



BBC DETAILED ANALYSIS

case029_BBC's Nick Robinson telt by Alex Salmond.en

Broadcast: COMPLETE ANALYSIS | Analyzed: 2026-05-11 19:51

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OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly biased/manipulative

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification based on Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Green	SNP	Lab	LibDem	Con	Reform
CHES	1.85	2.90	3.50	4.60	7.30	8.80
Spectrum	Left	Left	Left	Center	Right	Right

The overall tendency is presented on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly left-favoring, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly right-favoring). The calculation is based on the difference in average favoritism of left vs. right parties (grouping per CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

5.5 / 10

Balanced

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — chesdata.eu | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section provides political context and does not contribute to the overall score.

BROADCAST INFO AND TOPIC FRAMEWORK

Programme Data

- Title: BBC News — Live Interview with First Minister Alex Salmond (Scottish Independence Referendum Campaign)
- Date: September 2014 (internal evidence: RBS headquarters announcement, referendum campaign context; exact date from filename not provided)
- Estimated Length: Approximately 6 minutes 50 seconds (transcript 00:00–06:50)

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- Presenter/Reporter: Nick Robinson, BBC Political Editor
- Persons Interviewed:

Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political Spectrum
Alex Salmond	First Minister of Scotland	SNP	3.5 — Left, Scottish Nationalist
Nick Robinson	BBC Political Editor (interviewer)	BBC (public broadcaster)	N/A — Journalist

Main Topic

Nick Robinson challenges First Minister Alex Salmond on the economic consequences of Scottish independence, specifically regarding the Royal Bank of Scotland's announced intention to re-register its headquarters in England, and on broader business warnings against independence.

World-Knowledge Context

In September 2014, Scotland held its independence referendum (result: 55.3% No, 44.7% Yes). In the final weeks of the campaign, a series of major corporations — RBS, Standard Life, BP, John Lewis — issued statements warning of negative economic consequences of a Yes vote. The Scottish Government and SNP disputed the framing and substance of these warnings, alleging coordinated pressure from the UK Government. The BBC's coverage of these business warnings became itself a major political controversy, with the SNP and Yes campaign accusing the BBC of pro-Union bias. Nick Robinson's reporting on this specific exchange — in which he later stated on the BBC News at Ten that Salmond "didn't answer" a question, despite Salmond having given a lengthy response — became one of the most contested episodes in BBC impartiality history, leading to a protest outside BBC Scotland headquarters. This transcript captures the live exchange that preceded that controversy.

Assessment: Was Each Perspective Addressed?

[A] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 01:04 — Quote: "the corporation tax does not depend on registered office but on economic activity" — Salmond makes this point directly and at length; Robinson does not independently verify or challenge it with expert input.

[B] ADDRESSED (partially, via Robinson's framing)

Timestamp: 00:01 — Quote: "tax revenues would move to London in other words Scottish taxpayers would have to make up the money they would lose from RBS moving to London" — Robinson presents the Treasury/Union position as the factual premise of his question, without attribution to a specific source.

[C] OMITTED

No independent economist or tax expert is cited to adjudicate between Robinson's premise and Salmond's counter-claim. The factual dispute is left unresolved.

[D] ADDRESSED (raised by Salmond, not by Robinson)

Timestamp: 04:02 — Quote: "treasury officials or ministers are not allowed to brief market sensitive information" — Salmond raises this; Robinson does not respond to it substantively.

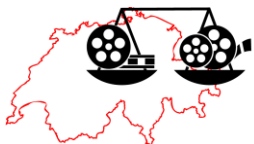
[E] ADDRESSED (briefly, by Salmond)

Timestamp: 06:11 — Quote: "the very sensible statements from Angus Grossart and also from Martin Gilbert of Aberdeen Asset Management" — mentioned by Salmond only; not introduced by Robinson.

[F] ADDRESSED (as Robinson's framing device)

Timestamp: 00:24 — Quote: "John Lewis's boss says prices could go up, Standard Life boss says money will move out of Scotland, BP's boss says oil will run out" — presented as authoritative without scrutiny of coordination allegations.

[G] ADDRESSED (raised by Salmond, not by Robinson)



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Timestamp: 04:07 — Quote: "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland" — Salmond raises the propriety of this briefing; Robinson does not address it.

[H] ADDRESSED (partially, by Salmond)

Timestamp: 02:00 — Quote: "his business advisor was busy desperately trying to get any business he possibly could to say something negative about Independence" — Salmond alleges coordination; Robinson does not follow up.

[I] ADDRESSED (implicitly, as Robinson's rhetorical premise)

Timestamp: 00:36 — Quote: "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" — Robinson frames business authority as superior to political authority; this framing is not interrogated.

[J] OMITTED

The BBC's own obligations under its Charter during a constitutional referendum are not addressed by Robinson, though Salmond alludes to them sarcastically.



CHAPTER 1 — DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Hard Facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically verifiable

1. EXPERT SELECTION

7/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Expert 1: Business Leaders (John Lewis CEO, Standard Life CEO, BP CEO, RBS CEO)

Timestamp	00:24–00:35; 02:47–03:19
Statement	**John Lewis's boss says prices could go up, Standard Life boss says money will move out of Scotland, BP's boss says oil will run out**
Classification	These are corporate executives with direct financial interests in the outcome of the referendum. Standard Life had already announced contingency plans to re-register in England. BP had North Sea licensing interests dependent on UK Government policy. John Lewis had supply chain and pricing interests. None are independent economic analysts.
Missing counter-voice	Independent economists from Scottish universities, the Fraser of Allander Institute, or the Scottish Fiscal Commission would have provided non-partisan analysis.

Source Depth Check — Business Leaders as Expert Voices:

(a) FUNDING: Privately funded corporations with shareholder obligations. Standard Life had already taken a position; BP had regulatory interests with the UK Government.

(b) MANDATE: Corporate executives have a fiduciary duty to shareholders, not a mandate for neutral public policy analysis. Their statements are inherently interest-driven.

(c) CREDIBILITY MATRIX:

(c) FACHKOMPETENZ: These business leaders are framed by Robinson as neutral, authoritative voices ("men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits") when they are structurally partisan sources with direct financial interests in the referendum outcome. This constitutes Technique 12 (Source Selection) — presenting interested parties as neutral experts.

Expert 2: Angus Grossart and Martin Gilbert (Aberdeen Asset Management)

Timestamp	06:11–06:34
Statement	Statement (Salmond): "the very sensible statements from Angus Grossart and also from Martin Gilbert of Aberdeen Asset Management this morning... pointing out in their estimation as two giants of the Scottish financial sector that Scottish financial sector will prosper under Independence"
Classification	Introduced by Salmond only; Robinson does not follow up, does not give these figures equivalent weight, and does not ask Salmond to elaborate. They receive approximately 20 seconds of mention versus the extended treatment of anti-independence business voices.
Missing counter-voice	These figures should have been given equivalent framing to the anti-independence business voices Robinson cited.



Source Depth Check — Grossart/Gilbert:

(a) FUNDING: Private financial sector; Aberdeen Asset Management is a major Scottish-headquartered fund manager.

(b) MANDATE: As with anti-independence business voices, these are interested parties — but their interest runs in the opposite direction.

(c) CREDIBILITY MATRIX:

Missing Expert Groups:

- Independent academic economists (e.g., University of Edinburgh, Strathclyde Business School)
- HM Revenue & Customs or independent tax law specialists on the corporation tax dispute
- Financial Conduct Authority or legal experts on market-sensitive information rules

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
Business Leaders (John Lewis CEO, Standard Life CEO, BP CEO, RBS CEO)	-2	-1	+1	-1	-1	-1	-5	RED
Angus Grossart and Martin Gilbert (Aberdeen Asset Management)	-1	0	+2	+1	+1	0	+3	YELLOW

Summary (Matrix Result):

- Business leaders cited by Robinson: RED — structurally interested parties presented as neutral authorities.
- Grossart/Gilbert cited by Salmond: YELLOW — also interested parties but with relevant sector competence; given disproportionately less airtime and framing weight.



2. SOURCE SELECTION								8/10	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Anonymous Treasury Source

Timestamp 04:07–04:19

Statement (Salmond quoting BBC report): "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland"

- (a) Funding and governance:** HM Treasury — UK Government department. Directly interested party in the referendum outcome; the UK Government was campaigning for a No vote.
- (b) Structural conflict of interest:** A Treasury source briefing the BBC about RBS plans before market opening, during a referendum campaign, has an obvious interest in maximising the negative impact of the RBS announcement on the Yes campaign.
- (c) Missing counter-source:** An independent financial regulator, legal expert on market abuse, or RBS spokesperson would have provided a non-government perspective on the significance of the re-registration.

Source Depth Check — Anonymous Treasury Source:

- (a) FUNDING:** UK Government — directly interested party in referendum outcome.
 - (b) MANDATE:** HM Treasury's mandate is UK fiscal policy; it has no mandate for neutral referendum information provision.
 - (c) CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The UK Government was actively campaigning for a No vote. An anonymous Treasury source briefing market-sensitive information to the BBC during the campaign has a clear political interest in the story's framing.
 - (c) FACHKOMPETENZ:**
- (e) Is the source framed as neutral despite being structurally partisan? YES — Robinson cites "a treasury source told the BBC" as if this were a neutral factual report, without acknowledging the political interest of the source.

Source 2: RBS Chief Executive Statement

Timestamp 02:47–03:19

Statement (Salmond reading): "it is my view as chief executive any decision to move a registered headquarters should have no impact on everyday banking services... it is a technical procedure regarding the location of her registered head office... it's not intention to move operations or jobs"

- (a) Funding:** RBS — at this time majority state-owned (UK Government held approximately 80% stake following 2008 bailout).
- (b) Structural conflict of interest:** RBS was majority-owned by the UK Government, which was campaigning for a No vote. The CEO's statement, while apparently supportive of Salmond's position, comes from an institution with a complex relationship to the UK state.
- (c) Missing counter-source:** An independent assessment of what RBS re-registration would actually mean for Scottish operations would have been more reliable than either the CEO's statement or Robinson's premise.

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
Anonymous Treasury Source	-2	-2	+1	0	-1	-2	-6	RED



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Summary: The source selection is heavily weighted toward interested parties — an anonymous Treasury source (UK Government, No campaign) and corporate executives with financial stakes in the outcome. Independent economic or legal analysis is entirely absent. The anonymous Treasury source in particular represents a significant editorial problem given the market-sensitive information allegation.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									5/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Estimated speaking time:

- Alex Salmond (First Minister / SNP / Yes campaign): approximately 5 min 20 sec (78%)
- Nick Robinson (BBC Political Editor / interviewer): approximately 1 min 30 sec (22%)
- Other guests: None

Summary: Salmond has substantial speaking time, which superficially appears favourable. However, the quality and framing of that time is shaped entirely by Robinson's adversarial questions. Salmond spends the majority of his time defending against Robinson's premises rather than advancing his own arguments. Raw time distribution is not a reliable measure of balance in this format.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1:

Context

Robinson's question embeds the claim that RBS re-registration would transfer tax revenues to London. Salmond immediately disputes this on corporation tax grounds. Robinson does not acknowledge, verify, or follow up on Salmond's factual correction.

Relevant at: 01:04–01:43

Effect

The viewer is left with Robinson's original (disputed) premise intact. The factual correction — which Salmond makes clearly and specifically — is not validated or explored. This creates a false impression that Salmond is evading rather than correcting.

Omission 2:

Context

Salmond raises the allegation that a Treasury source briefed the BBC with market-sensitive RBS information before the 7:00am market announcement, potentially constituting a breach of financial regulation. This is a serious allegation with legal implications.

Relevant at: 04:02–05:13

Effect

Robinson does not respond to this allegation at all in the transcript. The omission of any journalistic accountability response to a direct allegation of improper sourcing is itself a significant editorial failure. A viewer would not know whether the allegation had any substance.

Omission 3:

Context

Salmond states that the business warnings from Standard Life and BP were recycled statements from months earlier (Standard Life: 3 months prior; BP/Bob Dudley: February). This directly undermines Robinson's framing of them as fresh, convergent evidence.

Relevant at: 02:25–02:40

Effect

Robinson does not acknowledge or challenge this claim. If true, it means Robinson presented months-old, potentially coordinated statements as if they were new independent warnings — a significant editorial misrepresentation.

Summary: Three critical omissions systematically disadvantage Salmond's position: the unacknowledged factual correction on corporation tax, the unanswered allegation of improper Treasury briefing, and the unaddressed claim that business warnings were recycled. Each omission leaves Robinson's original framing intact despite substantive challenge.

Missing Voices

- Independent Tax Economist: Would have adjudicated the corporation tax dispute between Robinson's premise and Salmond's counter-claim with primary-source analysis.
- Financial Regulator (FCA/PRA): Would have assessed the legality and propriety of Treasury briefing market-sensitive RBS information before market opening.



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- Pro-Independence Business Figures (on equal footing): Angus Grossart and Martin Gilbert were mentioned by Salmond but not given equivalent airtime or framing to the anti-independence business voices Robinson cited.
- UK Government/Treasury Spokesperson: The source of the market-sensitive briefing was anonymous; a named Treasury official should have been accountable.
- BBC Editorial Standards Representative: Given Salmond's direct challenge to BBC conduct, an editorial accountability voice was absent.
- Scottish Voter/Civil Society Representative: No non-elite perspective on the economic warnings was included.
- Legal Expert on Referendum Conduct Rules: To assess whether Treasury briefings to BBC constituted a breach of purdah or market abuse rules.



5. NUMBERS MANIPULATION

5/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Complete figures include: absolute value, proportion (%) and trend

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:07–00:22

Number: Implied: RBS re-registration → tax revenue loss for Scotland

Quote *"by moving their base to London tax revenues would move to London in other words Scottish taxpayers would have to make up the money they would lose from RBS moving to London"*

Missing context No figure is given. The claim is presented as a logical certainty without any quantification, source, or acknowledgement that corporation tax allocation rules (as Salmond immediately explains) do not work this way.

Effect Creates an impression of a large, concrete fiscal loss without any supporting data. The absence of a number is itself manipulative — it allows the viewer to imagine the worst while giving Salmond nothing specific to rebut.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 00:24–00:35

Number: "billions of pounds of profits" (referring to business leaders' authority)

Missing context The profits of John Lewis, Standard Life, and BP are not relevant to the accuracy of their statements about Scottish independence. Profit size is not a measure of analytical credibility on constitutional economics.

Effect The figure "billions of pounds" functions as a credibility amplifier for the business warnings, implying that financial scale confers analytical authority. This is a non-sequitur presented as evidence.

Summary: Numbers are used selectively and without context — an unquantified fiscal loss claim is presented as certain, and profit figures are used to confer authority rather than as relevant data. The absence of specific figures on the corporation tax question is particularly problematic given that this was the central factual dispute.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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Association 1:

Timestamp

00:36–00:43

Quote

"why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"

Technique: Salmond is associated with the general category of "politicians" — implicitly untrustworthy, self-interested, and less credible than business leaders. The contrast is not between Salmond and specific named critics but between "a politician" (generic, pejorative) and "men responsible for billions of pounds of profits" (specific, authoritative).

Effect

Suggests that Salmond's political status is itself a disqualifying characteristic, associating him with a general distrust of politicians rather than evaluating his specific arguments.

Association 2:

Timestamp

02:00–02:14

Quote (Salmond)

"while the Prime Minister was busy telling us what a wonderful Nation we were his business advisor was busy desperately trying to get any business he possibly could to say something negative about Independence"

Technique: Salmond attempts a reverse association — linking the business warnings to coordinated UK Government political strategy rather than independent commercial judgment.

Effect

This is Salmond's own counter-framing, not Robinson's technique. However, Robinson does not follow up on this allegation, which means the association Salmond draws (business warnings = coordinated political messaging) is left hanging without journalistic investigation.

Summary: Guilt by association is present but not the dominant technique in this segment. The more significant issue is the implicit authority hierarchy Robinson constructs between business leaders and politicians, which functions as a soft form of discrediting by category.

Guilt by Association — Actors Assessment:

- Alex Salmond: Not framed as conspiracy theorist or extremist. Framed as a politician whose credibility is structurally inferior to business leaders. Category: Not applicable to conspiracy framing — political credibility challenge only.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1:

Position: 00:01–00:43 (Opening)

Content: Robinson opens with the RBS tax revenue claim and the "why believe a politician" challenge before Salmond has spoken a single word.

Timing Effect: The opening frames the entire interview as a credibility challenge to Salmond. By leading with the most adversarial framing — the authority of business leaders versus the untrustworthiness of politicians — Robinson sets the interpretive frame for everything that follows. Salmond's subsequent answers are received by the viewer through this pre-established lens of suspicion.

Finding 2:

Position: 04:02–05:13 (Middle — approximately two-thirds through)

Content: Salmond raises the Treasury/BBC market-sensitive briefing allegation.

Timing Effect: This serious allegation is raised in the middle of the interview and receives no response from Robinson. By placing it in the middle rather than at the end, and by Robinson immediately redirecting (05:21) to his original question, the allegation is structurally buried. A viewer watching a summary or clip would likely not encounter it.

Finding 3:

Position: 06:41–06:50 (End)

Content: "I know that given I've given you a comprehensive answer we'll have the full cooperation of the BBC in the inevitable inquiry which will now take place"

Timing Effect: Salmond ends with a direct challenge to BBC conduct. This is the final word in the transcript, but in the broadcast context (BBC News at Ten), Robinson's subsequent report — in which he stated Salmond "didn't answer" — effectively overwrote this ending. The timing of Robinson's post-interview editorial comment is the most consequential timing issue in this case, though it falls outside the transcript itself.

Summary: The opening framing is the most significant timing manipulation — establishing a credibility hierarchy before Salmond speaks. The burial of the Treasury briefing allegation in the middle, followed by immediate redirection, is the second most significant.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

6/10

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage amplifies the finding. Score = outrage level (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

Methodological principle (v2.7): The trigger event must be documented before any assessment. A reaction can only be assessed as selective if comparable trigger events with other positions produced no analogous reaction.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:36–00:43

Trigger event: Salmond is a politician making economic claims about independence.

Reaction: "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" — Robinson expresses implicit scepticism about Salmond's credibility by virtue of his political status.

Comparison

No equivalent scepticism is expressed about the credibility of the business leaders whose statements Robinson cites, despite their direct financial interests in the outcome. The anonymous Treasury source is cited without any credibility challenge despite being from a directly interested government department.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Salmond's political status triggers a credibility challenge; business leaders' financial interests and the Treasury's political interests trigger no equivalent challenge.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 04:02–05:13

Trigger event: Salmond alleges that a Treasury source briefed the BBC with market-sensitive information before market opening, potentially in breach of financial regulation.

Reaction: Robinson does not respond. No outrage, no acknowledgement, no follow-up question.

Comparison

Robinson's opening questions express implicit outrage at the idea that Scottish voters might believe a politician over business leaders. A comparable allegation of improper conduct by the UK Government and/or BBC would, in a balanced interview, trigger at least an acknowledgement.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Salmond's political credibility triggers challenge; a serious allegation against UK Government/BBC conduct triggers silence.

Summary: Selective outrage is present in the asymmetric credibility challenges applied to Salmond versus business leaders and government sources. The complete non-response to the Treasury briefing allegation is the most significant instance.



9. COMPLETENESS									6/10
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Share of covered perspectives

Inverted: original value measures coverage (higher = better). Shown as deviation (higher = larger gaps).

[A] The Scottish Government's position that corporation tax is allocated on economic activity, not registered office location — making the RBS re-registration fiscally neutral.

[B] The UK Treasury's position and the economic case for the Union, including fiscal transfer arguments.

[C] Independent economic analysis of the actual fiscal impact of RBS re-registration on Scottish tax revenues.

[D] The legal and regulatory framework governing market-sensitive information and the propriety of Treasury briefings to media before market opening.

[E] The perspective of Scottish financial sector figures supportive of independence (e.g., Angus Grossart, Martin Gilbert of Aberdeen Asset Management).

[F] The perspective of business figures warning against independence (John Lewis, Standard Life, BP) — with scrutiny of whether these statements were coordinated.

[G] The BBC's own editorial standards and the propriety of using anonymous Treasury sources for market-sensitive information.

[H] The broader pattern of business warnings — whether they represented genuine commercial concern or coordinated political messaging.

[I] The democratic legitimacy question: whether business leaders' economic warnings should carry more weight than elected politicians' positions.

[J] The role of the BBC as a public broadcaster during a constitutional referendum and its obligations under the BBC Charter.



Soft Facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING

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Finding 1:

Timestamp	00:01–00:43
Quote	<i>**are you suggesting that the decision of RBS has no consequence or do you accept that by moving their base to London tax revenues would move to London in other words Scottish taxpayers would have to make up the money they would lose from RBS moving to London**</i>
Manipulation	Robinson embeds a contested factual claim — that RBS re-registration would transfer tax revenues to London — as the binary premise of his question. The question is structured as a forced choice: either Salmond accepts the negative consequence, or he is denying reality.
Why problematic	The premise is factually disputed (as Salmond immediately demonstrates with reference to corporation tax rules). By framing it as a given, Robinson pre-loads the question with the Union campaign's economic argument, presenting it as established fact rather than contested claim. A viewer who does not know corporation tax law would assume Robinson's premise is correct.

Finding 2:

Timestamp	00:36–00:43
Quote	<i>**why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits**</i>
Manipulation	Robinson constructs an explicit authority hierarchy: business leaders (defined by profit responsibility) are implicitly more credible than elected politicians. The framing positions Salmond as inherently less trustworthy by virtue of being a politician.
Why problematic	This framing is itself a political position — it privileges market authority over democratic authority. It is not a neutral journalistic question but an ideological premise. The BBC Charter requires due impartiality; framing one side of a constitutional debate as structurally less credible violates this standard.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	00:24–00:35
Quote	<i>**John Lewis's boss says prices could go up, Standard Life boss says money will move out of Scotland, BP's boss says oil will run out**</i>
Manipulation	Robinson presents three business warnings as a cumulative, authoritative list without any qualification, source scrutiny, or acknowledgement of Salmond's previously stated position that these were recycled statements. The rhetorical structure (three parallel "X says Y" constructions) creates an impression of overwhelming consensus.



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**Why
problematic**

Salmond later demonstrates (02:25–02:40) that these statements were months old and recycled. Robinson's framing presents them as fresh, independent, and convergent evidence — which is misleading by omission.

Summary: The entire interview is framed as a challenge to Salmond's credibility against a backdrop of business authority presented as factual and authoritative. The framing systematically advantages the No/Union position by embedding its claims as premises rather than positions.



11. LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY									6/10
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	00:36–00:43
Quote	<i>**"why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician"**</i>
Manipulation	The word "politician" is used as a pejorative contrast to "men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits." The construction implies that being a politician is a disqualifying characteristic for credibility.
Why problematic	Neutral alternative would be: "Why should voters weigh your assessment differently from that of business leaders?" The current formulation is loaded with anti-political sentiment that serves the No campaign's messaging about SNP economic credibility.

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	00:32–00:35
Quote	<i>**"BP's boss says oil will run out"**</i>
Manipulation	This is a dramatic simplification of what BP's CEO actually said. "Oil will run out" is an apocalyptic paraphrase that goes significantly beyond any corporate statement about North Sea reserves or investment risk.
Why problematic	The language escalates the severity of the business warning beyond what was actually stated, creating a more alarming impression. Neutral alternative: "BP's chief executive raised concerns about North Sea investment."

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	02:18–02:21
Quote (Salmond)	<i>**"I know this might be news for some of the Metropolitan media"**</i>
Manipulation	Salmond uses "Metropolitan media" as a counter-framing device to position Robinson and the BBC as geographically and culturally distant from Scottish concerns.
Why problematic	This is Salmond's own rhetorical counter-move, not Robinson's language — but it is notable that Robinson does not challenge this characterisation of the BBC, which itself contains an implicit accusation of institutional bias.

Summary: Robinson's language consistently frames the business warnings as authoritative and Salmond's political status as a credibility deficit, while Salmond's counter-language attempts to reframe the BBC itself as a biased metropolitan institution.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR							7/10		
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Methodological principle (v2.7): The trigger event must be documented before any assessment. An intervention can only be assessed as asymmetric if comparable trigger events with other guests produced no analogous intervention.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:01–00:43

Trigger event: Robinson opens with two questions simultaneously — one specific (RBS tax revenues) and one general (why believe a politician over business leaders) — before Salmond has spoken.

Quote (Robinson) *"two if I may one specifically on RBS... and on a more General Point... why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"*

Comparison There is no equivalent interview in this transcript with a No campaign politician or UK Government minister facing a comparable double-question structure that embeds contested premises. The asymmetry cannot be directly tested within this single-guest transcript, but the structure of the question — embedding a factual claim as premise and a credibility challenge as the second question — is notably aggressive for an opening exchange.

Asymmetry: Partially demonstrable — the framing of the opening question is structurally adversarial in a way that would require comparison with Robinson's treatment of No campaign figures to fully establish asymmetry. Within this transcript, the pattern is consistent throughout: Robinson challenges, Salmond defends.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 05:21–05:30

Trigger event: Salmond has given a lengthy answer covering corporation tax rules, the RBS CEO statement, the Lloyds Banking Group factual correction, and the Treasury briefing allegation. Robinson interrupts to redirect.

Quote (Robinson) *"yeah remember the first start question corporation tax is based on economic activity not on your registered office and for example yes please"*

Comparison Robinson's interruption occurs after Salmond has been speaking for approximately 3.5 minutes. The interruption redirects back to Robinson's original premise rather than engaging with Salmond's substantive points, particularly the Treasury briefing allegation.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable within transcript — Robinson interrupts Salmond's comprehensive answer to reassert his original question, effectively dismissing the intervening content including the serious allegation about market-sensitive briefing. This is not a neutral clarification but a reassertion of Robinson's framing.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 04:41–05:13

Trigger event: Salmond raises the allegation that a Treasury source briefed the BBC with market-sensitive information before market opening, and states this is "a matter of extraordinary gravity."

Quote (Salmond) *"I know that the BBC will want to cooperate with the inevitable investigation by the cabinet secretary into the briefing of this information"*



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Comparison

Robinson does not respond to this allegation at all. There is no follow-up, no denial, no acknowledgement. If a guest on a BBC programme made a comparable allegation of improper conduct against, say, the SNP Government, it would be standard journalistic practice to respond.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Robinson's complete non-response to a direct allegation of BBC/Treasury impropriety, while having pressed Salmond repeatedly on business warnings, constitutes a clear asymmetry in moderation behaviour.

Summary: Robinson's moderation is consistently adversarial toward Salmond's position while failing to engage with Salmond's substantive counter-arguments, factual corrections, or serious allegations about BBC/Treasury conduct. The asymmetry is structurally embedded in the interview format.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

8/10

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Asymmetry 1:

To Salmond, 00:07–00:43: "are you suggesting that the decision of RBS has no consequence or do you accept that by moving their base to London tax revenues would move to London... why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"

— Very hard: embeds contested factual premise, forces binary choice, challenges personal credibility.

To business leaders (absent, cited by Robinson): presented as authoritative without any question about their interests, coordination, or accuracy.

— No scrutiny applied: business leaders are cited as evidence, not as subjects of journalistic challenge.

Comparison: The asymmetry is structural — Salmond faces hard, premise-laden questions while the business leaders whose statements Robinson uses as ammunition face no scrutiny whatsoever. This is not a matter of interview format (only Salmond is present) but of editorial choice: Robinson chose to present business warnings as authoritative rather than as contested claims requiring verification.

Asymmetry 2:

To Salmond, 05:21–05:30: "yeah remember the first start question corporation tax is based on economic activity not on your registered office and for example yes please"

— Redirecting/dismissive: Robinson reasserts his original question after Salmond has given a detailed factual answer, implying the answer was inadequate.

To the Treasury source (anonymous, cited by Robinson at 04:13): "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland" — no question is asked about the propriety of this briefing; it is simply cited as a source.

— No scrutiny: an anonymous government source providing potentially market-sensitive information is used without any journalistic accountability question.

Comparison: Salmond is pressed repeatedly on his credibility and the credibility of his economic arguments. The anonymous Treasury source — whose conduct Salmond alleges was potentially illegal — faces no scrutiny.

Summary: The question asymmetry is severe and systematic: Salmond faces hard, credibility-challenging questions with embedded contested premises, while business leaders and government sources are treated as authoritative without scrutiny. This pattern is inconsistent with BBC Charter due impartiality requirements.



14. FALSE BALANCE									3/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:01–06:50 (entire segment)

Construct: The interview presents itself as a journalistic challenge interview — implying balance through the format of questioning power.

Analysis

The false balance here is structural rather than explicit. The interview format implies that Robinson is neutrally challenging Salmond on behalf of the public. In reality, Robinson's questions consistently embed the No campaign's economic arguments as premises, while Salmond's counter-arguments (corporation tax rules, recycled business statements, Treasury briefing allegation) receive no independent validation or follow-up. The appearance of balance (tough questioning) masks a substantive imbalance (only one side's claims are treated as premises).

Summary: False balance is present but not the dominant technique. The interview's format creates an appearance of neutral challenge while the substance of Robinson's questions consistently advantages the No campaign's framing. Score is moderate because the imbalance is structural rather than through explicit false equivalence.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

8/10

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Finding 1:

Agenda element set: Business leaders' economic warnings are the legitimate, authoritative framework for evaluating independence.

Timestamp 00:24–00:43

Evidence: "John Lewis's boss says prices could go up, Standard Life boss says money will move out of Scotland, BP's boss says oil will run out... why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"

Alternative agenda: The democratic legitimacy of the independence question, the Scottish Government's economic modelling, the interests and coordination of business warnings, the BBC's own conduct in sourcing and reporting — none of these are on Robinson's agenda.

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The RBS re-registration is a significant negative economic event for Scotland.

Timestamp 00:07–00:22

Evidence: "by moving their base to London tax revenues would move to London in other words Scottish taxpayers would have to make up the money they would lose"

Alternative agenda: Whether the re-registration is actually fiscally significant (Salmond argues it is not, based on corporation tax rules); whether it is a contingency plan rather than a decision; whether it represents genuine commercial concern or political signalling.

Finding 3:

Agenda element set: The BBC's role is to challenge the Yes campaign's economic claims on behalf of business authority.

Timestamp 00:36–00:43; 05:21–05:30

Evidence: Robinson's persistent return to his original question after Salmond's comprehensive answer, and his framing of business leaders as the relevant authority against which Salmond must justify himself.

Alternative agenda: The BBC's obligations under its Charter to provide due impartiality during a constitutional referendum; the BBC's own conduct in sourcing market-sensitive information from the Treasury; the equal scrutiny of No campaign economic claims.

Summary: Agenda-setting is one of the most powerful techniques in this segment. By treating business authority as the legitimate framework for evaluating independence, and by treating the RBS re-registration as a given negative event, Robinson sets an agenda that systematically advantages the No campaign without explicitly advocating for it.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant Techniques

The 3 strongest techniques in this programme:

- 1. Framing (Score 8):** Robinson embeds the No campaign's economic arguments as factual premises rather than contested positions, most powerfully in the opening question which treats RBS re-registration as a proven fiscal loss and business leaders as inherently more credible than elected politicians. This framing shapes the entire interview and is never interrogated.
- 2. Omission / Selective Omission (Score 8):** Three substantive counter-arguments by Salmond — the corporation tax correction, the recycled-statements allegation, and the Treasury briefing allegation — receive no follow-up, acknowledgement, or independent verification from Robinson. The effect is that Robinson's original premises remain intact in the viewer's mind despite having been substantively challenged.
- 3. Agenda-Setting (Score 8):** By treating business authority as the legitimate framework for evaluating independence and by treating the BBC's own conduct as off-limits for scrutiny, Robinson sets an agenda that systematically advantages the No campaign. The most significant agenda exclusion is the BBC's own role in sourcing and broadcasting market-sensitive information from an interested government department.

Core Messages of the Programme

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "Business leaders are more credible than politicians on economic questions, and their warnings about independence should be taken as authoritative."

Technique: Framing + Authority hierarchy construction — Evidence: 00:36–00:43, 00:24–00:35

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "Alex Salmond, as a politician, cannot be trusted to give an honest account of the economic consequences of independence."

Technique: Credibility challenge + Question asymmetry — Evidence: 00:36–00:43, 05:21–05:30

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIAL): "The economic risks of independence are real, serious, and endorsed by authoritative figures — the Yes campaign's counter-arguments are defensive and insufficient."

Technique: Agenda-setting + Omission — Evidence: 00:07–00:43, 04:02–05:13 (non-response)

Manipulation Level Classification

Justification: The combined score of 6.7 places this segment at the upper boundary of "clear one-sidedness," approaching systematic imbalance. The dominant techniques — framing, omission, and agenda-setting — are not isolated incidents but form a coherent pattern that consistently advantages the No campaign's economic narrative. Under BBC Charter Article 6, which requires due impartiality in matters of political controversy, the embedding of contested economic claims as factual premises, the asymmetric treatment of sources, and the complete non-response to a serious allegation about BBC/Treasury conduct represent a material departure from the required standard. The segment does not meet the threshold of "extreme imbalance" because Salmond is given substantial speaking time and is able to make his counter-arguments; however, the structural framing ensures those arguments are received through a pre-established lens of political untrustworthiness.

CONCLUSION

This BBC News interview segment, conducted by Nick Robinson with First Minister Alex Salmond during the 2014 Scottish independence referendum campaign, exhibits a pattern of structural imbalance that is inconsistent with the BBC's obligations under Royal Charter Article 6 and the BBC Agreement's due impartiality requirements. The dominant techniques — framing business authority as the legitimate evaluative standard, omitting substantive counter-arguments from the editorial record, and setting an agenda that excludes scrutiny of No campaign claims and BBC conduct — systematically advantage one side of a constitutional debate that the BBC was obligated to cover with due impartiality. The most serious single editorial failure is Robinson's complete non-response to Salmond's allegation that an anonymous Treasury source briefed the BBC with market-sensitive information before market opening — an



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allegation with potential legal implications that a duly impartial broadcaster was obligated to address. The subsequent controversy — in which Robinson's BBC News at Ten report stated that Salmond "didn't answer" despite the existence of this transcript — represents a further departure from accuracy standards under BBC Charter Article 6(1)(a), though that report falls outside the scope of this transcript analysis. Taken together, the evidence in this transcript supports a finding of clear one-sidedness in the coverage of a matter of major political controversy, in breach of the BBC's Charter obligations.



CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Assessment by Party

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Programme Representation vs. Party Programme Position
Conservative	0	Not directly represented; UK Government (Conservative-led coalition 2014) implicitly supported through Robinson's framing of business warnings and Treasury source. No explicit Conservative policy positions stated or distorted.
Labour	0	Not represented in this segment. Note: In 2014, Scottish Labour was part of the Better Together campaign; this context is absent from the segment.
Lib Dems	0	Not represented.
SNP	-3	00:36 "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician" — SNP's core programme position (economic viability of independence, corporation tax competence) is challenged through embedded false premises and credibility attacks. Salmond's factual corrections on corporation tax and RBS are not validated. SNP's economic case is framed as less credible than business warnings without independent verification. Programme position on independence economics: distorted by framing.
Reform UK	0	Not represented (Reform UK did not exist in its current form in 2014).
Green	0	Not represented.

Note: This segment predates the 2024 political landscape described in the political context. The relevant parties are SNP (Yes campaign) and the Better Together coalition (Conservative-Liberal Democrat-Labour). The scoring above applies the framework to the 2014 context.

Party Bias Summary

- Most accurate representation: Conservative/Better Together (Score 0) — not explicitly represented but implicitly advantaged through framing.
- Strongest distortion: SNP (Score -3) — economic programme positions challenged through false premises and credibility attacks without independent verification.
- Average deviation from 0: 0.5
- Conclusion: The segment exhibits a directional bias against the SNP's programme positions, specifically on the economic case for independence. Robinson's questions embed the No campaign's economic arguments as premises, while Salmond's counter-arguments — including a factually accurate correction on corporation tax — receive no independent validation. The distortion is not through explicit misrepresentation of SNP policy but through the structural framing of SNP economic claims as inherently less credible than business and government sources.



CHAPTER 4 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (BBC Charter Art. 6)

Assessment under BBC Charter Art. 6

Violation 1:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6(1)(b) — Due impartiality in matters of political controversy

Offence: Robinson embeds the No campaign's economic argument (RBS re-registration = tax revenue loss for Scotland) as a factual premise in his opening question, without attribution, qualification, or acknowledgement that this is a contested claim.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:07–00:22 — Quote: "by moving their base to London tax revenues would move to London in other words Scottish taxpayers would have to make up the money they would lose from RBS moving to London"

Assessment: This constitutes a breach of due impartiality. The claim is factually disputed — Salmond immediately corrects it with reference to corporation tax allocation rules — and represents the No campaign's economic framing. Presenting a contested political-economic claim as a factual premise in a question directed at the Yes campaign's leader, during a constitutional referendum, is inconsistent with the BBC's obligation to treat matters of political controversy with due impartiality.

Violation 2:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6(1)(a) — Due accuracy

Offence: Robinson presents business warnings from John Lewis, Standard Life, and BP as fresh, independent, and convergent evidence, without acknowledging Salmond's previously stated (and apparently accurate) claim that these were recycled statements from months earlier.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:24–00:35 — Quote: "John Lewis's boss says prices could go up, Standard Life boss says money will move out of Scotland, BP's boss says oil will run out"; cf. Salmond at 02:25–02:40: "the warnings which were released yesterday were actually a recycling of things from months ago... Standard Life made exactly the same statement 3 months ago"

Assessment: If Salmond's claim about recycled statements is accurate (and Robinson does not challenge it), then Robinson's presentation of these warnings as current, independent evidence is inaccurate. The BBC's due accuracy obligation requires that factual claims be verified before being presented as authoritative. Presenting months-old, potentially coordinated statements as fresh independent warnings, without verification, breaches this standard.

Violation 3:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6(1)(b) — Due impartiality; and BBC Editorial Guidelines on source handling

Offence: Robinson (or a BBC colleague, per Salmond's account) cited an anonymous Treasury source regarding market-sensitive RBS information before market opening, without disclosing the source's political interest or the potential impropriety of the briefing. Robinson does not respond to Salmond's allegation about this briefing.

Evidence: Timestamp 04:07–05:13 — Quote (Salmond): "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland... treasury officials or ministers are not allowed to brief market sensitive information... the Royal Bank of Scotland share price changed overnight... this is a matter of extraordinary gravity"

Assessment: The use of an anonymous Treasury source — from a government department directly engaged in the referendum campaign — to report market-sensitive information, without disclosure of the source's political interest, raises serious questions under both BBC impartiality standards and financial regulation. Robinson's complete non-response to this allegation in the interview is itself an editorial failure: a duly impartial broadcaster, when faced with a direct allegation of improper sourcing, is obligated to address it rather than redirect to the original question.

Overall Assessment BBC Charter Art. 6

This segment exhibits three identifiable departures from BBC Charter Article 6 standards: the embedding of a contested political-economic claim as a factual premise (impartiality); the presentation of potentially recycled, coordinated business warnings as fresh independent evidence (accuracy); and the non-response to a serious allegation about BBC/Treasury conduct involving market-sensitive information (both impartiality and editorial



accountability). The violations are not isolated but form a coherent pattern of structural advantage to the No campaign's economic narrative during a constitutional referendum — precisely the context in which the BBC's Charter obligations are most demanding. The subsequent BBC News at Ten report by Robinson, in which he stated that Salmond "didn't answer" despite the existence of this transcript, would constitute an additional and more direct accuracy violation, though it falls outside the scope of this transcript. Taken together, the evidence supports a finding that this segment fell materially short of the due impartiality and due accuracy standards required by BBC Royal Charter Article 6.

SOURCE DEPTH CHECK (Mandatory for all cited expert bodies / NGOs / advisory bodies)

Source 1: Anonymous Treasury Source

- 1. FUNDING:** HM Treasury — UK Government department, funded by public taxation. Directly engaged in the Better Together campaign through UK Government policy.
- 2. MANDATE:** Fiscal policy and public finance. No mandate for neutral referendum information; the UK Government was an active participant in the No campaign.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Direct and severe. The UK Government had a stated political interest in a No vote. An anonymous Treasury source briefing market-sensitive information about RBS to the BBC during the referendum campaign has an obvious interest in maximising the negative political impact of the RBS announcement.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — Direct political interest in referendum outcome.
 - D2 Personal Risk: -2 — Anonymous; zero personal accountability.
 - D3 Subject Competence: +1 — Treasury officials competent on fiscal matters.
 - D4 Consistency: 0 — Cannot assess anonymous source.
 - D5 Emotion vs. Data: -1 — Briefing appears designed for political impact.
 - D6 Source Level: -2 — Anonymous secondary source.**TOTAL: -6 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: RED**
- 5. COUNTER-SOURCE:** An independent financial regulator (FCA), legal expert on market abuse, or RBS spokesperson would have provided a non-government perspective. None cited.

Source 2: RBS Chief Executive Statement

- 1. FUNDING:** RBS — at the time approximately 80% owned by UK Government following 2008 bailout. Governance structure creates complex relationship between RBS management and UK Government interests.
- 2. MANDATE:** Corporate governance and shareholder value. No mandate for neutral constitutional analysis.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Moderate. RBS's majority shareholder (UK Government) had a direct interest in the referendum outcome. However, the CEO's statement (as read by Salmond) appears to minimise the significance of re-registration, which is consistent with Salmond's position — suggesting either genuine commercial assessment or a desire to avoid market disruption.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: -1 — Majority state-owned; complex relationship with UK Government.
 - D2 Personal Risk: +1 — CEO making a public statement accepts reputational accountability.
 - D3 Subject Competence: +2 — Directly competent on RBS operations and re-registration implications.
 - D4 Consistency: 0 — Cannot assess without broader context.
 - D5 Emotion vs. Data: +1 — Statement as quoted is factual and operational rather than alarmist.
 - D6 Source Level: +1 — Primary document (CEO statement), though read by Salmond rather than independently verified.**TOTAL: +4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW**
- 5. COUNTER-SOURCE:** An independent assessment of what RBS re-registration would mean for Scottish fiscal revenues — from an academic economist or the Fraser of Allander Institute — would have been more reliable than either the CEO statement or Robinson's premise.

Source 3: Business Leaders (John Lewis CEO, Standard Life CEO, BP CEO Bob Dudley)

- 1. FUNDING:** Privately funded corporations with shareholder obligations and direct financial interests in the referendum outcome.
- 2. MANDATE:** Corporate governance. No mandate for neutral public policy analysis.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Direct and material. Standard Life had already announced contingency re-registration plans. BP had North Sea licensing interests dependent on UK Government policy. John Lewis had supply chain interests. All had financial reasons to prefer the status quo.



4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:

D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — Direct financial stake in referendum outcome.

D2 Personal Risk: -1 — Executives face reputational risk if warnings prove wrong but no personal financial risk from making statements.

D3 Subject Competence: +1 — Competent on own business operations; not competent as macro-economists.

D4 Consistency: -1 — Salmond's claim that statements were recycled from months earlier, if accurate, suggests coordinated messaging rather than independent assessment.

D5 Emotion vs. Data: -1 — "Oil will run out" (Robinson's paraphrase) is emotionally loaded; no methodology cited.

D6 Source Level: -1 — Robinson paraphrases rather than quoting primary documents.

TOTAL: -5 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: RED

5. COUNTER-SOURCE: Pro-independence financial sector figures (Grossart, Gilbert) are mentioned by Salmond but not given equivalent treatment. Independent economic analysis is entirely absent.

IMPORTANT NOTE: "Men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" (Robinson, 00:40–00:43) is a social attribution of authority, not a substantive qualification for constitutional economic analysis. This attribution is itself a framing device and must not be treated as a neutral credibility assessment.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual Scores — All 15 Criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Rating
1	EXPERT SELECTION	7	●●●●
2	SOURCE SELECTION	8	●●●●
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	5	●●●
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	8	●●●●
5	NUMBERS MANIPULATION	5	●●●
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	4	●●
7	TIMING	7	●●●●
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	6	●●●
9	COMPLETENESS	6	●●●
10	FRAMING	8	●●●●
11	LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY	6	●●●
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	7	●●●●
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	8	●●●●
14	FALSE BALANCE	3	●●
15	AGENDA-SETTING	8	●●●●

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.8/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

Average of Hardfacts and Softfacts



KEY — Score Definitions

Individual Scores per Criterion (0–10)

0	No finding	No relevant anomaly detected.
1–2	Weak finding	Minor anomaly without substantial impact on balance.
3–4	Slight to moderate finding	Recognizable tendency; low to moderate impact relevance.
5	Moderate finding with impact	Relevant imbalance affecting the audience's opinion-forming potential.
6	Significant finding (threshold)	Scores of 6 and above are classified as 'significant findings.'
7	Significant finding	Clear, well-documented imbalance with distinct impact relevance.
8–9	Severe finding	Pronounced imbalance; multiple documented individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum severity	Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.

Aggregated Deviation Index — Interpretation Ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No significant patterns detected; broadcast meets the impartiality standard.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight imbalance	Isolated anomalies; statistically visible but within tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Significant imbalance	Multiple significant findings; relevant impairment of perspective diversity.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation	Pronounced, cross-broadcast patterns; high impact relevance.
8.1 – 10	Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high bias degree	Maximum severity across nearly all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

Party-Political Bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is significantly underrepresented in framing, airtime, or presentation.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Recognizable but minor disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No detectable favoritism or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favored	Recognizable but minor favoritism.
+3 to +5	Strongly favored	Party is significantly overrepresented in framing, airtime, or presentation.

Legal and Methodological Notes



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No factual determination

The results presented do not constitute factual determinations about individual persons, editorial teams, or broadcasts. They are the product of a standardized operationalization, not a finding of individual responsibility.

No legal judgment

The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment under Ofcom Broadcasting Code. The determination of whether a specific broadcast violates legal requirements is exclusively the responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular Ofcom).

No proof of causation

Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intent. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news environment, political controversy, or format logic.

No judgment of intent

The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of broadcasts. A score of 7 means a significant imbalance was detected — not that the editorial team intended it. The methodology makes no claims about motives or strategic objectives.

Heuristic comparison tool

The index serves comparative pattern recognition across thousands of broadcasts, not precise metric measurement of individual segments. Threshold values serve heuristic orientation, not sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX: NATIONAL BROADCASTING LAW

Legal Framework United Kingdom — BBC

Legislation

- BBC Royal Charter (2017, valid until 2027)
- Communications Act 2003
- Ofcom Broadcasting Code

Relevant Provisions

BBC Royal Charter

- Art. 5 (Public Purposes): Sustaining citizenship and civil society through the provision of impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them.
- Art. 6(4): The BBC must observe high standards of due impartiality.

Communications Act 2003

- s.319(2)(c): News included in television and radio services is presented with due impartiality.
- s.320(1): Special impartiality requirements for matters of political controversy and matters relating to current public policy.

Ofcom Broadcasting Code

- Section 5 (Due Impartiality): Due impartiality on matters of political or industrial controversy and matters relating to current public policy. "Due" means adequate or appropriate to the subject and nature of the programme.

Core Obligations

- 1. Due Impartiality:** Not absolute equal treatment, but appropriate to the subject matter
- 2. Due Accuracy:** Adequate accuracy in reporting
- 3. Editorial Independence:** Independence from government and commercial interests

Regulatory Authority

- Ofcom (Office of Communications): External regulator with sanctioning powers
- BBC Board: Internal governance

Complaints Procedure

1. BBC Complaints (internal, three-tier)
2. Ofcom (external complaint after exhausting internal routes)
3. Judicial Review (High Court)



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC REFERENCES

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The interview is not a conversation. It is a stage – and someone else has written the script.

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