

# Perils of Perception

## A FOURTEEN COUNTRY STUDY

**These are the findings from our 14 country study looking at how accurate – or inaccurate – people are when asked to estimate basic facts about their population or social issues.**

**It shows how wrong we often are:**

**Perceptions are *not* reality...**

**Looking across all questions,  
we have calculated a  
measure of how accurate  
the population of each  
country is.**

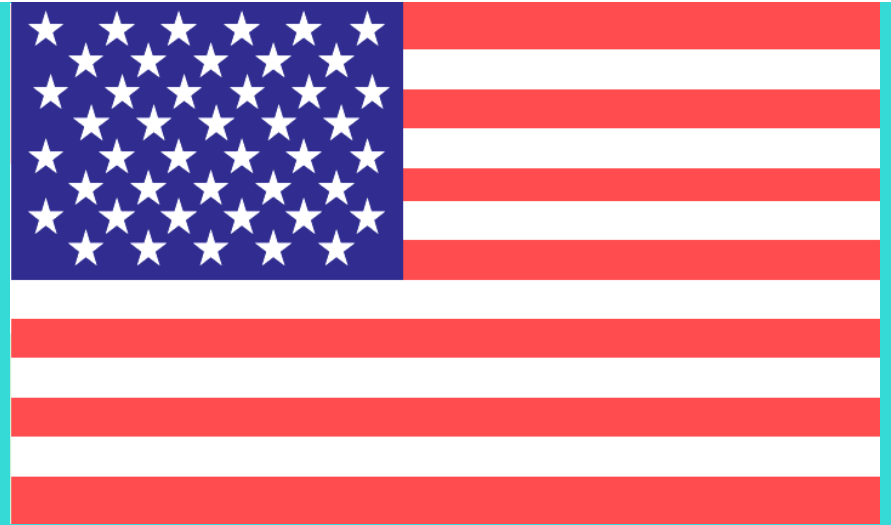
**This gives us our  
“Index of Ignorance”**

# INDEX OF IGNORANCE

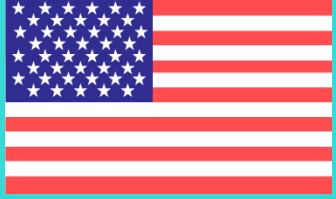
(Least accurate at top)

- 1st Italy
- 2nd US
- 3rd South Korea
- 4th Poland
- 5th Hungary
- 6th France
- 7th Canada
- 8th Belgium
- 9th Australia
- 10th Great Britain
- 11th Spain
- 12th Japan
- 13th Germany
- 14th Sweden



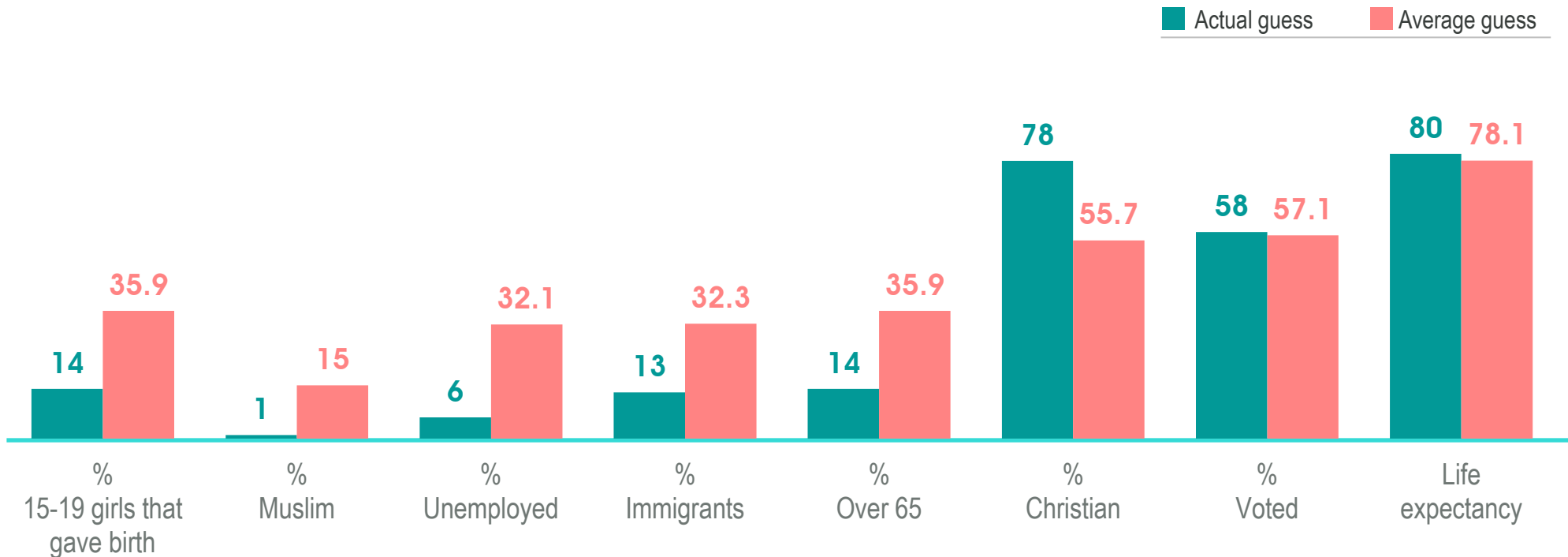


# PERILS OF PERCEPTION IN THE **USA**



# OVERALL

**Americans** are wrong about the basic make-up of their population and the scale of key social issues such as unemployment and behaviours like voting...

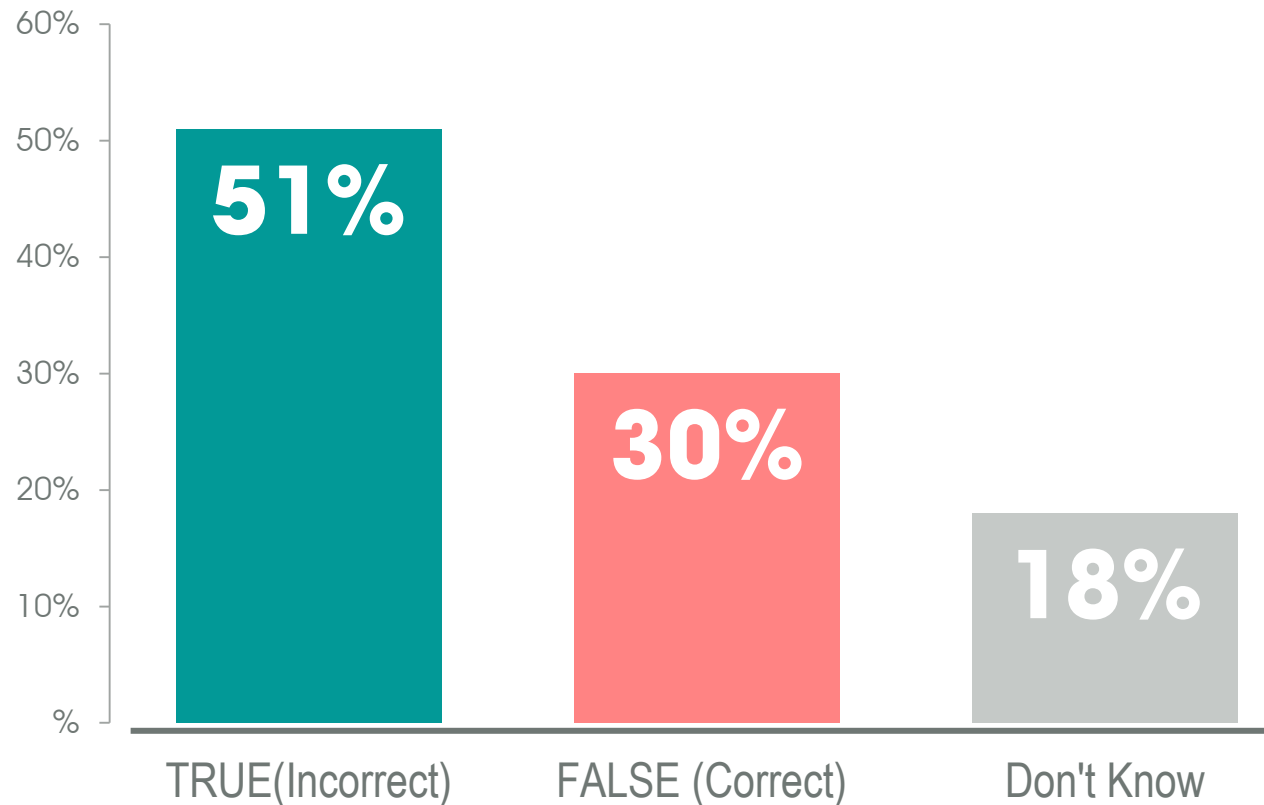




# CRIME

Only 30% of Americans rightfully believe that the murder rate in the US is **NOT** rising...

Please tell me whether you think the following statement is true or false: **The murder rate is rising in America.**



# IN YOUR OPINION WHAT PERCENTAGE OF **GIRLS AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 19 GIVE BIRTH EACH YEAR?**





















Q. In your opinion what percentage of girls aged between 15 and 19 give birth each year?

People across the world hugely overestimate the proportion of teenagers who give birth each year.

% POINT DIFFERENCE		TOO HIGH	AVG. GUESS	ACTUAL
	US	+21	24	3
	Poland	+17	18	1
	Italy	+17	17	0.5
	Hungary	+14	16	2
	Canada	+14	15	1
	Great Britain	+14	16	3
	Australia	+14	15	2
	Germany	+14	14	0.4
	South Korea	+13	14	0.2
	Spain	+13	14	1
	France	+12	12	0.6
	Belgium	+11	11	0.7
	Japan	+10	11	0.5
	Sweden	+7	8	0.7



Q. In your opinion what percentage of girls aged between 15 and 19 give birth each year?

# People across the world hugely overestimate the proportion of teenagers who give birth each year.



# WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION DO YOU THINK ARE IMMIGRANTS TO THIS COUNTRY?





Q. What percentage of the population do you think are immigrants to this country?

**All countries overestimate their level of immigration**

% POINT DIFFERENCE

TOO HIGH

	Italy	+23
	US	+19
	Belgium	+19
	France	+18
	Hungary	+14
	Canada	+14
	Poland	+12
	Great Britain	+11
	Spain	+11
	Germany	+10
	Japan	+8
	South Korea	+8
	Sweden	+7
	Australia	+7

AVG. GUESS

ACTUAL

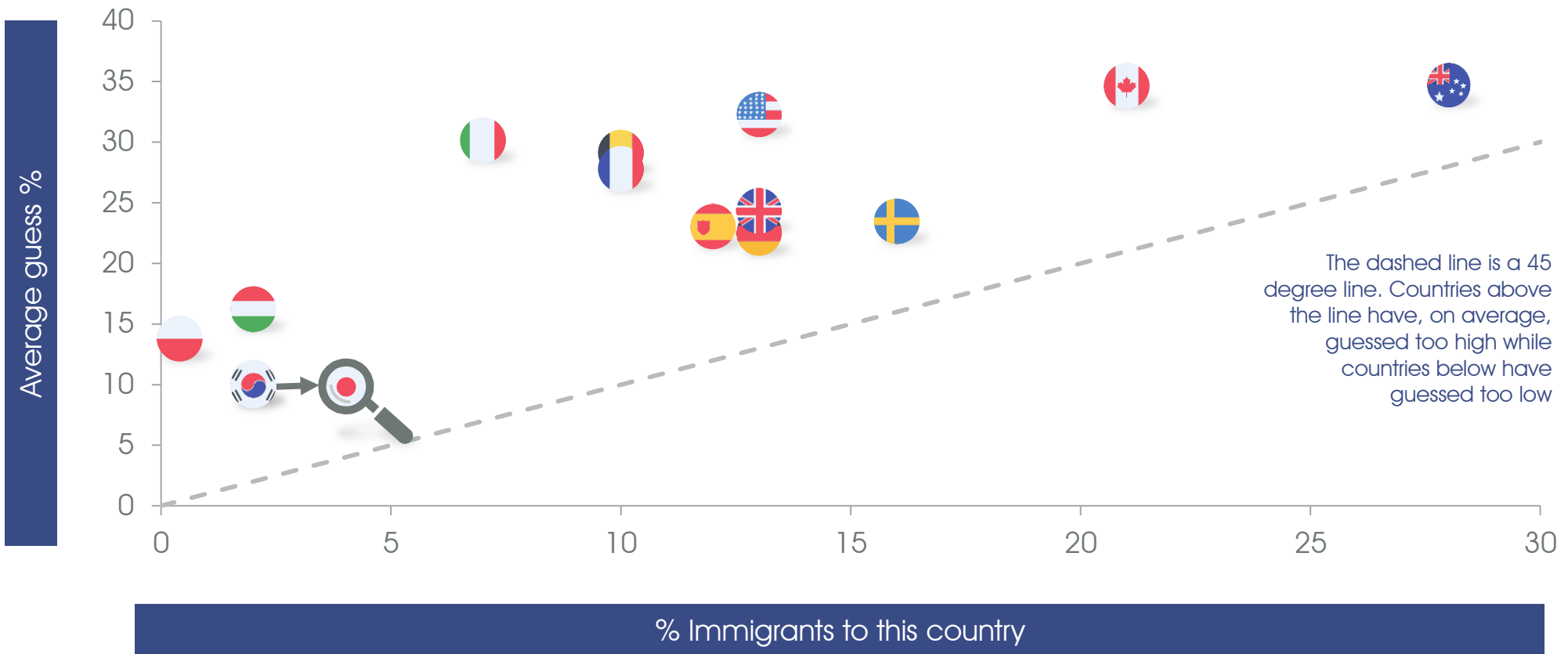
30	7
32	13
29	10
28	10
16	2
35	21
14	1.75
24	13
23	12
23	13
10	2
10	2
23	16
35	28





Q. What percentage of the population do you think are immigrants to this country?

# All countries overestimate their level of immigration



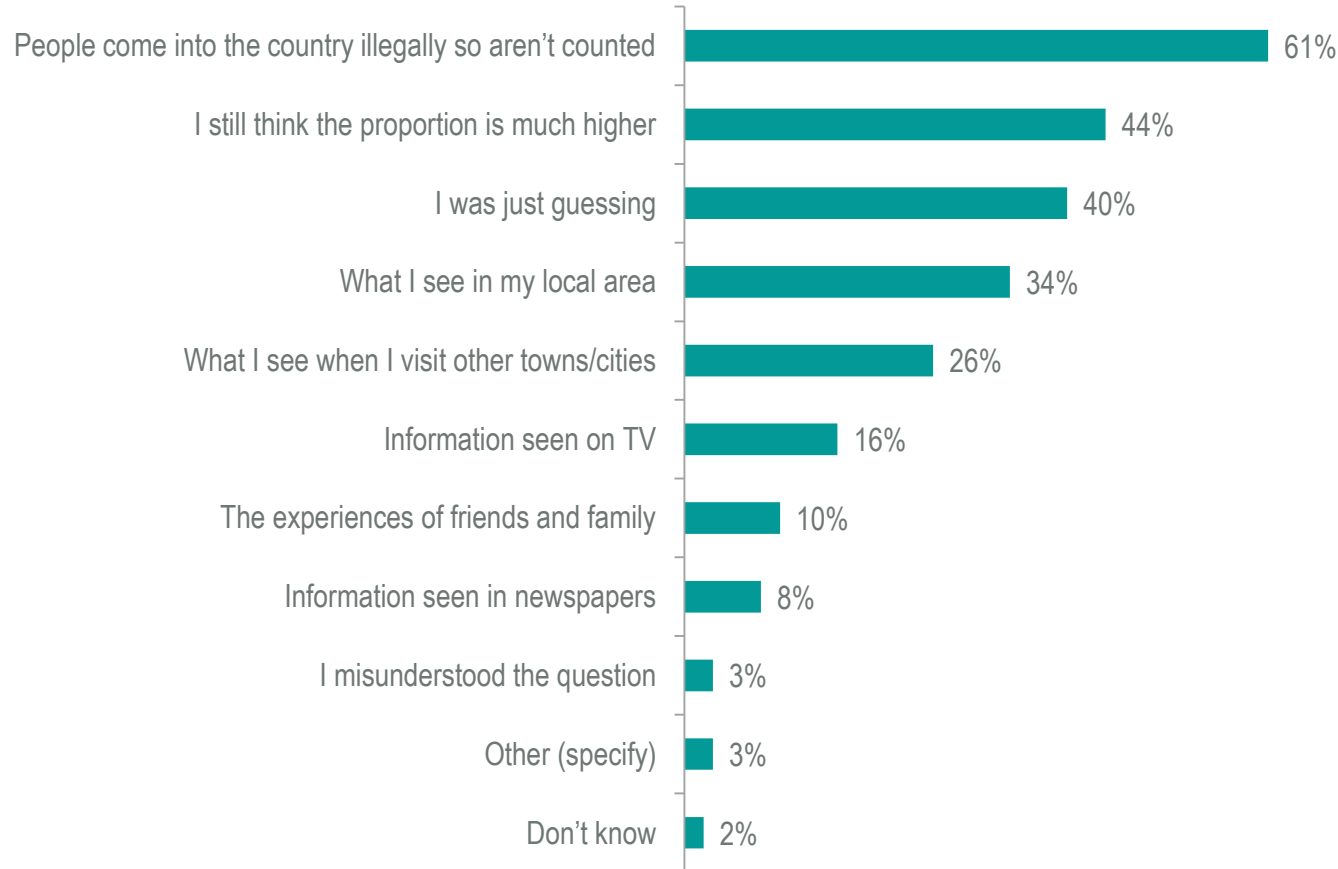


# IMMIGRATION

Respondents from the US who thought immigration was more the actual figure of 13% said the main reason they over-estimated is because people come into the country illegally so aren't counted (61%)

Asked of % who thought **immigration** is more than 13%

According to official statistics the percentage of the American population that was born in another country is actually 13%. Why do you think the percentage is much higher?



# OUT OF EVERY 100 PEOPLE HOW MANY DO YOU THINK ARE **MUSLIM?**



















Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are Muslim?

People in a number of countries massively overestimate the proportion of Muslims

% POINT DIFFERENCE

TOO HIGH

	% POINT DIFFERENCE	TOO HIGH
 France	+23	
 Belgium	+23	
 Canada	+18	
 Australia	+16	
 Great Britain	+16	
 Italy	+16	
 US	+14	
 Spain	+14	
 Germany	+13	
 Sweden	+12	
 Hungary	+7	
 South Korea	+5	
 Poland	+5	
 Japan	+4	

AVG. GUESS

ACTUAL

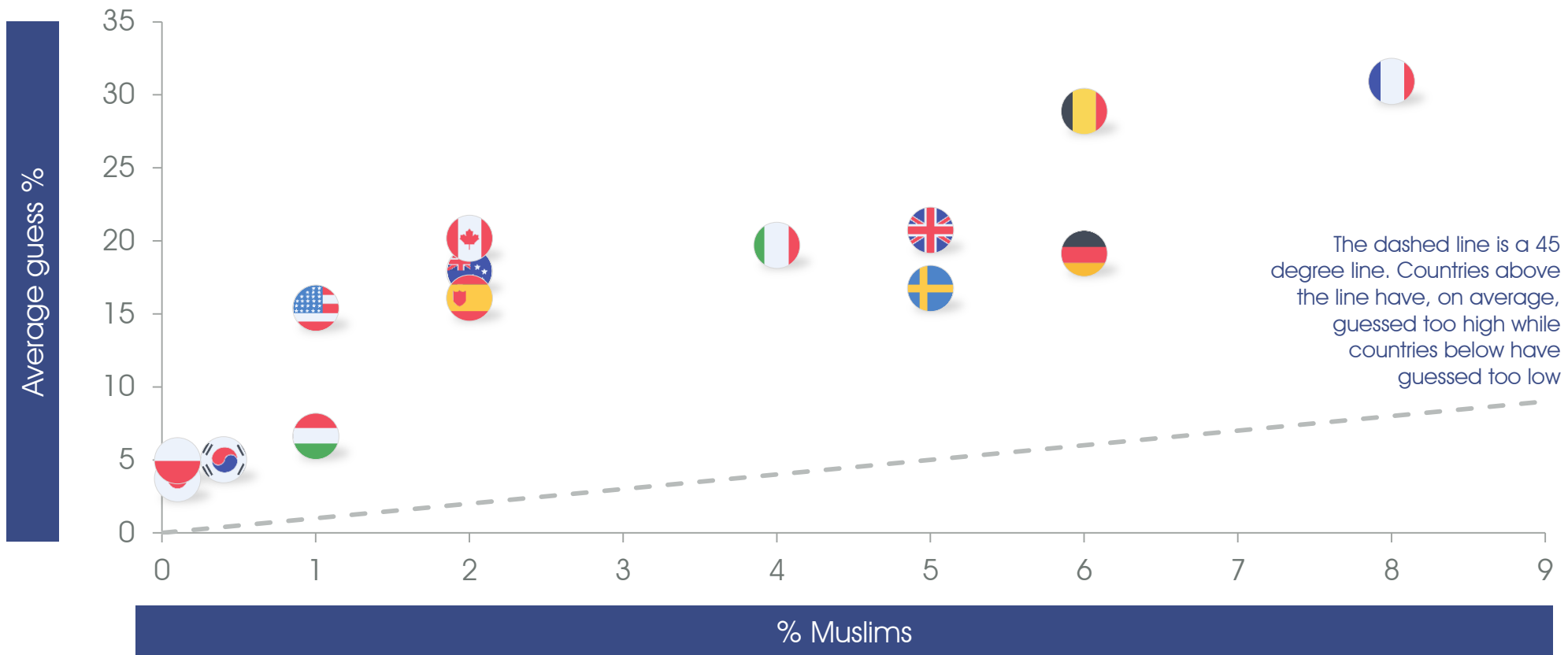
AVG. GUESS	ACTUAL
31	8
29	6
20	2
18	2
21	5
20	4
15	1
16	2
19	6
17	5
7	0.1
5	0.4
5	0.1
4	0.1





Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are Muslim?

# People in a number of countries massively overestimate the proportion of Muslims



# OUT OF EVERY 100 PEOPLE HOW MANY DO YOU THINK ARE **CHRISTIAN?**



















Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are Christian?

In contrast to the Muslim question, majority-Christian countries tend to underestimate how many people count themselves as Christian.

% POINT DIFFERENCE

TOO LOW | TOO HIGH

	South Korea	+13
	Japan	+10
	Hungary	+9
	<b>Germany</b> ★	
	Italy	-14
	France	-14
	Spain	-15
	Poland	-15
	Australia	-16
	Belgium	-18
	Sweden	-19
	Great Britain	-20
	Canada	-21
	US	-22

AVG. GUESS | ACTUAL

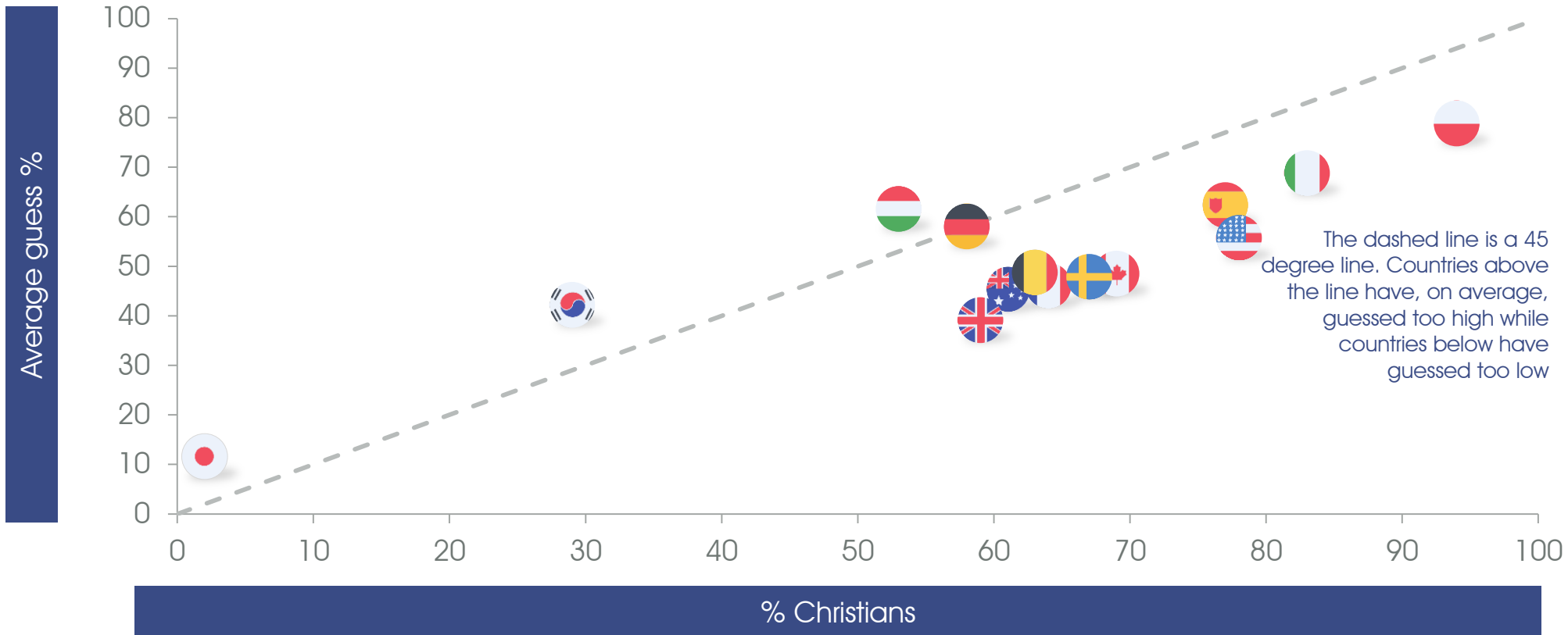
42	29
12	2
62	53
58	58
69	83
49	63
62	77
79	94
45	61
46	64
48	67
39	59
49	69
56	78





Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are Christian?

In contrast to the Muslim question, majority-Christian countries tend to underestimate how many people count themselves as Christian.



# OUT OF EVERY 100 PEOPLE HOW MANY DO YOU THINK ARE **OVER 65?**





Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are over 65?

All countries hugely overestimate the proportion of their population aged 65+

% POINT DIFFERENCE

TOO HIGH

	Italy	+27
	Poland	+27
	Canada	+25
	Spain	+25
	Australia	+23
	US	+22
	Hungary	+22
	Belgium	+22
	France	+20
	Great Britain	+20
	Germany	+19
	Japan	+16
	South Korea	+16
	Sweden	+14

AVG. GUESS

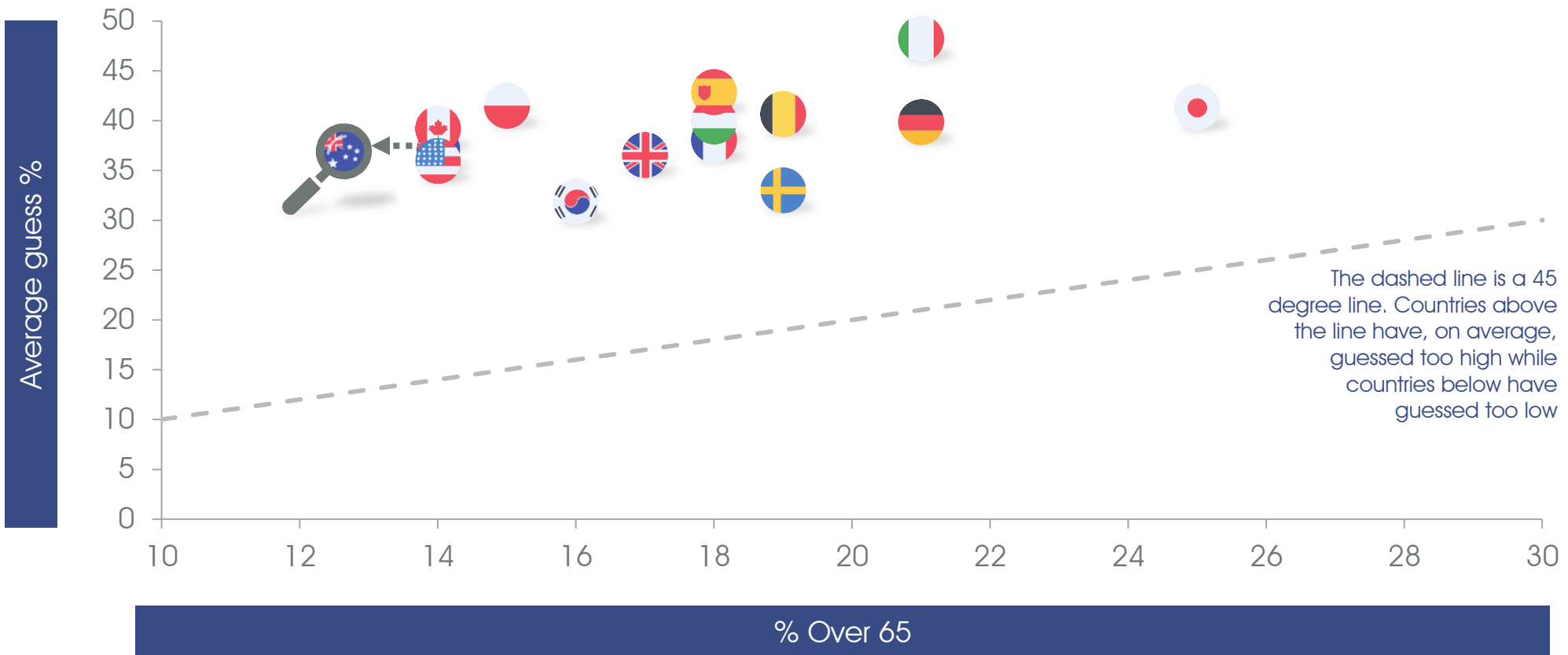
ACTUAL

48	21
42	15
39	14
43	18
37	14
36	14
40	18
41	19
38	18
37	17
40	21
41	25
32	16
33	19

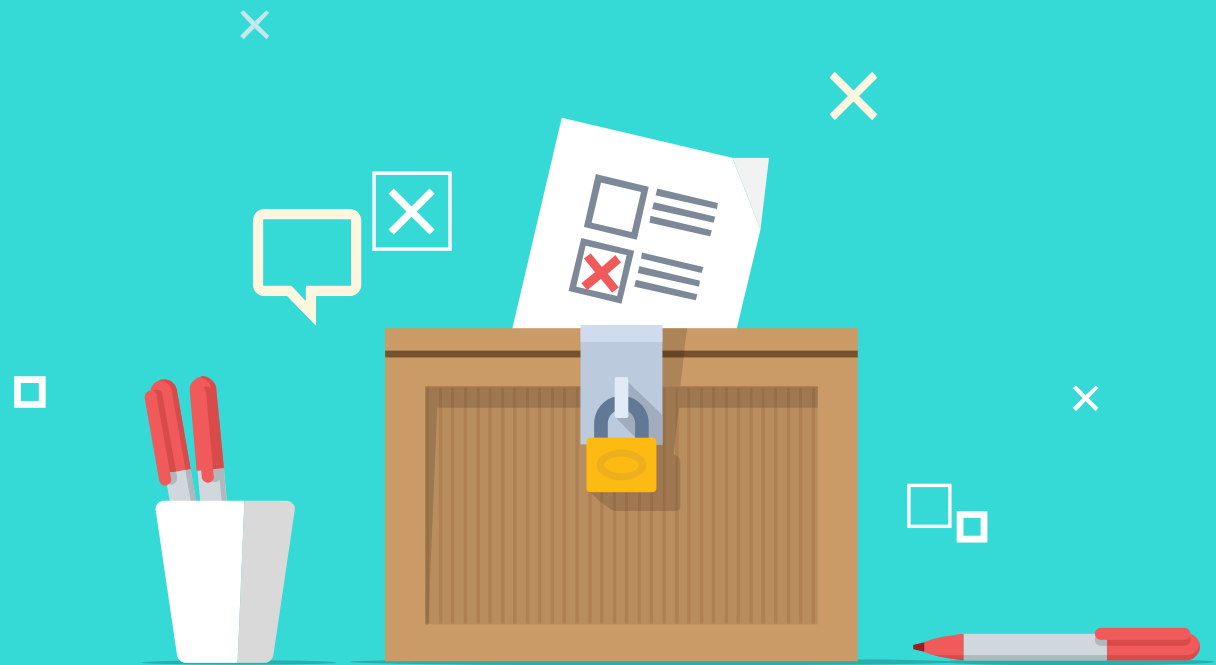


Q. Out of every 100 people how many do you think are over 65?

# All countries hugely overestimate the proportion of their population aged 65+



# OUT OF EVERY 100 ELIGIBLE VOTERS ABOUT HOW MANY DO YOU THINK VOTED IN THE LAST ELECTION?



















Q. Out of every 100 eligible voters how many do you think voted in the last election?

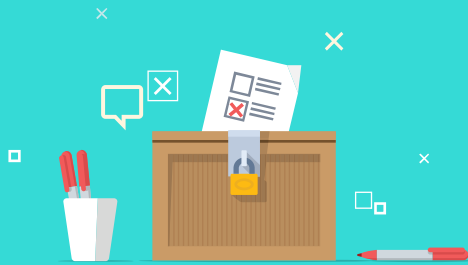
All countries underestimate the proportion of the population that voted in the last major national election

% POINT DIFFERENCE

TOO LOW

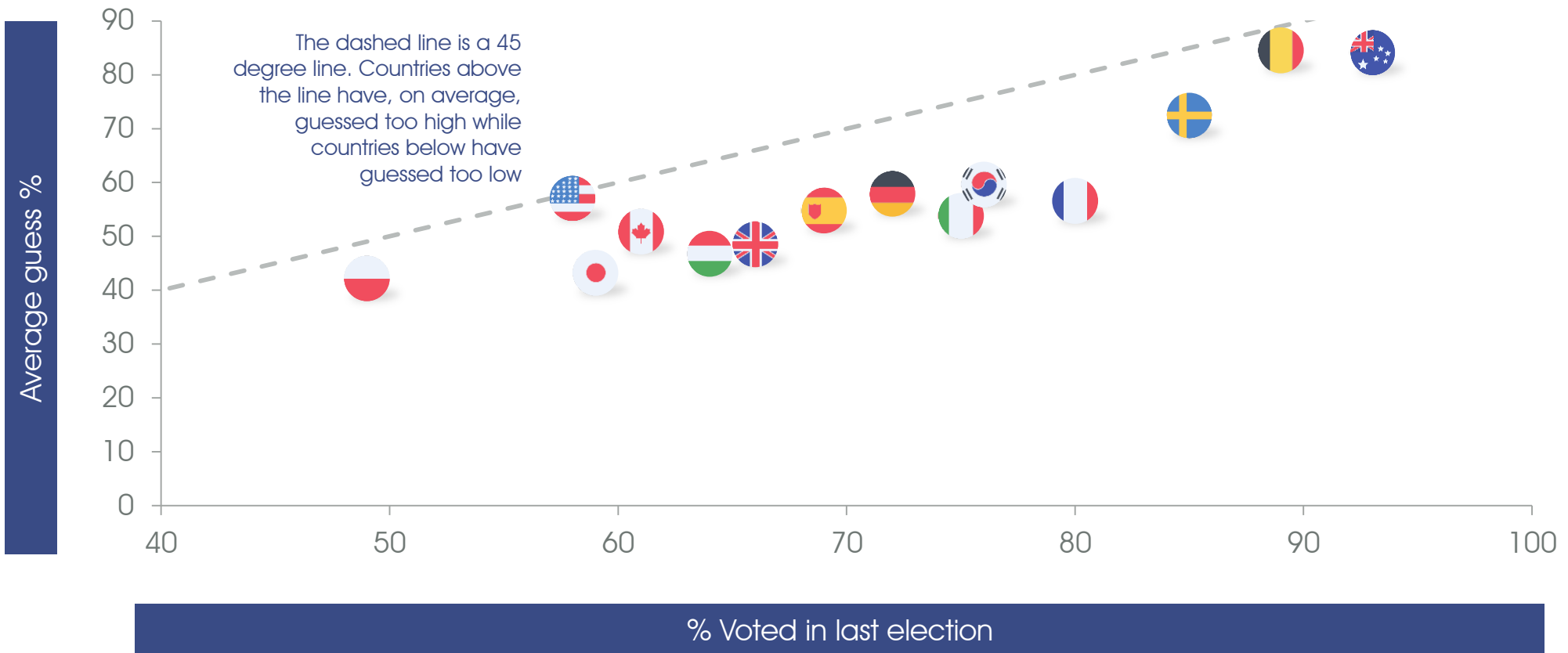
			AVG. GUESS	ACTUAL
	France	-23	57	80
	Italy	-21	54	75
	Great Britain	-17	49	66
	Hungary	-17	47	64
	South Korea	-16	60	76
	Japan	-16	43	59
	Spain	-14	55	69
	Germany	-14	58	72
	Sweden	-13	72	85
	Canada	-10	51	61
	Australia	-9	84	93
	Poland	-7	42	49
	Belgium	-4	85	89
	US	-1	57	58





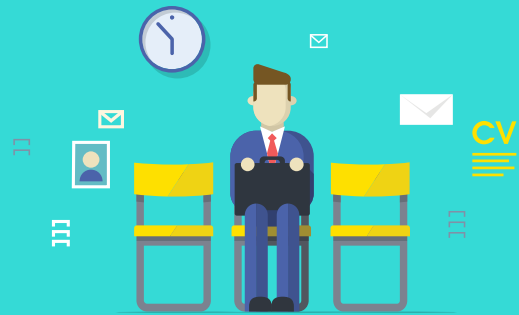
Q. Out of every 100 eligible voters how many do you think voted in the last election?

# All countries underestimate the proportion of the population that voted in the last major national election



# OUT OF EVERY 100 PEOPLE OF **WORKING AGE** ABOUT HOW MANY DO YOU THINK ARE **UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK?**





Q. Out of every 100 people of working age about how many do you think are unemployed and looking for work?

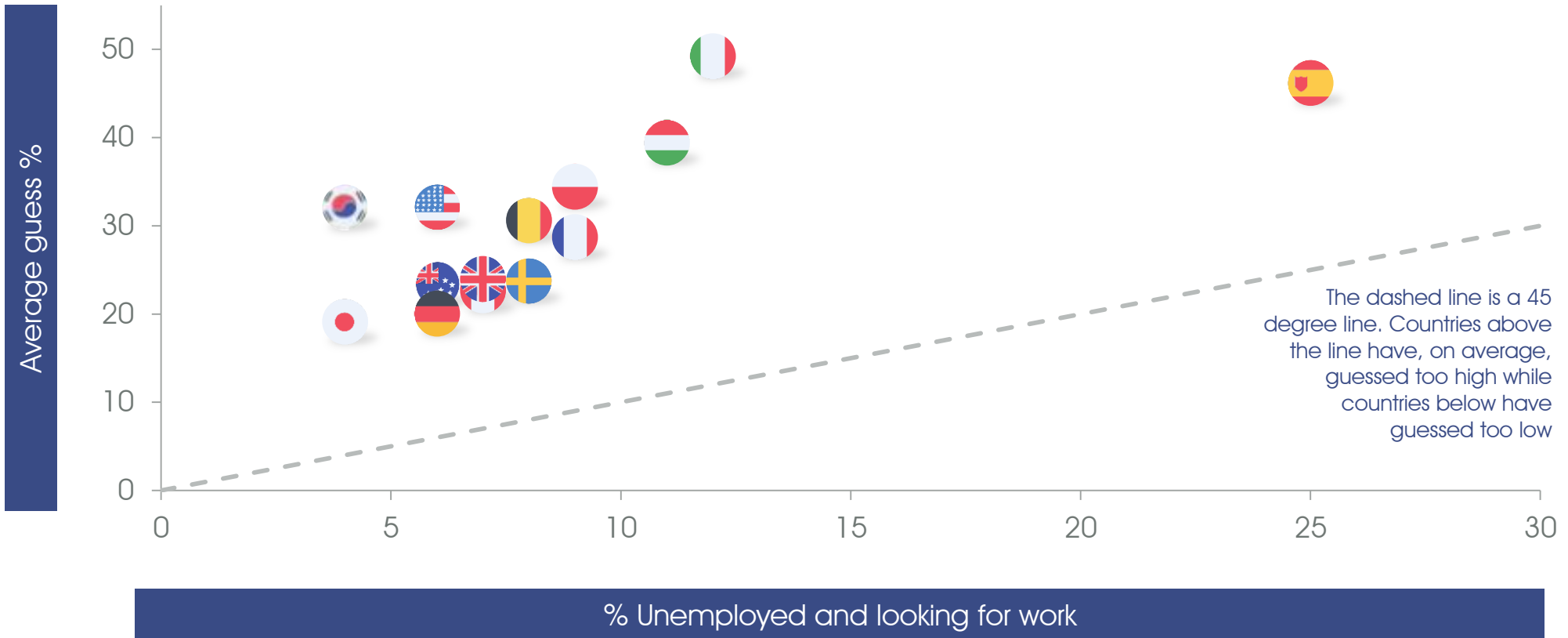
Unemployment levels are hugely overestimated in every country

% POINT DIFFERENCE		TOO HIGH	AVG. GUESS	ACTUAL
	Italy	+37	49	12
	South Korea	+28	32	4
	Hungary	+28	39	11
	US	+26	32	6
	Poland	+25	34	9
	Belgium	+23	31	8
	Spain	+21	46	25
	France	+20	29	9
	Australia	+17	23	6
	Great Britain	+17	24	7
	Sweden	+16	24	8
	Canada	+16	23	7
	Japan	+15	19	4
	Germany	+14	20	6



Q. Out of every 100 people of working age about how many do you think are unemployed and looking for work?

# Unemployment levels are hugely overestimated in every country



# WHAT DO YOU THINK THE **LIFE EXPECTANCY** WILL BE OF A CHILD BORN IN 2014?





Q. What do you think the life expectancy will be of a child born in 2014?

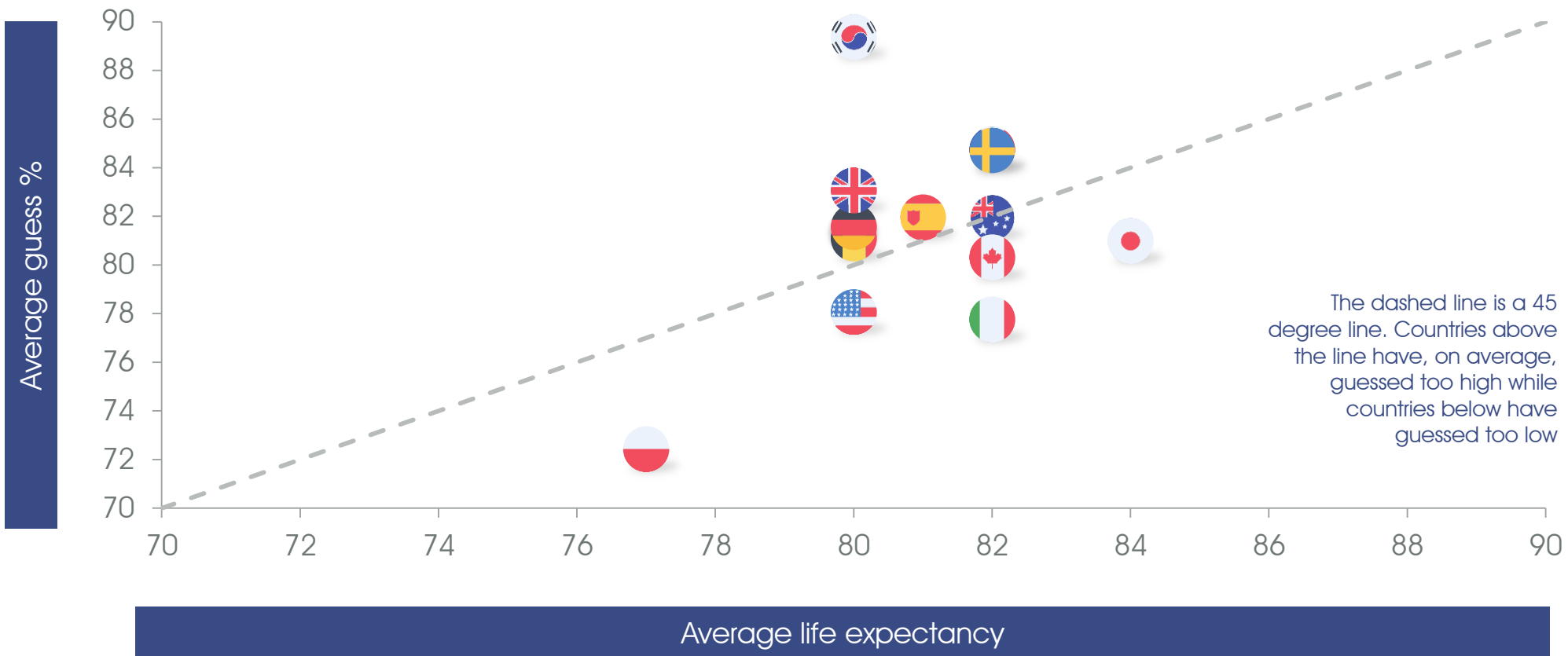
People in most countries have a fairly accurate picture of life expectancy

DIFFERENCE IN YEARS		TOO LOW	TOO HIGH	AVG. GUESS	ACTUAL
	South Korea		+9	89	80
	Great Britain		+3	83	80
	France		+3	85	82
	Sweden		+3	85	82
	Germany		+2	82	80
	Belgium		+1	81	80
	Spain		+1	82	81
	Australia ★			82	82
	Canada	-2		80	82
	US	-2		78	80
	Japan	-3		81	84
	Italy	-4		78	82
	Poland	-5		72	77
	Hungary	-7		68	75



Q. What do you think the life expectancy will be of a child born in 2014?

## People in most countries have a fairly accurate picture of life expectancy





- This study is based on a survey run on Ipsos Global @dvisor, between 12-26 August 2014
- Global @dvisor is conducted monthly in 24 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel.
- For this study, 14 countries with high internet penetration were included: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and the US.
- The research is based on an international sample of 11,527 adults aged 18-64 in the US and Canada, and aged 16-64 in all other countries. Sample size is approximately 1,000 per country, with the exception of Belgium, Hungary, Poland, South Korea and Sweden where each have a sample of approximately 500
- sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent Census data in each country
- The “point difference” figures that show differences between the “actual” and “average guesses” may not match a straight subtraction. This is due to rounding, as the calculation is conducted using decimal places

For more information on this release, please contact:

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- Data are weighted to ensure that the

