

The Scottish Referendum in the press (Oct.12-Feb.13): Overview and trends

Dídac Gutiérrez-Peris
d.gutierrez-peris@lse.ac.uk



Aim of the report

The objective of this study is:

- To present an overview of the press coverage of the independence referendum that will take place in Scotland in 2014;
- To draw some key conclusions and make some observations about the political process;
- To analyse the evolution of the debate so far.

Structure

The report comprises nine different sections and one appendix. Each section focuses on the salient issues of the debate. The themes studied are:

- 1) Leaders (Opinion)
- 2) Electoral Commission and the Edinburgh Agreement
- 3) Campaign issues and communication strategies
- 4) European membership
- 5) Currency and defence
- 6) Third way
- 7) Identity politics
- 8) Polls
- 9) Constitutional question and post-referendum timeline

Appendix: List of Reports.

Each section contains a selection of the most relevant press articles with a brief summary thereof. At the end of each section there is a list with the key points and observations based on the articles selected.

The period covered by the study starts the day of the signature of the Edinburgh Agreement (16.10.12), and ends four months later (16.02.13).

Methodology

A daily press review for the period covered (including weekends). The review has been conducted systematically.

The newspapers used are: ***The Guardian/The Observer; The Times/Sunday Times*** (national edition); ***The Independent; The Daily Telegraph; The Financial Times***. Scottish newspapers: ***The Herald/Sunday Herald*** and ***The Scotsman/Scotsman on Sunday***.

Scottish newspapers have been publishing about independence with a higher frequency. Consequently, the majority of the articles in this study come from these newspapers.

The first criterion for selecting the articles has been the link with the issue studied. All articles on independence, the political process linked with it, or the political implications, have been selected. When the articles contained very brief information, or they were reporting the same text as another newspaper (which occurs when different newspapers publish an article by an agency), then these articles have not been included.

The final selection has been done with the main objective of realistically reproducing the tendencies and the main content published during this period.

Key conclusions

1. Two options debate? Not really

Without a third option in the referendum ballot, the 'no' is potentially perceived as something more. In the last 5 months the pro-unionists have been playing with that idea, knowing that if they propose more devolution the 'no' will not be associated with the status quo, but with an enhanced devolved new framework. In that sense one of the potential lessons for the pro-independence side is to not underestimate the potential attraction of a 'middle' option and the potential flexibility of the unionists when forced to counteract the real possibility of independence.

2. Political parties, stay away

If one side of the debate is associated too closely to one specific party, there is the risk of diluting the public demand for the independence issue to be treated in a 'transversal' and 'trans-partisan' way. Moreover, one of the main lessons of the five last months is that the close involvement of one party allows the opposite camp to center their attacks on the credibility and positions of that party. This strategy has been followed by both sides, both when linking the union with a Tory government, and when linking independence with the visions of the SNP.

3. Follow the rules and endorse fair play

The question of who holds the political or legal power to decide on certain issues of the process involving a referendum becomes secondary if the rules that are proposed are judged to be fair by both sides. The fairness of the Electoral Commission and its attempt to respect neutrality –despite being a 'British' institution- is probably one of the most crucial events of the last 5 months. The main lesson is that, without the good will to reach a common understanding the process, could potentially degenerate into a debate focusing on power, sovereignty and frustration. Instead, the debate has been framed in policy terms.

4. Accept uncertainty but be pro-active?

The pro-independence side is confronted with a non-negligible challenge, which is to propose a vision for a new country. Some pieces of the puzzle will depend on external actors, and therefore involve a certain degree of uncertainty. Over the last 5 months the debates on the currency, defence matters or EU membership have been clear examples thereof. The Scottish government has been strongly criticized for being too confident. Potentially, the only way to fight uncertainty is not to overlook it, but to try, in a pro-active manner, to discuss and clarify such issues as much as possible. Paradoxically, the willingness to accept uncertain realities and to engage with them might prove a more efficient strategy in order to inspire confidence – even if there are no definitive answers available at the time of the vote.

5. Beyond the unionist negative campaign

Until now the defense of the Union per se has not been a major element within the debate. On the contrary, the unionist focus has been to display scepticism over the issues raised by the pro-independence side. This strategy is expected to change over the next 12 months, when the British government will publish 12 papers in 'favour' of the Union. But for now, the communication strategy is mainly a negative one. Scottish voters will expect to be presented also with the vision of the UK that awaits them after the vote.

Summary of the study

Newspapers are not a perfect mirror of society but are one of the main channels of communication. The media influences, orientates and changes the perception of reality. Some of the topics surrounding the Scottish referendum have started to receive in-depth debate in the press. The question of EU membership, or the 'third alternative' that could be adopted in the event of the 'no' vote winning are among those issues. Significantly some other questions are still in their earliest stages, for example the implications that a 'yes' vote could mean for the rest of the United Kingdom.

Among the many trends that could be highlighted since the signature of the Edinburgh Agreement, there are two that are particularly illustrative:

- a) The debate on independence has focused on **policy issues and not identity**;
- b) The main challenge that lays ahead for each side is **the management of the unavoidable 'uncertainty' linked with this process**. The camp offering a response to this 'uncertainty' (even if the strategy is to embrace it) will potentially have the upper hand.

Note: all links on this document were accessed for the last time the 22 February 2013.

This report has been released on 12 April 2013, London.

SECTION 1

LEADERS (OPINION)

1.1 PRESS REVIEW

[We must realize future is federal](#), Scotland on Sunday (03.02.13)

by **Willie Rennie (Leader Scottish Liberal Democrats)**

"If Scotland rejects independence, Alex Salmond must accept the people's will and work with all parties to open the door to more powers. The Scottish Social Attitudes survey showed most people want decisions on domestic issues to be made in Scotland, whilst benefiting from the strength and security of remaining in the UK".

"A consensus is emerging on what those powers should be too. Reform Scotland's devo-plus¹ and the IPPR's devo-more² share many common recommendations with Sir Menzies Campbell's Home Rule in a Federal UK³"

['Devo More' widens debate](#), Scotland on Sunday (20.01.13) **Editorial**

"The blueprint for further devolution of powers to Holyrood, drawn up by the IPPR think tank and dubbed "Devo More", may well turn out to be the eventual constitutional destination for this country if voters say no to independence in the 2014 referendum. Senior Labour Party figures are known to be taking a close interest in this current IPPR project"

"This newspaper welcomes the IPPR report as a significant contribution to reclaiming the conversation on Scotland's future from the unsatisfactory binary choice in the referendum between independence and the status quo. The biggest group of voters in this country is still the one that favours a powerhouse parliament within the UK"

[Beyond the SNP](#), Scotsman (29.12.12)

by **Stephen Noon (Chief Strategist of Yes Scotland)**

"In 2016, Scottish politics will be freed from the constitutional question (...) with the most significant dividing line in Scottish politics erased, independence focused SNP-ers could safely choose to give one or even both their votes to Labour (or Green or LibDem)"

"It is only in the first election to an independent Scottish Parliament that we can truly choose Scotland's new direction. We will have a multitude of coalition choices, including a currently inconceivable Labour and SNP partnership. Beyond

¹ See appendix, reference 1

² See appendix, ref. 2

³ See appendix, ref. 3

the personalities and party positioning, the driver must be the policy opportunity that independence presents"

"So in an independent Scotland, I will give my vote to the party that shares my vision of the kind of country I want for myself and future generations. We can all have that choice if only we decide to take it"

[How to lose regions and alienate peoples](#), The Times (22.12.12)
by **Matthew Parris (Columnist)**

"Laugh if you like, but David Cameron, Alistair Darling, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband could sit down together and within an afternoon begin solving what the entire political class in Madrid seems incapable of sorting out. And the reverse is true. If Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and his bull-necked Partido Popular henchmen were put in charge of maintaining the unity of our own United Kingdom then within days we'd have the Armed Forces mobilized to storm the Scottish Parliament, Whitehall departments countermanding devolved legislation, Mr Salmond carried shoulder-high to cheers down Edinburgh's Royal Mile, and soaring Scottish support for full independence. Blimey, do it like Madrid and you could even revive Plaid Cymru"

[Honesty is key from SNP](#), Herald Scotland (16.12.12) **Editorial**

"Nicola Sturgeon is to be applauded for the manner in which she bowed to the inevitable and admitted that an independent Scotland would need to negotiate its position within Europe, and that those negotiations will probably be more complicated than the rather bland assurances the SNP has given until now"

"The SNP needs to be absolutely honest when it is impossible to foresee how certain issues will play out. A vote for independence will always be to some extent a leap of faith. Scots must be trusted to weigh up the benefits of that leap for themselves"

[For overwhelming practical, political and economic reasons, Europe will be only too keen to see Scotland remain in the EU](#), Herald Scotland (16.12.12)

by **Nicola Sturgeon (Deputy First Minister of Scotland)**

"Why on Earth would they not, given the huge resources and advantages that Scotland brings to the European table? Our greatest asset as a nation always has been and always will be our people and their ingenuity, but Scotland also has enormous natural resources. Scotland has around 90% of the EU's oil reserves and a huge share of the Continent's renewable energy, as well as some of the richest fishing grounds in Europe. Would Brussels really want to lose such assets at a time when energy security is one of the dominating political and economic issues of the early 21st century? (...)"

"And there is precedent which shows that, when hard-headed concerns like this are brought to bear, Europe is a flexible institution. When the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989, few at that point would have expected a united Germany to be part of

the then European Community within less than 12 months – but that is exactly what happened when German reunification took place on October 3, 1990”

“The pro-independence cause also now has the unlikeliest of allies on the currency issue: David Cameron. The Prime Minister has backed up the view of the many experts who say no country can be forced into euro membership when on Friday he said: “There are countries in the European Union who have no early or immediate or indeed longer-than-that prospects of joining the euro, and I think that is the important point.” Mr Cameron, under pressure from Tory Eurosceptics, has unwittingly demolished one of the anti-independence campaign's favourite scare stories”

[Dennis Canavan challenges pro-union parties to set out their vision for independent Scotland](#),
Herald Scotland (07.12.12)

by **Dennis Canavan (YesScotland advisory Board)**

“It is, of course, vital that answers are provided to the many questions people have about independence. (...). But I believe that as more and more of these questions are settled, more and more people will begin to focus on the vision of a better, more prosperous, fairer and more equal Scotland. Framed in this way, I am convinced people will begin to see just what opportunity independence offers us to fulfil the values, priorities and aspirations that make us the people we are. (...). But the anti-independence parties also owe it to the Scottish people to reveal their visions for Scotland in the event of a Yes vote in 2014. After all, they will all be vying for your votes in the first independent Scottish Parliament election in 2016”

“If you are an exponent of lateral thinking, there is another, interesting way of framing the debate. Imagine that Scotland had remained independent in 1707 and the referendum question being asked in 2014 was: ‘Do you agree Scotland should join the United Kingdom?’ In those circumstances what would be the case for a Yes vote? Your main parliament will move hundreds of miles away, and your MPs will be in a tiny minority; you will probably get a government you didn’t vote for; all of your oil and gas revenues will be handed over to the London treasury. The biggest nuclear weapons arsenal in Western Europe will be built on the River Clyde, 30 miles from your largest city. You will be joining a country where the health and education services are rapidly being privatised. Now and then you will get dragged into an illegal foreign war. An austerity budget will be imposed from London, cutting jobs and threatening the provision of vital public services. Weak regulation of the banking sector will bring your economy to the brink of disaster. And, on top of all that, the most vulnerable people in society, instead of getting protection and support, will be interrogated and humiliated in order to deprive them of the very meagre level of provision to which they are entitled. There is a much, much better vision for Scotland than that”

[It’s been a Unionist’s year](#), Scotsman (30.11.12) by **Murdo Fraser (Conservative MSP)**

“So the “Edinburgh Agreement” removed the uncertainty of a third option. But it does not remove the debate about a “third way”. The debate about this third way – more powers for the Scottish Parliament within the UK – is not going away. And nor should it. It is a live issue within all of the three main opposition parties, and

the sharing of a platform last month by Duncan McNeill of Labour, Liberal Democrat Tavish Scott and the Tories' Alex Fergusson serves to confirm its relevance. Endorsing the sound principles articulated by Jeremy Purvis and Reform Scotland's Devo Plus group, these three very senior members of their parties are standing behind a shared vision which may very well be the blueprint for a new constitutional future. The third way is the new centre-ground in Scottish politics"

"In that respect, I have a concern that the upturn of unionist support in opinion polls is giving some within the Better Together campaign a false sense of security. I am concerned that this may lead to a stubborn determination amongst unionist leaders to reject calls for further devolution in favour of fighting the referendum on the status quo"

[Gordon Brown's Pro-union speech in full](#), Scotsman (03.11.12)
by **Gordon Brown (former Primer Minister of the UK)**

"Today I am listing the first twenty of the hundreds of unanswered questions about the separate state they propose. The unanswered questions that hide the truth about the costs and risks of independence are 'not just about Europe and the euro-the issue of controversy of the last two weeks- but about mortgages, interest rates, pensions, child benefits, the monarchy, citizenship and the armed forces"

[Market forcing the independence issue](#), Scotsman (26.10.12)
by **Jim Sillars, (former deputy leader of the SNP)**

"The House of Commons Library, on 8 November, 2011, produced a paper, "Scotland, independence and the EU"⁴, in which it examined the three different legal scenarios under international law, but came to the conclusion that: "Whatever the position under general international law, a decision on Scotland's status within the European Union is likely to be a political one." They are correct. The EU is, above all, an organisation in which politics takes precedence over all other matters"

"Now, it is possible to influence the commission to take another point of view, but that would require diplomacy on a European scale, visits to every one of the 27 member states' governments to press the Scottish position: in the EU for over 40 years; no reason, given the democratic nature of the independence decision, to be ejected; pointing out that ejection means the loss to the EU of its only oil producer; and with the loss of Scottish waters the consequent destruction of its Common Fisheries Policy. There is no evidence that any such diplomatic effort has been made (...). Less adulation and sharp scrutiny is now required from the party and its parliamentarians"

[Dreams and realities](#), The Guardian (22.10.12) **Editorial**

"So is it now, as Mr Salmond claims, "game on" for the SNP's campaign to win independence as a seamless stepping stone towards the social democratic

⁴ See appendix, ref. 4

Scotland of which he dreams? He leads a formidable campaigning party that remains strong in the polls. (...) One key part of this is to create a sense of inevitability (...). Another is to try to position Labour on the same side of the argument as the government in its commitment not just to the union but to austerity (...). A third is to finesse a series of risky issues by promising that an independent Scotland will retain the monarchy, the pound, EU membership and, after a narrow vote in Perth on Friday, its links with Nato"

"But the world is not always as accommodating as Mr Salmond paints it. The sense of inevitability he fosters is fragile. And support for independence, at 37% in one poll on Sunday, has slipped to recent lows in others. Game on, indeed. But Mr Salmond's victory is far from certain yet"

1.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• *'Third way'*

Besides the Yes/No question, political figures have been particularly active in the last 5 months writing about the 'alternative' or 'third option'. Willie Rennie, leader of the liberal-democrats in Scotland has been one of them, along with the conservative Murdo Fraser, who was one of the two contestants in the campaign for the leadership of the party in 2011. (The debate around the 'third option' is examined in more detail in Section 6 of this report).

• *Beyond the SNP*

When writing in the press, the leading figures of the pro-independence side have concentrated on defending independence beyond the SNP. Two significant examples are the texts published by Stephen Noon, the chief strategist of the campaign **Yes Scotland**, and Dennis Cannavan, member of the advisory board of the same platform. The articles written by SNP leaders, such as Nicola Sturgeon –the deputy first minister-, or Jim Sillars –the former leader of the SNP-, are focused on reassuring the readers regarding EU membership, and other specific policy questions.

• *Scepticism and criticism*

Overall, the leading unionist figures that have written in the press have based their strategy on criticizing and casting doubts over the SNP standpoints. The speech by Gordon Brown, the former prime minister, but also the editorials published by the newspapers The Guardian and The Herald Scotland, go in that direction. At this stage the positioning of unionist leaders in the press is clearly based on generating scepticism over some of the assertions made by the Scottish government. For now, the defence of the Union per se has not been the main priority.

• *International perspective*

The articles published by columnist Matthew Parris, in The Times, are a useful example of the way that the press has 'contextualized' the referendum process. In this regard, see his article of 6 April 2013 in the appendix to this report. It is worth noting that Parris has a home in Catalonia. Columnists on both sides are relatively focused on the 'content', and do not enter in superficial or personal attacks. In that sense the difference is immediately palpable regarding other political disputes in Europe involving territorial matters.

SECTION 2

ELECTORAL COMMISSION AND EDINBURGH AGREEMENT

2.1 PRESS REVIEW (Electoral Commission)

[*Some choices words on independence*](#), Scotsman (03.02.13)

“This was for me the essence of the most important recommendation of the Electoral Commission⁵. On page 36, paragraph 5.42 of its report, it says: ‘We recommend that both governments should clarify what process will follow the referendum in sufficient detail to inform people what will happen if most voters vote Yes and what will happen if most voters vote No’ ”

“In the heat of the Commons chamber the Prime Minister seemed to reject the call by misdirection: ‘We will not pre-negotiate Scotland’s exit from the United Kingdom’. I don’t believe anyone is expecting or asking him to. But it would be plainly disrespectful if he chose not to seek some sensible agreement on the shape of the settlement and process to follow on either outcome”

[*Top marks for a fair and transparent start to the referendum*](#), Herald Scotland (02.02.13)

“(…) ‘Become’ might emphasise the process of change that would follow a Yes vote, the watchdogs considered. Would that incline some to vote No? Or was ‘become’ a more positive word than ‘be’, potentially encouraging a Yes vote? In the end they opted for ‘be’ as less ambiguous. It implies something would definitely happen, the commission suggested, and focus groups assembled to road test different versions of the question understood that”

“The new form of words, backed by all sides, means the referendum race can begin untarnished by questions over its legitimacy. The same goes for the even more contentious issue of campaign funding where, if anything, the Electoral Commission did an even more skilful job”

[*SNP accepts new working for referendum question*](#), Herald Scotland (31.01.13)

“The polls watchdog said the SNP’s proposed question – “Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country? Yes/No” – was potentially biased in favour of a Yes answer. Instead it recommended: “Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes/No”. The suggestion was immediately accepted by referendum minister Nicola Sturgeon”

“The Electoral Commission said the two lead organisations, Yes Scotland and Better Together, should each be allowed to spend £1.5 million in the last 16 weeks of the campaign, when strict rules apply. It is double that proposed by the

⁵ See appendix, ref. 5

Government, but the watchdog insisted the higher limit was necessary to let both sides get their message across and discourage efforts to bend the rules. Political parties will also be set spending limits based on their share of the vote at the last Holyrood election. The SNP, as Holyrood's biggest party, will be able to spend £1.344m, more than £500,000 above Labour's limit of £834,000. The Tories will be allowed to spend £396,000, the LibDems £201,000 and the pro-independence Greens £150,000. It means pro-independence parties can spend £1.494m combined, compared with £1.432m for the pro-UK parties"

"Other bodies will be required to register as campaign organisations if they plan to spend more than £10,000. They will be bound by electoral rules and allowed to spend up to £150,000 –also higher than the SNP wanted"

[Electoral Commission forces the pace on possible paths for Scotland,](#)

The Guardian (31.01.13)

"The Electoral Commission has – in a refreshing moment for Scottish politics – found rare consensus on two central referendum issues yesterday. All the parties, bitter enemies some, agreed to a new six-word yes or no question and on funding limits on Thursday"

"But the commission then rather threw things off-key by challenging all sides to answer one thing: what would actually happen once the result is known? (...). It implies the pressure will be heaviest on the "no" camp to show their hand, particularly on Scottish Labour and the Tories (...). So the pro-UK parties must accelerate their agendas"

2.2 PRESS REVIEW (Edinburgh Agreement⁶)

[Spain, Britain and the forbidden fruits of independence,](#) Financial Times (16.10.12)

by Gideon Rachman (Columnist)

"The British are taking an approach that is simultaneously more pragmatic and bolder. Prime Minister David Cameron could easily have insisted that only the British government had the legal right to organise a referendum. Instead he has agreed to allow Scots to organise a vote on their nation's future – on condition that independence should be the only question on the ballot"

"The British government's approach, while risky, is also psychologically astute. Telling people that there is something that they are absolutely forbidden from doing is a sure way of stoking their desire to do that very thing. This principle – first established in the Garden of Eden – applies just as surely in modern Catalonia (...). No marriage can survive simply by declaring divorce illegal"

⁶ See appendix, ref. 6

[The other One Nation debate](#), The Guardian (16.10.12) Editorial

"Both sides appear ready to accept the outcome. But the vote will be the first time that Scotland has voted on its national status in the democratic era. It may lead to the further splintering of the UK. It would change the lives of everyone in these islands. There is no doubt that the Scottish people voted for this process to begin"

"Spain and Canada have been amazed at how ready the UK government has been to facilitate such a move. At a time when Catalan and Québécois separatist feeling is running high, Madrid and Ottawa have not been so relaxed as London is here. The UK government deserves credit for this approach"

"(...) Both sides deserve some credit for the readiness to compromise. A few weeks ago, it looked as if a deal might not be done, with Mr Salmond in particular posing as a leader who could ignore the UK and the law. The deal means that the referendum will have a firm legal basis. It will be crafted in Scotland with British authority. This was essential"

[An agreement, a handshake – so will the Union survive?](#), The Times (16.10.12)

"The vote will now take place in the autumn of 2014, following three months in which Scotland will have celebrated the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, hosted the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and staged the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles"

[Historic agreement in place, we can now move forward](#), Scotsman (15.10.12) Editorial

"The argument for a two-question referendum had considerable appeal – and not just to those in the SNP camp who wanted to have a political safety net. Recent opinion polls have shown "Max Dev" to be the single most popular option among Scottish voters. It would seem perverse to remove from the referendum ballot paper the very option which would seem to be the most popular. It may well have also been the one which would have drawn significant support away from the option of full independence"

[The Scottish independence referendum will not offer what most Scots want](#), The Guardian (15.10.12), by James Mitchell (School of Government University of Strathclyde)

"The Scottish referendum in 2014 will be a major political event, whether it resolves anything is another matter. There will be two key battles in this polarised debate. In the referendum battle both sides will focus on winning over the supporters of more powers. The second battle will be one of interpretation"

"Both yes and no votes will include many who would have voted in favour of a second preference – greater devolution of financial and lawmaking powers within the UK – if it had been a two-question referendum. An ambiguous result will lead to bitter arguments of interpretation. Whatever happens, the result will be open to dispute"

2.3 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• ***The Electoral Commission advice***

Despite the political previous disputes, the advice of the UK Electoral Commission regarding the question of the referendum and the spending limits has been accepted by both sides. The question for the referendum will be: 'Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes or No'. Regarding the issue of spending limits, in the last final 16 weeks of the campaign both platforms will be allowed to spend £1.5m each. Regarding the political parties with representation in the Scottish Parliament, all of them will have a spending limit based on their electoral results in the last Scottish elections. Under this system all the pro-union parties will be able to spend almost the same amount as all the parties defending independence.

• ***Consensus and legitimacy***

By agreeing to the wording of the question and the spending limits the legitimacy of the result in the referendum is assured. This question has been one of the most fundamental points in the press in the last 5 months. Without the necessary legitimacy the campaign will have started with a sort of 'original sin'.

• ***Transitional timeline?***

The Electoral Commission also asked both sides to provide some clarity over the period following the referendum. The demand to set a general timeline has been disputed by the unionist camp, refusing to 'pre-negotiate' independence. This issue is examined in more detail in Section 9 of this report.

• ***Edinburgh Agreement***

The press gives credit to both sides after the signature of the Edinburgh Agreement in October. Regarding the first minister, Alex Salmond, he is applauded for recognizing that the legal power to set the referendum resides in Westminster. Regarding the prime minister, David Cameron, he is praised for handing over such power. Credit is also given to the British and Scottish government for their capacity for compromise. Some commentators compare it favourably with the case of Catalonia and Spain, which are unable to reach mutual understanding.

SECTION 3

CAMPAIGN ISSUES AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

3.1 PRESS REVIEW

[*This negative Unionist campaign isn't working*](#), Herald Scotland (14.02.13)

"There are far better reasons for opposing independence than the timetable for EU membership anyway. I could think of a dozen positive arguments for remaining in the UK. You should always treat opinion polls with caution, because they only offer a snapshot of public attitudes. But nor should their message be ignored. The Unionists are persevering with a negative and punitive approach that has failed to damage Alex Salmond in successive Scottish Parliamentary elections, and is not being listened to by many young voters in the referendum campaign. Time to rethink"

[*Banish defeatism and win the referendum*](#), Herald Scotland (10.02.13)

"The SNP has been a brilliant vote-winning machine, but it has never been anywhere near winning independence, and under Alex Salmond it has always pursued a gradualist, incremental approach to self-government, rather than a big bang. And any way you look at it, independence is a leap of faith. They need to bridge the Scottish confidence gap, our psychology of national defeatism"

"The lesson of the referendums of 1979 and 1997 is the Scottish voters say Yes when they see their political parties co-operating and No when they see them falling out in unconstructive sectarianism. Whoever manages to show they can provide leadership of Scotland at this crucial moment will inherit the future, with or without the referendum"

[*SNP sells out and says yes please to donations*](#), Scotsman (13.12.12)

by Tavish Scott (Liberal Democrat MSP)

"The separation campaign will happily accept donations from anywhere in the world"

[*Call for non-residents to be given vote in referendum*](#), Herald Scotland (11.01.13)

"Scots living outwith Scotland, in particular those serving in the Armed Forces, should be given the vote in the 2014 independence referendum (...). A report by the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee on the Edinburgh Agreement⁷ pointed out many Scots not currently resident in Scotland wished to vote in it; under current plans only those on the Scottish electoral register will get a ballot paper (...). The committee – which has no SNP representation – acknowledged

⁷ See appendix, ref. 7

there were "real practical problems" in devising a way to allow Scots outwith Scotland to participate. (...) Estimates have put the number of Scots living south of the Border at 800,000"

[Coalition plans to expand 'manifesto for the Union'](#), Herald Scotland (03.01.13)

"The Treasury is spearheading the co-ordinated push, with Sir Nicholas MacPherson, the department's top civil servant, chairing a group of permanent secretaries. It is overseeing teams of top economists and civil servants, who are busy formulating the statistical and policy ammunition for ministers, including David Cameron, to fire in their bid to stop the Nationalist-led attempt to end the 300-year-old Union. Sir Jeremy Heywood, the Cabinet Secretary, is also chairing another group liaising with ministers. The documents, the first of which is expected within weeks, will look at a wide range of areas from the economy to defence and security. (...) there is room for the manifesto to respond to events and to examine new issues that emerge as the independence debate intensifies"

[Many questions, but must we answer them all?](#), Scotsman (31.10.12)

"The SNP's position has become more difficult as it has had to spell out its understanding of independence, and the form this would take. Awkward questions about disengagement have been raised, questions about the currency, about pensions and social security, about membership of supra-national bodies, NATO and the European Union. Some of the answers have been less than convincing"

"(...) There was another course the SNP might have chosen to take. It might have stuck to the simple message: independence will be good for us, and declared that these questions of the currency, NATO and the EU would be matters for the first parliament and government of an independent Scotland to decide, and then, if necessary, negotiate"

"Clearly it would be easier for the SNP to win the referendum if they didn't have to address these questions, but could rely only on the emotional appeal of independence and on the assertion that an independent Scotland would manage its affairs better than they are managed within the UK. But, unfortunately for Mr Salmond and his party, the irritating and difficult questions are being put, and for the moment, they are failing to provide satisfactory answers"

[Pro-UK lobby's refusal to discuss independent Scotland could play into rival's hands](#), Scotsman (31.10.12)

"(...) If the [UK government and pro-union side] contingency plans propose a tough talking stance towards Scotland ("we'll demand they keep Trident at Faslane or else") London would soon find it accused of bullying Scotland into submission and running a negative campaign. On the other hand, if the plans set out a co-operative stance ("Sure, English taxpayers and the Bank of England will stand behind Scotland to lend if required"), they risk an explosion of resentment from south of the border. More than that, there is a general reluctance in the pro-UK camp to do anything that puts flesh on the bones of a post-independent Scotland."

The general rule in politics – not to hypothesise on defeat – is being followed. Consequently, it appears Whitehall will restrict itself to a series of papers setting out its views on the strengths of the UK, and the question marks that would be placed over them in the event of independence.

“The risk with this is that the “no contingency plans” line ends up frustrating more people than just their noble Lordships, and alienates swing voters who would quite like to know more facts before deciding which way to vote. Their reasons are understandable, but – especially if polls tighten – ministers who claim there are no contingency plans for something which looks pretty contingent can expect uncomfortable times ahead”

[Salmond both a formidable asset and the greatest challenge to Yes cause,](#)
Scotsman (28.10.12)

“It was July 2004 and Alex Salmond had announced his candidacy to replace John Swinney as leader of the SNP. A crucial part of this process was for his advisers to address a welter of negative connotations around the man. In those days, Salmond was not father of the nation material. He was a failure. In political circles, his flaws – especially that short temper and tendency to rely on swagger rather than detail – were widely discussed”

“(…) Did Alex Salmond lie about whether legal advice had been obtained [about the EU membership] when asked by Andrew Neil? No, I doubt it. Did he bluster through, unsure of detail and presenting guesswork and supposition as fact? I’m certain of it. And the danger for the “yes” campaign is that he’ll do it again (...). As for the First Minister, those same people who saw his flaws clearly in 2004 have work to do. He needs to be better briefed, clearer on detail and – yes – willing to concede at times that some answers might only emerge post-independence”

[Target Salmond,](#) Herald Scotland (27.10.12)

“The newspaper headlines which greeted the First Minister on Wednesday morning were the most uniformly hostile since he took office in 2007. Even during the release of the Lockerbie bomber and long-forgotten rows over Donald Trump's golf course, Salmond received mixed reviews. But the admission that SNP ministers had never had official legal advice to support their longstanding case that an independent Scotland would automatically be in the EU and avoid the Euro changed all that”

“This wasn't just about the EU, it was about trust – trust in Salmond and trust in his key policy. But are Labour and the other pro-Union parties confusing a lousy few days for the SNP with a game-changing moment in the referendum campaign?”

“Sources say the party's private research has identified Salmond's “trust issue” as one of his greatest liabilities with voters. If they can discredit the messenger, they can discredit the message, goes the theory. Salmond may have survived last week's furore, but like every politician he has a shelf life. The big question for the SNP and the independence movement is whether it extends to October 2014”

[Salmond shifts strategy as he seeks to steady SNP nerves](#), Financial Times (22.10.12)

"Recent polls have shown support leaking away from the independence cause. (...). Confronted with such odds, the SNP has shifted its strategy in a subtle but important way. Instead of arguing for independence for its own sake, Mr Salmond has begun to reframe the argument in terms of policy (...). The new approach could be a game-changer. A poll carried out by Panelbase and published by the Sunday Times showed the threat of a Conservative victory in the 2015 general election transformed the argument, boosting support for independence from 37 per cent to 52 per cent"

[A new generation of voters... but will they make a difference?](#), Herald Scotland (21.10.12)

"Rather than being last-minute converts, the SNP has been campaigning on the issue since the dog days of opposition, and was a founder member of the Votes at 16 campaign in 2003. Nor is the SNP isolated on the subject. The Liberal Democrats adopted votes for 16 as party policy in 2001, and included it in their last two General Election manifestos"

"(...) that would give a total electorate of 4.05m, of whom around 90,000 would be new teenage voters (...). According to Professor John Curtice, psephologist extraordinaire at Strathclyde University, that would mean that on the day of the referendum, 2.2% to 2.7% of voters will be 16 or 17. Would they make a big difference? "Undoubtedly not," he says ... or maybe, in a cliff-hanger. If there was around half a percent between the Yes and No votes of the adult population, then people aged 16 and 17 would decide the outcome. Short of a knife-edge result, this cohort is very unlikely to make an impact, he says. Nor is there any proof that these new voters would vote as a bloc, Nationalist or otherwise"

[Ne'er cast a vote till your 18th birthday's out, The Times](#) (19.10.12) by Philip Collins (Columnist)

"(...)The most common fallacy is the claim that if you can get married or join the Army you should therefore be allowed to vote. Well, in truth, you cannot get married at 16 without the consent of your parents, which is also needed to join the Army. Children under 18 are not allowed on the military front line. But the 'therefore' does not follow in any case. One permission does not necessarily entail another"

"There are two arguments for change worth hearing. The first is that it is a bedrock principle of a democracy that if you are taxed on money you have earned yourself, then you should be represented. (...) almost 20,000 16 and 17-year-old workers paying income tax without the vote (...) but this argument will soon be rendered redundant by the raising of the school leaving age at 18, which is due to come into force in 2015. The only argument left standing is that 16 is the age at which we deem children to have matured to the point where, in general and as a body of people, they are liable to be ready to exercise their democratic rights well. There is no escaping the arbitrary element to this judgement"

[Greens give their backing to YesScotland corner](#), Scotland on Sunday (07.10.12)

"At their party conference in Glasgow yesterday, the Greens agreed to join up with the SNP and other figures in the "YesScotland" movement, created earlier this year. They also announced plans to lobby to replace the Queen as head of state and create a separate Scottish currency"

3.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• **Positive versus Negative**

In the period covered by this report, the unionist side has mainly developed a 'negative' strategy. The priority has been to criticize the timetable proposed by the nationalists, and to question some of the arguments put forward by the SNP government. Some of the issues, especially when presented in an assertive way by the nationalist camp, become an easy target for the pro-union side. For example: the SNP argues in favor of keeping the pound, the UK government questions the 'automaticity' and 'feasibility' of such policy. Interestingly, the unionist strategy does not necessarily 'oppose' or 'confront' some of the nationalist standpoints, but aims simply to erode their credibility by presenting a 'sceptical' answer.

• **Embracing certainty or uncertainty?**

Nationalists are confronted to a major dilemma in terms of their communication strategy: should they fight or embrace the uncertainty created by the independence process? Everybody knows what the UK 'looks like', what are the limits and benefits of unity, and how it works in practice. The perspective of an independent Scotland is a projection of something that currently doesn't exist. The press has been echoing this crucial dilemma, which applies mainly to the nationalist side, but not exclusively.

• **Policy or identity?**

The communication strategy of the nationalists has, in the period covered, focused clearly and almost exclusively on policy, not identity. This trend is examined in more detail in Section 7 of this report.

• **Target Salmond**

The strategy of focusing the debate around the figure of the first minister, Alex Salmond, has been one of the main trends since October. The reason behind such a strategy is to turn the whole issue of independence into a matter of trust and personal approval regarding the person of Alex Salmond. The crisis that unfolded after the non-existent legal advice on EU membership has shown the issues that can be exploited by 'personalizing' too much the issue of independence.

• **Campaign arrangements and other controversial issues**

The press coverage has echoed the debate around a range of controversial and disputed arrangements linked with the referendum. This include for example the appropriateness of letting the 16 and 17-year take part in the vote, the approval by nationalists of foreign donations, or the arrangement allowing only the Scots living in Scotland to take part in the referendum vote.

SECTION 4

EUROPEAN MEMBERSHIP

4.1 PRESS REVIEW

[Westminster in trouble over Scots and EU polls](#), Scotsman (07.02.13)
by Stephen Gethins (SNP candidate for the European elections)

"It will be even more difficult for the UK government to make two contradictory arguments – in favour of the Treaty of Union whilst undermining the European Union (...). This shift in focus is already providing a boost to Scotland's Yes Campaign. In its simplest form, key arguments that the No camp will have been looking to deploy are now irrelevant. (...). Another difficulty for the No campaigners is why should the UK pre-negotiate a deal with Brussels but not Edinburgh? (...) Maybe the UK government should take a fresh look too. Anyone who has worked in Brussels will know that no-one gets anything done without friends"

[Determined Sturgeon defies EU snub](#), Herald Scotland (27.01.13)

"Nicola Sturgeon last night launched an audacious bid to open up direct dialogue with the leaders of the 27 EU states on the role of an independent Scotland in Europe after being rebuffed by Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso. Just days after Barroso refused her request for talks on Scottish entry to Europe, the Deputy First Minister wrote to the foreign ministers of each EU state to promote the SNP Government's pro-European credentials"

"She said: 'I therefore want to assure all Member States that following a positive result in the [independence] referendum we would work with the United Kingdom and the rest of the EU in partnership to ensure we continued to play an active part in that community of interest' "

[How does Scotland's referendum fit into David Cameron's EU plans?](#),
The Guardian (27.01.13)

"In a two-day period the prime minister has lanced the no campaign's two most powerful arguments against Scottish independence (...). The first of them is that independence will result in Scotland being cast adrift from the European fold, outcast and isolated. The second is that the very process of holding a referendum sometime in the future will somehow distort, undermine and fatally destabilise business interests"

"Now even that threat looks ridiculous. Cameron has created a bizarre scenario where he might simultaneously be arguing that the Scots risk losing their European credentials while casually jeopardising the UK's"

[Alex Salmond in the clear but critics attack 'sham' inquiry over EU legal advice,](#)
The Scotsman (11.01.13)

"Alex Salmond was yesterday cleared of breaching the ministerial code when he appeared to confirm the Scottish Government had specific legal advice about an independent Scotland's entry to the European Union. An official investigation said the First Minister gave a muddled, incomplete and confused answer during a BBC interview but did not breach the code"

[EU membership high on SNP agenda,](#) Scotsman (16.12.12)

"In the real world, however, things might be different. Alastair Sutton, a Scottish lawyer based in Brussels with a lifetime of experience of EU law, echoes Sturgeon's point to agree that it is politics, not law, which would be the key factor at play. There is no "automaticity" about Scotland's entry, he says, agreeing with Barroso's point – and rebutting the SNP's previous view. But, 'if the political will were there, then all the arrangements – the number of MEPs and so on – could be sorted out between Date One [the referendum vote] and Date Two [the actual day Scotland becomes independent]. Scotland, with a very small gap, would then become a member of the EU' "

"(...) the key question: "What muscle would Scotland have?". And then there is the issue of other nations with independence movements – Spain, most notably"

"The only problem is that the debate may end up leading people to a host of unanswerable questions prior to a referendum – because no-one can say with certainty how these negotiations will end. Meanwhile, other pro-independence backers say uncertainty should be embraced. "When you aren't bluffing and you are being honest, then you can speak with true confidence. Confidence breeds confidence, and real confidence comes from knowing that you are telling the truth as honestly as you can," argues one figure. That truth, on last week's evidence, looks messy and uncertain. But then so too does a future in the Union, says Sturgeon – pointing to the über-fact of a UK-wide referendum on the recasting of Britain's relationship with the EU, set to face Scotland in the aftermath of a "no" vote"

[Whatever Barroso says, voting for independence might be the only way for Scotland to stay IN Europe,](#) Herald Scotland (16.12.12)

"What the myopic chatterati have failed to grasp is that the UK is moving rapidly away from the EU and, under the present constitutional arrangements, is likely to take Scotland with it – at least if the majority of Tory MPs in Westminster get their way"

"What does all this mean for Scotland? Well, it means that the run-up to the Scottish referendum on independence IN Europe will likely be dominated by debate about a referendum on independence FROM Europe"

"We live in an age of uncertainty in which constitutional relations are being renegotiated at all levels. We don't even know if the eurozone will survive another

year of the sovereign debt crisis. What we do know is that, if it does, the EU will have to become much more like a federal state, with a central treasury and common tax and spending policies across the EU. It's pretty clear that the UK doesn't want any part of that. Scotland has yet to express its settled will"

[Sturgeon accepts reality of negotiated entry to EU](#), Herald Scotland (14.12.12)

"– after previously arguing that an independent Scotland would automatically inherit the UK's terms of membership – she told MSPs her case was based on "common sense and realism". The Deputy First Minister made a statement to parliament after European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said a newly independent state would have to apply for EU membership"

[All to play for in spite of Barroso's letter](#), Scotsman (13.12.12)

"On Monday the president of the European Commission delivered an early Christmas present to the unionist side in the independence debate. It took the form of a letter to the economic affairs committee of the House of Lords. In it José Manuel Barroso detailed his view that if Scotland were to become independent then it would have to apply for membership of the EU"

"There are several common sense points that need to be made about this issue. First, there is no definitive legal solution to the puzzle; it will ultimately be decided through an interaction of law and politics. Second, the opposing arguments put forward by pro- and anti-independence forces are overly simplistic. Third, the notion that Scotland will be forced to adopt the euro is false. Fourth, the EU's commitment to democracy and self-determination ought to tell us a lot about how this will play out"

"The state-centric and citizen-centric views of the EU are simplified, stylised and sit at opposite ends of a complex political and legal spectrum. Somewhere in between those ends of the spectrum is the reality: Scotland will have to negotiate the precise terms of its status within the EU, there are trade-offs to be had, and various parties will drive hard bargains. But, ultimately, the notion that Scotland will at any stage find itself outside of the EU looking in, unless it chooses that for itself, is politically and legally far-fetched. That is as concrete as anybody can be"

[Crystal-clear SNP claims on EU shown to be opaque](#), Herald Scotland (11.12.12)

"No-one, on either side of the debate, is suggesting that an independent Scotland would not be welcomed by the European Union. The real question is, on what terms? And there lies the SNP's problem. Until recently, at least, it has denied there was any question at all over the terms of membership, accusing anyone who dared suggest otherwise of scaremongering"

"In October, the First Minister publicly acknowledged that negotiations would be required but suggested talks would touch on minor issues, such as the number of MEPs Scotland would send to the European Parliament. Now the SNP claims it "always said" the specific terms of Scotland's EU membership would be

negotiated. Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has requested formal legal advice on the issue from the Lord Advocate and yesterday announced she was seeking talks with the EC to discuss the Government's plans for independence"

[SNP faces tough battle to claw back ground over EU](#), Scotsman (11.12.12) Editorial

"José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, has finally laid down the EU law regarding Scottish independence. In an interview with the BBC, and in a letter to the House of Lords, he has made clear what this newspaper reported last week – that an independent Scotland would have to apply for European Union membership and such membership would have to be negotiated, with all the uncertainties that entails"

"This puts the Scottish Government in a predicament. For years, the SNP has insisted that because Scotland is inside the EU as part of the UK, an EU member, and because there is no provision for expelling a country from the EU, it would remain inside it"

[In full: José Manuel Barroso's letter on EU membership](#), Scotsman (10.12.12)

"In these replies the European Commission has noted that scenarios such as the separation of one part of a Member State or the creation of a new state would not be neutral as regards the EU Treaties. The European Commission would express its opinion on the legal consequences under EU law upon request from a Member State detailing a precise scenario"

"The EU is founded on the Treaties which apply only to the Member States who have agreed and ratified them. If part of the territory of a Member State would cease to be part of that state because it were to become a new independent state, the Treaties would no longer apply to that territory. In other words, a new independent state would, by the fact of its independence, become a third country with respect to the EU and the Treaties would no longer apply on its territory"

[Desperately seeking some kind of clarity](#), Scotsman (22.11.12) Editorial

"So we have some eminent academics who say Scotland's entry would be automatic; and some who say it would be automatic but subject to negotiation on the exact conditions; some who say it would necessitate signing up to join the euro; and others still who say Scotland would have to apply for entry from scratch"

"The truth is, nobody knows what Scotland's position will be, come independence day, if that is indeed where the country is heading. Moreover, an official opinion from the EU now may not be the same as an opinion in two years' time (when Scotland votes) or a year further down the line (when Scotland would be in throes of independence negotiations with London). The EU position may well fluctuate depending on the political outlook at the time, and the political complexion of EU member governments"

[Where there is a plan there is a way to the EU, Scotsman](#) (01.11.12)

by Marc Weller (Prof. international law Univ. Cambridge)

"The first view claims that Scotland would automatically inherit EU membership. It is argued that EU law protects individuals from the arbitrary withdrawal of their nationality. As a denial of continuous EU membership would imply a withdrawal of EU citizenship from the people of an independent Scotland, such a denial could not occur. This is not true. EU citizenship is expressly subsidiary to national citizenship – it follows nationality. If the home state leaves the Union, EU citizenship and the benefits it brings can be lost. And while the EC/EU legal instruments do not foresee a withdrawal from the Union, it is nevertheless possible for territories to depart. Greenland left the EC in 1985 in the context of its enhanced home rule granted by Denmark. A further argument is based on fundamental or human rights. International law assigns these to individuals, rather than states"

"The second theory asserts that neither Scotland nor the rest of the UK would retain membership. True, state unions such as federations or confederations dissolve when all or most of their members leave. Hence, the legal identity of Czechoslovakia vanished when Slovakia and the Czech Republic divorced in 1993. During the 1990s, Serbia claimed to succeed to the rights and membership status of the dissolved Yugoslav federation. But this claim was internationally rejected. Only the Russian Federation exceptionally inherited the rights and obligations of the dissolved USSR, in particular its permanent seat in the Security Council. This was due to a special agreement reached among all of the constituent states of the former Soviet Union. Scotland position in the United Kingdom is based in the Act of Union of 1706-7. However, Britain is no state-union. It is a unitary state. Even if devolution had rendered it a federal-type state, its continuous legal identity would not be put into question should only one of its constituent units, Scotland, leave."

"This leaves the third possibility of secession. This doctrine applied to the recent departures of Eritrea from Ethiopia, Southern Sudan from Sudan, and Kosovo from Serbia, and it would also apply to Scotland. The mother country continues the legal personality of the state, while the seceding entity has to apply anew for membership in international organizations. (...) difficult accession negotiations would still need to be held with Brussels. These talks would take place after a referendum favouring independence and before independence is declared"

"Hence, Scottish EU membership in the event of secession is definitely not automatic. On the other hand, it should be possible to negotiate a seamless transition towards independence with EU membership that does not disrupt the lives of the people of Scotland. However, such an outcome requires significant preparation and pro-active diplomatic engagement, instead of the present state of confusion"

[Public's trust has to be earned](#), Herald Scotland (25.10.12) Editorial

"Trust is a quality that is hard-won and easily lost. For politicians seeking public support, it is vital. The claim that, post-independence, Scotland would automatically be a member of the EU under the same conditions as currently apply to the UK is such a key plank of the prospectus for independence that failure to ensure it was based on authoritative legal opinion is extraordinary"

[Salmond's darkest day in government](#), Herald Scotland (24.10.12) Editorial

"For months the Nationalists have attempted to close down debate on the issue by insisting it was done and dusted. Unexpectedly yesterday, Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon revealed no specific legal advice had been sought. If this is the case, taxpayers are entitled to know why the Government has spent £12,000 of public funds going to the Court of Session in an attempt to prevent the publication of whether or not such advice had been sought. They would also like to know why the First Minister appeared to give the clear impression in a television interview in March that reassuring legal advice on this issue had been obtained. Alex Salmond has questions to answer"

[Salmond accused of misleading Scots on EU membership](#), The Guardian (24.10.12)

"The first minister has repeatedly said that Scotland would be an automatic member of the EU, be free to adopt sterling as its currency and would inherit all the UK's opt-outs on EU immigration and border controls. He has asserted that this position was supported by his government's legal advice. But Salmond was forced to make a statement to the Scottish parliament late on Tuesday after opposition leaders accused him of "lying" and "covering-up" following an admission from his deputy, Nicola Sturgeon, that no specific legal advice had been given by Scottish law officers on EU membership. His critics highlighted an interview by Salmond with Andrew Neil on BBC1's Sunday Politics earlier this year in which the first minister said he had been given clear legal advice by Scottish law officers"

[In Salmond, we no longer trust](#), Scotsman (25.10.12)

by Bill Jamieson (Executive Editor Scotsman)

"Before yesterday, I thought I had a fairly clear idea of what Alex Salmond told me about Scotland's position with regard to the European Union in the event of independence. This was that Scotland's membership would be continued. (...) [But] According to Nicola Sturgeon, the administration has only just begun seeking specific legal advice"

"A clarification and an apology back at the time would have dealt with the issue. Instead, parliament and the public have been led to believe in the existence of advice that was never given and support for a contention that has no legal basis whatever. (...) Trust is a finite quality in politics. Time and again the First Minister will need to say to the Scottish people on this and other issues: "Trust me; you know I will not deceive you." But who is going to trust Alex Salmond now, having been caught out in such a cheap lie?"

4.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• *The first big SNP crisis of the campaign*

EU membership has been the issue causing the first significant crisis within the SNP since the signing of the Edinburgh Agreement in October 2012. It has been, without any doubt, the main topic of the debate in the press for the last 6 months. The SNP has faced two main challenges. The first one arose when the SNP government confessed that 'legal advice' on EU membership had not been sought. Accusations followed that Alex Salmond had misled the public opinion in a past television interview where he seemed to confirm exactly the opposite.

The second challenge has been probably more important for the long term because the SNP has been forced to abandon their traditional assumption that Scotland would retain 'automatically' its EU membership. In particular the debate has been determined by the political opinion against this stance given by J.M Barroso, president of the European Commission.

• *From assertion to pro-active engagement*

The EU membership crisis has triggered particularly severe criticism of Alex Salmond in the press and it has also been analyzed as a severe blow to the pro-independence side. Nicola Sturgeon, the deputy first minister, has become the main SNP leader dealing with that issue. The strategy deployed by the Scottish government has evolved significantly in the last six months. The new nationalist argument in the newspapers follows two stances. The first is that, despite the need to negotiate Scotland's EU membership, such negotiation will be successful because Scottish membership is in the best interests of the EU. This argument implies that SNP is adopting a rational and common sense approach. The second, that despite the reluctance of the EU and the UK to clarify as much as possible this issue, the Scottish government will engage in a pro-active diplomatic strategy across Europe advocating for EU membership.

• *Understanding EU politics*

The row over EU membership has also provoked a vibrant debate in the press around the way the EU works, and the legal and political difficulties of granting EU membership. Academic experts, senior civil servants and experts on the EU have written continuously in the newspapers, in particular in the Scotsman and Herald Scotland. The overall tendency over the last five months is to acknowledge that the potential integration of an independent Scotland in the EU will fluctuate depending on the political outlook at the time, and the political will of the EU governments (including the crucial position of the UK).

• *The promise of a UK referendum on Europe in 2017*

The announcement made in January by the prime minister, David Cameron, to hold a referendum on Europe in 2017 has offered new room for the discussion. The press coverage has pointed to two main challenges for Cameron. The first is the potential lack of coherence between the two discourses of the UK government, one towards the Scottish government in the case of the referendum on independence, the other towards the EU in the case of re-negotiating the relationship of the UK. The potential contradictions are numerous, both in terms of specific policy disputes, but also in terms of the general political argument.

The risks and uncertainty embodied in the process that Cameron has started have been perceived as an opportunity for the Scottish nationalists to minimize the row over EU membership. Indeed, the crisis that engulfed the SNP forced the government to recognize that nothing is certain regarding EU matters. But now, with the announcement made by Cameron, the nationalists can defend the idea that staying in the UK offers the same degree of uncertainty – if not more – regarding EU membership.

SECTION 5

CURRENCY AND DEFENCE

5.1 PRESS REVIEW (Currency)

[*Economics will decide referendum, research suggests*](#), Herald Scotland (12.01.13)

"It claims that nearly half of Scots who do not regard themselves as British in any way still wish to remain in the UK. The study by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen)⁸ also found widespread optimism about the impact of independence did not translate into majority support for leaving Britain. The analysis, How will Scotland answer the referendum question?, was co-authored by Professor John Curtice of Strathclyde University, the country's leading polling expert"

"The study follows a report this week by macroeconomic think-tank Capital Economics⁹ which warned that the UK would demand a "near veto" over an independent Scotland's budget as the price for keeping the pound"

[*Keeping pound 'sensible'*](#), Scotsman (11.02.13)

"Experts in the Fiscal Commission Working Group said Scotland was sufficiently large to have its own currency if the country opted to leave the UK in next year's independence referendum. But the group - set up by Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond to provide advice on the economic challenges and opportunities the country would face after independence - conceded there would be a number of "practical challenges" linked to establishing a separate Scottish currency. (...) The Commission stated: "On day one of independence, the members of the Working Group agree that retaining sterling would be a sensible currency choice that would be attractive both to Scotland and the UK."

[*Economic vision needed before independence vote*](#), Herald Scotland (13.11.12)

by Keith Cochrane (CEO of Weir Group)

"From the perspective of the Weir Group, these are: How a coherent UK single market for people, goods and services will be maintained; how consistent will tax policy be between Scotland and England and what proposals are there for harmonisation where difference may exist? Regulation: Where might Scotland seek to develop its own regulatory regime and, from a UK listed company perspective, how might this impact on the existing obligations of Scottish headquartered businesses? People and skills: How can Scotland continue to ensure there is widespread availability of quality people with the correct balance of

⁸ See appendix, ref. 8

⁹ See appendix, ref. 9

expertise and skills? Finally, what would a post-independence regulatory and taxation regime for private sector pension schemes look like?"

"Ultimately, business is about the assessment of risk. That relies on a number of inputs, foremost of which is the quality of information necessary for robust decision-making. While there may be an unwritten political rule that policy detail should not be revealed too far in advance of the polls opening, for as long as business remains trapped in the realm of known unknowns, it will be difficult to assess adequately the implications for business of independence"

[Cameron's army of civil servants to defend Union](#), Herald Scotland, 29.10.12

"The drive will see a paper on each of 13 policy areas relating to what the UK Government regards as the key benefits of Scotland remaining in the Union due to be published by Coalition ministers each month during 2013. The Treasury is spearheading the co-ordinated push with Sir Nicholas MacPherson, the department's top civil servant, chairing a group of permanent secretaries"

"Some 13 policy "work streams" have now been established. Five involve the Treasury and cover the economic performance of Scotland, currency and monetary policy, tax and spending, financial services and banking, and debt and borrowing. The other eight work streams involve several UK Government departments. These are: The legal basis and history of the UK, EU membership and inter-national matters, energy and North Sea oil, defence and security; welfare, culture, heritage and identity, borders and immigration, and business, innovation and infrastructure"

"The areas of analysis clearly show where the Coalition's lines of political attack will be.

-Trade: Scotland as part of the UK has access to a larger domestic market, which could be threatened by independence with an impact on the flows of trade, labour and capital between Scotland and the rest of the UK; before their split, the Czech Republic and Slovakia had a great deal of cross-border trade, after it, this decreased significantly.

-Debt and borrowing: As a new country with no track record a breakaway Scotland is likely to face higher borrowing costs.

-Services: With oil revenues set to decline over the next 30 years and demographics showing Scotland's population is ageing faster than the rest of the UK's, will an independent Scotland be able to maintain its current public services?

-Resilience to shocks: A newly independent state with a much smaller economy could be more at risk of structural shocks such as the failure of a big bank.

-Currency and monetary policy: If a breakaway Scotland joined a sterling zone, its monetary policy would be set by a foreign country.

-Finance: How would the financial sector in an independent Scotland relate to the Bank of England? Mortgage providers based in Scotland sell 16% of their mortgages to Scottish properties and 84% to those elsewhere in the UK"

[Alex Salmond and Scotland's future](#), Financial Times (29.10.12), Editorial

"One thing can be predicted at this stage. In both its EU and Nato applications, success for Scotland would depend ultimately on whether the London government were supportive. Again however, it is Mr Salmond's slipperiness that makes it hard to predict how events would develop. For example, a critical issue after secession would be what stance Mr Salmond takes over the UK's nuclear weapons. The UK deterrent is loaded on four submarines berthed at Faslane on the Clyde. If Mr Salmond were to insist on the immediate removal of these submarines then London would face a crisis in which its status as nuclear power would be under threat. British hostility to Scotland at the EU and Nato would be assured"

5.2 PRESS REVIEW (Defence)

[One-man rescue operation keeps leadership's Nato plans on track](#), Scotsman (20.10.12)

"But the most telling contribution came from Kenny MacAskill, whose speech was full of barnstorming pragmatism. "I'm no US poster boy," was the opening line from the man vilified on the other side of the Atlantic for freeing the Lockerbie bomber. "And certainly no US lapdog," he added as uproarious laughter gripped the hall"

"Warming to his theme, he said: "We have moved on from being a party of protest to a party of power." We will never know for sure how many activists MacAskill won over, but Salmond and Robertson, in particular, owe him a large dram. In the end, Robertson's resolution squeezed home by just 29 votes"

[Alex Salmond gains slim SNP vote for joining Nato](#), The Guardian (20.10.12)

"Alex Salmond has won a narrow victory in his attempts to overturn the Scottish National party's long-standing opposition to membership of Nato. After a debate that split the party's annual conference, delegates voted by 394 to 365 to back a new policy to support membership of Nato if the SNP wins the 2014 Scottish independence referendum"

[Salmond seeks SNP rethink on Nato](#), Financial Times (19.10.12)

"Remaining in the alliance has become an important plank of Mr Salmond's efforts to persuade floating voters that voting in favour of independence would not have a significant effect on Scottish foreign policy (...). The motion keeps the party committed to moving Trident out of Scotland, but questions remain over how long it would take to move the deterrent and whether Nato would accept an independent Scotland committed to nuclear disarmament"

[Principles trump politics in decision on Nato](#), Scotsman (18.10.12)

by Marco Biagi (MSP for the Scottish National Party)

"Party members should, above all, be cautious of the flimsy argument that changing positions to back an independent Scotland's Nato membership would make a 2014 Yes vote more likely. Such thinking feeds into the false narrative that voting Yes means endorsing only the SNP vision of an independent Scotland. Worse, though, this argument leads to a dangerous – though in my view false – perception that a Nato U-turn might be being pursued for political gain rather than out of genuine belief. The question of Nato membership will be an issue for the first elections to an independent Scottish Parliament in 2016"

"I believe that we should seek protection through alliances that provide collective security by means other than the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, which underpins all Nato doctrine. (...). Our objection as a country, rather than "Not in our back yard" should be "Not in our name"

[There is a price to pay for national security](#), Scotsman (17.10.12)

by Liam Fox (Conservative MP, former Secretary of State for Defence)

"For probably the first time in my political career, I find myself agreeing with Alex Salmond. There is simply no way that the Scottish Nationalist Party can continue with a defence policy that argues an independent Scotland could not be part of Nato. To leave after enjoying the alliance's protection for the last 60 years is like leaving the pub before your turn to buy the round"

"But the Scottish Nationalists must not be taken in by Alex Salmond's unilateral decision to re-interpret the Nato treaties. Nato is a nuclear alliance. In its Deterrence and Defence Posture Review, released at the Chicago Summit earlier this year, that was re-affirmed without ambiguity. (...).Mr Salmond may be promising the removal of our nuclear weapons from Faslane but he does so without consulting any of our Nato allies"

[Why we can ban nuclear weapons and stay in Nato](#), Herald Scotland (14.10.12)

by Alex Salmond (First Minister of Scotland)

"An independent Scotland will be a good citizen of the world – and a good friend to our neighbours and allies. That is why as Scotland prepares to take our place in the world, I believe it is right that Scotland continues our Nato membership as a full member state as one of 29 – subject to an agreement that we will not host nuclear weapons, in line with the vast majority of current Nato members. As well as wanting the closest possible co-operation with the rest of the present UK, we must also recognise that Scotland's North Sea neighbours regard co-operation through Nato as extremely important. For example, air policing in northern Europe – including against potential terrorist threats – occurs through a Nato command centre in Denmark, and maritime patrol in our region is also carried out via Nato"

"For an independent Scotland remaining in Nato, we would advocate a "triple lock" governing any Scottish involvement in the deployment of international force. First, Nato must continue to respect the right of the government of each member

state to decide whether to commit forces or not. Second, the deployment of any armed servicemen and women into combat situations would require to be approved by Scotland's independent Parliament. And third, above all, Scotland would only become involved in actions which carried the authority of the United Nations"

5.3 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• **Economics**

Economics is perceived as one of the key factors determining the vote on the referendum. If the case can be made that Scotland will benefit economically from independence, the percentage likely to vote in favour increases. The opposite is also valid. In the last 6 months the press has pointed out that the position of business and industry will be crucial. Significantly, the unionist strategy and in particular the strategy of the UK government is to focus largely on economic arguments when preparing the material for the campaign. The unionist strategy in this field is, for the moment, similar to that adopted for the rest of the issues in dispute. The main objective is to cast doubt and present a sceptical response to the standpoints of the SNP.

• **Keeping the pound?**

The official line of the SNP is to keep the pound in an independent Scotland. The press has been discussing the potential problems of such policy, mostly in terms of sovereignty. The discussion unfolds around the fact that all monetary policy concerning the pound is governed by the Bank of England, which would necessarily pose a dilemma when envisaging an independent Scotland.

• **Nato: change of policy**

In the SNP congress celebrated in October the leadership of the party proposed to change the traditional political line regarding Nato. The vote was won by a very small margin (29 votes out of a total of 759 delegates). As a consequence of this vote the party agreed to ask for integration in the Nato alliance in the event of Scotland becoming an independent state. The change provoked strong criticisms in the press, even from some members within the Scottish Party. One of the traditional features of the party has been the opposition to nuclear arms and the fight against war and militarism.

• **Ban of nuclear weapons**

Despite the new policy line on Nato adopted in October, the nationalists have proposed to ban all nuclear weapons in Scotland in the event of becoming an independent state. This proposal provoked the reaction in the press of two of the most current important political personalities: Liam Fox, the former Secretary of State for Defence, and Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland. Fox pointed out the 'contradiction' laying at the heart of the SNP policy, by arguing that Nato was first and foremost, a nuclear and deterrence alliance. The debate around the implications of the referendum in terms of national security is expected to be crucial. The deterrence system of the UK is reliant on four nuclear submarines that are based in Faslane, in Scotland.

SECTION 6

THIRD WAY

6.1 PRESS REVIEW

[Devo Plus campaign seeks pro-union party support](#), Scotsman (14.02.13)

"The leader of the Devo Plus campaign, which wants Holyrood to be handed full tax powers, is to write to the leaders of the anti-independence parties asking them to sign up to a details package of reforms. The move by Devo Plus leader Jeremy Purvis comes as the cross party campaign prepares to mark the first anniversary of its launch. Labour has launched a devolution commission to look at what powers it would back, while Tory leader Ruth Davidson has said her party also needs to look at what more powers it could back for Holyrood. The Lib Dems have backed Home Rule for Scotland that would see the Scottish Parliament handed greater autonomy over taxation and welfare policy while remaining in the UK. (...).The Devo Plus campaign leader's demands were backed by former Labour First Minister Henry McLeish and Tory MSP Murdo Fraser"

[Davidson makes a devolution U-turn](#), Herald Scotland (26.01.13)

"Since winning the leadership in November 2011, she has had to learn that lesson the hard way (...). On the constitution, she spoke of drawing "a line in the sand" and said she opposed the devolution of any further powers from Westminster. That was the platform on which she was elected. Yesterday the Scottish Tory leader exercised as neat a 180-degree turn (...)"

"A party that almost always argued against more powers for Scotland was seen as "London's party in Scotland". As a result too many Scots "simply don't trust our motives", she admitted, opening the way to the possibility of a new constitutional convention, should Scotland reject independence"

[Labour needs answer to £30bn question](#), Scotland on Sunday (20.01.13)

"Often referred to as Labour's favourite think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research has a habit of coming out with ideas which take the party into new political territory. This week, the think tank publishes a new report proposing that MSPs get far more control over the taxes we pay. A policy and political challenge is therefore being laid before Scottish Labour this week; is leader Johann Lamont likely to grasp the thistle?"

"Lamont herself has so far struck a cautious ton (...).The IPPR report, written by leading devolution expert Professor Alan Trench, may strike the kind of middle ground that might resolve the tension within Labour (...) It does not propose devolving corporation tax or North Sea oil revenues but it does back the idea of giving MSPs complete control over income tax. It also suggests that MSPs should

be “assigned” a large chunk of VAT revenues, and the windfall “sin” taxes, such as alcohol and tobacco revenue”

“Lamont will signal “open-mindedness” on all these issues when she presents her speech to her party conference in April. But, deliberately, she is to keep the final plan under wraps until the spring of 2014. That points to the tactical battle Labour is fighting. But Lodge warns today of the dangers of such a wait-and-see plan (...) Lamont insists that, come the referendum next year, there will be a “concrete” offer from Labour on the next stage of devolution (with both the Tories and the Lib Dems also preparing their own plans too)”.

[Carving out a new union](#), Scotsman (19.12.12)
by Ben Thomson (Chairman of Reform Scotland)

“Why do we think devo plus is the best solution? First, it recognises the strength of the relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom (...). However, devo plus also recognises that the UK is overly-centralised. Even after the implementation of the Scotland Act, about 85 per cent of all revenue is raised through Westminster, but the majority of spending is done at a local or devolved level. This imbalance, where Holyrood has insufficient fiscal powers to run its own affairs, is a disincentive to responsible management of public services. It creates a culture of protecting and spending the budget rather than how to produce the most effective public services. It also lacks the flexibility to create Scottish solutions for the Scottish social culture and economy. At the core of devo plus is the principle that each level of government should be responsible for raising the majority, if not all, of the money it is responsible for spending. It also enshrines – once and for all – the rights of Holyrood, permanently creating a new union between Scotland and the rest of the UK”

“And so we come to the fourth option; the one which we believe must now be executed. Using the methodology outlined in the comprehensive paper, A New Union by the Devo Plus group, the pro-Union parties can come together in advance of the referendum and agree that when the electorate votes No, it votes not for the status quo but for an agreed set of principles leading to the Scottish Parliament raising the majority of the money it spends, in the short term, and the totality of it, in the longer term”

[Would devo plus be the reality of a No vote in 2014?](#), Herald Scotland (24.11.12)

“An attempt to answer it was made by the Devo Plus Group this week. Devo plus is not to be confused with devo max. The notion of devo max may have entered the Scottish political lexicon but it is really little more than that. Broadly it means Scotland would remain in the UK and become responsible for almost all tax and spending north of the Border. The Scottish Government would pay an annual sum for shared UK functions such as defence and foreign policy”

“Devo plus is different. Under the system a specific and considerable package of financial powers would be transferred to Holyrood. The Scottish Government would become responsible for all taxes apart from VAT and National Insurance but including a geographic share of oil revenues. At the same time it would take on

responsibility for welfare spending, though not pensions. That would make Holyrood responsible for raising about two-thirds of its revenue, compared with less than one-quarter even under the new Scotland Act, which will give MSPs control over a portion of income tax from 2016. The system has been set out in minute detail by the Devo Plus Group, an offshoot of the centre-right Reform Scotland think tank"

"Devo plus faces an uphill struggle. I suspect its fate depends on those stubborn polls. Only if public opinion shifts markedly towards independence will Labour and the Tories feel the need to throw their weight behind such a radical proposal before the referendum"

[Blueprint revealed for Scots Devo-plus](#), Scotsman (22.11.12)

"The Devo-plus organisation's blueprint for change includes a "Statement of the New Union" and would see Holyrood raise the majority of its own spending. A report launched in Edinburgh yesterday by the group, which is led by former Liberal Democrat MSP Jeremy Purvis, insists its plans could be implemented by 2020. Leading MSPs from three main pro-union parties at Holyrood – Labour, the Tories and Liberal Democrats – were present for yesterday's launch, although it remains unclear if the parties will all sign up to the proposals"

[LibDems should put their own convictions to the vote](#), Herald Scotland (18.10.12)

"No sooner had Alex Salmond and David Cameron struck the Edinburgh Agreement, and opened the way for a single-question referendum on independence for Scotland, when along come the Liberal Democrats with plans for a full-scale federal restructuring of Britain. The Scottish Labour Party has also finally convened its Devolution Commission. And of course David Cameron has suggested that Scotland can expect enhanced devolution if we are good boys and girls and reject independence. Suddenly you can't move for devolution commissions. What will Scots make of it all?"

"So, the overwhelming majority of Scots, who want a new improved version of devolution but don't particularly want to leave the UK to get it, will soon discover that they have effectively been disenfranchised: allowed only to vote for options they don't actually support. The irony is that, if the Liberal Democrats' federal plan were put to the Scottish people in a referendum in 2014, the Scots would almost certainly vote for it. But of course it won't be, so they can't. The big question for the next 100 weeks is what the Scottish voters will do when they wake up to the fact that they have been locked out of their own referendum. I suspect many will not bother to vote, others will vote Yes out of frustration. Either way, it could undermine the legitimacy of the referendum"

[Middle option is the most likely result](#), The Times (16.10.12)

by Michael Keating (Professor of Politics at the University of Aberdeen and Univ. of Edinburgh)

"Nationalists and unionists have agreed to fight on their own grounds, excluding the middle ground of 'devolution-max'. Ironically, despite the decision this week to

abandon that middle option, that is probably where we will end up. If independence comes it will be 'independence-lite' and will be linked into Europe and the rest of the United Kingdom. If the No side wins, the tendency towards more self-government will continue. This reflects the reality of modern Europe, where 19th-century ideas are ever more irrelevant and thoughtful people are looking for more imaginative forms"

6.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• *Third way*

Since the Edinburgh Agreement was signed in October the press has been consistently discussing the different 'alternatives' that could be imagined between the status quo and full independence. The idea of having a 'third option' was already one of the priorities of the Scottish government but was dropped after the 'one single question' clause between the Scottish and UK government. All polls since October show that the preference of a clear majority of Scots lies in 'more devolution'. The press and some political leaders have been proposing and endorsing a new plethora of frameworks potentially enhancing further devolution.

Name and institution behind the proposal	Potential Political Endorsement	Main innovations
DEVO + (Reform Scotland, main figure behind: Jeremy Purvis – former liberal-democrat)	Conservatives Labour Liberal-Democrats Proposal backed by former Labour first minister McLeish and tory MSP Murdo Fraser	Devolution of Income and Corporation Tax. UK keeps National Insurance and VAT. Rationale: each Parliament is responsible for raising the money it spends (according to their political competencies)
Devo max	SNP	Full tax powers for Scottish Parliament.
Home Rule (Liberal-Democrats, main figure behind: Menzies Campbell – former libdem)	Liberal-Democrats	Federal reform of the UK. Recognition of 'national' identity and fiscal powers of Scotland.
Devo More (IPPR, main figure behind: Alan Trench)	Labour	Devolution Income Tax but not corporation tax or North Sea Oil revenues

- ***Conservatives changing cap***

Conservatives have changed their discourse since October. From defending the status quo to recognizing the need to support devolution, the party might be willing to support a trans-party proposal in favour of enhancing devolution in case the 'no' wins in the referendum.

- ***Timing***

The debate in the press has shifted from discussing the potential proposals to discussing when the pro-Union parties might officially back such proposals. The pro-union parties might be willing to play a risky game of 'wait and see', and commit themselves, in a united front, to further devolution only in case the support for independence grows.

SECTION 7

IDENTITY POLITICS

7.1 PRESS REVIEW

[Control, not emotion, is referendum battleground](#), Scotsman (06.02.13)

“On the pro-independence side, the emotion is being played down. Strategists are deliberately attempting to remove all talk of identity from the picture; the very word “independence” itself is said to be raising negative connotations for many swing voters (...). On the pro-Union side, by contrast, the pitch is far more emotional. The Better Together campaign refers regularly to the UK “family” of nations”

[Referendum ‘decided by economics, not national identity’](#), Scotsman (14.01.13)

“The economic consequences feature more prominently in people’s decision to support or reject independence, ScotCen’s analysis of the latest Scottish Social Attitudes survey concluded. Despite conflicting economic projections by think-tanks and parties on both sides of the debate, ScotCen found that neither side has won the economic argument in the eyes of voters”

[Beware the SNP’s hidden Ex-factor](#), Scotsman (05.12.12)

“Basically, the Ex-Faction [existentialist strand of nationalism] want independence come hell or high water, for better or for worse, richer or for poorer. The U-Team [utilitarian strand of nationalism], in contrast, are portrayed as pragmatists who wish to see an independent Scotland only because it will be a richer, fairer, happier place with better weather”

“The problem for the SNP is that, while “independence for better or worse” is their raison d’être, it has never shown much sign of commanding majority support within Scotland. So they require that third category which, I guess, covers the entire SNP leadership. They are E-Faction who must pose as U-Team in order to tempt the unwary with wonderful promises and disappearing problems, when what they are actually after is a vote for independence by hook or crook”

[Sturgeon appeals to the head rather than the heart](#), Herald Scotland (04.12.12) Editorial

“In her first major speech since heading the SNP’s campaign for independence, Nicola Sturgeon yesterday set out to appeal to minds rather than hearts. The chief benefit of an independent Scotland as envisioned by the Deputy First Minister is that it will enable the country to be run on principles of social justice. With a commitment to work together with representatives from across political parties and civic Scotland, this was an appeal to centre-left, particularly Labour, voters. It

included a tribute to Donald Dewar and carefully distanced independence from Braveheart ideas of national identity"

"Ms Sturgeon demonstrated these qualities again yesterday in a forward-looking speech whose hallmark was an inclusiveness that will be a challenge to opposition parties. But she will have to provide a more detailed route map before voters have the confidence to take what is at present a leap into the unknown"

[So, what about England?](#), Scotsman (21.11.12)

*"The result has been in part ignorance – the infuriating habit of conflating England and Britain arises because many in England have no need to distinguish between them. But it's also produced a kind of tolerant neglect. Scotland can get on with its own business, and for the most part – the evidence shows – English opinion is quite relaxed about it. This has been changing. Thirteen years of devolution, and five years of Nationalist government have changed English perceptions – a bit. Recent work published by the think-tank IPPR in its report *The Dog That Finally Barked*¹⁰ showed English opinion shifting. People south of the Border are now more likely than formerly to see themselves as English, not just British, and a bit more likely to want an English political voice"*

"Before 2007, majority English opinion supported a Scottish Parliament; in 2011 support had fallen to just over 40 per cent. Five years of nationalist administration in Edinburgh haven't shifted Scottish opinion on independence, but have shifted English views a bit. A total of 22 per cent supported Scottish independence in 2011. But just as many favour having no Scottish Parliament at all"

[Attacking Britishness will only damage Nationalist cause](#), Scotland on Sunday (21.10.12)

"Rather than clumsily addressing Britishness – felt to some degree by a majority of Scots – Sturgeon would be advised to perform a little sleight of hand. Her mantra should be Scottish empowerment rather than Scottish independence. She will hope, too, that activists and less thoughtful Nationalist politicians take greater care with the language they use. Crude attacks on the "British State", "imperialism", and the union flag are destructive to the independence cause"

[The head, not heart, will decide Scotland's future](#), Financial Times (16.10.12)
by Janan Ganesh (Columnist)

"Above all, the romantics in Mr Cameron's ear rather missed the point of campaigns, which is to win over the undecided. There are plenty of heartfelt unionists in Scotland but they are already certain to vote to remain part of the UK. The referendum will be decided by voters who are neither unionists nor nationalists in principle; people who are open to pragmatic arguments in either direction. (...). Even the unionists' choice of unofficial frontman embodies their practical approach. Alistair Darling is the least lyrical of politicians – certainly no

¹⁰ See appendix, ref. 10

match for Mr Salmond as a conjuror of stirring visions – but the former Labour chancellor of the exchequer brings a forensic command of economic issues”

“If Mr Darling is the unionists’ main asset, Mr Salmond’s is time. Having won his struggle with Mr Cameron over the timing of the referendum he has two years to campaign”.

7.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• **Identity, not the priority**

The ‘identity’ argument of the debate has been discarded since the beginning of the process. Significantly, the nationalist side has been the one refusing more clearly to use –for now – arguments linked to identity or patriotism. The tendency to approach the debate -also in the press- in terms of policy echoes the priorities emphasized by the Scottish population. The elements determining their vote are precisely the ones concerning economics, policy benefits, and social stability. The ‘rational’ way of approaching the debate also affects the pro-union side. Precisely, the unionists will also need to ‘offer’ something more than just pride in being British, or the emotional links between the two nations across the years.

• **Mutual recognition**

One of the possible explanations of the secondary role of the ‘identity’ issue is the mutual respect and historical recognition of Scottish distinctiveness. Scotland is perceived by all citizens in the UK as a ‘nation’, and such recognition does not create a ‘political’ tension, either in London or in Edinburgh. Consequently, independence is rarely perceived as the tool to accomplish the ‘fight’ for recognition. It is significant that the press has been comparing this specific point with the situation regarding Catalonia, where it could be argued that the opposite is the case.

• **British pride**

The unionist side has been the one more insistently using elements linked to British national pride. In 2012 two events are remembered in the press as symbols of such pride: the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee.

SECTION 8

POLLS

8.1 PRESS REVIEW

[Increase in support for Scottish independence](#), Scotsman (14.02.13)

"The sharp rise in backing for independence among young Scots came alongside an increase in the number of respondents saying they would vote Yes. There were 34 per cent who supported Scotland leaving the UK. (...) Support for Scotland staying in the Union fell slightly, going from 58 per cent to 55 per cent over the same period. The poll also gave Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon a higher approval rating than the man leading the campaign to keep Scotland in the UK"

[New indyref poll shows 58% of under 25s back Independence](#), Herald Scotland (13.02.13)

"(...) the poll showed a large rise in support for independence amongst voters aged 18 to 24. This stood at 27% last October but in the new survey - which was carried out between February 4 and 9 - this had increased to 58%. (...). Mark Diffley, director at Ipsos MORI Scotland, said: 'Our latest poll shows a boost in support for those campaigning for Scottish independence, who will take some encouragement from these findings. Having said that, support for independence is behind where it was a year ago and those campaigning for Scotland to remain in the UK retain a sizeable lead' "

"A total of 1,003 people in Scotland were questioned for the research, which also gave Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon a higher approval rating than the man leading the campaign to keep Scotland in the UK. Ms Sturgeon, who is spearheading the campaign for independence, came out with a net approval rating of +17, with 50% of those surveyed satisfied with her performance"

[Support for Yes vote at post-devolution low](#), Herald Scotland (24.01.13)

"In a major challenge to the Yes referendum campaign, new figures show 23% of voters believe "Scotland should become independent, separate from the rest of the UK". The total is the same as the previous low recorded in 2010 and is nine points down on 2011, when 32% backed independence. However, the figures also revealed a stronger appetite for more powers at Holyrood. They were published by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) in a report co-written by Professor John Curtice of Strathclyde University, the country's leading polling expert. A further 61% backed devolution (...). While the findings show falling support for independence, they reveal a strong appetite for more devolution. Nearly two-thirds (64%) said Holyrood should take "most of the important decisions for Scotland" about welfare and benefits, compared with 19% who wanted control to remain at Westminster. More than half (56%) believed Holyrood should take the lead in deciding tax levels"

“Mr Curtice said: ‘During the course of the last 12 months the independence debate moved firmly to the top of the Scottish political agenda. Yet the proponents of independence have apparently struggled to capitalise on the resulting opportunity to persuade Scots of the merits of their case. Instead, more voters appear to have become concerned about the prospect of leaving the UK’ ”

[Blow to SNP as support for independence stalls](#), Herald Scotland (14.01.13)

“A new poll puts public backing for a split at 28% – unchanged from last October. It means the pro-UK campaign has a 20-point lead, more than double the nine-point advantage it enjoyed this time last year. However, the Yes camp will take comfort from a recent fall in opposition to independence, which is down from an all-time high of 53% in October to 48%. Over the same period the number of don't-knows has risen from 19% to 24%, the highest level since the TNS BRMB series of polls began in 2007”

“Support for independence dipped to 27% in November – an all-time low in the TNS BRMB series – and stood at 28% in December and this month. Opposition slipped from 50% in November to 48% in December, where it has remained. The polls have coincided with a difficult period for the Scottish Government, which has faced criticism over its claims about an independent Scotland's EU membership and its plans to enter a currency union with the UK, and suggests support for independence is at or near a bedrock level. UK Government warnings about defence jobs were also in the headlines as this month's poll of more than 1000 voters in 55 constituencies was taken”

“Chris Eynon, head of TNS BMRB Scotland, said: (...) ‘while this gives the Yes campaign a sizeable base on which to build and a significant 24% undecideds to attempt to win over, the gap of 20% remains large. If the opposition is consolidating at around 48%, the challenge is considerable’ ”

[Poll shows SNP failing to win business hearts](#) (Scotsman) 07.12.12

“The survey of 250 business chiefs by Ipsos Mori shows that just one in ten believes prospects would improve if Scotland decided to become an independent country. By contrast, more than half believe their businesses will suffer as a result of the country voting Yes to an independent state”

[Independence blow as support for Union soars](#), Herald Scotland (08.10.12)

“A new poll published today reveals 53% would vote No to independence, compared to 28% who are in favour of breaking up the United Kingdom. A little over a year ago support for independence had edged ahead in the battle for Scotland's future, but since then there has been a significant change in public opinion, which would appear to have been enhanced by a summer of unprecedented British sporting success”

8.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• **20 points lead**

Between October 2012 and February 2013, support for independence has averaged 23%-28%. The support for the Union has attained an average record of 48%-53% - depending on the poll and the month-. Nicola Sturgeon is the most valued leader, which shows that the unionist lead in the polls does not necessarily encompass a loss of popularity for the Scottish government. All polls showed that more than 50% of Scots are in favour of 'increased devolution'.

SECTION 9

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION AND POST-REFERENDUM TIMELINE

9.1 PRESS REVIEW

[SNP route map after indyref poll](#), Herald Scotland (05.02.13)

“Scottish Independence Day would be in March 2016 in the event of a Yes vote in next year’s referendum, according to a transition paper¹¹ published by Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. The paper outlines what Ms Sturgeon hopes will be a smooth transition in March 2016 followed by elections to an independent parliament in May”

“The paper, ‘Scotland’s Future: from the referendum to independence and a written constitution’ describes that 17-month time frame as ‘an orderly and co-operative transition process’. (...) Ms Sturgeon called on the UK Government to adhere to the Electoral Commission’s recommendations by agreeing to early discussions about how Scotland will move forward following the referendum, with this publication providing a solid basis for those discussions. She added: ‘An independent Scotland is not an end in itself, rather it offers us an opportunity to build the kind of country we all want to see – an outward looking, prosperous and successful nation that reflects the values of fairness, enterprise and opportunity’ ”

[Salmond pushes for new rights](#), Scotsman (16.01.13)

“On the day that legislation giving Scotland the right to hold a referendum on independence was passed in the House of Lords, Mr Salmond used a speech to make the case for a written constitution”

“Salmond said ‘what I have in mind are constitutional provisions that go beyond those touchstone rights. In Scotland, we have a policy of the right to free education, in keeping with our history as the nation which pioneered universal education. We also have homelessness legislation which is proving effective by granting rights to people who are made involuntarily homeless. There is an argument for embedding those provisions as constitutional rights’. The SNP has already said that nuclear weapons could be banned under a written constitution, and Mr Salmond said yesterday that it could also be used to enshrine safeguards over the use of Scottish armed forces in future”

¹¹ See appendix, ref. 11

[Sturgeon warns on transition plan](#), Herald Scotland (16.01.13)

"The UK Government will be to blame for uncertainties over independence if it refuses to engage in "transition" talks with the Holyrood administration, Nicola Sturgeon has warned. She wrote in a blog: 'This transition work should also be discussed, on an ongoing basis, with the UK Government in order we develop a shared understanding of what these issues are and, as far as we can, a shared approach to dealing with them' "

[Sturgeon: Unionists could help shape independence](#), Herald Scotland (04.12.12)

"Opposition parties, trade unions, charities, churches and other civic bodies would also be consulted on creating a written constitution for the new state, the Deputy First Minister said. In a bid to reach beyond SNP supporters, she said: "Although the independence negotiations that will follow a Yes vote will be led by the Scottish Government, we will not act alone"

"Her reasoning for independence, she said, was not based on Scottish identity but to ensure the country could choose how it was governed, stressing her own commitment to social justice. She said she did not believe independence was essential to preserve the Scottish identity. But, she said: "I don't agree at all that feeling British – with all of the shared social, family and cultural heritage that makes up such an identity – is in any way inconsistent with a pragmatic, utilitarian support for political independence. 'My conviction that Scotland should be independent stems from the principles, not of identity or nationality, but of democracy and social justice' "

[Sturgeon calls for 'Team Scotland' consensus if public votes Yes](#), Scotsman (03.12.12)

"Ms Sturgeon made her first major speech since taking over responsibility for the independence referendum recently, as the new constitution minister (...). Labour leader Johann Lamont, Conservative leader Ruth Davidson and Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie would "argue Scotland's case as strongly as Alex Salmond" in those talks, she said"

[Why Alex Salmond's timetable after a yes vote is too much too fast](#), Herald Scotland (25.11.12)
by Patrick Harvie (Scottish Green Party Co-Convener)

"Negotiation will begin between the two governments about assets, liabilities, debts, and the framing, drafting and passage of legislation through both parliaments. None of this can really make progress until the UK election in May 2015 and the possible formation of a new UK Government. Then we'll approach the myriad international treaties; what rights and obligations will we want to continue? Which could be inherited? Which would need to be renegotiated and under what terms?"

"All of this in 16 months – less time than the current Scottish Government is spending on simply drafting a white paper about the process. This breakneck speed would risk mistakes that could never be put right, and an arbitrary deadline

could give the UK Government crucial advantages in negotiations. I believe the SNP's white paper next year must set out a calmer transition process, to be completed over the course of the 2016 Parliament, rather than at its election"

[*I have seen the future - and it's not that clear*](#), Scotsman (14.11.12)
by Robin McAlpine (Jimmy Reid Foundation)

"First there would be a series of negotiations, between Scotland and the remainder of Britain, between Scotland and the EU, between the rest of Britain and the EU and so on. Then there would need to be the development of some sort of Scottish constitution, if nothing else to identify who is a citizen, who can vote and the arrangements for electing and running a parliament. Then we will need to elect a parliament and let it get on with its job. It is of the utmost importance to Scotland's future that we have a simple, clear and unambiguous framework for understanding what independence means"

[*Nats told to ignore baiting by 'No' camp*](#), Scotland on Sunday (11.11.12)

"Regular followers of the independence referendum battle will have witnessed a familiar pattern over recent months. The "No" camp raise a subject – EU membership, defence, the pound – asking how it would be affected after secession. The "Yes" camp responds with a categorical answer, hoping to reassure that such issues are easily resolvable. The "No" camp accuse the "Yes" of assertion. The "Yes" camp accuse the "No" of scaremongering. And on we go. The paper from the Scottish Independence Convention (SIC)¹² proposes a different path, suggesting the pro-independence campaign ignore the bait and set out a post-Yes vote framework where uncertainties would be democratically resolved"

"It sets out three-stage process, following a 'Yes' vote. (...). A negotiating-team team assembled from political parties, employers, and bodies including trade unions would work out the foundations for the new country such as how much of the UK's assets and liabilities Scotland would be required to take. (...). Second there would be a constitution. Third, a list of issues would be decided by elections"

[*If we are 'better together', what kind of UK will we be?*](#), The Guardian, 25.10.12

"A strong leader and a well-supported party – which Salmond is, and the SNP is – can survive events like these. But the SNP's electoral success, which shows little sign of faltering, is enormously dependent on Salmond's artful ability to persuade voters that it is worth taking a risk with him. In the space of 10 days, he has now lost the devo-max soft option in the referendum, (...) and stands accused of playing a three-card trick over Scotland's place in Europe"

"Yet whatever the scale of a no victory, it would in fact do relatively little to settle most of the political and constitutional issues that are now increasingly corralled within the referendum campaign. (...) voters need a truthful and sober account, in a world where economic power is shifting east and south and in which Europe

¹² See appendix, ref. 12

faces decline not expansion, of what this means. And not just Scottish voters either. Welsh voters too, English and Irish. If Scotland votes no, that's not the end of the story. It could even be, though I say this more in hope than expectation, a new beginning"

9.2 KEY POINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

• **Transition plan**

The Scottish government is pressing the UK government to agree on a transitional plan after the referendum. The press has been discussing the political impossibility of 'pre-negotiating' independence, while at the same time advocating some sort of 'guideline' and 'timeline' for the day after the vote. The Scottish government has, until now, proposed to handle the negotiations in a way that involves civil society and all Scottish political parties.

• **Written constitution?**

The question of adopting a written constitution has been recurrently debated in the press during the last four months. The Scottish first minister has indicated his intention to adopt a written constitution, in contrast with the UK that doesn't have one. The issue has been a priority for the nationalists, who believe the text could offer some safeguards regarding Scottish standards in education, defence and welfare.

• **Seventeen months**

The transition plan suggested by the nationalists proposes to achieve full independence in a period of 17 months after the referendum. The press has covered the debate about the feasibility of such timeline. Within this debate the elections in 2016 are perceived as crucial. If the timeline proposed by the Scottish government were to be accomplished, these elections would mark the first parliament of an independent Scotland. In case this period is too optimistic, the elections would mark the beginning of the last Parliament under which the independence will be negotiated. In all cases the speed of the negotiations will depend on the rhythm and good will of the UK government and the international institutions (in particular the European Union).

• **And the rest of the UK?**

The debate around the constitutional question and the post-referendum timeline has been focused exclusively on Scotland. Nevertheless some articles in the press have pointed out that the process of 'imagining' a new Scotland will also push the rest of the UK to think about its own future. In that sense, it is relevant to note how this issue has been completely absent in the press, showing that, for the moment, the possibility of having to deal with a 'new UK' is not really contemplated.

LIST OF REPORTS (REFERENCES)

1. Campaign '[Devo Plus](#)', Jeremy Purvis, Reform Scotland. Website of the campaign: Download the summary paper of the Devo Plus proposals, [here](#).
<http://www.devoplus.com/>
2. Document: '[Funding devo more: Fiscal options for strengthening the union](#)', Alan Trench, IPPR.
<http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/10210/funding-devo-more-fiscal-options-for-strengthening-the-union>
3. Document: '[Federalism: the best future for Scotland](#)', Sir Menzies Campbell, Liberal Democrats.
<http://scotlibdems.org.uk/homerule>
4. Document: '[Scotland, independence and the EU](#)', House of Commons Library
<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06110.pdf>
5. Document: '[Advice of the Electoral Commission on the proposed referendum question January 2013](#)', UK Electoral Commission Report
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/scotland/referendum-on-independence-for-scotland>
6. Full text of the [Edinburgh Agreement](#)
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/text-of-the-edinburgh-agreement-8212225.html>
7. Document: '[Sixth Report](#): The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: The proposed section 30 Order-Can a player also be the referee?', Scottish Affairs Committee, House of Commons.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmsscota/863/863.pdf>
8. Document: '[Attitudes towards Scotland's Constitutional Future](#)', Scottish Centre for Social Research
<http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/1021490/ssa12briefing.pdf>
9. Document: '[What would independence mean for Scotland's economy?](#)', Capital Economics
<https://www.capitaleconomics.com/uk-cities-regions/uk-cities-regions-focus/what-would-independence-mean-for-scotlands-economy.html>
10. Document: '[The dog that finally barked: England as an emerging political community](#)', Richard Wyn Jones et al, IPPR.
<http://www.ippr.org/publications/55/8542/the-dog-that-finally-barked-england-as-an-emerging-political-community>
11. Document: '[Scotland's Future: from the referendum to independence and a written constitution](#)', Scottish Government.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/02/8079>

- 12.** Document: '[A Model for Guiding Constitutional Change](http://www.scottishindependenceconvention.org/media/2982/a_model_for_guiding_constitutional_change.pdf)', Scottish Independence Convention.
http://www.scottishindependenceconvention.org/media/2982/a_model_for_guiding_constitutional_change.pdf