

Public Concerns and Political Trends

John Curtice

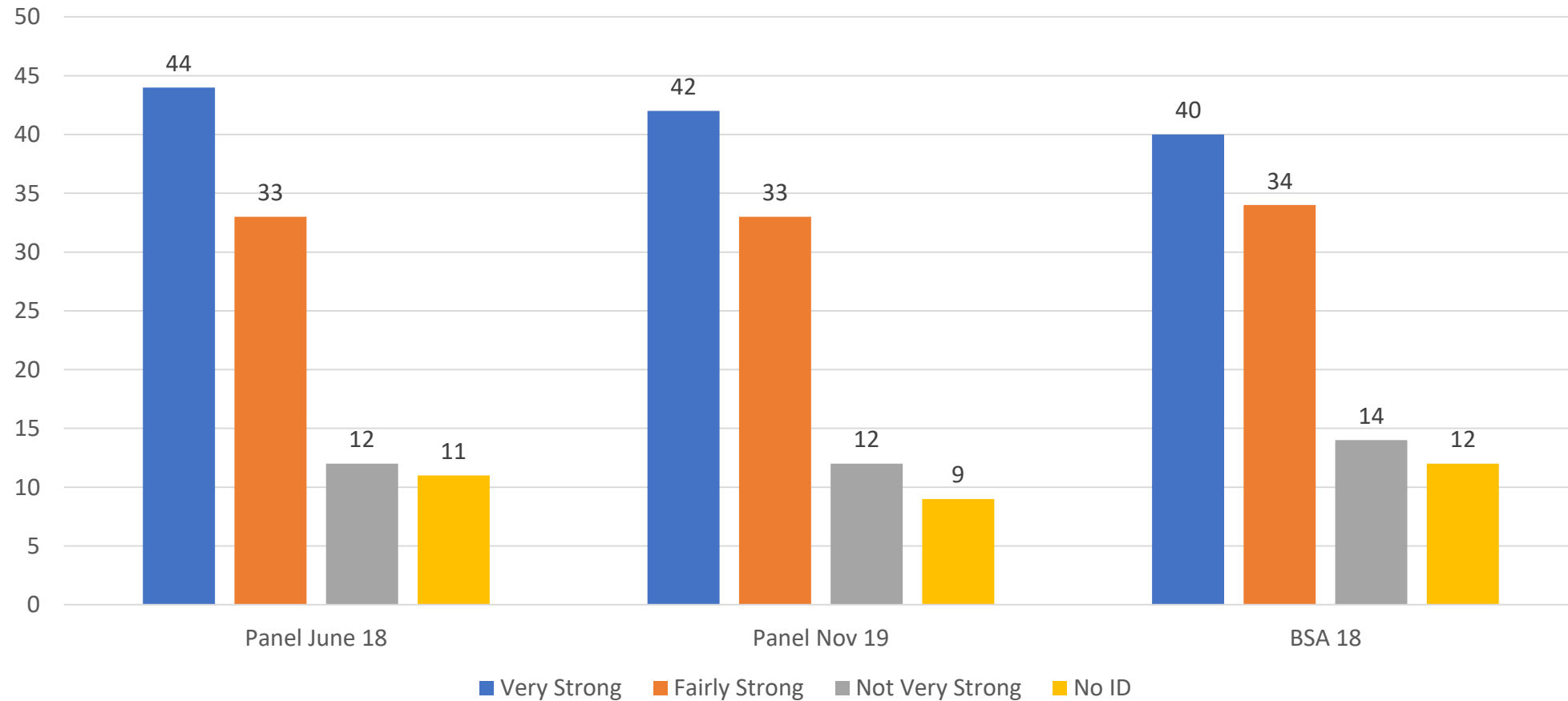
Strathclyde University and NatCen Social Research

The UK in a Changing Europe

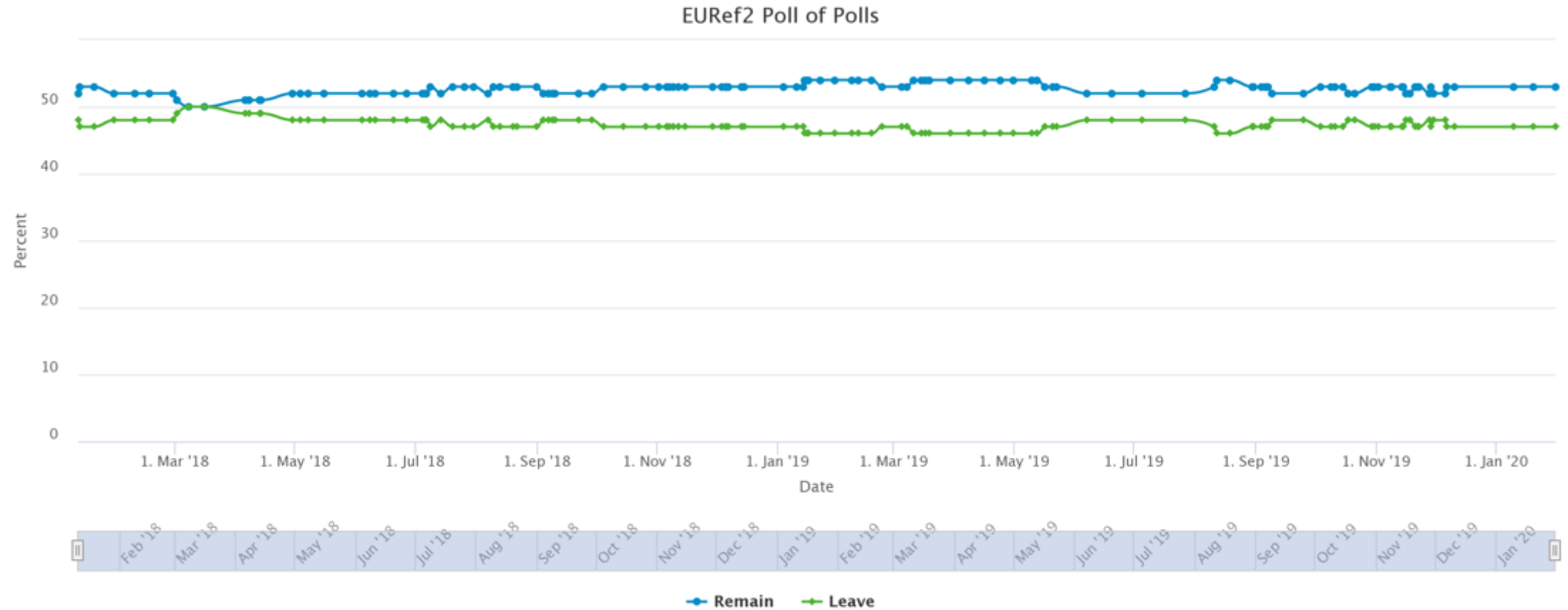
Three Concerns

- Brexit
- Economic Management/Public Services
- English Devolution

Nation of Brexit Identifiers

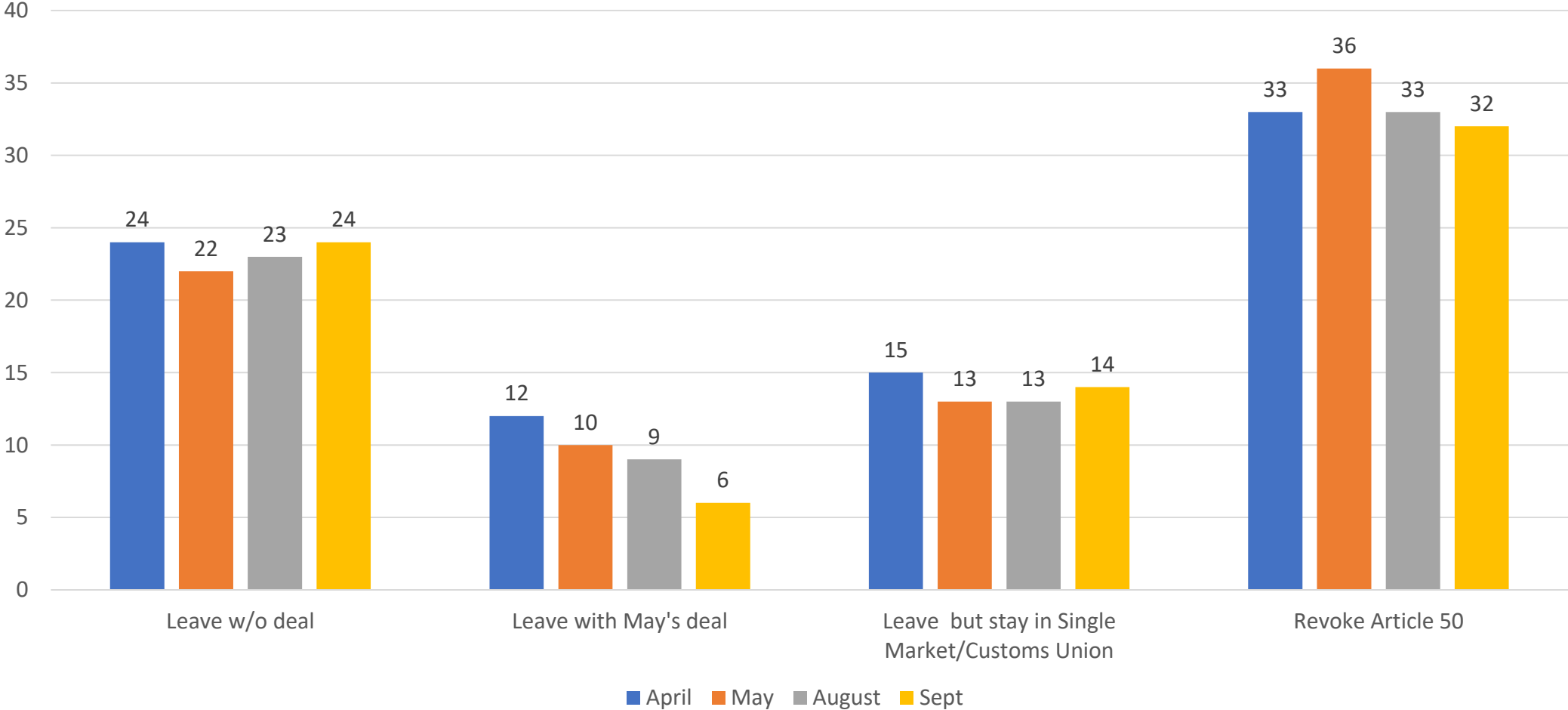


Remain vs Leave Support



Source data at www.WhatUKThinks.org/EU run by NatCen Social Research

The Popularity of Extremes



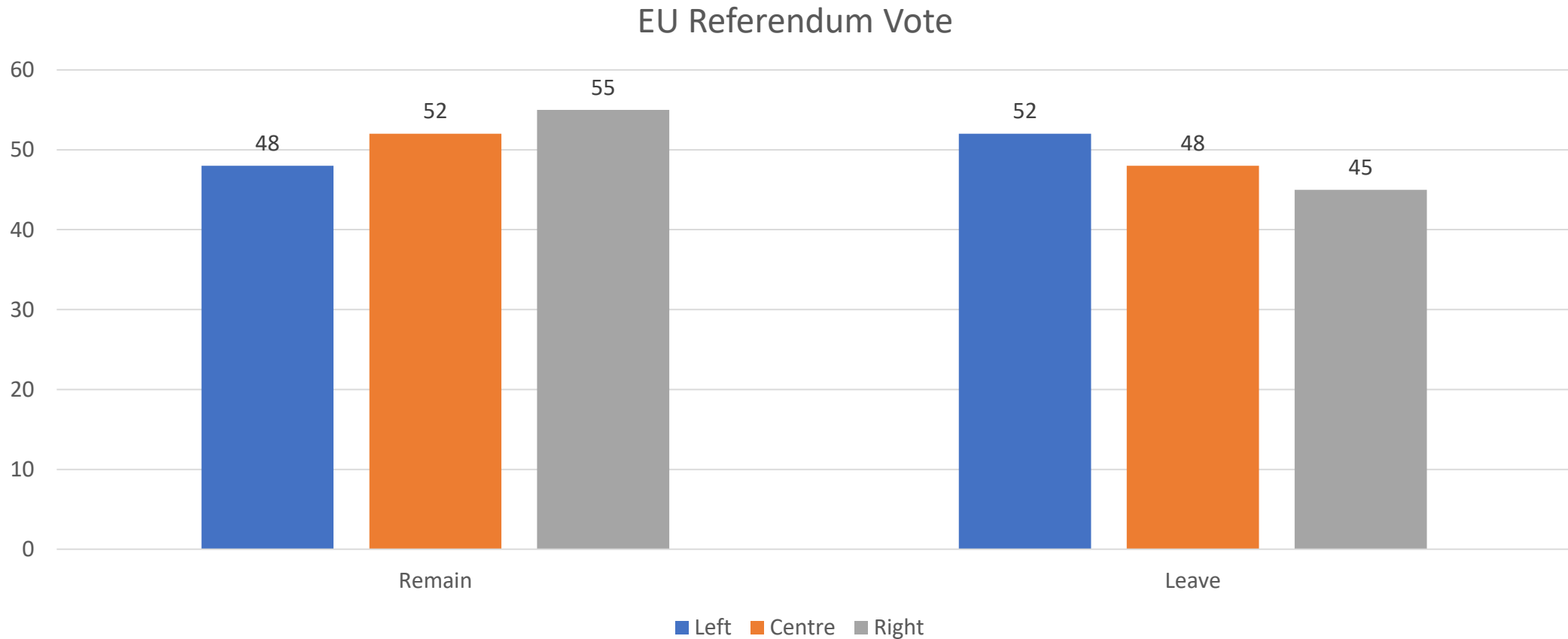
Source: Kantar

Poles Apart



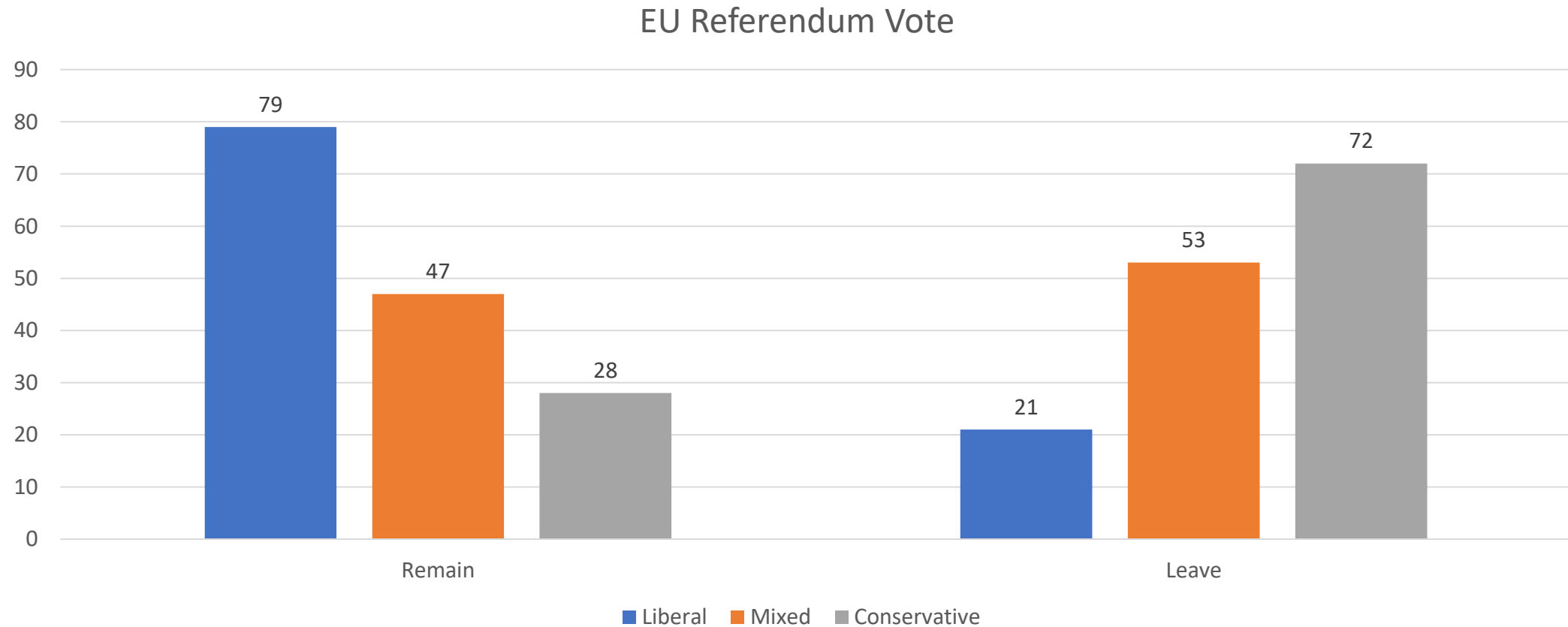
Source: Kantar, average of April, May, August and September 2019

EU Ref: Not a Left vs Right Divide



Source: British Social Attitudes 2016

But A Clear Division Between Social Liberals and Conservatives



Source: British Social Attitudes 2016

The Result

	% Votes (GB)	Change since 2017	Seats (UK)	Change since 2017
Conservative	44.7	+1.2	365	+49
Brexit	2.1	(+0.2)	0	-
Labour	33.0	-8.0	203	-59
Liberal Democrats	11.8	+4.2	11	-1
SNP	4.0	+0.9	48	+13
Greens	2.8	+1.1	1	n/c
PC	0.4	-0.1	4	+1
Others	1.1	+0.4	18	n/c

Highest Tory vote since 1979 and biggest majority since 1987
Lowest Lab seats since 1983 but only lowest vote since 2010

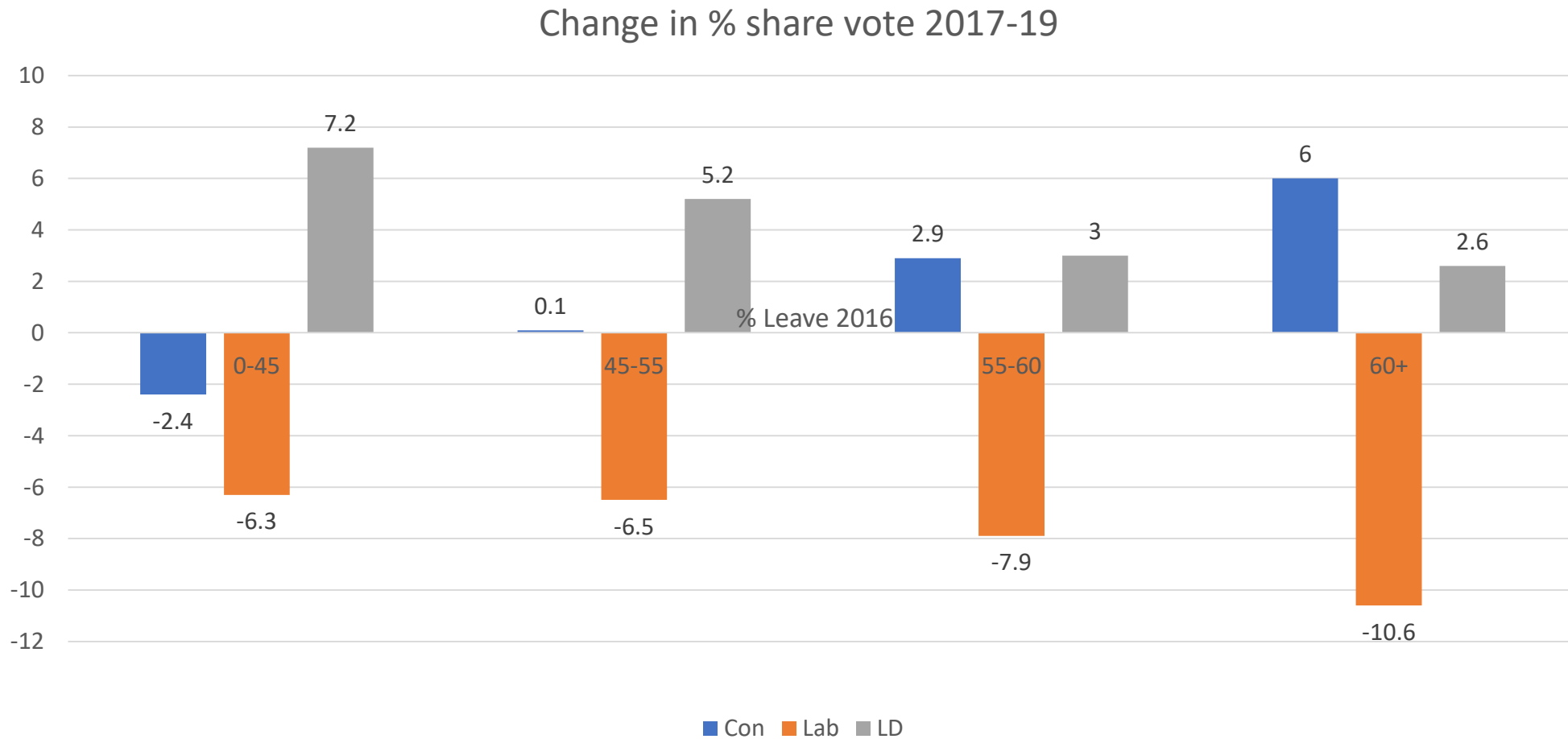
The Brexit Divide

	Remain Voters		Leave Voters	
	2019	2017	2019	2017
Conservative	19	25	74	65
Brexit/UKIP	0	0	4	4
Labour	49	55	14	24
Liberal Democrats	21	12	3	3
SNP/PC	7	5	2	2
Greens	4	2	2	1

The Long-Term Change

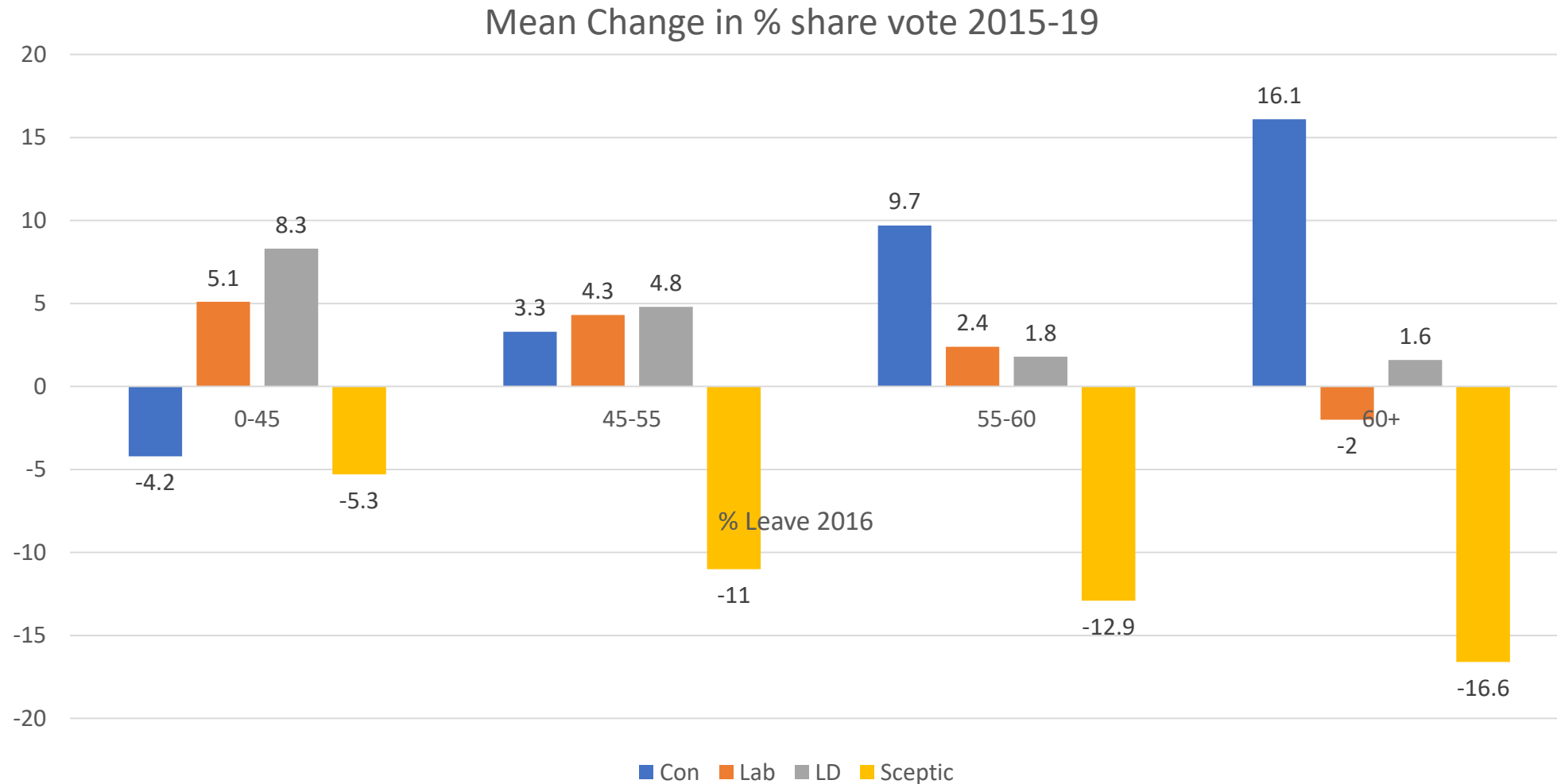
	Remain Voters		Leave Voters	
	2019	2015	2019	2015
Conservative	19	30	74	45
Brexit/UKIP	0	1	4	25
Labour	49	43	14	20
Liberal Democrats	21	11	3	5
SNP/PC	7	7	2	3
Greens	4	7	2	1

In The Constituencies



Based on seats in England & Wales only

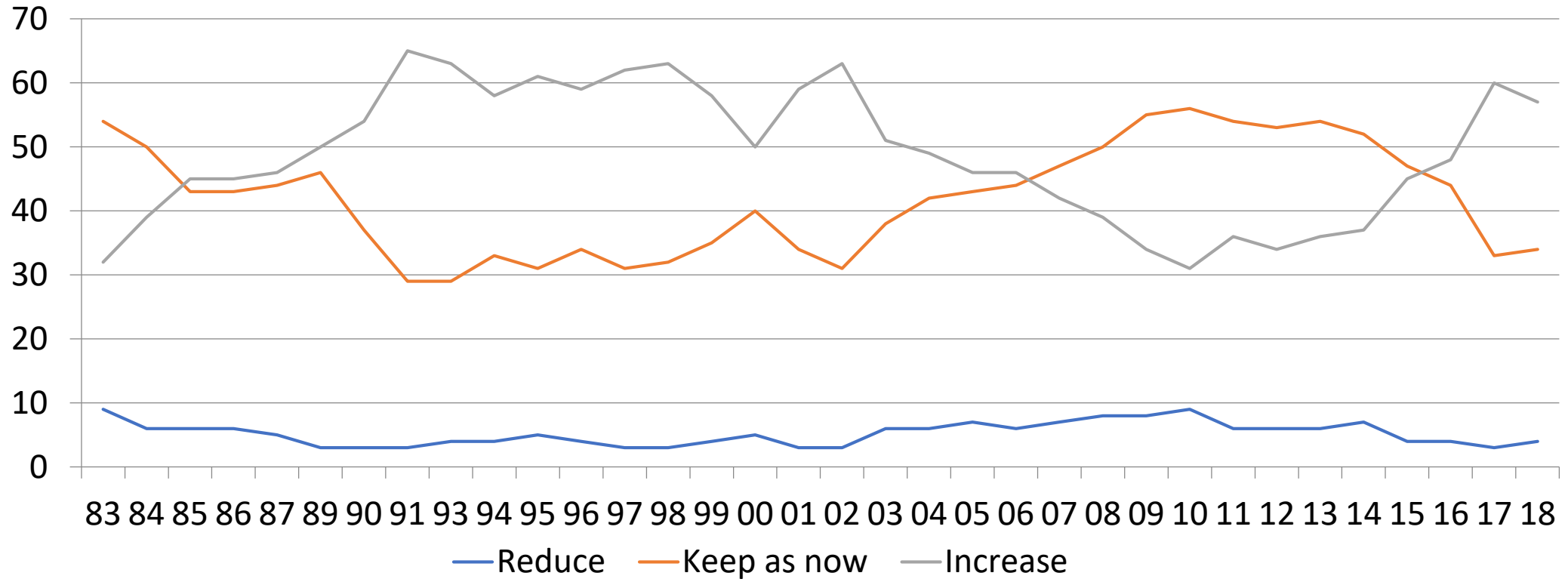
Over The Longer-Term



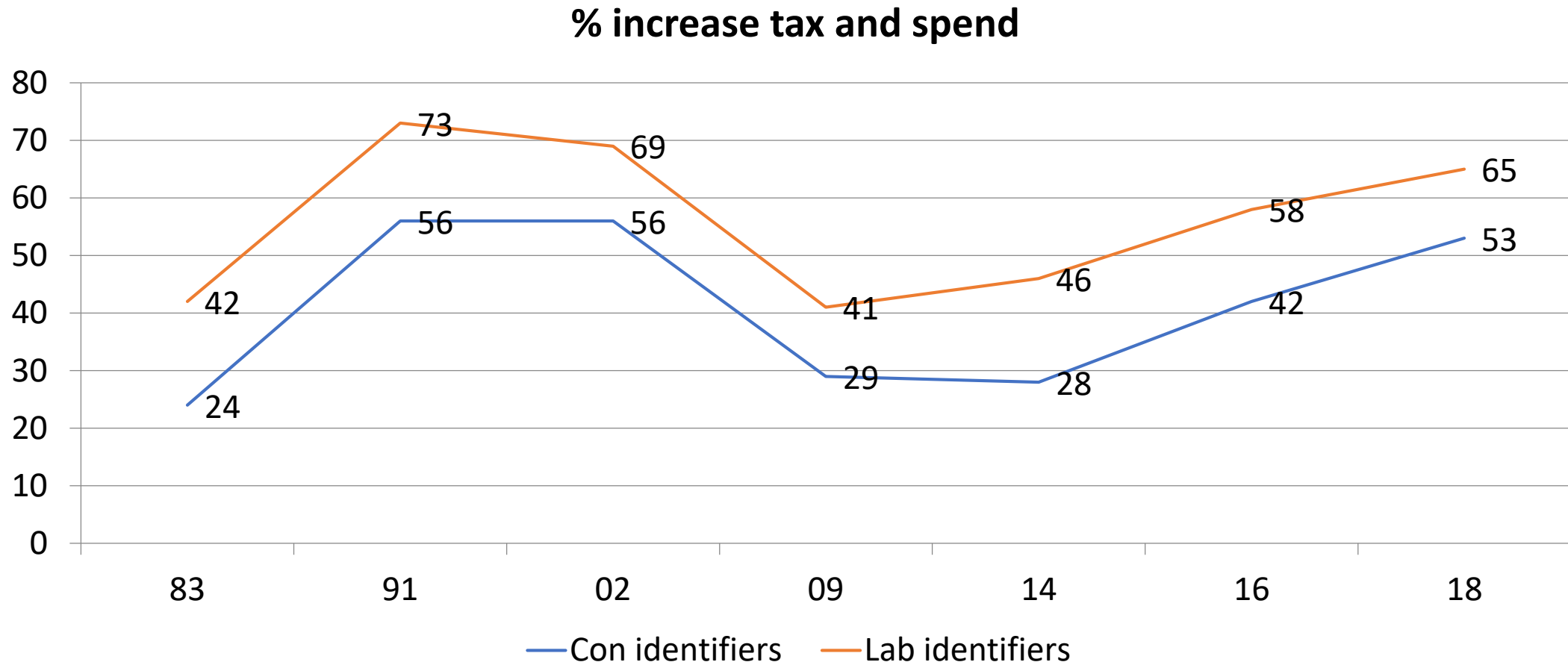
Based on seats in England & Wales only. Sceptic = Brexit 2017 – UKIP 2015 and is not confined to seats fought.

A Classic Thermostat?

Taxes and Spending

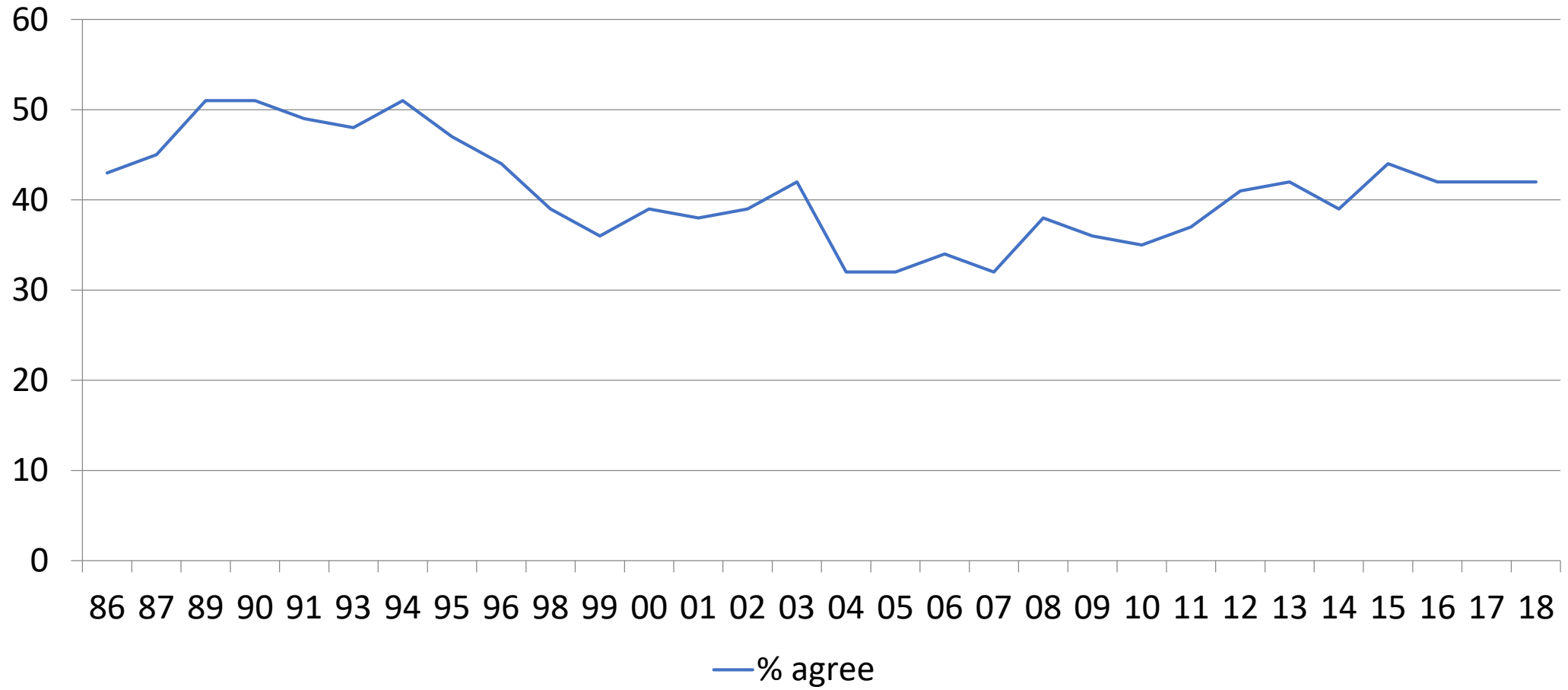


Change Largely Across the Board

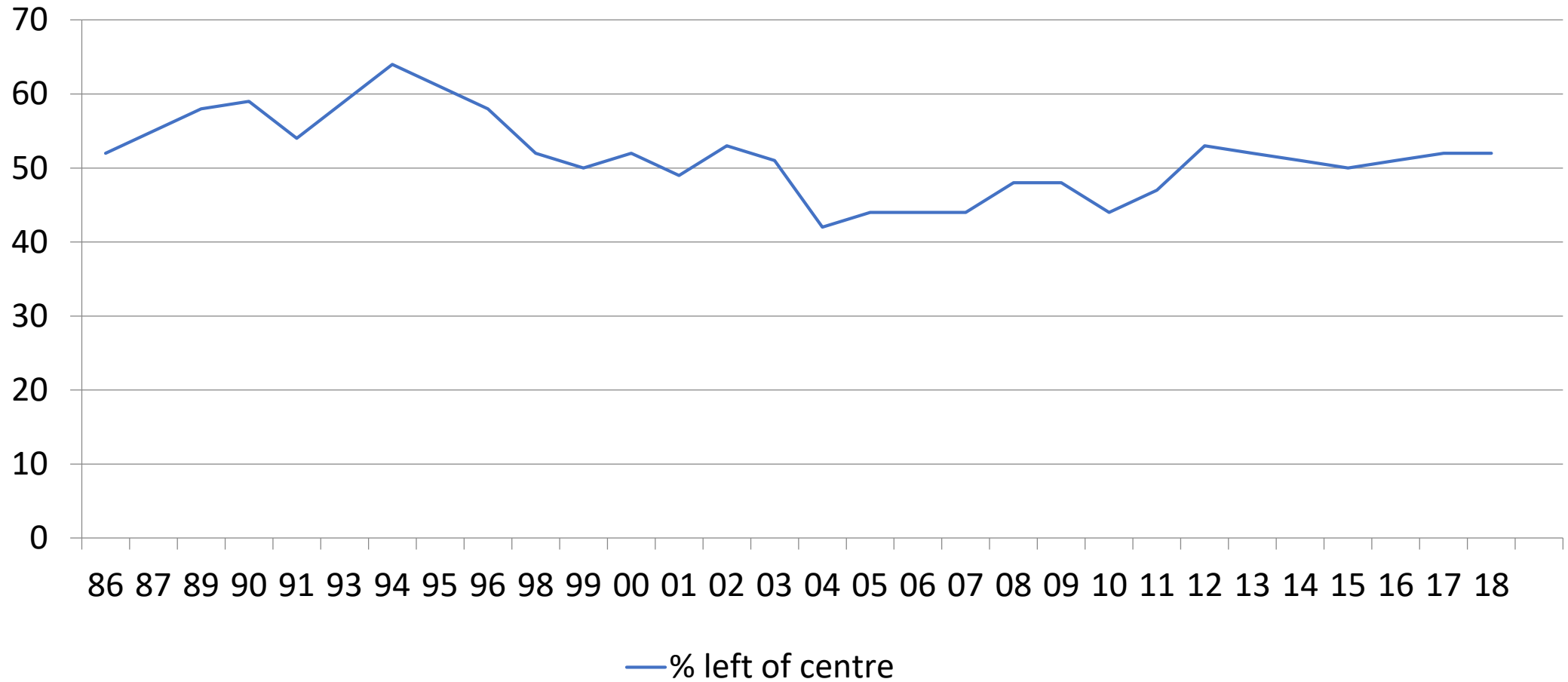


Source: British Social Attitudes

Government Redistribute Income

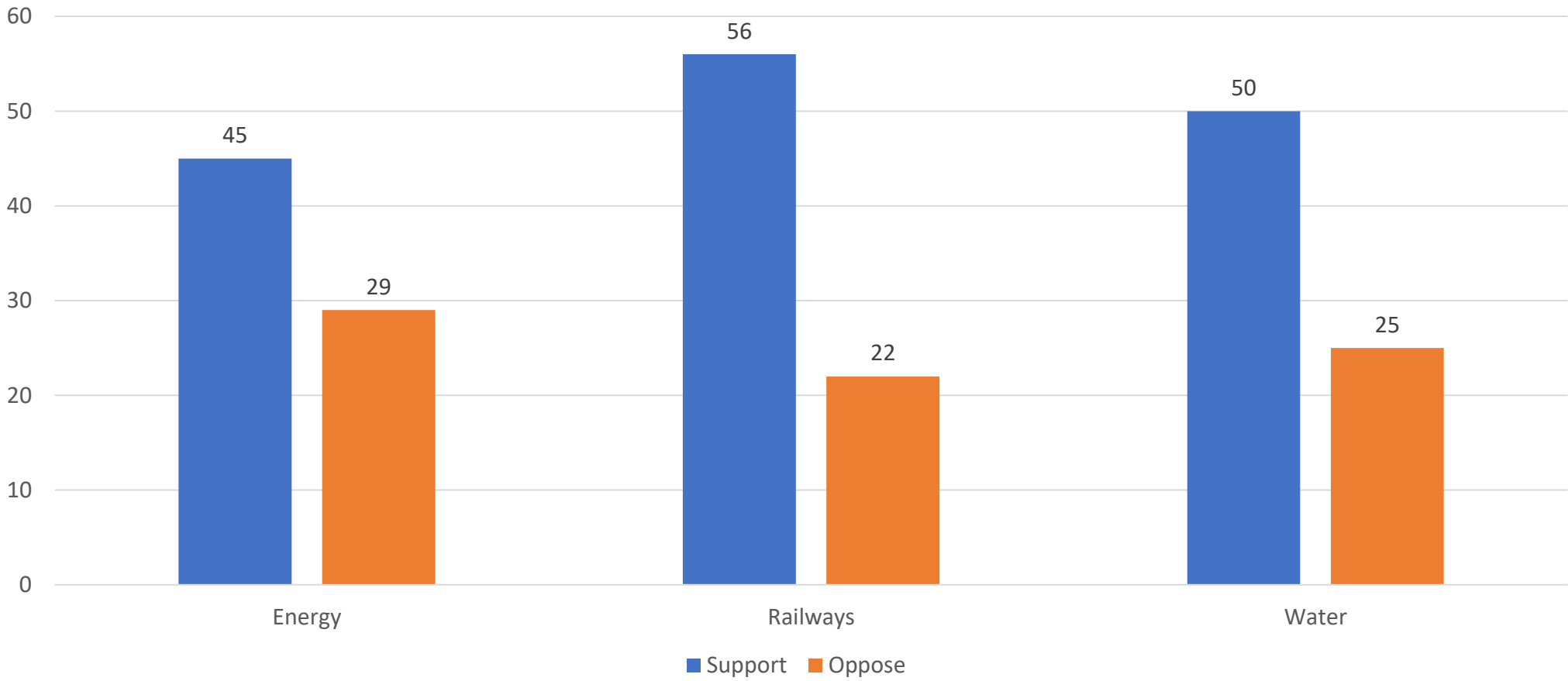


Socialist-Laissez-Faire Scale



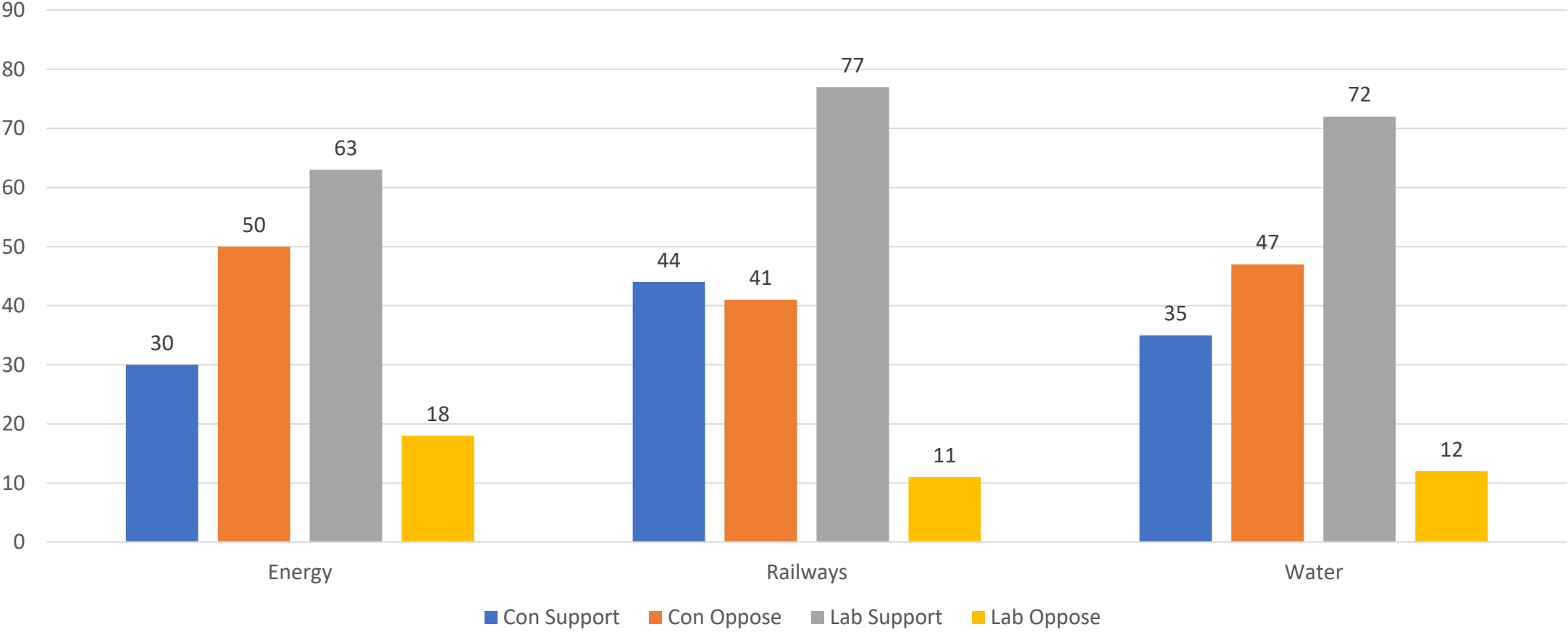
Source: British Social Attitudes

Attitudes to Nationalisation



Source: YouGov 7-8.11.19

A Sharper Divide

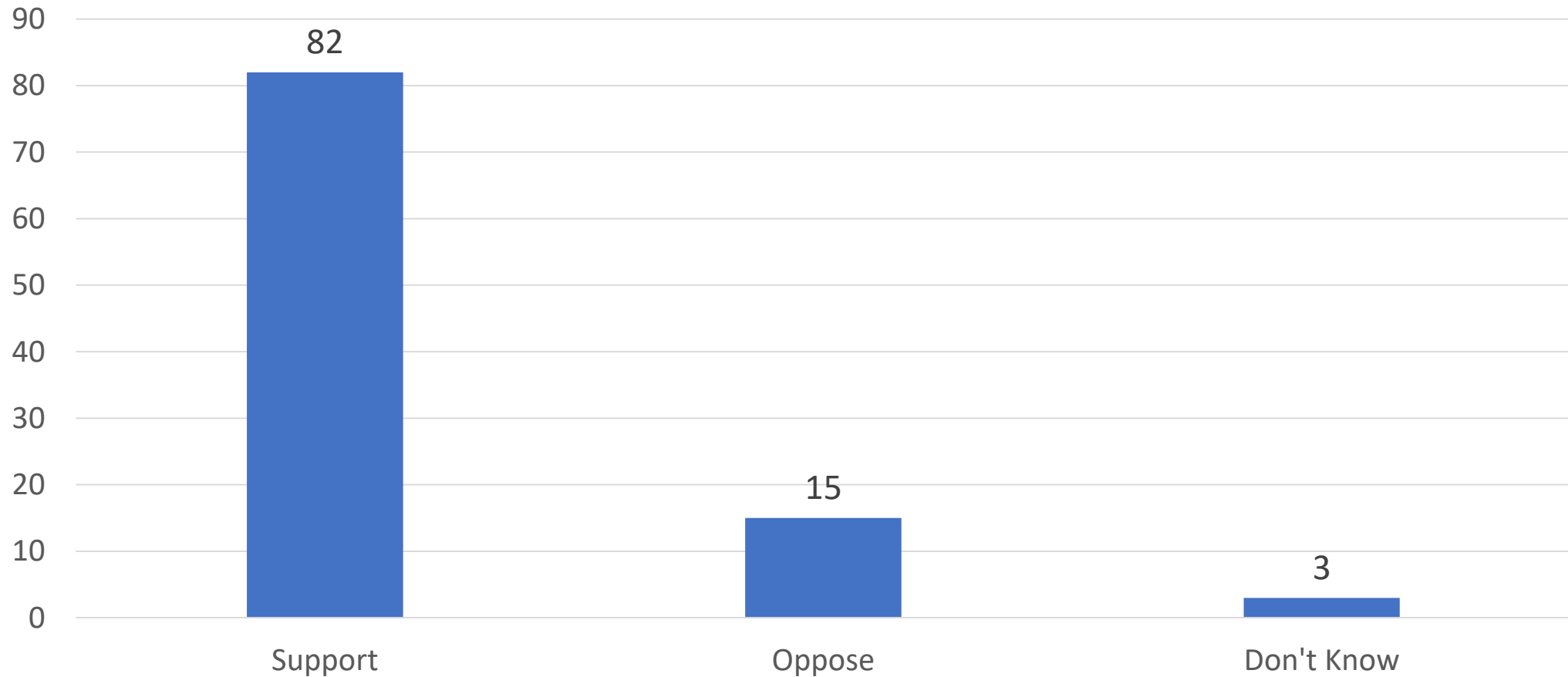


Source: YouGov 7-8.11.19

The English Devolution Debate

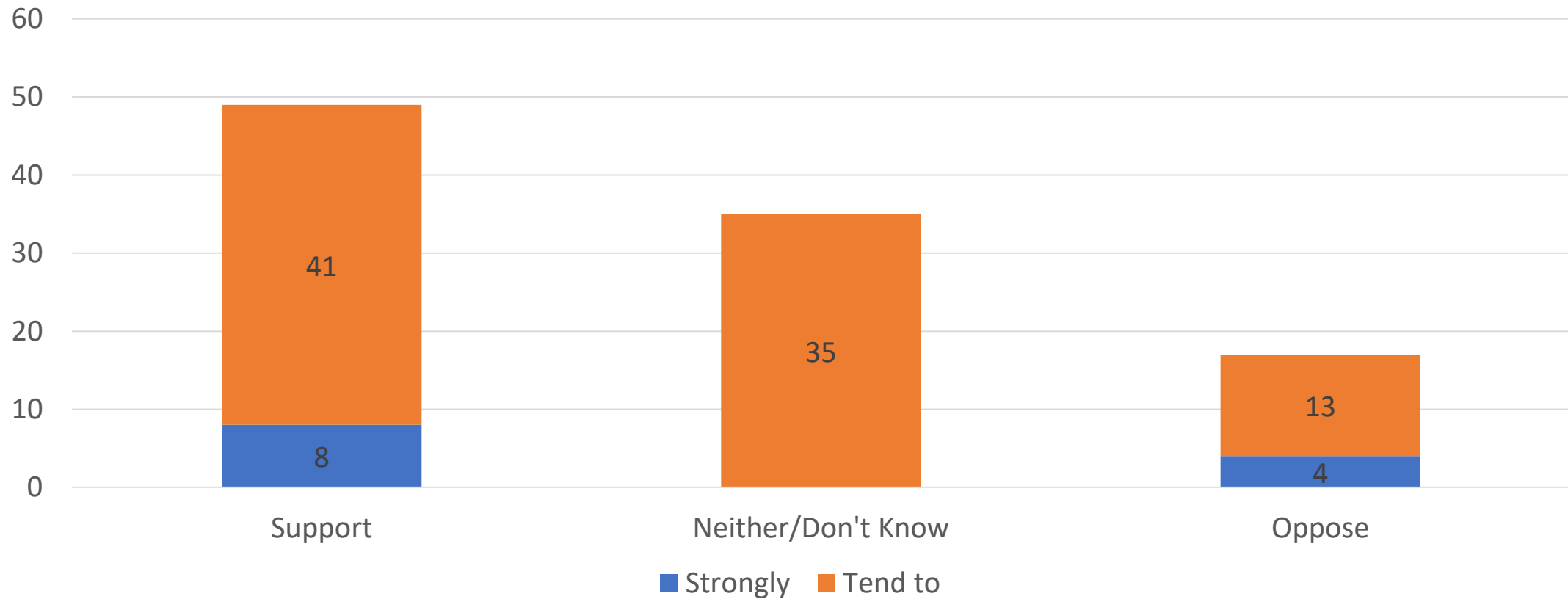
- Regional devolution – rejected in NE referendum in 2004
- City Regions - Revival of old (little loved?) structures (Greater Manchester, Avon etc.)
- Directly elected mayors - outside London not proven very popular when put to voters in referendums
- Impetus from Scottish independence referendum – EVEL/English Parliament

Give More Decision-Making Powers to Local Areas?



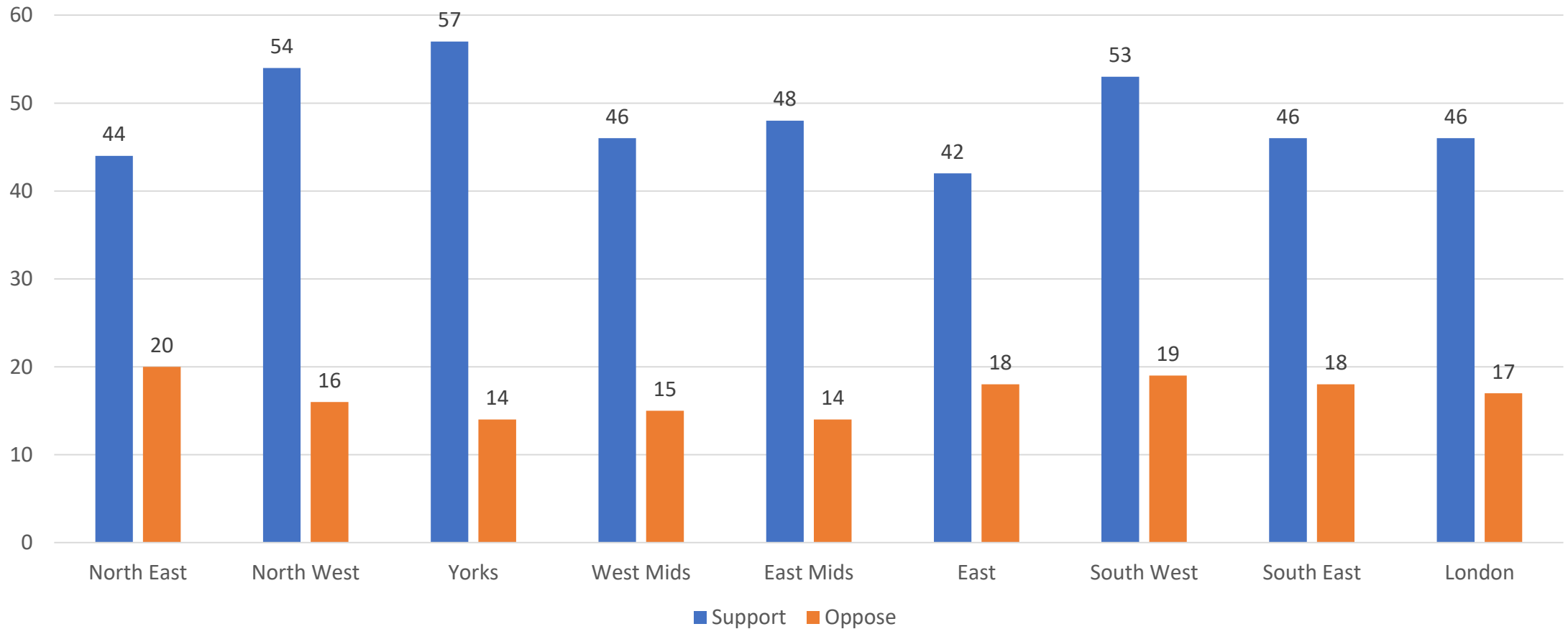
ComRes/BBC: October 2014. 'Giving more decision making powers on issues such as tax, education, policing to local areas'

Support More Decision-Making Powers to Local Areas



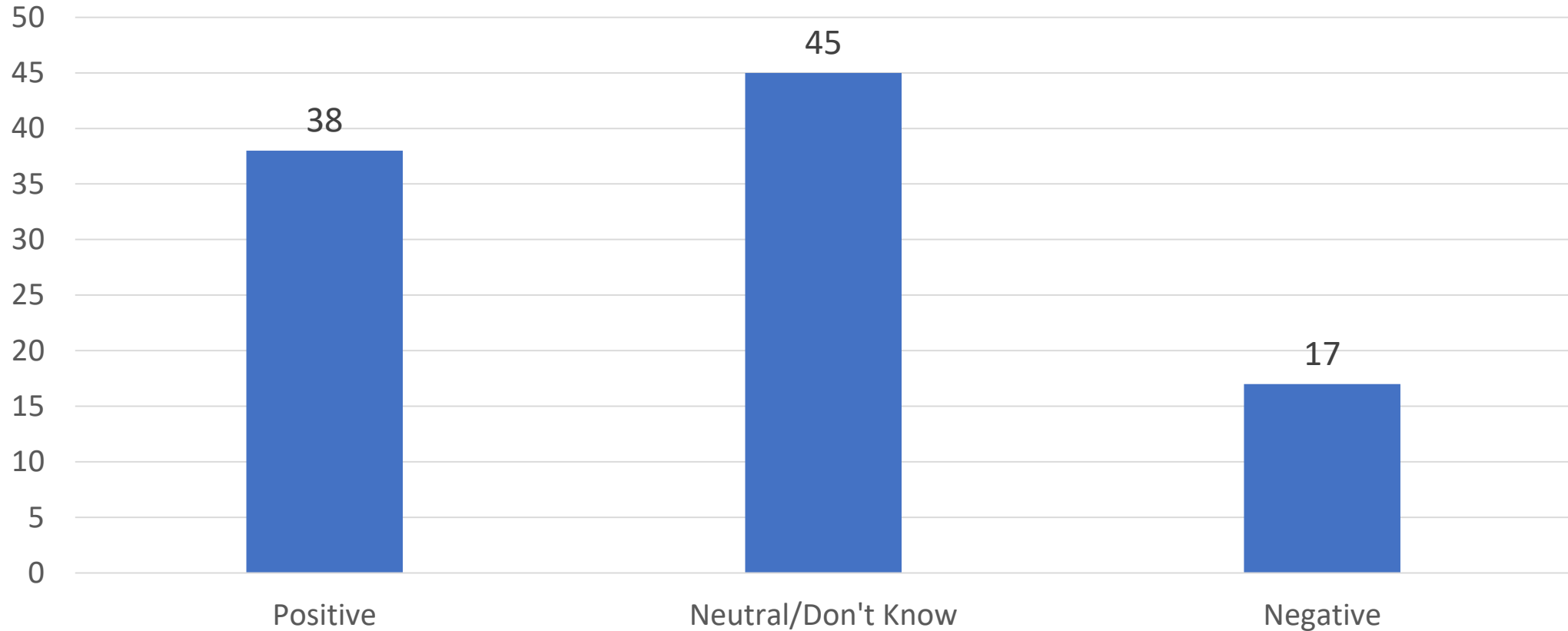
Ipsos MORI/NLGN/PwC Northern Powerhouse Survey: Sept 2015. 'Thinking overall, to what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose giving more decision-making powers (on issues such as economic development, transport, housing, planning and policing) to local areas?'

Little Regional Variation



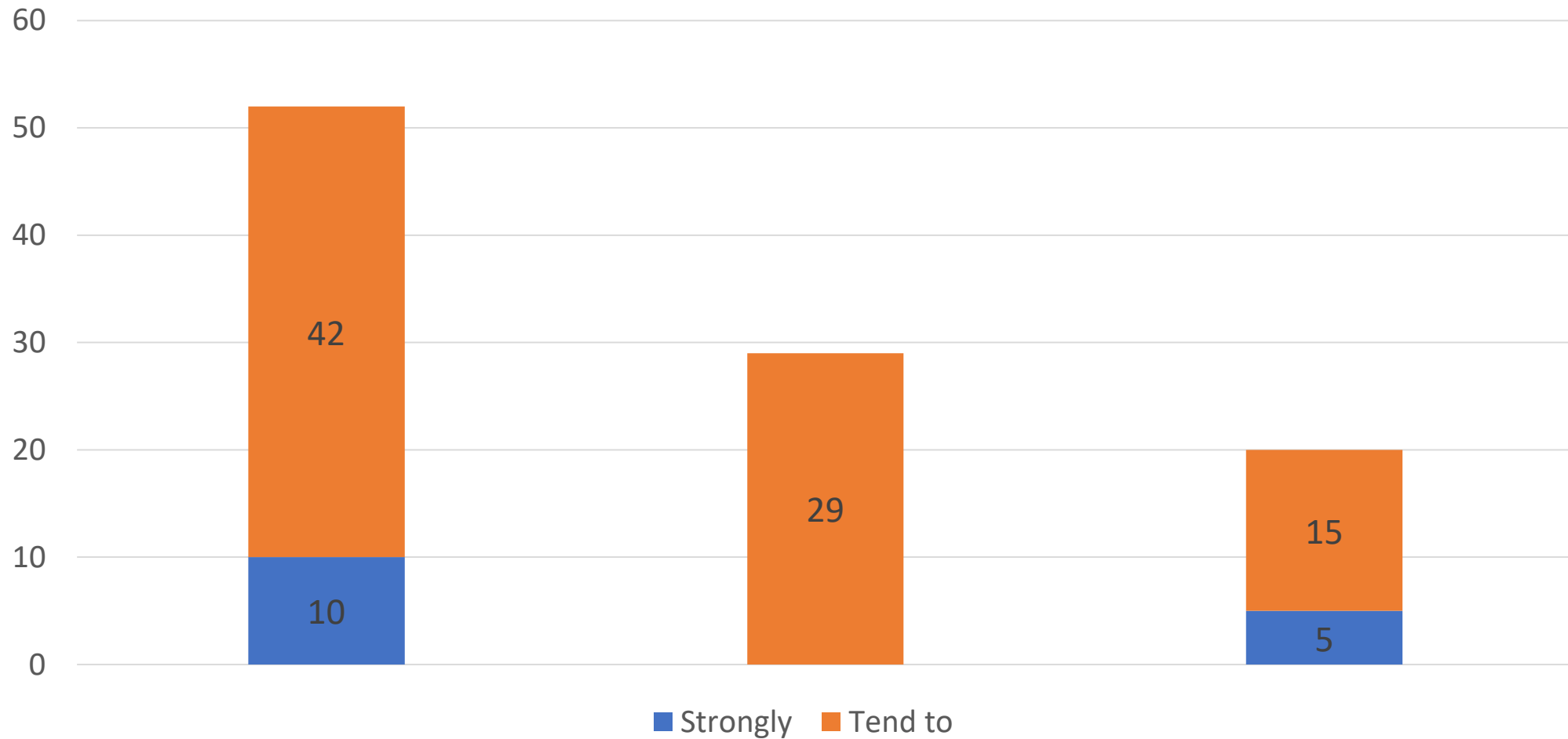
Source: Ipsos MORI/NLGN/PwC Northern Powerhouse Survey: Sept 2015.

Expected Impact of Devolution to Local Areas on Local Services



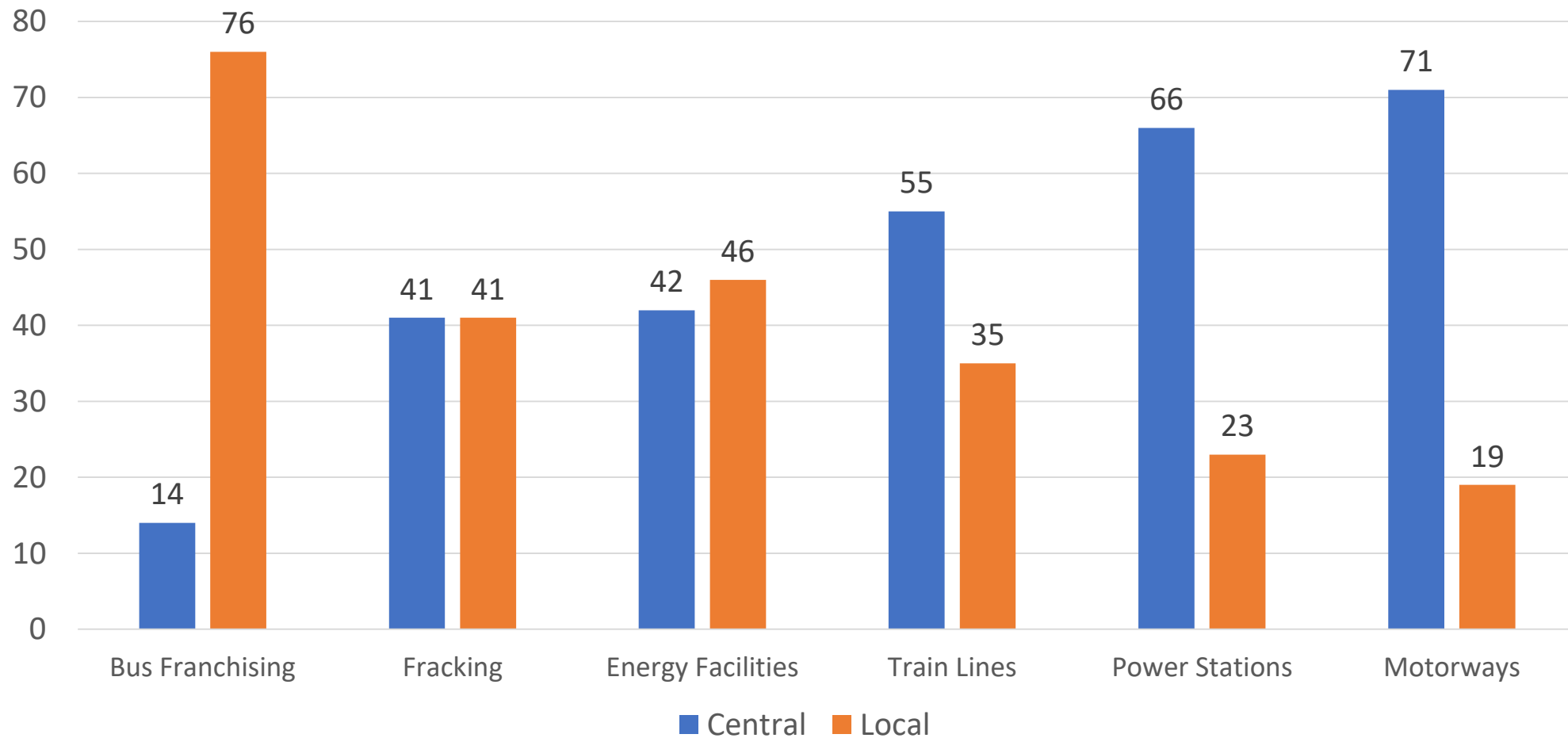
ComRes/ICE survey Feb 2016: Overall, do you think that devolution of powers from central government in Westminster to local areas is likely to have a positive or negative impact on local services?

And on the Local Economy

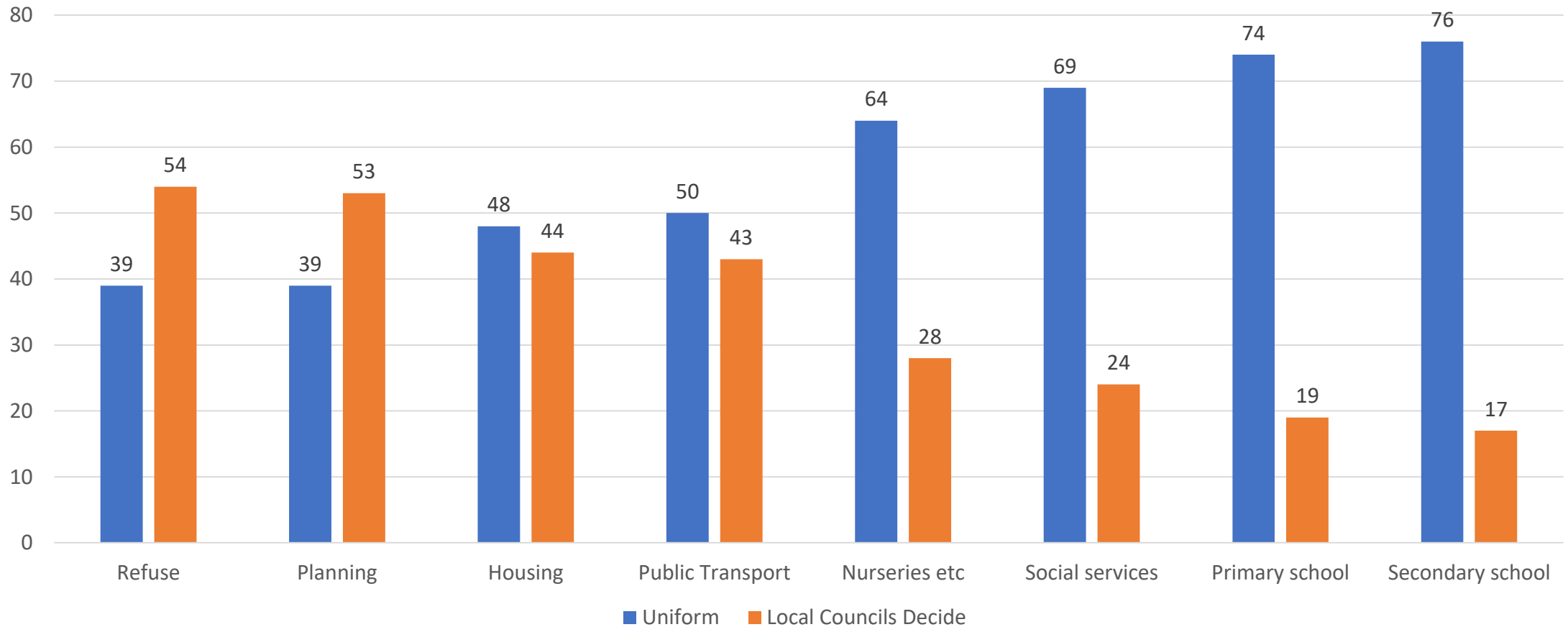


ComRes/ICE survey Feb 2016; To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on devolution to local areas?
Devolution will help boost local economies

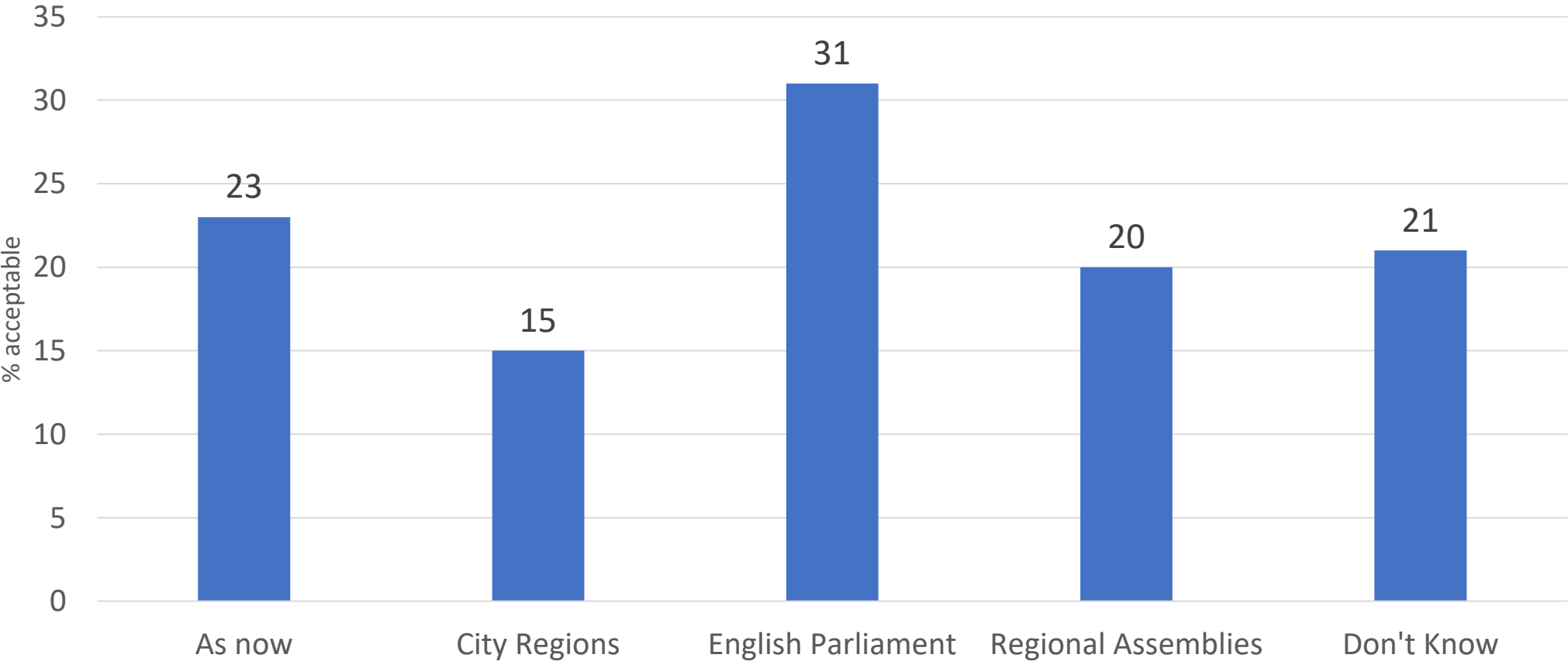
Who should take Decisions?



Uniformity or Local Decision?

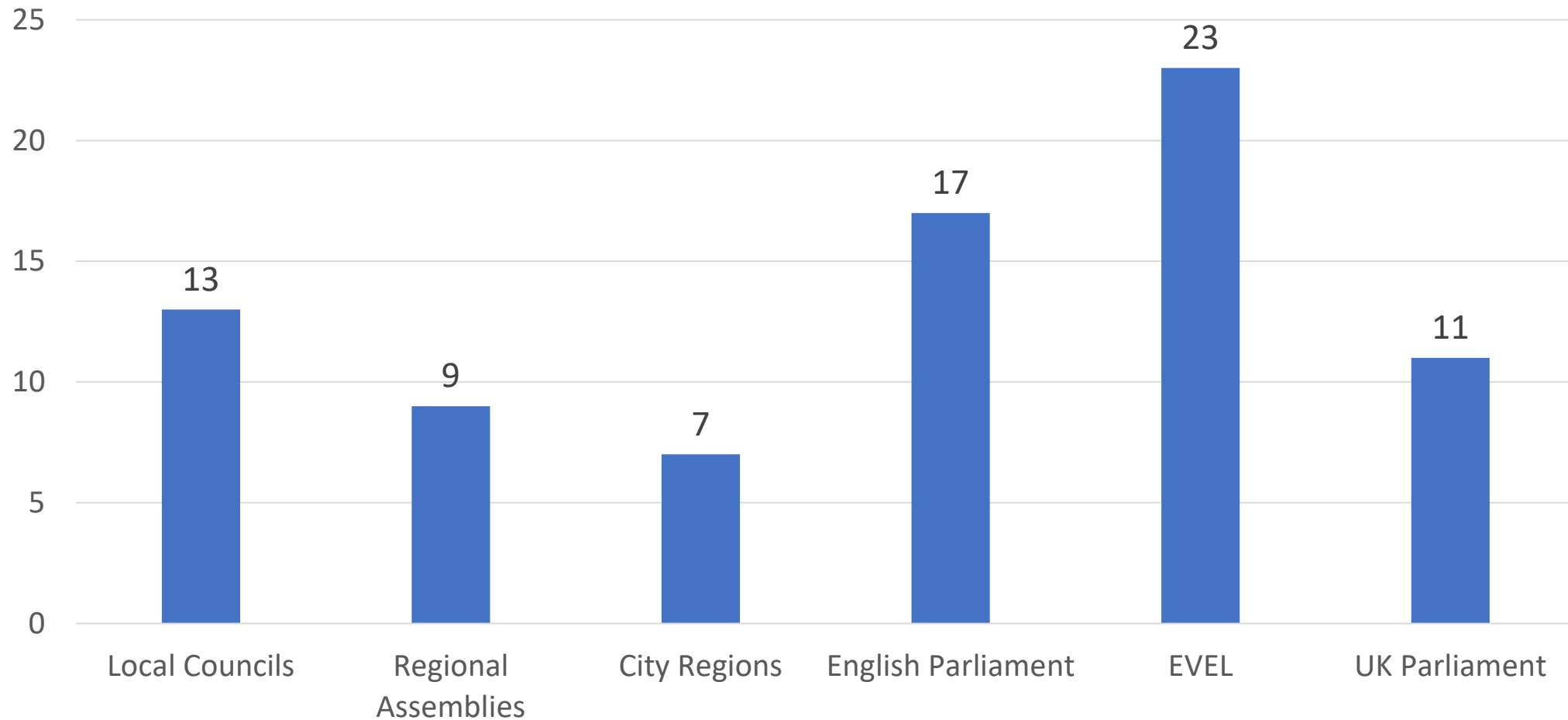


A Scattering of Preferences



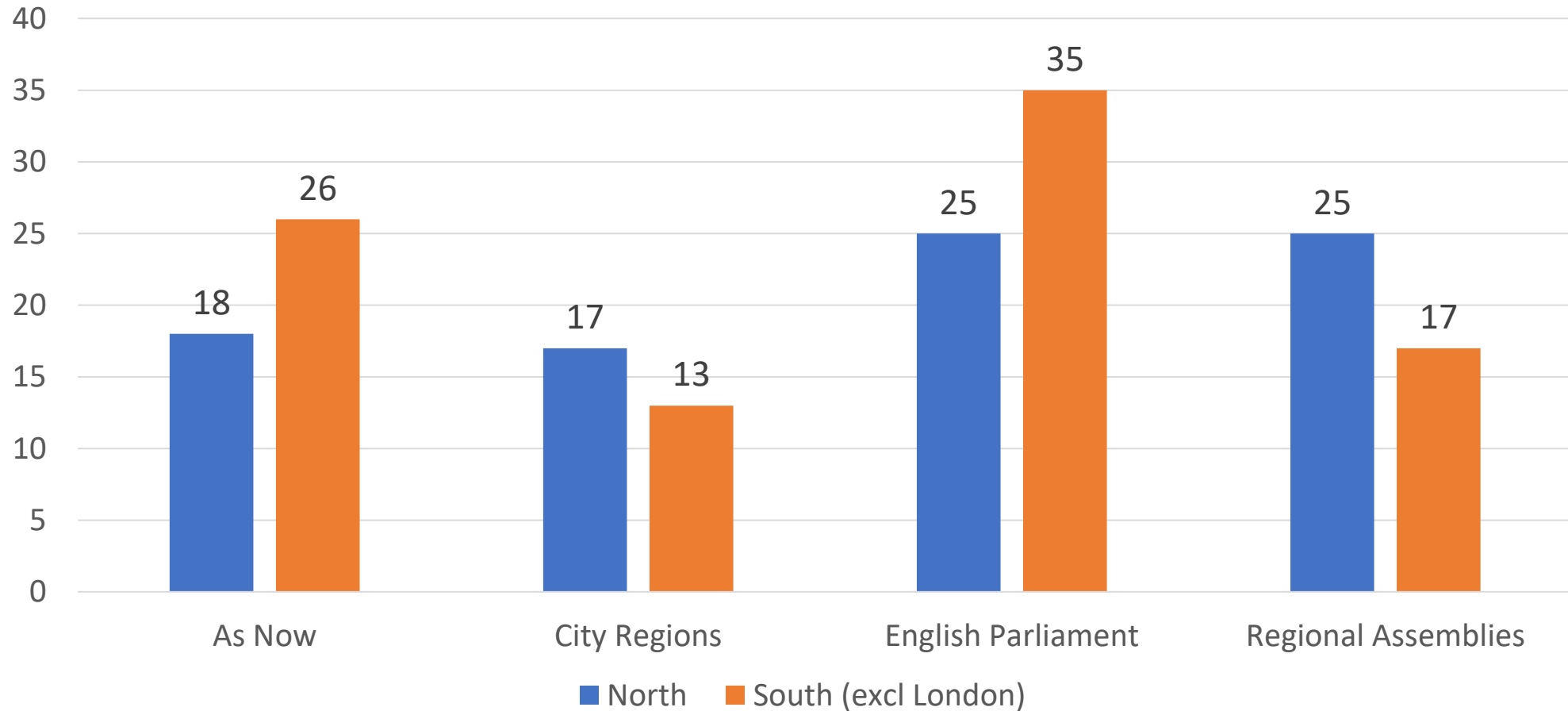
Opinium: August 2015.

Who Ought to Have Most Influence?



Source: Future of England Smith Commission Survey 2014

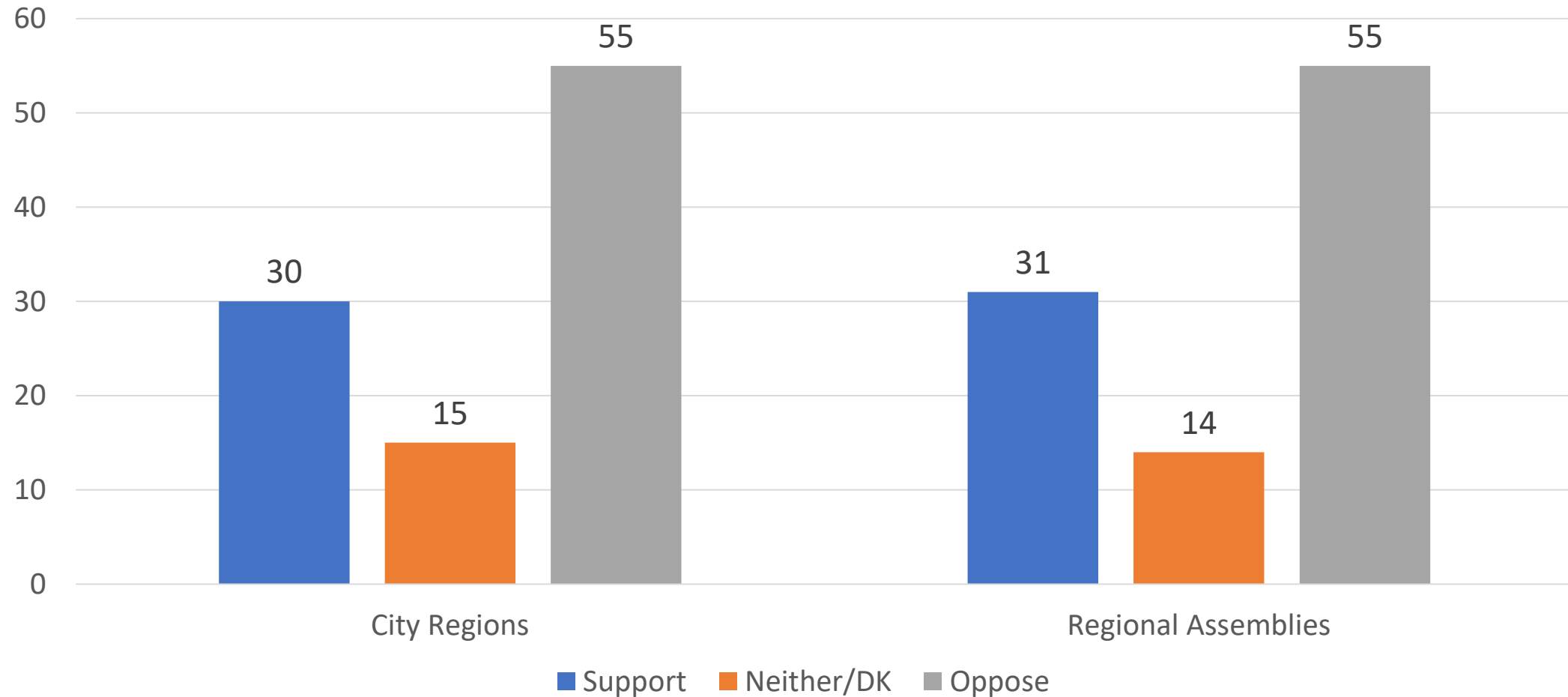
Some Regional Variation



Devolving Tax Powers - 1

- As you may know, in September there will be a referendum in which Scots will vote on whether they want Scotland to stay as part of the United Kingdom or separate to become an independent country. Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives have all said that if Scotland votes to stay in the UK, the Scottish Parliament should have increased powers to choose the level of income tax in Scotland and how it is spent.
- And to what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose giving similar powers to choose their own levels of taxation and spending for major cities, such as London, Birmingham and Manchester?
- And to what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose giving similar powers to choose their own levels of taxation and spending for English regions, such as the South West or Yorkshire and Humber?

Devolving Tax Powers - 2

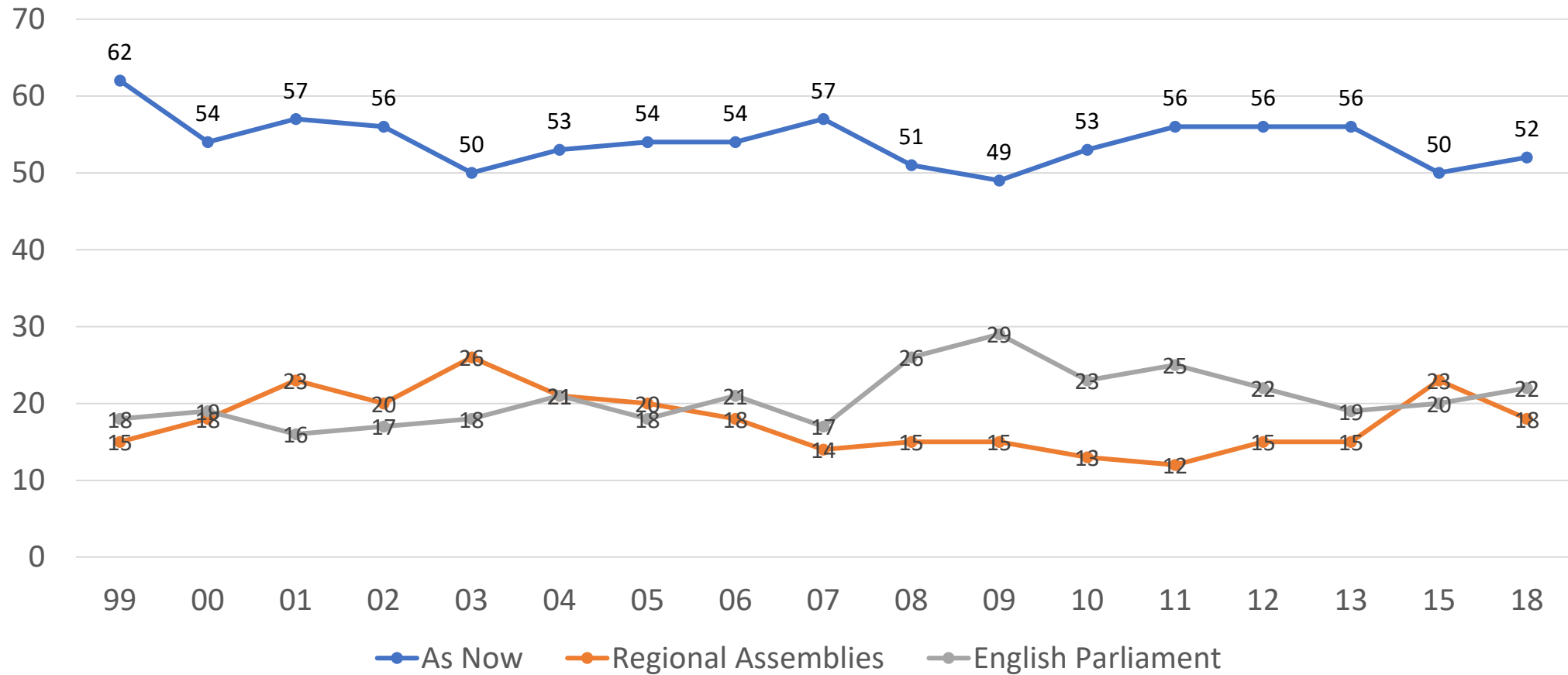


Forms of Devolution

- With all the changes going on in the way the different parts of Great Britain are run, which of the following do you think would be best for England...
- ...for England to be governed as it is now, with laws made by the UK parliament,
- for each region of England to have its own assembly that runs services like health,
- or, for England as a whole to have its own new parliament with law-making powers?

In 2004–2006 the second option read “that makes decisions about the region’s economy, planning and housing”.

The Governance of England



Source: British Social Attitudes. Respondents in England only

Summary

- Brexit has been (and still is) both divisive and disruptive of our electoral politics
- There has been something of a reaction against austerity and of a swing in favour of government intervention in the economy
- Support for devolution in England is fractured – and has not necessarily been boosted by Brexit.