Referendum Campaign Financing by Political Parties: The Case of the United Kingdom

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Abstract

The literature on the political finance of referendum campaigns has focused primarily on how these are regulated in individual countries, but scholarly work is yet to empirically explore how these regulations and other factors translate into concrete spending practices of political parties. This article attempts to do this for the United Kingdom (UK), which has one of the oldest and most extensive referendum political finance regimes, with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA). After formulating several hypotheses grounded in party behaviour and political finance literature, we offer a close examination of the PPERA's regulations on referendum campaign finance and compare the expenditure patters of UK political parties in five post-PPERA referendums. The findings suggest that the competitiveness of a referendum, as well as a party's financial resources and the salience of the referendum topic for the party are possible explanations for their financial engagement in the referendum campaign. More surprisingly, our results show that expenditure limits imposed by the PPERA barely have an effect on party expenditure. Parties rarely come close to the limits imposed, but when they do bump up against the limit, they are able to circumvent this via donations, which do not count towards their spending cap.

Keywords: United Kingdom, political finance, referendums, political parties, campaigning, campaign finance regulation

Word count: 9705

Main Text

Introduction

While referendum use has increased over the past decades (Qvortrup, 2018), direct democracy remains a highly contentious issue. A common argument in favour of these instruments is the supposed legitimacy of this type of decision-making "because there are no processes or actors between the people and the decision that could bias, or in any way shape, the eventual decision." (Gilland Lutz and Hug, 2010, p. 2) However, this does not match political reality where actors stemming from representative democracy, such as political parties, often play an active role in referendum processes. As referendums require voters to make a single, mostly binary choice on issues that are often multi-faceted and complex, parties have ample opportunity for voter behaviour manipulation (De Vreese and Semetko, 2004, p. 3; Smith, 2021a, p. 11). Recent scholarly work has then focussed mainly on how parties shape the content of referendum campaigns: what are the pivotal narratives and issues (Whigham and May, 2017; Seawright, 2013) and how are these framed (Dvořák, 2013; Coutto, 2020)? While relevant, these approaches miss the more fundamental, yet under-studied question on the extent to which political parties actively engage in referendum campaigns. This is pertinent in part because literature on referendum instrumentalization shows that parties strategically use these instruments to obtain policy goals or to strengthen their position within the inter-party and electoral arena (Hollander, 2019a; Closa, 2007).

This article aims to address this lacuna from a political finance perspective, arguing that an analysis of the financial behaviour of parties in referendum campaigns can yield a precise quantitative indicator for their engagement in a campaign. The relevant literature on referendum campaign financing has focused primarily on how referendum campaigns are regulated in individual countries (for instance Lutz and Hug, 2010), but scholarly work is yet to empirically explore how these regulations translate into concrete spending practices of political parties. A lone exception in the field is the study by Ghaleigh (2010) on the United Kingdom (UK). With the introduction of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) in 2000, the UK became one of the first countries to implement an extensive and dedicated framework that covered most, if not all aspects of referendum campaign financing (Reidy and Suiter, 2015). Since then, under the impetus of an increased fragmentation of the party system giving minor parties leverage to push for referendums on issues of great importance for them (Hollander, 2019b), the UK has seen five referendums, including two of the most divisive and attention-grabbing of the last decades, namely the 2014 Scottish independence and 2016 Brexit referendums. These high-profile referendums, combined with the UK's unique regulatory context, makes the UK an ideal case for studying this phenomenon.

Following a rational choice approach (Downs, 1957; Strom, 1990), we depart from the assumption that political parties in referendum campaigns are rational actors seeking varying strategic objectives whilst facing institutional and organizational constraints. This study then aims to answer the following research question: How does the regulatory framework for referendum campaign financing in the UK translate into the specific financial behaviour of its political parties, and what might further explain this? In a first section, this paper discusses the relatively scarce literature on referendum campaign finance regulations and locates the UK regulatory regime in this broader framework. Next, we introduce our theoretical framework and corresponding hypotheses, for which we build on party behaviour literature as well as previous research on traditional political finance. Subsequently, the paper explores the regulatory context within which political parties in UK referendum campaigns operate before offering an in-depth descriptive and explorative examination of political party spending in five post-PPERA referendums and its potential drivers.

The results of this case study indicate a potential link between party expenditure in referendum campaigns and the issue of the referendum, the parties' total income, the competitiveness of the referendum and the expenditure of other actors. Equally, it sheds light on how spending limits imposed by the PPERA fail to adequately capture or limit referendum campaign expenditure. We clarify these key findings, address their broader implications and offer potential avenues for future research in the conclusion of this article.

Literature Review: Political Finance Regimes and Referendums

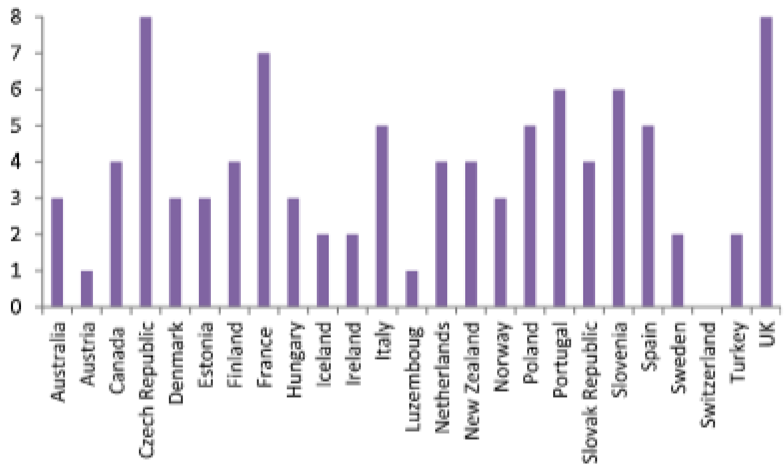
Referendum campaign finance is situated in the study of political finance, i.e. financial costs of democracy and political competition (Austin and Tjernström, 2003). Scholarly attention has mainly been devoted to party expenditure in election campaigns, and more specifically on the reform and effects of 'political finance regimes' (see for instance Johnston et al., 2011; García Viñuela and Artés Caselles, 2008), which are broadly defined as "the framework of public policies, legal statutes, judicial rulings, procedural rules, institutions, and informal social norms that regulate the role of money in politics" (Norris & Van Es, 2016, p. 14). Such a regime and its rules can regulate the funding and activities of all political actors. As political finance research has remained largely 'under-theorized' (Scarrow, 2007, p. 195), many scholars have attempted to formulate a model of cross-country comparison of these regimes (see for instance Horncastle, 2022; Norris & Van Es, 2016; Kulesza, Witko & Waltenburg, 2015; Ben-Bassat & Dahan, 2015), since this 'would help to develop greater understanding of the origins and impact of varied regulatory approaches' (Horncastle, 2022, p. 1). While these studies use different methods of classifying varying types of regulation, the typology used by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in their Political Finance Database is arguably the most comprehensive. This four-dimensional approach, mirroring the one first used by Casas-Zamora (2005), distinguishes between (1) provisions on reporting, oversight and transparency, (2) bans and limits on private income, (3) regulations on spending and (4) provisions for public funding.

These dimensions of political finance regulation have also been applied to referendums. This is often from a normative perspective: how can regulations advance the political ideal of political participation by addressing inherent inequalities in the democratic process, thus delivering so-called 'regulated equality' (Reidy and Suiter, 2015, p. 161)? As concerns transparency requirements, the focus is on fostering 'voter competence'. This implies that voters should be informed in such a way that they cast votes in line with how they would have if they possessed all knowledge about the policy consequences of their decision (Gerbert and Lupia, 1999, in Garret and Smith, 2005). Along these lines, Garret and Smith (2005) argue that transparency regulations are the primary kind of campaign finance regulation for referendums. They also consider transparency rules necessary for combatting corruption. Provisions on spending limits, private income bans and public funding, on the other hand, are seen as necessary to create fairness and a level playing field for both sides in a referendum campaign (Kildea, 2016).

In general, scholarly work on referendum finance is mostly focused on describing regulations in a specific country such as Germany (Binder, 2015) and Australia (Kildea, 2016). The keystone publication on this is arguably Gilland Lutz and Hug (2010), who collect a number of contributions that focus on several European countries. Less widespread are the comparative perspectives that are so prevalent in the literature on traditional (electoral) political finance. Zellweger et al. (2010) is one of the only attempts to compile cross-national data on referendum campaign finance rules and practices, and provides a classification of four types of countries based on how they regulate public funding for campaigners. A similar analysis can be found in a study commissioned by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament (Van Klingeren et al., 2015). Finally, Qvortrup (2021, p. 175) did an expert survey detailing campaign spending limits and public funding provisions for 30 countries as part of his Index of Referendum Regulation.

However, these studies generally do not come close to the four-dimensional framework set out by IDEA in their approaches towards comparing political finance regimes in different countries. The exception is the typology developed by Reidy and Suiter (2015), who compiled an index to measure the extent of referendum campaign regulations of 24 OECD countries that have organized referendums since 1990. One of their sub-indices focuses specifically on referendum campaign finance regulations, and is made up of eight variables which have an equal weight in the index. These variables relate to campaign contribution limits, campaign spending limits, public finance and disclosure requirements. Figure 1 shows the scores for the 24 observed countries on this sub-index. Together with the Czech Republic, the UK clearly stands out with a maximum score of eight, with most other countries not even obtaining a score of five.

Source: Reidy & Suiter (2015, p. 166).



<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

Party behaviour in referendum campaigns, let alone their expenditure habits, is heavily undertheorized. Scholarly focus is instead aimed at party behaviour in a general or specifically electoral context, mainly conceptualizing parties as being vote-seekers (aiming to maximize electoral support), office-seekers (aiming to maximize their control over political office) and/or policy-seekers (aiming to maximize their effect on public policy) (Downs, 1957; Riker, 1962; Leierson, 1968; Budge and Laver, 1986; Strom, 1990). Departing from a rational choice perspective and drawing from New Institutionalism, the behavioural theory of competitive political parties pertained by Strom (1990) argues that parties operate within a behavioural space that is demarcated by office-, vote- and policy-seeking motives. In this space, parties mix these three objectives, and their specific position (i.e. which objective is being prioritized) is dictated by their organizational and institutional environments. Such a framework has already been applied to referendums in the context of theorizing the role of *political agency* in referendum use (Closa, 2006; Hollander, 2019a). Grounded in rational choice institutionalism, scholars argue that referendums in general have the goal to strengthen the position of the political actors that trigger them, instead of adhering to popular demands, ideological conventions or idealistic considerations (see for instance Gherghina, 2019; Hollander, 2019a; Nemčok and Spáč, 2019). Hollander (2019a) distinguishes between act-contingent and outcome-contingent strategies: in the case of the former, the organization of the referendum itself is the purpose, serving specific office- or vote-seeking objectives within political competition at large. For the latter, it implies that the outcome of the referendum instead is important and can potentially "increase the power of political actors vis-à-vis their competitors" (Hollander, 2019a, p. 70), with policy-seeking being the main objective.

Once a referendum is called, parties might become active campaigners for their desired outcome. Concerning this decision, parties can equally be conceptualized as operating within the aforementioned behavioural space, having strategic objectives to advocate for or against a specific side which are constrained by contextual, institutional or organizational factors. When we look at what might drive participation in a referendum campaign, we argue that the issue on which is being voted is the strongest determinant of their specific motivations. Parties might act mainly out of policy-seeking motivations when they have strong ownership of the referendum issue. Likewise, if the issue at hand is less part of their core business but still of considerably contentious nature within the public arena, we can expect parties to mainly act as office- or vote-seekers instead. In this case, they recognize that their involvement in a campaign can offer electoral benefits, or that abstaining from the campaign will allow them to not get burned on a sensitive subject.

The question then becomes: if a party partakes in a referendum campaign and is thus seeking policy, votes or office, what will drive their level of engagement? As mentioned before, we argue that the best way to measure party engagement in referendum campaigns is by using expenditure as a quantitative approximation. Arguably the main factor shaping expenditure patterns of political parties will be the political finance regime within which they have to operate. Studies linking regulations to practice are particularly scarce in referendum finance literature. The main exception is the study by Ghaleigh (2010) on the UK. The author examines in detail how political parties and other actors behaved financially in the campaign for the 2004 North East Referendum, the first referendum after the implementation of the PPERA regulation. One of the main findings was that none of the parties came close to its maximum expenditure limit; furthermore, the study voiced a concern that the PPERA offers certain loopholes through which wealthy parties and other campaigning actors can potentially subvert system of spending limits and undermining the equality of campaigning. This article will descriptively explore how the PPERA has impacted party expenditure over the UK's five post-PPERA referendums as a whole, and whether or not the concerns of Ghaleigh (2010) eventually turned out to be justified. Additionally, we formulate several hypotheses which are embedded in rational choice, political finance and issue ownership literature, and based on corresponding campaign-specific and party-specific variables that could help explain party expenditure habits in referendum campaigns.

As mentioned before, a primary factor is the salience of the referendum issue for the party. If the issue at hand is arguably the main motivator for parties to participate in a referendum campaign, we can expect it to also play a role for expenditure levels. However, issue ownership is rarely discussed in the literature on political finance, possibly because it is not considered to affect spending in election campaigns which rarely focus on specific issues. But, referendums are always issue-specific, and the saliency theory argues that parties focus their attention on those issues for which they have a high credibility (Budge, 2015). Hence, we can expect that the more central an issue is to a party's profile, the more it can be expected to invest heavily in the campaign.

H1: Political parties are likely to spend more in referendum campaigns if the issue up for vote is more salient for them.

Additionally, we might expect parties with more resources to have higher levels of expenditure. The higher the party's revenue, the more leeway it has to strategically allocate money on a referendum campaign and the more it can be expected to invest in a campaign. Ghaleigh (2010, p. 193) already speculated that there might exist a link between a party's private income and their expenditure in a referendum. This can potentially work in two ways: on the one hand, the higher the party's revenue, the more leeway it has to strategically allocate money on a referendum campaign and the more it can be expected to invest in a campaign. On the other hand, it might instead decide to invest a lot of money in a campaign and therefore intensify its fundraising efforts.

H2: Political parties are likely to spend more in referendum campaigns the higher their revenues are.

A first campaign-specific factor is expected to be the *competitiveness* of a referendum. A general assumption on campaign spending is that *closely contested* races tend to result in a higher degree of expenditure (for instance Frederick and Streb, 2008). As a race tightens, incentives to invest increase. Actors might feel that they are close to flipping the vote and thus might find a greater opportunity for victory (Weinschenk and Holbrook, 2014, p. 18), or they might find themselves desperate to hold on to a slim lead. This will arguably be even more the case in a referendum, given the simple binary opposition between two sides, and the relative ease with which polls can show how the race between the two camps develops. Ghaleigh (2010) also pointed to this possibility: "a more contentious subject […] would better capture the public's attention and so acquire more extensive (and expensive) campaigning" (Ghaleigh, 2010, p. 191). It can therefore be expected that parties will spend more in referendum campaigns when polling results indicate that the outcome of the referendum will be closely contested.

H3: Political parties are likely to spend more in referendum campaigns when polling indicates that the outcome of the referendum will be closely contested.

A second campaign-specific factor stems from the observation that parties are often not the only actors in a referendum campaign, as is the case in the UK. In fact, the main players are often interest groups or organizations specifically set up to campaign for either side. The extent to which such other actors engage in the campaign will arguably have an impact on the investment of the political parties (see for instance Rogers and Middleton, 2015). If another actor campaigns intensively for the referendum outcome desired by the party, there will be less need for that party to invest its own means in the campaign. From a resource-maximalisation perspective, the party could then potentially freeride and profit from the campaign efforts of others. Such a 'communicating vessels'-model would imply that the higher the spending of other actors campaigning for the party's desired outcome will be, the less the party itself will spend.

H4: Political parties are likely to spend less in referendum campaigns if other campaigning actors actively participate in it.

In what follows, I shortly discuss the UK's referendum political finance regime, before detailing the methods used for testing the aforementioned hypotheses and thus for comparing and explaining observed expenditure patterns in UK referendums.

<u>The Political Finance Regime of Referendum Campaigns in the UK</u>

In the PPERA (2000), the UK has one of the earliest and most extensive regulatory frameworks when it comes to the financial aspects of referendum campaigns. Out of the 32 European countries that have organized a national referendum since 1990, the UK is one of 11 countries that has a dedicated political finance regime in the form of a specific piece of legislation containing provisions written to (partly) govern the financial aspects of referendum campaigns[i]. Other countries either have legislation stating that provisions originally written for elections also apply to referendum campaigns, or have no provisions governing the financing of referendum campaigns at all. Furthermore, as Reidy and Suiter (2015) have shown, the UK is also one of only two OECD countries that has regulations for all four dimensions of the framework set out by International IDEA.

Before 2000, referendums in the UK were regulated on an ad hoc basis (Ghaleigh, 2010), with arrangements spelled out in bespoke legislation that was usually in line with how general elections were organized (Smith, 2021b, pp. 474-475). This method gave Parliament *carte blanche* for setting the contents (such as the question) as well as the procedural rules of referendums (Mathias, 2021, p. 228). The enactment of the PPERA in 2000 resulted in a complete overhaul of UK party funding and electoral law as well as a separate regulation scheme for referendums (Ghaleigh, 2010, p. 185). Every UK referendum still requires bespoke legislation (Smith, 2021a, p. 15), but the act regulates all organizational and financial aspects of both national and regional referendums (Ghaleigh, 2010, p. 185).

Looking first at *provisions on reporting, oversight and transparency*, the PPERA established the Electoral Commission, an independent body corporate assigned to overseeing elections and referendums and regulating political financing. It has a range of responsibilities when it comes to referendums: checking the wording of the question, informing citizens on how and when to vote, certifying the results, and publishing administrative, financial and electoral reports after a referendum's conclusion. Furthermore, parties and other campaigning actors have to register themselves to participate in referendum campaigns, after which the Commission indicates which of these actors are allowed to effectively participate as so-called 'Permitted Participants' (PPs). All PPs are required to submit to the Electoral Commission a fully itemized report of their expenses and the contributions received during the relevant period, all of which are published in the Political Finance Online database of the Commission. This means that a large amount of data on referendum campaign finance is freely accessible to the public. However, political parties do not need to include a separate report on the donations they have received as they already do this for all contributions on a quarterly basis. This means that donations are not earmarked specifically for referendums campaigns. For each referendum, one non-party PP from both the 'Yes' and the 'No' side of the campaign is selected to be the 'Designated Organization' (DO), which essentially acts as a lead campaign organization. To ensure parity, the Commission designates either two DOs (one for each side), or none.

Regulations on spending for national referendum campaigns are set out by Schedule 14 of the PPERA. If a non-PP wishes to incur any expenses, this may not exceed £10,000. A DO is limited to £5 million, while political parties are limited based on their performance at the previous Westminster General Election: 5 million for those more than 30% of the vote, 4 million between 30 and 20%, 3 million between 20 and 10%, 2 million between 10 and 5% and £500,000 for those parties that are below 5%, the same as all other PPs. While political parties and their leaders, which includes the Prime-Minister, are thus allowed to participate in the campaigns, the PPERA also embraces the concept of political 'purdah' (Smith, 2021a, p. 15). This entails that government and civil service (excluding the Electoral Commission) are restricted in their behaviour in the last four weeks before the vote, as they are banned from financing the publication of promotional materials and from using the 'government machine' to their benefit. It is important to note that in regional referendums, spending limits are set by the bespoke legislation. These limitations are to be reviewed by the Electoral Commission, but the Secretary of State is not bound by these views.

Public funding specifically earmarked for referendum campaigns is limited to DOs, who can receive up to £600,000. There also exists the possibility of indirect funding in the form of use of public meeting rooms and access to referendum campaign broadcasts (see also PPERA 2000, S. 14). While political parties in the UK are eligible for general public funding (i.e. not specifically earmarked for referendum campaigns), the general practice in the political finance literature on referendum campaigns is to leave these out of the equation (see for instance Reidy and Suiter, 2015). Finally, when it comes to *private income*, there exist no limits on how much donors can contribute to PPs. This therefore also means that DOs are allowed to accept donations from registered political parties. Article 54 does specify so-called 'permissible donors', i.e. those natural and legal persons that are allowed to contribute to PPs, but the scope of inclusion is quite wide. Foreign interests are banned from donating, as are anonymous donations, but otherwise the floor is open for private funding by any other entity or person.

Case Selection: Post-PPERA Referendums

Due to the drastic change in regulatory context, the introduction of the PPERA in 2000 offers a clear cutting-off point for our case selection. It would obviously be interesting to investigate the impact of the new legislation by comparing the pre- to the post-PPERA referendums, but there are no detailed and readily comparable data available for the pre-PPERA period. Table 1 offers a schematic overview of the five post-PPERA referendums, as well as the respective DOs and their public funding. Finally, it outlines the spending limits for every campaigning actor.

[TABLE 1]

The **North East Referendum** of 4 November 2004 posed the question whether an elected regional assembly should be created in the North East England region. It was supposed to be the first in a series of referendums, in order to establish regional assemblies in all nine official English regions. Due to the existence of a strong sense of identity in the North East, it was expected that the referendum would result in a resounding 'yes' (Ghaleigh, 2010), but 77.9% of the voters voted against the regional assembly.

Six years later, the people of Wales were presented with a similar question in the **National Assembly for Wales Referendum of 2011** as they were to decide whether or not the National Assembly would gain additional legislative powers on top of those granted by the Government of Wales Act 2006 (Roberts, 2011). Clause 103 (1) of the Act formed the legal basis for the referendum, while its arrangements were set out in the 'Referendum Order'[ii], and the 'Referendum Expenses Order'[iii]. There were no DOs for this campaign, as the No-side lacked an applicant that adequately presented those supporting this outcome. The PPERA states that in that case, the Electoral Commission cannot designate a lead campaign group on either side. On 3 March, 63,5% of the vote was in favour of additional legislative powers for the National Assembly.

Later that year, the **United Kingdom Alternative Vote Referendum** was the first nation-wide referendum organized since 1975. The subject matter, reforming the electoral system from 'first past the post' to 'alternative vote', was extremely rare from an international perspective (Qvortrup, 2012, in Blick, 2021), and it is the only UK referendum to date not to have dealt with possible transfers of competences (Blick, 2021, p. 269). Its statutory basis was the Parliamentary Constituencies and Voting System Act 2011 (PCVSA) which included provisions on the timing and the question of the referendum, as well as administrative matters. With a turnout of 42.2%, 67.9% of the voters eventually said No to a new electoral system.

In 2014, the **Scottish Independence Referendum** took place. The 2012 Edinburgh Agreement stated that the UK Parliament would pass secondary legislation, thus giving Holyrood (the Scottish Parliament) the authority to hold a referendum on independence (Curtice, 2021,p. 291). Holyrood then passed The Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013, together with The Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Act 2013, which formed the bespoke legislation for this referendum and attributed the Electoral Commission with the decision on the DOs as well as public funding and expenditure limits. The spending limits for political parties became a more difficult decision, as the two sides were quite imbalanced in terms of support by the parties in the general election. This created the potential for the three 'No' parties, who were of substantial size, to "outgun the one and a bit parties on the Yes side" (Curtice, 2021, p. 294). The Electoral Commission solved this by dividing a total amount of £3,000,000 by the party's 'relevant percentage'[iv] in the Scottish Elections of 2011, which gave each side's political parties a pooled spending limit of £1,500,000. Eventually, 55.3% of the voters said No to Scottish Independence.

Last but certainly not least, the **Referendum on European Union Membership for the UK in 2016** proved to be the culmination of a decade-long struggle with Brussels, one that by the early 2010s had created a strong division in the Conservative Party. As then-Prime Minister David Cameron noted that the issue started to dominate his premiership, he vowed in 2013 that "if re-elected Prime Minister he would seek to reform the EU, renegotiate the terms of the UK's membership of the Union and then hold a referendum on continued membership by the end of 2017" (Smith, 2021b, p. 474). By the end of February 2016, the European Union Referendum Act 2015 was wholly in force, and eventually, Leave won the vote with 51.9%.

Measuring and Comparing Referendum Campaign Financing

The Political Finance Database of the United Kingdom's Electoral Commission provides detailed information on spending by political parties, non-party campaigners and referendum participants for all five investigated referendums. In order to increase comparability between different monetary values at different referendums, we need to take into account inflation as well as divergent electorates. Total spending will be divided by the number of registered voters, creating a relative measure of pounds/voter. This is then indexed through the use of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), as it is the most comprehensive measure of inflation in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2017). The following formula will be used to determine the indexed expenditure per voter (£X per voter):

$$\text{£X per voter} = \frac{\text{Expenditure}}{\text{Number of eligible voters}} \times \frac{\text{2004 CPIH}}{\text{CPIH of referendum year}}$$

£X per voter uses 2004 as a base year in order to take into account inflation since the first post-PPERA referendum. In what follows, we will map in detail the expenses of the parties for the referendum campaigns. We will then exploratively and descriptively relate these expenses to the spending limits, as well as the specific referendum topic, the parties' total income, the competitiveness of the referendum and the expenditure patterns of other actors in the campaign, in order to find support in favour or against our hypotheses. But first, we need to discuss several technical issues relating to which expenses can be considered as party expenses for the referendum campaign.

Defining Party Referendum Campaign Expenses

A first issue is that sometimes, spending by parties is not limited to what they report to the Electoral Commission as official campaign expenditure. An internally divided party may see one or more 'political party related PP's' being established. This takes two forms in practice, the first occurring when a party chooses to campaign for a specific side, after which the members who wish to support the other side create a separate PP. For instance, in the 2011 Electoral System Referendum, the Conservative Party campaigned for the status quo, while the party members that wanted to advocate for the other side created a different PP, *Conservative Yes* (Strafford, 2011). In that case, the party registering as a PP receives the spending limit appropriate for the size of the party (here, £5,000,000 for the Conservative Party), while the additional PP has the same limit as a standard third party PP (£500,000 in the case of *Conservative Yes*). The second possibility is that the party withholds from campaigning and that members join other PPs created specifically to support a side. Here, both PPs receive equal spending limits which are in line with what other third party PPs receive. Such a strategy was applied by the Conservatives in the 2016 EU Membership Referendum, which saw its Eurosceptic wing join the cross-party umbrella group *Grassroots Out Ltd* in campaigning for Leave while *Conservatives In Ltd* backed Remain (Clarke et al., 2017, pp. 14-17). Overall, this phenomenon was only observed in the two nation-wide referendums, with Labour-related PPs spending 0.0035 and 0.0072 £X per voter in the Electoral System and EU Membership referendums respectively. For the aforementioned Conservatives-related PPs, these numbers are 0.0001 and 0.0146, while a PP related to the Green Party spent £X0.0002 per voter in the latter referendum.

Parties can also operate as donors to unrelated PPs, offering them the possibility to circumvent spending limits and indirectly participate in campaigns, as these do not fall under campaign expenditure according to the Electoral Commission. Parties mainly donate to DOs: in 2004, UKIP donated £6,399 (£X0.0034 per voter) worth of 'consultancy services' to *North East Says No Ltd*, while in the 2011 Electoral System Referendum the Conservatives made a non-cash donation (of which the nature is unknown) of £19,641 (£X0.0004 per voter) to *No Campaign Limited*. The most eye-catching donations were done by the SNP in the 2014 Scottish Referendum, where the party donated a total of £825,000 (£X0.1504 per voter) to *Yes Scotland Limited*. Finally, in the 2016 EU Membership referendum, one of the PPs related to the Conservatives, *Grassroots Out Ltd*, donated £21,026 (£X0.0003 per Voter) to the *GO Movement Ltd*. In general, as we aim to study party expenditure in referendum campaigns as holistically as possible, our measure of expenditure will include the expenses reported to the Electoral Commission, their donations to other PPs, and the spending by the party related PPs.

The Absolute and Relative Party Campaign Expenses

Table 2 shows the total expenditure of the ten most active parties in post-PPERA referendum campaigns in absolute terms. Most smaller parties only registered at the Electoral Commission for the EU membership referendum campaign, often not actually spending any money, and are thus excluded from the analysis. Additionally, the British National Party and the Alliance Party have spent extremely low amounts and will also be omitted from the analysis. The total relative expenditure of the parties are shown in Table 3. Tables 2 and 3 show that the two most high-profile referendums have the highest levels of relative and absolute spending; The 2014 Scottish Referendum saw over £X0.6 per voter, with over half of it being accounted for by the SNP. In 2016, the number is considerably lower at 0.1714, but this is arguably largely due to the electorate being ten times as big (over 46 million registered voters) compared to the 2014 one (about 4.5 million). This is clear from Table 2 which shows that in 2016 over six times as much money was spent than in 2014 when taking into account inflation. This seems to be in line with Ghaleigh's (2010) expectation that more contentious subjects result in more extensive and expensive campaigning. The SNP is clearly the biggest relative spender with £X0.3889 per voter over the five referendums, before Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats at 0.2949, 0.1076 and 0.0906 respectively. In absolute numbers, Labour ranks first, followed by the Liberal Democrats and the SNP in front of the Conservatives.

[TABLE 2]

[TABLE 3]

Our findings allow us to immediately address our first hypothesis. On a first glance, parties do seem to invest more when the referendum issue can be considered as (part of) their core business. This is particularly the case for Plaid Cymru, SNP and UKIP, which spent most in the referendums about their core issue, the 2011 Wales referendum, the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and the 2016 EU Membership Referendum respectively. On the other hand, while it could be expected that the LibDems would invest heavily in the 2011 Electoral System referendum, held at the instigation of the party, this was clearly not the case. In fact, this was the referendum for which the party spent least. Furthermore, when viewed from a within referendum perspective, it is only for the Scottish referendum that the party which owns the issue, being the SNP, actually spends the most. While decentralization and EU integration are very important topics to respectively Plaid Cymru and UKIP, the lack of financial firepower seems to make it impossible for these small parties to compete with the traditional parties. Only the SNP was able to translate this salience into a substantial financial push. There is thus a certain level of support for H1 and the effect of issue salience on referendum campaign expenditures by parties, but the amount of resources available simultaneously seems to have a mediating effect.

Party Campaign Expenses and Total Party Income

The findings above directly tie in with our second hypothesis and the question whether or not party expenditure then relates to their ability to spend, i.e. their income? Table 5 shows the referendum campaign expenditure as a percentage of the total indexed income of the parties in the year of the referendum[v]. It is important to note that we used UK-wide income for national parties such as Labour or the Conservatives throughout, including for the regional referendums of 2004, 2011 and 2014. This is because the respective referendums are on issues with a UK-wide impact, namely devolution and independence, and we can therefore expect these parties to rely on all of their possible resources in these campaigns, rather than leaving them solely in the hands of their respective regional chapters. This is further supported by the fact that the parties in question registered for these campaigns as their central units with their registered office in London.

[TABLE 4]

Overall, expenditure shares are quite low, mostly in the first three referendums. In 2014 and 2016, the minor parties come into play: these have a smaller revenue but invest a substantial part of this in the referendums related to their core business. This is the case for the SNP and the Scottish Socialists in 2014, and UKIP in 2016. In these referendums, the traditional parties, more specifically Labour and the Liberal Democrats, also start throwing their weight around. For the Conservatives there is a directly proportional relation between its overall income and its expenditure in three referendum campaigns. This is also the case for the SNP and UKIP in the two campaigns they have participated in. The Liberal Democrats do spend a lot more in 2014 and 2016 than in previous referendums, which is also a reflection of higher incomes in those years. Labour also spends more as its income increases, with only the Scotland referendum being an outlier. Within-referendum comparisons show that the party with the highest income spends the most money in every referendum except for the Scottish one. In that case, the SNP's income is six times as low as Labour's while they spend almost three times as much. It is only in the EU Referendum of 2016 and the Electoral System Referendum of 2011 that there is a direct proportionality between expenditure and party income. These results, while not wholly confirming H2, do offer some indication of the existence of a link between the income of a party and its expenditure habits.

Party Campaign Expenses and Referendum Competitiveness

As mentioned in our theoretical framework, Ghaleigh (2010) speculated about a relationship between the contentiousness of the referendum and the absolute and relative expenditure patterns of the parties. Our overview of relative and absolute party campaign expenses seems to support this speculation. In order to more closely examine this, Table 6 looks at how the spending patterns relate to the competitiveness of a referendum in terms of aggregated polling results during the official referendum campaign periods[vi]. The average percentage point difference between the two camps ('Competitiveness Full') can be considered as a rough indication of the competitiveness of a referendum. In general, a clear correlation between competitiveness and expenditure patterns of political parties is lacking. However, there exists a much stronger relationship when looking at the final month of the referendum campaign instead ('Competitiveness Month'). The two most competitive referendums, Scotland and EU membership, also had the highest levels of expenditure. Additionally, the latter had the highest level of total absolute spending, and both over the full campaign period, as well as in the final month leading up to the vote, this referendum was by far the most competitive. This appears to be a general trend: if we look only at absolute expenditure, higher competitiveness over the final month of the campaign more or less consistently results in more spending, thus supporting H3.

[TABLE 5]

Party Campaign Expenses and the Spending of Other Actors

Table 7 shows the share of each of the campaigning actors in the total expenditures. Third party actors spent very little in both 2011 referendums, but this did not lead to a higher share of the parties. Third parties spent much more in the other three referendums, but this did not result in a lower share of the parties, on the contrary. In ‘expensive’ referendums, all the actors spend more and the share of the political parties even tends to be higher. For instance, in the referendums on Scotland and the EU, where most money was spent in total, the share of the parties increased to respectively 38.7% and 31.7%. In other words, where our expectation in H4 was that we would observe less spending by parties if other actors campaigned more intensely, the contrary seems to be the case: the rising tide of a highly contentious referendum appears to lift all boats, party and non-party actors alike.

[TABLE 6]

Party Campaign Expenses and The Spending Limits

Finally, a very important topic that needs to be addressed is how the expenditure levels relate to the spending limits within which the campaigning actors had to operate. Table 4 shows the expenditure limits of the parties and their related PPs, as well as the percentage of this maximum amount actually spent. This suggests that, in general, the overall impact of the spending cap is marginal. In the referendums prior to 2014, parties never come close to their imposed limits. The party which comes closest is Labour in 2004 with a mere 18.7% of its cap. This stands in stark contrast with early post-PPERA legislative election campaigns, ‘where the major political parties and closely fought constituency campaigns come close to the statutory limits’ (Ghaleigh, 2010, p. 191). In the 2014 and 2016 votes, however, parties consistently approach their ceilings more closely, with the SNP even overspending by over 50% due to the aforementioned donation to the DO supporting independence. In the EU Membership Referendum, the highest percentage hovers around 80%. These results suggest that the authorities thus seem to overestimate the financial engagement of parties in these campaigns, as parties rarely come close to the limits imposed. The case of the SNP also shows that even when parties do bump up against their limits, they effectively have a loophole through which they are still able to exceed the imposed limit on its financial engagement.

[TABLE 7]

Conclusion

The regulatory framework for referendums in the UK takes up a unique position from a comparative perspective. It is one of the first and most extensive referendum political finance regimes in Europe, setting out regulations that cover four dimensions: transparency, private income, expenditure and public funding. In this article, we explored how this framework functions in practice by offering a first comprehensive overview of political party spending in five post-PPERA referendums.

Our descriptive exploration shows, first and foremost, that parties often fail to act as singular, coherent entities in referendum campaigns, which has consequences for their financial engagement. The phenomenon of party related PPs symbolises the difficulties parties might encounter in striving for a unified approach; the binary, single-issue and complex nature of referendums is detrimental for party unity (De Vreese and Semetko, 2004, p. 3). As a result, parties that choose a specific side in a referendum campaign might have to deal with dissenting members creating a separate PP that advocates for the opposing side.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that spending limits barely have an effect on party expenditure at large. The fact that parties are not only spenders but also donors, and that these donations do not count towards their spending cap, effectively eliminates the limiting power of this ceiling. Additionally, the aforementioned party-affiliated PPs offer another loophole for parties to circumvent spending caps, as the additional PP receives an expenditure limit on top of the one that the party was originally capped at. In theory, a party could create, register and fund a separate PP advocating for its preferred outcome if it expects its investment to exceed the spending cap. Such a scenario would prove even more problematic than the donations of the SNP to Yes Scotland Limited, the pro-independence DO in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. While the latter organisation operated independently from the party, this would not be the case when a party created and funded its own third party PP.

Parties can themselves also become vessels for other entities to work around expenditure limits. This is so because the donations parties receive during referendum campaigns are not earmarked, and form part of the general revenue from donations which the parties have to disclose on a quarterly basis. This, combined with the rather laissez-faire regulations on 'permissible donors', is potentially problematic for a number of reasons. Donors which do not want to be seen as taking up a specific side in a referendum campaign, and are thus reluctant to register as donors for a PP, could potentially disguise their contributions as general donations for a party that just so happens to align with their views on a referendum topic. Furthermore, it allows them to circumvent the PP spending limits and basically make unlimited contributions to a party's campaign. This underlines the aforementioned concern voiced by Ghaleigh (2010, p. 195) that the PPERA does not limit wealthy individuals in splitting donations between a large number of PPs, potentially subverting the system of spending limits and undermining the equality of campaigning. This creates the possibility of a large number of well-funded PPs actively campaigning on one side of a referendum, thus dominating the campaign and undermining the primacy of DOs. These findings show that the PPERA, while comparatively quite extensive and intervening, currently offers a number of possibilities for wealthy (non-)party actors to undermine the 'regulated equality' of campaigning it set out to achieve.

Our results also allow us to offer some tentative answers on the hypotheses we formulated in our theoretical framework. Firstly, concerning H1, the importance of the referendum topic seems to indeed influence expenditure, particularly for smaller parties, as Plaid Cymru, the SNP and UKIP spent most in those campaigns that dealt with their core business. This dovetails with the argument of Hollander (2019b) that small parties in the UK see referendums as an important tool to push on issues of great importance to them. However, the SNP in 2014 notwithstanding, these parties are rarely able to overcome their lack of financial firepower and match the absolute expenditure of the larger parties, which ties in to H2. As expected, the financial resources of the parties are shown to often be directly proportional with expenditure: in every referendum but the Scottish one, the party with the highest income invests most. Also, the Conservatives, SNP and UKIP and (to a lesser degree) Labour and the Liberal Democrats all spend more when they have a higher revenue. Smaller parties do, however, sometimes tend to 'outspend' their more traditional counterparts in terms of the share of their yearly income they choose to invest. Like H2, H3 also finds support in the case of the UK, where a higher degree of competitiveness indeed consistently results in higher party expenditure in the final month leading up to the vote. Finally, and more counter-intuitively, our findings seem to suggest a lack of influence of the expenditure of other actors on party expenditure, therefore largely disproving H4. While we theorised that parties freeride when other actors, such as the DOs, are more financially active in the campaign, our results instead indicate that when others increase their spending, parties actually appear to invest more, while they are also seemingly never incentivized to outspend these actors.

We obviously cannot generalize from these findings concerning party spending in UK referendum campaigns, nor can we definitively confirm or disprove the hypotheses we have formulated in our theoretical framework. This can, however, be achieved through additional cross-national research with more units of analysis in order to more definitively test these hypotheses: do factors such as topic salience, referendum competitiveness, income and the expenditure of other parties indeed affect the spending habits of political parties, and to what extent? Do these effects differ depending on variation in a country's political finance regime or political system? And how does variation in the latter impact the specific financial behaviour of the parties that are operating in said regulatory framework? Future research on referendum campaign financing should thus embrace such a more comparative design, one that offers more variation with regard to institutional and contextual factors while also paying careful attention towards correct operationalisation of the aforementioned factors. Nonetheless, our study has also shown the relevance of detailed and exploratory single case studies in this field of research, especially considering how young and under-researched it is. With this article, we hope to have created an appetite for this intriguing and relevant topic, and to have set the stage for further research.

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Tables

Table 1. Post-PPERA Referendums: Designated Organizations and Spending Limits.

Referendum	Designated Org.	Spending Limits
2004 Referendum on the Establishment of a Regional Assembly in NE England (North-East Referendum)	Yes4NorthEast North East Says No Both received £100,000 in public funding	DOs: £665,000 Labour: £665,000 Cons.: £400,000 LibDems: £400,000 Others:£100,000
2011 Referendum on further law-making powers for the National Assembly for Wales (Wales Referendum)	NA	DOs: £600,000 + £70,000 for infrastructure Labour: £600,000 Cons.: £480,000 Plaid Cymru: £480,000 LibDems: £360,000 Others: £100,000
2011 Referendum on Changing the Parliamentary voting system from 'First Past the Post' to 'Alternative Vote' (AV Referendum or Electoral Systems Referendum)	No Campaign Ltd Yes in May 2011 Ltd Both received £980,000 in public funding	DOs: £5,000,000 Cons.: £5,000,000 LibDems: £4,000,000 Labour: X[a] Others: £500,000
2014 Referendum on Scottish independence (Scottish Referendum)	Yes Scotland Better Together No public funding	DOs: £1,500,000 SNP: £1,344,000 Labour: £834,000 Cons.: £396,000 LibDems: £201,000 Others: £150,000
2016 Referendum on European Union Membership for the United Kingdom (Brexit Referendum)	Britain Stronger in Europe Vote Leave Both received £600,000 in public funding	DOs: £7,000,000[b] Cons.: X[a] Labour: £5,000,000 UKIP: £4,000,000 LibDems: £3,000,000 Others: £700,000

[a]Party in question was not imposed a specific spending limit as they did not register as a Permitted Participant for the respective campaign. Any Permitted Participant that was related to a party instead received the minimum spending limit (as specified for 'Others').
[b]The bespoke legislation for the 2016 referendum, the European Union Referendum Act 2015, indicated that the spending limit of £5,000,000 mentioned in the PPERA would be increased to £7,000,000.

Table 2. Total (indexed) expenditure of political parties over the five post-PPERA referendums.

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016	Total
Labour	124,126	8,330	159,660	575,899	4,068,643	**4,936,658**
Conservatives	30,243	-	554,785	293,562	693,954	**1,572,544**
LibDems	30,183	5,878	52,184	146,523	1,713,071	**1,947,839**
Plaid Cymru	-	7,778	-	-	21,179	**28,957**
SNP	-	-	-	1,658,718	69,966	**1,728,684**
UKIP	6,999	-	-	-	1,043,289	**1,050,288**
Scottish Greens	-	-	-	10,728	0	**10,728**
Scott. Socialist Party	-	-	-	9,942	-	**9,942**
DUP	-	-	-	-	327,857	**327,857**
Green Party	-	-	-	-	48,757	**48,757**
Total	**191,570**	**21,986**	**766,917**	**2,695,372**	**7,986,716**	**11,622,560**

Note: 0=registered as PP in campaign but no expenditure, '-' = not registered.

Table 3. Total expenditure of political parties over the five post-PPERA referendums expressed in £X per voter.

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016	Total
Labour	0.0653	0.0036	0.0039	0.1344	0.0877	**0.2949**
Conservatives	0.0159	-	0.0121	0.0650	0.0149	**0.1079**
LibDems	0.0159	0.0026	0.0011	0.0342	0.0368	**0.0906**
Plaid Cymru	-	0.0034	-	-	0.0005	**0.0039**
SNP	-	-	-	0.3872	0.0015	**0.3887**
UKIP	0.0035	-	-	-	0.0224	**0.0259**
Scottish Greens	-	-	-	0.0025	0	**0.0025**
Scott. Socialist Party	-	-	-	0.0023	-	**0.0023**
DUP	-	-	-	-	0.0071	**0.0071**
Green Party	-	-	-	-	0.0010	**0.0010**
Total	**0.1006**	**0.0096**	**0.0172**	**0.6256**	**0.1719**	**0.9248**

Table 4. Indexed expenditure of political parties and the % share of the expenditure of their indexed income in post-PPERA referendums.

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016
Labour	124,126	8,330	159,660	575,899	4,068,643
Income	29,312,000	26,038,171	26,038,171	30,908,127	38,391,752
% Income	0.4	0.03	0.6	2.1	11.2
Conservatives	30,243	-	554,785	293,562	693,954
Income	20,041,000	-	19,666,192	29,249,071	21,801,801
% Income.	0.1	-	3.0	1.0	3.2
LibDems	30,183	5,878	52,184	146,523	1,713,071
Income	5,060,121	5,157,401	5,157,401	8,079,929	6,566,061
% Income.	0.7	0.1	1.0	2.1	28.8
Plaid Cymru	-	7,778	-	-	21,179
Income	-	519,489	-	-	569,501
% Income.	-	1.2	-	-	3.4
SNP	-	-	-	1,658,718	69,966
Income	-	-	-	5,505,232	3,753,969
% Income.	-	-	-	27.7	1.5
UKIP	6,999	-	-	-	1,043,289
Income	1,744,659	-	-	-	2,586,456
% Income.	0.4	-	-	-	45.3
Scottish Greens	-	-	-	10,728	0
Income	-	-	-	266,712	345,204
% Income.	-	-	-	4.0	0
Scott. Socialist Party	-	-	-	9,942	-
Income	-	-	-	46,908	-
% Income.	-	-	-	21.2	-
DUP	-	-	-	-	327,857
Income	-	-	-	-	610,367
% Income.	-	-	-	-	53.7
Green Party	-	-	-	-	48,757
Income	-	-	-	-	1,667,724
% Income.	-	-	-	-	2.9

Table 5. Competitiveness in referendums compared to total party expenditure.

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016
Competitiveness Full	1.7	24.4	8.8	7.0	0.7
Pro-Change	34.7	53.7	36.2	40.5	43.8
Pro-Status Quo	33.0	29.3	45.0	47.5	44.5
Undecided	32.3	17.0	18.8	12.0	11.7
Competitiveness Month	7	34.0	13.5	3.3	1.3
Pro-Change	35	67.0	39.1	43.6	45.5
Pro-Status Quo	42	33.0	52.6	46.9	44.2
Undecided	23	0	8.3	9.5	10.3
Rel. Total Party Exp.	.1006	.0096	.0172	.6256	.1719
Abs. Total Party Exp.	**191,570**	**21,986**	**766,917**	**2,695,372**	**7,986,716**

Table 6. Share of total expenditure of DOs, political parties and other PPs in post-PPERA referendums, expressed in % (expenditure in £X per voter in parentheses).

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016
DOs	67.9 (.2664)	-	83.3 (.0862)	42.2 (.5185)	41.3 (.2238)
Other PPs	7.4 (.0290)	81.3 (.0416)	0.4 (.0004)	19.1 (.2353)	27.0 (.1466)
Parties[a]	24.7 (.0972)	18.7 (.0096)	16.2 (.0168)	38.7 (.4752)	31.7 (.1716)
Total	.3926	.0512	.1034	1.2290	.5420

[a]These amounts do not include the donations to other actors, in order to not 'double book' these numbers

Table 7. Percentage of expenditure limit spent by political parties in post-PPERA referendums (limit in indexed absolute number in parentheses). Includes spending limits by related PPs.

	North East 2004	Wales 2011	Electoral System 2011	Scotland 2014	EU 2016
Labour	18.7 (665,000)	1.7 (498,720)	19.2 (831,200)	88.4 (651,437)	82.5 (4,929,920)
Conservatives	7.6 (400,000)	-	12.1 (4,571,600)	94.9 (309,316)	64.3 (1,078,420)
LibDems	7.6 (400,000)	2.0 (299,232)	1.6 (3,324,800)	93.3 (157,001)	74.1 (2,310,900)
Plaid Cymru	-	1.9 (398,976)	-	-	3.9 (539,210)
SNP	-	-	-	158.0 (1,049,798)	13.0 (539,210)
UKIP	7.0 (100,000)	-	-	-	33.9 (3,081,000)
Scottish Greens	-	-	-	9.2 (117,165)	0.0 (539,210)
Scott. Socialist Party	-	-	-	8.5 (117,165)	-
DUP	-	-	-	-	60.8 (539,210)
Green Party	-	-	-	-	4.5 (1,078,420)

Endnotes

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[i] Based on desk research between September and November 2022. Other countries are Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine.

[ii] The National Assembly for Wales Referendum (Assembly Act Provisions) (Referendum Question, Date of Referendum etc.) Order 2010

[iii] The National Assembly for Wales (Assembly Act Provisions) (Limit on Referendum Expenses Etc.) Order 2010

[iv] This was determined to be the "total number of constituency votes cast at the 2011 election for the candidate or candidates […] expressed as a percentage of the total number of constituency votes cast at that election for all candidates, multiplied by 56.6% and rounded to one decimal place, and the total number of regional votes cast at the 2011 election for the party expressed as a percentage of the total number of regional votes cast at that election for all registered parties and individual candidates, multiplied by 43.4% and rounded to one decimal place" (S. 4, Scottish Independence Referendum Act, 2013).

[v] The data for this also comes from the Electoral Commission Political Finance Database.

[vi] Polls are aggregated both from the start of the official campaign period and during the month preceding the vote, as published by organizations that are members of the British Polling Council (BPC) and thus are fully transparent in their methodology and results (British Polling Council, n.d.). For the 2004 referendum, results are based on Rallings & Thrasher (2006:929) who made an overview of pre-referendum Ipsos MORI polls in July, August, September and October. Our results for the final month of the campaign period are based on the October numbers. For all other referendums, the results are based on the following number of polls:

- Wales Referendum: 3 polls published between 16/12/2010 and 2/03/2011 (1 poll between 03/02/2011 and 02/03/2011)
- Alternative Vote Referendum: 22 polls published between 16/02/2011 and 04/05/2011 (10 polls between 05/04/2021 and 04/05/2021)
- Scottish Independence Referendum: 39 polls published between 30/05/2014 and 18/09/2014 (20 polls between 18/08/2014 and 17/09/2014)
- EU Membership Referendum: 65 polls published between 15/04/2016 and 22/06/2016 (34 polls between 23/05/2016 and 22/06/2016)

Detailed information on the location of these polls are available from the authors.