



Scottish Independence Referendum 2014

Analysis of results

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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.

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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](#)

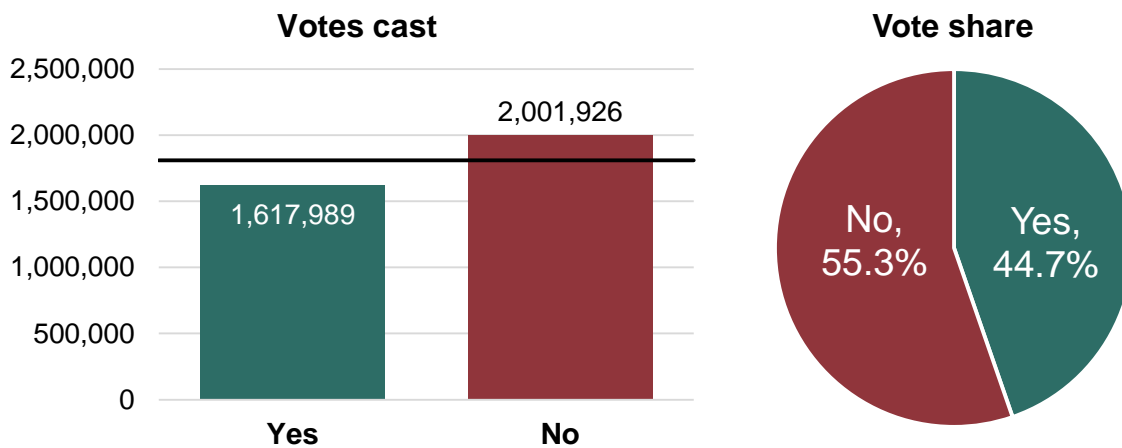
³ Based on [ONS mid-2013 population estimates](#).

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](#).

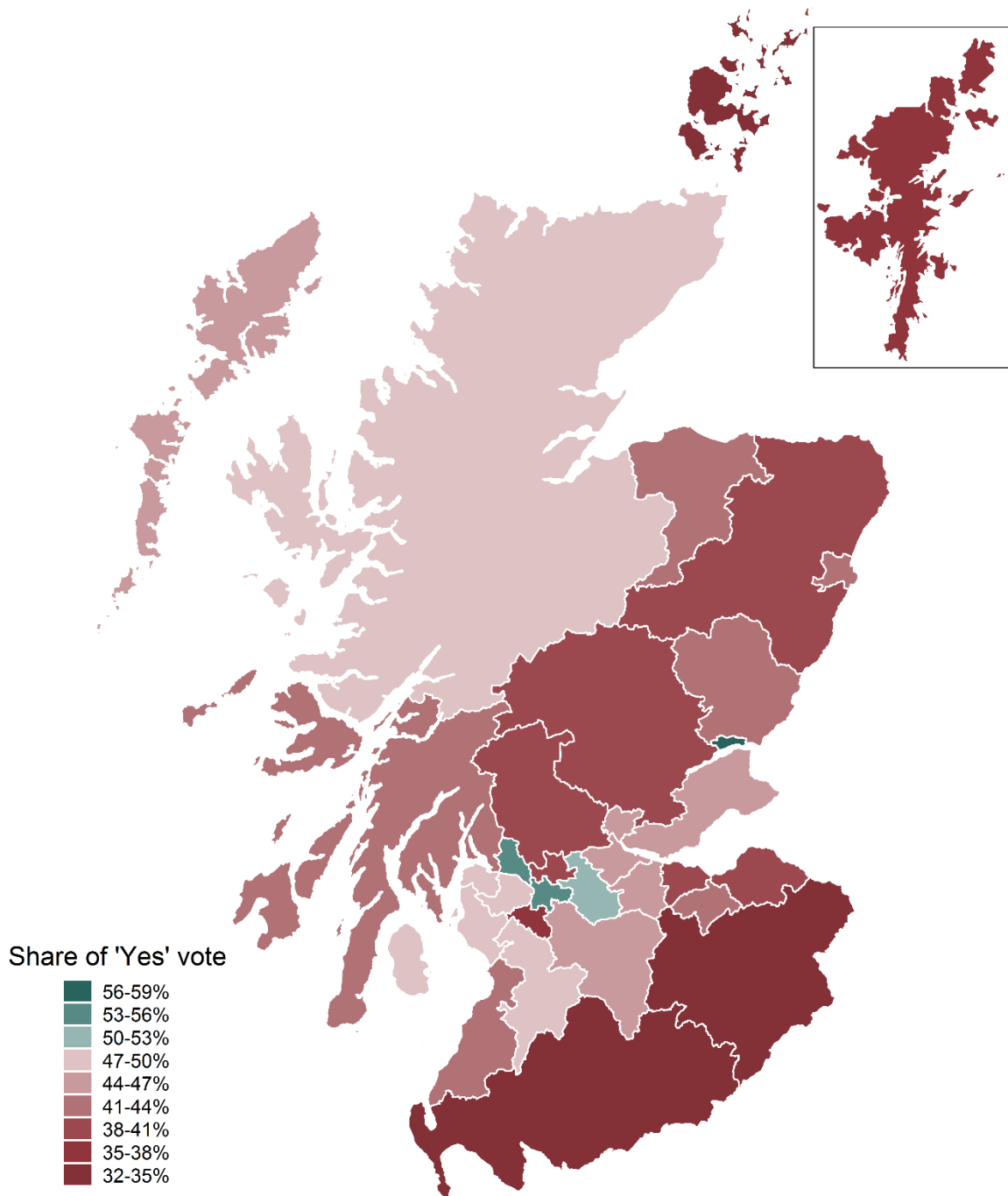
Table 2.1: results by counting area (in alphabetical order)

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')

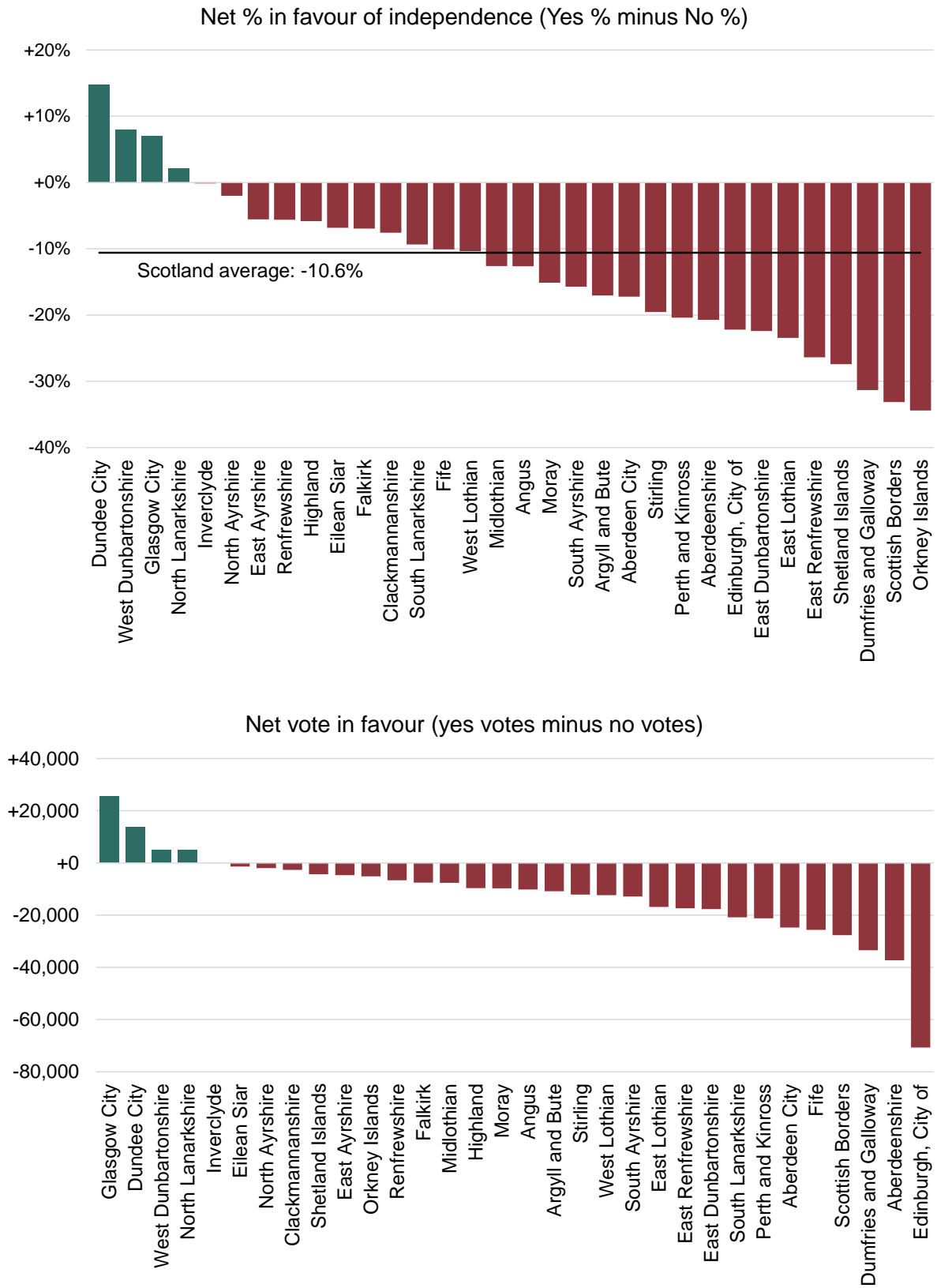
local authority	Yes	No	rejec- ted	total votes cast (incl. rejected)	yes %	no %	turnout (votes cast as % of electorate)	rank (1 = highest % 'yes')
Dundee City	53,620	39,880	92	93,592	57.3%	42.7%	78.8%	1
West Dunbartonshire	33,720	28,776	36	62,532	54.0%	46.0%	87.9%	2
Glasgow City	194,779	169,347	538	364,664	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)



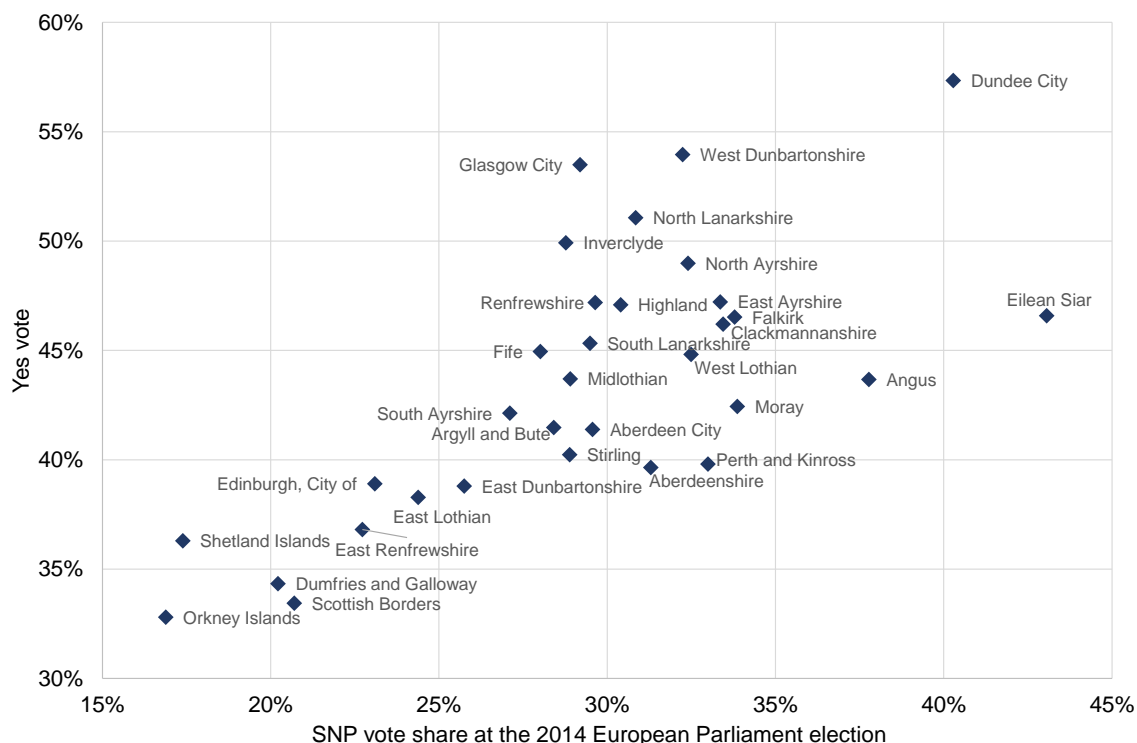
3 Characteristics of local authority areas

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

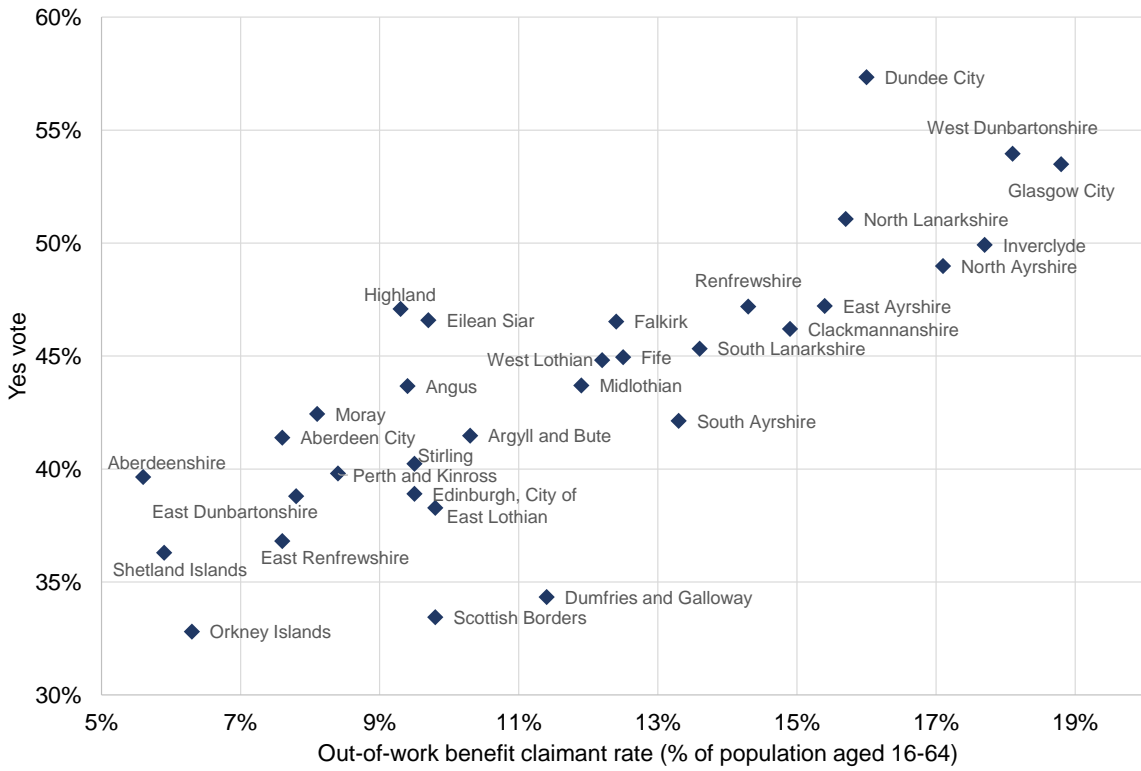


Figure 3.3: Yes vote vs Census respondents self-describing as Scottish only

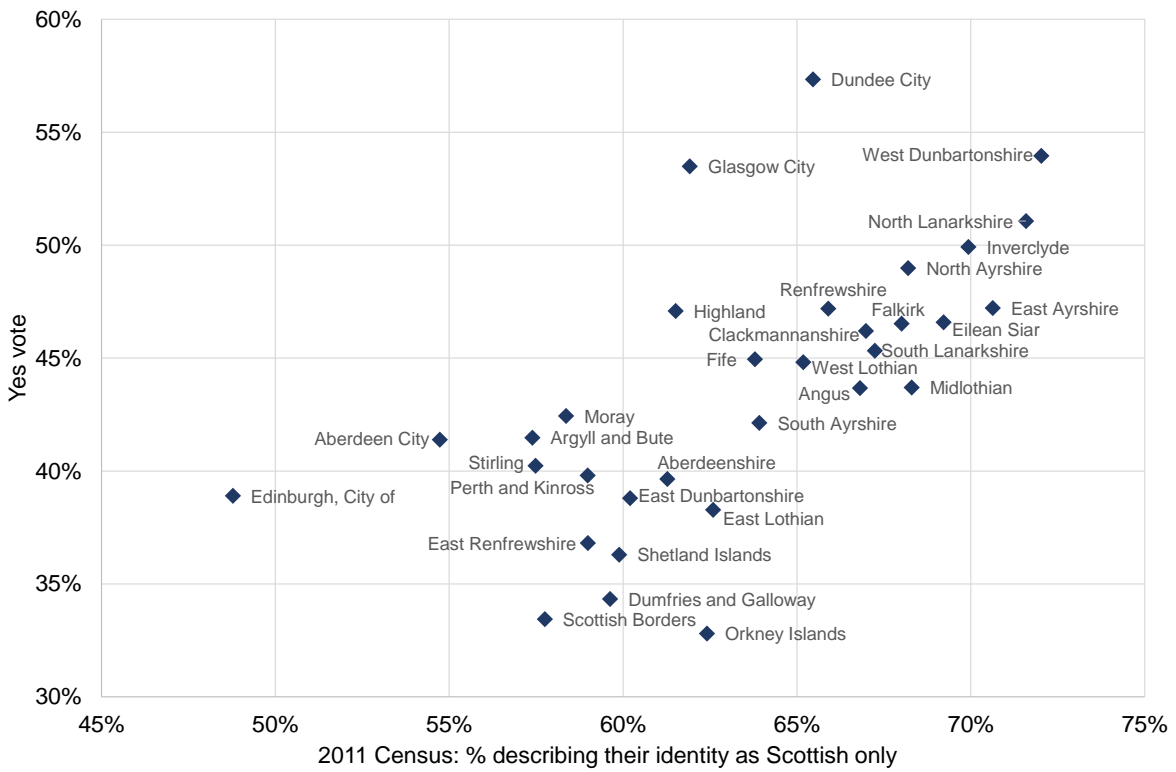


Figure 3.4: Yes vote vs population born in Scotland

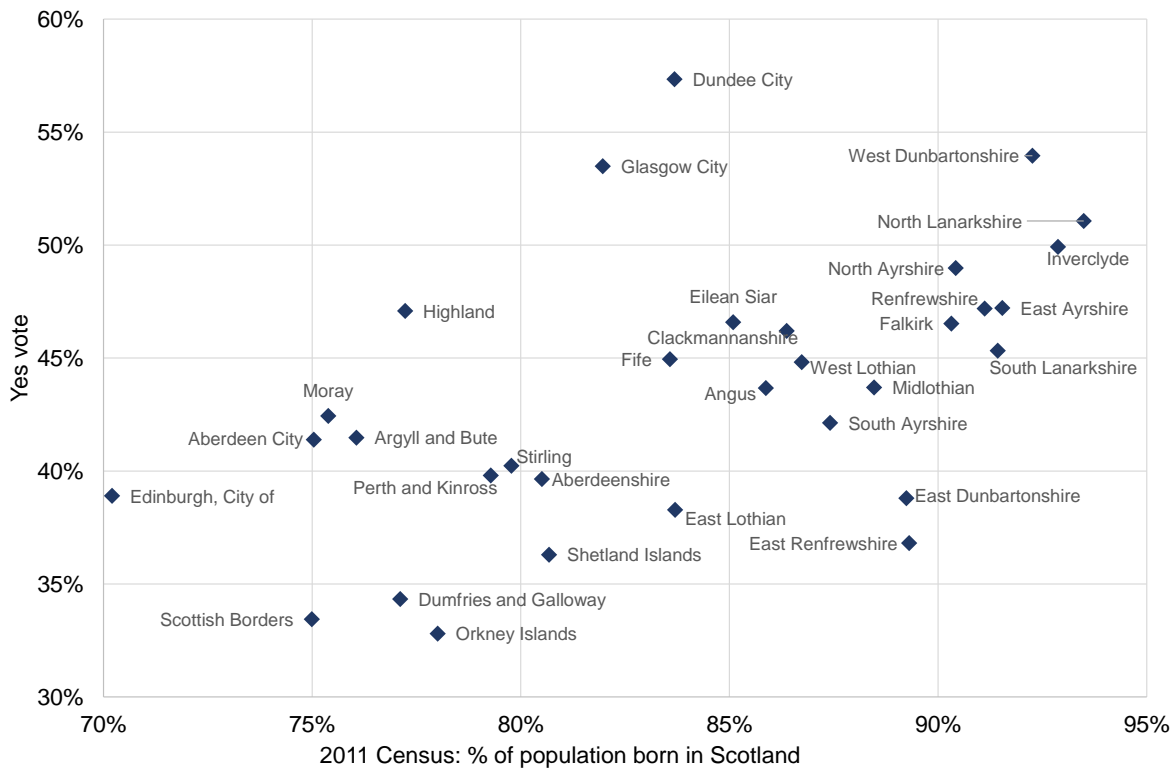


Figure 3.5: yes vote vs population aged 65 and over

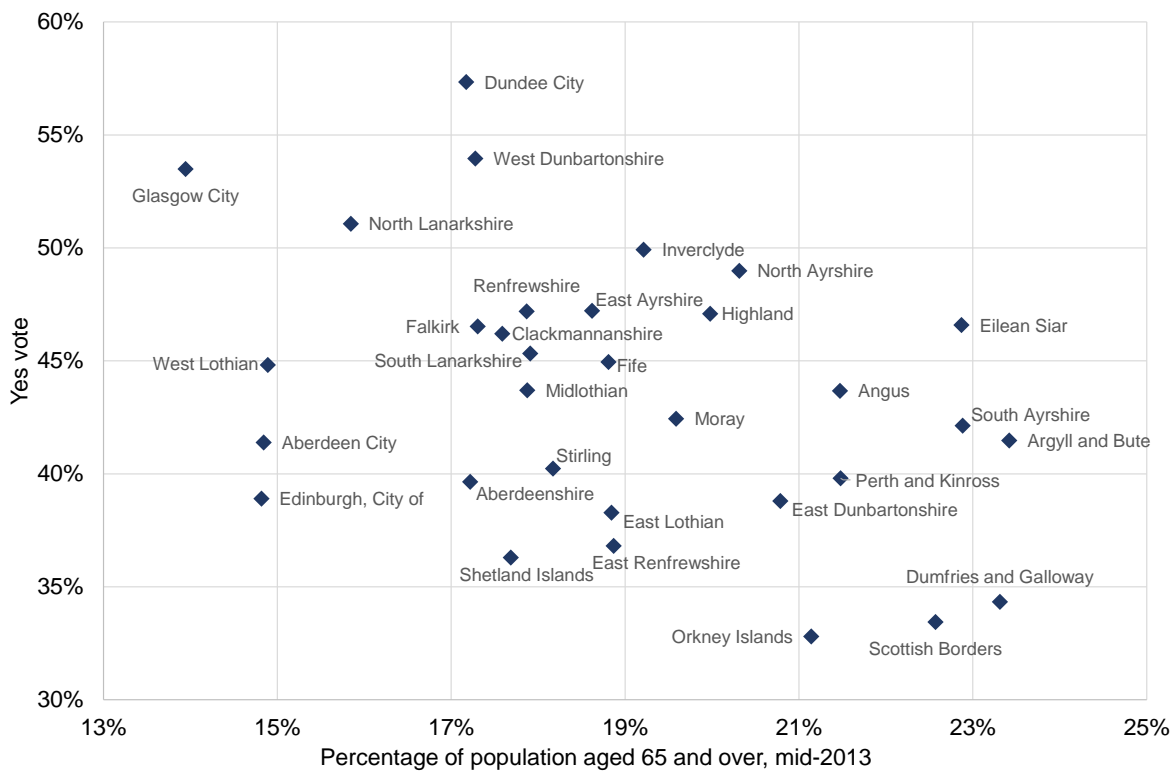


Table 3.1: selected key demographic and electoral indicators for local authorities

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.”

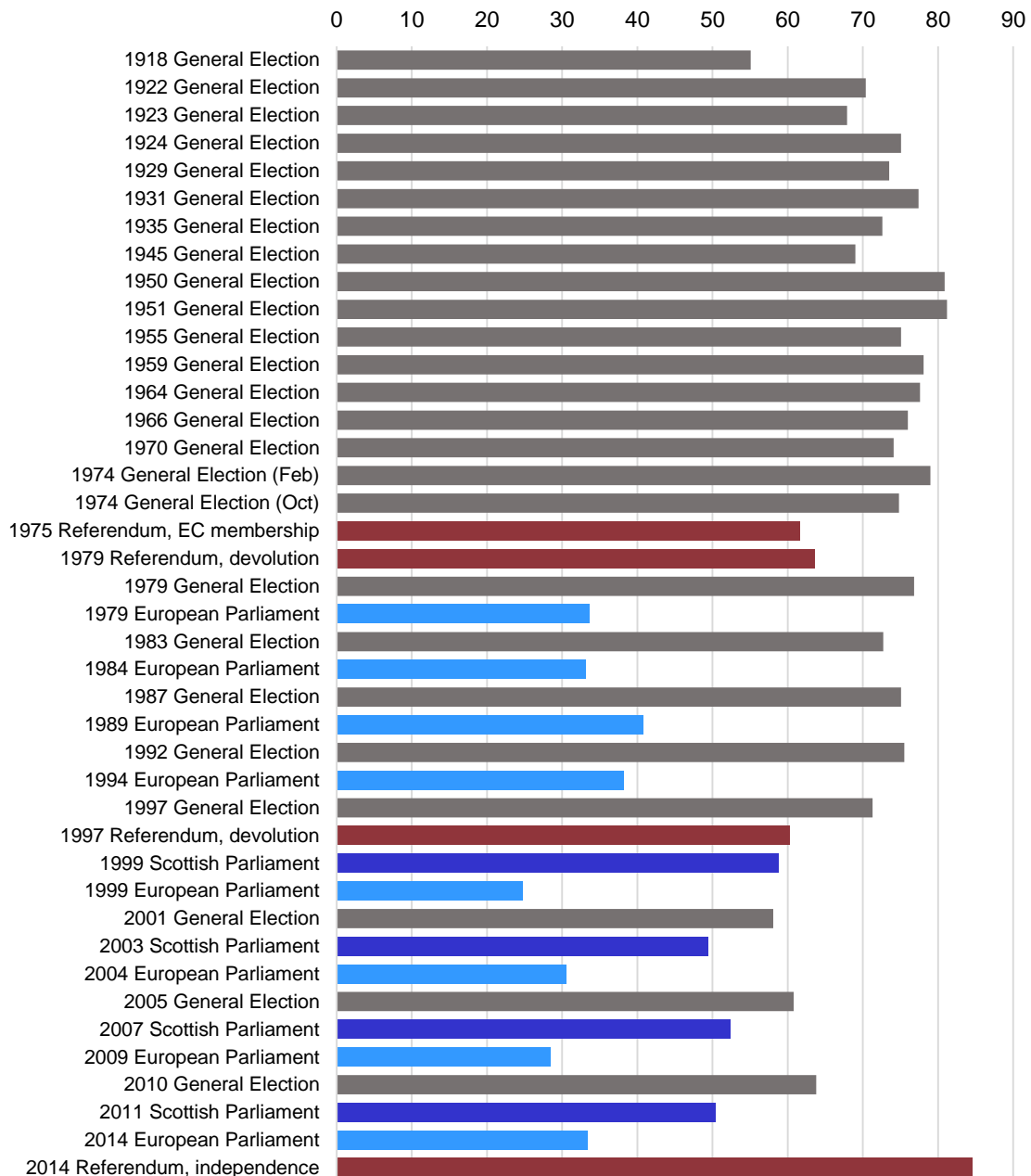
¹² [Scottish Independence Referendum 2014 Results for Glasgow](#), Glasgow City Council website

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 (%)



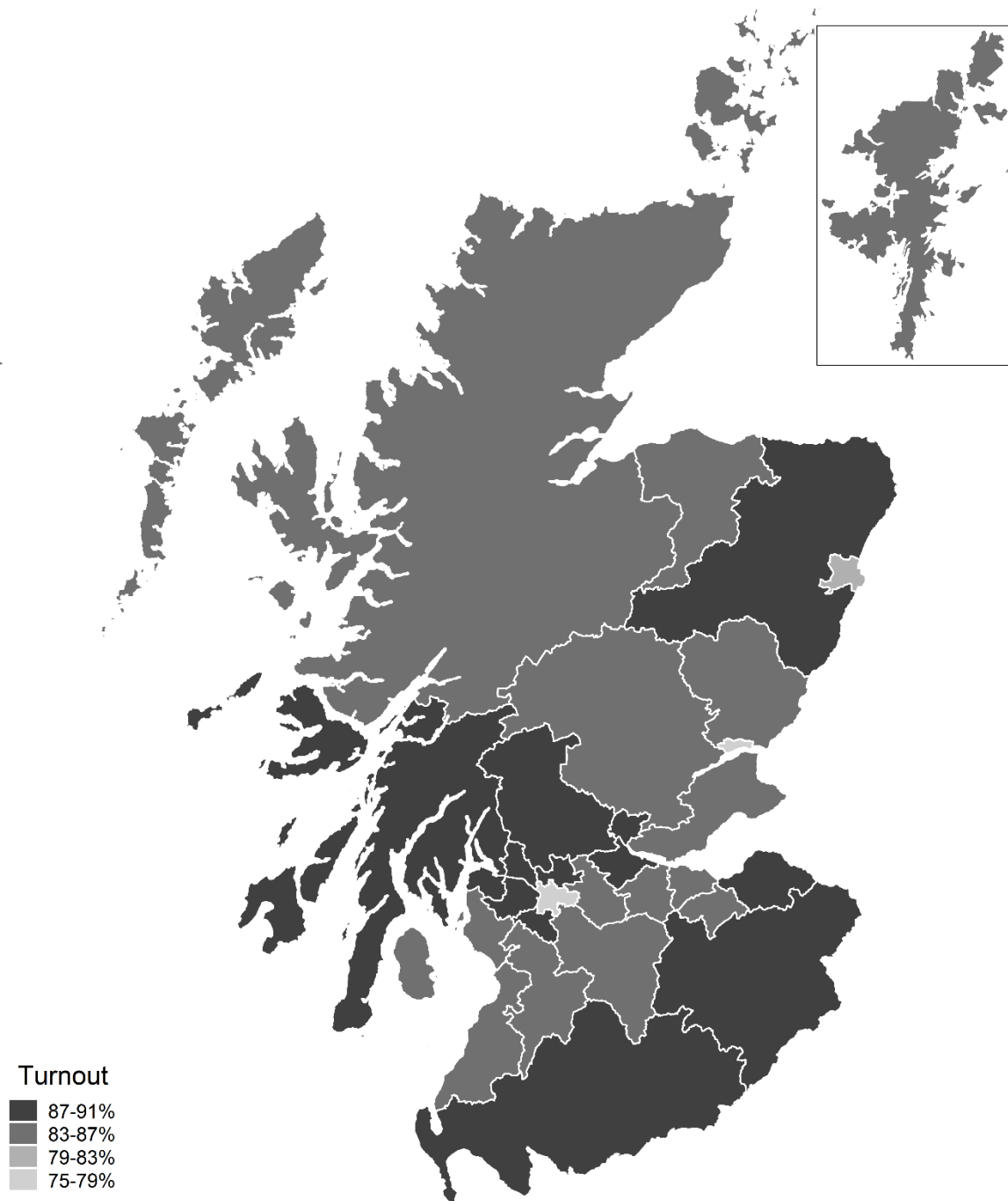
Note: Valid votes as % of electorate. Scottish Parliament turnouts are the higher of the constituency or regional turnout in each case.

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)



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

6 Opinion polls

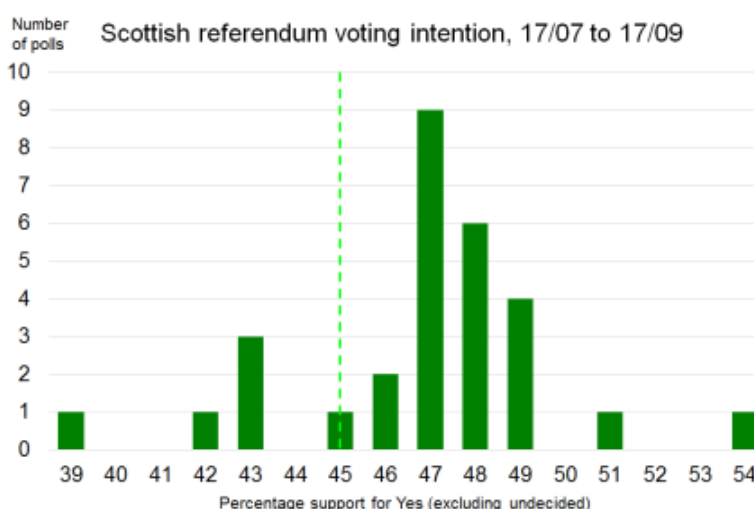
This section examines the trend in referendum voting intentions as measured by opinion polls from January 2012 onwards.¹⁵

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 +/-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

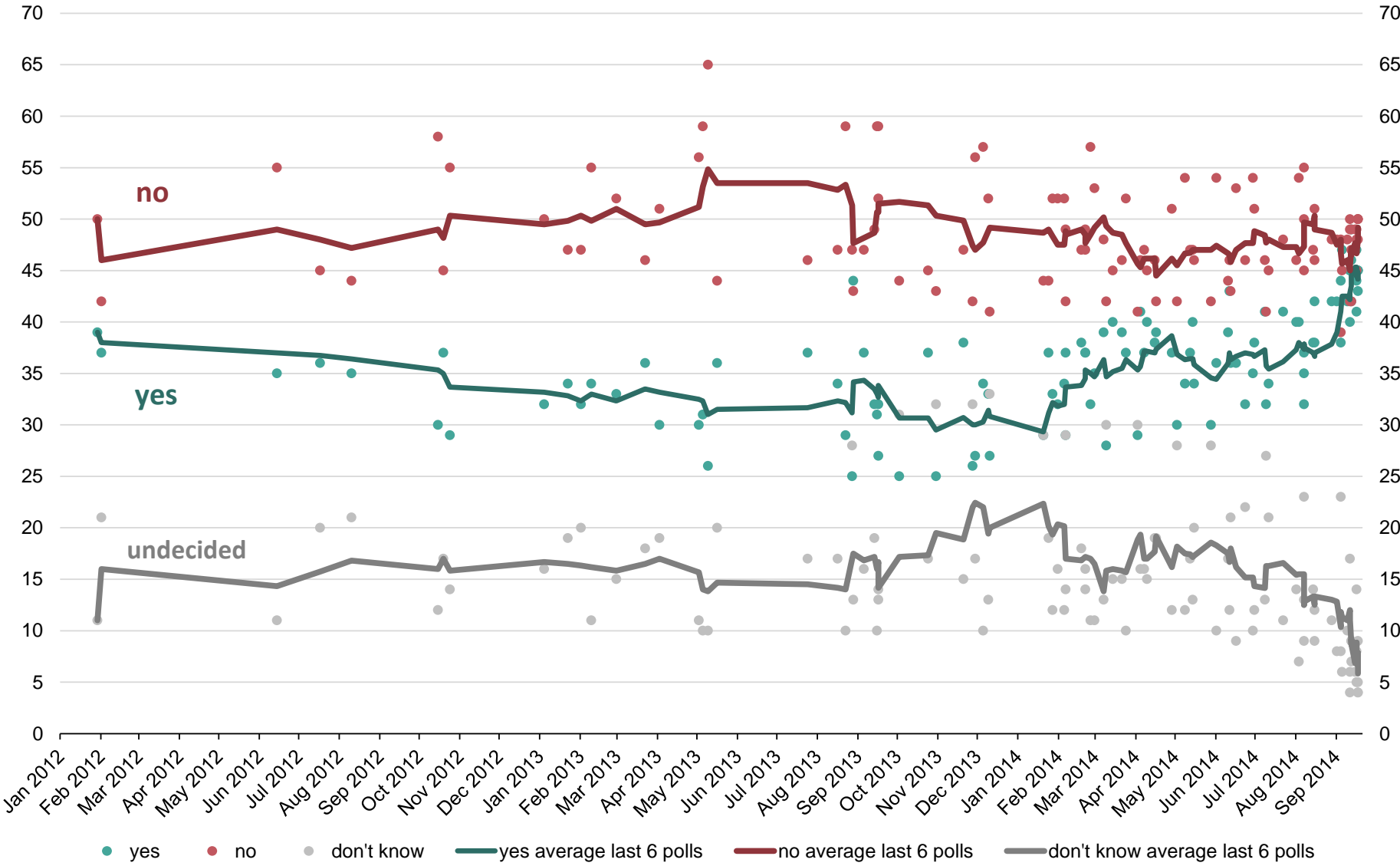


Figure 6.2: Scottish independence referendum opinion poll findings, Jan 2012 to Sep 2014: % yes / no (excluding undecided)

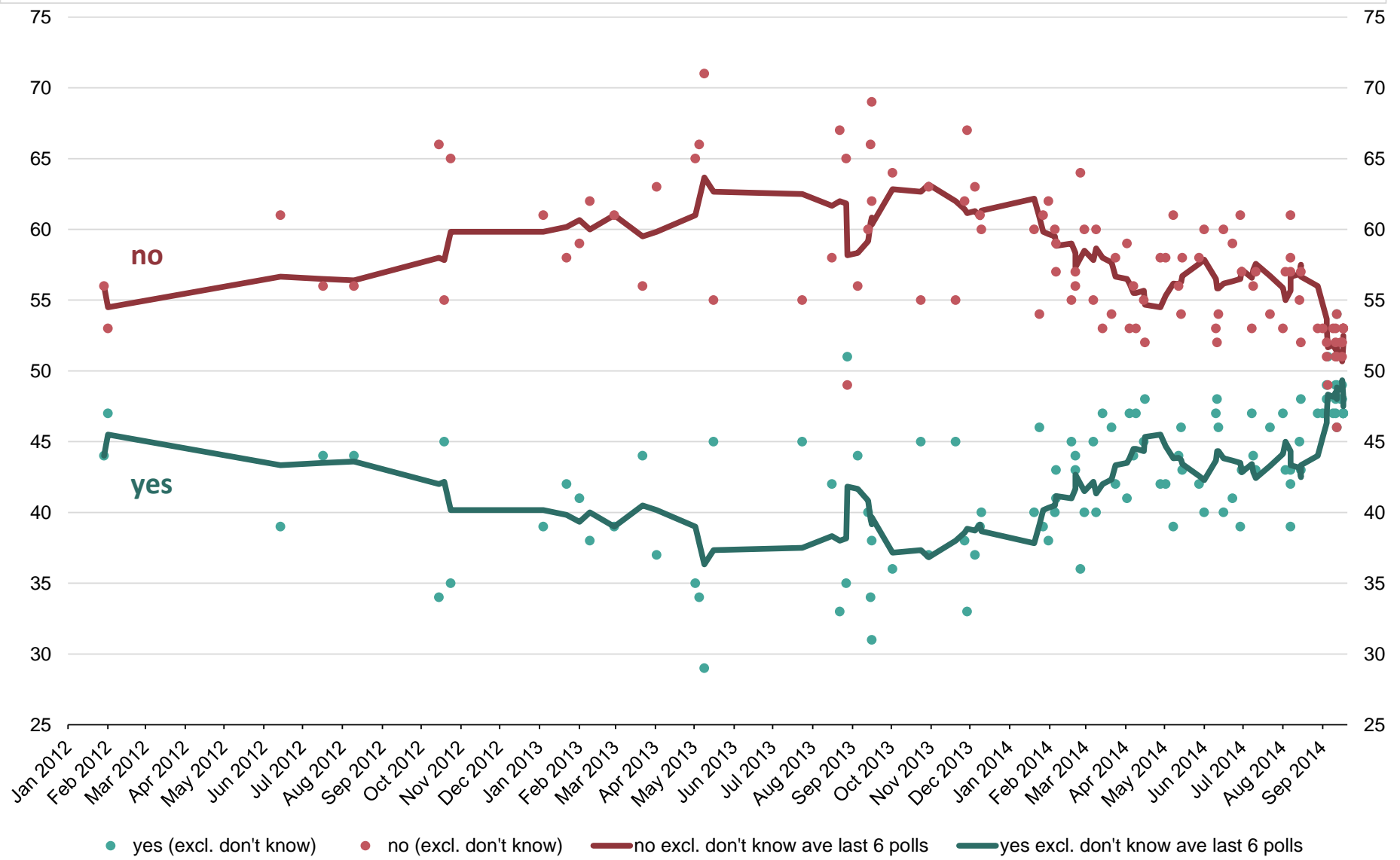


Figure 6.3: Scottish independence referendum opinion poll findings, Jan 2014 to Sep 2014: % yes / no / undecided

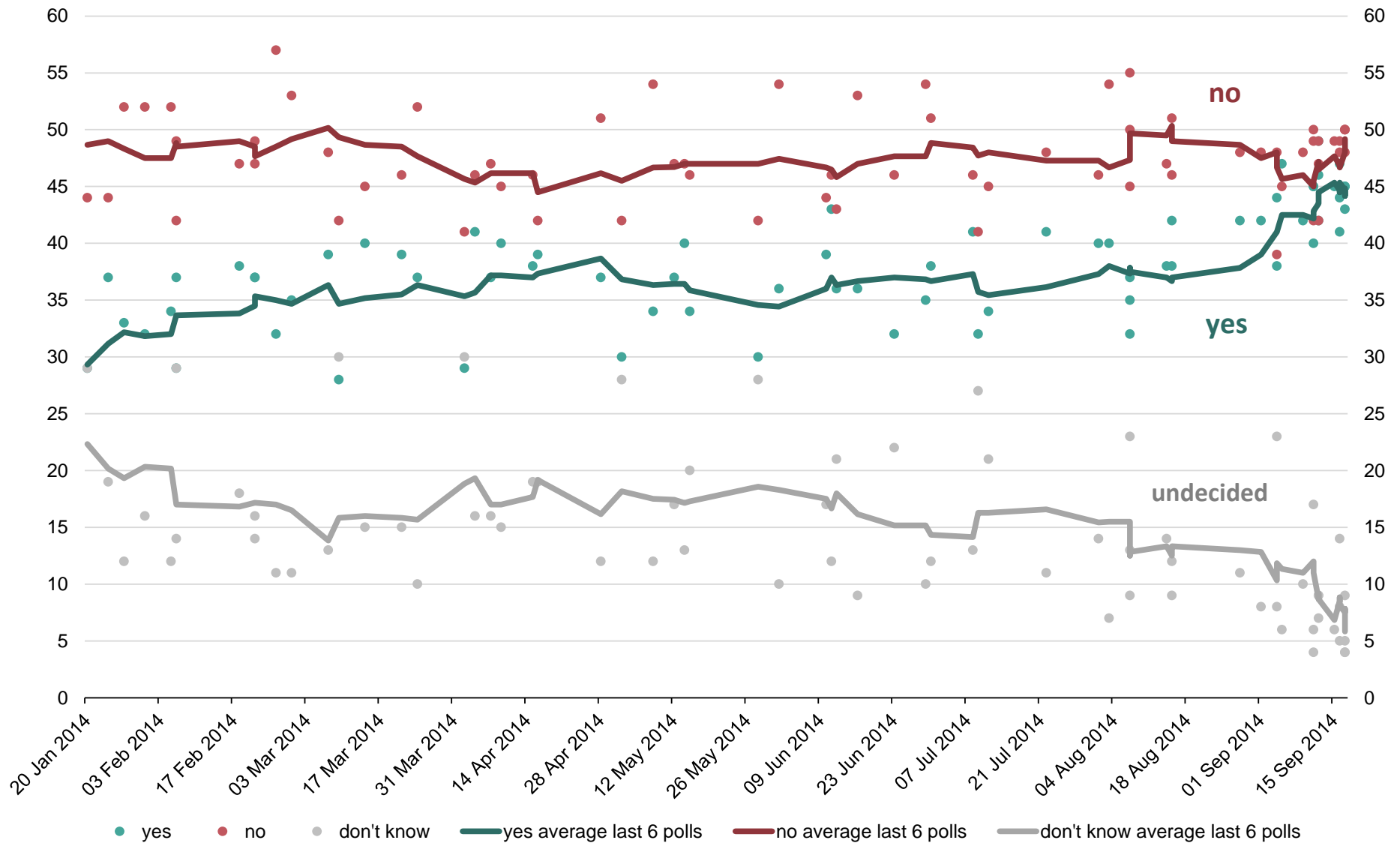
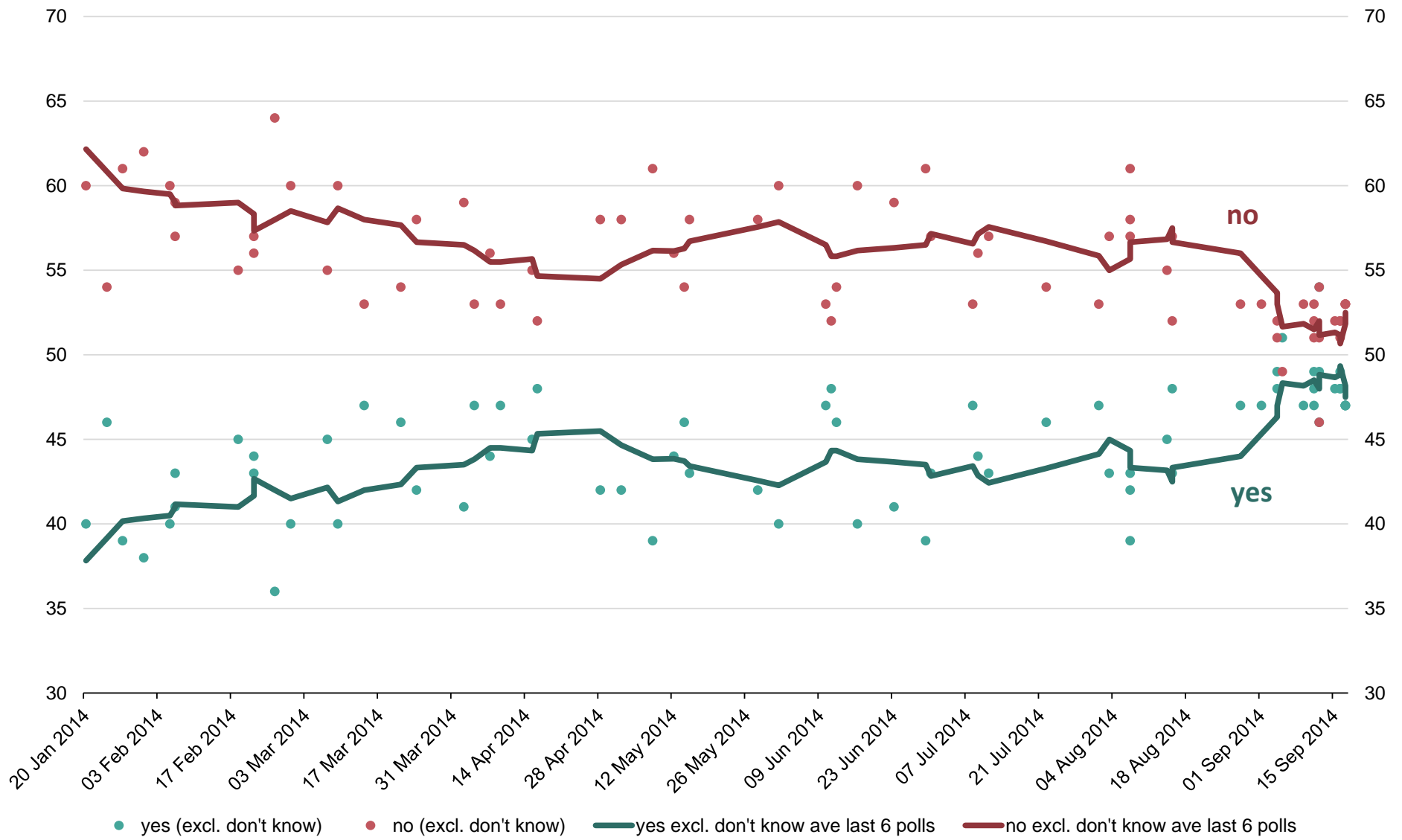


Figure 6.4: Scottish independence referendum opinion poll findings, Jan 2014 to Sep 2014: % yes / no (excluding undecided)



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	55.3%	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