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Llywodraethiant Cymru

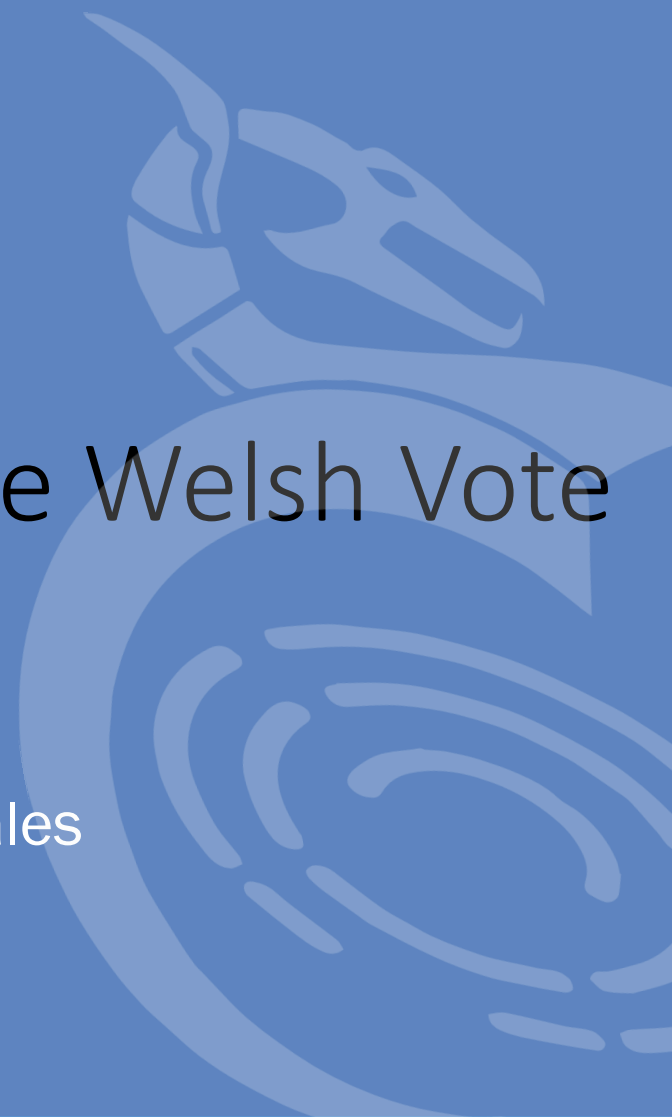
Wales Governance  
Centre

# Understanding the Reasons for the Welsh Vote

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Presentation to PPIW Conference on Brexit & Wales

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## *Why Did Wales Vote Leave?*

- Puzzling, given Wales' status as net beneficiary of EU membership – apparently against self-interest
- Also counter to self-image of Wales portrayed by much of the political/cultural elite: outward-looking, European nation
- And counter to referendum campaign stance of nearly all that elite

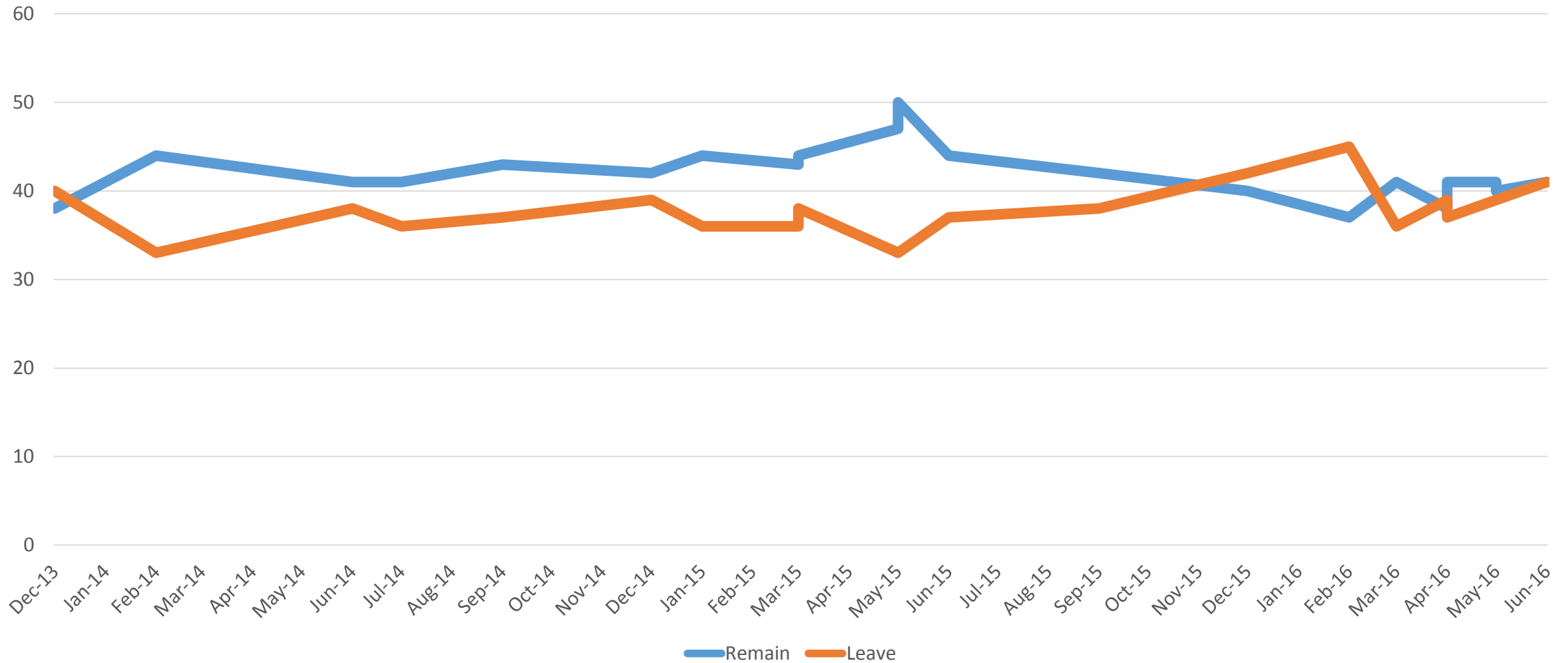


## *Point 1: The result was not a great surprise*

- Opinion polls on EU Referendum vote had been showing things very close in Wales for some time: generally had Remain ahead, but mostly had it very close
- But, as with Donald Trump, people couldn't quite accept that it might happen?



## EU Referendum Polls, Wales, Dec 2013 – June 2016





## *Point 2: There was little Welsh campaign*

- EU Referendum 7 weeks after devolved elections
- Welsh parties and news-media very thinly resourced; had thrown everything they had at May elections
- Therefore, little left for EU Referendum campaign, little work by party activists or Welsh-specific media coverage

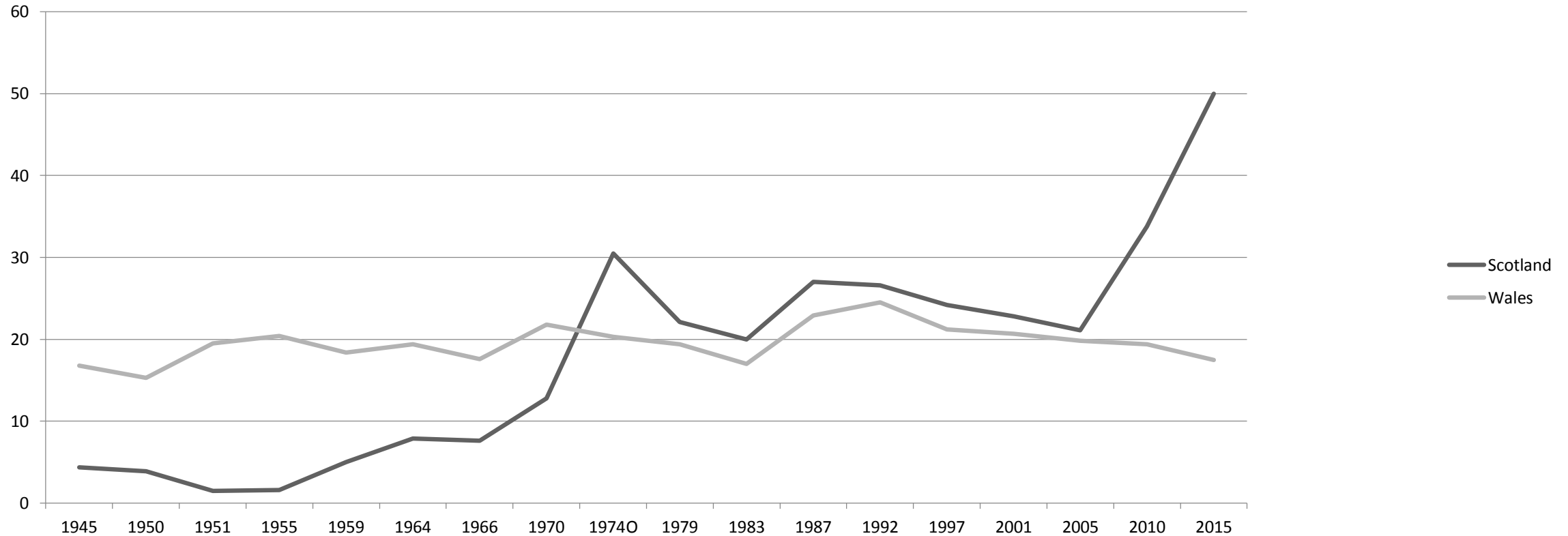


### *Point 3: Following Point 2 – one side of ‘bi-focal Wales’ emphasised in EU Referendum*

- Balsom et al (1983): Politics in Wales has a “bi-focal perspective”, Welsh as well as British
- No *general* pattern of Welsh voting patterns becoming more like those of England
- In May elections, Plaid Cymru gained ground and won 2 of 4 PCC elections in Wales



# Index of Dissimilarity, Scotland and Wales (compared to England), 1945-2015 General Elections





## *Point 4: Demographics of the vote: very similar in Wales to England*

- Similar sorts of *places* voted Remain and Leave in Wales as in England
- Similar sorts of *people* also voted Remain and Leave in Wales as in England





## *Point 4: Demographics of the vote: very similar in Wales to England*

- Similar sorts of *places* voted Remain and Leave in Wales as in England
- Similar sorts of *people* also voted Remain and Leave in Wales as in England (Age, Income, Education Level, National Identity)

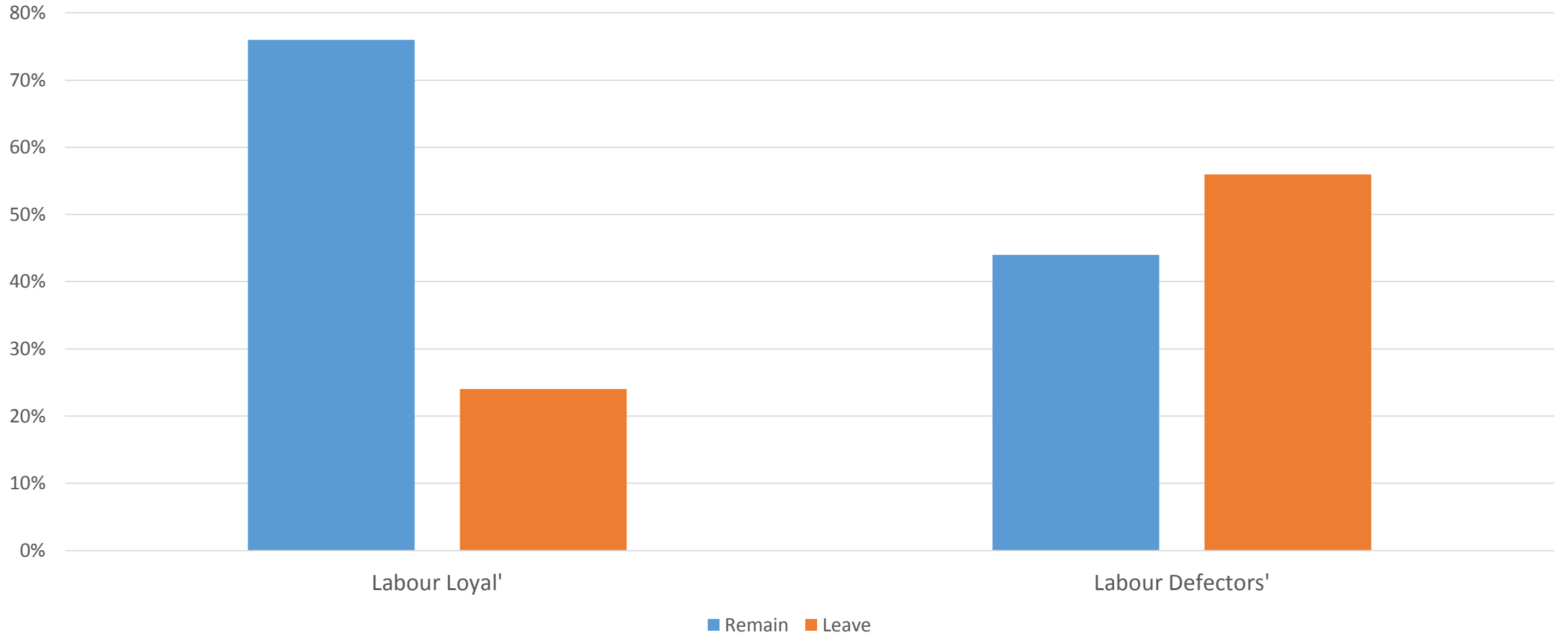


## *Point 5: Labour defectors were a key group*

- Those people remaining loyal to Labour were still quite significantly pro-Remain
- But those who had abandoned Labour since 2011 leaned clearly towards Leave



### EU Referendum Vote Intention, 2011 Labour Supporters (Source: WES2016, Post-Election Wave)





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