

# **SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE UK GENERAL ELECTION**

**An LSE/British Polling  
Council Event**

**5 June 2024**

**LSE**

**British  
Polling  
Council**

**Shedding Light on the UK General Election**

*5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

# **Welcome from the Chair**

Patrick Sturgis, LSE

**#GE24LSEBPC**





# Agenda

## **PART ONE: WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

*Chaired by Sara Hobolt, LSE*

### **Performance Shocks and the “Tide and Tribe” Election**

Jane Green, BPC President

### **Can we Trust the Polls?**

Will Jennings, Southampton/Sky

### **Can we use Random Sampling Methods for Polling?**

Joel Williams, Verian

### **The 2024 Election: Scotland**

Sir John Curtice, University of Strathclyde

## **BREAK: 3.30-4pm**

## **PART TWO: PROJECTING SEATS – AN MRP ROUNDTABLE**

*Chaired by Jane Green, BPC President*

### ***Projecting Seats – an MRP Roundtable:***

Damian Lyons-Lowe, Survation; Martin Baxter, Electoral Calculus; Callum Hunter, JL Partners; Patrick English, YouGov

## **PART THREE: THE CAMPAIGN TO COME**

*Chaired by Patrick Sturgis, LSE*

### **What about the Don’t Knows?**

Paula Surridge, University of Bristol

### **Tactical Voting**

Stephen Fisher, University of Oxford

### **What Might Change?**

Luke Tryl, More in Common

### **Election Night and The Exit Poll**

Jouni Kuha, LSE

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

*Patrick Sturgis and Jane Green*

## **RECEPTION: 6pm**



# Shedding Light on the UK General Election

*5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

# Opening Remarks

Jane Green, BPC President

#GE24LSEBPC



# BPC Next Gen Pollsters

## Our mission

- To cultivate a community of early-career researchers, bringing together individuals to share knowledge, grow careers, and shape the future of the polling industry through networking, knowledge exchange, and career development initiatives.

## Meet and greet – now!

## Post-election event in September

- Following our event in November 2023, we are planning a post-election event in September
- Spotighting early career speakers
- Drinks reception and networking opportunity afterwards

## How to get involved and stay up to date

- Reach out to anyone on the committee
- Come for a drink after the reception today
- Join the mail list, WhatsApp Community, and LinkedIn group
- Please share these details within your organisation!

## Committee Members

- Anna Ayers (ORB)
- Beth Kühnel Mann (YouGov)
- Holly Day (Ipsos)
- Jack Peacock (Survation)
- Joe Alder (JLP)
- Lachlan Rurlander (Whitestone)
- Maria Stapleton (Opinium)
- Tyron Surmon (Find out now)



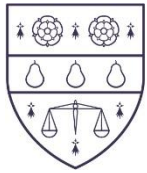
**British  
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**Shedding Light on the UK General Election**

*5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

**Part One:  
Where Are We Now?**





Nuffield Politics  
Research Centre  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



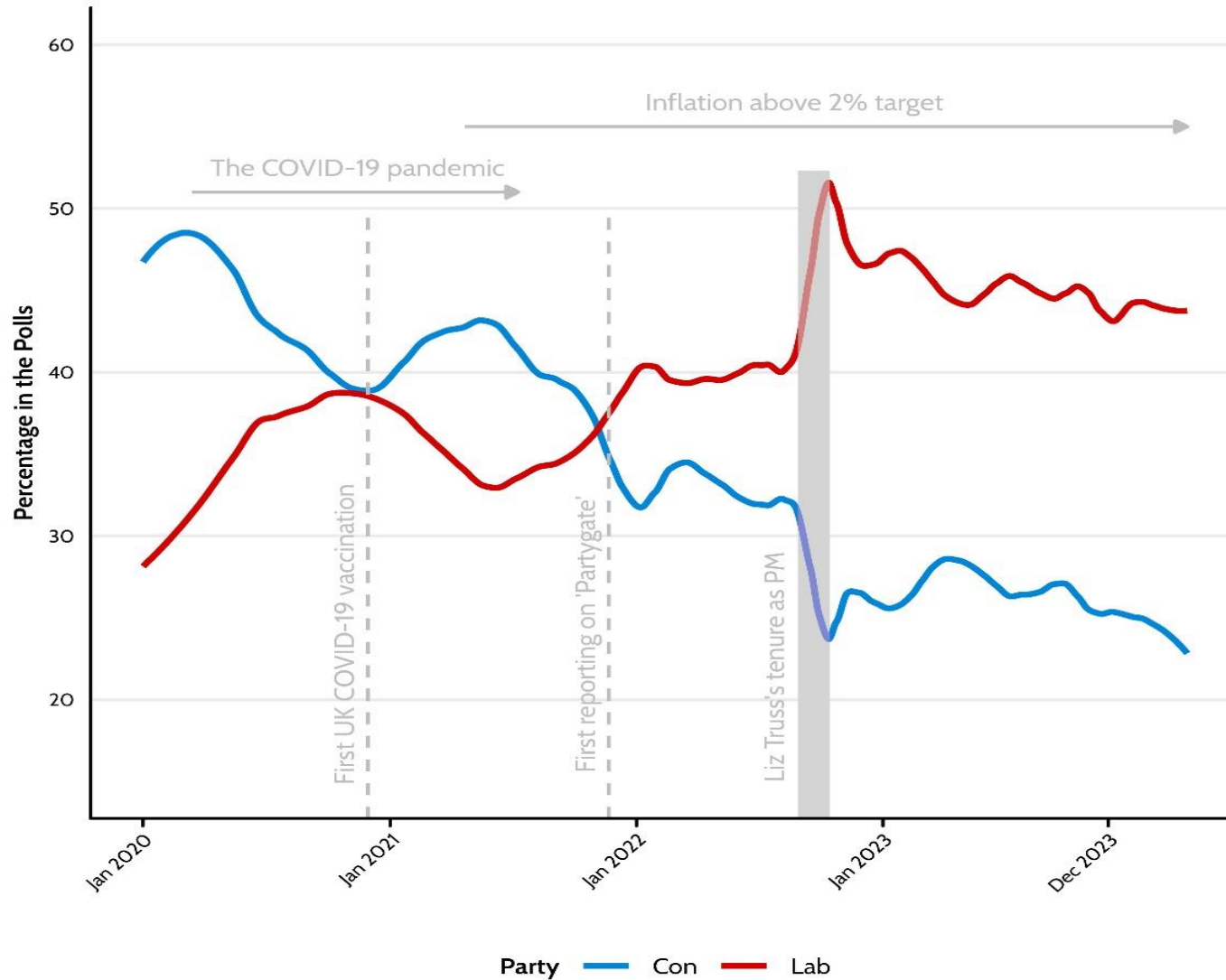
# Performance shocks and the 'tide' and 'tribe' election

Professor Jane Green  
Nuffield College/BES/BPC

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British Polling Council/London School of  
Economics Conference

# Competence shocks: fundamentals



Source: All publicly available polls of UK voting intention conducted since 2019



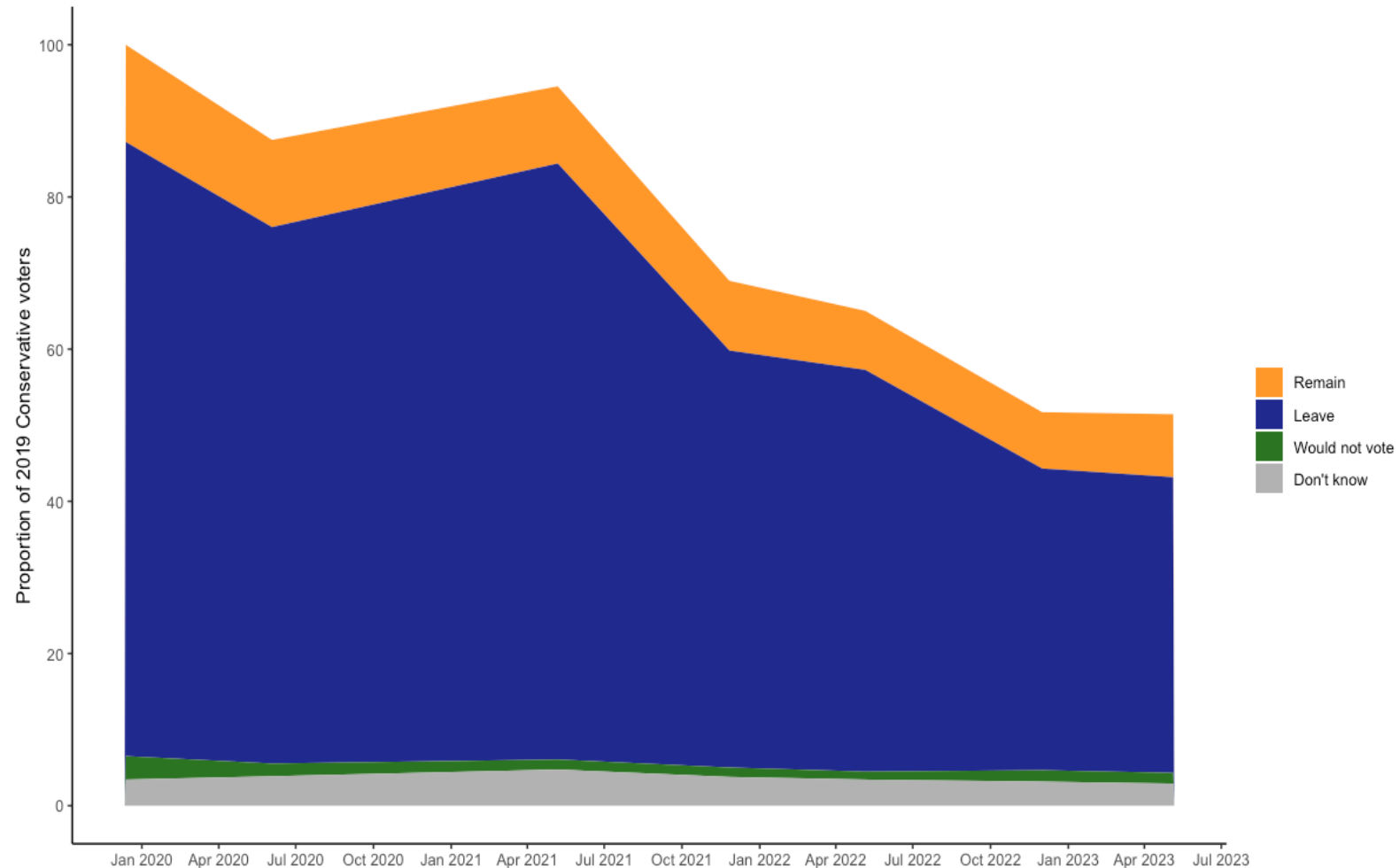
# Signs of the end of the Brexit realignment?

- Labour gains in 'Red Wall' seats/areas, where Brexit support was higher
- Gains, too, in York/Yorkshire, Rushmoore, Peterborough, etc. in May
- Conservative losses comprised of more Leavers, so the 'Brexit coalition' is fragmenting

True.

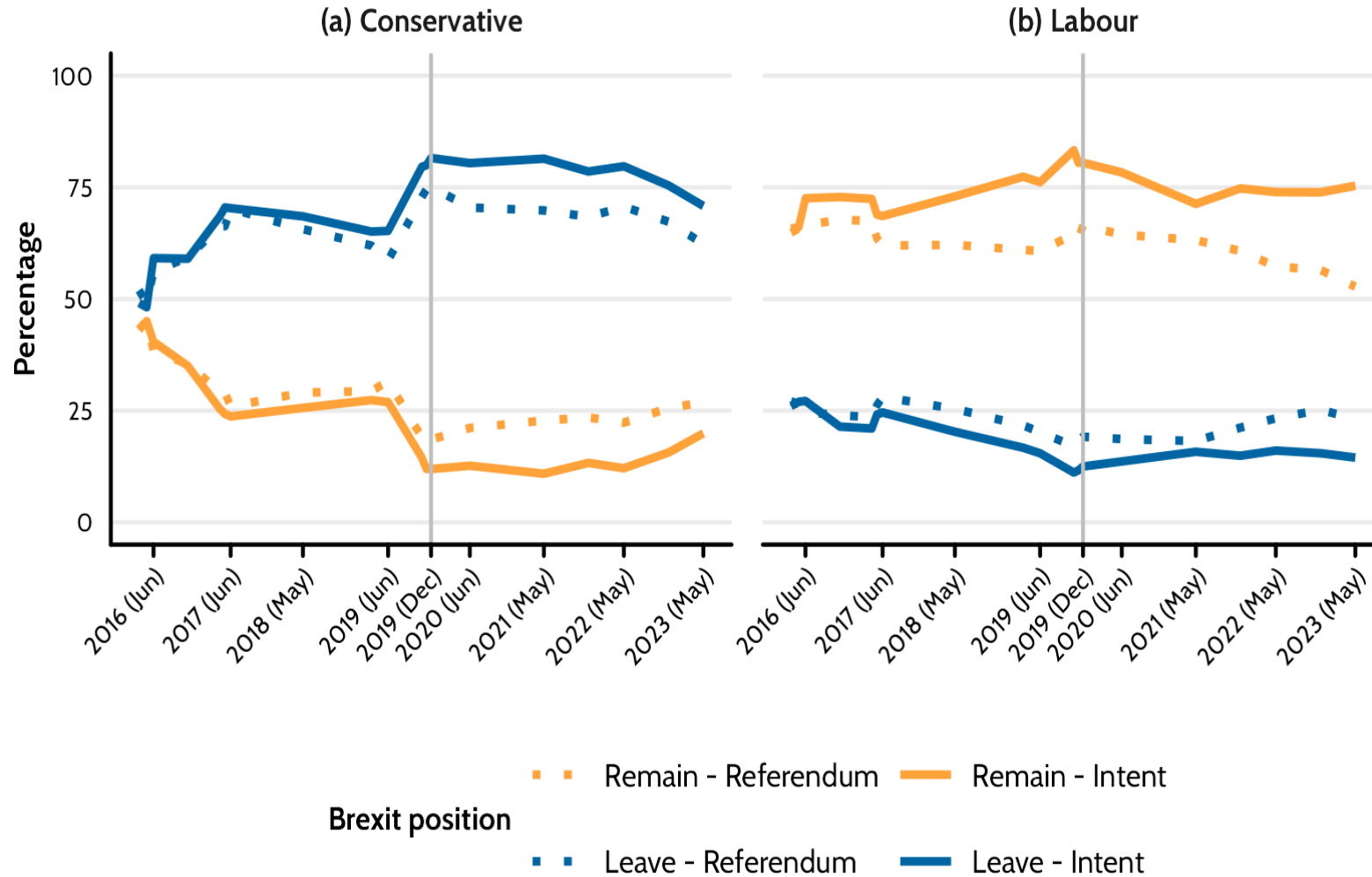
But the realignment persists beneath the  
surface

# Conservative vote intention, 2020-2023, among 2019 Conservative voters, by Brexit support (British Election Study internet panel)



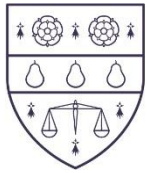
# Party-Brexit alignment, 2016-2023

(British Election Study internet panel)



# Lessons

- A Tide and Tribes Election
- Hence age divide shapes the election
- Reputation damage long-lasting
- Leavers (and Labour leavers) majority of losses, but Leavers also more likely to stick with Conservatives ...



Nuffield Politics  
Research Centre  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



# Performance shocks and the 'tide' and 'tribe' election

Professor Jane Green  
Nuffield College/BES/BPC

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British Polling Council/London School of  
Economics Conference



University of  
**Southampton**

# Can we trust the polls?

Will Jennings

Professor of Political Science and Public Policy



# Overview

- How polls change over the election cycle
- Lessons from previous campaigns
- The dispersion of voting intention estimates in 2024
  
- **In 10 minutes!**

# The timeline of electoral preferences

- Preferences converge!
- Campaigns connect voters' preferences to the fundamentals!
  - Gelman and King, Wlezien and Erikson, Jennings and Wlezien
  - Institutions and parties matter for the crystallisation of voters' preferences (Jennings and Wlezien 2024, *EJPR*)
    - More volatile for bigger parties
    - More stable for smaller/niche parties
- See... Wlezien et al. 2013; Jennings & Wlezien 2016; Wlezien et al. 2017; Jennings et al. 2020; Wlezien & Jennings 2023.

# The timeline: polls and the vote

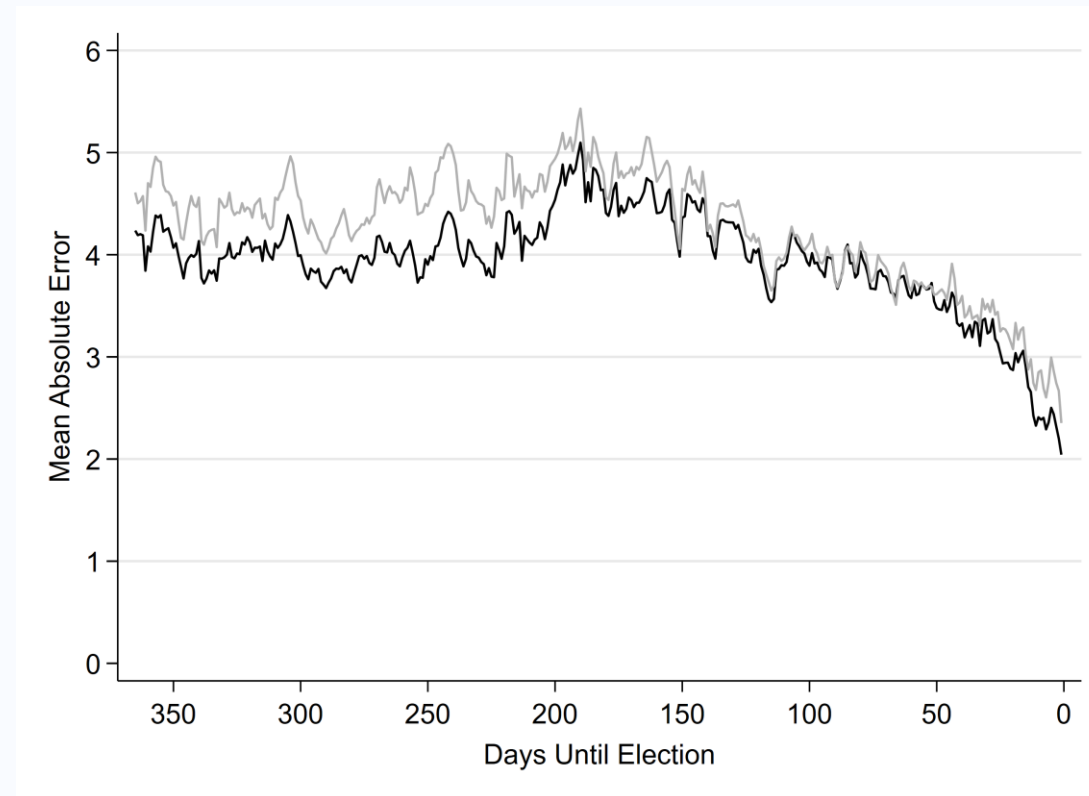
- GB: 1945-2019
- 22 elections
- 7,785 polls

Mean absolute error

$$= | \text{VOTE} - \text{POLL} |$$

All parties vs. Con + Lab only

*Daily interpolated poll-of-polls average*



# The timeline: polls and the vote (margin)

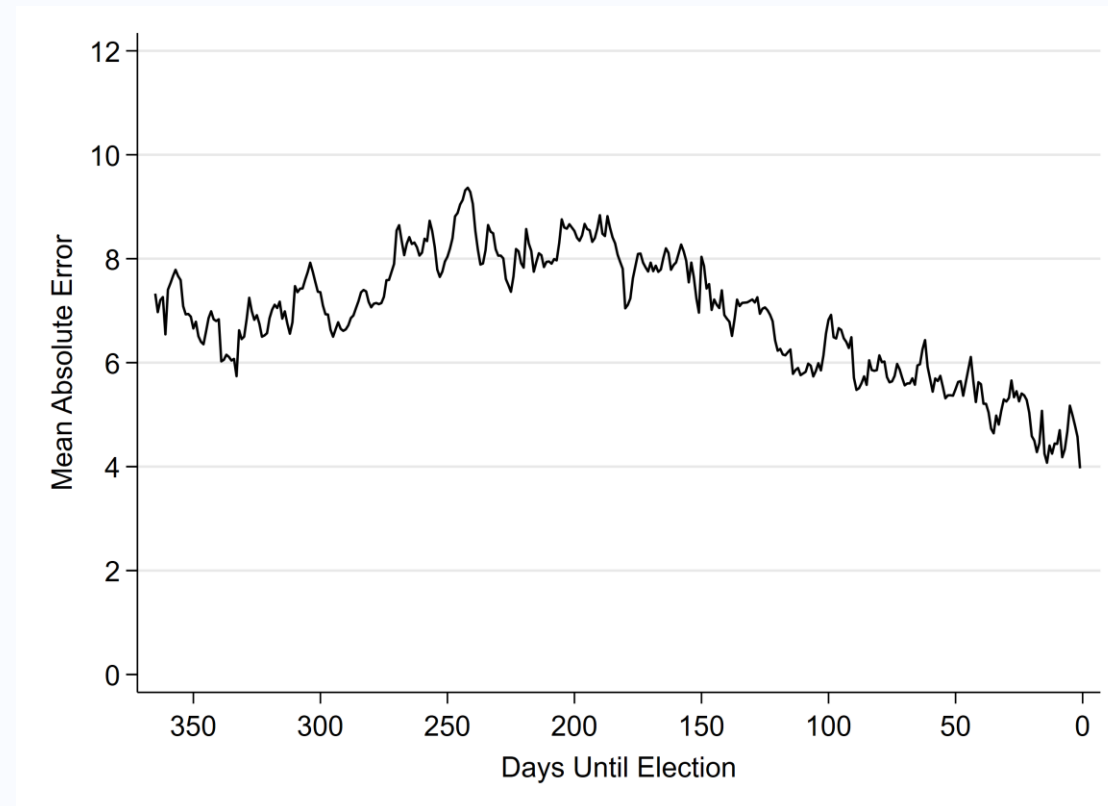
- GB: 1945-2019
- 22 elections
- 7,785 polls

Mean absolute error

$$= | \text{VOTE} - \text{POLL} |$$

Con-Lab margin

*Daily interpolated poll-of-polls average*



# The timeline: polls and the vote

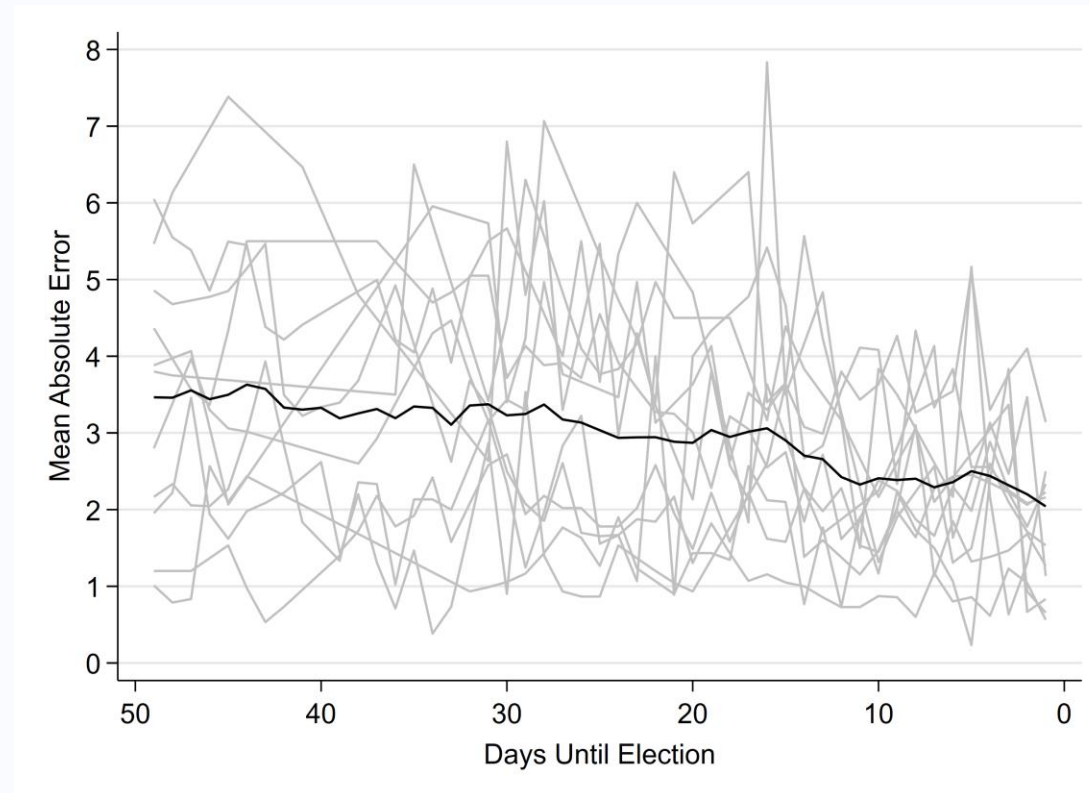
- GB: 1945-2019
- 22 elections
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Mean absolute error

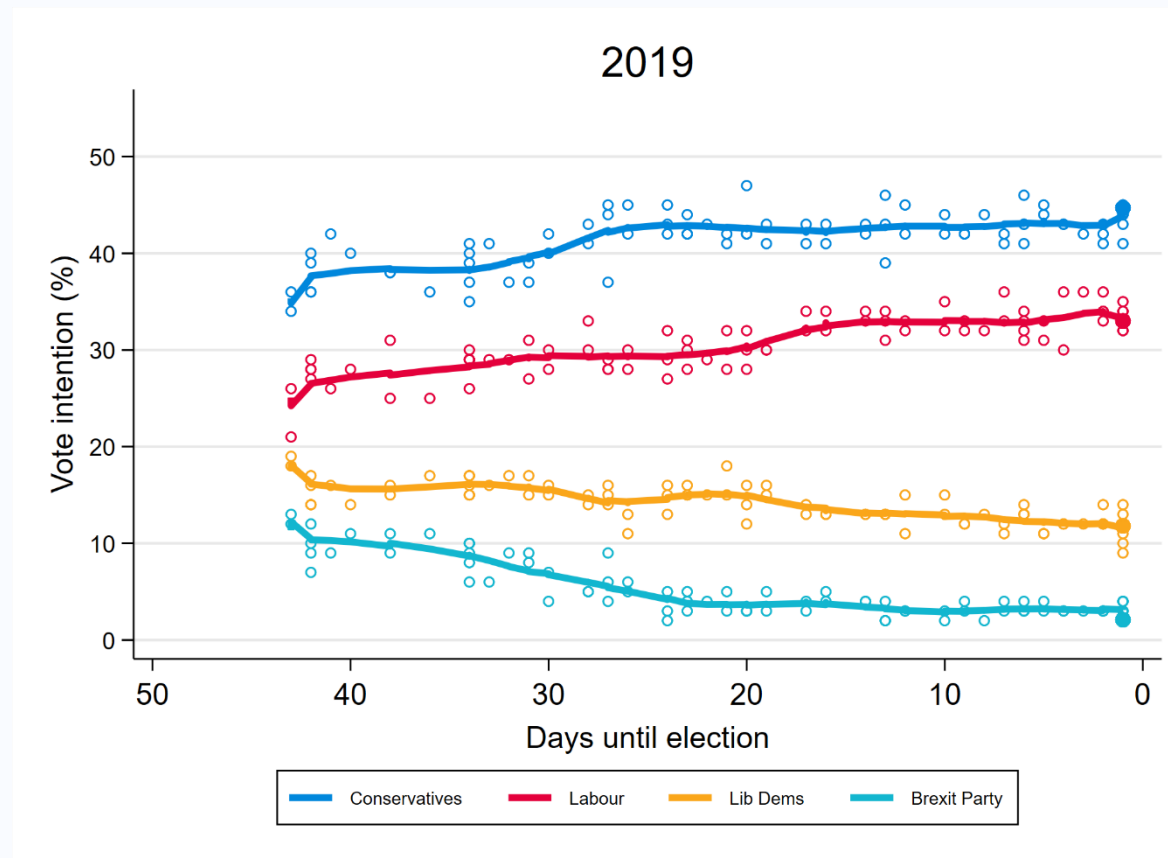
$$= | \text{VOTE} - \text{POLL} |$$

Con + Lab only vs. by election

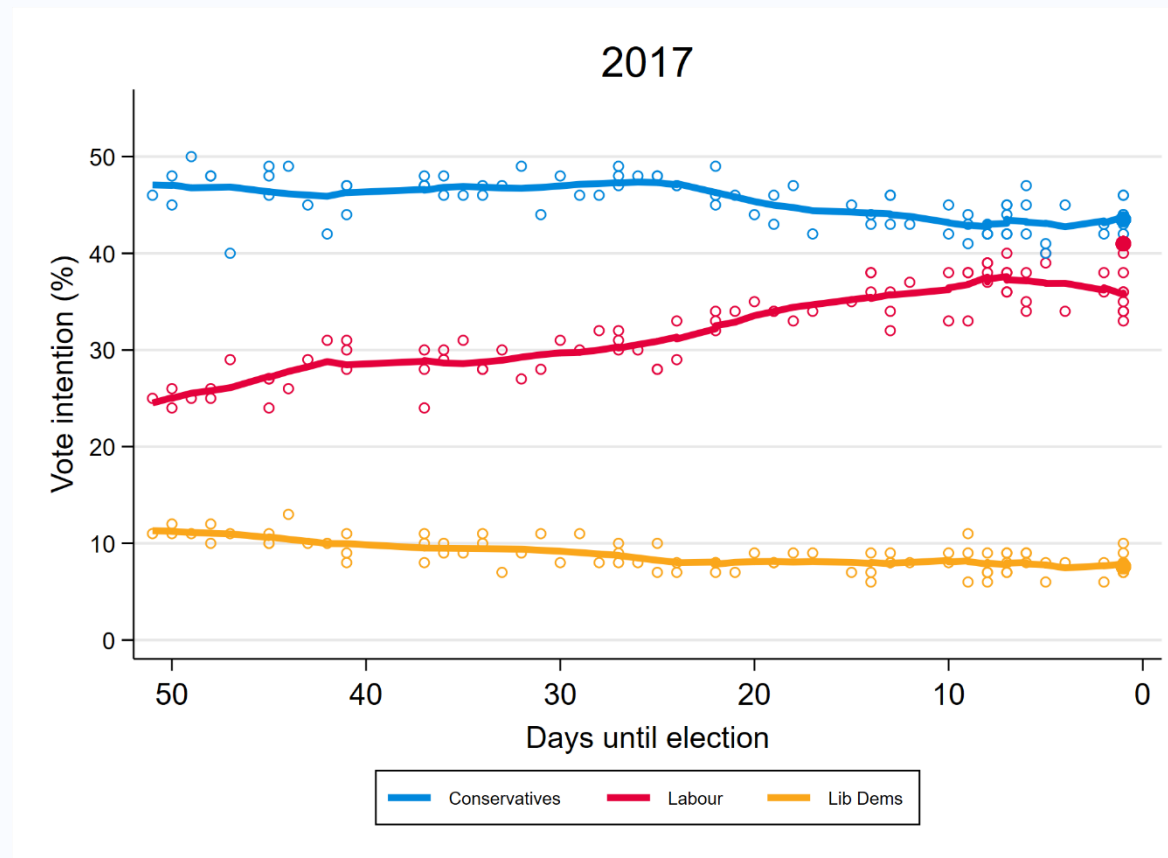
*Daily interpolated poll-of-polls average*



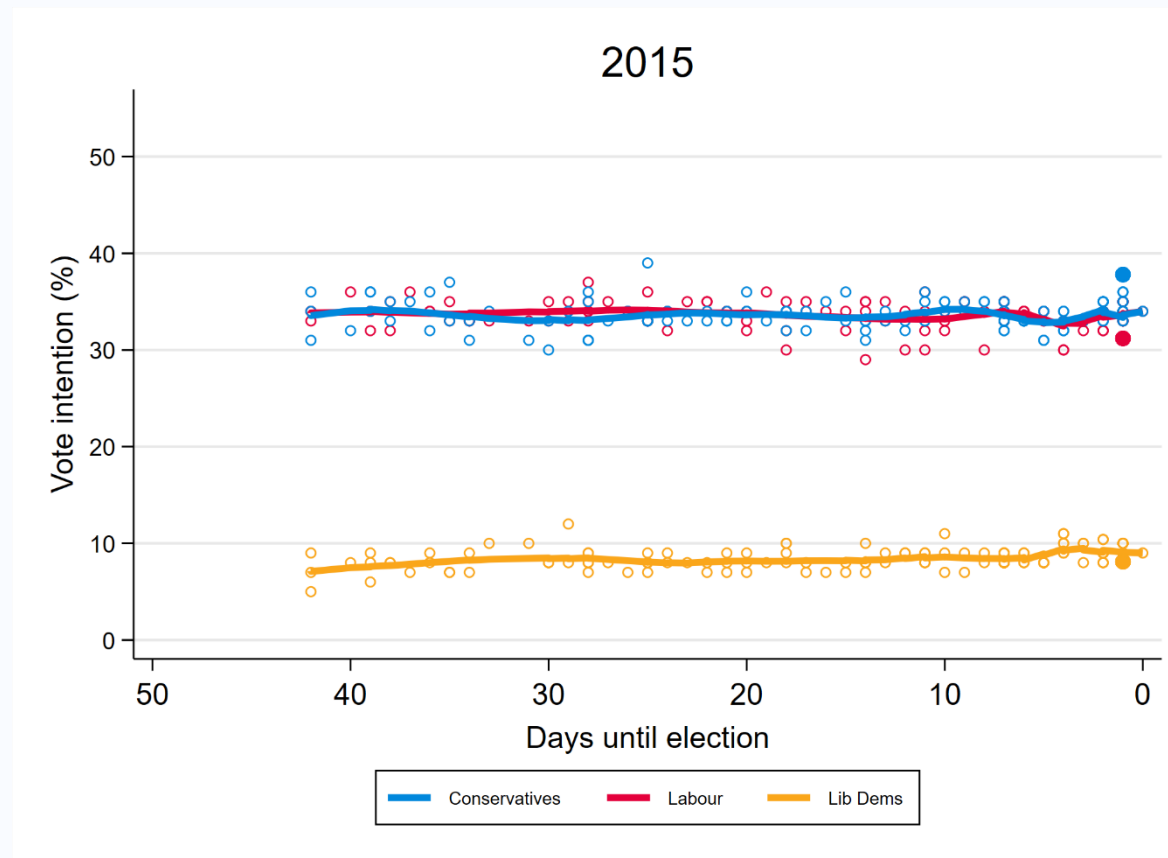
# The timeline: campaigns



# The timeline: campaigns

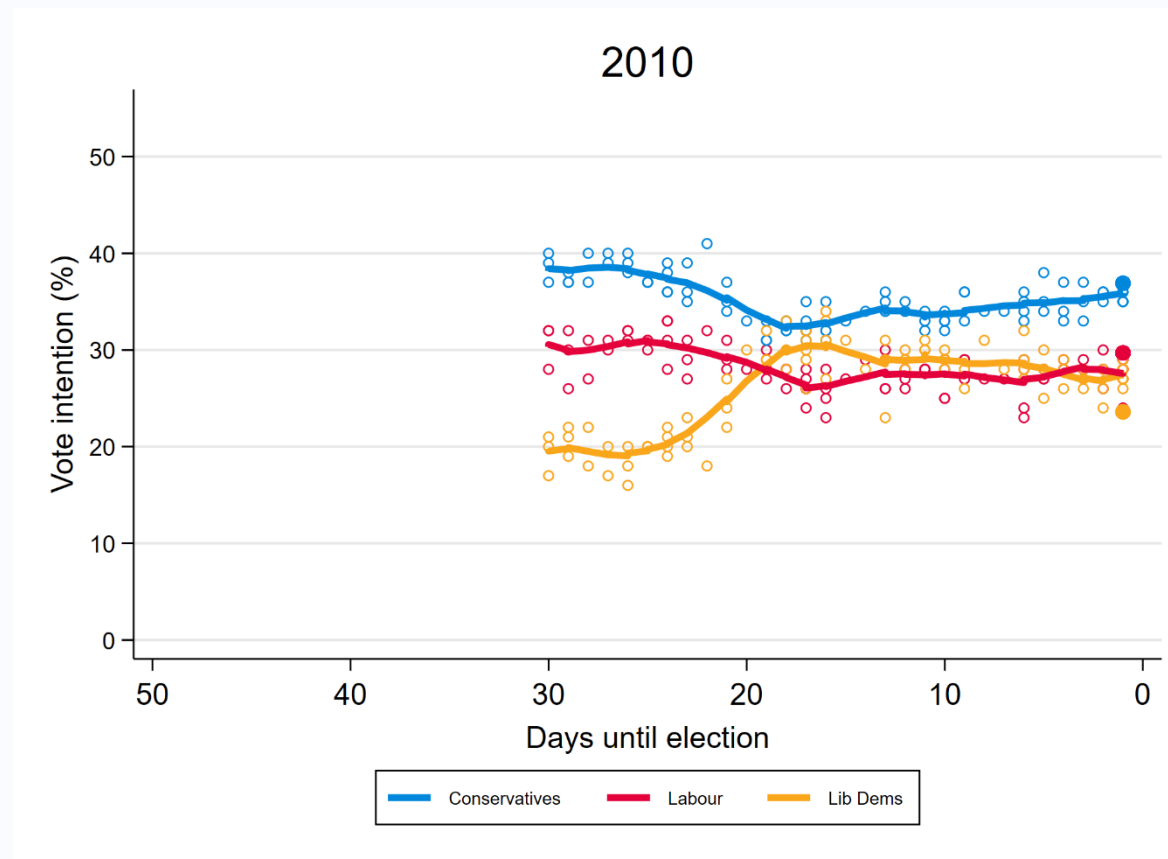


# The timeline: campaigns

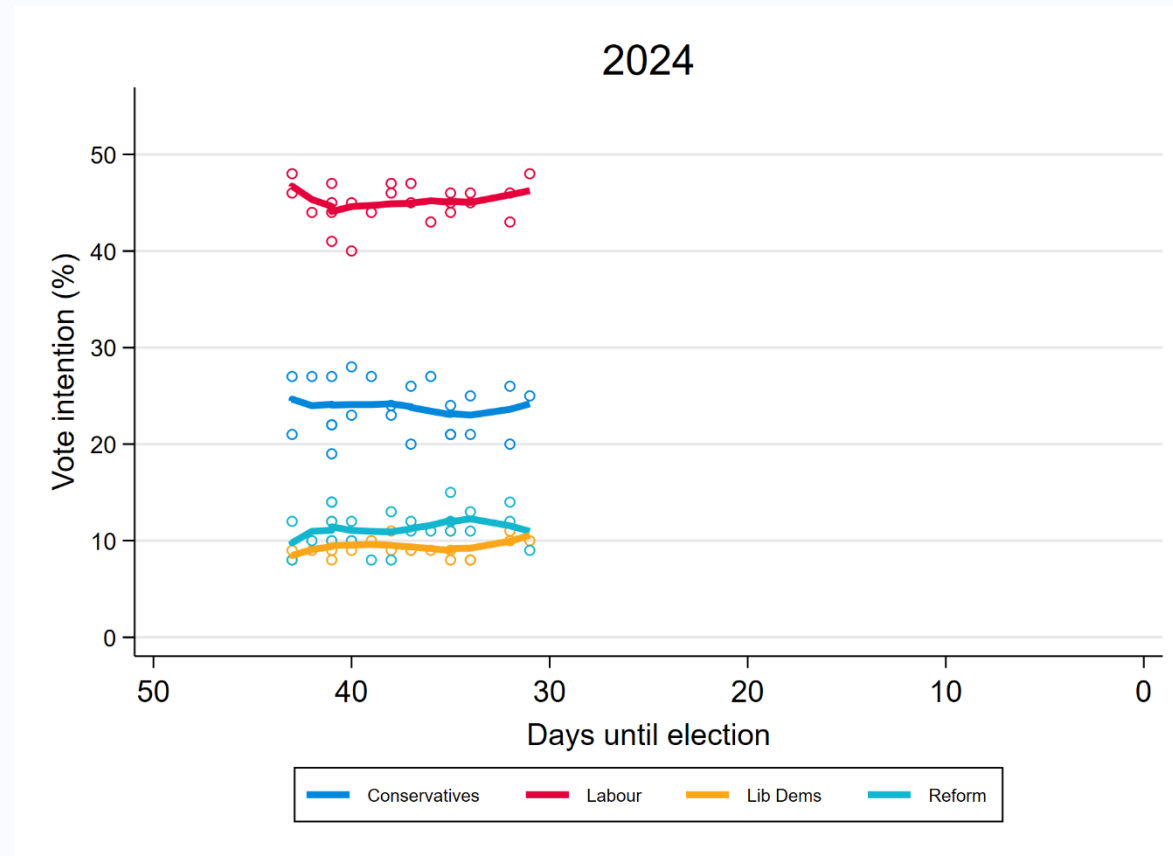




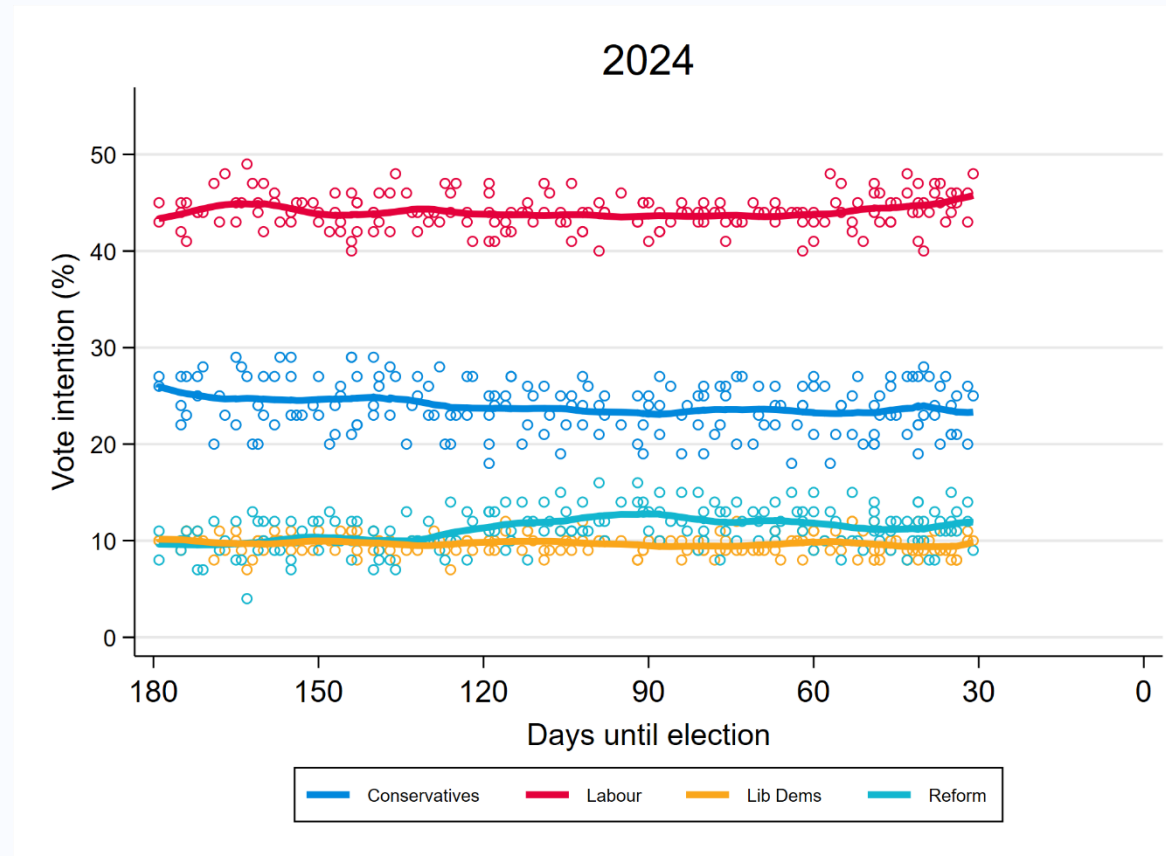
# The timeline: campaigns



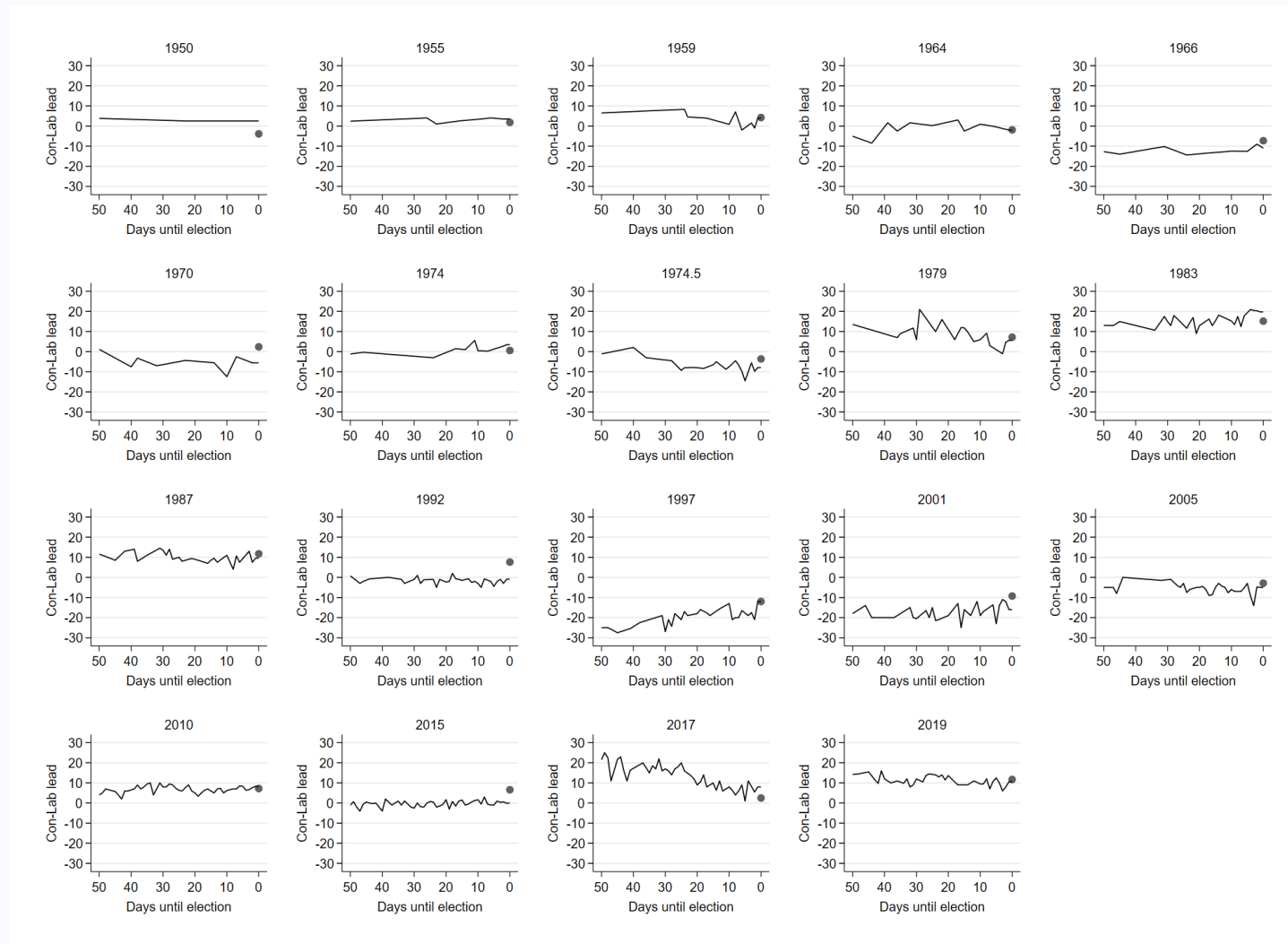
# The timeline: where we are now...



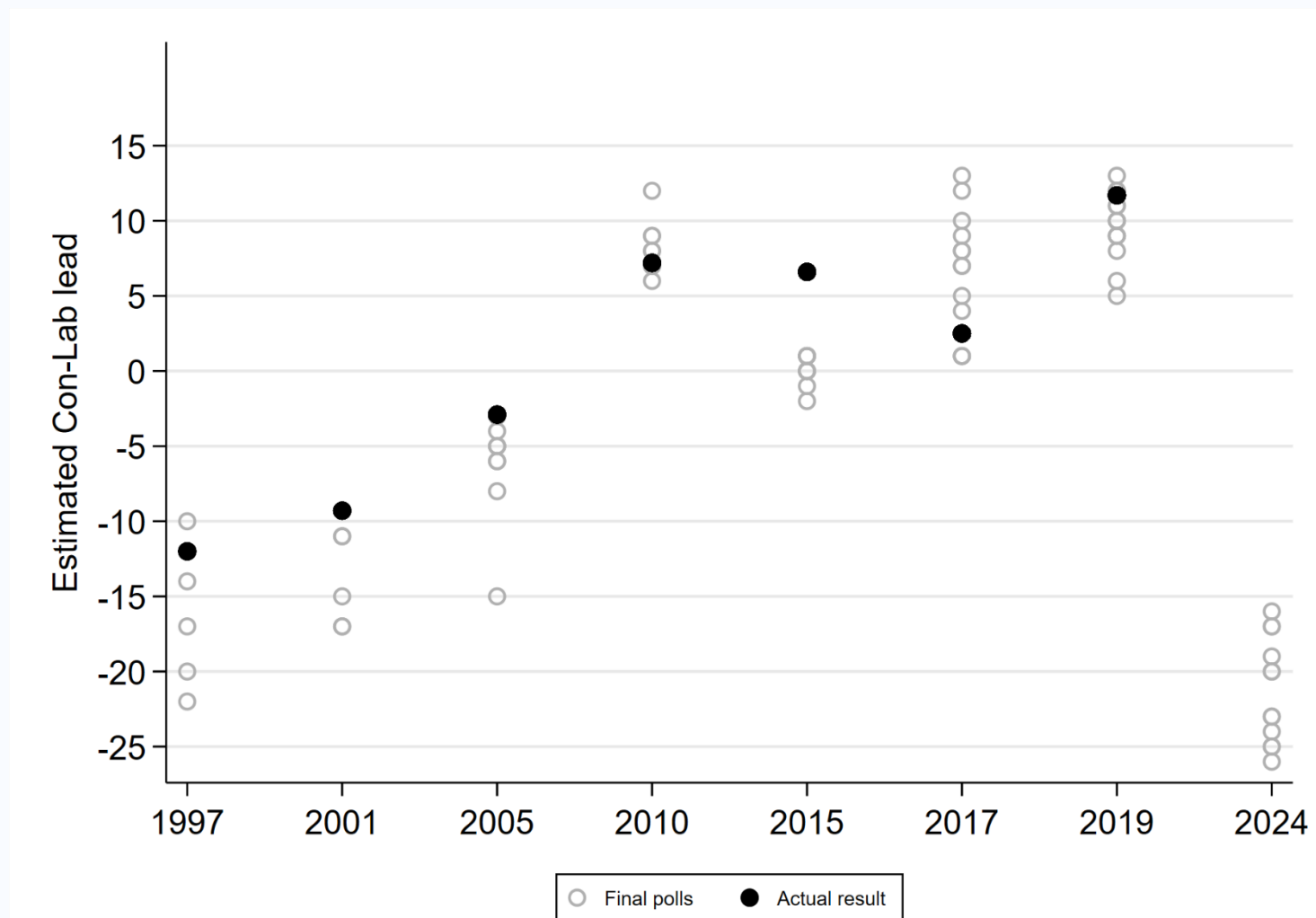
# The timeline: where we are now...



# Does the lead narrow, historically?



# Errors on the poll margin, 1997-2019



# Why do the polls differ?

- Explanations have focused on whether pollsters ‘squeeze’ respondents or reallocate undecided voters.
- But there are other points of observed and unobserved difference:
  - Source of respondents
  - Variation in demographic and political targets (e.g. vote in 2016 referendum)
- Not all these differences are clear, even when reported under BPC requirements.
- Methodological adjustments to the polls may not be stable over time (i.e. DK adjustments should decline as election day nears).

# Can we trust the polls?

- What are the red (green) flags?
  - Issues that matter to voters are largely favourable to Labour (cost of living, NHS, economy) or highly unfavourable to the Conservatives (immigration).
  - Starmer consistently ahead as best PM (over Johnson too).
  - Starmer ratings poor, Sunak ratings far worse.
  - Labour reputation on economy stronger than that at any point as early New Labour.
  - Labour leading on handling of all issues (competence shock?).
  - By-elections over the past 18 months have consistently been in line with the national polls.
  - The fundamentals!

# Can you use random sampling methods for polling?

Joel Williams  
Verian UK Head of Methods





# What do we want from a poll sample?

## THE IDEAL

Random sample of electors

They all take part!

...Very quickly

And they all accurately evaluate own chance of voting...

**Benefits:**

No risk of noncoverage bias

Use basic probability theory to calculate margins of error

**Benefits:**

No risk of nonresponse bias

No reliance on additional models for inference

**Benefits:**

Accounts for campaign effects (if any)

**Benefits:**

Convert sample of eligible to vote into synthetic sample of voters-to-be

Measurement challenge for any sample

# A random sample of electors?

## THE REALITY: A VARIETY OF STRATEGIES

Random samples of potential phone numbers from Ofcom 'exchanges'

Stratified sample drawn from a single pre-existing panel

Aggregated samples drawn from multiple panels

River sample(s) & 'passive' panels

### Features:

Comprehensive coverage (screen for electors)  
Limited control over initial sample composition

### Features:

Strong control over sample composition  
Advertising-based recruitment model  
>> Self-selection effects?  
>> Profile data risks?

### Features:

Broader sample sourcing but less control over composition  
Back-end quality filter necessary

### Features:

Can be quirky  
Better for low attention voters-to-be?

# Everyone sampled takes part?

THE REALITY: DEPENDS A GREAT DEAL ON SAMPLE SOURCE

Random samples of potential phone numbers from Ofcom 'exchanges'

Stratified sample drawn from a single pre-existing panel

Aggregated samples drawn from multiple panels

River sample(s) & 'passive' panels

**Outcomes:**

Low conversion rate  
Uneven contact & cooperation probabilities  
Quota controls necessary  
>> Subgroup risk?

**Outcomes:**

Predictable conversion rate per stratum (informed sampling)  
Quota controls sometimes also applied

**Outcomes:**

Less control over initial sample so quota controls essential

**Outcomes:**

Hard to know what really happens...  
Topic related bias?

# What else could we do?

## A PANEL DERIVED FROM A UK ADULT RANDOM SAMPLE?

### What we want

Advantages of a single-source panel:

- Stratification
- Well-calibrated response probabilities

### What we don't want

Hard-to-pin-down panel self-selection effects

Possibly faked profile data/bots

### A possible solution

Initial survey:  
**random sample from pop. frame**

Maximise response

Request to join panel only at end

Stratified samples drawn from panel

### Drawbacks

Expensive recruitment

Still significant nonresponse / attrition

NatCen EU Referendum poll: the wrong side of a knife-edge

# Verian's Public Voice panel

## OUR CHOICE FOR POLLING GE2024

### What is it?

Panel of >20,000 UK residents aged 16+  
Sampled from PAF  
20-minute multi-topic initial survey: online, on paper, in person  
Tightly calibrated to Census, LFS and BES

### Social research model

20–30-minute questionnaire  
Four contact modes  
Two data collection modes  
£10 incentive  
Multi-week fieldwork

### Polling model

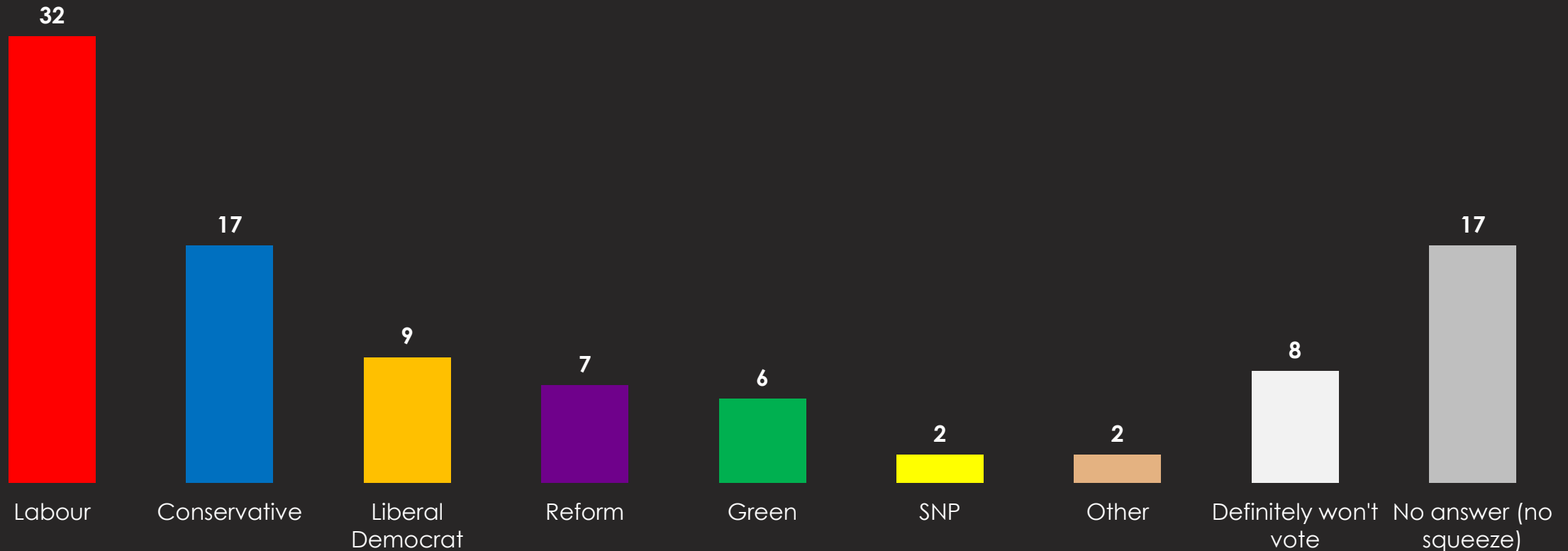
5-minute questionnaire  
Two contact modes  
Online data collection only  
Small incentive  
2-4 days of fieldwork

### Plan

Weekly polls  
#1: May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> inclusive)  
Target n = 1,100  
Final poll double sized with Scotland boost

# Early June 2024 poll: GE24 voting intention

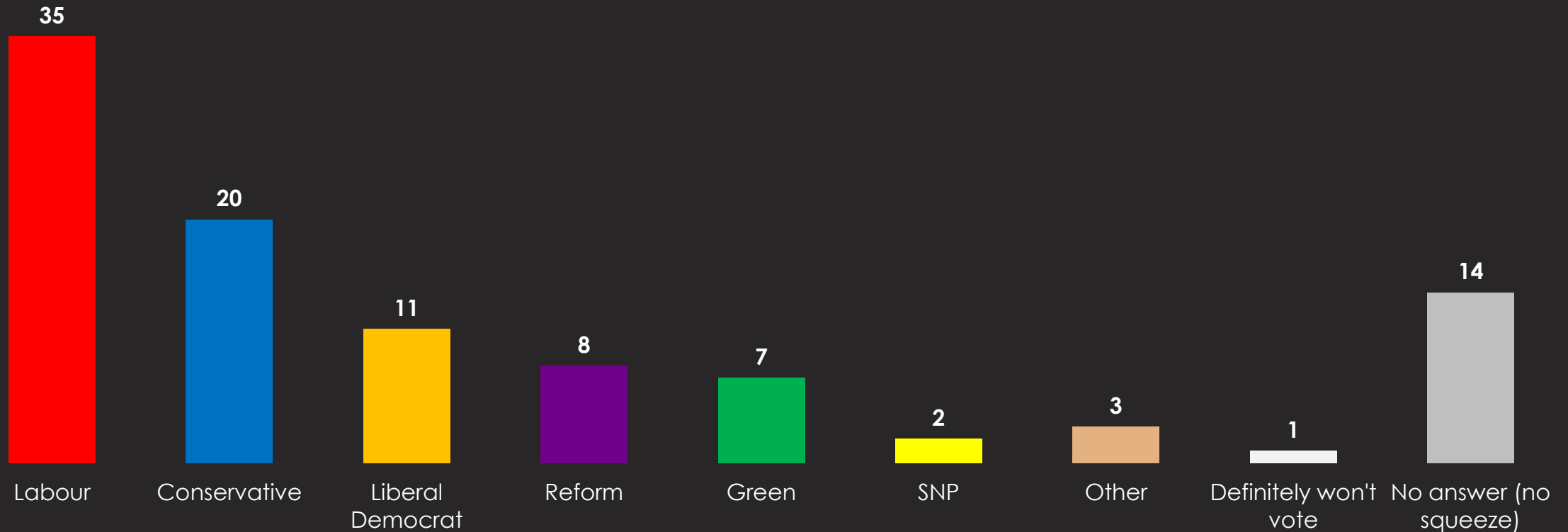
Including 'no answer' & adamant non-voters - no LTV weight



June 2024 poll base: 1405

# Early June 2024 poll: GE24 voting intention

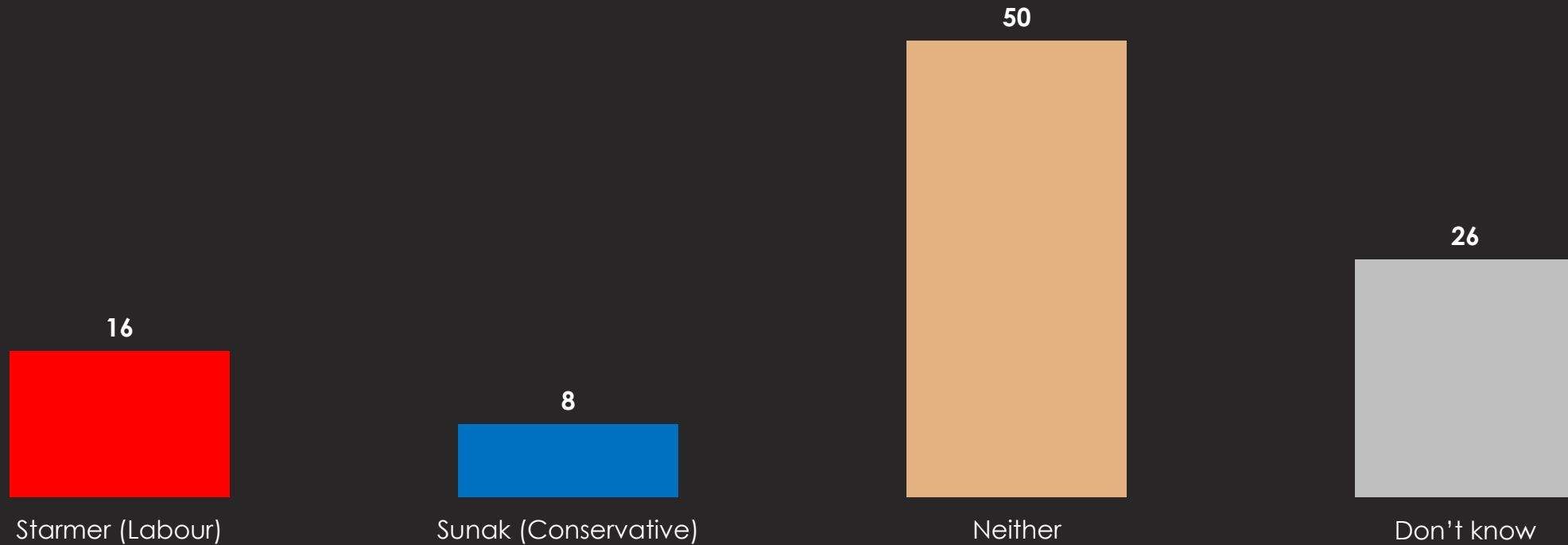
Now with an LTV weight (so, voters-to-be)



June 2024 poll base: 1405

# Early June 2024 poll: No answer/WNV: Preference for PM

With LTV weight applied

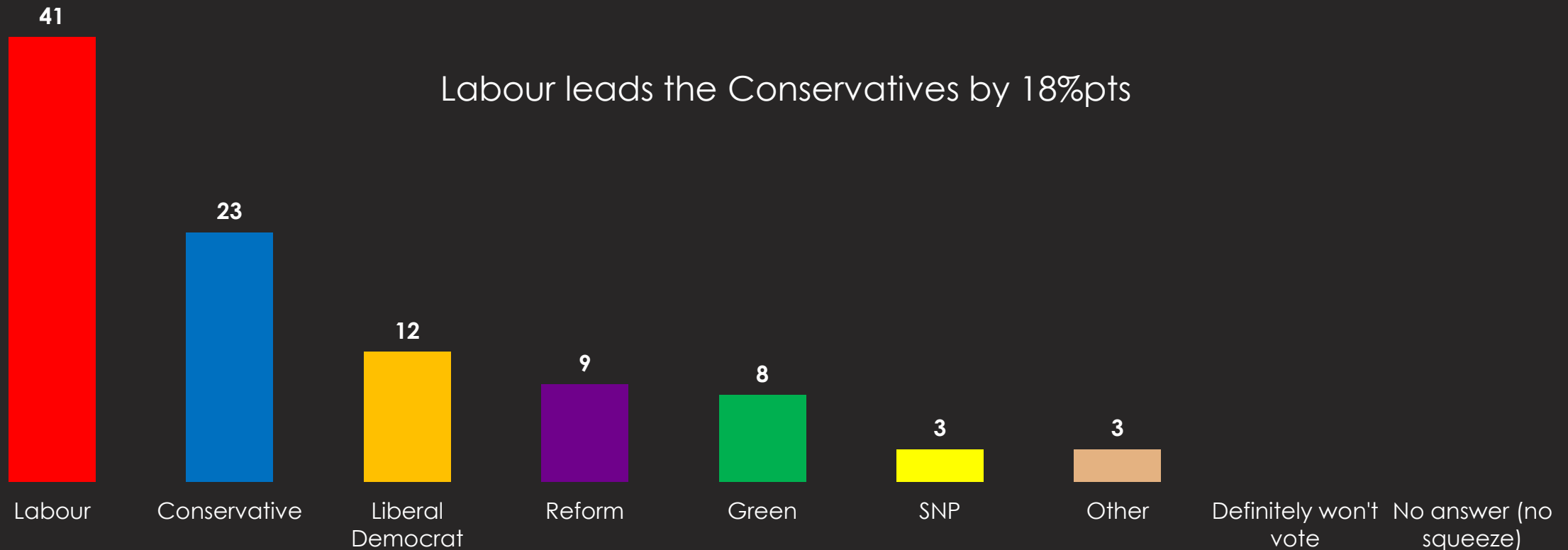


June 2024 poll base: 277



# Early June 2024 poll: GE24 voting intention

Now with an LTV weight and excluding cases lacking party choice = headline VI



June 2024 poll base: 1128

# Thank you for your time

Joel Williams

Email: [joel.williams@veriangroup.com](mailto:joel.williams@veriangroup.com)

X (Twitter): @joelwilliams74



# The 2024 Election: Scotland

John Curtice

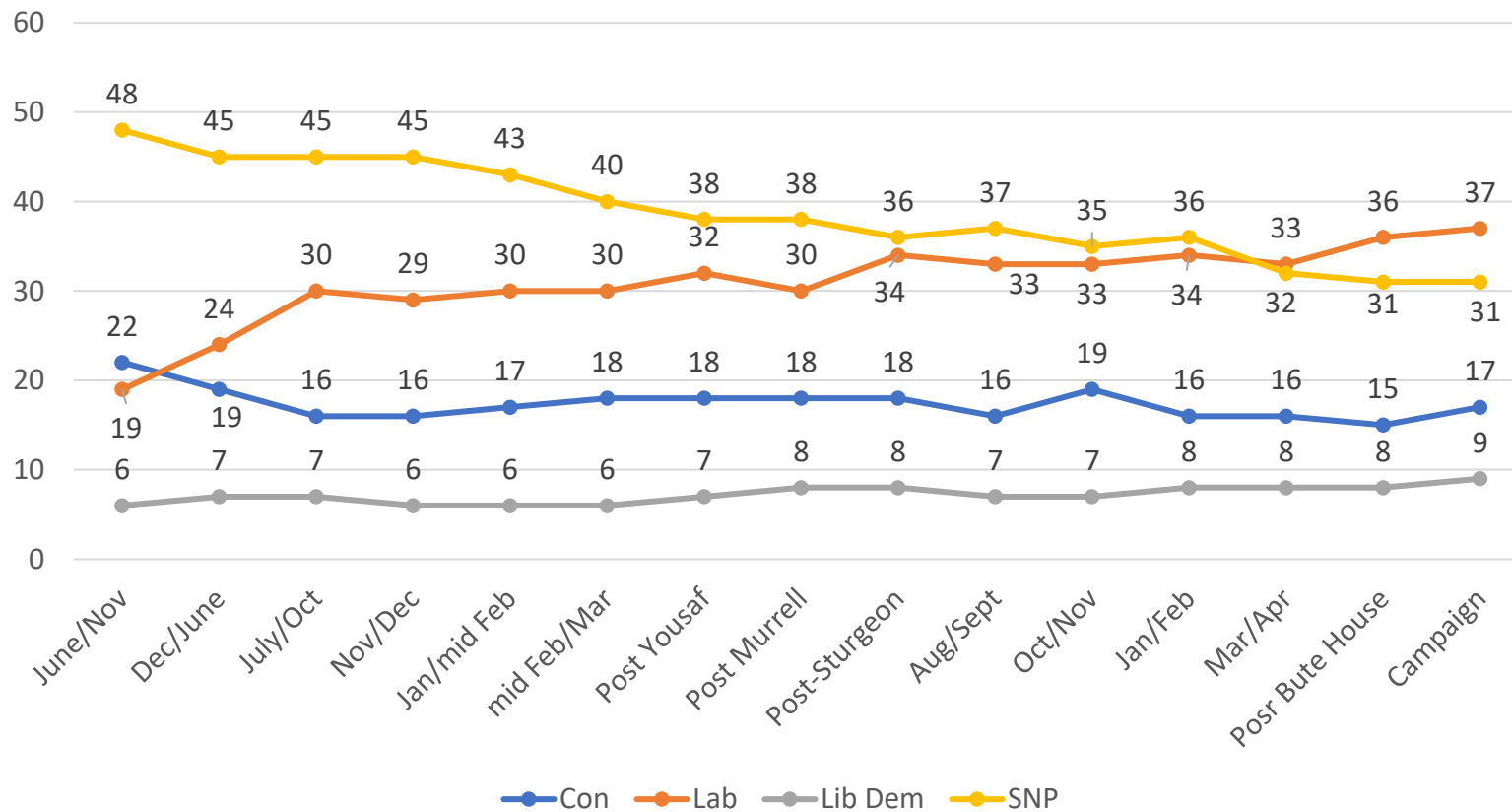
University of Strathclyde and Scottish Centre for Social Research

'The UK in a Changing Europe'

'Trendy' podcast

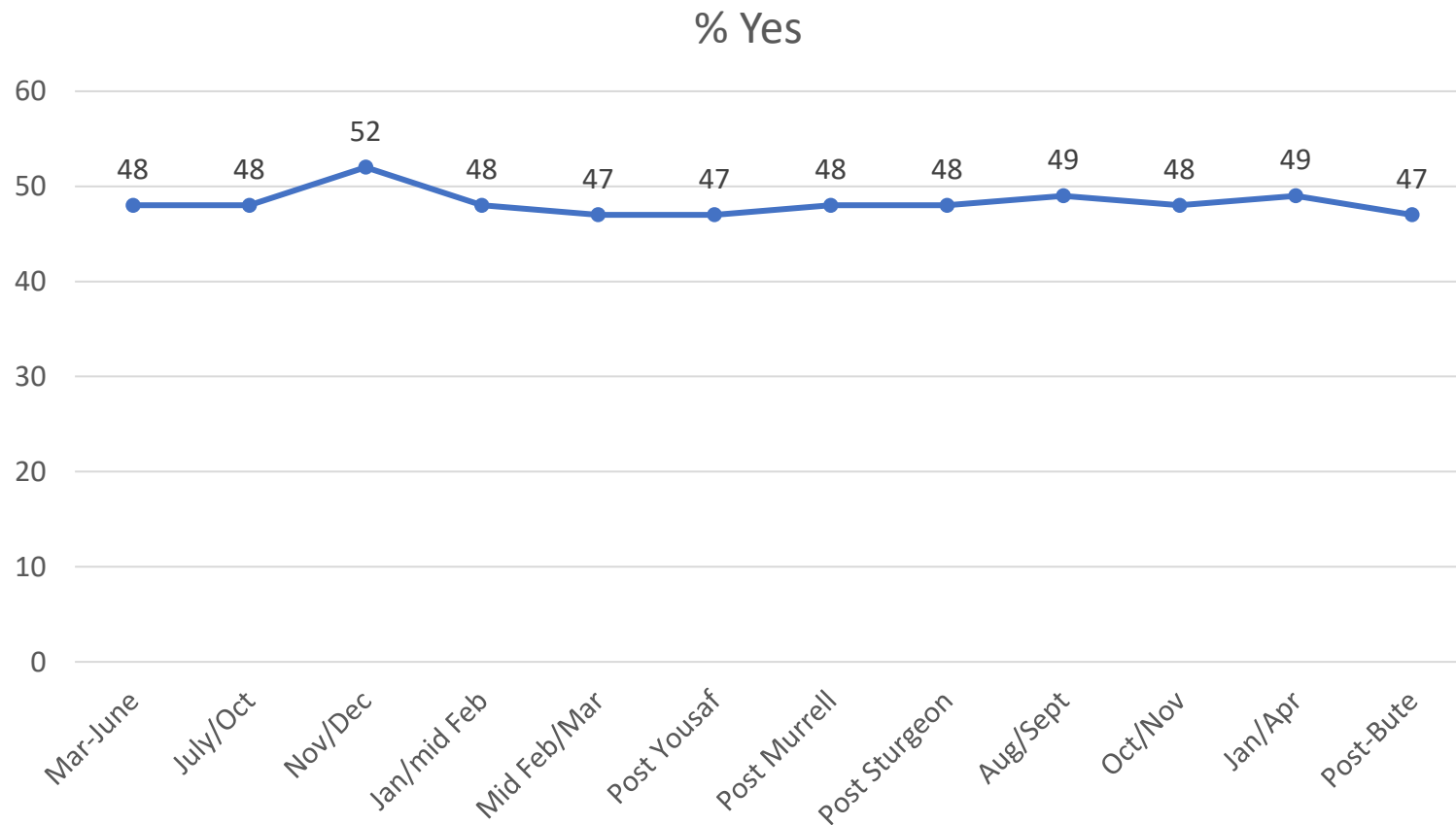
Whatscotlandthinks.org @whatscotsthink

# Trends in Westminster Party Support in Scotland since May 2021



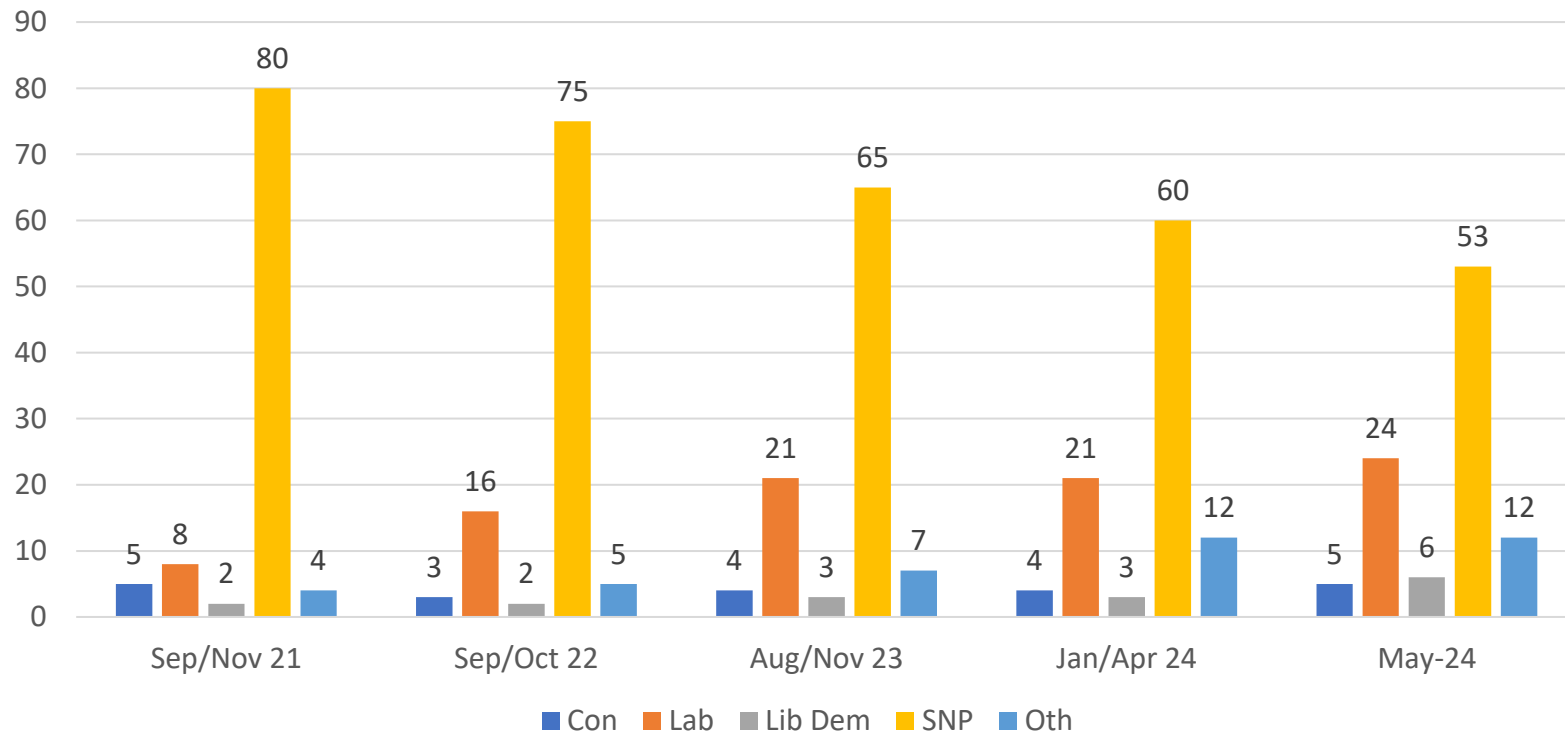
Source: Average of all published Scottish polls of Westminster vi – between 4 and 8 in each period (except 3 in Campaign).

# Recent Trends in Support for Scottish Independence



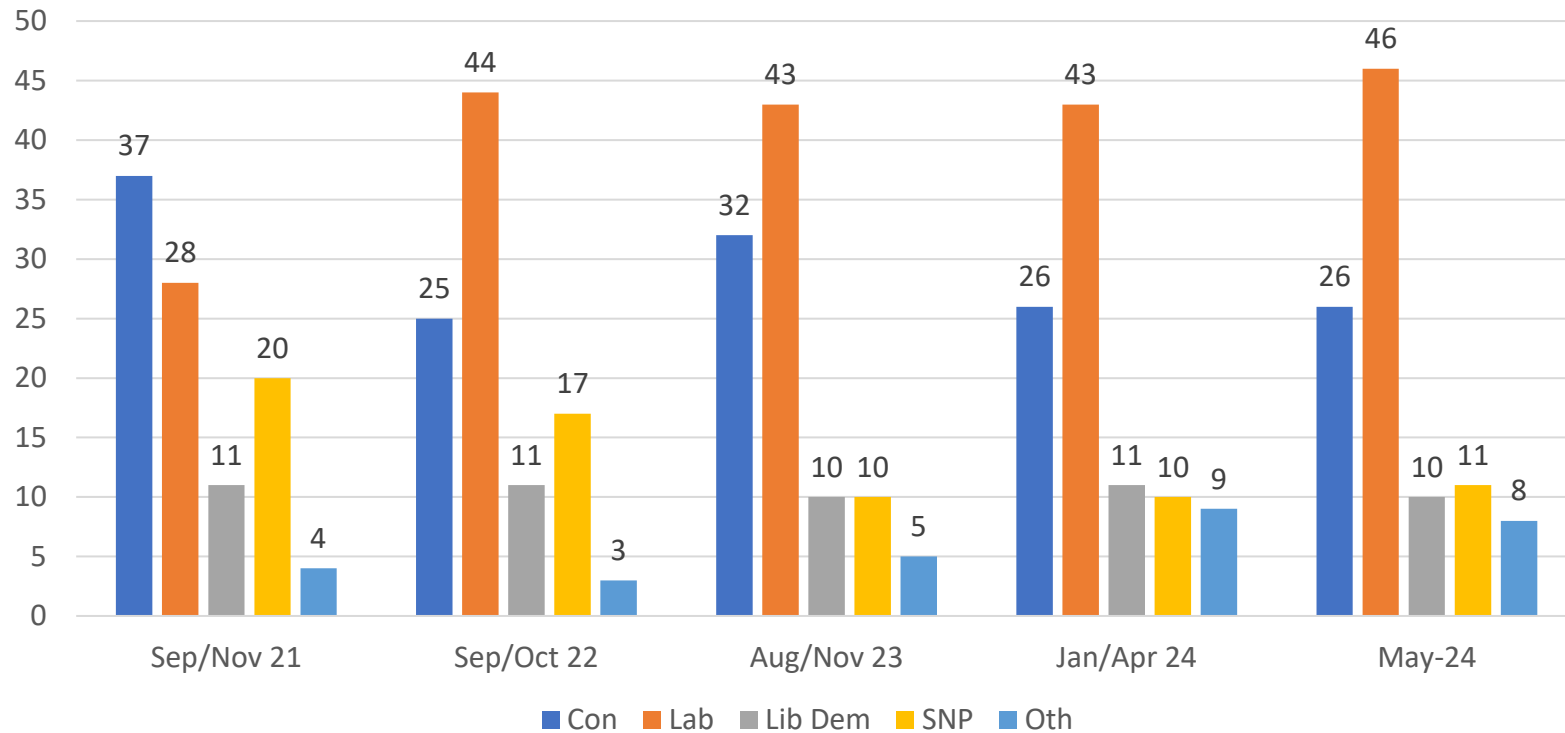
Source: Average of all published polls of indyref2 vote intentions in each period.

# Westminster Preference of 2014 Yes voters



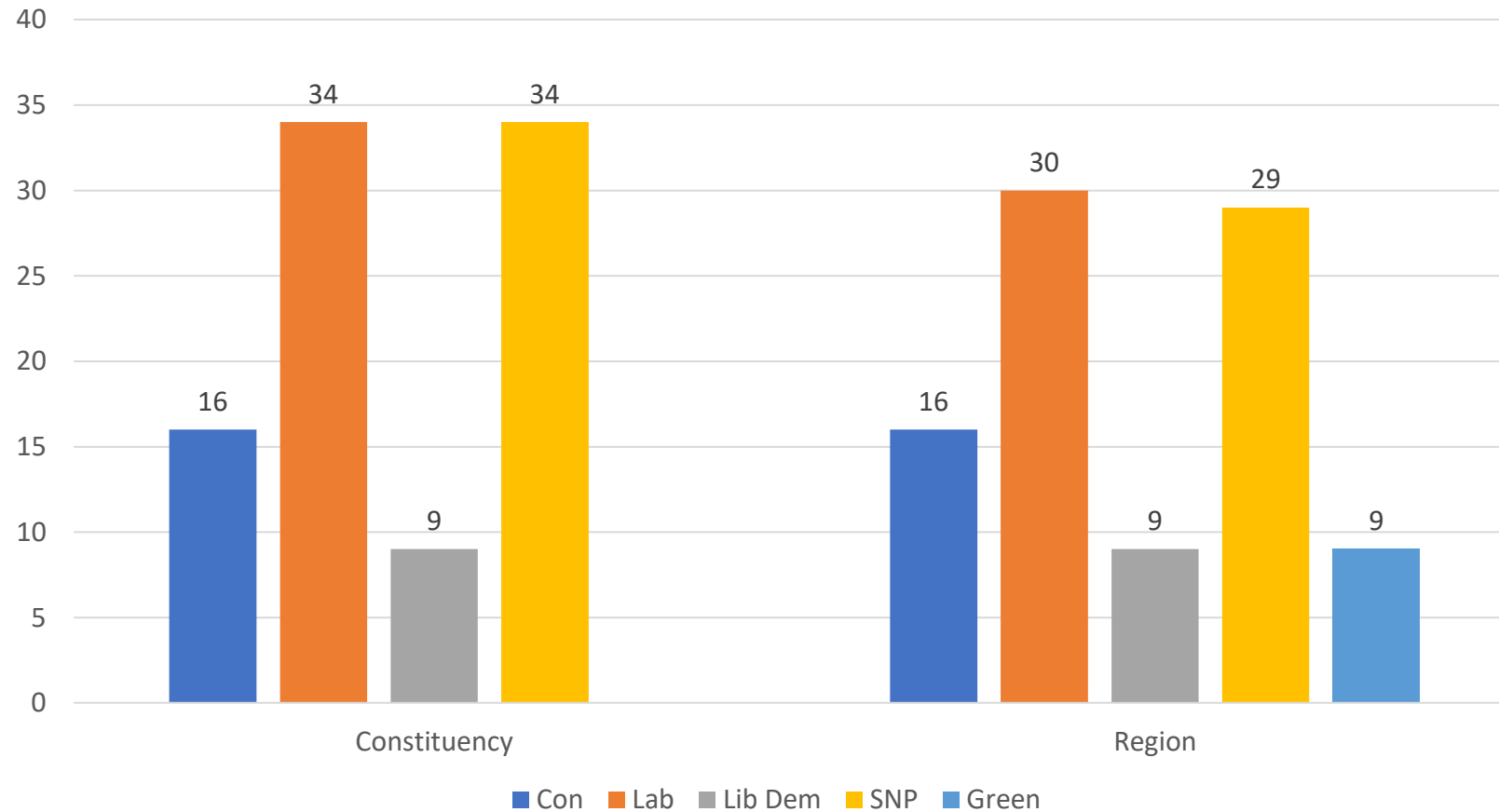
Source: Average of polls by Ipsos, (Opinium), Panelbase, Savanta, Survation and YouGov; Yes/No is 2014 vote  
In polls for which info is available, 61% of current Yes supporters would vote SNP, 22% Labour..

# Westminster Preference of 2014 No Voters



Source: Average of polls by Ipsos, (Opinium), Panelbase, Savanta, Survation and YouGov; Yes/No is 2014 vote  
In polls for which info is available, 47% of current No supporters back Lab, 31% Con, 4% SNP..

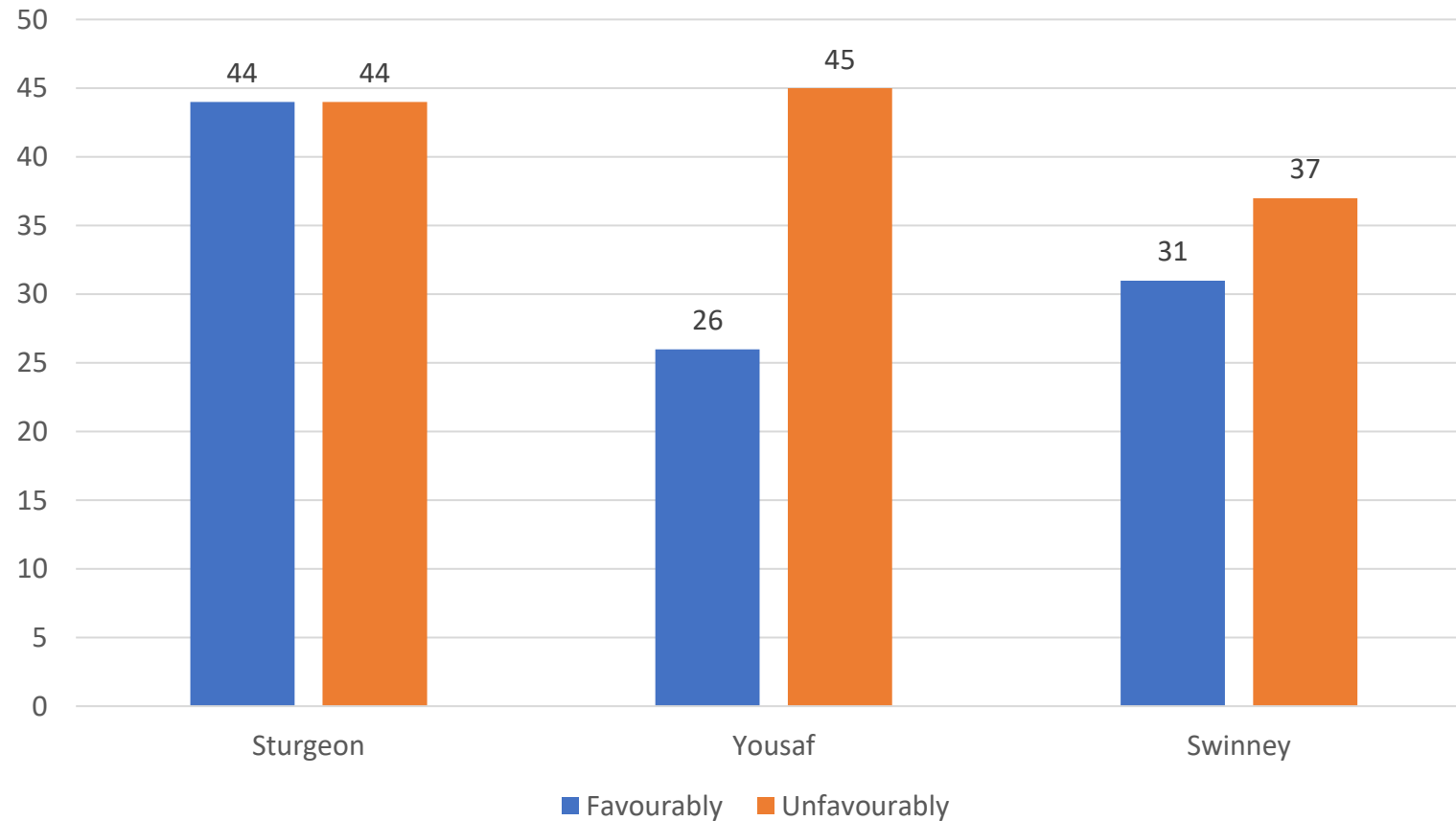
# Current Holyrood Vote Intentions



Source: Average of 8 polls since termination of Bute House Agreement by Panelbase, Redfield & Wilton, Savanta, Survvation, and YouGov

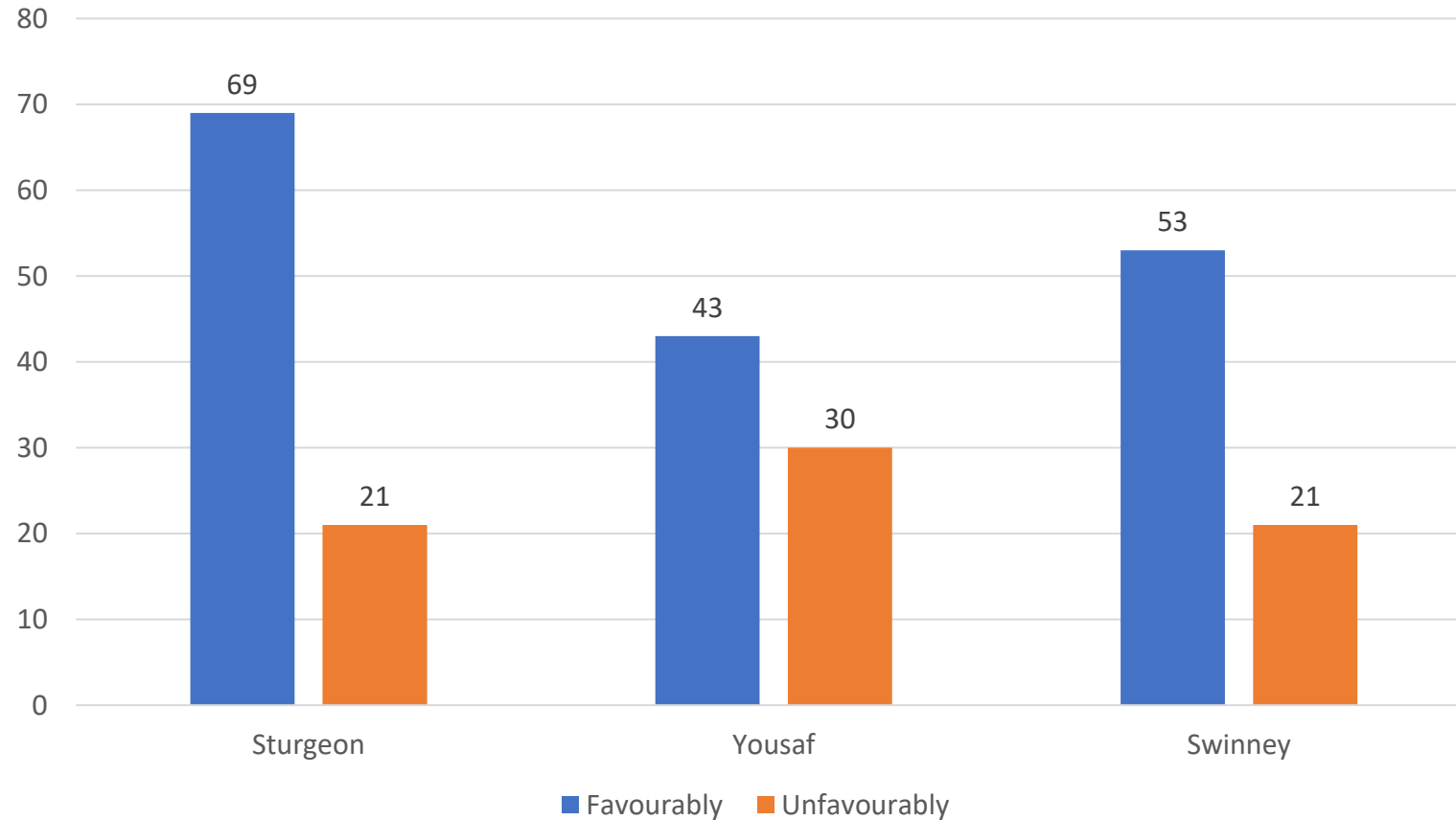


# Less Popular Leaders – All Voters



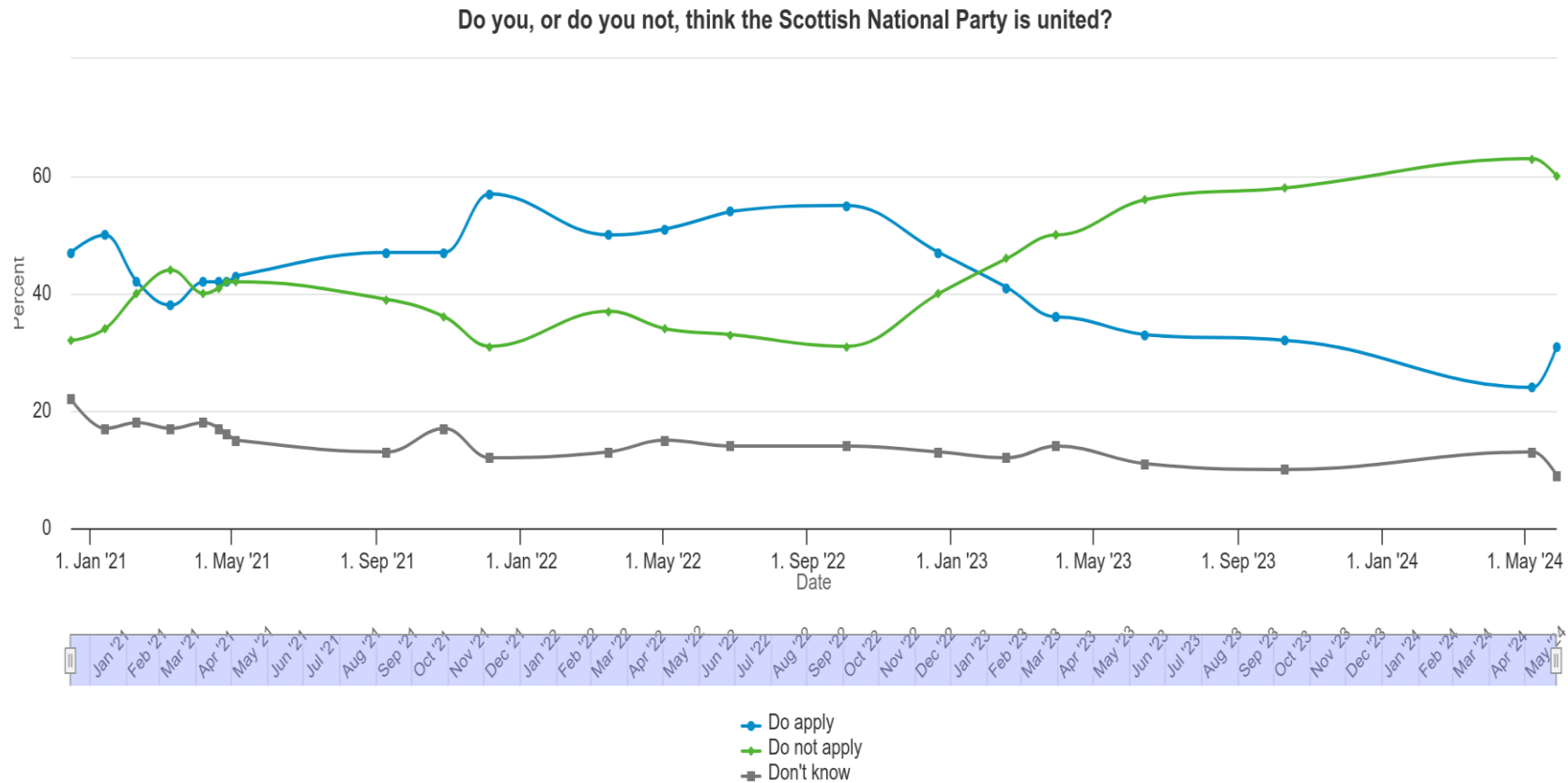
Source: Swinney: Average of Savanta and Survation, May 24; Yousaf: Average of Ipsos & Survation, Jan & Mar 24; Sturgeon Average of Ipsos, Survation & YouGov, Dec. 22-Feb. 23

# Less Popular Leaders – 2014 Yes Voters



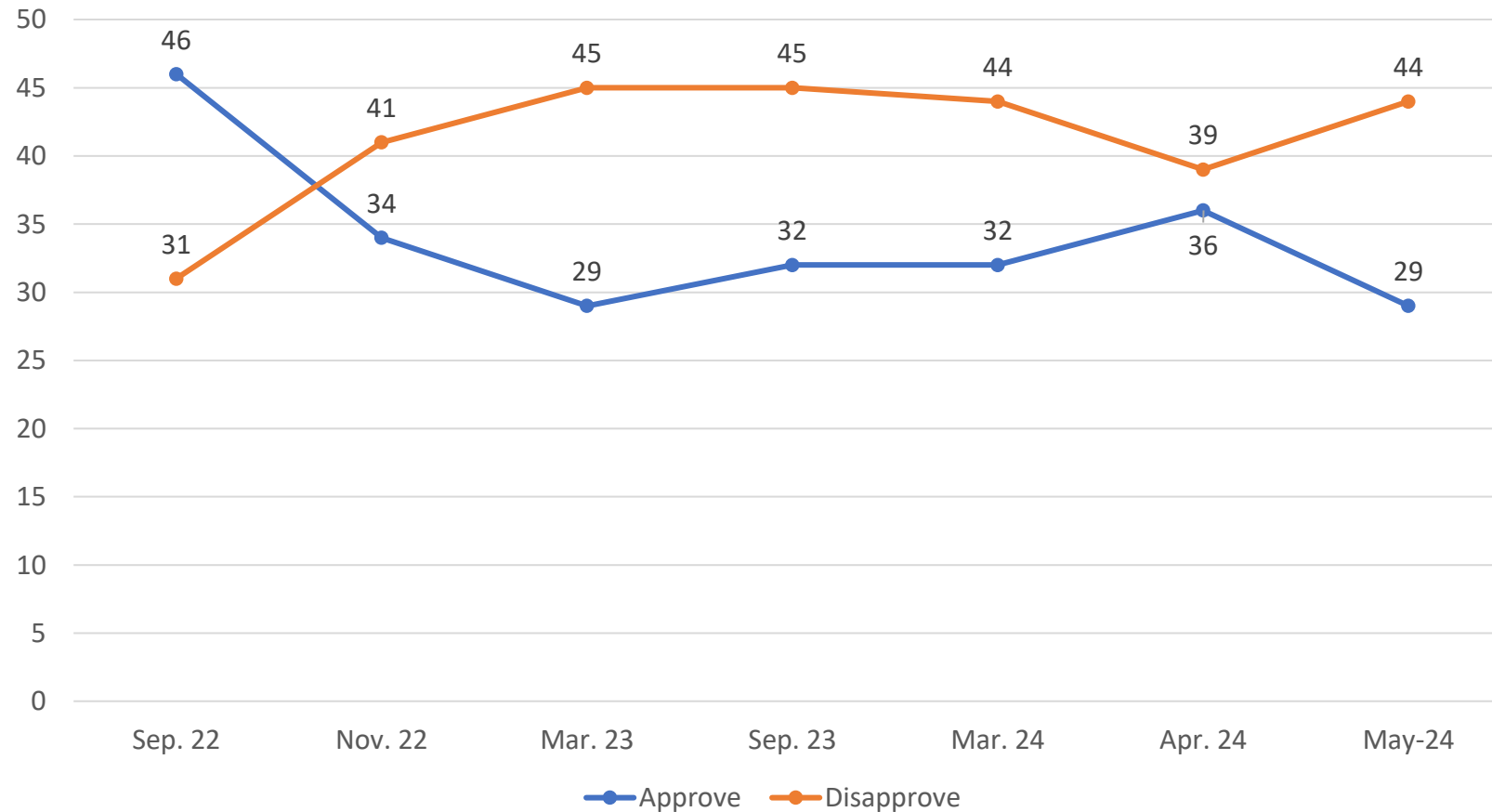
Source: Yousaf: Swinney: Average of Savanta and Survation, May 24; Yousaf: Average of Ipsos & Survation, Jan & Mar 24; Sturgeon Average of Ipsos, Survation & YouGov, Dec. 22-Feb. 23

# Perception of Division



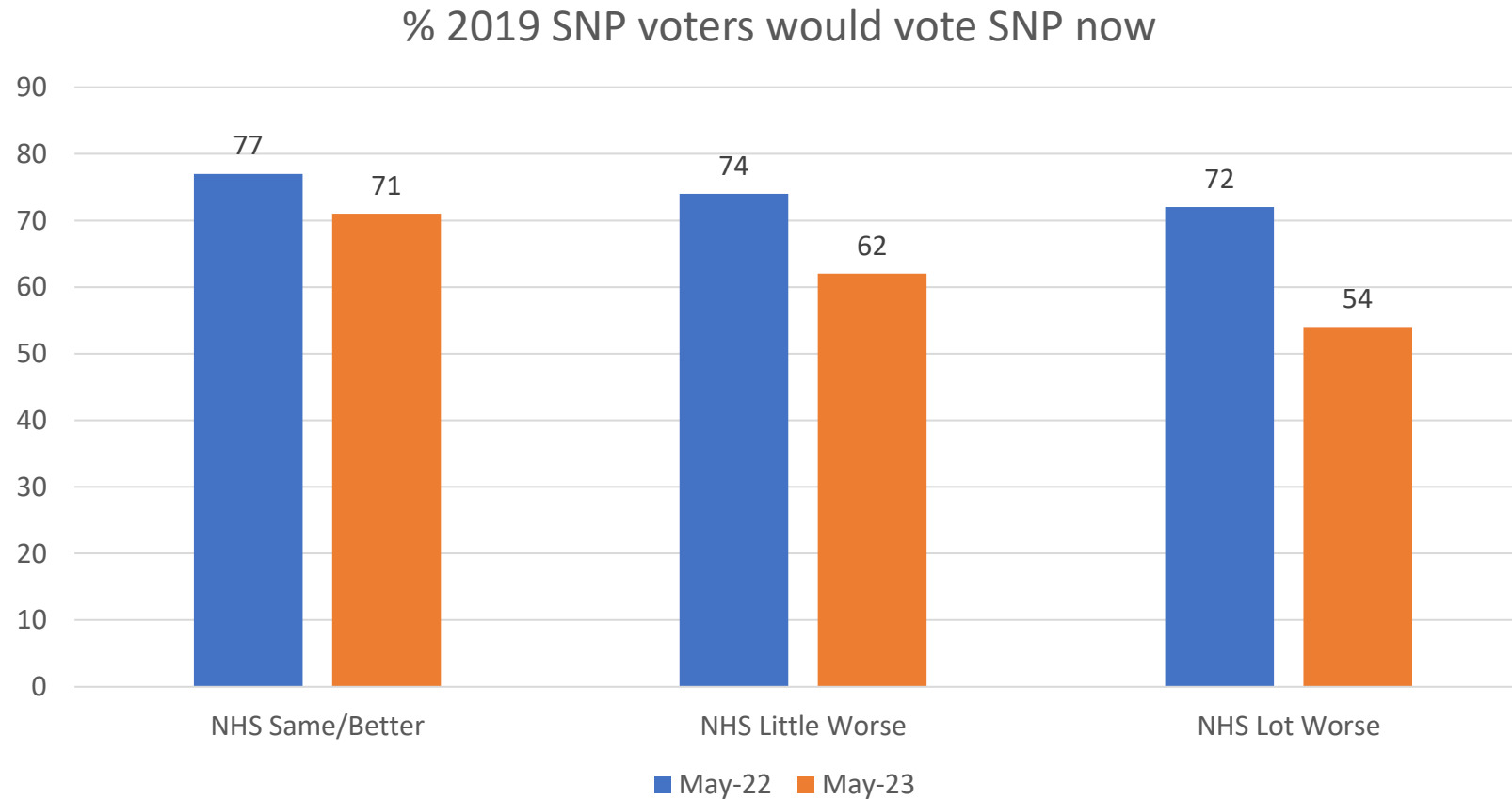
Source: Savanta/Scotsman. In May 44% 2019 SNP voters and 49% of 2014 Yes voters said, 'Does not apply'.

# Evaluations of Scottish Government's Performance on Health



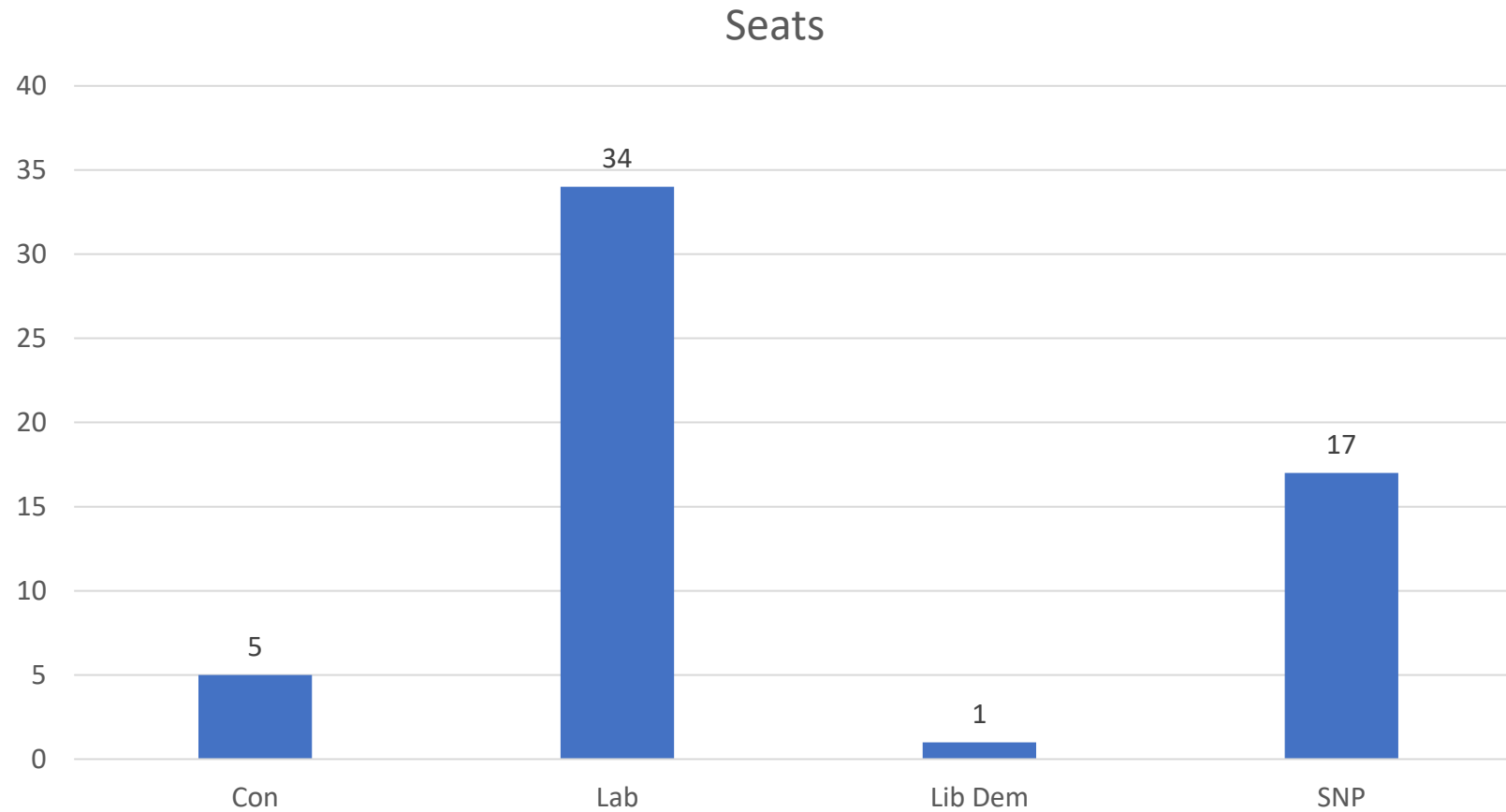
Source: Redfield & Wilton. In May 24, 47% of 2019 SNP voters approved of the SG's handling, 27% disapproved

# SNP Now Being Held To Account?



Source: British Election Study Internet Panel. In May 22 (blue bars), 35% thought the NHS was same/better, 34% a little worse, 25% a lot worse. In May 23 (red bars), 10% thought the NHS was the same/better, 32% a little worse, 54% a lot worse

# What It Might All Mean



Source: YouGov MRP Model: 24.5-1.6.24

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**Part Two:  
Projecting Seats -  
*An MRP Roundtable***

Chair: Jane Green, BPC President

Damian Lyons-Lowe, *Survation*; Martin Baxter, *Electoral Calculus*;

Callum Hunter, *JL Partners*; Patrick English, *YouGov*



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*5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

**Part Three:  
The Campaign to Come**





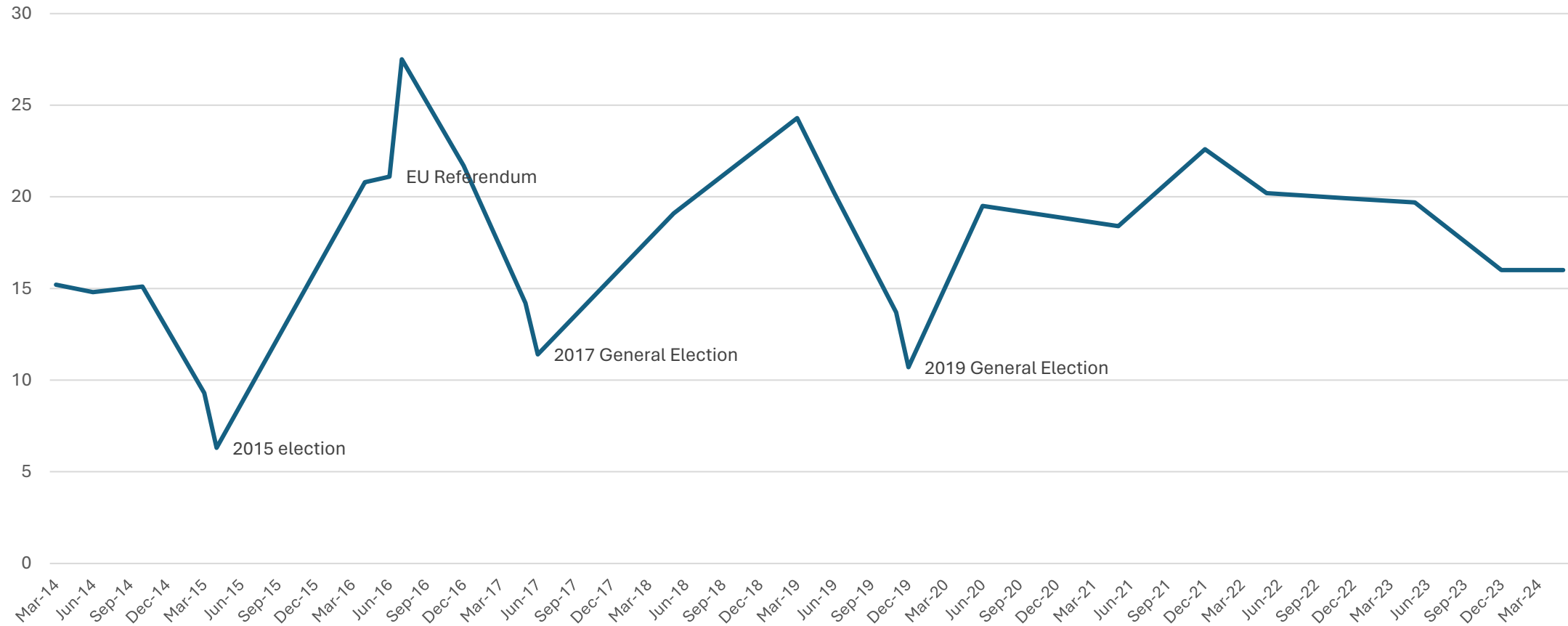
# What about the don't knows?

Professor Paula Surridge  
University of Bristol  
and  
UK in a Changing Europe

# Not an unusual amount of uncertainty

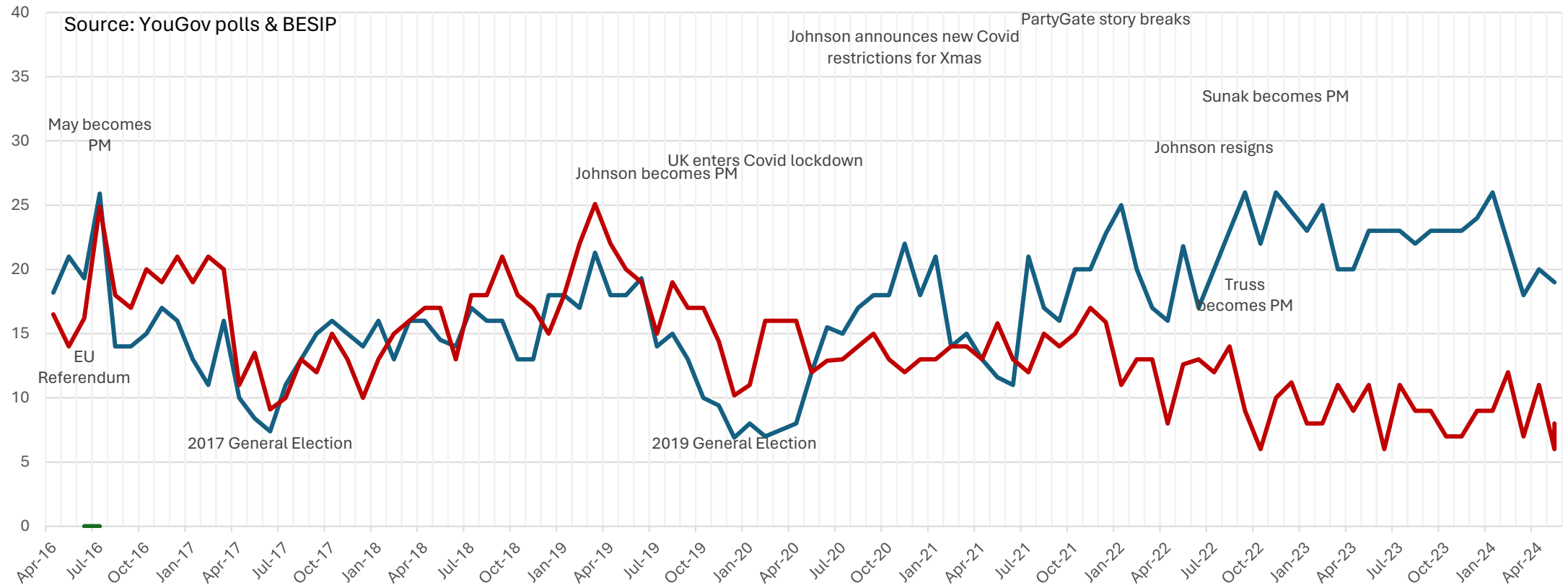
Source: YouGov polls & BESIP

Total % 'don't know'



# But an unusual distribution of it

% of Conservative and Labour voters at previous election undecided how they will vote



# Guess the election

## THE GREAT DON'T KNOW FACTOR

DAVID HUGHES

1 May 1997

Daily Mail

TONY BLAIR leads New Labour into today's General Election buoyed by a record-breaking lead in the polls.

The Tories were praying last night that another record statistic - the army of an estimated four million 'don't know' voters - could still sink his chances and provide the biggest political upset this century. A series of eve-of-poll opinion surveys gave Labour a commanding lead, ranging from ten to 22 points - the largest ever enjoyed by an Opposition challenging for power. The lowest rating would give Mr Blair an 83-seat majority. At the highest it would be 223.

Publications

### 'Don't Knows' reveal fragility of Labour poll lead

Best for Britain | November 18, 2022


Best for Britain warns against complacency among opposition parties as analysis of new data suggests the Tories are not as far behind as recent polls have shown.

## The Sunday Long Read

In a startling result, the recent YouGov poll found that in his own, usually safe, Conservative constituency, **Rishi Sunak** was beaten into third place by 'don't know'. When so many people are disillusioned about politics, could this be the election when the 'don't knows' decide the result?

News

## Election '97: Last-minute rescue by cavalry of 'don't knows' is a party myth

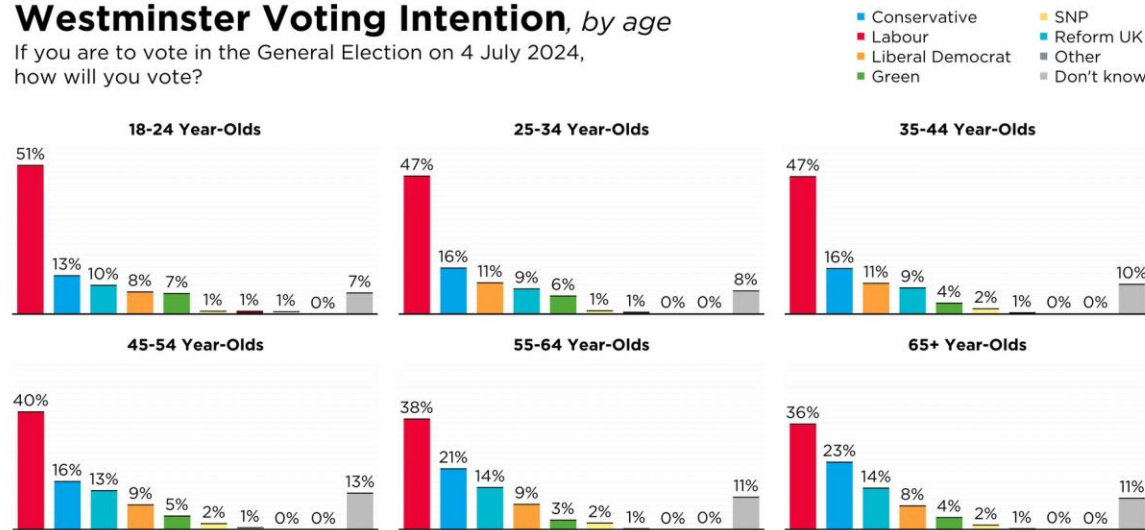
Sunday 06 April 1997 23:02 BST •  Comments



# Can don't knows save the Conservatives this time?

## Westminster Voting Intention, by age

If you are to vote in the General Election on 4 July 2024, how will you vote?



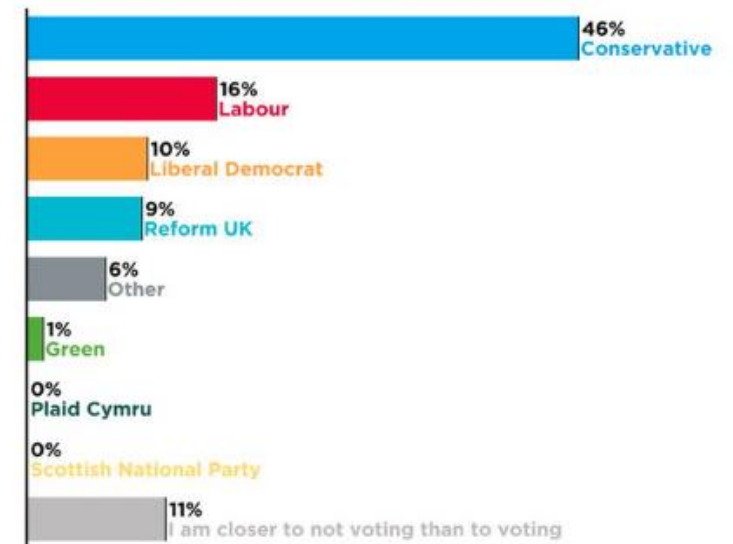
REDFIELD & WILTON STRATEGIES

Redfield & Wilton Strategies | GB | 10,000 | 31 May-2 June 2024

## Westminster Voting Intention

Undecided 2019 Conservative Voters

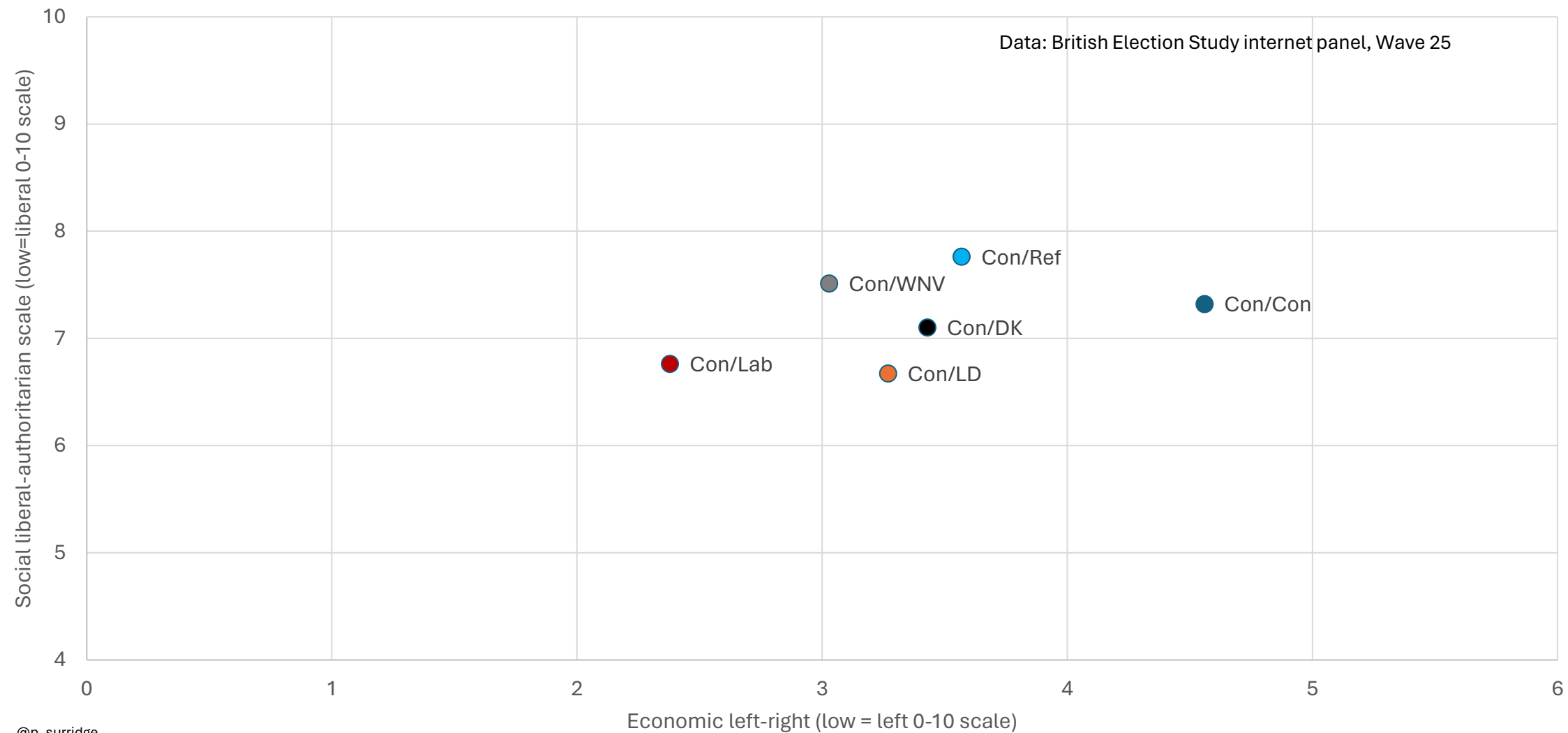
You have indicated that you are undecided. Which way are you leaning closest towards voting?



REDFIELD & WILTON STRATEGIES

Weighted By Likelihood to Vote  
Redfield & Wilton Strategies  
GB | 397 | 31 May-2 June 2024

# Value positions of **2019 Conservative voters** by vote intention in May 2023



# Win voters back with a culture war?

Too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use

Statues of prominent historical figures *should not* be taken down, even if they profited from the slave trade

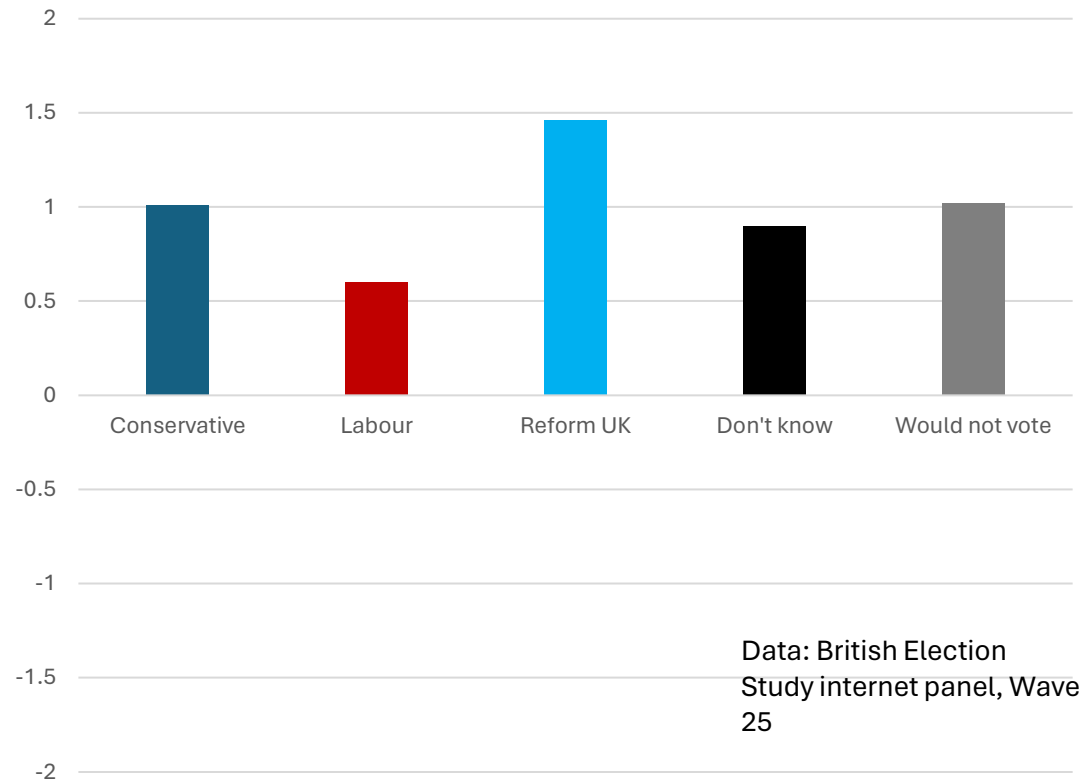
Workplaces should end mandatory diversity training

School and university curriculums should include fewer white male authors and more female and non-white authors

Transgender women (someone who was biologically male at birth, but now identifies as a woman) *should be allowed* to compete in female-sex sport

BBC children's TV shows *should* portray more families with same-sex parents

Average position of **Conservative 2019** voters on 'Culture Wars' scale by vote intention in May 2023



# What can the Conservatives do?

- Minimise losses and hope to fight the next election on their home turf
- Easier said than done. Pitches to save Reform vote may alienate everyone else.



More information or contact me

Twitter: @p\_surrIDGE





TRINITY COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD

# Tactical Voting

Stephen Fisher

- Presentation for the British Polling Council and LSE Methodology event 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

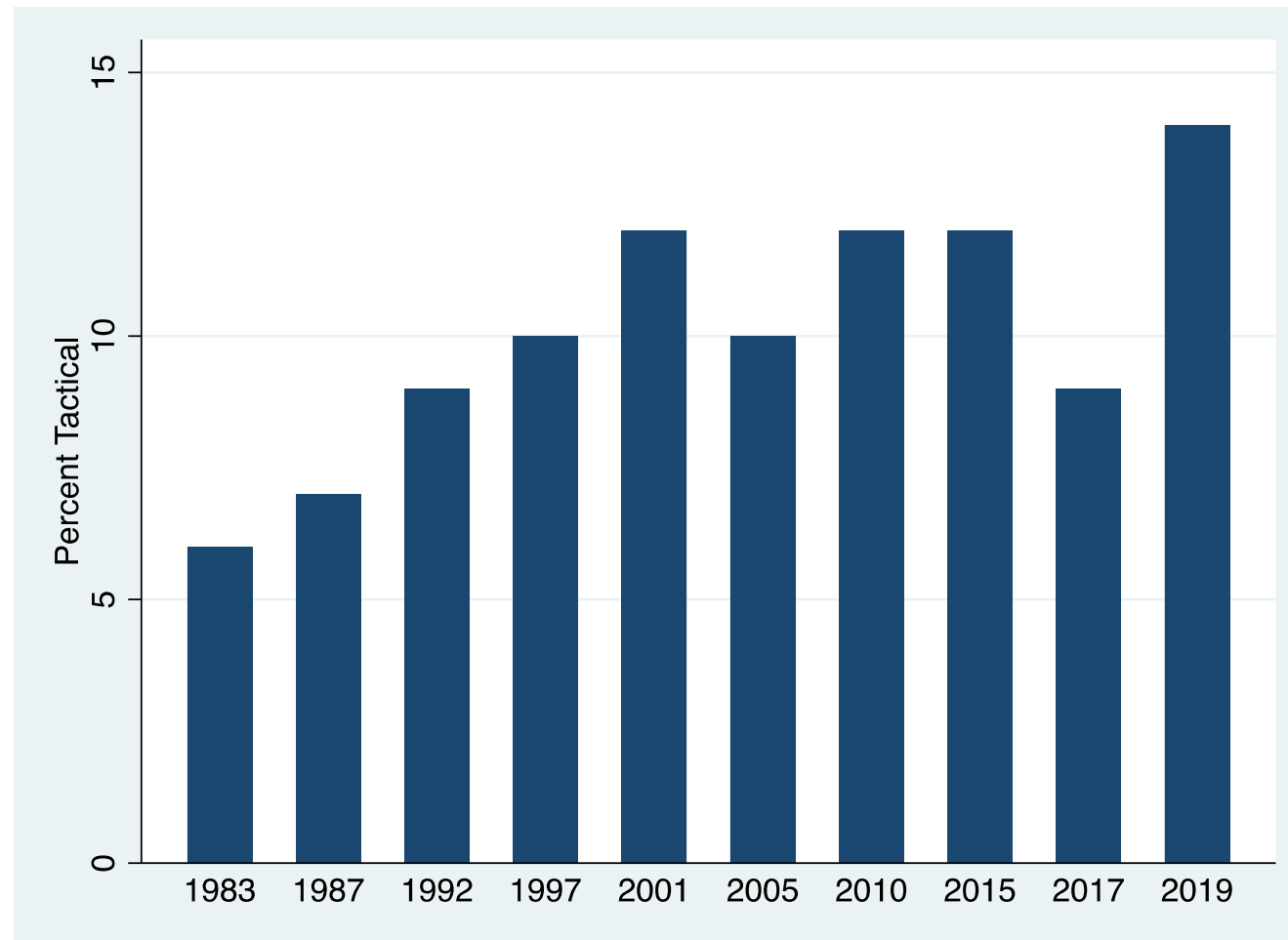
# The story so far...

- By-elections since 2019 showing either
  - record Con to Lab swings with LD going backwards
  - or massive Con to LD swings with Labour going backwards
- Local election results in 2023 and 2024 in which Labour and Liberal Democrats both do best when they were starting 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Conservatives.
- Similar story before 1997 Labour landslide

But...

- Turnout at those events much lower than in general elections
- Coordinated party campaigning at by-elections
- Anti-Tory voting not necessarily tactical voting

Percentage who said they voted "tactically" or "really preferred another party but it had no chance of winning in this constituency"



Source: British Election Survey post-election face-to-face surveys and 2019 probability survey

# Possible changes in the drivers of tactical voting **from** a particular party

- **Pool of Potential:**

- More people supporting that party?

- **Opportunity:**

- Party coming third or lower in more constituencies?

- **Motives:**

- Third-party supporters more fond of one of the top two in the constituency?
- Third-party supporters more hostile to the least liked of the top two in the constituency?

# Average like-dislike (0-10) scores, BES May 2023

	Con Voters	Lab Voters	LD Voters	Green Voters	Reform Voters
Con	7.4	1.4	2.5	1.5	3.9
Lab	2.1	7.0	4.6	4.1	1.2
LD	2.9	4.8	6.7	4.0	1.2
Green	2.8	5.5	5.4	7.6	1.7
Reform	3.2	1.4	1.5	1.0	7.8
N	6011	9067	2396	1495	1416

# Change in Motivation?

## 2019 campaign to May 2024

	Con Voters	Lab Voters	LD Voters	Grn Voters	Reform/ Brexit Voters
Con	0.0	0.2	0.0	-0.8	-1.2
Lab	0.5	-0.5	0.5	-0.4	-0.7
LD	0.7	0.5	-0.2	-0.5	-0.3
Green	0.0	-0.7	-0.5	-0.3	-1.0
Reform/ Brexit	-1.9	0.5	0.9	-0.3	0.0

# Changing Pool of Potential

	<b>Change in Vote share (2019-2024) percentage points</b>
<b>Con</b>	<b>-22</b>
<b>Lab</b>	<b>+12</b>
<b>LD</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>+3</b>
<b>Reform/Brexit</b>	<b>+9</b>



# Change in Opportunities:

Number of seats where each party is 3<sup>rd</sup> or lower

	2019	2024 Uniform Change	2024 YouGov MRP
Con	50	212	146
Lab	126	47	82
LD	529	559	545
Green	628	625	583
Brexit/Reform	628	507	604
#Top2 Con & Lab	461	374	407

- Includes non-candidature, except speaker seat.
- Huge uncertainty over who's coming third or lower in each seat in 2024, due to boundary changes as well as uncertainty in changes in party support.

# Summary of changes since 2019 in the drivers of tactical voting

Party supported	Pool of potential (# supporters)	Opportunity (placed third or lower)	Motive (preference structure)	Overall
Lab	Lots more	Much less	Up for Lib Dems	Mixed
LD	Slightly fewer	Slightly more	Up for Labour	Mixed
Green	Slightly more	Little relevant	Down for Lab and Lib Dem	Mixed
Reform/ Brexit	Lots more	Lots less	Down for Con	Mixed

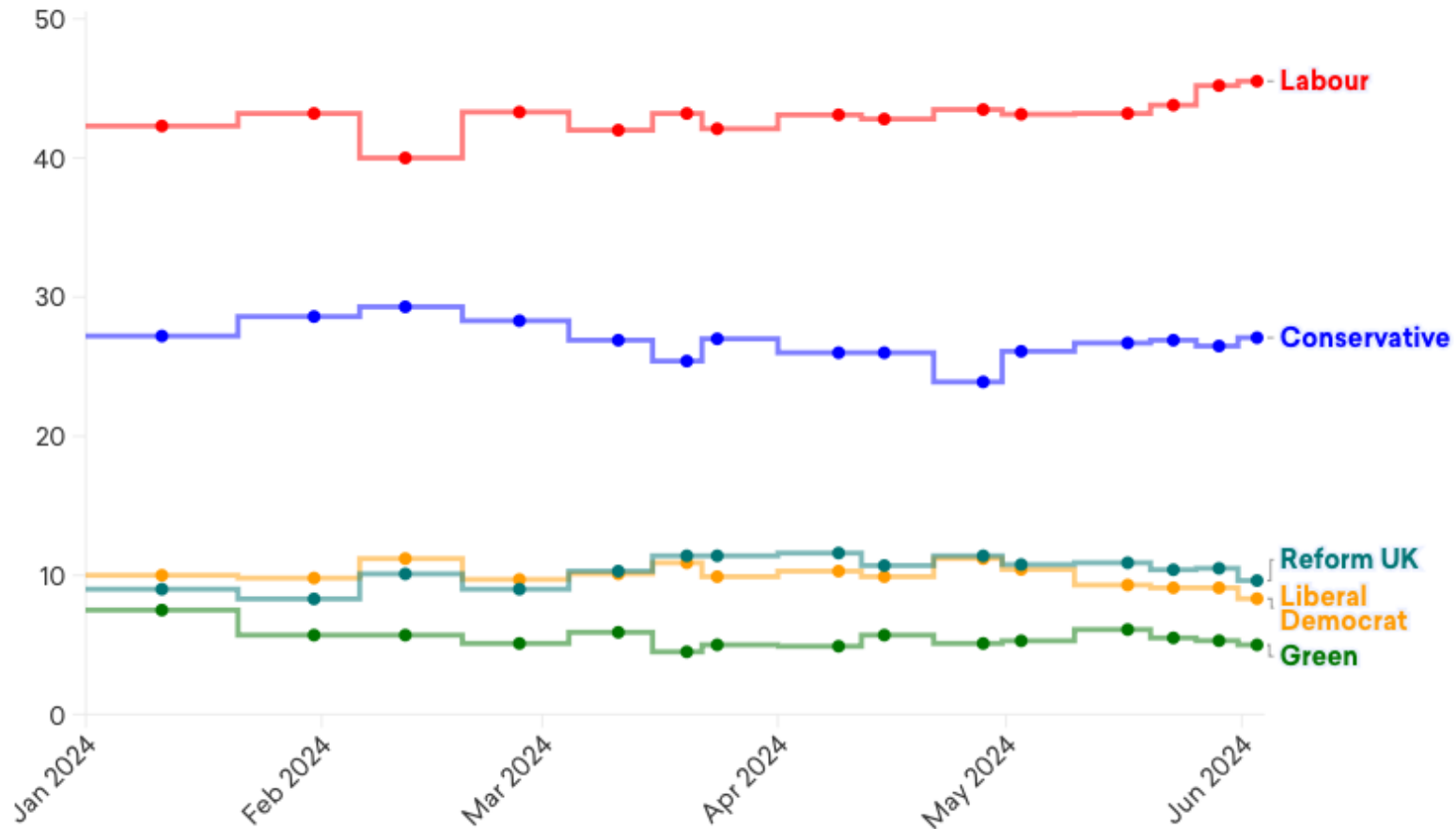
# What could change?

Luke Tryl

*5th June 2024*

# Voting intention has been very stable this year

## Westminster voting intention over time

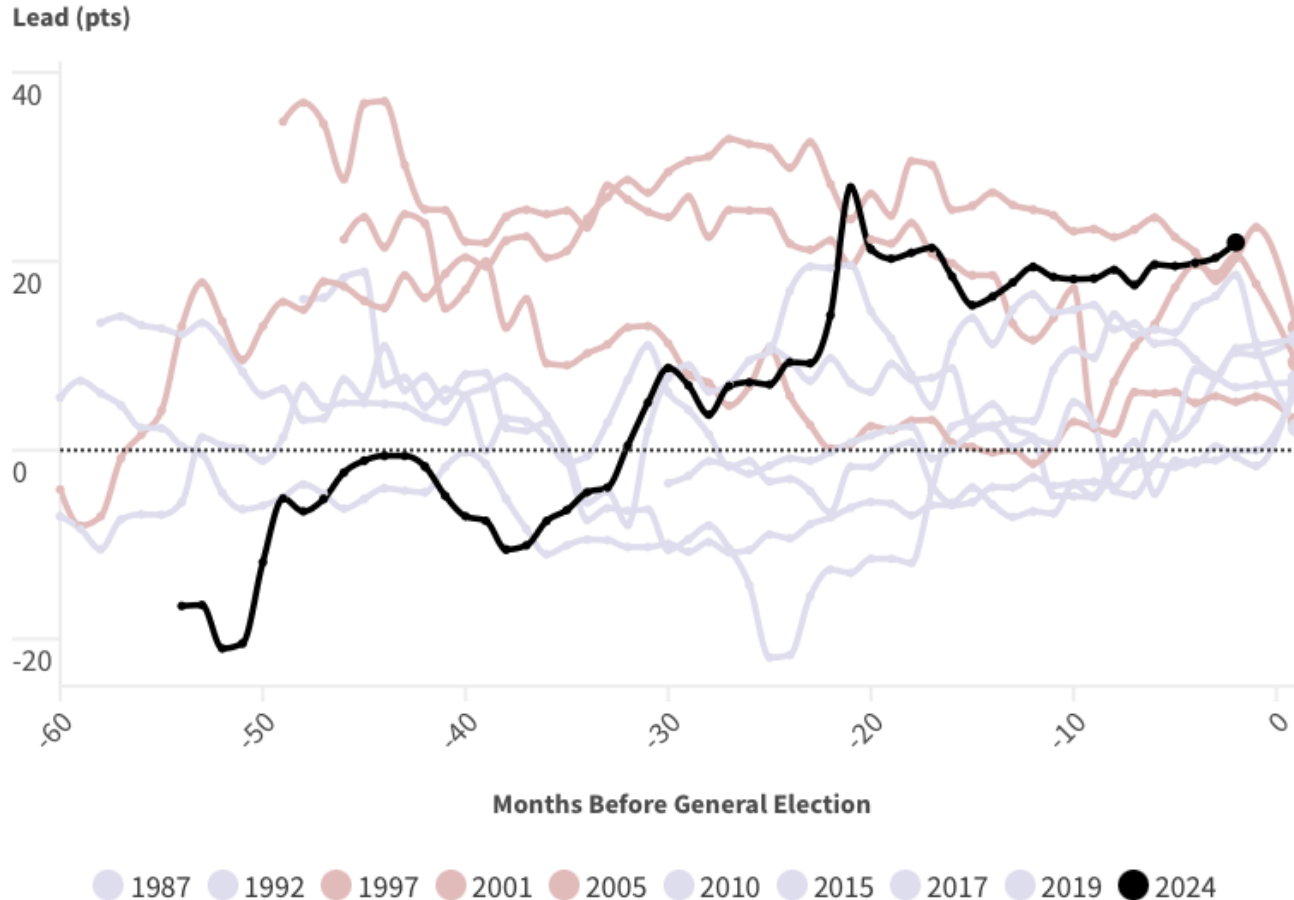


Source: More in Common, [Methodology change information here](#) • Latest fieldwork: 27-29 May 2024

# Polls usually tighten, but haven't so far...

## Labour's Lead in Historical Context

Winning party's lead over second party in GB voting intention polls



Historically, incumbents recover in the run-up to the election.

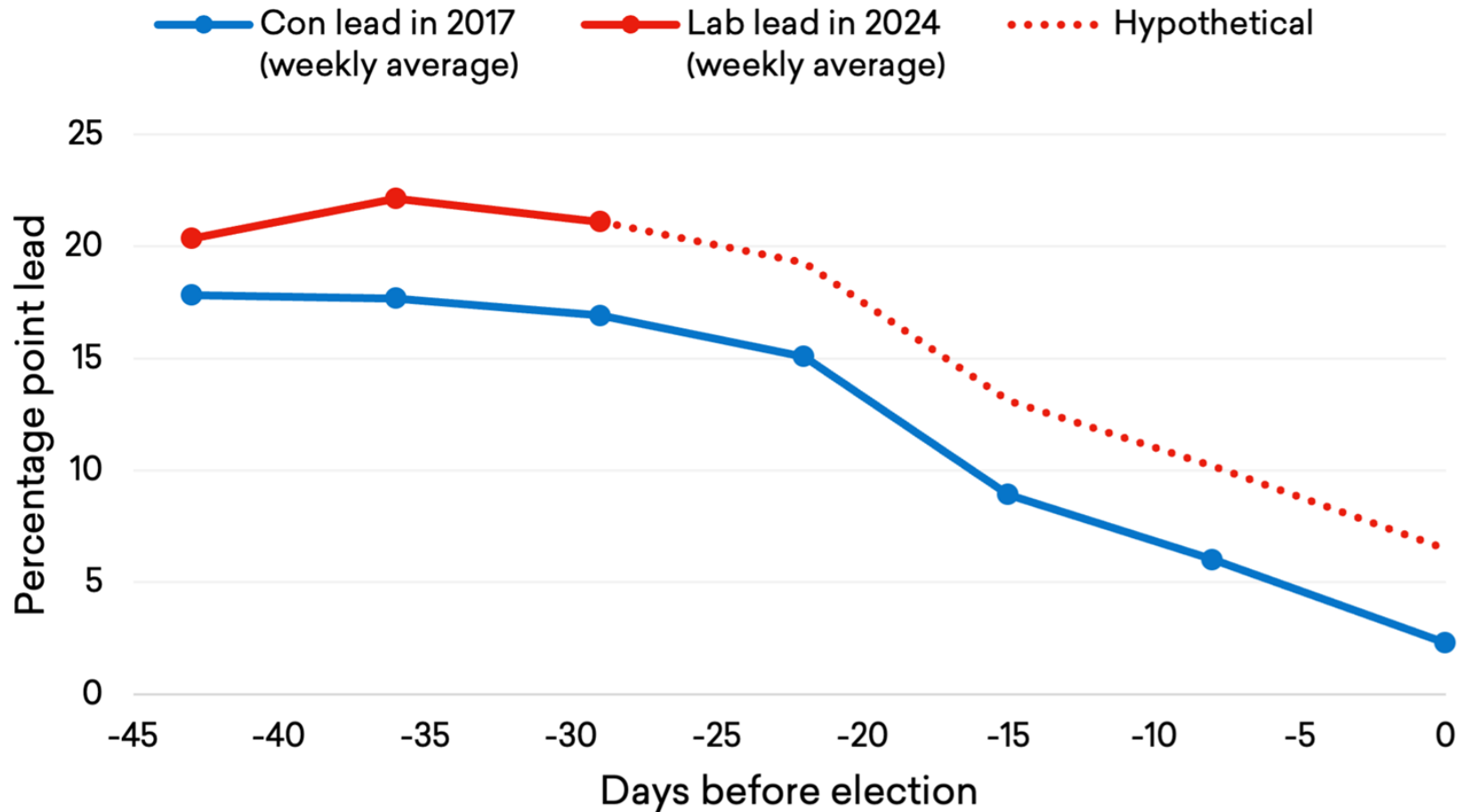
In 1997, Labour's lead fell by 9.6-points in the six months before polling day.

In 2010, the Conservatives' lead fell by 4.1-points in the last six months.

But Labour's lead has remained stable throughout 2024.

# A good (bad) campaign can make all the difference

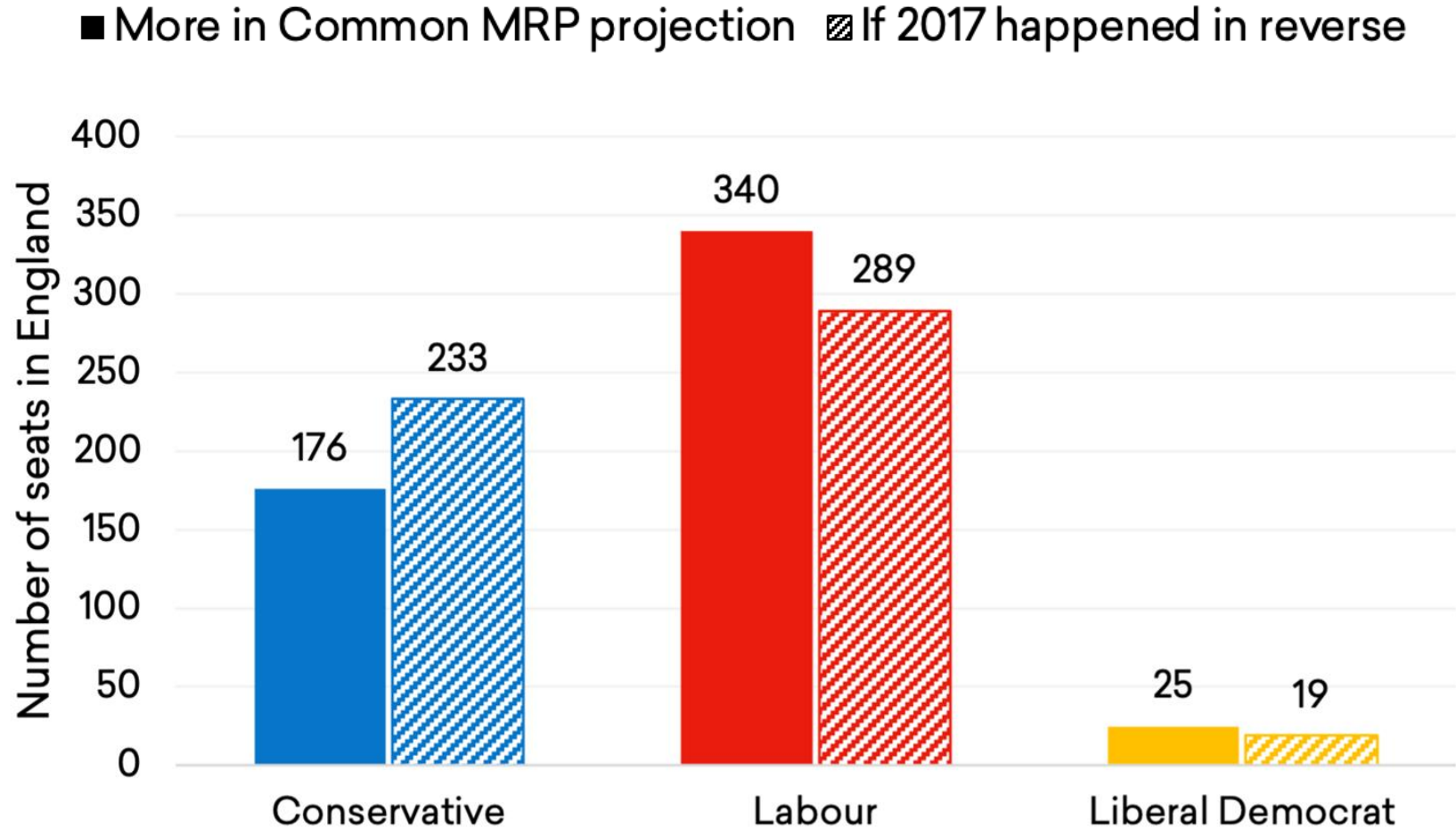
What if the 2017 campaign shift happened in reverse and Starmer's lead evaporated much like May's in 2017?



In 2017, Theresa May started around 18 points ahead of Jeremy Corbyn, but finished only 2 points ahead

If the same happens in 2024, Starmer's 20-point lead would shrink to 6 points.

# A good campaign can make all the difference



Taking More in Common's most recent MRP projection as a baseline, we model a simple UNS (England only) assuming that 2017 happens in reverse

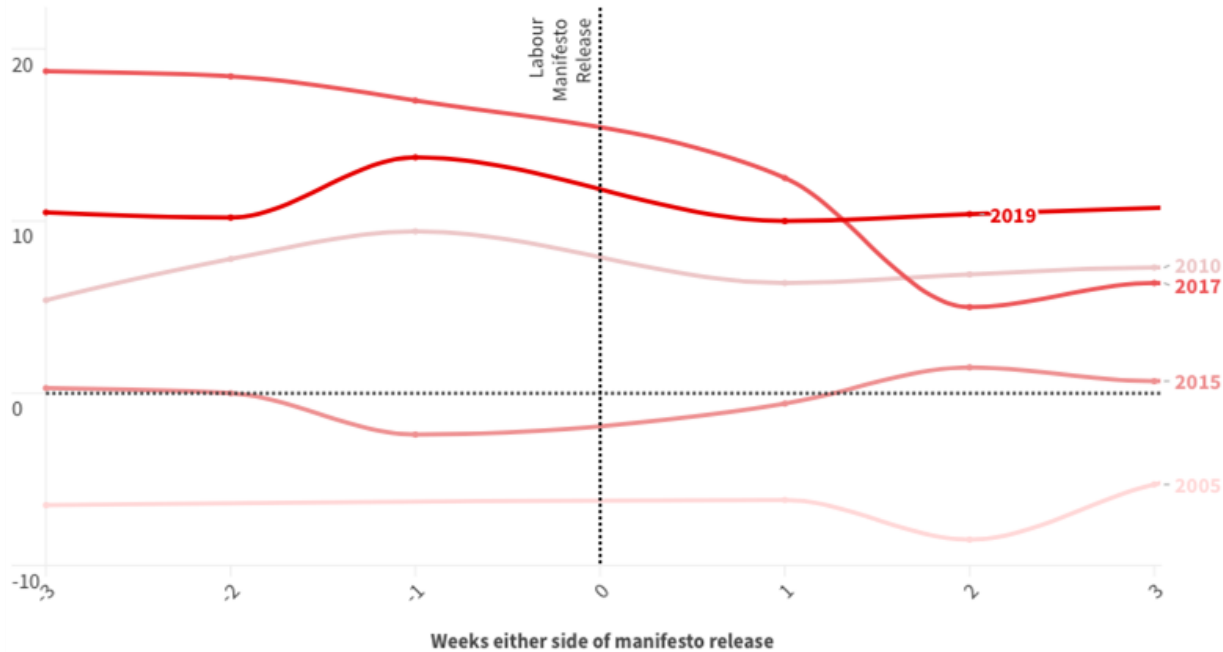
Starmer would need to rely on winning 36 seats in Scotland and Wales to secure a majority

# Manifestos rarely shift the dial - apart from 2017

Over the last five elections, manifesto commitments have not tended to make a significant difference to voting intention. But 2017 is an outlier - the Conservative lead fell from 17pts to 8pts after the manifesto was released.

Conservative Party's lead over Labour Party in GB voting intention polls

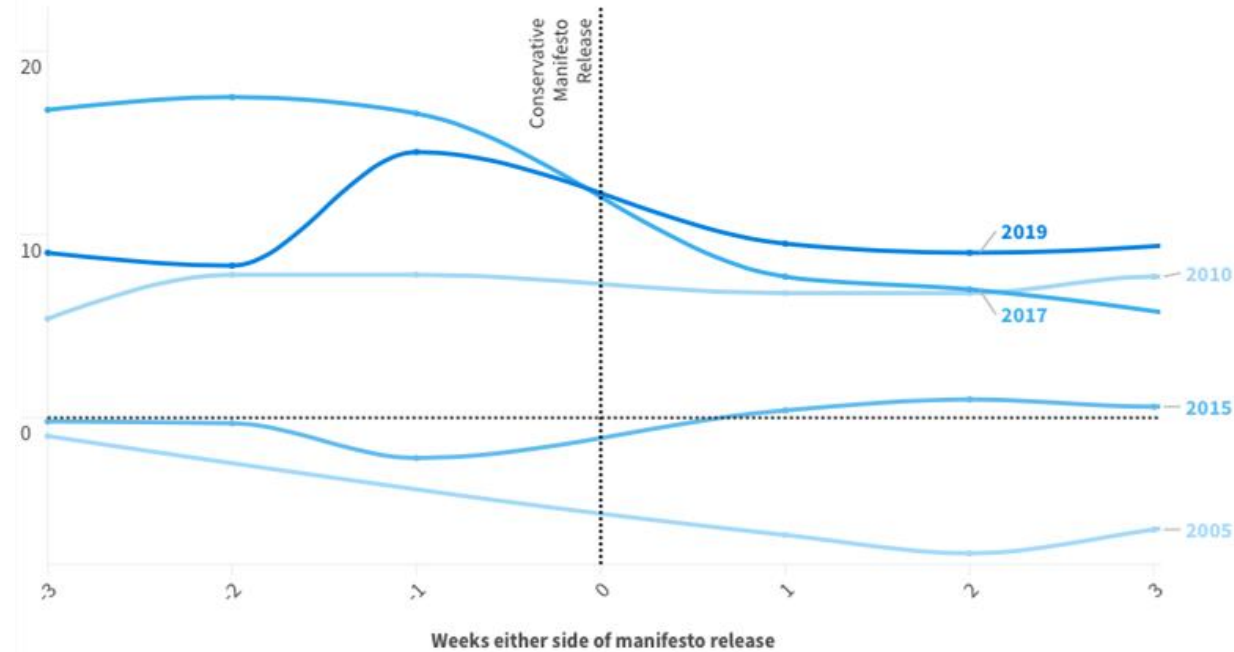
Conservative lead (pts)



Source: PollBase

Conservative Party's lead over Labour Party in GB voting intention polls

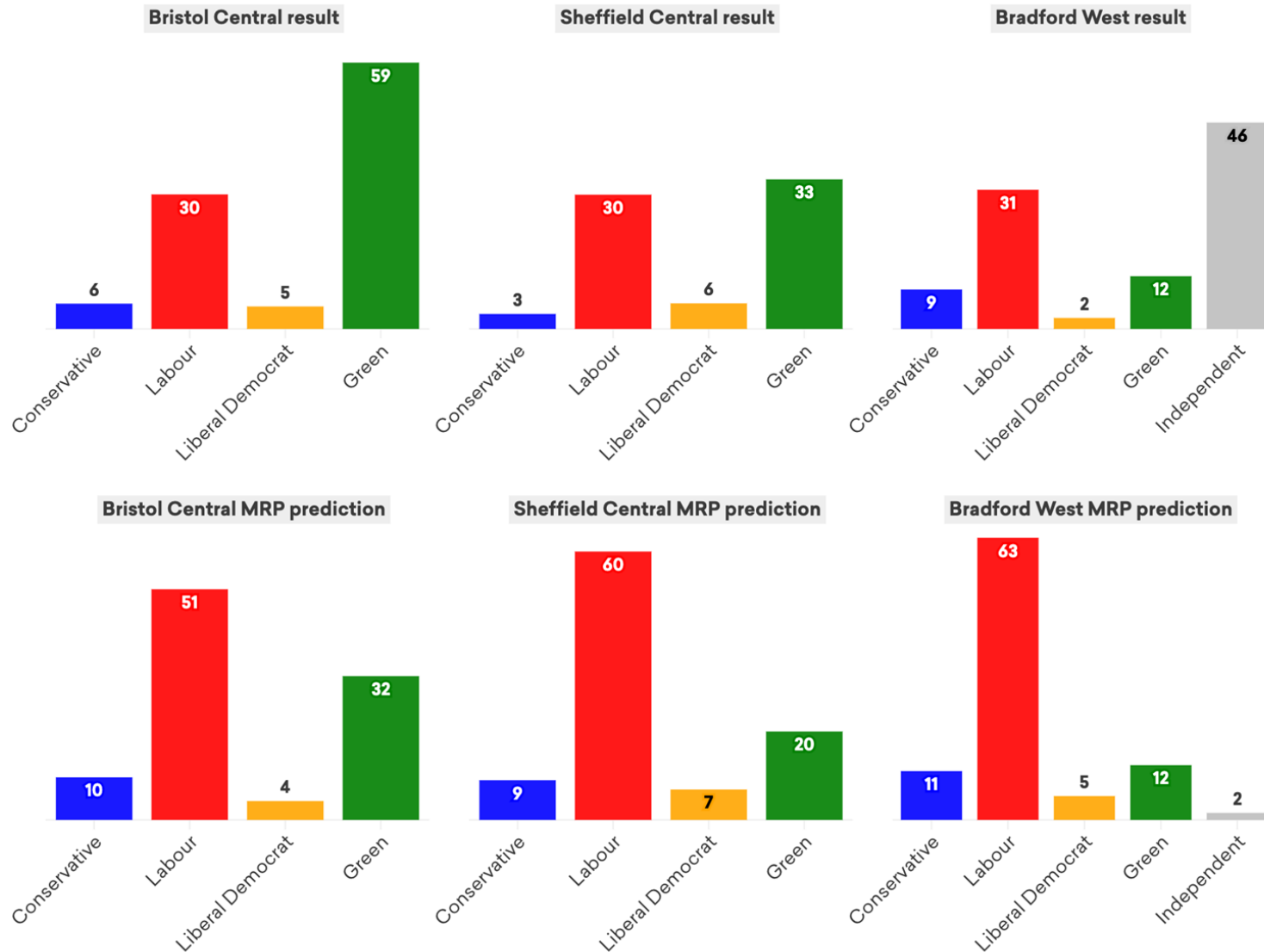
Conservative Lead (pts)



Source: PollBase



# Greens and independents on Labour's left flank



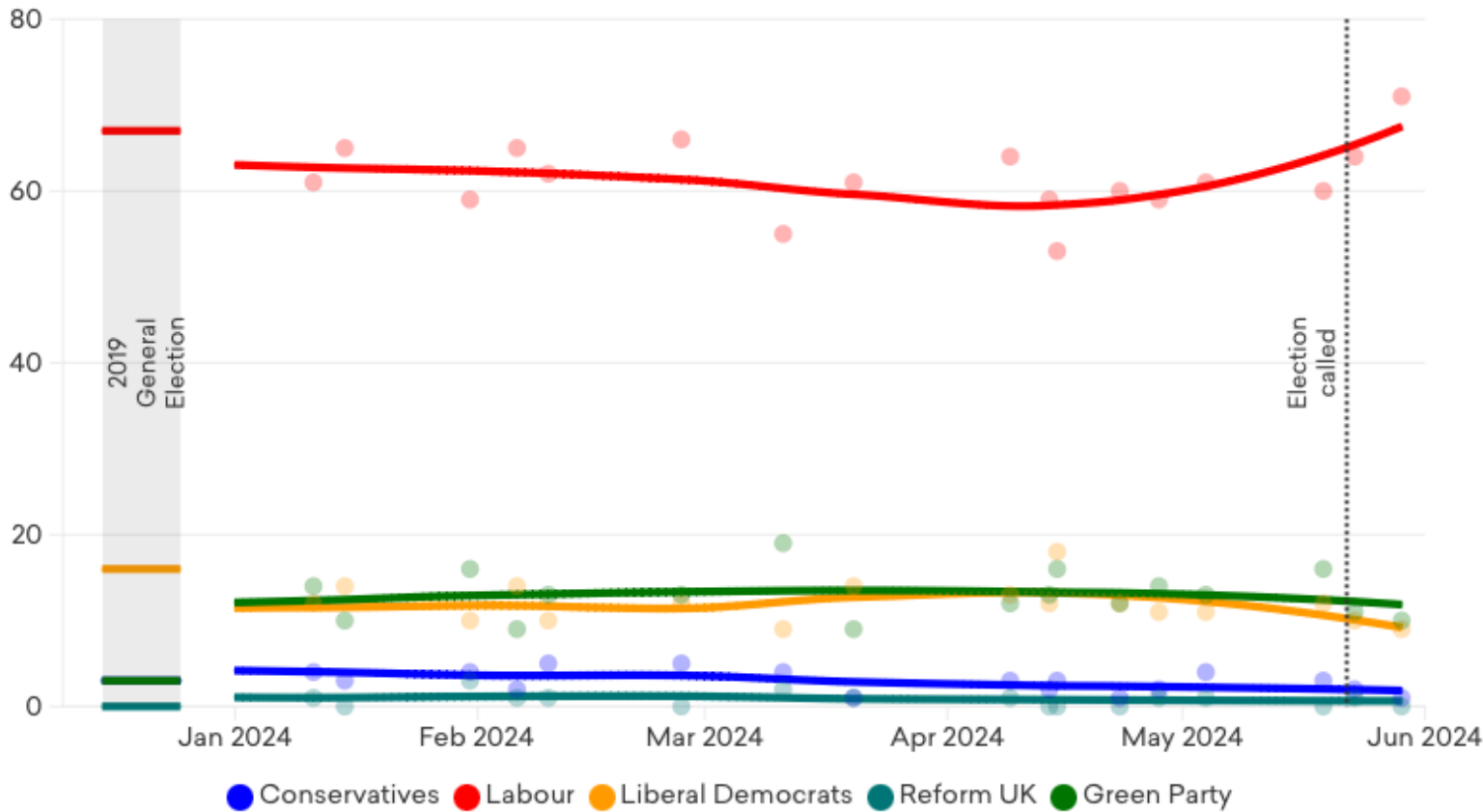
At the 2024 local elections, the Greens overperformed MRP polling predictions in a range of seats, in most cases at the expense of Labour.

Of those councils up for election, MRP polls predict the highest vote share for the Greens in Bristol Central, Sheffield Central, and Bradford West - and the Greens outperformed prediction in two of these.

The exception is Bradford where strong independent candidates massively outperformed MRPs.

# Could Labour squeeze progressive voters?

## Progressive Activist Voting Intention



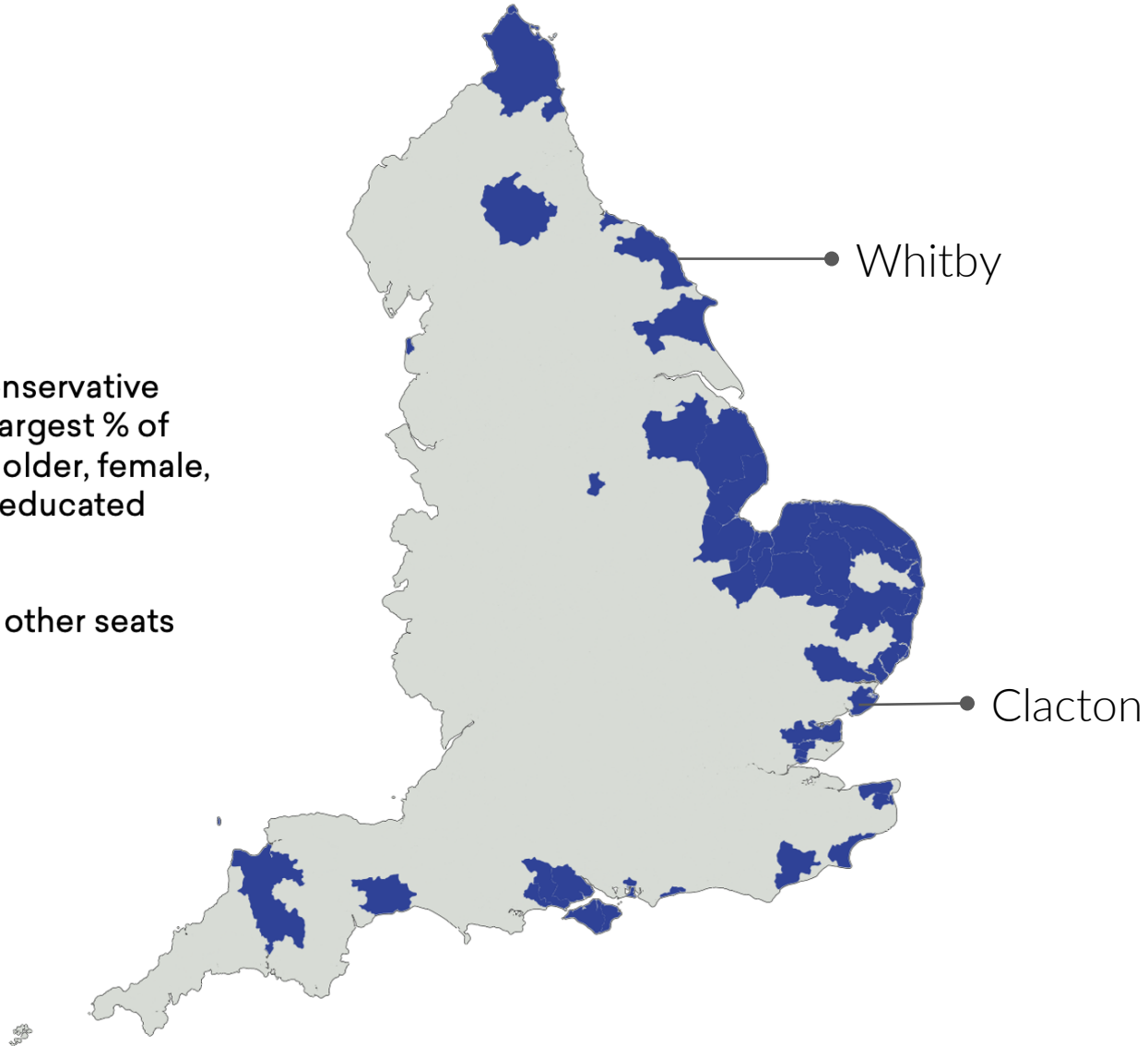
More in Common's Progressive Activist segment look like they are increasingly returning to Labour, since the start of the election campaign, mostly at the expense of Greens and Liberal Democrats.

If this continues, Labour's risk of being outflanked on the left is minimal

# Whitby Woman - the wavering Conservative voter

In **BLUE** are Conservative seats with the largest % of voters who are older, female, non-university educated homeowners

In **GREY** are all other seats

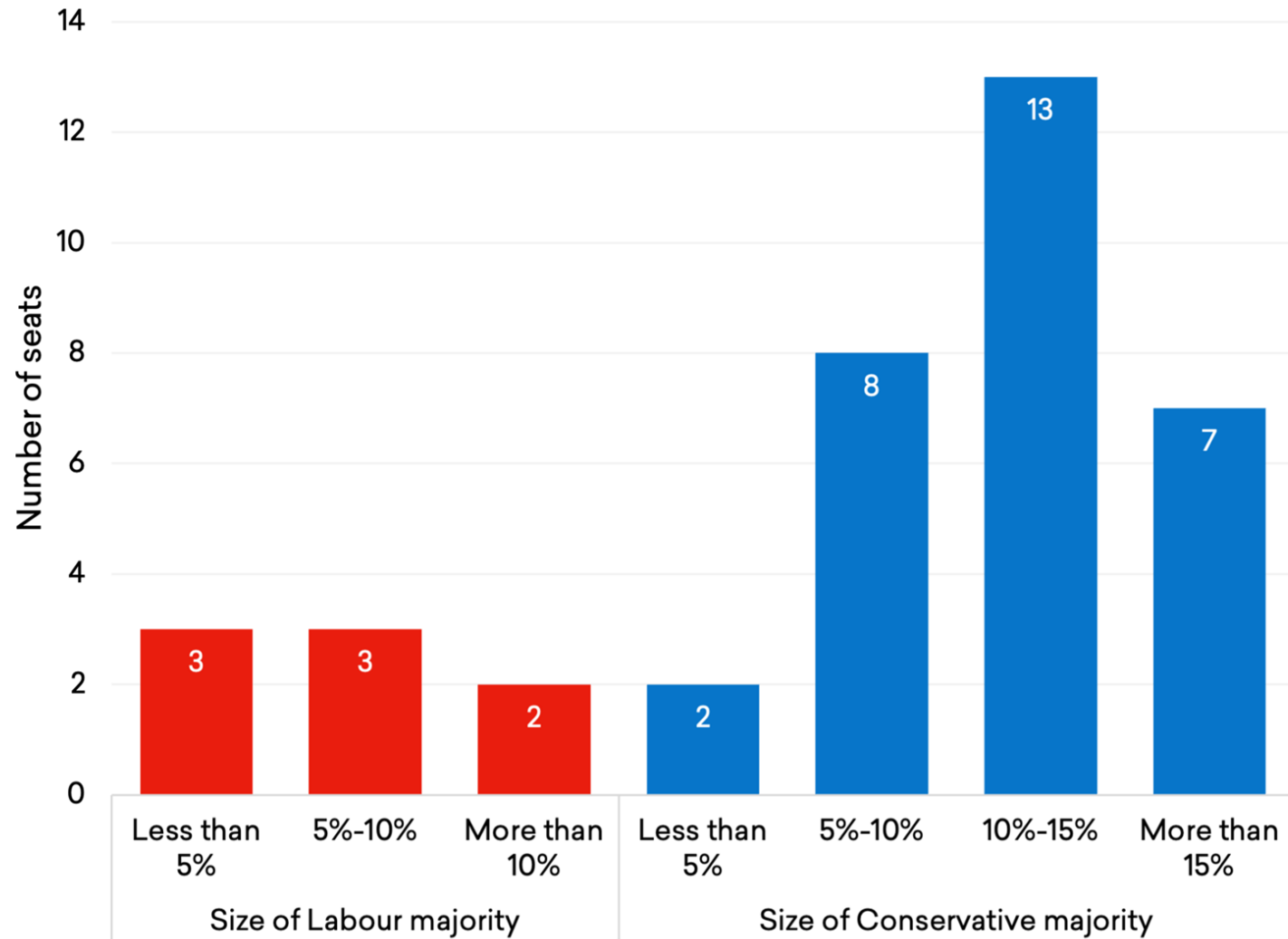


A portrait of Whitby Woman:

- Female
- Mostly in their 60s
- Own their own homes
- Didn't go to university
- Voted to Leave in 2016
- Top concern is the NHS, more than cost of living

Particularly receptive to the “we've turned a corner message” and have little confidence in Starmer or Labour.

# Whitby Woman - the wavering Conservative voter



Of the seats with the most Whitby Women, Labour are ahead in 8 of them. In 6, their majority is less than 10%.

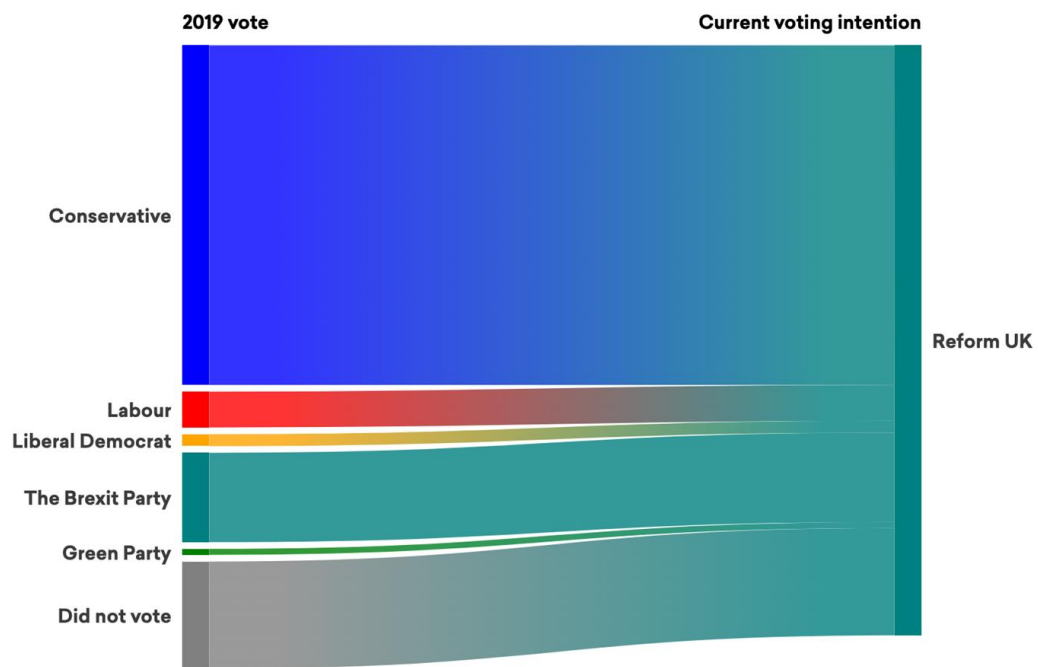
Most of these seats are safe, but there are 10 seats where the Conservatives are currently ahead by less than 10%.

Labour are currently 6-points ahead in Scarborough and Whitby.

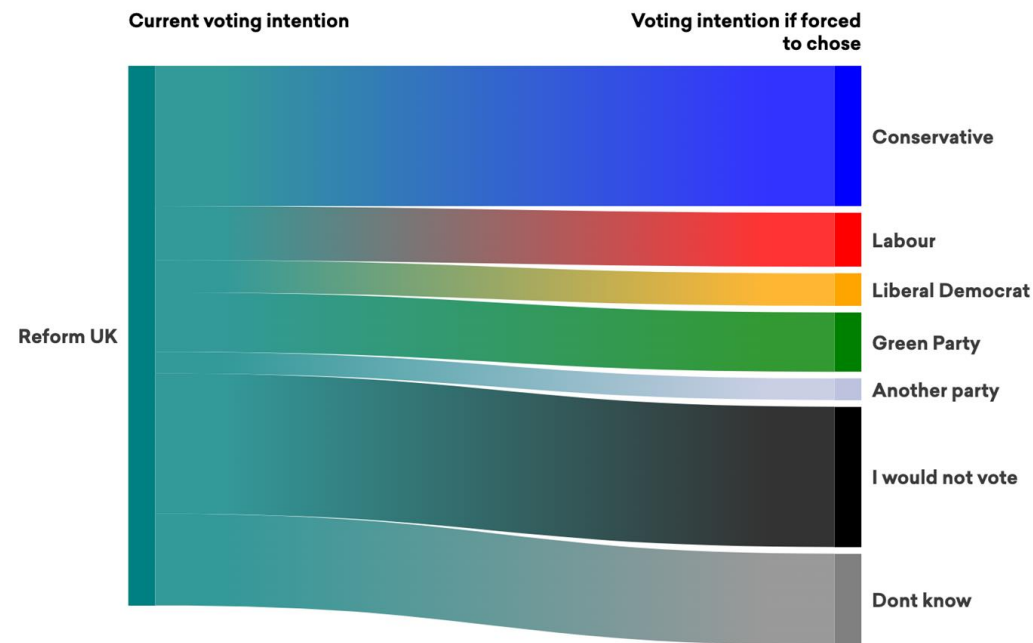
# Might some Reform voters switch back to Conservatives?

Reform UK's decent poll performance has overwhelmingly come from disillusioned 2019 Conservative voters. But Reform standing down at a General Election would only benefit the Conservatives by a small amount: If Reform wasn't an option, only a quarter would go back to the Conservatives. The majority of Reform UK voters are now protest voters who are unlikely to vote for either of the large parties.

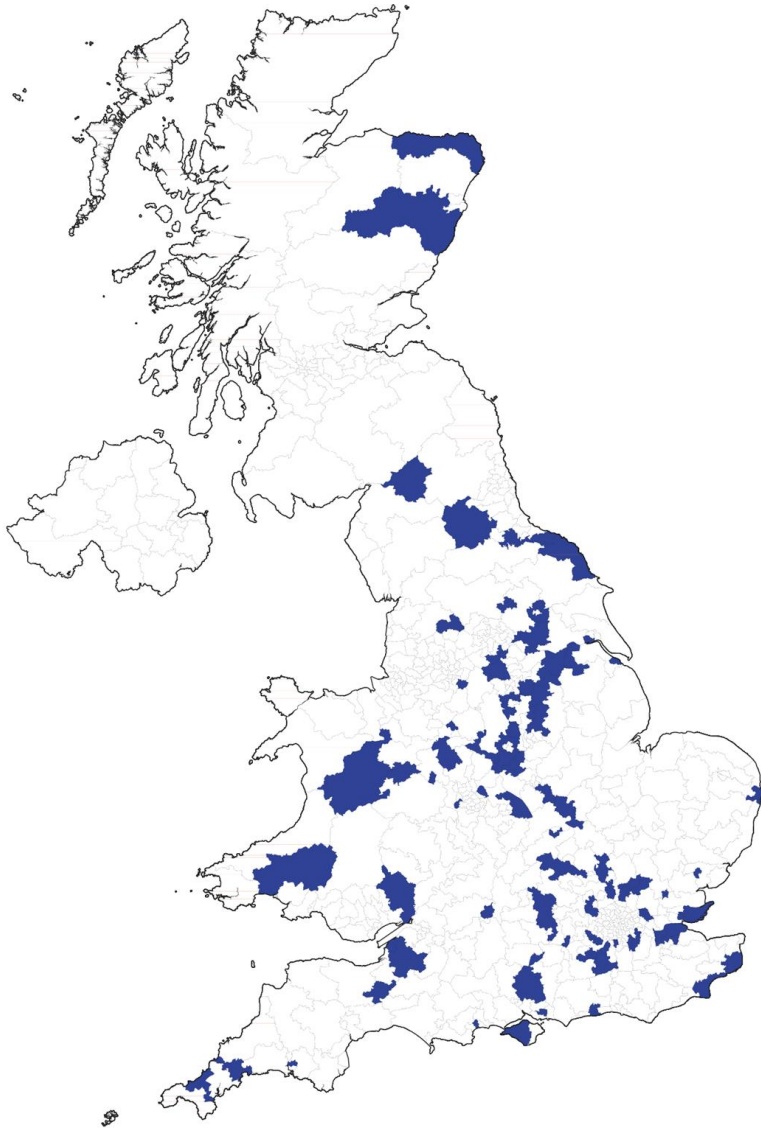
## How did Reform UK voters vote in 2019?



## Who would Reform UK voters vote for if Reform stood down?

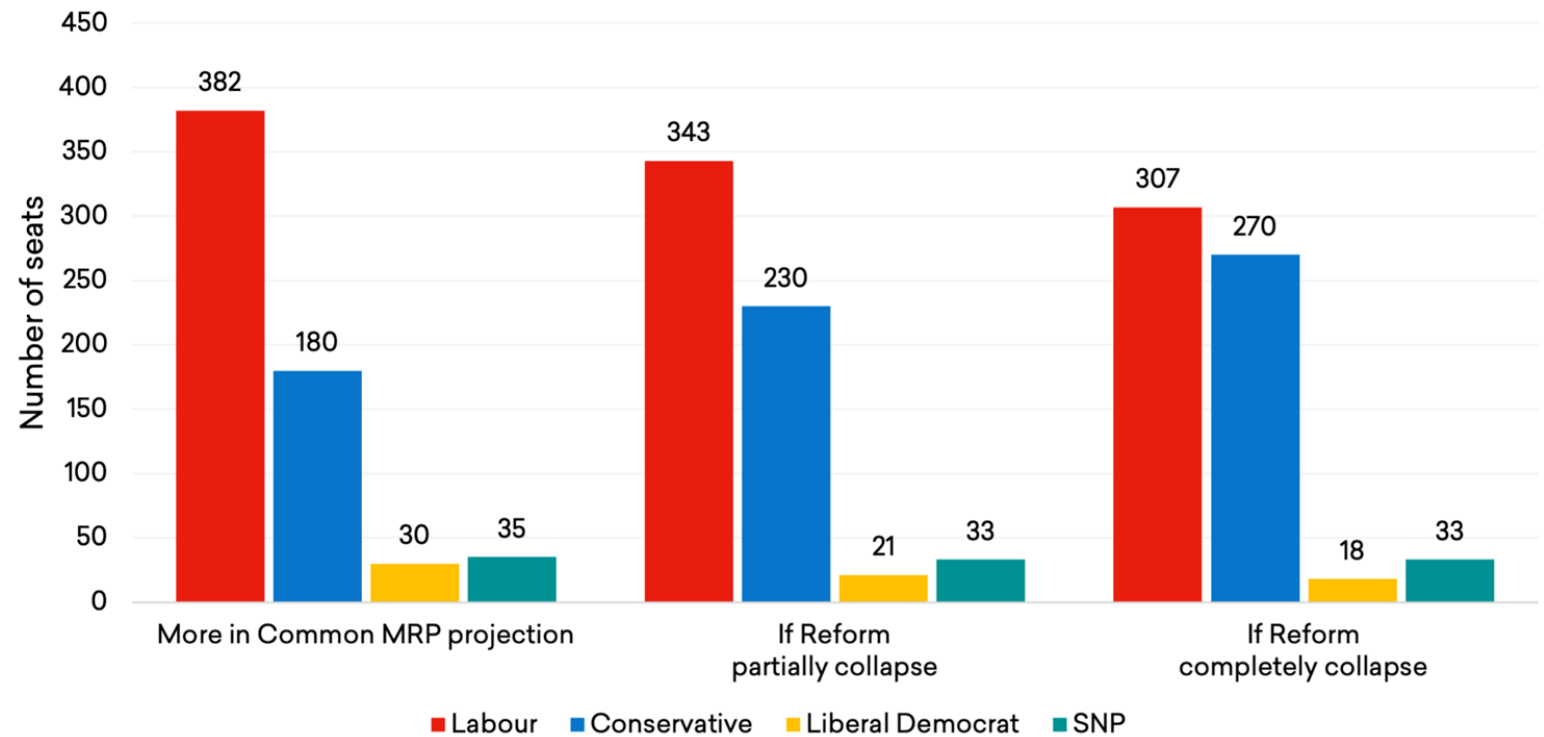


# Seats that could flip if Reform collapse



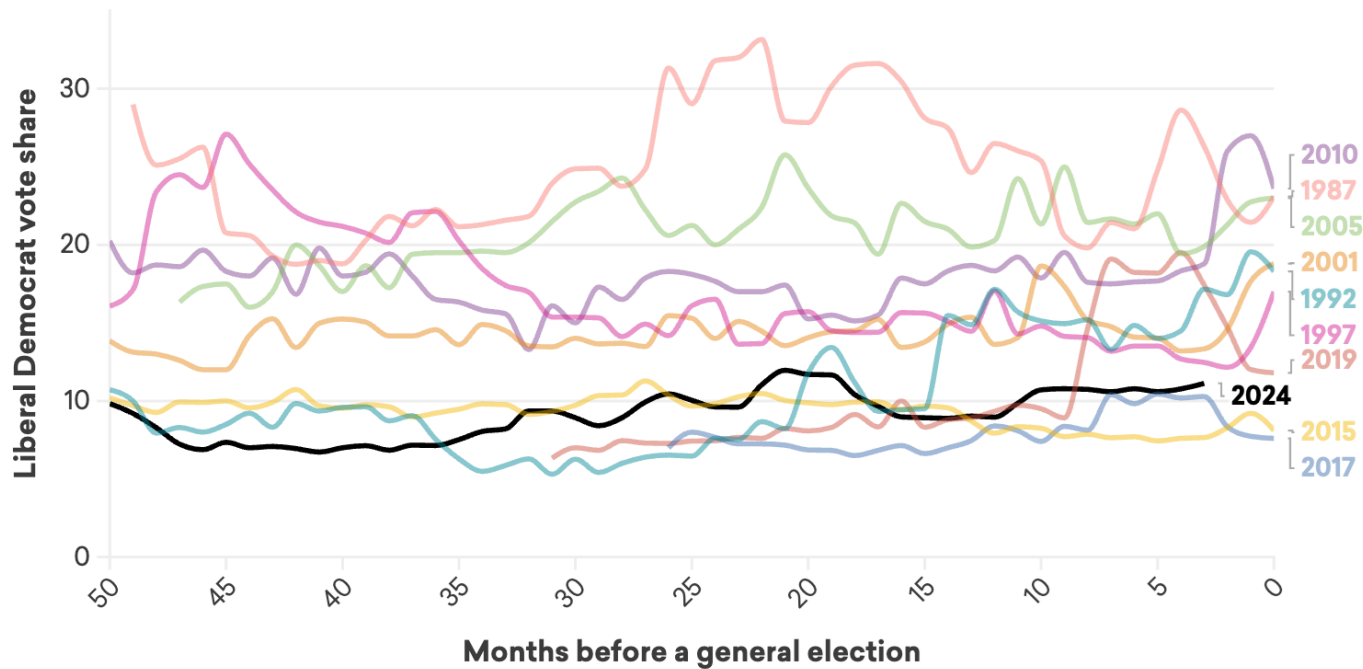
If all Reform voters switched to the Conservatives, they would win back 90 seats - for a total of 270. Even if only half of Reform voters defect to the Conservatives, the Tories would regain 50 seats.

This is spread evenly across the country, saving Red Wall seats like Bishop Auckland and Grimsby and historic Blue Wall stalwarts like Henley and Dorking.



# Should we expect a last-minute Lib Dem surge?

## When a Liberal Democrat rise in the polls does happen, it happens just months before a General Election

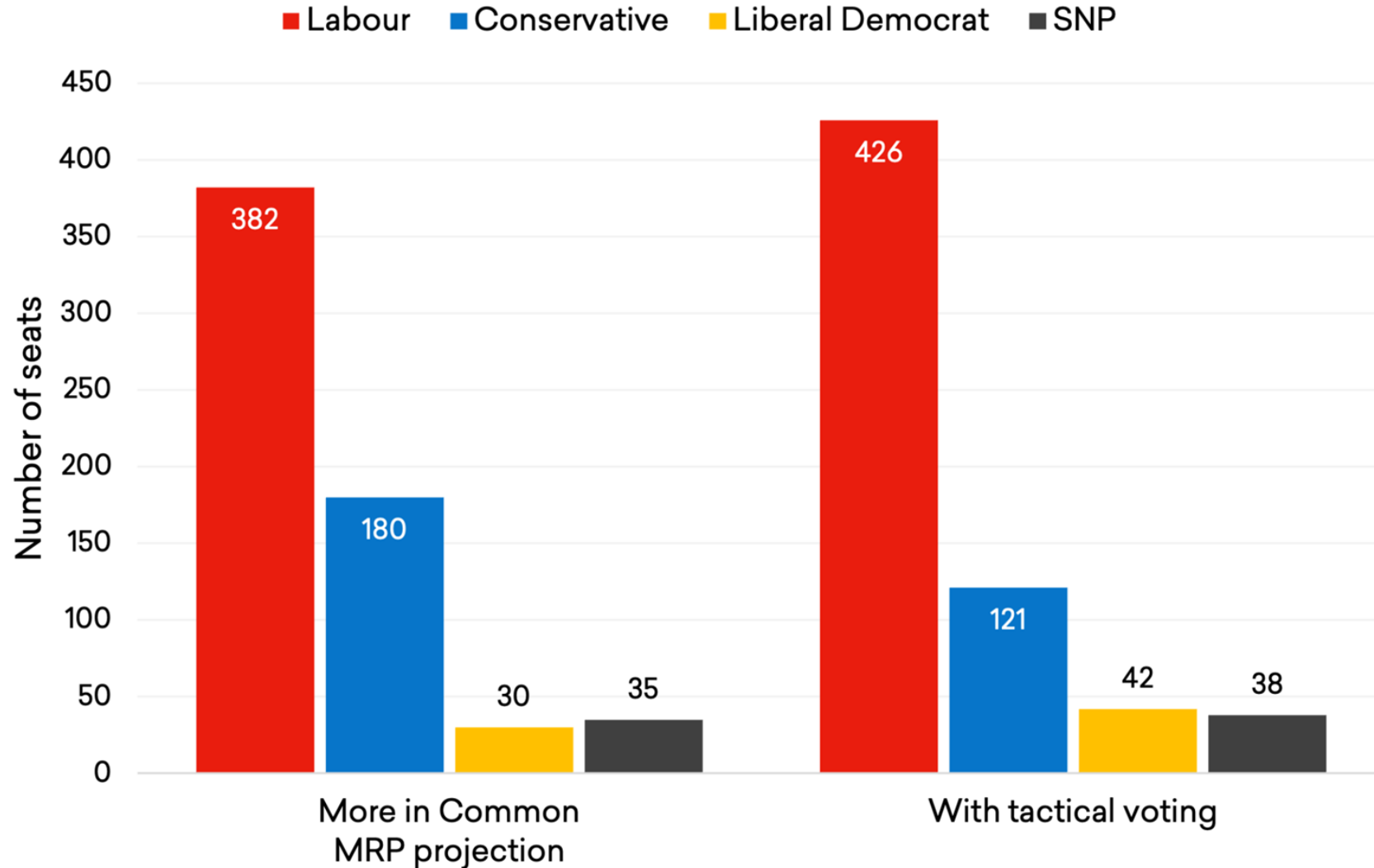


Historically, Liberal Democrats have seen a surge in their poll numbers just before a General Election - rising around 5pts in the last three months before an election as voters start to think more tactically about their options.

If a similar rise happened in 2024, they could be comfortably ahead of Reform UK as the third largest party.

However, this pattern of last-minute polling gains for the Lib Dems hasn't happened since 2010, and it's impossible to know for sure if it will repeat again this year.

# Tactical voting could be decisive



A Lib Dem surge may not materialise in the national polling averages, but could have an impact locally.

Even a very small consolidation makes a big difference. If whichever party (Labour or Lib Dem) is currently ahead takes 5-points off the other, Conservatives would lose 59 seats.



# The Exit Poll: Will it be Alright on the Night?

Jouni Kuha  
London School of Economics and Political Science

Shedding Light on the UK General Election  
LSE, 5.6.2024

## Last two exit poll predictions

	CON	LAB	LD	SNP	PC	UKIP/ Brexit	Green	Others
<b>2017:</b>								
Exit poll	314	266	14	34	3	0	1	18
Final result	318	262	12	35	4	0	1	18
Difference	-4	+4	+2	-1	-1	0	0	0
<b>2019:</b>								
Exit poll	368	191	13	55	3	0	1	19
Final result	365	203	11	48	4	0	1	18
Difference	+3	-12	+2	+7	-1	0	0	+1

# Acknowledgements

- The broadcasters' exit poll is commissioned by BBC, ITV News and Sky News
- Fieldwork by Ipsos MORI
  - with particular thanks to Roger Mortimore and Michael Clemence
  - ...and the interviewers at polling stations who make this possible
- Exit poll analysis team
  - John Curtice, Steve Fisher, Jouni Kuha, Jon Mellon, Rob Ford, Patrick English, and Albert Ward
- Election experts for the broadcasters
  - Colin Rallings (ITV), Michael Thrasher (Sky), John Curtice (BBC)
- Thank you to David Firth for the development of the current methodology of analysis.

## Data collection: Face to face at polling stations

- Respondents (23790 in 2019) at 130 or so (in 2024) polling stations
- Most importantly:
  - The **same** polling stations (as far as possible) as in 2019
- So we can analyse **changes** in parties' vote shares at these locations

## Data analysis: Models for changes

1. Estimate regression models for the changes in vote shares at the exit poll locations, given constituency characteristics
2. Apply these models to all constituencies, to obtain predicted vote shares for all of them
3. Convert predicted vote shares into estimated probabilities that a party wins a constituency
4. Exit poll prediction of the total number of seats that a party will win is the sum of its estimated probabilities of winning across all constituencies

## Example from 2019: *Holborn and St Pancras*

	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	PC	BRX	Green	Other
2017 vote share (%)	18	70	7	0	0	1	3	0
<i>2019 exit poll prediction:</i>								
vote share (%)								
probability of win								
2019 vote share (%)								

## Example from 2019: *Holborn and St Pancras*

Values of some predictors used in 2019:

- % Leave in Brexit referendum below 35%: *Yes*
- Labour 3rd or lower in 2017: *No*
- % of residents with degree-level education above 35%: *Yes*

## Example from 2019: *Holborn and St Pancras*

	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	PC	BRX	Green	Other
2017 vote share (%)	18	70	7	0	0	1	3	0
<i>2019 exit poll prediction:</i>								
vote share (%)	11	65	14	0	0	3	6	1
probability of win	0	1.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019 vote share (%)	16	65	13	0	0	2	5	0



## 2024 Exit Poll

- Some new issues:
  - Constituency boundary changes
  - Some changes to exit poll locations, including additional locations in Scotland
- The methodology is proven, and mostly unchanged
- The team is experienced, and mostly unchanged
- But predicting election results is hard, always...

## The 2024 Exit Poll?

	CON	LAB	LD	SNP	PC	REF	Green	Others
Exit poll	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Final result	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Difference	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

## The 2024 General Election?

	CON	LAB	LD	SNP	PC	REF	Green	Others
Final result	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

# Shedding Light on the UK General Election

*5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

## **Closing Comments**

Patrick Sturgis, LSE and Jane Green, BPC President

