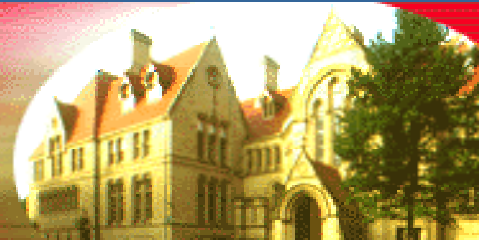


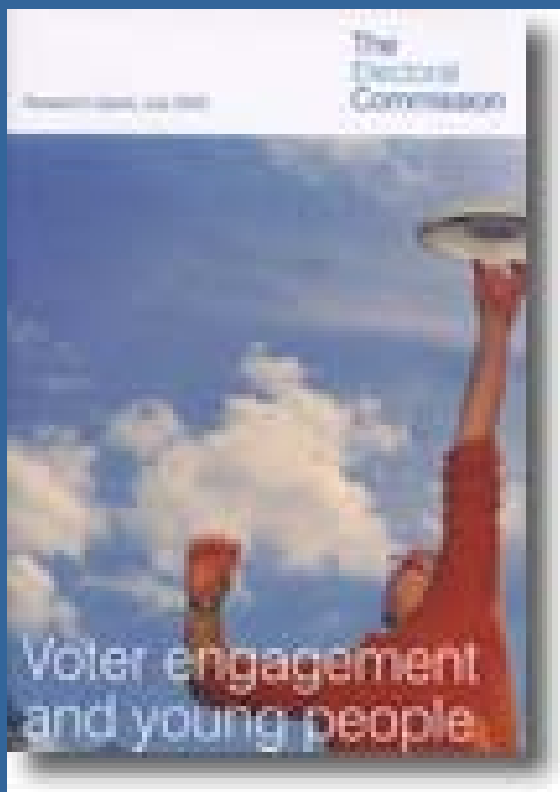
Turnout, Voter Engagement and Young People in Britain

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www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/voterengageyoungppl.cfm



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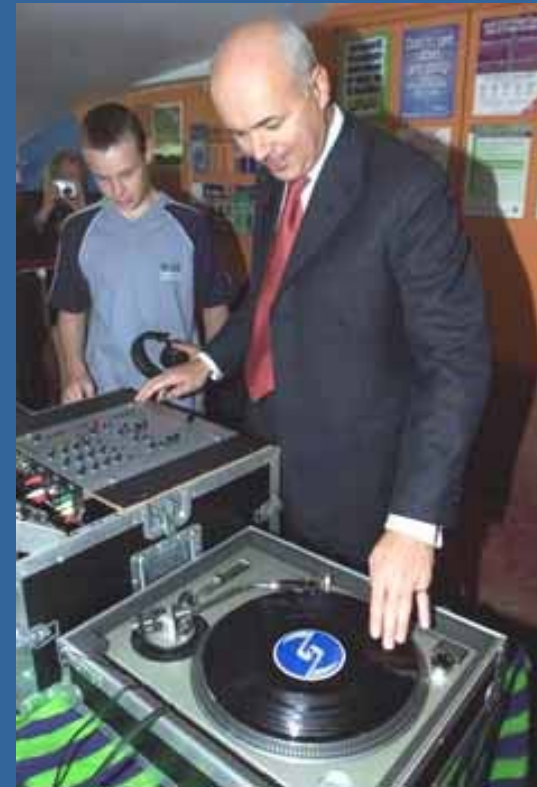
Defining the problem

- Turnout
- Participation
- Social capital
- ‘The ever shrinking circle of concern’?
- ‘Hard to reach’ groups are hard to reach!
- The connection between electors and elected.



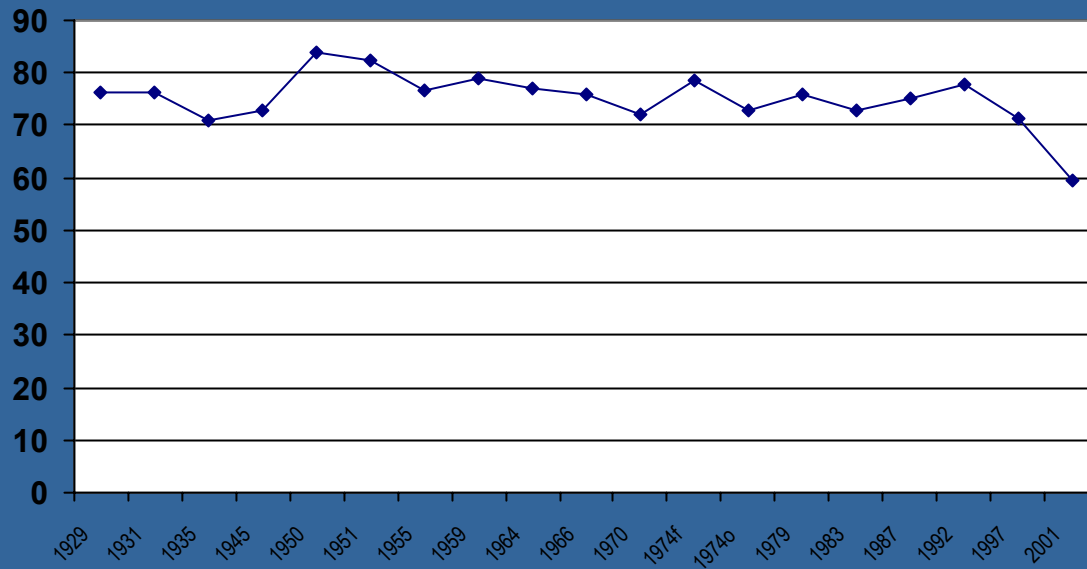
Getting Connected?

- *Politics but not party politics?*
- “Young people ... are not switched off from the issues that form the foundations of political decision-making but they are less enamoured with the way we ‘do’ politics. (Edwards, IPPR, 2001: 6).
- *‘Naffness filter’*



Turnout: Secular Decline vs Trendless Fluctuation

- *Figure 1 – Percentage Turnout at General Elections as proportion of registered electorate 1929-2001*



2001 – BLANDSLIDE?

- Lowest turnout since 1918
- Proportion of those of voting age?
- Differential impact
 - 100 seats with lowest turnout...
 - 1997 victories
 - Marginal seats

Why Vote?



- Resources (Parry et al., 1992).
- Motivation & Mobilisation.
 - Party Id.
 - Civic duty.
 - Having a say.
- Context.
 - Closeness & significance of election.
 - Ideological distance.
 - Marginality of seat.

Why Not Vote?

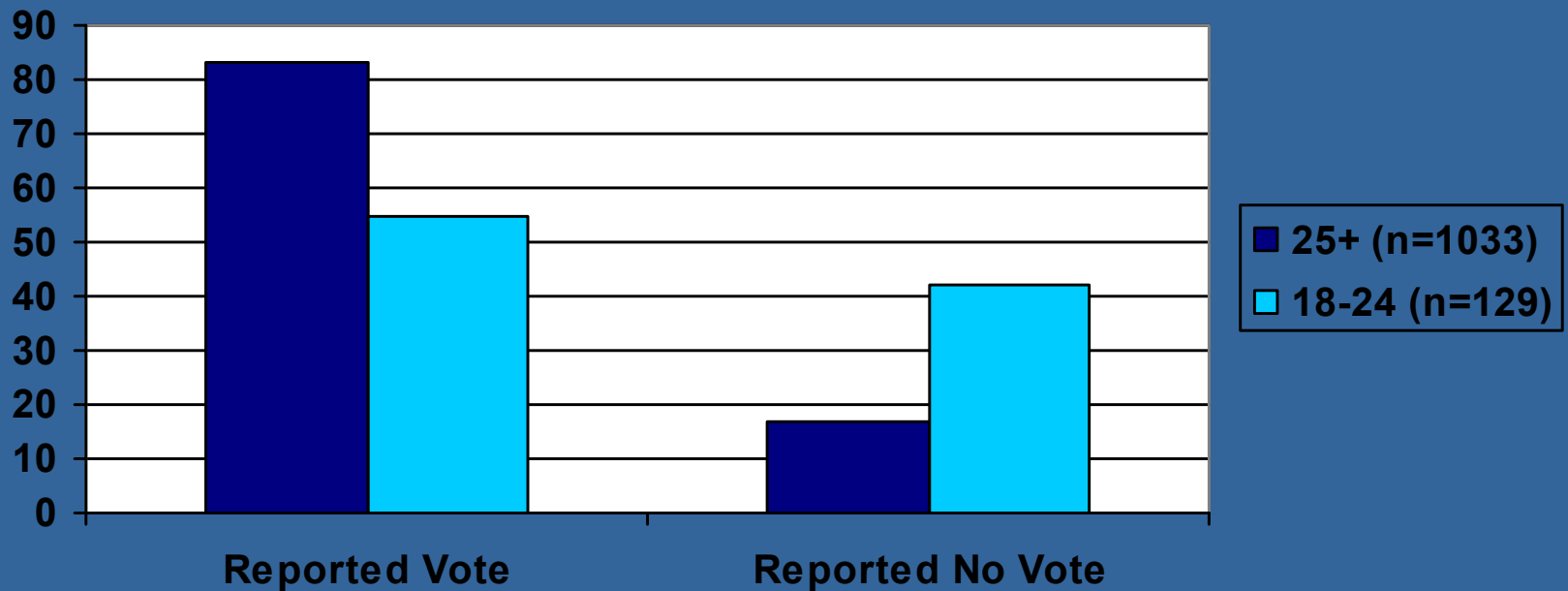
- Inconvenience.
- Structural factors.
 - Legal/registration.
 - Awareness.
- Apathy.
- Alienation or antipathy.



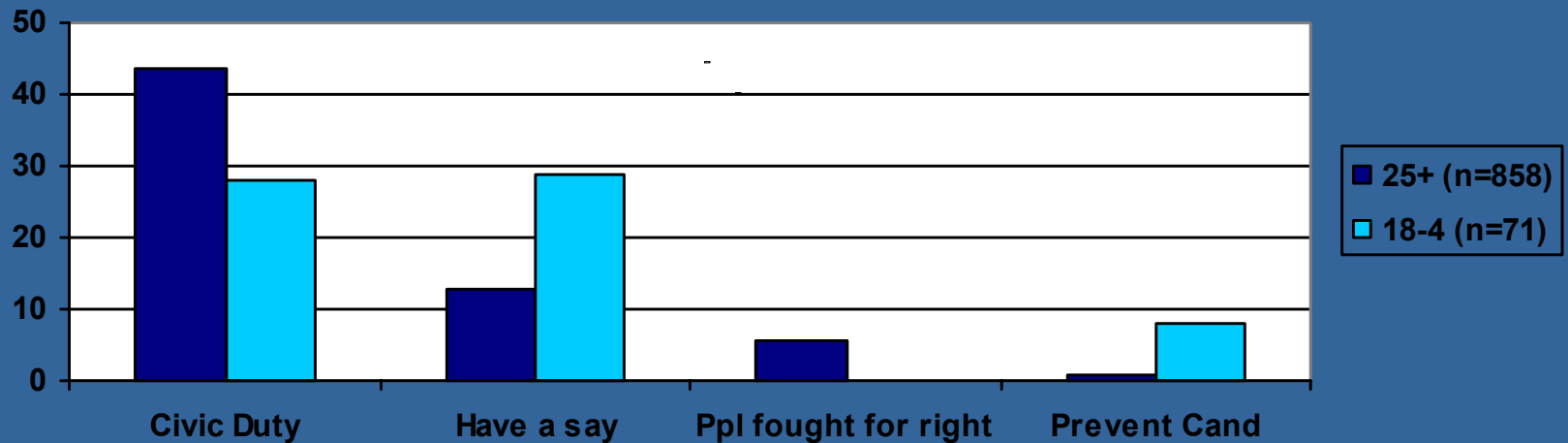
Lost for Good?

- “What worries me is that no matter how hard we try, we cannot persuade these kids - youngsters, new voters – to support us in the ballot box. They won’t vote for anyone else, but they just can’t be bothered, (they) don’t see what it has to do with them. And once you’ve lost them, you’ve lost them for good... It’s a worry for the party, for all the parties really, not just the Lib Dems but Labour and the Tories as well . (Russell & Fieldhouse; 2001),

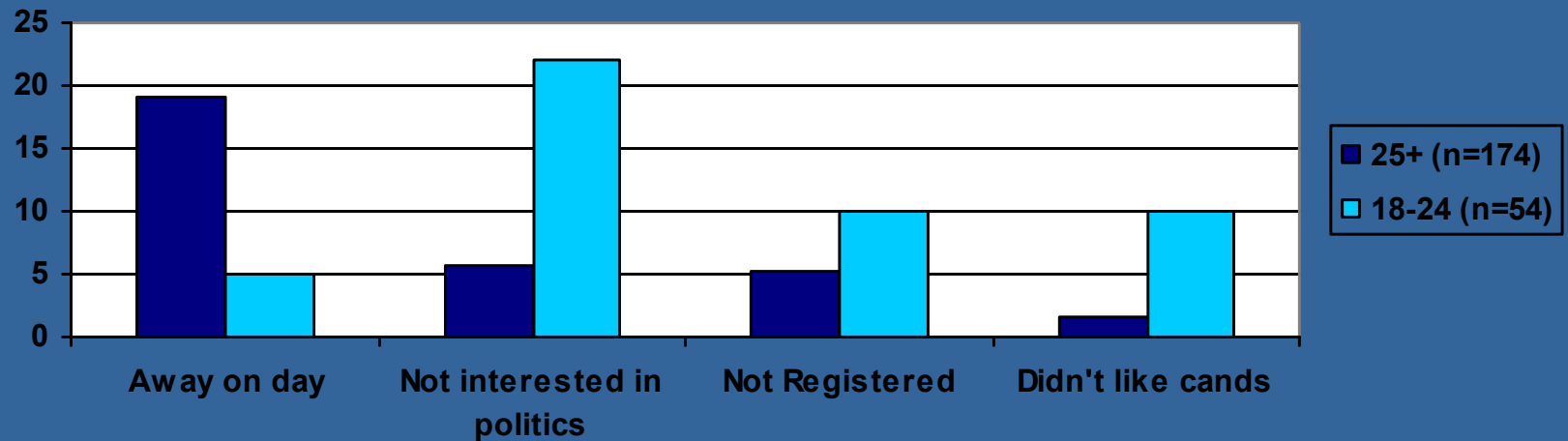
Young people and reported Turnout



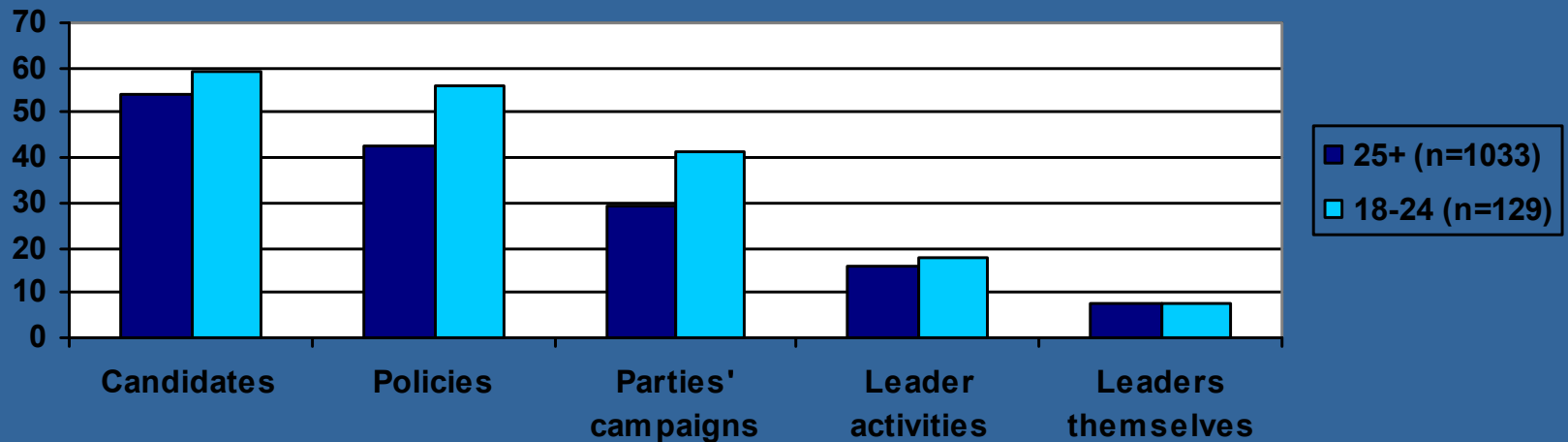
Selected Reasons for Voting



Selected Reasons for Not Voting



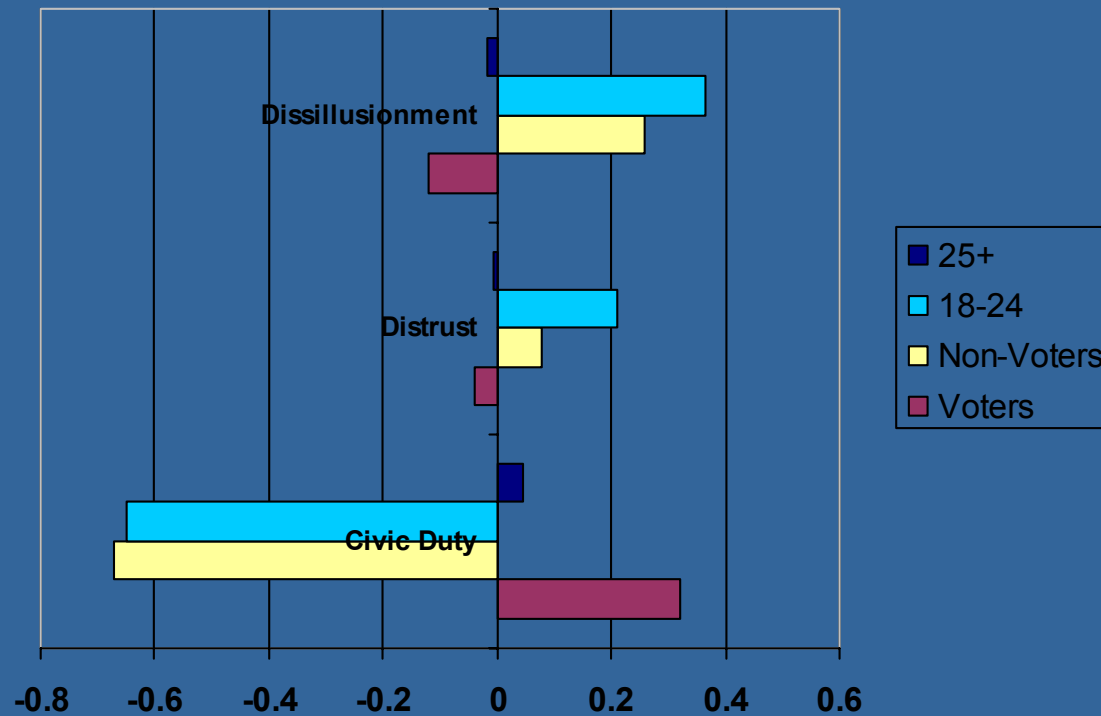
Campaign Expectations? Too little information



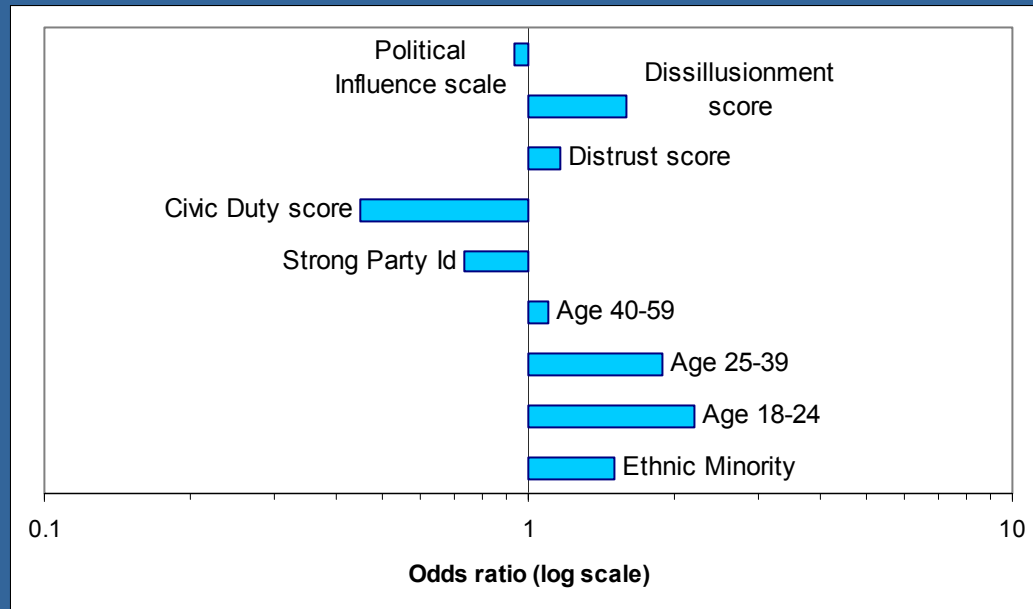
PCA (BES)

●		Civic duty	Distrust of politicians	Disillusion with politics
●	Seriously Neglect Duty If Not Vote	.86		-.14
●	Feel Very Guilty If Not Vote	.84		-.14
●	Every Citizens Duty To Vote	.77		-.10
●	Sense Of Satisfaction When Vote	.73	-.20	
●	Democracy Only Works If Vote	.62		
●	Government Doesn't Care		.81	.14
●	Parties Only Interested In Votes		.79	.15
●	MPs Lose Touch With People		.73	.17
●	People Like Me Have No Say		.68	.17
●	Govt Treats People Like Me Fairly	-.17	-.58	
●	Voting Can Change Britain	.43	-.50	.21
●	Politics Difficult To Understand		.19	.69
●	Gap btw expects & actually get		.23	.62
●	People Too Busy To Vote	-.25		.57

Modelling Turnout 1



Modelling Turnout 2



Young People: Conclusions, solutions?

- Turnout = symptom not cause.
- Citizenship / Voter Education Programmes?
- Registration.
- Voting Changes?
- Compulsory Voting?
- Internet/Telephone etc.
- Electoral System?
- Campaigning?