

# Scotland and England: what future for the Union?

A seminar at the London School of Economics, 1 July 2014

**Chair: Deborah Mattinson, BritainThinks**

*Scotland's referendum on 18 September is the most momentous event in United Kingdom politics since 1945. It is possible that 'Britain' will cease to exist within a couple of years and that Scotland may face a future as an independent, sovereign, country for the first time since 1707. England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be affected whichever way the vote goes. Britain would never be the same again. This event will consider a number of different aspects of the debate about the future of Scotland and the UK as a whole.*

**1.30pm**      **Arrival, tea and coffee**

**2.00pm**      **Welcome from Simon Hix, LSE, followed by Chair's Introduction**

**2.10pm**      **What will happen to Parliament if Scotland goes (or stays)?**

Patrick Dunleavy, LSE

If Scotland votes to leave the UK, there would be a radical change in the number of MPs, particularly affecting Labour and the Liberal Democrats. What would be the immediate and possible longer-term impacts of Scotland's departure on the 'New UK'? If Scotland votes to stay, there will still be a need for Parliamentary reform.

**2.40pm**      **Scottish consequences for the government of England**

Tony Travers, LSE

Scotland's departure (or near-departure) would be a massive shock to the London political Establishment, which would be seen to have 'lost' (or come close to losing) the second biggest country in the Union. Whether or not Scotland votes 'yes', might English regions get more attention from Westminster as a result of Scotland leaving the UK or becoming radically more detached. Or might there be a move to even greater centralisation within England?

**3.10pm**      **If Scotland stays: what next for Scottish nationalism?**

Nicola McEwen, University of Edinburgh

Following a 'no' vote, the SNP would have been seen to fail in its core objective. Would this be the end of the matter or, as in Quebec, would there be renewed efforts to hold a further referendum in due course? Would Scottish nationalism be strengthened or weakened by a 'no' vote? What would be the implications for key leaders?

**3.40pm      Tea, coffee**

**4.00pm      Super 'devo-max' and moves towards a federal Britain**

Iain McLean, University of Oxford

If Scotland remains within the UK, it will assume income tax and other fiscal powers, making it more like a German land or US state. Wales has been promised something similar. By the time these reforms had been delivered, the UK would be a near-federal country, but with no constitutional mechanisms to deal with the distribution of power between capitals. Would it be possible for the UK government to re-set the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the country by reforming the Barnett Formula and the number of MPs sent from Scotland to Westminster?

**4.30pm      What UKIP's progress tells us about England**

Matthew Goodwin, University of Nottingham

UKIP has established itself as the nearest there is to an English 'nationalist party'. Has moderate English nationalism been given a kick-start by the advantages given to Scotland and Wales? UKIP's relative success tells us something about the failure of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties to appeal to a large number of voters. What might the longer-term impact of this insurgent force be?

**5.00pm      Scotland's identity**

John Curtice, University of Strathclyde

Scotland evidently has a powerful, separate, identity which is very different from 'Britain' or the 'United Kingdom'. What are the longer-term political implications for this strength of identity? What do we know about the incidence of identity, how it is currently politicised, and the role it will and won't play in referendum voting behaviour?.

**5.30pm      Open discussion**

**5.50pm      Chair's conclusions**

**6.00pm      Close, reception**