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survey and polling news from YouGov's Anthony Wells



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Different pollsters methods – a summary

23 Mar 2015

In [this post](#) back in January I wrote about the partisan effects of the different methodologies the different polling companies used, of how some companies tend to show consistently higher or lower scores for different parties. Since then I've been meaning to do a reference post explaining those different methods between pollsters. This is that – an attempt to do a summary of different companies methods in one place so you can check whether company A prompts for UKIP or what company B does with their don't knows. As ever, this is from the published methodology details of each company and my own understanding of it – any mistakes are mine and corrections are welcome!

Phone polls

There are four regular telephone polls – Ipsos MORI, ICM, Ashcroft and ComRes/Daily Mail (ComRes do both telephone and online polls). All phone polls are conducted using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) – essentially taking phone numbers from the BT directory and then randomising the digits at the end to ensure the sample includes some ex-directory numbers, all polls will now also include some mobile phone numbers, though the pollsters have all said this makes little actual difference to results and is being done as a precaution. All telephone polls are weighted by some common demographics, like age, gender, social class, region, housing tenure, holidays taken and car ownership.

Ipsos MORI

Now the most venerable of the regular pollsters, Ipsos MORI are also the most traditional in their methods. They currently do a monthly political poll for the Evening Standard. Alone among GB pollsters they use no form of political weighting, viewing the problem of false recall as unsurmountable, their samples are weighted using standard demographics, but also by public and private sector employment.

MORI do not (as of March 2015) include UKIP in their main prompt for voting intention. For people who say don't know, MORI ask who people who are most likely to vote for and count that equally as a voting intention. People who still say don't know or won't say are ignored. In terms of likelihood to vote, MORI have the tightest filter of any company, including only those respondents who say they are absolutely 10/10 certain to vote.

ICM

ICM are the second oldest of the current regular pollsters, and were the pioneer of most of the methods that became commonplace after the polling industry changed methods following the 1992 debacle. They currently do a monthly poll for the Guardian. They poll by standard demographics and by people's past vote, adjusted for false recall.

ICM don't currently include UKIP in their main voting intention prompt. People who say they don't know how they will vote are reallocated based on how they say they voted at the previous election, but weighted down to 50% of the value of people who actually give a voting intention. In terms of likelihood to vote, ICM weight by likelihood so that people who say they are 10/10 certain to vote are fully counted, people who say they are 9/10 likely to vote count as 0.9 of a vote and so on. Additionally ICM weight people who did not vote at the previous election down by 50%, the only pollster to use this additional weighting.

Ashcroft

Lord Ashcroft commissions a regular weekly poll, carried out by other polling companies but on a "white label" basis. The methods are essentially those Populus used to use for their telephone polls, rather than the online methods Populus now use for their own regular polling. Ashcroft polls are weighted by standard demographics and by past vote, adjusted for false recall.

Ashcroft's voting intention question has included UKIP in the main prompt since 2015. People who say they don't know how they will vote are reallocated based on how they say they voted at the previous election, but at a different ratio to ICM (Ashcroft weights Conservatives and Labour down to 50%, Lib Dems down to 30%, others I think are ignored). In terms of likelihood to vote, Ashcroft weights people according to how likely they say they are to vote in similar way to ICM.

ComRes

ComRes do a monthly telephone poll, previously for the Independent but since 2015 for the Daily Mail. This is separate to their monthly online poll for the Independent on Sunday and there are some consistent differences between their results, meaning I treat them as two separate data series. ComRes's polls are weighted using standard demographics and past vote, adjusted for false recall – in much the same way as ICM and Ashcroft.

ComRes have included UKIP in their main voting intention prompt since late 2014. People who say they don't know how they will vote or won't say are asked a squeeze question on how they would vote if it was a legal requirement, and included in the main figures. People who still say don't know are re-allocated based on the party they say they most closely identify with, though unlike the ICM and Ashcroft reallocation this rarely seems to make an impact. In terms of likelihood to vote ComRes both filter AND weight by likelihood to vote – people who say they are less than 5/10 likely to vote are excluded completely, people who say they are 5/10 to 10/10 are weighted according to this likelihood.

Online Polls

Online poll sampling can be somewhat more opaque than telephone sampling. In most cases they are conducted through existing panels of online volunteers (either their own panels, like the YouGov panel or PopulusLive, or panels from third party providers like Toluna and Research Now). Surveys are conducted by inviting panellists with the required demographics to complete the poll – this means that while panels are self-selecting, surveys themselves aren't (that is, you can choose to join a company's online panel, but you can't choose to fill in their March voting intention survey, you may or may not get randomly invited to it). Because panellists demographics are known in advance, pollsters can set quotas and invite people with the demographics to reflect the British public. Some pollsters also use random online sampling – using pop-ups on websites to randomly invite respondents. As with telephone polling, all online pollsters use some common demographic weighting, with all companies weighting by things like age, gender, region and social class.

YouGov

YouGov are the longest standing online pollster, currently doing daily voting intention polls for the Sun and Sunday Times. The length of time they have been around means they have data on their panellists from the 2010 election (and, indeed, in some cases from the 2005 election) so their weighting scheme largely relies on the data collected from panellists in May 2010, updated periodically to take account of people who have joined the panel since then. As well as standard demographics, YouGov also weight by newspaper readership and party identification in 2010 (that is, people are weighted by which party they told YouGov they identified with most in May 2010, using targets based on May 2010).

YouGov have included UKIP in their main prompt since January 2015. They do not use any weighting or filtering by likelihood to vote at all outside of the immediate run up to elections (in the weeks leading up to the 2010 election they weighting by likelihood to vote in a similar way to Ashcroft, Populus and ICM). People who say don't know are excluded from final figures, there is no squeeze question or reallocation.

Populus

Populus used to conduct telephone polling for the Times, but since ceasing to work for the Times have switched to carrying out online polling, done using their PopulusLive panel. Currently they publish two polls a week, on Mondays and Fridays. As well as normal demographic weightings they weight using party identification,

weighting current party ID to estimated national targets.

Populus have included UKIP in their main prompt since February 2015. They weight respondents according to their likelihood to vote in a similar way to ICM and Ashcroft. People who say don't know are excluded from final figures, there is no squeeze question or reallocation.

ComRes

Not to be confused with their telephone polls for the Daily Mail, ComRes also conduct a series of monthly online polls for the Independent on Sunday and Sunday Mirror. It is conducted partially from a panel, partially from random online sampling (pop-ups on websites directing people to surveys). In addition to normal demographic weightings they weight using people's recalled vote from the 2010 election.

ComRes have included UKIP in their main prompt since December 2014. Their weighting by likelihood to vote is slightly different to their telephone polls – for the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats it's the same (include people who say 5+/10, and weight those people according to their likelihood) but for UKIP and Green I believe respondents are only included if they are 10/10 certain to vote. Their treatment of don't knows is the same as in their phone polls: people who say they don't know how they will vote or won't say are asked a squeeze question and included in the main figures, people who still say don't know are re-allocated based on the party they say they most closely identify with.

Survation

Survation do a regular poll for the Daily Mirror and occasional polls for the Mail on Sunday. Data is weighted by the usual demographics, but uses income and education rather than social class. Recalled 2010 vote is used for political weighting. Survation have included UKIP in their main prompt for several years. They weight by likelihood to vote in the same way as ICM, Populus and Ashcroft. People who say don't know are reallocated to the party they voted for in 2010, but weighted down to 30% of the value of people who actually give a voting intention.

Note that Survation's constituency polls are done using a completely different method to their national polls, using telephone sampling rather than online sampling and different weighting variables.

Opinium

Opinium do regular polling for the Observer, currently every week for the duration of the election campaign. Respondents are taken from their own panel and is weighted by standard demographics. Historically Opinium have not used political weighting, but from February 2015 they switched to weighting by "party propensity" for the duration of the election campaign. This is a variable based on which parties people would and wouldn't consider – for practical purposes, it seems to be similar to party identification.

Opinium do not include UKIP in their main prompt (meaning they only appear as an option if a respondent selects "other"). They filter people by likelihood to vote, including only respondents who say they will definitely or probably vote. People who say don't know are excluded from the final figures.

TNS

TNS are a huge global company with a long history in market research. In terms of public opinion polling in this country they are actually the successors to System Three – who used to be a well known Scottish polling company and ended up part of the same company through a complicated series of mergers and buy-outs by BMRB, NFO, Kantar and WPP, currently their ultimate parent company. At the last election TNS were the final company doing face-to-face polling, since then they have switched over to online. The sample is taken from their Lightspeed panel and is weighted using standard demographics and recalled 2010 vote. TNS do include UKIP in their main prompt, and also prompt for the BNP and Green. TNS filter and weight people according to likelihood to vote and exclude don't knows and won't says from their final figures.

Putting all those together, here’s a summary of the methods.

Pollster	Political Weighting	UKIP prompt	Likelihood to vote	Don't knows
Online polls				
YouGov	2010 Party ID	Y	None	Excluded
Populus	Current party ID	Y	Weight	Excluded
Opinium	Party propensity	N	Filter (definite and probable)	Excluded
TNS	2010 Recalled vote	Y	Filter and weight	Excluded
Survation	2010 Recalled vote	Y	Weight	Re-allocation by past vote
ComRes	2010 Recalled vote	Y	Filter (5+/10) and weight, tighter filter (10/10) for UKIP & Grn	Squeeze & re-allocation by ID
Telephone polls				
ICM	2010 Recalled vote	N	Weighted, 2010 non-voters downweighted	Re-allocation by past vote
ComRes	2010 Recalled vote	Y	Filter (5+/10) and weight	Squeeze & re-allocation by ID
Ashcroft	2010 Recalled vote	Y	Weight	Re-allocation by past vote
Ipsos MORI	None	N	Filter (10/10)	Squeeze

As to the impact of the different methods, it not always easy to say. Some are easy to quantify from published tables (for example, ICM and Ashcroft publish their figures before and after don’t knows are reallocated, so one can comfortably say “that adjustment added 2 points to the Lib Dems this week”), others are very difficult to quantify (the difference the choice of weighting regimes makes is very difficult to judge, the differences between online and telephone polling even more so), many methods interact with one another and the impacts of different approaches changes over time (a methodology that helps the Tories one year may help the Lib Dems another year as public opinions change). Rather than guess whether each pollsters methods are likely to produce this effect or that effect, probably best to judge them from actual [observed results](#).

UPDATE: TNS have confirmed they do prompt for UKIP, and also prompt for the BNP and Green – I’ll update the table later on tonight.

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491 Responses to “Different pollsters methods – a summary”

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1. **Amber Star**

@ Bristolian Howard

Thank you for clarifying. I was certain that you didn't mean to imply that it 'hurt' Labour but thought you meant that up to Lab/Con =35%, Labour had a disproportionate advantage; but Lab/Con both >35% & still equal didn't garner Labour any further 'bonus' points, they simply matched Con seat for seat above the 35% point, as it were.

It's quite a difficult concept to explain, which is why I took your comment as meaning what I've tried to express in the above paragraph.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:34 pm](#)

2. **BlueBob**

@ Spearmint

“I don't think many of us predicted large Ukip gains”

Are you sure? only a few days ago I was told I was being ridiculous for suggesting that UKIP will get a maximum of 9% in May.

@ Brian Nicholson

No angry comments here, I just think its all a bit hypocritical of AS and the SNP to tell the United Kingdom government how it should be run.

I have lost count of the times Alex Salmond has told Westminster to stay out of Scottish politics.

The next government, be it Labour or Conservative will be making decisions for the good of the whole of the UK (or at least trying to) is it right that a political party that only wants what's best just for their own country should be in any sort of UK government?

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:36 pm](#)

3. **[J. R. Tomlin](#)**

On comparing polling companies, I've had the impression which I can't really justify that Ipsos Mori is the most often near the mark of all the polling companies over the past 5 or 6 years anyway. I wonder if that is really the case.

Of course, everyone knows that polling in Scotland and the south are not quite the same, so being close in one might not carry over to the other.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:38 pm](#)

4. **Andy Shadrack**

So it is now Tuesday night and far from seeing a bounce for the "Coalition" from the budget the two largest parties are neck and neck as we come around the corner from the back straight.

In a few days we will be at the start of the run to the home stretch and nothing has basically changed from when I joined at the beginning of February.

The two main parties have kicked it up a notch to 67.1% combined, which is roughly where they were on election day in 2010. Except that the Conservatives are probably down 4 points in England and Labour are probably up 4 points in England.

At 381 seats for Labour and 46 for SNP, it really does not matter what any other MP or Party thinks in the HoC as between them with a C and S deal they can govern the full term.

Between now and then Labour and SNP can continue to snipe at each other as any good "dog and pony show" should during an election writ period.

But if the polls hold steady for Labour and SNP, the others and especially the Conservatives can jump up and down all they like, but it will not make a jot of difference as to the number of MPs sitting in the HoC for Labour and SNP as it will be the same as currently projected.

So it really does boil down to 39 Conservative seats in England and 1 Welsh one, and whether SNP can go from 6 seats to 46.

What is the statistical probability of that happening? From where I am sitting looking in from outside the country the numbers look pretty strong to me.

Now all that could change as the campaign itself unfolds, but nothing I have seen to date would make me think it will be otherwise on May 7th.

The Conservatives have played their vote Labour get SNP card, and quite frankly when I look at the polling numbers I see that those who are horrified by the prospect of SNP holding the balance of power were not going to vote Labour anyway.

If Labour are a few seats short of a majority with SNP support they can always ask for C and S from Plaid Cymru and Green.

The contrary image of Conservative, LD, UKIP and DUP cobbling together a long term working relationship does not seem plausible, and I think some of the remaining LD MPs will jump ship before entering into that “dogs breakfast”

In Canada the Liberals and NDP did not have the “cojones” to face down the Conservatives, and ask the Bloc Quebecois for C and S.

At least they asked for it, but when the Conservative Prime Minister shut Parliament down they folded their cards and tossed in their hand.

At least Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon and I suspect Michelle Wood and Carolyn Bennet/Caroline Lucas are being up front in stating that, if after the election Prime Minister Cameron does not have the numbers they collectively will move and support a vote of no confidence.

I think SNP have just punted the ball back into Mr Milliband’s side of the net. Do Labour agree that Scottish MPs, nationalist or not have a right to participate in the running of the UK.

Sturgeon, Wood and Bennet have said yes to the idea that nationalist MPs and at least Greens, believe that all MPs should have a say over how the UK is run.

The Conservatives have said no, so have DUP and I think I have read so have LD, but what does Labour think?

An MP is an MP and surely no matter which country they are representative from they have a right to have a say in all matters put before the HoC. Is that not what Parliamentary democracy is all about and what was so ably argued by Edmond Burke in the eighteenth century that he was sent to represent the best interests of the country.

The fact that Mr Salmond believes that Scotland would be better to go in a “separate” direction than England, Wales and Northern Ireland is not the issue here.

The issue is do a majority of MPs drawn from across the nationalist and non-nationalist divide have a right to run the UK, and I think the answer is yes if they are the majority because that is what they will be sent there to do if they are elected on May 7th

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:42 pm](#)

5. **Richard**

Howard’s Way seems to be taking over the thread!
Here’s my opinion for the G.E result...

In 2010 the Tories achieved 36%, they have lost support, I’d say 3% so for 2015 a figure of 33% is likely.

Labour have gained support since 2010 but the Scottish situation is having the effect of lowering their UK poll rating by about 2%. Had the SNP scenario not arisen I would say Labour would achieve 35-36% for 2015. The Labour result in terms of % share is obviously going to be skewed against them so they are likely to achieve 33-34%

The Lib Dems will achieve higher than polls suggest but probably only around 14%

The SNP will take around 30 seats from Labour .

The result of all this will be:

Tories 265-270 seats
Labour 290-301 seats
Lib Dem 25

Labour will form the next Government which will not be a formal coalition...biggest mistake the Lib Dems made for many a year and the biggest mistake the Tories made. Had Cameron gone it alone there would be no UKIP taking all their support and Clegg wouldn't have had to break his promise on tuition fees....both deadly for each party!

Cameron and Clegg will resign, May will be the next Tory leader.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:49 pm](#)

6. **catoswyn**

@Andyshadrack

Totally agree

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:52 pm](#)

7. **BlueBob**

@ Richard

Thanks for that, Its so obvious now how on earth did I not spot it:)

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:52 pm](#)

8. **Richard**

Oh good, the other Richard is back to add to the chaos :)

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:53 pm](#)

9. **KeithP**

Prediction concensus is still Conservatives around 2% vote share and 5-6 seats ahead of Labour. That looks like our old friend "polldrums" with a few bumps.

With all these parties declaring (for various reasons) that they won't deal with this or that party, I'm struggling to remember if anyone has declared they are happy to deal with anyone, or at least not declared any intent. I think it'll be a short list at this point: DUP/other unionists (?) Greens I think, any independents? Anyone else?? I'm sure various parties were more open to deals last time.

I am so looking forward to Election night.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:53 pm](#)

10. **james peel**

Clegg wouldn't have had to break his promise on tuition fees....both deadly for each party!

the collapse of the lib dems was also deadly for the conservative party...if cameron had won in 2010, he would enter this election with the lib dems and labour splitting the left ...the lib dems with the nice charming Cleggster leading them in opposition to the evil tories would have been on their historic % of about 18-21%, labour would be about 28%, Ukip would have been on about 6%, and the tories would be on about 38%....

Cameron would have got boundaries and be looking at his second term.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:53 pm](#)

11. **07052015**

35 is such a great number.

And if Labour could improve to 35 in Scotland as well Mr Salmonds wind up routine get a puncture.

Incidentally has she who is the real leader commented publically on wee Alexs latest attempt to breath life back into ukip.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:54 pm](#)

12. **Tristan**

Richard- sensible post. The only figure I query would be the LD's back up at 14%...can't see that happening. I agree however with your projection of 25 seats for them, so maybe it's all academic.

How many seats for UKIP do you predict?

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:55 pm](#)

13. **james peel**

Richard's numbers seem sensible, though i think labour is a tad high...i certainly think we are heading for a coalition of the left. salmond has openly said he will vote down a tory queen's speech, so whether a seat is held by the snp or labour makes no difference.

I wish Cammie had concentrated on winning his 2nd term before talking about his putative 3rd.

[March 24th, 2015 at 11:56 pm](#)

14. **Millie**

A 'castle' of howards, surely...

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:00 am](#)

15. **nottsdave**

never mind the howards whats happened to pressman ????

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:02 am](#)

16. **scotslass**

Andy Shadrack

Great post and a huge doze of common sense compared to the posturing of Fleet Street and the hypocrisy of the Tories. They after all wanted the Scots to play their part in the mother of parliaments. Now they are complaining that the part seems a big one not a bit part!

Well done Andy for nailing the point.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:04 am](#)

17. **scotslass**

James Peel

Your point is a good one. The wily old fox has just shot Labour's entire campaign attack on the SNP to

pieces. Very smart politics in a Scottish context.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:11 am](#)

18. **Amber Star**

@ Millie

A 'castle' of howards, surely...

Is that an allusion to Howl's Moving Castle? I love that movie.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:11 am](#)

19. **Pete B**

I've been waiting all day for ElectionForecast to publish their latest figures. They just have (dated 25/3!). Changes are since 23/3.

Con 284

Lab 278 (+1)

SNP 39 (-1)

LibDem 26

No change in minor parties

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:12 am](#)

20. **james peel**

pressman?!

I forgot about him. he was hysterically funny!...he's probably in a lager with peter kellner, bluebob, the other howard and the rest of the tories will win 295+ seats mob.

As each day passes, this is looking increasingly fantastical...it's amusing though to remember this prediction.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:12 am](#)

21. **james peel**

Con 284

Lab 278 (+1)

SNP 39 (-1)

LibDem 26

that tory number will creep relentlessly down if the polls don't change much. lots of the tory projections still incorporate some kind of swingback whose chances diminish the longer the polls do nothing...

I'll be interested to see fisher's projection on friday.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:14 am](#)

22. **Andy Shadrack**

@ Richard

I think you are too high on your Labour and LD seats numbers and too low on you Tory number, but we agree on the outcome.

And I think Clegg made a huge blunder in 2010 when he went for political power instead of sticking to Party principles.

He could have had the best of both worlds by offering C & S to Cameron and then agreed to support Labour on some more “progressive issues”

And history will ultimately show that Clegg was responsible for the rise of the SNP, because by backing Cameron over Brown he left a near majority of the Scottish people in a situation of feeling they had no hope inside the UK.

Time and time again in Canada I have watched the majority in Quebec reach out to “progressives” to form an alliance across Canada , only to be rebuffed.

If after May 7th there is a large block of SNP MPs in the HoC and a majority of MPs vote to block them participating in the UK government, and that block includes any or all Labour MPs then you can expect the UK to break up.

In 1995 Canada came within a “hairs breath” of breaking up:

No 50.58%

Yes 49.42%

Out of 4.57 million votes cast in that Quebec referendum Canada came within 54,288 votes of breaking up.

Why? Those who lived outside of Quebec could not agree on how to amend the constitution to accommodate First Nations and the Quebecois.

The lesson learned is that when you don’t include someone in the day to day running of your country, they have no good reason to stay in that country.

I disagree with nationalists, in fact nationalism terrifies me, but it has never stopped me from agreeing to work with anyone to find solutions that work for the good of the country.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:15 am](#)

23. **Amber Star**

In 1995 Canada came within a “hairs breath” of breaking up:

In case that wasn’t just a typo:

It’s a hair’s breadth (i.e. the thickness of a single hair).

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:17 am](#)

24. **Daniel Down**

HaHa

Loving the Howard conversation tonight :)

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:23 am](#)

25. **Daniel Down**

I don’t comment on here very often but I do enjoy reading everybody’s contributions :)

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:25 am](#)

26. **rivers10**

I have to admit pressman's predictions always made me laugh. It was also the fact that he seemed totally oblivious to how ridiculous most of his claims were. Wasn't he still predicting a Tory landslide just before he disappeared?

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:28 am](#)

27. **Andy Shadrack**

Talking of polling numbers have we had the YouGov numbers yet?

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:30 am](#)

28. **rivers10**

Andy

Yes labour and Tories tied on 35 each

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:31 am](#)

29. **kitsune**

@ Amber Star

Castle Howard is a stately home in Yorkshire, used as the setting for *Brideshead Revisited* on screen and television (apparently; I've never seen either).

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:42 am](#)

30. **Millie**

@Richard

Pretty much agree with your prediction. LibDems won't get to 14%, but as Tristan says, your seats prediction is good anyway.

May for Tory leader is also a very good shout. The establishment (May, Osborne, Hammond) will gang up to stop Boris. May to lead, Osborne and Hammond to stay where they are or perhaps swap jobs. Nicky Morgan perhaps to move to Shadow Home Secretary, or Sajid Javid. A long shot for Health is Sarah Wollaston, my favourite politician. Boris for Party Chairman. Grant Shapps to oblivion. They might give Boris a bigger job, at least while they are in opposition.

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:48 am](#)

31. **Tristan**

Millie- some good and interesting calls there. But Morgan as Home Secretary?! Sorry I can't see it. It's not like she's won rave reviews for her work in her current job. Plus the cynic in me thinks that, with May as leader, the Tories won't have to promote as many women as they can always say 'look, our leader is female! Surely that's enough?'. A better call for HS is Javid although I really don't rate him. In fact, even good old Liz Truss may be a better pick.

[March 25th, 2015 at 1:11 am](#)

32. **Tristan**

Oh and I totally agree about Wollaston. An interesting, principled lady who is seemingly in politics for the right reasons.

[March 25th, 2015 at 1:13 am](#)

33. **Millie**

@Tristan

These discussions are highly relevant, and have been neglected. As many correspondents seem to agree, the Tories are very unlikely to secure an outright victory, in which case Cameron may well resign the leadership. He may even resign before the make-up of a governing coalition is resolved, which might take quite a time.

It is quite possible that a new government will only last a few weeks or months.

Boris is not taken seriously by most senior Tories, and the prospect of endless reruns of 'Have I Got News For You' must chill the blood. They can't support him. So a 'Stop Boris' alliance is inevitable.

Osborne, Hammond and May (a new line-up for 'Top Gear'?) will not stand against each other, and establish Boris as front-runner. They will take soundings and form a team – and you are right, May is the natural choice.

By going for a woman, who isn't an Old Etonian, they will immediately transform the prospects of the Conservatives.

Javid might be better with the Business portfolio, but he is a decent Question Time performer. Gove is intelligent, but unpopular, so has to go. Morgan is okay on television (the only criterion of promotion these days) and will underline the new younger, female non-Etonian line-up. I think she is moderately capable, and is the new favourite of the Daily Telegraph.

And above all, no Shapps – an immediate and sustained boost to the polls. We talk about policy shifts, etc., but the biggest impact upon voting intentions is surely having a complete idiot representing you regularly on TV.

Boris might even accept all the above, and the Party Chairmanship, or they could give him Transport.

It is actually quite an attractive, modern team.

Your description of Sarah Wollaston is spot on – the only politician who will genuinely help and improve the NHS.

As the election draws near, and a hung parliament becomes increasingly inevitable, it is time to consider what will follow. I think it could be very unpredictable, and Cameron's resignation before the dust settles is one scenario I consider to be very possible. The Lib Dems could also have a new leader on May 8th., remember.

Interesting, turbulent and exciting times

[March 25th, 2015 at 7:18 am](#)

34. **Jim Jam**

The level of Scoffing at the 290-295 Brigade seems to be increasing!

It reminds me of the amount of opprobrium the few of us who suggested a Cons OM in the run up to 2010 was not a forgone conclusion.

IIRC, Neil A as a cons supporter saying so got similar remarks addressed to him as Lab supporters do now for believing Con most seats is likely now.

It seems that 38-40 seats Lab-Con is the forecast from a few posters based on current polling and it only takes this to fall by 7-10, with no corresponding move in Scotland to compensate Labour.

I agree at that level while the Tories may have most seats a Cons. UKIP, LD. DUP alliance to pass a Queen's Speech and/or Budget is very unlikely and would be unstable if it did; however, a Lab led Government would also be unstable with such arithmetic.

A further 7-8 seats though so only 25 gains by Lab from the Tories would allow a weak Cons dominated (Prob C&S) Government to just about function.

It may not happen but it is realistic, just as it is realistic that Lab could improve by 10-15 seats in Scotland and/or 5-15 in E&W (v current UNS), possibly breaching 300 and be able to negotiate with more authority with the LDs and/or SNP.

[March 25th, 2015 at 7:31 am](#)

35. **Tristan**

Thank you, Millie, I pretty much agree with you about everything apart from Morgan (we'll agree to disagree on that one).

I agree about Gove, and Shapps particularly. They may be highly intelligent, capable men, but they are not vote winners in any way shape or form. Put simply, they have no appeal to the wider public and should only be deployed in non public facing roles.

I have no issue with your theory of the 'big three' colluding after the election to keep Johnson out. My only question is whether May and Osborne get on well enough to actually agree on that process (I think Hammond is pretty malleable).

[March 25th, 2015 at 7:33 am](#)

36. **Millie**

There are similarities between Osborne and Gordon Brown – both better Chancellors than Prime Ministers. Maybe Osborne understands this, although he appears keen on the top job. May does have a mix of gravitas and normality, which I think will appeal. Dare I say it, there is a bit of the Angela Merkel about her.

Most people recognise that Osborne has done his job pretty well, steering the economy out of some terrible problems. But they really don't want another Bullingdon toff.

May and Osborne, with Hammond (an extremely safe pair of hands and a possible Home Secretary) supporting, and Boris as the entertaining sideshow, is a winning combination. Suddenly, Cameron looks like yesterday's man. And I'm convinced he will prefer being ex-Prime Minister to being in charge. He is looking very tired.

Agree to disagree on Nicky Morgan – I am certainly not a fan. Perhaps keep her at Education, where she is much preferred to Gove.

Which leaves a gap at Home Secretary/Foreign Secretary, whichever is not occupied by Hammond. I can't see Michael Fallon stepping up. Not Boris, surely. But, who else? Where's William Hague when you need him?

[March 25th, 2015 at 8:18 am](#)

37. **Tristan**

As I mentioned, Truss does appear to be being lined up for great things. God only knows why...don't see the appeal myself. She's a favourite of the Mail (well, a favourite of their editorial team...maybe not their readers, judging by the comments section!). So I wouldn't be surprised to see her gain a big promotion at some point in the next five years.

I agree...Fallon isn't up to it, and is also no great vote winner himself.

I'm also an admirer of Hague...he is missed at the FO.

[March 25th, 2015 at 8:35 am](#)

38. **rmj1**

It seems somewhat premature to be discussing a future Conservative prime minister who isn't Cameron but it is easy to see circumstances where a second election arrives quite quickly. Whether Cameron is leader for that election depends on the circumstances that led to it happening.

Imho, the only sensible option at the present time would be May as she has accumulated few enemies and is a safe pair of hands. In time, Osborne would move to Foreign Secretary with Boris taking on a transport or education roll. Boris may well be a future leader however. Things seem to fall his way and he is a master at grasping opportunities before others have noticed.

Some have mentioned Shapps and Gove. One is an intelligent and capable man who can be impatient and confrontational, the other is an idiot. I am sure you know which is which. Both need back room rolls but in Shapps case the door should be kept locked.

[March 25th, 2015 at 9:45 am](#)

39. **rmj1**

Roles – darn spellchecker.

[March 25th, 2015 at 9:47 am](#)

40. **assiduousity**

Today's conversation on future Conservative leadership goes to prove why DC's statement was, to say the least, unwise.

Of course such speculation is little more than idle banter, and amongst people with a profound interest in politics at that.

But it has the character of personal gossip, which is infectious, even amongst those who are less than gripped by the election. If the narrative of 'oh he's going anyway, I wonder who's next' gains currency outside of the 'Westminster bubble' it can do nothing but devalue the Prime Minister and undermine his chances for re-election .

The more it is Conservatives, or the Conservative supporting media who continue to prattle on about succession, the more it appears that party takes this election for granted, feeding the notion of 'arrogance' and in turn 'taking the voters for granted'.

As many have pointed out here, no swift effect on VI was ever likely to result from the the 'kitchen conversation', but unless the Conservatives and their allies maintain discipline and return to message, the effect, as demonstrated by history, could be corrosive.

Sufficient enough to influence the GE? That's a different matter.

[March 25th, 2015 at 11:15 am](#)

41. **[Mark Elphinstone-Hoadley](#)**

Well this is interesting. With the majority of these being landline pollsters, and it having been 5 years since the last election which, I do remember at the time, the first Android phones only seeping in and the iPhones only just making a dent on the market, I have to say there must be a technology and demographic

skew. This is turning out to be the most politically aware GE for a long, long time.

Can we have some data on entirely non-landline polls, please?

[March 25th, 2015 at 12:00 pm](#)

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Latest Voting Intention

	5 May	33	34	9	16	Lab +1
YG	4 May	33	33	10	12	Tie
YG	3 May	34	33	9	12	Con +1
	3 May	32	30	11	12	Con +2
	3 May	34	34	10	13	Tie
YG	2 May	34	33	8	13	Con +1
	2 May	31	34	8	17	Lab +3
	1 May	33	34	9	16	Lab +1
YG	1 May	33	34	8	14	Lab +1
YG	30 Apr	34	35	8	12	Lab +1
	30 Apr	33	33	9	15	Tie
	30 Apr	32	34	8	17	Lab +2
YG	30 Apr	34	35	9	12	Lab +1
	29 Apr	35	30	8	10	Con +5
YG	29 Apr	35	34	9	12	Con +1
	28 Apr	35	35	7	11	Tie
YG	28 Apr	34	35	9	12	Lab +1
	27 Apr	34	33	7	15	Con +1
bmg	27 Apr	35	32	11	14	Con +3
YG	27 Apr	35	34	9	12	Con +1
	26 Apr	36	30	9	11	Con +6
	26 Apr	33	36	8	14	Lab +3
ICM	26 Apr	35	32	9	13	Con +3
YG	26 Apr	33	34	8	14	Lab +1
YG	25 Apr	32	34	9	14	Lab +2

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Messagespace

