

Ipsos Political Attitudes By Ethnicity

April 2024

About the data

- The data presented in this report are taken from the monthly Ipsos Political Monitor, which was conducted face to face until the second half of 2008 after which it was conducted by telephone. In this report we aggregate voting intention and leader satisfaction ratings for party leaders amongst ethnic minority and white Britons on a biannual basis going back to 1996. This allows us to compare results amongst these two groups using reasonable sample sizes each wave.
- Voting intention percentages are among all those who gave a voting intention, i.e. those who responded ‘would not vote’, were undecided or preferred not to answer are excluded from the percentages. Unlike our usual headline voting intention figures, we do not factor in turnout. This is so we can maximise the available sample for analysis purposes.
- In the following slides, ethnic minority Britons are defined as those who describe their ethnic group or background as ‘Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups’, ‘Asian / Asian British’, ‘Black / African / Caribbean / Black British’, or ‘Other ethnic group’, and white Britons are defined as those who describe their ethnic group or background as ‘White’. Note that this definition of ‘white Britons’ includes white minorities (‘Irish’, ‘Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ and ‘Any other White background’).
- Breaks for ethnicity are taken from polls weighted to the overall GB population (we have not weighted ethnic minorities separately). On average, voting intention scores for ethnic minorities are based on n sizes of 300 or 400 for individual waves and so confidence intervals will be wider than national polls. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.

VOTING INTENTION



Measuring voting Intention by ethnicity

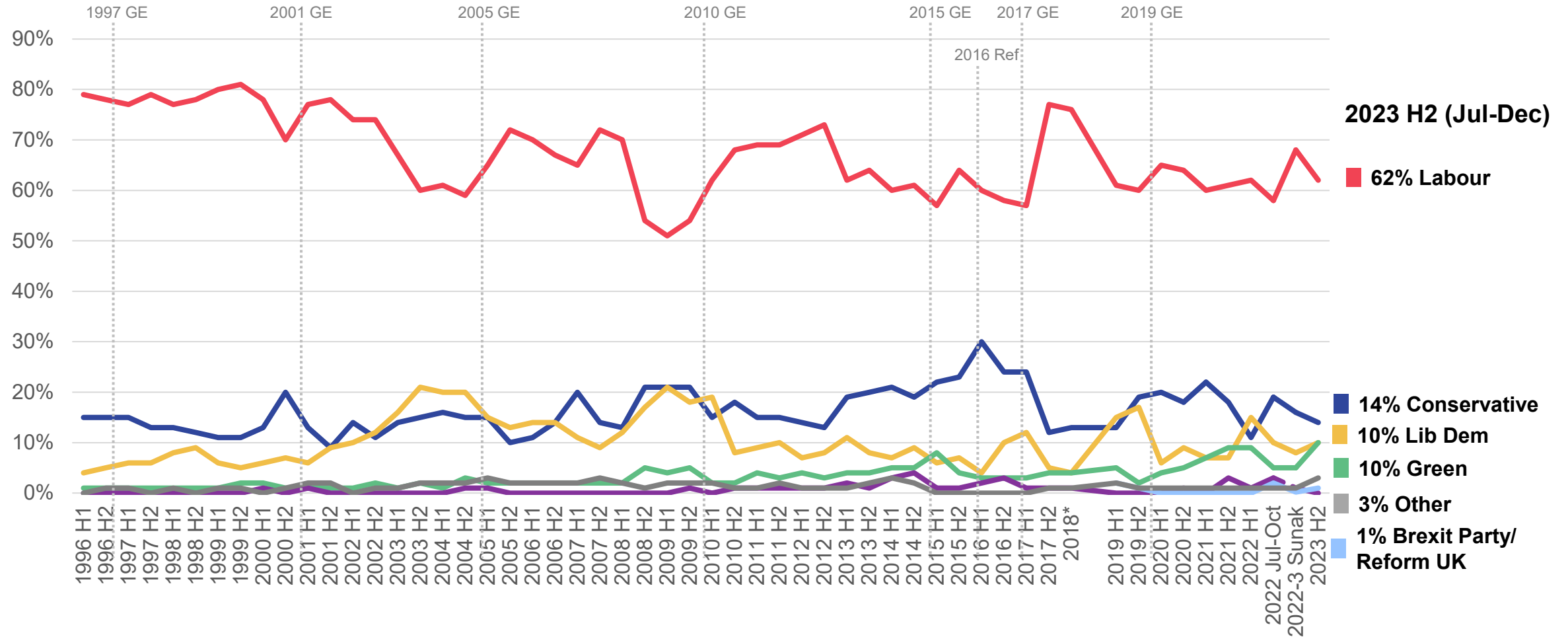
- The following charts show voting intention for the Conservatives and Labour among white and ethnic minority Britons by half year. In most cases this means January to June and July to December going back to 1996.
- To better allow for useful comparisons, the penultimate data point in our series measures Rishi Sunak's first eight months as PM rather than half of a calendar year. So, whilst the most recent data point follows the usually half year pattern of July to December for 2023, the previous wave includes November 2022 to June 2023. There is also a smaller wave preceding Sunak's appointment as PM running from July to October 2022 as well.

Voting Intention by ethnicity

- Support for the Conservatives among ethnic minority voters generally rose from 2007 until 2016. This increase was especially pronounced from 2013 to 2016 when support for the Conservatives increased slightly faster among ethnic minority voters than white voters, reaching a high of 30% in the first half of 2016. After the first half of 2016, the share of ethnic minority voters supporting the Conservatives fell sharply to 12% in the second half of 2017. Ethnic minority support for the Conservatives then recovered from the second half of 2019, reaching 22% in the first half of 2021, but fell away thereafter reaching another low of 11% in the first half of 2022. It then recovered slightly in the aftermath of Boris Johnson's resignation but has slipped again to a figure of 16% under Rishi Sunak in his first eight months and to **14% in the most recent July to December 2023 wave.**
- Labour has had the support of the majority of ethnic minority voters throughout the period covered by these surveys. Support for Labour among this group was at a high of 81% in the second half of 1999, but steadily fell (after a post-2005 recovery) to its lowest level of 51% in the first half of 2009. It showed some signs of recovery then another fall during 2012 to 2015, then rose sharply during 2017 to reach 77% in the second half of that year. In the beginning of 2019, it fell away somewhat from that peak. Although it rose again to 68% in 2022-3 during the first eight months of the Sunak government, it has now fallen back to near its previous level at **62% in our most recent July to December 2023 time period.**

Voting intention among ethnic minority Britons

How would you vote if there were an election tomorrow?



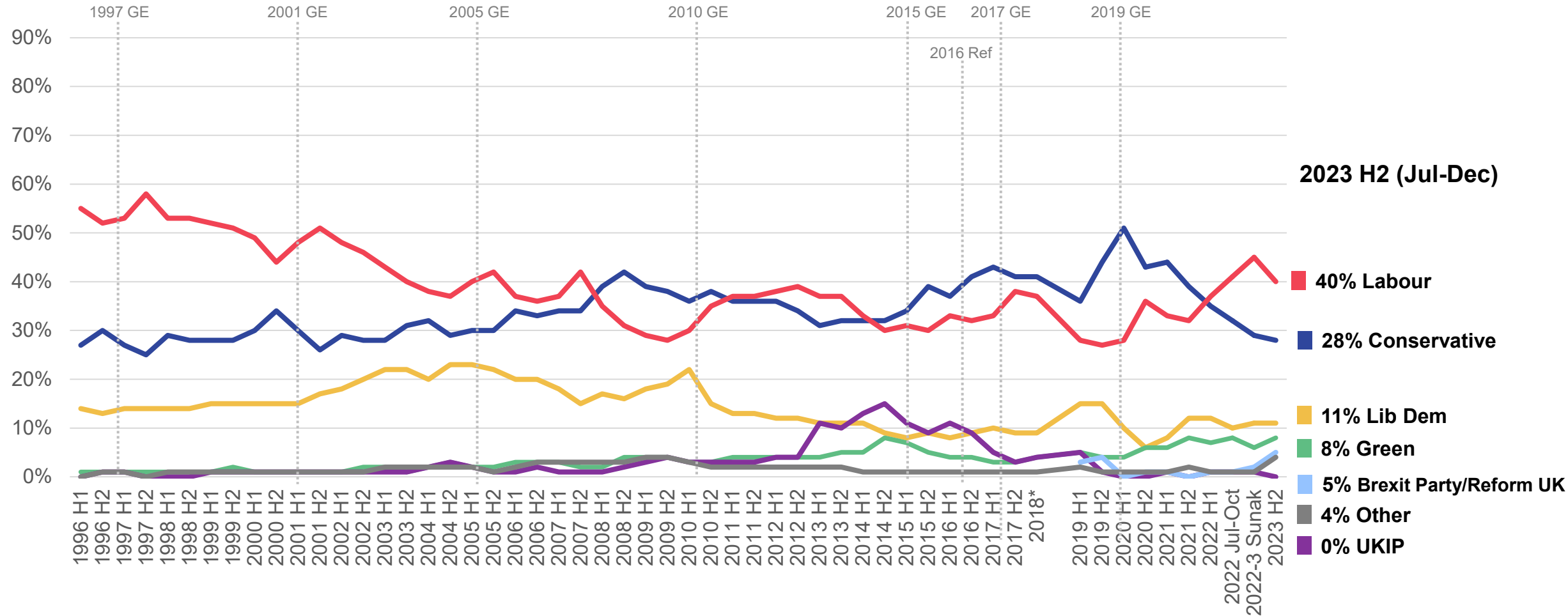
*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes

Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Voting intention among white Britons

How would you vote if there were an election tomorrow?



*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes

Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.

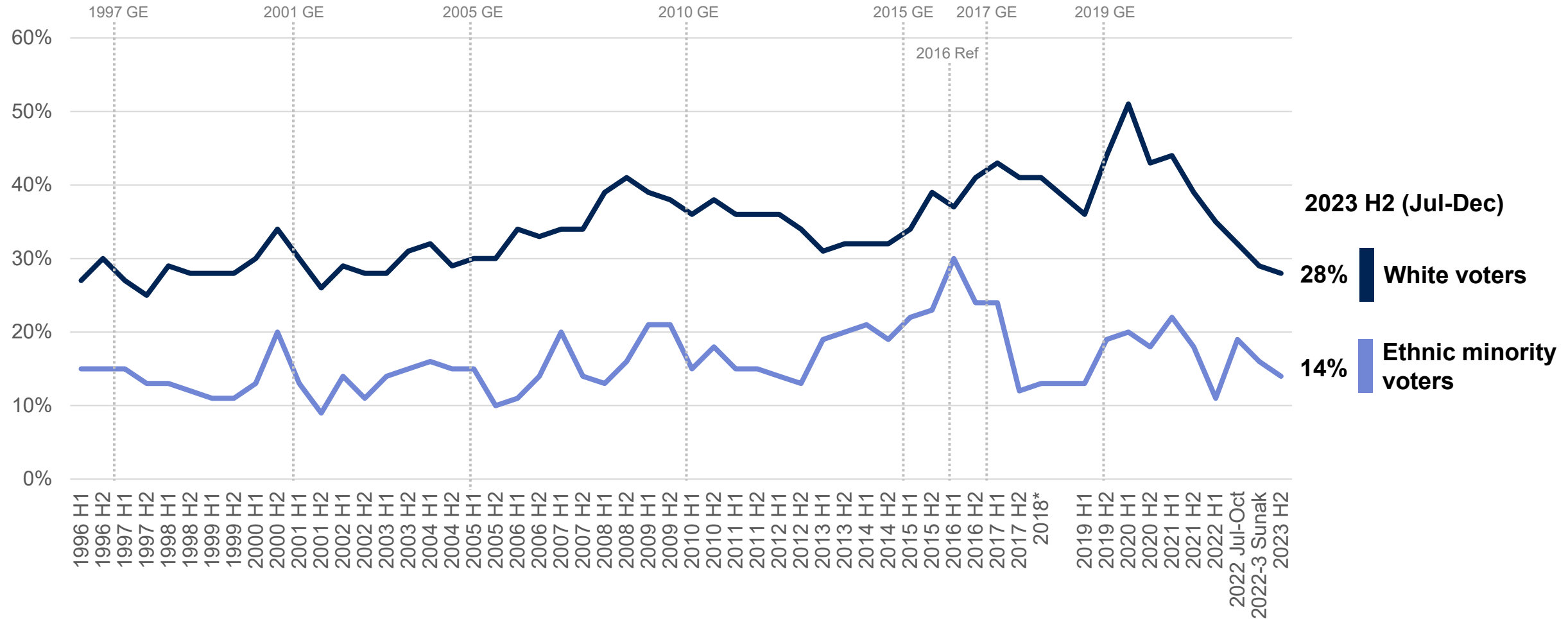
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year



Voting intention for the Conservative Party by ethnicity

How would you vote if there were an election tomorrow?



*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes

Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.

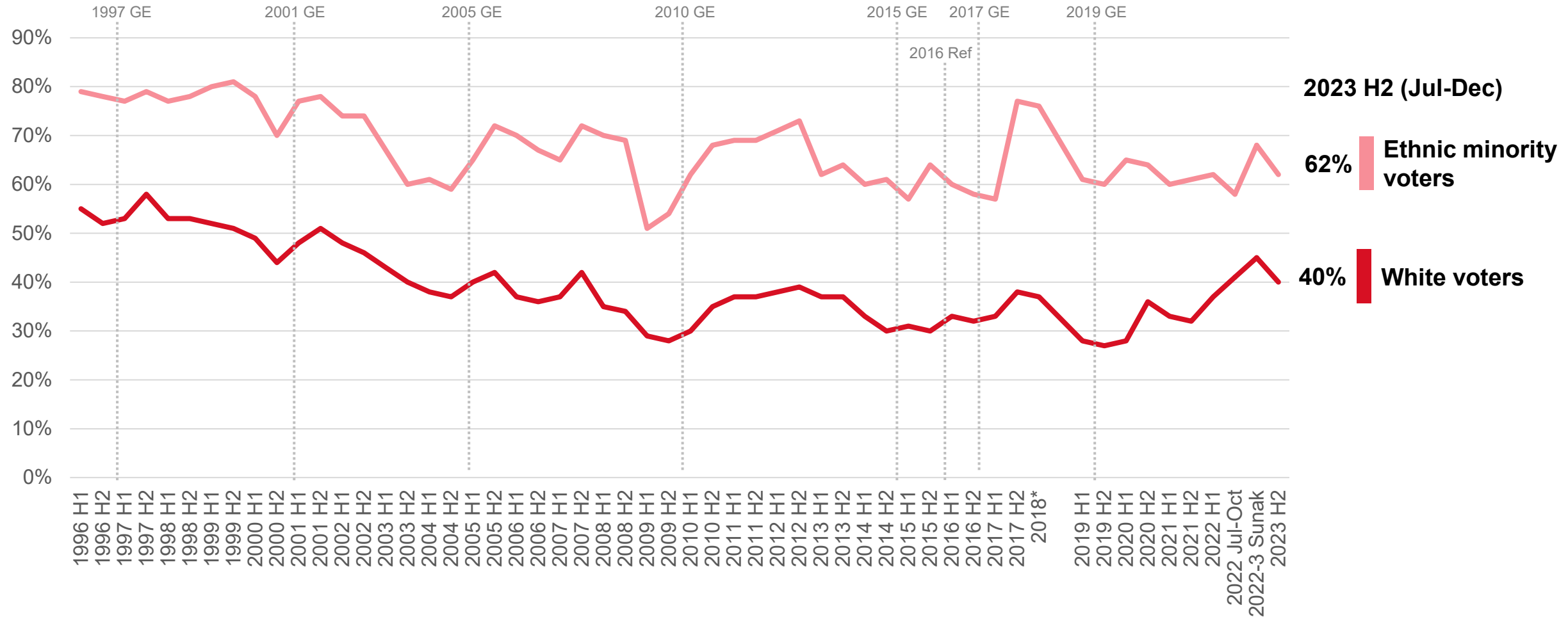
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year



Voting intention for the Labour Party by ethnicity

How would you vote if there were an election tomorrow?



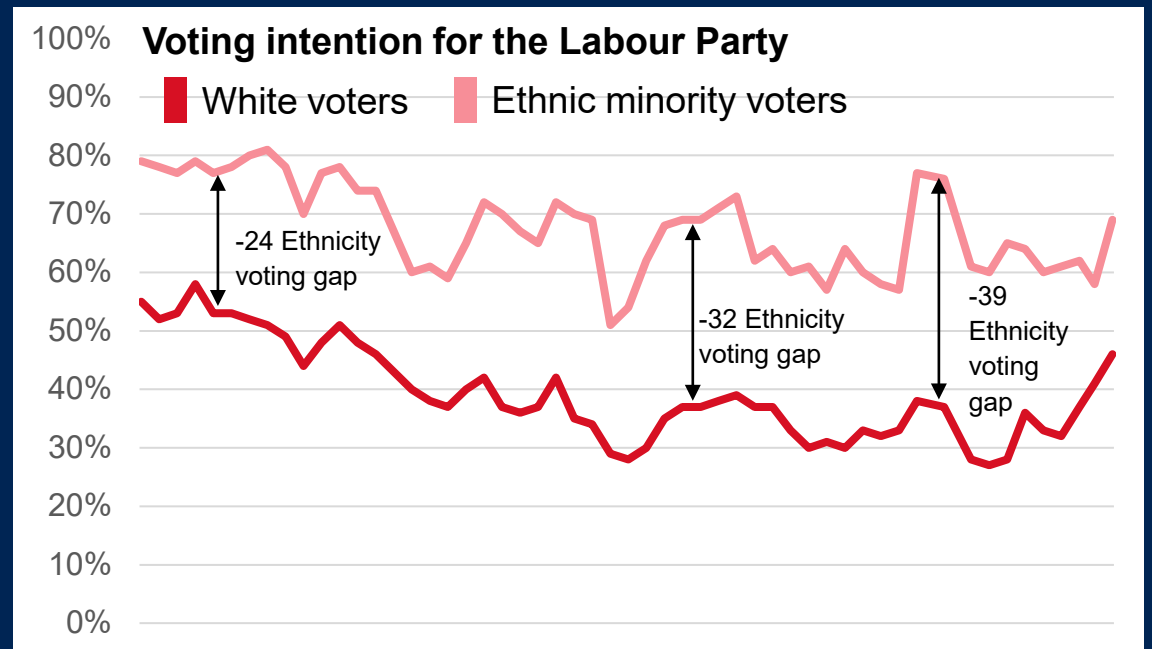
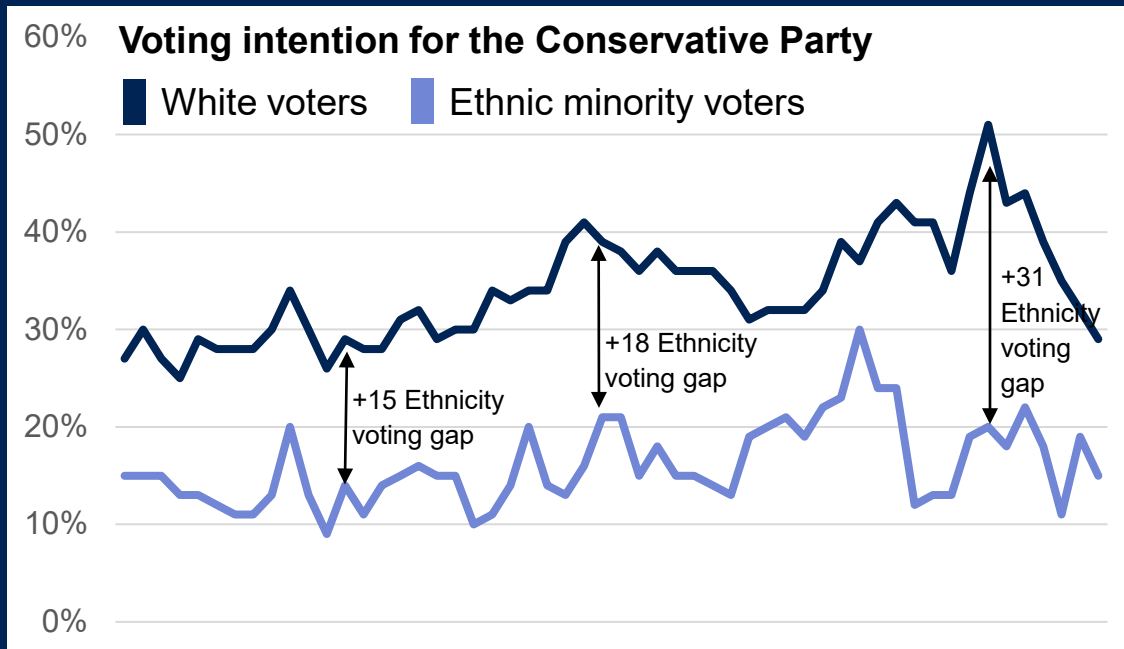
*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes
Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year



The ethnicity voting gap

- The diagrams below highlight the difference in vote share for the Conservatives and Labour between white and ethnic minority voters. Positive values mean that support among white voters is greater than among ethnic minority voters and negative values mean higher support among ethnic minority voters than white voters.



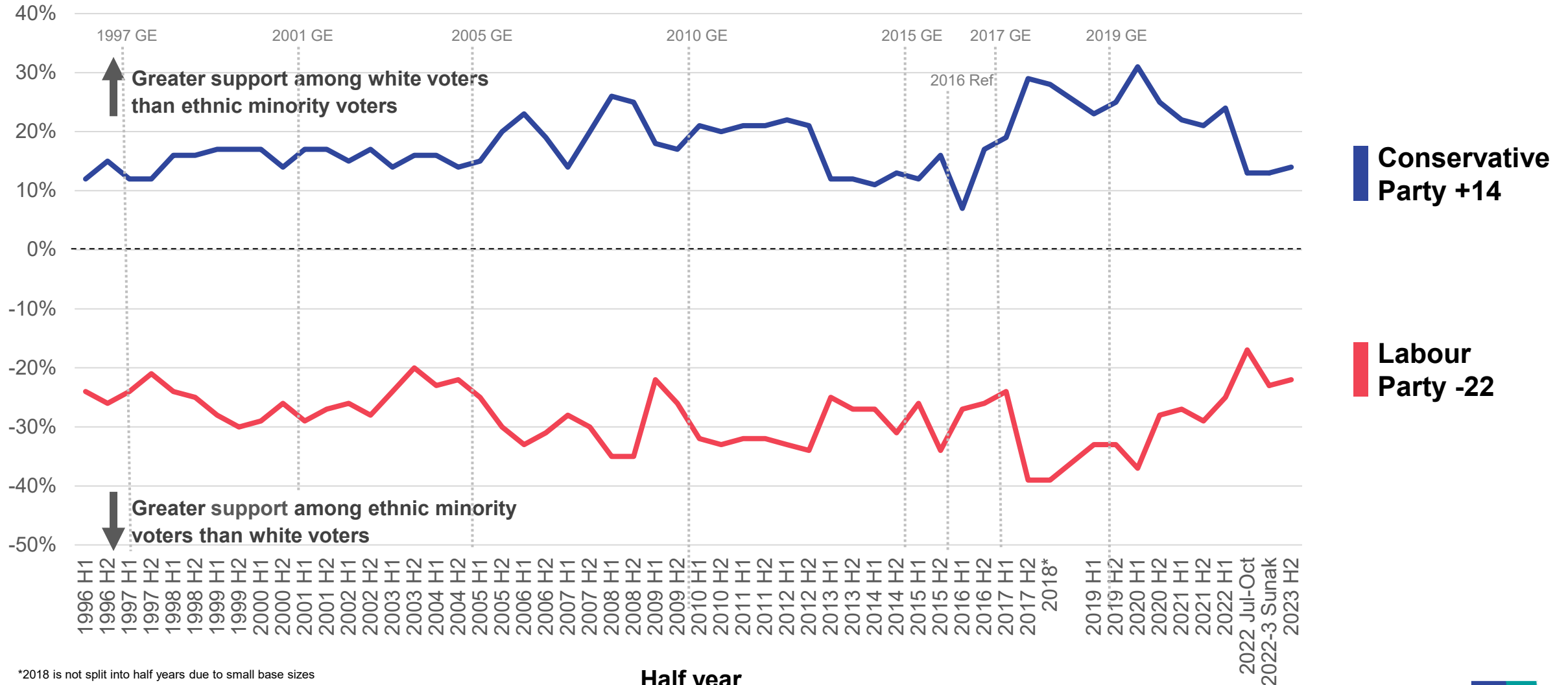
- This ethnicity voting gap is useful because it measures how differently ethnic minority Britons vote compared with white Britons. For example, if both white and ethnic minority voters became more supportive of the Conservatives at the same rate, the difference between ethnicity and voting Conservative would not change, even as the proportion of ethnic minority voters supporting the Conservatives increased. In contrast, if white voters became more supportive of the Conservatives and ethnic minority voters became less supportive of them, the ethnicity voting gap would increase. Therefore, measuring this has value in aiding our understanding of the composition of party support by ethnicity over time.

The ethnicity voting gap

- Ethnic minority voters are more likely to support Labour and less likely to support the Conservatives than white voters, but the size of these voting gaps have varied over time.
- The size of the ethnicity voting gap for the Conservatives grew slightly up to 2012 before shrinking to its lowest level (of +7 pts) in the first half of 2016 (when support was growing for the party generally, but especially among ethnic minority voters). After 2016, the ethnicity voting gap for the Conservatives grew to reach its largest level in the first half of 2020 (+31) but shrunk in size after that to a smaller gap in the period Rishi Sunak has been Prime Minister (reflecting the fall in support for the Conservatives generally, especially among white voters). **It now stands at +14 for the most recent July – December 2023 period, little changed since the middle of 2022.**
- The size of the ethnicity voting gap for Labour has mostly tended to fluctuate between about -25 and -35 percentage points, tending to be slightly smaller in 2003-2004 (reaching -20 in the second half of 2003), and slightly wider in 2005-2012 (-35 in 2008). This gap also grew sharply during 2017 to reach its widest level (-39) in 2017-18 when support for Labour increased more rapidly among ethnic minority Britons than white voters, before narrowing again to **-22 in the most recent period, July to December 2023**, little changed since Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister (as support among white Britons has grown).
- Both of these trends suggest that the aftermath of the 2016 EU referendum and the 2017 election caused voting intention to become more polarised by ethnicity, but this trend has reversed since the end of 2019 as support for the Conservative government fell faster and for Labour rose faster among white voters than amongst voters from ethnic minority groups. There is no sign of this trend reversing in the most recent data.

The ethnicity voting gap over time

% of white voters supporting party minus % of ethnic minority voters supporting party



*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes
 Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.
 Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year

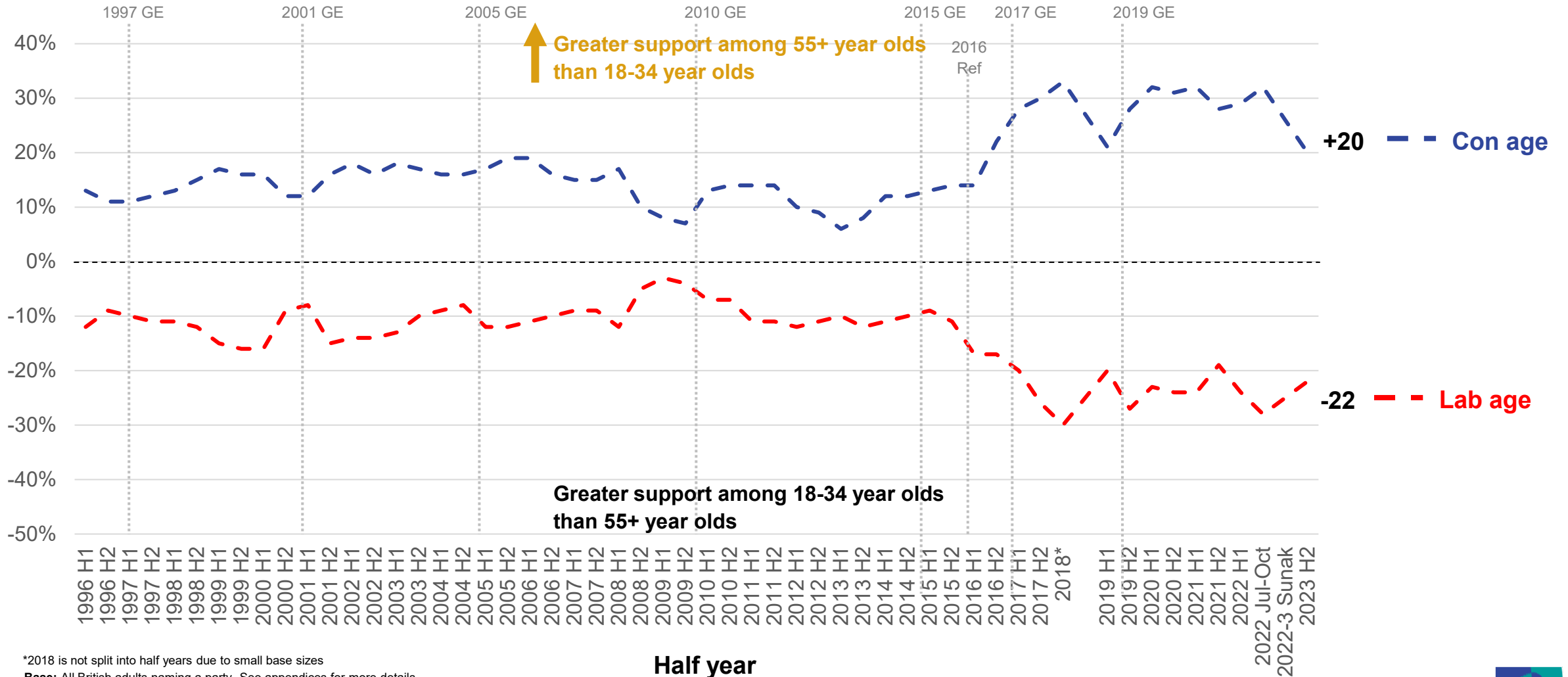


The ethnicity voting gap and age

- The following charts show the difference in vote share between white and ethnic minority voters compared to the difference in vote share between those aged 55+ and those aged 18-34.
- Ethnic minority Britons are on average significantly younger than white Britons – according to the 2020 Annual Population Survey, just 20% of ethnic minorities in Britain over 18 are aged 55+ compared with 42% of white Britons. This means that the increase in the age voting gap after 2016 would be expected to have increased the ethnicity voting gap too, as the younger age profile of ethnic minorities means they would have moved away from the Conservatives and towards Labour even if nothing else changed.
- The following slides confirm there is some link between age and ethnicity. For example, for the Conservatives between 1997 and 2007, the age and ethnicity gaps were similar and after 2016 the two moved in tandem (with the gap in both increasing). For Labour the picture is more mixed. Up to 2015, the ethnicity gap was much bigger than the age gap. Since 2016, these have become more aligned (partly due to an increase in the age gap).
- Since 2020 things have changed. The ethnicity gap for the Conservatives has narrowed (due to declining support with white voters) but the age gap remains large (although is starting to narrow slightly under Sunak). For Labour, the ethnicity and age gaps have somewhat converged for the opposite reasons (increased support with white voters).
- This all suggests that whilst age does explain some of the change in the ethnicity voting gap over time (and vice versa), it is not the full picture and there is still an independent effect due to ethnicity where changes occur.

The age gap over time shows a sharp divergence post Brexit

Age voting gap: % vote share among 55+ year-olds minus % vote share among 18-34 year-olds



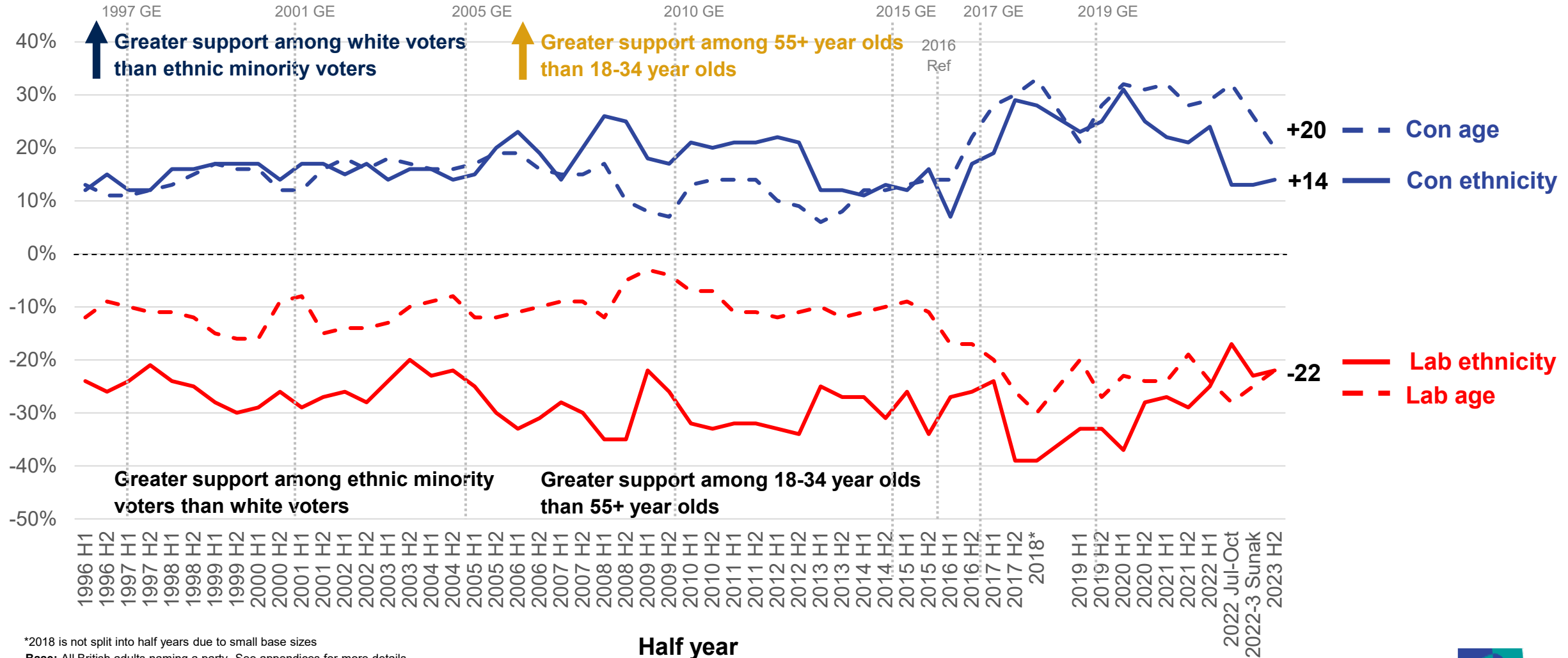
*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes
 Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.
 Source: Ipsos Political Monitor



The ethnicity voting gap vs age gap over time

Ethnicity voting gap: % vote share among white voters minus % vote share among ethnic minority voters

Age voting gap: % vote share among 55+ year-olds minus % vote share among 18-34 year-olds



*2018 is not split into half years due to small base sizes
Base: All British adults naming a party. See appendices for more details.
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year



NET SATISFACTION

WITH GOVERNMENT
AND PARTY LEADERS



Satisfaction with Government and party leaders by ethnicity

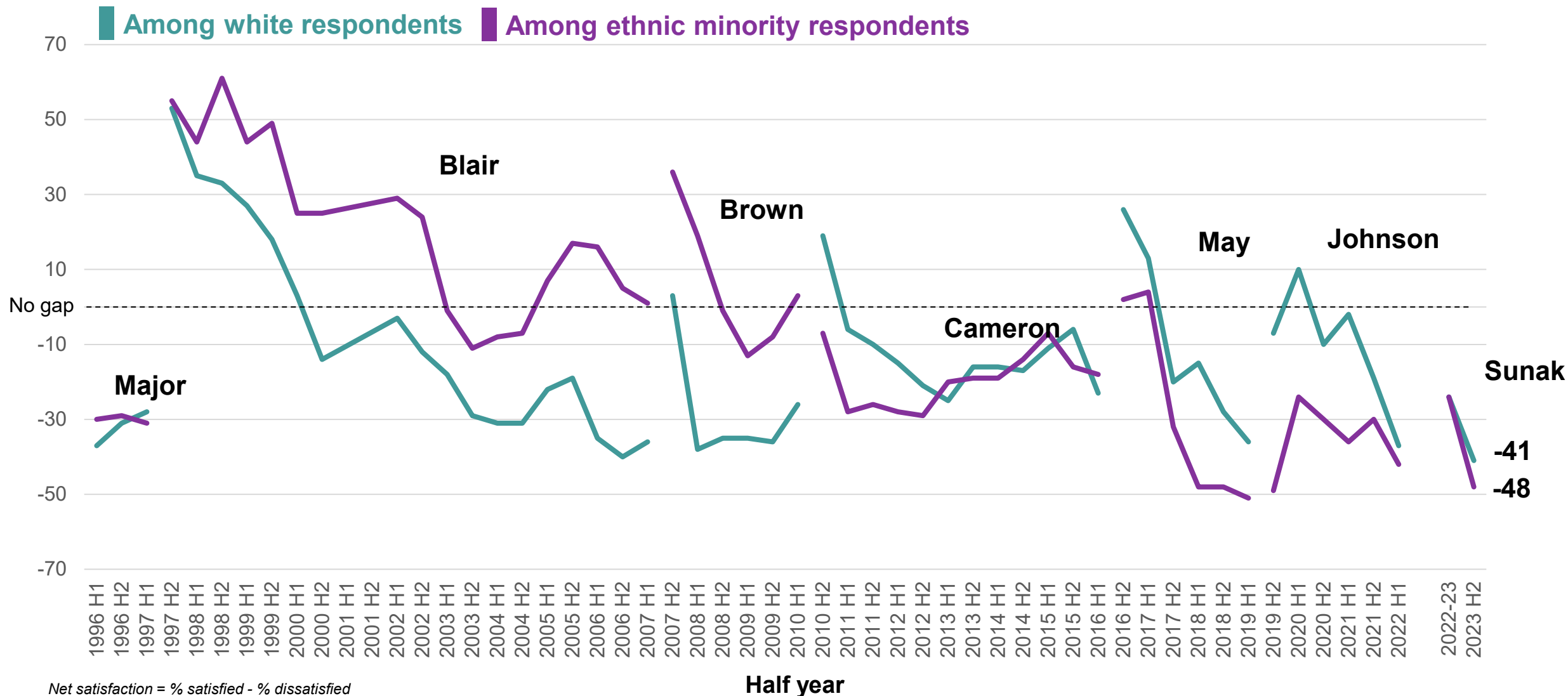
- The following slides show net satisfaction (% satisfied minus % dissatisfied) with the government and party leaders by ethnicity for approximately each half year, depending on the timing of change in leadership. The slides on the ethnicity gap in satisfaction show the difference between white and ethnic minority Britons in a similar way to that explained earlier in the report.
- Labour leaders and governments generally have higher net satisfaction scores among ethnic minority Britons than white Britons (although recently there is very little difference for Keir Starmer), while the Conservatives tend to have either a gap in the opposite direction or little difference.
- **Rishi Sunak's ratings among ethnic minority Britons are now as low as the worst for Boris Johnson and Theresa May, who have received the lowest scores from ethnic minority voters. His net satisfaction rating among ethnic minority voters fell from -24% in his first 8 months to -48% in the second half of 2023** (even faster than the fall among white voters, from -24% to -41%). This means while his last rating showed no ethnicity gap, now his net satisfaction score is slightly better amongst white Britons than ethnic minorities (more the norm for Conservative leaders). His scores with both cohorts are amongst the worst recorded by a Prime Minister in our series.
- Please note – there are no ratings by ethnicity for Liz Truss as not enough data was collected during her time in office.

Net Satisfaction with Prime Ministers by ethnicity

- The gap in **net satisfaction with the Prime Minister** between ethnic minority and white Britons was significantly smaller for John Major and David Cameron for most of their period in office than for Theresa May and Boris Johnson.
- This ethnicity gap in satisfaction with the Prime Minister reached its highest level under Boris Johnson in the second half of 2019 (net of +42), which also saw some of the lowest levels of satisfaction with a PM among ethnic minorities on record (19%, comparable with Theresa May's 21% in her last half year. Rishi Sunak's satisfaction score now is 19% too – matching the lowest we have recorded.
- However, the gap narrowed over the course of Johnson's premiership as satisfaction at first rose faster and later fell slower among ethnic minority voters than among white voters. By the time of Johnson's resignation, there was almost no difference in the (low) satisfaction levels of the two groups, and this remained true in Rishi Sunak's first ratings (again because large numbers in both groups were dissatisfied). In fact, Rishi Sunak's first rating shows no gap at all, but a small one has re-emerged in his most recent ratings.
- Tony Blair received the highest net satisfaction ratings among ethnic minorities of any Prime Minister in the second half of 1998. The smallest ethnicity gap in satisfaction ratings for a Labour Prime Minister also occurred shortly after his election in the second half of 1997 (-2, reflecting his high scores among all groups). However, after Blair's first years in office the gap widened, and continued for Brown, with both having lower ratings among white voters than those from ethnic minorities.

Net Satisfaction with the Prime Minister by ethnicity

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



Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

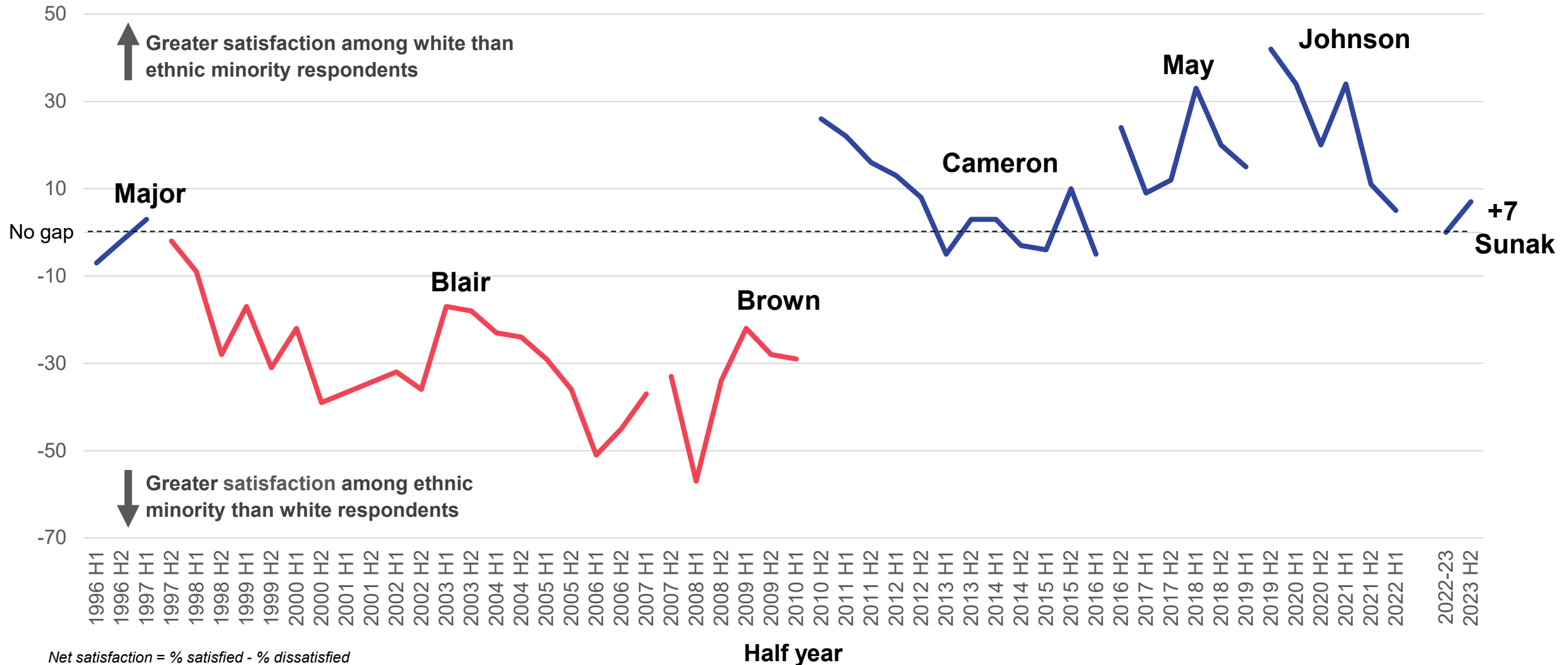
Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor



The ethnicity gap in net satisfaction with the PM

% White respondents net satisfied with PM minus % ethnic minority respondents net satisfied with PM



Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

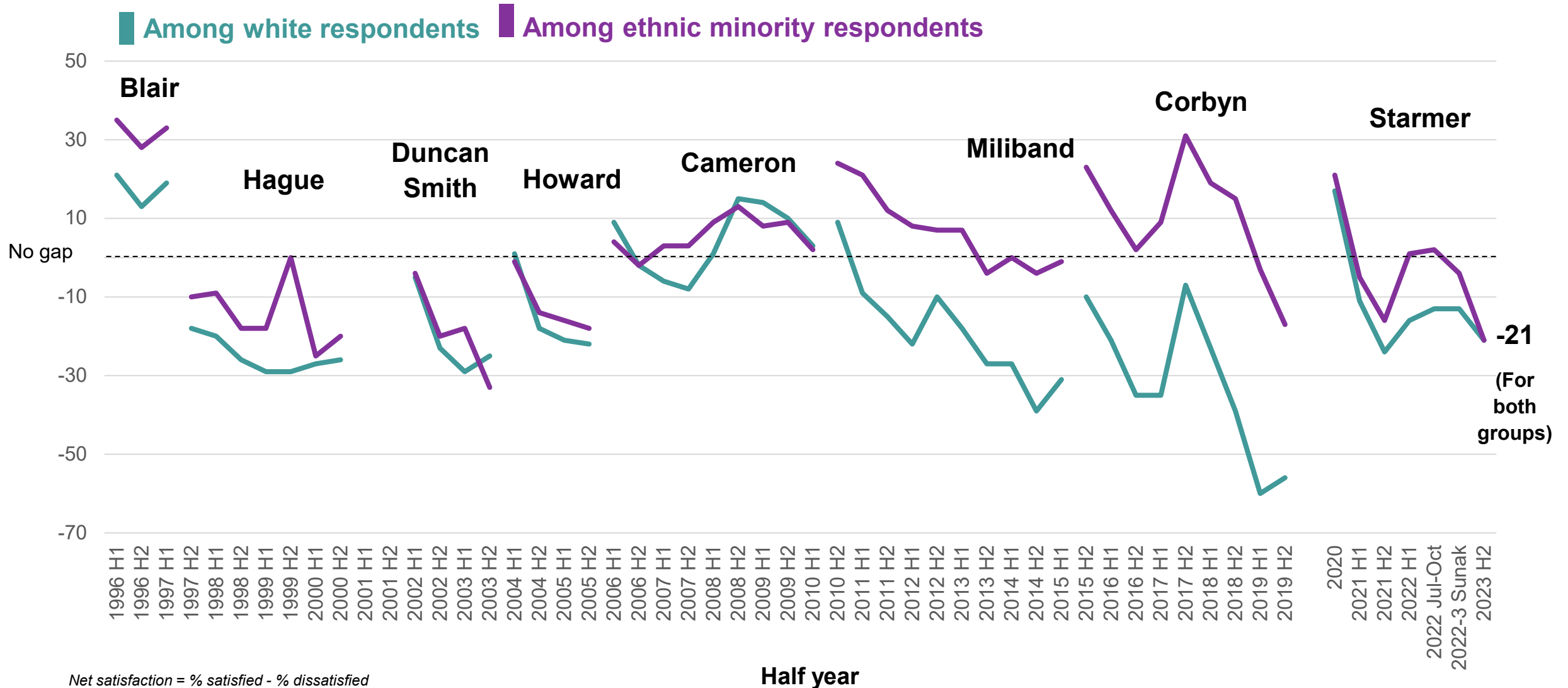
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Satisfaction with Leaders of the Opposition by ethnicity

- The Leader of the Opposition with the largest ethnicity gap in satisfaction ratings was Jeremy Corbyn. This included both when he had relatively high ratings among ethnic minorities in 2017 (when he matched Blair's high ratings as LOTO in 1996), and when he had lower ratings in 2019 (because his ratings among white Britons were much lower). In the first half of 2019, the large increase in the size of the ethnicity gap appears to have been partly driven by a large drop in his satisfaction ratings (after a period of relatively healthy scores) among white Britons, which was then followed by a fall in satisfaction ratings among ethnic minority Britons.
- Ratings for Keir Starmer have tended to differ from those of Labour leaders in the recent past in that there is less difference between his scores among white and ethnic minority Britons (Starmer's ratings among white Britons being better than his predecessors in the second half of their leadership). In fact, his most recent ratings for the second half of 2023 show no gap at all. **However, this is a function of his scores falling amongst white Britons (from -13 to -21) but falling even more among ethnic minority Britons (from -4 to -21).** His net satisfaction rating amongst ethnic minorities is the lowest of any Labour leader in our series.

Net Satisfaction with the Leader of the Opposition by ethnicity

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way ... is doing his job as leader of the Labour/Conservative Party?



Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

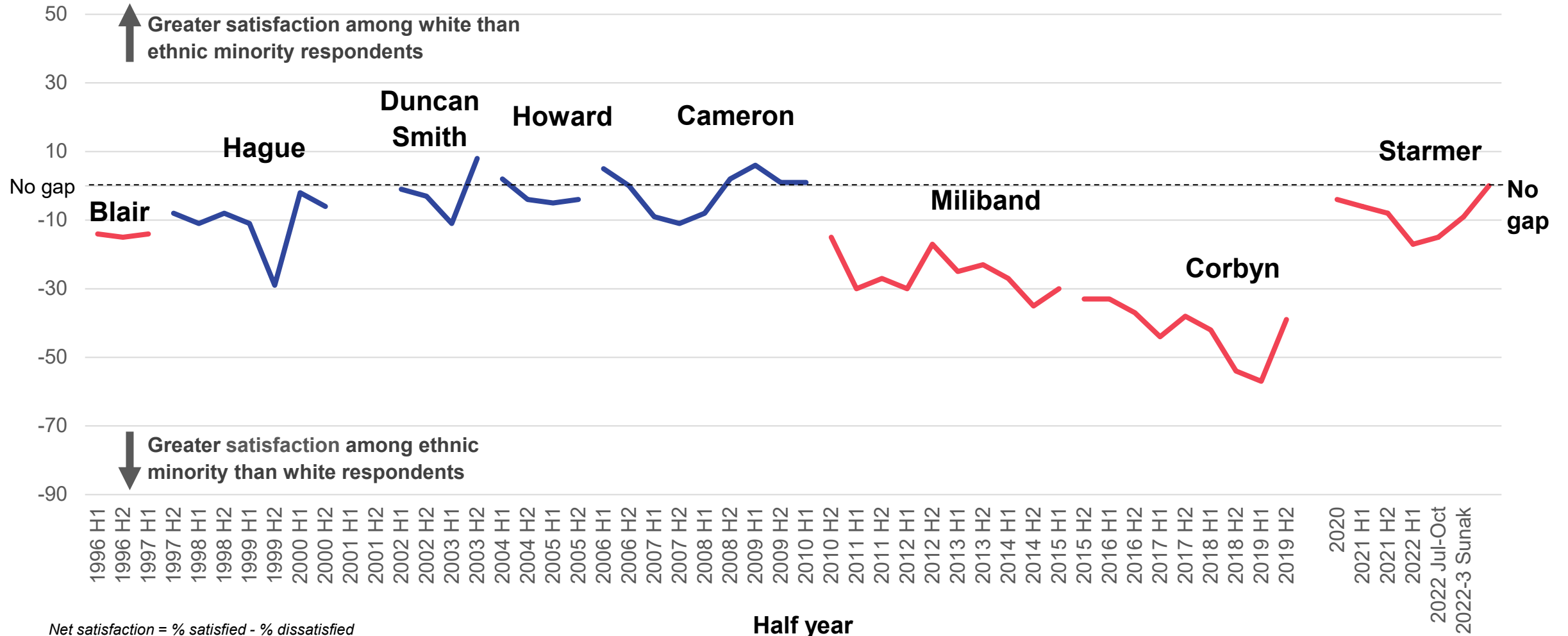
Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Half year

The ethnicity gap in net satisfaction with the Leader of the Opposition

% White respondents net satisfied minus % ethnic minority respondents net satisfied



Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

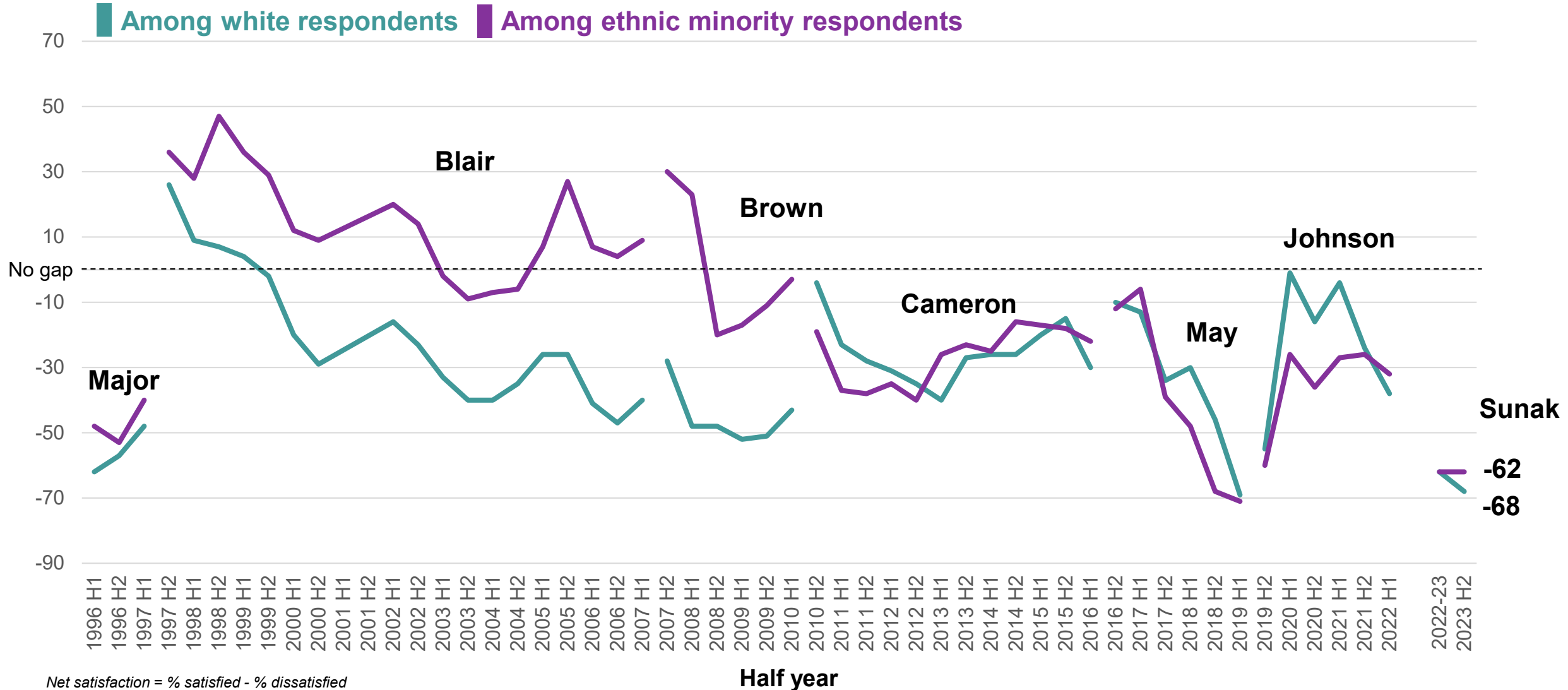
Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

Net Satisfaction with the Government by ethnicity

- As with leader ratings, net satisfaction with the government among ethnic minorities tended to be higher for the Labour governments of 1997-2010 than for Conservative-led administrations, and the Blair and Brown periods had the biggest ethnicity gaps.
- For the Conservatives, there was relatively little difference by ethnicity for Major and Cameron's governments most of the time, but a bigger gap for May in 2018 and Johnson 2020-21, when satisfaction – particularly for Johnson – was much higher among white Britons than among ethnic minority Britons.
- Both May and Johnson ended their premierships with low satisfaction ratings among all groups, and so the ethnicity gap narrowed. Rishi Sunak's government is commanding ratings among both white and ethnic minority Britons almost as low as they were at the end of Theresa May's term, which again means the ethnicity gap is very small.

Net Satisfaction with the Government by ethnicity

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



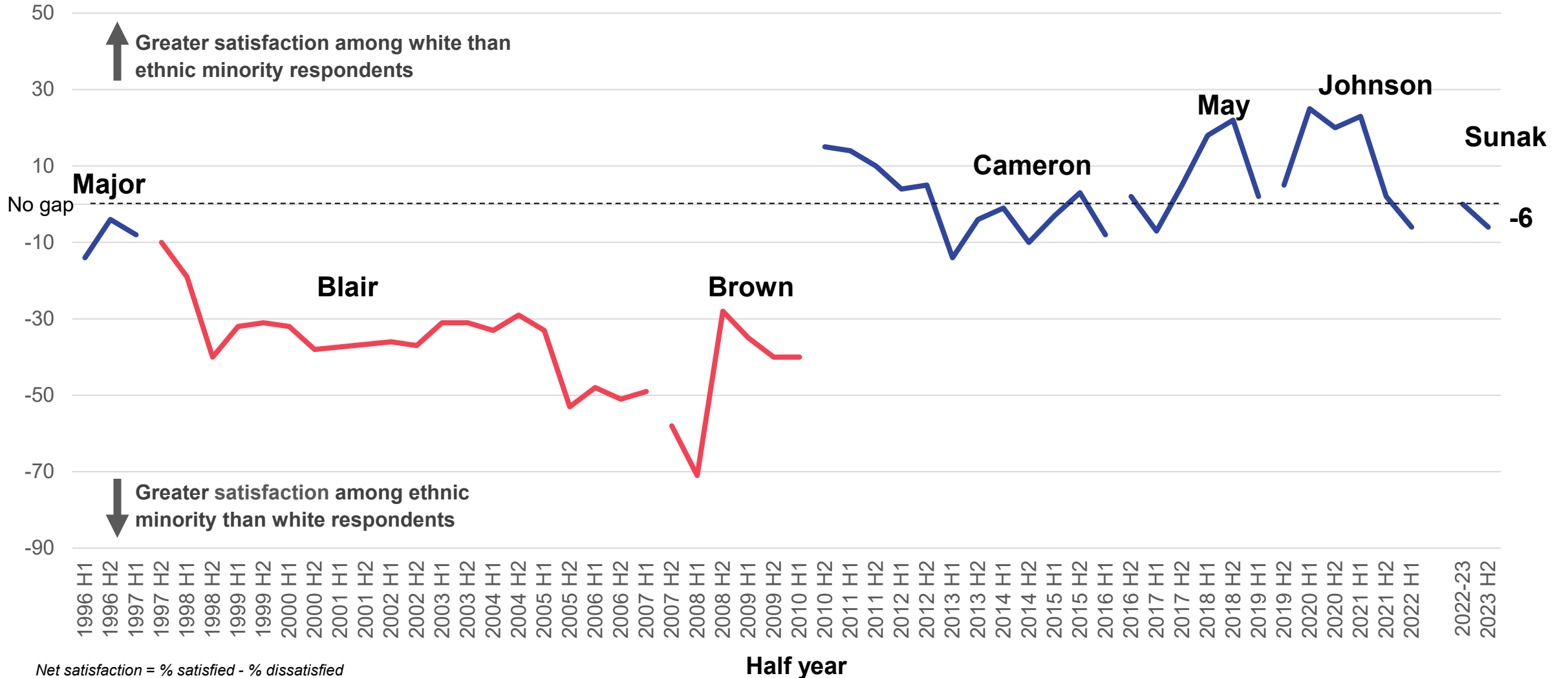
Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor

The ethnicity gap in net satisfaction with the Government

% White respondents net satisfied minus % ethnic minority respondents net satisfied



Net satisfaction = % satisfied - % dissatisfied

Base: All British adults. See appendices for more details.

Source: Ipsos Political Monitor



Appendices

Appendix 1a: Voting intention base sizes

	Unweighted base sizes for voting intention (among all giving a VI)	
	White voters	Ethnic minority voters
1996 H1	24759	1235
1996 H2	23099	1067
1997 H1	14320	604
1997 H2	19436	842
1998 H1	16771	723
1998 H2	13943	639
1999 H1	15639	641
1999 H2	16553	809
2000 H1	17368	991
2000 H2	17733	948
2001 H1	8746	465
2001 H2	10851	551
2002 H1	18319	1040
2002 H2	18861	978
2003 H1	16922	858
2003 H2	17318	828
2004 H1	15625	928
2004 H2	14275	864
2005 H1	10669	661
2005 H2	16307	1163
2006 H1	17406	1280
2006 H2	13504	989
2007 H1	5398	421
2007 H2	6678	532
2008 H1	8453	609
2008 H2	8139	627

Appendix 1b: Voting intention base sizes

	Unweighted base sizes for voting intention (among all giving a VI)	
	White voters	Ethnic minority voters
2009 H1	4305	316
2009 H2	4386	312
2010 H1	4736	337
2010 H2	3714	344
2011 H1	4530	449
2011 H2	4284	402
2012 H1	4462	336
2012 H2	4493	355
2013 H1	4681	337
2013 H2	4536	367
2014 H1	4501	384
2014 H2	4593	352
2015 H1	4808	407
2015 H2	5808	493
2016 H1	4954	410
2016 H2	4756	397
2017 H1	6000	448
2017 H2	3398	258
2018	7581	454
2019 H1	4181	311
2019 H2	6357	439
2020 H1	2416	260
2020 H2	3017	372
2021 H1	3067	363
2021 H2	3809	400
2022 H1	3567	524
Jul-Oct '22	2118	309
Nov '22-June'23	4747	692
2023 H2	3308	487

Appendix 3a: Satisfaction base sizes

	Unweighted base sizes for satisfaction ratings	
	White respondents	Ethnic minority respondents
1996 H1	10966	579
1996 H2	12534	565
1997 H1	6297	258
1997 H2	12748	550
1998 H1	6348	289
1998 H2	2783	132
1999 H1	5691	206
1999 H2	5463	277
2000 H1	5355	347
2000 H2	5829	320
2002 H1	6658	410
2002 H2	4665	243
2003 H1	5650	327
2003 H2	5643	332
2004 H1	5800	368
2004 H2	6581	436
2005 H1	4728	363
2005 H2	4763	374
2006 H1	5653	451
2006 H2	4368	388
2007 H1	3647	327
2007 H2	4416	424
2008 H1	5610	487
2008 H2	5628	381

Note: Base sizes for individual politicians may vary where they took over as party leader midway through a datapoint.

Appendix 3b: Satisfaction base sizes

	Unweighted base sizes for satisfaction ratings	
	White respondents	Ethnic minority respondents
2009 H1	5570	419
2009 H2	5563	428
2010 H1	4879	350
2010 H2	5461	518
2011 H1	5568	553
2011 H2	5438	517
2012 H1	5557	443
2012 H2	5588	423
2013 H1	5611	429
2013 H2	5507	473
2014 H1	5493	480
2014 H2	5491	459
2015 H1	4583	404
2015 H2	6678	599
2016 H1	6653	594
2016 H2	4593	379
2017 H1	5796	450
2017 H2	3813	286
2018 H1	4761	271
2018 H2	3868	260
2019 H1	5245	367
2019 H2	7382	512
2020 H1	2730	296*
2020 H2	3573	448*
2021 H1	3648	468
2021 H2	4592	535
2022 H1	4397	689
Jul-Oct '22	2588	419
Nov '22- June '23	6000	978
2023 H2	4321	705

Note: Base sizes for individual politicians may vary where they took over as party leader midway through a datapoint

*Keir Starmer ratings for 2020 aggregated into one as only one wave of data available for H1..



Political Attitudes by Ethnicity

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