

The case for a normal European Scotland



In a nutshell...

- **The UK is the most unequal country in North West Europe**
- **First-past-the-post (FPTP) countries are much more unequal than PR countries**
- **The FPTP system favours the middle class and therefore parties of the right**
- **Middle class misery, fueled by ever great inequality, was main Brexit driver**
- **UK trapped in a spiral of unequal doom since Tory & Labour wedded to FPTP**
- **25 year old PR option ready and waiting for an Indy Scotland**



Our peers – the ones the establishment like to ignore

3 Groups

The 'Nordic Nobles'

The 5 Western European Scandinavian countries



16 Peers

Norway
Denmark
Sweden
Finland
Iceland

The 'Mainland Moderates'

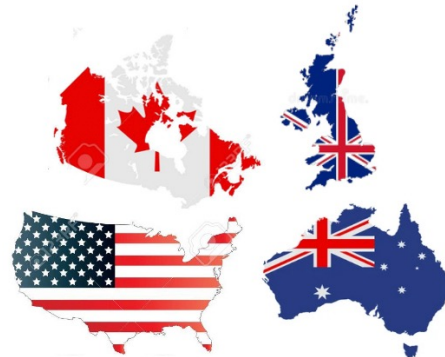
The 6 North-Western European mainland states + Ireland



Ireland
Netherlands
Austria
Germany
France
Belgium
Switzerland

The 'Free-market Fanatics'

The 4 major 'neoliberal' Western economies of the anglosphere



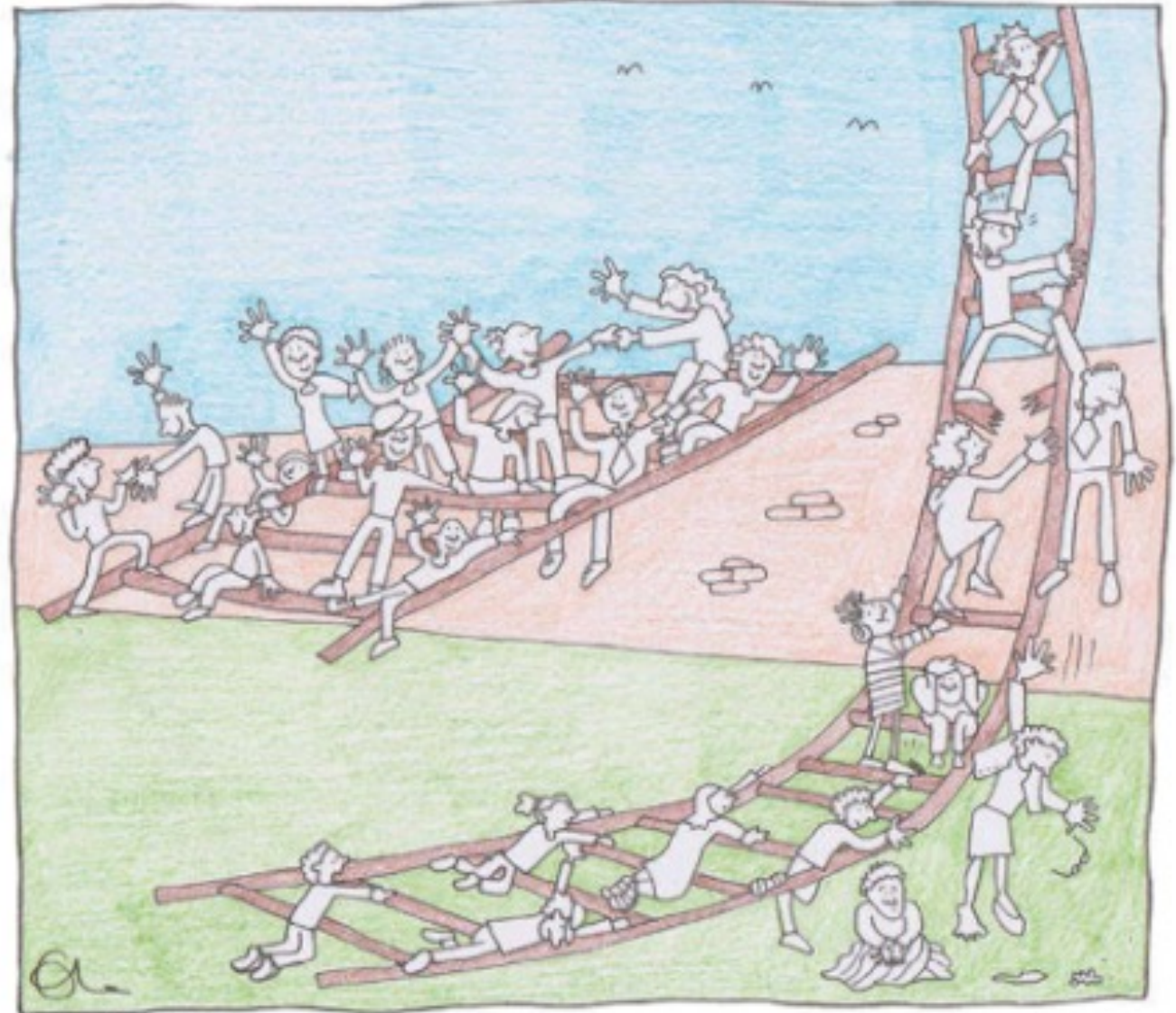
UK
USA
Australia
Canada

Lots in common

- All EU or EEA states
 - Closest geographic neighbours
 - Similar mix of culture, climate and resources to Scotland / UK
 - Typically centrist coalition-based politics
 - All use Proportional Representation
-
- Leading players in the EU / EEA / EFTA projects
 - Most have shared the ½ century EU journey with Scotland / UK (until Brexit)
 - Similar mix of culture, climate and resources
 - Typically centrist coalition-based politics
 - Most use Proportional Representation
-
- Closest allies linguistically and shared imperial histories
 - Politics dominated by free-market oriented / conservative governments (i.e. neoliberal)
 - All First Past the Post or similar voting systems



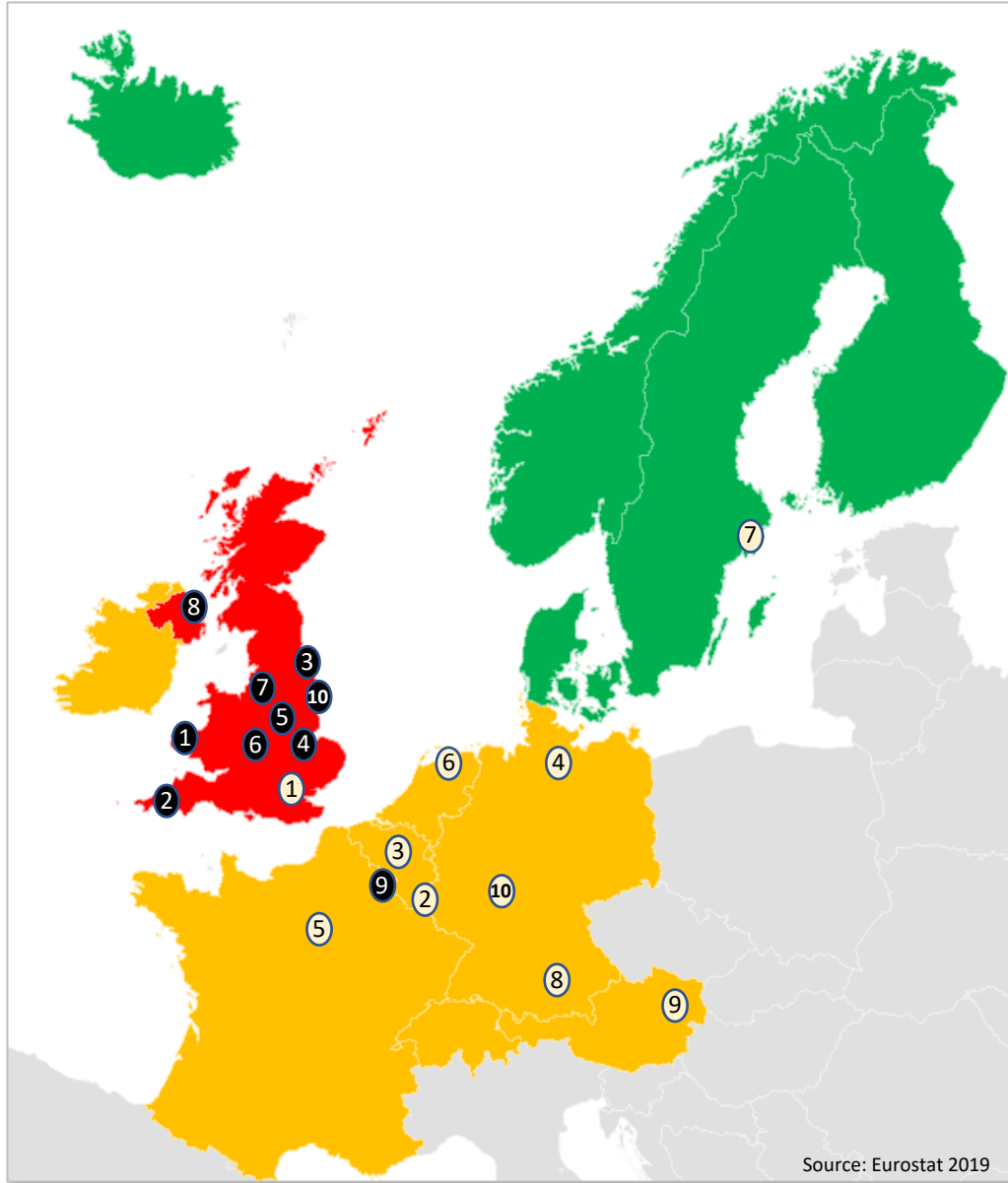
I. The staggering truth about UK inequality



Two ladders



UK has 9 /10 poorest regions as well as the wealthiest...



Richest regions

- ① Inner London 
- ② Luxembourg 
- ③ Brussels 
- ④ Hamburg 
- ⑤ Ile de France 
- ⑥ Groningen 
- ⑦ Stockholm 
- ⑧ Ober Bayern 
- ⑨ Vienna 
- ⑩ Darmstadt 

Poorest regions

- ① West Wales 
- ② Cornwall 
- ③ Durham & Tees 
- ④ Lincolnshire 
- ⑤ South Yorks 
- ⑥ Shropshire 
- ⑦ Lancashire 
- ⑧ Northern Ireland 
- ⑨ Hainaut 
- ⑩ East Yorks 

UK has the highest level of income inequality amongst peers



Source:
OECD

Definition of Gini co-efficient: income is defined as household disposable income in a particular year. The Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive, and it ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality and 1 in the case of perfect inequality.



UK has the worst inequality metric stats across European peers

Inequality metrics across peers – 2020*

	Income Equality		Social & Economic							Health			
	income equality (gini)	poverty gap	pensions levels	unemployment benefits	childcare costs	post family work re-engage incentive	incapacity benefits	healthcare spend	housing availability	Life expectancy from birth	Years Lost (deaths pre age 65)	Child mortality rate	COVID deaths / population
1	Iceland	Iceland	Austria	Finland	Germany	Sweden	Denmark	Switzerland	Austria	Switzerland	Switzerland	Iceland	Australia
2	Belgium	Denmark	Netherlands	Belgium	Austria	Norway	Norway	Norway	Switzerland	France	Norway	Sweden	Iceland
3	Norway	Finland	France	France	Canada	Netherlands	Sweden	Germany	Finland	Norway	Sweden	Finland	Norway
4	Denmark	Ireland	Denmark	Netherlands	Sweden	Austria	Finland	Austria	France	Australia	Australia	Norway	Finland
5	Finland	Belgium	Iceland	Austria	Iceland	Germany	Iceland	Sweden	Germany	Sweden	Netherlands	Austria	Denmark
6	Austria	Netherlands	Belgium	Ireland	Norway	Finland	Belgium	Netherlands	Denmark	Iceland	Ireland	Ireland	Canada
7	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Germany	Belgium	Iceland	Netherlands	Canada	Sweden	Ireland	Austria	Australia	Netherlands
8	Netherlands	France	Sweden	Switzerland	France	Switzerland	Switzerland	Denmark	Norway	Canada	Denmark	Germany	Ireland
9	Germany	Sweden	Germany	Australia	Denmark	Belgium	Germany	France	Netherlands	Netherlands	Finland	Switzerland	Germany
10	Ireland	Switzerland	Norway	Canada	Netherlands	France	Australia	Belgium	Belgium	Austria	France	Netherlands	Austria
11	Switzerland	Austria	Canada	Norway	Finland	Ireland	Austria	Ireland	Ireland	Finland	Belgium	Denmark	Switzerland
12	France	Germany	USA	Iceland	Ireland	USA	UK	Australia	UK	Belgium	Canada	France	Sweden
13	Canada	UK	Switzerland	Sweden	Australia	Australia	France	Iceland	USA	UK	Germany	Belgium	France
14	Australia	Canada	Australia	UK	Switzerland	UK	Ireland	Finland	Canada	Denmark	UK	UK	UK
15	UK	Australia	Ireland	USA	USA	Denmark	USA	UK	Iceland	Germany	USA	USA	USA
16	USA	USA	UK		UK	Canada	Canada		Australia	USA		Canada	Belgium

* or most recent year

Source: OECD

see appendix 1 for more detail

**Quality of life in the UK much poorer than
peers because of inequality**



2. Extreme inequality is driven by FPTP



Under FPTP, most votes don't count

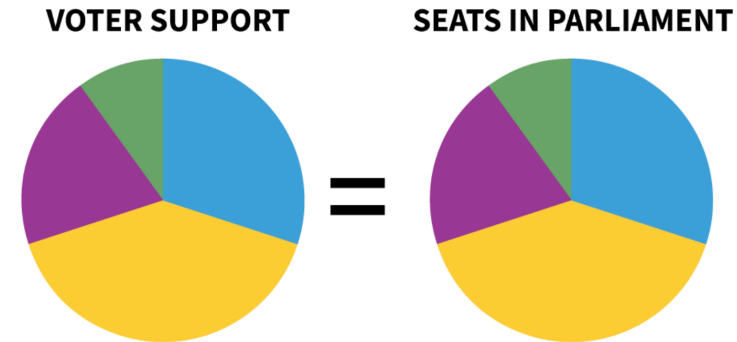
Electoral system

Proportional
Representation
(PR)

How it works

- Parties get seats in proportion to the number of votes they get

Outcome



Users

Norway
Denmark
Sweden
Finland
Iceland
Ireland
Netherlands
Austria
Germany
Belgium
Switzerland

versus

Majoritarian
or 'First Past
the Post'
(FPTP) systems

- Votes for losing parties in a constituency do not count

WINNER TAKES ALL

LOSERS GET NOTHING

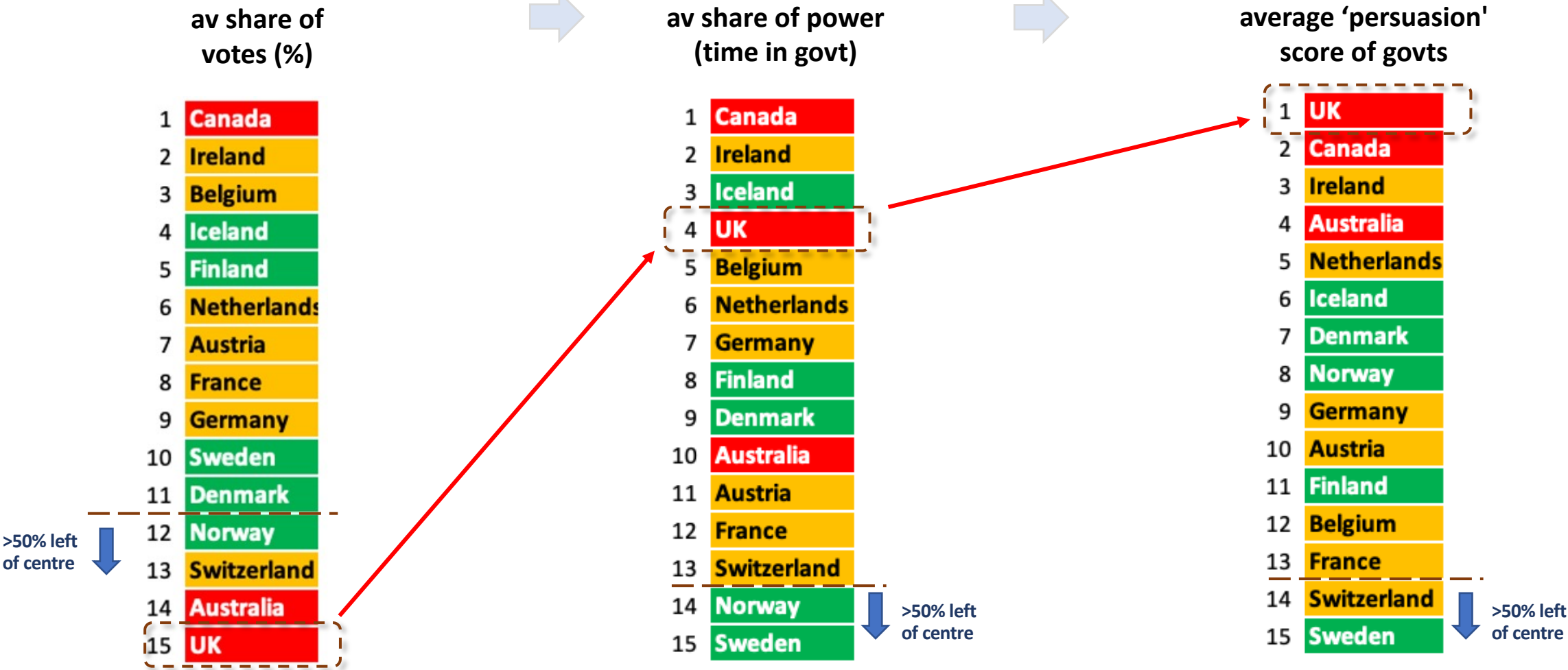


France*
UK
USA
Australia**
Canada



FPTP has an inbuilt bias favouring right wing parties

Ranking votes, seats, time in power and persuasion: 1979 - 2020



Source: ParlGov

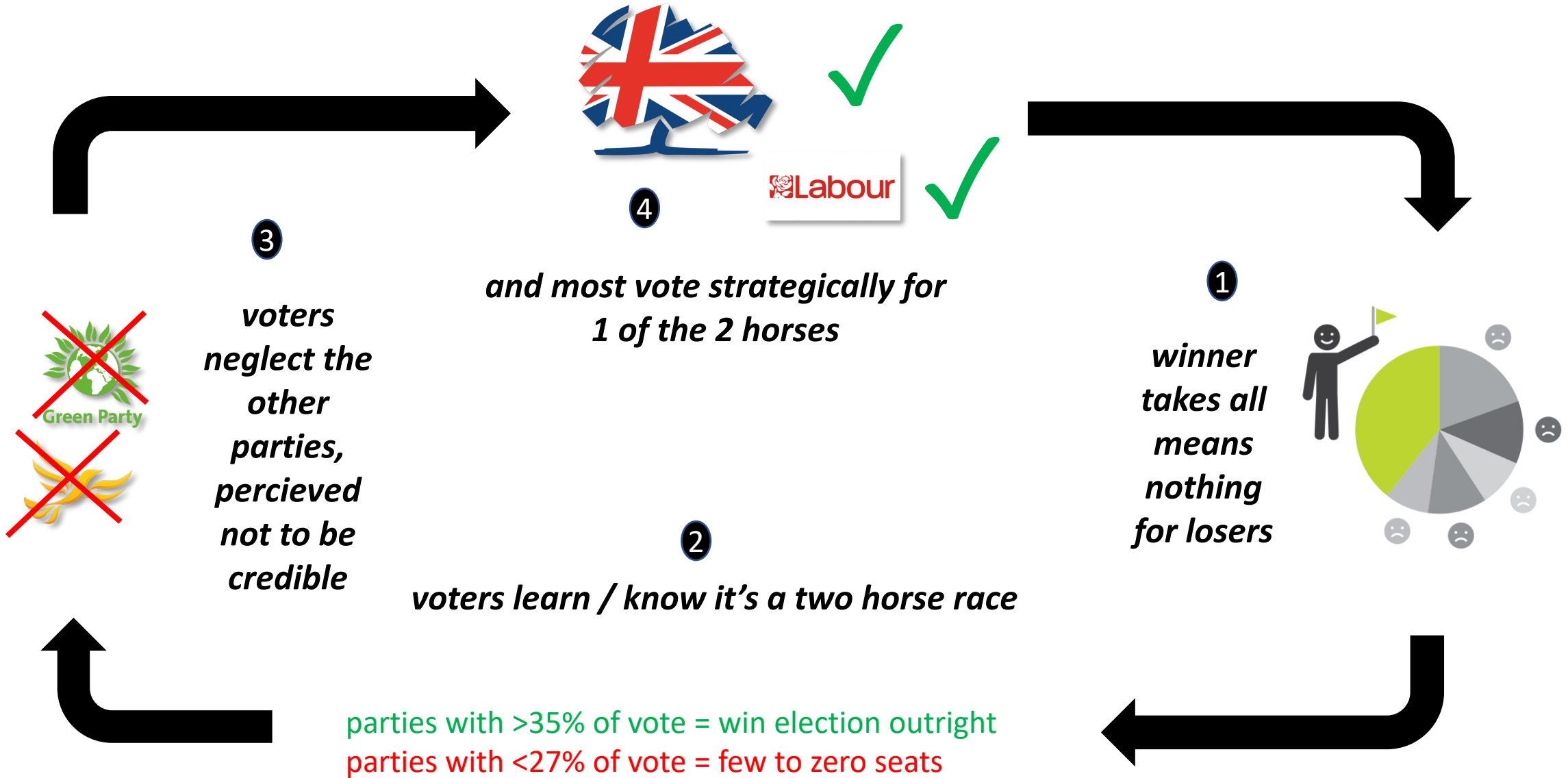
* Political leaning / persuasion score based on a 0-10 scale mean value in left/right dimension with data from Castles/Mair 1983, Huber/Inglehart 1995, Benoit/Laver 2006 and CHES 2010; 0 = extreme left wing, 10 = extreme right wing



Why?

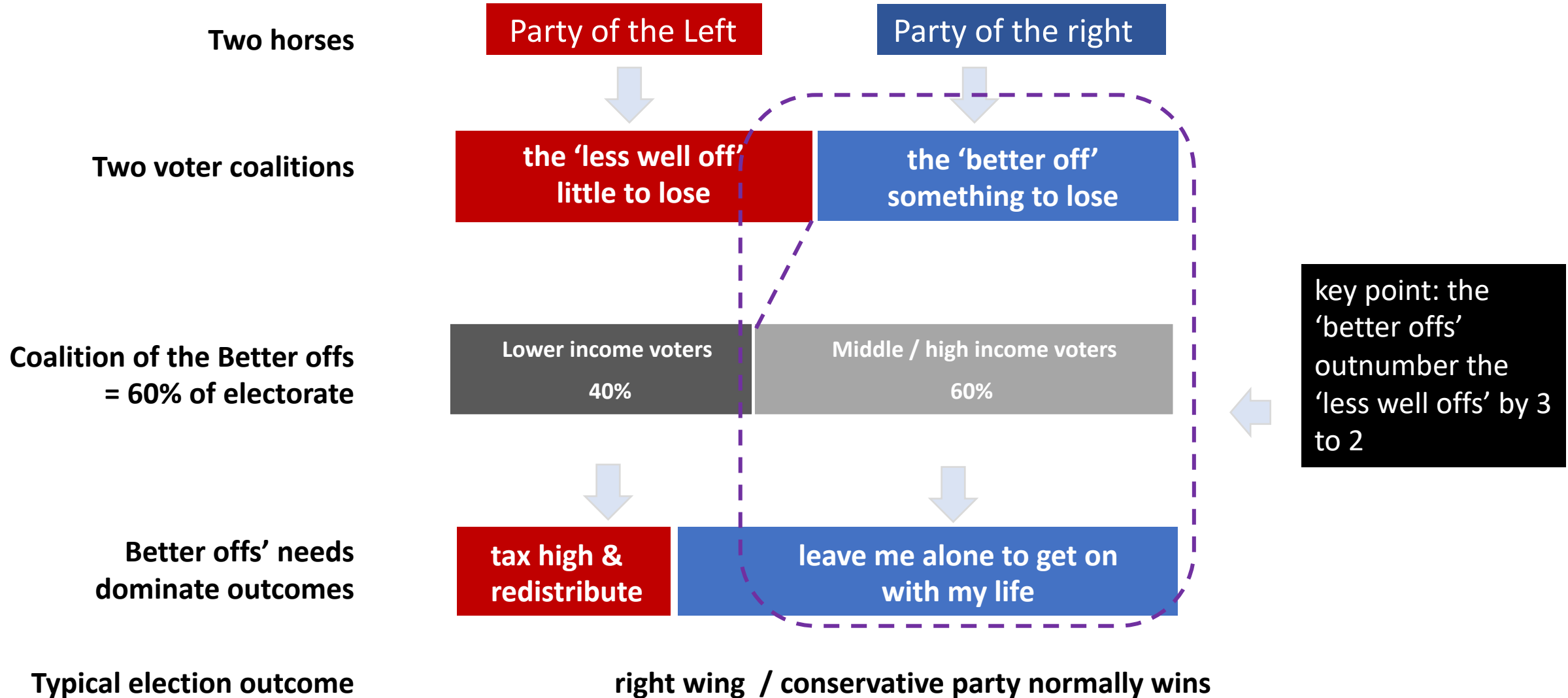


'Winner-takes-all' drives elections into a 'two horse' race



2 horse race gives the middle class all the power; the massive 'coalition of the haves'

First Past the Post: parties and voter coalitions



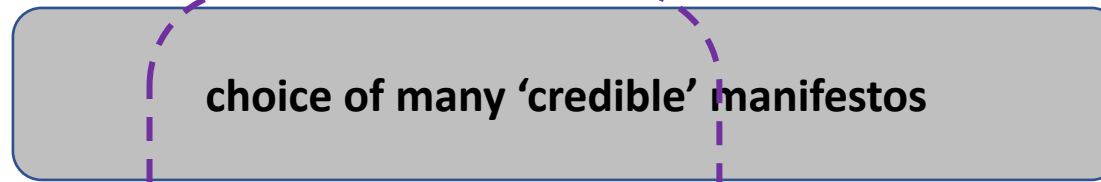
unlike PR where smaller voter coalitions emerge through plurality of options...

Proportional Representation: parties and voter coalitions

Multiple 'credible' parties
(at least 4)



Plurality of 'credible choices'



Plurality of voter coalitions



resulting in a coalition
between the 2 largest
parties

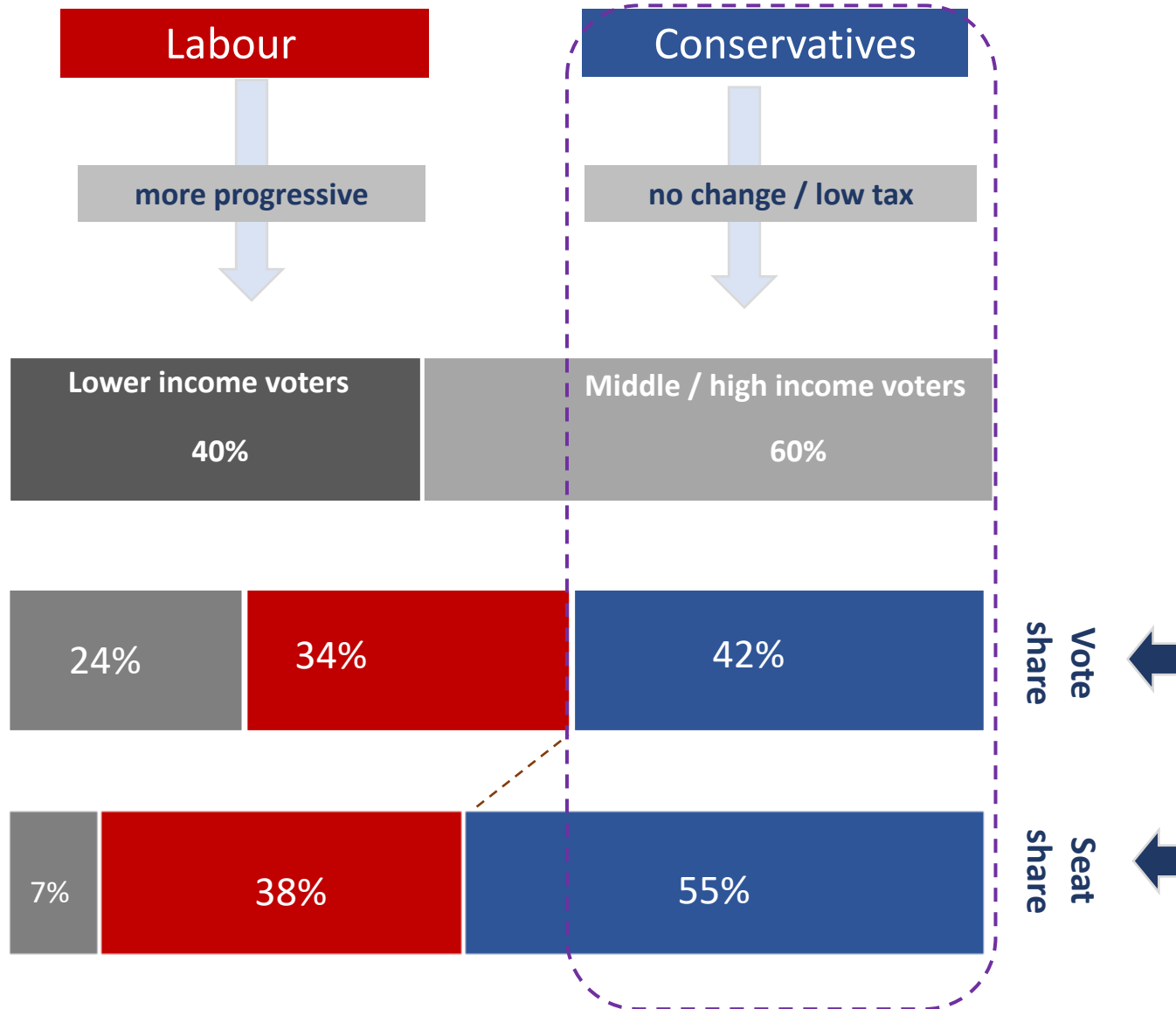


Typical election outcome

Plurality prevents domination of the Better offs;
large variety of centrist govts dominate

key point: options
– no automatic
cleavage between
less well off and
better off

40 yrs of UK FPTP experience makes the point...



in the 8 elections the Tories have won since 1979, they have achieved on average 42% of the vote

translating to 55% of seats = majority

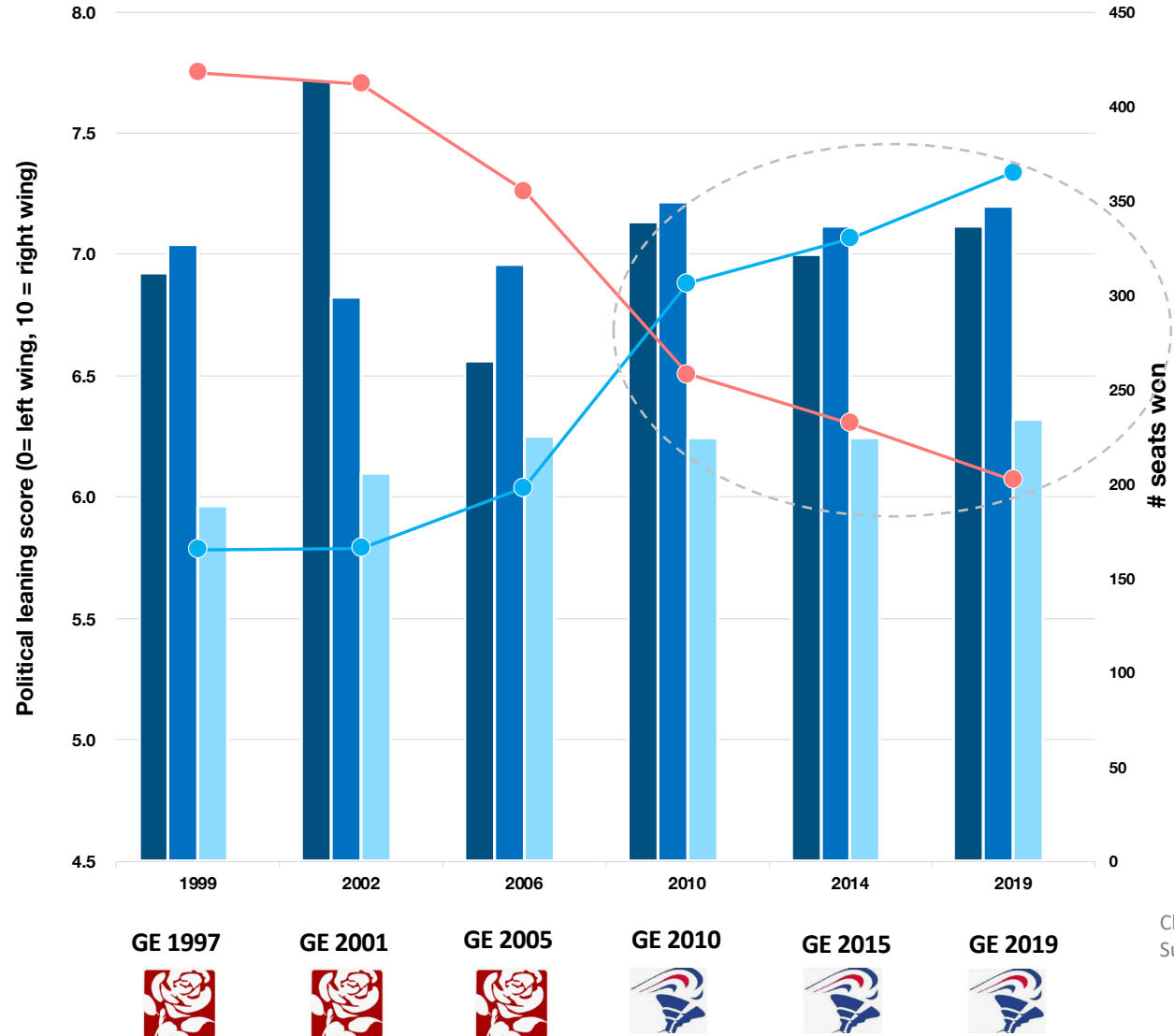
see appendix 2 for more detail



And the all powerful Tories move further and further to the right...

UK Tories lurch to the right: 1999 - 2019

- UK Tories
- European Conservative peers (radical right)
- Centre-right peers (lib / christian dem)
- Con seats
- Lab seats



Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2022

**FPTP countries have higher
inequality because the
mechanism favours the right**



3. FPTP and the emasculated of UK Labour



So how best to judge what New Labour did when in power?

new Labour
new Britain



Benchmark



Relevance

The 'other' UK party: the most successful and one of the most extreme right wing parties anywhere in Europe

Sensible comparator?

X
nonsense!

new Labour
new Britain



The
Nordic
Nobles



The
Mainland
Moderates



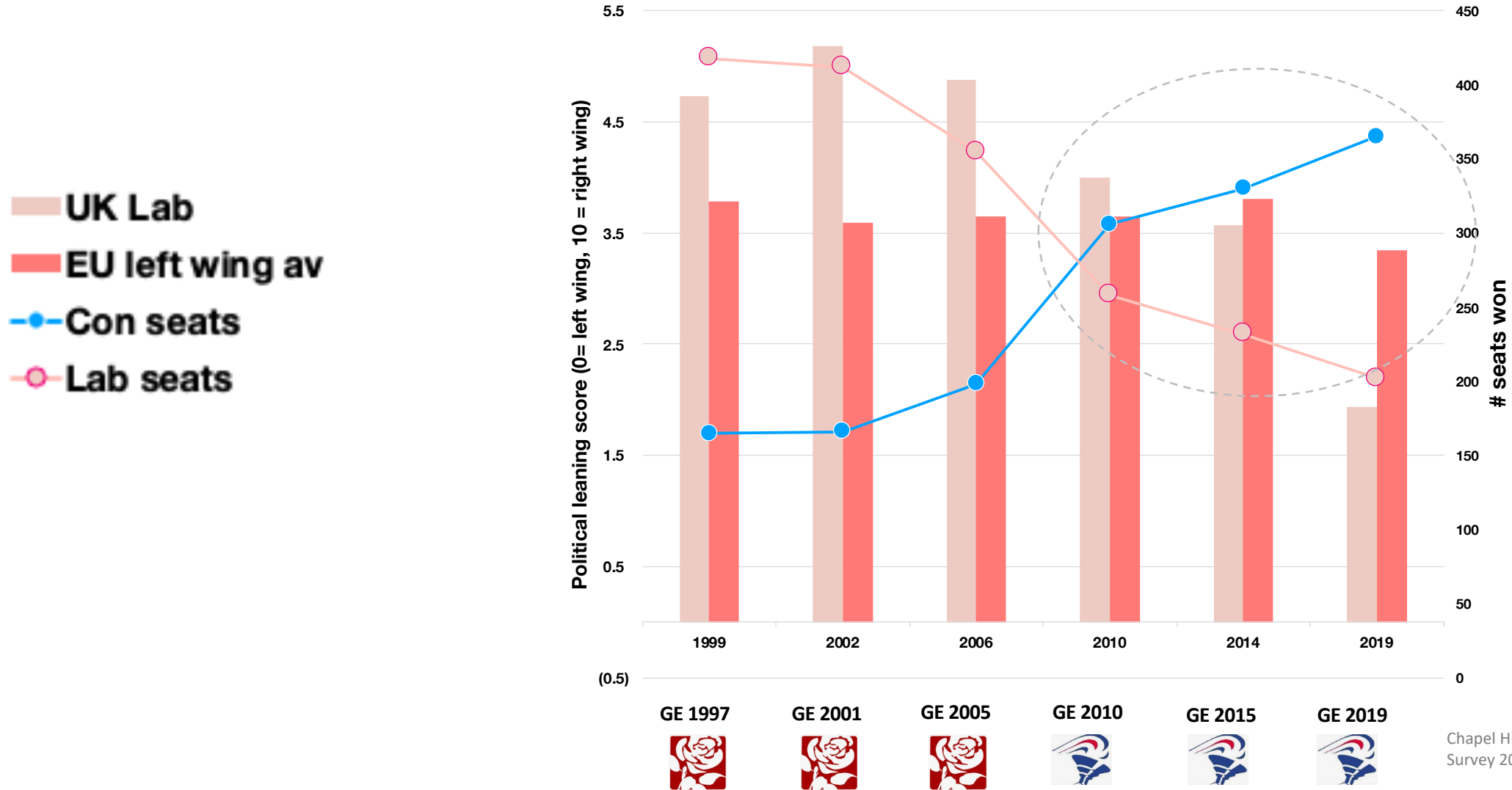
The UK's most relevant peers: the countries with the best social outcomes anywhere in the world

✓
of course!



What were the 'progressive' consequences of New Labour moving to the right?

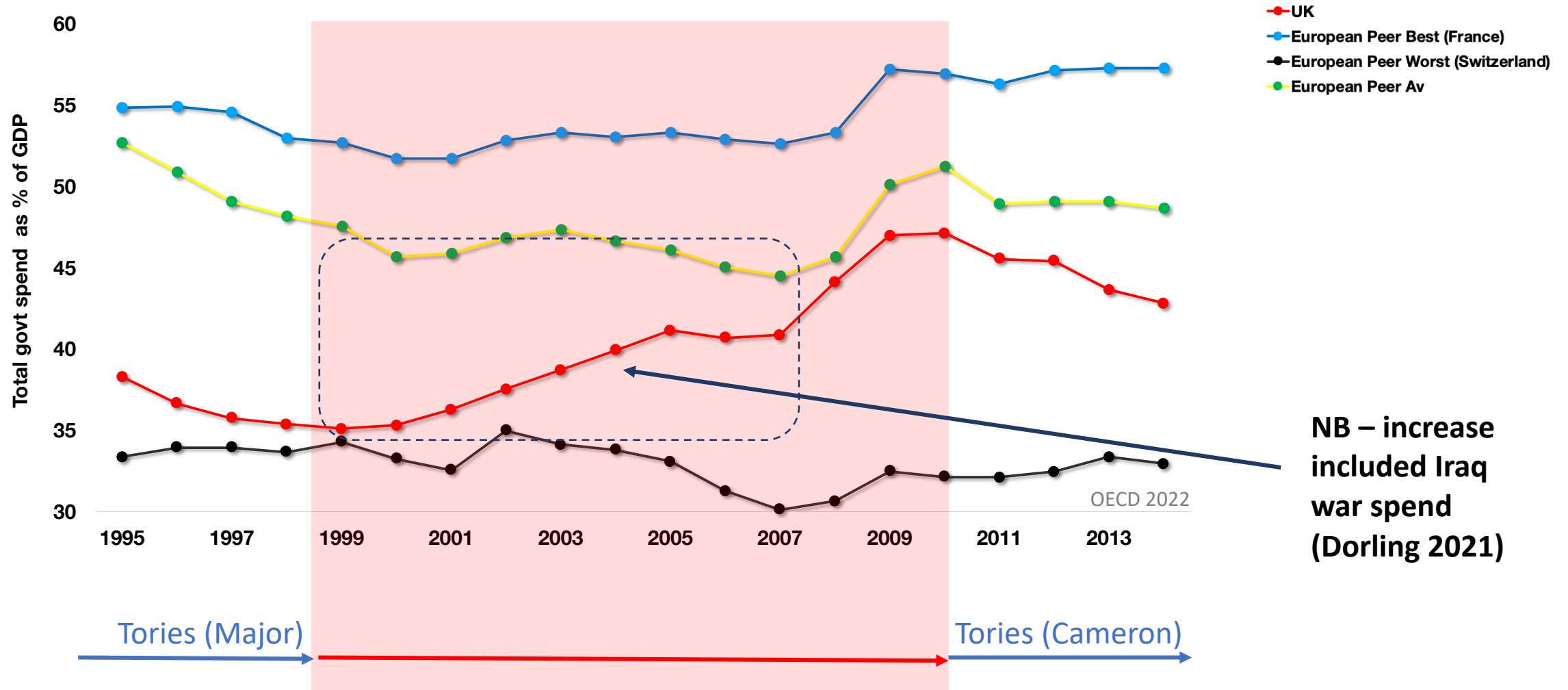
UK Labour's lurch to the left: 1999 - 2019



Chapel Hill Expert
Survey 2022

New Labour 1997 – 2010: lower levels of public investment than European peers

Total government spending under New Labour: 1998 - 2010



NB – increase included Iraq war spend (Dorling 2021)

OECD 2022

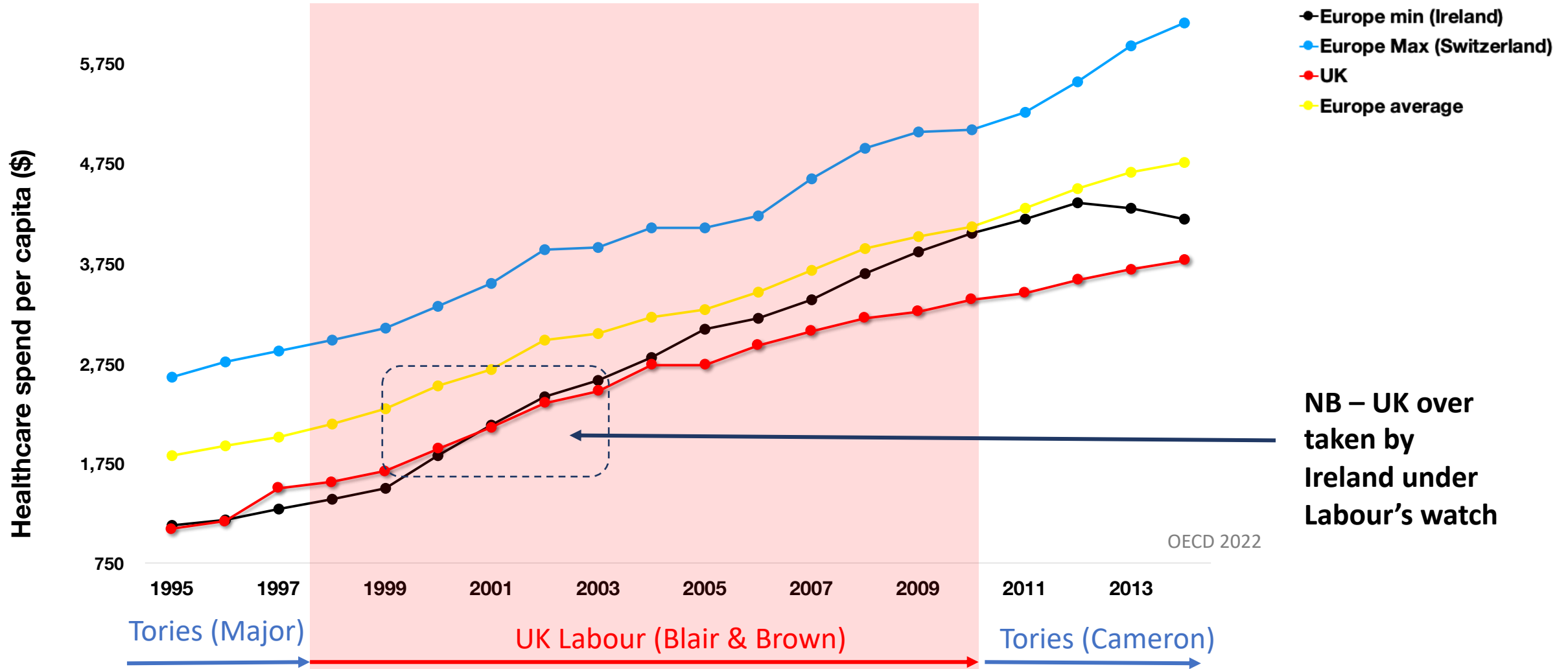
Tories (Major)

Tories (Cameron)



New Labour 1997 – 2010: lower levels of health spending than European peers

Health spend under New Labour: 1998 - 2010

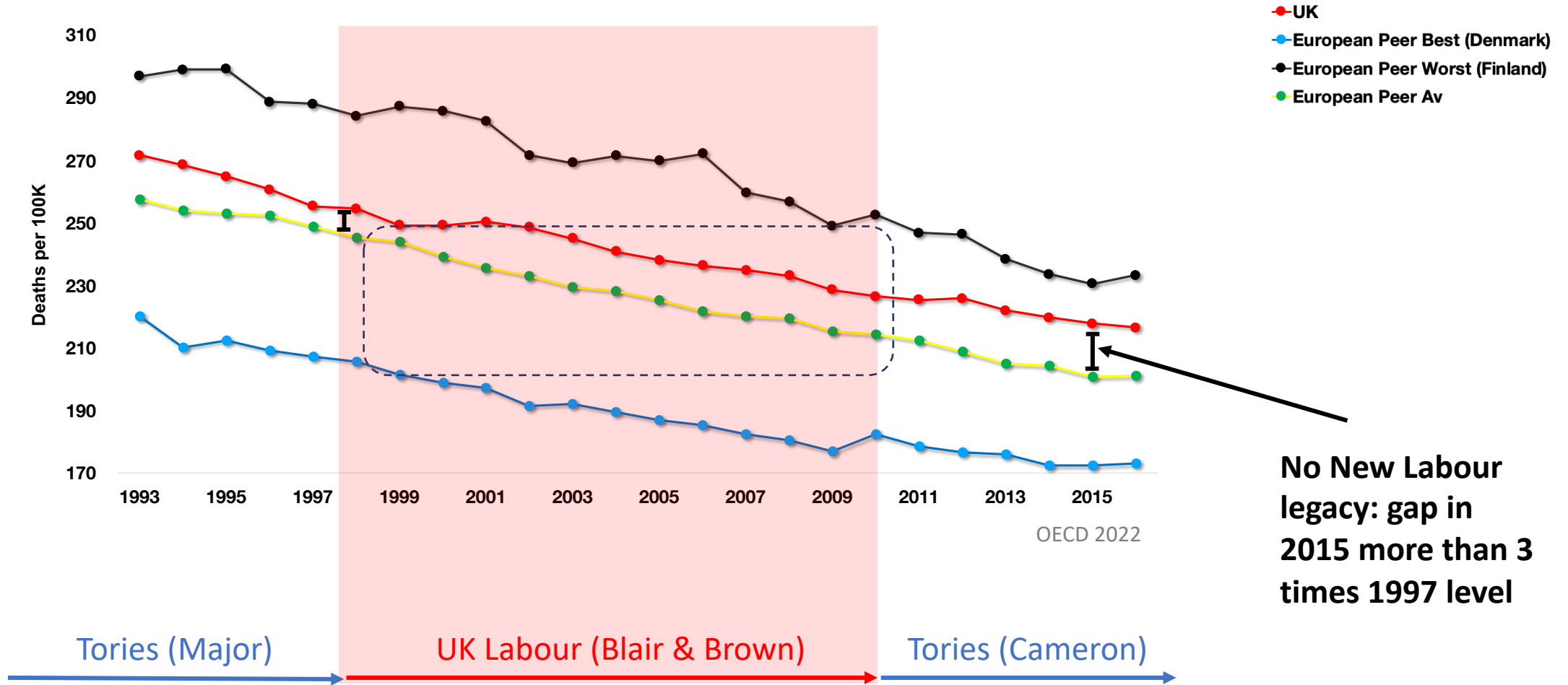


NB – UK overtaken by Ireland under Labour's watch

OECD 2022

New Labour 1997 – 2010: cancer survival gap widened v European peers

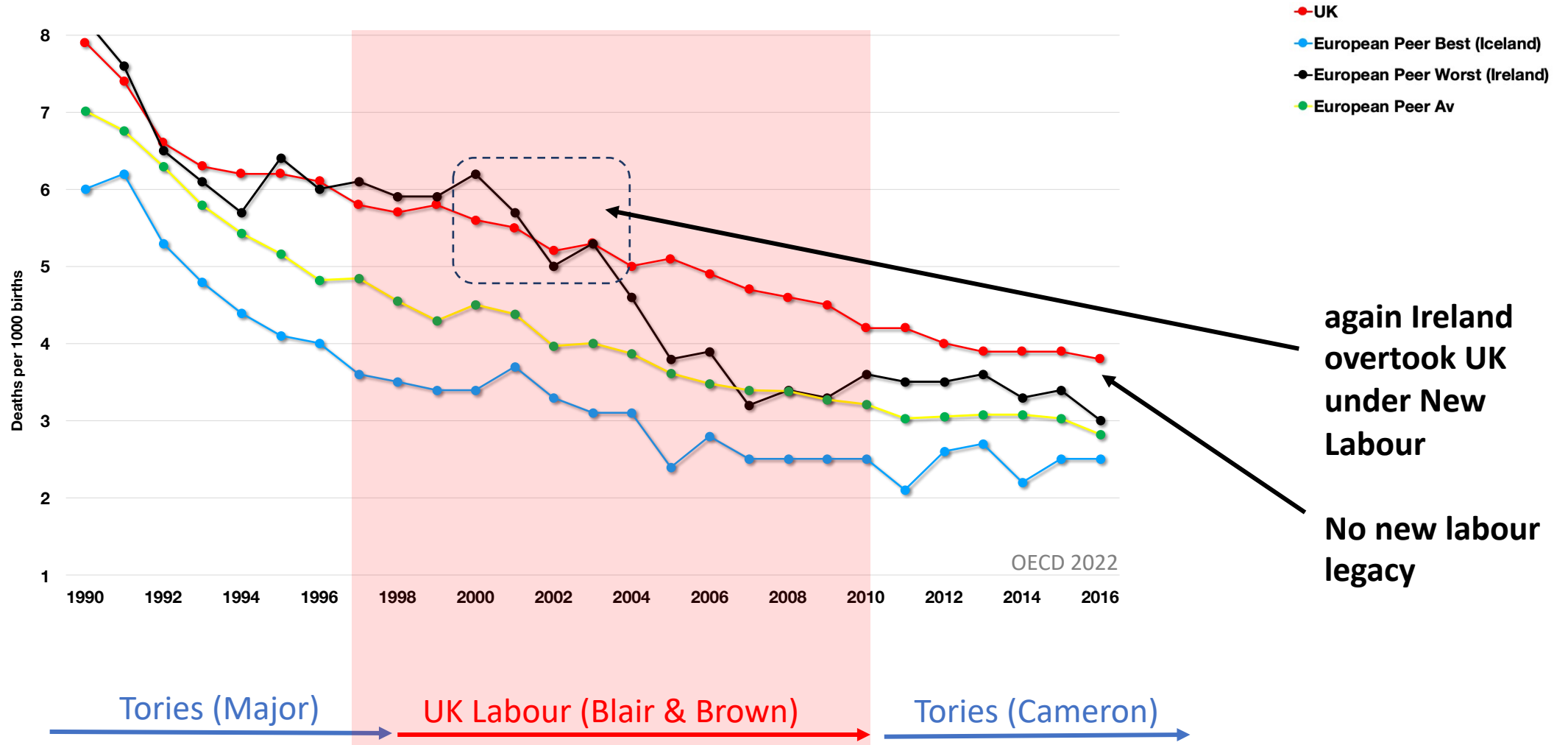
Cancer Deaths per 100k - New Labour : 1998 - 2010



No New Labour legacy: gap in 2015 more than 3 times 1997 level

New Labour 1997 – 2010: highest level of child mortality v European peers

Child mortality per 100k births - New Labour – 1998 - 2010



again Ireland overtook UK under New Labour

No new labour legacy

OECD 2022

Tories (Major)

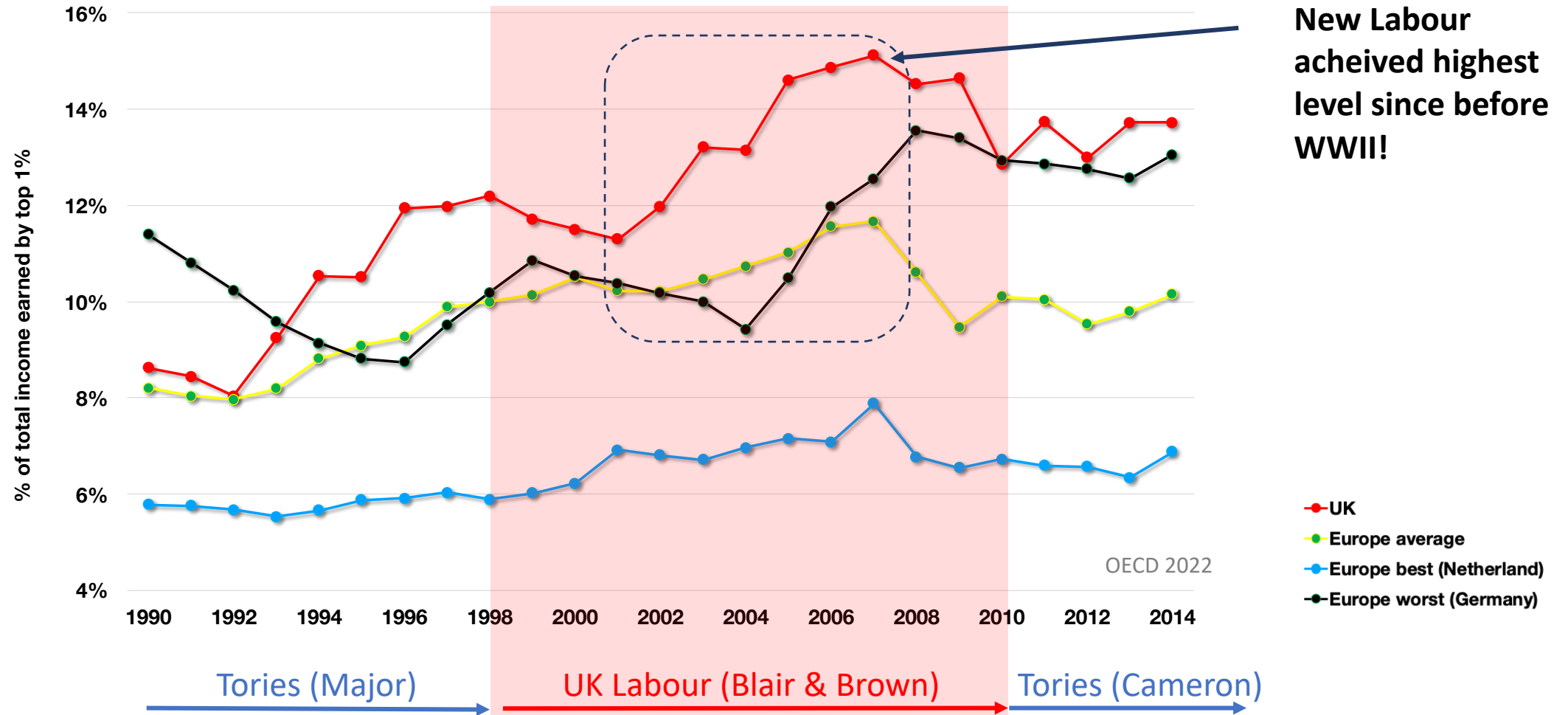
UK Labour (Blair & Brown)

Tories (Cameron)



New Labour 1997 – 2010: wealthiest 1% in UK earn more than European peers top 1%

Share of total income earned by top 1% - New Labour: 1998 - 2010



New Labour achieved highest level since before WWII!

OECD 2022



New Labour: a bullied, interim caretaker

- 2 largest GE majorities in the UK since the 2nd world war + 3 consecutive GE victories
- Single party majority rule for 12 ½ years
- The most powerful 'progressive' mandate in Europe since WWII
- At best, pace of inequality stemmed but no long term legacy
- A brief interlude before the norm of Tory-led neoliberal business is resumed...



**FPTP countries have higher inequality
because the FPTP mechanism itself weakens
the progressive lobby**



4. A way out for Scotland?



Another go for Labour or time for a European Scotland?

3 objectives

3 solutions



Move to PR

Impossible



All set to go!



Create a fair society

Serve the needs of the Haves



Compromise and consensus through PR



Rejoin the EU or EEA

A total mess



A clean sheet



Overall Verdict

Trapped in the Cycle of doom



Indy now our only option



Appendix 1

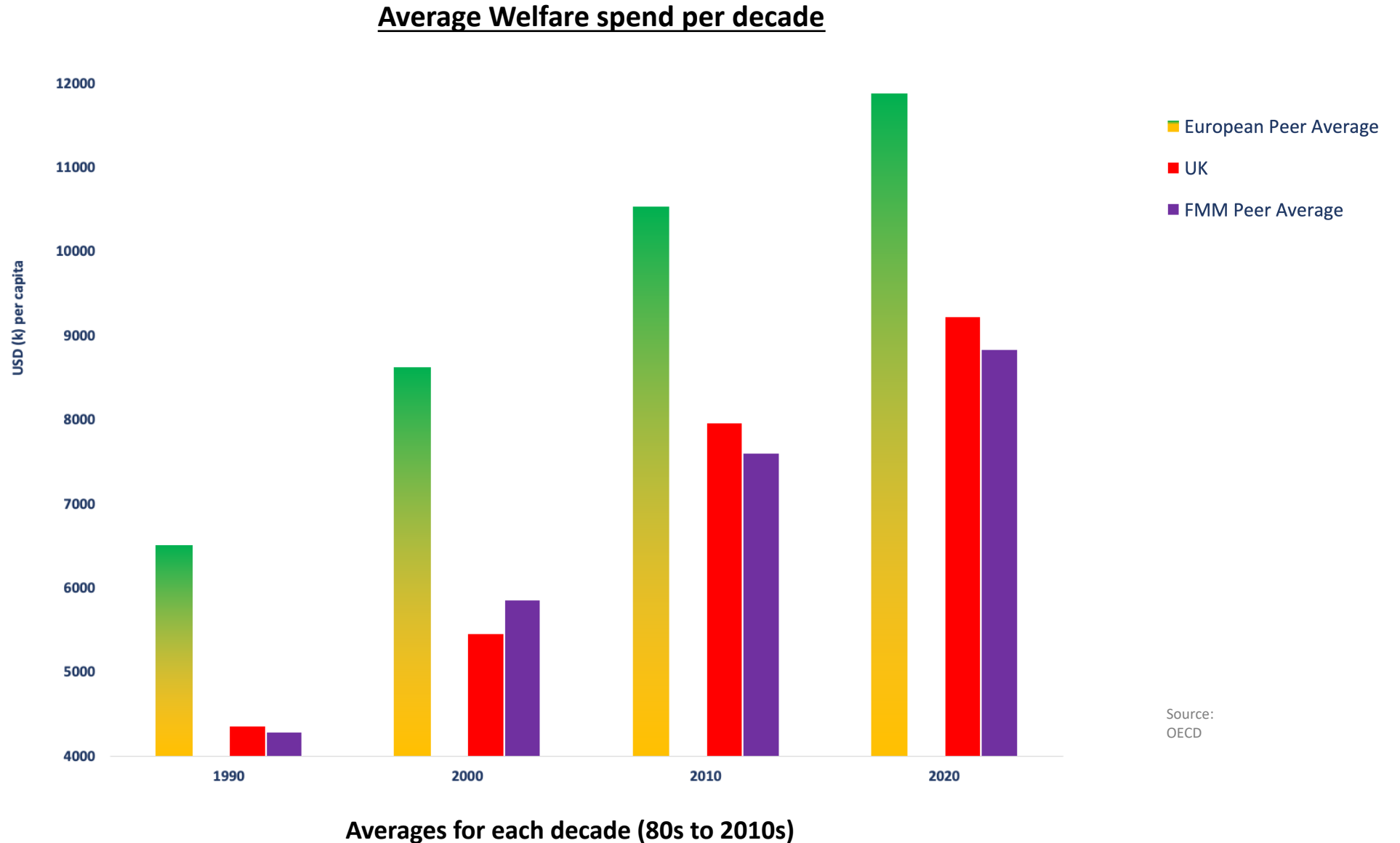
Comparing inequality metrics across 4 decades

UK v European peers v Anglosphere peers



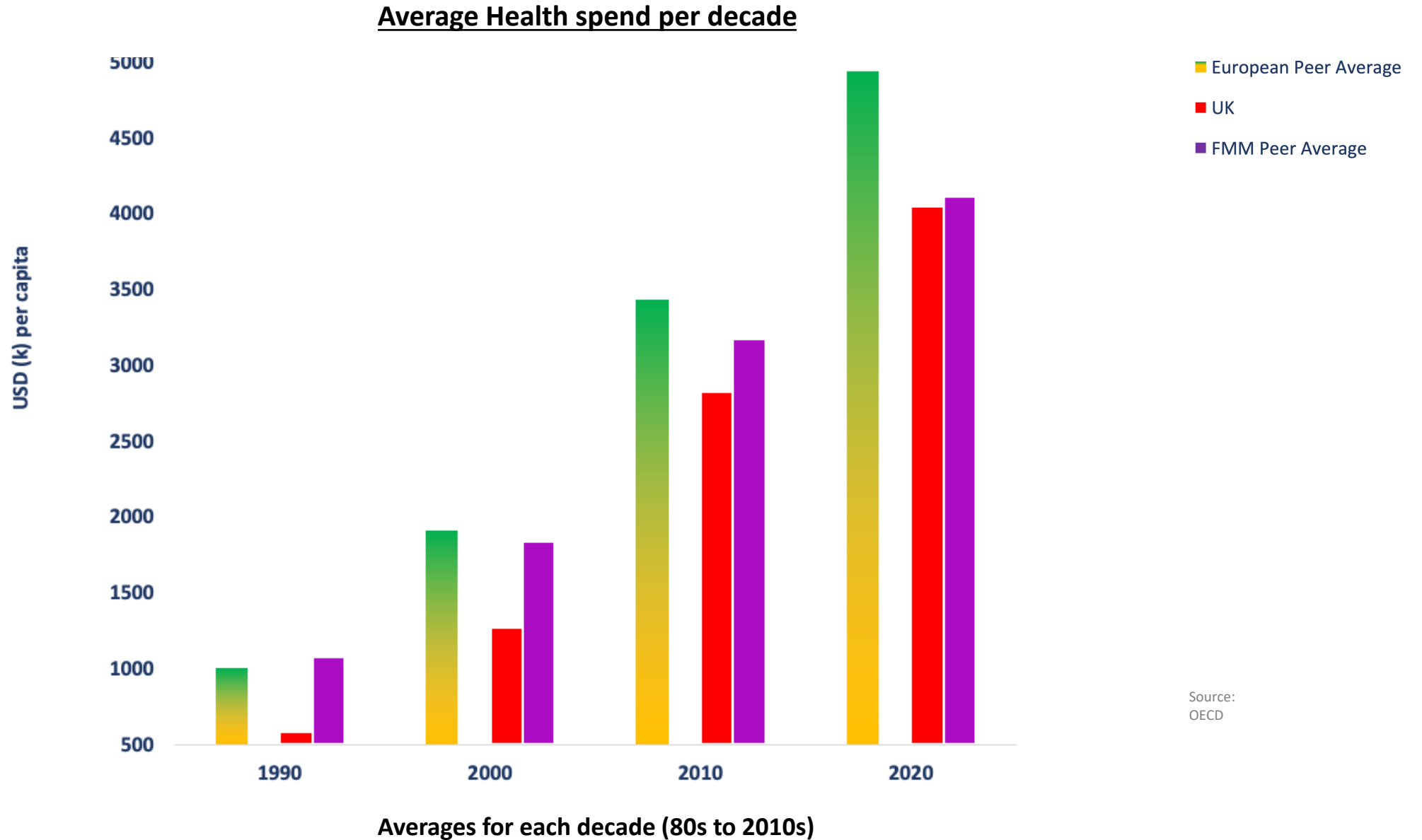
UK provides much lower benefits than European peers

- UK currently has lowest state pension, unemployment and childcare support amongst European peers (2019)



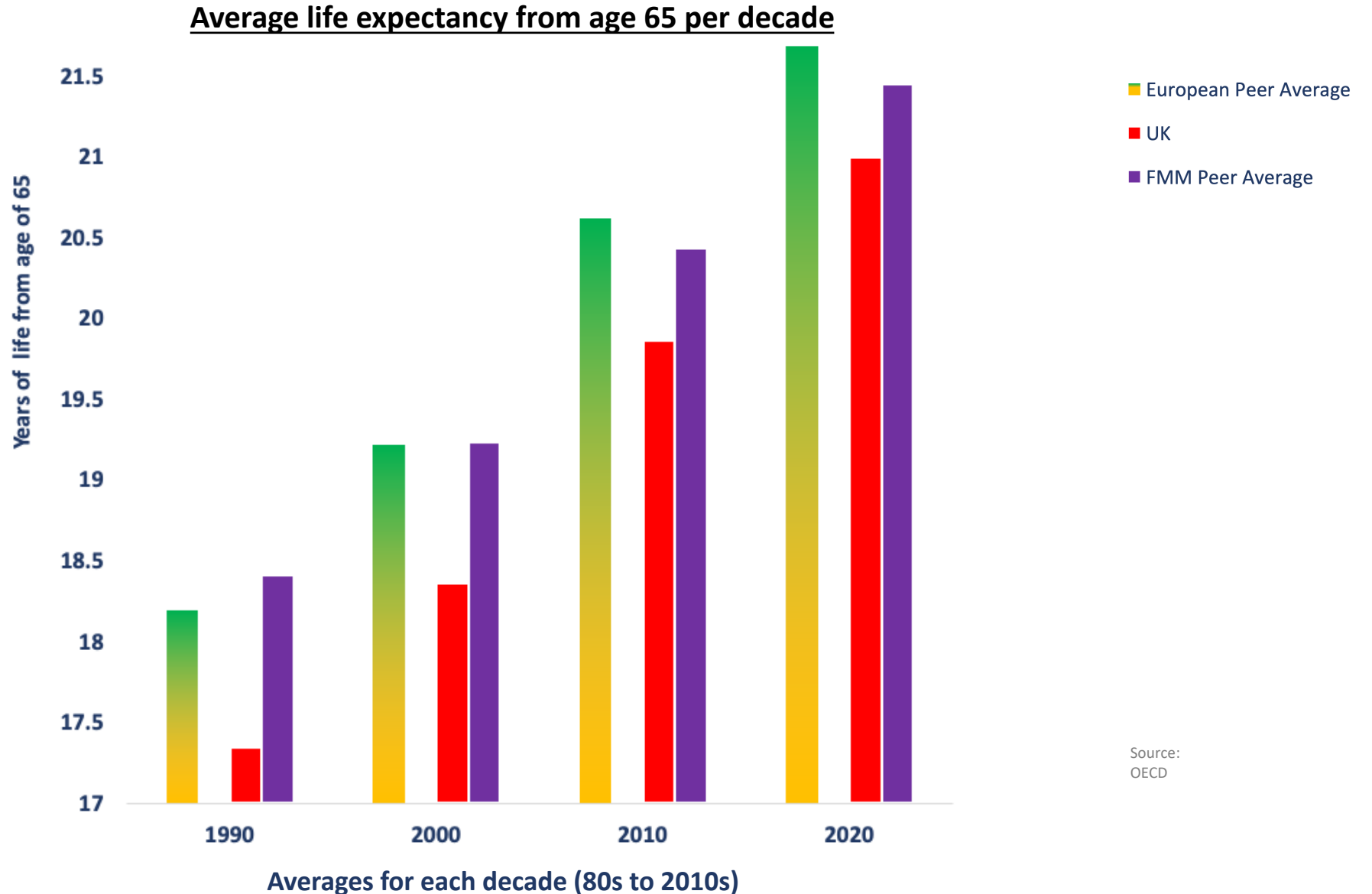
UK spends much less on Health than European peers

- UK currently has lowest spend level for healthcare amongst European peers
- Germany spends around **€1 bn PER WEEK** more than the UK on Healthcare



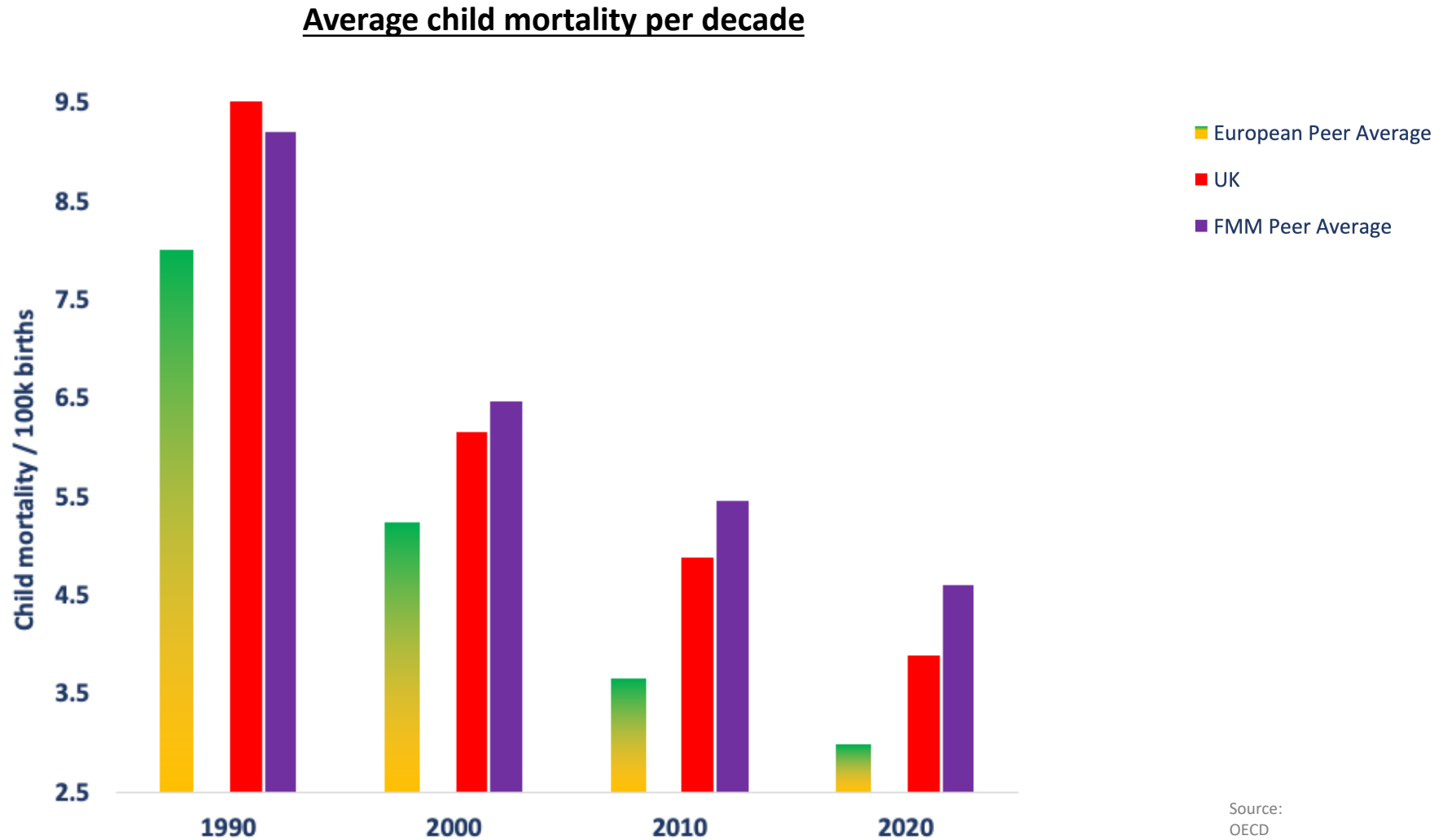
In the UK, older people die younger

- UK has remained in the bottom 3 over the 40 year period
- Ireland rose from 2 bottom to mid table by the last 5 years of the 2010s



and the UK is home to the highest level of child mortality v peers

- UK has moved from 3 highest level of child mortality to highest by 2020
- UK has a higher level of child mortality in 2023 than all but 5 of the EU27 countries (Dorling 2023)



Averages for each decade (80s to 2010s)



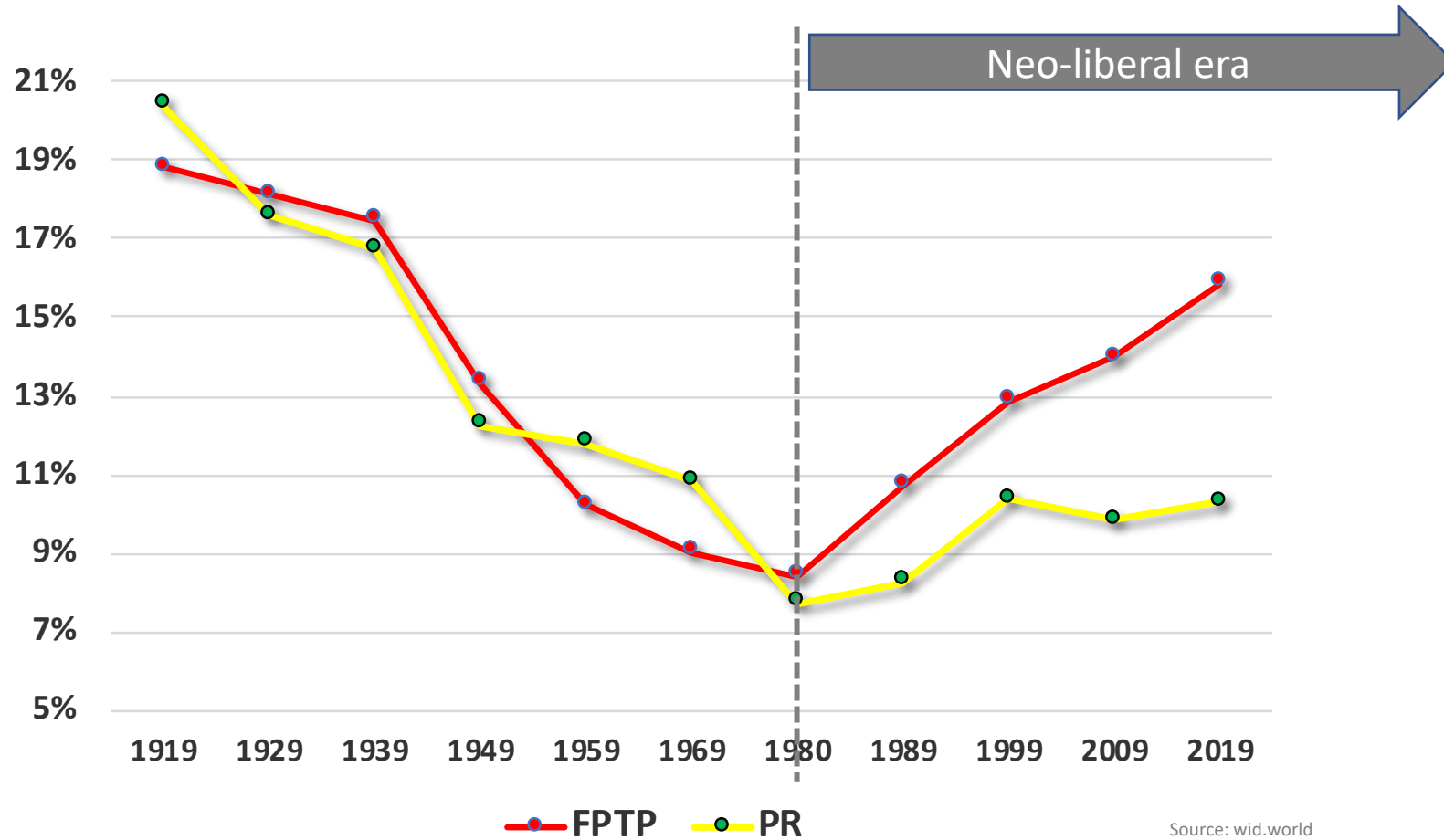
Appendix 2

More detail on why FPTP creates the inequality trap



The right turn that sent FPTP spiraling out of control...

Share of income secured by wealthiest 1%



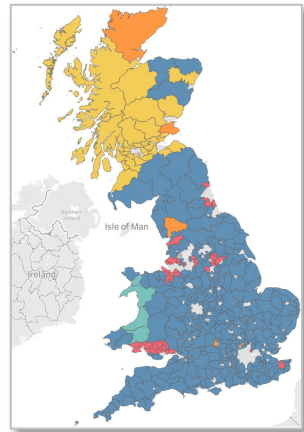
*“the state
should spend
less, regulate
less, do less”*

M Thatcher

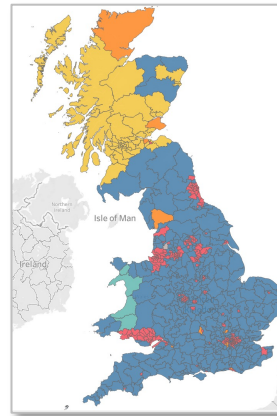


Geography, not policy, provides FPTP 'majoritarian muscle'...

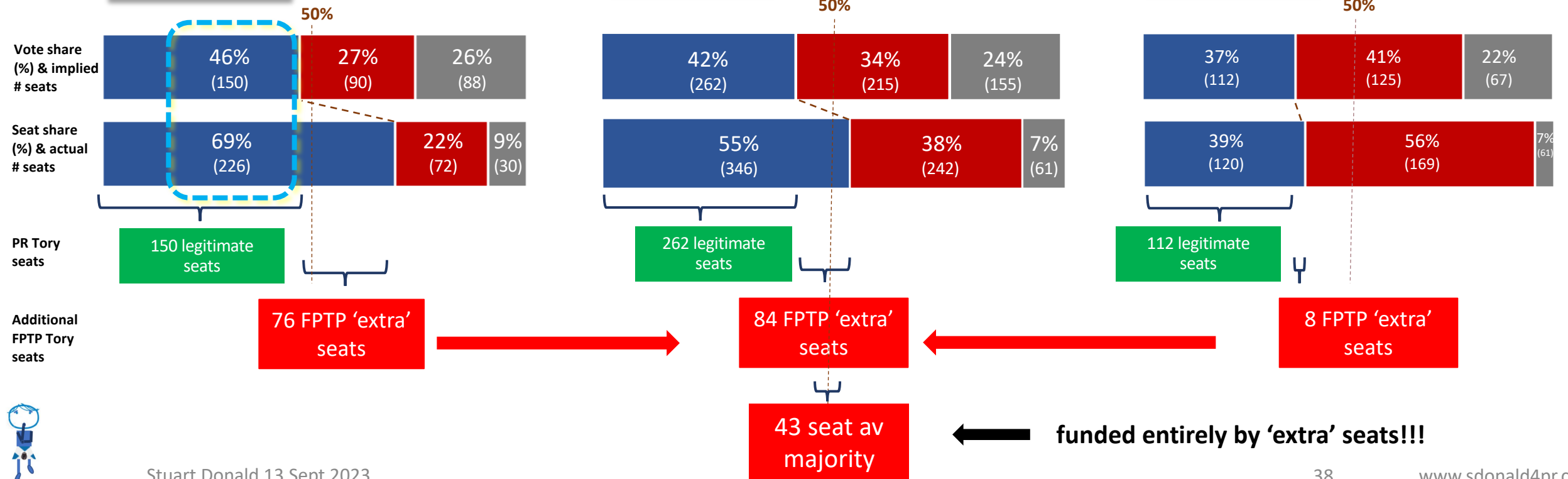
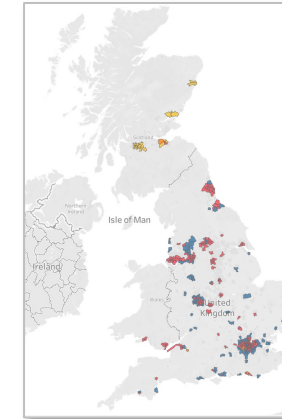
Counties of the UK



All constituencies of the UK

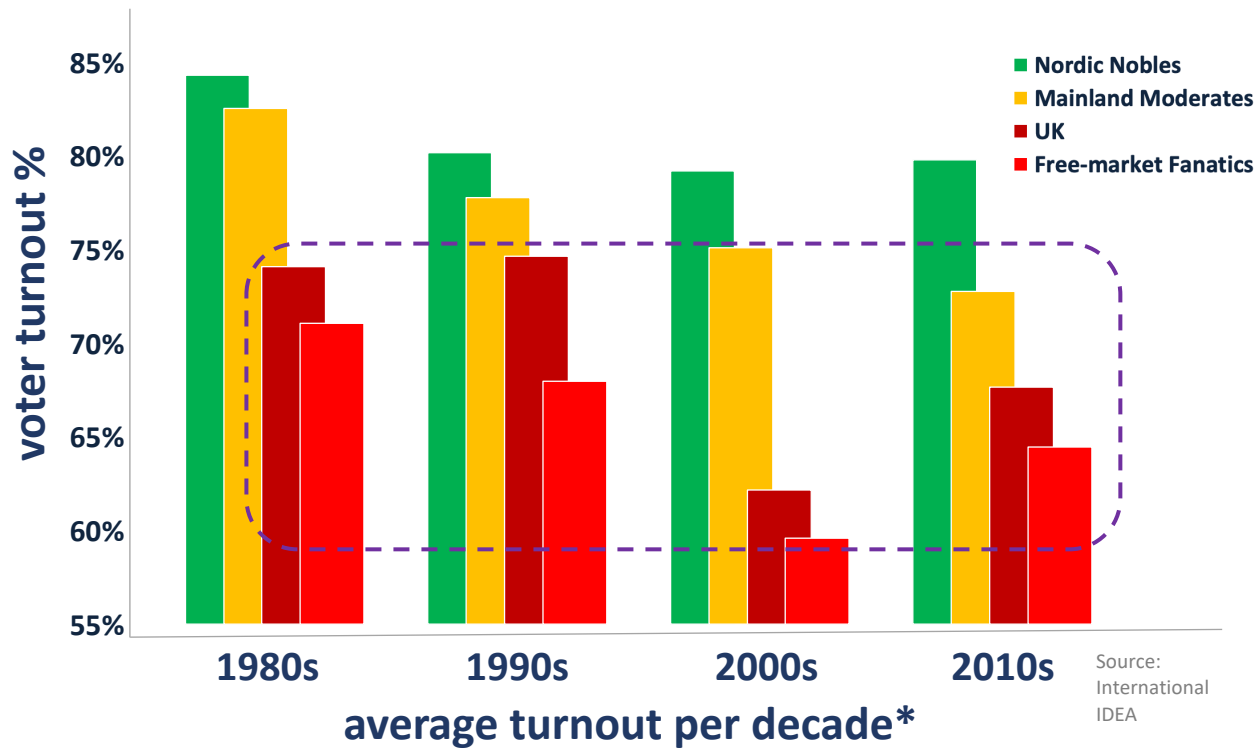


Boroughs of the UK

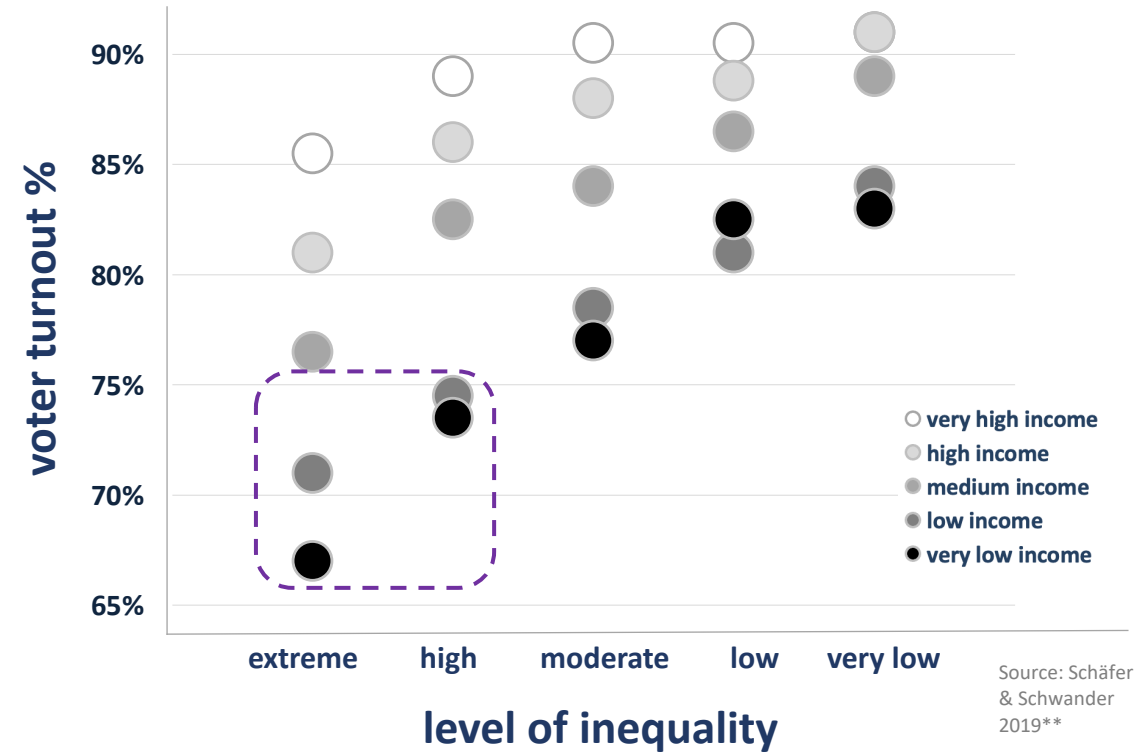


FPTP results in lower turnouts among lower income voters, strengthening the hand of the 'haves'

General election turns outs – 1980 - 2020



Voter turnout by income and inequality



* does not include Australia (has a compulsory voting regime) or Switzerland (turnout compromised by high frequency of single issue referendums) or the US (General election voting compromised by presidential elections)

** voting data for 14 /16 peers (Switzerland and Iceland missing) also including Japan, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Lux, NZ and Italy using ESS, EB, CSES and ISSP surveys between 1985 and 2015



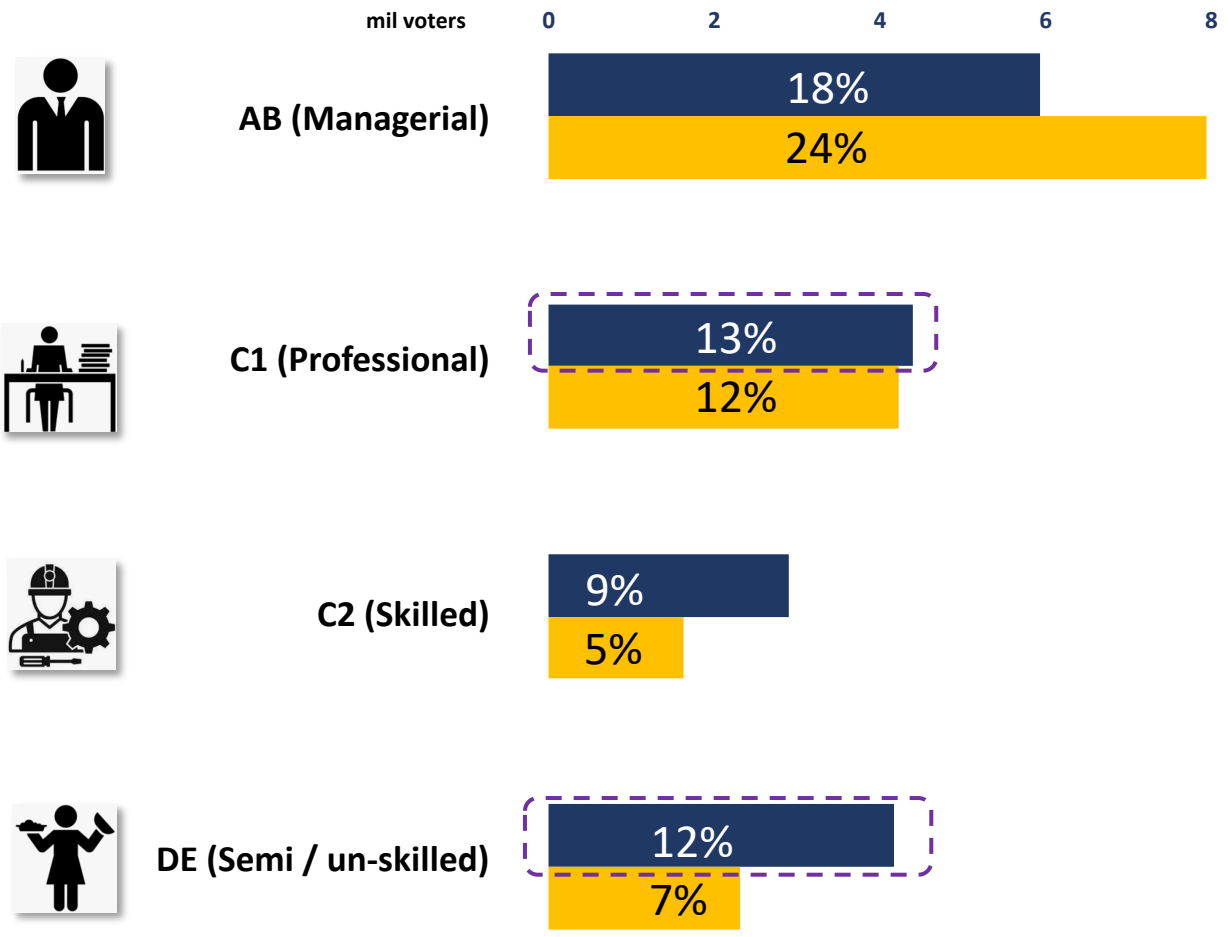
Appendix 3

4. How the misery of inequality drove Brexit

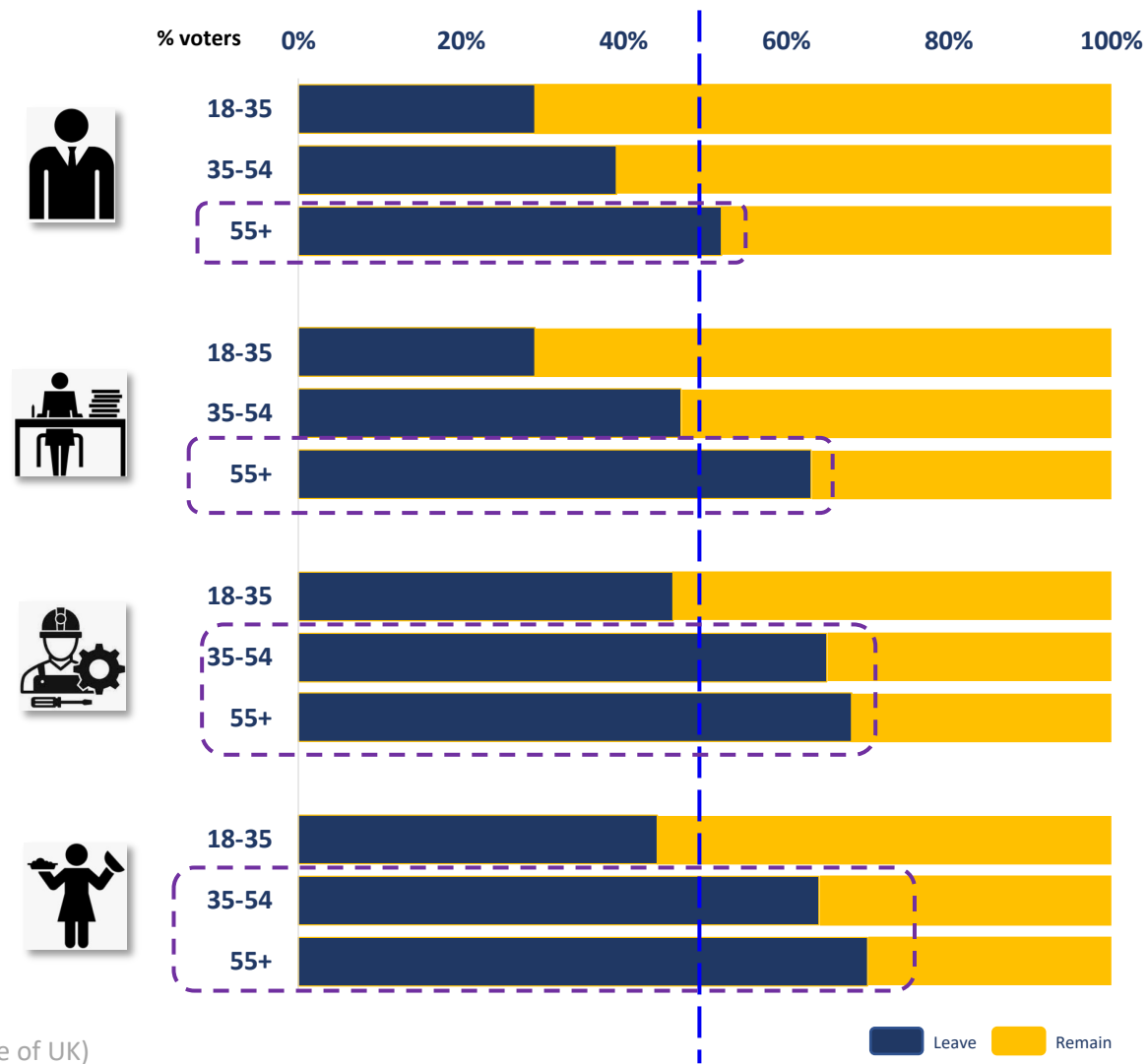


Middle class memories of better times drove Brexit

Middle class delivered vote leave...



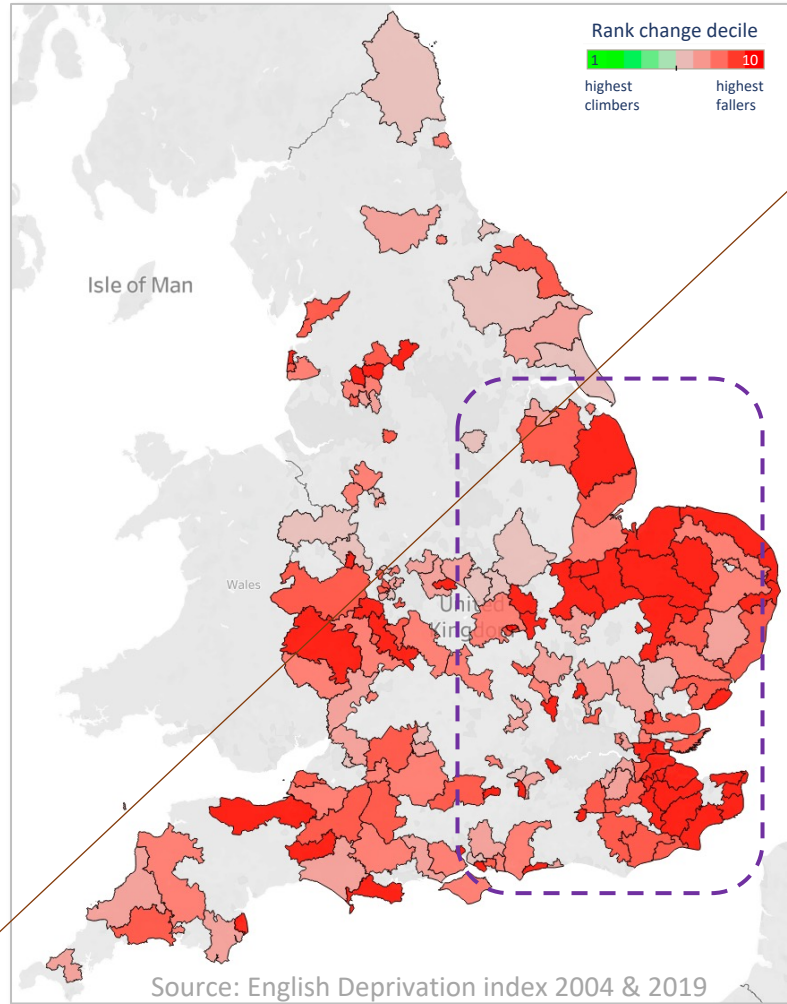
And older heads rather than younger



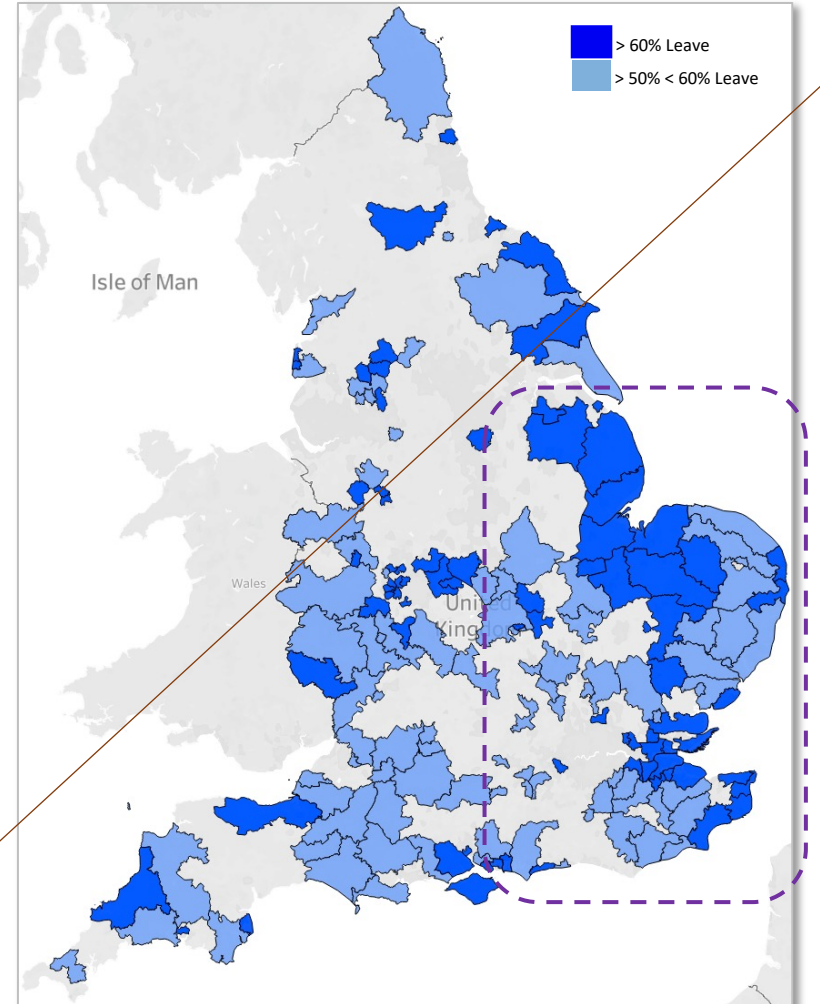
Source: Ashcroft EU ref exit poll 2016 (whole of UK)

South East Tory seats were the most effected by rising inequality and returned the highest vote leave shares

Change in seat deprivation rank 2001 - 2015



Share of vote Leave 2016



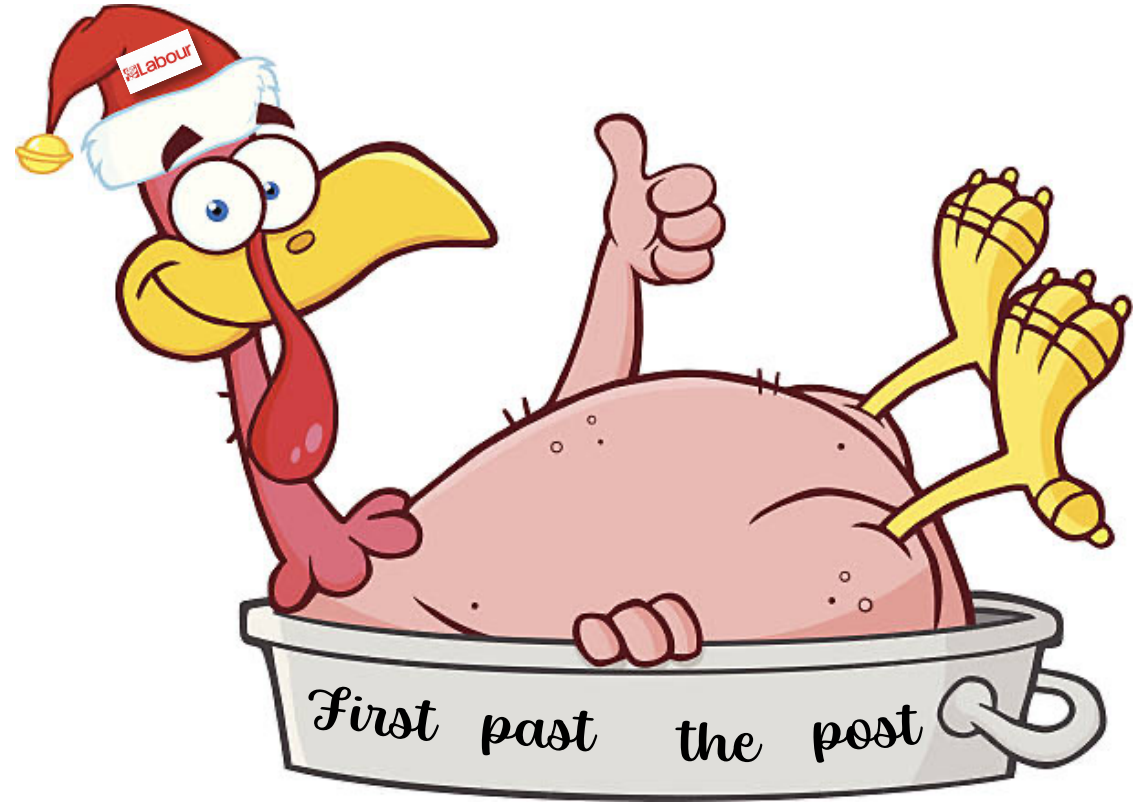
**Brexit was only possible because
inequality is now damaging middle
England**



Appendix 4

**4. From FPTP
to PR:**

**asking turkeys
to vote for
Xmas**



The hopeless dash of the FPTP turkey: a gauntlet of conflicts & deceit

