



## Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office Briefing Paper

### The Scottish Referendum 2014: Looking to the Future

December 2014, Briefing 2014/12

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#### The Scottish Referendum 2014

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2014, the Scottish people voted in a referendum on whether to become an independent country or stay part of the United Kingdom. Several political organisations, grassroots movements, civil organisations and others were involved in campaigning for each viewpoint. The most prominent campaigns were led by 'Yes Scotland' in favour of independence and by 'Better Together' in favour of maintaining the union.

The referendum result was 44.7% in favour of 'Yes' and 55.3% in favour of 'No'<sup>1</sup>. As a result of the majority voting in favour of 'No', Scotland now remains part of the United Kingdom.

This paper intends to look further at the referendum process and what the result of the event and its result might indicate for the future. The following questions will be considered:

- Who voted 'Yes' and 'No' and why?
- Does this provide an indication of any sort of division within Scotland?
- What does this tell us about the state of our nation and potential cohesion/division?
- What role did the Churches play following the referendum?

The SCPO has also published two additional briefings. One is on the [Smith Commission Agreement](#). The second is about the new First Minister's [Programme for Government 2014-15](#).

#### How the electorate voted

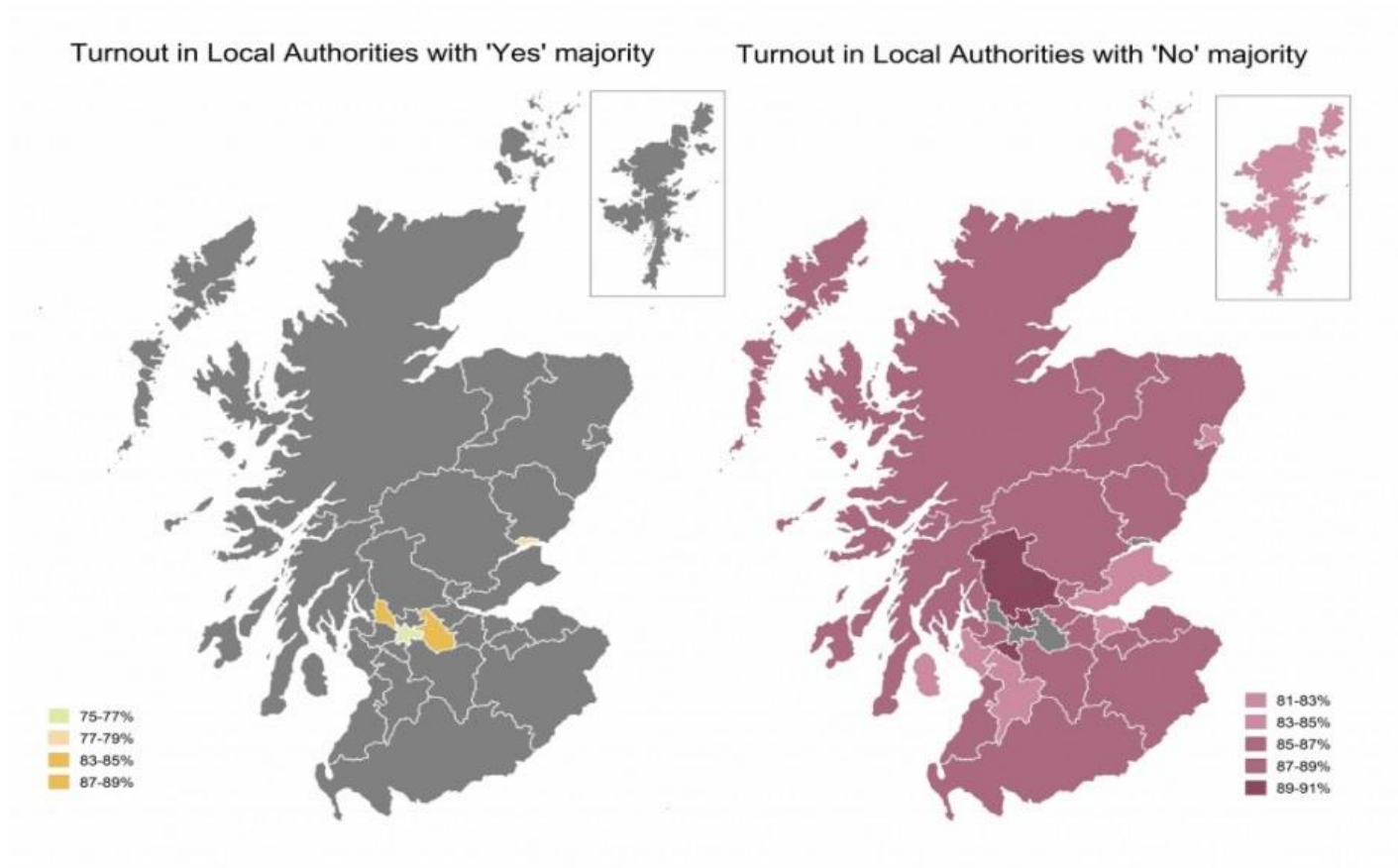
##### Turnout

The overall turnout at the Scottish referendum was 84.6%. Glasgow had the lowest turnout at 75%, followed by Dundee on 78.8%. The highest was East Dunbartonshire at 91% with East Renfrewshire and Stirling also just over 90%.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/ng-interactive/2014/sep/18/-sp-scottish-independence-referendum-results-in-full>

Figure 1. Turnout in Local Authorities with 'Yes' and 'No' majorities.



Source: London School of Economics and Political Science

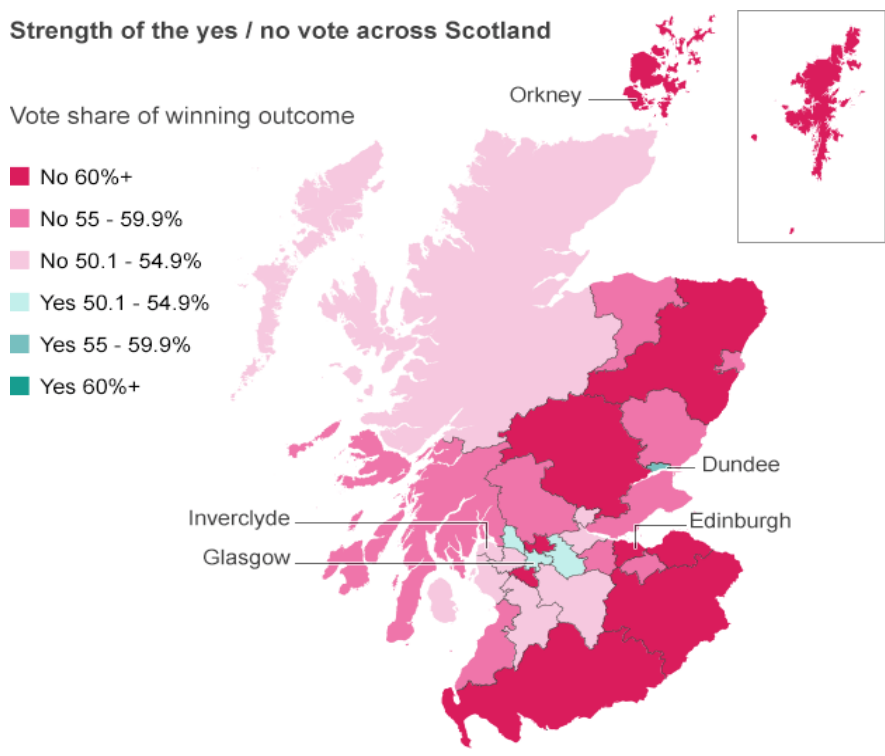
### Results in detail

The **closest result** was Inverclyde with 50.1% 'No' to 49.9% 'Yes'.

The **most emphatic 'No'** vote was Orkney where 67.2% voted against independence, followed by Scottish Borders at 66.6% and Dumfries & Galloway at 65.7%.

Dundee was the **most pro-Yes** with 57.4%, followed by West Dunbartonshire at 54% and Glasgow at 53.5%.

**Figure 2. Strength of the yes/no vote across Scotland**



Source: British Broadcasting Corporation

The latest electoral statistics for Scotland (as of March 2014) can be accessed at the General Registrar Office for Scotland<sup>2</sup>.

### Who voted yes and who voted no?

The first poll of how people actually voted in the Scottish referendum was conducted by [YouGov on 18 September](#)<sup>3</sup>. Yougov contacted those whom they had interviewed (online) for [their final poll](#)<sup>4</sup> published on the morning of 18 September. It comprised 1,756 people who had voted, and 783 who in previous polls had advised YouGov that they had already voted, an overall total of just over 2,500 respondents. The poll was used to predict on the night of the Referendum that the No campaign would win with 54% of the vote.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of September a polling exercise was [undertaken by Lord Ashcroft](#)<sup>5</sup> partly by phone (n=1,216) and partly online (n=831), a total of 2,047 interviewees. The balance of Yes (45%) and No (55%) votes in this poll matches the actual referendum result, but it is not possible to tell from the data whether or not this is because the poll was weighted to ensure that it matched the actual result.

Both polls confirm the presence of four patterns that were shown in the polls throughout most of the campaign: women, those in more affluent circumstances, older people and those who were born outside Scotland were less likely to vote 'Yes'.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/electoral-stats/10-march-2014/introduction-and-commentary.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://yougov.co.uk/publicopinion/archive/10934/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://blog.whatscotlandthinks.org/2014/09/polls-still-close/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2014/09/scotland-voted/>

## Gender

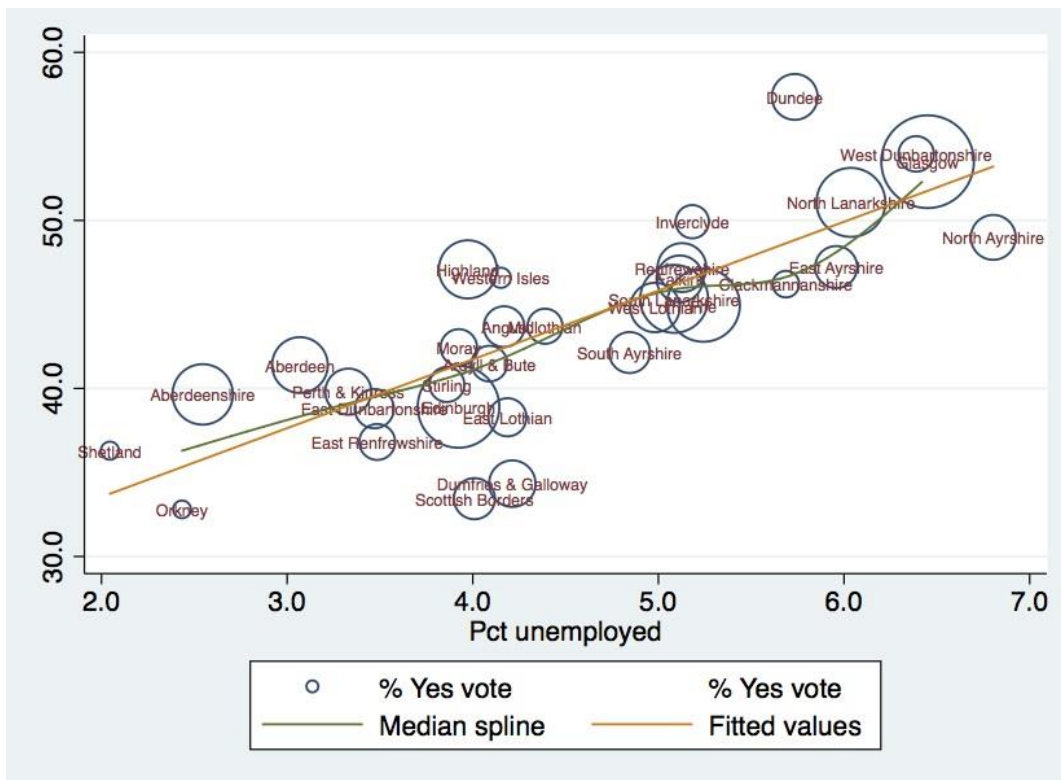
According to the [Ashcroft poll](#), 47% of men voted Yes, compared with 44% of women. On average the Yes vote amongst men in each company's final poll was 51%, while it was only 43% amongst women. YouGov's figures are closer to those averages, with 51% of men voting Yes and only 42% of women. It is therefore likely that the smaller gender gap in the Ashcroft poll is a product of the 'random variation' to which all polls are subject.

## Economic Deprivation

Unemployment figures from the Annual Population Survey 2013 show [North Ayrshire](#) the worst affected with a rate of 13.5% of the adult population. This area returned a narrow No vote of 51%. Neighbouring [East Ayrshire](#) has the second-highest unemployment rate with 11.4% and [Dundee](#) - which voted Yes - is third with 11.3%. At the other end of the scale, [Shetland](#), which voted strongly No, has the lowest unemployment levels at 3.2%, followed by [Aberdeenshire](#) at 3.3%<sup>6</sup>.

The below figures show that people in 'relatively deprived' areas and areas with higher levels of unemployment were much more likely to vote in favour of independence.

**Fig 3. Unemployed (%) by Local Authority and the 'Yes' vote.**





(many of whom would have been Irish, Commonwealth or EU citizens) was much less distinctive, with 41% saying they voted Yes.<sup>9</sup>

One might expect a higher concentration of people born elsewhere in the UK in these areas due to the close proximity to England, as well as a stronger desire to remain within the UK due to social and economic ties. However, it is the urban areas in the centre of the country that have the lowest share of English, Welsh or Northern Irish and the highest support for 'Yes'. Even in those central areas where a majority voted for 'No' such as North and East Ayrshire, the result was closer than the average.

### **National Identity**

People's sense of national identity was also reflected in how they voted. In [Ipsos MORI's two final polls](#) 88% of those who said they were 'Scottish and not British' voted Yes, compared with 65% of those who said they were 'More Scottish than British' and 26% of those who felt 'Equally British and Scottish'.

Amongst the two remaining small groups, only 9% of those who said they were 'More British than Scottish' identified themselves as Yes voters, and just 13% of those who said they were 'British and not Scottish'<sup>10</sup>.

### **Party support**

In the referendum, three of the four areas to vote Yes had backed Labour in the European election. Dundee was the exception, backing the SNP in May and voting Yes in the referendum.

The Local Authority areas with the highest vote share for the SNP in the 2014 European Parliament election did not show strongest support for independence. This is perhaps best shown by Eilean Siar, where the SNP received its highest vote share in the 2014 European Parliament elections (43%) but which rejected independence by a margin of 7 percentage points. Perth & Kinross and Aberdeenshire were ranked 8th and 12th in terms of SNP support in 2012, but 23rd and 24th for support for independence.

Professor of politics at Edinburgh University, Charlie Jeffrey, stated that party loyalties did not seem to have mattered in the referendum vote:

*"We have seen results in Labour strongholds like Glasgow and North Lanarkshire where there has been a 'Yes' vote, and in SNP strongholds like Angus and Perthshire there has been a 'No' vote. What we have found is a very strong correlation between the Yes vote and a higher level of unemployment... but also a slightly less strong relationship between the more British you feel, the less likely you are to vote 'Yes'...these seem to be more significant influences than political party in the outcome."*

### **Voting patterns and Religion**

The [University of Manchester's Institute for Social Change](#) owns a think tank and blog titled '[British Religion in Numbers](#)' (or BRIN).

BRIN state that none of the post referendum polls appear to have asked about the faith or religion of respondents. As a result, there is little knowledge of how religion may have influenced views on Scottish independence<sup>11</sup>.

BRIN published following table, [calculated from Ashcroft's data](#), stating that "there does appear to have been a simplistic correlation between religious affiliation and referendum voting patterns. Essentially, the majority of Catholics, non-Christians, and those professing no religion all favoured independence. It was

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<sup>9</sup> <http://blog.whatscotlandthinks.org/2014/09/voted-yes-voted/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/contactus/offices/scotland/indyref2014/polling/votingintention/natid.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/2014/scottish-independence-and-other-news/>

only the votes of Protestants which saved the United Kingdom. The vast majority of these affiliate to the Church of Scotland and may have been influenced by the fact that the Queen has a strong relationship with it, albeit she is not its Supreme Governor (as she is in respect of the Church of England). The reality is likely to be far more complex than this, as a multivariate analysis of the dataset would doubtless reveal (if it ever becomes available), but these figures suggest that religion cannot be discounted from having some bearing on how people voted.”

**Table 1: Religion of voters in the Scottish Independence Referendum**

% across	No vote	Yes vote
Total	54.6	45.4
Christians: Catholic	43.0	57.0
Christians: Non-Catholic	69.1	30.9
Non-Christians	36.4	63.6
No religion	44.3	55.7

Source: British Religion in Numbers; Institute for Social Change, University of Manchester.

### A nation divided?

In the run up to the Scottish referendum and immediately after, the media published many articles<sup>12</sup> that Scotland may become a divided nation following the outcome of the referendum. Among the public, views on this were split. ICM asked voters in June, July and August 2014 if they thought Scotland would be “left badly divided” after the referendum. 51% felt it would and 49% felt that it would not<sup>13</sup>.

Following the referendum there has been little research to suggest that Scotland is more divided as a direct result of the independence referendum. Fringe groups on both sides were responsible for a minority of divisive actions and words, some of which may be routed in the issue of sectarianism<sup>14</sup>.

Many individuals on both sides engaged in the political process and in campaigning for the first time as a result of the referendum. Politics is by its very nature divisive as it involves individuals, groups or political parties with opposing views and often involves heated debate. The future of Scotland was a topic that resulted in many people holding strong views; however the majority of the referendum campaign process was well conducted in behavioural terms.

Throughout the world, elections and referendums often result in armed deployment, violence and even deaths<sup>15</sup>. By contrast, Scotland and the rest of the UK remained relatively unmarred.

What is clear from the referendum is that Scotland is divided economically. The referendum result highlighted this through the results. The most economically deprived areas held the highest number of yes voters whilst the least economically deprived held the least amount of yes voters.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/512458/The-Union-remains-BUT-it-will-never-be-the-same-again-after-the-Scottish-referendum>

<sup>13</sup> <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/questions/whatever-the-outcome-scotland-will-be-left-badly-divided-after-18th-september#line>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/glasgows-george-square-turns-ugly-4290576>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.madamasr.com/news/deaths-injuries-and-arrests-day-one-referendum>

In October 2014, the campaign group 'End Child Poverty' mapped levels of child poverty throughout the UK. Glasgow is in the top 20 parliamentary constituencies where child poverty is most prevalent whilst West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and Orkney and Shetland are two of the top 20 constituencies where child poverty is the least prevalent<sup>16</sup>.

## Scotland's Churches Post Referendum

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office assisted the Church of Scotland to run a series of community consultation events in 2013 to generate ideas about the values and aspirations they had. This was published as [Imagining Scotland's Future: Our Vision](#).

The Church of Scotland utilised a model of debate and discussion, characterised as 'Respectful Dialogue', which sought to listen to every point of view and not discard the views of those who we disagree with.

On 5 November 2014 The Church of Scotland repeated a nation-wide series of events which involved elements of respectful dialogue and imagining Scotland's future. They called it [Scotland's Future Now](#). You can read more about some of the results from the consultation in [this report](#).

Two core themes emerged from the dialogue:

*"We expect our politicians to work together."* There needs to be more consensus, agreement and acknowledgement that other people may have better ideas than our own. It's not so much about pursuing this policy or that initiative, or even ultimately about whether responsibility for certain aspects should be at Westminster or Holyrood – but instead it's about the way politics are done. The four principles etched on the mace in the Scottish Parliament would be a useful starting point for anyone involved in public life - *Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity*. If there was room perhaps we could imagine a fifth: working together for the common good.

*"Political decisions – big or small – should not be left to the politicians alone to decide, disrupted only by occasional elections where ordinary citizens can express a preference"*. Instead there has to be a much greater involvement by individuals and community groups in the decisions which affect their own lives: meaningful consultation which is accessible to all, finding a shared future whether people voted Yes or No, whether they want more or less powers for Holyrood.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area>