



The 2016 Swiss referendum on basic income

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The vote

- On 5th June 2016, Swiss voters were asked in a referendum if they wanted their country to introduce a universal, unconditional basic income
- Turnout was 46.9%
- The proposal was rejected by 76.9% of voters



How did the vote come about?

- Popular initiative. The Swiss Constitution allows citizen who are able to produce 100,000 signatures of eligible voters to put a proposal in front of the electorate
- If successful, the proposal is written in the constitution
- A popular initiative was launched in 2013



The constitutional article

Art 110a

- 1 The Federal government makes sure that an unconditional basic income is introduced
- 2 The basic income must guarantee to the whole population a dignified standard of living and allow participation in public life
- 3 Legislation will determine how the basic income is financed and its amount



The details...

- Even though the constitutional article did not contain details with regard to the amount, the following figures were mentioned in the debate
- For an adult: CHF 2500 (=EUR 2170)
- For a child: CHF 625 (=EUR 543)



The financing

- The federal government made the following estimates for 2012:
- Total cost: 208 bn CHF
- Savings from social programmes: - 55 bn CHF
- BI financed from income from work: - 128 bn CHF
- To be financed: 25 bn CHF, or 8 points of VAT



The debate

- Broad debate on the transformation of work, digitalisation, robots
- Major societal revolution, possible
- Stigmatisation of laziness



Images of the campaign



**Fr. 2'500.- PAR MOIS
QUI PAIERA ?**

**LE 5 JUIN
RBI
NON**

www.NON-RBI.ch

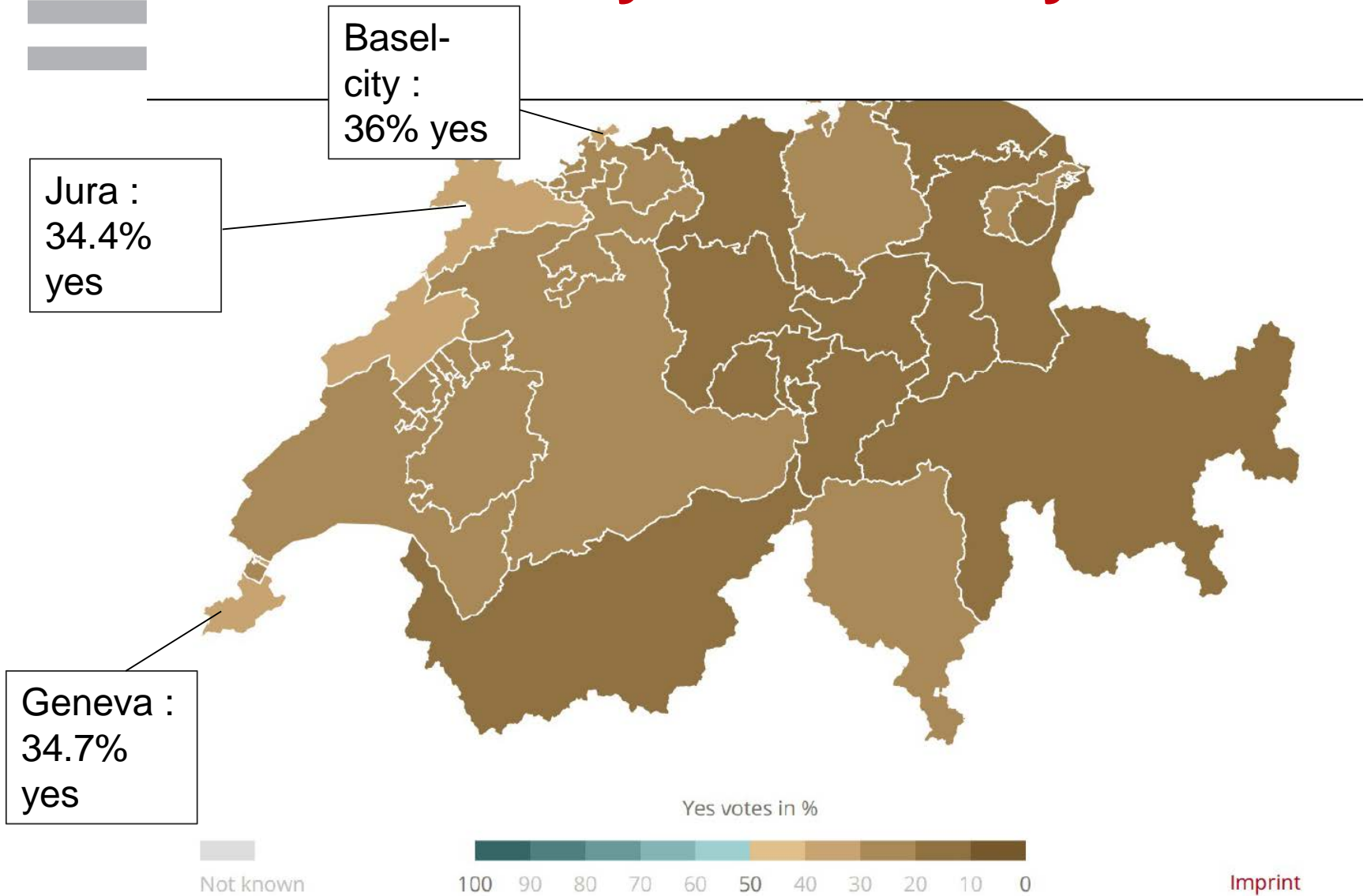
à l'initiative pour un **revenu de base inconditionnel**



Recommendations

- Federal government: NO
- Federal Parliament: NO
- Political parties:
 - Christian democrats: NO
 - Liberals: NO
 - Populist NO
 - Socialist NO
 - Greens YES
- Employer federation: NO
- Trade unions: NO

The vote: only 23 % voted yes

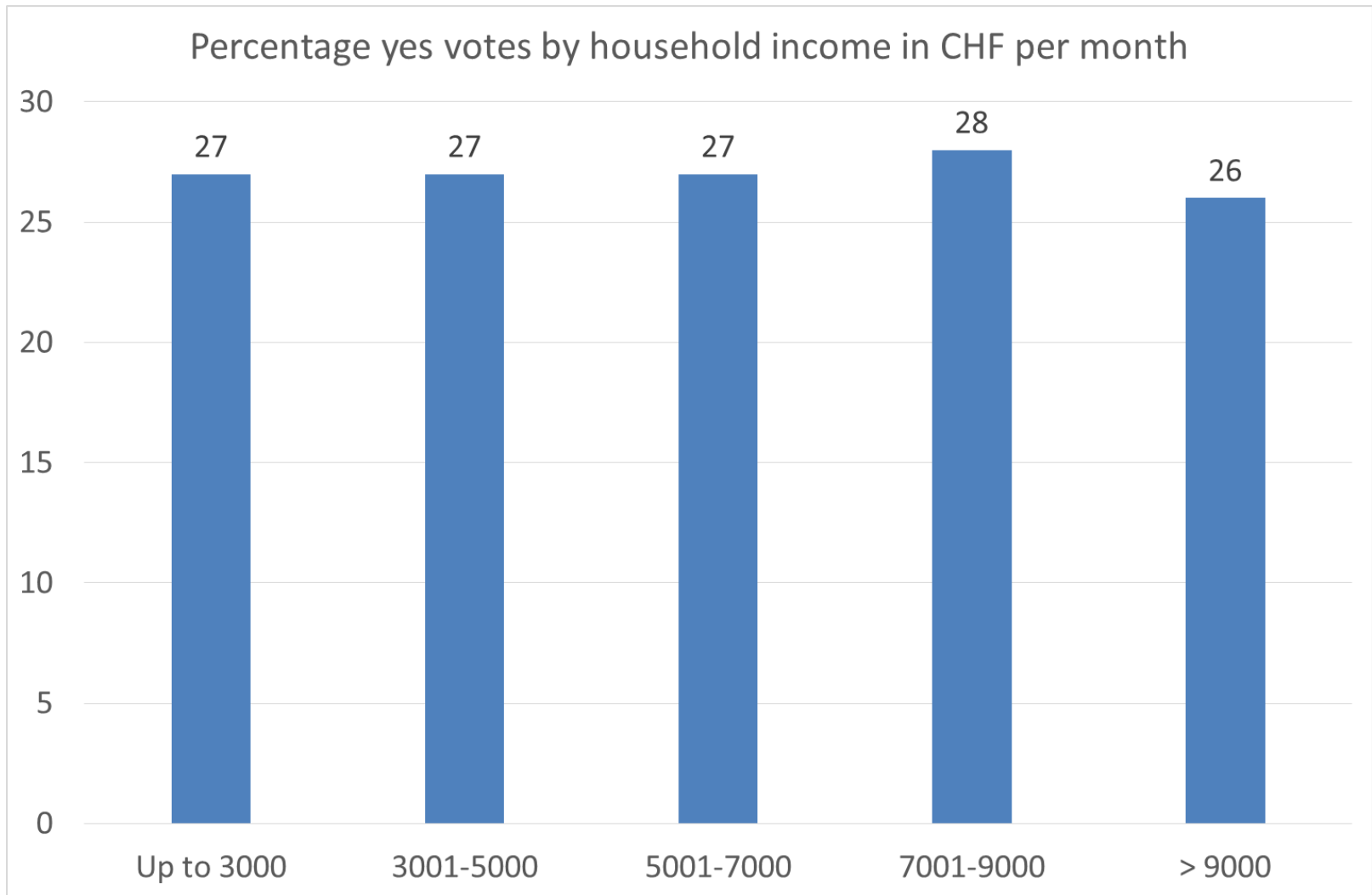




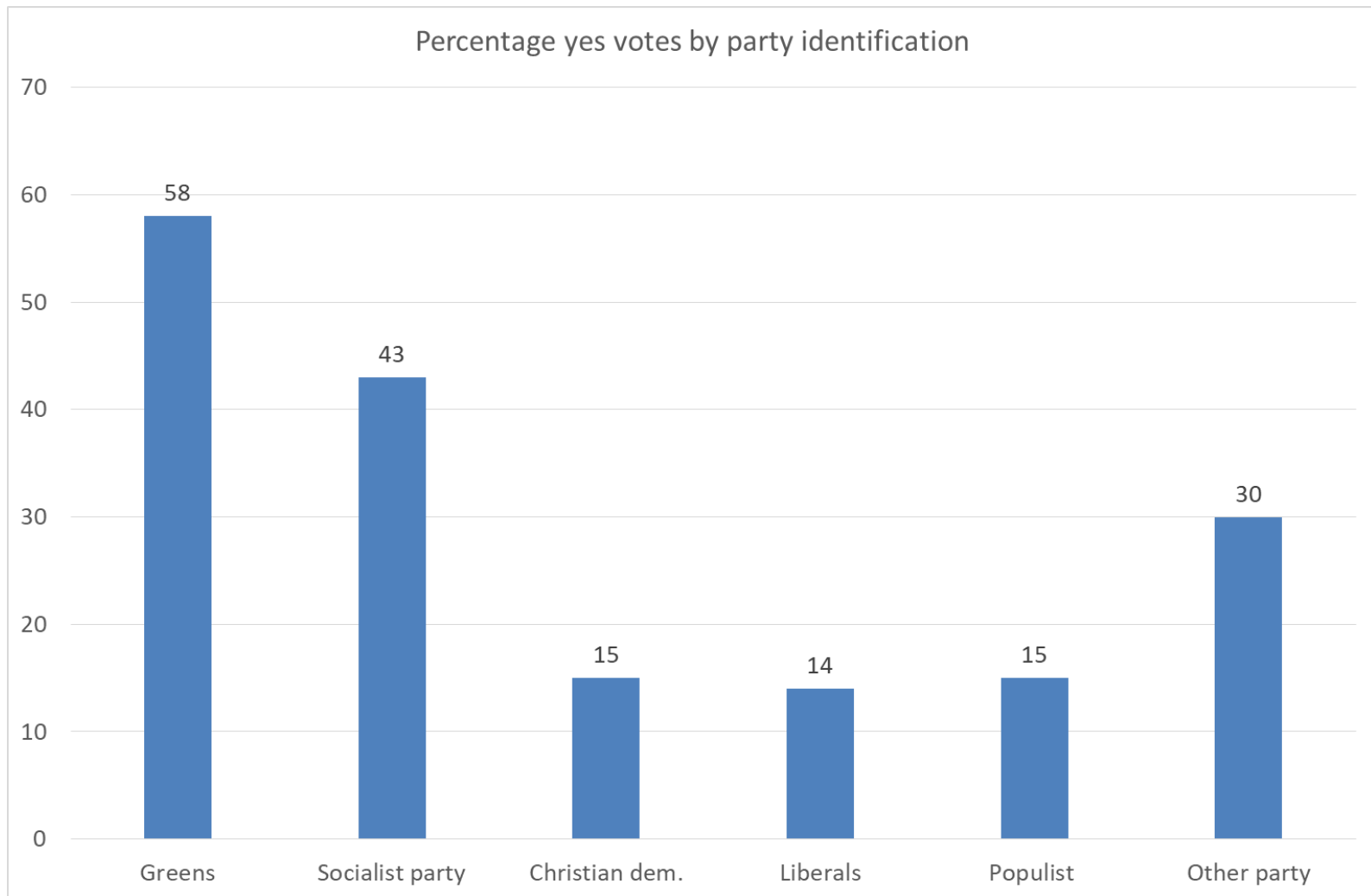
How did people vote?

- Post-vote survey (Vox Analyse)
- 1082 people who voted and who reported their choice
- Yes vote in the survey: 26.6

By income?

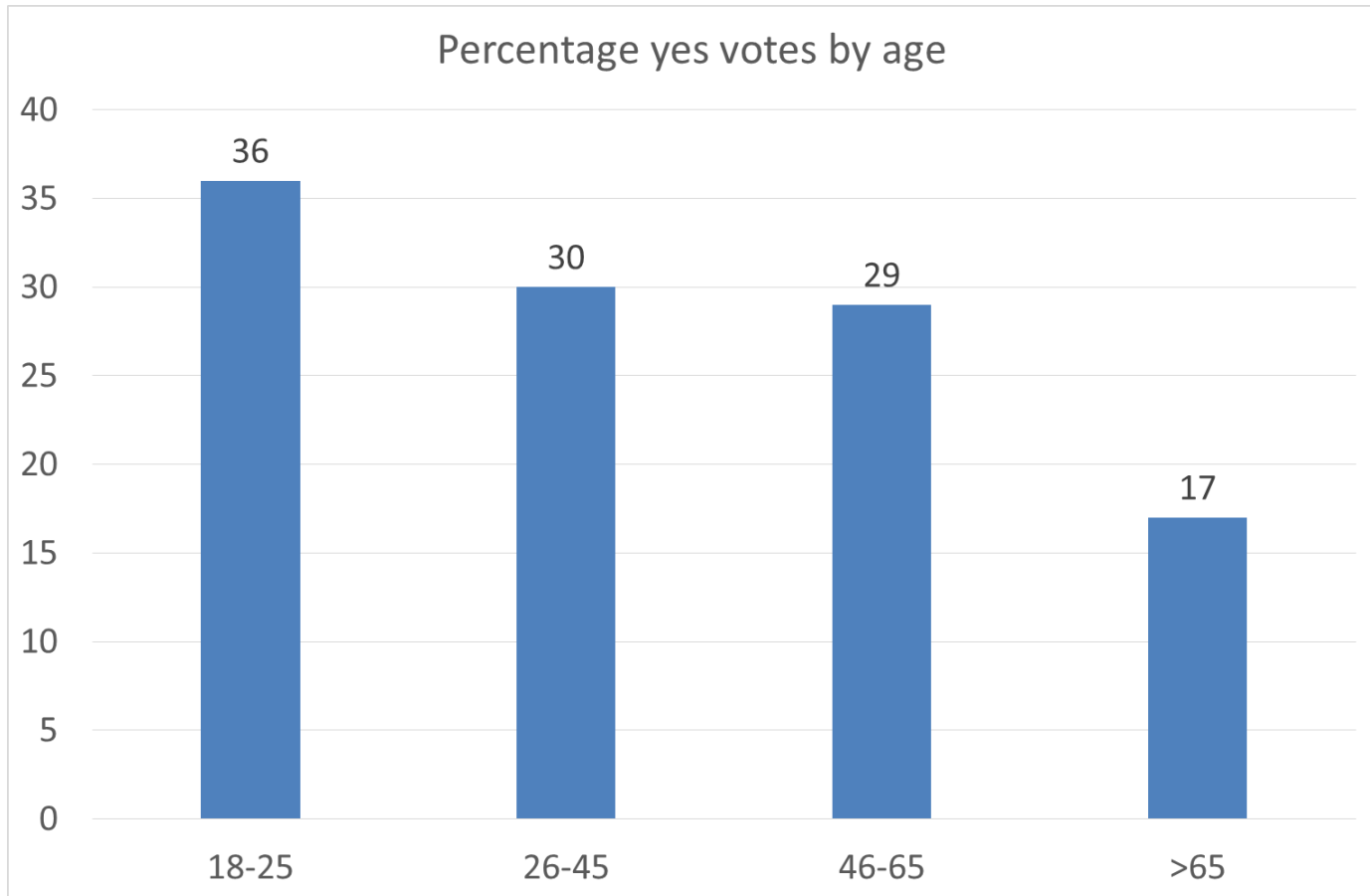


By party identification





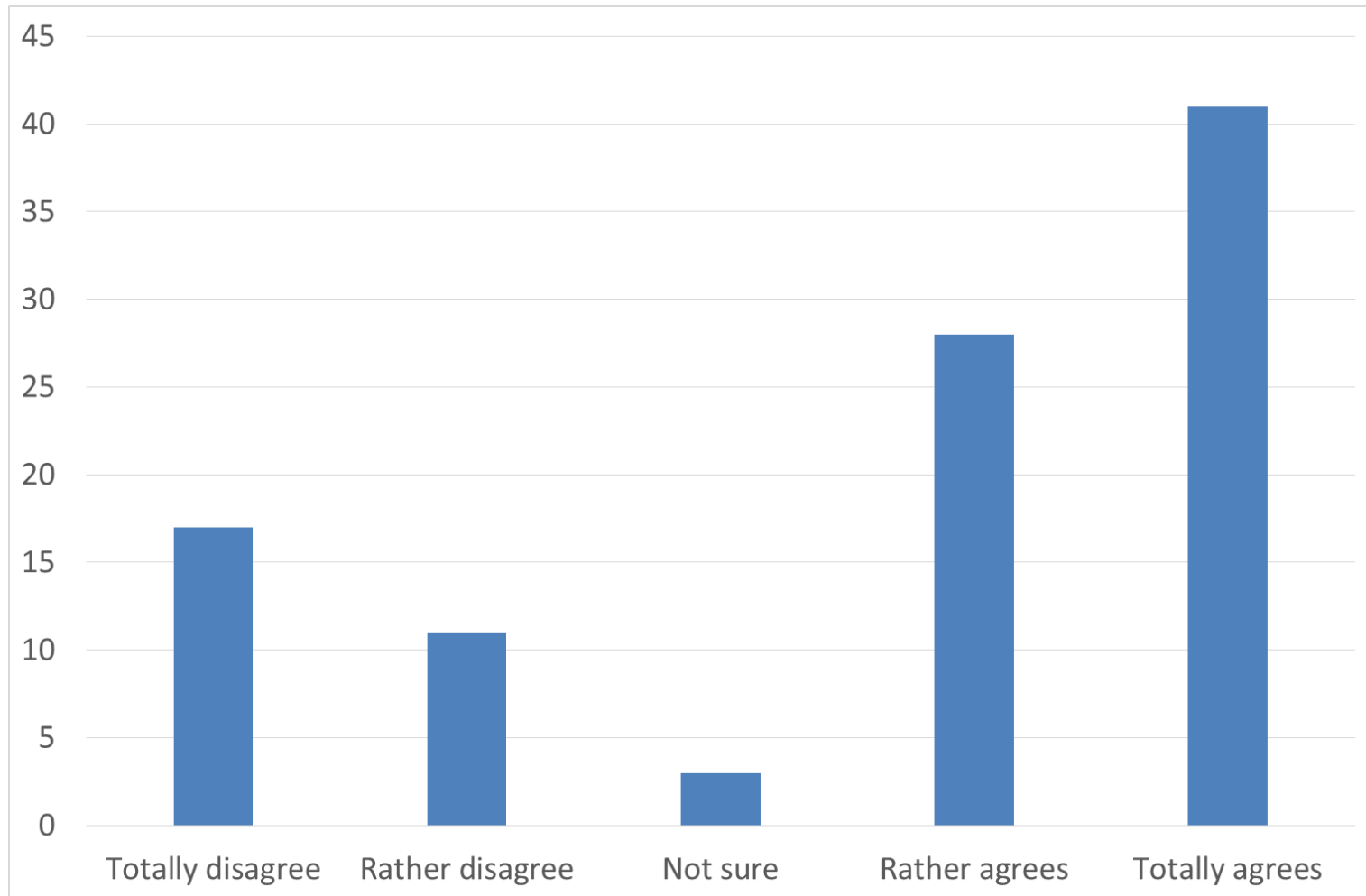
By age



Multivariate model (odds ratios) – Dependent variable = Yes vote

| | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | P-value |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|
| Employed | 0.992 | 0.185 | 0.965 |
| Age | 0.977 | 0.005 | 0.000 |
| Party identification (ref.: Christian dem.) | | | |
| Greens | 9.299 | 3.967 | 0.000 |
| Populist (SVP + LEGA) | 1.177 | 0.458 | 0.675 |
| Socialists | 5.828 | 1.979 | 0.000 |
| FDP +GLP | 1.183 | 0.439 | 0.651 |
| Other party(s) | 3.321 | 1.267 | 0.002 |
| No party | 2.441 | 0.892 | 0.015 |
| Education (ref.: Compulsory education) | | | |
| Secondary | 0.946 | 0.485 | 0.913 |
| Tertiary | 1.995 | 1.036 | 0.184 |
| HH income (ref.: below 3000) | | | |
| 3001-5000 | 0.819 | 0.301 | 0.587 |
| 5001-7000 | 0.665 | 0.238 | 0.253 |
| 7001-9000 | 0.510 | 0.197 | 0.082 |
| > 9000 | 0.431 | 0.165 | 0.028 |
| Cons | 0.630 | 0.447 | 0.515 |
| N | 915 | | |
| Pdeudo R2 | 0.114 | | |

Agreement with the statement “A basic income would completely remove incentives to work”





Lessons from the Swiss experience

- Huge problems of political acceptability
- Work values are very entrenched
- Fear that a basic income would remove work incentives
- Amount was too high?