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## POLITICAL COMMUNICATION



### IN BRITAIN

Campaigning, Media and Polling  
in the 2019 General Election

EDITED BY DOMINIC WRING, ROGER MORTIMORE, AND SIMON ATKINSON





12 December 2019

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Polling station, Enfield, 7am

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# AGENDA



## INTRODUCTION

**Simon Atkinson**  
**Dominic Wring**

Chief Knowledge Officer, Ipsos  
Professor of Political Communication, Loughborough University

## HOW 2019 WAS (AND WAS NOT) A BREXIT ELECTION

**Sir John Curtice**

Professor of Politics, University of Strathclyde  
and President of the British Polling Council

## BORIS JOHNSONS'S VICTORY: A FRENCH PERSPECTIVE

**Sonia Delesalle-Stolper**

Chief Foreign Editor, Libération

## PATH TO POWER: A JOURNEY WITH SKY NEWS

**Isla Glaister**

Assistant Editor for Data and Forensic Journalism, Sky News

**British Polling Council**



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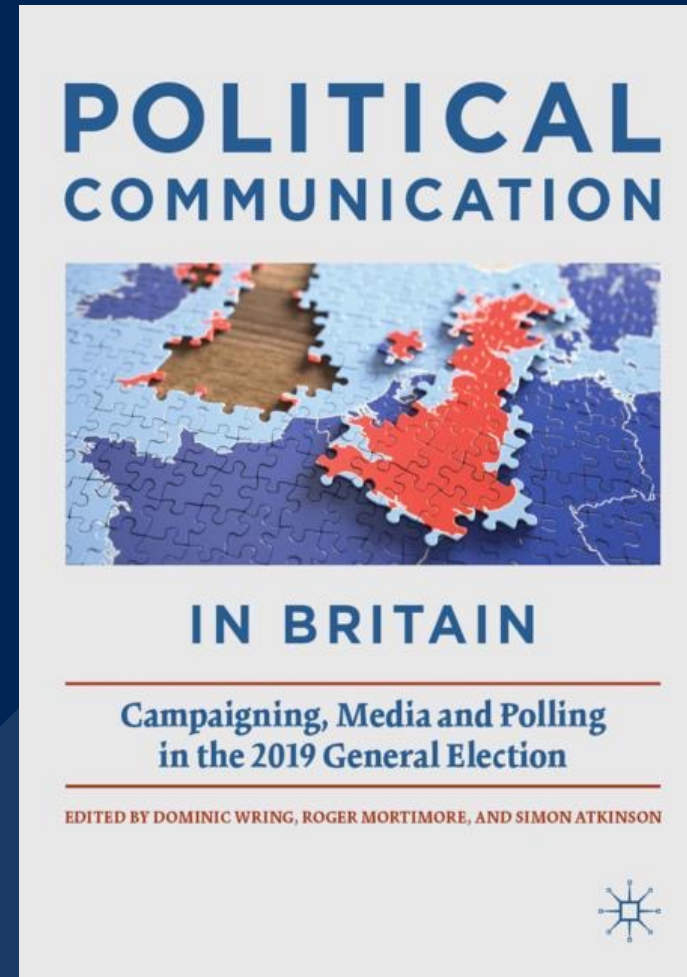


# Introduction

**Dominic Wring**

Professor of Political Communication,  
Loughborough University

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# The 11<sup>th</sup> Edition in the series



# Eyewitness Accounts

**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION  
IN BRITAIN**  
CAMPAIGNING, MEDIA AND POLLING  
IN THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTION

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Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson

**2 A Brexit Election?**  
John Curtice

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Lord Hayward

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Erik Geddes

**6 An Alternative Voice: The Liberal Democrats**  
James Gurling

**7 "Me and Brexit, or Nothing": A French Perspective on Boris Johnson's Victory**  
Sonia Delesalle-Stolper

**8 'Water Dripping on a Stone': Topham Guerin and the Tory Digital Strategy**  
Nathan Ritchie

**9 "Strategic Lying": Or How the Conservatives Dominated the Campaign News Agenda**  
Ivor Gaber and Caroline Fisher

## Part II Media

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Dominic Wring, David Deacon, and David Smith

**11 Reporting the Digital Campaign: Online News Coverage of the 2019 UK General Election by *BuzzFeed* and *The Huffington Post***  
Emily Harmer and Rosalynd Southern

**12 The Role of Alternative Online Political Media in the 2019 General Election**  
Declan McDowell-Naylor, Stephen Cushion, and Richard Thomas

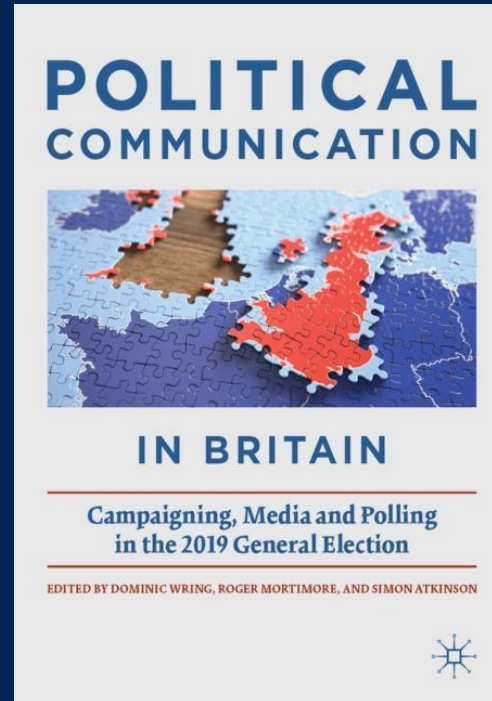
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Ric Bailey

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Murray Goot



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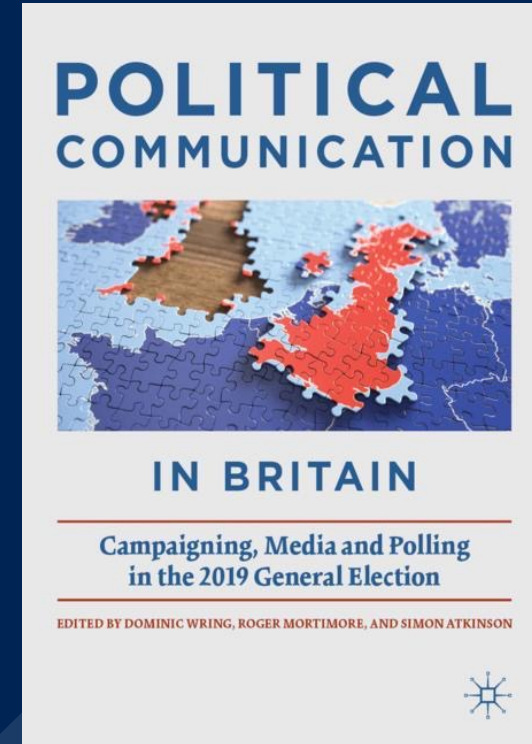
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# A Brexit Election?

**Sir John Curtice**

Professor of Politics, University of Strathclyde and President of the British Polling Council



# 2

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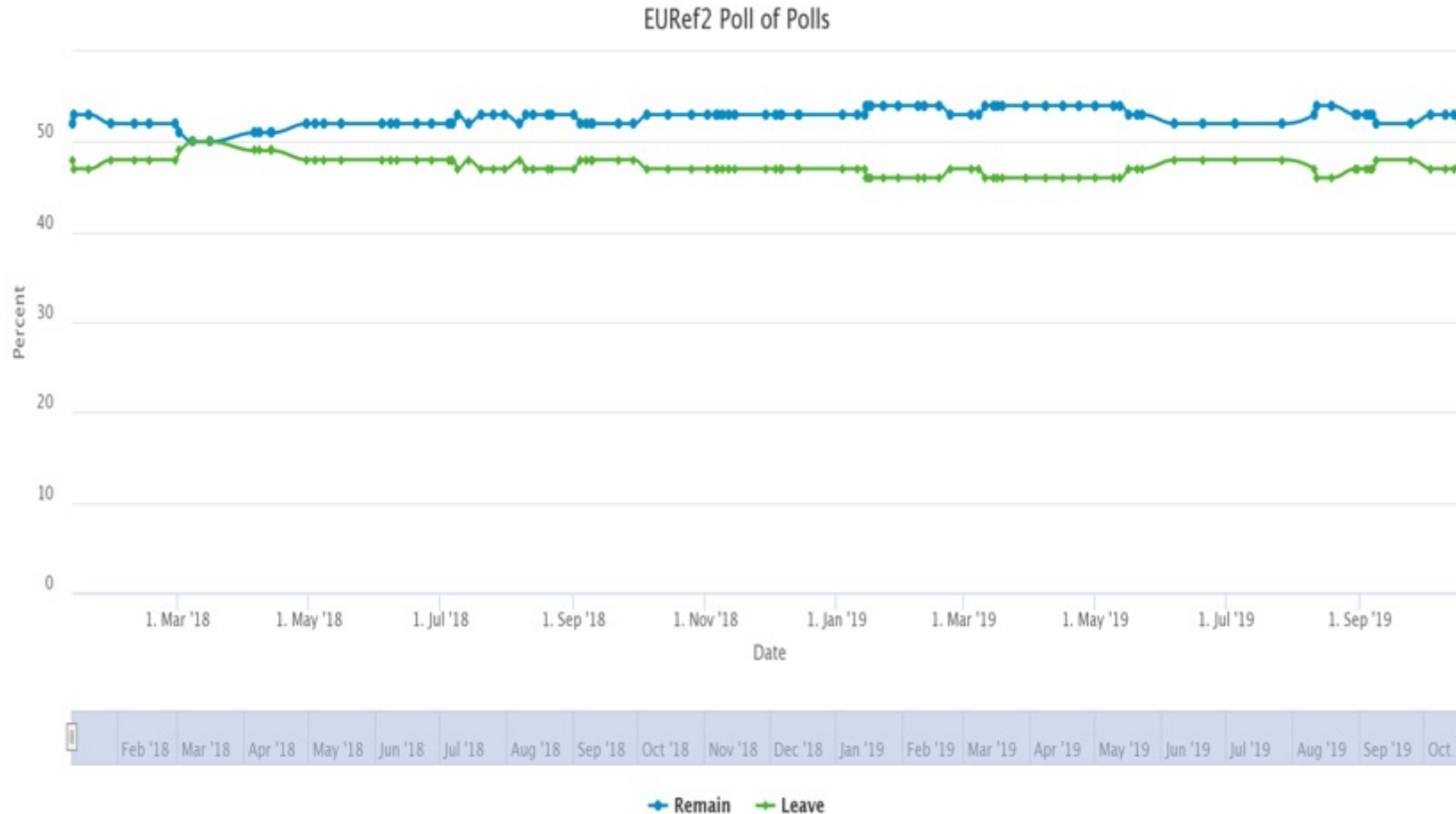


# How 2019 was (and was not) a Brexit election

John Curtice

Univ of Strathclyde/NatCen Social Research

# Prospects For A Second Referendum

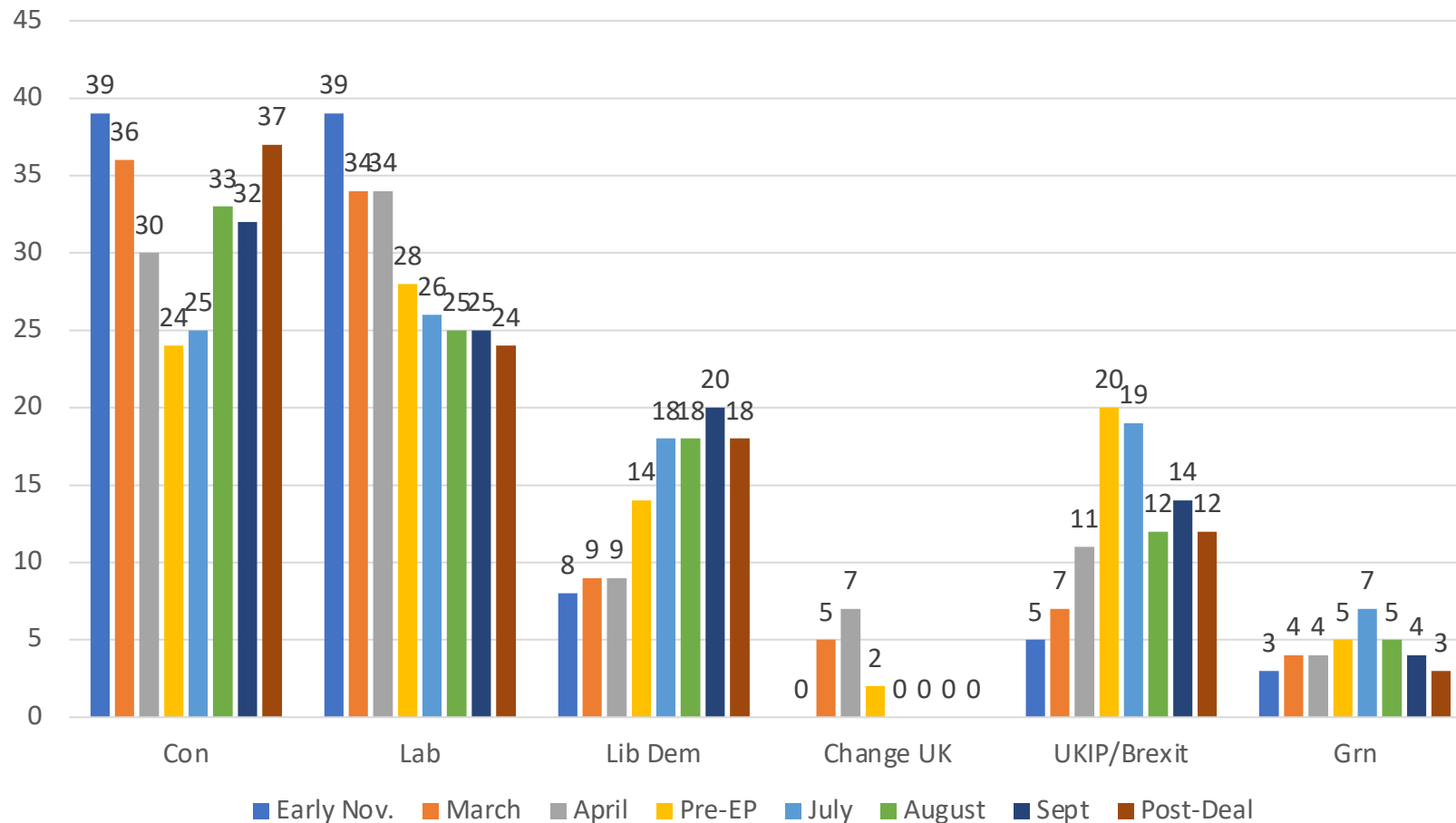


Source data at [www.WhatUKThinks.org/EU](http://www.WhatUKThinks.org/EU) run by NatCen Social Research

# The Result

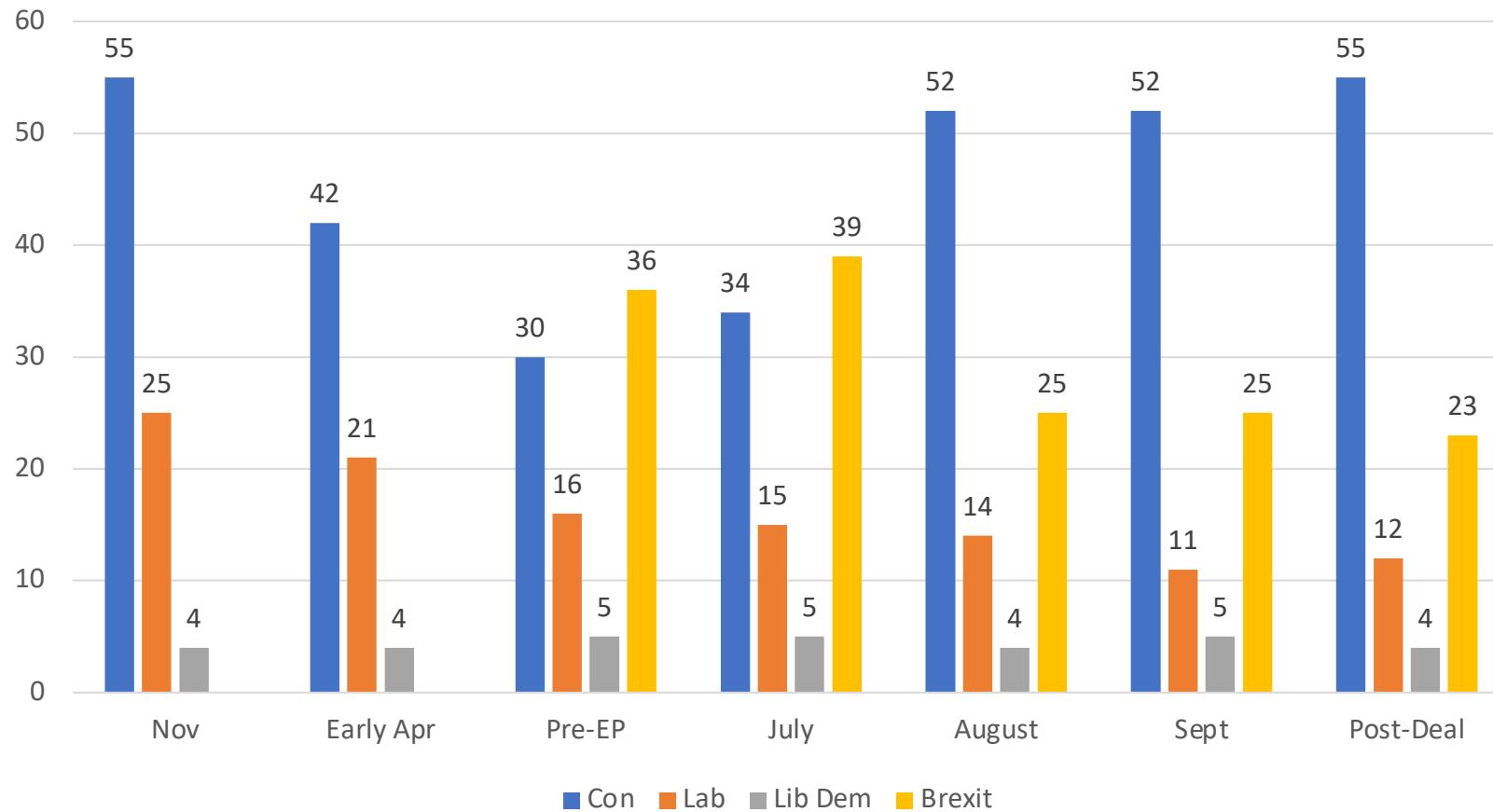
	% Votes (GB)	Change since 2017	Seats (UK)	Change since 2017
Conservative	44.7	+1.2	365	+49
Brexit	2.1	(+0.2)	0	-
Labour	33.0	-8.0	203	-59
Liberal Democrats	11.8	+4.2	11	-1
SNP	4.0	+0.9	48	+13
Greens	2.8	+1.1	1	n/c
PC	0.4	-0.1	4	+1
Others	1.1	+0.4	18	n/c

# A Year of Brexit



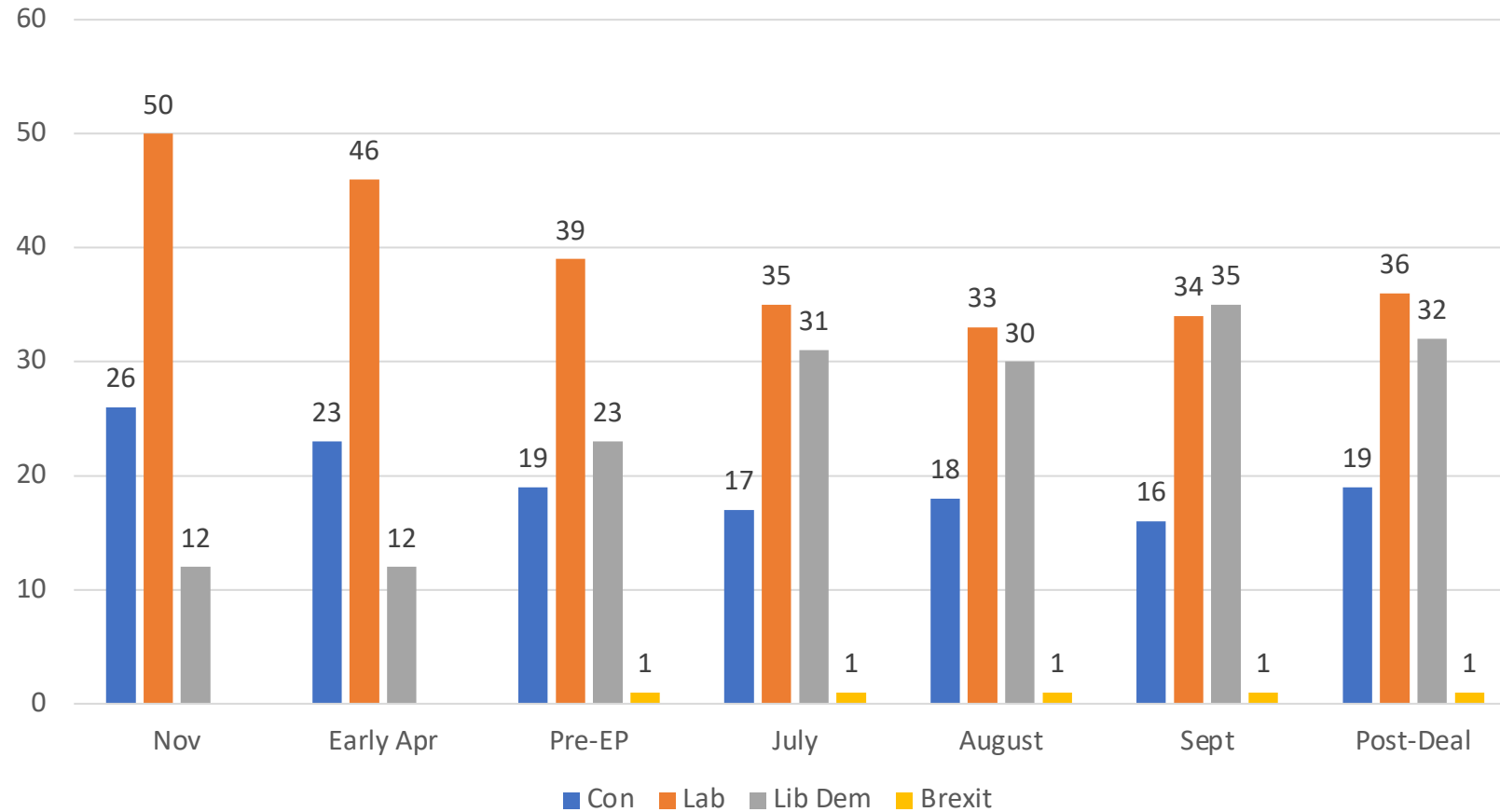
Source: Average of most recent poll conducted by each of BMG, ComRes, Deltapoll, Hanbury, ICM, Ipsos MORI, Kantar, Opinium, Panelbase, Survation, YouGov up to 15.11.19/25.3.19/12.4.19/22.5.19/17.7.19/31.8.19/1.10.19/7-27.10.19.

# Westminster Vote of Leavers



Source: Average of most recent poll conducted. by each of BMG, ComRes, Deltapoll, GRQ, Hanbury, ICM, Kantar, Opinium, Survation, YouGov up to 15.11.19/12.4.19/23.5.19/17.7.19/31.8.19/ 1.10.19/17-27.10.19

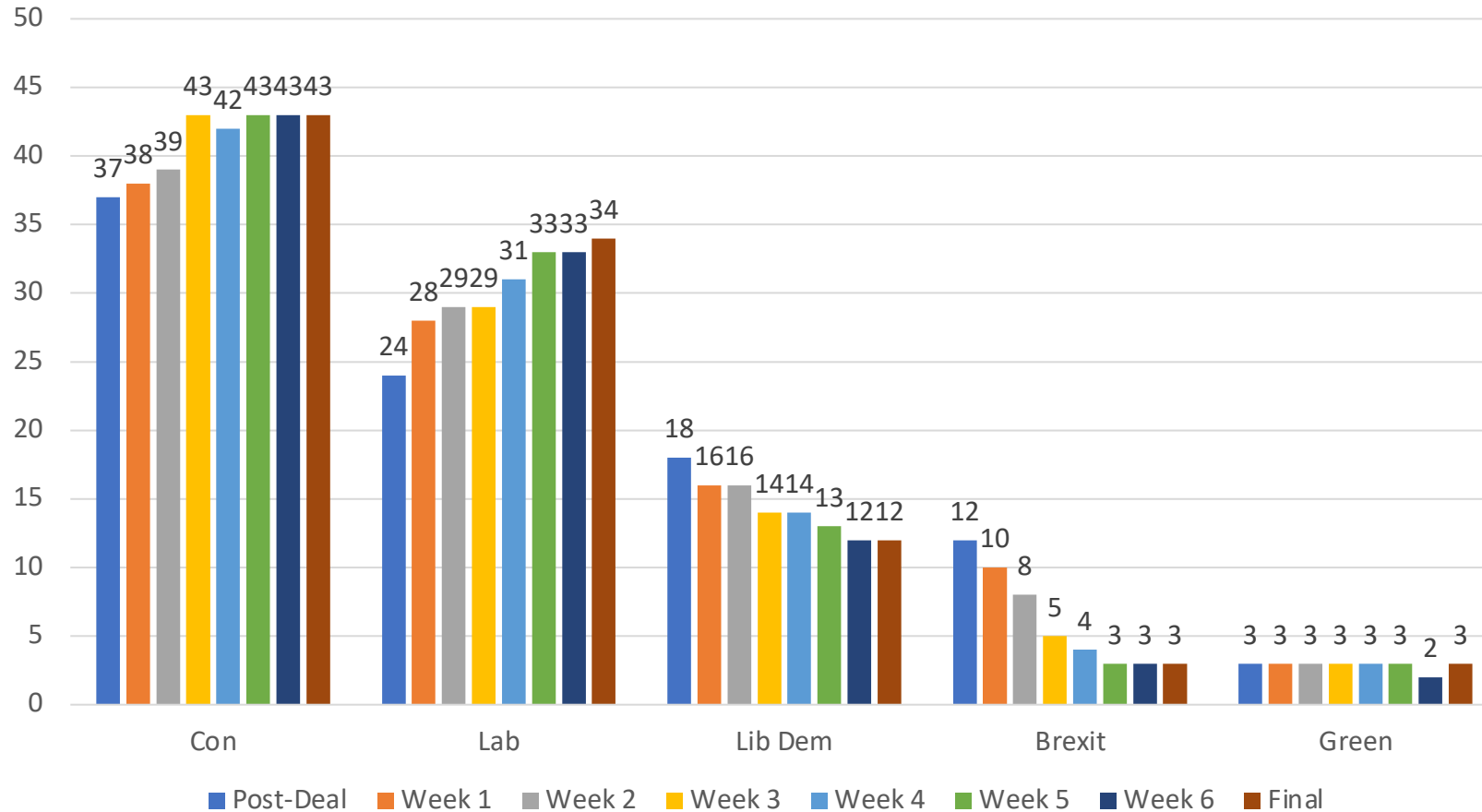
# Westminster Vote of Remainders



Source: Average of most recent poll conducted by each of BMG, ComRes, Deltapoll, GRQ, Hanbury, ICM, Kantar, Opinium, Panelbase, Survation, YouGov up to 15.11.19/12.4.19/23.5.19/11.7.19/31.8.19 /1.10.19/17-27.10.19

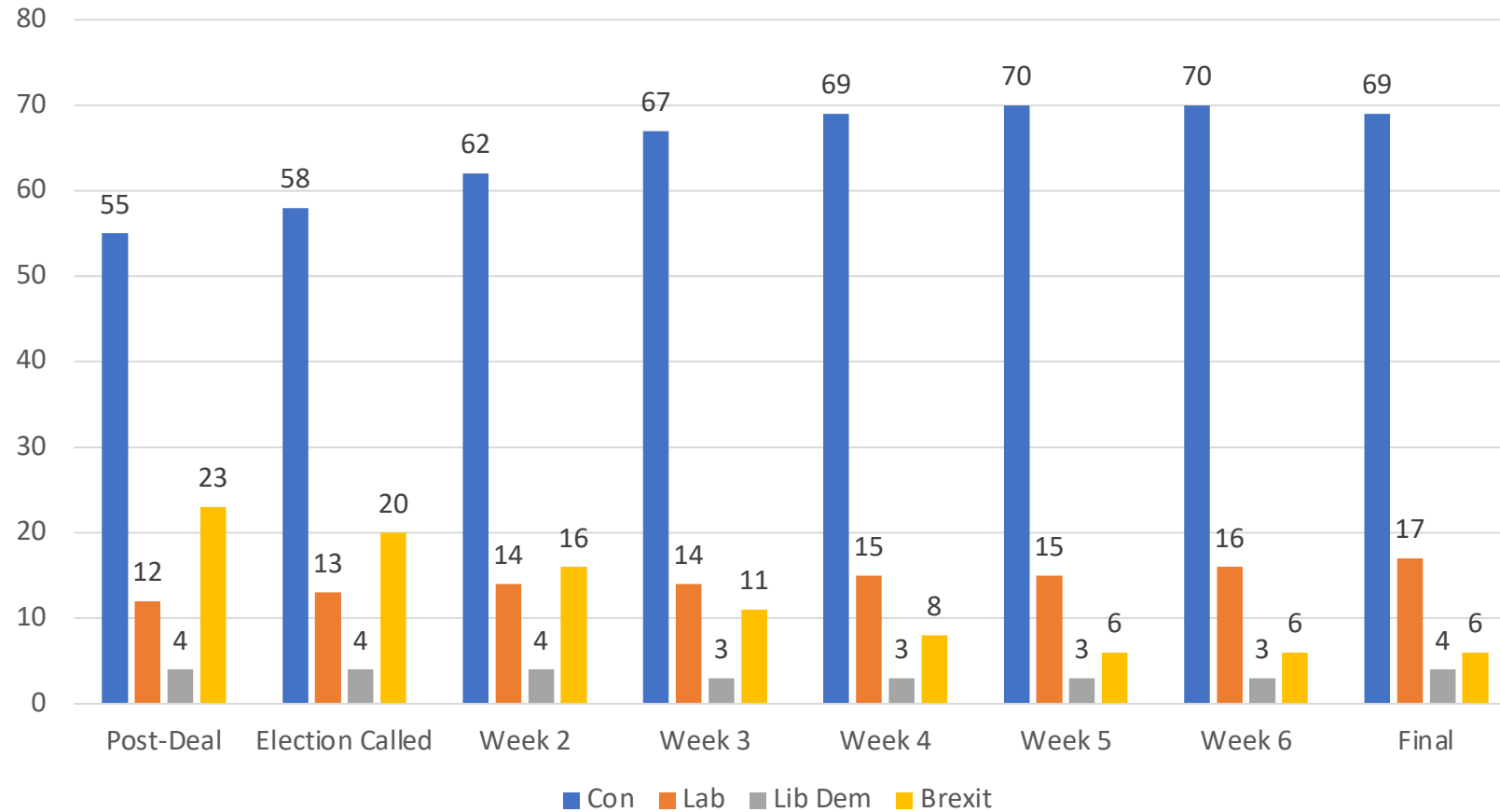


# The Campaign Polls



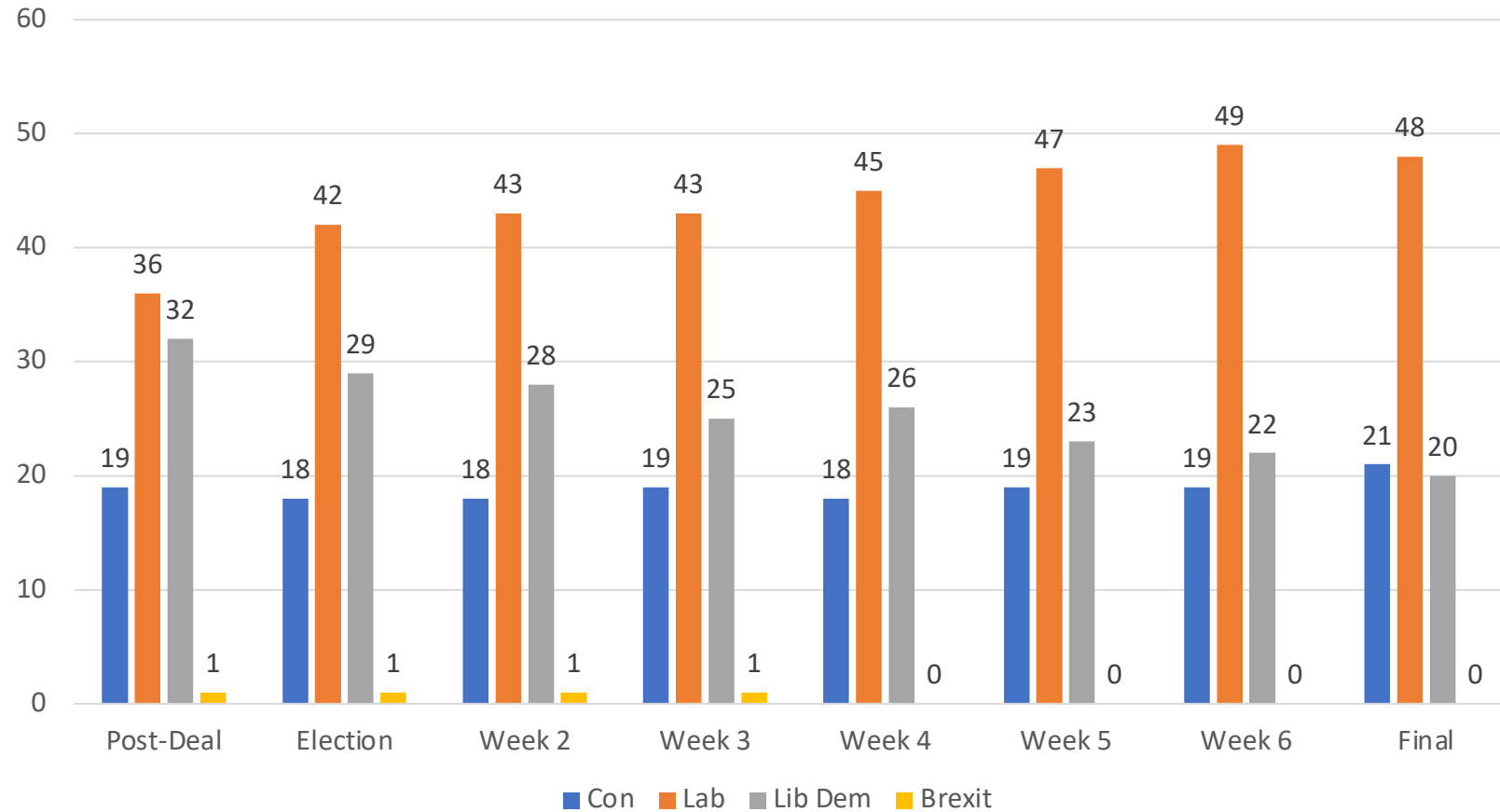
Post Deal: Average of most recent. poll 7-27.10.19 by 9 companies. Week 1: Average of most recent poll to 6.11.19 by 8 companies. Week 2: Average of most recent poll by 9 companies 6-12.11.19. Week 3: Average of 10 companies 13-19.11.19: Week 4: Average of 9 companies 19-26.11.19; Week 5: Average of 9 companies 26.11—3.12.19; Week 6: Average of 8 companies 4-7.12.19: Final: Average of 10 companies 4-11.12.19

# Leavers In The Election



Average of most recent poll by BMG, ComRes, Detapoll, ICM, Kantar, Number Cruncher Politics, Opinium, ORB, Panelbase, Survation, YouGov 17-27.11.19/ 6.11.19/12.11.19/19.11.19/26.11.19/3.12.19/7.12.19/11.12.19

# Remainers in the Election



Average of most recent poll by BMG, ComRes, Detapoll, ICM, Kantar, Number Cruncher Politics, Opinium, ORB, Panelbase, Survation, YouGov 17-27.11.19/ 6.11.19/12.11.19/19.11.19/23.11.19/3.12.19/7.12.19/11.12.19

# The Brexit Divide - 1

	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

Source: YouGov (41,995) 13-16.12.19; (52,609) 9-13.6.17.

# The Brexit Divide - 2

	Remain Voters		Leave Voters	
	2019	2017	2019	2017
Conservative	20	25	73	60
Brexit/UKIP	0	0	4	6
Labour	47	51	16	25
Liberal Democrats	21	14	3	4
SNP/PC	7	7	2	2
Greens	4	3	2	2

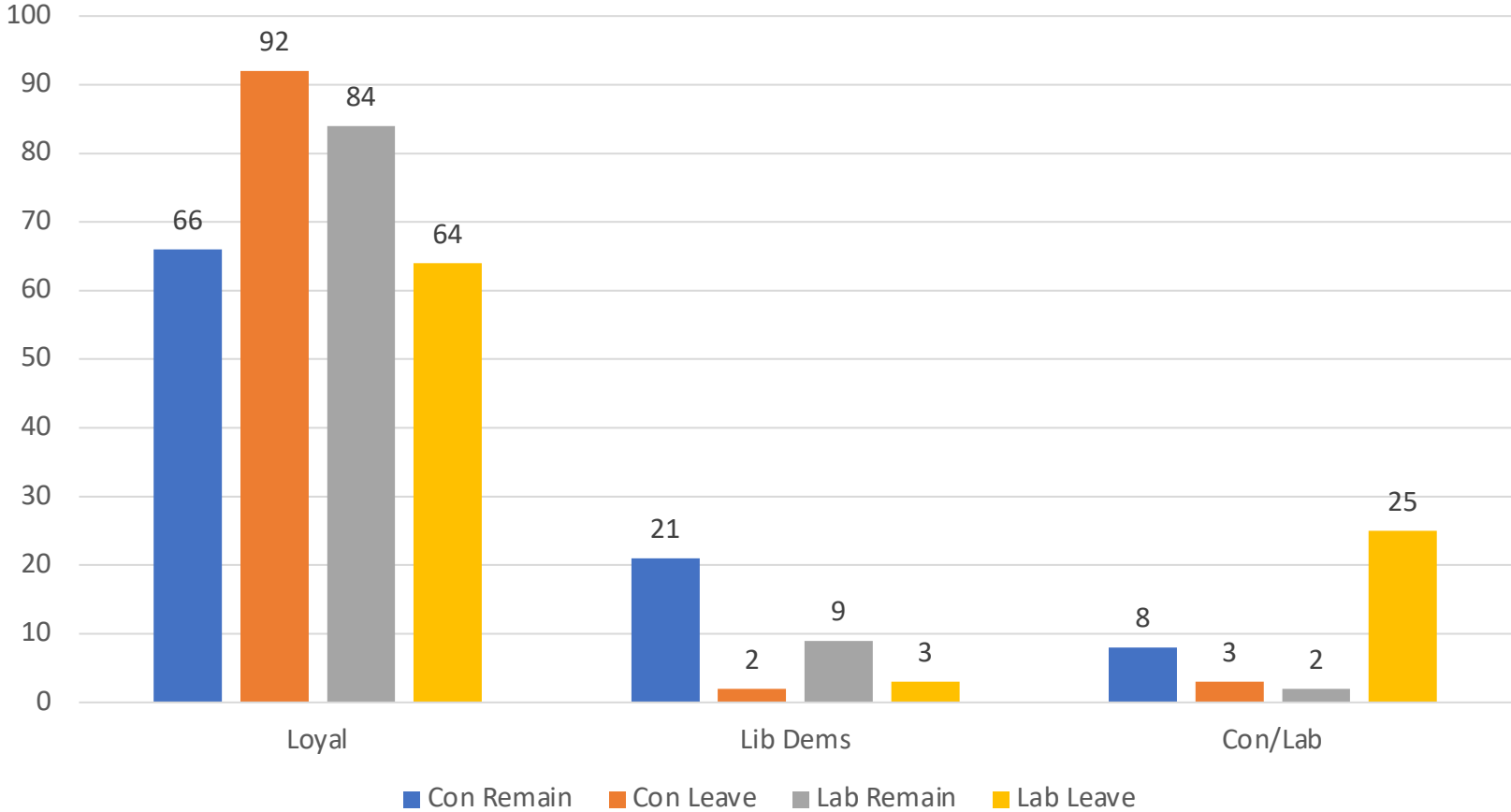
Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls: (13,128) 6-9.6.17; (14,394 )11-12.12.19. Voters only.

# 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

Source: YouGov 13-16.12.19; 9-13.6.17.

# The Pattern of Switching 2017-19



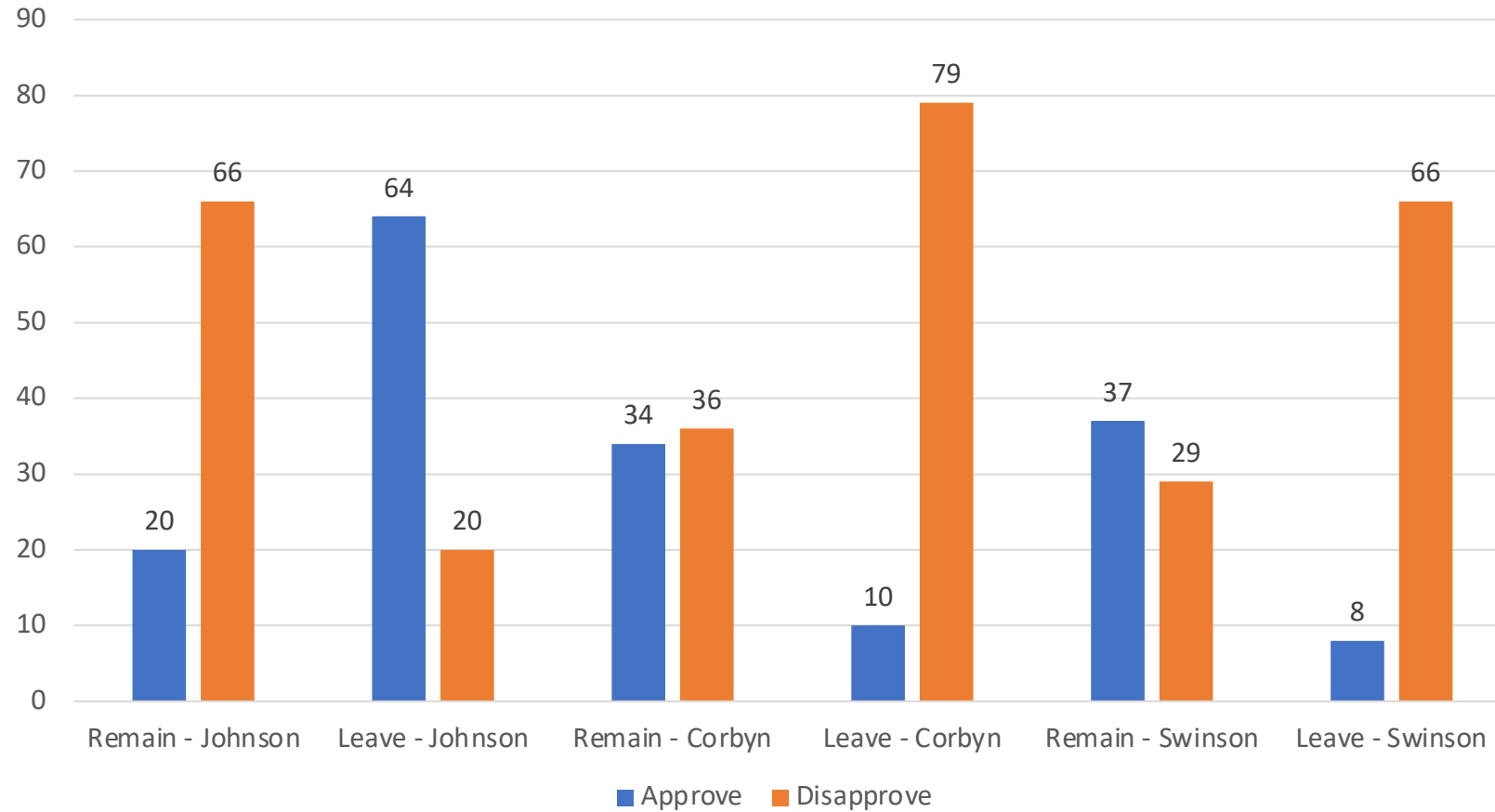
Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls 11-12.12.19.

# Points of Policy

- Labour's nationalisation policies were generally not unpopular – though less popular among Conservative Remainers
- Although Labour's overall policy platform was more popular among Remainers as a whole than that of the Conservatives, this was not true of Conservative Remainers
- Conservative policies were as popular as Labour ones among Labour Leavers

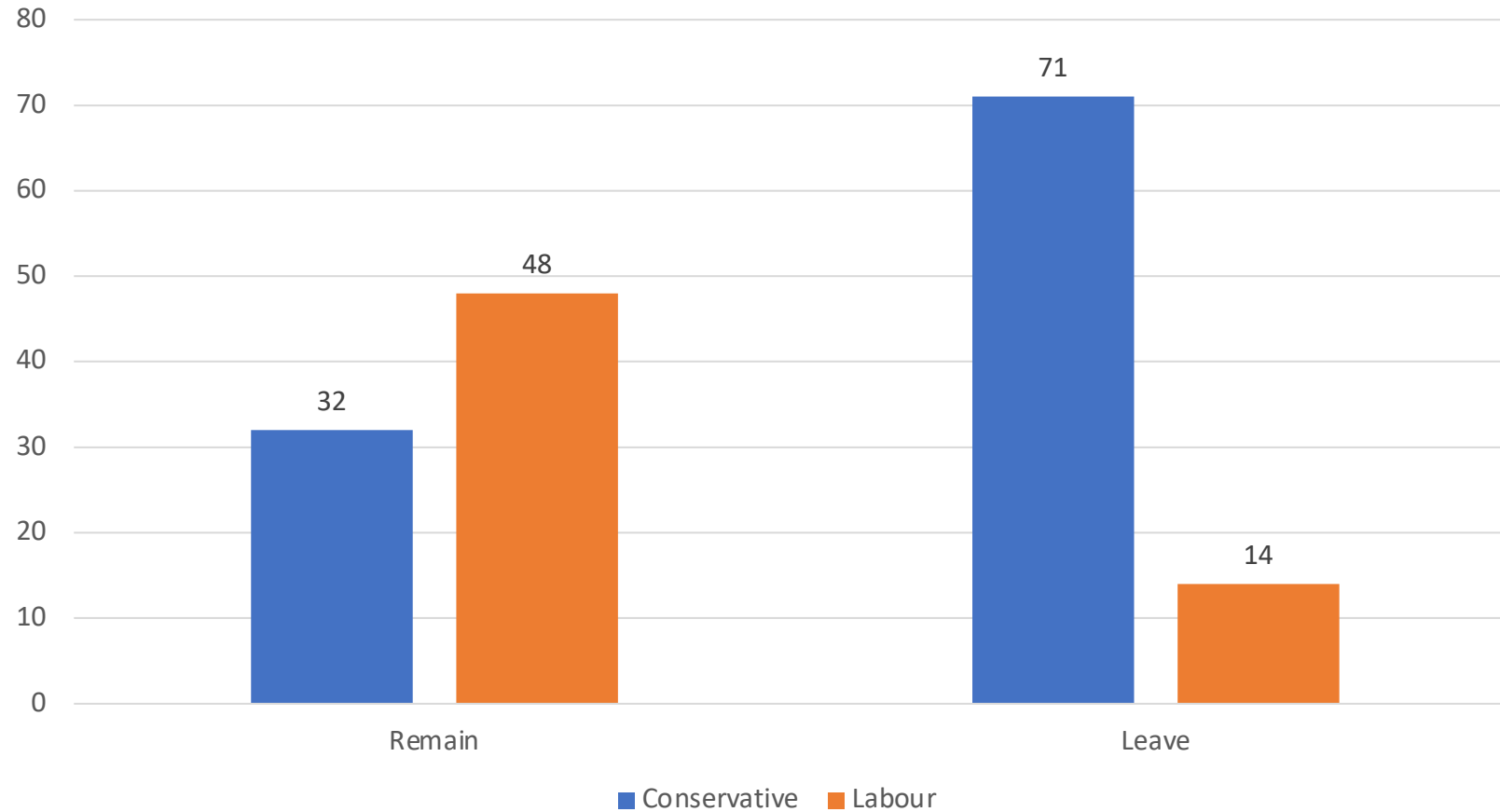


# Differences of Leadership



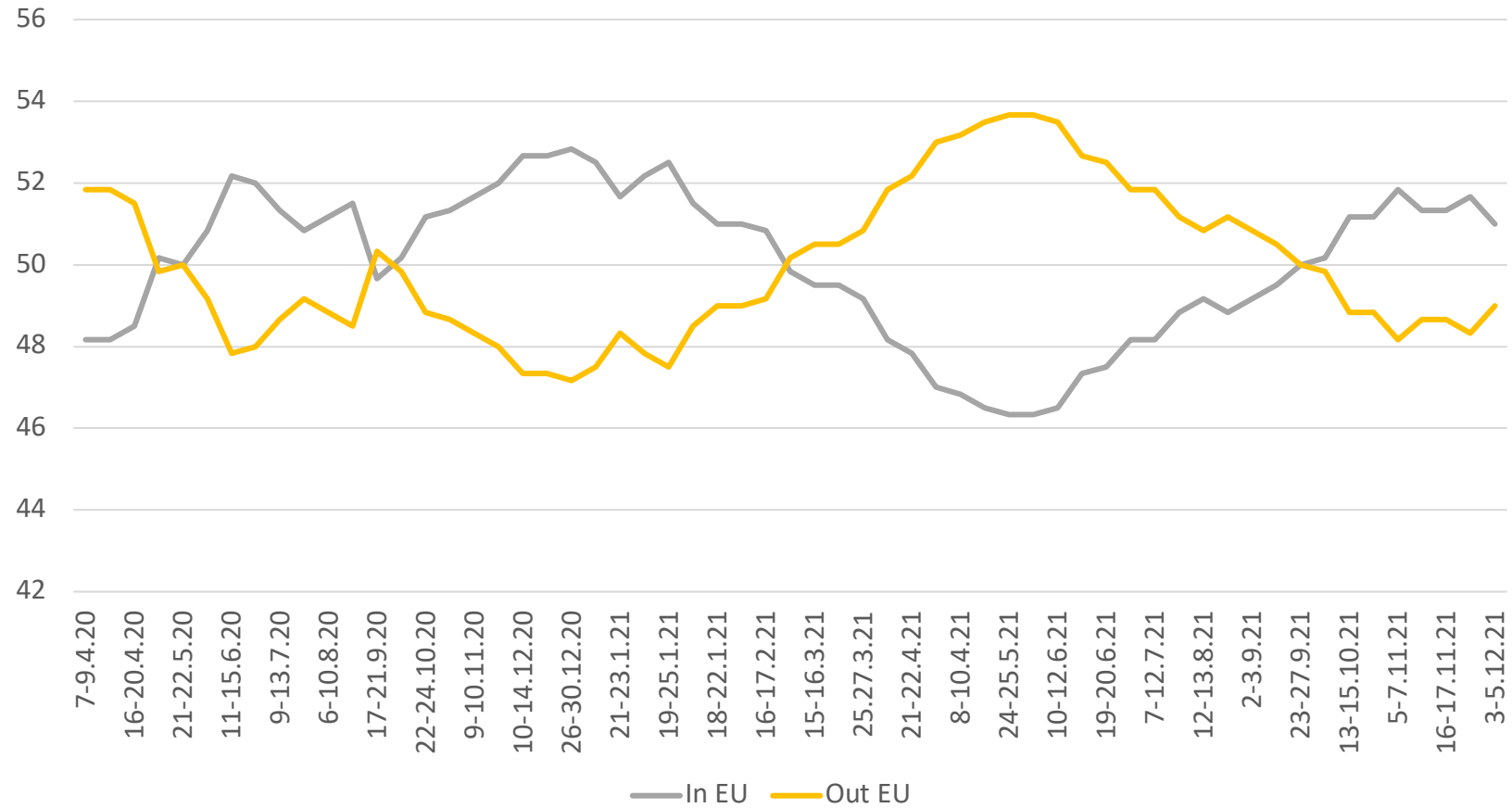
Source: Average of Opinium Polls: 30.10-11.12.19

# Best Party at Handling Economy



Source: Average of polls by Deltapoll 31.10-7.12.19

# Post-Brexit Poll of Polls



Source: [whatukthinks.org/eu](https://whatukthinks.org/eu)

# The Current Divide

	Remain Voters			Leave Voters		
	Now	+/- 2019	+/-2017	Now	+/-2019	+/- 2017
Con	19	-1	-6	56	-18	-7
Reform	1	+1	+1	8	+3	+3
Lab	51	+3	-2	23	+8	-2
Lib Dem	14	-7	+1	4	0	0
SNP/PC	7	0	+1	3	+1	+1
Greens	7	+3	+4	4	+2	+2

Source: Average of the most recent fully published polls in the month to 11 December by Deltapoll, Find Out Now, Focaldata, Kantar, Opinium, Panelbase Savanta ComRes, Survation, YouGov. Comparison with 2019 and 2017 is with the average of the Lord Ashroft and YouGov polls cited above.

# Summary - 1

- Over the year prior to the election, voters were (increasingly) reflecting their views about Brexit in their party preference
- Eventual Conservative success founded on uniting the (minority) Leave vote – whereas the Remain (pro-EURef2) vote was fractured
- Popularity of Johnson – and unpopularity of Corbyn and Swinson (plus perceptions of competence) – helped stimulate this asymmetric pattern
- In the wake of little partisan discussion of Brexit, the electoral divide has returned to its 2017 level

# Campaign Perspectives

# 3



# Sonia Delesalle-Stolper

Chief Foreign Editor, Libération



# Isla Glaister

Assistant Editor for Data and Forensic Journalism, Sky News



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