

Ten thoughts on No

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No has won the day. Politics takes on a new direction. Some immediate thoughts.

1. Politics is important

People have realised politics can make a difference.

2. The failure of the parties to get this turnout in most elections is a lesson

Most of the time the mainstream parties fail to motivate people to vote in the way this election has. That is because, I am sure, people think they are not offering them a real choice.

3. The Irish question took more than 40 years to resolve

The Irish question and related constitutional questions dominated the UK parliament from 1880 to the time of independence. The Scottish question has the same power to continue to disrupt.

4. Westminster is a very long way from most people

I have some access to Westminster and know my way around it and it can still feel alien. To most people it is so far away from their lives that I am wholly unsurprised people wanted to kick it. Those who do will play a big role in UK politics for some time to come.

5. Devolution of Housing Benefit is not enough to keep people feeling empowered

This is an issue I will return to today, but if we're talking of devolved powers what are they going to control? In England the NHS and education have already left almost all local control, and these are the big issues for most people, so what powers are going to be given to devolved authorities. There's talk of Scotland getting power to control Housing Benefit. That's not going to resolve anything.

6. Labour has all sorts of problems

Labour has not answered questions in this campaign. What is its position to be on devolved power? And how would it manage an English parliament? It would be hard to control it and yet such a 'rump parliament' (I choose the word with care) would be responsible for 85% of the UK. How can it be that the control of this 'rump' could in fact control whatever still happens in other areas by default?

7. There is no way the House of Lords can survive this

The only way to get round this whole conundrum is to rethink the whole structure of our Westminster parliament. An unelected tier looks more like an anachronism than ever. A second elected tier that is federal in nature is absolutely essential if the cohesion of the UK - which is what the No vote wanted, after all - is to be retained. It will be very easy to forget this point.

8. A lot of people will now doubt that the existing factional interests will be up to this issue

A lot of existing politicians are steeped in the status quo. Too many are very small minded. Vested interests will be powerful. And many are very petty. It will require leadership that is not readily apparently available to lead these die hard conservative thinkers (small c) into any process of change.

9. UKIP is not the same as the SNP

The SNP tried a positive image and eventually sold itself short. UKIP is selling a negative image and will sell everyone short.

10. The elite won. Now, what about everyone else?

Fear that the elite might lose control was the undercurrent of this campaign, and No played it for all it was worth, and won. Many will now feel smug. But what now for the people of the UK who so badly need a well functioning state? Can we have that debate now, please?