The Scottish Referendum:
What’s next for Scotland, the UK, Europe?

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What happened?
Why did it happen?

- Triumph of heads over hearts/fear over hope?
  - The currency, mortgages/pensions, EU, defence
- The ‘silent majority’ & the Britishness factor
- Intense media coverage of pro-UK parties in last 2 weeks of campaign (& media opposition to ‘Yes’)
- Last-minute Unionist ‘vow’ for more powers
  - From ‘Yes/No’ to ‘Yes/Devo-max’
  - The ‘Gordon Brown effect’ on SNP momentum
- Swayed the undecided and floating Labour voters
What’s next for Scotland?

- Devolution-max?
  - ‘extensive new powers’
    - taxation and welfare
  - ‘permanent’ Scottish Parliament
  - ‘sharing resources equitably’
  - keep Barnett Formula

- The Timetable
  - Lord Smith of Kelvin cross-party commission
  - White Paper by end October 2014; draft legislation by end of January 2015. Unfeasible?
  - Legislation enacted by whom after Gen Election?
The Vow is unravelling…

Before the Vow, party disagreements on:
- Levels of income tax (LibDems/Cons want full devolution to Scotland; Labour against)
- Corporation Tax/VAT (LibDems/Cons in favour of devolution; Labour against)
- Welfare policy (Lab/Cons to devolve housing benefit, attendance allowance; LibDems against)

After the Vow, even more divisions:
- Conservative backbench revolt: no more powers to Scotland! (also the UKIP problem)
- End result: less Devo-Max than Devo-Lite?
A bigger issue... England

- The ‘English Question’ has stolen the show
  - An unresolved issue since the devolution settlement for Scotland, Wales, N Ireland
  - ‘West Lothian Question’ on MP voting rights
  - ‘English Votes for English Laws’ (Tories), based on McKay Commission, but ‘incoherent and separatist’?
  - Not over my dead body! (Labour fears loss of power)

- An English Parliament?
  - Increasing sense of English identity but no appetite

- English devolution – to cities not regions?
  - Opposed to London-centrism of UK politics
Feeling ignored? Wales and Northern Ireland

- **Wales: What about Us?!**
  - Plaid Cymru: ‘We want what Scotland’s getting!’
  - More powers through Silk Commission recommendations

- **Northern Ireland: crisis averted?**
  - Scottish Independence could have re-opened issue of NI (re)unification with Republic of Ireland
  - Republican/Loyalist divisions on what to devolve
  - Any further constitutional change needs sensitivity

- The Scottish ‘No’ has clearly opened up the Pandora’s Box of competing territorial identities, politics and interests in the UK
The Road Ahead for the Parties

Scottish National Party (SNP)
- Lost IndyRef and Leader; but gained 30,000 new members since result & now 3rd biggest party in the UK...

Scottish Greens
- More visibility & doubled its membership

Labour
- Restraint. Difficult Days Ahead – lost Scottish heartlands

Liberal Democrats
- Hopes of federalism. Will the Coalition Government fall apart?

Conservatives
- Revolt of backbench; move to anti-EU, English nationalism?

UK Independence Party (UKIP)
- Everything to gain (incl. likely seat in Gen Election)
The Road Ahead for Civic Society

- ‘The parties have missed the point: it’s not about the technical transfers of some powers...it’s about wider political and social change’
- High levels of civic engagement during the independence campaigns as a model for others
- A challenge to nexus of political and corporate power centred in London
- A Constitutional Convention?
  - Need to consider all options, including citizens assemblies & creation of a Federal Kingdom of Britain
What’s the final destination?

- A more federalised UK or a more England-centred UK?
What’s been happening elsewhere in Europe?

Referendums on independence in:

- Basque Country (2008 attempt)
- Catalonia (2009-2011, 2014),
- South Tyrol (2013),
- Veneto (2014),
- Sardinia (2015?)

Then there’s:

- Quebec (1980, 1995)
- Puerto Rico (2012)
- Texas …?
A Scottish Model?

Has the Scottish referendum, despite the negative result, led the way for other stateless nations?

Representative of Parti Quebecois:

"any way you look at it, the Scotland/British model is a template for what an adult, democratic country should do with this kind of issue"

Not just PQ watching: Reps from Sardinia, Catalonia, Basque Country, Flanders, Bavaria etc
International Lessons from the Scottish referendum

- Constitutional agreement with the central-state
  - Cameron Speech: “we did the right thing”
  - Unlike Spain/Italy

- Peaceful, informed, inclusive— in particular Yes side welcoming of immigrants/ethnic groups
  - Other nationalist parties taking notes

- Constitutional change guaranteed, despite the final ‘No’ result of the referendum
  - Pressure on Spain/Italy to follow suit?
  - What does the EU think of all this?
The European Dimension

- The EU, regions and secessionism
  - Rise & Fall of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ 1990s
  - ‘Neutral Position’ on Scottish IndyRef BUT:
  - Fear of Domino Effect: Spanish ACs

- Conservative Proposal: In/Out Referendum on UK Membership of EU (2017)
  - Growing hostility to EU in England (rise of UKIP)
  - BUT: the Scottish Question
    - Scots (slightly) more pro-European
    - All Scottish parties (much) more pro-EU
    - Scotland would likely want to remain in EU
Will we see another independence referendum in Scotland?

- Salmond: “once in a generation opportunity”
- But when he’s gone, his successor (Sturgeon) will not be beholden to that statement…
- Three factors:
  - Fudging the devo-max process
  - Tories win 2015 general election
  - UK exits the European Union 2017
  - Scottish independence referendum #2…?
Cheers! And till the next time...

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