



# The Coalition's First Year: the public's verdict

A briefing from the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute

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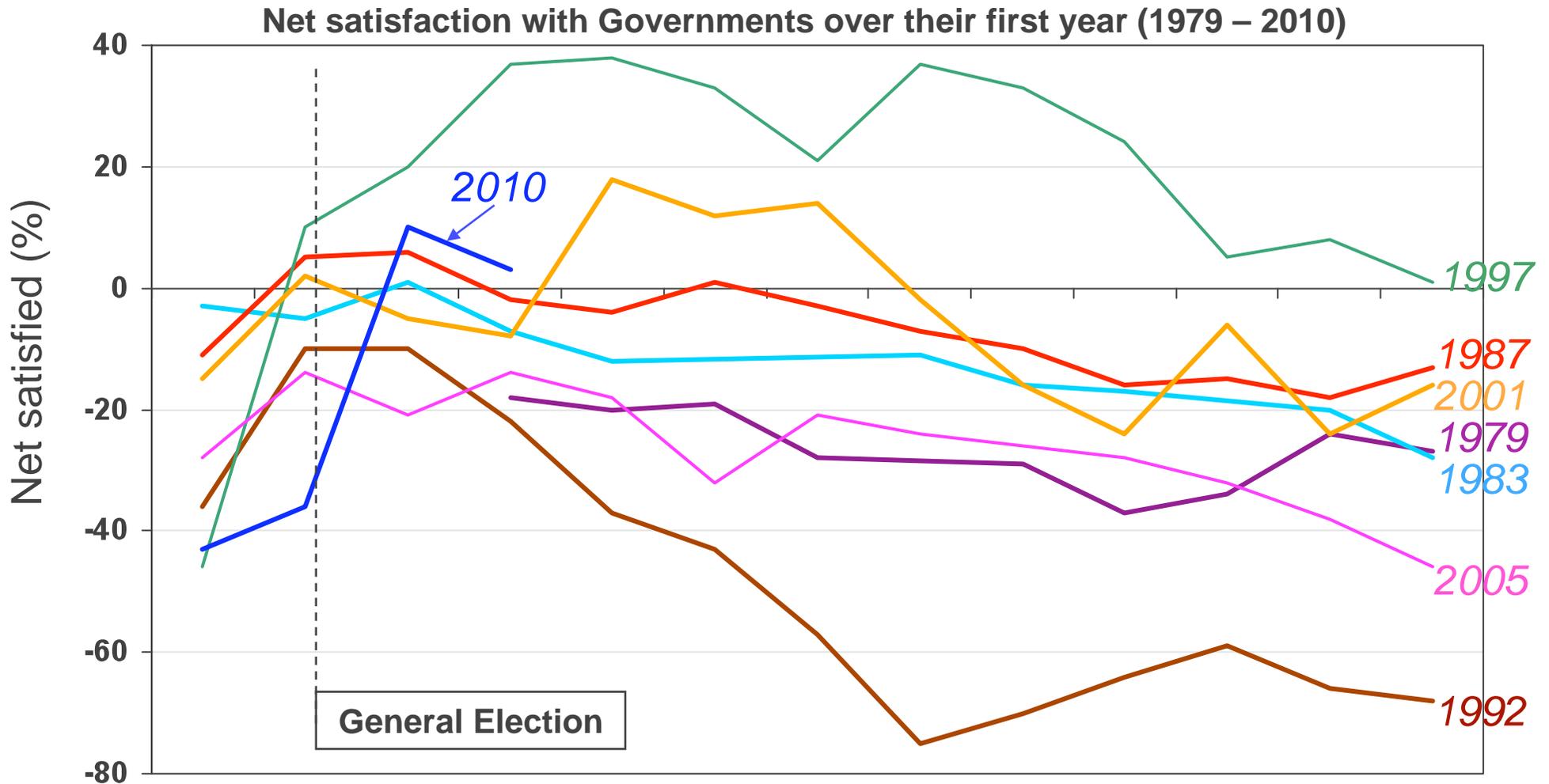
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In the beginning...

One hundred days in, the  
public were optimistic  
about the new  
government

# The government was rated more favourably at the 100 day mark than any since 1979, except for Blair in 1997

*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Government is running the country?*

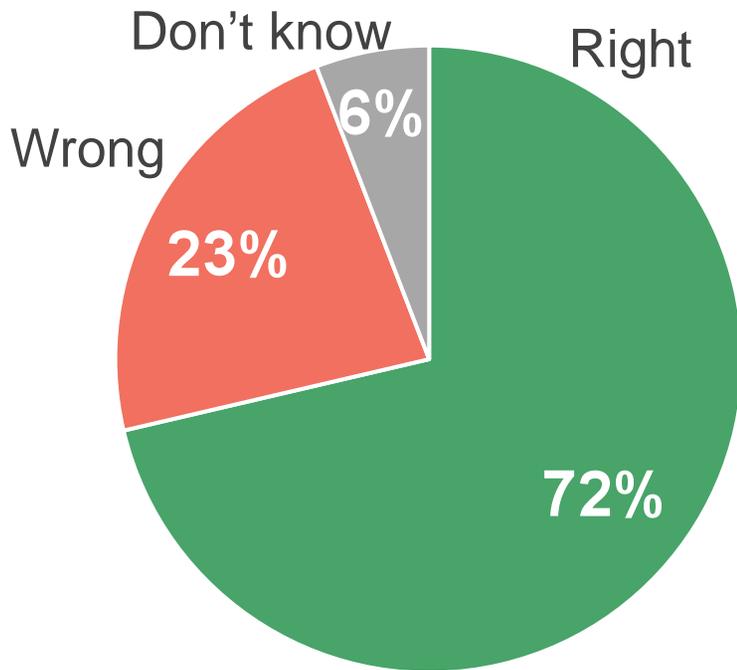


Base: c. 1,000 British adults each month; (July 2010: 1,009 adults)

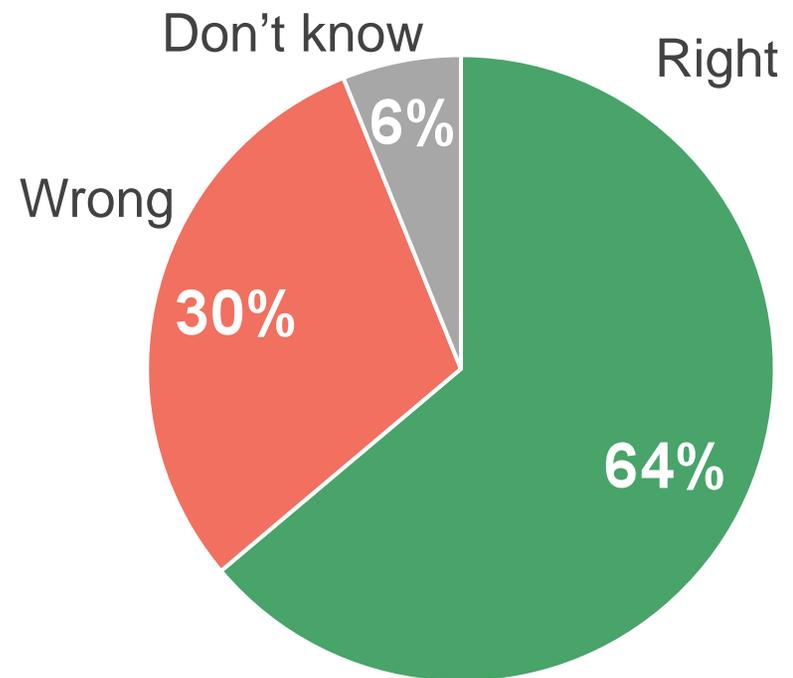
# Most thought Cameron and Clegg were right to form a coalition

*Do you think that David Cameron/Nick Clegg was right or wrong to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats/Conservatives?*

David Cameron



Nick Clegg



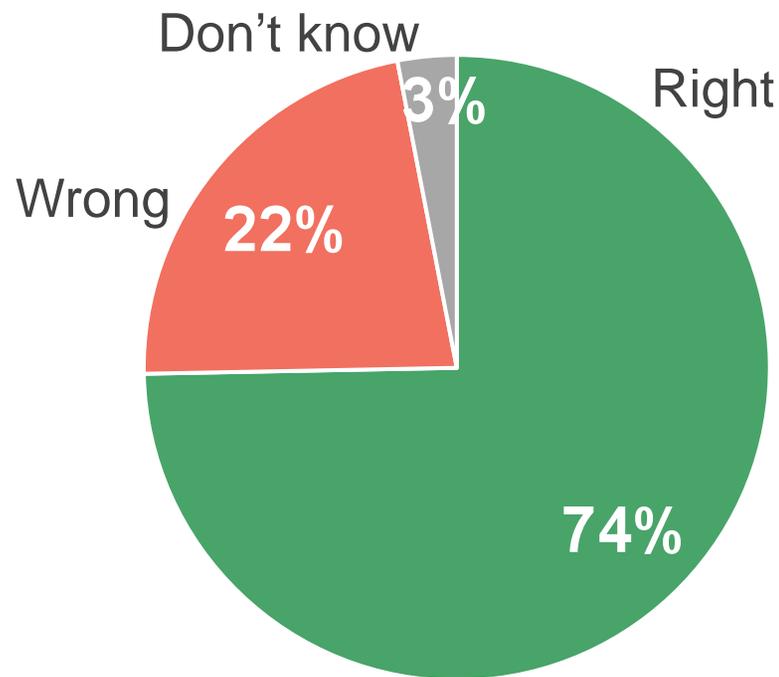
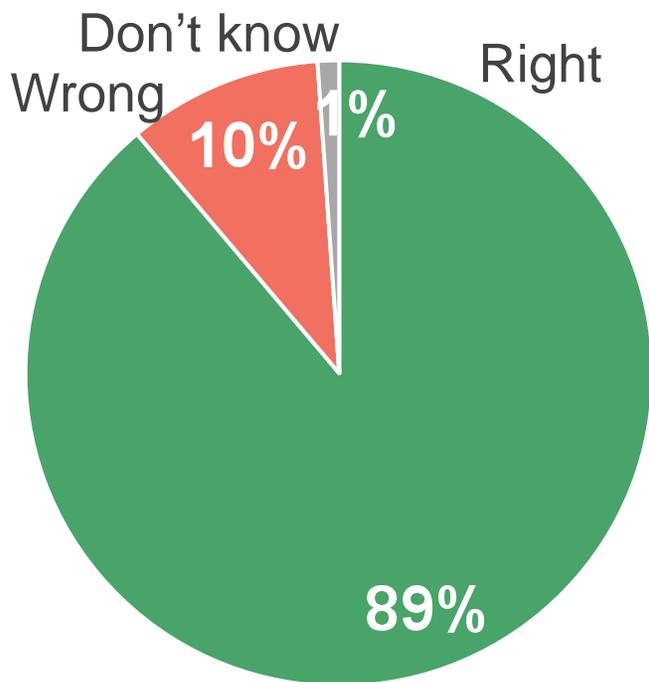
# Conservative and Lib Dem voters were supportive of their leaders' decisions, Lib Dems slightly less so

**Do you think that David Cameron was right or wrong to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats?**

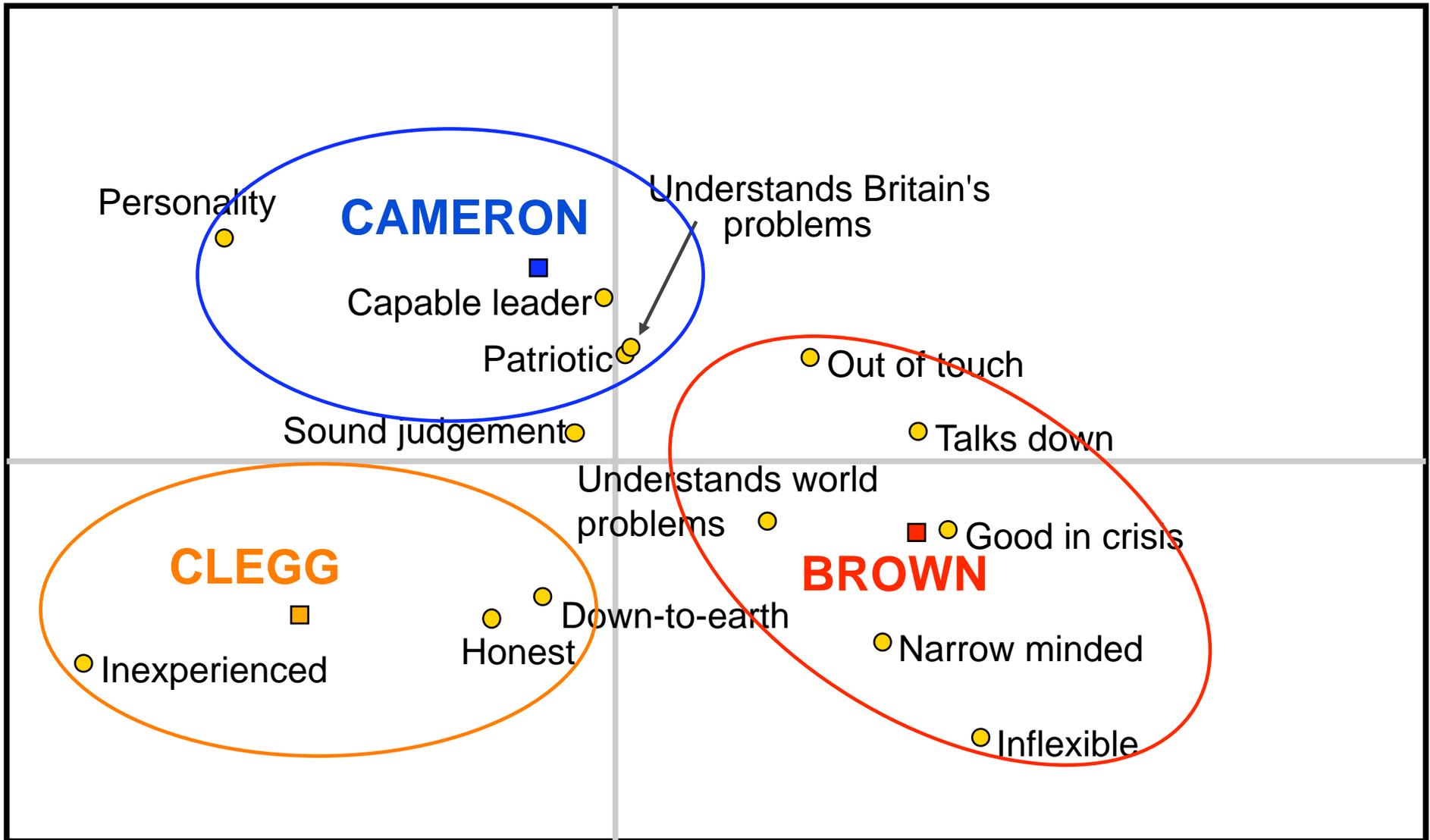
**Do you think that Nick Clegg was right or wrong to form a coalition with the Conservatives?**

Conservative voters

Liberal Democrat voters



# Cameron seen as capable and to understand Britain's problems, Clegg seen as honest and down-to-earth but inexperienced



# A year on: overall satisfaction

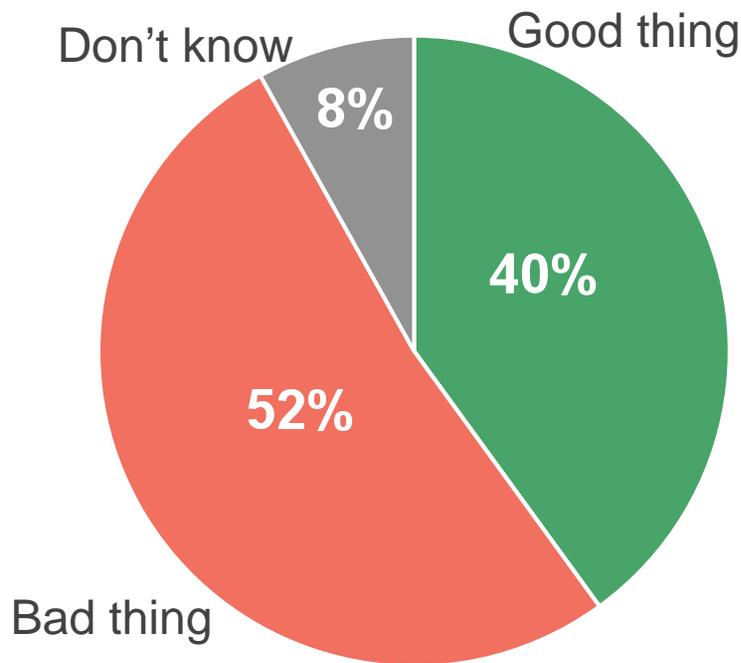
# Overview of the Coalition

- The public are increasingly **sceptical that hung parliaments are good for Britain**
- **Particular concerns about the unity of the Coalition**, with the Conservatives seen as making most of the decisions
- **Satisfaction with the performance of the government has increased since the start of the year**, although more people remain dissatisfied (55%) than satisfied (37%)
- **The Conservative party are faring better than their Coalition partners**, with their vote holding up at the local elections much more than the Lib Dems
- **Conservative and Lib Dem supporters differ** in their views about how well the **Coalition and its leaders** are doing, with Lib Dems consistently more dissatisfied

# Growing scepticism about Hung Parliaments in Britain

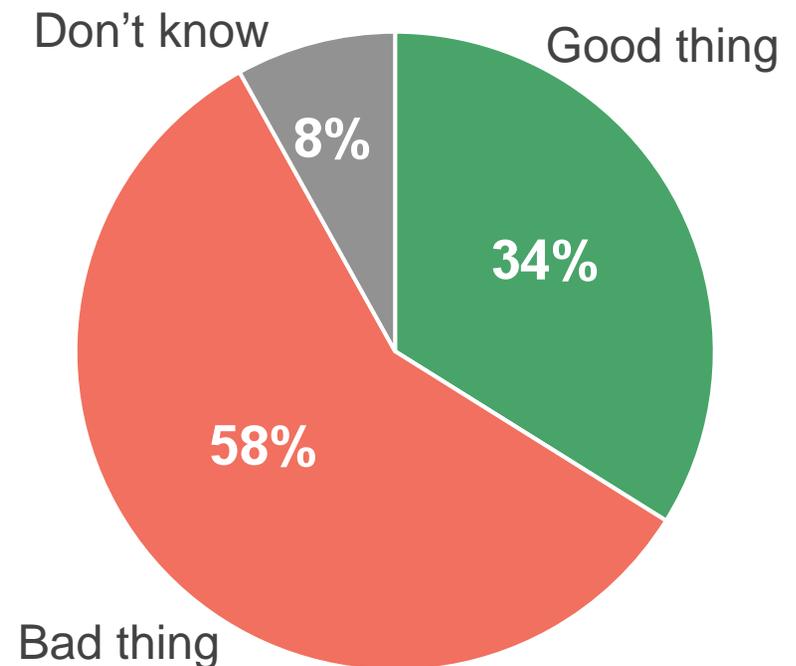
*Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing for the country that no party achieved an overall majority?*

May 2010



Base: 1,023 British adults 18+, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May 2010

April 2011



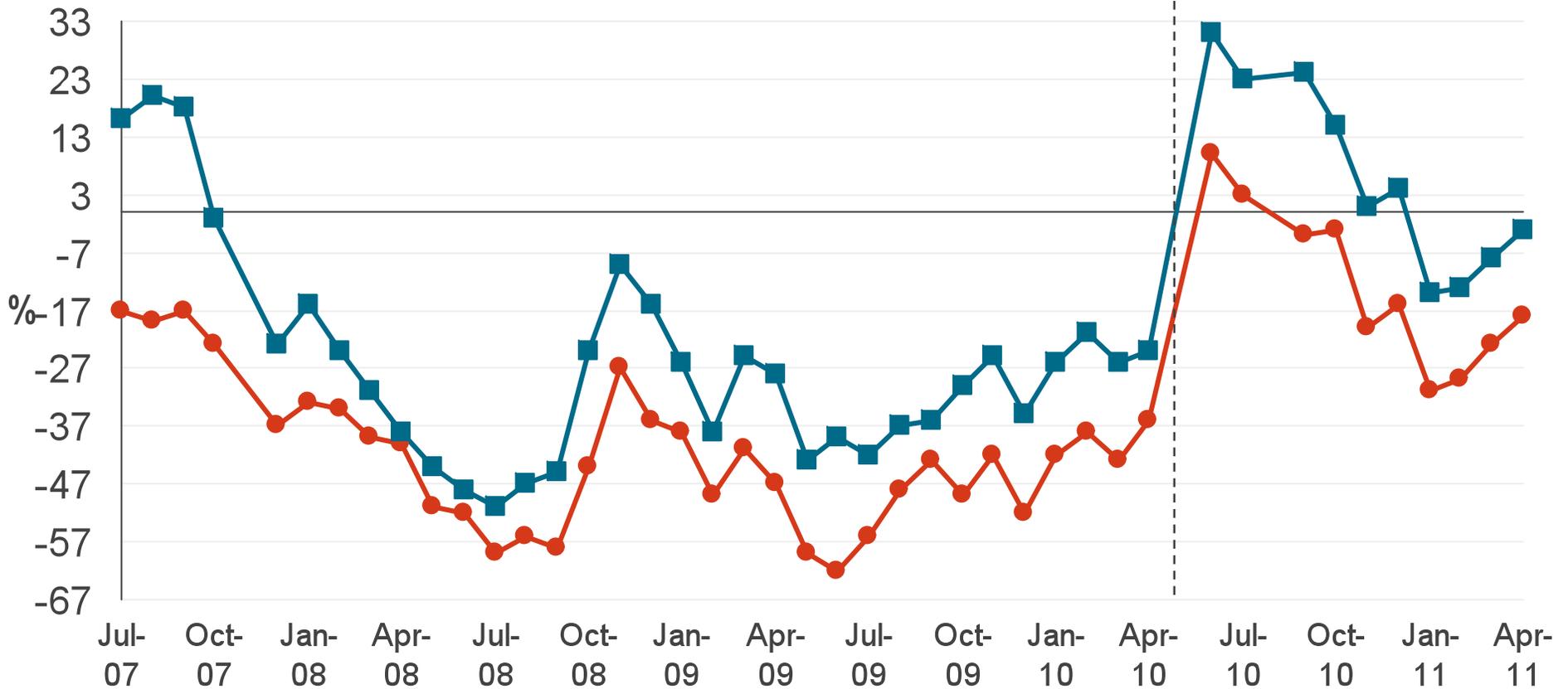
Base: 1,000 British adults 18+, 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> April 2011

# Net satisfaction with the Prime Minister and the government

Q How satisfied are you with the way  
...the government is running the country?  
...Gordon Brown/ David Cameron is doing his job as Prime Minister?

● Government ■ Brown/ Cameron

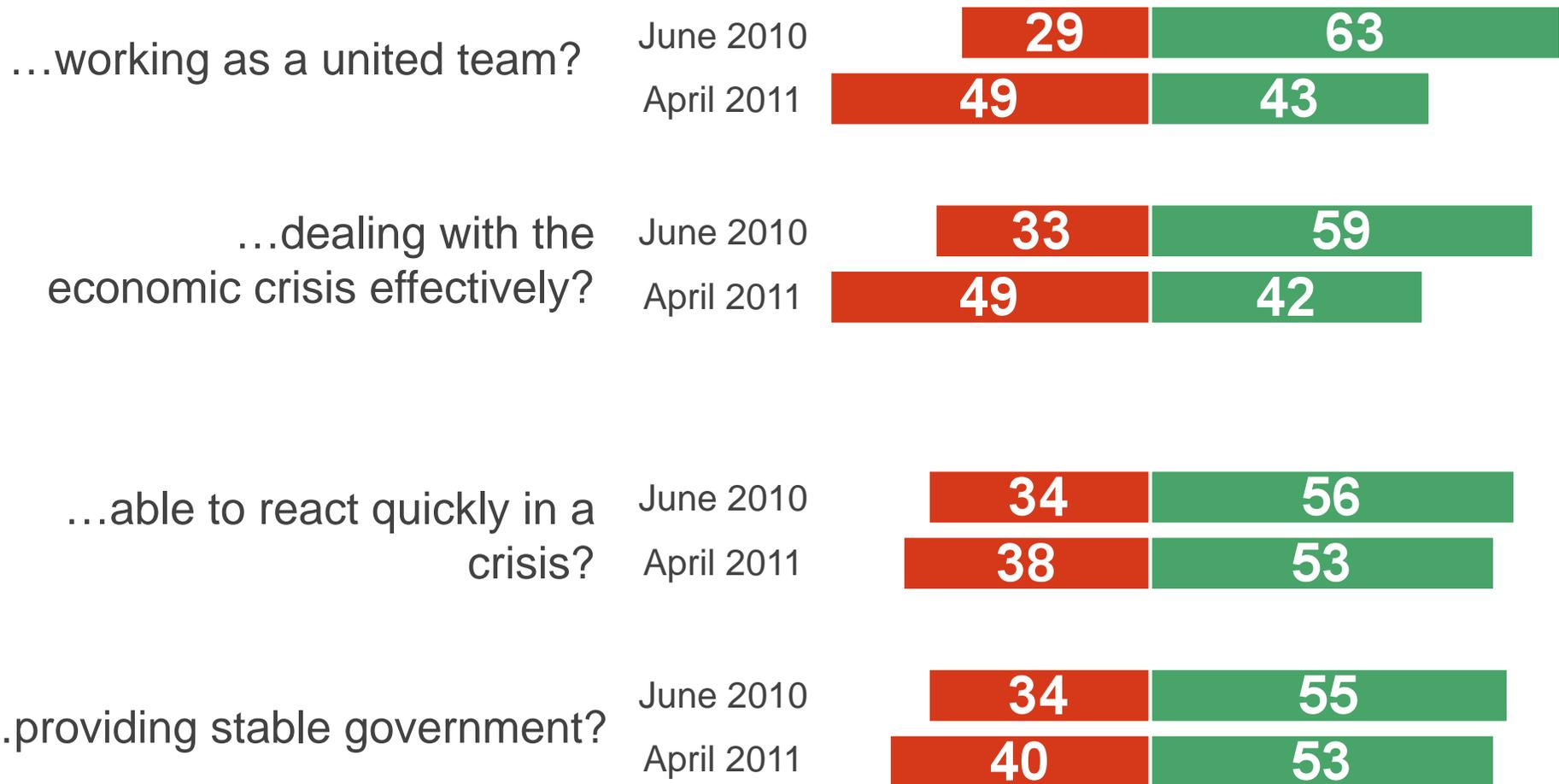
BROWN → CAMERON



# Image of the Coalition one year on

*Do you think that the Coalition government is or is not...*

■ % Is not ■ % Is

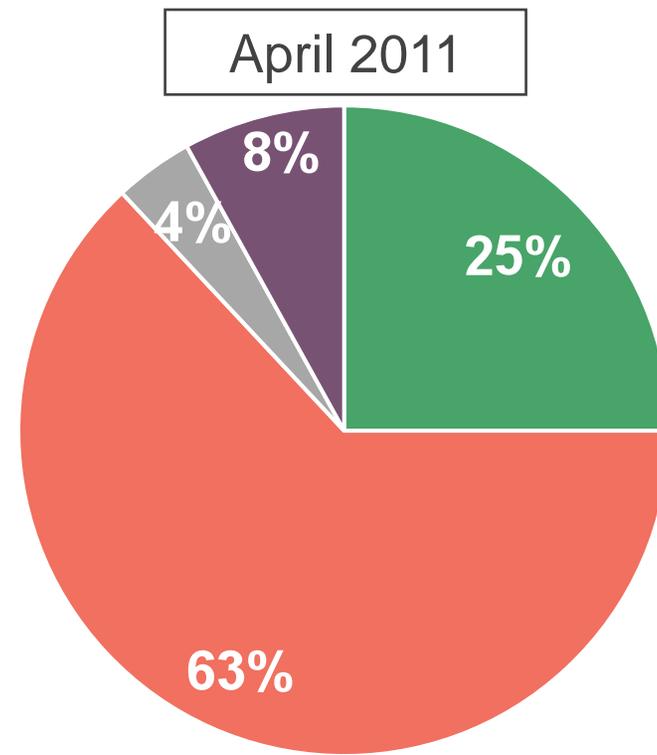
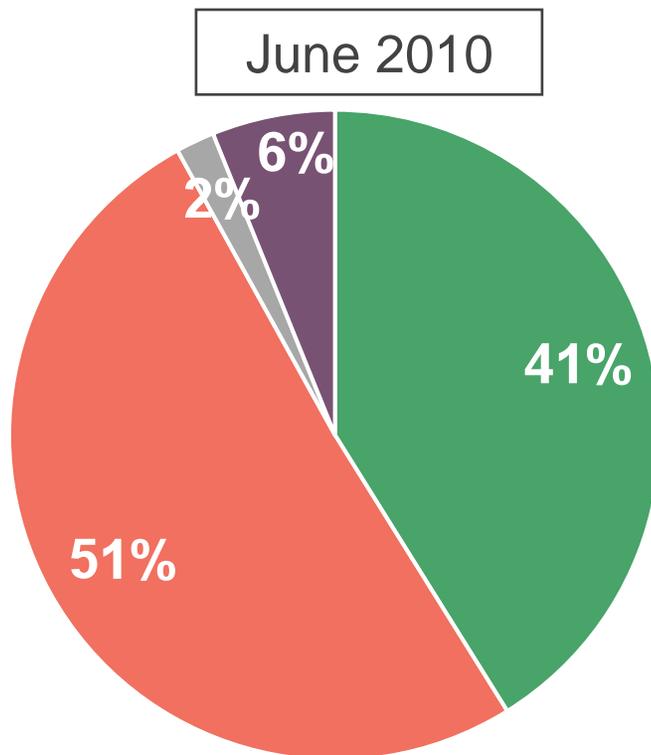


# Almost two-thirds think that the Conservatives are making most of the decisions in the government

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*From what you know so far, which of these comes closest to your view?*

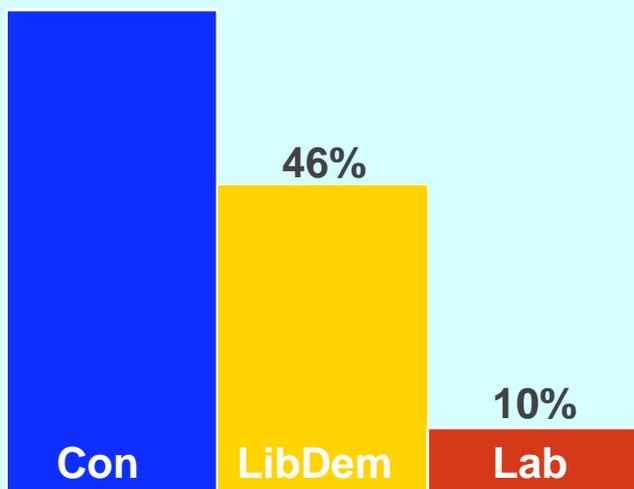
- The Coalition government is a **genuine coalition** in which decisions are made jointly between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats
- The **Conservatives are making most of the decisions** in the Coalition government
- Don't know
- Neither



# At a glance: how Conservative, Lib Dem and Labour supporters see the Coalition

### Satisfaction with government

72%

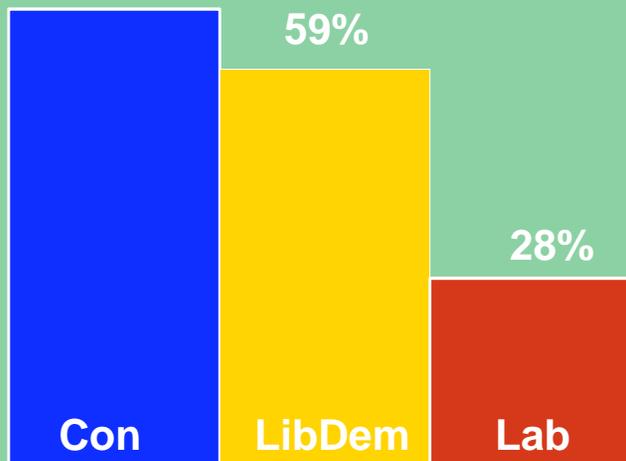


### Coalition is a united team

68%

59%

28%

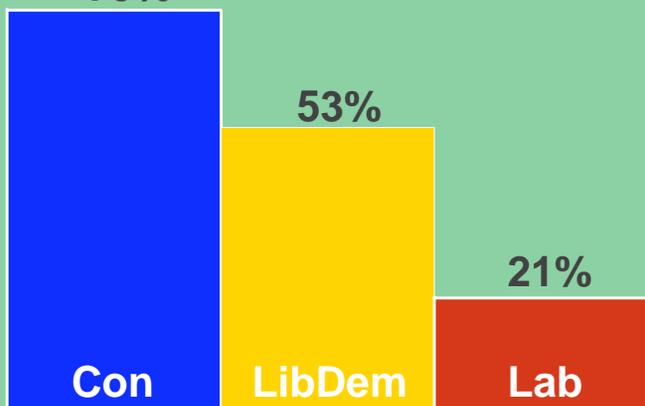


### Coalition dealing with economic crisis effectively

75%

53%

21%

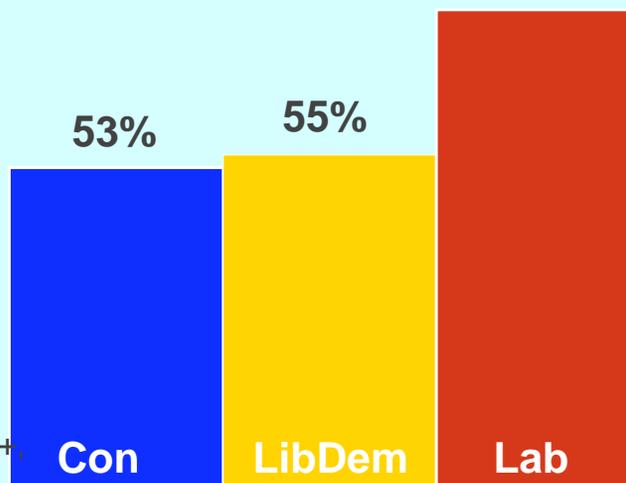


### Conservatives making most of the decisions in Coalition

79%

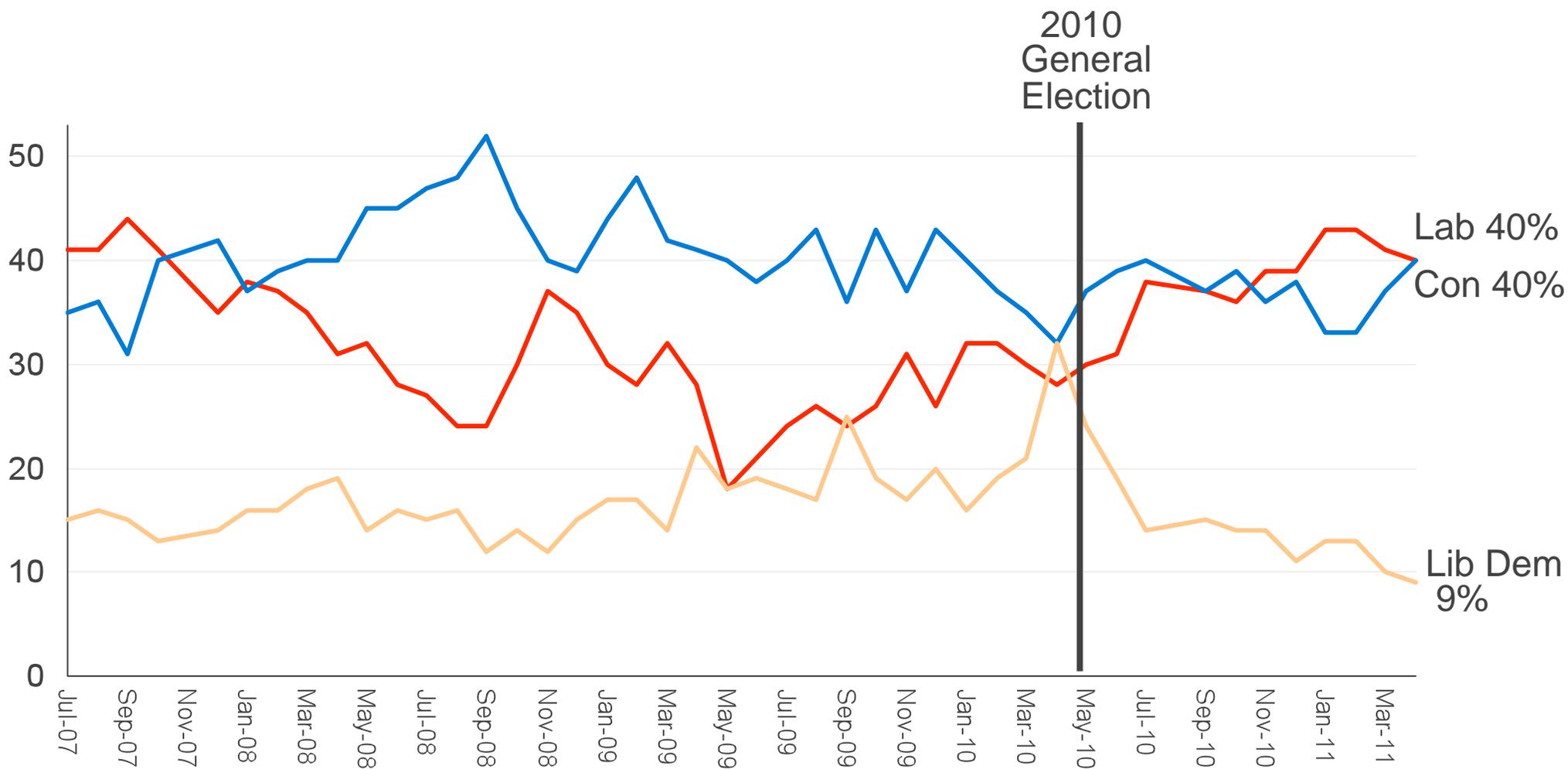
53%

55%



# Voting Intentions July 07 – April 11 (all certain to vote)

*How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?*



Base: c. 1,000 British adults each month through June 2008; c. 500 British adults thereafter

Source: Reuters/Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

# And how they would vote now...

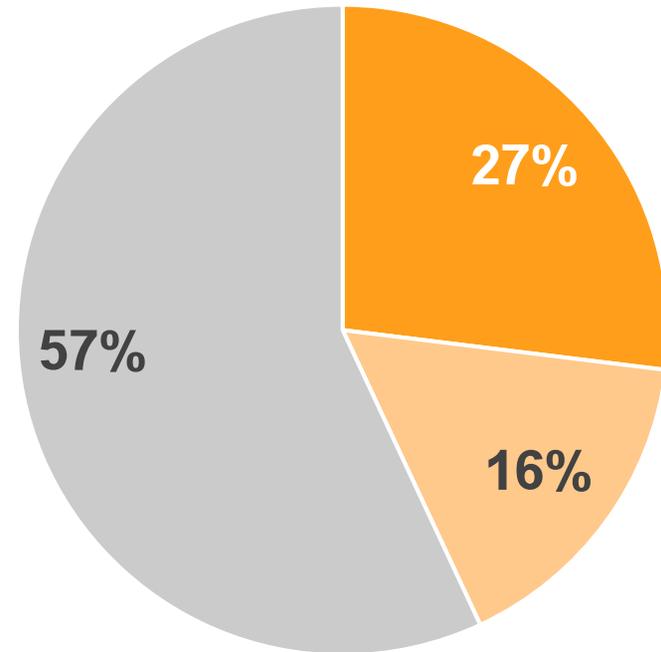
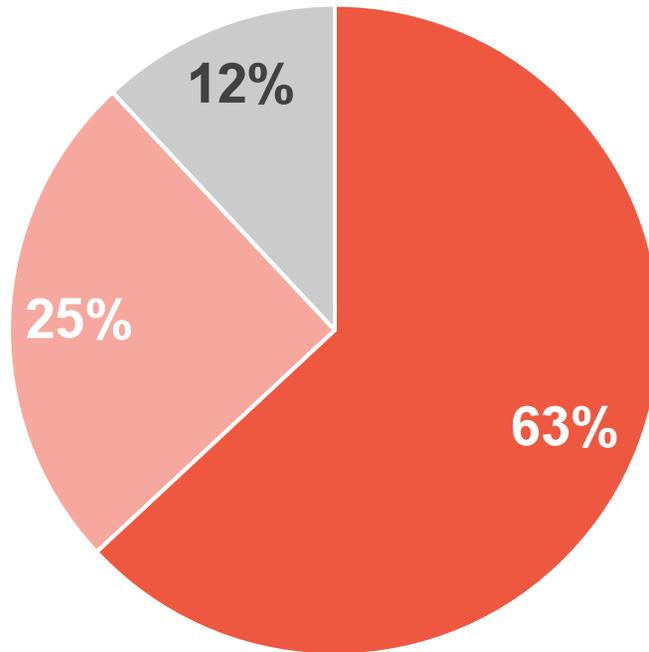
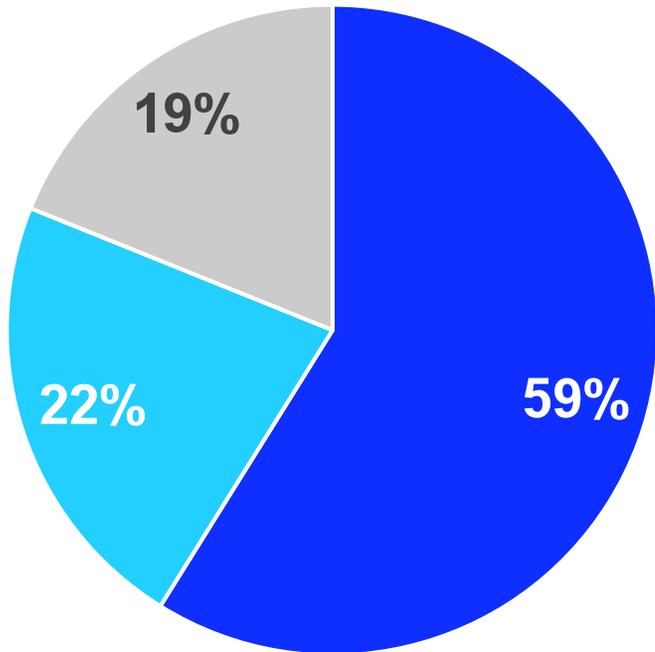
*How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?*

Voted Tory  
in 2010

Voted Labour  
in 2010

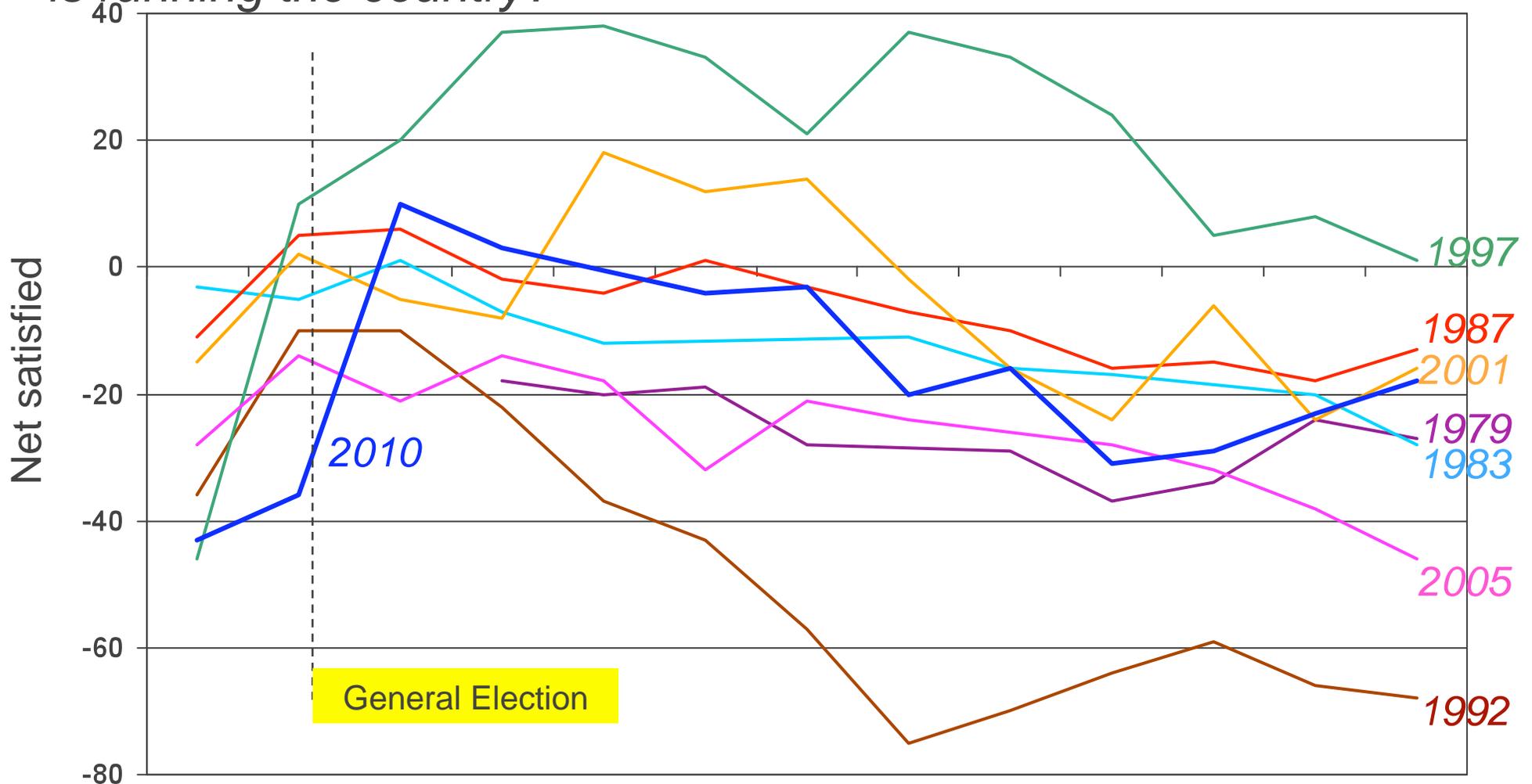
Voted LD  
in 2010

- ■ ■ Still Conservative/Labour/LibDem and certain to vote
- ■ ■ Still Conservative/Labour/Lib Dem but not certain to vote
- Not Conservative/Labour/LibDem any more



# But one year in, satisfaction with the Coalition is holding up fairly respectably compared to other governments

*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the Government is running the country?*



Base: c. 1,000 British adults each month

Ipsos MORI

Note: Data collected prior to May 2008 was collected via face-to-face methodology; data collected from June 2008 was via telephone

Source: Reuters/Ipsos MORI Political Monitor



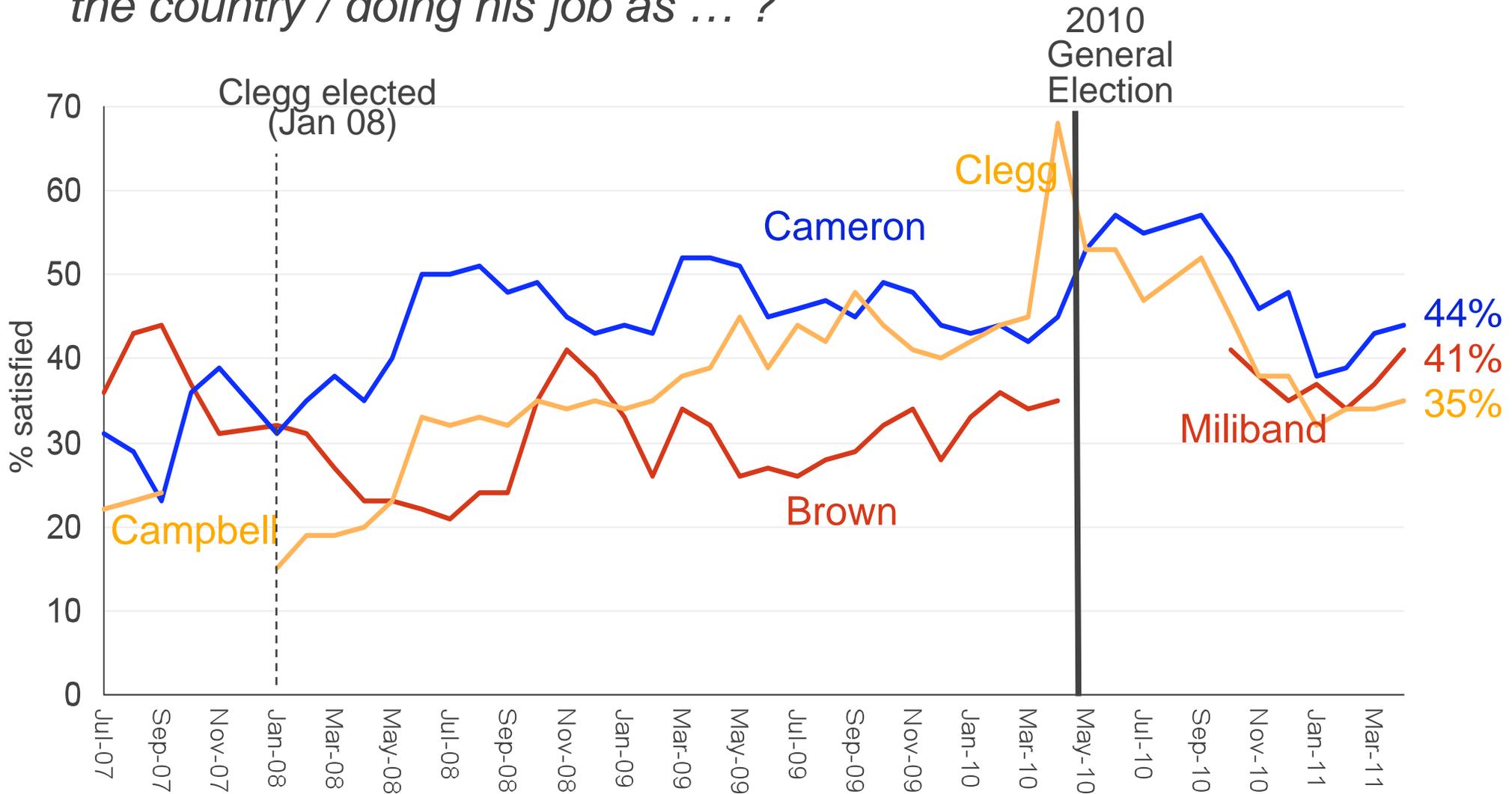
# The leaders

# The party leaders

- **Cameron maintains his lead as most capable Prime Minister** among half of the public. He is more popular than Thatcher or Brown after a year in office but trails Blair and Major at the equivalent point in their Premiership.
- **Cameron is also the most 'liked' leader**, by 47% of the public, compared with Clegg (40%) and Miliband (36%).
- However, in terms of parties, the story is reversed; **the Labour party is the most liked (45%)** with 40% liking the Liberal Democrats, and 37% liking the Conservative party. Put simply, **Cameron is more popular than his party, and the opposite is true for Ed Miliband.**
- **Satisfaction with Miliband is in line with Cameron a year into his leadership of the Opposition.** His ratings have improved since last year, although only a quarter say he would make the most capable PM.
- **Over half of the public are dissatisfied with Clegg as Deputy PM**, and a third of Lib Dem supporters are dissatisfied.

# Little to separate Cameron and Miliband in terms of satisfaction ratings

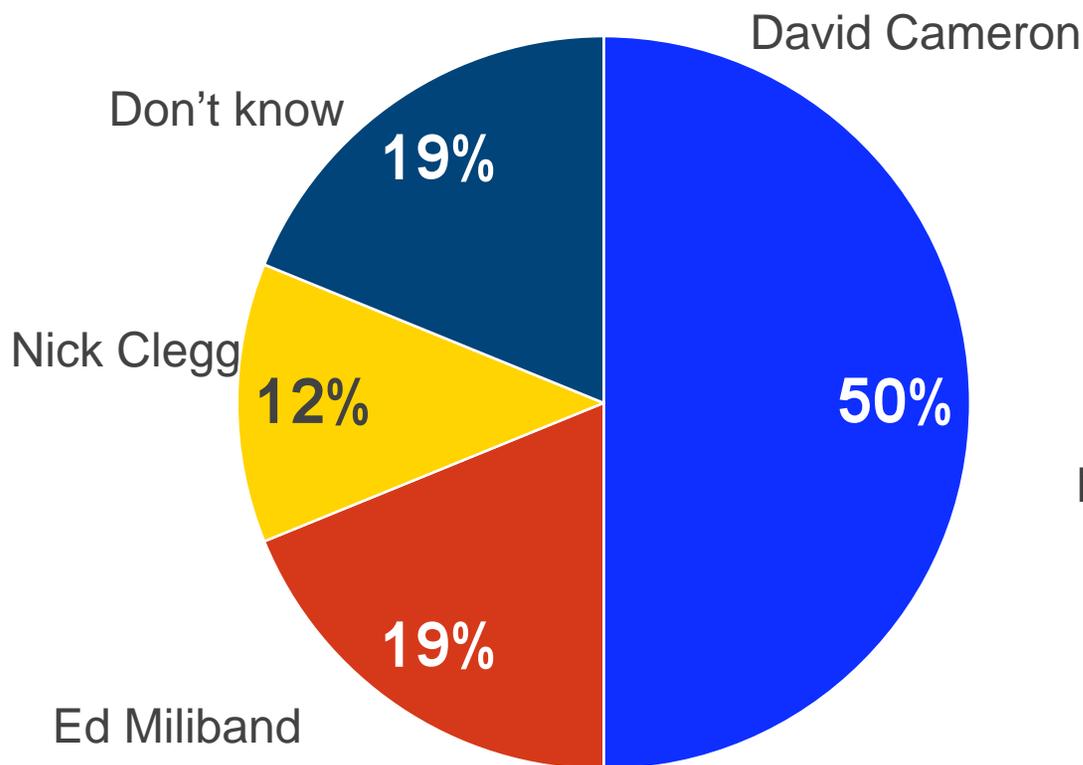
*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way ... is running the country / doing his job as ... ?*



# Cameron leads as most capable PM although Miliband's ratings have improved

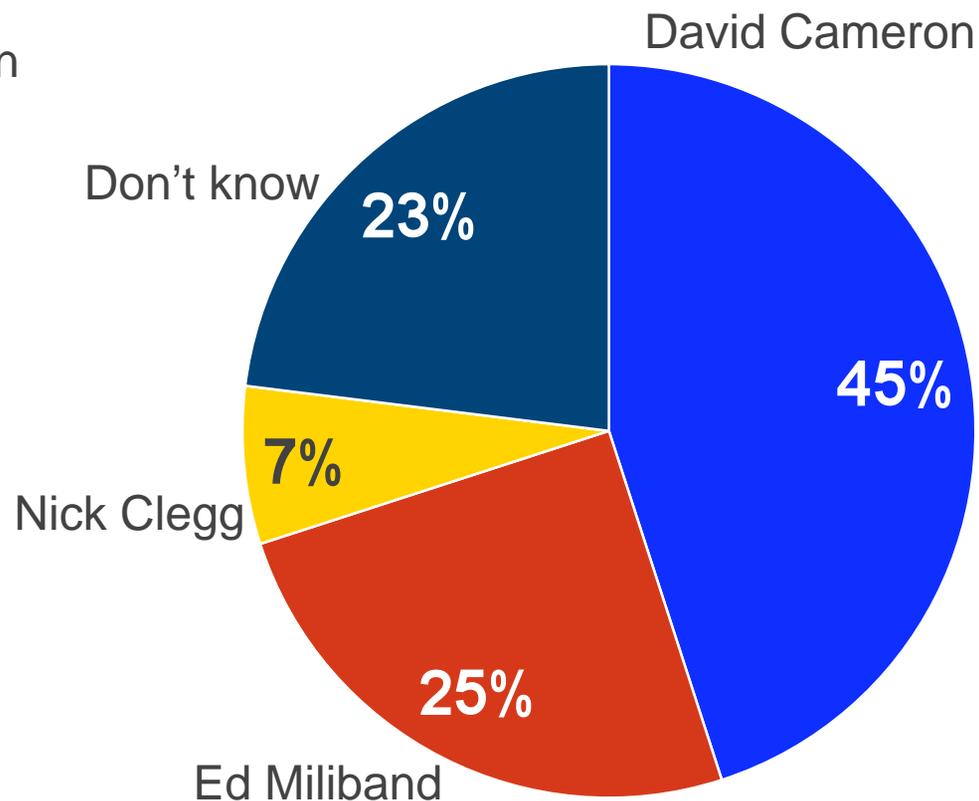
*Who do you think would make the most capable Prime Minister, David Cameron, Nick Clegg or Ed Miliband?*

September 2010



Base: 505 British adults 18+, 10<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
Ipsos MORI

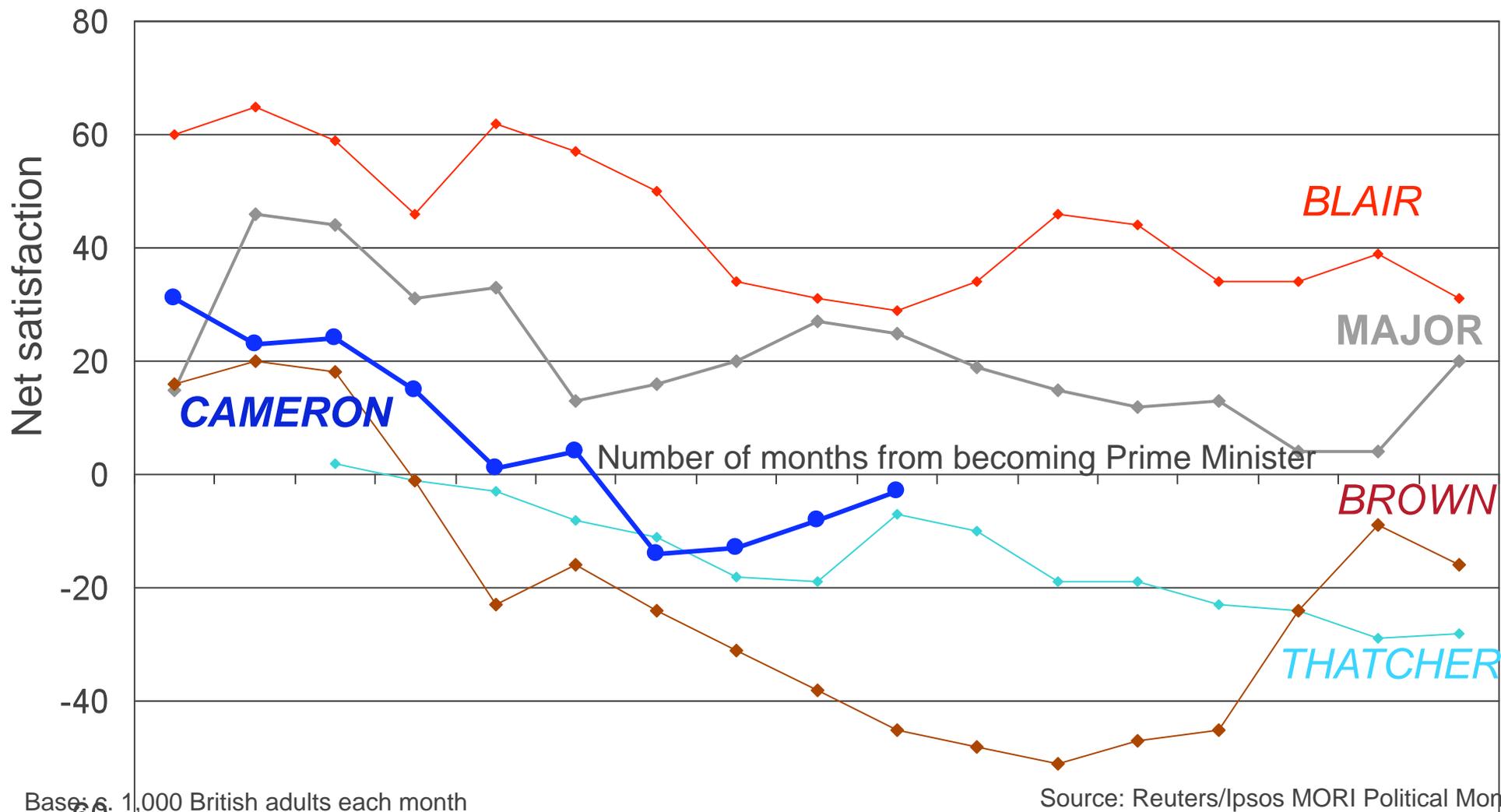
April 2011



Base: 1,000 British adults 18+ 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2011  
Source: Ipsos MORI/Reuters Political Monitor Ipsos

# Public satisfaction with PM Cameron is higher at the end of his first year than for Brown and in line with Thatcher...

*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way ... is doing his / her job as Prime Minister?*



Base: 6,100 British adults each month

Source: Reuters/Ipsos MORI Political Monitor



Note: Data collected prior to May 2008 was collected via face-to-face methodology; data collected from June 2008 was via telephone



# ...but his party is the most disliked

	Miliband	Cameron	Clegg
	%	%	%
I like him and I like his party	25	30	24
I like him but I do not like his party	11	17	16
I do not like him but I like his party	20	7	16
I do not like him and I do not like his party	31	39	35
Don't know	13	7	9
<b>Total like him</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Total do not like him</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Total like his party</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Total do not like his party</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>

Base: 1,162 British adults 18+, 21st - 24th January 2011

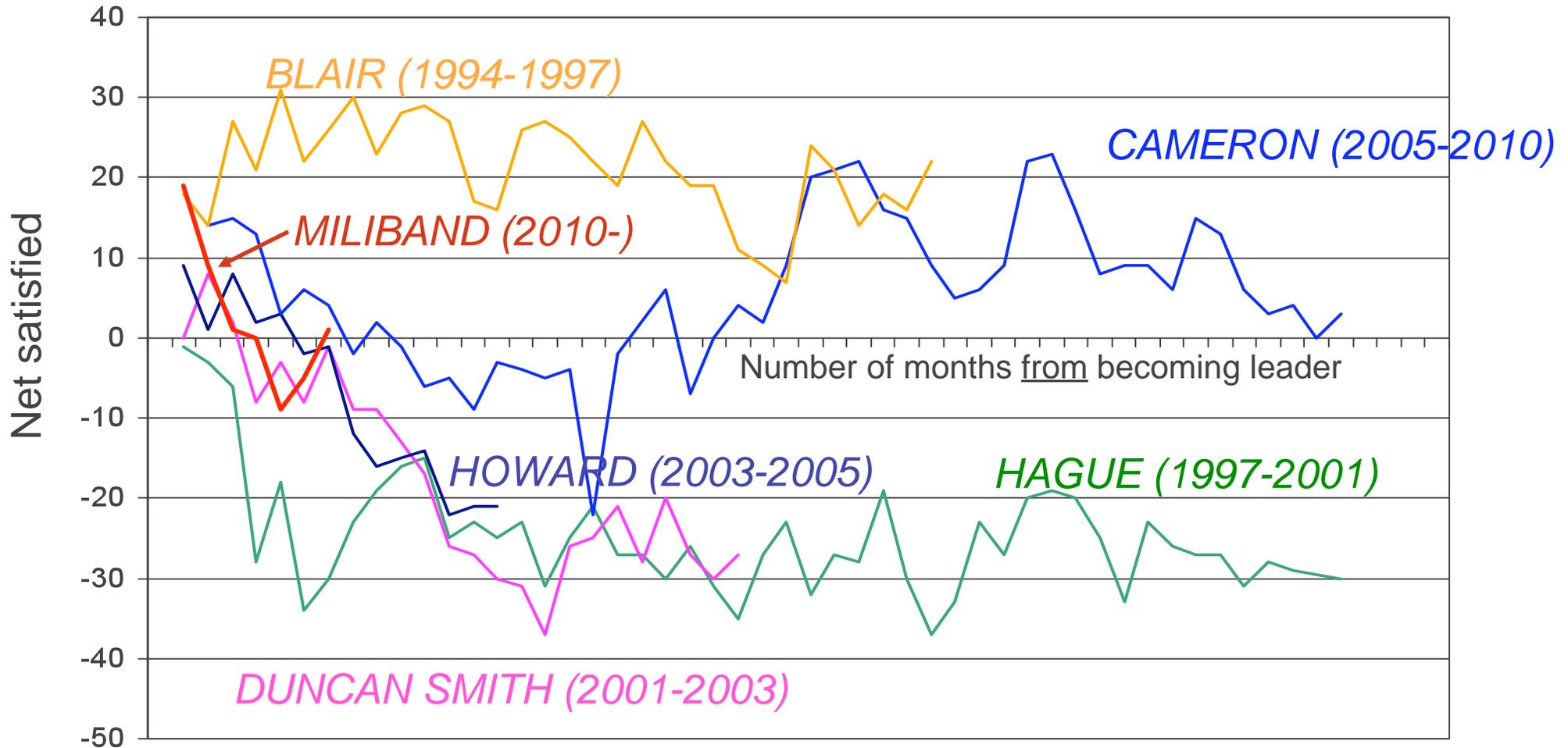
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Source: Reuters/Ipsos MORI Political Monitor



# Net satisfaction with Miliband is higher than for Hague and in line with IDS, Howard and Cameron at same point in their Opposition leadership

*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way ... is doing his job as leader of the ... Party?*



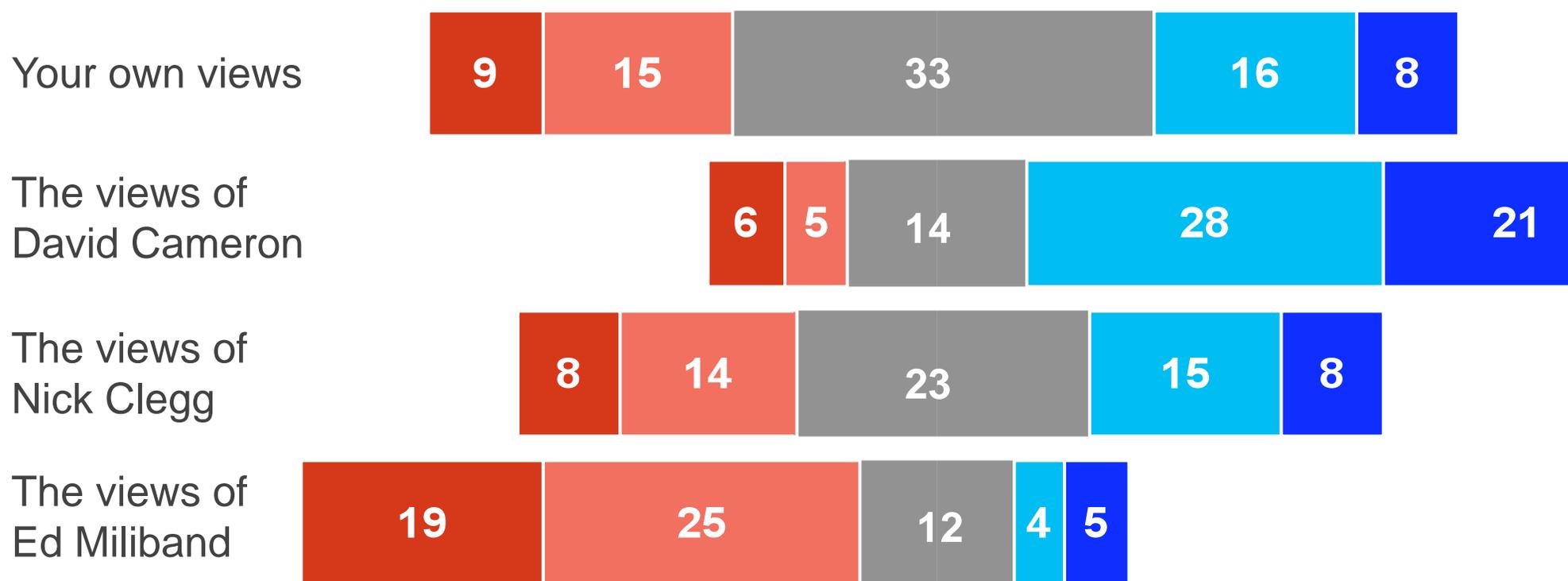
Base: c. 1,000 British adults each month;

Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

# Miliband is seen as much to the left as Cameron is to the right

*Some people describe their political views as being left wing or right wing. How would you describe your own views, would you say they are...? And how would you describe..?*

■ % Left wing   ■ % Left of centre   ■ % Centre   ■ % Right of centre   ■ % Right wing



Base: 1,009 British adults 18+, 15th - 17th October 2010

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Source: Reuters/Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

"Don't knows" not shown



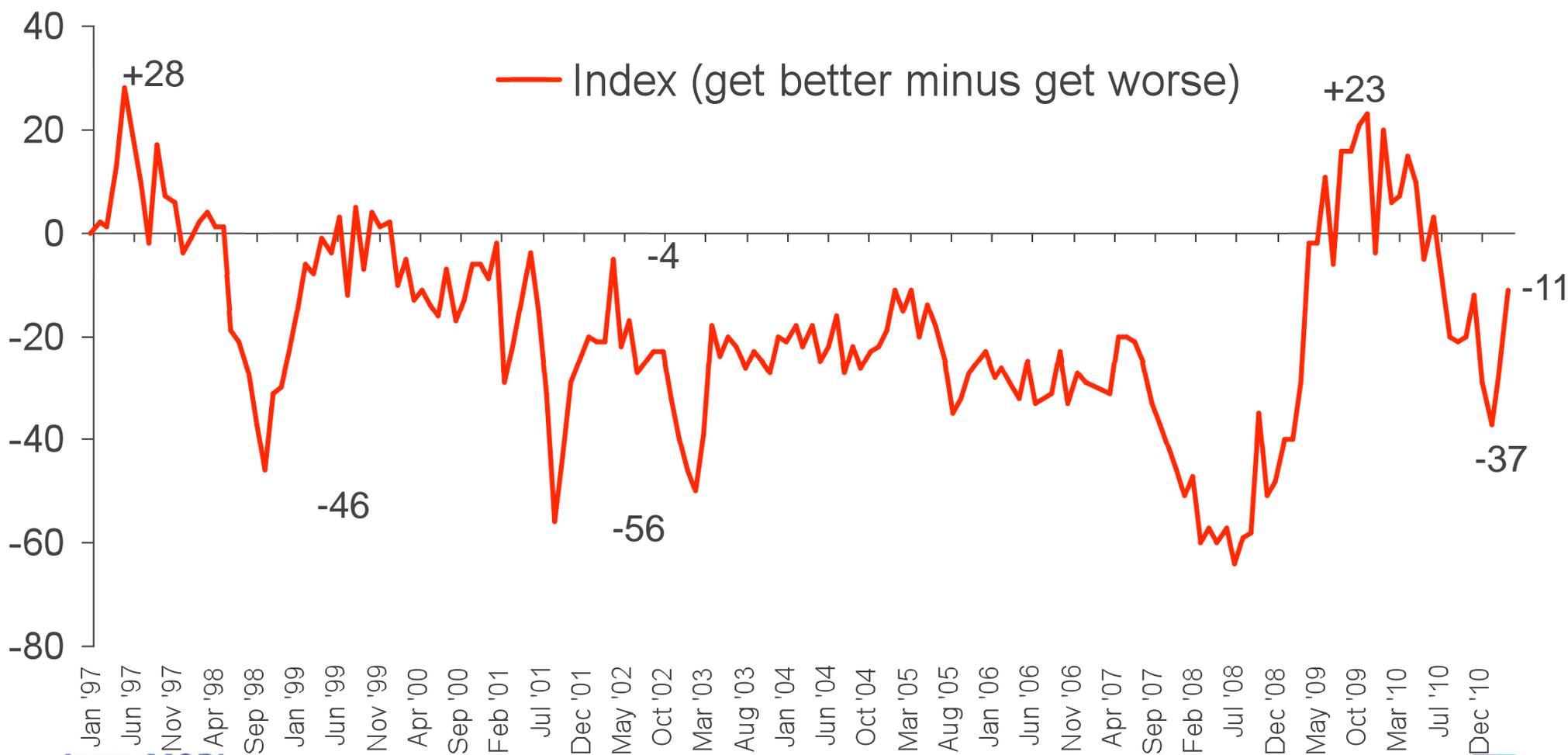
# Key challenges ahead

# Economy, economy, economy

- The economy remains the key challenge for this government
- Public support for spending cuts has fallen away since the end of last year as the impact begins to be felt, although more still agree than disagree that cuts are needed
- The Conservatives retain their lead as having the best policies on the economy, although their lead over Labour has narrowed since last November
- The previous Labour government is seen as most to blame for the need for cuts
- The Coalition has gambled heavily on the their economic policies, and it is on the economy that the next general election will be won or lost

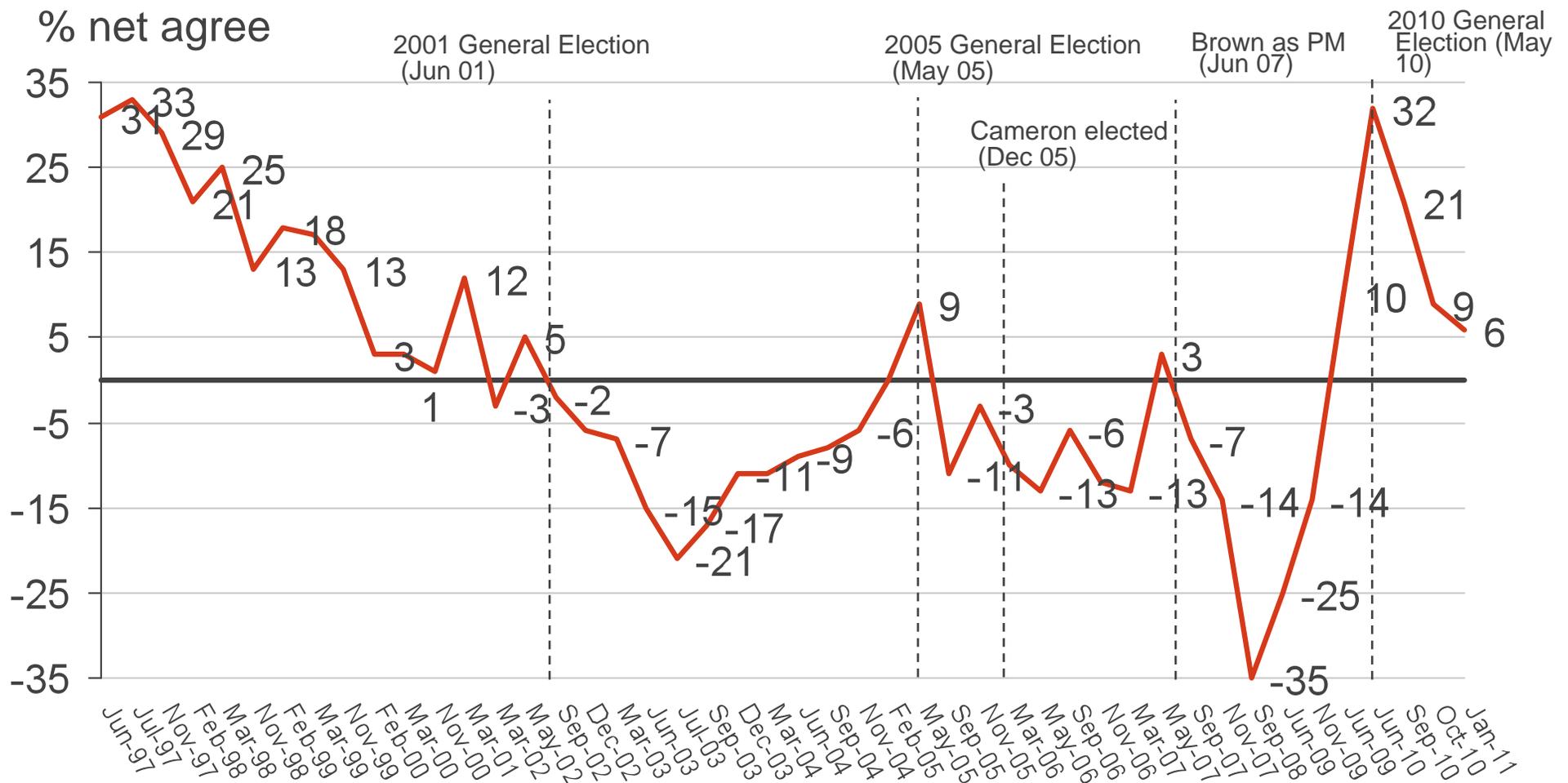
# Economic optimism fell to two-year low in February

*Do you think that the general economic condition of the country will improve, stay the same or get worse over the next 12 months?*



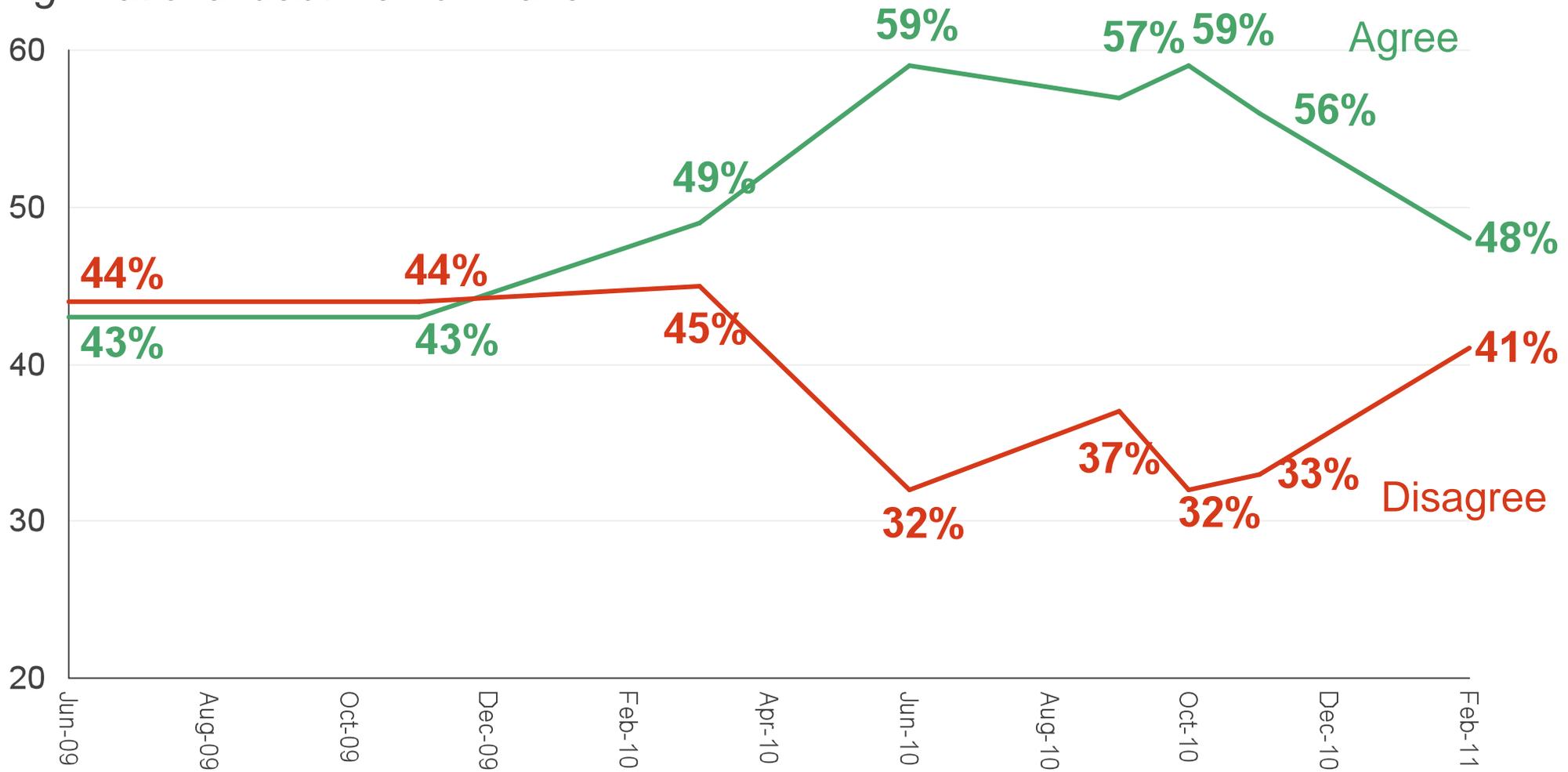
# Continuing decline in confidence in the Coalition's policies on the economy

*Do you agree or disagree... "In the long term, this government's policies will improve the state of Britain's economy"*



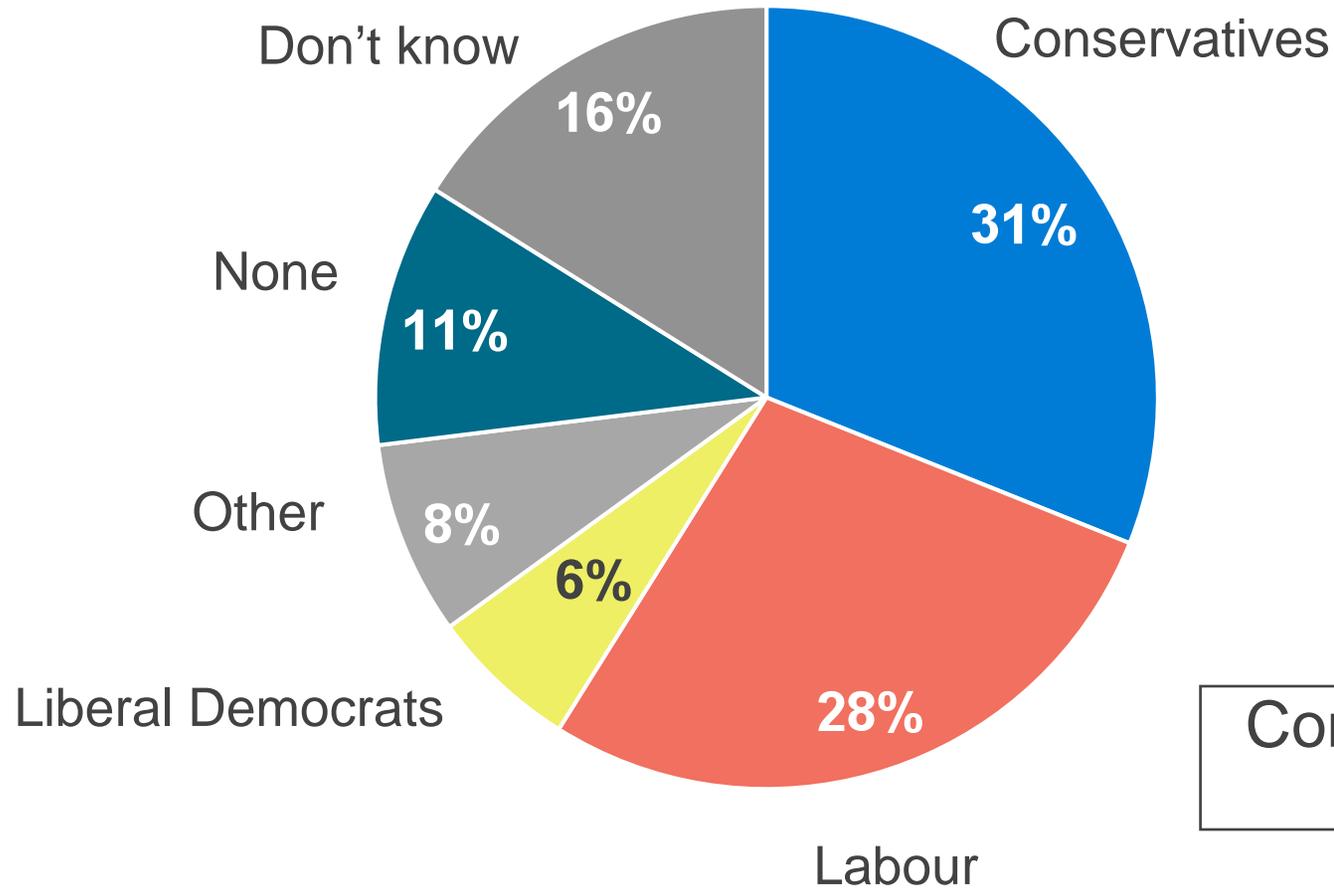
# They thought they had won this argument...

*There is a real need to cut spending on public services in order to pay off the very high national debt we now have*



# Conservatives and Labour neck-and-neck on having the best policies on the economy...

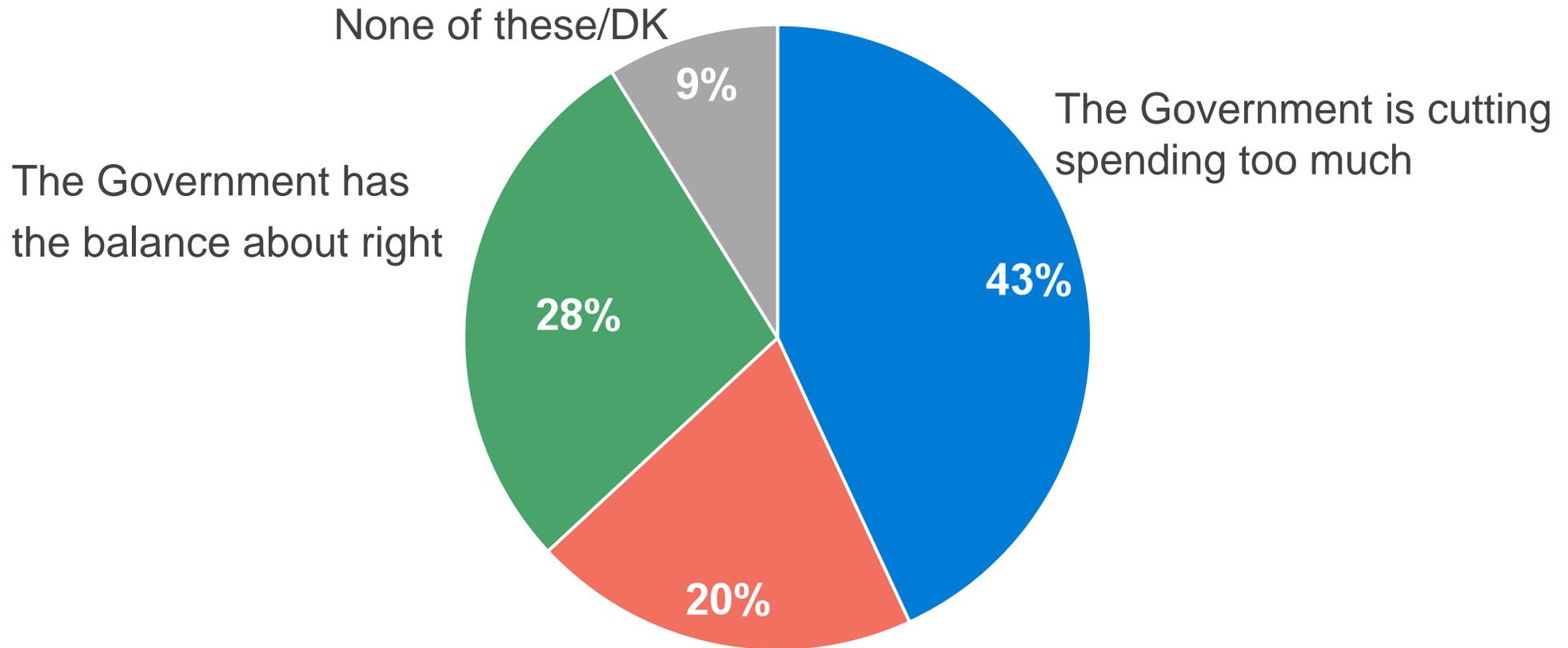
*Which party do you think has the best policies on managing the economy, the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats or some other party?*



Conservative lead  
= +3

# Government's response to the deficit

*In order to reduce the deficit, the government plans to cut spending on some public services and increase some taxes. Given this aim, do you think that the government is cutting spending too much, or increasing taxes too much, or do you think it has got the balance about right?*



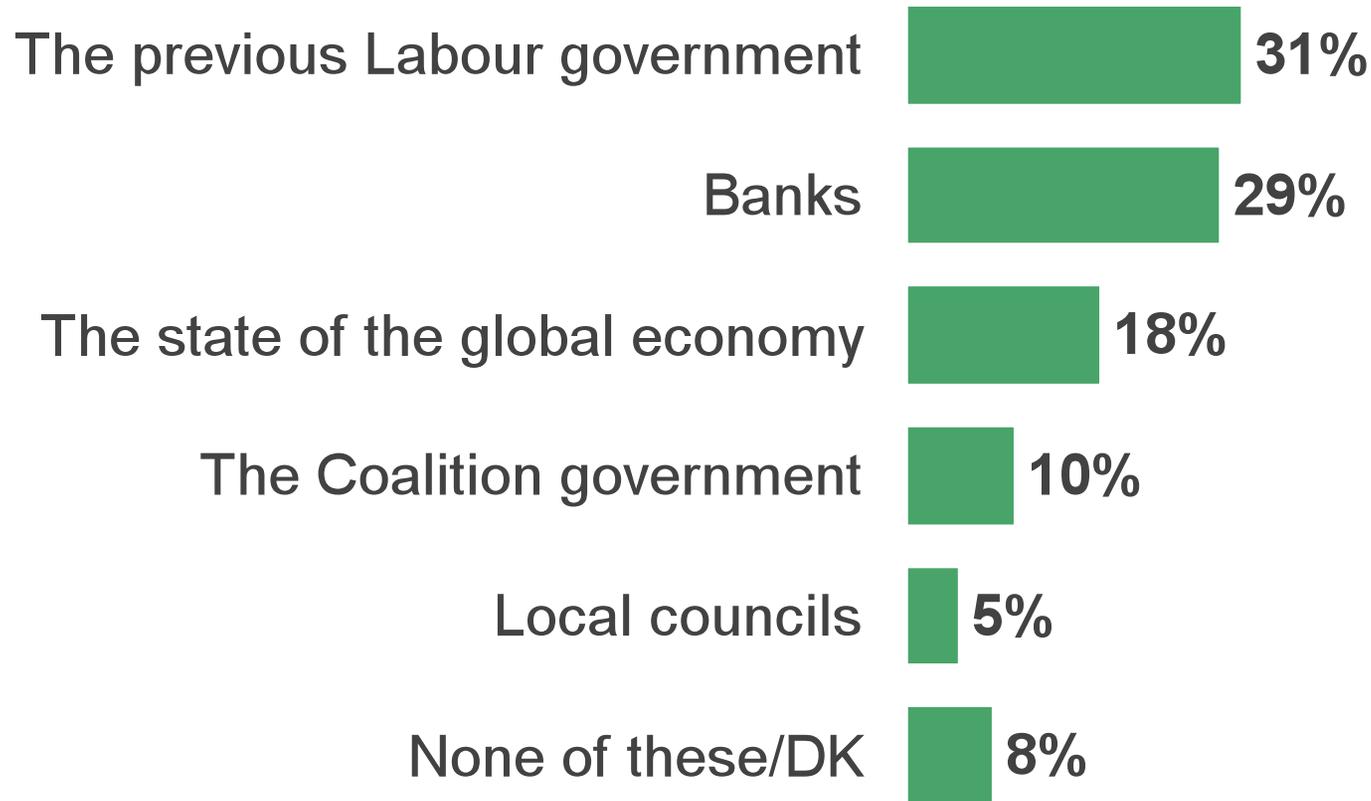
Base: 1,000 British adults 18+, 11th - 13th March 2011  
Ipsos MORI

The Government is increasing taxes too much

Source: Ipsos MORI  


# Labour is seen as to blame for the level of cuts

Who do you think is most to blame for the level of cuts to public services?



What next?

# Getting through the “choppy period” over AV

36

- The repercussions of the AV referendum will remain a challenge for the Coalition
- The victory for the “No” campaign will raise further questions about the stability of the government. The campaign pitted the Coalition parties against each other, and it remains to be seen whether relationships have been damaged and how it will change the nature of these relationships
  - Nick Clegg has talked in the last few weeks about the Lib Dems changing their role in the Coalition, attempting to strengthen the identity of his party
  - This will be an important step for the Lib Dems in reasserting their credibility and highlighting what they have achieved since forming the government

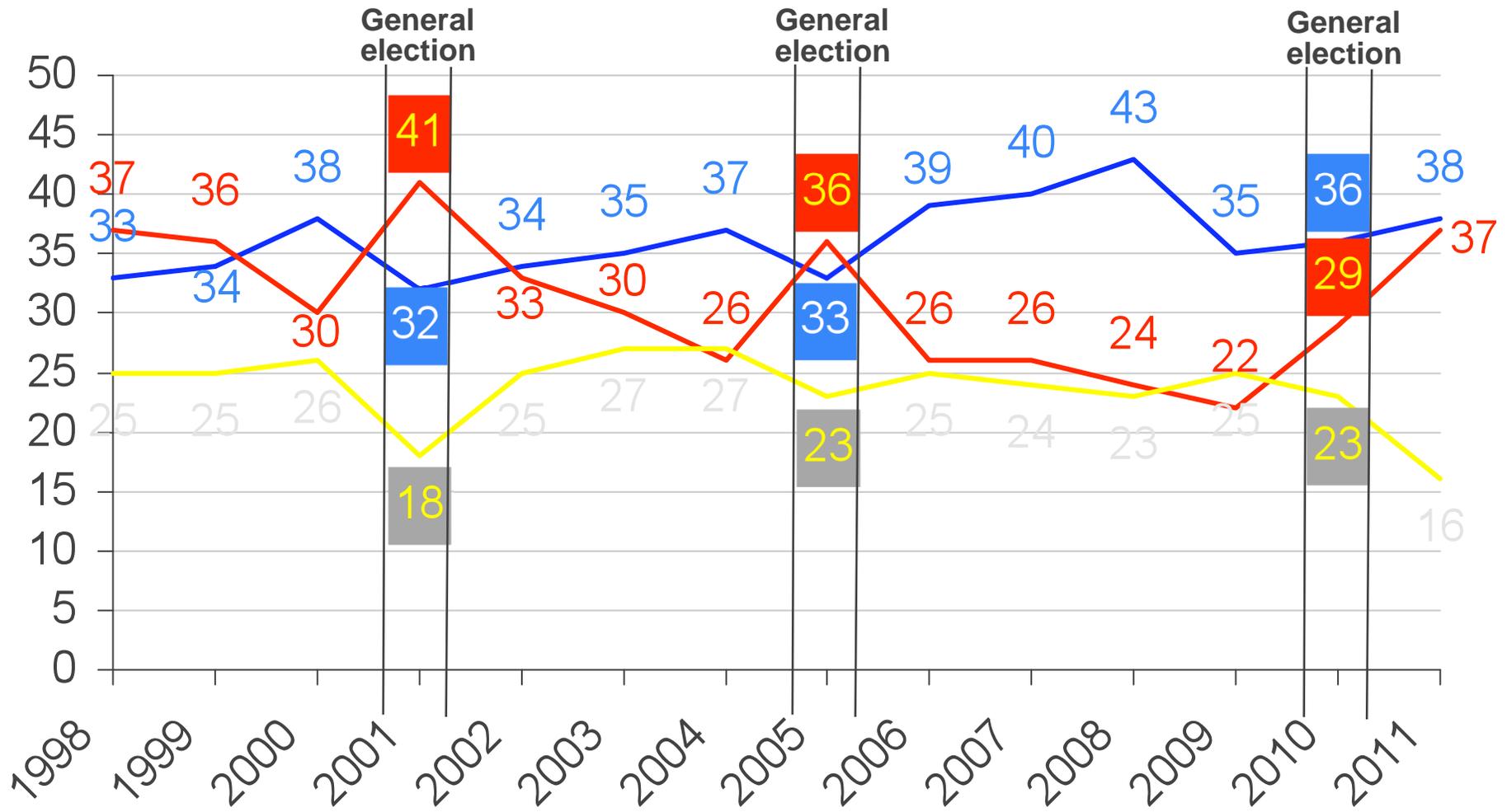
# The locals and beyond: where the parties stand

37

- **The Conservatives** are seen as the dominant partner in the Coalition and Cameron leads as most capable Prime Minister. Crucially, the party retains its lead as having the best policies on the economy. The Conservative vote has held up at the local elections, and victory for the No campaign was a further boost.
- **Labour's** polls ratings have risen since last May, although the public remain split on Ed Miliband. Labour's victories in the English local elections were to be expected but are offset by defeat in Scotland – and as Labour proved under Blair, this does not mean the current government will lose the subsequent general election.
- **Liberal Democrat** support has dwindled, with major losses at the local elections and only a quarter of those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 intending to vote for the party at an immediate election. The victory of the No campaign in the AV referendum makes the picture even bleaker for the party.

# Local elections 1998-2011

## % national equivalent vote



Source: Rallings & Thrasher (quoted in House of Commons Library Research Paper RP10-044)

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