

How much difference would AV make?

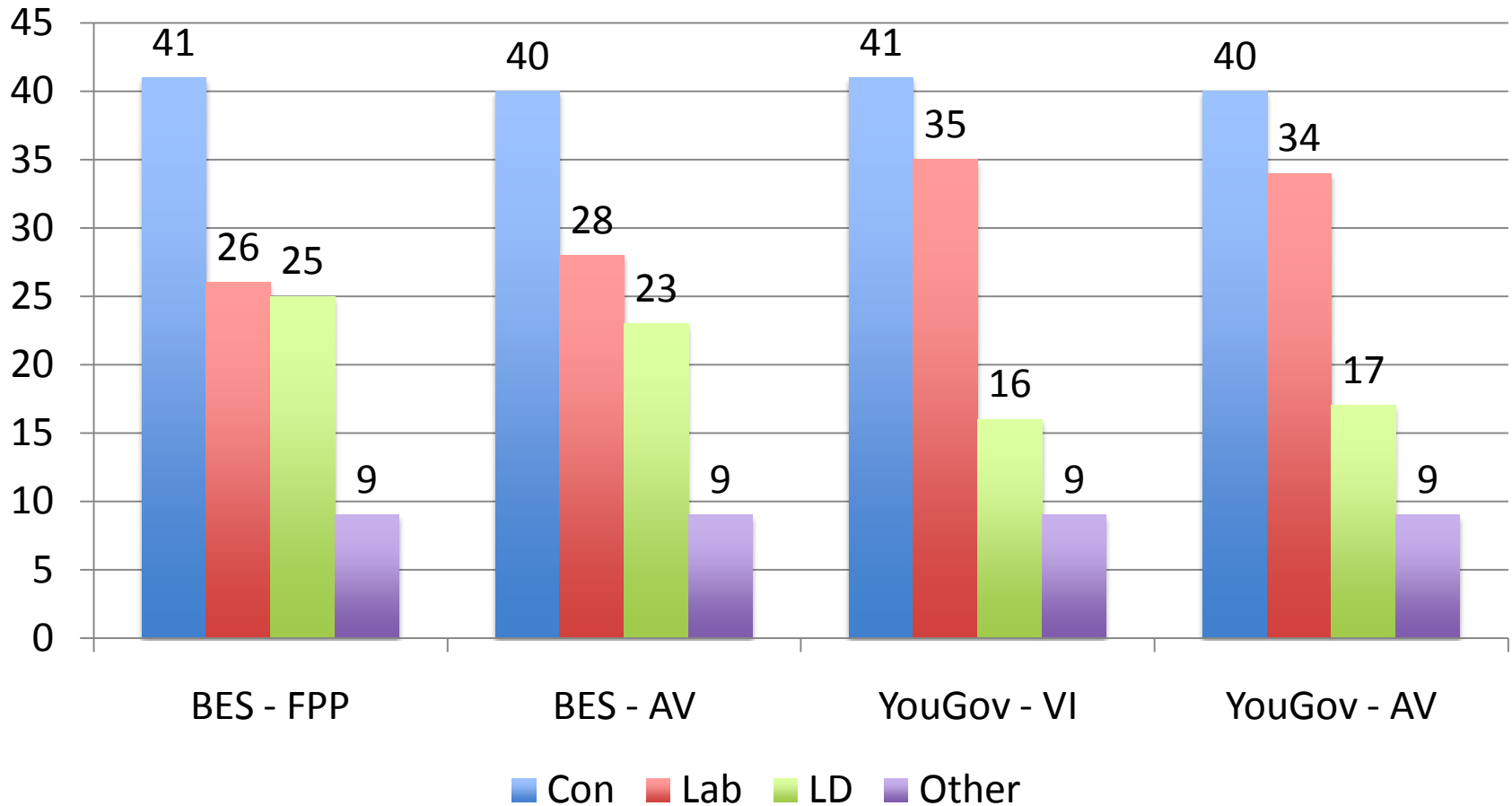
John Curtice

Strathclyde University

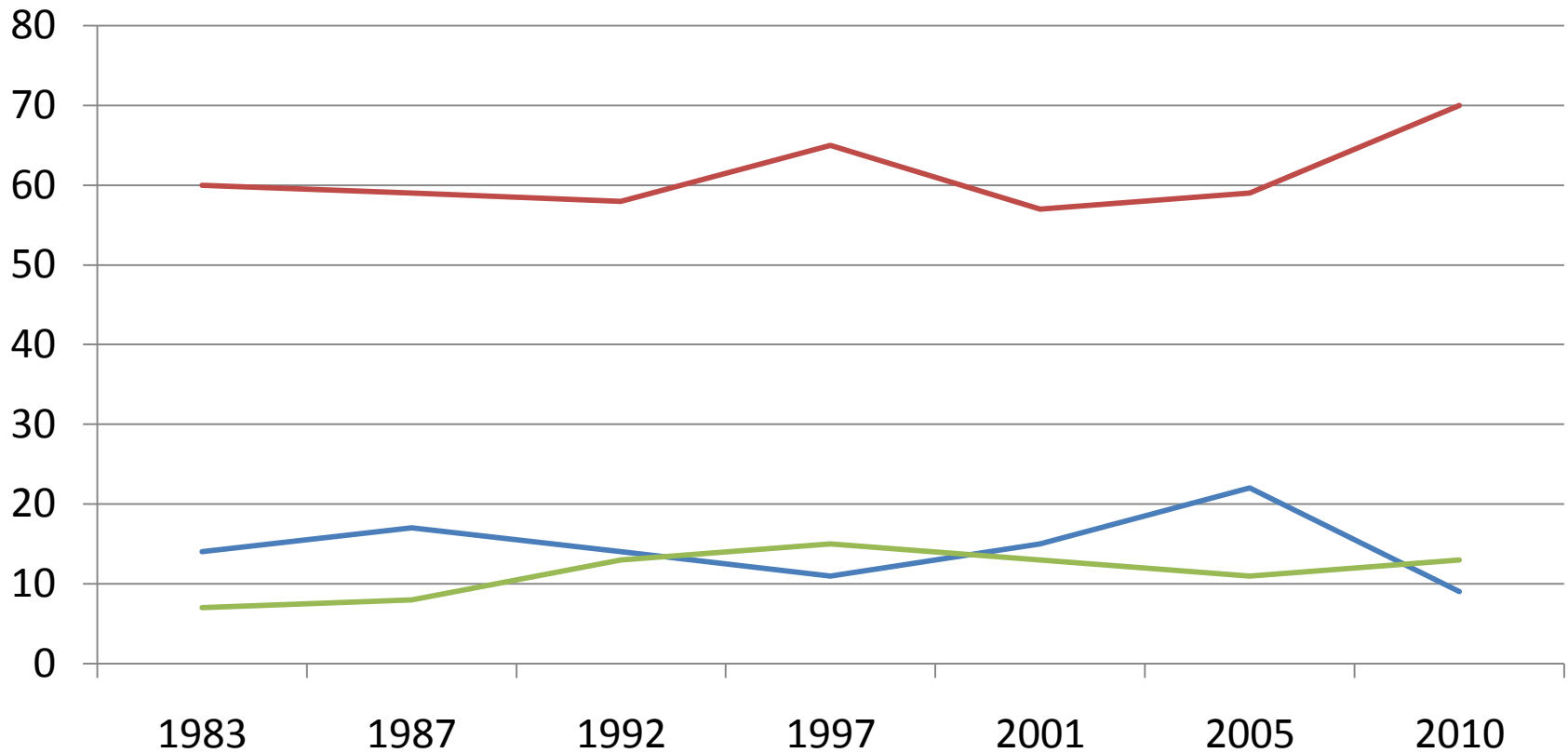
How AV can make a difference

- May make it easier for 3rd parties to win first preference votes (though 1 in 3 now vote that way anyway)
- Second and subsequent preferences may change the winner – but only if whoever comes 2nd (or maybe 3rd) in first preferences is sufficiently more popular amongst supporters of lower placed candidates to overhaul whoever came 1st
- Means will usually only make a difference in marginal seats.

Little impact on votes?



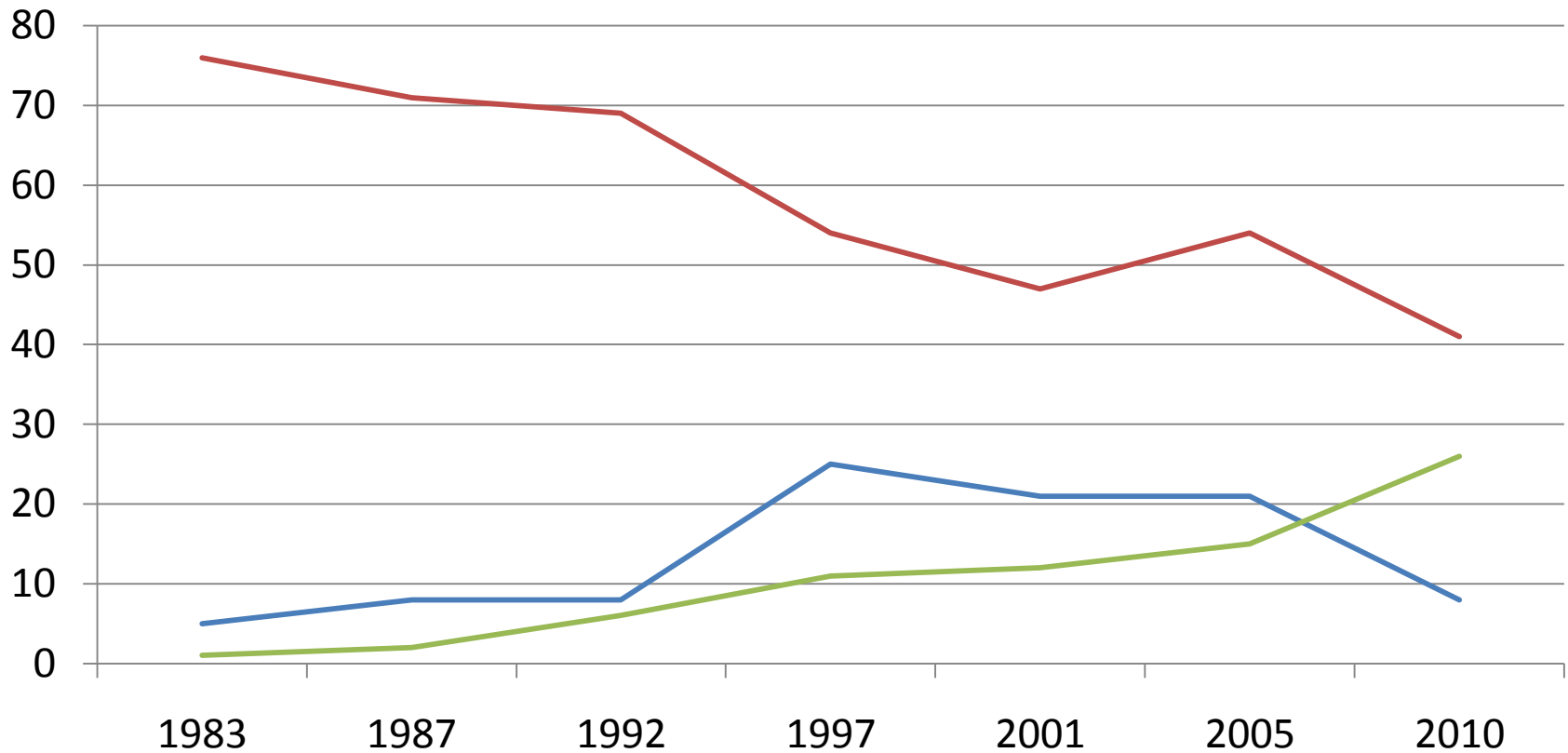
The History of Lab 2nd Preferences



Source: BES/ICM/ComRes

— Con — LD — Other

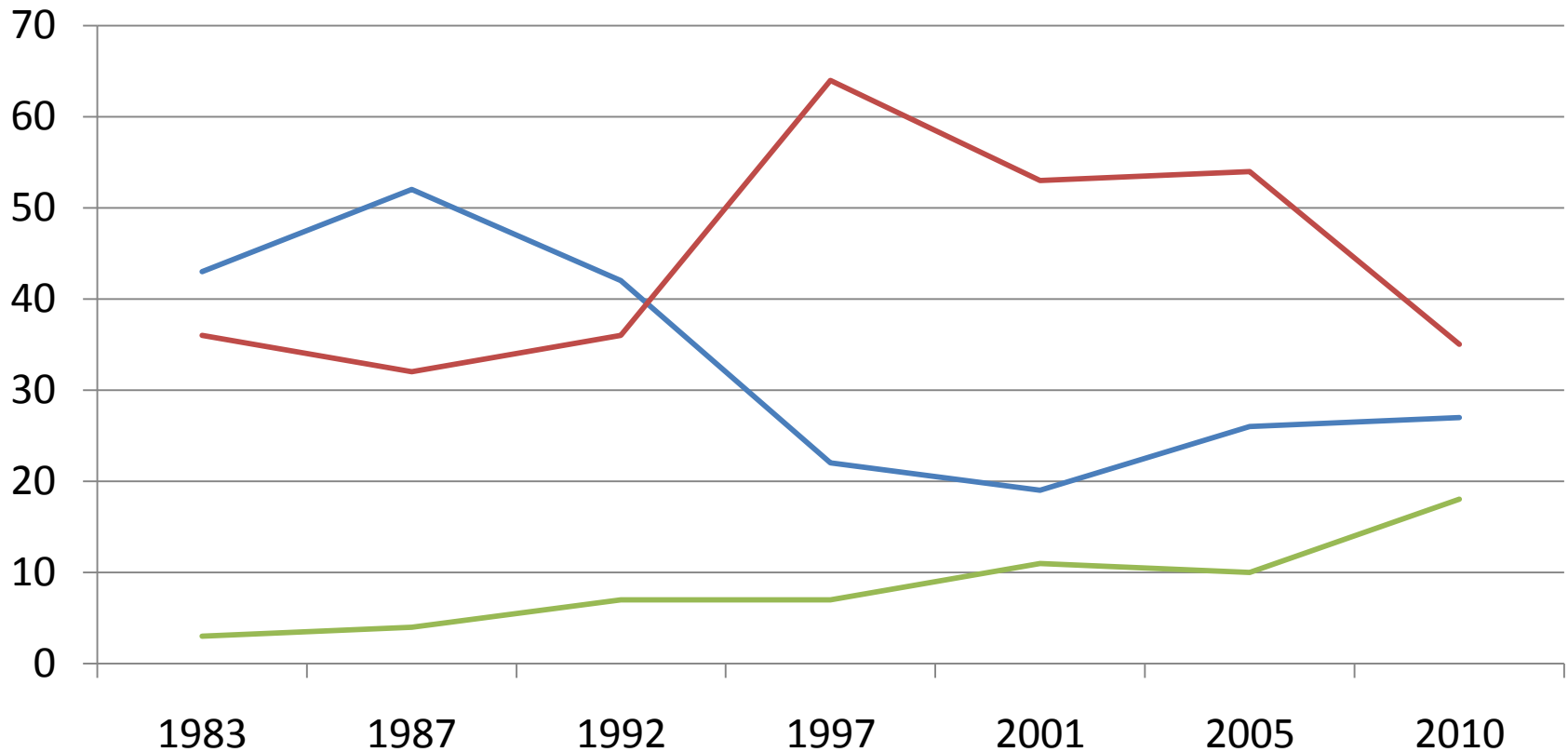
The History of Con 2nd Preferences



Source: BES/ICM/ComRes

— Lab — LD — Other

The History of LD 2nd Preferences

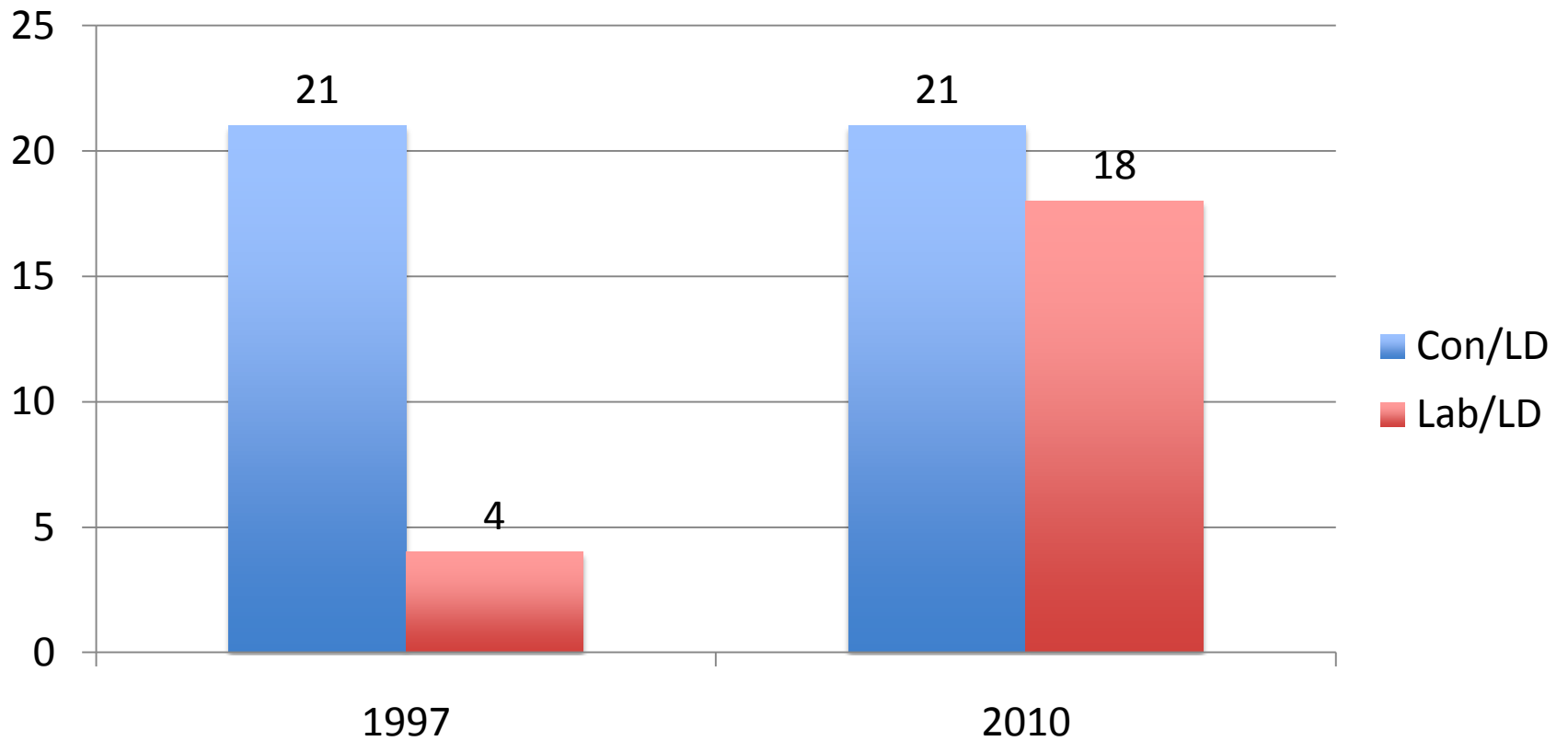


Source: BES/ICM/ComRes

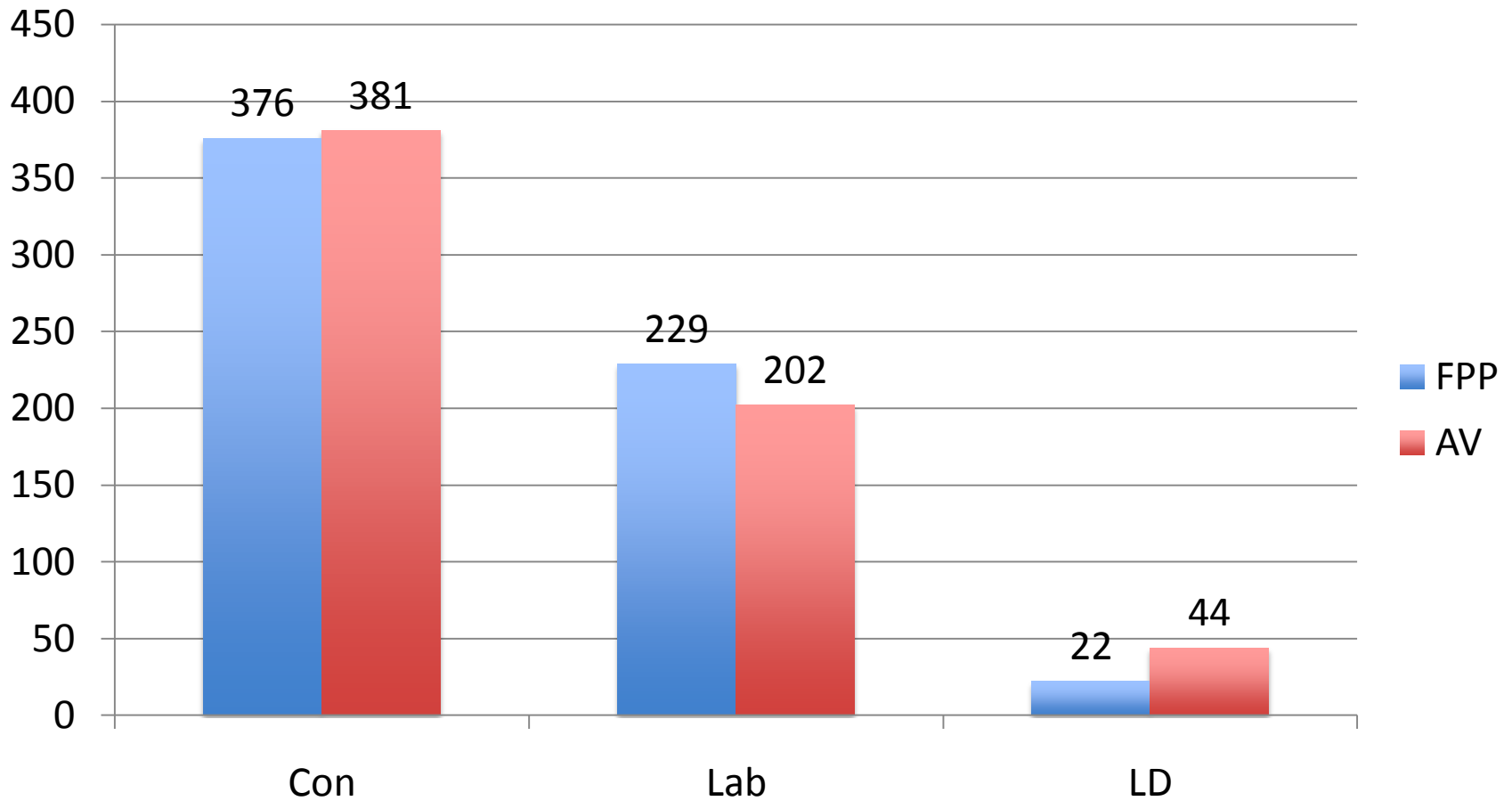
— Con — Lab — Other

Vulnerability to the LDs

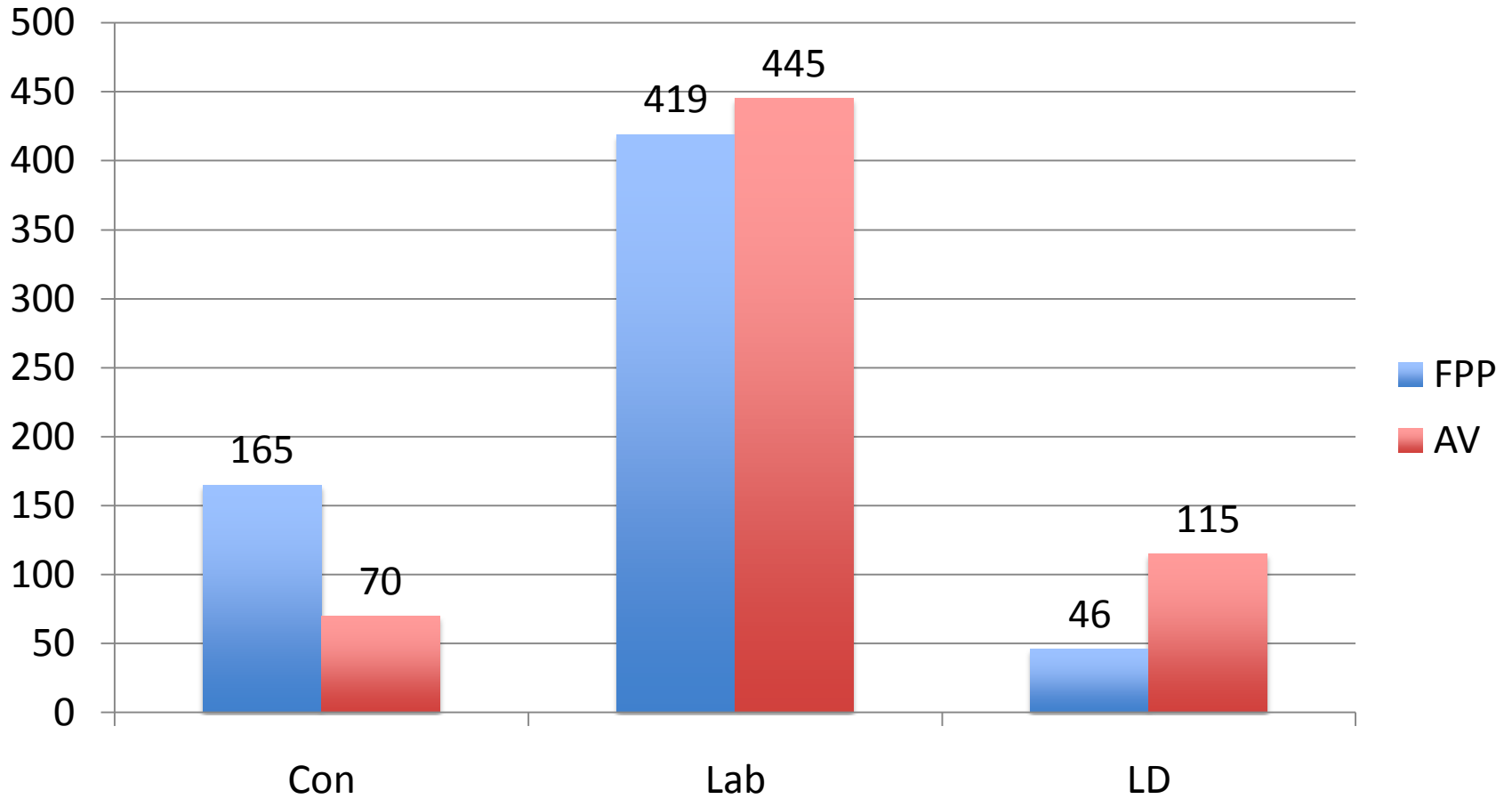
Close 2nd Places



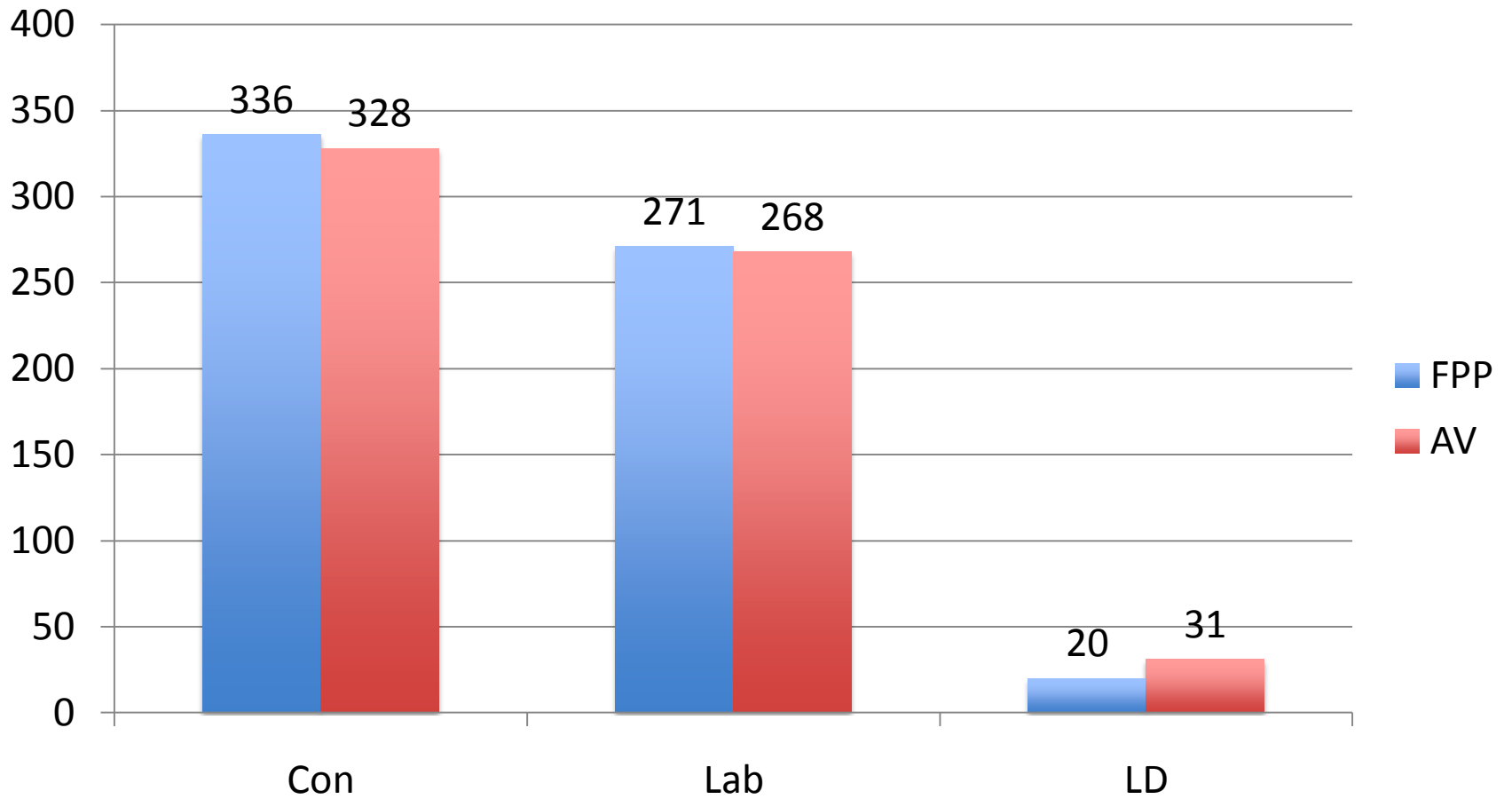
Seat Extrapolation - 1987



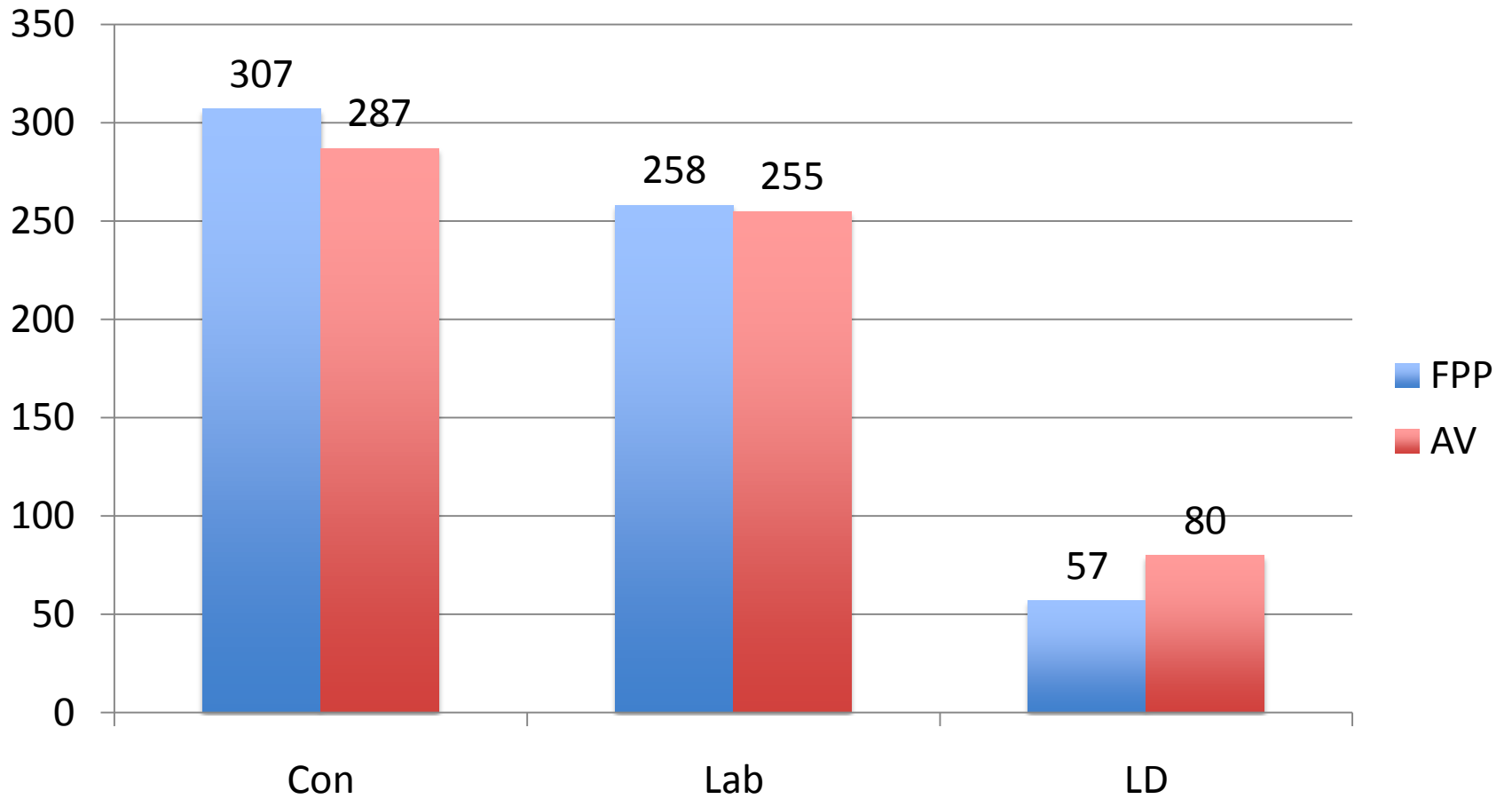
1997



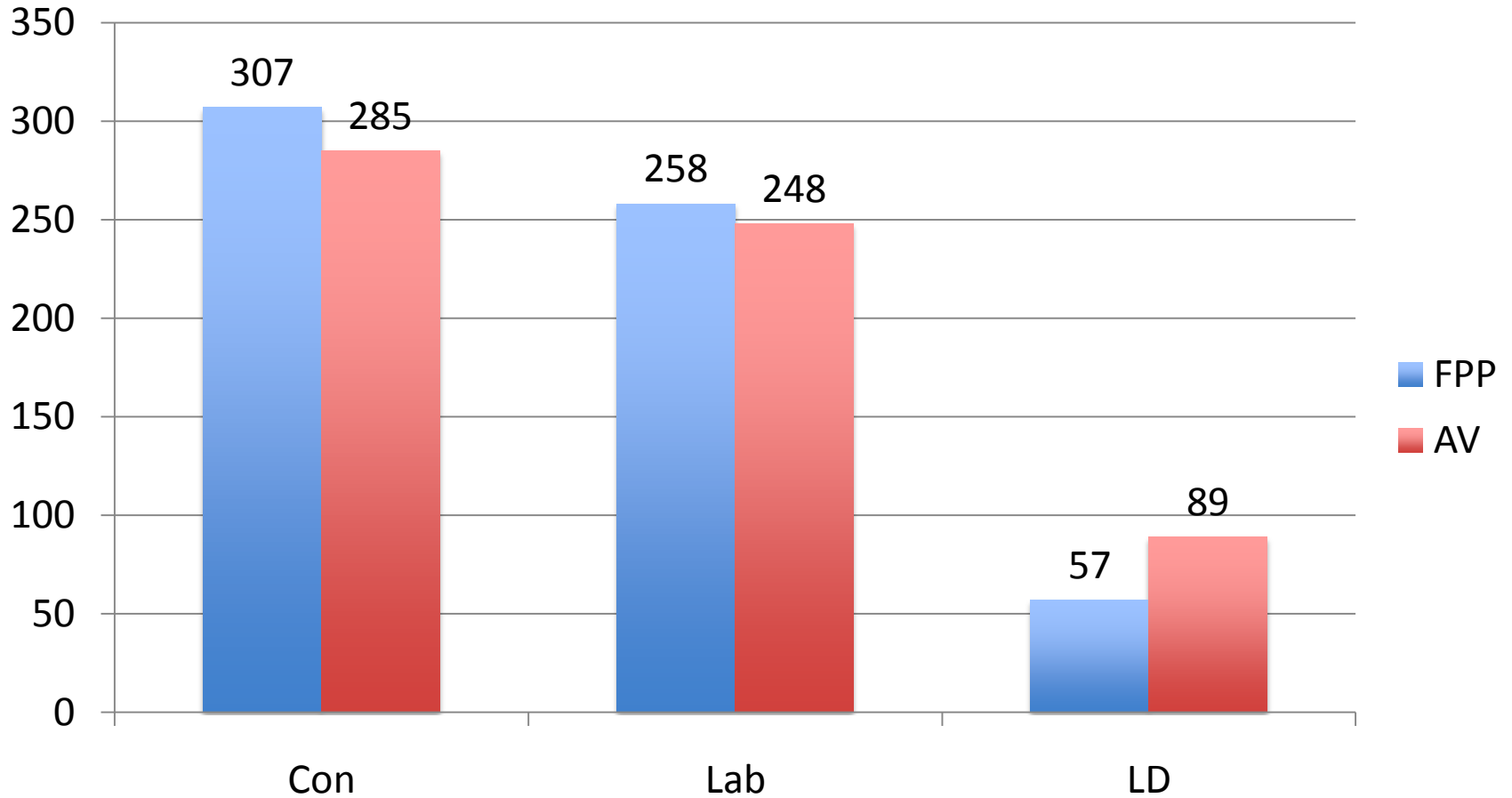
1992



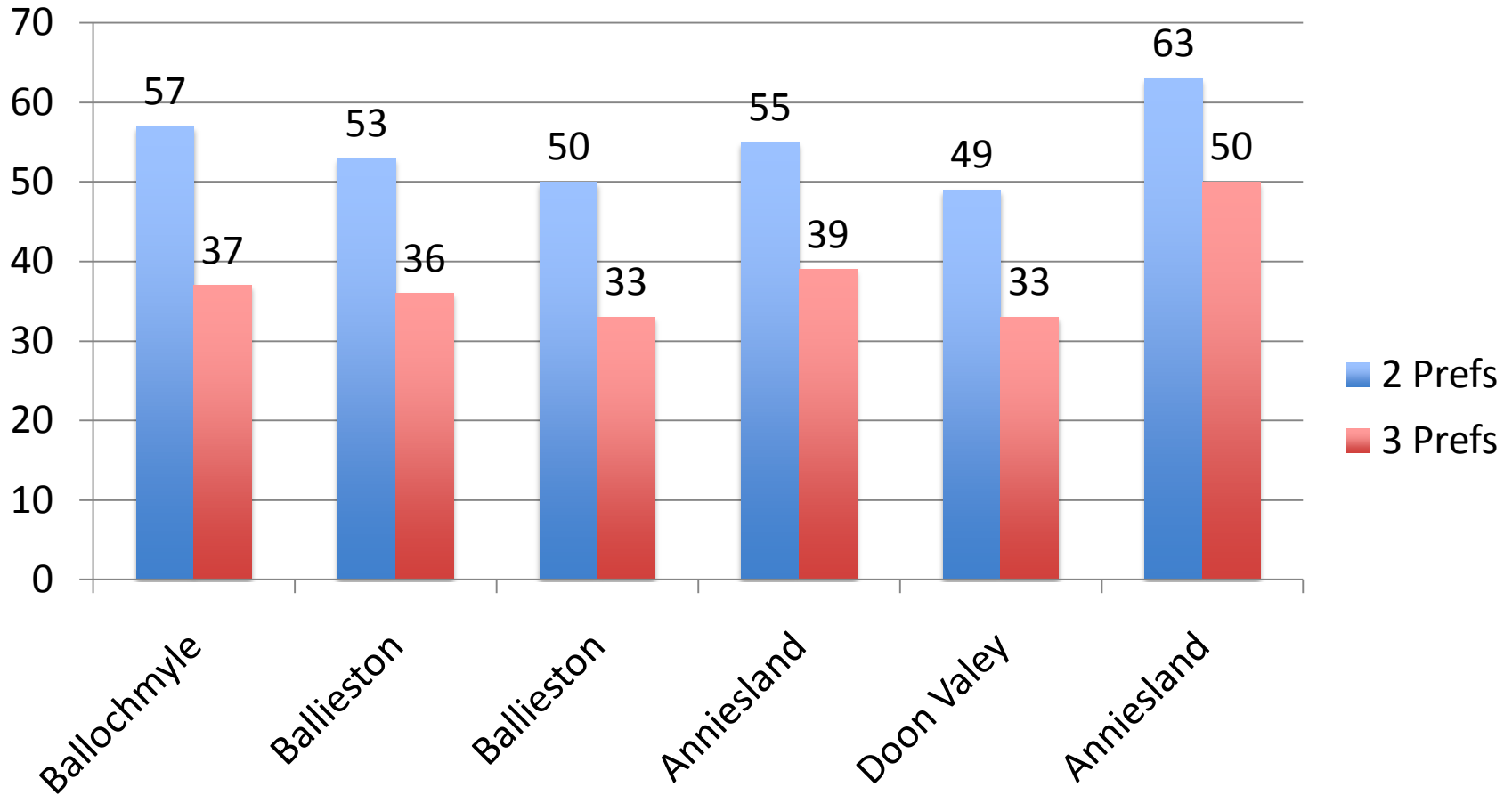
2010



BES - 2010



How Many Prefs Do People Cast?



Councils that have counted AV by hand

- East Dunbartonshire
- Falkirk
- North Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Perth & Kinross
- Renfrewshire

Instances where AV made a difference

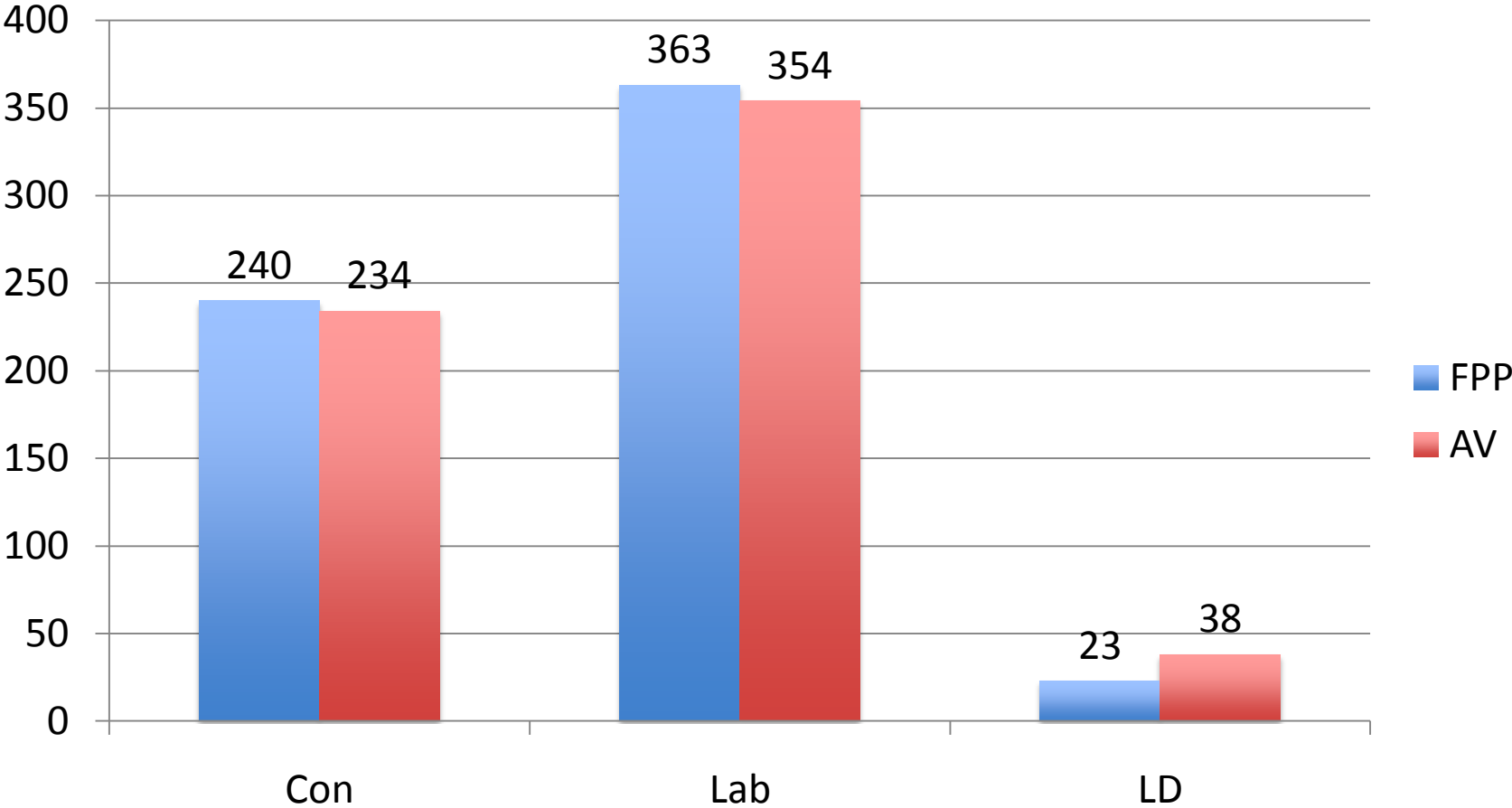
- Aberdeenshire; Apr. 09. LD won after being 4.8% behind Con on 1st preference
- East Dunbarton; Dec. 09. LD won after being 4.0% behind Con on 1st preference
- Moray; Nov. 10. Ind won after being 6.6% behind SNP on 1st preference
- Angus; Feb. 11 Ind won after being 1.2% behind SNP on 1st preference

How Things Can Change

1st Preference – survey date	Second Preference			
	Con	Lab	LD	Other
Con - May		8	41	26
Con - July		4	49	18
Lab - May	9		70	13
Lab - July	4		33	32
LD - May	27	35		18
LD - July	33	33		20

Source: ComRes/YouGov

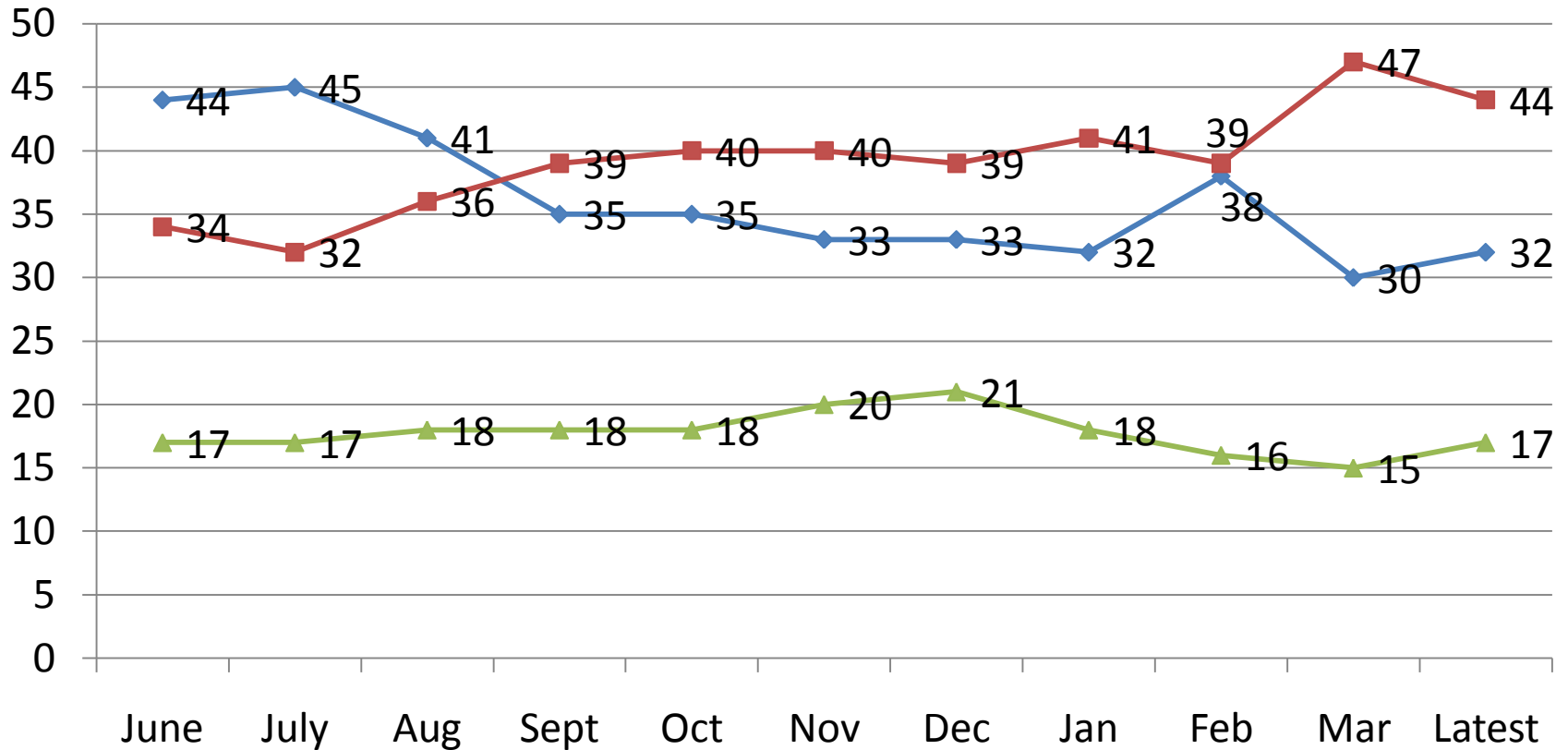
How much difference might AV make now?



Conclusion

- The partisan consequences of AV are easily exaggerated (even the estimates may do so!) and are uncertain (voters' preferences change)
- Only likely to produce modest boost for LDs
- Thereby making a hung parliament a little more likely (and FPP far from fails to guarantee hung parliaments will not occur)
- Will still leave open possibility of single party government – and even landslides.

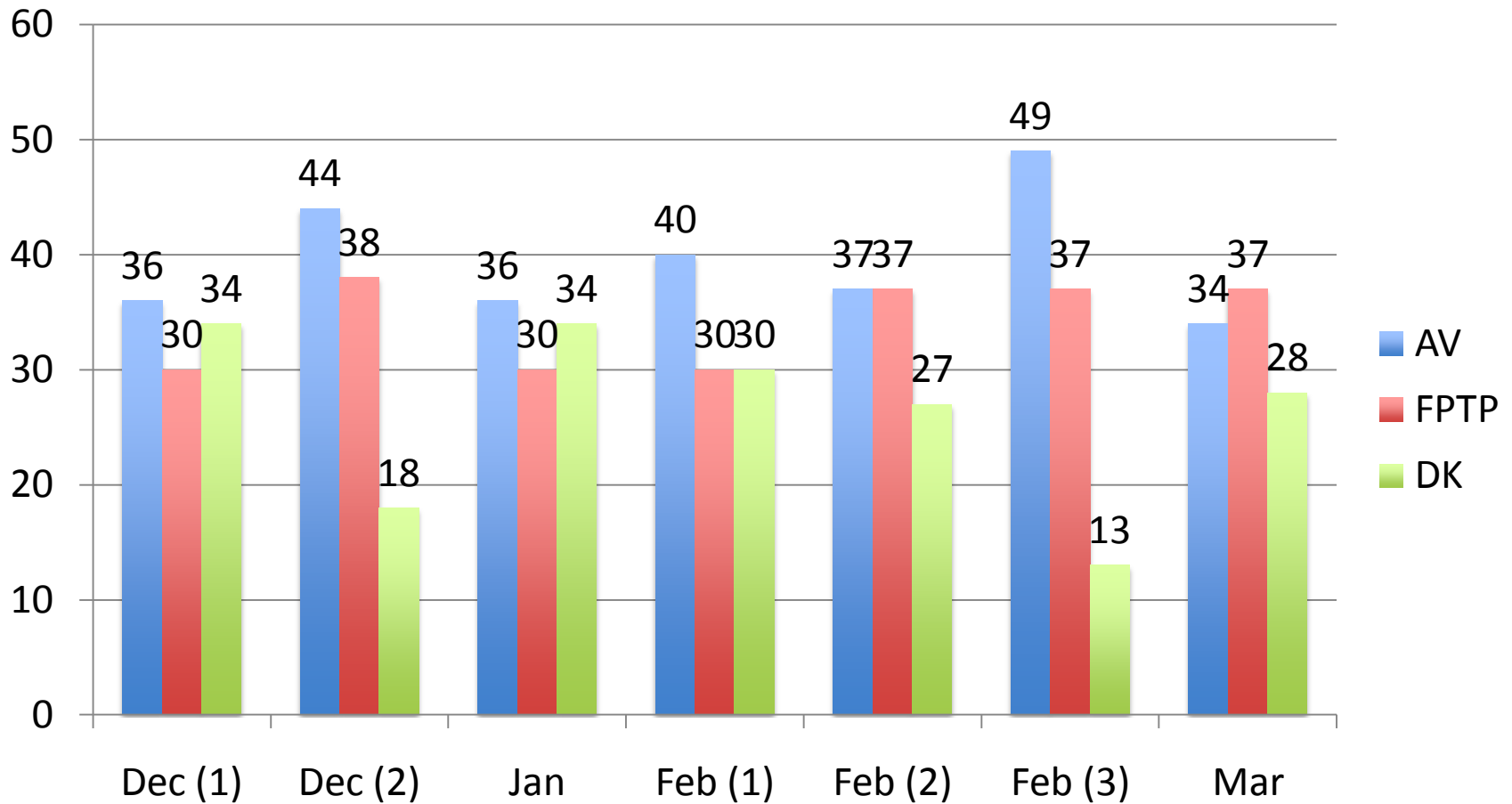
AV Referendum - 1



Source: YouGov

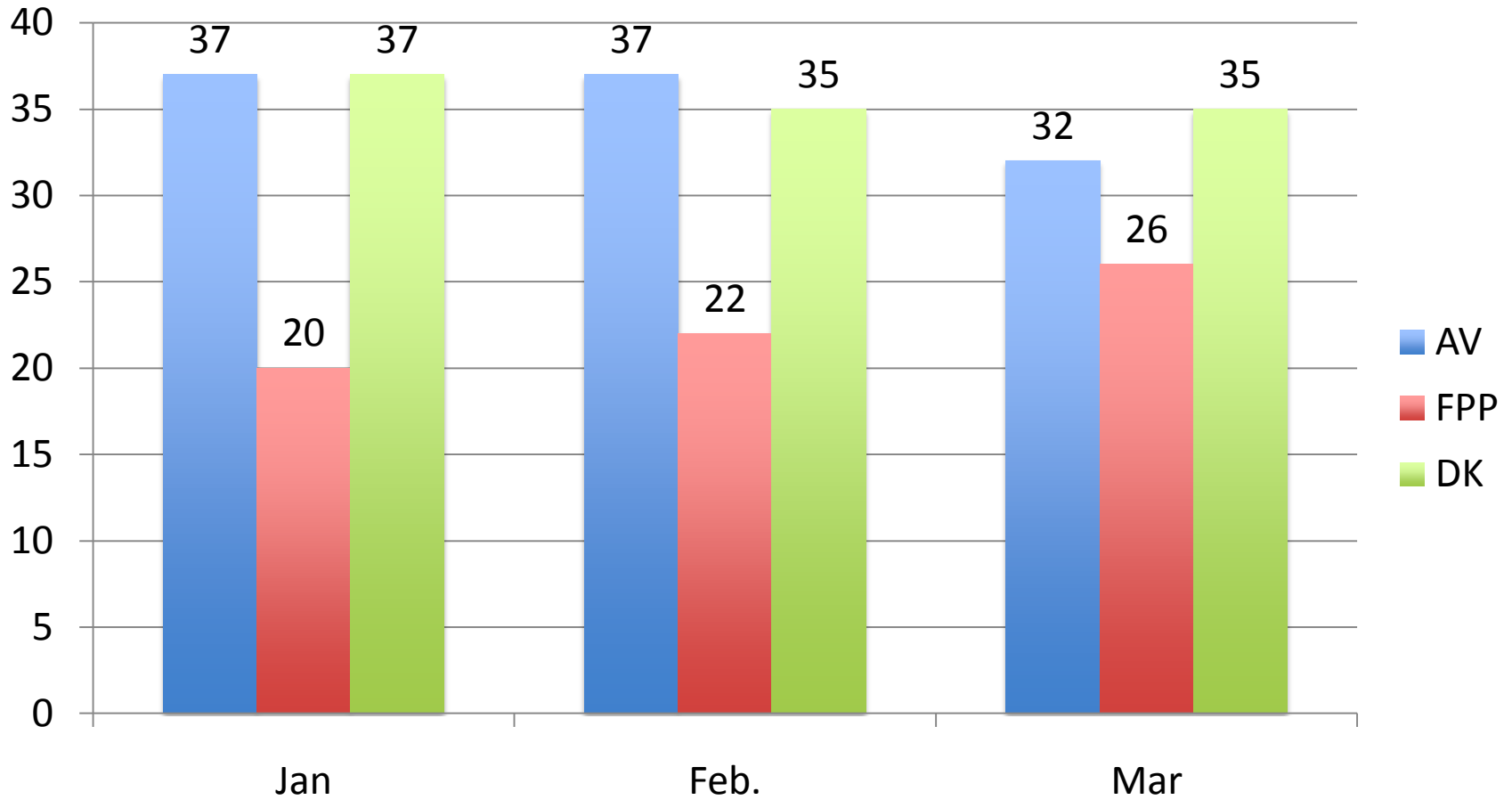
—◆— AV —■— FPTP —▲— DK

AV Referendum - 2

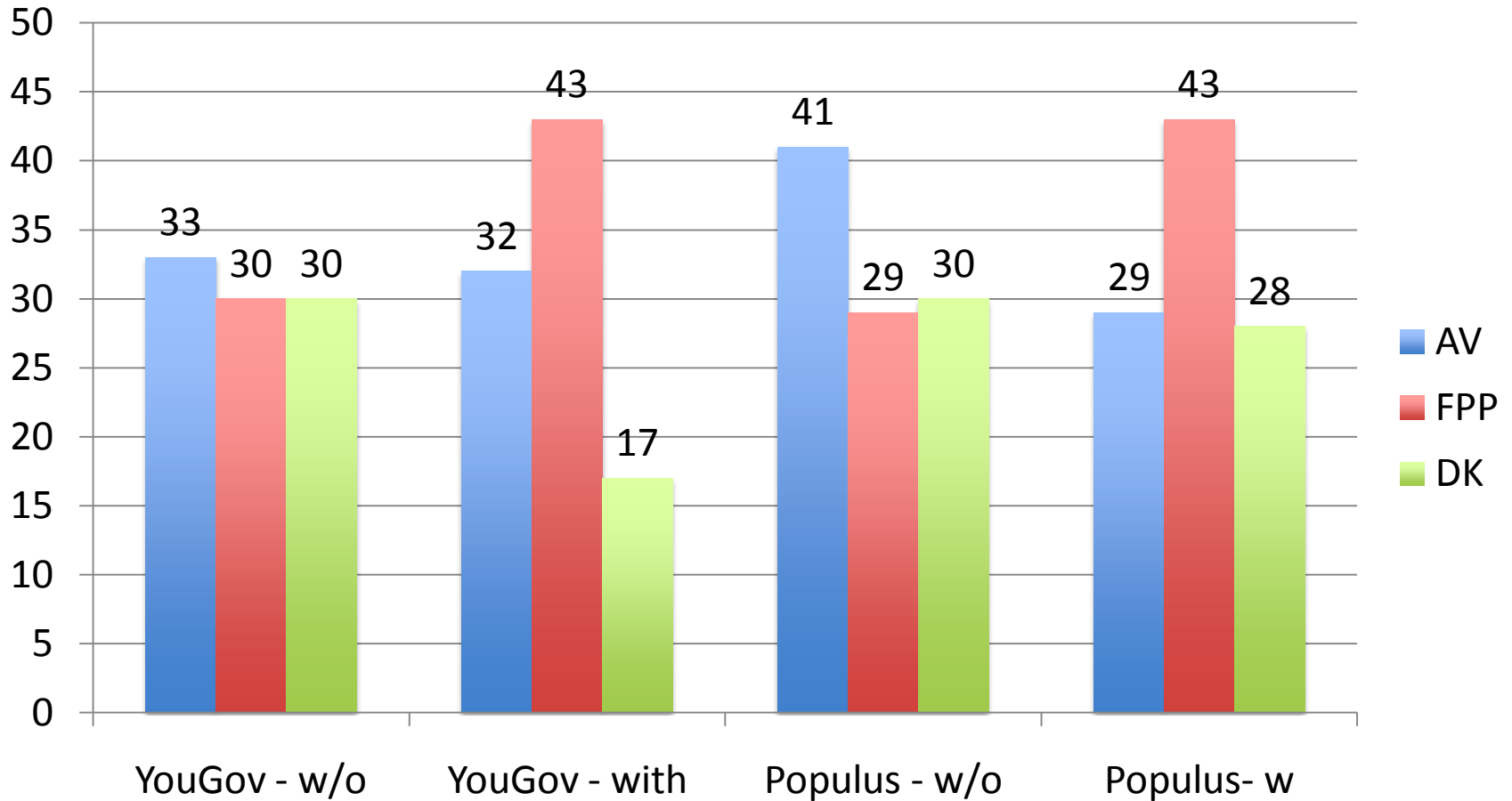


Source: ICM/ComRes/MORI

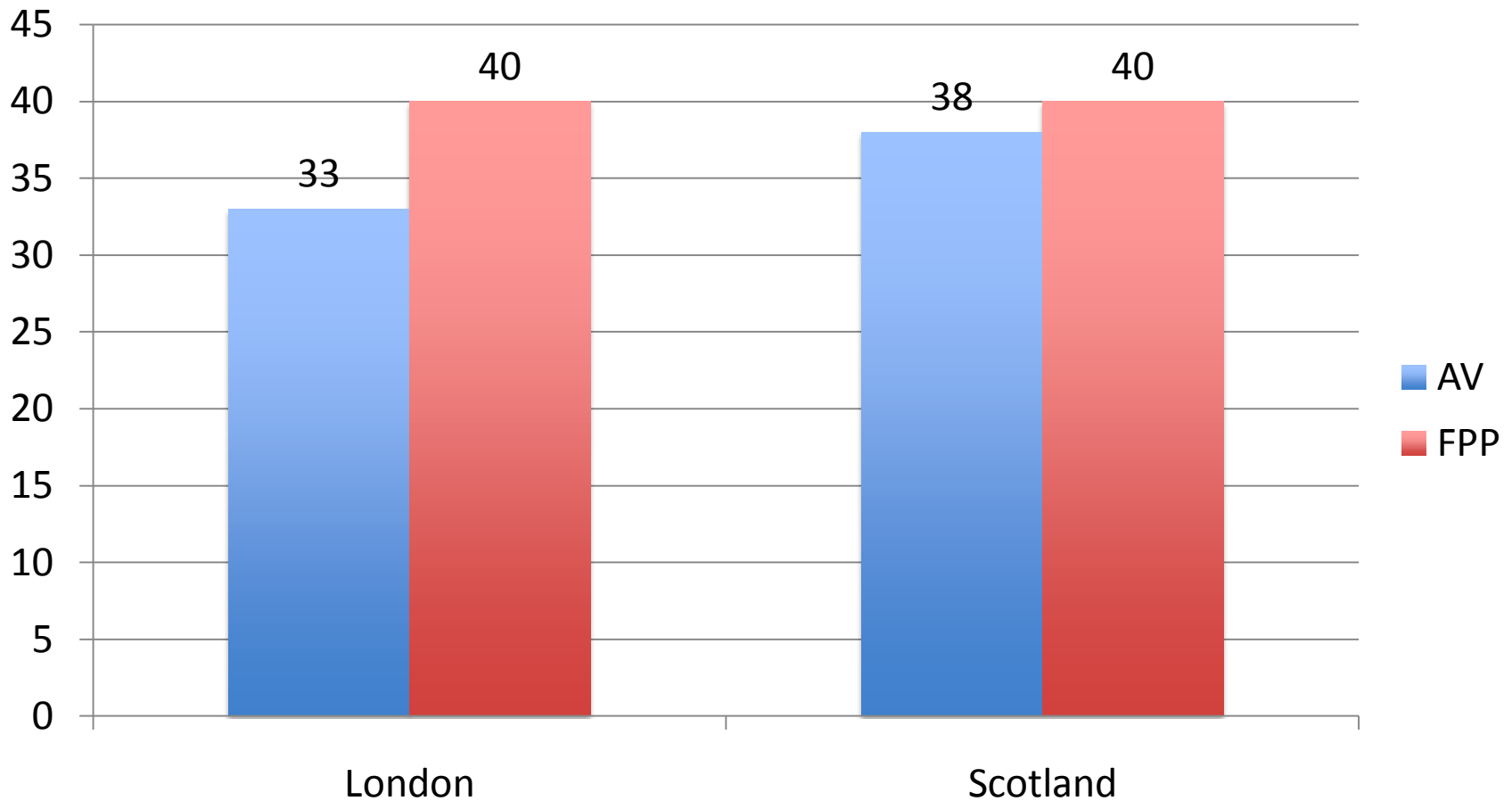
Angus Reid Polls



With and Without Explanation



Could Differential Turnout Matter?



Source: Calculated from YouGov