

### **Scottish independence in the media**

“We live in an uncertain world. Our homeland and our interest overseas are subject to constant threats: history shows how quickly and unexpectedly crises can emerge.”

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# 1 Introduction

Scotland voted for independence in September 18th 2014. The referendum got worldwide attention and also sparked hopes for independence in other nations, such as in Catalonia, where the movement for independence has been strong during and after the Scottish vote. In Scotland the No vote got 55.3 per cent and the Yes vote 44.7 per cent of all votes. The Yes campaign was led by the Scottish National Party (SNP) with Alex Salmond as the head of the party. On the other side there was the 'Better together' campaign representing the No vote, which had the support of the three other prominent Scottish political parties: the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats.

The question of Scotland's independence could be said to be something that has risen to the political discussion periodically: the 2014 referendum was not the first time the Scottish people were asked to vote for more independence, for example, in 1979 a referendum for more autonomy was held, but it "failed to achieve the necessary support from the electorate" (Bond, 2015, p. 1). When reading the news from the United Kingdom now, the Scottish independence debate is far from over. Since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum the Scottish parliament has agreed to apply for another independence referendum. The reasons for this new referendum are clear: Scotland already stated its willingness to stay in the European Union in 2014 if they were to become independent, furthermore, most Scottish people voted Stay in the Brexit vote of 2016. All in all, the possible next independence referendum will likely be just as close as the one examined in this paper.

In this study I will examine some online articles from the websites of two Scottish newspapers: [scotsman.com](http://scotsman.com) and [heraldscotland.com](http://heraldscotland.com). The articles are from before the independence vote. I will examine the articles from the point of view of media influence; looking at ways of persuasion through the theories of presupposition, agenda setting and message framing. The main goal of this study is to examine the chosen online articles as a part of a political discussion around the independence referendum. I will three themes in particular, which are national identity and history; uncertainty and Alex Salmond, and the way these themes are used to inform and influence the readers. As many newspapers in the United Kingdom announced their side on the independence vote, this matter is closely taken into consideration in order to discover any ways the articles might be taking a stance attempting to persuade the reader into one direction or another. This type of research can be said to be important in making people realize and

understand the possibility of hidden agendas behind the news most of us consume from different sources daily. The importance of media literacy or media education is being emphasized more and more in, for example, schools, but not many people understand just how much influence the media can have on the information we as the audience receive from any events, phenomena or politics.

The worldview of this study is constructivist, as I will attempt to examine and understand larger contexts behind the news articles and reflect the ideas presented to the historical context of the phenomenon. In the case of the independence referendum of 2014 this means Scotland's history within the United Kingdom as a separate nation with its own national identity, but still a part of the United Kingdom. The research approach used is qualitative, since I will be looking at a single phenomenon and making interpretations of the data. The method of this study falls within cultural studies, media studies and political studies.

This study will not be only examining articles and making conclusions around them. I will attempt to draw a broader picture around the phenomena by examining, for example, the history of Scotland and by looking at the state of today's media and its possible influences on its audiences. The reason for this wide view is well explained by Fairclough (1989):

in seeing language as discourse and as social practice, one is committing oneself not just to analyzing texts, nor just to analyzing processes of production and interpretation, but to analyzing the relationship between text, processes, and their social conditions (p.26)

All in all, this study views language and language use in the media is seen as a social practise which is surrounded and affected by different contexts.

This paper is divided in six sections: section 2 will introduce the background and history relevant to this paper: the history of Scotland, Scottish National Party and the opposing side in the independence debate; in section 3 I will introduce the data; section 4 is the theory and methodology section of this paper, where I will look at previous studies made on this field and introduce the different methods used in this paper; section 5 is the analysis, where examples from different articles are given and examined closely according to the theory. The last section, section 6, is the conclusion.

## **2 Scotland as an independent nation within of the United Kingdom**

In this section I will shortly introduce some background relevant to this study. I will look at Scotland's history in regards to independence; I will also introduce the Scottish National Party and the opposing, unionist side in the independence debate before the vote of 2014.

### **2.1 The history of Scotland's independence**

It is important to understand the events that led to the independence referendum, and the reasons why Scotland is not an independent country already. In this section the history of Scotland's independence will be very briefly looked at in a way that is relevant to this study, although much more could certainly be said about the subject.

There are plenty of cultural influences from the South to be seen from very early on in Scottish history. This influence can be seen prominently in the use of the English language in Scotland and the downfall of Scottish language Gaelic. It is worth noting that during their history the English authorities have made attempt to suppress the Scottish culture and language by, for example, forbidding the use and teaching of Gaelic and the use of the traditional kilts.

The 1707 Act of Union was a treaty made between England and Scotland, where the two nations would go under the same crown for, as many would regard it, mutual benefit. Scotland was considered a poor country which needed English trade and finance, whereas England needed support against the French and against a possible Jacobite rising ("Act of Union", 2016). The Jacobites did attempt to gain power in Scotland, which resulted in the famous Battle of Culloden in 1745: the Jacobites got most of their support from Gaelic speaking clans in Scotland, which were defeated by the British army. This battle has often been regarded as a downfall of the traditional clans of Scotland, even though the idea of the clans is still in existence.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish Nationalism lived in the "re-invention of the Scottish past" through poets and literature. But in reality the romanticised Scottish Highlands were suffering in deep poverty, which led to many people leaving the countryside in search of industrial jobs (Ross, 2014, pp. 268–271). All in all, the 1800s meant a so called amalgamating between England and Scotland which can be seen, for example, in the decline of the Scottish language. Ross (2014) writes: "One of the victims of the century was the Scots language, which by the 1900s had become little more than a set of distinctive forms of pronunciation with a number of characteristic words and expressions of its own" (p. 286).

It can be argued that the 1970s represented the rise of Scottish nationalism: people of Scotland considering themselves as Scottish rather than English, making Scottish identity an entity which is both separate and united. The Scottish National Party (SNP) used Scotland's oil as their slogan and many Scottish people felt that the North Sea oil belonged to Scotland only, not England. In 1979 a referendum was held with the question "Do you want the provisions of the Scotland Act 1978 to be put into effect?" This meant that the Scottish people were voting for more independence and devolution with the Government of the United Kingdom. The result of the 1979 referendum can be said to be quite confusing since it got 51.6% 'yes' and 48.4% 'no' votes. However, because the total 'yes' votes represented only 32.9% of the registered electorate, it was seen that since the threshold was 40%, the Act's requirements were not fulfilled and Scotland was seen to have voted 'no' for their independence (Dewdney, 1997, pp. 8–9). 1979 marked another political change in Scotland and the whole of United Kingdom, as Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister.

In the 1980s Scotland's political landscape differed greatly from England's, since Scotland had a Labour leadership and the English parliament was led by the Conservatives. It can be argued that many of the Scots were not in agreement with changes made by the Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1980–1990 since these changes were against many political ideologies the Scottish seemed to represent. As Ross (2014) writes:

Mrs Thatcher had no truck with home rule, and rejected the suggestion that her government had no mandate in Scotland. She was reputed to care little for Scotland, which offered her little in return except for some talented MPs of her own persuasion emerging from St Andrews University, which seemed a nursery of right-wing talent in a left-wing country (p. 14).

During the two decades a good proportion of Scotland's industry declined when, for example, coal mines, steelworks and shipyards were closed as they were unable to operate under the goals set by the British Government. It can be argued that this period made some of the Scottish people drift further away from England, and feel ideologically different from the rest of the United Kingdom. The decision to start a Scottish Parliament was made in a referendum in 1997, and the Parliament was established in 1998. The parliament had limited powers, and it would operate under the aegis of the British parliament. Many were happy with the results and some saw it as beginning on the road to Scotland's independence (Ross, 2014, p. 14). 'The next step' towards possible independence would be taken in the form of an independence referendum.

The Edinburg Agreement, in October 2012 was an agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Scotland that allowed the independence referendum to

take place. The sides agreed that the referendum would have a legal place and that it would present a clear result of the will of the Scottish people. The possibility of a referendum of independence taking place before 2014 was already established in the Scotland Act 1998 (“Referendum on independence for Scotland”, 2012.) In the next section I will shortly look at what some might call the driving force behind the referendum, the Scottish National Party.

## **2.2 Scottish National Party (SNP) and the independence movement**

The Scottish National Party (SNP) was founded in 1934 and the party has since then attempted to increase Scotland’s ability to make decision for their own and critiqued the British control over Scotland’s affairs. Despite the Labour Party being historically the most popular party in Scotland, the SNP has been able to attract voters making it the second most popular party in Scotland. In 1997 the SNP joined the Liberal Democratic and the Labour party to campaign for the successful referendum for Scotland to have its own Parliament. In 2003 the Scottish National Party’s former leader, Alex Salmond, became the head of the party once more, since the party’s ratings had dropped (Broughton, 2016). After this, the party remained as the main opposition party in Scotland, and in the 2007 elections the SNP won the most seats in the Scottish Parliament, ending the some 50 years of Labour dominance. Furthermore, in 2011 the SNP managed to secure the first majority government in the Scottish Parliament and therefore Salmond promised to hold an independence referendum within five years (Broughton, 2016).

After the 2014 referendum Alex Salmond resigned and was replaced by Nicola Sturgeon, who led the party to a historical win in the 2015 general election, “in which the party jumped from representing 6 Scottish constituencies to representing 56, obliterating Labour’s longtime dominance of Scottish representation in Westminster” (Broughton, 2016).

Since the Scottish National Party still holds a strong lead in Scottish politics, the question of independence and a possible new referendum is always present. On the SNP website, Nicola Sturgeon writes the following:

To be in the driving seat of our own destiny and to shape our own future is a natural desire. It is what we all hope for ourselves and it is what the SNP believes is right for Scotland.

We will achieve independence only when a majority of our fellow citizens are persuaded that it offers the best future for our country. Our success will depend on the strength of our arguments and the clarity of our vision. We will undertake new work to persuade a majority of the Scottish people that independence is the best future for our country.

We believe that the Scottish Parliament should have the right to hold another referendum if there is clear and sustained evidence that independence has become the preferred option of a majority of the Scottish people – or if there is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014, such as Scotland being taken out of the EU against our will (snp.org, 2017).

All in all, it could be said that the Scottish National Party will continue to campaign for Scotland's independence and it clear that the result of the Brexit vote has played a big part in their campaign.

Next, I will shortly introduce the other side of the independence debate, the campaign which supported the Union.

### **2.3 The opposing side**

As said in the introduction, many Scottish political parties went against the vote for independence, joining the campaign called Better Together. These parties were the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. Many other politicians outside these parties also backed up the unionist campaign, as well as several organisations, campaigns and known individuals.

The Better Together campaign was officially launched in 2012 by Alistair Darling, who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer under Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Prime Minister 2007-2010). Brown, from Scotland himself, campaigned against independence with Better Together. The former Prime Minister became very visible in the campaign, giving speeches that were described as emotional and were often considered highly influential. The campaign also got the support of many newspapers, politicians and celebrities.

Such known celebrities figures as the Scottish actor Ewan McGregor stated that it would be “a terrible shame” to break to union (Swarbrick, 2012) and the writer J.K. Rowling donated 1 million pounds for the campaign (“Scottish Independence: JK Rowling donated £1m to pro-UK group”, 2014).

As can be seen from above, the opposing side to the ‘Yes Scotland’ campaign was a prominent one, gaining plenty of publicity around it. In the next section I will introduce the data of this study: the websites of the Scottish newspapers the Scotsman and Herald Scotland.



### **3 Research materials**

In Britain, as was the case in everywhere in the developed world, the early stages of press were highly restricted and the political content of the printed media was regulated by the crown. The 17th Century marked the rise of political pamphleteering, fuelled by the Civil War (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 19). In the 18th century newspapers and magazines were created rapidly, and Britain had fewer restrictions than other countries of the world. Still the press was created by and for the elite, its function was to educate, offer information about, e.g. the markets and it was controlled by the government. From the late 1700s onwards was the time of political press. Writers were often politicians or other members of the elite, the news were controlled by the political parties, but the press was separating from the government. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the newspapers had become the primary means of political education (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, pp. 19–20). Eventually demands for free press led to gradual lessening of censorship. The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked the rise of labour and trade union movements, and different political newspapers were born. The mid-19th century was also the time when commercial press was growing and market forces began to rule the newspaper more than their original party ties (pp. 20–21).

In the modern world the media has in many cases developed into large media corporation, which can be ruled by so-called media barons. In other words, there is still discussion over the actual freedom of the press, since so many papers and television channels etc., are actually owned by the same people, even though they might seem independent to an uninformed audience. In the past years, the press has been going through some major changes as the internet has created an immense amount of free news sources and less people seem to be willing to pay for news. From the websites used in this study, [scotsman.com](http://scotsman.com) allows free access to its online articles, but [heraldscotland.com](http://heraldscotland.com) has a limitation on how many articles can be read for free. In the next section, I will introduce the websites used as the data: [scotsman.com](http://scotsman.com) and [heraldscotland.com](http://heraldscotland.com). In section 3.2 I will also discuss the use of online news as news resources.

#### **3.1 Description of the data**

The Scotsman is a Scottish daily newspaper and its headquarters are placed in Edinburgh. The paper was founded in 1817 and it is widely circulated in Scotland. The [scotsman.com](http://scotsman.com) website, used in this study, features a wide range of news from politics to lifestyle sections. On September 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 the Scotsman announces its verdict on the matter of the Scottish independence referendum, supporting to No side. The paper explained this decision with the uncertainty of the

implications a Yes vote would have to currency, “the issue of EU membership” and defense. The Scotsman also stated that the benefits of Scotland’s independence would be more decision power, but concluded that Scotland was already able to make its own decisions on important matters, such as tuition fees (“The Scotsman’s verdict”, 2014). In *The Scotsman’s verdict* uncertainty seemed to be the main reason for their to decision back the Better Together –campaign, as can be seen from the following quote:

There are significant *uncertainties* (my emphasis) with the proposals before us. There are some major parts of life that will be changed and we do not know what those changes are or what impact they will have, and at a cost we cannot calculate at present (“The Scotsman’s verdict”, 2014).

Most of the major Sunday newspapers, both Scottish and UK-wide, took the same position. Only the Sunday Herald stood behind the Yes vote (heraldscotland.com, 2014). As said in the introduction, it is important to take this possible bias into account when the articles are studied, since it can be assumed that it can have some effect on the decision made by, for example, the journalists and editors of the newspaper.

The other website used in this study, heraldscotland.com entails news from both the Herald and the sister paper Sunday Herald. The Herald was founded in 1783 in Glasgow, Scotland. Herald Scotland announced that it backed the No campaign as well. 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 the paper wrote the following article titled *The Herald's view: we back staying within UK, but only if there's more far-reaching further devolution*:

Since the timing of the referendum was announced, The Herald has not only presented the arguments from both sides, it has also subjected the claims of each to rigorous and impartial analysis. Unlike the legion of Private Frazers who have raised their tremulous voices recently in a chorus of doom, we reject the notion that independence would be a catastrophe for Scotland. Scotland is already a successful country and could come to be so, in time, with independence.

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Such a huge, irrevocable, decision about Scotland's future must be accompanied by a realistic assessment of the risks and problems associated with it, so as not inadvertently to condemn Scotland, and particularly the poorest members of our society, to a less prosperous and more unstable future.

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The hard truth is that independence carries considerable risks with the promise of uncertain benefits. Instead of taking such a gamble with Scotland's wellbeing, our nation has the chance to seek transformative change by pursuing greater autonomy within the UK.

We do not endorse the status quo, which has fallen drastically out of step with Scotland's needs and aspirations, but stand with the people of Scotland in demanding much-strengthened autonomy; something the main pro-UK parties have a profound responsibility to deliver.

However, the Sunday Herald, founded in 1999, announced their position in *The Sunday Herald's view: the prize for Yes is a better country...it is as simple as that:*

We believe that now is the time to roll up our sleeves and put our backs into creating the kind of society in which all Scots have a stake. Independence, this newspaper asserts, will put us in charge of our destiny. That being the case, Scots will have no-one to blame for their failings, no-one to condemn for perceived wrongs. We will, for the first time in three centuries, be responsible for our decisions, for better or worse.

The proposition is this: We believe independence offers Scotland an historic opportunity to choose the kind of country that might allow its people to prosper. Decisions affecting our lives will be made on our doorstep, by the people who live here. By us. A vote for independence says that a small country is not helpless in a big, troubling world.

The Sunday Herald's announcement is arguably a rather sentimental one. What is interesting here is the part where they write "*Scots will have no-one to blame for their failings*". Here the Sunday Herald is referring to the way many Scots and Scottish politician tend to blame the English for many things. The article also implies that all obstacles concerning the independence can be conquered with hard work.

Both newspapers and their websites were chosen for this study for their popularity and location as a clear Scottish newspaper. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the owning company of the Scotsman, Johnston Press, is located in London and the Herald belongs to the Newsquest Media Group, which publishes all over the United Kingdom. Herald Scotland was chosen as the second newspaper for two reasons, the main reason was that its sister paper, the Sunday Herald, was one of the few newspapers who declared to support the Yes vote, even if the main paper supported the No side. The second reason was to get a broader view of the political discussion around the independence vote in Scotland.

In 2014 the Scotsman's website had the average daily traffic of 182,499 Unique browsers (from July to December), but in September 2014 the daily average was as much as 240,345 Unique

browsers which indicates that the referendum had some effect on the rise of visitors on the site (“Online Property: Activity certificate: the Scotsman.com”, 2015). Unfortunately there was no activity certificate available for heraldsctoland.com, but one can assume that the referendum sparked more interest on their site as well. Altogether, 39 articles were studied for this paper, and 17 of them are used as examples in the analysis section. Next I will discuss the use of news websites as news resources.

### **3.2 The use of websites as news resources**

As online news sites are getting more and more popular, and actual printed newspapers are being bought less, it is important to look at the ways online news are used, and what kinds of implications this might have.

Nowadays most newspapers have their own news websites, providing somewhat different content than their printed version. One of the advantages of online news is that the space for news is not as limited as it is in printed papers. Online news sites are also accessible for anyone with an internet connection, so people can access the news they want to read without going out to buy a paper or making a subscription. I will briefly examine the use of websites as news resources, since the data of this study are online articles from newspapers which also circulate as printed papers. It is important to examine in which way newspapers might choose their content according to whether it appears online or in the printed paper, and whether there are major differences in the readership of online news compared to traditional newspapers. The technological changes in news consumption are also worth considering because it may have an effect on how people choose which news media they choose to read. Nowadays individuals can also share particular stories through social media, consequently spreading news that interests them to a vast range. “For example, Xenos and Moy (2007) showed that exposure to campaign information online was positively associated with political information acquisition, and for those who reported higher level of interest in the political campaigns, web use enhanced their likelihood of being involved in civic and political actions” (Xenos & Moy, 2007, as cited in Hao, Wen & George, 2014, p. 1224).

Flaxman, Goel & Rao (2016) write that “with more options, individuals may choose to consume only content that accords with their previously held beliefs” (p. 299). Nevertheless, it can also be argued that a reader can choose which printed paper they buy quite the same way they choose which online news site they read. Considering the fact the Scotsman announced its opinion on the referendum only eight days before the vote, one can assume that not many

readers chose this particular website according to their own idea on how to vote. Furthermore, Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) have studied the difference of acquiring a political perspective through a printed newspaper and its online version. They also conclude that the online news offer more possibilities from individualized information feed, with some risks of missing some information:

“By providing users with more content choices and control over exposure, new technologies may allow people to create personalized information environments that shut them off from larger flows of public information in a society” (p. 197).

It might be thought that the use of the ‘new’ media, i.e. online news, is mainly for the younger generations more familiar with the internet. Considering this, Hao, Wen & George (2014) have studied the internet’s role in the civic engagement of young people, taking the use of online news into account. They write that as there have been concerns about the political uninterest of young people, the internet has been held as somewhat a ‘beacon of hope’ in this matter (pp. 1223–1224). In Scotland too, the idea of a ‘Young vote’ was in the headlines, as many politicians attempted to activate the new generations into voting. All in all, one might say that younger people in general might use websites as news recourses more, which then might have an effect on what kind of news are posted on them. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to examine this further in the limits of this paper.

All in all, the internet has the possibility to limit the news exposure of its readers, since people can shut out information they do not want to receive or that are opposite to their own political beliefs. Nevertheless, in this study neither of the news sites has the option for individual newsfeed, even though people can certainly choose to read, e.g., political or sports news only, they cannot remove any headlines with certain content from the feed. The next section of this paper will move on to theory and methodology, looking at the power of language and media, persuasion, presupposition, agenda setting and message framing.

## 4 Studying media power and influence

Ideological power, the power to project one's practises as universal and 'common sense', is a significant complement to economic and political power, and of particular significance here because it is exercised in discourse (Fairclough, 1989, p. 33).

In this theory and methodology section of the thesis I will be looking at media power and influence. As the medium of the media is language, the power of language will also be shortly looked at. The power of media will be examined through the ideas of persuasion, presupposition and the theories of agenda setting and different ways of framing. By looking a few different ideas of media influence, I will attempt to give a broad view of the different ways the media can affect its audience.

### 4.1 Language and power

In this section, I will examine the relationship between language and power, especially political power, through Norman Fairclough's (1989) studies.

Fairclough (1989) writes about the "significance of Language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power." He discusses language use and unequal relations of power, saying that language is a key point in the ways some people dominate over others (p. 1). According to Fairclough (1989) "—the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language" (p. 2). In other words, these ideologies are impeded in language and discourse. Fairclough (1989) describes language as follows: "language is a social practise determined by social structures" and elaborates the connection of power structures and language use by saying that "orders of discourse are ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole" (p. 17). Therefore social structures can be seen in language, and existing power relations are enforced through it. Fairclough (1989) also introduces the idea of *ideological assumptions*, saying that assumptions are ideologies that are closely linked to power: *ideological assumptions* are embedded in particular conventions, which are underlined by some power relations, and can be seen as means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power. Furthermore, Fairclough (1989) states that ideologies and language are closely linked, since language is the "commonest forms of social behaviour" (p. 2). Furthermore, Fairclough (1989) writes that in discourse powerful participants control and constrain the contributions of less-powerful

participants: they use constrains on contents, on what is said or done (p. 46). These constrains can be directly applied to media, if the powerful can decide what the media publishes.

Language is used in the media, not just to inform or educate, but to highlight certain matters, downplay other and this way arguably enforce certain ideas or perhaps break down others. Fairclough (1989) says that in modern society, power is more often exercised by consent (opposed to coercion) and identifies the “constant doses of ‘news’ which most people receive each day” as significant factors of social control, as they account for a large amount of people’s daily involvement in discourse (pp. 36–37). This is particularly important in regards to this study, as we consider the possible implications of power usage through the media. Fairclough (1989) also describes how the power used by the media as hidden. Its discourse is one-sided, as opposed to face-to-face discourse, although in the modern media the one-sidedness could be said to be lessening when, for example, online news can offer the reads to possibility for commenting on the things they read. Nevertheless, in the media the journalists and editors etc. are always the producers of the text, whereas the readers act as the interpreters.

The presentation of the media can be unequal as well. It can be very carefully designed who is interviewed, whose speeches are reported or whose columns are published. Fairclough (1989) writes the following:

It is rather obvious that the people and organizations that the media use as *sources* in news reporting do not represent equally all social groupings in the population [...] While the unequal influence of social groupings may be relatively clear in terms of who gets to be interviewed, for example, it is less clear but nevertheless highly significant in terms of whose perspective is adopted in reports (pp. 50–51).

This kind of choosing of perspective will be discussed more in the following sections regarding message framing and agenda setting.

It is difficult to know who exactly is exercising power over what is written and what is not in the media. One can argue that the journalists do the ultimate decisions on what they write, but it is known that the editors have just as much say in what they want written. It can also be said that, for example, the newspaper as a whole decides its stories, and more broadly, modern media complexes, that can entail newspapers, television networks and online sites, can have a strong hold in their content. Therefore, the audience can never be certain which parties make the decisions to write certain things and omit something else. These factors are important to take into

consideration in this study: the newspapers have given their official line on the independence vote, (although many of the articles are from before the announcements) which already indicates that the objectivity of the news could be compromised. If we argue that by deciding to support one side of the argument, the newspapers might be inclined to publish stories that promote that side, and leave out arguments that might help the idea of the opposing side.

The next section will shortly introduce the way media power has been explained and studied in the past.

## **4.2 Media power**

It can be said that this thesis is built around the idea that the media is powerful. In this case, I refer to political power in particular. The effects of the media in today's political life have not gone unnoticed and therefore, it has been studied quite extensively in many different fields.

Fetzer & Lauerbach (2007) describe political discourse in the media in three ways: *as institutional discourse, media discourse and mediated political discourse* (p. 14). *As institutional discourse* political discourse in the media is "subject to institutional goals and procedures". Compared to everyday discourse, there are constraints on, for example, participant roles and turn length. In other words, institutional discourse can be said to be more artificial than everyday discourse. *As media discourse* it is first and foremost public discourse addressed to an absent mass media audience. This affects both its content and form: the audience cannot intervene in the discourse and, for example, ask clarifying questions leaving a great possibility of misunderstandings of meaning. As a consequence it has become increasingly important for political speakers to choose their words carefully in speeches and interviews, i.e. having them carefully designed. Furthermore, more often than not, politicians may direct their words to certain types of audiences: for example, during the independence campaigning Alex Salmond could attempt to influence undecided voters such as the young. Finally, *as mediated political discourse*, political discourse in the media is "the outcome of the encounter of two different institutional discourses – those of politics and of the media" (pp. 14–18). As these two institutional discourses meet, it is often considered the media's job to 'translate' political discourse to the audience, in order to fully inform and educate the public.

The media is often referred to as the 'fourth estate' (the three estates being the legislative power, executive power and judicial power). This name exemplifies the power that the media holds in (at least) western societies, as the 'watchdog of power'. In the modern world it is considered the



media's job to inform citizens on what the power holders are doing and in this way free media is seen as an important part of democracy. Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams (1997) write about a "view of media power as total and all-embracing" (p. 10). It is often claimed that media sets the frame to the political discussion that people, i.e. the audience, is able to see, since the papers or the news are generally the only places people can know what is said or done by politicians. Journalist and editors can set the frame of a political story and basically change the tone of it in the direction they want: decision of what is said and what is left out are made every day in the media. Politicians have also become aware of the changing power of the media: politicians who perform well in the news and answer to the needs of the newspapers are often held more popular, and get their message across more easily.

There is also some criticism over the idea of media power: some have argued that the media does not have as much power or influence as we think it does. Therefore, in another point of view the media can be seen as 'the lapdog of power', where the news media always enforces the existing political power by being, for example, more critical over the opposition. "the power of the press [...] is to provide support for the status quo and the dominant culture, selecting certain issues for discussion while marginalizing or ignoring others and, in particular, the voices calling for progressive change" (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 30). Whitten-Woodring (2009) also writes about the possible conflict between media freedom and media's relationship with power holders:

[...] it is important to consider how practices shape the political environment. Even if the news media are free from overt government censorship, some would argue that the news media are subject to government control because of their reliance on official sources (p. 599).

This so-called 'indexing-hypothesis' suggest that the media is "merely a megaphone for elites, especially government elites". According to this hypothesis, any debate seen in the media is, in fact, disagreement between these official sources mentioned above (Bennet 1990, as cited in Whitten-Woodring, 2009, p. 599). The reasons for this kind of development can be, for example, found in the market forces that rule most of today's media as well as in the changes of readership, where people might be declined to buy papers that write what they already want to read.

As said before, in many ways modern politics can only be seen through the media. But one can argue that even the media does not have all the information about politics pure and uncensored: it is also important to know that there are often a skilled professional controlling what the media

can know about politics or politicians. Franklin (1994, 2004) writes that political “parties have recruited small armies of media advisers to develop strategies for promoting electorally favourable media images of their leaders and key policies” (p. 8). Furthermore, Franklin (1994, 2004) writes that carefully designed media images about politician and politics pose “a number of challenges to democracies.” These challenges occur when the media acts only as government policy messenger and the message is “drafted by press officers and special advisers but mistaken by readers and viewers as the work of independent journalists.” In this case the media no longer plays a role in shaping the ‘informed citizen’ who can make political choices based in a wide range of information (p. 6). But not wanting to go further into public relations and image building, which could be another study in itself, it is quite safe to say that in Scotland’s independence vote, both sides must have used public relations, marketing and communication professionals in their campaigns.

To say that media creates the reality power holders want people to see, is arguably an extremely critical way of examining today’s media influence, but still an important part of critical study. Nevertheless, one must take into account that in today’s world of social media, people have other ways of gaining information about politics. For example, politician can themselves inform their followers in social platforms such as Facebook or Instagram on what is happening, without any media filtering in between. Since this study looks at web articles made by newspaper media only, we will not look further into any other forms of information sources.

#### **4.3 Audience reception and persuasion**

The study of persuasion in rhetoric can be traced back as far as ancient Greece and Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. However, modern media studies are generally considered to have begun in Germany in 1930s, through the work of the so-called Frankfurt School. The works of Adorno, Marcuse and Horkheimer laid the base for future media studies. They studied mainly propaganda, promoting an idea that “media messages were directly absorbed into the hearts and minds of the people” (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 126). Next, I will present a few studies concerning persuasion and audience reception in order give a broad view of how the media can influence different audiences.

The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) was originally led by Stuart Hall, whose work on media studies and audience reception will be looked at next. The BCCCS examined the theory of ‘hegemony’ meaning that “ideological domination can never be complete

but is a continuous struggle in which the media are crucial” (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 129). This type of media studies look at the media as something that supports the dominant order and manufactures consent to it (as mentioned in 4.1 and 4.2). According to Stuart Hall, 1973, there are three position of decoding the media message: the dominant, the negotiated and the opposition. In the dominant position the viewer/the reader takes on the message full and straight “operating inside the dominant code”. In the negotiated position the audience “accepts the legitimacy of the dominant framework in the abstract but negotiating the application of this framework to ‘local conditions’”. The oppositional position challenges the whole hegemonic framing of the issue (Hall, 1973, p. 101, as cited in Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 130). All in all, it can be said that in Hall’s work it is highlighted that the meaning does not come from the text alone, but the audience; their personal experiences and knowledge, takes part in forming the meaning of what they consume in the media.

Another, alternative way of looking at audience reception has been done by the Glasgow Media Group.

This work presents a quite different perspective on media power. It demonstrates that, although there are variations in audience ‘readings’ of media reports, there are pervasive common themes in the meanings conveyed to the public. It reveals that even though people may ‘resist’ the dominant message of a programme, it may still have the power to convey facts and to influence their ideas, assumptions and attitudes (p. 160).

In other words, the Glasgow Media Group discovered that despite audience activity, media shapes the perceptions people have on different social issues, and this strengthens media power as the images come from different media feeds over the course of their lives (Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams, 1997, p. 160). Here we once again come to the issue of the dominant existing power: if there is indeed a dominant view of any issue, and the media is inclined to support it (as has been mentioned in many sources) then the dominant message would be ‘at the back of the audiences head’ even if they did not even hold the issue very important to them.

All in all, it can be said that media messages do not just come to the audience ‘pure’: they are added into the viewers’ existing assumptions, knowledge and ideas. The power of any media message is in the way it builds up to these things: does it confirm the pre-existing ideas, alter audience’s feelings about something, or, e.g. make them believe that the media is lying and discard the message completely? It could be said that this is where the media’s power is truly

measured: skilled persuasive strategy, done through, for example, agenda setting and framing can influence and alter people's pre-existing ideas, and this is what I hope to demonstrate in this study.

In the different ways of looking at audience reception, one might begin to feel that in today's world the media does not have as much power as might be suggested in this paper. But as Eldridge, Kitzinger & Williams (1997) say, "Acknowledging that audiences are 'active' does not mean that the media are ineffectual. Recognizing the role of 'interpretation' does not invalidate the concept of 'influence'" (p. 160). People interpret the things they read in different ways. Fairclough (1989) calls the resources people have in their heads 'members' resources' (MR). People draw upon MR when they produce and interpret texts: these are, for example, values, beliefs and assumptions. Members' resources are social in origin and according to Fairclough, the forces which shape societies have an important foothold in the psyche of the individual (p. 24). In other words, persuasive messages in the media can 'get through' people, but perhaps on different ways and levels depending on their original knowledge of the subject and world views in general.

Persuasive messages have been studied by Shen & Bigsby (2013) as well. They write that "all persuasive messages advocate a particular position with the goal of getting the receivers to think or behave a particular way" (p. 21). They list different types of evidence used in persuasive messages that will be looked at in the examples in the analysis section. The types are *statistical evidence* (relying on statistics, generally numbers etc.), *testimonial evidence* (person's own experience, eye-witnesses, personal opinion and expert testimony), *anecdotal evidence* (person's observations of the world=subjective) and *analogical evidence* (comparing one situation to another) (p. 21).

Metaphors are also often seen as persuasive. As Scheithauer (2007) writes: "metaphors are a popular means of simplifying complex concepts. They enable us to make sense of abstract concepts by drawing parallels to concepts that are easily accessible to us" (p. 75). Furthermore, Wilson (1990) says that metaphors are good tools in mass media language because media discourse is one way discussion, where there is little change of further clarification; metaphors make difficult issues easier to understand with less need for explaining (as cited in Scheithauer, 2007, p. 79). For these reasons many politicians can be said to favour metaphors when speaking to audiences. Nevertheless, Tucia (2011) has examined newspaper articles by looking at metaphors, saying that through the use of metaphors a statement comes interpretable and unstable (p. 6). They write that metaphors can lead to ambiguous language and by using metaphorical stereotypes

as fake messages, the audience cannot know to whom exactly is referred to (p. 7). Metaphors are often used in message framing as well, as will be seen in section 4.4.

Another mean of persuasion is the use of presupposition in media messages, which will be introduced next.

#### **4.4 Presupposition in media messages**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term *presupposition* as follows: “something that you believe to be true and use as the beginning of an argument even though it has not been proved; the act of believing it is true” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2010).

Sbisà (1999) has studied the use of presupposition in the Italian press, she writes that “presupposition is suitable for transmitting a kind of content which might be called ideological: assumptions, not necessarily conscious but liable to be brought to consciousness, about how our human world is and how it should be” (p. 492). Sbisà (1999) further writes about the persuasive use of presupposition saying she considers presupposition as not “shared assumptions, but assumptions that ought to be shared.” Sbisà (1999) explains that presuppositions are given a normative feature. This normative feature entails that the viewer expects the presupposition to be true, but also that the speaker breaks the rules of interaction if they assume that information is shared when it is not (pp. 501–502). Fetzer & Lauerbach (2007) have also identified a certain ‘taken-for-grantedness’ in media texts, meaning “certain formulations by which propositions are treated as generally known or agreed upon, and hence as uncontentious and not at stake argumentatively” (p. 32). This type of argumentation can be seen, for example, in the use of the adverb *of course* and other phrases such as *naturally* and *it goes without saying*. Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer (2007) call this a type of persuasive strategy value positions that are presented as self-evidence, in other words, it could be said that it is hinted that this type of value is common sense (p. 40). According to them, presupposition or ‘taken-for-grantedness’ can be, for example, found in monoglossic utterances that are bare statements where propositions are declared absolutely. “Such utterances are seen as undialogic in that they ignore the backdrop of alternative viewpoints and other voices against which such utterances always operate” (Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer, 2007, p. 35) . Often in monoglossic cases there is a presupposition of the fact being true. The opposite of this are heteroglossic utterances where the speaker positions themselves with respect to other viewpoints using phrases such as *it’s possible*, *I believe* and *will* (pp. 34–35). In the context of this study presuppositions could, for

example, be ideas such as Scotland has been historically oppressed by the English or that Westminster takes advantage of Scotland on Scotland's expense. On the other side such presupposition could be that Scotland and England belong together historically, or that belonging to the United Kingdom protects Scotland.

Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer (2007) have identified certain features of presupposition that will be seen in the examples in the analysis section: *Evaluative terms* are often used with presuppositions. *Evaluative terms* can express approval or disapproval, so when used in media language they can be said to entail some persuasion to a certain direction. Other features are *factive predicates*: when it is implied that something is true (pp. 53–54); *relative clauses*, meaning *which* -clauses that carry presupposition (pp. 54–55); *conditional clauses*, meaning *if* clauses, often used with relative clauses, that carry presupposition and finally, *existential structures* that are structures with “definite noun phrases trigger the presupposition of the existence of their referents.” In political language there is often ‘a problem’ named, assuming that this issue is a problem without further explanation (pp. 56–57).

According to Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer (2007) presuppositions are more easily challenged in political debate situations in the media, than they are in ‘normal’ discourse (pp. 60–61). They write that it is more difficult for any member of the audience or, e.g., opposition to question a statement when it is implied that it is self-evident for the speaker (Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer, 2007, p. 46). Therefore it can be argued that in political discussion this kind of language can be used as a tool. “It appears indeed that in the data political speakers do present highly controversial judgements in a monoglossic way by expressing them as bare unmodalised statements.” Another tactic is to present the other proposition as a non-issue: as something that is not important or has nothing to do with the issue at hand (Simon-Vandenberg, White & Aijmer, 2007, p. 47). In this study one can find presuppositions being challenged when, i.e., another politician says something the opposing side says is not true. However, the actual audience of the news media is assumedly less able to challenge the presuppositions they read, since they are not in dialogue with the politicians or journalists.

The next section will look at other forms of possible persuasion: agenda setting and framing.

#### **4.5 Agenda setting and message framing in the media**

The two media research theories, agenda setting and framing, are certainly related in many aspects. Both of these ideas have a long history in the field of media research, but they are also

still widely used and developed as media studies also develop to new dimensions: the importance of new media fields such as online news and social media are being studied right now, and I will look at a few of these studies in this section, as well as introduce the original ideas of agenda setting and framing through older articles. In message framing I will look at one prominent frame more closely, called the game-frame. In a macro level one can discuss terms *agenda building* and *frame building*, these terms do not refer to media effect, but to the construction of news in the media. On the micro level media effect can be studied through individuals and groups (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, pp. 12–13).

*Agenda setting* refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues (e.g., based on relative placement or amount of coverage) and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audience. Newspaper editors and writers have an important role in shaping political reality when they choose certain news and, for example, display them in a certain way (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 176). After all, it is the news media that provides the public the information they receive from politics. The media basically informs its consumers about what are the important issues to consider in a certain event by writing and/or broadcasting about them. This is what makes agenda setting so important when we discuss the media during the Scottish independence referendum debate: if one assumes that the voters who are unsure about their opinion on the matter would go looking for information from news websites or papers, the things they would read might have had an effect on their decision on how to vote, as McCombs & Shaw (1972) write: “—voters learn from the immense quantity of information available during each campaign” (p. 176).

In the field of agenda setting, studies have been made by asking people what they thought was important in a political campaign, and their answers were then compared to what was actually said in the mass media. The people interviewed had not yet decided on how to vote. McCombs and Shaw (1972) described their findings as follows:

In short, the data suggest a very strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media (reflecting to a considerable degree the emphasis by candidates) and the judgements of voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics (p. 181).

All in all, it was discovered that agenda setting does matter and that it has an effect on people’s judgement when they consume political issues from the media. From this it can be argued that the

media can affect people's choices on matters such as an independence referendum, even though there are several other factor influencing people's choices, as had been said earlier in this study.

*Message framing* differs from agenda setting in the sense that it argues that how an issue is characterized in the news has impact on how it is understood by its readers (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). According to Hallahan (2009) "Framing is a critical activity in the construction of social reality because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world" (p. 207). Framing has both psychological and sociological background: studies have been made, for example, by Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984) on how different presentations affect the same decision making processes. Framing is used to draw attention to and away from certain points, to highlight what could be called 'key points' in, for example, a news story or an advertisement. As Hallahan (2009) writes: "framing involves processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as emphasis" (p. 207). Furthermore, Entman (1993) writes that

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (as cited in Todd, 2014, p. 6).

Nevertheless, as Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) write, this does not mean that most journalist are attempting to spin the news, but that framing is a necessary tool to make the story less complex, since all news forms have certain limits whether in space or airtime (p. 12). All in all, not all news are framed in order to persuade the audience or influence their political opinions. In order to identify frames specifically, Cappella & Jamieson (1997) name a few criteria for studying news framing: the frame should be identified from the text, not just from the effect it may have, i.e. the frame should have identifiable linguistic characters. The frame ought to be a common journalistic practice, and its effects are regularly noticed in the audience. Cappella & Jamison (1997) also write that it is important that frames are something that can be identified by a regular news consumer, and not just by an isolated expert (p. 47). Some of these characteristics of frames are introduced next.

Hallahan (2009) summarizes the different ways of framing as follows:

Frames reflect judgments made by message creators or *framers*. Some frames represent alternative valencing of information (i.e., putting information in either a positive or negative light, or *valence framing*). Other frames involve the simple alternative phrasing of terms (*semantic framing*). The most complex form of framing is storytelling (*story framing*). Story



framing involves (a) selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and (b) incorporating a variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme (p. 207).

From the explanation above it is easy to see how broad the concept of framing actually is. Furthermore, Pan & Kosicki (1993) have also suggested some patterns how frames could be identified. These patterns could be, for example, divided into these four following structures. *Syntactical structures*: basically it means using stable pattern of arranging words and phrases, which can be seen as a 'pyramid structure' of, e.g. headline, lead, episodes, and so on. *Syntactical structures* can also be used as a framing device when the story is quoting an authority or using empirical data, quoting official sources to link certain points to an authority or making some points seem of lesser importance by relating a quote or a point of view to a 'social deviant'. *Script structures*: news are often structured as stories and therefore news discourse has recognizable organizations called scripts. A news script may often appear to be dramatic and emotional, since it has been built to have a beginning, a climax, and an end. *Thematic structures*: this means that proposition or a hypothesis are used to explain relation between issues within the text. *Thematic structures* can be identified, for example, from words like 'because', 'since' and 'so'. The last structures are *rhetorical structures* which can suggest in subtle way how the text ought to be interpreted. This effect can be done with the use of metaphors and similes, familiar exemplars and illustration, provocative language and descriptors or catchphrases and visual imagery (pp. 59–62). Some of these structures can be found from the data of this study, and they will be looked at more closely in the Analysis section 5.

Both framing and agenda setting entail plenty more than just world choices: newspapers have to take many things into consideration in order to get people to read their content and furthermore, they often want to get *certain kind of people* to read certain kind of articles. It is a part of media conventions to direct certain content to certain kind of people. Different media have to design an *ideal subject* to whom they direct their content to. According to Fairclough (1989) “—actual viewers or listeners or readers have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject” (p. 49). Ideal subject is in accordance with the notion that papers, and even different sections of a paper are designed to a certain audience, this is usually done to increase profit, since as said before, people tend to consume the media that interests them in particular. In order to get the ideal subject to read the article, papers have to think about such things as layout as well:

Doris Graber's (1988) influential study of news reading concluded that the most important criteria used by newspaper readers when choosing stories to read are the presence of story importance cues supplied by editors and the match between story topics and their own interests (as cited in Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002, p. 182).

What this means is that people use such cues as article location, the size of headlines and visuals and story length *combined* with their own interest to choose which stories to read. Considering this study it is important to note that in online news sites the readers' own personal interests play a bigger role since they can choose content differently. Furthermore, online news are usually made to fit one single screen, so there might be less space for visual cues compared to paper versions (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002, p. 182).

A very common frame that has been studied in the media is the *game frame* that can also be called *strategy coverage*. Lawrence (2000) suggests that the modern way of journalism encourages this game frame. According to them, political discussion is often portrayed as battle where a candidate's every move is seen as their next ploy to win (p. 95). The game frame can be identified by the following features: winning and losing as the central concern; the use of language of wars, games and competition; a story with performers, critics, and audience (which usually means the voters); centrality of performance, style, and perception of the candidate; and finally heavy weighing of polls and the candidates standing in them (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 33).

Lawrence (2000) claims that the problem with strategy coverage is that it draws attention away from actual issues and makes the audience focus on the 'battle'. By making it seem as if politicians are at constant battle over certain issues, the public may be directed away from actual policy making (p. 94). The Scottish vote could be said to fit perfectly to the game-frame, as it could be seen as a two-sided conflict between the unionists and the nationalists.

Cappella & Jamieson (1997) have studied the way politics are presented by the press. They have shown that "reporters demonstrated the hold of a strong tradition that reduces leaders to their presumed motives and substance to its strategic intent, bypassing consensus for conflict" (p. 4). In other words, the press can be said to show politicians as being in constant conflict with one another. They also argue that politicians feel the need to give the press something that they are likely to print (p. 10). This raises a lot of questions and concerns over the accountability of news recourses that many media studies have focused on: can the audience really know what is happening in politics if even the politicians choose what they say (and in what way) to journalists,

and if the journalists furthermore make the story sound more interesting, possibly leaving something out? According to Cappella & Jamieson (1997) the journalistic culture and the focus on conflict and motives (meaning the personal motives of politicians) invite cynicism, i.e. distrust towards the political system (p. 31). Cappella & Jamieson (1997) describe the political news frame in a rather cynical way, portraying a 'strategic coverage' in which politicians carefully design what is published about them and their policies in order to stay in power:

“The news frame we focus on is an organized set of assumptions that implies and often explicitly state that leaders are self-interested to the exclusion of the public good, that their votes can be swayed by monied or special interests that do not serve their constituents' ends, [...] Explaining what they are doing to “win” or why they are “losing” is the resulting form of campaign coverage” (p. 39).

They also say that framing provides context that in turn activates prior knowledge. Therefore, the message may not be comprehensible to a reader unequipped with said knowledge (see 4.4). Cappella & Jamieson (1997) continue by saying that frames in the media make interpretations possible but different frames alter the kinds of inferences or assumptions the audience can make. According to them, inferences allow “an efficient form of communication where some things can be left unsaid while being readily supplied by the reader” (p. 42). This means that inferences are a natural part of communication since not everything has to be 'spelled out' to the reader. Nevertheless, Cappella & Jamieson (1997) say that inferences can also be misleading, misdirecting, or simply false (p. 42). In which case they can be seen parts of message framing. They identify references to, for example, history and war to be powerful frames which trigger memories of other situations, which are then reflected to the current message (p. 43).

An alternative to the game frame has been named by Lawrence (2000) which is called the 'issue' frame. In this frame the focus is on policy issues, politicians' proposals to problems and implications to the public. The issue frame consists of:

“Stories about public policy problems and solutions; descriptions about the substance of legislation or proposed legislations or other government programs; descriptions of politicians' stands or statements or policy issues; stories about the general implications or impacts of legislation or proposed legislation for the public” (p. 100).

Closely related to the game frame, is the theory of in-group and out-group members and the way they are used in media discourse. Mastro, Tukachinsky, Behm-Morawitz & Blecha (2014) write about the different usage of language when writing about an out-group member, “using adjectives

and adverbs rather than concrete action verbs” (p. 136). Even though Mastro et al.’s study considers racial prejudice and immigration, linguistic bias can be found in political discussion in mass media, when discussing any opposing side. Mastro et al. (2014) continue that mass media, such as television and newspaper use biased language which can unconsciously affect the readers’ attitudes (p. 138). This kind of biased language can often be evaluative terms, but in addition, emotional appeals (words that trigger some emotional response on the consumer) are also used. Studies have been done concerning environmental reactions, and they have proved that using emotional appeals (that can, e.g. trigger sadness, hope or enthusiasm) is more persuasive (meaning that people were more likely to take action) than objective reporting (Searles 2010; Peter & Honea, 2012). Not all emotional appeals are made on purpose: “while journalists would not typically express their values in a conscious manner, news stories introduce ideological and power biases that stem from unconscious processes” (Gans, 1979. as cited in Mastro et al., 2014, p. 143). Emotional words such as *democracy*, *imperialism* and *liberation* can often be found in any political discussion, but they are used in different ways by different sides of the argumentation. According to Fairclough (1989) debating the meanings of these words is, in fact, politics. It can be seen in the analysis section of this paper as well that the meanings behind these expressions and words are a large part of political discussion (p. 23).

Yu, Si & Cho (2015) have studied the use of “separate and combined effects of emotion-laded exemplars and responsibility frames on readers’ perceptions and evaluations” (p. 525) by using six versions of the same news story that differed from their emotion-laden exemplars. They found that emotional exemplars “significantly affected readers’ moral evaluations toward the target individuals and their perceptions of the social issue’s severity” (p. 525). Yu et al. (2015) define an exemplar as a journalistic feature that can capture recipients’ attention toward and interest in news, entertainment, and persuasion media (p. 525). They write that “Positive emotional reactions are guided by the immediate evaluation that an event’s outcome is successful or a desired goal is attained, whereas negative emotional reactions are generated by an exact opposite evaluation” (p. 527).

In order to find attempts to affect the consumer’s evaluation, one can look for signs like moving from concrete language to abstract when discussing the out-group: concrete language is, for example, situation specific whereas abstract language is more person specific and present general ideas about the group (Mastro et al., 2014, pp. 149–151). In political language this could mean

personalizing the discussion around a certain politician rather than the party or the idea, such as was arguably done with Alex Salmond.

From the discussion here in this theory section, one can conclude that there has been plenty of attention brought to the different possibilities news stories in general and journalism in particular may have on the reader's perspectives on the issues they read. The media studies concerning, for example, presupposition, agenda setting, framing and emotional responses have gathered a considerably vast source of material and empirical data on the subject. Many of these theories overlap and often one can find examples of several different ways of persuasion or framing in one article or news broadcast. The next section will be the actual analysis of this study, where different online articles concerning the Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014 will be examined within the frames that have been introduced earlier.

## **5 Scottish independence and media persuasion**

This analysis is constructed by closely studying examples from online articles concerning the Scottish independence referendum of 2014. The analysis will be done by examining the ways of media influence discussed in section 4. From the research material, certain re-occurring themes were found, which could be identified as ways to persuade the audience to one way or another. These themes were the idea of national identity and history; emphasis on uncertainty and fear; and finally, concentration to Alex Salmond as the face of the Yes campaign. The findings will be summarized in section 5.4.

### **5.1 National identity and historical references**

As Law and Mooney (2012) write: "Scotland is envisioned as a spontaneous collective, an imagined community or even a sentient being whereby 'Scotland' does and feels things" (p. 162). It is quite clear that Scotland has its very own national identity, which is not English, but particularly Scottish. It can be argued that this identity has developed through the nation's joined history with the United Kingdom, but has also taken new shapes in the more recent times. "At the heart of recent developments has been the ways in which 'Scottishness' as a collective identity has been imprinted by social policy and welfare considerations" (McEwen, 2006, as cited in Law & Mooney, 2012). What is meant by this, is that there are certain features in Scotland, that defer from the rest of the United Kingdom in ways that they have become some kinds of 'tokens' of Scottishness itself. These features are, for example, social welfare policies and tuition fees. This separate national identity was often referred to in the media during the independence campaigning from both sides of the argument. Scottish national identity is closely linked to its history, and there can be several ways to view Scotland's history within the United Kingdom; one of them is an idea of a successful union where the two nations, very much alike, united for mutual benefit and prosperity. Another way is to look at Scotland's history as a struggle for independence against a larger colonial force, which defeated the Scots with military force and suppressed its culture replacing it with their own. Any way one looks at it, historical references are something that repeatedly arose during the independence discussion. References to history are being examined in this paper because they can be said to have a strong influence in the media by triggering emotional reactions. The following examples present the way the themes of national identity and history showed in the data, and in what ways tools of persuasion were used to highlight these themes.

**Example 1 (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Salmon's letter to voters, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

“What has emerged in this campaign is something very new,” Mr Salmon said.

Empowerment. An understanding that if we work hard, Scotland can be a global success story. A beacon of economic growth and a champion of social justice. That's who we are as a nation.”

As both campaigns enter their last full day, Mr Salmon says that the talking is all but done.

“What's left is just us: the people who live and work here. The only people with a vote. The people who matter. The people who for a few precious hours during polling day hold sovereignty, power, authority in their hands.

Alex Salmond's public letter on the day before the referendum is full of emotionally laden words such as *sovereignty* and *power* which have positive connection to them. The sentences are short and there is a lot of repetition: '*the people who*' is used three times. This kind of rhetoric is common in speeches that are aimed to be influential and trigger emotions (see section 4.5 p. 26 about emotion laded exemplars). In the beginning of the example there is a presupposition made, implying that the feeling of 'empowerment' is something *new* to the Scottish people; when one says something is new, it can excite and intrigue the audience, but, nevertheless, many people would argue that as the idea of Scotland's independence is not a new one and that Scots have had these feelings before. It can be said that the purpose of this this speech is to make the debate and the vote seem historic and unique and to imply that many Scots have woken up to some truth about their country and nation (see section 4.4 about presupposition).

In addition, Scotland's national identity is referred to strongly in example 1: Salmond highlights the idea that Scotland is very different from the rest of UK by referring to the social justice system, where Scottish politics are known to be different than England's. It is implied that this is the first time that the people of Scotland can vote for themselves as a nation, and that the citizens of England should not have a say in Scotland's matters. The in-group – out-group –position can also be found in example 1: here the in-group would be the people of Scotland and the out-group the people living and working south of the border. This way the article supports the game frame by setting up an image of opposite sides in a battle (see section 4.5, pp. 25–28 about the game frame).

Historical references are quite subtle in this particular article: in the point of view where Scotland has been oppressed by the English for centuries, it is thought that the British government and officials decide Scotland's issues, when they should be able to decide matters for themselves. Arguably, Mr. Salmond refers to this idea when he says that the people who matter are the people who live in Scotland, i.e. not people who live in England (see section 4.5, p. 25 about historical references in framing). The next example is also quoting Alex Salmond.

**Example 2a (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence story empowering – Salmond, September 1st, 2014*)**

“A huge number, hundreds of thousands of Labour supporters, are now supporting Yes in this campaign. The Yes support is rising. We're still behind, we're still underdogs, we've still got a distance to travel but if we're making the Prime Minister nervous then we are doing something right.”

In this quotation from the SNP (former) leader Alex Salmond, the minister is saying that the British Prime Minister David Cameron is getting nervous about the actual possibility that Scotland might become independent. There is clear 'us and them' division found in example 2, as Salmond addresses the 'Better together' campaign as the out-group, whereas the in-group would be the Yes voters (section 4.5, pp. 24–28). The word *underdog* is rather interesting in this article, since it can be seen as having some emotional collocations: it implies that someone is in a weaker or even oppressed situation, perhaps making the readers feel like they need to fight for their position. The *underdog* metaphor is strengthened by a travel metaphor in *we've still got a distance to travel* which again suggests that the Yes side is lagging behind the 'stronger' opposition. The travel metaphor also suggest that the way to independence is a journey that some people are taking together (*we've still got...*), i.e. the Scottish people are doing something together (see section 4.3, pp. 18–19 and 4.5. p. 23 about metaphors). The article continues:

**Example 2b (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence story empowering – Salmond, September 1st, 2014*)**

He added: “Hundreds of thousands of people who have never been interested in politics in their lives before are now engaged in the most engaging, participative and empowering debate in political history – 180,000 people who have never voted before are registering to vote in this referendum, and incidentally they are not registering to vote No.

“This is the most empowering story in history, certainly in Scottish history and I suspect in European history.”



The use of some emotional laded exemplars such as *engaging* and especially *empowering* continues in Salmond's speech (section 4.5, p. 26). These words seem to invite people to take charge of their own destiny and it could be said that words like these speak to readers or listeners who feel insignificant in the political field. Salmond refers to Scotland's political history within the United Kingdom, and seems to underline the fact that now the people of Scotland will be engaged in their own decision making for the first time, which is a reoccurring theme in Salmond's speeches. One can also argue that in example 2b some presuppositions are made: for example, saying that 180 000 people who have never voted before will vote Yes in to coming referendum is something that the reader might assume to be true even if Mr. Salmond does not offer the source of this information (section 4.4). This way Salmond enhances the idea that the referendum has moved Scottish people to 'fight' for their freedom.

From the game frame points of view, the entire independence debate can be divided into two camps, where the independence side leader or 'general' was Alex Salmond, and the unionist side leader was Prime Minister David Cameron. In example 2, the game frame can be seen as Salmond speech suggests as if his 'troops' had made a war move that makes the enemy nervous.

In the following example one of the biggest questions of potential independence, national security, is being discussed, when both Yes and No sides released their own ideas about Scotland's future armed forces and security. Both sides used war veterans as 'spoke persons' for their cause. Even though this article did give some space for the statements of the veterans from the Yes side, the biggest proportion of the article was given to the official statements the veterans campaigning for No vote had issued. This selection of space usage can be interpreted as a case of framing, since the decision of how to use the limited space is always something that journalist and editors have to make.

**Example 3 (The Scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Defence is new battleground*, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

In an equally strongly worded statement, more than 400 veterans warned of dire consequences they foresee in the wake of a Yes vote.

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It reads: "As former members of the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Airforce who are proud to call Scotland our home, we passionately believe that the people of Scotland will be stronger and more secure is we remain part of the UK."

Example 3 demonstrates different ways how the unionist side could appeal to the audience's feelings of national identity: the quotations from veterans arguably triggers emotional feelings of pride, and also refer the Scotland's war history, where Scottish troops fought with the United Kingdom just the same as the English troops did. The veteran statement used in this article can be identified as testimonial evidence, where someone's personal experience is used to support a claim. As said in section 4.3, using these kinds of testimonials can be a way of persuasion, and in this case it can be seen to persuade the audience to think that Scotland *will* be safer as a part of the United Kingdom.

The newspapers used in this study published several articles that reported how non-Scottish people reacted to the independence vote. In the following examples one can read about a person who does not live or work in Scotland lobbying for independence, as well as an Estonian professor who works in Scotland and also speaks for independence. There are many ways to look at the decision to publish stories like these: on one hand, a reader who, e.g., identifies themselves as European or otherwise citizens of the world, might read the articles in a positive light and think that it is a good thing that non-Scots feel so strongly about Scotland's independence. On the other hand, a reader who strongly thinks that no other countries should have a say in Scotland's business, might see the articles in a more negative light. It is perhaps worth noting that one of the Yes campaigns' main themes was that Scots could decide for themselves without 'outsiders', and it can be argued that many Scots would not agree whether the women in these articles are 'outsiders' or not. In example 4, the story is following a pro-independence lobbyist who goes from door to door asking people how they are planning to vote, answering questions and handing out registration forms to potential voters. What is highlighted in this article, is the fact that many such lobbyist are not even Scottish, or live in Scotland: the article begins with a Catalanian woman Marta Vallbona:

**Example 4 (The Scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: support from Catalonia, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

ENGLISH teacher Marta Vallbona is gathering up armfuls of pro-independence leaflets and checking of names on the list.

She is heading out to canvass voters in a bid to convince them to vote in favour of Scottish independence.

But Marta had never lived in Scotland – nor is she eligible to vote in the poll. She has travelled from Catalonia, Spain – which has its own independence movement – to help with the final three weeks of Scotland's Yes campaign.

“I feel I can hugely identify with Scotland,” she says. “In Catalonia, we can only imagine the powers of full democracy which the people of Scotland could have. I would hope that if Scotland becomes independent, it would be catalyst for us, which is why I am here. I want to help – it has to be a Yes vote.”

In example 4 the reader is reminded that there are other nations in the world, in where some people aspire to be independent just like in Scotland. In consequence, Marta Vallbona’s emotional words about *powers of full democracy* make Scotland seem like a freedom fighter for the whole world. As said above, there are several ways one can examine articles like example 4. One the one hand, it can be said that there are strong pro-independence emotions expressed in the article, when the Catalonian woman speaks of independence and democratic power. The word *democratic* is certainly held in high regard in the western world and it sets a certain frame to the story, since the word has connotations to other words like *freedom*. On the other hand it can be argued that in this example it is subtly hinted that perhaps people from other countries should not be involved in the Scottish independence referendum: the journalist has chosen to highlight the interviewees’ position in Scotland by using words like ***But Marta never lived in Scotland – nor is she eligible to vote.*** The next example also interviews another woman who was not born in Scotland.

**Example 5a (heraldscotland.com: *Can independence be lost or found in the search for our sense of belonging?*, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

SHE has already helped to win independence for the land of her birth.

Now Lea Kreinin wants to do the same for her adopted home.

“I am a Scottish patriot,” the Estonian academic announces as she stands in the rain on Glasgow University’s lion and unicorn staircase, its old, old stones tinged green by damp. “I even like the climate.”

Lea has been in Scotland for eight years. Her work is here, her life is here: so, too, is her vote.

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The referendum, after all, is *déjà vu* for Lea. Today’s rows and warnings take her back to Estonia in the 1980s, during the death throes of the Soviet Union. She has, she says, felt what she sees as the hope and empowerment of one side and fear of the other.

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“They wrote long reports about how life in Estonia would become worse, and that the end result would be a catastrophe. But Estonians took a leap of faith. Since then we have done exceptionally well.

“I can easily imagine a similar future for Scotland. One where people feel a part of the state and the government truly represents them, rather than one where they are far removed from their statesmen.”

The beginning of example 5a is full of symbolism: the description of the surroundings of the interview could be said to remind the reader of Scotland’s proud history with Glasgow University and the repetition of the word *old* is used to highlight its age, furthermore, there is a reference to the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom (which has the English lion and the Scottish unicorn). The Coat of Arms is a reminder of Scotland’s union with England, and it can be seen as a contrast with the fact that the interview is from a nationalist. Lea Kreinin’s own personal experiences work as testimonial evidence and her words can be seen as reassurance for people who are afraid of the possible negative consequences of independence (see section 4.3, p. 18 about persuasive messages and testimonial evidence). Nevertheless, after the interview of the Estonian scholar, the tone of the article changes as the writer turns to evaluate the statistical facts of how native Scots and foreigners living in Scotland are likely to vote comparing to English-born Scots:

**Example 5b (heraldscotland.com: Can independence be lost or found in the search for our sense of belonging?, March 19th, 2014)**

Balts, of course, however enthusiastic for independence, won't swing the referendum.

However, collectively "New Scots", 460,000 of them born in England, just might, provided the vote is close enough. And that is something nobody seems to want to talk about.

It is the great referendum taboo.

The Yes campaign - mindful of its "welcoming" pitch on immigration and the electoral dangers of appearing anti-English - flinches at words like "foreign".

Better Together is a little more comfortable with the concept of "foreignness". It uses the "F" word to describe the rest of the UK after independence. But it's stayed clear of talk of an ethnic split in support for independence.

The role of incomers, campaigners are painfully aware, has played big in other independence processes. Take Lea's Estonia. A quarter of its population is Russophone. This complicated things in 1991 and it complicates politics now.

In the column above one can see an implied warning that a Yes vote in Scotland would lead to similar kinds of divides between people that are present in former Soviet countries. The article

suggests that the Scottish nation might ‘split in two’ and that would create political difficulties. Historical references to the independence struggles in post-soviet countries can be seen as a way of fear-mongering, since many people would argue that the situations in Estonia in 1991 and in Scotland today, are quite different. It is also said that Yes-campaigners struggle with incomers or foreigners who are publically (like in these examples) supporting independence. It is presupposed that the nationalist *flinch at words like foreign*, and this kind of language paints a picture of politicians who are afraid to take a stance in an issue because they are afraid of scaring off some of their voters. Example 5b ends with further presupposition by stating that campaigners are *painfully* aware of the role of *incomers* and then implies that independence would lead to complicated, i.e. difficult politics in Scotland too (see chapter 4.4 about presupposition).

The next example is written by a reader and published by Herald Scotland in a series of reader letters. The language could be said to be quite emotional, and the writer is clearly pro-independence which can be seen from the headline alone. This article has some good examples of emotionally laden language and other means of persuasion that are discussed in this thesis. Even though the letter is not written by a journalist, the decision to publish it was done by editors or journalists, and in this way it serves as a good example in the discussion of national identity.

**Example 6 (heraldscotland.com: *Independence would help us better share this great island*, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

ANDREW McKie says that independence is not necessarily the best way to get rid of a Tory government or nuclear weapons (“Why I believe it makes little sense to unravel the union”, The Herald, April 17).

What other mean does he suggest? If the majority of people in Britain want a Tory Government with occasional Labour interludes of the Blair/Miliband kind or even Tory/Ukip coalition then that is *their* (my emphasis) choice, even if the weapons of mass destruction are on the Clyde and not on the Thames. Independence means that it does not have to be *ours* (my emphasis).

All independence means is that we get rid of 10 Downing Street and all the archaic idiocies which are associated with Westminster. Unless the rest of the UK (rUK) are stupid enough to impose border controls or even oppose a currency union then it will make no difference to the relationship which I have with my grandchildren who live in Northumbria. I have spent many years working in Ireland, Northern Ireland and England and still have many friends there. Independence will bring us into closer partnership; no more artificial barriers set up by Westminster.

Let us start thinking of Britain not as a failed state but as a desirable island on the edge of Europe. Scotland had one third of Britain’s landmass, 50% of

Britain's territorial waters and 70% of Britain's coastline. We need a government to enable us to control and protect our share of the island of Great Britain. We certainly can't leave that responsibility to the incompetents in Westminster.

In this example, game frame can be found in the sense on us-and-them thinking: the writer makes quite a clear emphasis that the voting choices of the rest of the United Kingdom do not represent the voting choices of Scotland (and as mentioned before, the writer is correct). This could be seen as a reminder for the reader on the benefits of independence: Scotland would not be affected by the English votes. Furthermore, the writer speaks to the readers who are angry with the government's decisions, as he provocatively describes the decisions made by 10 Downing Street (Prime Minister's office) as *idiocies* (see section 4.5, p. 23 about framing and provocative language). The article also has historical references to Westminster deciding on Scottish matters against their will.

Example 6 surrounds a highly controversial issue of nuclear weapons in Scotland: River Clyde is in Scotland, and a naval base commonly known as Faslane is situated there. The base carries nuclear-armed submarines (Nicolson, 2015). On this matter the writer makes a clear contrast between two rivers: the Thames is a famous river in the middle of London, where (it is implied) no Englishman would want nuclear weapons. Therefore, Westminster has decided to have the weapons based far away from London in Scotland even though (it is again, implied) the Scots never wanted any nuclear weaponry in the first place. All in all, it could be said that in this example the writer attempts to trigger many Scots' feelings of injustice. And the solution offered is a Yes vote. In example 6 presupposition is used, when many ideas are presented as self-evident facts: Scots do not want nuclear weapons, Scots do not want a tory government, the recent Labour governments do not represent Scottish ideals either, a Ukip coalition would be a very bad thing, and finally: Scottish resources are being used by Westminster and the benefits are going somewhere else than Scotland (see section 4.4). The controversial issue of nuclear weapons are discussed in the next example as well:

**Example 7a (heraldscotland.com: *Former moderator joins Church of Scotland clergy to pledge support for independence, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

A FORMER moderator of the Church of Scotland is among nearly 40 Ministers to have signed a declaration of support for independence.

The Right Rev Andrew McLellan said leaving the Union was a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" for removing Trident, which he described as the "worst thing in Scotland".

However, Rev Ewan Aitken, a former Labour council leader, hit back by saying independence amounted to "dumping" Trident on England.

At the beginning of this example a Yes supporter, Reverent Andrew McLellan, who is extinguished as the former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (a highly respected position within the church), is quoted saying that the Trident, (meaning the Trident nuclear programme) is bad, and in fact the *worst possible thing* in Scotland. From here the reader can assume that the speaker means that the Trident is dangerous for Scotland. The game-frame can also be found in this example in the form of battle words, when Reverent Ewan Aitken is described to *hit back* another Reverent. An intriguing picture is painted by the writer where churchmen, generally regarded as peaceful, are now 'on battle' over the issue of independence. The game-frame highlights the feeling that Scotland is split in two sides, and in this article in particular seems to imply that the breach is everywhere (chapter 4.5 pp. 25–28). The example continues:

**Example 7b (heraldscotland.com: Former moderator joins Church of Scotland clergy to pledge support for independence, August 24th, 2014)**

The signatures were collected by Christians for Independence (CFI), a group bankrolled by SNP donor Brian Souter.

In an advert in today's Sunday Herald, 34 ordained Kirk ministers put their names to a statement, which reads: "We believe that a Yes vote in the forthcoming referendum makes possible a more socially just Scotland."

It can be said that above the journalist chooses to highlight the fact that the CFI is not operating independently for independence, but is financed by a person who is financing the SNP as well. It can be argued that the battle metaphor is further enforced by this, since the reader is reminded that there are two sides in 'the battle': the SNP and the unionists. As for the advertisement quoted in the article, which is assumedly done by the CFI, the church ministers are making a statement that an independent Scotland would represent church values of social justice. Here one can also remember that Scots tend to view Scotland's social policies more advanced than the rest of the United Kingdom, so these kinds of statements are likely to influence people who feel proud of this distinction over England. The last part of example 7 continues with the powerful image of social justice:

**Example 7c (heraldscotland.com: Former moderator joins Church of Scotland clergy to pledge support for independence, August 24th, 2014)**

"But what will change everything is voting 'Yes' in the referendum. Living in a Scotland free of nuclear weapons will make everything else better."

Rev Peter Macdonald, the leader of the ecumenical Iona Community, is another minister to have signed the pro-independence pledge.

He said: "I was a member of the Labour Party for 30 years until last year. Now I no longer believe a Westminster government is capable of delivering the socially just and equitable society in which I want to live. The British State no longer serves the needs of all its people. Economic policies pursued have favoured the wealthy who have grown richer and stigmatised the poor and vulnerable who are paying for the failures of the private financial sector."

In the quotes above independence is said to bring a needed change to Scottish society. McLellan goes as far as promising that resigning from nuclear weapons will turn *everything else better* as well. This statement is offered without any further clarification of how and what else would be better, neither does it give room for any other things that might make Scotland a better place. These kinds of presupposition can be said to be monoglossic utterances and the audience is expected to assume it to be true (section 4.4, pp. 19–20). The example continues by another quote from a pro-independence reverent who also claims that the Scottish society needs to be apart from the United Kingdom. They enforce this idea by making another presupposition by saying that Scotland has become unjust when it has been forced to follow English rule. All in all, example 7 strongly addresses any readers whose national identity is built on separateness from the United Kingdom rather than on unity.

The examples seen in this section show that the idea of national identity is not black and white, but it is often used to trigger certain emotions in the audience. Furthermore, historical references are often used in Scottish political discussion, and they are often closely linked to Scottish national identity. In the following section 5.2, the examples address feelings of uncertainty and fear which were often used in the political discussion during the referendum debate.

## **5.2 Uncertainty and fear**

In the Scottish independence debate the possibility of independence has always been clouded by the uncertainty of its consequences to people's lives. Questions of such things as education, finances, economy and pensions have been on the frontline of all discussion, and especially the politicians on the No side have used these uncertainties to speak against a Yes vote. As Gutiérrez-



Peris (2013) says: “—the unionist focus has been to display scepticism over the issues raised by the pro-independence side” (p. 3). The idea of uncertainty arguably got the most attention in the data that was examined for this paper. Fearmongering was also used by both sides to influence the voters before the independence vote. The following examples demonstrate how the theme of uncertainty and fear came across in the data.

**Example 8 (scotsman.com: *Gordon Brown’s Pro-union speech in full, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012*)**

“Today I am listing the first twenty of hundreds of unanswered questions about the separate state they propose. The unanswered questions that hide the truth about the costs and risks of independence are not just about Europe and the euro –the issue of controversy of the last two weeks- but about mortgages, interest rates, pensions, child benefits, the monarchy, citizenship and the armed forces”

The first example of this section is taken from a speech from 2012, and it is a clear example of the numerous speeches made by the unionist side, where the theme of uncertainty is very present. The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Gordon Brown appeals to such sentiments as *citizenship* and fears such as *vulnerability* if Scotland was separated from the military forces of the United Kingdom. In addition, everyday concerns of average people, like mortgages and child benefits are mentioned to be at risk. These kinds of word choices could be said to trigger the most basic fears of listeners and readers, highlighting the uncertainty of independence. In this way there is quite a clear case of agenda setting found in the article (section 4.5 p. 26).

In example 8, presupposition is used to suggest that there are in fact *hundreds* of question left unanswered by the Yes side. It is also stated that these question hide a *truth* of some sort, implying that the nationalist are lying or otherwise hiding some truth concerning the consequences of independence (see section 4.4). Portraying the nationalist as liars can be said to be a re-occurring theme in many unionist speeches and statements, as will be seen in the following examples of this section.

**Example 9a (heraldscotland.com: *Nobel prize–winning economist: be very afraid of independence, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

A Nobel prize-winning economist has warned Scots to "be very afraid" of independence.

The risks of going it alone "are huge", particularly if it follows the "recipe for disaster" of keeping the pound without a political union with Westminster, Paul Krugman wrote in the New York Times.

Better Together said his "expert intervention exposes the risks of leaving the UK" but Yes Scotland responded with the opinions of two Nobel prize-winning economists who said sharing the pound is "the best option" for Scotland and the remainder of the UK.

In this example some forms of persuasion can be found in the headline alone: using an expert (and a highly respected one for that matter) is a way of influencing the reader (chapter 4.3 p. 18). The parts chosen from Paul Krugman's article from another newspaper are arguably quite intimidating for a reader: a prize winning expert is telling people to *be afraid*, saying that independence is a *recipe for disaster* and that Scotland will be *exposed to risks*. An interesting choice of words can be found from the Better Together comment, as they call Krugman's words an *intervention*. An intervention is done to someone when they are doing something wrong or even crazy, and in example 9a Better Together gets to imply that the entire notion of independence is so irrational that Scotland needs an outside intervention. This choice of words can be categorized as semantic framing, especially when alternative, more neutral options could have been used by the Better Together commentator (see section 4.5, p. 23 about semantic frames). The article continues with the expert testimonial:

**Example 9b (heraldscotland.com: Noble prize-winning economist: be very afraid of independence, September 8th, 2014)**

"An independent Scotland using Britain's pound would be in even worse shape than euro countries, which at least have some say in how the European Central Bank is run.

"I find it mind-boggling that Scotland would consider going down this path after all that has happened in the last few years.

"If Scottish voters really believe that it's safe to become a country without a currency, they have been badly misled."

The expert commenter continues by making two presuppositions: first he claims that it is taken-for-granted that Scotland's economy would be in bad shape if they were independent and still kept the pound. Second, he states that euro countries have bad economy (referring to the recent financial crises some euro countries have had), without making a clarification that not all euro countries are in trouble. Furthermore, the economist does not give the possibility of a new Scottish currency any chance either, making it seem as independence is simply impossible (section 4.4).

The economist also implies that someone has *mised* the Scottish people, and one can only assume that he is hinting to the SNP, portraying them as untrustworthy. After this the article moves on to comments from spokespersons from both Yes and No side, beginning with a No side comment:

**Example 9c (heraldscotland.com: Noble prize–winning economist: be very afraid of independence, September 8th, 2014)**

"Leaving the UK would put at risk the livelihoods of families in Scotland."

A Yes Scotland spokesman said: "The (Scottish Government's) Fiscal Commission contains two Nobel Laureate economists - Joseph Stiglitz and Sir James Mirrlees - and they have published a hugely detailed report recommending sharing the pound as the best option for both an independent Scotland and the rest of the UK.

"That also means Scotland being in control of 100% of our revenues, rather than the 7% under devolution at present, enabling us to build a stronger economy and fairer society.

"Scotland is in the top 20 of the world's wealthiest countries. We are rich in terms of the skills of our people, entrepreneurship, innovation, life sciences, and technology, and we are blessed with an abundance of natural resources including huge reserves of oil and gas and a quarter of Europe's renewables potential.

The first quotation from the No side uses the emotional appeal of family values: no Scottish family would want their livelihoods to be at risk. This comment can be seen as very effective especially when one considers the beginning of the article, where an expert all but promises that in an independent Scotland, the economy would fall into crisis (section 4.5, p. 26). On the other side of the argument, the Yes side spokesperson offers alternative expert opinions about the currency issue, and according to them, the situation does not seem as hopeless. A Yes side speaker also makes a presupposition that, once again, Scotland cannot use the full potential of its resources because of Westminster. After this they go on to an arguably emotional speech about Scotland, using many words with positive connotations: *wealthy, rich, innovation, blessed, abundance of natural resources...* and so on.

All in all, example 9 offers room for both sides of the argument, but it does seem that the Better Together agenda is more powerful in the article. One can argue that certain choices of what is written first and in what way are choices of agenda setting, and my opinion is that in example 9 the agenda was more on the unionist side. The next example is the end of the same article as

example 5 in section 5.1. The article goes on to interview an English born man with family, who shares his fears of independence:

**Example 10a (heraldscotland.com: *Can independence be lost or found in the search for our sense of belonging?*, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

The 40-something dad-of-two and Labour activist has stayed in Glasgow for 18 years. But he is a firm "No".

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It's this right mix of an identity that makes Nick worry about independence. "My Unionism is partly emotional because of my mixed family background," he says. "I like the idea of an overarching identity that excludes nobody within my family. To me a Yes vote would fray that. Identities ultimately do depend on there being events, causes, institutions that link people and bind people. Post-indy, those, fundamentally, will go."

Above one can see a clear sentiment of family values: emotional language connected to family and home is used and the interviewee goes as far as suggesting that a Yes vote would change the dynamics inside his own family, saying that someone might be *excluded* if Scotland votes yes. These kinds of words can trigger emotions in a reader and in a way the interview invites the audience to feel sorry for the man whose family is being torn apart (section 4.5, p. 26). The interview continues:

**Example 10b (heraldscotland.com: *Can independence be lost or found in the search for our sense of belonging?*, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

A consultant on public policy, especially housing, Nick fears his skills as a Glasgow-based expert may become less relevant to those south of the border if the big change comes. But he worries more about belonging to a new, independent Scotland. "I don't think I would feel the same way about this place if it had said that 'our values are so different from the rest of the UK that we have to go our own route'," he says.

"Tracy and I are constantly bashing around the question of whether we would move. We probably would, if there was a Yes vote. I would rather live in a country that was my country. This feels like my country at the moment but I am not sure it would post-independence. More: I don't want to raise my daughters in a situation where their identity is absolutely distinct from mine.

This part of the article expresses the fears of a 'working man': the man interviewed fears that jobs might change or disappear in an independent Scotland, and arguably many Scots share these same thoughts. The article also suggests that skilled working people, just like Nick, might be inclined to move away from Scotland if it became independent, which could be said to be a form of

fearmongering. To sum up, the article seen in both examples 5 and 10 suggests that independence will lead to a divided Scotland, where especially English-born citizens would be outsiders. The next example is from an article used in section 5.1 as well and it continues with the veteran statements.

**Example 11 (The Scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Defence is new battleground*, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

They went on: "We live in an uncertain world. Our homeland and our interest overseas are subject to constant threats: history shows how quickly and unexpectedly crises can emerge.

"Whilst alliances can increase our security, no nation can avoid its individual responsibility to defend its territory, interest and citizens both home and overseas. Britain's armed forces represent a potent safeguard against those who mean us harm."

Example 11 is the next part of the article in example 3 in section 5.1. The quotations published here imply that Scotland could not defend itself without England. In this example, a historical reference to the World Wars sets up a frame that says that crises can emerge at any time, and in that way it is implied that Scotland would be taking a huge risk by leaving the United Kingdom (section, 4.5 p. 25). The word *uncertainty* appears in the third paragraph and it can be argued that the article highlights the fact that a Yes vote would mean taking a dangerous risk with security. As said earlier, the veterans' words work as testimonial evidence where the interviewee's own experiences are used to arguably support a frame of risk. The next example discusses yet another uncertain issue of independence, finance.

**Example 12 (scotsman.com: *How would Scottish independence affect the stock market?*, July 28th 2014)**

A host of London-listed companies would face "significant challenges" should Scotland vote for independence in September, according to analysts at Barclays.

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"Although Scotland only accounts for circa 2pc of FTSE 350 sales, independence would present several companies with significant challenges," the analysts told clients in a research note.

Gas company BG Group, Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds Banking Group, drinks giant Diageo and defence company BAE Systems are among those companies that may experience a negative stock market reaction.

There could be "material consequences" for banks, the Barclays experts warned.

"The creation of a new Scottish currency would lead to the greatest risk given uncertainty on the scale of potential currency fluctuations.

The example above is another good example of expert testimonial evidence used in the media (section 4.3 p. 18). Barclays is a well-known bank, its headquarters are located in London but the bank operates all over the United Kingdom as well as in other parts of the world. The comments of an analyst from such a company would be held in high esteem, and therefore the analyst's (or expert's) name does not even seem relevant to print.

At the beginning, presupposition can be found in a form of a monoglossic utterance, when it said that companies *would* face challenges (section 4.4 p. 19–20). In this way it is presented that something is true without giving account to other opinions. The statement has some taken-for-grantedness in a form of a conditional clause as well: *should* Scotland become independent, companies will be in trouble. Otherwise the theme of uncertainty is clear in example 12: many banks and experts declared that Scotland would not be able to keep their currency, the pound, and the idea of a whole new currency raised a lot of questions. In the example the Barclays analyst says that a new currency would be the *greatest risk* of all, possibly leaving the reader wondering whether his or her finances are secure in an independent Scotland. The next example addresses an old, controversial question in Scottish politics about the North Sea oil, and to whom it belongs to.

**Example 13a (scotsman.com: Key topic: oil, date unknown)**

Opponents say the North Sea recourses are in decline and raise concerns over an economy built on a commodity which fluctuates so heavily in value.

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The real issue is over the amount of oil being recovered from the North Sea. This has been falling since the turn of the century and is about a third of its peak level. Unplanned shutdowns last year (2012/13) contributed to North Sea receipts almost halving from £10 billion to £5.6 billion. Scotland's public spending deficit jumped to £12.1 billion as a result.

This has meant difficult questions for the SNP Government over its flagship pledge to start a Norwegian-style oil fund to act as a nest egg for future generations. How can this be done when the country is in deficit and is likely to inherit a national debt in the region of £140 billion from the UK?

The theme of uncertainty is present in the article, as oil reserves are said to be something quite unreliable. Some statistical evidence in the form of numbers are given to demonstrate the effect oil reserves can have, implying that relying on oil would be dangerous for Scotland's economy. Metaphors are used in the article to describe SNP actions: *flagship pledge* means that SNP's plans

for the oil is the key point in their argument for independence. Consequently, the factual evidence presented in this article seems to make this point redundant. In addition, the metaphor *nest egg* is used to describe SNP's plans to savour the oil for future generations. As mentioned in 4.4 metaphors can be used to imply how to text ought to be interpreted: in this case it could be implied that the SNP leaders sit on empty promises that have no factual background. The text continues:

**Example 13b (scotsman.com: Key topic: oil, date unknown)**

About 42 billion barrels of oil have so far been extracted from the North Sea, but the volume and lifespan of existing oil and gas reserves remains uncertain. SNP energy minister Fergus Ewing has claimed it can last until the end of the century "provided we make the right policy decisions."

More independent estimated from Alex Kemp, Professor of Petroleum economics at Aberdeen University, indicate that production can continue until 2050, but by then it will be "quite, quite small."

The journalist continues by comparing SNP statements about the oil reserves with other expert opinions which they say are more independent; consequently implying that SNP statements are biased. The uncertainty of the oil reserves is underlined and Fergus Ewing's (energy minister) statements are, in a way, 'made empty' with the word *claimed* (indicating that his words might not be true).

The next example is very interesting and it highly concerns fear and the way it might be used to persuade the audience in the media. During the independence debate of 2014, the terrorist group ISIS released a video threatening to kill a Scottish aid worker. The following article made claims saying that this was ISIS's way to secure Scotland's Yes vote in order to weaken the United Kingdom. The article says:

**Example 14 (scotsman.com: 'Scottish independence link' to ISIS hostage, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

Professor Anthony Glee of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham said: "ISIS are masters of propaganda and realize the impact of selecting a Scot.

"They will hope by showing the UK is weak and unable to defend its citizens it will drive Scots to embrace independence.

"If they can no longer strike hostile forces who attack their citizens, the UK is clearly in danger of being a spent force heading towards division. And a weakened UK is exactly what the ISIS wants."

In example 14 expert testimonial of yet another professor specializing in the field in question is used to support the message of the article (section 4.3, p. 18). A statement from an expert like above certainly makes the impression that this is a person who knows what they are talking about; and as said before, it is difficult to argue or disagree with an expert even in such a controversial article. Example 14 can be said to be the clearest example of fearmongering in the articles used in this study. One can argue that in this news article, agenda setting has been taken quite far: it is all but said that by voting Yes for independence, the Scottish people are surrendering to terrorists and ‘playing to their pocket’, so to speak (see section 4.5 about agenda setting). Using the global and very real threat of terrorist can be said to be effective, since it is a growing concern for many western countries and the people living in them. Presupposition can be found in the last *if*- clause: it is implied that if Scotland becomes independent, they will not have any armed defenses, and furthermore, that ISIS will then attack Scotland (section 4.4, p. 20).

The next examples are different from the previous examples concerning uncertainty and fear: they discuss some uncertain or even scare-scenarios of the consequences of No vote. The following article reports the results of an opinion poll published before the referendum, in which English opinions about Scotland and Scotland’s future were measured.

**Example 15a (scotsman.com: *Leader comment: English opinion on independence, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

THERE is ammunition for both sides of Scottish independence referendum divide in a new poll of English opinion commissioned by Cardiff University and the ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change at Edinburgh University.

The beginning of the article clearly represents the game frame, as the two sides of the independence are presented as being in war, where events regarding independence are said to be *ammunition* for one or both of the fighting parties (section 4.5, pp. 25–28). The article continues:

**Example 15b (scotsman.com: *Leader comment: English opinion on independence, August 19th, 2014*)**

The so-called Future of England survey paints the most detailed picture yet of how England would regard a post-referendum Scotland, in the event of both a Yes vote and a No vote. What both scenarios have in common seems to be a hardening of English opinion against the aspirations of the Scottish nation. The emerging attitude seems to be one in which the English are keen to punish the Scots for flirting with – or in the case of a Yes vote, achieving – independence.



None of this is good news from a Scottish point of view. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the cumulative effect of the referendum seems to have been to sour relations between Scotland and its southern neighbour.

Example 15b discusses an undesirable possibility where Scotland has ruined its relationships with England, and that even if Scotland voted to stay in the union, England would somehow punish Scots for even *flirting* with independence. In a way these English attitudes reported in the article resemble some old medieval conventions where rebelling people or nations would be punished for treason. The article says that the English are *keen* to punish the Scots, furthermore painting a picture of a medieval executioner. It should be noted that the poll is about the opinions of English people, not political leaders, but nevertheless, the article suggest that the results of the poll say that English are angry at Scots, and that Scotland might be in trouble whichever way the independence vote goes.

**Example 15c (scotsman.com: Leader comment: English opinion on independence, August 19th, 2014)**

From a Scottish point of view, this report makes alarming reading. Regardless of the outcome of the 18 September referendum, England will remain our closest neighbour and our most important trading partner. As such, it would also be wise to have it as our closest ally.

Such a hope is beginning to look vain, at least now in the thick of a referendum campaign where withering criticisms of “Westminster” can often be taken as thinly-veiled attacks on England and the English.

It can be said that a certain agenda has been set for this article and the message seems to be that Scotland has made a mistake in even suggesting independence: it is highlighted that England is a close neighbour and a trading partner and in this way it is implied that perhaps Scotland should have stayed in good terms with such a powerful friend. Furthermore, it is suggested that the independence campaigners should not criticise the English government since the English can see them as ‘personal’ attacks on them and their nation (section 4.5). The use of the phrase *thinly-veiled* can be seen as criticism towards Yes campaigners, because it is implied that they have, instead of focusing on politics, actually showed ‘hatred’ towards the English and therefore angered them.

The following two examples address some reactions this poll had, and the way they were reported in the Scottish media.

**Example 16 (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: English backlash warning*, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

AN ENGLISH backlash against Scotland's demands for greater political power is looming, whatever the outcome of the independence referendum.

Alex Salmon's proposal for a currency union are opposed by two-to-one among English voters, who say the UK should block an independent Scotland joining Nato and the European Union, according to new polling evidence today.

Even after a No vote, people south of the Border say public spending in Scotland should be reduced to bring it into line with the UK average, which the SNP has warned could see £4 billion removed from the Scottish budget.

"The English appear in no mood to be particularly accommodating however Scots choose to vote in their independence referendum," said researcher Professor Richard Wyn Jones, of Cardiff University. "There is strong English support for reducing levels of public spending in Scotland to the UK average – a development that would lead to savage cuts in public services north of the Border

"There is also overwhelming support for limiting Scottish MPs at Westminster. The question for Scottish voter is whether they can rely on pledges about the consequences of a No vote, when such pledges do not seem to be supported in the largest and most important part of the Union."

This example shows the overall complexity of the situation and discussion in Scotland before the vote. The article seems to prefer a more pro-independence side: at least it can be said to shed some doubt about the profits of staying in the Union. It is worth noticing that the article was posted well before the Scotsman announced its stand on the referendum issue (see section 3.1 *Description of the Data*). The headline of the article supports the game frame: the word *backlash* refers to wars or fighting, painting a picture of angry Englishmen beyond the border (section 4.5, pp. 25–28).

Example 16 uses expert testimonial as well: researcher Professor Richard Wyn Jones from Cardiff University (section 4.3, p. 18). The message Professor Jones is supporting is that the English want to make *savage* cuts on public spending in Scotland. The choice of the word *savage* can be seen as semantic framing, since alternative, less strong, words could have been used here as well. The scenario presented in the example: lowering public spending and reducing Scottish MPs in the British parliament can be considered something that fights against the core values of Scottish identity. The tone in example 16 suggests that the English are against the Scots, and the overall

message could be that perhaps Scotland would be better independent. The results of the opinion poll in question must have caused alarm and doubt amongst the Scottish people reading about it, and therefore this kind of reporting might have had a strong effect on some of the voters. The same theme can be found in the next example, where a celebrity of Scottish origin addresses the same fears of what might happen to Scotland if they stayed in the United Kingdom.

**Example 17a (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Alan Cumming in 'Yes' call, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

The X-Men actor returned to his native Scotland to join Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and other pro-independence campaigners making a final push for votes ahead of September 18. Cumming, who also stars in hit US show *The Good Wife*, was greeted by hundreds of enthusiastic supporters as he campaigned with Ms Sturgeon in Glasgow.

The beginning of the article highlights Alan Cumming's success as an actor: the reader is reminded of his most famous parts and it is also said that hundreds of supporters had come to listen to him. The decision to highlight this can be seen in at least two ways. First, it can be seen as being proud of Cumming's success as a Scottish born actor, but the other way of looking at it is to say that the article underlines the fact that Mr Cumming is not a political expert in any way, and that the people gathering up to see him are just his fans, not necessarily people supporting his cause. If one chooses to look at the article in the second way, it can be said to belittle Cumming's, and other famous people's contributions to the Yes cause (section 4.5). The text continues:

**Example 17b (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Alan Cumming in 'Yes' call, September 8th, 2014*)**

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Cumming was in Scotland the day after a YouGov poll put support for independence ahead for the first time in the campaign. He described the referendum debate as a "huge political issue about the destiny of a whole country". He said: "It's an historic moment for us all, we now have a chance in this country to have our own destiny in our own hands."

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Cumming said: "I've always voted Labour in the elections I have voted in in this country, that's because I believe in a good health service, a great education, and that should all be free. Those things are under huge threat, as we all know. "I believe if we don't vote Yes we're going to see a huge change in the amount of money Scotland's going to be given by the Westminster government. "I really don't believe they're going to say 'vote

No and we'll reward you' because all they have done is threaten and bully us up till now."

In the quotations Mr. Cumming lists some highly emotive and important ideas for Scots in particular: free health service and education (section 4.5, p. 26). Cumming continues by stating that these things are *under huge threat*, and makes a further presupposition by saying that *everyone knows* that they are at risk. In the article Mr. Cumming is saying that Scotland would not be the same if it did not vote for Yes, and therefore speaks to many people who fear for their Scottish values. All in all, example 17 continues on the same theme of uncertainty in the case of a No vote, but the article can be said to be framed in a way that might make Alan Cumming seem like an unreliable source.

The final theme of this analysis section is about Alex Salmond and the way the independence debate personified around him in the media.

### **5.3 Alex Salmond, the face of independence?**

As said in the theory section, a political issue or a debate can often be personified around a certain person, therefore perhaps taking attention away from the actual issue at hand. Based on the research materials used in this study, one can conclude that in the Independence debate of 2014, the issues raised by the nationalist were often surrounding the head of the Scottish National Party, Alex Salmond.

#### **Example 18 (scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: 36% of firms may move*, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

"Being part of the UK single market is vital for Scottish businesses.

"Today they have the strength, stability and security of the UK pound, with no barriers between them and their customers elsewhere in the UK. The only thing putting this at risk is Alex Salmond's obsession with independence."

Example 18 is a quotation from the director of the Better Together campaign, Blair McDougall, in an article that concerns poll results over how Scottish businesses felt independence might affect their business. In this quote McDougall clearly suggest Alex Salmond is the only one who wants independence, thereby personalising the entire independence movement around one person (see section 4.5, pp. 26–27 about person specific language). Furthermore, it is implied that Alex Salmond is *obsessed* and therefore not in his right mind, framing him a 'social deviant' and

untrustworthy (see section 4.5, p. 23 about syntactical structures). The next example is an article about Mr Salmond's own speech.

**Example 19 (The Scotsman.com: *Scottish independence: Salmon's letter to voters, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014*)**

"Our choice, our opportunity, our time. Wake up Friday morning to the first day of a better country.

"Wake up knowing you did this – you made it happen." Voters would dismiss "increasingly desperate and absurd scare stories," according to Mr Salmond, which he claimed were being generated by Downing Street.

In example 19, Alex Salmond addresses the 'scare tactics' or fearmongering done by the opposing side. One can argue that there is some message framing to be found on the way the news story addresses Salmond's words: he is directly quoted and it is highlighted that these are Salmond's words, not the papers'. Word choices such as *according to* and *which he claimed* distance the newspaper from Salmond's claims and perhaps imply that what Salmond is saying about 10 Downing Street is somewhat paranoid, consequently making him, once more, sound untrustworthy.

The next example is the first part of the article in example 13 in section in 5.2.

**Example 20 (scotsman.com: *Key topic: oil, date unknown*)**

"It's Scotland's oil," was the mantra which drove the rise of the Nationalist movement in the 1970s. Four decades later, the country's lucrative North Sea resources remain at the heart of the independence debate.

This issue is personal for Scotland's First Minister and Scottish National Party leader Alex Salmond. He worked as an oil economist for Royal Bank of Scotland in the early 1980s before entering politics and devised its Oil and Gas Index which is still in use today. The SNP leader points to neighbouring Norway, a country of similar size to Scotland, which made the most of its own 1970s oil boom and is now one of the most affluent global nations with an oil fund for the future generations worth £470 billion.

Mr Salmond even branded Westminster MPs "thieves" who had plundered Scotland's "black gold", as he clashes with David Cameron this year over the future of North Sea reserves.

At the beginning of this example the use of the semi-provocative word *mantra* can be seen as a way of painting the nationalist as a group fanatics, so to speak; chanting mantras is often associated with some kinds of religious worship ceremonies (section 4.5, p. 23). The first sentence of this example can also be interpreted as indicating that the nationalist keep repeating the same

thing over and over again. These type of word choices can be seen as ridiculing the Nationalist side, and as a result render their words as unimportant and a non-issue.

The article addressed Scotland's history in the 20th century when the idea of "Scotland's oil" arose and many people began to feel that oil could be the way for Scotland to arise as an independent and wealthy country. The article frames the oil issue around Alex Salmond, whose history with oil is mentioned, as well as his recent comments about the issue (section 4.5 pp. 26–27). He is said to have *even* branded Westminster MPs as thieves, which can be interpreted that the journalist is implying that Mr. Salmond has taken his accusations quite far.

The game frame is also present in example 20 when Salmond and Cameron are said to *clash* over the North Sea oil. This kind of framing makes it look like the oil is a toy over which the two leaders are fighting about, and this way might diminish the importance of the actual discussion. The last example of this section is a column written by David Torrance, a columnist for Herald Scotland.

**Example 21a (heraldscotland.com: *Beware of false distinctions in the independence debate*, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

I guess you could say I'm an Anglophile, something I have in common with the First Minister, although I've never been terribly convinced he has much understanding of the English psyche. But then, his experience is even more limited than mine: sleepers or flights to London and 23 years in the Westminster village.

To use Alex Salmond's own terminology, last Wednesday he embarked on a "day trip" to Carlisle in order to reassure England - or rather northern England - that even after independence they would "remain Scotland's closest friends, as well as our closest neighbours".

In this column the writer discusses whether there is actually much difference between England and Scotland by using his own personal observations as testimonial evidence on the matter (the columnist has lived in both England and Scotland) (see chapter 4.3, p. 18 about personal experience). At the beginning of the article, Torrance writes that he does not think Alex Salmond understands the English psyche. This is a bold and even a provocative statement, and it is made to suggest that Alex Salmond does not necessarily know what he is talking about when he (as the face of independence) says that Scotland is different from England. This idea is emphasised by saying that Salmond's experience is *even more limited than mine*. The column continues by evaluating Salmond's speeches in a critical manner:

**Example 21b (heraldscotland.com: Beware of false distinctions in the independence debate, April 28th, 2014)**

As ever it was a nice, pithy line that masked a multitude of contradictions. Announcing a "feasibility study" into a high-speed rail line from Scotland to England and a "borderlands economic forum" (assuming Scotland votes Yes), Salmond said Cumbria had "nothing to lose, and much to gain, from the establishment of a successful independent Scotland".

This was disingenuous on a number of levels. Not only did talk of a "borderlands" initiative tacitly concede independence would create more difficulties than exist at present, but there was no mention of less attractive consequences such as continuing to charge English students tuition fees (in contravention of EU rules). If he'd made the same speech in Newcastle then he'd no doubt have been reminded of the time he lured Amazon - on the cusp of creating much-needed jobs in that part of England - further north with a £1.8 million sweetener.

The article clearly suggests that Salmond is hiding things in his speeches and does not tell the truth about the negative aspects of independence: this is, for example, done by using presupposition with evaluative, disapproving, phrases such as [...] *masked a multitude of contradictions* (section 4.4, p. 20). The writer repeatedly implies that not only does Alex Salmond leave important things unsaid, but he hides *many* things from his audience: Torrance writes that Salmond's words were *disingenuous in a number of levels* and his *talk of "borderland" initiative tacitly concede*. These kinds of presuppositions make Alex Salmond seem like a social deviant and it is my opinion that this column is strongly framed to ensure the reader of Alex Salmond's untrustworthiness. The text continues:

**Example 21c (heraldscotland.com: Beware of false distinctions in the independence debate, April 28th, 2014)**

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And although these days Mr Salmond oozes warm words about the English, three years ago - in the hubristic wake of election victory - he told one London-based journalist that although England and Scotland shared the same language "you couldn't get two more different cultures", while in 1999 he claimed Britishness had been co-opted by thugs and racists while Englishness was an "aristocratic, almost mediaeval concept".

But then Mr Salmond is prone, on occasion, to say odd things. Take his forthcoming interview in GQ magazine in which he praises "certain aspects" of Vladimir Putin, particularly his restoration of "a substantial part of Russian pride" which, he added, "must be a good thing". The First Minister also conceded that the very English Ukip leader, Nigel Farage, possessed a "certain bonhomie".

In the last part of example 21 Alex Salmond's character is furthermore questioned, by comparing what he says about the English now, to what he has said in the past, arguably again implying that Mr. Salmond cannot be trusted. The writer lists some of the things Salmond has said, and then makes a statement *that Mr Salmond is prone [...] to say odd things*. In this statement the writer suggests that Salmond's words are not to be taken seriously, because they are *odd*, i.e. strange and unusual.

In the last part of this example there are two emotion triggering concepts: Vladimir Putin, the generally disliked Russian president and Nigel Farage, the English right-wing populist party leader. The decision to write that Salmond's has said something positive about these people, who trigger negative emotions in many people, can be said to be framing: the article to suggest that Salmond does not support the democratic, more left-wing values held high in Scotland, even though the words were taken out of context and the reader cannot know when or why these things were said (section 4.5, p. 26).

To conclude this section, it can be said that not only was the Yes campaign personified around Mr Salmond and his personality, but it is clear that in many examples he was portrayed as a liar or a concealer of truths, his personality was in some cases ridiculed and his competence as a politician was often questioned. Even Mr. Salmond's sanity was questioned in some examples. All in all, it can be said that in the unionist side Alex Salmond was framed as a social deviant. When the news stories make the most prominent face of the Scottish National Party seem ridiculous and untrustworthy, it can make the entire Yes campaign and the independence referendum seem untrustworthy and ridiculous. Used like this, the way of personifying a debate around someone is a powerful tool of persuasion, and it is not a wonder the SNP felt the need to change their leader and key figure after the referendum. After all, Nicola Sturgeon has yet to go through as much scrutinizing and criticising in the media as Salmond has, and therefore, is arguably a much more desirable leader for the SNP. The last section of this analysis section will summarize the findings made in this study.

#### **5.4 Summary of findings**

As said in section 4.4 agenda setting means *emphasis* on certain issues as well as decision to leave something out. It means the decisions editors and journalists etc. make when they write and publish news stories. In this study the research materials showed emphasis on the three themes that were examined in the analysis, and it can be concluded that both the Scotsman and Herald



Scotland emphasized these themes by deciding both what to write about, and how to write about it.

As explained in this paper, Scotland has a strong national identity as Scottish, not just British. And furthermore, some Scots see themselves as only Scots and regard England as a separate, but often oppressing force. On the other side there is a strong feeling of unity with England, and especially English-born Scots do not feel a strong separate identity with England. The historical references made on the data were closely linked to Scotland's history as an oppressed nation and very few historical references were made to embrace a successful union with England. The idea of national identity is filled with emotion, and therefore it is often used as a form of persuasion in the media. In addition, historical references can further trigger emotions and connections between things, which is why the Nationalist side in particular seemed to use it as a framing tool in their speeches and public letters.

Overall the biggest issue in the independence referendum seemed to be uncertainty: most of the articles raised the same issues and questions over what might happen if Scotland became independent. Voting yes was often framed to be like taking a huge risk, and the data showed evidence of some fearmongering, where worst case scenarios were often supported by expert testimonials. The Yes side was also able to use uncertainty for their benefit, when English opinions about the Scottish situation were published, but based on this study, scaremongering seemed to be more effective when it was done by the Better Together side.

Finally, the Yes side was strongly personified around the SNP leader Alex Salmond. In some of the articles his words were connected to his person and character, which in a way this took some attention away from the actual message, i.e. what he was saying. Many of the tools of persuasion introduced in this paper were used in the data, but some of them, like the use of expert testimonial stood out. It is clear that media are eager use respected experts (often academics) to support their claims, and give interviews over difficult topics. Obviously using experts is both wise and necessary in many cases, since not many people would hold a news source reliable if their stories were never based on facts proven by professionals.

The final section of this study is the conclusion, where I will briefly discuss the overall findings of this paper, some difficulties that I might have faced during this research, as well as some possibilities for further research.

## 6 Conclusion

“The media are the major primary sources of national political information; for most, mass media provide the best—and only—easily available approximation of ever-changing political realities” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 185). One might argue that the validity of this paper can be explained by this sentence alone. It is important to examine the mass media and its effect on people, especially at this time where the media is going through some major changes. This paper has examined a new kind of media, online news sites, from where an increasing amount of people acquire their news and information. Considering the possibility that people who consume more online news may be receiving a more narrow view of social issues than paper readers may not be relevant to this particular study, since the phenomenon in question (Scotland’s independence vote) is something that arguably touched every person considering themselves as Scottish, or with close ties to Scotland, and so would be seeking information about this particular campaigning, whether it would be from the internet or from printed papers. Today the internet is full of different forms of media, and people can pick and choose from where they get their information. There is a lot of discussion over the trustworthiness of the different sites that can be upheld and written by anyone, i.e. by people who do not answer to any ethical code of journalist. However, the ‘mainstream media’, like the newspapers used in this study are considered trustworthy and it can be said that it would be quite difficult for them to publish information that was clearly not true. In these kinds of media, the way of influence is subtle and by all means not always intentional from the publishing side, as was mentioned in section 4.

One of the major difficulties I faced while writing this paper was the scarceness of data, since I was searching for articles from three years back. Neither of the papers chosen had an online archive of their printed papers from the time period examined, but since online articles were found, online news was chosen as the data. Unfortunately there was no way to tell in which way the news were laid out on the site during the time they were published, so such things as layout choices had to be left out. Furthermore, Herald Scotland’s website has a limited amount of articles that one can read for free, which made data searching somewhat difficult.

The attempt of this study was to give the reader a good general view of the Scottish independence referendum by looking at Scotland’s history as its own nation within the United Kingdom as well as Scotland’s present day. Also the main political parties and other political forces behind the two campaigns were introduced so that the ideas present in the data would be clear to a reader not so familiar with Scottish political field.

In conclusion it can be said that the independence referendum was very much debated on the media, and the selected news sources, scotsman.com and heraldscotland.com, represented quite a vast view of the situation. The two newspapers are considered reliable and good news sources and it can be seen from the data that in many articles several point of views concerning the independence were both published and debated. Nevertheless, it can be said that this study shows that in several cases different ways of media persuasion were found and emphasis on the possible risk and uncertainty of Scotland's independence was often the theme of the articles studied. It is also my opinion that the entire Yes Scotland –campaign was very much personalized around the SNP leader Alex Salmond, making some of the debate more about him and his person, rather than the actual message. The research materials used in this study showed that uncertainty and fear of the outcome of the possible independence played a major part in why the referendum of 2014 failed, but the reasons cannot be found from the media alone. Nevertheless, the news articles examined in this paper did draw attention on these issues, and these findings are in correlation with the fact that both papers announced their support for the No vote before the referendum.

Studying media influence can be taken a lot further by examining, for example, psychological aspect of message receiving, individual reactions to particular news. Like many scientists have done when researching mass media. Nevertheless, in this study I have simply looked at some particular online articles and made my own interpretations on them based on some ideas that persuasion, presupposition, agenda setting and message framing have given me. In my opinion this gives a new perspective on the political writing in the media during the independence referendum of 2014 in Scotland. Ideas for further study concerning this subject are not difficult to find, since the independence debate has already sparked again in the Scottish media. It will certainly be interesting to see whether the tone of the media is any different from 2014, now when the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union.

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