

Likely Outcome of a Progressive Electoral Alliance in the 2017 UK General Election

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Introduction

The following is an analysis of the likely outcome of an electoral alliance between progressive parties in the 2017 UK General Election. This alliance would consist of Labour/Co-op, LD, SNP, PC, and the two Green parties. The analysis is made on the basis of recent polls and the 2015 election results.

The seats in GB can be divided into:

- seats that are safely Conservative with or without an alliance
- seats that will be won by a progressive party with or without an alliance
- seats less likely to be won by the Conservatives if there is only one progressive candidate

In an electoral alliance, only one progressive candidate would run in each of the seats in the third category.

Simplifying assumptions

Northern Ireland results are ignored. It is conventional wisdom that the NI parties will not act as kingmakers regardless of the results from the Great Britain: a party with 317 seats in GB will govern.

The current speaker, John Bercow, is taken to be a Conservative.

Independents and microparties are ignored. There are unlikely to be any seats in which their effect is decisive.

It is assumed that the absence from the ballot of a particular party may suppress the vote of those whose first choice would have been that party, but that the existence of the alliance does not suppress the vote of those whose first choice remains on the ballot. The term “compliance” is used here to refer to the percentage of progressive voters who will vote for progressive candidate who is not their first choice, if an alliance is in place. It is assumed that voters who do not comply will choose not to vote, rather than voting for the Conservatives.

It is assumed that Labour, SNP, LD, PC and the Greens could form a coalition government if required.

2015 results and recent polls

The following table shows the results of the 2015 election, after removing microparties and independents and normalising, compared to the average of the three most recent voting intention polls in GB as at 14 May, after removing “other” and normalising:

Party	2015 result	Recent polls (at 14 May 2017)
Conservatives	38.0%	46.5%
UKIP	13.0%	5.7%
Labor	31.5%	31.4%
LD	8.1%	8.9%
SNP	4.9%	4.5%
Greens	3.9%	2.5%
PC	0.6%	0.5%

The last 3 weeks have seen a recovery of around 6% by Labour, at the expense of UKIP, LD, SNP, Greens and PC. The Conservatives' polling has remained fairly stable on that interval.

For the purpose of reallocating votes within seats, the changes since the last election have been taken as follows:

Labour and PC: stable

56% of 2015UKIP transferred to Conservatives

9% of 2015SNP transferred to Conservatives

10% of 2015LD transferred to Conservatives

35% of 2015Greens transferred to LD

Cases examined

Case 1: Actual results of 2015 election

Case 2: Projected results of 2017 election based on recent polling

Case 3: Projected 2017 results based on recent polls, WITH a 5.4% transfer from Conservative to Labour before the election (the minimum swing for victory)

Case 4: Projected 2017 results based on recent polls, with an electoral alliance (100% compliance)

Case 5: Projected 2017 results based on recent polls, with an electoral alliance with 100% compliance, WITH a 1.1% transfer from Conservative to Labour before the election (the minimum swing for victory)

Case 6: Projected 2017 results based on recent polls, with an electoral alliance (70% compliance)

Case 7: Projected 2017 results based on recent polls, with an electoral alliance with 70% compliance, WITH a 3.1% transfer from Conservative to Labour between now and the election (the minimum swing for victory)

Projections

Party	Case 1: 2015 results	Case 2: 2017 no EA no swing	Case 3: 2017 no EA 5.4% swing	Case 4: 2017 EA 100% no swing	Case 5: 2017 EA 100% 1.1% swing	Case 6: 2017 EA 70% no swing	Case 7: 2017 EA 70% 3.1% swing
Conservatives	331	378	315	326	315	343	315
UKIP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labor	232	191	253	233	243	220	250
LD	8	5	20	13	14	9	8
SNP	56	55	56	57	57	57	56
Greens	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PC	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Conclusion

Based on this analysis, under current circumstances an electoral alliance with full compliance would be about as good as an additional 4.3% swing, and an electoral alliance with 70% compliance would be about as good as an additional 2% swing. The benefit of an electoral alliance appears to diminish rapidly with decreased compliance.