

Center for Independent Journalism Malaysia 2008 Media Independence Survey



German Research
Foundation **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**

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About Merdeka Center

A Public Opinion Research Organization

Market research for social, economic and political issues

Provides decision support for policy makers

Obtains feedback for communications strategy development

What we do

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

- Focus groups and in-depth interviews, ethnographic surveys
- In person and telephone surveys; random or field intercept

How we do it

Generally, random multistage sampling

Commitment to tell the truth – no matter how painful

Why we do it

Because leaders need to know what the public is thinking

Timely information help saves resources and people

Content

1. Methodology
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4. Survey Findings

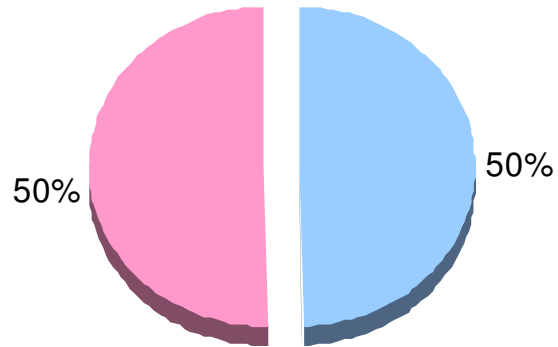
Methodology

- 1,203 randomly selected respondents aged 21+ were interviewed via telephone for the survey
- Respondents were selected via random stratified sampling method along the lines of state of residence, ethnicity, and gender.
- Survey was carried out between 8th to 14th May 2008
- Survey margin of error estimated at $\pm 2.83\%$

Respondent Profile

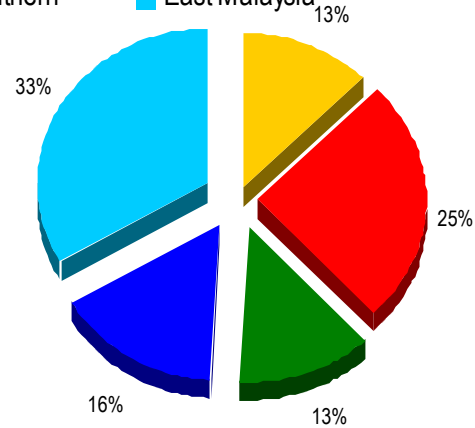
Gender

Male Female



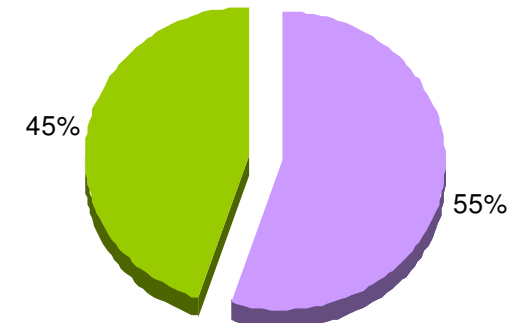
Region

Northern Central Eastern
Southern East Malaysia



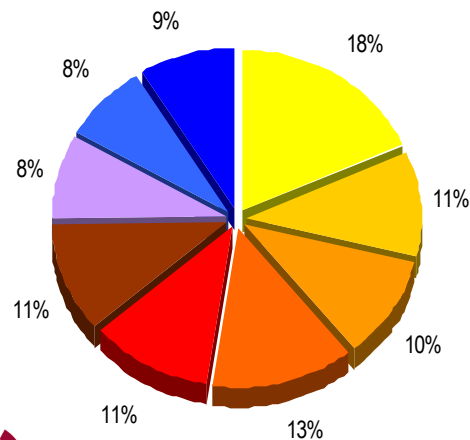
Setting

Urban Rural



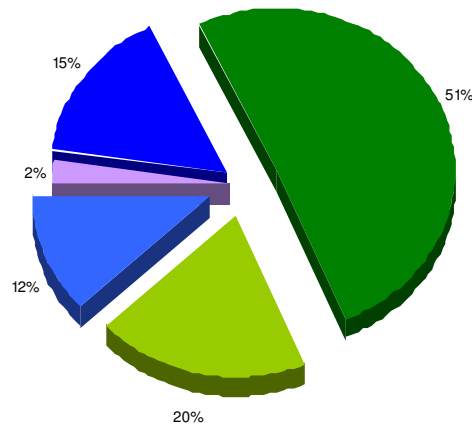
Age

21-25 26-30 31-35
36-40 41-45 46-50
51-55 56-60 Above 60



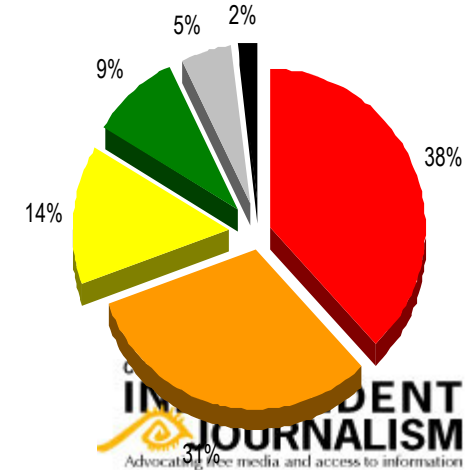
Education level

No formal education
Primary school
Secondary school
Diploma/Polytechnics/Teacher's college/Vocational Institutes
Degree



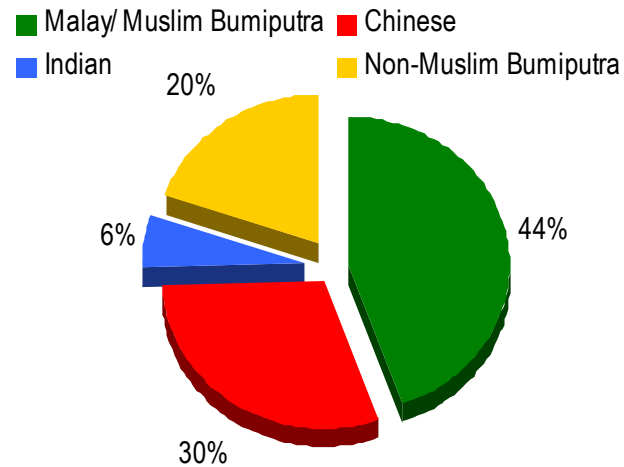
Monthly household income

< RM1500 per mth RM1501- RM3000 per mth
RM3001 - RM5000 per mth > RM5000 per mth
Don't know No response

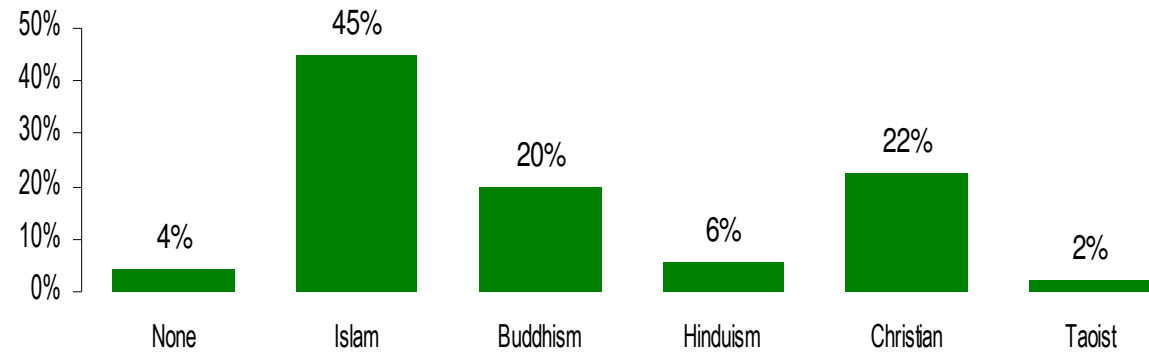


Respondent Profile

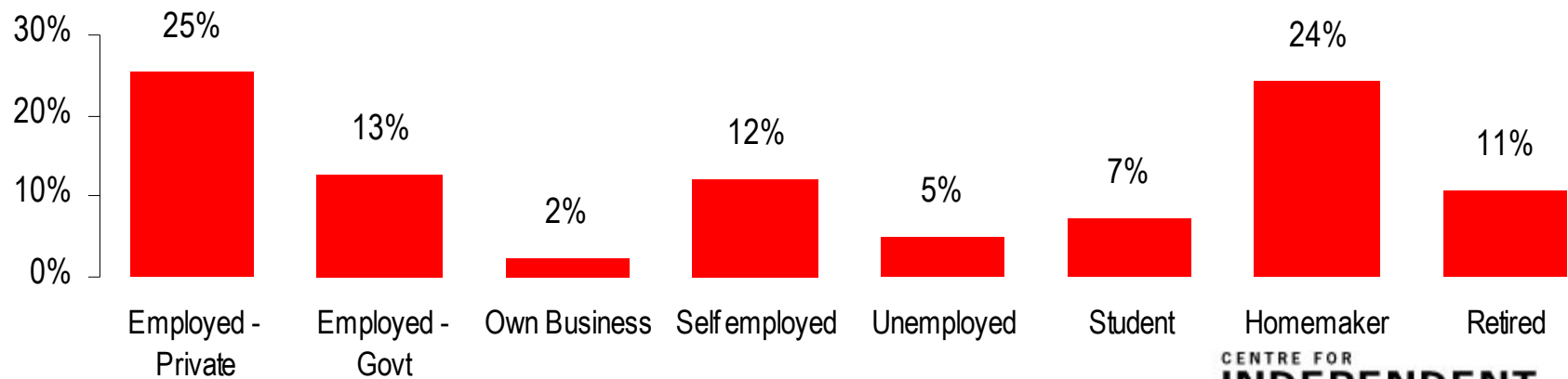
Ethnicity



Religion



Occupation



Survey Findings

Public awareness of the structure of the media industry is limited...

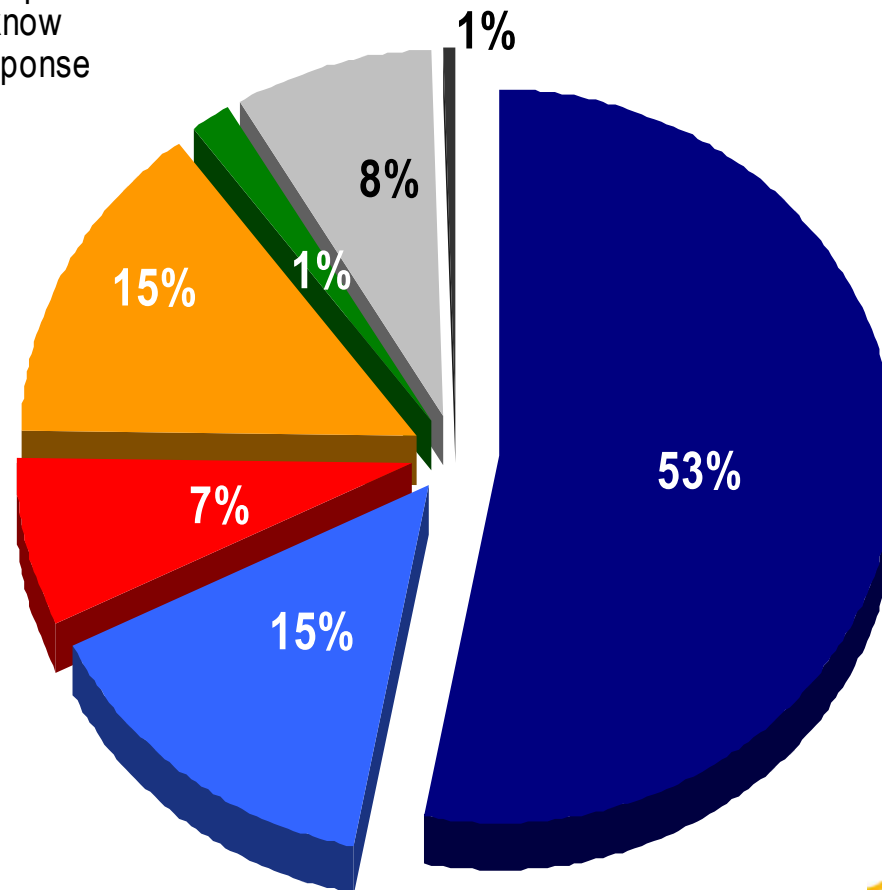
majority believe in government ownership

limited understanding of the concept of media independence

but perceive that govt. has strong influence on the media

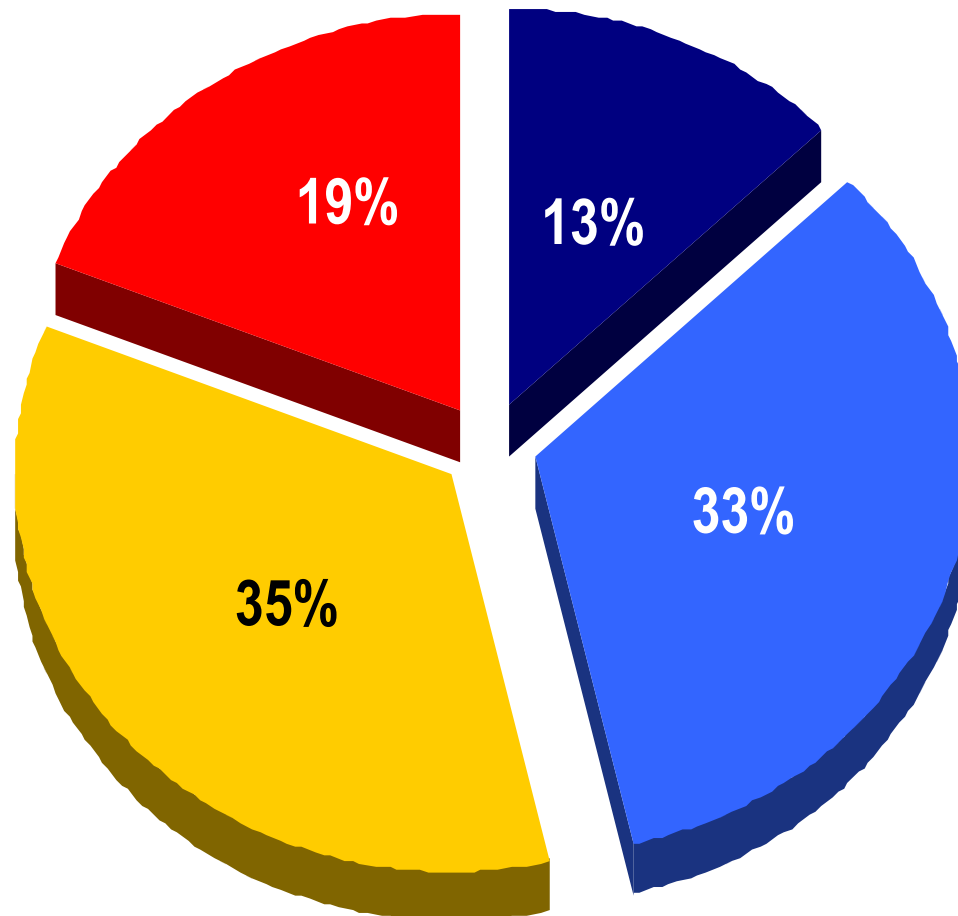
Q2. Who do you think owns most of the media in the country?

- Government
- People/companies connected to the government
- Independent businessmen
- The community
- Political parties
- Don't know
- No response

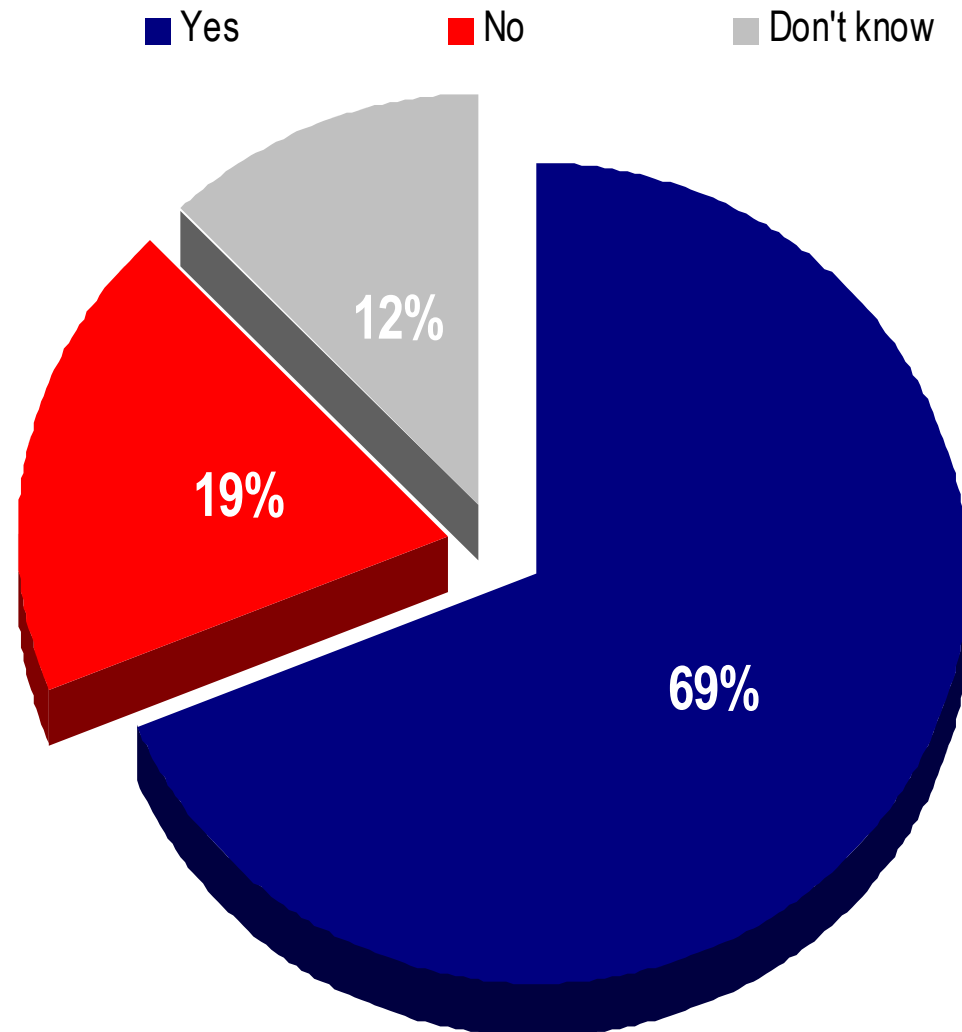


Q3. Do you understand the concept of media as a watchdog?

- Strongly understand
- Somewhat understand
- Somewhat not understand
- Do not understand at all/ Don't know

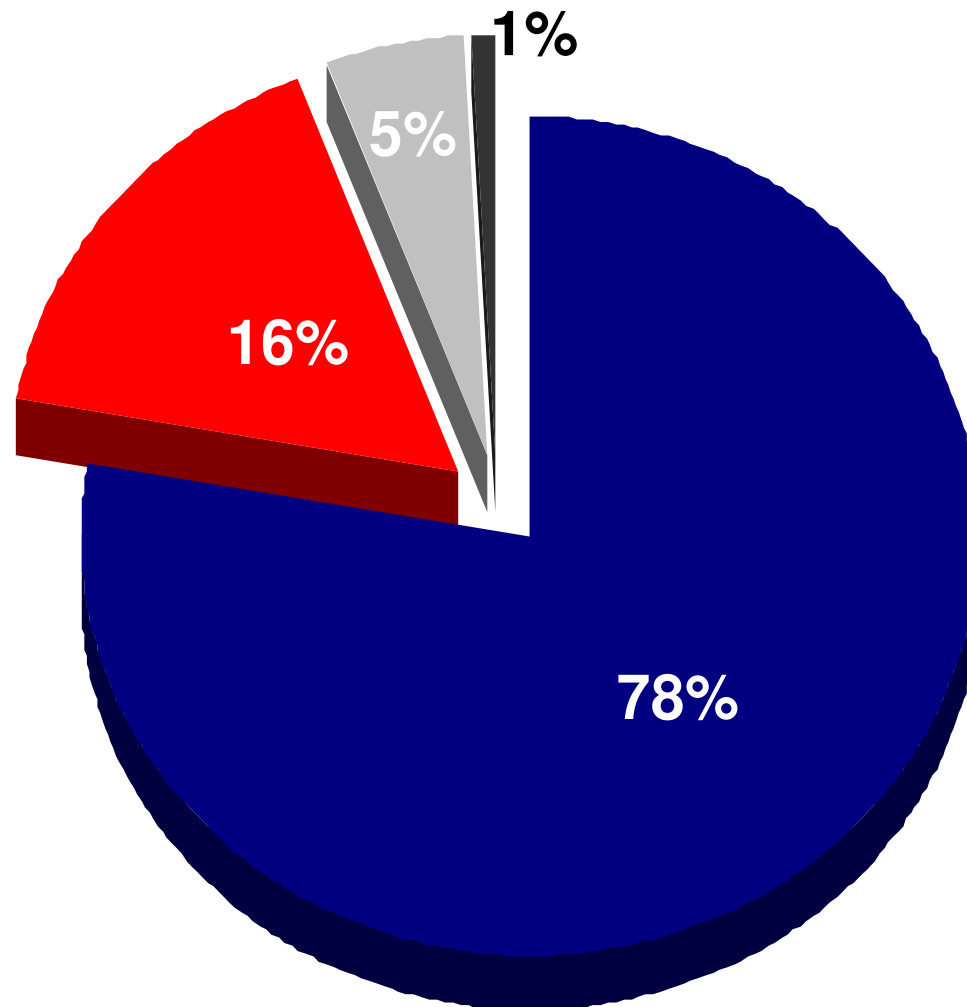


Q4. Do you think the media in Malaysia is fulfilling its role as a watchdog to influential factions?

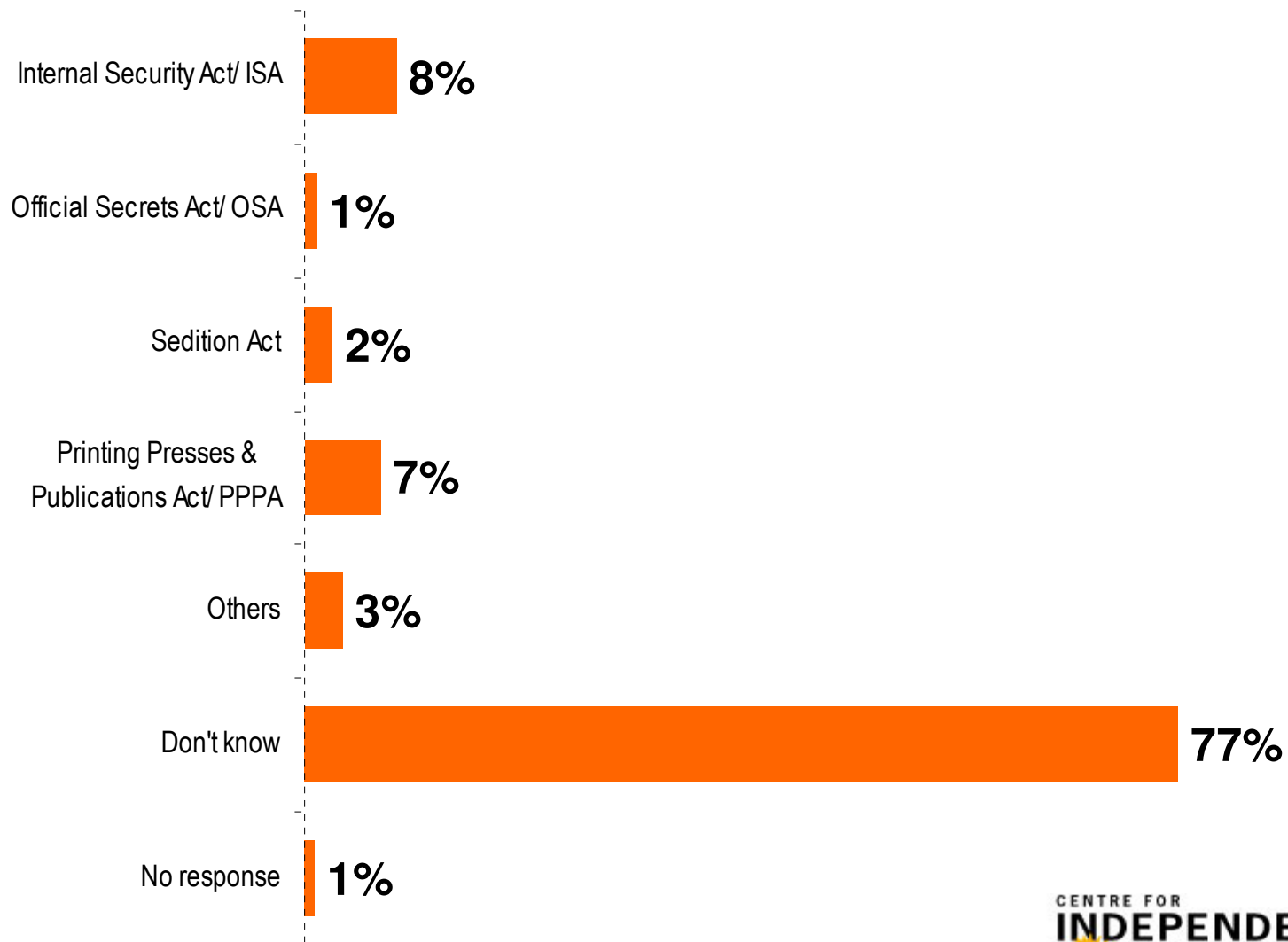


Q6. Do you think that owners of media have a significant impact on media content?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ No response

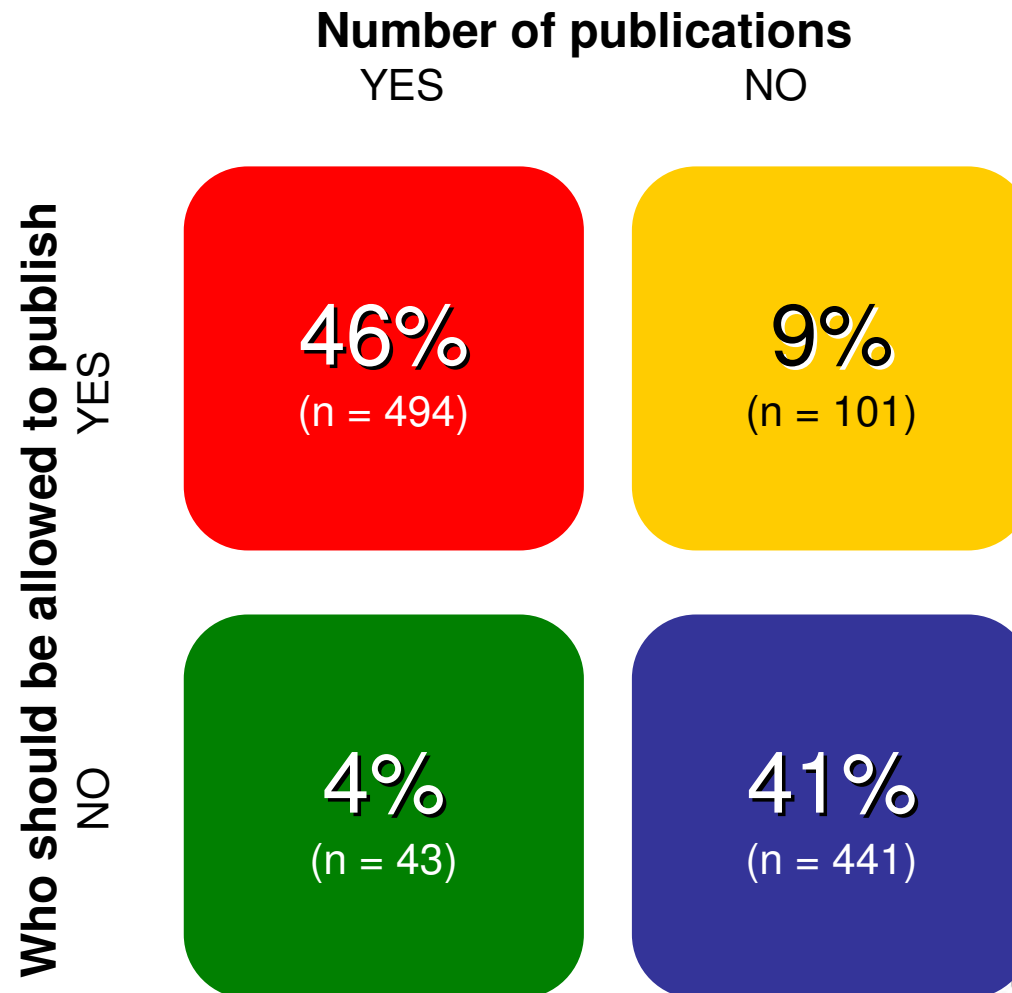


Q7. Do you know laws governing the media? Can you name them?

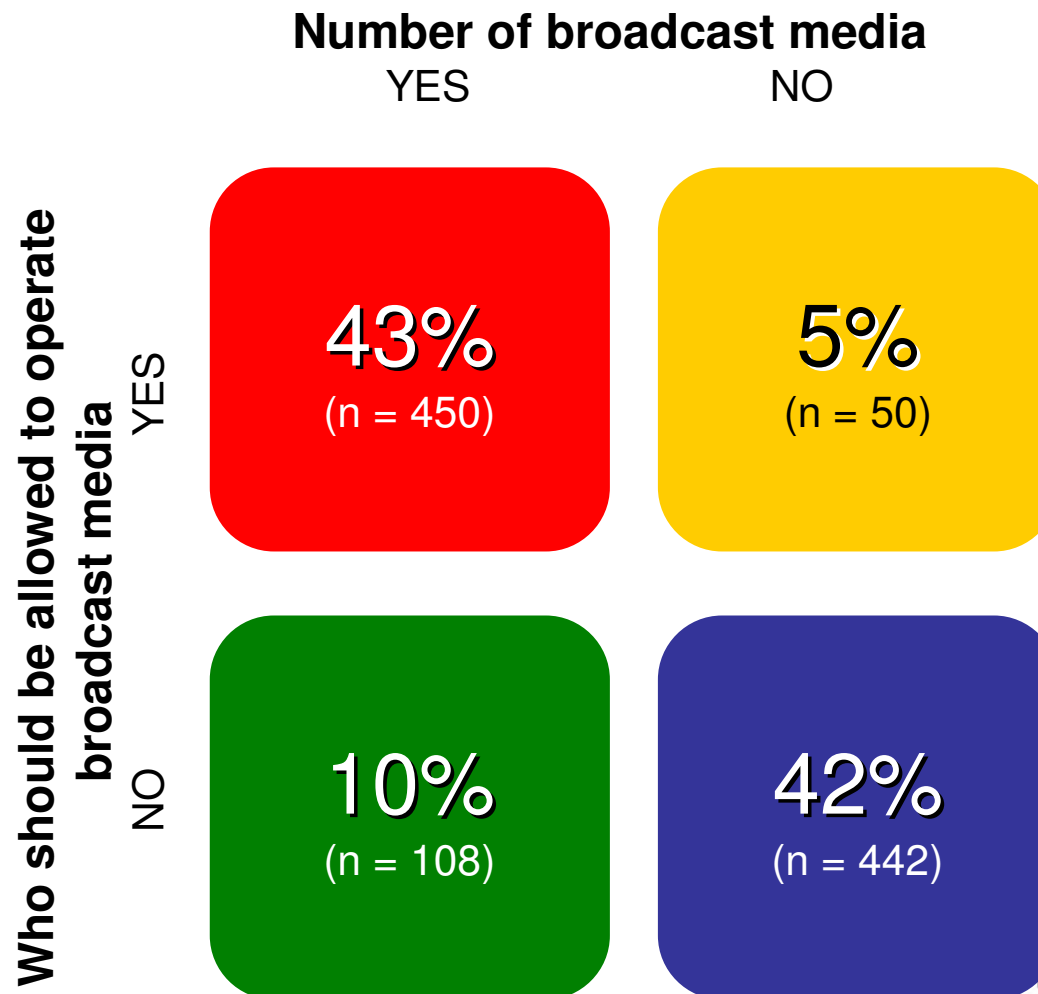


Public is split over the form of government control on the media

Q8. Do you think the government should control the number of publications and who should be allowed to publish?



Q9. Do you think the government should control the amount of broadcast media and who should be allowed to operate the broadcast media?



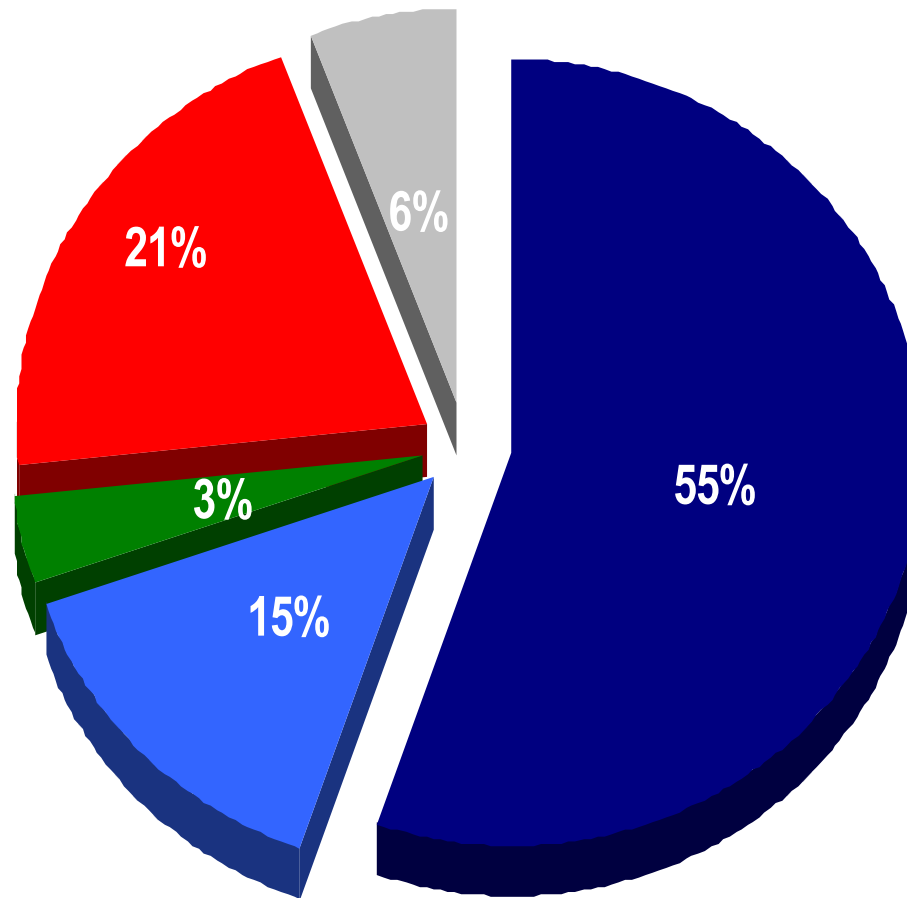
Despite limitations of awareness of media independence

majority recognize that media slant impacts
credibility

understands that regulations may lead to self-
censorship

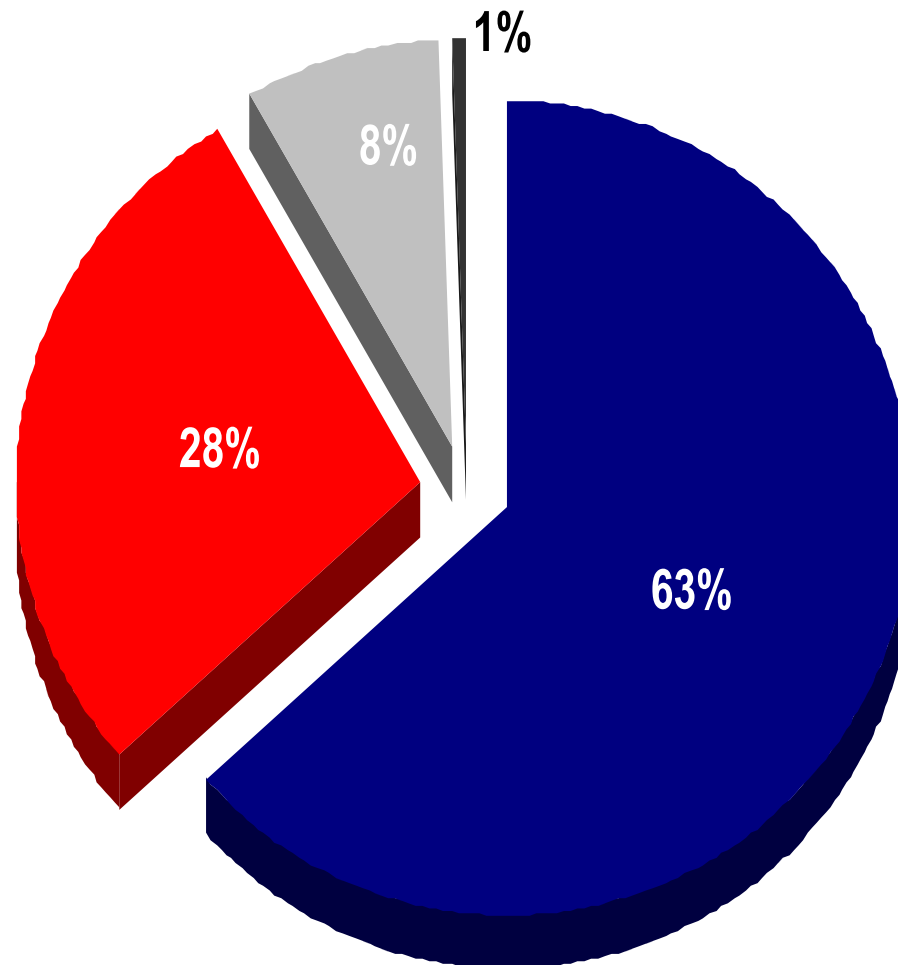
Q10. When a news media is said to be "pro-government" or "pro-opposition", do you think it affects the media's credibility?

■ Yes ■ Maybe yes ■ Maybe no ■ No ■ Don't know

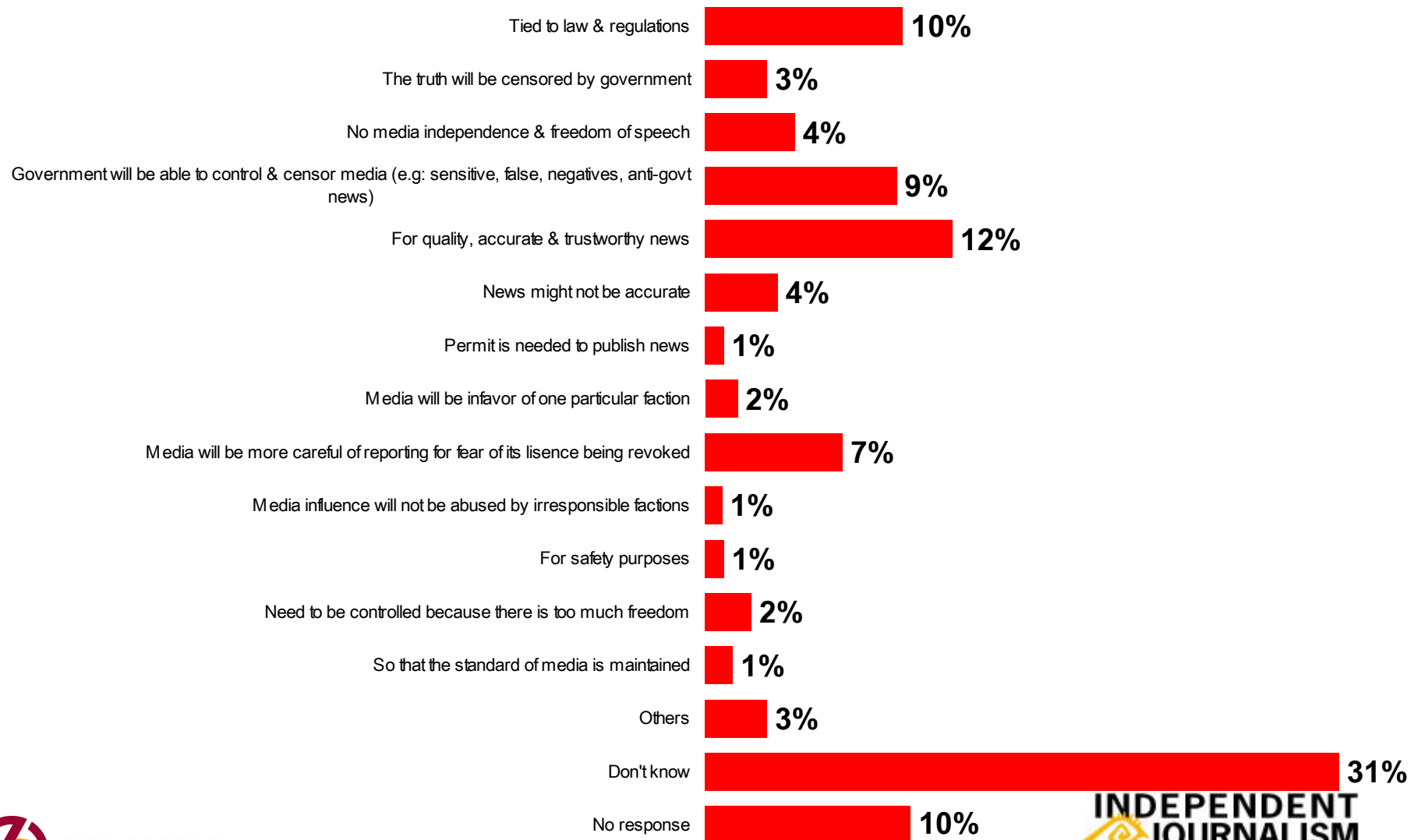


Q11. Do you think the current requirement to license the media have a significant impact on the accuracy of news content?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ No response



Q11A. Why? (Among those who answered in the affirmative in Q11, n = 761)



Public supports the idea on peer-review among media practitioners as a form of regulation

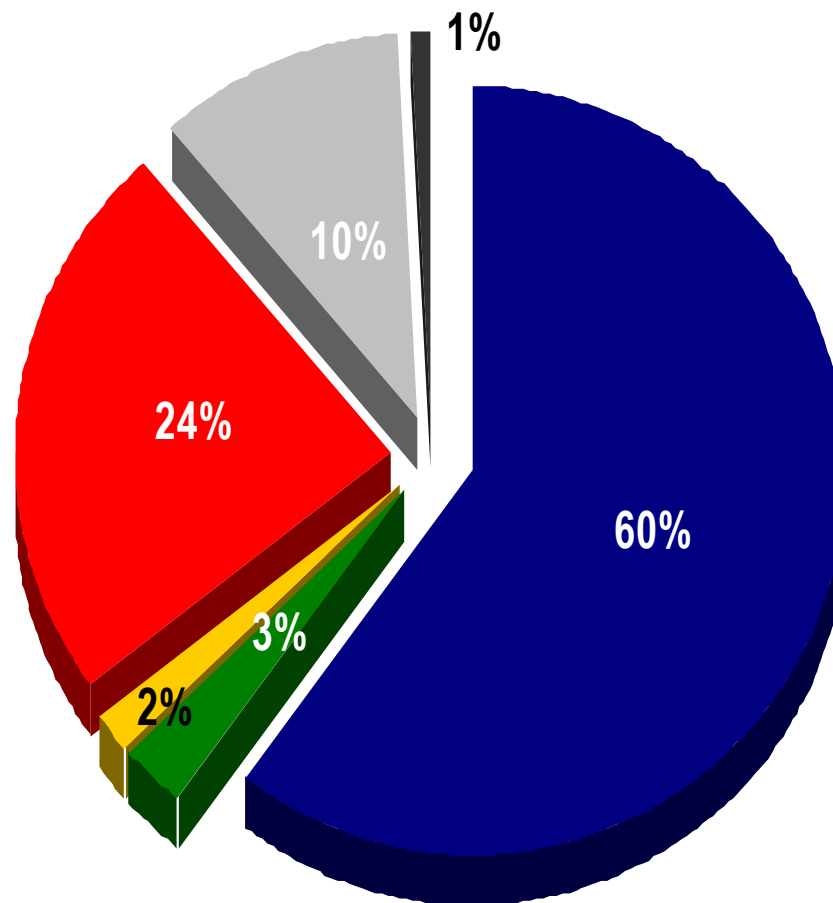
majority recognize that media could do with less censorship

split on how ethnic issues ought to be reported

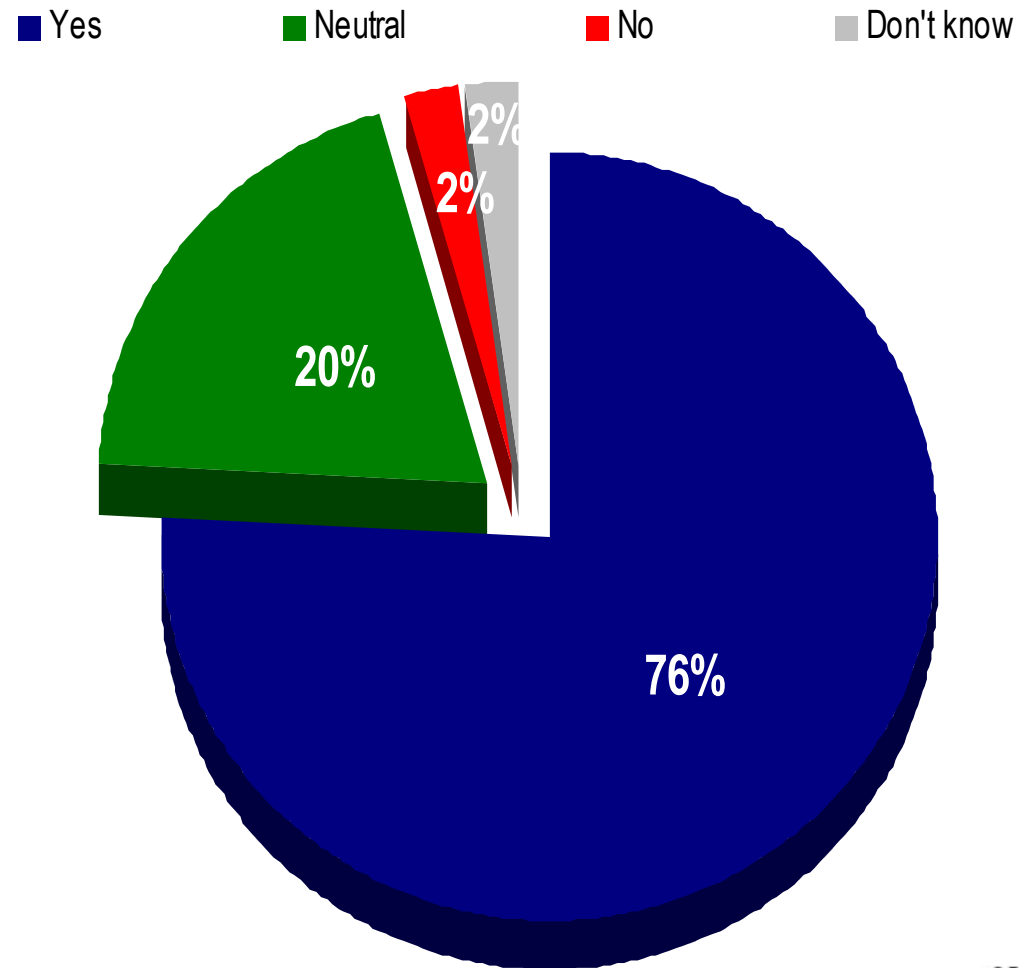
scores a variety of factors were moderate

Q13. Instead of laws, do you think public opinion and peer pressure within the industry are better tools for regulating the media?

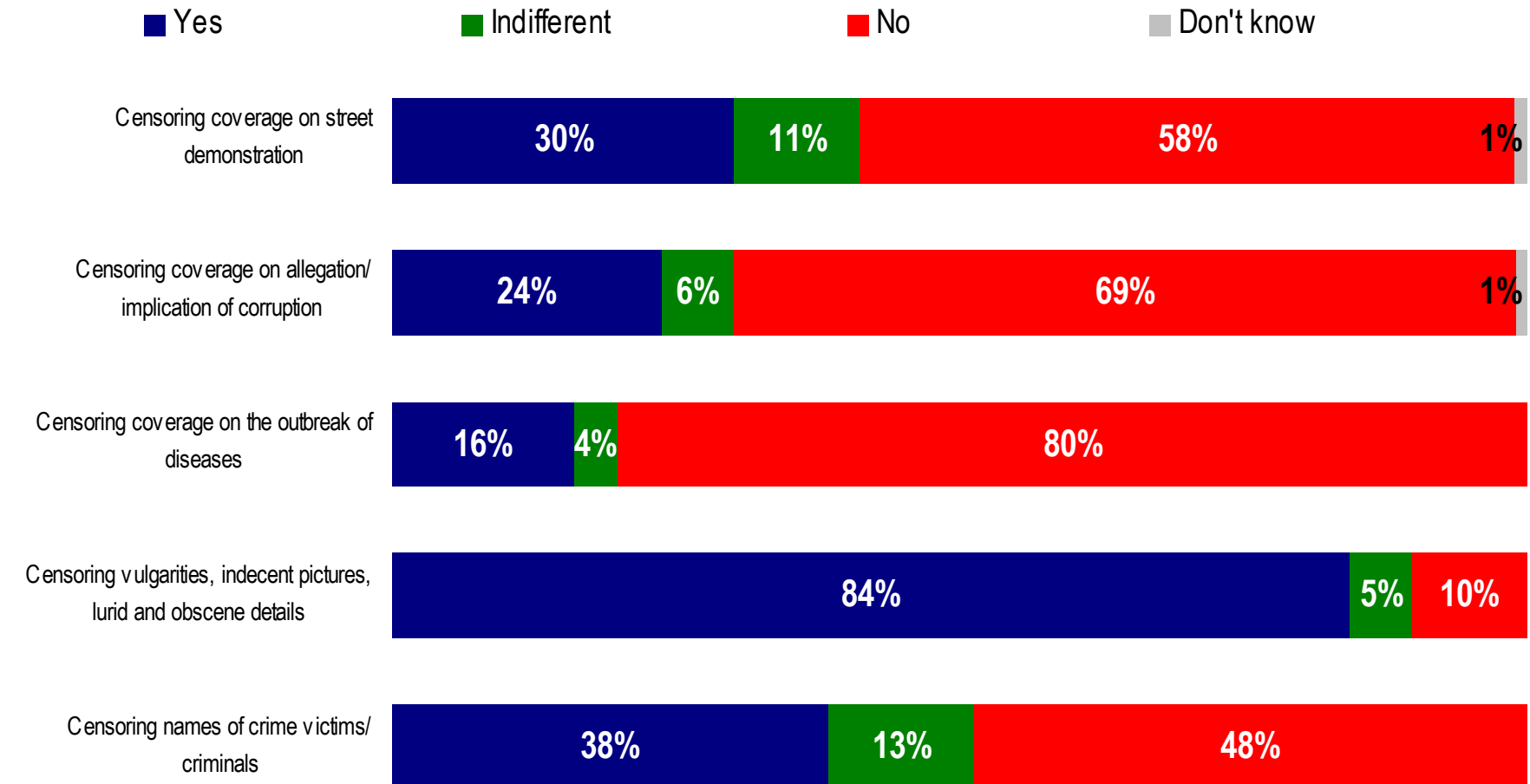
- Yes
- Yes to public opinion, no to peer pressure
- No to public opinion, yes to peer pressure
- No
- Don't know
- No response



Q15. Do you think media should be left independent in deciding what it wants to report?

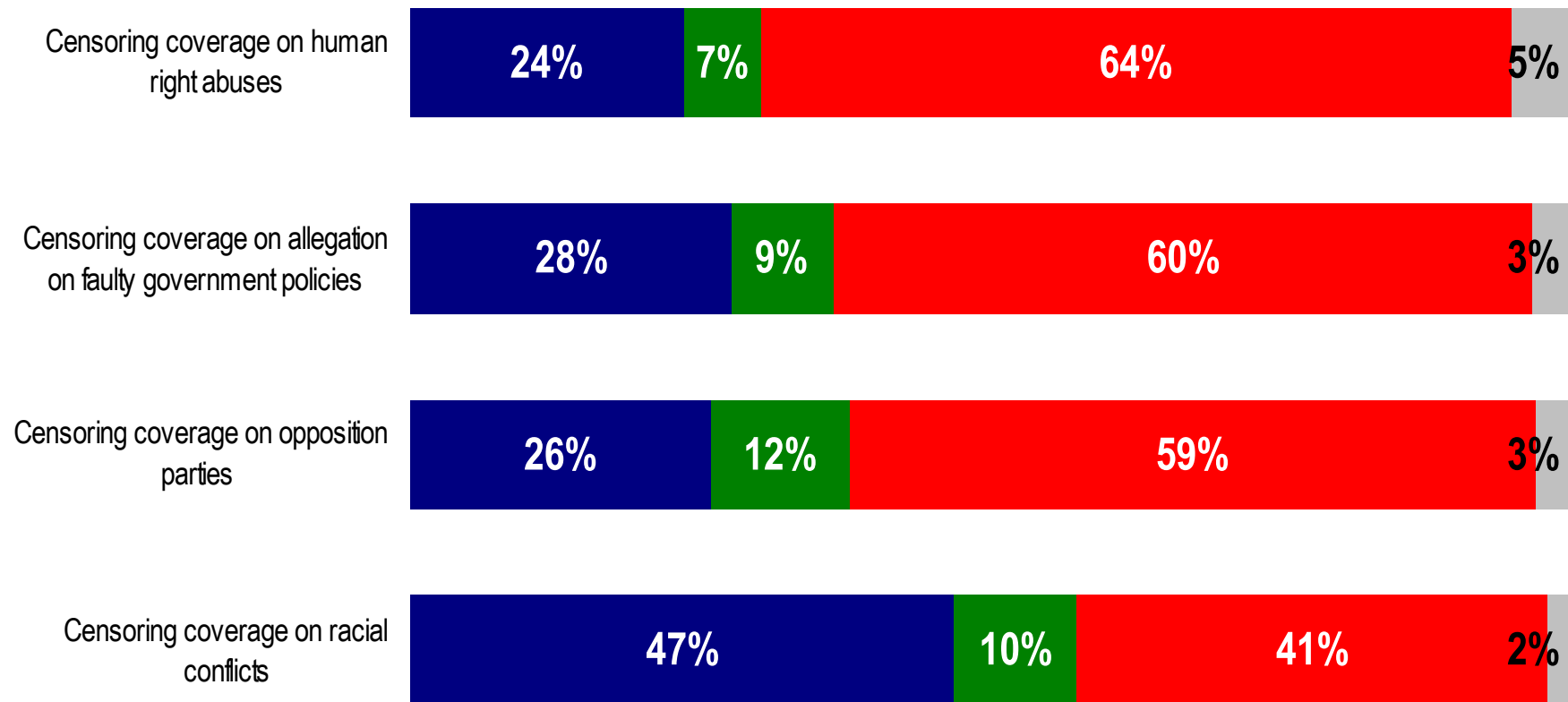


Q14. Should the reporting of the following areas be censored?



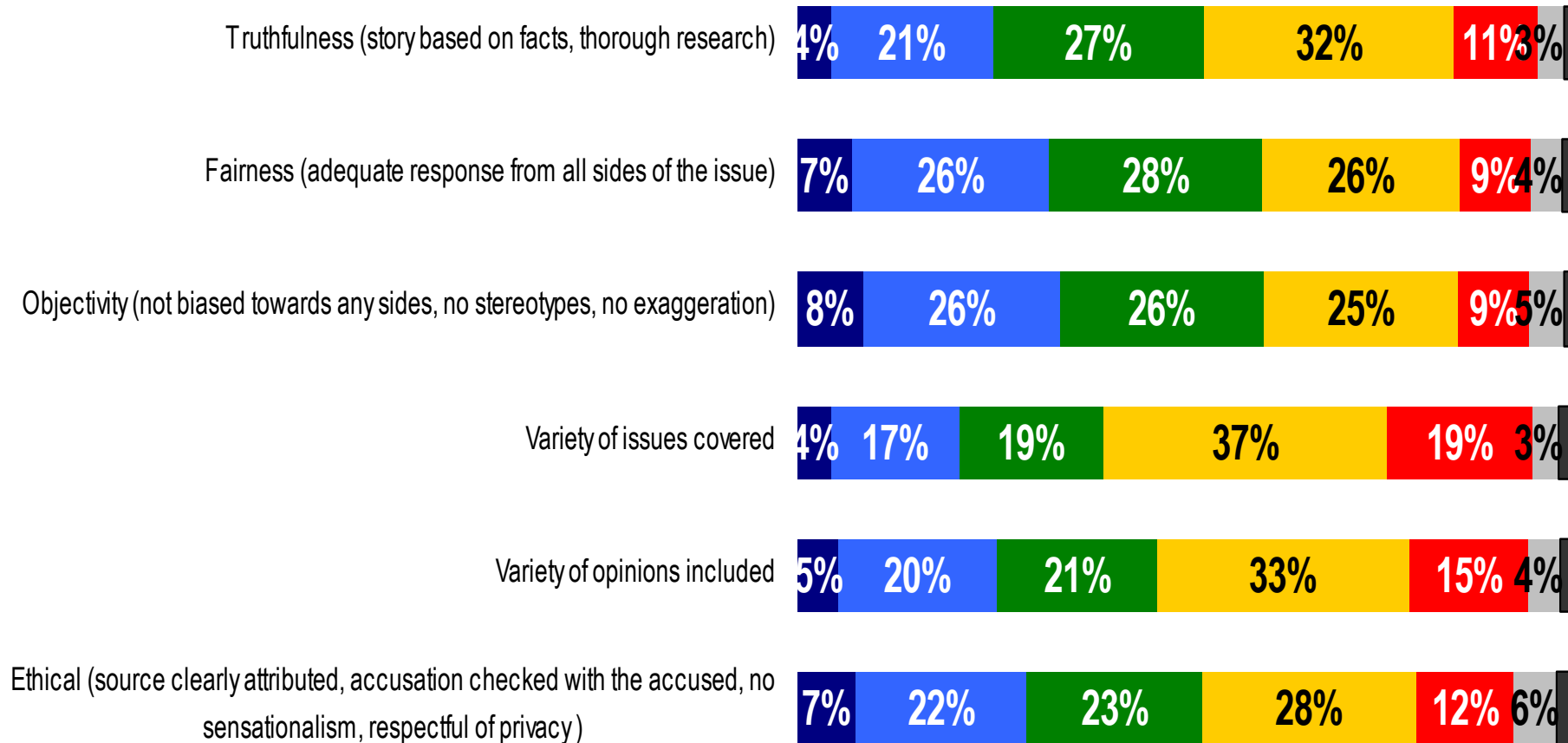
Q14. Should the reporting of the following areas be censored?

■ Yes ■ Indifferent ■ No ■ Don't know



Q25. If 1 = very unfavourable and 5 = very favourable, please rate the local mainstream media on the following.

■ Very unfavourable
 ■ Somewhat unfavourable
 ■ Indifferent
 ■ Somewhat favourable
 ■ Very favourable
 ■ Don't know
 ■ No response



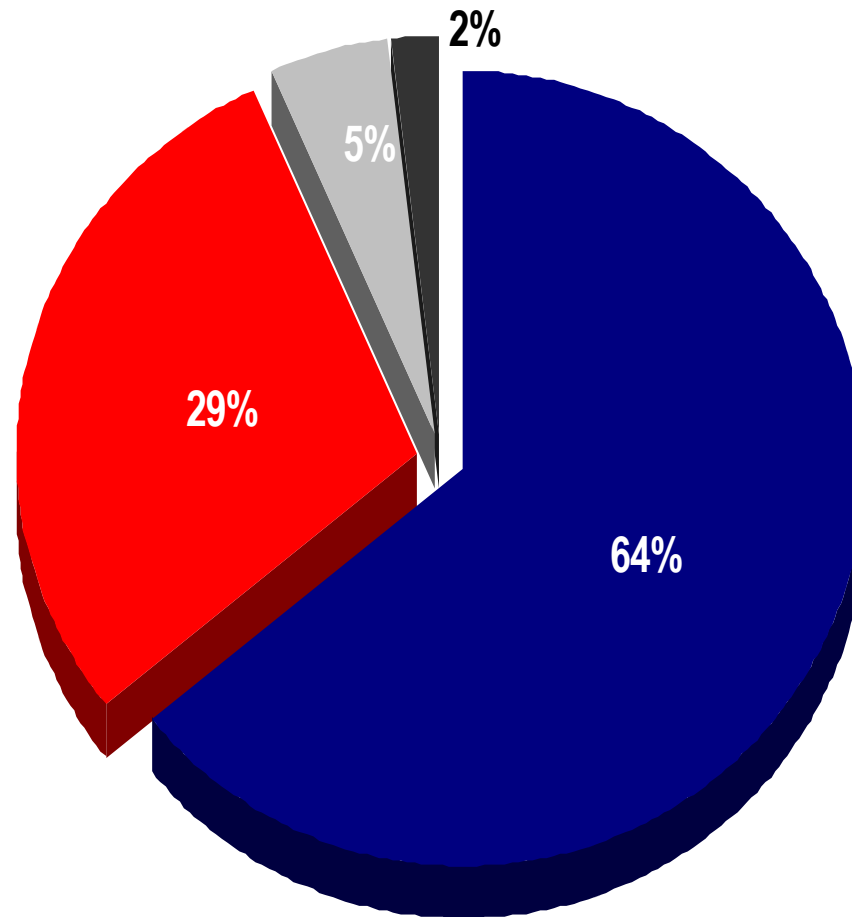
Public felt that media helped them make choices in the last elections

but not necessarily in favor of the ruling government

large majority consumer more than one source of information for news for comparison

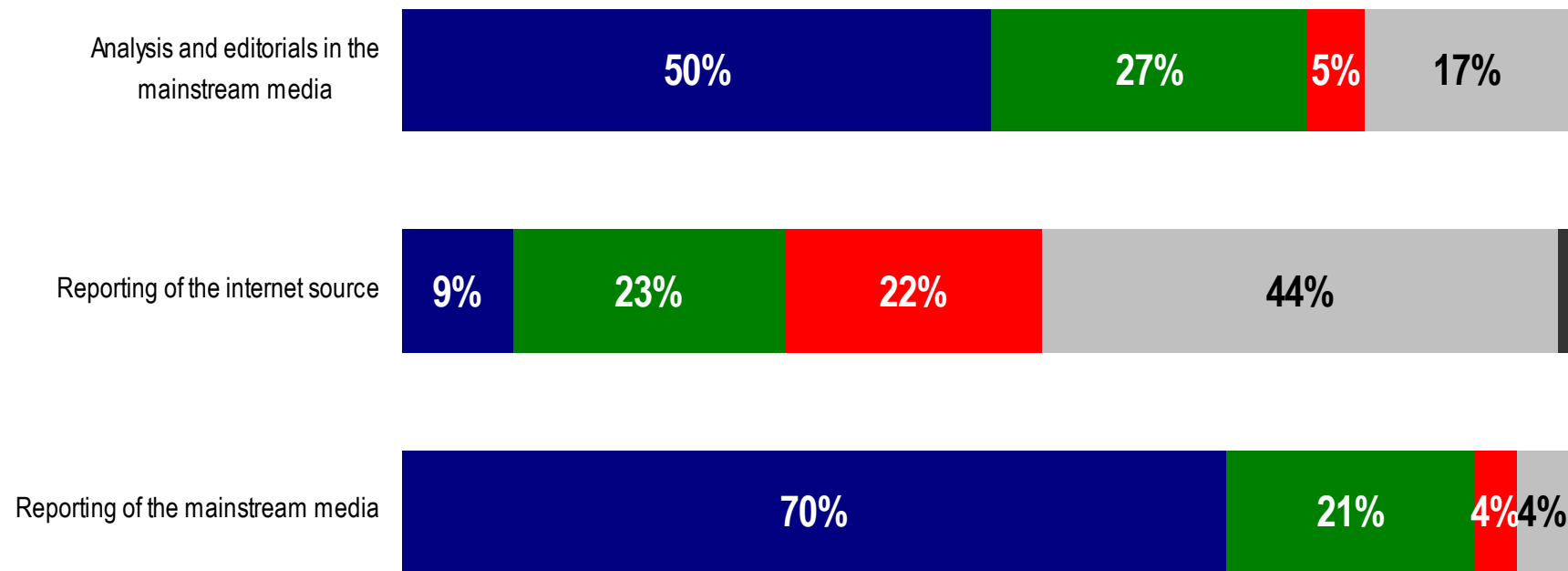
Q19. In general, did your choice of media help you make an informed decision on who you should vote for during the general election?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ No response

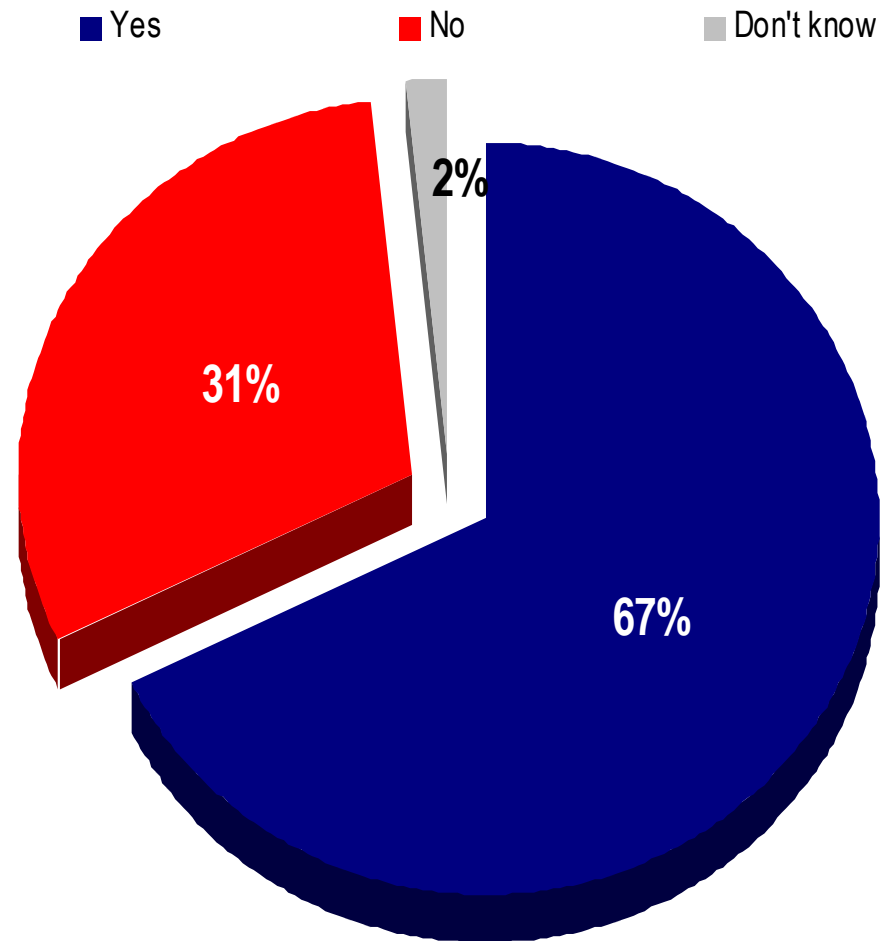


Q20. How would you describe the slant in reporting of the following media during elections?

■ On the side of BN ■ Balance ■ On the side of the opposition ■ Don't know ■ No response



Q23. During the elections, did you read from more than one news media to compare their reportage on a same issue?

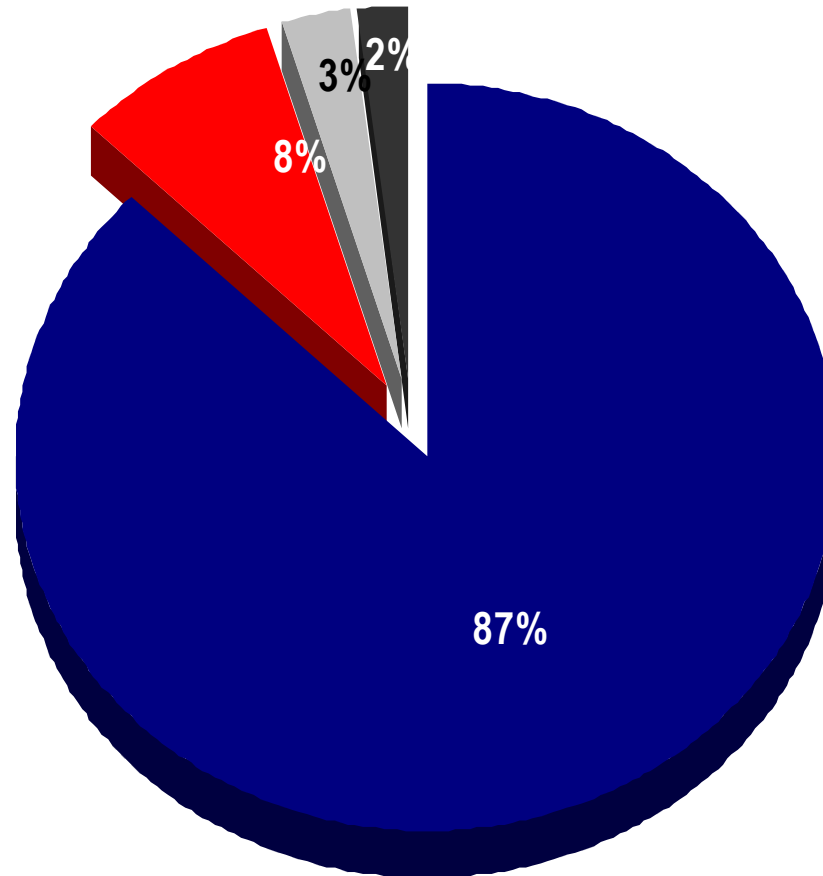


Majority of the public want to see improvements in the media

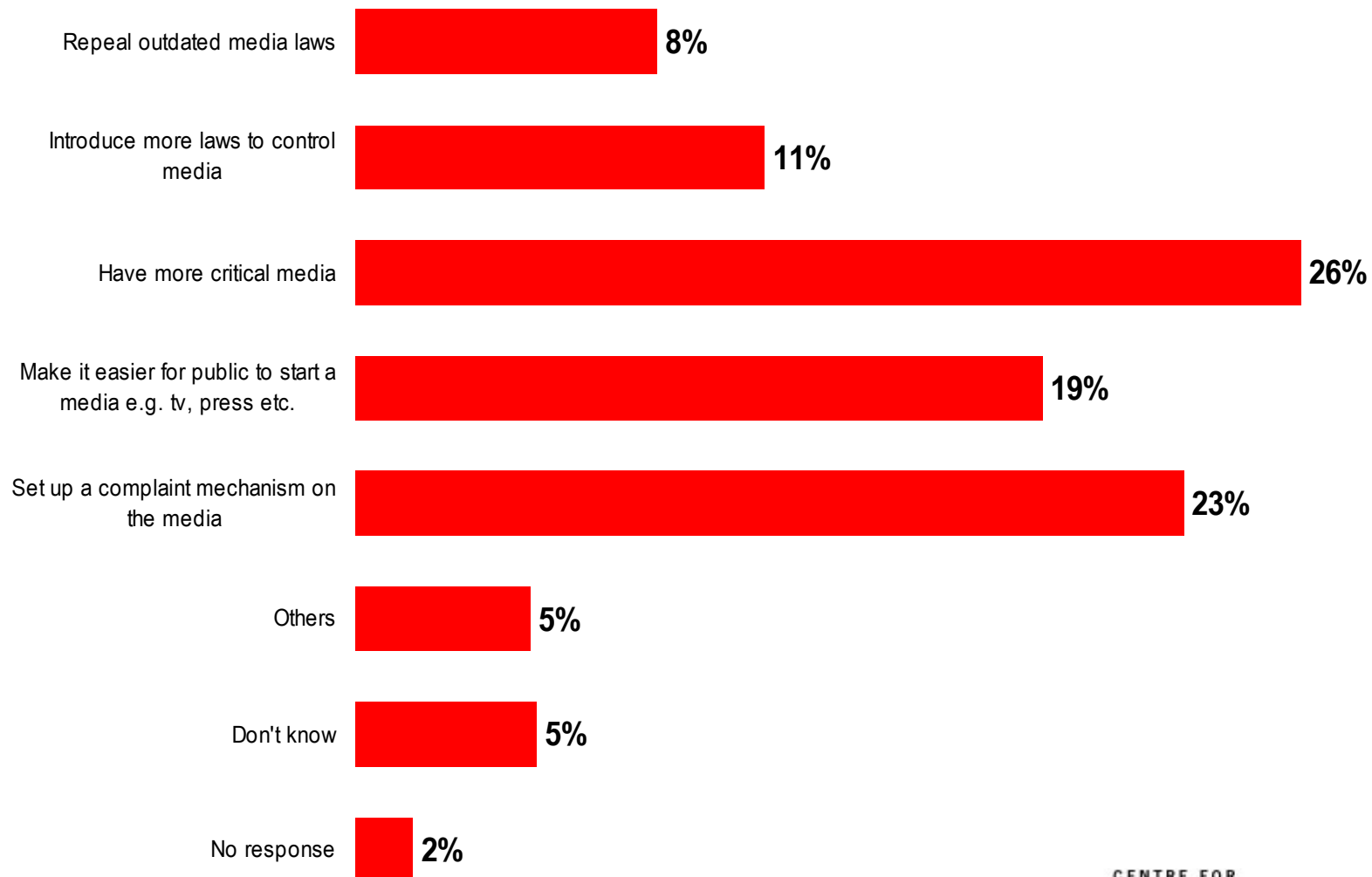
- more critical and analytical
- improved access
- element for public feedback

Q27. Would you like to see changes leading to greater media independence?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■ No response



Q28. In general, what kind of changes do you think is needed?



Q31. Who do you should play the most important role in improving media independence in Malaysia?

