

SECTION I
SUMMARY OF POLITICAL OPINION POLLS
IN SCOTLAND 1981/82

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As usual the opinion polls summarised in this section virtually select themselves: they are polls which asked questions relating to voting intention or constitutional change. Again the regular appearance in the Glasgow Herald of System Three polls (Table 1) is invaluable for comparing data over time. Other polls, carried out by MORI, are useful for comparison as a check but in addition MORI were commissioned by The Scotsman to ask other questions, not covered elsewhere, and this in-depth coverage is a useful complement to the System Three data (see in particular The Scotsman, 11-15 Dec. 1981 and 3-5 May, 1982). The MORI polls are summarised in Table 2.

1981/82 saw the establishment on the Scottish scene not only of the Social Democratic Party but also of its alliance with the Liberal Party. This is reflected in the change of approach by System Three to the SDP: after July 1981 they stopped asking "prompted" questions about the SDP and instead the Alliance became one of the regular options from August 1981 onwards. The difference made by prompted versus unprompted questions can be gauged by comparing sections A and B of Table 1.

The SDP was of course at the centre of the biggest political story of the year - the Hillhead by-election, held on 25 March 1982. In the event Roy Jenkins won the seat for the Alliance but the combination of a three-or even four-stranded tightrope (SDP, Conservative and Labour each being ahead in the polls at various times and with all four parties campaigning vigorously) and the political fate of the internationally known Mr Jenkins meant that the media commissioned a record number of opinion polls for a Scottish by-election. These polls are reproduced in summary form in Table 3.

In Table 4 the results are given of opinions expressed on Scotland's constitutional future - for Scotland as a whole (the middle option being expressed as "a Scottish Assembly as part of Britain but with substantial powers") by MORI, and for Hillhead (the middle op-

tion this time being "a Scottish Assembly") by System Three for the Glasgow Herald and Scottish Television.

Acknowledgements

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Technical note

Percentages have been rounded; "don't knows", refusals and "Won't votes" have been ignored, as have parties with one per cent or less of recorded support; dates given are dates of completion of fieldwork rather than the slightly later dates of publication.

Abbreviations

AS= Audience Selection; MORI = Market & Opinion Research International; NOP = National Opinion Polls; ORC = Opinion Research Centre; S3 = System Three Scotland; TSRU = Telephone Survey Research Unit.

D/ = Daily; S/ = Sunday; Expr. = Express; Obs. = The Observer; Stand. = Standard; Tel. = Telegraph.

TABLE 1
VOTING INTENTION : SYSTEM THREE (Glasgow Herald)

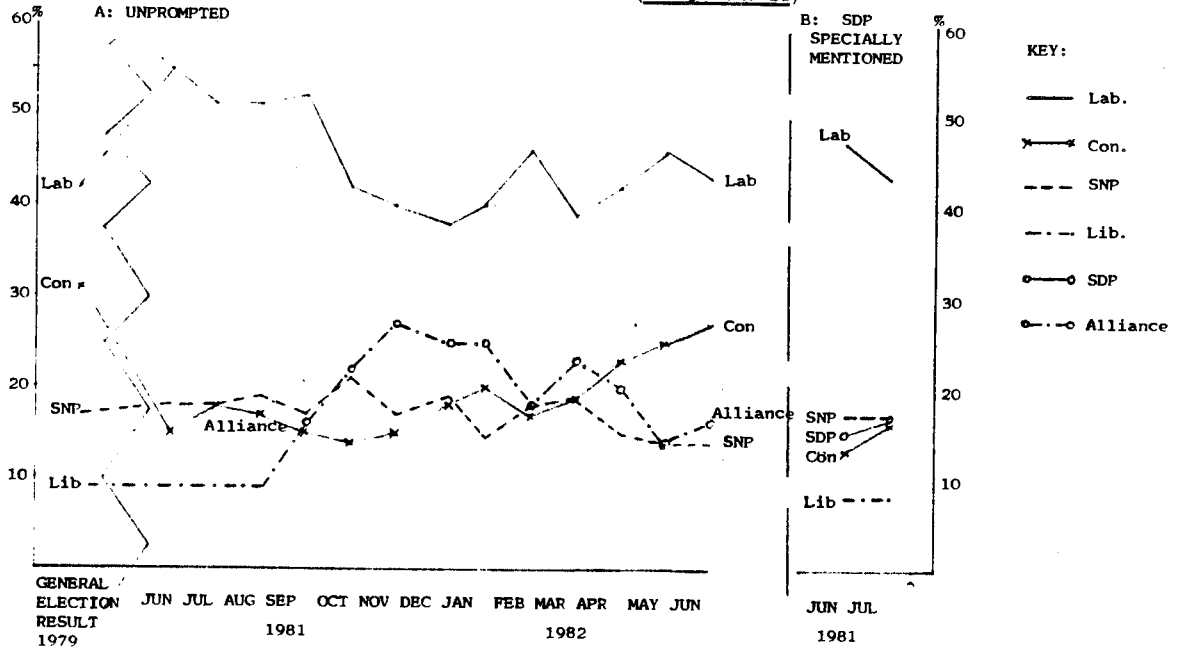


TABLE 2 : VOTING INTENTION :
MORI (The Scotsman)

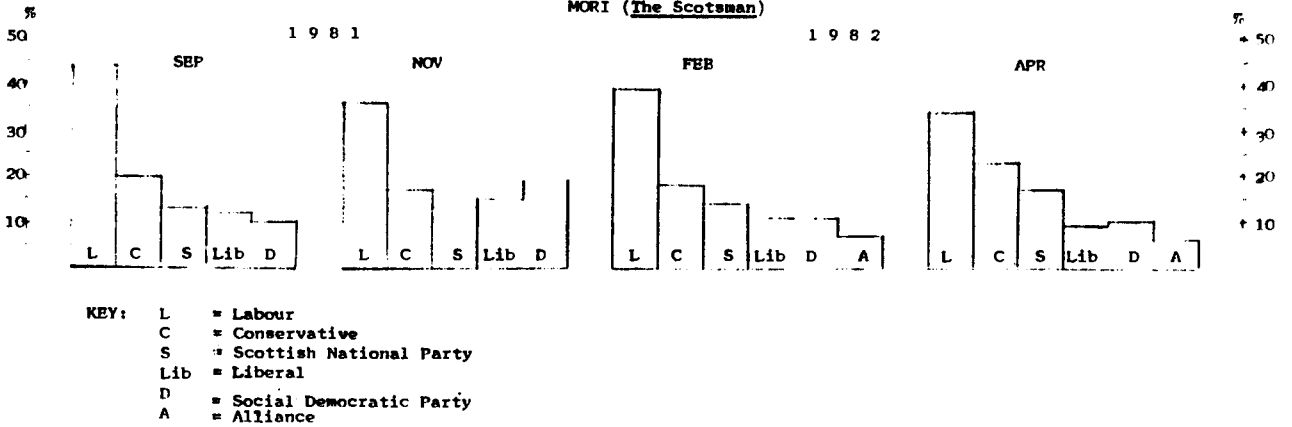


TABLE 3 : THE HILLHEAD BY-ELECTION - VOTING INTENTION

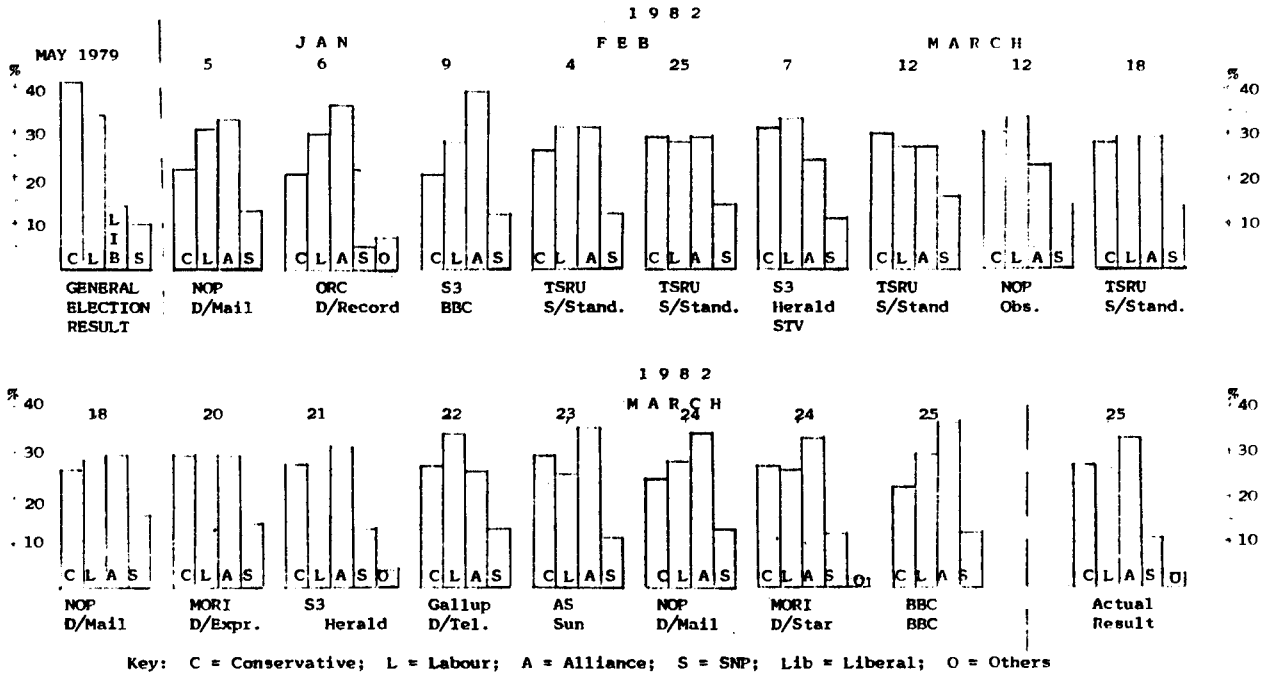
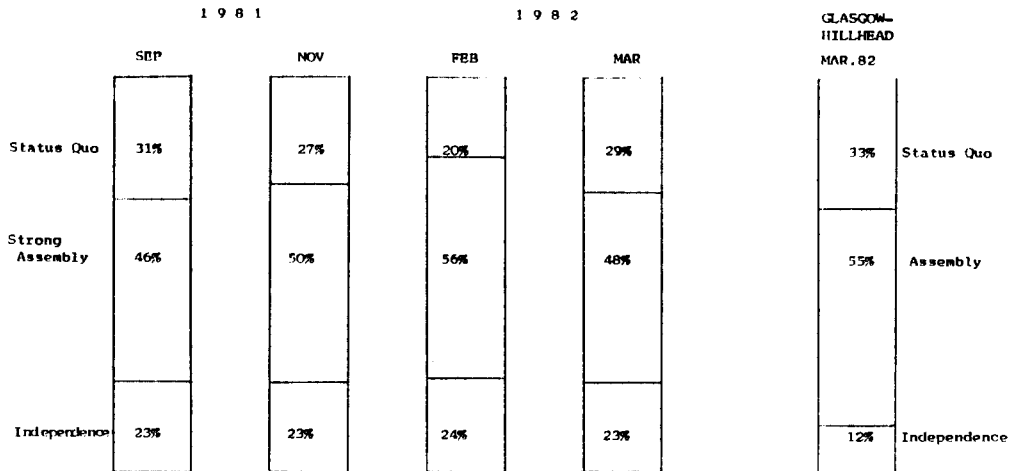


TABLE 4 : CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS



Source: MORI (The Scotsman)

System 3
Glasgow
Herald +
STV