UK parliamentary election forecasts for Q2 2023
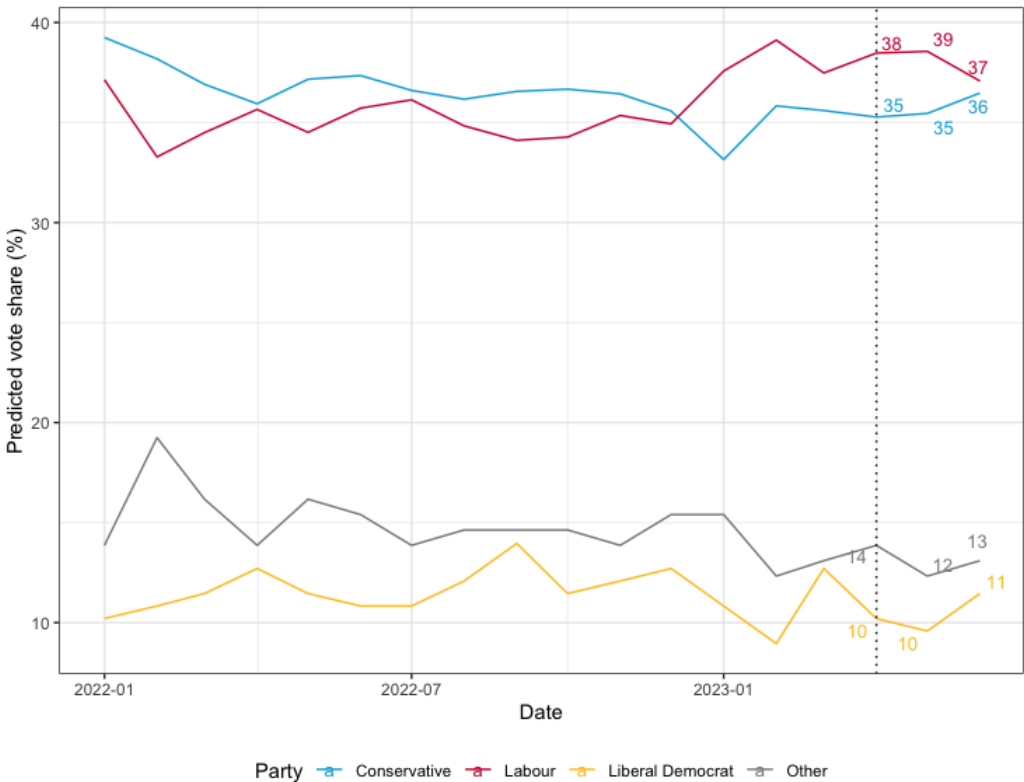
Lucky Dube

April 17, 2023

FORECASTS

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

The forecasts show a decline in the Labour Party's vote share from April 2023 to June 2023. This result is driven by two factors. First, a decrease in the leader of the oppositions approval ratings. Second, a decrease in the share of public support (as measured by voting intention polls) for Labour relative to other opposition parties. The forecasts show an increase in Conservative Party vote shares. This increase is driven by the continued recovery of the Prime Minister's approval ratings.

FORECASTING MODELS

The models used to generate these forecasts are an adaptation of the models proposed by Mongrain (2019). My forecasting models use data from 1959 to 2019 on party vote shares in general elections, the approval ratings for the prime minister and leader of the opposition, GDP growth, the number of consecutive months that the incumbent party has been in office, and party voting intention polls. In these models, general election vote shares are determined by the values of these variables three to six months before a general election. There are separate forecasting models for the vote shares of the incumbent party, the official opposition party, the Liberal Democrats and

Figure 1: 2023 Q2 UK parliamentary election forecasts

Notes: Q2 forecasts for April, May, and June 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, Butler and Butler (2011), Ipsos Mori, Radfield and Wilton Strategies, and Lucky Dube UK parliamentary election forecasting models.

other parties.

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 are 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 polls (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 (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.*