

Did they Define the Outcome? Churches and the Independence Referendum in Scotland

In: [Journal of Religion in Europe](#)

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Online Publication Date:
16pr 2018

Abstract

The 2014 referendum in Scotland, which brought victory for the unionists, was characterised by a high level of involvement of religious organisations in the campaign. Although the Churches chose to be neutral on the referendum dilemma, this was explained by prevailing attitudes among clergy, who objected Scottish independence. In this article, analysing the stance of the Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic Church, Episcopal Church of Scotland, and Free Church of Scotland, I argue that the chosen path of neutrality played more in favour of unionists. The Churches' influence on the referendum's outcome was far beyond statistical errors, and had Churches publicly supported independence, it would have been likely that Edinburgh would now be negotiating the terms of “divorce” with London.

Metadata

Title:

**Did they Define the Outcome? Churches and
the Independence Referendum in Scotland**

Article Type:

Research Article

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1163/18748929-01101002>

Language:

English

Pages:

20–45

Keywords:

[Churches](#); [Scotland](#); [religion](#); [independence](#); [referendum](#)

In:

Journal of Religion in Europe

In:

[Volume 11: Issue 1](#)

Publisher:

Brill

E-ISSN:

1874-8929

Print ISSN:

1874-8910

Subjects:

[History of Religion](#), [Religious Studies](#), [Religion & Society](#), [Social Sciences](#), [Religion](#), [Middle East and Islamic Studies](#), [Anthropology of Religion](#), [Comparative Religion & Religious Studies](#)

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