

What kind of post-Brexit Immigration policy do voters want?

John Curtice

University of Strathclyde NatCen Social Research

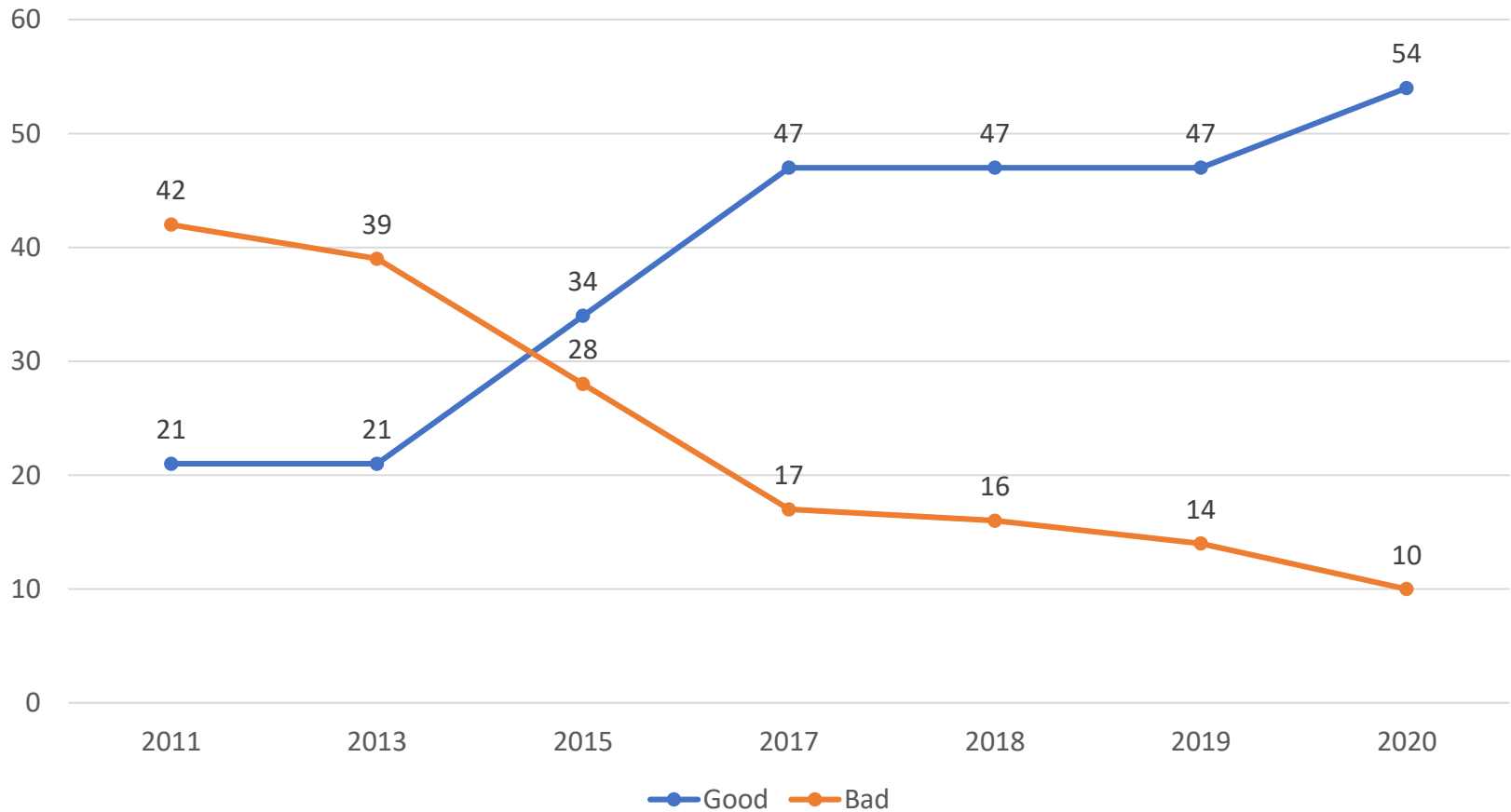
‘The UK in a Changing Europe’

whatukthinks.org/eu @whatukthinks

Sources

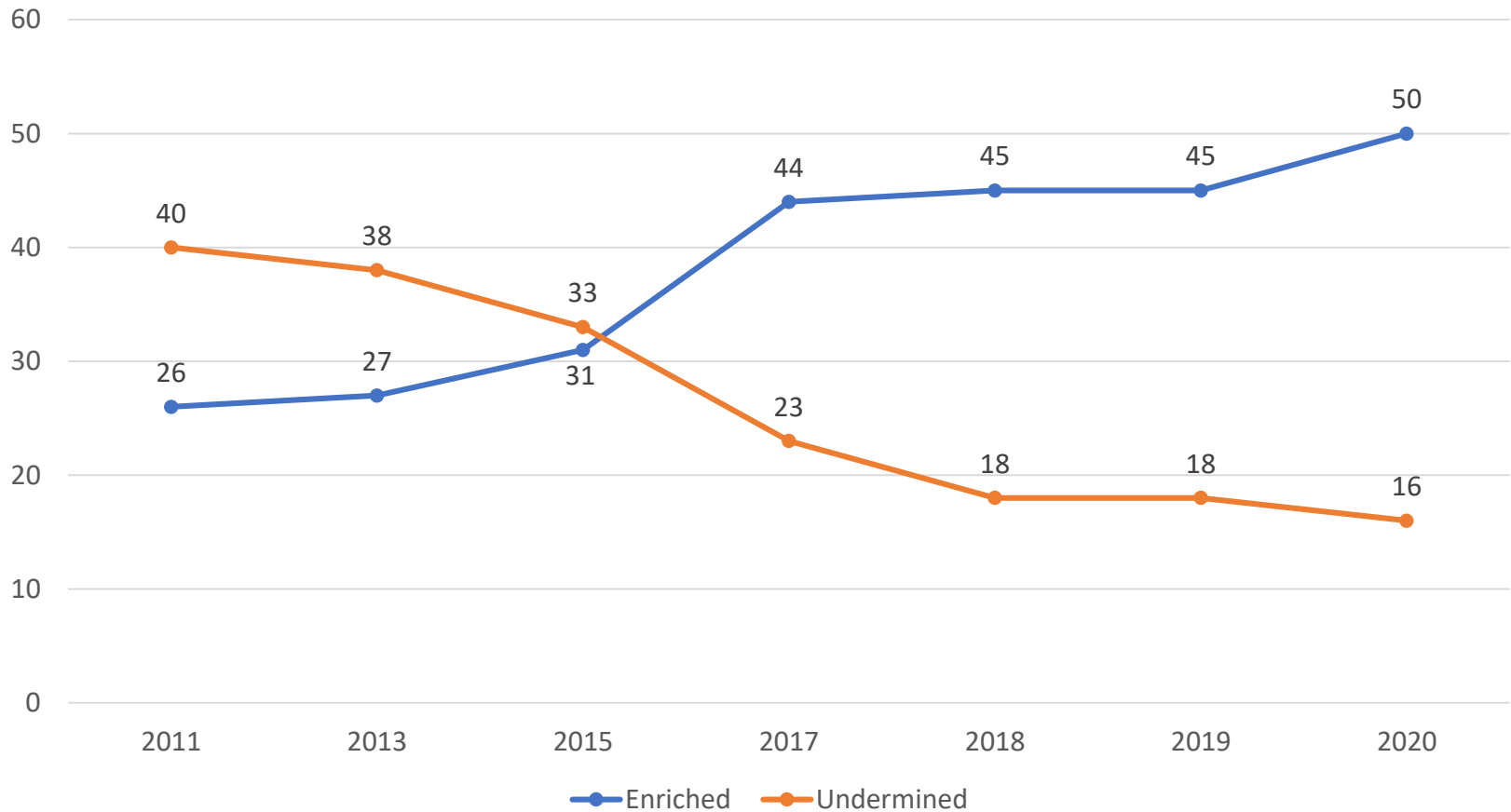
- British Social Attitudes (annual face to face random probability sample)
- NatCen Mixed Mode Random Probability Panel (reinterviews online/phone of BSA respondents – mostly spring 2019 & 2020 and autumn 2019, but some on various occasions 2016-20, including July 2020)
- Future of Britain Deliberative Polling (385 participants recruited from NatCen Panel deliberated online on post-Brexit policy over 3 separate weekends)
- Each data set weighted to reflect adult population
- Funding from UKRI/ESRC

Perceived Impact of Immigration on Economy



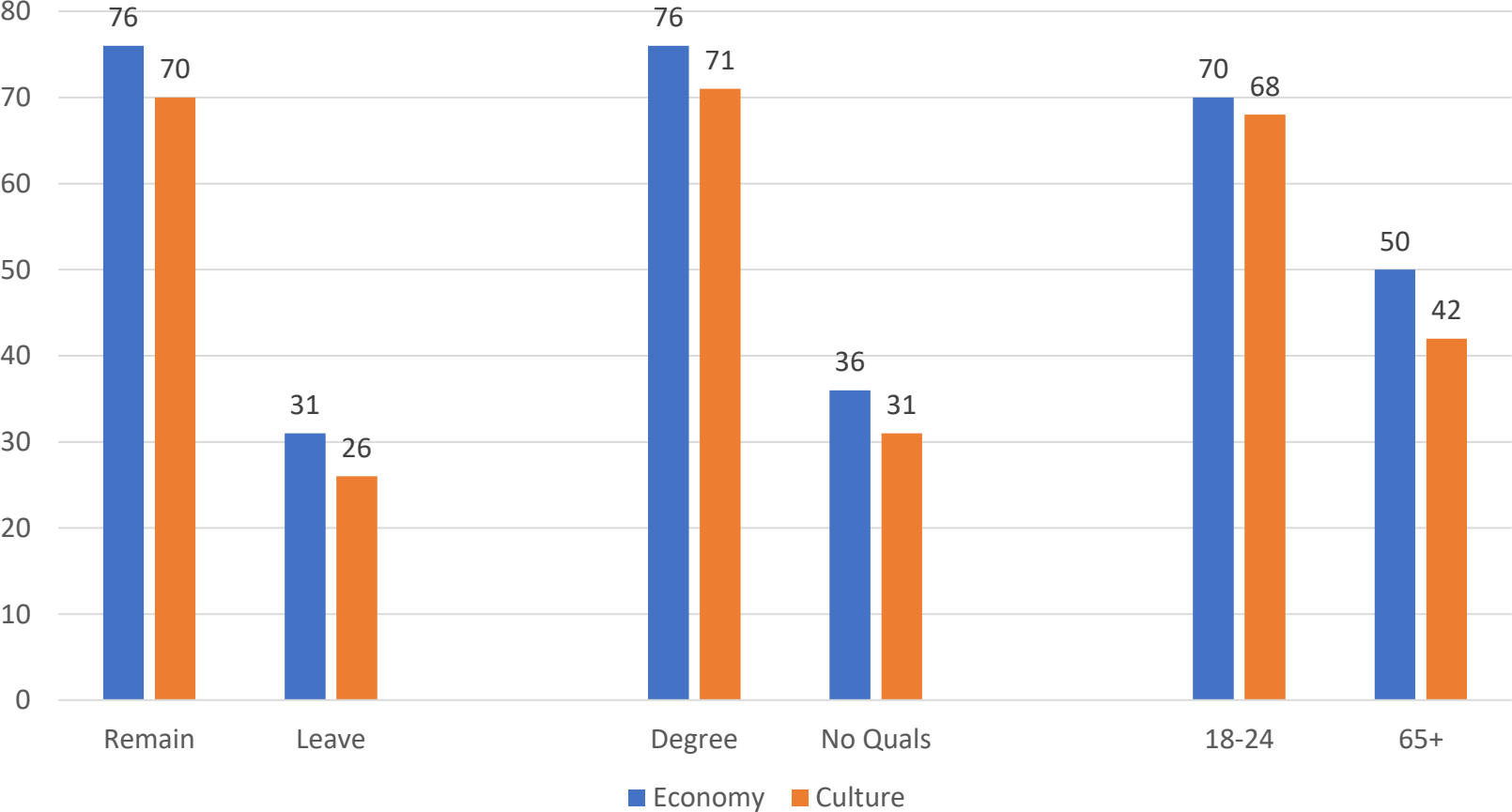
Sources; 2011-19: British Social Attitudes; 2020: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel

Perceived Impact of Immigration on Culture



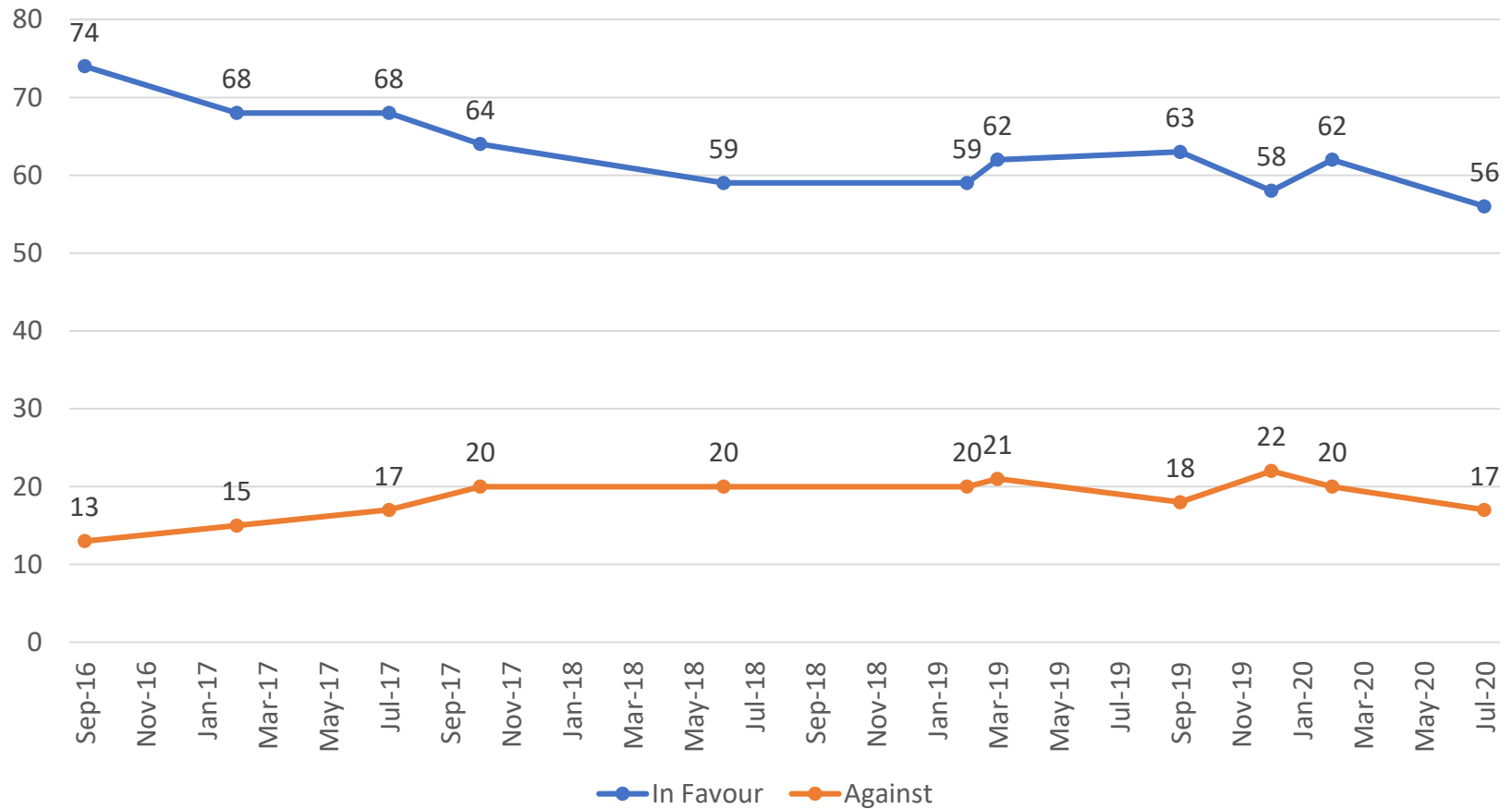
Sources; 2011-19: British Social Attitudes; 2020: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel

Some Familiar Divides



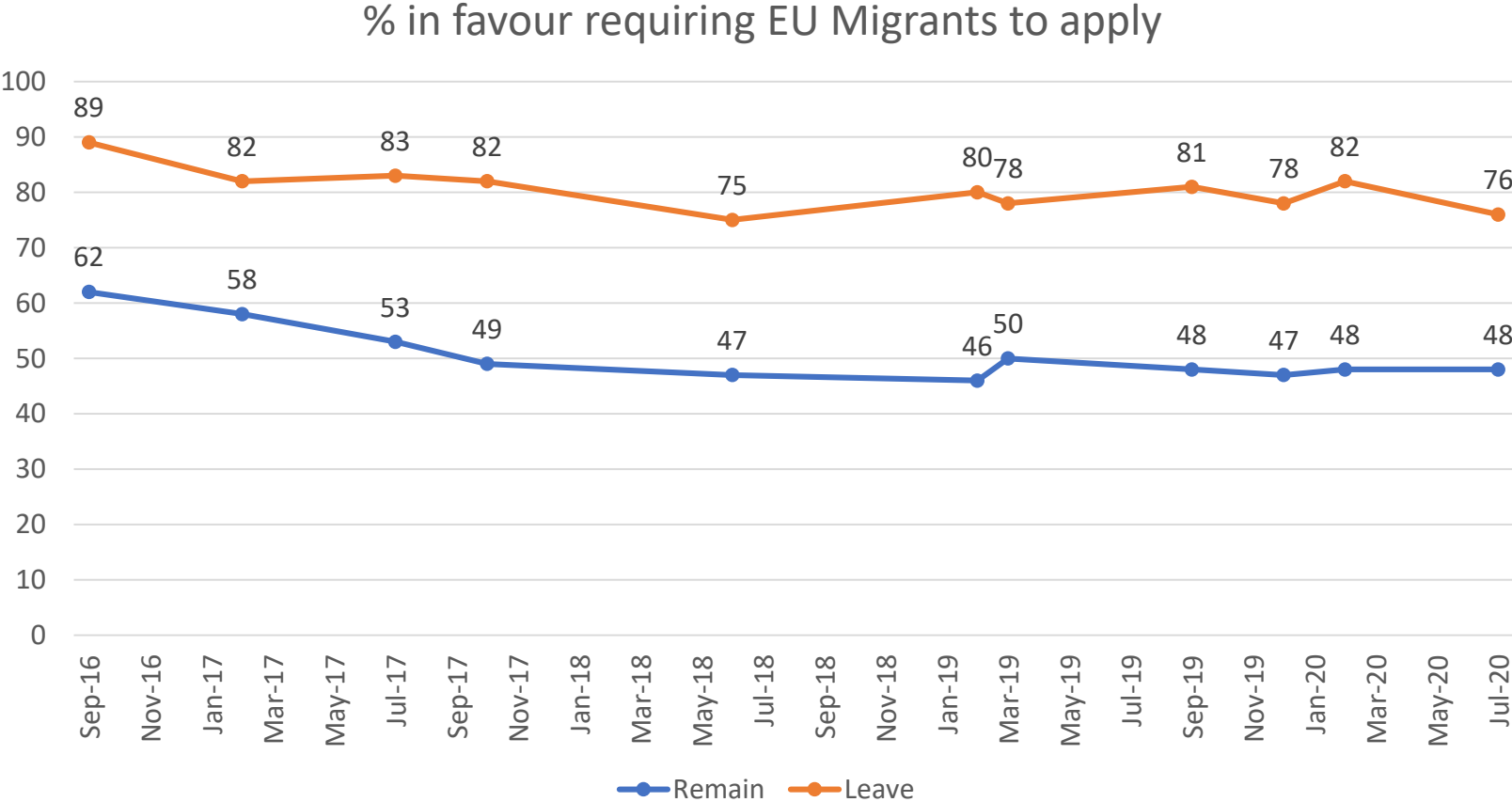
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel July 2020

Require EU Migrants To Apply



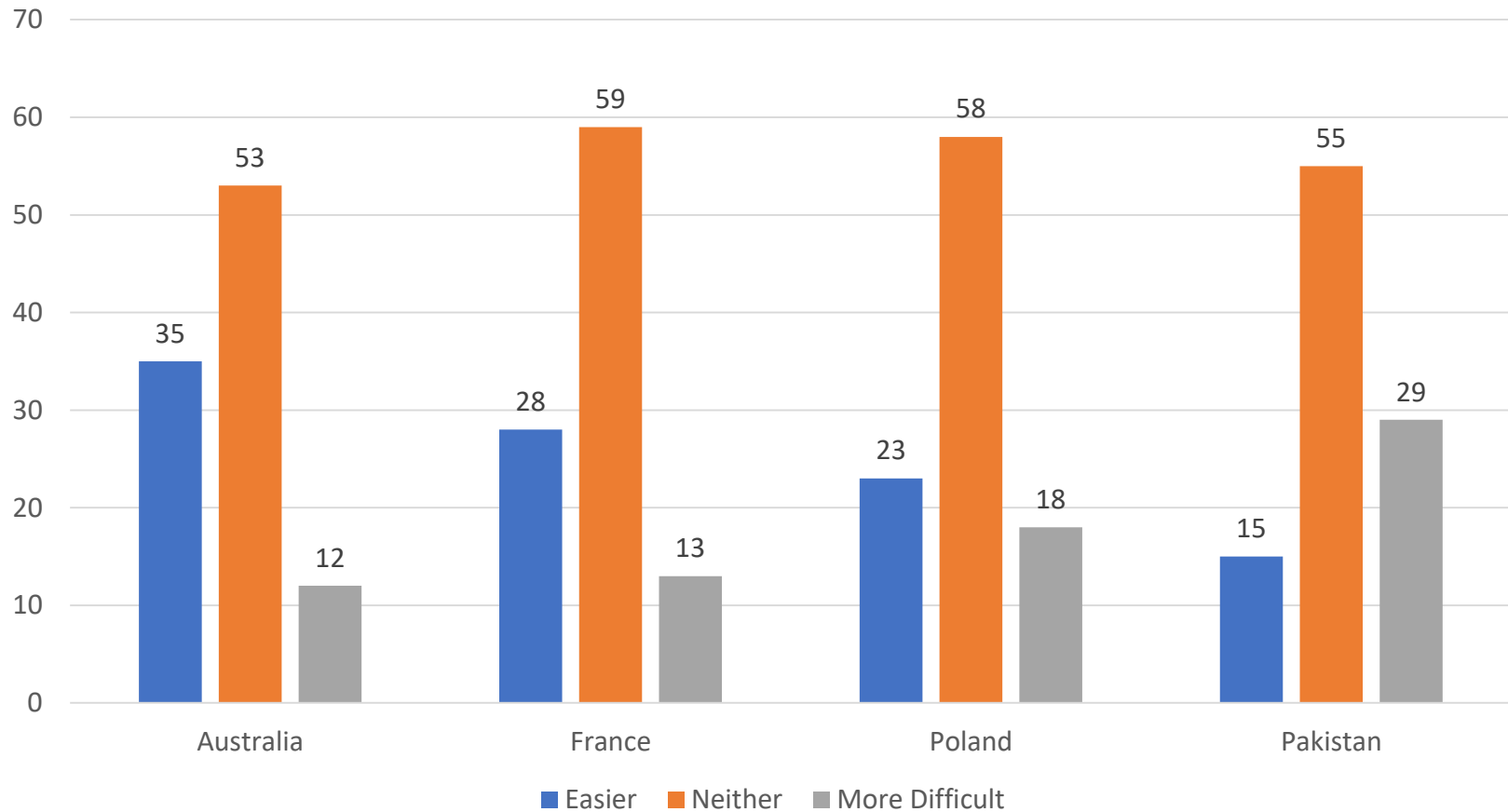
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel

A Limited Remain/Leave Divide



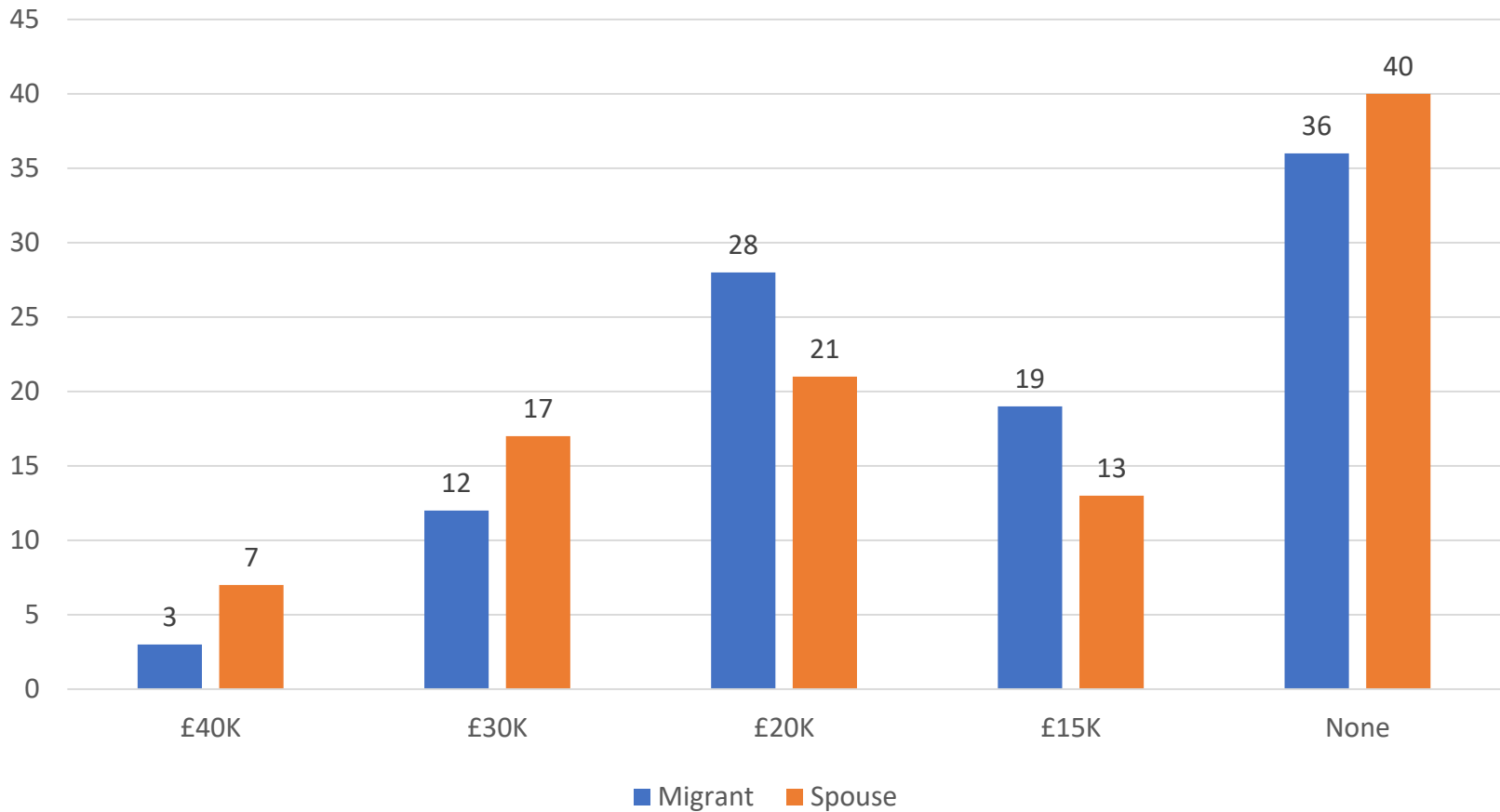
Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel

Preferred Origins?

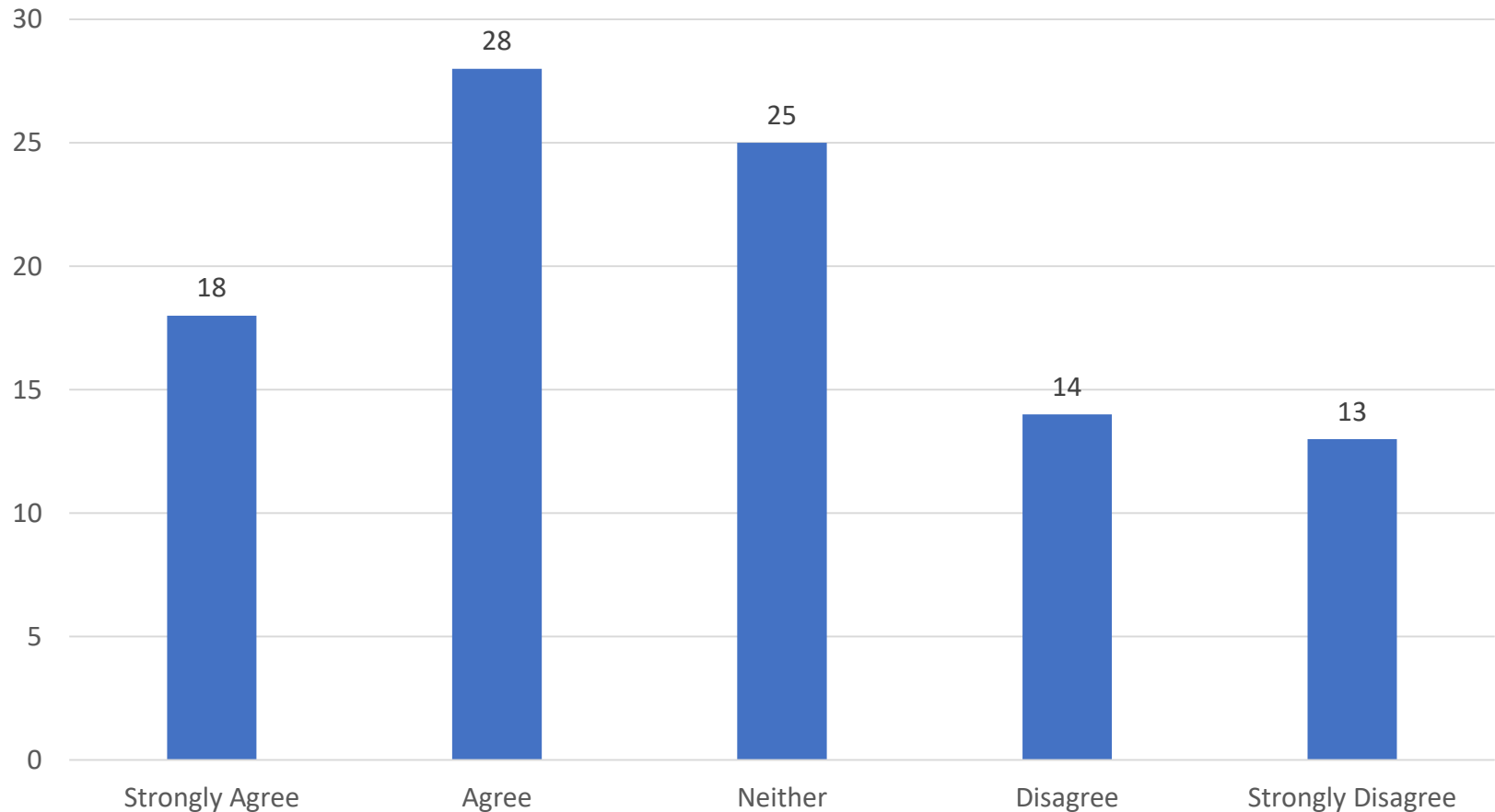


Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel: 31.1-1.3.20

Migrant Income Requirement?

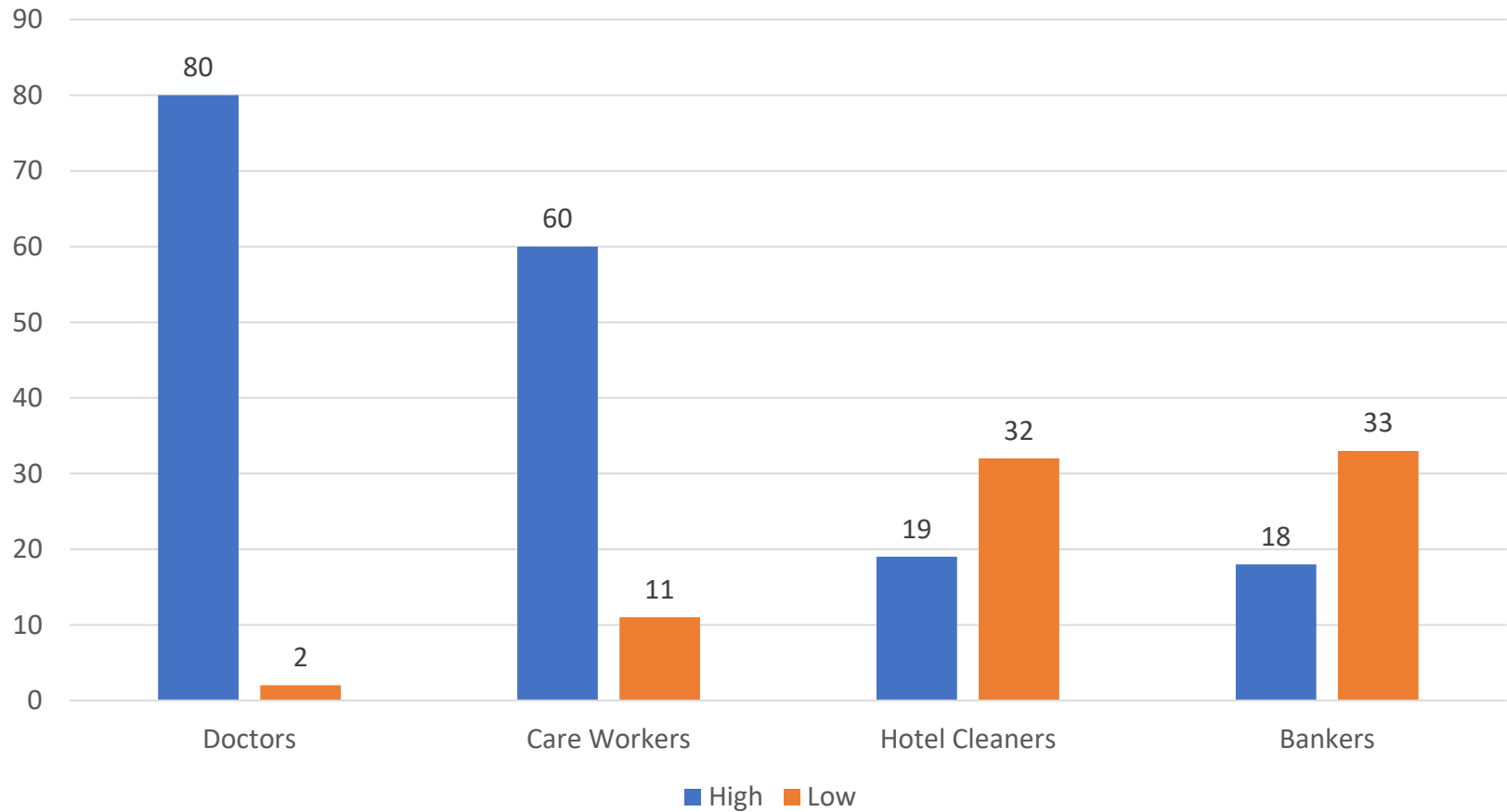


Require Migrant Spouse To Have Everyday English



Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel: 31.1-1.3.20

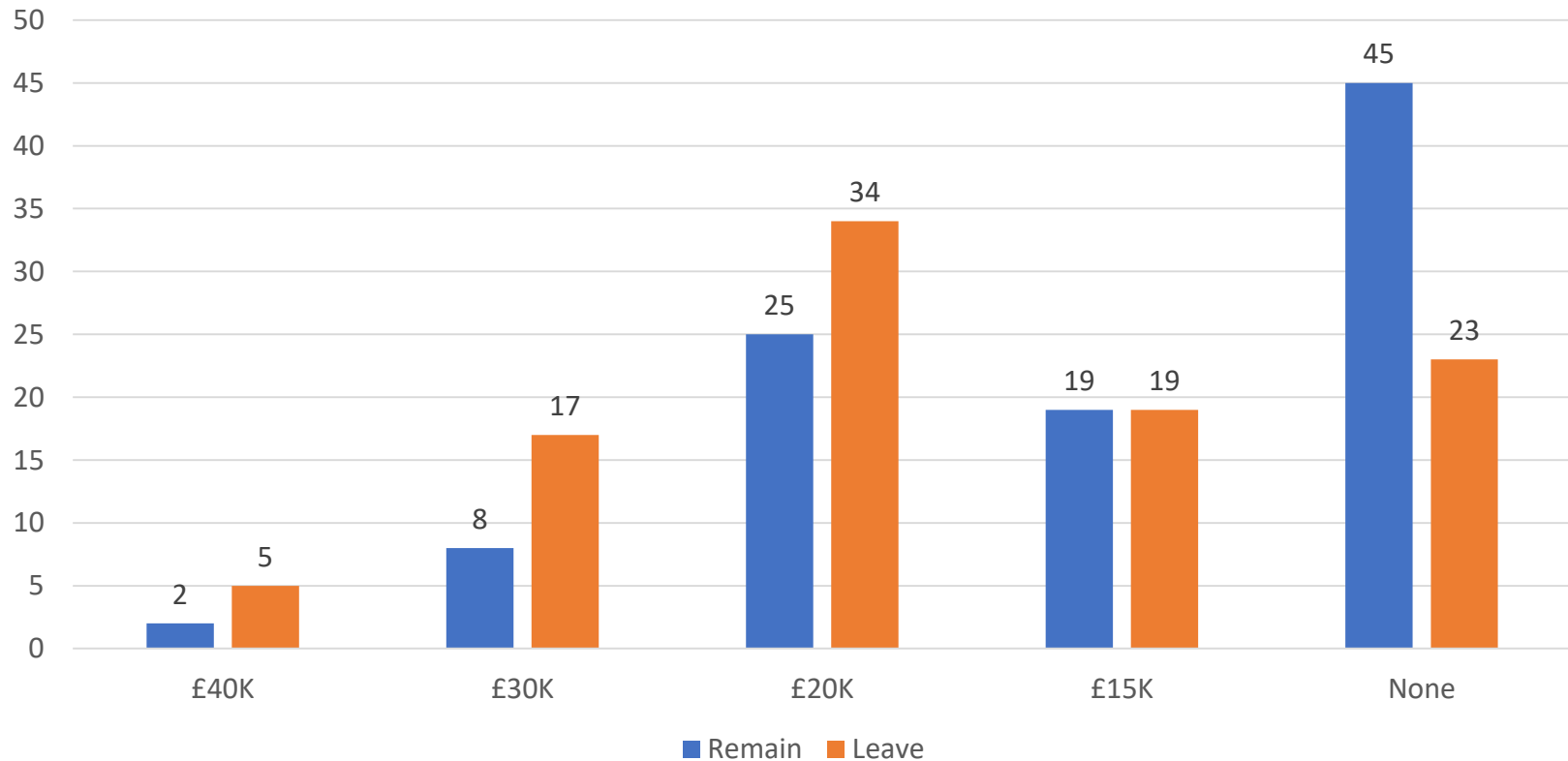
Priorities for Admission?



Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel: 31.1-1.3.20

Different Perspectives?

Migrant Minimum Income Requirement

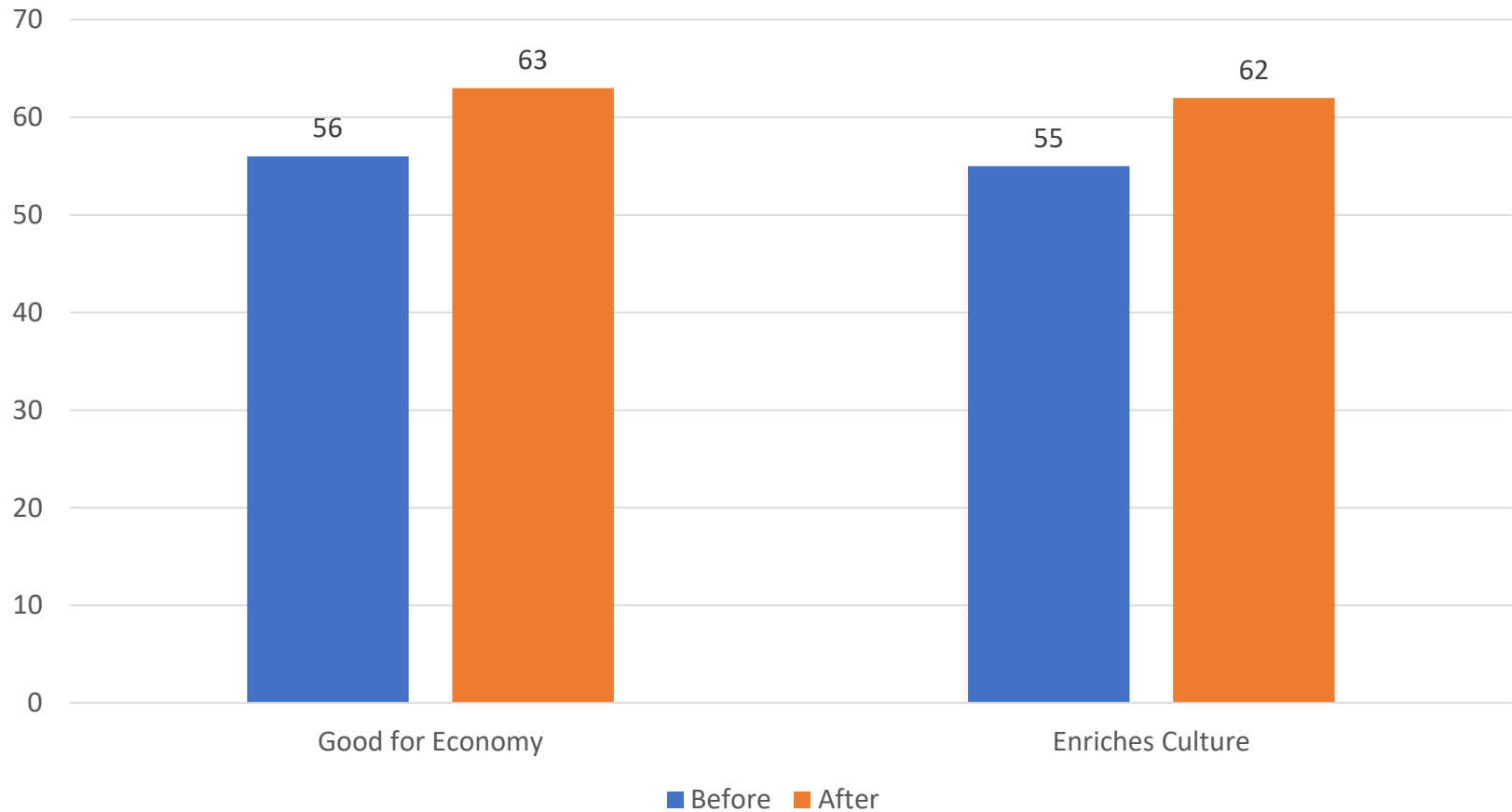


Source: NatCen Mixed Mode Panel: 31.1-1.3.20

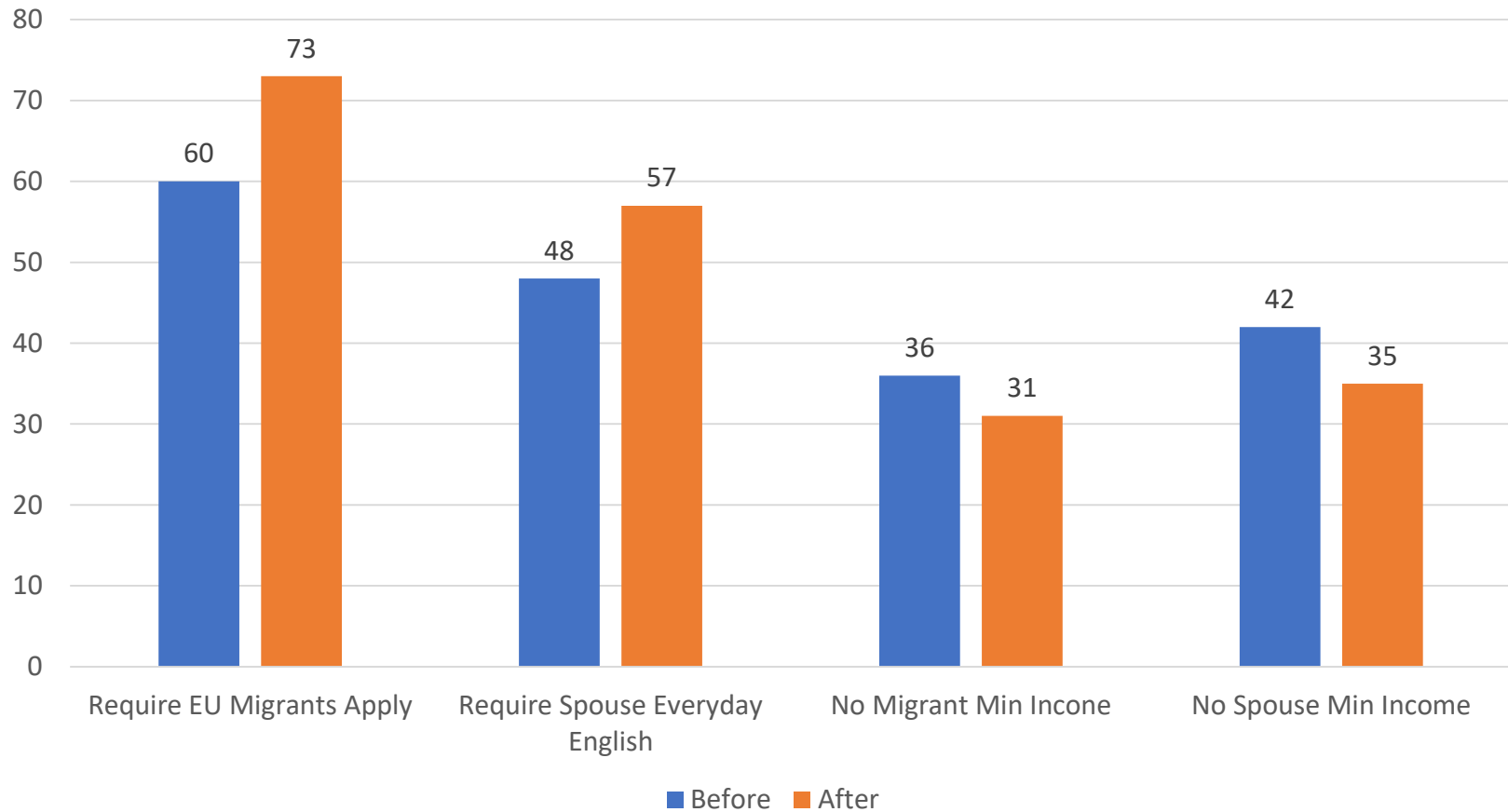
Summary of 'Regular' Polling

- Public have become more likely to believe that immigration is economically and culturally beneficial
- But, although lower than it was, support for requiring EU migrants to apply for entry like non-EU is still over half – and is backed by many Remainers
- This picture not (so far) changed by COVID19
- But voters do not necessarily share the current policy emphasis on income as an entry criterion – or that on occupational 'skill'

More Regard Immigration as Beneficial

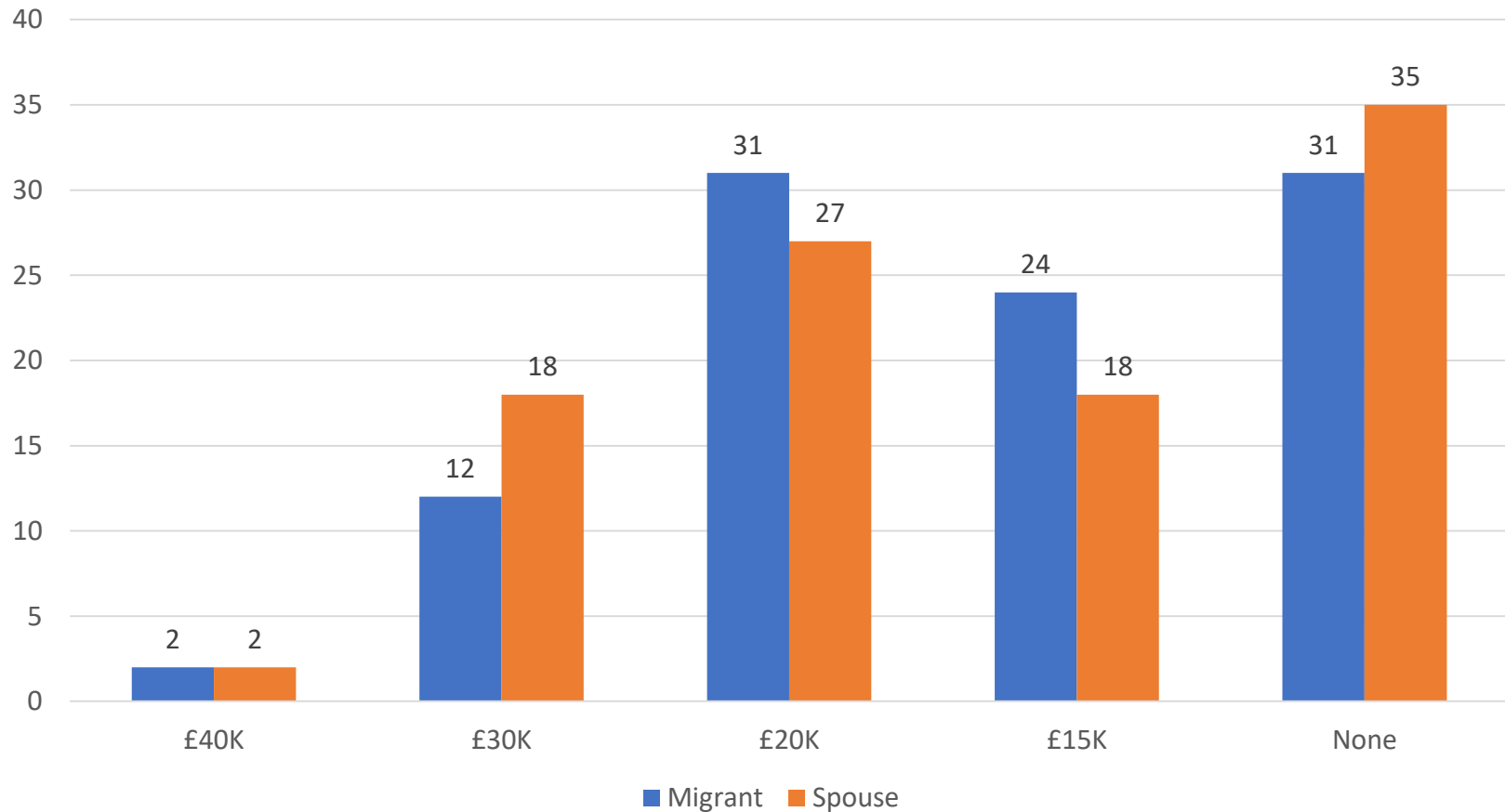


More Support for Tighter Control



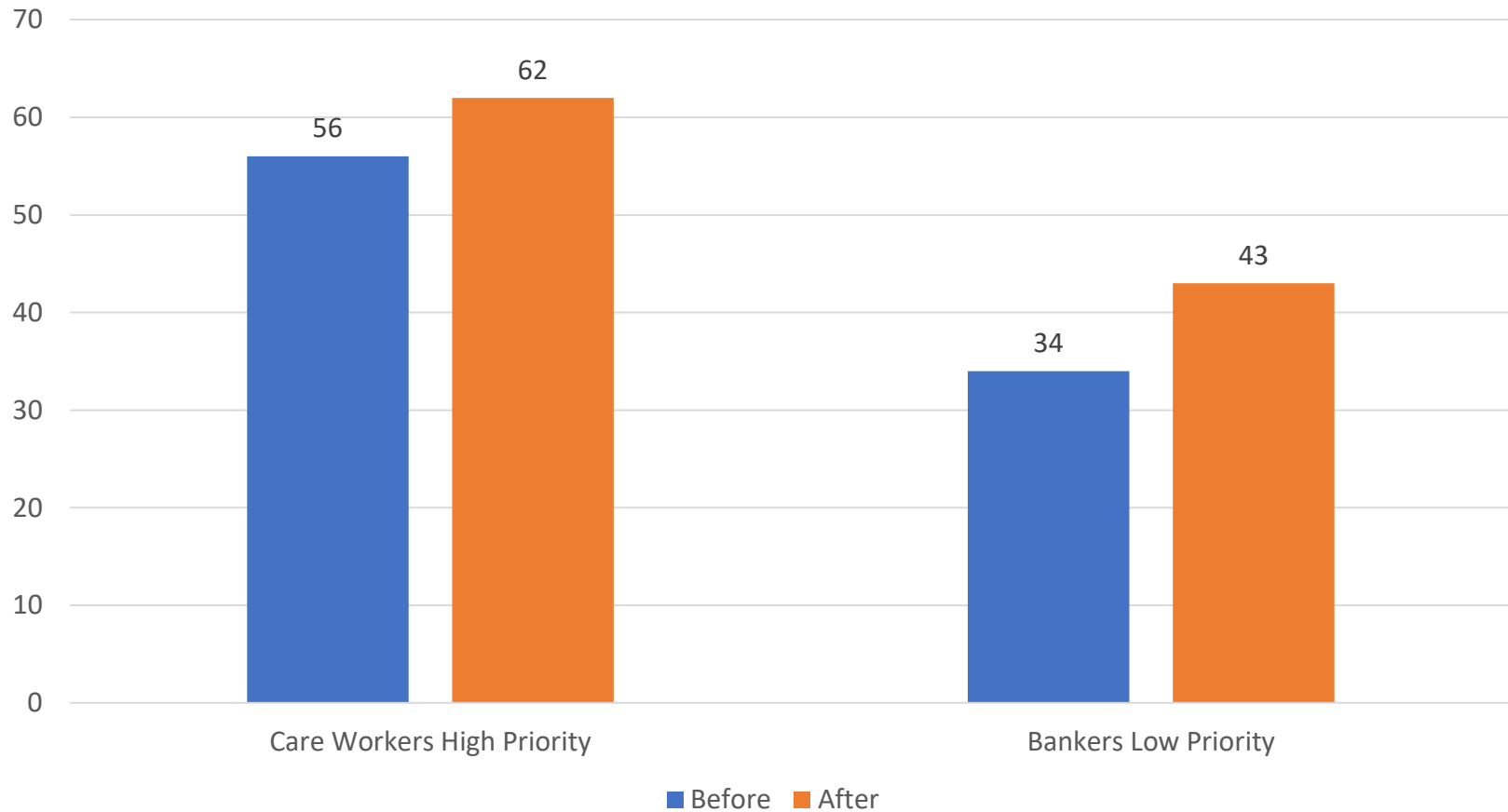
Source: NatCen Deliberative Polling 2019 & 2020

Though Still Not Necessarily As Tight As Proposed



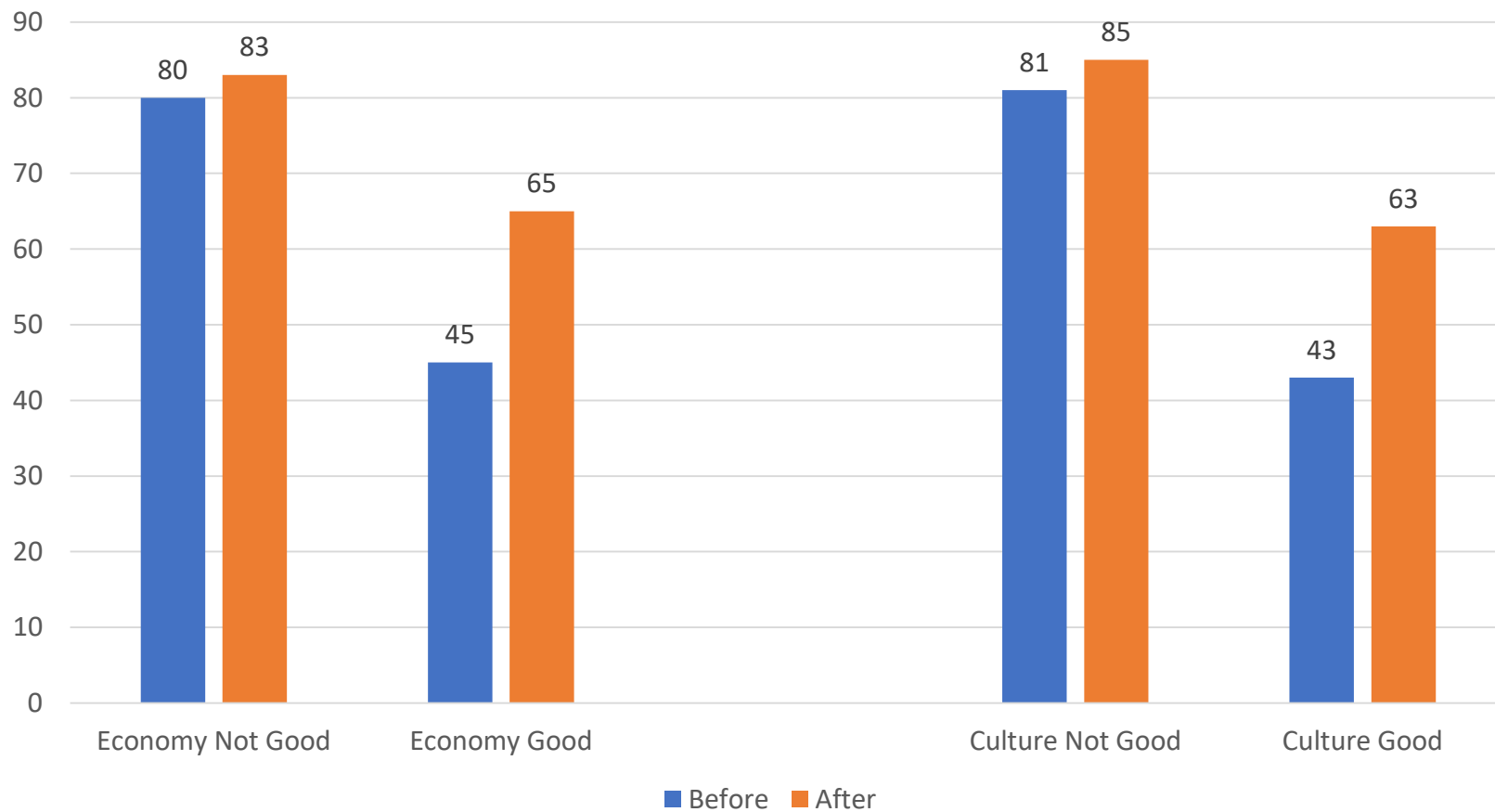
Source: NatCen Deliberative Polling 2019 & 2020

A Widened Occupational Gap



Source: NatCen Deliberative Polling 2019 & 2020

'Liberals' Swing To Control - 1



Source: NatCen Deliberative Polling 2019 & 2020

'Liberals' Swing To Control - 2

	Culture Not Enriched		Culture Enriched	
	Before	After	Before	After
	%	%	%	%
No migrant income limit	19	20	50	41
No spouse income limit	26	27	55	42
Spouse everyday English	64	70	34	47

Source: NatCen Deliberative Polling 2019 & 2020

Summary of 'Deliberative' Polling

- Participants generally moved in favour of control even though they also became more likely to say that migration was beneficial
- Swing in favour of control occurred primarily among those who think immigration is beneficial
- Perhaps some came to the view that control helps to ensure migration is beneficial?
- Though that still did not mean that participants' preferences always matched current policy

Further Details

- <https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-37/post-brexit-public-policy.aspx>
- & <https://whatukthinks.org/eu/analysis/thinking-about-post-brexit-public-policy-voters-perspective-on-immigration-and-regulation/>