

# FPTP & Inequality

## Part VI: A way out for Scotland?

How Scotland's fledging PR platform might shape the constitutional debate

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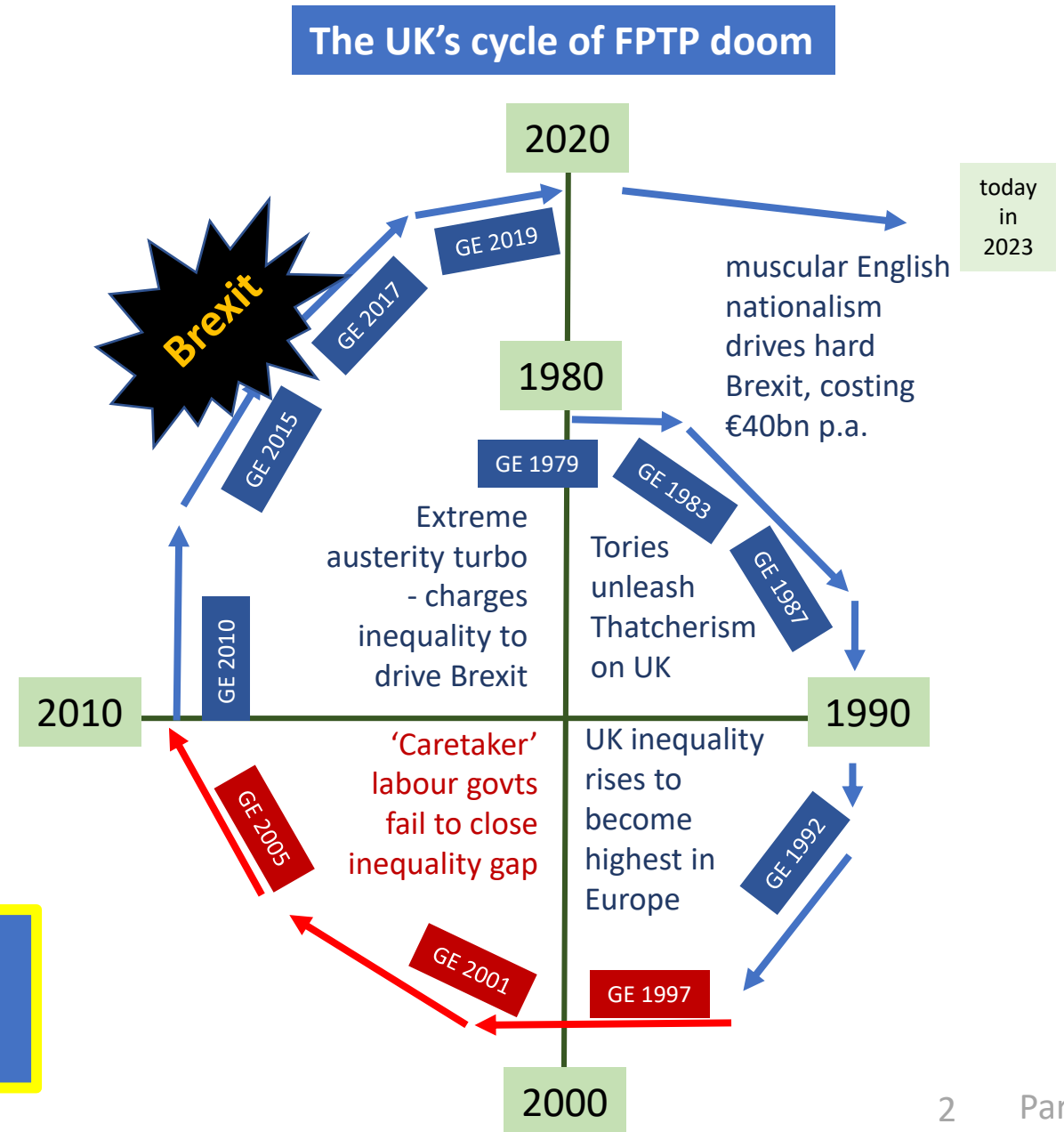


Image: Miguel Villalba Sánchez

## Three secular issues face Scotland across political & constitutional persuasions:

- **Failure of the FPTP system** – we now know that its bias to the right makes societies meaner and poorer;
- **Acute inequality** - with little progressive influence, the UK has become the most unequal country in North West Europe
- **Out of the EU** - increasing misery caused by acute inequality drove Middle England to vote Leave; Scotland voted to remain

So what are Scotland's options from here?



### 3 major problems

- Failure of the FPTP system – its bias to the right makes societies meaner and poorer

- Acute inequality - with little progressive influence, the UK has become the most unequal country in North West Europe

- Out of the EU - increasing misery caused by acute inequality drove Middle England to vote Leave; Scotland voted to remain

### 3 objectives

#### Remove FPTP



#### Close inequality gap



#### Rejoin the EU



### 3 solutions

- Put in place a modern PR electoral system that makes social justice accessible
- Develop public inequality overhaul strategy to tackle legacy of under-investment and failed free-market initiatives
- Rejoin the EU or EEA

# so how do we execute?

## 3 objectives

## 3 solutions

## 2 possible routes



1 → Put in place a modern PR electoral system that makes social justice accessible



2 → Develop public inequality overhaul strategy to tackle legacy of under-investment and failed free-market initiatives



3 → Rejoin the EU or EEA



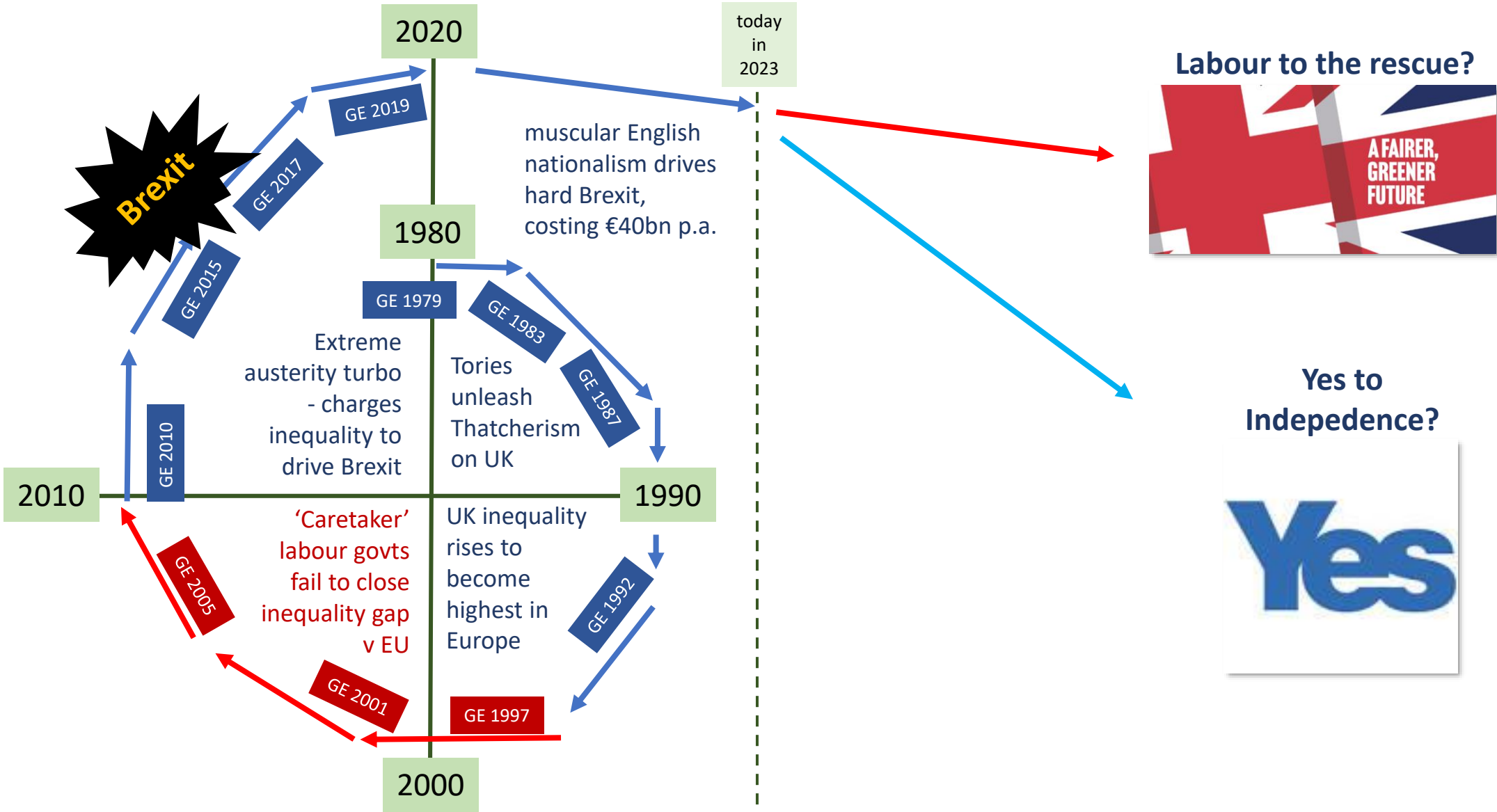
1 Labour to the rescue



2 Yes to Independence



How do the two routes compare?



## I. Replacing FPTP with PR

## II. Tackling inequality head on

## III. Returning to the EU

## IV. Final Conclusion

Labour to the rescue?






v

Yes to Independence?



# Which route is best to get rid of FPTP?

objective	1 → solution	Option 1 Labour to the rescue	Option 2 Yes to Independence
	Put in place PR electoral system		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Commitment to PR at party level?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Manifesto commitment for GE 2024 ?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>If not GE 2024, when?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Can we trust Labour to deliver PR?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Steps to put in place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>commission to review options</i></li> <li>○ <i>pass law in parliament</i></li> <li>○ <i>hold and win referendum</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Risk PR is reversed once in force?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Lead time for benefits to kick in?</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Overall verdict</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>Verdict</b></p> <p>Passed at conf in 2022 but no support from parliamentary party</p> <p>no; ruled out by Starmer, 'not a priority' for '1<sup>st</sup>' term</p> <p>depends when Lab next in power (early to late 2030s?)</p> <p>not clear; Blair promised Libdems PR in 97 then U-turned due to GE97 majority; Labour did not fully back the AV ref in 2011 due to spats with Libs over GE 2010 .</p> <p>reviewer choice material to good PR outcome; if lab have big majority, 'reviewer' selection may steer to dilute PR</p> <p>all Tories &amp; many labour MPs are pro-FPTP since PR will break up their parties; bill will be attacked &amp; PR likely diluted</p> <p>wider pro-FPTP lobby massive, well funded (same group as Brexit / leave); huge risk referendum is lost (as per AV in 2011)</p> <p>land owners and wealthy would lose out if Tory party and majorities disappear so lobby will remain strong</p> <p>even if PR enacted for GE 2029, min 2 decades needed to bed in new parties, voter familiarity; early 2050s at best</p> <p>As long as FPTP offers total power Labour always at risk of conflict</p>	<p><b>Verdict</b></p> <p><b>Outlook</b></p> <p>modern, tailored to our needs, 25+ years old &amp; culturally bedded-in PR arrangement already in place under devolution</p> <p>On Indy, Scotland will have c 30 year head start on any UK PR arrangement</p> <p>PR airborne in Scotland but no use without Indy</p>

**Labour's path littered with obstacles & objection; but in Scotland, PR is already airborne...**





## I. Replacing FPTP with PR

## II. Tackling inequality head on

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Labour to the rescue?






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We'll take it from here?





# Which route is best to start closing the inequality gap?

<b>objective</b>  <b>solution</b>	<b>Option 1</b> <b>Labour to the rescue</b>	<b>Option 2</b> <b>Yes to Independence</b>
 tackle legacy of under-investment and failed free-market initiatives	<b>Verdict</b>  <b>Outlook</b>	 <b>Verdict</b> <b>Outlook</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public spending to reach European peer levels?</li> </ul>	<p>When Corbyn aimed to raise public spending to a level still below European average, it was perceived as unelectable; Starmer cannot risk coming close to these levels</p>	<p>Under PR Indy, we could build the coalitions needed for sustainable long term public investment in society (but not overnight)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of Tory reversal when next in power?</li> </ul>	<p>As long as Tories remain committed to a 'small state' model this is always likely</p>	<p>The Tories will never be in power under PR Indy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve house &amp; rent affordability / accessibility?</li> </ul>	<p>Labour plan to build more houses but they will not dare regulate rental costs (as they do in Berlin) or house values for fear of losing their 'house owning' voters</p>	<p>Under PR Indy, we can set our own strategy for this; change will be slow but PR will allow the 'have nots' to have a say</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw education strategy in line with successful European models?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>private v public investment</li> <li>tuition fees</li> <li>knowledge v student agency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Labour will do nothing to disturb UK's two tier system for fear of losing pro-private school vote</p> <p>Labour will not change tuition fees since risk spooking soft element of their vote</p> <p>Labour may look to change but overhaul too risky; testing method popular since allows streaming to top unis and jobs</p>	<p>Under PR Indy, we will have the space to decide our own moral approach to schooling</p> <p>No tuition fees in Scotland</p> <p>Implementation already underway</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can Labour or Indy Scotland out-perform Blair and Brown?</li> </ul>	<p>Not likely that Starmer's Labour can match Blair or Brown unless they won 3 elections on bounce; but even this unlikely to close the gap (see part III)</p>	<p>Under PR Indy, we can set a course that could surpass any UK FPTP outcome; but we need Indy...</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall verdict</li> </ul>	<p>Under FPTP, Labour can be no more than a 'caretaker' govt</p>	<p>Means to close gap in place but we need Indy</p>

**Labour is trapped by fear of losing soft vote; Indy Scotland may start slowly but PR outcomes will drive fairness**



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Yes to Independence?



# Which route can lead us back into the EU?

objective	3 → solution	Option 1 Labour to the rescue	Option 2 Yes to Independence
	Rejoin the EU or EEA	 Verdict Outlook	 Verdict Outlook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to rejoining the EU?</li> </ul>		No; Labour's stated aim is to 'make Brexit work'	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Based on the EU ref &amp; every single poll ever carried out, Scotland is committed to the EU project</p> </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not, the single market and/or CU?</li> </ul>		No; Labour's stated aim is to 'make Brexit work'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not, freedom of movement of labour?</li> </ul>		Even though Scotland needs more immigrants, Labour cannot risk this for fear of alienating the pro-Brexit vote	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If none of the above when is EU entry likely to become policy?</li> </ul>		Polls indicate higher support to rejoin but Labour must remain very cautious to avoid upsetting their pro-Brexit voters; formal pro-EU stance not likely until 2030s at earliest but not clear Labour will be back in power then	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How long before Europe would allow re-accession for either UK or Scotland?</li> </ul>		For UK, not likely for at least 15-20 years; even then they'd need to see stable govt which would include at least two Tory government where they could rebuild trust	For Indy Scotland, path to entry is not yet known but as long as we leave the UK in a recognised way, a path will eventually be agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can Europe or Scotland be sure we won't leave again?</li> </ul>		This will always be a risk; not clear that it can be over come along as a powerful and well funded English nationalist anti-EU movement exists	The risk of remaining outside the EU for decades or Brexit happening again is very high; Indy in Europe is a much safer route back to the EU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What plans are there to recognise Scotland's desire to remain in the EU?</li> </ul>		Labour have no plans at all to recognise Scotland's EU ref vote, e.g. single market options for Scotland as per N Ireland; this would risk upsetting pro-Brexit vote they need to win the GE	The current SNP govt is committed to doing all possible to maintain our links with Europe and prepare for our eventual re-entry as an Indy state
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall verdict</li> </ul>		Neither UK, EU nor Labour ready to consider UK re-entry	No UK baggage but no Scottish case without Indy



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Labour to the rescue?



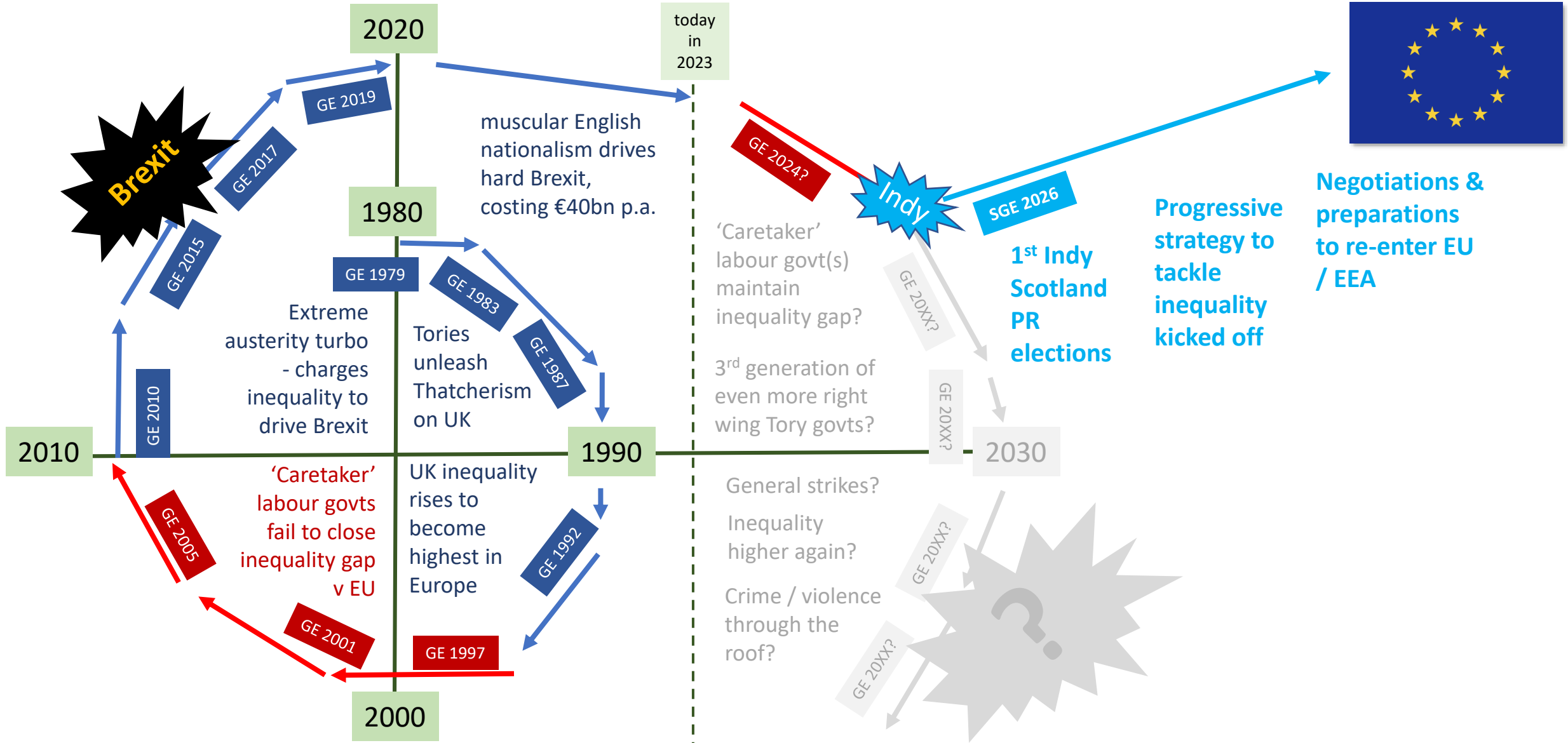
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Yes to Independence?



3 objectives		3 solutions		Labour to the rescue		Yes to Independence	
		Option 1		Option 2			
		Verdict	Outlook	Verdict	Outlook		
	1 → Put in place a modern PR electoral system that makes social justice accessible	Not likely to be considered until mid 2030s at earliest (assuming a Labour govt)		PR already in place and working for 25 years under devo			
	2 → Develop public inequality overhaul strategy to tackle legacy of under-investment and failed free-market initiatives	Possible tinkering but no reversal of previous 40 years failures; FPTP related conflicts prevent action needed		Existing PR arrangement would allow us to chart new strategy with realistic plans to close gap			
	3 → Rejoin the EU or EEA	UK unlikely to be back in EU for decades; No UK pro-EU lobby & major EU trust issues		No 'UK baggage' in a Scottish application for EU			
<b>Overall Verdict</b>		Very little hope of breaking out of cycle of doom		Good solutions but only executable with Indy			

**Labour can only perpetuate the UK's FPTP cycle of doom; Indy Scotland has a viable PR alternative...**



**Vive L’Ecosse européenne!**

