



Version FINAL | Public

Are MPs open to experimenting?

Findings from the winter 2014 MPs survey

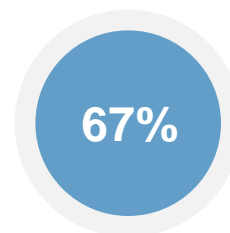
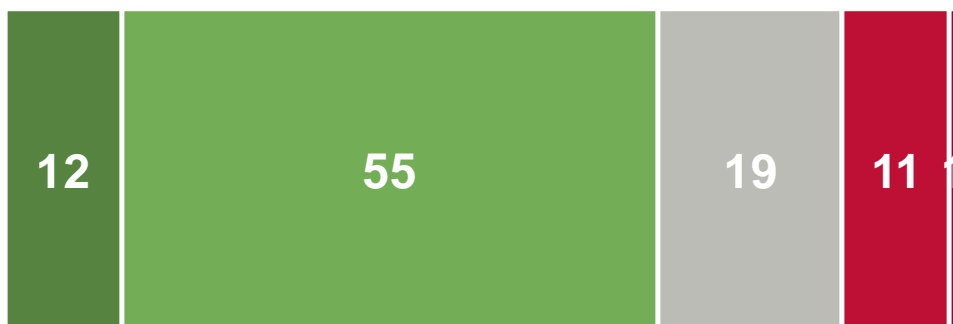
Support for controlled trials of policy is high, but support for less robust evidence gathering is similarly high

Q. How much do you support or oppose ... to design and test more areas of government social policy?

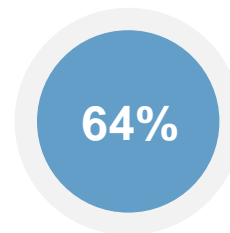
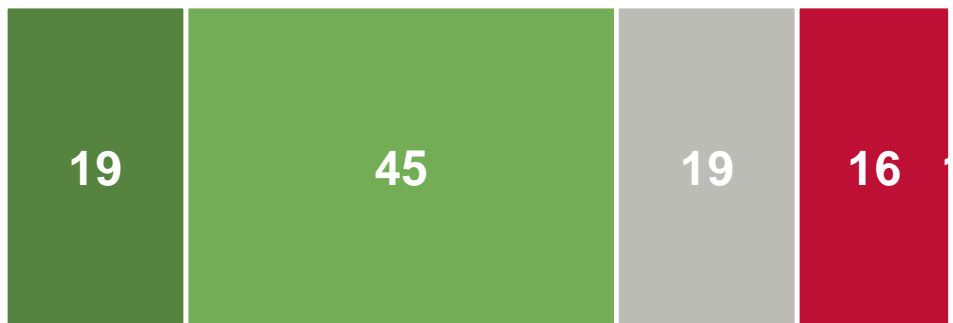
■ % strongly support
 ■ % tend to support
 ■ % neither support nor oppose
■ % tend to oppose
 ■ % strongly oppose
 ■ % don't know

% support

The use of controlled trials



The use of pilot schemes without control groups



Base: 104 MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

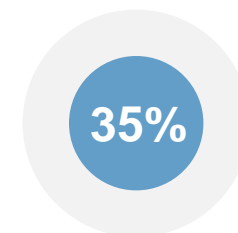
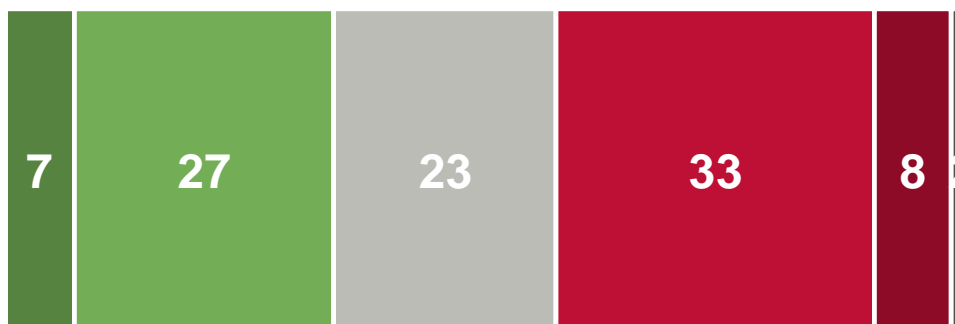
The fairness of controlled trials is more polarising than their cost, though many MPs are neutral on both these grounds

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

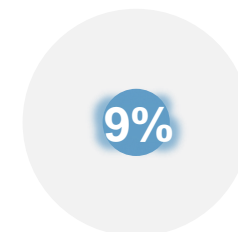
■ % strongly agree
 ■ % tend to agree
 ■ % neither agree nor disagree
■ % tend to disagree
 ■ % strongly disagree
 ■ % don't know

% agree

Randomly choosing whether some people get a policy intervention and others do not is unfair



Controlled trials are too expensive as ways of designing and testing social policies

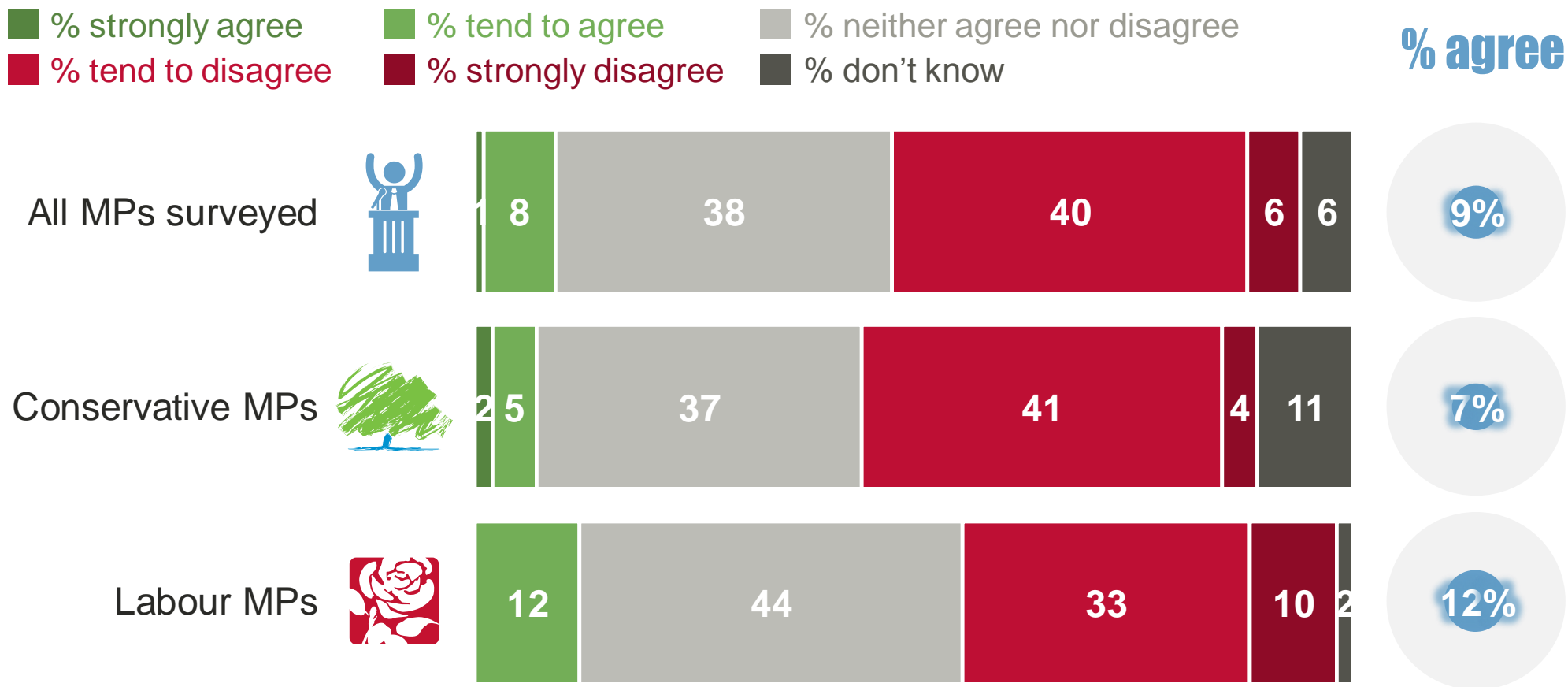


Base: 104 MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

Across the two main parties there is no strong objection to controlled trials on the grounds of cost

Q. How much do you agree or disagree that “controlled trials are too expensive as ways of designing and testing social policies”?



Base: 104 MPs; 50 Conservative MPs; 42 Labour MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

Even those who say they support the use of controlled trials still have concerns

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26% 

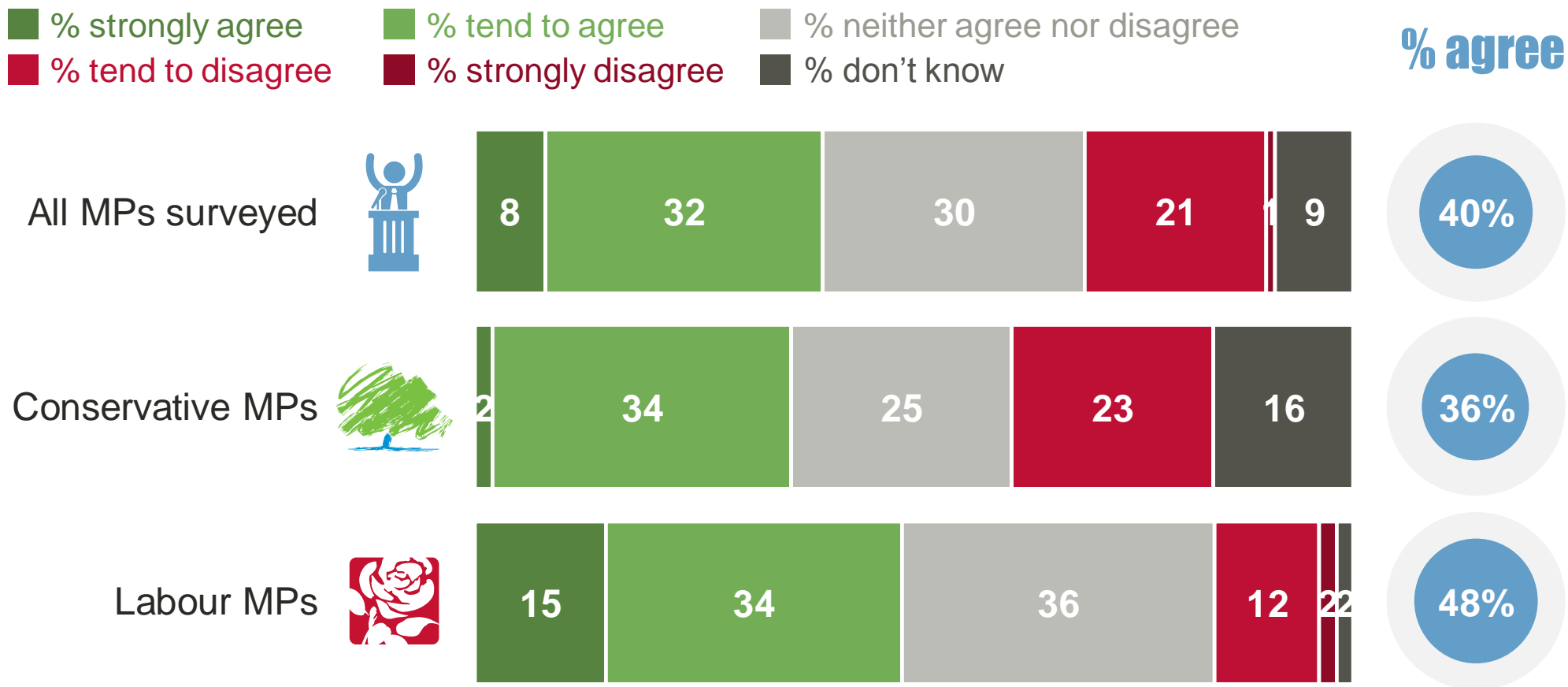
of those who support the use of controlled trials in policy design also think that randomly choosing whether some people get a policy intervention and others do not is unfair

Base: 72 MPs who support the use of controlled trials (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

Two-fifths of MPs see the greater use of controlled trials of policy as inevitable

Q. How much do you agree or disagree that “we are going to see much greater use of controlled trials in designing and testing social policies in the next few years”?



Base: 104 MPs; 50 Conservative MPs; 42 Labour MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

MPs tend to think they should put their principles ahead of controlled trials when deciding what should be done

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Q. Which two or three, if any, of the following should politicians pay most attention to when deciding what should be done?

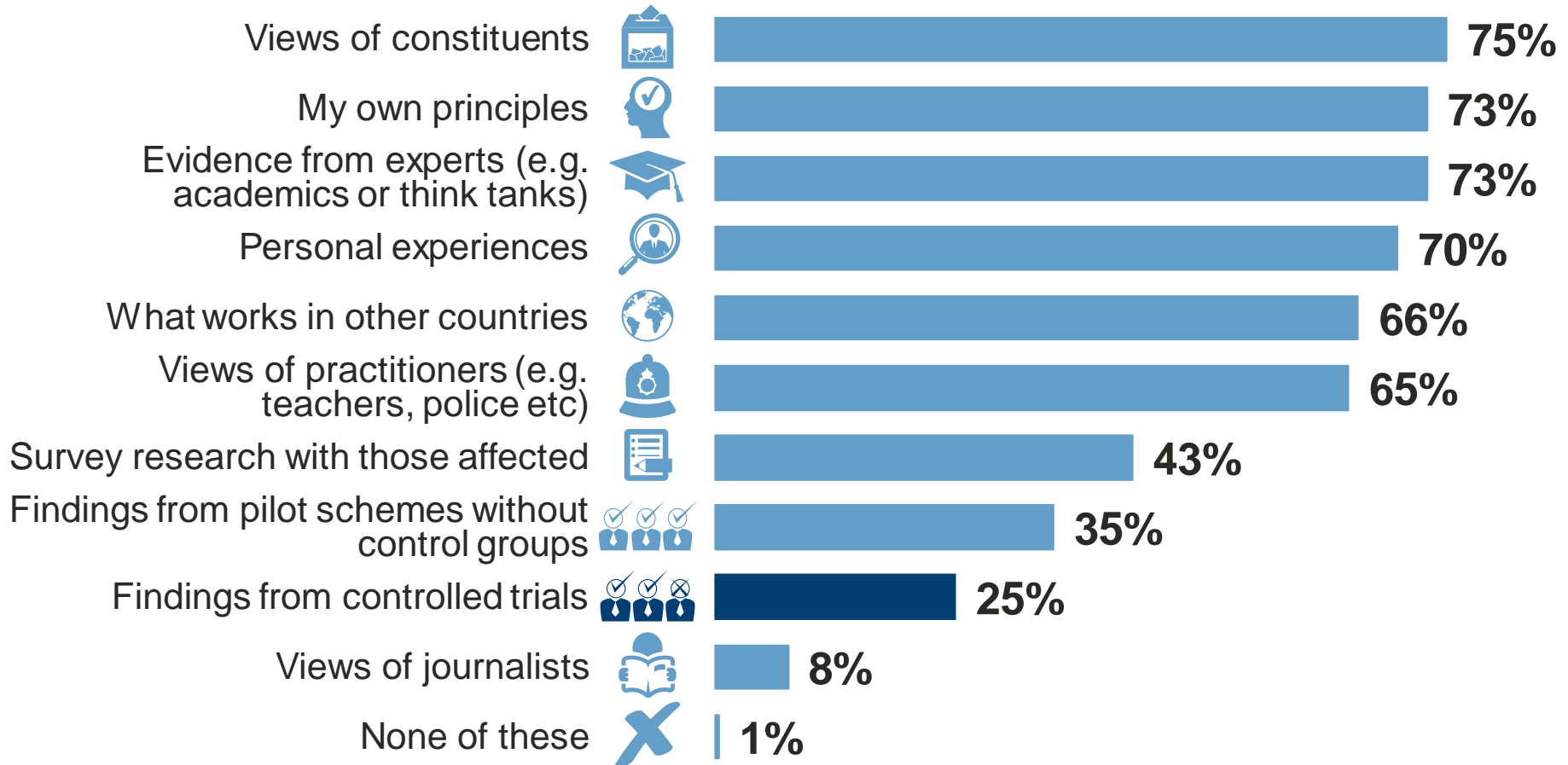


Base: 104 MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

Talking about findings from controlled trials when backing up policy decisions is far from the norm among MPs

Q. Which, if any, of the following have you ever used to justify a policy that you support?

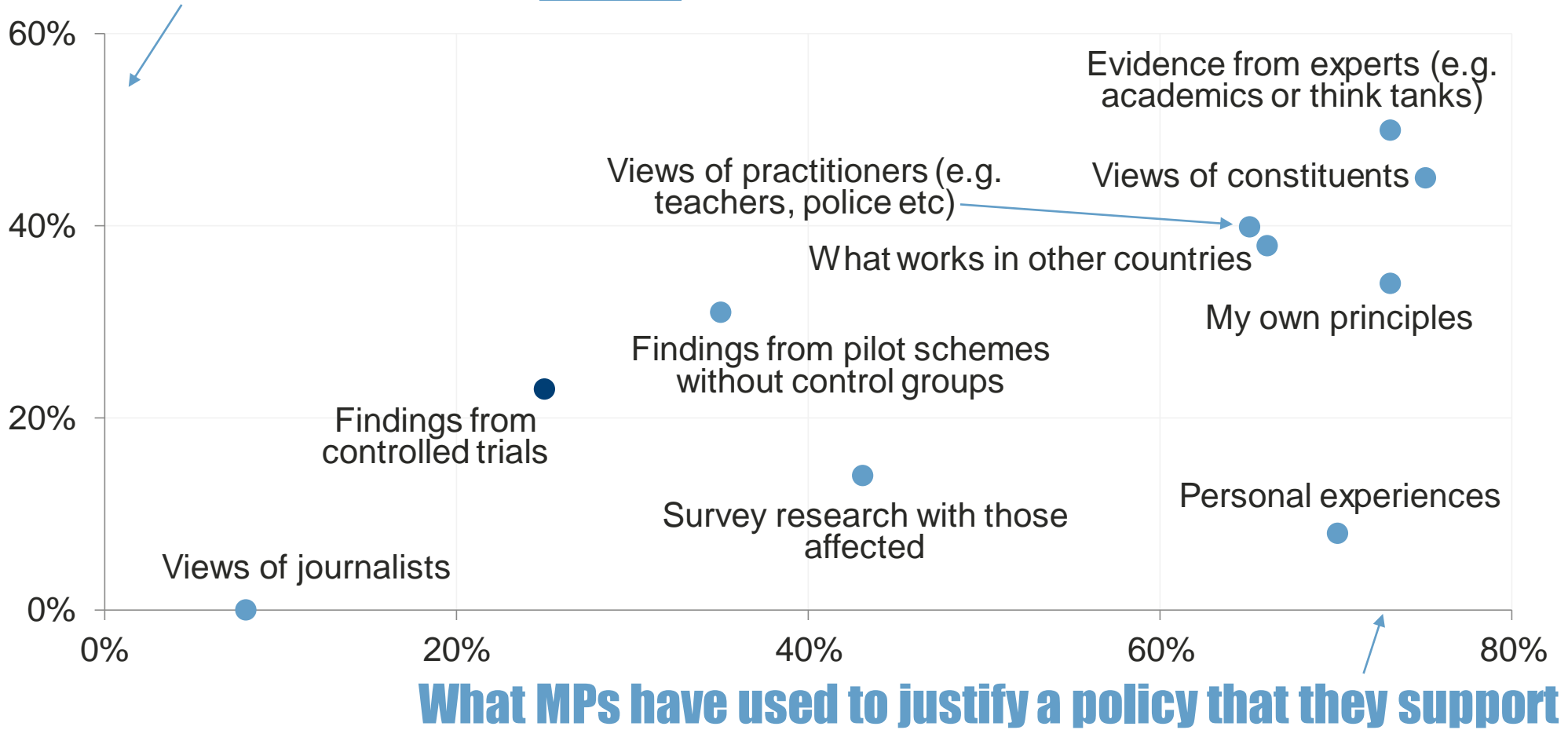


Base: 104 MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

MPs' use of controlled trial evidence is in line with what they think they should be paying attention to

What MPs say politicians should pay most attention to



Base: 104 MPs (interviewed from 4 November to 19 December 2014)

Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey

- Ipsos MORI carried out face-to-face interviews with 107 MPs from 4 November to 19 December 2014
- An initial sample of 343 MPs were contacted to take part
- Data are weighted to reflect the true balance of the House of Commons by political party and ministerial or spokesperson position
- The following preamble preceded all the questions shown here:

As you know, there are many ways of testing the effectiveness of social policies, in areas such as education, crime, health and welfare.

For example, in a controlled experiment or trial, some people are randomly chosen to get a policy intervention and others do not get it at all. These groups are then compared to see the effect the policy has had.

On the other hand, a pilot scheme is when a policy is tested with part of a population before being rolled out to the whole target population.

- For more information on the Ipsos MORI MPs surveys, please see <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchspecialisms/reputationresearch/whatwedo/kit/MPs.aspx>