

The Tories: lost, rudderless and without a clue what to...

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John Burn-Murdoch has one of his incredibly good [data-journalism articles in the FT this morning](#). He is tackling a theme [I have also addressed this morning](#) when discussing the future of the Conservative Party.

As he shows, using data, it was Johnson who set the Tories on the path to their current electoral defeat. All that Truss and Sunak have done is compound the problem by tacking right, appearing incompetent, and failing to comprehend reality.

The graphs are useful in his argument, but this time the words are better.

To be clear, the split on the right has done considerable additional harm, amplified by the capricious nature of the first-past-the-post voting system. But that has turned what was already on course to be a top-five worst-ever defeat into what seems set to be the all-time worst.

He added:

Uniting the right is a necessary step on the way to the Conservatives' return to power, but it is far from sufficient to deliver it. At best it gets them back to where they were under Johnson: a dysfunctional party disliked and distrusted by most of the electorate, trailing some distance behind Labour in the polls.

He concluded:

The reason the Tories stand on the brink of a historic defeat is a slow, rolling competence shock that has alienated voters across the spectrum, not just a few months of insurgency on their right flank.

Is there a way back for the Tories from that? Not if they continue to move right. They have lost that ground to Farage, and he won't be giving it up in a hurry.

Electing Kemi Badneoch as leader when she is so obviously out of total touch with reality is not going to address that issue for them. It will instead alienate more people.

So that can't work, although it would seem that many in the Tories think otherwise, which is precisely why they are in trouble.

But nor can they move towards the centre: Labour has become the party of the centre-right. There is no space left for the Tories there.

So, what options are there for the Tories? No good ones at all, I would suggest. The reality is that Johnson did for them, firstly by delivering a deeply flawed Brexit (or by delivering any form of Brexit, come to that) and by expelling the left of the party - where much of what competence it had was to be found. I can't see a path back for them within decades, and can happily live with that thought.