

Consulting the public online - opportunities, barriers and policy options

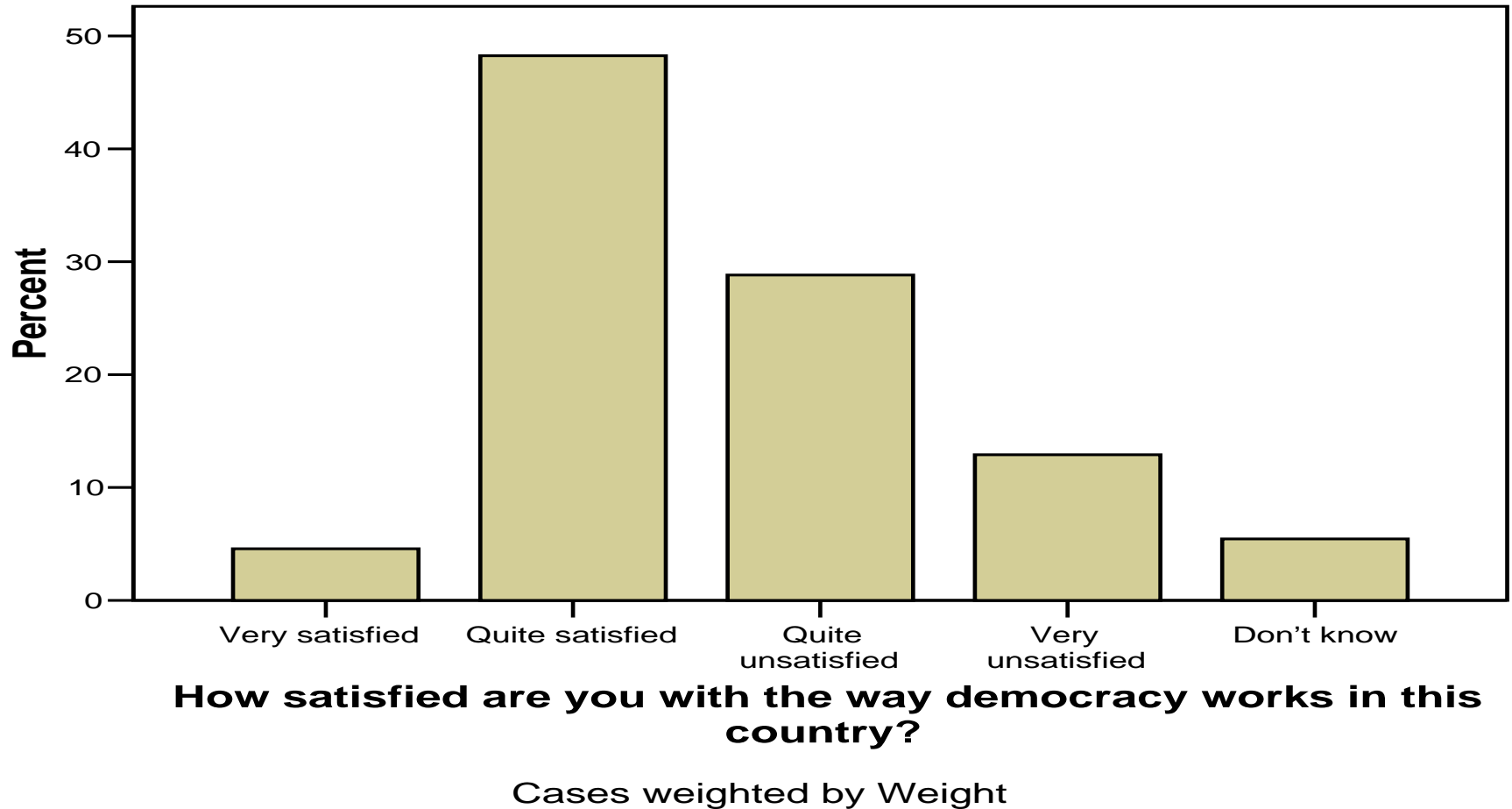
Professor Stephen Coleman,
Institute of Communications Studies,
University of Leeds

Barriers to Effective Consultation

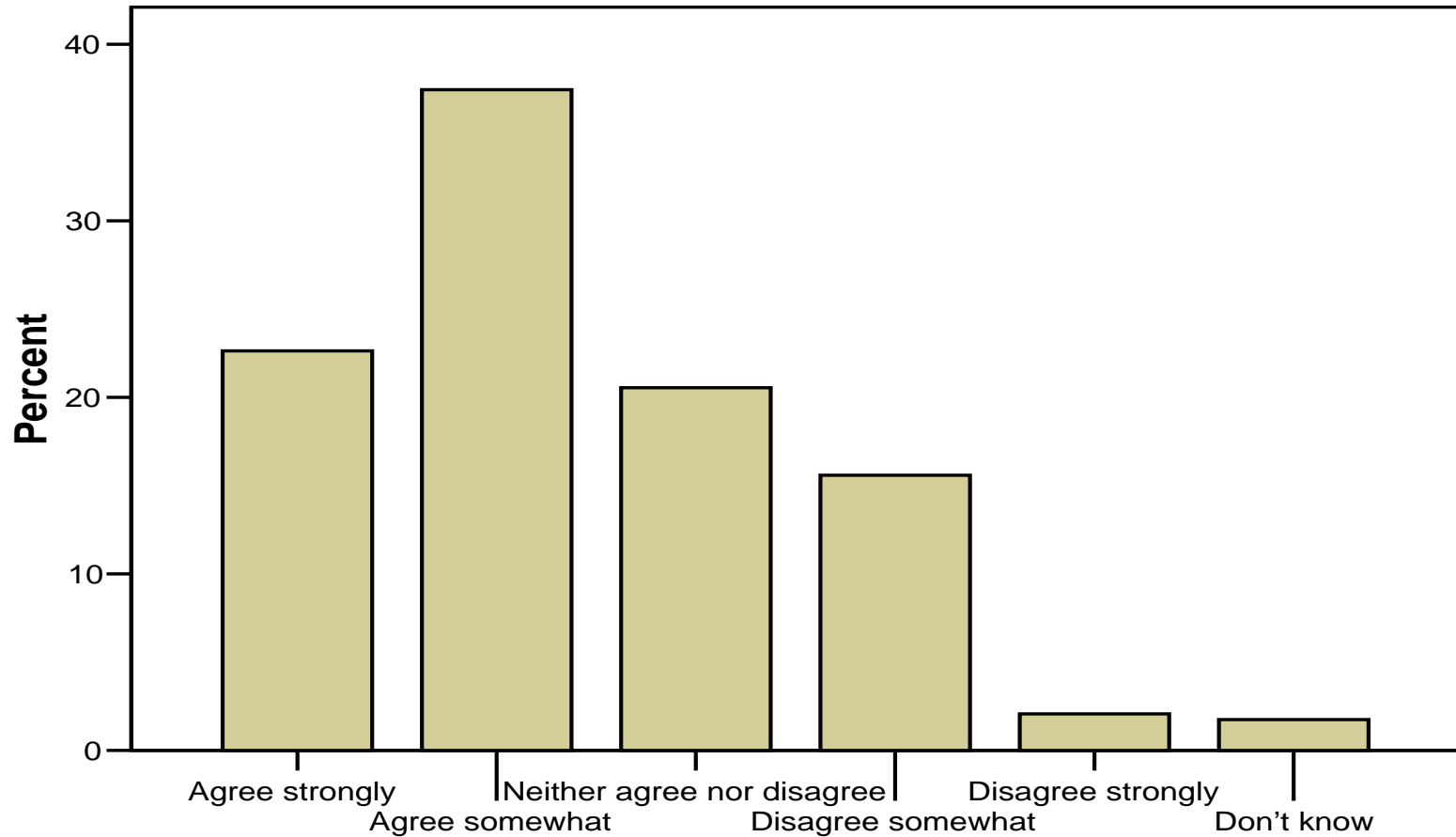
- **Exclusive**
- **Consumerist**
- **Tokenist**

- **2005 national representative survey**
- **n=3,229 18-75 year-old Internet users**
- **Age:** 18-24 (n=356); 25-29 (n=296); 30-34 (n=319); 35-39 (n=306); 40-49 (n=592); 50-59 (n=682); 60+ (n=696)
- **Gender:** Males: (n=1,554); females (n=1,674)
- **SES:** ABC1 (n=1,742), C2DE (n= 1,487)
- **Party voted for in 2005 general election:** Labour (n=1,349); Conservative (n=676); Lib Dem (n=323); others (n=69); did not vote (n=812)

How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in this country?



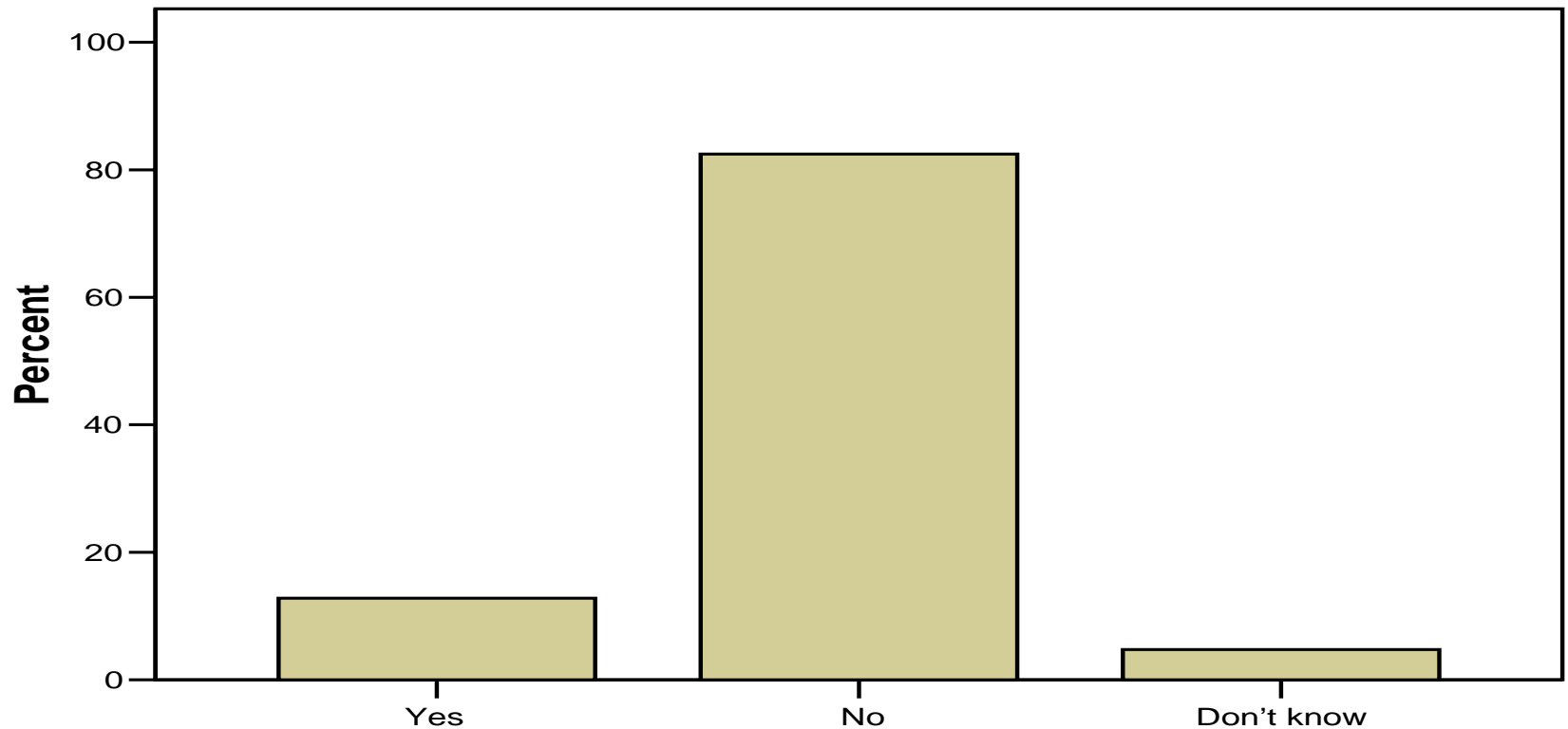
‘My local council doesn’t care what I think’



‘My local council doesn’t care what I think’

Cases weighted by Weight

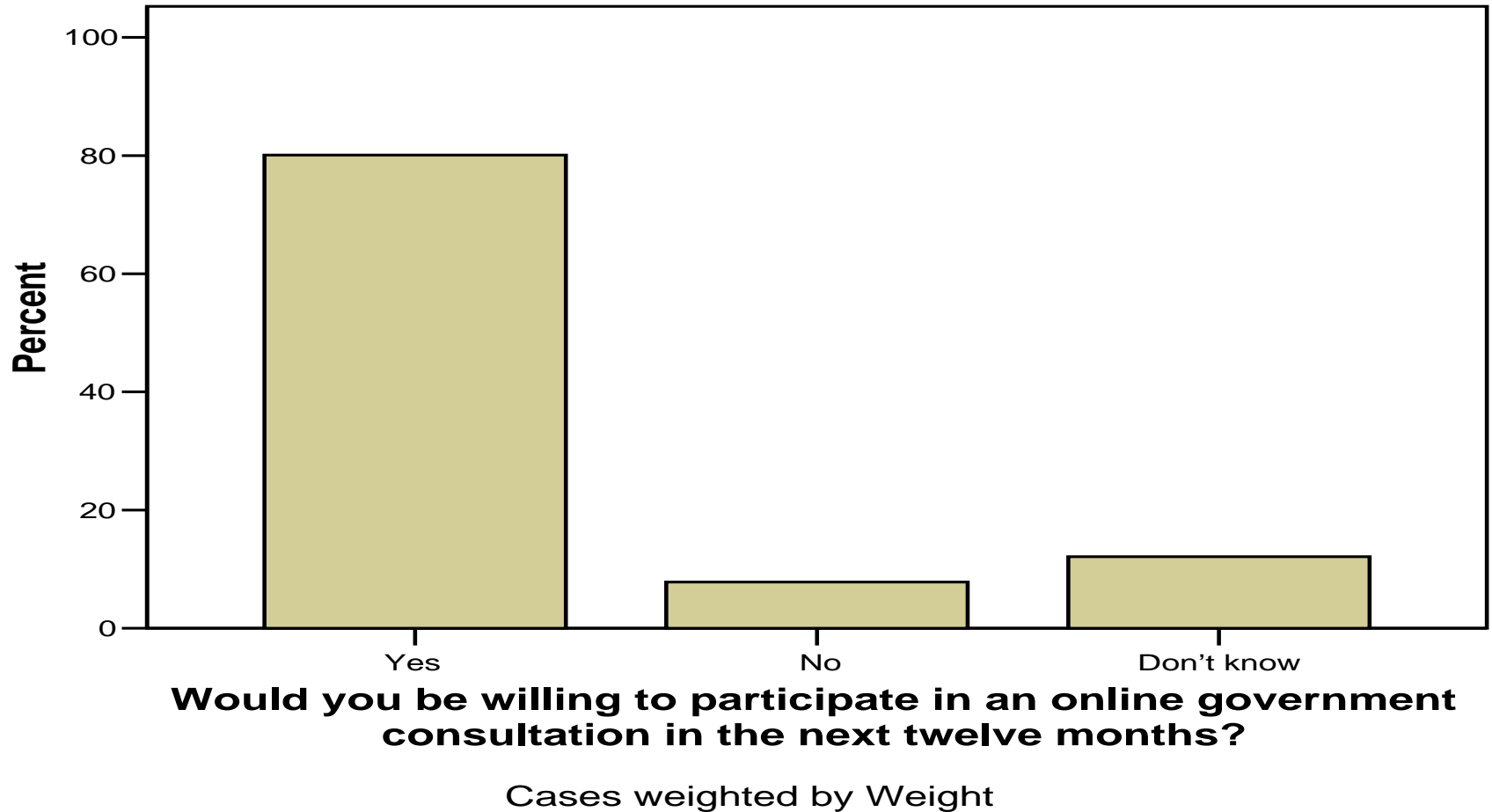
**Have you participated in an online government consultation
(local or national) in the last twelve months?**



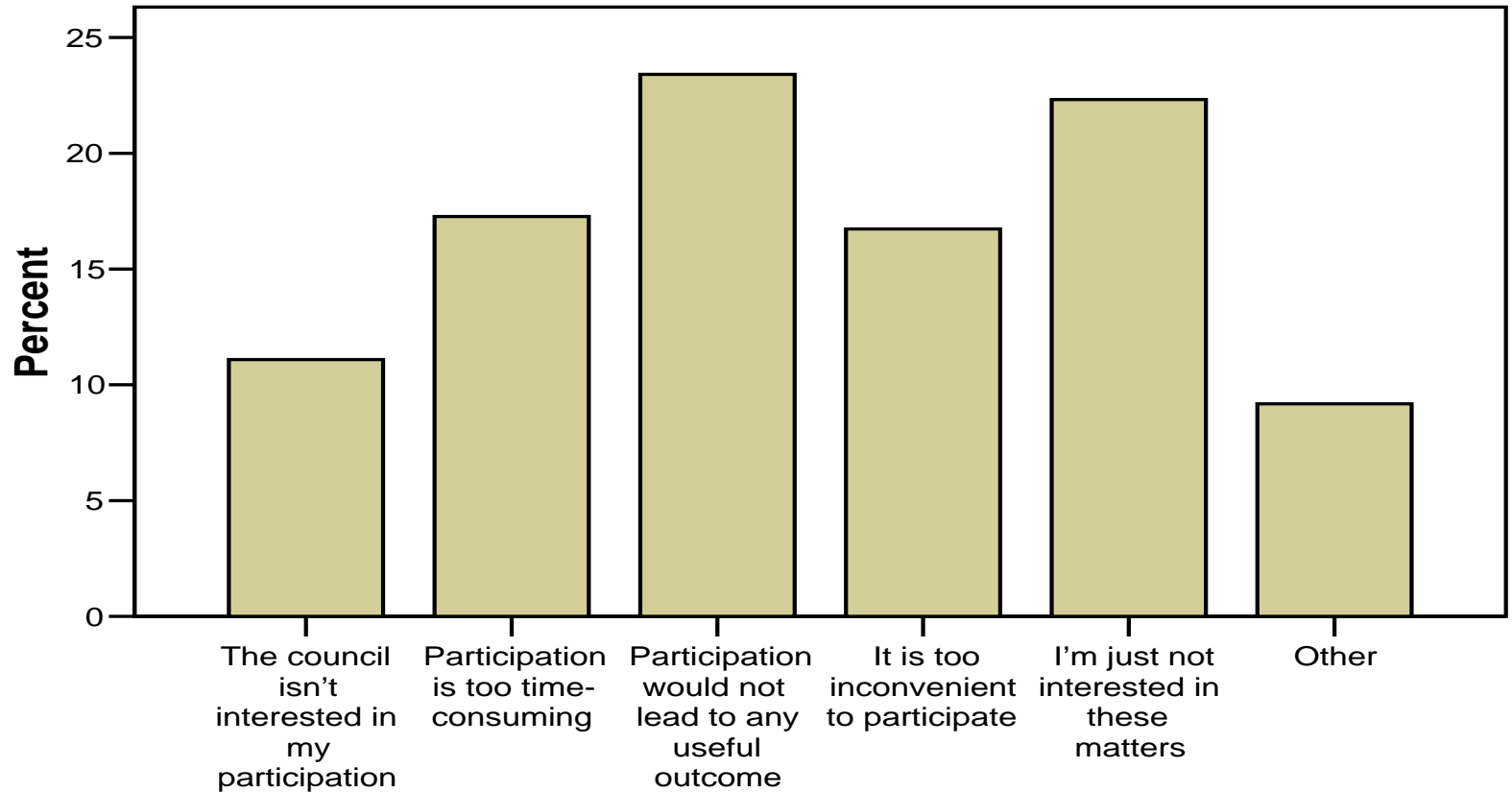
**Have you participated in an online government consultation
(local or national) in the last twelve months?**

Cases weighted by Weight

Would you be willing to participate in an online government consultation in the next twelve months?



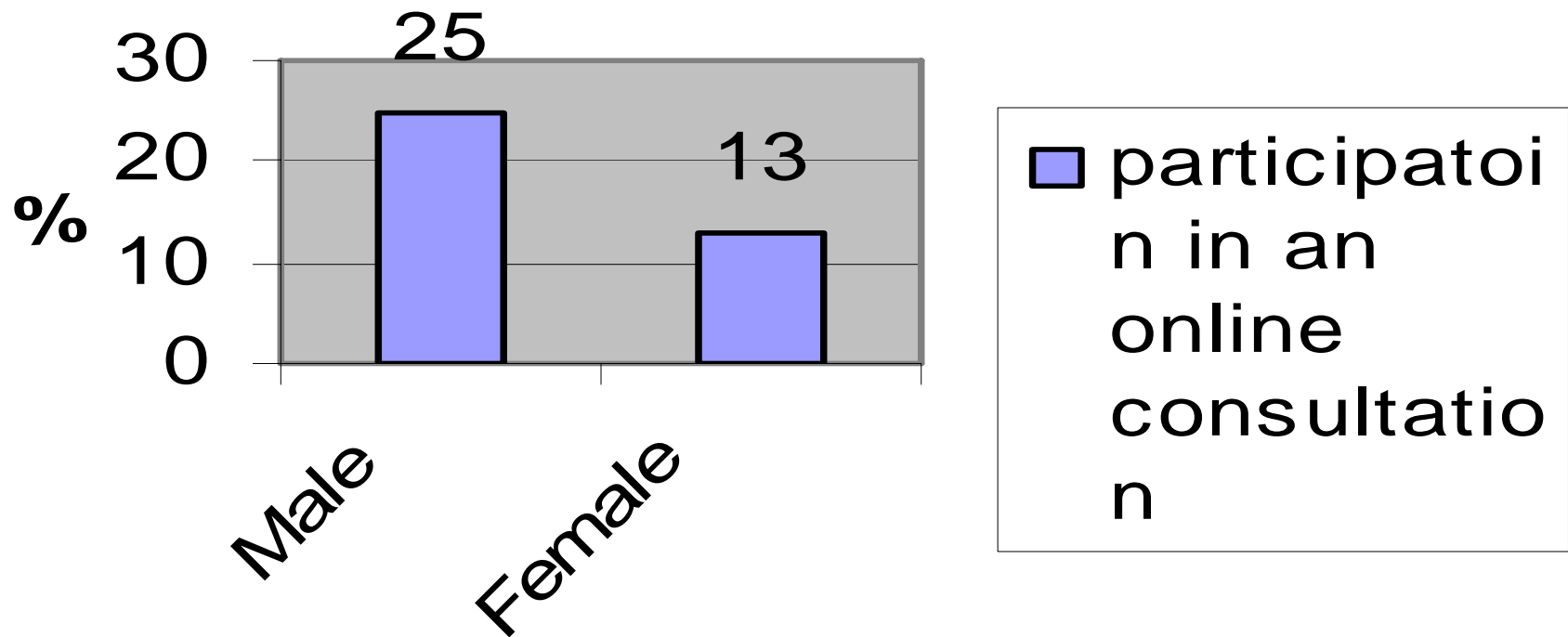
If you are NOT interested in getting involved, what is the main reason?



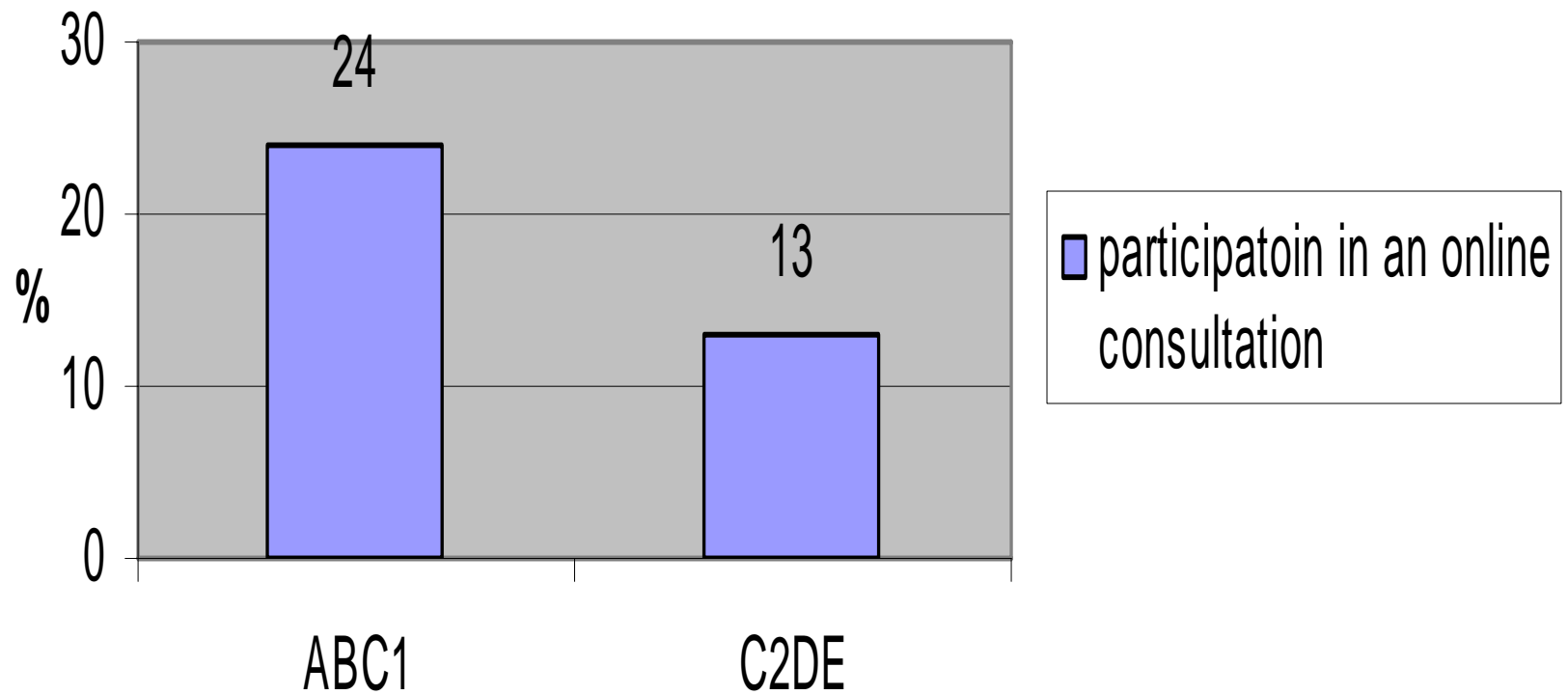
If you are NOT interested in getting involved, what is the main reason?

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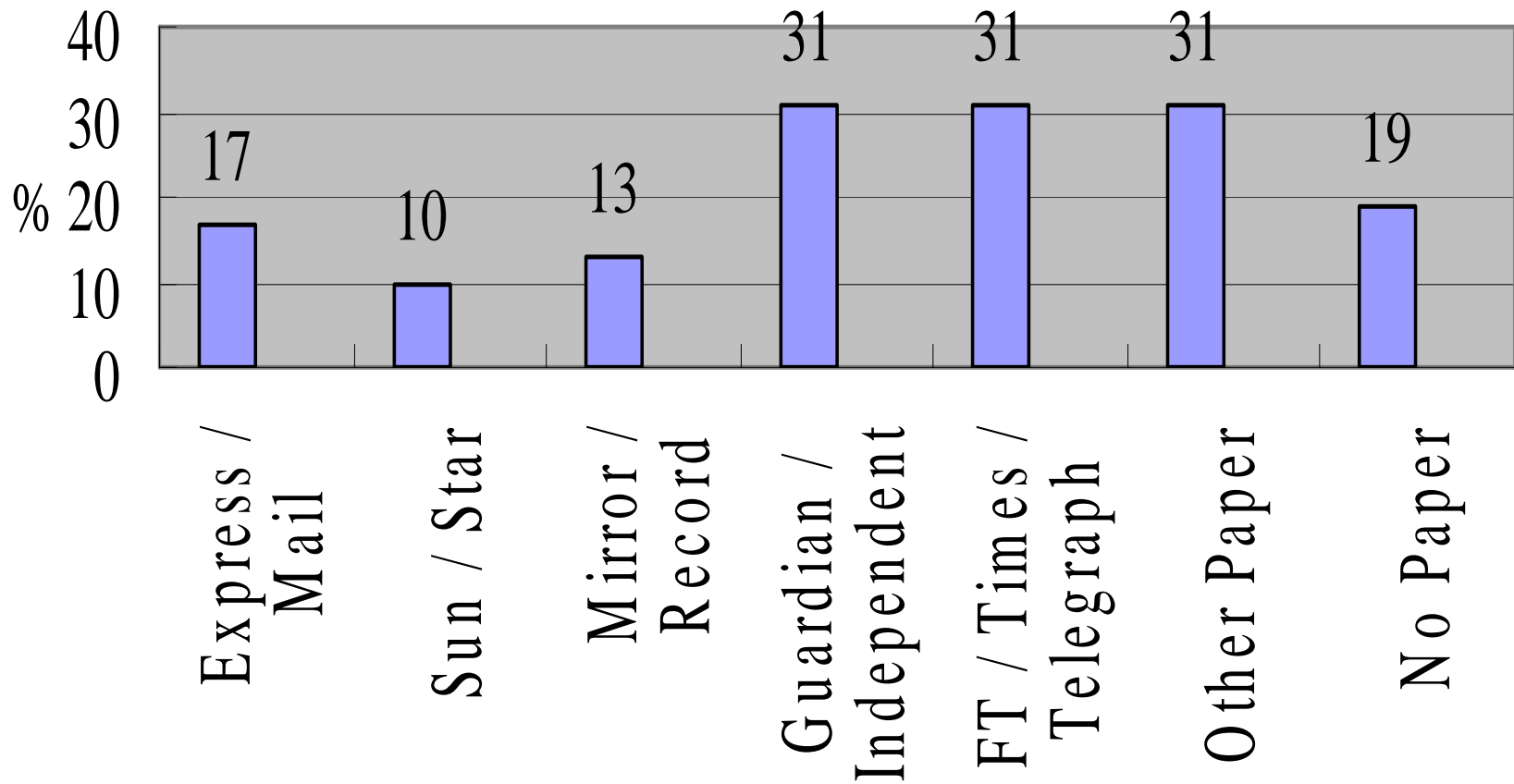
Gender differences in participation in an online consultation



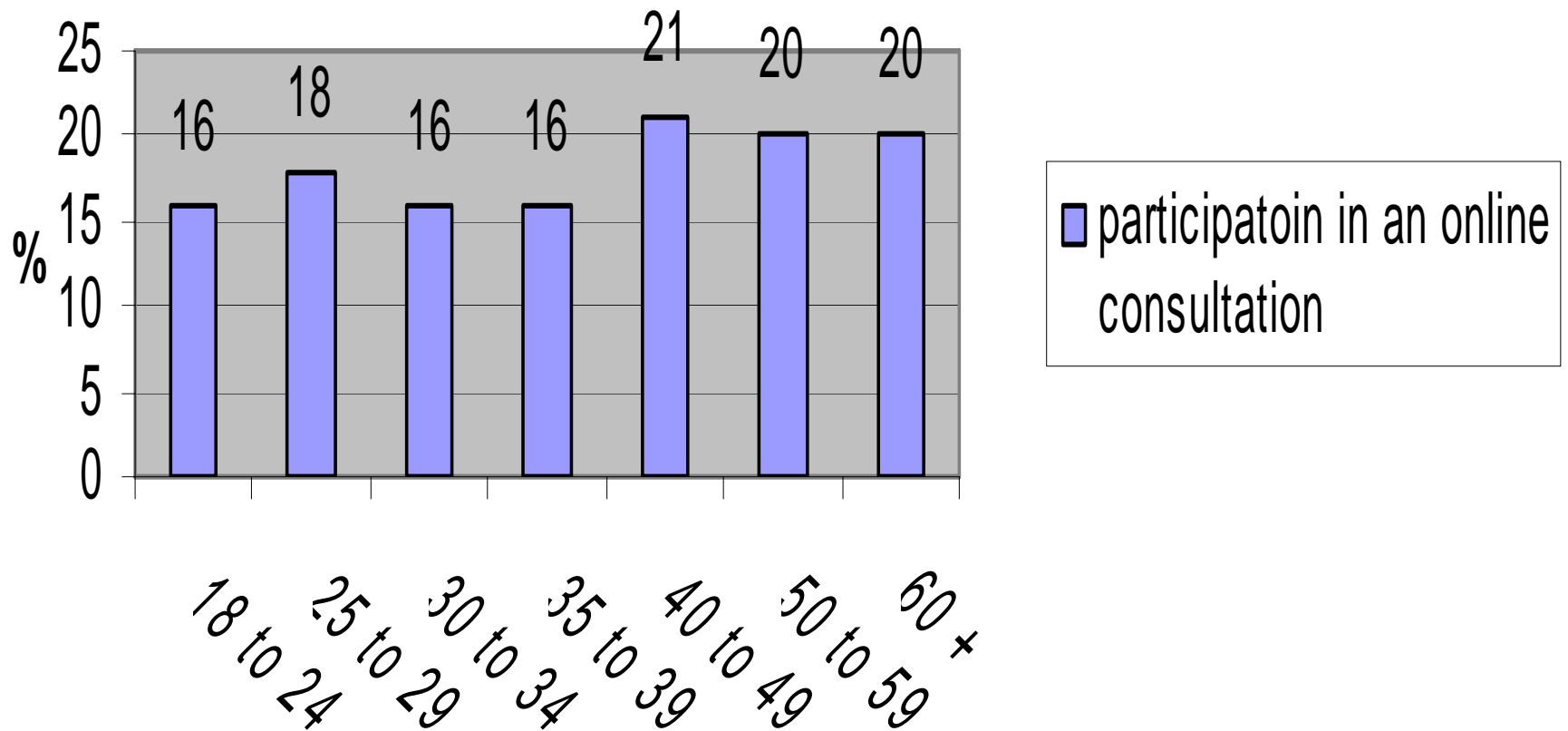
Class differences in participatoin in an online consultation



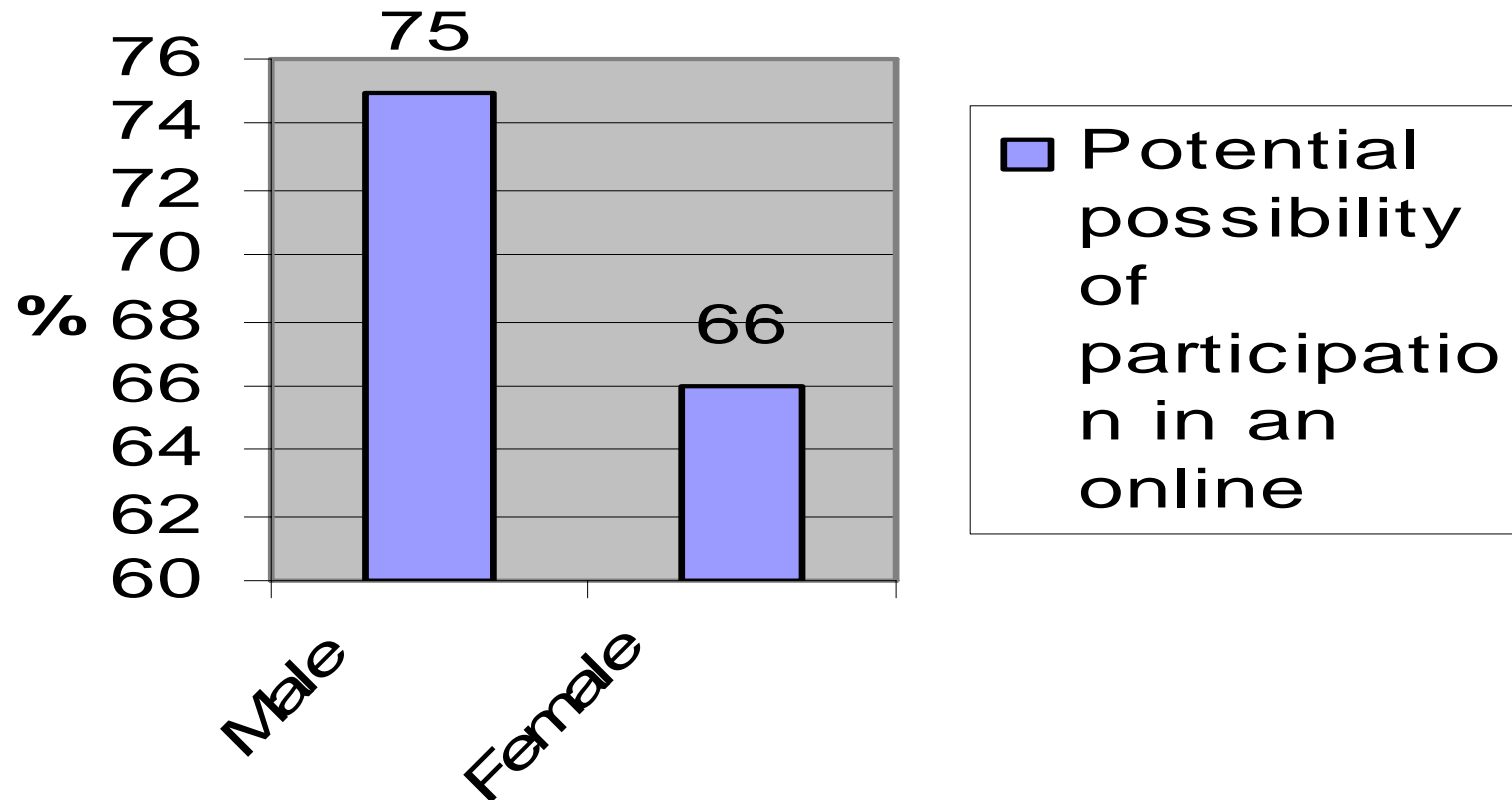
Have you ever taken part in an online consultation?



Age differences in participatoin in an online consultation



Gender differences in potential possibility for participation in an online consultation



Class differences in potential possibility for participation in an online consultation

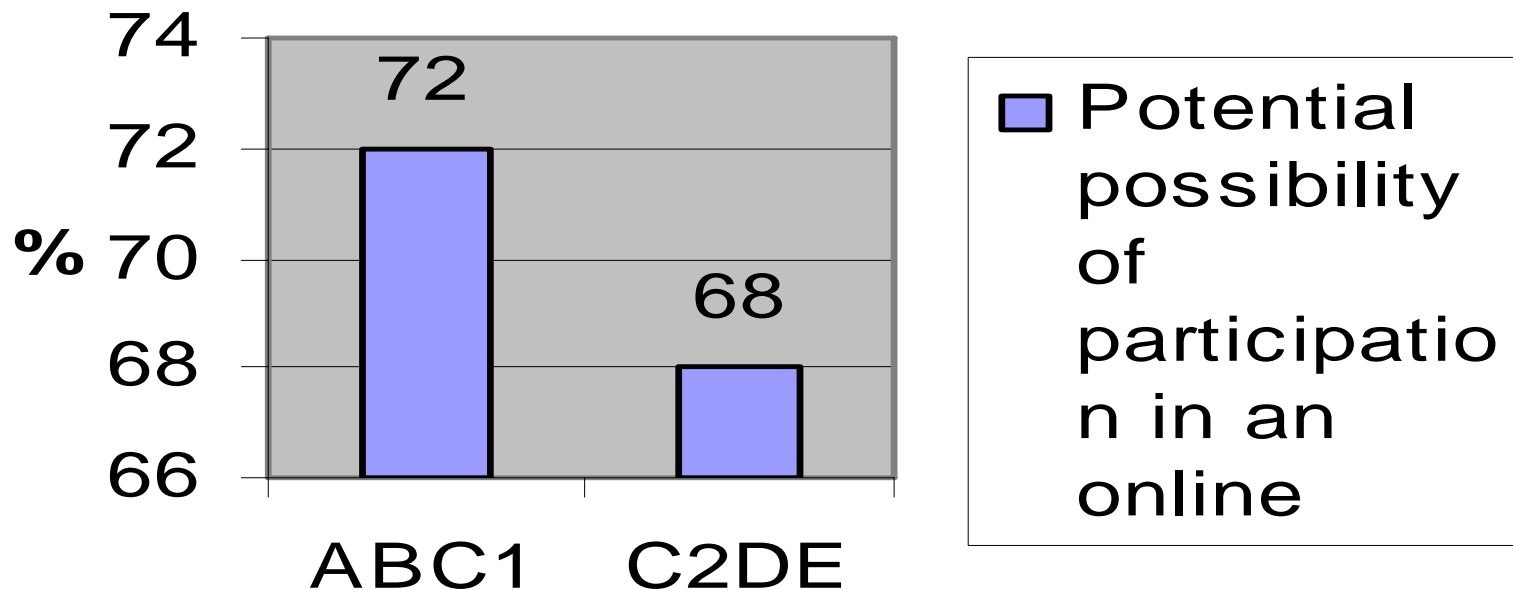
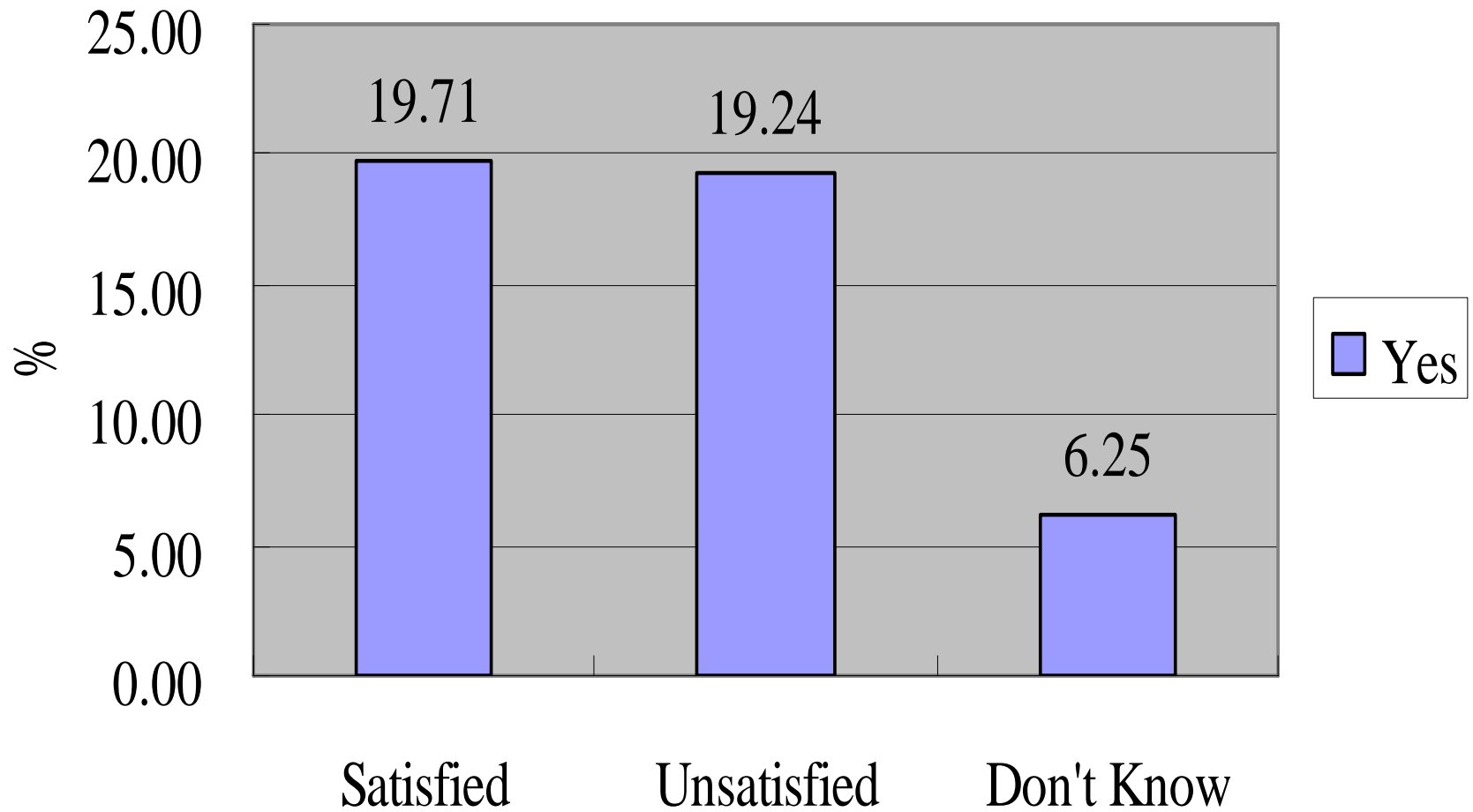
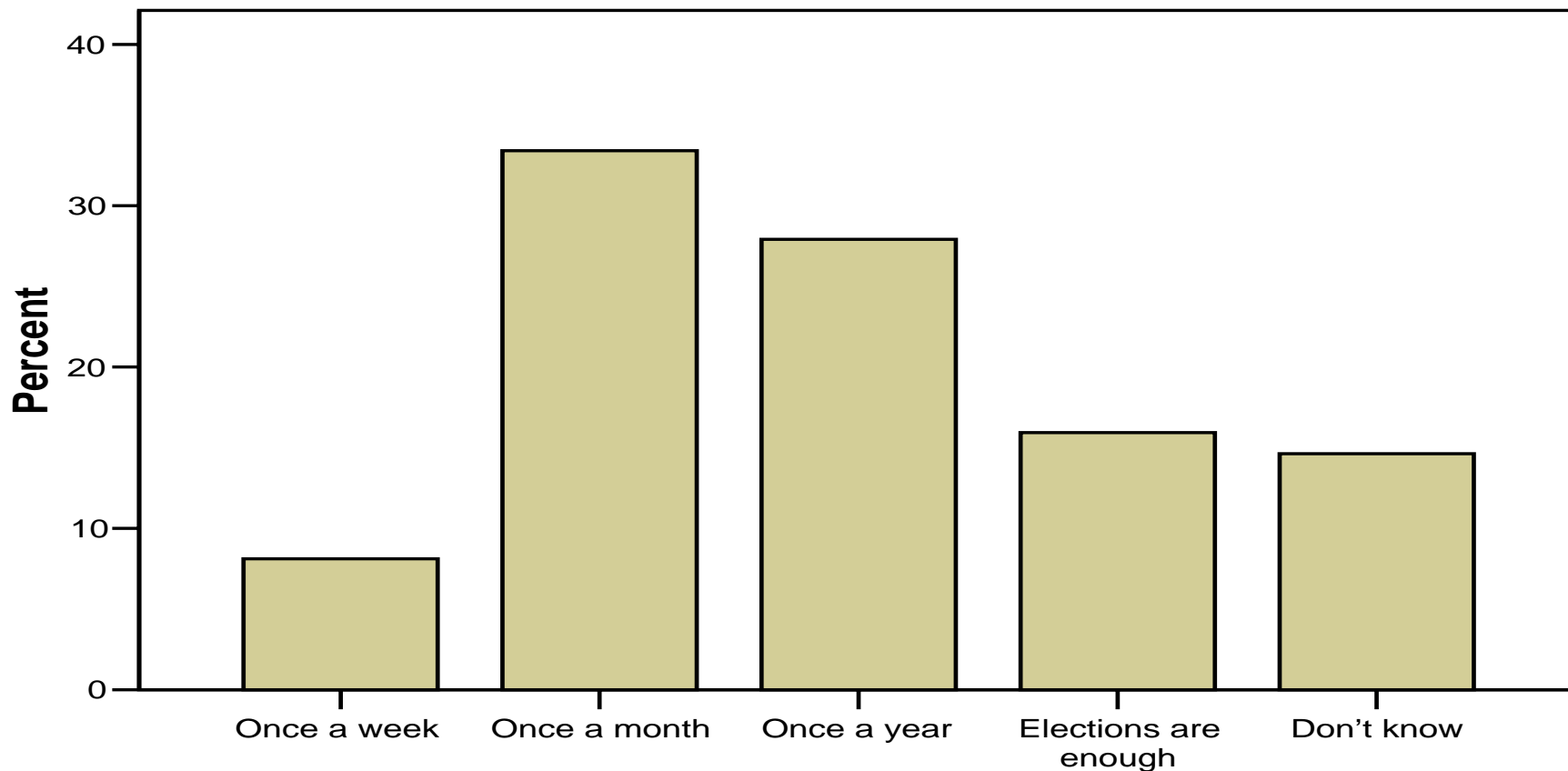


Table 2.5



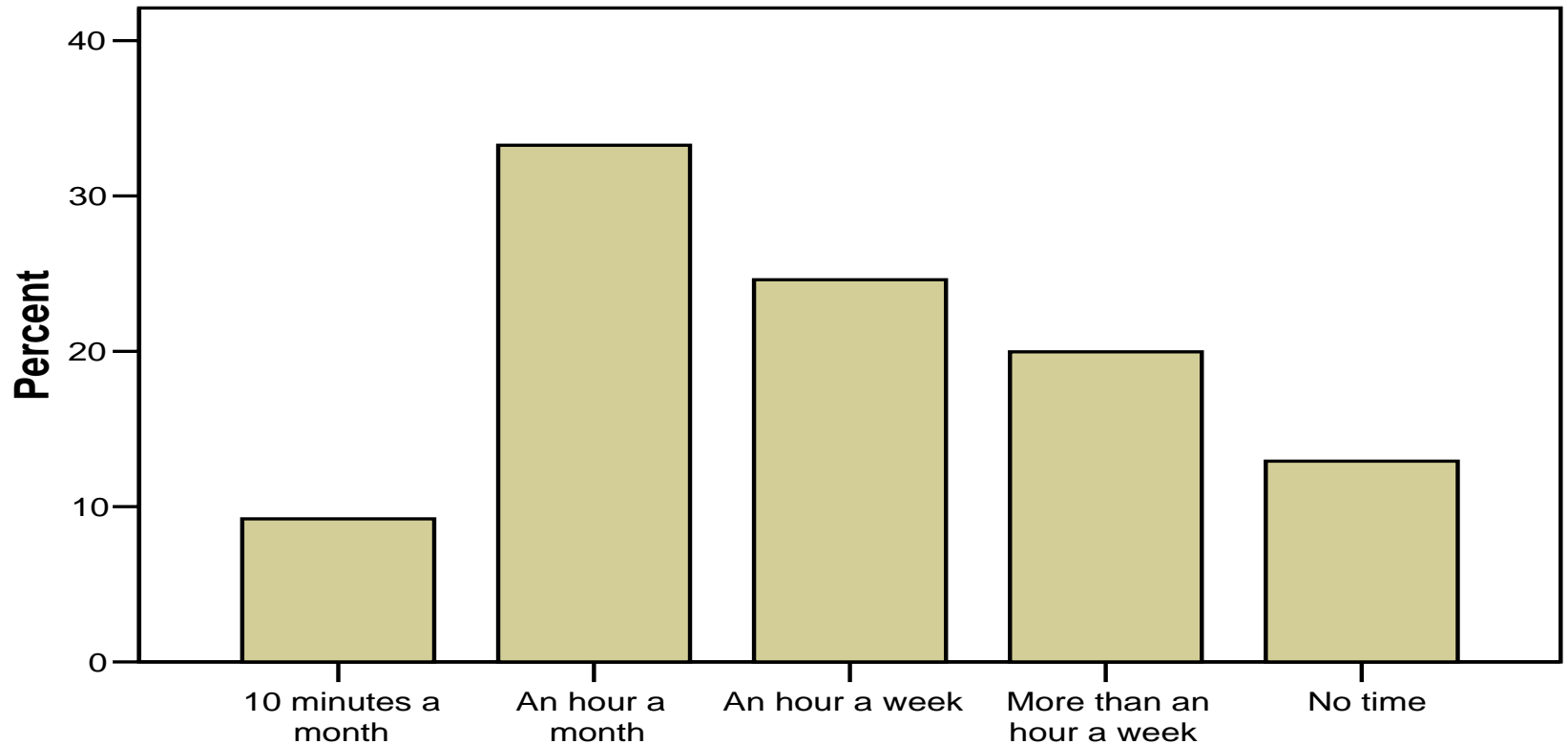
How often (if at all) should government consult people on decisions affecting government?



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Cases weighted by Weight

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SURVEY: 650 participants in four
UK parliamentary online
consultations

66% - male

34% - female

3% - members of political parties

58% - posted messages

42% - registered, but did not post
messages

PRE-CONSULTATION SURVEY:

44% felt that Parliament was 'out of touch' with people like them

20% thought that MPs were "interested in listening' to them.

POST-CONSULTATION SURVEY:

72% said that they found the consultation in which they participated 'worthwhile.' – 52% of whom said that Parliament was out of touch in the pre-consultation survey.

79% said that they had learned something new from reading other messages that were posted.

8% reported that they made new contacts with other people as a result of participating

17% stated that they had 'changed their mind or opinion' in some way

“...the impact on the final document was substantial, because there was an immediacy about some of the speech that was used in the examples in people’s contributions which was probably more accessible than having to dig through the large volumes of evidence. So there is a starkness and immediacy. There was also a sense in which this was an interesting appendix to a report that you don’t often see; so a number of people who read the report said that they flicked immediately to the report on the e-consultation.” (Clerk)

“I think with the online consultation you lower the threshold of effort that’s required to participate in the inquiry, so the people that you bring are the people who wouldn’t go to the trouble of drafting a memorandum and editing it and printing it out and posting it in and so on, but might just post a few sentences on a message board.” (Clerk)

“... It did prove to be an avenue in which people could contribute who otherwise might not have done so ... All I can say is that the nature and experiences mediated through the contributions were quite often of a different nature from the, sort of, institutional contributions we would normally expect to get.” (Clerk)

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

- Address reasons for not wishing to be involved
- Attracting women
- Attracting lower socio-economic groups
- Designing deliberation for the time poor
- Creating horizontal links
- Identifying policy impacts