

INFORMATION-RELATED BEHAVIOUR FOR ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL DISINFORMATION

Key research findings of the most recent forsa study 2020

OUTLINE

1. Research Design
2. Preferred sources of information on elections and election campaigns
3. Preferred online sources of information on elections and election campaigns
4. Identifiers of Political election campaign advertising
5. Statements on political advertising on the Internet
6. Statements on politically motivated disinformation on the Internet
7. Perception of politically motivated disinformation on the Internet
8. Perception of disinformation relating to the coronavirus
9. Previous behaviour upon perceiving disinformation relating to the coronavirus on the Internet

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Target group: German-speaking private Internet users from the age of 14 in Germany

Sample size: 2020: 1,010 respondents
2019: 1,002 respondents

Survey method: Online survey using a structured questionnaire

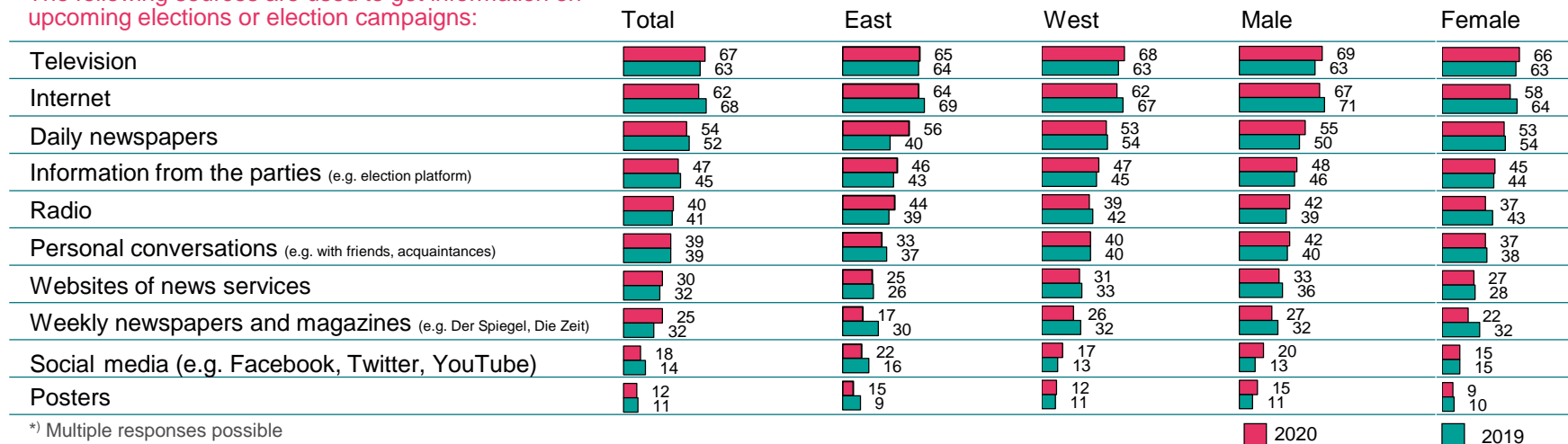
Survey period: 2020: April 1-7, 2020
2019: April 8-15, 2019

Weighting: based on region, age, and gender

2. PREFERRED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (1/2) *)

The majority of the surveyed Internet users would get their information on upcoming elections or election campaigns from television (67 %) or online (62 %).

The following sources are used to get information on upcoming elections or election campaigns:



*) Multiple responses possible

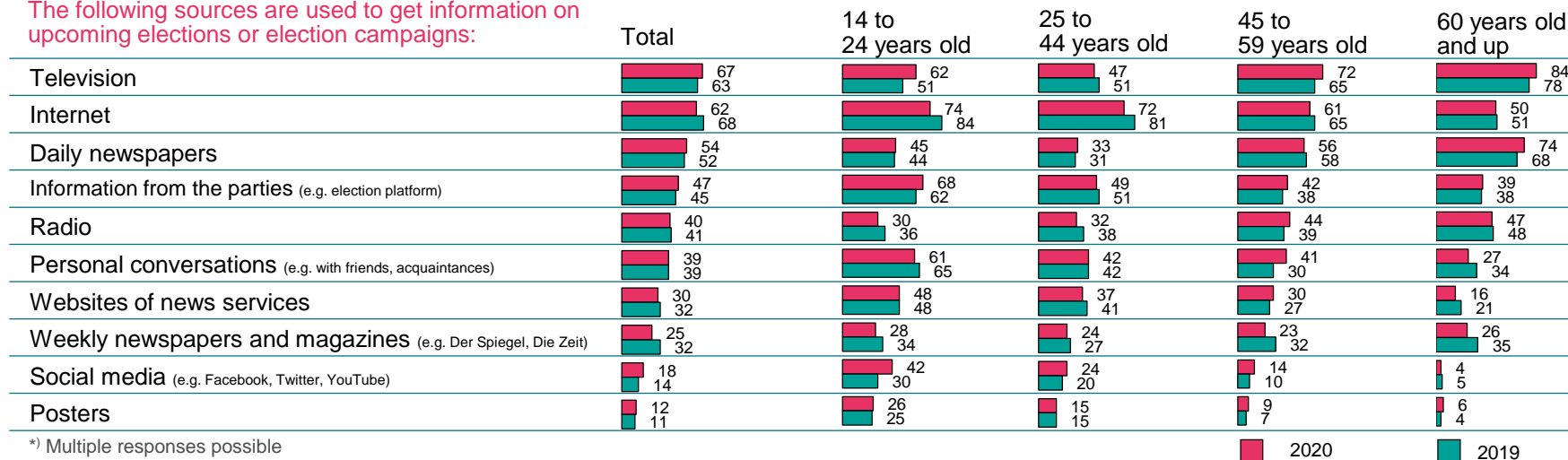
Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

Question 1: "If you want to inform yourself about upcoming elections or election campaigns, such as for the upcoming 2019 European election or parliamentary elections, which of the following sources of information would you use?"

2. PREFERRED SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (2/2) *)

Internet users who are 25 or younger get their information through personal conversations or on social media more frequently than average users.

The following sources are used to get information on upcoming elections or election campaigns:



*) Multiple responses possible

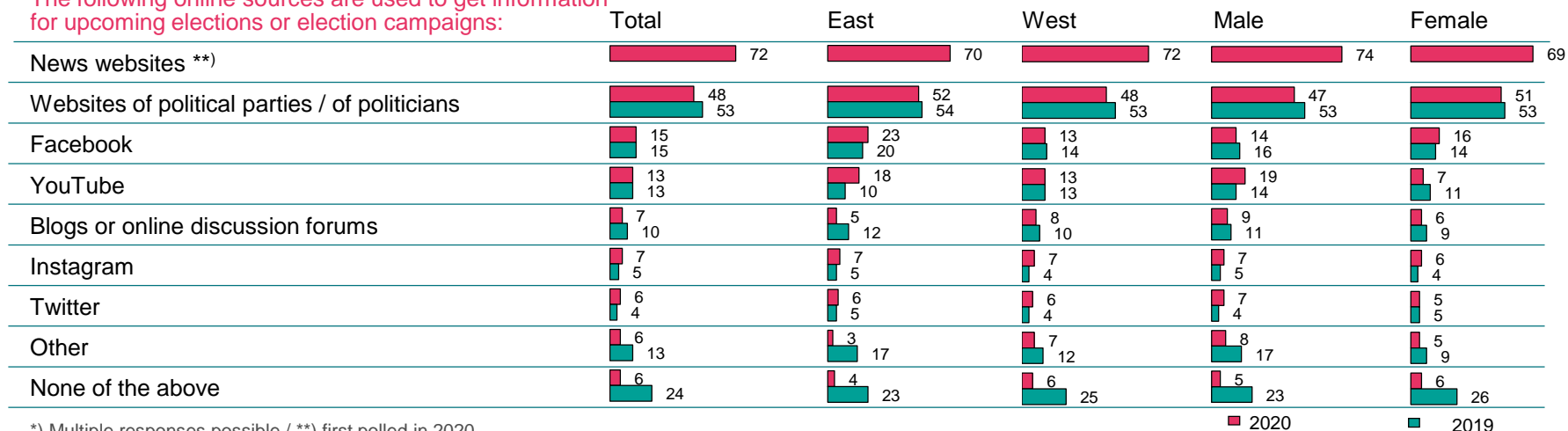
Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

Question 1: "If you want to inform yourself about upcoming elections or election campaigns, such as for the upcoming 2019 European election or parliamentary elections, which of the following sources of information would you use?"

3. PREFERRED ONLINE SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (1/2) *)

The majority of respondents who get information online for elections and election campaigns uses news websites for this purpose, and around one-half of them use the websites of political parties or individual politicians

The following online sources are used to get information for upcoming elections or election campaigns:



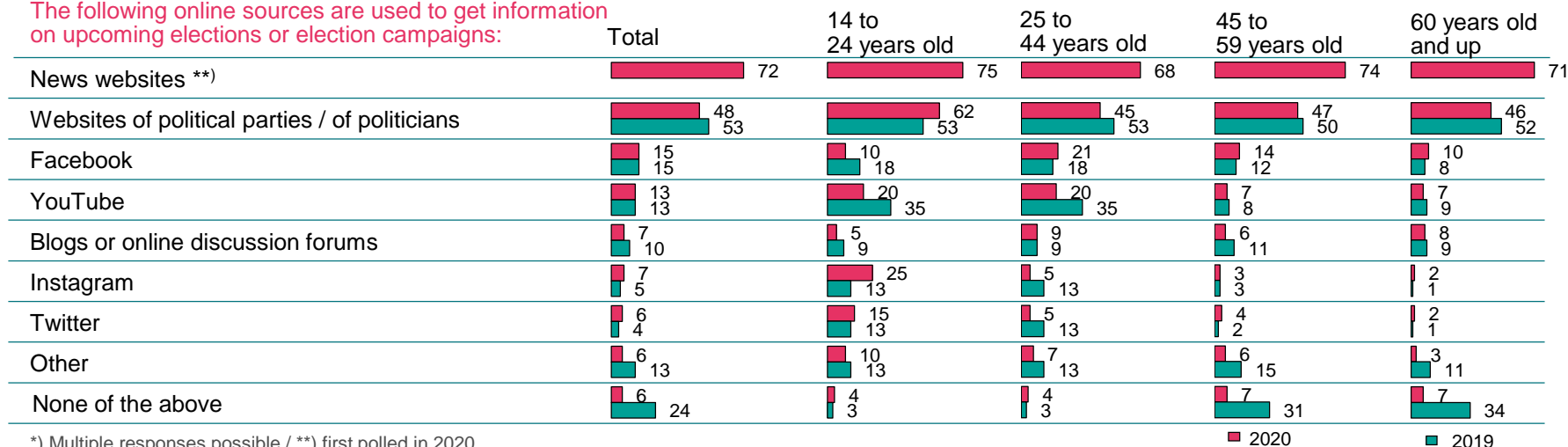
*) Multiple responses possible / **) first polled in 2020

Basis: 2020: 720 respondents / 2019: 741 respondents, who use the Internet, social media, or the websites of news providers to get information on elections or election campaigns
Question 2: "The Internet can be used to get information from various sources on upcoming elections or election campaigns. Which of the following sources do you use most frequently when you want this kind of information?"

3. PREFERRED ONLINE SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (2/2) *)

YouTube, Instagram, or Twitter are used more frequently by Internet users under 25 years old as a source of information on elections and election campaigns.

The following online sources are used to get information on upcoming elections or election campaigns:



*) Multiple responses possible / **) first polled in 2020

Basis: 2020: 720 respondents / 2019: 741 respondents, who use the Internet, social media, or the websites of news providers to get information on elections or election campaigns

Question 2: "The Internet can be used to get information from various sources on upcoming elections or election campaigns. Which of the following sources do you use most frequently when you want this kind of information?"

4. IDENTIFIERS OF POLITICAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING (1/2)

Political campaign advertising which was recognised as such was identified most frequently by means of the party logo. In contrast, only 38 % recognised campaign advertising because it was labelled as such.

The following things led to the recognition that it was political campaign advertising

	Total	East	West	Male	Female
Party logo was visible	71	59	74	74	68
Content was presented by a politician	58	54	59	59	57
It was a political topic	50	61	48	50	49
Content was labelled as advertising	38	37	38	39	36
Other	1		1		2

*) Low basis

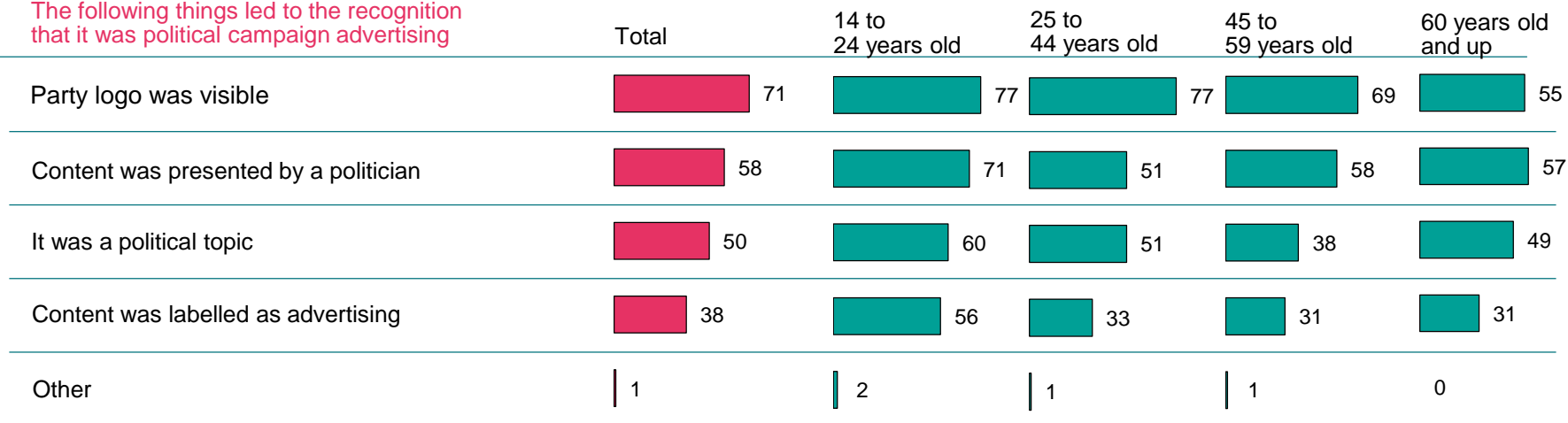
Basis: 446 respondents who have already noticed campaign advertising on social media

Question 4: "Which of the following things led to the recognition that it was political campaign advertising?"

4. IDENTIFIERS OF POLITICAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING (2/2)

Internet users under 25 years of age recognised political campaign advertising disproportionately frequently because the content was labelled as advertising.

The following things led to the recognition that it was political campaign advertising



*) Low basis




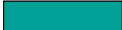


























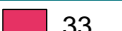

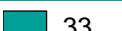

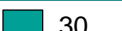



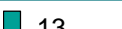

Basis: 446 respondents who have already noticed campaign advertising on social media

Question 4: "Which of the following things led to the recognition that it was political campaign advertising?"

5. STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET (1/2)

A large majority of each group thinks that online political advertising should be labelled accordingly, should be visible by all parties, and should be shown free of charge and limited to the period before elections.

Respondents agree fully or tend to agree with the following statements: Online advertising...

	Total	East	West	Male	Female
... should be subject to mandatory labelling.	 89	 86	 89	 90	 87
... of all parties must be visible.	 83	 87	 82	 82	 83
... has to be shown free of charge and platforms mustn't earn money with them	 77	 77	 77	 75	 79
... should only be allowed in the lead-up to elections.	 74	 75	 74	 74	 74
... must not be personalised.	 70	 69	 70	 68	 71
... should be handled in the same way as commercial advertising.	 38	 39	 38	 40	 36
... should remain unregulated	 33	 37	 33	 36	 30
... should be banned	 12	 13	 11	 13	 11

Basis: 1,010 respondents

Question 6: "In your opinion, what actions should be taken in connection with online political advertising? How much do you agree with the following statements relating to political advertising?"

5. STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET (2/2)

Especially Internet users who are 25 or younger believe less often that political advertising should only be allowed on the Internet in the lead-up to elections.

Respondents agree fully or tend to agree with the following statements: Online advertising...

	Total	14 to 24 years old	25 to 44 years old	45 to 59 years old	60 years old and up
... should be subject to mandatory labelling.	89	92	89	88	87
... of all parties must be visible.	83	81	84	82	83
... has to be shown free of charge and platforms mustn't earn money with them	77	80	80	74	76
... should only be allowed in the lead-up to elections.	74	63	75	71	80
... must not be personalised.	70	66	77	70	64
... should be handled in the same way as commercial advertising.	38	31	36	40	40
... should remain unregulated	33	26	28	35	39
... should be banned	12	9	9	13	13




































Basis: 1,010 respondents

Question 6: "In your opinion, what actions should be taken in connection with online political advertising? How much do you agree with the following statements relating to political advertising?"


6. STATEMENTS ON POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DISINFORMATION ON THE INTERNET (1/2)

The vast majority of the surveyed Internet users still shares the concern that election results could be manipulated by political disinformation campaigns and that political disinformation threatens democracy.

Respondents agree fully or tend to agree with the following statements:

	Total	East	West	Male	Female
I am concerned that election results could be manipulated by political disinformation campaigns.	 86	 81	 87	 87	 86
	 82	 79	 83	 81	 83
Political disinformation threatens our democracy	 83	 81	 83	 83	 83
	 81	 77	 81	 79	 82
The topic of political disinformation does not interest me.	 17	 18	 16	 17	 16
	 17	 19	 17	 17	 18
I don't get the fuss – Political disinformation campaigns do not have a considerable impact on the decisions of voters.	 10	 10	 10	 12	 8
	 13	 15	 12	 13	 12

 2020

 2019

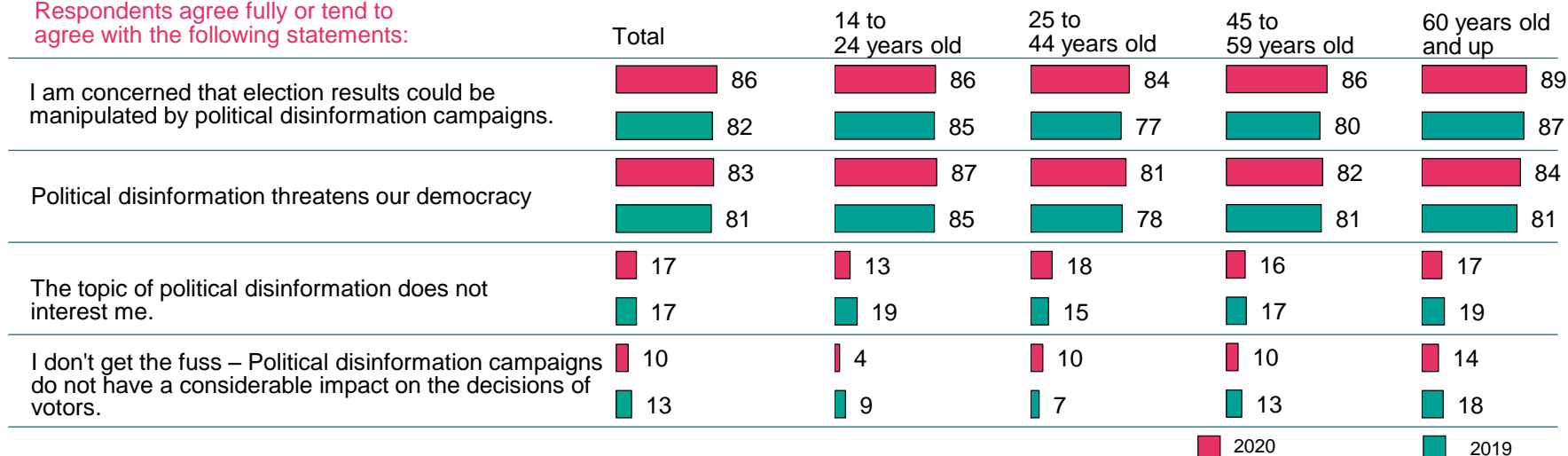
Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

Question 7: "Below you will see various statements on politically motivated disinformation on the Internet. Please specify if and to what extent you agree with each statement."

6. STATEMENTS ON POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DISINFORMATION ON THE INTERNET (2/2)

The concern that political disinformation campaigns could manipulate election results and that political disinformation threatens democracy tends to be shared by all age groups to the same extent.

Respondents agree fully or tend to agree with the following statements:



Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

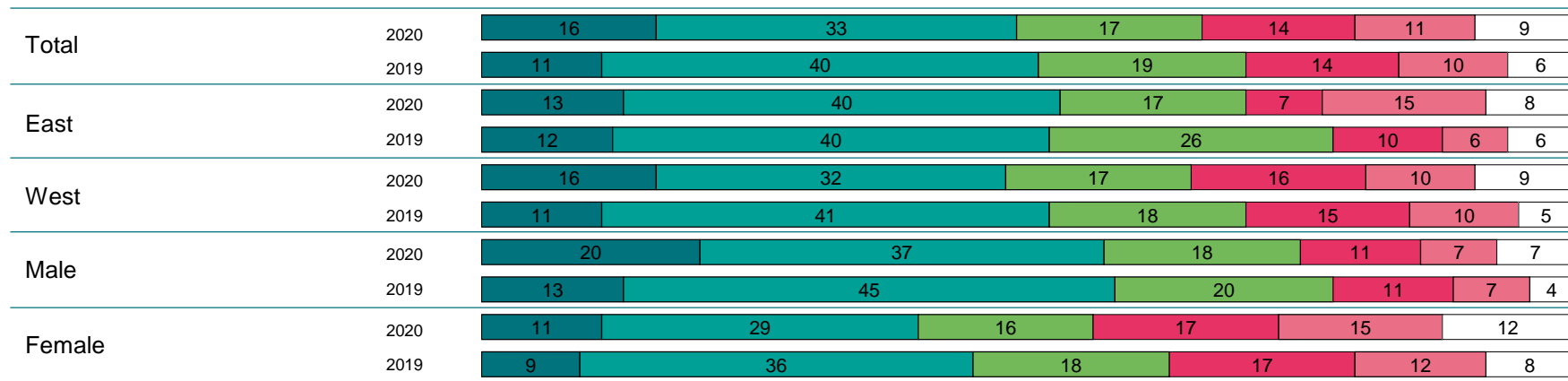
Question 7: "Below you will see various statements on politically motivated disinformation on the Internet. Please specify if and to what extent you agree with each statement."

7. PERCEPTION OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DISINFORMATION ON THE INTERNET (1/2)

The majority of the Internet users surveyed states that they personally have already recognised politically motivated disinformation on the Internet – men more frequently than women.

I have noticed politically motivated disinformation on the Internet:

■ frequently
 ■ occasionally
 ■ rarely
 ■ not yet but I have suspected it
 ■ never and I don't suspect it, either
 not sure / no response



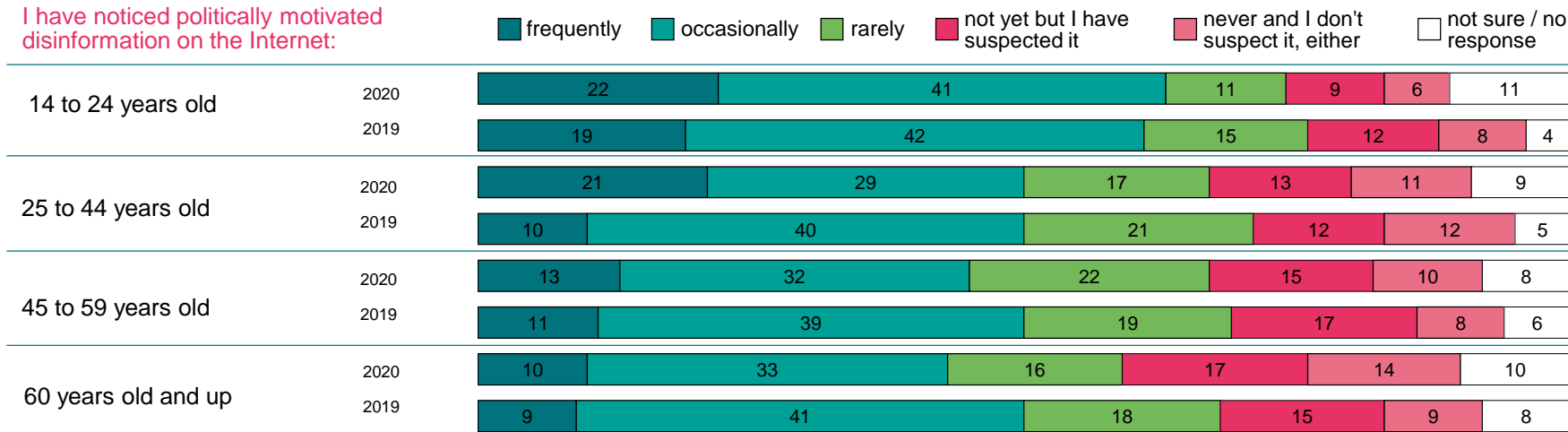
Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

Question 8: "How frequently have you personally noticed politically motivated disinformation on the Internet – e.g. on website, in blogs, on social networks or in online forums?"

7. PERCEPTION OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DISINFORMATION ON THE INTERNET (2/2)

The majority of the Internet users surveyed states that they personally have already recognised politically motivated disinformation on the Internet.

I have noticed politically motivated disinformation on the Internet:



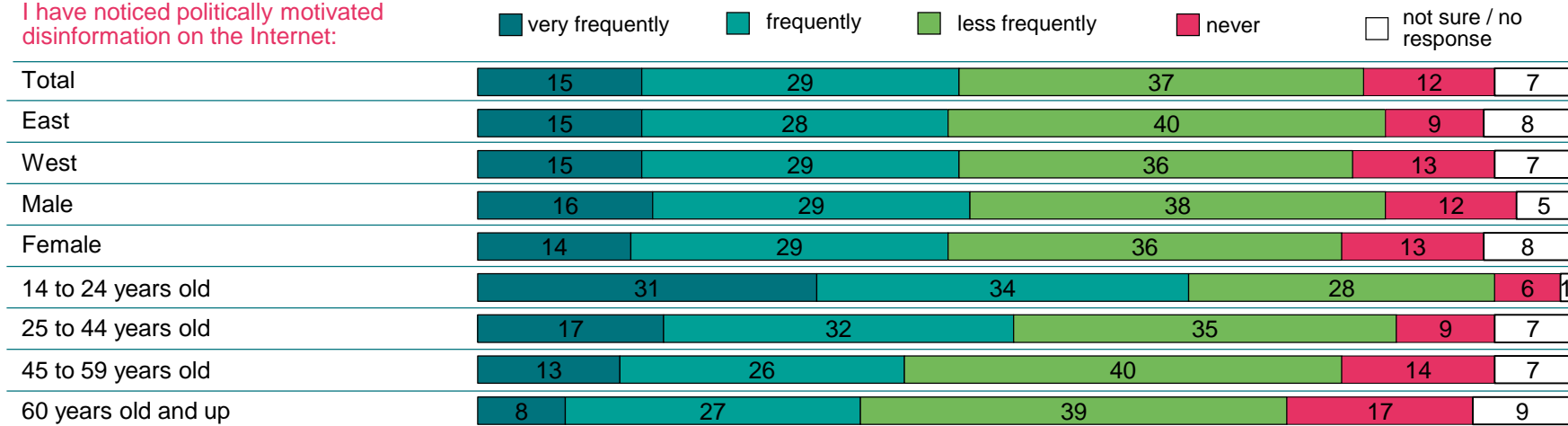
Basis: 2020: 1,010 respondents / 2019: 1,002 respondents

Question 8: "How frequently have you personally noticed politically motivated disinformation on the Internet – e.g. on website, in blogs, on social networks or in Internet forums?"

8. PERCEPTION OF DISINFORMATION RELATING TO THE CORONAVIRUS

81 % of the Internet users surveyed state that they personally have already recognised disinformation relating to the coronavirus on the Internet.

I have noticed politically motivated disinformation on the Internet:






































Basis: 1,010 respondents

Question 9: "Disinformation booms in times of crisis. How frequently have you personally seen or received disinformation, meaning deliberately misleading posts relating to the coronavirus on the Internet – e.g. on websites, blogs, social networks, messengers, or in online forums?"

9. PAST BEHAVIOUR UPON RECOGNISING DISINFORMATION RELATING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (1/2)

Around one-half of the Internet users surveyed who reported having already seen a misleading post relating to the coronavirus on the Internet have taken a closer look at the topic.

Respondents have already:

	Total	East	West	Male	Female
taken a closer look at this post.	 52	 55	 51	 52	 52
responded to a post like this to criticise it	 18	 20	 18	 21	 15
thought a post like this was real and shared it	 13	 11	 13	 12	 14
reported a post like this or its author to the respective portal	 9	 14	 9	 13	 6
thought a post like this was incorrect but still shared it	 5	 7	 4	 7	 2
responded to a post like this to support it	 1	 2	 1	 1	 2
none of the above	 32	 34	 32	 30	 35

Basis: 813 respondents who have already recognised disinformation relating to the coronavirus on the Internet.

Question 10: "Please specify which of the following things you have already done in connection with disinformation, meaning deliberately misleading posts, relating to the coronavirus..."

9. PAST BEHAVIOUR UPON RECOGNISING DISINFORMATION RELATING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (2/2)

Especially Internet users who are 25 or younger have already consciously dealt with a misleading post relating to the coronavirus.

Respondents agree fully or tend to agree with the following statements:

	Total	14 to 24 years old	25 to 44 years old	45 to 59 years old	60 years old and up
taken a closer look at the post	52	74	53	49	42
responded to a post like this to criticise it	18	22	27	16	11
thought a post like this was real and shared it	13	18	13	11	14
reported a post like this or its author to the respective portal	9	16	16	6	3
thought a post like this was incorrect but still shared it	5	10	3	4	3
responded to a post like this to support it	1	1	3	1	
none of the above	32	17	25	35	46

Basis: 813 respondents who have already recognised disinformation relating to the coronavirus on the Internet.

Question 10: "Please specify which of the following things you have already done in connection with disinformation, meaning deliberately misleading posts, relating to the coronavirus..."

THANK YOU

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