

# What if the UK votes Brexit?

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I have explained why I will vote Remain next week. I am not going to change my mind. I just accept the possibility that not everyone will think or act as I do. That's what democrats have to accept. What then? It is a question that has to be considered for four reasons.

The first is that it is interesting, and asking it after the event if the vote is Remain will have little relevance because the piquancy will have gone.

The second is that compared to a vote for Remain, which means life carries on as normal, it is a testing scenario.

Third, it looks like it's a real possibility now.

Fourth, and easily the most significant, is that very few people seem to have done it.

There is no chance of one blog, or one mind map of reasonable size, dealing with the issues that will arise: I might develop some of the themes over the next week or so. The one that really interests me though is that last one. How has it happened that an act so reckless as to the futures of the UK, the well being of the people of its nations and the function and future role of its body politic been allowed to take place with such little consideration for the consequences?

The question can be agonised over or answered in a single word, which is arrogance. The referendum was Cameron's equivalent of John Major's Conservative party leadership resignation moment. In both cases they had reached the point where they had suffered those they felt to be the 'bastards' for long enough and demanded 'put up or shut up'.

There is a difference though. Major put his own future on the line. Cameron put the country's in the same position. Major was pretty sure of the outcome. So too was Cameron. There was however another difference: no one really doubted Major had called the odds right even if it was apparent he would be doomed when he had to face the country. Cameron looks as if he might have got his odds spectacularly wrong. Even

a narrow Remain, which is the best he could hope for now, would release the type of backlash that has swept the SNP to their current position in Scotland. Arrogance is the only explanation for that.

Of course it would be easy to say that this is an arrogance that comes from Cameron's position of privilege. But that does not explain why some of those with similar backgrounds are opposing him. The issue is not as simple as conventional class attitudes.

Rather, the arrogance is that of a prevailing cohort of power that has reached a point where it has lost the ability to think that it could lose that power. This arrogance is that of the Establishment. Owen Jones did a good job of defining this: I won't re-cover his ground. What I will say is that there is a very obvious elite in society. It does cross political divides, to some degree. It does embrace large parts of politics, the professions, business, military and the legal system. And, dangerously, neoliberalism has given it a hegemony that restored its confidence after the battering that it took from 1929 onwards. That restoration of confidence had reached the point where it has felt itself insurmountable.

It is paradoxical, of course, that this elite is being challenged at present by those who appear to be a part of it. That though does not alter my thesis. The actions of Johnson, Gove, Farage and the Tory Brexit camp are old fashioned power grabs seeking to realign the control in their particular favour. Such plotting has always been the favourite pastime of elites since time immemorial. But I have little doubt at all that people will not be voting for their positions, or them as people, or what they have even had to say come June 23rd. Rather they are voting against the elite. Johnson et al had better take note.

The wave of rejection has some deeply unsavoury aspects to it. The racism is the most obvious and is deeply worrying. But again this is not the 'why' of the voting sentiments currently being expressed, in my opinion.

That why is simply that voting Leave is like having for the very first time an option of saying 'none of the above' and a lot of people are going to take it.

This is a rejection of the politics of hegemony.

And of the power of corporations.

It's a giant rebuff to the status quo.

It is an expression of deep anger; at being left behind economically; of having the wealth divide rubbed in faces; of being left feeling powerless; of having little hope of changing anything.

And then the chance to spite the system arrived. And even if leaving is wholly irrational

(and I have laid out why I think it is) people may well vote for it because Cameron, in his arrogance, assumed he could cajole and frighten people to do his bidding and so get them to solve his own little local difficulty and instead he created the chance for people to say 'sod off, the lot of you'. And there is a real chance they will do just that.

No wonder Remain are panicked. No wonder the EU power structures are. No wonder the rearguard action so retain control despite a referendum looks to be the only option being discussed by those who fear losing power. That is what an elite does when faced with a crisis that rocks the state to its core, which is what a Brexit vote would do.

What is not being asked is how this decision is embraced if it happens. And how we adapt to it. And what has to happen as a consequence. It's the arrogance that is stopping that happening: the idea of rejection is beyond an elite's comprehension.

Some rude awakenings do, at the very least, look to be possible soon. And that may be very uncomfortable for many, including those leading the Leave campaign.