

# Conservative Research Department

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16th September 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

*New Report,*

## PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 81

The results from our latest Gallup tracking study conducted from 1st to 7th September found almost no change in the level of support for any of the main parties.

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D. K. Britto

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 81

(produced 12th September 1981)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted in the period 1st to 7th September and found almost no change in the level of support for any of the parties.

Full details of the level of support for the main parties in response to our three standard voting intention questions are shown below - these tables include don't knows as a separate category.

VOTING INTENTION

VOTING INTENTION  
(including don't knows)

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June	<u>16/22</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	26	27	26	27	29	29	31	28	28	28	27	29
Labour	29	31	34	32	31	32	33	35	33	36	34	33
Liberal	15	13	16	13	15	16	16	14	17	13	16	14
Others	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2
Social Democrat Party	17	17	16	14	12	10	10	11	12	11	11	11
Don't know/it depends	10	16	9	12	11	9	8	9	9	10	10	10

	<u>24/30</u> June	<u>1/6</u> July	<u>8/13</u> July	<u>15/20</u> July	<u>22/27</u> July	<u>29 July</u> 3 Aug	<u>5/10</u> Aug	<u>12/17</u> Aug	<u>19/24</u> Aug	<u>26/31</u> Aug	<u>1/7</u> Sept
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	26	27	27	26	24	23	24	25	26	23	23
Labour	35½	35	36	32	35	36	33	34	31	36	37
Liberal	15	12	13	14	12	11	14	12	15	13	14
Others	2	3	3	3	2	2	4	1	2	1	2
Social Democrat Party	10½	11	11	15	19	19	16	17	16	14	15
Don't know/it depends	10	11	11	10	9	9	10	11	10	12	9

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE  
(including don't knows)

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	21	22	22	23	25	23	25	23	21	22	23
Labour	21	24	25	24	25	24	27	26	27	27	28
Liberal	10	10	11	9	10	11	11	10	12	9	12
Others	2	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democrat Party	26	27	22	24	21	21	20	21	20	23	20
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/it depends	20	17	19	18	15	18	15	18	17	17	16

	<u>16/22</u> June	<u>24/30</u> June	<u>1/6</u> July	<u>8/13</u> July	<u>15/20</u> July	<u>22/27</u> July	<u>29 July</u> 3 Aug	<u>5/10</u> Aug	<u>12/17</u> Aug	<u>19/24</u> Aug	<u>26/31</u> Aug	<u>1/7</u> Sept
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	23	21	22	21	21	18	20	20	20	21	20	19
Labour	28	31	29	29	28	28	30	27	27	25	28	29
Liberal	11	11	8	9	11	9	7	8	8	11	9	10
Others	2	1½	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Social Democrat Party	19	19	20	20	23	29	26	25	26	25	24	25
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/ it depends	16	16½	16	18	16	16	15	18	18	16	18	15

VOTING INTENTION IF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL ALLIANCE

	<u>31 Mar</u> 6 Apr	<u>8/13</u> Apr	<u>15/21</u> Apr	<u>22/27</u> Apr	<u>29 Apr</u> 5 May	<u>6/11</u> May	<u>13/18</u> May	<u>19/26</u> May	<u>26 May</u> 1 June	<u>3/8</u> June	<u>9/15</u> June
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	20	21	21	22	21	22	24	23	20	21	22
Labour	20	23	24	24	24	22	25	25	25	27	17
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
Social Democrat Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	35	37	34	33	32	32	32	31	33	32	30
Don't know/it depends	23	17	20	18	20	22	16	19	19	18	19

	<u>16/22</u> June	<u>24/30</u> June	<u>1/6</u> July	<u>8/13</u> July	<u>15/20</u> July	<u>22/27</u> July	<u>29 July</u> 3 Aug	<u>5/10</u> Aug	<u>12/17</u> Aug	<u>19/24</u> Aug	<u>26/31</u> Aug	<u>1/7</u> Sept
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	24	20	22	20	21	18	20	20	19	21	19	20
Labour	27	29	28	27	27	27	29	25	27	25	27	28
Liberal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
Social Democrat Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Democrat/Liberal Alliance	28	32	28	31	33	37	33	33	33	35	31	33
Don't know/it depends	19	18	19	19	18	16	16	19	19	18	22	18

## 2. Standard Voting Intention

This table shows the level of support for the main parties excluding those respondents who claimed not to know how they would vote. Support for the Conservatives continues to drift downwards - the movement in any individual week is not statistically significant and individual weeks occasionally show a slight recovery. Support for the Social Democrats appears to have reached a new (and higher) 'plateau' of support since the Warrington by-election.

### VOTING INTENTION (excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>						
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0
<u>1981</u>						
31 March/ 6 April	29.0	32.0	17.0	19.0	3.0	-3.0
8/13 April	30.0	34.5	14.0	19.0	2.5	-4.5**
15/21 April	28.5	37.5	17.5	15.0	1.5	-9.0
22/27 April	30.5	36.5	15.0	15.5	2.5	-6.0
29 April /5 May	33.0	35.0	17.0	13.5	1.5	-2.0
6/11 May	32.0	35.5	18.0	11.0	3.5	-3.5**
13/18 May	33.5	36.0	17.0	10.5	3.0	-2.5
19/26 May	31.0	38.0	15.5	12.0	3.5	-7.0
26 May/1 June	30.0	36.0	18.0	13.0	3.0	-6.0
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**
16/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0
29 July/ 3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5
5/10 August	27.0	36.0	15.0	18.0	4.0	-9.0
12/17 August	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**
19/24 August	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0
26/31 August	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0
1/7 September	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

## 3. Government Record

No change in the level of approval for the record of the Government. Details on following page.

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GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1981</u>			
31 March/ 6 April	26	65	9
8/13 April	24	67	9
15/21 April	25	65	10
22/27 April	27	63	10
29 April/5 May	26	62	12
6/11 May	29	60	11
13/18 May	30	57	13
19/26 May	28	60	12
26 May/1 June	27	61	12
3/8 June	26	60	14
9/15 June	26	63	11
16/22 June	29	59	12
24/30 June	23	67	10
1/6 July	24	63	13
8/13 July	23	66	11
15/20 July	23	66	11
22/27 July	23	66	11
29 July/ 3 August	23	65	12
5/10 August	23	64	13
12/17 August	23	66	11
19/24 August	26	64	10
26/31 August	23	64	13
1/7 September	23	65	13

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

No significant change in the popularity of any of the three main political leaders.  
Details below:

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>sat.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Know</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>1981</u>									
31 March/ 6 April	31	63	6	24	55	22	64	17	19
6/13 April	30	65	5	21	54	24	60	20	20
15/21 April	31	64	6	24	54	22	62	17	21
22/27 April	34	60	6	21	58	20	66	17	18
29 April /5 May	34	59	7	20	58	22	60	19	21
6/11 May	35	60	5	26	52	23	63	17	21
13/18 May	35	58	6	27	52	22	63	17	21
19/26 May	35	59	6	27	50	23	60	17	23
26 May/ 1 June	32	62	6	27	54	19	62	17	20
3/8 June	36	58	6	29	41	21	59	19	22
9/15 June	33	61	6	28	48	24	61	18	21
16/22 June	34	60	6	29	50	21	60	20	21
24/30 June	30	65	5	28	52	21	60	19	21
1/6 July	31	62	7	25	54	21	60	17	23
8/13 July	30	65	5	25	52	23	56	20	24
15/20 July	31	65	4	22	59	19	59	19	22
22/27 July	26	68	6	23	55	22	59	21	21
29 July / 3 Aug	27	68	5	26	53	20	57	23	20
5/10 August	30	65	5	27	56	17	62	18	21
12/17 August	28	66	6	23	57	20	61	18	21
19/24 August	33	61	6	25	51	24	63	19	19
26/31 August	28	66	6	29	52	20	60	20	21
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19

5. Published Polls(a) M.O.R.I. (Times 14th September 1981)

An M.O.R.I. poll conducted between August 20th and September 2nd and published in the Times on 14th September looked at the level of support for the Social Democrats. M.O.R.I. found the following pattern of support for the parties:-

VOTING INTENTION

- (a) How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?  
 (b) If there was a General Election tomorrow and the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party formed an alliance to fight this Election, which of the parties on this card would you vote for?

	<u>Spontaneous</u>	<u>Prompted</u>
	%	%
Conservative	30	25
Labour	39	31
Liberal	13	-
S.D.P.	16	-
SDP/Liberal Alliance	-	41
Other	2	3

Details of changes in support for the parties among the main social groups are shown below:-

CHANGE IN PARTY SUPPORT

<u>All</u>	<u>May 1979</u>	<u>August 1981</u>	<u>Change</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	45	30	-15
Labour	38	39	+ 1
Liberal	14	13	- 1
S.D.P.	-	16	+16
Other	3	2	- 1
<u>Middle Class (ABC1)</u>			
Conservative	59	44	-15
Labour	24	20	- 4
Liberal	15	13	- 2
S.D.P.	-	22	+22
Other	2	1	- 1
<u>Skilled Working Class (C2)</u>			
Conservative	41	23	-18
Labour	41	48	+ 7
Liberal	15	13	- 2
S.D.P.	-	14	+14
Other	3	2	- 1

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	<u>May 1979</u>	<u>August 1981</u>	<u>Change</u>
	%	%	
<u>Unskilled Working Class</u> (DE)			
Conservative	34	19	-15
Labour	49	53	+ 4
Liberal	13	15	+ 2
S.D.P.	-	10	+10
Other	4	2	- 2
 <u>Trade Unionists</u>			
Conservative	33	19	-14
Labour	51	48	- 3
Liberal	13	12	- 1
S.D.P.	-	18	+18
Other	3	3	0

M.O.R.I. asked those interviewed which they regarded as the most important issues facing Britain today. They found:-

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

	<u>Feb 79</u>	<u>Feb 80</u>	<u>Sept 80</u>	<u>Dec 80</u>	<u>June 81</u>	<u>July 81</u>	<u>Aug 81</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	10	15	57	59	68	70	67
Prices/inflation	30	38	23	23	18	12	14
Trade unions							
Strikes/industrial disputes	51	25	3	4	3	2	3
Law and Order	3	4	2	3	3	6	5
Common Market	2	4	5	2	2	1	2
Northern Ireland	1	2	*	2	2	1	2
Immigration	1	1	2	1	2	3	3
Housing/rates/rents	1	1	1	1	1	1	*
Schools/education	1	2	2	*	1	1	1
Pensions	1	1	1	*	1	1	*
National Health Service	1	1	1	*	1	*	*

Base: All 18+

(b) M.O.R.I. (Sunday Times 13th September 1981)

An M.O.R.I. poll carried out on 29/30 May 1981 was published in the Sunday Times on 13th September. It looked at the question of the North/South divide in England. It found:-

Myth One: The common view is that people are friendlier in the North. But our poll shows, in North and South, nearly two-thirds of the sample agree that "people round here keep themselves to themselves". And in North and South, seven people in 10 agree that "anyone round here will help you out if you're in trouble".

Myth Two: The North lives in close-knit families in and out of each others' homes whereas in the South it is all split up. But, according to the poll, in both North and South about seven people in 10 say that they have seen a close relative who does not live with them in the last month.

Myth Three: The Southerner is more materialistic, the Northerner content with less. But according to the poll, rather more Southerners are content with the money they have now than are the Northerners. More Northerners than Southerners expect that people like them will own a second home in the year 2000 - and nearly as many expect to own a yacht.

Myth Four: The Northerner is a "union man", while the Southerner is individualistic and anti-union. They found that in both North and South more than 70 per cent of our sample thought that "trade unions have too much power in Britain today".

Myth Five: The North is the home of male chauvinism; Northern men are off to the pub every night and only liberated Southerners help their wives around the house. The poll does show that Northern men are rather more likely to be pub-goers than Southerners; 69 per cent have been to the pub in the last month; only 62 per cent of Southerners have.

But Northern men are at least as helpful around the house. Indeed, one in four men among married couples sampled in the North do at least an equal share of the housework compared with one in five in the South. More Northern men than Southerners share the cooking with their wives, and as many share looking after the children. Northern men are, however, rather less likely to take care of decorating. And the "housekeeping money" tradition is far stronger in the North; only a third of Northern men take care of the household bills compared with more than half of Southern men.

Real differences found included:

1. Despite the similarities in personal attitudes and lifestyles outlined above, there are very real and objective gaps between North and South; overall the North has fewer jobs, less money, worse housing, worse health and worse education.
2. The objective gaps are made wider by an equally real, but this time subjective regional chauvinism, which sometimes creates a state of near-hostility between the two parts of the country.
3. There is another very real difference between North and South - the North is still broadly Labour and the South is not

The objective differences between North and South quoted by the poll include:-

- \* In the North, one person in eight is now jobless. In the South one in 12 - 50 percent fewer - are unemployed.
- \* In the North as a whole, weekly household incomes, at about £130 a week on the average are some £15 a week lower than in the South.

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- \* In the North, 52 per cent of families own their own homes; in the South 57 per cent
- \* In the North, 13 Northern babies in 1,000 die before they reach the age of one; in the South 12 in a 1,000 do.
- \* In the North 22 per cent of school leavers have at least five 'O' levels or one 'A' level. In the South, 27 per cent are so qualified.