



Sefydliad Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru

Institute of Welsh Politics

Why Wales Said Yes The 2011 Referendum

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Outline of Seminar

1. Introduction
2. The 2011 Referendum: the Result
3. The 2011 Welsh Referendum Study
4. The Referendum Campaign
5. Voting in the Referendum:
 - Who Voted?
 - Who Voted Yes and No?
 - Explaining the Vote
6. Questions and Discussion

2011: The Result

Yes 517,132 (63.49%)

No 297,380 (36.51%)

Turnout 35.6%

- 21 of 22 areas voted Yes
- Highest Yes majority: Rhondda Cynon Taff
- Highest % Yes margin: Gwynedd

Turnout

- How low is low? Comparisons
- Reasons for the low turnout:
 - Declining turnouts generally
 - 3 UK GEs from 1987-97 average turnout = 74.8%
 - 3 UK GEs from 2001-10 average turnout = 62.0%
 - Nature of the question
 - Absence of official campaigns
 - Lack of interest from UK media
 - Referendum timing
- Variations in turnout within Wales

Turnout in major UK referendums

'Border Referendum', Northern Ireland, 1973	58.7%
EC Membership, UK, 1975	64.5%
Devolution, Scotland, 1979	63.8%
Devolution, Wales, 1979	58.8%
Devolution, Scotland, 1997	60.4%
Devolution, Wales, 1997	50.1%
Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland, 1998	81.0%
Elected Mayor & GLA, London, 1998	34.1%
Devolution, North East England, 2004	47.7%
Devolution, Wales, 2011	35.6%
AV Electoral Reform, UK, 2011	42.0%

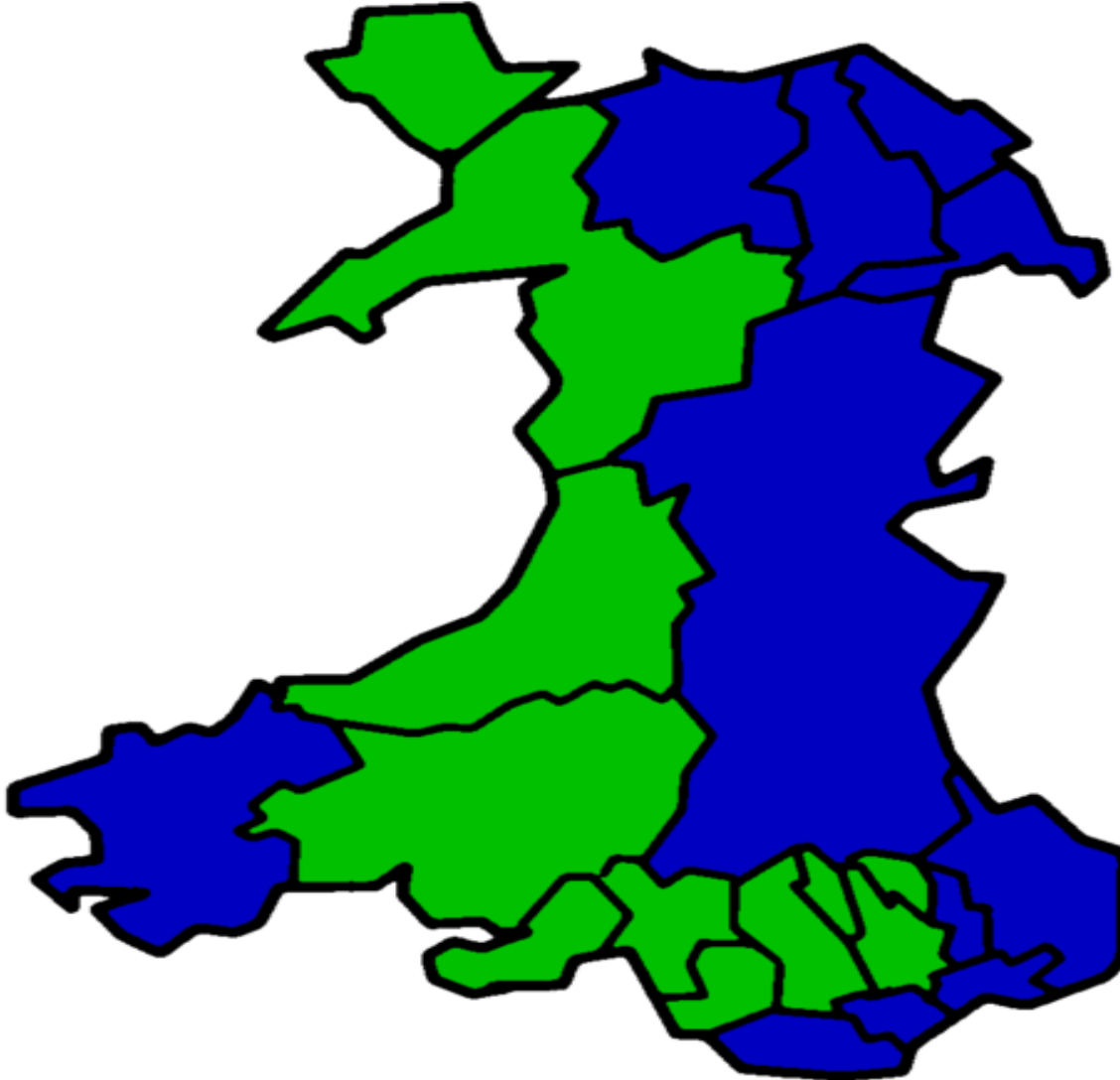
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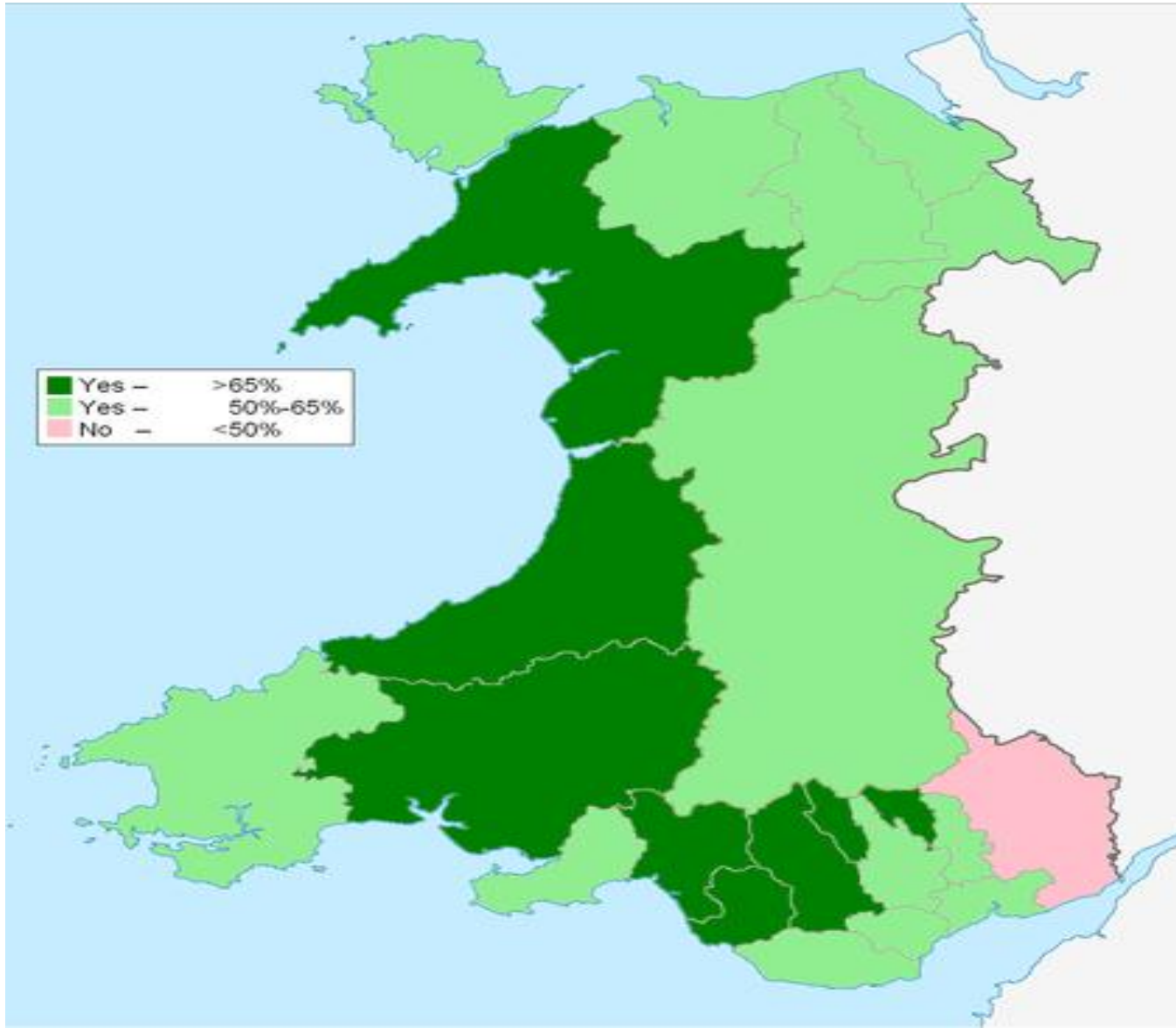
Variations in Turnout: LA correlations

% Yes vote	.16
1997 Ref turnout	.91
2010 UKGE turnout	.57
2011 NAW turnout	.92
% Welsh identity	-.07
% Welsh speaking	.68
% in employment	.13
% economically inactive	.03

1997: A Divided Nation



2011: a United Nation?



Yes .v. No: Homogenisation?

- Overall 'swing' from 1997 for Yes: 13.2%
- Yes % per LA closely correlated ($r = .90$) with % Yes in 1997
- BUT differences all \rightarrow greater homogeneity
 - Average 'swing' in 1997 *No* areas = 16.8%
 - Average 'swing' in 1997 *Yes* areas = 10.4%
 - 8 highest 'swings' to Yes all in areas that voted No in 1997
- 4 largest Yes 'swings' all in North Wales
- Gap between highest and lowest Yes % = 26.6%, compared to 34.5% in 1997

Variations in LA % Yes Vote: correlations

% Welsh identity	.55
% Welsh speaking	.38
% in employment	-.44
% economically inactive	.47
% Conservative vote 2010	-.55
% Plaid Cymru vote 2011	.70

The 2011 Welsh Referendum Study

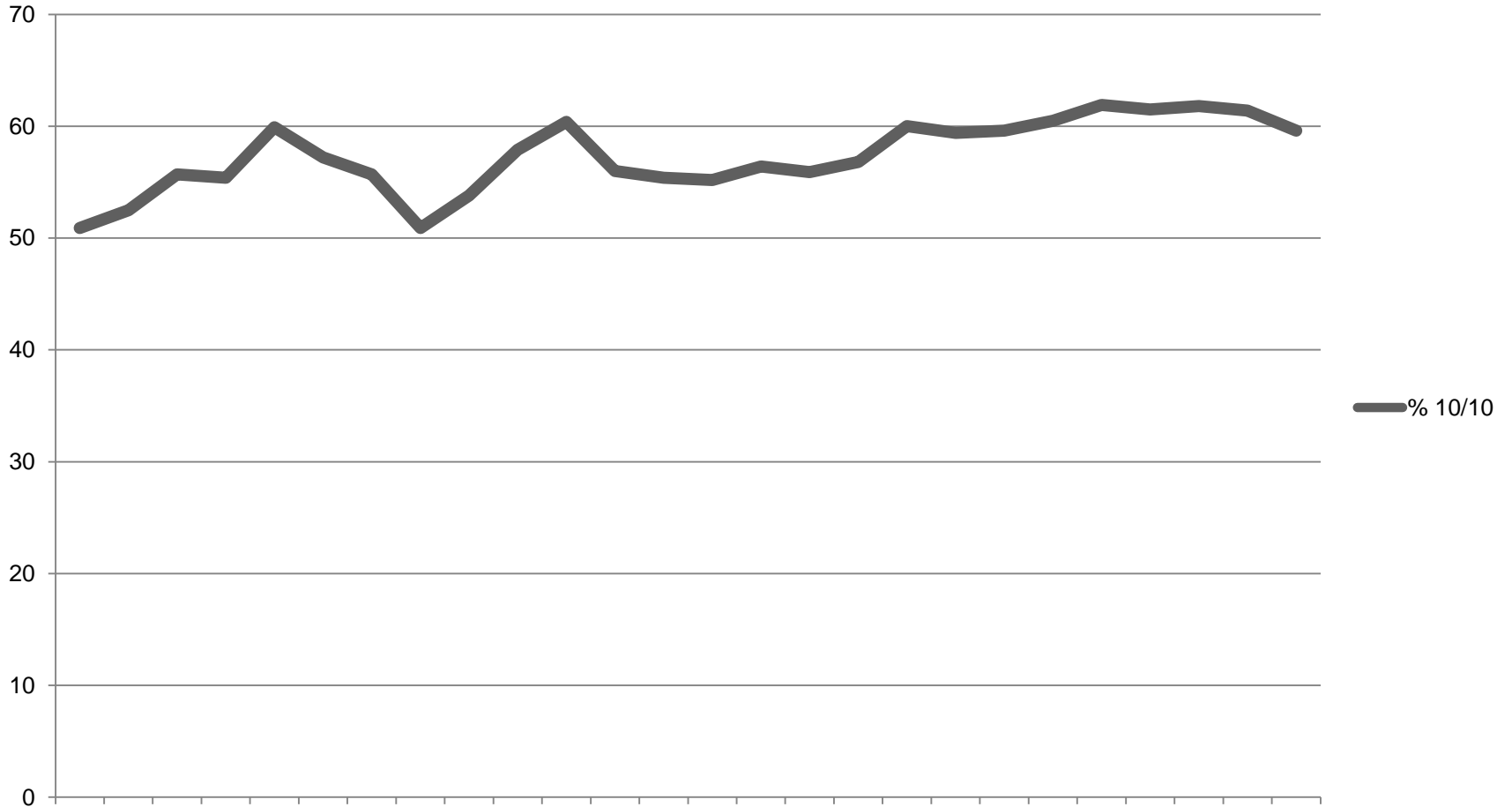
- Support from Economic and Social Research Council (Grant RES-000-22-4496)
- Fieldwork conducted by YouGov, via internet
- Sampling conducted in two waves:
 - Pre-referendum wave conducted as ‘rolling sample’ through the 4 weeks prior to the referendum; N = 3029
 - Post-Referendum wave conducted immediately after referendum vote; N = 2569
 - Post-Referendum wave drawn from pre-referendum respondents: Panel Data on the same individuals
- Questions on many potentially relevant areas

The Referendum Campaign

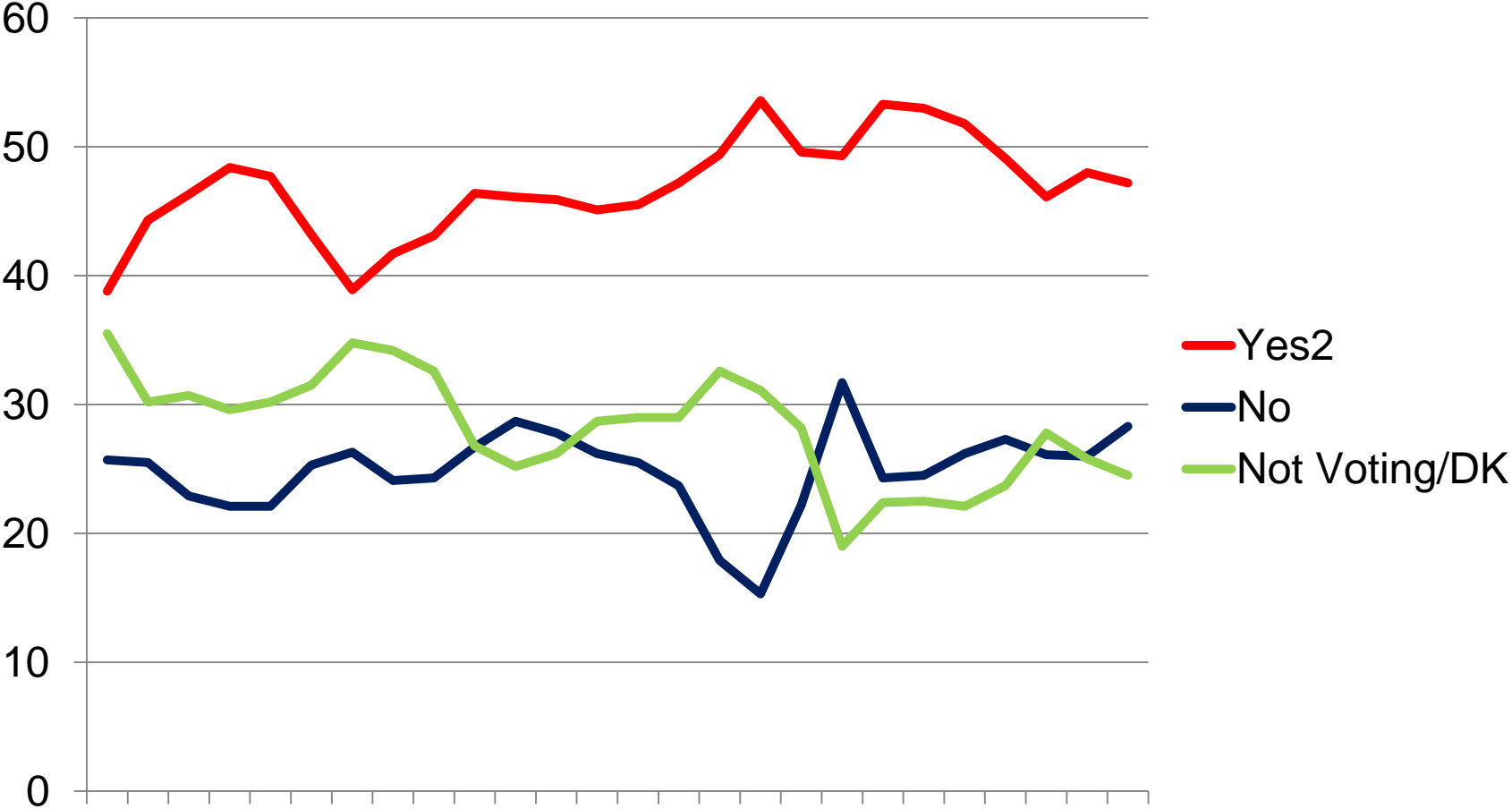
Can use WRS data to explore:

- Extent to which voting intentions changed over the course of the four week campaign ('rolling averages')
- Overall attitudes and reactions to the campaign

% 'Certain to Vote' across last 4 weeks of campaign



Voting intentions across last 4 weeks of campaign



Campaign: Voter Contacts

% of WRS (post-referendum) respondents reporting being contacted about the referendum during the campaign by...

Yes for Wales	5.4%
True Wales	1.3%
Conservatives	0.8%
Labour	3.0%
Liberal Democrats	0.8%
Plaid Cymru	3.3%

Overall % contacted by *anyone* = 9.7%

Campaign perceptions/reactions

	<u>% Agree</u>
Ref campaign 'gave me enough information to make an informed choice'	26.6%
'The media coverage of the referendum made it difficult for me to understand what the referendum was really about'	31.9%
'The Yes campaign were completely invisible; I Didn't hear anything about them'	37.2%
'The No campaign were completely invisible; I Didn't hear anything about them'	61.1%

Party Cues: Labour

Which way do you think Labour recommended people should vote in the referendum?

Yes	51.9%
No	3.1%
Did not recommend	6.6%
Don't Know	38.5%

Perceived Party Unity: Labour

Would you describe Labour as united or divided on which way to vote in the referendum?

United	30.9%
Divided	15.3%
Neither	11.3%
Don't Know	42.5%

Party Cues: Conservatives

Which way do you think the Conservatives recommended people should vote in the referendum?

Yes	23.4%
No	18.3%
Did not recommend	14.6%
Don't Know	43.7%

Perceived Party Unity: Conservatives

Would you describe the Conservatives as united or divided on which way to vote in the referendum?

United	12.9%
Divided	26.7%
Neither	13.5%
Don't Know	46.8%

Party Cues: Lib-Dems

Which way do you think the Liberal Democrats recommended people should vote in the referendum?

Yes	32.3%
No	6.3%
Did not recommend	12.4%
Don't Know	49.0%

Perceived Party Unity: Lib-Dems

Would you describe the Liberal Democrats as united or divided on which way to vote in the referendum?

United	16.1%
Divided	18.6%
Neither	13.0%
Don't Know	52.3%

Party Cues: Plaid Cymru

Which way do you think Plaid Cymru recommended people should vote in the referendum?

Yes	70.1%
No	0.9%
Did not recommend	4.1%
Don't Know	25.0%

Perceived Party Unity: Plaid

Would you describe Plaid Cymru as united or divided on which way to vote in the referendum?

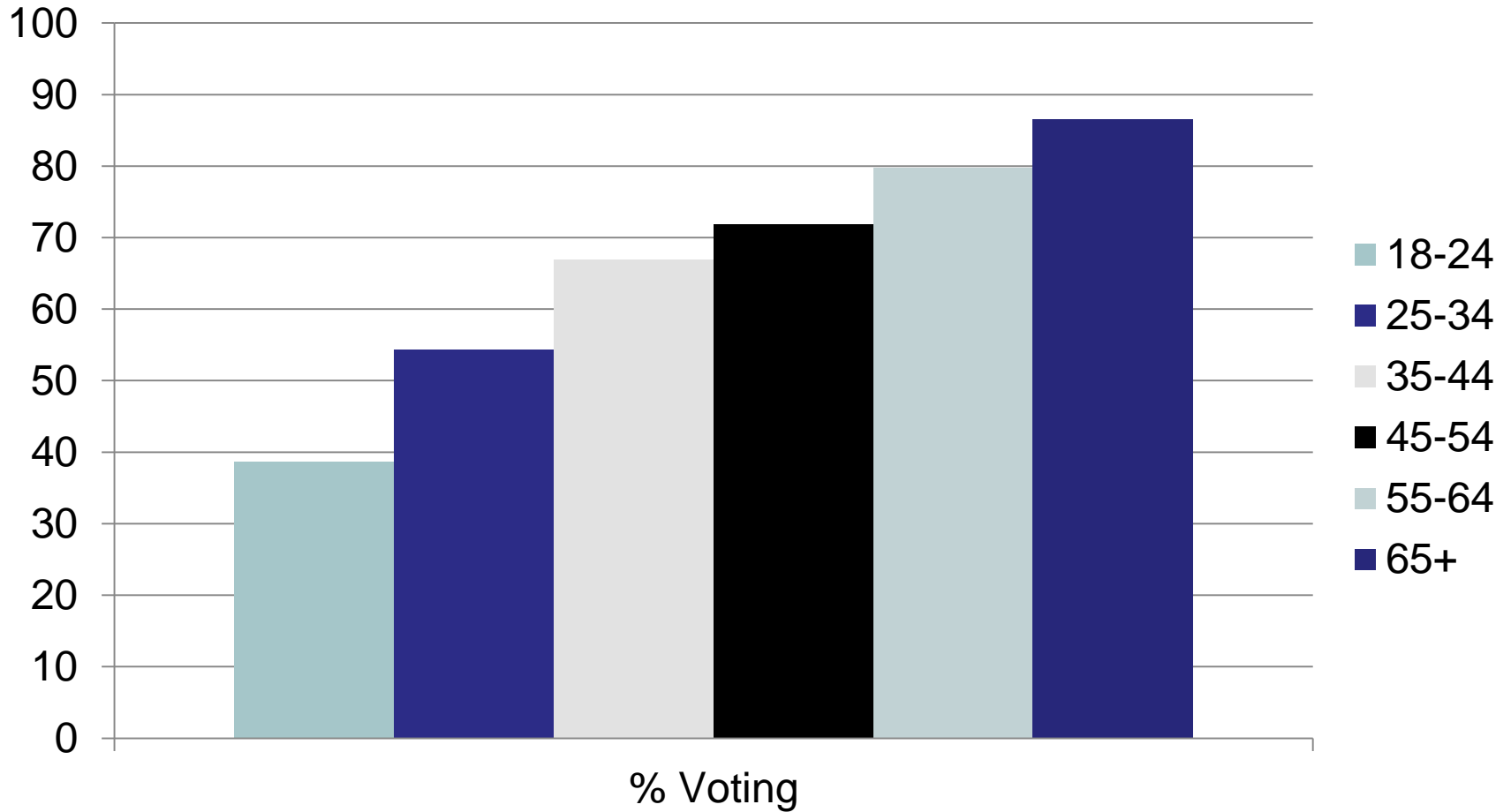
United	60.3%
Divided	3.0%
Neither	6.2%
Don't Know	30.4%

Voting in the Referendum

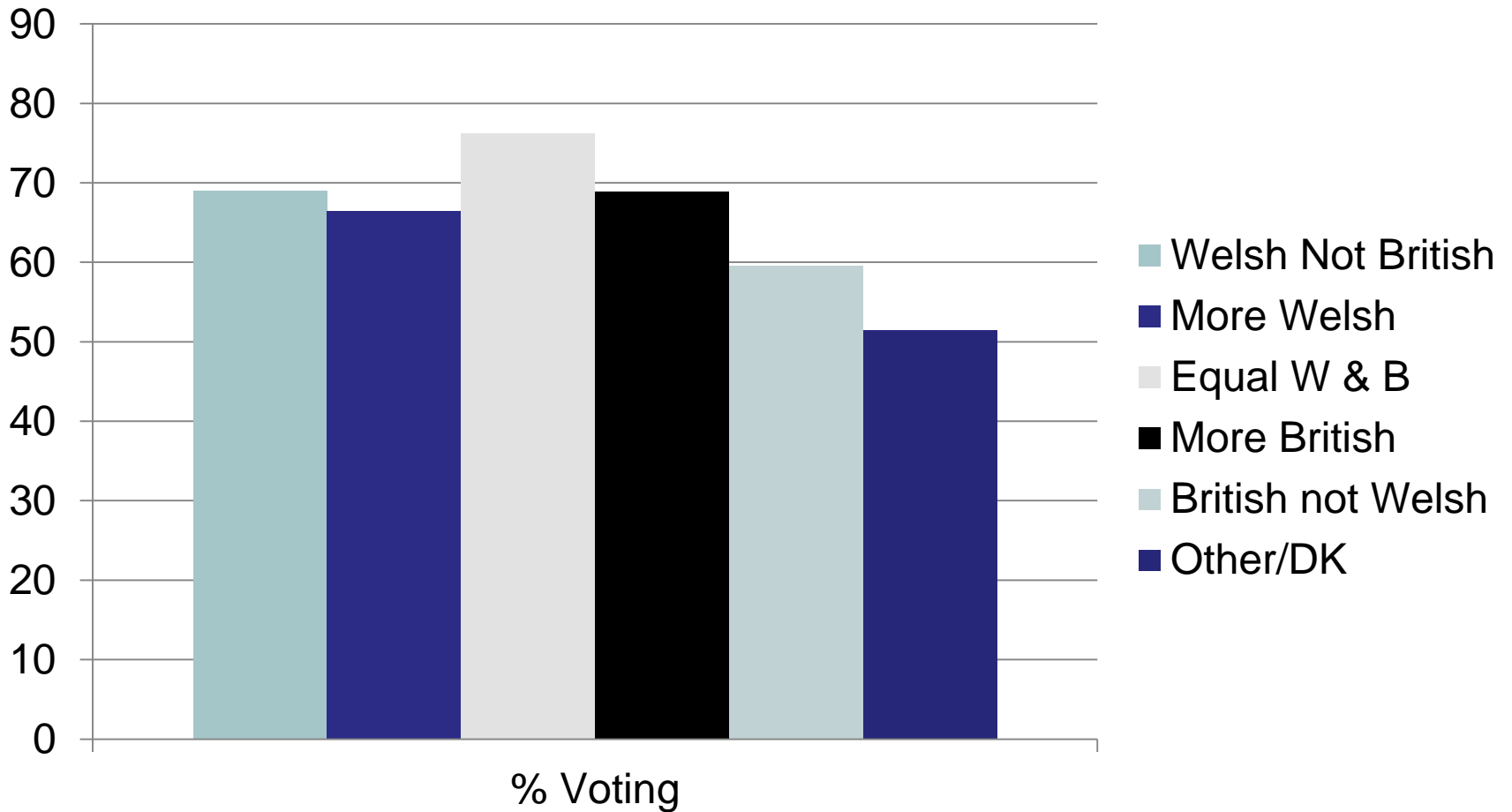
WRS evidence can explore:

- Turnout: Who voted?
- Who Voted Yes and No
- Major Factors Shaping Vote Choices

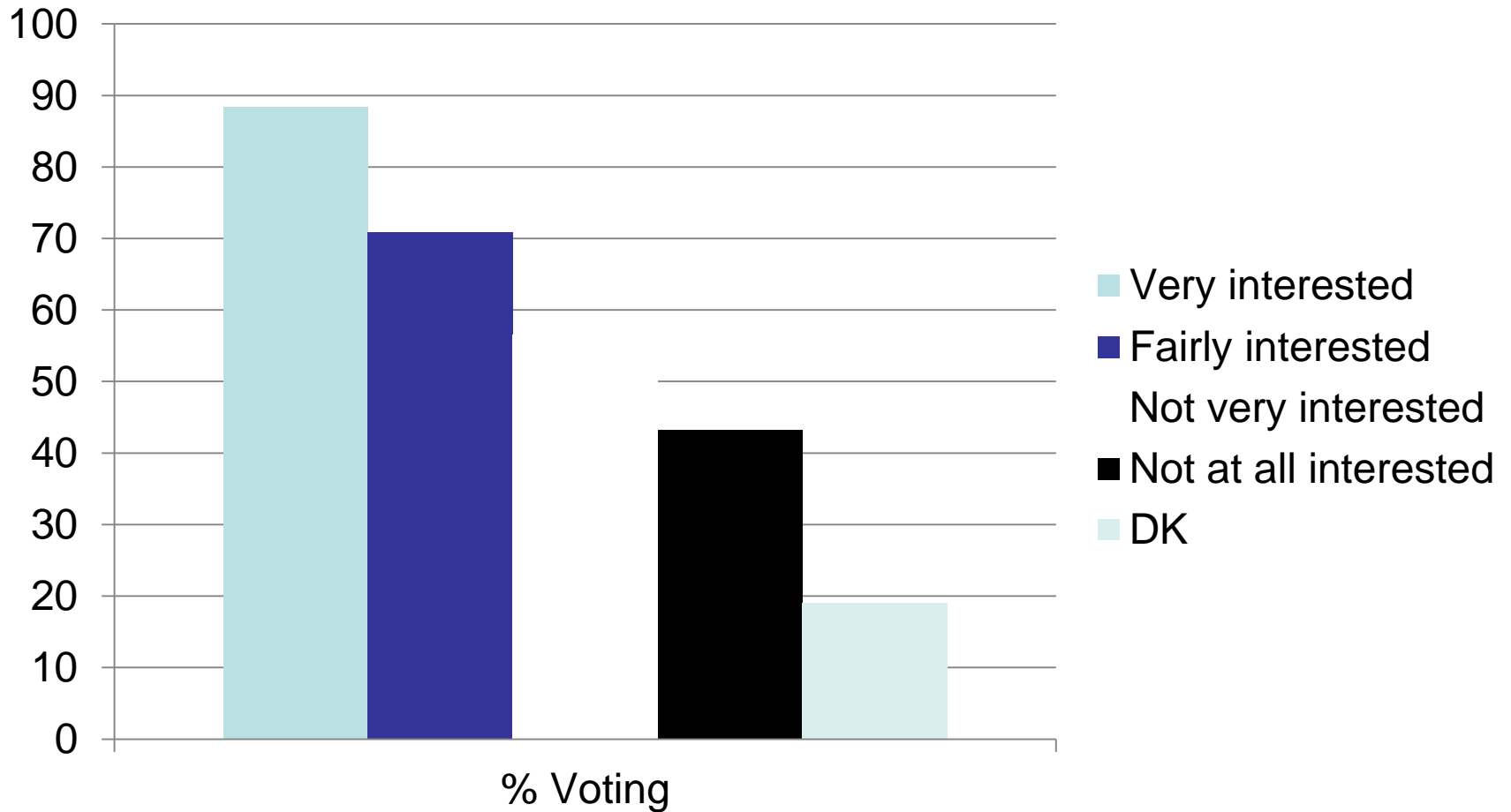
Referendum participation: Age



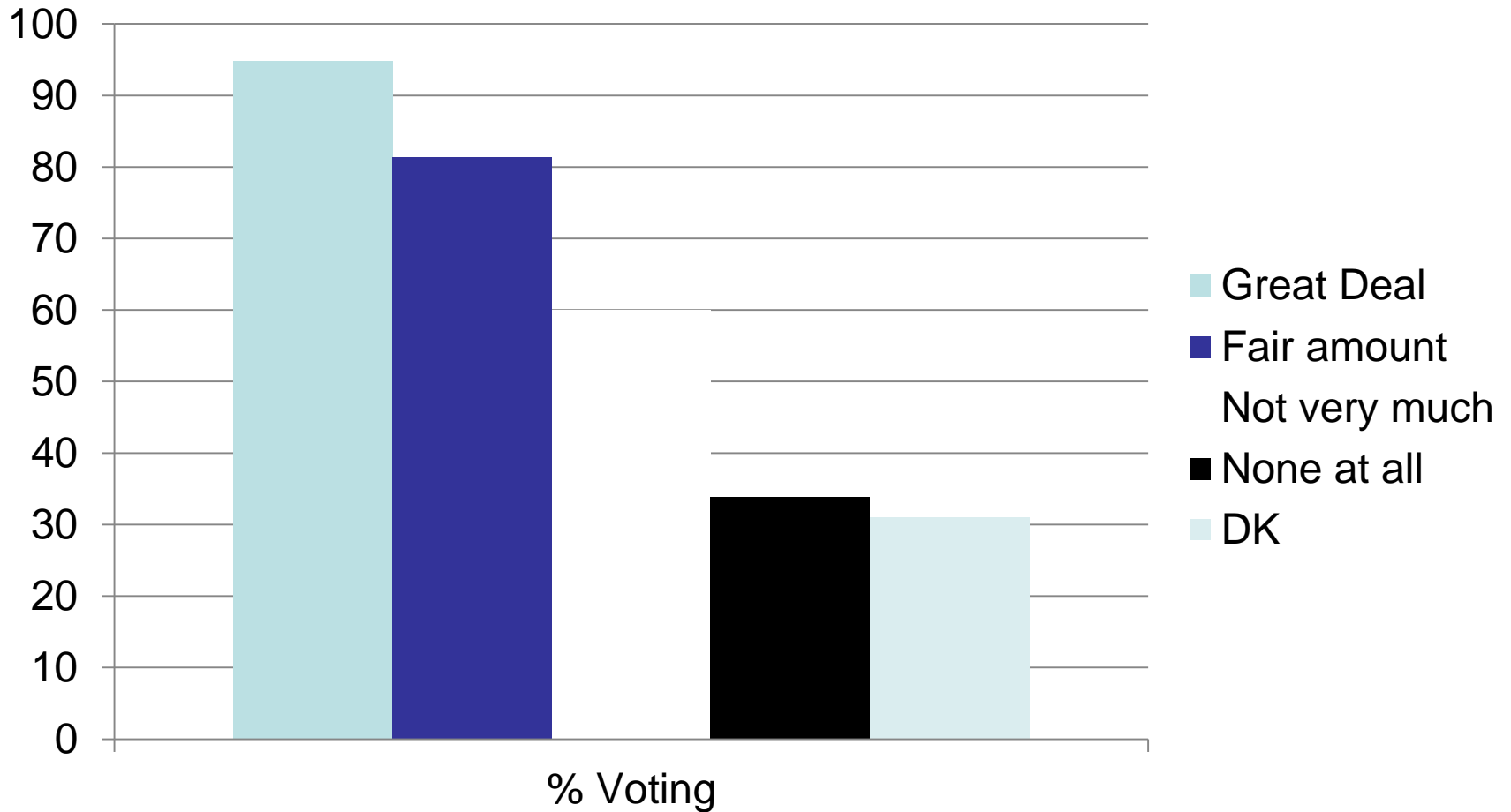
Referendum participation: National Identity



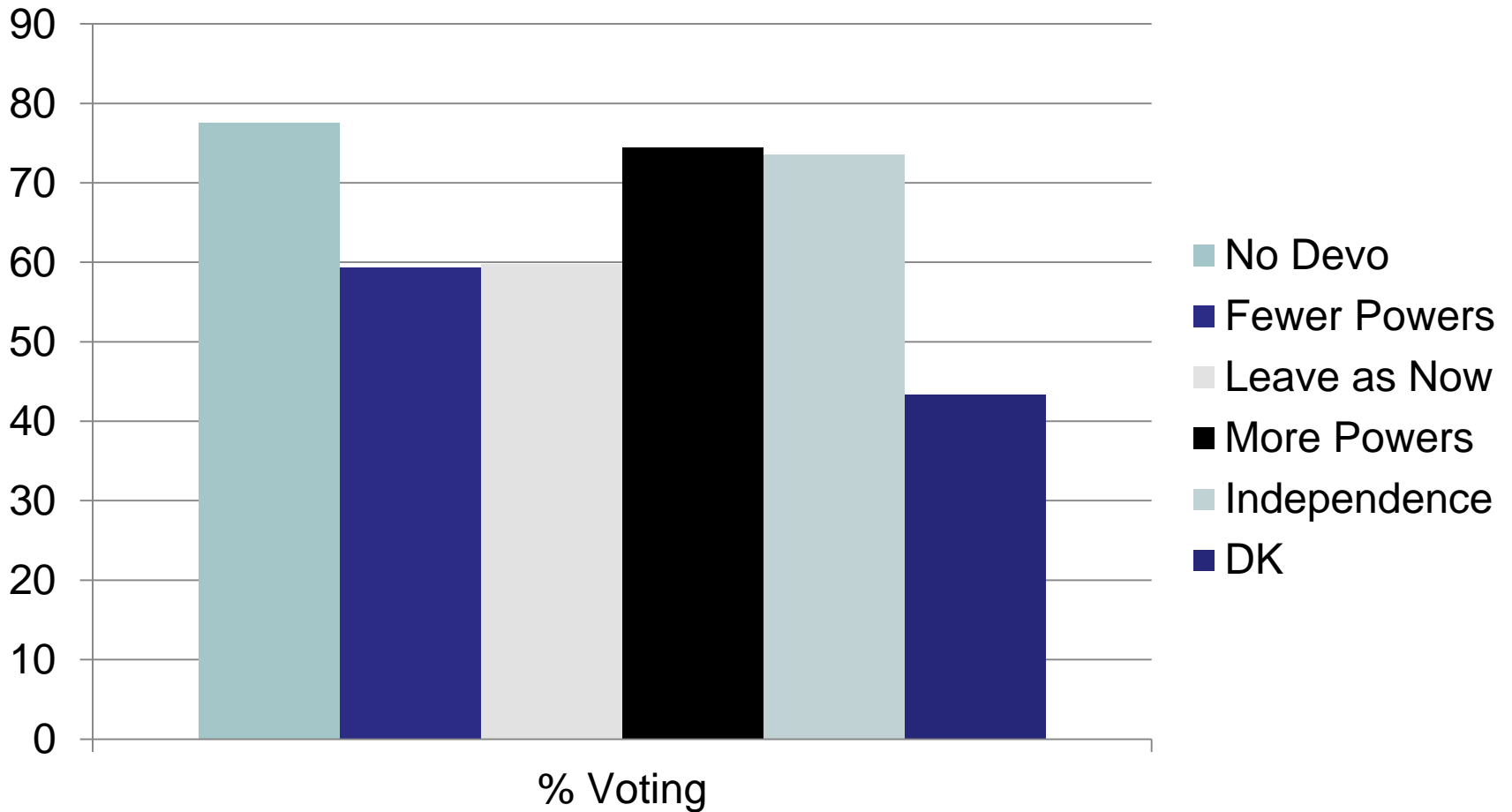
Referendum participation: Interest in politics



Referendum participation: Importance of the Referendum

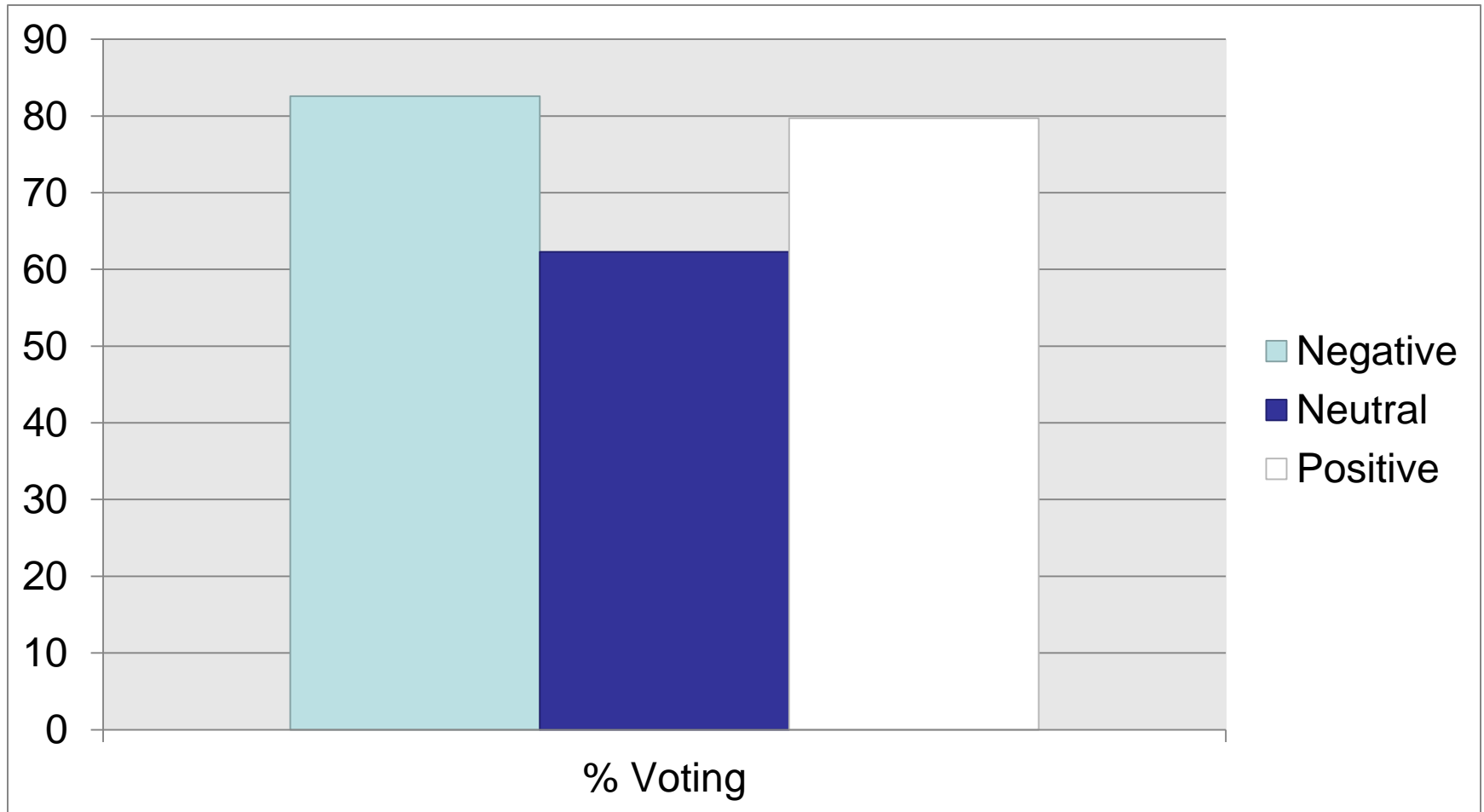


Referendum participation: Constitutional Preference

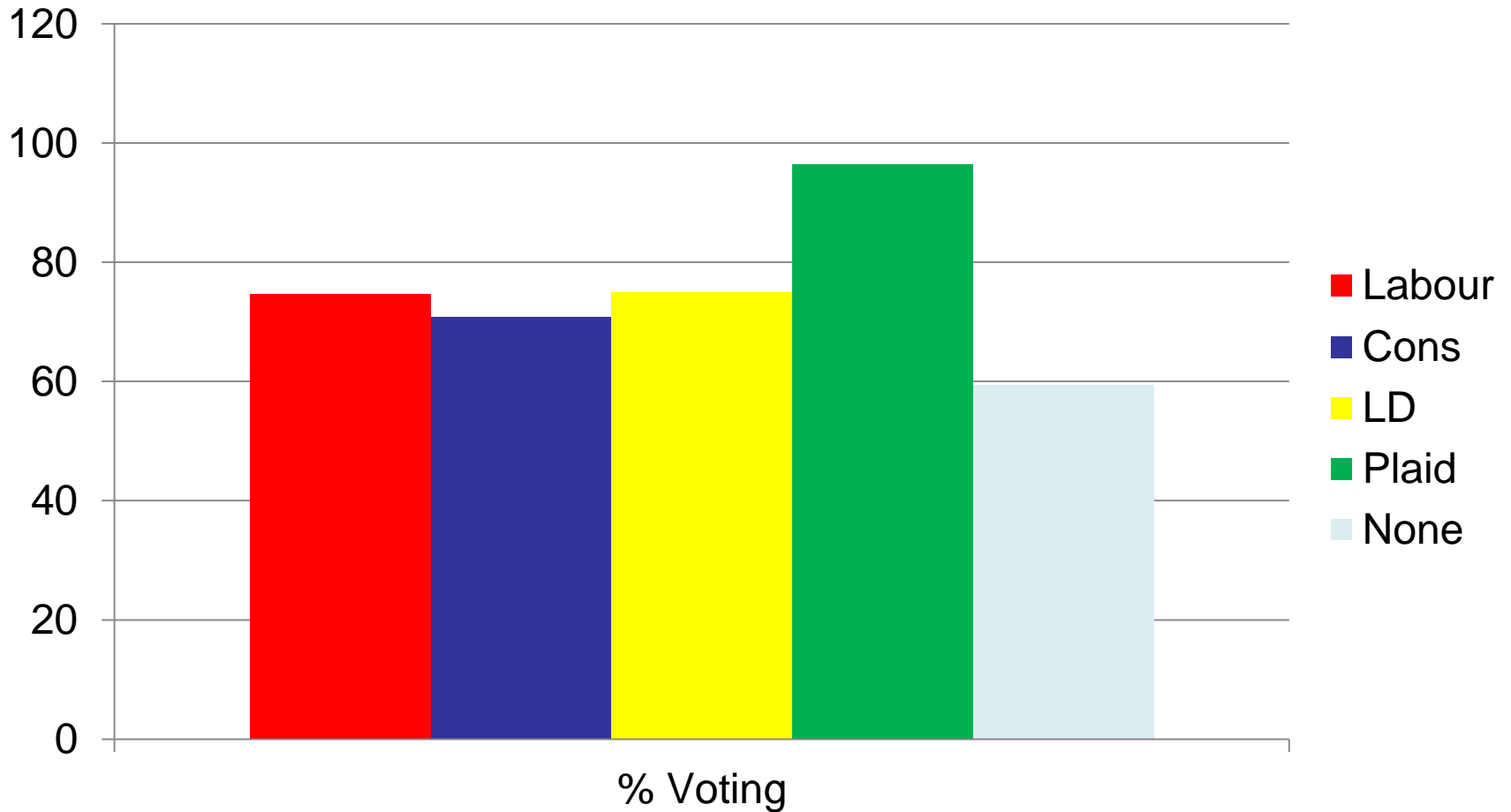


Referendum participation: WAG

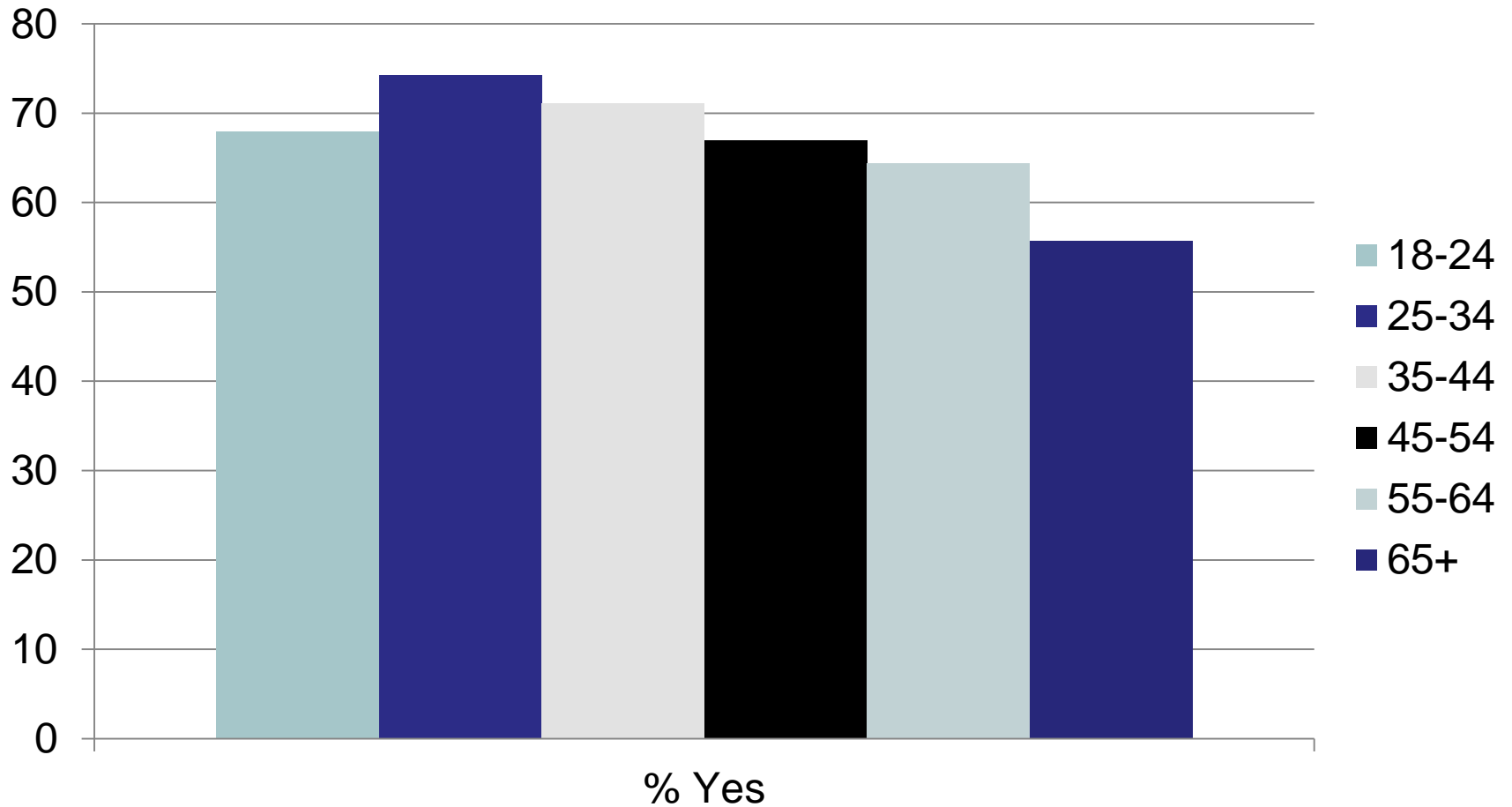
Performance evaluations



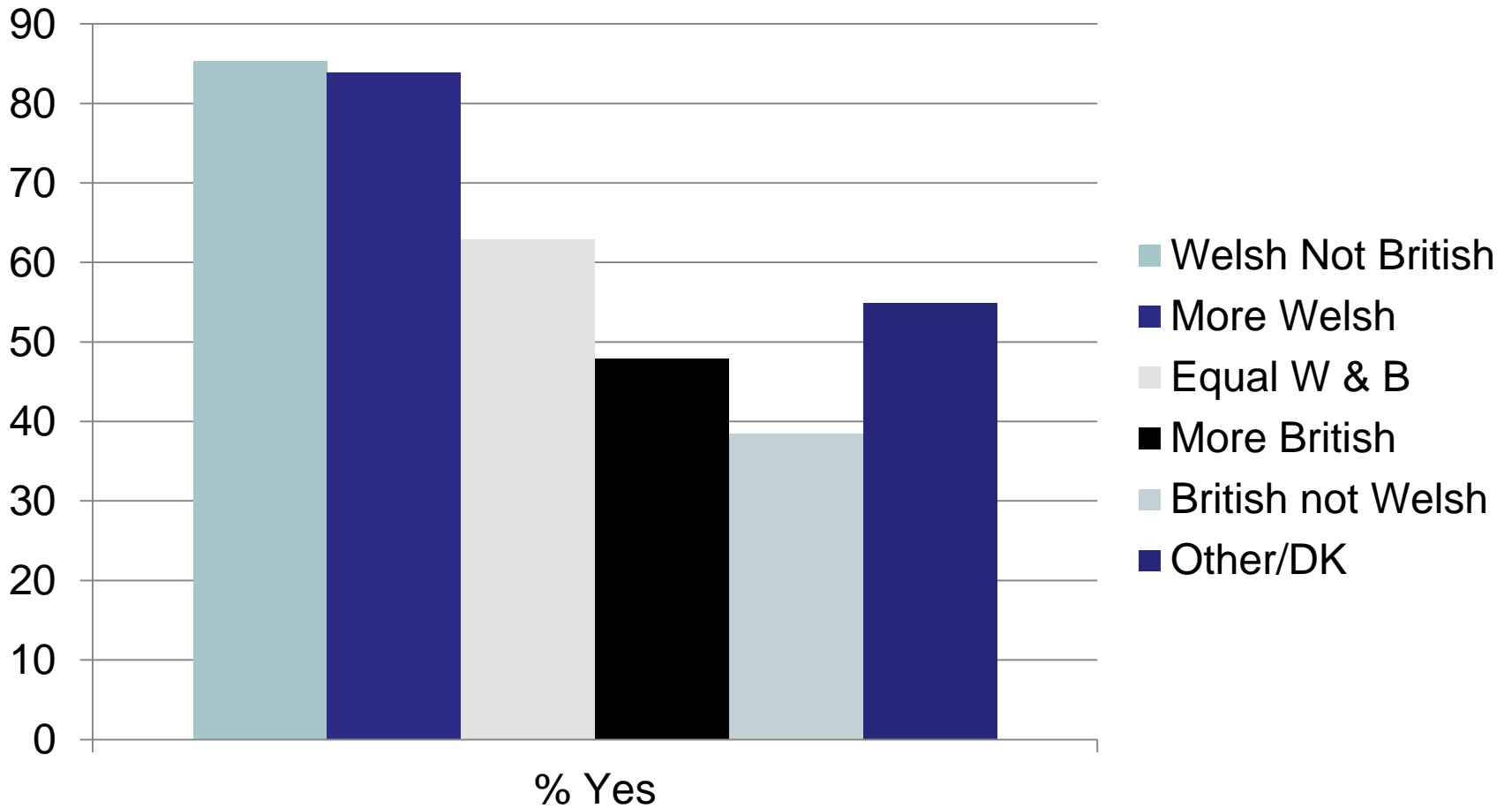
Referendum participation: party support



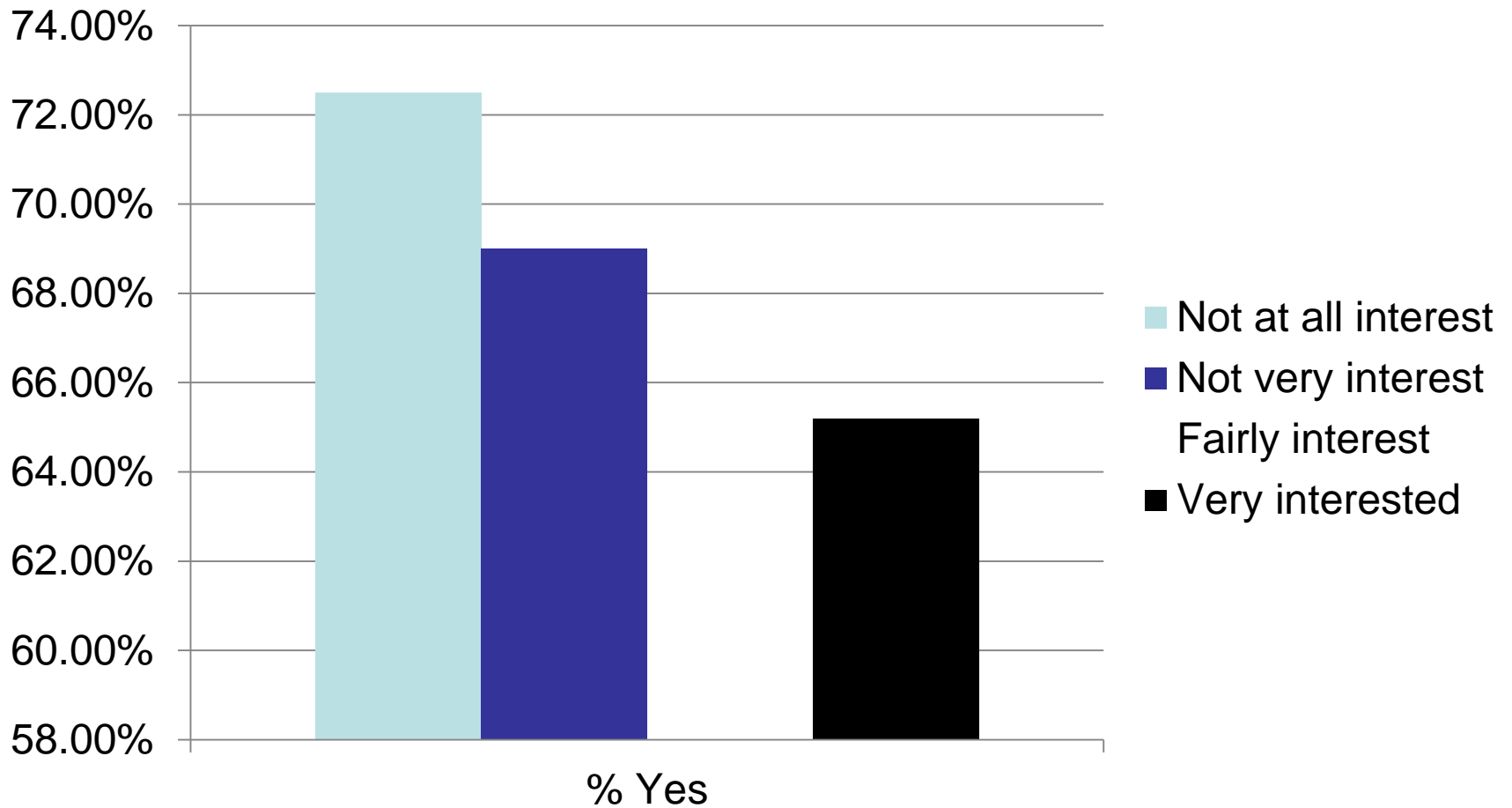
Referendum Vote: Age



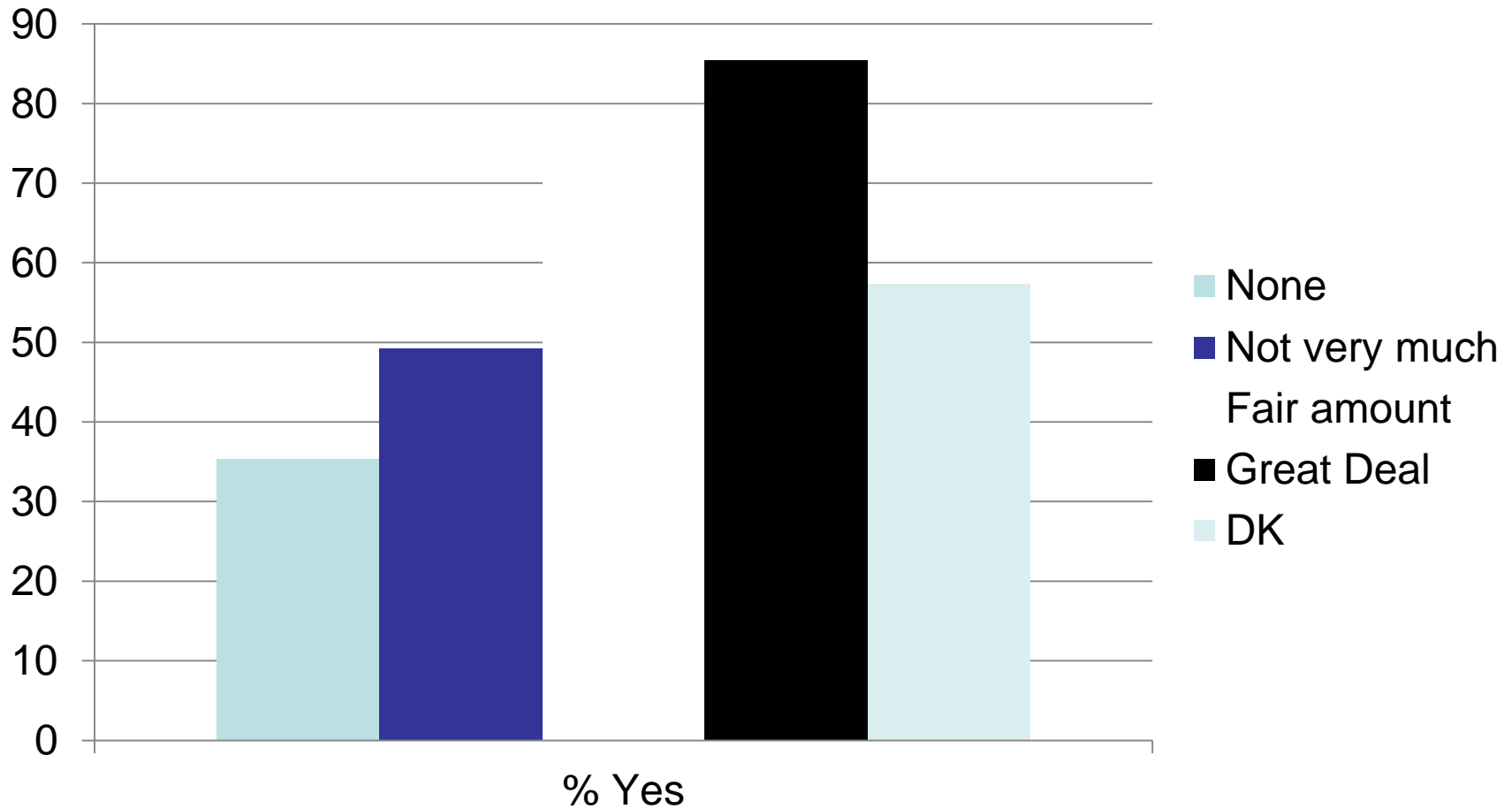
Referendum Vote: National Identity



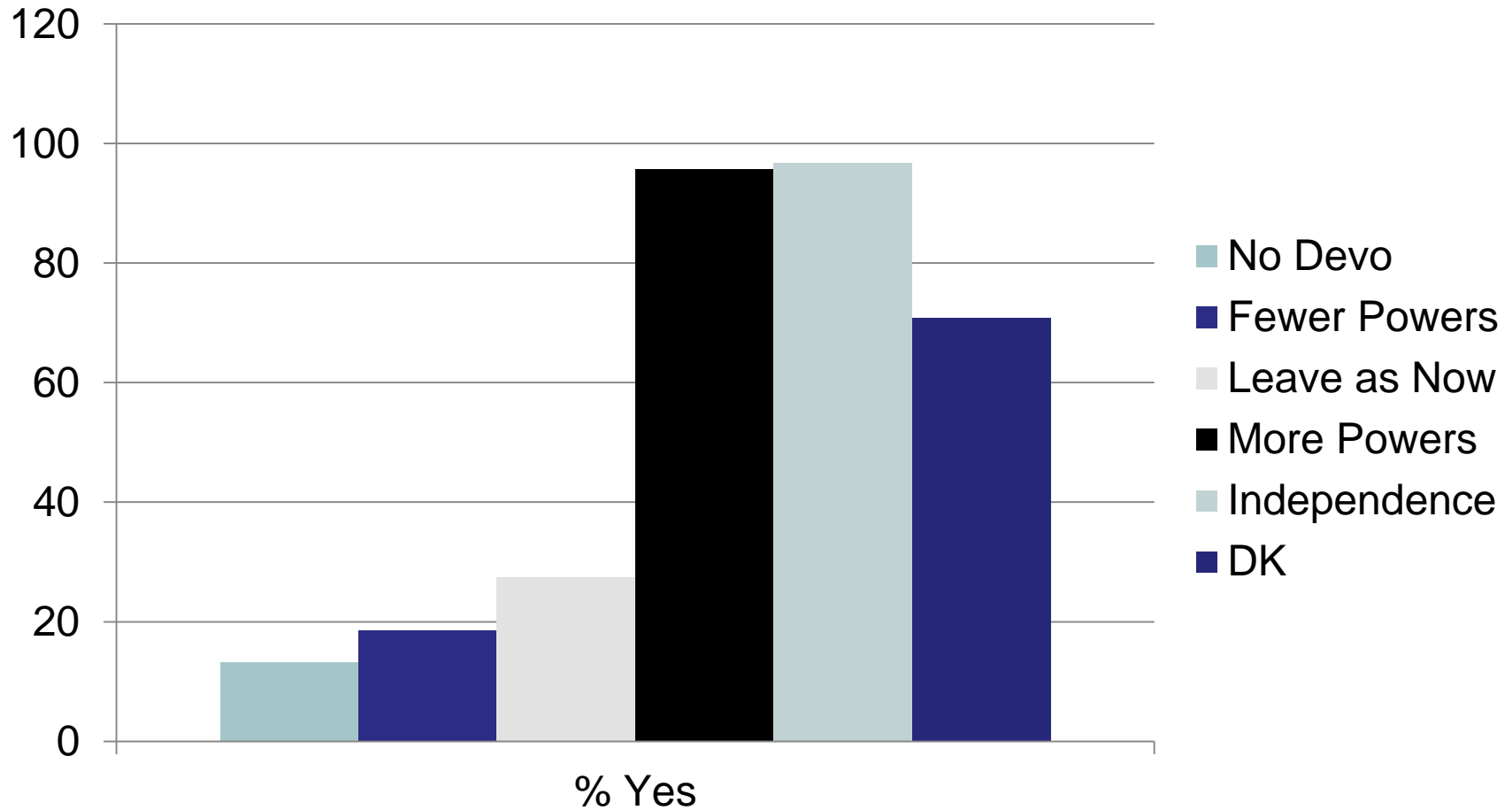
Referendum Vote: Interest in politics



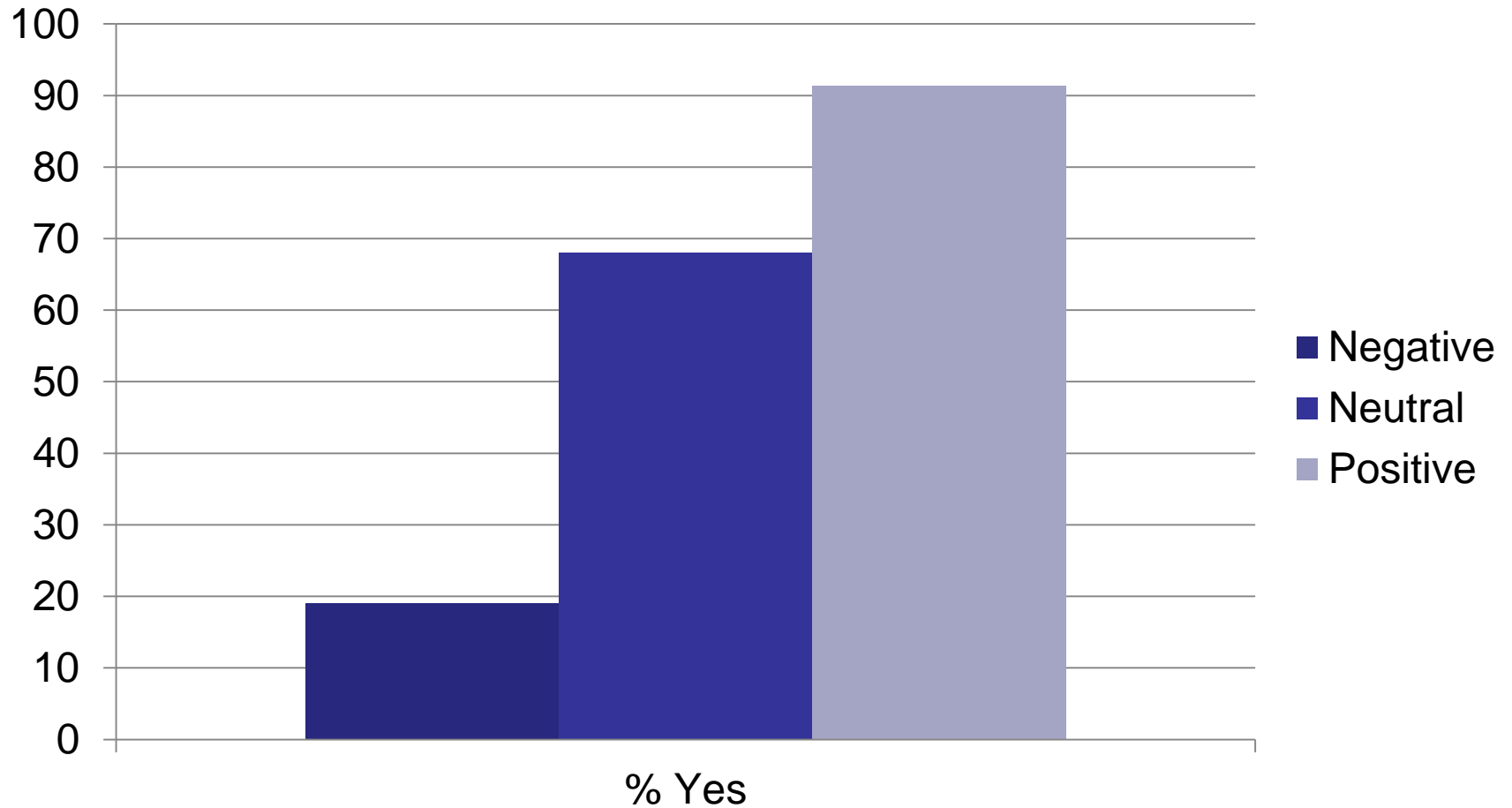
Referendum Vote: Importance of the Referendum



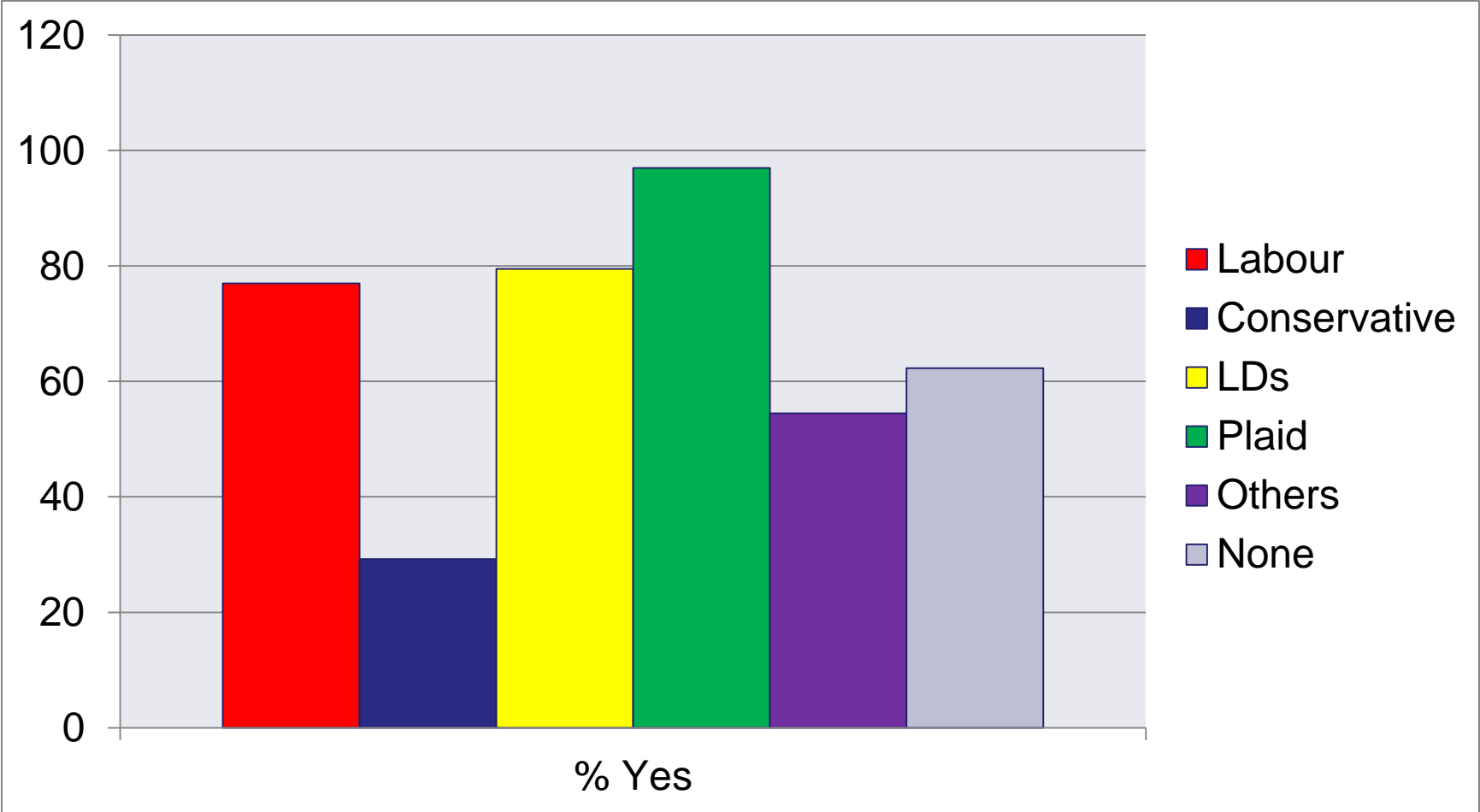
Referendum Vote: Constitutional Preference



Referendum Vote: WAG performance evaluations



Referendum Vote: Party Support



Referendum Vote: the overall story

- Limited campaign impact: little changed
- Limited impact of social status variables, even those related to ‘Welshness’: referendum was not socially divisive
- Limited impact of attitudes to the UK government
- Referendum vote choice most strongly shaped by attitudes to how Wales should be governed; supplemented by attitudes to WAG performance

And to find out more...

Richard Wyn Jones and Roger Scully, *Wales Says Yes: the 2011 Welsh Referendum*
(University of Wales Press, 2012)

Questions and Discussion

