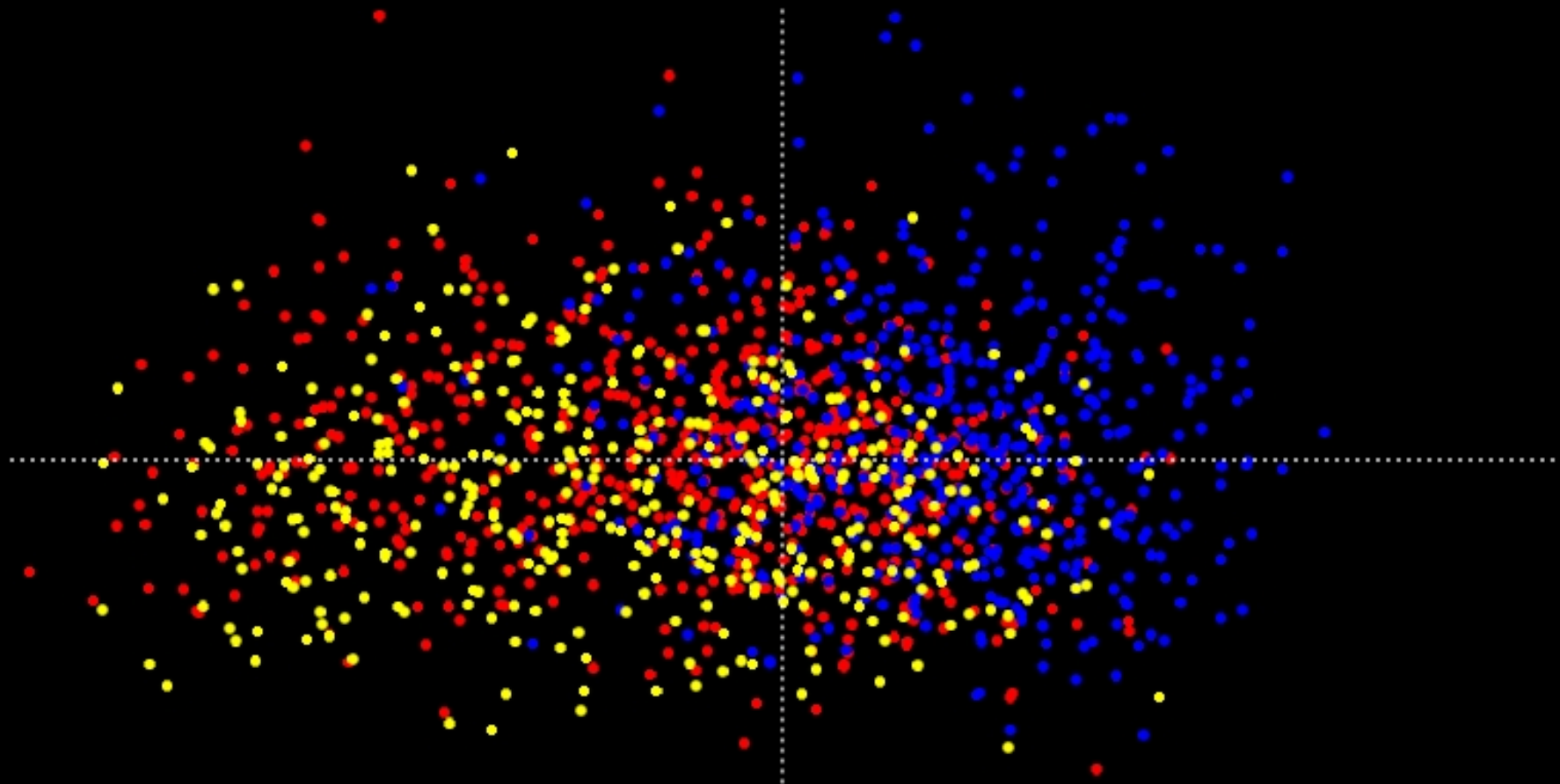
Are you lost?

Do you get the feeling that politicians and parties aren't really sure what the British public is actually like any more?

Do you feel that the terms 'right' and 'left' really don't describe you or any of your friends?

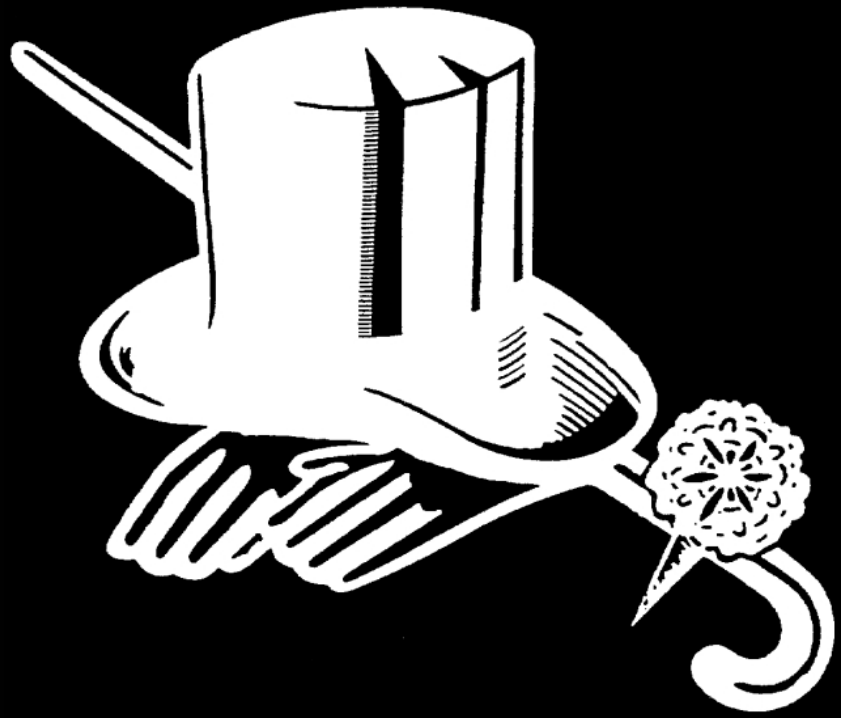
We've made a map to help



Give us 5 minutes and we'll explain what it means and why it matters

Once upon a time, there was left wing

And there was right wing.



It was all very simple

And then it all changed

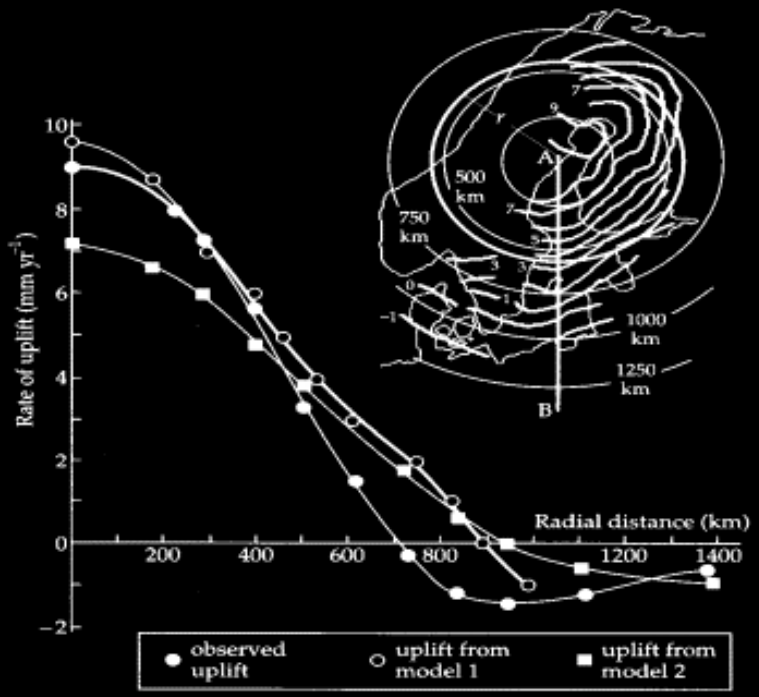
Ever since, people have been claiming that they've found what comes after left and right

But there are two small problems with these attempts

Nobody actually has any evidence

Everyone’s answers to date have been curiously self-serving

There had to be a better way



But it took a computational geo-physicist to spot it

Instead of guessing what the great political divide of our time is, it turns out that we could discover it.

All we needed was a big list of wide-ranging political questions, a representative sample of two thousand people to answer them all (twice), some clever sums, a website, some self-discipline, and coffee.

The conclusion was clear. The traditional left right divide has been replaced by a pair of divides:

Divide 1 - The Axis of UKIP
Divide 2 - The Axis of Economics

The Axis of UKIP?

People at the right hand end of the Axis of UKIP are both isolationist (anti-migration, anti-EU etc.) and also very unforgiving of criminals (i.e. pro death penalty)

People at the left-hand end of The Axis of UKIP are quite internationalist, and tend to think that crime is a complex outcome of social pressures.

The Axis of UKIP is much stronger than the Axis of Economics – it is currently the principle political dividing line between people in the UK

At this point, we normally get asked a question…

“What do crime and internationalism have to do with each other? They’re not connected!”

Our answer is…

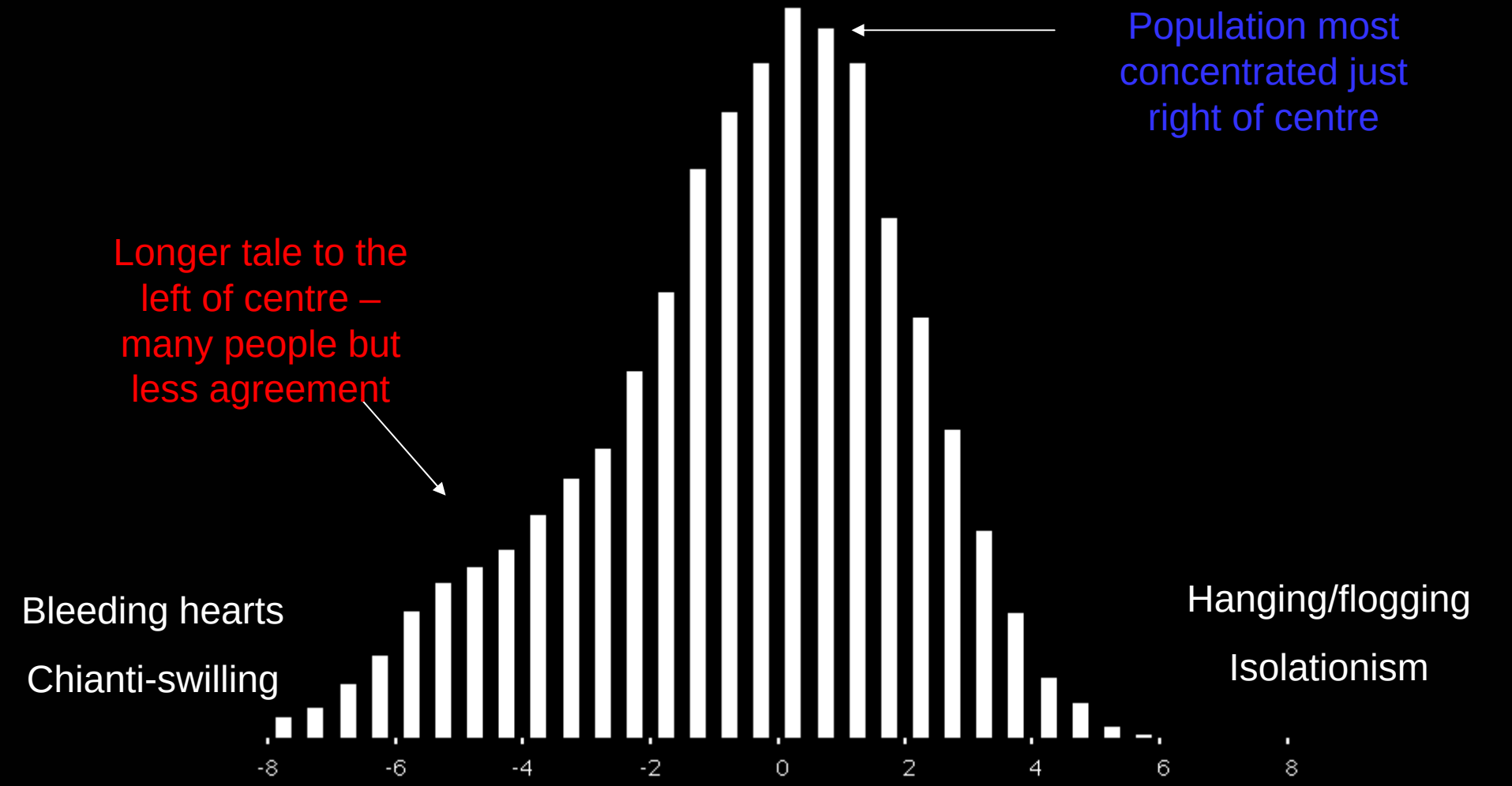
Think about the women's equality movement and the trades union movements.

In the 19th century, they weren't obviously connected, sometimes they even clashed. But by the 20th century, they were inseparably part of the 'package' of being left wing.

The new package

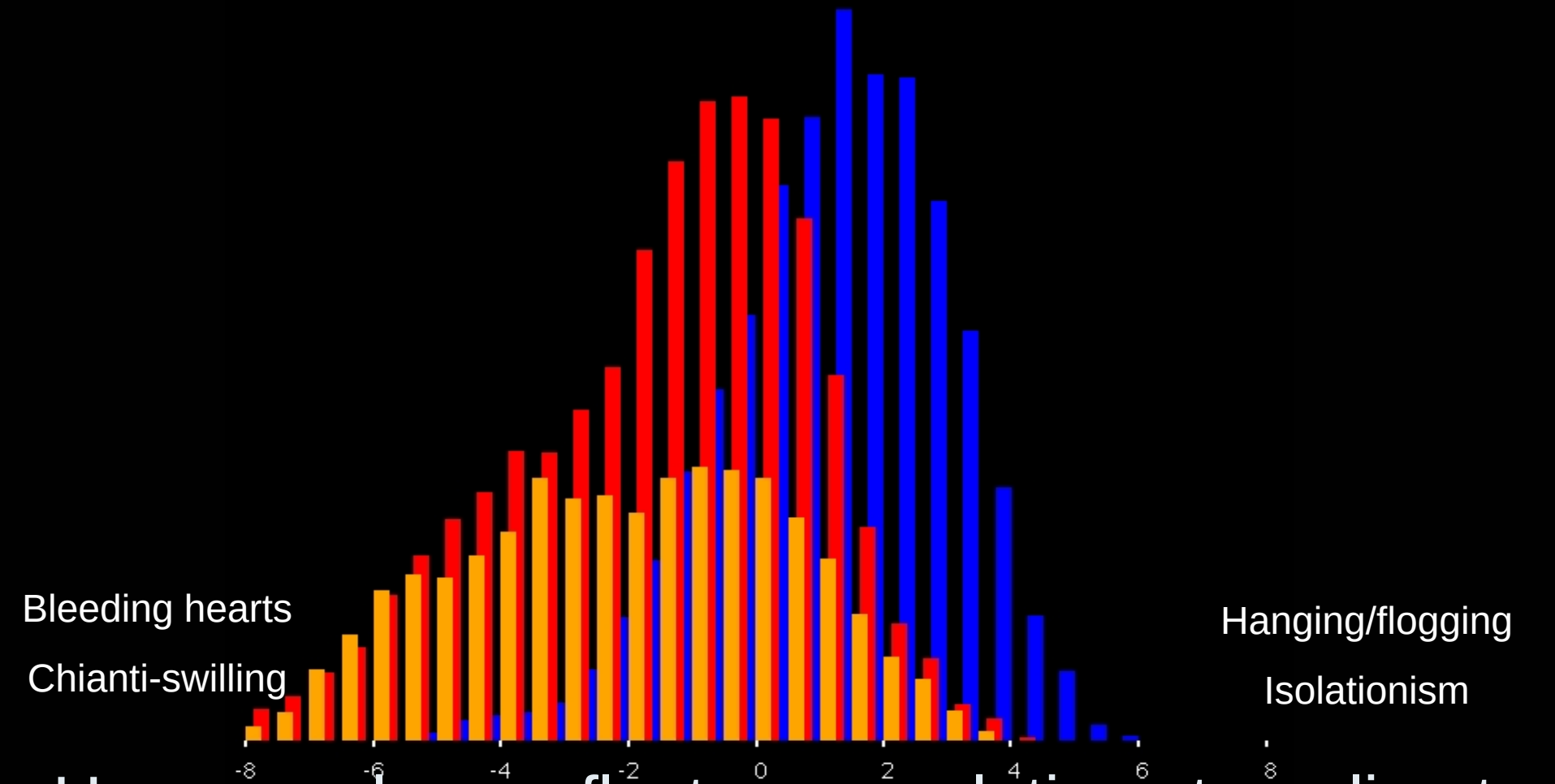
Attitudes towards criminals and other countries are the new dividing lines in British politics

How the whole population sits along the axis of UKIP



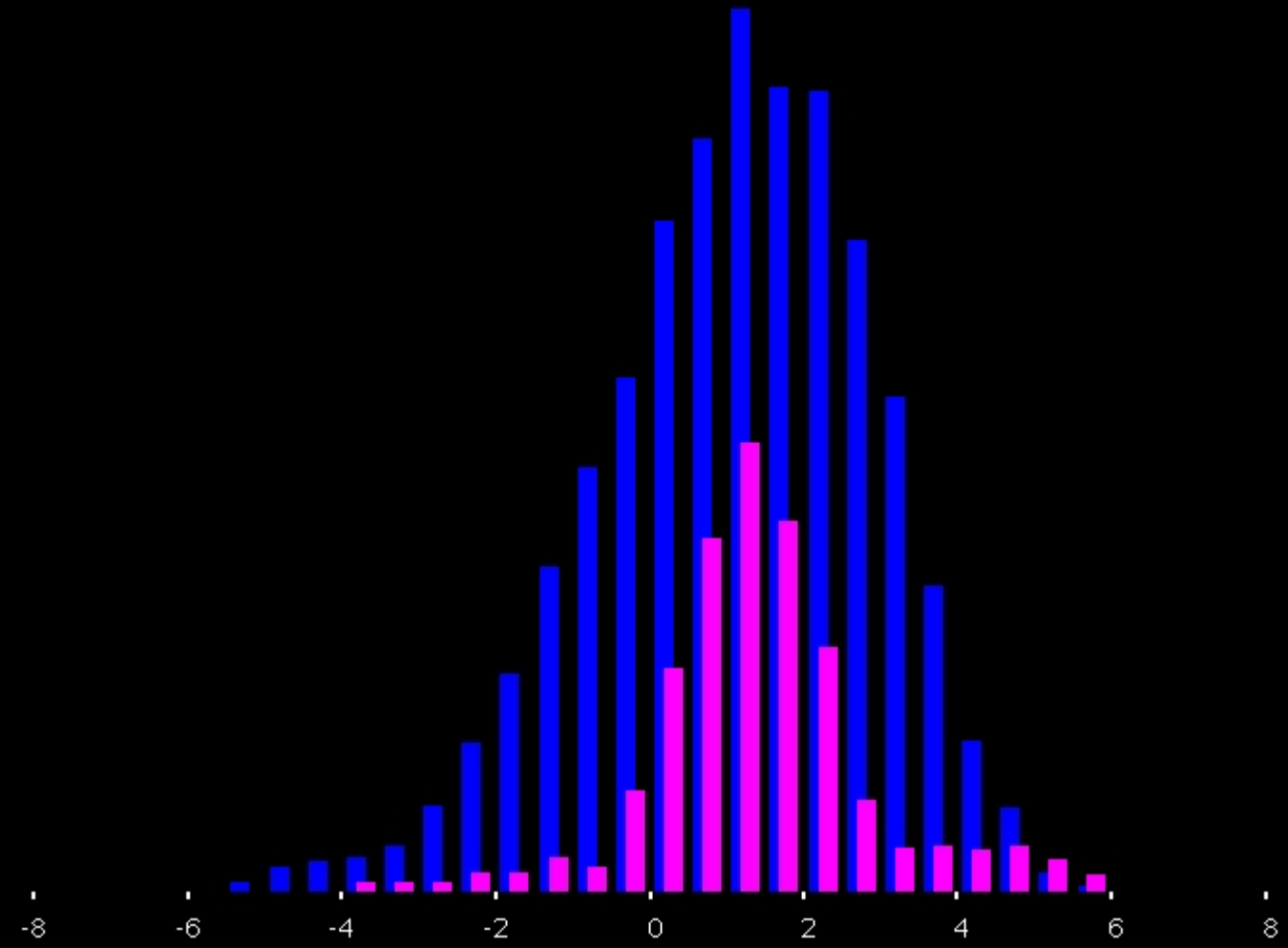
The right-of centre peak is probably why it is easiest to sell the public newspapers and policies which are somewhat hard on crime and strong on sovereignty than it is to sell any other ideas.

Where voters for the parties lie



Huge overlaps reflects a population struggling to understand the changed political environment, frequently voting from habit

The Tory Problem laid bare



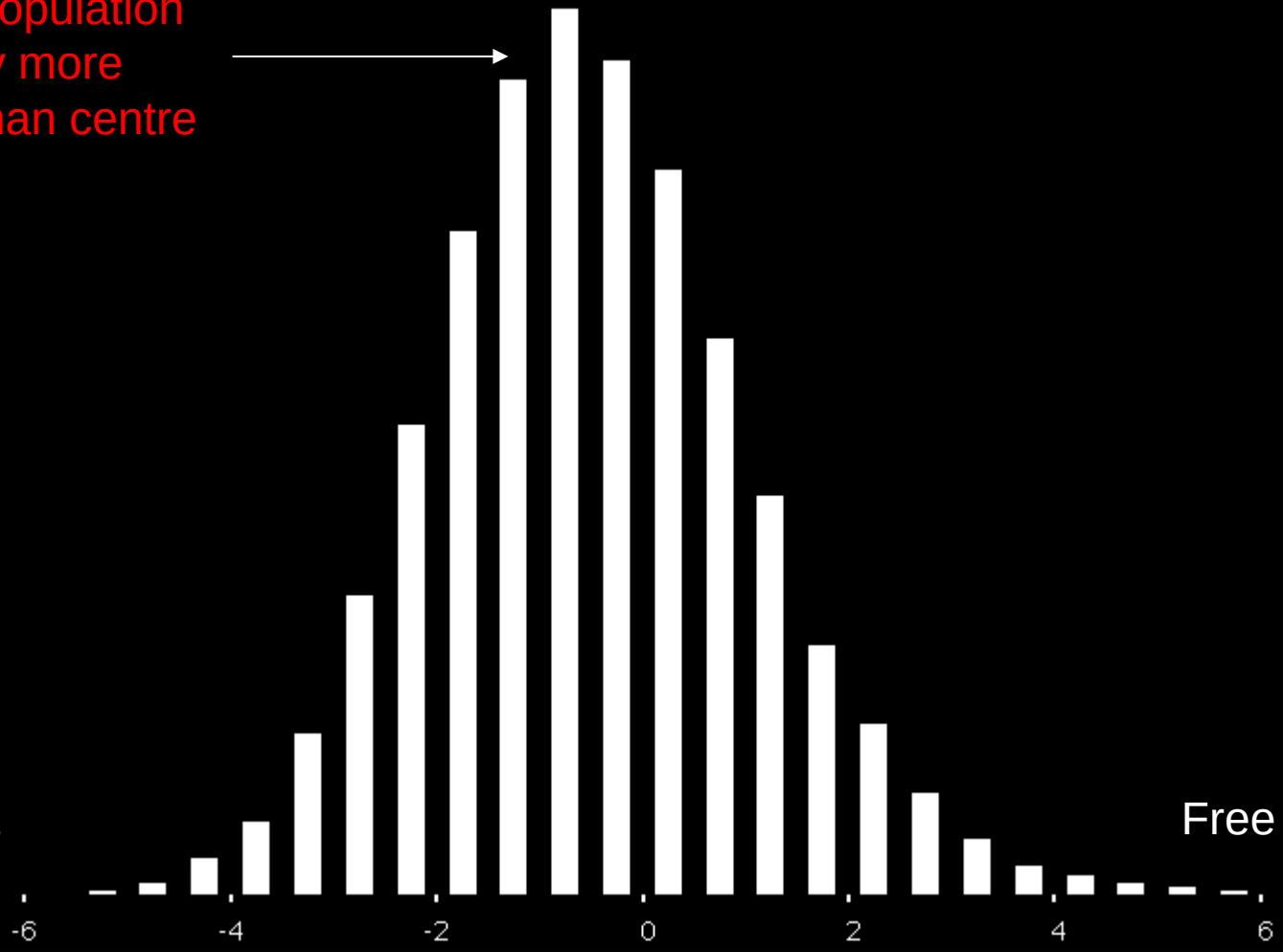
UKIP voters are disaffected centrist Tories, not the right-hand fringe. Cripes.

But remember we said there are two divides

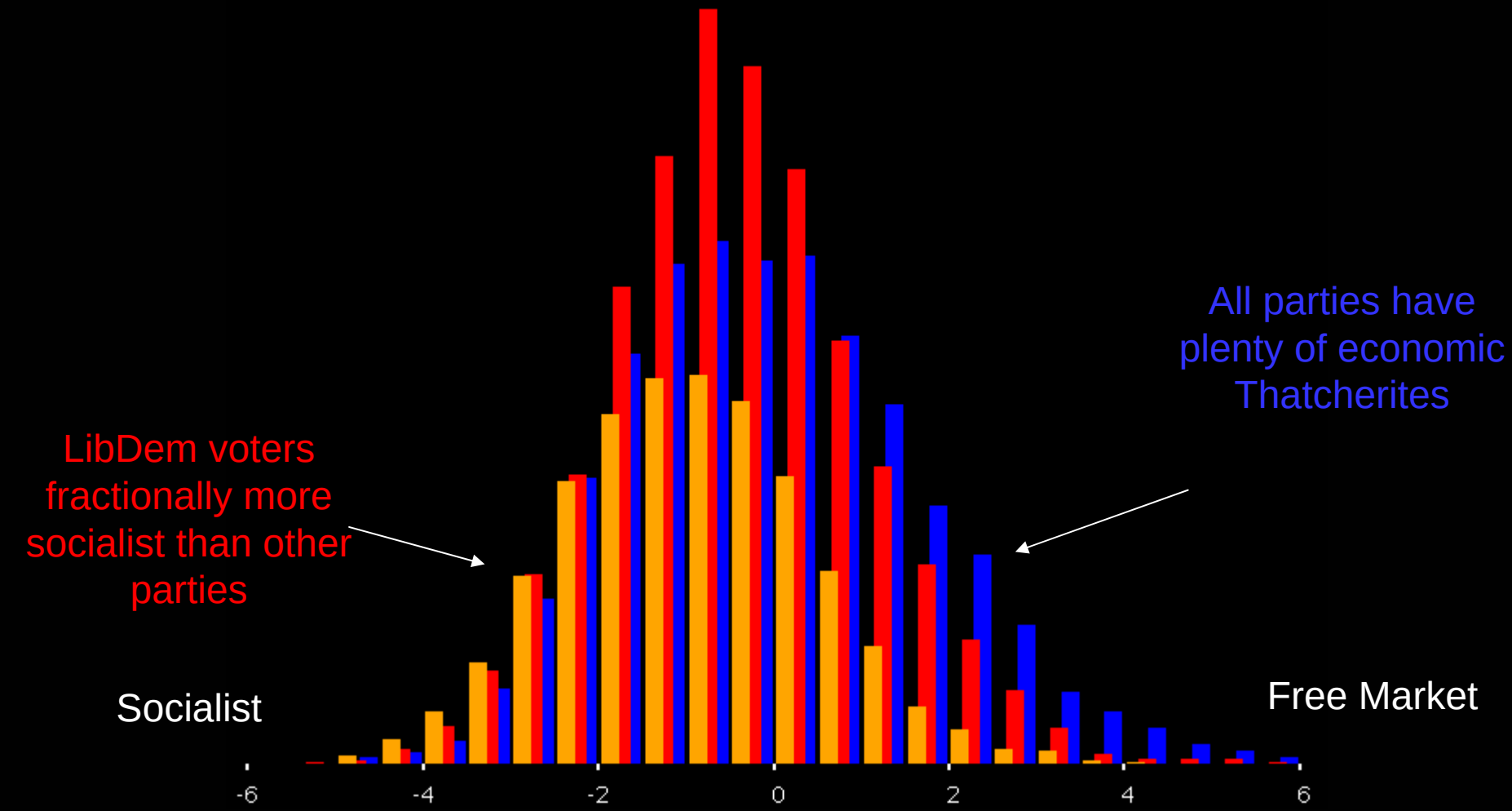
Where the population lies on

The Axis of Economics

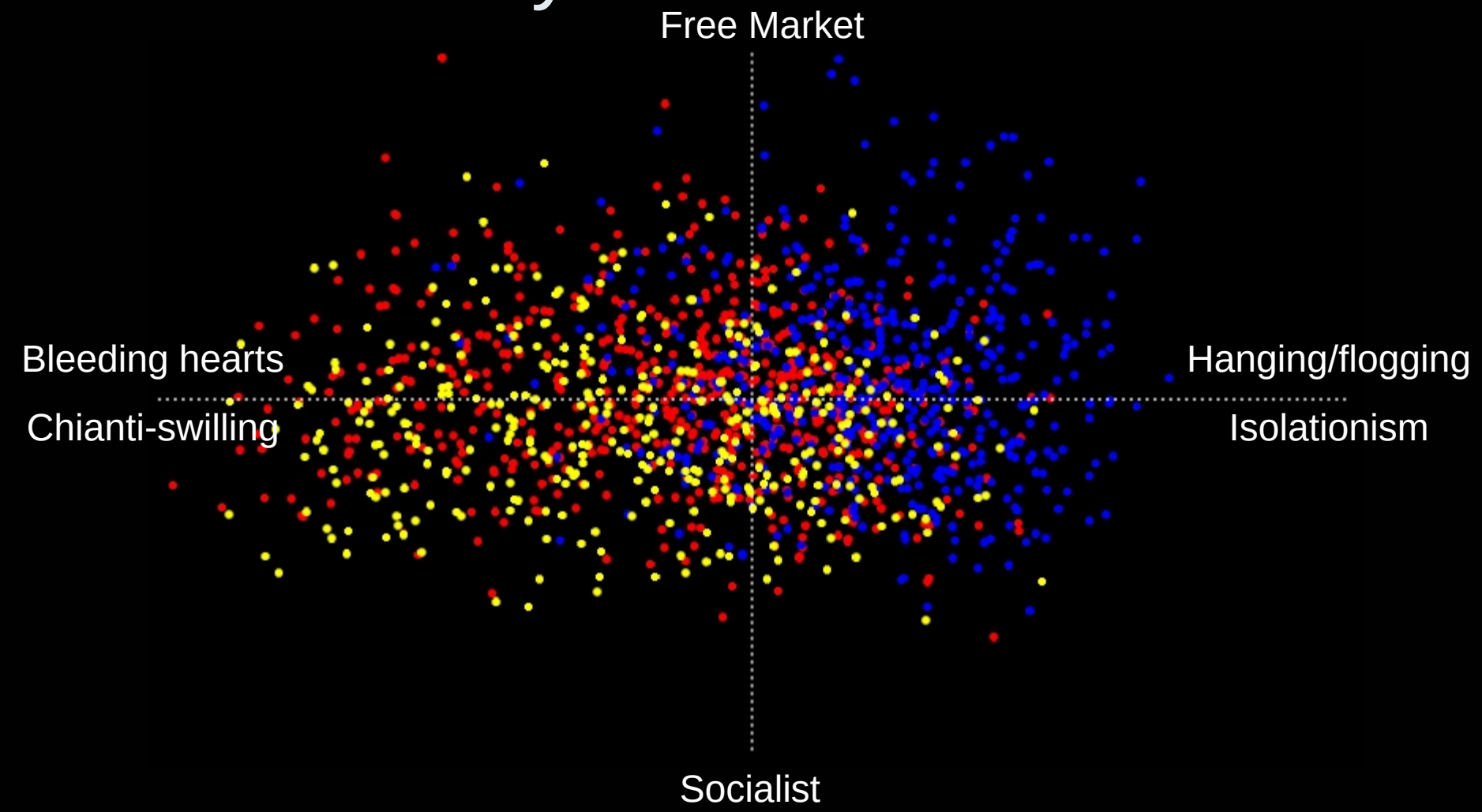
Peak of population slightly more socialist than centre



Where the parties sit on
The Axis of Economics



So now we can explain the map – both axes you've seen combined

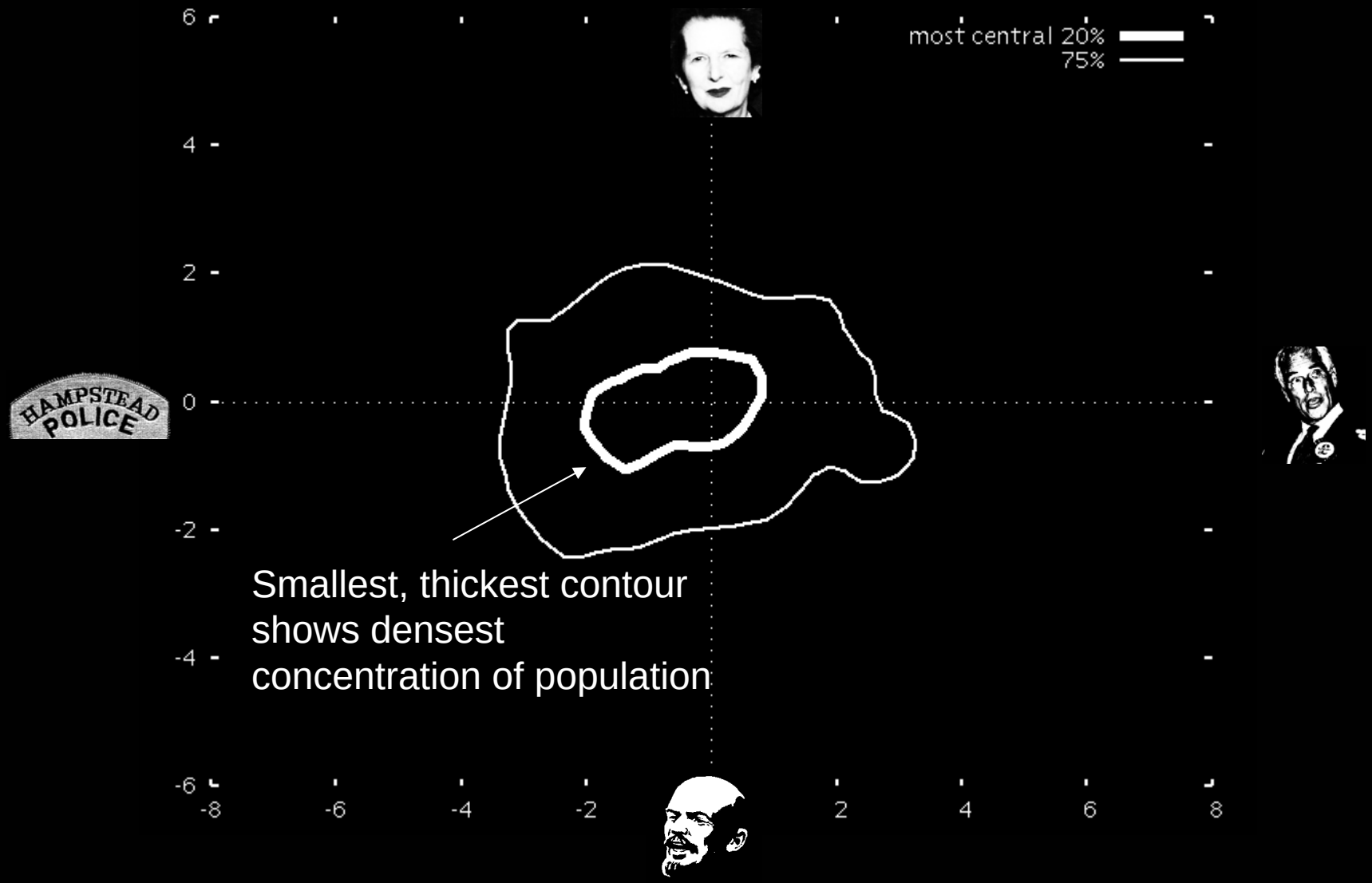


Or…

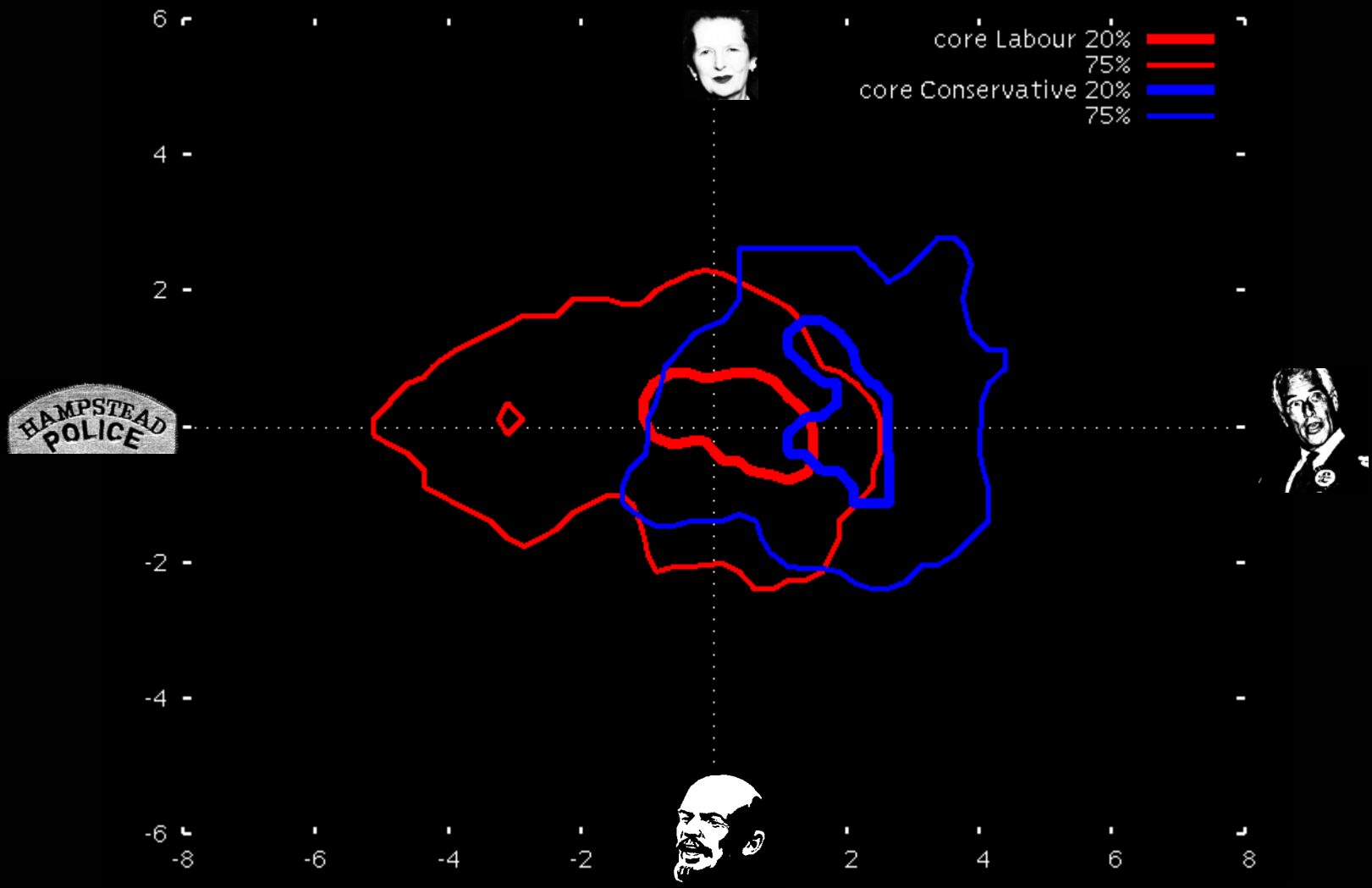
Axis of Economics

Axis of UKIP

We can use contour lines to make it all easier to understand

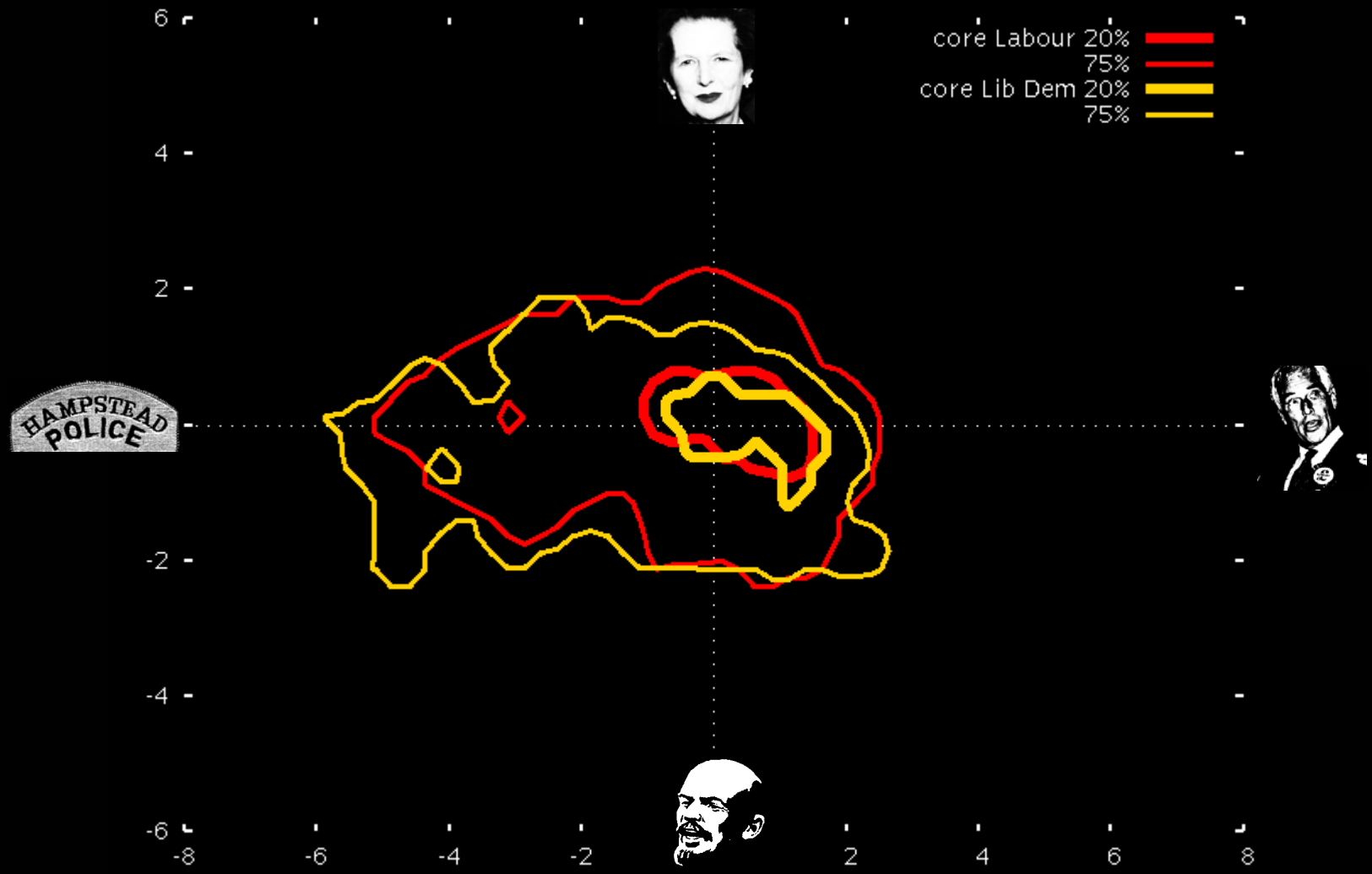


Labour vs. Tories



Labour & Tory voters separated mainly by attitudes to internationalism & to crime; not economics

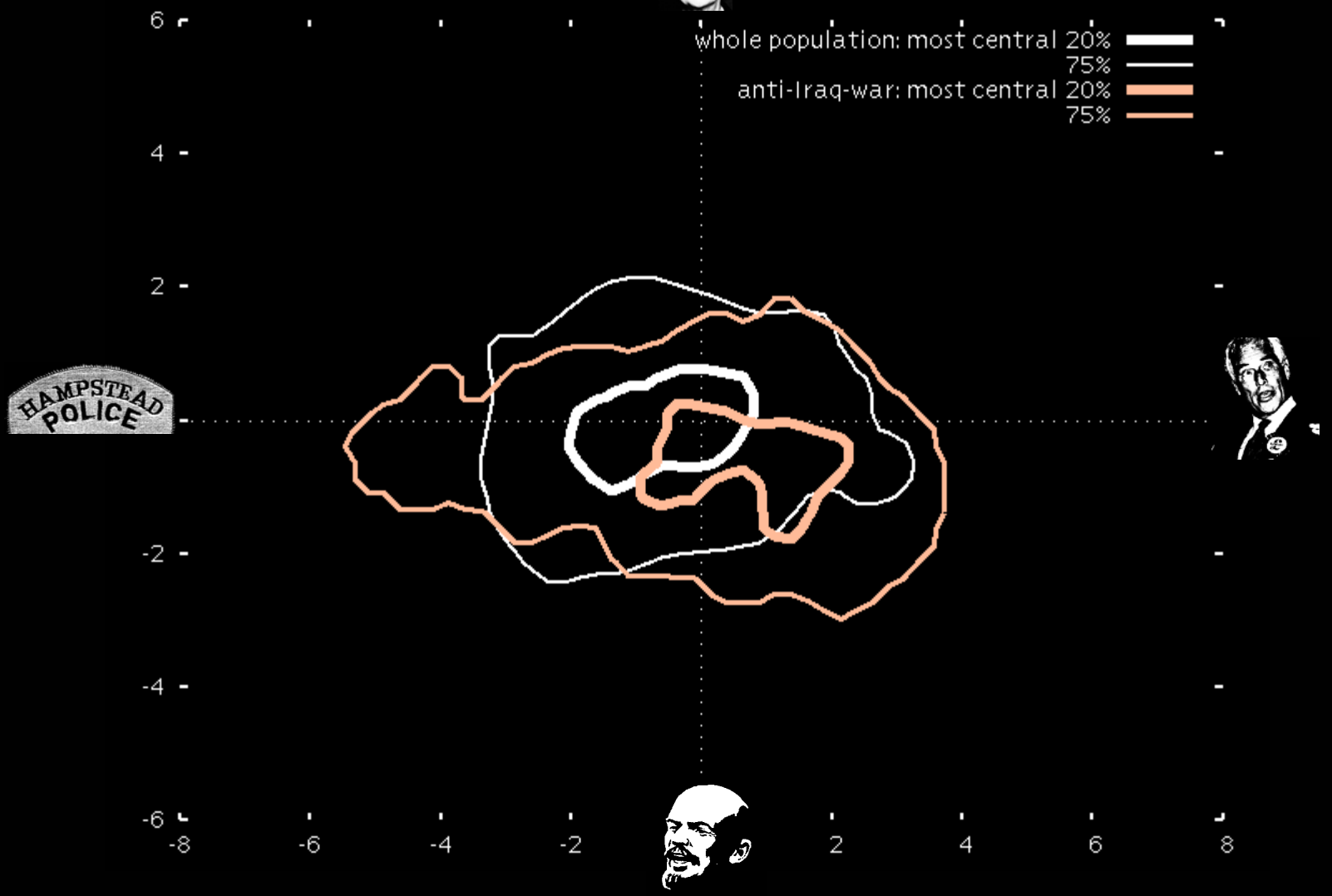
The Lib-Lab Overlap



Iraq

The map is especially helpful in explaining why the war in Iraq is such a confusing phenomenon in this election

The war split the population, but not down any recognizable political lines



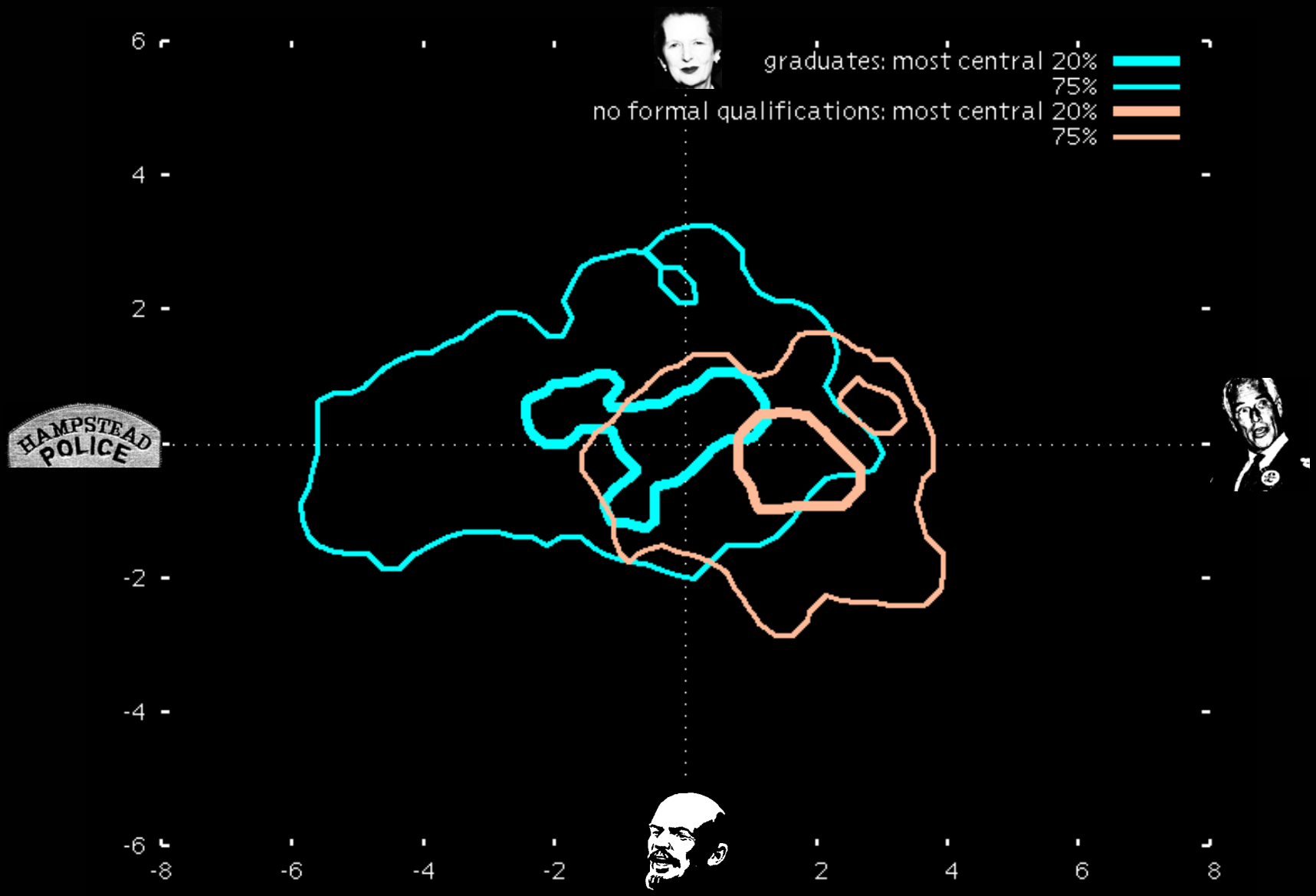
The huge social mix of people on the anti-war march showed how unpredictably people were divided into pro-and-anti camps.

The people who stayed at home were probably just as mixed.

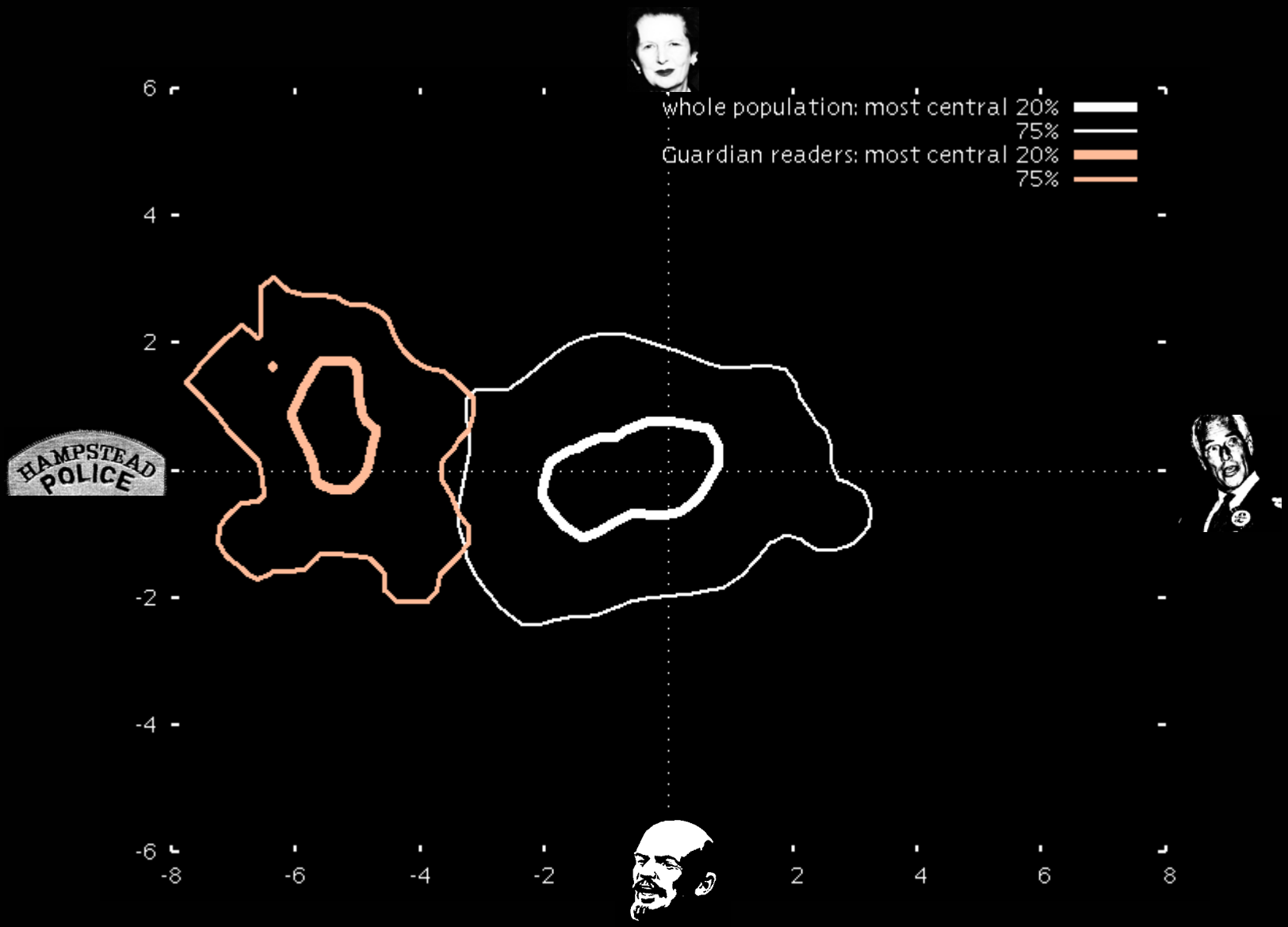
The final three slides are all somewhat controversial, and so we present them with no comment.

We hope you found this useful, and that the strangeness of this election now makes a bit more sense.

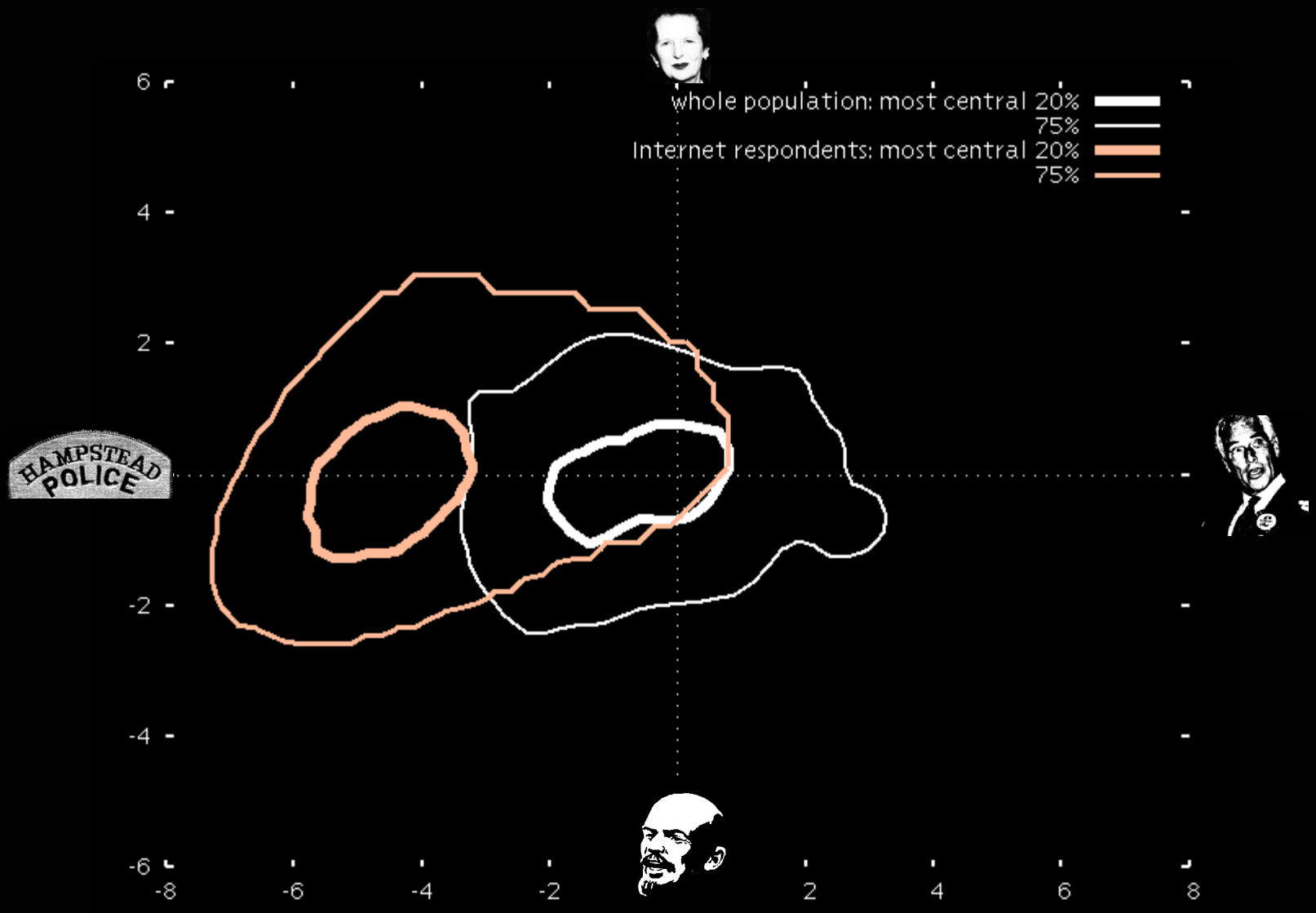
Education levels



Newspaper readership



Whole population vs. people who took the quiz at politicalsurvey2005.com



Idea & coding by by Chris Lightfoot

Methodology assistance and slideshow by Tom Steinberg

Data kindly supplied by YouGov

Questions & Invites to election night parties to survey@tomsteinberg.co.uk

For methodological detail, see http://snipurl.com/elzd

URL of this slideshow www.mythic-beasts.com/~francis/themap.ppt

And no, Mr/Ms Paranoia, this isn't some partisan stunt. Who exactly do you think it would favour?