

The power of small data in understanding the unknowable

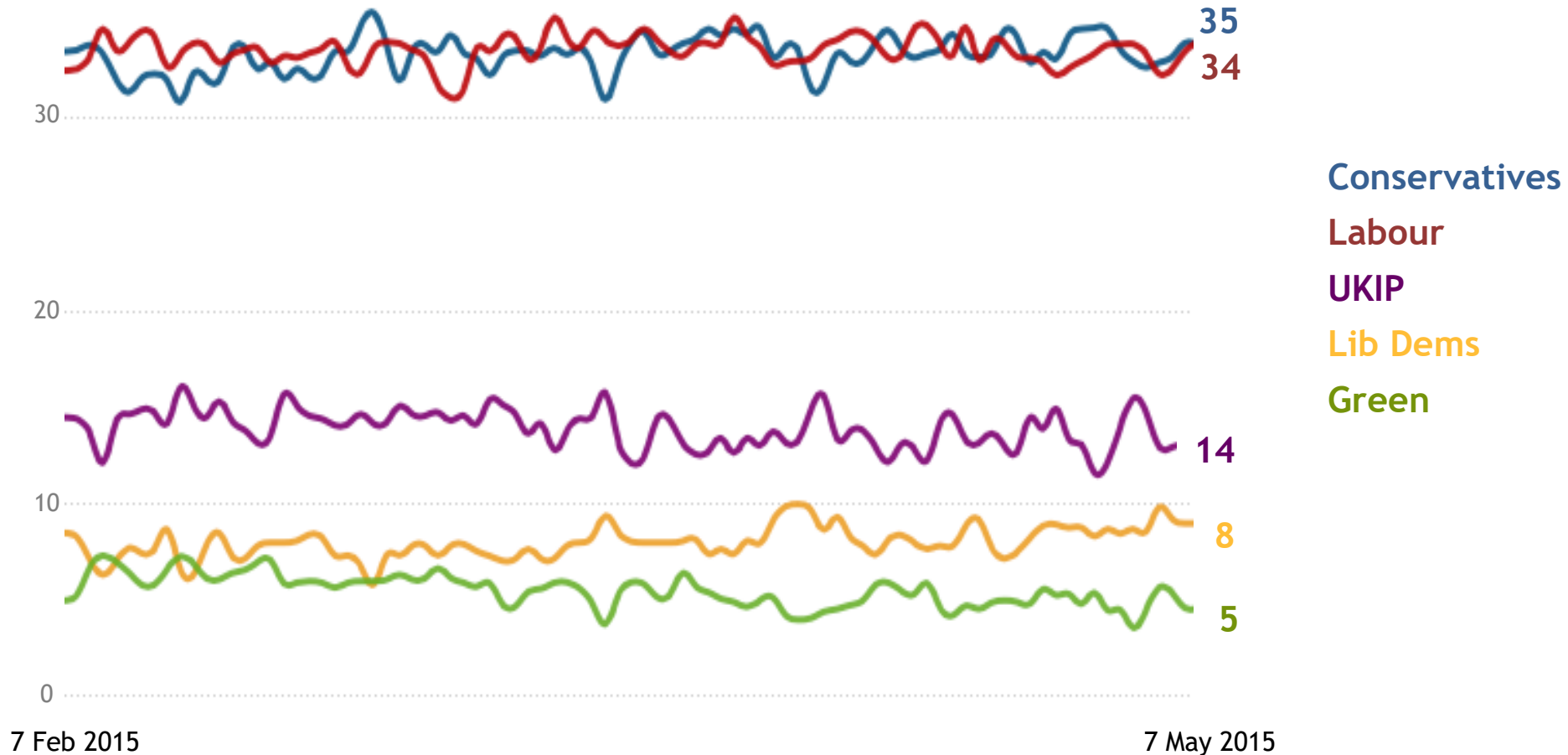




# What is 'small data'?

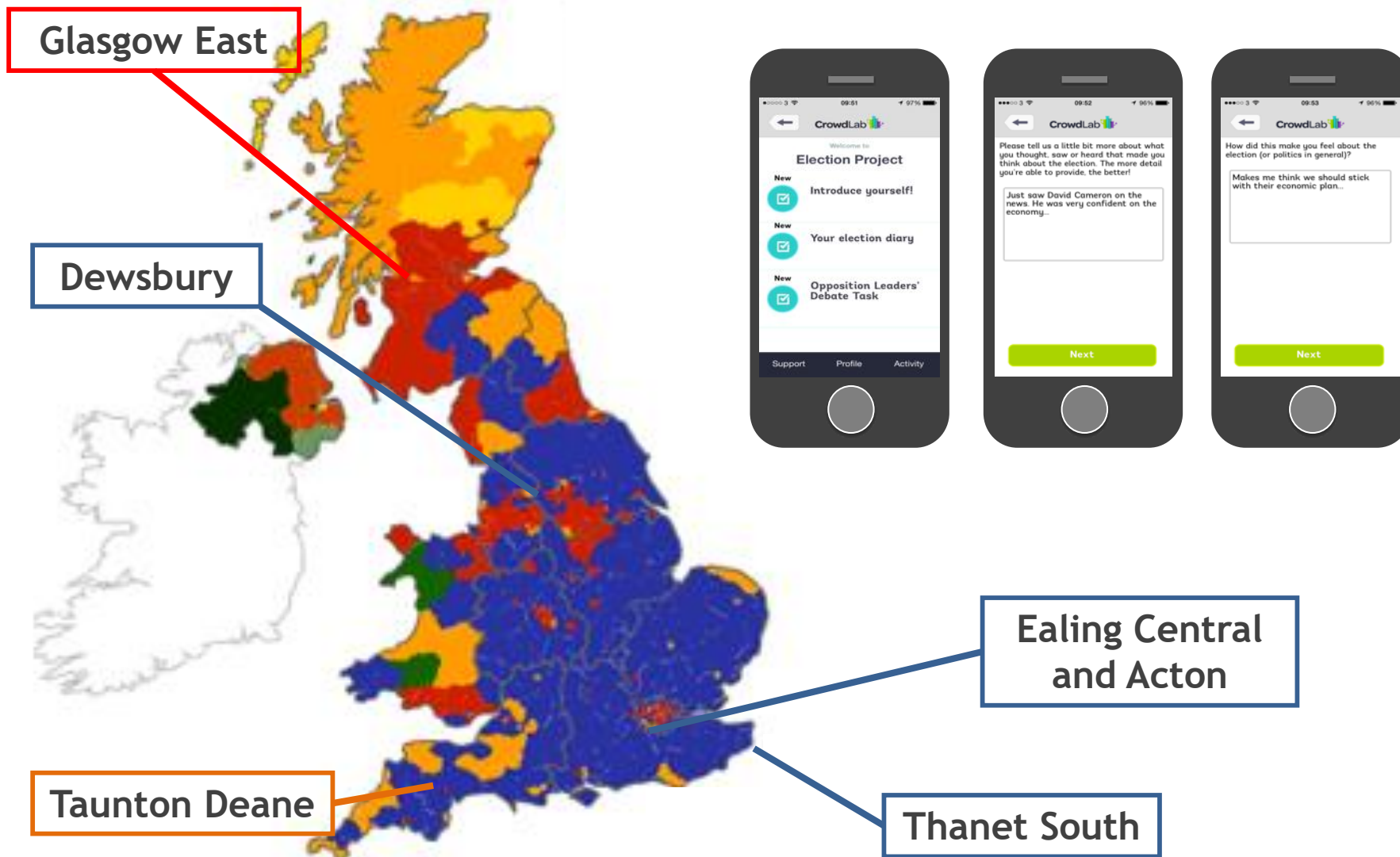
# In May 2015, when the polls suggested deadlock...

*Voting intention for 3 months from 7 Feb to 7 May 2015:*



Source: May2015. Aggregated polling data from: Ashcroft, ComRes, ICM, Ipsos MORI, Opinium, Populus, Survation, TNS-BMRB and YouGov

# We looked to 'small data' to tell us a different story





**Why do we need it?**

- 1 To understand the context
- 2 And get to what matters most
- 3 To reflect how people are increasingly receiving information
- 4 With real-time insight led by *voters*, not hacks



# 1 To understand the context



# 1 To understand the context

When you conduct a 'deep dive' into 'trade' with many voters...



So when politicians talked about trade in the Referendum campaign...

*They said:*

*"Our membership of the EU allows us to trade freely with other member states, and strike trade deals with the rest of the world. We can't risk leaving the EU."*

*Voters heard:*

*"Something we're not very reliant on any more (because greedy politicians have let British industry decline) might be at risk. This only matters to rich people who have stocks and shares - it makes no difference to real life."*



# 1 To understand the context



## Steve, Builder, Harlow

- Has lived in Harlow all his life, and describes the area as in decline - especially public services
- Thinks that places like East London are now too dangerous for White British people as the Muslim community is so dominant
- Feels he can no longer fly an England flag when the football is on because of political correctness gone mad

*British culture is fading away, the influx of the migrants is changing things in Britain. People who don't want to integrate. When they come over here, and they can't speak English properly, and you can't talk to them at work, you have to get someone to interpret.*



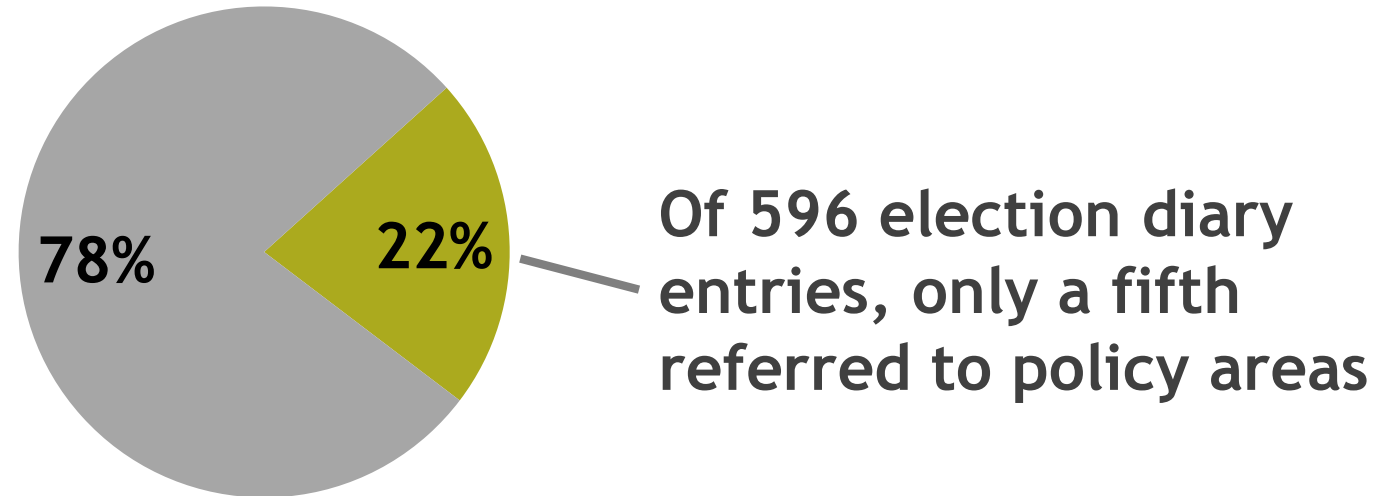
## Chris, HR Manager, Leamington Spa

- Feels optimistic about his local area and the economy
- Thinks that multiculturalism has been a great thing for the UK and has made it a more interesting and vibrant place to live
- Says that most immigrants he has met or worked with have been hardworking, polite and a great addition to the country - much harder working than 'white benefit scroungers'

*There are British citizens who aren't working and there are people coming in and it's nothing to do with colour or religion, it's to do with whether you're willing to do certain jobs for that amount of money.*

## 2 And get to what matters most

Despite voters' pleas for policy detail in the 2015 General Election, people mattered much much more...



*“In my dream government I’d have Labour with the Lib Dems in coalition because I think they’re more about working people. But I’d have David Cameron as my Prime Minister because he’s strong and confident, so I think he’s who I’ll vote for.”*



# 3 To reflect how people are increasingly receiving information

## Hard-Wired Selection

- Personalised search & recommendation algorithms
- Targeted advertising & messaging
- Timeline editing



*“It will be very hard for people to watch or consume something online that has not, in some sense, been tailored for them”*

Eric Schmidt, Google

## Social Selection

- Social networking as news source
- Recommendations from friends
- Network building based on preference-proximity



*“The thing is, you don’t decide what gets in, and more importantly, what gets edited out of your filter bubble”*

Eli Pariser, “The Filter Bubble”

# 3 To reflect how people are increasingly receiving information

A Corbyn  
Supporter



A non-  
supporter





# 4 With real-time insight led by voters, not hacks

How a 'politico' experiences an election...



How a 'real voter' experiences an election...



*"Since the election has drawn near and post has been coming through the door I've saved all the advertising campaigns coming to my door and I'm stood looking at it all now and think wow! So much info from different parties to take in. I'm feeling Confused.com!!"*

# 4 With real-time insight led by voters, not hacks

In a week when:



The stories that stood out:

- Parliament was dissolved and the short campaign began
- Conservatives and Labour squabbled about necessary tax rises
- Lib Dems pledged an extra £2.5bn on mental health
- 100 business leaders signed open letter supporting Conservatives
- Party leaders took part in 7-way televised debate
- Leaked memo alleged Sturgeon supported Cameron over Miliband
- Green party replaces candidate facing jail sentence
- Poll put Farage behind in Thanet South
- And more...

- The 7 way debate
  - Nicola Sturgeon's performance
  - Farage's HIV reference
  - Interest in the smaller parties
- General coverage of the future of the NHS
  - With just 1 mention of LD pledge
- The couple from Scunthorpe who won the lottery twice



# 4 With real-time insight led by voters, not hacks

*“Labour are just ‘spend spend spend’... I just don’t think austerity would be dealt with effectively enough by Labour. I’m beginning to lack any trust at all in them.”*



13  
April

Britain only  
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## The Labour Party Manifesto 2015

### Labour's Manifesto Budget Responsibility Lock

Our manifesto begins with the Budget Responsibility Lock we offer the British people. It is the basis for all our plans in this manifesto because it is by securing our national finances that we are able to secure the family finances of the working people of Britain.

#### The Budget Responsibility Lock guarantees that:

Every policy in this manifesto is paid for. Not one commitment requires additional borrowing. We are the first party to make that pledge and with this manifesto it is delivered. We will legislate to require all major parties to have their manifesto commitments independently audited by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

A Labour government will cut the deficit every year. The first line of Labour's first Budget will be: "This Budget cuts the deficit every year". This manifesto sets out that we will only lay a Budget before the House of Commons that cuts the deficit every year, which the OBR will independently verify.

We will get national debt falling and a surplus on the current budget as soon as possible in the next parliament. This manifesto sets out that we will not compromise on this commitment.

 Labour

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### Labour manifesto to promise 'Budget responsibility'

### Labour Launches 'Responsibility Lock'

Ed Miliband says he would cut the deficit every year and promises his policies would not need a "single penny of extra borrowing".



itv  
NEWS

Miliband promises Labour 'triple lock of responsibility'

1

Mention

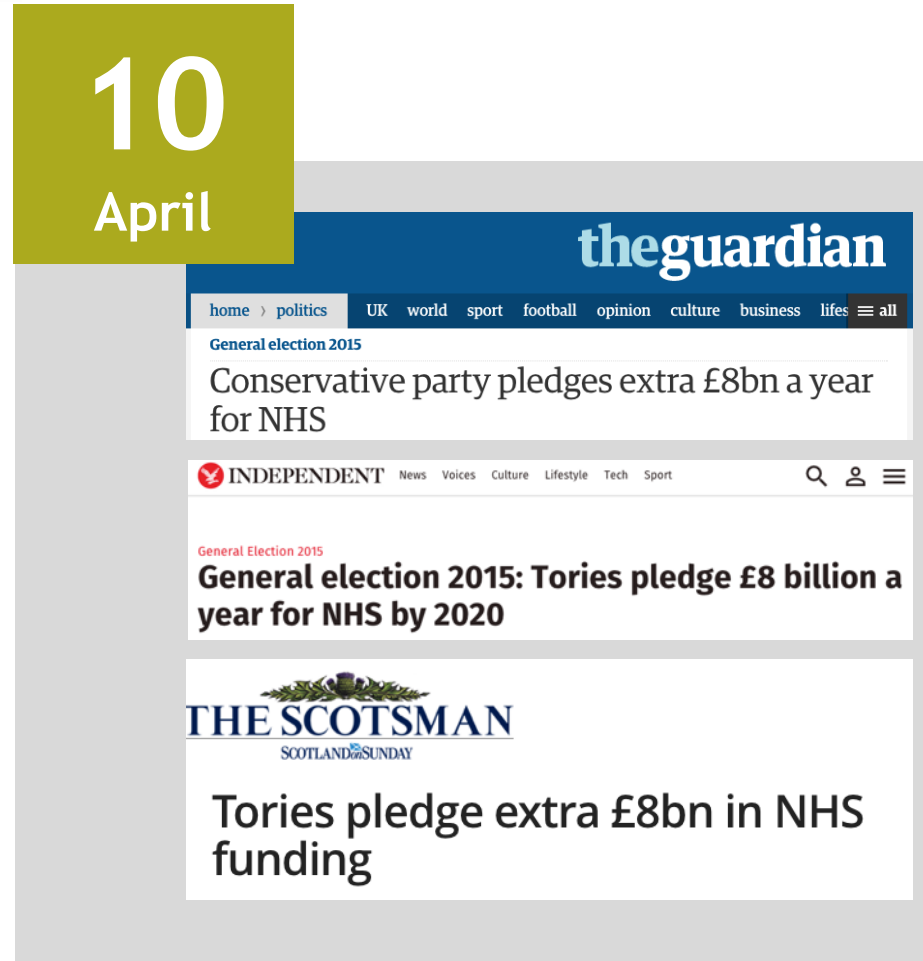


# 4 With real-time insight led by *voters*, not hacks

*“The Tories don’t care about public services. They won’t protect the things normal people rely on to get by.”*



10  
April



*“Pledging to meet the £8bn... why is the money only there at the election?”  
(Paul, Taunton Deane)*

# What next?

- We need to use small data to be ever smarter about...
  - The **context** - so that we can start from where people are at, rather than where we want them to be
  - Real-time, **citizen/consumer-led** insight that doesn't presuppose what's important
  - Focusing as much on the **channels of information** as the information itself

