

UK parliamentary election forecasts for Q1 2023

Lucky Dube

December 31, 2022

FORECAST

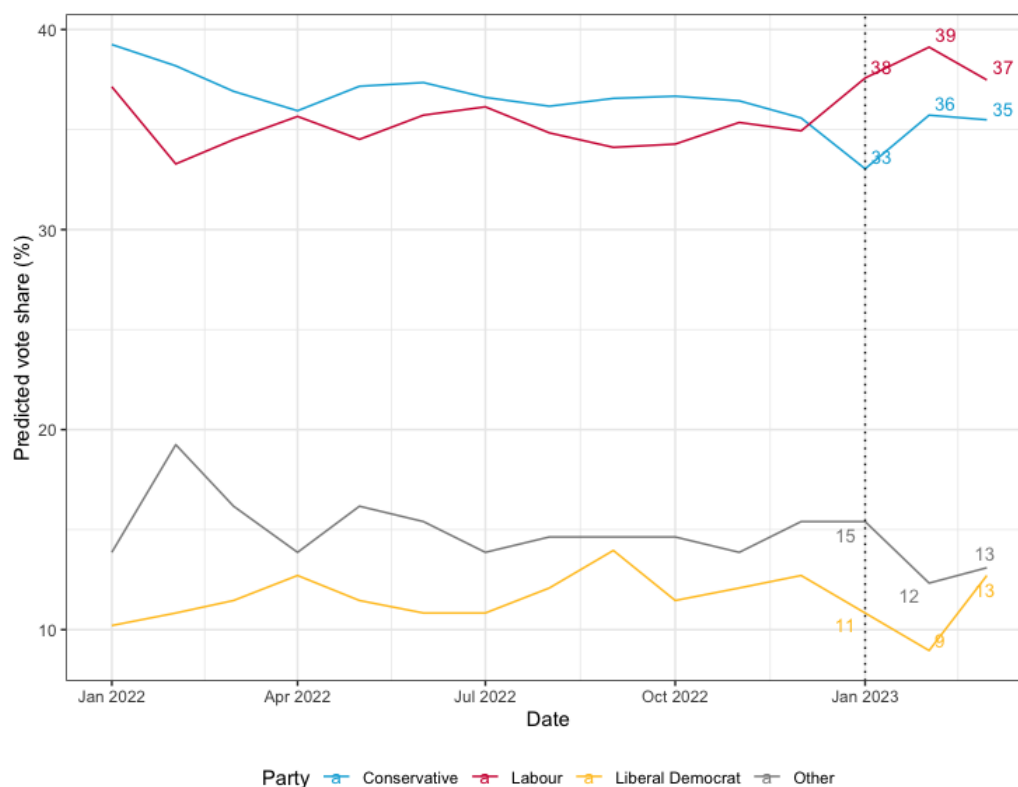
I have generated forecasts for votes shares for the main political parties and other parties for January, February, and March 2023. These forecasts are provided in Figure 1 below. The Labour Party's forecast vote shares are 38%, 39% and 37% in January, February, and March respectively. The Conservative Party's forecast vote shares are 33%, 36% and 35% in January, February, and March respectively.

The forecasts show an increase in vote shares for the Labour Party from December 2022 to February 2023. This increase is driven by two factors. First, an increase in leader of the opposition's approval ratings. Second, and increase in the share of public support (as measured by voting intention polls) for Labour compared to other opposition parties. Predicted Conservative party vote shares are predicted to trough in January 2023 and recover from February 2023. The reason for this is that the incumbent party's election vote share is determined by the Prime Ministers approval rating three months before the election. That the Conservatives predicted vote shares increase from January onwards reflects a recovery in the Prime Minister's approval ratings after the change of Prime Minister in October.

FORECAST MODELS

The models used to generate these forecasts are an adaptation of the model proposed by Mongrain (Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 2019). My forecast models use data on party vote shares in general elections from 1959 to 2019, approval ratings for the prime minister and leader

Figure 1: 2023 Q1 UK parliamentary election forecasts



Notes: Q1 forecasts for January, February, and March are provided after the dotted line. These forecasts are generated by election-forecasting models that use a combination of economic, polling, and political variables to forecast vote shares for the three main political parties and other parties in the UK. The models' predictions are more accurate than voting intention polls taken 3 months before general elections.

Source: ONS, UK Election Statistics, Abel and Butler (2011), Ipsos Mori, Radfield and Wilton Strategies, Lucky Dube UK parliamentary election forecast models.

of the opposition, GDP growth, number of consecutive months in office, and party voting intentions polls. There are separate forecasting models for the vote shares of the incumbent party, the official opposition party, the Liberal Democrats and other parties. The advantage of these models is that they can generate backcasts of party vote shares as well as forecasts. Table 1 below compares mean absolute error (the average prediction error) of voting intention polls and the forecasting models used to generate predictions above. The forecasting models are more accurate at predicting party vote shares at

general elections compared to voting intention polls three month before the election. The forecasting models as accurate at predicting party vote shares at general elections compared to voting intention polls one week before the election.

Table 1: Mean absolute error comparisons

	Incumbent	Opposition	Liberal Democrats	Others
Voting intention polls (three months before the general election)	2.67%	3.33%	3.21%	2.48%
Voting intention poll (one week before the general election)	2.65%	2.24%	1.47%	1.58%
Forecast model	1.91%	2.33%	2.88%	2.63%

Notes: Lower mean absolute error means that the forecast vote shares more accurately predict actual vote shares at general elections.

Source: Mongrain (Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 2019) and Lucky Dube UK parliamentary election forecast models.

References

MONGRAIN, PHILLIPE (2019) "10 Downing Street: who's next? Seemingly unrelated regressions to forecast UK election results." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*.