

BRIEFING

NOSTRADAMUS LIVES our correct projection, in March, of the result

On 26 March, I circulated a paper entitled ‘Projection of EU referendum vote’ in which I forecast how all the major political party supporters would divide up between Leave and Remain, based on an ORB poll around that time.

I concluded *“Opinion is now solidifying ... For these reasons, I am calling the result of the referendum now – a win for Leave – by about ten points.”*

“We must remember the referendum is not the end, it is a stage, and what happens afterwards is what matters.”

“It is inevitable that, after a Leave win, our proposals must be the only safe, sane way to execute withdrawal.”

I got some forecasts wrong. The turnout was much higher than I forecast but the forecast for lower than average turnouts in London and Scotland was correct.

The key was indeed the moderate Conservative voters. The Leave side did not quite get the 60/40% projection of vote for Leave among Conservative voters, but nearly got there.

	Projection of 26 March		23 June result (Lord Ashcroft Poll of 12,369 voters)	
	Leave	Remain	Leave	Remain
Conservative	60	40	58	42
Labour	35	65	37	63
SNP	31	69	36	64
LibDems	30	70	30	70
Others (mainly Northern Ireland)	50	50	-	-
Greens	18	82	25	75

My projections were accurate and, in most cases, very close to the result.

Why? Around 45% of the electorate had already decided, according to Ashcroft, before the beginning of 2016 so it was a reasonable inference that the late deciders would approximately decide in the same way on such a long running issue – ‘Opinion was solidifying’.

- There was no last minute surge for Leave among Labour voters. If there was a slight ripple, it was among SNP voters who were slightly more in favour of Leave than I estimated.
- Self-government was far the biggest motive for the Leave campaigners while the economic arguments were the foremost motivator for Remain.
- The percentages are quite striking. Four out of five parties (five out of six in Scotland) supported Remain and, except for the Conservatives, the party leaders DID carry 63-75% of their voters with them. It was only the Conservatives who voted against their party leadership.
- The division in the Labour vote, 37-63%, was barely changed from the March projection of 35-65% or the ORB March poll of 39-61%. The idea that there was a sudden awakening of nativism of the ignorant being conned by right wing fanatics is simply wrong. It did not exist.
- The official campaigns on both sides seem to have been completely irrelevant. There was no movement of significance in the last three months. Both campaigns were negative and scaremongering. Both dealt in dodgy statistics.
- The quiet determination of the ordinary electorate to make a considered and thoughtful decision on a major issue and turn out in staggering numbers was, however, impressive and humbling.
- Finally, 81% of those described as “*in full time education*” voted to Remain, quite extraordinary. Youth seems conformist, ultra-conservative.

PROJECTION OF EU REFERENDUM VOTE

General Election 2015

Electorate 2016: 44,722,000 (General Election 2015: 45,325,000)

Turn out in 2015 election 66%

Total voters in 2015 election: 30,691,500

	2015 Votes for Parties	Adjustment to 2015 vote Making 60% T/O	LEAVE	REMAIN
Conservative	11,300,109	11,100,000	6,600,000	4,500,000
Labour	9,347,324	8,500,000	3,000,000	5,500,000
SNP	1,454,436	1,300,000	400,000	900,000
LibDems	2,415,862	2,320,000	690,000	1,630,000
UKIP	3,881,099	3,780,000	3,500,000	280,000
Green	1,157,613	1,057,000	157,000	900,000
Others, mainly Northern Ireland)	1,135,057	800,000	400,000	400,000
(Approx. total)	30,691,500	28,850,000	14,747,000	14,110,000

The Breakdown in percentages				
	Leave/Remain in ORB polling figures		Leave/Remain projection	
	LEAVE (%)	REMAIN (%)	LEAVE (%)	REMAIN (%)
Conservatives	56	44	60	40
Labour	39	61	35	65
SNP	32	68	31	69
LibDems	35	65	30	70
UKIP	92	8	92	8
Others, mainly Northern Ireland	41	59	50	50
Green	n/a	n/a	18	82
Total	52	48	49	51
Total 85% most likely to vote	54	46		
Total 68% extremely likely to vote	58	42		

Comments: Most assume that the total turnout will be about ten per cent less than in a general election, as in 1975. However, I have allowed for a higher turnout because the electorate has shrunk since 2015 because of individual voter registration and, therefore, some incorrect voters are no longer on the electoral roll.

There is an unequal distributional effect of this. Since benefits are not affected by the Leave-Remain result and there are no real Scottish issues involved, unlike a general election, the lower turnout will be mainly among Labour and SNP voters.

Who will turn out? David Cameron has said turnout is critical to the result but he certainly has not made the best arrangements for his side.

My projection (unlike the ORB poll data) is made after correcting for a lower turnout of a referendum vis-à-vis election. But it is before considering the effects of the 5th May elections in local authorities in Scotland, Wales and London.

To call the electorate back to the polls six weeks later is a substantial ask and, again, in London, Wales and Scotland, there is likely to be a drop off in votes on 23rd June.

Then there is the European football tournament which will be going on most of June. Once again, a depressant on votes.

The ORB polls clearly show that, as the number of voters goes down, so the Leave lead increases.

	<u>%</u> <u>Leave</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Remain</u>
Poll turnout figures	52	48
Only 85% most likely to vote	54	46
Only 68% extremely likely to vote	58	42

The older demographic voter will turn out because of its sense of civic duty and all polls shows the older demographic is much more likely to vote 'Leave'. It is quite evident that the key voting block is the 11.3 million Tories, most of whom will vote.

While the 25 percent or so Thatcherite Tories will vote en masse to 'Leave', the question arises about the liberal or moderate Conservatives, Home Counties Tories. They will determine the outcome.

It is evident from the figures that, contrary to general elections, it is the Leatherheads, the Henleys, the New Forests, the West Kents, which will decide the outcome. They are the 'Swing' votes.

The moderate Tories are being asked to give ANOTHER BLANK CHEQUE to a Tory Leader when the **last blank cheque** was cashed in, in the form of nine extra Treaties. And I do not think they will make the same mistake again.

Opinion is now solidifying. It is possible there could be a major terrorist atrocity with EU links. (This was written before the Brussels' attacks) or a major event on the Eurozone. Either are likely to increase the 'Leave' vote.

For all these reasons, I am calling the result of the referendum now – a win for 'Leave' – by about ten points.

We must remember the referendum is not the end; it is a stage, and what happens afterwards is what matters. The larger the 'Leave' vote, the harder it will be for Boris Johnson or another Tory Leader to come in and promise new (and better) negotiations to stay in the EU.

I am pleased to see reports in The Daily Telegraph indicating that the Leave Alliance proposals are being looked at with favour in Whitehall.

It is inevitable that, after a 'Leave' win, our proposals must be the only safe, sane way to execute withdrawal.

[Data extracted from March 2016 ORB poll]