the plethora of challenges faced by social media over this time, largely in the area of fake news, misinformation and hate speech, that wider tech has largely avoided.

Looking at the changes across the detailed trustworthiness drivers, it looks as though the social media sector should be suffering more – there have been statistically significant falls across four of the driver metrics, including three of the most important top four. Similarly surprising, given its overall fall in trustworthiness, is the finding that tech is getting worse on only three of the main drivers, two of which (being well led, and not taking advantage of users) are relatively less important to the trustworthiness model. While it may well be the case that, if we had trends going back a decade or more, we could see the fall in trustworthiness in social media starting several years ago and now know that there is little left for social media to lose, despite a fall across the main drivers. Tech on the other hand still retains, to a greater or lesser extent, much of the same cachet that it did a decade ago, so has further to fall once metrics start changing for the worse.

## Global trustworthiness/untrustworthiness over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

**Looking ahead at the issues tech and social media face, and the increasingly significant differences between the two in trust performance, to continue to try and bucket them together is misleading and unhelpful. The differences between the two are significant, a fact that communicators and brand strategists need to understand and adapt to going forward. Trying to position a social media company as a tech firm isn't going to work. In fact, the sector that most closely resembles social media is the mainstream media sector, with which it shares a range of common issues.**

Looking across both sectors, while it is clear where many companies fall once you start dividing them up across these new sector boundaries, there are exceptions. Google, and to a lesser extent Microsoft, fall across both sectors. Both are primarily tech, but both also own major social media platforms in the form of YouTube and LinkedIn. The same is true from the other direction, Facebook, now Meta, is so dominant across its multiple platforms that it could be regarded as the brand that is primarily responsible for driving its sector's image, but it is also expanding into SaaS and B2B software provision. How the parent company's brands are affected by their sub-brands presence in another sector remains to be seen, but the lengths taken by all the main firms to make their sub-brands stand separate from the parent brand (except on investor calls) indicates that the risks of brands cross-contamination are already being factored in. For instance, Google, a tech firm, will want to avoid being judged against criteria and expectations more commonly applied to YouTube, a social media one. Clarity of brand positioning, as the two sectors diverge, is going to be critical over the coming years for those companies exposed to both sides of it.

To find out more, please contact:
**carl.phillips@ipsos.com**

# OIL & GAS: EXCEEDING LOW EXPECTATIONS

**COVID-19 restrictions placed on everyday life, including lockdowns and international travel bans, greatly reduced both domestic and international travel around the world. For many it meant putting a pause on commuting, and instead working from home or going to school online. Some businesses have had to re-think and localize the logistics of their supply chains. With the world seemingly on pause for much of 2020 and 2021 the demand and cost of oil subsequently fell.[36]**

Beyond the pandemic, the public was exposed to – either lived through or via screen – a notable increase in 'freak' weather phenomena, in the form of flash floods, brutal heatwaves, and wildfires. For many, it felt like climate change was no longer coming - it had already arrived.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, oil and gas companies, responsible for the majority of global emissions,[37] have found themselves under ever-increasing scrutiny and opposition. Climate protests have become more common among organised groups such as Extinction Rebellion in the UK, and the build-up to international events such as COP26 have gained extensive mainstream media coverage (although the event itself took place after 2021 fieldwork was conducted). The media narrative has escalated from talking about the world facing climate change to a 'climate crisis.' But at the same time, this period has seen a series of announcements and strategy pivots, (e.g. Shell and BP announcing net-zero targets, Total re-branding to Total Energy) through which the major, global extractive businesses have aimed to communicate what they are doing to transition to greener energy and keep planetary warning at levels compliant with international climate frameworks.

Against this backdrop, Ipsos asks, how have levels of trustworthiness in oil and gas companies changed over the last two years?

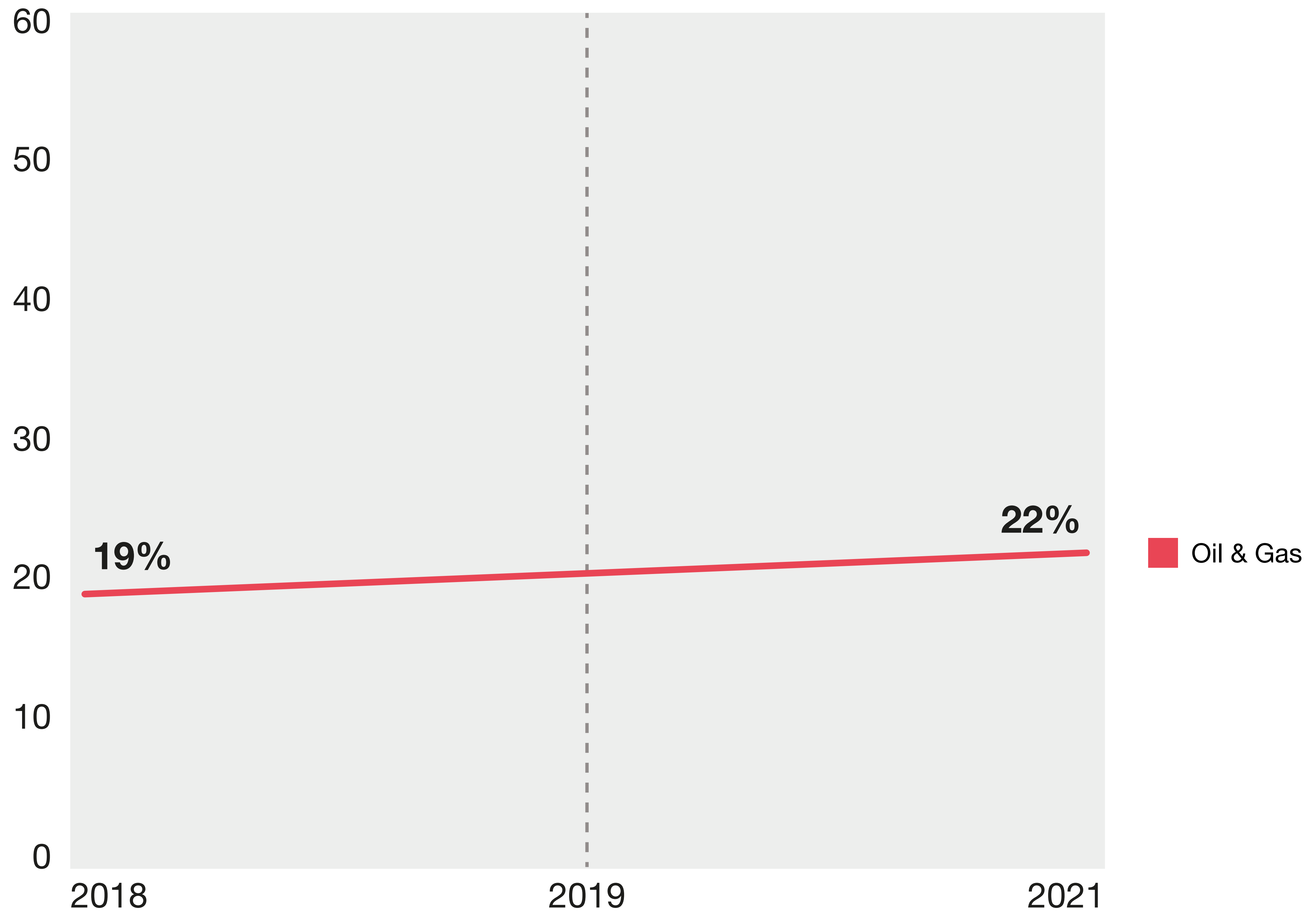
# Oil and gas companies are widely documented as being among those contributing most to rising carbon levels

## How has trustworthiness changed?

It may come as a surprise that the share of the public who feel that oil and gas companies are trustworthy has improved +3 points since 2018. Ipsos data suggests there has been a “business bounce” on trust: since the COVID-19 pandemic, all industry sectors except for technology are perceived as being more trustworthy. Oil and gas started from a particularly low point with more room to manoeuvre up and very little to fall further down. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that trust is judged on actual behaviour against predicted behaviour. The increase in trustworthiness among oil and gas companies may be because they are performing better than anticipated against a set of expectations already set very low.

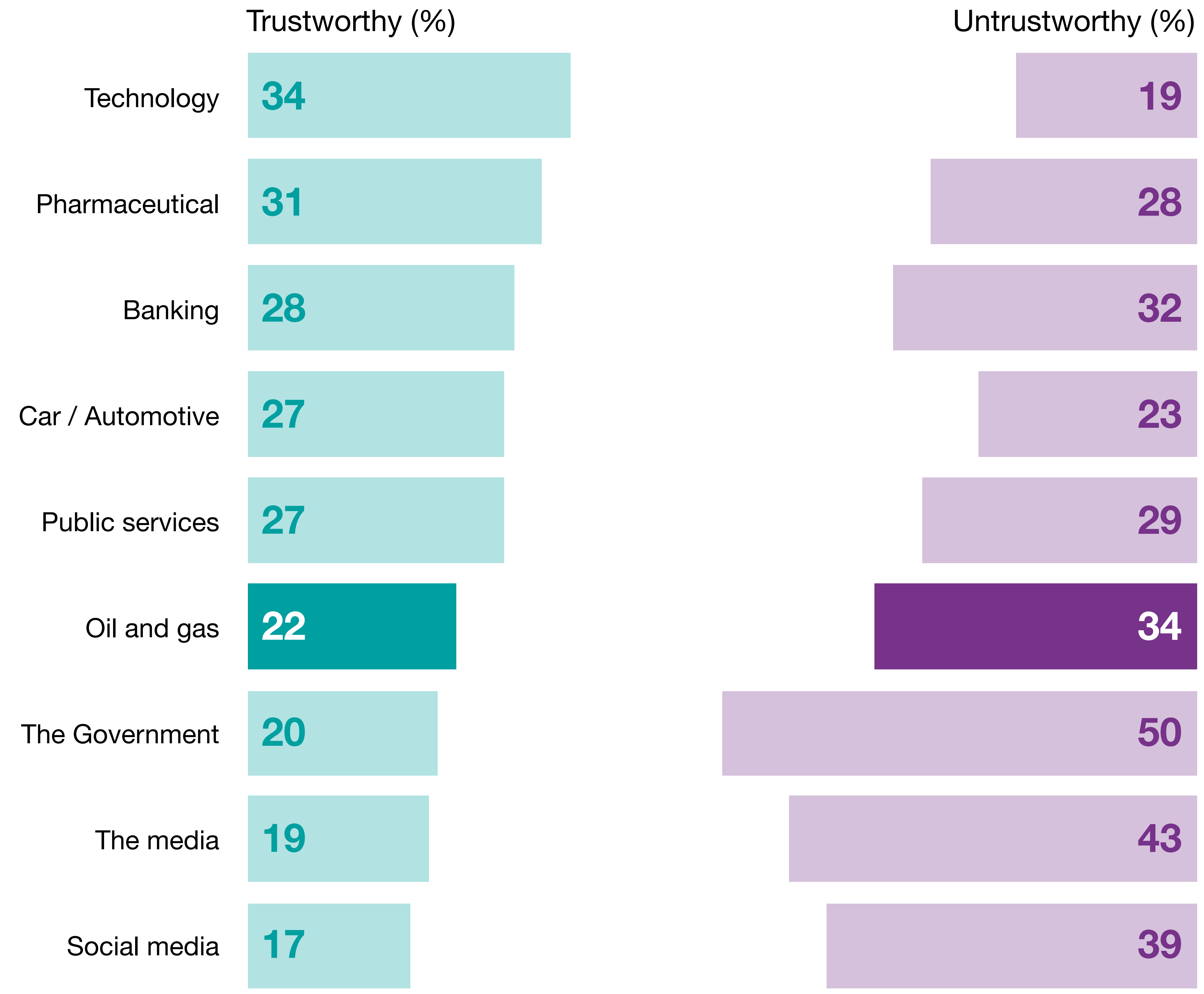
Oil and gas companies are widely documented as being among those contributing most to rising carbon levels. However, many are now responding by putting together plans and strategies, as well as setting public pledges to reach net zero. Demonstrating greater responsibility and accountability is likely to also contribute to the growing trustworthiness scores in the sector.

## Trustworthiness in oil and gas over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

## Global trustworthiness by sector




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy?
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## Trustworthiness today

While Ipsos Global Trustworthiness data shows that trust in oil and gas companies is not in crisis (it has in fact improved), monitoring trust remains extremely important when you examine them in context. Compared to other industries, oil and gas companies remain at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to trust in business, with just over a fifth of the people globally feeling that the sector is trustworthy. Extractive brands sit behind the automotive industry (another sector seen as contributing to the climate crisis) but ahead of Government, traditional media and social media (increasingly focal points for societal distrust). It is notable that, in 2021, half of people globally distrust their governments but just a third say the same about a sector that has faced intense media scrutiny over the past decade.

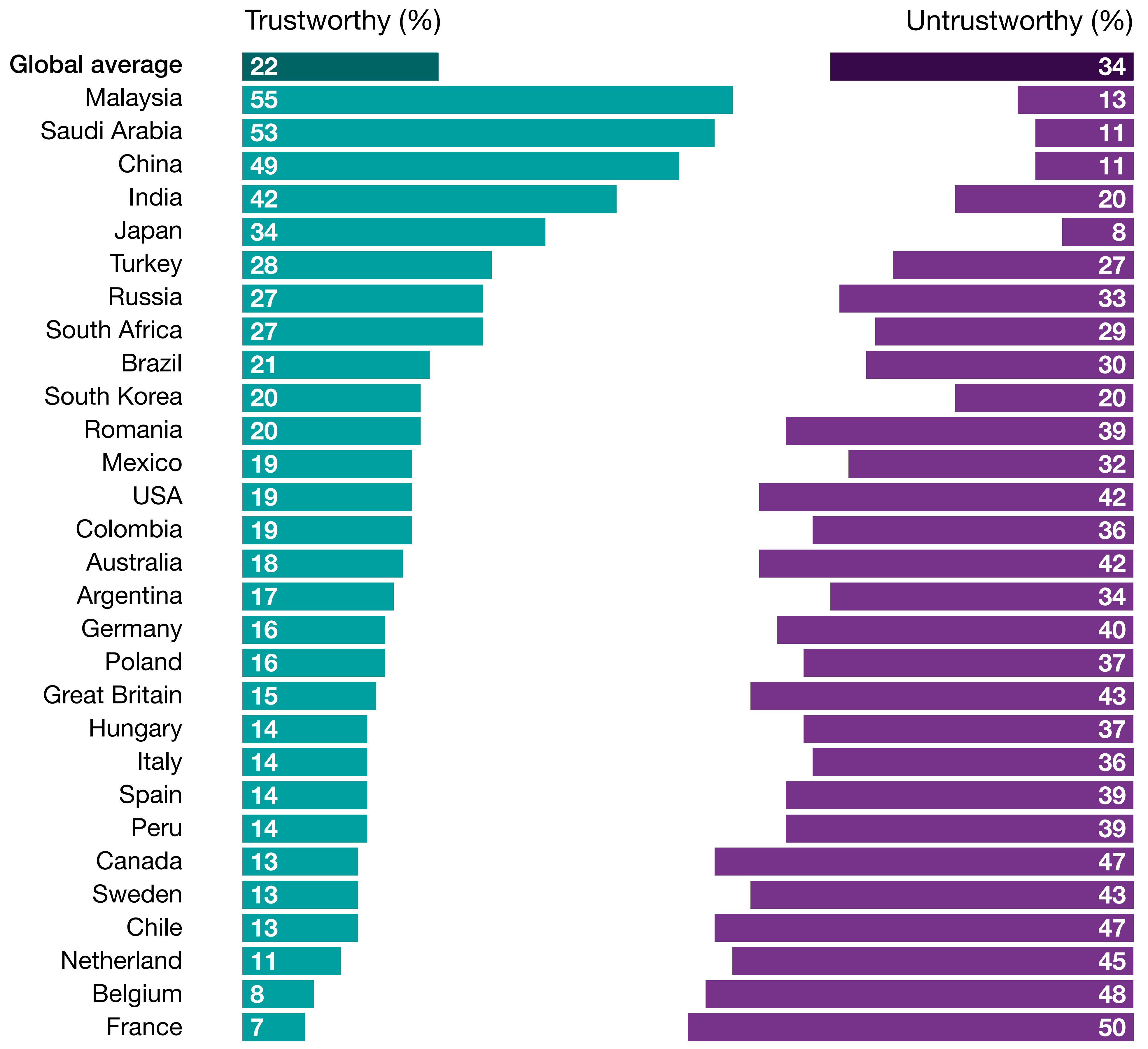
Indeed, globally, the public are most likely to be neutral towards oil and gas companies than have an opinion about the sector's trustworthiness: 22% find sector brands "trustworthy" and 34% "untrustworthy," but 46% sit somewhere in the middle. Given the emotional intensity of the climate debate, court cases and activity of groups such as Extinction Rebellion, one might assume the public is more divided and committed in their opinions. This large undecided group represents the best opportunity for oil and gas companies to improve their position.

# How does trustworthiness in oil & gas companies vary by country and region?

Broadly, trustworthiness in oil and gas companies is lowest in Western European markets (France 8%, Belgium 8%, Netherlands 11%, GB 15%) where there is intense concern about Climate Change. The latest edition of Ipsos' "What Worries the World" in November 2021, shows that concern about climate change is substantially higher in France (25%), Belgium (28%), Netherlands (25%) and GB (30%) than the Global Country Average (17%). These countries are headquarters to some of the world's largest independent oil companies.

Trustworthiness is also relatively low in the US despite the US historically being fiercely pro-oil. Conversely, Saudi Arabia is headquarters to the world's largest state-owned oil company and China is home to several large state-owned oil companies. Half of people in Saudi Arabia and China think that oil and gas companies are trustworthy. Trustworthiness tends to be higher in industrialising markets like China (49%), India (42%), and Malaysia (55%), and oil-dependent Saudi Arabia (52%) where there is a strong recognition of extractives' economic contribution.

## Trustworthiness in oil & gas companies




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021



## How do oil and gas companies become more trustworthy?

Current issues facing the sector, such as finding a way through the Energy Transition, rests mainly on the shoulders of oil and gas companies and the government. Oil and gas companies have the expertise and sector relevance to lead, and they stand out as performing best on trust drivers such as being well-led (31% agree) and good at what they do (39% agree). They potentially have the most to gain from demonstrating leadership here, rather than leaving it to politicians, the courts, or pressure groups, and environmental organisations.

When one considers that over 75% of the world's oil companies are state-owned,[38] the overall difference in trustworthiness between governments and oil and gas companies is interesting — whereas the majority see governments as untrustworthy, the majority are ambiguous and undecided on oil and gas companies. The large pool of 'Neutrals' represents a big opportunity and advantage to oil and gas companies. There is an opportunity to demonstrate to the public, through behaviour and communications, that oil and gas aren't just a part of the problem, and convince them that they are a leading part of the solution too.

Historically, expectations of the oil and gas sector are set low. However, oil and gas companies have made progress across all of the drivers of trust since 2018. Continuing to exceed expectations is the best way to convert neutrality into trust, and to keep building on the gains made in overall trustworthiness seen since 2018. Being seen as reliable (44%) and open and transparent about what it does (40%) are the drivers of trust with the most importance, which have the most impact on overall trustworthiness. Oil and gas companies have made good progress on these two drivers since 2018 (net scores are up +6 points and +5 points respectively).

However, despite progress, the portion that disagrees still outweighs those that agree, and net scores remain negative on these drivers (-3 points and -11 points respectively). The sector has faced accusations of greenwashing and we have seen court rulings telling oil and gas companies that their net-zero strategies do not go far enough, quick enough. The drivers the sector performs worst on are being environmentally sustainable (-18 points), it shares my values (-16 points), and that it would take advantage of me if it could (reverse scale +24 points). Oil and gas companies should carefully convey their plans for the energy transition in a transparent way that the public can understand and get on board with, so that they feel in partnership, working towards shared goals that affect us all. Oil and gas companies need to demonstrate that they can keep their promises and demonstrate clear progress against plans and strategies.

## Global oil and gas trust driver performance over time

| | 2021 | | | | Change since 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Importance | Agree | Disagree | Net | Net |
| Reliable/keeps its promises | 44% | 26% | 29% | -3 ▼ | +6 ▲ |
| Open and transparent about what it does | 40% | 25% | 35% | -11 ▼ | +5 ▲ |
| Behaves responsibly | 33% | 26% | 33% | -6 ▼ | +6 ▲ |
| Good at what it does | 23% | 39% | 19% | +19 ▲ | +3 ▲ |
| Does what it does with the best of intentions | 18% | 26% | 32% | -5 ▼ | +6 ▲ |
| Shares my values | 17% | 19% | 35% | -16 ▼ | +3 ▲ |
| Environmentally sustainable | 16% | 23% | 41% | -18 ▼ | N/A |
| Has behaved well in its responses to the COVID-19 pandemic | 14% | 27% | 19% | +8 ▲ | N/A |
| Is well led | 13% | 31% | 22% | +9 ▲ | +1 ▲ |
| Would try to take advantage of me if it could (Reverse scale) | 8% | 41% | 16% | +24 ▲ | -5 ▼ |

▲▼ Statistically significant difference since previous wave

**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations?

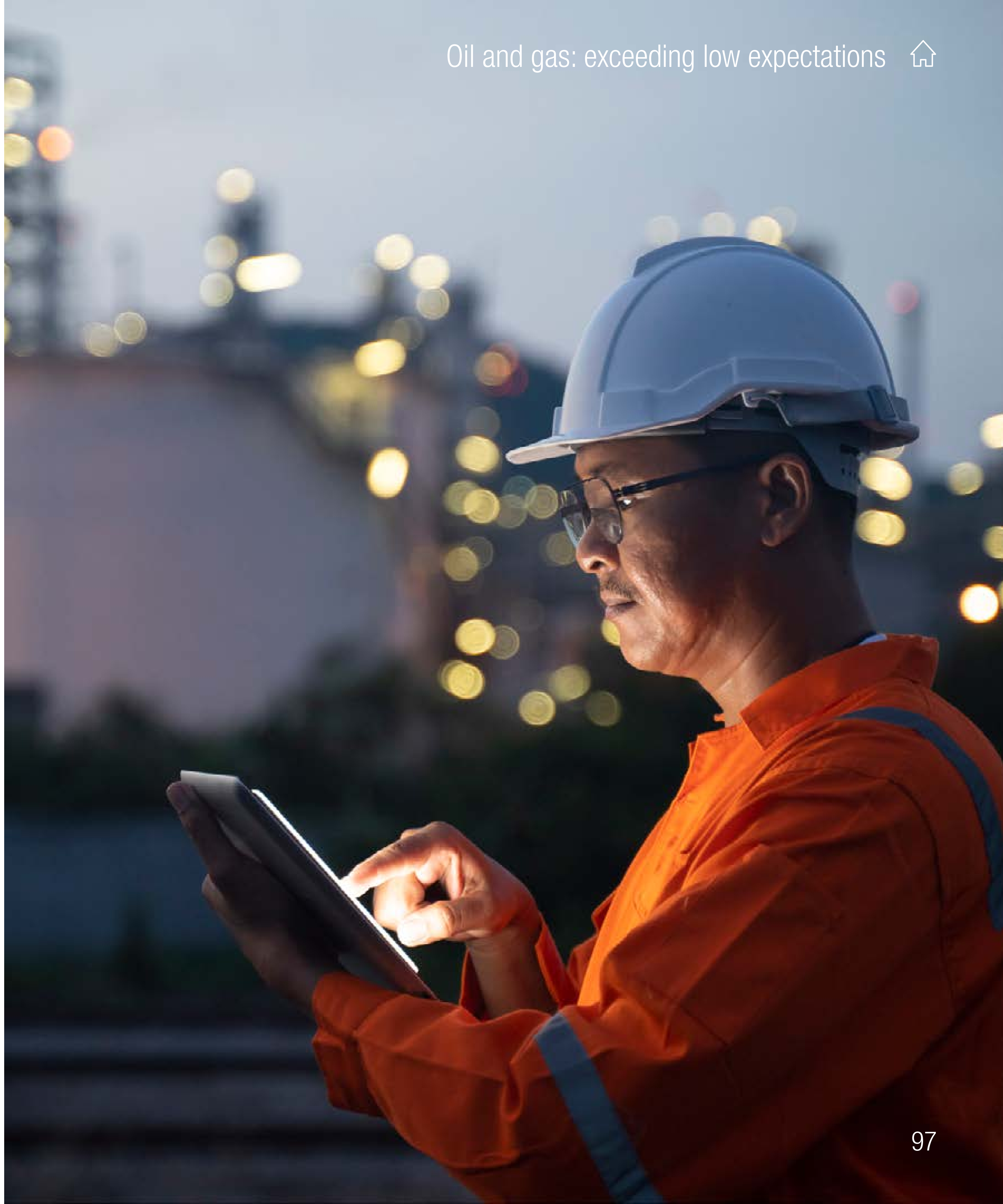
**Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 10,544 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021. Table ranked by order of driver importance.

Oil and gas companies perform best on the drivers being good at what it does (+19 points) and being well-led (+9 points). The public has a level of faith that the industry has the know-how and expertise to lead a way through current issues such as the Energy Transition. Although more still disagree than agree that oil and gas companies do what they do with the best of intentions (-5 points) and that they are responsible (-6 points), these views have softened considerably since 2018 (both +6 points). Oil and gas companies need to continue to demonstrate not only that they are good at what they do, but that what they do is for the public good and not just their own.

**“Oil and gas companies need to demonstrate that they can keep their promises and demonstrate clear progress against plans and strategies”**

To find out more, please contact:

**tom.cox@ipsos.com**



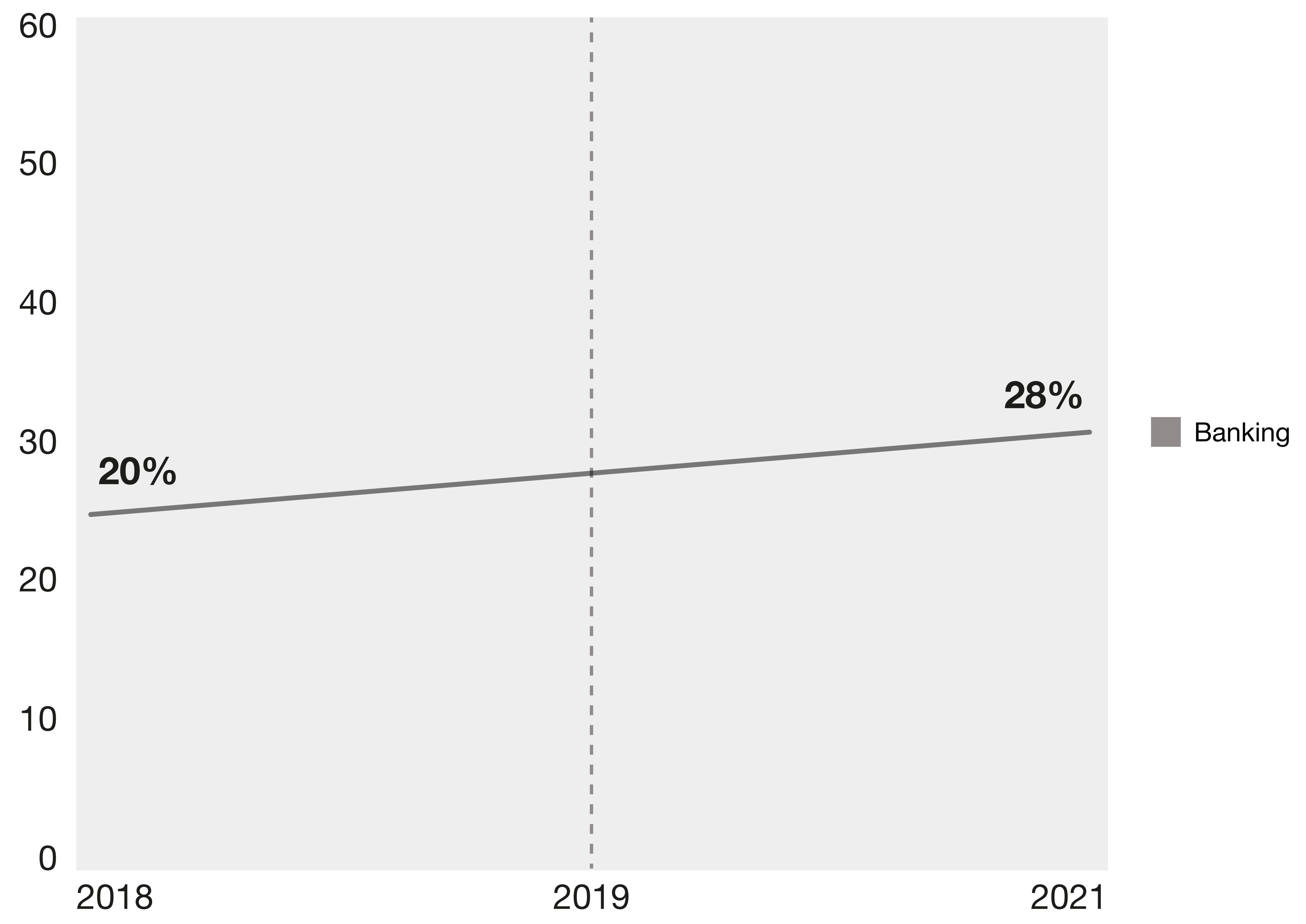
# **BANKING:** THE LONG HARD ROAD TO TRUSTWORTHINESS

**The banking sector has had a tumultuous 13-year period. Since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the ensuing financial crisis, the global banking sector has limped from one scandal to the next. Whether it was the mis-sold PPI affecting UK consumers that came to prominence in 2011, the Libor scandal of 2012, or more recently the allegations of money laundering through the leaked Panama, Paradise, or Pandora Papers, it is easy to see how there has been an erosion of trust in the industry.**

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for the sector to claw back some goodwill by providing support to consumers and businesses in what was (and still is), the biggest global crisis in the post-war era. So, we ask – have the past eighteen months changed perceptions of the trustworthiness of the banking sector? The latest findings from Ipsos' Global Trustworthiness Monitor suggest it has.

Almost three in ten (28%) of the public think that the banking sector is trustworthy vs two in ten in 2018 (20%). This places the sector as the third most trustworthy industry (behind technology and pharmaceuticals) amongst the nine sectors asked about. What's more, the sector has seen the biggest global increase since 2018 in trustworthiness amongst this set (+8 points). When we look across regional shifts, growing trust towards the sector is seen consistently across the globe.

## Trustworthiness (%) in banking over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

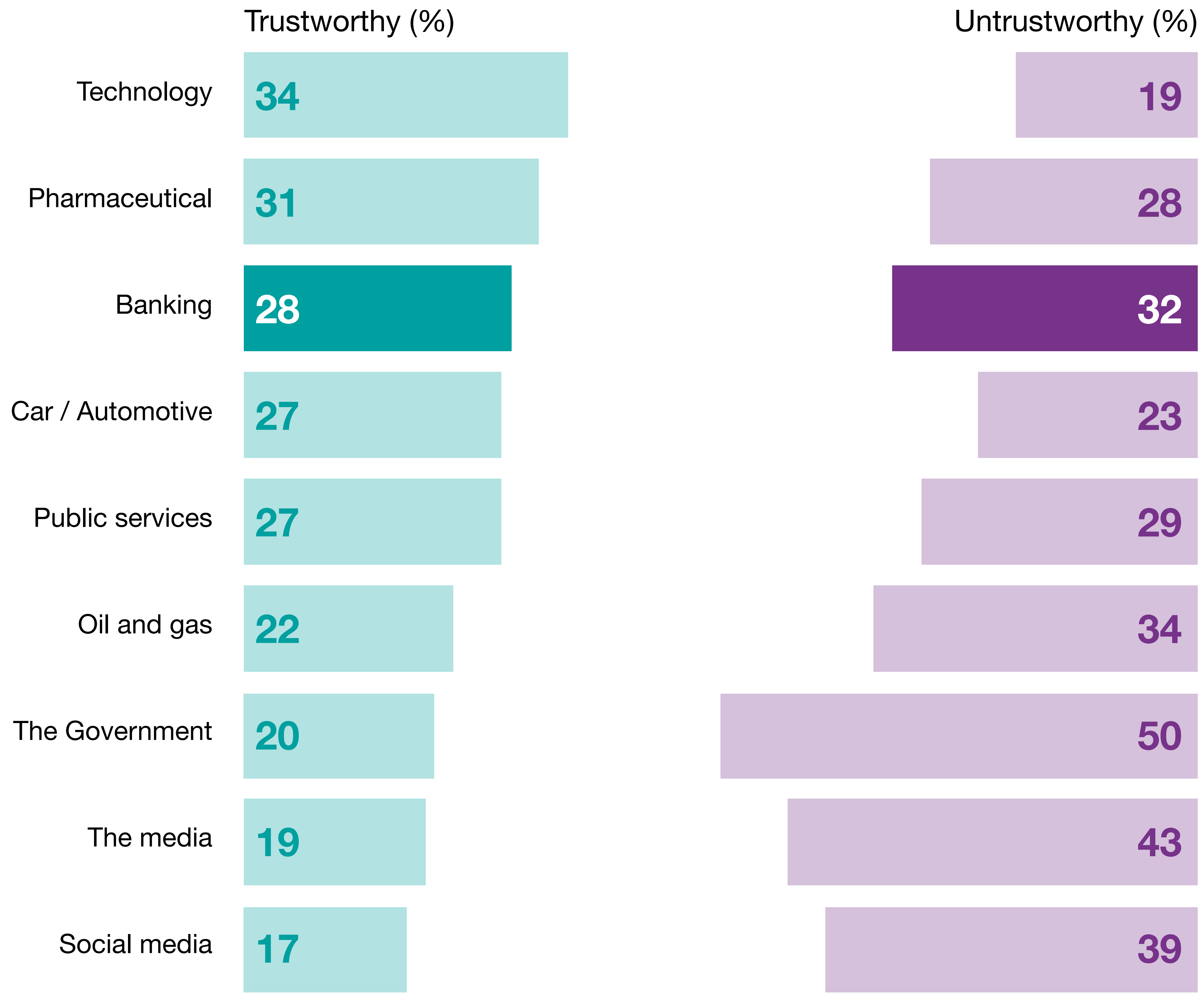
In the Americas, trustworthiness of the banking sector has increased +8 points from 18% in 2018 to 26% in 2021, in EMEA it has grown +6 points from 18% to 24%, and in APAC it has jumped +11 points from 29% to 40%.

Whilst this clearly shows the direction of travel for banking is positive, it is still important to reflect on the proportion who feel the sector is untrustworthy.

Globally, just under one third of the public (32%) feel the banking sector is untrustworthy, which is in line with the average across the nine sectors tested, whilst 4 in 10 are 'neutral'. There remains a 'trustworthiness deficit' of -4 points for banking, with more seeing the sector as untrustworthy (32%) than trustworthy (28%). Nevertheless, there has been stark improvement in recent times with the banking sector having drastically reduced its deficit from the improved net trustworthiness by +18 points since 2018 (-4% in 2021 vs -22% in 2018).

What might have caused the observed uplift in trustworthiness? The sector's response to COVID-19 has undoubtedly played a prominent role and we can unpick this further by looking at performance across a range of 'corporate values'.

## Global trustworthiness by sector



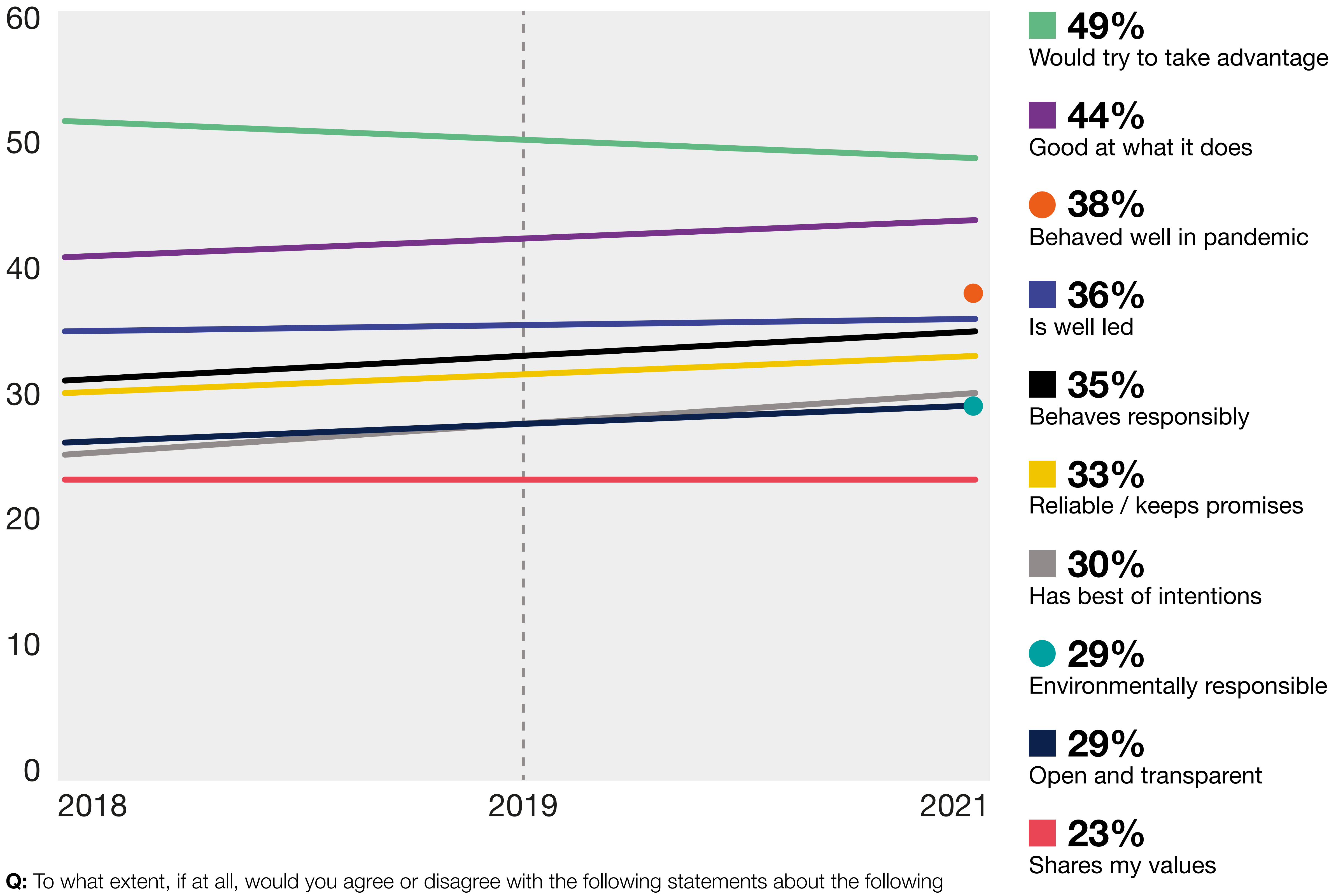

**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

**It is clear that the behaviour of banks over the course of the pandemic has had a tangible and positive impact on trustworthiness**

The biggest shifts in agreement among the global public on the banking sector's corporate values are 'it does what it does with the best of intentions' (+5 points) and 'it behaves responsibly' (+4 points). Important to note here, is that although 'it would try to take advantage of me if it could' remains the highest agreed measure, the decrease recorded is a further sign of positive change for the sector. This is further demonstrated when looking at the proportion of those who disagree with each measure – 'it would try to take advantage of me if it could' is the only measure that sees an increase in disagreement.

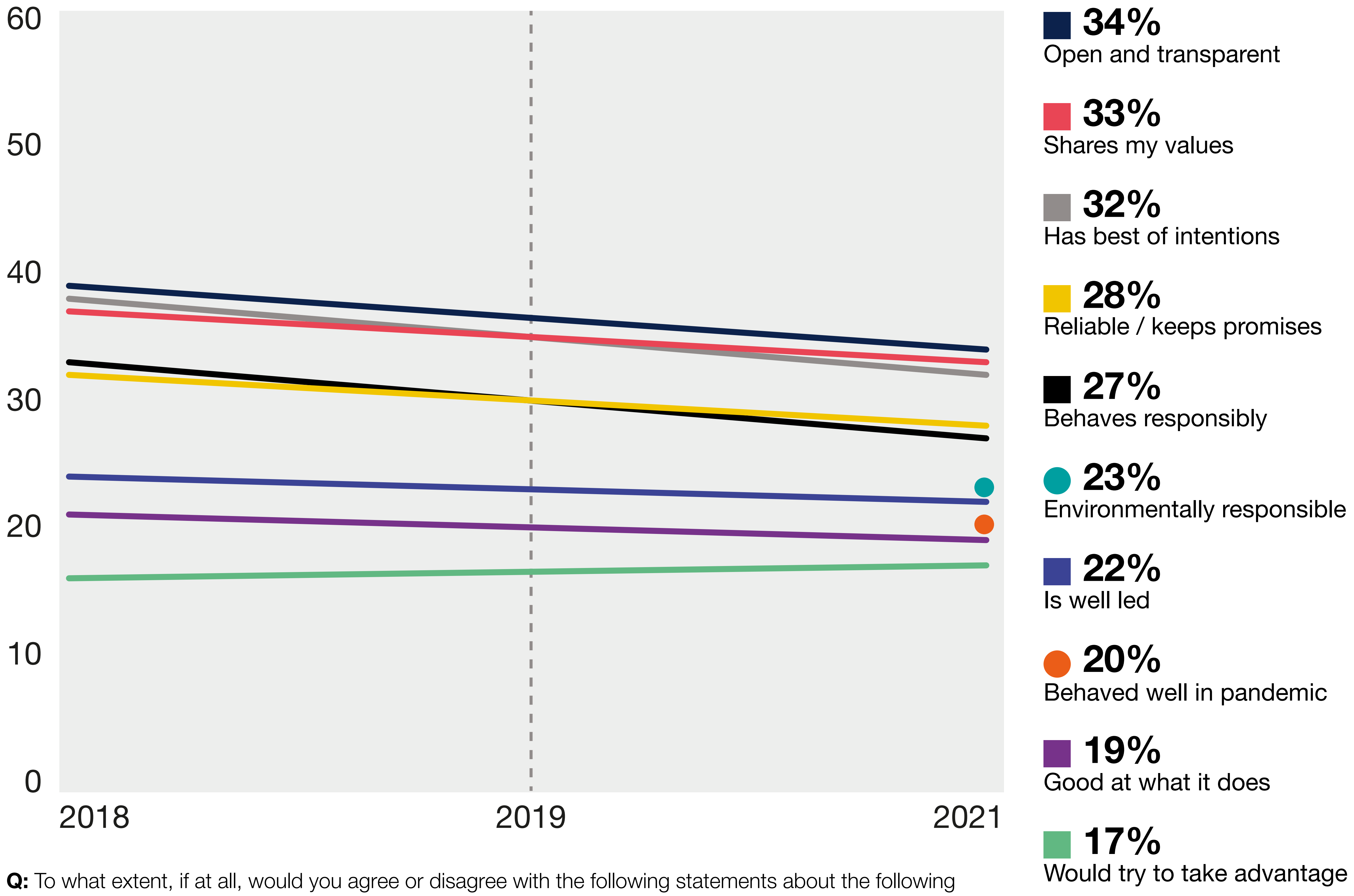
It is therefore clear that the behaviour of banks over the course of the

## Global banking companies performance on trust drivers over time (% agreement)




**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 10,812 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

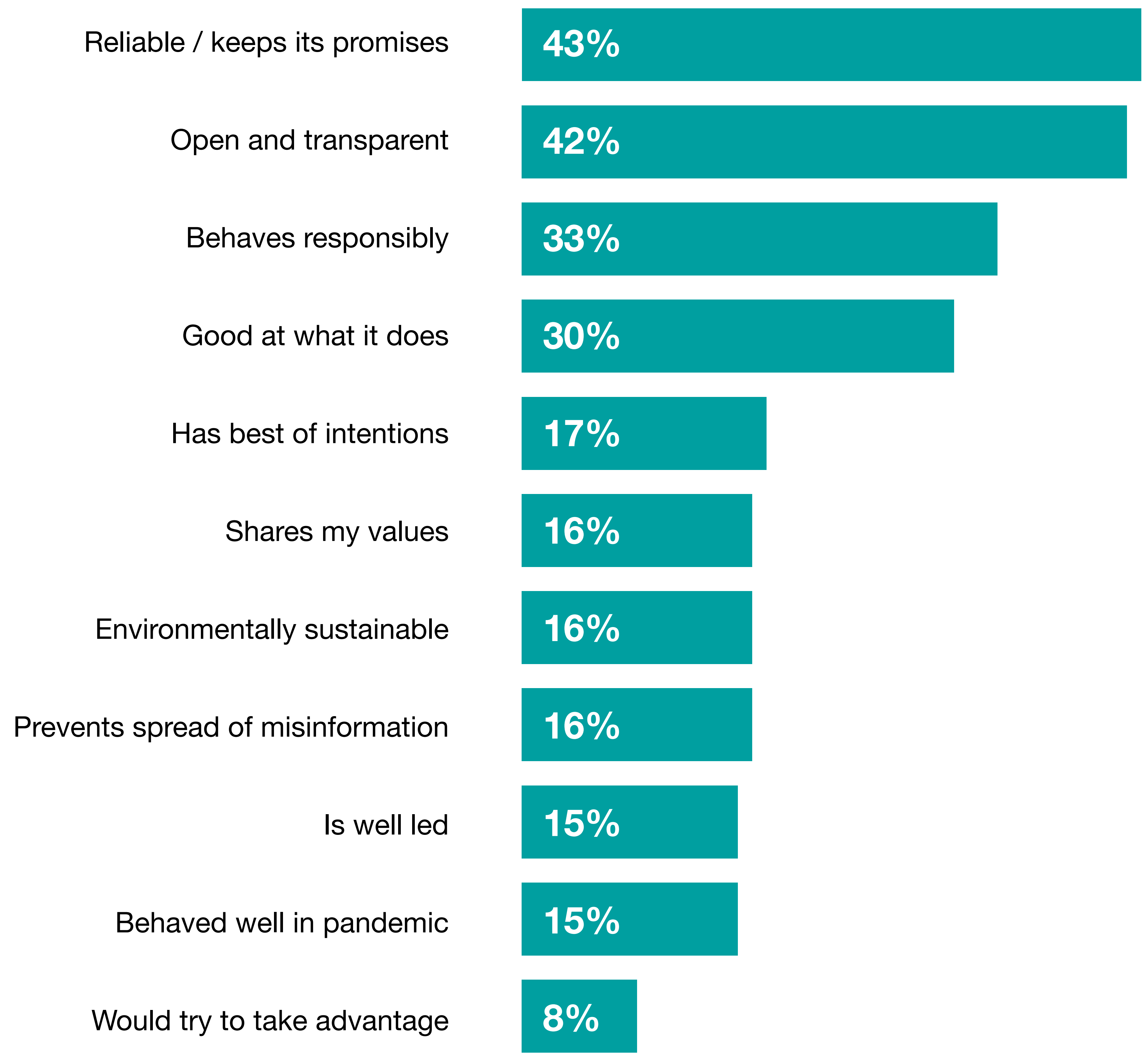
## Global banking companies performance on trust drivers over time (% disagreement)




**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 10,812 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

pandemic has had a tangible and positive impact on trustworthiness. As seen in the chart to the left, reliability, responsible behaviour and being good at what they do are three of the top four drivers of trust for the banking sector. Recognising this, the moderate improvements achieved across each of these areas (+3, -4 points each) have laddered up into a notable increase in trustworthiness for the sector overall (+18 point improvement in net trustworthiness since 2018). In essence, focusing on what matters most and demonstrating positive behaviours during a time when the sector was under the public glare have acted to accelerate trust improvement at a rate that would not have previously been expected.

## Global trust drivers by importance




**Q:** Which two or three of the following attributes, if any, are most important to you when deciding whether or not to trust an organisation or institution? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

## "There is still space to grow and start building a trustworthiness 'credit'"

However, while the overall picture is improving for the banking sector, there is still space to grow and start building a trustworthiness 'credit'. Further improvement for the sector relies quite simply on major banks consistently living up to the values they communicate through their behaviour and performance. As the sector and wider economy emerges from the pandemic, new expectations have been created that now need to be met or surpassed for further growth to take place. The absence of the scrutiny and motivation that the pandemic created, the challenge for corporate communicators is to ensure their organisations maintain focus on the purpose driven actions that kick started the trust growth observed. Indeed, despite improvements seen in recent times, the sector's actions may still be viewed through the legacy of the past with further growth needed before positive perceptions become deeply embedded.

To find out more, please contact:
alex.russell@ipsos.com

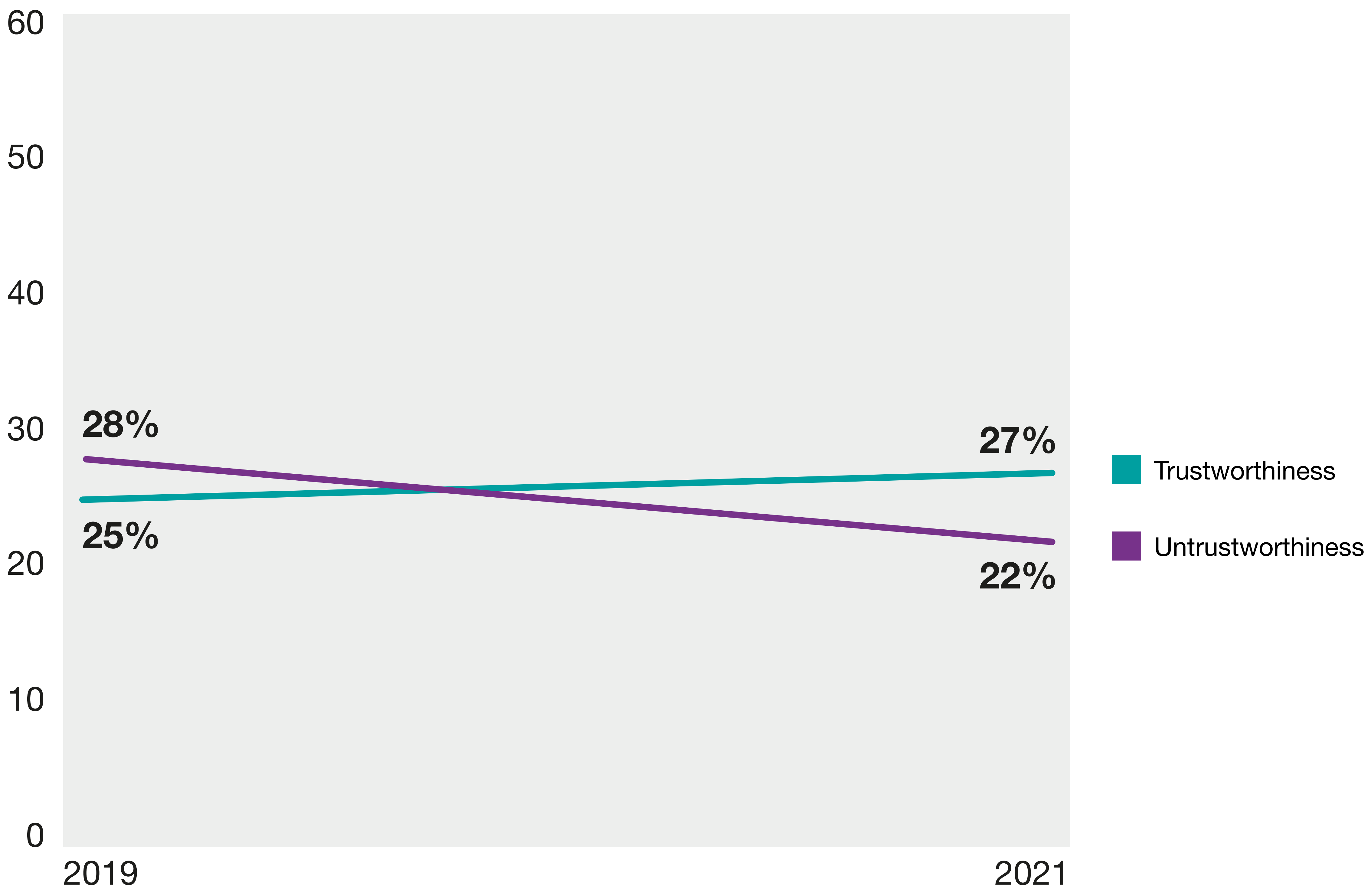
# RESILIENCE:
# THE AUTO SECTOR

**Pre-COVID-19, the automotive sector was predicted to be selling 80 million cars a year by now. Instead, in 2021, the sector will likely sell in the region of 66 million, up from 63.8 in 2020, but still way off where the sector expected to be. The bad news isn't confined to sales alone, COVID-19 hurt workforces and supply chain disruption led to mothballed factories, while the global chip shortage is thought to have knocked $210 billion off sector sales in 2021.**

If this was not bad enough, the sector has had some self-inflicted knocks in recent years; from the Volkswagen emissions scandal to Fiat Chrysler's $300 million fine, Mitsubishi Motors fuel-economy scandal, through to falsified end-of-line inspections at both Nissan and Subaru. While Tesla continues to go from strength to strength, the casual observer (and indeed many industry analysts) would be forgiven for thinking that the overall reputational health of the automotive sector is weak.

And all this is before you start factoring in the global shift towards net zero and the decarbonisation of the economy. While the automotive sector has invested strongly in electric cars, the sector has been lukewarm in its willingness to sign up to the more ambitious commitments to transition away from petrol or diesel engines.

## Automotive sector trustworthiness (%) over time




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 18,000 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

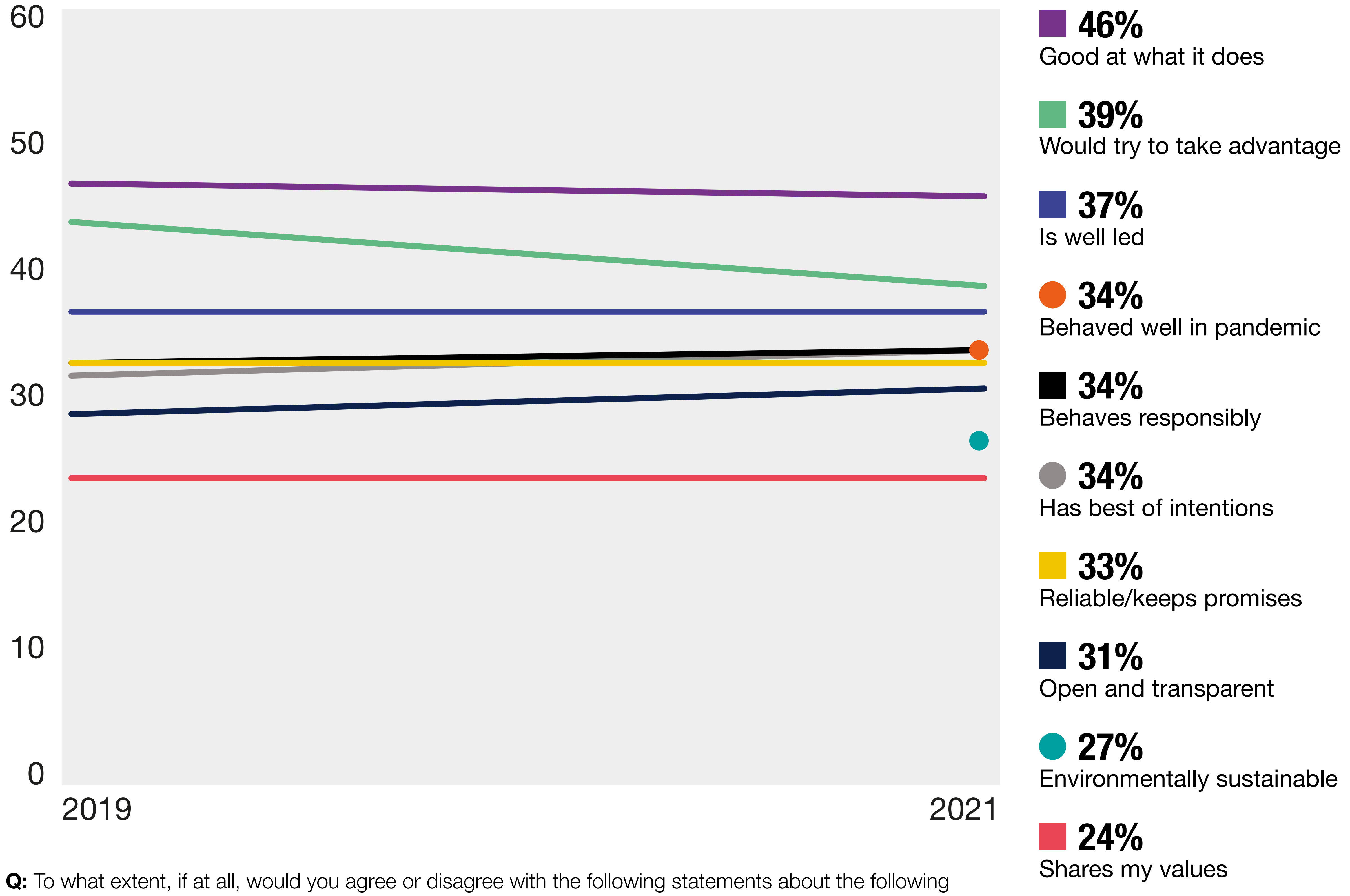
Against this background we might expect to find trust in the automotive sector in decline, or potentially even in crisis. However, perhaps surprisingly, 27% of people across the world regard the automotive sector as trustworthy, a relatively strong performance given that the top-rated sector (tech) only scores 34%. In fact, there are only four sectors ahead of automotive measured in the 2021 Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor. Furthermore, there has been a slight increase in the number of people who think the automotive industry is trustworthy. Specifically, trustworthiness in the sector has increased slightly since 2019 (25% 2019 vs 27% 2021) while the proportion that think the sector is untrustworthy has fallen from 28% (2019) to 22% (2021). It can be said then that the automotive sector has had a positive last couple of years, one shared with sectors like banking and pharmaceuticals, of solid, if not spectacular, improvement in sector trustworthiness.

How has the sector managed this? An assessment of the automotive sector's drivers of trustworthiness shows clearly that the sector performs strongly on one of the more important drivers – being good at what it does (46% agreed). It also performs solidly, if not spectacularly, on being well-led (37%) and being reliable (33%). In fact, despite what might be assumed given the cumulative effect of a decade of bad press, the sector is also improving when it comes to the number of people who say that the sector would try and take advantage of them if it could (39%, down from 44% in 2019).

It isn't all positive; only a quarter (24%) agree that the sector shares their values, unchanged from 2019, this clearly isn't a drag on the sector's overall reputation. More critical perhaps for the sector's reputation and overall trustworthiness long term, is the finding that only 27% agree that the sector is environmentally sustainable while 29% disagree. Clearly the fact that the sector relies on fossil fuels and is yet to fully and enthusiastically embrace the net zero agenda is a barrier to how the sector is seen globally. If the sector can persuade people that it is changing then significant reputational and trustworthiness gains are possible - the electric vehicle market is set to be worth $802.81 billion by 2027, up from $162.34 billion in 2019,[39] and the explosion in value of Tesla as the most valuable car company in the world indicates the potential future of this market.

One interesting finding from this year's data, that the sector will need to bear in mind as it plans how to improve how trustworthy it is seen, are the differences between regions and countries in perceptions of the sector. On a positive note, across all regions there was a fall in untrustworthiness in the automotive sector. However, there is now more

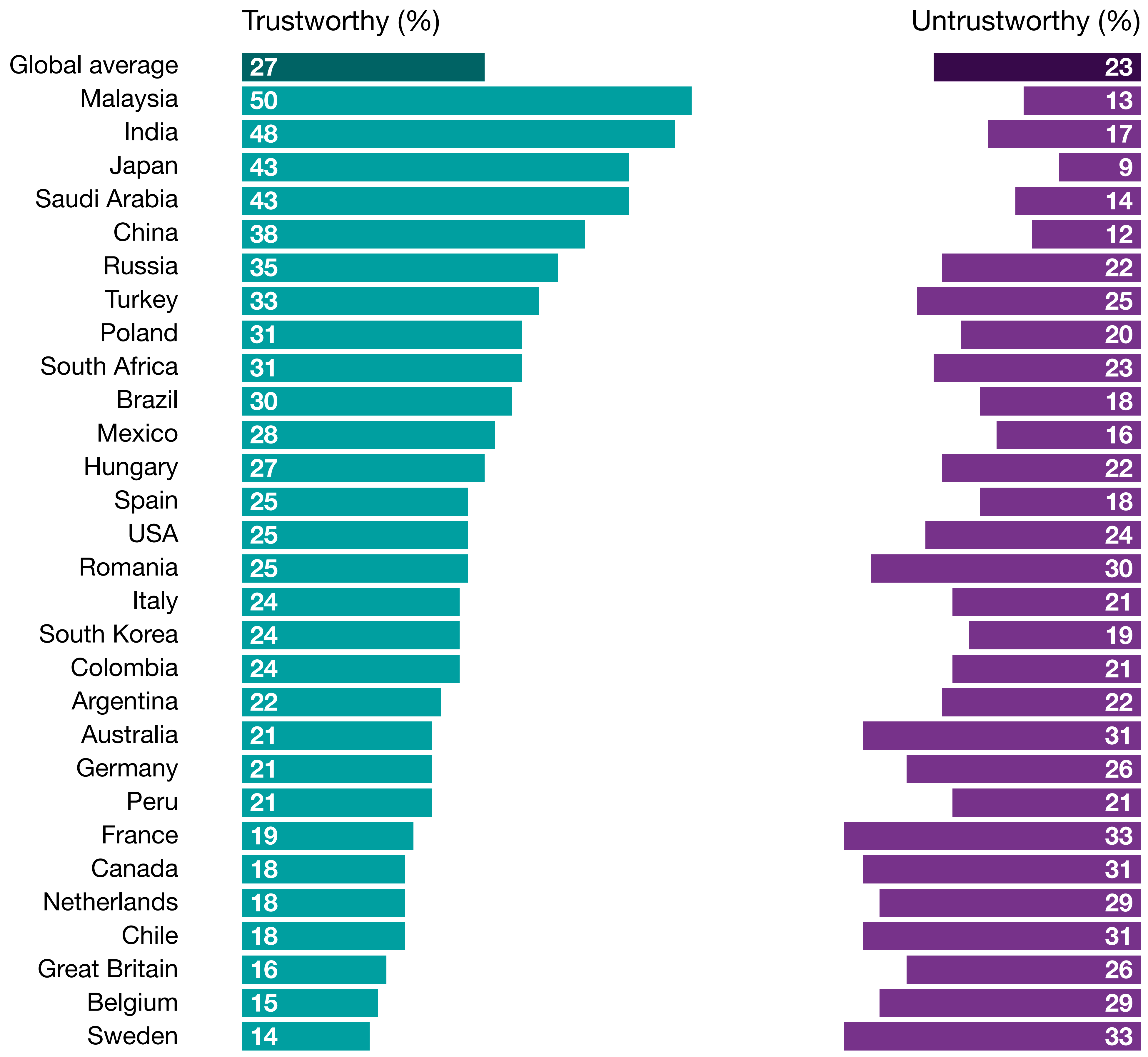
## Global automotive companies performance on trust drivers over time (% agreement)




**Q:** To what extent, if at all, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the following organisations? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 10,836 online interviews across 22 countries c500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, 2018-2021

# On one hand it is generally regarded as being good at its core function, making cars, but on the other the legacy of a decade of scandals has damaged how the sector is seen

# Trustworthiness in automotive companies




**Q:** Please look at this list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? **Source:** Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Monitor: Global Country Average of 21,503 online interviews across 29 countries c.500-1000 online interviews per country aged 16/18-65/75, June 25-July 9 2021

disparity between the regions - APAC markets report a +7 point increase in trustworthiness (35% in 2021 vs 28% in 2019), with EMEA (26%) and the Americas (24%) now further behind and seeing little change in perceptions of trustworthiness compared to 2019.

What has driven this disparity? An analysis of some of the major players reveals a confusing picture of a sector with a hugely variable reputation.

China has continued to establish itself as the global leader in automotive manufacturing, despite COVID-19 related issues, supported by a government that introduced initiatives to reboot the sector including, tax exemptions and subsidies for NEVs (New Energy Vehicles). This may also explain why 59% in China agree the automotive sector has responded well to the pandemic. The sector is seen so positively in China that even 55% agree that the sector is environmentally sustainable - the highest rating out of all countries measured.

The US is the second largest car manufacturer in the world, yet surprisingly, only a quarter (25%) agree its automotive sector is trustworthy, below the 27% global average. This is fascinating because 59% of the US public agree that the automotive sector is good at what it does, far higher than most other markets. That said, 43% also think the sector would take advantage of them if it could.

However, this is down from 57% in 2019 so the impact of the scandals is lessoning. There are also concerns about environmental issues, with a third of Americans (32%) disagreeing that the US automotive sector is environmentally sustainable.

Trust is also unusually low for Germany, as one of the global automotive manufacturing leaders - only 21% consider the sector trustworthy. However, this is actually a recovery from a mere 12% who regarded the sector as trustworthy back in 2019. Indeed, 2019 was a particularly bad year for the sector in Germany, but positively many of their metrics are showing signs of improvement. While positive, given the importance to Germany of transitioning the automotive industry away from fossil fuels without destabilising the economy, the sector's environmental impact has been under scrutiny.
But while caution makes sense on a political and business level, it is far less popular among the public – hence the 37% of the public who disagree that the sector is environmentally sustainable. A third of the public (35%) think the sector is good at what it does otherwise the overall trustworthiness score would be lower.

Which brings us to France. While France may not be in the top rank of car manufacturing countries, it is still the home of two of the top 10 largest car companies, and yet the automotive

**“The dominant issue facing the sector, that of its environmental impact, is also its second biggest weakness when it comes to whether the public of the world find it trustworthy”**

sector is not seen as trustworthy at all (19%, up from 14% in 2019), with far more saying it is untrustworthy (33% - no change). In fact this sets the pattern for how the sector is seen in France. The French public are more likely to disagree than agree that the sector behaves responsibly, that it is open and transparent, shares my values, that it is environmentally sustainable and does what it does with the best intentions. Unlike Germany, not enough of the French public think the sector is good at what it does (24%) to compensate for poor performances elsewhere.

What this shows is that the automotive sector has a complex relationship with trust on a global level – on one hand it is generally regarded as being good at its core function, making cars, but on the other the legacy of a decade of scandals has damaged how the sector is seen across other metrics. Certainly, in the Western world this will take time to overcome.

More fundamentally though, the automotive sector is in the fascinating position where the dominant issue facing the sector, that of its environmental impact, is also its second biggest weakness when it comes to whether the public of the world find it trustworthy. For the sector overall, or major players within it, this is both a long-term reputational risk or a potential significant advantage and differentiator. Looking across the list of the automotive companies that signed up to the COP 26 pledge on car emissions[40] shows that the sector is far from unified on environmental issues. The major manufacturers, both companies and countries, will need to make sure they do not lose competitive and reputational advantage to those that move fastest to lead the sector on environmental sustainability.

To find out more, please contact:
**yasmin.lamb@ipsos.com**
**carl.phillips@ipsos.com**

# References


1. https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/introduction-3/

2. https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/the-drivers-of-trust-in-brands-and-government/

3. https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/modelling-trust-what-is-it-how-do-i-do-it-and-how-do-i-earn-it/

4. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/25/protests-rage-around-the-world-hong-kong-lebanon-chile-catalonia-iraq

5. https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/modelling-trust-what-is-it-how-do-i-do-it-and-how-do-i-earn-it/

6. https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/the-drivers-of-trust-in-brands-and-government/

7. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-021-02796-3

8. See for example Davies, B., Lalot, F., Peitz, L. et al. Changes in political trust in Britain during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020: integrated public opinion evidence and implications. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 8, 166 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00850-6, and Covid-19 and the 'rally-round-the flag' effect, Jennings W www.ukandeu.ac.uk

9. Patriotism, social solidarity, or up shit creek without a paddle? COVID-19 and trust in the US, UK and Italy. Devine, D, Gaskell J, Jennings W and Stoker G, University of Southampton, www.trustgov.net

10. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-08/covid_and_trust.pdf

11. Devine D, Gaskell J, Jennings W, Stoker G. Trust and the Coronavirus Pandemic: What are the Consequences of and for Trust? An Early Review of the Literature. Political Studies Review. 2021;19(2):274-285. doi:10.1177/1478929920948684

12. Willingness to Distance in the COVID-19 Pandemic, Olsen A L, Hjorth F, University of Copenhagen https://osf.io/xpwg2/

13. Catherine Mei Ling Wong & Olivia Jensen (2020) The paradox of trust: perceived risk and public compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore, Journal of Risk Research, 23:7-8, 1021-1030, DOI: 10.1080/13669877.2020.1756386

14. Goldstein, Daniel A. N. and Wiedemann, Johannes, Who Do You Trust? The Consequences of Political and Social Trust for Public Responsiveness to COVID-19 Orders (April 19, 2020). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3580547 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3580547

15. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-04/G%40%20Earth%20Day%202021.pdf

16. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/21-08-57_HowMulti_pov_v2.pdf

17. https://reputation.ipsos-mori.com/shared-value-the-corporate-imperative/
18. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2021-02/Ipsos_Shaping_2025_0.pdf
19. https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/2020-larry-fink-ceo-letter
20. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/climate-change-believe-true-gap-ben-marshall/
21. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-04/Environmental%20Perils%20of%20Perception%202021_0.pdf
22. https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/larry-fink-ceo-letter
23. https://reputation.ipsos-mori.com/shared-value-the-corporate-imperative/
24. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/apr/16/got-a-minute-global-attention-span-is-narrowing-study-reveals
25. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ipsos-mori_uk-public-as-concerned-by-the-spread-of-misinformation-activity-6861231954822492160-_808/
26. https://www.statista.com/topics/3251/fake-news/#dossierKeyfigures
27. https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-10/google-media-literacy-infographic-emea.pdf
28. https://www.ipsos.com/en/bbc-global-survey-world-divided
29. https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2020/01/24/u-s-media-polarization-and-the-2020-election-a-nation-divided/
30. https://news.gallup.com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx
31. https://news.gallup.com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx
32. https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/06/28/trust-in-the-media-has-increased-in-the-past-year
33. https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/06/28/trust-in-the-media-has-increased-in-the-past-year
34. https://cpj.org/reports/2019/09/10-most-censored-eritrea-north-korea-turkmenistan-journalist/
35. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/201316/news-consumption-2020-report.pdf
36. https://www.iea.org/fuels-and-technologies/oil
37. https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change
38. https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704852004575258541875590852
39. https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/electric-vehicle-market#:~:text=The%20global%20electric%20vehicle%20market%20was%20valued%20at,billion%20by%202027%2C%20with%20a%20CAGR%20of%2020.1%25
40. https://www.autocar.co.uk/car-news/industry-news-environment-and-energy/major-car-firms-fail-back-cop26-ev-pledge

# For further information

**Carl Phillips**
Director, Ipsos Corporate Reputation
**+44 020 7347 3061**
**carl.phillips@ipsos.com**

**James Allen**
Associate Director, Ipsos Corporate Reputation
**+44 (0)20 3059 4813**
**james.allen@ipsos.com**

**Tom Cox**
Research Manager, Ipsos Corporate Reputation
**+44 020 7347 3768**
**tom.cox@ipsos.com**

**www.ipsos.com**
@ipsos
https://www.linkedin.com/company/ipsos/

# About Ipsos

In our world of rapid change, the need of reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder.
Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:
You act better when you are sure.