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Brexit: Democratic Success or Failure?

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@whatukthinks

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#IFoALecture

17 April 2019

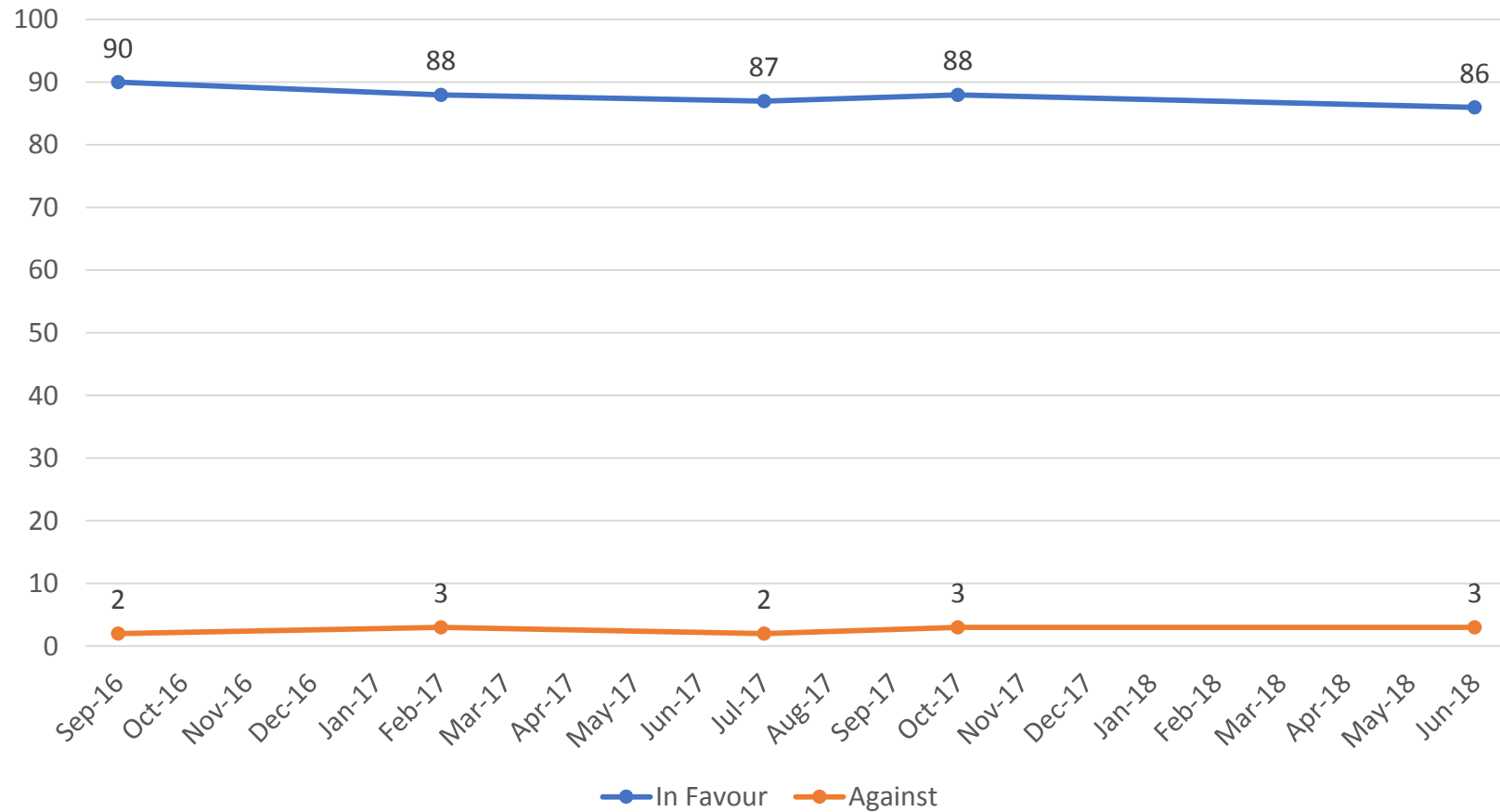
Possible Criteria for Judging a Referendum

- Does it bring public policy into line with public preferences?
 - Assumes voters have clearly developed views
- Are the public's preferences implemented?
 - Assumes preferences are clear from the outcome
 - Assumes that, even if it wishes to do so, the state has the capacity to deliver

Three Questions to Ask of the Brexit Process

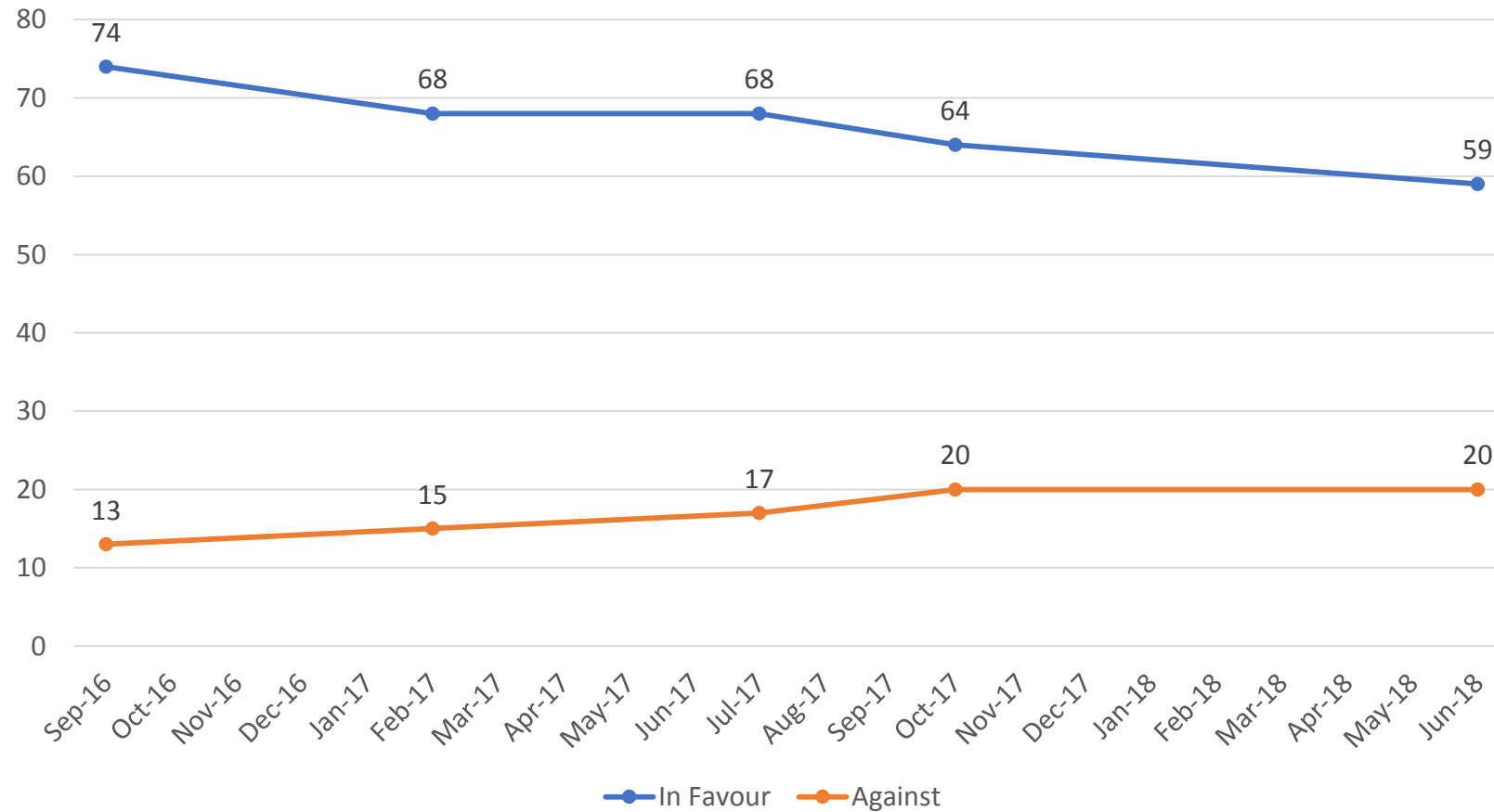
- What did voters want?
- What do they think of the outcome (so far)
- Are voters still of the same mind as they were in June 2016?

Attitudes towards Free Trade with the EU



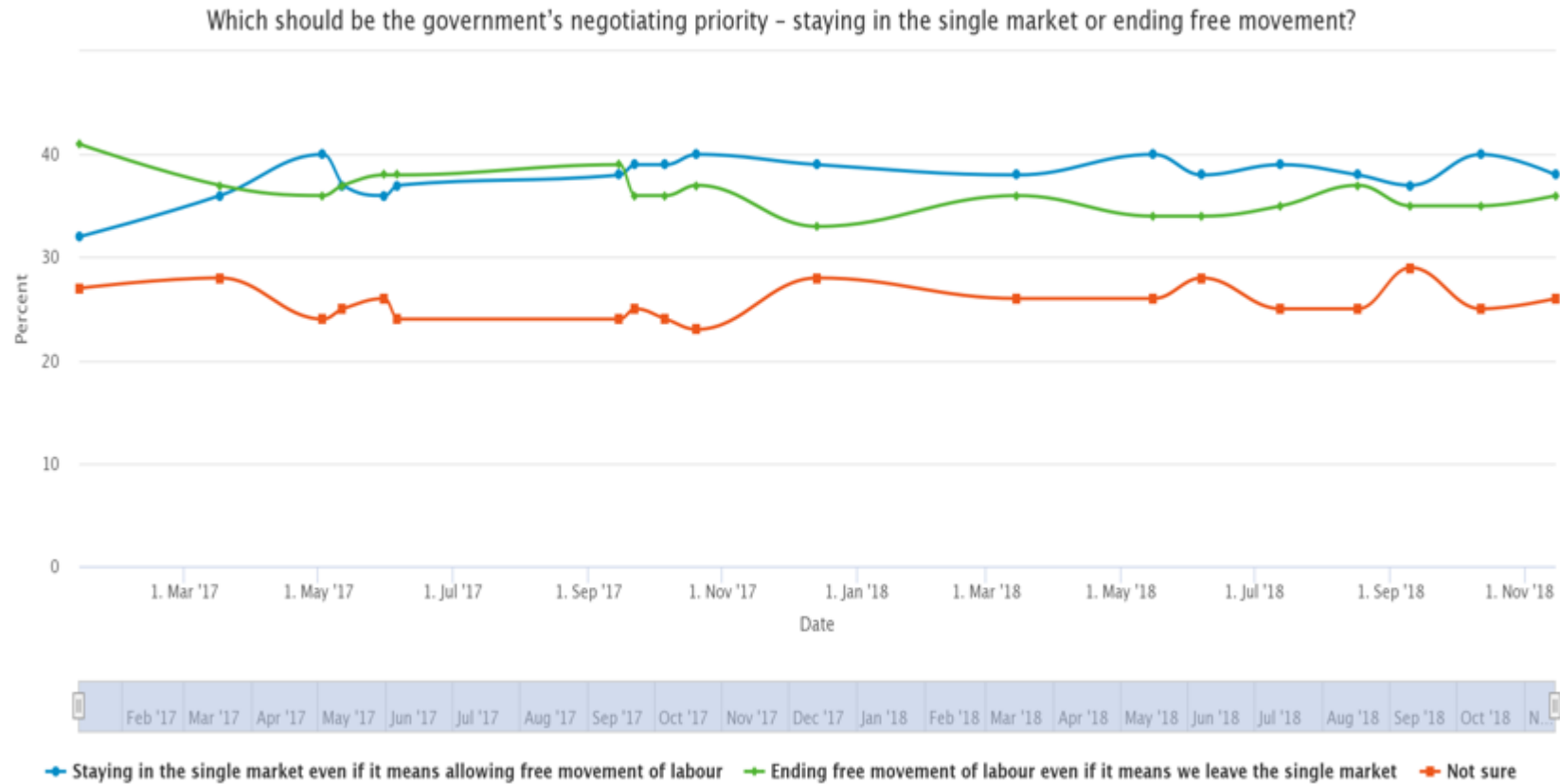
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Random Probability Panel

Attitudes towards Treating EU Migrants like non-EU Migrants



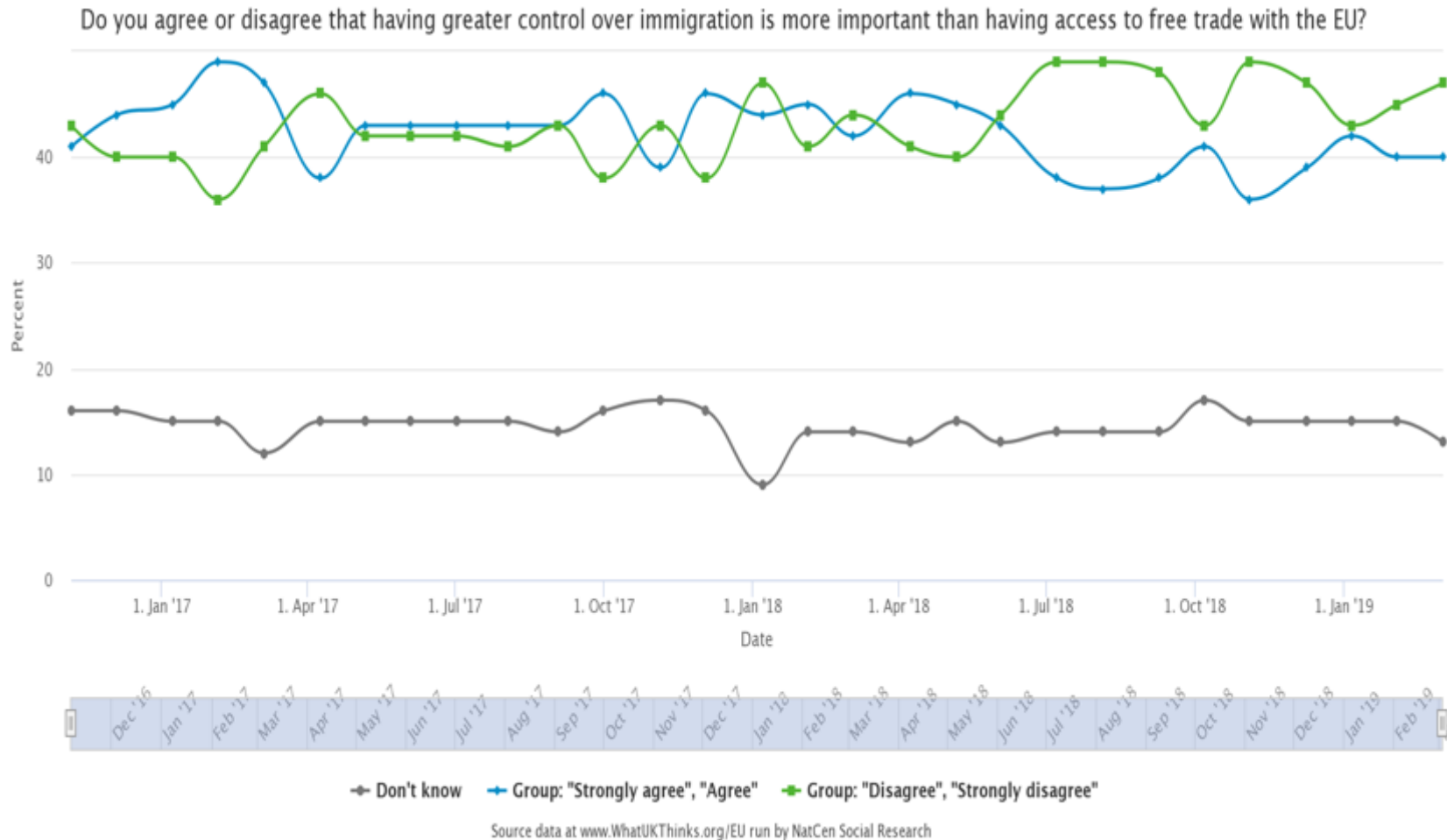
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Random Probability Panel

Opinium: Single Market vs Free Movement



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

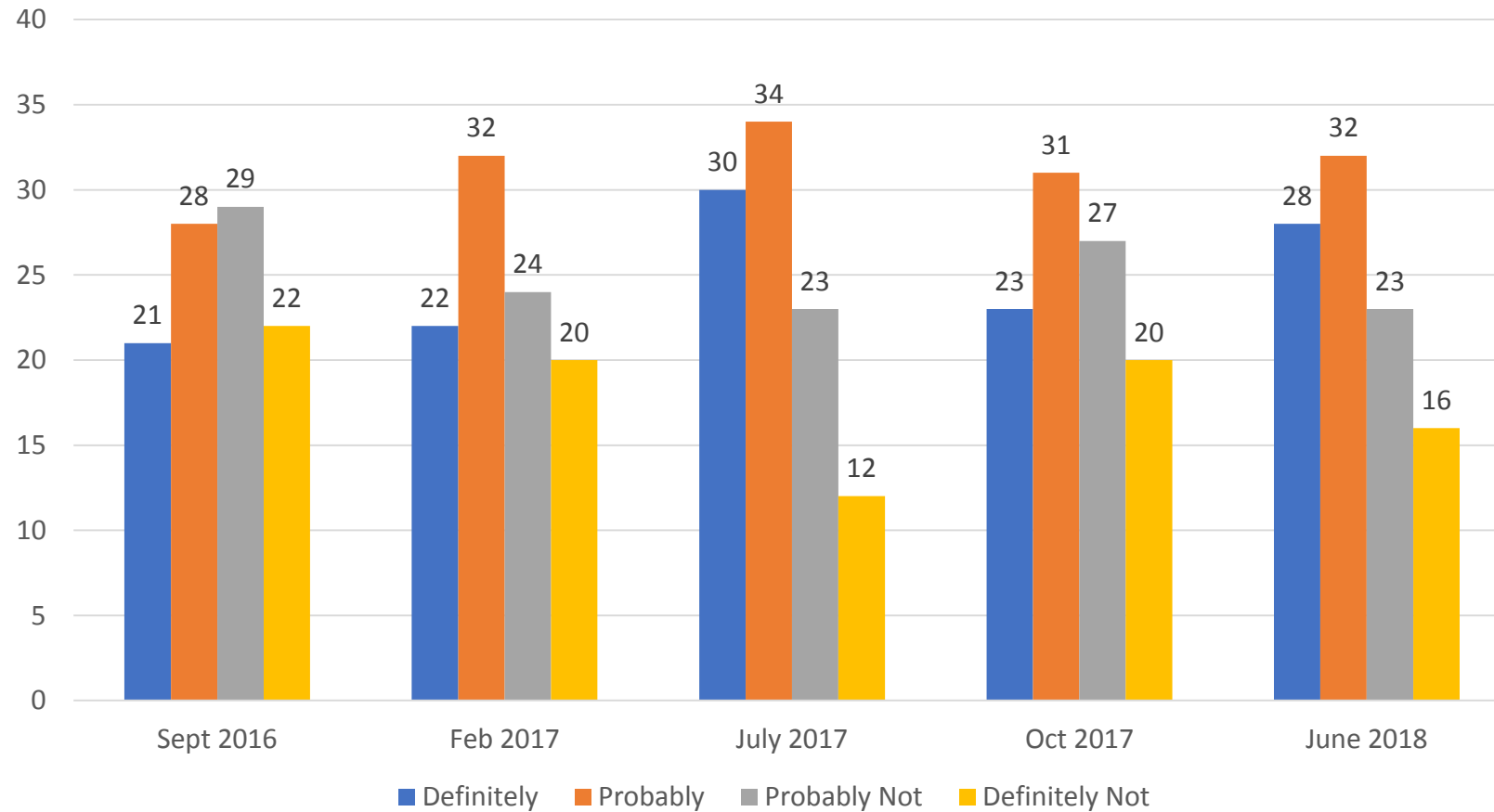
ORB: Immigration Control More Important than Free Trade



The Possible Trade-Off

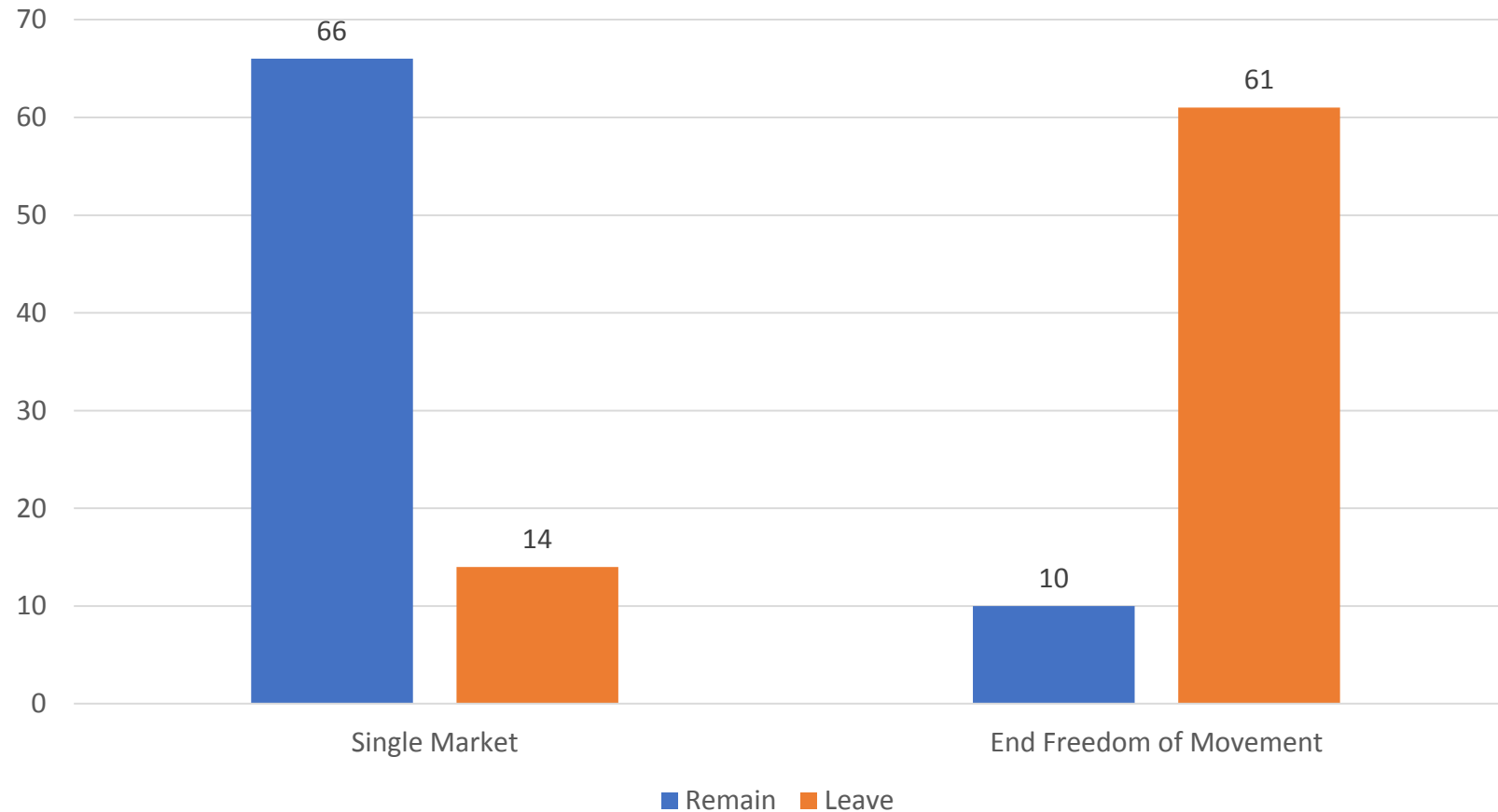
- It has been argued that when Britain leaves the EU, British firms will only be allowed to continue to sell goods and services freely to people in the EU if people from the EU are still free to come here to live and work.
- Do you think Britain should or should not allow people from the EU to freely come here to live and work in return for allowing British firms to sell goods and services freely in the EU.
- Definitely should allow people from the EU to come here to live and work
- Probably should allow people from the EU to come here to live and work
- Probably should not allow people from the EU to come here to live and work
- Definitely should not allow people from the EU to come here to live and work

Attitudes towards the Trade-Off



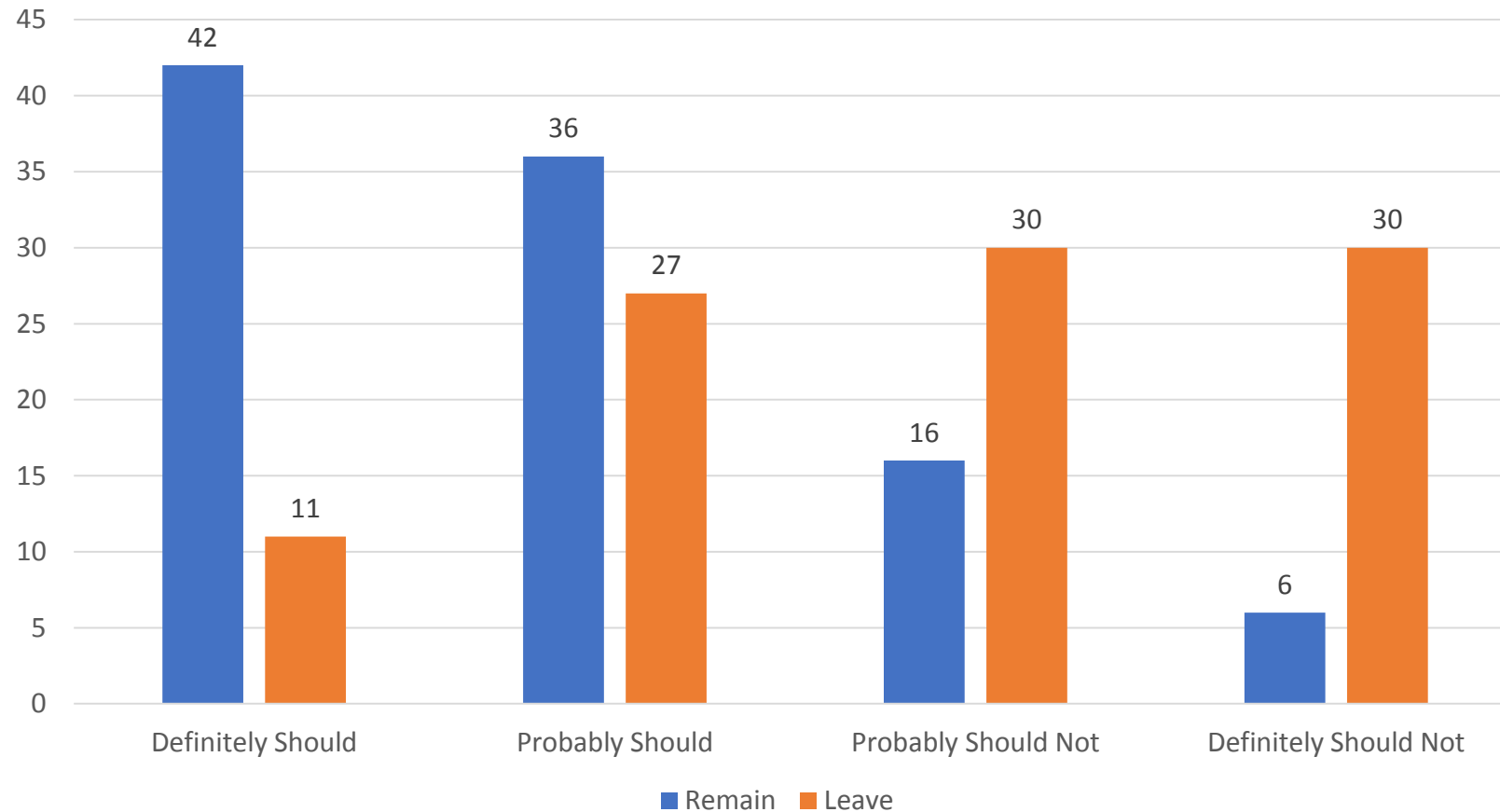
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Random Probability Panel

Remainers and Leavers Have Different Priorities - 1



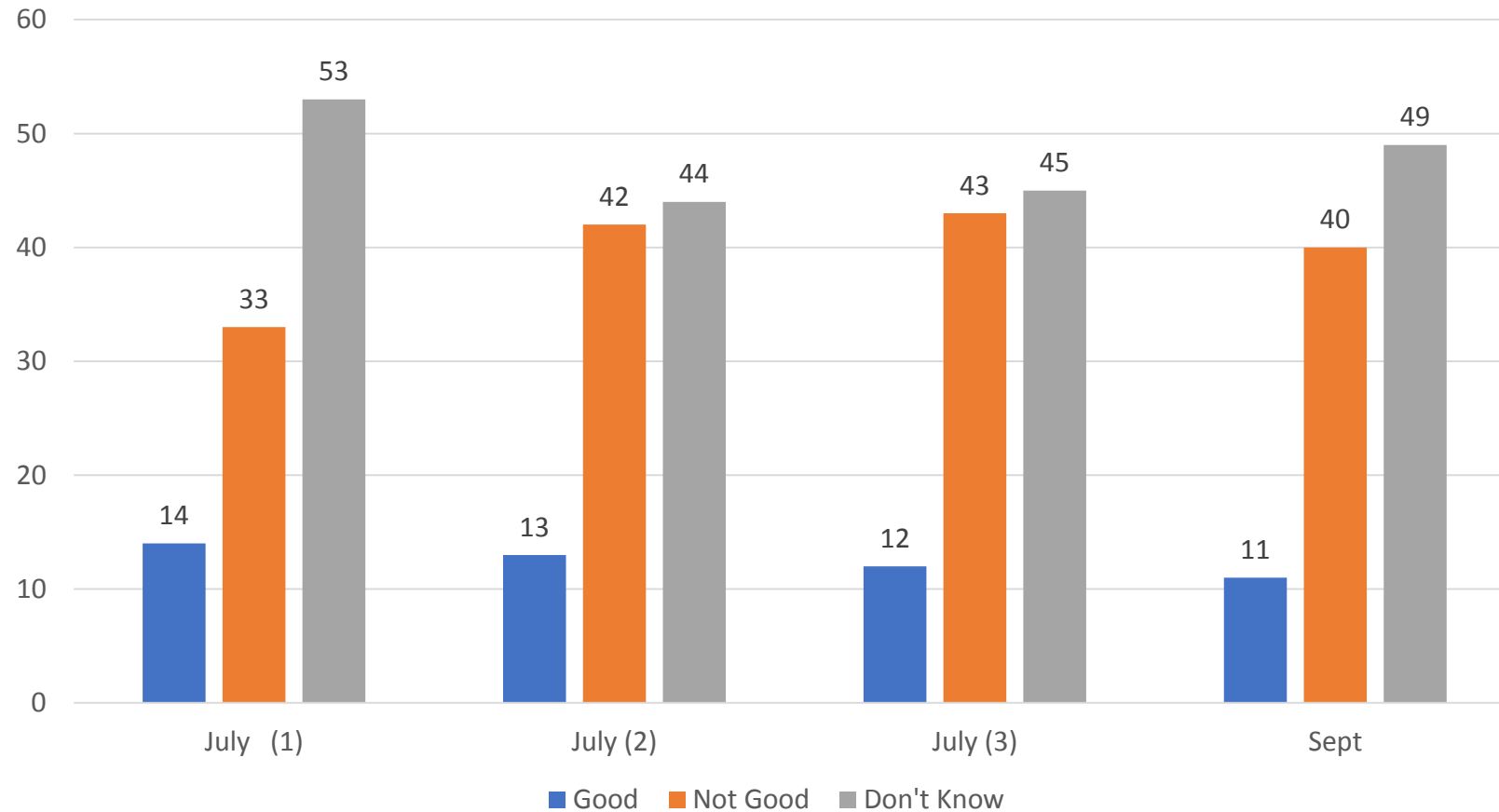
Source: Average of 3 polls by Opinium, September to November 2018

Remainers and Leavers Have Different Priorities - 2



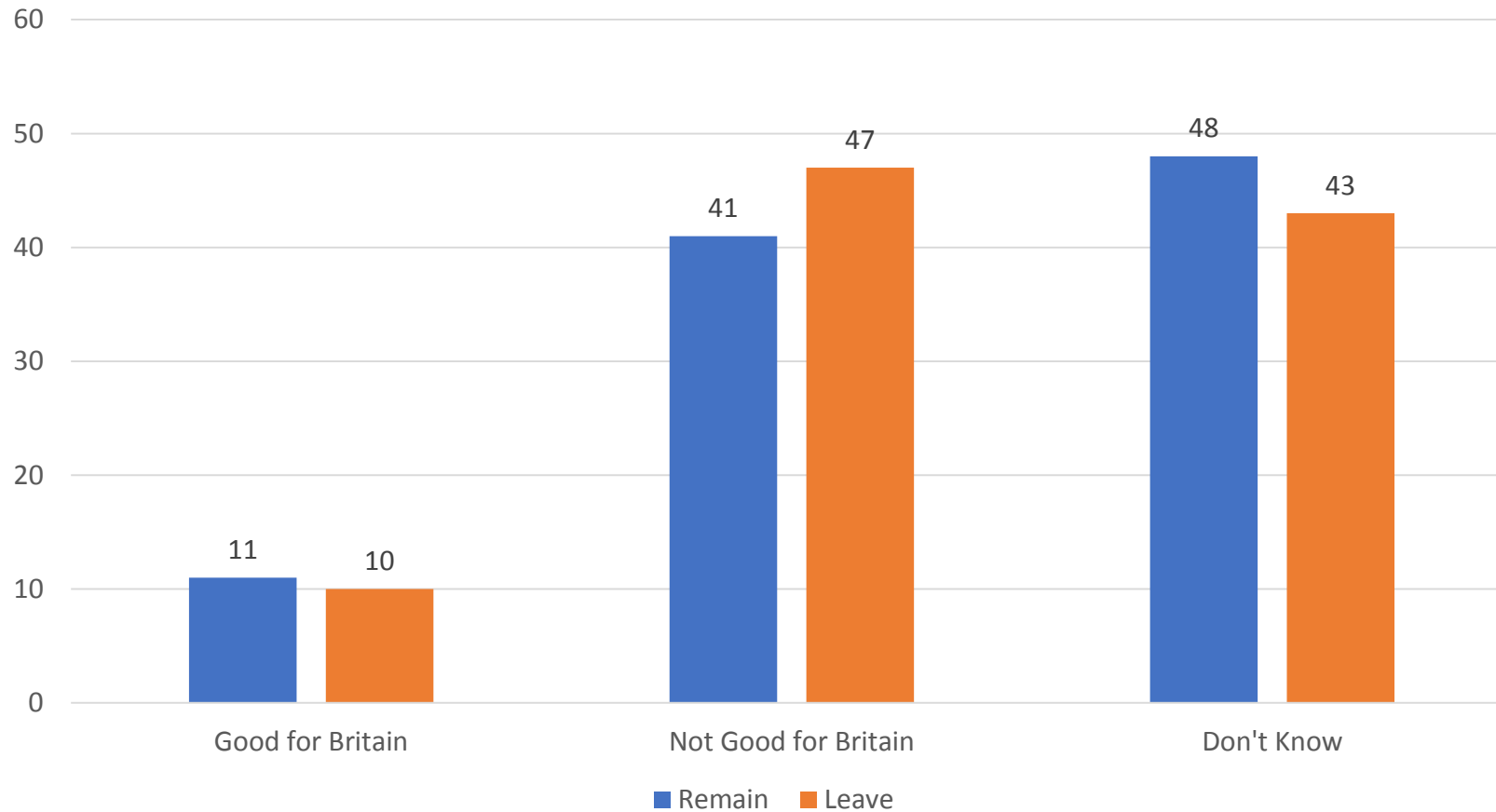
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel, June 2018

Chequers: A First Attempt At Compromise



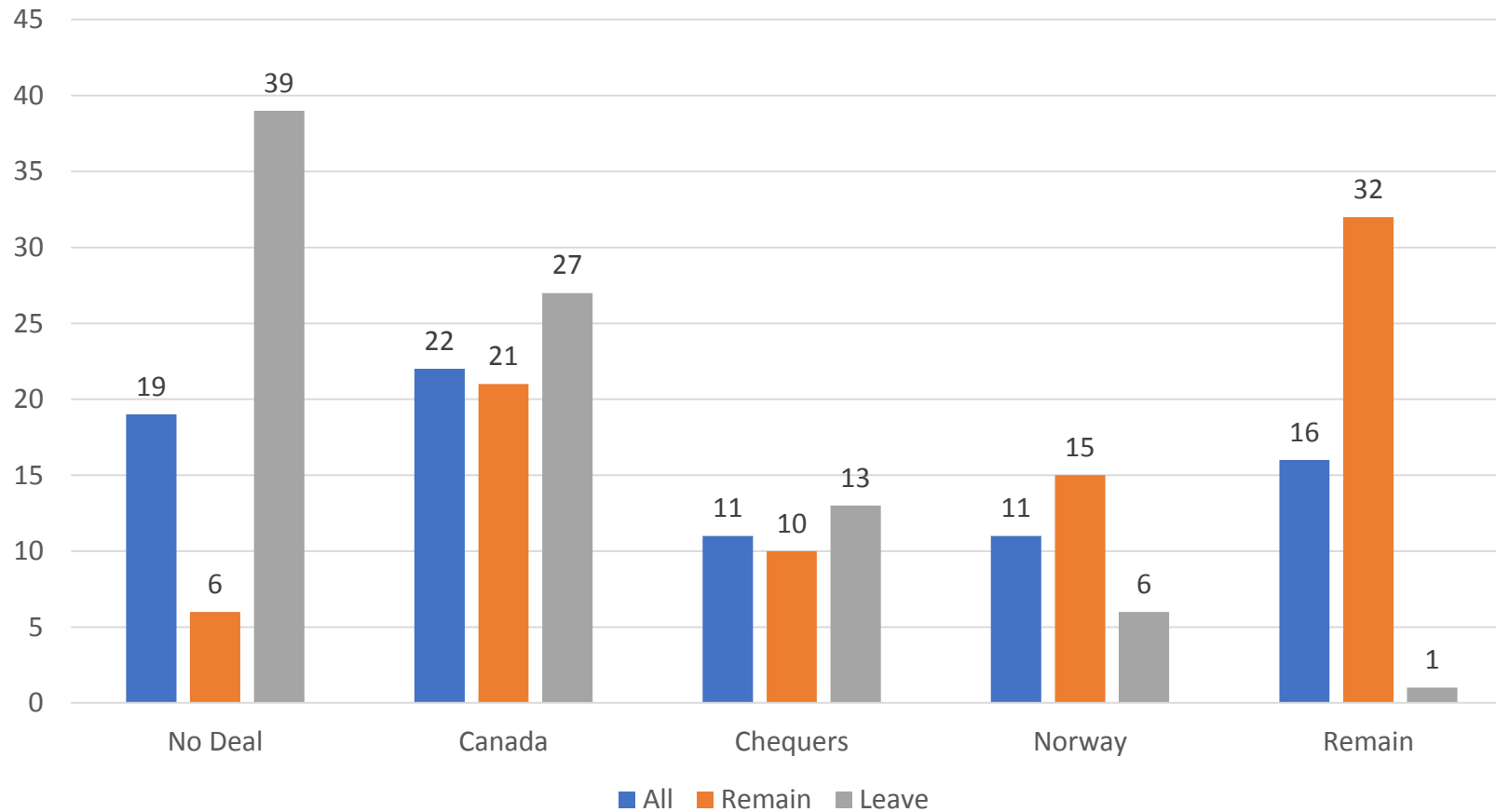
Source: YouGov

Rejected by Remainders and Leavers



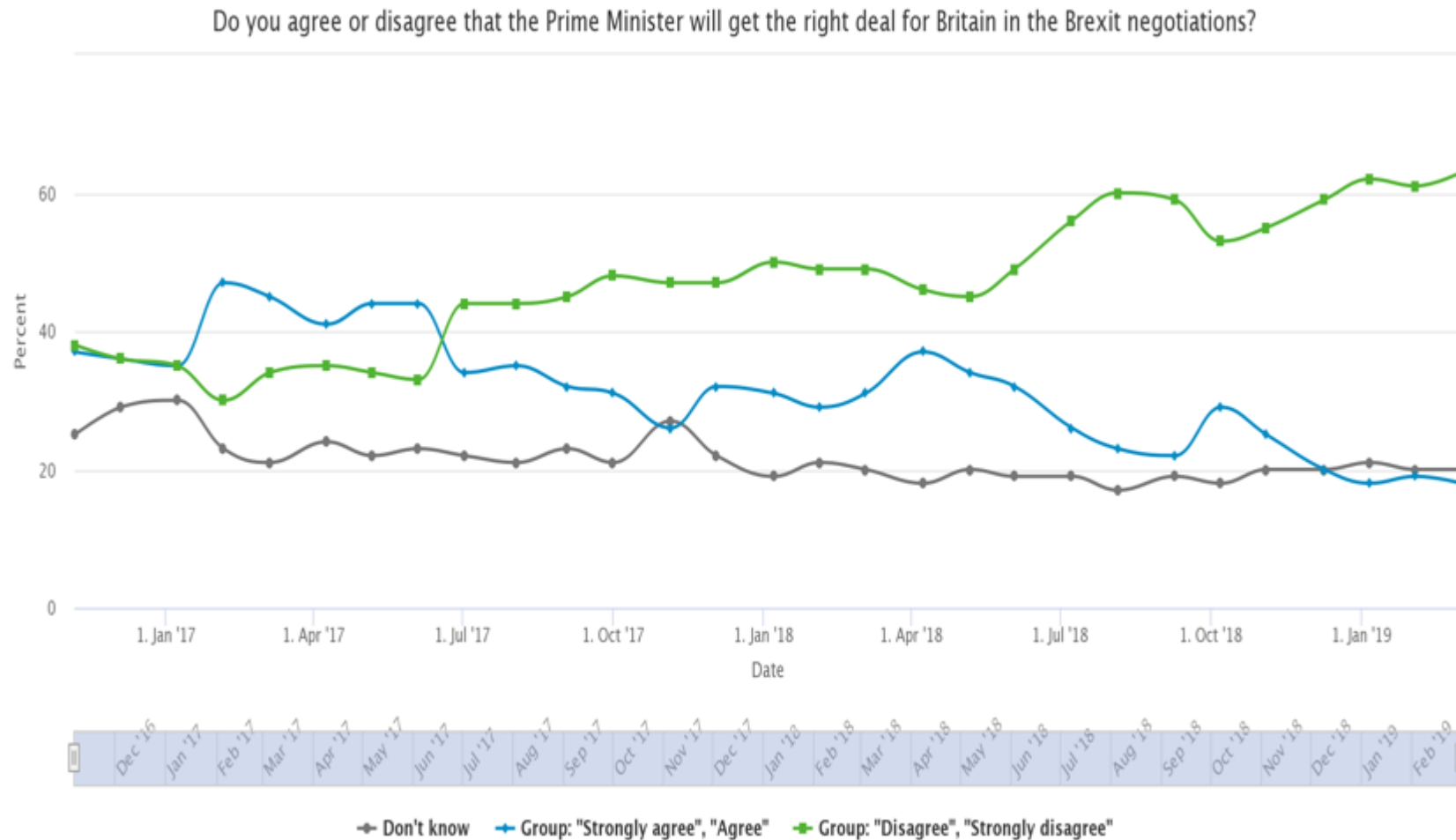
Source: YouGov 4-5.9.18

Fragmented – but Polarised

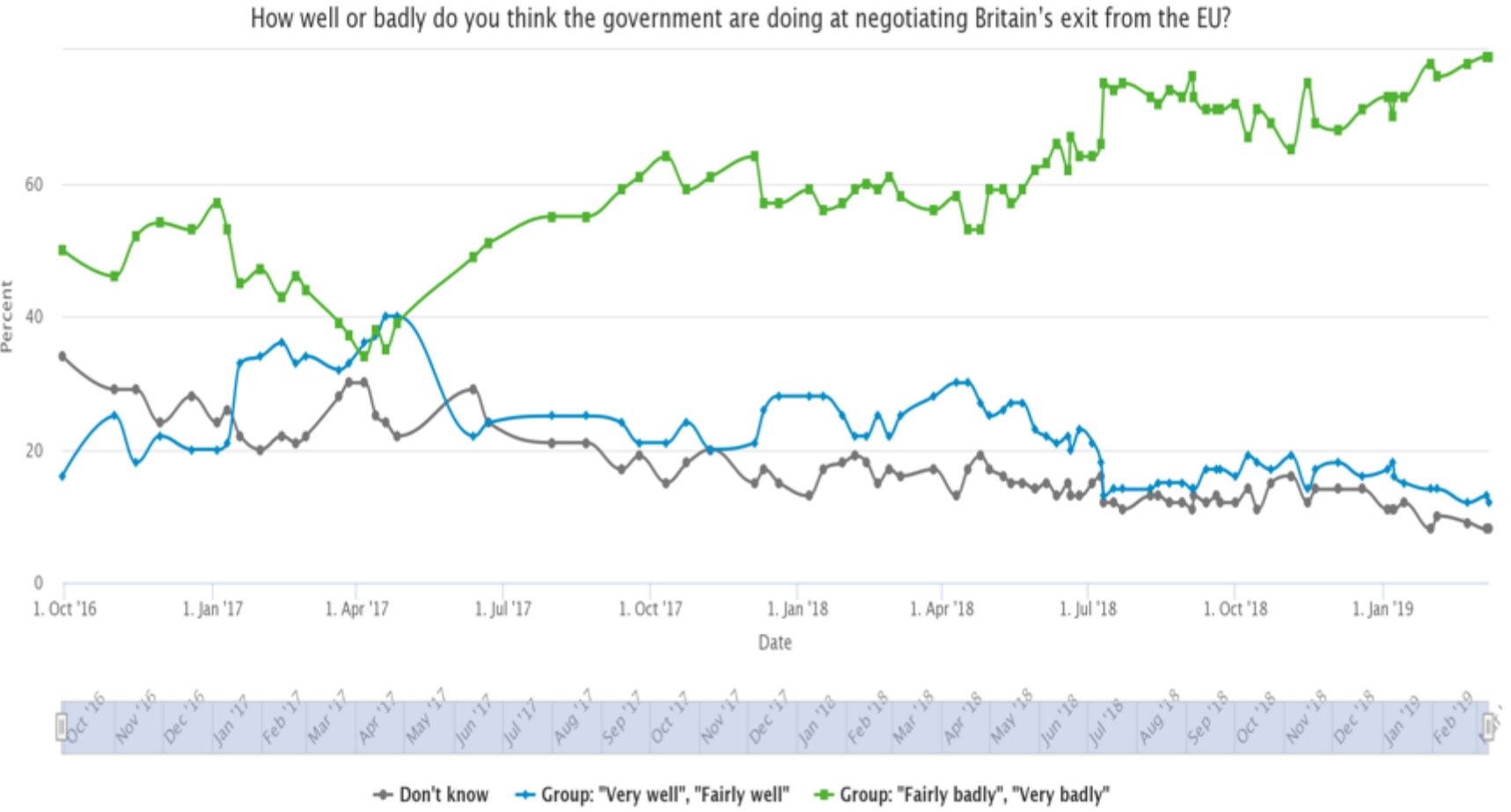


Source: BMG Research 21-22.9.18

Diminishing Expectations



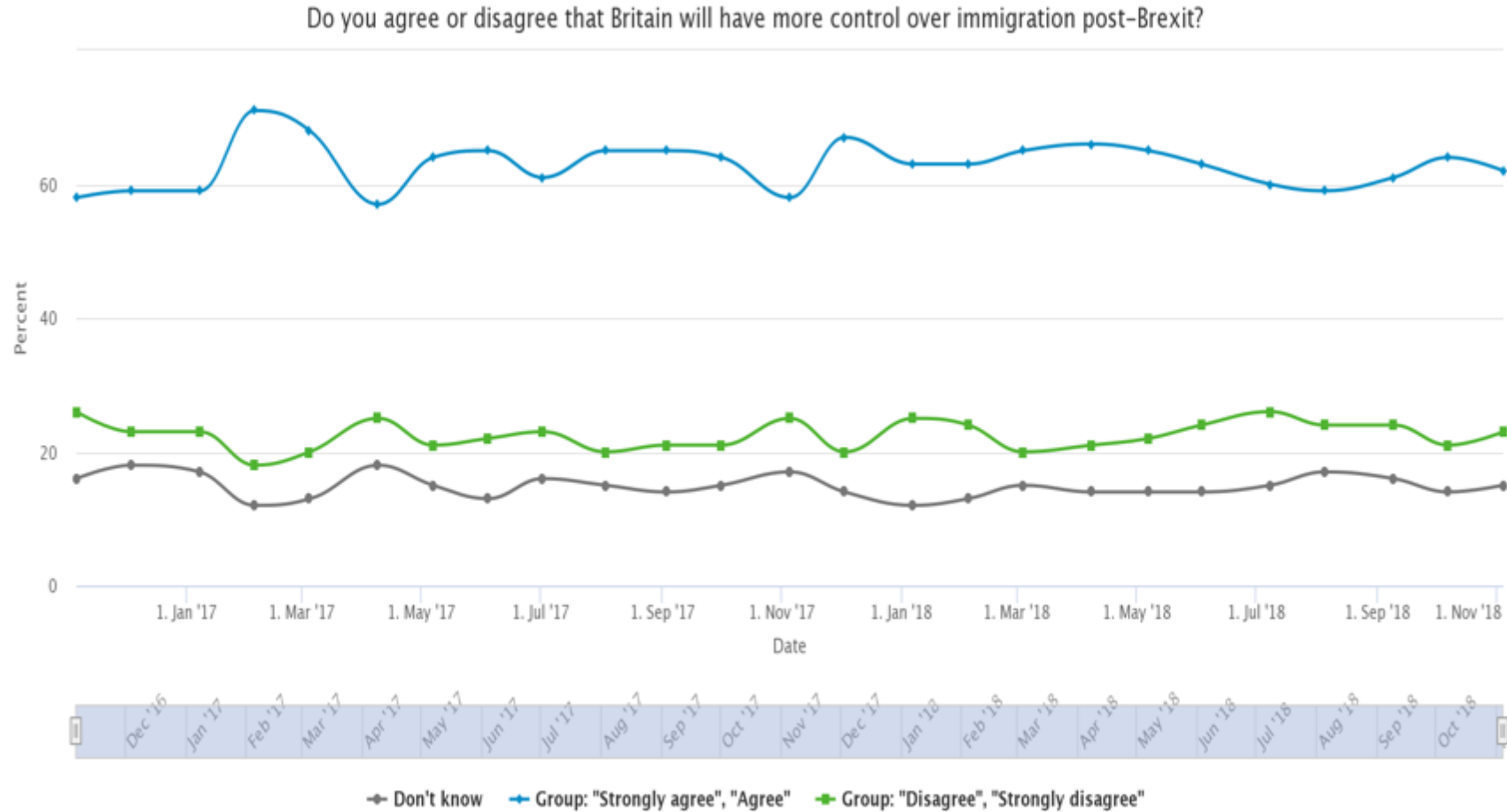
And Declining Confidence



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

Source: YouGov

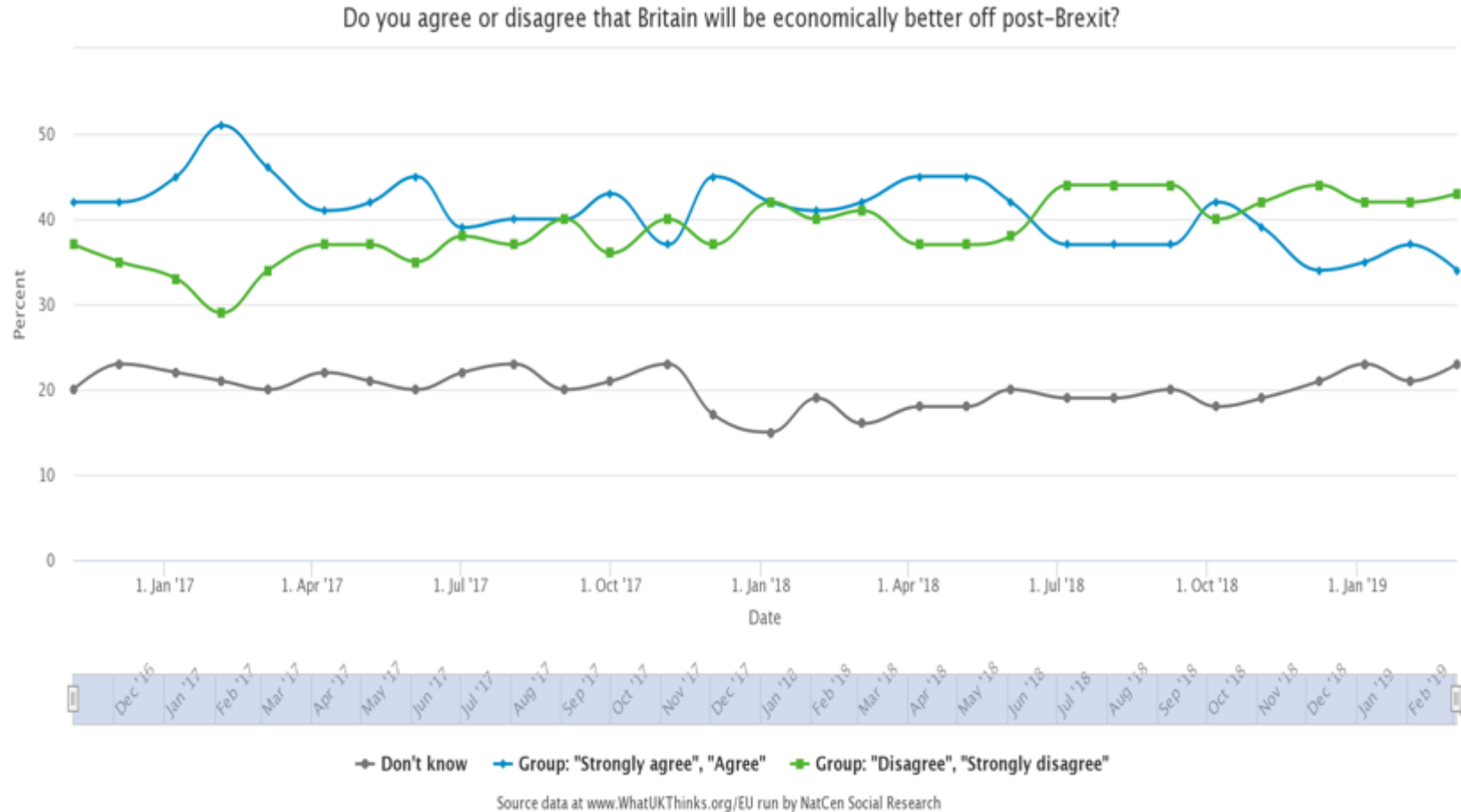
A Persistent Expectation



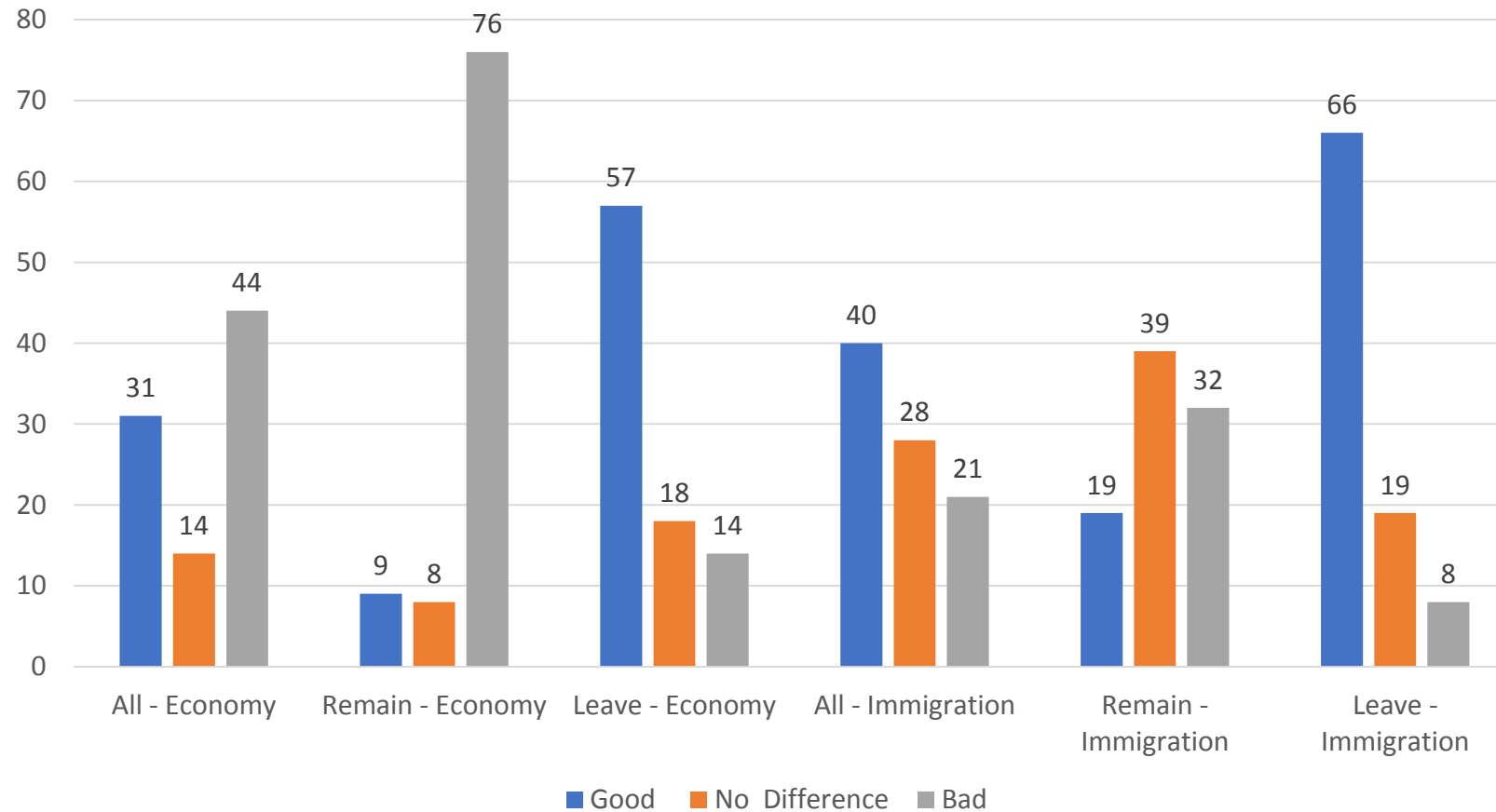
Source data at www.WhatUKThinks.org/EU run by NatCen Social Research

Source: ORB International

ORB: Better off economically?

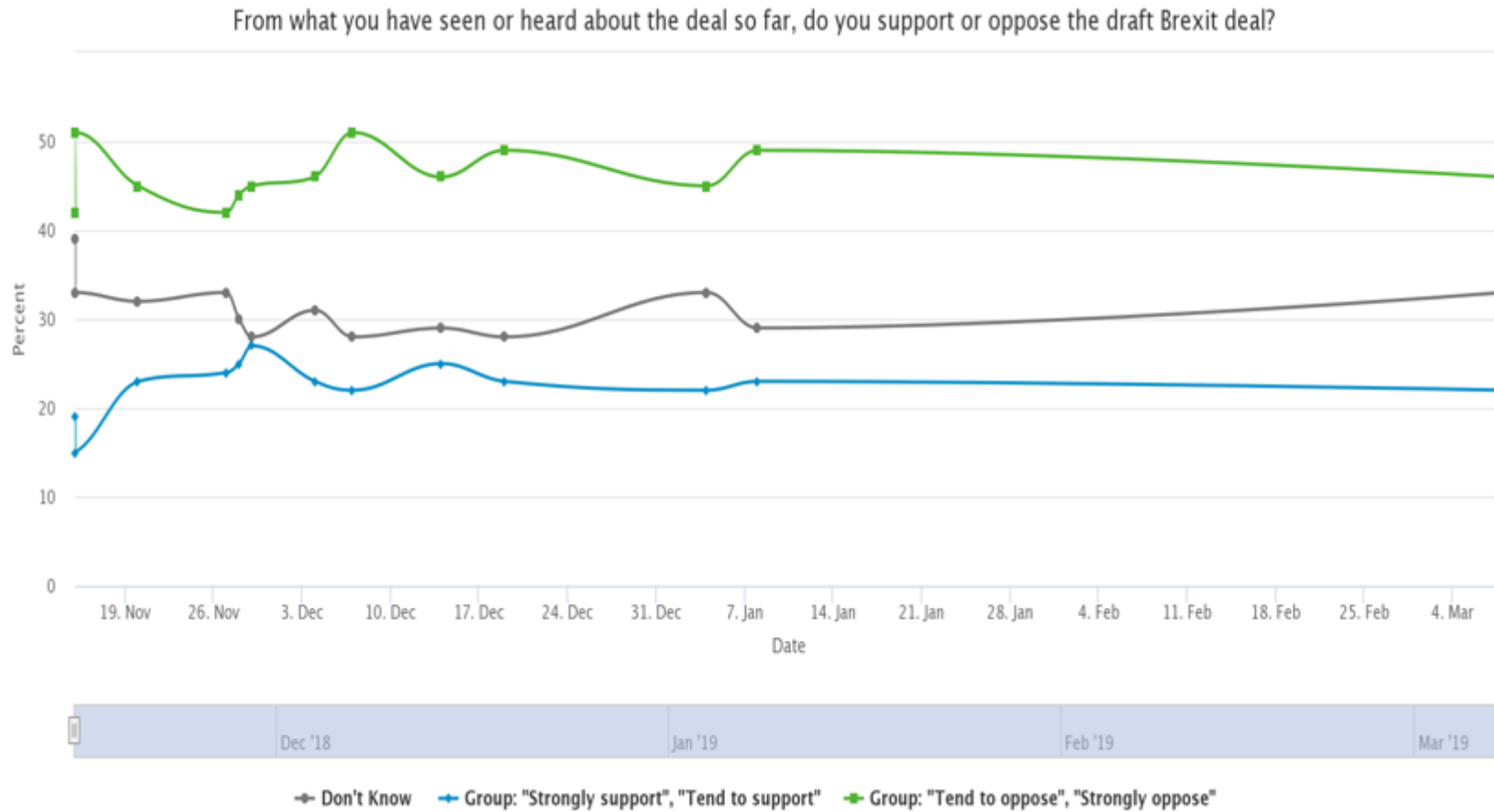


But Leavers and Remainers Have Very Different Perceptions



Source: Survation/Channel 4: 20.10-2.11.18

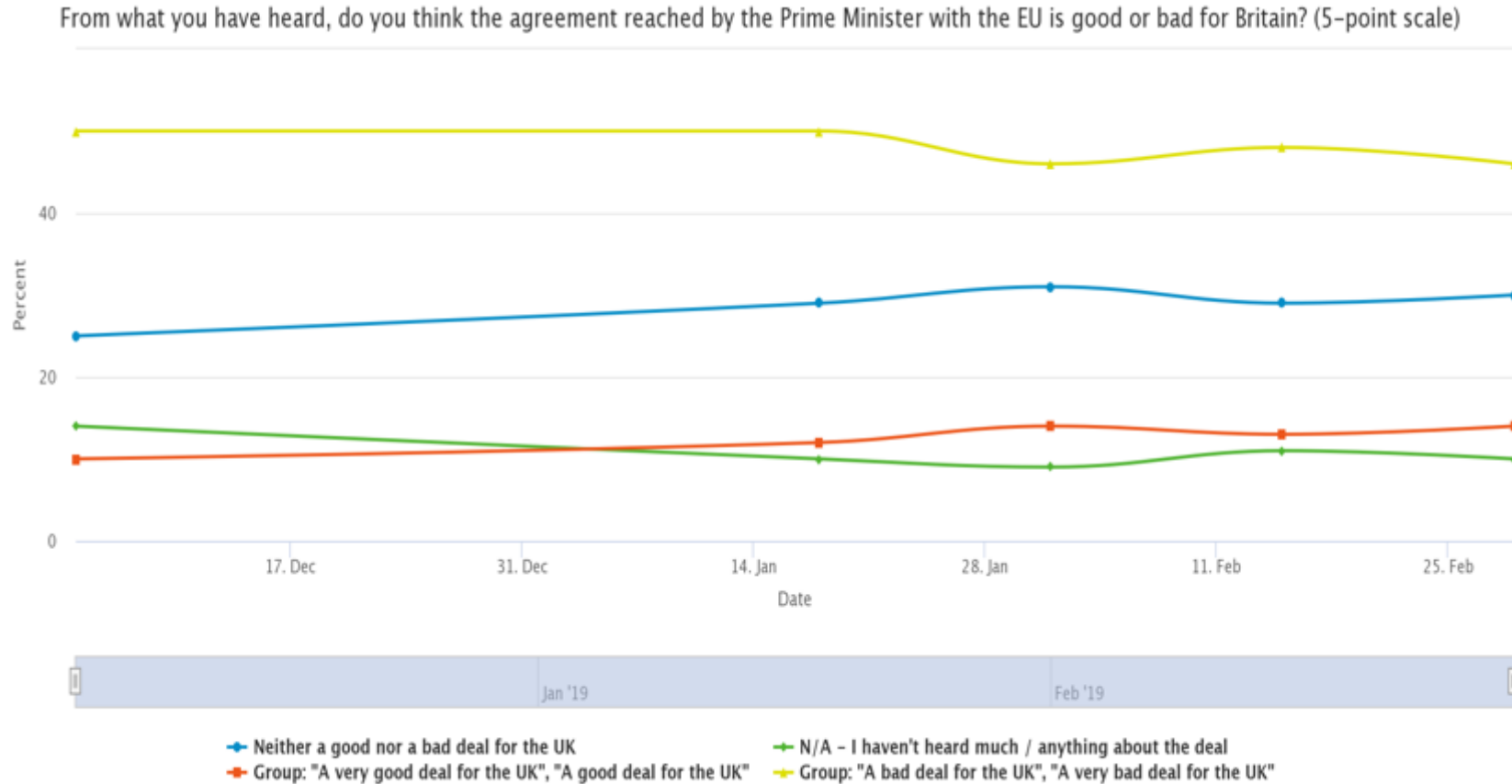
Support or Oppose The Deal?



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

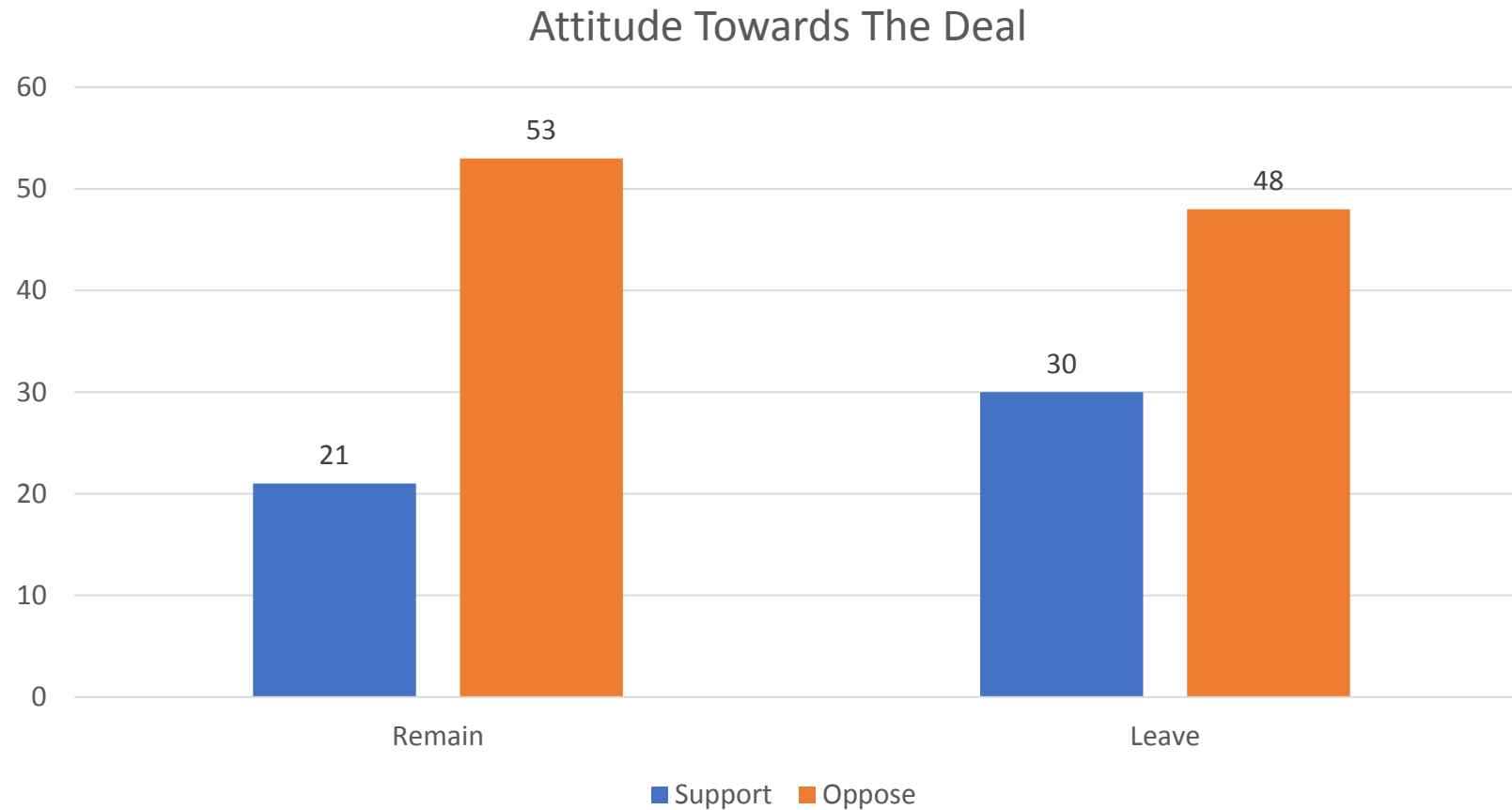
Source: YouGov

Deal Good or Bad for Britain?



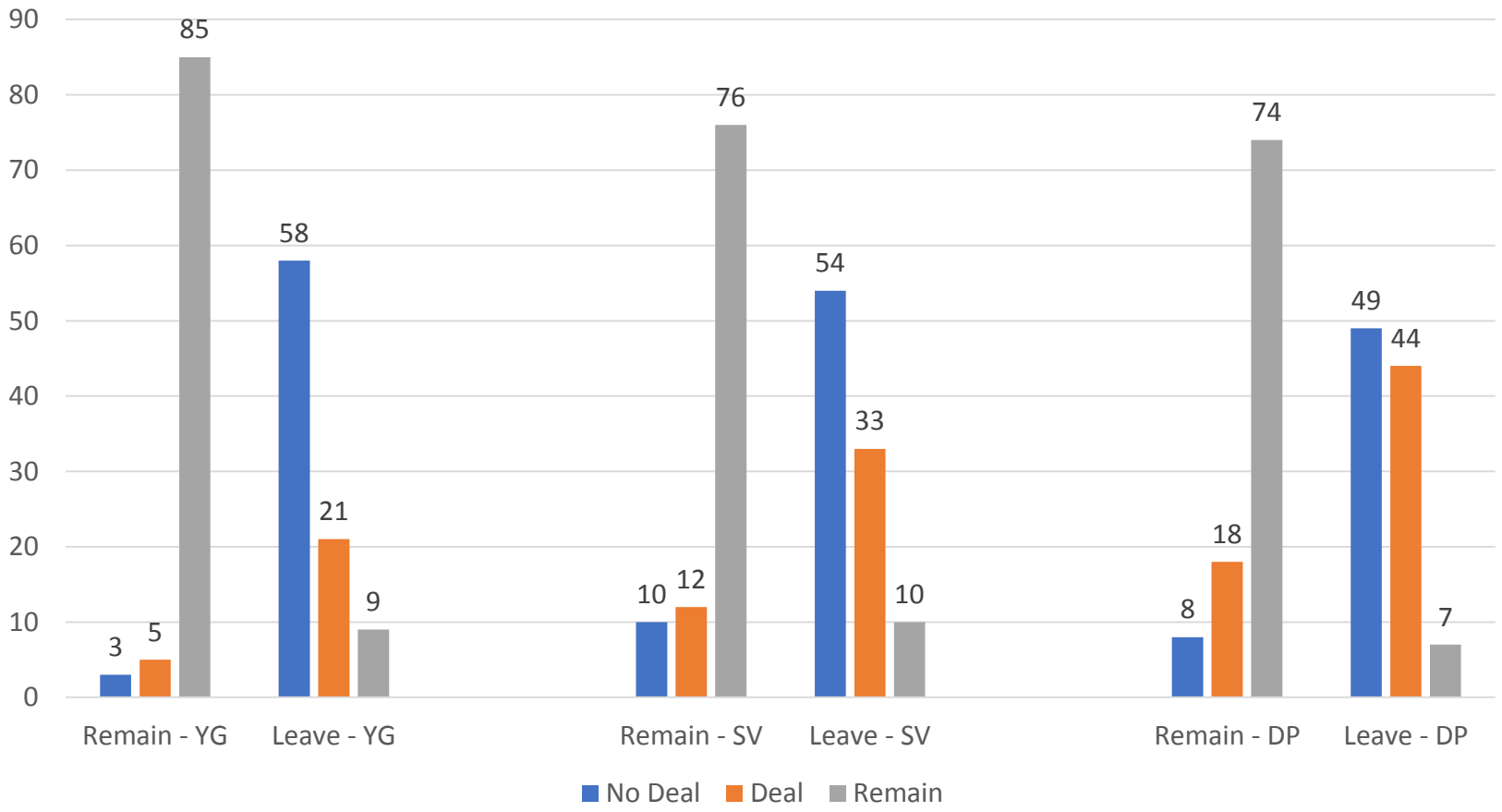
Source: Opinium

Another Remarkable Outbreak of Unity!



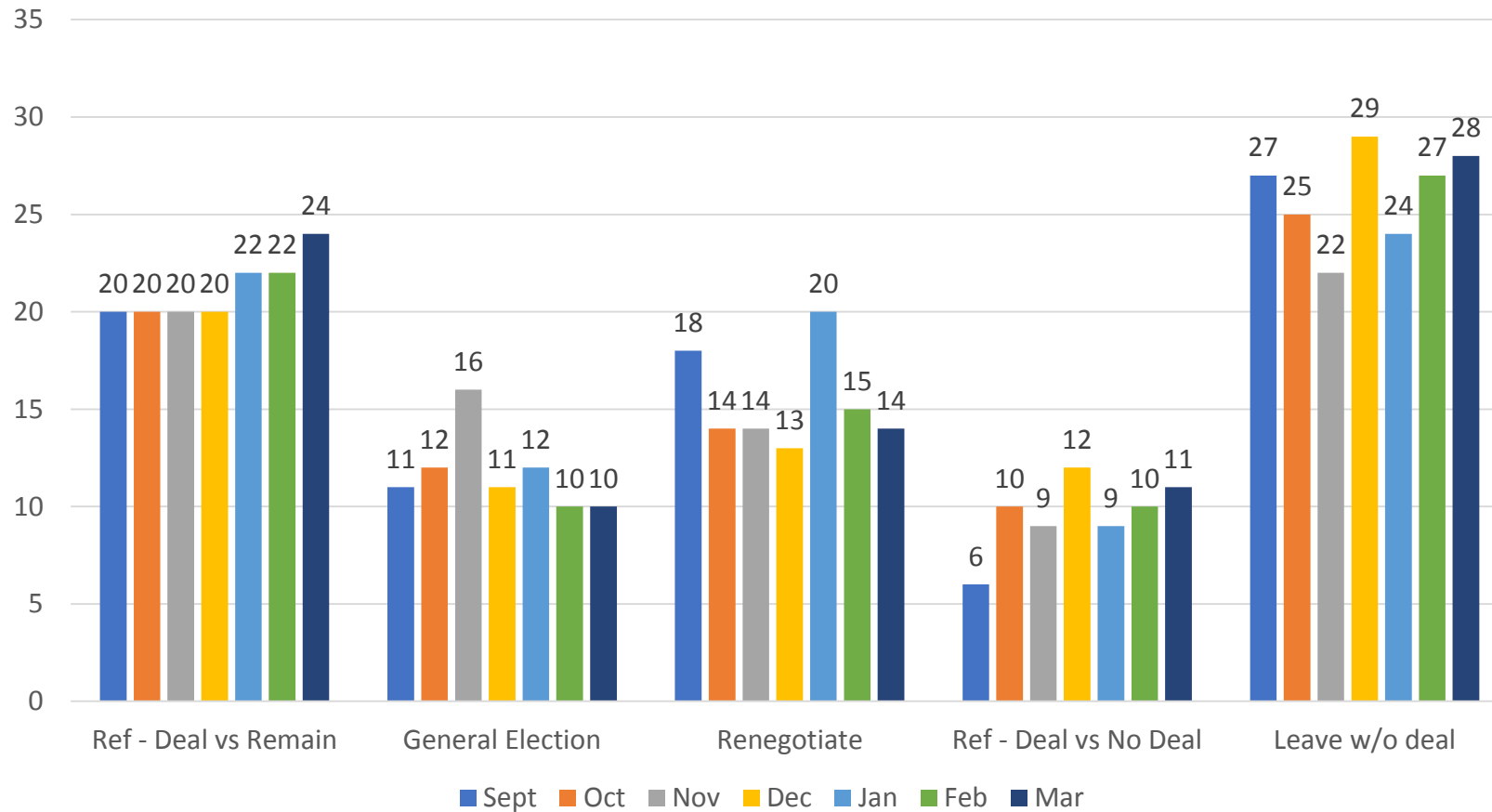
Source: Average of 7 YouGov polls, 3.12.18-8.3.19

Different Priorities



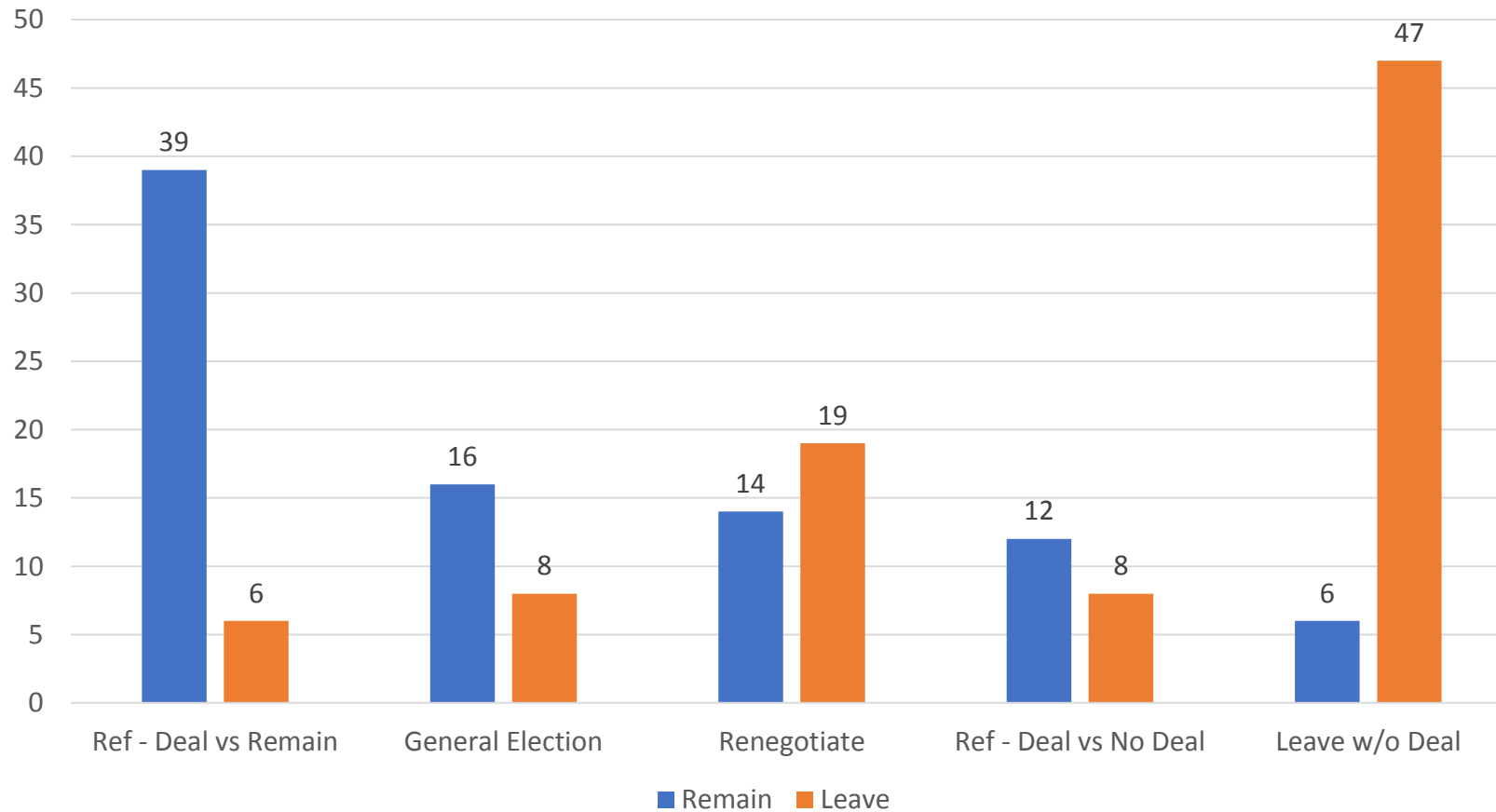
Sources: YouGov 17-18.1.19; Survation 10-11.1.19; Deltapoll 26-27.11.18

Procedural Pluralism



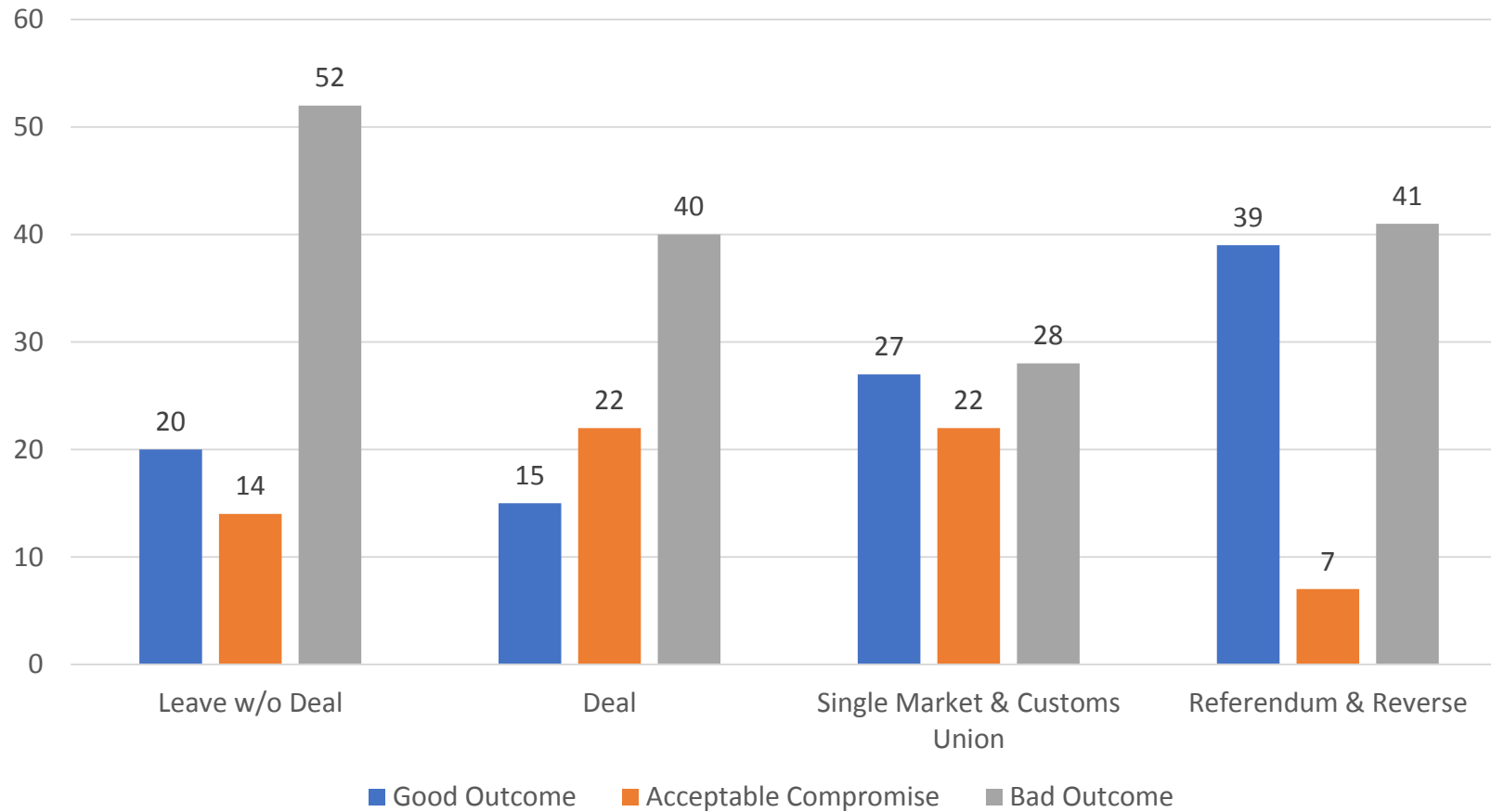
Source: Opinium

Hiding A Polarised Structure



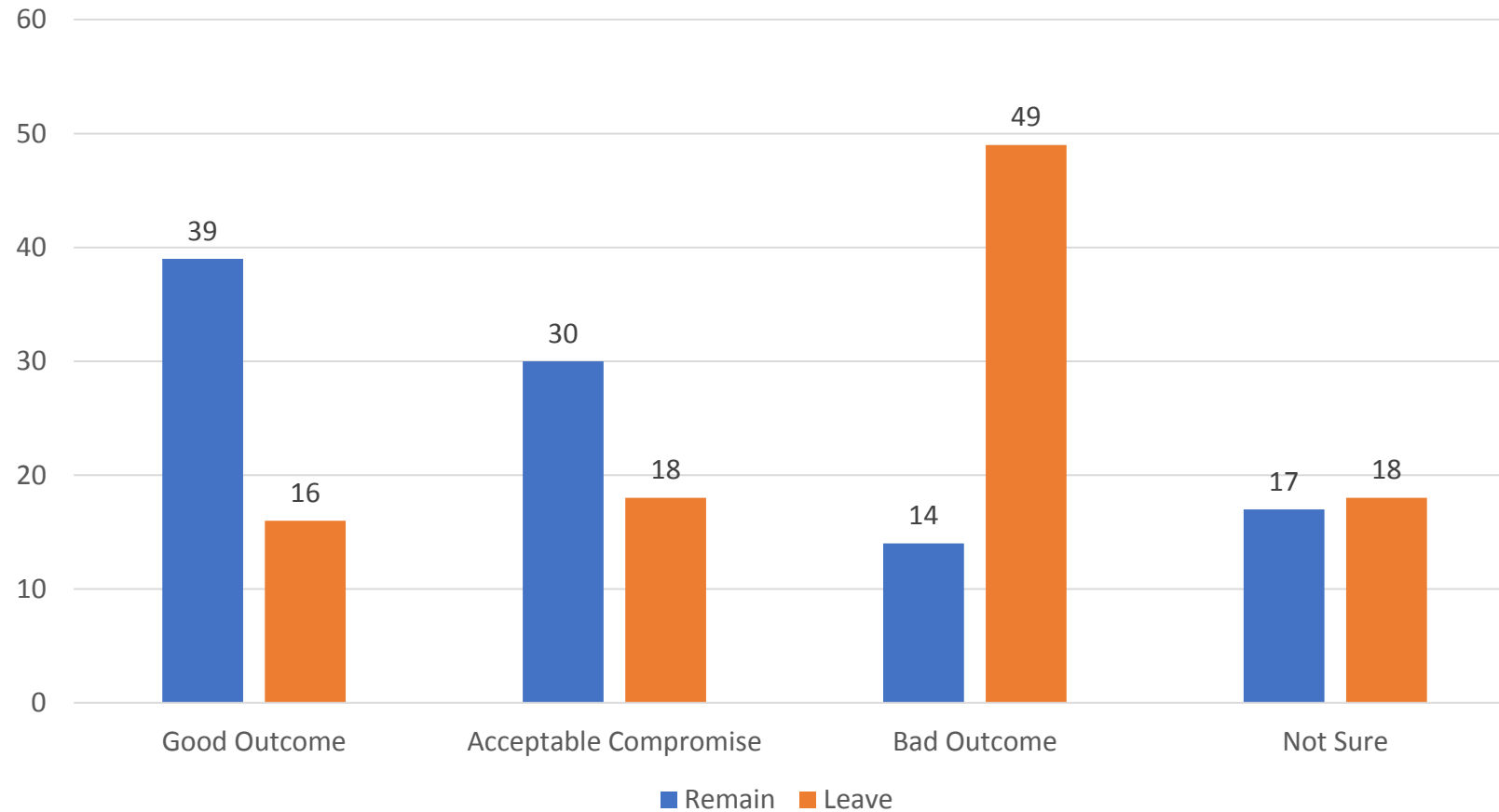
Source: Average of 9 polls by Opinium 26.9-1.3.19

An Explicit Search for Compromise



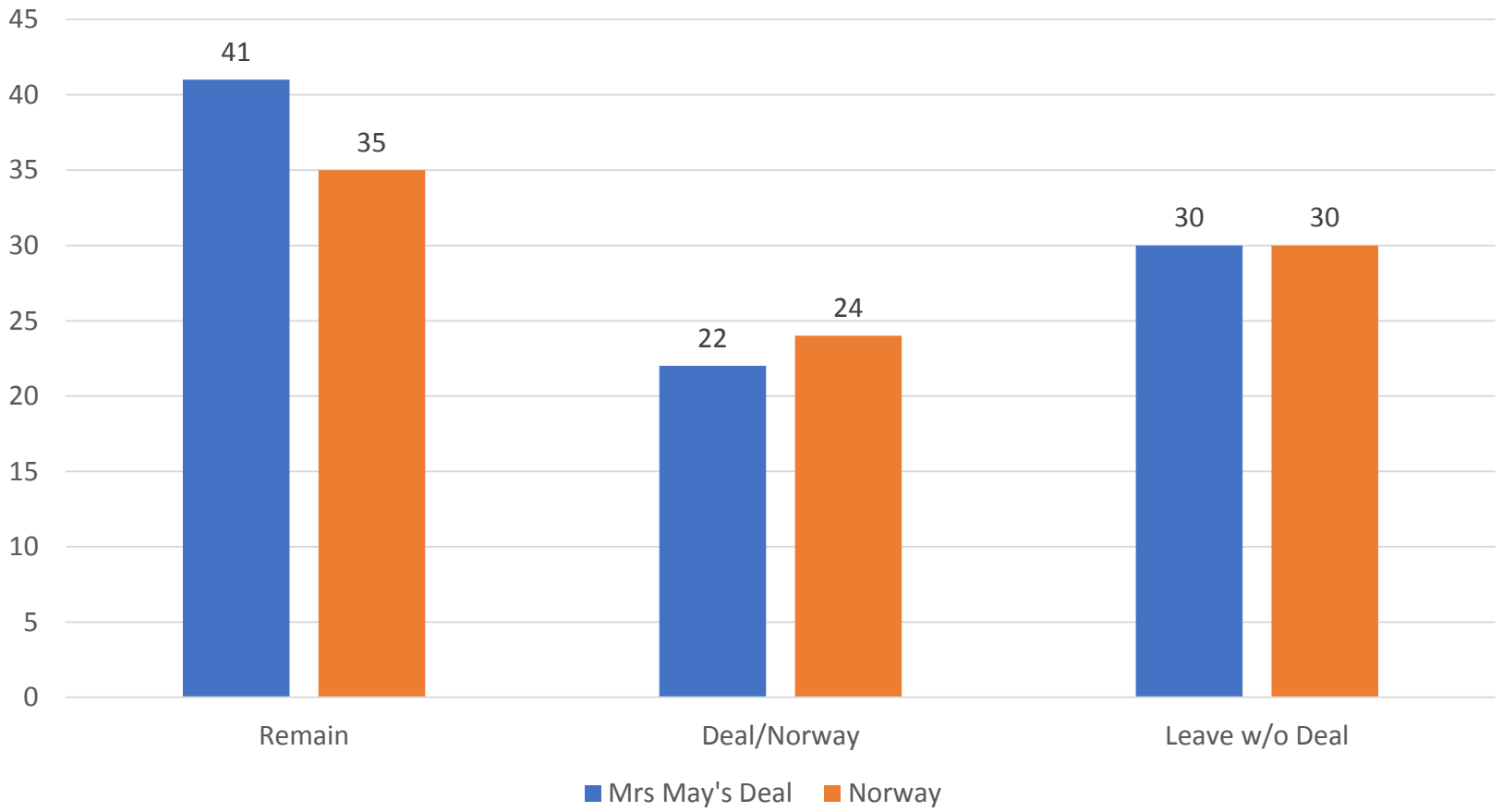
Source: YouGov 7-8.3.19

But A Soft Brexit Does Not Bridge The Divide



Source: YouGov 7-8.3.19

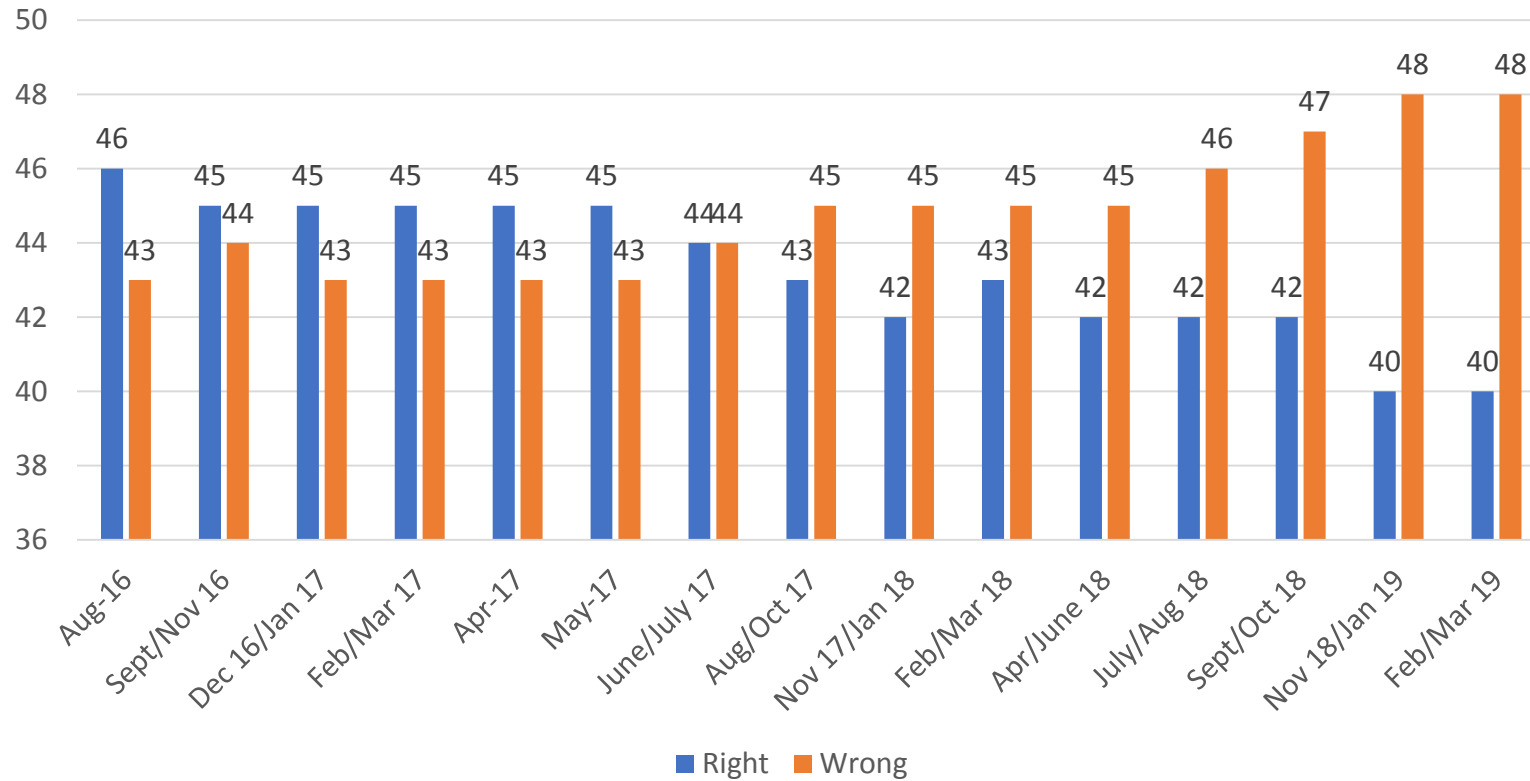
Another Third Choice?



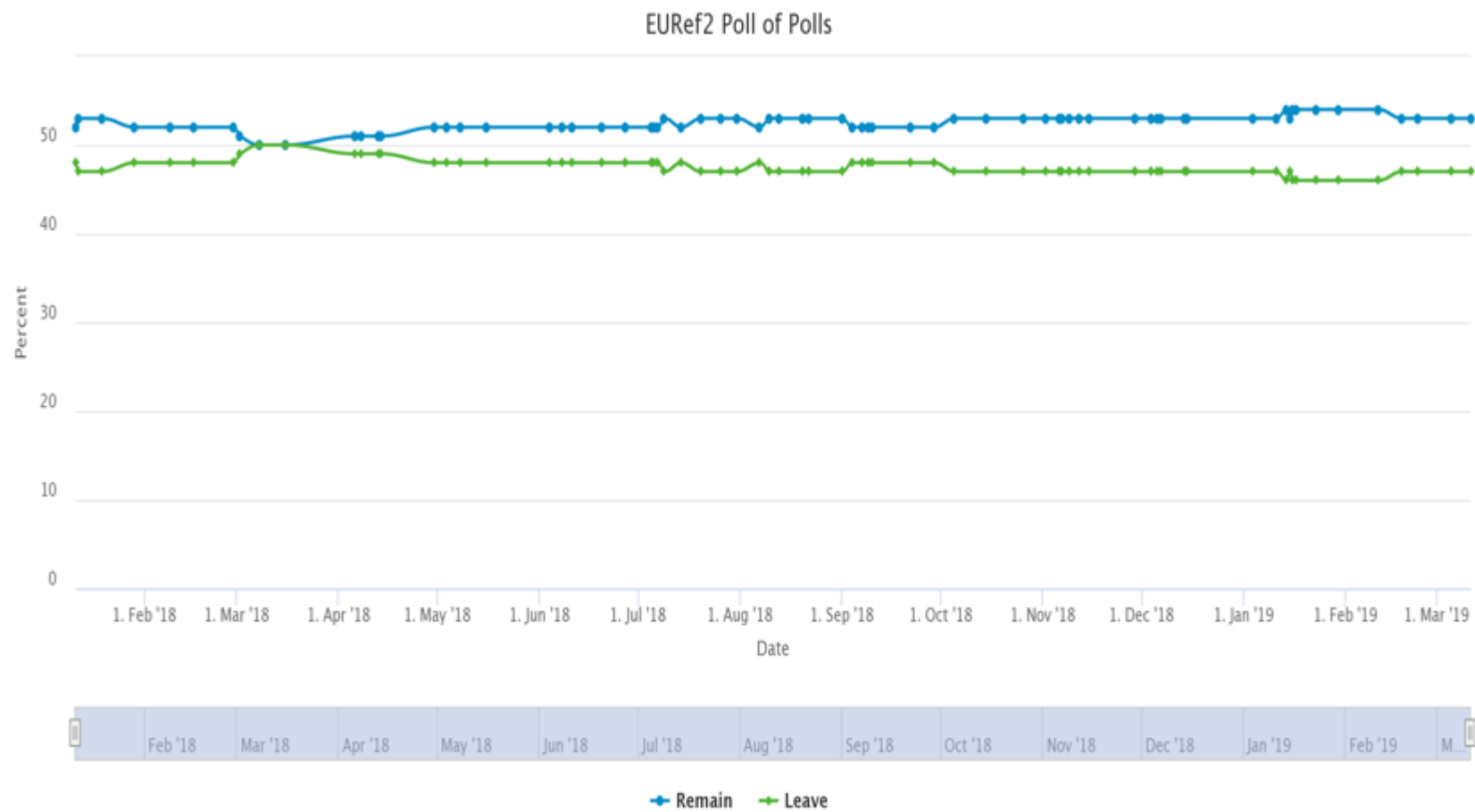
Source: Survation 10-11.1.19

Hindsight From YouGov

In hindsight do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the EU?



EURef2 Poll of Polls



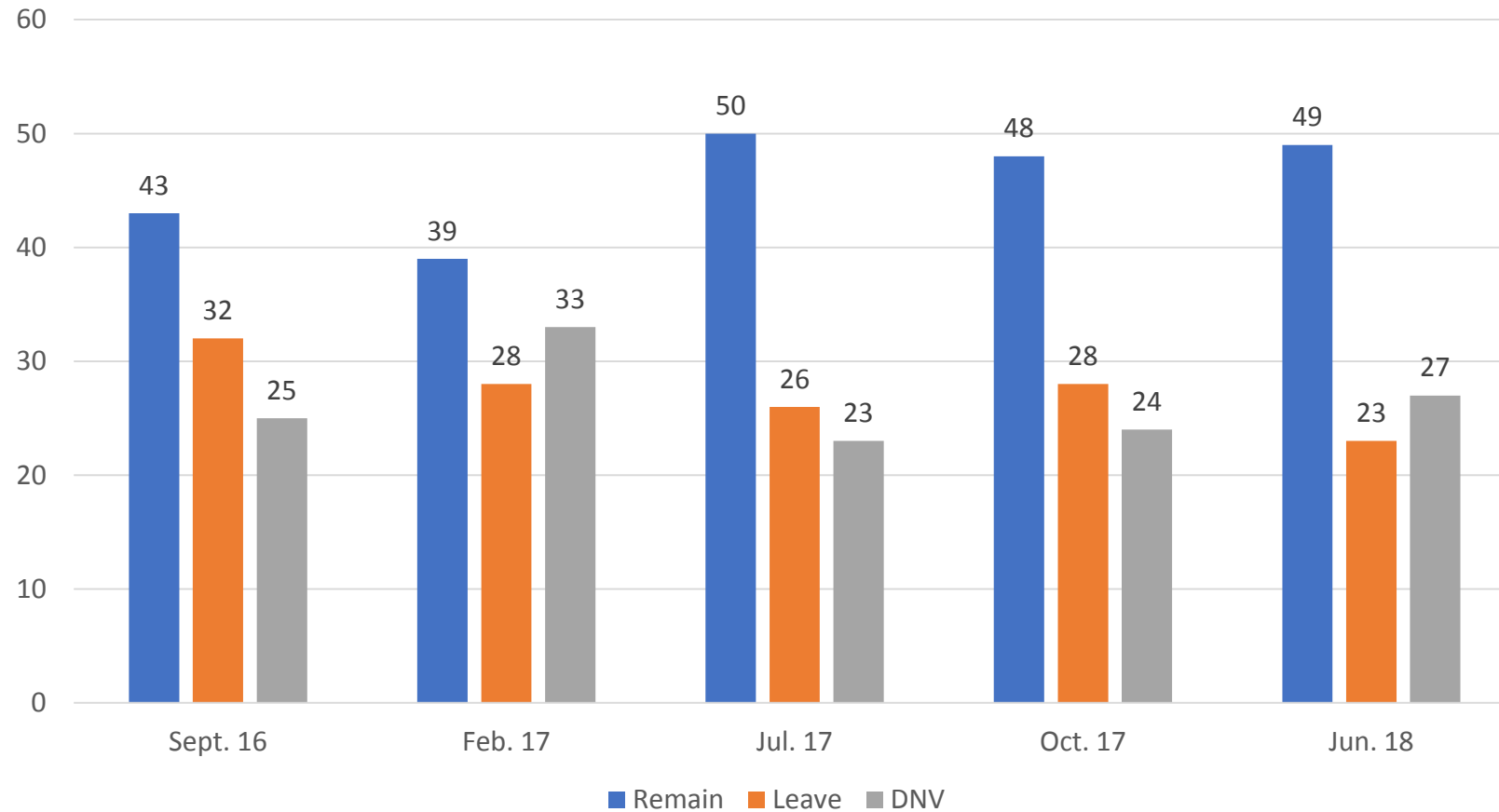
Source data at www.WhatUKThinks.org/EU run by NatCen Social Research

The Turnover of 'Votes'

Vote Now/Vote 2016	Remain (%)	Leave (%)	Did Not Vote (%)
Remain	85	9	42
Leave	9	82	16
Undecided/W ould Not Vote	7	9	42

Source: Average of 6 polls conducted by ComRes, Deltapoll, Kantar, and Survation 7.2-11.3.19

How Abstainers Have Swung Away from Leave



Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Random Probability Panel

Conclusion

- Delivering a Brexit that would satisfy most voters was never going to be easy
 - Given ending free movement but remaining in single market was ruled out by the EU, voters were always likely to polarise
- So far no compromise has emerged that seems capable of bridging the Remain/Leave divide
 - They all run the risk of appearing friendless
- Voters have become increasingly pessimistic about the outcome
 - But there has only been a small movement to Remain occasioned primarily by the view of abstainers

Questions

Comments



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