



SECTION 6

Research Paper – The reasons for the defeats of the 1980 and 1995 Referendums in Quebec on sovereignty

Research for Deputy Mark Daly

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Introduction

Quebec is one province of ten within the Canadian federation. The question of economic sovereignty for Quebec and separation from Canada has been debated for some time.

Beaulieu...et al. suggest that

“Most observers of the Canadian political scene trace the political instability of Quebec to the creation of the Parti Québécois (PQ) in 1968, a political party dedicated to Quebec sovereignty.”¹

The 1980 referendum on sovereignty was defeated by a margin of almost 20% while the 1995 referendum was narrowly defeated by a margin of just over 1%.

This note sets out the factors behind the defeats of both referendums on sovereignty in Quebec.

Summary of the 1980 and 1995 Referendums in Quebec

1980 Referendum

During the 1976 election campaign the Parti Québécois (PQ) had indicated that it would hold a referendum on sovereignty. With its winning of that election, the way was clear for a referendum on sovereignty. On November 1, 1979, the Quebec government made public its constitutional proposal in a white paper entitled *Québec-Canada: A New Deal. The Québec Government Proposal for a New Partnership Between Equals: Sovereignty-Association*.

The referendum sought to ask the people of Québec for a mandate to negotiate, on an equal footing, a new agreement with the rest of Canada which would guarantee Quebec’s sovereignty. The wording is set out below:

¹ Beaulieu..[et al.] (2006), p. 624

“The Government of Quebec has made public [*the white paper referred to above*] its proposal to negotiate a new agreement with the rest of Canada, based on the equality of nations. This agreement would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make its laws, levy its taxes, and establish relations abroad -- in other words, sovereignty -- and at the same time, to maintain with Canada an economic association including a common currency. No change in political status resulting from these negotiations will be effected without approval by the people through another referendum. On these terms, do you agree to give the Government of Quebec the mandate to negotiate the proposed agreement between Quebec and Canada?”

The referendum took place on the 20th of May 1980.

The concept of sovereignty-association was rejected by almost 60 per cent of voters, although it is estimated that about 50 per cent of francophone voters supported it.

Table 1 below provides summary information on the % of the Quebec population identifying as Francophone (mainly or exclusively French-speaking) compared to Anglophones (mainly or exclusively English--speaking) and provides clear evidence of the dominance of French-speaking communities in Quebec.

Table 1: Francophone and Anglophone populations in Quebec

% population ²	1981	1996
Francophones	82.4%	80.2%
Anglophones	10.9%	8.4%

Source: Canadian census, 1981 and 1996

The 1995 Referendum

In preparation for the referendum, every household in Quebec was sent a draft of the *Act Respecting the Future of Quebec*, with the announcement of the National Commission on the Future of Quebec to commence in February 1995.

The Act Respecting the Future of Quebec (also known as "Bill 1" or the "Sovereignty Bill") was a bill proposed to the Quebec National Assembly by the Parti Québécois

² % does not add to 100 as there are other linguistic categories included in the Census count

government in 1995. It proposed to give the National Assembly the power to declare Quebec "sovereign", with the "exclusive power to pass all its laws, levy all its taxes and conclude all its treaties". It received a first reading in the National Assembly but the final version of the bill was never voted on following the defeat of the sovereignty option in the 1995 referendum. Had it become law, it would have served as the legal basis for the Quebec government to declare Quebec a sovereign country.

The 1995 Referendum wording was as follows:

"Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new Economic and Political Partnership, within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12 1995?"

By means of this referendum wording, the Government of Quebec proposed to the rest of Canada a partnership treaty based on a "Tripartite Agreement" signed on 12 June 1995 between the Parti Québécois government and 2 smaller pro-sovereignty political parties, the Bloc Québécois and Action Démocratique du Québec.

A yes vote indicated support for negotiations with Canada to lead to a sovereign Quebec.

A no vote indicated continuation of Quebec as a province within a federal Canada.

The referendum was carefully worded by the PQ government to promote the concept of residents of a sovereign Quebec but with the securities provided by being a Canadian citizen.

The campaign began in September 1995 and the referendum was held on the 30th October 1995.

The 1995 Referendum was defeated by less than a 1% margin. Turnout was very high (93.5%) with a large number of spoiled votes (76,000).

In general terms, non-Francophone communities and middle-class voters voted against the Referendum (No vote) while Francophone communities, young people, women, low

and lower middle income earners, and the unemployed voted for the Referendum (Yes Vote).³

Table 2 sets out the results of both referendums

Table 2: Results of Referendums, 1980 and 1995

Referendum	20 May 1980	30 October 1995
Registered Voters	4,367,584	5,087,009
Participation Rate	85.61	93.48
Yes (% of Valid Votes)	40.44	49.42
No (% of Valid Votes)	59.56	50.58
Spoiled Ballots (% of Valid Votes)	1.74	1.82

Source: Gagnon and LaChapelle ,1996

Reasons why the 1980 referendum was defeated

Johnson and McIlraith suggest that in the 1980 referendum language and cultural issues appeared to be more important to voters while economic issues were more important in the 1995 referendum.

The 1980 referendum partly failed because the then Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau promised Quebec “a new federalism that seemingly promised to satisfy nationalist aspirations within the framework of a revised Canadian constitution”.⁴ This emphasis on renewed federalism coupled with Trudeau’s popularity with the electorate in Quebec swung the momentum to the No campaign.

In addition controversial remarks by the Parti Québécois Minister responsible for the Status of Women, which appeared denigrating to female No voters, saw polls slide from 47 per cent in favour of the “Yes” side to 40 per cent by the time of the referendum.

³ *ibid*, 1996, p. 179

⁴ Clarke and Kornberg, 1996, p. 677

This shows how campaigns tend to matter a lot during referendums because of voter volatility. This issue is addressed in a Spotlight⁵ issued by the Library and Research Service in 2009.

Reasons why the 1995 referendum was defeated

Opinion polls in the years between the 2 referendums indicated increasing support for sovereignty and the margin of defeat of the Yes vote in the 1995 referendum was much smaller than in the 1980 referendum. LeDuc suggests that most voters had already made up their minds and were more familiar with the issues around sovereignty than were voters in the 1980 referendum⁶.

Six months before the 1995 referendum, the Yes side was at 39% in the polls but this rose to 50% in some polls during the campaign, and it would appear that the No campaigners underestimated the levels of support for the proposal, initially choosing to remain relatively silent during the early and middle stages of the campaign and only becoming more vocal and public when polls suggested that they might lose the referendum. In addition the sovereignty campaign (the YES vote) had a coherent alliance based around the PQ, the Bloc Quebecois and the small Action Democratique de Quebec. The Bloc Quebecois' leader Lucien Bouchard was popular among the Francophone electorate and took a leading role in the Yes campaign, becoming the leader of the Oui campaign in the last three weeks of the campaign.

By the time of the 1995 referendum however unemployment was high in Quebec, and fears were stoked by No campaigners about possible higher interest rates and increased taxation should Quebec vote to secede from Canada. Johnson and McIlraith highlight this:

⁵ http://vhlms-a01/AWData/Library2/Polling_web1.pdf. See part 2, pages 17-20 in particular.

⁶ LeDuc (1999), p. 20

“pro-Canada forces repeatedly issued doomsday forecasts in which a host of misfortunes – political, economic and cultural would befall Quebecers should they be so foolish as to vote Yes”⁷

In addition the Canadian Finance Minister suggested in a speech close to the referendum date that Quebecers would be treated as foreigners in the event of a Yes vote while Canadian Prime Minister Chrétien said that he would take steps toward recognizing Québec as a "distinct society" and guarantee Québec a de facto veto over constitutional changes should it vote No. These late initiatives were designed to appeal to undecided voters and helped swing the campaign to the No side.

Conclusion

The 1980 referendum was defeated primarily for the following reasons:

- A lack of understanding among voters of the issues relating to sovereignty as well as promises by the federal Canadian government that it would extend greater powers to Quebec after the referendum if Quebec voted No.

By 1995 the Quebec electorate was much more attuned to the issues around sovereignty due firstly to the growing popularity of pro-sovereignty parties such as the PQ and the Bloc Québécois and the perceived lack of progression with regard to several Canadian governments' promises to delegate more powers to Quebec. Therefore the margin of defeat in the 1995 referendum was much narrower than that of 1980.

- Nevertheless the referendum was still defeated for a number of reasons, in particular the No campaign's suggestions that, by voting Yes, the Quebec people might lose access to a range of services including their

⁷ Clarke (2004), p. 349

Canadian passports, social welfare and other public service programmes, the right to vote in Canadian federal elections and the loss of some parts of Quebec to native aboriginal peoples as well as the threat of being seen as foreigners by Canada.

- In addition a large rally in Montreal the weekend before the referendum swayed many undecided voters to the Yes camp, in its focus on the continuation of Quebec as a distinct state but within Canada.

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Scottish Independence Referendum 2014

Analysis of results

RESEARCH PAPER 14/50 30 September 2014

In the Scottish Independence Referendum held on the 18th September 2014, the question 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' was answered 'No' by a margin of 10.6 percentage points.

- 2,001,926 electors (55.3%) voted 'No'
- 1,617,989 electors (44.7%) voted 'Yes'.

This Research Paper presents information on the votes cast and the electorate in each referendum counting area and on opinion polls in the lead-up to the referendum.

Roderick McInnes
Steven Ayres
Oliver Hawkins

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Summary

In the Scottish Independence Referendum held on the 18th September 2014, the proposition 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' was rejected by a margin of 10.6 percentage points.

- 2,001,926 electors (55.3%) voted 'No'
- 1,617,989 electors (44.7%) voted 'Yes'.

There was a majority for 'No' in 28 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas, including the capital, Edinburgh. There was a majority for 'Yes' in Scotland's largest city, Glasgow.

The turnout at the referendum was 84.6% including rejected papers (84.5% based on valid votes). This is the highest turnout at a nationwide referendum or parliamentary election in Scotland since the franchise was extended to women in 1918.

For the first time, 16- and 17-year-olds were eligible to vote. 109,533 people in this age group had registered to vote by polling day.

1 Introduction

On Thursday 18th September 2014, a referendum was held in Scotland on the question:

“Should Scotland be an independent country?”

The holding of an independence referendum was announced by the Scottish National Party (SNP) after they won an overall majority of seats in the May 2011 Scottish Parliament elections.

The franchise for the referendum was defined by [Scottish Independence Referendum \(Franchise\) Act 2013](#). Eligibility to vote was based on the franchise at Scottish Parliament and local government elections, which comprises citizens of the UK, the Commonwealth, the Republic of Ireland and other EU member states who are registered electors in Scotland.

A major innovation in this referendum was the lowering of the voting age from 18 to 16 years of age. By 10 March 2014, 98,068 young voters who would be 16 or 17 on the referendum date had already registered to vote.¹ The final number of registered young voters in this age bracket as of 18 September 2014 was 109,533 voters² – accounting for 2.6% of the total referendum electorate and equivalent to around 89% of all 16- to 17-year-olds resident in Scotland.³

Table 1: Scottish referendum electorate – final totals by local authority area

	Total electorate	of whom: young voters (16-17)	young voters as % of electorate		Total electorate	of whom: young voters (16-17)	young voters as % of electorate
Aberdeen City	175,751	3,658	2.1%	Highland	190,787	5,144	2.7%
Aberdeenshire	206,490	5,926	2.9%	Inverclyde	62,486	1,761	2.8%
Angus	93,656	2,490	2.7%	Midlothian	69,620	1,747	2.5%
Argyll and Bute	72,014	1,808	2.5%	Moray	75,173	2,310	3.1%
Clackmannanshire	39,974	1,037	2.6%	North Ayrshire	113,941	3,377	3.0%
Dumfries & Galloway	122,052	2,936	2.4%	North Lanarkshire	268,738	7,049	2.6%
Dundee City	118,764	3,649	3.1%	Orkney Islands	17,806	460	2.6%
East Ayrshire	99,682	2,836	2.8%	Perth and Kinross	120,052	3,309	2.8%
East Dunbartonshire	86,844	2,437	2.8%	Renfrewshire	134,745	3,962	2.9%
East Lothian	81,947	2,153	2.6%	Scottish Borders	95,542	1,798	1.9%
East Renfrewshire	72,993	2,479	3.4%	Shetland Islands	18,516	544	2.9%
Edinburgh, City of	378,039	7,467	2.0%	South Ayrshire	94,895	2,646	2.8%
Eilean Siar	22,908	598	2.6%	South Lanarkshire	261,193	6,246	2.4%
Falkirk	122,460	3,007	2.5%	Stirling	69,043	2,003	2.9%
Fife	302,165	8,155	2.7%	West Dunbartonshire	71,128	1,725	2.4%
Glasgow City	486,296	10,864	2.2%	West Lothian	138,238	3,952	2.9%
				Scotland	4,283,938	109,533	2.6%

Source: Elections Scotland - [results by council](#) and [Scottish Independence Referendum Young Voter Registrations](#)

As at 17 September 2014, 789,512 postal votes had been issued (excluding postal proxies).⁴ These amounted to 18% of the total electorate.

¹ General Register Office for Scotland: Electoral Statistics – Scotland 10th March 2014

² Elections Scotland: [Scottish Independence Referendum Young Voter Registrations](#)

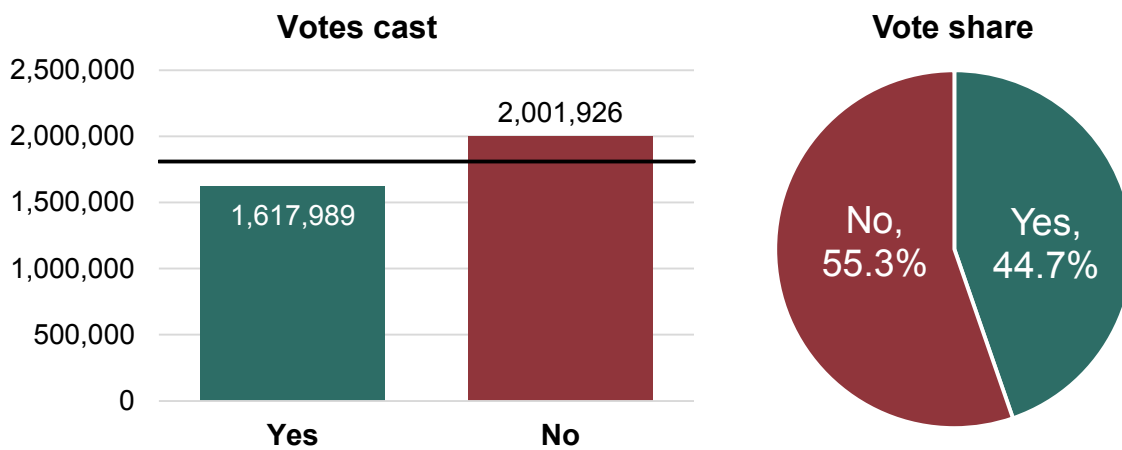
³ Based on [ONS mid-2013 population estimates](#).

⁴ Elections Scotland: [Total polling list broken down by local authority](#) 17 Sep 2014

2 Results

Scotland voted No by a margin of 10.6 percentage points (55.3% No; 44.7% Yes).⁵

National result		
	Votes cast	% of valid votes
Yes	1,617,989	44.7%
No	2,001,926	55.3%
Winning margin for 'No'	383,937	10.6%
Total valid votes	3,619,915	100.0%
Rejected papers	3,429	
Total votes cast	3,623,344	



The total electorate was 4,283,938. Turnout including rejected papers (the headline figure) was 84.6%. Turnout excluding rejected papers (i.e. based on valid votes only) was 84.5%.

The designated counting areas for the referendum were Scotland's 32 local authority areas.

- There was a majority for 'No' in 28 of the 32 areas, including the capital, Edinburgh (61.1% No).
- The four highest 'No' shares were recorded in Scotland's two northernmost authorities (Orkney Islands 67.2% and Shetland Islands 63.7%) and in the two local authorities bordering England (Scottish Borders 66.6% and Dumfries and Galloway 65.7%).
- There was a 'Yes' majority in four areas: Dundee (57.3% Yes), West Dunbartonshire (54.0% Yes), Glasgow (53.5% Yes) and North Lanarkshire (51.1% Yes).

⁵ Definitive vote counts and electorates for each Scottish local authority were published by the Scottish Electoral Management Board on the [Elections Scotland website](#).

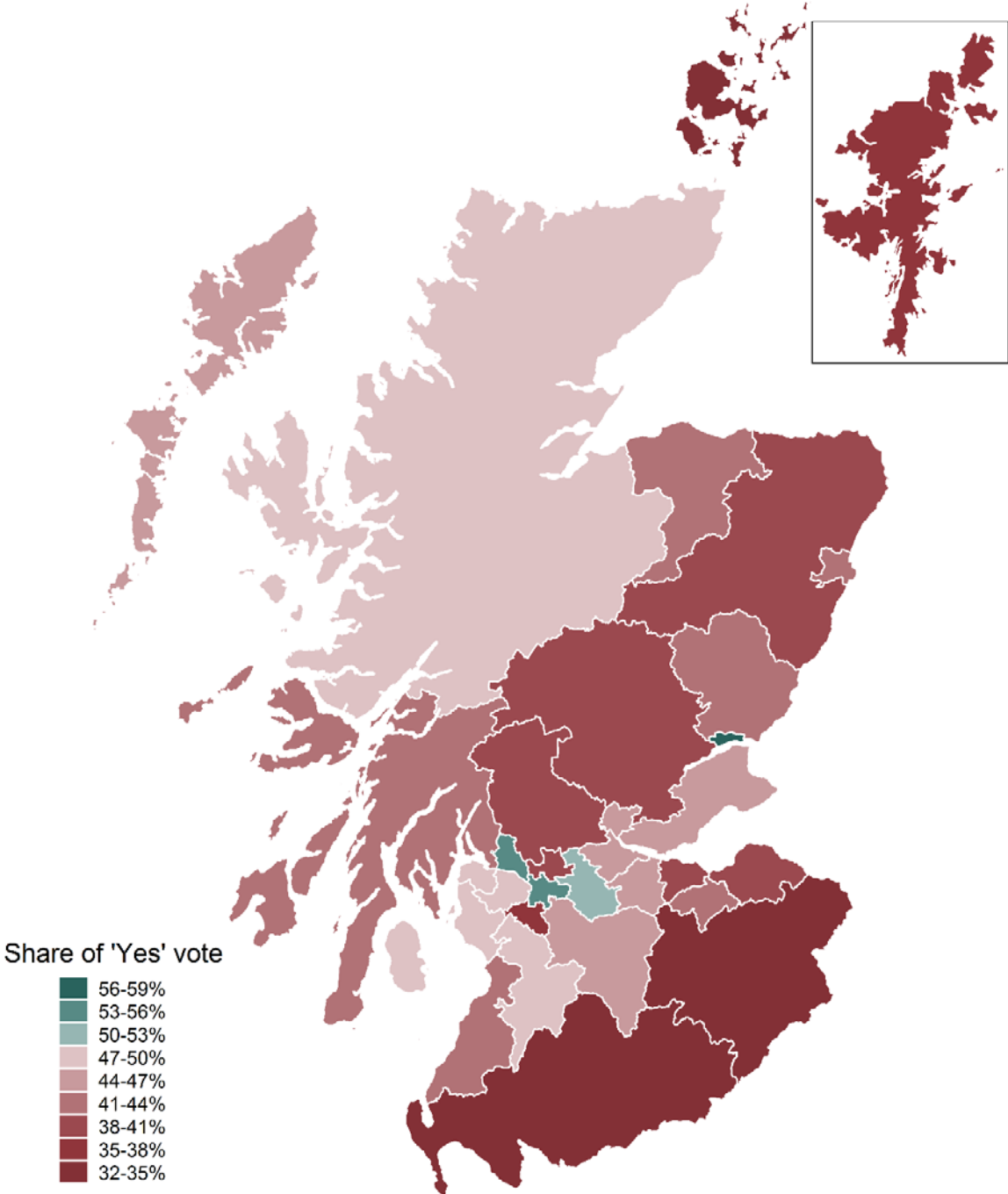
Table 2.1: results by counting area (in alphabetical order)

local authority	Yes	No	rejec- ted	total votes cast (incl. rejected)	yes %	no %	turnout (votes cast as % of electorate)	electorate
Aberdeen City	59,390	84,094	180	143,664	41.4%	58.6%	81.7%	175,751
Aberdeenshire	71,337	108,606	102	180,045	39.6%	60.4%	87.2%	206,490
Angus	35,044	45,192	66	80,302	43.7%	56.3%	85.7%	93,656
Argyll and Bute	26,324	37,143	49	63,516	41.5%	58.5%	88.2%	72,014
Clackmannanshire	16,350	19,036	24	35,410	46.2%	53.8%	88.6%	39,974
Dumfries and Galloway	36,614	70,039	122	106,775	34.3%	65.7%	87.5%	122,052
Dundee City	53,620	39,880	92	93,592	57.3%	42.7%	78.8%	118,764
East Ayrshire	39,762	44,442	58	84,262	47.2%	52.8%	84.5%	99,682
East Dunbartonshire	30,624	48,314	73	79,011	38.8%	61.2%	91.0%	86,844
East Lothian	27,467	44,283	48	71,798	38.3%	61.7%	87.6%	81,947
East Renfrewshire	24,287	41,690	44	66,021	36.8%	63.2%	90.4%	72,993
Edinburgh, City of	123,927	194,638	460	319,025	38.9%	61.1%	84.4%	378,039
Eilean Siar	9,195	10,544	19	19,758	46.6%	53.4%	86.2%	22,908
Falkirk	50,489	58,030	107	108,626	46.5%	53.5%	88.7%	122,460
Fife	114,148	139,788	226	254,162	45.0%	55.0%	84.1%	302,165
Glasgow City	194,779	169,347	538	364,664	53.5%	46.5%	75.0%	486,296
Highland	78,069	87,739	168	165,976	47.1%	52.9%	87.0%	190,787
Inverclyde	27,243	27,329	29	54,601	49.9%	50.1%	87.4%	62,486
Midlothian	26,370	33,972	53	60,395	43.7%	56.3%	86.7%	69,620
Moray	27,232	36,935	38	64,205	42.4%	57.6%	85.4%	75,173
North Ayrshire	47,072	49,016	85	96,173	49.0%	51.0%	84.4%	113,941
North Lanarkshire	115,783	110,922	178	226,883	51.1%	48.9%	84.4%	268,738
Orkney Islands	4,883	10,004	20	14,907	32.8%	67.2%	83.7%	17,806
Perth and Kinross	41,475	62,714	96	104,285	39.8%	60.2%	86.9%	120,052
Renfrewshire	55,466	62,067	79	117,612	47.2%	52.8%	87.3%	134,745
Scottish Borders	27,906	55,553	67	83,526	33.4%	66.6%	87.4%	95,542
Shetland Islands	5,669	9,951	15	15,635	36.3%	63.7%	84.4%	18,516
South Ayrshire	34,402	47,247	67	81,716	42.1%	57.9%	86.1%	94,895
South Lanarkshire	100,990	121,800	137	222,927	45.3%	54.7%	85.3%	261,193
Stirling	25,010	37,153	62	62,225	40.2%	59.8%	90.1%	69,043
West Dunbartonshire	33,720	28,776	36	62,532	54.0%	46.0%	87.9%	71,128
West Lothian	53,342	65,682	91	119,115	44.8%	55.2%	86.2%	138,238
Scotland	1,617,989	2,001,926	3,429	3,623,344	44.7%	55.3%	84.6%	4,283,938

Table 2.2: results by counting area (ranked by % voting 'yes')

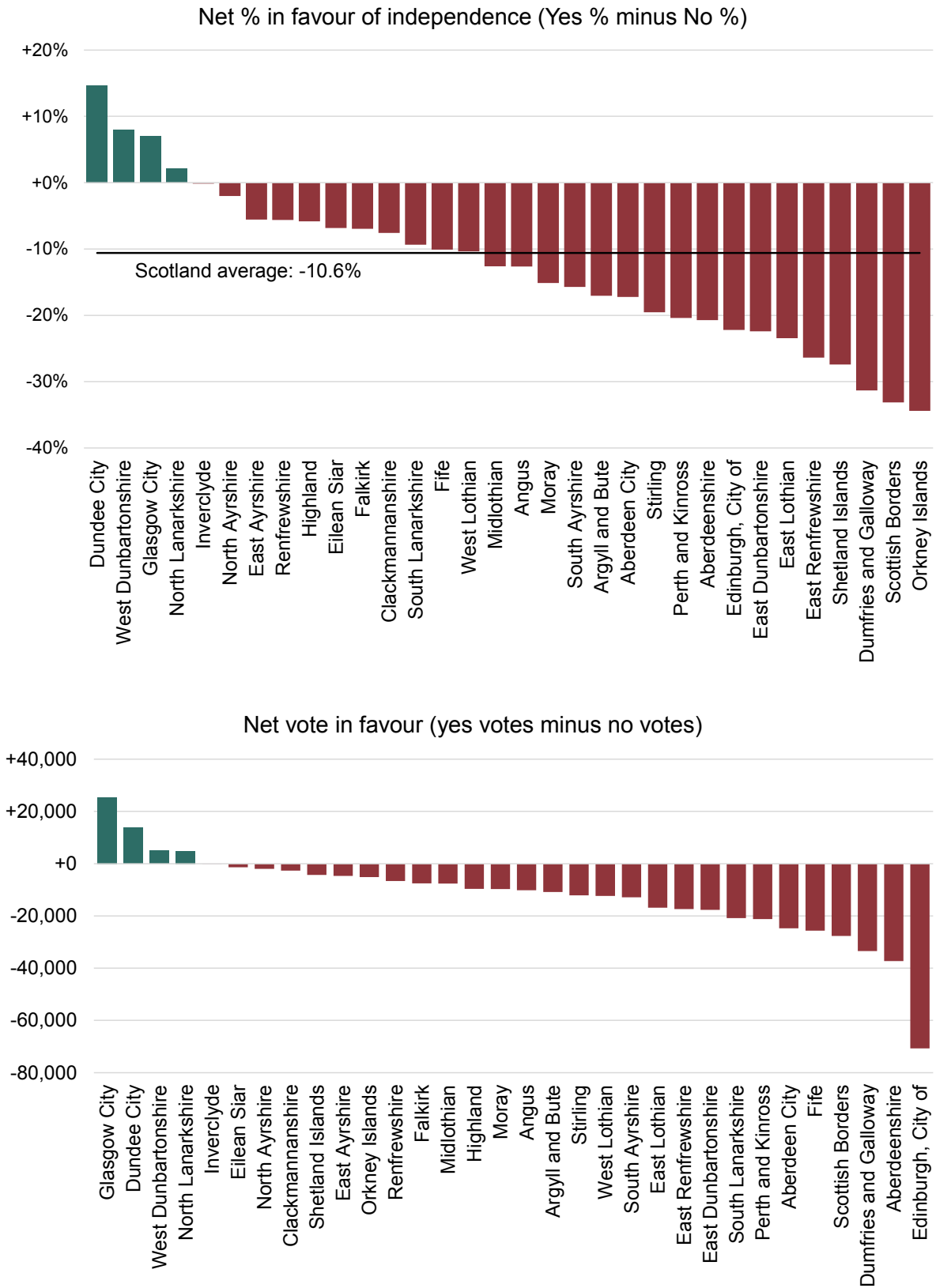
local authority	Yes	No	rejec- ted	total votes cast (incl. rejected)	yes %	no %	turnout (votes cast as % of electorate)	rank (1 = highest % 'yes')
Dundee City	53,620	39,880	92	93,592	57.3%	42.7%	78.8%	1
West Dunbartonshire	33,720	28,776	36	62,532	54.0%	46.0%	87.9%	2
Glasgow City	194,779	169,347	538	364,664	53.5%	46.5%	75.0%	3
North Lanarkshire	115,783	110,922	178	226,883	51.1%	48.9%	84.4%	4
Inverclyde	27,243	27,329	29	54,601	49.9%	50.1%	87.4%	5
North Ayrshire	47,072	49,016	85	96,173	49.0%	51.0%	84.4%	6
East Ayrshire	39,762	44,442	58	84,262	47.2%	52.8%	84.5%	7
Renfrewshire	55,466	62,067	79	117,612	47.2%	52.8%	87.3%	8
Highland	78,069	87,739	168	165,976	47.1%	52.9%	87.0%	9
Eilean Siar	9,195	10,544	19	19,758	46.6%	53.4%	86.2%	10
Falkirk	50,489	58,030	107	108,626	46.5%	53.5%	88.7%	11
Clackmannanshire	16,350	19,036	24	35,410	46.2%	53.8%	88.6%	12
South Lanarkshire	100,990	121,800	137	222,927	45.3%	54.7%	85.3%	13
Fife	114,148	139,788	226	254,162	45.0%	55.0%	84.1%	14
West Lothian	53,342	65,682	91	119,115	44.8%	55.2%	86.2%	15
Midlothian	26,370	33,972	53	60,395	43.7%	56.3%	86.7%	16
Angus	35,044	45,192	66	80,302	43.7%	56.3%	85.7%	17
Moray	27,232	36,935	38	64,205	42.4%	57.6%	85.4%	18
South Ayrshire	34,402	47,247	67	81,716	42.1%	57.9%	86.1%	19
Argyll and Bute	26,324	37,143	49	63,516	41.5%	58.5%	88.2%	20
Aberdeen City	59,390	84,094	180	143,664	41.4%	58.6%	81.7%	21
Stirling	25,010	37,153	62	62,225	40.2%	59.8%	90.1%	22
Perth and Kinross	41,475	62,714	96	104,285	39.8%	60.2%	86.9%	23
Aberdeenshire	71,337	108,606	102	180,045	39.6%	60.4%	87.2%	24
Edinburgh, City of	123,927	194,638	460	319,025	38.9%	61.1%	84.4%	25
East Dunbartonshire	30,624	48,314	73	79,011	38.8%	61.2%	91.0%	26
East Lothian	27,467	44,283	48	71,798	38.3%	61.7%	87.6%	27
East Renfrewshire	24,287	41,690	44	66,021	36.8%	63.2%	90.4%	28
Shetland Islands	5,669	9,951	15	15,635	36.3%	63.7%	84.4%	29
Dumfries and Galloway	36,614	70,039	122	106,775	34.3%	65.7%	87.5%	30
Scottish Borders	27,906	55,553	67	83,526	33.4%	66.6%	87.4%	31
Orkney Islands	4,883	10,004	20	14,907	32.8%	67.2%	83.7%	32
Scotland	1,617,989	2,001,926	3,429	3,623,344	44.7%	55.3%	84.6%	

Figure 2.1: Map of results by counting area (local authority)



Contains [Ordnance Survey data](#) © Crown copyright and database right 2014

Figure 2.2: net vote in favour by counting area (local authority)



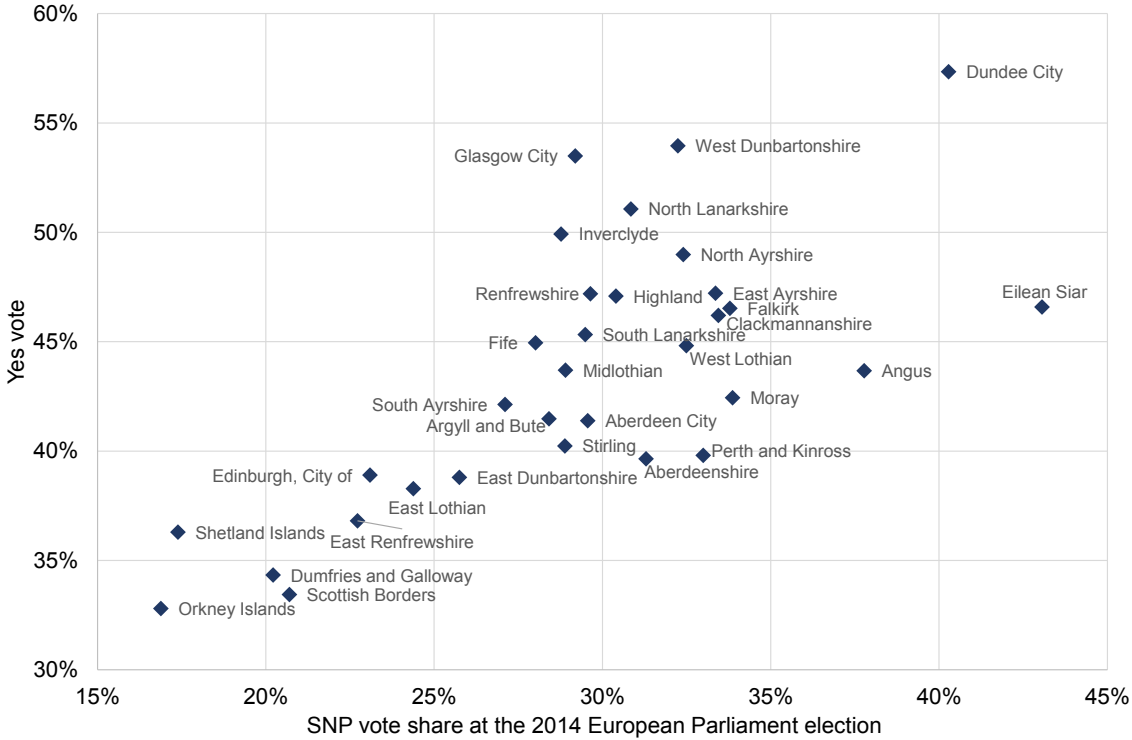
3 Characteristics of local authority areas

This section illustrates the relationship between the yes vote recorded in each local authority area and the following selection of key demographic and electoral characteristics:

- The SNP’s share of the vote at the May 2014 European Parliament election;
- The percentage of people who describe their national identity as Scottish only, as opposed to both Scottish and British, British only or any other identity (as recorded by the 2011 Census);⁶
- The percentage of the population born in Scotland;⁷
- The percentage of the population aged 16-64 who claim an out-of-work benefit (JSA, Income Support or an incapacity-related benefit);⁸
- The percentage of the population aged 65 and over.⁹

Of these, out-of-work benefit claimant rate and SNP vote share both appear to show a particularly strong association with the yes-vote share in each area. Scottish-only identity and Scottish birth are also positively correlated with yes-vote share, but not as strongly. By contrast there is a negative correlation, albeit a weak one, between the proportion of the population aged 65-plus in each area and yes-vote share.¹⁰

Figure 3.1: yes vote vs SNP vote share at 2014 European election



⁶ 2011 Census table KS202SC National identity, accessed via [Scotland’s Census 2011](#)
⁷ 2011 Census table KS204SC Country of birth, accessed via [Scotland’s Census 2011](#)
⁸ DWP working-age client group data Feb 2014, accessed via [ONS Nomisweb](#)
⁹ [ONS mid-2013 population estimates](#)
¹⁰ See also [Demographic differences and voting patterns in Scotland’s independence referendum](#), HoC Library Second Reading blog, 23 Sep 2014

Figure 3.2: yes vote vs out-of-work benefit claimant rate

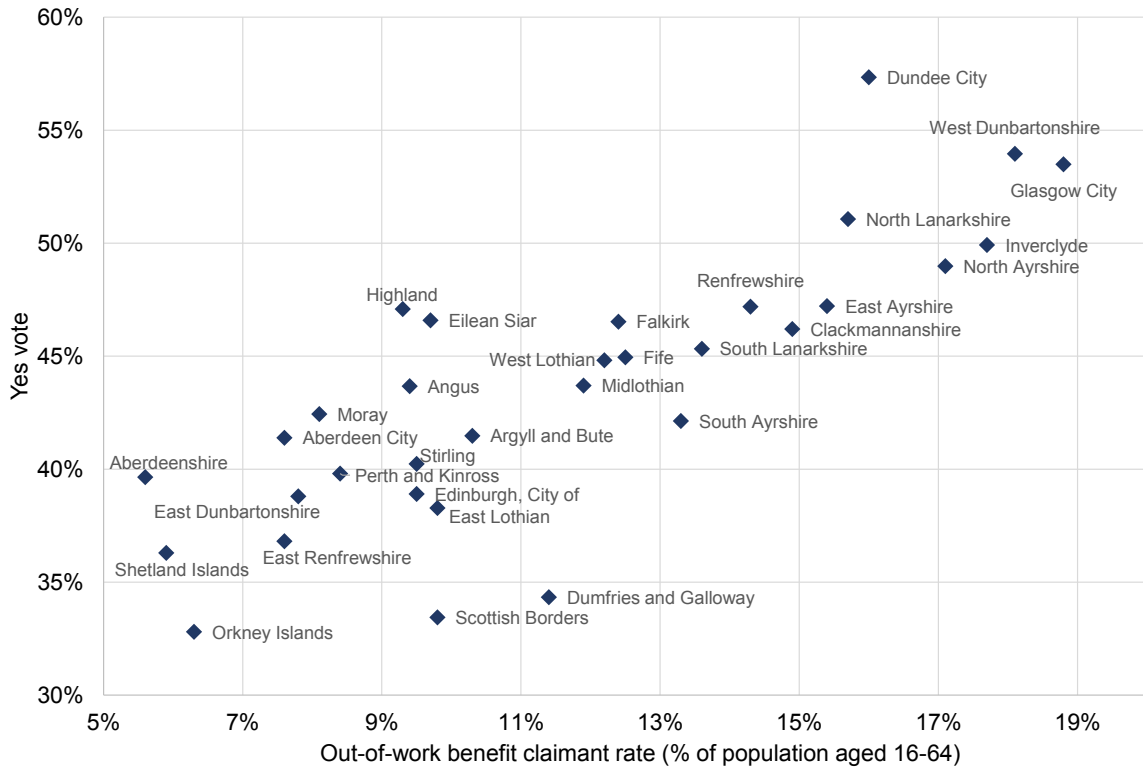


Figure 3.3: Yes vote vs Census respondents self-describing as Scottish only

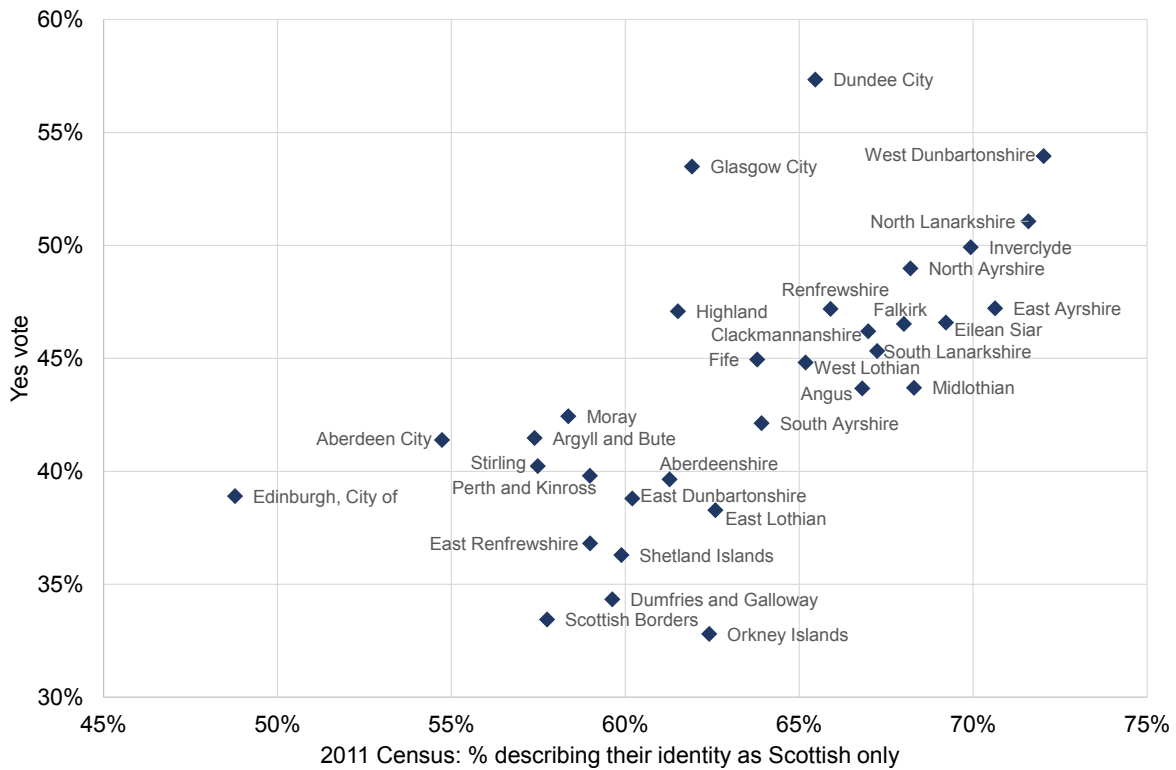


Figure 3.4: Yes vote vs population born in Scotland

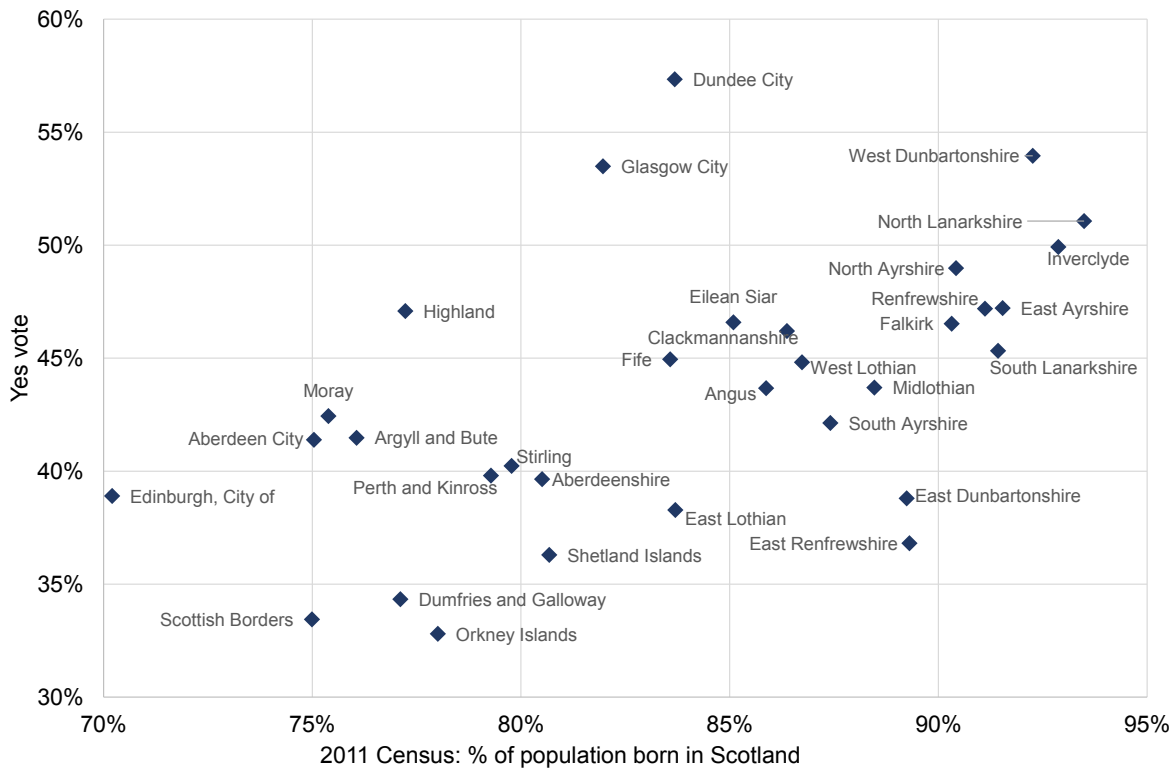


Figure 3.5: yes vote vs population aged 65 and over

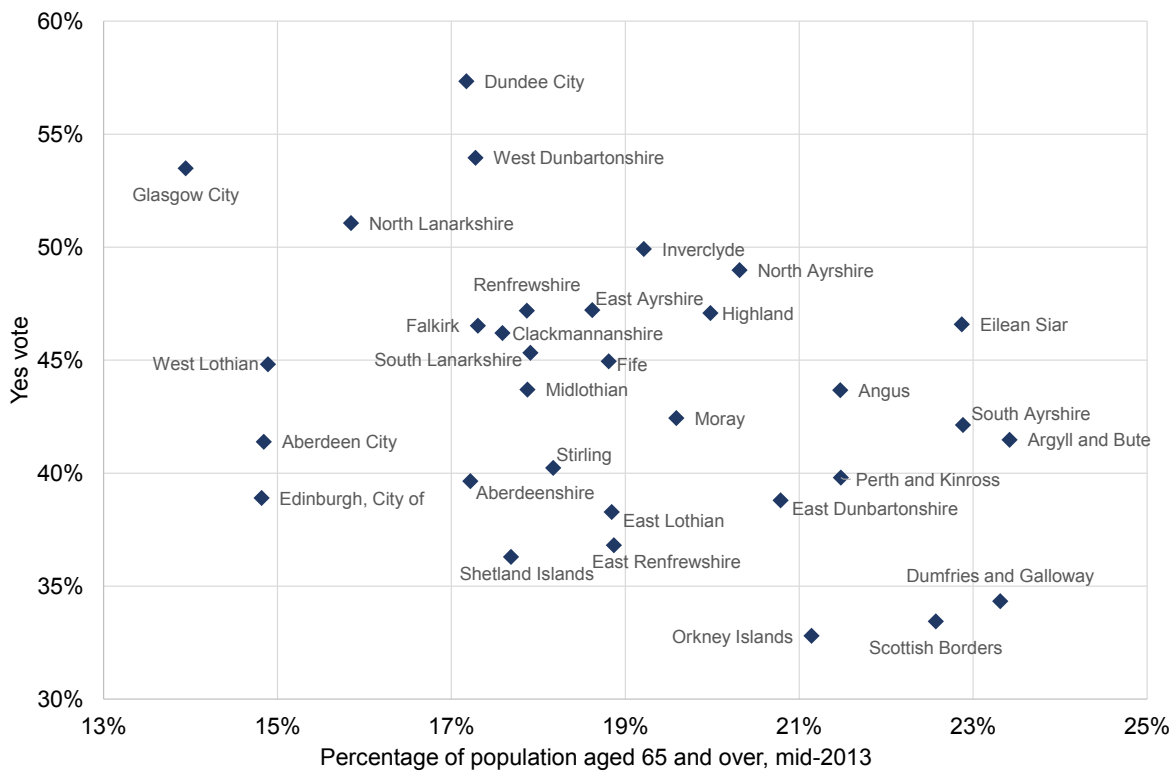


Table 3.1: selected key demographic and electoral indicators for local authorities

local authority	Yes vote share in referendum		SNP vote share, 2014 Euro election		2011 Census: Scottish-only identity		2011 Census: born in Scotland		Out-of-work benefit claimant rate, Feb 2014		Population aged 65 and over	
	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	% of pop	rank	rate (% of 16-64 pop.)	rank	% of pop	rank
Aberdeen City	41.4%	21	29.6%	16	54.7%	31	75.0%	30	7.6%	28	14.8%	30
Aberdeenshire	39.6%	24	31.3%	12	61.3%	21	80.5%	22	5.6%	32	17.2%	26
Angus	43.7%	17	37.8%	3	66.8%	11	85.9%	15	9.4%	23	21.5%	7
Argyll and Bute	41.5%	20	28.4%	22	57.4%	30	76.1%	28	10.3%	17	23.4%	1
Clackmannanshire	46.2%	12	33.4%	6	67.0%	10	86.4%	14	14.9%	8	17.6%	23
Dumfries and Galloway	34.3%	30	20.2%	30	59.6%	24	77.1%	27	11.4%	16	23.3%	2
Dundee City	57.3%	1	40.3%	2	65.5%	13	83.7%	18	16.0%	5	17.2%	27
East Ayrshire	47.2%	7	33.4%	7	70.6%	3	91.5%	4	15.4%	7	18.6%	17
East Dunbartonshire	38.8%	26	25.8%	25	60.2%	22	89.2%	10	7.8%	27	20.8%	9
East Lothian	38.3%	27	24.4%	26	62.6%	17	83.7%	17	9.8%	18	18.8%	15
East Renfrewshire	36.8%	28	22.7%	28	59.0%	25	89.3%	9	7.6%	28	18.9%	14
Edinburgh, City of	38.9%	25	23.1%	27	48.8%	32	70.2%	32	9.5%	21	14.8%	31
Eilean Siar	46.6%	10	43.1%	1	69.2%	5	85.1%	16	9.7%	20	22.9%	4
Falkirk	46.5%	11	33.8%	5	68.0%	8	90.3%	8	12.4%	13	17.3%	24
Fife	45.0%	14	28.0%	23	63.8%	16	83.6%	19	12.5%	12	18.8%	16
Glasgow City	53.5%	3	29.2%	18	61.9%	19	82.0%	20	18.8%	1	13.9%	32
Highland	47.1%	9	30.4%	14	61.5%	20	77.2%	26	9.3%	24	20.0%	11
Inverclyde	49.9%	5	28.8%	21	69.9%	4	92.9%	2	17.7%	3	19.2%	13
Midlothian	43.7%	16	28.9%	19	68.3%	6	88.5%	11	11.9%	15	17.9%	20
Moray	42.4%	18	33.9%	4	58.4%	27	75.4%	29	8.1%	26	19.6%	12
North Ayrshire	49.0%	6	32.4%	10	68.2%	7	90.4%	7	17.1%	4	20.3%	10
North Lanarkshire	51.1%	4	30.8%	13	71.6%	2	93.5%	1	15.7%	6	15.8%	28
Orkney Islands	32.8%	32	16.9%	32	62.4%	18	78.0%	25	6.3%	30	21.1%	8
Perth and Kinross	39.8%	23	33.0%	8	59.0%	26	79.3%	24	8.4%	25	21.5%	6
Renfrewshire	47.2%	8	29.6%	15	65.9%	12	91.1%	6	14.3%	9	17.9%	21
Scottish Borders	33.4%	31	20.7%	29	57.7%	28	75.0%	31	9.8%	18	22.6%	5
Shetland Islands	36.3%	29	17.4%	31	59.9%	23	80.7%	21	5.9%	31	17.7%	22
South Ayrshire	42.1%	19	27.1%	24	63.9%	15	87.4%	12	13.3%	11	22.9%	3
South Lanarkshire	45.3%	13	29.5%	17	67.2%	9	91.4%	5	13.6%	10	17.9%	19
Stirling	40.2%	22	28.9%	20	57.5%	29	79.8%	23	9.5%	21	18.2%	18
West Dunbartonshire	54.0%	2	32.2%	11	72.0%	1	92.3%	3	18.1%	2	17.3%	25
West Lothian	44.8%	15	32.5%	9	65.2%	14	86.7%	13	12.2%	14	14.9%	29
Scotland	44.7%		29.0%		62.4%		83.3%		12.4%		17.8%	

Sources: GRO Scotland 2011 Census; ONS Nomis; ONS 2013 mid-year population estimates

4 Constituency results in Glasgow and Edinburgh

In accordance with guidance from the Chief Counting Officer for the Scottish Independence Referendum, official certifications and declarations of referendum results at local level were only made in respect of each local authority area as a whole, and not for wards, constituencies or any other administrative or electoral areas.¹¹

Glasgow and Edinburgh councils have however published constituency breakdowns of the referendum vote in their areas. Glasgow's votes have been broken down by Scottish Parliament constituency,¹² while Edinburgh's have been disaggregated by UK Parliament constituency.¹³

Table 4: Glasgow and Edinburgh constituency results

	Yes	No	rejec- ted	total votes cast (incl. rejected)	yes %	no %	turnout (votes cast as % of electorate)
Glasgow - total	194,779	169,347	538	364,664	53.5%	46.5%	75.0%
<i>Scottish Parliamentary constituencies:</i>							
Glasgow Anniesland	23,718	22,976	51	46,745	50.8%	49.2%	79.2%
Glasgow Cathcart	26,499	23,688	77	50,264	52.8%	47.2%	80.0%
Glasgow Kelvin	23,976	21,742	100	45,818	52.4%	47.6%	68.8%
Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn	24,079	18,094	62	42,235	57.1%	42.9%	72.5%
Glasgow Pollok	26,807	22,956	45	49,808	53.9%	46.1%	78.7%
Glasgow Provan	25,217	19,046	70	44,333	57.0%	43.0%	74.0%
Glasgow Shettleston	23,137	21,911	54	45,102	51.4%	48.6%	75.1%
Glasgow Southside	21,346	18,934	79	40,359	53.0%	47.0%	71.6%
Edinburgh - total	123,927	194,638	460	319,025	38.9%	61.1%	84.4%
<i>UK Parliamentary constituencies:</i>							
Edinburgh East	27,500	30,632	100	58,232	47.3%	52.7%	80.7%
Edinburgh North and Leith	28,813	43,253	115	72,181	40.0%	60.0%	83.2%
Edinburgh South	20,340	38,298	100	58,738	34.7%	65.3%	85.7%
Edinburgh South West	24,659	39,509	81	64,249	38.4%	61.6%	84.1%
Edinburgh West	22,615	42,946	64	65,625	34.5%	65.5%	88.5%

¹¹ From Elections Scotland [Scottish Independence Referendum Guidance for Counting Officers Part E – Verifying and counting the votes](#), para 7.39: “You must make only one certification and declaration – for your local authority area as a whole and not subdivided into wards, constituencies or any other smaller administrative areas.”

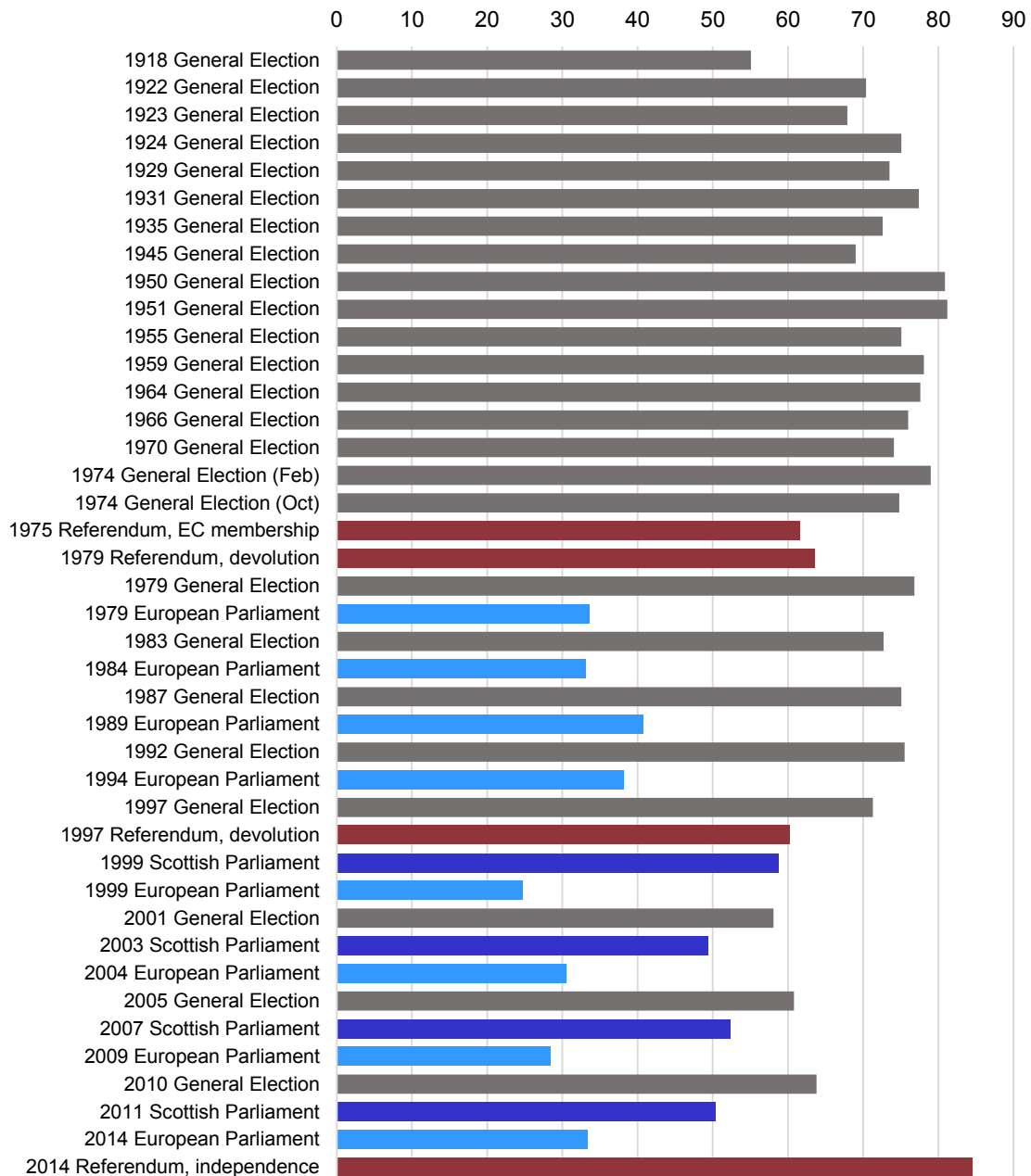
¹² [Scottish Independence Referendum 2014 Results for Glasgow](#), Glasgow City Council website

¹³ [Analysis of voting totals in the Scottish Independence Referendum for the City of Edinburgh Area](#), City of Edinburgh Council website. Constituency electorates provided to the Library.

5 Turnout

The turnout at the referendum was 84.6% including rejected papers (84.5% based on valid votes). This is the highest turnout at a nationwide referendum or parliamentary election in Scotland since the franchise was extended to women in 1918, surpassing the 81.2% turnout in Scotland at the 1951 General Election.¹⁴

Turnout at parliamentary elections and referendums in Scotland since 1918 (%)



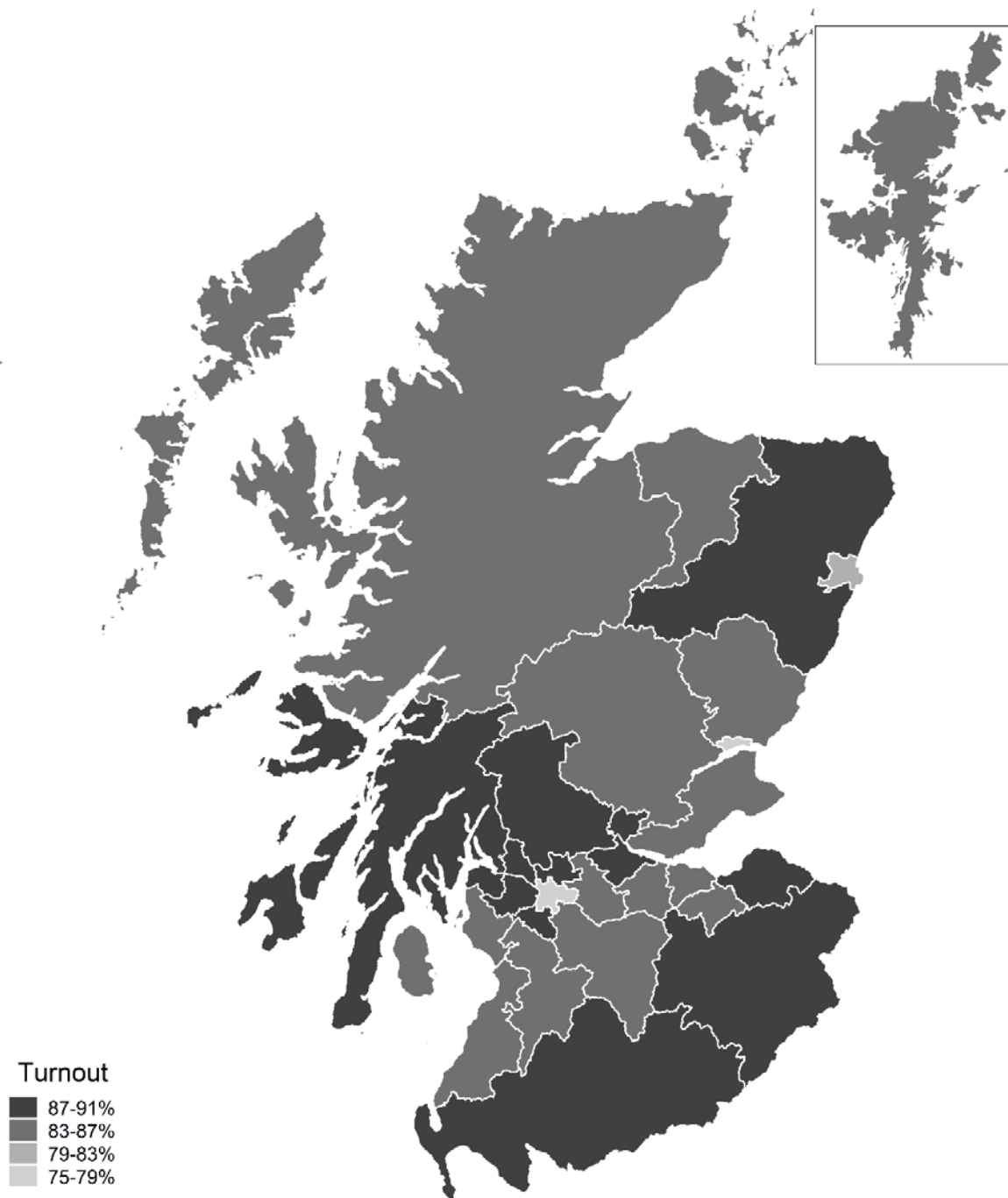
Note: Valid votes as % of electorate. Scottish Parliament turnouts are the higher of the constituency or regional turnout in each case.

¹⁴ See HoC Library Research Paper 12/43 *UK Election Statistics: 1918-2012* (Aug 2012) and HoC Library Standard Note *Elections: Turnout* (SN01467)

Table 5: counting areas ranked by turnout percentage

local authority	yes	no	rejec- ted	total votes cast (incl. rejected)	yes %	turnout (votes cast as % of electorate)	electorate	turnout rank (1 = highest % turnout)
East Dunbartonshire	30,624	48,314	73	79,011	38.8%	91.0%	86,836	1
East Renfrewshire	24,287	41,690	44	66,021	36.8%	90.5%	72,981	2
Stirling	25,010	37,153	62	62,225	40.2%	90.1%	69,033	3
Falkirk	50,489	58,030	107	108,626	46.5%	88.7%	122,457	4
Clackmannanshire	16,350	19,036	24	35,410	46.2%	88.6%	39,972	5
Argyll and Bute	26,324	37,143	49	63,516	41.5%	88.2%	72,002	6
West Dunbartonshire	33,720	28,776	36	62,532	54.0%	87.9%	71,109	7
East Lothian	27,467	44,283	48	71,798	38.3%	87.6%	81,945	8
Dumfries and Galloway	36,614	70,039	122	106,775	34.3%	87.5%	122,036	9
Scottish Borders	27,906	55,553	67	83,526	33.4%	87.4%	95,533	10
Inverclyde	27,243	27,329	29	54,601	49.9%	87.4%	62,481	11
Renfrewshire	55,466	62,067	79	117,612	47.2%	87.3%	134,735	12
Aberdeenshire	71,337	108,606	102	180,045	39.6%	87.2%	206,486	13
Highland	78,069	87,739	168	165,976	47.1%	87.0%	190,778	14
Perth and Kinross	41,475	62,714	96	104,285	39.8%	86.9%	120,015	15
Midlothian	26,370	33,972	53	60,395	43.7%	86.8%	69,617	16
Eilean Siar	9,195	10,544	19	19,758	46.6%	86.2%	22,908	17
West Lothian	53,342	65,682	91	119,115	44.8%	86.2%	138,226	18
South Ayrshire	34,402	47,247	67	81,716	42.1%	86.1%	94,881	19
Angus	35,044	45,192	66	80,302	43.7%	85.8%	93,551	20
Moray	27,232	36,935	38	64,205	42.4%	85.4%	75,170	21
South Lanarkshire	100,990	121,800	137	222,927	45.3%	85.4%	261,157	22
East Ayrshire	39,762	44,442	58	84,262	47.2%	84.5%	99,664	23
Shetland Islands	5,669	9,951	15	15,635	36.3%	84.4%	18,516	24
North Lanarkshire	115,783	110,922	178	226,883	51.1%	84.4%	268,704	25
North Ayrshire	47,072	49,016	85	96,173	49.0%	84.4%	113,923	26
Edinburgh, City of	123,927	194,638	460	319,025	38.9%	84.4%	378,012	27
Fife	114,148	139,788	226	254,162	45.0%	84.1%	302,165	28
Orkney Islands	4,883	10,004	20	14,907	32.8%	83.7%	17,806	29
Aberdeen City	59,390	84,094	180	143,664	41.4%	81.7%	175,745	30
Dundee City	53,620	39,880	92	93,592	57.3%	78.8%	118,729	31
Glasgow City	194,779	169,347	538	364,664	53.5%	75.0%	486,219	32
Scotland	1,617,989	2,001,926	3,429	3,623,344	44.7%	84.6%	4,283,392	

Figure 5.2: Map of turnout by counting area (local authority)



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6 Opinion polls

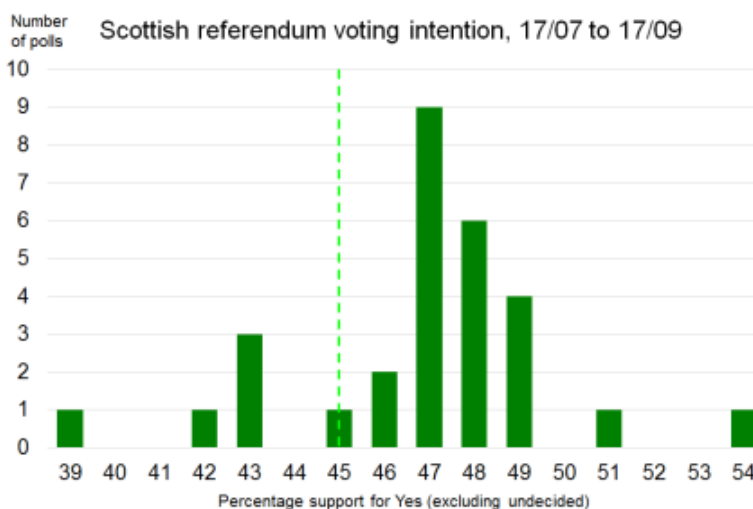
This section examines the trend in referendum voting intentions as measured by opinion polls from January 2012 onwards.¹⁵

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate the trend from January 2012 onwards (including and excluding don't-knows respectively) while Figures 6.3 and 6.4 focus on the period from January 2014 to referendum day. The trendlines are based on a rolling average of the six most recent opinion polls (each individual set of poll findings is shown as dots).

Measuring the trend on this basis, 'No' maintained a substantial average lead over 'Yes' in the opinion polls during 2012 and 2013, with a substantial proportion remaining undecided. 'Yes' then appeared to narrow the deficit appreciably between February and April 2014 and then almost closed the gap entirely during the final three weeks of the campaign.

Looking at the polls whose last day of fieldwork fell during the final two months of the campaign, the most frequent finding was Yes support of 47%-48% (as against the actual result of 45% - see chart, right).

While this difference lies within the range of the usual $\pm 3\%$ margin of error for a single poll, this chart indicates a systematic difference between the estimated level of support for Yes and the percentage of people who actually voted that way: 23 of the 29 polls conducted in the last two months of the campaign estimated support for Yes at 46% or more.¹⁶ This chimes with research by Prof Stephen Fisher of the University of Oxford who found that opinion polling in the run-up to constitutional referendum votes has tended to overestimate support for the Yes option – for example,:



Looking at 16 recent and/or pertinent constitutional referendums [...] In no less than 12 out of the 16 cases the average vote for Yes (which in each case was also the change option) in the final polls was higher than was found in the ballot boxes. The twelve include the referendums on introducing the Alternative Vote in 2011 (5 point difference), Welsh devolution in 2011 (4 point difference) and 1997 (3 points), the Good Friday agreement in 1998 (3 points), Quebec independence in 1995 (4 points)

¹⁵ Based on 108 opinion polls published between 29 January 2012 and 17 September 2014, conducted by the following research companies: Panelbase (24 polls); TNS-BMRB (17); YouGov (17); Survation (15); ICM (13); Ipsos MORI (12); Angus Reid (3); Progressive (3); Ashcroft (2); Opinium (2).

Poll trackers also maintained by [What Scotland Thinks website](#), the [Financial Times](#) and the [BBC.Scotland Decides page](#).

See also [Polling Data on the Scottish Independence Referendum](#) - Lords Library Note LLN 2014/027, 8 August 2014, for a discussion of polling trends up to Aug 2014.

¹⁶ See also [So How Well Did The Polls Do?](#), Prof John Curtice, What Scotland Thinks website, 19 Sep 2014 and [How do Scottish referendum polls compare with the result?](#) House of Commons Library Second Reading blog, 19 Sep 2014

and Scottish devolution in 1979 (3 points). [...] the polls overestimated Yes by more than the traditional +/- 3 margin of error in seven of the 16 referendums.¹⁷

Following on from these surveys of prospective voting intention, two polling organisations – YouGov and Lord Ashcroft Polls – conducted retrospective surveys on polling day to ask respondents how they actually voted.¹⁸ Both surveys indicated a clear majority for ‘No’ among women and a very large ‘No’ majority among older voters. Around a fifth of respondents who reported having voted for the SNP at the 2011 Scottish Parliament election voted ‘No’, whereas between a quarter and a third of Labour voters voted ‘Yes’.

Table 6.1: YouGov and Lord Ashcroft referendum-day surveys of Scottish Independence Referendum voting behaviour

selected findings

How respondent voted:	YouGov			How respondent voted:	Lord Ashcroft		
	<i>unweighted sample size</i>	Yes (%)	No (%)		<i>unweighted sample size</i>	Yes (%)	No (%)
Overall	2,654	46	54	Overall	2,047	45	55
Gender:				Gender:			
Male	1,368	51	49	Male	997	47	53
Female	1,286	42	58	Female	1,050	44	56
Age:				Age (a):			
16-24	216	49	51	25-34	263	59	41
25-39	561	55	45	35-44	384	53	47
40-59	1,061	47	53	45-54	415	52	48
60-64	327	45	55	55-64	399	43	57
65+	489	34	66	65+	488	27	73
Holyrood 2011 vote				Holyrood 2011 vote			
Conservative	351	8	92	Conservative	331	2	98
Labour	689	27	73	Labour	625	31	69
Lib Dem	184	29	71	Lib Dem	263	23	77
SNP	937	78	22	SNP	449	80	20

Sources:

[YouGov, fieldwork 18 Sep 2014 \(non-postal voters\), 15-17 Sep \(postal voters\)](#)

[Lord Ashcroft Polls, fieldwork 18-19 Sep 2014](#)

Note: Figures exclude those that didn't vote

(a) Lord Ashcroft poll also found a 71% 'yes' share among 16-17 year olds and 48% 'yes' among 18-24 year olds, but based on a sample of only 14 and 84 respondents respectively in these age groups - too small for reliable estimates.

According to the Lord Ashcroft survey, 62% of voters who made their mind up in the final month of the campaign voted ‘Yes’, while 66% of those who had always known their voting intention voted ‘No’. The overall pattern was that the later a voter made up their mind, the more likely they were to vote ‘Yes’. For yes-voters the most important issues that determined their vote were disaffection with Westminster politics and the NHS, while for no-voters the main issues were the pound and pensions.¹⁹

The YouGov survey found that 51% of Scottish-born respondents voted ‘No’, whereas 74% of those born elsewhere in the UK voted ‘No’ as did 59% of those born outside the UK.²⁰

¹⁷ [How accurate will the Scottish independence referendum polls be?](#) Prof Stephen Fisher, What Scotland Thinks website, 15 Sep 2014

¹⁸ [YouGov survey, fieldwork 18 Sep 2014 \(non-postal voters\), 15-17 Sep \(postal voters\); Lord Ashcroft Polls, fieldwork 18-19 Sep 2014](#)

¹⁹ [Lord Ashcroft Polls, fieldwork 18-19 Sep 2014](#)

²⁰ [YouGov survey, fieldwork 18 Sep 2014 \(non-postal voters\), 15-17 Sep \(postal voters\)](#)

Figure 6.1: Scottish independence referendum opinion poll findings, Jan 2012 to Sep 2014: % yes / no / undecided

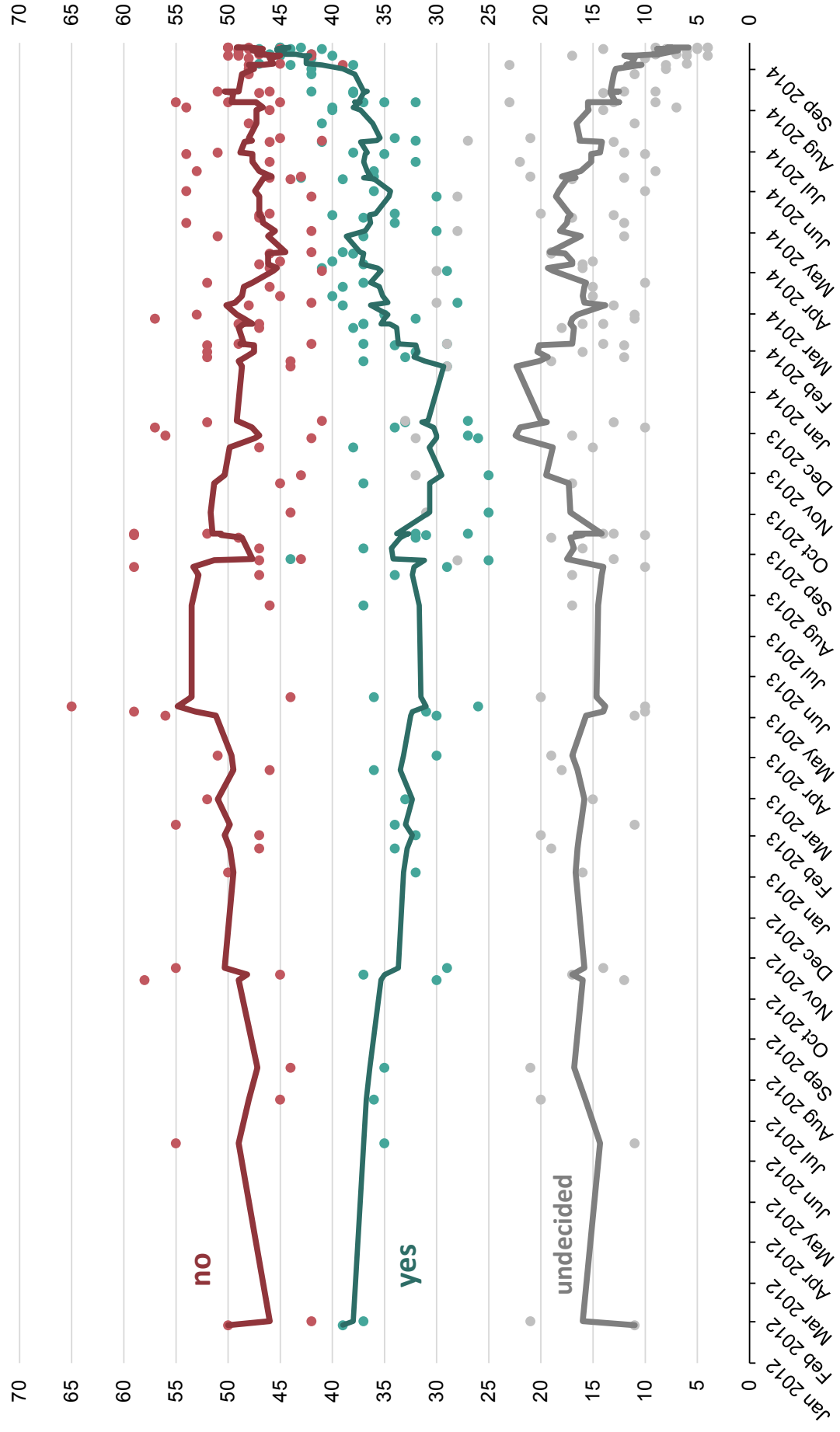
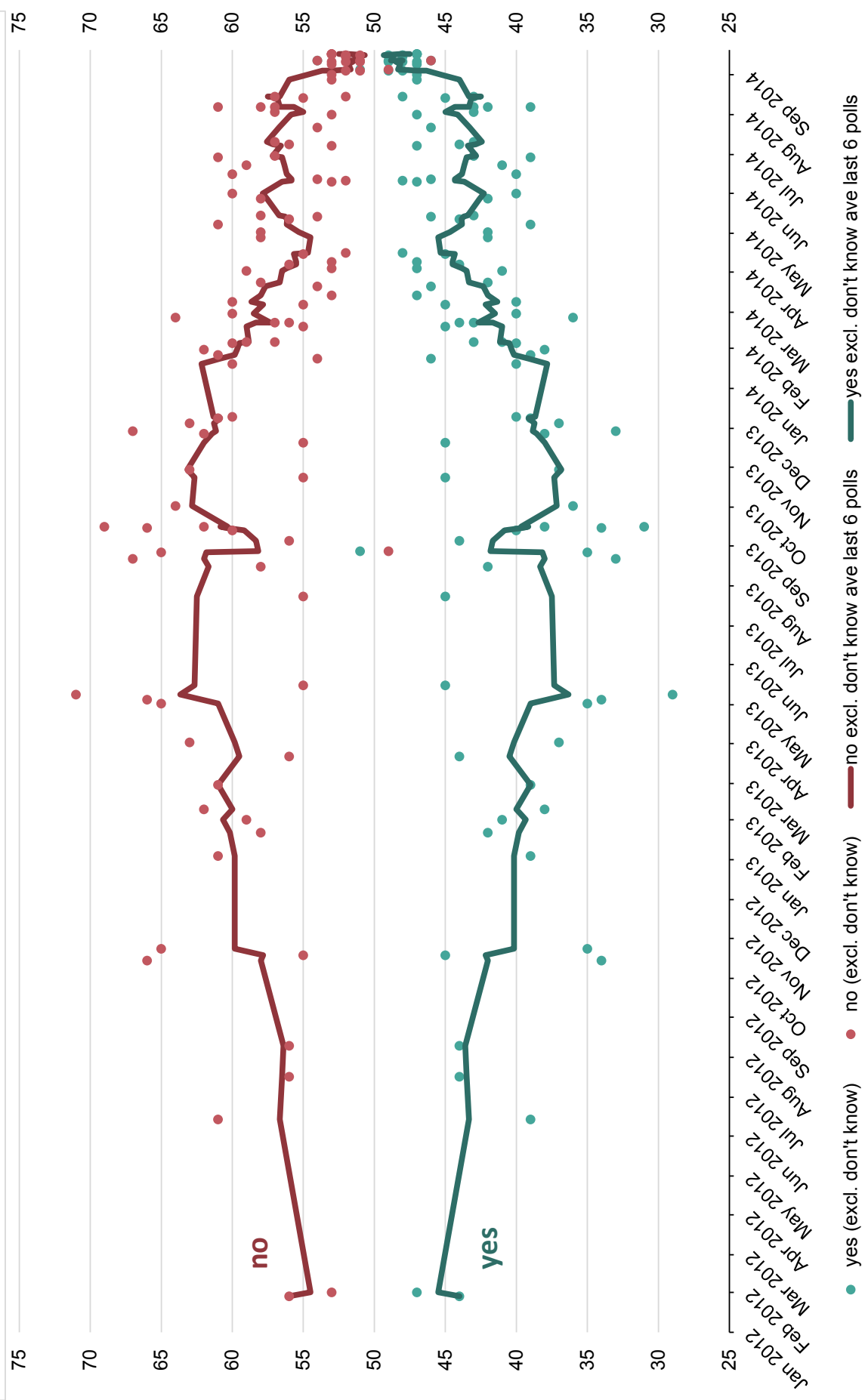
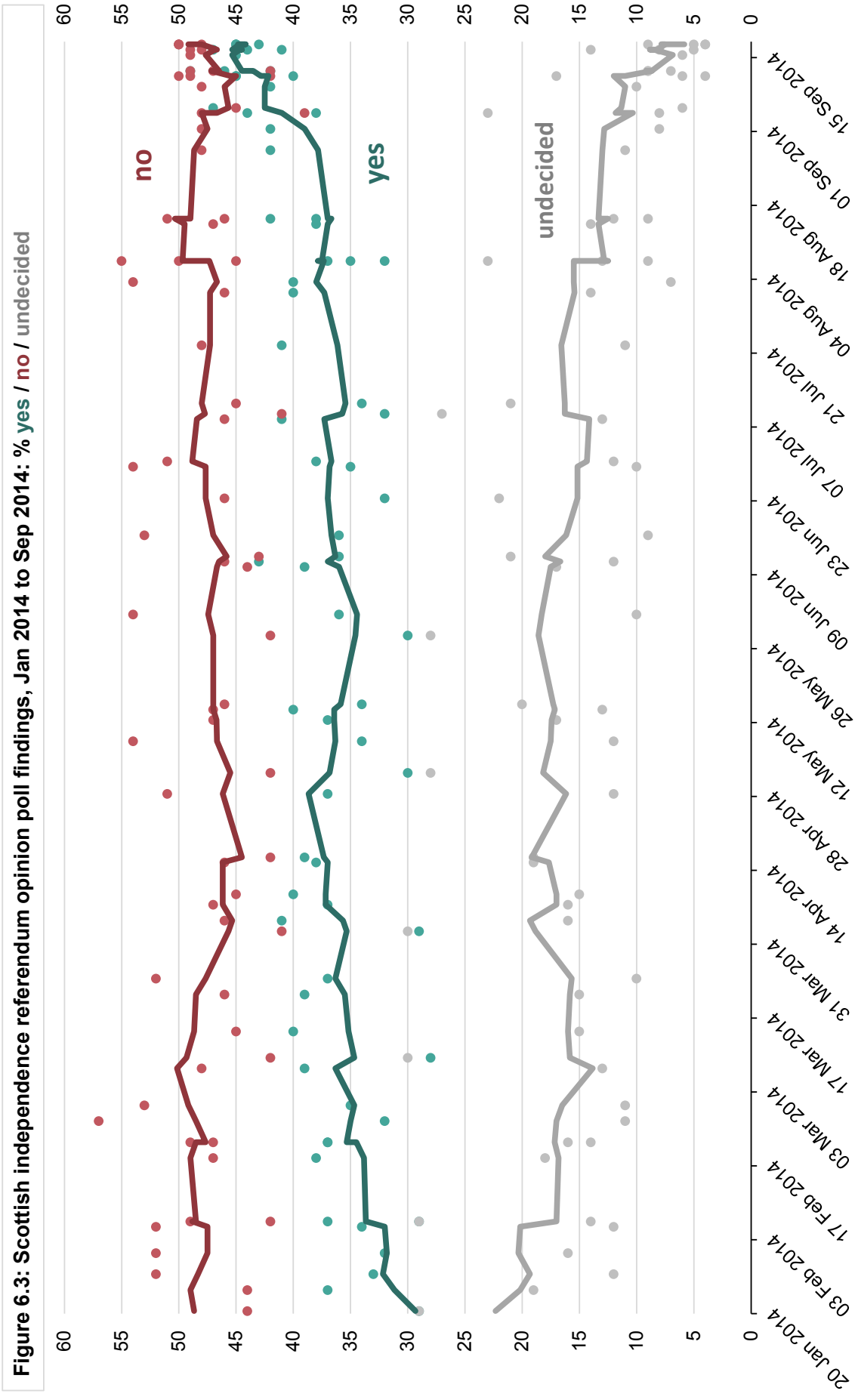
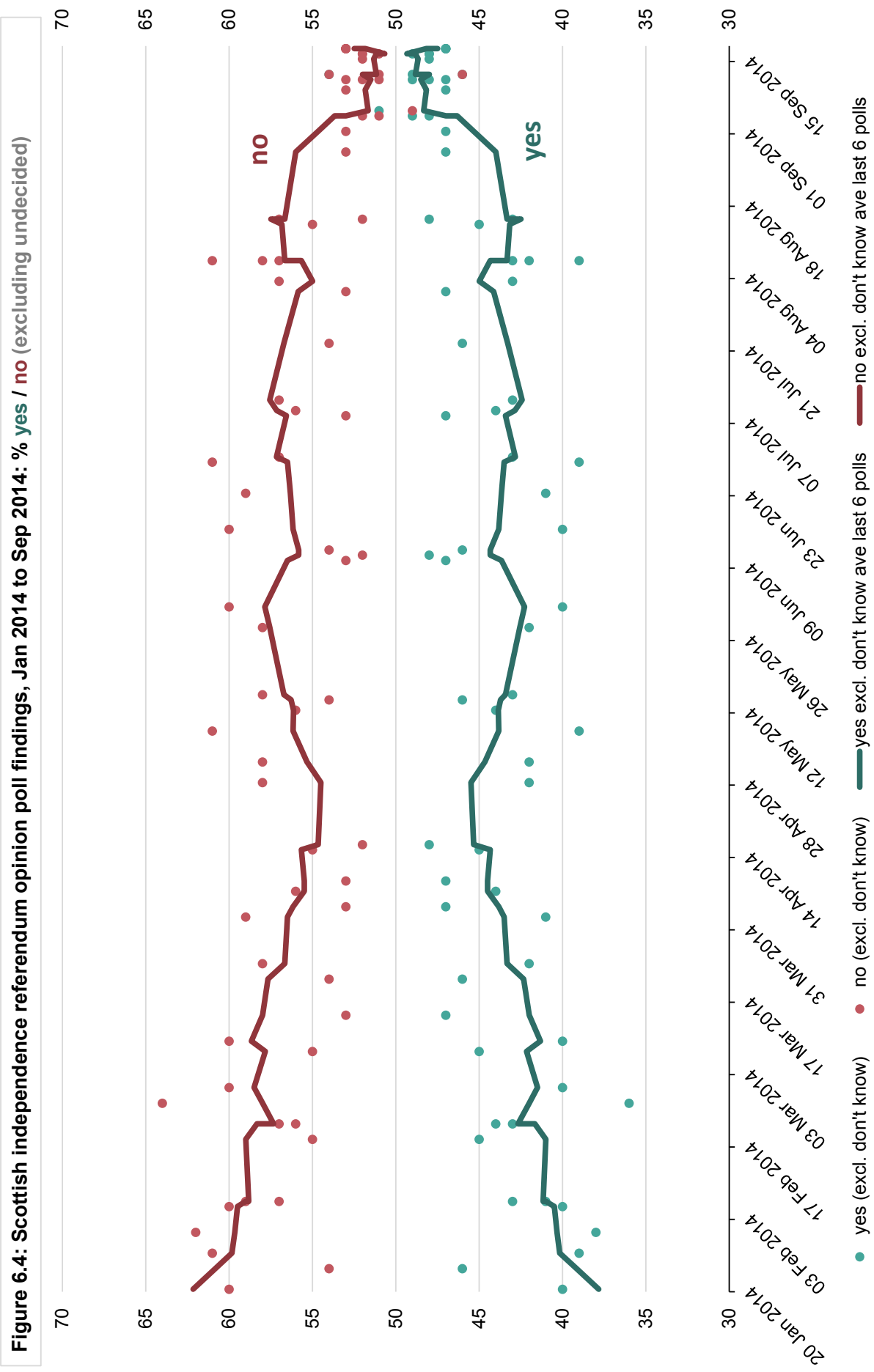


Figure 6.2: Scottish independence referendum opinion poll findings, Jan 2012 to Sep 2014: % yes / no (excluding undecided)







7 Timeline of key events

5 May 2011: the Scottish National Party (SNP) wins a majority of seats (69 out of 129) at the Scottish Parliament election and indicates that a referendum on independence will be held in the second half of the parliament.

January 2012: the Scottish and UK Governments launch consultations on the referendum.²¹ The Scottish Government announces that the referendum will be held in autumn 2014, and proposes that the question should be worded: “*Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country?*” It also holds open the possibility of including an extra question on further substantial devolution (or ‘devo-max’).

15 October 2012: the Prime Minister and First Minister sign the ‘**Edinburgh Agreement**’, enabling the Scottish Government to hold a single-question referendum on independence and to determine the referendum date, franchise and question.²²

30 January 2013: the Scottish Government accepts the Electoral Commission’s recommendation that the question be: ‘*Should Scotland be an independent country?*’²³

7 August 2013: the Bill for the [Scottish Independence Referendum \(Franchise\) Act 2013](#), passed by the Scottish Parliament on 27 June 2013, receives Royal Assent. This bases the referendum franchise on the Scottish Parliament franchise with the addition of 16- and 17-year-olds.

26 November 2013: the Scottish Government publishes its independence White Paper [Scotland’s Future](#).

17 December 2013: the Bill for the [Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013](#), passed by the Scottish Parliament on 14 November 2013, receives Royal Assent. This sets the referendum date for 18 September 2014.

13 February 2014: in a speech in Edinburgh, Chancellor George Osborne rules out a currency union between the UK and an independent Scotland.²⁴ The Labour Party and Liberal Democrats also express their opposition to a currency union.²⁵

30 May 2014: official 16-week regulated campaign period begins.²⁶

5 August 2014: first televised debate between Alistair Darling and Alex Salmond (on STV)

25 August 2014: second televised debate between Darling and Salmond (on BBC)

2 September 2014: final deadline for voter registration.²⁷

18 September 2014: referendum day.

²¹ [Scotland's constitutional future](#), Scotland Office, 10 January 2014; [Your Scotland – Your Referendum – A Consultation Document](#), Scottish Government, 25 January 2014

²² Text of Edinburgh Agreement on [Gov.uk](#) and on [Scottish Government website](#)

²³ [Government accepts all Electoral Commission recommendations](#), Scottish Government news release, 30 Jan 2014

²⁴ [‘A currency union with an independent Scotland is ‘not going to happen’ says Chancellor](#)’, Gov.uk 13 Feb 2014

²⁵ [‘Ed Balls: Currency union with Scots ‘won’t happen’](#)’, Scotsman, 13 Feb 2014; [Liberal Democrat press release](#), 13 Feb 2014

²⁶ See [Scottish referendum- the campaign rules](#) - Commons Library Standard Note SN06604, 13 May 2014

²⁷ [About my vote website](#)

8 Previous referendums

The table below summarises referendums that have taken place in the UK since 1973 at a national or regional level.

Subject of referendum	Relevant area	Date	Outcome	vote share in favour	Turnout
Northern Ireland sovereignty referendum	Northern Ireland	March 1973	NI votes to remain in UK (note: poll subject to widespread boycott by Nationalist community)	98.9%	59%
Continued membership of the European Community	UK	June 1975	UK voted to remain in European Community	67.2%	64%
Devolution	Scotland	March 1979	Devolution did not proceed (threshold requirement not met)	51.6%	64%
Devolution	Wales	March 1979	Devolution did not proceed	20.3%	59%
Devolution	Scotland	September 1997	Scottish Parliament established	74.3%	60%
Tax-varying powers for Scottish Parliament	Scotland	September 1997	Scottish Parliament given tax-raising powers	63.5%	60%
Devolution	Wales	September 1997	Welsh Assembly established	50.3%	50%
Establishment of Greater London Authority	London	May 1998	Greater London Authority established	72.0%	34%
Good Friday Agreement	Northern Ireland	May 1998	Support given for provisions of Agreement	71.1%	81%
Establishment of elected Regional Assembly	North East England	November 2004	Elected Regional Assembly not established	22.1%	47%
Expansion of Welsh Assembly law making powers	Wales	March 2011	Welsh Assembly given greater law making powers	63.5%	35%
Voting system	UK	May 2011	Alternative Vote system rejected	32.1%	42%
Scottish Independence Referendum	Scotland	September 2014	Independence rejected	44.7%	85%

Sources:

[House of Lords Constitution Committee - Twelfth Report of session 2009-2010, Referendums in the United Kingdom \(7 Apr 2010\)](#);

[Referendum in Wales - Commons Library standard note SN05897 \(Mar 2011\)](#)

[Alternative Vote Referendum 2011 - Commons Library Research Paper 11/44 \(19 May 2014\)](#)

There have also been a number of local-authority referendums in England and Wales on the question of directly-elected mayors and several authorities have held non-binding referendums on increases in council tax.²⁸

²⁸ See Commons Library standard notes SN05000 [Directly Elected Mayors](#) and SN05682 [Council tax: local referendums](#) for more details