

The Fourth National Assembly Election

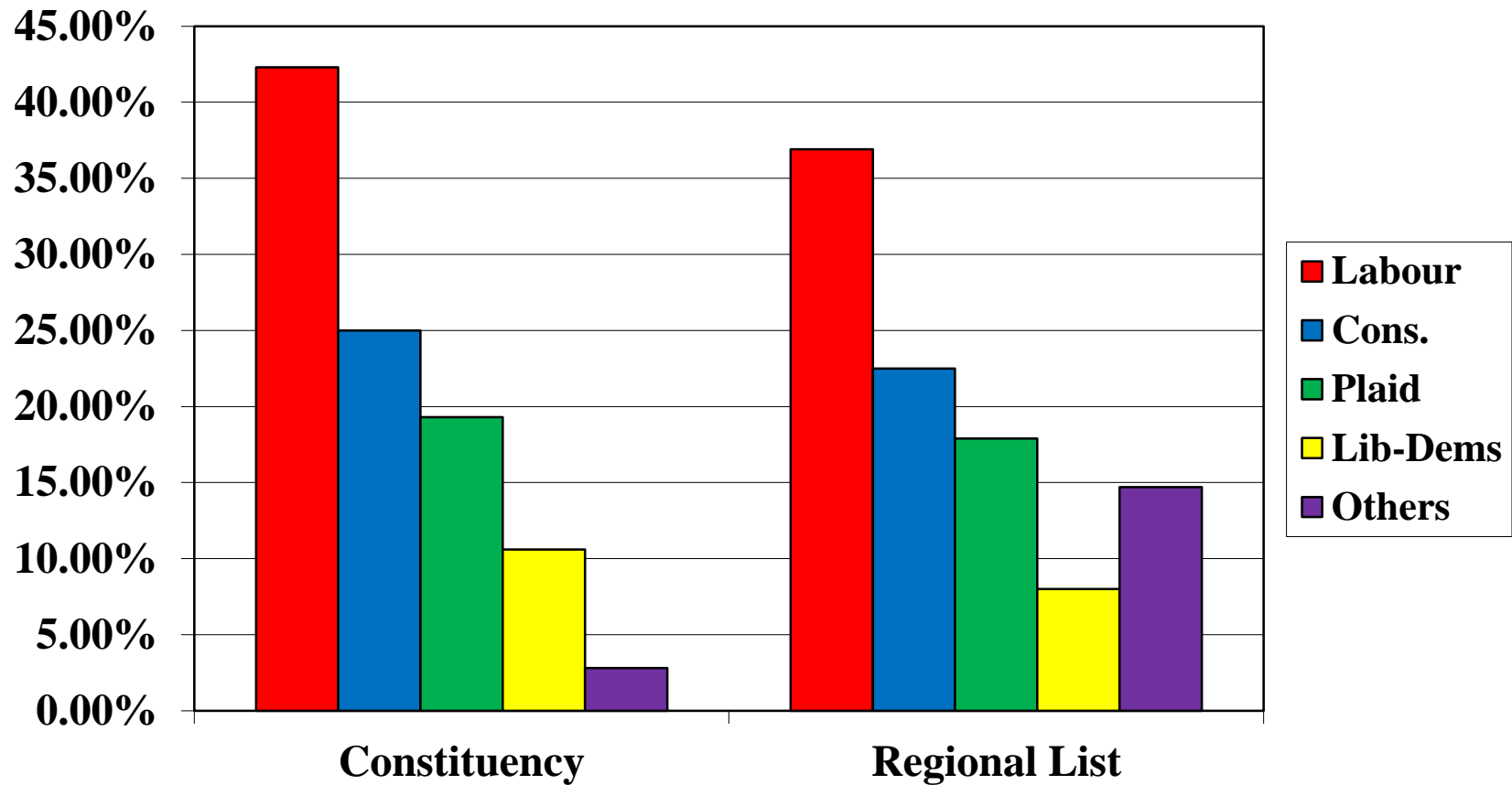
Richard Wyn Jones (Cardiff University)
Roger Scully (Aberystwyth University)

Cardiff, 11th October 2011

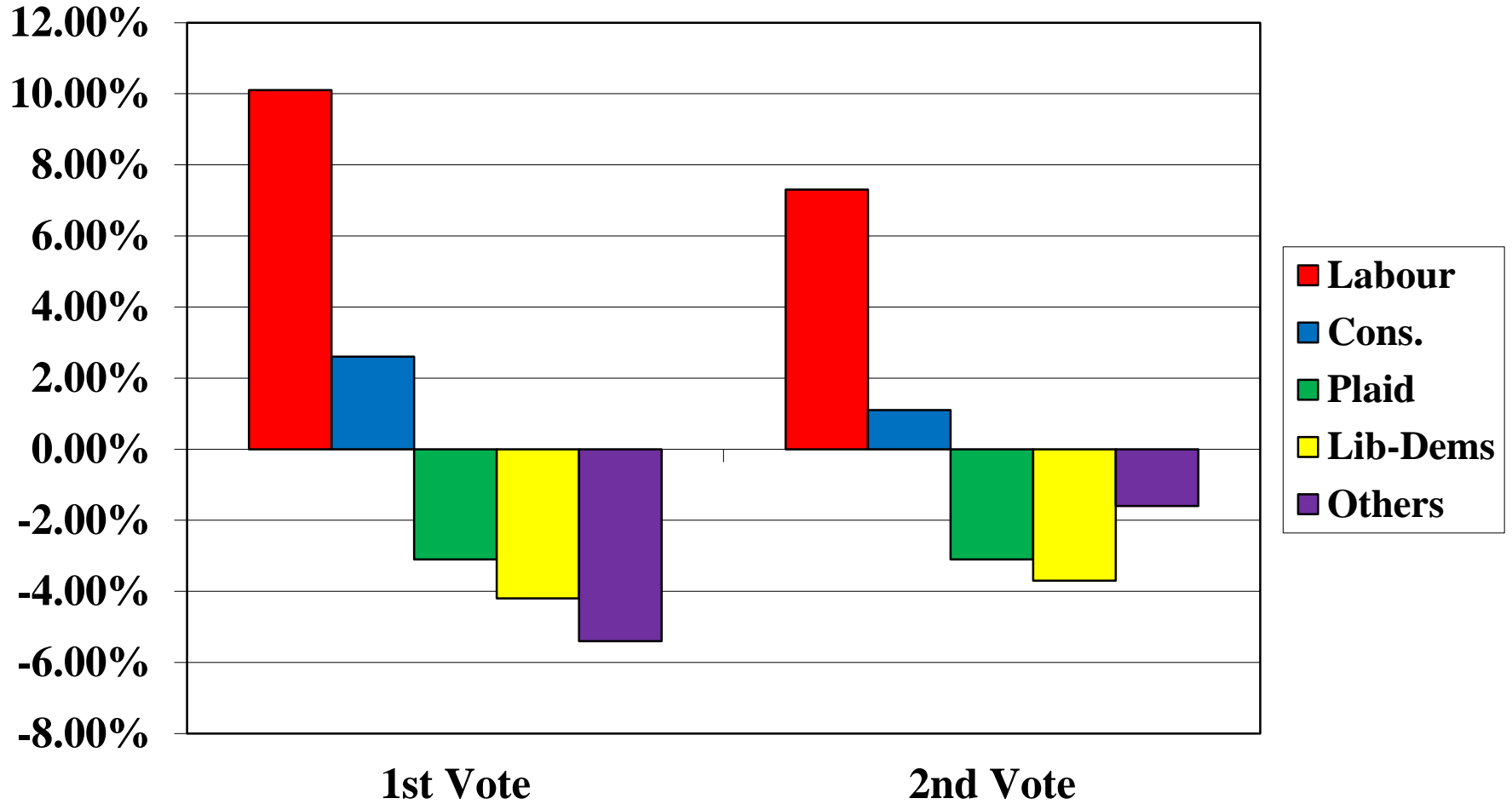
Outline of Seminar

1. Introduction
2. The 2011 Election: the Result
3. The 2011 Welsh Election Study
4. The Survey Evidence:
 - Attitudes to the Parties
 - Attitudes to the Leaders
 - The Major Issues
 - Turnout Effects?
5. Attitudes to Devolution
6. Questions and Discussion

2011: The Result



Changes From 2007



The Best of Times...Labour

- Highest vote share ever on constituency ballot (2.3% better than 2003)
- Highest vote share ever on regional ballot (0.3% better than 2003)
- Equal best seats ever: 30 (as in 2003)
- Labour vote share increased in all five regions, and in 38 of 40 constituencies

The Best of Times...Conservatives

- Highest vote share ever on constituency ballot (2.6% better than 2007)
- Highest vote share ever on regional ballot (1.1% better than 2007)
- Best seat total ever: 14
- Less consistency than Labour in performance: vote share actually *fell* in 12 constituencies

The Worst of Times...Plaid Cymru

- Lowest vote share ever on constituency ballot (1.9% worse than 2003)
- Lowest vote share ever on regional ballot (1.8% worse than 2003)
- Lowest seat total ever: 11
- But not uniform decline: vote share actually *increased* in 11 constituencies

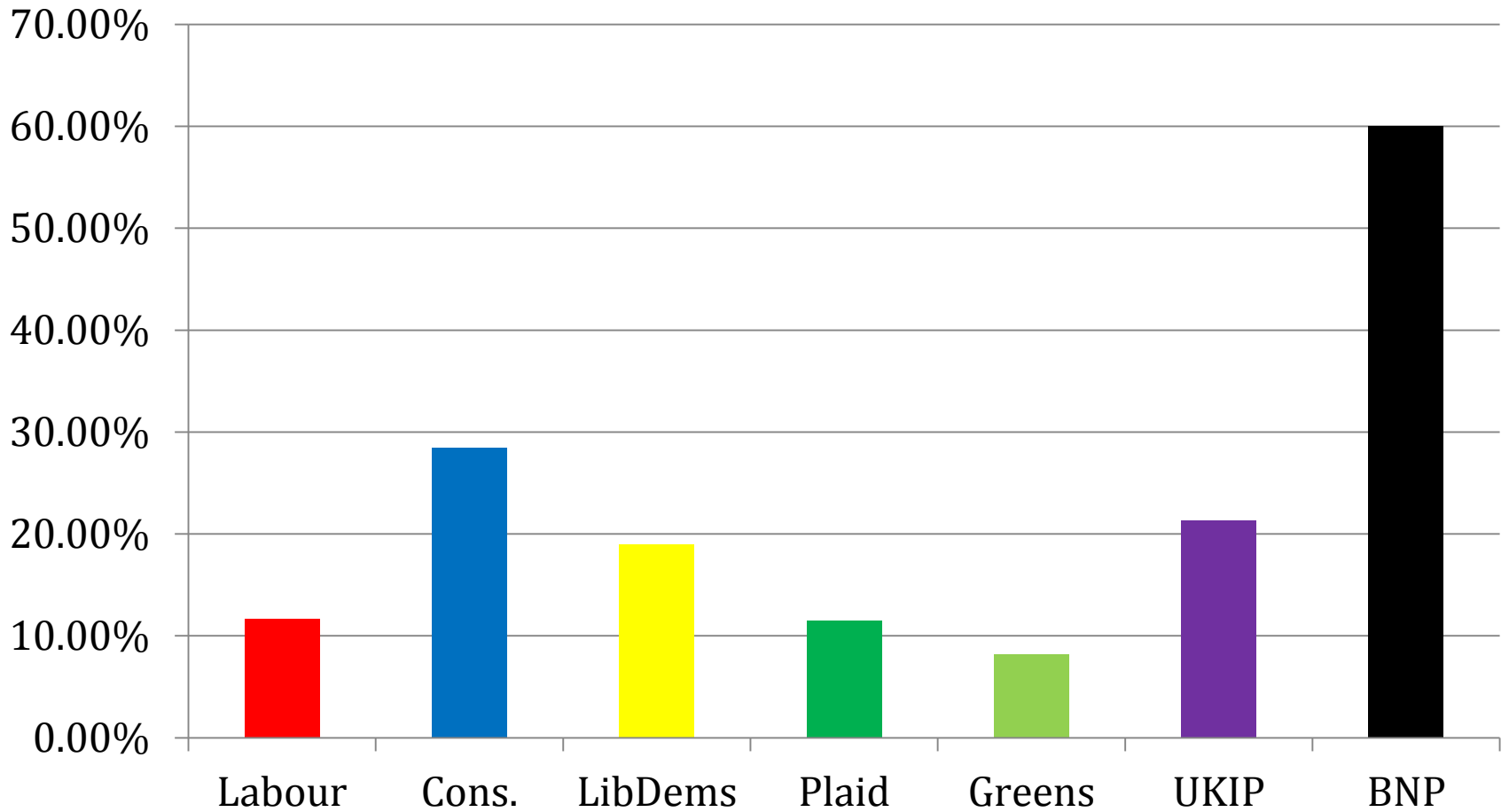
The Worst of Times...Lib-Dems

- Lowest vote share ever on constituency ballot (2.9% worse than 1999)
- Lowest vote share ever on regional ballot (3.7% worse than 2007)
- Lowest seat total ever: 5
- Near uniform decline: vote share rose in only 3 constituencies
- Close to Disaster: 4 List Seats could easily have been 2 (won MWW seat by 198 votes; SWW by 54 votes)

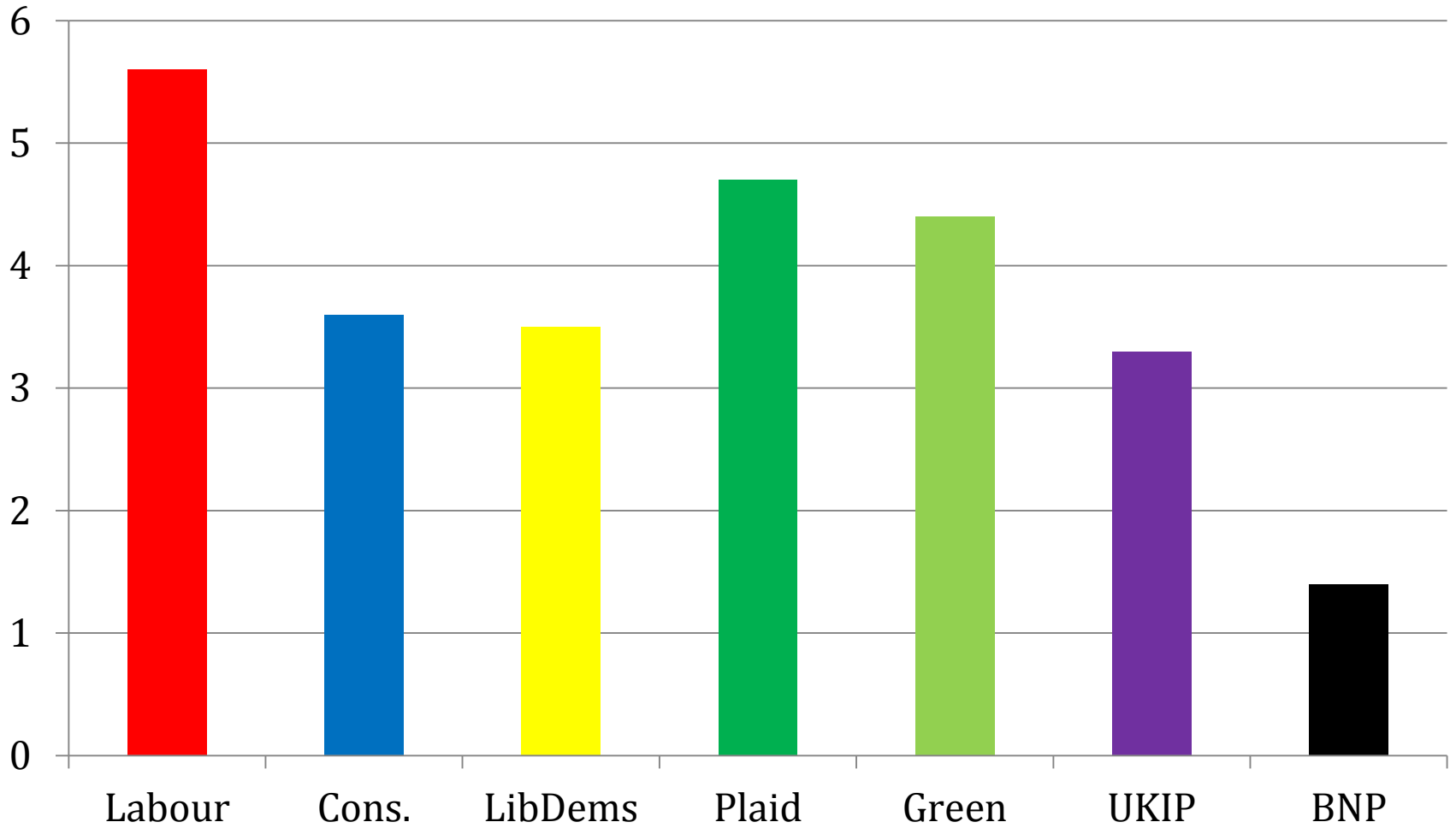
The 2011 Welsh Election Study

- Support from Economic and Social Research Council (Grant RES-062-23-2625)
- Fieldwork conducted by YouGov, via internet
- Sampling conducted in two waves:
 - Pre-election wave conducted as 'rolling sample' through the 4 weeks prior to the election; N = 2359
 - Post-election wave conducted immediately after election; N = 2217
 - Post-election wave drawn from pre-election respondents: Panel Data on the same individuals
- Questions on many potentially relevant areas: Parties, Leaders, Issues etc

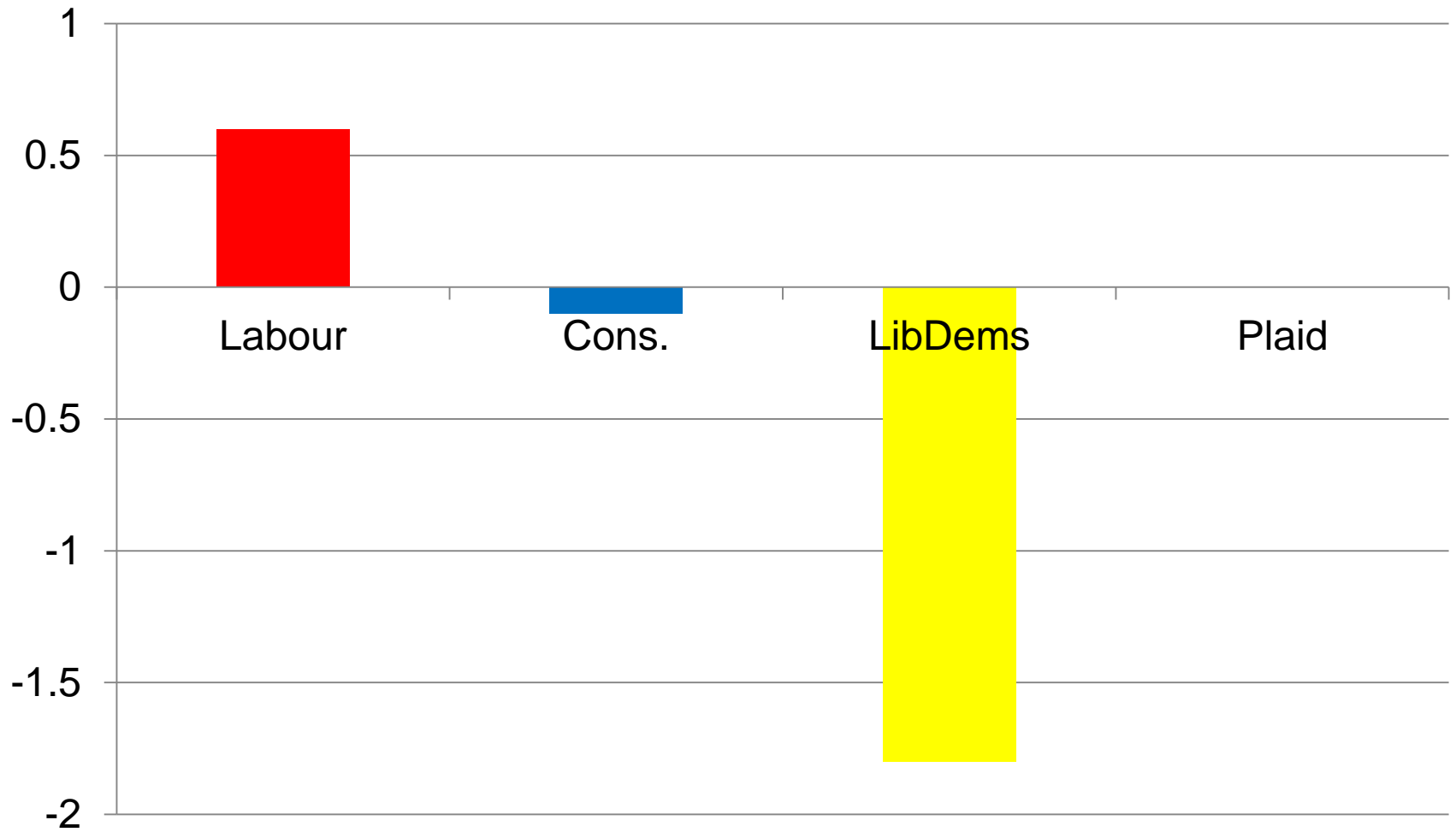
Parties' Popularity: % 0/10



Political Parties: Popularity (Average Rating /10)

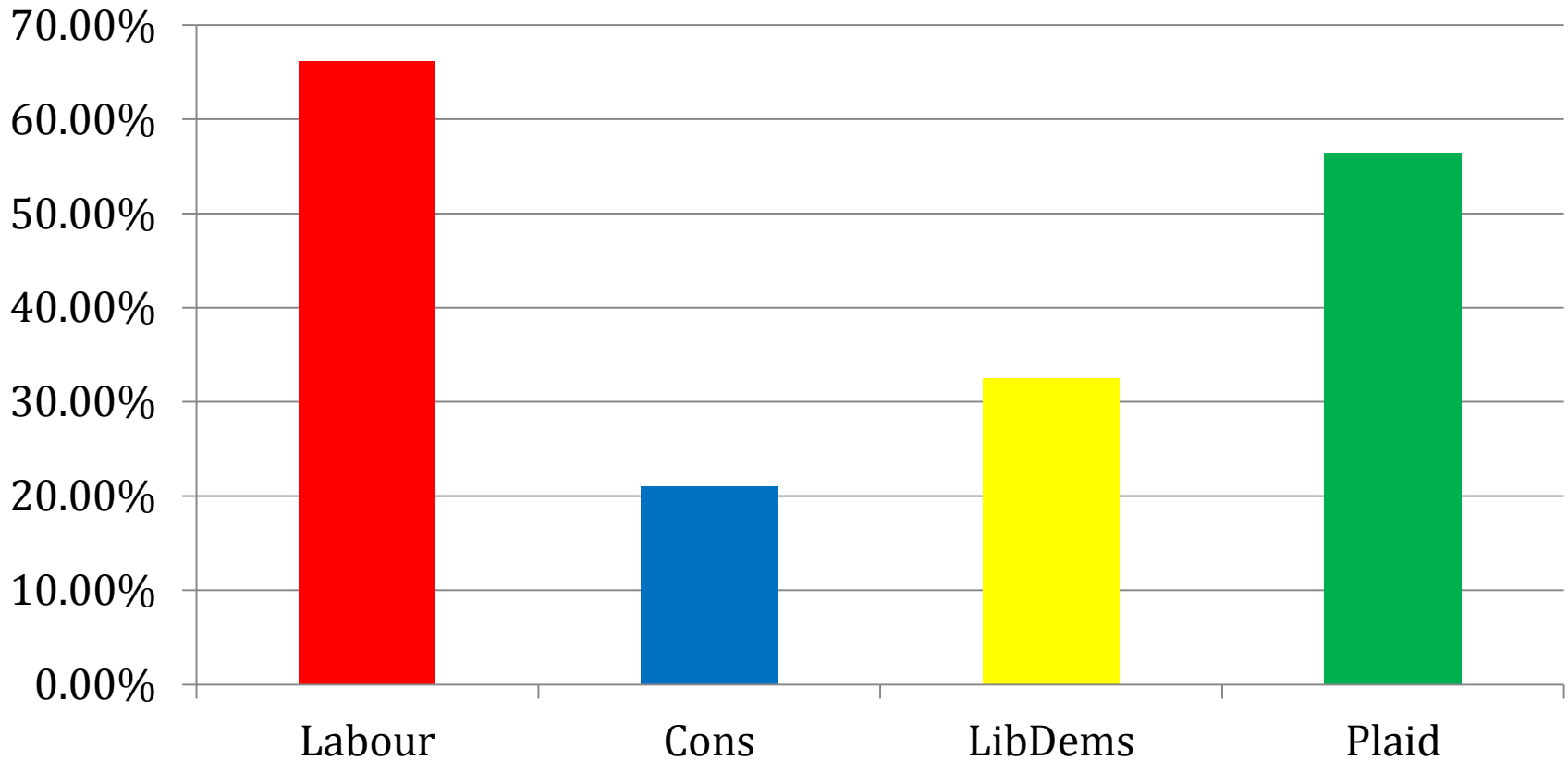


Political Parties: change in average popularity May 2010-11



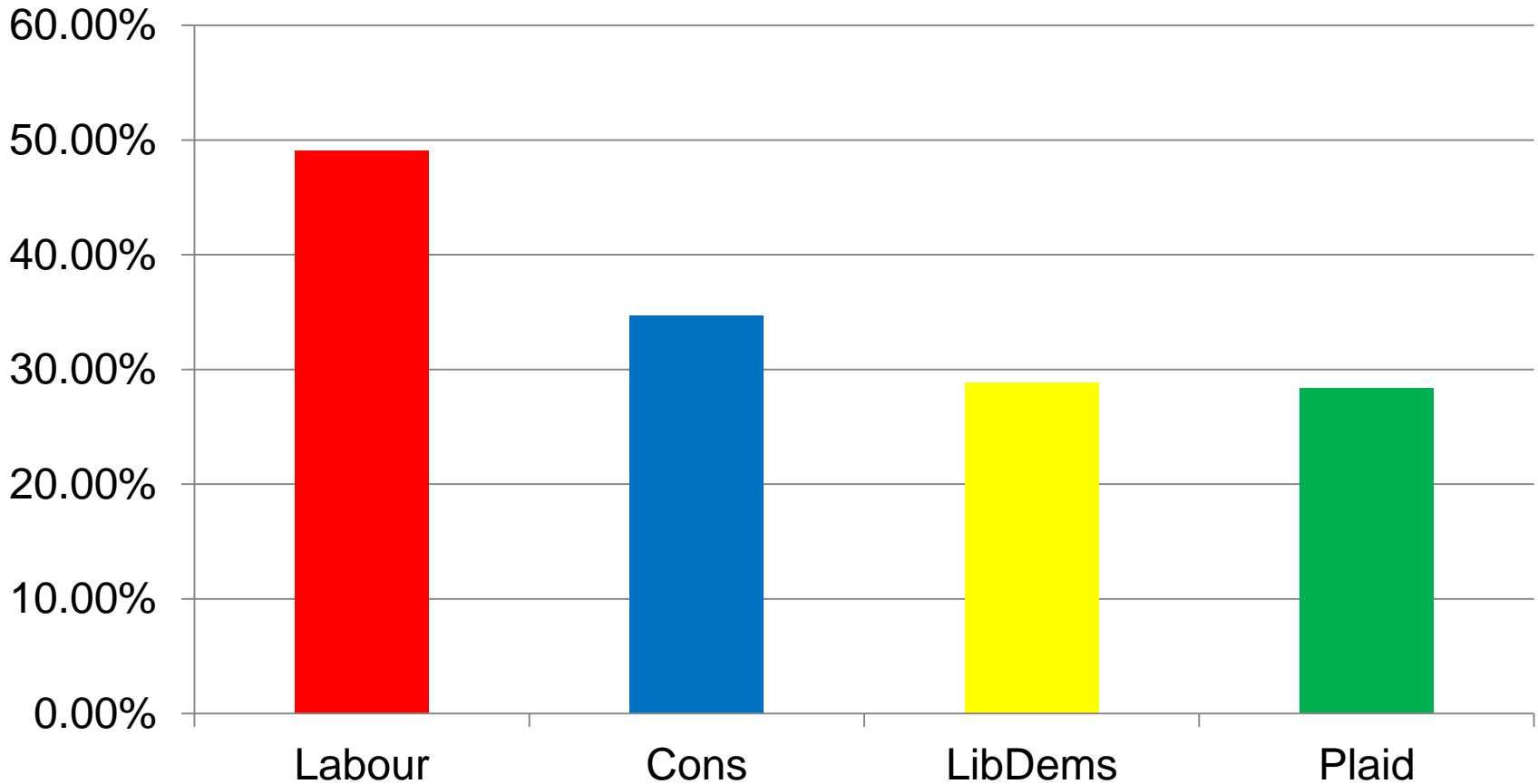
‘How much does each of these parties look after the interests of...?’ (% ‘great deal’ / ‘fair amount’)

Working Class People



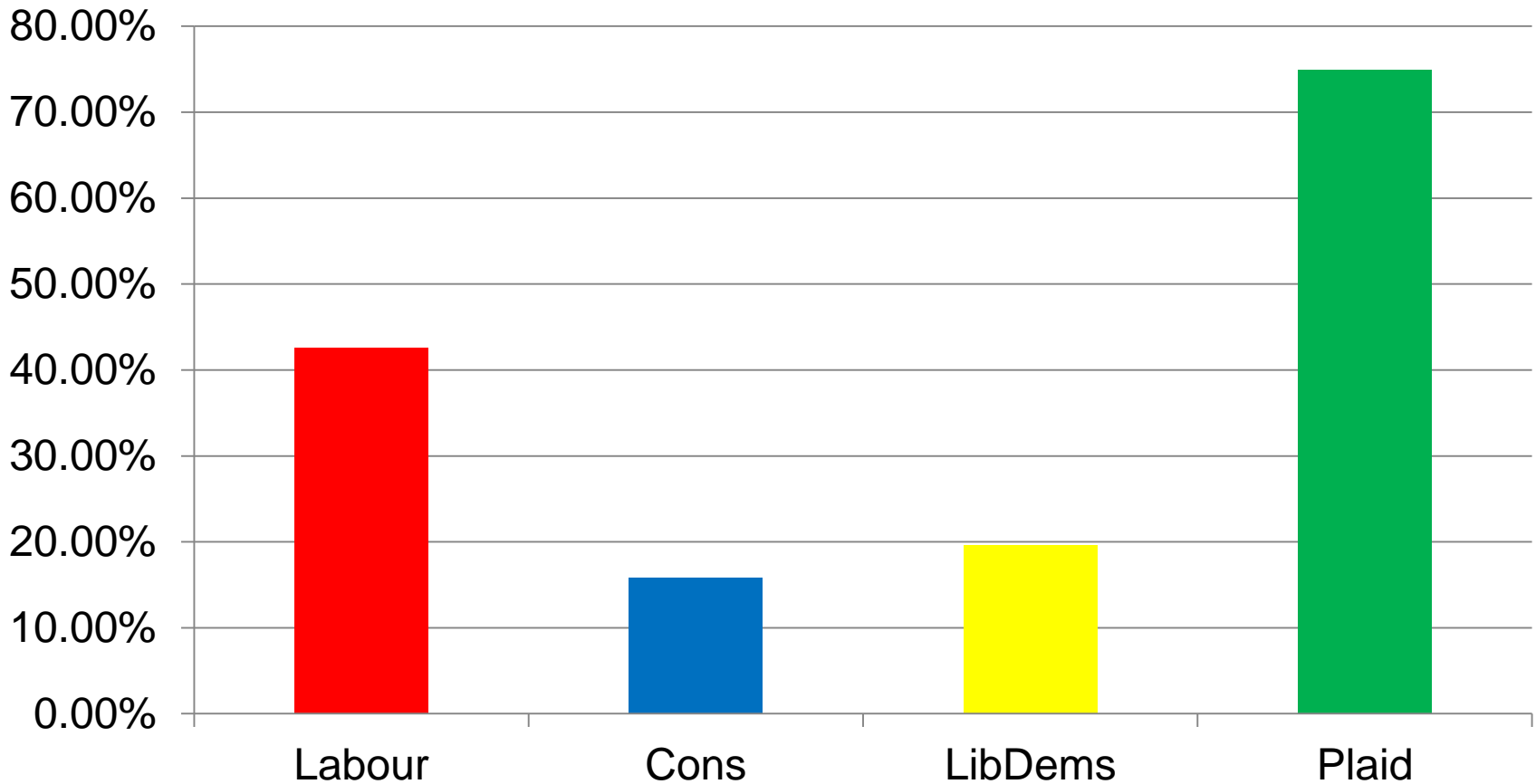
‘How much does each of these parties look after the interests of...?’ (% ‘great deal’ / ‘fair amount’)

English people in Wales



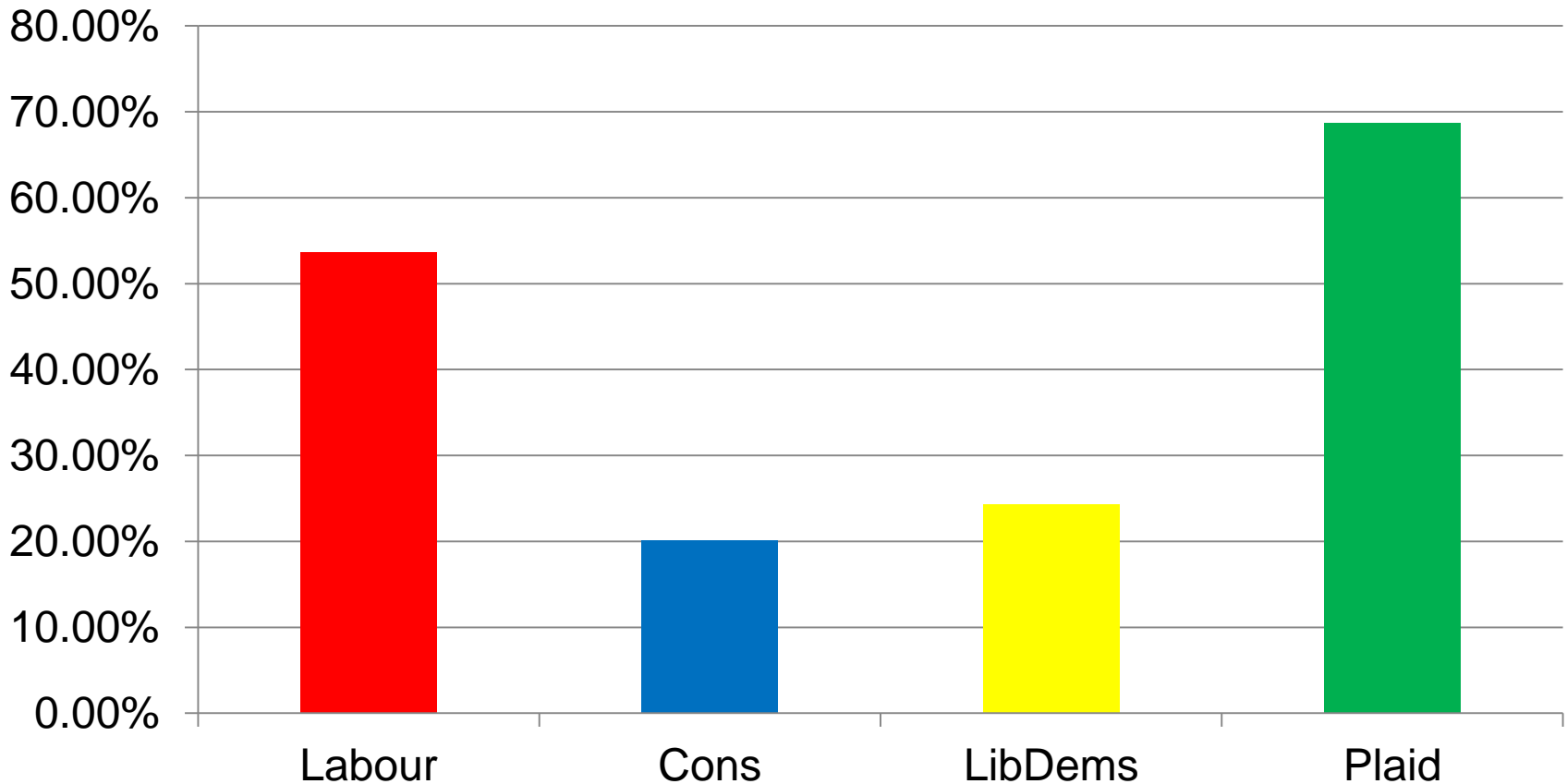
‘How much does each of these parties look after the interests of...?’ (% ‘great deal’ / ‘fair amount’)

People who speak Welsh



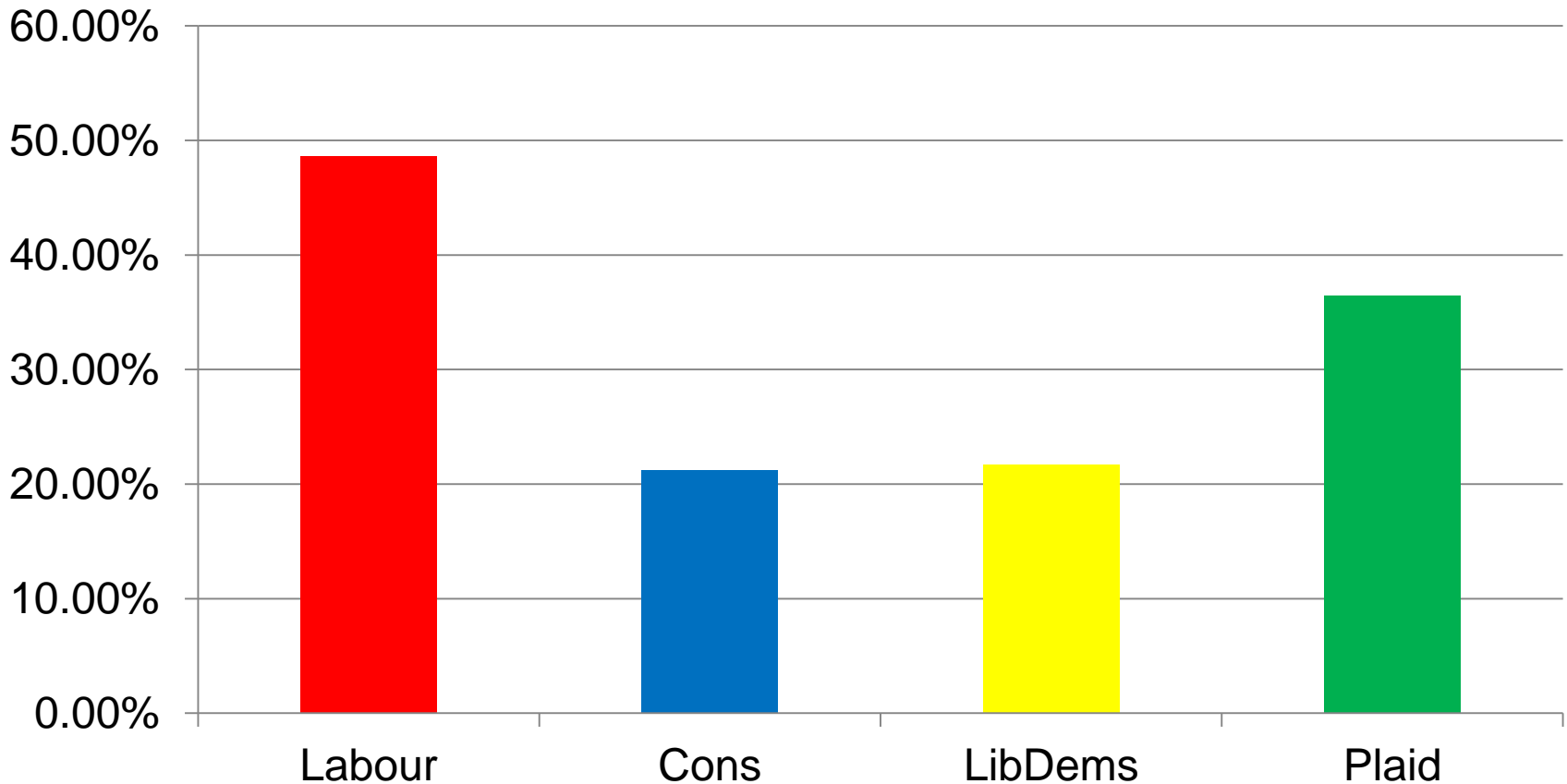
‘How much does each of these parties look after the interests of...?’ (% ‘great deal’ / ‘fair amount’)

Welsh people in general

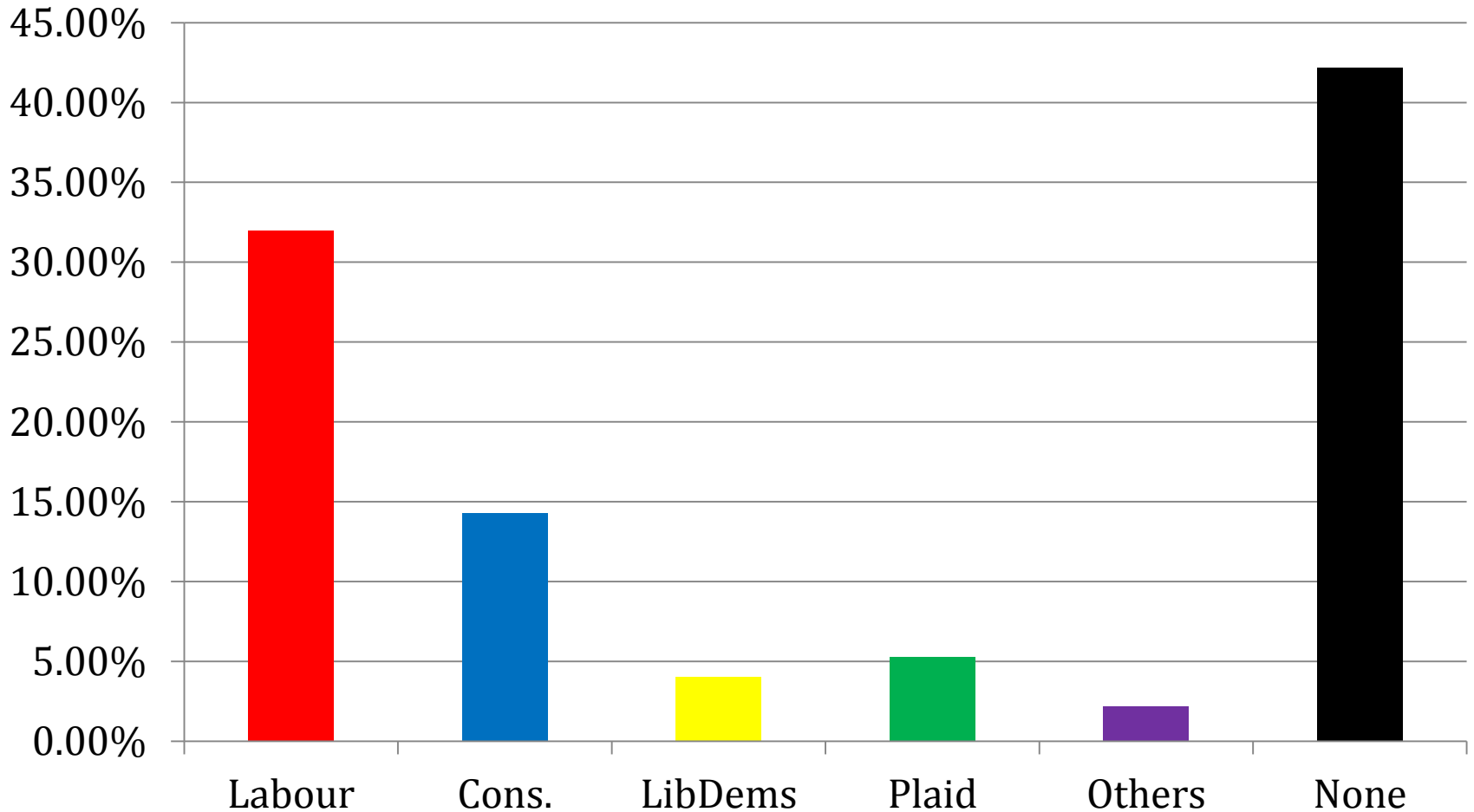


‘How much does each of these parties look after the interests of...?’ (% ‘great deal’ / ‘fair amount’)

People like you



Do you usually think of yourself as being a supporter of one political party?



Overall Attitudes to Parties

Labour: recovered ground over last year; strong profile across all categories

Conservatives: Core support; but (despite decontamination/Welshing-Up) still widespread hostility

LibDems: Major change in public attitudes in last 12 months → greater negativity

Plaid Cymru: Little hostility and much positive feeling: but not translating into electoral support

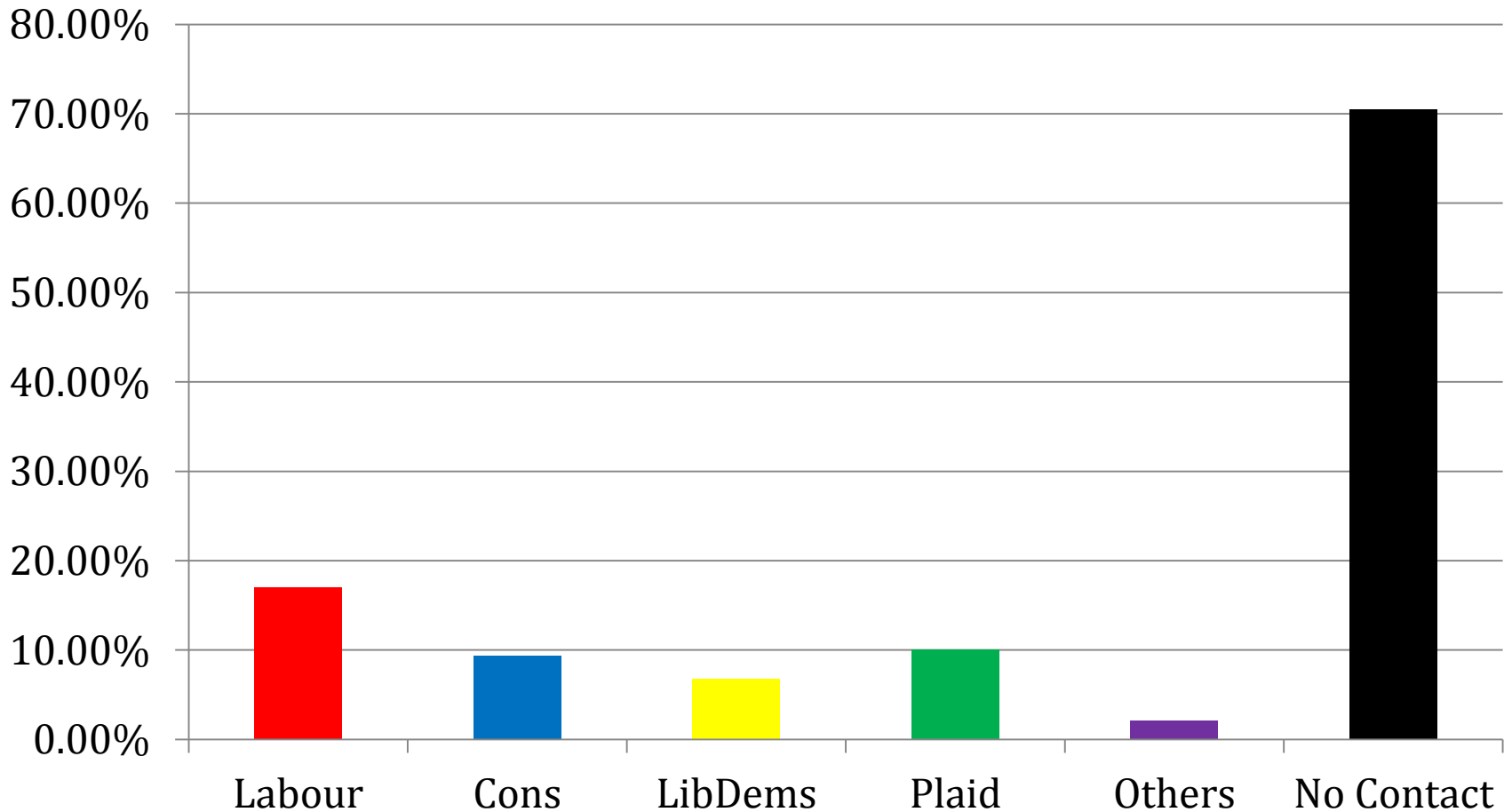
Potential Influences on Vote Choice

Longer-Term: Attitudes to parties / party identification

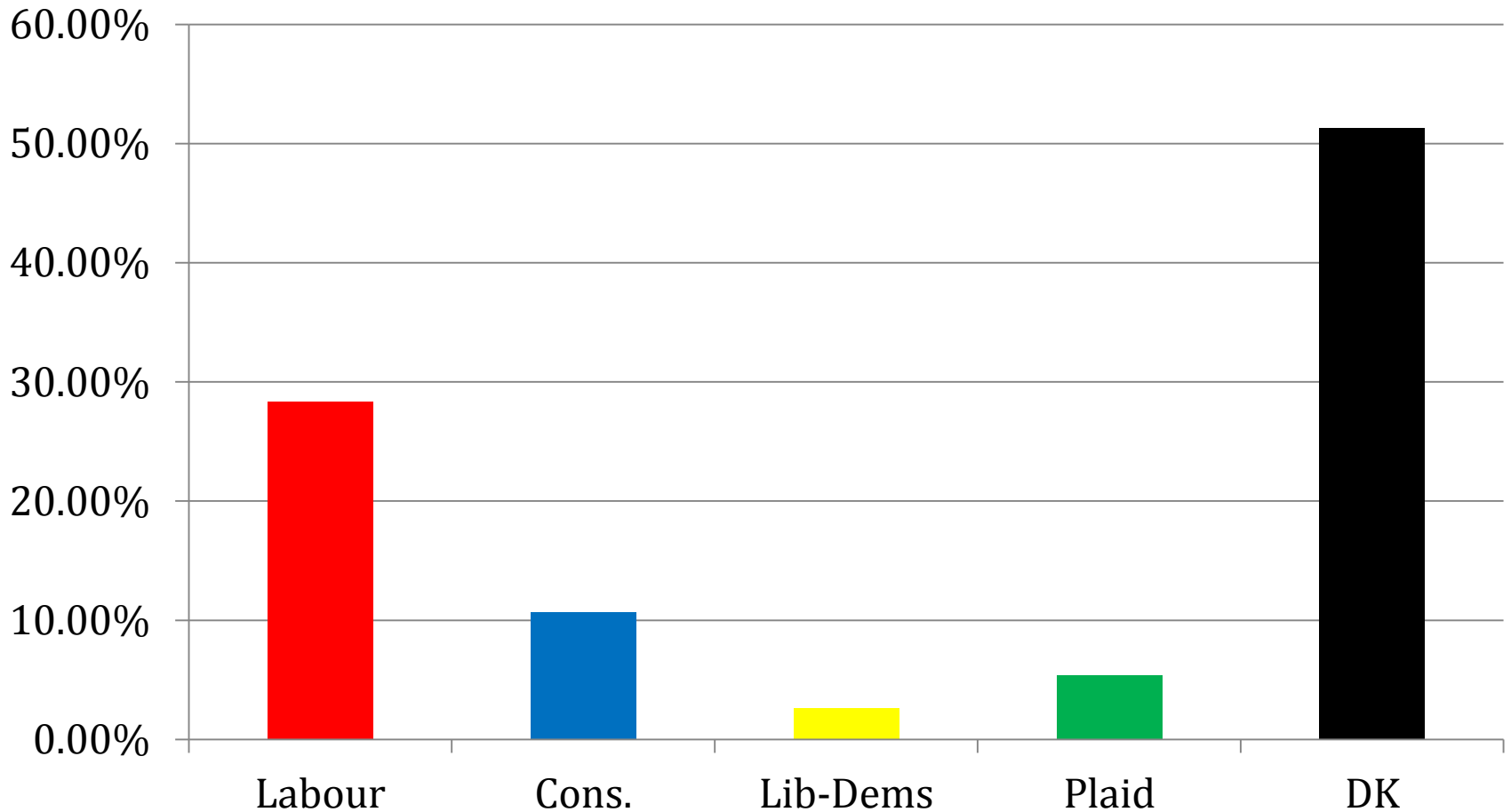
Short-Term:

- Campaign
- Leaders
- Performance in Govt (relevant to all four main parties)

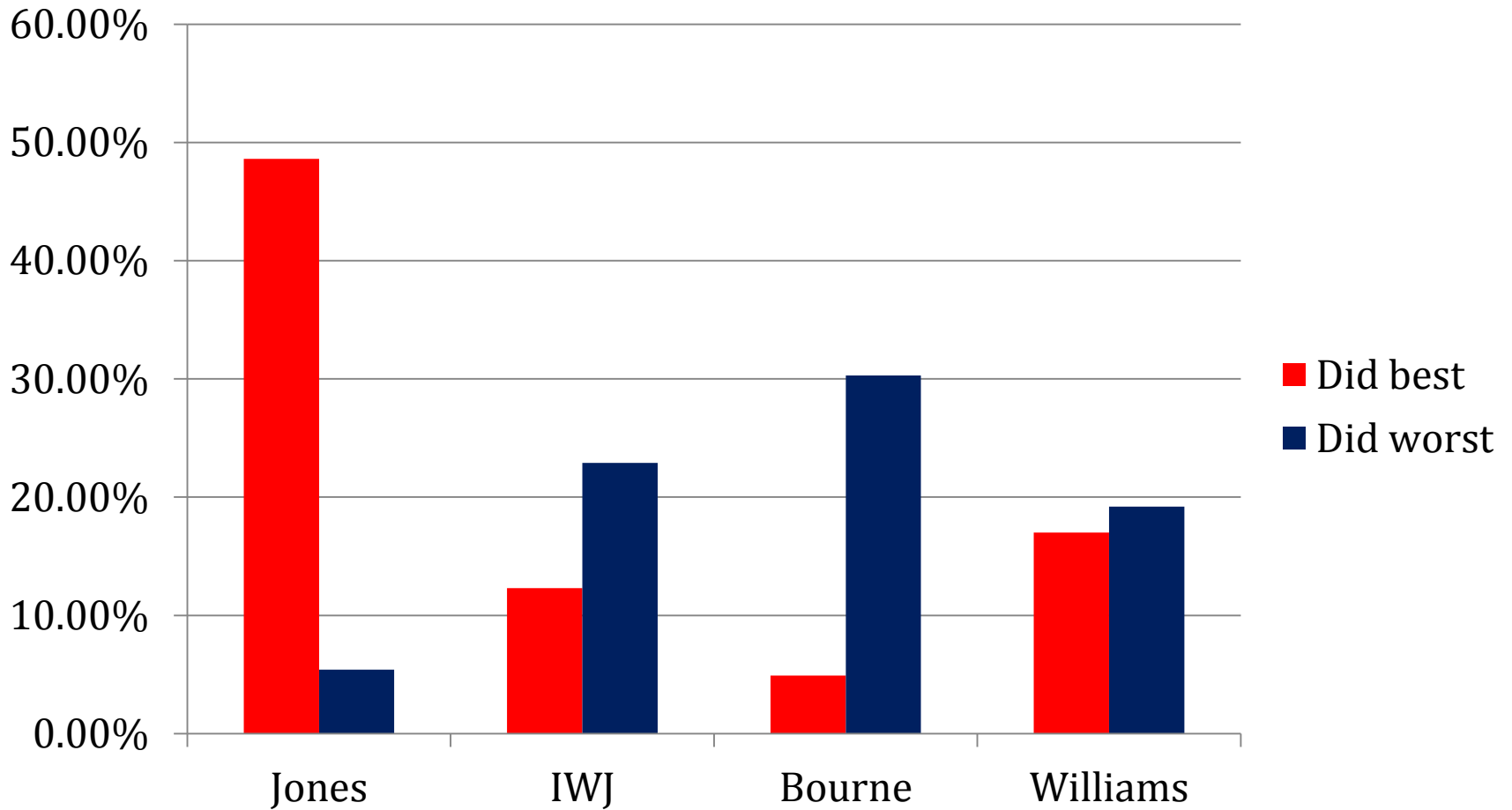
Campaign Contact: % recalling contact from any party in campaign



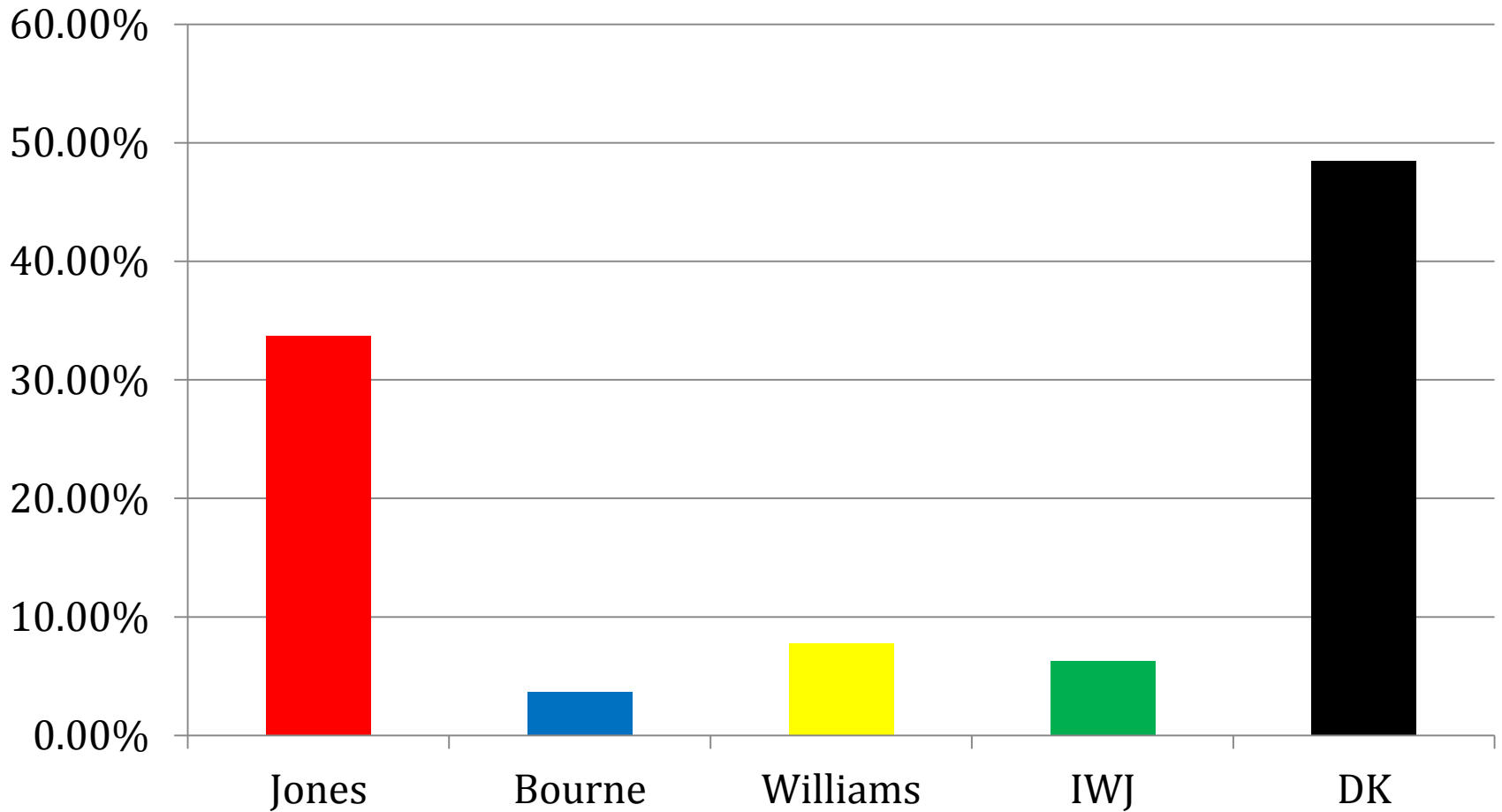
Which party ran best campaign?



Of those viewing TV Leaders' debates (c.17% of sample)

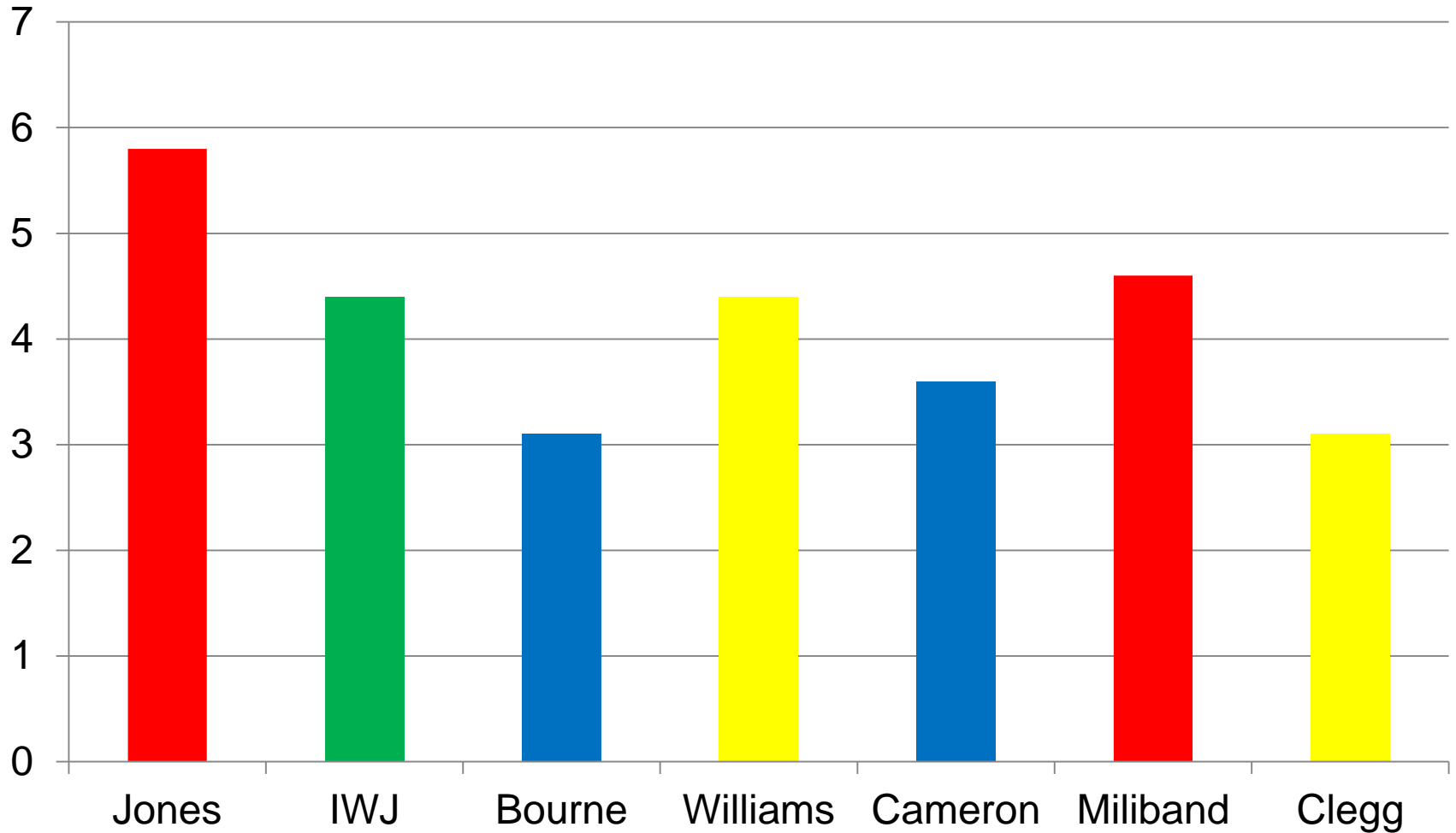


Which leader best in campaign?



Party Leaders: Popularity

(Average Rating /10, among those offering view)



Government Competence Evaluations

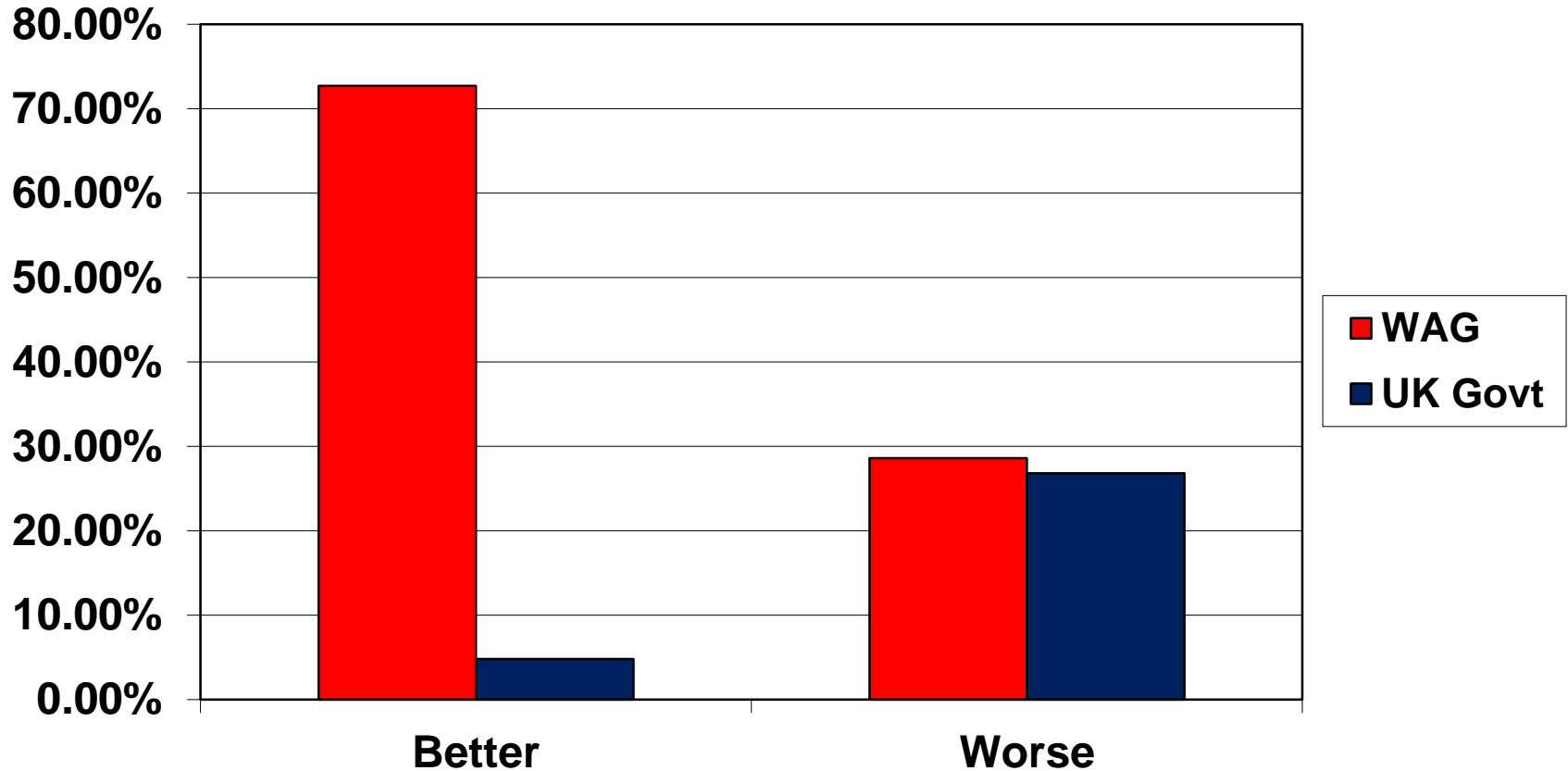
‘How Good or Bad a Job in running Britain/Wales?’ (%)

| | Cons. | LD | Lab.UK | LabWG | PCWG |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Very Good | 6 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Fairly Good | 20 | 11 | 27 | 35 | 28 |
| Neither | 17 | 19 | 18 | 25 | 29 |
| Fairly Bad | 23 | 23 | 18 | 14 | 14 |
| Very Bad | 27 | 38 | 26 | 9 | 8 |
| DK | 7 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 17 |

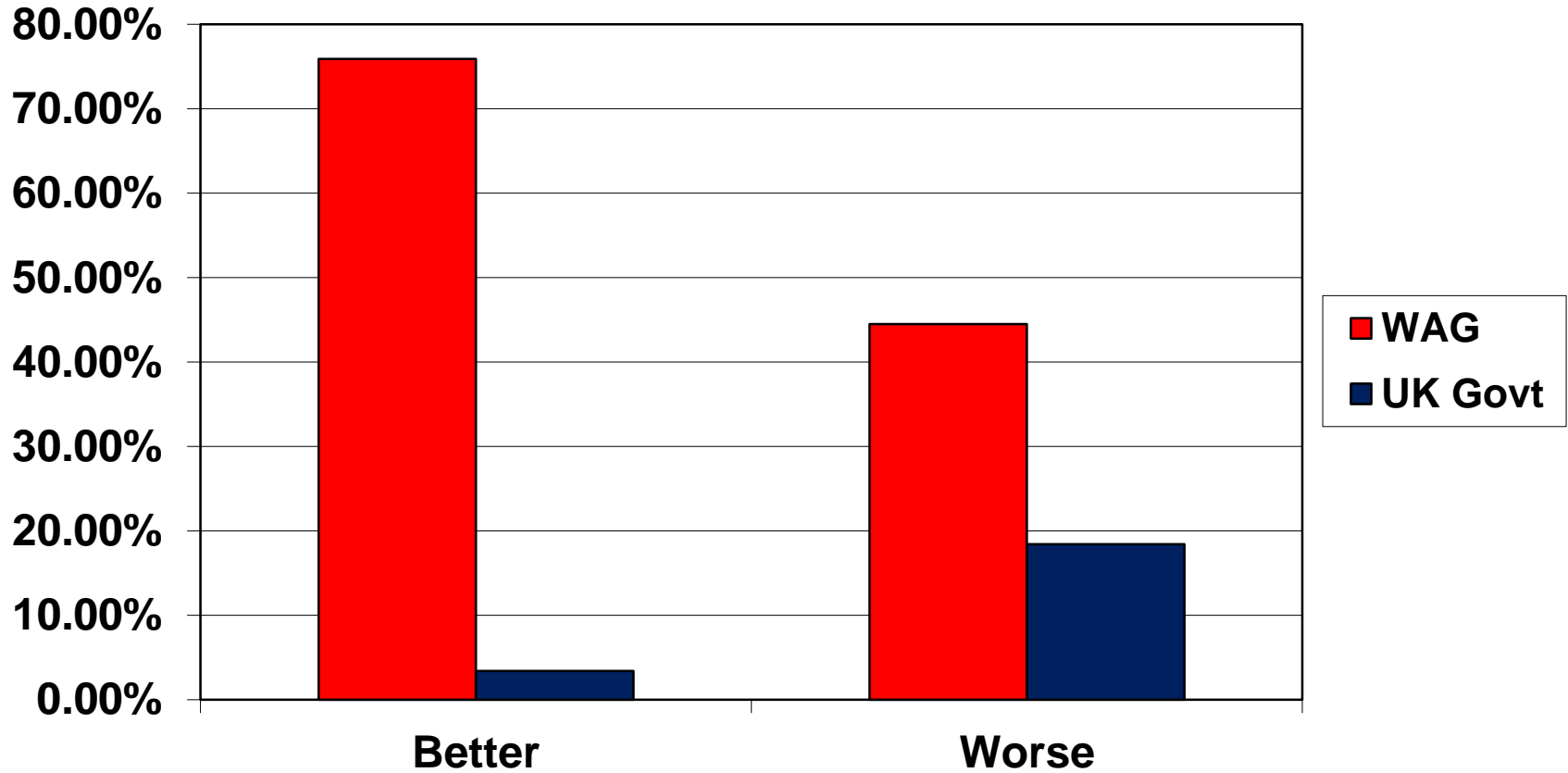
Policy Change Since 2007 (2011, %)

| | <u>NHS</u> | <u>Educ.</u> | <u>Std.Liv</u> | <u>L&O</u> |
|----------|------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Better | 22 | 12 | 10 | 15 |
| No Diff. | 36 | 29 | 25 | 44 |
| Worse | 30 | 36 | 54 | 25 |
| DK | 12 | 23 | 11 | 17 |

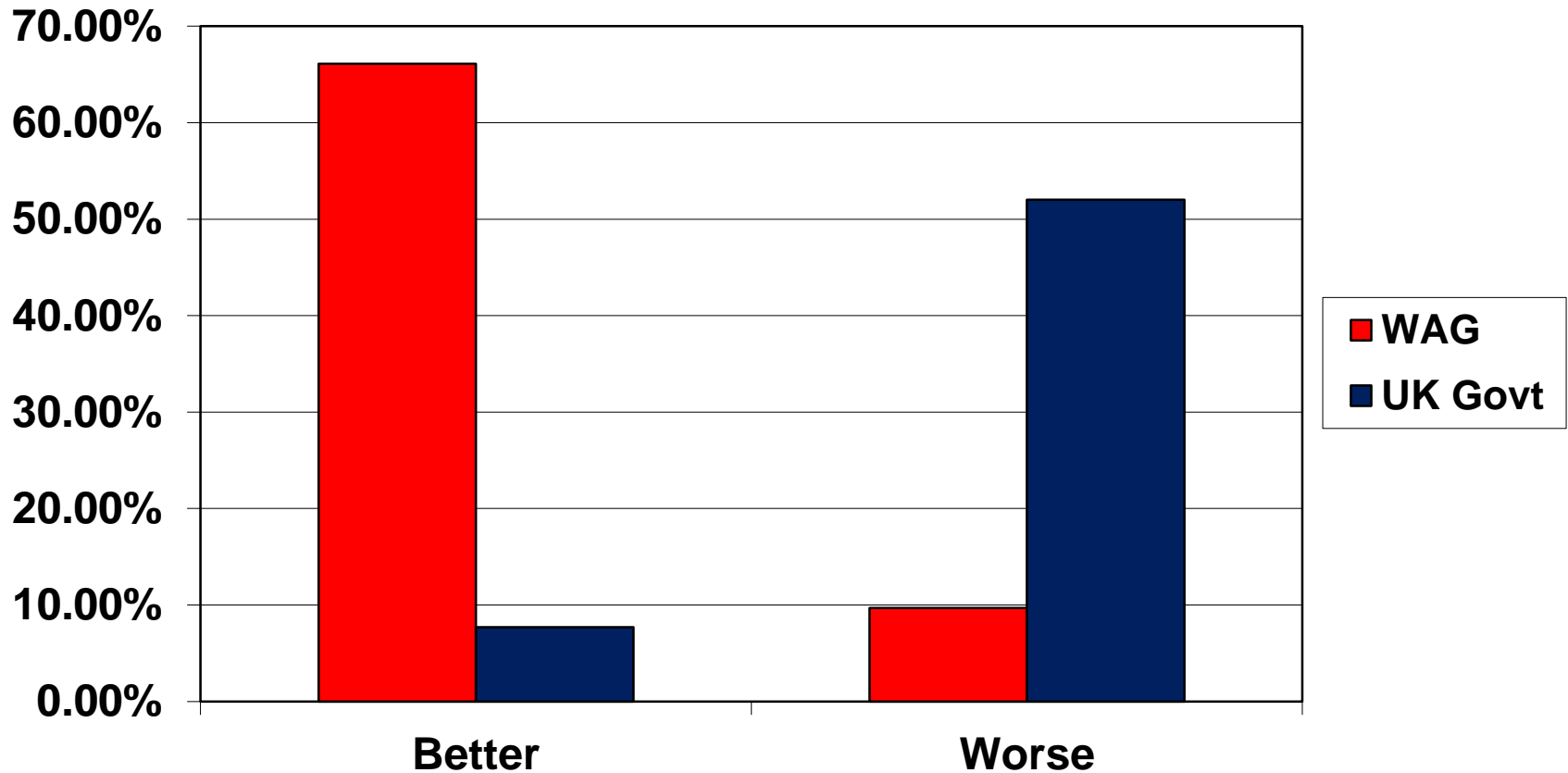
Attributions of Policy Credit/Blame: NHS



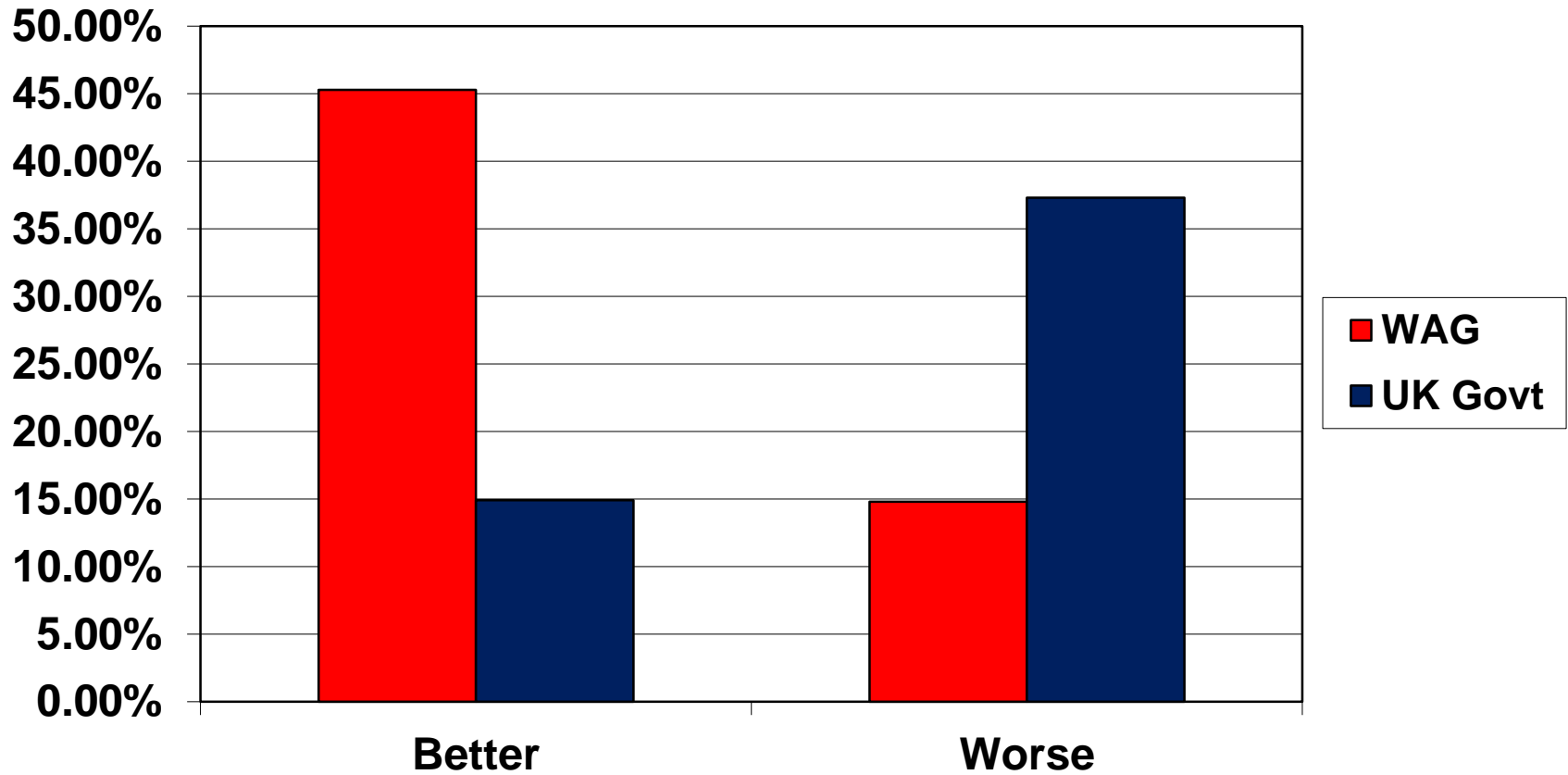
Attributions of Policy Credit/Blame: Education



Attributions of Policy Credit/Blame: Standard of Living



Attributions of Policy Credit/Blame: Law and Order



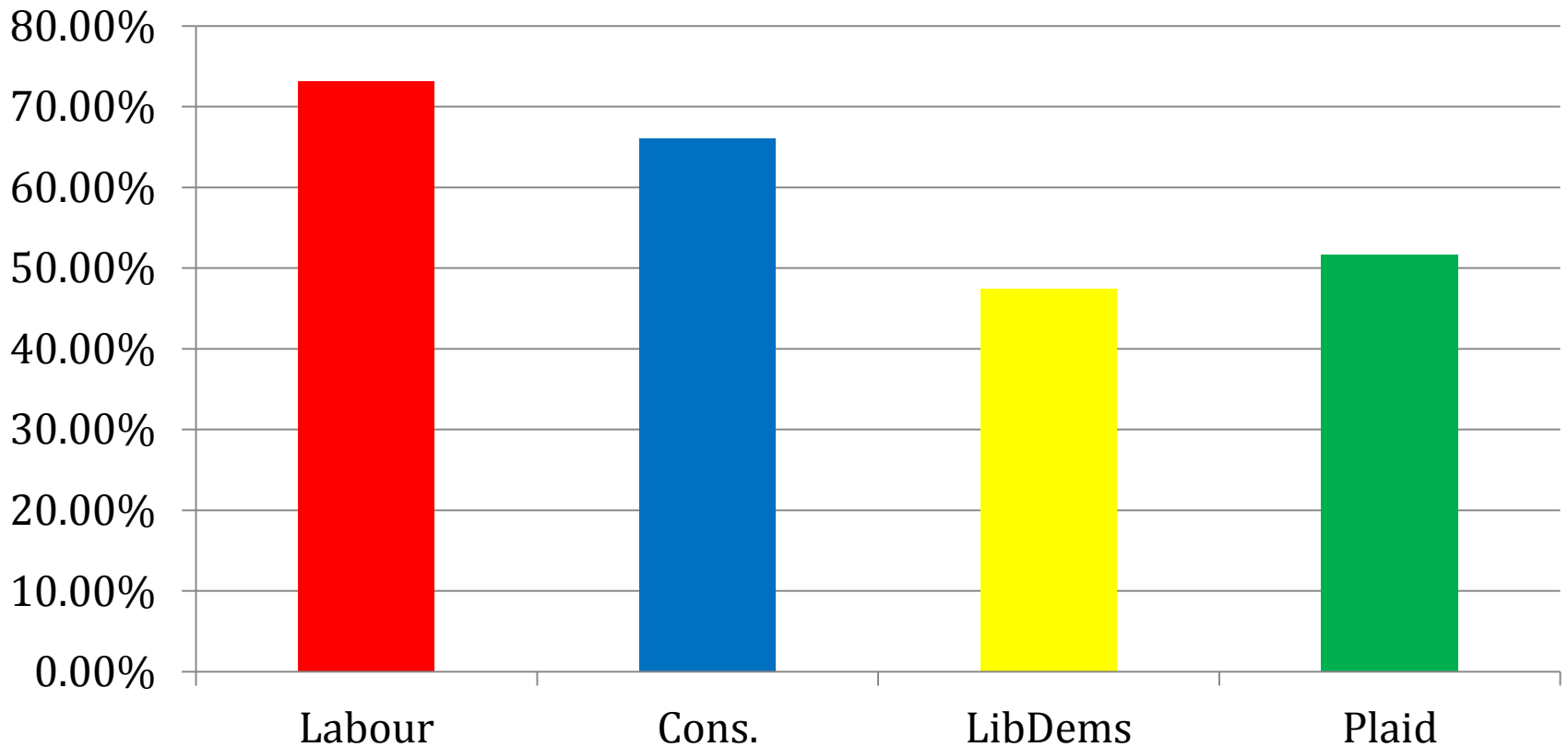
How 'Welsh' an Election was it?

Level of voting decision (%)

| | <u>2011</u> | <u>2007</u> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Mainly Wales | 52 | 57 |
| Mainly Britain | 20 | 28 |
| Both equally | 27 | 10 |
| Other / DK | 2 | 5 |

Converting Attitudes into Votes

% of people giving 8-10 on party popularity scale who actually voted for party on constituency ballot



The Overall Verdict

Labour: Most popular party, most popular leader, most visible & effective campaign, able to run against unpopular UK government. BUT – if they can't win outright majority in these circumstances...

Conservatives: Successfully mobilised much of potential vote (suggesting good 'ground war' campaigning); but still significant hostility to party, limiting future growth

Plaid: Plenty of positive sentiment towards party; but campaign did nothing to convert that into party identity or votes

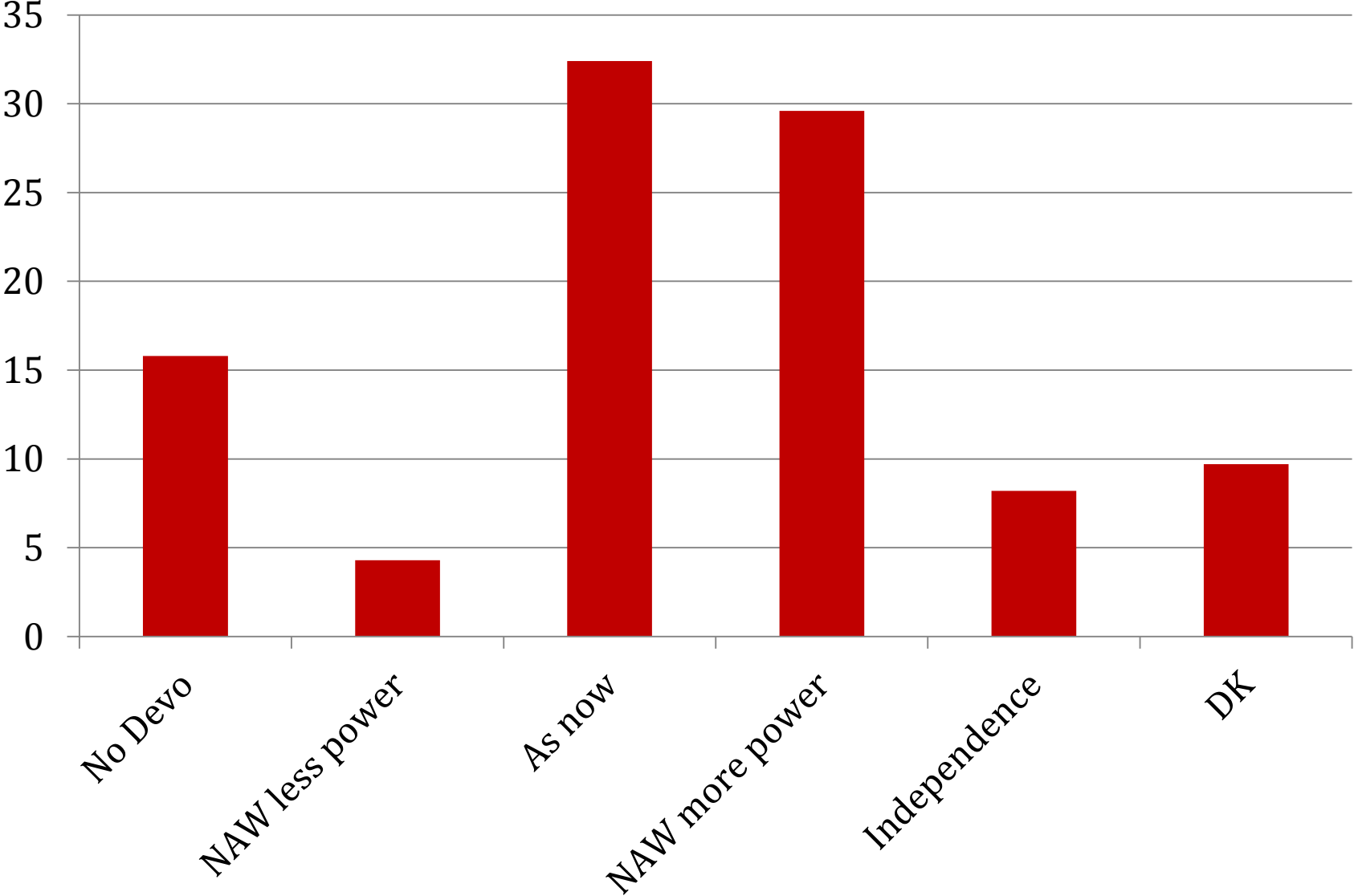
Lib-Dems: Considerable tide of ill-will towards party; leadership (and sheer luck) helped limit damage and created opportunity to re-build in better times

Three Assemblies and a Referendum

After 12 years of devolution, what do the people think?

- Clear majority support for devolution, and for NAW to be a powerful body in many policy areas
- Growing perceptions of importance
- But how deep-rooted is support for the Assembly and Devolution?

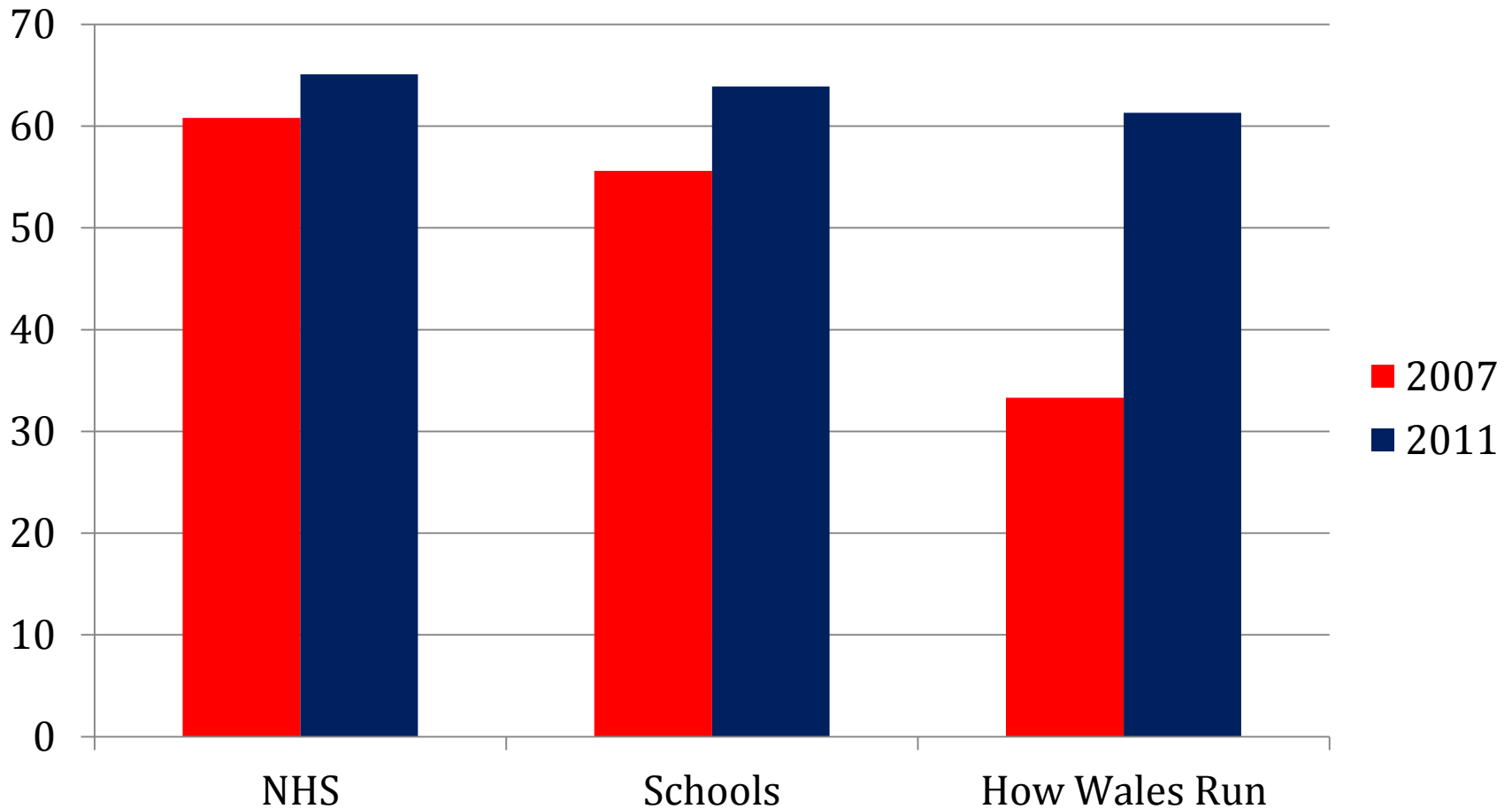
Constitutional Preferences



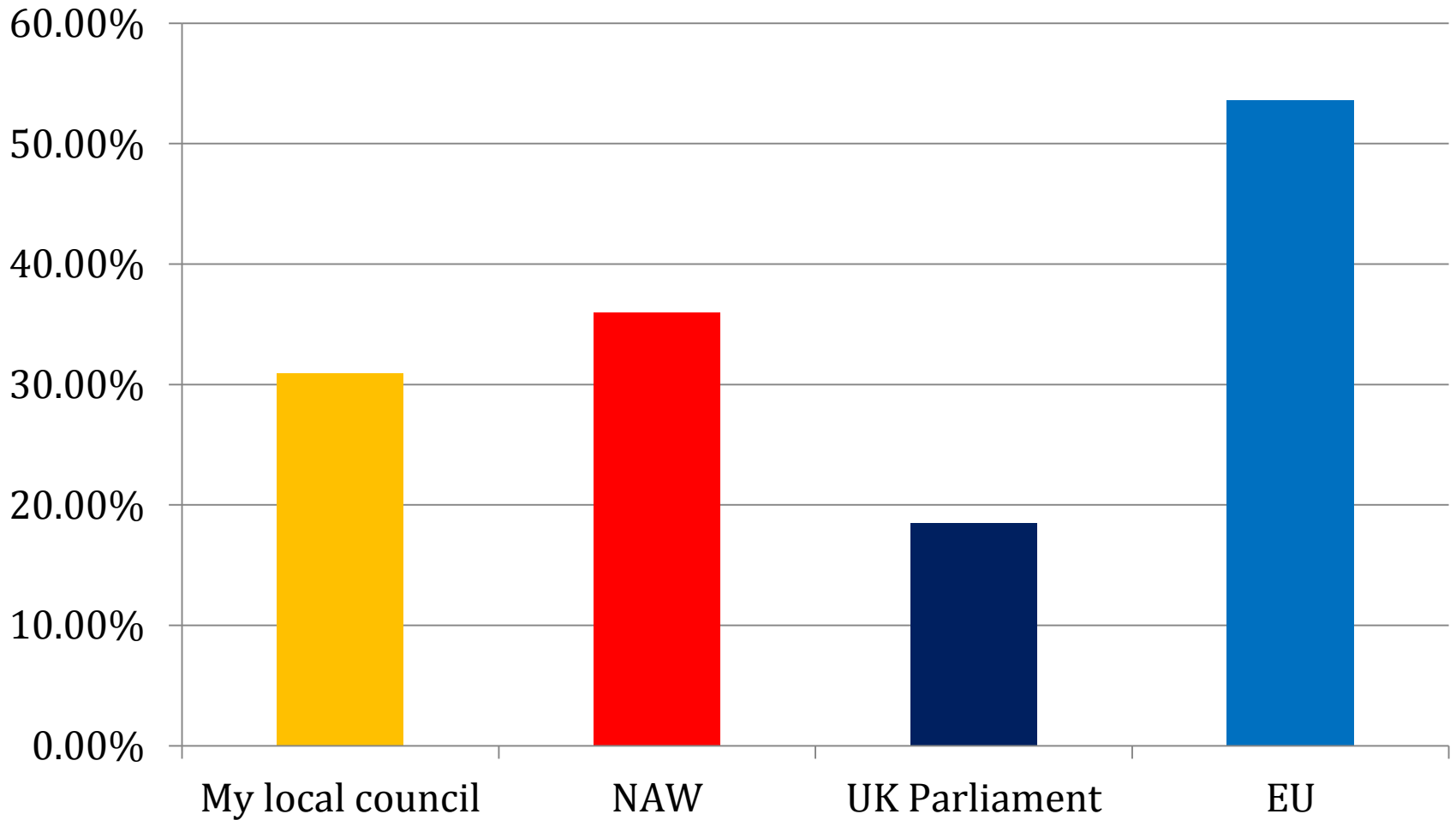
Desired level of govt for 'most influence' (%)

| | <u>UK</u> | <u>WAG</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| NHS | 21 | 66 |
| Schools | 19 | 63 |
| Law & Order | 31 | 56 |
| Defence & Foreign Policy | 76 | 10 |
| Level of taxation | 58 | 29 |
| 'The way Wales is run' | 18 | 69 |

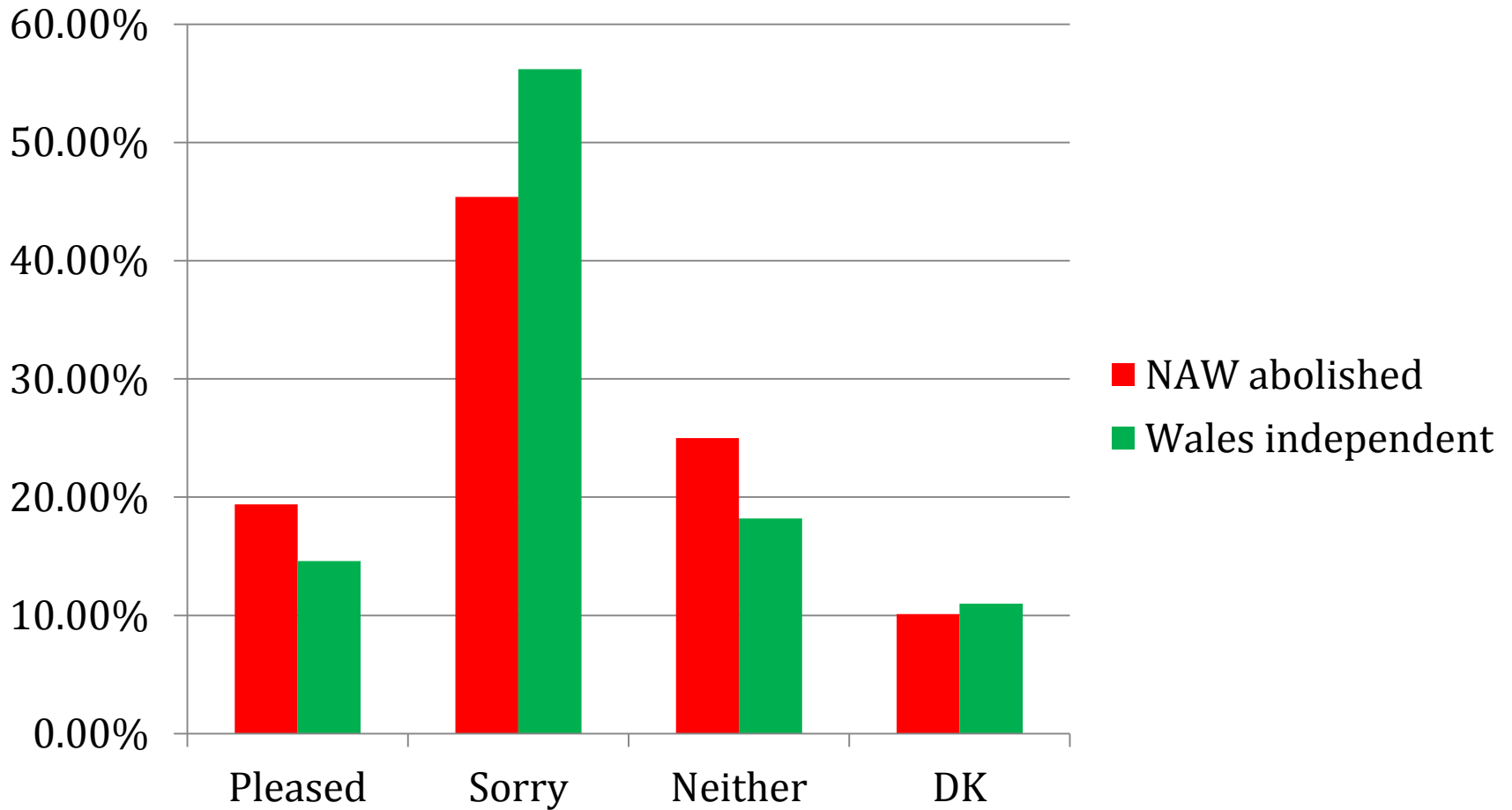
% believing WAG 'has greatest influence'



'If X started making lots of decisions that most people disagreed with, it might be better to do away with X altogether': % Strongly Agree/Agree



How would you feel if...?



And to find out more...

Project website:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol/research/research-projects/welsh-election-study/about-the-study/>

Contains:

- Descriptions of the aims and methods of the 2011 Welsh Election Study and 2011 Welsh Referendum Study
- Presentations on the two studies made by the research team
- Downloadable files containing survey questionnaires and (forthcoming) the raw SPSS data
- Sneak preview of one chapter of forthcoming book *Wales Says Yes: Welsh Devolution and the 2011 Welsh Referendum* (University of Wales Press, 2012)

Questions and Discussion