

Angry voters syndrome

And what it means for brands....

A presentation by Deborah Mattinson for the Market Research Society's
'Customers Exposed' conference

27th October 2016

Voters feel Britain is now a divided nation

I think the country's not broken but fractured...after the referendum as well, you were labelled as either racist or unpatriotic depending on which side you were.

Harlow, Male

divided
multicultural
diverse
fractured
ill-advised
polite
confused
trust
getting-by
olympians
shambles
poor-housing
pound
victorious
changed
tolerant
overcrowded
hesitant
broken
struggling
successful
weak
waiting
slow

Divided - the 52% and 48%, the country is very much unsure what to do. I voted to stay, and I'm appalled that we are going to leave the EU, I'm appalled that some of the people that voted won't even be here. And I think it's the worst decision we've made in 50 years.

Leamington Spa, Male

I love the idea of diversity in Britain and I actually embrace that but I feel that these days there's quite an undercurrent of xenophobia, and that makes me feel that Britain is broken. An undercurrent of intolerance.

Leamington Spa, Female

...divided between 'haves' and 'have nots'

'Have nots' describe:

- A powerful sense of injustice about their situation in life
- The feeling that systems are in place which work in favour of elites and against their best interests

We as a country have created a society of levels. And this won't change, because politicians, most politicians are millionaires. So how are they representative of us? When they're making laws. The rich people could make change but won't because the system works for them.

Harlow, Male

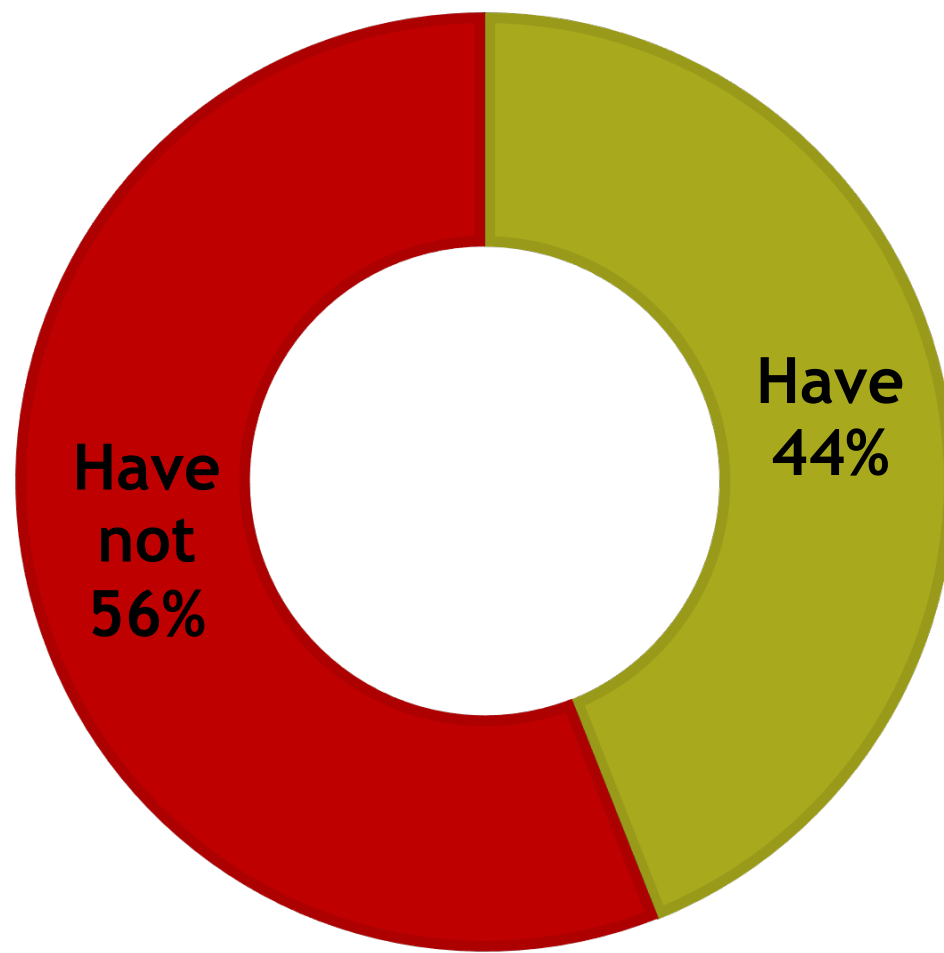
'Haves' describe:

- Awareness of different levels of wealth and success in the UK
 - And a growing contingent of people who feel 'left behind' and disenchanted
- Themselves as different to that group - and are grateful that that's the case

My family come from Stoke on Trent, and it's a really impoverished city. Their outlook on the EU was so different to my friends here, and in London, and these are my cousins, the same family, age. It's Cities vs Rural, but also cities with outdated industries that have no regeneration. My cousin by the time she was 26 had been made redundant 4 times, in an industry our family had worked in for generations. It's so different to my life.

Leamington Spa, Female

Voters are more likely to identify with the 'have nots'

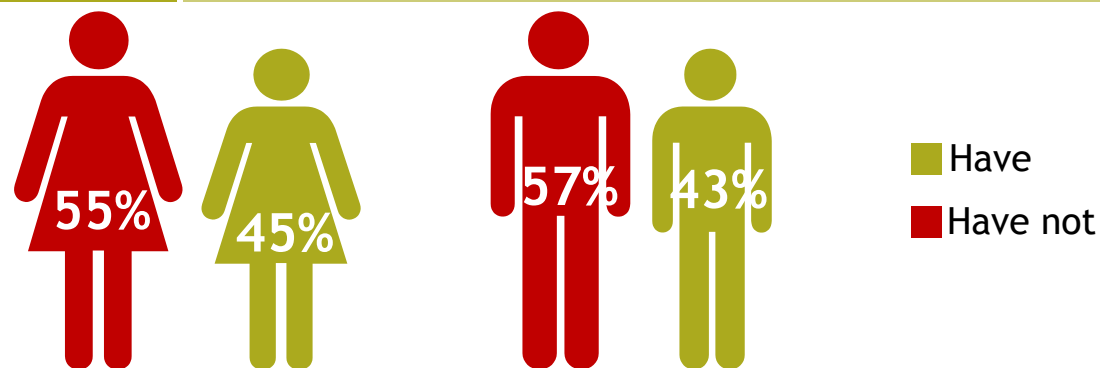


Q. People often talk about our divided society nowadays and how Britain is now a nation of "Haves" and the "Have nots". Which group do you feel best describes you? Base: Representative sample of the British public excluding those who say 'don't know' (n=1,384)

But within this there are significant differences in terms of age, geography and socioeconomic grade

SEX

Men and women are more or less equally likely to feel disenchanted



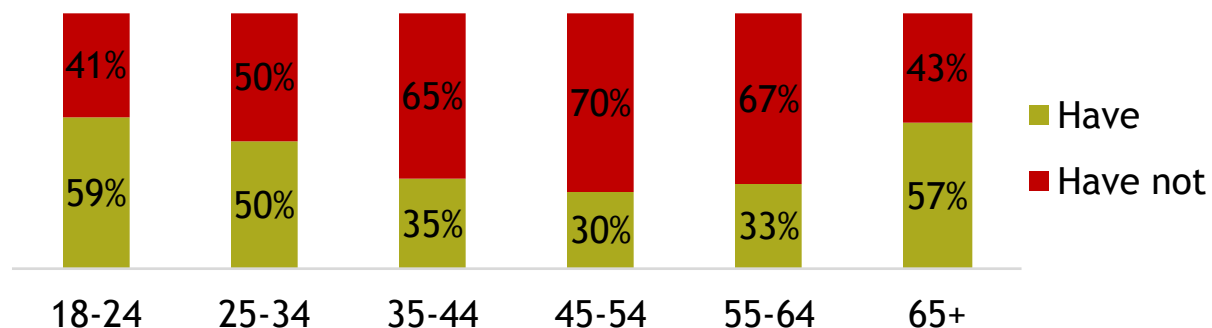
GEOGRAPHY

There is a clear North/South divide - most strikingly in the NE versus SE



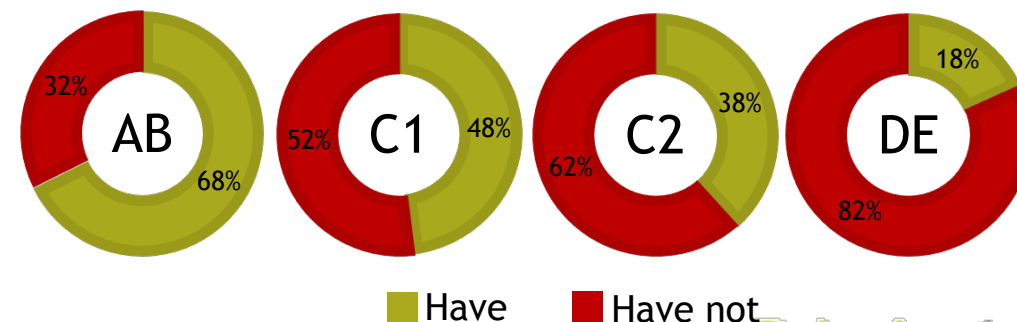
AGE

Disenchantment increases with age up until pension age



SEG

Disenchantment is - unsurprisingly - higher the lower your SEG



And by political leaning and beliefs

PAST VOTE

Conservative leaners are MUCH less likely to feel disenchanted than Labour/UKIP supporters

66%

are 'haves'



34%

are 'have nots'

32%

are 'haves'



68%

are 'have nots'

33%

are 'haves'

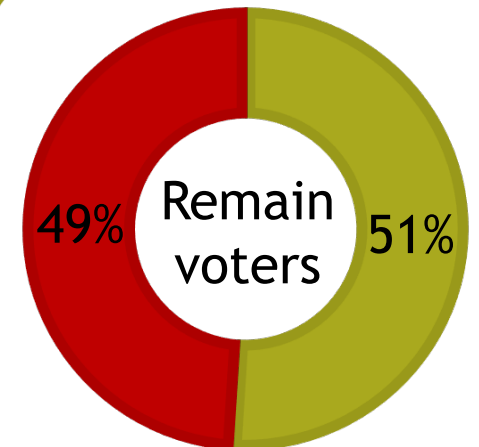
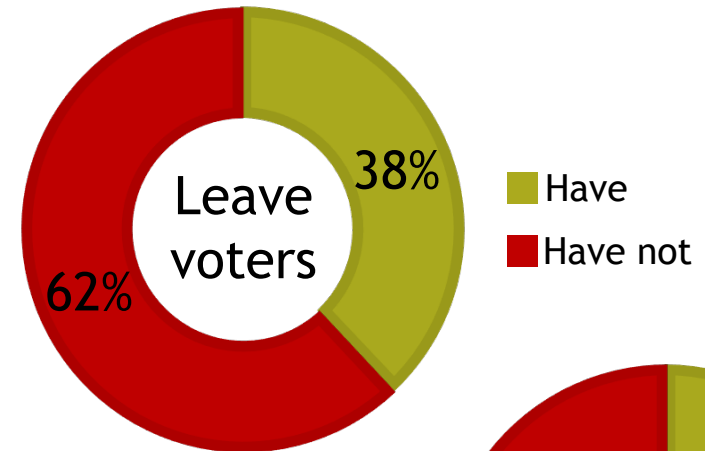


67%

are 'have nots'

EU REF

'Leavers' are more likely to feel left behind than 'remainers'



Their lives are different...



Kerry, Cleaner, Waitress and Nanny, Harlow

- Single mum of a 10 year old boy, and rents a room in her mum's house
- Works three jobs to cover all the bill and childcare and even then has very little to spare at the end of the month
- Feels that people like her are ignored and that more money is spent on services for immigrant communities

Charity should start at home. There are a lot of people struggling, and they can't get any help. I work 3 jobs and I can't afford somewhere to live. I live with my mum, with my 10 year old son in a room, we're earning just enough to get by. If I didn't have my mum's support I couldn't manage.



Martin, Civil Servant, Leamington Spa

- Is proud of what he's achieved in life: was the first person in his family to go to university and has built a comfortable life by working hard
- Felt pleased when his oldest daughter was accepted in to university, but worries about her future beyond that
- Blames struggles for young people getting onto the property ladder on poor management by successive politicians

I came from a working class background and I went to university and it took me to a life that I wouldn't have had. I think now young people are looking at the debt and are put off.

...and their views are different too



Steve, Builder, Harlow

- Has lived in Harlow all his life, and describes the area as in decline - especially public services
- Thinks that places like East London are now too dangerous for White British people as the Muslim community is so dominant
- Feels he can no longer fly an England flag when the football is on because of political correctness gone mad

British culture is fading away, the influx of the migrants is changing things in Britain. People who don't want to integrate. When they come over here, and they can't speak English properly, and you can't talk to them at work, you have to get someone to interpret.



Chris, HR Manager, Leamington Spa

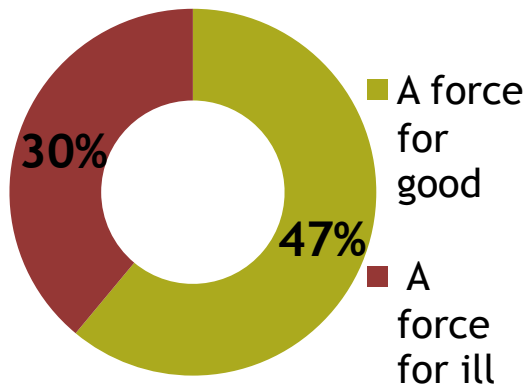
- Feels optimistic about his local area and the economy
- Thinks that multiculturalism has been a great thing for the UK and has made it a more interesting and vibrant place to live
- Says that most immigrants he has met or worked with have been hardworking, polite and a great addition to the country - much harder working than 'white benefit scroungers'

There are British citizens who aren't working and there are people coming in and it's nothing to do with colour or religion, it's to do with whether you're willing to do certain jobs for that amount of money.

The extent of division is stark on issues such as feminism, multiculturalism and globalisation

- Thinking about these issues is a luxury that only the middle classes and ‘haves’ can really afford
- For the ‘have nots’ multiculturalism and globalisation are worrying
- And environmental and feminist movements feel largely irrelevant

Multiculturalism



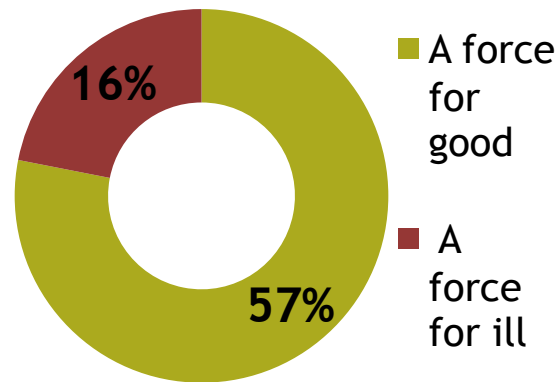
54%

AB social grade
think a force
for good

36%

DE social grade
think a force
for good

Feminism



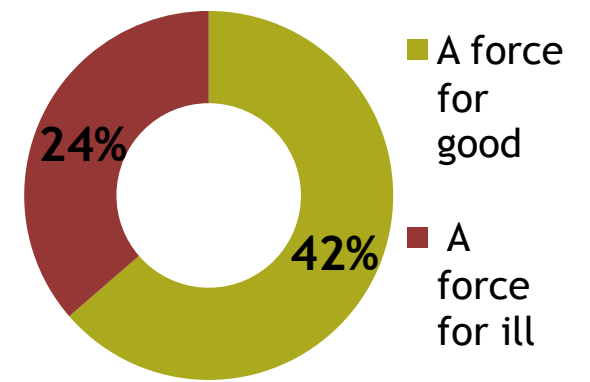
61%

AB social grade
think a force
for good

50%

DE social grade
think a force
for good

Globalisation



47%

AB social grade
think a force
for good

36%

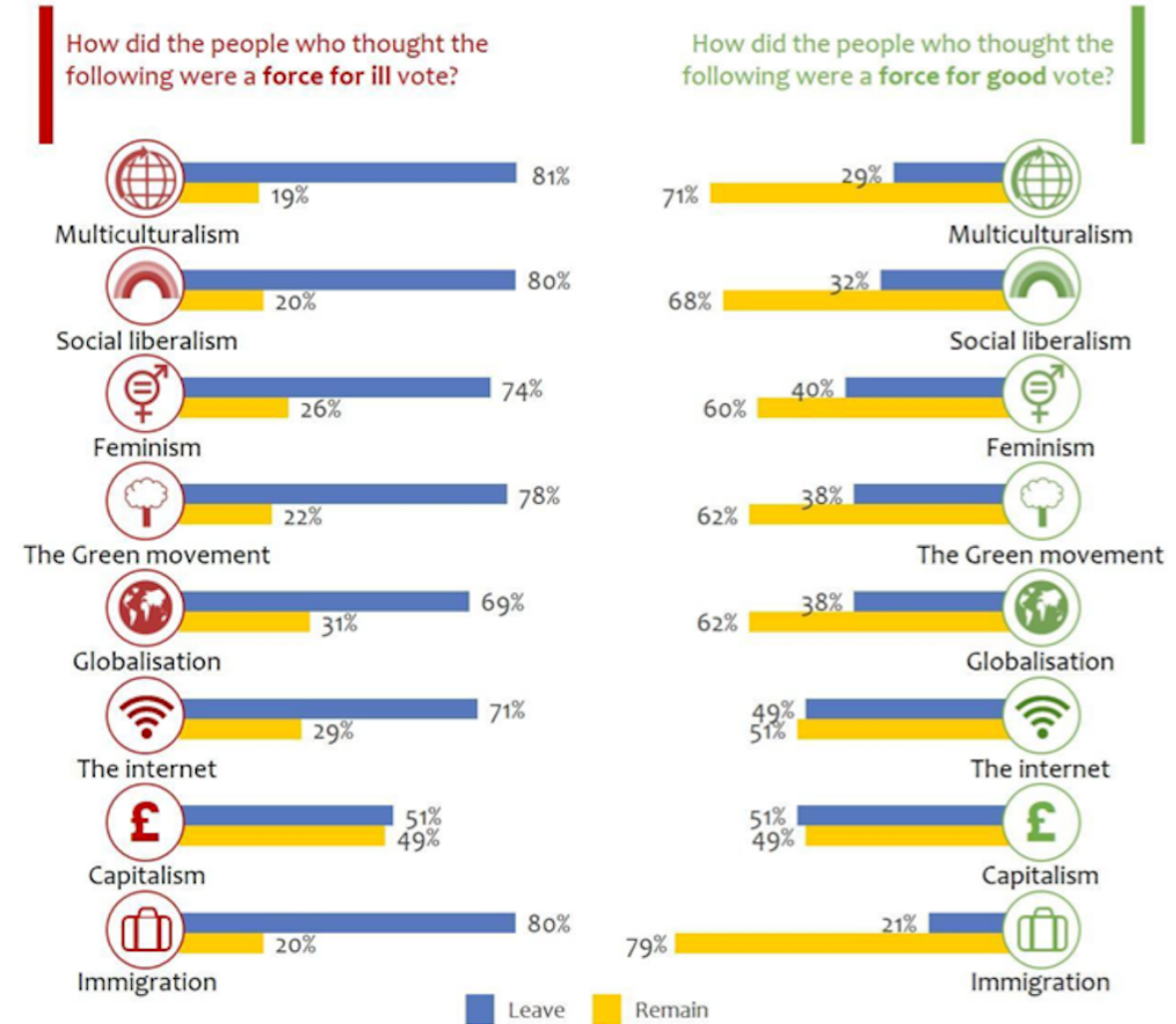
DE social grade
think a force
for good

As the referendum highlighted...

At the referendum, by significant majorities, voters who saw multiculturalism, feminism, the Green movement, globalisation and immigration as forces for good voted to remain in the EU

Whereas those who considered these issues to be forces for ill voted by even larger majorities to leave the EU

Do you think of each of the following as being a force for good, a force for ill, or a mixed-blessing?



The referendum is not the cause, but has brought these long-simmering divides to a head

Seen by 'have nots' as:

- Ordinary people triumphing over elites
- An opportunity to fight back against the personal and local impacts of immigration
- Being given licence to say things they wouldn't say previously because of fears of being 'un-P.C.'

We as a country have created a society of levels. And this won't change, because politicians, most politicians are millionaires. So how are they representative of us? When they're making laws. The rich people could make change but won't because the system works for them

Harlow, Male

Seen by 'haves' as:

- Vulnerable downtrodden people who have been manipulated
- Scapegoating immigration because of problems in their lives
- Threatening dearly held values like tolerance and diversity

My family come from Stoke on Trent, and it's a really impoverished city. Their outlook on the EU was so different to my friends here, and in London, and these are my cousins, the same family, age. It's Cities vs Rural, but also cities with outdated industries that have no regeneration. My cousin by the time she was 26 had been made redundant 4 times, in an industry our family had worked in for generations. It's so different to my life.

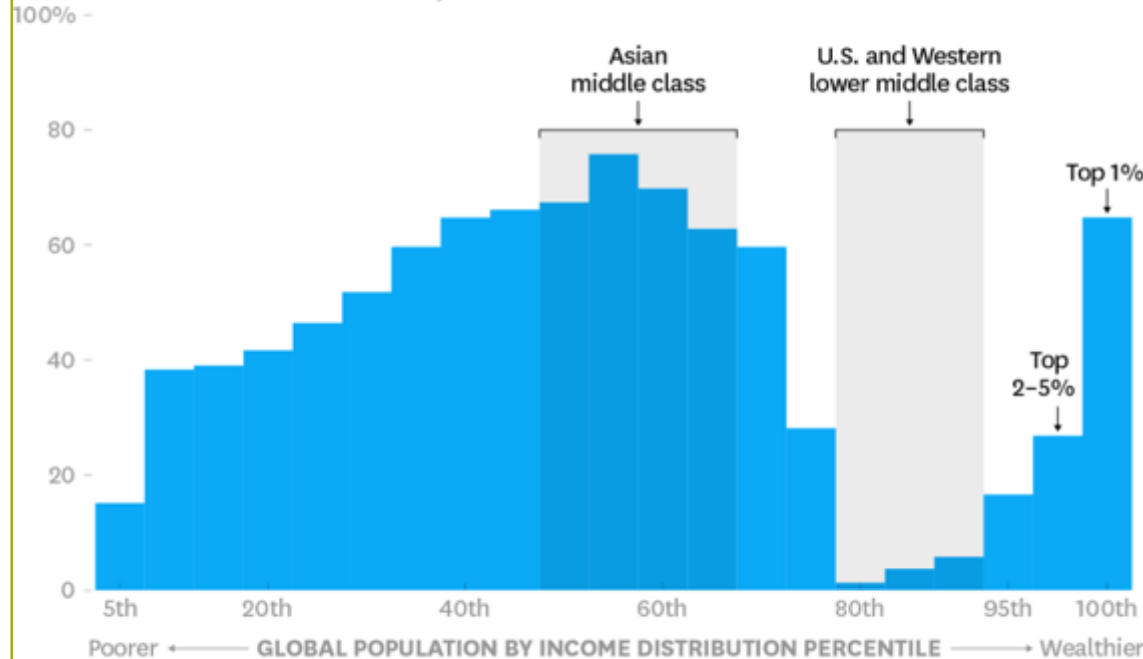
Leamington Spa, Female

Why are there so many 'have nots'?

Who Has Gained from Globalization

The global 1% and the Asian middle class.

REAL INCOME GAINS IN PERCENTAGE, 1988 TO 2008



NOTE INCOMES ARE REAL, PPP-ADJUSTED, IN 2005 DOLLARS.
SOURCE BRANKO MILANOVIC

© HBR.ORG

Global economy

Up to 70% of people in developed countries 'have seen incomes stagnate'

New report calculates that earnings did not rise for more than half a billion people between 2005 and 2014

'I don't believe that I personally benefit from economic growth in the UK'

Leave voters from SEG AB

30%

11%

Agree Strongly agree

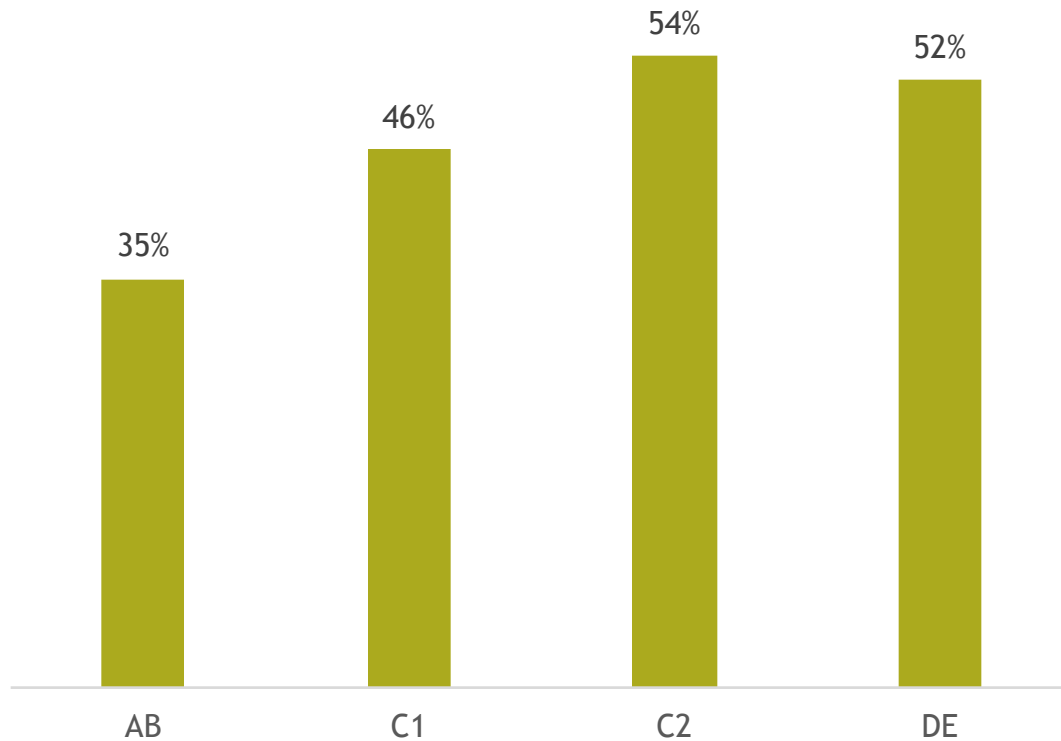
Leave voters from SEG DE

32%

25%

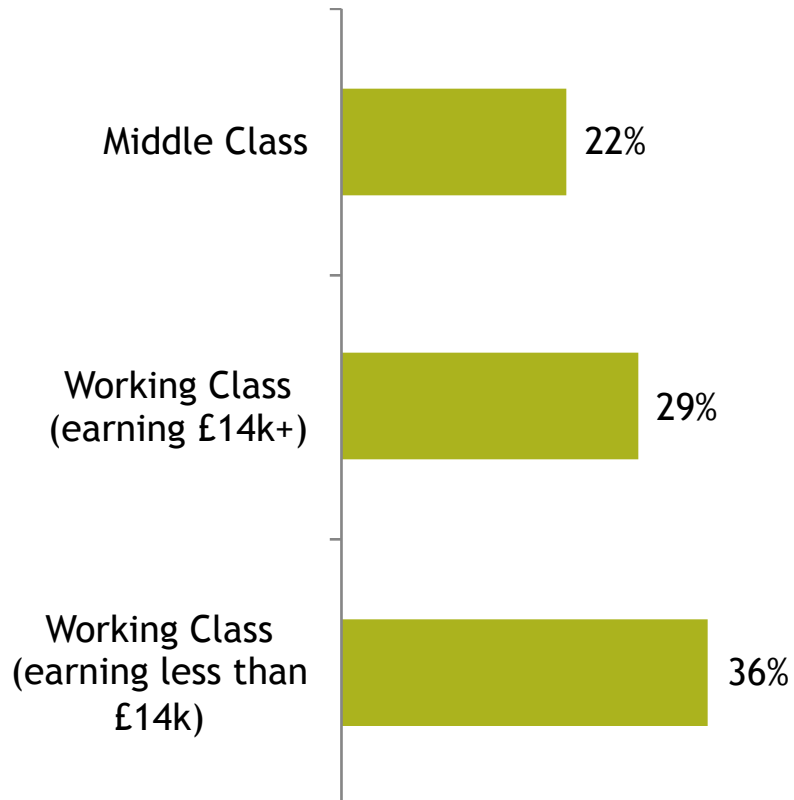
Manual workers, and people reaching the end of their working lives are most likely to feel that economic growth doesn't benefit them

I don't believe that I personally benefit from economic growth in the UK
(% Agree)

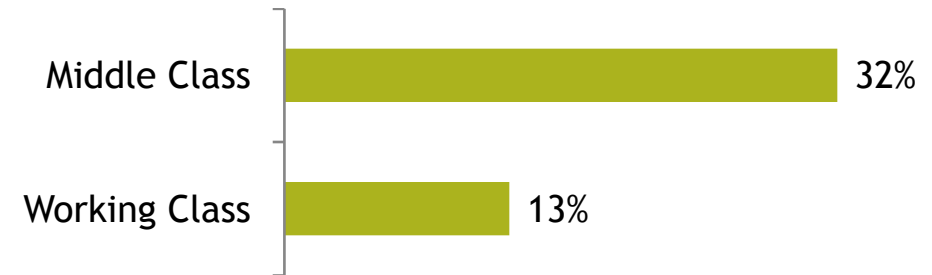


The closer to the line people are, the more insecure they feel...

% who say they feel nervous about their family's future



% who say 'I have enough savings to feel secure about my future'

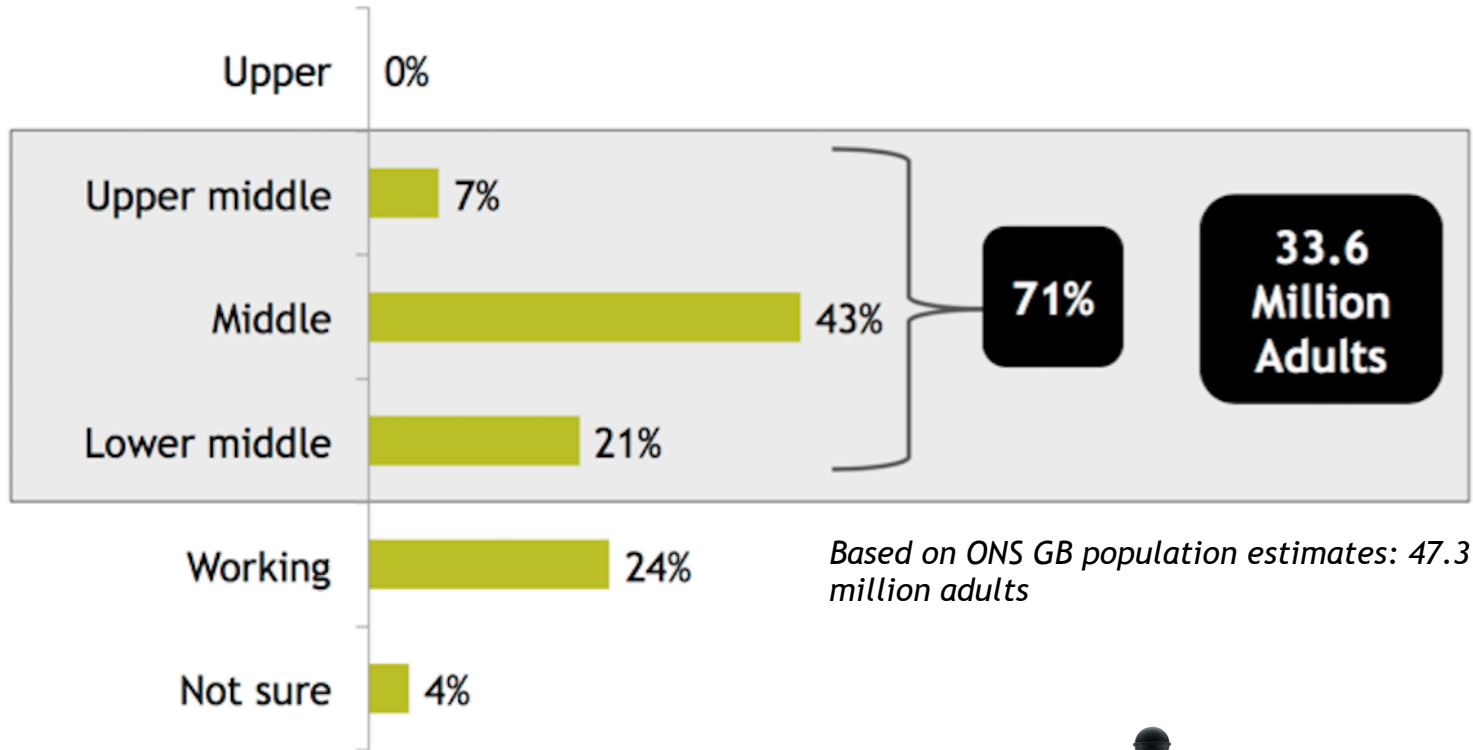


% who say 'It would be a big financial problem for me if I had to replace a large item'



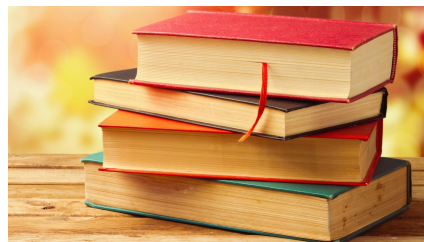
Back in 2010 71% of the British public self-identified as middle class

Q. If you had to say which social class you belong to, which would it be?



There is variation among the 71% - in our report we identified six separate middle class segments

But all of these varying segments, in total a staggering 33.6 million adults, felt comfortable enough to call themselves middle class in 2010



This has undergone significant change, with increasing numbers now self-identifying as working class

theguardian

Although just 25% of people now work in routine and manual occupations, 60% of Britons regard themselves as working class, a phenomenon described as a “working class of the mind” that has withstood dramatic changes in the labour market.

NatCen Social Research, 2016

They feel they are living largely hand-to-mouth and often find it difficult to have aspirations beyond day to day routine

They hope their children will have better lives than they did

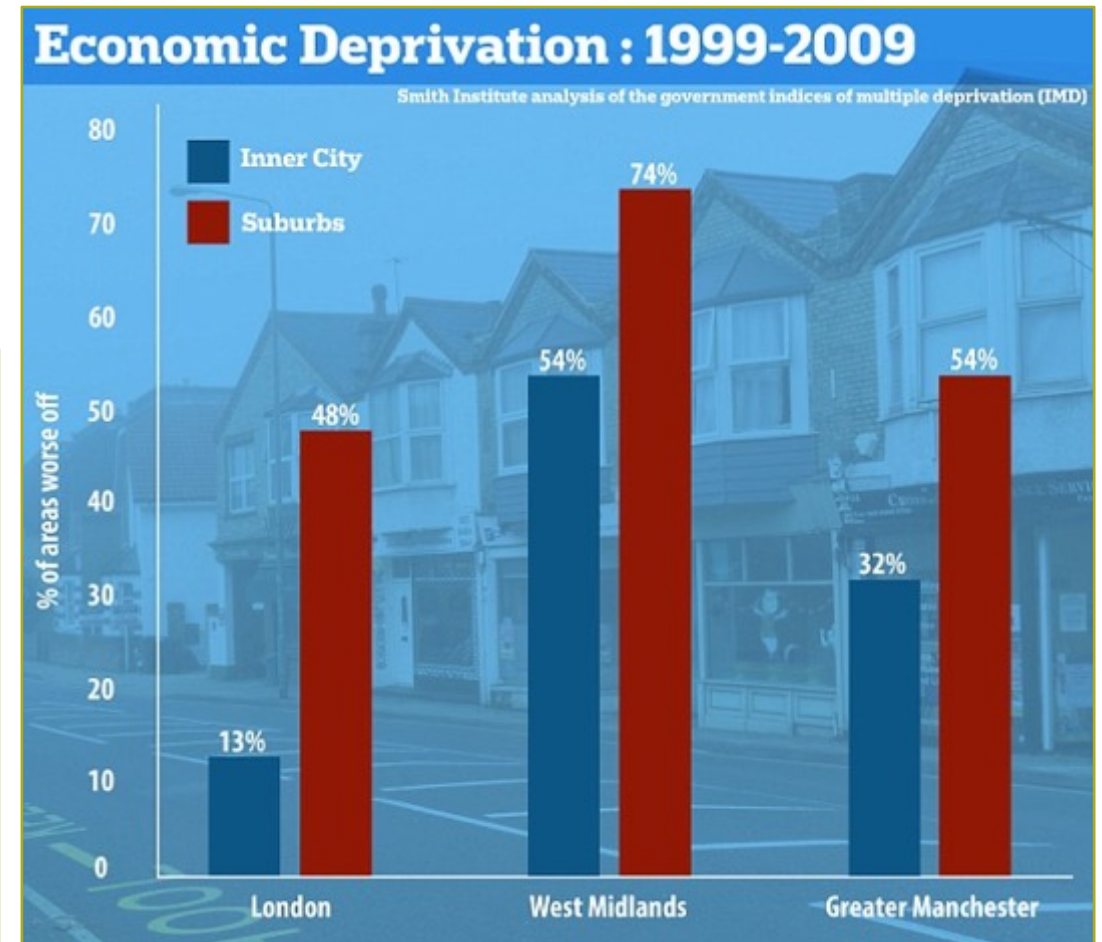
They often refer to another, ‘lower’ class:

- People who don’t work
- Or don’t want to work

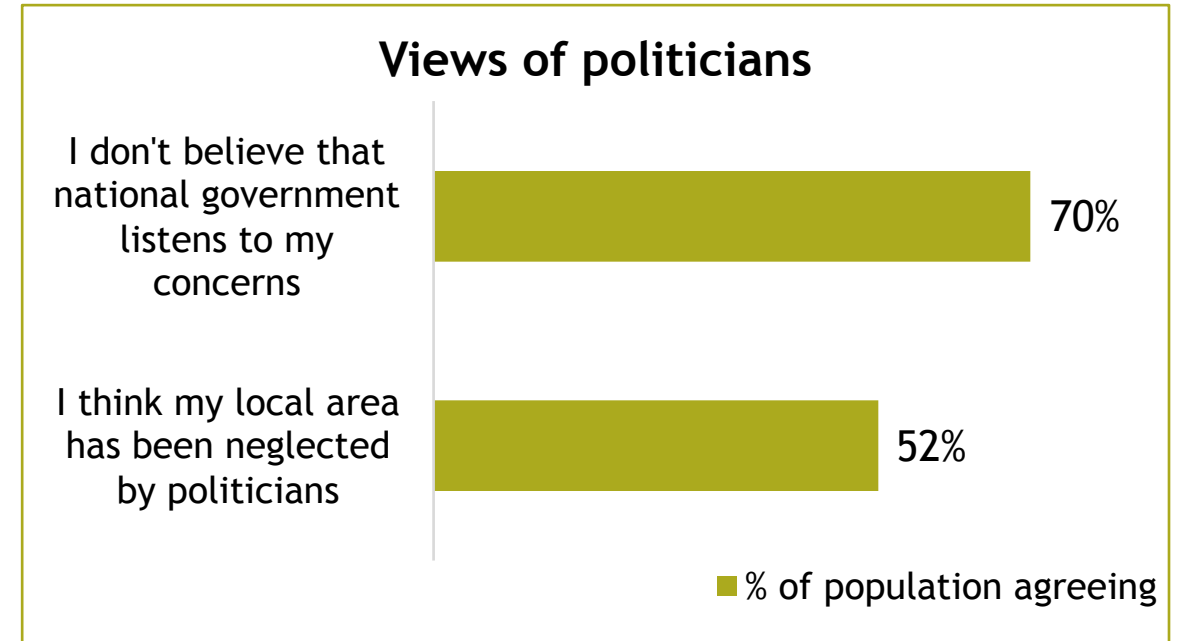
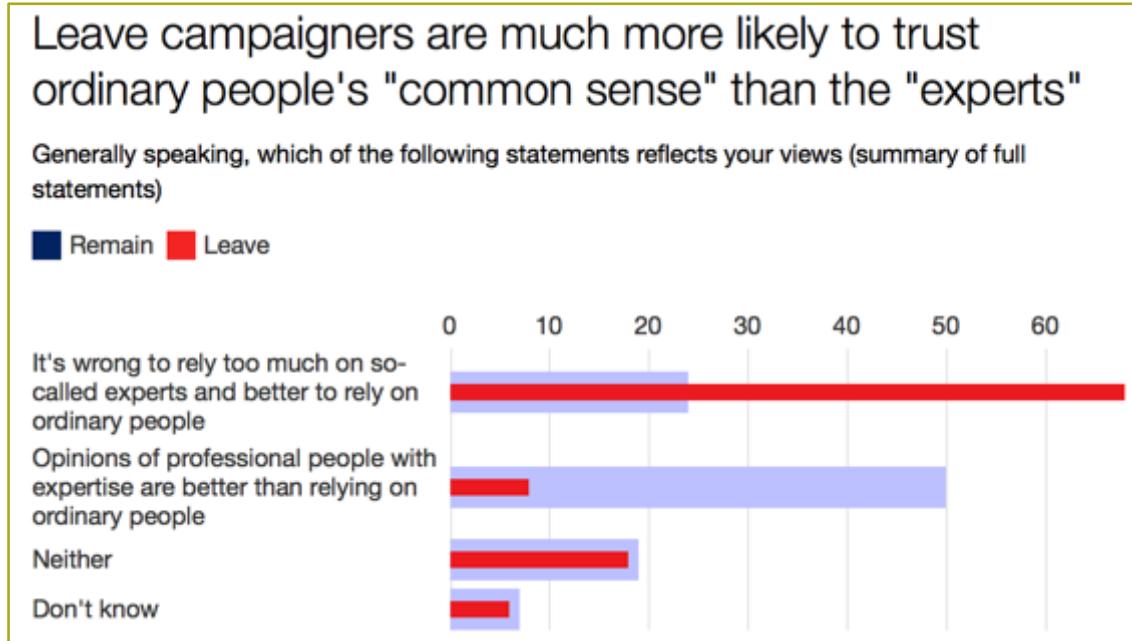
The pecking order requires there to be a group below the working class

and fueled growing resentment and anger towards cities particularly London...

- Cities are seen to have been growing at the expense of smaller towns
- City centres at the expense of suburbs
- And London at the expense of everywhere



... and resentment and anger towards elites and experts...

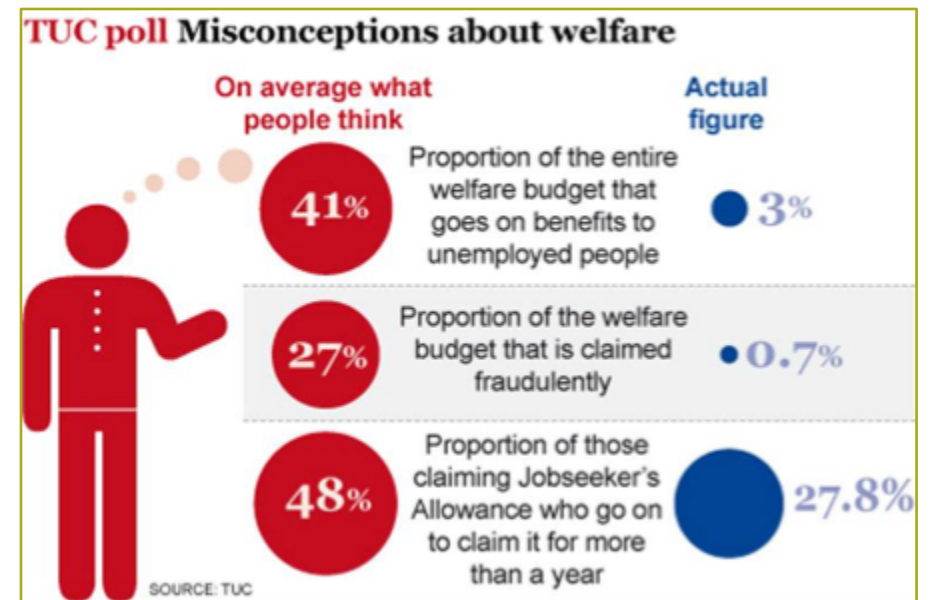


- Mainstream parties' treatment of the issue of immigration has fueled this: Throughout the 2000s, politicians increasingly told the public that their concerns are valid; promised tough action; but delivered little.
 - The understanding that promises like "aussie style points systems" only applied to non-EU migrants fueled the sense that Politicians were trying to "pull the wool over our eyes"

...and, most of all, resentment and anger towards those who seem to be exploiting the system

...the 'have nots' are very quick to distinguish themselves from 'benefit scroungers' who they regard as cheating the system

"I may be out of work, but I want to work, I'm looking hard for work ... and that's the difference"



This sense of 'us and them' leaves people feeling they are losing out to an indistinguishable class of elites...

'Them'.. they don't get our lives, they don't live in our shoes. The working lower class voted out, and the upper class voted in because they've got the money and they have more to lose. It affects them more than it affects you. People with money. They're panicking more that we're out [of the EU].

Harlow, Female

The 'big people', they think that it's a united country, because they don't know about our lives.

Harlow, Male



They don't know about anything about real life, their daily shop probably cost what our weekly shop costs.

Harlow, Female

When it comes to these tax laws, and you tax these higher earners they'll go "so long"...it's those higher earners that donate to the Conservative party, who own the big newspapers. It sounds good taxing them more but how are you going to do it?

Harlow, Male

And people live in an ‘echo chamber’, meeting only people who share and reinforce their views rather than challenge them

- As more and more people get their information online and through social media, this is only set to intensify

Hard-Wired Selection

- Personalised search & recommendation algorithms
- Targeted advertising & messaging
- Timeline editing



“It will be very hard for people to watch or consume something online that has not, in some sense, been tailored for them”

Eric Schmidt, Google

Social Selection

- Social networking as news source
- Recommendations from friends
- Network building based on preference-proximity



“The thing is, you don’t decide what gets in, and more importantly, what gets edited out of your filter bubble”

Eli Pariser, “The Filter Bubble”



What does this mean for businesses and brands?

It is vital not to 'tune out' dissenting voices

The remain campaign failed because Adland and the media failed to hear the emotional soundtrack of life outside the M25 and there are serious lessons for brands beyond the referendum.

Head of Marketing, the Mirror

- Remember 56% self define as 'have not's' (and why they do)
- Understand the impact that this has on their need for
 - Security
 - Control
 - Self belief
- Demonstrate you understand this - do not be part of the 'indistinguishable elite'
- Involve them in your decision making
 - Put insight, consultation and co creation at the heart of your strategy

And be prepared to work harder to show you are on their side

People in this country have had enough of experts.

Michael Gove

- In our ‘post-truth’ democracy, businesses can no longer rely on merely ‘being right’
 - Emotional connection will trump rational argument
- There will be no assumption (if there ever was) that you are ‘on their side’
 - Rather than being the guarantor of good will, you may need a guarantor of goodwill yourselves
- This has implications beyond communications to the way that you do business more broadly

...Remember the public are in a mood to vote with their feet!

- And to 'get their own back' on elites and the establishment



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STARBUCKS®



Who is David Cameron to tell me that I'll be worse off if we leave the EU? He has no idea how I live my life - he's just worried about his posh friends in London losing their cushy jobs and their bonuses in the City.

Leave leaner during the Referendum campaign