

## **A Democratic Argument for a General Election**

Our democratic system of governance, the “first past the post” method of electing a government, on its own would technically defeat any argument for calling a general election when a Prime Minister resigns. When Britain votes, those who can vote that is, the nation elects a ruling party into the seat of power, with the leader of said party asking the monarch for permission to form a government, with that person at its head. The party in power is then technically free to change leadership as much as it chooses to, with no legal requirement for any public vote or referendum into who will become the new leader, just the party members choosing their next head. Unless living under a rock, or in blissful ignorance of politics, you’ll be aware of the 3 changes in PM in recent times, all without the public getting a say. I believe this to be wrong and shall set out the principals upon which my mind was made.

Beyond my own jealousy of not yet popping my General Election cherry due to my April birthday, I yearn for a vote on our leaders, wanting to express my dissatisfaction in their incompetence and inability to put the country over party. Even those that agree with the recent history of inaction, market turmoil and changes in policy can sympathise that Boris, Liz and Rishi have drastically different ideologies, with only one being the proposed leader when we last went to the polls.

If reasons for voting and the influence of different factors could be measured, there would be a huge disparity between individuals, with varying factors, lived experience, fears, hopes and history changing from the next 5 people you may speak to after reading this. During an election however, a lot of emphasis is placed on those who lead their party and would then become the Prime Minister, should said party win an election. Whatever problems Boris may have had (of which I frequently

wrote about for the Stevo Chronicle), he was popular when winning his majority. The Red Wall fell, the Tory’s won in places they hadn’t in generations. The man leading the party influenced this to no end, being accredited largely with the Conservative victory in 2019. Conservative voters elected Boris with the understanding that he would be the PM, not with the notion that we’d have 3 (at least) PMs with this singular government. I don’t believe a nation can change its de facto ruler (as the Monarch is our head of state but with mainly symbolic powers) without those being governed having a say. This is allowed and expected within our current system, but just as like many other aspects of our nation, this should change. To have a change in the Prime Minister without a general election feels almost like a con to the public. The electorate did not vote for Liz, the electorate did not vote for Rishi, but Boris had to go, something that everyone knew was going to happen and what many wanted.

I’ll accept that forcing an election in the case of a Prime Minister’s removal will disincentivize the governing party to act against someone unfit for office, but we need a system that brings the power of government back into the people’s hands. Beyond our current need for an election, our system of government is broken, and without large scale change it will continue to damage the country.

***By James Lawrence***