



BBC DETAILED ANALYSIS

case029_Nick Robinson caught lying about Alex Salmond not answering a question - 2014.en

Broadcast: COMPLETE DETAIL ANALYSIS | Analyzed: 2026-05-11 19:55

Version 2.8-detail | Universal 2.8-detail | Konverter 3.3 (2026-05-14) | Standard: Ofcom Broadcasting Code

**OVERALL
SCORE**

5.8/10

Significant imbalance

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	<i>Left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Center</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Right</i>

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

Broadcast Data

- Title: BBC Interview with Alex Salmond — Scottish Independence Referendum Campaign (unidentified programme, likely BBC News or Newsnight Scotland)
- Date (from filename): Not specified in transcript; internal references to the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum campaign period (September 2014)
- Estimated Length: Approximately 5 minutes 21 seconds (based on transcript timestamps 00:00–05:21)

President: Schlaepfer, David - **Contact:** kontakt@SVFAB.ch - **Address:** SVFAB, P/O-Box, CH-8021 Zurich 1



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

- Presenter/Reporter: Nick (surname not stated in transcript; likely Nick Robinson, BBC Political Editor at the time)
- Persons Interviewed (with function/party/affiliation):

Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political Spectrum
Alex Salmond	First Minister of Scotland / Leader of Yes Campaign	Scottish National Party (SNP)	3.5 — Left, Scottish regionalist
Nick (Robinson)	BBC Political Editor / Interviewer	BBC (public broadcaster)	N/A — Journalist

Main Topic

A BBC journalist (Nick Robinson) presses Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland and leader of the Yes campaign, on the economic implications of Scottish independence — specifically regarding the potential relocation of Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group headquarters — during the final days of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum campaign.

World-View Context

The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum (held 18 September 2014) was one of the most consequential constitutional votes in modern British history. The Yes campaign, led by Salmond and the SNP, argued that an independent Scotland would be economically viable and prosperous. The No campaign (Better Together) and the UK Treasury repeatedly raised concerns about financial sector stability, currency arrangements, and corporate relocations. In the final days before the vote, several major financial institutions — including Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group — announced contingency plans to move their registered headquarters to England in the event of a Yes vote. These announcements were widely reported by the BBC and other outlets as evidence of economic risk, and the Yes campaign accused the BBC and the UK establishment of coordinating a fear campaign. The specific allegation raised by Salmond in this clip — that a Treasury source had briefed market-sensitive information to the BBC before the 7am market announcement — became a significant controversy, with Salmond demanding a Cabinet Secretary investigation. The BBC's coverage of the referendum, and Nick Robinson's reporting in particular, was subsequently the subject of formal complaints and a large protest outside BBC Scotland's headquarters in Glasgow.

Assessment: Was Each Perspective Addressed?

[A] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 03:38–05:00 — Quote: "the corporation tax is based on economic activity not on your registered office" — Salmond makes this argument directly, though the interviewer does not engage substantively with it.

[B] ADDRESSED (implicitly)

Timestamp: 00:09–00:16 — Quote: "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" — The framing of the question implies the No/Treasury position without stating it explicitly.

[C] OMITTED

No independent financial economist is cited or referenced at any point in the broadcast.

[D] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 01:34–01:57 — Quote: "it's my view as chief executive any decision to move a registered headquarters should have no impact on everyday banking services this is a technical procedure" — Salmond reads the RBS CEO statement directly; the interviewer does not acknowledge or engage with its content.

[E] ADDRESSED (by Salmond only)

Timestamp: 01:42–02:58 — Quote: "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland the Treasury official for ministers are not allowed to brief market sensitive information" — Raised by Salmond; not independently investigated or acknowledged by the interviewer.

[F] OMITTED



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

The BBC's own editorial decision-making regarding how it framed the RBS/Lloyds story is never examined or acknowledged.

[G] OMITTED

No reference to the broader pattern of BBC referendum coverage or impartiality standards.

[H] ADDRESSED (briefly)

Timestamp: 04:33–04:56 — Quote: "Angus Rosset and also from a from Martin Gilbert to fava bean Asset Management this morning... pointing out in their estimation as two giants of the Scottish financial sector of the Scottish financial sector will prosper under independence" — Mentioned by Salmond but not followed up by the interviewer.

[I] OMITTED

The question of whether coordinated corporate announcements in the final days of a referendum constitute political intervention is never raised.

[J] OMITTED

No international comparative context is provided.



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: RBS Chief Executive (cited indirectly via Salmond)	
Timestamp	01:34–01:57
Statement	***it's my view as chief executive any decision to move a registered headquarters should have no impact on everyday banking services this is a technical procedure regarding the location of a registered head office based on current strategy it's not intention to move operations or jobs***
Classification	The RBS CEO statement is read by Salmond, not independently verified or contextualised by the BBC. The CEO has a fiduciary duty to shareholders and a potential interest in managing political risk — his statement is not neutral.
Missing counter-voice	An independent financial regulatory expert who could assess whether the distinction between registered and operational headquarters is as clear-cut as the CEO suggests.

Credibility Matrix (RBS CEO statement as cited):

- (a) FUNDING:** RBS is a publicly listed bank, majority state-owned at this time (UK government held ~80% stake post-2008 bailout). Structural interest in maintaining UK government confidence.
- (b) MANDATE:** CEO mandate is to shareholders and stability — not to provide neutral political analysis. Statement is explicitly framed as "in my view."
- (c) CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
- (c) FACHKOMPETENZ:** The statement is presented by Salmond as exculpatory evidence, but the BBC interviewer does not engage with its content — effectively treating it as irrelevant. This is a form of selective source dismissal.

Expert 2: Angus Grossart / Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen Asset Management (cited by Salmond)	
Timestamp	04:33–04:56
Statement	***pointing out in their estimation as two giants of the Scottish financial sector of the Scottish financial sector will prosper under independence***
Classification	Cited by Salmond as pro-independence financial sector voices. Not independently verified or interviewed. Aberdeen Asset Management is a major Scottish financial institution with potential interest in Scottish independence.
Missing counter-voice	Direct interview with these figures, or with equivalent financial sector figures expressing concern about independence.

Credibility Matrix (Grossart/Gilbert as cited):



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

(a) FUNDING: Private financial institutions — Aberdeen Asset Management is a major fund manager. No direct state funding.

(b) MANDATE: Commercial entities — their views on independence reflect business judgement, not neutral analysis.

(c) CREDIBILITY MATRIX:

(c) FACHKOMPETENZ: These figures are cited only by Salmond and receive no independent verification or follow-up from the interviewer.

Missing Expert Groups:

- Independent financial economist (no affiliation to either campaign)
- Financial regulatory expert (FCA/PRA) on market-sensitive information rules
- Constitutional law expert on corporate domicile implications

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
RBS Chief Executive (cited indirectly via Salmond)	-1	+1	+2	0	+1	-1	+2	YELLOW
Angus Grossart / Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen Asset Management (cited by Salmond)	-1	+1	+2	0	+1	-2	+1	YELLOW

Summary (Matrix Results):

- RBS CEO (indirect): YELLOW (+2) — Competent on own company plans but structurally conflicted; statement not engaged with by BBC
- Grossart/Gilbert (indirect): YELLOW (+1) — Credible sector figures but cited only through Salmond, not independently verified



2. SOURCE SELECTION

7/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: BBC Screen Grab / Treasury Source

Timestamp 01:47–01:54

Statement ****a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland****

(a) Funding and governance: The BBC is a public broadcaster funded by the licence fee. The Treasury is a UK government department. Both have institutional interests in the outcome of the referendum.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: A Treasury source briefing the BBC about RBS plans before the market announcement raises questions about coordination between the UK government and the BBC during a referendum campaign. This conflict of interest is not acknowledged in the broadcast.

(c) Missing counter-source: An independent financial regulatory expert who could assess whether this briefing constituted a breach of market-sensitive information rules.

Source 2: RBS Chief Executive Statement (read by Salmond)

Timestamp 01:34–01:57

(a) Funding: RBS majority state-owned (UK government ~80% stake). Structural interest in UK government confidence.

(b) Conflict of interest: CEO statement may reflect political pressure from UK government as majority shareholder, not purely independent business judgement.

(c) Missing counter-source: The BBC does not independently verify or contextualise the CEO statement — it is presented only through Salmond's reading of it, and the interviewer does not engage with its content.

Source 3: Angus Grossart / Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen Asset Management (cited by Salmond)

Timestamp 04:33–04:56

(a) Funding: Private financial institutions.

(b) Conflict of interest: Scottish-based financial institutions may have commercial interest in Scottish independence.

(c) Missing counter-source: Equivalent financial sector figures expressing concern about independence are not cited.

Missing counter-source (overall): An independent financial economist with no affiliation to either campaign would have been the appropriate source for assessing the fiscal implications of registered headquarters relocation.

Summary: The source selection in this broadcast is structurally skewed: the only sources cited are those with direct interests in the referendum outcome (Treasury, RBS CEO, Scottish financial sector figures), and none are independently verified or contextualised. The BBC's own role as a source (Treasury briefing to BBC) is not examined.

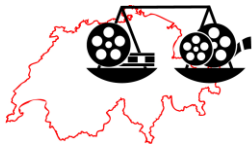


3. TIME DISTRIBUTION								4/10	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Estimated speaking time:

- Alex Salmond (Yes/SNP): approximately 3 min. 45 sec. (70%)
- Nick Robinson / Narrator (BBC): approximately 1 min. 36 sec. (30%)
- No campaign / Other perspectives: 0 sec. (0%)

Summary: Salmond dominates speaking time, which superficially appears to favour the Yes campaign. However, the framing, pre-emptive characterisation, and failure to engage with Salmond's substantive points mean that extended speaking time does not equate to fair treatment. The complete absence of any No campaign voice or independent expert means the broadcast cannot be assessed as balanced on time distribution grounds alone.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

8/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Omission 1:

Context

The BBC's own prior reporting on RBS/Lloyds — specifically the claim that "Lloyds Banking Group are about to move their headquarters to London" — is never examined or corrected, despite Salmond pointing out that Lloyds has had its headquarters in London "for many many years."

Relevant at: Timestamp 01:00–01:35

Effect

The omission of any BBC self-correction or acknowledgement of this factual error suggests that the BBC's original reporting was accurate, when Salmond's account (if correct) indicates it was materially misleading.

Omission 2:

Context

The regulatory allegation — that a Treasury source briefed market-sensitive information to the BBC before the 7am market announcement — is raised by Salmond at length (01:42–02:58) but receives no response, investigation, or acknowledgement from the interviewer.

Relevant at: Timestamp 01:42–02:58

Effect

The omission of any engagement with this allegation creates the impression that it is either frivolous or has been addressed, when in fact it is a serious claim about potential breach of financial regulations and civil service rules. Viewers are left without any means of assessing its validity.

Omission 3:

Context

The distinction between registered office relocation (a "technical procedure" per the RBS CEO) and operational relocation (which would affect jobs and tax revenues) is central to Salmond's argument but is never acknowledged or examined by the interviewer.

Relevant at: Timestamp 03:38–04:26

Effect

By failing to engage with this distinction, the broadcast implicitly validates the original BBC reporting that conflated the two, leaving viewers with the impression that RBS and Lloyds were genuinely "moving" in a meaningful operational sense.

Summary: The three most significant omissions — the Lloyds factual error, the Treasury market-sensitive information allegation, and the registered vs. operational headquarters distinction — are all points raised by Salmond that would, if acknowledged, substantially undermine the BBC's original reporting. Their omission is structurally consistent with protecting the BBC's editorial position rather than pursuing journalistic accuracy.

Missing Voices

- Independent financial economist: Would have assessed whether registered office relocation versus operational relocation has material fiscal consequences for Scotland.



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

- Financial regulatory expert (FCA/PRA): Would have assessed whether Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information before a market announcement constitutes a regulatory breach.
- Cabinet Secretary / Civil Service spokesperson: Would have responded to Salmond's demand for an investigation into the Treasury source.
- RBS Chief Executive (direct interview): Would have clarified the distinction between registered and operational headquarters in their own words, rather than through Salmond's reading of a statement.
- Aberdeen Asset Management / Angus Grossart (direct interview): Would have provided the pro-independence financial sector perspective directly rather than through Salmond's characterisation.
- BBC Editorial Standards representative: Would have addressed the allegation that BBC reporting misrepresented the RBS/Lloyds situation.
- Constitutional law expert: Would have contextualised the legal implications of independence for financial regulation and corporate domicile.
- No campaign / Better Together spokesperson: Would have provided the opposing political perspective on the economic arguments being debated.



5. NUMERICAL MANIPULATION

2/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:14–00:16

Figure: "men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"

Missing context

No specific figures are cited; "billions of pounds of profits" is a vague appeal to financial authority without specifying which institutions, which profits, or over what period.

Effect

The vague invocation of "billions" creates an impression of overwhelming financial expertise without providing any verifiable data point.

Summary: Numerical manipulation is not a primary technique in this broadcast. The single instance of numerical language ("billions of pounds of profits") is vague and rhetorical rather than statistically misleading. Score reflects this limited but present use.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION									3/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Association 1:	
Timestamp	00:09–00:16
Quote	<i>“why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician”</i>
	Technique: The word "politician" is used as an implicit association with untrustworthiness, contrasted with the implicit integrity of "men responsible for billions of pounds of profits."
Effect	Salmond is associated with the general category of "politicians" (implicitly self-interested, unreliable) rather than assessed on the specific merits of his arguments.

For persons framed as making conspiratorial claims:

Salmond's allegation about Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information could be characterised as conspiratorial. Applying the required source check:

- Does Salmond work with verifiable primary sources? YES — he cites the RBS CEO statement verbatim and references a specific BBC screen grab.
- Are his core claims falsifiable? YES — the question of whether a Treasury source briefed the BBC before the 7am market announcement is empirically verifiable.
- Risk matrix: Salmond is First Minister making a public allegation against the UK Treasury and the BBC — significant reputational and political risk if wrong.
- Gain: Short-term campaign advantage, but high risk of backfire if allegation is unfounded.
- Net: Risk > Gain → elevated credibility for the allegation.
- Tone: Salmond is specific, cites sources, and acknowledges journalistic source protection — analytical rather than emotional.

RESULT CATEGORY: A — Systemic critic with methodology (specific claims, primary sources cited, falsifiable, significant personal risk)

Summary: Guilt by association is present but relatively limited in this broadcast — the primary technique is the implicit association of "politician" with untrustworthiness. Salmond's regulatory allegation, which might be framed as conspiratorial, in fact meets the criteria for Category A systemic criticism with methodology.



7. TIMING

6/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Finding 1:

Position: 00:00–00:19 (Opening)

Content: "we reporters have flown to Edinburgh from all over the world but Alex Salmond knows that for victory he needs to reassure voters at home why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits he didn't answer but he did attack the reporting"

Timing Effect: The opening 19 seconds establish the entire interpretive frame for the broadcast: Salmond is on the defensive, corporate executives are more credible, and Salmond's response is pre-characterised as a non-answer. All subsequent content is received through this frame. Placing the editorial characterisation ("he didn't answer") before the audience hears Salmond's response is a particularly significant timing manipulation.

Finding 2:

Position: 05:00–05:21 (End)

Content: "so I think that's a reasonably comprehensive answer neck and then of course I know that give knife getting your crop land so answer we'll have the full cooperation of the BBC in the inevitable inquiry which will now take place going to go to her friends you"

Timing Effect: The broadcast ends with Salmond's demand for BBC cooperation with an inquiry into the Treasury briefing — a serious allegation — without any response, rebuttal, or acknowledgement from the BBC. Ending on this unresolved note, without any BBC response, leaves the allegation hanging without resolution, which may serve to minimise its perceived seriousness.

Summary: The most significant timing manipulation is the placement of the editorial characterisation ("he didn't answer") before the audience hears Salmond's response, which pre-determines the interpretive frame. The unresolved ending on the Treasury allegation without BBC response is a secondary timing issue.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

5/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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 involving other positions produced no analogous reaction.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 00:09–00:16

Trigger Event: Salmond is asked to justify his position against corporate executives.

Reaction: "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" — The question expresses implicit scepticism of Salmond's credibility.

Comparison

No equivalent scepticism is expressed toward the Treasury source, the RBS CEO, or the No campaign in this broadcast.

Asymmetry: The scepticism is directed exclusively at Salmond. The Treasury source who allegedly briefed market-sensitive information — a potentially more serious credibility issue — receives no equivalent scrutiny. Since no No campaign figure is present for direct comparison, full asymmetry cannot be proven, but the pattern within this broadcast is consistent with selective application of scepticism.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 01:42–02:58

Trigger Event: Salmond raises a specific regulatory allegation about Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information.

Reaction: The interviewer does not respond, does not express concern, and attempts to redirect to other questions.

Comparison

The opening question expresses strong scepticism about Salmond's credibility on economic matters. No equivalent scepticism or concern is expressed about the Treasury's alleged conduct.

Asymmetry: The contrast between the adversarial opening question (directed at Salmond) and the complete non-engagement with the regulatory allegation (directed at the Treasury/BBC) is a significant asymmetry. The trigger events are comparable in seriousness — both concern credibility on economic matters — but the reactions are diametrically opposite.

Summary: Selective outrage is present in the differential application of scepticism: Salmond's economic arguments are met with adversarial questioning, while the Treasury's alleged breach of market-sensitive information rules receives no scrutiny. The asymmetry is structurally consistent across the broadcast.



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

Share of covered perspectives

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

Independent of the transcript, the following perspectives would be required for genuinely balanced coverage of this topic:

- [A]** The Yes campaign's economic case: that corporation tax is based on economic activity, not registered office location, and that RBS/Lloyds relocating a registered plaque would not affect Scottish tax revenues.
- [B]** The No campaign's / UK Treasury's economic warnings: that financial sector uncertainty posed genuine risks to an independent Scotland's fiscal position and currency arrangements.
- [C]** Independent financial economists' assessment of the actual fiscal impact of registered headquarters relocation versus operational relocation.
- [D]** The RBS chief executive's own statement (as cited by Salmond): that any registered headquarters move would be a "technical procedure" with no impact on operations or jobs.
- [E]** The legal and regulatory question of whether a Treasury source briefing market-sensitive information before a market announcement constitutes a breach of financial regulations or civil service rules.
- [F]** The BBC's own editorial standards and the question of whether its reporting of the RBS/Lloyds story accurately reflected the distinction between registered office relocation and operational relocation.
- [G]** The broader pattern of BBC referendum coverage and whether it met the due impartiality standard required under the BBC Charter and Ofcom Broadcasting Code Section 5.
- [H]** The perspective of Scottish financial sector figures (e.g., Angus Grossart, Martin Gilbert of Aberdeen Asset Management) who expressed confidence in Scotland's financial future under independence.
- [I]** The question of democratic legitimacy: whether coordinated announcements by financial institutions in the final days of a referendum campaign constitute legitimate business communication or political intervention.
- [J]** International precedents for financial sector behaviour during independence referendums (e.g., Catalonia, Quebec) and what they suggest about the reliability of such warnings.



Soft Facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING

7/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Finding 1:

Timestamp	00:00–00:16
Quote	<i>"we reporters have flown to Edinburgh from all over the world but Alex Salmond knows that for victory he needs to reassure voters at home why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"</i>
Manipulation	The opening frame positions Salmond as a politician who must "reassure" voters against the superior authority of corporate executives ("men responsible for billions of pounds of profits"). The implicit hierarchy places financial sector leaders above elected politicians as credible sources of truth.
Why problematic	This framing pre-loads the interview with the assumption that corporate announcements are inherently more credible than political arguments, without acknowledging that corporate executives also have interests and that their statements may themselves be politically motivated. Viewers are primed to distrust Salmond before he speaks.

Finding 2:

Timestamp	00:16–00:19
Quote	<i>"he didn't answer but he did attack the reporting"</i>
Manipulation	The narrator (Robinson) characterises Salmond's response as a non-answer and an "attack" before the audience hears Salmond's actual response. This is a pre-emptive framing device that delegitimises Salmond's subsequent arguments.
Why problematic	Salmond's response (as heard from 00:19 onwards) is in fact substantive — he reads the RBS CEO statement verbatim and raises a specific regulatory allegation. Characterising this as merely "attacking the reporting" is a misrepresentation that shapes how viewers receive the subsequent content.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	03:03–03:14
Quote	<i>"so can I go back to her friends and the international media please"</i>
Manipulation	The interviewer's repeated attempts to redirect to "international media" and "friends" frames Salmond's detailed responses as evasions and positions the international press corps as the legitimate audience, implicitly marginalising Salmond's substantive points.



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

**Why
problematic**

This framing device allows the interviewer to avoid engaging with the specific regulatory allegation (Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information) by treating it as a digression rather than a serious matter requiring response.

Summary: The broadcast is framed from the outset as a credibility test for Salmond against corporate authority, with the interviewer's narration pre-emptively characterising Salmond's responses as evasive. This framing systematically disadvantages the Yes campaign's position without equivalent scrutiny of the No campaign's claims or the corporate announcements themselves.



11. LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY									6/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1:	
Timestamp	00:09–00:16
Quote	<i>**"why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"*</i>
Manipulation	The word "politician" is used as a pejorative contrast to "men responsible for billions of pounds of profits." The implicit connotation is that politicians are self-interested and unreliable, while corporate executives are objective and credible.
Why problematic	Neutral alternative would be: "Why should voters weigh your assessment differently from that of financial sector executives?" The loaded formulation "believe you a politician" embeds distrust of Salmond as a premise rather than a question.

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	00:16–00:19
Quote	<i>**"he didn't answer but he did attack the reporting"*</i>
Manipulation	"Attack" is a militaristic/aggressive term applied to Salmond's journalistic criticism. "Didn't answer" is an editorial judgement presented as fact.
Why problematic	Neutral alternative would be: "He disputed the reporting and offered the following response." The word "attack" frames legitimate criticism of BBC editorial decisions as aggressive behaviour, while "didn't answer" pre-empts the audience's own assessment of whether Salmond's subsequent response is adequate.

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	03:27–03:36
Quote	<i>**"Nick Nick Nick this has been a lively campaign with heckling at many meetings across Scotland this is the first opportunity the BBC have had to heckle at a meeting"*</i>
Manipulation	Salmond uses the word "heckle" to characterise the interviewer's behaviour. This is Salmond's own language, not the broadcaster's — however, the broadcast includes this exchange without the interviewer responding to or contesting the characterisation.
Why problematic	The inclusion of Salmond's "heckle" characterisation without rebuttal allows it to stand as a description of the BBC's conduct, which may or may not be accurate. A neutral broadcast would have addressed this characterisation directly.

Summary: The language used by the interviewer/narrator systematically positions Salmond as a defensive politician whose credibility is in question, while corporate executives are implicitly framed as objective authorities.



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

The term "attack" for journalistic criticism and "didn't answer" as editorial pre-judgement are the most significant linguistic interventions.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

7/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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 involving other guests produced no analogous intervention.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 03:03–03:27

Trigger Event: Salmond has raised a specific regulatory allegation (Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information) and is pressing for a response. The interviewer attempts to redirect to "international media."

Quote (Interviewer) *"so can I go back to her friends and the international media please" / "I don't think I don't think I mean I'll tell you what well I've just read you the statement"*

Comparison No analogous situation exists in this transcript where a No campaign figure raises a serious allegation and the interviewer redirects away from it. The broadcast does not include any No campaign interview for comparison.

Asymmetry: The interviewer's repeated attempts to redirect away from the regulatory allegation — rather than engaging with it — constitute a form of evasion that would be characterised as inadequate if performed by an interviewee. Since no comparable No campaign interview is available in this transcript, full asymmetry cannot be proven, but the pattern is notable.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 00:16–00:19

Trigger Event: Salmond has responded to the opening question. The interviewer/narrator characterises the response as a non-answer before the audience hears it.

Quote (Interviewer/Narrator) *"he didn't answer but he did attack the reporting"*

Comparison No comparable pre-emptive characterisation of a No campaign figure's response is present in this transcript.

Asymmetry: The pre-emptive editorial characterisation of Salmond's response as a non-answer, delivered before the audience can assess it, is a significant moderatorial intervention with no comparable instance for the opposing position in this broadcast.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 03:25–03:27

Trigger Event: Salmond uses the word "heckle" to describe the interviewer's conduct.

Quote (Salmond) *"this is the first opportunity the BBC have had to heckle at a meeting"*

Comparison The interviewer does not respond to or contest this characterisation.

Asymmetry: The failure to contest a characterisation of BBC conduct as "heckling" — while simultaneously characterising Salmond's responses as non-answers — represents an asymmetric application of editorial standards.



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

Not independently verifiable as asymmetric without a comparable No campaign interview, but the pattern within this broadcast is consistent.

Summary: The interviewer's moderation is characterised by pre-emptive editorial characterisation of Salmond's responses as evasive, repeated redirection away from the regulatory allegation, and failure to engage with the substantive content of Salmond's arguments. While full asymmetry cannot be proven without a comparable No campaign interview in the same broadcast, the pattern within this segment is consistent with differential treatment.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

7/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Asymmetry 1:

To Alex Salmond, 00:09–00:16: "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits" — Hard/adversarial

To No campaign / Treasury / RBS executives: No questions asked (not present in broadcast)

Comparison

The opening question to Salmond is maximally adversarial, framing him as inherently less credible than corporate executives. No equivalent challenge is posed to the No campaign's claims, the Treasury's briefing practices, or the corporate executives' motivations.

Asymmetry 2:

To Alex Salmond, 03:03: "so can I go back to her friends and the international media please" — Deflection/redirection when Salmond raises regulatory allegation

To Treasury source (absent): No question about whether briefing market-sensitive information before market announcement was appropriate.

Comparison

The interviewer redirects away from the regulatory allegation rather than pursuing it. If a Yes campaign figure had briefed market-sensitive information, it is reasonable to assume the question would have been pursued rather than deflected.

Summary: The question asymmetry in this broadcast is structural rather than comparative — only one side is present and questioned. The single question posed to Salmond is maximally adversarial and frames corporate authority as superior to democratic mandate, while the serious regulatory allegation raised by Salmond receives no follow-up question whatsoever.



14. FALSE BALANCE

3/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Finding 1:

Timestamp

00:00–05:21

Construct: The broadcast presents itself as a journalistic interview (implying balance) while featuring only one political perspective (Salmond/Yes) with no No campaign representative, no independent expert, and no BBC editorial response to the allegations raised.

Analysis

The false balance here is inverted — the broadcast does not create artificial equivalence between unequal positions, but rather presents a one-sided adversarial interview as balanced journalism. The "balance" is implied by the journalistic format but not delivered in content.

Summary: False balance in the traditional sense (presenting fringe views as equivalent to mainstream consensus) is not the primary issue here. The more significant problem is the presentation of an adversarial one-sided interview as balanced journalism, without the structural elements (multiple perspectives, independent experts, editorial response) that would constitute genuine balance.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

7/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Finding 1:

Agenda element set: Corporate executives' assessments of independence risks are treated as objective facts requiring political rebuttal, rather than as interested parties' views requiring independent verification.

Timestamp

00:09–00:16 — Evidence: *"why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician against men who are responsible for billions of pounds of profits"*

Alternative agenda: The question of whether corporate executives have interests in the referendum outcome, and whether their announcements are coordinated with the No campaign or UK government, is never placed on the agenda.

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The BBC's own reporting accuracy is treated as beyond question — the allegation that BBC reporting conflated registered and operational headquarters relocation is not placed on the agenda.

Timestamp

01:00–01:35 — Evidence: Salmond's correction of the Lloyds reporting receives no acknowledgement from the interviewer.

Alternative agenda: BBC editorial standards and accuracy in referendum coverage would be a legitimate agenda item, particularly given the subsequent formal complaints and protests.

Finding 3:

Agenda element set: The regulatory allegation (Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information) is treated as a political deflection rather than a serious matter requiring investigation.

Timestamp

01:42–02:58 — Evidence: The interviewer's non-response and redirection treat the allegation as irrelevant.

Alternative agenda: The question of whether UK government officials coordinated with financial institutions to release market-sensitive information during a referendum campaign is a matter of significant public interest that belongs on the agenda.

Summary: The agenda-setting in this broadcast systematically places the burden of proof on Salmond/Yes while treating corporate announcements, BBC reporting accuracy, and Treasury conduct as beyond scrutiny. Three significant matters of public interest — the Lloyds factual error, the registered vs. operational headquarters distinction, and the Treasury briefing allegation — are excluded from the effective agenda.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant Techniques

The 3 strongest techniques in this broadcast:

- 1. Omission / Selective Omission (Score 8):** Three substantive matters raised by Salmond — the Lloyds factual error, the registered vs. operational headquarters distinction, and the Treasury briefing of market-sensitive information — are systematically not engaged with by the interviewer. This omission is structurally consistent with protecting the BBC's editorial position and the No campaign's narrative.
- 2. Framing (Score 7):** The broadcast is framed from the opening seconds as a credibility test for Salmond against corporate authority, with the pre-emptive characterisation "he didn't answer" delivered before the audience hears his response. This frame is never challenged or balanced by an equivalent frame applied to the No campaign or the BBC itself.
- 3. Agenda-Setting (Score 7):** The broadcast treats corporate executives' assessments as objective facts requiring political rebuttal, while systematically excluding from the agenda the questions of BBC reporting accuracy, corporate interests in the referendum, and the regulatory implications of the Treasury briefing. These exclusions are not random but consistently favour the No campaign's narrative.

Core Messages of the Broadcast

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "Corporate executives are more credible than politicians on economic matters, and Salmond cannot adequately answer their concerns about independence."

Technique: Framing + Question Asymmetry — Evidence: 00:09–00:16, 00:16–00:19

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "Alex Salmond evades questions and attacks journalists rather than providing substantive answers."

Technique: Pre-emptive editorial characterisation + Language — Evidence: 00:16–00:19, 03:27–03:36

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIAL): "Scottish independence poses genuine economic risks that the Yes campaign cannot credibly address."

Technique: Agenda-Setting + Omission — Evidence: 00:00–00:19, 01:00–01:35, 03:38–04:26

Manipulation Level Classification

Justification: The combined score of 5.3 places this broadcast at the upper end of "clear one-sidedness." The broadcast exhibits a consistent pattern of framing, omission, and agenda-setting that systematically disadvantages the Yes campaign's position. The pre-emptive characterisation of Salmond's responses as non-answers, the failure to engage with the substantive RBS CEO statement, the non-response to the Treasury briefing allegation, and the complete absence of independent expert voices collectively constitute a pattern that falls short of the "due impartiality" standard required under BBC Charter Article 6. The score does not reach "systematic imbalance" because Salmond is given extended speaking time and is able to make his arguments, even if they are not engaged with substantively.

CONCLUSION

This BBC broadcast, covering Alex Salmond's response to corporate announcements about registered headquarters relocation during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum campaign, exhibits a consistent pattern of editorial choices that systematically disadvantage the Yes campaign's position. The opening framing — positioning corporate executives as inherently more credible than "a politician" — establishes an adversarial frame that is never balanced by equivalent scrutiny of the No campaign, the Treasury, or the BBC's own reporting. The failure to engage with three substantive matters raised by Salmond (the Lloyds factual error, the registered/operational headquarters distinction, and the Treasury briefing allegation) constitutes selective omission that is structurally consistent with protecting the BBC's editorial position. Under BBC Charter Article 6, which requires the BBC to provide duly accurate and impartial news and current affairs programming, this broadcast raises serious concerns: the pre-emptive characterisation of Salmond's responses as non-answers before the audience hears them, the non-engagement with a specific regulatory



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

allegation about Treasury conduct, and the complete absence of independent expert voices collectively fall short of the due impartiality standard. The broadcast does not reach the threshold of extreme imbalance, as Salmond is given extended speaking time and is able to articulate his arguments; however, the structural editorial choices — framing, omission, agenda-setting — consistently favour the No campaign's narrative in a manner that is difficult to reconcile with the BBC's public service obligations under the Charter.



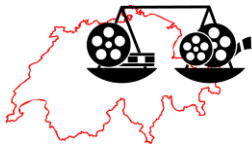
CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Broadcast Representation vs. Programme Position
Conservative	0	Not directly present in broadcast; UK government (Conservative at time of 2014 referendum) implicitly supported through non-scrutiny of Treasury conduct — programme position not directly tested.
Labour	0	Not present in broadcast; not applicable to this segment.
Lib Dems	0	Not present in broadcast; not applicable.
SNP	-3	00:09–00:16 "why should a Scottish voter believe you a politician" — SNP programme position (economic viability of independence, corporation tax based on economic activity) is raised by Salmond but not engaged with by interviewer; the broadcast frames SNP's core economic argument as requiring rebuttal against corporate authority rather than as a legitimate policy position.
Reform UK	0	Not present in broadcast; not applicable.
Green	0	Not present in broadcast; not applicable.

Note: This broadcast predates the 2024 political landscape described in the political context. The relevant party-political dynamic is SNP (Yes campaign) vs. UK establishment parties (No campaign), with the Conservative-led UK government as the implicit counterpart to Salmond's SNP.

Party Bias Summary

- Most accurate representation: Conservative/UK Government (Score 0) — not directly tested but implicitly favoured through non-scrutiny of Treasury conduct
- Strongest distortion: SNP (Score -3) — core economic arguments raised but not engaged with; framed as requiring rebuttal against corporate authority
- Average deviation from 0: 0.5 (across parties present/relevant)
- Conclusion: The party-political bias in this broadcast is directed against the SNP/Yes campaign. The SNP's core economic argument — that corporation tax is based on economic activity, not registered office location, and that the RBS CEO himself confirmed no operational impact — is raised by Salmond but systematically not engaged with by the interviewer. The UK government/Treasury's conduct (alleged briefing of market-sensitive information) is not scrutinised. This pattern is consistent with a broadcast that implicitly favours the No campaign's narrative without directly advocating for it.



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

Assessment under BBC Charter Art. 6

Violation 1:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6 (Due Impartiality) / Ofcom Broadcasting Code Section 5

Facts: The broadcast pre-emptively characterises Salmond's response as a non-answer ("he didn't answer") before the audience hears it, and fails to engage with the substantive content of the RBS CEO statement read by Salmond.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:16–00:19 — Quote: "he didn't answer but he did attack the reporting"

Assessment: Pre-emptive editorial characterisation of an interviewee's response as a non-answer, delivered before the audience can assess the response, constitutes a breach of due impartiality. The BBC Charter requires that the BBC present information in a manner that allows audiences to form their own judgements; pre-emptive characterisation forecloses this possibility.

Violation 2:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6 (Due Accuracy) / BBC Editorial Guidelines on Accuracy

Facts: Salmond alleges that BBC reporting stated that "Lloyds Banking Group are about to move their headquarters to London" when Lloyds has had its headquarters in London "for many many years." This factual allegation is not addressed, corrected, or acknowledged by the interviewer.

Evidence: Timestamp 01:00–01:35 — Quote: "I've also had many times in the BBC the argument that Lloyds Banking Group are about to move their headquarters to London eh I would have thought given the headquarters of the BBC in London that the BBC might have known that Lloyds Banking Group has their headquarters in London has had for many many years"

Assessment: If Salmond's account is accurate (and it is consistent with publicly available information about Lloyds' corporate structure), the BBC's failure to acknowledge or correct this factual error in the broadcast constitutes a breach of the due accuracy standard under BBC Charter Art. 6.

Violation 3:

Standard: BBC Charter Art. 6 (Due Impartiality) / BBC Editorial Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest

Facts: Salmond raises a specific allegation that a Treasury source briefed the BBC about market-sensitive information before the 7am market announcement. This allegation — which, if true, would implicate the BBC in a potential regulatory breach and raise serious questions about the BBC's relationship with the UK government during a referendum campaign — receives no response, investigation, or acknowledgement.

Evidence: Timestamp 01:42–02:58 — Quote: "a treasury source told the BBC that it had discussed the plans with the Royal Bank of Scotland the Treasury official for ministers are not allowed to brief market sensitive information"

Assessment: The BBC's failure to engage with a specific allegation about its own conduct — particularly one that raises questions about the BBC's impartiality during a referendum campaign — is inconsistent with the due impartiality standard. A broadcaster that is itself implicated in an allegation has a heightened obligation to address it transparently, not to redirect away from it.

Overall Assessment BBC Charter Art. 6

This broadcast raises three distinct concerns under BBC Charter Article 6. First, the pre-emptive characterisation of Salmond's response as a non-answer before the audience hears it breaches the due impartiality standard by foreclosing independent audience judgement. Second, the failure to acknowledge or correct the alleged factual error regarding Lloyds Banking Group's headquarters raises concerns under the due accuracy standard. Third, and most seriously, the complete non-engagement with Salmond's allegation that a Treasury source briefed the BBC with market-sensitive information before the market announcement — an allegation that directly implicates the BBC's own impartiality during a referendum campaign — is inconsistent with the transparency and accountability obligations that flow from the BBC's public service mandate under the Charter. Taken together, these three issues constitute a pattern of editorial conduct that falls short of the due impartiality and due accuracy standards required under BBC Charter



Article 6, and would have warranted formal investigation under the BBC's complaints and editorial standards procedures.

SOURCE DEEP-CHECK (Mandatory for all cited specialist bodies / NGOs / advisory bodies)

Source 1: Treasury Source (anonymous, cited by BBC)

- 1. FUNDING:** HM Treasury is a UK government department, funded by public taxation. Directly accountable to the UK government, which was campaigning for a No vote in the 2014 referendum.
- 2. MANDATE:** Treasury mandate is fiscal policy and economic stability — not neutral political commentary. During a referendum campaign, Treasury communications are subject to purdah rules and restrictions on market-sensitive information.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The UK government had a direct interest in a No vote. A Treasury source briefing the BBC about RBS plans before the market announcement — if accurate — would represent a significant conflict of interest between the Treasury's regulatory obligations (not to brief market-sensitive information) and its political interest in maximising the impact of the RBS announcement on the referendum campaign.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: -2 — UK government directly interested in No vote outcome
 - D2 Personal Risk: -1 — Anonymous source bears no personal reputational risk
 - D3 Technical Competence: +1 — Treasury officials competent on financial matters
 - D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — No prior statements available
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: 0 — Factual briefing, but politically motivated timing
 - D6 Source Level: -2 — Anonymous secondary source, not independently verified
 - TOTAL: -4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW (borderline RED)**
- 5. COUNTER-SOURCE:** An independent financial regulatory expert (FCA/PRA) who could assess whether the briefing constituted a breach of market-sensitive information rules. Not cited in broadcast.

Source 2: RBS Chief Executive Statement (read by Salmond)

- 1. FUNDING:** RBS majority state-owned (UK government ~80% stake post-2008 bailout). Structurally dependent on UK government confidence.
- 2. MANDATE:** CEO mandate is to shareholders and operational stability — not to provide neutral political analysis. Statement explicitly framed as "in my view."
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** As majority shareholder, the UK government could exert pressure on RBS management regarding the timing and content of public statements during the referendum campaign. The CEO's statement distinguishing registered from operational relocation may reflect genuine business assessment or may reflect political pressure — the broadcast does not examine this.
- 4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:**
 - D1 Conflict of Interest: -1 — State-owned bank CEO structurally dependent on UK government
 - D2 Personal Risk: +1 — Public statement carries reputational risk if inaccurate
 - D3 Technical Competence: +2 — CEO competent to describe own company's plans
 - D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — No prior statements available
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +1 — Technical and specific statement
 - D6 Source Level: -1 — Secondary (read by Salmond, not directly verified)
 - TOTAL: +2 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW**
- 5. COUNTER-SOURCE:** Independent financial regulatory expert to assess the registered/operational headquarters distinction. Not cited in broadcast.

Source 3: Angus Grossart / Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen Asset Management (cited by Salmond)

- 1. FUNDING:** Private financial institutions — Aberdeen Asset Management is a major Scottish fund manager. No direct state funding.
- 2. MANDATE:** Commercial entities — views on independence reflect business judgement and potential commercial interest in Scottish financial sector development.



3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Scottish-based financial institutions may have commercial interest in Scottish independence (access to EU markets, Scottish regulatory environment). Their pro-independence statements may reflect genuine business assessment or commercial interest.

4. CREDIBILITY MATRIX:

- D1 Conflict of Interest: -1 — Potential commercial interest in independence
- D2 Personal Risk: +1 — Public statements carry reputational risk
- D3 Technical Competence: +2 — Senior financial sector figures competent on economic conditions
- D4 Opinion Consistency: 0 — No prior statements available
- D5 Emotionalisation vs. Data: +1 — Described as making an "estimation"
- D6 Source Level: -2 — Tertiary (cited by Salmond, not directly interviewed)

TOTAL: +1 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

5. COUNTER-SOURCE: Equivalent financial sector figures expressing concern about independence, or independent economist assessing both sets of claims. Not cited in broadcast.

IMPORTANT NOTE: "Recognised" or "authoritative" are social attributions, not factual qualifications. All sources in this broadcast — Treasury, RBS CEO, Scottish financial sector figures — have direct interests in the referendum outcome. None are independently verified or contextualised by the BBC in this broadcast. The BBC's own role as recipient of the Treasury briefing is not examined. This structural feature of the broadcast's source selection is itself a significant editorial choice that falls short of the due impartiality standard under BBC Charter Article 6.

Analysis completed under Version 2.7-detail. Methodological Principles K5+K13 applied throughout: trigger events documented before asymmetry assessments; asymmetry assessed only where comparable trigger events without analogous reactions are identifiable. Where comparable trigger events are absent (no No campaign interview in broadcast), this limitation is noted explicitly rather than assumed.

Source Credibility Overview:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Signal
Treasury Source (anonymous, cited by BBC)	-2	-1	+1	0	0	-2	-4	YELLOW
RBS Chief Executive Statement (read by Salmond)	-1	+1	+2	0	+1	-1	+2	YELLOW
Angus Grossart / Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen Asset Management (cited by Salmond)	-1	+1	+2	0	+1	-2	+1	YELLOW



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual Scores — All 15 Criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

5.3/10

Significant imbalance

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality standard. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

5.8/10

Significant imbalance

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



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

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

References

- Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2), 103–125.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. Free Press.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.
- fög – Forschungszentrum Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft (2024). *Jahrbuch Qualität der Medien 2024*. Schwabe.
- Gilardi, F., Alizadeh, M. & Kubli, M. (2023). ChatGPT outperforms crowd workers for text-annotation tasks. *PNAS*, 120(30).
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. University of Chicago Press.
- Jolly, S. et al. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file, 1999–2019. *Electoral Studies*, 75, 102420.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- McCombs, M. E. & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.
- Shoemaker, P. J. & Vos, T. P. (2009). *Gatekeeping theory*. Routledge.
- SVFAB (2026). *Methodenbericht v4.1: Zählbare Kriterien und Multi-Modell-Kreuzvalidierung*.
- Törnberg, P. (2023). ChatGPT-4 outperforms experts and crowd workers in annotating political Twitter messages. arXiv:2304.06588.

SVFAB Working Papers

- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Systematic AI-Assisted Analysis of Public Broadcaster Impartiality: A Scalable Methodological Framework for Measuring Structural Bias in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6688478](#)
- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Measuring Editorial Noise: A Retrospective Suppression Index for Public Broadcasting Content Analysis. [SSRN 6733280](#)
- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Source Traffic Light: A Six-Dimensional Credibility Framework for Systematic Source Assessment in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6733880](#)

David Schläpfer — ORCID: 0009-0000-5671-9266

SVFAB — Swiss Association for Balanced Reporting | P.O. Box, 8021 Zurich 1 | www.svfab.ch | kontakt@svfab.ch | *Methods Report March 2026* | *Converter 3.3 (2026-05-14)*



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

Reports and Membership at SVFAB

At SVFAB.ch you will find detailed reports and can also commission custom analyses for any broadcast (billed separately). To ensure the quality of our work, we depend on membership fees and donations.

Contact and further information:

www.SVFAB.ch | Kontakt@SVFAB.ch

Bank details: PostFinance – POFICHBE

IBAN: CH32 0900 0000 1675 6251 1

Beneficiary: SVFAB, Postfach, CH-8021 Zürich 1



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

The following books are available from SVFAB

Orders via www.svfab.ch or kontakt@svfab.ch



Unbalanced Reporting is the response to the halving initiative in Switzerland: Manipulation techniques are explained in detail, starting with the selection of staff and sources. Then 15 principles are explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, context removal and many more, illustrated with numerous examples. Additionally, it becomes apparent where we ourselves apply these techniques – fostering not only awareness but also empathy.

Optionally the book comes with **playing cards**.

Also available as an **audiobook**.



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

Those who don't know this deliver material. Good quotes that get cut wrong. Correct statements that end up in the wrong context. Honest answers framed as confessions.

This book is not a media criticism book. It is a toolbox – for everyone who faces a microphone and wants to know what to do about it. 7 chapters. 7 tools: What an interview really is. The 7 most common traps. The three principles of sovereignty – anchoring, reframing, setting boundaries. Preparation in one hour. Body and voice. What to do when things go wrong. And what matters after the interview.

For politicians, activists, entrepreneurs, whistleblowers – for everyone who is in the public eye and wants to understand how the game works. So they stop playing along – and start shaping it.

In A5 format. Direct. For preparation, reference, follow-up and when difficulties arise



You think you see the world. In reality you see the frame someone has placed around it. Framing is the oldest and most elegant manipulation technique in the world. It doesn't change the facts – it changes what we make of the facts. How we feel. What we believe. How we decide. And it works – because we all play along. Every day. Unconsciously. You too. This book is not a dry textbook. It is a workbook – playful, direct, full of real-life examples. You don't just learn how others frame you. You learn how you yourself frame – and how you can use it consciously and fairly.

Because whoever understands framing sees the world more clearly. Hears news differently. Conducts conversations more confidently. And no longer so easily accepts a frame chosen by someone else.



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato

With many exercises and concrete examples from politics, media and everyday life – and the occasional smile.

Framing with style. Because the frame changes everything.