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The Democracy Unit





Brexit, Citizens' Assemblies and the Future of Democracy in the UK

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What's coming...



Two visions of democracy

Why one is better than the other

Better processes for deciding major issues

Implications for how democracy is conducted in the UK



Two Visions of Democracy

Two Visions of Brexit Democracy



Voters were presented with two options to choose from. The option preferred by the majority should be implemented.

Voters chose between principles; they couldn't make an informed choice between fleshedout options. Whether to go ahead should be subject to detailed scrutiny, and perhaps another public vote.

Plebiscitarian vision

Deliberative vision

Why the Second Vision Is Better



Informed decisionmaking generally leads to better outcomes Plebiscitarianism disempowers citizens

Power without accountability is easily corrupted

Collective decisionmaking works better if the people taking part understand each other

A system with checks and balances can build in protections for minorities



Better Processes for Deciding Major Issues

Three Key Principles



1. Wherever possible, referendums should be post-legislative rather than prelegislative

If a pre-legislative referendum is unavoidable, it should be part of a two-referendum process

- 2. Proposals for a referendum should be subject to detailed prior scrutiny and deliberation
- 3. The quality of information available during the referendum campaign should be as high as possible



Report of the Independent Commission on Referendums

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON REFERENDUMS

July 2018

Prior Scrutiny and Deliberation



Parliamentary Scrutiny

absent before the Brexit referendum

the Swiss case

but can get caught in partisan battle

and can struggle for popular legitimacy

Citizens' Assembly

most prominent in Ireland

now happening widely across the UK

could a CA work in the UK on a controversial constitutional question?





Citizens' Assembly on Brexit



- 50 members selected randomly (with stratification) from the UK electorate
- Met for two weekends in Manchester in autumn 2017
- Topic: what kind of Brexit members want, focusing on trade and migration
- Weekend 1: 'Learning Phase' (learning from experts and each other)
- Weekend 2: 'Deliberation and Decision Phase'
- Designed and supported by expert facilitators



Citizens' Assembly on Brexit



- What do you want to be able to value about the country in which you live?
- UK trade/migration policy should....
- Options for trade with the EU
- Options for trade beyond the EU
- Options for migration policy



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO VALUE ABOUT THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU LIVE?

WHAT MEMBERS VALUE



- quality of public services
- effective democracy
- standards of social care
- social equality
- freedom of speech
- natural environment
- cultural diversity



POLICY GUIDELINES

UK TRADE POLICY SHOULD...



- minimise harm to the economy
- protect the NHS and public services
- maintain living standards
- take account of impacts on all parts of the UK
- protect workers' rights
- avoid a hard border with Ireland

UK MIGRATION POLICY SHOULD...



- be linked to investment in training for UK nationals
- keep better data on migrants
- enable us to sustain public services
- benefit our economy
- be responsive to regional needs
- include better planning of public services



OPTIONS FOR TRADE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

OPTIONS



OPTION A

Stay in the Single Market for goods and services

OPTION B

Agree a 'comprehensive' trade deal covering tariffs and non-tariff barriers

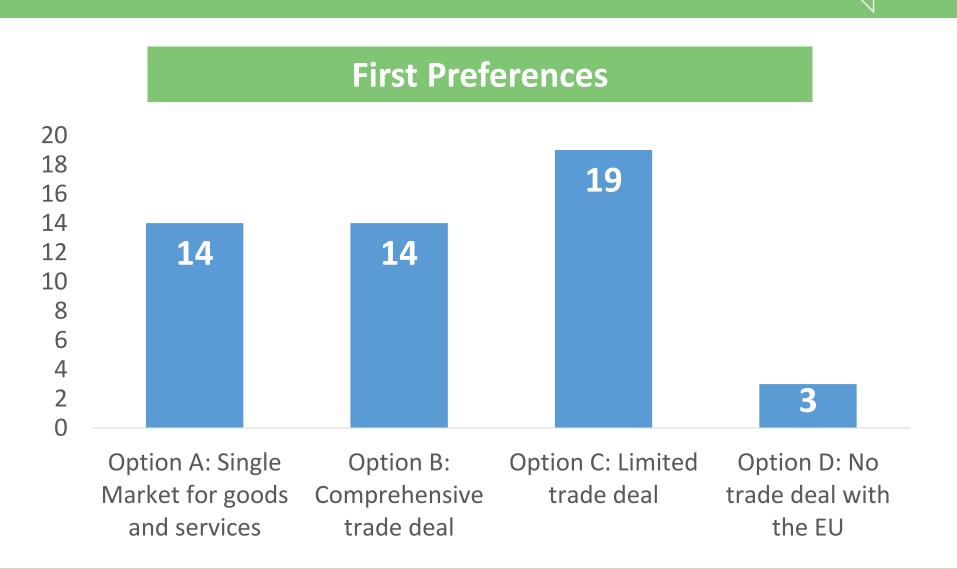
OPTION C

Agree a limited trade deal covering tariffs only

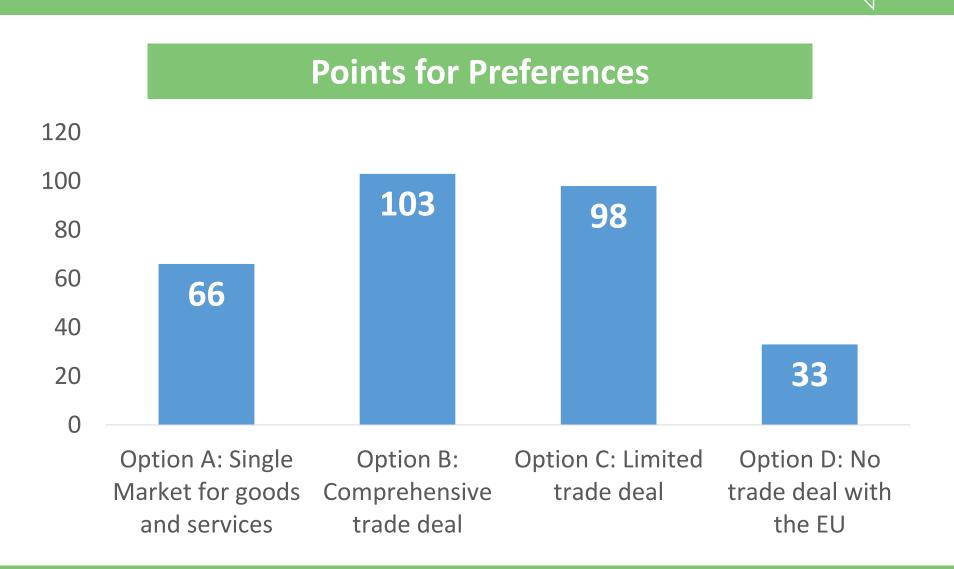
OPTION D

Agree no trade deal with the EU



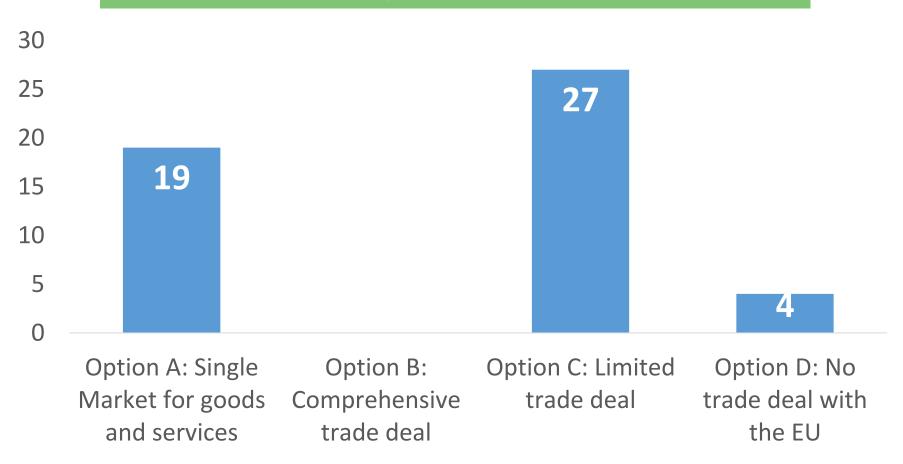






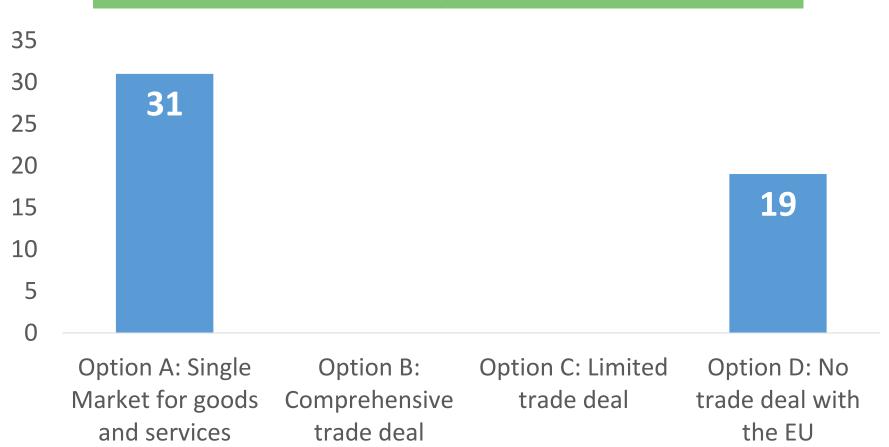














OPTIONS FOR TRADE BEYOND THE EU

OPTIONS



OPTION A

Stay in the EU's Customs
Union

OPTION B

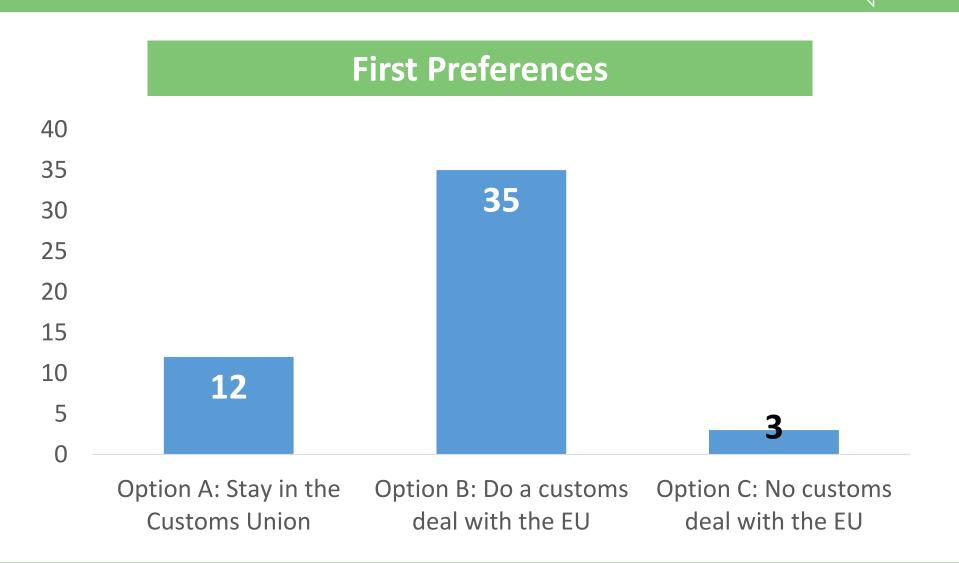
Agree a special customs deal with the EU

OPTION C

Agree no customs deal with the EU

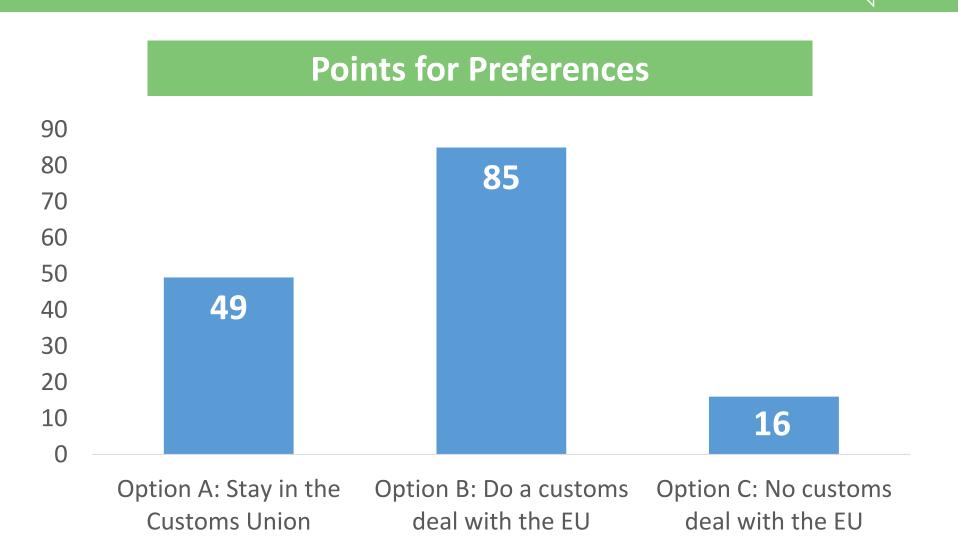
TRADE BEYOND THE EU





TRADE BEYOND THE EU

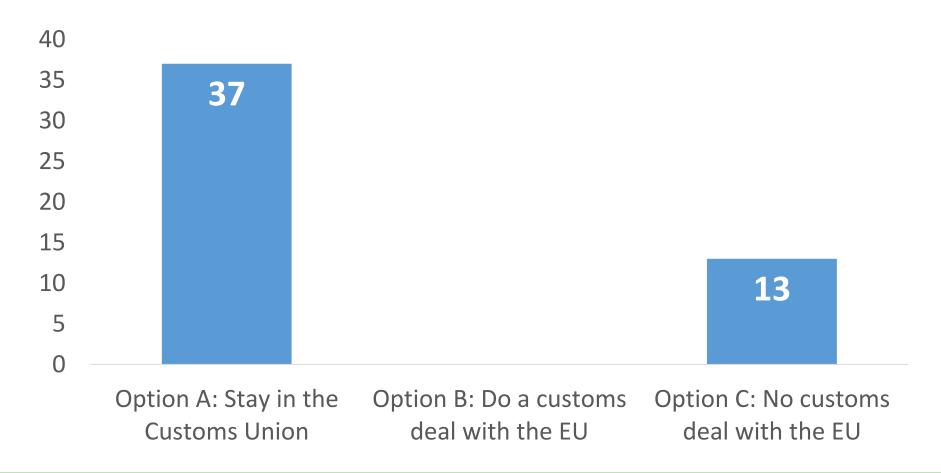




TRADE BEYOND THE EU



What if we can't get a special customs deal?





OPTIONS FOR UK-EU MIGRATION

OPTIONS



OPTION A

Maintain free movement of labour as now

OPTION B

Maintain free movement of labour, but use controls

OPTION C

End free movement, but still favour EU citizens

OPTION D

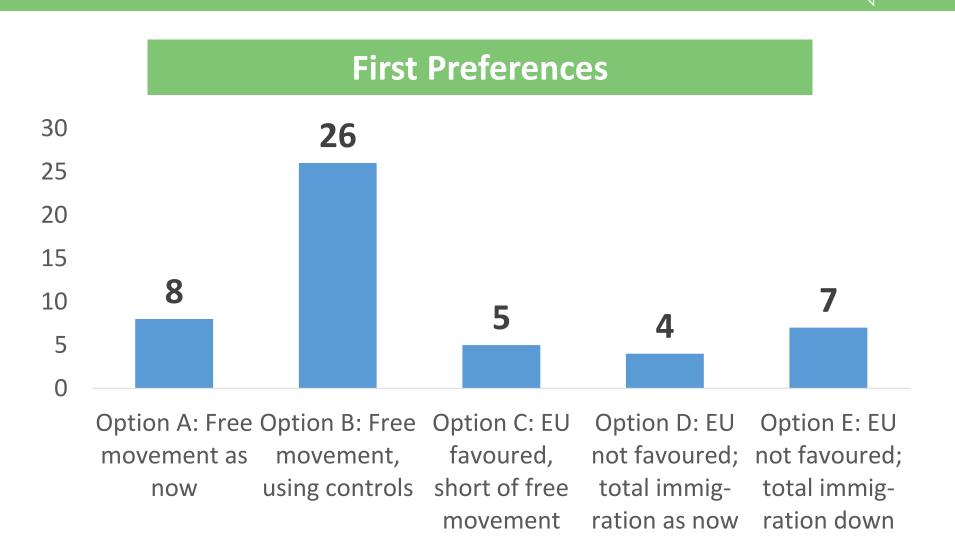
Same rules for EU and non-EU citizens; total immig. as now

OPTION E

Same rules for EU and non-EU citizens; total immig. lower

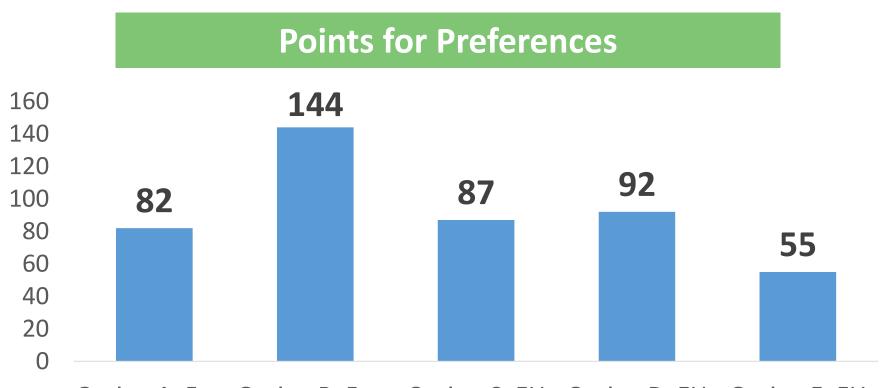
UK-EU MIGRATION





UK-EU MIGRATION





Option A: Free Option B: Free Option C: EU movement as movement, using controls short of free now

favoured, movement

Option D: EU not favoured; not favoured; total immig-total immig-

Option E: EU ration as now ration down

Citizens' Assembly on Brexit



Highly successful within itself

equal participation

high-quality participation

coherent (and moderate) conclusions

Largely ignored outside itself

a CA is likely to work best when politicians are involved

and when opinions are not already polarized and entrenched

Information during Campaigns





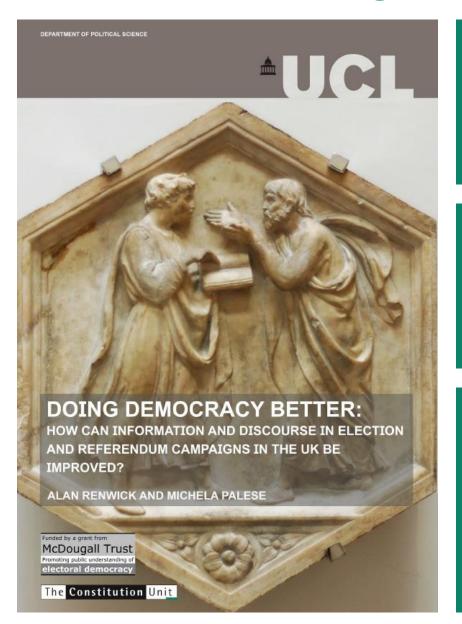
Information during Campaigns





Information during Campaigns





attempts to confront misinformation directly are unlikely to get far

attempts to foster quality information tend to achieve more

but wider political literacy and political culture are vital too



Implications for democracy in the UK



After Brexit we also need to look at the broader aspects of our constitution: the relationship between the Government, Parliament and the courts; the functioning of the Royal Prerogative; the role of the House of Lords; and access to justice for ordinary people. The ability of our security services to defend us against terrorism and organised crime is critical. We will update the Human Rights Act and administrative law to ensure that there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals, our vital national security and effective government. We will ensure that judicial review is available to protect the rights of the individuals against an overbearing state, while ensuring that it is not abused to conduct politics by another means or to create needless. delays. In our first year we will set up a Constitution, Democracy & Rights Commission that will examine these issues in depth, and come up with proposals to restore trust in our institutions and in how our democracy operates.

Implications for Democracy



Implications for how big constitutional decisions are made

Brexit

Scottish independence

Future of Northern Ireland Implications for the conduct of day-to-day politics

the importance of multiple centres of power

opportunities for developing the use of citizens' assemblies

Thank you!