

# Conservative Research Department

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*New document,*

## Public Opinion Background Note 25

I enclose a copy of the results from our latest Gallup Tracking Study. The findings on the Voting Intention part of this survey are the same as those published in the Daily Telegraph on 17th July 1980.

It is encouraging to note the fall in Labour's lead to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent compared with the 8 per cent (25/30th June) and 7 per cent (2nd/7th July) that we found in our previous unpublished Tracking Studies.

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*Keith*

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CONFIDENTIAL

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 25

(PRODUCED 20TH JULY 1980)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest 'tracking' study (conducted 10-14th July 1980) are the same as the results of the Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on 17th July 1980. The 3½% Labour lead in the latest study is in strong contrast with the results from our two previous unpublished tracking studies which found respectively an 8% Labour lead (25/30 June) and a 7% Labour lead (2/7 July). It is always dangerous when looking at the results of the tracking exercise to build too much upon the results of a single weekly survey, however given the tendency for public opinion to move towards the government of the day over the summer period we may be in a position of having a small lead in the polls when the next Gallup poll is published in late August. It is tempting to see the increase in Labour's lead in our previous two tracking studies as a response to the unemployment figures released towards the end of June - it will be interesting to see if we can get a similar response after the release of the latest unemployment figures on Tuesday (22nd July).

This 3½% Labour lead can be compared with Labour's 18% lead in June 1971, 21½% lead in July 1971, 4½% lead in August 1971 and 19% lead in September 1971.

2. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished Gallup 'tracking' studies are shown both in the table below and in the attached graphs. It is perhaps worth noting the stable level of Liberal national support, at around 14% - 15% since early April.

Voting Intention

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
May 1979 (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*	42	43½	12	2½	-½
<u>1980</u>					
2/8 April	39	45	13	3	-6
10/14 April	36½	45	15	3½	-8½**
16/21 April	41	43	14½	1½	-2
23/28 April	39	44	14	3	-5
30/6 May	39	42	17	2	-3
7/12 May	40	45	13	2	-5
15/19 May	39	43½	15½	2	4½**
21/27 May	40	43	13½	3½	-3
28/2 June	36	46	15	4	-10
4/9 June	39½	43	15½	2	-3½
11/16 June	40½	45	11½	3	-4½**
18/23 June	39	43	15	3	-4
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8
2/7 July	37½	44½	14½	3½	-7
10/14 July	40	43½	14	2½	-3½**

\* First Gallup post election survey

\* Published polls

3. Government Record

Slight improvement in popularity of Government back to level it reached before drop in popularity that took place in last two weeks. The present position with 33% of the electorate approving of the Government's record to date can be compared with the position in 1971 when in June 1971 only 22% of the electorate approved of the Heath Government's record, 26% approved in July, 39% in August 1971 and 30% in September 1971.

For details of the trend of the electorate's approval of our record as a government in recent months please see table below and attached graphs.

Government record

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
2/8 April	36	51	13
10/14 April	36	52	12
16/21 April	38	50	12
23/28 April	34	54	12
30 April/5 May	36	51	13
7/12 May	37	50	13
15/19 May	37	52	11
21/27 May	37	51	12
28/2 June	34	55	11
4/9 June	35	54	11
11/16 June	35	52	13
18/12 June	33	55	12
25/30 June	31	56	13
2/7 July	31	56	13
10/14 July	33	54	13

\* First post election survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Our latest tracking study found 41% of the electorate satisfied with Mrs Thatcher's record as Prime Minister (38% in the previous week) compared with 46% satisfied with Mr. Callaghan as Leader of the Opposition (45% in the previous week). The latest study found a sharp drop in Mr. Steel's popularity which totally reversed the improvement we noted in last week's unpublished study.

Details of trends in popularity of the three political leaders are down in the table below and on the attached graphs.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr. Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
2/8 April	41	54	5	56	31	12	55	19	25
4/10/14 April	41	54	5	55	33	12	60	19	21
4/16/21 April	43	51	7	52	34	14	59	17	23
4/23/28 April	40	54	6	52	33	14	57	18	25
5/3/6 May	45	51	5	53	32	15	57	17	25
5/10/12 May	44	49	6	57	31	13	59	20	21
5/17/19 May	44	51	5	51	36	13	61	19	20
5/24/27 May	43	51	7	50	37	14	57	18	24
6/1/2 June	41	54	5	51	35	15	58	17	25
6/8/9 June	40	55	5	50	38	12	59	19	21
6/15/16 June	43	52	5	48	37	15	57	18	25
6/22/23 June	40	55	6	44	42	13	57	20	23
6/29/30 June	39	55	5	45	41	13	55	20	25
7/6/7 July	38	56	6	45	42	13	61	19	20
7/13/14 July	41	51	7	46	41	13	53	24	23

5. The Electorate's Reaction to Key Political Issues

In our recent private tracking studies we have been asking our respondents for their views on a range of current issues of political interest in terms of whether the issues make them more favourably inclined towards the Government, less favourably inclined or they make no difference. The issues we include in this question are based largely on the answers to our standard open-ended tracking question, "Over the last seven days have you seen or heard anything that has made you more favourably or less favourably inclined towards the Government". In our latest tracking study conducted 10-14th July we found 14% of the electorate claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days and 20% claiming to have heard something making them less favourably inclined (66% claimed to have heard nothing making them more or less favourably inclined).

Details of the responses we obtained on the electorate's reaction to the government's handling of specific issues are shown on the attached table.

ISSUES

Make more favourable  
towards the Government

Make less favourable  
towards the Government

Make no difference

	<u>Make more favourable towards the Government</u>						<u>Make less favourable towards the Government</u>						<u>Make no difference</u>					
	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>18/23 June</u>	<u>25/30 June</u>	<u>2/7 July</u>	<u>10/14 July</u>	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>18/23 June</u>	<u>25/30 June</u>	<u>2/7 July</u>	<u>10/14 July</u>	<u>4/9 June</u>	<u>11/16 June</u>	<u>18/23 June</u>	<u>22/30 June</u>	<u>2/7 July</u>	<u>10/14 July</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister	30	28	27	27	27	30	42	43	43	44	46	45	27	27	27	27	26	24
The Government's taxation policy	27	26	25	25	27	27	44	44	45	47	46	43	21	23	21	19	17	21
The Government's policy on Trade Union Reform	50	46	47	43	45	45	27	30	28	29	29	30	10	12	12	13	12	11
The Government's policy on the Olympic Games	30	34	30	28	31	28	51	49	49	50	51	53	11	11	13	13	11	11
Public Spending cuts	28	25	25	25	24	27	56	60	60	59	62	57	9	9	9	10	9	11
The cost of living	8	8	8	7	8	11	72	72	71	72	71	69	18	15	17	19	18	17
The Government's policy on the Common Market	47	39	35	36	34	35	35	39	41	38	41	40	10	12	14	13	14	14
The level of unemployment	5	6	5	4	5	5	71	72	68	72	74	77	20	17	21	19	16	15
The level of rates	9	6	7	6	7	9	61	61	61	58	63	59	23	24	24	26	23	23
The Government's pay policy	24	25	24	22	27	27	43	43	45	42	44	41	18	19	18	20	17	17
M.P.'s Pay	-	-	-	8	9	23	-	-	-	55	53	47	-	-	-	22	22	20

As last week with the exception of our policies on Trade Union Reform we do not have a lead in terms of favourability on any of the issues we included in this question. It is interesting to note the positive public reaction to Mrs Thatcher's statement on MP's pay with 23% as regarding the issue as making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the week 10/14 July compared with only 9% in the week 2/7 July.

5. Most Urgent Problem facing the Country

The Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph on 17th July 1980 included the results from the standard Gallup question as to what the electorate regards as the most urgent problem facing the country. Gallup found a dramatic change in the proportion of the electorate regarding unemployment as the country's most urgent problem - this had been 23% in May 1980, 29% in June 1980 but in July increased to 49%. Inflation was rated by 27% of the electorate as the most important issue facing the country in July (38% in June).

Full details of what the electorate regarded as the most urgent problem facing the country in the regular monthly published Gallup polls are shown below :-

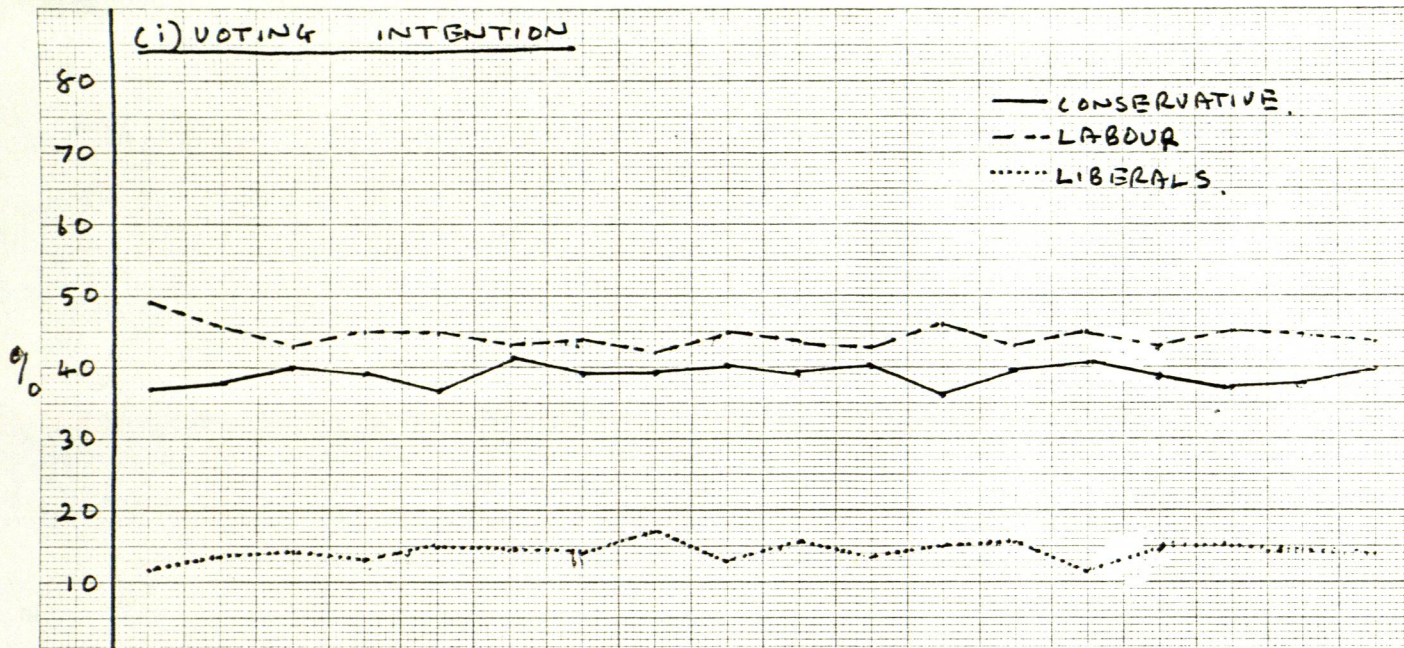
MOST URGENT PROBLEM FACING

THE COUNTRY

	<u>Inflation</u>	<u>Unemployment</u>	<u>Strikes</u>
Jan 1980	30%	15%	24%
Feb 1980	28%	13%	31%
March 1980	36%	18%	17%
April 1980	34%	19%	11%
May 1980	41%	23%	7%
June 1980	38%	29%	4%
July 1980	27%	49%	3%

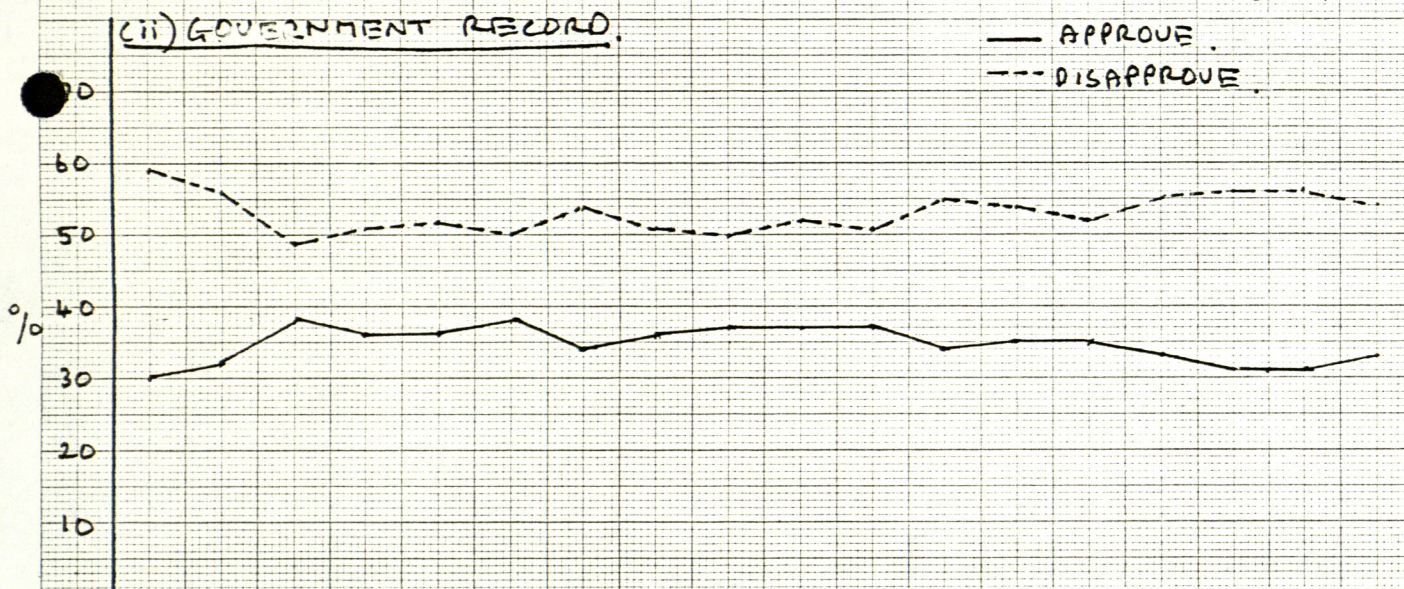
# 'TRACKING' RESULTS

## (i) VOTING INTENTION



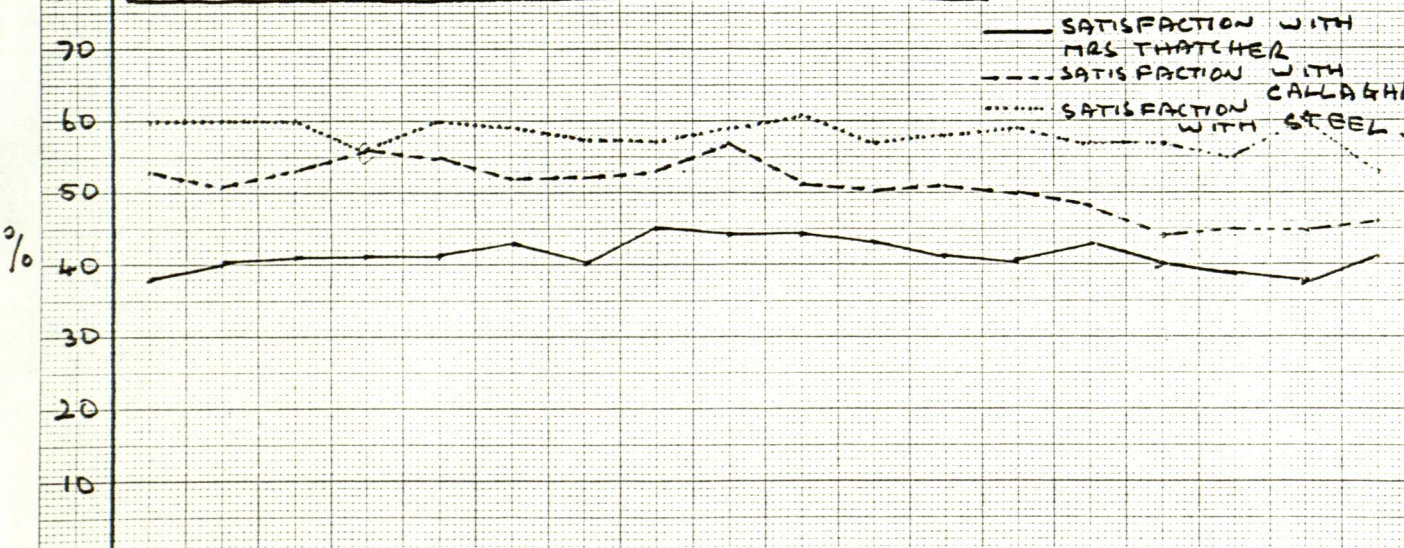
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## (ii) GOVERNMENT RECORD



11/17 20/24 27/31 2/8 10/14 16/21 23/28 30/6 7/12 15/19 21/27 28/24 4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14  
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## (iii) SATISFACTION WITH POLITICAL LEADERS



11/17 20/24 27/31 2/8 10/14 16/21 23/28 30/6 7/12 15/19 21/27 28/24 4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14  
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