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INDEPENDENCE FOR SCOTLAND?

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Abstract

The changes in the politics and economy of the United Kingdom in the last 35 years led the Scottish parties to seek more radical solutions for the long-lasting political discussions about the future of Scotland and to voice them unreservedly. After the campaigns, conventions, conversations, commissions, bills, and discussions about the future of Scotland in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, and after the Scottish National Party became fully and vigorously committed to and articulate about independence, an agreement between the Westminster government and Holyrood government was signed for a referendum on independence for Scotland which is to be held on 18 September 2014. In consideration of the contentment of the Scottish people with the devolved parliament, the looming uncertainty after independence, the unwillingness to go back to the condition in 1603 and the polls conducted on the outcome of the momentous referendum, a split-up seems unlikely.

Keywords: Scotland, Independence, Referendum, SNP.

In recent years, Scottish demand and struggle for independence, which has been expressed and formulated as 'home rule', 'devolution', 'independence in Europe' and 'independence' over the years since the 13th century, has gained pace and strength after the supporters of independence for Scotland got over the shock caused by the failure of the 1 March 1979 Referendum. After the terminological confusion and hesitation of decades, the Scottish National Party (SNP), which has been championing and pleading the cause of independence since the 1930s, is declaring clearly and loudly that their ultimate goal is independence for Scotland. The SNP claims that

As an independent country it will be the people who live in Scotland who will be in charge. That's why being independent will mean a fairer and more successful Scotland. We'll be able to take the right decisions for our future, based on our shared values and priorities and using our wealth of resources and talent.

As an independent country we will have a parliament and government just as we do now. But it will take all the decisions for Scotland. It will be elected in the same way, and so the people of Scotland will be able to choose the government they want whether SNP or Labour or even Tory, Green or Lib Dem.

All the Scottish politicians who are currently in the House of Commons will be able to stand for the Scottish Parliament, so, for example, some of the more experienced Labour politicians currently at Westminster may well be challenging to become the Scottish government. The Scottish parties will all be able to field their strongest teams. ("Choice."2014, p.8)

The SNP has been achieving more and more public and electoral support in the 2000s by its overtly stated commitment to independence. The SNP finally dethroned the Scottish Labour Party in the 2011 Elections for the Scottish Parliament after securing its position as the

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second biggest party in the Westminster, Local and European Parliament Elections since the 1990s. The SNP majority government at Holyrood finally persuaded the UK government to an agreement on a referendum on independence for Scotland which is to be held on 18 September 2014. In this study, the events which led to the rise of the SNP and the support for independence, the political and legislative initiatives which brought Scotland to the point of secession as well as the probable consequences of the referendum are explored on the assumption that the distance covered to independence in the last 35 years is more than the distance covered since 1707.

In 2014, the SNP has grown into a formidable political power after challenging the Scottish Labour, Scottish Liberal Democrat and Scottish Unionist/Conservative Parties for many years. Although the Scottish Labour Party did not suffer dramatic losses in the elections and maintained its position as the party with the most votes in the Westminster, Local and European Parliament Elections, the Liberal Democrat Party and the Conservative Party, which was known as the Unionist Party between 1912 and 1965, lost much of their support in Scotland while the latter conserved its dominance in the political structure of the United Kingdom. The first and the foremost cause in the loss of prestige and the electoral disappearance of the Scottish Conservative Party in Scotland and in the rise and growth of the SNP was Margaret Thatcher's economic and social policies. Thatcher's Conservative government "always rejected devolution, dismissed calls for political devolution as 'the slippery slope to the break-up of the United Kingdom'" (Deacon and Sandry, 2007, p.5). In addition to the coldness of the Thatcher government to devolution, the Thatcherite years in the UK and Margaret Thatcher's iron fist economic policies in the 1980s which "set out to undo the postwar consensus on the welfare state and state economic management, orienting politics around a straight left-right fight and in the process undoing the bases of Scotland's quasicorporatism and particular relations with the central state" (Greer, 2007, p.67) caused fury and antipathy in Scotland. Because of the closure and the decline of the steelworks, coalmining, shipbuilding industries and the implementation of the 'Poll Tax' one year before the other parts of the UK, the electoral support of the Scottish Conservative Party was minimized in Scotland (Buerkle, 1999; Deacon and Sandry, 2007, p.56; Finlay, 2008, pp.157, 160-164; Greenway, 2007; Keating, 2009, p.50; Töngür, 2005, p.70; Wheatcroft, 2007). Finlay (2008) argues that Thatcher's "unapologetic attitude towards economic restructuring and the uncompromising position on the existing constitutional arrangement effectively painted the Tories into a corner" (p.171) and supplied ammunition to the pro-devolution and pro-independence parties because in the 1980s and the 1990s the Scottish Labour Party and the SNP strengthened their positions in Scotland and the supporters of Home Rule and independence increased significantly from 56 per cent to 82 per cent from March 1979 to March 1987 (Lynch as cited in Deacon and Sandry, 2007, p.57) because "the option of a nationalist vote has become more available as the SNP contested more seats, more credible in the context of a Scottish Parliament and a proportional election system, and less frightening as the SNP has adopted a much more moderate and inclusive definition of nationalism" (Miller, 2008, p.175).

Another significant issue in the 1980s was the formation of cross-party "Campaign for a Scottish Assembly" with the creation of a Constitutional Convention based on the Campaign. The Convention was made up of Labour Party, Liberal Party, Social Democrat Party, Co-operative Party, Democratic Left, Scottish Green Party, Orkney and Shetland Movement, MEPs, councilors, and representatives of various groups and churches. In other words, 58 MPs out of 72, 7 MEPs out of 8, 59 councilors out of 65 participated in this Convention. After years of working, the Convention did not offer independence as an option. Instead, the Convention outlined a devolved parliament based on proportional representation, a government and a prime minister with only limited and tightly defined powers, and a Scottish Bill of Rights (Deacon and Sandry, 2007, pp.60-62; Finlay, 2008, pp.163-164; Greer, 2007, pp.82-84; Pittock, 2008, pp.76-81; Töngür, 2005, pp.69-70). Marr (1992) claims that the proposals were extremely important because "It took Labour firmly in the middle of the Home Rule movement. It created an expectation, almost an assumption that the Scottish Parliament would be formed eventually"

(p.209). The Conservative Party which had always been opposed to Home Rule and the Scottish National Party which fine-tuned its objective as 'Independence in Europe' remained outside.

In addition to the pressure created by the Convention, May 1997 General Elections in Scotland displayed clearly that the majority of the Scottish people preferred the parties, the Scottish Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats, which were committed to Home Rule or pro-independence Scottish National Party because they won 45.6 per cent, 13 per cent and 22.1 per cent of the Scottish votes cast respectively. The Labour Party was well-aware that "an English Westminster, stripped of its Scottish Labour lobby fodder, would be Tory-Tory-Hallelujah forever. Here's why palliative devolution took priority, post-1997. Here is why Labour wants the independence rot stopped at any cost" (Preston, 2007, para.2). Therefore, after years of U-turns, twists, broken promises, lukewarm commitment of the Westminster governments, the Labour Party could not delay the Home Rule any more and they brought a Referendums Bill for Scotland and Wales (Greer, 2007, pp.89-90). The referendum held on 11 September 1997 for a Scottish Parliament produced an overwhelming 'Yes' vote of 74 per cent, and 63.5 per cent of the voters agreed the new Parliament to have tax varying powers. The consecutive elections for the Scottish Parliament on 6 May 1999 reinforced the Labour and the SNP in Scotland because they gained 56 and 35 MSPs respectively.

So, in 1999, the most important event which carried fuel to the independence fire was the formation of the Scottish Parliament. The new Scottish Parliament, *Pàrlamaid na h-Alba* (in Gaelic) – *Scots Parliament* (in Scots), which had been adjourned on the 25th day of March 1707, was reconvened at the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in Edinburgh with the 129 members of the Scottish Parliament on 12 May 1999. On the swearing-in procedure 35 SNP MSPs, wearing white roses, the symbol of the Jacobites in the eighteenth century, and three other MSPs insisted their oath of allegiance was to the Scottish people not the Queen and declared their opposition to the contents of the Oath of Allegiance and Affirmation ("MSPs pledge." 1999). Their protest was another manifestation of pro-independence ranks which swelled after the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government began to work.

The Scottish Parliament is the unicameral legislature of Scotland and the parliament elects a First Minister to head the Scottish Executive which is divided into nine departments, a number of agencies and a large number of Scottish public bodies which have responsibilities over "health, education and training, local government, social work, housing, planning, tourism, including financial assistance to the tourist industry, law and home affairs, including the court system, the police and fire services, the environment, natural and built heritage, sport and the arts, agriculture, forestry and fishing, some aspects of transport, including the Scottish road network, ports and harbours" (Moran as cited in Deacon and Sandry, 2007, p.67). Nevertheless, the United Kingdom reserved major areas to legislate on:

- The constitution, including the Crown, the Union and the United Kingdom Parliament and the civil service;
- National security, security and intelligence services, international relations and defence;
- Fiscal, economic and monetary policy, including money, taxes, public expenditure and the Bank of England;
- Immigration and nationality;
- Companies, health and safety, employment rights and industrial relations;
- Oil, gas, coal, nuclear energy and supply of electricity;
- Road, rail, marine and air transport;
- Social security, child support and pension schemes; and
- Broadcasting. ("Choosing Scotland's Future." 2007, p.8)

After the 1999 Elections, Donald Dewar became the first First Minister of Scotland for the coalition government between the Labour and the Liberal Democrats. After his death in

2000, Henry McLeish became the second First Minister until 2001 to be replaced by Jack McConnell for two consecutive terms; between 2001 and 2003, and after the 2003 elections until 16 May 2007. Although the original Scotland Act 1998 gave the name 'Scottish Executive' (or Administration) as the legal term for the devolved government, on 2 September 2007, the SNP minority government announced their decision to replace the Royal Arms on the logo of the Scottish Executive with the Flag of Scotland and to rename Scottish Executive as the 'Scottish Government' to the dismay and protest of the other parties. Indeed, the official Gaelic title, 'Riaghaltas na h-Alba' means 'Government of Scotland' and finally Westminster agreed to formally change the name of the 'Scottish Executive' to the 'Scottish Government' with the Scotland Act which came into effect on 3 July 2012.

The European Parliament Elections in June 1999 proved that the SNP became a serious threat to the Labour Party in Scotland because the SNP gained 27.2 per cent of the votes just 1.5 per cent behind the Labour Party. The new Scottish Parliament has not quenched the thirst for independence, has not taken the lead from the nationalists or "has not stopped demands for independence in Scotland" (Dale, 2000, para.11). On the contrary, "many Scots have acquired a taste for greater autonomy" (Wheatcroft, 2007, para.6). The local election results, which were held on the same day as the elections for Scottish Parliament, confirmed the positions of the Labour and the SNP as the first and the second parties with 36.6 per cent and 28.7 per cent of the votes in Scotland. So the election of 2003 once again produced a Labour-Liberal Democrat Executive and the SNP became the main opposition party. Meanwhile, the new Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood was opened by the Queen in 2004 with an inaugural speech.

On 28 November 2005, the Scottish National Party published "Raising the Standard", a 28-page program, outlining the practical steps for moving from a devolved to a fully sovereign parliament as part of a contribution to a possible Independence Convention which would convene on St. Andrew's Day. That paper developed the arguments for independence, laid out the anticipated benefits of independence and sovereignty for Scotland, and detailed the constitutional arrangements:

An independent Parliament will have sovereignty over the full range of matters that affect Scotland. Current reservations in the Scotland Act will be removed and the parliament will have the power to legislate in all areas, reserved and devolved, subject only to agreed international obligations. ("Raising the Standard." 2005, p.5)

The 2007 Elections for the Scottish Parliament was a milestone in the history of Scotland because the SNP won the most seats, 47 out of 129, with 30 per cent of the votes and Alex Salmond formed the first nationalist minority government in Scotland. Ten years after the referendum to establish the Scottish Parliament, the nationalist Scottish Government began seeking new ways for independence. In order to create a public forum for this discussion, the Scottish Government issued a document titled "Choosing Scotland's Future A National Conversation" to launch a 'National Conversation' on Scotland's Future in 2007. The document detailed the rationale behind this formation and their aims:

Significant powers are currently reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament and the United Kingdom Government. Further devolution in these important areas would allow the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government to take their own decisions on these issues in the interests of Scotland and reflecting the views of the people of Scotland. In some areas, further devolution could also provide greater coherence in decision-making and democratic accountability for delivery of policy.

To go beyond enhanced devolution to independence would involve bringing to an end the United Kingdom Parliament's powers to legislate for Scotland, and the competence of United Kingdom Ministers to exercise executive powers in respect of Scotland. All of the remaining reservations in the Scotland Act would cease to have effect, and the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government would acquire responsibility for all domestic and international policy, similar to that of independent states everywhere, subject to the provisions of the European Union Treaties and other inherited treaty obligations. ("Choosing Scotland's Future." 2007, p.vii)

In the document, the Scottish Parliament suggested that legislative and executive competence of Westminster and the UK government be transferred to Holyrood and the Scottish Government and stressed the legislative process:

For Scotland to achieve full independence, the United Kingdom Parliament must cease to have competence to legislate for Scotland and the United Kingdom Government must cease to have competence in respect of executive action in Scotland. Correspondingly, the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government would assume the full range of competence, duties and responsibilities accorded to sovereign states under international law. ("Choosing Scotland's Future." 2007, p. 20)

They proposed another referendum(s) for independence and drafted a bill setting the framework for the referendum. They also invited the Scottish people to contribute on the design of 'A National Conversation' about the future of Scotland. With this document, titled as "Your Scotland Your Voice: A National Conversation", the SNP Scottish Government set out in detail its economical, historical, social and cultural arguments for Scottish independence, and published its plans to hold a referendum on our country's future. They declared that

The Scottish Government's favoured policy is independence, which would bring all the possibilities of full devolution with the additional responsibilities that could not be devolved within the United Kingdom, such as foreign affairs and defence. Under independence Scotland would be responsible for:

- the economy, including decisions on the currency and the macroeconomic framework
- investment in education, enterprise and infrastructure including transport and housing
- the environment, energy and climate change
- the taxation and benefits system
- the full range of public services, including benefits and health
- foreign affairs, defence and security matters
- equality legislation and human rights
- the constitution and government of Scotland, including Parliament, the courts, local government. ("Your Scotland Your Government" 2009, p.17)

The National Conversation on the future of Scotland was finalized with a White Paper by the Scottish government with the contribution of the Scottish people from all walks of life in November 2009. The White Paper concluded that

9.27 It has long been a part of Scottish constitutional tradition that the people of Scotland should be able to decide their own constitutional arrangements. However, the Scottish Parliament does not currently have the responsibility for determining the best way of governing the nation, as aspects of the constitution are reserved to the United Kingdom.

9.28 The sovereignty of the people of Scotland could be recognised legally and constitutionally within the United Kingdom if the Scottish Parliament had full responsibility for determining its own functions and role, as well as its structure and elections, consulting either or both the Scottish people (by way of referendum) and the United Kingdom Parliament. There are precedents for such a model. However, independence would provide the Scottish people and their Parliament with the fullest responsibility for their own government. ("Your Scotland Your Government." 2009, p.133)

The UK government reacted to the increasing pressure in Scotland by setting up the Commission on Scottish Devolution under the chairmanship of Sir Kenneth Calman, the Calman Commission, to explore options for constitutional reform within the Union in 2007. After two years' work, the commission gave its final report in June 2009 in favor of the status quo with more fiscal powers:

The first conclusion we have reached is that devolution has been a real success. The last 10 years have shown that not only is it possible to have a Scottish Parliament inside the UK, but that it works well in practice. Having a Scottish Parliament is in general popular with the people of Scotland, and they welcome the scope to have Scottish issues debated and decided in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament has embedded itself in both the

constitution of the United Kingdom and the consciousness of Scottish people. It is here to stay. ("Serving Scotland." 2009, p.6)

The Calman Commission detailed 24 recommendations for tax regulations, better government in Scotland, more cooperation between Scotland and the rest of the UK, a number of other powers to be devolved to Scotland, transfer of tax raising powers, and enabling Scotland to borrow for capital investments; however, the independence was out of scope ("Serving Scotland." 2009).

In order to implement the Calman Commission's recommendations and to give new budget powers, a Scotland Bill was introduced at Westminster in 2010. The Bill was enacted in 2012 and Scotland was given the right to raise its own taxes and borrowing powers worth £5bn. The Scotland Act transfers powers over air guns, drink-driving and speeding limits to Holyrood. The act also devolves stamp duty, land tax and landfill tax to the Scottish Parliament and gives the Scottish Parliament a role in appointments in broadcasting and the Crown Estate; however, Holyrood will not be able to use the new powers until 2016. The nationalists were not contented with the 2012 Act and they declared it was a missed opportunity ("Scotland Bill." 2012).

The SNP secured its post as the second biggest party in 2010 Westminster Elections in Scotland. But the 2011 Elections for the Scottish Parliament proved a triumph for the SNP as the party won the majority at Holyrood with 53.49 per cent of the votes and 69 of the 129 seats and Alex Salmond maintained his post as the First Minister after the 2011 Elections with the majority SNP government. On 25 January 2012, the Scottish Government published "the Consultation Paper: Your Scotland Your Referendum" to allow the Scottish people to voice their concerns and opinions about independence. The document set out the principles on which the referendum would be based as well as the mechanics of the referendum and the campaign rules. The consultation paper also included a consultation questionnaire and a draft referendum Scotland Bill ("Your Scotland Your Referendum." 2012). In the Local Elections in 2012 the SNP maintained its position in Scotland as the party won the most votes.

After more than 8 months of negotiations, on 15 October 2012, 30-clause Edinburgh Agreement was signed by the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore, the First Minister of the Scottish Government, Alex Salmond, and Deputy First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, on a referendum on independence for Scotland. The 30-clause agreement set out the terms for the referendum to be held before the end of 2014 with a single 'Yes/No' question whether Scotland should be an independent country. Both governments agreed that the referendum

have a clear legal base;

be legislated for by the Scottish Parliament;

be conducted so as to command the confidence of parliaments, governments and people; and deliver a fair test and a decisive expression of the views of people in Scotland

and a result that everyone will respect. ("Agreement." 2012, p.2)

The European Parliament Elections in May 2014 showed that the SNP is still the strongest party in Scotland as the SNP gained 29 per cent of the votes cast and won two of the six seats Scotland has in the European Parliament.

In order to exploit the winds of change in Scotland and to maximize their chances of victory in the referendum, the Scottish Government issued 650 answers to the questions people asked about independence ranging from benefits of independence to economics, business, aviation, health, education, internal relations, national defence, and culture ("Scotland's Future." 2013). On June 2014, Scotland's Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, revealed a 74-page draft independence bill for constitution, "The Scottish Independence Bill: A Consultation on an Interim Constitution for Scotland", which "provides for a permanent written constitution to be drawn up post-independence by a Constitutional Convention, entirely autonomous from the Scottish Government" ("The Scottish Independence Bill." 2014, p.4).

On the other hand, Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats jointly declared that they “guarantee to start delivering more powers for the Scottish Parliament as swiftly as possible in 2015” and they will endeavor “to increase the tax and spending powers of the Scottish Parliament if Scots vote against independence” (Grice, 2014, paras.4-5). The UK government published a print and web Scotland analysis on borders and citizenship in which the possible changes are detailed. The document openly stated that since the boundary would become an international border, new tax, regulatory, administrative and visa regimes would develop between Scotland and the UK. The membership in the European Union and joining the Schengen area would also mean land, sea and air border with the UK. Scotland would have to leave the Common Travel Area so trade between the UK and Scotland would be import-export. Citizenship would also mean problems in the future and issuing passports and warring visa agreements with other countries would be required (“Scotland Analysis.” 2014). The UK government published another booklet on the benefits of staying in the UK for Scotland claiming economies of both countries grow together, Scottish people’s money is safe and goes further, Scotland’s public services are more affordable, Scotland had a strong voice in the world and Scotland is stronger (“What staying.” 2014).

Nevertheless, the referendum on independence for Scotland, which is scheduled on 18 September 2014, is to raise more questions than answers. Obviously, the SNP is the first choice of the majority of the Scottish people for Holyrood elections; however, as for independence, the situation is more complicated. Almost all the polls conducted since 2003 to find out the percentage of the people favouring independence for Scotland and those against it unanimously and constantly demonstrate the latter is higher. Keating (2009) conveys the findings of a few polls:

A YouGov poll for The Sunday Times in January 2007 showed 59 per cent of Scots thinking that independence was likely within the next twenty years (31% within ten years). By contrast, Surridge (2006), using election study and social survey data, finds a fall from 59 to 31 per cent of Scots thinking that independence was likely within twenty years. In 2003, 48 per cent of them would be unhappy to leave the Union, against 24 per cent who would be pleased. A YouGov poll for The Daily Telegraph in June 2006 showed that 70 per cent of people in Britain as a whole expected the Union to survive. Yet only 25 per cent would be unhappy if Scotland were to become independent, with 44 per cent indifferent. (p.72)

Devine (2008) details the findings of the research published by the Institute of Public Policy Research North (IPPRN) in autumn 2007 and says that “around three in every ten Scots supported independence and that figure had hardly moved from the levels which existed even before devolution. Indeed, before the Scottish elections in 2007, only 63 per cent of those who intended to vote SNP said they supported its core policy of independence”. The results of a poll conducted by Channel 4 news in January 2007 are consistent with that of the IPPRN because 31 per cent of the respondents said they were supporting independence (Pittock, 2008, p.84). The Comres/ITV News poll on October 2012 found that “a majority of Scots (55%) opposed independence, with just over a third (34%) in favour” (Carrell and Watt, 2012). Hennessy (2014) also reports the latest TNS/MRBI monthly poll which confirmed the results of the previous polls because “30 per cent questioned say they will vote ‘Yes’, 42 per cent say ‘No’, and 28 per cent – still an extraordinarily high figure – are undecided”. The most comprehensive and recent data comes from ScotCen which offers “What Scotland thinks” polls from 2009 to June 2014 on public attitudes to Scottish independence. When asked “How should Scotland be governed?” in a 2013 poll, 55 per cent of the respondents said ‘devolution’ while 29 per cent preferred independence. Another poll titled “Should Scotland be an Independent Country?” in June 2014 produced 35 per cent ‘Yes’ answer and 54 per cent ‘No’ answer whereas the ‘Don’t know’s’ were still high as 12 per cent. To the poll question “Have you definitely decided to vote that way or might you change your mind? on 12 June 2014, ‘Yes’ answers counted for 82 per cent and 16 per cent said ‘Might change mind’ (“What Scotland thinks.” n.d.).

To conclude, all the campaigns, conventions, conversations, commissions, and bills in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s snowballed and involved all the political parties in Scotland

in a crucial and heated discussion about the future of Scotland after the SNP became fully and vigorously pledged and articulate about independence. Indeed, the independence constitution bill drafted by the SNP is a reverse union of crowns when King James VI of the Scots was crowned as James I of the English in 1603 because Queen Elizabeth and her successors would be accepted as Head of State in Scotland as well after independence. According to the bill,

- 7(1) Scotland is an independent, constitutional monarchy
- (2) The form of government in Scotland is a parliamentary democracy
- 9(1) Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is to be Head of State, as Queen
- (2) Her Majesty is to be succeeded as Head of State (and as Queen or, as the case may be, King) by Her heirs and successors to the Crown according to law.
- (3) Her Majesty, and Her successors to the Crown, continue to enjoy all the rights, powers and privileges which, according to law, attached to the Crown in Scotland immediately before Independence Day. ("The Scottish Independence Bill." 2014, p.12)

So independence, which would also mean a return to the union of crowns in the period between 1603 and 1707, does not appeal to all people living in Scotland who have various ethnicities, disparate faith and dissimilar allegiances. Undoubtedly, in the Holyrood elections the Scottish electorate prefers the pro-independence parties, the SNP and the Green Party; however, the majority of the Scottish electorate does not give an overwhelming support to the cause of independence. All the polls and the Westminster elections, local elections and European Parliament election results in Scotland show that pro-independence votes have stabilized at about 35 per cent and therefore, the referendum on 18 September 2014 is unlikely to generate independence. The Scottish people's contentment with the current status and their devolved parliament may be a plausible explanation for the variation in the voting behavior. Their lack of enthusiastic support for the cause of independence may also be attributed to the assumption that the Scottish people are happy that their cultural distinction, linguistic diversity, governmental autonomy, legal, educational and religious structures, and economic benefits are recognized, credited and preserved within the devolved system of administration. Another cause for the hesitation of the Scottish people about independence may be stemming from the impending troubles of divorce, and uncertainty and insecurity they may be feeling about their future if the territorial integrity of the UK is impaired. Although the SNP is offering a 'velvet divorce' (Greenway, 2007), the Scottish people might be intimidated by the new finance, border, visa, tax and trade regimes to be established which might complicate and destabilize their lives at least for the time being.

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