

To Stay or Not To Stay? British public opinion about Europe on the eve of the EU referendum

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How did we get here?

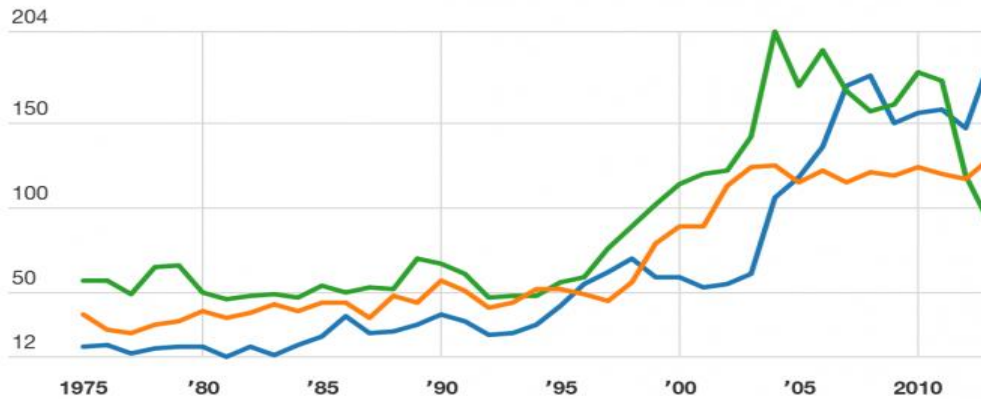
1. Accession, immigration, Euroscepticism

- 2004 is a key date for understanding current British debate over Europe
 - A8 countries joined, Britain provided immediate unrestricted migration rights to their citizens...
 - ...while most of the rest of the EU (incl Germany, France, Italy) imposed transitional controls for the maximum 7 year period allowed
- The consequence was a massive surge in EU migration to Britain, far larger than politicians or policymakers had expected
 - More people arrived in first two weeks than had been expected in first year
 - Britain's Polish population has increased around tenfold since 2004 – they will become Britain's largest immigrant minority soon.
- This change was noticed, and strongly opposed, by the British electorate
 - Immigration shot up the political agenda, with most attention focussed (for the first time) on EU immigration
 - Public confidence in first Labour, then Conservative, abilities to manage the issue as they failed to bring numbers down
 - Growing awareness of EU as a driver of immigration meant Euroscepticism and anti-immigrant sentiment became closely linked

Foreign immigrants by source

Thousands

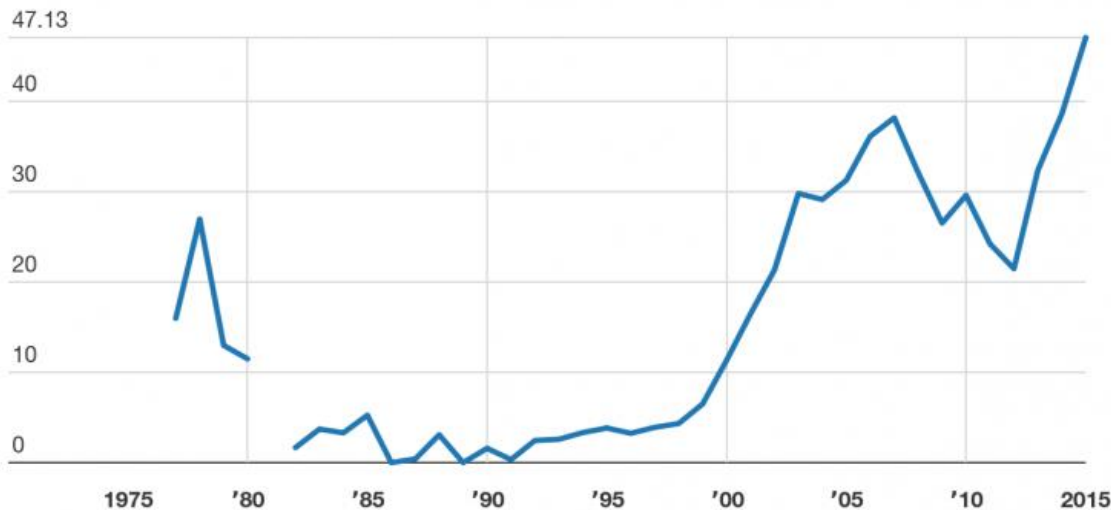
■ EU ■ Other ■ Commonwealth



EU immigration has surged since A8 accession in 2004....

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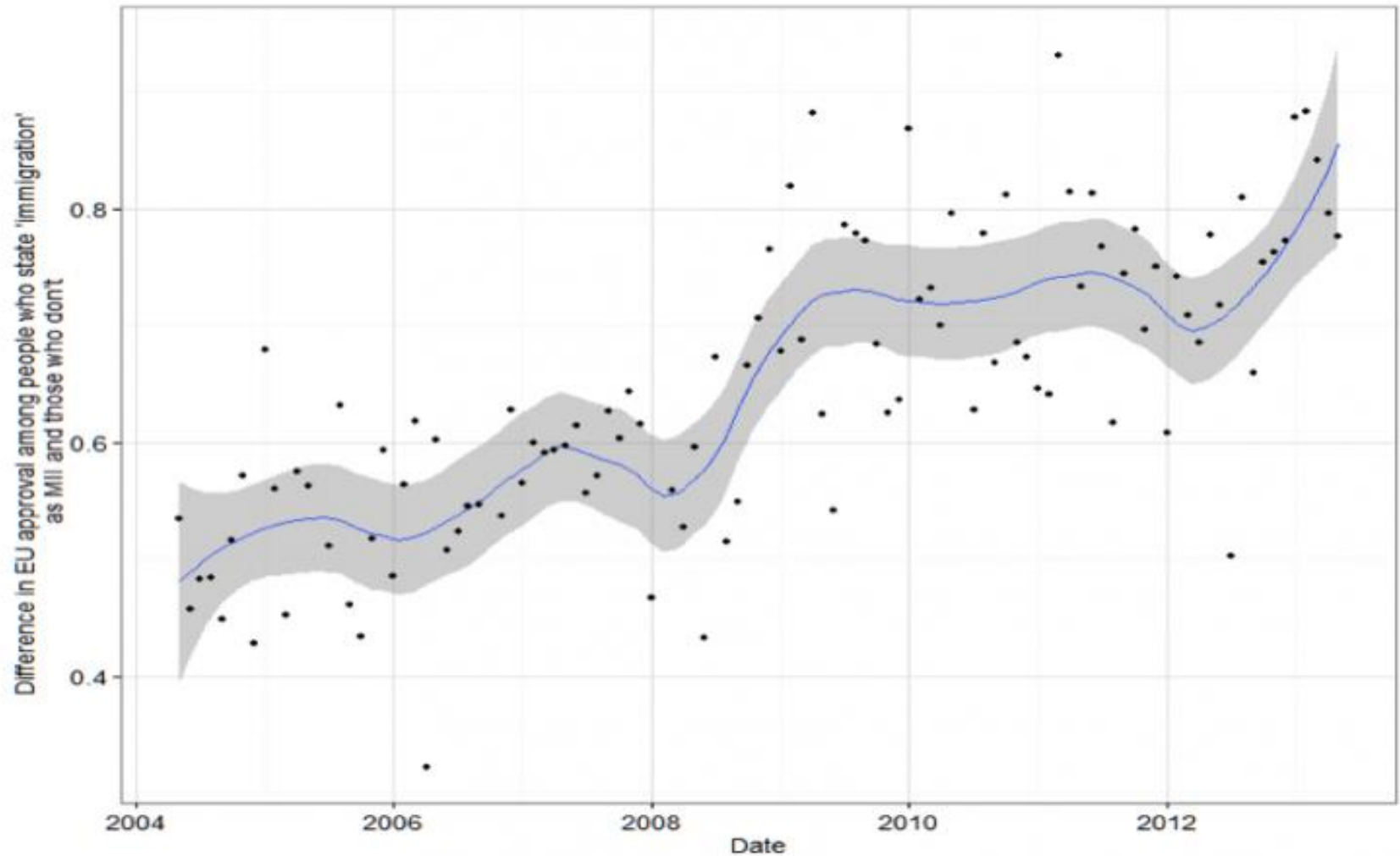
% of Ipsos respondents saying immigration is one of the most important issues facing the country



British public concern with immigration has also surged, and concern since 2004 has closely tracked EU immigrant numbers...

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The growing impact of immigration anxiety on EU approval



How did we get here?

2: The Conservatives' thirty years' war over the EU

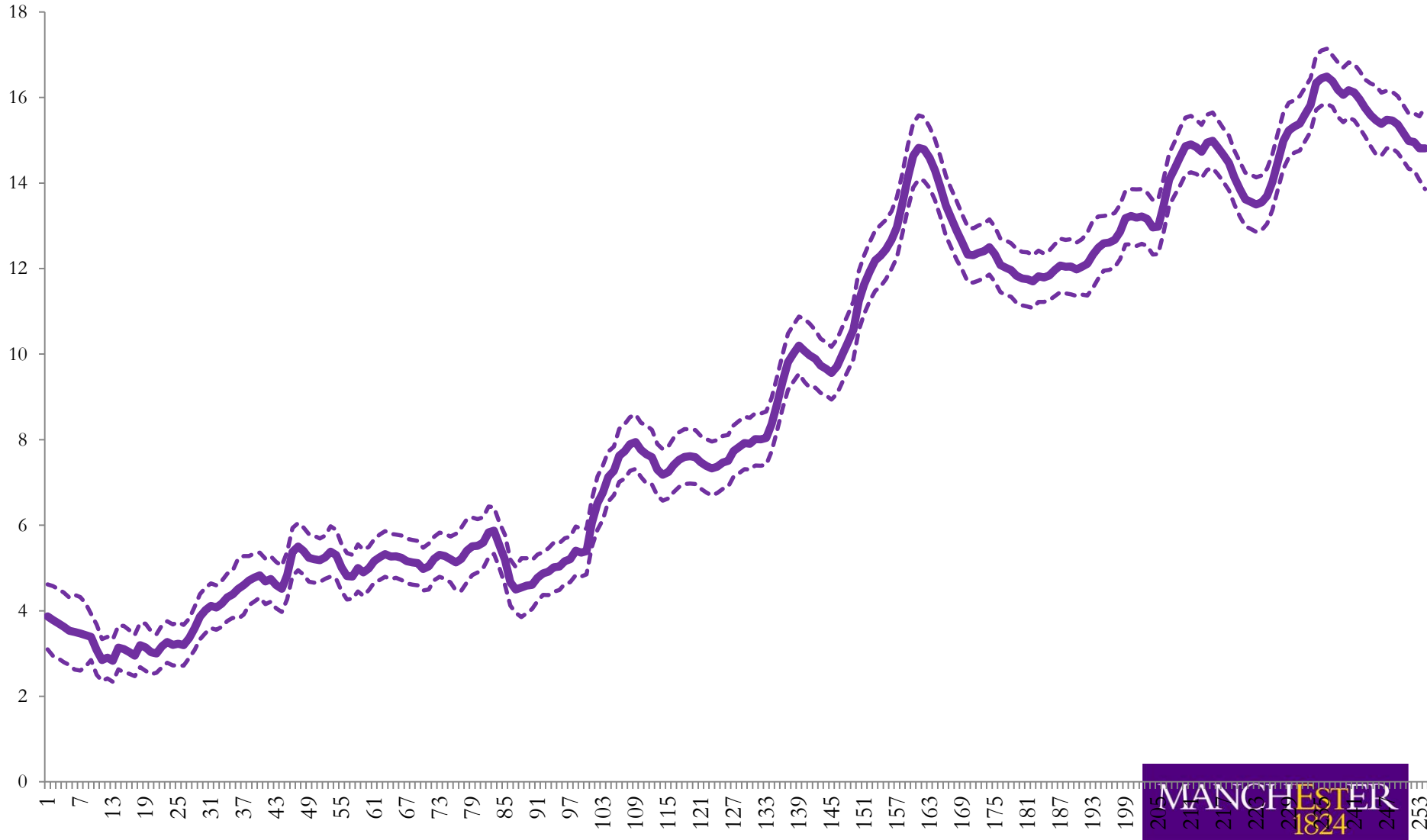
- Thatcher (1975-90): Initially pro-EU, but became increasingly passionate opponent.
 - Clashes over Europe played major role in her departure
- Major (90-97): (More) pro-EU, negotiated Maastricht agreement, took Britain into ERM
 - Anti-Maastricht “bastards”
 - ERM crisis and election defeat
- Hague, IDS, Howard (97-2005): Series of Eurosceptics favoured over more popular Ken Clarke
 - Tory MPs and members could not stomach Clarke's pro EU views
- Cameron (2005-16): Initially elected as strident Eurosceptic.
 - Took Conservatives out of EPP
 - Repeatedly demanded reform, culminating in referendum pledge
 - Presiding over more Eurosceptic Parliamentary party than any previous Con leader

How did we get here?

3. The rise of UKIP, and the surprise majority

- UKIP founded in 1994. A fringe party in domestic politics until 2010
- Support surged in 2010-15 Parliament, rising from 3% to 15% in a few years
 - Key drivers – record concern about immigration, disaffection with Conservatives and Labour
- Initial evidence suggested UKIP were primarily taking votes from Conservatives
 - Under pressure from backbenchers and activists, Cameron pledged to offer a referendum on EU membership in January 2013
- At the time Cameron was in Coalition with pro EU Liberal Democrats, firmly opposed to a referendum. Polling suggested another Coalition likely after 2015
 - But the voters delivered a surprise Con majority. Cameron therefore had to deliver on his pledge

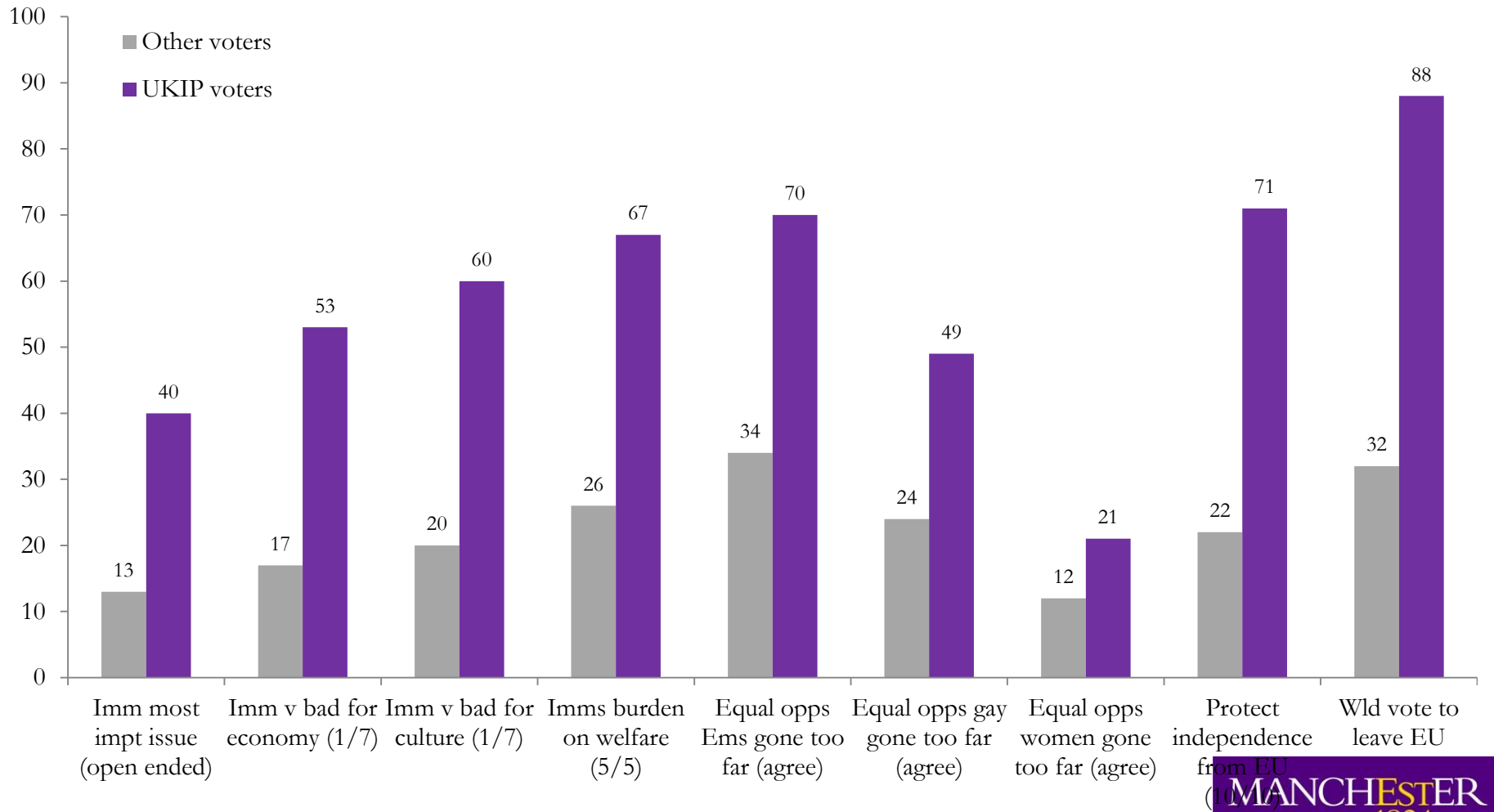
Growth in UKIP support 2010-15



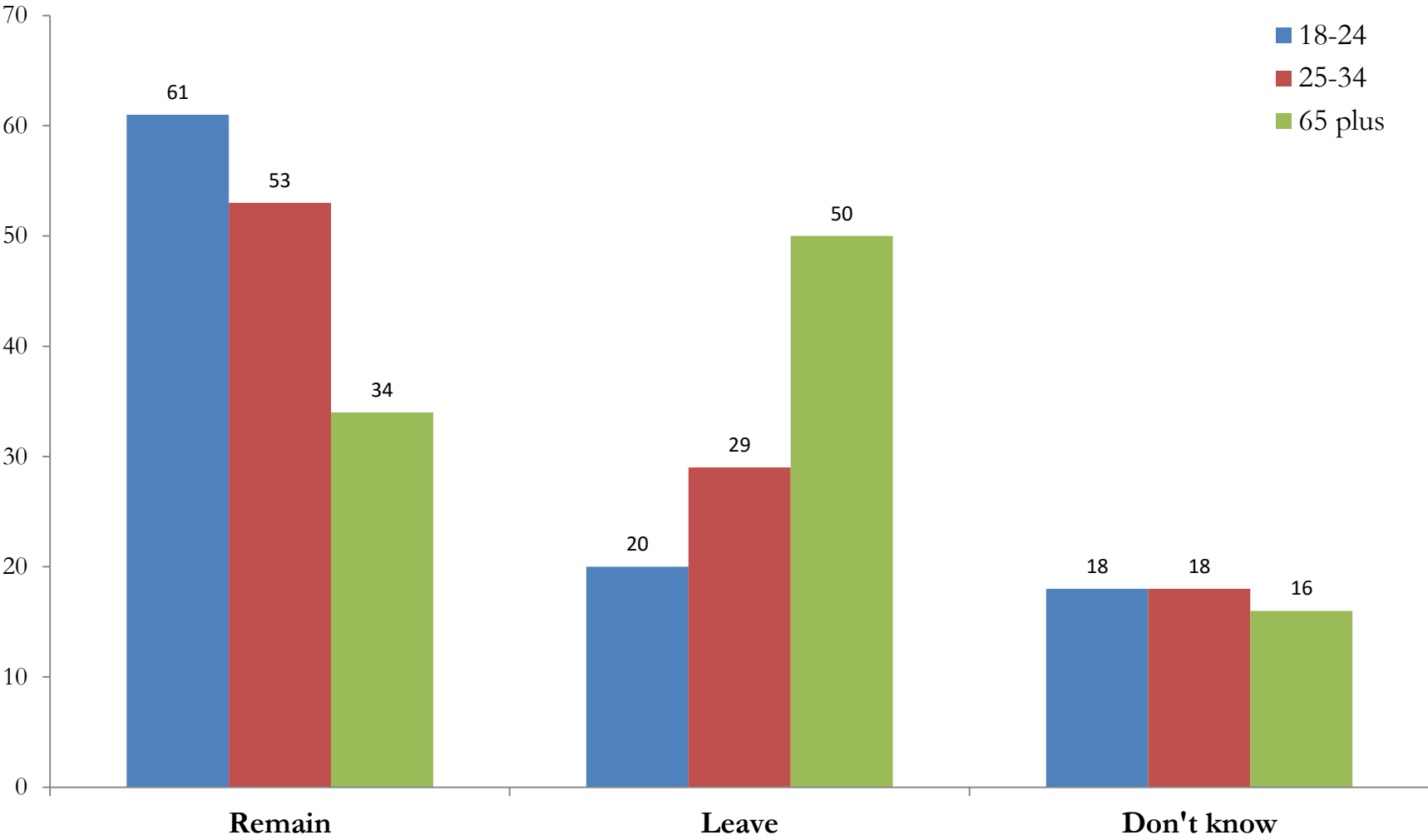
The University of Manchester

Source: Pickup, Jennings, Wlezien and Ford "Polling Observatory" poll aggregation estimates

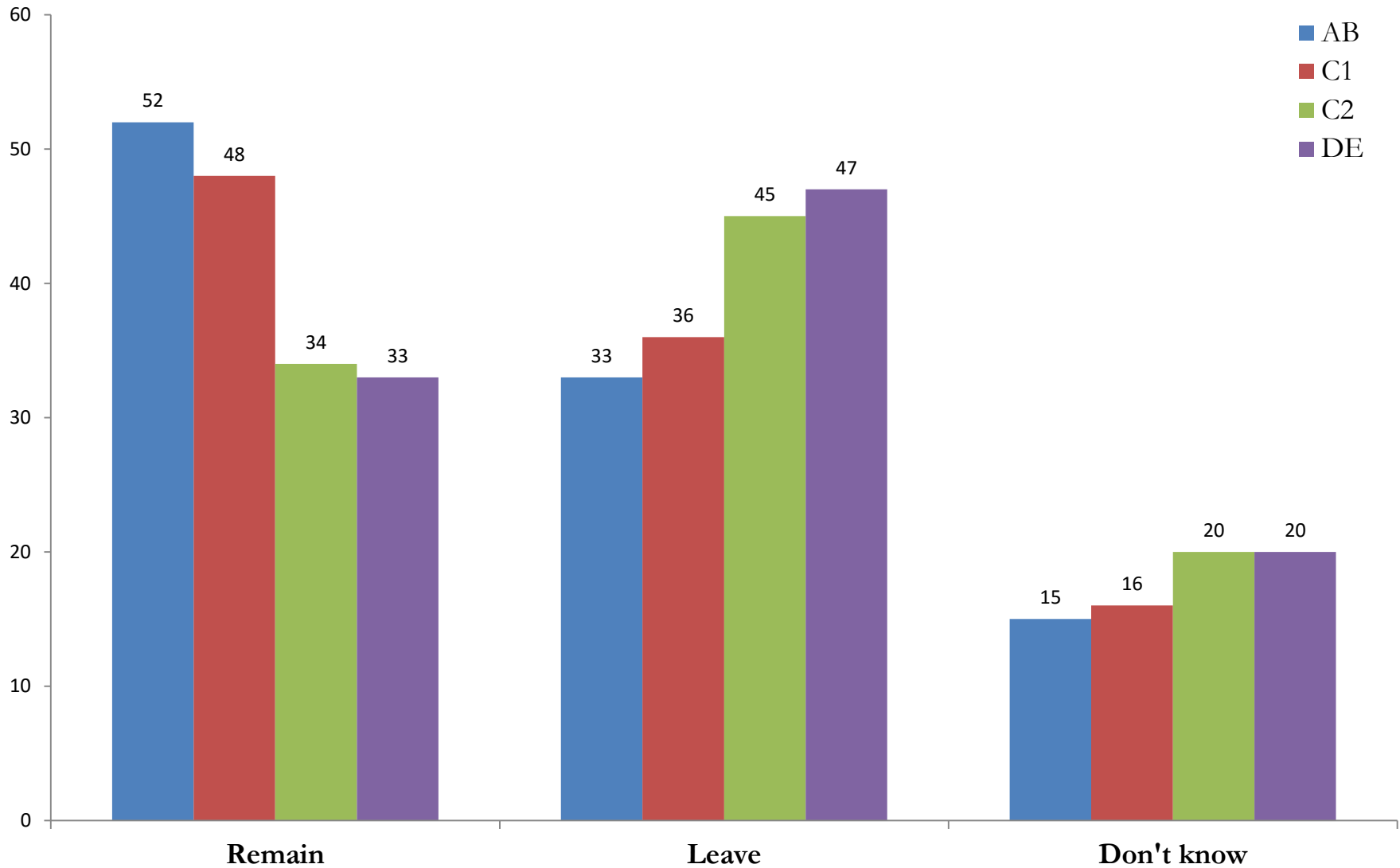
The UKIP issue agenda: immigration, equal opps, Europe



Social divides: age and referendum preference, 6 pollster average

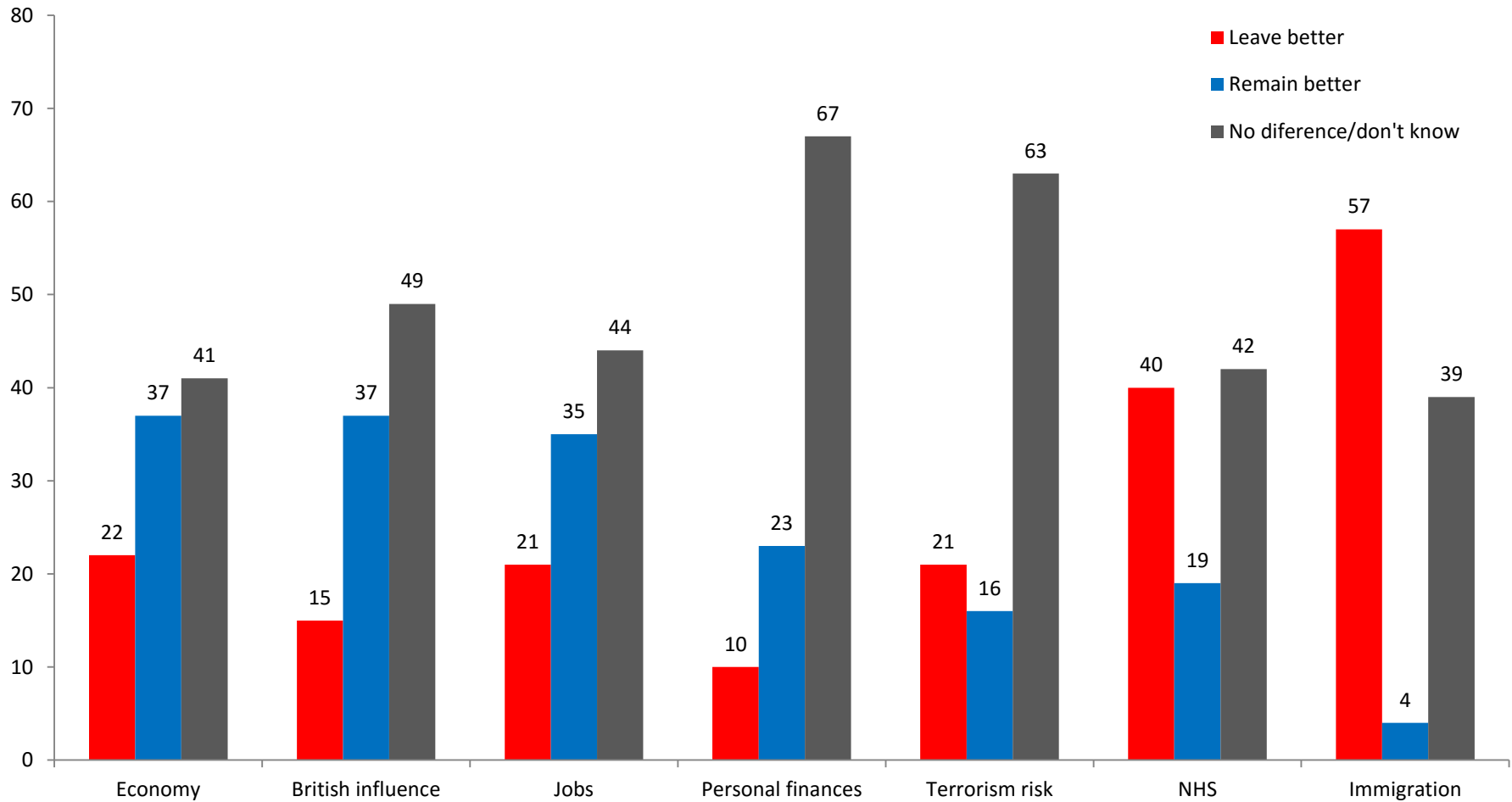


Social divides: Class and referendum preferences, 6 pollster average



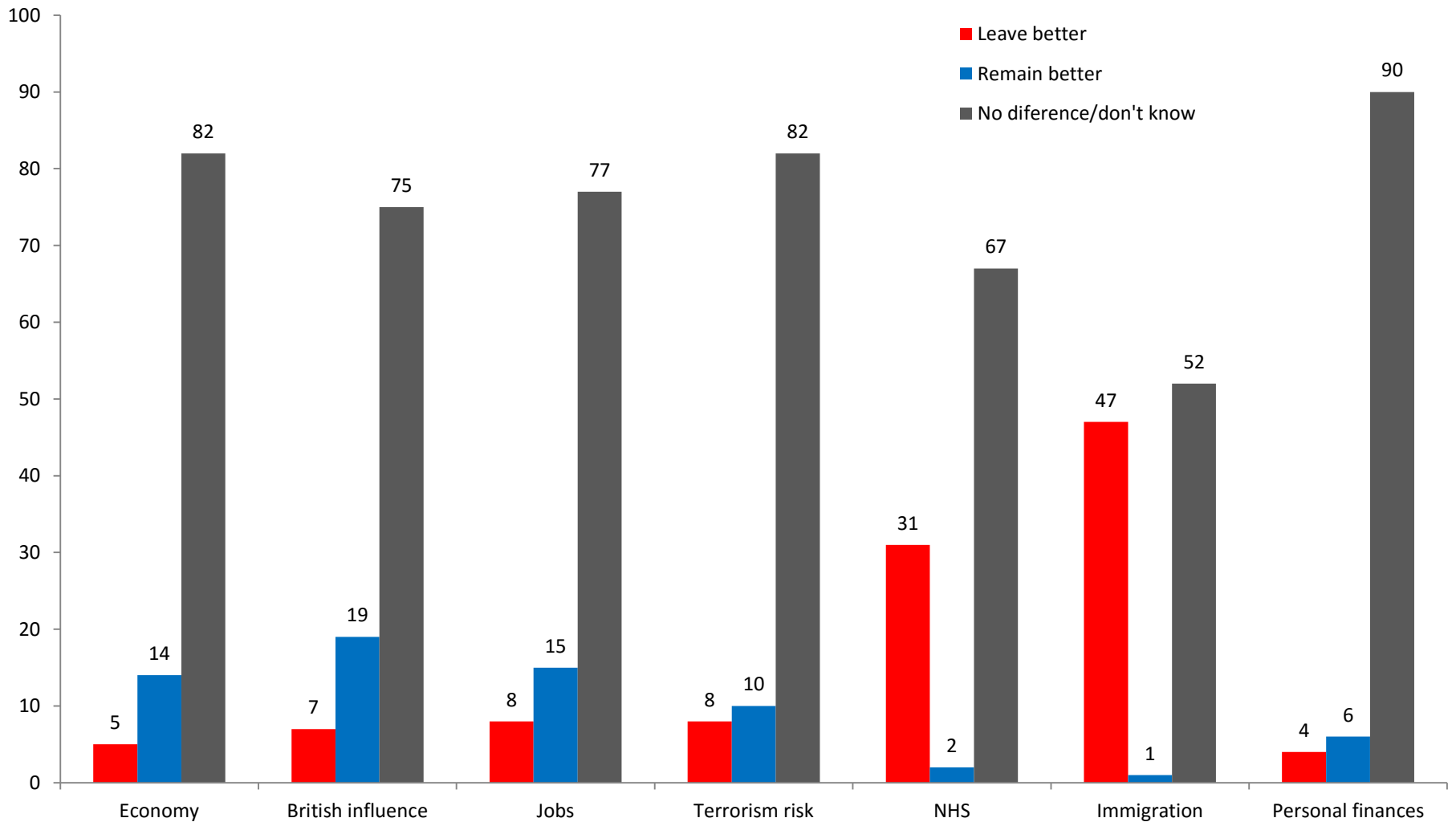
Who won the campaign fight?

The issues: all voters



Source: YouGov 4th-6th June

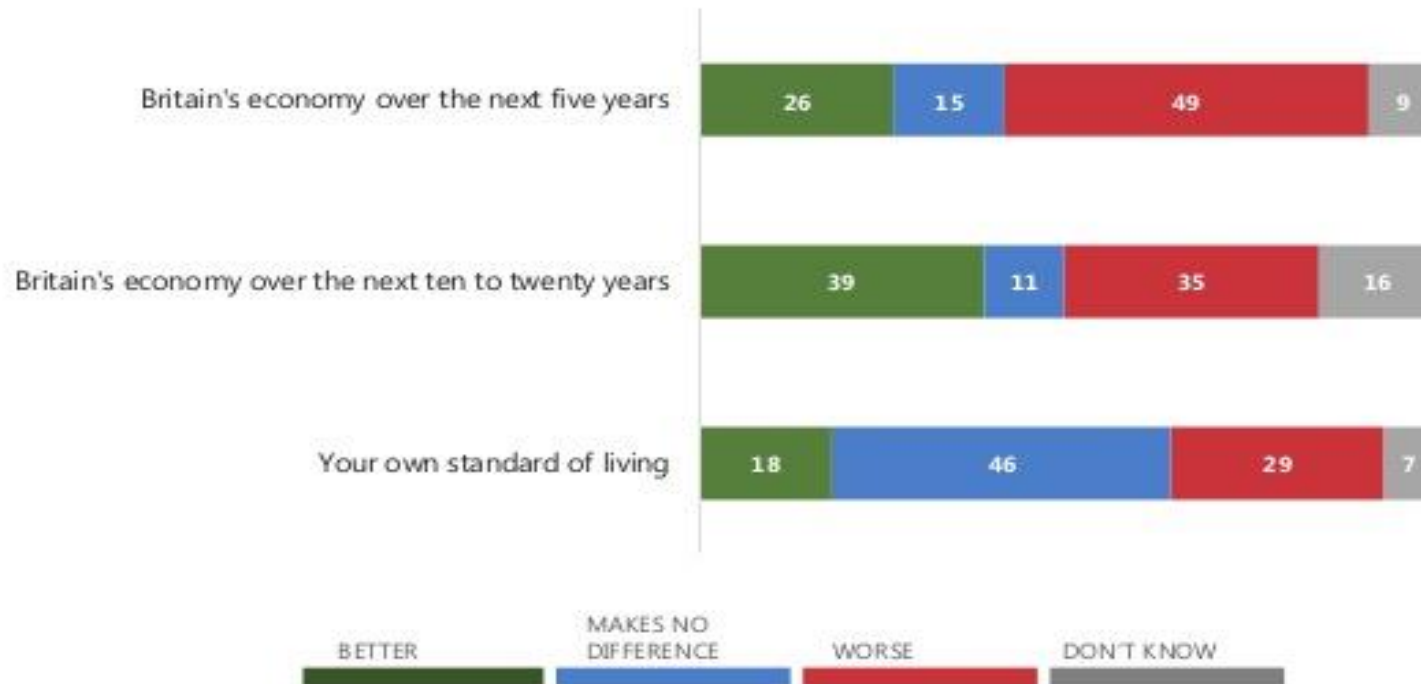
The issues: undecided voters



The economy – did it cut through?

Impact of Brexit on economy and standard of living

IF BRITAIN VOTES TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION, TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER OR WORSE FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, OR WOULD IT MAKE NO DIFFERENCE?

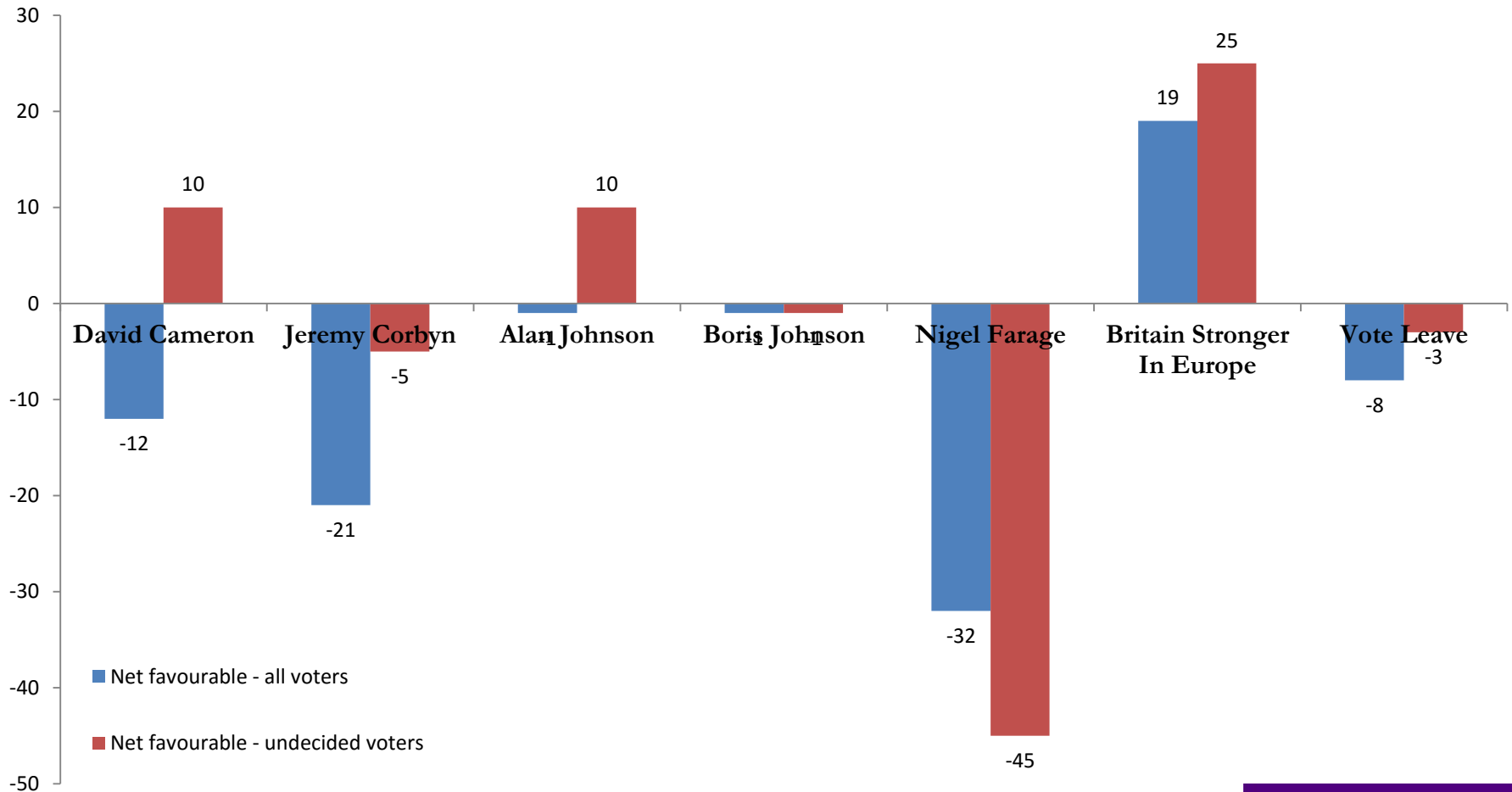


Base: 1,002 British adults, aged 18+, 14th – 16th May 2016

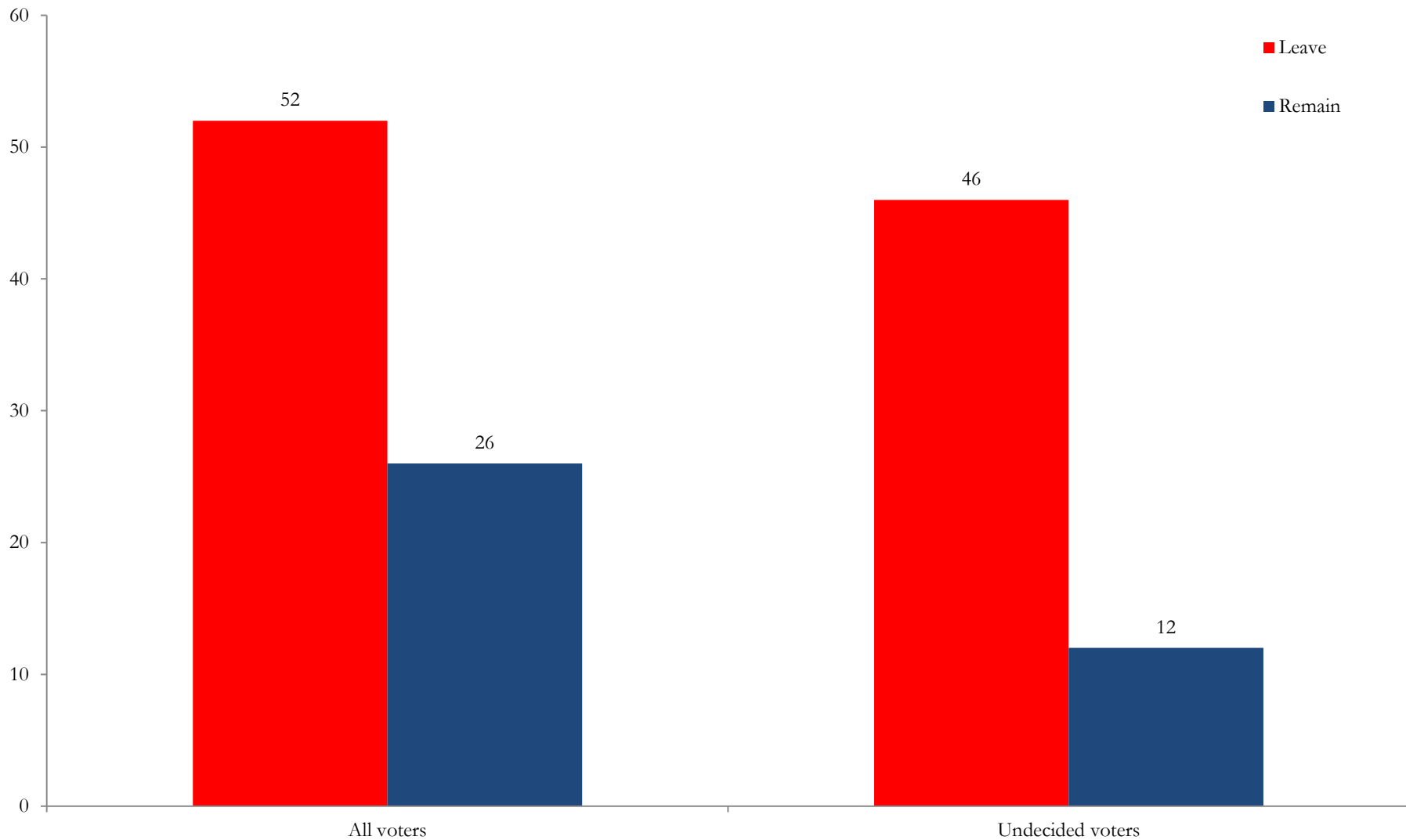
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

Who won the fight?

Views of leaders and campaigns



Remain or leave – which was seen as the bigger risk?



Things got rather heated...



ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IS A REAL THREAT TO OUR WAY OF LIFE.

ACT NOW BEFORE WE SEE AN ORLANDO-STYLE ATROCITY HERE BEFORE TOO LONG

LEAVE.EU

JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GR
MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" T
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES)

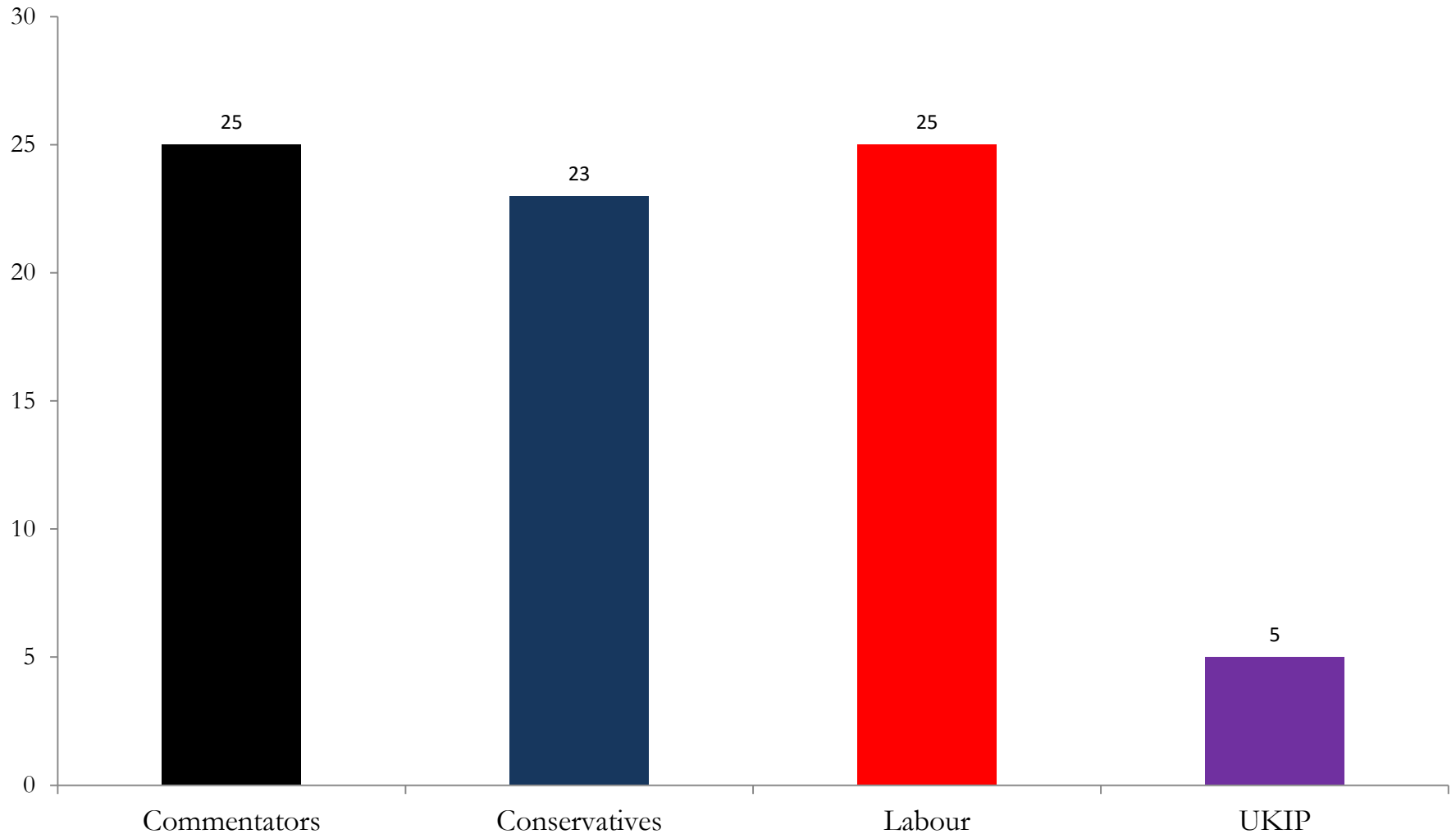


£32,000

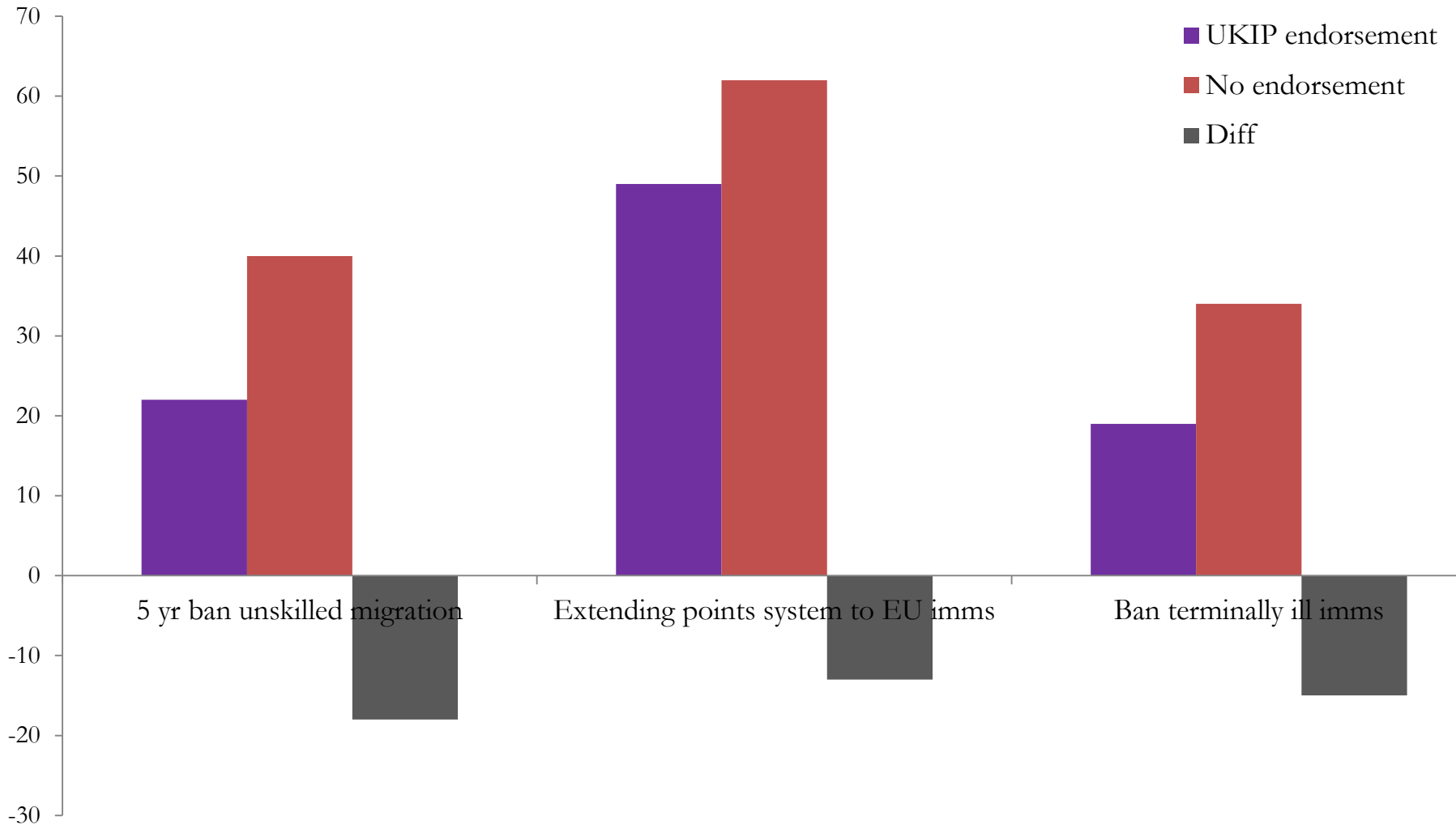
WHAT LEAVING EUROPE COULD COST THE AVERAGE PENSIONER

Source: Official Treasury analysis

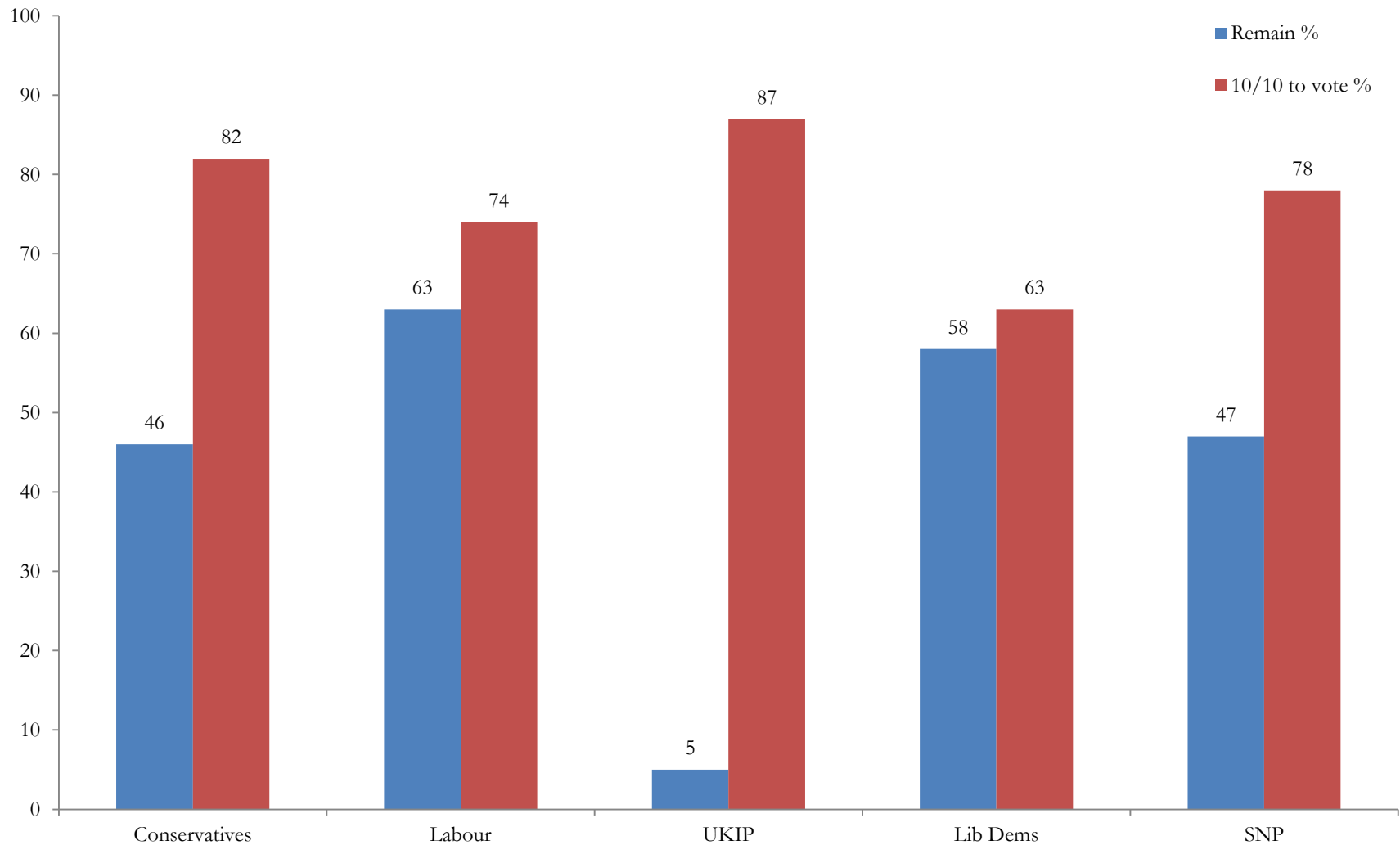
The “UKIP paradox” in action : Strong backing for reform to EU freedom of movement, unless associated with UKIP



UKIP paradox 2: UKIP immigration reforms popular, unless associated with UKIP



Centre left were not enthused enough about EU (or about voting)?

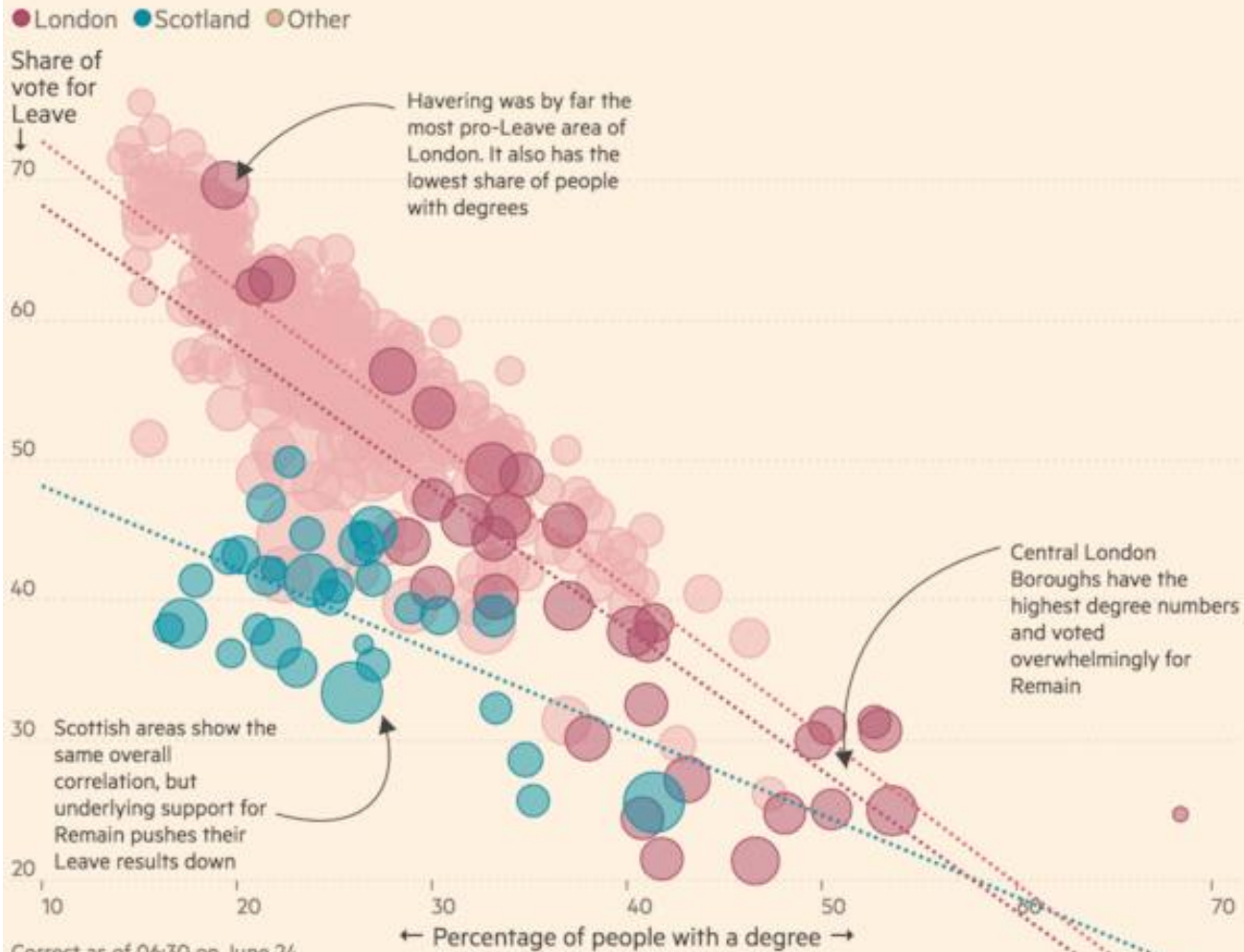


Why Labour failed to vote Remain

- Campaigns dominated by Conservative politicians (Cameron, Boris)
- Labour leadership not enthusiastic about EU or active in campaign.
 - Wouldn't cooperate with Conservatives
- Nearly half of Labour voters reported not knowing where party stands on EU, or thinking it is for Brexit
- Labour are traditional party of many Brexit leaning segments of the electorate – esp older, blue collar white voters
 - Such areas in England delivered large majorities for “Leave” on the night, may have swung result
- Vote has exposed massive divide in Labour between progressive liberals and working class social conservatives
 - That divide, as well as ref result, at the heart of current leadership contest
 - Liberals: London, membership, current leader
 - “Trad Lab”: voters in poorer areas outside London & their Lab MPs

A people divided

The strongest correlation between the vote for Leave and any key demographic measure is with the share of people holding a degree. But even here, regional patterns are clear: London Boroughs stand out in the tail on the right, with higher education and low Leave numbers. Scotland follows the overall national trend but is shifted as a whole towards Remain



Correct as of 06:30 on June 24
Source: Press Associaton, UK Census
Graphic by John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

Education was the biggest divide

(except in Scotland)

Turnout generally increased with age

The relationship between median age and turnout is far from clear cut, but on a very general basis, areas with younger populations had lower turnout. Oxford and Cambridge, university towns with politically engaged students, had high turnout relative to age, whilst Glasgow had very low turnout for a city of its relative youth



Referendum results: Press Association
Demographic data: UK Census, Office for National Statistics
Graphic by John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

Once again, the old and young were divided....

....but the old voted in much larger numbers....

...this may have decided the result. As in 2010, and 2015, if young voters have engaged with EU ref at same rates as their grandparents, result would have been different. Voting matters!

Consequences of a “Leave” win

- Conservatives: Cameron likely to resign soon after (perhaps remaining in post through succession).
 - Early election very likely, with Eurosceptic Conservative leader as favourite to be next PM
- UKIP: Dancing in the streets.
- Labour: Possible challenge to Corbyn leadership from furious pro-EU MPs
- General: British political agenda set to be dominated by Brexit negotiations for 5 years or more. Recession?