What makes a 'successful' policy?
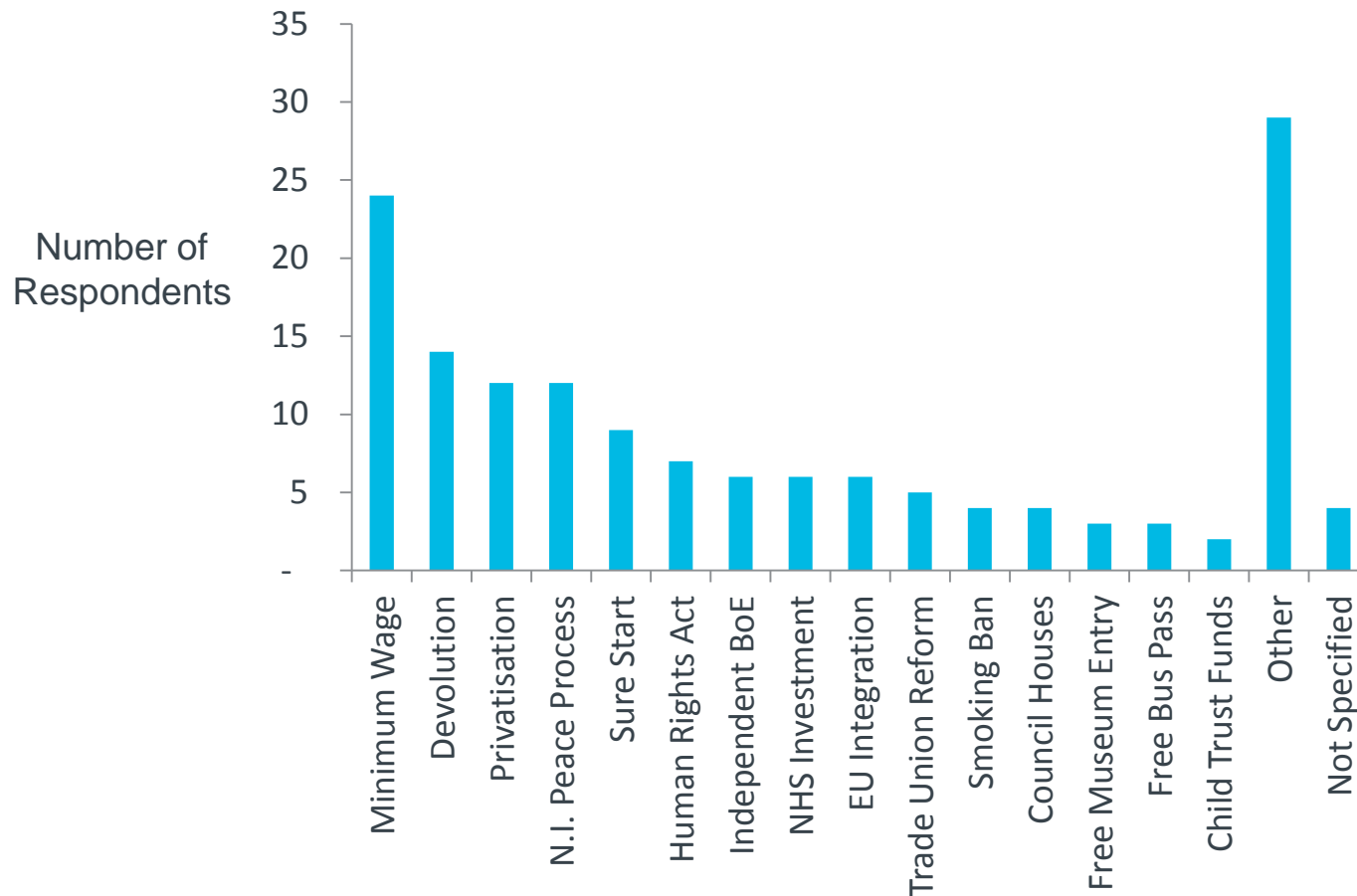
Analysis of Political Studies Association survey data

November 2010

Overview of the survey

- These are the results of an online survey sent to members of the UK Political Studies Association.

- The survey was sent to over 800 members. The results are based on 150 responses from 69 institutions.

- The questionnaire required respondents to:
  - Suggest the most successful policy intervention by a Westminster government since 1980
  - Offer and rank criteria used to judge the success of this policy
  - Offer and rank reasons for this policy's success

The minimum wage was most frequently cited as the most successful policy intervention since 1980

The most successful Westminster policy intervention since 1980*

Number of Respondents

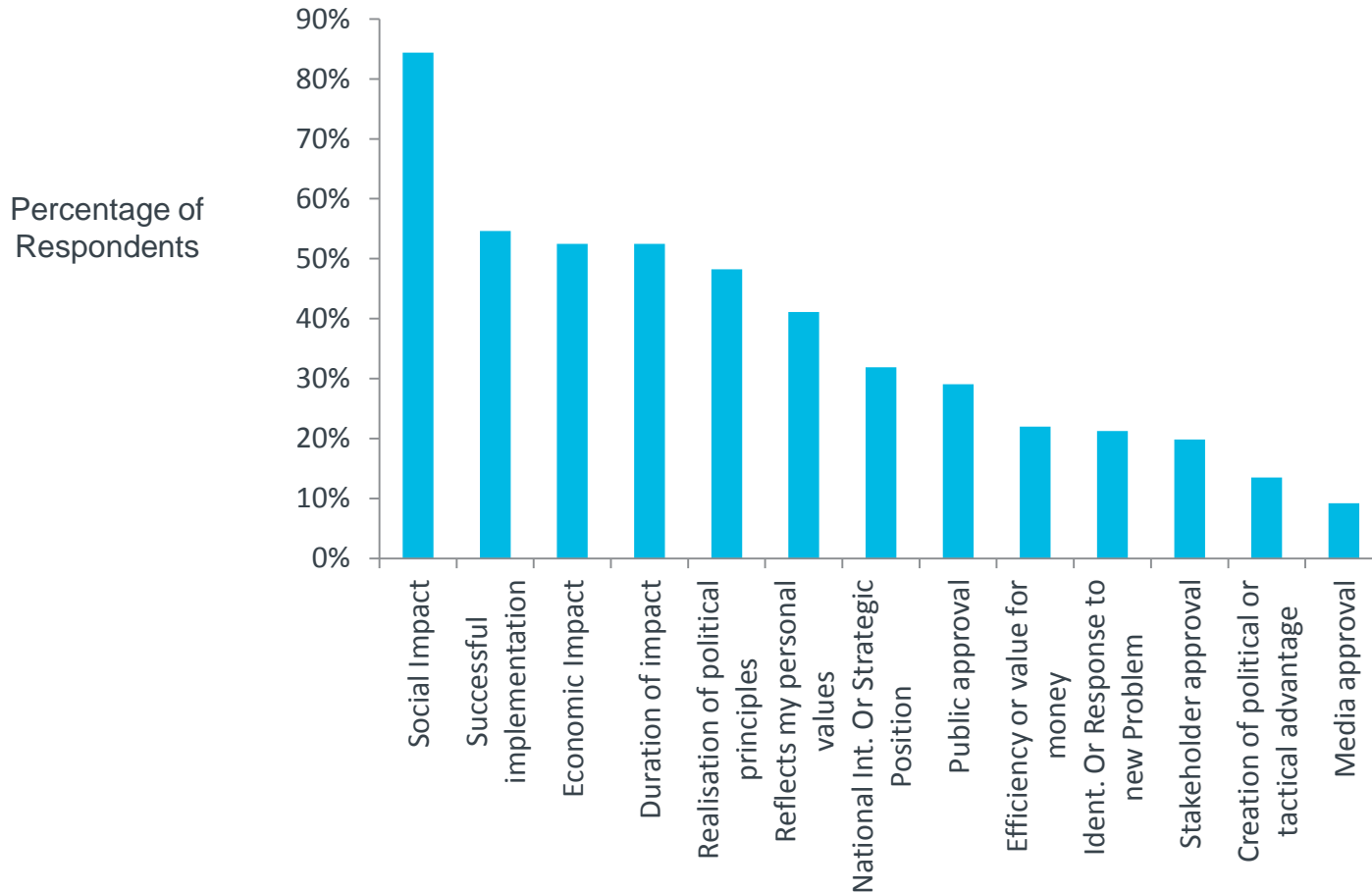| Category	Number
Minimum Wage	24
Devolution	14
Privatisation	12
N.I. Peace Process	12
Sure Start	9
Human Rights Act	7
Independent BoE	6
NHS Investment	6
EU Integration	6
Trade Union Reform	5
Smoking Ban	4
Council Houses	4
Free Museum Entry	3
Free Bus Pass	3
Child Trust Funds	2
Other	29
Not Specified	4

Note: * In response to the question: Policy can be defined as: 'a set of interrelated decisions... concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation' (Jenkins, WI (1978) Policy Analysis, London: Martin Robertson).With this definition in mind, please tell us what you think is the most successful policy intervention by any Westminster government since 1980?
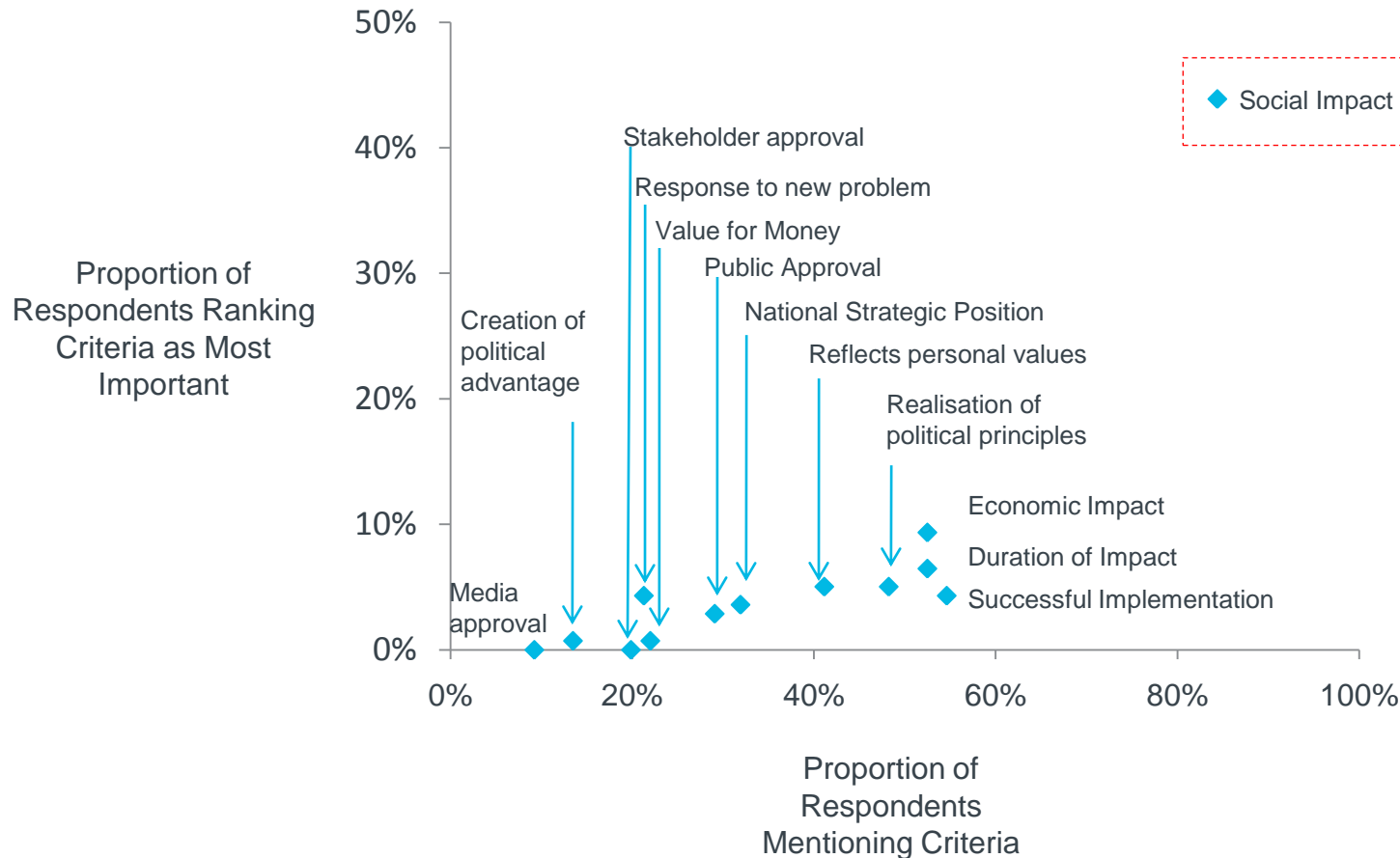
Source: IfG Survey

Social impact was consistently ranked as a key criteria of judging policy success

What makes a successful policy?*

Percentage of Respondents

Most respondents identified social impact in response to "What makes a successful policy?"*

Proportion of Respondents Ranking Criteria as Most Important

◆ Social Impact

Stakeholder approval

Response to new problem

Value for Money

Public Approval

National Strategic Position

Reflects personal values

Creation of political advantage

Realisation of political principles

Economic Impact

Duration of Impact

Media approval
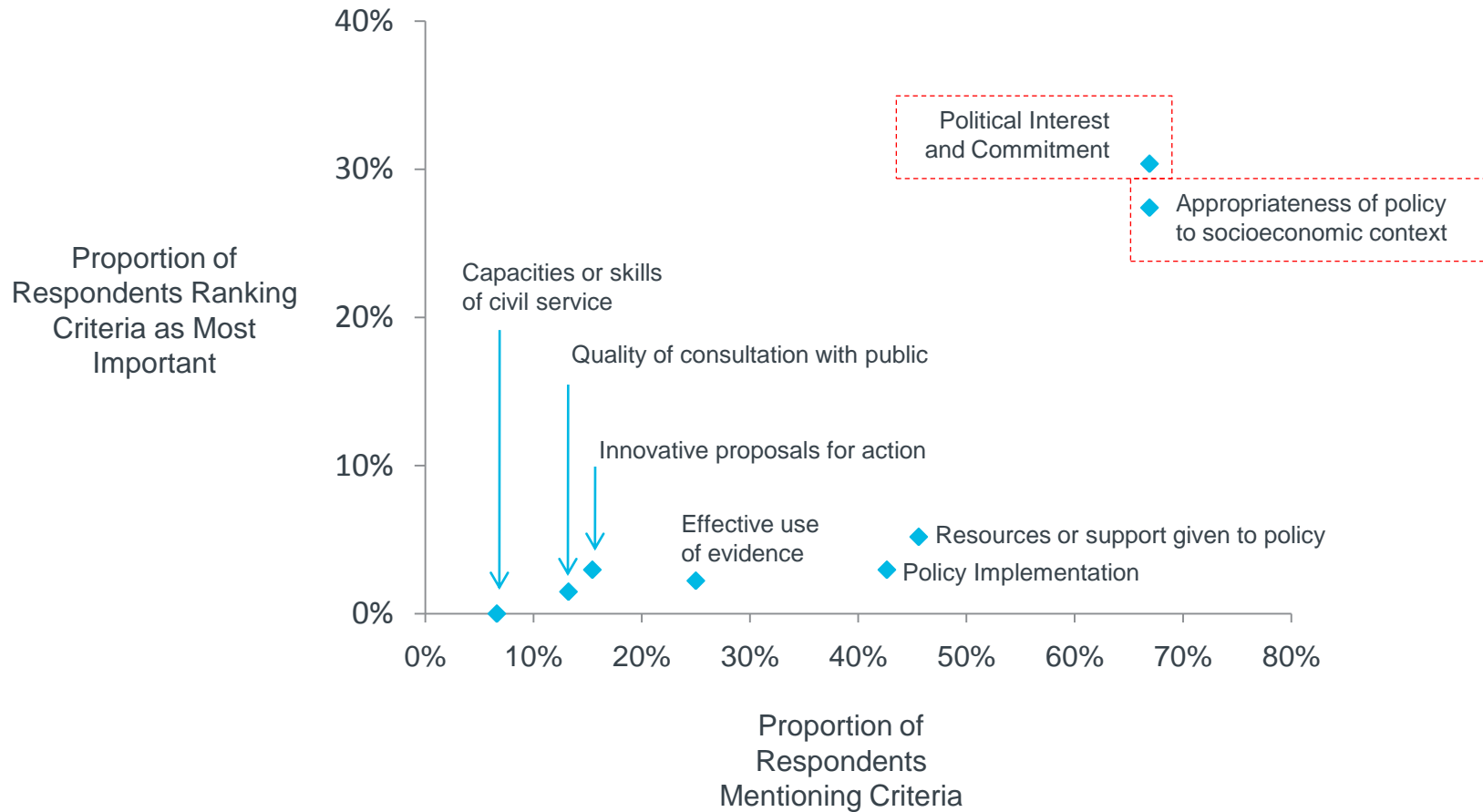
Successful Implementation

Proportion of Respondents Mentioning Criteria

Political interest and appropriateness to the socioeconomic context were rated the key drivers of policy success

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT

What are the reasons for the policy's success?*

Percentage of Respondents

Categories (left to right):
- Political interest and commitment
- Appropriateness of policy to socioeconomic context
- Resources or support given to policy
- Policy implementation
- Effective use of evidence
- Generated innovative proposals for action
- Quality of consultation with public or other stakeholders
- Capacities or skills of the civil service

Reasons ranked most highly for policy success*

Proportion of Respondents Ranking Criteria as Most Important

40%

30% — Political Interest and Commitment

Appropriateness of policy to socioeconomic context

20% — Capacities or skills of civil service

Quality of consultation with public

10% — Innovative proposals for action

Effective use of evidence — Resources or support given to policy

Policy Implementation

0% — 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

Proportion of Respondents Mentioning Criteria

Note: * In response to the question: What were the reasons for the policy's success? Can you identify the specific contribution of certain factors, either singly or in combination?
Source: IfG Survey