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<https://flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=5d67acffb3d60#17>

Would you let this man drive your daughter home?

Danny Dorling

In the early hours of July 19th 1969, a few days before the first man stepped on the moon; a car swerved on a bridge in Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts. Ted Kennedy, the 37-year-old younger brother of the President of the United States of America was at the wheel. The car plunged into the water. Ted managed to swim free. He left Mary Jo Kopechne, his 28-year-old passenger to die in the vehicle. At some point, as it slowly submerged, she drowned. Ted notified the police of the accident ten hours later. Another man had recovered the vehicle and found Jo's body. Jo was very pretty, a secretary, a typist, a loyal political activist and a dedicated Democrat. She died just over a week before her 29th birthday.

It was at first seen as a joke when Lord Ashcroft asked the question 'Would you rather allow Jeremy Hunt or Boris Johnson to babysit your children'.¹ The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that 'in a curious little snippet from the weekend. According to a poll by Lord Ashcroft, only 10 per cent of voters would let Boris Johnson babysit their children.'² However, it was more than curious, some 52% of all voters said they would not allow either of the two candidates vying for the leadership of the Conservative party such access to their children. That poll was of 8,223 adults taken in the last week of June 2019.

Broken down by political party, some 49% of all Conservative voters, 59% of Labour voters, and 46% of Lib Dem would not allow either of the two candidates to babysit their children. Older voters were especially wary; some 56% of 'Leave' voters (who tend to be much older voters) would not allow either man to babysit. However, particularly savvy groups of the younger voters were especially averse to the idea. As many as 97% of Labour Remain voters said they would not allow Boris to be their babysitter; even 80% of Boris' most loyal supporters said they would (these are the group of voters who voted both Conservative in the 2017 general election and had also voted Leave in the earlier 2016 referendum).

Lord Ashcroft also asked voters for their views on the Chappaquiddick question: "*would you allow Boris Johnson to drive your daughter or the daughter of a friend home after a party*"? Some 88% of Conservative voters said no, alongside 96% of Labour voters and 98% of Liberal voters. Only 3% of people who voted to 'Remain' in the 2016 Referendum would trust Boris with that responsibility, and just 13% of those who had voted 'Leave', including

only 14% of those who both voted 'Leave' in 2016 and also Conservative in 2017. Only one in seven of the group of voters most in favour of Boris to be Prime Minister would trust him to do such a simple thing. We are living in remarkable times.

The voters verdict: Question 11 in the Lord Ashcroft Poll of late June 2019 (%)

11. Who would you rather:

% JEREMY HUNT / % BORIS JOHNSON	ALL	2017 GE vote			EU ref vote		2017 GE + EU ref vote			
		Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Allow to babysit your children	32/10	35/16	35/6	48/6	43/4	26/18	53/5	29/20	40/3	26/13
Have round for dinner	19/38	17/58	21/26	29/28	28/24	11/56	32/41	11/65	26/19	14/40
Trust with an important secret	32/9	35/15	34/5	47/3	42/3	26/17	55/5	28/19	37/2	26/13
Lend money to and expect to get it back	35/10	38/16	39/6	51/5	46/4	29/17	57/5	31/20	43/3	31/12
Allow to drive your daughter or the daughter of a friend home after a party	40/8	45/12	43/4	56/2	50/3	35/13	62/5	39/14	48/2	33/10

What choice did the few who could vote have? Given the choice between Jeremy Hunt and Boris Johnson, I would have opted for Boris. This is because I have monitored the actions and behavior of Jeremy Hunt as Secretary of State for Health. I believe Jeremy Hunt to be capable, and I know that life expectancy in Britain fell for the first time since the Second World War during his watch. Improvements in life expectancy began to rapidly slow down before 2014 while Hunt was in charge. That most basic measure of national well-being never regained its 2014 level right through to at least the end of his tenure as Secretary of State for Health, a tenure which lasted from 2012 until 2018.

I know, and I believe Jeremy knows, that the infant mortality rate in Britain rose from 3.6 babies dying per 1000 born in England and Wales in 2014, to 3.7 in 2015, 3.8 in 2016, and 3.9 in 2017. I know, and I believe Jeremy Hunt also knew, that the Office for National Statistics said that each of these rises was statically significant. I know, and I am sure Jeremy will have been told, that nowhere else in Europe was suffering such a health crisis. I cared, I'm not sure he did, or necessarily could. I would have voted for Boris, not because I think Boris cares; but because I am less sure that he doesn't. I would not trust Jeremy with the lives of others.

The UK voters' verdicts on the character of Jeremy Hunt are more sanguine than mine. As the table above shows, some 32% would trust Jeremy with an important secret, whereas only 9% would trust Boris with one. Some 35%, still a minority, would lend money to Jeremy and expect to get it back, whereas only one in ten would expect Boris Johnson to repay his debts, including just 16% of Conservative voters! Then why did the Conservatives back Boris? The only clue given in the statistics just shown is that a majority, 58% would have him round to dinner, whereas only 17% would invite Hunt.

Lord Ashcroft's poll went on to reveal that the word voters most associated with Jeremy Hunt was "smug"; with Boris it was "arrogant". The British, and especially British Conservative voters quite like people who are arrogant. It may have something to do with the somewhat arrogant history of Britain. My friend Sally Tomlinson and I wrote a book on this earlier this year. It was published on the day of the first "meaningful vote" way back in January 2019. We titled our book *"Rule Britannia: From Brexit to the end of Empire"*. The book is largely about people being arrogant and smug, and speculation over when the British elite might finally become a little more normal and less arrogantly smug. The full details of what the British public felt were the words that best summed up the two candidates for summer 2019 Conservative leadership race are given in table 12: here.

The voters verdict: Question 12 in the Lord Ashcroft Poll of late June 2019

12. Which three of the following words and phrases best describe JEREMY HUNT / BORIS JOHNSON?

Determined / Weak / Down to earth / Out of touch / Principled / Indecisive / Up to the job / Out of his depth / Competent / Dishonest / Doesn't listen / Shares my values / Weird / Likeable / Ruthless / Fair / Stands up for Britain / On my side / Arrogant / Smug / Amusing / Dangerous / Tolerant / Human / Unreliable

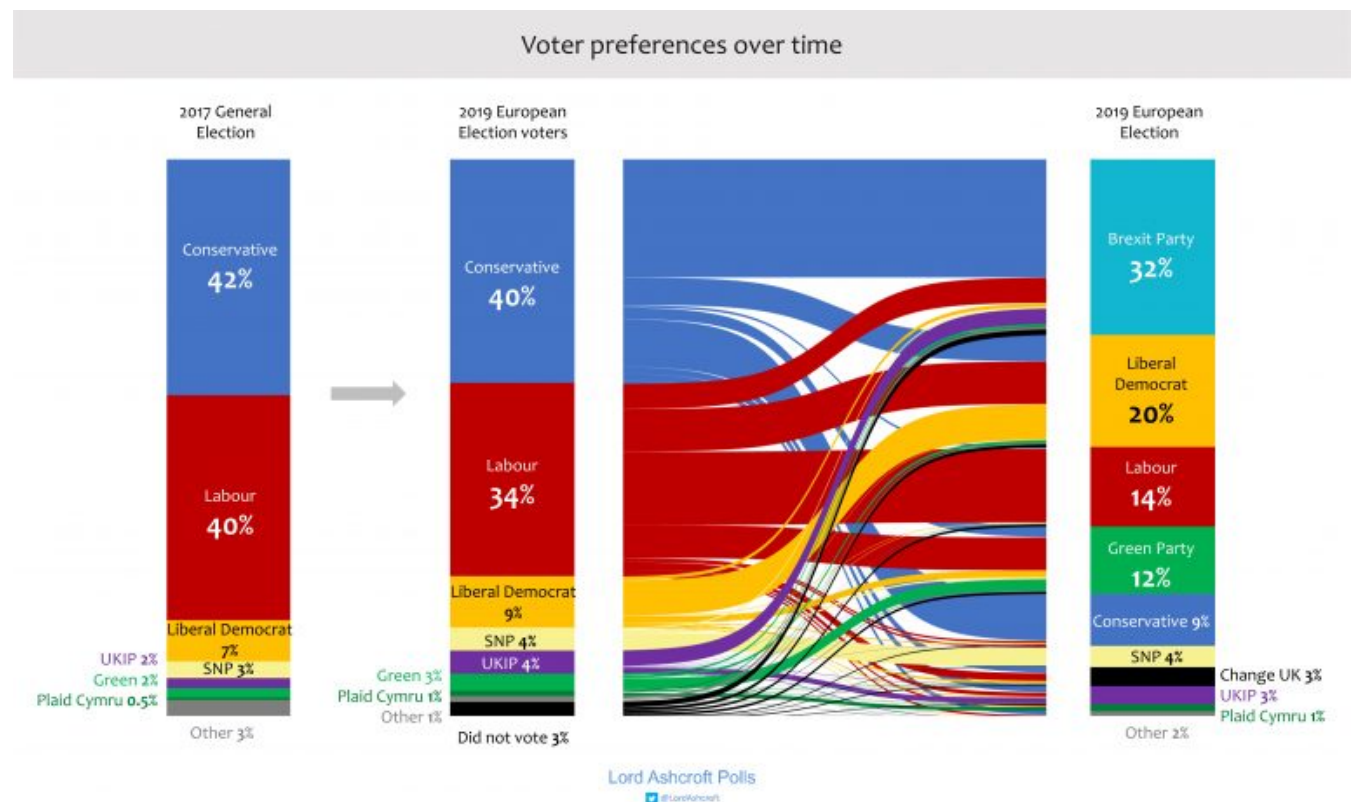
Top 5 words JEREMY HUNT	Top 5 words BORIS JOHNSON
Smug (23%)	Arrogant (26%)
Out of his depth (19%)	Dishonest (24%)
Competent (19%)	Dangerous (22%)
Out of touch (18%)	Unreliable (22%)
Arrogant (18%)	Amusing (21%)

Lord Ashcroft's June 2019 poll also revealed that 91% of Labour voters who had also voted 'Remain' who prefer a government lead by Jeremy Corbyn over one lead by Boris Johnston, as would 56% of Labour voters of the small minority of Labour voters who had also voted 'Leave'.

In spring and early summer 2019 it was often said that Labour was losing its support to the new Brexit party. However, an earlier poll by Lord Ashcroft had revealed that fewer than one in seven of those who had voted Labour at the 2017 General Election had voted for the Brexit Party in the May 2019 European elections. Furthermore, some 62% of Brexit supporters by May 2019 were social class ABC1, as compared to 58% of Labour voters. Brexit voters were (on average) posh in 2016 (59% ABC1, with a 95%-confidence limit of 1%) and were getting posher as a group by 2019. People who were social class C2, D or E were more likely to stop supporting Brexit between 2016 and 2019, or not to switch towards supporting it.

Lord Ashcroft's also carried out an earlier exit poll of 10,280 voters which was conducted on May 23rd and 24th 2019. It revealed that some 22% of previous Labour voters voted Liberal Democrat, 17% Green, 4% for the now defunct "Change UK" party (the Tiggers as they were briefly known), 2% for UKIP and 1% for the Conservatives. Faced with a choice at an actual General Election, where the choice for the vast majority of voters is between the two main

potentially victorious parties, Labour and the Conservatives, and two potential prime ministers, most voters will revert to that binary choice. However, the great unknown in future is whether, if the Brexit Party were to stand in a future General Election, it would decimate the Conservative party as it did in May 2019. Lord Ashcroft produced³ an especially colourful graphic to illustrate this:



Finally, Lord Ashcroft's exit poll of late May 2019 revealed that the most popular political party in the UK was the Labour party, even after it just lost ten seats at the European Elections; its greatest ever fall in support at any such an election. Contrary to popular understanding and most media messaging Labour commanded more support among every social class group other than those with an occupation that classed them as C2 (see the final table here and note C2 voters tend to be older).

Some 93% of those who said they voted Labour in the European elections said they would do so again in a future General Election, as did 13% of Liberal Democrat European voters 21% of all those who had voted Green (but only 1% of Conservatives). Labour were by far the most popular party amongst those who did not know if they were Leave or Remain. They were the most popular party amongst female voters, and equally most popular (with the Conservative Party) amongst male voters.

Labour was the most popular amongst all voters aged below age 55. Labour was the most popular party in the North East of England, the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, in the West Midlands, and in London. In the South West of England the Brexit party was one

percentage point ahead of Labour, two points ahead in the East Midlands, and level pegging in Wales. Only in the South East of England Region were the Conservatives most popular in late May 2019, and then only just.

So think – would you let your daughter drive home in a car with Boris Johnston and, if not, how will you vote (and everyone you know) when you have the chance to get him out of the driving seat?

	Total	Social Grade			
		AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted Base	10280	4331	2659	1332	1958
Weighted Base	10280	4353	2655	1321	1951

Q8. Which party do you think you are most likely to vote for at the next general election? (% shown below)

Labour	21	19	20	21	26
Brexit Party	18	13	18	24	23
Conservative	18	21	17	17	13
Liberal Democrat	17	23	16	11	10
The Green Party	7	7	9	5	6
Change UK/ (Tiggers)	4	4	4	3	3
SNP	4	3	4	4	4
UKIP	3	2	3	4	5
Plaid Cymru	1	0	1	1	1
Another party	2	2	3	3	3
Prefer not to say	6	5	6	7	5

At 11am on Tuesday July 23rd Boris Johnston was elected leader of with a two thirds majority of Conservative members who voted voting for him, some 92,153. In contrast only 46,656 voted for Hunt, turnout was 87.4% so total party membership at that time was 158,800 people or fewer than 250 people per constituency. Before Boris won the vote ministers Philip Hammond, David Gauke, Rory Stewart, Alan Duncan, Anne Milton, all resigned, as well as the chair of the Conservative Muslim Foundation and member of 36 years standing, Mohammed Amin, who compared Boris to Hitler.⁴ And that was all before lunch on the first day of Boris's premiership.

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³ <https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2019/05/my-euro-election-post-vote-poll-most-tory-switchers-say-they-will-stay-with-their-new-party/>

⁴ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9565235/who-has-resigned-over-boris-johnson/>

WOULD YOU LET THIS MAN DRIVE YOUR DAUGHTER HOME?

Danny Dorling is a British social geographer and is the Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography of the School of Geography and the Environment of the University of Oxford and the author of a number of books including the recent *"Rule Britannia: From Brexit to the end of Empire"* with Sally Tomlinson.

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Broken down by political party, some 49% of all Conservative voters, 59% of Labour voters, and 46% of Lib Dem would not allow either of the two candidates to babysit their children. Older voters were especially wary; some 56% of 'Leave' voters (who tend to be much older voters)



Prof Danny Dorling

would not allow either man to babysit. However, particularly savvy groups of the younger voters were especially averse to the idea. As many as 97% of Labour Remain voters said they would not allow Boris to be their babysitter; even 80% of Boris' most loyal supporters said they would not (these are the group of voters who voted both Conservative in the 2017 general election and had also voted Leave in the earlier 2016 referendum).

Lord Ashcroft also asked voters for their views on the Chappaquiddick question: "would you allow Boris Johnson to drive your daughter or the daughter of a friend home after a party?" Some 88% of Conservative voters said no, alongside 96% of Labour voters and 98% of Liberal voters. Only 3% of people who voted to 'Remain' in the 2016 Referendum would trust Boris with that responsibility, and just 13% of those who had voted 'Leave', including only 14% of those who both voted 'Leave' in 2016 and also Conservative in 2017. Only one in seven of the group of voters most in favour of Boris to be Prime Minister would trust him to do such a simple thing. We are living in remarkable times.

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Hunt and Boris Johnson, I would have opted for Boris. This is because I have monitored the actions and behavior of Jeremy Hunt as Secretary of State for Health. I believe Jeremy Hunt to be capable, and I know that life expectancy in Britain fell for the first time since the Second World War during his watch. Improvements in life expectancy began to rapidly slow down before 2014 while Hunt was in charge. That most basic measure of national well-being never regained its 2014 level right through to at least the end of his tenure as Secretary of State for Health, a tenure which lasted from 2012 until 2018.

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had also voted 'Remain' who prefer a government led by Jeremy Corbyn over one led by Boris Johnson, as would 56% of Labour voters of the small minority of Labour voters who had also voted 'Leave'.

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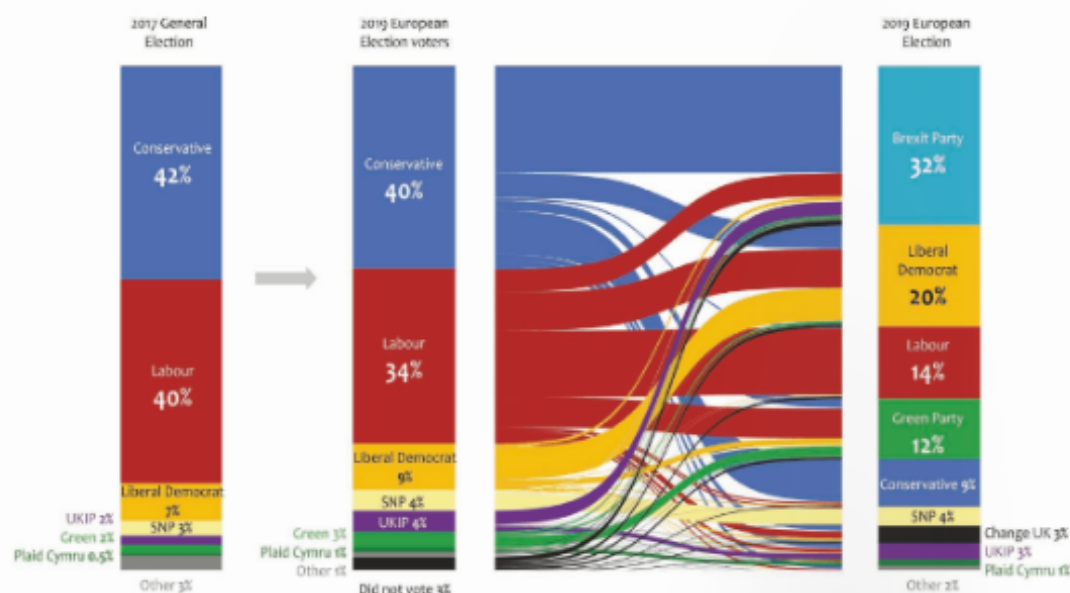
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Voter preferences over time



voters aged below age 55. Labour was the most popular party in the North East of England, the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, in the West Midlands, and in London. In the South West of England the Brexit Party was one percentage point ahead of Labour, two points ahead in the East Midlands, and level pegging in Wales. Only in the South East of England region were the Conservatives most popular in late May 2019, and then only just.

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UKIP	3	2	3	4	5
Plaid Cymru	1	0	1	1	1
Another Party	2	2	3	3	3
Prefer not to say	6	5	6	7	5