

MIND THE GAP(S)

What the new political order could look like

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Lord Ashcroft Polls

Contents

Introduction:	4
Methodology	6
The choice today	7
The gap(s) in the market	10
Full poll results	15
About Lord Ashcroft	26

Introduction

Ten years ago, when I was responsible for the Tories' private polling as the party's Deputy Chairman, we often asked voters to choose from a selection of words and pictures those which they most associated with the main parties. The Conservative selection would invariably include a picture of an aristocratic family standing outside an enormous house, and other indications that the party was for the rich and out of touch with ordinary people. Labour's often featured a fat man lazing on a sofa, usually signifying those who lived this way rather than going to work.

Repeating this exercise now, we find that if a week is a long time in politics, in terms of the party brands the last decade might as well not have happened. For the Tories, the posh family is still there, along with a shiny Jaguar, a pinstriped City worker and the words 'untrustworthy', 'for themselves' and 'out of touch'. Labour's lazy fat bloke has also survived the years, with the words 'dangerous', 'confused' and, like the Conservatives, 'untrustworthy' – though 'for the many' and a picture of an ordinary family were also chosen.

Not surprisingly, half of all voters saying they do not feel represented by any of the current parties. This has become a familiar refrain from anti-Brexit voters exasperated by Labour's refusal to oppose leaving the EU. But despite complaints that Remain-supporting centrists have been abandoned, it is in fact Leave voters who are more likely to feel none of the parties really represents them. Indeed, only half of those who think none of the parties stands for them say this is because Labour and the Tories have moved to the extremes; almost as many say they have become too alike.

All of this suggests a huge opportunity to Hoover up voters unimpressed with the choices currently on offer. To identify the most

fertile political territory for such a venture we asked 8,000 voters about issues including immigration, welfare, business regulation, tax, public services and international affairs, and compared the findings to people's answers on how close they felt to any of the current parties. We found a large cluster of people of broadly liberal views, who had wanted to remain in the EU and who felt the main existing parties had become too extreme. But that was not the only gap. In the opposite corner was another group who had very different views on the issues but felt their opinions were not currently represented because the parties were all the same.

In a further poll, we proposed two new parties with policies that might be expected to appeal to these two groups. 'New Party A' would emphasise community and society, be happy with current or higher levels of immigration, want more action to tackle climate change, support aid to poorer countries, promote rehabilitation in the criminal justice system, strongly support rights for same-sex couples and favour international co-operation, including the closest possible links with the EU after Brexit. 'New Party B' would aim to reduce immigration, take a tougher line on law and order, spend the international aid budget in the UK instead, prefer the UK to act independently with few formal ties to the EU after Brexit, and argue that the threat of climate change had been exaggerated, that traditional values had been wrongly neglected and that the government had become too much of a nanny state. When I asked people how they would vote in an election with these new entrants standing against the current players, the liberal 'New Party A' did well, with 24% of the vote, including nearly a third of 2017 Labour voters and nearly half of Lib Dems. But they were pipped at the post by the much more conservative 'New Party B', with 27%, including more than four in ten 2017 Tories and nearly half of Leave voters.

It is pretty fanciful to suppose that this could happen at the next election, with the Conservatives and Labour reduced to third and fourth place. But it demonstrates that there is a real appetite for credible alternatives – and that the gap in the political market is not only in the liberal centre.

But for a new movement, having the right policies is not even half the battle. Few had much faith in political promises before, but if sceptical voters have learned one thing from the Brexit debacle – in which politicians have seemed unwilling or unable to enact the result of a referendum they pledged to heed – it is that a manifesto is not worth the paper it is printed on. Indeed, when we asked what their ideal party would be like, the answers were words like ‘honest’, ‘accountable’, ‘trustworthy’ and ‘realistic’. While those who think the parties are too extreme are usually talking about policies, those who think they are too alike usually mean they are remote, divided, and never do what

they say they will. Even the principled defectors of the Independent Group had committed the same old political sin: to be elected on a clear platform and then abandon it.

Nor will politicians joining a new force shake off their own party’s brand as easily as they may hope. One in five of those voting for ‘New Party A’ admitted they would be put off completely if it turned out to have former Tories in its senior ranks.

Some think politics is failing because the wrong people are now in charge, pursuing the wrong policies on behalf of the wrong voters. But just as many think the problem is that the links between parliament and the people, promise and delivery, what people want and what they get, have been all but lost. It is a tale that echoes across the Atlantic. Many of those who want to recast the political order fondly imagine being led by a synthesis of Chuka Umunna and Sarah Wollaston; they might just as easily see the rise of our very own Donald Trump.

Methodology

8,146 adults in Great Britain were interviewed online between 22 and 26 February 2019. A further 6,241 adults were interviewed online between 8 and 13 March 2019. Data have been weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain. A summary of the poll results can be found at the end of this report. Full data tables are available at LordAshcroftPolls.com.

Eight focus groups were held between 12 and 19 March 2019 in Brighton, Ramsgate, Bath and Wolverhampton.

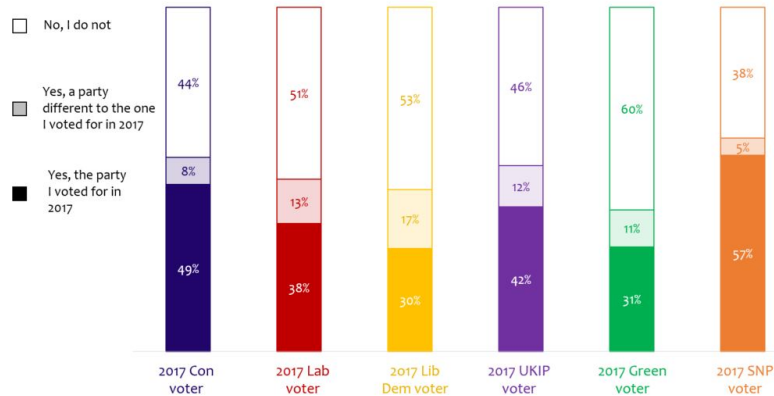
The choice today

Who identifies with a party?

First, we asked voters whether they identified with a political party – whether they feel that a party consistently represents them, and that they have an affinity with that party beyond the question of how they voted. Just over half (54%) of voters said they did not identify with any party, and there were wide variations in the extent to which any party's voters felt more strongly attached.

2017 SNP voters were the most likely to say they identified with their party (57%). Next were Conservatives, 49% of whom identified with the party. UKIP voters (42%) were next, but only 38% of Labour voters said they identified with the Labour Party – though the proportion was higher among Labour Remain voters (41%) than Labour Leave voters (34%). Only 31% of Green voters and 30% of Liberal Democrats said they identified with their respective parties.

Do you identify with a political party – that is, do you feel that party consistently represents you and you feel an affinity with the party beyond the question of how you vote?



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Who would you never vote for?

When we asked people if there was a party they would never vote for at a general election, UKIP topped the list, with 45% (but only 35% of Conservatives and 23% of Conservative Leave voters) ruling out ever backing the party.

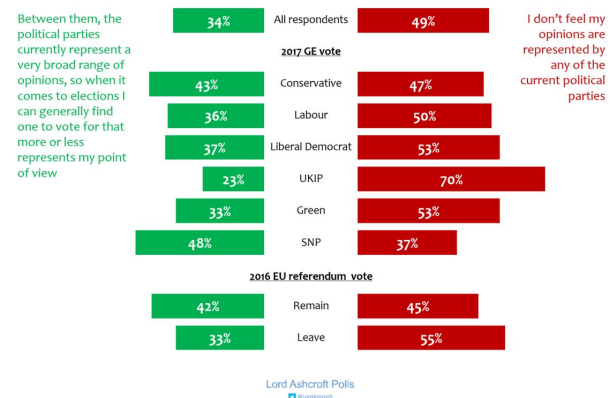
Three in ten respondents – including just over half of 2017 Labour voters and four in ten Lib Dems – said they would never vote Conservative.

Another three in ten – including 62% of Conservative Leave voters but only 49% of Conservative remainers – said they would never vote Labour.

One in five said they would never vote Liberal Democrat, and the same proportion said they would never vote Green.

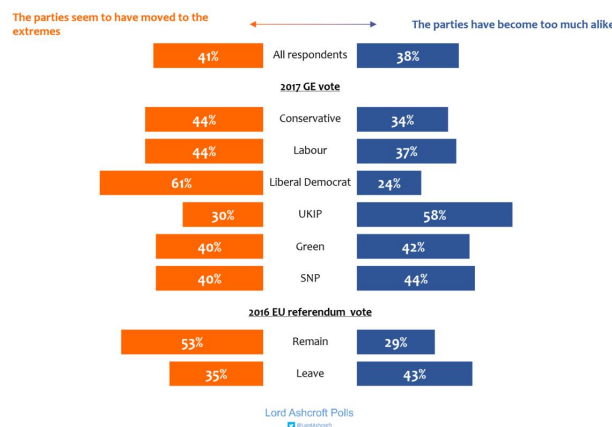
Only one in ten said they did not rule out voting for any of these parties and would consider all of them.

Thinking about the political parties that currently exist in the UK, which of the following comes closest to your view?



You said you don't feel your opinions are represented by any of the current political parties. Would you say that is more because...?

[Note: Only asked to those who don't feel their opinions are represented by any of the current political parties]



Are you represented by the current parties?

Only one in three voters (34%) said they thought the political parties currently represent a broad range of opinion and that at elections they can generally find one to vote for that more or less represents their point of view. There was little variation between supporters of different parties with the exception of the SNP, 48% of whose voters said the statement was true of them.

Nearly half of voters (49%) said they don't feel their opinions are represented by any of the current political parties. Overall this was true of similar proportions of 2017 Conservatives (47%), Labour voters (50%) and Liberal Democrats (53%), but there was some difference by EU referendum vote. A majority of Leave voters (55%) said they did not feel represented, compared to 45% of remainers. Tory leavers (50%) were more likely to say this than Tory remainers (40%), and the same was true of Labour leavers (58%) and Labour remainers (46%).

Why not?

Of those who said they did not feel represented by any of the parties, around four in ten (41%) said this was because the parties seemed to have moved to the extremes. This was most true for 2017 Lib Dems (61%) and Conservative remainers (58%). However, almost as many (38%) of those who said they did not feel represented said this was because the parties had become too much alike. This was truer for Leave voters (43%) than remainers (29%), and especially for Labour leavers (47%).

In our focus groups, some said the problem was not so much that parties were too extreme or alike, but were so divided it was hard to tell where they stood: **"The parties are so split. It would be nice to have a group who are all on the same page."** For others, the problem was that the political class as a whole was far removed from the lives of the people it was supposed to represent:

"Politics now is filled with people who went to private school, did politics at university, and at 21 or 22 get a job up in the gilded palace, and they've never bought a pint of milk or had a mortgage in their life;" **"Corbyn is still in the miners' strike era, and Theresa May is very, very conservative. They're completely out of touch with what goes on in reality."** Another frequent complaint was that parties never seemed to keep their promises. If this had always been true, it had been brought home by the failure to deliver Brexit on time: **"I didn't think much of them but when we had the referendum I thought fair enough, they're giving us the chance to have our say, but now they're going back on it;"** **"Theresa May said we'd leave on 29 March, that there wouldn't be a general election, that nothing had changed... you can't believe a word;"** **"The trouble is, every time you give these politicians a job, they screw it up. They lie to your face to get the job and then they make a mess of it."** Many complained that Brexit had dominated politics at the expense of issues that were at least as important, including public services and rising crime. **"Over the last two and a half years, when it comes to the health service or homelessness or social justice, all of that stuff, is there anything that parliament or the government have actually done?"**

Below is a selection of words and phrases. Please choose up to three that you would most associate with each party as it is today / From the images below, please choose up to three that best sum up your view of each party as it is today.
NB the larger the word / image the more times it was selected.

ALL VOTERS



2017 CON VOTERS



2017 LAB VOTERS



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We showed our online poll respondents a selection of 37 words and phrases, and a selection of 41 images, and asked them to choose the three that they most associated with the Conservative and Labour parties as they are today.

The Conservative brand

For voters as a whole, the most chosen words and phrases were ‘out of touch’, ‘untrustworthy’, ‘for themselves’, ‘confused’, ‘selfish’ and ‘for the few’. Most of these also featured in the selection of Conservative voters themselves, though ‘weak’ and ‘sensible’ were chosen more by Tories than by voters at large.

A prosperous-looking man, a Jaguar car, an aristocratic family outside a large house and the tower of Big Ben were the images most often selected. According to the comments that went with them, these were usually intended to signify being for the rich, big business and a London-focused establishment. Again there was some overlap with the choices of Tory voters – though these sometimes chose Big Ben to represent tradition and patriotism in a positive sense; a student, representing aspiration, and a soldier, representing defence and Britishness, were also among the most frequent choices of Tories.

The Labour brand

Labour’s mood board was also predominantly negative, featuring a lazy man (or benefits scrounger), a Division Two (ie. second-rate) football club, and the words ‘untrustworthy’, ‘dangerous’, ‘confused’, ‘out of touch’ and ‘weak’. However, it also included positive elements: ‘for the many’, and images of a miner (working people) and an ordinary or struggling family.

Labour voters’ own selections also included a doctor and an image representing solidarity or a helping hand, as well as the word ‘hope’ – but also featured ‘untrustworthy’, ‘confused’, ‘out of touch’ and ‘weak’.

In our focus groups we also asked for the first words that came to mind for the Liberal Democrats (“non-existent”, “weak”, “over”, “no identity”, “irrelevant”, “who?” “student fees”, “they want to legalise cannabis, that’s the only good thing”) and UKIP (“pointless, we’re leaving the EU”, “falling apart”, “disappeared”, “slightly racist”).

The gap(s) in the market

What kind of party would you prefer?

Our initial 8,000-sample poll we showed respondents pairs of statements describing opposing views on a wide range of policy issues – including immigration, business regulation, the welfare state, climate change, overseas aid, globalisation, crime, and the UK's approach to international affairs – and asked them whether they would be more inclined to support a political party that took one view or the other.



New party territories

New Party A

New Party B

Parties have moved to the extremes

Parties are too alike

Identify with Lib Dems

Pro Remain

EU ref: Remain

Closer ties to EU

Work with other countries

Guarantee rights by international agreements

More immigration

Importance of rehabilitation

Aid to poorer countries

Higher tax and spend

ID Green

Regulate business more

No private involvement in public services

Narrow gap between rich and poor

More rights to minorities

Equality and workers' rights

Immigrants should keep own language and culture

Unions should have more say in business

Wants to tackle climate change

Same-sex right to marry

Represent a range of opinions

Stick to what is right even if unpopular

Emphasises community and society

Only use military if UK threatened

Govt should guarantee standard of living for all

Privacy and civil rights

Identify with Labour

Protect people from making bad choices

Identify with no party

My opinions are not represented

People should make own choices

Listen to the people

Too much regulation

EU ref: Leave

Fewer rights for same-sex couples

Identify with another party

Represent what I think

Use military force to protect allies

Welfare should be for those in need

Allow private involvement in public services

Business should be autonomous

Pro Austerity

Identify with Conservatives

Prioritise economic growth

Less worried about gap between rich and poor

Security and crime

Individual rights and opportunities

Guarantee rights by UK parliament

Lower tax / spend

Aid should be spent in the UK instead

Prison for punishment and deterrent

Less ties to EU

Pro Brexit

Identify with UKIP

Climate change is exaggerated

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Next, we used correspondence analysis to show closely people's identification with an existing party (or lack of it), and whether they feel the current parties are too extreme or too alike, are associated with their attitudes to the issues explored above.

In the bottom left, we see that people who identify with Labour are also likely to be anti-austerity, to prioritise equality and workers' rights over economic growth, to see narrowing the gap between rich and poor as an end in itself, to want more regulation of business and to oppose private involvement in public services on principle.

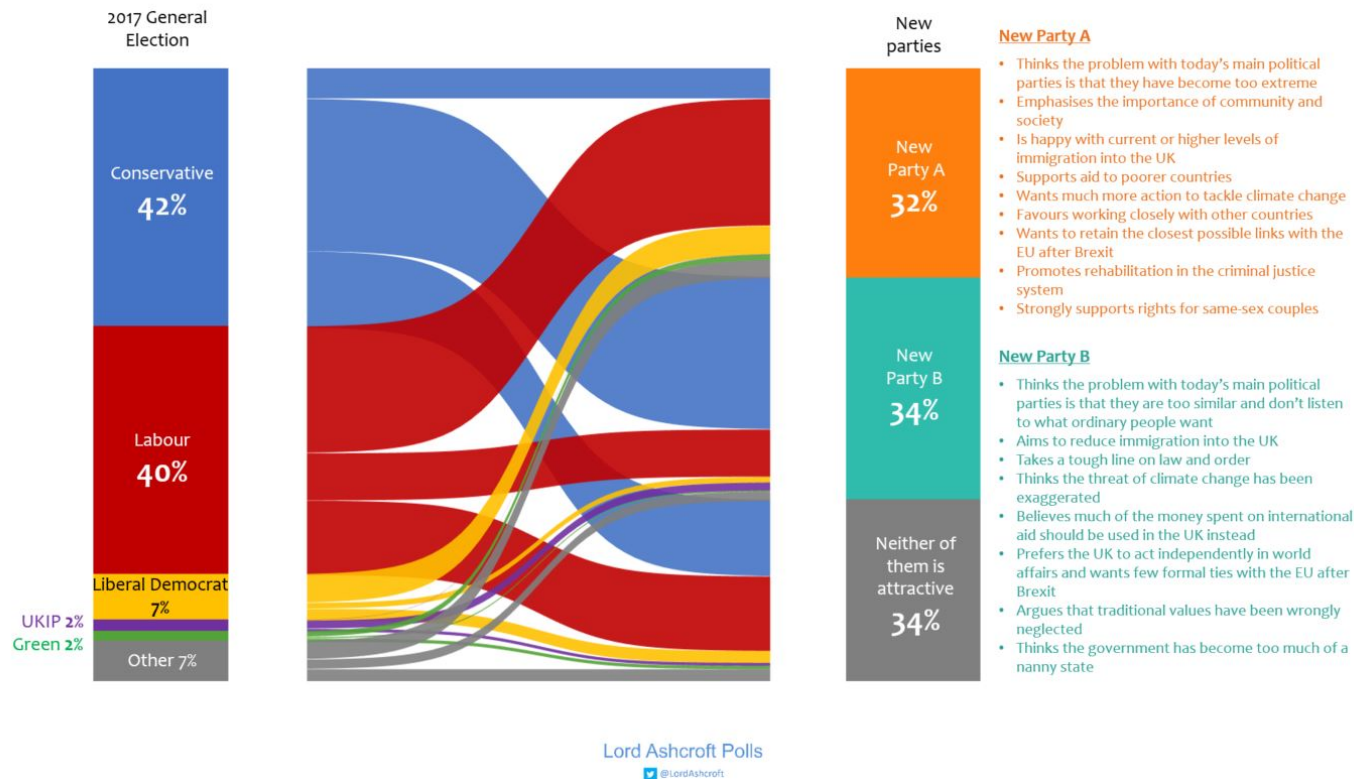
The top left quadrant shows the attitudes most associated with thinking the current parties have moved to the extremes. These include wanting close ties with the EU after Brexit, wanting more action to tackle climate change, seeing globalisation as a good thing to be embraced, and

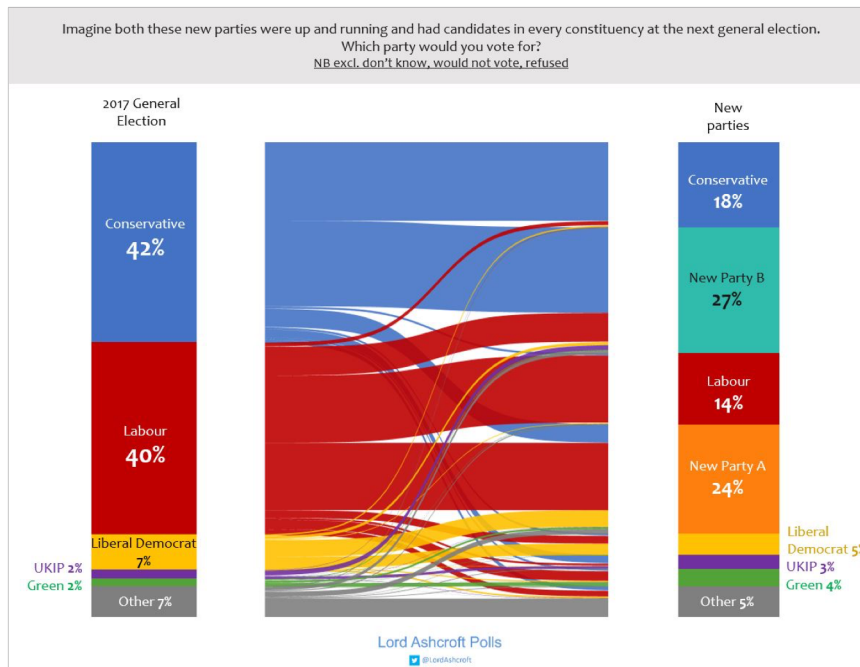
In the bottom right quadrant are those who do not feel represented by the current parties because they seem too much alike. They say they would prefer a party which campaigned to leave the EU and does not want close formal ties after Brexit, wants to reduce immigration, thinks the threat of climate change has been exaggerated, prefers the UK to act independently in international affairs, emphasises prison as a punishment and deterrent, does not think same-sex couples should have exactly the same rights as heterosexual married couples, and thinks much of the foreign aid budget should be spent in the UK instead. The small number who say they identify with UKIP also appear in this quadrant.

Two new parties

On the basis of the above 'map', we constructed two new party platforms that might be expected to appeal to two distinct kinds of voters who do not feel represented by the current political parties: those who think the current parties have become too extreme, and those who think they have become too alike. Respondents were shown a summary of each party's policies and asked which sounded the more attractive, regardless of whether they would vote for it. Overall, respondents were evenly divided as to which party sounded more attractive: 32% said New Party A, 34% said New Party B, and 34% said neither sounded attractive. However, while Labour, Lib Dem, Green voters, remainers and those aged 18-24 had a clear preference for A, Conservatives, leavers, UKIP voters, C2DEs, those aged 65+ and people who thought the existing parties were too alike much preferred B.

Imagine that two new political parties are formed in the UK. The new parties would compete in elections against the existing parties. Both parties would have a complete manifesto, but here is a selection of their policy positions. Whether or not you would vote for them, which of the two new parties sounds more attractive to you?



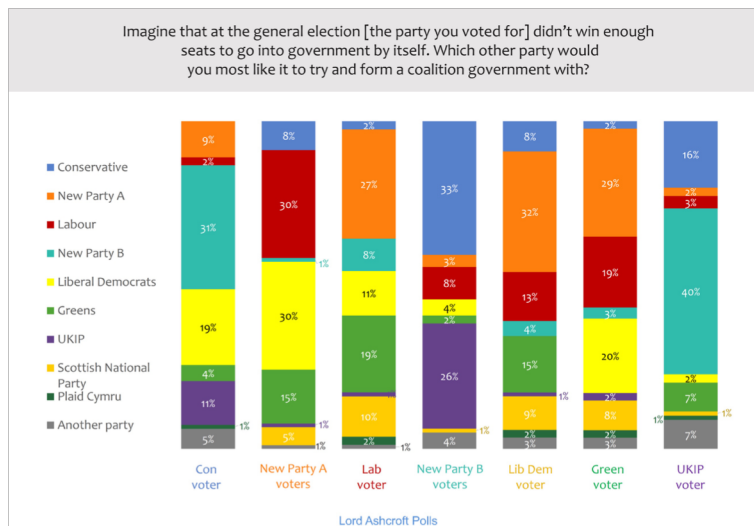


Just a bit of fun

Next, we asked respondents to imagine that both new parties were up and running at the next general election and had candidates in every constituency and asked how they would vote.

New Party B topped the poll, with 27% of those naming a party. This included 42% of 2017 Conservative voters (with 40% of them saying they would vote Conservative again), 56% of 2017 UKIP voters, 48% of Leave voters, 34% of those aged 65+ and 42% of those saying they feel unrepresented because the current parties are too alike.

New Party A came a close second with 24%, including 35% of 2017 Labour voters (the same proportion as said they would vote Labour again), 47% of 2017 Lib Dems (higher than the 32% who said they would vote Lib Dem again), 41% of Remain voters, 42% of those aged 18 to 24 and 37% of those who think the current parties have moved to the extremes.

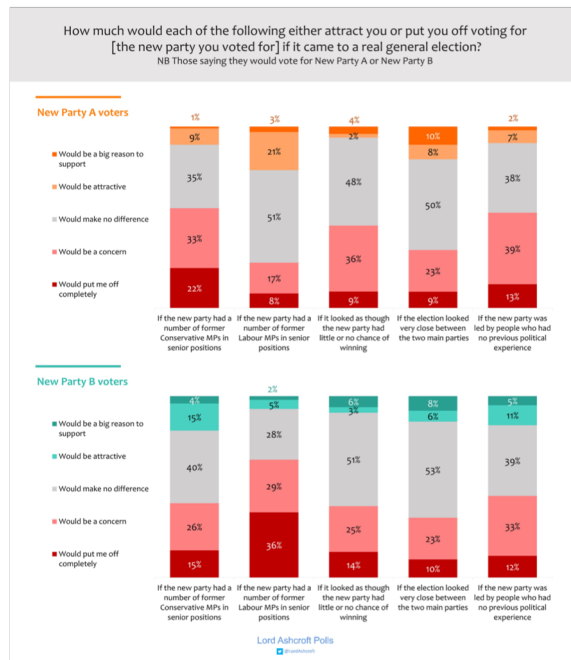


Coalitions of the willing

Assuming the party they voted for had not won enough seats to govern by itself, we asked people which other party they would most like to try to form a coalition government with.

The most popular choice of coalition partner for Conservative voters was Party B, and vice versa. New Party B was also the clear preference for UKIP voters.

New Party A was the first choice for Labour, Lib Dem and Green voters, but those who voted for New Party A were evenly divided between working with Labour and the Lib Dems. For SNP voters, the first-choice coalition partner was the Greens.



What if...

Those who did vote for one of the new parties were asked whether certain things would put them off or provide further reasons to support it. In both cases, the most off-putting factor would be prominent members from the wrong existing party. More than half of New Party A voters said they would be concerned (including more than one in five who would be put off completely) if it had a number of former Conservative MPs in senior positions.

Two thirds of New Party B voters would be concerned (including more than one in three put off completely) if former Labour MPs played a senior role – and four in ten would be concerned if it included senior former Tories.

The next biggest concern would be if the new party was led by people with no previous political experience – though this was slightly greater among voters for New Party A.

The party looking as though it had no chance of winning was less of a worry but was still mentioned by nearly half of New Party A voters and four in ten New Party B voters. Only one third said they would be concerned about voting for a new party if the election looked very close between Labour and the Tories.

What's not to like?

We asked those who had not voted for one of the new parties why they had not done so. Apart from not liking the policies that were described, the most commonly cited reasons were that voting for a new party would be a wasted vote, or that it might help the party they liked least to win the election.

This was echoed in the focus groups: **“My main priority has always been to stop the Tories. So even if I agreed with every word of their manifesto, I don’t think I’d vote for them;”** **“Even if there was another decent choice, I would be hesitant because it wouldn’t get a majority.”**

A new party would also have to have a convincing agenda covering the full range of policy areas: **“The Greens and UKIP haven’t made much headway because you need a rounded basket of policies, not just one issue that you’re championing.”** Even then, policy would not be enough: **“The manifesto is not worth the paper it’s written on. They win an election and it goes out of the window.”**

Accordingly, when asked what their ideal new party would be like, people in our focus groups nearly always talked about attributes rather than policies: **“Honest”, “transparent”, “they stand for the same thing, not infighting”, “balanced”, “positivity”, “clear policies in plain English”, “accountable”, “effective”, “open-minded”, “integrity”, “trustworthy”, “a true representation of the country as a whole”, “realistic – don’t promise what you can’t keep”, “deliver”, “strong and stable!”**

Full poll results

Stage One Poll: 8,146 adults in Great Britain were interviewed online between 22 and 26 February 2019.

Stage Two Poll: A further 6,241 adults were interviewed online between 8 and 13 March 2019.

Data have been weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain. Full poll tables are available at LordAshcroftPolls.com

STAGE ONE POLL

1. Do you identify with a political party – that is, do you feel that a party consistently represents you and you feel an affinity with the party beyond the question of how you vote?

		2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
%	ALL	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Yes – Conservatives	19	49	2	5	13	30	49	50	1	3
Yes – Labour	15	1	38	6	22	9	2	1	41	34
Yes – Liberal Democrats	3	1	3	30	7	1	2	0	4	1
Yes – Green Party	3	0	4	4	4	1	0	0	5	2
Yes – UKIP	3	5	1	1	0	6	1	7	0	2
No, none of them	54	44	51	53	49	51	45	42	47	54

- The voters most likely to say they identified with the party they voted for in 2017 were SNP voters, 57% of whom identified with the party.
- 42% of 2017 UKIP voters said they identified with the party.

2. Is there a party you would never vote for at a general election? Please tick all that apply.

	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
		Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
UKIP	45	35	60	77	70	26	65	23	74	38
Conservatives	30	9	52	40	44	21	9	9	59	44
Labour	30	57	11	22	21	46	49	62	9	15
Green Party	21	37	11	11	13	32	25	42	9	17
Liberal Democrats	20	31	14	5	11	33	12	40	11	22
No, would consider any of these	10	8	6	5	5	11	6	8	3	11

3. Thinking about the political parties that currently exist in the UK, which of the following comes closest to your own view?

		ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
	%		Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Between them, the political parties currently represent a very broad range of opinion, so when it comes to elections I can generally find one to vote for that more or less represents my point of view	34		43	36	37	42	33	48	41	42	27
I don't feel my opinions are represented by any of the current political parties	49		47	50	53	45	55	40	50	46	58
Don't know	17		10	14	9	13	12	11	9	12	15

4. [Those saying they do not feel their opinions are represented] You said you don't feel your opinions are represented by any of the current political parties. Would you say that is more because:

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
The parties seem to have moved to the extremes		41	44	44	61	53	35	58	40	51	37
The parties have become too much alike		38	34	37	24	29	43	24	38	31	47
Neither/Don't know		22	22	19	15	18	21	18	23	19	17

5. Below are some pairs of statements that might describe a political party. Please say in each case which kind of party you would be more inclined to support – where 0 means you strongly prefer the first statement, 10 means you strongly prefer the second statement, and 5 means you have no preference between the two. Would you be more inclined to support a party which:

		ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote			2017 GE + EU ref		
	Mean 0-10		C	L	LD	R	L	CR	CL	LR	LL
Thinks government welfare payments should be for people who can't support themselves / Thinks the government should guarantee a comfortable standard of living for everyone		5.2	4.1	6.0	5.1	5.5	4.7	4.1	4.0	6.0	5.7
Campaigned for the UK to leave the EU / Campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU		5.4	3.5	6.9	7.9	8.4	2.4	7.4	1.8	8.7	3.5
Aims to reduce the level of immigration into the UK / Would allow current or higher levels of immigration into the UK		4.1	2.7	5.1	5.6	5.6	2.5	4.2	2.1	6.0	3.3
Aims for lower taxes and tightly controlled government spending / Aims for higher spending on public services paid for by higher taxes on most people		4.9	3.8	6.0	5.9	5.9	4.0	4.4	3.5	6.5	5.0
Would allow private companies to be involved in delivering public services / Is opposed on principle to private companies being involved in delivering public services		6.0	5.2	6.9	6.2	6.4	5.7	5.0	5.2	7.1	6.6
Wants a closer relationship with the EU after Brexit / Wants a more distant relationship with the EU after Brexit		4.4	5.6	3.4	2.6	2.7	6.1	3.8	6.4	2.3	5.6

	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote			2017 GE + EU ref		
		C	L	LD	R	L	CR	CL	LR	LL
<i>Mean 0-10</i>										
Listens to the people and tries to do what they want / Sticks to what they think is right even when it is unpopular	3.9	3.6	4.0	4.4	4.2	3.4	4.3	3.3	4.1	3.7
Thinks the government regulates business too much / Thinks the government should regulate business more	5.4	4.8	6.2	5.9	6.0	5.0	5.1	4.7	6.4	5.7
Would be prepared to use military force to protect foreign allies / Would use military force only in the event of a direct threat to the UK	5.9	5.4	6.3	5.4	5.8	5.9	5.2	5.5	6.1	6.6
Was in favour of austerity / Was opposed to austerity	5.7	4.5	6.9	6.1	6.3	5.1	4.5	4.4	7.2	6.4
Is more interested in economic growth and competitiveness / Is more interested in equality and workers' rights	5.5	4.1	6.7	5.8	6.2	4.8	4.3	4.0	7.0	6.1
Thinks business owners and managers should make decisions about their companies / Thinks workers and unions should have more say in how businesses are run	4.9	3.5	6.1	5.1	5.4	4.2	3.8	3.4	6.2	5.8
Sees globalisation as a positive thing that the UK should embrace / Sees globalisation as a negative thing that the UK should resist	4.3	4.2	4.3	3.6	3.9	4.6	3.7	4.4	4.0	4.9
Believes British law does a good job of treating different people equally / Wants to do more to give new rights to minority groups	4.1	2.9	5.1	4.5	4.9	3.1	3.5	2.6	5.5	4.1
Thinks the threat of climate change is exaggerated / Wants more investment in green energy and big cuts in carbon emissions to tackle climate change	6.8	5.9	7.7	8.2	7.9	5.8	6.8	5.5	8.3	6.6
Thinks immigrants to the UK should learn English and subscribe to British culture and values / Is happy for immigrants to continue with their own language and culture	3.1	1.8	3.9	3.8	4.1	1.8	2.7	1.4	4.6	2.4
Is more concerned about national security, terrorism and crime / Is more concerned about protecting people's privacy and civil rights	3.8	2.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	2.8	3.1	2.2	5.1	3.6
Wants to maintain and increase the UK's spending on aid to poorer countries / Thinks some of the money currently spent on aid should be used in the UK instead	6.8	7.8	6.0	5.4	5.6	8.0	6.7	8.3	5.2	7.6
Thinks same-sex couples should have exactly the same rights as heterosexual couples, including the right to marry / Thinks same-sex couples should not have all the rights that heterosexual married couples have	3.1	3.9	2.3	1.9	2.2	3.9	3.4	4.2	1.8	3.3
Consistently represents what I think / Tries to represent a range of opinions even if that means I sometimes disagree with it	5.4	5.3	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.2	5.7	5.5

		2017 GE vote			EU ref vote			2017 GE + EU ref		
	ALL	C	L	LD	R	L	CR	CL	LR	LL
Mean 0-10										
Prefers to guarantee people's rights through laws made in the UK by parliament / Prefers to guarantee people's rights by signing up to international agreements and charters	3.8	2.5	4.7	4.9	5.0	2.4	3.6	2.0	5.4	3.2
Prefers to act independently in international affairs even if it means the UK being a lone voice / Prefers to act in conjunction with other countries even if it means compromising on the UK's position	4.4	3.4	5.0	5.4	5.4	3.2	4.6	2.9	5.6	3.8
Strongly associated with my part of the UK / Not associated with any particular part of the UK	5.2	5.0	5.4	6.4	5.6	4.8	5.4	4.8	5.8	4.7
Tries to protect people from making bad choices / Prefers to let people make their own choices even if they are unhealthy or risky	5.0	5.2	4.8	4.7	4.7	5.2	4.8	5.4	4.7	5.0
Tries to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor / Thinks the gap between rich and poor doesn't matter much as long as the poor are getting better off	4.1	5.0	3.1	3.6	3.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	2.9	3.6
Emphasises the importance of community and society / Emphasises individual rights and opportunities	4.2	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.4	3.6	4.1
Emphasises the importance of prison as a punishment and deterrent / Emphasises the importance of rehabilitation	4.6	3.4	5.4	6.1	5.7	3.3	4.4	2.9	6.1	4.0

6. How important is each of the following when it comes to your own identity, where 0 means it doesn't matter to you at all and 10 means it is very important to you?

		2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
%	ALL	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Bring British	6.3	7.6	5.9	5.9	5.8	7.3	7.3	7.7	5.4	7.0
Bring English/Scottish/Welsh	5.7	6.7	5.1	4.4	4.9	6.9	5.8	7.1	4.4	6.6
Bring from my local area	5.1	5.5	4.9	4.4	4.7	5.6	5.2	5.7	4.5	5.7
Bring part of a global society	4.7	4.1	5.4	6.1	5.9	3.8	5.2	3.7	6.1	4.2
Being European	3.7	2.7	4.5	5.7	5.4	2.2	4.4	2.0	5.5	2.7
Being part of my social class	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.6	4.2

7. If you were forced to choose, which would you prefer to see?

		2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
%	ALL	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Britain becoming more like America	28	43	14	9	9	47	16	54	6	31
Britain becoming more like other countries in Europe	72	57	86	91	91	53	84	46	94	69

8. Please say whether you see each of the following more as a friend and ally of the UK, or as an adversary or threat to the UK – where 0 means a close friend or ally and 10 means very much an adversary or threat, and 5 means neither:

		2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
Mean 0-10	ALL	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Canada	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.7	2.9
USA	3.8	3.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.2	3.6	2.8	4.8	3.8
Germany	4.0	4.5	3.6	3.0	3.1	4.8	3.6	4.9	3.0	4.5
France	4.0	4.6	3.5	3.1	3.3	4.8	3.9	5.0	3.1	4.4
Japan	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.7
The European Union	4.6	5.7	3.7	2.8	3.0	6.2	4.1	6.4	2.7	5.7
Israel	5.4	4.9	5.6	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.1	4.8	5.6	5.8
China	5.9	6.1	5.9	6.4	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.8
Russia	7.2	7.6	7.3	7.8	7.4	7.3	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.1

STAGE TWO POLL

Imagine that two new political parties are formed in the UK. The new parties would compete in elections against the existing parties. Both parties would have a complete manifesto, but here is a selection of their policy positions:

New Party A: Thinks the problem with today's main political parties is that they have become too extreme; Emphasises the importance of community and society; Is happy with current or higher levels of immigration into the UK; Supports aid to poorer countries; Wants much more action to tackle climate change; Favours working closely with other countries; Wants to retain the closest possible links with the EU after Brexit; Promotes rehabilitation in the criminal justice system; Strongly supports rights for same-sex couples

New Party B: Thinks the problem with today's main political parties is that they are too similar and don't listen to what ordinary people want; Aims to reduce immigration into the UK; Takes a tough line on law and order; Thinks the threat of climate change has been exaggerated; Believes much of the money spent on international aid should be used in the UK instead; Prefers the UK to act independently in world affairs and wants few formal ties with the EU after Brexit; Argues that traditional values have been wrongly neglected; Thinks the government has become too much of a nanny state.

9. Whether or not you would vote for them, which of the two new parties sounds more attractive to you?

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		Current parties	
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Too extreme	Too alike
New Party A	32		13	51	62	59	8	40	23
New Party B	34		58	19	12	12	61	31	48
Neither of them is attractive	34		29	30	26	29	31	29	30

10. Which of the existing political parties does New Party A sound most like?

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		Current parties	
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Too extreme	Too alike
Labour	27		34	30	12	23	33	25	29
Liberal Democrats	16		16	17	41	23	12	20	14
Conservatives	9		9	10	6	6	13	8	12
Greens	8		5	11	10	11	5	8	7
Another party	2		2	2	2	3	2	3	1
UKIP	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
It doesn't sound like any of them	38		33	31	27	33	34	34	35

11. Which of the existing political parties does New Party B sound most like?

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		Current parties	
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Too extreme	Too alike
UKIP	29	29	29	34	44	36	27	32	31
Conservatives	23	23	22	28	29	30	19	27	18
Labour	5	5	4	7	4	5	5	5	6
Liberal Democrats	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Another party	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	2
Greens	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
It doesn't sound like any of them	39	39	41	28	19	26	44	33	41

12. Imagine both new parties were up and running and had candidates in every constituency at the next general election. Which party would you vote for?

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		Current parties	
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Too extreme	Too alike
New Party B	20	20	34	12	7	6	37	20	32
New Party A	16	16	7	26	38	31	4	27	12
Conservative	12	12	31	1	3	9	18	9	7
Labour	10	10	0	26	1	15	5	4	7
Liberal Democrats	3	3	1	3	26	6	1	5	3
Greens	3	3	1	4	2	4	1	3	3
UKIP	2	2	3	1	1	0	5	3	4
Another party	3	3	1	2	3	4	3	4	4
Would not vote	9	9	3	4	1	3	6	6	12
Don't know	21	21	18	21	17	21	18	18	17

Those naming a party, weighted by likelihood to vote:

	%	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		Current parties	
			Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Too extreme	Too alike
New Party B	27		42	15	8	7	48	26	42
New Party A	24		9	35	47	41	5	37	18
Conservative	18		40	2	4	12	25	12	11
Labour	14		1	35	2	20	7	6	10
Liberal Democrats	5		1	4	32	8	2	7	4
Greens	4		1	5	3	6	1	4	4
UKIP	3		4	1	1	0	6	3	5
Another party	5		2	3	4	6	4	6	6

13. Imagine that at the general election [the party you voted for] didn't win enough seats to go into government by itself. Which other party would you most like it to try and form a coalition government with?

	Con voters	New Party A voters	Lab voters	New Party B voters	Lib Dem voters	Green voters	UKIP voters
Conservative	0	8	2	33	8	2	16
New Party A	9	0	27	3	32	29	2
Labour	2	30	0	8	13	19	3
New Party B	31	1	8	0	4	3	40
Liberal Democrats	19	30	11	4	0	20	2
Greens	4	15	19	2	15	0	7
UKIP	11	1	1	26	1	2	0
Scottish National Party	0	5	10	1	9	8	1
Plaid Cymru	1	0	2	0	2	2	1
Another party	5	1	1	4	3	3	7

14. [Those who did not vote for New Party A or New Party B] **Why did you choose not to vote for New Party A or New Party B? Please tick all that apply.**

	%	ALL	Con voters	Lab voters	Lib Dem voters	Green voters	UKIP voters
I didn't like the policies that were described for either of the new parties		23	29	19	33	27	20
Voting for one of the new parties would be a wasted vote		19	27	28	20	12	19
Voting for a new party might help the party I like least to win the election		18	28	28	23	19	28
I support one of the other parties		14	24	26	27	23	15
Another reason		16	8	7	9	19	11
Don't know		24	8	15	6	13	13

15. [Those saying they would vote for New Party A or New Party B] **How much would each of the following either attract you or put you off voting for [the new party you voted for] if it came to a real general election?**

	%	New Party A voters	New Party B voters		%	New Party A voters	New Party B voters
If the new party had a number of former Conservative MPs in senior positions				If the election looked very close between the two main parties			
Would put me off completely	22	15		Would put me off completely	9	10	
Would be a concern	33	26		Would be a concern	23	23	
Would make no difference	35	40		Would make no difference	50	53	
Would be attractive	9	15		Would be attractive	8	6	
Would be a big reason to support	1	4		Would be a big reason to support	10	8	

	%	New Party A voters	New Party B voters		%	New Party A voters	New Party B voters
If the new party had a number of former Labour MPs in senior positions				If the new party was led by people who had no previous political experience			
Would put me off completely		8	36	Would put me off completely		13	12
Would be a concern		17	29	Would be a concern		39	33
Would make no difference		51	28	Would make no difference		38	39
Would be attractive		21	5	Would be attractive		7	11
Would be a big reason to support		3	2	Would be a big reason to support		2	5
If it looked as though the new party had little or no chance of winning							
Would put me off completely		9	14				
Would be a concern		36	25				
Would make no difference		48	51				
Would be attractive		2	3				
Would be a big reason to support		4	6				

About Lord Ashcroft

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is an international businessman, author, philanthropist and pollster. From 2005 to 2010 he was Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, having been its treasurer from 1998 to 2001. He is the founder and chairman of the board of Crimestoppers, a Trustee of the Imperial War Museum, chairman of the trustees of Ashcroft Technology Academy, Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University, and Treasurer of the International Democrat Union. From 2012 to 2018 he served as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Veterans' Transition.

Lord Ashcroft's political works include:

Smell The Coffee: A Wake-Up Call For The Conservative Party
Minority Verdict: The Conservative Party, The Voters And the 2010 Election
Pay Me Forty Quid And I'll Tell You: The 2015 Election Through The Eyes Of The Voters
Well, You Did Ask: Why The UK Voted To Leave The EU
Call Me Dave: The Unauthorised Biography Of David Cameron (with Isabel Oakeshott)
Hopes and Fears: Trump, Clinton, The Voters and The Future
The Lost Majority: The 2017 Election, The Conservative Party, The Voters & The Future

His other books include:

Victoria Cross Heroes
Special Ops Heroes
Heroes Of The Skies
George Cross Heroes
Special Forces Heroes
White Flag? An Examination Of The UK's Defence Capability