

**Scotland's future in Scotland's hands? – A thematic analysis of the
referendum-related editorials of six newspapers during the last five weeks
of the Scottish independence referendum campaign of 2014**

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Arbetets titel: Skottlands framtid i Skottlands händer? – Tematisk analys av ledartiklar publicerade i sex tidningar under de sista fem veckorna före folkomröstningen om skotsk självständighet år 2014	
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Abstrakt: Den 18 september 2014 hölls folkomröstningen om skotsk självständighet. Sexton år fyllda i Skottland bosatta fick besvara frågan: borde Skottland vara ett självständigt land? Folkomröstningen hölls femton år efter att Skottland fick ett parlament för första gången efter unionen med England som upprättades 1707. Självständighetskampanjen skapade ett oerhört intresse och entusiasm för politik i Skottland vilket ledde till att en rekordhög andel av de röstberättigade, 97 procent, registrerade sig i röstlängden och 85 procent röstade. Efter en lång och färgstark kampanj röstade 55 procent emot självständigheten så Skottland fortsatte som en del av Förenade konungariket Storbritannien och Nordirland. Syftet med denna avhandling var att identifiera de viktigaste temana, ämnena och mönstren i tidningsdebatten kring skotsk självständighet. För detta ändamål valde jag sex kvalitetstidningar vars ledartiklar under sexton veckors tid jag samlade. Korpusen innehåller totalt 1061 ledartiklar. Själva forskningsperioden blev till slut de sista fem veckorna före folkomröstningen och under den tiden publicerades 343 ledartiklar. Bland dem fanns 70 artiklar som behandlade självständighetsfolkomröstningen och dem analyserade jag med hjälp av en metod som heter tematisk analys. Som en produkt av denna analys skapade jag en tematisk modell som består av 57 tematiska komponenter som i den slutliga modellen blev delteman. Dessa delteman grupperade jag till 13 teman som i sin tur blev delade i tre huvudkategorier. Som en helhet har modellen alltså tre nivåer. <i>Kampanj</i> var den största av de tre huvudkategorier och den omfattade nästan hälften av alla kodade ord. De viktigaste temana var <i>YES rörelse</i> , <i>Osäker framtid</i> och <i>Positiv UK</i> som alla hör till olika huvudkategorier. De mest omskrivna deltemana i ledartiklarna var <i>Nya befogenheter</i> som mestadels diskuterade befogenheter, som det lovades att Skotska parlamentet skulle få efter att Skottland hade avvisat självständigheten, och <i>Dålig BT</i> som kritiserade Better Together kampanjen för att de inte framhävde unionens positiva sidor för Skottland. <i>Salmond</i> och <i>YES budskap</i> kritiserade YES kampanjens ledare och argument medan <i>Ekonomisk inverkan</i> och <i>Valuta</i> betonade risker och otryggheter med självständighet. På basis av detta arbete – och forskning gjord av andra forskare och politiska kommentatorer – kan man konstatera att Nej-kampanjen medvetet och avsiktligt valde att betona självständighetens negativa verkningar och risker och senare under forskningsperioden bytte till en mer positiv strategi som fokuserade på löften om mer självstyre för Skottland. Med undantag av den enda tidningen som stödde skotsk självständighet upprepade och förstärkte tidningarna Nej-kampanjens budskap.	
Nyckelord: Tematisk analys, dagstidningar, ledartiklar, Skottland, självständighet	
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ÅBO AKADEMI – FACULTY OF ARTS, PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

Abstract for master's thesis

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Title: Scotland's future in Scotland's hands? – A thematic analysis of the referendum-related editorials of six newspapers during the last five weeks of the Scottish independence referendum campaign of 2014	
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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>On the 18th of September 2014, the Scottish electorate faced a momentous choice: should Scotland be an independent country or not. Fifteen years after the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament after a hiatus of more than 300 hundred years, people resident in Scotland decided whether the nation was ready to take the next step and dissolve the union and continue as a sovereign state. The independence referendum campaign created enthusiasm for and interest in politics unprecedented in the modern-day UK, which was reflected in the record-high 97 per cent voter registration and 85 per cent turnout. After a colourful and eventful campaign, 55 per cent of the voters rejected independence so Scotland remained as a part of the UK.</p> <p>The goal of this study was to identify the most important themes and issues of the Scottish independence referendum debate in six broadsheet newspapers' independence-referendum-related editorials from the last five weeks before the independence referendum. The data corpus collected for the study contained 1061 newspaper editorials, 343 of them published during the last five weeks of the campaign. Among those editorials, there were 70 that were referendum-related and thus included in the analysis. The research method chosen was thematic analysis, which produced detailed and complex results and a wealth of data for further analysis. As a result of this analysis, a model with 57 thematic components – subthemes in the final model – was created. The subthemes were grouped under 13 themes, which were in turn grouped under three top-level categories thus creating a three-tier model of the thematic construction of the data set.</p> <p>Of the three top-level groups, <i>Campaign</i> contained almost half of all coded words. The most important themes in the editorials were <i>Yes movement</i>, <i>Uncertain future</i> and <i>Positive UK</i>, which were all parts of different top-level groups. As most of the press were opposed to Scottish independence, the most written-about subthemes were <i>New powers</i> which mostly discussed the promised powers coming to the Scottish Parliament after a No vote and <i>Poor BT</i> which criticised the Better Together campaign for not making a positive case for the Union – which the papers then made for them. These were followed by <i>Salmond</i> and <i>Yes message</i> – which were mostly critical of the arguments of the pro-independence campaign and its leader – and <i>Economic impact</i> and <i>Currency</i> which for the most part highlighted the risks and uncertainties of independence.</p> <p>Based on this study – and research done by other scholars and commentators – it seems safe to argue that the No campaign opted to deliberately emphasise risks and uncertainties surrounding independence and, at a later stage, shifted their main focus to new powers for the Scottish Parliament and a federated Britain. The newspapers – with the exception of the sole independence-supporting paper – echoed and amplified those messages.</p>	
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I BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

On 18 September 2014, people resident in Scotland voted in a referendum to decide whether the ancient nation should remain in the United Kingdom or continue its journey as an independent country once more. Like few countries before it, Scotland, after a colourful and eventful campaign, rejected independence deciding to give the union another chance. Considering the fact that less than a third of the electorate supported independence in 2012, few people expected the independence movement to turn the referendum campaign into a white-knuckle race especially when they were against the whole Great British establishment and virtually all of the mainstream media but they did.

Scotland is often referred to as a stateless nation. It was never annexed to be a part of England like Wales but became a part of the UK by treaty. Despite Scotland being “bought and sold for English gold”, Scotland agreed to enter a Union and therefore, it has been argued that it must be allowed to leave if its people so wishes. After a tumultuous beginning and a strenuous restoration of discipline, Scotland was content with its role of a junior partner in the Union as it enjoyed the benefits of being a part of a genuine world power. Popular support of Scottish self-determination is a relatively new phenomenon and what is remarkable about it is that the movement has been peaceful and fought by democratic means.

The Scottish Covenant is an interesting document in the history of the Scottish nation and its quest for self-determination. More than two million Scots signed a petition supporting home rule for Scotland in the late 1940s but despite the massive popularity, the initiative was disregarded by the political parties. The devolution referendum of 1979 was tinged with a lack of enthusiasm on both sides and devolution was postponed for another twenty years. The 1997 devolution referendum resulted in the Scottish Parliament being reconvened after nearly 300 years. Even though the proportional representation was designed to prevent one party achieving a majority, the Scottish National Party (SNP) broke the system and did just that in 2011. As a referendum on independence had been one of their manifesto promises, the Scots for the first time got a chance to decide whether they wanted to retain the Union or go it alone.

The Scottish independence referendum campaign was said to be unlike any political campaign before it. It produced an unprecedented enthusiasm for politics in Scotland which resulted in political discussion finding its way to places where it had never been encountered before and a remarkable 97 per cent voter registration (Macwhirter

2014b:11). The atmosphere in Scotland before the referendum was said to have been extraordinary. 16-17-year-olds were allowed a vote for the first time but also many older voters that had never voted before registered to vote. The turnout of 85 per cent proves that people found the referendum important and felt that, perhaps unlike a normal general election, they had a chance to influence the direction the country would be travelling in afterwards.

Knowing what happened in the past is necessary to be able to understand the present and understanding the present is essential for being able to comprehend a process of making a decision about the future and how people try to influence it. As will be discussed later on, newspapers play a bigger role in forming the debate than their falling circulation figures would indicate (cf. chapter 3). Newspaper editorials or leaders that this study focuses on present the official views of newspapers. Unlike broadcasters, newspapers have no duty to remain impartial in the debate and many of them are keen to argue for their views.

The goal of this study is to identify the most important themes and issues of the Scottish independence referendum debate in six newspapers' independence-referendum-related editorials of the last five weeks before the Scottish independence referendum including the actual polling day of 18 September 2014. This will be done using a method called thematic analysis and its inductive variant where there are no pre-determined coding frames i.e. no themes were automatically included or excluded before the first round of coding. While the thesis makes no claims that the results are generalisable to the independence debate or even the written press's role in it as a whole, identifying these themes and issues is an important task and the results will add a fresh angle to a body of studies that already present a comprehensive picture of the debate.

The hypothesis is that much of the editorial discussion will revolve around the economic issues connected to independence. Both campaigns presented figures depicting how much Scottish households will gain or lose by voting for independence and how leaving the UK would affect the Scottish GDP. Also, the democratic deficit Scotland suffers as a part of the UK, i.e. that Scotland – or Wales or Northern Ireland for that matter – can never get its way in the most important issues unless England agrees, is expected to be discussed. Lastly, Scotland's resources – oil in particular – and how they have been managed by Westminster are other issues that may take up a significant part of the discussion.

The focus of the study is solely on the editorials of the selected newspapers and it takes no stance on how the papers reported referendum-related news elsewhere on their

pages. News stories and columns published in these papers during the period have been used as sources for providing additional information but the actual findings of this study have reference solely to the editorials and their contents. Some of the papers had both pro-independence and pro-union columnists and while the balance between them would be an interesting subject to study, this work provides no information about it.

Opinion pieces quoted in this study are not necessarily facts and, with regard to the significant uncertainty surrounding many issues and the fact that it was impossible to know the outcome of post-independence negotiations, in many cases they are just that: opinions. But it is also a fact that quite often the main difference between opinion pieces by columnists and newspaper editorials is that the columnist has their name and picture printed beside their opinion while an editorial has the paper's masthead printed above theirs. The editorials are often published under the headline of "The Guardian View" or "The Telegraph View" and not as hard facts even if they are sometimes presented as news.

In this work, the different themes and issues are presented in as clear and coherent a manner and order as possible considering the fact that the web of issues is very complex and many of the themes affect other themes in numerous ways. Because of the complexity and interconnectedness of the issues, a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable.

The thematic analysis resulted in a vast number of codes that were then developed into subthemes which in turn were combined into themes. The themes in this study fall under three different top-level groups. These are then compared with regard to word counts of coded words for each of these levels as well as different newspapers and weeks.

2. Historical background

This chapter will look at the historical background of Scotland and the Union. First, there is a brief introduction to Medieval Scotland, a presentation of the period known as the Wars of Scottish Independence, how Scotland achieved English recognition of its independence and discussion of what led to the establishment of the United Kingdom. Section 2.2 discusses Scotland as a part of the UK in the 18th and 19th centuries. Section 2.2.4 discusses teaching Scottish history in Scottish schools or more accurately the lack of it until relatively recently.

2.1 Scotland as an independent country

Keating (2001:199) identifies Scotland as an early European state and argues that Scotland's status as a stateless nation is less disputed than those of Quebec or Catalonia because it had its own monarchy and parliamentary institutions and was able to avoid

annexation despite facing a very real threat from England especially in the 13th and 14th centuries. With regard to this study and the Scottish dream of independence, it is a significant fact that Scotland was recognised as an independent country and only lost its independence after agreeing to join a union with England.

Broun (2007) identifies the year 900 as the beginning of the kingdom of Scotland when the Gaelic name “Alba” was adopted as the name of the country and the kingship stayed, for the first time, in one family for a sustained period. Although the kingdom did not include the whole of present-day Scotland, its beginnings were characterised by relative peace – at least on a medieval scale – with its neighbours.

King Alexander III of Scotland in 1278, while giving homage to Edward I, stated “I become your man for the lands which I hold of you in the kingdom of England for which I owe homage, saving my kingdom”. But he continued: “No one has right to homage for my kingdom of Scotland save God alone, and I hold it only of God” (McHardy 2015:82). How Scotland achieved an unconditional admission of independence from England and why the Scots voluntarily gave up their independence in 1707 will be discussed in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

2.1.2 The Wars of Independence

The period of near constant warfare between Scotland and England between 1286 and 1353 is often called the Wars of Scottish Independence but Watson (2007a) is quick to point out that the term does not mean that Scotland first became independent after or because of these wars. The two kingdoms had enjoyed relatively amicable relations for most of the 13th century but the death of King Alexander III of Scotland led to King Edward I of England achieving bigger influence in Scottish affairs than perhaps was desirable from a Scottish perspective. Nevertheless, Scotland needed Edward’s advice and the price for it was acknowledging his overlordship of the country.

Despite strong pressure from Edward, he did not receive a general admission and had to settle for acknowledgements of the claimants for the Scottish crown. The new king, John Balliol, had to swear homage and fealty to Edward. It soon became clear that Edward’s goal was to subjugate Scotland and that if the Scots wanted to preserve their sovereignty they had to prepare for war. Even with a negotiated alliance with France, Scotland was not strong enough to survive the war and soon found itself kingless and under direct English government (Watson 2007a).

But Scotland was not content with being treated as a part of England. There was resistance that soon turned to open revolt led by William Wallace in the south-west and

Andrew Murray (de Moray) in the north-east. The resistance was supported by the church that did not want to lose its own independence. Named Guardians of Scotland, Wallace and Murray achieved a famous victory at the battle of Stirling Bridge. However, Murray was seriously wounded in the battle and died soon afterwards leaving Wallace to continue as the sole Guardian of Scotland (Ross 2009:56). After Stirling Bridge in October 1297, Wallace and Murray as “leaders of the army of the kingdom of Scotland and the community of the same” famously sent a letter to the Hanseatic League in order to restore trading links with the confederation (Lynch 2007). This was a way to emphasise the independence of Scotland.

Wallace managed to clear most of Scotland of English officials prompting Edward’s return. Wallace achieved success in a guerrilla war against the English and making raids into Northumbria but in July 1298, Edward’s army caught up with that of Wallace’s and the Scots were defeated in full battle in Falkirk. However, Wallace managed to escape and continued his guerrilla warfare until he was captured, sentenced and finally executed in 1305 (Ross 2009:56).

Perhaps the only historical figure more revered in Scotland than Wallace, Robert the Bruce picked up the battle soon after. What Houston (2008:26) calls “a complex train of events” led Robert to become, first, the leader of the resistance to the English and, later on, the King of Scotland. In the beginning of his kingship Robert had only limited support so, in addition to the wrath of Edward, he had plenty of Scottish enemies. Edward’s death in 1307 caused great turmoil in England so King Robert was able to focus on his enemies in Scotland (Watson 2007b).

The Bruce was able to hold his first parliament in 1309 and a few years later he could insist that Scottish noblemen declared support for him or faced losing their privileges. In 1314, Robert achieved, perhaps, the most significant victory in Scottish history when he defeated a full-blown English army at the battle of Bannockburn. Watson (2007a) lists “detailed preparations, high morale, disciplined leadership, and an element of pre-emption” as the most important factors that made the famous victory possible. Being in full control of Scotland and with the English beaten and driven out of Scotland, Robert could focus on his main goal: getting Edward II to acknowledge Scottish independence and Robert’s kingship.

The Declaration of Arbroath was written in 1320 in order to get papal recognition of Scottish independence and Robert’s kingship. It was sent by Scottish earls and barons on behalf of the whole community of the kingdom of Scotland. It famously states:

As long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, that we are fighting, but for freedom - for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself (Declaration of Arbroath 1320 National Records of Scotland).

As well as being a declaration of independence, the declaration was a form of medieval diplomacy. The pope had worked as a mediator trying to establish a truce between Scotland and England but the Scots had defied his efforts by continuing their raids of northern England (National Records of Scotland). Macwhirter (2013:48-49) writes that the Declaration of Arbroath is “one of the finest statements of defiance in the English language”. In addition to portraying England as an aggressor and praising King Robert for liberating Scotland from English rule, it remarkably questions the Divine Right of Kings and states that a king that no longer is able to protect Scotland can be driven out and replaced.

Pope John XXII recognised Robert I as the king of Scotland in 1324. In 1327-28, Robert’s success on the battlefields continued and in early March 1328, amid fears of losing Northumberland, England abandoned its claim to the overlordship of Scotland. The Treaty of Edinburgh, signed on 17 March and ratified on 4 May, stated that Scotland was to be “separate in all things from the kingdom of England, entire, free, and quit, without any subjection, servitude, claim or demand” (Pittock 2003:112). Watson (2007a) identifies the Treaty as a “categorical admission of Scottish independence”.

King Robert died a year later and soon after that, the hostilities were renewed and continued for more than another twenty years. The wars were characterised by extreme cruelty and resulted what Watson (2007a) calls “bitter enmity” between the countries but she writes that the Scots had also gained “a firm national identity”. Even after the Wars of Independence, Scotland and England fought each other more or less for the next 300 years but according to Macwhirter (2013:49), Scotland’s independence was not seriously in doubt at any point before the Union of 1707.

According to Macwhirter (2013:52), there are views that the Scottish Wars of Independence were “a regional conflict between Plantagenet dynasties, a bit like Wars of the Roses only a bit further north”, that they were a civil war fought between the Bruces and the Balliols. However, he (2013:52-54) argues that presenting medieval Scotland’s fight to achieve or retain independence as a side note of British History in order to not come across as anti-English is an excess of multiculturalism. Edward’s goal was certainly to annex Scotland to England and extinguish Scotland’s national autonomy like he had done in Wales. It would be too simplistic to see Robert the Bruce as nothing but a noble

freedom fighter but, in the end, he was pivotal for Scotland's journey as an independent country.

McHardy (2015:81) argues that calling the period during which the Scots fought against King Edward I, II and III "Wars of Scottish Independence" is "one of the clearest distortions in Scottish history". He writes that Scotland has existed since the 9th century unification of the Dalriatic and Pictish areas while the Kings of Wessex only generations later claimed to be the rulers of England and thus Scotland can be said to have become a nation state earlier than its southern neighbour.

McHardy (2015:82) claims that the term "Wars of Scottish Independence" includes a subtext that Scotland is supposed to be a part of Britain dominated by England. He also argues that the role played by William Wallace shows that the wars were not a "dynastic struggle between different aristocrats" but a "battle for survival by the Scots against a southern invader set on a military conquest" (McHardy 2015:82-83).

2.1.3 What led to the Union of 1707?

According to Devine (2016:3), the 1707 Union of England and Scotland was "a marriage of convenience founded on pragmatism, expediency, competing national patriotisms and realpolitik." He writes that there was no love lost between the negotiating partners and that it was by no means inevitable or – as unionist-minded Victorians later viewed it – "a providential gift from a caring Protestant God."

After the Regal Union of 1603, King James's objective was to bring his two kingdoms closer together, but it was met with strong opposition on both sides of the border: Scottish nobility were concerned that they would lose influence in a parliament that sat in London while the English believed that James – having been the king of Scotland before becoming the king of England as well – would favour Scotland at England's expense (Devine 2016:4).

There were negotiations for establishing a union at different times during the 17th century but the only union between England and Scotland in the 17th century was achieved in 1650-1652 when Oliver Cromwell annexed Scotland to the British Commonwealth (Devine 2016:4,14). After the execution of Charles I in 1649, Scotland supported, and the Scottish parliament declared his son to be the next king of Scotland, Charles II. This led to Cromwell marching his New Model Army north and beating the Scots in a brutal fashion: thousands were killed and thousands deported or sold into slavery (MacPherson 2018:20).

In 1653, Cromwell dismissed the Rump Parliament, ruled the Commonwealth as Lord Protector and appointed English commissioners to run Scotland. In 1654, the “Ordinance for uniting Scotland into one Commonwealth with England” was pronounced and in 1657 it was made into an Act of Union that stated that Scotland would no more have a monarch or a parliament (MacPherson 2018:21). The Union ended after Cromwell’s death and the Stuart monarchy was restored in 1660 with Charles II as the king. According to Devine, the restoration was a source of great relief in both England and Scotland (2016:14).

Devine (2016:4-5) writes that there was interest among the Scottish political class for a trading union and that some negotiations to achieve one were conducted in 1668, 1670 and 1688-1689 but they proved unsuccessful. With King James, Scottish foreign policy had moved to London and the interests of England were deemed more important than those of Scotland’s: for instance, the Dutch and the French were among the most important trading partners of the Scots but at war with England. The London parliament also imposed punitive tariffs on Scotland’s most important exports like linen, salt, cattle and coal (Devine 2016:14).

Scotland’s financial situation was made even more difficult when the English Navigation Acts in 1660 prohibited Scottish ships from trading with English colonies making it impossible for Scotland to profit from the opportunities of the new world. Macinnes (2008:56) explains the Navigation Acts as follows: “No goods or commodities regardless of where they were produced could be imported into or exported out of any English colony except in a ship built in England or in the colonies whose master and three- quarters of its crew were English.”

In 1695, the Company of Scotland was established with a goal to set up a Scottish colony in Darien in Central America. The idea of the venture was to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans by setting up a colony and organising land transport of goods from one ocean to the other over the narrow Isthmus of Darien. Although the idea behind the Darien scheme was a clever one, things went terribly wrong, the venture turned into a disaster and the whole project had to be abandoned in 1700 (Devine 2016:8).

Among the many reasons behind the failure were poor planning based on inadequate knowledge, tropical diseases and hostility from the Spanish Forces ruling much of the wider area at that time, but from the Scottish point of view, the blame was put on the English who, according to King William’s order, had refused to give the Scottish settlers any assistance or support in their distress. Macwhirter (2013:56) argues that it was just an excuse that King William – being at war with the French – did not want

to upset the Spanish by helping the Scots. He says the real reason was that the East India Company did not appreciate the competition from the Scots and orchestrated the boycott.

Devine (2016:8) writes that it is possible that the Darien scheme might have been doomed regardless but in Scotland it was widely believed the failure was, if not caused then at least significantly contributed to by the English, the Auld Enemy. Also, it became clear for the Scots that when there was a conflict of interest between England and Scotland, the monarch favoured England. (ibid. 16)

According to Macwhirter (2013:60), Unionists have used the Darien disaster as a stick to beat independence supporters with. A House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee Report in April 2013 studying the effects and consequences of Scottish independence included a reference to Darien on page two and the Economist brought it up in its infamous “Skintland” issue as if it was in any way relevant to a Scottish quest for self-determination more than 300 years later. Even at the time, the idea was solid but failed because of inadequate resources and poor execution.

Macwhirter (2013:66) argues that “the Darien adventure achieved iconic significance largely because of the political story it told about Scotland, and continues to tell.” In the early 18th century, it was useful to both Jacobites and Hanoverians as the former communicated it to convey a message of the treachery of the English, and the latter to strengthen the idea that Scotland was “too wee, too poor, too stupid” to survive as an independent country.

Many Scottish noblemen, lairds and merchants had made significant investments in the Darien project and lost everything (Devine 2016:8). In addition to the Darien disaster, there were successive poor harvests in Scotland in the 1690s which led to mass emigration. English wars with France hampered Scottish trade and their costs led to increased taxes which further deepened the financial crisis (Devine 2016:16).

In the early years of the 18th century, the relations between the English and the Scottish parliaments deteriorated because Westminster failed to appreciate Scottish interests: they made decisions about a war with France and even succession to the common throne without consulting the Scottish parliament. The parliament in Edinburgh retaliated by refusing to vote on financial supply needed for the war and passing their own acts concerning succession, ability to declare wars and trade, as well as dictating terms for continuation of the regal union. According to Devine (2016:17-18), these hostile acts convinced Westminster that the Regal Union with Scotland was not sustainable without a political union.

In early 1705, as a countermeasure to the Scottish Acts, Westminster passed the *Act for the effectual securing of the Kingdom of England from the apparent dangers that might arise from several Acts lately passed by the Parliament of Scotland* which became known as the Aliens Act. Unless the Scots started negotiations for a political union, Scottish residents would be treated as aliens in England and the import of the most important Scottish exports would be banned. Devine (2016:19) calls the Act a “naked piece of economic blackmail, designed to bring the Scottish parliament swiftly to the negotiating table” and writes that it caused outrage and rioting north of the border. Although the incoming Whig government repealed the Act in November, it had demonstrated that England wanted a political union and was prepared to force Scotland into it if necessary.

During the negotiations, it was agreed that all subjects of Great Britain “received freedom of trade and navigation within the kingdom and ‘the Dominions and Plantations thereunto belonging’” which was extremely important for many Scottish merchants. Scotland also received the “Equivalent”: a compensation of £398,000 for accepting a share of England’s national debt – Scotland as a country had no national debt at the time. The Kirk, Scottish private law, heritable offices and jurisdictions were maintained and privileges of royal burghs guaranteed. Universities, schools and poor law were also left out of the treaty (Devine 2016:26).

Scotland would send 16 lords and 45 members of the Commons to the Parliament of Great Britain thus effectively resigning the country’s representatives to always being a small minority. The Scottish parliament adjourned indefinitely on March 25, 1707. The Treaty of Union was signed and the Act of Union became law on May 1 creating a kingdom called Great Britain (Macwhirter 2013:69).

Henderson Scott (2008:33) argues that other European countries at the time thought that Scotland had been “absorbed by England” and kept referring to the new country as England. He argues that this was confirmed by the fact that Scotland only had 45 members in the House of Commons of 558 while Cornwall had 44. In the House of Lords, there were 16 Scottish peers while the Church of England alone had 26 bishops in the upper chamber.

Keating (2001:199) cites mixed motives for the Union. England needed the union to secure Protestant succession and to avoid the possibility of Jacobite plots, Scotland allying itself with France or functioning as a beachhead for an invasion. For the Scots, the Union was motivated by economic incentives like new and continuing possibilities to trade with England and being able to benefit from the Empire. Macwhirter (2013:71)

includes also Scotland's ability to provide troops and pay taxes as English motives for the Union: both men and money were needed for building the Empire.

The people of Scotland were outraged by the loss of the Parliament. Devine (2016:22) cites the estimate of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik during the negotiations in 1706 that "not even one per cent [of the Scottish people] approved what [the parliament] was doing". Macwhirter (2013:70) writes that after the deal was done there were riots across the country and that according to estimates at the time, 90 per cent of Scots opposed the Union with England. Daniel Defoe's view from 1713 was that "not one man in Fifteen" would at that point have voted for the Union (Devine 2016:33). Even though Scotland was by no means a democratic society and ordinary people had no means to influence decision making or who was making the decisions, they did not want to be governed from London. Defoe, in his own words, described the mood of the Scots after the treaty was signed as follows:

I had not been Long There but I heard a Great Noise and looking Out Saw a Terrible Multitude come up the High street with A Drum at the head of Them shouting and swearing and Cryeing Out all Scotland would stand together, No Union, No Union, English Dogs, and the like.

Daniel Defoe as cited in Goring (ed.) 2007:110

The political implications were not the only thing that upset the Scots and roused opposition: Scottish nobility who had lost their investments in the Darien scheme received so much money from London that Macwhirter states "it began to look more like a version of the Louisiana Purchase than a voluntary union of equals" (2013:70). The Darien investors were compensated by stealth and the money was taken out of the pockets of the taxpayers in Scotland by raising taxes. "Honours, appointments, pensions and even arrears of pay and other expenses were distributed to clinch support from Scottish peers and MPs" (parliament.uk). Henderson Scott (2008:41) argues that a parliament that in 1703 and 1704 had "voted repeatedly for the recovery of Scottish independence and the restoration of a separate Scottish monarchy" would not have agreed to a union without significant threats and bribery.

Keating (2001:199) writes that Scottish nationalists have always emphasised the scale of chicanery and bribery that was needed from the English side to achieve the support for the union in the Scottish Parliament. For instance, the Duke of Hamilton, leader of the opposition in the Scottish parliament who, according to Devine (2016:24), "was lionized by the Edinburgh crowds as the only hope for Scottish independence", was heavily in debt and would have lost his large English estates if the negotiations for the

union had collapsed. Hamilton famously suggested that instead of the Scottish parliament, the Queen should nominate the members of the Scottish commission for treaty negotiations thus making sure that most of the Scottish negotiators were in favour of union. He also declined to lead the proposed withdrawal from the parliament and boycotting proceedings.

Decades later, Robert Burns lamented the “Treason” that resulted in Scotland losing its independence with often quoted lines:

O would, or I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

Excerpt from “*Such A Parcel Of Rogues In A Nation*” by Robert Burns 1791

2.2 Scotland as a part of the 18th and 19th century UK

As discussed above, in 1707 Scotland became a part of Great Britain. The possibilities of the British Empire were vast but the price Scotland paid for them was significant and ordinary Scots were not pleased facing the prospect of being governed by the English. The events and proceedings leading to the Treaty of Union were a huge source of discontent and opposition to the Union with the “Auld Enemy” after centuries of warfare and rivalry was rife. But in time Scotland would become a peaceful part of the United Kingdom where there was little opposition to the Union.

This section will investigate the turbulent early years of the Union and how opposition to it was brought to an end. Had it been all misery and repression the Union would not have endured for more than 300 years so there had to be some benefits to it as well. One of them was access to trade and employment opportunities that came the Scots' way through the expanding British Empire that is discussed later in this section. After the measures the Hanoverian establishment took to stabilize Scotland after the last Jacobite rising, there was a risk of Scotland forever turning into North Britain. How the Scottish identity was reconstructed is discussed in section 2.2.3.

2.2.1 The Jacobite risings

Jacobitism was motivated by opposition to the deposition of King James VII of Scotland and II of England in 1689. In total, there were four Jacobite risings: in 1689, 1715, 1719 and 1745-46. In addition to the actual risings, there were plans for risings in 1708, 1741

and 1744 but the plans were abandoned, or the action was aborted at an early phase. According to Mackillop (2007), the risings were “military operations against the Whig and Hanoverian establishments” by supporters of restoration of the Stuart monarchy.

In addition to the pro-Stuart cause, religion played a significant part and in 1707, opposition to the Union added another major motivation to the Jacobite cause. In the end, what made the Jacobites lose their battle against the Hanoverian establishment was the fact that they failed to win enough supporters for their cause. After taking Edinburgh in 1745, they failed to call a parliament which led to people questioning their support for the institution, but the most important factor was probably the very powerful Presbyterian Church. The Stuarts being Catholics themselves and leading an army with more than 75 per cent Episcopalians made it impossible to win the war (Mackillop 2007).

The fourth rising ended when the Jacobite army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart was defeated in the last land battle on British soil on Culloden Moor on 16 April 1746. The news of this happening was greeted with joy among many Lowland Presbyterian Scots who had seen the possibility of restoration of the Catholic Stuarts as the greater of two evils compared with the Union with England. What is more, the economic rewards of the Empire had, at that point, started to benefit the Scottish economy in the 1740s which also decreased opposition to the Union (Devine (ed.) 2008: 4-5, Devine 2016:45).

2.2.1.1 The Culloden aftermath

Devine (2013) argues that after the fourth Jacobite rising and its decisive battle at Culloden, a major intervention was inevitable: the Jacobites had too seriously threatened the Protestant establishment. As a result, three great Hanoverian armies and the navy were sent to the north of Scotland. He states that “The idea was to transport comprehensively not only disloyal clans but clans loyal to the Hanoverian state, in their totality, to the American colonies”. That plan was not carried out and the state opted for an exhaustive reign of terror in the Highlands to “root out the clannish recalcitrance” and “the military aspects of the society”.

In the aftermath of the 1745 rising, the Act of Proscription was passed. The act forbade “wearing of any part of Highland dress and carrying of arms” and banned other cultural components of the Highland culture. Hinderks (2014) compares the Act of Proscription to the assimilation of the Indigenous people of North America. She states that it was a “systematic attempt to eradicate the culture of the Highlanders in the hope that this would also eradicate any further political opposition not quashed through military force”. Interestingly, wearing the Highland Dress was deemed as dangerous as carrying

arms resulting in the same punishments. Devine (2016:43) writes that the Highland Dress was seen as a “sartorial symbol of rebel militarism” and banning it was “a measure for punishing and undressing the rascals”.

Cheape (2010:17) writes that the Act of Proscription was “a series of legislative measures designed to force the assimilation of Scotland into the greater Britain”. He states that the Highland Dress was seen as “an outward and visible manifestation of Jacobitism and continuing loyalty to the Stuart dynasty in exile and, so, political treachery and lawlessness.” While carrying weapons was illegal only in the Highlands, wearing tartan was forbidden in the whole of Scotland except for those in the military of Great Britain.

Pittock (2003:211) points out that the Jacobite rising was not a Highland or Gaelic rising and the Jacobite army was not a Highland army. There were troops from all over Scotland but there were also Irish troops, French officers and even an English regiment fighting in the Jacobite army. But the British establishment attacked the Highlands in a campaign that included, according to Macinnes (as cited in Pittock 2003:212-213), “systematic state terrorism, characterised by a genocidal intent that verged on ethnic cleansing”.

McHardy (2015:104, 109) does not stop short of calling the campaign ethnic cleansing and argues that it was a “deliberate attempt to destroy the ancient Highland way of life once and for all” and an “orgy of looting, raping and murder.” He (2015:111-113) argues also that for around a decade after Culloden, there was a “wholesale long-term military occupation” of the Highlands and much of the Lowlands by the British army. Despite all this, the fear of a Scottish rising lived on. The Militia Act 1757 enabled establishment of a volunteer force “for defence of the realm against foreign attack”. It was possible to create such groups in England and Wales, but it was not allowed in Scotland (Devine (ed.) 2008:5).

Although the 1745-1746 rising is the most famous one, Devine (2016:44) argues that the 1715 one had a better chance of success. In 1715, opposition to the Union was a major recruiting argument for the Jacobites but by the 1740s more and more people had accepted the Union and many already profited from the opportunities it provided. When the last rising took place, there was little support for it south of the River Tay and after Culloden the defeat of the Jacobite army was greeted with relief and celebration (Devine 2016:44-45).

2.2.2 Scotland and the Empire

Macwhirter (2013:10) argues that for the most part, Scots have been satisfied in the role of a junior partner in the United Kingdom. Many middle-class Scots profited from getting access to the opportunities provided by the British Empire, and the Kirk, which in the past centuries was a powerful force in the Scottish society, was enabled to convert peoples in the colonies to Christianity. After the failure of Scotland's own empire, the Scots made the most of the next best thing: "they colonised the British Empire and took charge from within" (ibid.:59). There was little resistance against the Union after 1750, as being a part of the Empire was beneficial for the Scottish economy. Devine (2013) says that it was England who ruled the vast Empire but it was the Scots who ran it.

Keating (2001:202) states that Scots "made a disproportionate contribution to the ranks of imperial administrators, soldiers, teachers, doctors and missionaries". This was, according to Macwhirter (2013:84), due to the "impressive" production rate of Scottish universities and the fact that finding employment in Scotland or even in London was very difficult for many of the Scottish graduates. He states that "Scots were useful to the expanding Empire because they were prepared to go where many in the English middle class feared to tread" (ibid: 84). Many of those who left Scotland for the colonies in the 18th century paid the ultimate price for their pursuit of fortune: an estimated 50 per cent of Scots who worked for the East India Company never returned to tell the tale.

Hutchison (2005:255) argues that the Scots' identification with Britain was strengthened by the major role many of them played in expanding and running the Empire: "Missionaries like Livingstone, traders like Jardine & Matheson, explorers like Park, colonial governors like Elgin, soldiers like Dalhousie – all focused the attention of their compatriots on the centrality of Scots in the imperial construct."

For more than two hundred years, the British Empire had brought attractive opportunities for the Scots but after the Second World War, its importance diminished. Between 1945 and 1967, 26 of its former colonies opted to become independent which, of course, limited the influence Great Britain had in the world. The opportunities became rarer and the pride felt over the Empire faded with its diminishing international footprint. One of the pillars of Britishness was eroding and there was precious little to replace it (Macwhirter 2013:121-122).

2.2.3 Reinventing Scottish identity

In early 19th century, there was a revival of the Scottish national identity that had almost been eradicated after the 1745 Jacobite rising. One of the most important figures behind

this process was Sir Walter Scott who, according to Devine (2016:81), was “the world’s first best-selling historical novelist” at the time. What Devine calls Highlandization was one of the phenomena that prevented Scotland becoming North Britain or a part of England. Devine (2013) argues that it was important to maintain emotional commitment to Scotland without endangering the Union. Thus, “by the mid-19th century, a variety of the markers and symbols of Scottish identity were either new or had been changed to such an extent that Scots of the 17th century would never have recognized them”.

Macwhirter (2013:91) writes that Scott “salvage[d] an idealised Scottishness” for the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822 but criticises the visit as “pantomime Nationalism” including “fictitious clansmen” and “improbable tartans”. Macwhirter (2013:92) writes that Scott almost by himself created the fictitious image of Scotland that has been adopted by the tourism and film industries of today. Such was the integration of Scotland to the Union at this stage that romanticising the Jacobites was not seen as a threat to the Union and even the Royals became enthusiastic about this new Scottishness and helped turn Scotland fashionable. Macwhirter (2013:93) argues that Scotland turned into a “Celtic theme park, a tartanised construct”.

Devine (2012:235) writes that Scott produced “a distortion of the Highland past and present and the projection of a national image in which the Lowlands had no part.” It was argued that the image of Scotland was presented as something that in reality was the culture of a small minority of Scots. Lord Macaulay (as cited in Devine 2012:235) protested that what was now presented as the national dress of Scotland was before the Union “considered by nine Scotchmen out of ten as the dress of a thief.”

According to Royle (2010:60), the visit of George IV “cemented the kilt as the national dress and created a bogus tartan caricature which became the accepted and increasingly acceptable face of Scotland.” He argues that amid increasing anglicisation and while Scotland’s image became more and more linked to that of England’s, there was a deep emotional need that was satisfied with the highland dress and myths of Scottish history. In the world of today, that image of Scotland – however incorrect it may be from a historical point of view – is embraced by supporters of Scottish independence as well as those who favour continuation of the Union but neither of the groups want to overlay it.

2.2.4 Teaching Scottish history

But why do so many Scots so embrace the Union after all that has happened? In Scottish schools, there was no teaching of Scottish history until the 1990s when the Standard

Grade syllabus made it compulsory. Macwhirter (2013:52) says that during his school days in the 1960s, he was not taught about Wallace or Bruce. Most young Scots only learned about Scottish history from their relatives.

Professor Tom Devine, upon retirement in 2014, planned to give public lectures because there was such a huge enthusiasm to learn about the past of the country. He said in an interview that “There is a generation in their 40s and above who never really had Scottish history at school, it is a profound educational deficit” (Ross 2014). According to what Professor Hargreaves stated in 1964, “the history of modern Scotland [was] less studied than the history of Yorkshire” (Devine 2014).

McHardy (2015:87-88) says that all cultures need a national history and before literacy, the way to convey history is oral tradition. He states that when history and how it is taught can be controlled by the powers that be, it is not “an objective reality but essentially a political tool. ... [it] is no coincidence that it is only since the institution of the Scottish Parliament that Scottish history is officially part of the Curriculum for our children” (McHardy 2015:88). Salmond (2015:7-8) writes that before university, the only way he learned the history of Scotland was through the stories his grandfather told him. Luckily, he writes, the oral tradition his grandfather passed on to him “wasn’t too wide of the mark”.

Henderson Scott (2008:39) writes about the impact of not knowing the history and literature of one’s own country on a person’s self-confidence and puts the blame for this educational deficit on schools and broadcasters who in Scotland have ignored them “to an extent probably unique in the developed world”. Henderson Scott (2008:39-40) cites Michael Hechter on a “process of anglicisation” that is achieved not only by force but also by “voluntary assimilation of peripheral elites”. Thus, it has been common for ambitious Scots to seek their fortune in England.

In 2011, when the Scottish Government set out to implement their manifesto pledge that they would improve teaching by setting more focus on “Scottish historical, literary, linguistic and cultural heritage”, the then Labour education spokesman and current Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, Ken Macintosh, said in a BBC interview that “[his] suspicion is that this is just the SNP trying to brainwash children into their political view” (BBC News 2011). One could argue that was what decades of unionist administrations had been doing while in power: teaching focused on British and omitting Scottish history. After all, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past” (Orwell 1949).

3. Quest for home-rule and/or independence in the 20th and early 21st century

This chapter will be tracing the emergence of present-day Scottish nationalism as a social/cultural and political movement quite distinct from its historical past and ultimately leading to devolution in 1997 and the referendum in 2014. Since the days of Jacobitism, there have not been any serious or significant movements fighting for Scottish independence through violent means and the declining importance of religion has quite probably contributed to the non-confrontational and inclusive nature of the independence movement of today.

Keating and McEwen (2017:5) state that “the establishment of the Scotland Office in 1885 started a trend to administrative devolution”. The Union treaty did not affect Scottish law, education or church but as economic policy, taxation and welfare were assimilated to the British ways, there was a need for a Scottish organ to administer those three areas of Scottish society (ibid.). The empire was beneficial to Scotland and there were few calls for dissolving the union. What Hutchison (2005:255) calls “a brief flurry of quasi-nationalist agitation” half way through the 1850s and the campaign for Scottish Home Rule some thirty years later sought reforms within the union rather than secession.

As discussed earlier, the Scots were mostly happy to be the junior partner in the Union. Macwhirter (2013:12) writes that almost for the first two thirds of the 20th century, the Scottish electorate voted “Tory Unionist”. In 1955, the party achieved a General election electoral double winning a majority in both parliamentary seats and number of votes, something that a mere thirty years later would have been deemed impossible to ever happen again. So it is relevant to ask what prompted the change.

3.1 Political traditions with regard to the national question

Keating and McEwen (2017:7) identify three political traditions concerning independence and union in Scotland. The dominant one until the very last years of the twentieth century has been unionism. Keating and McEwen point out that the UK unionism has not been assimilationist but, to an extent, actually encouraged the recognition of the fact that the UK is made of four different nations with their own cultures. But while the UK has praised the diversity of cultures, it has tried to play down or suppress any political manifestations of nationhood.

The second Scottish political tradition is support for home rule or more lately devolution of powers from Westminster. Keating and McEwen (2017:7) say that it has been the most popular alternative for a long time but both Conservatives and Labour

opposed it for more than a hundred years. A very clear manifestation of this was the Scottish Covenant discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

The tradition of independence was only viewed as a realistic option from the 1970s onwards. Since then it has become one of if not the most important issue in Scottish politics to the extent that Keating and McEwen (2017:7) rank it as the “main fault line in Scottish politics” today. This was demonstrated well during the 2017 General Election campaign where the Scottish Tories only slogan and policy was ‘There shall be no second referendum on Scottish independence’. McKenna (2017) stated that the party’s campaign in Scotland was “not a campaign at all – it [was] a crusade”. He went on to say that the Tories’ traditional counterforce Scottish Labour was also “crazily pursuing a “no second referendum” line”.

Keating and McEwen (2017:7-8) say that devolution has made Scottish politics simpler in the sense that there is very little opposition to devolution among the unionists and reaching the intermediate stage of a devolved Scottish parliament has brought the gradualist and fundamentalist supporters of self-determination together. People who supported and campaigned for home rule or devolution, but not full independence have become unionists. Still, the amount of devolution supported varies among the unionists and there are different schools in the independence movement regarding constitutional questions and policy choices of an independent Scotland.

3.1.1 Nationalism

Keating (2001:3) identifies two types of nationalism: ethnic and civic. The former emphasizes ethnicity as the basis on which national identity is constructed and the membership of a nation is determined. Keating brands defining ethnicity as ‘race’ as old-fashioned because that kind of thinking is, in the modern world, questionable both morally and scientifically. He writes that ethnicity is nowadays presented as “a form of ascriptive identity, that is an identity and a basis for social relations and political mobilization which people are given rather than choosing” (Keating 2001:4). He acknowledges that some current definitions of ethnicity can include a genetic element, language or religion.

Civic nationalism is based on acquired and not ascriptive identity. Keating (2001:6-7) lists “common values and institutions, and patterns of social interaction” as well as established customs as the main elements it is built on. Anyone regardless of birth place or ethnicity can join the nation if its values appeal to them and they wish to live within its territory. Civic nationalism seeks to establish a global society where all people irrespective of their backgrounds, social customs, or ways of thinking work together

towards building a functional society, whereas ethnic nationalism promotes the values and views of one ethnic group within a broader context being exclusive rather than inclusive.

Smith (2017:62) writes about ethnic and civic forms of nationalism presenting the views of other unnamed scholars. According to him, ethnic nationalism has sometimes been described as “a pernicious ideology fuelling sectarian hatreds and inspiring violence and mass murder” while civic nationalism is “grounded in shared values and cultural institutions” i.e. very much as a good and a bad type of nationalism.

Keating (2001:8-9) points out that the ethnic and civic nationalisms described above are ideal types or abstractions that do not necessarily exist anywhere in their purest forms but can be useful tools when describing real-life nationalist movements. He emphasizes also that the categories are normative and value-laden, and that even though civic nationalism is often thought to be a positive and ethnic nationalism a negative phenomenon, this is not necessarily always the case.

3.1.2 Recent Scottish nationalism

Keating (2001:207) says that national identity started to play a bigger role in Scottish politics during the latter half of the nineteenth century. State intervention increased and resulted in calls for it to be administered in Scotland. There were also a number of new social movements distinct from their English counterparts that strove for tailored treatment better suited for their needs but the most important factor that contributed to the rise of Scottish nationalism was Irish home rule.

The idea of Scottish nationality had civic traits already in the mid-19th century. Patrick Dove, an activist in the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, argued that “whoever – whatever man – be he black, white, red, or yellow, the moment he identifies with the institutions of Scotland, that moment he became a member of the Scottish nation” (Pittock 2003:261-262). Dove argued that Scottish nationality was not dependent on race but on reason.

The Scottish Home Rule Association consisting of members of all parties was established in 1886 and revived in 1918. Its members introduced 13 parliamentary bills that, according to Keating (2001:208), were “broadly supported by Scottish MPs”. Only one of the bills received a second reading but it did not progress from there and interest in Scottish home rule waned. He argues that it was the frustration among the home rulers in their inability to promote Scottish home rule through the existing parties that led to the establishing of the Scottish National Party.

Keating (2001:218) writes of the Liberal Party supporting Scottish Home rule in a federal Britain since the beginning of the 20th century and the strong commitment of an early Labour party supporting Scottish home rule. The Labour Party in Scotland abandoned the idea of Scottish home rule in 1958 but brought up the idea of devolution in 1974. During the last hectic weeks and days of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum campaign, former Labour PM Gordon Brown, promised Scots “nothing less than a modern form of Scottish Home Rule within the United Kingdom” (Herald editorial 9 Sep 2014) and "a system of government as close to federalism as you can have in a nation where one part forms 85% of the population" (Observer editorial 13 Sep 2014).

Keating (2001:220) states that “Nationalist doctrine in Scotland is overwhelmingly civic rather than ethnic, with broad agreement that the relevant population is those living in Scotland.” There is no agenda to highlight ethnicity or religion and Scottish nationalism has also been opposed to violence as a means to achieving independence. Keating lists Siol nan Gaidheal, English Watch, Settler Watch and the Scottish National Liberation Army as examples of extreme pro-independence organisations that harboured anti-English sentiments but states that they had few members, made little impact and were repudiated by all serious nationalist organisations already in the 1980s and 1990s.

Kavanagh (2017:18) brands the Unionist argument built around every form of nationalism being negative a straw man. While the English language does not have different names for supporters of exclusive, often aggressive nationalism that claims superiority over other nations or peoples, and inclusive nationalism aspiring for self-determination and building a society that works for everyone, the Spanish language does.

The Spanish term for a supporter of the former type – found for example in Germany in the 1930’s, the Franco regime in Spain or in the Balkans in the 1990’s – would be called *nacionalista* while the vast majority of supporters of Scottish or Catalan independence would be referred to by the term *independentista* (Kavanagh 2017:18). These terms are not interchangeable with ethnic and civic nationalism, but they illustrate that there are different sorts of nationalisms and that being a nationalist is not automatically a bad and deplorable thing.

Gardiner (2015:55) writes that during the independence referendum campaign, in order to be able to call the Scottish pursuit of self-determination ‘nationalism’, the No side had to disavow “a British nationalism in strong revival at the same time”. The British variant was “seen familiarly as neutral and universal, and so not ‘national’, where Scottish nationalism was systematic and disruptive.”

MacIntyre-Kemp (2018:16) argues that support of and opposition to independence have replaced traditional left and right in Scottish politics and states that “tactical voting by Labour supporters, successfully returning enough conservative MPs in marginal Scottish seats to stop Corbyn becoming PM [in the 2017 General Election], seems ample proof that [MacIntyre-Kemp] was right.” Gardiner (2015:52) reports that already during the 2014 European election, “the BBC’s Brian Taylor reported on 25 May 2014, ‘[p]arties in Scotland who support the Union ... probably prefer UKIP to take [a] seat [than] the SNP’”.

When it comes to British and Scottish nationalisms, the main difference is that the UK is already independent while Scotland is not. MacIntyre-Kemp argues that British nationalism projects superiority to others and aims to “put the “great” back in Great Britain, to take back an imagined loss of control” whereas Scottish nationalism is “a cry for nationhood and the benefits that go hand in hand with that, giving [the Scots] a chance to be equal to, not better than, other nations” (MacIntyre-Kemp 2018:16).

3.2 The Scottish National Party (SNP)

The SNP was established in 1934 when the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party joined forces. The National Party had, in turn, been formed in 1928 when the Scots National League, the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association and the Scottish National Movement united (snp.org). Devine (2016:206) identifies Winnie Ewing winning the Hamilton by-election of 1967 as the first significant victory of the SNP but argues that for the most part of the years between Ewing’s victory and the 1997 devolution referendum, the SNP was not a significant force in UK politics.

Since devolution, the party has enjoyed considerable success in Scottish politics and has been the party of government in Scotland since 2007 when it, for the first time, beat Labour to become the largest party at Holyrood but also in local government (Devine 2016:217). Even though the 2010 General Election was a disappointment for the SNP, the Holyrood election of 2011 “proved to be the most significant in modern Scottish history since Labour’s victory in 1945” (Devine 2016:219). Macwhirter (2013:252) writes that the whole idea of proportional representation at Holyrood was to prevent a majority government but the SNP achieved a majority winning 69 of 129 seats.

Miller (2008:185) describes the SNP’s view of independence as complex. In the beginning there was a division between supporters of independence and home rule. By the 1960s and 1970s, he writes, the favoured alternative was full independence with opposition to European integration. After the 1979 referendum failure, it took quite a

while for the party to bounce back to being a relevant entity in Scottish and UK politics. By 1988, a vast majority of SNP members supported the policy of “independence within Europe” i.e. being independent from the UK but a member of the EU which led to Labour presenting new plans for devolution.

By 1997, three different factions had emerged within the SNP: according to Miller (2008:186), 37 per cent supported independence within the EU but outside the UK, 34 per cent devolution or “independence within the UK”, and 23 per cent independence outside the EU. Miller (2008:186) says that the SNP has moved from a nationalism emphasizing history, people and heritage to a new form focusing on “the future rather than the past”, “the land rather than the people” – i.e. people living in Scotland rather than being Scottish by birth – and “multiculturalism rather than heritage”. He rightly states that the Scottish nationalist movement has moved a long way from stunts like blowing up “E II R” post-boxes and stealing the Stone of Destiny.

Macwhirter (2013:22) writes that the SNP’s form of nationalism is “outward-looking, inclusive, organic and kind to animals” while not being “defined by race or ethnicity”. Miller (2008:186-187) says that the SNP could be described as “multicultural nationalists” who welcome new people to the nation but also “the diversity and cultural change” they bring with them. What is more, they accept and celebrate the way their national culture changes and develops as a result of the new incomers.

Daisley (2015) states that while a small minority may support Scottish independence because of their anti-English views, the SNP has “comprehensively rejected” ethnic nationalism. He says that the SNP views identity as “a choice rather than an accident of birth, an interior dialogue between people who find themselves living in Scotland and the Scotland they find around them.”

Compared to the nationalism of Ukip that attributes the social and economic problems of society to immigrants, the SNP sees immigrants as one of the solutions to ageing population and a positive addition to the Scottish culture. Daisley (2015) writes that “reduced to its simplest terms, Ukip wants fewer people to be English while the SNP wants more people to be Scottish.”

After New Labour moved significantly to the right in their economic programme in the 1990s, the SNP has been among the most radical and progressive parties in the UK and “one of the greenest parties in Europe” (Macwhirter 2013:22). He points out also that the SNP is the only party to ever form a government in the UK that supports unilateral disarmament of nuclear weapons. The SNP’s popular policies include also free tuition in Scottish universities, free elderly care, free prescriptions, commitment to land reform and

Community Right to Buy as well as scrapping right-to-buy social housing: a policy often blamed for the shortage in social housing stock in Scotland.

Miller (2008:187) argues that while there was an ethnic element in the nationalism of the SNP in the 1970s, it has been abandoned in favour of a more civic vision. From 1992, election manifestos of the SNP have presented “an explicitly ‘multicultural’ vision of the nation”. What he calls “the anti-English tone” present in earlier manifestos has been replaced by a more political approach presenting the Conservatives as anti-Scottish. In other words, the SNP do not oppose the English but the Conservatives and the UK ruling elite.

McGarvey (2015:38) writes that “being seen to be Scotland’s party and standing up for the national interest” is an integral part of the strategy of the SNP. He argues that “a party’s capacity to ‘stand up for Scotland’ is an important factor in determining vote choice” and that the SNP have taken the place of the party considered to be the most willing and able to do that.

Scottish nationalism in its search for home rule or self-determination is not exclusive to the SNP. During the 2014 independence referendum, the SNP was one of, if not the most important player in the independence movement but the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialists were also campaigning for independence as were a vast number of other groups and organisations not affiliated with political parties. Many independence supporters are not supporters let alone members of the SNP but looking at the power structure of Scottish politics, it is safe to say the SNP is the only political party that can deliver another independence referendum in the near future.

3.3 The Scottish Covenant

The Scottish National Assembly held in Glasgow in 1947 produced the “Blue Print for Scotland”: proposals for a Scottish Parliament that would control basically all Scottish affairs apart from defence, foreign affairs and currency. They also produced a document named the Scottish Covenant expressing the Scottish people’s will for more powers over their affairs. The Scottish Covenant was signed by nearly two million people in 1949 (Devine 2016:116). The document that was written to support Scottish home rule stated:

WE, the people of Scotland who subscribe to this Engagement, declare our belief that reform in the constitution of our country is necessary to secure good government in accordance with our Scottish traditions and to promote the spiritual and economic welfare of our nation.

WE affirm that the desire for such reform is both deep and widespread throughout the whole community, transcending all political differences and sectional interests, and we undertake to continue united in purpose for its achievement.

WITH that end in view we solemnly enter into this Covenant whereby we pledge ourselves, in all loyalty to the Crown and within the framework of the United Kingdom, to do everything in our power to secure for Scotland a Parliament with adequate legislative authority in Scottish affairs.

The Scottish Covenant 1949 (Devine 2016:115)

The goal of the petition was to demonstrate support for Scottish home rule “within the framework of the United Kingdom” rather than an independent Scotland. The war had created a sense of unity in the UK and the atmosphere in Scotland favoured international cooperation instead of leaving the Union. The Scottish Convention that produced the Covenant was non-partisan and consensual and it strove for constitutional reform with “a gradualist agenda and a moderate approach.” Even though the covenant had been signed by nearly two out of five Scots – a quarter of a million more than voted Yes in 1997 – it lacked political backing and was ignored by the UK government (Devine 2016:115-116).

Member of the Scottish National Assembly and the Scottish Convention, John MacCormick (1955:135,137) writes that both Prime Minister Attlee and leader of the opposition Winston Churchill turned down the requests for meetings with the Assembly members. Attlee’s Secretary of State for Scotland Hector McNeil wrote to MacCormick: “... it is our view that constitutional change in this country is considered and settled by the normal process of Parliamentary democracy.” An excerpt of MacCormick’s reply to McNeil discusses the problem of the democratic deficit that leaves Scotland disadvantaged in the Union:

There are in Parliament 554 English and Welsh members against 71 Scottish members. It follows that in the ‘normal processes of Parliamentary democracy’ a situation might readily arise in which, although a majority of Scottish members representing a majority of their countrymen supported a measure to achieve self-government, they would be helpless in the face of an adverse English majority. This is no mere hypothetical case, since similar situations have already arisen in the past (MacCormick 1955:138).

According to the Diomhair documentary (BBC Alba 2008), the Cabinet meeting minutes of 15 May 1950 stated that the ministers agreed that “Any concession to a Nationalist movement of this kind was likely to lead merely to further demands both in Scotland and in Wales.” The Scottish Covenant did not lead to negotiations of any kind because the Covenant Committee had no constitutional standing. The documentary quoted MacCormick concluding that “It must be supposed that in the case of Scotland,

unlike that of any other nation, the wishes of her people are in the Government's view, irrelevant.”

Macwhirter (2013:115) writes that the idea of the Scottish Covenant was brilliant as it placed the debate in the hands of ordinary people instead of politicians but at the same time it had little effect on Scottish or UK politics as none of the political parties supported it in the UK parliament. Nevertheless, it was remarkable that the Covenant was signed by two thirds of the Scottish electorate and it clearly demonstrates that even right after the war when support for the Union was at its highest levels, there was a clear demand for home rule on a level that corresponds to the modern idea of devolution max that will be discussed later on.

3.4 The devolution referendum of 1979

Soon after BP discovered oil in Scottish waters in the early 1970's, the SNP started to argue that the new-found wealth should belong to Scotland. Even though only a minority of SNP voters supported full independence at that point, the party attracted a significant amount of support as the Scots felt that voting the SNP would put pressure on the bigger parties to pay more attention to Scottish needs (Devine 2008:154).

The Diomhair documentary (BBC Alba 2008) cites a Scottish Office official who in July 1974 warned about devolution:

To provide a directly-elected assembly in Scotland with a real or simulated sense of grievance over the handling of oil would provide a focus for national discontent, particularly since the oil has now made plausible the possibility of full Scottish independence (BBC Alba 2008).

Despite this, in order to see off the perceived threat of the SNP, Labour positioned itself as strongly pro-devolution in its 1974 election manifesto. The first devolution referendum was held in March 1979 (Devine 2008:154-155).

Macwhirter (2013:192) writes that before the referendum, the mood in Scotland was apathetic and the campaigns “were almost non-existent until the last week or so.” The powers on offer were insignificant so there was little enthusiasm for either campaign. There was no consensus in any of the parties about whether devolution was a cause worth fighting for or not. Even the SNP was divided because some members felt that “devolution was a Labour trap, a toothless talking shop” (Macwhirter 2013:192). The party did support the pro-devolution campaign but there were few enthusiastic campaigners.

One of the peculiarities of the referendum legislation was an amendment tabled by Labour MP George Cunningham. A Scot but representing London Islington constituency insisted that if less than 40 per cent of Scottish electorate voted Yes the plans for the assembly would be abandoned. Some political scientists have argued that this has been “the most significant backbench intervention in any Parliament since 1945” (Devine 2008:155). Considering the low level of interest towards the referendum, getting 40 per cent of the electorate to support Yes was always a tough task.

Devine (2008:155) writes that the result of the referendum was “inconclusive, ambivalent and confusing”. Yes amassed 51.6 per cent of the vote or 1.23 million votes in total. Devine argues that for such an important constitutional issue, the margin separating Yes and No was slim and the low turnout of 63.8 per cent did not show very strong support for home rule. But what was more important was the fact that only 33 per cent of the electorate had supported independence and the Cunningham amendment led to Yes actually meaning No.

Macwhirter (2013:173) argues that the sick who could not make their way to the polling station, the disinterested and – as the electoral register in many places was badly outdated – even many dead people effectively voted No. Given the relatively weak interest in the whole referendum, there were no riots or mass protests on the streets but there were definitely people who felt betrayed. It would take Scotland until 1997 to get another shot at devolution.

3.5 The Thatcher factor

The battle lines were clearly drawn, both politically and ideologically, from the start of Mrs Thatcher’s premiership. Yet few could have predicted the scale, bitterness and duration of the hostilities that eventually broke out (Devine 2016:171).

Devine (2013) argues that between the 1760s and the massive state intervention of the late 20th century, Scotland enjoyed a period of semi-independence. Scottish bills at Westminster were agreed outside of parliament by Scottish representatives, put forward by ministers and rarely opposed. A number of voluntary bodies consisting of Scottish professionals ran Scotland at the local level which was one of the reasons the Scots were so content as a part of the Union. But that came to an end after the entrance of the Iron Lady.

Margaret Thatcher’s Tories won the 1979 election with the votes of a third of the Scottish electorate and sent 22 Scottish MPs to Westminster. In 1987, the corresponding share was a fifth which brought the party 10 of Scotland’s then 72 seats. The General

Election of 1992 meant that for the fourth time in a row, Scotland faced a Conservative government and a Conservative-run Scotland Office the Scottish electorate had rejected at the ballot box (Little 2014).

Macwhirter (2013:175) writes that the 1979 referendum and subsequent General Election were regarded by Thatcher as a clear sign that “there was no need to keep pouring money into Scotland to keep alive its crumbling manufacturing sector, and no need for Westminster to offer any concessions in exchange for oil.” Between 1979 and 1981, the Scottish manufacturing sector lost 11 per cent of its jobs – Devine (2016:158) writes it was up to a fifth that was lost – and by 1987, 31 per cent of its capacity was gone. Between 1951 and 2001, seven out of ten Scottish manufacturing jobs disappeared: most of them during the 1980s under Thatcher (Macwhirter 2013:176-177). Devine (2016:160) writes that “commentators talked freely of the total de-industrialization of Scotland as unemployment soared”.

Macwhirter (2013:180) calls this “economic vandalism” the like of which would not have been possible in countries like Germany but the Tory-governments of the 1980s saw Scotland’s industrial infrastructure “expendable in the war against organised labour”. He also argues that it was by no means inevitable but “a result of conscious political decisions taken predominantly in London” and that “the policies of privatisation, deregulation, tax reduction, trade union reform all served to enrich the upper and middle-classes of the south-east of England” (Macwhirter 2013: 180).

Devine’s (2016:182) view of the old Scottish industrial economy was that it was already deteriorating and would have lost importance even without Thatcher but “perhaps more slowly and with less pain.” However, he agrees that her approach to Scotland – abandoning “sensitivity to Scottish interests, consultation on Scottish issues, and respect for Scotland’s semi-autonomy” – was an insult to many Scots and a threat to the stability of the UK. Devine (2016:182) argues that “never since the aftermath of the last Jacobite rising in 1745 had an all-powerful Westminster intervened in Scottish affair to such an extent.”

In 1983, the Tories were able to retain 21 of their 22 seats from 1979 but according to a poll in 1986, 80 per cent of Scots were dissatisfied with Thatcher as the PM. In 1987, the Tories achieved a landslide victory in the General Election but in Scotland they won only 10 of the then 72 Scottish seats. In 1988, historian Christopher Harvie told the Observer (as cited in Devine 2016:174): “Thatcher seemed to be hated so intensely north of the border because she personified every quality we have always disliked in the English: snobbery, bossiness, selfishness and, by our lights, stupidity”.

MacIntyre-Kemp (2018:16) argues that it was Margaret Thatcher and her policies that led to centralisation of wealth, opportunity and power to the south-east of England that started the unravelling of the UK. Traditional manufacturing was run down, and the financial sector concentrated in London was made the driver of economic growth. London's success came with a cost to the rest of the UK as it hoarded up ingredients of prosperity from other parts of the country.

The costs of the Thatcher era were not exclusively economic. Kerevan (2019:12) writes that the “rising inequality and “erosion of hope” during the Thatcherite 1980s increased the risk of drug and alcohol-related deaths among Scots men who reached adulthood during that lost decade.” Those men, now middle-aged, “are dying prematurely today”.

Little (2014) writes that before deindustrialisation Scottish workers had more in common with workers in England than, for instance, highland landowners. Social class was much more important than nationality. Fighting for social justice and striving for better workplace conditions, fairer wages and working hours was a common cause all over Britain and it created a strong shared identity. One of the consequences of the 1980s deindustrialisation was weakening of such ties and of solidarity across the UK.

After the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the first First Minister Donald Dewar refuted the notion that he was the “Father of the Scottish Parliament”. According to Devine (2016:167), Mr Dewar declared that “there was no ‘Father’ – but there was a ‘Mother’ and her name was Margaret Thatcher”. His view was also that if the 1980s had not happened, it would be very doubtful that there would have been interest in a Scottish Parliament in the year 2000. Charles Kennedy MP reportedly named Mrs Thatcher “the greatest of all Scottish Nationalists” and the current First Minister Nicola Sturgeon told the Herald in 2015 that “Thatcher was the motivation for [her] entire political career. [Sturgeon] hated everything [Thatcher] stood for” (Devine 2016:167).

3.5.1 Poll tax

The poll tax came to be regarded as the most infamous act of the Thatcher governments, further cementing her now established reputation as an anti-Scottish, uncaring and divisive leader who looked after the interests of the rich rather than of the population as a whole (Devine 2016:181).

In 1987, the Conservative government introduced their plans for the community charge also known as the poll tax. It was a flat-rate levy that was widely opposed in England as well but the announcement that it would be introduced in Scotland a year earlier than in

England sent the Scots to the barricades. After cutting the top-rate of tax from 83 to 40 per cent – which already set the UK on course to becoming one of the most unequal countries in the western world – a tax that did not depend on people’s ability to pay was regarded as highly unfair (Macwhirter 2013:181,189).

The facts that it was imposed on Scotland by a government few people in Scotland had voted for and a year earlier than in England resulted in public opposition not seen for decades (Macwhirter 2013:189). There were protests on the streets in Scotland but they were peaceful unlike the poll tax riots in England. The other significant difference between the Scottish and English protests was that the Government ignored the massive Scottish protests between 1987 and 1990 but reacted and abolished the poll tax after the riots in England. Thatcher resigned in late 1990 after she lost support of her own cabinet (Macwhirter 2013:191).

3.6 The devolution referendum of 1997

After the failure of the 1979 referendum, the idea of devolution was kept alive by the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (CSA). They tried to unite political parties and representatives of Scottish civil society behind devolution but for many years it made little impact. The more years the Tories had the power the more sympathetic Labour grew towards devolution, especially after the “doomsday scenario” of the General Election of 1987 when Labour was by far the most popular party in Scotland but mainly English votes brought the UK a Tory government (Devine 2016:192).

In 1988, the CSA published *A Claim of Right for Scotland* in which it argued for setting up a Scottish Constitutional Convention which was established and joined by Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Green and Communist parties, most councils, the Scottish Churches, etc. In 1990, the Convention produced a report that proposed establishing a Scottish legislature. Devine (2016:193-195) writes that although there were no direct consequences, the Convention was important as it brought Labour – the party with the biggest support in Scotland – “into the heart of the home-rule movement”.

According to Little (2014), in 1979, many Labour people opposed devolution with passion but by the end of the 1980s after a decade of Tory rule, the vast majority supported it. While some saw devolution as the first step towards Scottish independence, most thought that a strong devolved Scottish parliament would satisfy the Scots and neutralise the threat of SNP to Scottish Labour’s Westminster seats. Labour leader John Smith said getting a devolved parliament was the “settled will” of the Scots and George Robertson famously stated that devolution would “kill nationalism stone dead” (Little 2014).

In the 1992 General Election, 75 per cent of the Scottish votes went to parties that supported devolution or independence and they achieved 85 per cent of Scottish seats but the UK-wide vote brought the Conservatives another majority government at Westminster (Devine 2016:196). After the death of Labour leader John Smith in 1994, Tony Blair became the party leader. He “inherited the devolution commitment from John Smith and assumed that it was not worth the political risk of trying to abandon it” (Macwhirter 2013:196). Labour had been “committed to legislating for a Scottish Parliament without a referendum in the first year of Labour Government” but Blair was not as keen on devolution as his predecessor: he wanted to reduce the powers of the parliament and there had to be a referendum before one could be established (Macwhirter 2013:199-201).

After the Labour landslide in the 1997 General Election, Donald Dewar was tasked to write a white paper – *Scotland's Parliament* – which was published in July the same year. Unlike in the 1979 proposal, only the powers that were reserved to the UK parliament were listed in the document leaving everything else to the new Scottish Parliament – this is something that now causes problems for the current Westminster government as a large amount of powers from the EU are not specified as reserved and thus supposed to return to Holyrood. The reserved powers included issues like defence, overall economic policy, foreign affairs, broadcasting and abortion (Macwhirter 2013:204).

Salmond (2015:16) writes that after Donald Dewar promised that Scotland would, at a later stage if the people so wished, be able to progress to independence, the SNP joined the campaign for a double Yes in the 1997 devolution referendum. He argues the promise was explicit but Labour believed it would never come up because of proportional representation in the Scottish parliamentary elections. In the referendum, 74.3 per cent voted Yes for a Scottish parliament and 63.5 per cent supported tax-raising powers for it (MacAskill & Donegan 2013).

3.7 The Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament became a reality in 1999 and Winnie Ewing opening it was able to declare it reconvened after a 292-year hiatus. In the first election, the SNP was able to gain “more parliamentarians in a single day than in the previous seventy-year history of the party” (Salmond 2015:17). The first election victory of the SNP came in 2007 and as the largest party, they were able to form a minority government. Devine (2016:230-231) writes that the SNP minority government “progressed by pragmatism, concession and

expediency”. Policies that would have been unpopular with other parties were abandoned but potential vote winners – like free prescriptions and tuition or scrapping bridge tolls – were kept and proved successful.

Compared to the difficulties of the previous Scottish Executives led by Labour, the SNP-led and re-branded Scottish Government was a success and in the 2011 Scottish Election, the SNP achieved “what had, until then, been thought impossible: an absolute majority in a proportional system specifically designed to prevent that from happening” (Salmond 2015:17). As a majority government, the SNP was in a position to keep their manifesto pledge of holding a referendum on independence.

Devine (2016:269) argues that the crisis the UK faced after the Thatcher years was so serious that the only way forward that enabled the continuation of the UK was promising Scotland a devolved government. Originally, the idea behind the Scottish parliament was to stabilize the country by ending separatism but it was the very forum that helped the SNP and support for independence become more popular than ever. Devine says that the independence referendum that was a consequence of the rise in SNP popularity was the most serious threat to UK existence since the early 18th century.

3.8 What led to the Scottish independence referendum?

Little (2014) identifies the 1990s as the decade during which talk of a democratic deficit and Tory governments having no mandate to govern Scotland became popular in Scottish political circles: the Tories imposed policies on Scotland that very few people in Scotland supported. John Major wrote in 1993 (as cited in Keating 2001:200) that “each of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom has entered into Union with the others by a different route” and that “no nation could be held irrevocably in a Union against its will”. Margaret Thatcher wrote in her memoirs:

As a nation, they have an undoubted right to national self-determination; thus far they have exercised that right by joining and remaining in the Union. Should they determine on independence no English party or politician would stand in their way, however much we might regret their departure (Thatcher 1993:624).

Donald Dewar (as cited in Murkens, Jones and Keating 2002:13) said that “the only way in which we could move to independence would be if people voted for independence. That is clearly their right and I would not wish to deny them that right”.

Mitchell (2016:3) identifies the Scottish election of 2011 as the starting gun for the Scottish independence referendum process. The Scottish National Party won a majority in the Scottish Parliament thus paving the way for an independence referendum: it was a

manifesto promise of the SNP. The electoral system for Holyrood Elections is proportional so it was designed on purpose to make it highly unlikely for any party to achieve a majority unless there is actual support of more than half the electorate and it has been argued that the model was chosen to prevent the SNP from getting a majority and thus delivering an independence referendum.

At the Scottish Election in 2007, the SNP won 47 seats out of 129 and became for the first time the party with the most MSPs and thus the party got a chance to form their first government. As a minority government, they needed the support of MSPs from other parties but did an effective job and lasted the whole parliamentary term. Already in 2007, the SNP Government launched a “National Conversation on Scotland’s constitutional future” (Mullen 2016:3-4) to map the possible future directions for Scotland like, for example, enhanced devolution or independence. This report led to the establishment of what would be known as the Calman Commission and a number of new powers in the Scotland Act 2012.

In 2009, the Scottish Government set out four alternative directions for the country in a White Paper called *Your Scotland, Your Voice: A National Conversation*. The different options were “(i) the status quo, (ii) implementing the recommendations of the Calman Commission, (iii) devolution of the maximum possible range of responsibilities to Scotland within the United Kingdom (‘devolution max’), and (iv) independence.” The Scottish Government wanted to organise a referendum on independence but being a minority government, it was beyond their powers (Mullen 2016:5).

Even with a majority at Holyrood, the Scottish Government did and does not have the means to call a referendum that would be legally binding for the UK Government, so they had to negotiate the details with the UK Government in order to be able to hold one whose result would be respected by both governments. The Edinburgh Agreement signed on 15 October 2012 by Prime Minister David Cameron and Secretary of State for Scotland Michael Moore from the UK Government’s side and First Minister Alex Salmond and Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon from the Scottish Government’s side granted the Scottish Government the permission to hold a legally binding single-question referendum before the end of 2014 (Mitchell 2016:3).

The original suggestion of the SNP was a three-option referendum: independence, more devolution for Holyrood or the status quo. However, the Westminster government opposed the middle alternative so the final format required answering yes or no to the question “Should Scotland be an independent country?”. At the time, opinion polls

suggested that more powers for Scottish Parliament would have been the most popular option (Mitchell 2016:12).

Devine (2016:234) argues that “the Prime Minister clearly saw an opportunity to destroy the cause for ‘separatism’ for a generation or more”: he believed independence would be seen as too risky by a majority of the voters and that they would not have to devolve more powers to the Scottish Parliament. The final format of the ballot paper was discussed in the editorials collected for this study and will be discussed below.

The agreement also defined who was eligible to vote in the referendum. The franchise included all over 16-year-olds who were living in Scotland. This included everyone who permanently resided in Scotland regardless of where they were from originally but no Scots who lived elsewhere (Devine 2016:235). The effect birthplace had on voting decisions will be discussed later on.

Keating and McEwen (2017:2) present different theories about why there was an independence referendum in Scotland. One of them was that unionists wanted to “call the nationalists’ bluff” and decided to allow a referendum despite opposing it earlier. The SNP had promised a referendum in their manifesto and they had to deliver one and unionists decided to allow it because losing looked very unlikely at the time. A clear and decisive win for the Union would stop all talk of independence for a generation.

Another explanation Keating and McEwen (2017:2-3) write about is the ‘slippery slope’ argument: giving the nationalists a parliament will lead to demands of more and more powers and ultimately independence and disintegration of the United Kingdom. Around the world, there is evidence of the slippery slope but also of devolution being a force “stabilizing, reinforcing the legitimacy or the state”. They state that according to the Scottish Social Attitudes Surveys, devolution has not increased popular support for independence and at the same time, more Scottish people identify as both Scottish and British. It seems that devolution has not increased support for independence but the independence referendum did.

What Keating and McEwen (2017:3-4) see as a more important reason than the theories above is the changing idea of statehood in both domestic and international contexts. Globalisation, free trade and mobility of capital have lessened the possibilities of states to manage their economies and provide services connected to the welfare-state, and many question even the desirability of them doing so. The important questions in the new complex and interdependent world are, what is the most effective way of governing a nation and who are the most competent people to do it. This has been one of the core arguments for Scottish independence: Scotland’s future in Scotland’s hands i.e. people

living and working in Scotland would make better decisions regarding Scottish issues than a distant elite in London.

3.9 The independence referendum campaign

According to Macwhirter (2014b:11), support for Scottish independence had for thirty years remained around 30 per cent while the success of the Scottish Parliament had seen support for more devolution gain the backing of a vast majority of Scots. Keating and McEwen (2017:8) say that support for independence was first measured in the 1960s and for 1960s and the 1970s, it hovered around 20 per cent. During the Tory governments of the 1980s and 1990s it climbed to around 30 per cent but devolution – partly designed to curb enthusiasm for an independent Scotland – caused it to stagnate to some extent. Williamson and Golding (2016:110) write that in a YouGov poll in 2011, there were more people that supported Scottish independence in England and Wales than Scotland.

Thus, the need to increase support for independence by more than 20 per cent was always a demanding task: especially as in the last weeks of the campaign the options seemed to be independence, that was portrayed as very risky by most of the media; and significantly improved devolution, devo supermax or as close to federalism as possible. The offer of further devolution will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2.1.1. *New powers*.

The main campaign organisations were Yes Scotland of the independence movement and Better Together which campaigned for the continuation of the Union. Both campaigns were led by veteran politicians who had been active in the Labour Party – Dennis Canavan, former Labour MP and independent MSP, was the Yes Scotland chairman while Alasdair Darling, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, led the Better Together campaign (Mitchell 2016:4).

At the time of the referendum campaign, 41 of Scotland's 59 MPs represented Labour so a distinguished Scottish Labour politician was always an obvious choice for the Unionist campaign. Mitchell (2016:4) explains the choice of a Labour veteran to be the chairman of the Yes campaign – despite UK Labour and their Scottish branch supporting the Union with the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats – by reference to the identification of Labour voters as the group most crucial to win over during the campaign.

Mitchell (2016:5) identifies various strengths and weaknesses of the two lead campaigns. The Better Together campaign was said to have superior spending power and support of the press. As for the Yes campaign's strength, it was its slick, more efficient

and professional campaign organisation than that of the Unionist parties' and that did well engaging local activists to campaign on the ground. There was a risk that Yes Scotland would be seen by many as an SNP campaign, something which the campaign fought against with scores of different independence-supporting grassroots groups. The Better Together problems included the Conservative Party which at the time was a toxic brand in Scotland being a part of it and the perceived negativity of their main campaign messages.

Macwhirter (2015:10-11) states that it is common knowledge and acknowledged by both sides that the Yes campaign was superior to the No campaign as it was "positive, cultural, people-centred and energetic". Yes Scotland consisted of more than 300 local groups that were instrumental in achieving the record high voter registration of 97 per cent. Macwhirter writes about disappointed campaigners regretting the fact that the buzz created by the Yes campaign resulted in most of the Unionists registering and voting as well.

Devine (2016:235) says that the SNP's form of independence presented to the voters before the referendum was "much closer to the concept of devo-max than an absolute sovereignty principle of the nineteenth-century variety" and that "this latter was an ideal that would have been unattainable anyway for a small country in the modern era of globalization, powerful multinational corporations and growing interdependence between nation states". Independent Scotland would have had the Queen as its head-of-state, it would have been a member of Nato and continued to use sterling in a currency union with the rUK. There was to be no hard border between independent Scotland and the rUK as Scotland would stay or become an EU member soon after independence. What Devine (2016:236) sees as the "most explicit symbol of [the] proposed new order" was the removal of nuclear weapons from Scotland.

3.10 Polling day

The Scottish independence referendum took place on 18 September 2014. Of those who voted, 55.3 per cent voted against Scotland becoming an independent country again. Yet, most commentators (Mullen 2016:1, Devine 2016:245, Blain and Hutchison 2016a:ix. Macwhirter 2014b:16, etc.) agree that the question of Scottish independence and the future of the United Kingdom has not been resolved in any satisfactory way.

The referendum turnout was 85 per cent: according to Blain and Hutchison (2016a:vii), it was proof of political involvement among the citizens of Scotland not seen in any election or referendum since 1945. Mitchell (2016:13) argues that such a level of

engagement in the political process was unprecedented. There were meetings at town halls, rallies organised by members of all political parties and none, discussions in pubs, workplaces and homes, as well as countless people canvassing all over Scotland trying to persuade their fellow citizens to support their stance in this most important vote in living memory.

In total, there were 4,285,323 Scottish residents registered to vote in the independence referendum 109,000 of whom were 16- and 17-year-olds who were enfranchised to vote for the first time in the UK (Devine 2016:245). The 97 per cent voter registration was the highest in electoral history of the UK (Macwhirter 2014b:11). The polling day turnout was 85 per cent which is way short of the registration but still more than 20 percentage points higher than that of the 2010 general election (Devine 2016:245). A total of 2,001,926 people – 55 per cent – voted No while 1,617,989 people – 45 per cent – voted Yes. Devine (2016:245) argues that despite the 10-point margin and assurances by the winning side that the matter was settled for at least a generation, the Yes side refused to let the dream of independence die.

According to Lord Ashcroft's polls after the referendum, men were more likely to support independence than women but the gap was smaller than what had been predicted based on polls before polling day. Voters born in Scotland were more likely to vote Yes than voters born elsewhere: 50.2 per cent of them voted Yes while people born elsewhere in the UK the corresponding percentage was remarkably only 29.8. Of people born outside the UK, 43.2 per cent voted Yes (Devine 2016:251). Identity played a significant role in the decision as only around a quarter of voters who identify as equally Scottish and British voted Yes: the identity argument was not important solely for the Yes side.

The post-referendum survey by the Centre on Constitutional Change produced similar results: women were more likely than men to vote No although there were similar proportions of both groups that changed from No to Yes during the campaign. The 65+ age group were the most likely to vote No and the younger the voter the more likely they were to vote Yes except for the youngest group 16-24-year olds that was the second most likely to vote No even after a swing of 15 percentage points when comparing pre- and post-referendum results. Also, the middle-class voters were leaning towards No compared to working class that almost mirrored the actual result of the referendum. The group that was by far the most pro-union were people born in the rUK: seven out of ten people born in England, Wales or Northern Ireland voted No. However, political orientation and national identification were the most important factors determining how people voted (Liñeira, Henderson and Delaney 2017:172-173,175).

3.11 The Aftermath of the independence referendum

According to Blain and Hutchison (2016a:ix), it is now obvious that the constitutional debate in Scotland and the UK will continue. Mitchell (2016:13) argues that there were many in the 55 per cent strong No-voting majority who wanted significant new powers for Holyrood. That group of Scots added to the 45 per cent who wanted Scotland to get all power except that reserved to the EU means that there is a significant demand for further devolution. Riddoch (2014) writes of Ipsos Mori polls in September and November 2014 that indicated that two thirds of Scots wanted the Scottish Parliament to control all tax and spending and welfare powers i.e. a situation somewhat closer to what was promised during the last weeks of the referendum campaign than what the Smith Commission recommended or the UK Government subsequently delivered.

Riddoch (2015:27) believes that it was “scaremongering” about the economy and the promises of new powers that were decisive for the referendum. She also states that “the ballot reflected the Scots’ worst fears not [their] highest hopes” and that the No voters “were rewarded by being put to the back of the constitutional queue” as right after the referendum, the two main party leaders turned their focus towards the General election that was going to take place in May the following year.

Devine (2016:256) argues that the return of the independence movement after the referendum was hastened by the announcement of PM Cameron mere hours after the referendum results had been declared that after the Scots had made their decision, it was time to hear the millions of English voices and introduce English votes for English laws also known as EVEL. This resulted in angry reactions from his Better Together partners and significant surges in memberships for the Yes parties, most notably the SNP.

Pike (2015:273) argues based on interviews with Better Together personnel that Cameron’s EVEL announcement after the referendum did not go against the Better Together plan for the aftermath of the referendum because there was no plan for the aftermath of the referendum. While the Yes side had made and published plans for independence, the No side were focused only on being ahead on polling day.

On 19 September when the results had been declared, First Minister Alex Salmond announced his resignation both from being the FM but also from being the SNP leader. There was, in practice, only one possible replacement and so Salmond was replaced by his long-time deputy Nicola Sturgeon (Devine 2016:254). Sturgeon has served as the First Minister and the SNP leader since.

During the independence referendum campaign, the Scots were told that they should not leave but lead the Union. As soon as the result was clear, PM Cameron set the wheels rolling to limit the ability to vote in the House of Commons of everyone representing Scottish constituencies. At the House of Commons debate SNP MP Patrick Grady described the EVEL proposal as “Tory votes for Tory laws” and SNP MP Ian Blackford predicted that EVEL was “probably signalling the end of the Union that [the unionists] want to preserve” (Learmonth 2015a:3). Macwhirter (2015:127) says that English only bills are rare because many bills that seem English only can affect the devolved administrations financially through the Barnett formula.

In addition to the EVEL discussion, Macwhirter (2014b:153) writes that the period after the referendum seemed to confirm nationalist warnings before the referendum: a new oil field was found right after the referendum when just weeks earlier the oil was supposedly running out, The Times ran a headline “Cameron to cut public funds for Scotland”, English Tory MPs and the mayor of London were protesting against Scottish spending, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced cutting inheritance tax at the same time as he revealed a set of benefit cuts, UKIP was on the rise and the Tory government declared their intention to repeal the Human Rights Act. The power that Scotland had on 18 September 2014 had been given away and from a Westminster point of view, Scotland returned to being insignificant.

Nevertheless, McEwen and Keating (2017:195) write that the referendum had more than one winner. The No side won as they succeeded in keeping the Union together but the Yes side achieved new powers for the Scottish Parliament, the SNP more than quadrupled its membership and went on to win the General Election of 2015 winning 50 per cent of the popular vote and all but three Scottish seats. Macwhirter (2014b:156) says that “the parties that lost the referendum emerged from the campaign vastly more powerful than when they went in”.

Macwhirter (2014b:19) points out that if just 5 per cent of Scots had changed their minds from No to Yes the Union would have been dissolved. After the referendum the independence supporting parties, the SNP, but also the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialists, at least quadrupled their membership numbers and a number of non-partisan groups continued their activities. Kettle (2014) writes that during the independence referendum campaign in Scotland, “the sense of a gathering generational rejection of past Scottish politics was palpable. And the defeat of independence seems barely to have slowed it. The sometimes malign incompetence of the victors may have fuelled it even more.”

3.11.1 The Smith Commission and the Scotland Bill

The all-party commission to negotiate the new powers for the Scottish parliament was set up soon after the referendum and it was chaired by Lord Smith of Kelvin (Devine 2016:255). On the basis of the Smith commission, the UK government in January 2015 granted the Scottish parliament a set of new powers and David Cameron declared that the Scottish Parliament was now “the most powerful devolved assembly in the world”. Ascherson (2015) writes that it is “hard to know what he meant by that. No other country in the world has British-style devolution, in which the centre retains an absolute veto over the periphery.”

Devine (2016:258-259) argues that the powers were “some way away from the concept of ‘modern home rule’” and what many Scottish voters had understood as the meaning of the Vow. McEwen and Keating (2017:198) argue that “after the massive public engagement during the referendum campaign, the secretive and elite-led nature of [the Smith Commission] generated considerable disillusionment.”

Salmond (2015:239-240) writes that “according to all accounts” the party least willing to devolve new powers to the Scottish Parliament was the Labour Party and that this resulted in “70 per cent of taxation and 85 per cent of welfare powers” being retained in Westminster control. In the days following the publication of the Smith Report, there was difference of opinion whether the Vow had been delivered or not. Gordon Brown made another intervention launching “Vow Plus” but was criticised by the Conservatives and LibDems who reminded him that his party had actually promoted a “Vow Minus” approach during the Smith negotiations (Salmond 2015:242).

Riddoch (2015:38-39) writes that in order to avoid Scottish MPs being excluded in Westminster budget votes, the Labour Party demanded that while devolving the power to set income tax bands and rates, the power to set the income tax threshold would remain reserved. She states that “It was politics by horse trading and party diktat – not a solution to reflect the will of the people”. Unfortunately, in the light of all the argument around the Brexit referendum, it is hard not to feel uneasy about references to “the will of the people” and in any case, it had already been ignored already in the Edinburgh agreement when the devolution max option was blocked by David Cameron even though it was the most popular one in the polls at that time.

McKenna (2014) writes about the Smith Report: “In its overall character, there is a stark absence of anything significant that would allow any Scottish government the essentials to set its own policies in areas where radical and remedial action is required.”

He states also that “Those who believe that the Smith recommendations – and they are only recommendations – even slightly resemble devo-max are deluding themselves.”

Macwhirter (2014a) describes devolving income tax but retaining control of a vast majority of taxes as “a transparent fiscal trap” as the Scottish Government would have to finance its policies by taxing ordinary Scots instead of corporations or the extremely wealthy. McMillan (2014) writes that the proposed

...limited new income tax power represents a political poisoned chalice, an invitation to Scotland’s political class to increase their spending by hammering ordinary middle and lower earners, while once again letting the seriously wealthy, and large corporations, off the taxation hook.

She states that there are no “sweeping” powers in the Smith Report, as described in news reports after its publication, or anything that would resemble federalism or devolution-max that were promised during the last days of the independence referendum campaign.

The disappointment with the Smith Commission recommendations among commentators was clear and the actual Scotland Bill did not do much to improve the contentment of independence supporters. On 4 July, the National newspaper commented on the actual new powers in its editorial:

The Conservatives have gone out of their way this week to alienate Scotland. They began by blocking every single amendment Scottish politicians put forward to the Scotland Bill, a diluted version of the limited powers suggested by the Smith Commission, which in turn failed to live up to the suggestion of federalism of the now infamous and discredited Vow.

Macwhirter (2014b:20) writes that according to the poll of polls published on the last day of September, a substantial majority wanted all major tax decisions and most welfare decisions devolved to Holyrood and a clear majority thought that broadcasting should be devolved as well. McGarvey (2015:37) wrote that independence supporters were rightly disappointed with the gap between the pre-referendum promises and the Smith Commission as its recommendations “reflected a new incremental extension to devolution based on the evolutionary path pursued since 1999, rather than any dramatic departure from it.”

At the same time the EVEL legislation was making progress in Westminster. The SNP MP of Aberdeen North Kirsty Blackman submitted a written question asking which recent bills could be categorised as English or England and Wales only to the Leader of the House of Commons Chris Grayling. One of the bills listed in the answer was the Scotland Bill which led to Blackman describing the whole handling of EVEL as “ham

fisted and shambolic.” Grayling’s office put this down to an administrative error (Learmonth 2015b:7) but a more cynical commentator could see the Scotland Bill being very close to an England only bill as every amendment that the Scottish MPs had put forward, even those that were supported by 58 of Scotland’s 59 MPs, were shot down by the Government with one MP in Scotland. What made EVEL even more controversial was the fact that it was “introduced via an amendment to House of Commons standing orders rather than new legislation” (McGarvey 2015:37).

In the aftermath of the 2018 Power-grab crisis i.e. when Westminster, in connection to powers returning from the EU after Brexit, decided to unilaterally adjust the legislative competence of Holyrood, Leckie (2018:8) pointed out that “the Smith Commission despite the gloss put on it at the time, upheld the sovereignty of Westminster. Westminster created the Scottish Parliament and it could take it away. The reality is, in terms of the UK constitution, Westminster can grab power any time it likes”.

In early 2018, the Scottish Government took advantage of the new tax varying powers that were by many branded a fiscal trap or a poisoned chalice. They reformed the taxation so that “all taxpayers earning up to £33,000 – 70% of all taxpayers – will pay less than last year for the same income”. At the same time the higher and top rates were increased to 41 and 46 per cent respectively. According to the Scottish Government, these changes will “deliver an additional £428 million in 2018/19” (Mackay 2018). The change is supposed to facilitate “a positive investment in our country’s future” while most people pay less tax than the year before.

3.11.2 General Election 2015

The Scottish independence referendum was never Scotland versus England but the General Election of 2015 to some extent was. During the referendum campaign the Westminster parties were campaigning very actively to keep Scotland as a part of the UK but when the Scots voted No, it became an “absolutely terrifying” – as Tory MP Anna Soubry put it – possibility that a large group of MPs with Scotland’s best interest instead of Westminster party political interest in mind would be going to the House of Commons. In case there was a hung parliament, the SNP could well hold the balance of power in the lower chamber (Carrell and Watt 2015).

The Unionist parties understand the value of Scotland to the UK and thus instead of the traditional juxtaposition of the Conservatives and Labour, the SNP has emerged as the new number one enemy for both parties. The Scots were repeatedly accused of anti-Englishness before the independence referendum but have since it been governed by the

Conservative party who fought a strongly anti-Scottish or at least anti-SNP campaign before the 2015 General Election.

Devine (2016:260) describes the media campaign before the general election of 2015 as a “storm of Scotophobia”. The Tories had in their advertising portrayed Alex Salmond as a pickpocket or a pied piper controlling Labour leader Ed Miliband. The Tory supporting press in England were, according to Devine, “almost racist and then misogynistic” in their attacks against Nicola Sturgeon. She was described as “the most dangerous woman in Britain”, “Little miss McHypocrite” and even “the Scotweiler”. McGarvey (2015:37) writes about “demonization” of the SNP during the campaign: “The SNP were what social psychologists would term ‘othered’ – they were the bogeymen (and women) from Scotland who were threatening to govern the rest of the UK through propping up a potential minority Labour administration”.

Devine argues that David Cameron seemed more interested in remaining in power than respecting the supposedly equal partner north of the border but the tactics were successful in winning the general election even if they quite possibly contributed to the SNP landslide in Scotland. Then again, that was also good for the Tories as it meant fewer Labour MPs. The SNP won 56 of Scotland’s 59 seats ending Labour hegemony in Scotland (Devine 2016:261). The party won more votes and a higher proportion of seats than any party in Scottish election history (Macwhirter 2015:117).

Devine (2012:658) writes about London cartoonists who in the latter half of the 18th century lampooned “the Scots as treacherous and parasitic mendicants feasting off England’s riches both at home and abroad” so the anti-Scottish tones from the London press were nothing new to the Scots. The Conservative campaign Devine described as Scotophobic was criticised by The Spectator’s columnist Alex Massie known for his strong pro-union views. According to Pike (2015:213), Massie branded the Tory advertising campaign “impressively stupid” and continued that it was “increasingly evident --- that almost no one at CCHQ [Conservative Campaign Headquarters] really cares that much about the union”. Macwhirter (2015:1) argued after the 2015 general election that the SNP landslide meant that “only the most radical form of home rule, often called devo max, within a new federal United Kingdom, could conceivably now satisfy Scottish demands for autonomy and prevent Scotland taking the final step towards independence”.

4. Materials and methods

This chapter examines the field of Scottish media which provided the thesis with its primary as well as a number of secondary sources of information. The data corpus and the data set used as well as the most central research method – thematic analysis – are presented, as are the thematic model and the thematic components created during the analysis process.

4.1 Media coverage of the referendum campaign

In his Guardian column, Monbiot (2014b) argues that “the media shafted the people of Scotland”. As examples, he cites Simon Heffer of the Spectator arguing that the Scots are “addicted to welfare”, that they “embraced the something for nothing society” and that they opposed the poll tax “because many of them felt that paying taxes ought to be the responsibility of someone else”. Melanie Reed of the Times is quoted as writing “What spoilt, selfish, childlike fools those Scots are ... They simply don’t have a clue how lucky they are.” Dominic Lawson of the Daily Mail compared “the “threat” of independence with that presented by Hitler” (Monbiot 2014b). There was a clear anti-Scottish sentiment in the UK press although the only paper among the newspapers studied in this thesis to demonstrate such was the Telegraph or if the paper’s coverage was not anti-Scottish it most definitely was anti-independence and anti-SNP.

The problem with the media coverage of the Scottish independence referendum was that most of the media were if not downright hostile then at least cool towards the idea of Scottish independence. The media, big corporations and politicians have a peculiar relationship in the UK that maintain the status quo. Monbiot (2014b) describes it as follows:

If Westminster is locked into a paralysing neoliberal consensus it is partly because the corporate media, owned and staffed by its beneficiaries, demands it. Any party that challenges this worldview is ruthlessly disciplined. Any party that more noisily promotes corporate power is lauded and championed.

Monbiot (2014a) argues that the whole UK political system is “dominated by media owned by tax exiles, who, instructing their editors from their distant chateaux, play the patriotism card at every opportunity.”

This chapter discusses the role of the media in British politics in general and affecting the Scottish independence referendum in particular. Even though this thesis focuses on newspapers, broadcast media and new media are discussed also because of the interlinked nature of the whole media field. Each of the different types have their strengths

and weaknesses and they vary significantly between different interest groups in the complex puzzle that is the independence referendum campaign.

4.1.1 British/Scottish print media

Macwhirter (2014c) highlights the importance of newspapers and praises their contributions to Scottish civil society during the last 200 years. They inform readers, encourage debate and hold the ruling elite to account. At the same time, he laments the fact that during the past decade the Scottish titles have lost half of their editorial staff due to financial problems: it is impossible to think that would not have had an impact on their ability to perform those tasks. The decline has been because of more and more readers swap printed newspapers for digital ones – or independent news sources and even social media – while revenue streams are still very much dependent on print sales. At the same time costs are rising and advertising revenue is declining.

Blain and Hutchison (2016b:23) argue that press pluralism is vital for democratic debate and that a heterogeneous and vigilant press sector is crucial to freedom of expression for different views in society. They too acknowledge the regular cutbacks the Scottish press have suffered and recognise that at some point they will endanger their possibility to provide varied news service and investigative journalism.

According to Blain and Hutchison (2016b:17-19), several UK-wide newspapers with ‘editionised’ Scottish versions have been able to obtain market share from the ‘indigenous’ newspapers because they are well-resourced while the Scottish papers suffer from under-investment. The market share of Scottish newspapers has decreased rather dramatically: while their market shares in the mid-1970s were 64 and 66 per cent for dailies and Sundays respectively, in 2014, the Sundays only narrowly outsold the UK papers and the dailies managed a market share of 43 per cent.

The Scottish newspaper market is dominated by UK titles with, according to Macwhirter (2014c), their only nominally Scottish editions. Already in April 2014, he identified the problem that most newspapers were supportive of the Union, some “militantly” so: “It is right that newspapers have strong editorial views, but it is not healthy when they all have the same editorial views.” He argues that in order to preserve diversity of opinion, it may be necessary to subsidise newspapers in some way and calls for debate around the issue.

Williamson and Golding (2016:111) write that UK newspapers – irrespective of possible Scottish editions – “remain largely English in tone and rhetoric”. They also cite MacInnes et al. that what is often called British or UK press is better described as English

or London-based press. Blain and Hutchison (2016b:17-19) say that, since the late 1970s, there is a popular perception that the traditional media tends to oppose constitutional change. Monbiot (2014b) writes that “living within their tiny circle of light, most senior journalists seem unable to comprehend a desire for change. If they notice it at all, they perceive it as a mortal threat”.

Law (2015:3) writes:

Newspaper Unionism has been a central plank of the political fetish in Scotland since the eighteenth century. Every single day the press expresses its Scottish credentials on page after page. Banal declarations of Scottishness are routinely framed by the apparent permanence of the political Union.

He argues that after the 2011 SNP landslide and consequent SNP majority government “the politics of the press in Scotland began to look even more one-dimensional and nondemocratic.”

Dekavalla (2016:46) identifies the independence referendum as a “major topic in the Scottish press for over two years” starting from the 2011 SNP victory at the Scottish Parliament elections and the 2012 Edinburgh Agreement all the way to the independence referendum on 18 September 2014. She writes that the indigenous titles “have traditionally held an important position in the public sphere” and they have always demonstrated a sense of Scottish national identity in finding more Scottish events newsworthy than the UK-wide press.

After the devolution referendum of 1997, a survey found that voters identified indigenous Scottish newspapers as their most important sources of information. The newspapers believe they have a special place in the minds of the Scottish public, consider themselves influential in Scottish political life and policymaking and viewed the independence referendum debate as an opportunity to strengthen these bonds and their positions (Dekavalla 2016:46).

Mitchell (2016:4) states that during the independence referendum campaign, “many newspapers and journalists abandoned any pretence at impartiality.” Press Data – a non-aligned agency that monitors the UK news media – found that the media favoured pro-union stories almost 4:1 (Devine 2016:237). Between the end of the Commonwealth Games and polling day, the only day there were more pro-independence headlines than pro-union ones was the day when William MacDougall, also known as Groundskeeper Willie from the Simpsons, declared his support for a Yes vote.

Macwhirter (2014b:80) argues that “it would be hard for any reasonable person to view [the Press Data] material objectively and not come to the conclusion that during the

referendum the press became almost an arm of the no campaign”. He writes that the press mostly followed the narrative of the UK establishment showed little criticism or analysis when reporting the claims of business sources and “did not seriously report the rival narrative” (Macwhirter 2014b:81) or report positive assessments of an independent Scotland by, for instance, Standard and Poor, the National Institute for Economic and Social Research or the Financial Times.

Williamson and Golding (2016:109) say that “while the media are unlikely to directly determine what people think, they demonstrably have a huge impact on what they think about.” They also write that English newspapers through their “framing of the major issues can be assumed to have had a significant impact on how the merits and problems of separation were construed and addressed” for Scottish voters. They are widely read in Scotland and regardless of whether they have Scottish editions or not, they are London newspapers and their share of sold dailies is more than half of the total.

Blain and Hutchison (2016a:viii) point out that as support for the Yes movement increased in the final weeks of the campaign, more and more media got interested and involved in the coverage. Mitchell (2016:4) writes that while the importance of the press is not what it used to be, both sides were hoping for newspaper endorsements. However, most of the press was neutral or opposed to independence and even neutrality could mean “subtle – and sometimes not so subtle – opposition”. In the end, only the Sunday Herald declared their support for independence and many of the London titles adopted a downright hostile attitude towards Scottish self-determination.

Dekavalla (2016:55) sums up the editorial discourse of Union-supporting Scottish papers as presenting the vote as a choice between independence and enhanced devolution for the Scottish Parliament. The latter of these alternatives was presented as the change the Scottish people desired, a possibility to gain more control over Scotland’s future that would lead to a fairer society, while independence was portrayed as risky. However, the papers emphasised that neither of the alternatives would automatically result in a better Scotland but there would be plenty of work, political and otherwise, ahead to achieve that.

Dekavalla (2016:55) argues that while the Scottish papers had been unanimous in their support for devolution in 1997, independence in 2014 seemed to be “too bold a step” for them, once again, with the exception of the Sunday Herald. She (2016:56) argues that the decision to back neither side taken by the Sun was probably a financial one: the paper did not want to alienate half of its readers.

Dekavalla (2016:56) points out that most Scottish papers declared support for No at a time when the No vote was said to mean significantly increased devolution. She

emphasises the fact that while neither of the original referendum options nor increased devolution was supported by an outright majority in the 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, increased devolution was the alternative that faced the least opposition and was considered to be the least risky option. Presumably, remaining neutral was not an option that was available for the Scottish dailies so they chose the alternative that they thought would please as many potential readers as possible – or at least alienate as few as possible.

According to the EBU (2016:3, 18), the UK written press is the least trusted in Europe by some margin. The Net Trust Index that is “difference between the percentage of the population who answered 'tend to trust' and 'tend not to trust' to the survey question, not taking into account ‘do not know’ replies” for the UK written press was –51 in 2015 – i.e. after the referendum. The closest competitor for the status of the least trusted written press in Europe was Serbia with a Net Trust Index of –39 while the EU 28 score was –7.

One of the reasons for this is quite probably the high share of the tabloid press in the UK newspaper circulations. The most popular Scottish newspaper in 2013/14 was the Daily Record with a 216,000 circulation. The biggest paper in Scotland was the Sun with 248,000 sold copies and the third highest circulation was that of the Daily Mail: 92,000 with which it outsells the Scottish dailies the Herald (39,000) and the Scotsman (29,000) put together (Blain and Hutchison 2016b:20). In addition to the print circulations, there is the dimension of online versions of these newspapers but since the data about readers’ locations is not available, visitor figures of the online newspapers will not be discussed here. The latest, i.e. the 2017 Net Trust Index for the UK was –50: 73 per cent of respondents say that they “tend not to trust” the UK written press (EBU 2018:28) so there has not been much improvement.

4.1.2 Broadcast media

The Broadcast media played an important role in the referendum campaign as television was the medium that reached the biggest share of Scots during the run-up to the referendum (Blain and Hutchison 2016b:23). The coverage of the BBC in particular received plenty of criticism mainly from independence supporters. The newspapers whose editorials are included in this study discussed the alleged BBC bias in their editorials. Their views on whether there was a bias against the independence movement seemed to reflect the strength of their support for independence or the Union. This will be discussed in more detail in section 5.1.5.1 *Media impartiality*.

Blain and Hutchison (2016b:16) argue that while “there is no adequate calculus available for determining the influence of communications media besides other affective

factors ... in the formation of awareness and opinion about the world”, it is certain that the media has an effect on our world view and that they are able to control what people focus their attention on.

Robertson (2016:61) reports a “preponderance of anti-independence statements over pro-independence statements by a ratio of about 3:2 on *Reporting Scotland* and *STV News*” but acknowledges that it results, at least partly, from an editorial decision to allow all major UK parties a chance to respond to SNP statements. The sequence of presentation on *Reporting Scotland* where anti-independence news preceded pro-independence views as opposed to vice versa had a ratio of 66:24. Robertson (2016:63) argues that this is problematic because it normalises the No position and the Yes argument has to be defended and justified. His overall conclusion was that “there was an imbalance in the reporting of the referendum on television and radio in Scotland” (2016:68).

Herald blogger Jock Morrison (2014) discusses the problem with the sequence of presentation in a more direct way:

The BBC's 'impartiality' generally consisted of giving the Yes side the opportunity to respond to scare stories circulated by supporters of the union. There was no scrutiny of the credibility of these stories. The No side was never similarly put on the back foot - for example, having to respond to the risks to Scotland of remaining in the union. According to the BBC's coverage, staying in the union was a risk-free option.

This study focuses on newspaper editorials because they still – despite falling circulation figures – are very influential in the British society. Monbiot (2014b) writes:

despite the rise of social media, the established media continues to define the scope of representative politics in Britain, to shape political demands and to punish and erase those who resist. It is one chamber of the corrupt heart of Britain, pumping fear, misinformation and hatred around the body politic.

Monbiot (2014b) quotes Robert Peston, the economic editor of the BBC, as saying the BBC news “is completely obsessed by the agenda set by newspapers ... If we think the Mail and Telegraph will lead with this, we should. It’s part of the culture”. Also, Macwhirter (2014b:66) says that “the BBC’s news and current affairs shows tend to take their cue from the agenda of the newspapers”. Furthermore, TV show presenters often interview or discuss current topics with journalists from different newspapers. Therefore, newspapers influence the debate and opinions in several ways.

4.1.3 New media

Buchanan (2016:70) writes that while the potential of social media in political campaigns has been an acknowledged fact for some time, the level of engagement, activity and participation seen during the independence referendum campaign was remarkable. Yet, one could argue that the side that quite convincingly won the battle in the new media lost the referendum as it lost the race to obtain newspaper endorsements and, at least partly because of that, positive coverage of broadcast media.

Blain and Hutchison (2016b:19) say that many young people are indifferent to the print media. On the other hand, older people who do read newspapers seem to be the most certain to vote and thus influence the result more. The oldest age groups are also the most difficult to reach via new media. While people who read newspapers choose those papers whose views they tend to agree with, newspaper frontpages are witnessed by everyone who walks past a newsstand or visits a supermarket, even people who do not read newspapers. Social media users often find themselves in a bubble of a kind as they are able to choose whose messages they see on their timelines and most of the time do not follow or maybe they even block users that they disagree with.

Blain and Hutchison (2016b:23) argue that “despite the growth of non-traditional media, broadcasting and the press remain vitally important, not least when considering political news and opinion.” In the 2014 Ofcom surveys of the Communications Market, 80 per cent of those interviewed ranked television as their main source of Scottish news. Newspapers were the most important for eight per cent and the Internet for six per cent. While the difference between newspapers and the Internet is small, the newspapers – as discussed earlier – influence broadcasting more than the Internet does.

Dekavalla (2016b) argues that while newspaper readership has declined, people active in broadcasting or publishing material online as well as many contributors to social media tend to read them so newspapers inform the discussion in the new media as well. Macwhirter (2014b:88) argues that there are many people in Scotland who do not believe what the press writes and have turned solely to new media for their information. The problem with social media is that it “tends to be an echo chamber, reflecting the views of the committed back to the committed” (ibid.).

A Survation poll conducted between 5 and 10 July 2018 found that the younger a respondent is the more likely they would be to vote Yes “if there was a referendum tomorrow with the question 'Should Scotland be an Independent country?’” While 31.1 per cent of the respondents 65 years old or older would vote Yes, 71.1 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds would support independence. All three age groups between 18 and 44 years

would be more likely to vote Yes while all three age groups 45 or older would be more likely to vote No with the undecideds – 9.5 per cent – removed.

Nielsen (2017) reports that in all age groups under 45, a majority identify online as their most important source of news while in the 45+ age groups more people pick TV as their main source. Moving from younger age groups to older ones, there is a near-linear increase of share of those who identify TV as their most important source of news while the trend for online is the opposite. Whether there is a correlation between supporting Scottish independence and relying on television for their news – and perhaps that of having been taught Scottish history as discussed in section 2.2.4 – is not a subject of this study but it could, at least in part, explain why the Unionists are so reluctant to devolve broadcasting.

4.2 Methodology

This section presents the methodology of this study introducing the analytic method of thematic analysis and describing the process via which the most important themes in the data set of editorials were developed. Also, the model that illustrates the developed main groups, themes and subthemes and their connections is presented.

4.2.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data. It is used to identify and analyse themes or patterns within data. Braun and Clarke (2006:77-79) describe it as accessible and theoretically flexible and as such it provides a usable approach to a wide variety of research needs. Following the method helps researchers organise and describe their data sets but thematic analysis is a valuable tool also when proceeding to the actual analysis stage of the project.

Braun and Clarke (2006:78) argue that even though many scholars see thematic analysis as a tool that is used as a phase in other methods, it should be regarded as a method of analysis among others that can provide detailed and complex results from analysed data. Even though thematic analysis has been a widely used method, Braun and Clarke (2006:79) say that it has lacked proper guidelines or even an agreement on how to conduct it. They also point out that researchers often leave out proper descriptions of their research process and details of how they did their analysis. Their widely cited article provides the instructions needed to perform thematic analysis and properly report it.

The purpose of thematic analysis is to search “across a data set... . . . to find repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke 2006:86). They also highlight the importance of

including a description of what has been done and justifying the decisions made. Thematic analysis enjoys a theoretical freedom in the sense that it can be adapted to any theoretical framework but, according to Braun and Clarke (2006:81), it is of utmost importance that the theoretical position of the analysis is communicated to the audience.

Braun and Clarke (2006:87) say that it is essential that the researcher immerses themselves in the material i.e. gets very familiar with it. What counts as a theme is for the researcher to decide. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:82), “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set.” There are no clear and strict guidelines or rules on how much a theme has to feature within the data set to be considered a theme. The importance of a theme is not necessarily related to its frequency in the data. There are several possible ways to identify and select the themes in thematic analysis and the most important thing is that the researcher is consistent in how they do it. (Braun & Clarke 2006:82-83)

Braun and Clarke (2006:80) argue that themes do not just emerge from the data and a description of a researcher discovering them also portrays the analysis as a passive process. Instead, one should highlight the active role of the researcher who works through several different activities in identifying, selecting and reporting the patterns and forming the themes to report. The process involves a number of decisions the researcher has to make instead of just reading the texts and picking out the themes that were always there waiting to be found. The coding process continues throughout the whole process of thematic analysis and the researcher continually develops and modifies the codes towards creating the final themes (Braun and Clarke 2006:87).

While providing these valuable guidelines, Braun and Clarke (2006:87, 89) emphasize that they are just that. The guidelines are not exact rules and there should always be an element of flexibility in the researcher’s approach so that they can get the most out of the data using their selected method. The analysis is not a linear process but contains repeated reading going back and forth in the data creating and revising codes and coding, identifying themes or patterns while moving on. It is important that the researcher makes notes of potential themes and other insight as well as describing the actual process of analysing the material.

4.2.2 The process

The thematic analysis of the editorials was conducted using the inductive approach as presented by Braun and Clarke (2006:83-84) i.e. the data was coded without a pre-existing

coding frame. This approach is presented as data-driven and there is room for the research question to evolve during the coding process. This approach is more suitable for a data set that has not been collected with a particular goal in mind or controlled with, for example, interview questions focusing on a certain topic.

The primary data of this thesis is presented using the terms introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006:79). The *data corpus*, i.e. all data that was collected, consists of a total of 1,061 editorials published in the e-editions of the Scotsman, the Herald and the Sunday Herald and in the Telegraph View and the Guardian View sections of those newspapers' web sites. The period during which these editorials were collected was a total of sixteen weeks starting from Monday 30 June 2014 and ending a good month after the polling day on 19 October.

The e-editions of the three Scottish papers were identical to the print editions while the UK papers' editorials were html-based and were possibly somewhat different from the ones published in print. The Guardian View section included also the editorials of its sister paper the Observer. In the Telegraph view section, there was no distinction between editorials published in the Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Telegraph. Likewise, there was no indication whether the editorials were published in the Scottish edition of the paper. In the data corpus, there are 188 editorials of the Scotsman, 280 editorials of the Herald, 26 editorials of the Sunday Herald, 284 editorials of the Telegraph, 264 editorials of the Guardian and 19 of the Observer.

The *data set* consists of the editorials of the aforementioned newspapers that discuss issues related to the independence referendum and that were published during the last five weeks of the independence referendum campaign i.e. August 14 to September 18. The total number of *data items* i.e. editorials covering some aspect of the independence referendum is 70. Of these, 15 were published in the Scotsman, 21 in the Herald, 5 in the Sunday Herald, 18 in the Telegraph, 10 in the Guardian and one in the Observer.

In their editorials during the last five weeks of the campaign, the newspapers used a total 42,970 words to write about the independence referendum. The Scotsman printed a total of 8469 words (on average 564.6 words), the Herald 12096 (on average 576), the Sunday Herald 3122 (on average 624.4), the Guardian 7447 (on average 745), and the Telegraph 9491 words (on average 527). The Observer wrote 2345 words for what was their single independence referendum themed editorial.

A word can be included in a sentence or a paragraph that is not coded to be included in any code or theme, it can be a coded to a single theme or several closely

related or more loosely related themes at the same time. This explains the number of coded words being a lot bigger than the number of total words in the editorials. The numerical data discussed above is summarised in table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of the data corpus and the data set

	Data corpus	Research period	Data set				
Newspaper	No. of editorials	No. of editorials	No. of relevant editorials	Relevant editorials %	Number of words total	Average length	Number of coded words
Guardian	264	86	10	11,63	7447	745	15279
Herald	280	90	21	23,33	12096	576	20197
Observer	19	9	1	11,11	2345	2345	6080
Scotsman	188	60	15	25,00	8469	565	13077
Sunday Herald	26	7	5	71,43	3122	624	5274
Telegraph	284	91	18	19,78	9491	527	16198
Total	1061	343	70	20,41	42970	927	76105

During the last five weeks of the independence referendum campaign, three of the six newspapers published their preference for referendum outcome. The editorials in which they declared their support were longer than the papers' average editorials dealing with the independence referendum. The Sunday Herald declared their support for Scottish independence before the period during which the data corpus of this thesis was collected in its editorial on 4 May 2014 while The Telegraph was always, or at least during the whole period of data collection, strongly pro-Union.

The Scotsman declared their support for the continuation of the Union on 11 September 2014 with an editorial containing 2165 words. The following day, the Guardian pledged their support for the UK and the Herald came out in support of the No campaign on the 16th. The papers used 1225 and 2065 words respectively for that purpose. The Observer did not clearly or officially state a preference but they wrote about the promised constitutional reform in very positive terms in their only referendum-related editorial (13 September) and wrote that “those voting in favour of Scottish independence on Thursday will need to be certain that separation is a better option than a federated Britain” perhaps echoing the advice given by the Queen that people should think very carefully about their choice.

Braun and Clarke, as discussed earlier, present a description of the thematic analysis process. The researcher(s) start the project by familiarising themselves with the

data. In this case, the editorials were collected, read for the first time soon after they were published, and first notes were made about which editorials were relevant to the research. An Excel-file was set up and for each editorial a line was added that contained the date they were published, which paper they appeared in, the headlines and – as newspaper headlines are not necessarily very informative – a short description of the issue that was discussed.

The second time reading through the data already involved Braun and Clarke's (2006:88) second phase, writing down initial notes and a very preliminary search for meanings, patterns, arguments and themes related to the independence referendum. At this point, the data set had been narrowed down to referendum related editorials published during the last four weeks before polling day. The period was later extended to include the last five weeks of the campaign in order to get more material for the analysis.

The second phase was started with MS PowerPoint. This option was chosen because at that point all the editorials from the Scottish Newspapers were in picture format as screen grabs of the e-editions. The next step was going through the editorials and paraphrasing the essential information in each paragraph. This was a way of getting immersed in the editorials and working towards the first set of codes. These paraphrased texts were also an important part of the following phase.

After the paraphrasing, the newly written pieces of text were moved to a new Excel-file where each of them was placed on a line with the date and headline of the editorial. A column that indicated which paragraph in the original text the code originated from was added so that, if needed, it would be possible to go back and check what the original text actually said. The following step was moving to a new column where the text snippets were to be shortened and their messages defined and clarified in a more general form.

Moving to the following column meant writing the first set of codes to be used in the later phases of the analysis. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006:89), at this point, as many different codes or pre-themes as possible were created and applied as it is – especially when using the inductive approach – impossible to know exactly which codes or themes will be of interest at a later stage. It was possible for an extract of text to receive no codes, a single code or several codes depending on the issue or issues that were discussed. All the different codes in every extract of text were added to the relevant row in the Excel file.

The step following the creation of the first set of codes was generating a pivot table of the codes and thus getting the first list of codes used. This first list of codes or pre-themes included 122 different items which were to be sorted and grouped under what

were the first rough themes of the study. Later on, these preliminary themes were selected, refined and combined so that the final model contains 57 thematic components of this level.

These 57 thematic components became the sub-themes of 13 themes that were in turn grouped under three top-level groups thus creating a three-tier model of the thematic construction of the data set. At a later stage still, some of the 57 sub-themes became themselves lower level sub-themes so the model has, in parts, four levels. The model is illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The thematic model of the data set

Campaign	Constitutional question	Impact
YES Movement	Independent Scotland	Uncertain future
Salmond	Post-independence day Scotland	Economic impact
YES message	Self-determination	•Rising prices
Unfair YES		•No debt share
YES momentum	ENG-SCO relations	Currency
YES campaign	Relations with England	NHS
	Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	General uncertainty
Better Together campaign	National identity	EU
Poor BT		Oil
•BT late	Positive UK	
•BT panic	New powers	Indyref impact
Labour	Devolution	Indyref affects the whole UK
Late intervention	UK stability & security	Constitutional reform
	Federalism	UK won't be the same
Referendum campaign	Unity and solidarity	Fix the UK
Bullying	Success & benefit of UK	Who will speak for ENG?
People reclaiming politics	Barnett	
Exceptional campaign	Break-up complex: faster, safer, better change	
•Win for democracy		
Scaremongering	Defence	
Keep calm and show respect	•Trident	
	•Defence in general	
Independence referendum	•Nato	
Polls		
Importance of the vote	Social justice	
Tight race	Fairer society	
	UK not working	
Heart vs. head	Inequality	
Emotions		
Rationality		
Division		
Media & information		
Media impartiality		
Whose truth to believe		
Newspaper endorsements		

The three top-level groups are named *Campaign*, *Constitutional question* and *Impact* and in Table 2 they are marked with black text in white boxes. The first group consists of six themes, the second of five themes and the third two themes. The theme names are presented with white text on a dark background. Each theme has a number of subthemes marked with black text on a white background while a few of the subthemes

have subthemes of their own. These fourth-tier subthemes are marked with a small black bullet point and black text in italics.

As an example of the coding process and how it leads to subthemes being identified, the following excerpt from an editorial in the Herald on 16 September is presented:

The attractions of greater autonomy for Scotland have largely been lost in this campaign, however, partly because the impressive pro-independence camp has dominated the theme of positive change and partly because the pro-UK campaign has failed to sell the considerable benefits of enhanced devolution.

This single sentence in the analysis includes four different subthemes: “greater autonomy” refers to *New powers*, “the impressive pro-independence camp” is included in the *Yes campaign* subtheme, “dominated the theme of positive change” discusses *Yes Message* and “the pro-UK campaign has failed” belongs to *Poor BT*.

Some of the thematic components on the subtheme level have been merged into other subthemes. For example, *Win for democracy* has become a part of *Exceptional campaign* and thus is now placed on fourth tier because it is, on the one hand, rather close to *Exceptional campaign* but too different to be wholly absorbed into it and, on the other hand, big enough to deserve attention on its own. The same thing happened with *Poor BT* and *Economic impact* with their respective subthemes. The theme named *Defence* consists of three fourth-tier subthemes that have been merged into a theme.

Braun and Clarke (2006:86) write that thematic analysis is not and should not be a linear process but a more recursive one. Regarding this study, this has certainly been the case as during the evolution of the themes it was necessary to repeatedly go back to check, add and revise things. Also, their (2006:92) warning that coding data and generating themes can continue *ad infinitum* was also useful and important as the risk of endless refining in such a large and varied data set was very real.

II ANALYSIS

The analysis in this thesis consists of the results of the thematic analysis process. The results can be divided into two parts: firstly, the themes generated from the data set by the author and secondly, their importance measured by the number of words that have been coded under them. Full data tables of which themes were discussed in which newspapers, to what extent and when during the five-week research period can be found in the appendices. Appendix A consists of absolute word counts and number of editorials, Appendix B of vertical and Appendix C of horizontal percentage tables of the same data. These appendices present the aforementioned data for the whole five-week research period for all newspapers as a group as well as by week and by newspaper.

5. The thematic components

The themes have been grouped into three top-level groups dealing with the campaign, the constitutional question and the impact of the referendum respectively. Each of these top-level groups consists of a number of themes which in turn consist of a number of subthemes. The model was introduced in section 4.2. As the subthemes are the elements that were directly identified in the texts, they are discussed in more depth than the themes under which the sum of the subthemes is presented on a more general level. The excerpts and examples from the editorials are presented on the sub-theme level to illustrate the views of the newspapers.

The order in which the themes are presented is from the group with most coded words to the one with the least. Within each group the themes are presented in similar order and within each theme the subthemes likewise. In the few instances where there are subthemes under subthemes, the fourth-tier subthemes are presented directly after the third-tier subthemes they form a part of. The presentation of the groups and themes will include also comparison of importance i.e. the coded words of groups, themes and subthemes among themselves. The importance of the thematic components by word count in the top-level groups and on theme level are presented below in Table 3. The same data on all different levels as a group and by paper is presented in Appendix D which contains also vertical and horizontal percentage tables sorted according to the rankings.

Table 3: Word counts of top-level groups and themes by newspaper

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	15266	20131	6080	13039	5274	16130	75920
1 Campaign	5357	11852	1270	4597	3866	10153	37095
2 Constitutional question	5708	4872	3118	4636	347	3276	21957
3 Impact	4201	3407	1692	3806	1061	2701	16868

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total	Top-level group
1 YES movement	1350	3006	652	1160	1444	4507	12119	Campaign
2 Uncertain future	1709	2729	516	3471	1061	1826	11312	Impact
3 Positive UK	1913	3090	1057	1994	107	2025	10186	Constitutional question
4 Referendum campaign	891	3072	337	781	898	1443	7422	Campaign
5 Better Together campaign	1431	2049	267	855	701	1203	6506	Campaign
6 Indyref impact	2492	678	1176	335	0	875	5556	Impact
7 Independence referendum	887	1433	14	740	251	1476	4801	Campaign
8 ENG-SCO relations	1316	762	402	1048	44	708	4280	Constitutional question
9 Social justice	1495	698	1042	300	0	24	3559	Constitutional question
10 Media & Information	468	1341	0	499	541	340	3189	Campaign
11 Heart vs. head	330	951	0	562	31	1184	3058	Campaign
12 Independent Scotland	969	263	505	774	164	169	2844	Constitutional question
13 Defence	15	59	112	520	32	350	1088	Constitutional question

This chapter contains also plenty of quotations from the editorials to demonstrate how different issues were discussed in different papers. As many paragraphs and sentences in the editorials include several different subthemes and, as has been pointed out earlier, there is a complex web of themes and subthemes present in the editorials, examples of them may come up more than once. The aim, however, has been to present the most relevant examples in the sections covering different sub-themes and to avoid unnecessary repetition.

5.1 Campaign

The top-level group *Campaign* consists of six different themes. It is, by some margin, the most discussed top-level group with 49 per cent of the coded word count. As its themes quite often describe people and things, images and emotions, events and phenomena it might not have been the most important group with regard to voters' voting decisions, but it includes plenty of news material, general information and even entertainment. The group was present in 66 of the 70 editorials of the data set being the biggest by this indicator as well.

Both the Yes campaign and the No campaign were widely discussed in the data set editorials and so both have their own themes: *YES Movement* and *Better Together Campaign*. The theme called *Referendum campaign* consists of subthemes that discuss events and people-related phenomena during the campaign while *Independence referendum* deals with polls and aspects of the referendum that are not directly related to the campaign, the campaign groups or their subgroups. *Heart vs. head* discusses the emotional aspects of campaigning and the decision the people of Scotland had to make while *Media & information* deals with the role of the media in the campaign and the availability and reliability of information available to the voters.

5.1.1 Yes Movement

The *Yes Movement* theme was the most discussed theme of all. It deals with people supporting independence, their organisations, groups and actions but also their message, how the Yes side campaigned and how it nearly did what was thought to be impossible and achieved independence for Scotland. It includes plenty of criticism towards the message of the ‘independentistas’ and even the questionable methods of some individuals but also plenty of praise first and foremost for the positivity and engagement the Yes side was able to create and sustain. This theme was present in 60 different editorials and it was the most popular theme according to coded words.

Macwhirter (2014f:18) lists positivity as “one of Yes’s great advantages”. The campaign focused on how an independent Scotland could be a better country for everyone, it welcomed people regardless of ethnicity or other background, and there was very little violence or vandalism. As most newspapers supported the Union, the press would probably have jumped on broken windows, vandalised cars or attacks on No campaigners, but they had to be content with the so-called cybernats and the Jim Murphy egging as will be discussed below.

5.1.1.2 Salmond

Texts included in this subtheme discuss the then First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond. Some of the discussion about Salmond is merely reporting what he has said in an interview or a speech. Quite often there is an element of critique or praise involved. This subtheme was the only one that focused on a single person and, in that sense, it is quite remarkable that it was the third most discussed one during the research period. The only subthemes that produced more coded words than the *Salmond* subtheme were *New Powers* and *Poor BT*. Its wordcount of coded words is higher than those of six of the thirteen themes in this study.

In this sense it is reasonable to say that even though the First Minister was a highly active and visible character in the campaign and a great protagonist of the Yes movement and while discussing Salmond often is justified, there is a tendency to emphasise his persona in connection to the Yes movement and its goals. The sub-theme is present in 40 of the 70 editorials while the next most prolific themes are featured in 33 (*Yes message*), 27 (*New powers*) and 25 (*Poor BT*) editorials respectively. The Telegraph was the most productive of the papers publishing more than twice the number of coded words each of the Scottish dailies published in this sub-theme.

Robertson (2016:63) identifies personalisation of political issues as “a long-established strategy” that is used “to weaken arguments” and for “shifting focus from collective reasoning or shared values to supposed personal desires and personality traits”. He writes that this tactic has been used against, for instance, Neil Kinnock and John Major in UK politics. In his research of Scottish news broadcasts before the independence referendum Robertson found what he calls “heavy personalisation of the debate around the character of Alex Salmond” and that Salmond was “often portrayed as selfish and undemocratic” (2016:63-64).

Personalisation might to some extent have been a conscious and deliberate tactic but Law (2014:5) argues that it was difficult for journalists to “adapt to the challenge of thinking beyond the political fetish.” He writes that the media re-framed “political discourse in the more familiar terms of representation and away from the more fundamental questions” which led to “framing the discussion in terms of the electoral positioning of the Labour party and the SNP and the personalities of political leaders, rather than fundamental problems of citizenship, democracy, equality and statehood”. One could argue that when the democratic process of a referendum seeks to settle a question for at least a generation putting so much focus on one person or even a ruling party and its current policies seems problematic.

Macwhirter writes (2014b:76) that “the press coverage consistently equated the Yes campaign with the personality of the First Minister” while Monbiot (2014b) writes about media’s “chronic inability to distinguish” between the goals of the whole independence movement and personal wishes of Alex Salmond. He also argues that the then First Minister was subsequently “monstered beyond recognition”. As this study focuses on quality newspapers, the monsterring was only found in the Telegraph but presenting the Yes movement as Alex Salmond was common. “Alex Salmond has promised to bring more clarity to his stance on the currency” (Scotsman 18 Aug) is an example of both reasonable coverage as Salmond has personally promised to provide more information about the currency options but at the same time, the currency stance is portrayed as Salmond’s stance and not the stance of the Scottish Government.

The most prolific paper in personalising Alex Salmond as the Yes movement was the Telegraph. “Alex Salmond is in particular trouble among women voters. It could be that they have been alienated by his confrontational approach – charismatic to his fans, bullying to his critics” (17 Aug). The excerpt above portrays the fact that a smaller percentage of women than men support independence as Salmond being “in particular trouble among women voters” before attacking the FM’s approach to politics. In the 22

August editorial with the headline “Yet again, Alex Salmond refuses to face facts”, the paper writes about “the First Minister’s rose-tinted view of the world” and “the braggadocio he has displayed whenever the facts have got in the way of the story he wants to tell”.

The Guardian very much personalises the NHS to be a Salmond issue:

Mr Salmond’s tactic in recent days has been to present Scottish independence as the bulwark against attempts to privatise the NHS. Logically the argument is a nonsense, given that the only person who could privatise the NHS in Scotland is Mr Salmond himself (25 Aug).

While Salmond quite probably was the most visible and vocal independence campaigner, there were several other high-profile campaigners and thousands of grassroots campaigners talking about the NHS all over Scotland. The Guardian also implies that Salmond equals the Scottish Government and always will but less than a month later he had resigned as the SNP leader and was going to be replaced as the Scottish FM.

The Herald (20 Aug) likewise presents the Scottish Governments position on currency as Salmond’s plan:

The First Minister Alex Salmond’s continued insistence that the UK government would co-operate with his plan to share the pound following a Yes vote is dealt a blow by the finding that English voters opposed that scenario by two to one. A UK Government that no longer had responsibility for Scotland would inevitably pay more attention to the views of its remaining voters than to its departing ones so this does not bode well for Mr Salmond’s plans.

The Telegraph (24 Aug) writes: “For too long, Mr Salmond’s political project has coasted on romantic nationalism and vague promises of jam tomorrow” and presents the Scottish quest for self-determination as a personal project of the First Minister.

Even the Yes supporting Sunday Herald did it. “Almost one-third of those who supported Labour in the 2011 Scottish election say they will vote Yes, for all the growls of Gordon Brown, while one-fifth of those who supported the SNP will reject Alex Salmond’s pleas and vote No” (7 Sep). Interestingly they personalise the No campaign to Brown and the Yes campaign to Salmond. While it probably is not their purpose to present the Yes side as Alex Salmond, perhaps it is just such a common journalistic practice to make a text livelier that they do it without much thought. Quite possibly, it is a question of framing as discussed above. The same benefit of the doubt can be extended to many cases of Salmond personalisation in this study as, like mentioned earlier, the included papers were all profiled as quality newspapers.

The Telegraph was the only of the studied newspapers that actively “monstered” – as Monbiot described it above – the First Minister. “Alex Salmond’s stance will drag Scotland down”, “The SNP leader's skills are in reaping division and sowing discord”, “If the First Minister was seeking to portray himself as the equivalent of Nelson Mandela, perhaps there is another African leader who springs more readily to mind: Robert Mugabe“ are all examples of this from the Telegraph editorial published on 11 September and can be filed under deliberate monstering. On 17 September, the paper claimed that “Alex Salmond’s team has helped create an atmosphere in which hostility can flourish” and write about “Mr Salmond’s attempts to intimidate his alma mater, St Andrews University, into not attacking his cause.”

The Herald reported positive news about the First Minister “Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon also enjoy much higher satisfaction ratings than Alistair Darling” (15 Sep). The following day they wrote “In Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, Yes Scotland has had two of the UK's most able politicians and the campaign has energised Scottish grassroots politics like nothing else in a generation” (16 Sep). Interestingly, the latter excerpt is from the editorial in which the Herald declared their support for the Union.

The Sunday Herald was as expected the most positive paper in its coverage of the First Minister. In the August 24 editorial just before the second TV debate, they described Salmond as “the ultimate comeback kid”, stated that he “knows the arguments inside out” and that the advisers should not overprepare the FM like they had in the first debate: “let Salmond be Salmond” as that would lead to the best possible result for the Yes campaign.

The second TV debate between Alex Salmond and Alistair Darling was broadcast during the five-week research period. Four out of the six papers declared Salmond as the victor in their editorials. The Scotsman was the first on 26 August, The Herald followed on 29 August and the Sunday Herald on 31 August. The Guardian brought it up in the editorial of 7 September. In the build-up to the debate, the Telegraph declared that Salmond performed poorly in the first debate but after the second, argued that “Mr Salmond displayed a cocky arrogance as he wheeled out attack after attack on Mr Darling” (31 Aug) not mentioning who they thought won the debate.

5.1.1.3 Yes message

The message of the YES campaign was discussed often and at length. This subtheme includes what the YES campaign were communicating to the public and reactions to it. A mention of the YES campaign, Scottish Government, the SNP, the First Minister or Nationalists, Separatists, etc. in connection to the issue at hand is required or it has to be

clear that it is the message of Yes that is commented on, criticised or praised. *Yes message* is the fourth most discussed of all sub-themes. It is featured in all the papers included in this study. A third of the coded words were published in the Telegraph, almost a fourth in the Herald and nearly a fifth in the Guardian. In total, the sub-theme was featured in 33 editorials.

Mitchell (2016:10) identifies welfare, the NHS and nuclear weapons as important themes for the independence supporters. These issues, among others, achieved an aura of progressiveness for the independence movement. Another one was the democratic deficit Scotland faces i.e. the country is quite often governed by a Westminster government with little support north of the border. Buchanan (2016:75) argues that rejecting austerity and fighting inequality were also powerful and progressive arguments for the Yes side as the general election of 2015 was less than a year away and both major UK parties were pledged to more austerity in case they were forming the next UK government.

The message of the Yes campaign was, according to Devine (2016:242), “consistently upbeat and optimistic” to the extent that the independence movement “verged on something like a quasi-evangelical mission of liberation”. One of its main messages was that of a radical change towards a fairer society. Although Devine calls it “visionary utopianism”, he acknowledges that it found a good sounding board in the grassroots and resulted in more than 300 different groups joining the umbrella organisation. Independence was not seen as an end in itself but a means to achieving this new kind of society.

There was also criticism towards the Yes message from independence supporters: former SNP leader Gordon Wilson criticised the Yes campaign for not being negative enough as there would have been plenty of potential for “righteous anger at England and the “cancer” of London”. Some people felt that there should have been more emphasis on Scottish identity and social solidarity (Macwhirter 2014f:18).

There were some typical approaches to the Yes message in the editorials. The messages were branded lies, unconvincing, inaccurate, “Panglossian”, flawed, based on “faulty logic” and lacking credibility. At times these characterisations have been reported speech but quite often also the view of the newspaper. While the positivity of Yes was praised, only the Sunday Herald defended its arguments.

The Sunday Herald (17 Aug) were critical towards the Yes message about the NHS and the threat they claimed staying in the UK posed to it.

Unionists say these NHS warnings are a flat lie, a cynical exercise in scaremongering. ... After rightly condemning Better Together for scaring voters with empty threats, the Yes camp should strive to maintain the high ground. It is not enough to calculate "a win's a win". How independence is won matters enormously: a healthy birth for a healthy nation is desirable.

A week later their tone had changed somewhat and while they again reported unionist accusations that the Yes campaign was lying, there was also a mention of views supportive of the Yes message:

Salmond will be accused of lying over the National Health Service, by suggesting it could be privatised. But health service unions like Unison say it is naive to think that the Scottish service can be immune to the wholesale invasion of private providers into the rUK NHS (24 Aug).

As the only independence supporting paper, the Sunday Herald for most part tended to agree with the Yes messages the early criticism on the NHS being the rare exception.

The Herald discussed the differing views on the NHS. The accusation that the Yes campaign had been lying was reported speech, but the paper commented that the Yes case was "not proved" and that the logic behind it was faulty.

More controversially, she also states it is a lie to argue a vote against independence will doom the Scottish NHS to privatisation. ... There are noteworthy voices advancing an alternative argument, of course. Dr Philippa Whitford, a consultant breast surgeon, has been among the most prominent voices arguing for a Yes vote to safeguard the future of the NHS in Scotland. They have not proved their case. ... But there is a faulty logic here which cannot be ignored (21 Aug).

Later on, the Herald again published reported speech that branded the Yes message about the NHS as lies: "It was a speech from a man who had reached the end of his tether about what he firmly regards as SNP lies about the NHS" (10 Sep). The "man" in question was Gordon Brown, a respected figure in Scotland. Publishing the view of the former PM is a choice by the paper and, in this case, identifying the source adds credibility and authority to the claim especially when it seems to be accepted unquestioned.

Another approach to the Yes message in the Herald editorials was writing that the Yes message was suggesting that everything would turn better over night after independence.

The SNP argues independence would be an opportunity to tackle inequality but independence alone, or indeed greater devolution, cannot achieve that aim. Whatever happens on September 18, there will be no manna from heaven (20 Aug).

In the editorial in which the Herald on 16 September declared support for No, they described the Yes approach as “relentless optimism, wreathing itself in hope”. Again, they emphasised their view that the Yes message was promising too much.

But, amid all the excitement and hope generated by the prospect of wholesale change, it is important to recognise that aspiration, assertion and belief in the benefits of independence are not enough. ... But in promoting its manifesto for Scottish Independence, a Panglossian emphasis on the best-case scenario has at times strained its credibility. ... the case for independence has been built upon a string of ideal outcomes (16 Sep).

It cannot be denied that the message of the Yes campaign was extremely positive and their arguments were based on the assumption that their counterparts in post-referendum negotiations would behave rationally and cooperate like, for instance agreeing to a currency union that would benefit both parties. Tickell (2018:9) argues that the proposition that the two parties could have negotiated and reached agreements in a civilized manner “may have seemed optimistic in 2014” but “the Brexit adventures of the Conservative Party through 2018 suggests [that in a future independence referendum] it is downright Quixotic.” Devine’s above description of the Yes campaign as “a quasi-evangelical mission of liberation” and their view as “visionary utopianism” was, by no means, miles off the mark but while the Yes message probably was too optimistic, the No approach – discussed in more detail in section 5.1.3.1 – was too negative.

The Telegraph was from the beginning openly hostile towards the idea of Scottish independence and thus, towards the Yes campaign and its message. It wrote that “Sir Ian Wood says predictions for future oil revenues made to bolster the Scottish separatist case are wrong” (22 Aug) and that “Is it too much to ask that the referendum campaign stick to the facts?” (31 Aug). The facts, according to the Telegraph, were always the views, predictions and estimates that originated from the Unionist camp – even when they were easily identified as estimates or opinions – but they did, on 7 September, acknowledge that the positivity of the Yes message was working: “Mr Salmond has succeeded in neutralising the fear factor around independence, by simply denying there is any cause to be worried.”

On 11 September, the Telegraph argued that the Yes message was flawed: “These and other flaws in the separatist case were pointed out by the three major party leaders when they travelled to Scotland to campaign for Better Together yesterday” and, on 15 September, that it was too optimistic to be credible: “The half million are disproportionately women, and throughout this campaign women have been less willing

to take seriously the Yes campaign's Panglossian claims about the economy in post-independence Scotland".

The Guardian (8 Sep) seemed suspicious of the Yes message too: "The yes campaign offers a social democratic land of milk and honey based on tax cuts and an uncertain currency union" and "the Scottish government has proposed no tax changes except cuts in corporation taxes that would cause a race to the bottom. In the end it is a false prospectus" (12 Sep). When it seemed that the Yes side could be closing the gap the paper also portrayed the positivity of the Yes message as a strength:

But the original approach [of the No campaign] ceded the "vision thing" to the yes campaign and allowed the yes side to claim a monopoly of optimism. That has now begun to pay dividends for the yes cause, as new polls were again expected to show on Monday (8 Sep).

The idea that independence was the Scots' best or, indeed, their only option to retain the welfare state worked well for the Yes campaign: "This has allowed the yes campaign in Scotland to present itself as the best guarantor of a welfare settlement that was one of the UK's great 20th-century achievements" (8 Sep). So did emphasising the idea that Westminster politics were out of touch with the moods among ordinary people, that Scotland would always be a mere side note to the main UK parties and that it was the Scots who cared most about their country and thus would govern with Scotland's best interests at heart.

Entirely uncertain as to whether their efforts will do more harm than good, the three fretful leaders of Westminster headed for Scotland today. Alex Salmond had offered to pay their bus fares in recognition of service to the separatist cause. If he succeeds in making independence happen, he will have done so by turning a yes/no choice into a battle between Scotland and a remote London elite (10 Sep).

Highlighting the fact that the No parties had been unable to agree what was on offer for Scotland if they rejected independence was also, according to the Guardian, an effective argument for the Yes campaign.

So the real question is whether an independent Scotland would now offer a better kind of society. The claim that it could has played well for the yes side, not least because the No campaign disagrees about the kind of UK they do not want the Scots to abandon (12 Sep).

But in the end, the Guardian view on the eve of the referendum was that "The yes case has been, as Scottish law might put it, not proven. The implications have not been worked through, the risks not fully addressed" (17 Sep).

The Guardian's sister paper, the Observer, identifies the positivity as a strength but simultaneously as a weakness for the Yes message. In its sole independence-related editorial on the 13th of September, it argues that the abundant optimism is not credible, and the vision is flawed:

It is the yes campaign that has, sometimes shamelessly, gained ownership of the romance and the poetry. It has remained determinedly optimistic, insisting that membership of the European Union, Nato and even currency issues can be easily sorted. But the holes in the SNP position, sketched out in the white paper, Scotland's Future, have become increasingly clear. ... the yes campaign promises too much. It is tempting to hear the siren call of self-determination and warm to the notion of a small, independent state making its way in the world. Tempting, but how realistic? (13 Sep).

5.1.1.4 Unfair Yes

In the editorials of the period, the Yes campaign was accused of many things. The theme *Unfair Yes* deals with these accusations. The accuser can be the actual editorial team of the newspaper or the criticism can also be reported speech. Different forms of unfairness include scaremongering, negative campaigning, lying, bullying, abuse, intimidating, creating division, stirring controversy, using taxpayers' money and civil servants' time to promote independence, the Jim Murphy egging being allegedly coordinated by YES Scotland, cocky arrogance, Business for Scotland getting more publicity than it deserves, involvement of Siol Nan Gaidheal, Jim Sillars's "day of reckoning", registering young children to vote, heckling, anti-English sentiment, and whipping up a mob atmosphere.

Many of wildest claims were found in the Telegraph editorials. It featured by far the most coded words in this sub-theme: more than five times the amount published in the Herald that registered the second highest word count. The subtheme was present in 17 editorials eight of which were those of the Telegraph. Compared with the coverage of the other newspapers included in this study and scholars that have studied the referendum coverage, it seems that the Telegraph had a fundamentally different view of the referendum campaign. As a whole, the subtheme was the 17th most discussed.

Macwhirter (2015:119) says that the political climate in Scotland has been "unnaturally calm" and that the lack of civil unrest during a time when nationalism has been on the rise has led to the Westminster establishment becoming complacent towards the threat the Scottish quest for self-determination poses to its survival. He writes that the press published "grossly exaggerated" stories of violent confrontations which stoked tensions. Macwhirter (2015:120) goes on to state that "not a single punch has been thrown during the events of 2014/15 in Scotland; not a single arrest; not a single broken window".

He argues that the Scottish independence movement has quite possibly been the most peaceful nationalist movement in history.

It is fair to say that the Telegraph editorial coverage of the referendum was hostile towards the independence movement. While most papers and scholars have expressed an opinion that the Yes campaign and the Scottish Government's case was too optimistic and their message too positive to be credible, the Telegraph wrote that "the SNP is doing its very best to spread its message of division" (17 Aug).

Scottish civil service received their share of Telegraph criticism. Interestingly they choose to hedge their accusations with words like "alleges" and "reportedly".

Andrew Gilligan, our investigative reporter, has exposed how taxpayers' money and civil servants' time is being used to push the pro-independence cause through websites, mailed booklets and roadshows (17 Aug).

Though as Andrew Gilligan reports, he [Salmond] has also had a little help from his friends in the Civil Service, with taxpayers' money being used to finance a website and costly booklets promoting independence. ... Sir Peter Housden, the most senior civil servant in Scotland, has been stirring controversy with statements on a staff blog in which he describes the nationalist moment as "really exciting" and the old constitutional status quo as "lost in the mists of time". Jim Gallagher, a former senior civil servant now advising the No campaign, alleges that Sir Peter was directly involved in lobbying public institutions to leave the Scottish CBI when it came out against independence. ... Even Whitehall is reportedly losing its patience, following a series of anti-Union advertisements – and may well move to remind civil servants of their duty of impartiality (24 Aug).

Mitchell (2016:4) writes about complaints from the Scottish opposition parties about using civil servants in preparing *Scotland's Future*, the Scottish Government White Paper. He states that the UK government published a wide variety of reports in its *Scotland Analysis* series that were researched and written by UK civil servants. Producing these reports, according to Mitchell, would have cost more than what was allowed under the rules of the Electoral Commission but the pressure for UK civil servants to remain neutral was a lot less than what was expected of Scottish Government civil servants: partiality could make Scottish civil service position untenable in case there was a regime change but it was/is unlikely that there will ever be a Westminster government that supports Scottish independence.

The Telegraph did more recycling of Better Together allegations in connection to the Jim Murphy egging. They do acknowledge that what they are publishing is just allegations but in no way do they question them.

Compare that with the angry scenes when pro-Union Labour MP Jim Murphy tried to speak to fellow Scots last week and was pelted with eggs. They yelled “Traitor”, “Terrorist”, “Parasite” and “Quisling” at him – and he was forced to suspend his tour amid fears for his safety. Mr Murphy alleges that the abuse was co-ordinated by the Yes Scotland campaign (31 Aug).

The Herald (1 Sep) discussed the incident in one of its editorials wondering whether the campaign is turning uglier or not without providing a strong opinion about it.

The sight of Jim Murphy, the labour MP who has been travelling round Scotland making the case for a No vote on September 18, being targeted by an angry crowd was unpleasant, but does it really indicate a sinister turn in the campaign? Mr Murphy believes so and has claimed that his speaking tour; 100 Towns in 100 Days, has fallen foul of what he calls organised street mobbery, co-ordinated, he believes, by Yes Scotland.

The Sunday Herald’s (31 Aug) take on the incident branded it stupid and pathetic but highlighted how Murphy took advantage of the situation and used it against the Yes movement:

Last week it [Better Together] wasted no time capitalising on the stupidity of a few people who harangued the Labour MP Jim Murphy and pelted him with eggs. It was pathetic rather than sinister behaviour, but by suspending his tour of 100 towns in 100 days on safety grounds in response, Murphy adroitly secured the next day's headlines to claim it was indicative of Yes as a whole. He used the actions of a rogue few to smear a movement built peacefully by thousands.

Macwhirter (2014b:23) identifies the Yes campaign’s inability to deal with the allegations and media stunts of the No side as a major weakness. He writes that the solitary act of violence during the campaign was the egging of Labour MP Jim Murphy who was touring Scotland campaigning for a No vote. He was hit by an egg thrown by a member of the public who was not a Yes campaigner. Murphy went on to compile a video of alleged harassment by Yes campaigners. Macwhirter argues that it was clear from the video that the Yes campaigners were as dumbfounded by the attack as Murphy was and that the rest of the compilation was just heckling similar to that which Yes campaigners had faced. Nevertheless, the media campaign portraying the Yes campaigners as thugs and bullies went on for days without a rebuttal, “colouring voters’ attitudes to independence” (ibid.).

Alex Salmond branded Murphy’s allegations that Yes Scotland was somehow organising his harassment ridiculous. He told Sky News: “If Mr Murphy comes bawling and shouting on a street corner near you any time soon, keep doing your shopping. Go on

with what you're doing. It's just like a guy with an "end is nigh" sign around his neck: he'll go away soon" (Pike 2015:118). Macwhirter (2014b:83) writes that while campaigning for the Yes side, Jim Sillars was also hit by eggs but did not turn it into a media festival with a press conference. He only told the people responsible to give the eggs to a food bank instead. To Macwhirter's knowledge, the incident went unreported.

Another interesting case of *Unfair Yes* is the Telegraph arguing that Business for Scotland receives too much attention from the media. The same media that according to most commentators was definitely not supportive of Scottish independence. Surely, the amount of publicity Business for Scotland deserves must be very difficult to determine objectively. This is what the Telegraph (31 Aug) had to say:

Meanwhile, Andrew Gilligan reports that Business for Scotland, the pro-independence group, receives far more publicity than it deserves. It represents few significant employers, little cross-border trade, and some of its members enjoy substantial subsidies from the Scottish government.

Business for Scotland does not represent many significant employers because, as the group writes on its web page, "Although open to all businesses, our core focus is on SMEs [Small-medium sized enterprises] which make up 99.4% of Scotland's businesses, (55.6% of all private sector employment) – representing the biggest opportunity for economic growth".

There were few grassroots groups on the No side of the campaign but talking about receiving "far more publicity than it deserves" there was the curious case of the Vote No Borders campaign that received, according to Macwhirter (2014b:60) "much attention, at least on the BBC". The group was presented as a grassroots group "established by concerned Scottish citizens" but it was exposed by Craig Murray as a "London-based marketing campaign financed by a prominent Conservative donor, Malcolm Offord, and a PR consultant called Fiona Gilmour". Murray described VNB as follows: "Vote No Borders is not a grassroots campaign at all but a government organized campaign which has mysteriously acquired start-up cash of 400,000 pounds with no declared origin" (Murray 2014). The VNB group was a clear example of astroturfing i.e. "masking the sponsors of a message or organization to make it appear as though it originates from & is supported by grassroots participants" (Harris Graham 2014).

The Telegraph's accusations of Yes not playing fair included also "a smear attack on the mother of a disabled child who had the affront to campaign for the Union" (31 Aug), "links between Siol nan Gaidheal and the Yes campaign" (7 Sep), the Yes

campaign having “found friends among the European far-Right” (12 Sep), “resorting to open threats and extortion” (12 Sep) and even “concerns from the No campaign that some young children have been registered to vote” (14 Sep).

One aspect included in many of the occurrences of *Unfair Yes* has been the discussion around the so-called cybernats. Their intimidation and abusive behaviour will be discussed in more detail in section 5.1.2.1 *Bullying*. The views that the Yes campaign were lying about the NHS are discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1.4 *NHS*.

5.1.1.5 Yes momentum

The subtheme *YES momentum* deals with the increasing support for Scottish independence. It features references to polling data as well as other evidence for the Yes movement gaining supporters. The momentum provoked a reaction from the No campaign and there is also commentary on that included in this subtheme.

All studied newspapers published words that were coded under this sub-theme. The highest word count among the papers was that of the Sunday Herald. This is quite remarkable in the sense that the total coded word count of Sunday Herald was the lowest of the studied papers. Then again, being the only paper that supported Scottish independence it is not surprising that they published and commented on positive news for the Yes campaign.

Of all the coded words in the *Yes momentum* subtheme, 28 per cent were published by the Sunday Herald. Of all the subthemes, it was the 14th most written about. The vast majority of its coded words were published during the last three weeks of the five-week research window. It appeared in 19 editorials.

On 31 August the Sunday Herald wrote: “the tide of events now running in Yes's favour is broader than just one debate “. On 5 September, the Telegraph was cautious about admitting that Yes was making gains: “If the polls are narrowing, then Labour must take the lion’s share of the blame for failing to hold on to its traditional voters”. True to its style, the paper slipped in a barb aimed at the Labour party but its assessment of the situation was not entirely false.

The Scotsman acknowledged the narrowing polls on 6 September:

With less than a fortnight to the referendum vote, and with opinion polls showing a swelling in support for Yes, former prime minister Gordon Brown has asked the Commons Speaker John Bercow to allow him to lead a debate when the Commons resumes business in October.

The Scotsman also linked the rising Yes support and the feeling among the No campaign that the proposals for new Holyrood powers were needed with more urgency than before. The following day, the Sunday Herald wrote:

Something more than autumn is in the air. A slow-motion revolution is in progress. It has been building, steadily but surely, since the start of the year, fuelled by a desire for change and a backlash against those still ordering Scotland about like a bellhop. ... Momentum is wholly with the Yes campaign. That can not only inspire campaigners on the ground, it can snowball into further momentum (7 Sep).

Even the Guardian reacted to the decreasing lead:

But through the buzz of individual surveys, there has been movement in the swarm ... The overall average advantage for the noes has narrowed, with the previously strong unionist majority among women and Labour voters being particularly squeezed (7 Sep).

The Telegraph toned down its hostility towards Scottish independence and adopted a more conciliatory approach. Perhaps they followed the lead of the No campaign who apparently had come to the conclusion that the negative approach was not working on its own and made their approach more varied by adding promises.

There appears to have been a significant, if not necessarily decisive, move of public opinion towards independence over the summer ... The voters that have moved most towards separatism are predominantly Labour supporters, under 40, working-class and women. Why have these particular categories hardened in favour of Yes? (7 Sep)

The Scotsman (12 Sep) argued that the Yes momentum possibly had a significant effect on the new powers proposals from the No camp: “without such a surge in support for Yes, unionist parties at Westminster might not have bothered to pursue any change at all in the event of a No result. It took powerful support for Yes to ignite this response.”

During the last week there were several papers that commented on the momentum of the Yes camp: “Despite an almost constant bombardment of negativity and the testimony of so-called experts, support for independence has remained robust and continues to rise” (Sunday Herald 14 Sep); “Enough of that vote has been slipping towards the yes campaign to ensure that the outcome remains very much in doubt” (Guardian 16 Sep); “For the Yes camp, however, there is the knowledge that it has the momentum – what political activists refer to as 'The Big Mo' – as polling day looms large” (Scotsman 17 Sep). On polling day, the Scotsman wrote:

The No camp is, by common consent, ahead; but the Yes camp has the momentum. Whether it is enough momentum to win independence for Scotland and break up the United Kingdom will soon become clear.

The Herald (16 Sep) acknowledged the Yes momentum writing that “a big constitutional pledge on UK-wide devolution and a step change in the pro-union campaign ... seem[s] to have stemmed the tide of opinion towards yes for the moment.”

5.1.1.6 Yes campaign

This sub-theme deals with the YES campaign as an organisation or as a group of people and their methods, actions and achievements. The message of the YES Campaign and reactions to it were presented in section 5.1.1.3 *Yes message*. Also, the theme *Unfair YES* (5.1.1.4) views the campaign from another angle focusing on the unfair actions and attitudes the Yes Campaign were accused of.

This subtheme was ranked 24th based on word count of coded words and it appeared in 17 of the 70 editorials. The Herald published clearly more words included in this subtheme than the other papers, almost twice as many as the Yes-supporting Sunday Herald which was the second most prolific. Almost two thirds of the coded words in the *Yes campaign* subtheme were published during week five of the research period. Much of the material coded under *Yes campaign* is – to avoid unnecessary repetition – presented in connection with some of the more precise subthemes.

The political parties that took part in the Yes movement were the SNP, the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party. Devine (2016:242) lists Women for Independence, Generation Yes and the National Collective of the arts community as the most important non-partisan groups affiliated with Yes Scotland and the Radical Independence Campaign as an autonomous one. This subtheme deals with the Yes movement as a whole, not only the Yes Scotland group.

According to Macwhirter (2014b:24), the No side were quick to brand the different grass roots groups as “SNP fronts” which, of course, fell in with their strategy of claiming the whole Yes campaign was an SNP endeavour or even a personal desire of Alex Salmond. Macwhirter (2014b:44) writes that the Yes campaign managed, during the last weeks of the campaign, to create “a grassroots political conversion of biblical proportions” and that “support for independence was spreading like wildfire through the council estates of Scotland”. Mitchell (2016:8) says that the Yes side was “far more active ... and employed more imaginative approaches” to activate the grass roots.

The Economist (2014) wrote that “If the “no” campaign is a machine, “yes” is a carnival... Colour benefits the “yes” campaign. It generates an infectious energy”. The paper cites polls in August that say two thirds of Scots believe Yes Scotland is the more effective of the campaigns. Another poll result shows that by early August, the Yes campaign had reached 65 per cent of the voters while the corresponding share for No was 54 per cent. One could argue that reaching two out of three voters is an impressive achievement but with most of the mainstream media supporting No, it was not enough to convince the “silent majority” that, in the end, voted No.

Macwhirter (2014b:68) writes about Yes insiders believing that there should have been more gathering of voter intelligence and canvassing early on in the campaign. The “Yestivals” and the all-round carnival atmosphere were wonderful for those involved but it was “preaching to the converted”: the Yes campaign failed to reach middle class and 60+ voters. Macwhirter (2014b:71) says that “the Yes campaign’s conventional press management wasn’t so much poor as non-existent.”

Susan Stewart (as cited in Macwhirter 2014b:67) argued that “the digital and social media campaign... failed to persuade undecided or No-leaning women. Nor were the majority of over 60s convinced. Much has been written about the power of the internet in this referendum but it can also be an echo chamber, serving only to confirm the ‘true believers’ in the rightness of their cause”.

The *Yes campaign* subtheme featured, perhaps expectedly, quite a lot in the Sunday Herald editorials. There was plenty of positive coverage but also criticism when it was justified.

The Yes camp should strive to maintain the high ground. It is not enough to calculate "a win's a win". How independence is won matters enormously: a healthy birth for a healthy nation is desirable (17 Aug).

The Yes campaign has erupted into a multicoloured mass campaign the like of which we haven't seen in Scotland for decades. Change is in the air (24 Aug).

The failure of four SNP MPs to attend a key Commons vote on the bedroom tax on Friday was one mistake the Yes campaign could have done without (7 Sep).

The Herald is the paper with the highest total word count of coded words and the most active in commenting on the Yes campaign. It praised the Yes side for its positivity and enthusiasm and compared it favourably with the No side. What has to be borne in mind is that many of the positive words about the Yes campaign were published in the editorial in which the Herald declared its support for a No vote. Nevertheless, the praise

seems genuine and it corresponds to what many commentators have written after the campaign.

Whatever happens in the end, the Yes campaign has been well-organised. The Scottish Government's White Paper on independence may have left many questions unanswered, but it gave the campaign a foundation on which to build. The campaign has also succeeded in creating the impression of unity among many disparate elements under the Yes banner and the grassroots campaign has been passionate and persistent (8 Sep).

Yes Scotland's campaign, brimming over with optimism, has awakened in Scots a slumbering desire for a country that is better, stronger and fairer. Short of winning Independence, that will be the Yes campaign's enduring achievement. ... The attractions of greater autonomy for Scotland have largely been lost in this campaign, however, partly because the impressive pro-independence camp has dominated the theme of positive change and partly because the pro-UK campaign has failed to sell the considerable benefits of enhanced devolution. ... In Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, Yes Scotland has had two of the UK's most able politicians and the campaign has energised Scottish grassroots politics like nothing else in a generation. It has achieved this with relentless optimism, wreathing itself in hope. The Yes campaign has allowed disparate groups - socialists and business leaders, right-wing advocates of small government and left-wing environmentalists - to project all their hopes onto it, even though many of these are mutually incompatible. It has, in short, sought to cast a Yes vote as a vote of confidence in Scotland (16 Sep).

The Guardian and the Observer viewed the Yes campaign less positively acknowledging its inclusivity and positivity but at the same time criticising what they thought were its weaknesses or less pleasant characteristics.

Nevertheless, socialists, greens and other groups are very much part of the yes campaign too, even though they lack the SNP's machine. ... But the pro-independence side's habit of attacking the messenger and ignoring the message is just as unattractive (Guardian 12 Sep).

Monbiot (2014b) criticised the approach in his Guardian column on 16 September:

One of the roles of the Guardian, which has no proprietor, is to represent the unrepresented – and it often does so to great effect. On Scottish independence I believe we have fallen short. Our leader on Saturday used the frames constructed by the rest of the press, inflating a couple of incidents into a “habit” by yes campaigners of “attacking the messenger and ignoring the message”, judging the long-term future of the nation by current SNP policy, confusing self-determination with nationalism.

The Observer wrote on 13 September:

It is the yes campaign that has, sometimes shamelessly, gained ownership of the romance and the poetry. ... Many of those in the yes campaign are not "blood and soil" nationalists or fans of Alex Salmond (Observer 13 Sep).

The Observer's comment about many yessers not being "blood and soil" nationalists is somewhat at odds with the views of other commentators who tend to argue that that sort of nationalism is in the fringes of the fringes of the Yes movement i.e. that few Yes supporters are that.

Interestingly, of all the newspapers in this study the Scotsman – one of the indigenous dailies – published the smallest number of words coded under this subtheme. Its only contribution to this subtheme came on polling day: "The Yes campaign has been a dynamo of effort and creativity, but the campaigners for the UK have started to catch up."

5.1.2 Referendum campaign

The *Referendum campaign* theme includes both positive and negative phenomena related to the campaigning period. On the one hand, it includes the subthemes that celebrate the political revival like *People reclaiming politics*, *Exceptional campaign* and *Win for democracy*. On the other hand, there are negative tactics like *Bullying* and *Scaremongering*. The theme also includes a subtheme called *Keep calm and show respect* that includes calls for calm and respect as well as advice to think carefully about the big decision. These subthemes are not directly linked to the Yes or the No campaigns. The issues more closely connected to the referendum result are discussed under the theme *Independence referendum* in section 5.1.1.4. This theme was the fourth most written-about and it was present in 36 editorials.

5.1.2.1 Bullying

The theme called *Bullying* covers commentary on events and phenomena from the Jim Murphy egging to abuse on the Internet discussion forums. As all the chosen newspapers bar the Sunday Herald turned out to support the Union, much of the bullying overlaps with *Unfair YES* but it has to be pointed out that not all bullying is *Unfair Yes* and not all *Unfair Yes* is bullying. The subtheme includes alleged bullying, intimidation, smear attacks, and mob-like debate audiences. It was discussed in 13 editorials and it was the 12th most popular subtheme.

Supposedly, there was a risk that people would not take part in the democratic process out of fear of being abused. Not all bullying was done by YES supporters and there are other associations presented in the editorials. Denying Scotland the pound was said to have come across as bullying (Guardian 7 Sep). Alex Salmond reportedly claimed that David Cameron bullied company executives into backing the Union: a claim that the

Scotsman (16 Sep) branded “improbable”. Mitchell (2016:6) points out that both Yes and No campaigns claimed that the other side had been pressuring businesses to back them or stay neutral in the debate.

Macwhirter (2014b:58) writes about the media campaign against the so-called cybernats in the aftermath of the abuse that JK Rowling received because of her pro-Union stance and £1M donation to the Better Together campaign. John McTernan, on live TV in June 2014, accused the Yes side of “organising a coordinated campaign of hate” against her. Macwhirter writes that there was no foundation for the claim but newspapers – as they mostly supported the Union – took it up and amplified the cybernat theme on their pages. There was no similar interest in abuse towards pro-Yes women like Elaine C. Smith or actual death threats aimed at Nicola Sturgeon. Macwhirter (2014b:83) writes that between January 24 and September 17, there were 6,500 hateful tweets towards independence supporting politicians and other Scots picked up by @BritNatAbuseBot but, unlike those aimed at Rowling, they were not reprinted by the press.

The Sunday Herald (31 Aug) discussed Labour MP Jim Murphy being egged while giving a speech on an Irn Bru crate and the strongly pro-union Telegraph (31 Aug) wrote about the same incident in an editorial headlined “Bullying has no place in the fight for Scotland's independence”. Both text extracts were discussed already in section 5.1.1.4 *Unfair Yes*. The Telegraph went on to conclude that “while passion is great for democracy, bullying self-evidently is not. We hope that the pro-independence campaign calms down and that we see a lot more reason rather than febrile emotion“. The Telegraph would revisit the Murphy egging and suspending of his tour in its editorials on 7, 12 and 17 September.

The Herald (1 Sep) published an editorial with the headline “Unity required in face of voter abuse”. They wrote that “The sight of Jim Murphy ... being targeted by an angry crowd was unpleasant, but does it really indicate a sinister turn in the campaign? Mr Murphy believes so”. They also cited Alex Salmond’s response telling that he “condemns intimidation of any kind” and advising the Scots “to ignore what he calls the Labour MP’s “wind-ups””.

As discussed earlier, another issue that falls under bullying is the widely written-about one regarding the so-called cybernats. The Herald (1 Sep) wrote that

The so-called cybernats appear to be more numerous and high profile than their pro-UK counterparts but both sides have been guilty on occasion and both sides have a responsibility to control it as much as they can. There should be no hint of

encouraging the nastier elements to turn on their opponents, however tempting it may be.

The Herald went on to write that “abuse or intimidation ... has to be discouraged by the leaders of both campaigns”. They continued “The most obvious danger of allowing the abuse to escalate ... is that those who would otherwise contribute to the referendum debate will give up and keep quiet rather than be shot down in flames.” This was a fear whose origin became clear later in the editorial: “It is this danger that is apparently worrying some in the No campaign who have expressed their concern that an overly vehement atmosphere at Polling stations on September 18 could discourage some people from voting.” However, the paper concluded that “It is obviously impossible to say how likely intimidation or abuse on polling day is, but passions will be running high on the day on both sides”.

The voter intimidation narrative was reviewed during the General Election of 2015 when Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson tweeted about “burly blokes” turning away voters from a polling station in Annan “if they did not show support for a particular party”. Dumfries and Galloway council were quick to refute the claims saying there were no burly blokes or, indeed, complaints from voters of such problems (Redpath 2015).

The Guardian (7 Sep) identified another form of bullying: “Scots have not reacted enthusiastically to an unpopular front of Westminster parties telling Scots that they’d lose the pound along with the union.” After highlighting the difficulties with the proposals, they concluded “it came across as bullying.” Also, Alex Salmond branded the currency union refusal bullying (Brown Swan and Petersohn 2017:79).

One of the Telegraph editorials on 7 September was headlined “Bullying must not trump reason”. In it, the paper wrote about Siol nan Gaidheal – a group that “was expelled from the SNP in 1982” – who had allegedly been “behind some of the intimidation of pro-Union politicians in Scotland” and, according to the Telegraph, had “provided stewarding and first aid at a major Yes independence march and rally held last year in Edinburgh”. Given the amount of publicity other media gave the group at the time or how they have been ignored in literature about the independence referendum, one could argue that it is unlikely that they had enough members for first aid tasks let alone stewarding. Nevertheless, the Siol story reappeared in the Telegraph editorial of 12 September.

The Telegraph (7 Sep) continued that “Both sides claim to have experienced intimidation” and that:

It is understandable that passions should run high, but violent confrontation is inexcusable. If the Yes campaign knows of extremists in its midst, then it must denounce them. This election should be conducted at the level of reasoned argument, not bullying and intimidation.

On 12 September, the Telegraph editorial headline read “Scottish Nationalists show their true bullying colours”. They wrote that “the threats by Jim Sillars against banks, retailers and oil companies that there would be a 'day of reckoning' show the nationalist movement’s capacity for ugliness.” Sillars being the former SNP deputy leader made him a suitable target and the paper, again, chose to generalise his behaviour to that of the whole Yes movement: “Panic has exposed the Scottish National Party for what it really is. Having claimed to be making a purely positive case for independence, its supporters are resorting to open threats and extortion.” They continued with the issue two days later.

The Scotsman (16 Sep) which had already declared their opposition to independence had a critical view of Alex Salmond’s accusations of David Cameron “intimidating bosses of big companies into publicly backing a No vote, claiming that encouraging comment was effectively bullying. This seems improbable, as leaders of firms tend not to be people who are easily coerced” the paper concluded.

In the dying days of the campaign, the Guardian (17 Sep) wrote that “sometimes the debate has deteriorated into abuse, with intimidation particularly visible on the yes side” and the Telegraph (17 Sep) argued that “while there are doubtless sinners on both sides, it does seem that the majority of the violent language has come from the Yes camp.” On polling day, the Telegraph (18 Sep) argued that “his [Salmond’s] supporters have latterly resorted to intimidation, tarnishing what had otherwise been a largely well-tempered campaign.” The Scotsman (18 Sep) wrote that “in our news pages today we report harassment, vandalism and threatening behaviour that is totally unacceptable in what is meant to be a mature and peaceful democracy.” In the news pages they reported acts of vandalism with comments from former Labour FM Lord McConnell and a Colin McClean who says that “I’m scared to put a No sticker on the car in case it gets vandalised.”

They do report cars and advertising boards being vandalised, houses being egged and a Yes shop being “vandalised with swastikas and slogans reading “Nazis”” (Marshall 2014:5). The story featured no photos. The Herald did not report anything similar that day. If the papers wanted to it would probably have been easy to find a Yes supporter who was scared to put a Yes sticker on his car and interview them.

5.1.2.2 People reclaiming politics

This is a subtheme that deals with the excitement and new-found engagement for politics among ordinary people in Scotland. The engagement was widely praised and its continuation encouraged in the editorials. Most papers the editorials for this study were collected from wrote about and praised the massive grass-roots campaign formed by members of all independence supporting political parties and none as well as ordinary No campaigners. Such interest in politics had not, according to the papers, been seen in decades. The subtheme was the 15th most discussed and it was dominated by the Herald that published 53 per cent of the coded words. The Guardian stood for almost a quarter and the Sunday Herald and the Observer a tenth each. In total, it appeared in 18 editorials.

According to Mitchell (2016:7), the referendum made it possible for ordinary people to participate in debates and influence policy making. There was no distinction between constitutional and every day politics during what he calls an “unanticipated democratic renewal”. This was, as Mitchell states, more evident in the engagement of ordinary people in grassroots movements than what was presented in the media. This was partly due to the difficult conditions the Scottish press operates in. While the BBC has more resources, they focused largely on the high-profile participants and events (Mitchell 2016:8).

Macwhirter (2014b:14) writes that the independence referendum campaign was “a festival of democracy which defied the conventional wisdom of political scientists and opinion pollsters who say that we live in an age of comfort, of political apathy and retail politics. The Scottish people seized control of the democratic process and made it their own.” The enthusiasm was tangible: people queued at 7 AM outside polling stations many of them for the first time as 16-year-olds had been given the vote in the referendum but there were also pensioners who had never before registered to vote in an election or a referendum (Macwhirter 2014f:16). A week before the referendum, Monbiot (2014c) wrote:

Already, the myth of political apathy has been scotched by the tumultuous movement north of the border. As soon as something is worth voting for, people will queue into the night to add their names to the register. The low voter turnouts in Westminster elections reflect not an absence of interest but an absence of hope.

The Herald editorial of 22 August said that:

The public has become engaged with politics in a way that might have been thought to have gone out of fashion along with soap boxes and megaphones. ... crowds have flocked to meeting rooms and public halls to hear for themselves the arguments,

and to contribute to them. The politicians have come to the people, and the people have responded with enthusiasm.

The Sunday Herald (24 Aug) argued that “The Yes campaign has erupted into a multicoloured mass campaign the like of which we haven't seen in Scotland for decades.” A week later (31 Aug), the paper noted that “One of the most stirring aspects of the referendum has been the wide public debate about what sort of country this should be.” Another week closer to the referendum the Sunday Herald (7 Sep) wrote – mainly about the Yes campaign – that “The fostering of a grass-roots operation and the appeal to voters' better nature rather than the stoking of their fears is paying dividends.”

The Herald (8 Sep) highlighted the involvement of different sorts of enthusiastic people in the Yes movement: “The campaign has also succeeded in creating the impression of unity among many disparate elements under the Yes banner and the grassroots campaign has been passionate and persistent.” The Guardian (8 Sep) noted that the debate “has actually caught fire in Scotland” and that “it would be a travesty if financiers were to call all the shots in the closing days of a campaign that has energised and engaged a nation” (9 Sep). The paper went on to argue that:

The reflections and debates have felt at times like a collective reawakening, achieving a level of public engagement that had seemed to belong to history. ... Overall, the campaign has breathed fresh possibility into the belief that vibrant civic society really can shape our shared life (12 Sep).

The Observer (13 Sep) in its only referendum-related editorial during the research period wrote that “we should at least rejoice at the intense engagement with a different kind of politics that the referendum campaign has sparked.” The nominally neutral paper wrote enthusiastically about ordinary Scots being a part of reforming the UK after the referendum: “Londoners, Mancunians and Glaswegians will work together to re-make Britain in such a way that all its regions are empowered, and all its people written firmly and fairly into a new union.”

During the last week of the campaign, the Sunday Herald (14 Sep) praised what was happening in Scotland: “this campaign ... has energised people throughout the country”. The Herald (15 Sep) argued that “The mass registration of voters in particular has been one of the great positives of the campaign” and the following day they wrote that “the campaign has energised Scottish grassroots politics like nothing else in a generation” (16 Sep). The Guardian (17 Sep) wrote:

It has been a campaign without parallel on these islands, a genuine national conversation that has reached the smallest town and the most remote rural community. The argument has been conducted in packed public meetings but also in pubs and across kitchen tables.

On polling day, *The Scotsman* (18 Sep) wrote that “this is a nation energised by debate and discussion, and inspired by belief and conviction.” *The Herald* (18 Sep) used plenty of column inches to write about the enthusiasm and engagement of people in the campaign:

One of the most striking characteristics has been the engagement of the grassroots in the campaigning; this has not been like a traditional election in which the politicians do the talking and the voters do the listening. ... across the country, volunteers on both sides have been knocking doors and handing out leaflets, with the Yes side in particular appearing to galvanise and inspire their supporters to get involved. In some cases, the Yes campaign has also inspired men and women who had given up on the political process to get involved again. ... Scots on both sides have engaged in political debate, searched out the facts, challenged and grilled politicians and dissected the arguments.

5.1.2.3 Exceptional campaign

The independence referendum campaign of 2014 was unlike any political campaign in living memory. The enthusiasm and engagement of ordinary people was discussed in the previous subtheme while this one focuses on more general ways in which the campaign was described as remarkable. The exceptional nature of the campaign was the subject of many an editorial during the final weeks of the campaign. The campaign was intense, the debate was passionate with strong arguments and the level of public engagement was unheard of.

There was an extraordinary atmosphere in Scotland but at the same time it was clear politics cannot be like that all the time. There was no prejudice, it was civilised, well-behaved and respectful. Even if there were excesses at times, it was mostly intelligent, intense, good-humoured, informed and inclusive. The question was solved peacefully without a bullet being fired. It was discussed that the 16-17-year-old new voters made their parents proud.

The subtheme was the 18th most popular and like *People reclaiming politics*, the *Herald* was the most active to discuss it: this time with a 63 per cent share. The *Guardian* published a good fifth of the words while the *Scotsman* and the *Sunday Herald* participated with lesser shares. The *Telegraph* and the *Observer* touched neither this subtheme nor its subtheme. *Exceptional campaign* was discussed in 13 editorials during the research period.

Devine (2016:244) argues that since the referendum, there has been a narrative downplaying the “great festival of democracy”. This has been a tool of the unionist parties and the message has been very clear: no to a second divisive independence referendum. Devine (2016:244) cites Hugo Rifkind writing in the Times on 4 September 2014:

Don't be fooled by the ugliness you've seen on the front pages of newspapers, or the eggs, or the cybernat ghouls. Rarely can there have been a political battle with such high stakes that has been conducted so peacefully.

Macwhirter (2014b:29) says that “Scotland can be justifiably proud of a campaign that was meticulously democratic and peaceful – with not a pane of glass or a punch thrown in the cause of independence”. Liñeira et. al. (2017: 165) write that “all aspects of Scottish and UK political and economic life” were included in the independence referendum debate and that public engagement and voter turnout rose to levels not seen in the UK for decades.

With exactly a month to polling day, the Scotsman (18 Aug) wrote: “The longest political campaign in Scotland's history is moving into its final month - though such has been the ferocious intensity of the campaigning to date, we seem to have been in the final month for the past 24.” The Sunday Herald (31 Aug) argued that “Whatever the outcome in 18 days, there will be work to be done to make sure public engagement in politics does not fade away.” The Guardian (12 Sep) stated that “In city and village, discussions have been well attended and vigorous. Many will remember this campaign all their lives.”

The Herald (15 Sep), in an editorial with the headline “Referendum debate is a credit to the nation”, argued that:

Here we are, in the final week of the referendum campaign and, with three days to go until polling day, the atmosphere in Scotland is extraordinary. In many ways, though, the campaign has been remarkable for its lack of prejudice and the civilised way both sides have behaved. It has been passionate, certainly, and has sometimes got out of hand, particularly online, but it has also been intelligent, intense and inclusive.

On the eve of polling day, the Guardian (17 Sep) wrote that:

It has been a campaign without parallel on these islands, a genuine national conversation that has reached the smallest town and the most remote rural community. The argument has been conducted in packed public meetings but also in pubs and across kitchen tables. Civic engagement sounds like a dry abstraction, but it has been made real and visible in Scotland. It is something to be really celebrated.

In their polling day issue, the Scotsman (18 Sep) stated that “The atmosphere across Scotland this morning is extraordinary” and the Herald noted that “The campaign has been lively and exciting” and “different to all the others that have gone before.”

Win for democracy

This subtheme discusses people getting engaged in the democratic process, new or renewed interest in politics. In order to get included in this subtheme, the text snippet had to include a mention of positive impact the referendum was having on democracy or Scottish politics. Record-high voter registration etc. has been a massive win for democracy and many of the papers commented on it. This subtheme became, in the end, a part of the *Exceptional campaign* subtheme but to preserve its own place as a different narrative, it was placed as a fourth-tier subtheme. It appeared in 11 editorials.

It is interesting how most of the editorials of the last five weeks before the referendum praised the independence referendum campaign for the energy, excitement and the civilised manner in which it was fought but now after Brexit the Unionist parties in Scotland talk about little else than opposing another divisive independence referendum. Monbiot (2014b) wrote ahead of the referendum that “that so many Scots, lambasted from all quarters [of the media] as fools, frauds and ingrates, have refused to be bullied is itself a political triumph.” The newspaper editorials were quite a bit more positive about the democratic revival of the Scottish nation.

The Herald (22 Aug) stated that “Whatever your politics, and whether you are a Yes, a No or a Don't Know, there can be little doubt that the independence referendum debate has given the democratic process a shot in the arm.” The Sunday Herald (7 Sep) argued that the way the campaign has been fought has been “democracy in action and a stirring, inspiring sight.” The Herald (15 Sep) argued that:

with more than 118,000 voters registering in the month before the deadline, there are realistic expectations that the turnout could be as high as 80%. Opinion is sharply divided about whether this will be good for the No side or the nationalists, but it is certainly good for democracy.

The Scotsman (18 Sep) wrote that “turnout today is expected to break records. If Scots go to the polls in the numbers anticipated, this will – regardless of the outcome – be a great day for democracy.” The Herald editorial of polling day stated that the independence referendum will “stand as an extraordinary example of democracy-in-action conducted in a well, organised, fair and inclusive way”.

5.1.2.4 Scaremongering

The Oxford English Dictionary defines scaremongering as “the action of a scaremonger; the spreading of alarming reports.” During the independence referendum campaign both sides at times accused the other of scaremongering. Most of the time it was the YES side that criticised the self-named Project Fear of scaremongering but when the NHS became one of the main themes of the campaign, the Better Together campaign got their chance to accuse YES Scotland of the same offence.

Scaremongering often involves making exaggerated or downright false claims about something in order to influence people’s opinions. This subtheme does not include any personal views on what might be scaremongering and which concerns are legitimate but the papers branding something as scaremongering or reporting someone else doing that. There are cases included where the actual term scaremongering is not used but the paper suggests or implies that the claims are false or at least clearly exaggerated.

Scaremongering was the 25th most written-about subtheme and it was present in the editorials of all studied papers. Most of the time, it was the No campaign that was accused of using fear and uncertainty as their approach, so it is understandable that the independence-supporting Sunday Herald published 36 per cent of the coded words in this subtheme. The Herald published a good quarter of the words, the Telegraph 14 and the Observer 12 per cent respectively while the Guardian and the Scotsman’s shares were less than a tenth. The subtheme was found in fifteen editorials during the research period.

Pike (2015:31) writes that the name “Project Fear” was invented by Better Together Director of communications Rob Shorthouse and another staff member inadvertently used it while talking to Tom Gordon, a Sunday Herald journalist who, later on, used it in an article. The name was spotted by Yes Scotland employees and cited as proof of a deliberate scaremongering tactic of the Better Together campaign.

The Sunday Herald (17 Aug) wrote “Unionists say these NHS warnings are a flat lie, a cynical exercise in scaremongering” and seemed to agree with the view to a point: “After rightly condemning Better Together for scaring voters with empty threats, the Yes camp should strive to maintain the high ground.” The paper’s view seemed to change later on so that they agreed with the Yes campaign views on the NHS. Virtually all of the accusations of scaremongering that the Yes campaign faced during the research period were about their messages about the NHS. The issue is discussed in more depth in sections 5.1.1.3 *Yes message* and 5.3.1.4 *NHS*.

The idea of Yes scaremongering was reported in the Herald (21 Aug). The paper reported the views of Anna Gregor: “She is critical of the scaremongering she argues has

taken place and the effect that it is having on some vulnerable patients” branding the Yes NHS claims as false. However, in the same editorial they wrote that “It is equally misleading to suggest a Yes vote threatens the NHS”. Anna Gregor, while working as Scotland’s cancer czar under the Labour-run Scottish Executive in 2002, argued that “FAILING hospitals should be closed and the money spent on American-style rapid outpatient care” but was opposed by the SNP that was in opposition at the time (Scotsman 2002) so this was not the first time her views and those of the SNP differed.

The following week, the Sunday Herald (24 Aug) wrote about another No campaign story that they branded false: “And the FM should dismiss Lord Birt's claim last week that Scots will not be able to watch BBC programmes after independence. Of course, they will, as they do in Ireland.” On 3 September, the Herald criticised the Yes Campaign:

Yes Scotland, after accusing Better Together of being “Project Fear” for months, has been using these final weeks to engage in negative campaigning of its own, making highly disputable claims about how the increased involvement of the private sector in the NHS in England threatens NHS funding in Scotland. ... Certainly neither side can now credibly take the moral high ground when it comes to claiming to be positive.

The Sunday Herald (7 Sep) seemed to think that the Yes campaign’s NHS warnings had not undone their claim to positivity: “The fostering of a grass-roots operation and the appeal to voters' better nature rather than the stoking of their fears is paying dividends.” However, they still thought the No campaign was trying to spread fear among the Scots: “John Prescott, Ed Balls and Gordon Brown will be doing their utmost to cow Labour voters. There will be scare stories galore. The end will be nigh, no doubt. ... Liberal Democrat politicians and the odd Conservative will join them at the klaxons.”

The Guardian (7 Sep) accused the Yes campaign of scaremongering: “Scotland will not be well served by its recent tendency to answer the negativity of the noes with a little fear-mongering of its own, notably over the NHS.” The future of the health service seemed to be another issue where both sides fielded their own experts with opposite opinions. What was different about the NHS was that it was an issue where both campaigns emphasised the risks of their opponents winning.

The Scotsman (12 Sep) addressed the exaggeration of economic risks by the No side:

There are several reasons to believe the consequences may be less severe than some of the more troubling projections of No campaigners of a massive exodus of functions and jobs. ... a clutch of senior financial figures, including Sir Angus Grossart and former RBS chairman Sir George Mathewson, have said fears are

exaggerated, while Martin Gilbert, head of Aberdeen Asset Management, has expressed his confidence that an independent Scotland would flourish.

The Observer (13 Sep) sounded critical of the No campaign as well writing that “The offer of devolved powers came alongside warnings about the alleged cataclysmic economic consequences if yes wins the day” and so did the Herald (16 Sep) stating that “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.” The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) was expectedly sceptical as well: “If we are to believe all we hear, we can expect the cost of everything, from baked beans to mortgages, to rise.”

During the last week of the campaign, the *Scaremongering* subtheme appeared in four different editorials of the Telegraph. They listed things that, according to them, are not scaremongering (12 Sept, 14 Sep). They supported the PM: “The Prime Minister has been accused by the Yes campaign of “scaremongering”: but as he said, it is his duty to set out the true consequences of such a vote, and to explain how disastrous it would be not just for Britain, but for Scots themselves” (16 Sep); and criticised the FM: “Mr Salmond, as wily a political operator as we have seen for many a year, succeeded in neutralising concerns about Scotland’s economic future – how much oil is left, what currency would it use, will businesses flee the country – simply by denouncing all who raised these misgivings as scaremongers” (18 Sep).

5.1.2.5 Keep calm and show respect

This subtheme is about the newspapers urging people to keep calm, think carefully and respect the other side. It was narrowly outside the top 30 most discussed subthemes. It appeared mostly in the Scottish dailies, which published nearly three quarters of all its coded words and the Telegraph that stood for a good fifth. 12 editorials included coded words for this subtheme.

The Sunday Herald pleaded to independence supporters to not give the Unionists ammunition and opportunity to tar the whole YES movement with the same brush as a tiny minority that causes trouble. The Unionist papers laid the blame at the YES movement’s door or at least wrote that most of the negative events had been because of the independence supporters. Spokesmen for both sides made statements that all forms of bullying and intimidation are to be discouraged which the papers reported but they also highlighted the different campaigns’ responsibility to control their supporters and demand they respect the other side.

This theme also contains calls for calm and careful thinking in order to not overreact to polls, reactions of financial markets or the result of the referendum. The potential effects of independence would have been massive, so people were urged think carefully before making their voting decisions. People were also urged to keep the campaign civilised and respectful so that the post-referendum coexistence would be as easy as possible. Even the Queen told the Scots to think very carefully about the choice.

Concerned about the press getting carried away with reports of disorder ahead of polling day, the Scottish Police Federation published a warning the day before the referendum urging people – politicians, journalists, and otherwise – to keep calm:

Any neutral observer could be led to believe Scotland is on the verge of societal disintegration yet nothing could be further from the truth. At this time it is more important than ever that individuals be they politicians, journalists or whoever should carefully consider their words, maintain level heads and act with respect. Respect is not demonstrated by suggesting a minority of mindless idiots are representative of anything (as cited in Macwhirter 2014b:85).

The Telegraph (17 Aug) reported advice given by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury: “Given how deadly serious this decision is, Mr Alexander is right to urge his fellow Scots to think very carefully about the vote and about what the right choice might be.”

In the aftermath of the suspension of the Jim Murphy tour of Scotland, the Sunday Herald (31 Aug) being the only independence-supporting newspaper was well aware of the eagerness of other media and the No campaign to discredit the Yes movement: “But anyone who is determined that Scotland will vote Yes, as we believe it should, must do everything in their power to avoid giving opponents any opportunity to portray Yes campaigners as a braying mob.” The Telegraph (31 Aug) editorial quote from the same day said that “We hope that the pro-independence campaign calms down and that we see a lot more reason rather than febrile emotion” works as an example of that: claiming that it is the whole “pro-independence campaign” that is out of order.

The Herald (1 Sep) reported the Yes campaign’s reaction to the incident and advice to voters in Scotland: “A spokesman for Yes Scotland has underlined the message by saying that there is no place for abuse in the campaign and both sides of the debate should treat others with respect at all times” and stated that “[abuse or intimidation] has to be discouraged by the leaders of both campaigns”. Ahead of polling day, the paper also demanded that “Yes Scotland and Better Together must do all they can to help maintain calm at the polling stations on one of the most important days in Scotland's history.”

A week later, the Scotsman (8 Sep) wrote:

When Scotland's future is on a knife-edge and Westminster politics is facing radical alteration, calls for calm may struggle to be heard. But, whatever the referendum result, calm there must be if reason is to prevail and panic not to take over. ... A referendum that has disorder as its climax will serve no-one.

The Herald (15 Sep) reported what the Queen had said after church: "she said she hoped people would think very carefully about the referendum. Seen by some as a significant intervention in the debate, in these last few days, it is nothing if not good advice." The Telegraph (16 Sep) reported the Royal advice as well: "the Queen has urged her subjects to think very carefully about the choice ahead of them." The final piece of advice of the research period was given by the Scotsman on polling day:

We can only urge all activists, on both sides, to act as restraining influences on their fellow campaigners, and bring an element of self-policing to the final day - and, perhaps more importantly, the aftermath of the announcement of the result tomorrow morning.

5.1.3 Better Together campaign

The other major campaign organisation, Better Together of the No side, was discussed enough for it to become a theme of its own. Its subthemes include *Poor BT*, *Labour* and *Late intervention*. There is no neutral subtheme about the Better Together campaign because the vast majority of the discussion about its approach and methods was critical. The Labour Party was discussed in rather negative terms as well and as the leading Unionist party in Scotland at the time this discussion constitutes a subtheme separate from that discussing the No side as a whole. The *Late intervention* subtheme includes more positive views of the No side that, as the name suggests, came alive late and managed to stem the Yes momentum. The *BT late* subtheme discusses the lateness critically while *Late intervention* is portrayed as a neutral or positive thing. However, the lateness is a more central quality in the discussion than the potential positive impact. This theme appeared in 30 editorials.

5.1.3.1 Poor BT

This subtheme includes critical views about the Better Together campaign. Mentions of politicians in the No side even if Better Together is not directly mentioned are also included when there is a clear connection. It includes two subthemes of its own that go a little deeper into a more specific aspect of Better Together poorness namely, *BT late* and *BT panic*. They will be discussed in their own subsections below.

With the two sub-subthemes, this subtheme was the second most discussed behind only the *New powers* subtheme. Out of the 70 editorials, it appeared in 25. The Herald, the Guardian and the Scotsman were the most active discussing this subtheme amassing 27 per cent, 24 per cent and 21 per cent shares of the coded words respectively. The Sunday Herald as the only independence-supporting paper was probably the most likely to criticise the No side but the fact that those three dailies spend a considerable amount of column inches to do that as well probably shows that the criticism was justified. The Sunday Herald's 13 per cent is a significant share of the word count of a top-two subtheme considering it is a weekly.

The Unionist campaign Better Together was generally portrayed as lacklustre, poor, bloodless, etc. It was said to have lacked positive vision for Scotland in the UK, it was accused of focusing on creating fear among the risk-averse and the undecided voters - the "million in the middle". Keating and McEwen (2017:19) write that "strong emphasis on the dire economic consequences of independence could come across as threatening and unduly negative". Professor Joseph Stiglitz said that the No campaign was deliberately "trying to get anxiety levels up" and that talked about being shocked "how much of it [the No campaign] is based on fear" and "how little of it has been based on vision" (Whitaker 2014:6).

As Pike (2015b:15) writes, the negativity was a conscious choice based on research. As discussed earlier, the campaign was renamed Project Fear and it caught on first as an inside-joke, but the name was snapped up by the Yes campaign later on. The campaign failed, according to Pike, "to articulate the positives of remaining in the Union".

According to Macwhirter (2014b:29), "there was very little attempt by Better Together to offer a positive vision of a new progressive partnership between Scotland and England. It was a grudging No vote bought by threats and negativity". Fraser Nelson in the Spectator (as cited in Macwhirter 2014b:56) described the No campaign as "dismal, colourless, negative and crassly economic, seeking to value the Union at £1,400 per head or 10 weeks of fish suppers". Nicoll (as cited in Mitchell 2014) wrote about one of the Better Together campaign messages: "If you don't know, vote no. Seriously? If you don't know after two years and nine months, stay home and do some colouring!"

Buchanan (2016:76) wrote:

The overt message given by the Better Together campaign was that not only was Scotland incapable of being independent, but that a Yes vote would result not only in the financial industry in Scotland, a significant employer, moving their business to England but also that other major companies would follow suit; the old age

pension would be adversely affected and pensioners would suffer; furthermore, the country would also be globally isolated.

Law (2015:7) writes about the Better Together campaign and its “sometimes apocalyptic” messages:

Labelled ‘Project Fear’, businesses, bankers, economists, foreign politicians among others were mobilised to reinforce its main message that independence would spell disaster for the Scottish economy, welfare state, academic research, employment, currency, interest rates, retail prices, international relations, and so on.

Welsh (2014) wrote that criticising the No campaign of being negative was, in some ways unfair as there is not, in his opinion, much of a case for continuing the Union:

The union they strove to protect was based on industry and empire and the esprit de corps from both world wars, and you can't maintain a political relationship on declining historical sentiment alone. With the big, inclusive postwar building blocks of the welfare state and the NHS being ripped apart by both major parties there's zero currency in campaigning on that, especially as they're only being preserved in Scotland by the devolved parliament. The boast of using oil revenues to fund privatisation projects and bail out bankers for their avarice and incompetence is never going to be a vote winner. Going negative was the only option.

Kavanagh (2017b:18) wrote about the negativity of Scottish Unionism:

Unionism is the opposite of science fiction. Whereas science fiction is the art of imagining the possible, Unionism is the art of imagining that everything is impossible. ... Unionism is what happens when a lack of imagination combined with an unhealthy dose of self-loathing is elevated into a political philosophy.

A good example of the negativity is what the Sunday Herald (31 Aug) portrays as the BT campaign’s “premature elation” over Sir Ian Wood’s revised oil estimates: embracing bad news for their own country as a possibility to reinforce the message that Scotland is too poor to be able to make it on its own. This is what some Yes supporters refer to as the Jockholm Syndrome, a condition associated with a tendency to start sentences with “I’m a proud Scot but...”

The Jockholm syndrome is closely related to a phenomenon called system justification that according to Monbiot (2014a) is defined as the “process by which existing social arrangements are legitimised, even at the expense of personal and group interest” that “consists of a desire to defend the status quo, regardless of its impacts”. He writes that system justification makes people “try to rationalise their disadvantage by seeking legitimate reasons for their position” and the more extreme social and economic

inequality is the stronger their need to do it gets. Monbiot sees this as one of the reasons so many Scots oppose independence.

Another good example of *Poor BT* is the infamous “car crash political broadcast” (Sunday Herald 31 Aug) of the Better Together campaign called *The Woman Who Made Up Her Mind*. It featured a woman in a kitchen – of course – pondering on the independence referendum and how she should vote who, in the end, decides to vote No. The Sunday Herald wrote the TV advertisement featured “almost every sexist cliché in the book” and that “It made Mad Men look daringly progressive.”

The advert resulted in a flurry of internet jokes spread on Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag #PatronisingBTlady. Macwhirter (2014b:67) writes that “many women found this [the broadcast] not just patronising but positively offensive”. The Better Together defence for the advertisement was that it was based on real-life concerns of ordinary Scottish women the Better Together canvassers had met while canvassing but one could easily argue it portrayed women voters as ignorant.

The woman who made up her mind telling her independence-supporting husband to eat his cereal because it was “too early to be discussing politics” became a symbolic catchphrase for independence supporters. Pringle (2018) wrote:

Lingering pride in what was supposed to be a common endeavour was one of the reasons why the negativity of the “no” campaign lost so much ground during the referendum. It was as if Scotland was a satellite of the UK rather than an integral part of it; not so much “here’s tae us, wha’s like us”, more like shut up and (in the words of the notorious Better Together broadcast) “eat your cereal”.

Despite the backlash caused by the advert, the Sunday Herald (31 Aug) noted that “it would be foolish to assume that Better Together can mess it up indefinitely. Beneath the veneer of incompetence, the No campaign remains capable of sharp manoeuvres.”

The Herald (3 Sep) wrote about the BT campaign’s “continued failure to articulate the positives of remaining In the Union” and criticised Alasdair Darling’s debate tactic for not choosing to present “an appealing vision of Scotland within the UK to galvanise undecideds, but to attack the SNP on its currency policy and other matters again and again.” The paper argued that while it was correct to talk about the risks, the No side should have preached “the positives of remaining in the UK”.

The Guardian (7 Sep) wrote that “the no campaign must somehow prevent its inescapable anxiety from morphing into fear and loathing” and the Telegraph (7 Sep) argued that “their slogan is Better Together and yet the overwhelming tenor of their

approach has been “worse apart”. ... Rather than extol the positive virtues of the Union ... too great an emphasis has been placed on the negative potential of independence.”

After highlighting the same BT problem on 6 September, the Scotsman (8 Sep) wrote that “the pledge of “more powers” early last month was so vague, both in content and in legislative timing, as to lack credibility” and described George Osborne’s plan of action as “flaccidly lacking in detail”. On the same day, the Guardian wrote:

There is little doubt that the no campaign’s credibility problem is the more immediate one right now. The narrowing of the polls has exposed failures that were always inherent in the No campaign’s dogged fixation on the alleged dangers of independence. the original approach ceded the “vision thing” to the yes campaign and allowed the yes side to claim a monopoly of optimism. ... All the major UK parties set out their plans for further devolution some months ago. But the plans are not merely different from one another: they have also been parked for months until, the no side hoped, the independence issue could be got out of the way. That has proved to be mistaken (8 Sep).

The Herald on 9 September had little positive to say about the No side. David Cameron’s judgement was questioned for vetoing the devo-max question, and the Labour approach to run the referendum campaign like a General Election was blamed for losing voters to the Yes cause. The same day, the Guardian argued that “The sheer repetition of Alistair Darling on this point [currency] has, on the evidence of the polls, become counter-productive.” The following day, the Guardian (10 Sep) accused the No side of complacency for assuming that “the old pulls of party and particularly Labour loyalty would, in the end, rally voters to the no side.”

The Observer (13 Sep) criticised the BT campaign arguing that “the no campaign's weapons of mass destruction have been almost universally economic, and punitively deployed. There is more to the union than the value of sterling but the no campaign has had real difficulty in telling that story.” They also argued that “the no campaign suffers from being overly punitive”.

The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) wrote that “the No camp has been characterised by its obdurate resistance to change” and that it has “failed to show an alternative vision which might encourage those long repelled by Westminster politics to re-engage” echoing rather closely the criticisms of the other researched papers. Being the only Yes-supporting newspaper, the Sunday Herald in its last editorial before the referendum went a bit further arguing that “Better Together wallowed in nostalgia and spread paranoia, calling in favours to protect the status quo.”

The Herald (15 Sep) argued that “No retain a small lead, it may be in spite of, not because of, the Better Together campaign.” The next day (16 Sep) they wrote: “Meanwhile, Better Together has struggled to find its momentum. It has failed repeatedly to put forward a positive vision of the future.” The Scotsman stated on polling day that “The manner in which the vow has been made does none of the parties any credit whatsoever.”

BT late

As discussed earlier, the Better Together campaign came alive rather late. The poll on 7 September which put the YES campaign ahead for the first time made the BT campaign realise the referendum could go either way. The awakening resulted in the intervention of former PM Gordon Brown, the now infamous Vow, “the three amigos” as the Herald (10 Sep) put it skipping Prime Minister’s Question Time and a trainload of Labour MPs being taken to Glasgow. The No side was widely criticised for all this coming so late in the campaign as the agreement on the new powers for Scotland could and should have been published much earlier. The *BT late* subtheme appeared in 12 editorials.

The Telegraph (5 Sep) welcomed “Labour frontbenchers fighting for the Union” but asked “why they are doing it so late and whether or not it is having the impact they might have expected.” The Scotsman (6 Sep) published an editorial with the headline “Late, late show leaves No playing catch-up” in which they asked “Why has it taken so long to elicit such a response? And why could not an all-party agreement to an early timetable have been indicated earlier?” The Sunday Herald (7 Sep) discussed the issue writing “Last week, after YouGov recorded a jump in Yes support, the Unionists finally woke up to what the Yes camp had been trying in vain to tell them for months: that Scotland is on the move.”

The Guardian (8 Sep) wrote that “The no campaign’s efforts to address that deficit [BT credibility on new powers] thus feel as if they are too little and too late.” The Herald (10 Sep) talked about the BT revival writing “Better Together seems belatedly to have found its passion. But has it come too late to win the day for the No camp?” The Scotsman (12 Sep) commented on the lateness of Better Together:

Former Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy put his finger on the acute weak spot of the Better Together campaign - the undue delay in agreeing an accelerated timetable at Westminster for "more powers" legislation. Few would dispute his contention yesterday that it has come a year late. Whether it is too late we will not know until the ballot boxes are opened next Thursday evening.

The Observer (13 Sep) wrote that “Cameron, Miliband and Clegg had 18 months but they waited until the last 10 days to spell out just how profound devolution could be.” The Guardian (15 Sep) argued that “These efforts, however, have come very late in the day” and on polling day they wrote about the belatedness of the Better Together Vow: “Historians will long debate whether such a promise should have been made much earlier, and in a more coherent and cohesive manner.”

BT panic

Another subtheme to *Poor BT*, *BT panic*, deals with the response to the late frenzy of activity prompted by the Yes momentum and especially the Times poll that put YES ahead for the first time. For example, the plans for further devolution had been parked for a year and they were only revisited in the last two weeks of the campaign in order to save the Union. In the text snippets included in this subtheme, the tone in the editorials is critical, they report critical comments of others or at least panic is mentioned. This subtheme was present in 12 editorials and interestingly at least once in in each newspaper.

Mitchell (2016:12) argues that the tightening of the polls in the last weeks of the campaign created a sense of panic amongst the Unionist leaders and campaigners. This in turn led to the Vow: the promise of extensive new powers and of “faster safer and better change” signed by the Westminster leaders of the then three biggest UK parties. Jenkins (2014) describes the Unionist parties’ reaction to the poll as “poll-induced panic”. He accuses them of breaking the policy purdah and cynically promising new powers or devo max without making clear commitments to what those powers would be.

The then Labour leader Ed Miliband led more than a hundred of Labour MPs to Scotland for a last-minute rally (Devine 2016:241). This in turn led to some comical scenes when a Scottish activist with a PA system followed them on a rickshaw playing the Imperial Death March from Star Wars and telling the people of Glasgow to welcome their imperial masters and bow down to them (Simons 2014).

The Scotsman (6 Sep) argued that “So perilously late in the day has this initiative been left that it cannot but invite the charge of panic.” The Guardian (7 Sep) wrote:

Better Together also needs to avoid the appearance of panic. George Osborne spoke on Sunday about devolving more tax and borrowing powers, and even though much of this is already agreed, few will believe that it was always the intention to be revealing new details into mid-September.

The Telegraph (7 Sep) argued that “This [the publication of specific proposals for devolving additional powers in the event of a No vote] risks looking like panic” On the

following day, the Scotsman (8 Sep) talked about “signs of incipient panic” and wrote that “Earnestly intentioned though these efforts may be, they will struggle to avoid being seen as panic, thus adding to the impetus of the very campaign they were designed to derail.”

On 9 September, the Herald wrote “First Minister Alex Salmond calls it panic. At best, it could be called last-minute. ... Panic or not, the response is for the Westminster parties to lay out their plans tomorrow.” The following day the Herald (10 Sep) asked and answered its own question: “Will the arrival of the “three amigos” be portrayed as a [sic.] another sign of panic? Certainly” but argued that “The time for worrying about the appearance of panic, however, has passed”. Referring to the Gordon Brown speech a couple of days earlier they wrote “Since that speech, it is Better Together that has been setting the daily agenda, even if the frenzy of activity has looked at times like a case of the heebee-geebees.”

The Scotsman (12 Sep) wrote:

This last-minute rush to put together a credible package strong enough to win over wavering voters has inevitably given rise to several critical charges. The first, already well aired, is that it is a panic response to the YouGov poll last weekend showing the Yes campaign was in the lead.

The Observer (13 Sep) referred to the three main Westminster parties being “spooked by a poll showing the yes campaign in the lead”. The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) criticised the Labour-train experiment: “[Labour MPs] had been ordered to get on a train to save the Union. It reeked of cynicism, condescension and blind panic. It was also counter-productive.”

5.1.3.2 Labour

The texts in this subtheme discuss the Labour Party and their involvement in the referendum campaign. Mere mentions of Labour voters moving here or there are not enough, but actions designed to affect specifically their voting are included, as are texts covering the actions of leading Labour figures like Ed Miliband or Gordon Brown as they include also some discussion of the Labour Party. For example, Brown was portraying the party as the party of home rule or Miliband promising things to Scotland when he would become Prime Minister i.e. the Labour Party winning the general election.

The Telegraph that was very pro-Union from the start of the five-week period and even before was always very hostile towards the idea of Scottish independence, the Yes Campaign, the SNP and Alex Salmond but also towards the Labour Party. Many of the

mentions are in the Telegraph editorials and highly critical if not downright hostile in tone.

Labour was the 21st most discussed subtheme. Of its coded words, the Conservative-supporting Telegraph published nearly 40 per cent while the Herald wrote 30 per cent and the Guardian 22 per cent. The Sunday Herald and the Observer produced less than a tenth combined and the Scotsman did not discuss this subtheme at all. The *Labour* subtheme had coded words in 16 editorials.

Macwhirter (2014b:104) writes that one of the reasons behind Labour's dislike of the SNP is their sense of entitlement: Scotland is supposed to be a Labour country. Therefore, the SNP must have used "devious tactics" of encouraging anti-Englishness and playing identity politics. Macwhirter (ibid.) argues that the SNP hardly use identity arguments and that the Scots grew disillusioned with Labour because of the Iraq war, their support of nuclear weapons and Blairite economic policies. Devine (2012:663) identifies similar reasons: the Blairite neo-liberal policies were not as popular in Scotland as they were south of the border and the Iraq war had few supporters. The Scots did not leave Labour but Labour left the Scots. Nevertheless, at the time of the referendum, Labour held 40 of Scotland's 59 Westminster seats so in a sense, they had more to lose in Scotland than the Conservatives.

Devine (2012:663) explains the SNP landslide in 2011: "Scottish Labour seemed more committed to resisting the nationalists than exploiting devolution energetically in an attempt to solve Scotland's myriad social problems". Also, most of the most talented and charismatic Scottish Labour politicians seemed to prefer Westminster to Holyrood which combined with factionalism and personality clashes resulted in a "talent deficit". By contrast, the SNP with its many left-of-centre policies attracted traditional Labour voters. Macwhirter (2015:2) argues that the rise of the SNP has been made possible by its opposition to austerity and people's disillusionment with establishment politics but also by Labour moving to the right and leaving the radical space in the political field.

Pike (2015:193) describes an interesting situation that Labour faced in Scotland after the referendum and that portrays the animosity towards the party after teaming up with the Tories. At the end of October 2014, Ed Miliband was visiting Scotland to give a speech at a Labour fundraising gala dinner in Glasgow. There was a demonstration outside the hotel where the dinner was being held and, according to Pike, a senior Labour MSP commented "We're not in government in Scotland, we're not in Government in the UK, but we still have protestors outside!" (Pike 2015:193).

Macwhirter (2014b:20) writes that Labour fell out with the Tories on the day after the referendum because of the EVEL [English votes for English laws in the House of Commons] announcement of David Cameron. To make things more chaotic, a good month later, the leader of Labour in Scotland, Johann Lamont, resigned and accused London Labour of treating the Scottish division as a branch office. This was a particularly damning accusation because it was what the SNP had been arguing for years. Macwhirter (2014b:155) writes that many Scots were unhappy about the Ed Miliband promise to make refusing independent Scotland the pound a manifesto pledge. The party working together with the Tories in the Better Together alliance was probably even worse.

On his website, Lord Ashcroft (2015) list some of the reasons his Scottish focus group participants gave for not voting Labour anymore but switching to the SNP in the 2015 General Election. Firstly, many stated that Labour seemed “politically indistinguishable from the Conservatives”, that “the last fifteen years of government [had] been seamless”. As Orwell (1945) wrote “The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which” or as one of the Ashcroft focus group participants somewhat less eloquently put it “it’s just a different shade of shite”.

Secondly, many voters echoed the sentiments of Johann Lamont in her “branch office” statement: there is no Scottish Labour, the party is run from London. Thirdly, people were disappointed with Labour’s approach to the independence referendum that – in addition to being a joint venture with the Tories – was too negative and untruthful: “They were fear-mongering. They were telling pensioners they were going to lose their pensions” (Ashcroft 2015).

The Herald on 20 August wrote that the fact “English voters are inclined to support Scots taking control of the majority of taxes raised in Scotland ... puts Labour in a more difficult position since its proposals for greater devolution have been less radical than those of the other parties.” The Guardian (8 Sep) wrote about the plans for new powers that “The latest Labour plans, in particular, matter a lot, because of the possibility that Labour may indeed form the next UK government.”

The Herald (16 Sep) wrote:

The Liberal Democrats and even the once devo-sceptic Conservatives have demonstrated their readiness to meet voters' aspirations with far-reaching proposals on fiscal devolution but Labour, fearing the diminishing relevance of their 40 Scottish MPs, has shown greater timidity. ... It is critically important all three parties, and Labour in particular, show greater ambition and determination to implement a substantial expansion of Scottish Parliament powers.

The Guardian (10 Sep) argued that “Important differences in values separate Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and David Cameron, but in the eyes of much of Scotland, and tracts of England and Wales too, they look and sound the same.”

The Telegraph (5 Sep) wrote that Labour “has the most to lose politically if Scotland goes it alone, and because Labour has long regarded Scotland as its natural territory, it seems strange that Mr Miliband has hitherto left it up to local lieutenants to press the flesh.” They speculated this was because Miliband thought that “the sight of a distinctly southern, very privileged politician on Scottish doorsteps might actually add to a sense of isolation from Westminster.” The paper also stated that “Labour must take the lion’s share of the blame for failing to hold on to its traditional voters”. Pike (2015:82) writes that Miliband was reluctant to intervene in the referendum campaign because the Scottish Labour leader Johann Lamont had told him that “People hate Westminster, and you’re part of Westminster”.

Labour was, at that point, the party with most Scottish MPs and many Scots were still at that point loyal to the party. The Sunday Herald (7 Sep) wrote about “Labour bruisers touring Scotland” and “doing their utmost to cow Labour voters.” The Telegraph (7 Sep) argued that Labour who “for many years assiduously encouraged the view in Scotland that a Conservative government at Westminster was just about the most appalling prospect imaginable” would have to make an attempt “to shore up the house they helped undermine” and “get their supporters to the polls next Thursday to save the Union”.

The Herald (8 Sep) argued that “the [No] campaign has often felt more like a Labour General Election campaign than a cross-party fight for the future of the country. On the Yes side, SNP banners have been all but invisible, but the No campaign has often been a sea of Labour red.” The move to Yes was largely happening from 2011 Labour voters and on 9 September, both the Herald and the Telegraph highlighter this fact. The Guardian (10 Sep) accused the No side of complacency stating that “Westminster had always assumed that the old pulls of party and particularly Labour loyalty would, in the end, rally voters to the no side.”

The Telegraph (9 Sep) argued:

[Miliband] needs to tell his party’s supporters, in terms, that he would rather see a Conservative administration in power than the break-up of the Union. His problem is that Labour has so poisoned the political well in Scotland against the Tories over the past four decades that he finds it virtually impossible to make this case with any

credibility. ... Labour gives the impression that it only believes in the Union provided it is run by them.

One could assume that the Telegraph were well aware that the Labour leader would never endorse a Conservative government as the party was in deep enough trouble for the joint campaign with the Tories. Likewise, the Telegraph must have been aware that the Tories had done a stellar job destroying their own electoral hopes in Scotland even without Labour help. The Telegraph, while being strongly pro-union, were the whole time strongly pro-Conservative as well.

The Herald (16 Sep) argued that the Labour party, despite the acknowledgement that the race was too close to call, was still refusing to commit to far-reaching new powers for Holyrood because they feared “the diminishing relevance of their 40 Scottish MPs” and showed “greater timidity”. The paper stated that “The proposals of the LibDems and Conservatives are a good potential starting point but Labour's simply do not go far enough.” As discussed in sections 3.11.1 and 3.11.2, their reluctance to devolve significant new powers continued in the post-referendum Smith Commission and the electorate punished the party severely at the 2015 general election.

The Guardian (16 Sep) discussed the Vow: “the vow’s political purpose was transparent. Its aim is to steady the Labour vote in Thursday’s referendum.” They went on to state that “Enough of that vote has been slipping towards the yes campaign to ensure that the outcome remains very much in doubt. Strong commitments to protect Scottish Labour voters’ traditional material and political interests may therefore make the difference.”

5.1.3.3 Late intervention

This is a subtheme that deals with the significant increase in BT effort in the referendum campaign that took place with less than two weeks to go. Included are the Gordon Brown speech, the advice of the queen, the three Westminster leaders travelling north to save the Union as well as the infamous Labour train. The main difference between *BT late* and *Late intervention* is that the former includes excerpts of text that are critical of the BT campaign and its lateness while *Late intervention* lists acts and events that took place during the flurry of activity that was sparked by the Times poll that put YES campaign in the lead. Keating and McEwen (2017:19) describe what followed the poll as “an orchestrated intervention by big firms, banks, and even some supermarkets warning of calamitous consequences should there be a Yes vote.”

As the name suggest, the intervention took place late so it is absent from the first three weeks. The Observer did not publish material that would have been coded to this subtheme but all the other papers did. The Herald was responsible for nearly half the coded words, the Telegraph for a quarter and the Guardian for 15 per cent. The subtheme was discussed in 10 editorials.

The Sunday Herald (7 Sep) predicted that the Yes momentum would cause a reaction from the unionist side: “Now the Unionists have been shaken from their complacency, an ugly fightback is inevitable. The Labour bruisers ... will be doing their utmost to cow Labour voters. There will be scare stories galore. The end will be nigh, no doubt.”

One of the “Labour bruisers” the Sunday Herald was writing about was Gordon Brown and his speech was widely covered in the editorials: “Brown indicated he would call for an early debate at Westminster on more powers for the Scottish Parliament” (Scotsman 8 Sep), “Brown began to lay out a roadmap for the plan” (Herald 9 Sep), “Brown ... outlined a timetable for greater devolution” (Telegraph 9 Sep).

In addition to the famous promise of “nothing less than a modern form of Scottish Home Rule within the United Kingdom” (Herald 9 Sep), Brown talked about “what he firmly regards as SNP lies about the NHS” (Herald 10 Sep) and stated that “He could never stand by ... if he believed the Scottish NHS was going to be privatised and have its funding cut.” The Herald went on to call Brown’s intervention “passionate and sincere” and what was remarkable was the complete absence of scrutiny or criticism towards anything he said. It should be remembered that speech took place six days before the paper declared its support for the UK when it was supposedly providing impartial coverage.

The Telegraph (9 Sep) reported that “The Saltire was run up the flagpole of 10 Downing Street yesterday” as a “well-meaning gesture because it was a further indication of how seriously our politicians in Westminster are now taking the prospect of the break-up of the Union”. The paper also reported that the leaders of the three main Westminster parties “will absent themselves from Prime Minister’s Question Time and head to Scotland to campaign for the Better Together coalition that is desperately trying to hold back a last-minute surge of support for separatism.”

The Telegraph (9 Sep) questioned whether the party leaders’ trip north would have the desired effect. The Guardian (9 Sep) wrote that their voices like that of Mark Carney might rather irritate than persuade Scots and that it is “Entirely uncertain as to whether

their efforts will do more harm than good” (10 Sep) but, as the Herald (10 Sep) argued, “staying away, would no doubt be portrayed by opponents as astonishing complacency.”

The Telegraph (11 Sep) reported also that while in Scotland, “David Cameron sought to match the sentimental appeal of the separatists with an emotional speech in Edinburgh in which he appeared at times to be close to tears.” The other papers did not mention Cameron’s speech possibly because, as Brooker (2014) pointed out:

In Scotland, David Cameron is less popular than Windows 8. He’s the physical embodiment of everything a fair percentage of Scottish people hate: a ruddy-faced old Etonian walking around like he just inherited the place, sporting a permanently shiny chin as though he’s just enjoyed a buttery crumpet in front of the cricket.

5.1.4 Independence referendum

This theme deals with things connected to the independence referendum result and it includes the subthemes *Polls*, *Importance of the vote* and *Tight race*. Polls predicting the result were discussed at length at different times during the research period, the importance of the vote and how long-run its effects could be for Scotland was emphasised and the idea that the result would be close was repeated often especially towards the end of the campaign. All these issues were apt to increase voter interest and engagement while not presenting actual arguments for or against independence. The *Independence referendum* theme was the 7th most written-about and it featured in 42 editorials.

5.1.4.1 Polls

Polls produce a lot of information and play a big role in political campaigns, so they were widely discussed in the editorials of the relevant period. Especially the poll that put the YES campaign in the lead generated mentions and interest among the editorial teams. The media use polls in order to create data that can be used to back up stories and sometimes they can be developed into news stories in their own right. The most important criterion for this theme is that the text excerpt presents new information about a poll or several polls or indicate that polls have caused something to happen in the Scottish independence referendum campaign. The subtheme was the 7th most popular and it appeared in 31 editorials. The Herald and the UK dailies were the most active contributing to it.

The poll that created the most media interest was the Times poll that on 6 September put the Yes side ahead 51 to 49 per cent. According to Macwhirter (2014b:25), “the BBC’s Laura Kuenssberg tweeted later that she had been told that a second poll commissioned by the UK government but not published, had shown Yes in the lead by

53% to 47%”. If there indeed was a poll result like that it would explain the level of panic that hit the No side of the referendum campaign better than a single much tighter poll.

Poll results, on the whole, were news items and they were discussed in the editorials. Quite often there were just brief mentions of results on that particular day – “one survey puts the No vote ahead by 20 points” (Telegraph 17 Aug). At times there was more information about to which direction undecided voters were leaning: “ICM also indicates that undecideds are more likely to vote No than Yes” (Herald 18 Aug); or how different demographic groups were going to vote: “a new Panelbase poll shows buoyant support for Yes, rising most sharply among female voters hitherto resistant to it” (Sunday Herald 7 Sep); or what the most important factors affecting voter choice were: “Polls show the NHS is second only to the economy and jobs in voters list of priorities” (Herald 18 Aug).

The Herald (3 Sep) wrote “It is usually a mug's game to read much into one poll of voting intentions, but in the case of the latest YouGov poll on independence there is no denying its significance.” The polls were discussed for a reason: they affected, among other things, the financial markets like the Herald in the same editorial points out: “Such was the poll's impact that the value of the pound dipped against the dollar and RBS shares fell.” The polls had a clear effect on campaign tactics: “with opinion polls showing a swelling in support for Yes, former prime minister Gordon Brown has asked the Commons Speaker John Bercow to allow him to lead a debate to secure an early timetable on the delivery of these further devolution proposals” (Scotsman 6 Sep).

After the Times poll of 6 September, the Sunday Herald (7 Sep) wrote “Now we have seen the first poll to show the Yes campaign ahead of Better Together. The pro-union campaign no longer talks dismissively of “wavy lines” in the data, as if the electorate were essentially fixed in favour of the Union.” The Guardian (7 Sep) commented:

“There’s only one poll that matters, and that’s on 18 September.” The line from Downing Street on Sunday was staid, predictable, and – at one level – true. At another level, the publication of the first independently commissioned poll predicting the dissolution of the union matters very much.

The Guardian continued “While YouGov has uncovered an apparent tide of separatist sentiment over four surveys since early August, its competitor Panelbase has just released another survey recording no change over this period.” They even commented on the technicalities of polling:

All polls are subject to random fluctuations, and more systematic biases affecting the types of people who get involved with internet panels, or for that matter pick up the phone. Then there are special problems in forecasting a oneoff referendum, since – by contrast with a general election – the political mix of respondents cannot be calibrated on the strength of how respondents say they voted last time. So known unknowns abound: this is almost as frightening a time to be a pollster as it is a unionist politician (Guardian 7 September).

On the same day, the Telegraph (7 Sep) wrote “This was just a single poll and the outcome was within the margin of error. Another opinion survey yesterday gave the No camp a four-point lead; and there are still a number of Don’t Knows, most of whom may, in reality, be No voters.” The fact that the Scotsman (8 Sep) felt it was necessary to write “savers and investors need to bear in mind that this is one opinion poll, not the final result, and that a panic stampede for the exits will serve no useful purpose, whatever the referendum result” shows the power political polls have in the society of today as does the Guardian’s (8 Sep) account of polls’ affecting campaign tactics: “The no campaign ... has suddenly responded to the polls by switching tactics to unroll a jam-tomorrow timetable commitment”.

The Telegraph (14 Sep) wrote that “headlines about economics and polls can start to blur into so much noise” but the following day (15 Sep) they were back publishing about polls writing “The polls are too tight to call” and “the polls tell us the nation is essentially split down the middle”. A couple of days later, the Telegraph (17 Sep) reported results of a poll of their own: “Our poll today has a number of remarkable findings, but none more striking than the fact that the number of don't knows remains unchanged from last month at 14 per cent.”

The last reports on polls were published on polling day: “Yesterday's ICM poll for The Scotsman is one of a number of surveys that show the race is tantalisingly close” (Scotsman 18 Sep); “As the first voters head to the polling booths this morning, the polls still make the final result impossible to predict” (Herald 18 Sep); “Unless the pollsters have made a complete mess of things ... the result of the independence referendum is on a knife-edge” (Telegraph 18 Sep).

5.1.4.2 Importance of the vote

Importance of the vote was another recurring theme in the pre-referendum editorials. In order to be included here the snippet has to say that the decision is extremely important, momentous, the biggest Scottish vote in living memory or something to that effect. It was emphasised quite often that the effect of Scotland going it alone would be massive in a

number of ways, forms and levels and it would have been a decision that would have been very difficult if not impossible to reverse. The papers invited everyone to participate in the debate and the democratic process and an almost unprecedented number of people did.

“A decision that will last for generations” seems at the moment to be Unionist wishful thinking, especially when many Scots feel that most of the Better Together promises have not been kept. Had the Unionist parties delivered on their promises and delivered significant new powers to the Scottish Parliament the decision might have lasted for a generation. The nationalist argument after the EU referendum is that the UK the majority of Scots supported in 2014 does not exist after Brexit as one of the main BT claims was voting No meant staying in the EU.

This subtheme was the 16th most written-about. The Telegraph was the most active publishing about it with a 41 per cent share of the coded words followed by the Herald with 27 per cent. The Scotsman wrote 15 per cent and the Guardian 12 per cent while the Sunday Herald almost reached five per cent. In total, this subtheme appeared in 18 editorials.

The narrative focused on several issues the first of which is the significance of the vote. The Herald branded the referendum “the biggest constitutional decision to be made in the UK for 300 years” (18 Aug), “the biggest political decision of all our lives” (22 Aug) and “the most momentous vote in living memory” (16 Sep). The Telegraph described it “the most significant vote in its [the UK’s] history” (12 Sep), an “awful and momentous choice” (16 Sep), and “an elemental issue” (17 Sep). They stated that “The significance of tomorrow’s referendum on Scottish independence is impossible to exaggerate” (17 Sep) and wrote about “the sheer magnitude of the proposition” (14 Sep). The Guardian referred to it as “a decision of such gravity” and “this momentous matter” and stated that “The stakes here could not be higher” (17 Sep). The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) declared it “the most important decision of their [Scottish voters’] lives”.

Another narrative was the idea that the decision was one “that will last for ever” (17 Aug), that “there is no going back” (7 Sep) and that the “decision could not be undone” (16 Sep) as the Telegraph put it. The Scotsman branded it “a decision that cannot be revisited” (16 Sep). The Sunday Herald wrote that “How this generation acts on September 18 will mark this small country forever” and that “Scotland stands on the cusp of history” (14 Sep). The paper was probably confident that the Scots would vote Yes in their message about infinity.

The Herald stated that the referendum was a “date with destiny “, a “once in a lifetime opportunity” and that the Scots would be “setting the course of history for this country and beyond” (16 Sep). The Telegraph branded polling day “A day of destiny for our United Kingdom” (18 Sep). The Scotsman, when declaring support for the Union, wrote that deciding how to vote was a “decision that will have a fundamental and far-reaching impact on all our lives, our country and its future” and that the referendum was a “pivotal moment in our history” (11 Sep). On polling day, they stated that it was “Time to write ourselves into the history books”. The Telegraph branded the vote “a decision of seismic consequence” (12 Sep), argued that the Scots were “not just voting for themselves, but for their children and grandchildren and the generations beyond”, that the decision would “last for generations to come” (16 Sep) and that it was “a choice whose consequences will echo down the ages” (17 Sep).

5.1.4.3 Tight race

Tight race is a subtheme that includes predictions that the vote will be close. The race really was tight and it was a theme in many editorials especially in the last weeks of the campaign. It was not a massive insight but still it was repeated often and by most of the papers – the only paper that didn’t publish anything that ended up under this subtheme was the Observer. Nearly four out of five coded words in this subtheme were published during the last week when, obviously, the race was at its tightest. *Tight race* was just outside the top-40 most discussed subthemes and it appeared in 13 different editorials.

One month before polling day, the Scotsman wrote that “This would all suggest that there is still everything to fight for as we go into the final stretch”. On 3 September, the Herald wrote about a poll where Yes was for the first time only six points behind No: “This may come to be regarded as a pivotal moment in the campaign. It has turned a sedate punt to the finish line into a white-knuckle race.” On the following Sunday (7 Sep), the Sunday Herald wrote that “Alistair Darling is right in one thing: this is a campaign that will be fought down to the wire.”

The Guardian reported “Everyone can see how close-run this contest has now become. Strenuous parallel efforts by Labour and the Liberal Democrats to rally the no vote across Scotland over recent days are further evidence of that” (15 Sep) and the Telegraph wrote on the same day that “The United Kingdom is teetering on the brink of dissolution; opinion polls show that the Scottish referendum is too close to call with any certainty.” On the following day, the Scotsman stated that “The fact is that all the polls tell us the nation is essentially split down the middle” (16 Sep).

Three of the papers commented the situation on polling day:

Yesterday's ICM poll for The Scotsman is one of a number of surveys that show the race is tantalisingly close. ... Ultimately a single vote is all it takes to hand victory to one side or the other (Scotsman).

... the polls suggest it could be extremely tight and the result may come down to a few thousand, perhaps even a few hundred votes (Herald).

... the result of the independence referendum is on a knife-edge (Telegraph).

5.1.5 Media & information

This theme consists of three subthemes: *Media impartiality*, *Whose truth to believe* and *Newspaper endorsements*. The first of them was often linked to the BBC and its impartiality but at times the papers that were not openly partisan also highlighted that they were providing impartial coverage of the referendum campaign. *Whose truth to believe* discussed the difficulty of knowing which side provided truthful information as the two camps' views often differed significantly. The *Newspaper endorsements* subtheme consists of instances where the included newspapers explicitly endorsed one of the alternatives, declared their preference for the result. *Media and information* was, according to number of coded words, ranked tenth among the 13 themes and it appeared in 30 editorials.

5.1.5.1 Media impartiality

This theme deals mostly with the newspapers declaring impartiality or discussing alleged BBC bias or neutrality. The only newspaper that supported independence, The Sunday Herald, complained about BBC bias while The Telegraph saw none of it. The Sunday Herald also found it astonishing that no other paper declared support for Scotland going it alone. There was discussion about this in other papers by some columnists but understandably not much in these papers that ended up supporting the Union. It was the 27th most popular subtheme and it appeared in 12 editorials.

Patrick (2014) argues on the basis of his 12-month study of eight newspapers in Scotland, that “for every headline which framed Scottish independence positively, there were 4.3 articles which were against independence”. His in-depth analysis of the texts showed that while nearly half of the articles were neutral, those that were clearly biased included 3 pro-Union articles for every pro-independence one. The newspapers included in his study included, among others, the Scotsman, the Herald and the Telegraph whose editorials are also a part of this study.

Independence supporters believe there was a bias against independence in the BBC coverage. What Devine (2016:238) calls “the most notorious episode” of alleged BBC bias was when political editor Nick Robinson claimed on the Six O’Clock News that Alex Salmond had not answered his question when other recordings of the press conference that had already been widely distributed on the Internet clearly showed the First Minister answering Robinson for several minutes. Macwhirter (2014b:92) writes that Salmond’s seven-minute answer had been viewed 100,000 times before the Six O’Clock News and the broadcast made Yes supporters furious. One can only wonder how much the media used its power to skew the narrative before the emergence of the social media.

Macwhirter (2014b:77) writes that “it was abundantly clear to any general reader that the Scottish and UK press was hostile to independence”. He also states (2014b:83) that it was almost like all newspapers – bar the Sunday Herald – had turned into the Telegraph and were “engaged in a kind of war of escalating hyperbole, vying with each other to deliver the latest independence shock”.

Hutchison (2016:28) identifies two recurring themes in the Scottish press coverage of the independence referendum: “a number of key questions remained to be answered by the Yes side” and “the Better Together campaign needed to articulate a more convincing case for the union than it had offered so far”. Both themes were very much present in the editorials collected for this study as well.

Hutchison (2016:32) argues that “the lack of press support was a serious problem for the Yes side.” He (2016:29) writes that when the Scottish Government white paper on independence was published, of the papers included in this study the Telegraph was openly hostile towards Scottish independence and its Scottish editor, Alan Cochrane, was one of the most hostile individual commentators. The Guardian in their editorial referred to “many unanswered questions”. Hutchison finds it “striking” that no paper supported the independence movement but acknowledges that the Herald and the Scotsman published columns by independence-friendly commentators and, indeed, FM Salmond and his deputy Nicola Sturgeon. Already at that point, Hutchison argues, the Sunday Herald was the only newspaper that had a tone positive towards independence in its editorials.

A survey YouGov carried out for News UK produced results that support the argument that newspapers play an important part in the democratic process. According to the research, 60 per cent of Scots chose newspapers among their most important sources of independence referendum related information. The corresponding figures for social media and the campaign organisations were 54 per cent and 44 per cent respectively.

Television and radio were the most important for 71 per cent and, as was discussed earlier, they tend to follow the narrative set by newspapers Macwhirter (2014b:87).

He argues (ibid.) that if the views of the newspapers are distorted “then democracy is distorted”. He argues that most of Scottish newspapers or newspapers sold in Scotland are “instinctively, indeed militantly Unionist”. Comedian Frankie Boyle quite possibly echoed the sentiments of many independence supporting Scots and explained the falling circulation figures of newspapers on 25 January 2015 when he tweeted “I don't read newspapers anymore. I just lie to myself and cut out the middleman.”

Although the main focus of this study is on the newspapers, the BBC is discussed here because television and radio were the most important source of referendum information for more than seven out of ten Scots and a secondary source to plenty more. Furthermore, there are significant links between the newspapers and broadcasting and how they influence the narrative around politics as discussed in chapter 4.

Alex Salmond said in an interview in the last issue of the Sunday Herald before the referendum that BBC bias was unconscious: “they [BBC journalists] don't realise they're biased. It's the unconscious bias which is the most extraordinary thing of all. ... What they don't understand is they're players in this” (Gordon 2014b:10). According to Macwhirter (2014b:65), “there was, and is, a very profound belief among many supporters of independence in Scotland that [BBC] sought to demonise nationalism, be disrespectful to the First Minister and undermine the Yes campaign”.

Welsh (2014) writes:

As social media came of age in a political campaign in these islands, the rest of the establishment will be for ever tarnished in the eyes of a generation of Scots. The senior officials of banks and supermarkets dancing to Whitehall's tune, their nonsense disseminated by the London press, was not unexpected, but the BBC extensively answered any questions about their role in a post-independent Scotland.

The Herald (18 Aug) was keen to tell its readers about their “ongoing commitment to provide news and analysis even-handedly in relation to both sides, and offering content arguing the case passionately from both points of view.” On 22 August, they stated that “The Herald will continue to provide a platform for all to air their views.” When they declared opposition to independence, the Herald (16 Sep) stated that “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.” One could argue that the rigorous and impartial analysis part was somewhat difficult to detect at least in the editorials during the positive coverage of the No campaign views and

promises during the last days of the referendum campaign. The Scotsman (11 Sep) after declaring support for the Union, wrote:

The debate has seen strong arguments on both sides and throughout we have endeavoured to air all arguments fairly and give a voice to as many shades of opinion as possible. That will continue regardless of the position we take on the referendum today.

The Telegraph (12 Sep) was clearly quite upset about BBC trying to preserve an appearance of impartiality: “It's preposterous that the BBC has banned all talk of the Scottish referendum at the Proms”. They argued that the BBC was “strangely forgetting that being “British” is in its remit and in its title” when conductors were asked not to talk about the Scottish referendum. The BBC’s editorial guidelines had also made it impossible for some BBC personalities to sign up to Dan Snow’s Let’s Stay Together campaign. Interestingly, the Telegraph argued that “it answers Alex Salmond’s complaint that the BBC is pro-Union.”

The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) were more critical of the broadcaster:

The BBC has shown its much-vaunted impartiality is a sham. Its bias is obvious in the manner that many of its reporters direct an argument and sum up discussions. This was exemplified last week when its political editor, Nick Robinson, insisted Alex Salmond had not answered a question about the Royal Bank of Scotland, when it was clear he had. People are no longer willing to accept the writ of organisations and individuals which, in the past, they were happy to trust.

The Herald (15 Sep) wrote that “yesterday a large group of Yes supporters gathered outside BBC Scotland's headquarters at Pacific Quay to accuse the corporation of an anti-independence bias” without any reference to the reasons why they felt the broadcaster was biased and without a comment whether the paper thought the protest was justified or not. The Telegraph (17 Sep) wrote:

[Alex Salmond’s] response is to attack those who raise the issue, including the BBC’s Nick Robinson – prompting hundreds of Yes supporters to march on the corporation’s Glasgow headquarters demanding that the “biased” BBC be browbeaten into silence.

The Guardian (15 Sep) wrote that “most English-based newspapers have argued for a no vote too, including Tory-supporting papers. This all reflects a strong sense of connection, as does our own poll in which a clear majority say they would be sad for Scotland to separate.” It is interesting that they choose to highlight the “Tory-supporting papers” because those seemed to be the one most vocal in opposing independent Scotland.

5.1.5.2 Whose truth to believe (Vested interests or genuine economic points?)

This subtheme deals with the difficulty of finding reliable information about the independence referendum related issues. Of course, many issues were such that there was no information available as they would only have been clarified during the months of negotiations leading to independence or, like for instance with oil, there will only ever be estimates of how much of it there is and how much of it is recoverable. Those, of course, will also change over time as new technology is introduced and when demand and price fluctuate. Quite often one side presented its view on something and the other denied it and presented their own. At times, the papers commented on these claims but at times, they just reported them. The subtheme appeared in 16 editorials but was placed just outside the top-30 most popular subthemes.

It was, as Lecca, McGregor and Swales (2017:35) point out, difficult if not impossible to find impartial information on the economy because the issues were dependent on post-independence referendum negotiations or such information did not exist for other reasons. The Scottish Government had produced its white paper supporting the independence while the UK Government had produced a number of research documents that supported retaining the current constitutional settlement. “There was no official body holding the ring to set a neutral framework” (ibid.). Also, few voters possess adequate knowledge and analytical powers to make such a complex decision even if all information was readily available (ibid. 30).

Bell and Eiser (2016:64) say that lack of accurate and reliable data affected the quality of the debate and that the UK’s current economic structures and fiscal difficulties were allowed to play a role too significant considering what was debated. “The room for measured analysis, with plausibly qualified claims, diminished as the referendum date approached, making for a highly polarized debate” leaving the many voters suspicious of the claims of both campaigns (ibid.).

McEwen (2017:100) writes that “voters were given conflicting messages of the implications of both independence and union for a social democratic welfare state, with one side talking up the promise and opportunities of independence and the other warning of its dire consequences”. Liñeira et. al. (2017: 175) argue that because most arguments one side presented were contested by the opposite side, voters did not have sufficient reliable information to assess their beliefs.

The lack of reliable information was a major problem and it was demonstrated by this study where, like in the whole of Scotland, only one newspaper supported

independence. As discussed earlier, media support was a major problem for the Yes side. The Guardian reported on 7 September that a University of Edinburgh study had found that “those with more info are more likely to vote yes” and that “when undecided voters are presented with balanced arguments, support for independence increases” (Brooks 2014). After the referendum, this surely adds insult to injury for the Yes side.

McEwen and Keating (2017:191) write that in an independence referendum, it is difficult to provide “an objective base of evidence” because of the complexity of the issues and uncertainty around predicting the future. During the referendum campaign, the two sides received new information from polling and focus groups and shifted their focus accordingly. McEwen and Keating argue that their idea that “there is not a stark, binary distinction between independence and union but rather a whole range of positions on a series of issues, including macroeconomic policy, currency, welfare, and shared institutions” was proved correct by the campaign and its aftermath.

The Scotsman wrote on 14 August about the news of the currency contingency plans the Bank of England was preparing that “each side in the debate claimed this development supported their argument.” The Herald had, two days later, come to the conclusion that:

one of the points shown clearly by this study [Future of England] is that voters accept that neither side in the independence debate really knows the answers. ... Voters understand the risks and are wary of either side promising certainty: There is a limit to what can be predicted and neither side has a crystal ball. That is certain (16 August).

Another two days passed and the Herald wrote that “One of the biggest criticisms of the debate so far has been its bewildering nature, characterised so often by assertion and counter-assertion, leaving onlookers not knowing whom to believe” (18 September). The Telegraph wrote on 22 August: “But in Sir Ian he [Alex Salmond] has met his nemesis. Which of the two should Scots believe?” From their point of view, that was a rhetorical question but it highlighted the situation where there were claims and counterclaims, estimates supporting one side and estimates supporting the other side. The particular case with the estimates of the Scottish oil and gas reserves is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1.7 *Oil*.

The Telegraph in highlighting the uncertainty over many things touched upon the fact that both campaigns had their views on issues that could not be proved wrong or right:

Fundamental arguments over whether living standards will rise or fall, which currency a new country would use and whether membership of the EU would need to be applied for anew have been fought almost to a standstill, even if they remain unanswered. (7 Sep)

The Guardian (8 Sep) wrote that “Both sides in Scotland’s independence debate have their own distinct credibility problems” and that “Scottish voters could be forgiven for thinking that neither side is being entirely straight with them.” In the same editorial they went on to state:

Even before the narrowing of the polls on the core issue of independence, there was widespread Scottish scepticism about whether the unionist parties could be trusted to deliver on what has come to be known in the debate, not entirely accurately, as “devo-max”.

The Herald wrote on the subject in connection to the claim that retail prices would go up if there was a Yes vote:

As with so much of this debate, it is difficult to be certain of the veracity of claims on both sides. Voters will need to decide whether they believe major retailers have been leaned on to make these pronouncements and whether they have a vested interest: or, indeed, whether businesses are a useful impartial barometer, interested not in politics but only in the bottom line (13 Sep).

As if to illustrate the point, the independence-supporting Sunday Herald wrote about the issue from one angle:

we have seen one "big" businessman after another warn of the dire consequences of independence. How many arms did the Prime Minister have to twist for them to put their heads above the parapet when, clearly, many of them would rather have remained in their boardrooms? (14 Sep).

and the No-supporting Scotsman offered a rather different view on the issue:

Alex Salmond has accused David Cameron of intimidating bosses of big companies into publicly backing a No vote, claiming that encouraging comment was effectively bullying. This seems improbable, as leaders of firms tend not to be people who are easily coerced (16 Sep).

5.1.5.3 Newspaper endorsements

This subtheme covers the newspapers declaring their preferences and giving their views on what they think the best alternative for Scotland’s future would be. The Sunday Herald backed Yes while the Scotsman, the Herald, the Guardian and the Telegraph supported a No vote. The Observer were nominally neutral on the question of Scottish independence but even though they did not declare a preference in any unambiguous terms, it would be

difficult to describe their last independence-related editorial before the referendum as neutral.

With this theme, counting the words was somewhat difficult i.e. in an editorial declaring support, most of the text is arguing for the view but only a short bit is actually stating that we support this or that. The subtheme was among the top-35 most discussed and it was dominated by the three dailies that declared their support during the research period with each of them publishing a good quarter of the coded words. It appeared in 11 editorials.

The Telegraph was always strongly pro-Union in its editorials. On 25 August, they stated that “This newspaper sincerely hopes that Scotland will remain part of a Union that has proved an overwhelming success for several centuries.” The Scotsman declared their support for the Union on 11 September with an editorial headline “With exactly a week to go before our historic referendum The Scotsman gives its verdict on the choice before us: we are better together”. Their conclusion on that day was that “we are better together, that Scotland's best interests lie not in creating division but in continuing in the Union and using its strengths to help us continue in our success.”

The Guardian stated the following day (12 Sep) that “Britain deserves another chance”. They argued that “In Britain, in Europe and even in the world as a whole, we are indeed better together not better apart. Nationalism is not the answer to social injustice. For that fundamental reason, we urge Scots to vote no to independence next week.” echoing the narrative that all nationalism is bad and that Scotland should stay in the Union to help the people of the rUK.

The Sunday Herald commented on the newspaper endorsements on 14 September. They stated that “Alone among this nation's newspapers, the Sunday Herald has answered it [should Scotland be an independent country] in the affirmative. Our reasons are straightforward, compelling and unequivocal.” They discussed their motives for endorsing independence “When we decided to back the Yes campaign it was not a commercial decision. It was because we believed it was right.”

They shared their view on the choices of other newspapers: “It seems to us astonishing, in a country in which a significant proportion of the population supports independence, that the press is almost unanimous in its opposition.” Finally, they concluded with “Should Scotland be an independent country? Of course it should, and it must. Vote Yes on Thursday and those who come after you will be proud to say that you were there at the rebirth of the nation.”

Despite the stance of its sister paper, the Herald on 16 September declared support for the Union. It accounted for its history as a home rule supporting newspaper in the 1979 and 1997 referendums and continued on the same path stating that “In 2014, we believe Scotland's journey as part of the UK is far from over.” They promised “to harry the pro-UK parties every step of the way, to ensure they deliver the devolution Scotland wants and expects.” They did warn the Unionist parties that

The Herald backs Scotland staying within the UK at this stage. But fudge this process, stitch it up and fail to deliver far-reaching further devolution, and make no mistake: you will be guaranteeing another referendum - one that you will lose, and deserve to lose.

On the day before the referendum, the Guardian reiterated their position: “And yet, as we have already argued, if this newspaper had a vote, we would vote no.” On polling day, the Scotsman did the same: “This newspaper set out its position on the referendum last week. ... In the few days since our leader column appeared, developments in the campaign have only served to support our conclusion.” They concluded their final editorial:

Looking at what is on offer with independence, and gauging the size of the risk against the difference in powers that would be the prize, we have no hesitation in concluding Scotland's best interests lie in the United Kingdom. We shall shortly discover if Scottish voters agree.

5.1.6 Heart vs. head

This theme includes three subthemes: *Emotions*, *Rationality* and *Division*. A massive decision like this was always going to be an emotional one for some people and the tighter the race became the more emotional it got and for more and more people. Events and phenomena connected to this aspect of the referendum are discussed in the *Emotions* subtheme. The subthemes of *Heart vs. head* appeared in 28 editorials and it was the 11th most-popular.

Rationality was a subtheme that often presented voting No as the rational choice. Undoubtedly, many Yes supporters felt that the possibility to get rid of Trident or securing that Scotland got governments the majority of Scots voted for made the decision a no-brainer but with the newspapers mostly leaning towards No, the Union was most of the time presented as the safe choice and thus the more rational one. *Division* was not a major subtheme and it was mostly present in the strongly anti-independence Telegraph.

Disagreement is not uncommon in politics and the Scottish referendum was more often praised as a triumph for democracy than creating a divided society.

5.1.6.1 Emotions

This subtheme deals with emotions that were running high in the last weeks of the referendum campaign. On several occasions, emotions were also contrasted with rationality as in voting with heart instead of head. At least excitement, anger, enthusiasm, commitment and especially passion were identified and written about. Both David Cameron and Alex Salmond as well as Gordon Brown were said to have given emotional speeches. The narrative that such a massive issue was always going to evoke passions was oft-repeated.

Emotions are, for most people, a major part of human life and few individuals can claim to be completely rational when making decisions as big as the choice between independence and union. This subtheme included few convincing arguments for either camp or important insights but still, it made the top-20 with regard to number of coded words. The Herald and the Telegraph were the most active publishers of words about the emotional aspects of the campaign. 22 editorials feature text included in this subtheme.

Macwhirter (2014b:70) wrote that “the ideology of the Yes campaign was eclectic, socialist, pacifist, and sometimes confused, but it was invariably inclusive and democratic. If its head was sometimes a bit lost it always knew where its heart lay”. In other words, he associated the campaign with positive emotions and more with the heart than the head.

The Herald (18 Aug) wrote that “emotions and the tug of the heart will undoubtedly play their part in determining how people cast their ballot”. The Telegraph (22 Aug) wrote that “the reinstatement of Scottish nationhood may have strong romantic appeal” and that “for too long, Mr Salmond’s political project has coasted on romantic nationalism and vague promises of jam tomorrow.” The Sunday Herald (31 Aug) noted that “after more than two years of campaigning, with the stakes so high and the end in sight, it is inevitable that passions are running high.” The Guardian wrote that “Nationhood is always about emotion as much as calculation” and the Telegraph (7 Sep) stated that “it is understandable that passions should run high in the Scottish independence debate.”

The Telegraph (11 Sep) wrote about the softer side of the PM: “David Cameron sought to match the sentimental appeal of the separatists with an emotional speech in Edinburgh in which he appeared at times to be close to tears” and a few days later (16 Sep), they reported of another “passionate speech” in which “the Prime Minister spoke

primarily of Britain in emotional terms”. The Herald (15 Sep) wrote that “there is excitement, as well as tension and some anger in both campaigns”; the Scotsman (16 Sep) predicted that “emotions are bound to run higher still” and the Edinburgh paper concluded (17 Sep) that “when Scots vote tomorrow, their pencils will be guided more by emotion and issues of identity than by intellectual assimilation of policy arguments.”

The Guardian (17 Sep) argued that with such high stakes “Emotions were always going to run high and deep” while the Telegraph (17 Sep) stated that “it is understandable that people should be passionate about such an elemental issue”. On polling day, the Herald (18 Sep) wrote:

As the clock has ticked down, it was perhaps inevitable that the feelings of young and old would intensify and tempers would fray, but by and large the campaigning has been passionate but respectful, intense, intelligent and overwhelmingly good-natured.

They went on to note that “the network of Yes shops across the country has buzzed with commitment and passion” and predicted that “regardless of the result tomorrow, this passionate debate about Scotland's future will continue.”

5.1.6.2 Rationality

The texts in this subtheme discuss the role of rationality in voting intentions in the Scottish independence referendum. Rationality was demanded of or at least recommended to voters amid the emotional appeals presented by the campaigns. The subtheme was absent from the officially neutral Observer and the independence-supporting Sunday Herald. A third of the coded words were published in the Scotsman, the Telegraph and the Herald produced more than a quarter each and the Guardian stood for 14 per cent. The total word count places this subtheme as the 25th most popular. It appeared in seven editorials.

With rationality only being discussed in the Union supporting papers, often it was linked with the decision to vote No. According to Macwhirter (2014f:16), the Unionist view is that the Yes momentum in September 2014 was “an emotional spasm, a kind of Nationalist psychodrama during which Scottish voter temporarily took leave of their senses.”

On 16 August, the Herald wrote:

It is not clear whether the 70 per cent of Yes voters who are confident Scotland will be able to keep the pound support independence because they believe this, or believe it because they have decided to vote Yes. Likewise, it is not clear if No voters who are certain the UK Government will not cut Scottish public spending

after the referendum actually believe this or are rationalising their voting intention based on an act of faith. ... Yes supporters are often accused of voting with their hearts, not their heads. But a No vote can equally be cast in these terms.

This was a refreshing breath of impartiality in a subtheme dominated by presenting a No vote as the rational choice.

The Telegraph wrote on 22 August that “it was a reminder to voters that while the reinstatement of Scottish nationhood may have strong romantic appeal, it needs to be founded on a hard-headed appraisal of the country’s long-term prospects”. On 31 August, they argued that “happily, reason is on the side of the Union” and on 5 September, they stated that “the UK will be saved not by partisan appeals but by reason and national pride”. Two days later they argued that “with 10 days to go, the final appeal – as Mr Salmond intended it should be – is to the heart and not the head” and on 12 September they wrote that “hopefully, it [the second TV debate] will drive voters back towards the light and reason of the pro-Union argument.”

On 11 September, the Scotsman stated that “next week, for many people, it will be independence at any cost. Others will weigh cost against benefits, risks against potential gains and losses.” This presents all of the No voters as rational and calculating, making a carefully thought-through decision while many Yes voters will vote for independence regardless of the consequences. Needless to say, there were many people for whom it was the Union at any cost, but it was not mentioned in the editorials. The Scotsman also backed their own decision to endorse a No vote as “a measured view that assesses risk against possible benefit and loss” (11 Sep). One could argue that the paper could have spent more column inches analysing the risks associated with a No vote.

The Guardian (12 Sep) approached the question of rationality not by taking sides and advocating their own choice as the rational one but complimenting the quality of the debate and how it has evolved:

More recently, that argument has been replaced by a more mature contest about larger uncertainties and calculations. ... Overall, the campaign has developed into a large political and philosophical argument rather than a cost benefit calculation of personal advantage.

The Herald in their editorial on 16 September – in which they declared support for the Union – stated:

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. That, surely, is the responsibility of every one of us. Some will choose to opt for independence regardless and we respect their decision, but it is our view that there has not been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

They will respect the people's decision to vote Yes but they present it as a fact that voting Yes means "a less prosperous and more unstable future" which will hurt the poorest members of the Scottish society. Again, voting No was presented as a virtually risk-free option.

On polling day, The Telegraph wrote "The assumption was that when the flaws in his [Salmond's] argument were exposed and the key questions answered, his ambitions would be thwarted by the good sense of the people of Scotland."

5.1.6.3 Division

This is a subtheme that is present mostly in the Telegraph (four out of seven editorials) but it is included as it contributes several hundred words to the theme Heart vs. Head. It is also important in the sense that Scotland not wanting another "divisive" referendum has been a major campaigning message for the Unionist parties since the referendum and especially during the General Election of 2017 (cf. Settle 2016, Dugdale 2017, McCann, Hughes and Rayner 2017, BBC News 2017) but during the referendum campaign, divisiveness was not a quality often attached to it.

The texts in this subtheme are connected to the idea that the referendum was divisive and, especially in the Telegraph, it was Alex Salmond, the SNP and the YES campaign that were creating division. Obviously, in a yes/no referendum there are two alternatives to choose from and people will disagree but that is politics: not having alternatives would be totalitarianism. If everyone agreed, there would be no point in organising a referendum and spending millions of pounds on it.

The Brexit referendum was criticised for reducing a complex issue with many possible nuances of opinion to a simple yes/no vote making it reductive and unhelpfully divisive. In the Scottish independence referendum, this problem was rectified or at least mitigated by the sides publishing a wealth of material to inform the voters. Scotland's Future – the Scottish Government's independence white paper – was over 500 pages long and it laid out the Scottish Government's visions for many of the most important aspects of independence.

Mitchell (2016:7) acknowledges that while the debates sometimes were intense and passionate, "the referendum was a model of democratic conduct." In most of the editorials

in the chosen papers the campaign was portrayed more often as a win for democracy than one creating division (cf. section 5.1.2.3 *Exceptional campaign*). The Scottish independence referendum brought the Unionist parties together like nothing since the Second World War and people were talking about the blue Tories and the red Tories campaigning together, something the Scottish electorate punished the Labour party for in the General Election of 2015 (cf. section 5.1.3.2 *Labour*).

McEwen and Keating (2017:194) argue that the referendum was polarised with regards to the main characters in both the Yes and No side but that evidence suggests that political debate and commentary exaggerate the division among the Scottish electorate many of whom seem to be positioning themselves in the middle ground. They point out that the difference between the form of independence with many shared institutions and cultural links that the Yes side presented – dubbed independence light by some – and devo-max that at least the media suggested was on offer or the modern form of Scottish home rule promised by Gordon Brown were not miles apart.

This subtheme was placed in the bottom ten in volume and more than 70 per cent of its coded words come from the Telegraph. The paper was always alone in its narrative that “the SNP is doing its very best to spread its message of division” (17 Aug) or at least it was the only one placing direct blame on the party. On September 11, the Scotsman wrote: “So, with the choices before us, the conclusion is that we are better together, that Scotland's best interests lie not in creating division but in continuing in the Union and using its strengths to help us continue in our success.” In the editorial where it declared support for a No vote, the Herald argued that “Achieving that goal [greater autonomy for Scotland] could satisfy many on both sides of what has been a highly divisive debate” (16 Sep). The rest of the subtheme was the Telegraph shaping the narrative to fit its agenda of uncompromising support for the UK.

The Telegraph (11 Sep) argued that “the SNP leader's skills are in reaping division and sowing discord” and in the last days of the campaign they claimed that the campaign has been a painful experience for Scotland and a Yes vote would only make it worse:

Yet the tragedy of this campaign has been the way that it has torn that family apart. Divisions have been opened not just between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, but within Scotland itself. The split between Yes and No runs through towns and villages, families and businesses. ... Indeed, a victory for the Yes campaign will only stoke further division, not least by forcing those in Scotland, and those Scots who have moved elsewhere, to choose between their British and Scottish identities (16 Sep).

On the eve of the referendum the Telegraph stated that there would be a need “to weld Scotland back together” after the referendum and on the day of the referendum they shared their hopes and fears with its readers: “And while we fervently hope for national reconciliation, the fear is that the legacy will not be better together so much as bitter together.”

5.2 Constitutional question

While the top-level group *Campaign* consisted of themes dealing with the organisations, individuals, events and phenomena connected to the independence referendum campaign, the *Constitutional question* group deals mostly with arguments for and against independence and also reasons behind the independence referendum. The themes under this top-level group are *Positive UK*, *ENG-SCO relations*, *Social justice*, *Independent Scotland* and *Defence* and the themes will be discussed below in their own subsections. *Constitutional question* was the second most popular of the three top-level groups and subthemes placed under it were discussed in 55 of the 70 editorials.

Tierney (2017:151) ponders that it might be because of the nature of the UK’s constitution that the constitution of independent Scotland was hardly discussed during the independence referendum debate. He acknowledges that while the constitution was not debated as one entity, many parts of it like identity, nuclear weapons and social protections were given a high profile separately. Tierney’s view is that likely “the constitutional debate was in fact simply being deferred until after the referendum itself”.

Perhaps the reason why there was so little discussion around the constitution of an independent Scotland was that it was an argument for independence and most of the papers included in this study were unsupportive of that: drafting a written constitution “setting out and protecting the rights of the people of Scotland” was discussed in the Scotland’s Future white paper (Scottish Government 2013:298-299).

In their 16 September declaration of support for further devolution, the Herald wrote:

A UK constitutional convention should therefore be established, separately from the process of greater Scottish devolution, to consider issues such as the setting up of an English parliament (answering the West Lothian Question), reform of the House of Lords, greater power to the nations and English regions, and renaming the Bank of England.

Few if any of these recommendations – apart from EVEL which is significantly short of setting up an English parliament – have moved forward since the independence

referendum but few commentators let alone newspapers have been wondering what happened to them.

5.2.1 Positive UK

This theme consists of the positives of continuing UK membership. It includes eight subthemes: the highest number of subthemes under any theme. The subthemes are the one with the highest word count of coded words in the whole study, *New powers*, the others being *Devolution*, *UK stability and security*, *Federalism*, *Unity and solidarity: better together*, *Success & benefit of UK*, *Barnett* and *Break up complex: faster, safer, better change*. *Positive UK* was the third most-discussed theme and its subthemes appeared in 38 editorials most often in the Herald and the Telegraph.

New powers deals with the promised further devolution from Westminster to Holyrood while the *Devolution* theme looks back on how far devolution has come and what has been achieved through it. *UK stability and security* emphasises the said qualities and how they might be lost with a Yes vote while *Federalism* is a subtheme that sprang up after a Gordon Brown speech during week IV promising a federal UK after a No vote.

Unity and solidarity is a subtheme that emphasises how the countries of the UK are better together pooling and sharing resources and risks. *Success and benefit of the UK* lists past achievements and advantages that the UK brings to Scotland. *Barnett* is a subtheme dealing with the Barnett formula that is used to calculate how much money Scotland gets from Westminster while *Break up complex: faster, safer, better change* states that breaking up a 300-year-old union would be difficult and that after a No vote, Scotland would get the change it desires with much less difficulty than what independence would mean.

5.2.1.1 New powers

This subtheme has by far the highest word count among all subthemes in this study and it appeared in 27 editorials. It deals with the new powers promised to the Scottish Parliament in case there was a No vote: what they would be and how and when they would be delivered. David Cameron had insisted in referendum negotiations that there would be only one question with two alternatives on the ballot paper: Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes/No.

During the campaign period the Unionist camp shifted their position so that Yes still meant independence but No seemed to mean everything from the status quo or at least as little change as possible to devo supermax and modern home rule or as-close-to-

federalism-as-possible – Gordon Brown put it. As McGarvey (2015:36) wrote, “Effectively, the status quo was no longer an option – both Yes and No voters were voting for change and more powers for Scotland.”

All of the papers bar the independence-supporting Sunday Herald pretty much took these promises – when the UK parties finally could come to an agreement or sorts – of new powers at face value. In the Guardian on September 9, columnist Simon Jenkins wrote “Devo supermax looks full of holes. It is mostly about tax, and yet Scotland will not get the one economic game-changer, corporation tax, nor has London backed down on currency.” Devine (2016:241) wrote that Gordon Brown promised a No vote would lead to a “modern form of Scottish Home Rule within the United Kingdom”. The promise of “extensive new powers” by the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders that became known as the Vow was published two days before the referendum on the front page of the Daily Record. Before the Gordon Brown speech and the Vow, the lack of a plan was criticised in the editorials but after the Vow, no matter how vague it was, there were few questions whether or not it would be respected and delivered by the UK parties.

Dekavalla (2016:46-47) identifies the Vow i.e. the main Westminster party leaders’ joint promise of substantial new powers for the Holyrood Parliament published on the cover of the Labour-sympathising *Daily Record* as one of the most prominent issues in the political agenda and in the press during the week of the referendum. She summarises the narrative of the Scottish papers as follows: Scotland, referred to as ‘we’ in order to emphasise the papers’ Scottishness, wants change. Change means enhanced powers for the Scottish Parliament and/or a fairer society (Dekavalla 2016:48).

In the papers, a No vote was presented as a vote for more powers for Holyrood and with the exception of the Sunday Herald, and the neutral Observer the papers also identified it as their preferred outcome. Independence was presented as “risky”, “a gamble”, it would probably have “adverse consequences” as well as “unknown costs”, it would create division among the people and break the bond between Scotland and the rest of the UK. As for a No vote, it would unite the people and bring the Scots “more power/control over their own affairs/future” (Dekavalla 2016:49).

The Guardian, even though it in the end declared support for the No campaign, gave a voice to columnists some of whom supported Scottish independence or at least expressed less favourable views of the No campaign and the Westminster Unionist parties. Nine days before polling day, Jenkins (2014) wrote in the Guardian:

London says that Scotland, however it votes, can have autonomy that was beyond its wildest dreams a decade ago. We have gone overnight from devo max to “devo supermax”. A new “federation of Britain” is born, possibly including Wales and other provinces. Not since the disintegration of the British Empire has local discontent so traumatised the mindset of a London government. If I were a Scot I would not trust an inch of this.

Devine (2016:252) argues that, according to Lord Ashcroft’s post-referendum polls, the Vow did not play a significant part in the outcome of the referendum as two thirds of the people who decided how to vote in the last days of the campaign voted Yes while most No voters declared that they had made up their minds earlier. This is not to say that the promises had no bearing on the result or that they did not assure No voters that they had made the right decision even if it was made earlier and make them less likely to change their minds.

Buchanan (2016:77) writes that the Vow was met by a high level of cynicism among both supporters of independence and defenders of the Union on Facebook. Many people pointed out that it was impossible to keep a promise like that not least because of backbench opposition in the House of Commons. On the Better Together Facebook page, the Vow was labelled a “disgraceful underhanded tactic” by the supporters of said campaign. Independence supporters were cynical as well.

According to Lord Ashcroft’s post-referendum poll, 25 per cent of No voters said that new powers for Holyrood combined with the security of the UK was the most important reason for them to vote No so in real life that would have meant half a million voters. Considering that the Yes campaign would only have needed a swing of less than six per cent or roughly 220,000 votes, the role the new powers played was significant.

This is not to say that without the promises of new powers, those who chose new powers as the most important factor in the Ashcroft polls would not have had other reasons to vote No and would automatically have turned into Yes supporters but the promises of new powers influenced a significant number of people. Furthermore, when the two separate issues of new powers and UK security are combined in one alternative, it is difficult to say what their effects would have been separately or it can be argued that the question is loaded.

However, the Vow was published two days before the referendum and only three per cent of No voters stated that they had made up their minds during the last few days and three per cent on polling day so it seems that the Vow was not a decisive factor as such but it is quite possible that it – with the massive media attention that followed it – strengthened people’s positions and prevented some people from changing their minds.

Interestingly, roughly two thirds of those who decided how to vote during the very last days of the campaign voted Yes so it is possible that the Vow made some people vote for independence.

Morrison (2014) argues that the “BBC’s continual reference to the unionist parties’ extremely modest proposals for further devolution as ‘devo-max’” was the most scandalous example of BBC bias: “Whatever these proposals were, made at a crucial point in the campaign, no impartial observer could describe them as ‘devo max’.” Furthermore, Macwhirter (2014b:130) writes that “unfortunately, in the post-referendum period, federalism and devolution max have come to be seen as inherently nationalist policies, and therefore on the dark side and to be dismissed. In the tribal world of Scottish politics, anything that the SNP supports must be attacked at all costs.”

Macwhirter (2014b:131) states that “with hindsight, it looks as if Gordon Brown’s cryptic remarks, like editorials in the UK press on federalism, were part of the general attempt by Unionists to head off a Yes vote by hinting at a new constitutional settlement, much as Lord Home promised Scots a better devolution if they voted No in 1979.” Based on the editorials collected for this study, one could argue that the newspapers more than hinted at a new constitutional settlement.

Liñeira et. al. (2017:165) write that while the ballot paper only had one question – Should Scotland be an independent country? – the options were in real life a lot more complex than just Yes or No. They point out that although the devo-max option was rejected and subsequently left out, it “continued to hold an important influence on the attitudes of voters and in the public debate” (Liñeira et. al. 2017:167).

The results of the 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey found the devo-max option – i.e. UK Government deciding on defence and foreign affairs and the Scottish Parliament the rest – the most popular one among the respondents but only marginally more popular than independence with percentage shares of 32 and 31 respectively. The status quo was the preferred option of a quarter of the respondents while eight per cent opposed having a Scottish Parliament. Thus, independence or devo-max combined amounted to 63 per cent of the respondents so a clear majority, at that point, supported the Scottish Parliament having at least devo-max powers. When the respondents were asked for their second favourite option and these combined with the 1st choices, the devo-max achieved a total of 76 per cent support being the most popular option by some distance (Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2013 as cited in Liñeira et. al. 2017:168).

Liñeira et. al. (2017:168) say that the results of the Social Attitudes Survey affected the strategies of both Yes and No campaigns. As the survey proved, a devo-max supporter

was the median voter but as it was not an option on the ballot paper, both campaigns tried to appeal to the middle ground: the Yes campaign's offering has been branded "independence-light" where rather little – apart from Westminster control and nuclear weapons – was going to change whereas while the No side promised more powers for Holyrood after a No vote culminating in the Vow only days before polling day.

Liñeira et. al. (2017:169) write that "there is strong evidence to suggest that the later stage of the referendum campaign influenced preferences and encouraged some voters to change their views on the independence question". During the last two weeks of the campaign, many of the undecideds made up their minds and the gap between the two sides narrowed.

According to Liñeira et. al. (2017:171) and their Centre on Constitutional Change survey, the combined support for independence and additional powers was rather similar pre and post referendum – 72 and 73 per cent respectively – but support for independence increased from 32 to 37 per cent. Their conclusion is that the rise of support for independence came mostly from the group that before the referendum preferred additional powers for Holyrood.

In the editorials, there was a clear narrative suggesting that the majority of the Scots want more powers and if the option of Devolution Max had been on the ballot paper it would have won. The idea was presented in the editorials of the Herald (16 Aug) and (16 Sep) as well as the Scotsman editorial on 6 September. The major dilemma with new powers early in the research period was expressed by the Herald on 16 August: "The majority of the electorate want more powers for Scotland but if someone votes No, they do not know who will deliver what, or when."

A rare comment on new powers from the Sunday Herald dealt with the same issue:

Alex Salmond was clearly the winner of Monday's BBC debate with Alistair Darling, besting the former Chancellor on the currency question, and reducing him to a dry-mouthed stammer by asking which job-creation powers – if any – would pass to Holyrood in the event of a No vote (31 Aug).

The following week, the Herald (3 Sep) wrote that "voters wish to be reassured that the pro-UK parties will deliver extensive further devolution if they vote to remain in the UK."

The Scotsman (6 Sep) criticised the main Westminster parties with regard to coming to an agreement on new powers:

The notable inability to agree details of the extra powers promised "in the areas of fiscal responsibility and social security" led some to question the commitment. The

Yes campaign only had to remind voters of the failure of the Conservative government in 1979 to deliver on a similar promise to cast doubt on its sincerity.

They continued and, at this point, questioned whether the newly presented plans were realisable:

The big question now is whether this move by Gordon Brown will convince Scots that more devolution powers really will emerge in the event of a No vote. It will face searching examination. Would an early Commons debate, if granted by the Speaker, lead to specific measures agreed upon by MPs? Will this reassure voters in the absence of detail on exactly what new powers may be on offer? What certainty is there that the Commons as a whole will commit to them as a priority?

Two days later, the Scotsman (8 Sep) again questioned the new-powers-approach of the main Westminster parties. The paper argued it could be difficult to get English MPs to support significant new powers for the Scottish Parliament: “even assuming that Westminster agrees to an early Commons debate, this would be just the start of a legislative process that requires both a set of workable proposals and broad agreement from MPs.”

The Guardian (8 Sep) argued that the response of the No side to tightening polls had been to switch “tactics to unroll a jam-tomorrow timetable commitment on a variety of different party scenarios for more devolved powers if Scotland remains in the union.” They wrote about the No campaign having a “credibility problem” and continued:

Even before the narrowing of the polls on the core issue of independence, there was widespread Scottish scepticism about whether the unionist parties could be trusted to deliver on what has come to be known in the debate, not entirely accurately, as “devo-max”.

They went on to argue that “given the shock the unionist parties have suffered there is no reason to suppose that they, and thus the next Westminster government, will not make a priority of delivering on them if they have the opportunity“ but concluded that “Scots cannot know, for sure, what sort of further devolution they will be offered if they were to vote no.” The paper’s view at this point seemed to be that the Scots do not necessarily believe the promises of new powers; the Guardian does but no one knows what the powers will be.

The Herald (9 Sep) reported Gordon Brown promising that “a No vote ... would be the starting gun for delivering enhanced devolution to a strict timetable” and that “it would be ... nothing less than a modern form of Scottish Home Rule within the United Kingdom.” The Telegraph (9 Sep) in its summary of the same speech wrote that “he said

the extra powers over tax, welfare and other policies “moves (sic.) us as close to federalism as we can””. They seemed to be the only one of the newspapers studied for this thesis that actually supported the status quo and even opposed the idea of devolving more powers to the devolved parliaments:

When the negotiations over the referendum took place two years ago, we were assured the alternatives were separatism or the status quo, since the “devo-max” question was ruled out. Yet the growing support for independence has been matched by more and more concessions that have consequences not just for the Scots. If they are to be given total control over income tax, something previously ruled out, then what about England? How does the biggest country in the Union fit into a federalist future?

In its editorial where it declared support for the Union, the Scotsman (11 Sep) praised devolution and stated that “and that's without any more powers which have been promised as part of this referendum battle.” So in their view, things seemed to be good as they were and about to get better without really knowing what new powers the Scottish Parliament would be getting.

When the Herald (16 Sep) made public its support for the Union, it wrote “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.” The paper went on to state that “but fudge this process, stitch it up and fail to deliver far-reaching further devolution, and make no mistake: you will be guaranteeing another referendum - one that you will lose, and deserve to lose.”

After the Vow, the Guardian's (16 Sep) had changed tone from somewhat questioning to more approving: the new powers were coming but Gordon Brown's opponents were referred to as enemies, a rather loaded term: “When Gordon Brown unveiled the new devolution powers last week, there was scepticism, especially from his enemies.” Now the pledge on the front page of the Daily Record seemed to have made the promises watertight: “Getting the three leaders to sign up was an attempt to show that there would be no wriggling – to say that if Scotland votes no, these things will happen.”

In the end, the Telegraph (17 Sep) acknowledged that “The Prime Minister was clear in his appeal to Scotland's voters that the status quo is not an option: all the political parties have signed up to an agenda of further devolution.” On polling day, the Scotsman argued:

Perhaps the biggest development in the past few days has been the "vow" from the three main UK parties of more powers for Holyrood. ... it has been made now, and in such a way that makes it extremely difficult for any of the parties to renege.

The powers will not be as complete as some would wish. But, with a No vote, Scots will undoubtedly have more power over their own affairs.

5.2.1.2 Devolution

This theme focuses on the devolved powers and arrangements connected to them. The main difference with the theme *New powers* is that this theme contains discussion of the Scottish Parliament and the powers that Holyrood already had at that point. The new powers that were promised were quite often discussed as further devolution, but those mentions are excluded from this theme. One of the characteristics of the texts included in this theme is the Scottishness of the devolution i.e. devolution elsewhere in the UK is left out if it is not mentioned in connection with Scottish devolution. With these definitions, the *Devolution* subtheme was the 30th most popular and it was featured in 9 editorials.

On the whole, devolution was seen as a positive thing for Scotland and the UK the odd opposing murmur being the Telegraph protesting that the vote was supposed to be independence vs. the status quo (9 Sep). The Telegraph also showed its lesser support for devolution by not publishing anything that would end up under the Devolution subtheme: the Conservatives had opposed the Scottish Parliament so the Telegraph followed the party line. The papers that discussed devolution most were the Scottish dailies that between them accounted for 82 per cent of the coded words of this subtheme The Herald being the more active one with a share of 47 per cent.

The Guardian (21 Aug) argued that “Attempts to whip up English resentment about Scottish and Welsh devolution, or even the West Lothian question, have not got far beyond the Tory thinktanks.” The Scotsman (3 Sep) wrote about the nature of devolution highlighting that it is not always without problems:

The devolution settlement put together by Donald Dewar in a few short months after labour's general election victory in 1997 contained a number of potentially problematic ragged edges. ... In a democracy, it matters where accountability lies. Where there is confusion about which legislature is responsible for such important matters, political and public scrutiny can become lax. Clarity is required if we are to know which ministers to hold to account.

The Scotsman (11 Sep), in the editorial where it expressed its preference for staying in the UK, praised devolution:

But we are already holders of many of the levers that allow us to create a society that reflects our desires and values. ... We are in complete control of education, which must be the surest way of shaping the future we want, we are in charge of health, which is the very practical delivery of how we care for people. ... we can shape the NHS in Scotland as we choose. ... All these policies are formulated by

the people we Scots vote for, with the decisions taken by our parliament in Scotland. We have already gone our own way and created a different country in many big areas, including no tuition fees, free care for the elderly and free prescriptions.

The Herald (16 Sep) in its declaration of support for continuing devolution as a part of the UK wrote about it at great length:

This newspaper has been a passionate advocate of Home Rule for Scotland and continues to be so. In 1979, prior to the vote on a Scottish Assembly, the then Glasgow Herald argued robustly for a Yes vote, while in 1997, The Herald did the same in the Scottish Parliament referendum ... Devolution has been a success. It has allowed for progressive, innovative, government that seeks distinctively Scottish solutions to Scottish issues, but our confident government and nation are rightly straining against the limitations of that arrangement and are ready to take on more responsibility. Devolution has made it harder for the Scottish Government to "blame all Scotland's ills on others", but has not ended the habit. Greater responsibility for raising the money Scotland spends would make simplistic Scottish Government attacks on the UK much harder. That must be the next step forward.

On the eve of the referendum, the Guardian (17 Sep) claimed to understand why so many people wanted more than just devolution:

The desire to bring power closer to home, and scepticism about the Westminster parties' hurried pledge to deliver it, is something we understand. The hunger for the collective self-respect that comes with independence rather than mere devolution cannot be dismissed either.

5.2.1.3 UK stability & security

This subtheme deals with risks and threats and how they can be avoided as a part of the UK. Being a part of the UK brings stability and security to Scotland that an independent Scotland would not enjoy. The proposed currency union would leave some of the economic levers out of Scotland's control and that would threaten stability. Remaining "within the protective umbrella" of a federal UK would be the best of both worlds for Scotland and, indeed, for all the constituent parts of the UK. The Telegraph highlights the threat of Daesh and even Russia to an independent Scotland. Scotland would be better off as a part of the UK in global financial turmoil. The broad shoulders of the UK mean Scotland is in a stronger position to face economic fluctuation: sharing the risks as well as the rewards.

This subtheme is just outside the top-35 most discussed ones. It receives most attention from the Telegraph which published more than a third of its coded words. The Observer and the Herald made contributions of at least a fourth each and the Scotsman took part with 15 per cent. Perhaps surprisingly, the Guardian's share is only five per cent

but, less so, the Sunday Herald did not contribute to this subtheme at all. In total, it appeared in eight editorials.

The narrative of certainty in the UK is clear and with a narrative this strong, it is rather obvious the papers are enforcing the idea that independence would bring uncertainty. On 3 September – almost two weeks before it declared support for the Union – the Herald wrote:

Certainly, voters wish to be reassured that the pro-UK parties will deliver extensive further devolution if they vote to remain in the UK, so Better Together is likely to want to reiterate that commitment strongly and make the case that greater devolution would allow Scotland to continue to benefit from the stability and certainty of UK membership.

On 11 September, the day the Scotsman pledged support to the Union, they wrote:

The biggest factor in creating a prosperous and equal nation is the economy, and an independent Scotland would, of course, be able to stand on its own two feet, but under current proposals some of the levers needed would lie elsewhere and stability is under threat and that could come at a cost. ... The political Union has helped to provide security and stability.

The Observer – a supposedly neutral observer in the debate – praised the stability and security in terms that leave little room for interpretation:

The shared heritage of the rule of law ... the commitment to the liberty of the individual, the constraints of a constitutional monarchy, these are not values to be taken for granted. For most of the world we live in, these are at best aspirations. For us, voluntary members of a lasting union, they are the foundation of a stability and security that is beyond price (13 Sep).

The Telegraph (14 Sep) reports Lord Dannatt's view that "Mr Salmond is asking the Scottish people to take an enormous gamble on the subject of security" and his reminder that Scottish soldiers who died in Northern Ireland "died fighting in the service of a political union that has brought law and order, democracy and relative stability to these islands for hundreds of years".

The following day (15 Sep), their editorial told that Sir Malcolm Rifkind had pointed out that "an independent Scotland will be a weaker one militarily, and less capable of the intelligence work so vital for counter-terrorism." Leaving the UK will according to him "render the Scots more vulnerable to attack" and "make Scotland an attractive back door which could allow such enemies to find their way into England and Wales." On polling day the Telegraph view was that:

Today, we have a date with history: a country that has enjoyed peace, stability and prosperity to a far greater degree than most others is in danger of being rent asunder. ... But together we have been stronger, more prosperous and more secure; apart we would both be diminished (18 Sep).

5.2.1.4 Federalism

This subtheme covers the idea of a federal UK. The Liberal democrats have been supporting a federal UK for a long time but it was Gordon Brown that brought the idea of federalism and home rule to the independence referendum debate. The former PM was quoted in *The Observer* (13 Sep): "a system of government as close to federalism as you can have in a nation where one part forms 85% of the population". The *Guardian* backed further devolution for England and Wales as well but acknowledged that there is no commitment and little interest in "even-handed federalism" in those parts of the UK.

The *Telegraph* protested that the referendum was supposed to be a choice between independence or the status quo. At the time of the Edinburgh agreement, there was no talk of further devolution – something that PM Cameron insisted would not be on the ballot paper – let alone any form of federalism. It is interesting to see now, three years after the referendum, how close the UK has come to "as close to federalism as possible" that the Union-supporting papers were backing: Scotland does not seem to have any say in the Brexit process which it voted convincingly against. One could argue that Brexit changed things but most commentators probably agree that federalism was off the table
18 September 2014 at 10:01pm.

Devine (2016:271) writes that the discussion of federalism is nothing but mere talk. England has most of the populace of the UK and there is little interest in regional assemblies or any form of federalism among the English electorate. He sees the failure to modernize the House of Lords as evidence that the UK state is hardly willing to reform the British constitution and political system just to neutralise the threat of Scottish nationalists.

The *Federalism* subtheme was only barely among the top-40 subthemes. The UK papers dominated the subject with 86 per cent of the coverage. The rest was published by the *Herald* with the *Scotsman* and the *Sunday Herald* not contributing at all. The subtheme was present in eight editorials. The *Telegraph* was writing about federalism on 9 September and, as always, concerned about English interests:

A fast-track timetable for a new "home rule" Bill was set out on Monday night by the former prime minister Gordon Brown. He said the extra powers over tax, welfare and other policies "moves us as close to federalism as we can". If Mr Brown is right about that, it means that the two options now on offer are either the

separation of the country or a federal structure. ... How does the biggest country in the Union fit into a federalist future?

The Guardian (12 Sep) supported federalism that would bring about a UK fairer to its constituent nations: “Yet Wales and England need new rights and powers too, including a form of UK federalism that guarantees that the other parts of the country cannot be overridden by England.” The Observer (13 Sep) reported what Gordon Brown had talked about:

Gordon Brown has recently been reinvigorated as the father of British federalism. "Westminster's claim to undivided authority over the country? Dead and buried," he wrote recently. The upshot after a no vote, he argued, could be "a system of government as close to federalism as you can have in a nation where one part forms 85% of the population.

They went on to argue:

Those voting in favour of Scottish independence on Thursday will need to be certain that separation is a better option than a federated Britain, granting citizens in every region the strongest voice yet and an opportunity to challenge the political establishment.

As they, despite writing very positively about the continuation of the UK, did not take an official stance, they could have stated also that “Those voting against Scottish independence on Thursday will need to be certain that a federated Britain is possible and that the UK parties are committed to delivering it.” But once again, the federalism narrative was not questioned.

On 16 September, the Herald seemed enthusiastic about federalism: “Greater autonomy for Scotland would be best achieved within a federal United Kingdom. A federal structure would create less antagonistic relationships between all the constituent parts of the UK.” On the same day, the Guardian seemed to be wondering about the contents of the Vow regarding federalism: “The pledge says nothing about England or Wales. There is no commitment to an even-handed federalism.” Somehow, the other Union-supporting papers completely missed that point.

5.2.1.5 Unity and solidarity: better together

This subtheme portrays the UK as a family of nations that shares risks and rewards and is understandably absent from The Sunday Herald. Once again, the Telegraph published more coded words in this subtheme than all the other papers combined but they clearly focused more on unity than solidarity. The Guardian was also active but the Observer and

the Scottish dailies have contributed to the theme with less than a tenth of the word count of the Telegraph and less than a fifth of that of the Guardian. Thus, this subtheme was only just among the top-40 most written-about making an appearance in 12 editorials.

Most of the papers argued that the UK is stronger with Scotland as a member and Scotland is stronger in the UK. Everyone in the rUK wants Scotland to stay and so do the people of Scotland themselves. Although the UK is in need of major reform, it will be so much better if it is done with Scotland.

The solidarity argument was a part of the No message from the left of the political field. Pooling and sharing of resources was presented as a positive aspect of the Union and abandoning the English workers was a negative of independence. But the ideologies at play during the independence referendum were not nationalism and internationalism but Scottish nationalism and British nationalism. “In their attitudes to war, nuclear weapons and Europe, the nationalists are more internationalist than the Unionists” (Macwhirter 2014b:106,108-109). Monbiot (2014c) criticised the solidarity narrative arguing that “the demand that Scotland should remain in the union to save England from itself” was the worst of a multitude of bad anti-independence arguments:

“A UK without Scotland would be much less likely to elect any government of a progressive hue,” former Labour minister Brian Wilson claimed in the Guardian last week. We must combine against the “forces of privilege and reaction” (as he lines up with the Conservatives, Ukip, the Lib Dems, the banks, the corporations, almost all the rightwing columnists in Britain, and every UK newspaper except the Sunday Herald) – in the cause of “solidarity”.

The Scotsman while declaring their support for the Union stated “So, with the choices before us, the conclusion is that we are better together, that Scotland's best interests lie not in creating division but in continuing in the Union and using its strengths to help us continue in our success“ (11 Sep). The Guardian wrote:

[reduction of inequality and protection for the worse-off] is the core political task facing all western societies today, and it is surely better done when risks and resources can be pooled across a larger population than a smaller one. It is thus a task better undertaken in a Britain that remains united, rather than one facing breakup. ... In Britain, in Europe and even in the world as a whole, we are indeed better together not better apart. (12 Sep)

The Observer quoted Gordon Brown saying “the union, reinforced, can fight the impacts of globalisation far more effectively than two countries each weakened domestically and internationally by the split” (13 Sep). The Guardian argued that it was important “to put social solidarity back at the heart of a people’s union” (15 Sep). Two

days later they wrote: “Above all, the Guardian retains its belief in solidarity, in a world of fewer rather than more borders and in the union itself – as the best method of sharing the rewards and risks of our collective life together on what is still a small island.” On 14 September, the Telegraph argued:

This country was united in fighting two world wars – and while some of its recent military ventures have been controversial, it remains a significant world player and the lynchpin of the Atlantic Alliance. Across the world, the UK is a beacon of human rights: an example that other nations seek to follow (14 Sep).

A few days later, they reported that the PM “spoke primarily of Britain in emotional terms, as a family of nations and a force for good in the world” (16 Sep) and Danny Alexander was quoted arguing that “both Scotland and Britain are stronger for being united”. They went on to cite Mr Alexander:

It is important that people like me, voters in Scotland, get the message that it is not just the Scots who want the Union to stay together, but people in England and Wales and Northern Ireland desperately want Scotland to stay part of the United Kingdom (17 Sep).

On polling day, the Telegraph cited Gordon Brown: “What message would we send out to the rest of the world – we who pioneered a partnership between nations – if we said we’re going to give up on sharing, throw our idea of solidarity into the dust?”

Robin McAlpine talked at a Yes to Independence event in Motherwell on 31 March 2014 about the solidarity argument used by the Better Together campaign and the media:

Are we going to be able to tell the difference between solidarity and a suicide pact? Staying with England doesn’t help the poor in England. It certainly damages the poor in this country. ... [English activists] would quite often say: “What’s going on in Scotland?” ... None of them want us to stay. The people who keep saying “Oh, stay and look after the workers in England” don’t seem to be the people who are actually out campaigning for the workers in England. ... The people who are actually out campaigning for working people in England ...[are] telling us:” Run, Scotland! Run and bring help!” That is not the same what I’m hearing from the Labour party and others who’re saying “Oh no, you better stay and suffer it a little bit because somehow in a way that I can’t quite explain it’s going to help the poor.” It won’t.

5.2.1.6 Success & benefit of UK

This subtheme features text snippets that praise the success of the UK as being a prosperous, peaceful and secure country that has benefitted and will benefit every citizen in the future as well. Future as a part of the UK will bring the Scottish people countless opportunities and the continuing partnership of nations will bring about the fairer society

everyone wants. The welfare state, pensions and the NHS are all safe in one of the most successful democracies in the western world. Together the UK is more than the sum of its parts.

The subtheme was featured mostly in the Telegraph, the Scotsman, the Observer and the Herald in order of number of coded words but it has to be mentioned that the Telegraph published more words than the second and third most productive papers the Scotsman and the Observer combined. Unsurprisingly, the independence-supporting Sunday Herald did not discuss the success and benefit of the UK at all. According to word count of coded words, it was the 40th most popular subtheme and it appeared in 10 editorials.

It has been said that as a part of the UK, Scotland has a voice in the top-tables of international organisations. This is interesting as many Scots think their voice is not heard in the UK politics let alone outside the UK. In a letter written in September 2006 to then FM Jack McConnell, Michael Avon, the senior Scottish official in Scotland House in Brussels protested the lack of influence Scottish representatives could have on UK positions and how Scottish views were often ignored by Whitehall officials. He argued that Whitehall “appeared to be under the impression that their policy views and objectives were representative of the entire UK, rather than those of England” (Henderson Scott 2008:36).

On August 25, the Telegraph wrote: “This newspaper sincerely hopes that Scotland will remain part of a Union that has proved an overwhelming success for several centuries.” On 5 September, they argued that “the Union benefits all” and on 7 September they called for “the continuation of the western world’s most successful political partnership.” On 9 September, the Telegraph quoted the Queen making a speech to mark her Silver Jubilee in 1977 saying that UK citizens should “remind [themselves] of the benefits which union has conferred, at home and in our international dealings, on the inhabitants of all parts of this United Kingdom”. On polling day, they said that the UK was “arguably the world’s most successful constitutional partnership” and that “together we have been stronger, more prosperous and more secure.”

The Scotsman wrote on 11 September that “over the centuries Scots have played a large part in shaping that Union. Many, many Scots have benefited from opportunities it has afforded. ... Scotland is a prosperous, peaceful, successful country.” The following day, the Guardian (12 Sep) argued that “Over time and on balance, the union was good for the people of these islands, not least in the shape of universal pensions and the NHS

that bind us.” The Observer wrote on 13 September that “As political unions go, it has been a remarkably successful one.”

The Herald, in the editorial where it declared support for the Union, wrote:

The UK is a successful political union and one of the most successful democracies in the world. It stands more firmly in the face of global economic crosswinds than smaller nations such as Ireland, which was so badly battered by the recent financial crisis. A Scotland that stays in the UK will continue to enjoy the economic and social benefits, such as the certainty of an ongoing currency union backed by political union (16 September).

All the above quotations lead to a very important question: how does one define success? The UK is one of the richest countries in the world, but it is also one of the most unequal and a fifth of its population lives in poverty. The Union has been a roaring success for the South East of England, but the UK also includes some of the poorest areas in Western Europe. Defining and measuring success objectively are surely very difficult tasks.

The notion that the UK was a successful partnership has not aged particularly well as it became impossible to argue that the UK is a partnership when the Scottish Secretary David Mundell stated in the House of Commons that “Scotland is not a partner of the United Kingdom. Scotland is part of the United Kingdom” (McKiernan 2018). With its archaic first-past-the-post elections, unelected head of state and upper parliamentary chamber and the democratic deficit the parts of the UK other than England face, one could argue that calling such an undemocratic state a successful democracy is questionable.

5.2.1.7 Barnett

The Barnett formula is the formula that is used to calculate the Scottish, as well as the Welsh and Northern Irish, block grant i.e. most of the money the devolved administrations receive from Westminster. Scotland gets more money per head than the other constituent parts of the UK – except Northern Ireland – which leads to the impression that Scotland is subsidised by the English tax payer – a narrative enforced by London Press. As stated in the editorials (Herald 20 Aug), the public in England did not support the continuation of the formula but the main UK parties did.

In the aftermath of the No vote, the Scottish Government demanded full fiscal autonomy but the Unionist parties opposed it and preferred retaining the Barnett formula. That is interesting as both the voters in England and the Scottish Government wanted to get rid of Barnett: one reason for this could be that the subsidy narrative is useful for the

UK Government. However, The Telegraph is the only paper to call the Barnett formula block grant a subsidy (18 Sep).

The editorials discuss the Barnett formula on a few occasions. For example, how the Scottish NHS is dependent on the Barnett formula, how Northern Ireland receives the biggest amount of money per head and how changes in the formula and thus the block grant might lead to social unrest in the North of Ireland, and how Barnett might not survive the new federal UK. By volume, the subtheme is among the bottom-ten. It was discussed in seven out of the seventy editorials, most often in the Herald which published two out of three words included in this subtheme.

Macwhirter (2013:291-292) argues that according to OECD, “the British taxation system ceased to be progressive ... in the late 1980s” and if the oil revenues are included, it is not justified to claim that the Union benefits Scotland financially. Thus the “union dividend” i.e. redistribution of wealth through the Barnett formula which Scotland would not be able to survive without seems at present a myth: there is little evidence to back the argument. Macwhirter (2013:292) goes on to argue that staying with the UK – branded a “crisis economy” by the then incoming BoE governor Mark Carney – was arguably as big a risk as independence and that the loss of 90 per cent of oil and gas reserves that are located in Scottish territory would have “rather serious” consequences for the rUK.

Both the Scottish dailies and the Guardian reported in their editorials on August 20-21 that English voters, according to a poll, wanted to see Scottish public spending reduced after the independence referendum to match the level in England. On August 22, the Herald wrote that changes in the Barnett formula could lead to “social unrest” in Northern Ireland. The Guardian commented on the day of the Vow (16 Sep) that “in a federal system whose shape has not yet been agreed, it cannot be certain that the Barnett mechanism would survive.”

The Telegraph commented on the Barnett formula on polling day:

However, a No vote, especially a close one, will bring its own problems. Defeat will infuriate nationalists, for whom this is their one chance to break away; and promises of more devolution, underpinned by a continued subsidy to Scotland through the Barnett formula, will cause deep resentment in England.

5.2.1.8 Break-up complex: Faster, safer, better change

The complexity of breaking up the UK and the promise of faster, safer, better change amount to a total of six occurrences. Creating a new state, breaking up all of the common institutions and dividing assets from more than three centuries of Union would be a massive task. But the status quo was not at that point – according to the No campaign and

most of the media – an option anymore and the Scots were promised to get where they wanted to go faster, safer and better as a part of the UK.

The Vow published on the front page of Daily Record two days before the referendum promised to make the Scottish Parliament permanent, grant it “extensive new powers” and that “[a] No vote will deliver faster, safer, better change than separation”. The Vow was supported by the leaders of all three major UK parties in order to convince people that it would be kept regardless of who formed the UK government after the general election of 2015.

This subtheme was present in the editorials of all the studied dailies, both Scottish and UK papers. While it was the subtheme with the least coded words, the possibility of a positive change after a No vote makes it a part of the Positive UK theme. Like the Unionist arguments in general, more emphasis was put on the uncertainty caused by and the negative impact of a complex process of separation. Despite the Vow being published so late, the subtheme appeared in six editorials.

The Telegraph focused on the complexity of the process – “uncertainty about the costs and complexities of unravelling a Union that has grown organically over centuries” (17 Aug), “tearing apart a group of nations that have twined themselves around each other over the course of centuries was never going to be in any way simple” (16 Sep) – and that it would be unpleasant for all parties – “as in any divorce, this will be an acrimonious process” (18 Sep).

The Scotsman highlighted the uncertainty and costs: “There are many other unknowns in many other fields, not least the actual cost of creating a separate Scotland and how that Scotland would be represented around the world and what relationships it would have with other countries” (11 Sep). The Guardian reported that “It [the Vow] ended by pledging “faster, safer and better” change for Scotland than separation” (16 Sep) while the Herald echoed the idea of the Vow in that change within the UK would be a safer option in the road to the new society the Scots want to build: “A Scotland with much-enhanced autonomy, within a flourishing UK, offers a surer route to meeting Scots' aspirations than do the uncertainties of independence” (16 Sep). These are excellent examples of the newspapers taking the No campaign promises at face value and publishing them.

5.2.2 ENG-SCO relations

The theme with the tag *ENG-SCO relations* included three subthemes: *Relations with England*, *Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG* and *National identity*. The first of the subthemes

discusses how the independence referendum campaign has affected the relations of the two countries. The second subtheme combines two separate issues of opposing the ruling elite of UK politics and hating the neighbouring country and how they can be mixed up. The third subtheme discusses national identity and how it was used sparingly as a campaign theme. It is placed under this theme because of the British identity that some Scots share with the English. There are separate Scottish and English identities that sometimes can be very complex, demonstrated, for instance, by the English Scots for Yes groups. The theme was present in 28 editorials and it was ranked eighth according to coded words.

5.2.2.1 Relations with England

This is a theme that deals with Scotland's relations with England or/and the rUK. It was clearly a topic most papers found important and thought would interest their readers as it was the eighth most written-about featuring coded words in 12 editorials. The most active papers in discussing the Scoto-English relations were the Scotsman which published more than a third of the coded words, and the Herald and the Guardian with a good quarter and a good fifth respectively. The Sunday Herald editorials did not feature the subtheme.

Sir Tom Devine (2014) pledged his support to independence in August 2014. He argued that "Only through sovereignty can we truly develop a truly amicable and equal relationship with our great southern neighbour in every possible field." Devolution max would, according to Devine, "just prolong a running sore". He argued that many English people would be unhappy about more devolution and continuation of the Barnett formula and that with the pragmatic reasons of past centuries gone, "there is very little left in the union except sentiment, history and family."

Devine's thoughts are rather similar as those of Welsh's presented in section 5.1.3.1. arguing that the Unionist side had no positive case for No. One could argue that from an English point of view, the Union makes a lot of sense because of Scottish resources that in the Union are mathematically 85 per cent English and in reality often controlled by Westminster with a huge English majority.

The results of the Future of England survey by the Universities of Cardiff and Edinburgh that were published during the research period of this study were discussed in the papers. The Scotsman (20 Aug) discussed the survey at length and noted that regardless of the referendum result, there "seems to be a hardening of English opinion against the aspirations of the Scottish nation" so that "the English are keen to punish the Scots for flirting with - or in the case of a Yes vote, achieving - independence." The

Scotsman's conclusion from the survey was that "the cumulative effect of the referendum seems to have been to sour relations between Scotland and its southern neighbour" but unfortunately they published no evidence of this happening in Scotland. Perhaps they were referring to the alleged underlying anti-Englishness in the Yes campaign.

The Scotsman wrote also in the same editorial about "An English reluctance to back an independent Scotland's bids to join Nato and the European Union" and "an English demand for public spending in Scotland to be reduced to English levels after a No vote, and a determination to stop Scottish MPs voting on English-only matters" referring to the results of the same survey. The paper argued this was bad news for the No campaign. They went on to conclude that:

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. The nationalist historian and former diplomat Paul Henderson Scott famously described Scotland's place in the Union as being "in bed with an elephant". We should, perhaps, bear in mind that in the event of a Yes vote on 18 September, although we may well have separate beds, we and the elephant will still be sharing a bedroom (20 Aug).

The Herald (20 Sep) reported on the same survey and highlighted, at least partially, the same results: "English voters opposed [a currency union] by two to one", "three to one ... want Scotland to remain in the Union" and "a majority of English voters want spending in Scotland cut to the UK average after a No vote, equating to a reduction of more than 10 per cent." The paper's comments on these findings stated the rather obvious views which campaign they benefitted and whose cause they harmed. The Herald also noted the result that "English voters are inclined to support Scots taking control of the majority of taxes raised in Scotland" and stated it would please the LibDems and to some extent the Tories but that it would be bad news for Labour because "its proposals for greater devolution have been less radical than those of the other parties."

Also, the Herald (20 Sep) noted that "the referendum debate may have altered the relationship between Scotland and England" and branded the finding "surprising, and potentially worrying". The reluctance to back Scottish EU and Nato membership of a majority of English people, according to the Herald, "smacks of spite, though may also on the part of some respondents reflect their general Euroscepticism".

The paper reported also that "an overwhelming majority reject the notion that independence would improve the relationship between England and Scotland while, in the event of No vote, there was a view that Scotland and England would continue to drift

apart.” One could ask if that is surprising given the open hostility towards Scotland or at least the Scottish quest for self-determination in the London press that was discussed in chapter 4. Devine (2014) seemed to disagree with that idea as he argued that independence and only independence could help develop “a truly amicable and equal relationship” with England.

The Guardian (21 Aug) wrote that Tory “right-winger John Redwood has recently called for an English parliament, while Boris Johnson has suggested fresh powers for English cities should have more priority than any further devolution to Scotland” but noted that “attempts to whip up English resentment about Scottish and Welsh devolution, or even the West Lothian question, have not got far beyond the Tory thinktanks.” They did acknowledge that “This time, though, may be different.” The Guardian, based on the same report that other papers discussed earlier, argued that the survey:

... reveals a more resentful and perhaps more bloody minded feeling in England about Scottish nationalist demands. If Scotland votes yes next month, English opinion says Scots can sink or swim on their own; while if Scots vote no, there is little English appetite to continue the UK public spending settlement embodied in the Barnett formula.

They also stated that “the issues will be out there and the rightwing London press may not hesitate to fan them”.

The Telegraph (31 Aug) wrote about Sir Paul McCartney’s message to Scots, the ex-Beatle saying, among other things “what unites us is much greater than what divides us. Let’s stay together.” The Guardian (9 Sep) writing about the proposed currency union revealed a bit of how it saw the Scoto-English relations: “London – especially if reluctant divorce were to be followed by an outbreak of English bloody-mindedness – could make strangulatory fiscal rules the premium for the financial insurance that’s implicit in a currency union.”

The Scotsman (11 Sep) wrote, regarding the currency union question, that “You would be asking the people of your country, with their savings and assets and taxes, to be the ultimate backing for a foreign country. A foreign country that has just decided to leave a union with you and set out on its own.” They also questioned the idea of Scotland taking none of the UK debt after a Yes vote: “Is it the best way to start a new relationship with a country that is still going to be your closest partner and ally?” It seems that, a bit like the press portraying the tennis player Andy Murray British when he wins and Scottish when he loses, Scotland needing financial assistance would – according to the Scotsman – be “a foreign country” but “partner and ally” when needed to pay off UK debt.

The Observer (13 Sep) writes about how the Scoto-English relations will change with more devolution quoting a senior cabinet member: “The slumbering beast of English grievance will wake up.” The Guardian (15 Sep) argued “England has woken up late, to the extent it has woken up at all, to what is happening in Scotland.” They continued:

The Let’s Stay Together letter organised by the historian Tom Holland and the broadcaster Dan Snow has rapidly gathered more than 100,000 signatures. ... Such campaigners speak for the majority in England and Wales, insofar as the majority think about Scotland at all

arguing that many people in England and Wales were not that interested in Scotland. They went on to comment on English-based newspapers supporting a No vote: “This all reflects a strong sense of connection, as does our own poll in which a clear majority say they would be sad for Scotland to separate.”

The Scotsman (17 Sep) reported on a new poll that showed “that of English people with a view on whether the rUK should enter a currency union with Scotland, most were opposed” on the one hand reinforcing the narrative on the currency union and increasing uncertainty around it but, on the other hand, admitting that it was only a majority of those with a view and not a majority of the population. On polling day, the Telegraph (18 Sep) wrote that “promises of more devolution, underpinned by a continued subsidy to Scotland through the Barnett formula, will cause deep resentment in England.”

5.2.2.2 Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG

This subtheme covers on the one hand the unpopularity of Westminster politics, on the other hand the alleged anti-Englishness that has been detected in the YES campaign. Interestingly, it seems that quite a few people confuse the former with the latter. It was the 22nd most-discussed subtheme and it appeared in 16 editorials. The papers most active in publishing words in this subtheme were the Guardian, that stood for nearly half of them, and the Telegraph that wrote almost a fifth.

One could argue that portraying being anti-Westminster as being anti-English is questionable like portraying anti-Trump protests as being anti-American. There are Catalans who hate the Spanish and Finns who hate the Swedish or the Russians. There are people who use football as an excuse to seek violent confrontation but they are a tiny minority. Undoubtedly, there are Scots who hate the English but hate being in some way systematic or an integral part of the Yes Campaign was always dubious. The anti-Englishness can be seen as a straw man argument.

According to Braiden (2017:2), historian Sir Tom Devine described the SNP as “a barrier to the "blood and soil" nationalism that has swept Europe”. He bases this statement on the fact that there has been very little resentment towards English-born voters who voted No in the 2014 referendum. According to him, there was manifest Anglophobia in Scotland in the later decades of the 20th century but it has been in significant decline since. He says that distancing itself from its earlier “Claymores and Bannockburn” image and focusing on a civic form of nationalism has been a fundamental factor behind the SNP’s electoral success. Devine said “the "politics of Westminster not English people" were the chief opponent of Scots nationalists.”

Keating (2001:220) acknowledged that “a diffuse anti-English sentiment does exist within Scottish society but it tends to be aimed at the structures of the British state rather than English people as individuals or a race.” Keating’s assessment was made almost twenty years ago and there is little evidence suggesting that the situation would have changed towards a more hateful one. It could be suggested that the anti-Englishness narrative was at least outdated if not deliberately false.

Despite all this, it is not at all uncommon that all nationalism is branded evil and Scottish nationalists and especially the SNP are portrayed as fascists. During the independence referendum campaign, several people connected to the No campaign or supporting it – even the chair of the Better Together campaign – accused the Yes side of “blood and soil nationalism” and in some cases even being neo-fascist. Likewise, it was not at all uncommon during the campaign that Yes posters were vandalised with swastikas (Macwhirter 2014b:96).

Macwhirter (2014b:99) argues that “there is something of an obsession in Labour circles with tartan fascism and the notion that the Yes campaign must inevitably turn Nazi because of its nationalist politics”. There is little evidence of people campaigning for Scottish self-determination being fascists but – as some independence supporters like to point out – the leader of the 1930s British Union of Fascists, Oswald Mosley, was a Labour MP before becoming the head of the fascist movement (Macwhirter 2014b:100).

After the 2015 General Election, Conservative MP Lucy Frazer suggested in her maiden speech, to great amusement of her fellow Tories, that Oliver Cromwell’s – who hailed from her constituency – sending Scots to the colonies as slaves was “an answer to the West Lothian question” (HeraldScotland 2015). Perhaps there might be good reasons for Scots to dislike the Westminster establishment or at least the Tory party.

Columnist, blogger and campaigner Paul Kavanagh (2017a:19) discusses Scottish nationalism and the alleged anti-Englishness:

One of the most striking things from my meetings with local groups and activists all across Scotland is that I've yet to meet a single person who wants independence because they think that Scotland and the Scots are better than anyone else. Far less have I met anyone who wants independence because they hate the English..

Ascherson (2014) argues:

The English media and many politicians explain the independence movement by claiming that the Scots are obsessed by "anti-English racism." My own experiences tell me the exact opposite. Scots, these days, have almost forgotten about England, so fascinated are they by their own country. (This is sour news for the English, who can bear being hated but not being overlooked.)

The Scotsman (20 Aug) effectively argued that criticising Westminster is anti-English: "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." This view raises a question that when the English criticise the political establishment of the UK is that anti-English as well? Is Westminster not a parliament of Scotland as well as it is a parliament of England and if so why should it be above criticism? The Scotsman continued "Can we really be surprised that our neighbours - watching the Scots disparage the rest of the UK - are in no mood to do those self-same Scots a kindness after 18 September?" seemingly justifying anti-Scottish sentiment in England by the Yes campaign criticising Westminster.

The Herald (29 Aug) wrote about Douglas Carswell's defection to Ukip: "it does the Better Together campaign no favours to have this issue erupt now reminding many Scottish voters of what they deplore about certain aspects of politics elsewhere in the UK." If the Herald felt deploring "certain aspects of politics elsewhere in the UK" was anti-English they did not express it any way.

The Scotsman (3 Sep) wrote that "Mr Salmond may currently be motivated at least in part by a desire to make a point about Westminster's attitude to Scotland, to boost the campaign for independence" and the Telegraph (5 Sep) discussing Ed Miliband's absence from the independence referendum campaign mused that "Perhaps he has calculated that for all Labour's recent revival of class-war rhetoric, the sight of a distinctly southern, very privileged politician on Scottish doorsteps might actually add to a sense of isolation from Westminster." It seems that the Scotsman acknowledged that Westminster does have an attitude to Scotland that could boost the Yes message and that the Telegraph argued that Ed Miliband was unpopular in Scotland not because he was English but because he was a Westminster politician. The Guardian (7 Sep) wrote that "Scots have not reacted

enthusiastically to an unpopular front of Westminster parties telling Scots that they'd lose the pound along with the union.”

On the same day, the Telegraph (7 Sep) once again went out on a completely different path to those of the other papers:

Our reporter Andrew Gilligan details the unpleasant work of an anti-English group called Siol nan Gaidheal, which has been behind some of the intimidation of pro-Union politicians in Scotland. Xenophobia is often rooted in biological fantasy and this group is no exception. It opposes the “Lebensraum of rapacious Anglo-Saxonry” on “colonised” Scots.

The Siol nan Gaidheal group – or at least a group using the same name – was already discussed in section 2.3.1.2 *Recent Scottish nationalism*, where it was established that the group never enjoyed many members and that the original group was banned from the SNP already in the early 1980's. As discussed in section 5.1.2.1 on bullying, the Telegraph (7 Sep) found “evidence of links between Siol nan Gaidheal and the Yes campaign. ... The activities of Siol nan Gaidheal are reminders that the referendum campaign has been marred by bad feeling.”

The Herald (10 Sep) continued with the theme of dislike towards Westminster politics when they wrote: “The three UK party leaders are far from being the most popular of figures here in Scotland”. The Guardian (10 Sep) wrote that “the Scottish referendum campaign is exposing contempt for the big Westminster parties, which is evident on the south side of the border as well” and that “if [Salmond] succeeds in making independence happen, he will have done so by turning a yes/no choice into a battle between Scotland and a remote London elite” again undermining the idea that being anti-Westminster is being anti-English.

The Telegraph (11 Sep) wrote that “In many ways, though, this campaign is another manifestation of the estrangement of mainstream politics from voters that has led to the rise of nationalist parties across Europe” acknowledging the fact that Westminster is out of touch with ordinary people but at the same time connecting the Yes movement to some less civic nationalist parties in Europe. The Guardian (12 Sep) joined in – sort of – in that narrative writing:

There can be no place today for the ugly nationalism that insists that everything is the fault of some other group, while we are different and better than them. Fortunately, that has not been an explicit part of the campaign, though a coded anti-English prejudice can lurk near the surface of Alex Salmond's pitch.

Unfortunately, the Guardian did not go into more detail explaining what they meant by “coded anti-English prejudice”.

The Observer (13 Sep) commented on the anti-Westminster feeling: “Very large numbers of people in the rest of the UK feel equally strongly about entrenched injustice and complacent institutions and feel common cause with the Scots.” They also quoted Will Hutton’s piece in their paper the previous week that, according to them, explained “what was driving much of the enthusiasm for the yes campaign”:

The big argument is that Scotland does not need to be permanently yoked to English Toryism's infatuation with a libertarianism that denies obligations to society and each other ... and is the author of the great 'cashing out' of the past 30 years. All our utilities, five million council houses, many of our great companies and swaths of real estate in our cities have been cashed out in the name of market forces, of being open for business and wealth generation. What has been created is predator capitalism, massive inequality and a society organised to benefit the top 1%.

The Herald (15 Sep) editorial gave voice to accusations of anti-Englishness:

John Reid, the former Labour Home Secretary, has also accused Alex Salmond of indulging in anti-English sentiment when he described a group of Labour MPs campaigning in Glasgow as Team Westminster. “We know what they meant by Team Westminster don't we?” said Mr Reid. “They meant English.

Although it was reported speech, the paper in no way questioned the sentiment and while they stopped short of endorsing it, they chose to report it in a piece of writing communicating the paper’s view. The Guardian (17 Sep) wrote about and claimed to understand “the scepticism about the Westminster parties’ hurried pledge to deliver [new powers]” and waxed lyrical about breaking “the paralysis and centralisation of Westminster”. On polling day, the Telegraph (18 Sep) wrote about “a deep well of anti-Westminster sentiment that is replicated throughout the country.”

5.2.2.3 National identity

Devine (2016:184) writes that since the early 1970, most Scots have thought of themselves as Scottish not British or mostly Scottish rather than British. Keating (2001:202) argues that apart from a period in the beginning of the nineteenth century when “there were some efforts to submerge the Scottish identity into the British”, British and Scottish identities have been allowed to coexist.

In the latest Scottish Census (2011), 62 per cent of the population of Scotland chose “Scottish identity only” as the alternative that best described their identities. The second

most popular alternative “Scottish and British identity only” was chosen by 18 per cent while eight per cent define themselves as British (Blain and Hutchison 2016b:16).

Devine (2012:661) identifies the legacy of the war effort that united Britain to fight against “an evil foe” as well as the emergence of the welfare state as factors that strengthened the idea of Britishness in Scotland but acknowledges that the idea of Scottishness was not weakened by it but the dual identity – Scottish and British – was common. Only in the late 20th century did the balance between the two identities start to shift towards Scottishness. According to Devine (2012:662), in the early 21st century, “a sense of Scottish identity has apparently never been as strong since the eighteenth century”.

Devine (2012:662) lists some factors that have contributed to the decline of Britishness. Among them are the decreasing significance of Protestantism, the loss of Empire and how Britain’s global importance has been reduced to that of a “second-rate power”, the growing importance of Europe and the simultaneously diminishing clout of the British state, waning respect for monarchy, and the end of cold war which led to a situation where there was no unifying force in the shape of an external enemy.

Tommy Sheppard points out that the Scottish independence movement is not about identity but about self-determination:

This is not a question of identity. Far from it. If there was any nation that had a surfeit of icons for its identity it would be Scotland. We have the flags and emblems – what we lack is the ability to control our own lives and use our own natural resources and chart the destiny of our country (Learmonth 2017:2).

National identity could have been a more important theme in the editorials, but it was discussed relatively little: it was ranked in the bottom-ten with appearances in seven editorials. The papers whose editorials produced the most coded words for this subtheme were the Telegraph, the Scotsman and the Guardian. Seven out of ten coded words were published during week IV. The subtheme did not feature in the editorials of the two weeklies. The Herald commented on the fact that national identity had played a relatively small role in the campaign: “Alex Salmond will today appeal to Scots' sense of history by evoking the Declaration of Arbroath and perhaps a little of the Braveheart spirit, something he has eschewed until now” (20 Sep).

The Telegraph accused the Yes campaign of ugly nationalism and dug up Siol nan Gaidheal – as discussed in the previous subsection – in order to present the Scottish drive for self-determination as being abusive, violent and anti-English. They also argued that a date after the 700th anniversary of Bannockburn and Glasgow Commonwealth Games

was picked for the referendum by Alex Salmond in order to “remind Scots of their proud history and encourage them to believe that they could once more stand on their own two feet” (7 Sep). That, of course, was probably true. They also highlighted the fact that in turn the proposed “timetable for greater devolution, with a preliminary agreement by St Andrew’s Day on November 30 and draft legislation by Burns Night in January, deliberately [invoked] national symbols to the unionist cause” (9 Sep).

The Scotsman argued that “we will make that decision [Yes or No] from a position of pride in our country and belief in ourselves” (11 Sep). The idea of multiple identities i.e. being Scottish and British at the same time was discussed as was the idea of Scotland and England being able to preserve their own identities through the centuries of the Union:

Inescapably, the question of national identity is near the heart of next week’s vote. Scotland’s voters must give their answer to the question – who exactly are we? Many in the modern world do not find it easy to give a single answer. Charles Kennedy’s remark that at one and the same time he is a Highlander, a Scot, a Brit and a European will have resonance for many. ... At the same time, the union has never displaced the particularity of Scotland or England (Scotsman 12 Sep).

5.2.3 Social justice

The UK is one of the most unequal countries in the western world. There was much discussion about the argument of the Yes Campaign that independent Scotland could build a fairer society where the government would be interested in diminishing inequality. This was discussed in many of the editorials during the research period and it was acknowledged by some papers that the UK parliamentary system was not fully functional and that many people in the rUK were equally unhappy about it as many of the Scots. Social justice was the ninth most written-about theme and it appeared in ten editorials during the research period. While it is the theme discussed in fewest editorials its total word count is higher than those of four other themes, so it was discussed at greater length than those four themes.

The one paper that mentioned fairer society only once was the Telegraph and even that time the message was that independent Scotland would not be able to afford it. The papers that seemed to be most critical of the current UK system were the Guardian and its sister paper the Observer. In the Sunday Herald, the theme did not feature once. To be fair to the Sunday Herald, it has to be said that in the editorial in which the paper declared its support for Scottish independence (Sunday Herald 2014), one of the most important arguments was building a fairer more just society to replace the dysfunctional one the

new state would inherit from the UK. One has to bear in mind also, that the Sunday Herald only published five issues in the last five weeks of the campaign so the space was very limited.

5.2.3.1 Fairer society

Little (2014) writes:

For nationalist intellectuals who have, in the course of their lifetimes moved to the independence camp, what is happening in Scotland is, in part, a Presbyterian revolt against what they perceive as the growing inequality of British society – the apparent retreat from the ideals of social mobility, from the social justice agenda that characterised post-war Britain from the 40s to the 80s.

The Scottish Government's case for independence had three parts: the democratic case, the economic case and creating a fairer society. The progressive vision of making the society fairer and just was shared by most of the Yes movement. The No side portrayed independence as a risk to the existing welfare state, pensions, benefits and social services (McEwen 2017:89-91).

The Yes campaign used the UK governments welfare reforms as proof that the UK was moving away from and eroding the values of the welfare state that had been a source of pride and a manifestation of solidarity in the UK. They argued that the only way to repair the damage and develop it was independence. While fairer society was a central theme in the Scottish Government's case for independence, it was even more important to the many groups in the broader Yes movement.

The *Fairer society* subtheme had the 19th highest word count of coded words and it appeared in eight editorials. The Guardian and the Observer made the biggest contributions to this subtheme with a good third and a good fourth respectively while the Scottish dailies practically stood for the rest. The Herald (20 Aug) wrote:

The SNP argues independence would be an opportunity to tackle inequality but independence alone, or indeed greater devolution, cannot achieve that aim. ... Politicians and voters who truly wish to make Scotland more equal will have to consider their willingness to pay more tax to fund public services, and take steps to distribute organisational and corporate wealth more fairly.

One could argue that to stop tax avoidance of the wealthiest individuals and make big corporations pay their taxes, Scotland would need independence. In the Smith Commission, none of the unionist parties supported devolution of corporation or wealth taxes (Macwhirter 2014b:172).

The Guardian (8 Sep) wrote that “[the failure of UK parties to claim the social solidarity issue] has allowed the yes campaign in Scotland to present itself as the best guarantor of a welfare settlement that was one of the UK’s great 20th-century achievements.” The Herald (9 Sep) is critical of a similar failure: “[Miliband] has argued he can win next year's General Election and he will use the victory to build a fairer Scotland in the UK, but the evidence would appear to suggest the argument is failing to convince the Labour vote in Scotland.” One of the problems for this argument was, as discussed earlier, that Labour had already committed to austerity should it form the next UK government.

The Scotsman (11 Sep), in the editorial where they declared support for the Union, reviewed the Yes message that if decisions concerning Scotland were made by Scots “we will improve social justice in our society, making us fairer and more equal and reflecting and retaining our cultural values and sense of identity.” But in arguing that “we are already holders of many of the levers that allow us to create a society that reflects our desires and values” the paper stated they were content with the minor tweaks the Scottish Government would be able to make. It has to be noted that at this point it was unclear what new powers Holyrood would get. They went on to declare that the continuing Union would be “where the best interests of the Scottish people lie, understanding the benefits of working with the people in these islands in collaboration and partnership and seeing the opportunity to shape the strongest, most secure, fair and just society that we all want.”

The Guardian (12 Sep) stated that “the real question is whether an independent Scotland would now offer a better kind of society. The claim that it could has played well for the yes side, not least because the no campaign disagrees about the kind of UK they do not want the Scots to abandon.” They identified fairer Scotland as an important theme in the debate and criticised the Better Together partners for their inability to agree.

The paper argued that the most important question for voters was “whether the UK can supply social justice more or less reliably than independence can. ... Does the United Kingdom, as currently constituted or as likely to evolve, offer a comparable or better opportunity for shared life to flourish?” The Guardian then declared its support for “political economy which has the reduction of inequality and protection for the worse-off at its core” before concluding that “it is surely better done when risks and resources can be pooled across a larger population than a smaller one. It is thus a task better undertaken in a Britain that remains united, rather than one facing breakup.”

The Observer (13 Sep) argued that “It is difficult to see how these competing visions [fairer society and light-touch approach on business] can balance.” They continued that

“Inequalities must be tackled; redistribution of resources made fairer, the common good reasserted. The same inequalities and resentments and desire for a new deal can easily be found south of the border” and eventually asked “is a transition to a different sort of Scotland possible – or even preferable – without an end to the union?”

It was clear that the view of the Observer was that “predator capitalism, massive inequality and a society organised to benefit the top 1%” was not what they supported. They went on to state that “It would be inspiring to think that the radical energy generated by this referendum could see the whole of the UK becoming a fairer and more enlightened place.” It could, indeed, have been inspiring but, at the time of writing, it is fair to say it did not happen.

The Herald (16 Sep), in the editorial where they declared support for the Union, wrote:

Yes Scotland's campaign, brimming over with optimism, has awakened in Scots a slumbering desire for a country that is better, stronger and fairer. ... But the supporters of independence do not hold the monopoly on caring passionately about Scotland and wanting change to help bring about a more just, equal and prosperous society. The question is whether that vision is best pursued as part of the UK or outside it.

They continued that “Who would not want to believe that, by putting a cross on a ballot paper, Scotland could be set on a sure path to becoming a country where poverty, inequality and unpopular governments are vanquished?”

The Scotsman (18 Sep) stated that

A great many Scots are understandably attracted by promises that an independent Scotland would be fairer and more equal, but it is political and economic decisions that make a difference to levels of poverty. The SNP position going into this referendum, with a tax-cutting agenda and an uncertain economic plan, offers no clear path to reducing poverty; indeed, if the "best-case scenario" failed, it would be the poorest who suffered the most

effectively branding a fairer society in an independent Scotland all but impossible and echoing the Better Together narrative that independence is a massive gamble.

5.2.3.2 UK not working

In his book *Road to Referendum* (2013:312), Macwhirter writes that “In the deepest recession since the 1930s, the UK Government’s priority has been to cut taxes on the highest earners in the land and clamp down on welfare”. Monbiot (2014a) writes that the UK political system:

offers no obvious exit from a model that privileges neoliberal economics over other aspirations. It treats the natural world, civic life, equality, public health and effective public services as dispensable luxuries, and the freedom of the rich to exploit the poor as non-negotiable.

This is one of the central ideas featured in the *UK not working* subtheme of this study: the UK is not working and it is the fault of the political establishment and quite often conscious choices to favour areas or groups of people at the expense of others. It was the 23rd most discussed subtheme and entirely owned by the Guardian, the Observer and the Herald that published all the coded words in it: 56 per cent, 24 per cent and 21 per cent respectively. In total, it appeared in six editorials.

Macwhirter (2013:290) writes:

By the turn of the century, viewed from Scotland, London had become an introverted and myopic city state, largely run by a financial kleptocracy who had not only captured the political elite, but had also been allowed almost unlimited access to public funds, in the banking bailouts of 2008 and 2012.

He (2014b:109) argues also:

Decades of low taxation have led to great inequalities in wealth, made concrete in inner London property values. The state is increasingly being seen as a bureaucratic intrusion by many people and public services like the NHS are being subjected, if not to outright privatisation, then to increasing market-based reforms, in England at least.

Professor Philip Alston (2018), United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights concluded his report on UK poverty as follows:

The experience of the United Kingdom, especially since 2010, underscores the conclusion that poverty is a political choice. Austerity could easily have spared the poor, if the political will had existed to do so. Resources were available to the Treasury at the last budget that could have transformed the situation of millions of people living in poverty, but the political choice was made to fund tax cuts for the wealthy instead (Alston 2018).

In the same report Alston discusses the devolved administrations: “Devolved administrations have tried to mitigate the worst impacts of austerity, despite experiencing significant reductions in block grant funding and constitutional limits on their ability to raise revenue.”

Monbiot (2014a) wrote in the Guardian on 2 September: “The concerns of swing voters in marginal constituencies outweigh those of the majority; the concerns of

corporations with no lasting stake in the country outweigh everything. Broken, corrupt, dysfunctional, retentive: you want to be part of this?"

The Herald editorial of 20 August was rather critical of the UK:

There are no more important tasks for a government in peacetime than to work towards ensuring that its citizens meet a basic standard of living, but the percentage of households that do not meet that standard now rests at one third, double the rate of 30 years ago, in spite of the economy doubling in size. ... successive UK and Scottish administrations share the responsibility, and do so alongside wider society, some sections of which show alarming complacency in the face of these stark inequalities. The Poverty and Exclusion in the UK project shows that Scotland has slightly less poverty than the UK as a whole, but that is no cause for self-congratulation, with nearly one fifth of Scottish children and adults classed as poor.

Interestingly, they seem to place an equal amount of blame on the UK and Scottish governments for the developments of the past 30 years. Firstly, the Scottish Parliament only reconvened 15 years before the statement and secondly, saying its powers to affect poverty have been limited would have been an overstatement of their possibilities to do something about it. Perhaps the stance to blame both governments was the paper's idea of being impartial or trying to avoid appearing anti-English.

The Guardian (10 Sep) laid into the political system of the UK and what it had turned into:

These [1992 to 2001] were the years in which, jumping to the imperatives of an outmoded electoral system, ambitious young men in suits honed party messages to fit in with a sliver of swing voters in marginal seats, while forgetting about the rest. Today the suits have grown into fortysomethings, and taken command of their parties. Important differences in values separate Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and David Cameron, but in the eyes of much of Scotland, and tracts of England and Wales too, they look and sound the same.

Two days later, the Guardian (12 Sep) wrote that "Voters across the whole of the UK are uneasy and troubled, particularly after the poor and the ordinary, rather than the rich, have had to bear the weight of recovery from the financial crisis."

The Observer (13 Sep) wrote that "the union is broken" and that the Westminster parties only managing to agree on the new powers for the Scottish Parliament during the last ten days of the campaign and only after a poll putting Yes ahead "wasn't a terrific advertisement for how well the union is working." They went on to state that the "political elite has failed to find ways to improve the life chances of many Britons over the last 20 years" and that "Part of what is being heard on the doorsteps of Scotland is a fierce resistance to the status quo". They write about "entrenched injustice and complacent

institutions” and predict that “this surge of disenchantment presents radical challenges to the union.” They illustrate the serious problem of inequality with a harrowing statistic: “According to Oxfam, a child born in Lenzie, north Glasgow, lives 28 years longer than a child born in deprived Calton.”

The Guardian (15 Sep) wrote that “The existing union has often failed to be conscious of all its parts. ... In large ways and small – everything from waging an unpopular war to introducing a London-centric weather map, the union has not worked as it should.” On 17 September, they argued that a No vote “could be something very different: the beginning of a new joint enterprise for the four nations of the UK, the chance to reforge our union – to spread power, to break the paralysis and centralisation of Westminster, to fix a system that is broken”.

5.2.3.3 Inequality

Monbiot (2014a) states that the UK political system “sustains one of the rich world’s highest levels of inequality and deprivation”. Writing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation web page on the week of the referendum, Unwin (2014) stated that almost a fifth of the people of Scotland live in poverty and if action is not taken to prevent it, a third of children and a fourth of working-age adults will be living in poverty by 2020. According to Hutton (2014), in present-day Britain, there is “an extravagantly paid elite” but on the other end of the spectrum there is a “world of food banks, payday lending and quiet desperation”. Such inequality makes a society “profoundly dysfunctional”.

Hutton (2014) claims that responsibility for rising inequality lies with the policymakers of Britain and their reforms during the past three decades. In order to improve labour market flexibility, the governments have wanted to reduce the influence of trade unions. In order to promote incentives and wealth-generation, the governments have reduced taxation of capital, corporations and high earners. Because “Britain must be open for business”, the governments have facilitated concentration of market power in the City. According to Hutton, these goals have led to inequality rocketing to such an extent that Britain is the seventh most unequal country in the OECD. “The indifference to the growing gap between rich and poor, in all its multiple dimensions, is the first order category mistake of our times” (Hutton 2014).

By volume, *Inequality* was in the bottom-eight of subthemes i.e. it was discussed rather little in the editorials. The Observer published most *Inequality* themed coded words followed by the Guardian and the Herald. Perhaps the newspapers supporting the Union might have been reluctant to discuss inequality as the enormous problem had been created

during the Union and very little had been done to rectify it by the recent UK governments of any political direction. The subtheme was present in four editorials.

The Herald wrote about reducing inequality:

Better education, especially of those from deprived backgrounds, is critically important. Each year, Scotland's most prestigious seats of learning must defend themselves against accusations of elitism for failing to offer places to enough students from poor backgrounds. ... The SNP argues independence would be an opportunity to tackle inequality but independence alone, or indeed greater devolution, cannot achieve that aim (20 Aug).

The Guardian addresses the issue in its editorial on 12 September:

This [the UK offering a comparable or better opportunity for shared life to flourish] requires two large commitments for which the Guardian has always stood. The first is a political economy which has the reduction of inequality and protection for the worse-off at its core. That's no easier a matter in the continuing or reduced UK than it would be in an independent Scotland. ... [The second challenge is constitutional reform].

A day later the Observer discusses inequality and distribution of wealth in Scotland. They argued that North Sea oil had made Scotland one of the “wealthiest countries in the world” but still it had “the highest levels of inequality in western Europe”. They also wrote that the UK economic policies have created “predator capitalism, massive inequality and a society organised to benefit the top 1%.” They even presented some rather damning figures to illustrate the levels of inequality in Scotland. One would have been forgiven for thinking that they were arguing for Scottish independence:

Inequalities must be tackled; redistribution of resources made fairer, the common good reasserted. The same inequalities and resentments and desire for a new deal can easily be found south of the border. (13 Sep)

It is likely that there is interest in reducing inequality in England but there seems to be no political party willing to do it: the Conservatives had demonstrated it through simultaneous austerity and tax cuts for high earners and Labour had already committed itself to continuing austerity should they win the 2015 general election.

The only independence-supporting paper the Sunday Herald did not comment on inequality during the five-week research period but had done it at least in the editorial on May 4 when they declared their support for independence:

Above all, we want a progressive, fair society in which the gulf between haves and have nots is no longer unbridgeable. ... We view the referendum not as a choice between the status quo and an uncertain future, but as between a bankrupt, political

structure and the chance to remake our society in a more equal, inclusive, open and just way.

5.2.4 Independent Scotland

The theme *Independent Scotland* includes two subthemes *Post-independence-day Scotland* and *Self-determination*. The first one includes views and predictions of what an independent Scotland would look like and how well it would be able to function. The *Self-determination* subtheme consists of discussion on the degree of sovereignty an independent Scotland could expect to achieve and which issues would affect it. *Independent Scotland* is the 12th theme and only *Defence* included fewer coded words than it. It was featured in 17 editorials.

5.2.4.1 Post-independence-day Scotland

In order to be included in this subtheme, the text has to include an idea of independent Scotland that offers the reader something more than just a declaration that independent Scotland could or could not use the Pound or join the European Union because those issues are covered in separate themes. As there is no certainty of what independent Scotland would be like, it is all just speculation and quite often discussion about how feasible Yes Scotland's vision is. This subtheme was the 17th most discussed. It appeared in all the papers during the research period – 14 editorials in total – but the Guardian with a third and the Scotsman with a quarter of the coded words were the most active in publishing about it.

Nicola McEwan said during the Scottish Independence Convention of 2017 that she agreed with Alex Salmond in that “no nation was more ready for independence than Scotland”. She argued that Scotland has “a more mature democracy, a higher skilled population, a more advanced economy, a stronger civil society and political institutions than was case in Baltic states or Ireland at point of independence” (Nutt 2017b:7). Obviously, she was talking about a future independence referendum and the vision for the 2014 referendum will always remain hypothetical.

The Sunday Herald (17 Aug) wrote that “Tomorrow, the First Minister will also pledge to enshrine free healthcare "forever" in the written constitution of an independent Scotland.” The Telegraph (22 Aug) had a somewhat different view of an independent Scotland: “Of course, Scotland could be a vibrant economy on the Singapore model, with low taxes designed to attract new investment.” The Guardian (25 Aug) provided its readers with yet another view:

an independent Scotland would have to face the problem of protecting the NHS and other social gains in conditions very similar to those that confront the UK. ... the illusion that an independent Scotland could somehow escape these unavoidable contemporary policy dilemmas should not be one of them.

It has been argued that independence would mean decision about the Scottish budget would be made by Scotland and not for Scotland. Money that is now spent for Scotland as UK spending could be used to finance things that the Scots prioritise like the Scottish NHS if Scotland were independent.

The Guardian (9 Sep) argues that retaining its EU membership and access to the single market would be crucial to an independent Scotland and that it probably could do that. "Smaller economies can and do thrive, and there is little serious doubt that – in the end – the new country could survive on its own. ... Scotland could eventually find a way to pay its way in the world. That is not in doubt."

The Scotsman (11 Sep) wrote:

One of the questions at the heart of the referendum debate has been: "Could Scotland be a successful independent country?" There is only one answer to that of course it could. We are a nation of innovative and hard-working people, with a culture of altruism and egalitarianism. We can stand alongside any country in the world, large or small, and hold our own.

They continued later in the same editorial: "an independent Scotland would, of course, be able to stand on its own two feet, but under current proposals some of the levers needed would lie elsewhere and stability is under threat and that could come at a cost." The following day, the paper reported that "Martin Gilbert, head of Aberdeen Asset Management, has expressed his confidence that an independent Scotland would flourish" (12 Sep).

The Guardian (12 Sep) wrote that "An independent Scotland would be viable. But it would face hard times too. Independence would have rewards for some but costs for others." One could argue that if the fairer country agenda was pursued in an independent Scotland those having the costs could be people who can afford them and not the most vulnerable as seems to be the case in the UK at the moment. The Observer (13 Sep) gave its view of an independent Scotland:

Salmond offers universal childcare, free prescriptions, no fees at university, free social care, higher pensions, an end to Trident, a challenge to the bedroom tax and a securely non-privatised welfare state, anchored firmly in the social solidarity of the 1945 welfare settlement. At the same time, he advocates "a light touch" on business, cutting public expenditure, opposing 50% as the top rate of tax, promoting

deregulation, and competing with the Treasury to slash corporation tax. It is difficult to see how these competing visions can balance.

However, they continued:

Scotland, if it votes yes, will be a small state in a rapacious globalised economy. But Finland, Estonia, even tiny Trinidad and Tobago, with a population of only 1.3 million show that it is possible to be independent, innovative and economically successful. Scotland, as the eminent scholar Sir Tom Devine has pointed out, has undergone "a silent transformation of the economy". It now includes renewable energy, light manufacturing, electronics, tourism, financial services and the creative industries plus a thriving sector in higher education.

This brings us back, once again, to whose truth one wants to believe.

The Telegraph (15 Sep) wrote about "the Yes campaign's Panglossian claims about the economy in post-independence Scotland" while the Herald (16 Sep) offers a somewhat more positive view of an independent Scotland:

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.

but, as they in that editorial declared support for a No vote, continued:

Scotland's reliance on one volatile commodity, North Sea oil, would subject the economy of an independent Scotland to greater uncertainty. ... A great many Scots are understandably attracted by promises that an independent Scotland would be fairer and more equal, but it is political and economic decisions that make a difference to levels of poverty. The SNP position going into this referendum, with a tax-cutting agenda and an uncertain economic plan, offers no clear path to reducing poverty; indeed, if the "best-case scenario" failed, it would be the poorest who suffered the most.

On polling day and on a more conciliatory tone than at any earlier point during the research period, the Telegraph (18 Sep) argued that "We have never doubted that the Scots can be an independent people once again; and they will make a good fist of it if they do decide to go it alone."

The subsidy myth

The subsidy myth is a narrative that presents the Scottish economy as unviable and suggests that the country is subsidised by the English taxpayer. It is not a subtheme as such but it is closely related to the idea that independence would be detrimental for Scotland because it would lose the generous hand-outs from Westminster. McCrone

(1974:2) in his famous report – which will be discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1.7 *Oil* – wrote:

The traditional economic case against nationalism has always been that a politically independent Scotland would be unable to gain sufficient economic sovereignty to solve her problems successfully. This is partly a question of the scale of the Scottish economy, but more of the extent to which it has become integrated with that of the rest of the UK over the last 270 years.

The discovery of North Sea oil rendered this argument obsolete and had the potential to “transform Scotland into a country with a substantial and chronic surplus” (McCrone 1974:6).

In 1997, Dinwoodie reported in the Herald that between 1979 and 1997 Scotland had been a net contributor in the United Kingdom as it had paid in between £27bn and £31bn more than it had received in public spending. There was also a projection that during the following five years, Scotland would continue to subsidise the UK to the tune of £12.5bn. Maxwell (2011) writes that the Scots make up 8.4 per cent of the UK population but Scotland generates 9.4 per cent of the UK tax revenue. He also lists government under-spending on, for example, defence and foreign office services as proof of Scotland paying for more than it receives.

Macwhirter (2013:287) writes that until very recently it has been the common view in both England and Scotland that Scotland was incapable of surviving as an independent country. He describes the House of Commons in the 1980s and 1990s where English Tory MPs at more or less regular intervals taunted the Scottish MPs for representing a country of “subsidy junkies” that had a “begging bowl economy” and suffered from a “dependency culture”. According to Macwhirter, this was not a fair representation of the situation as it was the Scottish oil that was keeping the UK economy afloat.

The Fiscal Commission Working Group - a sub-group of the Scottish Government’s Council of Economic Advisers - estimated in the Scotland’s Future white paper (2013:71) that since 1980/81 the UK’s average annual net fiscal deficit had been approximately three per cent of GDP while Scotland had run an average yearly surplus of 0.2 per cent. They also claimed that if Scotland had been allowed to control its resources they would have been able to eliminate their population share of UK net debt and accumulate assets of more than £80 billion. The group consisted of four professors including two Nobel Laureates Sir Jim Mirrlees and Joseph Stiglitz.

Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:6) discuss the Fiscal Commission group’s estimates of Scotland’s cumulative balance and, instead of £80 billion, place their own at £148

billion and continue to argue that even that is probably an “unduly conservative” calculation as an independent Scotland would have probably spent far less on defence than what the UK has. Furthermore, an independent Scotland, like Norway, “would have used the licensing conditions for extracting its oil to ensure that more of the associated manufacturing activity, R&D, headquarter functions, and jobs stayed in Scotland.” This, in turn, would have further benefitted Scotland in many ways like, for instance, “reducing net outmigration”.

Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:8-9) argue that had Scotland become independent in the 1970s or 1980s and taken its oil with it, “rUK would have been forced to confront its economic demons in the 1980s, and put its economy on a sustainable footing.” This never happened and “the benefits of North Sea oil were squandered on current spending, with the result that the UK has never achieved a sustainable economic model.” Without such a model, the rUK would be in trouble if Scotland left and took its resources with it.

Former Labour Chancellor, Lord Healey said in an interview with Rhodes in May 2013 that Scotland “pays its fair share”, the idea that Scotland is subsidised by the rest of the UK through the Barnett formula was not true and that “these myths” are circulated by opponents of independence. Joel Barnett, the man behind the Barnett formula, was Healey’s deputy at the Treasury so one could assume the former Chancellor knew what he was talking about.

Kavanagh (2017c:23) comments on the subsidy myth:

They tell us that no-one wants us and we’re lucky to have them, because Scotland is the only thing in the universe which Westminster Conservatives throw billions of pounds at out of pure altruism. Scottish Unionism is the belief that the Tories love nothing more than giving free money to a country that doesn’t vote for them.

Arguably, the Scottish Government cannot for all eternity drive their policies of, for instance, free university tuition and free prescriptions as a part of the UK while the voters in England believe their taxes are being used to pay for them.

5.2.4.2 Self-determination

This subtheme discusses the concept of sovereignty and to what degree independent Scotland would be making decisions for itself. Self-determination is seen as an attractive proposal but at the same time there are many unclear issues around it. A currency union with rUK would mean restrictions to Scottish sovereignty. The view of the Yes campaign was that people living and working in Scotland would put Scotland first in their decision making which is something Westminster will never do. This in turn would lead to the

kind of Scottish society that the people of Scotland would like to see. With the Tories quite often perfectly capable of reaching Commons majorities without Scottish seats, Scottish priorities have not been of interest to them.

Self-determination was the 28th most written about subtheme. The Guardian was the most active newspaper publishing material that was coded into this subtheme with a share of 35 per cent followed by the Scotsman and the Observer with 31 and 20 per cent respectively. Like the majority of coded words for most subthemes, *Self-determination* received most of its words during the last two weeks of the research period i.e. the last two weeks before the referendum. In total, the subtheme appeared in eight editorials.

In the end, the Guardian supported the Union but its columnist George Monbiot (2014a) argued strongly for Scottish self-determination:

Independence ... offers people an opportunity to rewrite the political rules. To create a written constitution, the very process of which is engaging and transformative. To build an economy of benefit to everyone. To promote cohesion, social justice, the defence of the living planet and an end to wars of choice. ... To deny this to yourself, to remain subject to the whims of a distant and uncaring elite, to succumb to the bleak, deferential negativity of the no campaign, to accept other people's myths in place of your own story: that would be an astonishing act of self-repudiation and self-harm. Consider yourselves independent and work backwards from there; then ask why you would sacrifice that freedom.

The Telegraph (22 Aug) wrote about the potential risks presented by unionist campaigners that "Separatists tend to dismiss these arguments as "negative", preferring to emphasise the prospect of a Scotland making decisions free from English influence." An independence-supporting paper might have worded that somewhat differently. England does not just influence Scottish decisions but they make decisions for Scotland with little or no Scottish influence. Even many devolved issues can be influenced through finance.

The narrative of currency union limiting the sovereignty of an independent Scotland was clear and frequent: "shared currency arrangements have implications for national autonomy"; "Sovereignty is not an all-or-nothing absolute but a question of degrees. It is something that nominally independent countries lacking their own currency have rather less of than those that mint their own money"; and "Scottish voters who care about effective, as opposed to purely formal, self-determination over the economy, cannot avoid thinking through all the prospective restrictions on this" (Guardian 9 Sep).

The Scotsman (11 Sep) wrote that "Mark Carney, said ... that, for a formal currency union to be possible, an independent Scotland would have to cede some sovereignty", "a

currency union between rUK and an independent Scotland would be “incompatible with sovereignty”” and “under current proposals some of the levers needed would lie elsewhere and stability is under threat and that could come at a cost.” Once again, the currency union would be agreed after negotiations and while some power would remain in London with the Bank of England, Scotland would have a say in the running of the pound which is more than they have now. In the 21st century, there are no completely sovereign countries. Every country is dependent on other countries and cooperation with them.

The Observer (13 Sep) wrote that “It is tempting to hear the siren call of self-determination and warm to the notion of a small, independent state making its way in the world. Tempting, but how realistic?” One could argue that Scotland is a resource-rich country with a number of booming industries like gaming, tourism as well as food and drink. They have a number of world-class universities and vast potential for renewable energy. If they had all the levers of macroeconomic policy it would not necessarily be at all unrealistic.

Another narrative found in the editorials was the fact that power brings responsibility. The Observer (13 Sep) wrote that “The referendum, however, is also about something that it is difficult to price – namely exercising power in your own name. Even if that sort of power comes with new levels of responsibility.” They continued quoting Fintan O’Toole from the previous week: “National freedom isn’t another word for nothing left to lose. It’s another word for no one left to blame – no one, that is, except yourself. If you make your own choices, you become responsible for their consequences.” Somehow, they manage to make it sound like a bad thing which is a rather peculiar stance to take.

As if replying to the Observer, the Sunday Herald – the only newspaper that supported Scottish self-determination – wrote:

It [saying Yes to independence] is a matter of self-respect. We want to have mastery over our own affairs and be governed by those we elect. We want democracy to be what it’s meant to be, the means by which people collectively have a say in the society in which they live. We want to be a nation like so many successful others around the world, reliant on our own plentiful resources, responsible for our own actions. We want for the buck to stop with us. (14 Sep)

Even though the Guardian had already backed a No vote, they claimed to understand why almost every other person living in Scotland supported independence:

It is stirring to watch a nation, an ancient nation, longing to determine its own future. ... The desire to bring power closer to home, and scepticism about the Westminster

parties' hurried pledge to deliver it, is something we understand. The hunger for the collective self-respect that comes with independence rather than mere devolution cannot be dismissed either. (17 Sep)

5.2.5 Defence

Fleming (2017:119) writes that security and defence played a “relatively marginal role in the debates and literature on Scottish independence before the referendum campaign” and during the campaign although debated, they were clearly of lesser prominence than economic issues. The Scottish Government had presented its vision for defence and security models for an independent Scotland in its white paper. The major issues debated during the campaign included “the viability and cost of an independent Scottish defence force; nuclear weapons, notably the UK’s nuclear deterrent; membership of NATO; security needs in the face of new threats; and the economics of defence spending” (Fleming 2017:119).

On the basis of evidence from this study, it is easy to agree with Fleming’s assessment of the prominence of the theme of defence in the campaign. One could, perhaps, have been, considering their importance, expecting more weight on defence-related issues but as often the discussions in the newspapers were triggered by events or issues the campaigns took up, it is understandable that the papers did not spend much editorial space trying to steer the debate.

The Scotsman was the most active in discussing defence-related issues and published almost half of all the coded words. The Telegraph accounted for a third of the words and the Herald wrote roughly a tenth of them. The rest of the papers discussed the issues very briefly. The total word count of the theme *Defence* i.e. all three defence-related subthemes combined would be placed just outside top-30 subthemes and it is, by far, the smallest theme so it was clearly not deemed very important by these newspapers during the last five weeks of the campaign. It appeared in 13 out of the 70 editorials.

5.2.5.1 Trident, Defence in general, Nato

This theme consists of three subthemes that on their own are on the small side but together they form a theme. There are not many occurrences and many of the few that are there are just brief mentions. Quite often these subthemes are covered together. *Trident* covers what the UK Government call their nuclear deterrent, the subtheme *Nato* discusses Scotland’s membership of the military alliance, and *Defence in general* is about other aspects of the defence of an independent Scotland.

Although the issue played a minor role in the newspaper editorials during the last five weeks of the independence referendum campaign, the significance of Trident should not be understated: both main independence-supporting parties, SNP and Scottish Greens, were strongly against nuclear weapons as were practically all of the non-partisan grass roots organisations. For many people it seemed to be the most important factor affecting their voting decision: the Scottish CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) joined the independence movement in 2012 “confirming that independence was tied up with nuclear disarmament” (Gardner 2015: 64).

The different sides’ views of what was desirable and achievable varied to a large degree but for the most part it was a question of a matter of opinion: there was no higher truth in the matters. The No side viewed the UK as a global power that projects itself across the world in order to safeguard its interests and those of its allies. Scotland benefits of the safety of being a part of a world power and has a strong voice in the UN Security Council. Independence would decrease Scotland’s security and it would not be able to recruit sufficient personnel or finance its defence force. The No side also argued that “Scotland would be unable to shape world events or safeguard Scottish interest in the way the UK could” (Fleming 120-121). In their view, independence would make Scotland vulnerable to “international attack, terrorism, espionage, and cyber warfare”.

The Yes side had a completely different vision: Scotland would not harbour global ambitions but would focus on guarding its territorial integrity and interests and would only make “limited contributions to UN-sanctioned international commitments”. One of the integral parts of the Yes campaign was opposition to nuclear weapons in general and those stationed in Scotland in particular. Another powerful argument for the Yes side was being dragged to “illegal wars” like Iraq as a part of the UK. Independence would give the choice of whether to go to war or not to the Scottish people through the parliament they elected (Fleming 2017:121-122).

Even though, according to Fleming (2017:122), Scotland could have chosen neutrality like Ireland, its vision was to be a member of the EU and Nato and thus protected by the “collective security in Europe and the north Atlantic zone”. It would have emphasised defence cooperation with the rUK, the Nordic states and Nato. Foreign interventions would have had to be supported by the UN, the Scottish Government and a majority in the Scottish Parliament.

The Scottish Government White Paper presented a vision where Scotland would have a defence force of 15,000 regulars and 5,000 reserves – built progressively during the first ten years of independence – that would focus on Scotland’s regional interests.

Naval and air forces would be a priority for geographical reasons and there would also be a mobile army brigade.

Fleming (2017:127-129) writes that both campaigns shared the view that Nato membership was desirable for an independent Scotland and its future security. The No campaign argued that Scotland would not be able to join Nato if it opposed nuclear weapons and demanded a swift removal of Trident from Faslane and Coulport. While only three of the 28 Nato members have nuclear weapons, an ongoing dispute with Westminster would have led to refusal of or at least a delay in Scotland becoming a member.

On the whole, Scotland's membership of Nato was not seen as a major problem: Scotland would have met the necessary democratic and economic criteria and having been a member of Nato while a member of the UK, its share of UK military assets it would have met Nato requirements for equipment. Furthermore, Scotland's geostrategic importance would have made the negotiations progress fast (Fleming 2017:127-129).

In its White Paper, the Scottish Government (2013:204-205) argued that in the UK, there were "no maritime patrol aircraft and no major surface ships" based in Scotland which is a peculiar situation for a country with such a long coast-line and vast sea areas. They also argued the billions of pounds that have been "wasted" on an "affront to basic decency" that is the Trident system has weakened the UK's ability to defend itself. Ministry of Defence personnel in Scotland – both service and otherwise – had decreased from 24,680 in 2000 to 15,340 in 2013 and the Scottish decrease had been greater proportionally than in the UK as a whole.

Another alleged downside of independence was Scotland losing defence contracts: "the UK Government would not commission warships from an independent Scotland" which would harm shipbuilding and related industries and result in lost jobs. The Scottish Government's response was that there would be continued defence cooperation between Scotland and the rUK and the Scottish Navy would need new vessels as well (Fleming 2017:132-133). As it turns out, at the time of writing, Scottish shipyards are not building ships for an independent defence force, but neither are they building the promised UK vessels.

Fleming (2017:133-134) writes that the debate on defence was dominated by Trident and Nato. He argues that the Scottish Government defence blueprint was credible but lacked concrete plans because so many issues would have had to be negotiated with the rUK and also Nato. Once again, Fleming argues, the No side used the "uncertainty

about the cost of independence, including defence sector job losses and loss of intelligence capacity” to increase voter anxiety.

One of the arguments of the No campaign was that Trident was important for Scotland as it provided employment to a large number of military personnel. “Wings over Scotland’s *Wee Blue Book* suggested that even assuming jobs in nuclear weapons are desirable, they are subsidised at around £500,000 per year per job” (Gardiner 2015: 68). Research done by the Scottish TUC and the Scottish CND had already in 2007 found that renewing Trident would actually have a negative effect on employment opportunities in Scotland (ibid.).

Fleming (2017:119) acknowledges that “as in other fields, uncertainty and risk played an important role” in the debate around defence and security questions. The two sides were so far apart on defence questions that, according to Fleming (2017:121), they “often talked past each other rather than engage directly”. One could argue that this was probably one of the most important reasons these issues were not discussed more in the newspapers.

In the CCC [Centre on Constitutional Change] pre- and post-referendum surveys, 44 and 53 per cent of respondents respectively found it likely that Scotland and the rUK would or would have arranged a defence cooperation after independence. The corresponding shares that thought it to be unlikely were 18 and 14 per cent so defence was probably not the issue voters were most worried about. Likewise, there were clearly more people that thought nuclear weapons would be removed from Scotland in both surveys than people who found it unlikely (Liñeira et. al. 2017: 177).

Henderson Scott (2008:34-35) identifies a few problems with the Trident system of nuclear submarines and the nuclear weapons they carry. They are stationed dangerously close to Scotland’s largest city with regard to possible accidents or terrorist attacks. They are often presented as the UK’s independent deterrent, but they are neither independent – they depend on cooperation with the US – nor much of a deterrent for the new kinds of enemies the UK faces in today’s world. Henderson Scott goes on to argue that the nuclear weapons “serve no real purpose” (2008:35).

Former nuclear submarine commander Rob Forsyth told the Sunday Herald that Trident is no longer a weapon whose use is restricted to retaliatory attack but “present policy includes potential first use”. He argued also, like Henderson Scott, that the UK is very dependent on the US and would not be able to use Trident missiles if the US opposed it. Thus, “the government assertion that the UK operates an independent deterrent is no more than national hubris”. The upkeep of Continuous at Sea Deterrent of the UK i.e. one

of the four submarines with nuclear weapons is always on patrol, costs the UK £2bn a year which, according to Forsyth, means that “the UK’s conventional war-fighting capability is being sacrificed to preserve its nuclear one” (Edwards 2018:30).

The newspapers’ discussion of Nato included poll results that showed a majority of English people believing that the rUK should oppose Scottish Nato membership after independence (Scotsman and Herald 20 Aug). In the editorial where they declared their support for staying in the UK, the Scotsman (11 Sep) acknowledged the importance of the nuclear issue writing that “Some people will vote for independence just because it will come with a pledge to clear nuclear weapons from our country”. They continued:

There surely must be huge doubts about whether our society now would mandate their use in any circumstances, there are questions over their military value given the changing nature of the threats to our security, and there is the far more pragmatic question of their cost for their perceived benefit. ... How we can take the principled stance to free ourselves of nuclear weapons and then shelter under Nato's nuclear umbrella is difficult to reconcile. The bottom line is that, as a Nato member, we would be part of an organisation whose back-stop is nuclear strikes.

One would have to agree with the fact that the issue is complex. The Scotsman’s view (11 Sep) was that the question of Trident “should be separated from Scotland’s constitutional future” but the post-referendum events have shown that an independence referendum is probably the only chance Scotland will ever have of getting rid of the WMDs. In the same editorial the Scotsman questioned Scottish Nato membership:

All this assuming we were to be accepted as a Nato member on the terms we outline. Again, opinion is divided on the subject but we don't know for certain. It stands to reason we would be more secure as a member of a larger alliance, especially when it comes to intelligence sharing.

The Sunday Herald wrote about the independence supporters in its last editorial before the referendum on 14 September: “They are intelligent, streetwise, utterly engaged and concerned not only for themselves and their children but for people across the world who hope for a life free from fear of nuclear Armageddon.” – a statement that makes their view on Trident very clear.

The Telegraph was again strongly opposed to independence stating that independence would be “an enormous gamble on the subject of security” and asking about more than a hundred Scottish soldiers who “fought and died to keep Northern Ireland within the overall United Kingdom ... What was their sacrifice for?” (14 Sep). The Telegraph also argued that an independent Scotland “will be a weaker one militarily, and

... less capable of the intelligence work so vital for counter-terrorism” (15 Sep). It is a peculiar situation where a half-island has no surface vessels to protect its shores. The Scottish Government White Paper promised “a focus on maritime capabilities, such as air and sea-based patrol” (Scottish Government 2013:208) which would arguably have made the newly independent country stronger militarily but it is true that an independent Scotland would, of course, have a smaller global military role than the UK at present has. Then again, based on Scottish opposition of Trident and UK participation in “illegal wars”, it could be argued that a many Scots would want exactly that.

Kavanagh (2015:14) discusses the war-preventing ability of Trident:

Trident serves no purpose other than to prop up the UK’s claim to big power status. Claiming that nuclear missiles have kept the peace for the past fifty years is patently untrue in a country which has been involved in wars for most of those years. But even if the UK had not been involved in any conflicts at all, it still wouldn’t mean that nukes were responsible. That’s like claiming that having a ginger dug in your house is an effective Nessie deterrent. Since getting the dug I have not once seen a loch monster in my living room, so obviously the dug deterrent is working.

Nia Griffith, the Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Defence told the Andrew Marr Show in late June 2018 that “having a nuclear deterrent is a very important part of our defence policy. It’s also an important part of being a tier-one nation and being in the UN Security Council” (O’Toole 2018:2) thus confirming that the Trident system is the UK’s ticket to the big league. There is therefore no case to argue that Scotland’s opposition of Trident should be separated from the question of self-determination as both parties with a chance to form a UK government support the system unconditionally. However, one could argue that the issue of nuclear weapons, for instance, has been around in Scotland for such a long time that few would imagine it could make many people change their minds during the last weeks of an independence referendum campaign and thus it received relatively little attention during this research period.

5.3 Impact

The smallest of the top-level groups whichever way one measures it is called *Impact* and it contains two themes and 11 subthemes. The two themes that were identified deal with the impact the independence referendum has on the UK and, in the case of a Yes vote, independent Scotland. The themes are *Uncertain future* and *Indyref impact* the first of which is the second biggest theme of all according to the number of coded words. *Uncertain future* includes subthemes that discuss the impact independence would have on Scotland and what would happen, for instance, to the country’s economy or the NHS.

Indyref impact consists mostly of discussion on what happens to the UK after the independence referendum regardless of the referendum result. The subthemes of the *Impact* group appeared in 52 editorials.

5.3.1 Uncertain future

This is the second largest theme behind *Yes movement* and its subthemes appeared in 43 editorials. Its somewhat intertwined subthemes include *Economic impact* that includes two subthemes of its own, *Currency*, *NHS*, *General uncertainty*, *EU* and *Oil*. Creating uncertainty – as will be discussed in the following subsections – was a deliberate tactic of the No campaign and there was a strong and oft-repeated narrative both from the No side and the press that there were many unanswered questions around independence.

McEwen and Keating (2017:192) argue that lack of precedents and the vast number of issues that would only be clear after post-referendum negotiations but also the difficulty of predicting the behaviour and actions of a number of individuals, institutions and organisations all added to the uncertainty surrounding the future of an independent Scotland. As most of the arguments of the Yes side were dependent on post-referendum negotiations, it faced a big task in trying to alleviate the uncertainty.

The lack of impartial information and accurate data was also a major problem and presenting views and opinions as facts created “a credibility gap from a voter perspective”. McEwen and Keating also point out that the No side had a tactical interest to generate uncertainty and “to point to the unknowns” (McEwen and Keating 2017:193).

Macwhirter (2013:300) writes about generating uncertainty:

Doubt is a difficult thing to dispel, and with a Scottish media that is prone to hyperbolic negativity, fears about independence are never far from the front pages. This has become known in Nationalist circles as the “too wee, too poor, too stupid” agenda. The SNP lack the formal support of any of the Scottish or UK newspapers and independence tends to be portrayed as a “reckless gamble”.

Liñeira et. al. (2017:176) identify the economy and currency as the most debated issues before the referendum and that the No side approached them emphasising the risks and inconveniences while Yes highlighted the opportunities to build a fairer Scotland with a progressive approach to welfare policies. The Yes side argued that Scotland would benefit from economic policy made in Scotland with Scotland’s interest in mind and that independence would give the Scottish Parliament tools to craft a welfare policy that matched the needs and wants of the Scottish people. The No side argued that Scotland

was safer with the possibility to pool risks with the rest of the UK and that voting No was the safest way to avoid any barriers to trade.

Liñeira et. al. (2017:175-176) argue that the high level of uncertainty that was present in the run-up to the referendum increased the importance of voters' risk tolerance or risk aversion strategies so that they became crucial to their choices of how to vote. The CCC post-referendum survey identify uncertainty as the most important factor behind a no vote. More than a quarter of No voters picked "too many unanswered questions" as their single most important reason for voting No. Nearly a fifth believed that Scotland would have been "worse off economically" (Liñeira et. al. 2017:182).

5.3.1.2 Economic impact

Economic impact discusses the economic consequences of the independence referendum and a possible Yes vote. Issues closely related to currency are discussed under the *Currency* theme but both themes can, of course, feature in a single sentence. Most of the discussion about the economic impact was speculation as, as The Herald pointed out in its editorial on 16 August, "neither side has a crystal ball." The issues discussed were, for example, immediate effects on financial markets; banks and other companies moving south, effects on private household finances like jobs, pensions and mortgages; general living standards, and prosperity of independent Scotland as a country, etc.

Economic impact, with two smaller subthemes *Rising prices* and *No debt share* subsumed in it, was the fifth largest subtheme of all. The Scotsman published more than a third of its coded words while the Telegraph wrote nearly a quarter and the Herald a fifth of them. In total, the subtheme appeared in 25 editorials.

Robertson (2016:61) writes about his research on TV news reporting that during the referendum campaign, "anti-independence statements were heavily concentrated on economic affairs such as alleged increased unemployment or closures after independence". Economic fears were highlighted in the newspaper editorials during the research period even if the major economic issues were somewhat different at the late stage of the campaign the research period of this study covers.

The fact that the Yes campaign's failure to assure that people and independent Scotland would be safe on the economic front proved decisive. The less well-off were more likely to vote Yes while the more affluent were more likely to be influenced by No arguments of how risky independence would be (Devine 2016:246,250).

The independence supporters have faced suggestions that there is no developed business culture in Scotland or at least, it is not sufficient for an independent country

(Macwhirter 2013:284). Perhaps one could argue that it can hardly be an argument for continuing a union where your southern neighbour has held all the important economic levers for more than 300 years.

Lecca et.al. (2017:30) list problems encountered when estimating the economic consequences of a Yes vote. Firstly, there are no precedents for a situation where a “large region within a highly developed modern economy” becomes independent so there is no comparable empirical data for such a scenario. Secondly, many issues would have had to be negotiated after a Yes vote not only with the rUK government and institutions, like for instance the Bank of England, but with a number of international bodies as well.

Lecca et.al. (2017:42) write that the debate during the independence referendum campaign “focused on a small number of issues, often somewhat orthogonal to the central economic issues concerning independence and typically driven by short-term political considerations”. They continue that “the debate frequently obfuscated issues rather than clarifying them” and that the arguments presented were often negative and adversarial aimed at oversimplifying things for the voters.

How this can be avoided i.e. how in a possible future referendum the issues can be presented in a “balanced, straight-forward, simple enough way so that ordinary voters can understand” is a challenge (Lecca et.al. 2017:43). Finding a body that both sides recognise as independent might be a difficult task and even that would not solve the problem of the missing crystal ball. In the eventuality that a second independence referendum is triggered by Brexit, it will be different as neither side can offer voters the ostensible security of the status quo.

Bell and Eiser (2016:63) criticise the independence referendum debate on fiscal policies: “much of it was highly technical and eventually both sides looked for handy soundbites that conveyed their key messages” and that many arguments – instead of focusing on long-term issues – focused on what was happening in the relatively near future.

Macwhirter (2013:282) writes that had Scotland been independent at the time of the banking crash it would have been a setback but probably not a setback bigger than the banking crash was for the UK. Bailouts of banks are shared across borders and the shares are based on proportions to where the banks’ activities take place. Thus, as Professor Andrew Hughes points out (as cited in Macwhirter 2013:282), only 10 per cent of the activities of the Royal Bank of Scotland take place in Scotland and Scotland would have been liable for 10 per cent of the bailout. Macwhirter argues that it is “almost inconceivable that the Bank of England, as has been suggested, would have refused to act

as “lender of last resort” to the nominally Scottish banks”. The consequences of such decision would have been catastrophic for the stability of English financial markets.

It can be argued that the UK parties were not campaigning to preserve the Union out of love or solidarity but because Scotland going it alone would have been a catastrophe for the rUK. Among other things, 90 per cent of UK oil and gas reserves would have become Scottish (Macwhirter 2013:292) as would 90 per cent of UK fresh water supply (Simons 2012).

The Scotsman (14 Aug) wrote that “Mr Carney's comments [about BoE’s currency contingency plans] will be used to up the ante in the final weeks of the campaign, in a way that is likely to increase jitters in the finance markets.” They also talk about “the risk of "deposit flight" from Scottish banks” and conclude that “all the politicians in this campaign must realise that their political strategies may have serious financial consequences.” The Telegraph (17 Aug) presented an estimate that says that “Scotland could find itself with £143 billion of debt after independence, and be forced to embrace cuts that would make the Coalition look comparatively spendthrift.” National debt will be discussed more closely in a separate subsection below.

The Telegraph (22 Aug) wrote that “Douglas Flint, the chairman of HSBC, tells this newspaper today, there is a risk that a Yes vote could trigger a capital flight from Scotland.” Later in the same editorial they report Sir Ian Wood’s words that “once the oil and gas start to run down, so will Scotland’s economy – and that could begin within a generation”. It seems that an independent Scotland is presented as a country unable to diversify its economy during a generation with all the economic levers and significant oil revenues at its disposal. There would have to be a lack of talent as well as a lack of interest to do that which seems unlikely considering the quality of many Scottish universities, the fact that Scotland’s green energy potential was a major theme for the Yes campaign and that the Scottish Government had and still has very ambitious climate goals.

The Sunday Herald (24 Aug) discussed people’s fears regarding Scotland’s future economy: “[The FM] needs to show that he understands their fears, is on top of the economic numbers, and is flying on more than a wing and a prayer.” On 7 September, the Sunday Herald highlighted the campaign tactics of the No side that were focused on negative economic effects but were not working:

Treasury warnings of economic collapse in spite of mind-boggling oil reserves offshore? More advances in the polls for Yes. David Cameron, whose job and place in history depends on a No vote, prophesying mortgage spikes, pension doom and EU gridlock? The Yes vote grew regardless.

The paper also implied that the No campaign was trying to cause economic uncertainty on purpose: “There may, if they [senior Labour campaigners] howl enough, be jitters in the financial markets, which they may enjoy.”

The Scotsman (8 Sep) wrote “Capital flight may be a real risk with debilitating consequences for Scotland's critically important financial services sector“ but went on to state that “a panic stampede for the exits will serve no useful purpose, whatever the referendum result.” The Guardian (8 Sep) wrote about “the pound’s rocky day on Monday” and “the stock market hit to some of Scotland’s biggest companies.”

The following day, The Guardian (9 Sep) seemed to try to calm down the atmosphere writing “it is easier to assert than to prove that market movements reflect sentiment about any one thing. Some of this week’s movements have been unexceptional in scale, and inconsistent in direction.” However, they went on to state that “there is often a price to be paid for uncertainty” and that there would be plenty of that “during a transition to independence that could prove very rocky, even if all the details are ultimately satisfactorily resolved.”

The Telegraph (11 Sep) wrote that “[The FM] might also, like Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, be about to drag his country into an economic calamity”. The following day, The Scotsman (12 Sep) wrote a long piece about what might happen to Scottish banks if there was a Yes vote. It featured the announcements of some Scottish banks that they would move their HQs to London but also the declaration that the banks’, RBS in this case, “jobs and operations [would] not change in Scotland” and that the measures “would have no impact on our everyday banking services used by our customers in Scotland”. On the whole, the editorial encouraged “Calm and cool consideration”.

The Guardian (12 Sep) argued that “No one wants the currency and stock markets to be the final arbiters of national viability, but they cannot be ignored either.” The Telegraph (12 Sep) was typically negative about the effects of independence: “Independence would come with a price tag: that fact is indisputable”, “UK financial assets are in trouble”, “highest net outflow last month since the collapse of Lehman Brothers” and companies saying “they may have to emigrate from an independent Scotland”. They also reported that “The chief economist of Deutsche Bank describes Scotland going it alone as a mistake potentially as profound as the terrible financial decisions that brought on the Great Depression.”

The Sunday Herald (14 Sep) had a slightly different angle to the Deutsche Bank story: “An independent Scotland, said a banker of whom no-one had heard, would cause

a 1920s-style market crash. He did not mention a more recent collapse, caused by the likes of him.” Interestingly, on 9 February 2015, Spence reported in the Telegraph on a Deutsche Bank report that identified Scotland as one of the European “regions” of bigger states that could be more prosperous were they to become independent putting the claims discussed in the Telegraph editorial of 12 September in a rather different light.

The Observer (13 Sep) listed some of the issues regarding economic impact that had been used by the No campaign:

The offer of devolved powers came alongside warnings about the alleged cataclysmic economic consequences if yes wins the day. Among the growing list of economic tremors they say are about to hit are rising food prices, fewer jobs, higher taxes, reduced postal services, weaker pensions, volatile currency, crashing property market, a flight of the banks, plunging oil revenues, and more besides.

The Scotsman (18 Sep) wrote on polling day:

In the past week, the Scottish financial sector has spelled out the adverse consequences of independence for our banks and insurance companies. Other business leaders also warned of increased costs. It is clear that the risks are real and the costs unknown.

Rising prices

Because of a small number of occurrences – in six editorials, this subtheme was moved to being a lower-level subtheme of *Economic impact*. This theme focuses on the discussion sparked by supermarket chains warning customers that prices of everyday items might go up in an independent Scotland because costs would increase.

Warnings about rising prices and the economic impact of a Yes vote by retail giants and other big business were a hot topic during the final weeks of the independence referendum campaign (e.g. Herald 13 Sep: Referendum views flying off the shelf). This is something that Riddoch (2015:26) refers to as “the most concerted campaign of big business scaremongering in recent British history”. According to her, BBC’s Economic Editor, Robert Peston, made public that the warnings of rising food prices that supermarket chains came out with during the last days of the referendum campaign were a result of a meeting with the PM at Number Ten.

Riddoch also states that these claims went largely unscrutinised by the media. In that sense, the Herald deserves credit as in their editorial on September 13, they presented the views of deputy FM Nicola Sturgeon on the topic and called them “reasonably persuasive”. Riddoch highlights also the problem with “food miles”: in many instances, food produced in Scotland is transported to distribution centres in England before being

delivered to shops in Scotland. She says independence might end this practice and actually result in reduced costs and fresher food in Scotland (Riddoch 2015:26).

The Telegraph (12 Sep) wrote that “the John Lewis group and Asda warn that their prices could rise; and other retailers are expected to detail their concerns this weekend.” The following day, the Herald (13 Sep) devoted the best part of one of their editorials to the issue. They stated that “many Scots will be understandably concerned”. Those “reasonably persuasive” arguments of Nicola Sturgeon included, as reported in the Herald editorial, that “Supermarkets are a highly competitive sector” and “passing them [greater costs] on would be a tactical decision”. They also reported that “Lidl and Aldi have no plans to change pricing” and that Tesco’s response was that “Such claims were “entirely speculative””. The Herald concluded:

There is reason to believe market forces would help balance out any pressures some retailers feel as they would probably fear that price rises might hand an advantage to competitors. That does not mean the argument will not concern many people as they make their choice at the ballot box.

The Observer (13 Sep) included “rising food prices” among “the growing list of economic tremors” that the No side were warning voters about. The Telegraph (14 Sep) stated that it was not scaremongering to warn voters of “prices rising”. On the same day, the Sunday Herald (14 Sep) noted that “If we are to believe all we hear, we can expect the cost of everything, from baked beans to mortgages, to rise.”

No debt share

This subtheme covers the discussion on the Yes Campaign threat that if independent Scotland were not allowed to use the Pound in a currency union with rUK they would not accept any of the UK national debt. Scotland was not legally obliged to accept a share of the debt but had promised to do so in exchange of its share of UK assets. Like the subtheme *Rising prices* that was discussed above, there are only a handful of occurrences and the issue was not discussed at all in the Guardian, the Observer or the Sunday Herald and only once in the Herald so it became a fourth-level subtheme of *Economic impact*.

In order to avoid unrest on financial markets, the UK treasury guaranteed in January 2014 that it would take responsibility of the whole UK national debt. With the debt guaranteed, the Yes campaign had the possibility to counter the No claim that the rUK would refuse a currency union with a threat that in case Scotland was denied a share of the assets of the BoE, the country would not accept any of the UK debt either (Brown Swan and Petersohn 2017:81). According to Whitaker (2014:6), Sir James Mirrlees

backed the Scottish Government stance that if the UK Government denies Scotland the pound “Britain inherits the debt”.

Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:3) argued based on the Vienna Convention of 1983 that “Scotland should not take over any debt in relation to state assets which it is not going to own or utilise. Obvious examples would be Trident, or UK embassies abroad, unless Scotland was directly inheriting some part of the relevant property.”

During the Scottish Independence Convention of 2017, Robin McAlpine stated that there are no international precedents or nothing in the international law that would put any responsibility for UK debt on Scotland. The UK also made it clear that Scotland would be a new state after independence and would not have access to the Bank of England or the pound. McAlpine added that this would mean Scotland would have “no automatic right to any assets of the UK which are not physically or permanently located in Scotland. Thankfully it also means we have zero legal responsibility for debt” (Nutt 2017b:7).

Russell (2017:4) argued that “the revenue from exploiting North Sea oil has been used almost exclusively to plug the hole in the UK’s debt-fuelled foreign ventures, funding Trident and investing inordinate sums in the prosperous south.” His view is that should Scotland become independent, “it has already paid off any share of national debt owed by the UK.” Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:9-10) present similar ideas and argue that instead of taking a share of UK debt, Scotland should be compensated for the wasteful management of its oil wealth backing “a failed economic model” of the UK.

The Scotsman (26 Aug) commented on the threat of Alex Salmond not to accept any of the UK national debt that “Legally he may be right, but it is to be wondered how that hardball stance sits with most Scots.” On 11 September, the paper wrote that the threat was made “to add pressure to bring about that change [to the UK stance on currency union]” and that the First Minister’s argument supporting the idea that the UK parties would change their minds was to ask “what English politician would lay his people open to that financial cost [of Scotland taking on no debt]”.

The Scotsman (11 Sep) went on to argue that “the assertion that Scotland has no moral obligation for part of that debt will sit awkwardly with a lot of Scots” because “Scotland had a part in running up that debt”. The consequences of the approach would have on future Scottish borrowing were said to be unknown: “some say the markets would welcome a debt-free country which had the nous to get itself in to that position and it could then borrow at really good rates, others that we would be regarded as untrustworthy defaulters. We just don’t know”.

However, the Telegraph (11 Sep) claimed to know without a doubt that the consequences for Scotland would be “disastrous: the fledgling nation would be denied access to capital markets and would have to pay eye-watering interest rates to borrow money.” One could easily argue that the previous excerpt was pure speculation, an opinion, a guess but presented as a fact. The Herald (16 Sep) was somewhat more cautious, writing that “If Scotland carried through on its threat to walk away from its share of UK debt, it would possibly have to borrow at punitive interest rates.”

5.3.1.3 Currency

Currency was one of the most debated issues of the Scottish independence referendum. There were two televised debates between Alex Salmond and Alasdair Darling and the latter chose to make currency his most important topic in both debates. It was widely discussed in the editorials as well and from many different angles. The currency issue was highlighted as a weak point for the YES campaign but putting too much focus on it was, in turn, a weakness of Better Together.

This subtheme was the sixth most written about in the data set of this study. The Scotsman published 48 per cent of the coded words in this subtheme which is a remarkable share for such a popular subtheme. The shares of the Guardian, the Herald and the Telegraph were 17, 16 and 12 per cent respectively while the Sunday Herald and the Observer published a few per cent each. The subtheme appeared in 27 of the 70 editorials and the paper with most editorials that featured it was the Telegraph with a total of nine.

The Scottish Government Fiscal Commission Working Group studied the different currency alternatives for independent Scotland: pegged or flexible use of Sterling, a new Scottish currency or joining the Euro. The Scottish Government’s plan A for the currency of an independent Scotland was retaining the Pound as a part of a formal currency union with the rUK. According to the Fiscal commission, a currency union was the best alternative for an independent Scotland but also for the post-Scottish-independence rUK (Scottish Government 2013:103-104).

Professors and Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz and James Mirrlees (ibid.) argued that a currency union was the best alternative for both Scotland and the rUK as it would enable continuing trade with minimal distortion and thus reassure the financial markets. Stiglitz later branded the UK parties’ refusal to enter a currency union as “bluffs” (Whitaker 2014:6). Professor Anton Muscatelli said in the Financial Times (as cited in

Macwhirter 2014b:37-38) that refusing the currency union would be “tantamount to economic vandalism”.

The Financial Times (as cited in Lecca et. al. 2017:32-33) asked six experts their opinions on the currency question and to rank the different alternatives for an independent Scotland. Three out of six ranked currency union as their preferred option so it had considerable support but also opposition. The only constant, according to Lecca et. al. was that a Scottish currency was preferred to joining the Euro but otherwise the experts had differing views.

Fingleton (2014) argued that the Scottish Government’s wish to keep the pound was “hardly unreasonable”. He said that a currency union would “promote efficient trade among closely linked nations and, with reasonable self-discipline on both sides, has little or no downside.” One of the main motivations behind the Yes proposal to negotiate a currency union with the rUK was creating a “climate of financial stability in Scotland”.

MacWilliams (as cited in Fingleton 2014) drew attention to the fact that “British pound notes circulated interchangeably with Irish pound notes up to 1979” after Irish independence in 1922. Macwhirter (2014b:37) writes that when former British colonies became independent in the 1950s and the 1960s, the British approach was to allow them to continue to use the pound and the British establishment even actively campaigned for them to do so. He says that the Scottish Government believed that the UK government would not treat Scotland worse than former colonies.

Brown Swan and Petersohn (2017:66-67) say that the No side emphasised the view that currency was central to national sovereignty while the Yes campaign highlighted the importance and the desirability of cooperation and partnership after a Yes vote arguing that a currency union was the best option for Scotland but also the rUK: it was unnecessary to make Scottish and rUK businesses have to pay extra-costs related to separate currencies.

Brown Swan and Petersohn (2017:73-74) present a Scottish Government argument that a negotiated currency union would have given Scotland more control over its currency than what it had as a member of the UK where it has none. Keeping the pound would also have “provide[d] continuity and certainty for business and individuals” as there would have been no new transaction costs between Scotland and the rUK – provided that Scotland could have stayed or become a member of the EU. Monbiot (2014a) argues that “The [UK] monetary policy committee is based in London and bows to the banks. The pound’s strength, which damages the manufacturing Scotland seeks to promote, reflects the interests of the City.” Getting a say would have been a positive for Scotland.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, pointed out early on in the research period of this study that negotiations would be needed to set up the currency union but stated that “The Bank of England would implement whatever monetary arrangements were put in place” (Brown Swan and Petersohn 2017:68). In a move that Brown Swan and Petersohn describe as unusual for a civil servant, Sir Nicholas Macpherson published his advice on the subject which was clearly negative towards the idea.

However, the Tories, Labour and Liberal Democrats all stated that whoever formed the next UK government would deny an independent Scotland the possibility of a currency union. Mitchell (2016:10) calls this “a remarkable show of unity” and argues that this was typical of the Better Together mindset as, in order to damage the economy of an independent Scotland, they were willing to damage the economy of the rest of the UK as well.

Macwhirter (2014b:32) argues that the “entire Unionist case in the referendum rested on one simple proposition: Scotland would not have a currency union with the rest of the UK (rUK) after independence”. He (2014b:34) brands the No side’s approach to the referendum “a single issue campaign based on the future of Scotland’s currency”.

In Macwhirter’s (2014b:156) view, the blank refusal of the UK parties to let Scotland use the pound in a currency union was quite possibly the most important reason there was the “biggest capital outflow from the UK since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008”. He (2014b:38) argues the problem was that the Better Together strategists did not want to prevent market fluctuations but to create uncertainty. He calls the approach “financial scorched earth”.

Devine (2016:239) argues that the coordinated refusal of currency union by all major Westminster parties was “the most devastating weapon in the unionist armoury” and the failure to convincingly answer the question on currency the “Achilles heel” of Alex Salmond – especially during the first Salmond–Darling TV debate. On the other hand, Devine (2016:240) argues that the Chancellor refusing the idea of a currency union was a clear statement that the Union was not a partnership and that England’s interests would always come before those of Scotland.

Salmond branded the refusal to enter a currency union as bluff, bluster and bullying: bluff because the position would change after a Yes vote; bluster was saying Scotland would not be able to keep the pound even though it is an international tradeable currency; and bullying because it would be a “dictate from on high” in a supposed partnership of equal nations (Brown Swan and Petersohn 2017:79).

Devine reckons that it was unambiguous that the Westminster parties were not willing to give Scotland “the same favourable treatment on a shared currency that had been granted in the past to Ireland and former colonial territories when they first became independent” (Devine 2016:240). He (ibid.:244-245) goes on to argue that the intervention on currency by all three UK parties may have made some people reconsider their support of the Union.

According to Macwhirter (2014b:110), when the Chancellor told the Scots that they would lose the pound, “the Union appeared no longer as a joint project” and that “Scotland was no longer a partner nation but a subordinate region”. He (2014b:42) argues that “by denying Scotland use of the pound, the UK Chancellor prevented Scotland’s positive case for independence getting to first base”. Macwhirter (2014b:29) writes that while refusing the Scots a currency union “may have won the referendum, [it] may fatally have undermined the Union”. He argues that “the Union, as Scots understand it, died when Tory Chancellor George Osborne told Scots that he would build a financial Hadrian’s Wall to stop Scots using their own currency”.

While most Scots, according to polls, believed on polling day that there would indeed be a currency union with the rUK should Scotland become independent, it was clear that the Westminster Government would make life very difficult for the newly independent nation: “The rUK obviously had the power to wreck an independent Scottish economy if they really wanted to, and the way Unionists like Osborne talked, they did want to.” Even if it felt like bullying, upsetting the large neighbour was a risk many voters did not want to take (Macwhirter 2014f:18).

Brown Swan and Petersohn (2017:65) argue that refusing to enter into a currency union with independent Scotland was one of the scarce occasions when the No side made clear what their stance would be in case there was a Yes vote. Currency was one of the most significant themes in the debate and the uncertainty that the unionist parties’ joint stance on the issue created was among the critical elements that shaped the result of the vote. Brown Swan and Petersohn write that the issue was a complex one for the Yes side as the idea of keeping the pound was not universally supported among the independence supporters and even the SNP had supported an independent Scottish pound until relatively close to the publication of the white paper.

The Yes campaign pointed out numerous times that an unnamed UK Government minister had told a Guardian reporter that in case of a Yes vote, the UK Government would start negotiations for a currency union. In the second TV debate, the Yes campaign’s plan B was revealed to be so called Sterlingization i.e. using the pound

without a formal currency union but that it could be a transitional phase on the way to setting up a separate currency (Brown Swan and Petersohn 2017:81, 77). Rifkind (2014) wrote in the Times two weeks before the referendum that “there are now so many Yes badges in circulation that campaigners joke that, if a currency union doesn’t work out, Scotland can use those instead.”

Macwhirter (2014b:40) argues that Carney did not stay impartial but “became a key player” for the No argument arguing that the Bank of England would expect to have control over Scotland’s financial decisions if there was a currency union. What the currency union tactic led to was that many Scots now felt that “Better Together – and by association, the Union itself – was essentially a coalition of bankers, big business and Westminster Tory politicians” (Macwhirter 2014b:41).

Brown Swan and Petersohn (2017:80) argue that the currency question added more uncertainty to the already uncertain picture of an independent Scotland. As argued above, it was a goal of the No campaign to maximise uncertainty and for most issues it was best done by avoiding clarity on rUK negotiating positions. In the case of the currency question, the No side were able to maximise uncertainty by strongly opposing the Yes campaign proposal, chose to do so and possibly even overplayed the position to the point where it became counter-productive.

Liñeira et. al. (2017:181) identify the currency issue as the most important factor working against the Yes side. The CCC post-referendum survey provides evidence that “a currency agreement would have been the most beneficial issue for the pro-independence side”. Clarity over Scotland’s EU membership could have provided a boost to the Yes camp as well but not as big one as clarity over a currency union.

In the post-referendum polls by Lord Ashcroft, 60 per cent of No voters said that currency was a very important issue in their decision. In the CCC pre-referendum survey, a larger share of respondents thought it was unlikely than likely that “the UK government would allow Scotland to keep the pound” but in the post-referendum survey the situation was the other way around (Liñeira et.al. 2017:177).

At the Scottish Independence Convention of 2017, Tommy Sheppard MP said that it was one of the lessons of the independence referendum of 2014 that “it is very difficult to go into a campaign when one of your central policy points relies on consent from your opponents” (Nutt 2017a:2). It would be quite safe to assume that it was a mistake that is very unlikely to be repeated in a future independence referendum campaign.

Ryan (2017:12) writes that since 1990, out of the 47 European countries that are UN members, 33 have replaced their currency with another. Many of these changes have

come about because of the Euro but several of them introduced new currencies after the break-ups of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Thus, introducing a new currency is by no means something that has not been done and the process is well-known.

Early in the research period Mr Carney's comments about contingency plans for independence were so neutral that the Scotsman (14 Aug) argued that "each side in the debate claimed this development supported their argument." Carney was reported saying that "the bank has no locus" in the debate and that "whatever [politicians] decided, the bank would act accordingly." Nevertheless, the Scotsman talked about uncertainty and the risk of a "a period of UK financial instability after a Yes vote" and "'deposit flight' from Scottish banks".

Four days later, the Scotsman (18 Aug) wrote that polls appear to show that "doubts over SNP policy on the pound are not being reflected in a rise in support for No" and that "voters do not appear convinced that the signals from the three main UK parties will mean Scotland losing the pound". A couple of days later, the Scotsman and the Herald (20 Aug) reported that according to a survey, a majority of English voters opposed sharing the pound.

The Sunday Herald (24 Aug) wrote about the second TV debate coming up: "There will be angry exchanges on currency, but the polling evidence suggests most Scots agree with the FM, at least as far as wishing to keep the pound and the likelihood that Westminster is bluffing." The Telegraph commented on the same debate saying that in the first debate, "[Salmond] failed to provide answers to key questions about the future of Scotland's currency or debt" (24 Aug) and that the currency option was "an issue that lingers to this day" (25 Aug).

After the debate, the Scotsman (26 Aug) reported that "We also got a stronger signal that sterlingisation would be the favoured Plan B, as Mr Salmond pointed out that an independent Scotland could not be prevented from keeping the pound." After a period of relative calm on the currency comment front, the Guardian (7 Sep) wrote that the No side needs "to reflect on its obsessive focus on future currency arrangements, which appears to have done little good." They also stated that "most yes supporters are convinced that London is bluffing."

The Guardian (9 Sep) refers to a speech to the TUC in Liverpool as "Mark Carney's newly strident assault on the SNP's proposed sterling union with the rump UK" but go on to state that "he is surely correct to argue that shared currency arrangements have implications for national autonomy." They went on to give their own argument:

Sovereignty is not an all-or-nothing absolute but a question of degrees. It is something that nominally independent countries lacking their own currency have rather less of than those that mint their own money. With that facility, governments cannot run out of cash in the same way that a family might; without it ... states can be forced to choose between bankruptcy and surrender to external power.

The paper seems to be arguing that countries like Germany, France or Finland are only “nominally independent”. That being said, many people feel that sharing the Euro limited the options the Greek government had during its debt-crisis significantly so the issue is rather complex.

In the editorial where they declared their support for independence, the Scotsman (11 Sep) wrote at length about currency. They reported Mark Carney’s words that “for a formal currency union to be possible, an independent Scotland would have to cede some sovereignty.” Furthermore, they repeated the usual arguments against a currency union that “the three main Westminster political parties have declared against it” and that an agreement like that would mean for rUK politicians “asking the people of your country, with their savings and assets and taxes, to be the ultimate backing for a foreign country. A foreign country that has just decided to leave a union with you and set out on its own.” Interestingly, in their view Scotland would overnight turn into a “foreign country” instead of becoming the rUK’s closest ally and partner in cooperation like the Scottish Government was proposing. It is clear that from the Scotsman’s point of view, there were no good currency options for an independent Scotland.

The Herald (16 Sep) in their declaration of support editorial stated that “a Scotland that stays in the UK will continue to enjoy the economic and social benefits, such as the certainty of an ongoing currency union backed by political union.” They also argue that in a currency union, “an independent Scotland would ... have to accept unwanted constraints on borrowing, tax and spending, imposed on it externally and without democratic mandate.” In other words, – as pointed out above – not much would change. Like the Scotsman above, the Herald seemed pessimistic about every currency option for an independent Scotland. On polling day, the Telegraph (18 Sep) wrote about “huge uncertainty surrounding the currency Scotland would use”.

5.3.1.4 NHS

“Lord Lawson once said that the NHS is the closest thing the English have to a religion; but the same is true in Wales, Northern Ireland and, of course, Scotland too” (Guardian 25 Aug). The National Health Service was one of the most important features of the Scottish independence referendum debate during the final weeks of the campaign.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it was widely discussed in the newspaper editorials of those weeks.

NHS was the 10th most-discussed subtheme. The Herald published almost two fifths of the coded words for this subtheme, the Guardian over a quarter and the Sunday Herald more than a fifth. The Scotsman stood for less than a tenth and the Telegraph little less than five per cent of total NHS coverage. The Observer did not discuss the subtheme at all. In total, the subtheme appeared in 16 editorials.

The Yes campaign argued that staying in the UK threatens the NHS as the Conservative agenda seems to be moving the NHS towards privatisation. Most of the papers opposed this view at the time arguing that the NHS is devolved and cannot be privatised by anyone but the Scottish Government which mirrored the narrative led by the No campaign.

The NHS was the main focus during the research period but the narrative that an independent Scotland would preserve the welfare state had a long-term presence in the debate. Joan McAlpine (2014) pointed out in February that Chancellor Osborne had cut the Scottish block grant by 10 per cent and that both the Tories and Labour had already pledged to £4billion annual cuts after the next general election. With regard to the Scottish Government mitigating Westminster policies like the bedroom tax, she wrote that “There is only so long you can keep patching the holes Westminster is shooting into the welfare state. Eventually the bucket will leak.”

Not all papers or commentators agreed with the No campaign. Macwhirter (2014e:14) wrote in the Sunday Herald on 24 August:

The objective of the UK Government is to reduce the proportion of state funding of the NHS as private firms take over and this will eventually be reflected in the Barnett Formula – assuming it still exists. In the longer term there could also be legal pressure from private providers to gain access to the Scottish NHS under new competition rules, if Scotland remains in the UK.

Allyson Pollock, Professor of public health research and policy at Queen Mary University, London wrote in the Sunday Herald on 31 August:

The English NHS is on a track towards the US system, where commercialisation results in around \$750 billion wasted each year due to overtreatment, undertreatment and billing, invoicing and marketing costs. ... If the English NHS is not restored, consequences for Scotland are serious. The NHS in Scotland may not be suffering these changes, but funding for the NHS in Scotland is allocated through the Barnett formula, so any reduction in NHS funds in England, including those which follow from the 2012 Act, translate into reduced funding for Scotland. ... At present time, and in the absence of any reversal of neoliberal policies in

England, the clearest way to defend and promote the principle of a public NHS is to vote for Scotland to have full powers and responsibilities of an independent country (Pollock 2014:12)

In the same paper, in an interview with Duffy (2014a:10) Pollock said also that the Health and Social Care Act of 2012 “abolished the duty on the Secretary of State for Health to secure and provide comprehensive healthcare” in England so that it is possible that public funding is withdrawn and replaced with private funding. This in turn, according to her, could reduce the availability of healthcare to less-affluent people.

According to the Financial Times (as cited in Macwhirter 2014d:14), “up to 10% of English hospital trusts could effectively be in private hands by the end of the decade”. Macwhirter argues that this is because of “the combined effects of PFI debts and funding cuts”. Macwhirter also argues (2014d:15) that the then potential TTIP deal could have opened the Scottish NHS to private competition if Scotland stayed in the Union: private competition was ruled out for countries where none existed but as a part of the UK it could have been argued that Scotland was a region of the UK and corporations could have sued the Scottish Government for access. Macwhirter goes on to argue for the current form of Scottish NHS: “America spends twice as much of its GDP on its privatised health and gets an inferior service. Many millions of Americans have no adequate health insurance” (Macwhirter 2014d:15).

On 9 September 2014 Professors Mike Lean and Graham Watt published a letter signed by them and a total of 51 of their medical colleagues in the prestigious general medical journal, the Lancet. In it they write about the independence referendum and the threat that staying in the UK would bring to the Scottish NHS in the form of Westminster cuts and TTIP. They concluded their letter:

The NHS in Scotland is now very different from that in the rest of the UK. It is increasingly under threat because of funding cuts from Westminster. The plan for the UK to enter TTIP, without an opt-out clause for NHS Scotland, is symptomatic of the way Scotland has been treated in general, and an even more potent reason for Scottish people to be able to elect governments with full economic and bargaining powers through independence.

Professor Malcolm Macleod (Gordon 2014:21) said in an interview that the claim that what was happening with the English NHS would have a knock-on effect for the Scottish NHS was “a political statement with very little to justify it, made by people with a clear interest in frightening people to vote Yes.” In the same interview he stated that in case there is a Yes vote, people will soon realise it was a mistake. If No wins “he’s “utterly

confident” Johann Lamont will be First Minister in 2016, as the voter mistrust created in the referendum sinks the SNP’s plans at the Scottish Election”.

As discussed earlier, the Labour party lost all but one of its 40 Scottish seats at the 2015 General Election and in the 2016 Scottish Election they finished third behind the Conservatives who had been pronounced dead in Scotland decades earlier. Nevertheless, this goes to show that both sides had numerous experts on any issue that agreed with their stances and that the newspapers were able to pick the ones they agreed with.

McEwen (2017:100) identifies three Yes campaign messages related to the welfare state. Firstly, the ongoing welfare reform of the UK coalition government meant that the welfare state under the UK government could not be trusted and that it was moving away from the Scottish vision of what it should be. Secondly, the NHS reforms in the rUK posed a risk to the continuity of the Scottish NHS because it is dependent on the UK block grant. Thirdly, an independent Scotland where decisions were made by people who live and work in Scotland would have the possibility to develop the welfare state including the NHS towards what the Scots need and want.

McEwen (2017:93) writes that the NHS, the possibilities that independence would bring to its development and the risks to its continuity posed by staying in the Union became one of the most important themes of the last weeks of the campaign for the Yes camp. She highlights the fact that while health is an issue devolved to the Scottish Parliament, it is dependent on the Scottish block grant calculated based on spending decisions in England.

McEwen (2017:93) argues that the threat the Union poses to the Scottish NHS was a new type of argument for the Yes campaign that had been extremely positive until that point. According to her (2017:101), the No side’s core message “revolved around the risks to social security and the welfare state” and together with spreading a message of numerous other risks and uncertainties, these messages “may have contributed to the general unease among No voters at the consequences of a Yes vote”. In other words, both campaigns were emphasising the risks to the NHS if their side lost the referendum.

Dr Philippa Whitford, an NHS Surgeon and an SNP MP from the 2015 General Election, told in a speech on 1 May 2014 to Yes Clydesdale’s Women for Independence meeting that “In five years, England will not have an NHS as you understand it, and if we vote No, in ten years neither will we” (Whitford 2014). The speech went viral on YouTube. In an interview with Hutcheon (2014:20), Whitford says: “In none of my speeches do I say we vote No and the next day our budget goes down. It’s the long term.” Whitford went on to deny Labour accusations that she was lying and stated that she was

not “looking to gain anything” and that she had not expected that the issue would become such a huge part of the referendum campaign. The short-term focus was something that Lecca et.al. (2017:42) identified as a significant problem in the referendum debate.

The Sunday Herald (17 Aug) editorial was headlined “Health a pivotal referendum issue”. In it they stated that “the Conservative-led Coalition Government has embarked in England upon one of the most radical bursts of reform in the NHS's 66-year history in order to protect it, by dint of its idea of efficiency.” They report the Yes campaign arguing that “a No vote threatens the budget and possibly the structure of the NHS in Scotland. ... The cuts and privatisation that blight the NHS in England would spread north if Scots lacked the strong medicine of independence” and that the “Unionists say these NHS warnings are a flat lie”.

Interestingly, at this point even the independence-supporting Sunday Herald was sceptical of the claims stating that the No side’s counter-arguments – that “English NHS spending is rising, meaning there are no knock-on cuts in Scotland” and that “the NHS is already devolved” and thus cannot be privatised by Westminster – “cannot be shrugged off”. Nevertheless, the paper also highlights that “Tomorrow, the First Minister will also pledge to enshrine free healthcare "forever" in the written constitution of an independent Scotland.” According to a poll the Sunday Herald reports on, “the future of the NHS has the potential to deliver a victory to the Yes campaign in a month's time. Crucially, it could secure majority support from women, who have so far been resistant to Yes.”

The following day, the Scotsman (18 Aug) reported that the Yes campaign has been “campaigning vigorously on concerns over future financing of the NHS” and the Herald (18 Aug) argued that “Yes will seek to characterise the vote as being about the future of the NHS” because “polls show the NHS is second only to the economy and jobs in voters list of priorities.” Writing about the upcoming second TV debate, the Herald stated that in the debate “the First Minister will be under pressure” to justify “his controversial assertion that privatisation of some health services in England would threaten the Scottish NHS budget, a claim that has greatly puzzled many observers.”

Three days later, the Herald (21 Aug) published a whole editorial on the NHS with the headline “Facts not fear in debate on NHS” in which they argued that “As long as the fundamental principle that NHS services should be free at the point of delivery is preserved, involving private providers is not necessarily wrong.” As observed in section 5.1.2.4 *Scaremongering*, the Herald reported the views of Anna Gregor who branded the Yes arguments as lies and scaremongering and the paper stated that “hers is a voice worth listening to”. While it is perfectly true, as Gregor points out, that “The devolution

settlement gave Scotland full control over NHS policy ... and the evidence we can take a different approach to that taken south of the Border is there in the fact that we already have”, the English health budget is not the only thing that affects the Scottish health budget. The Herald went on to argue that “the most prominent voices arguing for a Yes vote to safeguard the future of the NHS in Scotland ... have not proved their case.” They also stated that “there is a faulty logic [in the Yes arguments] which cannot be ignored”.

To be fair, the Herald (21 Aug) did argue that “it is equally misleading to suggest a Yes vote threatens the NHS because Scotland currently spends £200 per head more on the NHS” but stated that “We have heard very little from either side about their vision for a stronger, more effective NHS. ... One of our most pressing issues ..., is how we organise the health and social care of older people in the face of major demographic challenges.” Even this could be argued, as discussed earlier, to be a short-term focus.

A week later, the Sunday Herald (24 Aug) reported that “health service unions like Unison say it is naive to think that the Scottish service can be immune to the wholesale invasion of private providers into the rUK NHS”. The Guardian (25 Aug), previewing the upcoming debate, wrote that “Scotland’s first minister is expected ... to move the NHS to the centre of the stage this time”. They called the NHS “a massively emotive subject in every part of the United Kingdom” and argued that “if Mr Salmond can persuade enough voters that institutions and principles like those of the NHS are at risk from the union – and would be protected under independence – he may yet manage to ride a wave to victory next month.”

The Guardian (25 Aug) stated with no ambiguity their view of the claims that the NHS faced a risk of privatisation after a No vote writing “Logically the argument is a nonsense” because the NHS was a devolved issue. They also argued that “an independent Scotland would have to face the problem of protecting the NHS and other social gains in conditions very similar to those that confront the UK.”

The following Sunday, the Sunday Herald (31 Aug) gave little editorial space to the NHS but stated that “the No campaign's claim that the Scottish NHS is safer and most assuredly funded with devolution than under independence is also unravelling.” This was a reference to, among other things, the interview of and the column by Allyson Pollock that were discussed above.

The Herald (3 Sep) accused the Yes campaign of “negative campaigning ... making highly disputable claims about how the increased involvement of the private sector in the NHS in England threatens NHS funding in Scotland.” The Guardian (7 Sep) made similar accusations referring to the Yes campaign’s “recent tendency to answer the negativity of

the noes with a little fear-mongering of its own, notably over the NHS.” The Telegraph (7 Sep) brought an interesting new angle in the debate writing:

fears of a privatised health service have been fomented largely by the Labour Party, who for many years assiduously encouraged the view in Scotland that a Conservative government at Westminster was just about the most appalling prospect imaginable.

The Herald (10 Sep) wrote about “Gordon Brown's moving intervention yesterday”, how he had stressed that “the NHS in Scotland was under no threat from staying in the Union” and said that “He could never stand by ... if he believed the Scottish NHS was going to be privatised and have its funding cut.” They also reported his words that the Scottish NHS could only be privatised by the Scottish Government and that “under existing proposals for enhanced devolution, Scottish ministers could raise up to £3bn in tax to spend on the NHS if they chose.”

Mr Brown was, of course, former PM but at the time of the referendum he was only an opposition backbencher who had for several years been a relatively low-profile one so even if he “could never stand by” there would not have been many ways he could have done much about it. This was demonstrated by the post-referendum Vow Plus episode discussed in section 2.4.1. Nevertheless, at the time, Brown’s opinions were valued by many and the Union-supporting press were able to pick him as a voice that supported their stance on independence.

The Scotsman (11 Sep), when declaring their support for the Union, stated that “we can shape the NHS in Scotland as we choose.” The Guardian (12 Sep), when making their similar declaration, stated that “Over time and on balance, the union was good for the people of these islands, not least in the shape of universal pensions and the NHS that bind us.” A few days later, they accused the Yes campaign of “alarmism over the NHS” (16 Sep).

What has happened to the English NHS after the independence referendum? In February 2016, The Guardian reported that “Trade unions representing half a million NHS workers have warned that a “surge in privatisation” of the health service risks creating a system based on ability to pay, rather than need.” They said that setting up the system with private companies is expensive and it does not lead to better care – quite the opposite as that money could have been used to fund the NHS patient care (Taylor 2016). These arguments echo those of the Yes campaign that during the independence referendum campaign were branded scaremongering by the No side and most of the press. While the NHS is a devolved issue, it is – as long as Scotland is a part of the UK and does

not have full fiscal autonomy – dependent on funding from the UK block grant. Westminster cannot directly privatise the Scottish NHS but it can starve it off funds.

In January 2017, British Red Cross said that the NHS was facing a “humanitarian crisis” as the charity was forced to step in to help the NHS staff cope with rising demand (Campbell, Morris and Marsh 2017). Senior doctors in the British Medical Association stated in June 2017 that “The government is deliberately underfunding the NHS in an attempt to speed up its plans to privatise the health service”. They said, in a motion passed by the BMA annual representative meeting, that the government is consciously and deliberately creating a crisis in NHS hospitals “in order to accelerate its transformation plans for private sector takeover of healthcare in England”. The then incoming chair of the BMA, Dr Chaand Nagpaul, said that “the Government speaks of new investment but in the same breath asks us to make £3 of efficiency savings for every £1 spent” (Forster 2017).

Eaton (2018) argues that the English NHS has since 2010 “endured the longest period of austerity in its history. Before the November 2017 budget, the NHS chief executive, Simon Stevens, stated that the NHS was underfunded by £20–30 billion. In January 2018, during the now annual winter crisis in the English NHS, Dr Richard Fawcett, an emergency consultant at the Royal Stoke University hospital in Staffordshire tweeted: “I personally apologise to the people of Stoke for the third world conditions of the department due to overcrowding” (ibid.).

At the same time, the devolved Scottish NHS – despite the UK Government “shooting [holes] into the welfare state” – has outperformed the English NHS in A&E waiting times every month since March 2015 (BBC News 2018). Scottish Health Secretary Jeane Freeman (2019:11) writes that “people’s overall satisfaction with NHS services remains at an all-time high”. 86 per cent of respondents of the Scottish Inpatient Experience Survey 2018 rated their inpatient experience positively and 91 per cent “rated their experience of hospital staff as good or excellent.”

5.3.1.5 General uncertainty

This subtheme features notions of general uncertainty. There are separate subthemes for the uncertainty over, for example, Scotland’s future currency, EU membership and NHS that were discussed in great length in all of the newspapers included in this study. It was clear that many things were uncertain because they would have had to be negotiated if Scotland voted Yes. This subtheme covers also concerns of more rarely discussed issues that the Scots might have.

The discussed unknowns and things that are not necessarily clear whether they are opportunities or threats are also listed under uncertainty although, the No side saw few opportunities in independence. Even with a number of much-discussed issues lifted as separate subthemes, *General uncertainty* was the thirteenth most published-about subtheme. Most active papers contributing to it were the Scottish dailies and the Guardian. It was present in 18 editorials.

According to Devine (2016:246), for the respondents of Lord Ashcroft's post-referendum polls, uncertainty and risks considering jobs, prices, the economy, pensions and EU membership as well as that surrounding the currency were more important than attachment to the United Kingdom or the promised new powers for the Holyrood parliament. Thus, one could argue that the No campaign tactic – based on surveys and focus groups – was spot on. Focusing on uncertainties – some genuine, some exaggerated – was despite the Yes surge enough to secure a No vote. At the Labour party conference in Manchester a few days after the referendum, the head of the Better Together campaign Blair McDougall argued that a more positive campaign could have been appealing to people already firmly in the No camp but that without “scaremongering” the result of the vote might have been different (Dattoo 2014).

Lecca et. al. (2017:31) write that uncertainty is unavoidable with or without independence and the only situation where ranking independence against a No vote would be possible without any uncertainty would be one where one option leads to better outcomes whatever the economic situation is in the future. Lecca et. al. (2017:35) say that “some of the uncertainty depended on the degree and nature of cooperation that could be expected between an independent Scotland and the remainder of the UK”. Macwhirter (2014f:18) writes that one of the risks many people associated with independence was an rUK retaliation: “Westminster politicians like David Cameron grudgingly accepted that Scotland could become an independent country, but made clear they wouldn't lift a finger to help it if it did”.

Macwhirter (2014b:24) writes that Better Together actively encouraged the fear of older voters losing their pensions. The pensions were not actively dealt with in the editorials collected for this study because the threat had been neutralised by the DWP (The Scotsman 2014) but regardless of that, Better Together canvassers allegedly told pensioners on the doorsteps that voting Yes would mean they would lose their pensions and Scotland would lose the pound which would leave their savings worthless (Ashcroft 2015).

Harvey (2017:152) writes that the small size of Scotland has traditionally been used against it in the independence debate on the grounds of the supposed benefits of being a part of a larger entity. Scotland is not a small nation per se but Harvey writes that compared to England it is and this developed into a dominant narrative in the debate. However, he argues that the Yes side was “able to point to a body of work to the effect that in a globalized world, small states have the advantage” (Harvey 2017:152).

Dekavalla (2016:56) writes about newspapers increasing uncertainty:

Although media effects on voting are complex and difficult to prove, it would be fair to say that newspapers’ construction of the referendum narrative confirmed and potentially reinforced a pre-existing uncertainty about independence in the public sphere.

The Herald (16 Aug) wrote that “One of the frustrations of the debate for voters, politicians and commentators alike has been the lack of decisive answers about key risks.” They also acknowledged that “The uncertainties attached to an independence vote have been played on by their [the Yes campaign’s] opponents”. The paper also discussed the newly published Edinburgh University research:

The No campaign has not had to defend its position in the same way, as researchers point out. The study says voters generally attach greater weight to fears associated with independence than those relating to the continued Union. ... Researchers were also struck that fears about negative outcomes had more effect on voting intentions than possible benefits of either result.

They went on to conclude:

Some, perhaps most, of these imponderables cannot be decisively answered and it is unfair to expect that they will. ... Voters understand the risks and are wary of either side promising certainty: there is a limit to what can be predicted and neither side has a crystal ball. That is certain.

The Telegraph (17 Aug) wrote about “uncertainty about the costs and complexities of unravelling a Union that has grown organically over centuries”. The Herald (9 Sep) wrote that “The theory [of the No camp] was that, with a choice between the status quo and the uncertainty of independence, Scots would pull back from the brink, but that theory looks like it be might be unravelling” effectively acknowledging that the No campaign had from the beginning identified uncertainty as one of their top-weapons. The Guardian (9 Sep) argued that “there is often a price to be paid for uncertainty”.

The Scotsman (11 Sep) declared their support for a No vote in a longer than usual editorial that discussed the uncertainties at length. They wrote, among other things, that:

There are many other unknowns in many other fields ... But unknowns are a part of all life, we all have to deal with them and plan for them as best we can ... There are significant uncertainties 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 editorial included the phrase “we don’t know” in various forms no less than eight times.

The nominally neutral Observer (13 Sep) wrote that “Those voting in favour of Scottish independence on Thursday will need to be certain that separation is a better option than a federated Britain, granting citizens in every region the strongest voice yet and an opportunity to challenge the political establishment.” Interestingly, it seems that there was no uncertainty whatsoever hovering over the “federated Britain” that a No vote would mean.

The Telegraph (15 Sep) stated that “it is always unsettling to gaze into an uncertain future”. The Herald (16 Sep), when coming out for the Union, stated that “independence carries considerable risks with the promise of uncertain benefits.” On polling day, the Scotsman revisited their decision to back the Union:

while Scotland, of course, has what it takes to be a successful independent country, the risks and uncertainties with the independence that is on offer today, taken with the powers we already have, led us firmly to the conclusion that Scots' best interests lay within the UK. ... It is clear that the risks are real and the costs unknown.

5.3.1.6 EU

This subtheme covers the discussion about the European Union. Will an independent Scotland be able to stay in the EU or does it have to go to the back of the EU queue and apply for membership? If Scotland could stay a member or join with little delay would it be able to retain the opt-outs negotiated by the UK? What would happen if there is an in-out referendum on the EU membership of the UK? Would England block Scotland’s EU membership? Unlike in the Brexit referendum, EU nationals living in Scotland had a vote in the independence referendum and thus, creating uncertainty around Scotland’s membership was beneficial for the No campaign. During the campaign, Scotland’s EU membership was one of the major areas of uncertainty.

The Scottish dailies were the most active in discussing this subtheme with the Herald publishing 44 per cent and the Scotsman 29 per cent of the coded words. Both papers covered the issue at length in at least one of their editorials. The subtheme was present in the editorial coverage of all researched papers but quite often it was just a side

note listing the EU membership of an independent Scotland as one of the factors creating uncertainty so its word count of coded words was only the 33rd highest. Despite its low word-count it appeared in 15 editorials.

Both sides' messages about the EU conveyed a view that it was in Scotland's interest to continue its membership. Thus, the focus of the debate became which of the options was a bigger threat to remaining a part of the EU. The No campaign argued that independent Scotland would have to reapply for membership of the EU while the Yes camp's view was that staying in the UK bore a bigger risk in the form of an EU referendum promised by the Prime Minister (Mitchell 2016:10).

Mitchell (2016:10) writes that it was "striking" that both sides presented EU membership as positive to Scotland and the only thing that was debated whether it was riskier for Scottish membership to vote Yes or No. Keating (2017:115) writes that both sides portrayed losing the EU membership as extremely costly to Scotland. The No side argued that it would be difficult for Scotland to retain its EU membership while the Yes side pointed out that there was a significant risk to Scotland's EU membership as a part of the UK because of the rising Euroscepticism in England and a conservative promise of a referendum on EU membership.

Nicola McEwen, at the Scottish Independence Convention of 2017, discussed the Europeanisation of Ireland stating that it is "often said that Ireland didn't really become independent of the UK until it joined the EU and it learned how to engage, how to exert influence, how to secure economic and financial benefits. It became less economically dependent on the UK, and more Europeanised in outlook" (Nutt 2017b:7).

Keating (2017:102-103) writes that – as discussed earlier – the Scottish Government's position on international relations was one of "independence-in-Europe" as it had been since the 1992 General Election. This, on the one hand, helped the Yes movement to combat charges of separation but on the other hand, provided the No side with the possibility to increase uncertainty and thus, voter anxiety. With the possibility of an EU referendum promised by the Conservatives, the EU debate turned out to be about which alternative was less risky for Scotland's future EU membership.

Keating (2017:104) writes that the No side tried to play down the Conservative divisions on Europe to brand independence as the risky option. While they did not completely rule out EU membership for an independent Scotland, they "rehearsed every argument to the effect that accession would be difficult, uncertain, and costly".

There were interventions by, for instance, José Manuel Barroso and Herman van Rompuy that seemed to reflect the position of the UK Government which the No side

amplified but Keating states that they – as neither gentleman had “official standing on the matter” – were nothing more than “expressions of opinion” (Keating 2017:104). On the Barroso intervention, French MP Axelle Lemaire said "It is clearly tactical because he wants to become secretary general of NATO and he thinks that having the support of Britain for her [sic] nomination is a good thing."

French senator Joelle Garriaud stated "The threats formulated by Mr Barroso are inappropriate and the result of Spanish and English pressure. London is increasingly worried. They [the threats] are not credible. If Scotland votes for independence, it will stay in the European Union. It would be in England's interest" (Leask 2014).

When Mr Barroso’s successor, Jean-Claude Juncker, in July said in “an explicit reference to the Balkans” that “the EU would not enlarge during the next five years”, the No side took it as a confirmation that Scotland’s entry to the EU would be difficult if not impossible and highlighted it in a very visible way. This prompted an immediate correction from Juncker’s office that the remark had nothing to do with the Scottish independence referendum. Most member states – at least those who had no internal nationalist movements of their own – kept themselves impartial and were prepared to support the result of the referendum as it had been agreed by the UK and Scottish governments (Keating 2017:105).

The UK Government declined to ask European authorities about Scotland’s future membership as they stated they made no plans for the time after a Yes vote. The Scottish Government did not represent a member state, so it had no possibility to get a ruling from Europe. Academic opinion of constitutional law and political science experts was divided and among a vast amount of different interpretations of different laws, there was no definite answer to the legal question of Scottish EU membership (Keating 2017:106).

The UK Government as a government of an EU member country would have been able to get a ruling from the relevant European authorities but chose not to because having no clear answer was beneficial for their cause. However, leaving a willing member outside of the EU would have benefitted no one especially with the prospective member being one with significant oil and gas resources and control of vast fishing waters.

According to Keating (2017:111), the unionist side “repeatedly suggested” that Scotland’s EU membership could be vetoed by other member states but never specified – unlike pro-unionist commentators who named countries with their own regions campaigning for self-determination – which members might do so. Furthermore, there was no clear indication from the No side or the UK parties what their stance on Scottish membership would be: support or veto. “This strategy was rather to use the EU question

to raise the level of risk and uncertainty, always their strongest card” (Keating 2017:111). At no point did any of the member states threaten to veto Scottish membership and Keating states that “it is difficult to see on what grounds they could veto Scotland’s EU membership.”

The argument for Scotland remaining a part of the EU was that in the end it would be a political decision and Scottish membership would be in the interest of all parties in the equation. Leaving Scotland out would be problematic for Scotland obviously but also to the EU, not least to the rUK (Keating 2017:112). This is the same rationale that was used in support of the currency union: it would be beneficial for all parties but in the case of the EU, the counter argument had no grounds whatsoever. Countries with their own secessionist movements could always argue that the Scottish referendum was agreed between the UK and the Scottish governments and thus legal.

In case Scotland was accepted as a member state of the EU, it would be treated as a new member and would lose all opt-outs it currently enjoyed as a partner in the UK, argued the No campaign. Keating (2017:113) states that “there is no legal provision and no precedent” to confirm that. The No side claimed that Scotland would have to join the Euro but Keating points out that joining the Euro is not automatic and it is actually a rather difficult process. Also forcing Scotland to join the Schengen zone would probably not have been realistic as the UK was at that point a member of the EU and outside Schengen and Scotland joining would have required a border and passport controls between Scotland and the rUK. Many of these points would have been subject to negotiations after a Yes vote so no clarity on them was ever reached.

Keating (2017:116) says that “in the absence of clear law or precedent, much of the debate about an independent Scotland’s place in Europe was speculative”. Politicians largely held the views that their side in the debate held but among academics, there were more complex pairings of beliefs. Keating (2017:116) says that as there were not many people who categorically claimed that Scotland would not be a member of the EU after independence, the debate was more about procedures, transitional arrangements, membership terms and costs and thus, “it echoed the referendum campaign as a whole” (Keating 2017:116).

According to Keating (2016:117), the EU issue was not a central one in the campaign but it contributed to the uncertainty. While the unionist camp were keen to emphasise uncertainties of independence, the promised EU referendum gave the Yes side a chance to highlight the threat to Scotland’s membership a No vote would bring. Since the Brexit referendum where the UK as a whole voted Leave but Scotland voted 62 per

cent Remain, there have been rather different tones from Europe on Scottish membership. Guy Verhofstadt, the chief Brexit negotiator of the European Parliament, told the Commons Home Affairs Committee that “it is a “fact” that an independent Scotland could join the EU after Brexit” (Learmonth 2018:12).

In the CCC [Centre on Constitutional Change] pre- and post-referendum surveys, less than 30 per cent found it likely that “Scotland would be able to retain membership of the EU on the same terms as the UK” (Liñeira et. al. 2017:177). Arguably, the formulation of the question or claim is not optimal because it contains two separate issues: would Scotland be able to retain EU membership and would it be on the same terms as the UK. The Scottish Government White Paper does not claim that an independent Scotland would automatically be able to retain the current UK opt-outs but stresses that the terms would have to be negotiated with the EU (Scottish Government 2013:194-195). With the No campaign knowingly creating uncertainty around the question of EU membership, it would have been interesting to know, how many people thought that Scotland could have stayed in the EU.

On 16 August, the Herald wrote that “One key unknown is whether the UK will remain in the EU if David Cameron gets to honour his pledge to hold an in-out referendum.” Two days later, the Scotsman reported that “nearly two-thirds of Scots believe an independent Scotland would be admitted to the European Union.” Interestingly, nearly “two-thirds of Scots” was also the share that voted remain in the 2016 EU-referendum. On 29 August, the Herald wrote:

After the Prime Minister spoke of stability as one of the great benefits to Scotland of remaining in the UK, he found himself rebuked by Sir Mike Bake, the CBI Scotland president, over the instability caused by his very own promise of an in-out referendum on EU membership. Ouch.

The editorial was mostly devoted to comments about Scotland’s EU membership and many of the observations came from Sir Mike. His view was that Scottish independence would cause “real uncertainty” but the possible EU-referendum and along with the 2015 General Election “contribute their own specific share of uncertainty”. The Herald went on to conclude:

When it comes to EU membership, there is uncertainty, of course, whichever way the vote goes on September 18. Opinion is sharply divided over whether an independent Scotland would have to reapply to join and how long admission might take, not to mention whether it would achieve the favourable terms the UK has negotiated. (29 Aug)

In the editorial where the Scotsman came out for the Union (11 Sep), they wrote at length about the EU membership that they branded a difficult issue. They admitted that “It may well be the case that common sense on the rest of Europe's part would be to accept Scotland in, and that we would be welcomed as a valuable member, but there is no certainty of that.” They stated also that there was “doubt over some of the special agreements the UK has negotiated and enjoys over the euro, borders and rebates.”

The paper acknowledged the issue of the possible EU referendum but argued that “it is probably wise not to let that form a part in Scotland's decision, given there are fairly fundamental questions, not least whether Mr Cameron will still be in power in 2017 to deliver on his promise.” They concluded that “Europe is generally seen as a good thing for Scotland, but the future for an independent Scotland in Europe is unclear. We just don't know what the terms of that would be.” On polling day, they summed up their opposition to independence from earlier editorials: “we delineated the difficulties Scotland would face in trying to secure its place in the European Union, while retaining the opt-outs and rebates secured over decades by the UK.”

5.3.1.7 Oil

This subtheme focuses on the discussion of the Scottish oil reserves and how the economy of an independent Scotland would be dependent on them. Much of this debate was sparked by Sir Ian Wood's warning that the North Sea oil is running out and cannot be relied on for very long. Another point that was discussed was the volatility of oil price which makes it difficult to make budgets.

Considering the importance of the issue, it is surprising that the subtheme was just outside the top 40 most discussed ones regarding number of coded words and it appeared in eight editorials. More than half the total of coded words were published in the Telegraph while the second most productive paper, the Sunday Herald, published less than half the word count of the Telegraph. Remarkably, the Scotsman and the Guardian did not comment on oil in their editorials.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) says that had the UK Government set up a wealth fund based around North Sea oil, it would be worth more than £500bn today. Between 1980 and 1990, the Thatcher government used the £166bn (in 2011 prices) collected as tax from the oil companies to fund non-oil-related tax cuts boosting private wealth of already wealthy individuals and increasing inequality (Nutt 2018:18). Macwhirter (2014g) argues that it was the Scottish hydrocarbon wealth that kept “the

British balance of payments afloat while Margaret Thatcher and her successors replaced manufacturing industry with a financial services kleptocracy based in London.”

Today, the sovereign wealth fund of Norway set up in 1990 is worth US\$1 trillion but in the UK, “no mechanism was established to ensure future generations could share in that windfall.” Aberdeen East MSP Gillian Martin rues the lost opportunity and states that during the North Sea oil production “the Treasury has siphoned off some £600,000 per head of population here in the North East of Scotland while we’ve seen precious little in return” (Nutt 2018:18). According to Macwhirter (2014b:128), “Scotland remains the only region, state, or principality in the world to have discovered oil in its waters and not had any direct benefit from it”. He (2014g) believes that “history will condemn successive UK governments for the way they squandered that precious resource.”

Macwhirter (2013:287) says that “Westminster went to considerable lengths to underplay the significance of oil for political reasons”. In 2005, the SNP made a Freedom of Information request to get a 30-year-old report published. The report was written in 1974 by Gavin McCrone and it stated that oil had the potential to make Scotland one of the richest countries in Europe and that if Scotland opted for independence its budget surpluses would be embarrassingly large: “What is quite clear is that the balance of payments gain from North Sea oil would easily swamp the existing deficit whatever its size and transform Scotland into a country with a substantial and chronic surplus” (McCrone 1974:6).

Russell and Kelbie (2005) write that within days, the report – written originally for Ted Heath’s Tory government – was classified as secret and would remain secret under the governments of Callaghan, Thatcher, Major and Blair i.e. several governments of both Tory and Labour variety. The report criticised the estimates of the potential oil revenues presented by the SNP – which were at that time branded fanciful by the government – as being “far too low”. Russell and Kelbie write that “this is a story of Whitehall betrayal that will satisfy the pre-conceptions of the most extreme Scottish anglophobe.” Had the report become public at the time it could have been a game-changer for Scotland.

Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:10) argue that the “active suppression” of the McCrone report proves that “the significance of the discovery was deliberately concealed” from the Scottish people. The report (1974:4-5) stated that “Even after its discovery, the full significance of North Sea oil was not immediately apparent, and it still remains in large measure disguised from the Scottish public”.

What arguably makes the “betrayal” even worse was the fact that an oil fund was discussed in a Cabinet meeting in December 1977, but the conclusion was that “the

creation of an oil fund would play into the hands of the Scottish Nationalists, for whom it would become a major political target” (Minutes of Cabinet meeting, 15 December 1977 as cited in Cuthbert & Cuthbert 2014:10). Cuthbert and Cuthbert (2014:10) write:

the way in which the UK handled the oil reserves was particularly perverse, since oil was used to prop up a system where the South East of England grew disproportionately, as most other parts of the union declined. It is particularly grotesque, for example, that during the 1980s, the peak years for oil production, Scotland itself suffered net out-migration of around 150 thousand people.

It seems quite clear the North Sea oil would, indeed, have been a game changer that would have made it possible for an independent Scotland to diversify its economy, invest in infrastructure as well as the welfare state and put aside funds for a rainy day and future generations.

Former Labour Chancellor, Lord Healey, said in an interview in 2013 that “the value of oil is a prime motivation behind Westminster’s opposition to independence now and in the 1970s.” He admits that the value of oil was underplayed but argues that the Labour government he was a part of invested in the infrastructure and it was only governments from Thatcher onwards who truly benefited from the oil revenues. Healey said that he believed Westminster politicians before the independence referendum were “worried stiff” about losing the oil and that the UK would “suffer enormously” if Scotland became independent and took control of the oil revenues (Rhodes 2013).

Another example of the UK hiding the oil wealth of Scotland is The Scottish Adjacent Waters Boundaries Order 1999. The BBC News (1999) reported disagreement over it as a “fishing boundary dispute” but in reality, the UK government, just before the opening of the Scottish Parliament, “gave 6,000 square miles of Scottish fishing territory to England.” The former “Alternate Head of the UK Delegation to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea”, Craig Murray (2012), points out that those 6,000 square miles of Scottish fishing territory also include “the Argyll field and six other major oilfields”. He argues that this was done to undermine the case for Scottish independence and that “it is [his] cold, professional opinion that this border lies outside the range of feasible solutions that could be obtained by genuine negotiation, arbitration or judgement.”

Nevertheless, Dickie and Fray (2014) argued in the Financial Times that with a geographic share of UK oil and gas, Scotland’s GDP per capita is higher than that of France and without it, it would still be higher than that of Italy. They also placed Scotland among “the world’s top 35 exporters” and stated that after independence, Scotland’s state finances would be “healthier” than those of rUK.

In late August, Sir Ian Wood, the oil tycoon, criticised the Scottish Government's predictions for future oil revenues and it resulted in a response in the editorials of two of the studied papers. The Union-supporting Telegraph used them to attack the Yes side and the First Minister: "As with so many inconvenient truths that have challenged the First Minister's rose-tinted view of the world, he simply refused to accept Sir Ian's warning that the predictions for future oil revenues made to bolster the separatist case were wrong" (22 Aug). The independence-supporting Sunday Herald criticised the media – "The press seemed to have been struck with collective amnesia last week, because only in February, Wood reported that oil and gas worth £200 billion in revenues was recoverable over 20 years." – and stated that "the industry itself does not share Wood's pessimism" (25 Aug).

Elsewhere in the Sunday Herald that day, Duffy (2014:11) reported that Oil & Gas UK "stood by its prediction" of 24 million barrels instead of the new Wood estimate of 16 million. Professor Alex Kemp backed the 24 million estimate and stated his belief that "the longer-term prospects are better than Wood suggested." A week later, the paper wrote of Wood's 16 billion barrel estimate that "it was just one estimate of Sir Ian's among many, the oil tycoon having plumped for an upper limit of 24 billion not so long ago [in February]." They also argued that "Even if the total is less than 24 billion - which remains arguable - it is still an almighty christening gift for a newborn nation" (31 Aug).

Russell (2017:4) states that Westminster "mismanagement" has made oil companies "fabulously wealthy", that with "more or the less same" resources Norway "has generated almost \$19 per barrel more for the nation than the UK" whose "trust in private enterprise [has] cost UK citizens £400 billion". One could argue that it is not a huge surprise that a billionaire executive of an oil company would want Scotland to remain a part of the UK rather than become independent and possibly review the taxation of such corporations.

The Herald commented on oil and other issues that "the case for independence has been built upon a string of ideal outcomes. ... Scotland's reliance on one volatile commodity, North Sea oil, would subject the economy of an independent Scotland to greater uncertainty" (16 Sep). On polling day, the Telegraph quoted one of its earlier editorials: "Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, had for too long "been allowed to get away with peddling a fantasy version of secession, in which his countrymen float off to prosperity on a cushion of apparently limitless oil wealth" (18 Sep).

In December 2014, Macwhirter (2014g) commented on the "Unionist glee at the recent collapse in the price of North Sea oil" writing that from a Unionist point of view, "up or down, Scottish oil always seems to be a curse". He acknowledged the great

volatility of oil prices citing examples of price developments but argued that “volatility is simply an argument for an oil fund, like Norway's, which evens out fluctuations in the price over time and conserves value.” He went on to conclude that “no one in their right minds would ever base an independent Scottish economy on this wildly fluctuating commodity, certainly not the Scottish Government.”

5.3.2 Indyref impact

This theme was the sixth most-discussed among the 13 themes. It includes five subthemes namely *Indyref affects the whole UK*, *Constitutional reform*, *UK won't be the same*, *Fix the UK* and *Who will speak for England?*. The idea uniting these subthemes to a theme is that the independence referendum campaign and the processes behind it have an impact on the UK regardless of the referendum result and there will have to be wholesale changes to how the UK functions irrespective of whether Scotland is still a part of it or not. The most active contributors to this theme were the UK dailies. In total, this theme appeared in 20 editorials.

5.3.2.1 Indyref affects the whole UK

The talk of Scottish independence or further devolution had a ripple effect on the rUK. There was plenty of discussion in the editorials about what would happen if the Scots voted No and Holyrood received more powers: on the one hand, the English and Welsh wanting more devolution and on the other hand, how the rather fragile Northern Ireland power-sharing administration would struggle with more powers than it had at the time. The federalism alternative would have consequences for all constituent parts of the UK and so would Scotland declaring independence after a Yes vote. There were also calls to reach an agreement that would be fair for all parts of the UK were the Scots to vote no and demand the promised new powers.

Blain and Hutchison (2016a:vii) point out that in addition to the effect the referendum had on Scotland, it was bound to affect the rest of the UK in the form of losing some of its resources – human or otherwise – in the case of a Yes vote. If the result was a No, the Welsh and Northern Irish administrations would also be affected by further Scottish devolution, and calls for devolution for England would materialise or intensify. The EU was faced with a potential dissolution of one of its members and European governments with their own regional independence or autonomy movements (e.g. Spain/Catalonia) were naturally monitoring the developments closely.

This subtheme has the ninth highest word count and it appeared in 14 editorials – six of those were published in the Guardian. The Guardian also had the highest individual word count as two out of every five coded words were published by it. The Telegraph, the Herald and the Observer published 19, 19 and 16 per cent respectively while the Scotsman accounted for eight per cent. The Sunday Herald did not discuss such issues at all.

The Guardian (21 Aug) wrote that “events in Scotland will force the English to rethink the way they are governed. It’s time for a national constitutional convention”. They went on to argue that “it seems clear that these new developments [calls for English devolution] are overwhelmingly a response to the current events in Scotland” and stated that regardless of the referendum result, “English devolution will have to be addressed too, whether through a devolved parliament, devolution to the regions, or to existing local authorities.”

The Herald (22 Aug) argued that “there are now clear signs it [the Scottish referendum] is having a ripple effect, prompting renewed debate about Westminster’s relationship with the other nations and regions of the UK.” They also brought up concerns that “greater devolution for Northern Ireland, prompted by greater devolution in Scotland, could actually bring down the province’s power-sharing administration” and that reforming the Barnett formula after the referendum “could threaten public spending in Northern Ireland” which, in turn, “could lead to social unrest”. Furthermore, according to the Herald, the Scottish referendum was “fuelling” Welsh calls for “greater devolution”. They also argued that “federalism within the UK is back on the agenda, thanks to the referendum” and that “a slumbering beast has been awoken in UK politics. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, there will be ramifications for the rest of the UK.”

The Guardian (7 Sep) noted that “it is not only one country but four that must grapple with the huge stakes involved in divorce” and argued that there is a “need for reform on a British, not just a Scottish, level” (8 Sep). The Scotsman (8 Sep) argued that “there will be calls for similar consideration for more tax powers” coming from “economically struggling areas in the rest of the UK”. The Telegraph (9 Sep) was worried that “The growing support for Scottish independence has been matched by more and more concessions that have consequences not just for the Scots” and stated that “many will argue there should be an English parliament to match those in the other three parts of the kingdom”. The Observer (13 Sep) wrote that “The Scottish people set out on this journey alone – but they have unwittingly taken on board passengers from the rest of the union.”

5.3.2.2 Constitutional reform

This theme focuses mainly on the discussed need for reform after the referendum. Most papers agreed that it is important to give different parts of the UK more control over their own affairs: power needs to be decentralised. It would have to be guaranteed that England won't override other parts of the UK but at the same time England needs its own devolution. Most papers were expecting a No vote and writing about reforms afterwards. The change would be fundamental and irrevocable.

The *Constitutional reform* subtheme appeared in nine editorials and four different papers. It was just among the top-half of subthemes i.e. the 26th most discussed one. The Guardian published nearly half of the coded words in this subtheme while the Observer, the Herald and the Telegraph combined reached a similar share. The Scotsman contributed five per cent.

The subtheme *Constitutional reform* occurred at times in the same paragraphs or even sentences as *Federalism* but not exclusively. Together with *New powers* these three themes are close to each other but there are differences. New powers are often discussed without any mention of constitution and constitutional reform is not always discussed in connection to federalism. *New powers* and *Federalism* are placed under *Constitutional question* as positive arguments for the UK and *Constitutional reform* under *Indyref impact* as a result of the independence referendum campaign.

The newspapers' message was that a No vote would be the new dawn for a completely different United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Guardian (21 Aug) wrote that:

A constitutional convention, similar to that which paved the way for Scottish devolution in the 1990s, seems a more promising forum than any other. But the thinking and talking all need to start now and to conclude within a finite time. If they don't, the right answers could be left at the mercy of events.

On 8 September, the Guardian identified a "need for reform on a British, not just a Scottish, level" and argued that "whatever the result next week, it has been a huge mistake not to extend the discussion about devolution and home rule across the whole of the British state, to include England and Wales". The Telegraph (9 Sep) wrote:

a Conservative committee chaired by Lord Strathclyde proposed the creation of a committee of all the parliaments and assemblies of the UK to decide on the constitutional balance of an extant union after September 18. Before forging blindly

ahead with Mr Brown's self-accelerated timetable ... we need to pause in the event of a No vote and let the whole country have a say in its future.

They argued that "A Yes vote next week will trigger a constitutional crisis of monumental proportions".

The Scotsman (12 Sep), with regard to Brown's fast timetable for new powers, argued: "Any legislation, but particularly that dealing with constitutional change, inevitably requires serious and detailed scrutiny to ensure that the final outcome secures majority support in the Commons and that it is robust." The Guardian (12 Sep) wrote:

Wales and England need new rights and powers too, including a form of UK federalism that guarantees that the other parts of the country cannot be overridden by England. England is not a Tory country. But that does not lessen the need for a radical new home-rule settlement involving the nations; including a new small, democratic second chamber, and genuine devolution in England.

They also argued that "But voting no cannot be a vote against change, and there is now at last the real hope that it can be a vote for reform and decentralisation in Britain." As we saw after the referendum, there was a window of opportunity to reform the UK and bring its governance to the 21st century but that window was closed – quite possibly deliberately – by the main UK parties and the in-power Conservatives in particular.

The Observer (13 Sep) argued that the referendum "result should act as a catalyst for change, a harbinger of constitutional shifts for the whole of Great Britain" and that Gordon Brown's intervention "signalled that the constitutional make-up of these islands is about to change irrevocably." They quoted him writing "Westminster's claim to undivided authority over the country? Dead and buried". The Guardian (15 Sep) wrote that "An important part of the answer ... is urgent constitutional reform that protects the nations, regions and other minorities from majoritarianism."

The Herald (16 Sep) stated that "What cannot be allowed to emerge is a constitutional settlement for Scotland that panders to that lowest common denominator, put together in a backroom deal at Westminster." They also presented a way to avoid that happening: "A UK constitutional convention should therefore be established ... to consider issues such as the setting up of an English parliament, ... reform of the House of Lords, greater power to the nations and English regions, and renaming the Bank of England." Needless to say, at the time of writing more than four years later, none of those things have happened and few people remember these demands. Of course, this is partly because of Brexit.

The Telegraph (16 Sep) argued that “As the campaign has become more partisan, wounds have been opened that will take more than mere constitutional reforms to heal”. On polling day, even the strongly pro-establishment Telegraph stated that “A new constitutional settlement will be needed.”

On the day of the referendum, Macwhirter wrote in his Herald (p. 17) column:

And the UK media which has suddenly become so interested in constitutional reform? After the tent cities and media hangouts pack up and go, they will forget all about it. Scotland will lapse back into what it has always been for many of them: a tartan theme park with bad weather and some truculent employees.

At the time of writing, one could argue that his prediction was a lot closer to reality than those included in the editorials collected for this study.

5.3.2.3 UK won't be the same

No matter how the Scottish people vote on 18 September, the UK will never be the same again. That seemed to be the consensus of the researched papers’ editorial teams. The papers that supported a No vote used hundreds of words in their editorials to preach how the UK would be unrecognisable after the exceptional and inspiring campaign. The winds of change were sweeping across Britain and the UK really had to change to finally come into the 21st century.

This subtheme was received most of its coded words from the Guardian and the Observer that combined accounted for more than 80 per cent of the word count. The Telegraph and the Herald made minor contributions while the subtheme was absent from the editorials of the Scotsman and the Sunday Herald. In total, the subtheme appeared in nine editorials.

The Guardian wrote already on 21 August that “Yes or no on 18 September, British governance is going to change afterwards.” On 12 September, they were somewhat more cautious in their prediction: “But voting no cannot be a vote against change, and there is now at last the real hope that it can be a vote for reform and decentralisation in Britain.” The Guardian’s last contribution to this subtheme came on 15 September and its tone was prophetic:

The one thing that cannot happen, if there is a no vote, is for England to assume that the anxiety is over. If the UK survives on Thursday, new powers for Scotland will be necessary but not sufficient. England itself must change too. And so must the way we all do politics. Back under the duvet is not an option.

The Observer, which published one editorial relevant to the independence referendum during the five-week research period, led it with a rather dramatic headline: “The union is broken. After Thursday, Britain will never be the same again” (13 Sep). It went on to state that:

The result should act as a catalyst for change, a harbinger of constitutional shifts for the whole of Great Britain. ... When Gordon Brown – backed by the three Westminster party leaders – last week promised Scotland "nothing less than a modern form of home rule" if the vote is no, it signalled that the constitutional make-up of these islands is about to change irrevocably. ... It would be inspiring to think that the radical energy generated by this referendum could see the whole of the UK becoming a fairer and more enlightened place. The extraordinary drama of this referendum means that there will be no return to the status quo ante south of the border. ... A new political settlement for the union offers a convincing opportunity of a new start for the whole of Britain. ... On Thursday, Scotland will decide but, whatever that choice, Britain will not be, and should not be, the same again.

The Telegraph, which on 9 September seemed to be complaining that the ballot paper options no longer meant “separatism or the status quo”, during the last week, had changed its position: “Whatever happens in Thursday’s vote, the Union will change. The Prime Minister was clear in his appeal to Scotland’s voters that the status quo is not an option: all the political parties have signed up to an agenda of further devolution” (16 Sep). They repeated the sentiment on polling day: “Whatever the outcome of the Scottish independence referendum, Britain will never be the same again” (18 Sep).

On September 9, the Herald wrote about publishing the UK parties’ plan for new Holyrood powers: “If it works, it may save the Union and lead to a very different UK”. In their second contribution to this subtheme they presented the UK changing profoundly as a result of the independence referendum as an undisputed fact: “We are on the cusp of the most momentous vote in living memory and, regardless of the outcome of Thursday's poll, Scotland and the rest of the UK will never be the same again” (16 Sep).

Understandably, the Sunday Herald did not contribute to this subtheme as they supported a Yes vote but somehow also the No supporting the Scotsman never included the “things will never be the same again” narrative in their editorials. At the time of writing, it is easy to argue that the UK most definitely is not the same as it was before the independence referendum but it has very little to do with the promises of devo-max or near-federalism and everything to do with the Brexit-referendum. Admittedly, the electoral map of Scotland changed profoundly in the 2015 General Election but it

probably turned SNP yellow because many people felt that Scotland received less than what was promised.

The Observer (13 Sep) wrote about how radical the change brought about by the independence referendum could be:

Ed Miliband ... suggests that were he to become prime minister the union would undergo fundamental change. "Scotland's example will lead the way in changing the way we are governed in England too, with the devolution we need to local government from Cornwall to Cumbria." Few, if any, people were talking about devolved powers to Cumbria or Cornwall two weeks ago.

Ed Miliband did not become prime minister and it is impossible to assess how dramatically the UK would have changed if he had but considering how Labour approached the much-hyped new Scottish powers in the Smith Commission, one can argue that there is little reason to believe that it would have been significantly more radical than that of the Cameron government of 2015.

On the day of the referendum, Iain Macwhirter wrote in his Herald (p. 17) column:

After a No vote, we will see a return to politics as usual as Westminster becomes preoccupied with the next UK General Election and then the proposed referendum on British membership of the EU. In a parliament of 650, Scottish interests are always going to be marginalised.

Hindsight is always 20/20 but it is not difficult to argue that Macwhirter's crystal ball was functioning better than those of the studied papers' editorial teams'. Starting from the Prime Minister's speech about millions of English voices that needed to be heard all the way to the "horse-trading" in the Smith Commission and rejecting all Scotland Bill amendments made by Scottish MPs.

5.3.2.4 Fix the UK

Fix the UK is another subtheme without a huge number of occurrences but still it brings several hundreds of words to the *Indyref impact* theme. If the UK survives the independence referendum intact, what should be done to make the future look brighter? The political system needs renovation. The Union needs to find its sense of solidarity again. This subtheme was discussed only in the Guardian and the Observer during weeks IV and V when it looked possible that the UK would have been reformed after a No vote.

The Guardian argued that the UK needs to be fixed regardless of the referendum result i.e. with or without Scotland (12 Sep). The Observer (13 Sep) argued that changing Scotland for the better might be possible and even done better without breaking up the

Union. They reported Gordon Brown's words about "the impacts of globalisation", "Westminster's claim" soon being "dead and buried" and "Londoners, Mancunians and Glaswegians" working together "to re-make Britain" that have already been discussed under 5.2.1.5 *Unity and solidarity*, 5.1.2.2 *People reclaiming politics*, as well as 5.2.1.4 *Federalism* and 5.3.2.2 *Constitutional reform*.

The Guardian wrote on 15 September – as discussed in the previous subsection – about "new powers for Scotland" after a No vote, the need for England and "the way we all do politics" to change. "Back under the duvet" could not be an option. On the eve of the referendum, the paper stated that a No vote could be:

... the beginning of a new joint enterprise for the four nations of the UK, the chance to reforge our union – to spread power, to break the paralysis and centralisation of Westminster, to fix a system that is broken. That is an exciting project for the 21st century, long overdue.

At the time of writing and actually since the EU referendum in the UK, the last chance for the UK which the Guardian and the Observer were so enthusiastic about seems to have been wasted.

5.3.2.5 Who will speak for England?

The title of this subtheme is from a Daily Mail front page on February 4, 2016. The subtheme covers the calls for devolution in England and, to some extent, further devolution in Wales, an English parliament or at least a solution to the West-Lothian question. The Telegraph was also worried about giving more powers to the Scots when the alternative outcomes of the Scottish referendum were supposed to be the status quo or Scottish independence.

The subtheme is placed in the tail end of the subtheme list when they are ranked according to volume. It is closely related to the subtheme of *Federalism* but there is a clear presence of an English perspective to the issue and an impact on English governance. The subtheme was mostly discussed in the Guardian and the Telegraph with the Scotsman pondering on the practicalities of getting the new Scottish powers through the House of Commons dominated by English MPs who might demand new powers for their own constituencies.

On 21 August, the Guardian wrote about John Redwood and Boris Johnson's views on further devolution for Scotland in relation to devolution in England – as discussed in 5.2.2.1 *Relations with England* – and how English devolution will require urgent attention – as discussed under 5.3.2.1 *Indyref affects the whole UK* and 5.3.2.3 *UK won't be the*

same. Later on, (12 Sep) when declaring support for No, the paper discussed Wales and England needing new powers (cf. 5.2.1.4 *Federalism* and 5.3.2.2 *Constitutional reform*) and the “need for a radical new home-rule settlement involving the nations” (5.3.2.2 *Constitutional reform*). Once again, this illustrates the interconnectedness of different subthemes within themes but also under different themes and even top-level groups.

The Scotsman (8 Sep) argued that legislating for the new Scottish powers will not by any means be easy at Westminster:

even assuming that Westminster agrees to an early Commons debate, this would be just the start of a legislative process that requires both a set of workable proposals and broad agreement from MPs. Many of them will represent economically struggling areas in the rest of the UK such as the north-east of England, west Midlands and south-west, where there will be calls for similar consideration for more tax powers.

The Telegraph (9 Sep) was clearly concerned about the democratic deficit that the English people faced:

Yet this [additional devolution and federalism] clearly has huge implications for England, whose voters have not had any say in this matter. When the negotiations over the referendum took place two years ago, we were assured the alternatives were separatism or the status quo, since the “devo-max” question was ruled out. Yet the growing support for independence has been matched by more and more concessions that have consequences not just for the Scots. If they are to be given total control over income tax, something previously ruled out, then what about England? How does the biggest country in the Union fit into a federalist future? ... Many will argue there should be an English parliament to match those in the other three parts of the kingdom. Yet such an institution, representing 85 per cent of the population, would risk creating a constitutional imbalance. The last government’s efforts to impose regional government were given short shrift when they were run past the people of north-east England. Recently, there has been talk of giving powers to the English cities to match those devolved to Scotland.

6. Quantitative analysis

This chapter discusses the quantitative aspects of the study i.e. the relative prominence of the thematic components and their timing and volume during the five-week research period. It starts with the volume of referendum-related editorials during the sixteen-week period of collecting editorials. It progresses to discuss the prominence of the thematic components on all levels of the thematic model as well as the discovered differences between the editorial coverages of the studied newspapers. The numerical data produced from the thematic analysis is presented as absolute figures and percentage shares and the most important differences are commented on. It has to be noted that no statistical tests have been used so there can be no claims of statistical significance.

6.1 When and where was the referendum discussed?

Williamson and Golding (2016:111) say that “neither the English press nor its readers were hugely excited by the referendum outside the period immediately before and after the vote.” It is easy to agree with that assessment at least based on the editorials collected for this study. The following graphs illustrate the percentages and numbers of referendum-related editorials published in the four dailies during the data collection period of this study.

The data corpus of the study consists of the editorials of six newspapers published during a sixteen-week period between 30 June and 19 October. The five weeks of the data set of this study are named Week I to Week V while the weeks before the actual period of the thematic analysis are branded Week A to Week F and the weeks after the data set are branded Week W to Week Z.

Table 4: The weeks during which the data corpus and the data set were collected

Week A 30 Jun - 9 Jul	Week B 10 - 16 Jul	Week C 17 - 23 Jul	Week D 24-30 Jul	Week E 31 Jul - 6 Aug	Week F 7 - 13 Aug	WEEK I 14 - 21 Aug	WEEK II 22 - 28 Aug	WEEK III 29 Aug - 4 Sep	WEEK IV 5 - 11 Sep	Week V 12 - 18 Sep	Week W 19-25 Sep	Week X 26 Sep - 2 Oct	Week Y 3 - 9 Oct	Week Z 10 - 19 Oct
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In order to keep the study readable, the time units are called weeks even though not all of them are seven days long. This is due to the fact that the data corpus was collected during sixteen weeks from Monday to Sunday. The data set i.e. the editorials that are included in the thematic analysis were collected during a five-week period that ended on polling day as it was expected that the thematic components would change significantly once the result was available. In order to include possible mentions of “exactly five weeks

to the referendum”, Week I is actually eight days long, while Week A and Week Z consist of ten days each.

It is clear that there is a clear spike in publishing referendum-related editorials during the week of the referendum as well as weeks immediately before and after it. All included papers published their highest numbers and percentage shares of referendum-related editorials during those weeks. The weekly papers are excluded from the following graphs because of their different pattern of publishing editorials compared to that of daily papers.

The Observer published one independence-referendum-related editorial during Week V and one during Week W. Those were the only relevant editorials the paper published during those weeks. The Sunday Herald did not publish a relevant editorial on Week D but published one during all other included weeks either as a single long editorial or one of two shorter ones. During six of the sixteen included weeks, they published only one longer, referendum-related editorial.

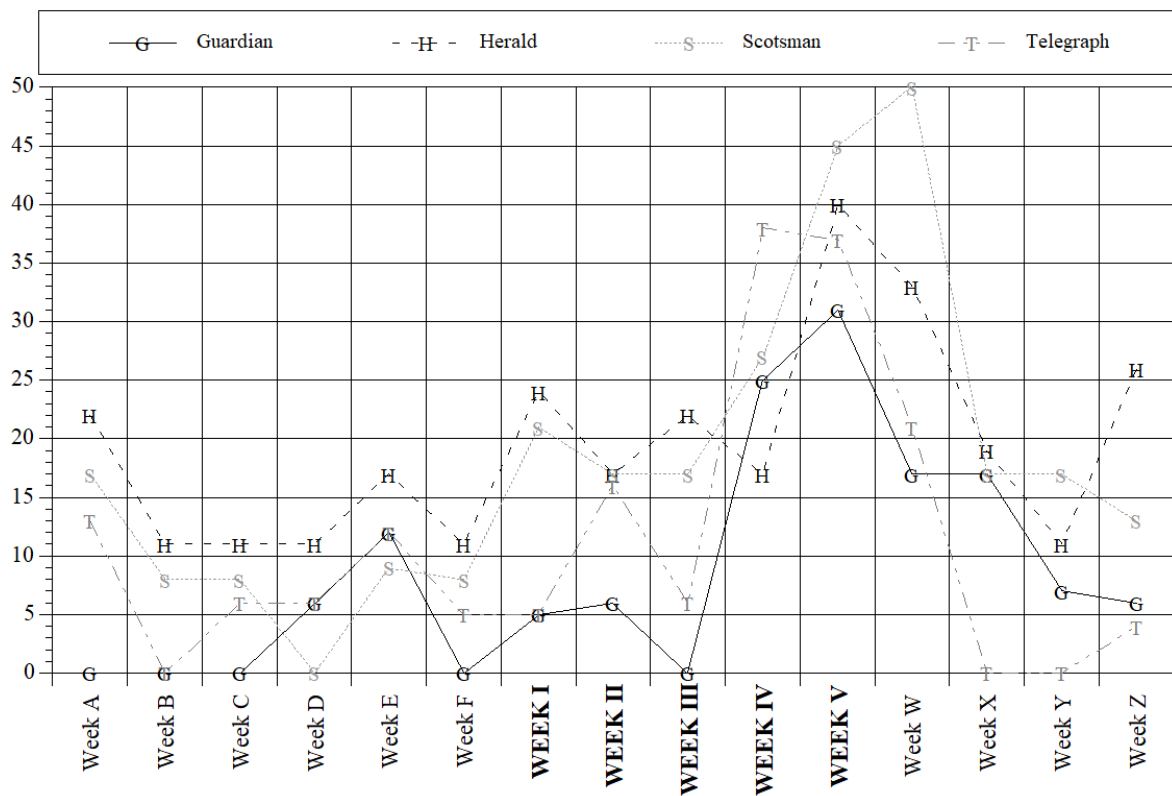


Figure 1: The percentage share of referendum-related editorials in the included daily newspapers in the data corpus

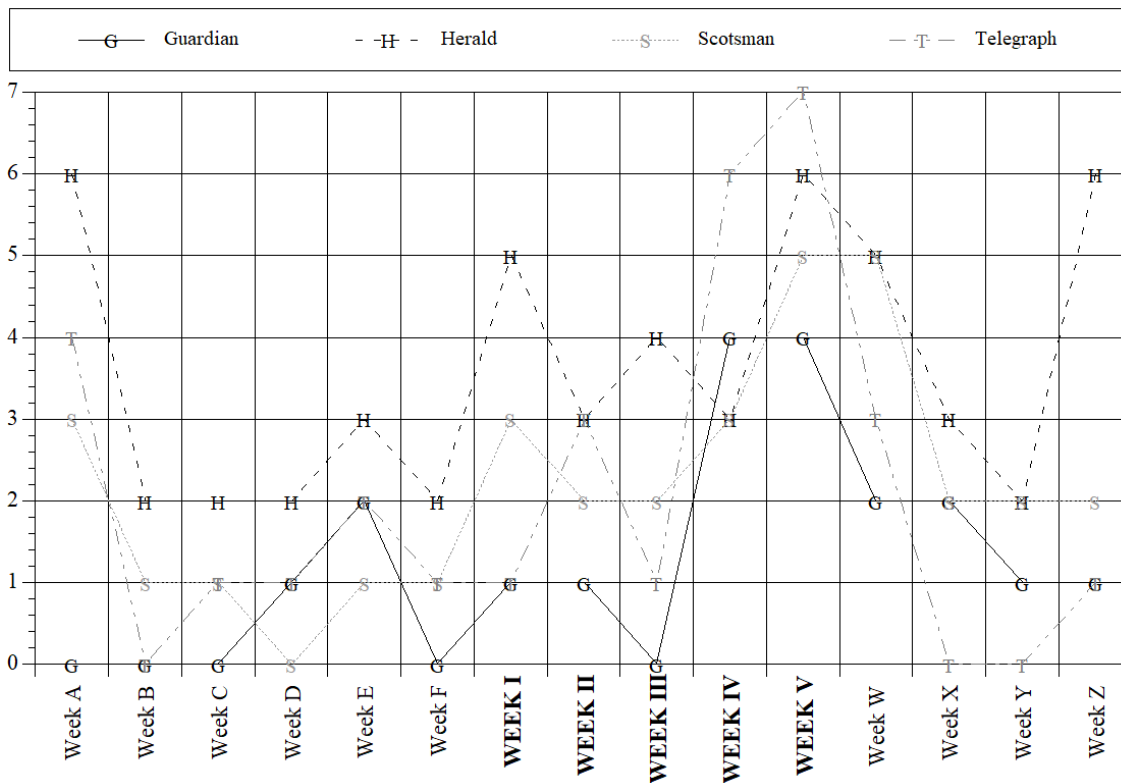


Figure 2: Number of referendum-related editorials in the included daily newspapers in the data corpus

The numbers of coded words increased for all papers during the last two weeks of the period of the analysis. The Scotsman declared its support for the Union during week IV in a special editorial longer than its usual ones and thus its word count of coded words peaked earlier even if its number and percentage share of relevant editorials was higher during week V than week IV. The results for the Guardian and the Telegraph – the UK dailies – seem to confirm the view presented above that the UK papers were not “hugely excited by the referendum outside the period immediately before and after the vote”. However, even for the Scottish dailies, there was a clear increase when entering the last two weeks of the campaign. The Sunday Herald stayed true to form and format working as the sole voice of the Yes movement discussing the people, events and phenomena in a rather similar form from week to week.

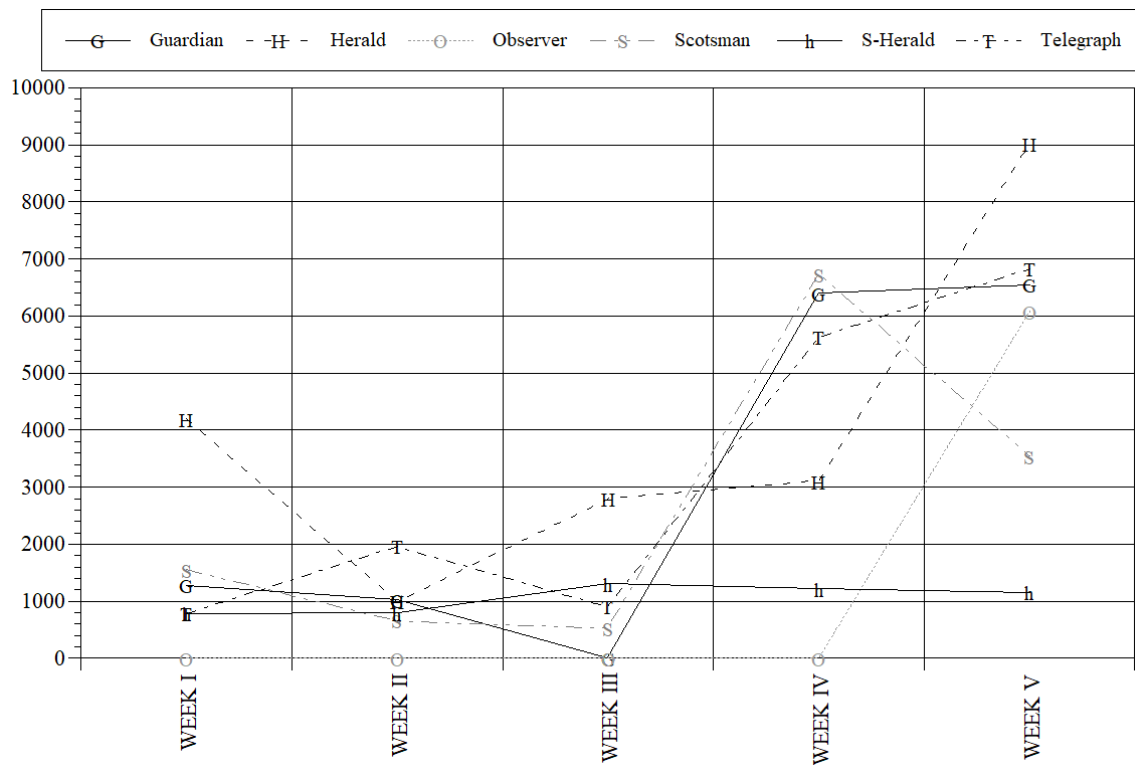


Figure 3: Coded words published by the included papers during the actual period of analysis

6.2 Relative prominence of the thematic components

The simplest and most practical way to measure the importance of the different themes is by comparing word counts in total and across the data set. One has to bear in mind that informing and educating their readers was not the sole motivation for newspapers to discuss the issues connected to the referendum, so importance might not be the correct choice of word. Newspapers can write about an issue to criticise or persuade but also to entertain or for commercial reasons i.e. write about issues that they believe their readers want to read so that they can sell more papers. Full data tables with absolute words counts as well as percentages and numbers of editorials where individual themes and subthemes appear can be found in the appendices. There are also tables presenting the word count rankings of different top-level groups, themes and subthemes.

6.3 Coded words weekly and by newspaper

The research period for the thematic analysis was five weeks long and it took place between 14 August and 18 September 2014. The first week is actually eight days long in order to include possible mentions of “five weeks to the referendum” and the difference, compared to a normal seven-day week is one editorial in the Scotsman. It has been discussed widely and already seen in previous figures that the referendum campaign and

especially its media interest was heavily concentrated on the last weeks or days of the 18-month campaign. This is illustrated again in Figure 4 below.

The referendum campaign really came alive when it started to look like it could go either way. This is reflected in the fact that nearly three fifths of editorials relevant for this study and three quarters of the coded words were published during the last two weeks of the campaign. During this period, the No campaign finally agreed – sort of – on what new powers would be devolved to Holyrood if the Scots voted No. Also, three of the six papers declared their preferred outcome for the referendum discussing the different issues at great length.

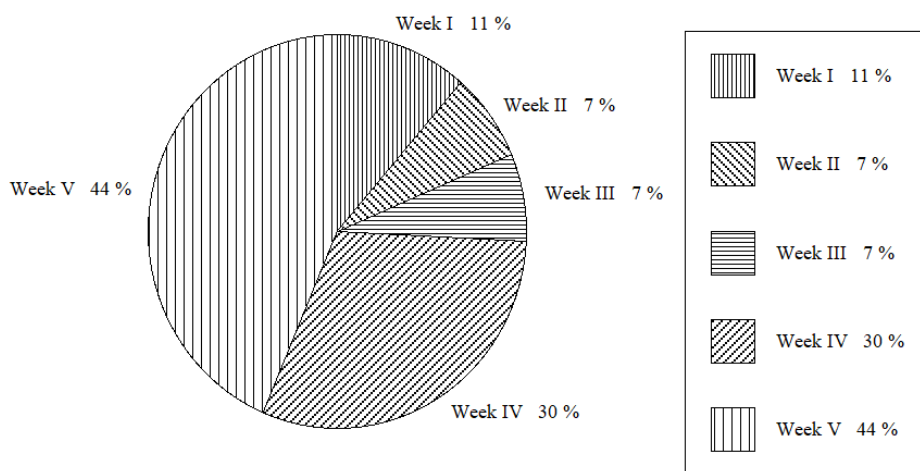


Figure 4: Percentage shares of coded words published during the research period weeks

The newspapers in this study published during the research period a total of 75,920 words coded into one or several of the thematic component categories. The most prolific paper was the Herald which published 27 per cent of all coded words in this study. The Telegraph and the Guardian published a fifth each while the Scotsman was responsible for 17 per cent. The Observer, while it only published one relevant editorial during the research period, published slightly more coded words than the Sunday Herald in its five editorials. This can be explained by the different formats i.e. print vs. web-based with their different restrictions and also the fact that the Observer discussed the independence referendum only once, so they had to address everything they considered relevant in that single editorial and, therefore, the density of codes/subthemes was higher. The shares of the total word count of different papers for each paper can be found in figure 5 below.

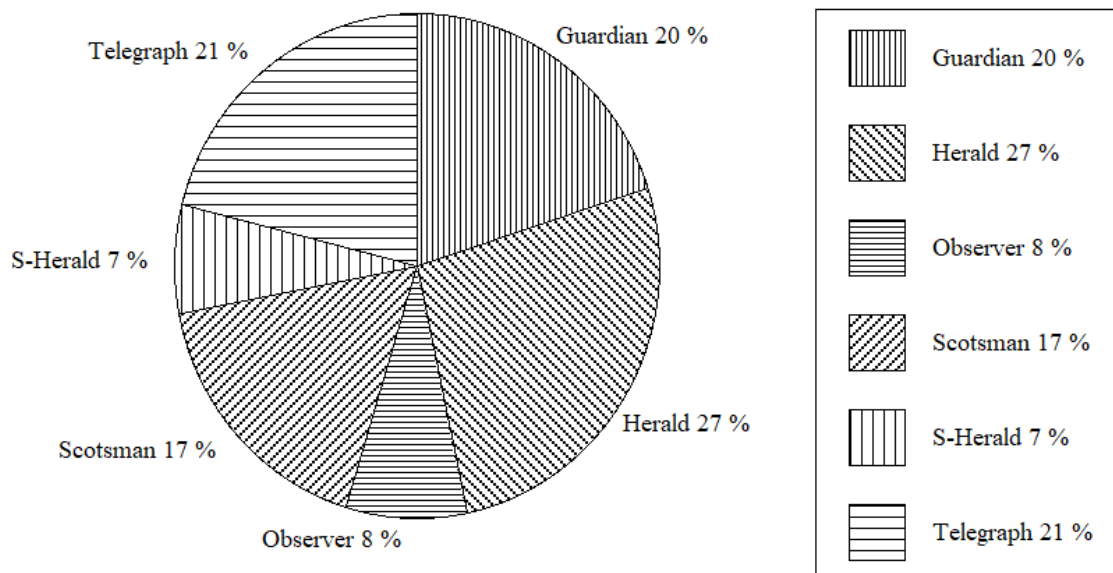


Figure 5: Percentage shares of coded words for each newspaper

6.4 Top Level Groups

Of the top-level groups, *Campaign* included the most themes (6) and those in turn included the most subthemes (25) so it is perhaps unsurprising that its number of coded words accounts for nearly half of the total word count of coded words. *Constitutional question*, with slightly fewer themes (5) and subthemes (19), amount to nearly 30 per cent while the share of *Impact* with two themes and 13 subthemes is a good fifth of the total.

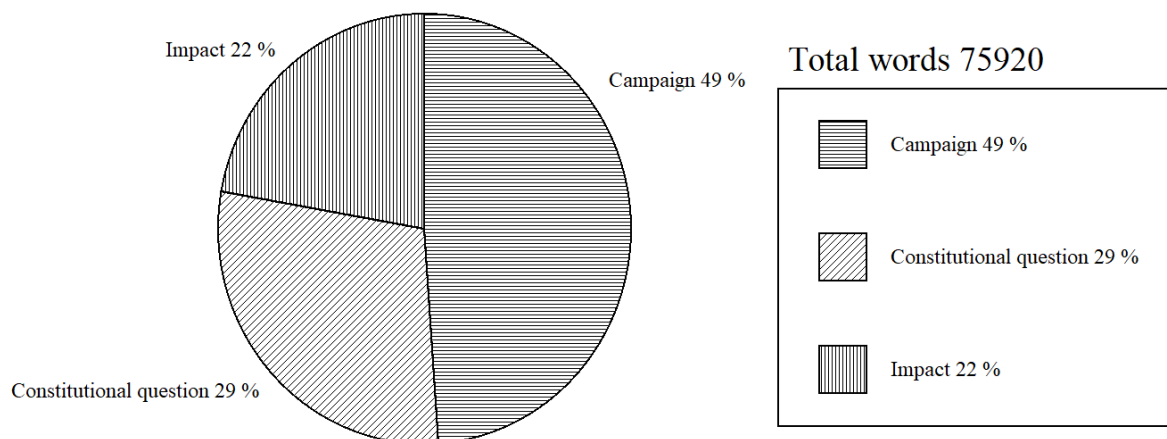


Figure 6: Percentage shares of coded words in different top-level groups

6.4.1 Top-level groups by week

The top-level group *Campaign* was by far the most discussed one: its number of coded words for week V almost equalled the number of coded words of the smallest group *Impact* during the whole five-week period. *Campaign* during the last two weeks included

more coded words than all five weeks of *Constitutional question*. During week I, the themes in *Campaign* were discussed less than those of *Constitutional question* and *Impact* but for each of the following four weeks, the group received more coded words than the others and during weeks II, III and V more than the other two groups combined.

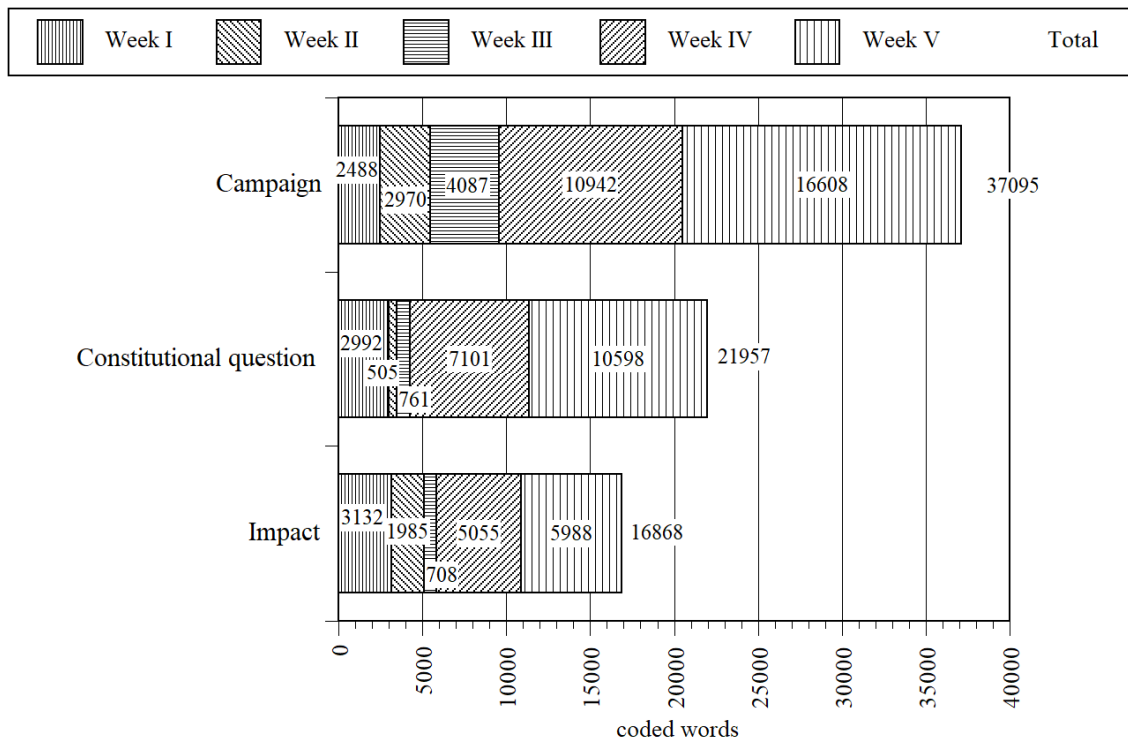


Figure 7: Absolute numbers of coded words published in different top-level groups during the research period weeks

Almost three quarters of all coded words were published during the last two weeks. This makes it difficult from a research point-of-view as close to the referendum there were days that produced more coded words than, for instance, the whole of week III. Also, as the debate was so heavily concentrated towards the end of the campaign, it might be difficult to obtain significant new insights by extending the research period further into the collected 16-week data corpus.

Campaign, like the grand total of coded words, received three quarters of its words during the last two weeks. It is the only group whose importance increases for the whole research period albeit rather modestly in the first weeks. *Constitutional question* is mostly discussed towards the end of the campaign with 80 per cent of its words occurring during the last two weeks, nearly half in week V and very little discussion during weeks II and III. Nearly a fifth of the discussion about the themes under *Impact* was published during week I and a good tenth during week II. Two thirds of its coded words – somewhat less than those of the other groups – were published during the last two weeks so the issues

were perhaps not deemed as important as the issues included in the other two groups: *Impact* was not as actively dealt with as the other groups when the contest was decided.

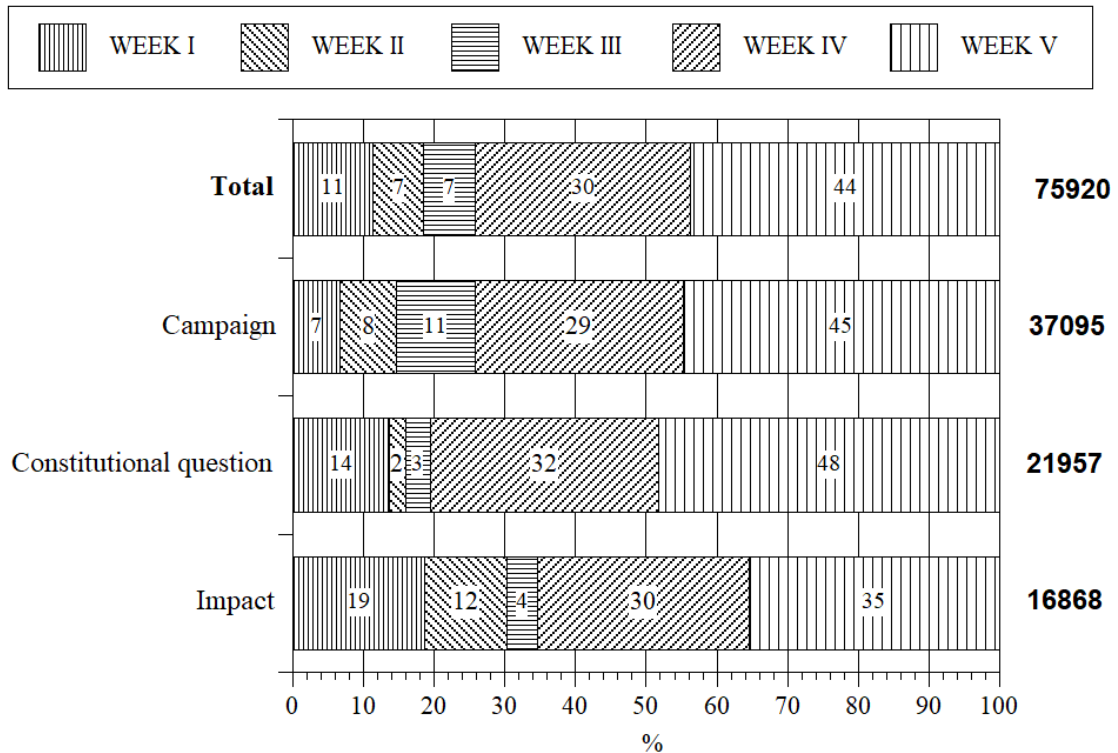


Figure 8. Percentage shares of coded words published in different top-level groups during the research period weeks

The absolute number of coded words for both week IV and week V is greater than the corresponding numbers or the first three weeks combined. There were more words coded under *Campaign* during weeks IV and V as well as under *Constitutional question* during week V than the grand totals of coded words during all of the first three weeks. One could expect a steady rise of interest and commentary when approaching an extremely important political event with potentially very significant effects like the Scottish independence referendum but even during week III that ended with a mere two weeks to polling day, the selected newspapers showed rather little interest in discussing the event or issues related to it in their editorials.

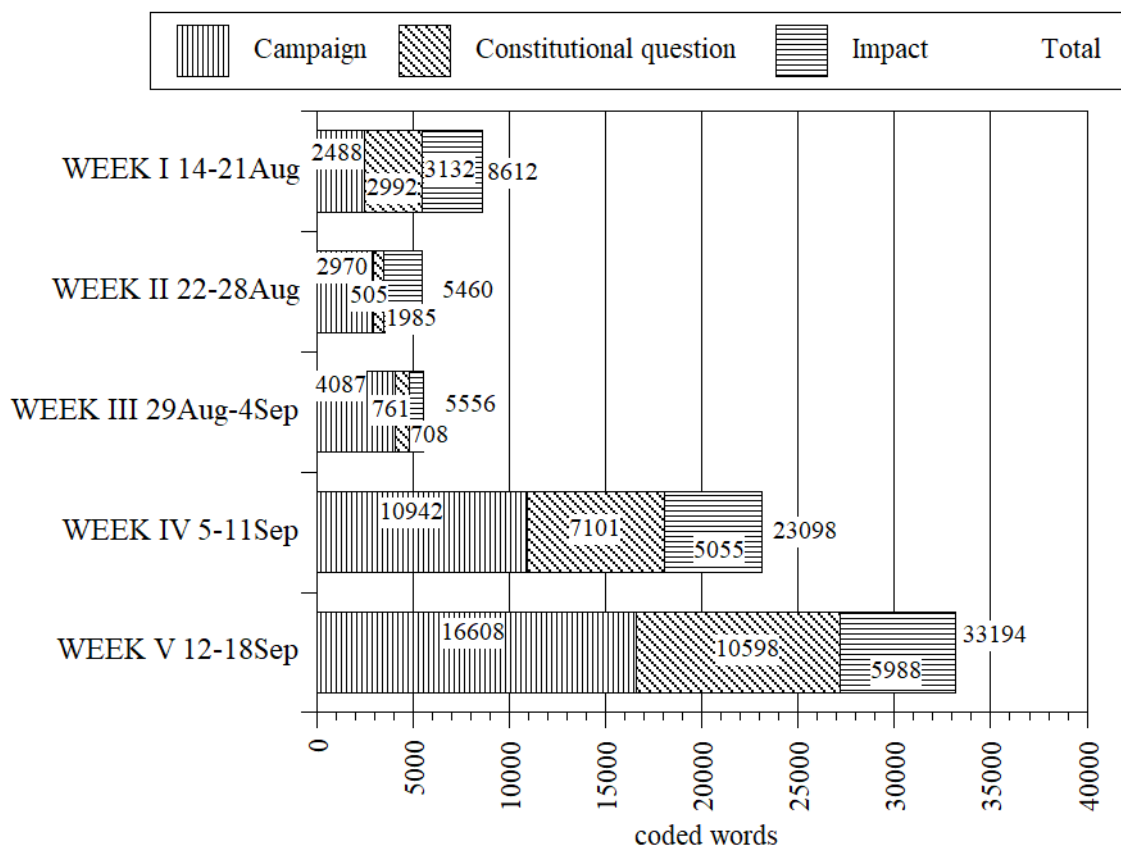


Figure 9: Absolute numbers of coded words published during the research period weeks according to top-level groups

It is not an overstatement to say that the themes and issues grouped under *Campaign* dominated the editorials. Those themes account for half of the coded words during week V – the week that saw the publishing of 44 per cent of all coded words – and they received an almost similar share during the second most productive week, week IV. During weeks II and III, the shares of *Campaign* among the coded words were 54 and 74 per cent respectively, although one has to bear in mind that the volumes of coded words during those weeks were less than a fourth and a fifth of weeks IV and V.

During weeks I, IV and V, 31-35 per cent of coded words fell under *Constitutional question* but during weeks II and III considerably less: nine and 14 per cent respectively. More than a third of coded words were filed under *Impact* during the first two weeks while during the most active weeks, the group received a share of around one fifth.

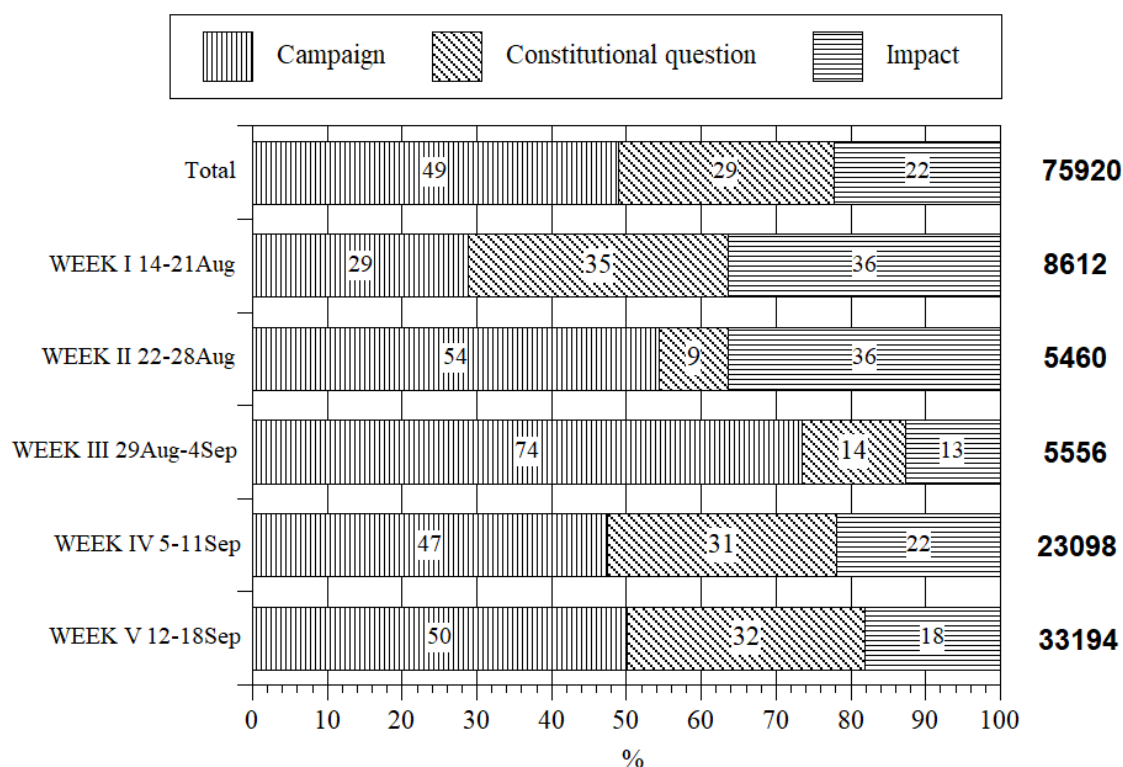


Figure 10: Absolute numbers of coded words published during the research period weeks according to top-level groups

6.4.2 Top-level groups by newspaper

The Herald and the Telegraph were the newspapers that contributed the most to the *Campaign* group. Each of them published roughly twice as many words coded under *Campaign* as the Scotsman and the Guardian which, in turn, was the most significant contributor to *Constitutional question* and *Impact*. Both Scottish dailies published significantly more in those groups than the Telegraph or the weekly papers. The Sunday Herald focused mostly on *Campaign*, had some input to the discussion about *Impact* but discussed the *Constitutional question* very little during the research period. It is to be remembered that the paper had declared support for independence already in May so presumably it had already been dealing with referendum related issues actively and at length before the research period started at the end of June.

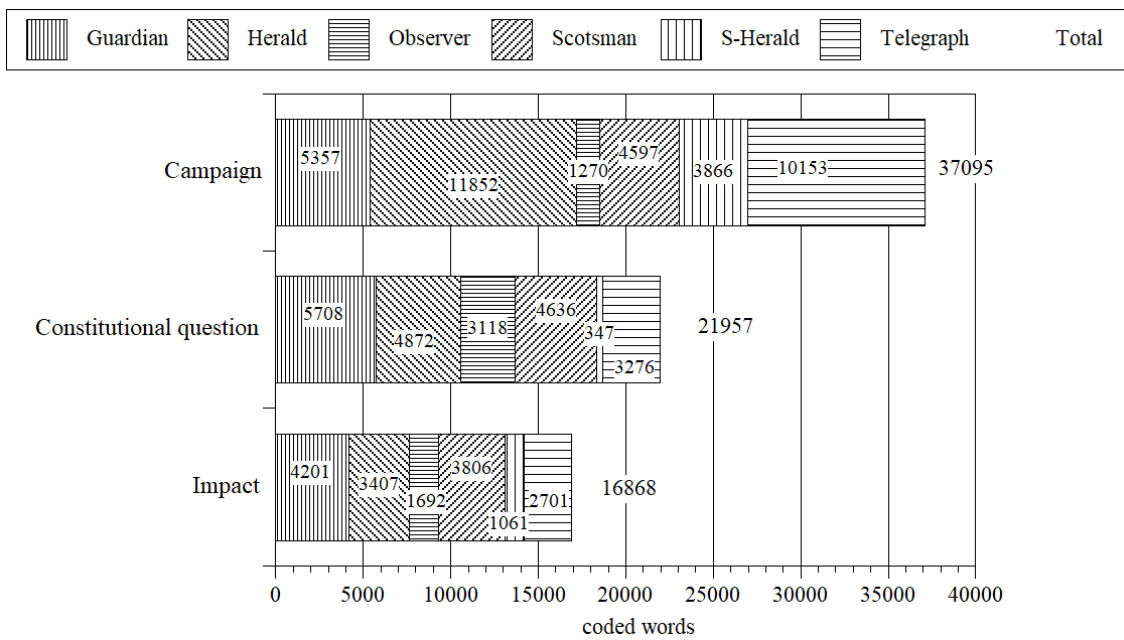


Figure 11: Top-level groups by newspaper: absolute word counts

The Herald editorial team was the most active in producing referendum-related editorials and both in number of editorials and number of words so, as one might expect, it was the paper that produced the most coded words for this study. The UK-wide dailies, the Telegraph and the Guardian, contributed considerably fewer coded words than the Herald but considerably more than the Scotsman.

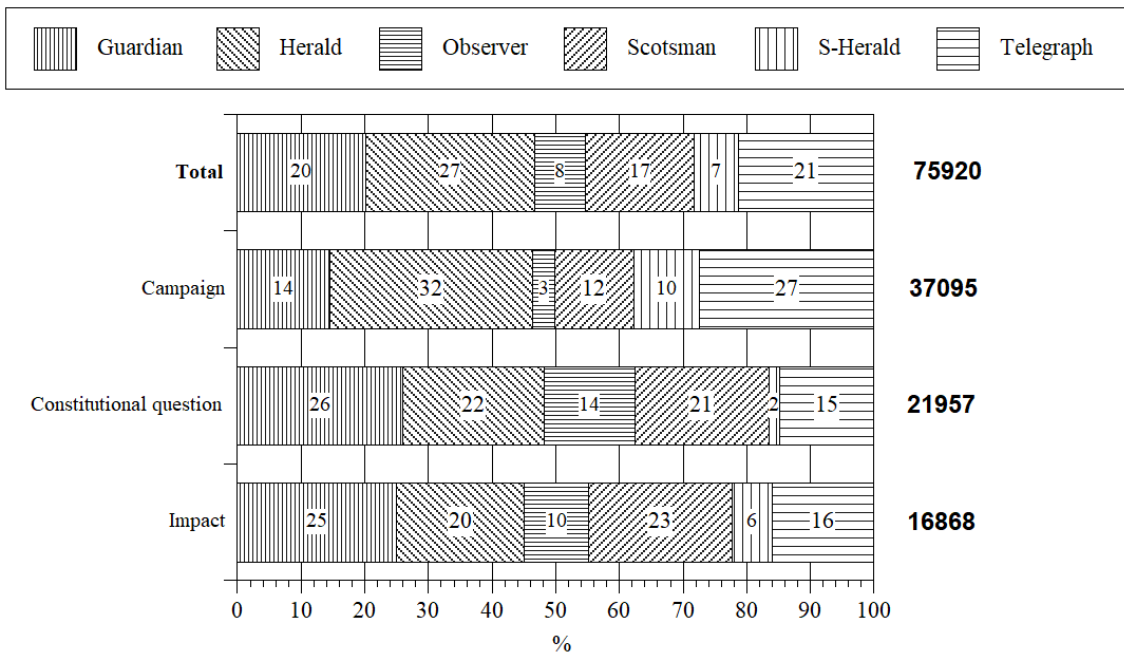


Figure 12: Top-level groups by newspaper: percentage shares

The weekly papers, the Observer and the Sunday Herald, published understandably fewer words than the dailies. As the Observer published only one referendum-related editorial during the five-week research period, they had to cover all important issues in one go while the Sunday Herald had been discussing referendum a lot more often and could focus on more specific issues in their editorials. This might be one of the reasons why the Observer's somewhat smaller total word count produced a higher number of coded words i.e. their text was very dense with thematic components.

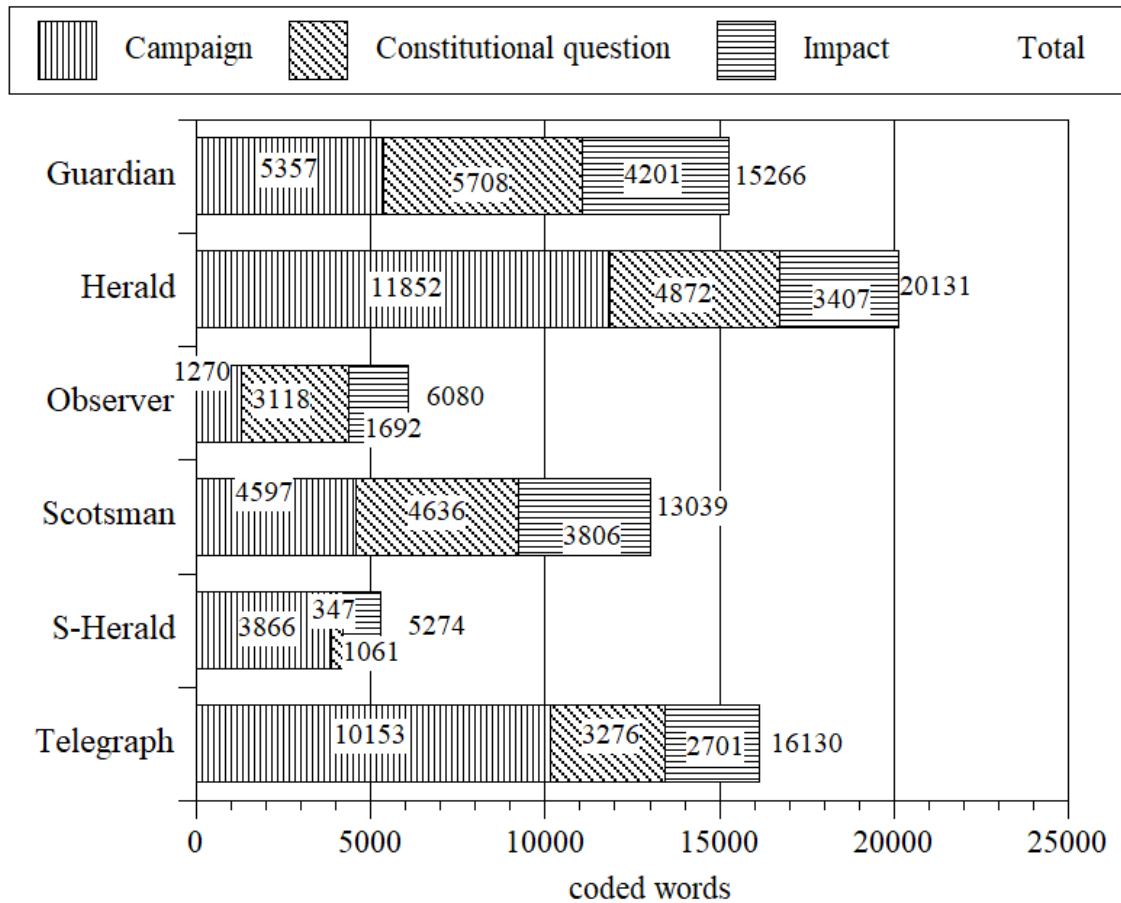


Figure 13: Newspapers coverage of top-level groups: absolute word counts

The Sunday Herald, the Telegraph and the Herald published mostly about themes and issues in the *Campaign* group while the Observer, the Guardian and the Scotsman focused more on the *Constitutional question* and *Impact*. The Sunday Herald devoted only seven per cent of their editorials to the *Constitutional question* while the average of all papers was 29 per cent. As the only newspaper that supported Scottish independence, it is natural that their interests lay elsewhere than discussing the positive aspects of the Union.

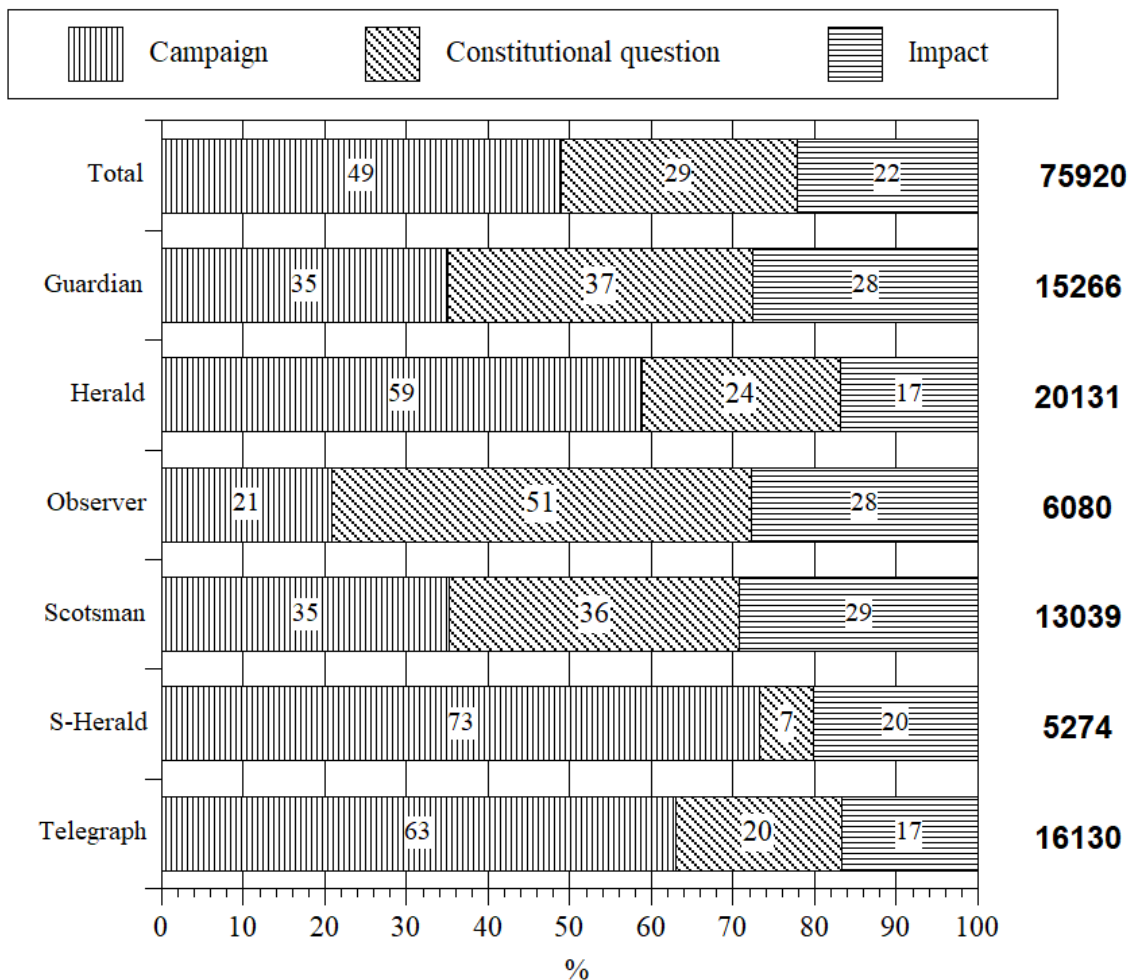


Figure 14: Newspapers coverage of top-level groups: percentage shares

6.5 Themes

Each top-level group had one theme that was a lot more widely written about than the other themes in their respective groups. The most popular theme was the *Yes movement* in the *Campaign* group followed by *Uncertain future* in *Impact* and *Positive UK* in the *Constitutional question* group. In the *Campaign* group, the *Yes movement* theme accounted for a third of the total coded words while around a fifth belong to *Referendum Campaign* and *Better Together campaign* themes.

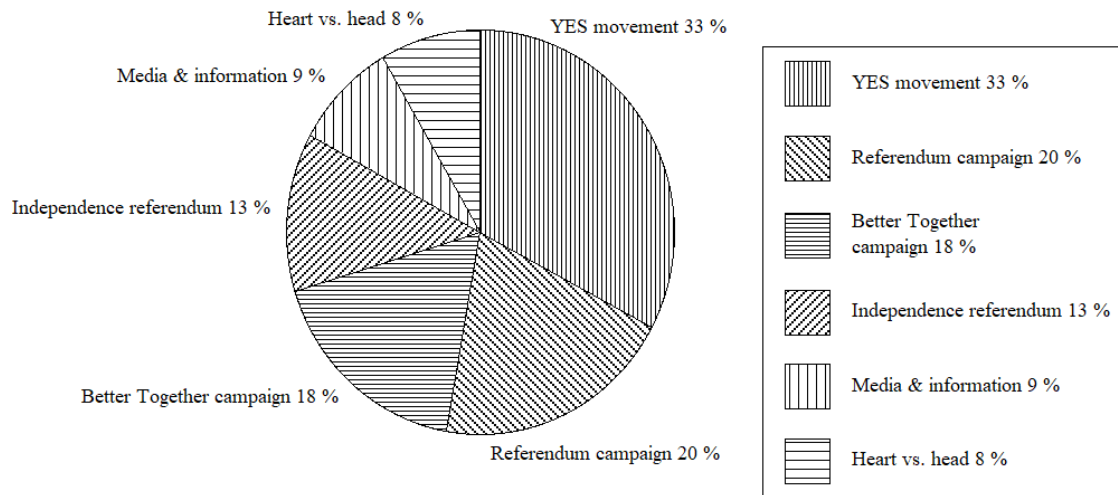


Figure 15: Percentage shares of different themes in the top-level group *Campaign*

In the *Constitutional question* group, nearly half the coded words fell into the *Positive UK* theme. While a lot was said about the No campaign’s ability to communicate the positive aspects of the Union to the voters, the No supporting papers wrote plenty about that particular theme. It has to be recognised that while *Positive UK* is the third largest theme of the study and consists of nothing but positive discussion of the merits of the Union, a large chunk of the positive case falls under the subthemes *New powers* and *Federalism* which were not a reality in the UK at that time but a vision for the future. At the time of writing, federalism looks as far off as ever and the new powers that Holyrood received after the Smith Commission amount to a lot less than what many Scots expected and what polls indicated a majority of them supported.

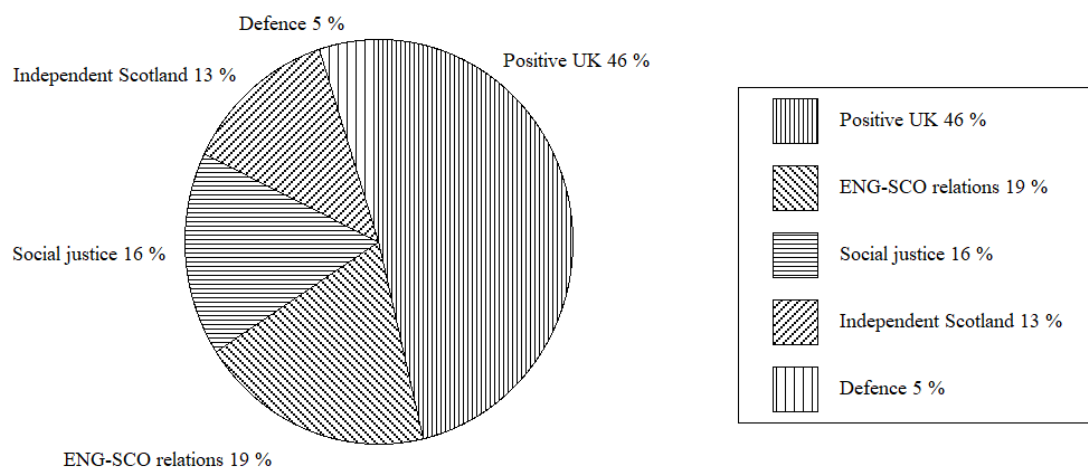


Figure 16: Percentage shares of different themes in the top-level group *Constitutional question*

The *Impact* group consisted of only two themes: *Uncertain future* and *Indyref impact*. As has been discussed earlier in this study, uncertainty was a major issue during the campaign and widely used as a tool by the No campaign. The newspapers' editorial coverage reflected this as *Uncertain future* was the theme with second most coded words.

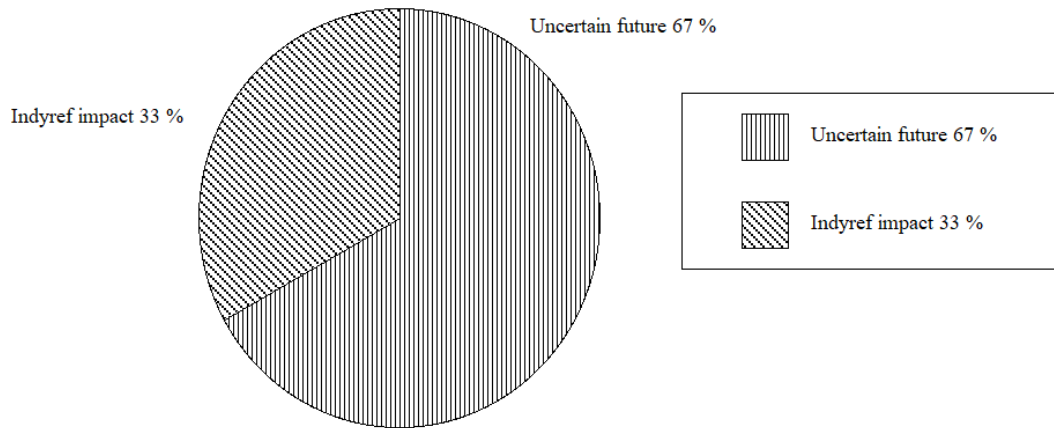


Figure 17: Percentage shares of different themes in the top-level group *Impact*

6.5.1 Themes by week

Figure 18 illustrates when the different themes were discussed in relation to the top-level groups they belong to as well as to how the total number of coded words is divided during the five-week research period. Important differences can be found in several themes. Two thirds of the coded words in the theme *Better Together campaign* were published during week IV while the shares of all coded words and of top-level group *Campaign* were less than a third. *The Media & information* theme received 71 per cent of its coded words during week V which period otherwise saw the publishing of around 45 per cent of all coded words. The theme *ENG-SCO relations* received a higher share of its coded words during week I than themes on average as did *Uncertain future* during weeks I and II.

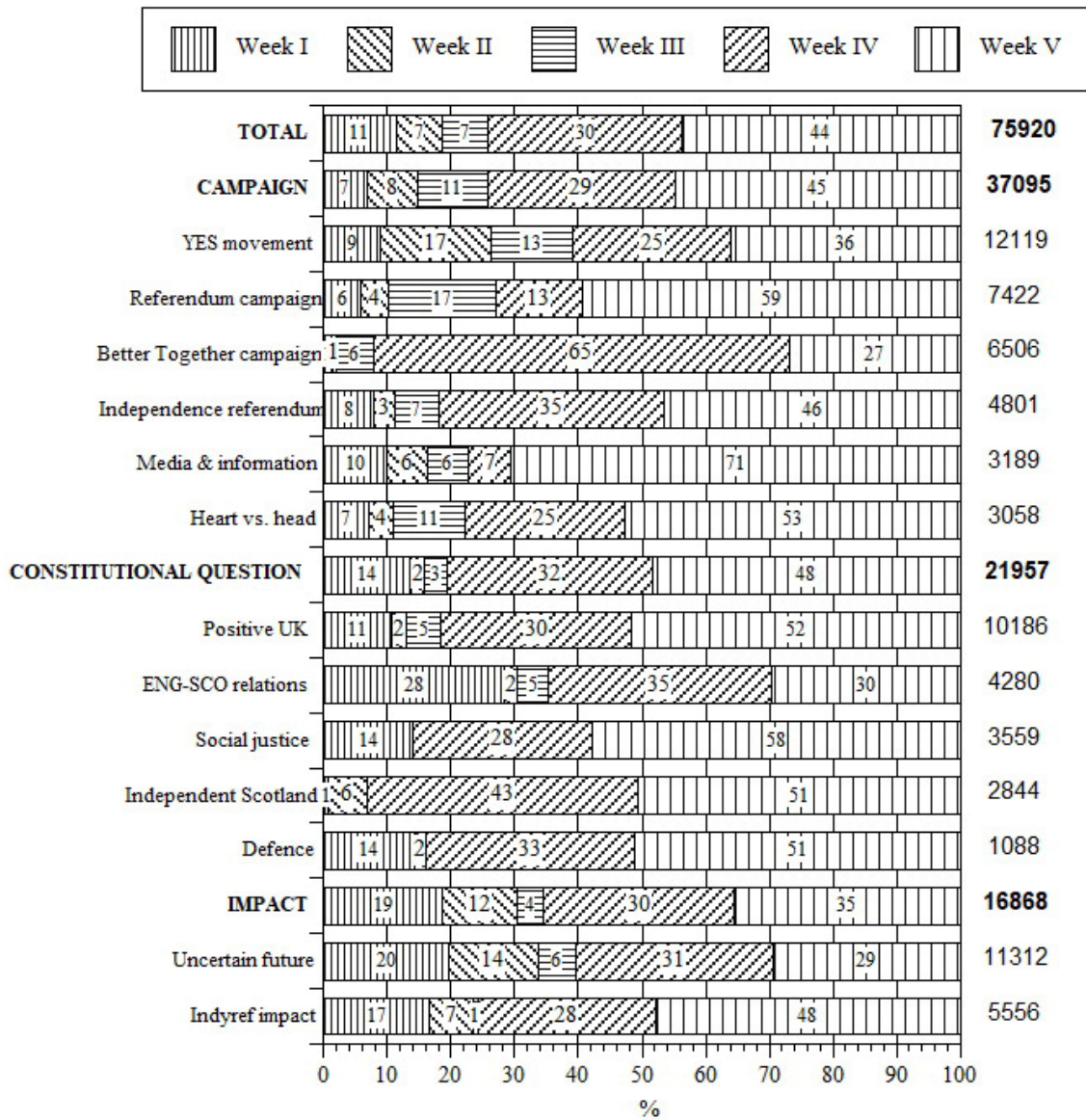


Figure 18: Percentage shares top-level groups and themes during weeks I to V

The absolute figures of these word counts can be found in figure 19 as well as in the data tables in appendix A.

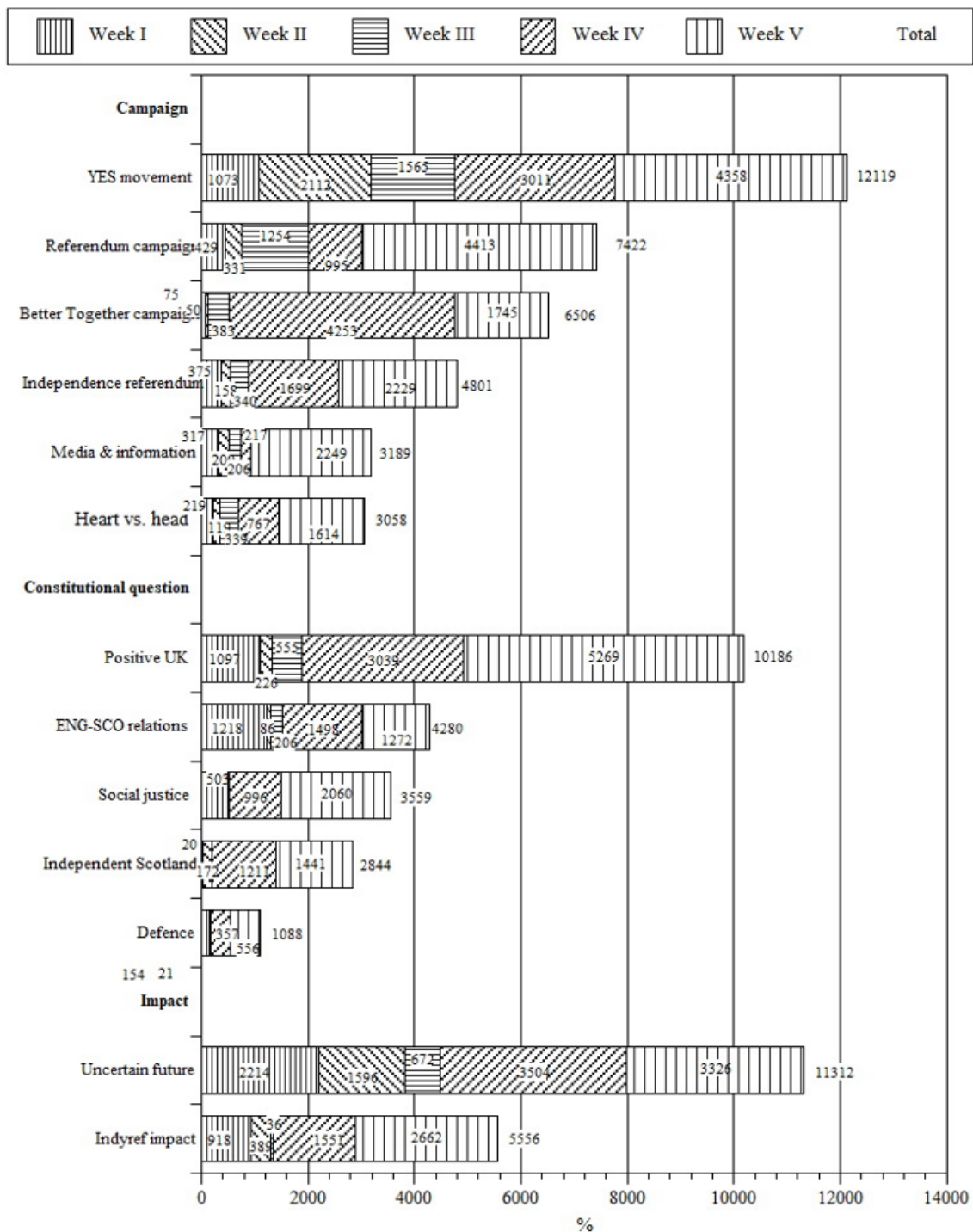


Figure 19: Absolute word counts of themes during weeks I to V

6.5.2 Themes by newspaper

The different newspapers had different areas of focus during the independence referendum campaign. The Guardian placed much emphasis on *Social Justice* and *Indyref impact* as well as discussing *Independent Scotland*. At the same time, they contributed relatively little to the *Yes movement*, *Referendum campaign* and *Heart vs. head* themes.

The Herald – the biggest contributor of coded words in the study – published considerably more coded words about the *Referendum campaign* and *Media &*

information than the other papers. Their focus on the *Independent Scotland*, *Indyref impact* and *Defence* themes was minor considering their total contribution of coded words.

The Observer was a rather special case among the newspapers as it is a weekly paper and it published only one relevant editorial during the study period. It placed much focus on *Social justice* and *Indyref impact*. The other weekly, the Sunday Herald, was because of the limitations its format placed on it, a rather insignificant actor volume-wise but as the only independence-supporting paper, it made an important and interesting contribution to the debate. It stood out in the *Media & information* theme with a share larger than expected on the basis of its overall contribution. However, it did not publish any of the coded words in *Social justice* or *Indyref impact* and in *Eng-Sco relations*, *Heart vs. head* and *Defence*, its contribution was less than 50 coded words each.

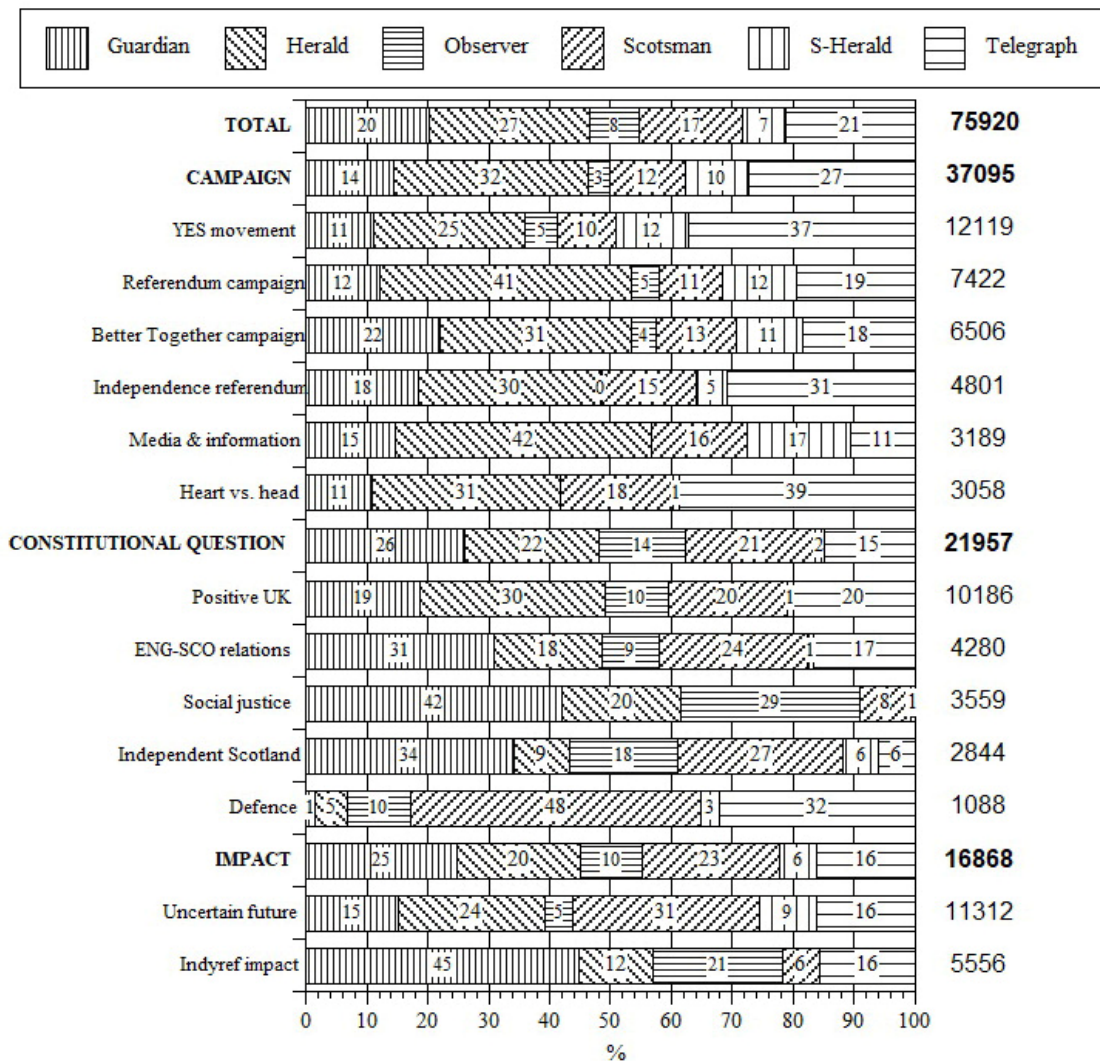


Figure 20: Percentage shares top-level groups and themes in newspapers

The Scotsman was very active in *Uncertain future* publishing the largest share of coded words in what was the second most discussed theme overall. In total, the Scotsman was only the fourth most prolific in publishing coded words behind the other three dailies. It was also active in the *Eng-Sco relations* theme and the two smallest themes *Defence* and *Independent Scotland*.

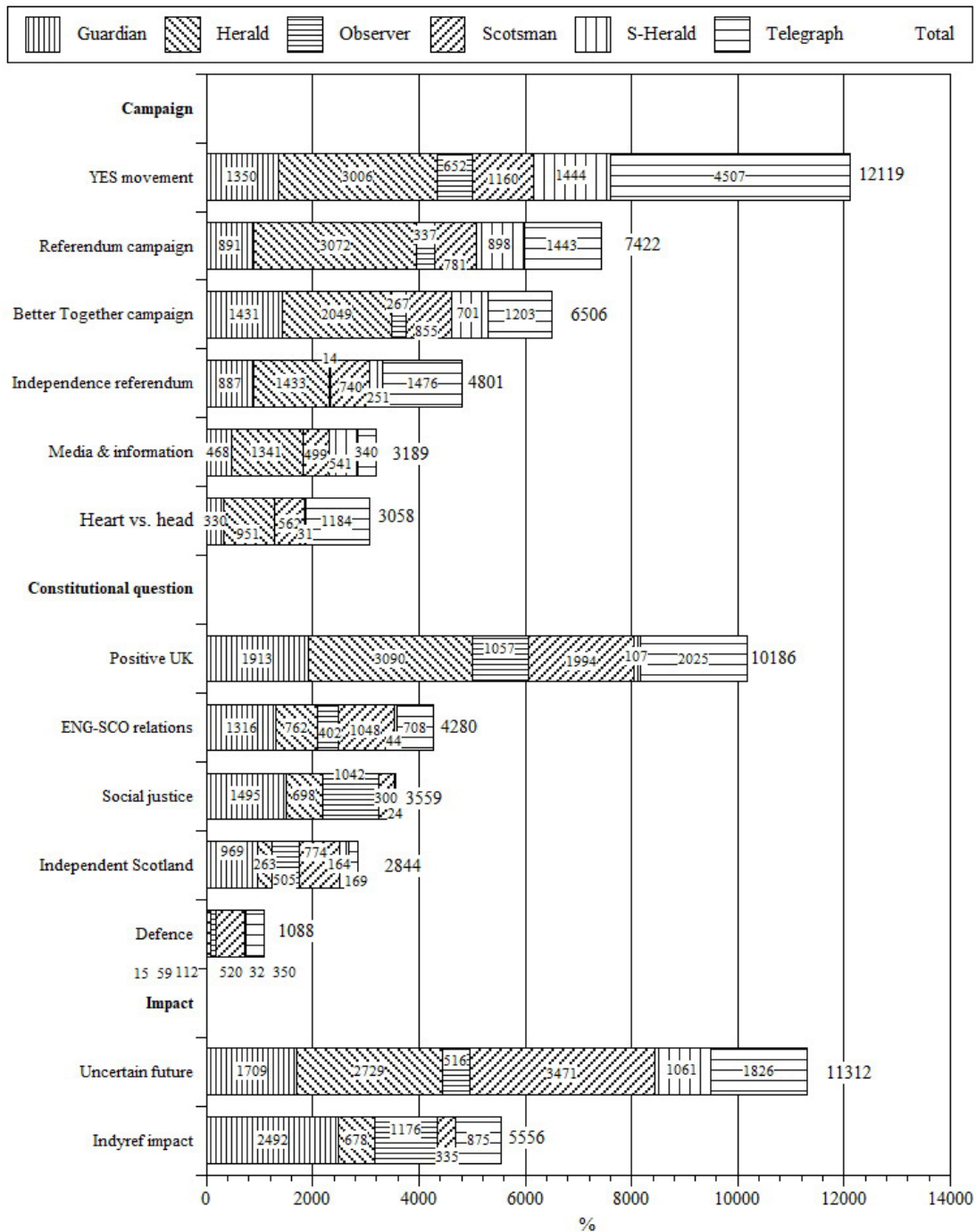


Figure 21: Absolute word counts of themes in the newspapers

The Telegraph was strongly pro-Union from the beginning and thus it might be surprising that it was the most active contributor – measured in coded words – in the *Yes movement* theme which was also the largest theme of all. Quite often, if not most of the time, its input was critical of the pro-independence camp. Its share was also substantial in *Independence referendum*, *Heart vs. head* and the smallest theme *Defence*. Compared to its share of all coded words, the Telegraph published less on *Media & information*, *Independent Scotland* and, especially, *Social justice* which it barely touched.

6.6 Subthemes and their subthemes

Each theme consists of a number of subthemes that make up the themes' wordcounts. This part of the study discusses when different subthemes were discussed and by which papers and identifies events which were the reasons for irregularities in the patterns where those can be found. The same events influence the themes but as the subthemes were the thematic components actually identified in the editorials, it is interesting to connect the events to the subthemes that focus on a more specific issue in the texts. The focus will be on subthemes with at least 1000 coded words because the smaller the subtheme the more a single editorial with in-depth discussion can influence the results. Such discussions in a single editorial with no apparent triggers have been mentioned as such. This was a problem mostly in weeks II and III with low total word counts.

6.6.1 Subthemes and their subthemes by week

During Week I, the Subthemes that stood out compared to the total share of week I and the shares of their respective upper level groups were *Scaremongering*, *Whose truth to believe*, *Relations with England*, *UK not working*, *Currency*, *NHS* and *General uncertainty*. The two first-mentioned were highlighted because of the three last-mentioned. The NHS was a hot topic during the week because of the intervention Anna Gregor made on the Yes campaign's views on the NHS and the currency question received attention because of a Mark Carney interview/statement. General uncertainty was highlighted when the papers listed other unclear issues after discussing the NHS and currency. Relations with England became a major issue during the first week because of the publishing of the Future of England survey which was discussed at length (Herald 16 Aug, Scotsman 20 Aug).

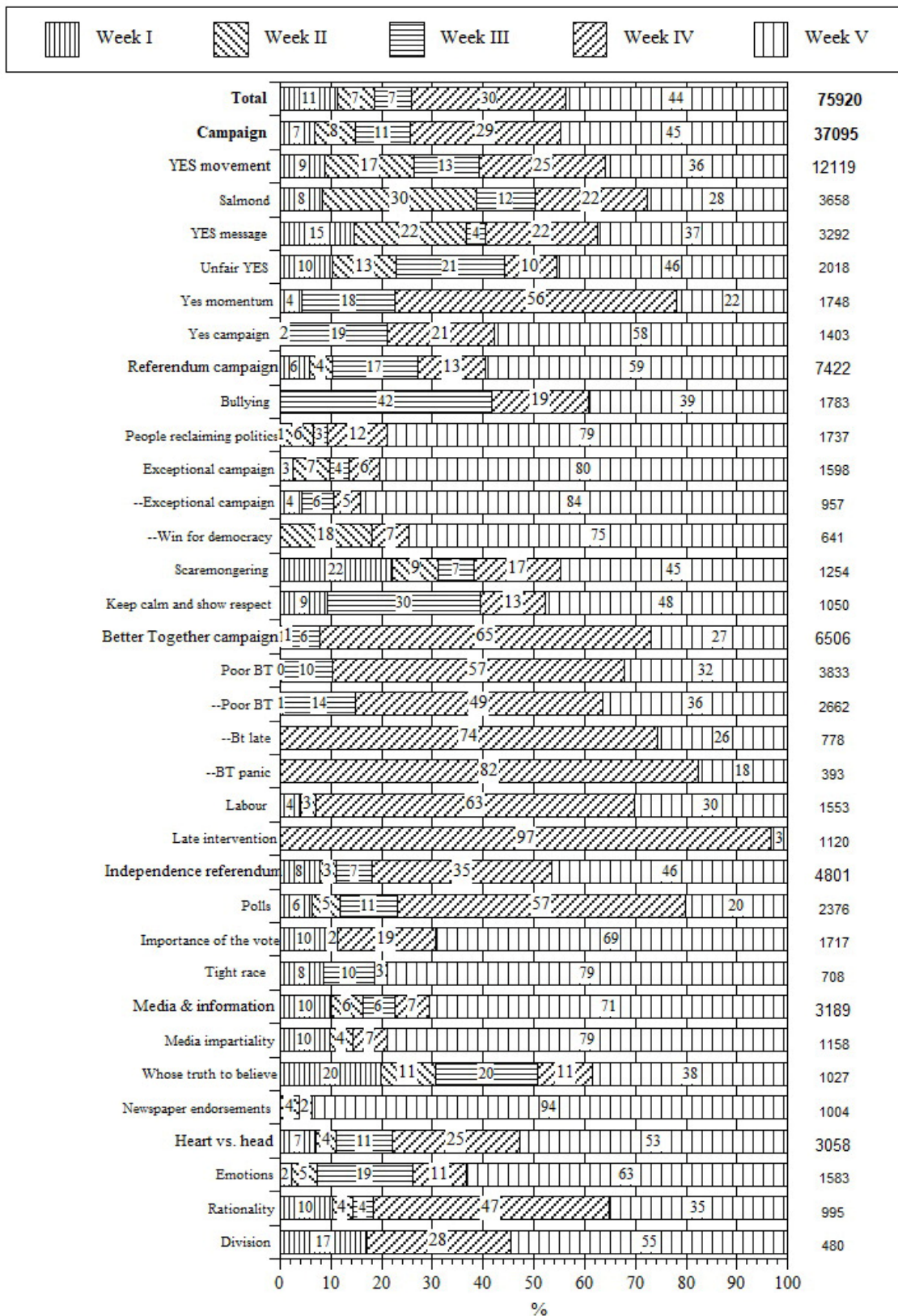


Figure 22: Weekly percentage shares of thematic components in the *Campaign* group

Week II saw the *Salmond* and *Yes message* subthemes with high shares compared to the weeks total share of the whole period. There were two major issues that caused

these two subthemes from the *Yes movement* theme to stand out. Firstly, there was the intervention of Sir Ian Wood related to the estimates of recoverable oil that questioned the Yes campaigns views on future revenues. Secondly, there was the second TV debate between Alistair Darling and Alex Salmond which was discussed in several papers both before and after the actual event. *Indyref affects the whole UK* receives a high share as one editorial in the Herald focuses on the issue.

The Jim Murphy egging and his subsequent cancellation of speaking dates resulted in *Bullying* and *Unfair Yes* receiving much attention and clearly higher than average shares of their coded words being published during week III. Prompted by the same event, there were a number of calls to *Keep calm and show respect*. *Whose truth to believe* which receives a higher than average week III share is covered in two of the eight referendum-related editorials published that week and the issue is discussed in relation to the Ian Wood oil estimates and the NHS. There were long editorials on the *EU* (Herald 29 Aug) and *Devolution* (Scotsman 3 Sep) but the subthemes were not discussed in any other editorials during that week.

Week IV saw a substantial increase in the total of coded words and several subthemes stood out with shares higher than the average. They included *Yes momentum*, *Poor BT*, *Labour*, *Late intervention*, *Polls*, *Self-determination*, *Currency* and *EU*. *Rationality* which consists of 995 coded words i.e. 5 words less than the limit to be included in this analysis received almost half of its coded words during week IV. Obviously, *Yes momentum* was discussed so much because the Yes campaign made significant gains in different polls and the Times poll even put it ahead during this week. *Polls* was a subtheme that discussed the polls and their effects, and it received so many coded words because of the extraordinary poll results that reflected the Yes momentum.

The emphasis on the *Poor BT* subtheme is a result of the No side losing a significant lead because, on the one hand, of a lacklustre and uninspiring campaign and, on the other hand, failure to agree on the new powers that would be coming to Holyrood after a No vote. Labour was at that point the party with the majority of Scottish MPs so this failure was associated with them and the party received much criticism. The subtheme *Late intervention* has been explained earlier but during this week the much-discussed Gordon Brown speech took place as did the Westminster leaders' abandoning of Prime Minister's Question Time and heading north to campaign.

A Mark Carney speech in Edinburgh brought some emphasis on the *Currency* subtheme but it received plenty of attention unconnected to it as the papers increased their referendum coverage during week IV and the currency question was identified as one of

the most central ones of the campaign. *Self-determination* was discussed often in connection with the proposed currency union and how they would be incompatible. There was no clear event that brought the *EU* subtheme to the fore but the uncertainty over Scottish EU membership was discussed in several editorials.

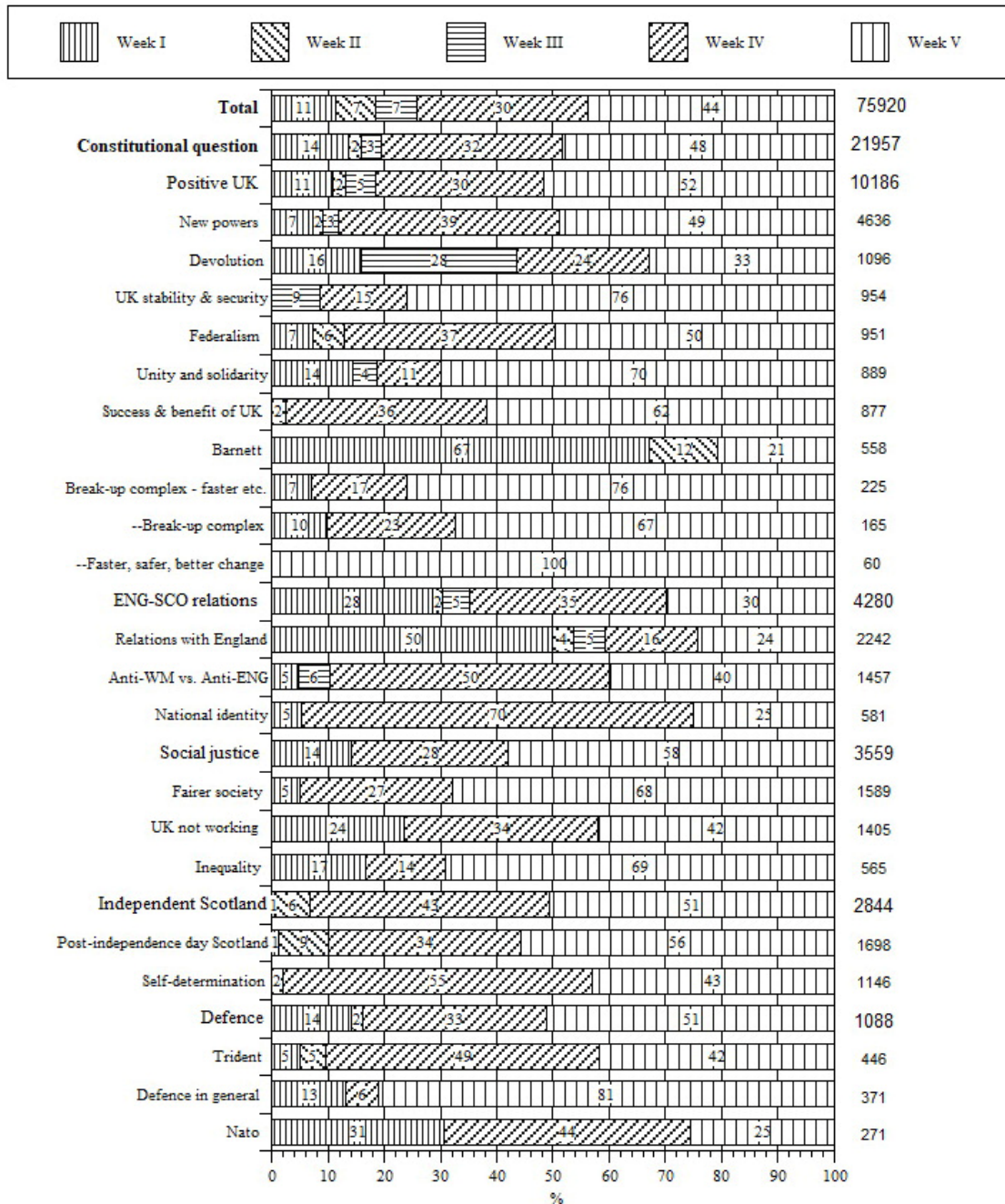


Figure 23: Weekly percentage shares of thematic components in the *Constitutional question* group

There were several subthemes that received an above average share of their coded words during week V. Among them were *Yes campaign*, *People reclaiming politics*,

Exceptional campaign, Importance of the vote, Media impartiality, Newspaper endorsements, Emotions, Fairer society, Post-independence-day Scotland, Economic impact and Constitutional reform.

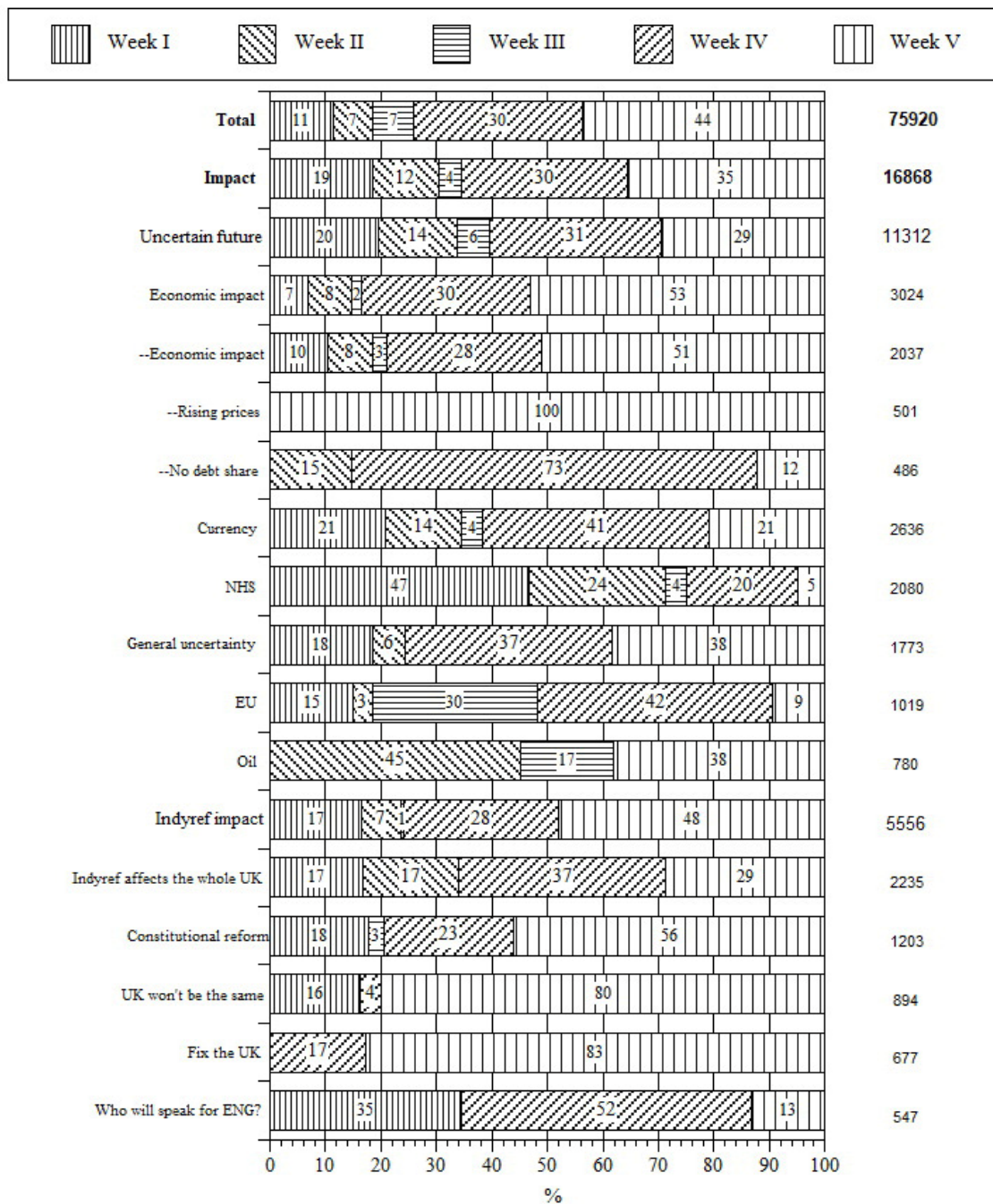


Figure 24: Weekly percentage shares of thematic components in the *Impact* group

Even though only the Sunday Herald supported independence, most papers recognised the Yes campaign as the more effective and attractive campaign and this brought coded words for the subtheme. *People reclaiming politics* and *Exceptional campaign* celebrated the extraordinary events that had taken place and excellent

atmosphere in Scotland during the last months of the referendum campaign and they were discussed at great length in the editorials.

The Importance of the vote subtheme was naturally discussed a lot as polling day drew closer. The Guardian and the Herald declared support for a No vote during the week and the other papers that had indicated a preference earlier discussed it and argued further for their views. The *Media impartiality* subtheme featured mostly discussion about alleged BBC bias as the week saw Yes-supporters stage a protest at BBC Scotland headquarters after the “creative” reporting by Nick Robinson that was discussed earlier. The Herald also discussed its own claim of impartiality before picking a side or, perhaps more accurately, making it public.

Emotions were discussed as the campaign allegedly got more heated. Long editorials in the Guardian and the Observer discussed the subtheme of *Fairer society* and the idea of *Constitutional reform* that would lead to that new society was discussed in and widely supported by most papers. *Post-independence-day Scotland* was discussed a great deal and it was mostly agreed that Scotland could be a successful independent country, but most papers still preferred the new constitutional settlement or a federal Britain that they seemed to believe was on offer.

The *Economic impact* of independence was the second most-discussed subtheme of week V and the papers’ assessments of it varied depending on their preference of the result. The most discussed subtheme of the last week, and indeed of the whole research period, was *New powers*. It received 88 per cent of its coded words during weeks IV and V – 74 per cent of all coded words were published during the same period – and its rise to be the most discussed subtheme was, of course, triggered by Gordon Brown’s promise of fast-tracking a Westminster debate on new powers for Holyrood, the Unionist parties’ agreement on what the new powers could be and ultimately the Vow two days before the referendum.

6.6.2 Subthemes and their subthemes by newspaper

The Guardian published a fifth of all coded words in this study. However, it published a greater share than that in several subthemes mostly in the *Constitutional question* top-level group. It published more than half of all coded words of the *UK not working* subtheme and nearly half of them in the *Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG* and *Constitutional reform* subthemes. It accounted for more than a third of the coded words of *Indyref affects the whole UK*, *Self-determination*, *Post-independence-day Scotland* and *Fairer society*.

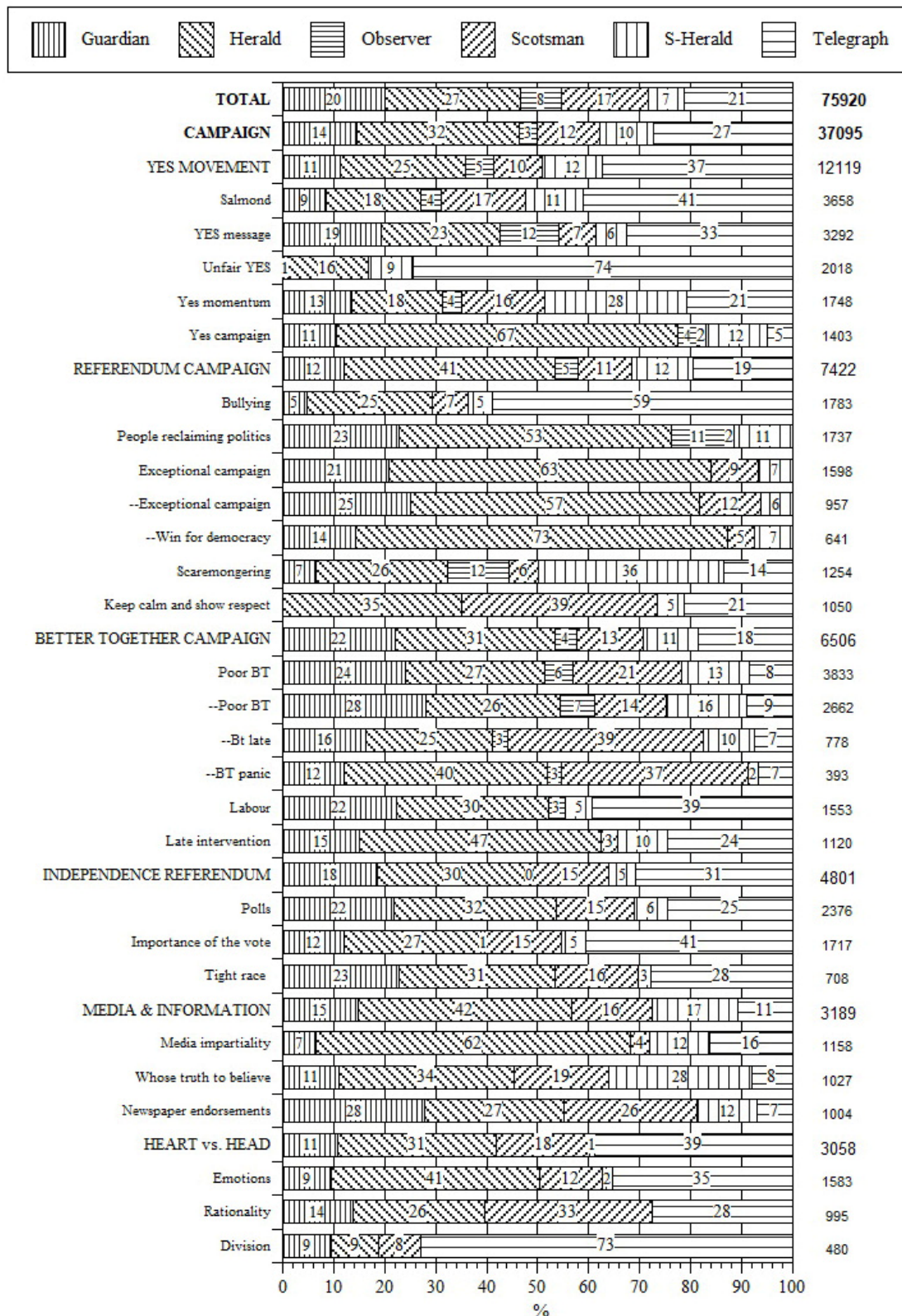


Figure 25: Percentage shares of thematic components in the Campaign group by newspaper

The Herald was the most-prolific publisher of coded words in this study and its focus was mostly in the top-level group *Campaign*. Its share of the *Yes campaign* subtheme was two out of three coded words and almost as big segments of the *Exceptional campaign* and *Media impartiality* subthemes were its writing. More than half of coded words of *People reclaiming politics* and nearly as big a share of *Late intervention* were found in the Herald editorials. It published also around two fifths of those of *Emotions* and *New powers*.

The Observer made its biggest contribution to the *Fairer society* subtheme in which it published 29 per cent of coded words compared to its share of less than a tenth of all coded words. It was, likewise, especially prolific in *Self-determination*, *Constitutional reform*, *Indyref affects the whole UK* and *Post-independence-day Scotland*. In other words, its interests were rather similar to those of its sister paper.

The Scotsman published around one in six of all coded words. Like the other studied papers, it placed more weight on some themes and issues than others. It produced nearly half of the coded words in the *Devolution* subtheme, nearly two out of five words in the *Keep calm and show respect* subtheme, a third in *Relations with England* and three in ten words in *Self-determination*. However, where its real focus lay was the *Uncertain future* theme where it published in several subthemes a greater share of coded words than one would have expected on the basis of its overall contribution: nearly half of coded words of *Currency*, more than a third of *Economic impact* and *General uncertainty* and three tenths in *EU* were published on the pages of the Scotsman. Then again, in the subtheme that created uncertainty for both sides in the campaign, *NHS*, the paper showed less interest than might have been expected.

The only independence-supporting paper not only in this study but in the UK at the time was the Sunday Herald. It published seven per cent of all coded words in this analysis but punched clearly above its weight in a number of subthemes. It published more than a third of all coded words discussing *Scaremongering*, nearly three in ten words reporting the *Yes momentum* and a similar share in the *Whose truth to believe* subtheme. Its contribution to the *NHS* subtheme – the tenth largest subtheme of all – was a fifth of the total. In the biggest, similarly named, subcomponent of the *Poor BT* subtheme, the Sunday Herald published one in six words. One could argue that there were no major surprises in the allocation of the Sunday Herald editorial focus.

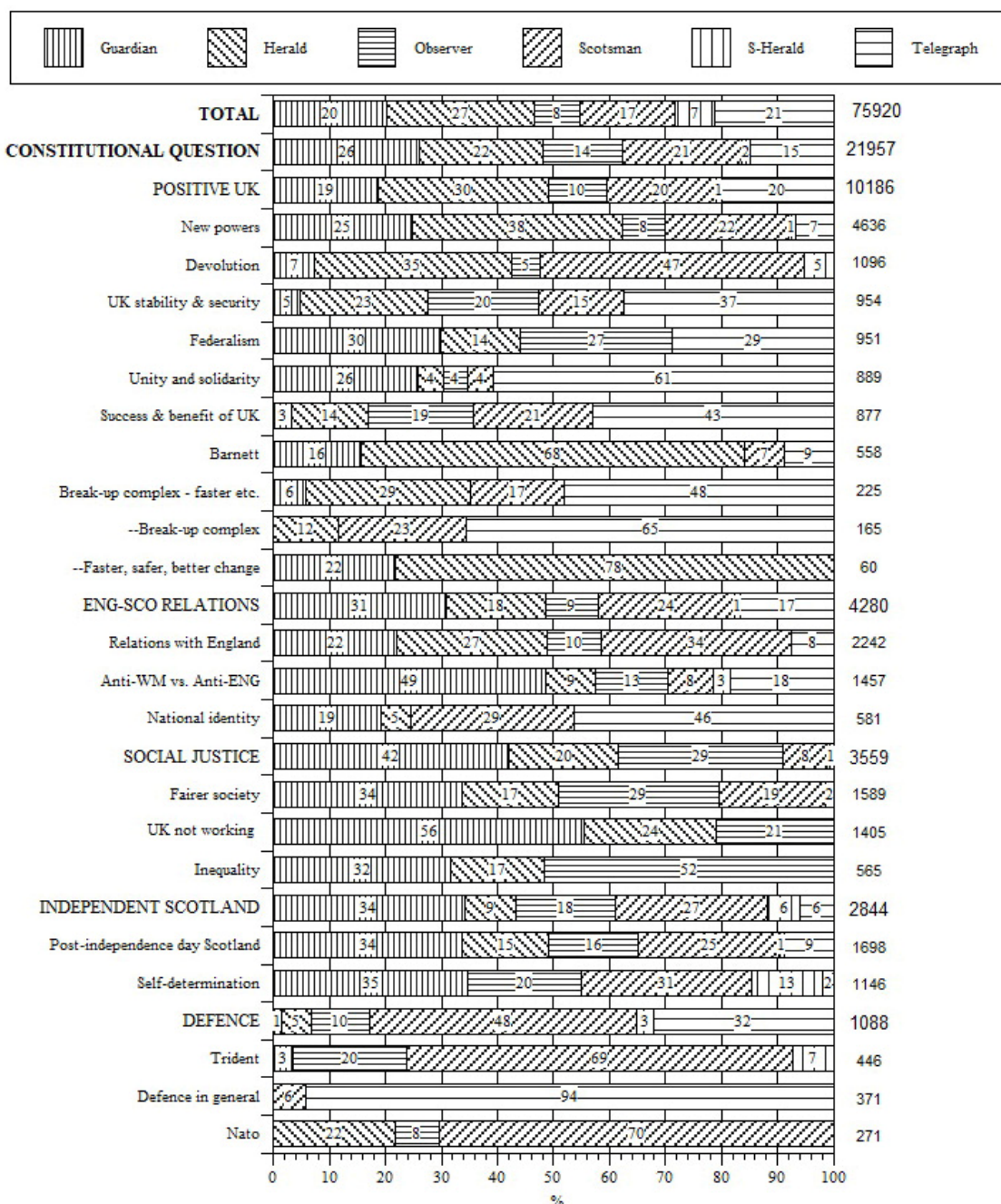


Figure 26: Percentage shares of thematic components in the *Constitutional question* group by newspaper

The Telegraph – a strongly anti-independence newspaper – published three quarters of coded words in the 11th most written-about subtheme *Unfair Yes*. It contributed to the *Bullying* subtheme with three out of every five words written. Despite – or probably because – being strongly anti-independence, it published two out of five coded words of *Salmond* and a third of those of *Yes message*. The paper accounted for two fifths of coded words discussing the *Labour* subtheme.

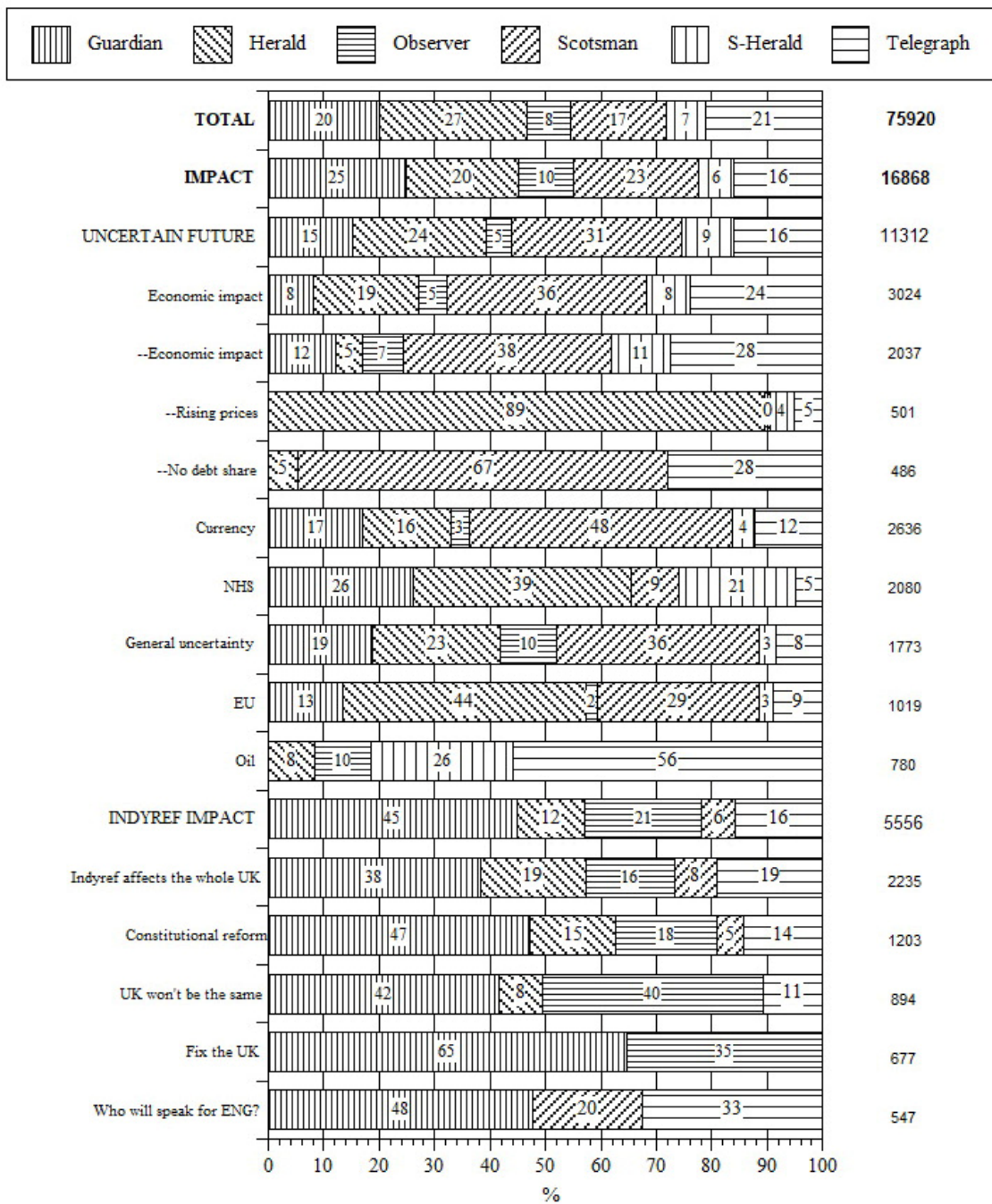


Figure 27: Percentage shares of thematic components in the *Impact* group by newspaper

6.7 Differences between newspapers: relative importance of thematic components

Figures 27-30 illustrate the relative importance each top-level group, theme and subtheme had compared to others. The bars reflect the share each thematic component received in its category and the symbols for each newspaper the share of its coverage it used to discuss that particular component. For instance, the Sunday Herald published ten per cent of the coded words of the top-level group *Campaign* but used 73 per cent of its own coded words discussing the themes and issues under it – a substantially bigger share than that of all the

studied papers. Some of the symbols lie on top of each other making the graphs somewhat difficult to read. However, that indicates that there are no major differences between the newspapers. Those newspapers that really stand out from the others are relatively easy to notice.

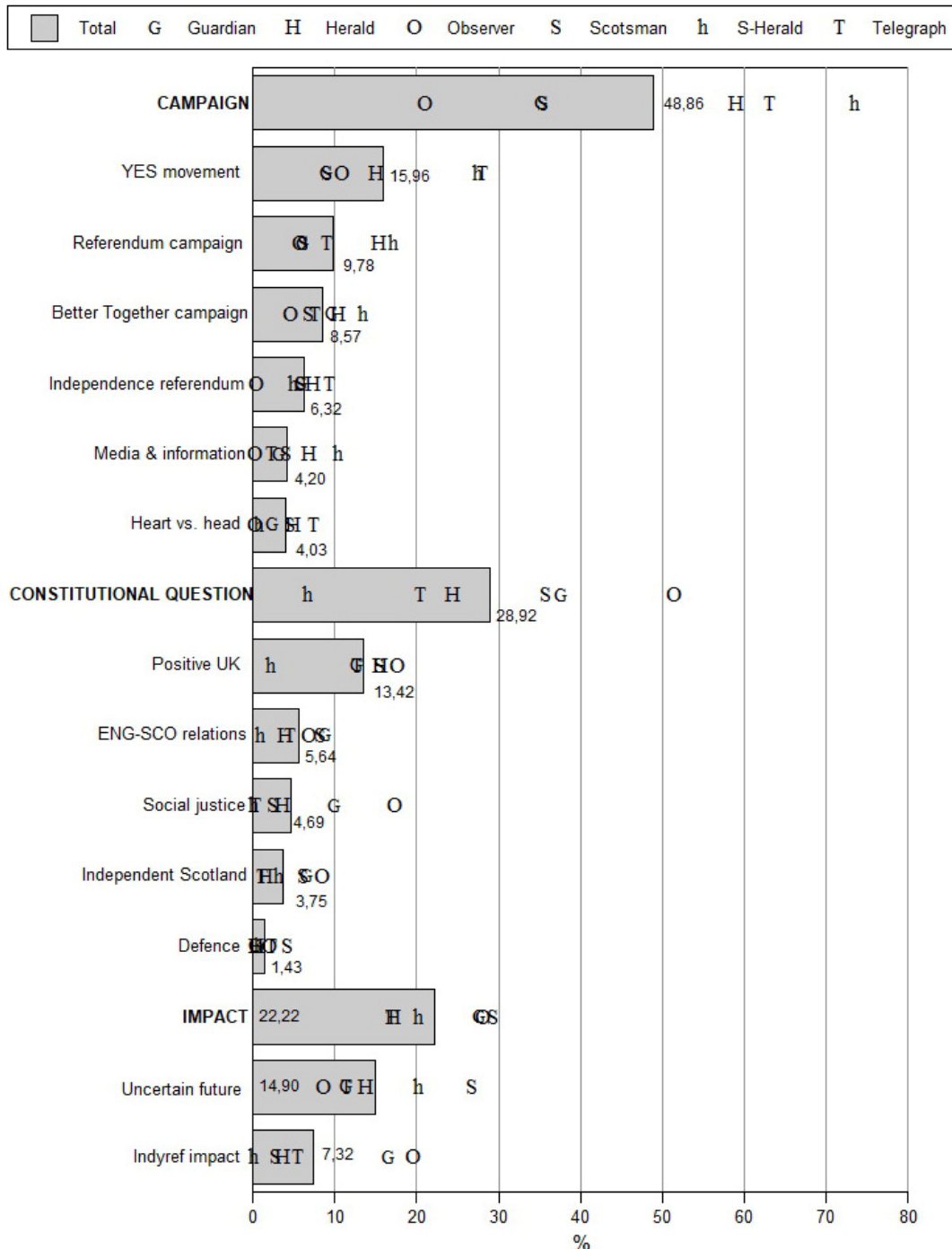


Figure 28: Relative importance of thematic components in different newspapers

Likewise, the average share used to discuss the *Constitutional question* group was less than 30 per cent but more than half of the coded words from the Observer were coded into subthemes in this group. We can also note that the Sunday Herald spent considerably

less of its effort on *Constitutional question* than the average paper and the same could be said about the Observer and the *Campaign* group.

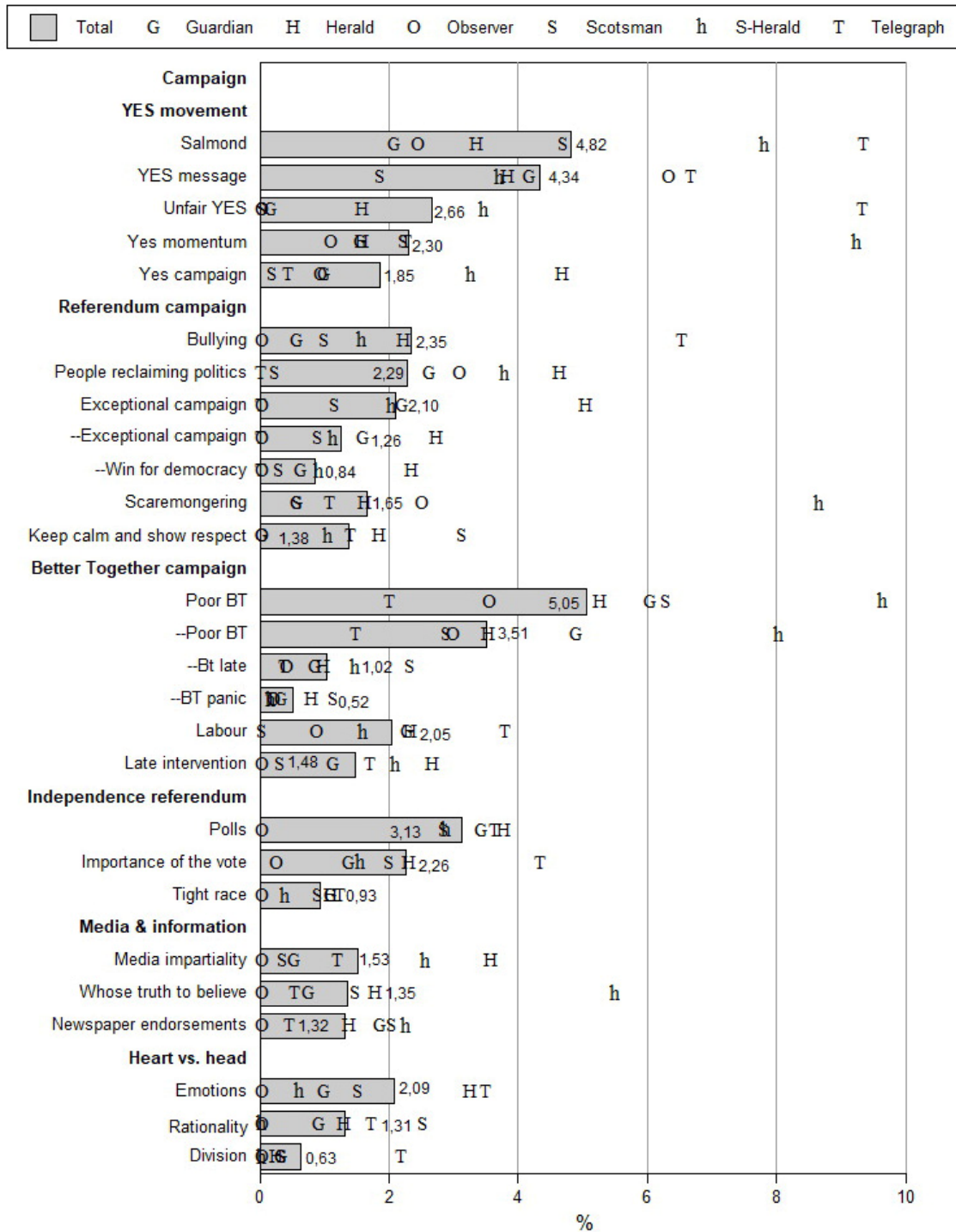


Figure 29: Relative importance of Campaign group themes and subthemes in different newspapers

On the subtheme level, the Telegraph wrote especially much about *Salmond*, *Unfair Yes* and *Bullying*. The Sunday Herald was more active than most papers on *Salmond*, *Yes*

momentum, Scaremongering, Poor BT, Whose truth to believe and NHS. The Herald dominated *New powers* – a subtheme discussed very little by the Telegraph and the Sunday Herald.

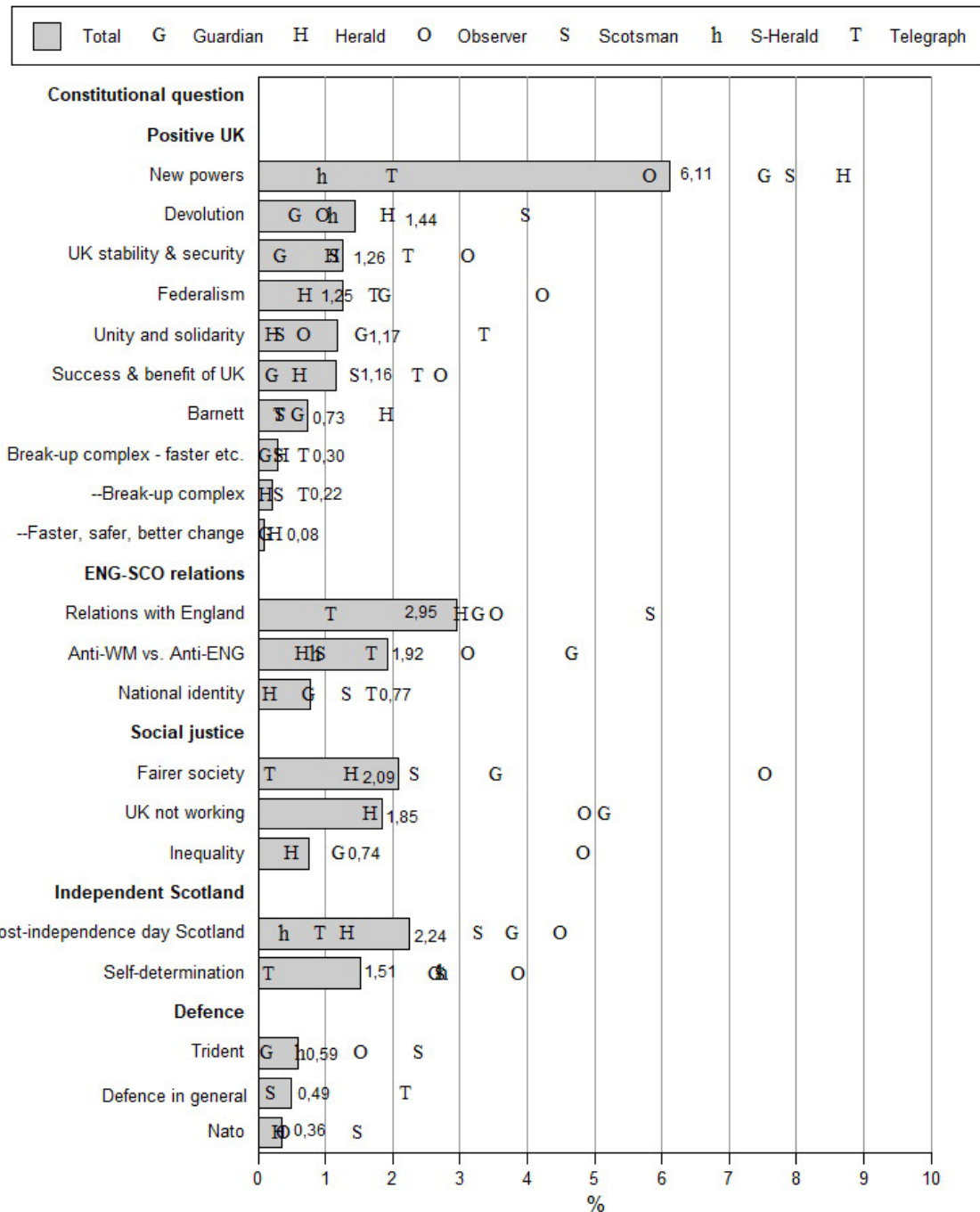


Figure 30: Relative importance of Constitutional question group themes and subthemes in different newspapers

The Scotsman emphasised *Currency, Economic impact* and *Relations with England* while the Observer wrote proportionally more than the other papers about *Fairer society, Indyref affects the whole UK* and *UK won't be the same*. The Guardian seemed to focus on the *Anti-WM vs. anti-ENG* and *UK not working* subthemes. Here, one has to bear in

mind though, that some of the subthemes had very small word counts so drawing far-reaching conclusions on them might be dubious.

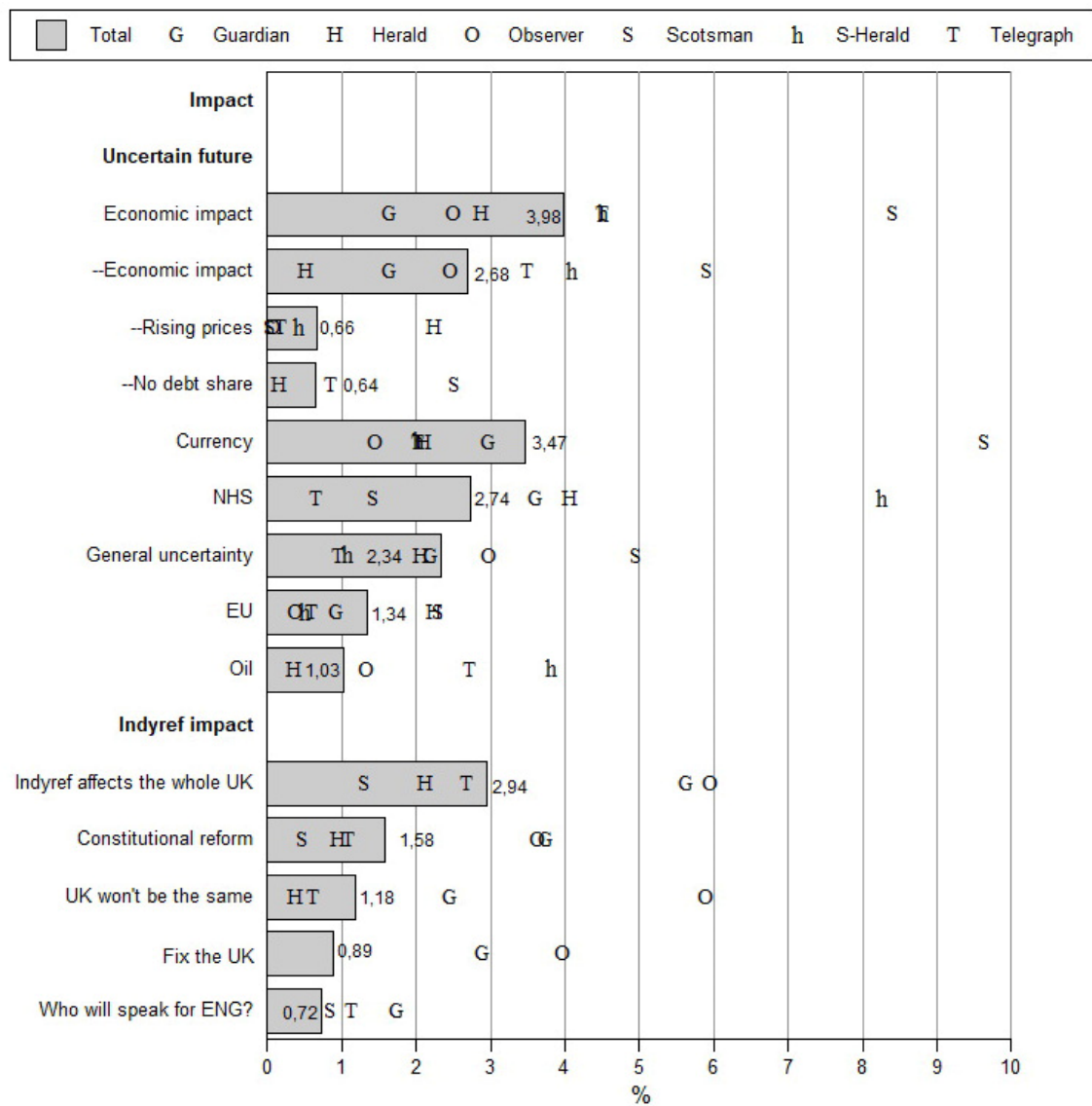


Figure 31: Relative importance of *Impact* group themes and subthemes in different newspapers

III UNDERSTANDING THE REFERENDUM

7 Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify the most important themes and issues in newspaper editorials during the last five weeks of the Scottish independence referendum campaign of 2014. This was done by conducting a thematic analysis of the independence-referendum-related editorials of six newspapers. All of the newspapers included were broadsheet newspapers, i.e. papers generally perceived to represent quality journalism as opposed to the tabloid press with rather different aims and philosophy.

The discussion was based on few absolute facts. There were many estimates, predictions, opinions or acknowledgements that the final shape of things was subject to post-referendum negotiations. McEwen and Keating also raised the issue of lack of precedents. Both sides had experts that backed their views, so people – politicians, voters, journalists – could pick the ones they agreed with and whose view or message supported their own stance. Few if any arguments were certain and, as the discussion around the themes and subthemes in this thesis shows, there were, on the one hand, convincing arguments but, on the other hand, many respectable people who could counter most of them.

7.1 The main (quantitative) findings of the thematic analysis

The most important themes in the editorials were *Yes movement*, *Uncertain future* and *Positive UK*. More than half of the *Yes movement* theme consists of the *Salmond* and *Yes message* subthemes which were quite often personalisation of the Yes campaign in the character of Alex Salmond and pointing out the “flaws” and “unanswered questions” of the pro-independence message. While there was some praise for the positivity and enthusiasm of the Yes campaign and even its leaders, much of the coverage was critical. *Salmond* and *Yes message* were the third and fourth most written-about subthemes and another Yes movement subtheme – a solely negative one from a Yes point of view – *Unfair Yes* is ranked 11th among the 52 subthemes.

The *Uncertain future* theme discusses, for the most part, the risks and unknowns connected to a Yes vote. As discussed earlier, uncertainty was generated and increased by the No campaign. While the Yes side used uncertainty and risk as their campaign argument in relation to the future of the NHS and, to a lesser extent, Scotland’s EU membership, those concerns seemed to be played down and those originating from the

No campaign messages “confirmed and potentially reinforced” – as Dekavalla (2016:56) put it – by the anti-independence newspapers.

Positive UK included the *New powers* subtheme that was, by some distance, the subtheme with most coded words. Together with another subtheme with highly speculative content, *Federalism*, it made up 55 per cent of the theme. While it is true that, at the beginning of the research period, *New powers* included criticism towards the No side and its lack of ability to agree on further devolution to the Scottish Parliament, most of the coded words were published during the last two weeks of the campaign and echoed the pro-union messages, with the obvious exception of the input of the Sunday Herald.

The top three themes based on word counts of coded words all belonged to different top-level groups. Nearly half of the coded words belonged to themes in the top-level group *Campaign* which included themes that did not present clear arguments for or against independence but focused on describing people, organisations, events and phenomena around the referendum campaign. The exception to this is the *Yes message* subtheme which discusses some of the pro-independence arguments but even that is to a significant degree a more general level discussion about the tone of the message. *Campaign* was the most written-about top-level group with 49 per cent of all coded words, six out of thirteen themes which, in turn, include 22 of 52 subthemes.

The top-level group *Constitutional question* had five themes which had 19 subthemes while *Impact* was made up of two themes which consist of 11 subthemes. The top three themes according to coded words were *Yes movement* in the *Campaign* group, *Uncertain future* in the *Impact* group and *Positive UK* in the *Constitutional question* group. They were clearly the most discussed themes with more than 10,000 coded words each. The top five themes include also *Referendum campaign* and *Better Together campaign* both from the top-level group *Campaign*.

The subthemes with most coded words were *New powers*, *Poor BT* and *Salmond* that each had more than 3,500 coded words i.e. had bigger word counts than those of the bottom-five themes. *Yes message* and *Economic impact* received more than 3,000 coded words as well. In addition to those subthemes, *Currency* was the only subtheme with more than 2,500 coded words. Among the top ten subthemes, there were four each from the top-level groups *Campaign* and *Impact*, while two belonged to *Constitutional question*. Likewise, among the top ten subthemes, there were three that belonged to the *Uncertain future* theme, two from *Yes movement* while the rest were all from different themes.

The Herald was the most prolific newspaper in publishing referendum-related material on the basis of the number of relevant editorials and coded words. Both indicators

place the Telegraph second but while the Scotsman published more relevant editorials, those of the Guardian resulted in a higher word count of coded words. This can be, at least partially, explained by the different formats of the papers. The weeklies were, understandably, significantly less prolific.

The three most written-about themes were clearly dominated by different papers. The *Yes movement* theme received the biggest contribution from the strongly pro-Union Telegraph, the paper that published most coded words for *Uncertain future* was the Scotsman and the most prolific contributor of *Positive UK* was the Herald. The explanations for these results can be found in the distribution of coded words for subthemes. The Telegraph's input to the *Yes movement* theme was heavily concentrated in its critical tones in the *Salmond*, *Yes message* and *Unfair Yes* themes. The Scotsman's focus was on the uncertainty around the economic impact of independence and the currency question which were also the main arguments of the No campaign. The Herald was the clearly most prolific of the papers in publishing coded words for the *New powers* subtheme in the *Positive UK* theme making the positive case for the Union – something that the Better Together campaign failed to do and received plenty of criticism for.

7.2 Revisiting the initial hypotheses

The hypothesis was that economic issues would form a major part of the editorial debate. Other issues that were expected were the democratic deficit – including the weapons of mass destruction based in Scotland against Scotland's will – and the political differences between Scotland and England. Issues related to oil, like how the North Sea oil revenues have been managed by Westminster, how little they have benefited Scotland or how oil's economic significance was played down and suppressed from the Scottish people, were issues that could have come up.

Economic issues were indeed a major theme in the debate but the rest of these issues played a minor role if any as they were arguments for the pro-independence side. There was little othering of the rUK in the Yes arguments, which was probably a wise choice as while highlighting justified alleged grievances might have won some votes, it would have received much criticism from the pro-union press. Even with the extremely positive and future-focused campaign, there were accusations that the Scottish quest for self-determination was based on anti-Englishness. That the editorial coverage of the campaign was so skewed towards the pro-union side was a surprise. Other surprises in the coverage were the focus on Alex Salmond and the tabloidesque editorials of the Telegraph.

7.3 The role of the media

The newspaper industry is facing rather severe difficulties. The competition is fierce and not just from other newspapers. Circulations and advertising revenues are falling while costs are rising and the availability of real-time news updates on mobile devices makes it more and more difficult for the print media to stay relevant.

One way for the papers to do this is to differentiate their offerings. The papers included in this study were the centre-right Scotsman published in Edinburgh and supporting a No vote, the Herald (centre-left, Glasgow, No), the Sunday Herald (centre-left, Glasgow, Yes) of the indigenous papers and the UK papers the Telegraph (right-wing, No) and the Guardian (centre-left, No) and its weekly sister paper the Observer (centre-left, nominally neutral). All of them, obviously, publish what they think their readership want to read and strive to inform their readers with varying degrees of criticism or embellishment. The experience from the weeks before the Scottish independence referendum suggests that scrutiny can be selective.

As was discussed earlier, the print media – including digital forms – play a major role in society beyond their actual readership, because broadcast media and opinion leaders pick up their messages and spread them further. During the Scottish independence referendum campaign, the newspapers had no obligation to remain impartial and most papers declared their preferred outcome. It seems that the partisan press seemed to scrutinise the views and arguments of the opposing side while accepting those of the side they supported without asking many hard questions. Many researchers and commentators have come to the conclusion that most newspapers were hostile towards independence and supportive of the continuation of the union. The only thing that varied – with once again the exception of the only independence-supporting paper – was the number and importance of new powers they argued the Scottish Parliament and other devolved administrations should have after the referendum.

Rephrasing the question the Herald posed in its 16 August editorial: were the experts the newspapers chose to believe more convincing than the experts of the other side or did they choose to believe them because they argued what they wanted to believe? As discussed earlier, the ‘rival narrative’ and the positive case for independence was not presented in the editorials of the Union-supporting papers even though they were readily available, as several examples in this thesis illustrate.

One of the problems in the editorial debate was the short-term focus that was probably demonstrated best with the near-obsessive focus on Alex Salmond – a particularly big problem for the Telegraph – who then announced his resignation the day

after the referendum. The No side – and the newspapers – put much focus on the economic policies of the Scottish Government’s White Paper and its light-touch approach on business, forgetting the fact that the SNP could have been replaced as the party of government or could have needed a coalition partner with different views in the May 2016 Holyrood Elections – less than two years after the referendum.

An example of a more long-term consideration was the Yes campaign’s argument that Scotland’s future should be in Scotland’s hands. The No-campaign’s counter argument was the promise to devolve more powers to the Scottish Parliament. This response was enough to win the referendum, as the No promises of devo max and near-federalism were rather close to the Yes approach – branded independence light by commentators – and the sweeping new powers within the UK would supposedly have come without the significant risks of going it alone.

Another interesting issue that was touched upon in the editorials and commented on by scholars and journalists was bullying of opinion leaders to support a cause or to remain silent. Whether it was bullying, intimidation, extortion, bribery or a combination of these as well as calling in favours and promises of mutually beneficial future arrangements, it is argued by many commentators that there was an “orchestrated intervention” (Keating and McEwen 2017:19), a “concerted campaign of big business scaremongering” (Riddoch 2015:26) supporting the No side on the home straight of the campaign. Surely, many required little encouragement to intervene as the Union had been very beneficial for them.

However, highlighting the vested interests of some people who spoke up is not to undermine the fact that many genuinely believed that Scotland and the rest of the UK were better together. Crucial to forming views on the question was where people’s loyalties lay. Leaving aside the questionable idea that Scotland needs subsidies from the English taxpayer to survive, Scotland being a part of the UK was viewed as beneficial for the UK but perhaps less beneficial for Scotland. The idea that as a part of the UK Scotland has a seat in the top-table and is punching above its weight globally has, however, been shown to be false by the way in which the UK Government has ignored Scotland in the Brexit process. The suggestion that Scotland is needed in the UK to prevent perpetual Tory rule was discussed earlier but was dismissed as unreasonable from a Scottish perspective by, for instance, Monbiot (2014c) and Robin McAlpine (2014).

The YES campaign was accused of being too optimistic and promising too much. It was relentlessly questioned and criticised by the unionist media. When the Record published the Vow during the referendum week, the media praised it and hyped it as

possible devo-max and near-federalism. All this, they said, was going to happen. The fact that the Westminster parties had two years to publish their vision for Scotland as a part of the UK and put it together in the last week of the campaign was criticised but the actual contents of the Vow, or the lack of them, really were not. The vow was a vague promise of significant new powers that would be delivered fast without really defining what the new powers would be. During the whole research period, the newspapers were rather critical of the Better Together campaign but much less so of its promises near the end of the campaign.

In an ideal world, the role of the press would be to inform the public, present the views of both sides and scrutinise their claims. In the real world, newspapers try to achieve other goals which are not necessarily as virtuous as those mentioned above, as most newspapers are run in order to create a profit and/or increase their owners' influence. Therefore, editorial decisions are sometimes guided by ideas of how to maximise circulation or to otherwise further the interests of the proprietor, rather than by what the ideal outcome for the country or the readership is. Even if they were, there could be several different views on the issue as, in the case of the Scottish independence referendum, neither alternative would have been better than the other in all possible future scenarios.

Did the newspapers' editorial teams actually believe in the near-federalism or devolution-max proposals or were they consciously spreading Unionist propaganda? Surely, they must have known that there was virtually no support for a federal UK south of the border and even far-reaching further devolution would face strong opposition. Perhaps the papers' editorial teams really believed what they wrote or perhaps they hoped to create conditions in which the force of these ideas had to be recognised. In either case, it is interesting to speculate why there have not been more questions asked about the near-federalism that never came or the threats that supposedly would have been avoided by voting No that materialised anyway after the referendum vote.

7.4 Missing themes: history and identity

The thesis started with a historical background. In order to understand the present, one has to understand the past. Only then is it possible to evaluate future possibilities. Scotland is an ancient nation that had its sovereignty recognised by England – its larger neighbour and one of the major powers in Europe at the time. After that recognition, it was at no point occupied and annexed by England. It had its own monarchy and democratic institutions and only joined the United Kingdom by treaty, so technically it

never became a part of England. Thus, Scotland is a part of the UK voluntarily and has a right to end the union if its people so wish. Scotland is a stateless nation (cf. Keating 2001:199) in the sense that although it lacks many of the qualities of a modern-day sovereign state, its existence as a nation separate from its neighbours has not been questioned.

The Union with England came about in as democratic a manner as was possible at the time and even though the process leading to it was characterised by threats, bribes and other forms of skulduggery, Scotland was a partner and not a conquest. In the beginning, resistance to the union was fierce but it was crushed by force and by anglicisation, partly through “voluntary assimilation of peripheral elites” (Henderson Scott 2008:39) – a sort of a divide and rule strategy that was utilised on different levels. Compared to Ireland, Scotland was always a “preferred partner” of sorts and therefore calls for Scottish home rule never achieved similar backing as those in Ireland and they were ignored by the Westminster parties.

The Scottish quest for self-determination only started to gain momentum after the hardship brought about by the Conservative governments of the 1980s. Labour gained Scottish support by promising devolution and as a result, the Scottish Parliament was reconvened in 1999. The devolved parliament was in turn the piece of the puzzle that made it possible for the party of Scottish independence, the SNP, to become the party of government in Scotland and – after the Scottish independence referendum – arguably the most vocal opposition party in the House of Commons.

Access to the British Empire benefitted many Scots and is one of the reasons for loyalty to the UK. Two world wars, the post-war welfare state and especially its greatest achievement the National Health Service are also factors that explain the older age-groups’ loyalty to the UK that has been a major factor in voting decisions in the two recent referenda. The younger age-groups, which have not experienced the wars and have been taught Scottish history, are only familiar with a scaled-down version of the welfare state and have witnessed the positive development since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, seem to be more supportive of Scotland being governed by Scots and not by the political elite of its much larger neighbour. Understanding the past is also crucial to understanding people’s identities that influence their voting decisions.

Even though knowing and understanding the history of your country is extremely important, it is safe to say that looking to the future instead of the past was a conscious choice by the Scottish Government and the Yes campaign. The chosen path of inclusivity and civic nationalism and campaigning for a fairer and more equal society opposing

inequality-increasing, neo-liberal policies led to an unexpected momentum for the supporters of Scottish self-determination. Although there would have been plenty of points to raise about past injustices, the Yes side was positive to the extent that it became a burden. Despite the Yes campaign being almost exclusively positive, there were still plenty of accusations of anti-Englishness, so focusing on what could be instead of what could have been seems to have been the correct decision.

Looking to the future instead of the past has continued after the independence referendum as there have been few protests against the fact that a slim majority of people born in Scotland voted Yes but a vast majority of people born elsewhere in the UK voted No. Despite the past injustices, if anything, history in the form of nostalgia was used more extensively as an argument for retaining the Union.

The inclusivity of the Yes campaign is manifest in the way that Scottishness and its symbols are revered and celebrated but anyone who chooses to become a part of Scottish society is welcome to join those celebrations and embrace their Scottishness. During the independence referendum campaign, there was no need to strengthen Scottish identity or claim it only for independence supporters. Scottish identity is strong and distinct, and everyone who wishes to embrace it is allowed to do so.

The mission of the Yes campaign was to achieve self-determination to accompany the strong identity. Therefore, identity played a relatively minor role in the independence referendum campaign. This is not to say that the Scottish identity would have been absent from the streets of Scotland during the last weeks and months of the campaign period, quite the opposite. Just that it was not a major argument for independence, so it played an insignificant role in the official Yes and No campaigns and thus also in the editorial debate of the newspapers included in this study.

If anything, the No campaign, placing much focus on research data, always acknowledged a separate Scottish identity – recognising the census of 2011 where 62 per cent of Scots chose “Scottish identity only” – but argued that Scotland’s aspirations would be best looked after as part of the union. Another of the reasons for not emphasising identity was probably that the people with strong identification with Scottish or British identities were not necessarily very likely to change their voting decisions and both campaigns focused on the voters in the middle who had not yet made up their minds.

Furthermore, in Scotland, there are significant numbers of people from the rest of the UK and other EU countries, so making Scottish identity a central plank of the campaign could have alienated those people. Even without that emphasis, especially voters born in the rUK were more likely to vote No. As discussed earlier, the focus of the

editorials during the research period was to a great extent dictated by events and what the campaigns chose as their main themes and lines of campaigning.

The Yes campaign position was that even if Scotland chose self-determination people would still be living on an island called Great Britain – the largest of the British Isles – so they could identify as British if they wanted to. Many people that refer to themselves as expats identify as British no matter where in the world they live. Moreover, the Yes approach would have meant, among other things, keeping the monarchy which quite possibly is the most British of all institutions.

The No campaign was having none of it. In his John P. Mackintosh lecture in June 2012, Alistair Darling stated that “your friends in Wales, your family in England and your workmates from Northern Ireland will, effectively and overnight, become foreigners” after independence. The Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, Margaret Curran, told BBC Radio Scotland’s Good morning Scotland programme in May 2013 that “My son, for example, who went to university in England, I think I’d be uncomfortable with the thought that he’s now a foreigner.” That one’s family in another country would somehow become foreigners is a peculiar idea, but it also conveys a more sinister message that there is something wrong with “foreigners”.

In addition to history and identity, themes that did not feature in the editorial discourse as much as they could have included the democratic deficit that Scotland suffers as a part of the UK and the right to self-determination of nations. This, of course, is easily explained by the stance most papers took on independence: why highlight something that supports the views of your opponent?

7.5 Comparison with previous studies

Plenty of detailed research has been conducted around the Scottish independence referendum debate and there is a body of studies that discuss the relevant issues. This thesis adds a different kind of approach by identifying the most important issues and themes in that debate, as they emerged during the last five weeks of the referendum campaign in the editorial opinion of a representative selection of Scottish and UK quality newspapers.

Many people see a second independence referendum as inevitable. This thesis adds to the understanding of how newspapers inform readers while, at the same time, trying to persuade them. It also functions as a summary of the arguments these papers emphasised and what differences there were between the included papers. Overall, the findings of this study are in close agreement with much of the earlier research. Some similarities have

already been noted in the text. Here a few of the most significant are highlighted. Hutchison's two recurring themes in the Scottish press were "a number of key questions remained to be answered by the Yes side" and "the Better Together campaign needed to articulate a more convincing case for the union that it had offered so far". These were very close to the main narratives in the *Yes message* and *Poor BT* subthemes.

Dekavalla pointed out the focus on risks and uncertainties which were core narratives in the *Uncertain future* and *Yes message*, ranked second in themes and fourth in subthemes respectively. She found that the newspapers' coverage of the referendum was apt to confirm and reinforce uncertainty that existed in the debate. This was illustrated rather tellingly by the Scotsman's repeated use of the phrase "we don't know" in its editorial declaring opposition to independence.

Her summary of the main message of the Scottish newspapers is that Scotland wants change and that change means a fairer society that can be achieved through enhanced devolution. These ideas are reflected here in the *Social justice* theme (9th), and the *New powers* (1st) and *UK won't be the same* (38th) subthemes. Liñeira et. al. highlighted the economy and currency as the most important issues in the debate and those were the subthemes ranked fifth and sixth in coded words.

McEwen and Keating pointed out the "tactical interest" of the No side in creating uncertainty which was also one of the main themes in this study. Liñeira et. al. discussed how the unionist side emphasised economic risks and inconveniences while McEwen argued that uncertainty around social security and the welfare state as well as several other types of risks and uncertainties were a core element in the No messages.

Brown Swan and Petersohn wrote about the uncertainty connected to Scotland's future currency which was identified as one of the most important weapons of the No campaign. In addition to uncertainty, the Better Together campaign was also associated with negativity. It was widely discussed in the editorials and identified also by Keating and McEwen, Lecca et. al. and Buchanan among others. It formed a significant part of the *Poor BT* subtheme.

McEwen highlighted the NHS and risks connected to it as one of the most important themes of the campaign. This is supported by *NHS* being ranked tenth among all subthemes based on number of coded words. The EU was identified as a source of uncertainty and Keating argued it was the No campaign's deliberate strategy to emphasize the doubts around it. *EU* was just outside top-30 subthemes in this study but still contributed over a thousand coded words to the second largest theme *Uncertain future*.

Robertson discussed the personalisation of the Yes campaign as Alex Salmond which was present also in the editorial coverage in this study: *Salmond* was the subtheme with the third most coded words. Even though defence and security were relatively minor themes in this study and according to Fleming, also more generally in the independence referendum debate, he pointed out that as in numerous other fields uncertainty and risk were highlighted in that discussion as well. On the basis of this study, it is easy to agree with that view.

Dekavalla (2016b:806) has identified a number of frames in the independence referendum press coverage. Despite the different methods, different time frames and different selections of newspapers, there are similarities in her observations and those of this study. She writes that “The referendum was hailed as a very significant, one-off decision in much of this coverage and words like ‘historic’, ‘once in a generation’, ‘unique opportunity’ often appeared in the narratives of the press”. It corresponds well with the findings in the *Importance of the vote* subtheme in this study. Likewise, Dekavalla’s (2016b:807) observation:

The unprecedented engagement of ordinary citizens in grassroots campaigning, in public meetings, in informal discussion, and eventually in the vote itself is unquestionable and was widely reported by the press, with much of the content of the democratic achievement frame focusing on this discourse.

could be used to describe the *People reclaiming politics* subtheme.

Much of the top-level group *Campaign* could fall under Dekavalla’s (2016b:800) strategic game frame that “focuses attention on politicians’ performance in the campaign, it emphasizes competition between those representing different parties and sees their ultimate goal as winning the contest”. Like the *Campaign* group in this study with a 49 per cent share of coded words, Dekavalla’s strategic game was present in 53 per cent of articles and thus, the most prominent frame in her study.

Themes like *Positive UK*, *Defence*, *Social justice* and *Uncertain future* would fit into Dekavalla’s (2016b:801) policy frame which includes two main categories of policy: “economic policy and policy relating to other areas, such as defence, membership of the EU and NATO, public services, welfare, immigration, broadcasting, etc.” The policy frame was present in 51 per cent of Dekavalla’s articles: a similar share as the *Constitutional question* and *Impact* groups combined. Her policies included themes and subthemes under both aforementioned top-level groups of this study

7.7 Reflections on the methodology and its limitations

When the collection of the data corpus started only two of the papers had a clear and published stance on independence: there was one pro-independence and one anti-independence paper. On the first day of the actual research period the situation was the same but during the collection of the data, three more papers declared their preferences for referendum outcome and the sixth paper, while it stopped short of pledging its support, seemed very positive about the new and improved UK that would be created after the referendum: preferably with the Scots on board.

Braun and Clarke identified room for the research question to evolve as one of the strengths of the inductive form of thematic analysis. Thus, as only one of the papers supported independence, the focus of this study shifted towards presenting and examining counter arguments to the dominant narrative in the editorials reflecting the anti-independence views. On the one hand the narrative of the newspapers is skewed towards an anti-independence stance but, on the other hand, the data set includes 100 per cent of the pro-independence editorials published in Scotland during the research period. The papers published plenty of other material connected to the referendum, but this analysis of theme focuses only on the editorials.

Another limitation of this study is the absence of the best-selling newspapers in Scotland but it was a question of access and, at the same time, a conscious choice that tabloid newspapers fell outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that if the tabloids were included, the findings would very likely be somewhat different. Including social media and independent digital news sources would similarly have changed the picture and perhaps even more drastically. Furthermore, the study, though employing quantitative and statistical methods, makes no claims regarding its findings' statistical significance one way or the other.

Thematic analysis can be a very labour-intensive research method even though lack of precise guidelines about how to conduct it leave decisions about the depth of analysis to the researcher. It might be better suited to a topic like e-cigarettes (Rooke and Amos 2013) than “all issues connected to an independence referendum”. Also, analysing material from interviews with pre-determined questions differs significantly from an approach like that of this study. It is not an exact science and the great freedom that a researcher enjoys when conducting thematic analysis can be seen both as a strength and as a weakness of the method. Two researchers working individually on the same dataset could produce rather different results regarding themes or connections between them. At the same time, that can be seen as a factor enriching the debate around the issue. However,

using this method with a partner or a group of researchers could lead to stimulating debates and produce interesting results.

What is important for a researcher working on their own is that the coding process is systematic, logical and consistent and that every piece of material is afforded similar attention. In this case, the method has helped produce a wealth of information about the themes and issues important in these newspapers' editorial coverage of the referendum and results that are in many ways rather similar to those of other researchers using other methods and scopes. Focusing just on actual arguments for and against independence presented in the editorials would possibly have provided an approach better suited to an MA thesis. But while the process might have been more manageable, it would have produced less nuanced results.

One possibility for further research on this topic would be to extend the research period to include a larger share of the data corpus, either to include more weeks before the referendum or to compare the themes before the referendum with those that were discussed during the month after polling day which is also included in the data corpus. The main problem with this would, of course, be the way the debate was very concentrated in the last two weeks of the campaign, so perhaps focusing on the tone in which the different themes were discussed i.e. whether they were neutral or favouring one of the sides would be a more fruitful approach. Also adding more newspapers to the study and perhaps afterwards comparing the themes of broadsheets and tabloids could generate interesting new insights. The increasing importance of social media and digital news portals supports their inclusion in any future research. Another suggestion for further research could be to investigate whether there are recognisable patterns that some themes tend to be discussed in connection with one another.

8 Conclusion

The newspaper editorials to a large extent echoed the main messages of the No campaign. There were significant risks and unknowns related to a Yes vote, the most important of which being the impact on Scottish economy, future currency arrangements, future of the NHS and whether or not Scotland could retain its membership of the EU. At the same time, a No vote would give the Scottish Parliament significant new powers to shape the country in a way that reflected the Scots' hopes and needs. It was portrayed as a significantly less risky option than independence. The enhanced devolution and federalism narratives formed a significant part of the positive case for Union, meaning that most of it was just promises at that point. Considering these findings, one can argue

that two out of the three most prominent themes were directly connected to the main lines of attack adopted by the No campaign.

In addition to these, the newspapers were eager to criticise and question the pro-independence vision and arguments and also associate, or even replace, the Yes movement with the persona of First Minister Alex Salmond – something that the No side did as well. Obviously, the only independence-supporting paper, the Sunday Herald, covered the independence referendum campaign from a different angle and there were significant differences in the approaches of the No-supporting papers studied here, but these are the conclusions on the main themes of the studied newspaper coverage as a group.

The Yes Scotland campaign was seen as superior to the pro-Union Better Together campaign but its arguments fell short of convincing the papers. Whether their stances were set long before they actually declared their preferences is debatable and the answers for different papers might be different. The subtheme associating the Yes campaign with foul play and dirty tricks was very much dominated by a single newspaper, i.e. the Telegraph. The No side received much criticism for its negativity and failure to communicate the positives of the Union and the main Westminster parties for their inability to agree on the new powers to be devolved after a No vote.

What was remarkable was the anti-independence newspapers' failure to question the federalism narrative of the BT campaign even though it should have been clear that there was no support for federalism in the two main UK parties or among voters in England – the country with 85 per cent of UK population and thus a huge majority of the electorate. Likewise, the Vow seemed to receive little criticism and was, for the most part, described as written in stone without any possibility – regardless of who won the general election and formed the next government – for the UK parties to renege on it.

According to most of the included newspapers, the UK was supposed to change for the better beyond recognition but the only truly major things that have changed after the referendum – as it seems at the time of writing – are the arrival of a considerably increased number of SNP MPs in Westminster and that Scotland is being taken out of the EU. This is happening despite Scotland voting by a significant margin to remain a member and being told in 2014 that the only way to guarantee its membership was to reject independence.

Despite promises of significantly increased devolution and some powers actually heading north after the referendum, at the time of writing the UK Government is planning to hold on to some devolved powers returning from the EU after Brexit. And despite all

the talk of a partnership of equals this is being done without the consent of the Scottish Parliament. Even before the EU referendum, the new powers coming to Holyrood after the independence referendum were much less than what many expected and what most Scots supported.

As for other Better Together promises, the renewable energy subsidies that were supposedly threatened by independence were cut by the UK Government after Scotland had rejected independence. The broad shoulders of the UK supposedly supporting the oil industry in case the oil price went down vanished when it did, leading to tens of thousands of people losing their jobs (Vaughan 2017). After the No vote, the criticised Yes promises will always remain hypothetical but the No promises that were not scrutinised with the same rigour are seen by many to have been broken and ignored.

The "independence case not proven" narrative mirrors the view projected by the No campaign that being a member of a Union is a normal state of affairs for a nation and it is true in the sense that retaining the Union meant fewer changes than independence. However, one could argue – and many people have – that self-determination for a country of more than five million people is the natural state of affairs and not in any way abnormal.

Many 'independentistas' have argued that no independent country would ever vote to enter a union on terms like those of the UK. Also, the 'no going back' narrative seems peculiar considering the number of countries that have chosen independence from London rule and subsequently wanted to reverse that decision. There have not been any, and even if there were, surely, if it was a union of equals beneficial for both parties there would be a way to negotiate a new Union, if both parties wanted that. The idea that rUK would reject a returning Scotland reflects the subsidy myth that has been shown to be untrue.

IV AFTERWORD

The newspaper market in Scotland has changed since the independence referendum. Shortly after the No vote, the then editor of the Sunday Herald, Richard Walker, set up the National, an independence-supporting daily which, after a short trial run, became a permanent fixture in the market. The Sunday Herald was axed in late 2018 and replaced by the independence-supporting Sunday National and the neutral Herald on Sunday. A bit later, the publisher of the Scotsman entered administration and the paper was bought out by another company. The National is still the only independence-supporting newspaper but now, instead of one weekly pro-independence paper, there is one published seven days a week. The Herald and the Scotsman have again declared neutrality in the independence question, so they at least approve of the current constitutional status.

Now, over four years after the polling day, many people feel that we are closer to the second Scottish independence referendum than the first one. During the hectic last weeks of the campaign period, the Unionist side managed to stem the Yes tide with high-profile interventions and the Vow, i.e. promises of more devolved powers and making the Scottish Parliament permanent. The extent to which those promises have been kept or not is debatable, but the real game changer has been the Leave vote in the 2016 EU referendum.

Sixty-two per cent of the voters in Scotland backed Remain but, as a part of the UK, the Scots now face a situation where they are being taken out of the EU against their will. During the committee stage of the EU referendum legislation, the SNP proposed an amendment, the so called "quadruple lock", that would have meant that all constituent parts of the UK would have had to vote Leave in order to make Brexit a reality. The amendment was rejected and now two of the four UK nations face Brexit despite voting Remain – although Northern Ireland may be in for a much softer Brexit thanks to the Good Friday Agreement.

Before the independence referendum, the Guardian was calling for an “urgent constitutional reform that protects the nations, regions and other minorities from majoritarianism.” With that reform being forgotten in the swift transition from the independence referendum to the 2015 General Election, the nations are not being protected now. In fact, the three smaller nations of the UK can never have their way regarding anything important enough to be among the reserved issues unless England agrees, be it Universal Credit or weapons of mass destruction.

Regarding Scottish devolution, Brexit brings about a new problem with powers returning from Brussels. As discussed in chapter 2.6., everything that is not specifically

reserved is devolved and as Brexit was impossible to predict in 1997, many powers that have been controlled by the EU are not listed among the reserved powers and should therefore return to Holyrood. Westminster has other ideas and they are seeking to assume a number of the repatriated powers. However, this does not suit the Scottish Parliament which “voted to withhold its consent to the Withdrawal Bill by 93:30” (McKerrell 2018).

Macwhirter (2015:151) writes that “nothing in the original Scotland Act or in the 2015 Scotland Bill prevents the UK parliament from legislating on matters devolved to Holyrood” but also that “the accepted practice is that there should be a legislative consent motion on any legislation that strays into the responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament”. That has largely been the case until now.

Now Westminster wants to establish common frameworks for the whole UK so that it can negotiate trade deals with other parts of the world after Brexit. To do this, the UK Government argues, they need to hold on to powers returning from the EU for up to seven years. They intend to do this with or without the consent of Holyrood while the Scottish Government insists that there cannot be any UK-wide legislation relating to devolved areas imposed on Scotland without an agreement with the Scottish Parliament (Nutt 2018b:4). The Scottish Brexit Minister, Mike Russell, said: “It would be an outrage if the UK Government decided to use what the people of Scotland did not vote for – Brexit – to undermine what we did vote for: devolution. The UK Government has no mandate to undermine the powers of the Scottish Parliament” (ibid.).

Macwhirter (2018:11) writes that the EU Withdrawal Bill “effectively abolish[es] Scottish devolution for the next seven years” during which time the UK Government can override the Scottish Parliament on many important matters. He also argues that “Home rule is over”: there will be no return to normality after the seven years and there will be a precedent that Westminster can, when it feels it to be necessary, override the Scottish Parliament. He concludes that “If Mrs May was trying to make the case for an independent Scotland, she could hardly have done better.”

Leckie (2018:8) cites constitutional expert Professor Aileen McHarg: “To be absolutely clear this is a unilateral adjustment by Westminster of Holyrood’s legislative competence in a way that creates the potential for future unilateral adjustments of Holyrood’s legislative competence by UK Ministers. That’s a big deal.” As Ascherson noted earlier, Westminster “retains an absolute veto” over Holyrood. Westminster gave Scotland a parliament and Westminster can – in the most extreme case – take it away. Power devolved is power retained.

The SNP manifesto for the 2016 Scottish election stated that:

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.

Scotland being taken out of the EU against its will looks more and more likely with every passing day and few people can argue that, after promising further devolution and to make the Scottish parliament permanent, the “unilateral adjustment by Westminster of Holyrood’s legislative competence” is not a significant and material change in itself. Furthermore, the Better Together campaign argued that voting No was the only way to guarantee Scottish EU membership and that the UK was a partnership of equals. Both claims have been shown to be untrue which further strengthens the case for holding a second independence referendum.

At the time of writing, it looks like Northern Ireland – and Gibraltar – will be given bespoke deals which retain their access to the EU single market and customs union, while Scotland, which voted 62 per cent Remain, will lose their access. FM Nicola Sturgeon discussed Theresa May’s approach to the Brexit process stating, that “Perhaps her one and only note of consistency in all of this, over the past two-and-a-half years, has been her contempt for Scotland and the position of the Scottish Parliament” (Learmonth 2019:6). Amid the Brexit-induced chaos in Westminster, Mhairi Black MP (2019:6) wrote that “The lifeboat of independence has never looked more attractive.”

Macwhirter (2013:71) writes that “in the Act of Union, Scotland gave up its political independence in exchange for access to the common market of its day.” One could argue, that perhaps it is only appropriate that they dissolve the Union in order to retain access to the EU common market of today. The people of Scotland have in the recent past voted in two referendums the results of which have become mutually exclusive. Brexit just might be the major political upheaval – like the October revolution or the collapse of the Soviet Union have been earlier – that results in independence for nations united with their larger neighbours. Even the then editor of the Daily Record who masterminded the Vow supports Scottish independence now.

Svensk sammanfattning

Skottlands framtid i Skottlands händer? – Tematisk analys av ledarartiklar publicerade i sex tidningar under de sista fem veckorna före folkomröstningen om skotsk självständighet år 2014

Inledning

Den 18 september 2014 röstade Skottlands befolkning om huruvida Skottland borde vara ett självständigt land eller inte. Efter en lång och färgstark kampanj blev resultatet 45 procent Ja mot 55 procent Nej och Skottland fortsätter som en del av Förenade kungariket Storbritannien och Nordirland (UK). Med tanke på att endast en söndagstidning bland alla tidningar i hela Förenade kungariket stödde självständighet var det i någon mån överraskande att Ja-sidan lyckades knappa in på Nej-sidans försprång så mycket att slutresultatet blev så jämnt. Kampanjorganisationen för självständighet fokuserade nästan enbart på självständighetens positiva verkningar medan Nej-sidans strategi var att kommunicera det negativa.

Ursprungligen var unionen mellan England och Skottland ett konvenansparti som ingicks av de politiska etablissemangen söder och norr om gränsen. För att åstadkomma det krävdes en hel del av såväl påtryckning som mutning. I Skottland väckte unionen mycket motstånd bland vanligt folk men i en outvecklad demokrati hade de ingen möjlighet att påverka beslutet. Detta motstånd var en av orsakerna bakom jakobitupproren. Det sista av dem mellan 1745 och 1746 ledde till mycket stränga bestraffningsåtgärder som i samband med ekonomisk nytta från det Brittiska imperiet ledde till att motståndet mot unionen falnade (Devine 2013).

Understöd för självständighet i Skottland är ett relativt nytt fenomen. Det viktigaste partiet bland dem som stöder självständighet är Skotska nationalpartiet (SNP) som blev en betydande faktor i brittisk politik på riktigt först år 1999 när Skotska parlamentet öppnades på nytt efter nästan 300 års uppehåll. Efter parlamentsvalen 2007 blev SNP det största partiet i Skotska parlamentet och kunde bilda en minoritetsregering. Parlamentsvalet år 2011 resulterade i en majoritet för SNP i Skotska parlamentet vilket gjorde det möjligt för partiet att initiera en folkomröstning om självständighet. Efter folkomröstningen har SNP fortfarande nått framgång i parlamentsvalen i såväl Skottland som Storbritannien (Devine 2016).

Under folkomröstningskampanjen var Ja-sidans YES Scotland och Nej-sidans Better Together de viktigaste kampanjorganisationerna. Speciellt YES Scotland hade

mycket aktiva gräsrotter en stor del av vilka inte var förbundna till politiska partier. De viktigaste partierna som stödde självständighet var SNP, Skotska gröna partiet och Skotska socialistpartiet. De viktigaste partierna på Nej-sidan var Labourpartiet, konservativa partiet och liberaldemokraterna (Macwhirter 2014). Efter folkomröstningen har inställningen till självständighet ersatt det traditionella motsatsförhållandet mellan högern och vänstern som den viktigaste utgångspunkten för partival i skotsk politik (McIntyre-Kemp 2018).

Syfte och ämnesmotivering

Målet för denna avhandling var att identifiera de viktigaste temana i ledartiklar publicerade i sex olika tidningar under de sista fem veckorna före folkomröstningen. Ledartiklar kommunicerar tidningars officiella inställningar till politiska frågor och fast tidningsupplagor håller på att minska spelar tidningar fortfarande en viktig roll i hur uppfattningar bildas direkt hos individer men också indirekt genom att påverka opinionsledarna och andra medier. Fast tidningarna inte nödvändigtvis påverkar vad folk tänker påverkar de vad folk tänker på genom att styra debatten.

Presentation av metod och material

Den huvudsakliga forskningsformen för denna avhandling var tematisk analys som presenteras av Braun och Clarke (2006). Enligt dem är tematisk analys en åtkomlig och flexibel metod som används för att identifiera och analysera återkommande teman och mönster i kvalitativt data. I denna avhandling har materialet analyserats med hjälp av den så kallade induktiva varianten av tematisk analys m.a.o. utan på förhand bestämda koder eftersom det var omöjligt att på förhand veta vad tidningarna skulle skriva om.

Datakorpusen som användes för detta arbete består av ledartiklar publicerade i skotska dagstidningar the Herald och the Scotsman, UK dagstidningar the Guardian och the Telegraph, och två söndagstidningar the Sunday Herald (Skottland) och the Observer (UK). Datakorpusen samlades mellan den 30 juni och den 19 oktober och datasetet (den data ur korpusen som har använts) består av folkomröstningsrelaterade ledartiklar från ovannämnda tidningar publicerade mellan den 14 augusti och den 18 september m.a.o. de sista fem veckorna före folkomröstningen inklusive valdagen.

Redogörelse för undersökningen

När datakorpusen var samlad började processen vars målsättning var att bygga en tematisk modell över de viktigaste temana och ämnen som diskuterades i tidningsdebatten under de sista veckorna före folkomröstningen. Efter att skribenten först hade grundligt bekantat sig med det relevanta materialet började kodningsfasen där delar av texterna som var relevanta med tanke på forskningsfrågan kodades enligt innehållet till preliminära, än vid det här skedet mycket specifika grupper. Olika koder från den första fasen grupperades senare till preliminära delteman (subthemes) som så småningom kombinerades och förädlades till slutliga delteman vilka då i sin tur grupperades under ett antal teman. Till slut sorterades temana under tre stycken huvudkategorier.

Den slutliga modellen omfattar tre huvudkategorier som innehåller totalt 13 olika teman som i sin tur består av 57 olika delteman. Modellen är presenterad i tabellen nedan.

Kampanj	Konstitutionella frågor	Inverkan
YES rörelse	Självständig Skottland	Osäker framtid
YES budskap	Skottland efter självständighet	Osäkerhet i allmänhet
Salmond (förste minister)	Självbestämmanderätt	Valuta
YES momentum		Ekonomisk inverkan
Orättvis YES	Relationer mellan Skottland och England	• <i>Ingen andel av skuld</i>
YES kampanj	Relationer med England	• <i>Stigande priser</i>
	Anti-Westminster eller Anti-England?	NHS (National Health Service)
Better Together kampanj	Nationell identitet	EU
Dålig BT		Olja
• <i>Sen BT</i>	Positiv UK	Folkomröstningens inverkan
• <i>BT panik</i>	Nya befogenheter	Folkomröstningen påverkar hela UK
Sen intervention	Enighet och solidaritet	UK kommer att förändras
The Labour Party	Självstyre	Konstitutionell reform
	Framgång & nytta av UK	Reparera UK
Folkomröstningskampanj	UK stabilitet & säkerhet	Vem talar för England?
Mobbning	Federalism	
Folk återkräver politiken	Upplösning invecklad:snabbare, tryggare, bättre förändring	
Bli lugn och respektera andra	Barnett-formel	
Exceptionell kampanj		
• <i>Seger för demokratin</i>	Försvar	
Panikspridning/avskräckning	• <i>Nato</i>	
	• <i>Trident-kärnvapen</i>	
Självständighetsfolkomröstning	• <i>Försvar i allmänhet</i>	
Opinionsundersökningar		
Jämn kamp	Social rättvisa	
Folkomröstningens betydelse	Social ojämlikhet	
	UK fungerar inte	
Hjärta eller huvud	Mer rättvist samhälle	
Känslor		
Förnuft		
Skiljelinjer/polarisering		
Media & information		
Medias opartiskhet		
Vems sanning ska man tro på?		
Tidningarnas stöd för Ja/Nej		

Viktigheten av olika huvudkategorier, teman och delteman jämförs med antalet kodade ord olika tidningar använde i sina ledarartiklar för att diskutera dem. Enligt Braun och Clarke (2006) finns inte olika teman i textkorpusen där forskaren hittar dem utan forskaren måste aktivt skapa dem genom att följa olika stadier i tematisk analys. Att

skapa en tematisk modell räcker emellertid inte utan det är ytterst viktigt att beskriva olika stadier i analysprocessen och rapportera resultaten. Rapporteringen måste omfatta noggranna beskrivningar av olika tematiska komponenter och man bör också presentera exempel på textavsnitt som ger läsarna en djupare insikt i analysprocessens resultat.

Resultat

Volymmässigt fördes största delen av debatten kring frågan om skotsk självständighet under de sista veckorna före folkomröstningen. Under den allra sista veckan publicerade tidningarna inkluderade i detta projekt 44 procent av alla ord som blev kodade till olika delteman och de två sista veckorna publicerades nästan tre fjärdedelar av alla kodade orden. En orsak till detta var att Ja-sidan lyckades knappa in på Nej-sidans försprång och galluparna började visa att unionistsegern inte alls var säker.

Den mest aktiva tidningen på basis av antalet relevanta ledarartiklar och kodade ord var the Herald som stod för 27 procent av de kodade orden. Den följdes av relativt jämnstarka the Telegraph med 21 procent och the Guardian med 20 procent samt the Scotsman med 17 procent av de kodade orden. Söndagstidningar publicerade förståeligt mindre antal ord och deras andelar var åtta procent för the Observer och sju procent för the Sunday Herald. Huvudkategorin *Kampanj* innehöll nästan hälften av alla kodade ord under forskningsperioden medan 29 procent av de relevanta orden blev kodade i kategorin *Konstitutionella frågor* och 22 procent i kategorin *Inverkan*.

De mest aktiva tidningarna i publicering av kodade ord i *Kampanj*-kategorin var the Herald och the Telegraph. The Guardian publicerade största andelar i *Konstitutionella frågor* och *Inverkan*. The Sunday Herald publicerade 73 procent av sina kodade ord i *Kampanj* kategorin medan motsvarande andelar för the Telegraph och the Herald var 63 procent respektive 59 procent. The Observer fokuserade mer på *Konstitutionella frågor* än tidningarna i genomsnitt medan the Guardian och the Scotsman var klart mindre aktiva i *Kampanj* kategorin än tidningarna i snitt. The Sunday Herald som stödde skotsk självständighet skrev proportionellt klart mindre om *Konstitutionella frågor* än de andra.

All tre huvudkategorier hade ett tema som var klart mer populärt än de andra temana i kategorin. Det allra populäraste temat var *Yes rörelse* i *Kampanj*-kategorin, på andra plats kom *Osäker framtid* i kategorin *Inverkan* och *Positiv UK* i *Konstitutionella frågor* har det tredje högsta antalet kodade ord. Temat *Yes rörelse* omfattar en tredjedel av alla kodade ord i sin egen kategori, 46 procent av de kodade orden i kategorin *Konstitutionella*

frågor hör till temat *Positiv UK* medan *Osäker framtid* omfattar två tredjedelar av de kodade orden i kategorin *Inverkan* som visserligen består av endast två teman.

De tre mest omskrivna temana ägdes klart av olika tidningar. The Telegraph – som var starkt mot skotsk självständighet – var den tidningen som publicerade mest kodade ord för temat *Yes rörelse*, the Scotsman var mest produktiv med tanke på temat *Osäker framtid* och the Herald stod för största andelen kodade ord på *Positiv UK*. Deras bidrag till de ovannämnda temana bestod till stor del av kritik mot *Salmond* (Skottlands försteminister 2007–2014), *Yes budskap* och *Orättvis Yes* (the Telegraph), osäkerhet kring *Ekonomisk inverkan* och valutafrågan (the Scotsman) och publicering av kodade ord om *Nya befogenheter* (the Herald).

De tematiska komponenter som faktiskt identifierades i ledarartiklarna var delteman så det är intressant att presentera de mest omskrivna. Det överlägset mest omskrivna deltemat var *Nya befogenheter* som placerades i kategorin *Konstitutionella frågor* och temat *Positiv UK* och som omfattade mer än 4600 kodade ord. Antalet kodade ord för det deltemat var högre än ordantalet för de sex minsta temana. Det andra och tredje mest populära deltemana var *Dålig BT* under *Better Together kampanj* och *Salmond* under *Yes rörelse*. De här två deltemana hade över 3500 kodade ord var medan *Yes budskap* och *Ekonomisk inverkan* båda hade över 3000 kodade ord. Utöver dessa fem hade endast *Valuta* mer än 2500 kodade ord.

Slutsats

Yes Scotland baserade sig på positivitet till och med i så hög grad att det blev en börda för kampanjen: den kritiserades för orealistiska förväntningar och löften. Better Together däremot fokuserade länge på ovisshet, potentiell ostadighet och risker för pensioner, jobb, ekonomi, stigande prisnivå, hälsovård och så vidare. När galluparna mot slutet började visa att situationen blev allt jämnare och risker inte verkade vara tillräckligt för att vinna omröstningen var Nej-sidan tvungen att också lova långtgående vidare självstyre för Skotska parlamentet. De påstod – med hjälp av massmedierna – att nya befogenheter på väg till Holyrood var mer omfattande än folk på Ja-sidan nånsin hade vågat drömma om. Enligt Better Together var det snabbare, tryggare och bättre förändring och utan risk dessutom. De tidningar som stödde unionen tog emot och spidde vidare detta budskap med stor iver.

Efter omröstningen visade sig de båda stora brittiska partierna inte vara beredda att hålla löfterna om maximalt självstyre för Skottland. Den konservativa premiärministern

David Cameron påstod bara några timmar efter att resultaten deklarerades att Skottland har haft sin chans och att det nu är Englands tur att få sin röst hörd angående unionens framtid. Labour var för sin del det partiet som var mest motvillig att överlåta nya befogenheter till Skotska parlamentet i förhandlingarna efter omröstningen.

Massmedierna och dagspressen spelade en betydande roll i försvaret av unionen. Enbart en tidning i hela Förenade kungariket stödde skotsk självständighet: söndagstidningen the Sunday Herald. Alla andra hade en negativ eller rent av fientlig inställning till propositionen. Av de tidningar vars ledarartiklar var med i analysen var the Sunday Herald alltså pro-självständighet, the Observer var skenbart neutral men ställde sig mycket positivt till förslag om politiska reformer i hela Förenade kungariket efter att Skottland skulle ha avvisat självständighet, men de andra motsatte sig självständigheten.

Motståndet från the Telegraph var hårdast, the Guardian var entusiastisk för demokratiska reformer efter folkomröstningen med Skottland fortfarande som en del av Förenade kungariket, the Herald stödde starkt långt-gående självstyre och the Scotsmans budskap var att självständighet inte är värd riskerna som det skulle innebära. Som en helhet upprepade och förstärkte pressen Better Together kampanjens budskap och ifrågasatte Yes Scotlands och Skotska regeringens planer för och visioner om framtiden: enligt dem fanns det många obesvarade frågor. Samtidigt var Better Together's argument och inställningar nästan inte alls undersökta eller ifrågasatta av största delen av pressen.

Den brittiska EU-folkomröstningen som hölls under två år efter självständighetsfolkomröstningen resulterade i en knapp seger för Leave-sidan och det ser sannolikt ut at Förenade kungariket kommer att lämna EU. Under kampanjen inför självständighetsomröstningen var båda sidor överens om att det är fördelaktigt för Skottland att förbli medlem i EU så en övertygande 62 procents andel av dem som röstade i Skottland backade Remain. Det var ett argument för Nej-sidan under kampanjen inför självständighetsfolkomröstningen att det ända sättet att garantera Skottlands medlemskap i EU var att säga nej till självständighet men nu ser det ut som att Skottland som en del av Förenade kungariket kommer att förlora sin plats trots att de gjorde det. Det ser nu ut som att Brexit-processen kan resultera i en ny folkomröstning om skotsk självständighet.

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Appendix A: All papers, all weeks

Word count

Theme	Guardian 15266	Herald 20131	Observer 6080	Scotsman 13039	S-Herald 5274	Telegraph 16130	Total 75920
Campaign	5357	11852	1270	4597	3866	10153	37095
YES movement	1350	3006	652	1160	1444	4507	12119
Salmond	314	672	147	610	411	1504	3658
YES message	633	768	384	240	194	1073	3292
Unfair YES	21	315			182	1500	2018
Yes momentum	234	313	65	288	486	362	1748
Yes campaign	148	938	56	22	171	68	1403
Referendum campaign	891	3072	337	781	898	1443	7422
Bullying	82	442		126	82	1051	1783
People reclaiming politics	396	928	186	28	199		1737
Exceptional campaign	331	1012	0	149	106	0	1598
--Exceptional campaign	240	543		115	59		957
--Win for democracy	91	469		34	47		641
Scaremongering	82	322	151	73	456	170	1254
Keep calm and show respect		368		405	55	222	1050
Better Together campaign	1431	2049	267	855	701	1203	6506
Poor BT	918	1054	215	817	508	321	3833
--Poor BT	744	705	180	373	423	237	2662
--Bt late	127	192	24	300	77	58	778
--BT panic	47	157	11	144	8	26	393
Labour	345	464	52		83	609	1553
Late intervention	168	531		38	110	273	1120
Independence referendum	887	1433	14	740	251	1476	4801
Polls	518	756		367	151	584	2376
Importance of the vote	207	460	14	259	81	696	1717
Tight race	162	217		114	19	196	708
Media & information	468	1341	0	499	541	340	3189
Media impartiality	76	715		44	134	189	1158
Whose truth to believe	112	353		191	289	82	1027
Newspaper endorsements	280	273		264	118	69	1004
Heart vs. head	330	951	0	562	31	1184	3058
Emotions	149	648		195	31	560	1583
Rationality	136	258		327		274	995
Division	45	45		40		350	480
Constitutional question	5708	4872	3118	4636	347	3276	21957
Positive UK	1913	3090	1057	1994	107	2025	10186
New powers	1144	1745	352	1028	49	318	4636
Devolution	80	385	57	516	58		1096
UK stability & security	45	218	188	146		357	954
Federalism	284	136	256			275	951
Unity and solidarity	230	39	40	40		540	889
Success & benefit of UK	29	120	164	186		378	877
Barnett	88	381		40		49	558
Break-up complex - faster etc.	13	66	0	38	0	108	225
--Break-up complex		19		38		108	165
--Faster, safer, better change	13	47					60
ENG-SCO relations	1316	762	402	1048	44	708	4280
Relations with England	495	603	214	759		171	2242
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	709	129	188	119	44	268	1457
National identity	112	30		170		269	581
Social justice	1495	698	1042	300	0	24	3559
Fairer society	535	273	457	300		24	1589
UK not working	781	331	293				1405
Inequality	179	94	292				565
Independent Scotland	969	263	505	774	164	169	2844
Post-independence day Scotland	572	263	272	424	20	147	1698
Self-determination	397		233	350	144	22	1146
Defence	15	59	112	520	32	350	1088
Trident	15		91	308	32		446
Defence in general				21		350	371
Nato		59	21	191			271
Impact	4201	3407	1692	3806	1061	2701	16868
Uncertain future	1709	2729	516	3471	1061	1826	11312
Economic impact	247	573	151	1093	237	723	3024
--Economic impact	247	99	148	767	215	561	2037
--Rising prices		448	3	2	22	26	501
--No debt share		26		324		136	486
Currency	448	419	86	1254	106	323	2636
NHS	545	814		183	435	103	2080
General uncertainty	332	412	179	644	56	150	1773
EU	137	446	21	297	26	92	1019
Oil		65	79		201	435	780
Indyref impact	2492	678	1176	335	0	875	5556
Indyref affects the whole UK	854	424	360	168		429	2235
Constitutional reform	568	185	219	59		172	1203
UK won't be the same	372	69	357			96	894
Fix the UK	437		240				677
Who will speak for ENG?	261			108		178	547

All papers, all weeks

Number of editorials

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	10	21	1	15	5	18	70
Campaign	9	20	1	13	5	18	66
YES movement	9	16	1	11	5	18	60
Salmond	3	9	1	7	5	15	40
YES message	8	6	1	4	2	12	33
Unfair YES	1	5			3	8	17
Yes momentum	4	3	1	5	3	3	19
Yes campaign	2	8	1	1	3	2	17
Referendum campaign	6	10	1	6	5	8	36
Bullying	2	2		2	1	6	13
People reclaiming politics	5	7	1	1	4		18
Exceptional campaign	3	5		3	2		
--Exceptional campaign	3	4		3	1		11
--Win for democracy	1	4		1	1		7
Scaremongering	2	3	1	1	4	4	15
Keep calm and show respect		3		4	1	4	12
Better Together campaign	7	8	1	4	4	6	30
Poor BT	6	6	1	4	4	4	25
--Poor BT	6	6	1	4	3	2	22
--BT late	2	2	1	4	1	2	12
--BT panic	1	2	1	3	1	1	9
Labour	5	6	1		1	3	16
Late intervention	3	2		1	1	3	10
Independence referendum	9	11	1	7	3	11	42
Polls	6	9		6	2	8	31
Importance of the vote	1	5	1	3	1	7	18
Tight race	3	3		3	1	3	13
Media & information	5	9		5	3	8	30
Media impartiality	2	6		1	1	2	12
Whose truth to believe	2	5		3	3	3	16
Newspaper endorsements	2	2		2	1	4	11
Heart vs. head	3	7		4	1	13	28
Emotions	2	5		4	1	10	22
Rationality	2	2		1		8	13
Division	1	1	1			4	7
Constitutional question	10	14	1	10	5	15	55
Positive UK	7	11	1	7	2	10	38
New powers	7	9	1	4	1	5	27
Devolution	2	3	1	2	1		9
UK stability & security	1	2	1	1		3	8
Federalism	4	2	1			1	8
Unity and solidarity	4	1	1	1		5	12
Success & benefit of UK	1	1	1	1		6	10
Barnett	2	3		1		1	7
Break-up complex - faster etc.	1	1		1			
--Break-up complex		1		1		3	5
--Faster, safer, better change	1	1					2
ENG-SCO relations	7	6	1	4	1	9	28
Relations with England	4	2	1	3		2	12
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	4	3	1	2	1	5	16
National identity	1	1		1		4	7
Social justice	5	2	1	1		1	10
Fairer society	3	2	1	1		1	8
UK not working	4	1	1				6
Inequality	2	1	1				4
Independent Scotland	4	2	1	3	3	4	17
Post-independence day Scotland	3	2	1	3	1	4	14
Self-determination	2		1	2	2	1	8
Defence	1	1	1	5	1	4	13
Trident	1		1	4	1		7
Defence in general				1		4	5
Nato		1	1	3			5
Impact	10	12	1	10	5	14	52
Uncertain future	6	10	1	9	5	12	43
Economic impact	3	3	1	6	3	9	25
--Economic impact	3	2	1	5	3	8	22
--Rising prices		1	1	1	1	2	6
--No debt share		1		2		2	5
Currency	3	5	1	6	3	9	27
NHS	4	4		3	3	2	16
General uncertainty	4	3	1	5	1	4	18
EU	2	4	1	4	1	3	15
Oil		1	1		2	4	8
Indyref impact	8	4	1	2		5	20
Indyref affects the whole UK	6	2	1	2		3	14
Constitutional reform	4	2	1	1		4	12
UK won't be the same	4	2	1			2	9
Fix the UK	4		1				5
Who will speak for ENG?	2			1		1	4

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	1285	4196	0	1554	792	785	8612
Campaign	0	1359	0	335	352	442	2488
YES movement	0	565	0	129	248	131	1073
Salmond		202		37	20	49	308
YES message		269		39	175		483
Unfair YES		72			53	82	207
Yes momentum		22		53			75
Yes campaign							
Referendum campaign	0	200	0	41	90	98	429
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics		12					12
Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	41	0	0	41
--Exceptional campaign				41			41
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering		188			90		278
Keep calm and show respect						98	98
Better Together campaign	0	61	0	0	14	0	75
Poor BT	0	0	0	0	14	0	14
--Poor BT					14		14
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour		61					61
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	0	166	0	78	0	131	375
Polls		74		53		24	151
Importance of the vote		57				107	164
Tight race		35		25			60
Media & information	0	230	0	87	0	0	317
Media impartiality		113					113
Whose truth to believe		117		87			204
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head	0	137	0	0	0	82	219
Emotions		35					35
Rationality		102					102
Division						82	82
Constitutional question	367	1791	0	564	78	192	2992
Positive UK	174	682	0	40	58	143	1097
New powers	45	293					338
Devolution	39	76			58		173
UK stability & security							0
Federalism	68						68
Unity and solidarity						127	127
Success & benefit of UK							0
Barnett	22	313		40			375
Break-up complex - faster etc.						16	16
--Break-up complex						16	16
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	193	547	0	478	0	0	1218
Relations with England	193	517		410			1120
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG				68			68
National identity		30					30
Social justice	0	503	0	0	0	0	503
Fairer society		78					78
UK not working		331					331
Inequality		94					94
Independent Scotland	0	0	0	0	20	0	20
Post-independence day Scotland					20		20
Self-determination							
Defence	0	59	0	46	0	49	154
Trident				22			22
Defence in general						49	49
Nato		59		24			83
Impact	918	1046	0	655	362	151	3132
Uncertain future	0	1046	0	655	362	151	2214
Economic impact	0	0	0	124	0	86	210
--Economic impact				124		86	210
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency		110		434		7	551
NHS		594		17	362		973
General uncertainty		244		40		43	327
EU		98		40		15	153
Oil							
Indyref impact	918	0	0	0	0	0	918
Indyref affects the whole UK	373						373
Constitutional reform	212						212
UK won't be the same	144						144
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?	189						189

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	1	5	0	3	1	1	11
Campaign		5		3	1	1	10
YES movement		5		2	1	1	9
Salmond		2		2	1	1	6
YES message		3		1	1		5
Unfair YES		1			1	1	3
Yes momentum		1		1			2
Yes campaign							
Referendum campaign		2		1	1	1	5
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics		1					1
Exceptional campaign				1			1
--Exceptional campaign				1			1
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering		1			1		2
Keep calm and show respect						1	1
Better Together campaign		1			1		2
Poor BT					1		1
--Poor BT					1		1
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour		1					1
Late intervention							
Independence referendum		1		1		1	3
Polls		1		1		1	3
Importance of the vote		1				1	2
Tight race		1		1			2
Media & information		2		2			4
Media impartiality		1					1
Whose truth to believe		2		2			4
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head							
Emotions		1					1
Rationality		1					1
Division						1	1
Constitutional question	1	5		2	1	1	10
Positive UK	1	4		1	1	1	8
New powers	1	3					4
Devolution	1	1			1		3
UK stability & security							
Federalism	1						1
Unity and solidarity						1	1
Success & benefit of UK							
Barnett	1	2		1			4
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex						1	1
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	1	2		1			4
Relations with England	1	1		1			3
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG				1			1
National identity		1					1
Social justice		1					1
Fairer society		1					1
UK not working		1					1
Inequality		1					1
Independent Scotland					1		1
Post-independence day Scotland					1		1
Self-determination							
Defence							
Trident				1			1
Defence in general						1	1
Nato		1		1			2
Impact	1	4		3	1	1	10
Uncertain future		4		3	1	1	9
Economic impact				1		1	2
--Economic impact				1		1	2
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency		3		3		1	7
NHS		2		1	1		4
General uncertainty		1		1		1	3
EU		2		2		1	5
Oil							
Indyref impact	1						1
Indyref affects the whole UK	1						1
Constitutional reform	1						1
UK won't be the same	1						1
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?	1						1

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	1029	1003	0	665	795	1968	5460
Campaign	487	323	0	363	531	1266	2970
YES movement	443	0	0	293	322	1054	2112
Salmond	234			293	249	329	1105
YES message	209					518	727
Unfair YES					47	207	254
Yes momentum							
Yes campaign					26		26
Referendum campaign	0	192	0	0	139	0	331
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics		76			26		102
Exceptional campaign	0	116	0	0	0	0	116
--Exceptional campaign							
--Win for democracy		116					116
Scaremongering					113		113
Keep calm and show respect							
Better Together campaign	0	50	0	0	0	0	50
Poor BT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
--Poor BT							
--Bt late							
--BT panic							
Labour		50					50
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	44	29	0	50	0	35	158
Polls	44			50		35	129
Importance of the vote		29					29
Tight race							
Media & information	0	52	0	0	70	78	200
Media impartiality		52					52
Whose truth to believe					70	40	110
Newspaper endorsements						38	38
Heart vs. head	0	0	0	20	0	99	119
Emotions				20		59	79
Rationality						40	40
Division							
Constitutional question	101	291	0	21	0	92	505
Positive UK	0	205	0	0	0	21	226
New powers		83					83
Devolution							
UK stability & security							
Federalism		54					54
Unity and solidarity							
Success & benefit of UK						21	21
Barnett		68					68
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	0	86	0	0	0	0	86
Relations with England		86					86
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG							
National identity							
Social justice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland	101	0	0	0	0	71	172
Post-independence day Scotland	101					49	150
Self-determination						22	22
Defence	0	0	0	21	0	0	21
Trident				21			21
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact	441	389	0	281	264	610	1985
Uncertain future	441	0	0	281	264	610	1596
Economic impact	0	0	0	72	56	109	237
--Economic impact					56	109	165
--Rising prices							
--No debt share				72			72
Currency				188	35	134	357
NHS	441			21	47		509
General uncertainty					56	50	106
EU						35	35
Oil					70	282	352
Indyref impact	0	389	0	0	0	0	389
Indyref affects the whole UK		389					389
Constitutional reform							
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	1	3	0	2	1	3	10
Campaign	1	2		2	1	3	9
YES movement	1			1	1	3	6
Salmond	1			2	1	3	7
YES message	1					3	4
Unfair YES					1	1	2
Yes momentum							
Yes campaign					1		1
Referendum campaign		1			1		2
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics		1			1		2
Exceptional campaign		1					1
--Exceptional campaign							
--Win for democracy		1					1
Scaremongering					1		1
Keep calm and show respect							
Better Together campaign		1					1
Poor BT							
--Poor BT							
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour		1					1
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	1	1		1		1	4
Polls	1			1		1	3
Importance of the vote		1					1
Tight race							
Media & information		1			1	3	5
Media impartiality		1					1
Whose truth to believe					1	2	3
Newspaper endorsements						2	2
Heart vs. head				1		2	3
Emotions				1		2	3
Rationality						1	1
Division							
Constitutional question	1	1		1		2	5
Positive UK		1				1	2
New powers		1					1
Devolution							
UK stability & security							
Federalism		1					1
Unity and solidarity							
Success & benefit of UK						1	1
Barnett		1					1
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations		1					1
Relations with England		1					1
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG							
National identity							
Social justice							
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland	1					1	2
Post-independence day Scotland	1					1	2
Self-determination						1	1
Defence				1			1
Trident				1			1
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact		1		1	1	1	4
Uncertain future	1			1	1	3	6
Economic impact				1	1	1	3
--Economic impact					1	1	2
--Rising prices							
--No debt share				1			1
Currency				1	1	3	5
NHS	1			1	1		3
General uncertainty					1	1	2
EU						1	1
Oil					1	2	3
Indyref impact		1					1
Indyref affects the whole UK		1					1
Constitutional reform							
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total		2799	0	536	1311	910	5556
Campaign		2061	0	182	1056	788	4087
YES movement		694	0	182	316	373	1565
Salmond		107		131	95	90	423
YES message		55		51		14	120
Unfair YES		80			82	269	431
Yes momentum		217			104		321
Yes campaign		235			35		270
Referendum campaign	0	708	0	0	243	303	1254
Bullying		389			82	272	743
People reclaiming politics						47	47
Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	0	59	0	59
--Exceptional campaign					59		59
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering		88					88
Keep calm and show respect		231			55	31	317
Better Together campaign	0	119	0	0	264	0	383
Poor BT	0	119	0	0	264	0	383
--Poor BT		119			264		383
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour							
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	0	290	0	0	50	0	340
Polls		219			50		269
Importance of the vote							
Tight race		71					71
Media & information	0	54	0	0	152	0	206
Media impartiality							
Whose truth to believe		54			152		206
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head	0	196	0	0	31	112	339
Emotions		196			31	72	299
Rationality						40	40
Division							
Constitutional question	0	236	0	354	49	122	761
Positive UK	0	203	0	303	49	0	555
New powers		82			49		131
Devolution				303			303
UK stability & security		82					82
Federalism							
Unity and solidarity		39					39
Success & benefit of UK							
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	0	33	0	51	0	122	206
Relations with England						122	122
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG		33		51			84
National identity							
Social justice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-independence day Scotland							
Self-determination							
Defence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trident							
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact	0	502	0	0	206	0	708
Uncertain future	0	466	0	0	206	0	672
Economic impact	0	54	0	0	0	0	54
--Economic impact		54					54
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency		55			49		104
NHS		54			26		80
General uncertainty							
EU		303					303
Oil					131		131
Indyref impact	0	36	0	0	0	0	36
Indyref affects the whole UK							
Constitutional reform		36					36
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	0	4	0	2	1	1	8
Campaign		4		2	1	1	8
YES movement		4		2	1	1	8
Salmond		3		1	1	1	6
YES message		1		1		1	3
Unfair YES		2			1	1	4
Yes momentum		1			1		2
Yes campaign		2			1		3
Referendum campaign		2			1	1	4
Bullying		1			1	1	3
People reclaiming politics					1		1
Exceptional campaign					1		1
--Exceptional campaign					1		1
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering		1					1
Keep calm and show respect		1			1	1	3
Better Together campaign		1			1		2
Poor BT		1			1		2
--Poor BT		1			1		2
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour							
Late intervention							
Independence referendum		2			1		3
Polls		2			1		3
Importance of the vote							
Tight race		1					1
Media & information		1			1		2
Media impartiality							
Whose truth to believe		1			1		2
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head		1			1	1	3
Emotions		1			1	1	3
Rationality						1	1
Division							
Constitutional question		2		1	1	1	5
Positive UK		2		1	1		4
New powers		1			1		2
Devolution				1			1
UK stability & security		1					1
Federalism							
Unity and solidarity		1					1
Success & benefit of UK							
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations		1		1		1	3
Relations with England						1	1
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG		1		1			2
National identity							
Social justice							
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland							
Post-independence day Scotland							
Self-determination							
Defence							
Trident							
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact		3			1		4
Uncertain future		2			1		3
Economic impact		1					1
--Economic impact		1					1
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency		1			1		2
NHS		1			1		2
General uncertainty							
EU		1					1
Oil					1		1
Indyref impact		1					1
Indyref affects the whole UK							
Constitutional reform		1					1
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	6402	3106	0	6738	1216	5636	23098
Campaign	2446	2230	0	1781	1062	3423	10942
YES movement	547	462	0	332	410	1260	3011
Salmond	80	56		92	16	565	809
YES message	306	73		150		199	728
Unfair YES		73				134	207
Yes momentum	161	74		90	284	362	971
Yes campaign		186			110		296
Referendum campaign	213	63	0	177	262	280	995
Bullying	61					280	341
People reclaiming politics	62	63			82		207
Exceptional campaign	8	0	0	44	47	0	99
--Exceptional campaign	8			44			52
--Win for democracy					47		47
Scaremongering	82				133		215
Keep calm and show respect				133			133
Better Together campaign	1003	1366	0	526	270	1088	4253
Poor BT	764	663	0	488	77	206	2198
--Poor BT	628	314		231		122	1295
--BT late	89	192		163	77	58	579
--BT panic	47	157		94		26	324
Labour	108	172			83	609	972
Late intervention	131	531		38	110	273	1083
Independence referendum	454	339	0	287	120	499	1699
Polls	454	270		175	101	347	1347
Importance of the vote		69		112		152	333
Tight race					19		19
Media & information	107	0	0	68	0	42	217
Media impartiality	36			44			80
Whose truth to believe	71					42	113
Newspaper endorsements				24			24
Heart vs. head	122	0	0	391	0	254	767
Emotions	61			24		83	168
Rationality	61			327		75	463
Division				40		96	136
Constitutional question	2380	607	0	2982	45	1087	7101
Positive UK	524	558	0	1312	0	645	3039
New powers	421	510		689		201	1821
Devolution		48		213			261
UK stability & security				146			146
Federalism	81					275	356
Unity and solidarity	22			40		40	102
Success & benefit of UK				186		129	315
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.				38			38
--Break-up complex				38			38
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	596	49	0	459	0	394	1498
Relations with England	80			289			369
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	516	49				159	724
National identity				170		235	405
Social justice	672	0	0	300	0	24	996
Fairer society	109			300		24	433
UK not working	482						482
Inequality	81						81
Independent Scotland	588	0	0	554	45	24	1211
Post-independence day Scotland	285			272		24	581
Self-determination	303			282	45		630
Defence	0	0	0	357	0	0	357
Trident				217			217
Defence in general				21			21
Nato				119			119
Impact	1576	269	0	1975	109	1126	5055
Uncertain future	1009	199	0	1759	109	428	3504
Economic impact	190	0	0	429	61	241	921
--Economic impact	190			177	61	138	566
--Rising prices							
--No debt share				252		103	355
Currency	448			564	22	42	1076
NHS	29	166		145		76	416
General uncertainty	205	33		394		27	659
EU	137			227	26	42	432
Oil							
Indyref impact	567	70	0	216	0	698	1551
Indyref affects the whole UK	293	35		108		397	833
Constitutional reform	157					123	280
UK won't be the same		35					35
Fix the UK	117						117
Who will speak for ENG?				108		178	286

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	4	3	0	3	1	6	17
Campaign	4	3	0	3	1	6	17
YES movement	4	3	0	3	1	6	17
Salmond	2	1		1	1	4	9
YES message	4	1		2		4	11
Unfair YES		1				1	2
Yes momentum	2	1		2	1	3	9
Yes campaign		2			1		3
Referendum campaign	3	1	0	2	1	1	8
Bullying	1					1	2
People reclaiming politics	2	1			1		4
Exceptional campaign	1			1	1		3
--Exceptional campaign	1			1			2
--Win for democracy					1		1
Scaremongering	2				1		3
Keep calm and show respect				1			1
Better Together campaign	4	3	0	2	1	5	15
Poor BT	4	3		2	1	3	13
--Poor BT	4	3		2		1	10
--Bt late	1	2		2	1	2	8
--BT panic	1	2		2		1	6
Labour	2	2			1	3	8
Late intervention	2	2		1	1	3	9
Independence referendum	4	3	0	3	1	3	14
Polls	4	3		2	1	3	13
Importance of the vote		1		1		1	3
Tight race					1		1
Media & information	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Media impartiality	1			1			2
Whose truth to believe	1					1	2
Newspaper endorsements				1			1
Heart vs. head	1	0	0	1	0	4	6
Emotions	1			1		3	5
Rationality	1	1				3	5
Division				1		1	2
Constitutional question	4	3	0	3	1	6	17
Positive UK	2	3	0	3	0	4	12
New powers	2	3		2		3	10
Devolution		1		1			2
UK stability & security				1			1
Federalism	1					1	2
Unity and solidarity	1			1		1	3
Success & benefit of UK				1		3	4
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex				1			1
--Faster, safer, better change				1			1
ENG-SCO relations	3	1	0	1	0	5	10
Relations with England	2			1			3
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	2	1				3	6
National identity				1		3	4
Social justice	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Fairer society	1			1		1	3
UK not working	1						1
Inequality	1						1
Independent Scotland	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
Post-independence day Scotland	1			1		1	3
Self-determination	1			1	1		3
Defence	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Trident				1			1
Defence in general				1			1
Nato				1			1
Impact	4	2	0	3	1	4	14
Uncertain future	3	2	0	3	1	2	11
Economic impact	1			2	1	2	6
--Economic impact	1			2	1	2	6
--Rising prices							
--No debt share				1		1	2
Currency	3			1	1	1	6
NHS	1	1		1		1	4
General uncertainty	2	1		2		1	6
EU	2			1	1	1	5
Oil							
Indyref impact	3	1	0	1	0	2	7
Indyref affects the whole UK	2	1		1		1	5
Constitutional reform	1					2	3
UK won't be the same		1					1
Fix the UK	1						1
Who will speak for ENG?				1		1	2

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	6550	9027	6080	3546	1160	6831	33194
Campaign	2424	5879	1270	1936	865	4234	16608
YES movement	360	1285	652	224	148	1689	4358
Salmond		307	147	57	31	471	1013
YES message	118	371	384		19	342	1234
Unfair YES	21	90				808	919
Yes momentum	73		65	145	98		381
Yes campaign	148	517	56	22		68	811
Referendum campaign	678	1909	337	563	164	762	4413
Bullying	21	53		126		499	699
People reclaiming politics	334	777	186	28	44		1369
Exceptional campaign	323	896	0	64	0	0	1283
--Exceptional campaign	232	543		30			805
--Win for democracy	91	353		34			478
Scaremongering		46	151	73	120	170	560
Keep calm and show respect		137		272		93	502
Better Together campaign	428	453	267	329	153	115	1745
Poor BT	154	272	215	329	153	115	1238
--Poor BT	116	272	180	142	145	115	970
--BT late	38		24	137			199
--BT panic			11	50	8		69
Labour	237	181	52				470
Late intervention	37						37
Independence referendum	389	609	14	325	81	811	2229
Polls	20	193		89		178	480
Importance of the vote	207	305	14	147	81	437	1191
Tight race	162	111		89		196	558
Media & information	361	1005	0	344	319	220	2249
Media impartiality	40	550			134	189	913
Whose truth to believe	41	182		104	67		394
Newspaper endorsements	280	273		240	118	31	942
Heart vs. head	208	618	0	151	0	637	1614
Emotions	88	417		151		346	1002
Rationality	75	156				119	350
Division	45	45				172	262
Constitutional question	2860	1947	3118	715	175	1783	10598
Positive UK	1215	1442	1057	339	0	1216	5269
New powers	678	777	352	339		117	2263
Devolution	41	261	57				359
UK stability & security	45	136	188			357	726
Federalism	135	82	256				473
Unity and solidarity	208		40			373	621
Success & benefit of UK	29	120	164			228	541
Barnett	66					49	115
Break-up complex - faster etc.	13	66				92	171
--Break-up complex		19				92	111
--Faster, safer, better change	13	47					60
ENG-SCO relations	527	47	402	60	44	192	1272
Relations with England	222		214	60		49	545
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	193	47	188		44	109	581
National identity	112					34	146
Social justice	823	195	1042	0	0	0	2060
Fairer society	426	195	457				1078
UK not working	299		293				592
Inequality	98		292				390
Independent Scotland	280	263	505	220	99	74	1441
Post-independence day Scotland	186	263	272	152		74	947
Self-determination	94		233	68	99		494
Defence	15	0	112	96	32	301	556
Trident	15		91	48	32		186
Defence in general						301	301
Nato			21	48			69
Impact	1266	1201	1692	895	120	814	5988
Uncertain future	259	1018	516	776	120	637	3326
Economic impact	57	519	151	468	120	287	1602
--Economic impact	57	45	148	466	98	228	1042
--Rising prices		448	3	2	22	26	501
--No debt share		26				33	59
Currency		254	86	68		140	548
NHS	75					27	102
General uncertainty	127	135	179	210		30	681
EU		45	21	30			96
Oil		65	79			153	297
Indyref impact	1007	183	1176	119	0	177	2662
Indyref affects the whole UK	188		360	60		32	640
Constitutional reform	199	149	219	59		49	675
UK won't be the same	228	34	357			96	715
Fix the UK	320		240				560
Who will speak for ENG?	72						72

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	4	6	1	5	1	7	24
Campaign	4	6	1	4	1	7	23
YES movement	4	4	1	3	1	7	20
Salmond		3	1	1	1	6	12
YES message	3	1	1		1	4	10
Unfair YES	1	1				4	6
Yes momentum	2		1	2	1		6
Yes campaign	2	4	1	1		2	10
Referendum campaign	3	4	1	3	1	5	17
Bullying	1	1		2		4	8
People reclaiming politics	3	4	1	1	1		10
Exceptional campaign	2	4		1			7
--Exceptional campaign	2	4		1			7
--Win for democracy	1	3		1			5
Scaremongering		1	1	1	1	4	8
Keep calm and show respect		2		3		2	7
Better Together campaign	3	2	1	2	1	1	10
Poor BT	2	2	1	2	1	1	9
--Poor BT	2	2	1	2	1	1	9
--Bt late	1		1	2			4
--BT panic			1	1	1		3
Labour	3	2	1				6
Late intervention	1						1
Independence referendum	4	4	1	2	1	6	18
Polls	1	3		2		3	9
Importance of the vote	1	2	1	2	1	5	12
Tight race	3	1		2		3	9
Media & information	3	5		2	1	4	15
Media impartiality	1	4			1	2	8
Whose truth to believe	1	2		1	1		5
Newspaper endorsements	2	2		1	1	2	8
Heart vs. head	2	4		2		5	13
Emotions	1	3		2		4	10
Rationality	1	1				3	5
Division	1	1				2	4
Constitutional question	4	4	1	3	1	5	18
Positive UK	4	1	1	2		4	12
New powers	4	1	1	2		2	10
Devolution	1	1	1				3
UK stability & security	1	1	1			3	6
Federalism	2	1	1				4
Unity and solidarity	3		1			3	7
Success & benefit of UK	1	1	1			2	5
Barnett	1					1	2
Break-up complex - faster etc.	1	1				2	4
--Break-up complex		1				2	3
--Faster, safer, better change	1	1					2
ENG-SCO relations	3	1	1	1	1	3	10
Relations with England	1		1	1		1	4
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	2	1	1		1	2	7
National identity	1					1	2
Social justice	3	1	1				5
Fairer society	2	1	1				4
UK not working	3		1				4
Inequality	1		1				2
Independent Scotland	2	2	1	2	1	2	10
Post-independence day Scotland	1	2	1	2		2	8
Self-determination	1		1	1	1		4
Defence	1		1	2	1	3	8
Trident			1	1	1		3
Defence in general						4	4
Nato			1	1			2
Impact	4	4	1	3	1	6	19
Uncertain future	2	2	1	2	1	6	14
Economic impact	1	2	1	2	1	5	12
--Economic impact	1	1	1	2	1	4	10
--Rising prices		1	1	1	1	2	6
--No debt share		1				1	2
Currency		1	1	1		4	7
NHS	2					1	3
General uncertainty	2	1	1	2		1	7
EU		1	1	1			3
Oil		1	1			2	4
Indyref impact	4	1	1	1		3	10
Indyref affects the whole UK	3		1	1		2	7
Constitutional reform	2	1	1	1		2	7
UK won't be the same	3	1	1			2	7
Fix the UK	3		1				4
Who will speak for ENG?	1						1

Appendix B: All papers, all weeks

Word count

VER%

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign	35	59	21	35	73	63	49
YES movement	25	25	51	25	37	44	33
Salmond	23	22	23	53	28	33	30
YES message	47	26	59	21	13	24	27
Unfair YES	2	10	0	0	13	33	17
Yes momentum	17	10	10	25	34	8	14
Yes campaign	11	31	9	2	12	2	12
Referendum campaign	17	26	27	17	23	14	20
Bullying	9	14	0	16	9	73	24
People reclaiming politics	44	30	55	4	22	0	23
Exceptional campaign	37	33	0	19	12	0	22
--Exceptional campaign	27	18	0	15	7	0	13
--Win for democracy	10	15	0	4	5	0	9
Scaremongering	9	10	45	9	51	12	17
Keep calm and show respect	0	12	0	52	6	15	14
Better Together campaign	27	17	21	19	18	12	18
Poor BT	64	51	81	96	72	27	59
--Poor BT	52	34	67	44	60	20	41
--Bt late	9	9	9	35	11	5	12
--BT panic	3	8	4	17	1	2	6
Labour	24	23	19	0	12	51	24
Late intervention	12	26	0	4	16	23	17
Independence referendum	17	12	1	16	6	15	13
Polls	58	53	0	50	60	40	49
Importance of the vote	23	32	100	35	32	47	36
Tight race	18	15	0	15	8	13	15
Media & information	9	11	0	11	14	3	9
Media impartiality	16	53		9	25	56	36
Whose truth to believe	24	26		38	53	24	32
Newspaper endorsements	60	20		53	22	20	31
Heart vs. head	6	8	0	12	1	12	8
Emotions	45	68		35	100	47	52
Rationality	41	27		58	0	23	33
Division	14	5		7	0	30	16
Constitutional question	37	24	51	36	7	20	29
Positive UK	34	63	34	43	31	62	46
New powers	60	56	33	52	46	16	46
Devolution	4	12	5	26	54	0	11
UK stability & security	2	7	18	7	0	18	9
Federalism	15	4	24	0	0	14	9
Unity and solidarity	12	1	4	2	0	27	9
Success & benefit of UK	2	4	16	9	0	19	9
Barnett	5	12	0	2	0	2	5
Break-up complex - faster etc.	1	2	0	2	0	5	2
--Break-up complex	0	1	0	2	0	5	2
--Faster, safer, better change	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
ENG-SCO relations	23	16	13	23	13	22	19
Relations with England	38	79	53	72	0	24	52
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	54	17	47	11	100	38	34
National identity	9	4	0	16	0	38	14
Social justice	26	14	33	6	0	1	16
Fairer society	36	39	44	100		100	45
UK not working	52	47	28	0		0	39
Inequality	12	13	28	0		0	16
Independent Scotland	17	5	16	17	47	5	13
Post-independence day Scotland	59	100	54	55	12	87	60
Self-determination	41	0	46	45	88	13	40
Defence	0	1	4	11	9	11	5
Trident	100	0	81	59	100	0	41
Defence in general	0	0	0	4	0	100	34
Nato	0	100	19	37	0	0	25
Impact	28	17	28	29	20	17	22
Uncertain future	41	80	30	91	100	68	67
Economic impact	14	21	29	31	22	40	27
--Economic impact	14	4	29	22	20	31	18
--Rising prices	0	16	1	0	2	1	4
--No debt share	0	1	0	9	0	7	4
Currency	26	15	17	36	10	18	23
NHS	32	30	0	5	41	6	18
General uncertainty	19	15	35	19	5	8	16
EU	8	16	4	9	2	5	9
Oil	0	2	15	0	19	24	7
Indyref impact	59	20	70	9	0	32	33
Indyref affects the whole UK	34	63	31	50		49	40
Constitutional reform	23	27	19	18		20	22
UK won't be the same	15	10	30	0		11	16
Fix the UK	18	0	20	0		0	12
Who will speak for ENG?	10	0	0	32		20	10

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign	0	32		22	44	56	29
YES movement		42		39	70	30	43
Salmond		36		29	8	37	29
YES message		48		30	71	0	45
Unfair YES		13		0	21	63	19
Yes momentum		4		41	0	0	7
Yes campaign		0		0	0	0	0
Referendum campaign		15		12	26	22	17
Bullying		0		0	0	0	0
People reclaiming politics		6		0	0	0	3
Exceptional campaign		0		100	0	0	10
--Exceptional campaign		0		100	0	0	10
--Win for democracy		0		0	0	0	0
Scaremongering		94		0	100	0	65
Keep calm and show respect		0		0	0	100	23
Better Together campaign		4		0	4	0	3
Poor BT		0			100		19
--Poor BT		0			100		19
--Bt late		0			0		0
--BT panic		0			0		0
Labour		100			0		81
Late intervention		0			0		0
Independence referendum		12		23	0	30	15
Polls		45		68		18	40
Importance of the vote		34		0		82	44
Tight race		21		32		0	16
Media & information		17		26	0	0	13
Media impartiality		49		0			36
Whose truth to believe		51		100			64
Newspaper endorsements		0		0			0
Heart vs. head		10		0	0	19	9
Emotions		26				0	16
Rationality		74				0	47
Division		0				100	37
Constitutional question	29	43		36	10	24	35
Positive UK	47	38		7	74	74	37
New powers	26	43		0	0	0	31
Devolution	22	11		0	100	0	16
UK stability & security	0	0		0	0	0	0
Federalism	39	0		0	0	0	6
Unity and solidarity	0	0		0	0	89	12
Success & benefit of UK	0	0		0	0	0	0
Barnett	13	46		100	0	0	34
Break-up complex - faster etc.	0	0		0	0	11	1
--Break-up complex	0	0		0	0	11	1
--Faster, safer, better change	0	0		0	0	0	0
ENG-SCO relations	53	31		85	0	0	41
Relations with England	100	95		86			92
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	0	0		14			6
National identity	0	5		0			2
Social justice	0	28		0	0	0	17
Fairer society		16					16
UK not working		66					66
Inequality		19					19
Independent Scotland	0	0		0	26	0	1
Post-independence day Scotland					100		100
Self-determination					0		0
Defence	0	3		8	0	26	5
Trident		0		48		0	14
Defence in general		0		0		100	32
Nato		100		52		0	54
Impact	71	25		42	46	19	36
Uncertain future	0	100		100	100	100	71
Economic impact		0		19	0	57	9
--Economic impact		0		19	0	57	9
--Rising prices		0		0	0	0	0
--No debt share		0		0	0	0	0
Currency		11		66	0	5	25
NHS		57		3	100	0	44
General uncertainty		23		6	0	28	15
EU		9		6	0	10	7
Oil		0		0	0	0	0
Indyref impact	100	0		0	0	0	29
Indyref affects the whole UK	41						41
Constitutional reform	23						23
UK won't be the same	16						16
Fix the UK	0						0
Who will speak for ENG?	21						21

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign	47	32		55	67	64	54
YES movement	91	0		81	61	83	71
Salmond	53			100	77	31	52
YES message	47			0	0	49	34
Unfair YES	0			0	15	20	12
Yes momentum	0			0	0	0	0
Yes campaign	0			0	8	0	1
Referendum campaign	0	59		0	26	0	11
Bullying		0			0		0
People reclaiming politics		40			19		31
Exceptional campaign		60			0		35
--Exceptional campaign		0			0		0
--Win for democracy		60			0		35
Scaremongering		0			81		34
Keep calm and show respect		0			0		0
Better Together campaign	0	15		0	0	0	2
Poor BT		0					0
--Poor BT		0					0
--Bt late		0					0
--BT panic		0					0
Labour		100					100
Late intervention		0					0
Independence referendum	9	9		14	0	3	5
Polls	100	0		100		100	82
Importance of the vote	0	100		0		0	18
Tight race	0	0		0		0	0
Media & information	0	16		0	13	6	7
Media impartiality		100			0	0	26
Whose truth to believe		0			100	51	55
Newspaper endorsements		0			0	49	19
Heart vs. head	0	0		6	0	8	4
Emotions				100		60	66
Rationality				0		40	34
Division				0		0	0
Constitutional question	10	29		3	0	5	9
Positive UK	0	70		0		23	45
New powers		40				0	37
Devolution		0				0	0
UK stability & security		0				0	0
Federalism		26				0	24
Unity and solidarity		0				0	0
Success & benefit of UK		0				100	9
Barnett		33				0	30
Break-up complex - faster etc.		0				0	0
--Break-up complex		0				0	0
--Faster, safer, better change		0				0	0
ENG-SCO relations	0	30		0		0	17
Relations with England		100					100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG		0					0
National identity		0					0
Social justice	0	0		0		0	0
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland	100	0		0		77	34
Post-independence day Scotland	100					69	87
Self-determination	0					31	13
Defence	0	0		100		0	4
Trident				100			100
Defence in general				0			0
Nato				0			0
Impact	43	39		42	33	31	36
Uncertain future	100	0		100	100	100	80
Economic impact	0			26	21	18	15
--Economic impact	0			20		18	10
--Rising prices	0			0	0	0	0
--No debt share	0			26	0	0	5
Currency	0			67	13	22	22
NHS	100			7	18	0	32
General uncertainty	13			0		8	7
EU	0			0	0	6	2
Oil	0			0	27	46	22
Indyref impact	0	100		0	0	0	20
Indyref affects the whole UK		100					100
Constitutional reform		0					0
UK won't be the same		0					0
Fix the UK		0					0
Who will speak for ENG?		0					0

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign		74		34	81	87	74
YES movement		34		100	30	47	38
Salmond		15		72	30	24	27
YES message		8		28	0	4	8
Unfair YES		12		0	26	72	28
Yes momentum		31		0	33	0	21
Yes campaign		34		0	11	0	17
Referendum campaign		34		0	23	38	31
Bullying		55			34	90	59
People reclaiming politics		0			19	0	4
Exceptional campaign		0			24	0	5
--Exceptional campaign		0			24	0	5
--Win for democracy		0			0	0	0
Scaremongering		12			0	0	7
Keep calm and show respect		33			23	10	25
Better Together campaign		6		0	25	0	9
Poor BT		100			100		100
--Poor BT		100			100		100
--Bt late		0			0		0
--BT panic		0			0		0
Labour		0			0		0
Late intervention		0			0		0
Independence referendum		14		0	5	0	8
Polls		76			100		79
Importance of the vote		0			0		0
Tight race		24			0		21
Media & information		3		0	14	0	5
Media impartiality		0			0		0
Whose truth to believe		100			100		100
Newspaper endorsements		0			0		0
Heart vs. head		10		0	3	14	8
Emotions		100			100	64	88
Rationality		0			0	36	12
Division		0			0	0	0
Constitutional question		8		66	4	13	14
Positive UK		86		86	100	0	73
New powers		40		0	100		24
Devolution		0		100	0		55
UK stability & security		40		0	0		15
Federalism		0		0	0		0
Unity and solidarity		19		0	0		7
Success & benefit of UK		0		0	0		0
Barnett		0		0	0		0
Break-up complex - faster etc.		0		0	0		0
--Break-up complex		0		0	0		0
--Faster, safer, better change		0		0	0		0
ENG-SCO relations		14		14	0	100	27
Relations with England		0		0		100	59
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG		100		100		0	41
National identity		0		0		0	0
Social justice		0		0	0	0	0
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland		0		0	0	0	0
Post-independence day Scotland							
Self-determination							
Defence		0		0	0	0	0
Trident							
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact		18		0	16	0	13
Uncertain future		93			100		95
Economic impact		12			0		8
--Economic impact		12			0		8
--Rising prices		0			0		0
--No debt share		0			0		0
Currency		12			24		15
NHS		12			13		12
General uncertainty		0			0		0
EU		65			0		45
Oil		0			64		19
Indyref impact		7			0		5
Indyref affects the whole UK		0					0
Constitutional reform		100					100
UK won't be the same		0					0
Fix the UK		0					0
Who will speak for ENG?		0					0

WEEK IV 5-11Sep

Word count

VER%

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign	38	72		26	87	61	47
YES movement	22	21		19	39	37	28
Salmond	15	12		28	4	45	27
YES message	56	16		45	0	16	24
Unfair YES	0	16		0	0	11	7
Yes momentum	29	16		27	69	29	32
Yes campaign	0	40		0	27	0	10
Referendum campaign	9	3		10	25	8	9
Bullying	29	0		0	0	100	34
People reclaiming politics	29	100		0	31	0	21
Exceptional campaign	4	0		25	18	0	10
--Exceptional campaign	4	0		25	0	0	5
--Win for democracy	0	0		0	18	0	5
Scaremongering	38	0		0	51	0	22
Keep calm and show respect	0	0		75	0	0	13
Better Together campaign	41	61		30	25	32	39
Poor BT	76	49		93	29	19	52
--Poor BT	63	23		44	0	11	30
--Bt late	9	14		31	29	5	14
--BT panic	5	11		18	0	2	8
Labour	11	13		0	31	56	23
Late intervention	13	39		7	41	25	25
Independence referendum	19	15		16	11	15	16
Polls	100	80		61	84	70	79
Importance of the vote	0	20		39	0	30	20
Tight race	0	0		0	16	0	1
Media & information	4	0		4	0	1	2
Media impartiality	34			65		0	37
Whose truth to believe	66			0		100	52
Newspaper endorsements	0			35		0	11
Heart vs. head	5	0		22	0	7	7
Emotions	50			6		33	22
Rationality	50			84		30	60
Division	0			10		38	18
Constitutional question	37	20		44	4	19	31
Positive UK	22	92		44	0	59	43
New powers	80	91		53		31	60
Devolution	9			16		0	9
UK stability & security	0	0		11		0	5
Federalism	15	0		0		43	12
Unity and solidarity	4	0		3		6	3
Success & benefit of UK	0	0		14		20	10
Barnett	0	0		0		0	0
Break-up complex - faster etc.	0	0		3		0	1
--Break-up complex	0	0		3		0	1
--Faster, safer, better change	0	0		0		0	0
ENG-SCO relations	25	8		15	0	36	21
Relations with England	13	0		63		0	25
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	87	100		0		40	48
National identity	0	0		37		60	27
Social justice	28	0		10	0	2	14
Fairer society	16			100		100	43
UK not working	72			0		0	48
Inequality	12			0		0	8
Independent Scotland	25	0		19	100	2	17
Post-independence day Scotland	48			49	0	100	48
Self-determination	52			51	100	0	52
Defence	0	0		12	0	0	5
Trident				61			61
Defence in general				6			6
Nato				33			33
Impact	25	9		29	9	20	22
Uncertain future	64	74		89	100	38	69
Economic impact	19	0		24	56	56	26
--Economic impact	19	0		10	56	32	16
--Rising prices	0	0		0	0	0	0
--No debt share	25	0			0	24	10
Currency	44	0		32	20	10	31
NHS	3	83		8	0	18	12
General uncertainty	20	17		22	0	6	19
EU	14	0		13	24	10	12
Oil	0	0		0	0	0	0
Indyref impact	36	26		11	0	62	31
Indyref affects the whole UK	52	50		50		57	54
Constitutional reform	28	0		0		18	18
UK won't be the same	0	50		0		0	2
Fix the UK	21	0		0		0	8
Who will speak for ENG?	0	0		50		26	18

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Campaign	37	65	21	55	75	62	50
YES movement	15	22	51	12	17	40	26
Salmond	0	24	23	25	21	28	23
YES message	33	29	59	0	13	20	28
Unfair YES	6	7	0	0	0	48	21
Yes momentum	20	0	10	65	66	0	9
Yes campaign	41	40	9	10	0	4	19
Referendum campaign	28	32	27	29	19	18	27
Bullying	3	3	0	22	0	65	16
People reclaiming politics	49	41	55	5	27	0	31
Exceptional campaign	48	47	0	11	0	0	29
--Exceptional campaign	34	28	0	5	0	0	18
--Win for democracy	13	18	0	6	0	0	11
Scaremongering	0	2	45	13	73	22	13
Keep calm and show respect	0	7	0	48	0	12	11
Better Together campaign	18	8	21	17	18	3	11
Poor BT	36	60	81	100	100	100	71
--Poor BT	27	60	67	43	95	100	56
--BT late	9	0	9	42	0	0	11
--BT panic	0	0	4	15	5	0	4
Labour	55	40	19	0	0	0	27
Late intervention	9	0	0	0	0	0	2
Independence referendum	16	10	1	17	9	19	13
Polls	5	32	0	27	0	22	22
Importance of the vote	53	50	100	45	100	54	53
Tight race	42	18	0	27	0	24	25
Media & information	15	17	0	18	37	5	14
Media impartiality	11	55		0	42	86	41
Whose truth to believe	11	18		30	21	0	18
Newspaper endorsements	78	27		70	37	14	42
Heart vs. head	9	11	0	8	0	15	10
Emotions	42	67		100		54	62
Rationality	36	25		0		19	22
Division	22	7		0		27	16
Constitutional question	44	22	51	20	15	26	32
Positive UK	42	74	34	47	0	68	50
New powers	56	54	33	100		10	43
Devolution	3	18	5	0		0	7
UK stability & security	4	9	18	0		29	14
Federalism	11	6	24	0		0	9
Unity and solidarity	17	0	4	0		31	12
Success & benefit of UK	2	8	16	0		19	10
Barnett	5	0	0	0		4	2
Break-up complex - faster etc.	1	5	0	0		8	3
--Break-up complex	0	1	0	0		8	2
--Faster, safer, better change	1	3	0	0		0	1
ENG-SCO relations	18	2	13	8	25	11	12
Relations with England	42	0	53	100	0	26	43
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	37	100	47	0	100	57	46
National identity	21	0	0	0	0	18	11
Social justice	29	10	33	0	0	0	19
Fairer society	52	100	44				52
UK not working	36	0	28				29
Inequality	12	0	28				19
Independent Scotland	10	14	16	31	57	4	14
Post-independence day Scotland	66	100	54	69	0	100	66
Self-determination	34	0	46	31	100	0	34
Defence	1	0	4	13	18	17	5
Trident	100		81	50	100	0	33
Defence in general	0		0	0	0	100	54
Nato	0		19	50	0	0	12
Impact	19	13	28	25	10	12	18
Uncertain future	20	85	30	87	100	78	56
Economic impact	22	51	29	60	100	45	48
--Economic impact	22	4	29	60	82	36	31
--Rising prices	0	44	1	0	18	4	15
--No debt share	0	3	0	0	0	5	2
Currency	0	25	17	9	0	22	16
NHS	29	0	0	0	0	4	3
General uncertainty	49	13	35	27	0	5	20
EU	0	4	4	4	0	0	3
Oil	0	6	15	0	0	24	9
Indyref impact	80	15	70	13	0	22	44
Indyref affects the whole UK	19	0	31	50		18	24
Constitutional reform	20	81	19	50		28	25
UK won't be the same	23	19	30	0		54	27
Fix the UK	32	0	20	0		0	21
Who will speak for ENG?	7	0	0	0		0	3

Appendix C: All papers, all weeks

Word count

HOR%

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	20	27	8	17	7	21	100
Campaign	14	32	3	12	10	27	100
YES movement	11	25	5	10	12	37	100
Salmond	9	18	4	17	11	41	100
YES message	19	23	12	7	6	33	100
Unfair YES	1	16	0	0	9	74	100
Yes momentum	13	18	4	16	28	21	100
Yes campaign	11	67	4	2	12	5	100
Referendum campaign	12	41	5	11	12	19	100
Bullying	5	25	0	7	5	59	100
People reclaiming politics	23	53	11	2	11	0	100
Exceptional campaign	21	63	0	9	7	0	100
--Exceptional campaign	25	57	0	12	6	0	100
--Win for democracy	14	73	0	5	7	0	100
Scaremongering	7	26	12	6	36	14	100
Keep calm and show respect	0	35	0	39	5	21	100
Better Together campaign	22	31	4	13	11	18	100
Poor BT	24	27	6	21	13	8	100
--Poor BT	28	26	7	14	16	9	100
--Bt late	16	25	3	39	10	7	100
--BT panic	12	40	3	37	2	7	100
Labour	22	30	3	0	5	39	100
Late intervention	15	47	0	3	10	24	100
Independence referendum	18	30	0	15	5	31	100
Polls	22	32	0	15	6	25	100
Importance of the vote	12	27	1	15	5	41	100
Tight race	23	31	0	16	3	28	100
Media & information	15	42	0	16	17	11	100
Media impartiality	7	62	0	4	12	16	100
Whose truth to believe	11	34	0	19	28	8	100
Newspaper endorsements	28	27	0	26	12	7	100
Heart vs. head	11	31	0	18	1	39	100
Emotions	9	41	0	12	2	35	100
Rationality	14	26	0	33	0	28	100
Division	9	9	0	8	0	73	100
Constitutional question	26	22	14	21	2	15	100
Positive UK							
New powers	25	38	8	22	1	7	100
Devolution	7	35	5	47	5	0	100
UK stability & security	5	23	20	15	0	37	100
Federalism	30	14	27	0	0	29	100
Unity and solidarity	26	4	4	4	0	61	100
Success & benefit of UK	3	14	19	21	0	43	100
Barnett	16	68	0	7	0	9	100
Break-up complex - faster etc.	6	29	0	17	0	48	100
--Break-up complex	0	12	0	23	0	65	100
--Faster, safer, better change	22	78	0	0	0	0	100
ENG-SCO relations	31	18	9	24	1	17	100
Relations with England	22	27	10	34	0	8	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	49	9	13	8	3	18	100
National identity	19	5	0	29	0	46	100
Social justice	42	20	29	8	0	1	100
Fairer society	34	17	29	19	0	2	100
UK not working	56	24	21	0	0	0	100
Inequality	32	17	52	0	0	0	100
Independent Scotland	34	9	18	27	6	6	100
Post-independence day Scotland	34	15	16	25	1	9	100
Self-determination	35	0	20	31	13	2	100
Defence	1	5	10	48	3	32	100
Trident	3	0	20	69	7	0	100
Defence in general	0	0	0	6	0	94	100
Nato	0	22	8	70	0	0	100
Impact	25	20	10	23	6	16	100
Uncertain future	15	24	5	31	9	16	100
Economic impact	8	19	5	36	8	24	100
--Economic impact	12	5	7	38	11	28	100
--Rising prices	0	89	1	0	4	5	100
--No debt share	0	5	0	67	0	28	100
Currency	17	16	3	48	4	12	100
NHS	26	39	0	9	21	5	100
General uncertainty	19	23	10	36	3	8	100
EU	13	44	2	29	3	9	100
Oil	0	8	10	0	26	56	100
Indyref impact	45	12	21	6	0	16	100
Indyref affects the whole UK	38	19	16	8	0	19	100
Constitutional reform	47	15	18	5	0	14	100
UK won't be the same	42	8	40	0	0	11	100
Fix the UK	65	0	35	0	0	0	100
Who will speak for ENG?	48	0	0	20	0	33	100

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	15	49	0	18	9	18	100
Campaign	0	55	0	13	14	18	100
YES movement	0	53	0	12	23	12	100
Salmond	0	66	0	12	6	16	100
YES message	0	56	0	8	36	0	100
Unfair YES	0	35	0	0	26	40	100
Yes momentum	0	29	0	71	0	0	100
Yes campaign							
Referendum campaign	0	47	0	10	21	23	100
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
--Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering	0	68	0	0	32	0	100
Keep calm and show respect	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Better Together campaign	0	81	0	0	19	0	100
Poor BT	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
--Poor BT	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	0	44	0	21	0	35	100
Polls	0	49	0	35	0	16	100
Importance of the vote	0	35	0	0	0	65	100
Tight race	0	58	0	42	0	0	100
Media & information	0	73	0	27	0	0	100
Media impartiality	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Whose truth to believe	0	57	0	43	0	0	100
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head	0	63	0	0	0	37	100
Emotions	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Rationality	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Division	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Constitutional question	12	60	0	19	3	6	100
Positive UK	16	62	0	4	5	13	100
New powers	13	87	0	0	0	0	100
Devolution	23	44	0	0	34	0	100
UK stability & security							
Federalism	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Unity and solidarity	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Success & benefit of UK							
Barnett	6	83	0	11	0	0	100
Break-up complex - faster etc.	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
--Break-up complex	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	16	45	0	39	0	0	100
Relations with England	17	46	0	37	0	0	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
National identity	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Social justice	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Fairer society	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
UK not working	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Inequality	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Independent Scotland	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Post-independence day Scotland	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Self-determination							
Defence	0	38	0	30	0	32	100
Trident	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Defence in general	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Nato	0	71	0	29	0	0	100
Impact	29	33	0	21	12	5	100
Uncertain future	0	47	0	30	16	7	100
Economic impact	0	0	0	59	0	41	100
--Economic impact	0	0	0	59	0	41	100
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency	0	20	0	79	0	1	100
NHS	0	61	0	2	37	0	100
General uncertainty	0	75	0	12	0	13	100
EU	0	64	0	26	0	10	100
Oil							
Indyref impact	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Indyref affects the whole UK	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Constitutional reform	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
UK won't be the same	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?	100	0	0	0	0	0	100

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	19	18	0	12	15	36	100
Campaign	16	11	0	12	18	43	100
YES movement	21	0	0	14	15	50	100
Salmond	21	0	0	27	23	30	100
YES message	29	0	0	0	0	71	100
Unfair YES	0	0	0	0	19	81	100
Yes momentum							
Yes campaign	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Referendum campaign	0	58	0	0	42	0	100
Bullying							
People reclaiming politics	0	75	0	0	25	0	100
Exceptional campaign	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
--Exceptional campaign							
--Win for democracy	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Scaremongering	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Keep calm and show respect							
Better Together campaign	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Poor BT							
--Poor BT							
--Bt late							
--BT panic							
Labour	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	28	18	0	32	0	22	100
Polls	34	0	0	39	0	27	100
Importance of the vote	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Tight race							
Media & information	0	26	0	0	35	39	100
Media impartiality	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Whose truth to believe	0	0	0	0	64	36	100
Newspaper endorsements	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Heart vs. head	0	0	0	17	0	83	100
Emotions	0	0	0	25	0	75	100
Rationality	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Division							
Constitutional question	20	58	0	4	0	18	100
Positive UK	0	91	0	0	0	9	100
New powers	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Devolution							
UK stability & security							
Federalism	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Unity and solidarity							
Success & benefit of UK	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Barnett	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Relations with England	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG							
National identity							
Social justice							
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland	59	0	0	0	0	41	100
Post-independence day Scotland	67	0	0	0	0	33	100
Self-determination	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Defence	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Trident	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact	22	20	0	14	13	31	100
Uncertain future	28	0	0	18	17	38	100
Economic impact	0	0	0	30	24	46	100
--Economic impact	0	0	0	34		66	100
--Rising prices							
--No debt share	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Currency	0	0	0	53	10	38	100
NHS	87	0	0	4	9	0	100
General uncertainty	53	0	0	0		47	100
EU	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Oil	0	0	0	0	20	80	100
Indyref impact	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Indyref affects the whole UK	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Constitutional reform							
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	0	50	0	10	24	16	100
Campaign	0	50	0	4	26	19	100
YES movement	0	44	0	12	20	24	100
Salmond	0	25	0	31	22	21	100
YES message	0	46	0	43	0	12	100
Unfair YES	0	19	0	0	19	62	100
Yes momentum	0	68	0	0	32	0	100
Yes campaign	0	87	0	0	13	0	100
Referendum campaign	0	56	0	0	19	24	100
Bullying	0	52	0	0	11	37	100
People reclaiming politics	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
--Exceptional campaign	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
--Win for democracy							
Scaremongering	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Keep calm and show respect	0	73	0	0	17	10	100
Better Together campaign	0	31	0	0	69	0	100
Poor BT	0	31	0	0	69	0	100
--Poor BT	0	31	0	0	69	0	100
--BT late							
--BT panic							
Labour							
Late intervention							
Independence referendum	0	85	0	0	15	0	100
Polls	0	81	0	0	19	0	100
Importance of the vote							
Tight race	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Media & information	0	26	0	0	74	0	100
Media impartiality							
Whose truth to believe	0	26	0	0	74	0	100
Newspaper endorsements							
Heart vs. head	0	58	0	0	9	33	100
Emotions	0	66	0	0	10	24	100
Rationality	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Division							
Constitutional question	0	31	0	47	6	16	100
Positive UK	0	37	0	55	9	0	100
New powers	0	63	0	0	37	0	100
Devolution	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
UK stability & security	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Federalism							
Unity and solidarity	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Success & benefit of UK							
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.							
--Break-up complex							
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	0	16	0	25	0	59	100
Relations with England	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	0	39	0	61	0	0	100
National identity							
Social justice							
Fairer society							
UK not working							
Inequality							
Independent Scotland							
Post-independence day Scotland							
Self-determination							
Defence							
Trident							
Defence in general							
Nato							
Impact	0	71	0	0	29	0	100
Uncertain future	0	69	0	0	31	0	100
Economic impact	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
--Economic impact	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
--Rising prices							
--No debt share							
Currency	0	53	0	0	47	0	100
NHS	0	68	0	0	33	0	100
General uncertainty							
EU	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Oil	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Indyref impact	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Indyref affects the whole UK							
Constitutional reform	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
UK won't be the same							
Fix the UK							
Who will speak for ENG?							

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	28	13	0	29	5	24	100
Campaign	22	20	0	16	10	31	100
YES movement	18	15	0	11	14	42	100
Salmond	10	7	0	11	2	70	100
YES message	42	10	0	21	0	27	100
Unfair YES	0	35	0	0	0	65	100
Yes momentum	17	8	0	9	29	37	100
Yes campaign	0	63	0	0	37	0	100
Referendum campaign	21	6	0	18	26	28	100
Bullying	18	0	0	0	0	82	100
People reclaiming politics	30	30	0	0	40	0	100
Exceptional campaign	8	0	0	44	47	0	100
--Exceptional campaign	15	0	0	85	0	0	100
--Win for democracy	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Scaremongering	38	0	0	0	62	0	100
Keep calm and show respect	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Better Together campaign	24	32	0	12	6	26	100
Poor BT	35	30	0	22	4	9	100
--Poor BT	48	24	0	18	0	9	100
--Bt late	15	33	0	28	13	10	100
--BT panic	15	48	0	29	0	8	100
Labour	11	18	0	0	9	63	100
Late intervention	12	49	0	4	10	25	100
Independence referendum	27	20	0	17	7	29	100
Polls	34	20	0	13	7	26	100
Importance of the vote	0	21	0	34	0	46	100
Tight race	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
Media & information	49	0	0	31	0	19	100
Media impartiality	45	0	0	55	0	0	100
Whose truth to believe	63	0	0	0	0	37	100
Newspaper endorsements	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Heart vs. head	16	0	0	51	0	33	100
Emotions	36	0	0	14	0	49	100
Rationality	13	0	0	71	0	16	100
Division	0	0	0	29	0	71	100
Constitutional question	34	9	0	42	1	15	100
Positive UK	17	18	0	43	0	21	100
New powers	23	28	0	38	0	11	100
Devolution	18	0	0	82	0	0	100
UK stability & security	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Federalism	23	0	0	0	0	77	100
Unity and solidarity	22	0	0	39	0	39	100
Success & benefit of UK	0	0	0	59	0	41	100
Barnett							
Break-up complex - faster etc.	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
--Break-up complex	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
--Faster, safer, better change							
ENG-SCO relations	40	3	0	31	0	26	100
Relations with England	22	0	0	78	0	0	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	71	7	0	0	0	22	100
National identity	0	0	0	42	0	58	100
Social justice	67	0	0	30	0	2	100
Fairer society	25	0	0	69	0	6	100
UK not working	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Inequality	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Independent Scotland	49	0	0	46	4	2	100
Post-independence day Scotland	49	0	0	47	0	4	100
Self-determination	48	0	0	45	7	0	100
Defence	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Trident	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Defence in general	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Nato	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
Impact	31	5	0	39	2	22	100
Uncertain future	29	6	0	50	3	12	100
Economic impact	21	0	0	47	7	26	100
--Economic impact	34	0	0	31	11	24	100
--Rising prices							
--No debt share	71	0	0	0	0	29	100
Currency	42	0	0	52	2	4	100
NHS	7	40	0	35	0	18	100
General uncertainty	31	5	0	60	0	4	100
EU	32	0	0	53	6	10	100
Oil							
Indyref impact	37	5	0	14	0	45	100
Indyref affects the whole UK	35	4	0	13	0	48	100
Constitutional reform	56	0	0	0	0	44	100
UK won't be the same	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Fix the UK	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Who will speak for ENG?	0	0	0	38	0	62	100

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	20	27	18	11	3	21	100
Campaign	15	35	8	12	5	25	100
YES movement	8	29	15	5	3	39	100
Salmond	0	30	15	6	3	46	100
YES message	10	30	31	0	2	28	100
Unfair YES	2	10	0	0	0	88	100
Yes momentum	19	0	17	38	26	0	100
Yes campaign	18	64	7	3	0	8	100
Referendum campaign	15	43	8	13	4	17	100
Bullying	3	8	0	18	0	71	100
People reclaiming politics	24	57	14	2	3	0	100
Exceptional campaign	25	70	0	5	0	0	100
--Exceptional campaign	29	67	0	4	0	0	100
--Win for democracy	19	74	0	7	0	0	100
Scaremongering	0	8	27	13	21	30	100
Keep calm and show respect	0	27	0	54	0	19	100
Better Together campaign	25	26	15	19	9	7	100
Poor BT	12	22	17	27	12	9	100
--Poor BT	12	28	19	15	15	12	100
--Bt late	19	0	12	69	0	0	100
--BT panic	0	0	16	72	12	0	100
Labour	50	39	11	0	0	0	100
Late intervention	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Independence referendum	17	27	1	15	4	36	100
Polls	4	40	0	19	0	37	100
Importance of the vote	17	26	1	12	7	37	100
Tight race	29	20	0	16	0	35	100
Media & information	16	45	0	15	14	10	100
Media impartiality	4	60	0	0	15	21	100
Whose truth to believe	10	46	0	26	17	0	100
Newspaper endorsements	30	29	0	25	13	3	100
Heart vs. head	13	38	0	9	0	39	100
Emotions	9	42	0	15	0	35	100
Rationality	21	45	0	0	0	34	100
Division	17	17	0	0	0	66	100
Constitutional question	27	18	29	7	2	17	100
Positive UK	23	27	20	6	0	23	100
New powers	30	34	16	15	0	5	100
Devolution	11	73	16	0	0	0	100
UK stability & security	6	19	26	0	0	49	100
Federalism	29	17	54	0	0	0	100
Unity and solidarity	33	0	6	0	0	60	100
Success & benefit of UK	5	22	30	0	0	42	100
Barnett	57	0	0	0	0	43	100
Break-up complex - faster etc.	8	39	0	0	0	54	100
--Break-up complex	0	17	0	0	0	83	100
--Faster, safer, better change	22	78	0	0	0	0	100
ENG-SCO relations	41	4	32	5	3	15	100
Relations with England	41	0	39	11	0	9	100
Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	33	8	32	0	8	19	100
National identity	77	0	0	0	0	23	100
Social justice	40	9	51	0	0	0	100
Fairer society	40	18	42	0	0	0	100
UK not working	51	0	49	0	0	0	100
Inequality	25	0	75	0	0	0	100
Independent Scotland	19	18	35	15	7	5	100
Post-independence day Scotland	20	28	29	16	0	8	100
Self-determination	19	0	47	14	20	0	100
Defence	3	0	20	17	6	54	100
Trident	8	0	49	26	17	0	100
Defence in general	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
Nato	0	0	30	70	0	0	100
Impact	21	20	28	15	2	14	100
Uncertain future	8	31	16	23	4	19	100
Economic impact	4	32	9	29	7	18	100
--Economic impact	5	4	14	45	9	22	100
--Rising prices	0	89	1	0	4	5	100
--No debt share	0	44	0	0	0	56	100
Currency	0	46	16	12	0	26	100
NHS	74	0	0	0	0	26	100
General uncertainty	19	20	26	31	0	4	100
EU	0	47	22	31	0	0	100
Oil	0	22	27	0	0	52	100
Indyref impact	38	7	44	4	0	7	100
Indyref affects the whole UK	29	0	56	9	0	5	100
Constitutional reform	29	22	32	9	0	7	100
UK won't be the same	32	5	50	0	0	13	100
Fix the UK	57	0	43	0	0	0	100
Who will speak for ENG?	100	0	0	0	0	0	100

Horizontal percentages of top-level groups and themes by newspaper

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
1 Campaign	14	32	3	12	10	27	37095
2 Constitutional question	26	22	14	21	2	15	21957
3 Impact	25	20	10	23	6	16	16868

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total	Top-level group
1 YES movement	11	25	5	10	12	37	12119	Campaign
2 Uncertain future	15	24	5	31	9	16	11312	Impact
3 Positive UK	19	30	10	20	1	20	10186	Constitutional question
4 Referendum campaign	12	41	5	11	12	19	7422	Campaign
5 Better Together campaign	22	31	4	13	11	18	6506	Campaign
6 Indyref impact	45	12	21	6	0	16	5556	Impact
7 Independence referendum	18	30	0	15	5	31	4801	Campaign
8 ENG-SCO relations	31	18	9	24	1	17	4280	Constitutional question
9 Social justice	42	20	29	8	0	1	3559	Constitutional question
10 Media & information	15	42	0	16	17	11	3189	Campaign
11 Heart vs. head	11	31	0	18	1	39	3058	Campaign
12 Independent Scotland	34	9	18	27	6	6	2844	Constitutional question
13 Defence	1	5	10	48	3	32	1088	Constitutional question

Horizontal percentages of subthemes by newspaper

SubTheme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total	Theme	Top-level group
1 New powers	25	38	8	22	1	7	4636	Positive UK	Constitutional question
2 Poor BT	24	27	6	21	13	8	3833	Better Together campaign	Campaign
3 Salmond	9	18	4	17	11	41	3658	YES movement	Campaign
4 YES message	19	23	12	7	6	33	3292	YES movement	Campaign
5 Economic impact	8	19	5	36	8	24	3024	Uncertain future	Impact
6 Currency	17	16	3	48	4	12	2636	Uncertain future	Impact
7 Polls	22	32	0	15	6	25	2376	Independence referendum	Campaign
8 Relations with England	22	27	10	34	0	8	2242	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
9 Indyref affects the whole UK	38	19	16	8	0	19	2235	Indyref impact	Impact
10 NHS	26	39	0	9	21	5	2080	Uncertain future	Impact
11 Unfair YES	1	16	0	0	9	74	2018	YES movement	Campaign
12 Bullying	5	25	0	7	5	59	1783	Referendum campaign	Campaign
13 General uncertainty	19	23	10	36	3	8	1773	Uncertain future	Impact
14 Yes momentum	13	18	4	16	28	21	1748	YES movement	Campaign
15 People reclaiming politics	23	53	11	2	11	0	1737	Referendum campaign	Campaign
16 Importance of the vote	12	27	1	15	5	41	1717	Independence referendum	Campaign
17 Post-independence day Scot	34	15	16	25	1	9	1698	Independent Scotland	Constitutional question
18 Exceptional campaign	21	63	0	9	7	0	1598	Referendum campaign	Campaign
19 Fairer society	34	17	29	19	0	2	1589	Social justice	Constitutional question
20 Emotions	9	41	0	12	2	35	1583	Heart vs. head	Campaign
21 Labour	22	30	3	0	5	39	1553	Better Together campaign	Campaign
22 Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	49	9	13	8	3	18	1457	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
23 UK not working	56	24	21	0	0	0	1405	Social justice	Constitutional question
24 Yes campaign	11	67	4	2	12	5	1403	YES movement	Campaign
25 Scaremongering	7	26	12	6	36	14	1254	Referendum campaign	Campaign
26 Constitutional reform	47	15	18	5	0	14	1203	Indyref impact	Impact
27 Media impartiality	7	62	0	4	12	16	1158	Media & information	Campaign
28 Self-determination	35	0	20	31	13	2	1146	Independent Scotland	Constitutional question
29 Late intervention	15	47	0	3	10	24	1120	Better Together campaign	Campaign
30 Devolution	7	35	5	47	5	0	1096	Positive UK	Constitutional question
31 Keep calm and show respect	0	35	0	39	5	21	1050	Referendum campaign	Campaign
32 Whose truth to believe	11	34	0	19	28	8	1027	Media & information	Campaign
33 EU	13	44	2	29	3	9	1019	Uncertain future	Impact
34 Newspaper endorsements	28	27	0	26	12	7	1004	Media & information	Campaign
35 Rationality	14	26	0	33	0	28	995	Heart vs. head	Campaign
36 UK stability & security	5	23	20	15	0	37	954	Positive UK	Constitutional question
37 Federalism	30	14	27	0	0	29	951	Positive UK	Constitutional question
38 UK won't be the same	42	8	40	0	0	11	894	Indyref impact	Impact
39 Unity and solidarity	26	4	4	4	0	61	889	Positive UK	Constitutional question
40 Success & benefit of UK	3	14	19	21	0	43	877	Positive UK	Constitutional question
41 Oil	0	8	10	0	26	56	780	Uncertain future	Impact
42 Tight race	23	31	0	16	3	28	708	Independence referendum	Campaign
43 Fix the UK	65	0	35	0	0	0	677	Indyref impact	Impact
44 National identity	19	5	0	29	0	46	581	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
45 Inequality	32	17	52	0	0	0	565	Social justice	Constitutional question
46 Barnett	16	68	0	7	0	9	558	Positive UK	Constitutional question
47 Who will speak for ENG?	48	0	0	20	0	33	547	Indyref impact	Impact
48 Division	9	9	0	8	0	73	480	Heart vs. head	Campaign
49 Trident	3	0	20	69	7	0	446	Defence	Constitutional question
50 Defence in general	0	0	0	6	0	94	371	Defence	Constitutional question
51 Nato	0	22	8	70	0	0	271	Defence	Constitutional question
52 Break-up complex - faster et	6	29	0	17	0	48	225	Positive UK	Constitutional question

Vertical percentages of top-level groups and themes by newspaper

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total
Total	15266	20131	6080	13039	5274	16130	75920
1 Campaign	35	59	21	35	73	63	49
2 Constitutional question	37	24	51	36	7	20	29
3 Impact	28	17	28	29	20	17	22

Theme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total	Top-level group
1 YES movement	9	15	11	9	27	28	16	Campaign
2 Uncertain future	11	14	8	27	20	11	15	Impact
3 Positive UK	13	15	17	15	2	13	13	Constitutional question
4 Referendum campaign	6	15	6	6	17	9	10	Campaign
5 Better Together campaign	9	10	4	7	13	7	9	Campaign
6 Indyref impact	16	3	19	3	0	5	7	Impact
7 Independence referendum	6	7	0	6	5	9	6	Campaign
8 ENG-SCO relations	9	4	7	8	1	4	6	Constitutional question
9 Social justice	10	3	17	2	0	0	5	Constitutional question
10 Media & information	3	7	0	4	10	2	4	Campaign
11 Heart vs. head	2	5	0	4	1	7	4	Campaign
12 Independent Scotland	6	1	8	6	3	1	4	Constitutional question
13 Defence	0	0	2	4	1	2	1	Constitutional question

Vertical percentages of subthemes by newspaper

SubTheme	Guardian	Herald	Observer	Scotsman	S-Herald	Telegraph	Total	Theme	Top-level group
1 New powers	7	9	6	8	1	2	6	Positive UK	Constitutional question
2 Poor BT	6	5	4	6	10	2	5	Better Together campaign	Campaign
3 Salmond	2	3	2	5	8	9	5	YES movement	Campaign
4 YES message	4	4	6	2	4	7	4	YES movement	Campaign
5 Economic impact	2	3	2	8	4	4	4	Uncertain future	Impact
6 Currency	3	2	1	10	2	2	3	Uncertain future	Impact
7 Polls	3	4	0	3	3	4	3	Independence referendum	Campaign
8 Relations with England	3	3	4	6	0	1	3	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
9 Indyref affects the whole UK	6	2	6	1	0	3	3	Indyref impact	Impact
10 NHS	4	4	0	1	8	1	3	Uncertain future	Impact
11 Unfair YES	0	2	0	0	3	9	3	YES movement	Campaign
12 Bullying	1	2	0	1	2	7	2	Referendum campaign	Campaign
13 General uncertainty	2	2	3	5	1	1	2	Uncertain future	Impact
14 Yes momentum	2	2	1	2	9	2	2	YES movement	Campaign
15 People reclaiming politics	3	5	3	0	4	0	2	Referendum campaign	Campaign
16 Importance of the vote	1	2	0	2	2	4	2	Independence referendum	Campaign
17 Post-independence day Scot	4	1	4	3	0	1	2	Independent Scotland	Constitutional question
18 Exceptional campaign	2	5	0	1	2	0	2	Referendum campaign	Campaign
19 Fairer society	4	1	8	2	0	0	2	Social justice	Constitutional question
20 Emotions	1	3	0	1	1	3	2	Heart vs. head	Campaign
21 Labour	2	2	1	0	2	4	2	Better Together campaign	Campaign
22 Anti-WM vs. Anti-ENG	5	1	3	1	1	2	2	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
23 UK not working	5	2	5	0	0	0	2	Social justice	Constitutional question
24 Yes campaign	1	5	1	0	3	0	2	YES movement	Campaign
25 Scaremongering	1	2	2	1	9	1	2	Referendum campaign	Campaign
26 Constitutional reform	4	1	4	0	0	1	2	Indyref impact	Impact
27 Media impartiality	0	4	0	0	3	1	2	Media & information	Campaign
28 Self-determination	3	0	4	3	3	0	2	Independent Scotland	Constitutional question
29 Late intervention	1	3	0	0	2	2	1	Better Together campaign	Campaign
30 Devolution	1	2	1	4	1	0	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
31 Keep calm and show respect	0	2	0	3	1	1	1	Referendum campaign	Campaign
32 Whose truth to believe	1	2	0	1	5	1	1	Media & information	Campaign
33 EU	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	Uncertain future	Impact
34 Newspaper endorsements	2	1	0	2	2	0	1	Media & information	Campaign
35 Rationality	1	1	0	3	0	2	1	Heart vs. head	Campaign
36 UK stability & security	0	1	3	1	0	2	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
37 Federalism	2	1	4	0	0	2	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
38 UK won't be the same	2	0	6	0	0	1	1	Indyref impact	Impact
39 Unity and solidarity	2	0	1	0	0	3	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
40 Success & benefit of UK	0	1	3	1	0	2	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
41 Oil	0	0	1	0	4	3	1	Uncertain future	Impact
42 Tight race	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	Independence referendum	Campaign
43 Fix the UK	3	0	4	0	0	0	1	Indyref impact	Impact
44 National identity	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	ENG-SCO relations	Constitutional question
45 Inequality	1	0	5	0	0	0	1	Social justice	Constitutional question
46 Barnett	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	Positive UK	Constitutional question
47 Who will speak for ENG?	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	Indyref impact	Impact
48 Division	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	Heart vs. head	Campaign
49 Trident	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	Defence	Constitutional question
50 Defence in general	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	Defence	Constitutional question
51 Nato	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Defence	Constitutional question
52 Break-up complex - faster et	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Positive UK	Constitutional question