

## What a mess. UK election 2015

**I am tediously optimistic, but as Britain goes to the polls I feel depressed about every likely outcome.**

This will not be a decisive election and I fear that out of the chaos will come, well... more confusion.

I am not against coalition government in principle and I instinctively welcome the idea of more plural politics. I would love to see the self-indulgent wishfulness of nationalism (SNP, Ukip) and lifestyle idealism (Green Party) exposed to more rigorous scrutiny and the test of having to be engaged in gritty decision-making. They might inject some fertility into the near-moribund anatomy of the main political parties.

But here's the downside.



Yet another stage-managed event with no voters involved

Firstly, as a media person I am so bored by the tight-arsed failure of the parties to embrace the possibilities of digital media—but also mainstream media—to have a full, frank and entertaining debate about politics. It's been a dull, stupid, bland, campaign. The broadcasters have been slavishly compliant in the relentless photo-opportunities, too lazy even to go for the odd wide shot to expose the visual chicanery involved. The faked moonlanding conspiracy has nothing on this election.

As for our newspapers – one of which today even sent its readers an email telling them how to vote – I [have already written](#) about how they are insulting their readers' intelligence and driving them to other platforms with their relentless partisan propaganda [which does appear measurably worse than ever](#).

Secondly, I share the view of people like [Andrew Marr](#), [Adam Boulton](#) and Martin Wolf that the big issues have been ignored. Not just in the avoidance of detail. The Tories won't tell us the welfare cuts to come. Labour won't describe the tax rises that must follow. But more importantly, why won't anyone talk about our core economic problem: productivity. Everything else flows from that including re-imagining hot topics such as immigration,

education and housing.

Thirdly, we are heading for a mess. I don't buy into the 'legitimacy' or 'coup' hysteria. This is politics, chaps. If you can get a majority then you rule for as long as it lasts. But if—for one moment—you assume that neither Labour nor Tory will ever bestride the political landscape like a colossus again—then what follows? Both Cameron and Miliband seem prepared to do anything to get the keys to Downing Street. Fair enough, but I have no sense that either of them have any idea what they will do with it. Not just in policies, day by febrile day. But where are they headed?

This is an opportunity to build some kind of new arrangement: of either a Realistic Right or a Progressive Front. But just when British politics was supposed to open up, I fear that like this control-freak election we are heading for a frightened, fractional administration.

[You can view [video and podcasts of our conference](#) that featured top journalists talking about covering the election [here](#)]

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