

Global Perceptions

2025 UK-Ireland Focus Group and Roundtable Report

April 2026



In partnership with:



British Embassy
Dublin



co-operationireland



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy



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Overview

The British Council in Ireland hosted a focus group and research briefing on the British Council's Global Perceptions 2025 research in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, on Monday, 30 March 2026.

What is Global Perceptions?

The British Council's flagship research programme, [Global Perceptions: how 18-34 year olds see the UK and the world](#) offers invaluable insight into the soft power and international influence of the world's leading powers and its focus on youth voices distinguishes it from other international soft power surveys and indices. This research provides a detailed picture of the values that matter to young people today, their trust in people and governments, their intentions to engage with education, arts and culture, and other metrics. Conducted by Savanta, the most recent iteration of the study was carried out in 2025 among 18 of the G20 nations including the 4 nations of the UK including Northern Ireland, and in 8 additional countries including Ireland. You can view the short explainer video, access headline findings and download the full report [on our website](#).

What did the Global Perceptions: UK-Ireland event consist of?

- On the morning of March 30, British Council Ireland, with partners Co-operation Ireland, hosted a focus group of 22 young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland aged 18- 34 years. They were invited to discuss the findings of the Global Perceptions 2025 survey and share their personal and professional reflections on the research. Doug Jefferson and Claudia Clark from Savanta were our rapporteurs for the focus group, capturing the discussions in the morning session, and sharing these with invited stakeholders at a research briefing in the afternoon.
- In the afternoon, we invited 14 key stakeholders in government, UK-Ireland relations, media and cultural organisations to a closed-room research briefing. We shared highlights from the morning's focus group and Global Perceptions 2025 findings relating to Ireland and Northern Ireland. This was followed by a facilitated Q&A session.
- At both the morning and afternoon sessions, British Council's Director of Research & Insight, Christine Wilson, presented highlights and key findings from Global Perceptions 2025, relating specifically to Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the UK as a whole.

What was the purpose of the event?

Originally piloted in 2024 in response to Global Perceptions 2023, the event tested and enriched the Global Perceptions research programme by grounding quantitative findings in young people's lived experience across the island of Ireland. It validated the data through dialogue, strengthened the British Council's evidence base, and gave stakeholders direct insight into how youth perceptions translate into real-world attitudes, relationships and future behaviour.

What is this report?

- This soft-copy, high-level report is a collation of the morning and afternoon sessions and comprises the qualitative and quantitative data discussed at the event.

A note on the inclusion of data and participants from Ireland and Northern Ireland

- ❖ The British Council is committed to ensuring that our data is robust, relevant and valuable to our key partners, stakeholders and civil society in each of the countries in which we operate.
- ❖ At a moment where the relationship between Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain continues to evolve, bringing young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland into the same carefully facilitated space added depth, credibility and nuance to the research. It enabled participants to reflect not just on abstract survey findings, but on how perceptions are shaped by proximity, history and ongoing social and political change on the island itself. This marked a deliberate evolution from the 2024 Ireland-only event toward a more contextually grounded model that better reflects the realities of life, identity and connection on the island of Ireland.



Event overview

Introductions:

- Welcome: British Council Ireland Country Director, Dr Kerry McCall Magan
- Overview of Global Perceptions Survey: British Council Director Research & Insight, Christine Wilson

Morning Focus Group:

- Discussion on Global Perceptions data with 22 participants facilitated by Cooperation Ireland Regional Development Officer Director, Mags Lucey and Programme Manager, Matt Gamble

Facilitated Discussion:

- Silent Conversation: Reaction to Overall Findings
- Position Statements: Values and Issues
- Q&A discussion on demographics & final reflections by group
- Feedback & summary from Rapporteurs

Afternoon Research Briefing:

- Welcome and introductions: British Council Ireland Director, Dr Kerry McCall Magan
- Welcome from Royal Irish Academy President, Professor Daniel Carey
- Welcome from British Ambassador to Ireland, Kara Owen CVO CMG
- Overview to ARINS from Co-Directors Pauric Dempsey and Ruth Hegarty
- Overview of Global Perceptions survey findings: British Council Director Research & Insight, Christine Wilson

Roundtable Discussion:

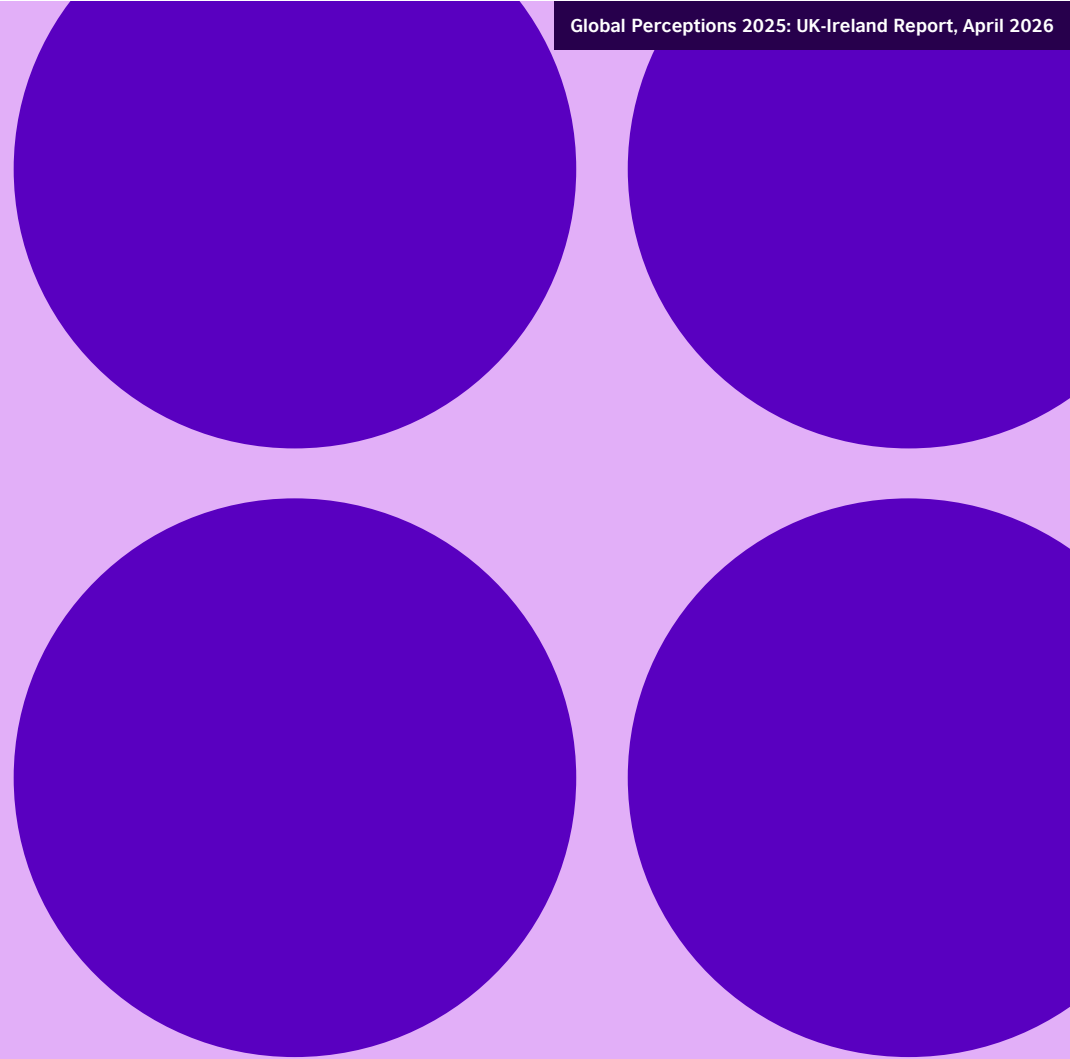
- Rapporteur's report on Focus Group
- Q&A and facilitated discussion between key stakeholders and focus group participants led by Dr Kerry McCall Magan



Research and Insight Presentation

Global Perceptions 2025: how 18-34 year olds see the UK and the world

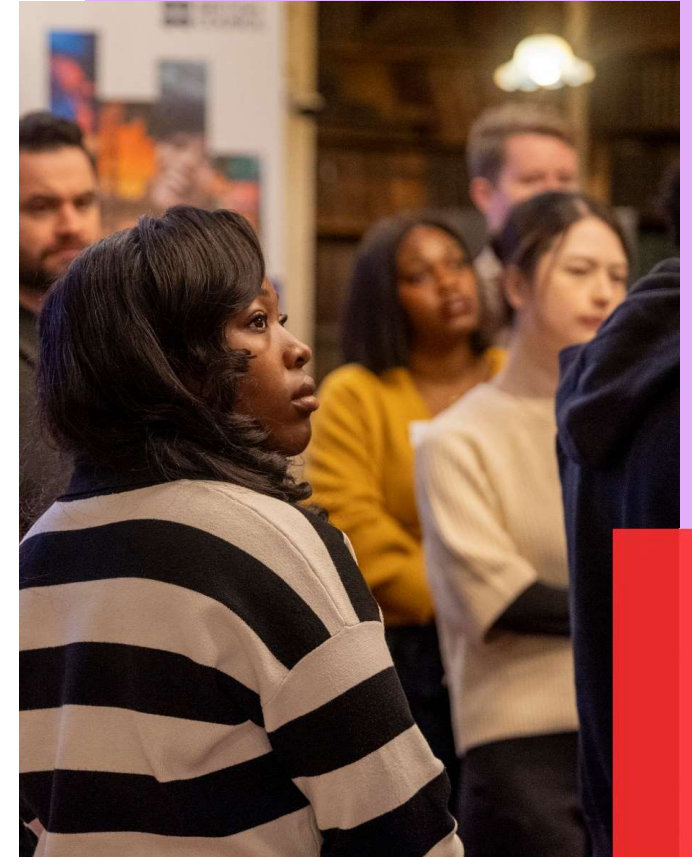
British Council flagship research
tracking youth perceptions of
G20 nations



About the research

Now in its seventh iteration, the British Council has been running Global Perceptions since 2016

- ❖ Perceptions matter as they drive people's behaviours, with significant implications for a country's prosperity, security, international influence and ability to effect positive change in the world.
- ❖ Roughly every two years the British Council survey young people who have completed secondary education from G20 member states and samples are weighted to the national population by age, gender and region.
- ❖ The focus on **youth voices** distinguishes Global Perceptions from other international soft power surveys and indices. We believe it is truly vital to understand what the leaders of tomorrow think of the world, as they will be making the decisions that shape our future.
- ❖ We focus on a range of metrics that collectively generate a **detailed picture of each G20 country's international standing** and leverage such as attractiveness, trust, international influence and values that young people feel the world should be supporting.
- ❖ Importantly, we use this insight to understand the UK's influence and trends in soft power internationally, **to inform UK and British Council strategies and programme development**, and to provide opportunities and platforms for young people.
- ❖ In 2026 we are marking the 10-year anniversary of Global Perceptions, starting with this event in Ireland. We are planning several other focus group and research briefings across the globe.



Which countries are included in Global Perceptions 2025?

18 G20 member states and 8 additional countries (listed in brackets)

- ❖ **Americas:** Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, USA
- ❖ **Sub Saharan Africa:** South Africa, (Kenya), (Nigeria)
- ❖ **South Asia:** India, (Pakistan), (Bangladesh)
- ❖ **Middle East and North Africa:** Saudi Arabia, (Egypt)
- ❖ **East Asia:** Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, (Vietnam)
- ❖ **EU:** France, Germany, Italy, **(Ireland)**
- ❖ **Wider Europe:** Turkey, (Ukraine)
- ❖ **UK:** UK including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

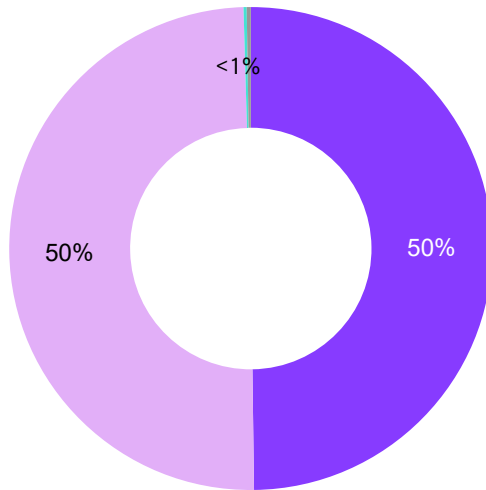


Who do we survey?

Sample Demographics (G20 countries, excluding Russia)

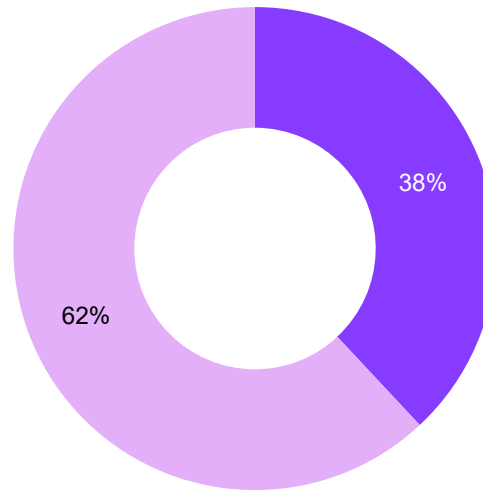
Gender

■ Male ■ Female ■ In another way ■ Prefer not to say

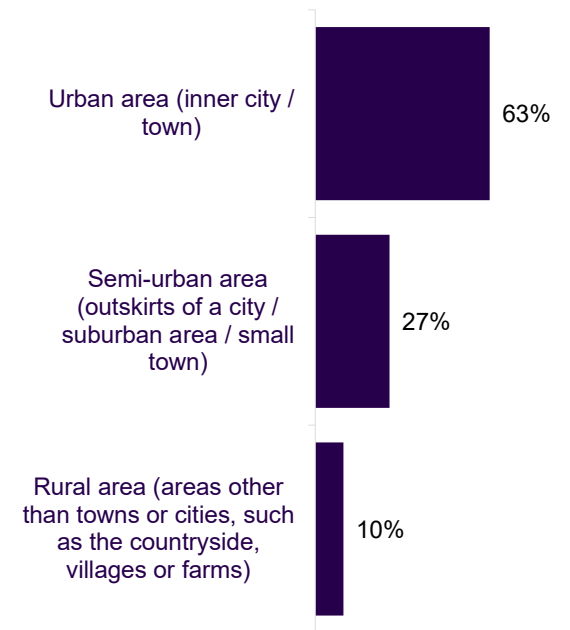


Age

■ 18-24 ■ 25-34



Urbanity

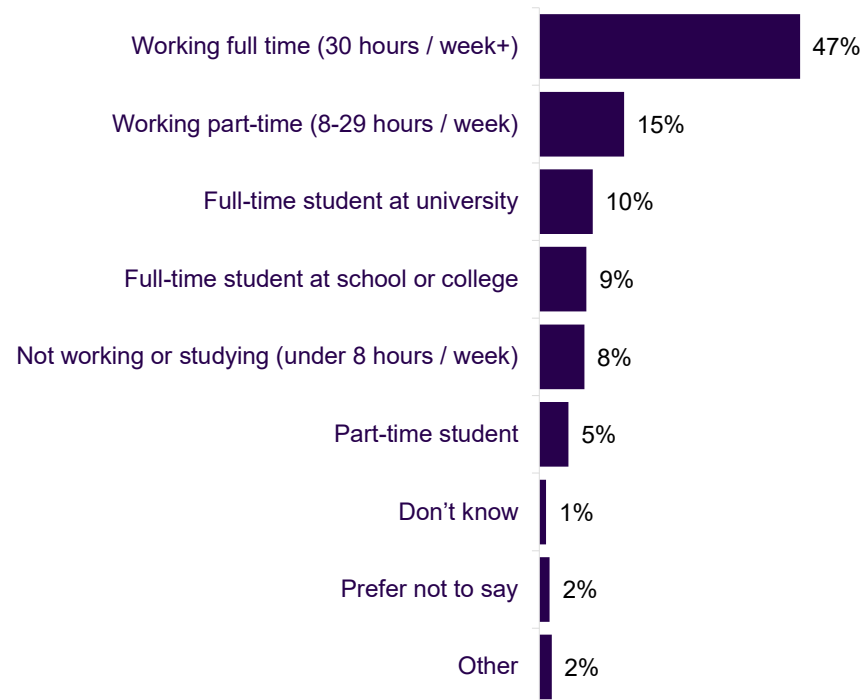


D1. What is your gender? | D2. AGE. How old are you? | D4. How would you categorize the area in which you live? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957). Showing unweighted data.

Who do we survey? continued

Sample Demographics (G20 countries, excluding Russia)

Current occupation



D6. Which of these best describes your current occupation? | D3_COUNTRY. And what is the highest level of education you have completed to date? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957). Showing unweighted data.

Sample Demographics: Ireland (1013)

❖ **Gender:** 51% male and 49% female

❖ **Age:** 36% aged 18-24 and 64% aged 25-34

❖ **Urbanity:** 43% based in an urban area, 35% based in a semi-urban area and 22% based in a rural area

❖ **Occupation:**

- 53% working full time and 15% working part-time
- 19% full time student at school, college or university
- 13% not working or studying, studying part time, prefer not to say, or other

❖ **Education:**

- 31% Leaving Certificate or equivalent
- 21% honours bachelor's degree / higher diploma
- 17% advance or higher certificate
- 14% master's degree / postgraduate diploma
- 10% ordinary bachelor's degree
- 6% Junior Certificate or equivalent
- 1% doctoral degree (PhD) or higher



Sample Demographics: Northern Ireland (500)

❖ **Gender:** 46% male and 53% female

❖ **Age:** 42% aged 18-24 and 58% aged 25-34

❖ **Urbanity:** 46% based in an urban area, 36% based in a semi-urban area and 19% based in a rural area

❖ **Occupation:**

- 52% working full time and 15% working part-time
- 17% full time student at school, college or university
- 15% not working or studying, studying part-time, prefer not to say, or other

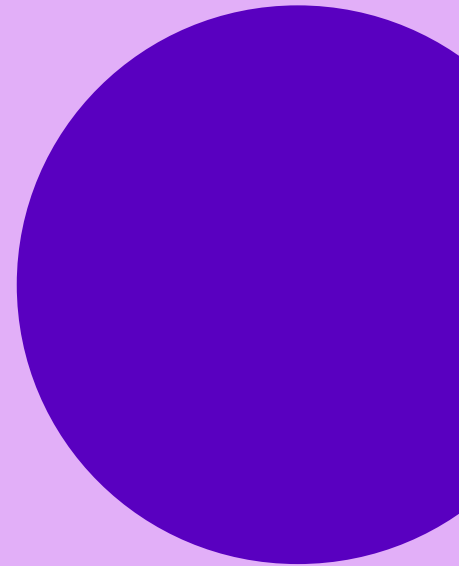
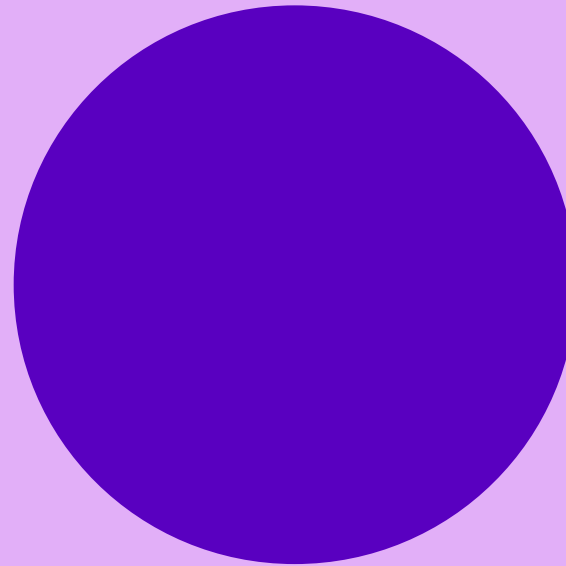
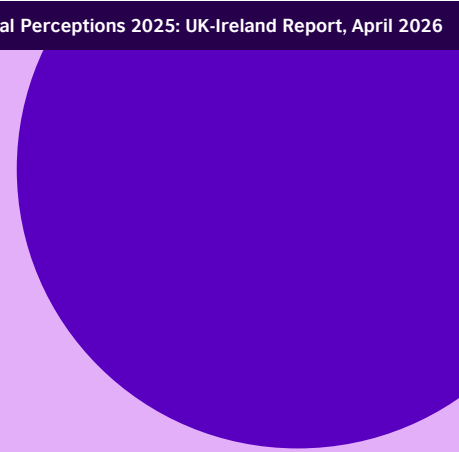
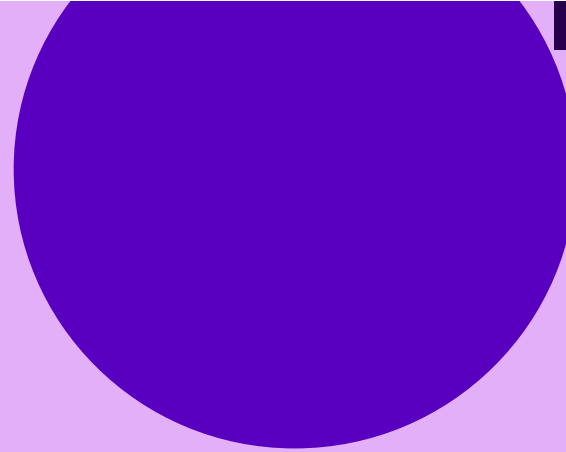
❖ **Education:**

- 33% NVQ4 / HNC / HND / Bachelor's degree or similar
- 25% NVQ3 / SCE Higher Grade / Advanced GNVQ / GCE A/AS or similar
- 22% GNVQ / GSVQ / GSCE / SCE standard
- 14% NVQ5 or post-graduate diploma
- 6% NVQ1 or NVQ2

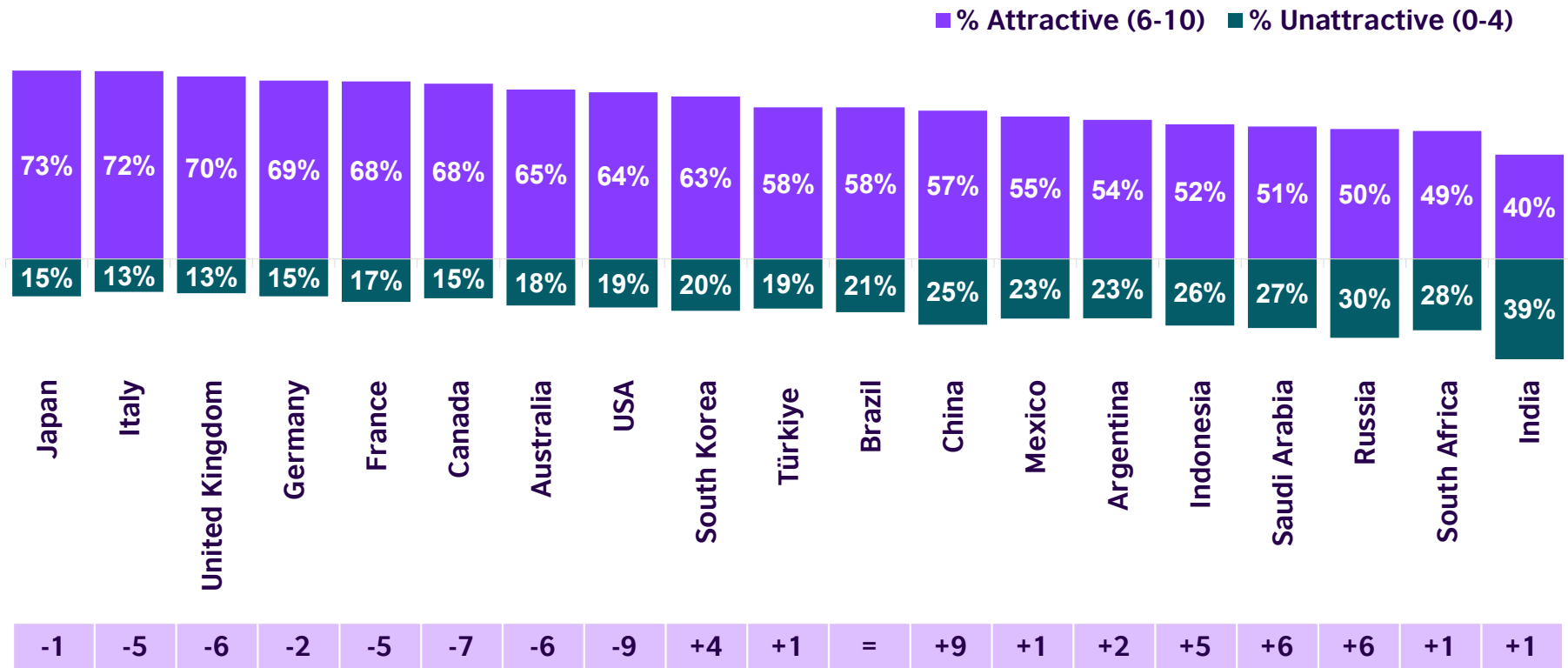


G20 perceptions

Sharing headline findings



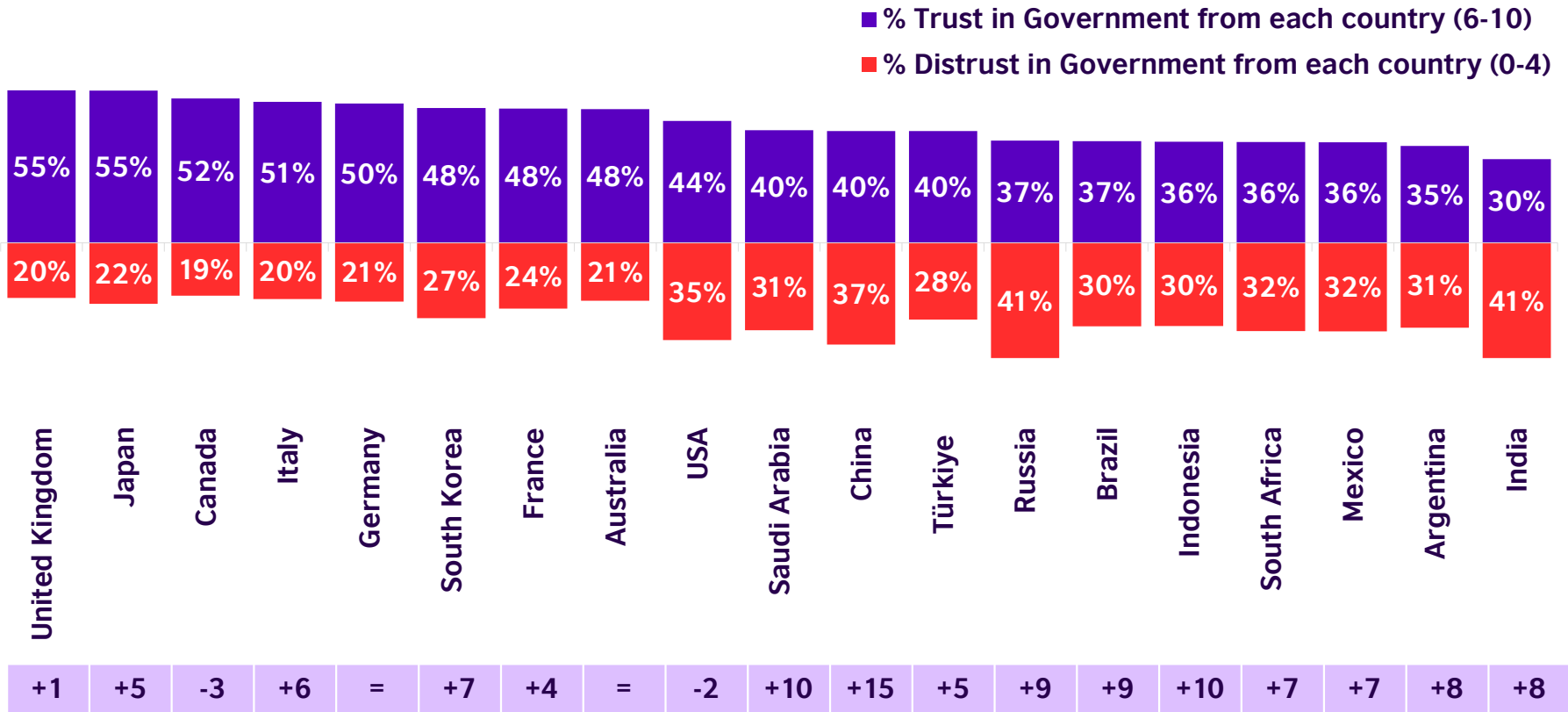
Overall attractiveness of G20 countries



% Difference in attractiveness scores between 2023 and 2025

Q8. Taking everything into consideration, how attractive overall do you find each of the countries below? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

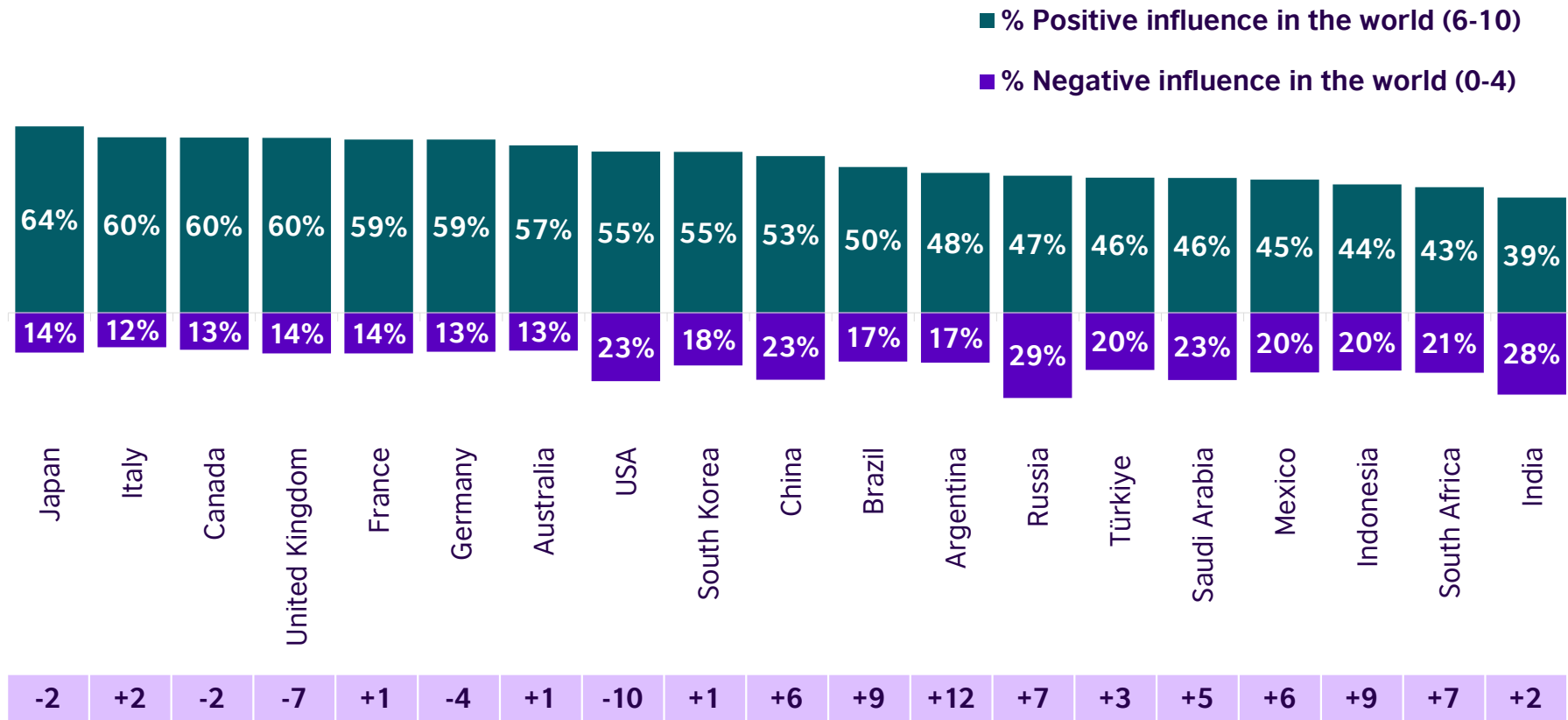
Trust in governments of G20 countries



% Difference in trust scores between 2023 and 2025

Q6. And now thinking about Government, to what extent do you distrust or trust the government from each of these countries? | Base: Those who live in countries participating in the G20, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957). Participants were not asked about their own country.

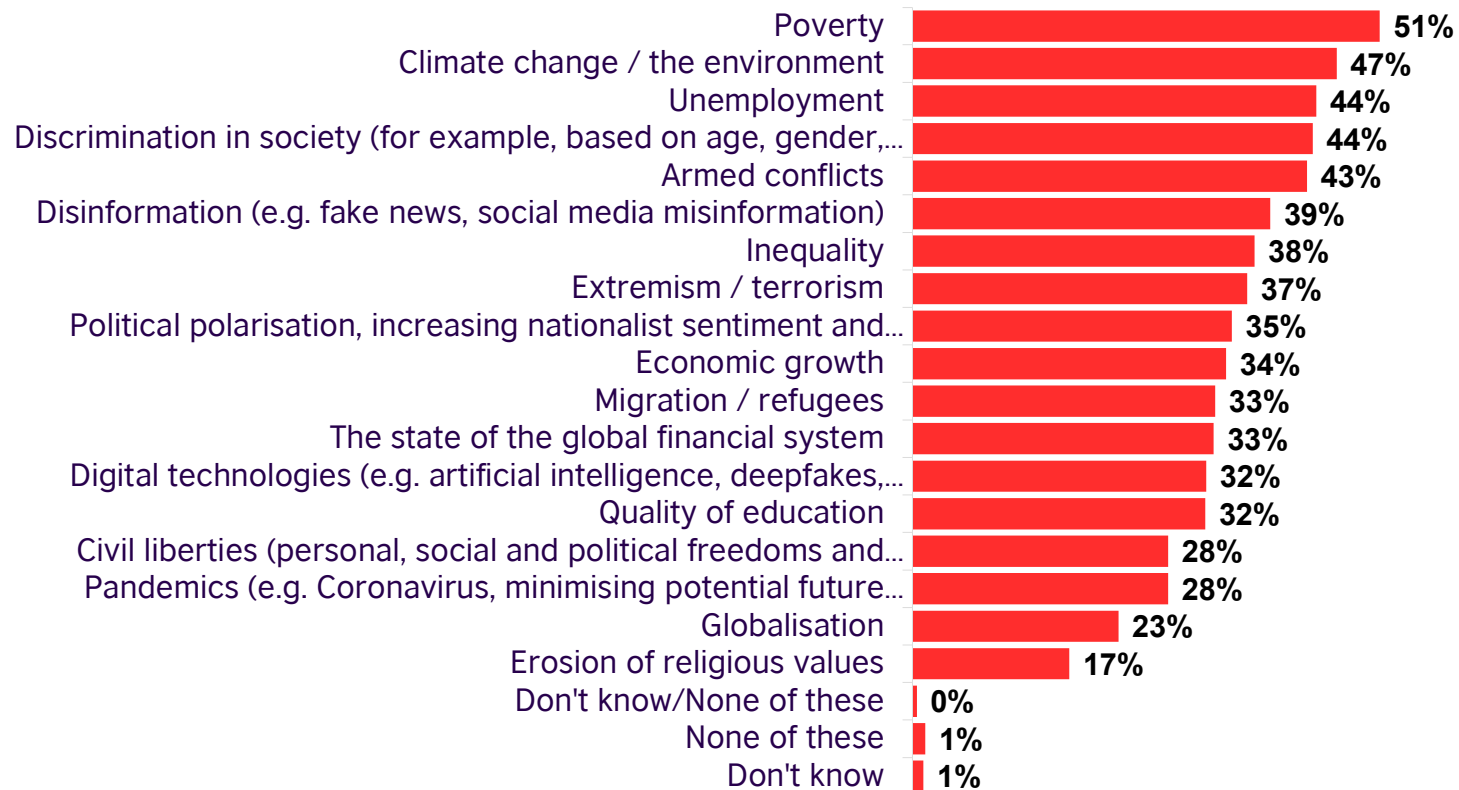
G20 countries and their perceived influence in the world overall



% Difference in attractiveness scores between 2023 and 2025

Q15D. And taking everything into account, how would you rate these countries on their overall influence in the world? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957). Participants were not asked about their own country.

G20 perceptions on the most important issues facing the world today



Q4. Which, if any, of these do you think are the most important issues facing the world today? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957).

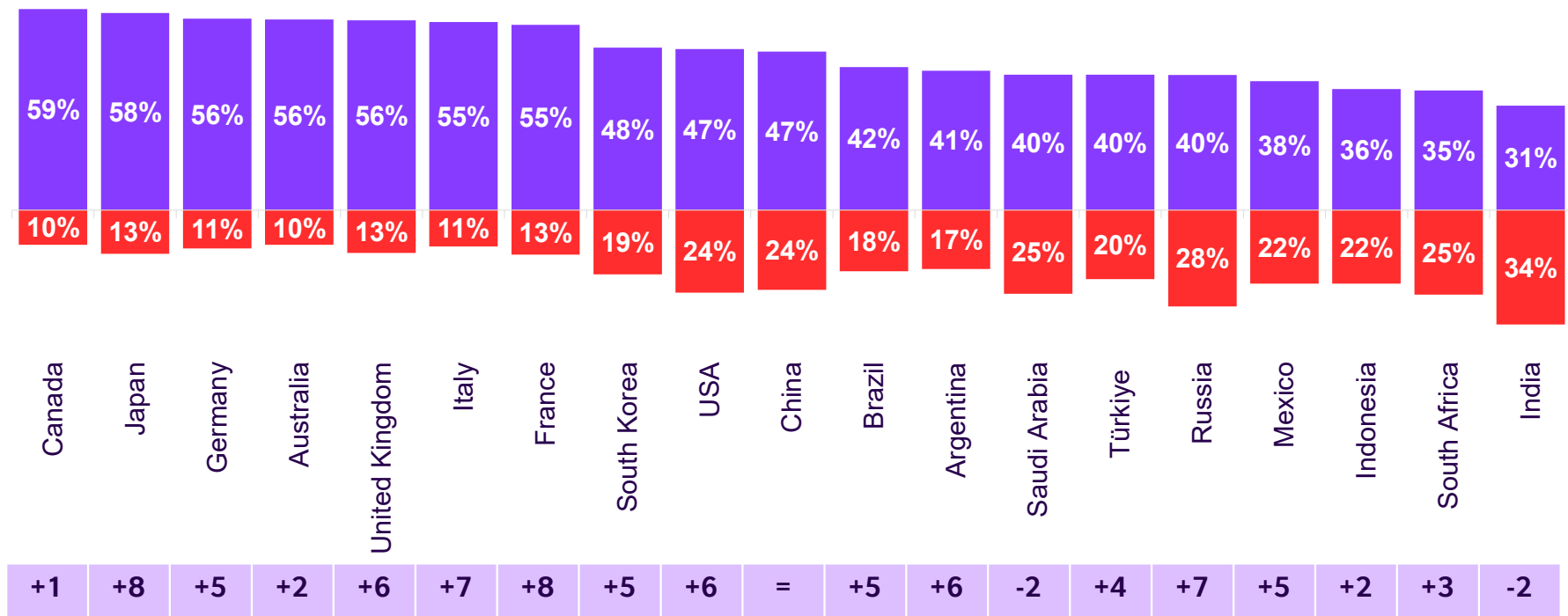
G20 perceptions on the most important values countries should support in 21st century



Q9a. Which THREE of the values listed below, if any, do you think are the most important values that countries around the world should support and encourage in the 21st century? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957).

G20 perceptions on how well each country supports 21st century values

■ % Very/fairly well ■ % Very/fairly poorly

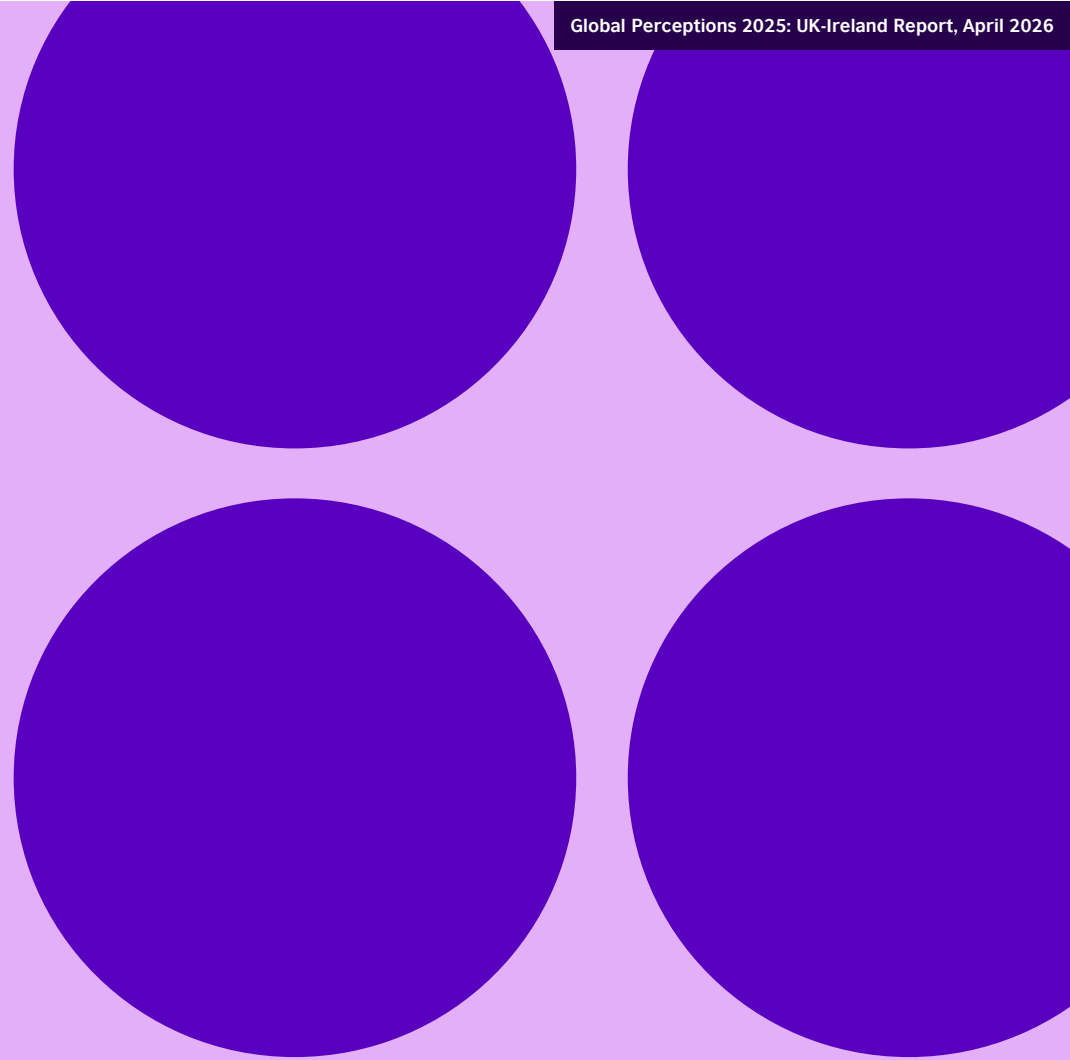


% Difference in very/fairly well scores between 2023 and 2025

Q10. And thinking about both your own country and the other countries listed below, how well do you think they support and encourage the values you think are important in the 21st century? | Base: Those who live in G20 countries, excluding Russia, 2025 (n=20957).

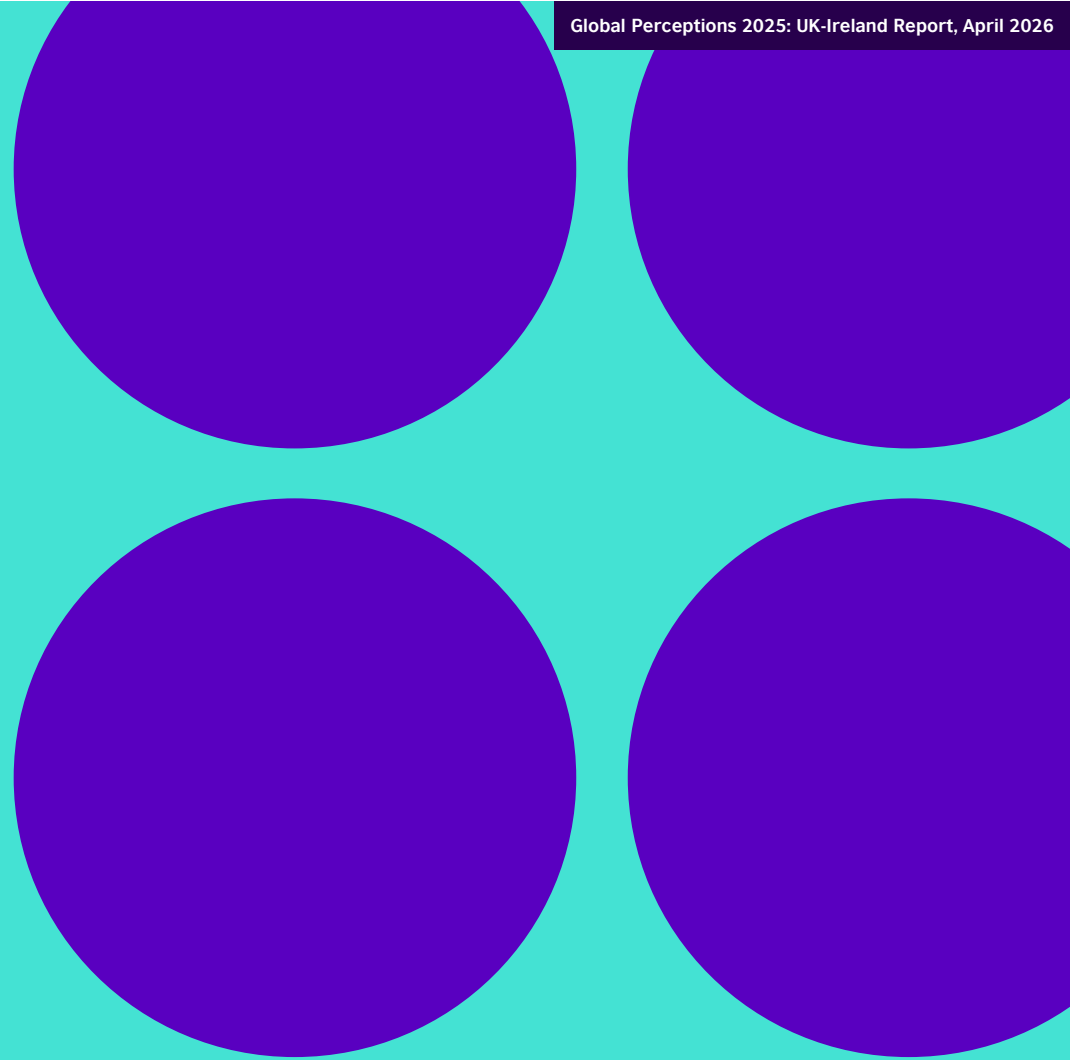
The view from Ireland and Northern Ireland

Sharing findings from Global
Perceptions respondents in
Ireland and Northern Ireland

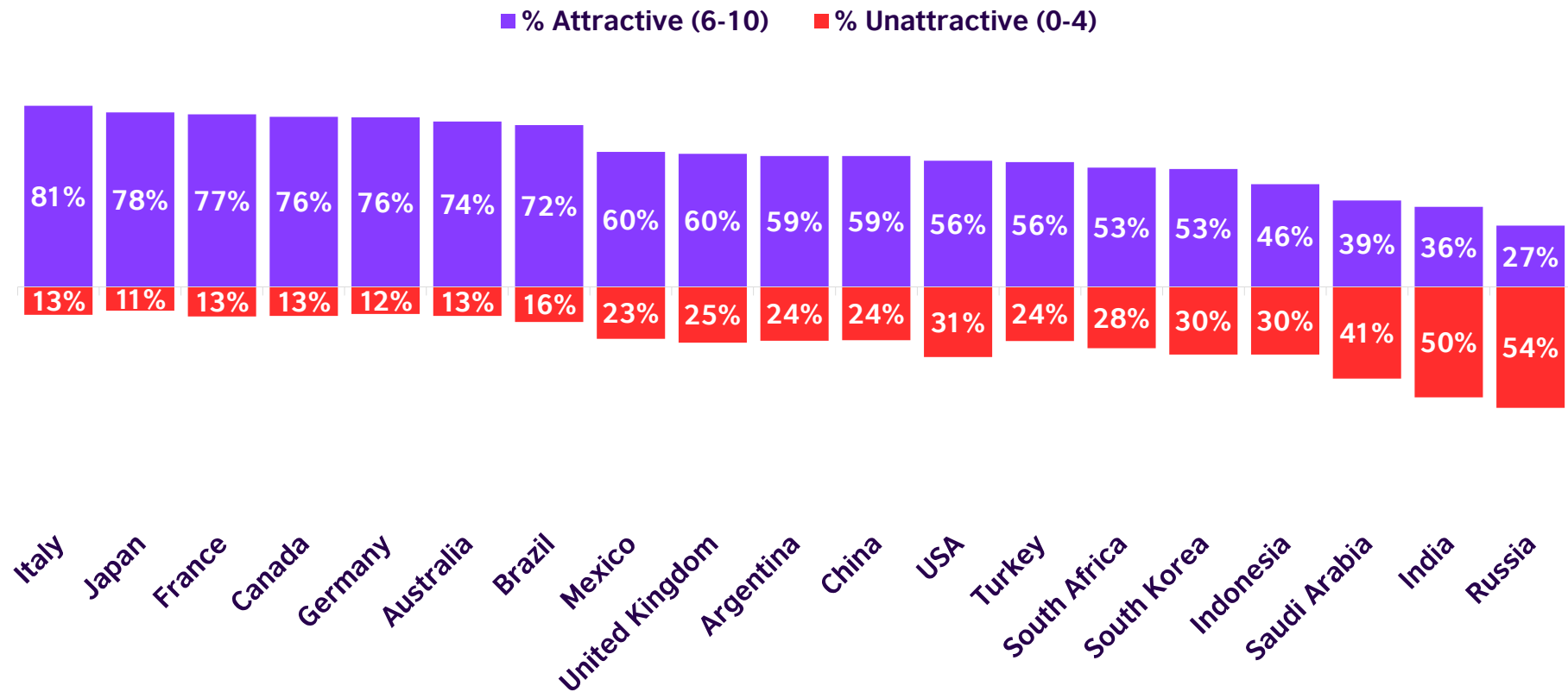


Attractiveness, trust and international influence

Exploring perceptions of G20 countries among Ireland and Northern Ireland respondents

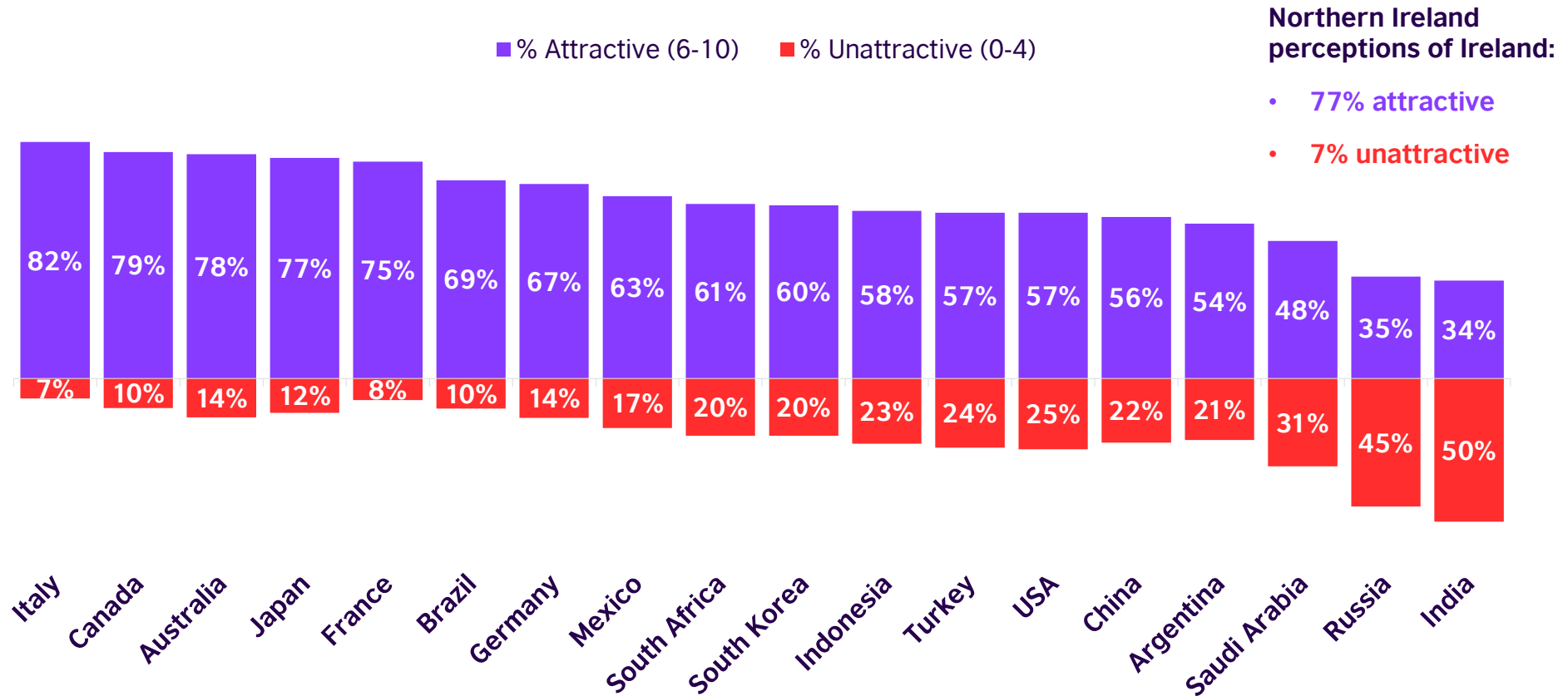


Ireland perceptions: overall attractiveness of G20 countries



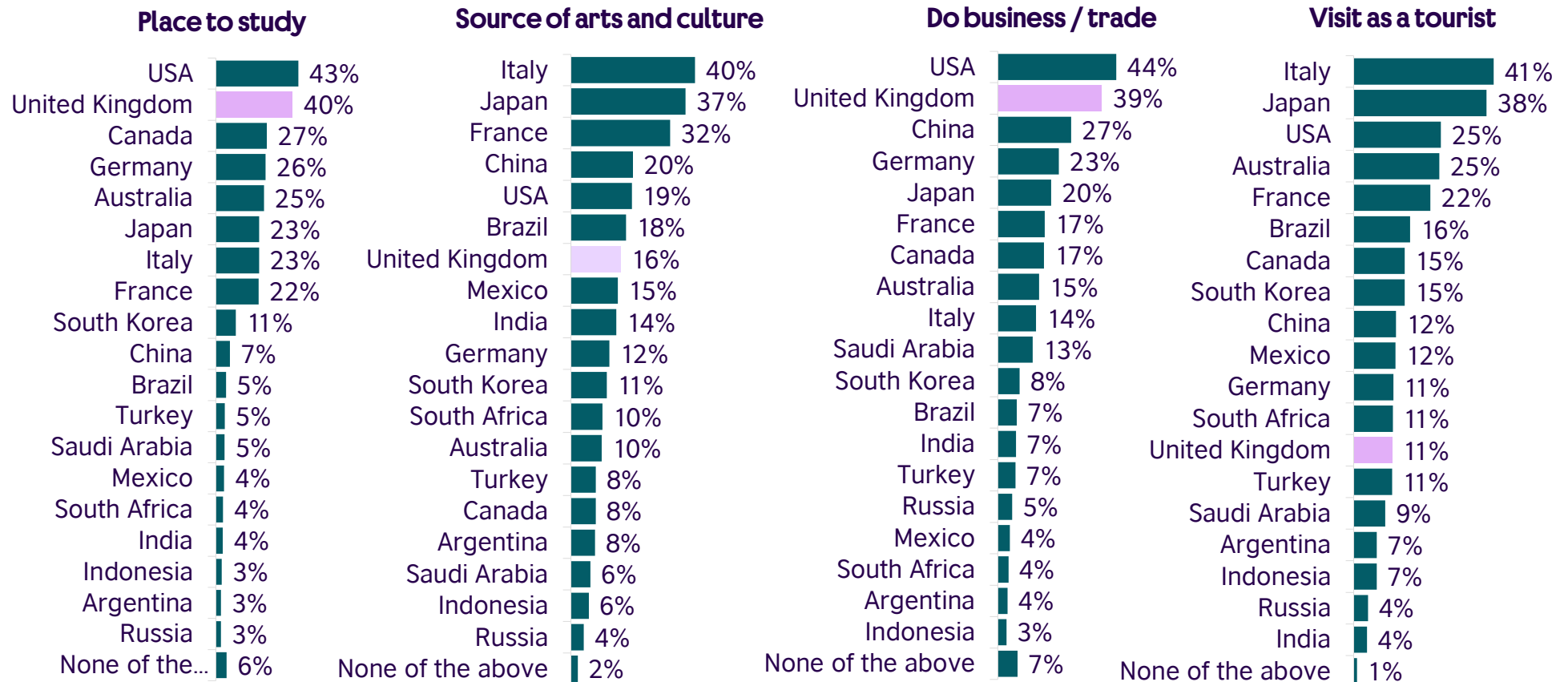
Q8. Taking everything into consideration, how attractive overall do you find each of the countries below? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Northern Ireland perceptions: overall attractiveness of G20 countries



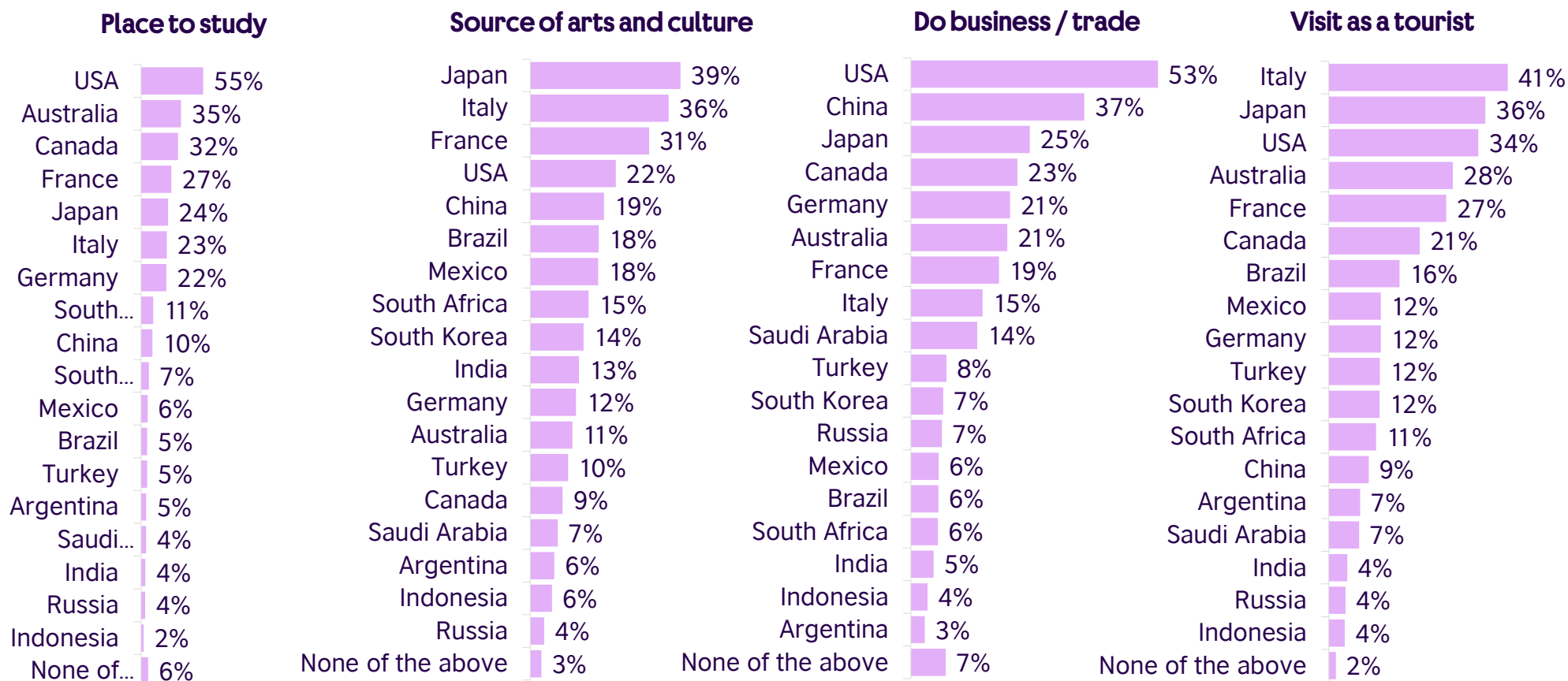
Q8. Taking everything into consideration, how attractive overall do you find each of the countries below? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Ireland perceptions: domains of attractiveness



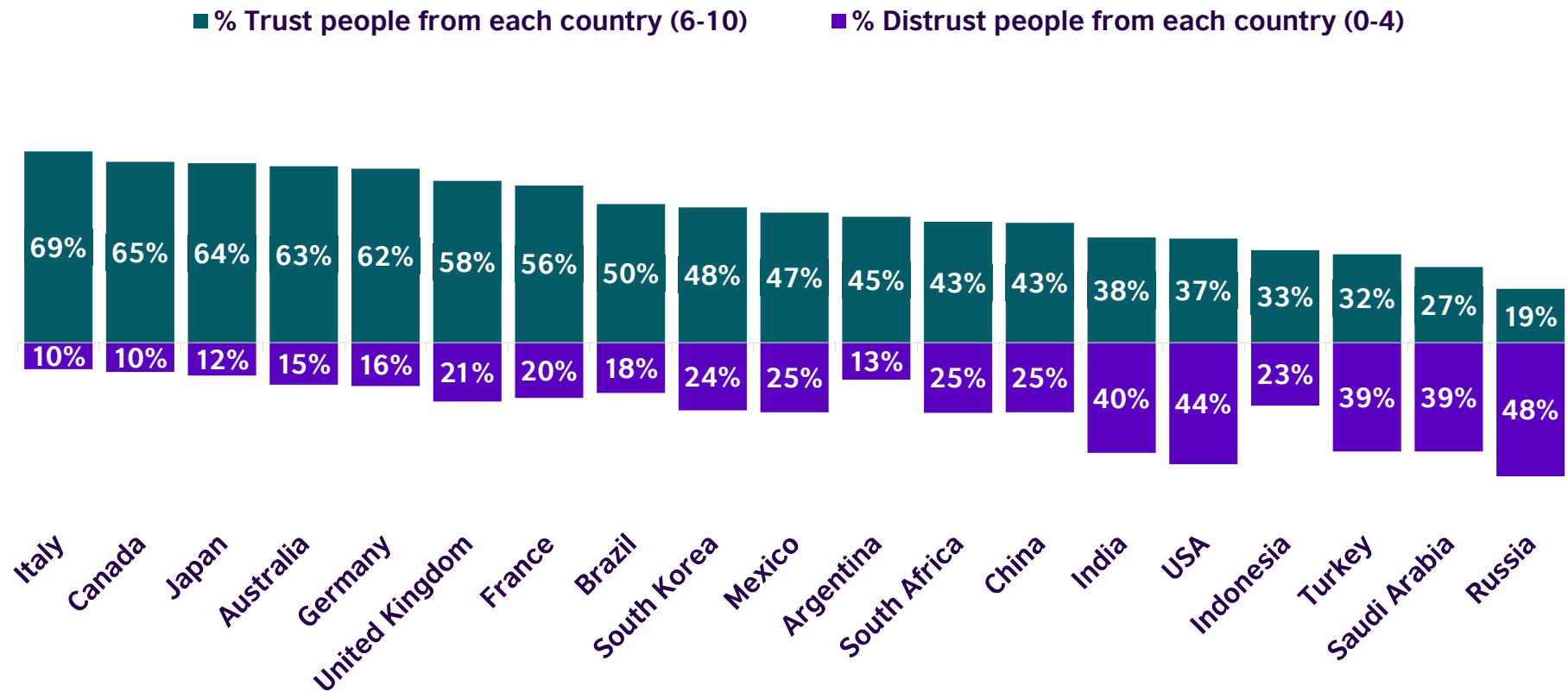
Qs 2a-2e. Which THREE of the following countries do you find MOST attractive as a country in which to study, as a source of arts and culture (e.g. classical/ popular music, digital arts, theatre, literature, visual arts, film, museums etc.), as a country with which to do business / trade, to visit as a tourist? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013). Participants not asked about own country.

Northern Ireland perceptions: domains of attractiveness



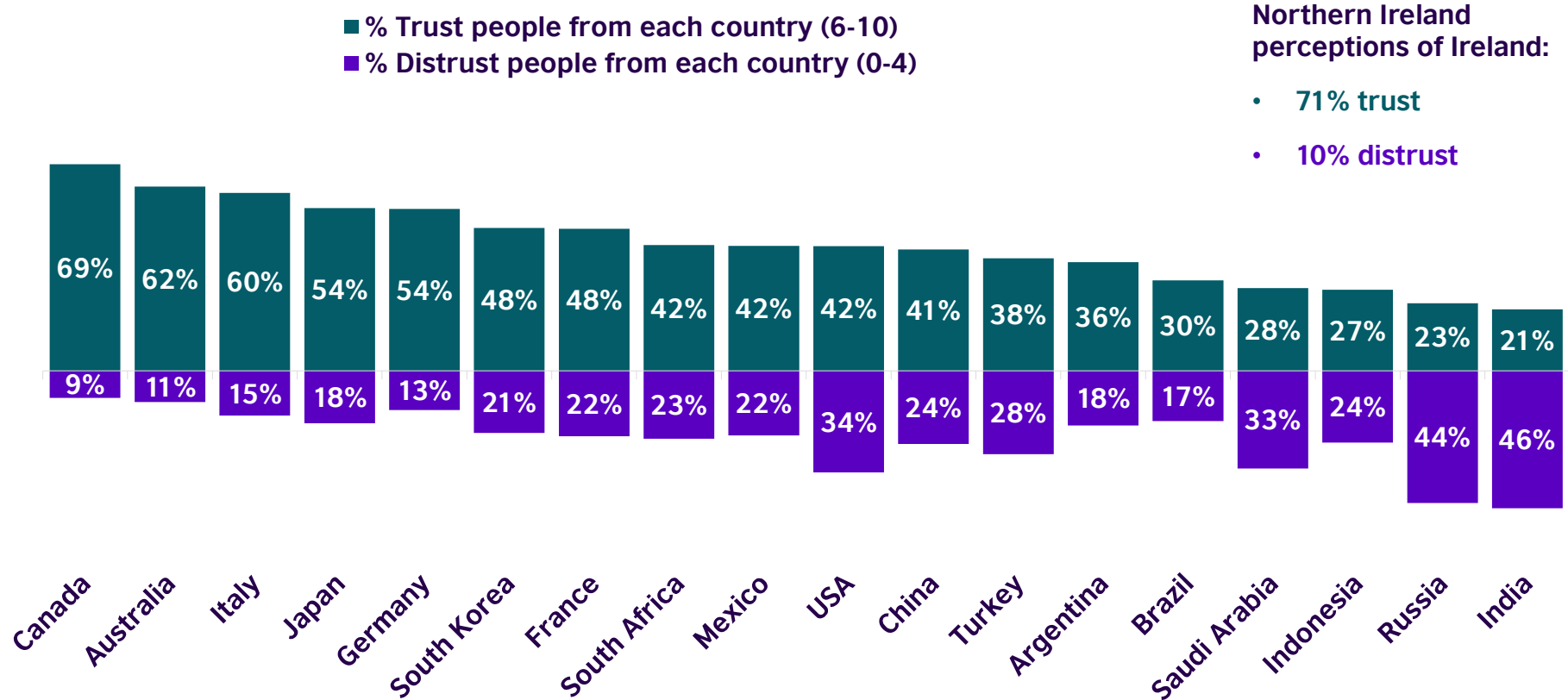
Qs 2a-2e. Which THREE of the following countries do you find MOST attractive as a country in which to study, as a source of arts and culture (e.g. classical/ popular music, digital arts, theatre, literature, visual arts, film, museums etc.), as a country with which to do business / trade, to visit as a tourist? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500. Participants not asked about own country.

Ireland perceptions: trust in people from G20 countries



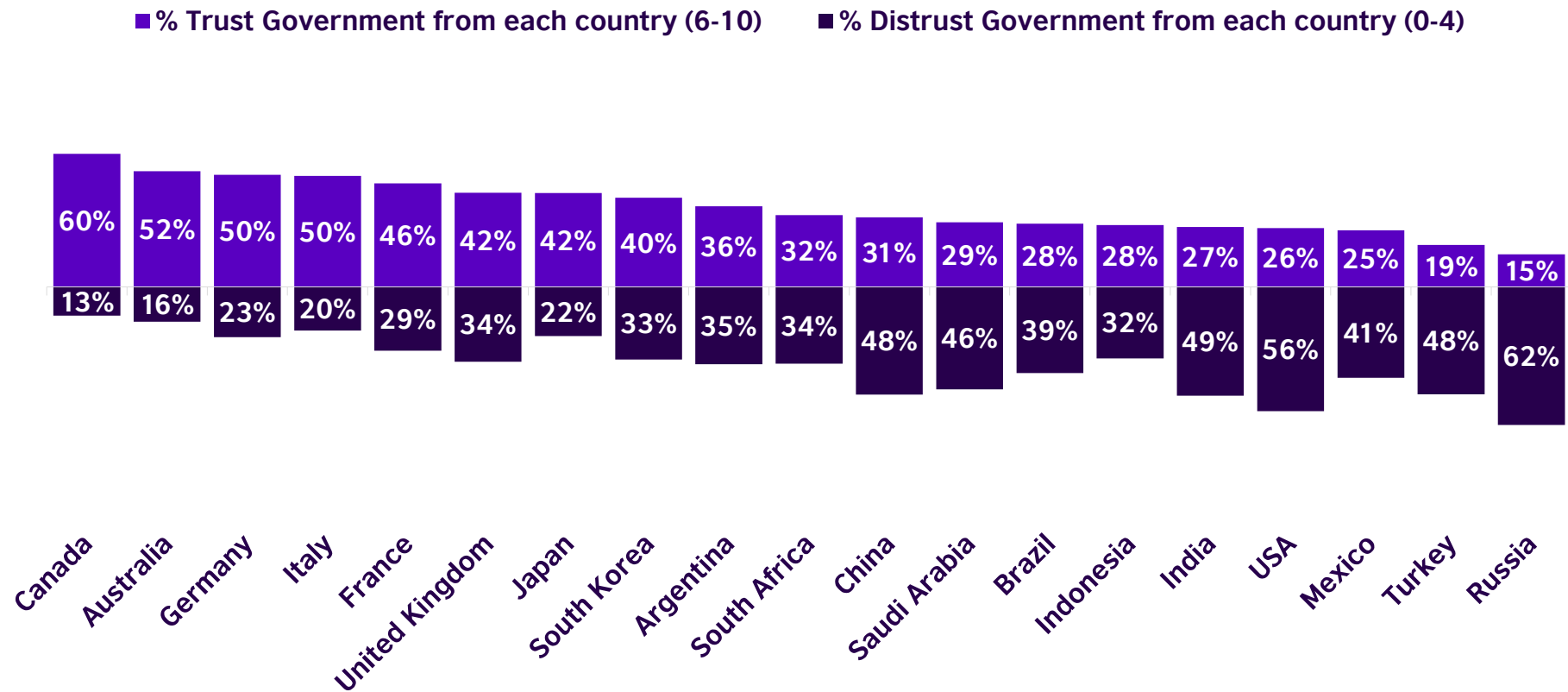
Q5. Thinking generally about people, to what extent do you distrust or trust the people from each of these countries? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Northern Ireland perceptions: trust in people from G20 countries



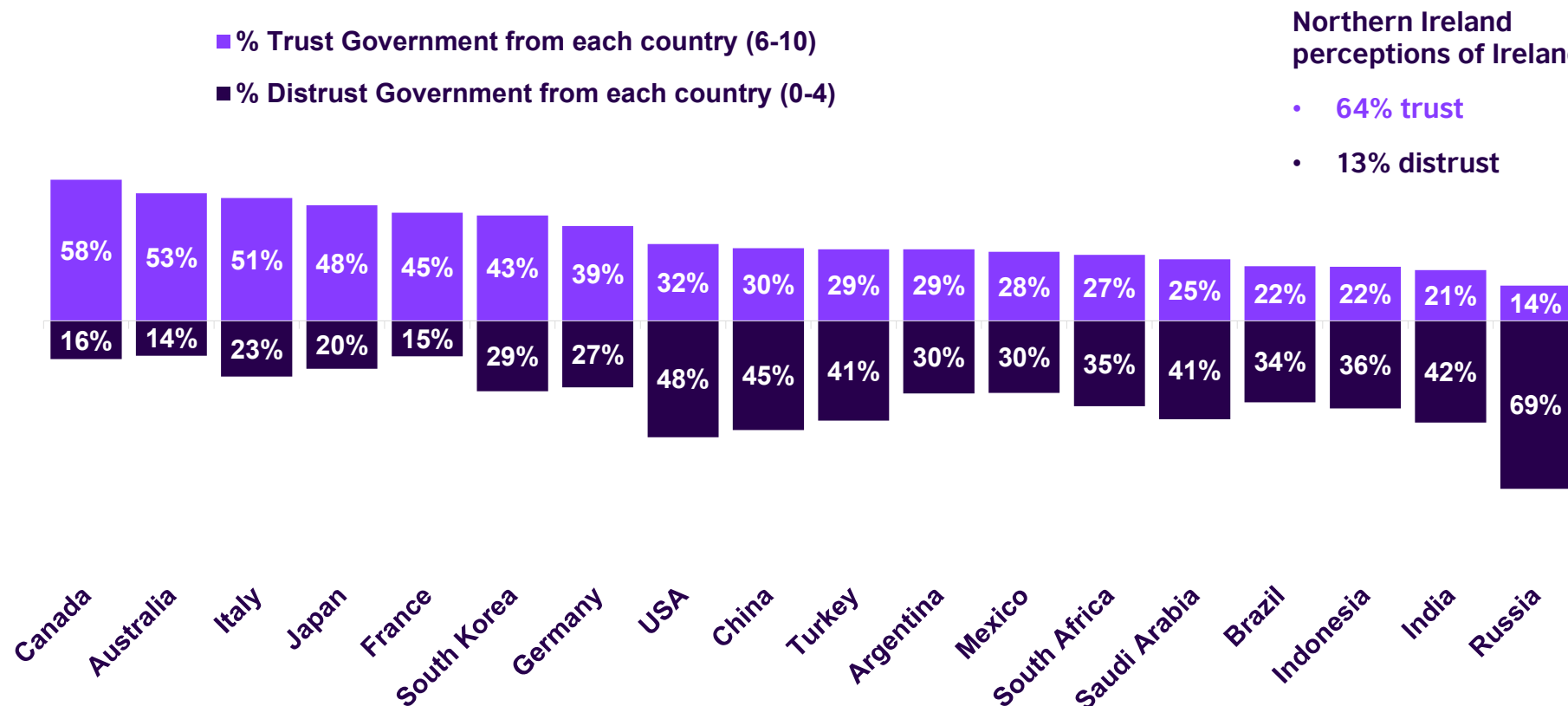
Q5. Thinking generally about people, to what extent do you distrust or trust the people from each of these countries? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Ireland perceptions: trust in the governments of G20 countries



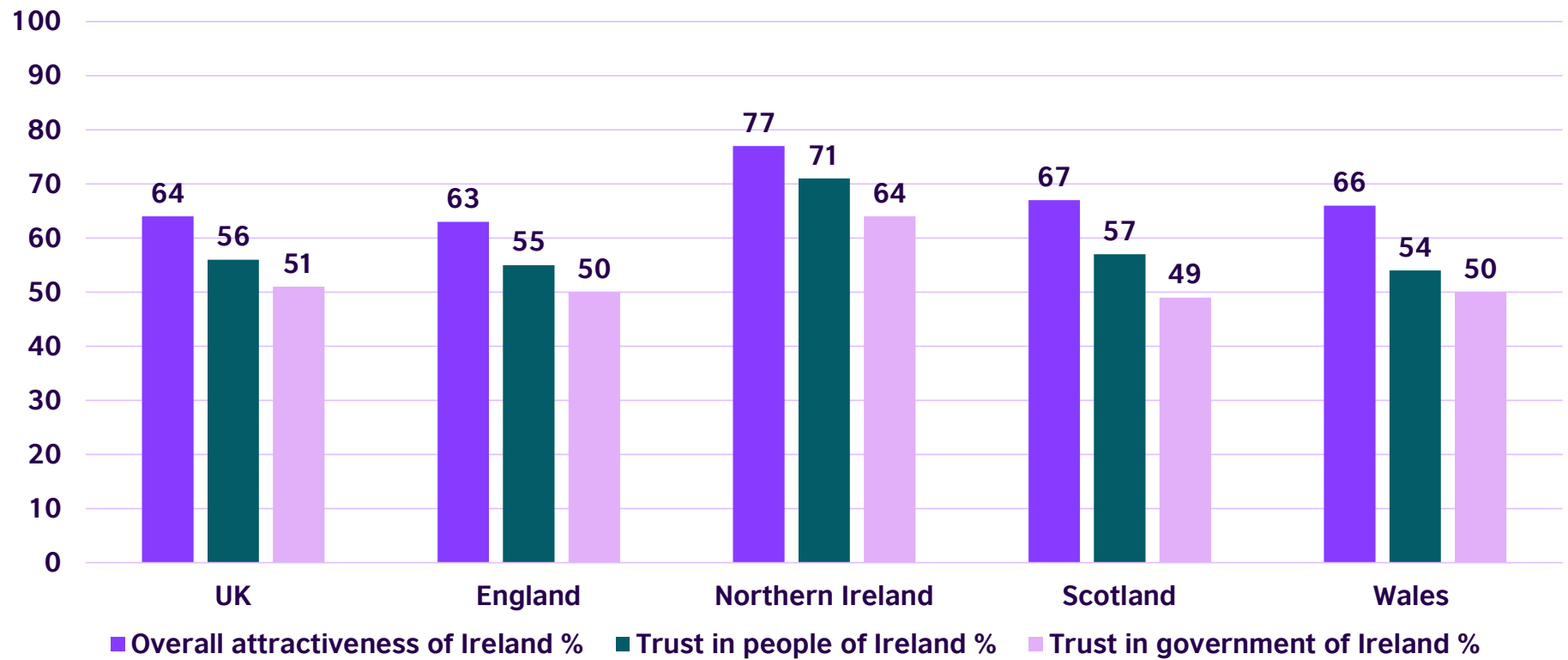
Q6. And now thinking about Government, to what extent do you distrust or trust the government from each of these countries? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Northern Ireland perceptions: trust in the governments of G20 countries

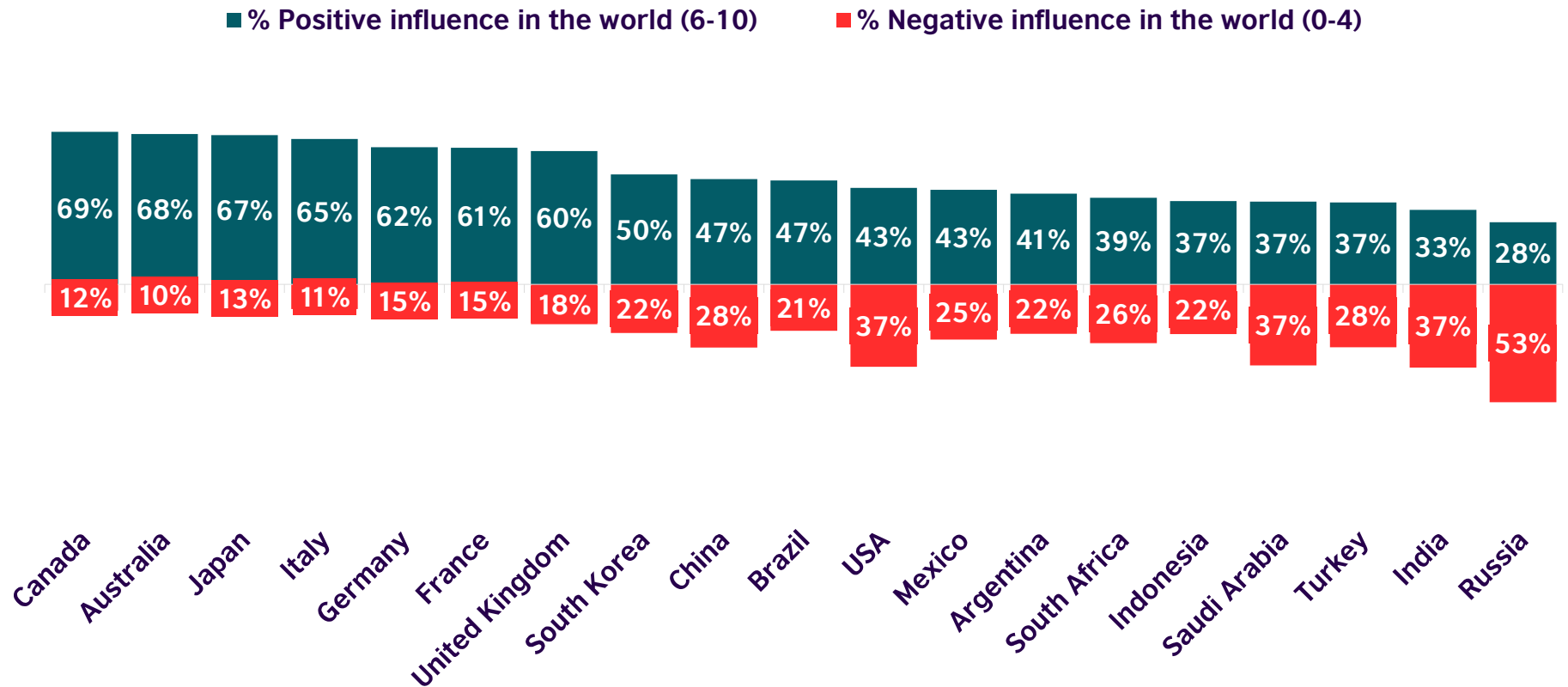


Q6. And now thinking about Government, to what extent do you distrust or trust the government from each of these countries? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 and saw each country (each country has its own base size). Participants were not asked about their own country.

UK and four nations perceptions: attractiveness of and trust in Ireland

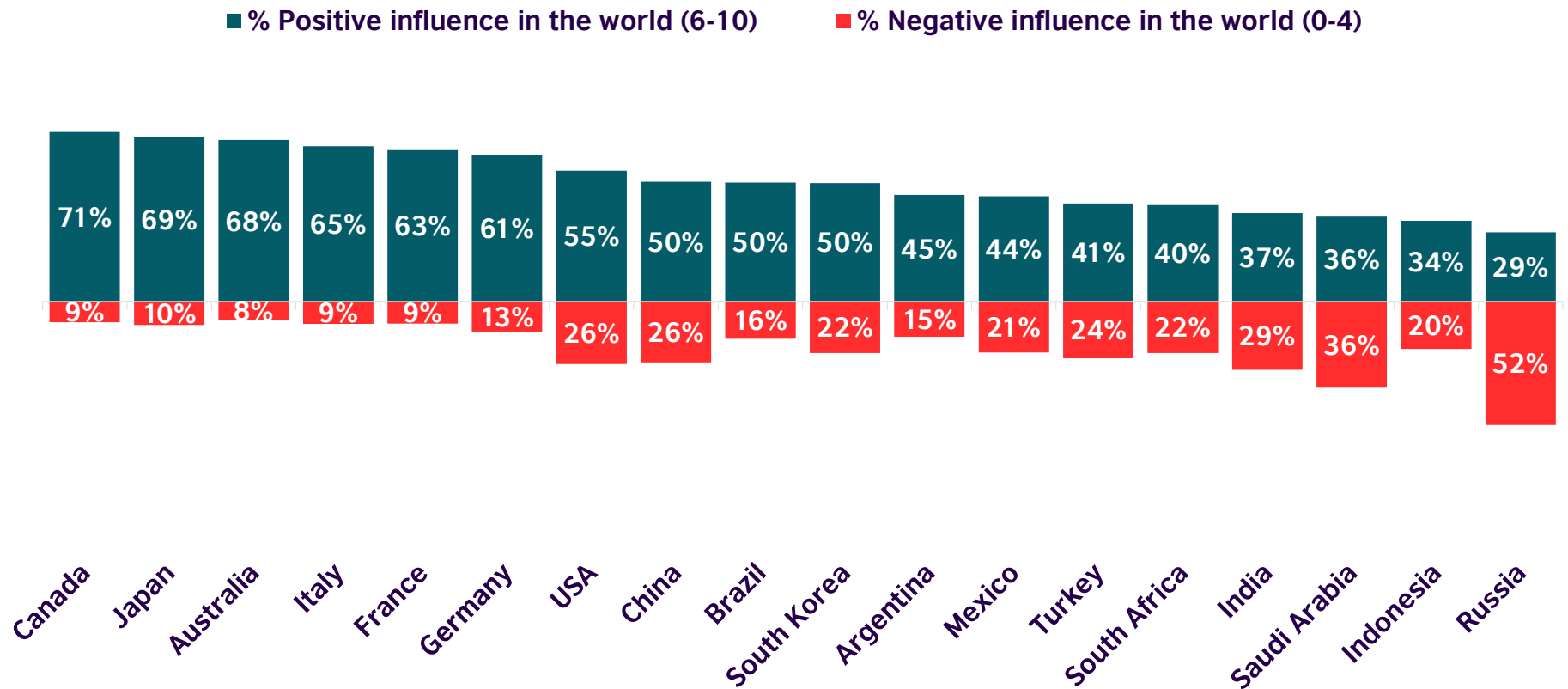


Ireland perceptions: G20 countries and their influence in the world overall



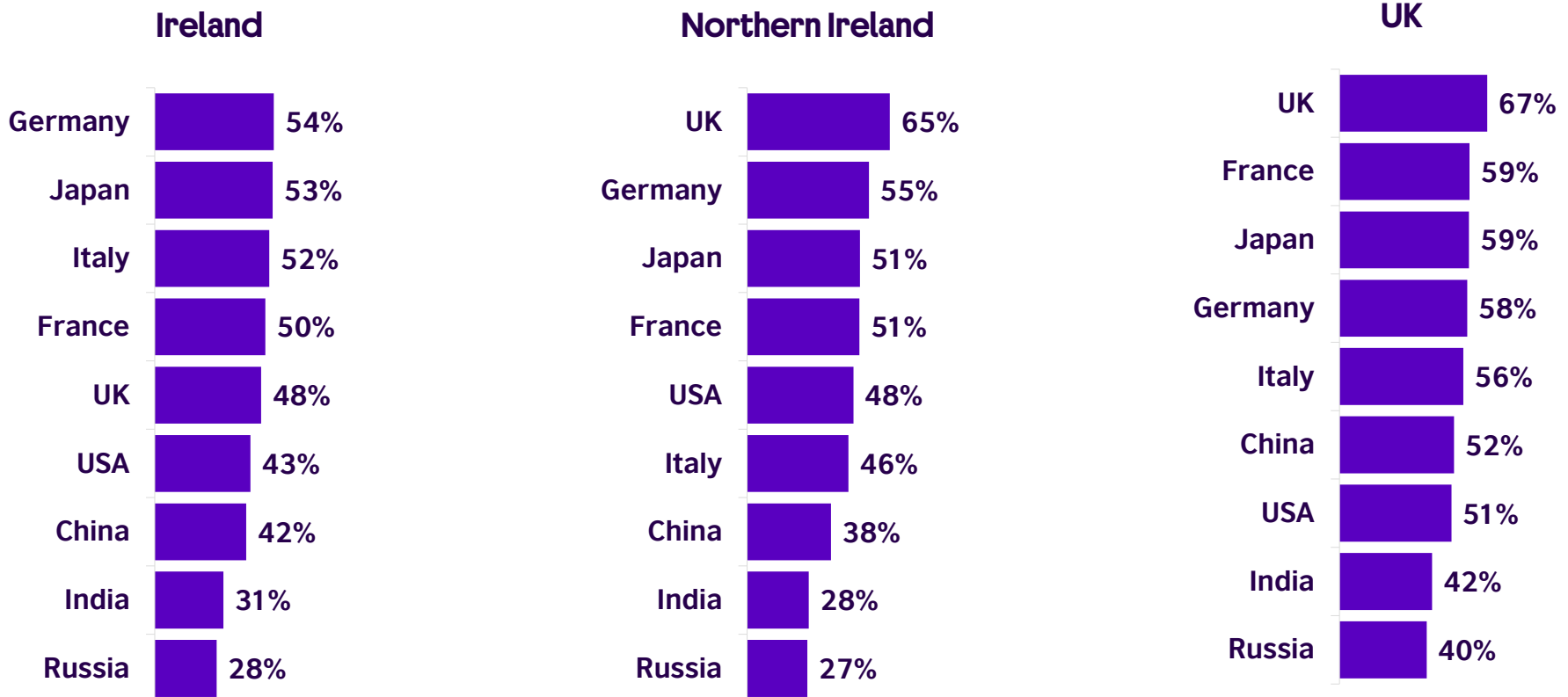
Q15D. And taking everything into account, how would you rate these countries on their overall influence in the world? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Northern Ireland perceptions: G20 countries and their influence in the world overall



Q15D. And taking everything into account, how would you rate these countries on their overall influence in the world? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500). Participants were not asked about their own country. This is not asked ask this about Ireland or any non-G20 countries.

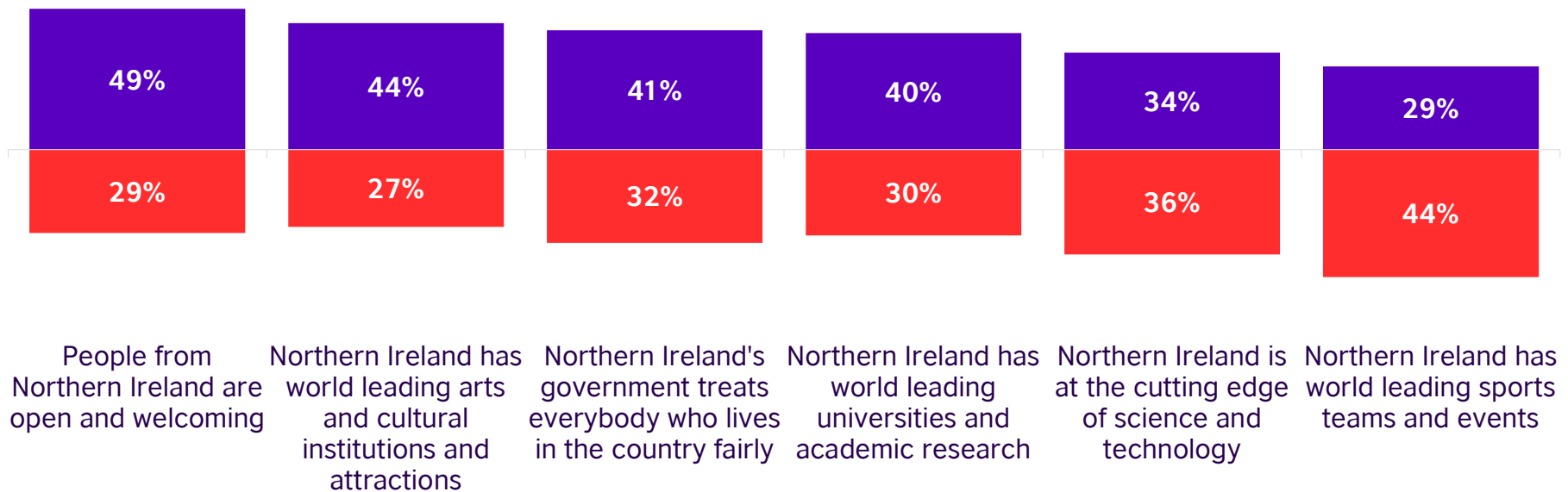
Ireland, Northern Ireland and UK perceptions: working constructively with other governments



Q13. And still thinking specifically about [COUNTRY], to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Showing agree scores (6-10) % | Base: Those in Northern Ireland, Ireland and UK 2025 that saw each country

Ireland perceptions: Northern Ireland's soft power

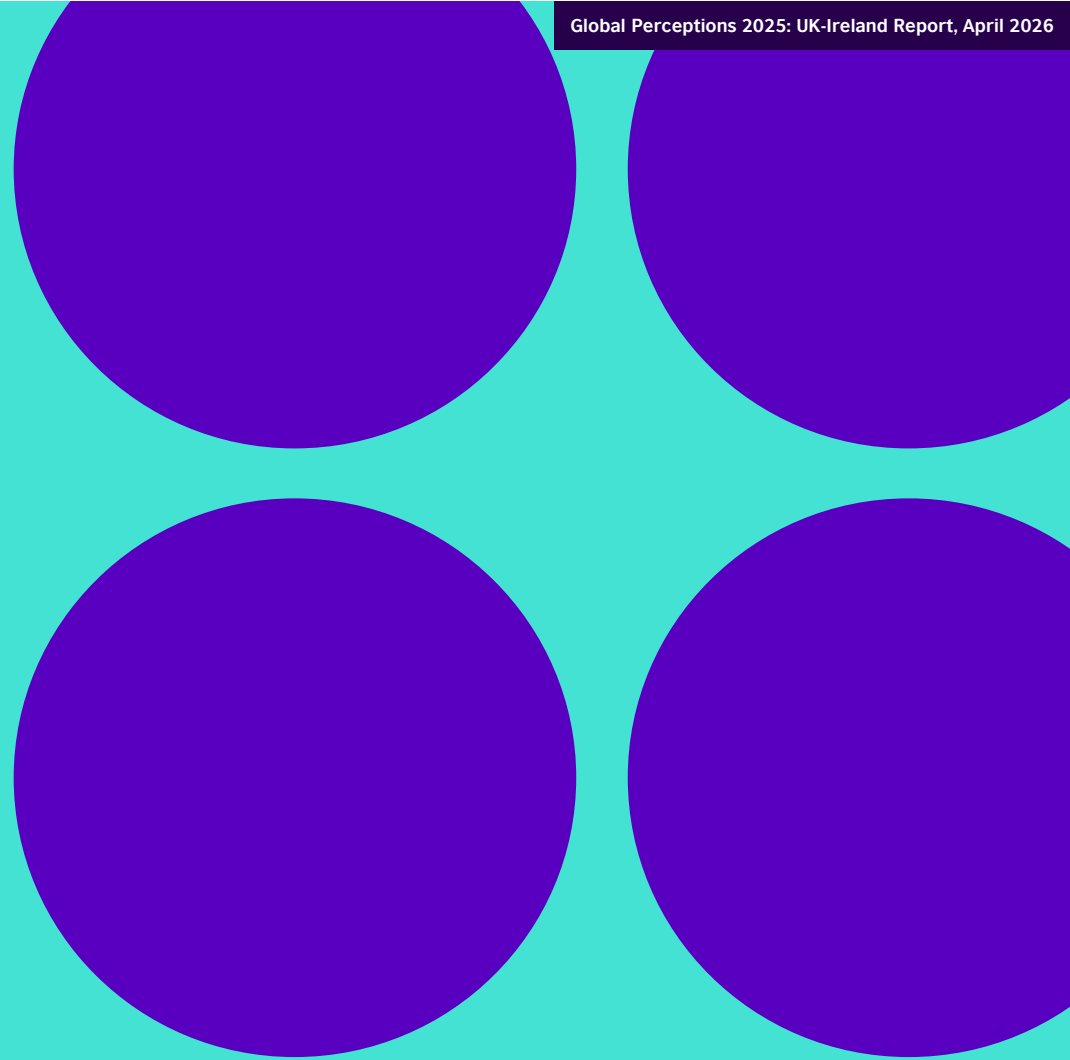
■ % Agree (6-10) ■ % Disagree (0-4)



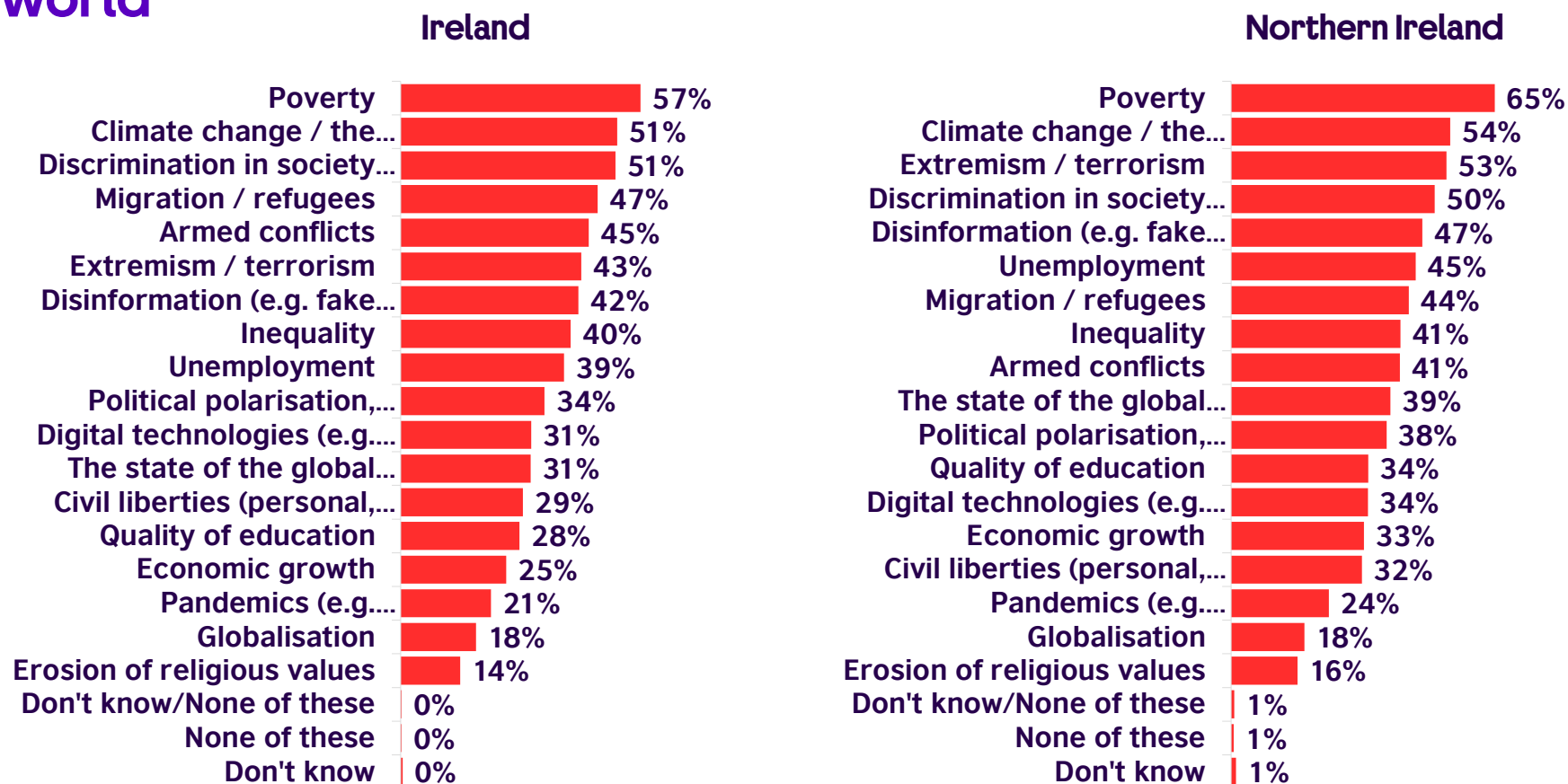
Q22NEW1_3. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013).

Issues and values

Exploring the issues and values that matter to young people in Ireland and Northern Ireland

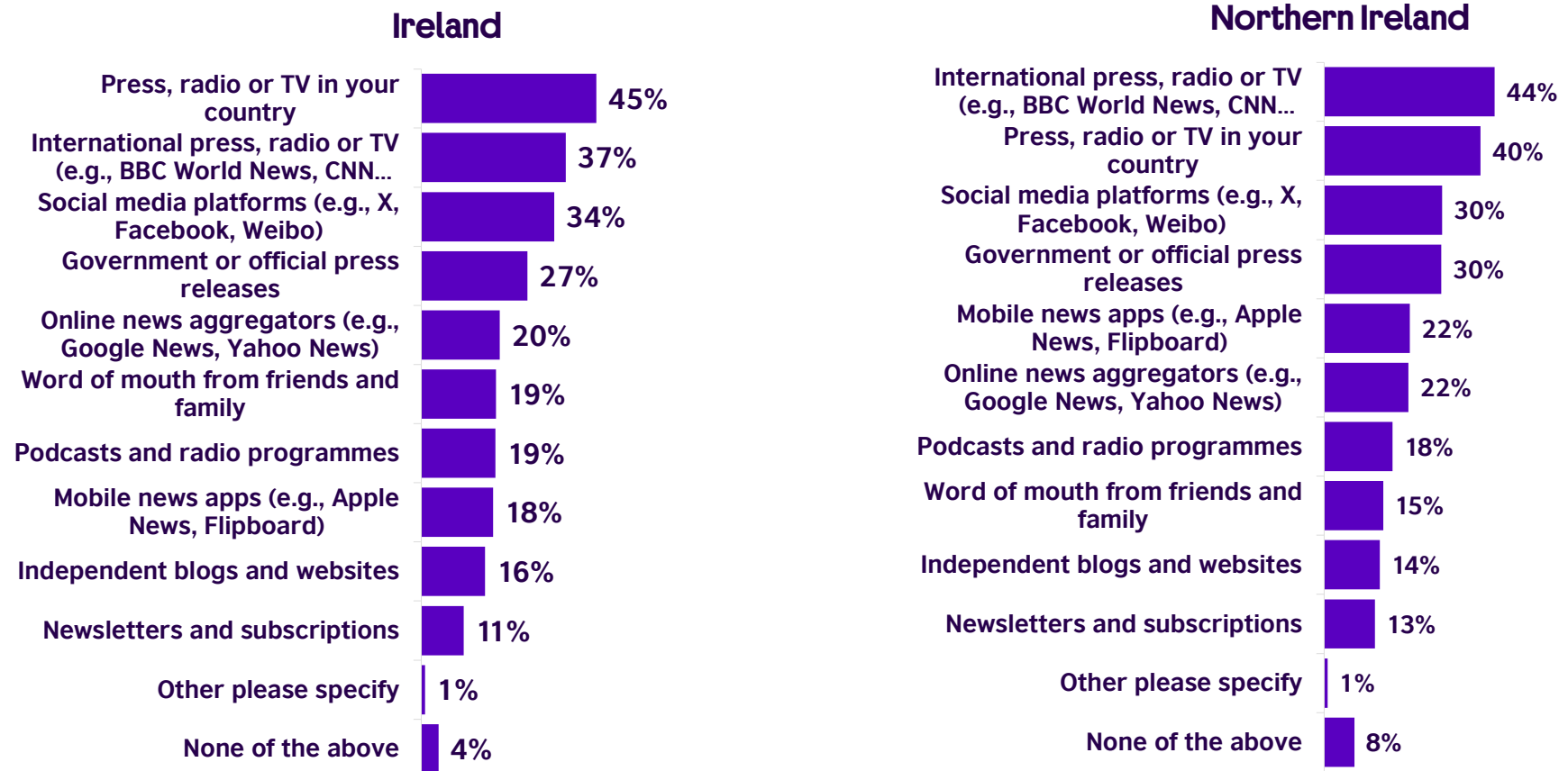


Ireland and Northern Ireland perceptions: important issues facing the world



Q4. Which, if any, of these do you think are the most important issues facing the world today? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013) and Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500).

Ireland and Northern Ireland perceptions: trust in media and information sources



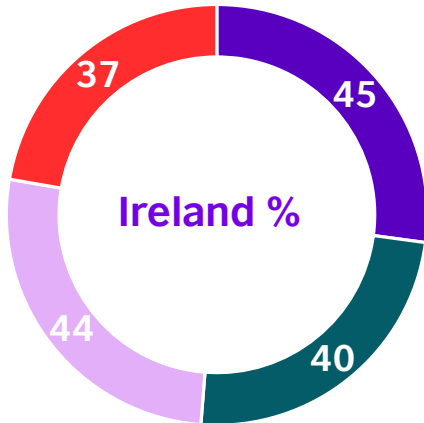
Q13. From the following list, please select up to three source(s) that you most trust for international news and information? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013) and those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Ireland and Northern Ireland: values the world should support and encourage



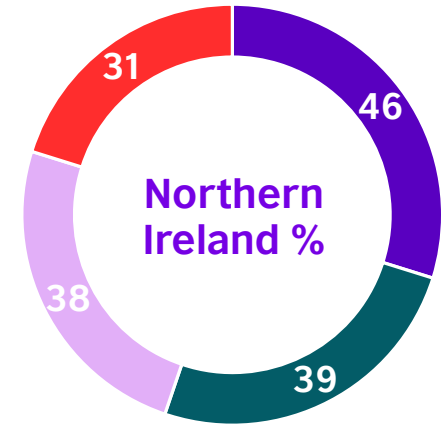
Q9a. Which THREE of the values listed below, if any, do you think are the most important values that countries around the world should support and encourage in the 21st century? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013) and Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500).

Ireland, Northern Ireland, UK and G20 perceptions: own country's actions internationally



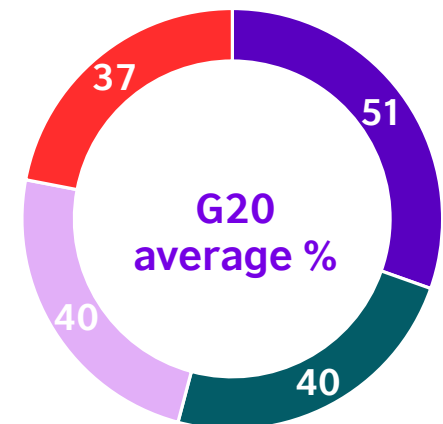
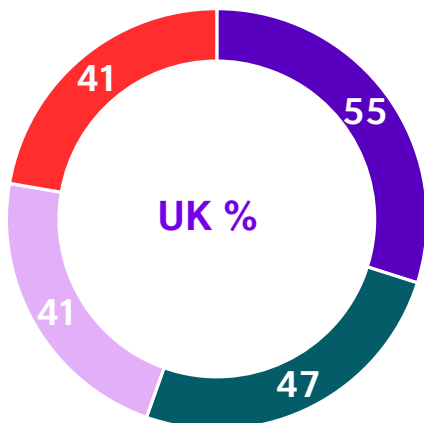
■ My country must be active internationally to protect the national interest and promote peace and prosperity

■ My country should avoid involvement in international affairs as much as possible and focus on domestic priorities



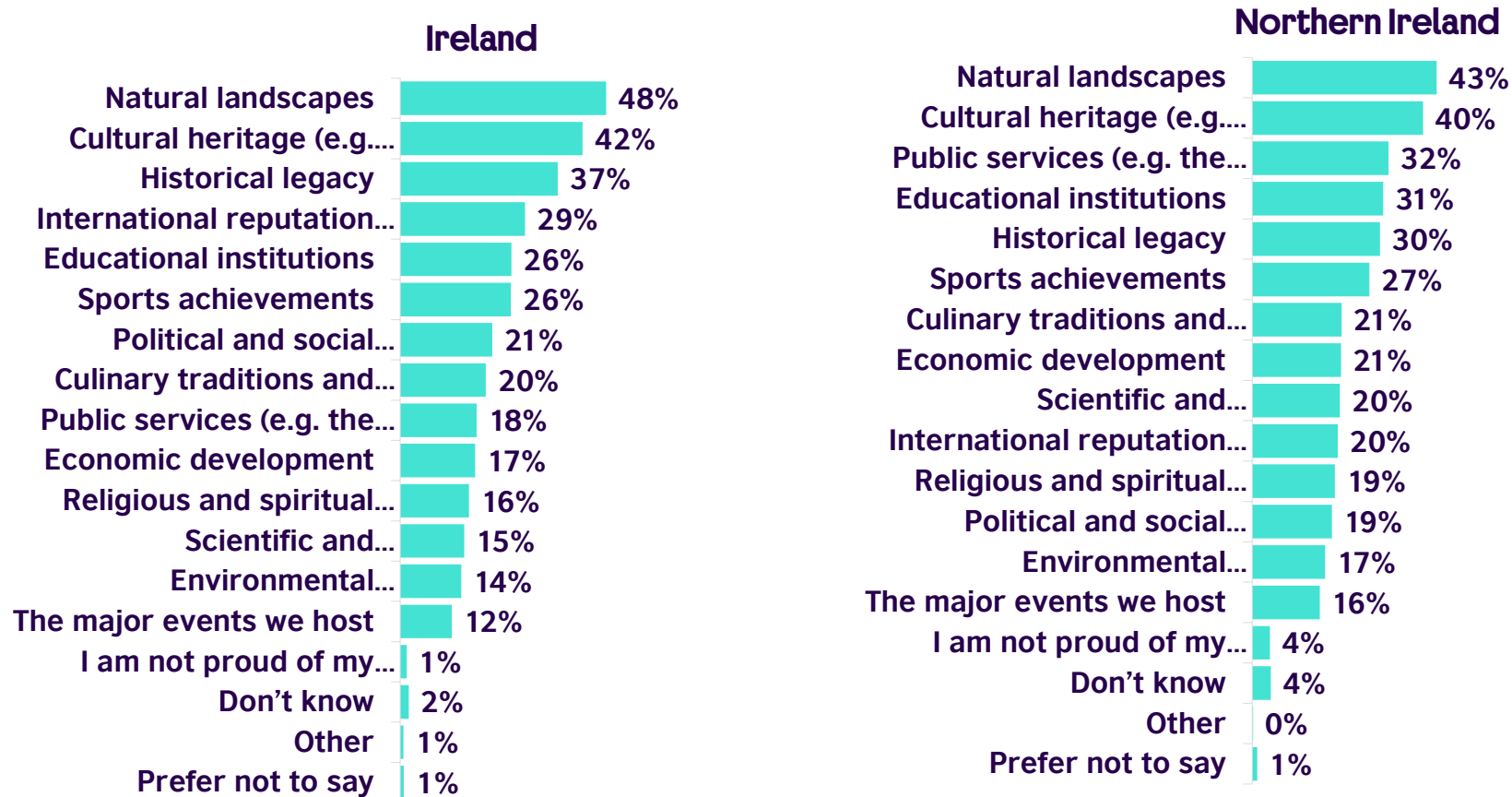
■ My country should prioritise advancing global peace and prosperity, even if it requires making sacrifices at home

■ My country should prioritise the national interest even if this at the expense of other countries, including our allies



D8b. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding your country's actions in the international arena?
 | Base: Agree scores from respondents from Ireland, Northern Ireland, UK and G20

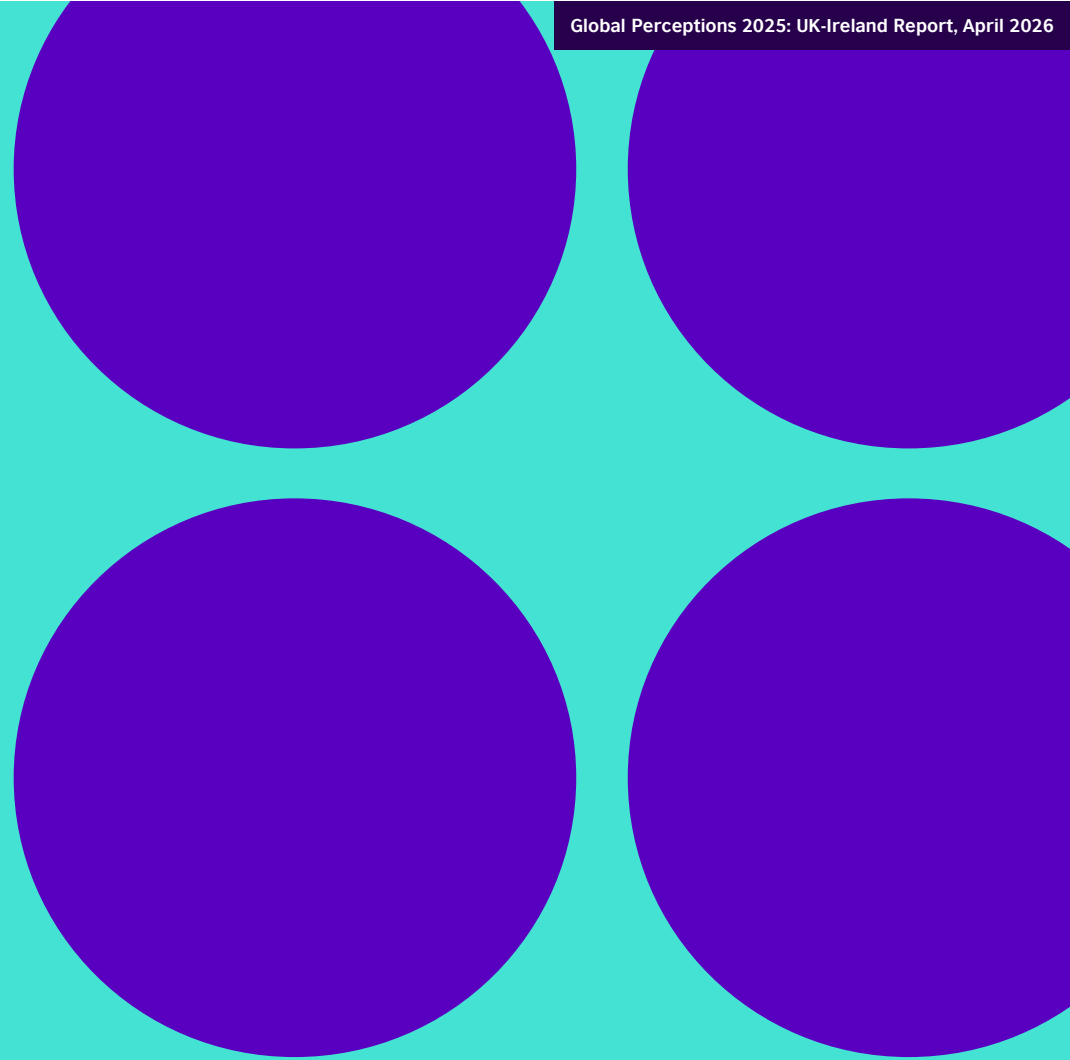
Ireland and Northern Ireland perceptions: features of their own country that makes participants proud



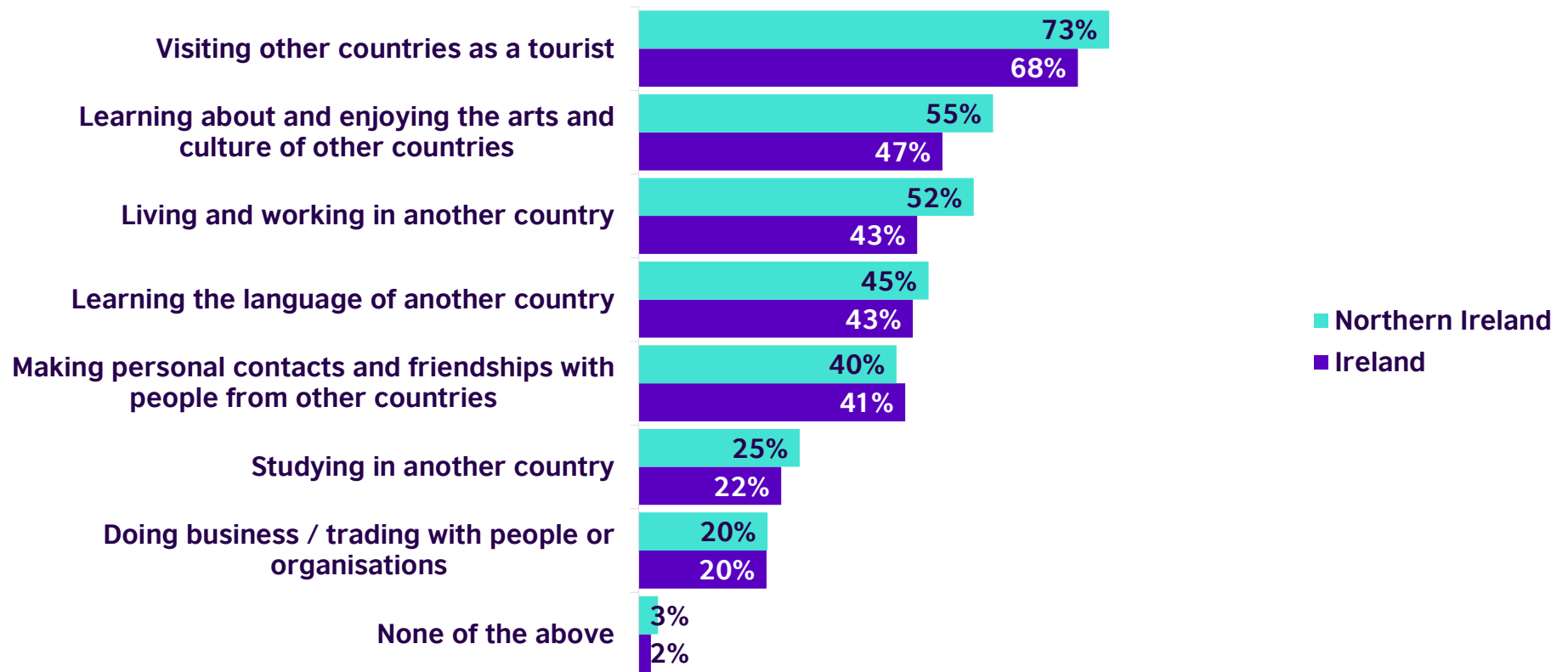
Q18. Which of the following makes you feel proud of your country? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013) and those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Interest and intentions to engage internationally and bilaterally

Exploring insight from respondents in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK

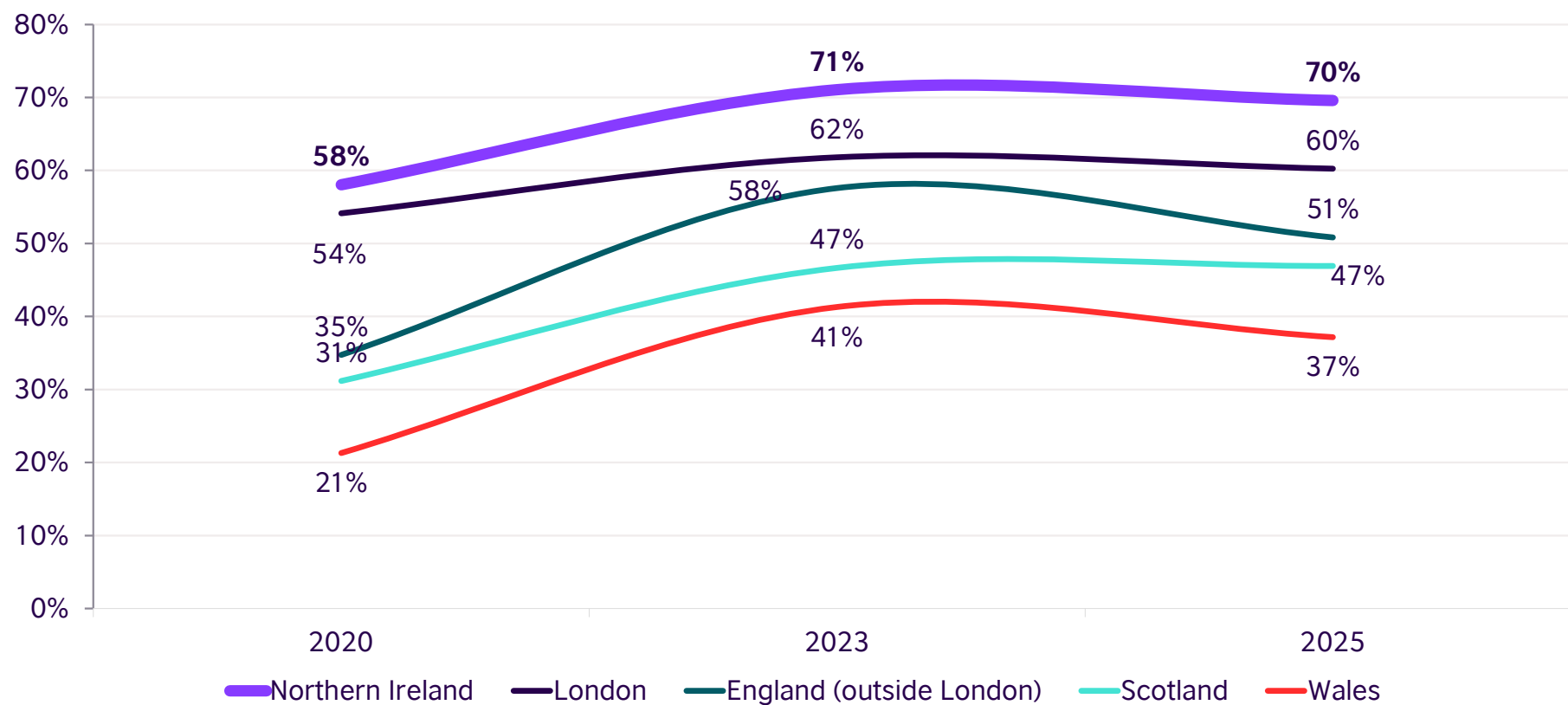


Ireland and Northern Ireland perceptions: level of interest in engaging with other countries



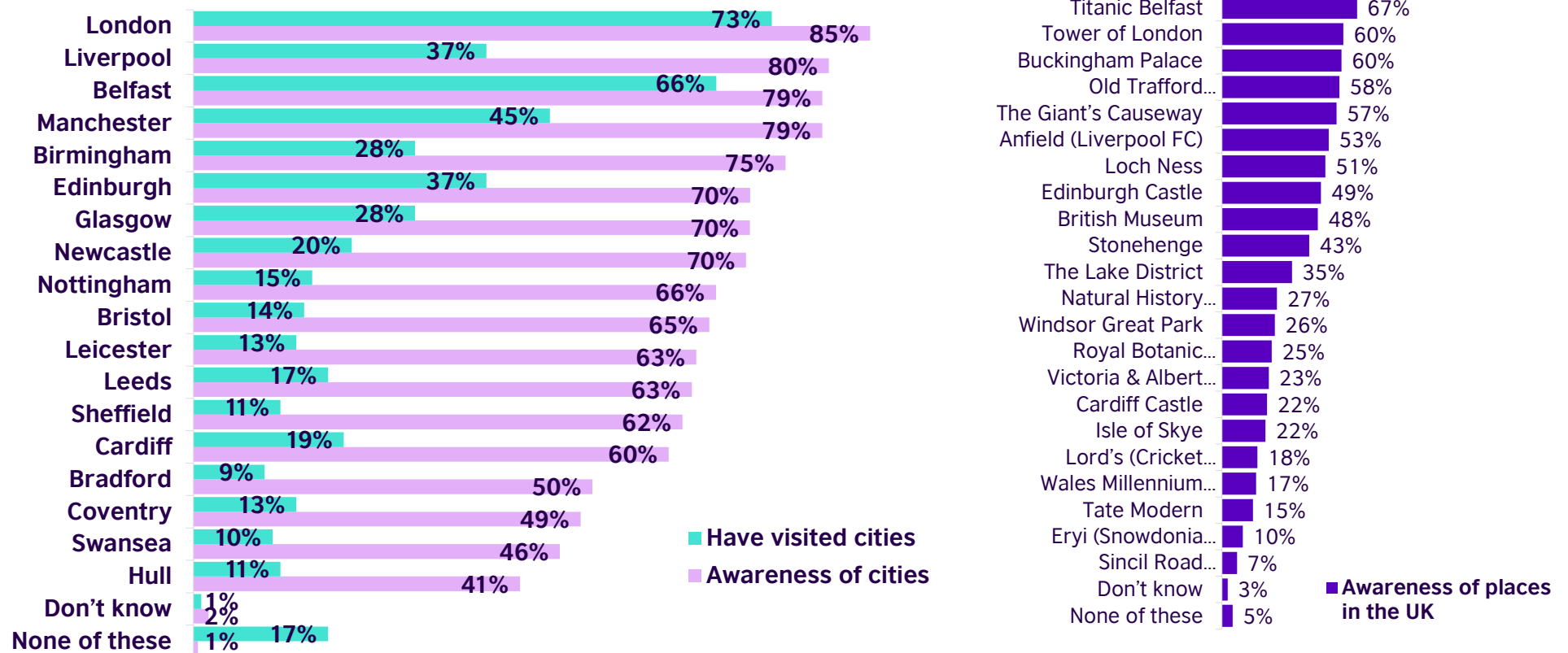
Q1. Which, if any, of the following are you particularly interested in? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013), those who live in Northern Ireland, 2025 (n=500) and those who live in the UK, 2025 (n=3303). Participants were not asked about their own country.

Ireland perceptions: knowledge of nations and regions of UK 2016-2025



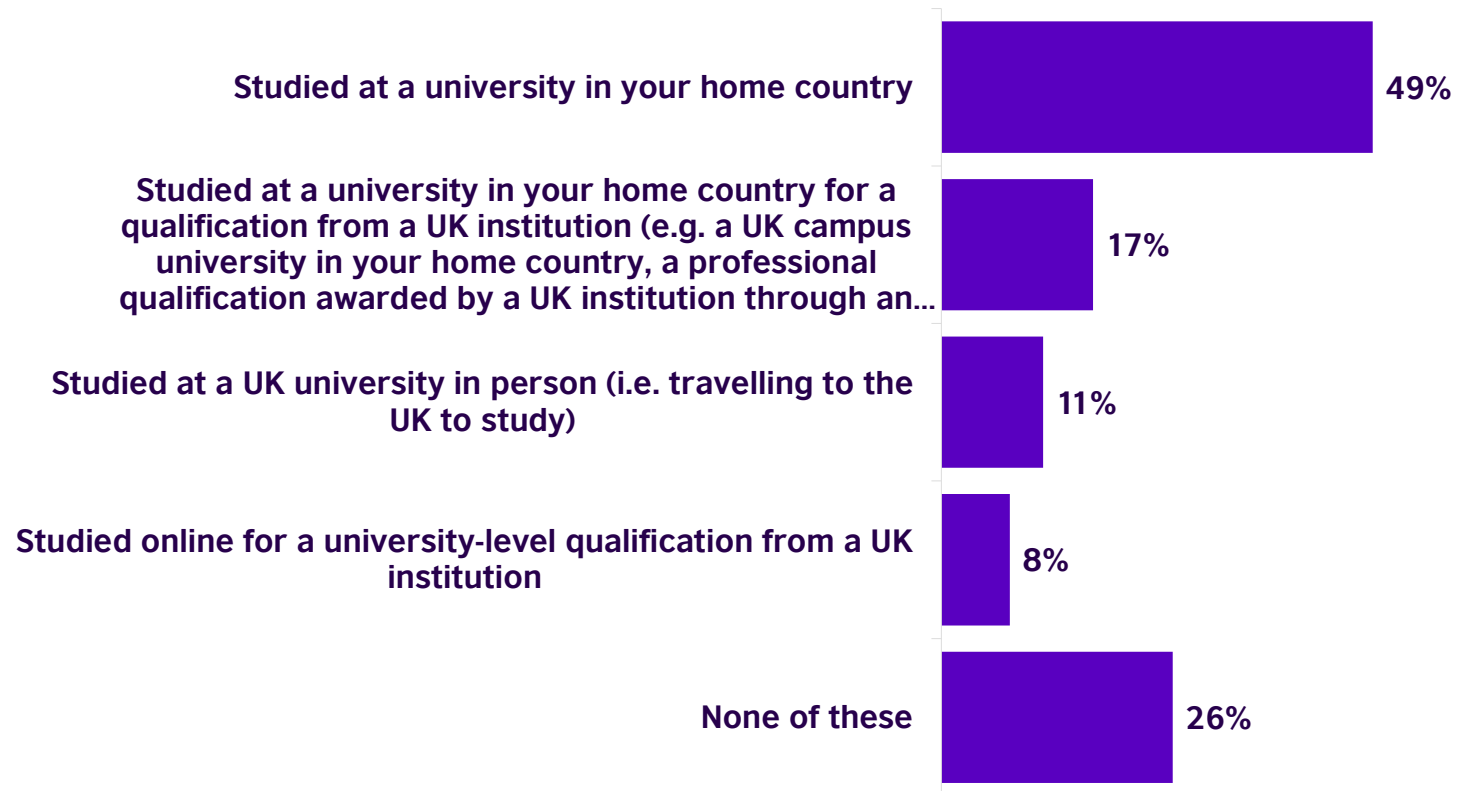
Q21a. How much do you know about each of the countries that make up the United Kingdom, that is England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the largest city, London? Showing % of those that know a lot/a fair amount | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013).

Ireland perceptions: awareness of UK cities and places and UK cities they have visited



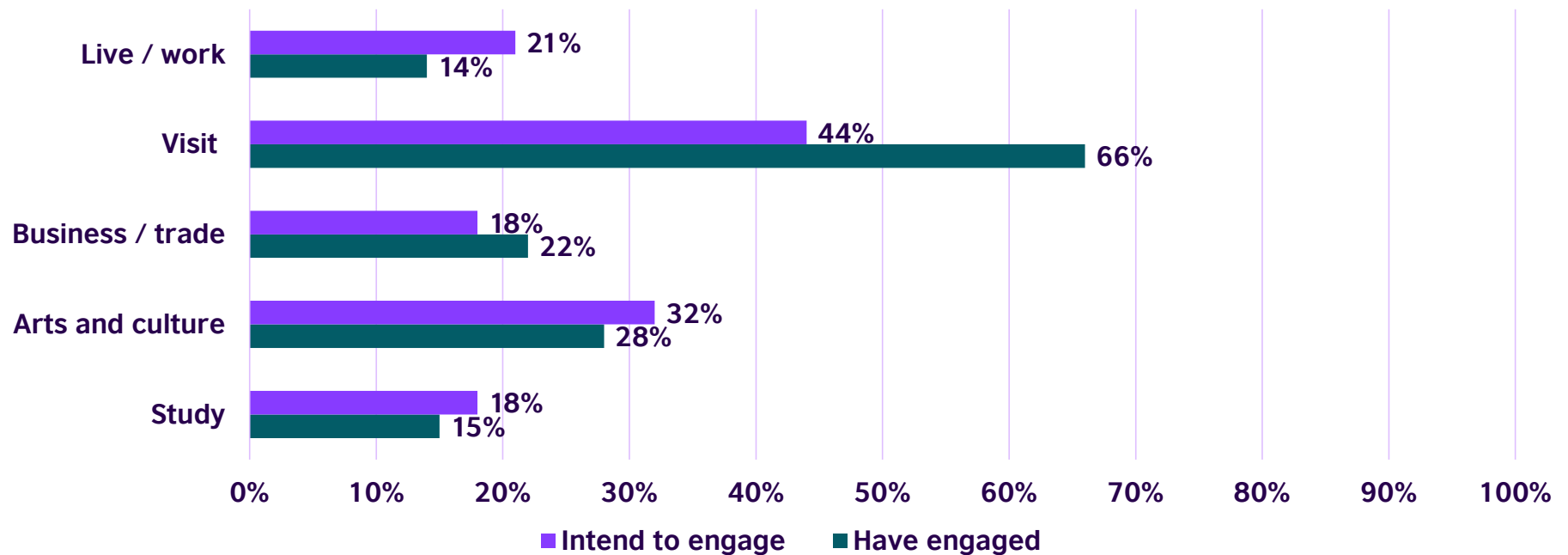
Q23a. Which, if any, of the following cities in the UK have you heard of? And Q23b. And which, if any, of these cities in the United Kingdom have you ever visited? And Q26b. Which, if any, of these UK places have you heard of? | Base: Those in Ireland 2025 who were shown each of the options above (each option has its own base size)

Ireland perceptions: study at home and abroad behaviour



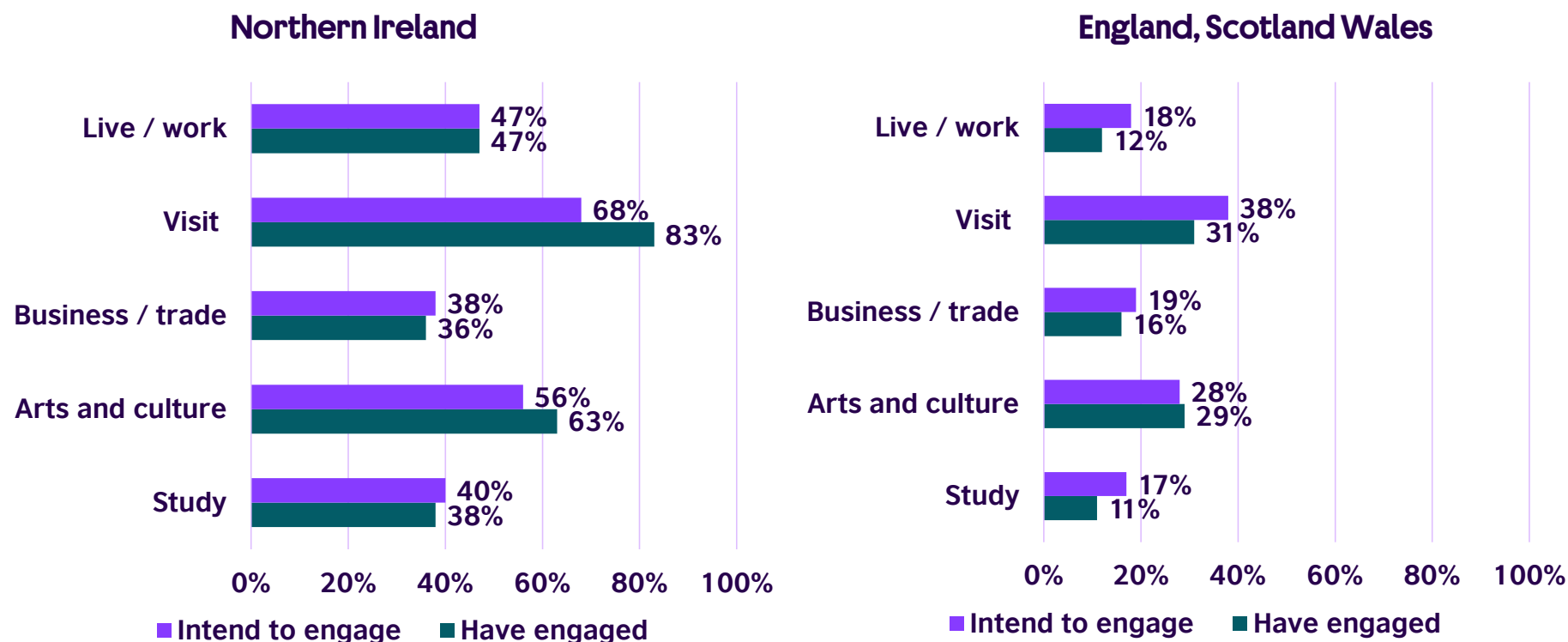
NEW_STUDY. Which, if any, of these things have you done? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013).

Ireland perceptions: past and intended future interaction with the UK



Q15a. Please select any of the following countries where you have lived and / or worked for at least six months / countries whose arts and culture you enjoy / countries that you have studied in (at school, college or University)/ countries that you have visited / countries that you have done business / trade with? | Q15b. And now thinking about your future plans... please select any of the following countries you intend to live and or work / live and or work in again for at least six months / any of the following countries whose arts & culture you intend to experience / experience more in the future / countries that you intend to study in / study in again e.g. at school, college or University / countries that you intend to visit / visit again / countries that you intend to do business or trade with / do business or trade with again? | ? | Base: Those who live in Ireland, 2025 (n=1013). Participants were not asked about their own country.

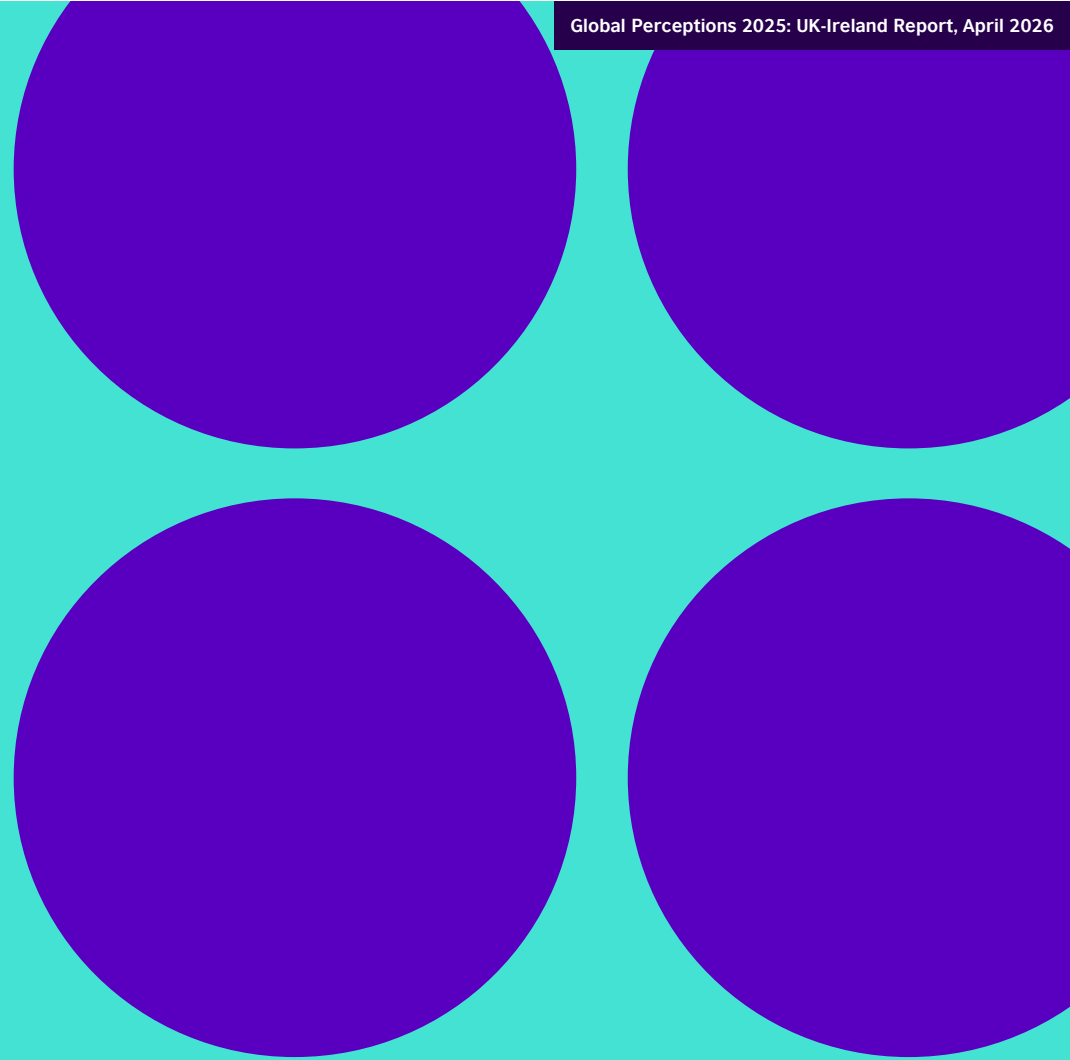
Northern Ireland and rest of UK perceptions: past and intended future interaction with Ireland



Q15a. Please select any of the following countries where you have lived and / or worked for at least six months / countries whose arts and culture you enjoy / countries that you have studied in (at school, college or University)/ countries that you have visited / countries that you have done business / trade with? | Q15b. And now thinking about your future plans... please select any of the following countries you intend to live and or work / live and or work in again for at least six months / any of the following countries whose arts & culture you intend to experience / experience more in the future / countries that you intend to study in / study in again e.g. at school, college or University / countries that you intend to visit / visit again / countries that you intend to do business or trade with / do business or trade with again? | ? | Base: Those who live in Northern Ireland and rest of UK 2025. Participants were not asked about their own country.

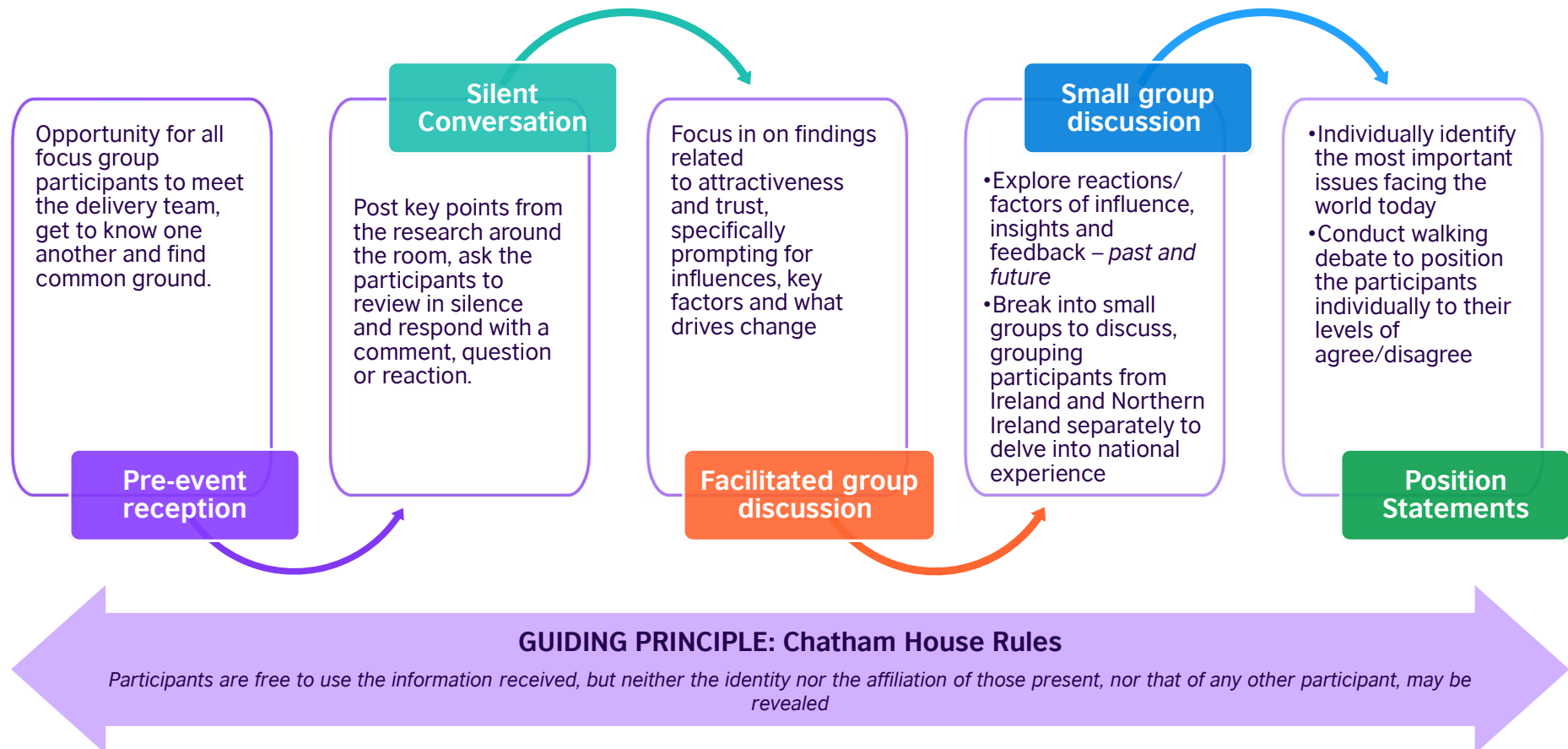
Focus group insights

Methodology, principles and qualitative findings

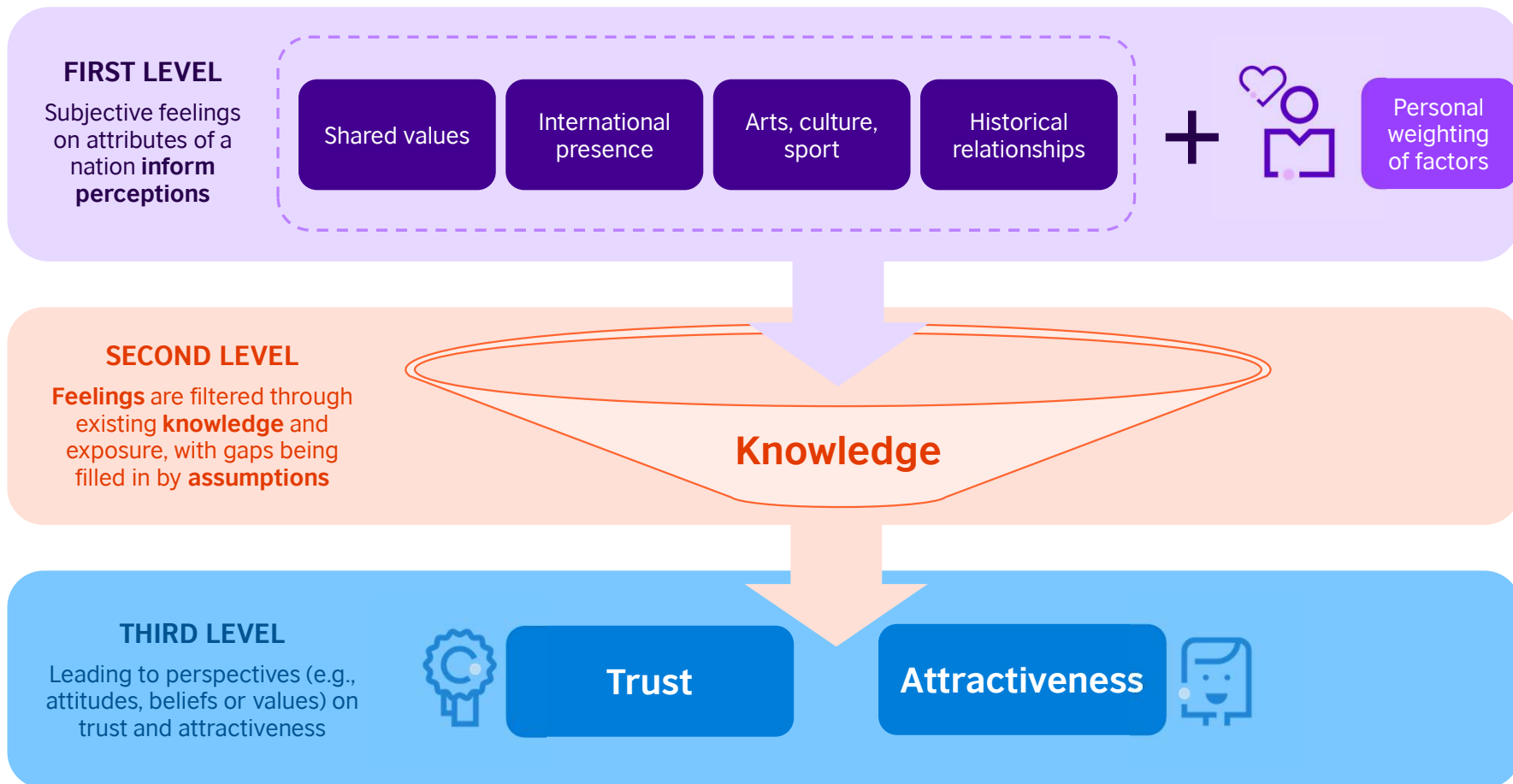


Methodology

Our partners Co-operation Ireland repurposed their approach from our 2024 event, adapted to best represent inputs and contributions from participants from both Ireland and Northern Ireland in 2026.



Visualising the determination of trust and attractiveness



Rapporteur report: summary



Image credits: Niamh Barry

- ❖ The focus group provided layered insights into young people's perspectives on national identity, international relations, trust, and societal values.
- ❖ Participants showed pride in the island of Ireland's historical legacy and a strong attachment to neutrality, but also an awareness of evolving international obligations and opportunities.
- ❖ Genuine concern for peace, equality, and climate action shaped discussions, while the UK leaving the EU, and political shifts in the UK continue to influence perceptions and cross-border experiences.
- ❖ Trust in established democracies is declining, and while the EU is respected, its credibility can be threatened by perceptions of inconsistent actions.
- ❖ The group's responses underscore the importance of learning from history while honestly confronting new challenges, especially around diversity, engagement, and international collaboration.
- ❖ Above all, there is a nuanced desire for Ireland to balance a distinctive national identity with active, credible participation on the global stage.

Discussion themes

Values and identity

- ❖ Young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland strongly identify with peace and mutual respect, and feel much of this is built on a shared history, including challenges that they have faced and grown up through.
- ❖ Young people view these as core national values and as essential to pass on with the shared history part of their story for both Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- ❖ There is pride in these foundations, but also an awareness that modern challenges require ongoing dialogue and reassessment.



Discussion themes

Pressing issues

- ❖ Climate change, poverty, immigration, and equality are seen as urgent and potentially moving in the wrong direction, worsening, echoing the survey findings.
- ❖ The group stressed the importance of direct conversations and policy responses, noting that Ireland's increasing diversity brings both challenges and opportunities.
- ❖ Migration is increasingly tied to study and work, and post-Brexit, Ireland sees itself as a unique gateway for migrants in the EU.
- ❖ With a perception of the UK's global influence waning, there are questions on where Ireland fits in with this, and the importance of carving out a unique and distinct role for themselves.



Discussion themes

Country perceptions

- ❖ Italy's top attractiveness surprised participants, who attributed it to positive cultural stereotypes and low media scrutiny and questioned whether surface-level appeal should outweigh real societal values.
- ❖ The UK's middling ranking reflects complex, close personal ties and growing scepticism towards UK leadership and institutions, particularly after the UK leaving the EU.

Trust and knowledge

- ❖ Participants link trust in countries and institutions to both media coverage and cultural familiarity and are keenly aware of biases, pointing out how "unknowns" are often idealised and non-white countries are rated lower, sometimes due to ignorance.
- ❖ Trust in the EU, and initiatives like Erasmus, remain positive but fragile, with funding and credibility concerns noted, and the risk of complacency getting in the way of progress.



Discussion themes expanded

Northern Ireland perspective

Cross-border barriers, especially education, and changing UK politics weigh heavily on Northern Ireland participants.

Migration drivers centre on opportunity, cost of living, and cultural connection.

Conversation in the Northern Ireland group on what drives attractiveness led to suggestions it is built around current concerns such as the cost of living and the overall quality of life.

It was suggested if Scandinavian countries were to be included in the survey they would rank highly, as they feel like examples of attractive countries to the group.

Bigger countries are seen to be home to more opportunity (like the US) and the size of the Northern Ireland diaspora means it feels realistic to move there with potentially more family and friend connections.



Discussion themes expanded

Ireland perspective

There is a shared perception amongst participants that there is a “knowledge gap” with regards to other countries, that people fill, both favourably or unfavourably.

For Italy, a nation that has high attractiveness, it is filled at a superficial level by perceptions on food, culture, holidays.

For India, a nation that scores low on attractiveness, this may mean they fill it in with unpleasant stereotypes or perceptions of negative interactions.

In terms of the UK, the closeness and exposure to media and the significant historical context leads to unfavourable perceptions being maintained.

These can be broken down somewhat, when discussing positives of UK culture such as its music scene, sports and cuisine are seen in a more positive light.

The initial perception formed from negative media coverage is reinforced by perceptions of political instability in the UK leading to a greater sense of uncertainty in UK-Ireland relations.



Discussion themes expanded

International engagement

- ❖ There is support for Ireland's neutrality, but also recognition that constructive, balanced global engagement is needed, provided it aligns with national values and resource limitations.
- ❖ Due to its history, Ireland has a unique and important voice that can be utilised for global conflicts.

Media and influence

- ❖ Participants are aware of the influence of both social and traditional media, noting that image and "soft power" (like sport, pop culture, influencers) increasingly shape international perceptions sometimes overriding policy or values.

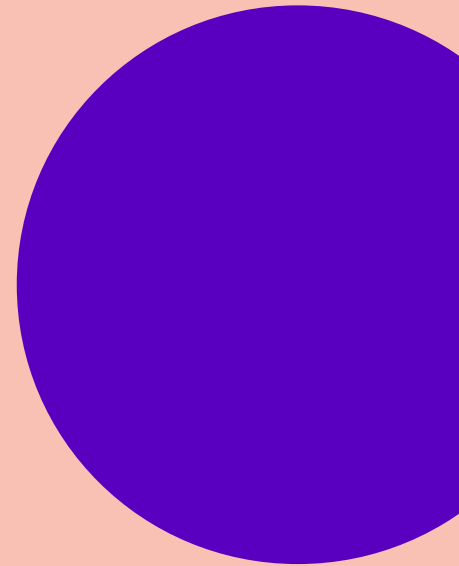
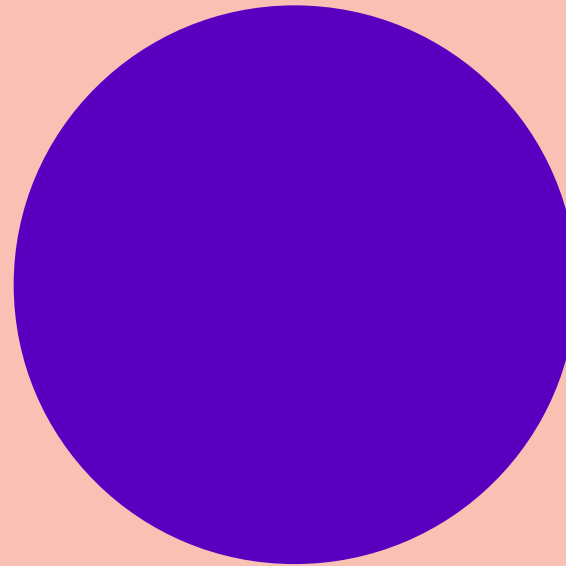
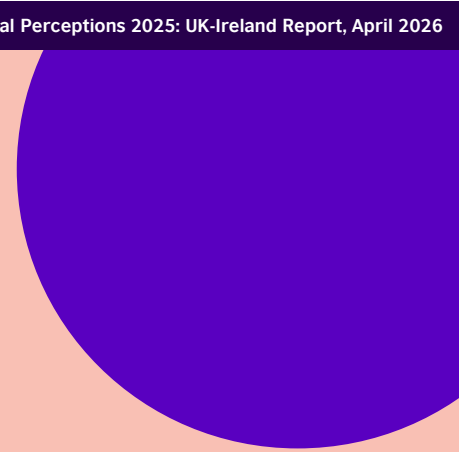
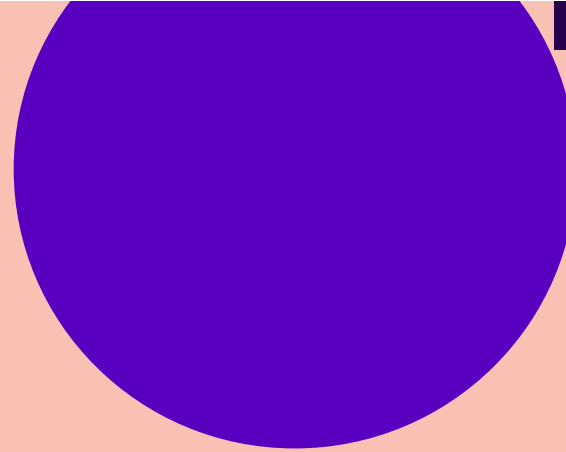


Conclusion

- ❖ Young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland value peace and historical identity, but their perceptions of countries are strongly shaped by personal experience, familiarity, and the influence of media.
- ❖ They are cautious about shallow stereotypes, questioning positive country reputations that aren't backed by deeper values like equality and opportunity.
- ❖ Relationships with the UK are viewed through a lens of practical connection rather than excitement, while Brexit and migration remain key concerns and barriers in terms of overall attractiveness.
- ❖ Participants want Ireland to remain neutral yet constructively engaged on the global stage and see an urgent need to address emerging issues such as climate change, inequality, and migration with open, honest debate.
- ❖ Ultimately, they seek alignment between Ireland's values and global role amid changing international influences.

Appendix

Further resources, partners and contacts



Further research and insight resources

Global Perceptions

- ❖ Further information and full report available for download, key findings, insight blogs and explainer video: [Global Perceptions UK-Ireland 2025-26 | British Council](#)
- ❖ Information on Global Perceptions UK-Ireland 2023 also available here: [Global Perceptions: UK Ireland | British Council](#)
- ❖ Additional analysis available upon request.

Research and Insight

- ❖ Learn more [about Research and Insight at the British Council](#)
- ❖ [Research and Insight newsletter](#): subscribe for the latest research and insight on arts and culture, education and English language and their contribution to soft power, trust, peace, and prosperity
- ❖ [Our World, Connected](#): award-winning podcast featuring global conversations about culture, creativity and innovation.



Acknowledgements

Our partners



The focus group was facilitated by our valued partners, Co-operation Ireland, an all-island peace-building organisation who primarily work with young people. They work to build a shared and cohesive society by facilitating contact and collaboration between people from different backgrounds. We have worked with Cooperation Ireland on a number of projects focussing on young people. These have included [climate change](#), the [Belfast Good Friday Agreement 25th Anniversary](#) and previous [Global Perceptions research](#).

Find out more about [Co-operation Ireland](#).



We were delighted to also collaborate with the ARINS project (Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South) for this event. ARINS is a research partnership between the Royal Irish Academy and the University of Notre Dame. Their independent and non-partisan analysis and research explores constitutional, institutional and policy options for Ireland, north and south. ARINS is a joint partnership between the University of Notre Dame and the Royal Irish Academy.

Find out more about [ARINS](#).



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- ❖ Margaret Lucey, Programme Manager Future Leaders & Regional Development Office and Matt Gamble, Project Manager from Co-operation Ireland
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