



Challenges of Nations

WHAT MAJOR TASKS NEED TO BE SOLVED IN SOCIETY
TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE. A SURVEY IN EIGHT
COUNTRIES.

Authors



Tobias Biró
tobias.biro@nim.org



Dr. Andreas Neus
andreas.neus@nim.org

Steinstr. 21 | 90419 Nürnberg | nim.org

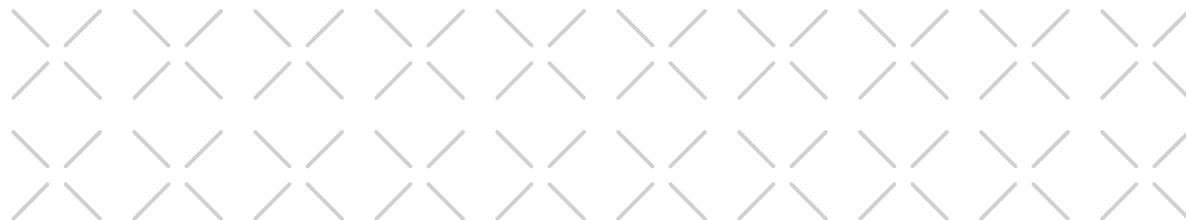
December 2023

The Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions (NIM) is a non-profit institute for research on consumer and market decisions. At the interface between science and practice, NIM examines how decisions of consumers and company decision-makers change in the face of new technological and social trends – and what the resulting impacts are. From its research, NIM generates new and relevant insights into how people can make better decisions in markets.

Reprinting, transmission and similar activities - even in extracts - are permitted only with prior written consent.

Picture credits

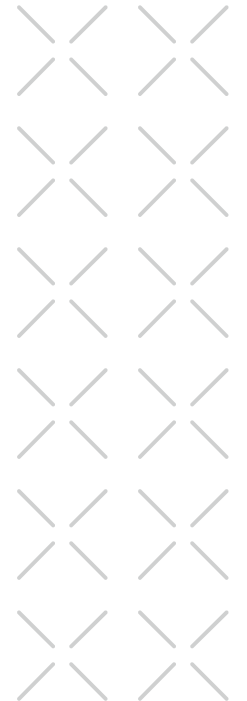
Title: PeopleImages/iStock / Getty Images Plus via Getty Images
P. 2: NIM/Wolfgang Schmitt
P. 10: South_agency/E+ via Getty Images
P. 11: hobo_018/E+ via Getty Images
P. 22: Tom Werner/DigitalVision via Getty Images
P. 23: jacoblund/iStock / Getty Images Plus via Getty Images



Contents

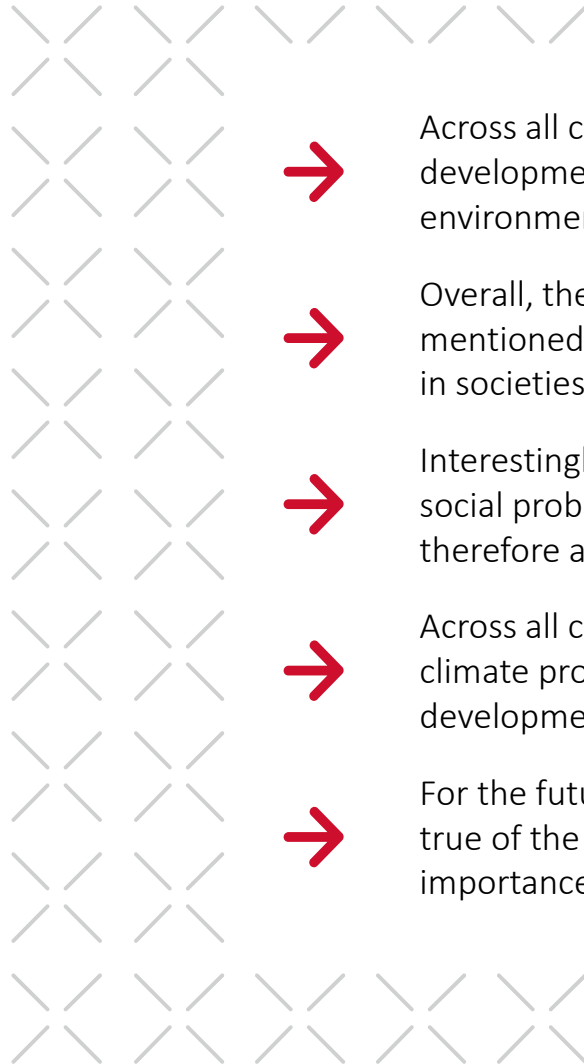
1. Summary
2. The current challenges at a glance
3. The future challenges at a glance
4. Country Deep Dive

-  Germany
-  France
-  Italy
-  Great Britain
-  USA
-  Japan
-  Brazil
-  South Africa



5. Appendix and method

Key Insights



Across all countries, the most frequently mentioned task which requires immediate attention **today** is the development of prices and purchasing power. This is followed by crime and security, the healthcare system, and environmental and climate protection.



Overall, the variety of problems appears to be increasing. In the 2023 survey, significantly more urgent tasks were mentioned per country and person than in the 2018 survey. This could also be an indication of further differentiation in societies.



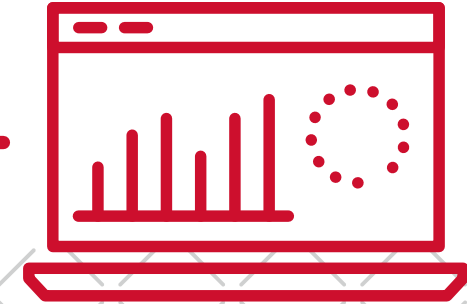
Interestingly, the demographic characteristics of income and gender play almost no role in the identification of urgent social problems. By contrast, the greatest differences are found among age groups. The perception of problems is therefore a generational issue.



Across all countries, the most frequently mentioned task which needs to be solved in the **future**, is environmental and climate protection. This is followed by crime and security, the healthcare system, and price and purchasing power development.



For the future, respondents seem to expect that many of today's pressing issues will be less acute. This is particularly true of the issue of price and purchasing power, which has almost halved in mentions. The only topic that is gaining in importance is environmental and climate protection.




1

Summary

Summary (1/3)

In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the respective country today resp. in 5 - 10 years? (unaided responses)



The 2023 edition of the study **"Challenges of Nations"** covers eight countries.

A total of 8,008 people were surveyed in these countries, representing for around 675 million people.


Across all countries, citizens see the greatest need for action in 2023 in the development of prices and purchasing power (39 percent). The expectation for the future is that inflation will remain an important issue, however not as acute as at present.


Crime and security comes in second place with 36 percent, closely followed by the healthcare system in third place with 33 percent. Respondents do not seem to expect any rapid improvement in either of these challenges, and they will retain their high positions in the ranking of future concerns.

Respondents see growing importance in the area of environmental and climate protection in particular, which is mentioned as an urgent task today by 27 percent, putting it in 4th place (+ 10 places). Respondents expect environmental and climate protection to be the most important task to be solved in the mid-term.



The **development of prices and purchasing power** is currently the main concern in two of the eight countries and ranks second in an additional four countries.

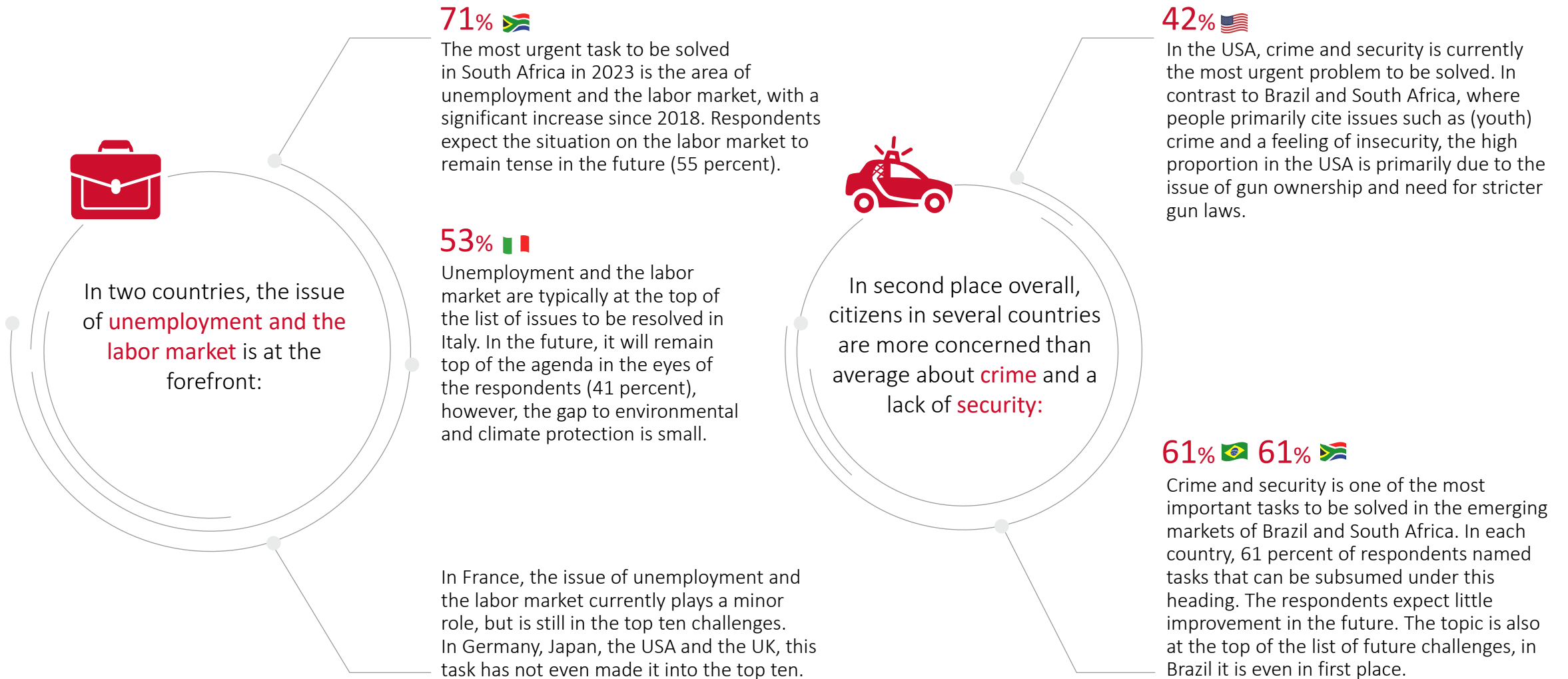
70%  The development of prices and purchasing power is by far currently the biggest concern for people in the UK. For the future, this area is still expected to be an urgent problem by 30 percent of respondents.

57%  Price and purchasing power development is also currently causing the greatest concern in France. As far as the future is concerned, the French expect that environmental and climate protection will be the most urgent task.

43%  **40%**  **38%**  **34%**  In Germany, Italy, the USA and Japan, concerns about prices and purchasing power are currently the second most pressing issue. What these countries have in common is the expectation that the issue will remain important in the future, even if it is no longer as acute as it is at present.

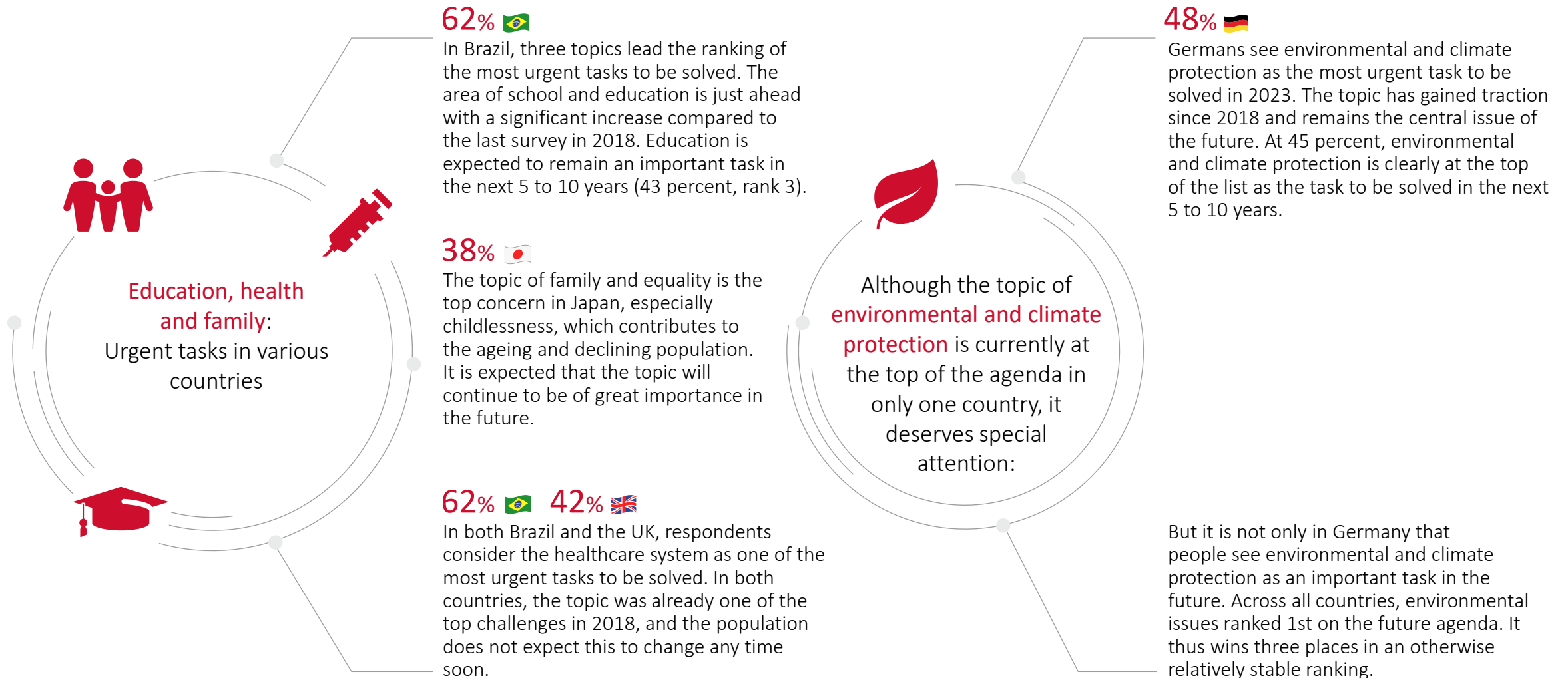
1 Summary (2/3)

In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the respective country today resp. in 5 - 10 years? (unaided responses)



Summary (3/3)

In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the respective country today resp. in 5 - 10 years? (unaided responses)



2

The current challenges at a glance



Current challenges: Summary



In April and May 2023, the Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions (NIM) asked a total of 8,008 people in eight countries the following question: "In your opinion, what are the most urgent tasks that need to be solved in [respondent's country of residence] today?"

The respondents were not given any answers, but were invited to answer openly and spontaneously. In this way, the NIM is continuing the "**Challenges of Nations**" study series, which the institute last conducted in 2018. A first exciting finding:

The variety of problems, i.e. the number of challenges mentioned per person, has increased significantly compared to the last survey, from 2.2 to 5 topics mentioned. This is probably partly due to the change in methodology (online interviews from 2023 on), but numerous new topics have also become the focus of public debate since 2018.



Additionally, in contrast to previous waves, there is no longer one major national problem; instead, a greater number of topics have high scores. This is an indication that societies are becoming more differentiated.



On average, across the eight countries surveyed, most respondents cited aspects relating to price and purchasing power development (39 percent) as the most urgent current problem to be solved. This was followed by crime and security at 36 percent and the healthcare system at 33 percent.





Growing urgency is particularly evident in the area of environmental and climate protection, which is mentioned by 27 percent of respondents and is therefore in 4th place (+23 percentage points). However, concerns about the economic situation are also gaining in importance (+20 percentage points).

The same tasks are not perceived as equally urgent in all countries. For example, the development of prices and purchasing power is the most pressing issue for British people, and the least for people in South Africa. Other tasks where assessments differ:

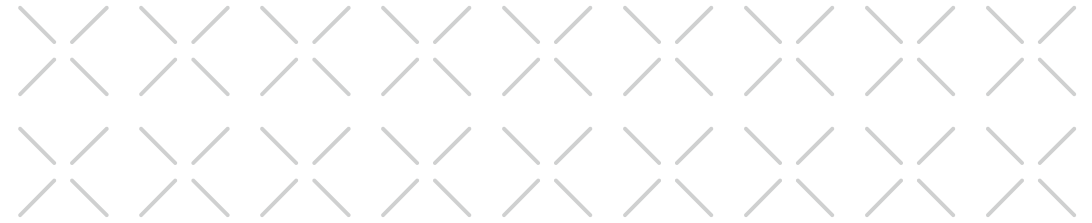
- People in South Africa are most concerned about unemployment and the labor market, but there is also great concern in Italy and Brazil. By contrast, the labor market situation in Japan, Germany and the UK is not a major concern at present.
- In the area of crime and security, South Africa and Brazil are in front, however, this issue is also frequently mentioned in the USA. In contrast, this only concerns a few people in Japan and Germany.
- Brazilians are by far the most likely to express concerns about school and education. For the Japanese, in this case there is little cause for concern.

Germans are more concerned than average about environmental and climate protection as well as about immigration/integration.

2 Current challenges: Summary – socio-demographic differences



Demographic characteristics such as income and gender scarcely factor into the identification of urgent social problems.



The order of priority of the tasks that men and women consider to be urgent is similar. However, consistently women are slightly more concerned than men about the issues of price and purchasing power development, the healthcare system, as well as school and education.

Only in the areas of economy and politics, and government and justice, is the proportion of men expressing concerns slightly higher than that of women.

When differentiated according to country-specific income categories, respondents with lower incomes noticeably mention more often than average only unemployment as an urgent task to be solved and less often than average the environmental and climate protection, the general economic situation or immigration and integration.

Issues relating to crime and security as well as environmental and climate protection are mentioned slightly more frequently by respondents with higher incomes.

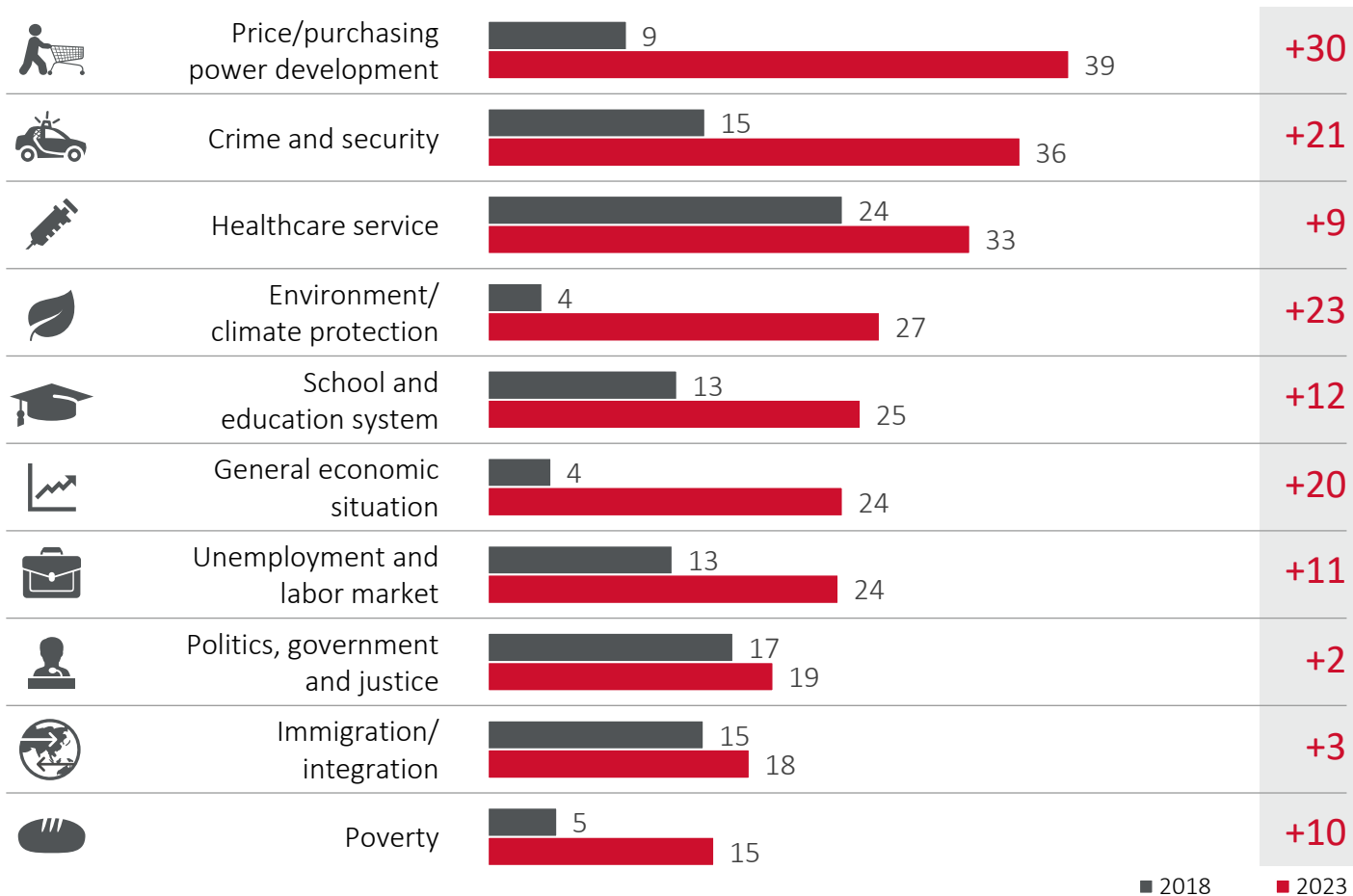
In contrast, middle-income earners are slightly more concerned about price and purchasing power development.

The biggest differences, however, can be seen in the age group segmentation. The perception of problems is therefore also a generational issue. While the generations largely agree that price and purchasing power development, crime and security as well as the general economic situation are tasks that urgently need to be solved, there are major differences in the immigration/integration category: Here, 60- to 69-year-olds express the greatest need for action, whereas they see the least need for action in the areas of education, unemployment and the labor market.

When it comes to environmental and climate protection, the generations have roughly the same perception of the problem. Therefore, this is by no means an issue solely for young people.

2

Most citizens across all countries see a need for action on price and purchasing power development in 2023. Unemployment, the most frequently mentioned issue in 2018, falls to 7th place in the ranking.

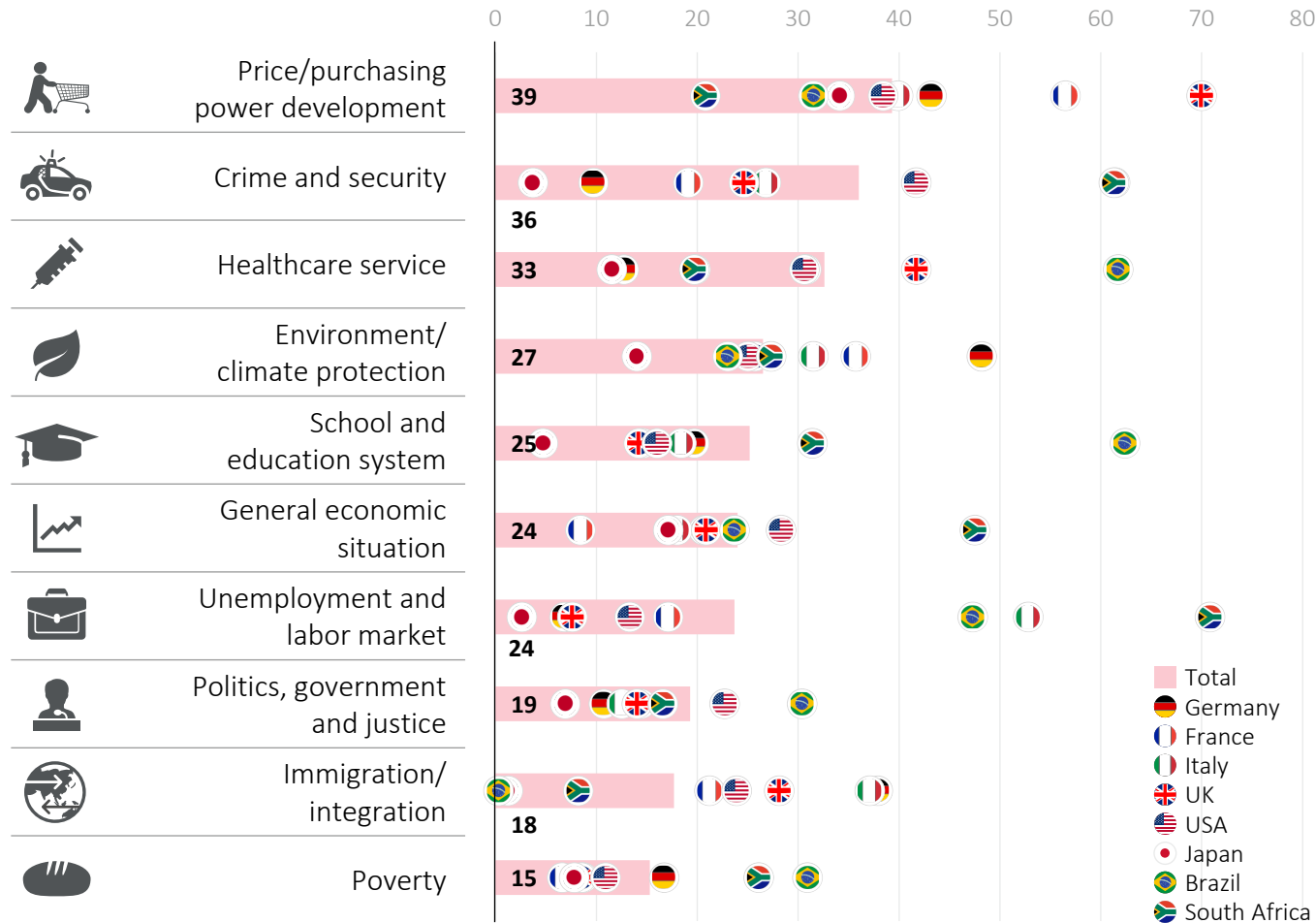


- > In 2023, **39 percent** of respondents cite aspects relating to price and purchasing power development as urgent tasks to be solved.
- > Positioned behind is the issue crime and security with **36 percent**, closely followed by the healthcare system with **33 percent**.
- > The topic of environmental and climate protection has taken a huge leap forward, being mentioned by **27 percent** and thus gaining 23 percentage points.
- > Overall, almost all of the problems that were named five years ago are also named in 2023 – but much more frequently.
- > Compared to 2018, a higher number of topics have high values.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?" | unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | Country base identical, i.e. all countries except for the eight countries involved were excluded in 2018 | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Different countries, different problems: The perceived need for action on individual tasks varies from country to country, in some cases significantly.

Top ten 2023 – by country



- > The challenges most frequently mentioned on a global average are not necessarily those that also top the rankings within the countries. The development of prices and purchasing power, for example, is of greatest concern to citizens in the UK, and least to those in South Africa.
- > Other issues where assessments differ greatly between the countries are unemployment and the labor market, crime and security as well as school and education.
- > Germans are more concerned than average about environmental and climate protection as well as about immigration/integration.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

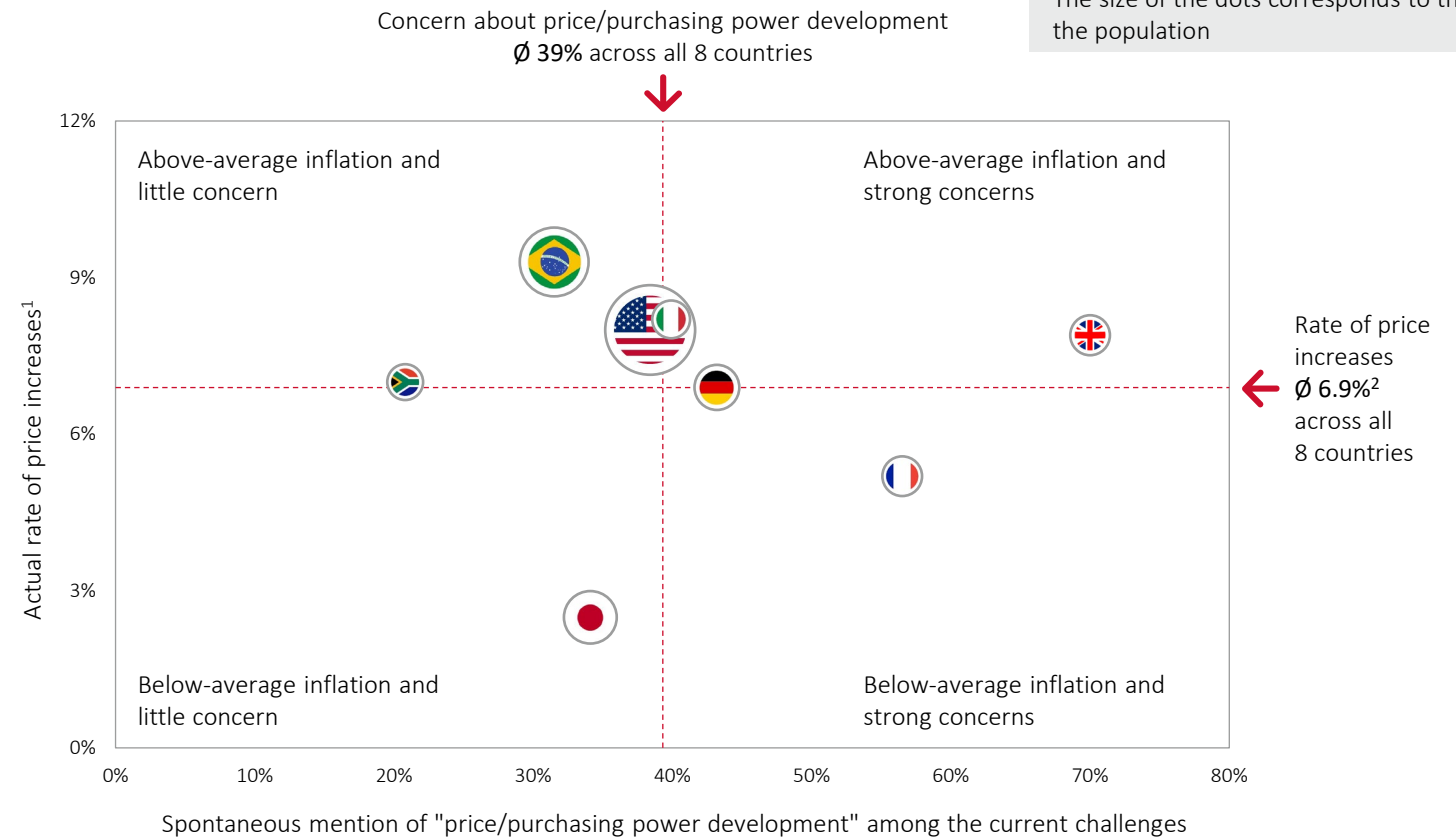
The view that certain tasks need to be solved urgently is not necessarily linked to objective indicators. Take inflation, for example:



- > In international comparison, citizens do not always consider issues in which their country's performance conspicuously lags as a more urgent task to be solved. Take price and purchasing power development, for example:
The inflation rate in Italy in 2022 was higher than in the UK. Nevertheless, many more people in the UK stated that the development of prices and purchasing power is one of the most urgent tasks to be solved.
- > In comparison, the Japanese seem to pragmatically assess the development of their purchasing power: There the lowest inflation rate is met with the least concern.

Comparison of the mentions of Price/purchasing power development with the actual price increase rate¹ in %

The size of the dots corresponds to the size of the population



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Concern about price/purchasing power development: unaided responses; multiple responses possible
¹ Source: OECD (2022, as of June 2023) | ² average = unweighted mean value

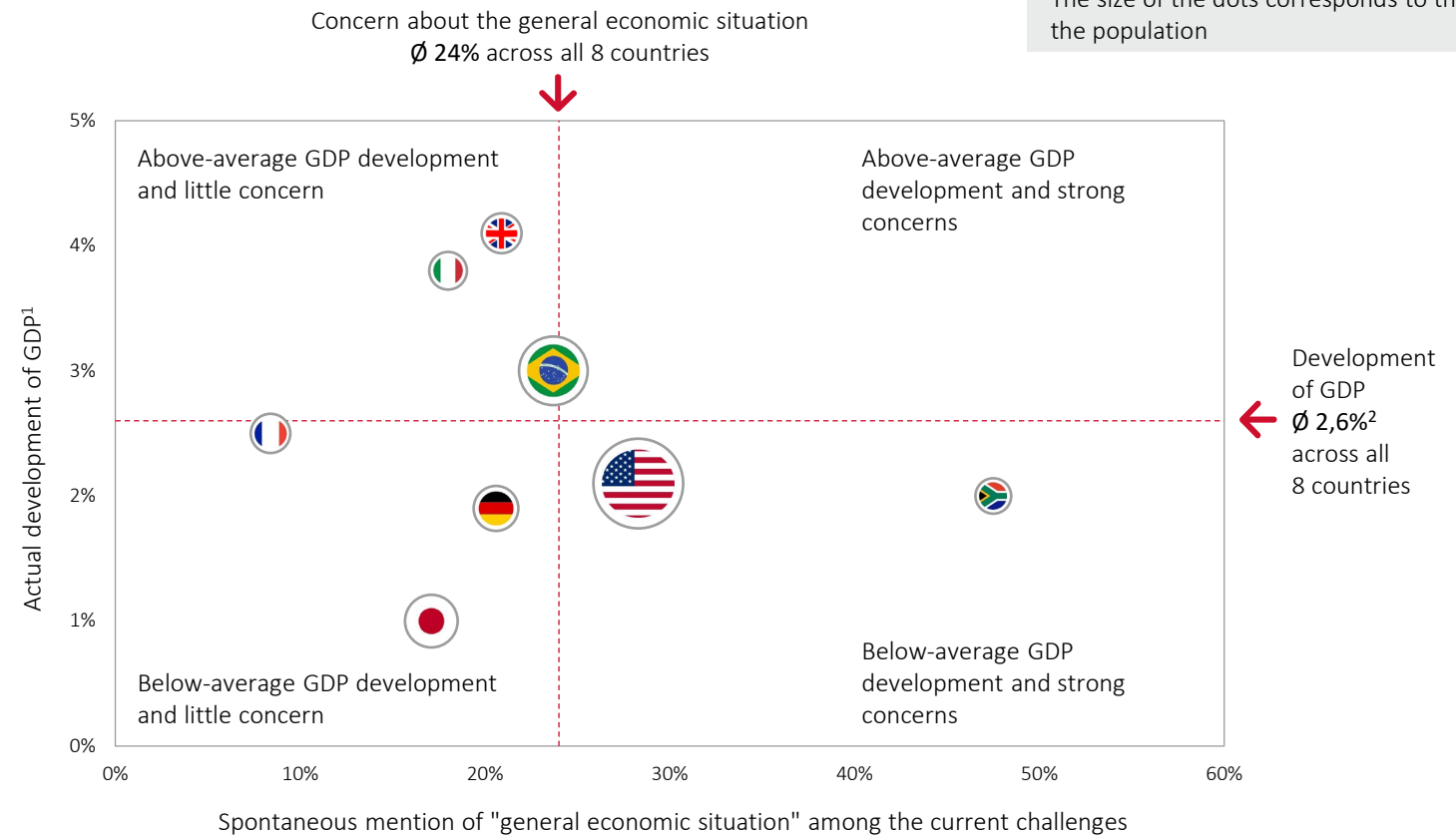
The view that certain tasks need to be solved urgently is not necessarily linked to objective indicators. Take the economic situation, for example:

Comparison of the responses on the general economic situation with the actual development of GDP¹ in %

The size of the dots corresponds to the size of the population



- > Another example of the phenomenon described above is the economic situation.
- > Respondents in Japan and Germany are relatively unconcerned here, which is surprising given the below-average economic growth.
- > There may be various reasons for this phenomenon, such as: other issues which overshadowed the economic situation at the time of the survey, respondents who do not compare the indicators internationally but rather historically with developments in their own country, or respondents who do not (yet) feel any concrete effects from abstract problems such as the economic situation.

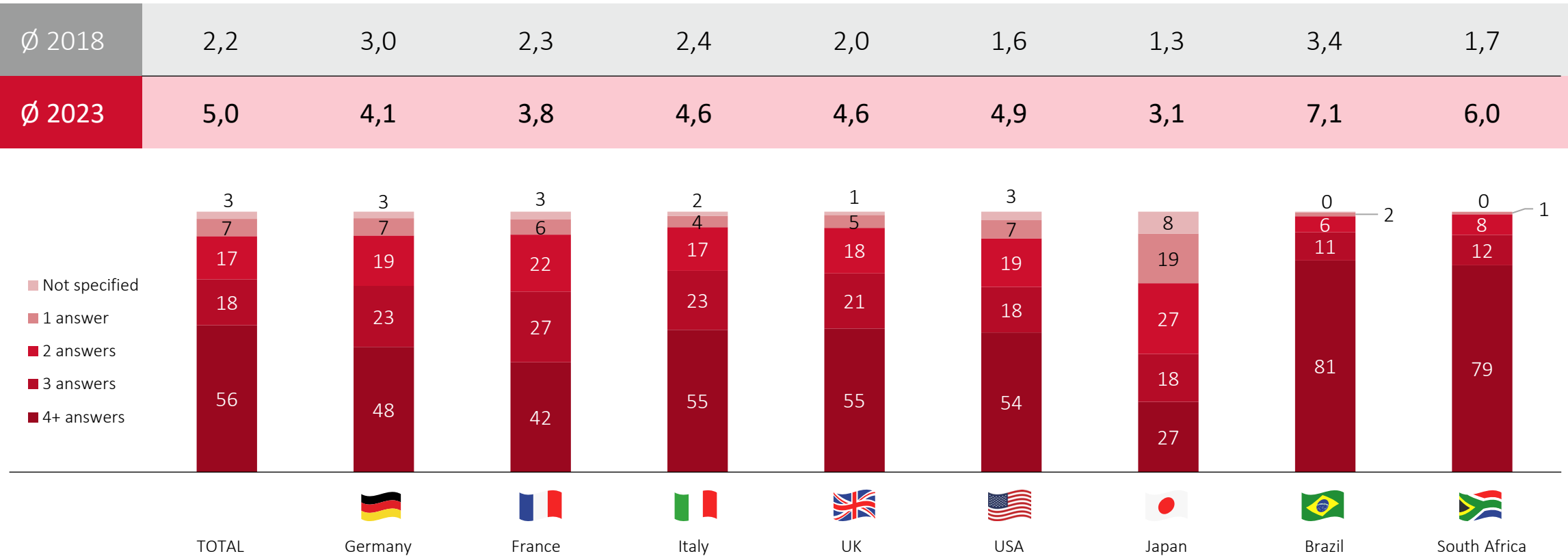


"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Concern about economic stability: unaided responses; multiple responses possible
¹ Source: OECD (Real GDP 2022, as at June 2023) | ² Average = unweighted mean value

The variety of problems has increased compared to the 2018 survey. In Brazil and South Africa, respondents name by far the most tasks that urgently need to be solved.

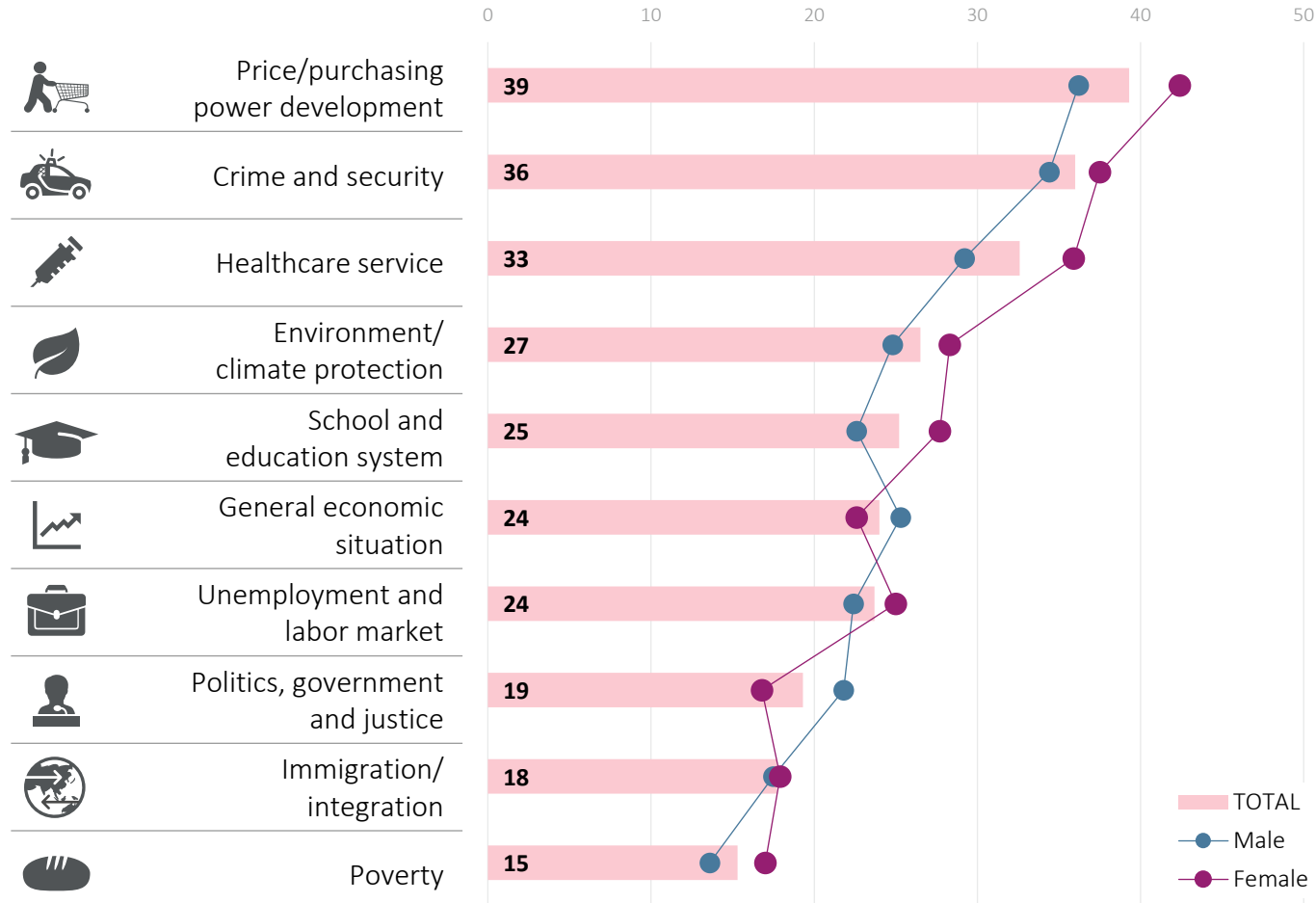
(Average) number of problems mentioned per country and person



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

When it comes to the most urgent tasks currently to be solved, men and women differ only slightly.

Top ten 2023 – by gender

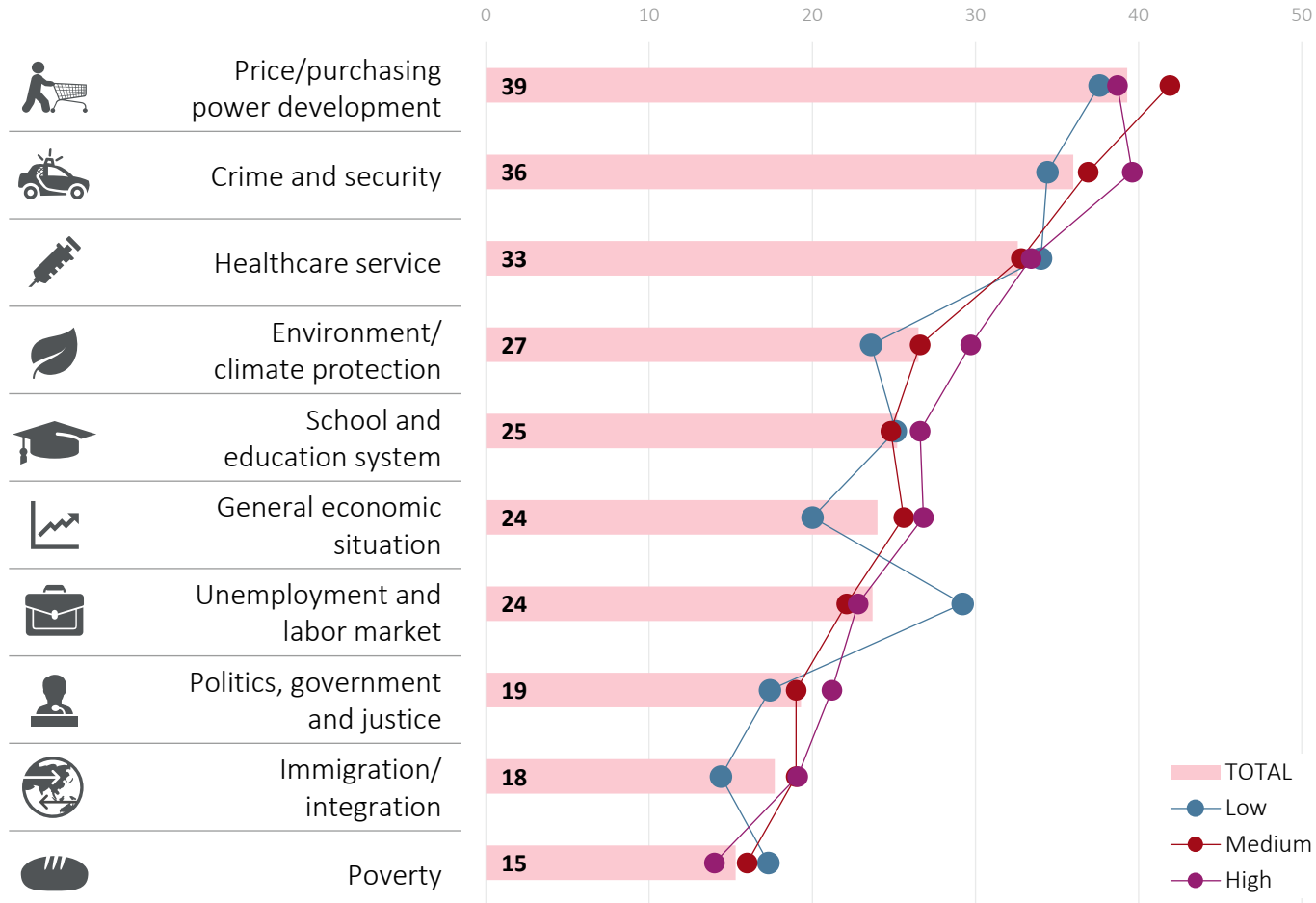


- > Not only between the countries are differences evident, but also to varying degrees between socio-demographic groups.
- > Take gender for example, although the ranking of tasks is quite similar for men and women, slightly more women are concerned than men in the areas of price and purchasing power development, the healthcare service, and school and education system.
- > Only in the areas of business and politics, and government and justice is the proportion of men naming the topics slightly higher than that of women.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

The level of income also appears to have only a small effect on the perception of a society's problems.

Top ten 2023 – by income

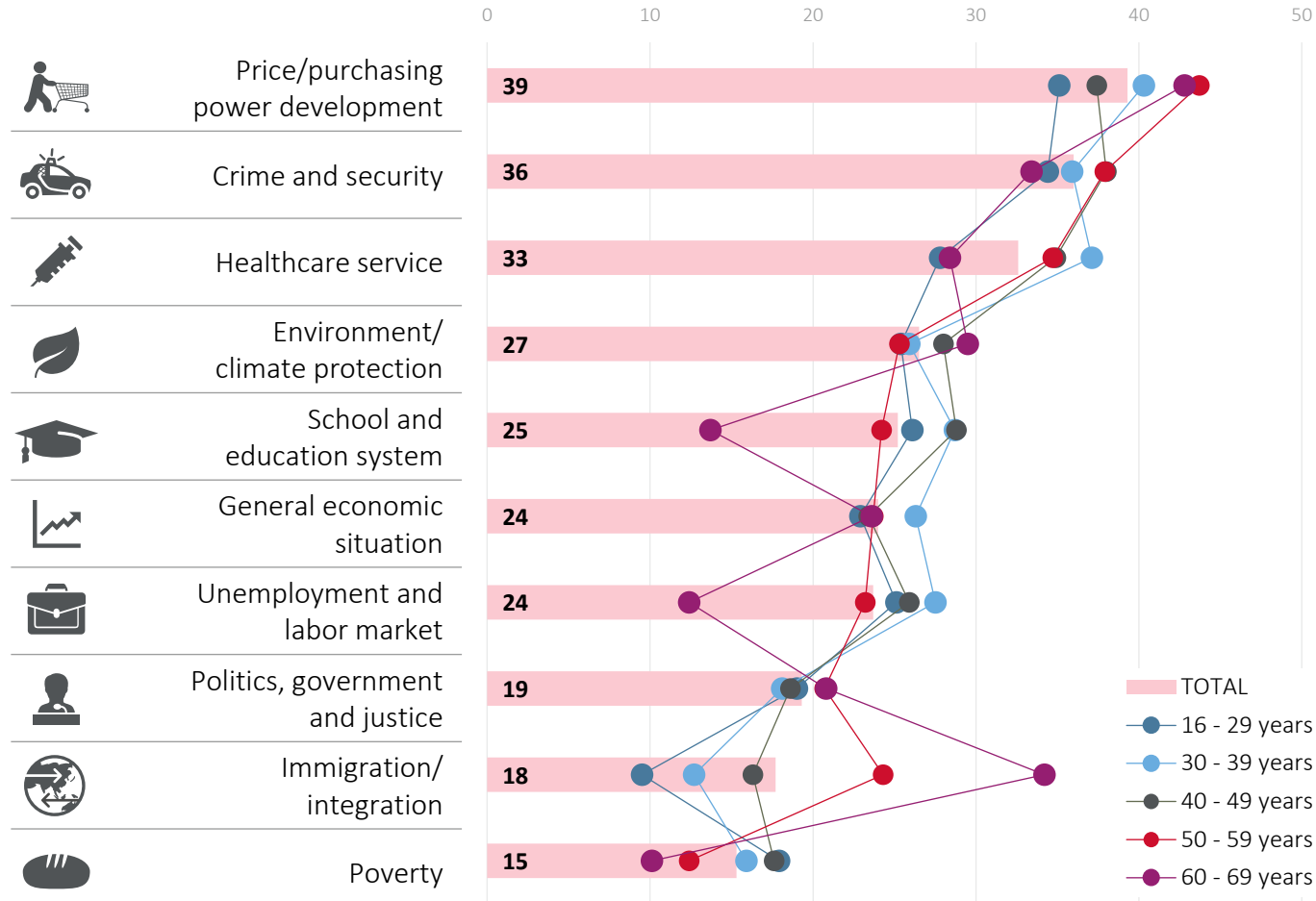


- > Take income as an example. People with lower incomes cite unemployment more frequently than average and they name environmental and climate protection, the economic situation and immigration less frequently than average as urgent issues to be resolved.
- > Issues relating to crime and security as well as environmental and climate protection are mentioned slightly more often by respondents with higher incomes.
- > People with a medium income are slightly more concerned about price and purchasing power development.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

The differences by age group are greater. The generations are particularly divided regarding the issue of immigration/integration.

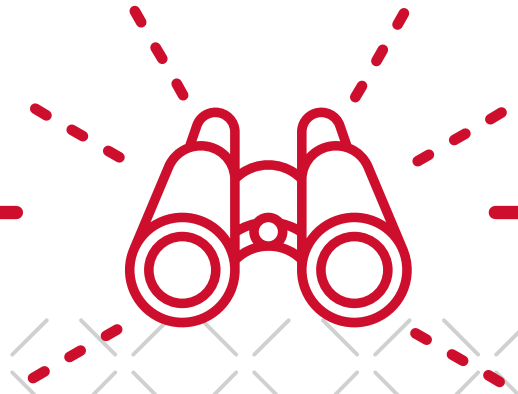
Top ten 2023 – by age



- > Take age¹ as an example. The generations largely share the same perception of price and purchasing power development, crime and security as well as the general economic situation. However, there are major differences in the immigration/integration category. A relatively large number of 60- to 69-year-olds see a need for action, whereas they are less likely to mention issues such as education and the labor market.
- > When it comes to environmental and climate protection generations have roughly the same perception of the problem. So this is by no means an issue solely for young people.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in [country of residence of respondents] today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

¹ Limitation: In Brazil and South Africa, no people aged between 60 and 69 were surveyed. This is likely to have an effect on the results.



3

The future challenges at a glance

Challenges in the future: Summary

- > In addition to the question regarding the most urgent tasks that need to be resolved today, the NIM also asked about the tasks that will need to be solved in the future. Respondents provided fewer responses to this question compared to the current tasks that need to be addressed. This may be attributed to the greater difficulty associated with forecasting compared to identifying present shortcomings
- > A look at the figures reveals a slight shift in priorities. Relatively, the majority of respondents in all eight countries indicate that environmental and climate protection will be an important task to be solved in the future. When asked about the current challenges, this topic area was mentioned fourth most frequently. Awareness of the problem of environmental and climate protection continues to grow. What can be learned for this problem area? One the one hand, respondents might expect the problem to persist, and they might believe that it urgently needs to be addressed. On the other hand, the discrepancy in the ranking (4th place in tasks that need to be solved now, 1st place in tasks that need to be solved in the future) could indicate that the issue has lower priority when compared to problems which need to be solved in the short term.



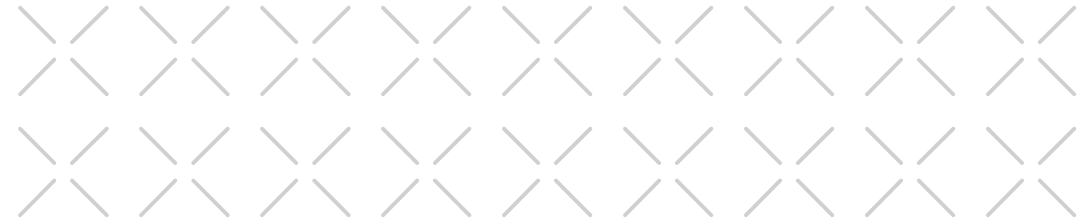


- › In general, it is striking that the respondents do not particularly expect any new problems in the future, and there are only gradual shifts in the ranking of the topics. Environmental and climate protection is mentioned most frequently and made a significant jump in the ranking, whereas price and purchasing power development fell three ranks to 4th place.
- › Differences in the forecast of problems can be identified at the individual country level. For example, the topic of environmental and climate protection is mentioned most frequently in France and least frequently in Japan. In the emerging countries, as is the case in current problems, the issues of unemployment and the labor market, crime and security, as well as school and the education system top the ranking of concerns.
- › Regarding the variety of problems, there seems to be a correlation between current and future problems. Japan, for example, is the country with the lowest total number of problems to be solved, with 3.1 mentions for current problems and 2.6 mentions for problems in the future. At the other end of the scale are the emerging markets of Brazil and South Africa, which not only currently face the greatest variety of challenges, but also expect a significant variety in the future.

3 Challenges in the future: Summary – Socio-demographic differences



Demographic characteristics such as income and gender play only a minor role in forecasting future challenges:



Compared to men, women tend to be more concerned, the biggest differences are in the areas of the healthcare system and education system.

The topics of the economy and politics, government and justice are mentioned slightly more often by men than by women.

Nevertheless, the ranking of the expected challenges are similar for men and women.

The challenges that urgently need to be addressed in the coming years show minor variations based on income levels. Higher-income individuals tend to mention certain issues more frequently, especially regarding crime and security, and the overall economic situation.

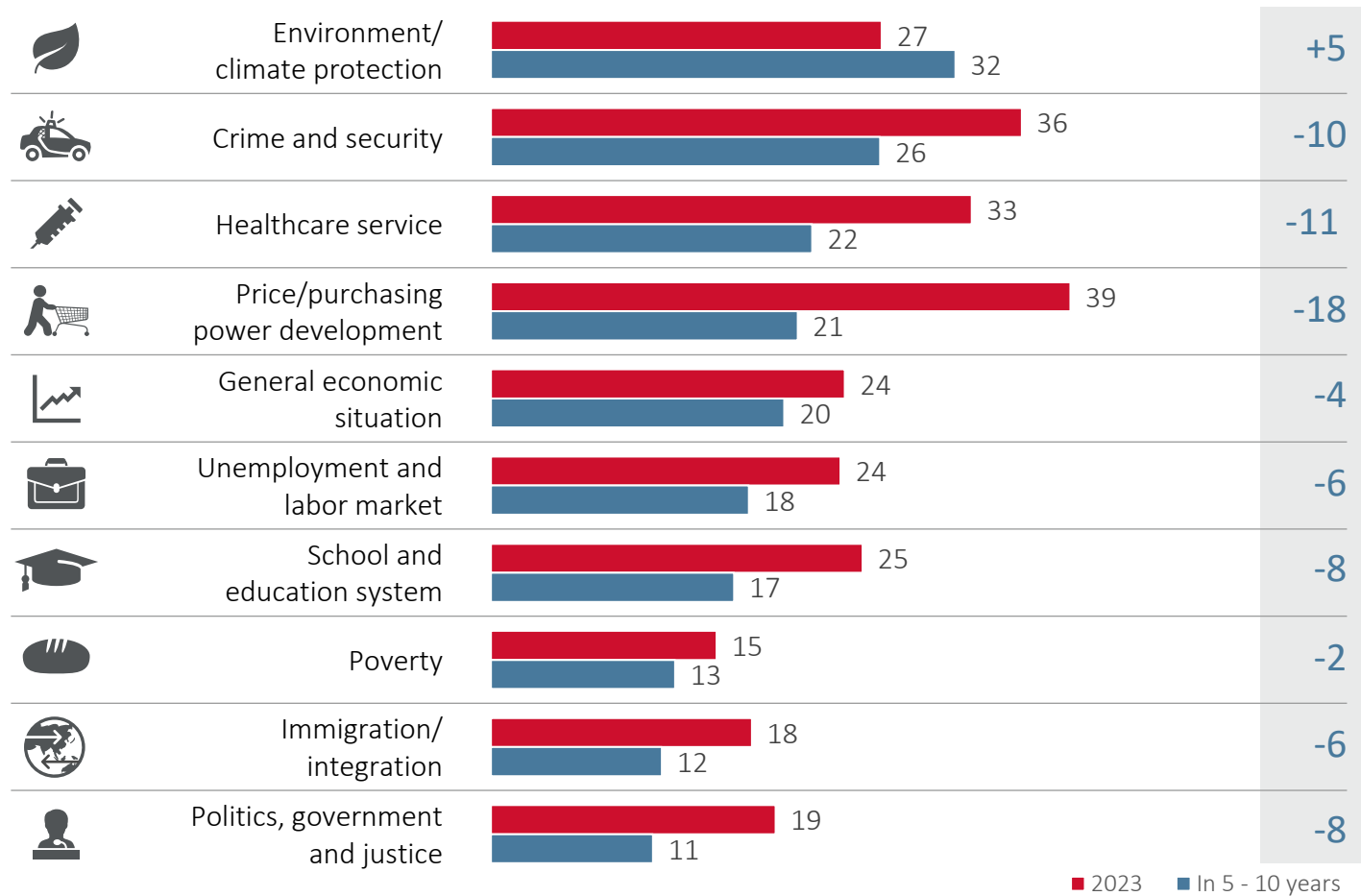
Those with lower incomes are slightly more inclined to foresee challenges related to the labor market and poverty persisting into the future.

Similar to the current tasks to be addressed, significant differences in perspectives emerge based on the respondents' age. Generations generally share a similar view on issues like price and purchasing power, as well as on crime and security.

However, individuals aged 60-69 are more inclined to perceive environmental protection and immigration/integration as urgent future tasks. In contrast, this age group is less likely to view unemployment, education and poverty as critical in the future, aligning with their responses to present urgent tasks.

Notably, both 60- to 69-year-olds and 16-29-year-olds seem to consider the healthcare system less problematic in the future.

Most respondents assume that environmental and climate protection will be an urgent task in the future.

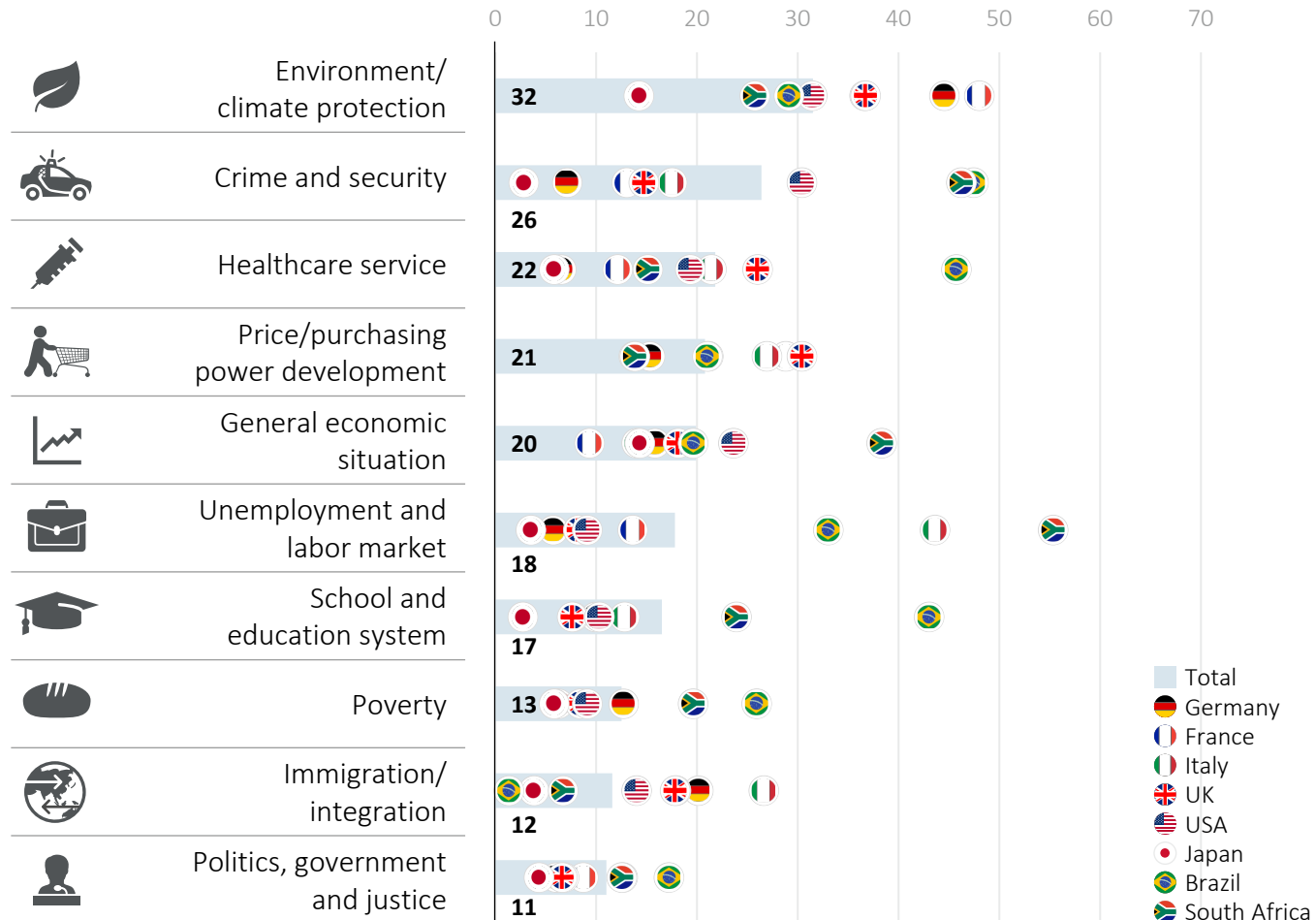


- > The relative majority of respondents consider that environmental and climate protection will be an urgent task of the future. Contrary to the rankings of current tasks, this topic takes the lead from price and purchasing power development. This indicates that there is hope among respondents that inflation will slow.
- > The data implies that no clear conclusions can be drawn with regards to future challenges. The only topic in which respondents are more or less certain is that environmental and climate protection will remain a problem.

"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Brazil and South Africa are ahead in many areas, while the Japanese seem to have fewer problems.

Top ten in future – by country



- > There are differences among the countries with regards to the prediction of problems. For example, the topic of environmental and climate protection is mentioned most frequently in France, and least frequently in Japan. In the emerging countries, the topics of unemployment and the labor market, crime and security as well as school and education are mentioned particularly often, similar to the current problems which were mentioned.
- > Europeans, on the other hand, are more likely to mention the environment and climate, price and purchasing power development, immigration and integration as problems for the future. The USA falls within the mid-range in every category.

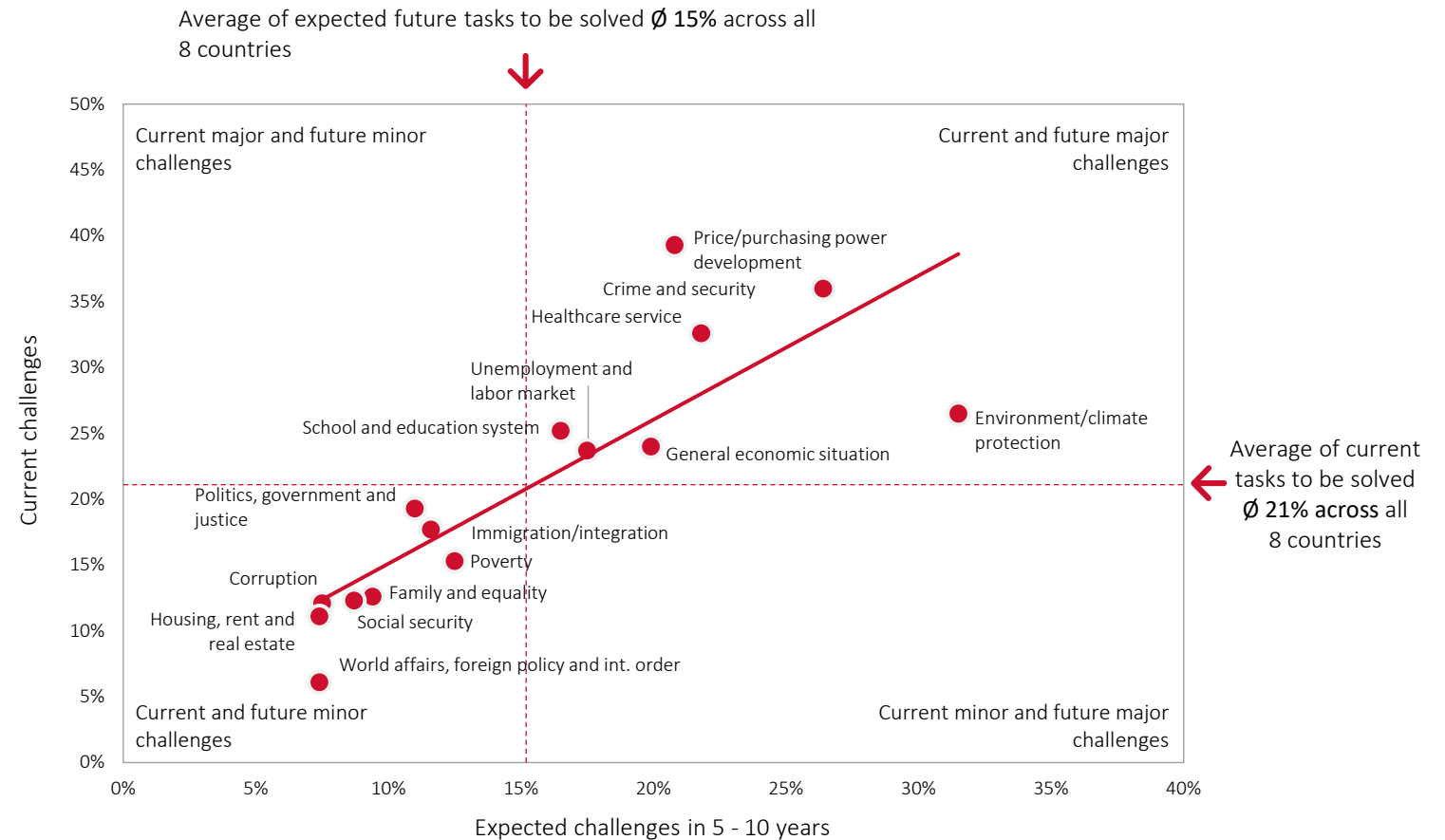
"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Everything stays the same? Problems that are currently perceived as urgent to solve are also expected to be solved in the future – and vice versa.

Comparison of tasks that are expected to be solved in 5 - 10 years with challenges that currently need to be solved, in %



- > The comparison of the current and future challenges to be solved shows that people do not see any previously unknown problems arising. It is surprising that issues that are known to affect people's future – such as demographic change and its impact on social security in industrialized countries – are not perceived as playing a greater role.
- > In fact, only a few tasks lie outside the trend: environmental protection is gaining in importance, price and purchasing power development is losing ground.



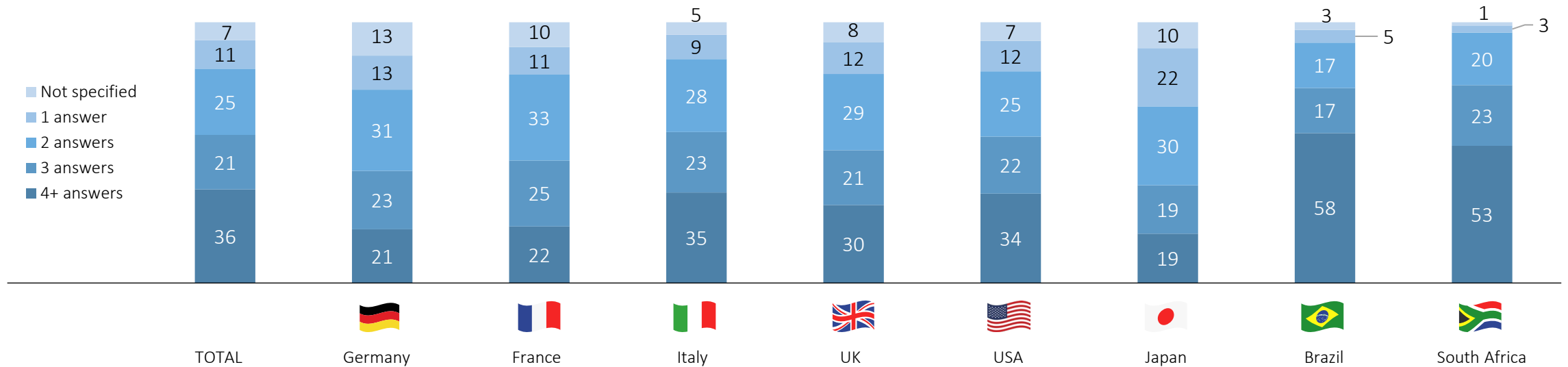
"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

3

For the future, especially people in emerging markets expect that many challenges will (continue to) exist in their country.

(Average) number of problems mentioned per country and person

∅ 2018	2,2	3,0	2,3	2,4	2,0	1,6	1,3	3,4	1,7
∅ 2023	5,0	4,1	3,8	4,6	4,6	4,9	3,1	7,1	6,0
∅ > 2028	3,8	2,9	2,9	3,5	3,4	3,8	2,6	5,2	4,6

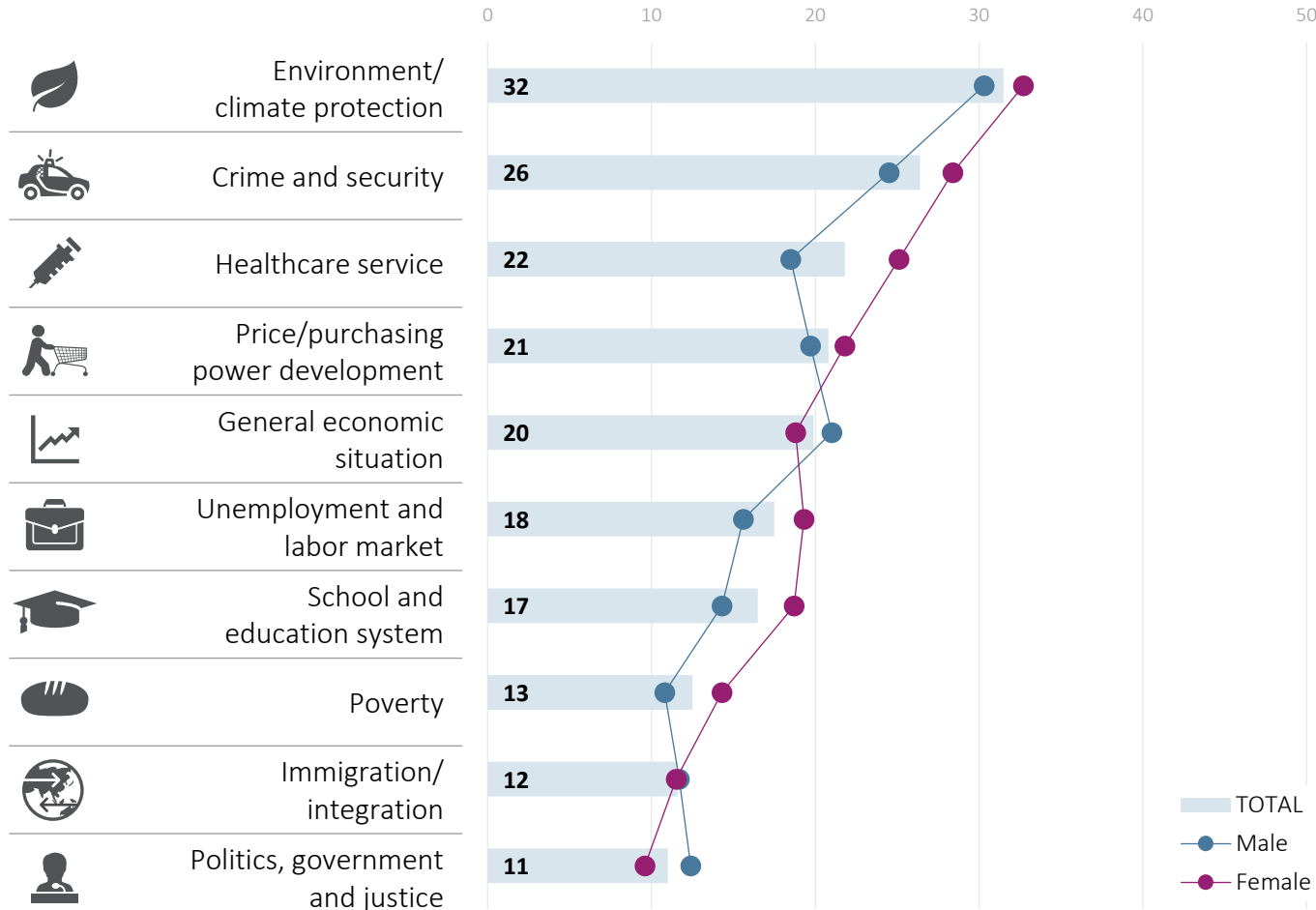


"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %



There are hardly any outliers by gender, but women see more need for action for many issues.

Top ten in the future – by gender



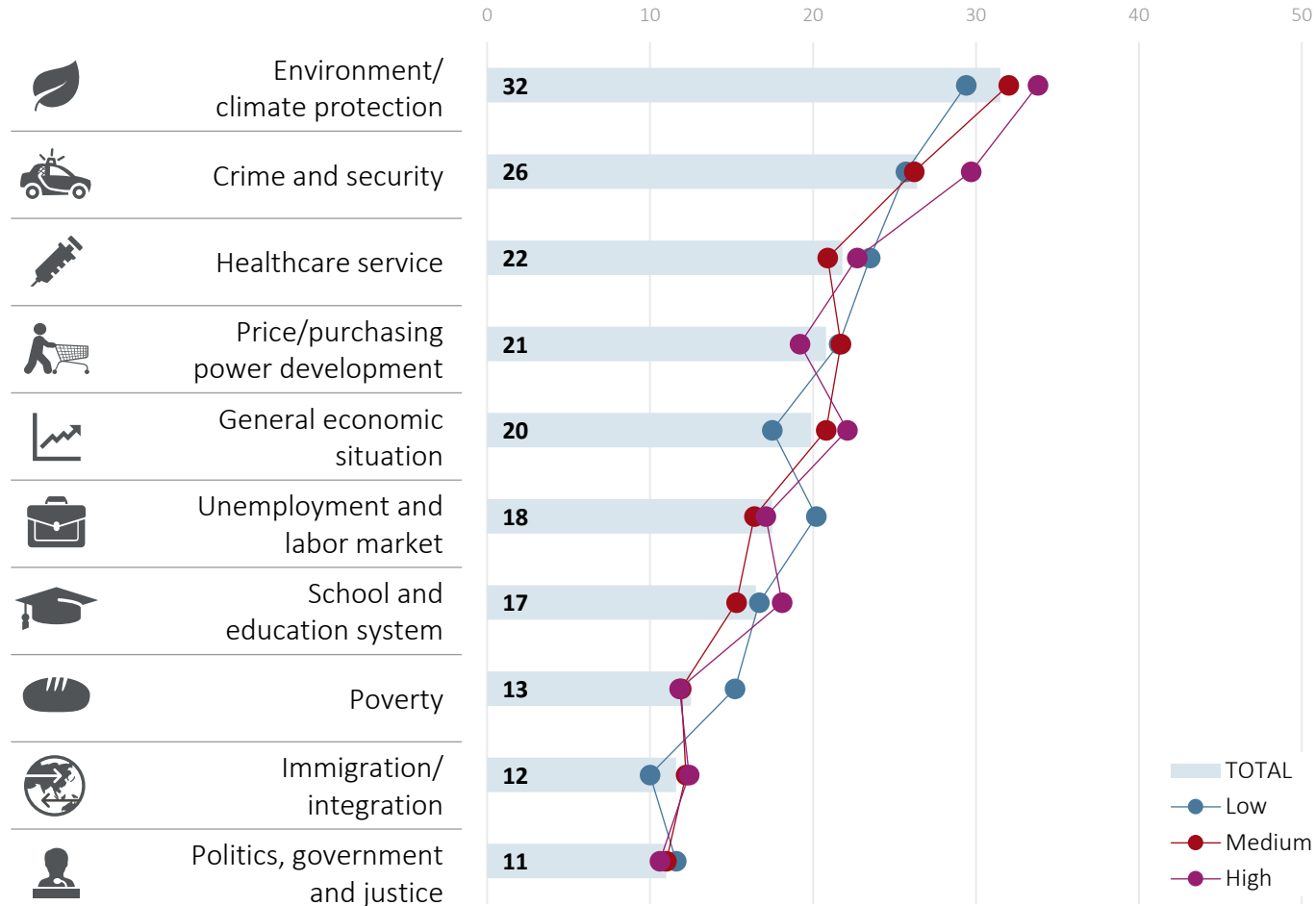
When it comes to future challenges, the observations by gender are similar to those for the most urgent tasks of the present:

- > Women mention more topics than men, with a particularly large difference in the areas of healthcare and education system.
- > In the areas of economy as well as of politics, government and justice, men consider these issues slightly ahead of women.
- > However, overall the ranking of the tasks expected to be urgent in the future is similar for men and women.

"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Respondents' income level has minimal impact on the prediction of future societal issues.

Top ten in the future – by income

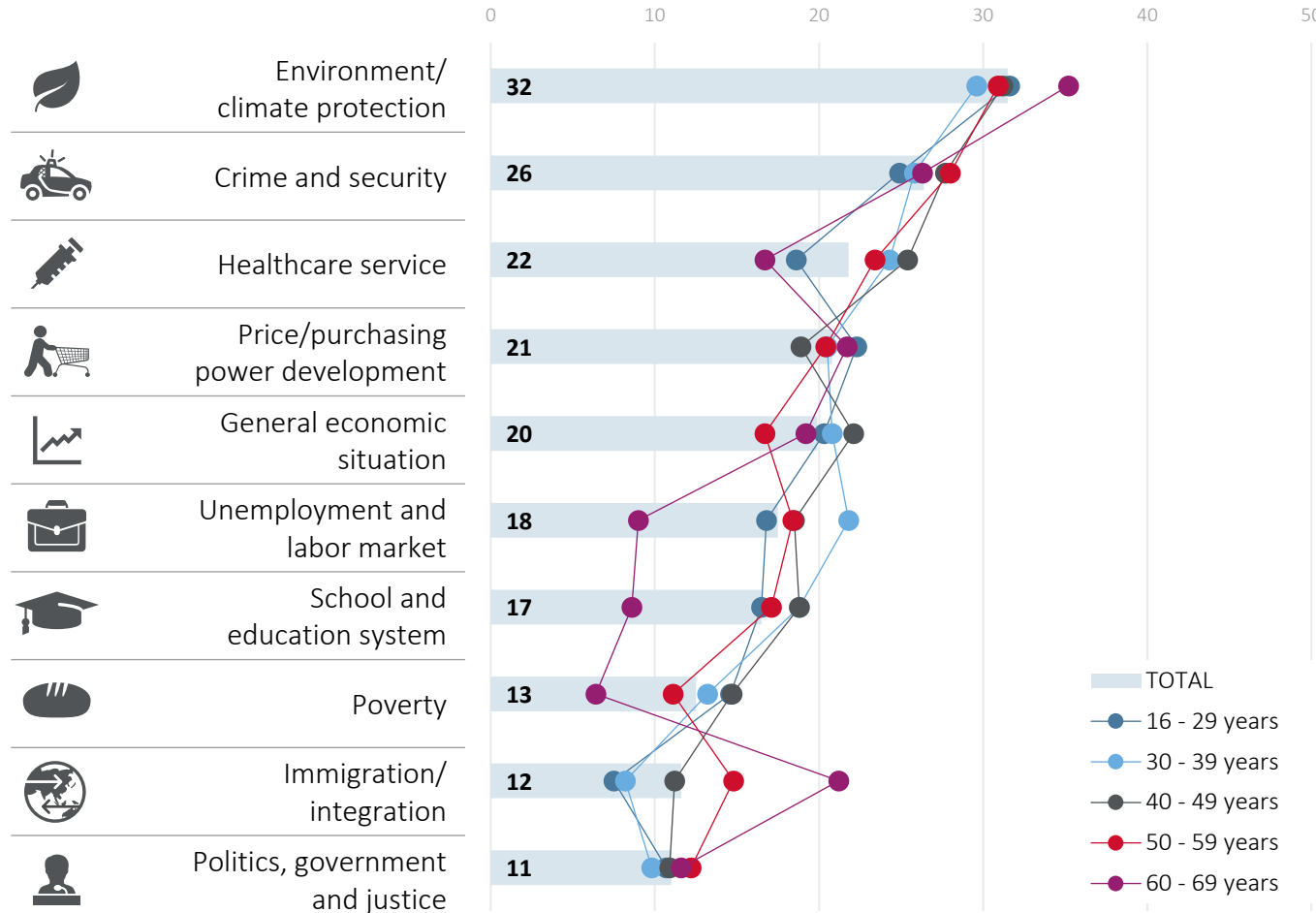


- > People with higher incomes mention some topics slightly more than people with lower incomes. Particularly this can be seen in the areas of crime and security and the general economic situation.
- > However, for people with low incomes, the labor market and poverty will remain relatively pressing issues in the future.

"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Greater differences can again be seen when looking at age groups. Best Agers deviate significantly from the average in many respects.

Top ten in the future – by age



- > The generations¹ have a similar assessment of the development of the problem of prices and purchasing power development as well as of crime and security.
- > The topics of environmental and climate protection and, even more frequently, immigration and integration are more likely to be seen by 60- to 69-year-olds as urgent tasks to be solved in the future. This corresponds to their response behavior for current urgent tasks.
- > Both 60- to 69-year-olds and 16 to 29-year-olds apparently see the healthcare system as less of a problem in the future.

"And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters [country of residence of respondents] will have to solve then?"

Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

¹ Limitation: In Brazil and South Africa, no people aged between 60 and 69 were surveyed. This is likely to have an effect on the results.



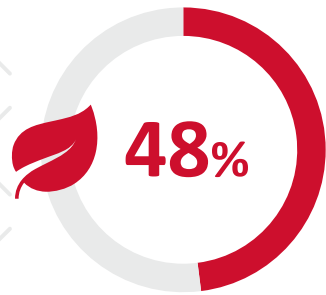
4

Country Deep Dive

4



Germans are very concerned about environmental and climate protection. Almost 50 percent mention this topic, which is well above the global average (27 percent). Germans are also well above the global average when it comes to immigration and integration, in no other country surveyed is this topic mentioned as a problem so often.



When asked about the tasks that currently need to be solved most urgently, most Germans answer **environmental and climate protection**. Almost 50 percent of respondents spontaneously mentioned this topic. This means that awareness has not only increased compared to 2018 – the high level of importance is also expected for the future. With **45 percent** of mentions, the topic is ranked number 1 of the tasks for the future.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Price/purchasing power development



43%

Germans also see the development of prices and purchasing power as a task that urgently needs to be solved. 21 percent describe the general economic situation as a current task to be solved. Both topics are obviously considered to be long-running issues and are also among the top ten tasks to be solved in the future.

Immigration/integration



38%

Concern about immigration and integration is high, however significantly lower than in the 2018 survey. Respondents expect this issue to become less important in the future, with the proportion of people mentioning it in this context falling to 20 percent.

Poverty and Housing, rents and real estate



17%

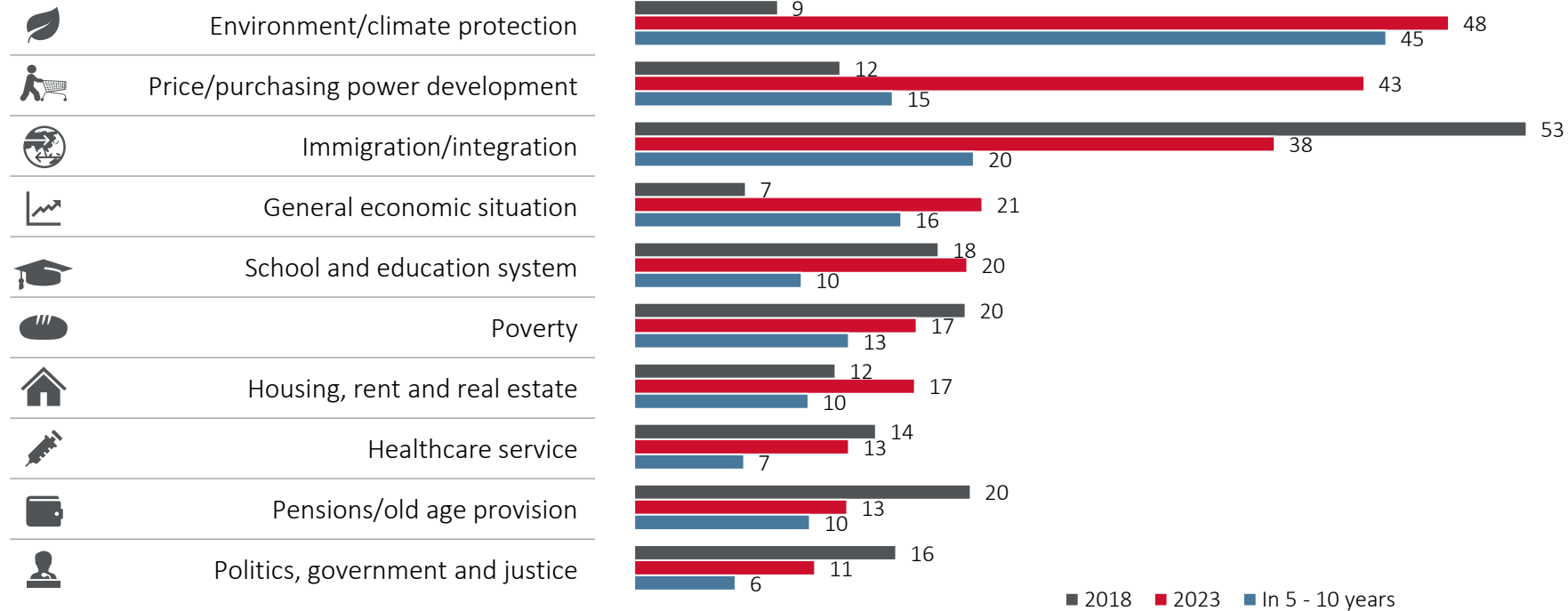
These two topics have established themselves as urgent tasks for Germans – and they are likely to remain. In the ranking, they are even ahead of issues such as the health system and old age provision.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Germany today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,003 | Values in %



The topics which are mentioned much more frequently than in 2018 include: environmental and climate protection (most frequently mentioned) as well as price and purchasing power development. However, the latter is mentioned much less frequently as a problem for the future, therefore it is considered to be a temporary phenomenon. Compared to 2018, the areas of pensions/old age provision and politics, government and justice have receded into the background.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future

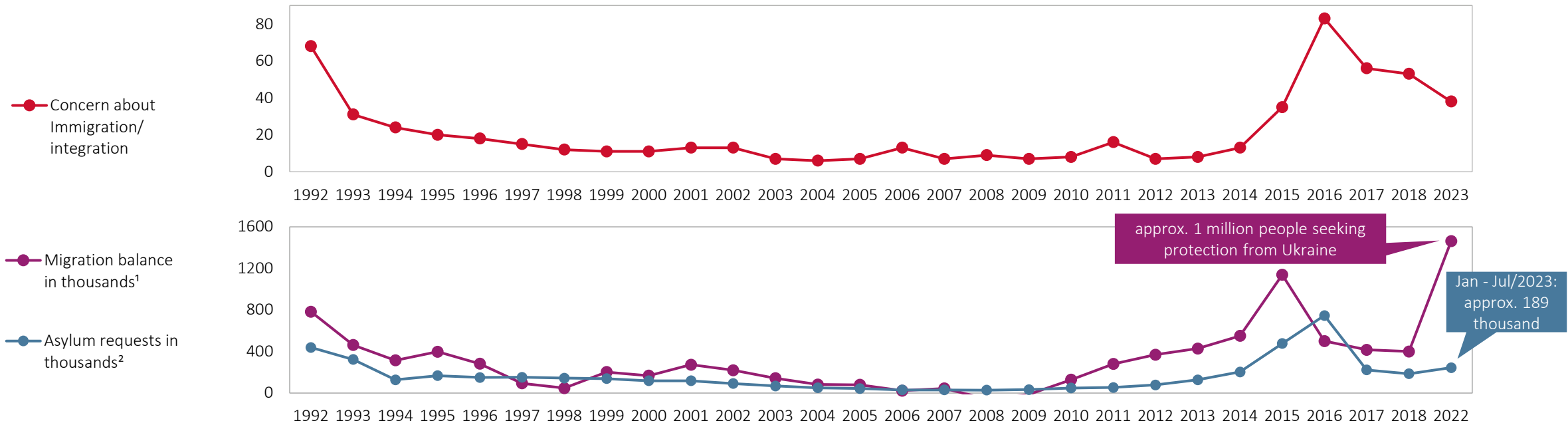


"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Germany today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,003 | Values in %

In previous surveys, there was generally a correlation between the number of immigrants and the frequency with which immigration was mentioned as a challenge. In the 2023 survey, for the first time this correlation is no longer evident.



Immigration/integration: Comparison of concerns and net migration or asylum requests 1992 – 2023



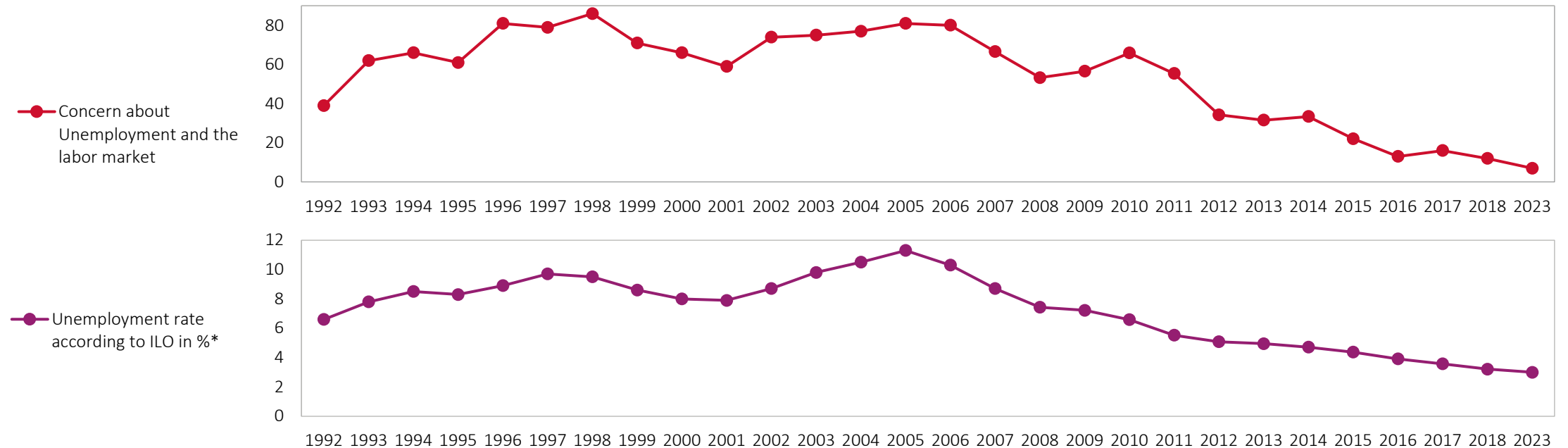
"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Germany today?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible |
 BASE: all respondents n = 1,003 | Values in %

... % of respondents named immigration/integration as the most urgent task (rounded)
¹ Source: Federal Statistical Office (Germans and foreigners) | ² Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

There appears to be a correlation between the unemployment rate and concerns about unemployment. Consequently, with a low unemployment rate, the number of corresponding mentions is currently also low.



Unemployment and labor market: Comparison of concern and unemployment rate 1992 – 2023



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Germany today?"

Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible |

BASE: all respondents n = 1,003 | Values in %

... % of respondents named Unemployment and labor market as the most urgent task (rounded)

¹ Source: OECD value for 2023: Q1/2023; as of August 2023

4

Looking back, concerns about the development of prices and purchasing power have returned to the level of 2008, when financial crisis and bank failures dominated the headlines.



unaided responses	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2023	
Environment/climate protection	23	13	6	5	4	6	11	5	4	3	3	5	16	12	7	10	14	12	7	10	6	5	7	9	48	
Price/purchasing power development	7	4	5	4	2	5	15	14	10	9	11	11	18	37	13	24	33	26	29	26	16	8	12	12	43	
Immigration/integration	20	18	15	12	11	11	13	13	7	6	7	13	7	9	7	8	16	7	8	13	35	83	56	53	38	
General economic situation	7	7	7	5	4	4	4	11	16	16	12	8	6	7	36	26	14	24	16	10	15	6	5	7	21	
School and education system	1	1	1	3	3	3	4	5	4	6	7	9	10	17	14	14	23	12	16	12	15	9	12	18	20	
Poverty	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	10	6	5	6	12	13	14	15	10	17	20	17	
Housing, rent and real estate	8	6	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	5	4	6	8	12	17	
Healthcare service	2	3	4	6	2	6	5	5	15	14	7	15	13	12	10	21	19	11	7	10	9	6	5	14	13	
Pensions/old age provision	10	17	15	14	10	17	15	12	18	20	12	18	18	23	9	19	17	13	14	24	16	8	14	20	13	
Politics, government and justice	1	2	3	3	2	4	3	6	7	8	8	6	7	9	10	10	12	13	7	7	6	10	9	16	11	
Securing peace	4	2	1	0	5	1	1	2	6	2	1	1	2	2	2	5	6	3	3	5	11	3	5	2	11	
Social security	8	9	8	9	7	7	7	8	12	13	7	10	8	13	13	17	25	11	12	11	9	8	11	10	10	
Crime and security	19	13	9	19	9	10	10	17	10	7	6	6	10	13	8	15	17	7	8	11	10	10	16	11	10	
Working conditions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5	3	9
Transportation and infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	2	3	3	5	4	5	6	8	
Base	2455	2427	2521	2486	2492	2451	2452	2022	1959	1979	1955	1974	1971	2010	2072	2063	2076	2087	2042	2018	1960	2104	2018	2139	1003	

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Germany today?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | Values in %

4



The French are currently most concerned about the development of prices and purchasing power. The areas of environmental and climate protection, pensions/old age provision and immigration/integration are also mentioned as problems with above-average frequency in France. In an international comparison, people here are more satisfied with security, the healthcare system and the economy.



The biggest concern in France at the moment is clearly the **development of prices and purchasing power**. This concern was already high in 2018 but was overshadowed by concerns about the labor market situation, which is now mentioned less frequently. Fewer respondents expect purchasing power to be an urgent issue in the future.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

**Environment/
climate protection**



36%

Slightly more than a third of French people spontaneously mention environmental protection as an urgent task (2nd place) – an increase of 28 percentage points. For the future, respondents expect the topic to become even more important (48 percent, rank 1).

**Pensions/
old age provision**



35%

In 2023, concerns about pensions/old age provision ranked almost on par with environmental and climate protection. However, many French people expect the problem to be less significant in the future (13 percent, rank 5).

**Immigration/
integration**



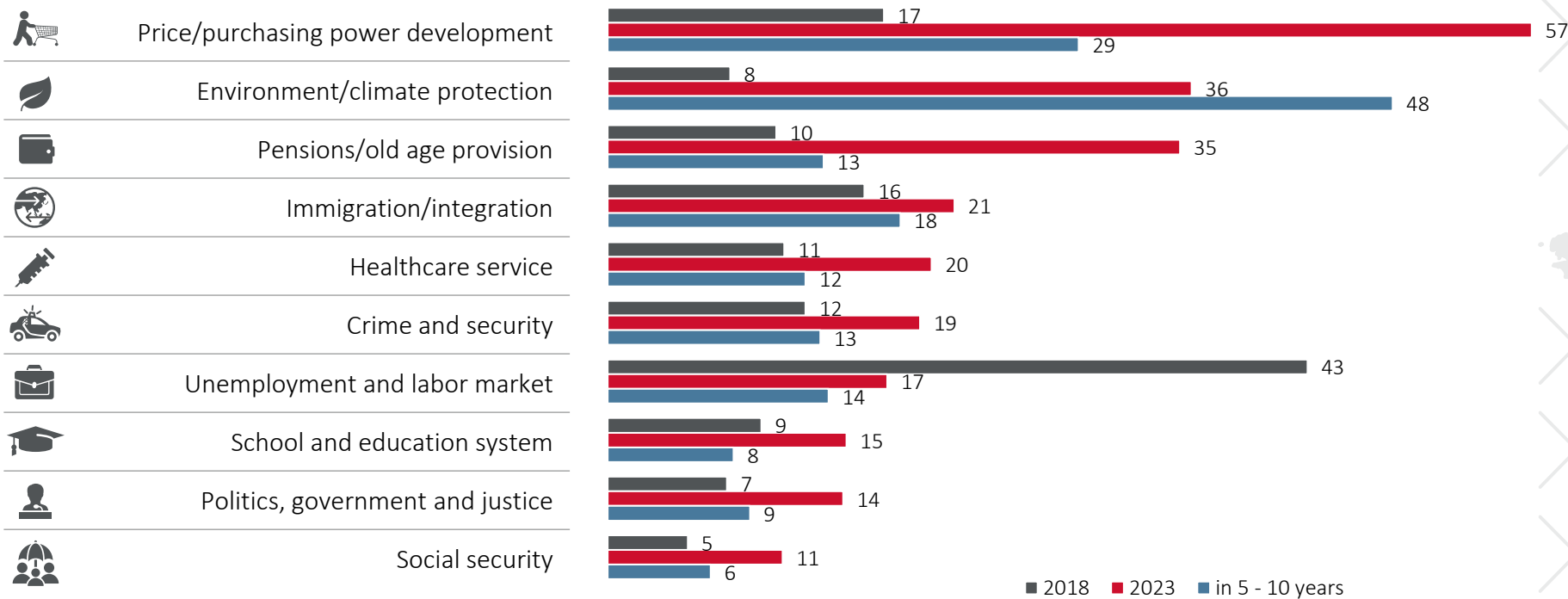
21%

Immigration/integration is an issue in 4th place on the current list of concerns, which many French people also consider to be highly relevant for the future (18 percent, rank 3). This topic was already mentioned as a problem by 16 percent of respondents in 2018.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in France today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %

Compared to 2018, significantly fewer French people indicate unemployment as an urgent problem to be solved. The problem is also not expected to return on a significant scale. The opposite is true for environmental and climate protection. The issues of price/purchasing power development and pensions/old age provision are seen as temporary problems.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in France today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %

4



At the top of the Italian list of concerns remains the issue of unemployment and the labor market. Immigration/integration is also mentioned as a problem more frequently than the international average. A distinctive characteristic of Italian respondents is the prevalent dissatisfaction with taxes and the tax burden.



In Italy, as in the past, **unemployment and the labor market** is in first place. This topic is also expected to top the list in the future (**41 percent**), however with a smaller gap to second place.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Price/purchasing power development



40%

Given the noticeable rate of price increases in Italy, it is hardly surprising that many people in the country are currently worried about inflation. 27 percent of Italians see price and purchasing power development as a problem to be solved in the future (3rd place).

Immigration/integration



37%

Immigration was already the second most frequently mentioned urgent problem to be solved in 2018. Now, with an increase in mentions, it ranks third on the list of concerns. For the future, Italians are skeptical that integration will succeed or disappear as a task.

Environment/climate protection



32%

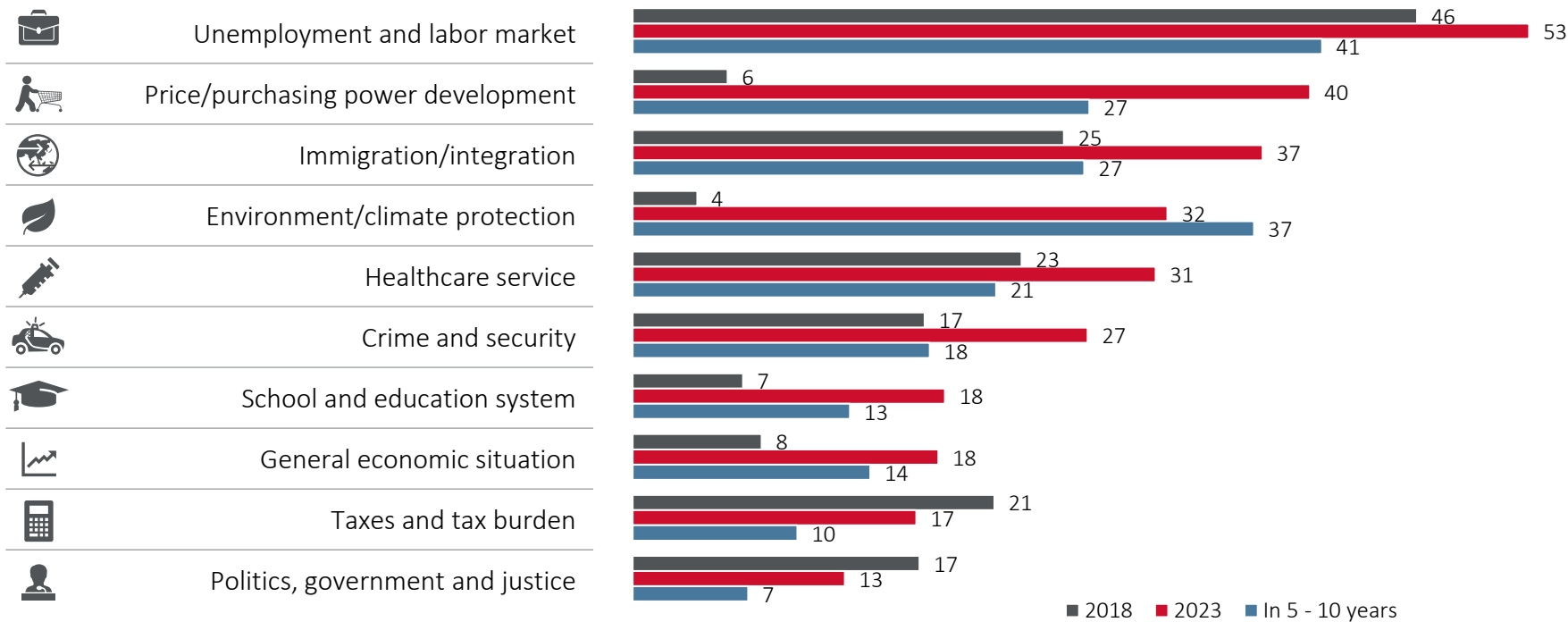
Similar to price development, the topic of environmental and climate protection has gained public attention. There was practically no mention of this in 2018, however in 2023, the figure rose to 32 percent and many Italians expect that environmental and climate protection will remain an urgent task in the future (37 percent, rank 2).

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Italy today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %



Mentions increased the most in the areas of price and purchasing power development (+ 34 percentage points) and environmental and climate protection (+ 28 percentage points). In particular, Italians expect that the latter will remain a problem to be solved in the future.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future

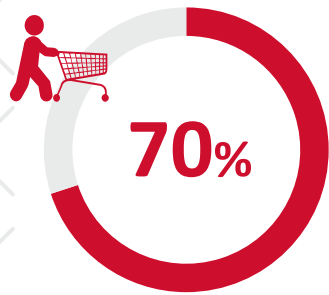


"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Italy today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %

4



In the UK in 2023, price and purchasing power development dominates the list of concerns by far. In an international comparison, there is also above-average dissatisfaction in the UK when it comes to the issues of the healthcare system, immigration/integration and housing, rent and real estate.



In the UK, the **development of prices and purchasing power** is by far the most frequently mentioned challenge. 70 percent of respondents spontaneously mentioned this topic in the survey. Only **30 percent** of Britons see inflation as an urgent problem in the future, but that is still 2nd place.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Healthcare service



42%

The healthcare system was already a problem area in the eyes of many Britons in 2018. In 2023, it is also high on the list of the most frequently mentioned problems. The future offers the British little cause for optimism, with 26 percent expecting the healthcare system to remain a problem in the future.

Immigration/ integration



28%

In the 2018 survey, immigration/integration was rarely mentioned as a problem. This has changed significantly in 2023 and is now ranked third among the challenges. The outlook for the future: only conditionally optimistic.

Environment/ climate protection



26%

The topic of environmental and climate protection has also become increasingly relevant in the UK and the expectation is that it will remain an urgent task in the coming years.

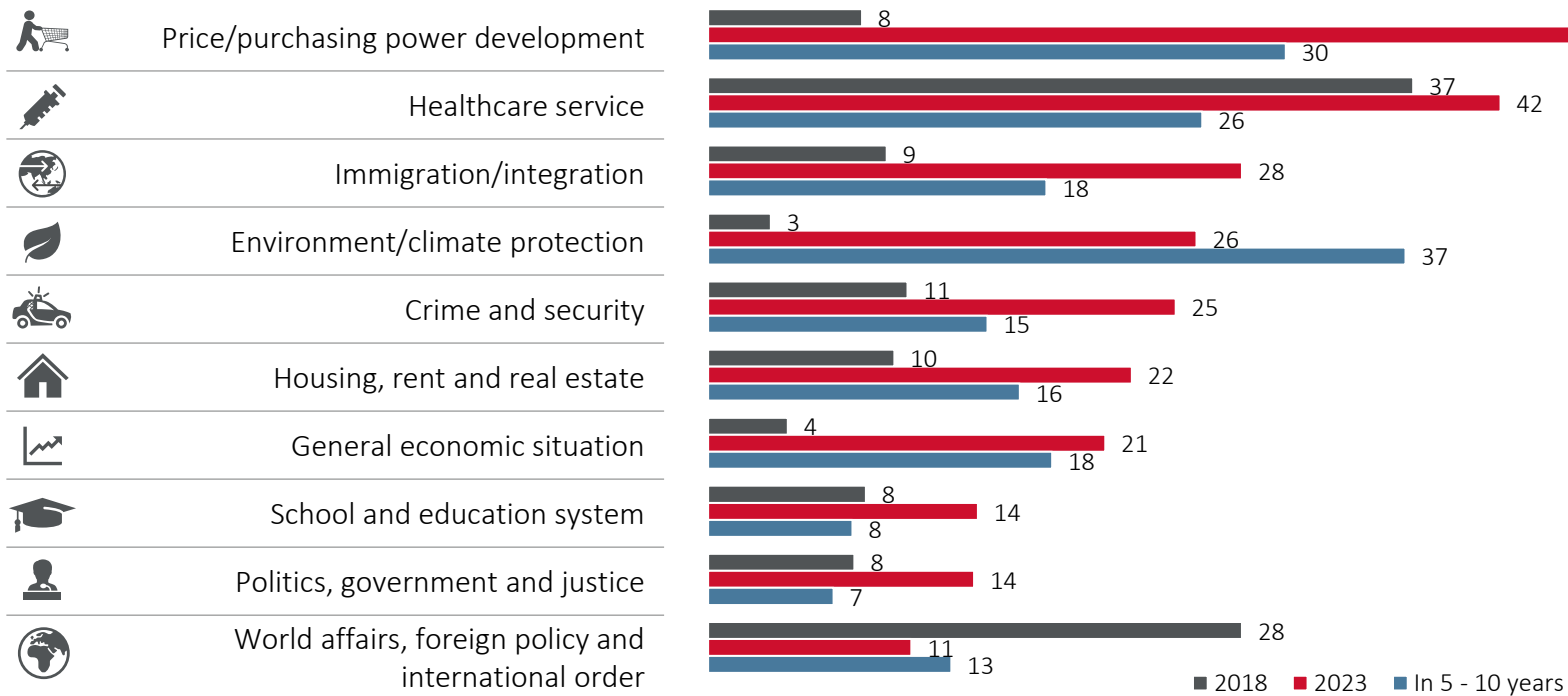
"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the UK today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,002 | Values in %

4



One peculiarity in the UK is that the topic of world affairs, foreign policy and international order is on one of the top-ranking concerns. Does this reflect the imperial past to some extent? In any case, this topic is mentioned much less frequently than in 2018, in contrast to housing, rent and real estate.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future

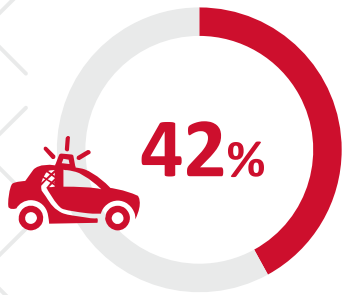


"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the UK today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,002 | Values in %

4



Crime and security is the issue that most Americans currently see as a challenge. In an international comparison, the areas of politics, government and justice, immigration/integration as well as racism are also mentioned as problems with striking frequency.



The main concern in the USA is currently **crime and security**. This includes the demand to limit access to weapons and the problem of gun crime. Both are often seen as urgent issues to be resolved (16 percent resp. 7 percent). In terms of future challenges, the topic shares the top spot with **environmental and climate protection**.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Price/purchasing power development



38%

In the USA, many respondents are also concerned about inflation (2nd place). In terms of the challenges that are expected for the future, the topic is in fourth place with 21 percent.

Healthcare service



31%

(Affordable) medical care and a good healthcare infrastructure are tasks that many Americans continue to see as needing to be solved at present (rank 3). 19 percent of respondents believe that the issue will continue to cause problems in the future (5th place).

Environment/ climate protection



25%

Slightly more Americans mention the economic situation as an urgent task (28 percent, 4th place). However, environmental and climate protection is also currently of great importance to one in four people surveyed. Even more respondents assume that the topic will remain significant in the future (31 percent).

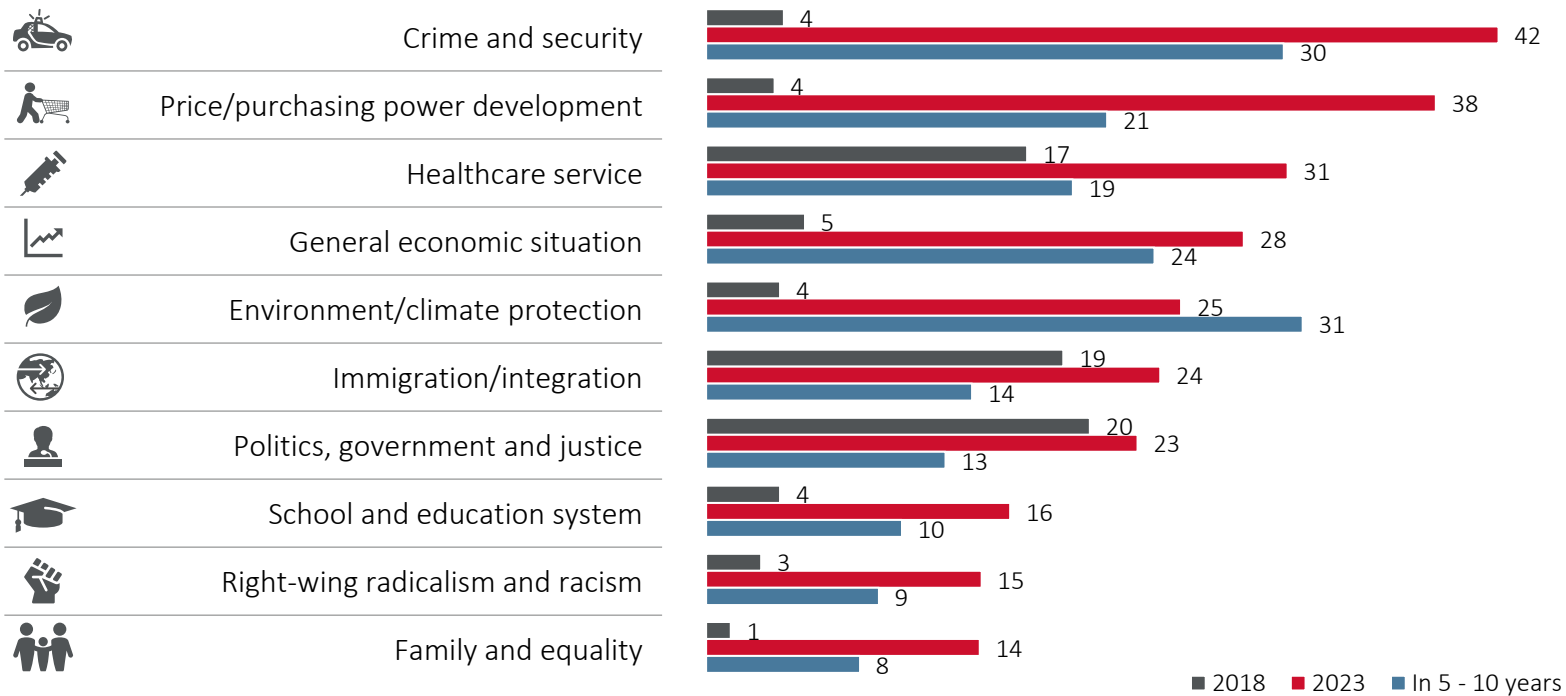
"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the USA today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %

4



The following problem areas are named much more frequently in 2023 by Americans than in 2018: Crime and security, price/purchasing power development, the healthcare system, economic situation, environmental and climate protection, racism, education, family and equality.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future

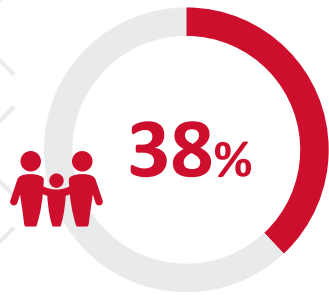


"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the USA today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %

4



Many Japanese people express concerns about family and equality as contributors to demographic change. Otherwise, Japan can be characterized as a country where many issues commonly mentioned on an international scale are not widely perceived as problems. Areas rarely mentioned by Japanese people include crime and security, education, unemployment and immigration/integration.



The issue of **family and equality** is identified as a problem by 38 percent of Japanese people, putting it at the top of the ranking of concerns. Specifically, childlessness is often mentioned here, which in turn contributes to an ageing and declining population. For the future, **family** remains the task that most Japanese people believe needs to be solved urgently.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Price/purchasing power development



34%

The development of prices and purchasing power is also a topic that concerns people in Japan. When asked about current challenges, it is the second most frequently mentioned issue. Significantly fewer people anticipate problems in this area in the future, with only 14 percent mentioning the issue.

General economic situation



17%

Concern about the economic situation has again increased noticeably compared to 2018 (+13 percentage points, 4th place). In the opinion of many respondents, its further improvement will remain an urgent task in the future.

Environment/ climate protection



14%

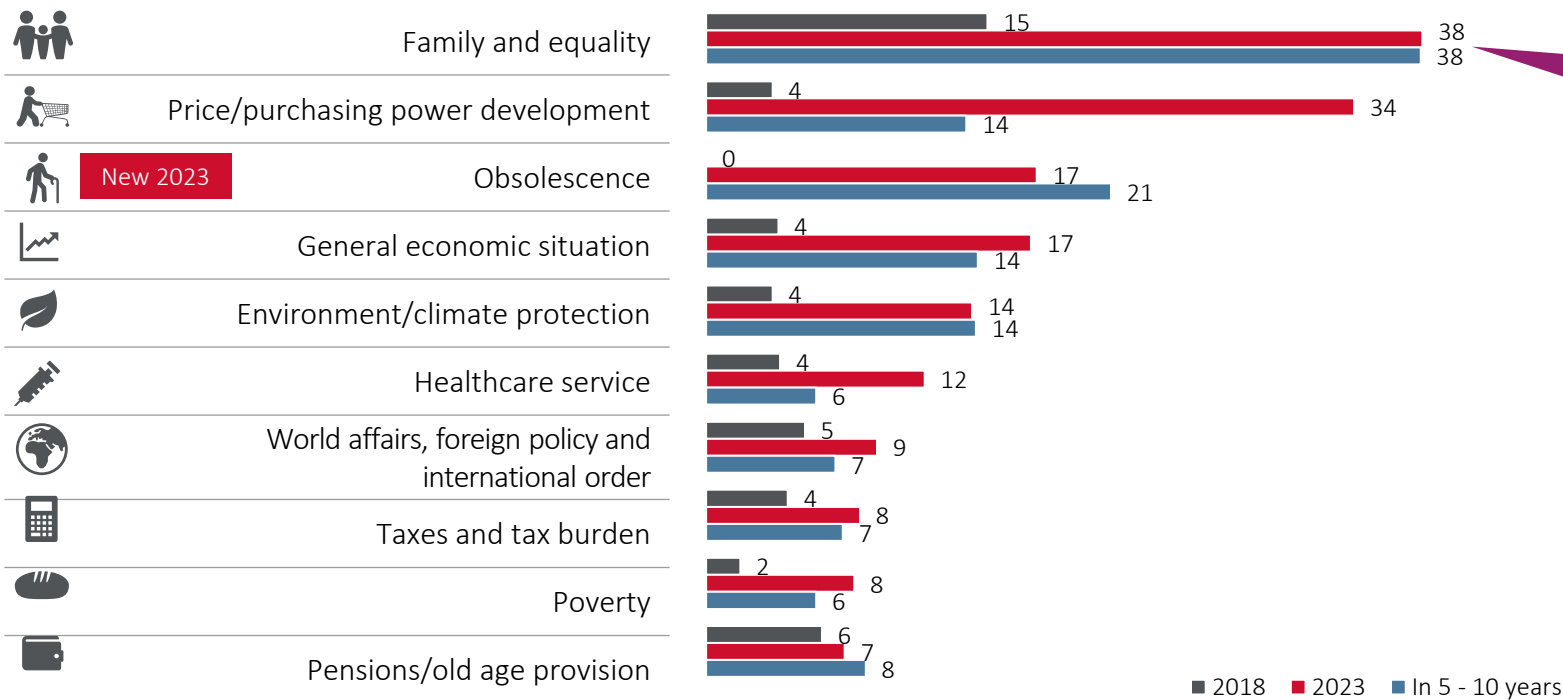
Environmental and climate protection currently ranks in the middle of the list of concerns (5th place). This remains the case when the Japanese are asked about tasks that need to be solved in their country in the future. In percentage terms however, the topic plays a rather subordinate role in Japan compared to other countries, both currently and in the future.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Japan today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %



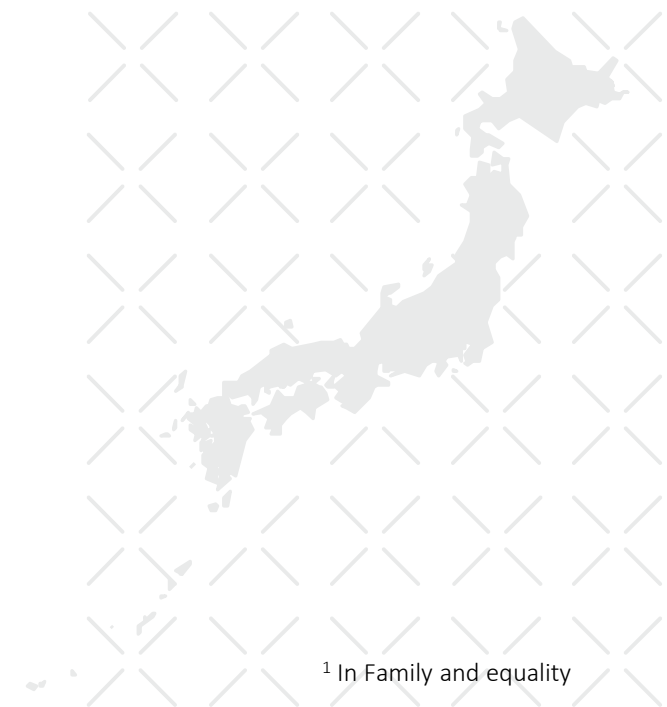
Family and ageing are mentioned as problems much more frequently than five years ago. As can be seen from the expectations for the future, the Japanese assume that these problems will remain in the interim. In contrast, the topic of environmental and climate protection does not play as big a role here as it does elsewhere.

Challenges of yesterday, today and the future



Of which:
 Current 33% Childlessness
 In 5 – 10 years 34% Childlessness

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Japan today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
 Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %

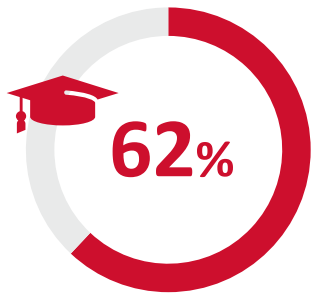


¹ In Family and equality

4



On average, respondents in Brazil and South Africa mentioned many more problem areas than those in industrialized countries. However, the response behavior differs not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of content. One specific feature: The majority of Brazilians see the education system as a task that urgently needs to be solved.



When asked about the most urgent tasks that currently need to be solved, almost two out of three respondents in Brazil named the area of **school and education**. Compared to the 2018 survey, this represents an increase of 23 percentage points. A quick and lasting solution to this problem does not seem to be expected in Brazil. Almost **one in two** believe that education will continue to be an urgent task in the future.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Healthcare service



62%

The healthcare system is viewed more critically in Brazil than in any other country surveyed. Two out of three Brazilians see this as a problem that currently needs to be solved, compared to an international average of just 33 percent. Brazilians expect little improvement in this area in the future.

Crime and security



61%

Brazilians are also at the forefront when it comes to their perception of crime and security as a problem area. None of the societies surveyed for this study described this area as a problem more often. Particularly worrying, 38 percent of the Brazilians specifically state that they do not feel safe everywhere.

Unemployment and labor market



47%

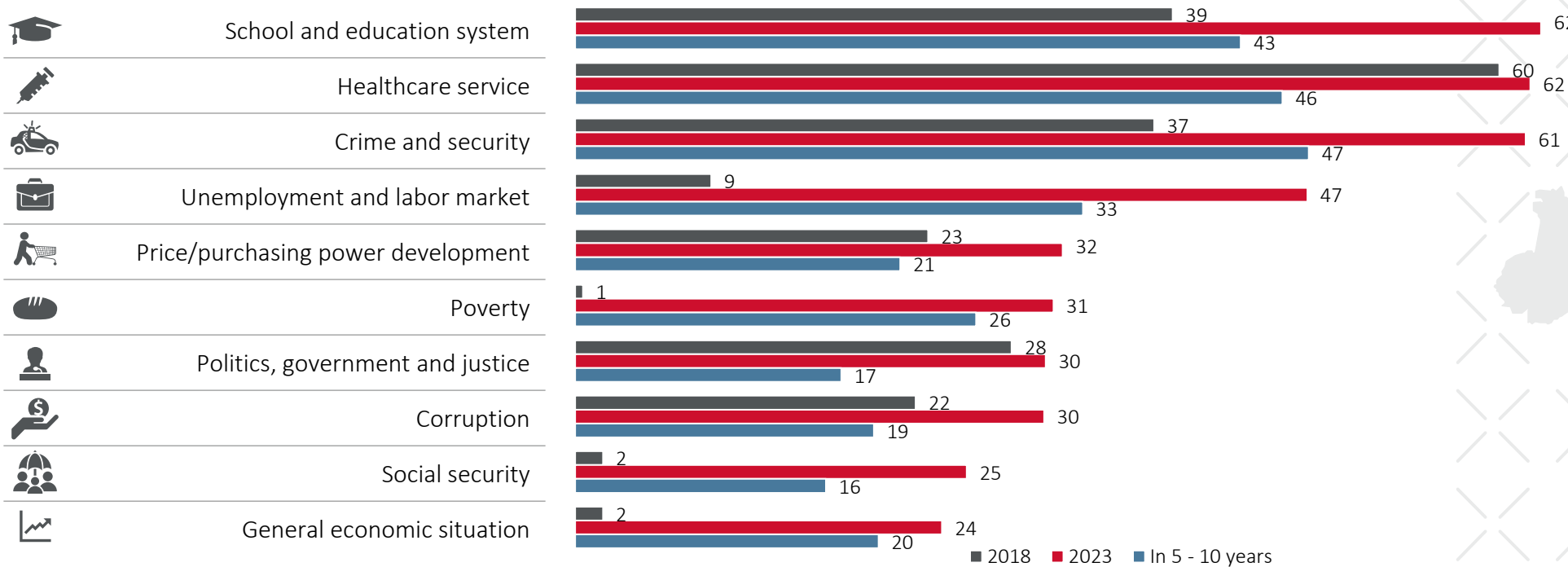
Urgent problems in Brazil in the labor market are also above average. While on a global average only one in four mention this issue as a problem, in Brazil it is almost one in two.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Brazil today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %



The challenges of yesterday, today and the future are a good example of how the perceived problems of people in emerging economies differ from those in industrialized countries. The most frequently mentioned problems differ significantly from those in Europe and Japan, and poverty and corruption are problem areas that play virtually no role in the global North.

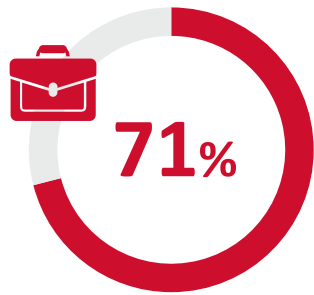
Challenges of yesterday, today and the future



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in Brazil today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,001 | Values in %



In emerging markets, different problems are prevalent than those in industrialized countries. However, a comparison of South Africa and Brazil shows that there are still country-specific differences. The most frequently mentioned problems in South Africa differ in several respects from those that top the ranking in Brazil.



The most important concern in South Africa in 2023 is **unemployment and the labor market**, with a significant increase since 2018. As a reminder, the education system concern leads the ranking in Brazil. South Africans also expect the labor market situation to remain tense in the future, with **55 percent** of respondents naming this issue.

Other frequently mentioned challenges

Crime and security



61%

Crime and security was a frequently mentioned problem in 2018 (43 percent), and the current survey shows even a further increase in concern. The topic ranks far ahead in second place for future tasks.

Corruption



47%

Closely linked to crime is corruption, which almost half of South Africans describe as an urgent problem. Moreover, 31 percent of those surveyed believe that the issue will still be a problem to be solved in the future – ranked 4th among worries about the future.

General economic situation and load shedding



48%

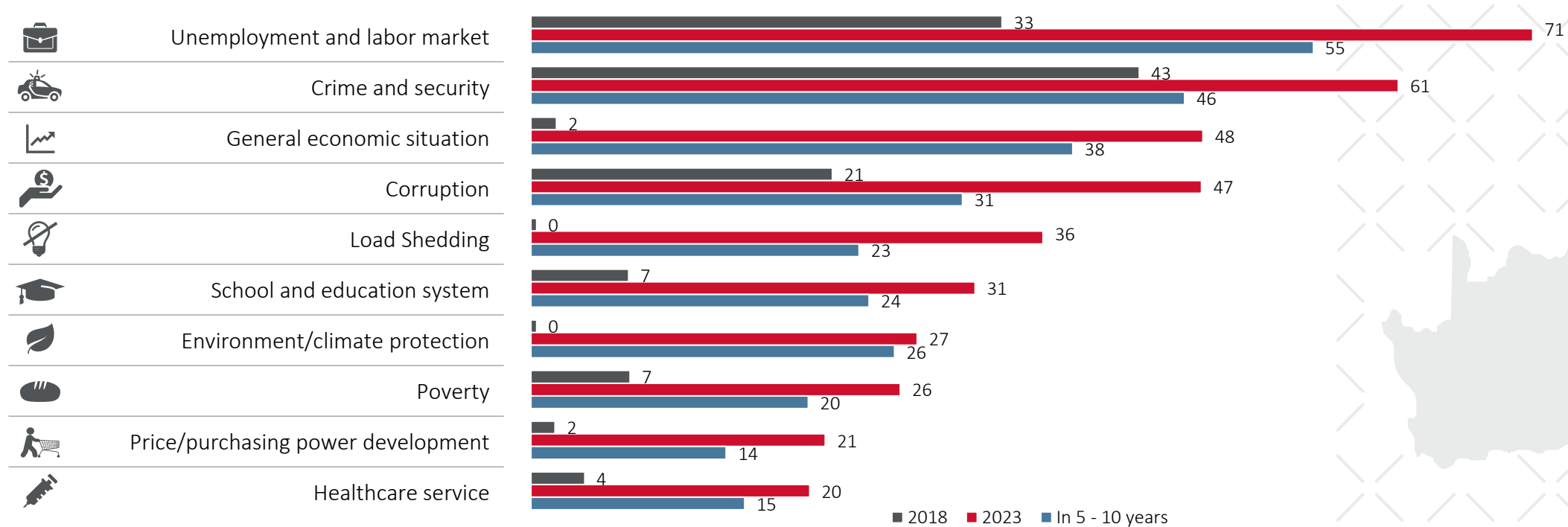
In the Challenges Study, the topic area "General economic situation" typically also includes energy supply. In South Africa, this alone accounts for 33 percent of mentions. In addition, 36 percent of respondents mentioned Load Shedding, i.e. the planned regular shutdown of electricity, as a problem.

"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in South Africa today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %



With unemployment and crime/security, South Africa is currently dominated by concerns that were already perceived by many respondents five years ago. New concerns include the economy, load shedding and environmental and climate protection. As for the problems of their country, South Africans expect little change in the future.

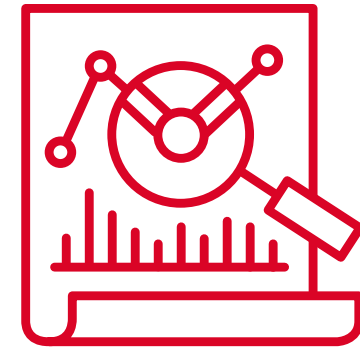
Challenges of yesterday, today and the future



"In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in South Africa today resp. in 5 - 10 years?"
Unaided responses (net sum per topic) | multiple responses possible | BASE: all respondents n = 1,000 | Values in %



















5

Appendix and method



In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in ... today? We are interested in your personal opinion here.



















Top ten current challenges in societies

	TOTAL	 Germany	 France	 Italy	 UK	 USA	 Japan	 Brazil	 South Africa
 Price/purchasing power development	39	43	57	40	70	38	34	32	21
 Crime and security	36	10	19	27	25	42	4	61	61
 Healthcare service	33	13	20	31	42	31	12	62	20
 Environment/climate protection	27	48	36	32	26	25	14	23	27
 School and education system	25	20	15	18	14	16	5	62	31
 General economic situation	24	21	8	18	21	28	17	24	48
 Unemployment and labor market	24	7	17	53	8	13	3	47	71
 Politics, government and justice	19	11	14	13	14	23	7	30	17
 Immigration/integration	18	38	21	37	28	24	1	0	8
 Poverty	15	17	7	9	9	11	8	31	26

unaided responses (net total per topic) | multiple responses possible
BASIS: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters ... will have to solve then?

Top ten future challenges in societies

	TOTAL	 Germany	 France	 Italy	 UK	 USA	 Japan	 Brazil	 South Africa
 Environment/climate protection	32	45	48	37	37	31	14	29	26
 Crime and security	26	7	13	18	15	30	3	47	46
 Healthcare service	22	7	12	21	26	19	6	46	15
 Price/purchasing power development	21	15	29	27	30	21	14	21	14
 General economic situation	20	16	9	14	18	24	14	20	38
 Unemployment and labor market	18	6	14	41	8	9	3	33	55
 School and education system	17	10	8	13	8	10	3	43	24
 Poverty	13	13	6	6	8	9	6	26	20
 Immigration/integration	12	20	18	27	18	14	4	1	7
 Politics, government and justice	11	6	9	7	7	13	4	17	13

unaided responses (net total per topic) | multiple responses possible
BASIS: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %

Sample of the survey

Concept and questionnaire

Nuremberg Institute for
Market Decisions

Sample

8.008 men and women aged from 16 - 59 resp. 69 years, representative of the (online) population in the 8 countries (see next page for details)
For the total value, the sample was extrapolated to the population per country.

Survey

GfK
Online Access Panels
Quotation on age,
gender, region
Change of methodology to the previous
waves (e.g. 2018): Offline, GfK GLOBO BUS®

Scope

2 open questions,
the answers were coded on
the basis of an existing code
plan, supplemented by
current topics.

Period of the survey

April 18th, 2023
until May 22nd, 2023

Number of demographic characteristics

10

Information on the study and the report

Question

- > These open questions without any answer specifications were asked, multiple responses possible:
- > "In your opinion, what matters require to be resolved most urgently in the respective country today?"
- > "And if you think 5 - 10 years into the future: What do you think, which urgent matters the respective country will have to solve then?"

Coverage

- > 2023: 8 countries worldwide
(Countries and their regional coverage: see methodology)

Charts

- > The values used in the data charts are rounded and - in the case of the "nations at a glance" charts - are projected figures
- > The value "-" means that the challenge was not mentioned at all

Change in methodology compared to 2018

- > Method change to the previous waves from offline (except USA), GfK GLOBO BUS® to online in Access Panels, age group 16 to 69 or up to 59 years (Brazil, South Africa)
- > 2018 in the GfK GLOBO BUS®:

CAPI:

- > Germany, age 14+ years
- > France, age 15+ years
- > Italy, age 15+ years
- > Great Britain, age 16+ years
- > South Africa, age 16+ years (Gauteng Metropolitan Region, KwaZulu-Natal, Cape Town)

CATI:

- > Brazil, age 18+ years

CAWI:

- > USA, age 18+ years

Methodology in detail

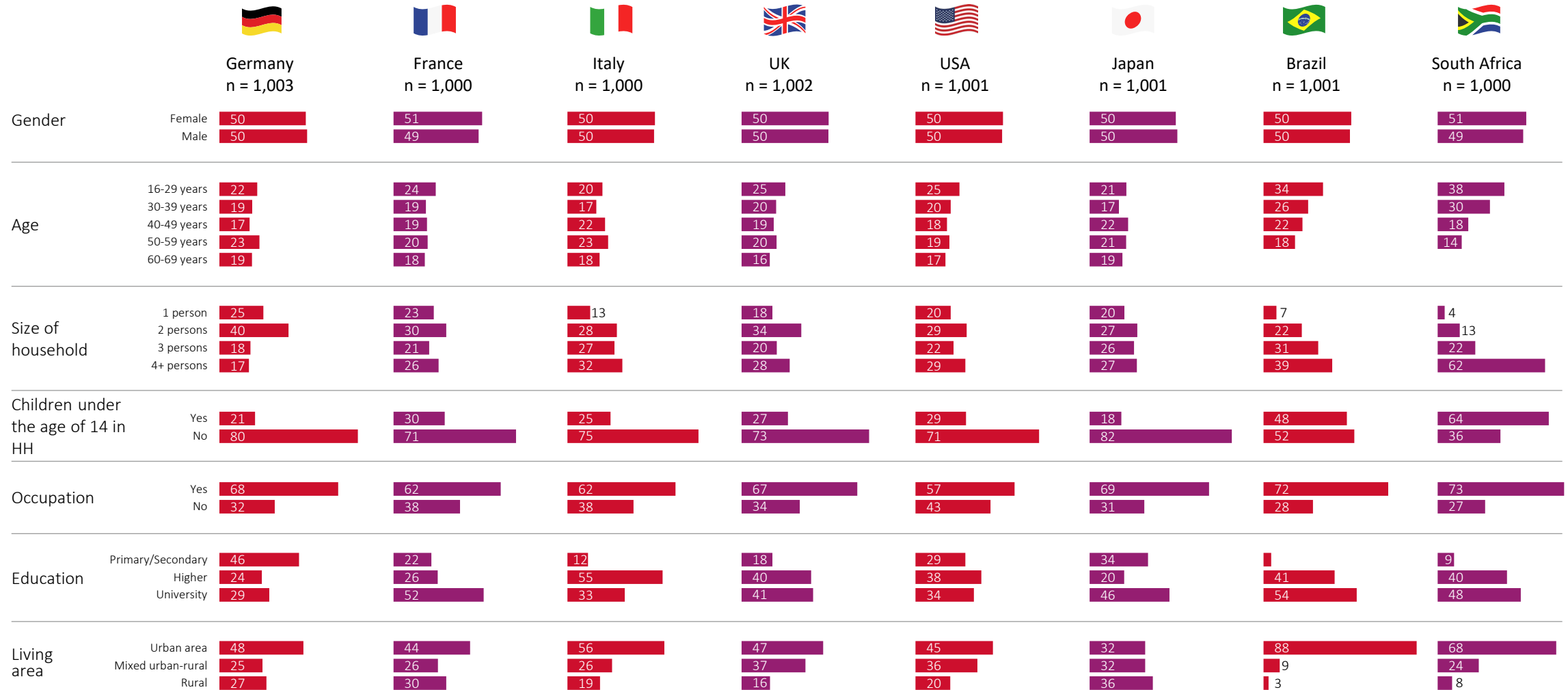
		Proportion sample/total population	Proportion sample/total population in millions	Sample size	Method	Age	Regional Coverage	Fieldwork	Surveyed since
	Germany	69%	57.6 m	1,003	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	1990
	France	66%	44.6 m	1,000	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	2001
	Italy	69%	40.6 m	1,000	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	2001
	UK	67%	45.3 m	1,002	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	2001
	USA	69%	233.6 m	1,001	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	2014
	Japan	64%	79.5 m	1,001	CAWI	16 - 69	Nationwide	April/May 2023	2015
	Brazil	64%	136.7 m	1,001	CAWI	16 - 59	Nationwide, more urban areas	April/May 2023	2014
	South Africa	61%	36.2 m	1,000	CAWI	16 - 59	Nationwide, more urban areas	April/May 2023	2014

BASIS: all respondents n = 8,008

The fieldwork was carried out as an ad hoc study in online access panels



Survey sample in detail



BASIS: all respondents n = 8,008 | Values in %