

This election may not be a foregone conclusion

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I have, of course, spoken to a few people since yesterday morning who seem pleased that the country is to have its third national poll in two years. They, perhaps unsurprisingly, are also Tory and pro-Brexit. For the rest the reaction of the woman who said 'not again' seems to sum it up.

Quite explicitly I do not accept May's claim that this election is about Brexit. She has triggered that despite opposition. She will continue to get what she wants from parliament. And no one believes otherwise. So that is not what this is about.

Instead, as I argued on [The Conversation](#) website yesterday, this is about seeking a mandate before economic news turns really sour, which I have little doubt it will.

That though means that this election should not be fought on the battleground of Brexit. I think it has to be taken as read that Brexit will happen. And whilst very clearly each party has to make clear what they think this means, which for all parties on the left is bound to mean remarkably similar discussion on retaining as much access as possible, it is everything else that then matters, and which may catch the Tories by surprise in dominating this election.

Those other issues are health, education, housing, cuts, austerity, pay, devolution, benefits, tax and social justice, and more besides. I say this because it's my belief that most people think Brexit is done and dusted. They've had an election on that. I am fairly sure they won't want another one on the same theme. And if that's what the Tories offer it will backfire for them. Many people will think they gave the Tories what they wanted on this issue last year and will ask now why it is they can't apparently deliver despite that, and a backlash might follow.

I'm not suggesting that this will change the overall outcome of the election. But it may make a difference. In particular it may be good for the LibDems. Even Linton Crosby apparently thinks they may recover most of the seats they lost to the Tories.

And it probably won't help UKIP.

Given then that I foresee remarkably little overall change in the Scottish result that means what happens on election night depends almost entirely on whether the Labour vote does really collapse. It is forecast that it will. But who knows? If Labour could offer a half decent manifesto, and better still one that shows clear willingness to cooperate with a range of other parties, it may still provide an opposition and the forecasts could be by wrong. But that is a big 'if'.