



THE BBC AND BREXIT

TODAY'S COVERAGE OF THE FIFTH
ROUND OF BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS
4 OCTOBER – 9 NOVEMBER 2017

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SUMMARY:

The latest News-watch assessed EU content in 24 editions of BBC Radio 4's Today programme between October 9, 2017 and November 4, 2017. There was an unusually high level of such coverage hinged mainly on the unfolding Brexit negotiations. It amounted to 451 minutes, 93 per cent of which was devoted to Brexit.

The main finding is that there was an unjustified heavy bias towards exploring the difficulties and potential negativities of Brexit. In this context, there is a special investigation of the pervasive and indiscriminate use by this BBC coverage of the word 'divorce' – with all its negative overtones – to describe the EU exit process. In academic media analysis, it is held that such value-loaded 'framing' of issues by the editorial process can negatively influence audiences.

The point here is that with all the resources available to the BBC news-gathering process, the use 47 times of such a controversial word to describe Brexit was at best poor journalism; at worst a sign of deliberate intent to frame Brexit in a particular light.

There was also a complete absence in the coverage of 'ordinary' people who had voted Leave, and of UKIP, the only political grouping with substantial electoral backing which supported without reservation the need for a decisive Brexit. Only 76 words, 0.2 per cent of the total words spoken on the EU by guest contributors, were in this category.

Another main finding is that in the news bulletins, there were 13 items which projected major problems in the Brexit arena, against none which were positive. The problems highlighted in bulletin stories included plummeting registration of nurses from across the EU, a Brexit cost to every household of £500, the loss of thousands of jobs in the City of London, the government denying 'panic' in its attempts to deal with Brexit talks, along with claims from Hillary Clinton that the Brexit vote was based on a 'big lie'.

Overall there were 199 speakers in Today's EU coverage, of whom 102 (51.3 per cent) were broadly pro-EU or were negative about Brexit, against 54 speakers (27.1 per cent) who were positive, a ratio of 2:1 (the remainder were neutral). Thus, Today, despite the Leave vote in the EU referendum, inexplicably gave substantially greater prominence to anti-Brexit opinion.

The imbalance was worst among programme guests who were not allied to political parties in the House of Commons, where there were only 16 appearances by supporters of Brexit, or who were against the EU, against 52 from those opposed to Brexit or in favour of the EU. This was

a ratio worse than 3:1. In words counts there were 13,498 in the former category against 3,433, a ratio of 4:1.

These 52 non-allied speakers opposed to Brexit or 'no deal' predicted a litany of woe for the UK, including the intractable difficulties of reaching new free trade deals; collapsing farm incomes; exports hit by new red tape, tariffs, customs delays and rising prices; Brexit causing a 'massive energy suck' against the British economy; 'panic' in the government camp because Theresa May's Florence speech had not worked; that the UK's xenophobic approach to Brexit would lead to long-term decline; that the cost of dairy exports and imports could soar; and that Brexit was hitting car exports from the UK.

The picture of negativity against Brexit was worsened throughout the period by comments from BBC correspondents and presenters, who projected a picture of a government in panic, insuperable difficulties related to reaching agreement with the EU and in striking new trade deals, and collapsing business confidence. Of course the government's progress towards negotiations was not smooth, but the BBC's editorial focus was disproportionately and relentlessly negative.

REPORT OVERVIEW

News-watch employs standard academic quantitative and qualitative tools in its analysis of programme content.

Part One is a statistical assessment of the 24 editions of Today, measuring a range of important variables, including coverage volumes, the choice of speakers and the space given to them, and comparing these findings to the News-watch historical data stretching back to 1999.

Part Two is line-by-line qualitative analysis of the 118,000 words of EU-related content. It examines the editorial approach of Today in terms of story-selection, the tone of presenters and correspondents, the treatment and selection of guests and problems of 'bias by omission' – for example, the issues related to Brexit which programme editors chose not to cover.

Part Three deploys for the first time in a News-watch survey the established academic technique of 'Frame Analysis' to examine aspects of the editorial process. This is a data analysis device which explores the processes by which particular themes, ideas and arguments are privileged above others and how this might influence audience perception. The analysis includes a case study on Today's use of 'divorce' as a metaphor for Brexit, and how the phrase 'divorce bill' as a rhetorical frame privileges a particular set of meanings. It considers how this specific linguistic choice may have served to persuade audiences, on a subconscious level, that a particular option was most beneficial, desirable or fair. The section also considers the wider 'journalistic frame' constructed by Today: that, although opinion polls indicated strong opposition to Britain paying large sums to leave the EU, those supporting this perspective (namely UKIP and members of the general public) were, through editorial choice, entirely excluded from the debate, and alternatives regarding the financial settlement were presented in very limited terms.

PART ONE: MONITORING STATISTICS

1.1 POLITICAL BACKGROUND

On 23 June 2016, the UK public voted to leave the European Union by a majority of 52% to 48%. Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron resigned, and after a short leadership contest, Theresa May became his successor. In March 2017, the government invoked Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, setting in motion a two-year timetable for Brexit talks. Two months later, Mrs May called a snap general election, intended to strengthen her negotiating position, but which left the Conservatives eight seats short of a majority and reliant upon a confidence and supply agreement with the DUP.

Formal negotiations between the UK and the other 27 members of the EU opened on 19 June 2017, with the UK represented by David Davis MP, and the EU appointing former French MP Michel Barnier as its chief negotiator. The European Council, in its negotiating guidelines, stated that attention should only turn to the framework for the future relationship between the UK and the EU – including future trade – once ‘sufficient progress has been made in the first phase towards reaching a satisfactory agreement on the arrangements for an orderly withdrawal.’¹

News-watch scheduled its Winter 2017 survey to coincide with the fifth negotiating round, which began in Brussels in the week commencing 9 October. On 12 October Michel Barnier announced that negotiations were stalled with a ‘disturbing’ deadlock on the UK’s so-called ‘divorce bill’ for leaving the European Union, although there were subsequently reports that the EU was beginning internal preparations on a post-Brexit trade deal with the UK. A joint statement issued on 16 October by Theresa May and the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said talks conducted during a working dinner in Brussels had been ‘useful and constructive’.²

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/04/29/euco-brexit-guidelines/#>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-by-prime-minister-theresa-may-and-president-jean-claude-juncker>

1.2 SURVEY OVERVIEW

Today is BBC Radio 4's flagship news and current affairs programme. It broadcasts for three hours on weekday mornings, and for two hours on Saturdays. Today has a weekly reach of over 7 million listeners³, and each programme is made available for listening 'on demand' through BBC iPlayer, for a month after broadcast.

News-watch's Winter 2017 survey began on Monday 9 October and monitored every edition of Today until Saturday 4 November, a period of four weeks, or 24 consecutive editions. All reports pertaining to the European Union or its relationship with the UK were fully transcribed and analysed on a systematic, line-by-line basis. Information was also collated in News-watch's bespoke database to enable comparisons with programme data collected during previous surveys dating back to 1999.

1.3 AIRTIME

News-watch bases its airtime calculations on Today's 'features'. These lie at the heart of the programme: interviews, correspondent reports and two-way discussions between presenters and journalists which account for approximately two thirds of Today's total weekly airtime. Focusing on these elements ensures that airtime calculations are not distorted by repeated content or 'non-news' components.⁴

During the Winter 2017 survey interval, Today's delivered 44 hours 20 minutes of feature items. Of this, 7 hours and 31 minutes (16.9% of the programme's available airtime) was EU-related, and the vast majority was on issues concerning Brexit. All EU material was fully transcribed, amounting to transcripts of approximately 118,000 words.

Since 1999, News-watch has monitored, tracked and analysed 353 full weeks of the Today programme, equating 2118 individual editions with a combined airtime of 6001 hours. This long-term monitoring has established that Today has, on average, given over 7.1% of its 'feature' output to the discussion of EU themes. Coverage during the Winter 2017 survey interval saw EU coverage at 16.9%, more than twice the long-term average. The table provides details of the 28 News-watch surveys of Today undertaken between September 2002 and November 2017.⁵

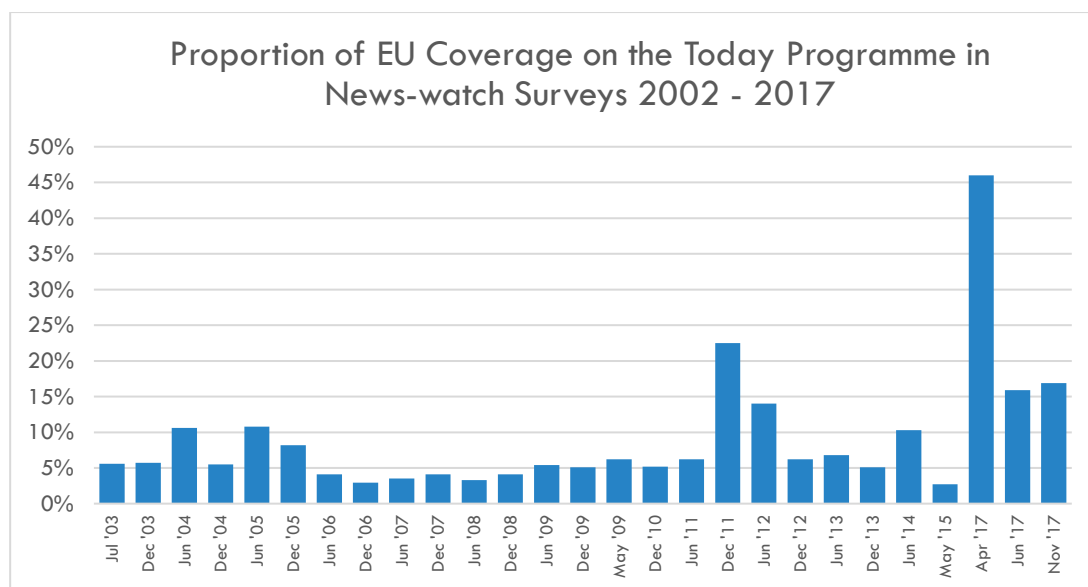
³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/rajar-q3>

⁴ Repeated content can include bulletins and newspaper review segments; non-news components are sports reports, weather forecasts and trailers for other BBC programmes.

⁵ A number of these surveys, particularly during election periods, included multi-programme monitoring. For the purposes of this survey, information pertaining solely to the Today programme has been isolated to allow direct comparisons.

	Survey Date	Weeks	Total Airtime (minutes)	EU Airtime (minutes)	Proportion of EU coverage
1	September 2002 – July 2003	47	31,255	1750	5.6%
2	September – December 2003	12	7,980	455	5.7%
3	March – June 2004	13	8,216	871	9.8%
4	October – December 2004	10	6,650	365	5.5%
5	March – June 2005	15	9,975	1082	10.8%
6	October – December 2005	9	5,985	489	8.2%
7	February – June 2006	16	10,640	437	4.1%
8	September – December 2006	14	9,310	275	2.9%
9	March – June 2007	14	9,310	326	3.5%
10	September – December 2007	14	9,310	386	4.1%
11	March – June 2008	12	7,980	263	3.3%
12	September – December 2008	14	9,310	384	4.1%
13	April – June 2009	6	4,206	228	5.4%
14	September – December 2009	13	8,577	442	5.1%
15	March – May 2010	6	3,961	245	6.2%
16	September – December 2010	13	8,493	444	5.2%
17	March – June 2011	13	8,617	532	6.2%
18	October – December 2011	11	7,298	1639	22.5%
19	April – June 2012	12	7,938	1112	14.0%
20	September – December 2012	13	8,640	540	6.2%
21	April – June 2013	12	7,929	538	6.8%
22	September – December 2013	14	9,207	470	5.1%
23	April – June 2014	6	3,979	412	10.3%
24	March – May 2015	6	3,990	252	6.1%
25	June – December 2016 (Business Slots only)	26	n/a	759	n/a
26	March – Apr 2017	1	667	305	46%
27	May – June 2017	5	3,433	542	15.9%
28	October – November 2017	4	2,660	451	16.9%

The graph shows the EU airtime proportions in the 28 most recent Today surveys listed by end date.⁶

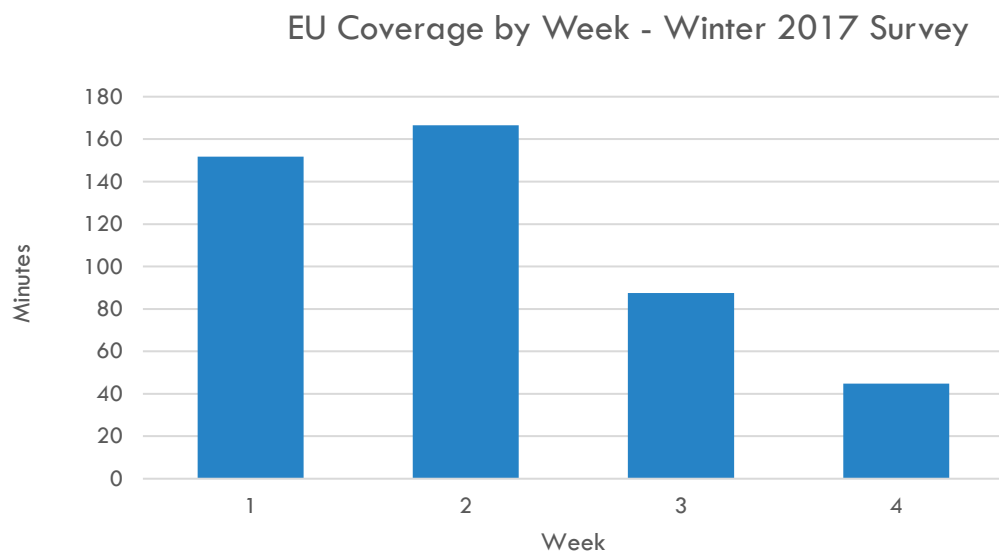


⁶ Airtime calculations are unavailable for Survey 25 (June – December 2016) which focused on six months of the programme's Business News slots in the period immediately post-referendum, and did not monitor Today in its entirety.

As the chart illustrates, the proportion of Today’s EU coverage in the one-month Winter 2017 survey interval was the third highest of all News-watch projects. Greater proportions of EU coverage were only recorded in Winter 2011 (where the unfolding economic crisis in the Eurozone saw EU coverage responsible for 22.5% of feature reports) and during an atypically short one-week survey undertaken in March/April 2017 (where monitoring was timed to coincide with the triggering of Article 50, and 46% of Today feature airtime was devoted to EU/Brexit discussion).

1.4 WEEKLY EU COVERAGE

Today transmitted 216 EU-related programme items during the four-week interval. 29 were bulletin reports, 46 were mentions of EU matters in the programme’s newspaper review section, and there were 141 ‘features’, with a total duration of 7 hours 31 minutes. In addition, EU issues were mentioned in passing on 24 occasions, and EU matters were discussed twice in the religious affairs slot, Thought for the Day. The chart shows the amount of EU coverage broadcast during each week of the survey.



The first and second week saw the highest volumes of EU coverage, with 2 hours 32 minutes (22.9% of available airtime) and 2 hour 46 minutes (25.1% of available airtime) respectively.

In the first week (9-16 October) Brexit Secretary David Davis embarked on the fifth round of Brexit negotiations, and the Chancellor Philip Hammond said that it was too early to commit further funds to Britain leaving the EU under a ‘no deal’ scenario. In the second week (18-25

October) Theresa May held discussions with EU Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and subsequently travelled to Brussels to attempt to convince other EU leaders to accept the offer of a financial settlement and to move on to discussing trade. EU coverage reduced by almost half in Week 3 (1 hour 28 minutes of coverage, 13.5% of available airtime) and halved again in Week 4 (45 minutes, 6.8% of available airtime)

1.5 EU THEMES

The EU features broadcast during the four-week interval were coded according to their primary theme. Brexit was by far the most widely-discussed EU issue: 122 feature items accounting for approximately 7 hours of coverage, or 93.5% of the total EU airtime.

Brexit was regularly enmeshed with other themes – most notably Economics, and Immigration – but EU coverage *without* a Brexit component was minimal: just 19 feature items (some of these partial discussions or short mentions) with a combined duration of under half an hour, as the table shows:

Subject Area	Total Features	Minutes	% EU Coverage
Brexit	122	421.25	93.5%
Catalan Independence	7	6.75	1.5%
Economics, Business and Financial	4	7.25	1.6%
European Legislation	2	5	1.1%
European Statistics Day	1	3.25	0.7%
European Space Agency	1	2.75	0.6%
European Court Decision	1	2.75	0.6%
EU and Immigration	1	1	0.2%
Member States and the EU	1	0.25	0.1%
Britain and the EU (historical)	1	0.25	0.1%

The Catalan Independence referendum was a significant story elsewhere on Today during the survey, with 1 hour and 48 minutes of coverage being broadcast over the four week interval, (4.1% of the programme's available airtime.) However, the events in northern Spain were treated primarily as a domestic issue within a member state, and as the table illustrates, the matter was discussed in an EU context for less than seven minutes, with brief consideration given to the impact on the EU, and to the European Arrest Warrant that was issued to Catalan leaders seeking sanctuary in Belgium.

Only four 'Economics, Business and Financial' items carried EU reports with no Brexit component. On 16 October, a question was put to Gillian Drakeford of Ikea on the European Commission's comments on her company's tax affairs, but she didn't mention the Commission specifically in her response, and thus the sequence lasted only thirty seconds. The Business News on 26 and 27

October spent a total of six minutes discussing the ECB's decision to cut the stimulus programme it established in the wake of the eurozone crisis. And on 28 October, in a special edition celebrating Today's 60th anniversary, one package briefly looked back at reporting of the introduction of euro notes and coins in 2002.

There were only two items discussing EU legislation: a brief mention of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation by Southampton University's Dame Wendy Hall on 16 October; and an interview with European Security Commissioner Sir Julian King on 17 October, in which he outlined new anti-terrorism measures being unveiled by the European Commission.

News-watch's early surveys regularly noted that EU news was not being awarded significant prominence, and that 'bias by omission' was depriving audiences of a full understanding of the EU and its institutions.⁷ Post-referendum, and with Britain's relationship with the EU centre-stage, few would make the case that overall coverage volumes are too low. But these figures, and the airtime calculations preceding them, underline the dominance of Brexit as a news theme, and show how it has a clear potential to crowd out other important EU stories.

1.6 SPEAKERS

During the four-week interval there were **199 contributions** to Today's EU/Brexit coverage, comprising **97 interviews** and **102 pre-recorded soundbites**.

Contributors were coded according to their viewpoint on Brexit or the EU. Although the positions adopted by guests during the June 2016 Referendum were taken into consideration (and indeed, these prior positions were often referred to within the interviews themselves), categorisation was not based solely upon whether speakers had voted Leave or Remain in 2016: in News-watch's methodology the actual contents of the contributions has always been the key determinant.

Of the **199 speakers** who contributed to the EU/Brexit discussions during the interval:

102 speakers (51.3%) were broadly pro-EU, offered a negative opinion on Brexit, or pushed for a 'soft' Brexit, including remaining part of the customs union, single market, or opposed a 'no deal' scenario in the Brexit negotiations.

⁷ This charge was also levelled by the Wilson Report 2005, which found, 'the BBC News agenda understates the importance and relevance of the EU in the political and daily life of the UK.'
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/independentpanelreport.pdf

54 speakers (27.1%) were anti-EU, or offered a positive opinion on Brexit. These included some speakers who had supported Remain in the referendum.

43 speakers (21.6%) offered a neutral, factual or mixed view on the EU/Brexit.

The 24% differential between broadly Pro-EU speakers and broadly anti-EU speakers is striking, and greater than the long-term 9.7% differential identified by News-watch's longitudinal analysis of Today between 2002 and 2016.⁸

Further, of the 54 speakers coded as being 'anti-EU', only 35 were 'firmly' pro-Brexit, in that they had been part of the Leave campaign in 2016 or explicitly stated that they had voted for, or now supported Brexit. Thus, **those speaking firmly in favour of Brexit accounted for 17.5% - approximately one sixth - of all contributors.**

SPEAKERS ON EU MATTERS (NON-BREXIT)

As outlined in Section 1.5, only 19 feature items during the survey period focused on EU matters with no reference to Brexit. In total, 16 guest speakers contributed to these items:

Name	Organisation	Attitude to EU	Type	Words
Dr Rafael Hortala-Vallve	LSE	Neutral	Interview	216
Feran Brevat	Anti-Catalan Independence Campaigner	Pro	Soundbite	52
Kevin McMullan	European Space Research and Technology Centre	Neutral	Interview	322
Sir Julian King	EU Security Commissioner	Pro	Interview	490
Jane Nelson	Birmingham Community Law Centre	Neutral	Soundbite	80
Jonathan Benton	Formerly of National Crime Agency	Neutral	Interview	69
Dr Jennifer Rogers	University of Oxford	Pro	Interview	331
Lady Ashton	EU Former Foreign Policy Chief	Pro	Soundbite	50
James Bevan	CCLA	Neutral	Interview	160
Carlos Bastarreche	Spanish Ambassador	Pro	Soundbite	126
Gillian Drakeford	Ikea	Neutral	Interview	51
Dame Wendy Hall	Southampton University	Pro	Interview	75
Raul Romeva	Catalan Government	Pro	Interview	168
Sarah Hewin	Standard Chartered Bank	Neutral	Interview	426
Helal Miah	The Share Centre	Pro	Interview	174
Heather Dhondy	English Bridge Union	Neutral	Interview	297

As the table illustrates, eight guests offered a perspective broadly in favour of the EU, its institutions, or particular aspects of legislation, and eight offered a neutral or factual view. No speaker provided anti-EU or sceptical opinion in this subset of coverage. In terms of the space allocated, 47.5% of words came from broadly pro-EU speakers, and 52.5% came from those who were neutral, with 0% from anti-EU speakers.

⁸ In the editions of Today monitored by News-watch between September 2002 and June 2015, a total of 5,093 guest speakers contributed to the EU debate on the Today programme. Of these, 1,968 (38.6%) were in favour of the EU or its legislation, 1,476 (28.9%) were against the EU or its legislation and 1,649 (32.4%) expressed a neutral opinion or provided a factual overview. The long-term differential between broadly Pro-EU and broadly Eurosceptic contributions was therefore 9.6% - although many of the most prominent 'Eurosceptics' recorded by News-watch eventually supported Remain in the referendum.

SPEAKERS ON BREXIT:

During the survey, debates raged on the fundamental direction and nature of Brexit. The firm polarity of the referendum Leave/Remain question has been replaced, over time, by a new binary: the notion of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ Brexit. It is, arguably an illusory construct⁹, but many former Remainers rallied behind policies designed to ensure the ‘softest’ possible departure, including suggestions that Britain should remain in the single market or maintain the free movement of people. **183 speakers** contributed specifically to Brexit discussions, and were coded as follows:

94 speakers (51.3%) offered a negative opinion on Brexit, or pushed for a ‘soft’ Brexit, including remaining part of the customs union, single market, or opposed a ‘no deal’ scenario in the Brexit negotiations.

54 speakers (29.1%) were anti-EU, or offered a positive opinion on Brexit. These included some speakers who had supported Remain in the referendum.

35 speakers (19.1%) offered a neutral, factual or mixed view on the EU/Brexit.

The table provides details of contributions by politicians and non-politicians who spoke on the issue of Brexit.

UK Politicians	Interviews	Soundbites	Total	Words
Conservative	12	45	57	10,393
Labour Party	5	18	23	5,315
Crossbench Peers	2	2	4	1,214
SNP	5	1	6	1,024
Liberal Democrats	2	4	6	868
Plaid Cymru	1	1	2	502
UKIP	0	1	1	76
Other politicians ¹⁰	0	3	3	65
DUP	0	1	1	48
Green Party	0	1	1	32

As the table shows, representatives of the Conservative Party dominated the political discussion, with more than twice as many appearances as their Labour counterparts. However, eleven of the 57 Conservative speakers gave pro-EU/anti-Brexit opinions, ten spoke neutrally. Of the 36 Conservatives that were coded as being pro-Brexit, ten had actually campaigned for Remain in the referendum.¹¹

⁹ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/816253/Brexit-news-soft-Brexit-utterly-meaningless-slogan-Theresa-May-European-Union-talks>

¹⁰ The ‘Other politicians’ category includes two appearance from the Speaker of the House of Commons, and one voice who made a clearly audible point in Yesterday in Parliament on 25 October, but who wasn’t referenced by name in the report, and not included in the Hansard record of the debate was checked.

¹¹ In all surveys since the referendum, News-watch has coded senior Conservatives as pro-Brexit unless they have clearly argued otherwise, on account of the party’s policy of pushing the Brexit process forward.

The only other two political parties who take an official pro-Brexit stance – UKIP and the DUP – received minimal coverage, just one short soundbite contribution each.

In the current survey political voices were particularly dominant, accounting for 104 of the 199 speakers, or 52% - significantly more than during the News-watch 2017 General Election Survey, where 37% of speakers had been politicians. A significant majority of MPs had campaigned for a Remain vote in the June 2016 referendum. Of the 650 sitting MPs, 463 (71%) had supported Remain, 156 (24%) had supported Leave, with a further 31 (5%) not publically declared¹² After the June 2017 General Election the proportion of MPs in favour of Remain increased due to Remain-supporting Labour MPs replacing Leave-supporting Conservatives, shifting the majority to 73% Remain to 23% Leave.¹³

But there was scant evidence on Today of political contributors having fundamentally shifted their core beliefs. The only clear example appeared in a short Yesterday in Parliament sequence on 13 October, in which the Conservative MP Mark Garnier make the following admission:

Doom-mongers like myself, Mr Speaker, who, during a referendum, were part of the Project Fear campaign, have been proved wrong. And I think it's important that we stand up and say, 'So far we have not got this right, and that is incredibly good news for both Britain and our individual constituents.'

William Hague, interviewed on 1 November, said that if there was a second referendum he would be 'more likely than before' to vote Leave, although he stopped short of explicitly stating that he had changed his mind. Elsewhere politicians were more coy. Parliamentary correspondent Susan Hulme noted that the Prime Minister herself had sidestepped a question from the SNP's Ian Blackford, designed to establish whether she was 'a true convert to Brexit, or a secret heretic.'

IAN BLACKFORD: If there was another EU referendum now, I know I would vote to Remain. Why hasn't the Prime Minister been straightforward about how she would vote?
THERESA MAY: There is no second referendum.¹⁴

The data shows that there was little evidence that Today attempted to balance the in-built parliamentary inequality by introducing Brexit-positive voices from other spheres.

¹² Carr, T., Dale, I. and Waller, R. (2017). The Politics Guide to the new House of Commons 2017.

¹³ <https://www.ft.com/content/408da138-550b-11e7-80b6-9bfa4c1f83d2>

¹⁴ Yesterday in Parliament, 12 October 2017, 6.41 am

Other Speakers	Interviews	Soundbites	Total	Words
Business, Economics, Finance	43	4	48	11,019
Politicians from EU Member States	7	6	13	2,702
Journalists	7	0	7	1,941
EU Institutions	3	1	4	1,637
Civil Servants	3	0	3	1541
Academics/Scientists	5	1	6	806
Campaigners and Pressure Groups	1	5	6	614
Pollsters	1	0	1	583
Charities/Community Organisations	1	2	3	518
Celebrities/Artists	2	0	2	268
International Politicians	1	1	2	129
General Public	0	1	1	54

Today normally includes in its EU coverage contributions from members of the public, most usually in the form of vox pops. They have been used mainly to convey what could broadly be called 'public opinion' or a range of contrasting views on individual issues. In this survey they were virtually absent. Section 3 investigates this absence through the lens of frame analysis, and considers the extent to which this lack of an important element 'breadth of opinion' was a source of bias.

1.7 WORD COUNTS

As the previous section revealed, there was a significant differential on Today between those speaking from a broadly pro-EU perspective (51.3%) and those speaking from a broadly anti-EU perspective (27.1%). However, an analysis of the full transcripts revealed an even larger discrepancy in terms of the word spoken by each subset. In total, invited guests delivered 41,085 words in live interviews and pre-recorded soundbites. The allocation was as follows:

Broadly Pro-EU/Negative towards Brexit: 22,700 words 22700 (54.2%)

Broadly Anti-EU/Positive towards Brexit: 10,585 words (25.7%)

Neutral/Factual/Mixed/Unknown: 7,800 words (19%)

Those offering a broadly pro-EU view were given more than double the space of those providing an anti-EU opinion. Thus, not only were anti-EU guests invited less frequently onto the programme, they were given less space, on average, than their pro-EU counterparts when they did appear. Subsequent sections of this report will address, using specific examples, how these editorial

decisions served to impact upon the shape and nature of Today's EU coverage.

1.8 IN DEFENCE OF METRICS

Throughout the 18-year history of News-watch, the BBC has firmly resisted assessments of its EU coverage based on standard academic approaches. In 2001, then-Today editor Rod Liddle dismissed a News-watch report as 'bean-counting', adding, 'these people with their stopwatches have too much time on their hands.'¹⁵

However, the Wilson Report in 2005, arguably the only genuinely independent analysis of the BBC's EU output commissioned by the Corporation itself, attacked the BBC's lack of internal systematic monitoring and a 'reluctance to accept external evidence'.¹⁶ In its formal response, the BBC undertook to remedy this.

A decade later, in his appearance before the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee, in October 2015, David Jordan, Director of Editorial Policy and Standards said this monitoring had been dropped because it had been decided it was 'unhelpful'. Similarly, when BBC Trust Chairman Rona Fairhead provided evidence to the same Committee on 2 December 2015, she said impartiality, 'cannot be done by maths, it has to be done by judgment'¹⁷ and was critical of the concept of 'impartiality by numbers'.¹⁸

In the same committee hearing, the Director of BBC News James Harding maintained that the BBC's internal meeting and content review system was sufficient to guarantee impartiality. After the 2016 EU referendum, the BBC – across several public statements – maintained it had achieved 'broad balance' between the two sides. The BBC's media correspondent Amol Rajan claimed there was 'consensus among Fleet Street' that the BBC had been even-handed in its coverage.¹⁹ BBC World Editor John Simpson went further and suggested output might have been too balanced. He said:

Because we're obliged legally to be balanced between different political ideas and different political viewpoints, that enabled all sorts of people, on both sides, to lie their heads off about what would happen, what might happen, if we left or if we didn't leave the EU. So I would say if people looked to television and radio for a clear guidance about what to do, well, we certainly didn't give them clear enough guidance about the

¹⁵ <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/5th-may-2001/20/the-truth-about-bbc-bias>

¹⁶ http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/independentpanelreport.pdf p.5

¹⁷ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/european-scrutiny-committee/eu-scrutiny-follow-up/oral/25623.pdf> p.9

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p11

¹⁹ BBC Radio 4, 21 March 2017, 7.52am

lies that were being told. I suspect that if people had known the facts and had judged in a more balanced way the outcome would have been a bit different, yes. We let our viewers and listeners down.²⁰

Simon Jenkin, writing in the Guardian, claimed that Director General Lord Hall had ‘wailed’ to his London dinner circuit that strict BBC balance had lost the referendum by giving too much credibility to Leave,²¹ although this was subsequently denied by the Corporation.²² Greg Dyke, a former Director General, complained of ‘dull’ referendum coverage, saying, ‘I understand exactly why they ended up reporting it the way they did, because there’s people with stopwatches and all the rest of it.’²³ Another former Director General, Mark Thompson, argued on BBC Radio 4 The Media Show that the BBC’s rules on ‘due impartiality’ ought to be changed if we were to ‘get to another referendum.’²⁴ He made similar points to Andrew Marr:

And in a sense, if...if one side, you know, produces an eminent, you know, economist, the other side produces, you know, Coco the Clown, they’re sort of treated as if they’re somehow equal. So I think there may be a case for looking at the rules for how referenda are...are covered in...in broadcasting.²⁵

In April 2017, Today presenter Nick Robinson took the argument further. He suggested in the Radio Times that that with the referendum over, the BBC no longer had a duty to balance the views of Leave and Remain. In a subsequent discussion with journalist Charles Moore, Mr Robinson argued that an ‘interesting period of political debate’ could be ‘killed’ by the ‘desperate, banal tedium’ of equally balancing opposing perspectives.²⁶ This view was roundly criticised by, among others, the Steepike column in The Spectator:

Although the BBC does not need to offer the same balance as it would during an election, the BBC impartiality guidelines state the broadcaster must be ‘inclusive, considering the broad perspective and ensuring the existence of a range of views is appropriately reflected’. Even a national treasure like Nick Robinson has no authority to make up — sorry, ‘translate’ BBC policy on the hoof.²⁷

But despite the narrative established by the BBC, there were problems of imbalance in its output. A News-watch survey of BBC Radio 1’s Newsbeat’s referendum coverage in the strict guidelines period found that audiences were 1.5 times more likely to hear a voice supporting Remain than

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeRP2buuvsk>

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/05/tackle-bbc-bias-make-plain-see-nick-robinson> In the article Jenkin says, ‘After the Brexit vote last June, Robinson’s boss, Lord Hall, went round the London dinner circuit wailing that BBC balance had “lost us the election”. It had given too much credibility to Lve.’ It is assumed given the context of the article that Jenkin (or Hall if the quote is direct) meant ‘referendum’ rather than election.

²² <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/simon-jenkins-lifts-lid-bbc-chiefs-dinner-circle-wailing-brexit/> The BBC responded: The words attributed to Tony Hall in the Guardian are not his; he has never made any such statement or assertion; they do not reflect his view in any way; and, the BBC has no regrets about its coverage of the campaign.”

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jul/05/media-should-rethink-coverage-in-wake-of-brexit-vote-says-justin-webb>

²⁴ Radio 4, The Media Show, 31 August 2016

²⁵ BBC1, The Andrew Marr Show, 11 September 2016, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/11091603.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/bias-and-the-bbc/>

²⁷ <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/brexit-bias-bbc-no-duty-balanced-says-nick-robinson/>

Leave, and Remain supporting politicians were given twice as much airtime as their counterparts from the Leave campaign.²⁸ Similarly – and equally in breach of the BBC’s referendum guidelines – research by Cardiff University found a 9% differential in favour of Remain speakers on BBC1 News at Ten during the ten-week campaign period²⁹ and that the BBC was the least balanced of the five broadcasters sampled.³⁰

The BBC has vigorously rejected ‘metrics’ as a way of assessing its record on impartiality. But it has a contradictory and unreasonable approach to the entire terrain, despite strict BBC Charter requirements to ensure properly balanced coverage.

First, the BBC’s rejection of content analysis is based on misrepresentation of academic research procedures and purpose. Such inquiry requires the cataloguing and classification of samples before they can be properly understood and analysed in parallel with other content and editorial considerations. It does not, as the BBC has implied, require or impose a rigid quota system of airtime, or on proportions of invited guests, thus hampering or distorting the editorial process. The Corporation’s approach is a simplistic reduction of academic procedure. The reality is that without systematic measurement, the overall picture simply cannot be assessed. A problem with bias is that those who perpetrate it are often unaware because they are locked in a self-reinforcing ‘bubble’ of belief. Academic analysis of media content does not seek to issue directives, but to address questions that cannot be answered in any other way.

Second, despite the utterances of figures such as David Jordan and James Harding, the BBC has commissioned academic research conducted on such principles to further claims about its own impartiality. Over a decade (2005-15), the BBC Trust and their predecessors, the BBC Governors, commissioned a range of ‘Impartiality Reviews’ conducted on these lines from Loughborough, Cardiff and Leeds universities, covering the reporting of the Middle East, Rural Affairs the Arab Spring, the Four Nations of the UK, Breadth of Opinion, the BBC’s reporting of statistics, and Business Coverage.³¹ The findings of the Review panels were trumpeted as authoritative and as clear evidence of balanced reporting on the ground that they were underpinned by such research.

Third, and perhaps most important, the BBC’s rejection of ‘metrics’ pitches the Corporation into battle against the discipline of media and communications studies itself. Methodical approaches to assessing

²⁸ See, for example News-watch’s survey of Radio 1’s *Newsbeat* during the ten-week referendum campaign, where audiences were 1.5 times more likely to hear a voice supporting Remain than Leave, and Remain supporting politicians were given twice as much airtime as their counterparts from the Leave campaign. <http://news-watch.co.uk/radio-1s-newsbeat-october-2016/>

²⁹ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0267323117695736> Page 214, Table 2. (Speakers marked as ‘Unclear’ by Cardiff have been discounted, to provide a clear differential between Leave and Remain in this calculation)

³⁰ BBC News at Ten: 8.9% differential in favour of Remain; ITV Evening News: 5.1% differential in favour of Leave; Channel 4 News, 4% in favour of Remain, Channel 5 News, 5.8% in favour of Remain, Sky News, 8.4% in favour of Remain. Again, speakers marked unclear by Cardiff have been discounted to provide a clear Leave/Remain differential.

³¹ All available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/editorial_standards/impartiality.html

mass media content go back over a century. Early media research used forms of quantitative analyses, physically measuring column inches to identify the prevalence of particular themes. Between the two World Wars a more formal system was established, driven by anxieties concerning the media's role in social upheaval and international conflict, and the influence of propaganda. Subsequent content analysis endeavoured to bring scientific rigour to the study of social phenomena.

The great advantage of content analysis is that it is methodical. It stipulates that all material within a chosen sample must be submitted to the same set of categories, which have been explicitly identified. To this extent it ensures a reasonable degree of reliability in the establishment of a pattern of media representation. It also provides a guard against temptations inherent in less rigorous approaches of selecting items that seem to fit the case you may want to prove.³²

News-watch based its coding frame on the book from which this quote was taken, *Researching Communications* published by academics from Loughborough University in 1999. Its media department is one of a handful of UK universities engaged in long-term, systematic news monitoring, and the methodologies they deploy remain close to the quantitative aspects of News-watch's approach – for example during the referendum they analysed coverage in terms of 'issue' balance and 'stopwatch balance' in a series of reports.³³

In rejecting media analyses outright, by elevating 'editorial judgement' above empirical evidence, the BBC has set itself against the media studies establishment. But historically News-watch has found no evidence of disquiet from academics with regards to this clear contradiction, and the survey of Today's Article 50 coverage spoke about the 'fierce resistance' to monitoring, stating:

University departments and academics who regularly undertake this sort of work using similar methodologies, during the referendum, and previously on behalf of the BBC itself, appear reluctant to engage in any sort of public critique of this new BBC orthodoxy.

However, during the current survey, a paper published by Cardiff University looking at the use of think-tanks as sources in BBC programming mirrored News-watch long held position on the BBC's rejection of external evidence and on the flawed concept of 'editorial judgement' rather than methodical research:

Nonetheless, we would argue, to reject the use of any independent criteria with which to make judgements is ultimately untenable. Without some form of measurement, the absence or presence of impartiality becomes entirely subjective—simply a question of news judgement about a particular event or topic without any systematic means of verification. The basis upon which the BBC was "satisfied our coverage achieves a proper balance" is entirely absent.

³² Deacon et al, *Researching Communications*, London, Arnold, 1999, p.133

³³ <https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/crcc/eu-referendum/media-coverage-eu-referendum-report-1/>

Indeed, broadcasters often do rely on broad mathematical forms of measurement to achieve fairness and balance over a period of time or an event (such as election campaigns, suggesting that impartiality is, in part, something that can be measured and quantified.³⁴

In October 2017, News-watch published two reports, one examining coverage of EU issues in the General Election,³⁵ the second looking at left-wing contributions to the EU debate across all News-watch surveys between 2002 and 2017.³⁶ The BBC Press office issued an immediate rebuttal:

We do not recognise the allegations made by News-watch and to describe this as a 'report' would be a gross overstatement for what is a defective and loaded piece of work which wouldn't pass basic academic scrutiny. Across the election campaign we heard from a range of voices, provided our audiences with clear and balanced analysis and rigorously scrutinised the issues and this is quite simply as [sic] an obvious attempt by a lobby group to discredit the BBC when all we are doing is holding all politicians, no matter their view, to account.³⁷

This was an abrupt, radical rejection of the report, revealing an unfamiliarity with both the contents of the News-watch survey and the composition of their own programmes,³⁸ and, crucially, the Corporation provided no evidence why the research might be 'defective', or why its conclusions were wrong. In fact, the BBC has *never* provided valid evidence to disprove News-watch's findings. A letter from BBC Chairman to Lord Pearson of Rannoch in November 2017 was ostensibly less dismissive. It stated that the two News-watch reports made 'interesting reading', but added:

As you know the BBC does not usually reply to surveys of this kind. In order to be fair to programme makers and audiences alike, complaints need to be specific and submitted within thirty days of broadcast.³⁹

But as News-watch has observed repeatedly⁴⁰, the BBC complaints system does not allow challenges based on longitudinal research, and any complaints about individual programmes are dismissed unfairly.⁴¹ The whole system is designed to protect the BBC rather than to deal properly with issues of partiality.

³⁴ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1389295#>

³⁵ <http://news-watch.co.uk/general-election-survey-october-2017/>

³⁶ <http://news-watch.co.uk/bbc-bias-by-omission-leave-and-the-left-october-2017/>

³⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/22/bbc-invited-third-pro-eu-euro-sceptic-speakers-appear-election/> It is unclear whether the error marked with [sic] is a misprint by the Telegraph or was contained in the official BBC response.

³⁸ For example, the focus on 'politicians' in the statement did not reflect that the General Election survey found that only 37% of speakers talking about the EU on Today and BBC News at Ten were politicians.

³⁹ <http://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Sir-David-Clementi-letter-to-Lord-Pearson-08.11.17.pdf>

⁴⁰ See, for example, News-watch's submission to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, in which we referred to the BBC complaints system as seeming to be 'more about containment for the BBC's convenience than being geared properly to considering the issues involved. The narrow, inflexible approach means that complaints based on detailed longitudinal academic analysis are never allowed.

⁴¹ <http://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Harlow-killing-BBC-correspondence.pdf>

The BBC has occasionally admitted mistakes and long-term problems in its coverage. But this has only been retrospectively – and often with accompanying (unsubstantiated) claims that the issues have been rectified. Former Today editor Rod Liddle, who, as mentioned earlier, attacked supposed ‘bean-counting’ by News-watch in 2001, said in March 2017:

I may have told you before about the comment made to me when I was editor of the Today programme about complaints from Eurosceptics which claimed our coverage was guilty of bias. I had been inclined to take the complaints very seriously. But a senior BBC apparatchik said to me: ‘What you have to understand, Rod, is that these people are all mad.’ That was the BBC’s controller of editorial policy, since you asked.⁴²

He added:

In fairness, this was a long time ago, around 2002, but stuff hasn’t changed at New Broadcasting House. I was told that not a single person on Newsnight had voted Leave — although subsequent investigations rounded this up to ‘one’.⁴³

In 2013, Helen Boaden, the BBC’s former Director of News, admitted that when she took up her post in September 2004, that the BBC had a culture of ‘deep liberal bias’, had thus failed to meet growing audience concerns about immigration, and had been ‘slow to react’ to increasing public opposition to membership of the EU.⁴⁴ Today Presenter John Humphrys agreed. In March 2014, he said that the Corporation had not been ‘sufficiently sceptical’ of the pro-EU case with regards to mass immigration and hadn’t look at the negatives with sufficient rigour. He asserted, ‘We bought into the European ideal’ but added, ‘I think we’re out of that now. I think we have changed.’⁴⁵ Roger Mosey, former editor of Today, controller of BBC Radio Five Live, and head of BBC television news, said in his 2015 memoirs that the BBC suffers from liberal ‘group think’, and had failed to reflect public concerns over immigration.⁴⁶ A News-watch survey undertaken in 2004 made an identical point:

During the 14 weeks, apart from one brief mention of a planning inquiry for a new centre for illegal immigrants, there was no item designed to examine the impact of immigration on British communities, and little effort to cover why there was concern.⁴⁷

But, at the time, the Corporation rejected both the methods and findings of News-watch’s research, as they do to this day. Identifying trends in coverage – including the improvements

⁴² <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/03/what-shocks-me-about-the-bbc-occasionally-it-isnt-biased/>

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/bbc/10158679/BBC-has-deep-liberal-bias-executive-admits.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2014-03-24/john-humphrys-i-am-a-different-interviewer-now-from-the-one-who-started-on-today/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/bbc/11690479/BBC-accused-of-liberal-bias-by-former-director.html>

⁴⁷ <http://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Report-for-Migration-Watch-UK-December-2004.pdf>

claimed by senior staff – is only possible through possible through painstaking research using accepted academic techniques.

Content analysis may not be very exciting – methodical, time consuming procedures rarely are – but it does ensure a degree of rigour, precision and trustworthiness with respect to the resulting data. These are qualities that would be lacking if you simply pasted together certain selective quotations and sensational images in order to prove the point from which, tendentiously you began.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Deacon et al, *Researching Communications*, London, Arnold, 1999, p.133

PART TWO: TRANSCRIPT ANALYSIS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research by News-watch – summarised in a paper by Civitas published on January 30, 2018⁴⁹ – has established that the BBC’s approach to withdrawal from the EU has been consistently negative over almost two decades. This latest survey, covering 24 editions of Today over four weeks from October 9 – November 4, 2017, provides clear evidence that such imbalance is continuing. There is a heavy skew towards emphasising the potential negativities of Brexit.

This was evident in the selection of programme guests – particularly those not from political parties represented in the House of Commons, among whom there was an imbalance of more than 4:1 in the word count of contributions – in correspondent comment, and in the lack of challenge by presenters to those who believed that Brexit was fraught with complexity and would impact adversely on the UK economy.

Of course, the role of journalism must include the exploration of the downside of government policies. But it must also, as is laid out in the BBC Public Purposes, bring audiences sufficient breadth of opinion on matters of public interest and concern.

The imbalance in this survey period is particularly hard to understand in the context that the vote in the EU referendum was in favour of Brexit. The editorial approach of Today seems to be to continue to emphasise relentlessly and disproportionately the potential difficulties of departure, and to underplay or ignore the advantages.

Leaving the EU is undoubtedly a difficult process. Equally, the Government’s approach to negotiations during the period monitored was at times confused, and regarded by some as lukewarm and incompetent. And there were fears in some quarters, most notably, the CBI, that the economy would be negatively affected when the UK left the single market and customs union, especially on a ‘no deal’ basis.

But the difficulties of leaving the EU must also be seen in context. Disengaging from 45 years of legislative and increasing political convergence was always going to be immensely taxing. Many believe that the EU is attempting to thwart the UK’s departure, and even punish the UK’s

⁴⁹ <http://civitas.org.uk/publications/the-brussels-broadcasting-corporation/>

Leave vote to discourage other countries from mounting EU membership referendums. Another complicating factor in the equation is that many who support Brexit believe that the Labour party – some from within the party itself⁵⁰ – is also obstructing the Brexit process and has adopted an ambivalent approach which means, in effect, that they are both for and against leaving. And despite the negativity of the CBI, there are rafts of economists and business people who believe leaving the EU is a huge opportunity for the UK to re-assert and expand its individual entrepreneurial muscle⁵¹.

This survey period of 24 editions of Today (totalling 68 broadcast hours), contained 451 minutes of EU-related content, 93 per cent of which was devoted to Brexit. This formed 16.9 per cent of the available airtime. There were 199 guest appearances from those mentioning EU themes. It would be expected that in this voluminous coverage, there would be reasonable balance between these various strands of opinion in the unfolding Brexit negotiations, not just from those inside Parliament, but from across interest groups and the country as a whole.

This need not be on a simplistic, binary basis between the Leave and Remain polarities, or between the political parties, but through the adequate, balanced reflection of different opinions about the way forward, ranging from ‘no deal’ and so-called ‘hard’ Brexit’ through to those who talked of staying in the single market, or adopting the ‘Norway option’, a ‘soft Brexit’ and wanting to avoid a ‘cliff-edge’.

2.2 BIAS BY OMISSION

Before considering in more detail the treatment of EU content, it should be noted that a strong indicator of the Corporation’s anti-Brexit approach can be found in what the Today programme editors chose *not* to cover. This was bias by omission, which as long ago as the 2005 report for the then BBC Governors by Lord Wilson of Dinton identified as a matter of concern in the BBC’s EU output⁵². A sample list of the positive news stories about Brexit on the national news agenda ignored by Today can be found in the section below. There was a gross imbalance, in numerical terms: 13:1, of items reflecting negativity about Brexit, typified by Hillary Clinton’s book-plugging contention that the referendum decision to leave the EU had been achieved through the telling of a ‘big lie’.

⁵⁰ <http://brexitcentral.com/labour-no-mandate-block-eu-withdrawal-bill/>

⁵¹ <http://brexitcentral.com/uk-bright-future-global-trading-nation-outside-eu/>

⁵² http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/governors_archive/european_union.html

In addition to this, Today did not bring listeners any perspectives about the deep systemic problems that many commentators and experts now believe are facing the EU⁵³, or about the wider opportunities of Brexit. It did not cover – for example – intensifying claims that the EU was increasingly out of touch with its citizens, particularly in Eastern Europe⁵⁴ or about disquiet concerning moves by the European Commission towards greater federalism⁵⁵. And while there were numerous interviews with those who saw Brexit gloom, there was little equivalent curiosity about investigating positive developments flowing from future trade opportunities. Supporters of Brexit, when they did appear, were tied down in the muddy despond of the Remain perspective rather than about where they saw optimism and opportunities for expansion.

2.3 BULLETINS

Items in the Today bulletins were one of the most striking features of the imbalance during this survey period. The choice of bulletin stories heavily stressed uncertainty in the Brexit negotiations and gave prominence to post-Brexit negativities. These included:

- Green Party joint leader Jonathan Bartley would warn about the dangers of Brexit at his party's conference
- Theresa May had refused to say whether she would back Brexit in the event of a second referendum, and Chancellor Philip Hammond had said it was too early to commit resources to 'no deal'.
- With Brexit talks 'stalled', Hillary Clinton had claimed in her new book that the Brexit campaign, like the election of Donald Trump, was based on a 'big lie'.
- Theresa May had 'denied' she had made a 'panic dash' to Brussels to try resolve deadlock in the Brexit talks.
- The Trade Policy Observatory at Sussex University had warned that 'no deal' would cost every UK household £500 and could lead to the cost of bacon and cheese imports rising by up to 45 per cent.
- Gina Miller had warned that the Brexit talks were being badly handled with the Government 'flip-flopping' around.
- Leanne Wood, the leader of Plaid Cymru, had asked for a £30 million fund to assist with the negative impact of Brexit in Wales.
- The CBI was demanding an urgent transition deal to safeguard jobs and investment.

⁵³ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/844970/European-Union-German-economist-predicts-EU-euro-collapse-Brexit>

⁵⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/16/austria-joins-eus-new-right-wing-eastern-bloc-set-confront-franco/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date/2017/html/ecb.sp171027.en.html>

- BBC Economics editor Kamal Ahmed, discussing the impending release of latest UK GDP figures, suggested that if the figure was below 0.3 per cent growth, fears would grow about 'Brexit uncertainty', and linked that to falling consumer confidence.
- Paul Johnson, of the Institute of Fiscal Studies, had warned that Brexit uncertainty would cloud the Chancellor of the Exchequer's spending plans in his coming budget.
- The Bank of England had forecast that up to 75,000 jobs could be lost in the financial services sector if there was 'no deal' in the Brexit negotiations. Business correspondent Kamal Ahmed said the Bank was preparing for 'thousands' of job losses (though adding that London would remain the most important centre for banking in Europe).
- It was said that the government had repeatedly refused Labour's request to release details of estimates of the impact of Brexit.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council had warned that there had been a decline of 90 per cent in the number of EU applicants wanting to join the UK nursing register.

Thus in the 30 editions of Today, there were 13 clearly negative bulletin items about Brexit. They suggested variously that Brexit had been secured by a 'big lie', that it was going to trigger rises in food bills by up to 50 per cent, that the government was in panic over its handling of the negotiations, that Brexit-related uncertainties were restricting the Government's economic options, and that jobs and investment were seriously at risk. The list is what BBC editors decided cumulatively warranted bulletin status

Particularly striking was the claim that the number of EU nurses wanting to work in the UK is in sharp decline. Although Brexit was not mentioned directly in the relevant sequence, it followed on immediately after another Brexit-related item and the linkage was further reinforced by that the decline had occurred after the Brexit vote.

Subsequent reporting by the Daily Mail found that the story was, in fact, highly misleading. Nurses had left the UK in the volumes claimed, but more had arrived to replace them. The story's inclusion as a lead item in the Today bulletin strongly underlines that the BBC copy-tasting was more likely to accept negative Brexit stories than positive ones.⁵⁶

Offset against the above list, there were no items clearly positive about the impact of Brexit. The overall air of negativity was compounded by a sustained heavy stress on the complexity of the Brexit talks, reference to the process as 'divorce', and the difficulties of reaching a 'breakthrough'.

⁵⁶ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5071847/Brexit-vote-did-not-cause-NHS-staffing-crisis.html>

One item was negative about the EU itself. It was reported that Suzanne Evans of UKIP had claimed that the EU was behaving like 'greedy bureaucrats' in the Brexit negotiations, and in the face of this, it was vital to prepare for 'no deal'. But even this was immediately strongly offset by countermanding quotes from two Remain contributors.

Another measure of the degree of the negativity that was expressed in BBC bulletins is what it chose *not* to report from this period. Elsewhere on the national agenda, there were dozens of positive stories about Brexit which the Corporation did not cover on Today. This was evidence of 'bias by omission'. It shows that BBC editors routinely ignored Brexit-related developments and selected alternatives that were more negative. Examples of such stories were:

October 9: Swedish banking 'group Handelsbanken, with 200+ UK branches, had opened another UK branch and was 'fully committed' to the UK in the 'very long term':

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/10/08/swedish-challenger-bank-handelsbanken-commits-uk-wants-brexite/>

October 11: The government was examining plans to join the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), giving better access to markets in the US, Mexico and Canada as part of its planning for a 'no deal' scenario: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/10/britain-could-join-nafta-trade-alliance-us-canada-mexico-post/>

October 12: FORATOM, Europe's nuclear trade body representing 800 nuclear industry firms across Europe, had said it saw no reason why the UK could not quickly sign a nuclear deal – similar ones it already had in place with Japan and the US – after Brexit:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/10/11/europes-nuclear-trade-body-pushes-swift-brexatom-deal-uk/>

October 13: A report presented by UK economist Gerard Lyons to the Institute of International Finance in Washington had provided evidence that London's competitive advantages were 'Brexit-proof' and would thus ensure the City remained a global financial hub:

<https://city.wsj.com/articles/a0b1a009-404c-46ac-b4f7-1f67f02a813c>

October 18: Alexander Downer, the Australian High Commissioner in the UK, had said that a trade deal could be reached with the UK very quickly after Brexit, and had slammed the EU as 'preposterously protectionist', with the CAP doing 'far more harm than good':

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4699695/brexit-britain-can-do-a-rapid-trade-deal-with-australia-its-government-confirms/>

October 23: Consumer confidence in the latest quarter had risen for the first time in 2017, buoyed by positive news on employment, according to a survey conducted by Deloitte:

<http://www.cityam.com/274324/consumer-confidence-rallies-despite-squeeze-household>

October 25: Financial services company Bloomberg had opened its new £1 billion European HQ in London and had plans to expand the workforce there from 4,000 to 8,000:

<http://brexitcentral.com/today/brexit-news-wednesday-25-october/>

October 26: The economy's performance – with GDP up 0.4 per cent between July and September – was 'continuing to defy predictions of anti-Brexit doom-mongers':

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/871122/Brexit-news-Britain-economy-GDP-boost-manufacturing-surge>

October 27: Talks were being held to facilitate overseas students being offered loans while they studied in post-Brexit Britain – if their country agreed to a free trade

deal: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4777059/overseas-students-loan-brexit-britain-free-trade-deal/>

October 28: Leaving the EU's Common Fisheries Policy could lead to a £3 billion boost to the UK's fishing industry, reversing the 'catastrophic' decline since 1973: <https://capx.co/the-economic-benefits-of-taking-back-control-of-british-waters/>

October 30: The UK aerospace industry was 'batting away Brexit blues' with a bumper third quarter for commercial aircraft deliveries worth £7 billion, and was heading for a record year, according to trade body Aerospace Defence Security:

<http://www.cityam.com/274735/uk-aerospace-industry-flies-away-brexit-blues-aircraft>

October 31: Airline industry bosses from IAG (parent company of British Airways), EasyJet and Heathrow Airport – in evidence to a Commons select committee – had dismissed claims that flights could be grounded if the UK left the EU with 'no deal': <https://news.sky.com/story/ba-boss-dismisses-claim-no-deal-brexit-will-ground-flights-11106540>

November 1: Data from the 'Pink Book' of the Office of National Statistics showed that after the UK's rebate of £5 billion, the 'eye-watering' sum of £13.9 billion, equivalent to £267 million a week, or 2p in the pound on the basic rate of income tax, had been handed over to the EU in 2016: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/873720/britain-gives-EU-billions-every-year-Brexit>

November 2: BMW's global sales director Dr Ian Robertson had said the its UK sales and manufacturing operation in the UK - the fourth largest market in the world for premium cars with 250,000 sales annually - would not be threatened by Brexit:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5041329/BMW-boss-s-vote-confidence-Britain.html>

November 3: The respected foreign policy group Chatham House had predicted that a shift to a more 'market oriented model' for the UK economy after Brexit would reap huge dividends, with a bright future for British agriculture and lower prices for consumers, providing the UK left the EU's Common Agricultural Policy:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/874550/Brexit-news-leaving-EU-Britain-global-farming-leader-Chatham-House>

In summary, this list of Brexit-positive items that were excluded from the BBC news agenda serves to underline the serious imbalance towards negativity in the news bulletins. This was made worse by sustained adverse comment and opinion offered by BBC correspondents, which is outlined in sections below.

2.4 METRICS

Focusing now on what Today *did* cover, the clearest reflection of this imbalance in favour of Brexit negativity was in the selection of those who appeared on the programme who were not drawn from the main political parties with House of Commons representation (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrats, SNP, Plaid Cymru and Greens). An immediate point here is that UKIP, which attracted almost 600,000 votes (two per cent of the poll) in the 2017 General Election, made only one appearance. Member Suzanne Evans spoke 76 words in a single news bulletin, equivalent to 0.2% of the words contributed by EU-related speakers. And despite the referendum vote, as is detailed in Section 3.2 of this analysis, there were no contributions at all from members of the public who supported Brexit.

The analysis below in subsequent sections of what was actually said by figures in the 'non main party' category shows that there were 16 appearances (five of them main interviews of more than 250 words) of those who supported Brexit or were anti-EU and they spoke **3,433 words**; those in the same category who were against Brexit or pro-EU made 52 appearances (23 of which were interviews) and spoke **13,498 words**.

To put this into sharper focus, the imbalance in this category of output – in which Today was in effect attempting to bring to its audience the range of opinions from outside Parliament – was 52 to 16 speakers, and 13,498 words to 3,433 words.

This was a very pronounced imbalance of **4:1** in word counts and interviews of more than 250 words and more than **3:1** in terms of appearances. 'Balance' in news, of course, is not measured on the basis of numbers alone, though such metrics are accepted in academic analysis of broadcast content as an important indicator, and are included, for example, in the rules governing coverage of general elections and referendums.

The analysis which follows underlines shows that the numbers reflect that there was systematic effort throughout the period to bring on a disproportionate number of guests from outside Westminster who had strong opinions against Brexit and/or in favour of the EU.

2.5 'NON-ALLIED' INTERVIEWS⁵⁷

Of particular importance and weight here in terms of imbalance were the 23 interviews with those who saw problems with Brexit or 'no deal'. The full list of the deluge of anti-Brexit opinion they expressed is in 2.8 below. The figures involved were drawn from a wide range of organisations and interest groups. Their perspectives included that business was continuing to suffer from the uncertainties of Brexit and the Brexit process; wanting a second referendum on EU membership; retaining the benefits of the single market; and suggesting that reversion to WTO rules would result in the introduction of punitive and damaging tariffs. The key exchanges featured figures such as Guy Platten, of the British Chamber of Shipping, who had been warning about Brexit since before the referendum⁵⁸ and claimed here that a 'no deal' exit would cause huge customs queues; Sir Martin Donnelly, the former Permanent Secretary in the Department of Trade, who contended that 'no deal' or trading on WTO rules would lead to immense problems for UK trade; and fashion company executive Peter Ruis, who was so concerned that current levels of immigration might be curtailed that he had launched a poster campaign in protest.

A common denominator of these interviewees seems to have been that the programme guests and the organisations they represented mostly had strongly held 'Remain' views, often dating back to before the EU referendum, such as Lord Bilimoria, who warned on the day of the referendum of cataclysmic results if there was a Leave vote⁵⁹. Their views tended to be reported predominantly in the sections of the media supporting Remain.

2.6 RODERICK ABBOTT – TAINTED 'EXPERT'?

A prime example of this distortion is the interview with Roderick Abbott, who spoke on October 21 about the potential impact of reverting to WTO rules. He was billed on the programme as 'the former Deputy Director of the WTO. . .with 40 years' experience working on multilateral trade deals' This was clearly written to emphasise his authority. It omitted, however, a crucial point about his background, that before he worked for the WTO (for only three years in 2002-5), Mr Abbott had worked for the European Commission for almost 30 years. He joined the organisation in 1973 and rose to become second in command to EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy, and was then EU ambassador to the WTO. A reflection of his anti-Brexit bias was that before the referendum in 2016 he warned of the very high cost of Brexit⁶⁰. After the Leave

⁵⁷ Defined as those involving figures who were not allied to the main political parties in the House of Commons: Conservatives, Labour, SNP, Liberal Democrats, DUP, Plaid Cymru and Greens

⁵⁸ <https://www.ship-technology.com/features/featureuk-shipping-and-the-eu-referendum-in-or-out-4909031/>

⁵⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lord-bilimoria-cbe/eu-referendum-brexit_b_10614938.html

⁶⁰ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2016-06/21/content_25781887.htm

vote, he told the Guardian that Brexit was an ‘enormous task’ which would take much longer than was being projected and would have dire negative effects⁶¹. What he said on Today in October 2017 was almost identical.

Today’s introduction to the Abbott sequence was thus deeply disingenuous. His track record showed what he would say about WTO rules was highly predictable. He may have worked for the WTO, but he also had a hostile stance towards Brexit. Further, as an EU pensioner, he was not permitted under the terms of his retirement, to speak negatively about the EU⁶².

During the interview, presenter Nick Robinson urged Mr Abbott to ‘stick to the facts’ rather than offering opinions about what would happen under a WTO trading regime. This was unrealistic, if not fatuous. Mr Abbott’s position was almost exactly as he had laid down in The Guardian article. He said that trading under WTO rules, rather than being part of the EU single market, would create serious problems for the UK, particularly as the balance of trade was in the EU’s favour. Nick Robinson challenged him mildly but did not take on the main point: that Mr Abbott was in this context a hostile witness.

Mr Abbott’s highly partisan perspective on the impact of WTO rules was further reinforced in the survey period with other figures who were just as pro-EU. They included Martin Donnelly – who compounded the importance of the alleged WTO problems by claiming at length that it would also be immensely difficult to do alternative free trade deals – Lord Bilimoria, Radek Sikorski, Lord Mandelson and Yanis Veroufakis, each of whom suggested in depth in different ways that trading under WTO rules would be a disaster for the UK.

Against this, four interviewees who favoured Brexit commented that adopting WTO rules would not be a problem for the UK. However, by contrast with the interviews above, each contribution was brief and in passing. The Labour-supporting businessman John Mills said only that ‘trade would not stop’ under WTO rules, because he was mainly rebutting another negative point made by Martin Donnelly. John Redwood said the WTO rules ‘worked perfectly fine’. Owen Paterson contended that the UK ‘should not be terrified’ of the rules. Iain Duncan Smith argued that free trade deals were better than the WTO regime, but that the WTO tariff rules would not impede UK exports.

Overall, therefore, the handling of the WTO issue – and its central part, the interview with the highly partisan Roderick Abbott, buttressed by dire warnings from an eclectic range of other

⁶¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/aug/08/uk-could-clinch-trade-deal-with-eu-within-two-years-says-expert>

⁶² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/labour/4996440/Lord-Mandelson-must-remain-loyal-to-EU-to-guarantee-pension.html>

politicians and commentators – were heavily loaded against Brexit. It is hard to see why Today editors could not see this glaring imbalance and why the issues arising from WTO rules were not more thoroughly and evenly explored.

2.7 SIR MARTIN DONNELLY AND JOHN MILLS: IMBALANCE PERSONIFIED?

Another major issue with these main interviews with ‘non-allied’ figures came in two exchanges at 8.10am and 8.54am on October 14 which projected editorially as balancing each other. They definitely did not. The exchanges were with Sir Martin Donnelly, a recently-retired former senior civil servant who had worked in international trade, and John Mills, the Labour-supporting businessman. Sir Martin, as has already been mentioned, was scathing about the prospects of exiting the single market and adopting WTO rules. It was said by Mishal Husain in the intro to the first sequence that this was Sir Martin’s ‘first broadcast interview’, (as if he was revealing his views for the first time) but this was disingenuous in that Sir Martin had already given a newspaper interview to the Remain-supporting Evening Standard in which he had laid out his very strong post-Brexit fears⁶³. Ms Husain’s approach to Sir Martin was largely non-adversarial. Her goal was mainly to facilitate what he wanted to say, essentially that the UK must stay in the single market. Sir Martin was placed in the ‘front-page’ 8.10am slot and he spoke 1,129 words.

The ‘balancing’ interview with John Mills started almost at the end of the programme at 8.54am and ran to only 519 words. Mr Mills said in his opening answer that the trade balance with the EU was substantially in the UK’s favour and would continue to be. Thereafter, Ms Husain’s approach to Mr Mills was much more adversarial. She interrupted before he had finished his first reply. She pointed out that Sir Martin had not been part of the Remain campaign and was an expert in knowing how hard it was to ‘negotiate a replacement for the single market’. That forced Mr Mills to explain the history of such free trade deals, but before he could introduce further material against Sir Martin’s points, Ms Husain immediately followed by suggesting that such deals did not include services. Mr Mills had to deal with that technically, and once he had done so, Ms Husain intervened again to ask how he was dealing with ‘all this uncertainty’. Mr Mills managed to say very briefly that this would be by adopting WTO rules. Ms Husain terminated the exchange at this point as the programme came to an end.

Overall, therefore, Mr Mills had less than half the space of Sir Martin to push forward alternative pro-Brexit views. He spent most of the time dealing with the points raised by Ms Husain and did

⁶³ <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/no-access-to-the-single-market-is-a-huge-threat-to-british-jobs-a3641206.html>

not have the time to present a fully coherent rebuttal. The approach to the two ‘balancing’ interviews was much more negative towards Mr Mills and the pro-Brexit perspective. This editorial deficiency was compounded by the disingenuous introduction to the sequence involving Sir Martin Donnelly, and by Ms Husain suggesting that he was not politically aligned to Remain and – unlike Mr Mills – was an ‘expert’.

Sir Martin’s partisanship, undermining further Ms Husain’s contention that he was an unallied ‘expert’ on international trade, has since been further confirmed; on January 22, 2018, he wrote an article for the ‘Stop Brexit’ website⁶⁴. Its other contributors include Roderick Abbott⁶⁵.

A third, similar, problem was evident in another allegedly ‘balanced’ interview sequence involving Lord Bilimoria and women’s wear businessman Christopher Neiper. Lord Bilimoria spoke 557 words, and had ample space to outline his fears about Brexit; Mr Neiper delivered only 401 words.

Collectively, the 52 figures in the ‘non-allied’ category observed or predicted a litany of woe: collapsing farm incomes; jobs draining from the City of London to the continent; tens of thousands of EU immigrants having acute concerns about their futures and not being given enough assurances; exports hit by new tariffs, customs delays and rising prices; tens of thousands of companies being enmeshed in customs red tape for the first time; Brexit causing a ‘massive energy suck’ against the British economy; ‘panic’ in the government camp because Theresa May’s Florence speech had not worked in persuading the EU to move forward, or unblocking the Brexit talks; the Government wrongly trying to ‘cherry-pick’ its exit terms and avoiding its obligations; that the UK must provide substantially more cash for Brexit than was on the table; that negotiating with the EU would continue to be humiliating; that the UK’s xenophobic approach to Brexit would lead to long-term decline; that Frankfurt would assume the UK’s position as leading EU financial centre; that poor results in the building industry were the result of Brexit uncertainty; that if transition arrangements were not urgently agreed, jobs would be switched from the UK to the EU; that lorry parks would mushroom in the Kent countryside to deal with customs problems; that civil servants did not have a clue about how to deal with customs after Brexit; that the cost of dairy exports and imports could soar; that Brexit was not recognising that the British economy relied on large numbers of immigrants; that Brexit was hitting car exports from the UK; that new customs requirements would need 5,000 extra customs officers.

Those who saw Brexit as positive or were against the EU, by contrast, had only five appearances (two of them mentioned above). Lord Owen said that Brexit had changed the axis of British

⁶⁴ <https://infacts.org/heres-single-market-hard-pick-apart/>

⁶⁵ https://infacts.org/author/roderick_abbott/

politics and had cross-party support, which should be reflected in how it was achieved; Christopher Nieper that leaving the EU would lead to opportunities for exporters; John Mills that UK trade would manage under WTO rules; Sir Mark Lyell Grant that EU-wide and British security would not be affected by Brexit; and Danish MEP Anders Vistisen that a bad trade deal for the UK would harm the EU.

Other positive points included that the low value of the pound (caused partly by the Brexit vote) was helpful to the hotels business, Eurostar and travel business; that despite passporting issues, Britain remained a good place to do business; that the UK could cope with 'no deal' and would not allow customs borders to be blocked; that the EU was acting like 'bullying bureaucrats and that 'no deal' would damage Brussels more than the UK; that the impact of Brexit had been less than predicted; that post-Brexit there was an opportunity to review the agricultural grants regime; and that the BBC had got it wrong in its negative projections about Brexit.

In summary, coverage of opinion about Brexit outside the Westminster bubble is a vital component in the debate about leaving the EU. In Parliament itself the majority of politicians remain ambivalent about the exit process, with many openly hostile. In that context, it is vital that the BBC, in line with its Charter requirement to be impartial should cover the full breadth of opinion on this key matter of public importance. The evidence presented above in the selection of this category of programme speakers is a clear proof that this Charter provision is not being met by the Today programme. It excluded opinion from UKIP and members of the public, and focused on anti-Brexit and pro-EU perspectives on a ratio of at least 3:1 against. There seemed to be a concerted effort to find as many figures as possible to discredit Brexit and the Brexit process, with much less focus on those who disagreed.

2.8 ANALYSIS: POLITICAL APPEARANCES

The full list of speakers who appeared who were MPs allied to the main parties in the House of Commons to political appearances is detailed below in Appendix III.

The total of those who were anti-Brexit, pro-EU or against the government's approach to the EU negotiations from the pro-EU perspective was 52 with seven interviews of more than 250 words (individual word-counts below) and they totalled all together 9,075 words. Appearances by those in favour of Brexit or against the EU were 36, with six interviews (word counts are listed below) over 250 words and a total word count of 6,826. This was a ratio of **4:3** in favour of those who opposed Brexit or favoured the EU.

The imbalance was not as great as in those from outside the main parties in Parliament, but in the context of bias already outlined, was a significant difference.

In terms of the analysis which follows, 60 of these appearances (33 anti-Brexit and 27 pro-Brexit), have been discounted because they were on Yesterday in Parliament, and as such were brief soundbites. These were not inconsequential in that they served as short, sharp summaries of some of the key issues in the unfolding Article 50 negotiations and the wider debate about departure from the EU. But they were broadly balanced in the opinions expressed.

The remaining interview sequences, on which the main analysis is based, are in two categories:

Anti-Brexit, pro-EU or against the government's approach to Brexit from a pro-EU perspective:

Nicola Sturgeon, interviewed by James Naughtie, wanted Scotland to benefit from continued access to the single market, and projected that she was leaving her options open about a second referendum on both Scottish independence and EU membership (832 words).

Nick Clegg, was pushed by John Humphrys on whether he was being 'undemocratic' in writing a book that advocated a second referendum, but maintained that the British people had not voted to Leave on the terms now being contemplated (769 words).

Hillary Benn, chair of the Commons Brexit Committee, in a sequence also involving Kwasi Kwarteng, PPS to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, maintained that leaving the single market with 'no deal' would lead to harsh economic consequences (594 words).

Kenneth Clarke, the strongly pro-EU former Chancellor, maintained that only hard Eurosceptics wanted a 'no deal' departure and insisted that it would be 'catastrophic' if terms similar to the single market were not achieved. He insisted that Parliament must be the ultimate arbiter of any deal, though also accepting that Article 50 had been activated (1,124 words)

Keir Starmer, the shadow Brexit secretary, had ample space to outline that his party wanted to retain the benefits of the single market, did not want a 'no deal' exit, believed the EU would compromise in its negotiating stance, believed the government was being incompetent of its handling of the negotiations and did not believe that free movement was a substantial issue. (1,529 words)

Leanne Wood, of Plaid Cymru, argued that Wales was losing important EU grants through exit from the EU and there needed to be a special fund of £30m to compensate (439 words).

Peter Mandelson, in the second longest interview in this category, contended that leaving the EU with 'no deal' and reverting to WTO rules would be disastrous. He stopped short of calling for a second referendum (1,209 words).

There were four further interview sequences in which pro-EU, anti-Brexit points were made, but they have not been analysed further because the points about the EU were incidental. They were:

Tom Tugendhat, the Conservative MP, discussing developments in Catalonia, he had voted Remain and thought the EU was vital in maintaining peace and ensuring international cooperation; **Claire Perry**, the Minister for Climate Change, said her role was helping the EU to move towards clean energy. She refused to say whether she would still vote Remain; **Lady Ashton** (marginal), former EU foreign policy chief, said that the deal the EU had helped negotiate with Iran was working well.

Angela Rayner said that training was needed of British trades people, in order to deal with the shortfall that would be caused by Brexit (interview mainly on portfolio issues).

Pro-Brexit, anti-EU sequences were:

Bernard Jenkin (850 words), who maintained in response to the latest apparent impasse in the Brexit talks, that further concessions to the EU would be economically damaging.

Kwasi Kwarteng (660 words), PPS to Philip Hammond, was asked about claims that Mr Hammond was being divisive in how he was approaching spending on 'no deal'. Mr Kwarteng contended that the Cabinet and the Conservative party was not as divided as was being projected.

John Redwood (709 words) was asked if it mattered whether Britain left the EU with 'no deal'. He contended that it did not. It was suggested to him that WTO rules were not 'the land of milk and honey'. He responded that the rules were workable.

Owen Paterson (974 words) talked about a letter with multiple signatories that advocated that the UK should accept that, as a result of the EU's intransigence, that it was now almost inevitable that the UK would leave the EU with no deal. Mishal Husain suggested that this would lead to 'severe economic consequences', and that no other country had ever been in the situation that the UK was now in danger of experiencing.

Iain Duncan Smith (788 words) was invited to appear to respond to Lord Mandelson's claims that leaving the EU without a trade deal and adopting WTO rules would be disaster. Mr Duncan Smith said a free trade deal with the EU was likely, but that WTO rules for dealing with UK trade were perfectly workable if not

Lord Hague (574 words), interviewed first about the ivory trade and then the Westminster sex scandal, was asked whether the threat of 'no deal' should be taken seriously. He said it should, but was unlikely and not desirable. Then, when pressed how he would now vote in a repeat Brexit referendum, he said he would review carefully his options, and possibly opt for Leave.

During this period, it is evident from drilling further into the above key exchanges that views about Brexit among politicians remained complex and divided. The position of the government and most Conservative MPs – expressed by Mr Kwarteng and to a lesser extent by former Foreign Secretary Lord Hague – was to press on towards trade talks, and to hope that a deal on trade would eventually be achieved while preparing in the background for 'no deal'. The four Conservative backbenchers interviewed were more hawkish. In summary, they stated that they were running out of patience with the EU's approach to negotiations and wanted more urgent preparations for 'no deal'.

The majority of Parliamentary Labour party had supported the activation of Article 50 in 2017, but the views of Labour-supporting figures towards Brexit expressed on Today during the survey period reflected a more complex or ambiguous approach. Hilary Benn, for example, the chair of the Commons Brexit committee, pushed hardest that the departure terms being framed by the government would seriously damage the economy. Although he did not explicitly say so, it seemed he wanted the UK to remain a member of the EU (or at least the single market) in all but name. Brexit shadow minister Keir Starmer was also highly critical of the government's handling of the Brexit talks, and appeared to want to keep the terms of the single market while not being subject to other EU rules. He also wanted the government to accept elements – but not all – of the EU's negotiating approach and terms. Party grandee Peter Mandelson described 'no deal' and the adoption of WTO trading rules advocated by Conservative backbenchers as a potential disaster. But despite his apparent strong desire to maintain the terms of the single market, he stopped short of calling for a second referendum (though not ruling it out).

Of the non-Labour politicians negative about Brexit, Kenneth Clarke, though claiming he was resigned to Brexit, made it clear that he wanted the UK to retain current EU regulations and trading terms. He described those who advocated 'no deal' as extremists. He was highly scathing about the prospect of winning free trade deals that would compensate for the economic damage he maintained would be caused by Brexit. Nicola Sturgeon told James Naughtie that she, too,

wanted to retain the terms of the single market, but prevaricated on whether she was seeking immediate referendums on either Scottish independence or the Brexit decision. Leanne Wood was insistent that the Brexit deal currently being pursued would damage the Welsh economy and wanted £30m to compensate. And finally, Nick Clegg, the former leader of the Liberal Democrats strongly pressed for a second referendum because he maintained that departure from the EU would be seriously damaging.

As already mentioned, there was only one interview with a government figure who was able to put, and be held to account for, the government's approach to the Brexit talks. This was with Kwasi Kwarteng. He reactively suggested, against a background of speculation that there was a split between Chancellor Philip Hammond and others in the government, that negotiations were on track and that such divisions were not there or exaggerated.

No Cabinet minister featured in the speaker list except in the soundbites in Yesterday Parliament. This may have been because of a refusal to appear – it was mentioned, for example, that Liam Fox had been booked for an interview, but it had been cancelled – but the omission of the direct government perspective created a gap in coverage.

This was filled primarily by speculation by correspondents about the government's intentions towards the talks, and about how they were proceeding. The picture they painted, as is outlined in more detail in subsequent sections, and was deeply negative about Brexit.

What were the other issues relating to balance in these interviews? Both sides of the Brexit debate were able to express elements of their respective arguments. However, those supporting 'no deal' did so against a welter of opinion on Today, from both inside and outside Parliament, that adoption of WTO rules would not work. Owen Paterson was particularly strongly challenged in this respect by Mishal Husain who pursued against him the views of Roderick Abbott.

Another comparison is between the interviews on October 20 with Peter Mandelson and Iain Duncan Smith. The former was in the front-page slot at 8.10am and ran to 1209 words, the latter was at 8.45am and was 788 words. Both men were asked adversarial questions, and both allowed to state their respective views. Why, then was one exchange considerably shorter (3:2) than the other?, And why was Peter Madelson afforded the more prominent programme slot? it is a straight imbalance – and assumes greater importance in the light of the overall numerical imbalances in the two main categories (allied to the main parties and not allied) of guest appearances (at 4:1 and 3:2). The Mandelson/Duncan Smith were billed as 'balancing' appearances but clearly they were not.

Similar issues apply to the interviews involving Keir Starmer and Owen Paterson the previous day (October 19). The interview with Mr Paterson, at 7.09am, was 974 words (the longest of the pro-Brexit political interviews), that with Keir Starmer at 8.10am ran to 1,529, also the longest in its category. This was a ratio of 3:2. Mr Paterson, as already outlined was able to make some positive points about 'no deal' and WTO rules, but he was heavily challenged in this by Mishal Husain. Mr Starmer had more space to advance his points that the government's negotiations were not working, that 'no deal' would be damaging to the economy, and that Labour's approach would to what was owed to the EU would be more pragmatic and realistic. He was challenged on whether Labour would accept a deal 'at any cost'. Overall, it boils down to that Mr Starmer had more space to present Labour's policy, and Mr Paterson had less; and to that Ms Husain was more adversarial with Mr Paterson than Mr Starmer. The discrepancies are further expanded in the analyses (in the Appendix section) of the presenters' approach to Brexit.

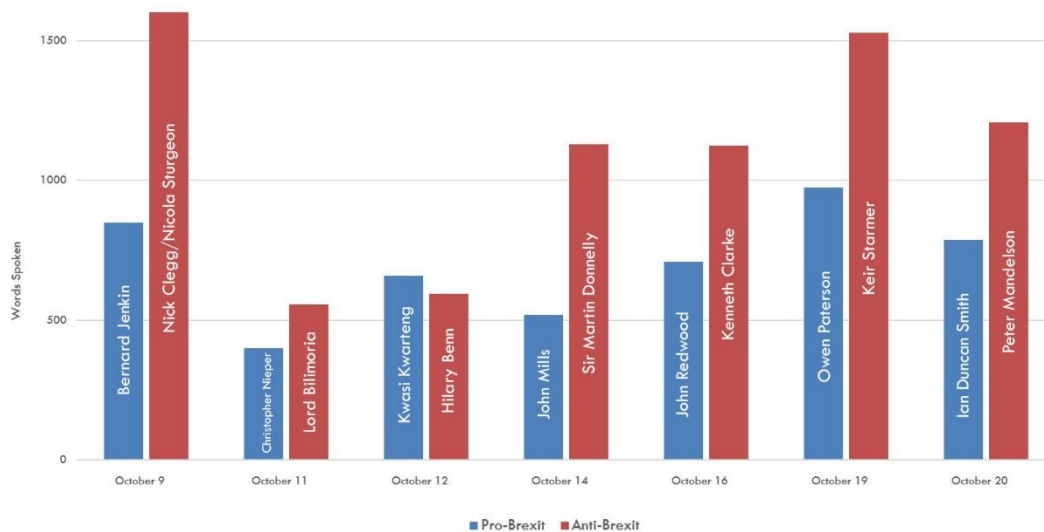
The sequence involving Hilary Benn and Kwasi Kwarteng on October 12 was clearly meant to be 'balanced', in that the two men appeared at the same time and were interviewed partly in parallel. Here Mr Kwarteng spoke 660 words, Mr Benn 594, but this imbalance did not tell the full story. The two men were treated very differently. John Humphrys opened the sequence by asking how Mr Kwarteng had different views from Mr Hammond about leaving the EU. As a result, Mr Kwarteng spent most of the time in suggesting that there was not really a government split in the approach towards Brexit, but rather a difference of emphasis. He was interrupted many times. Mr Benn then used the treatment of Mr Kwarteng as a lever to amplify that the government was indeed split, and then suggested it was incompetent and leading the UK towards a departure from the EU which would severely damage the economy. Mr Humphrys challenged him on some of his claims, but the overall impression of the sequence was that the government was struggling in its Brexit negotiations, while Mr Benn was able to put across his stance that Brexit itself was damaging.

John Redwood appeared at 7.12am on October 16 after a bulletin item in which it was claimed Theresa May had denied her latest visit to Brussels was 'panicked' because of difficulties in the Brexit talks. He spoke 709 words. Kenneth Clarke appeared on the same morning at 8.10am after John Humphrys had explained that the Brexit legislation was mired in amendments. His contribution was 1,124 words – another striking imbalance between the two sides. The axis of the interview with Mr Redwood was whether 'no deal' would be damaging, whether Labour and his own party would prevent Brexit happening, and whether Labour was playing 'a canny game' in forcing the government to make the running. Mr Redwood was able to rebut each of the points. The exchange with Mr Clarke was more wide-ranging. John Humphrys suggested that it would be possible to make free trade deals with countries other than those in the EU, that people had voted to leave the EU for sensible reasons, and then asked if Mr Clarke's goal was to stop Brexit,

whether he believed Parliament could veto a 'no deal', and what sort of terms he wanted to protect the UK economy. Overall, Mr Clarke had much more space than Mr Redwood to advance his basic premise that 'no deal' would be disastrous, was only supported by extremists, and that Parliament would prevail in preventing 'negative' exit terms. He conceded that Brexit was happening, but his other points suggested this must be on a highly qualified basis. Again, therefore, there was an imbalance in the approach of Today in favouring the negative aspects of Brexit.

On a morning in which Parliament returned from recess, and bulletins suggested that the government faced an uphill task in the resumed Brexit negotiations, Bernard Jenkin appeared on October 9 at 7.50am and spoke 850 words in making claims that no more concessions should be made to Brussels and in attacking the Treasury 'mindset' which was not pursuing British interests vigorously enough. On the same morning, Nicola Sturgeon and Nick Clegg appeared, and between them spoke 1,601 words that confirmed the bulletin contention that the government was facing difficulties in facilitating Brexit. Ms Sturgeon demanded at 8.16am that the UK should stay in the single market, and Mr Clegg that a second referendum should be held on the terms of the UK departure from the EU. None of the exchanges were in direct reaction to each other, and each speaker was challenged in different ways about their respective stances. But there was yet again a straight imbalance in the time and space allocated to the pro-Brexit side, represented by Mr Jenkin.

'Balancing Interviews' on Today
11 October - 20 October 2017



In conclusion, these seven sequences outlined above were the main political exchanges during the survey period. In all but one, the anti-Government, anti-Brexit, pro-EU figures who appeared commanded more space editorially and generally had the opportunity to put their respective cases with less challenge than those who favoured Brexit.

Overall, the political guests were not as imbalanced in terms of the numbers involved. But this must be seen in terms of much more pronounced imbalance in the 'non-allied' category. Another major factor contributing to the bias over the 24 editions of Today is analysed next.

2.9 BBC EDITORIAL INPUT: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

In this survey period a key element of imbalance was the commentary, and the opinions expressed within both special reports and questioning of interviewees, of Today's presenters and correspondents. The analysis which follows shows that there was some devil's advocate questioning of anti-Brexit speakers, and some optimism about elements of the EU coverage, for example the unfolding development of the Brexit negotiations.

But, overall, this was heavily outweighed by anti-Brexit gloom, and by an approach to opponents of Brexit that allowed them more easily to put their respective cases across (as is established above), for example, in the analysis of the treatment of Roderick Abbott.

The only way of appreciating the bias is see it extracted and laid out in summary form. The various contributions are summarised in the sequences below.

The **positives** about Brexit in the output emanating from correspondents and presenters were:

Bulletins:

October 13: Adam Fleming reported that the EU could be preparing to discuss among Council members trade with the UK, but not with the UK itself.

October 31: Kamal Ahmed said that post-Brexit, the UK would still have one million financial sector jobs and would be by far the most important banking centre in Europe.

Correspondent comment:

October 9: Adam Fleming reported that there was 'cautious optimism' in government circles about the moves towards trade talks. Laura Kuenssberg accepted that, although 'little noticed', Theresa May had kept the party's pro-Brexit wing onside.

October 11: Norman Smith suggested that government sources had tried to play down the significance of Chancellor Philip Hammond's remarks against Brexit.

October 13: Kevin Connolly claimed that the EU might offer the UK a 'small carrot' in progress towards trade talks.

October 16: Norman Smith accepted that the Brexit Bill would not be 'derailed completely'.

October 17: Kevin Connolly suggested that the Brexit talks were not yet at crisis level.

October 19: Kevin Connolly said the overall message on the Brexit talks from the government would be positive (but also pointed out all the negatives). Norman Smith suggested there were those who thought progress was being made in the talks. Katya Adler claimed there was 'no malice' on the EU side towards the UK.

October 20: Kevin Connolly said that Theresa May had issued a powerful call for Brexit to go ahead, with Angela Merkel acknowledging some progress. Adam Fleming said that the UK media were viewing the latest talks as less constructive than they actually were. Katya Adler suggested that the EU did want a deal.

Presenter comment/questions:

October 9: John Humphrys suggested to Nick Clegg that, in calling for a second referendum, he was trying to overturn a democratic decision and that the Remain side had made unsubstantiated claims about the impact of Brexit.

October 9: James Naughtie, interviewing Nicola Sturgeon of SNP, suggested that her policy was 'close' to that of Nick Clegg.

October 11: in a business news update about the claimed negative impact on agriculture of Brexit, Dominic O'Connell noted that Andrea Leadsom had said that being free of the restrictions of Europe (the EU) could lead to 'great times' for British farms.

October 12: Nick Robinson suggested to Hilary Benn that 'no deal' would not be good for other EU countries.

October 13: Sarah Montague suggested to Jeffrey Sachs, the development academic, that some people no longer saw Brexit as 'Armageddon'

October 16: John Humphrys, interviewing Kenneth Clarke, suggested that 165 countries were not in the EU (implying that there was therefore plenty of scope to make new trade deals).

October 17: Dr Michael Fuchs, of the CDU in Germany, was asked by John Humphrys why no movement had been made by the EU in the Brexit negotiations.

October 18: Nick Robinson suggested to Bruno Bonnell, a French MP, that some were saying that France was 'posturing' in its position on Brexit, that French business did not want the imposition of tariffs and would end up backing down.

October 19: Norman Smith said that there were those who thought progress was being made in the Brexit talks, including on Northern Ireland. Mishal Husain, in an interview with Keir Starmer, suggested that Theresa May was making it clear that the government would walk away from negotiations if concessions were not made. Ms Husain asked if he would 'never play' the walk out card, then whether he would pay the EU budget until 2023, and pushed on what amount Labour would pay as the leaving bill, suggesting that it could be up to £60 billion. She then asked whether Labour would honour a deal made by David Davis. She pushed on whether he would not honour a deal he disliked. Justin Webb suggested to Derek Hatton, and EU immigrants' rights campaigner, that he was wanting terms that would give EU citizens in the UK more rights than their British counterparts.

October 20: Kevin Connelly said Theresa May had issued a 'powerful call' for EU leaders to allow Brexit talks to move ahead. He added that most of the leaders had left without saying anything, though Angela Merkel had acknowledged progress so far. Justin Webb, interviewing Leanne Wood of Plaid Cymru about her demand for £30m to replace money allegedly lost because of Brexit, suggested that the Welsh people had voted for Brexit and must now accept the consequences. Interviewing Peter Mandelson, Justin Webb challenged that 'no deal' would be disastrous when China traded with the EU without a deal. He also suggested that David Davis claimed it as important to prepare for 'no deal', then that it was not clear what Labour wanted as a deal, for example, whether it wanted to stay in the single market.

October 21: Roderick Abbott, former deputy director of the WTO, was interviewed by Nick Robinson, who suggested that some people thought the UK would benefit financially from the introduction of tariffs.

October 23: Justin Webb, interviewing London Mayor Sadiq Khan, suggested that Goldman Sachs chief Lloyd Blankfein was talking too soon about businesses relocating, that he might be bluffing, and if the length of the transition period was 'clarified' it would help matters.

October 25: Rob Young suggested on business news that Peter Ruis, head of Jigsaw, was playing politics by running a poster campaign about the benefits of immigration. He asked if it was putting any customers off and whether those who disagreed with his stance were welcome in Jigsaw stores.

Mishal Husain, interviewing Judith Bryans of Dairy UK about the impact of tariffs on the dairy industry, whether they would make imports to the UK more expensive, thus helping British farmers.

October 27: Interviewing John Bruton, of the Stonewater housing group, and Alexander Stubb, the president of the EIB, Sarah Montague suggested that reductions in EIB funding for housing in the UK were not to do with Brexit but the UK economy. She also suggested that the EIB's actions looked like punishment for Brexit.

November 3: Mishal Husain, interviewing Ben Broadbent, director governor of the Bank of England, suggested that the negative predictions about the impact of Brexit had been wrong.

The **negativities** about Brexit were:

October 9: Chris Mason (bulletins) concluded in an item about progression to trade talks, that 'few in Britain expected this to happen'. Norman Smith said at 6.39am that Theresa May was attempting to 'prove the doomsayers wrong' and hoping EU negotiators would think again. If not the UK was in for a 'long crawl' with pressure at home from Brexiteers to sack Philip Hammond. Mr Smith observed:

Because I suppose Mrs May's difficulty is the one that has faced successive Tory leaders going back 40 years, namely she faces a party which is profoundly split over Europe, and that divide, that sort of war in the Tory party which has devoured successive Tory leaders, now that is the possibility she must face up to as well, because as soon as she moves one person in cabinet, she destabilises that uneasy truce within the Tory party over Brexit.

In the 7am bulletin, Chris Mason mentioned Theresa May's 'calamitous' conference speech and repeated that few in Brussels expected progress.

At 7.50am, after an interview with Bernard Jenkin, Laura Kuenssberg observed that even the most optimistic Conservative did not think the party conference had gone well for Theresa May. Mr Jenkin was urging 'danger, danger' against compromising 'very much'. Up until now – and little noticed – Mrs May had kept Brexiteers onside. But to previous leaders they had been 'the most troublesome group'. At this point, the line was lost.

October 10: At 6.10am, Matthew Price suggested that the troubles in Catalonia reminded him of England during the Brexit referendum, 'the sort of divisiveness that characterised the debate here'. In business news, presenter Vivienne Nunis suggested that Polar Capital was buying the Millennium and Copthorne hotel group 'to take advantage of the weakness of sterling'. Steve Ridgeway of Visit Britain was asked if the group was Britain was making plans to safeguard tourism after Brexit. Ms Nunis added:

I mean, we're looking at a situation without free movement of people coming from the European Union, is that going to put people off visiting Britain?

Norman Smith (6.38am), noting that 'no deal' had become a serious Plan B for government, observed:

the danger is we simply get sucked into a long, protracted, messy negotiation and transitional period, at the end of which we end up paying considerable amounts of money for a sort of half-in half-out arrangement. And what they are now saying is that if there is no progress in the negotiations by December, Mrs May should call it a day, walk away and go down the 'no deal' route.

John Humphrys suggested that it was inconceivable that she would do this as a result of pressure from backbenchers. Norman Smith said events were reaching a 'tipping point' with growing nervousness in backbench ranks about Mrs May's approach, for example in accepting that the UK would still be bound by ECJ rulings in a transitional phase – against a 'red line'. Backbenchers were also worried about how long the transitional phase would last, and the final exit bill.

October 11: In business news, Dominic O'Connell commented that an article in The Times in which Chancellor Philip Hammond had refused to commit money to Brexit in advance of need was a 'broadside against Brexiteers'. He said:

... but it's clearly a broadside at Brexiteers talking about spending money to prepare for a hard Brexit, sterling has been quite wobbly on the back of this to and fro on Brexit in recent weeks, hasn't it, do you think we might see more of the same?

Norman Smith (6.32am) noted that Theresa May had probably refused to answer a question on how she would vote now in an EU referendum on the ground that an answer would probably offend either Brexiteers or Remainers. The trouble was that 'some of her opponents' had concluded she was lukewarm about Brexit. He added that The Times article by Mr Hammond would be seen by opponents as a 'further pushback' by him. In an interview with Guy Platten, chief executive of the UK Chamber of Shipping, Justin Webb explored the extent to which 'no deal' on Brexit 'worried' the industry. At 7.15am, Dominic O'Connell, in a business news interview with Phil Bicknell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, noted that a report suggested that farmers could be hit 'very hard' by Brexit, with incomes cut by a half. Norman Smith (8am bulletin) said that government sources had sought to play down the significance of Mr Hammond's latest intervention in the Brexit talks, and had exercised 'treasury caution'. Mr Smith suggested that some had branded him as 'too pessimistic'.

October 12: Kevin Connolly(bulletins) declared that there was no sign of 'gathering momentum' in the Brexit talks because the EU was demanding progress on the financial settlement before moving on. Norman Smith (6.33am) said there was a poisonous atmosphere towards Philip Hammond from Brexiteers. He said they were comparing him to Gordon Brown not buying hardware to protect troops from harm in Afghanistan. Mr Smith added that Theresa May was performing a 'very, very precarious balancing act' between the two camps in her party. Nick Robinson observed that the

programme had been hoping to discuss this with Liam Fox, but he had become 'suddenly unavailable'. Chris Morris, in a BBC 'reality check', said that theoretically flights to and from Europe could stop at Brexit if the UK was no longer part of the EU Open Skies agreement. Other aspects of the economy could grind to a halt as well. Of a new customs system, he said:

Well, there's going to have to be an entirely new customs system of one form or another, I think again it depends on how long we have to prepare for it and that is why we have the debate now, a lot of Brexiteers saying, 'Come on, spend some money', because we did have a white paper on Monday, one of the very few official documents where we've actually seen official planning for the possibility of a 'no deal' scenario and it talked of things like companies having to pre-notify the consignments they want to send abroad, it talked about things like checking of consignments being done as far as possible inland to avoid disruption at ports. The thing is, if that's going to happen you need to put in an infrastructure the . . .

He added that HMRC had estimated that 130,000 exporting companies would have to start dealing with customs for the first time. At 8.20am, Laura Kuenssberg confirmed there were 'fault lines' in the Cabinet over preparations for 'no deal'. An issue was how the UK could present a united front in talks with Brussels when every day there were disagreements. At 8.55am, Justin Webb commented that it was too easy to forget sometimes that negotiations about Brexit were meant to be taking place between the UK and the EU, not between different members of the Cabinet, 'let alone the Prime Minister and the Chancellor'.

October 13: In business news, Lucy Burton noted that a survey for the British Chamber of Commerce claimed that the UK economy grew at a 'sluggish rate' in the third quarter of 2017, with the services sector – usually the main driver of growth – remaining static (guests followed who agreed with that perspective). Kevin Connolly (6.37am) said that the UK would not get what it wanted in terms of trade talks, but might be offered 'a small carrot' relating how the EU might be prepared to talk. Nick Robinson stressed that the UK was not negotiating with one body but 27 heads of state. Mr Connolly added that the 27 'valued unity' in a way that was hard to understand from inside the world of Westminster politics. Economics editor Kamal Ahmed commented that many people were wondering whether the IMF's bleak prospects about Brexit were now coming true. Nick Robinson suggested to Kevin McMullen, of the European Space Research and Technology Centre in Noordwijk, that the UK might have to leave the European Space Agency post Brexit. Mr McMullen said not.

October 16: Ben Wright noted (bulletins) that Theresa May had denied her latest visit to Brussels was a 'panic dash' to 'unjam' the trade talks. He said that the EU would not proceed to the next round of talks until it agreed enough progress had been made, and that now looked impossible. Norman Smith (6.32am) said Downing Street had denied that the latest visit to Brussels had been a 'desperado dinner'. The hope was that this dinner with Jean-Claude Juncker would go better than the previous one and would not be 'bread rolls at 30 paces'. He commented that if no progress was made it would strengthen the hands of 'Tory Brexiteers'. He added:

Businesses are beginning to reach the sort of period when they have to decide whether they trigger contingency plans and at Westminster we are seeing signs of Mrs May's Tory opponents beginning to work with Labour and other parties to engineer potential defeats on Mrs May over key Brexit legislation.

October 17: Reporter Andy Verity (bulletins) said that researchers had concluded that leaving the EU would hike the cost of living in the UK by £500 per head. He added that when people currently bought goods from the EU's customs union, they benefitted from an absence of tariffs – if the UK exited without a trade deal, the report said food prices would rise by up to 45 per cent. At 6.10am Kevin Connolly suggested that Theresa May's latest visit to Brussels had led to a 'bit of a rebuke' being issued to her for trying to broaden the talks. She did not seem to have got round the impasse over money. Questioned further, Mr Connolly said that Mrs May had failed to advance the talks beyond the money stage. It was not yet at crisis level, however. Norman Smith (6.32am) said there seemed to be no cause for optimism. There was talk of acceleration, but no new offers with the sticking point money. Katya Adler (7.09am) also said there had been no clear progress, phase two would not now happen until December. The Commission had perhaps not responded because they had been painted as the devil. She added that the EU also wanted a deal on Ireland. At 8.10am, Laura Kuenssberg said that heavy diplomatic lifting had been done, but the UK had used a lot of political capital in trying to project that progress was being made.

October 19: Kevin Connolly (bulletins) said it had been clear for weeks that the EU leaders would not move from divorce to trade. He elaborated at 6.10am that Mrs May had been handed a 'consolation prize', the promise of trade talks starting in December. He added that issues remained over the ECJ, citizens' rights and the Irish border. Norman Smith (6.32am) said there was a ratcheting up of pressure from Leave Means Leave for Mrs May to deliver an ultimatum about 'no deal'. Justin Webb responded that 'some believed' that 'no deal' was equivalent to a suicide by shooting in the head. Mr Smith said that there were those who thought progress was being made in the talks, including on Northern Ireland. A difficulty was that if Mrs May offered more money there would be a 'ferocious backlash' from Brexiteers and the electorate. Mrs May had worked to keep everyone on board – that might now be 'under threat'. In a 'reality check' at 6.50am, Chris Morris said the UK's commitment to the EU's pension fund was likely to be €30 billion. After an interview with Sir Keir Starmer at 8.10am, John Pienaar said that no-one on the British side expected the deadlock to be broken, and speculated the longer was an impasse, the more likely was 'no deal'. Katya Adler said the EU wanted to know what financial liabilities (such as pensions) it would honour. She claimed there was 'no malice' on the EU side, but they would not move on because the UK has signed up to the need to settle the 'divorce' details before moving on to trade.

October 20: In business news, Lucy Burton suggested that it was disappointing that no progress seemed to have been achieved in the Brexit talks as the business community wanted more clarity. Her guest suggested that jobs were already draining from the City, and Ms Burton agreed, buttressing her point with a tweet from Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs that he would be spending more time in Europe as a result of Brexit. Adam Fleming (6.30am) said that EU leaders would confirm

that not enough progress had been made on divorce issues. He noted that the EU viewed the possibility of 'no deal' only as a negotiating ploy and that Angela Merkel had suggested that the next phase of talks might be even more difficult. He added that Mrs Merkel had said the UK media were viewing the talks as less constructive than they actually were. At 7.09am, Katya Adler opined that the EU leaders did want a deal, though they believed that the UK would lose out most 'geopolitically, economically, in terms of security' if they did not reach one. Guest presenter Christiane Amanpour noted that 'hardliners' in Mrs May's own party were pushing for no deal – did 'Europeans' think that might happen and 'that this might fall off a cliff?' Ms Adler said they wanted to reach a deal 'without toppling Mrs May'. Ross Hawkins (7.43am) filed a report which assessed what would happen if the UK adopted 'no deal'. The intro suggested the UK could end up paying £26 billion extra in customs costs. The package contained interviews with residents upset about the idea of inland lorry parks, two hauliers who warned of dire financial consequences, with one counter-voice (a logistics expert) who disagreed. At 8.10am, prefacing an interview with Peter Mandelson, Laura Kuenssberg noted the gap between those who wanted no deal and those who thought it was like jumping off a building and wanting to fly. What seemed like 'baby steps' had been taken towards a deal 'after Theresa May had asked to be helped'. She claimed the issue holding things back was that Mrs May would not offer more than €20 billion; she perhaps wanted to go further, but other in the party would not.

October 21: Damian Grammaticas (7.13am) said that there had been no progress in the talks but the EU wanted to say 'something positive' about the way forward.

October 23: Ben Wright (bulletins) reported that the CBI was demanding an urgent Brexit transition deal to safeguard jobs and investment. Alex Forsyth (6.10am) said that Theresa May would give an upbeat assessment of Brexit talks to the cabinet, even though 'it wasn't very much'. She added that the limited progress (agreeing that trade talks would eventually start) was not what had been hoped for. Theresa May was now facing pressures across Parliament 'because, of course, she does not have a majority'. Ms Forsyth added that the letter from the CBI 'carried clout', and was a stark warning about the consequences of not getting a deal. Adam Fleming read out (8.36am) a report in a German newspaper which alleged Theresa May was viewed by EU officials as 'nervous, disheartened and discouraged, a woman who hardly anyone trusted'. He said the UK had not reacted yet.

October 24: Ben Wright (6.10am) suggested that there had been a hardening of the Government's stance on the Brexit talks in Theresa May's statement to Parliament. Nick Robinson suggested that business leaders would be worried by this, especially the prospect of 'no deal'. Mr Wright agreed that what had emerged would alarm a lot of businesses.

October 25: Kamal Ahmed (bulletins) said that 'Brexit uncertainty' would kick in around the Chancellor's options if the rise in GDP was less than 0.3 per cent. In business news, Rob Young noted

that Jigsaw, the fashion business was running an ad campaign stating that it loved immigration. He framed questions which allowed a company spokesman to explain the campaign. At 7.20am, Kevin Connolly reported from Poland. He said that increasingly, Poles were returning home because the fall in the pound had cut their wages. A research scientist warned that fears about what would happen as a result of Brexit and was causing a 'brain drain' that the UK could regret. Mr Connolly said the mayor of Lodz wanted workers to return, and people who had been in the UK said he had heard stories of racism and did not feel welcome.

October 26: Eleanor Garnier said David Davis had suggested that Parliament might not get a vote on any deal until after the UK had left because talks would go to the wire, but Downing Street had 'clarified' that the UK would get a deal and Parliament would get a vote. Ms Garnier suggested that Mr Davis had made a 'mistake' because he had answered a hypothetical question, but some of this was because of the unpredictable nature of the Brexit process. She added that the concern was that it gave ammunition to the government's critics who said they needed to 'get a grip'. She said the episode had caused uncertainty and knocked at the very delicate balancing act Theresa May was 'trying to master'.

October 27: Ross Hawkins, reporting on European Investment Bank loans (bulletins), said that delays to loans for housing projects in the UK totalling £6 billion were being caused because of Brexit-related due diligence. It was said that delays were being also caused because the EIB was awaiting assurances from the British government, with the result that 30 per cent less homes could be built.

October 31: Kamal Ahmed (bulletins) said that the Bank of England was preparing for 'tens of thousands' (up to 75,000) of job losses, partly as a result of losses to competitor cities, if a trade deal was not secured. He conceded, however that as the UK had a trade surplus with the EU, if there was not trade deal, the EU would lose out most. Sarah Montague pointed out that even with the loss of 75,000 jobs, London would remain the biggest financial centre in Europe.

November 2: Chris Aldridge (bulletins) said that, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council, there had been a sharp decline – up to 90 per cent – in the number of nurses from the EU wanting to work in the UK. Laura Kuenssberg suggested that Theresa May had been weakened by the resignation of Sir Michael Fallon and she also referred to the fragile balance in the cabinet 'with ministers at odds over the approach to Brexit'.

It is obvious from the above that there was a significant imbalance towards negative points about Brexit. Further detailed analysis of the approach towards interviewing is contained in the Appendix section. Taken with the above, it underlines that in the main programme interviews, in business news, in the two reporter packages (from Dover and Poland), the editorial framework presented by Today overwhelmingly emanated from a mindset which projected Brexit as a major problem

2.10 CONCLUSION

Taken together, the evidence presented in the sections above – speaker numbers, word counts, bulletin content, correspondent and presenter comment, and the imbalance in the appearances and treatment of those supporting Brexit – adds up to that Today in this period did not deal even-handedly with the issues in the Brexit debate and failed to bring into consideration sufficient speakers who saw Brexit as an opportunity rather than a national disaster. This was a failure, in breach of its Charter, to bring to the Today audience sufficient breadth of opinion in the Brexit debate. The core imbalance was made significantly worse by that both correspondents and presenters also seemed on a mission to highlight disproportionately Brexit negativities. For their part, programme producers also made a determined effort to find anti-Brexit figures, rather than those who supported it. Further evidence for these latter points is contained in the appendices which analyse in more detail the full range of positive and negative points. It boils down to that for whatever reason, that despite its Charter requirement of impartiality on issues of public importance, on matters relating to Brexit and the EU, this has been abandoned.

PART THREE: FRAME ANALYSIS

3.1 Brexit as 'Divorce' – A Frame Analysis

Framing differs from bias in several important ways. First it is a more sophisticated concept. It goes beyond notions of *pro* or *con*, *favourable* or *unfavourable*, *negative* or *positive*. Framing adds the possibilities of additional, more complex emotional responses and adds a cognitive dimension (beliefs about objects as well as attitudes). Second, framing recognizes the ability of a text—or a media presentation—to define a situation, to define the issues, and to set the terms of the debate.⁶⁶

In media and communications studies, frame analysis is a technique which explores the processes by which a particular set of ideas are presented and privileged above others. It facilitates understanding of why a journalist has told a story in a particular way, and enables exploration of how alternative frames could have been used in its place. Frame analysts also consider how the use of a specific frame might impact on audience understanding or perception of an issue.⁶⁷ Professor Robert Entman defines 'framing' as a process involving 'selection' and 'salience', and explains salience as, 'making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences'. He theorises that media texts can make pieces of information more salient 'by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols.'⁶⁸ These can include the presence or absence of 'certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences.'⁶⁹ Cognitive science suggests that repetition can embed frames deep within the brain: 'What we call "common sense" is made up of unconscious, automatic, effortless inferences that follow from our unconscious frames', and the more a particular concept is activated, the stronger it gets.⁷⁰

Other academics have identified a tension between the media and politicians (who often endeavour to create their own rhetorical frames and thus persuade voters of a particular argument), and research has been undertaken into how far the news media adopt certain political frames or choose to contest them.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Tankard, J 'The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing'. In Reese, S. et al. 2010. Framing public life. New York: Routledge. P.96

⁶⁷ <https://www.unc.edu/~fbaum/teaching/articles/J-Communication-1993-Entman.pdf> p.52

⁶⁸ Ibid p.53

⁶⁹ Ibid. p52

⁷⁰ Lakoff, G. Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate, Chelsea Green Publishing 2014, p.xii

⁷¹ See, for example, comparisons of President and News Media themes and frames in the eight weeks after 9/11, in Jim A. Kuypers, et al, "George W. Bush, "The American Press, and the Initial Framing of the War on Terror after 9/11," *The George W. Bush Presidency: A Rhetorical Perspective*, Robert E. Denton, ed. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), p.105.

Numerous frames have been deployed in the recent debates on Britain's departure from the EU. They include 'hard and soft Brexit', 'cliff-edge', 'Brexit uncertainty'. Their hallmark is that they are evocative but disputed phrases constructed, either by politicians or the media more widely, as a form of shorthand to persuade audiences into a particular way of thinking. Similarly, in the pre-referendum period, rhetorical frame' were often used to stereotype one side of the debate. An example was the much-repeated references to UKIP as 'fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists'⁷², or the attempts by Remain campaigners to shift the language of the debate onto 'Europe' rather than 'European Union'. This was motivated by polling suggesting that 'European Union' was 'toxic' to voters.⁷³

A pivotal 'frame' deployed in the four-week News-watch survey was the deployment of the word 'divorce' to describe elements of the process of Brexit. It was used primarily in relation to the negotiations around the financial settlement between the UK and EU (the 'divorce bill') but also in broader 'divorce issues'. These included citizens' rights and the logistics of the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

The following analysis considers the use of the 'divorce' analogy in two parts. The first is its deployment by journalists, correspondents and guests as a 'rhetorical frame' or form of linguistic shorthand. How might the powerful cultural resonance of the word 'divorce' have influenced audience perception in a loaded way? Second, is the framing of the *issue itself* by Today. How, in a wider thematic sense, did the use of 'divorce' as a specific editorial choice give salience to some perspectives and omitted others? And did the characterisation of the debate in this way ultimately project the issue of the UK's alleged financial obligations to the European Union in extremely narrow and loaded terms?

3.2 The Linguistic Frame

The word 'divorce' as an metaphor for Brexit was used 47 times in the 24 monitored editions of Today, 31 times by journalists, presenters and newsreaders and 16 times by invited guests.

Of course, the use of 'divorce' in a Brexit context dates much further back than this survey period. Brexit was first so described immediately after the 2016 referendum as the media tried to

⁷² Originally coined by the-leader of the opposition David Cameron in April 2006, this description of UKIP was repeated by the BBC for many years. For example the phrase was picked up on eight occasions on BBC programmes in News-watch's 2014 European Election survey.

⁷³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11941330/BBC-accused-of-dishonesty-and-bias-over-EU-referendum-coverage.html>

explain the helter-skelter developments. It soon found its way, too, into official government documents, for example the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee.⁷⁴

But the frequent use of 'divorce' in the current survey was striking, and a sharp contrast to how the UK's membership of the EU had regularly been framed by BBC journalists and presenters in News-watch's pre-referendum surveys: that the UK's was of a member of a 'European club', often with references to 'subscription fees'.⁷⁵

On 1 May 2017 the Guardian reported on a 'frosty' Downing Street meeting, in which Jean Claude Juncker was said to have told Theresa May that the bloc 'was not a golf club that could be easily joined or left', and that the EU was 'like a family and Brexit should be treated as a divorce'.⁷⁶ The shift in the BBC's metaphor of choice, by accident or design, replicated Mr Juncker's perspective and placed it closer to the EU standpoint than the previously ubiquitous 'club' analogy.

The word 'divorce' is loaded with social and cultural connotations. But ONS figures suggest that 42% percent of marriages in the UK end in divorce⁷⁷, so a very significant proportion of the UK population have either experienced the process themselves or been touched by it in some way. Its denotive meaning – that is, closest to its dictionary definition – implies the dissolution of a 'marriage' between the UK and EU. But because it is such a loaded word, other possible signifiers or resonances might be triggered by its use as an analogy at a subliminal or instinctual level. There are undertones of one partner being guilty, or of having reneged on vows. For some the metaphor might conjure negative emotions from one's personal experiences – upset, infidelity, loneliness, loss, but for others it might more readily suggest freedom and release, or obligation and duty.⁷⁸ It is impossible to define precisely the meanings that might be invoked by its use, as they vary between individuals. But what is certain is that formulations including the word 'divorce' are likely to carry more emotional power than, for example, equating leaving the EU to cancelling a gym membership.

On four occasions out of the 47, Today suggested to the audience that the 'divorce' metaphor was contested, or at least that it was operating as either a reductive shorthand or a colloquialism,

⁷⁴ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmffaff/1077/1077.pdf>

⁷⁵ Examples are too numerous to list individually, but include: Kate Clarke, correspondent, Today 18 December 2004, "Maybe bringing Turkey into the European club would prove to the rest of the world that Muslims and Christians can co-exist."; Matthew Price, Today, 18 February 2016, talking about "the perceived cultural benefits of being in a club of 28 different nations"; Evan Davis, Newsnight, 16 May 2016, talking about a 'subscription' for EU membership; Nick Robinson, BBC1, 'The Big EU Reality Check', 20 June 2016, "Shall we stay in the world's largest economic club or break free from a continent that's stagnating and a bureaucracy that's holding us back?"

⁷⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/may/01/jean-claude-juncker-to-theresa-may-on-brexit-im-10-times-more-sceptical-than-i-was-before>

⁷⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/divorce>

⁷⁸ According to The Holmes And Rahe Stress Scale, Divorce registers as the second most stressful life event, second only to the death of a partner. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/SRRS.html>

by prefacing the usage with ‘so-called’. But mostly, it was used without qualification by presenters, newsreaders and interviewees. No journalist or invited guest over the four weeks overtly challenged the metaphor or suggested why this particular rhetorical frame might be inappropriate.

On 43 other occasions ‘divorce’ was used as part of a phrase, and bracketed with other descriptors. . Some were clearly negative, ‘ugly divorce’ for example, while others were more neutral or positive-sounding, ‘talks’, ‘settlement’, ‘agreement’.

Term	Frequency
Divorce bill	15
Divorce issues	11
Divorce [alone]	4
Divorce settlement	3
Divorce negotiation(s)	3
Divorce deal ⁷⁹	3
Divorce talks	2
Ugly Divorce	2
Divorce agreement	1
Costs of the Divorce	1
Divorce Proceedings	1
Divorce details	1
Total	47

As the table illustrates, ‘bill’ was the most frequent addition – used with ‘divorce’ on almost one third of all occasions. The denotive meaning of the word ‘bill’ is ‘payment for money owed’, but other connotations rest on cultural concepts of settling debt (with punishments typically reserved for those who fail to pay). As a two-word phrase, ‘Divorce bill’ thus carries with it the obvious suggestion the requirement to meet financial obligations to an ex-partner.⁸⁰

Disquiet from across the political spectrum has been expressed about the validity of ‘divorce’ metaphor. Theresa May, speaking in the Commons on 14 March 2017, said she preferred not to use the term ‘divorce’ with regard to the European Union, ‘because, often, when people get divorced, they do not have a good relationship afterwards.’⁸¹ Writing in the Guardian on 30 March 2017 Dutch author and news presenter Joris Luyendijk asserted, ‘a divorce is between two equal partners. But the UK is to the EU what Belgium, Austria or Portugal are to Germany: an entity eight times as small’, concluding that ‘This is not a game and what is being negotiated

⁷⁹ Includes an alternate formulation, ‘Deal on the divorce’

⁸⁰ Another, more neutral, formulation was also encountered during the survey: ‘Brexit bill’, but the phrase was hampered by its dual meaning: it was used three times in relation to a legislative bill passing through the Commons, and four times as a synonym for ‘financial settlement’.

⁸¹ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-14/debates/B5826F13-CE59-42DD-9DE4-ACDEA7E308DA/EuropeanCouncil>

is not a divorce. If anything, it is a self-inflicted downgrade.⁸² In November 2017, Lionel Shriver in *The Spectator* suggested that the ‘divorce bill’ was ‘more like a ransom’ and argued:

A ‘bill’ is not commonly subject to negotiation. It arrives after a customer has contracted for the purchase of goods or services, whose price ... has been established in advance. For the average upstanding Briton, a bill is not a starting point, subject to haggling. It is something you pay.⁸³

Even the BBC’s diplomatic correspondent James Landale suggested in July 2017 that the ‘divorce’ analogy was being ‘stretched to unsustainable lengths, with discussion about who gets to divide the music collection and keep the children and so on.’⁸⁴

Despite these strong reservations, the News-watch analysis in this survey shows that framing Britain’s exit from the EU as a ‘divorce’ was the dominant trope. The more neutral, less emotional, formulation ‘financial settlement’ was featured seven times, though on three of these occasions the phrase was also linked with ‘divorce’.

In psychology, the ‘cognitive miser’ theory posits that human beings often rely on mental shortcuts to accelerate reasoning, which in turn, it is argued, makes us very susceptible to how information is framed.⁸⁵ Research has indicated that framing can have a greater impact on reasoning than existing political views. Experiments by Thibodeau and Boroditsky in the United States into metaphors used in news reports found that ‘even the subtlest instantiation of a metaphor (via a single word) can have a powerful influence’. They concluded:

Interestingly, the influence of the metaphorical framing is covert: people do not recognize metaphors as an influential aspect in their decisions. Finally, the influence of metaphor we find is strong: different metaphorical frames created differences in opinion as big or bigger than those between Democrats and Republicans.⁸⁶

Without undertaking similar research, it is difficult to discern the precise effect the widespread use of ‘divorce’ as a linguistic frame might have had on audiences. The suggestion here, however, based on the academic theory outlined above, is that it was likely to have raised strongly emotive connotations for audiences. The next section examines attitudes towards Brexit in polling which illustrate that public attitudes were softening towards the idea of settling the ‘divorce bill’. The question posed is whether this change could have been triggered by the use of the divorce metaphor by the BBC and the media more widely.

⁸² <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/30/brexit-divorce-terms-marriage>

⁸³ <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/11/this-eu-divorce-bill-is-more-like-a-ransom/>

⁸⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-40726215>

⁸⁵ Fiske, S. and Taylor, S. (1998). *Social cognition*. New York [u.a.]: McGraw-Hill.

⁸⁶ Thibodeau, P. and Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning. *PLoS ONE*, 6(2), p.e16782.

The Journalistic Frame

Much of the power of framing comes from its ability to define the terms of a debate without the audience realizing it is taking place. Media framing can be linked to the magician's sleight of hand-attention is directed to one point so that people do not notice the manipulation that is going on at another point.⁸⁷

In November 2016 it was reported that the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier on behalf of the EU27, would be adopting a 'three-tier' approach to the Brexit negotiations. The third tier (or stage) – the future trading relationship between the EU – would only start once the 'pending issues' (including UK payments to the EU, border issues and the rights of citizens living in the UK) had been agreed. The UK's Brexit Secretary David Davis had previously stated that he wanted to negotiate all three aspects in parallel.⁸⁸

In January 2017, in a speech at Lancaster House, Theresa May's initial position was that 'no deal is better than a bad deal' – the implication being that the UK could walk away from the negotiations, revert to WTO rules and effectively pay nothing.⁸⁹ This was bolstered by a House of Lords Financial Affairs Sub-Committee report, published in March 2017, three weeks before the triggering of Article 50, which noted "under international law the UK will not be legally obliged to contribute to the EU budget if an agreement is not reached at the end of Article 50 negotiations".⁹⁰ The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, agreed with MP Philip Hollobone in the House of Commons that the EU could 'go whistle' in terms of any 'extortionate payment'⁹¹

But with the negotiations stalled, on 22 September 2017, Theresa May flew to Italy to deliver a speech intended to break the impasse. Ahead of her Florence Speech, Sky News Europe Correspondent Mark Stone gave the following analysis:

She has an almost impossible line to tread. She must be heard to say that "no bill will be paid" but at the same time say "we'll meet our legal financial commitments" (which will be interpreted by many as "we'll pay a bill"). She needs to say "we need a transition period (which we accept we'll need to pay for)" but balance that with anger from hardline Brexiters who'll say the UK is still funnelling money into the EU after Brexit Day.

He said that the speech as 'about breaking the deadlock.' It included the following sequence:

⁸⁷ Tankard, J 'The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing'. In Reese, S. et al. 2010. Framing public life. New York: Routledge. P.97

⁸⁸ <https://news.sky.com/story/eu-adopting-three-tier-approach-to-brex-it-sources-tell-sky-news-10670578>

⁸⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/17/prime-minister-vows-to-put-final-brex-it-deal-before-parliament>

⁹⁰ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/04/britain-will-not-have-pay-penny-leave-european-union-say-peers/>

⁹¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-40571123>

Still I do not want our partners to fear that they will need to pay more or receive less over the remainder of the current budget plan as a result of our decision to leave. The UK will honour commitments we have made during the period of our membership.

The Daily Telegraph claimed that in framing these words Theresa May ‘took dictation’ from the European Commission, and that it was ‘pre-agreed wording’, shared with EU officials even before the Prime Minister had shown her Cabinet the draft.⁹² The London Evening Standard concluded:

So Britain has blinked . . . Today, in Florence, the Prime Minister’s whole speech is an admission that the UK has no option but to deal.⁹³

An uneasy consensus was thus established among the main Westminster parties that the payment of a ‘divorce bill’ was a necessary obligation. During the survey period, although some firm supporters of Brexit contested the precise amounts involved⁹⁴, any dispute of the central conceit, the linguistic construct of the ‘divorce bill’ was entirely absent. It was mentioned only once directly, in the opening to a Yesterday in Parliament report, by correspondent Susan Hulme:

Deal or no deal, divorce bill or walk away without paying – the arguments about how the UK leaves the EU swirled round and round. It can all sound very confusing.

But the subsequent package established that even Leave Campaign figurehead Boris Johnson had ‘changed his tune’. The sequence began with Labour’s Emily Thornberry reading two quotes from Mr Johnson, the first his statement that the EU could ‘go whistle’ if they demanded ‘a single penny’, the second, ‘We are law-abiding bill-paying people, we will meet our obligations as we understand them.’ Ms Thornberry accused Mr Johnson of ‘flip-flopping’ on the issue, and although he, in return, goaded the Labour benches as to whether they would ‘cough up €100 billion’, the inference was clearly that the Foreign Secretary had shifted his position and now believed that some financial settlement was inevitable. Even Susan Hulme’s initial proposition tacitly reinforced the dominant linguistic frame that Britain had an outstanding debt to settle. (It is, of course, impossible for one to ‘walk away without paying’ if nothing is owed in the first place.)

⁹² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/26/theresa-may-took-dictation-brussels-keynote-eu-speech-agreed/>

⁹³ <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/evening-standard-comment-turns-out-that-eu-deal-is-better-than-no-deal-a3641181.html>

⁹⁴ On Monday 9 October, Conservative MP Bernard Jenkin said, ‘And the idea that we should pay billions and billions and billions of pounds, we’ve paid 390 billion net into the European Union since we joined and they want more.’

Politically, UKIP were the only mainstream party who were wholly opposed to paying a financial settlement. The party's Brexit spokesman Gerard Batten issued the following statement on 20 October 2017, which also criticised the framing of the payment as a 'divorce bill.'

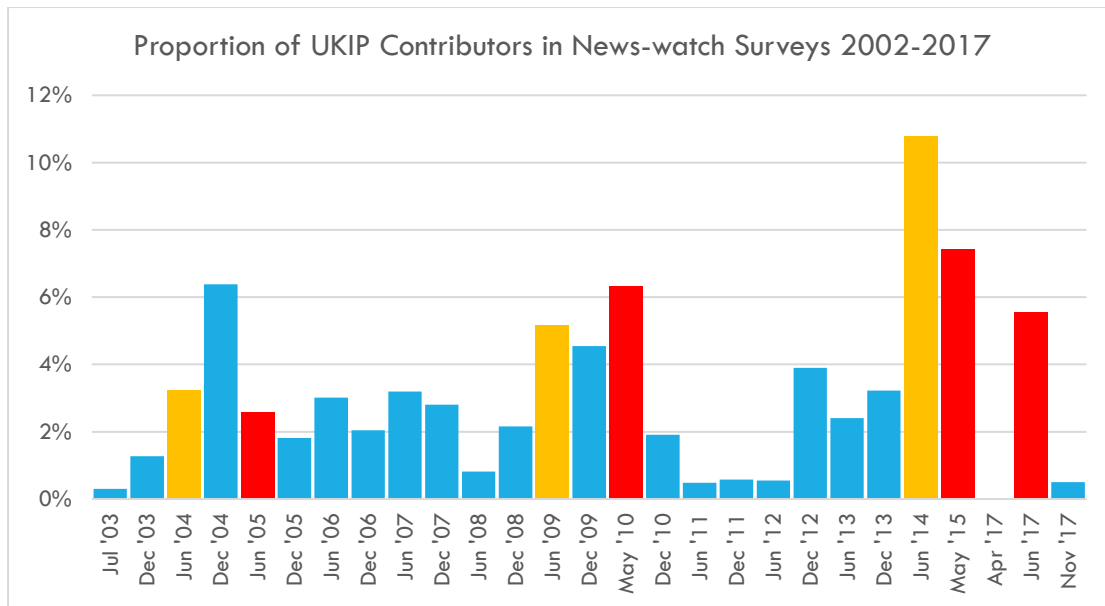
Fifteen months after the Referendum two things are glaringly obvious: Mrs May is completely unable or unwilling to take control of the situation, and the EU is determined to hold Britain to ransom. How many times does it need to be said? The UK is not married to the EU, and therefore there is no 'divorce bill'. Even so, when couples divorce there is usually a dividing of assets, not a one-sided bill. Mrs May should end this fiasco by telling the EU not only are we leaving but that we don't owe them a penny. They owe us a lot, given that we have always been one of the top net contributors to the budget, and we own a big share of the EU's assets. But never mind, working out how much we are owed is not worth the time and effort and we are moving out and they can keep the assets. Mrs May and the UK Government is actually in a very strong position to tell the EU how our exit is going to work but she persists in grovelling to the EU from a supine position of self-imposed weakness.

But his comments went unreported by Today. Indeed, across the whole four weeks, UKIP were only given space for a brief pre-recorded soundbite, as an adjunct to a bulletin item on 20 October, in which UKIP member Suzanne Evans spoke about the EU wanting 'more and more'. But she wasn't given the space to make any argument against the 'divorce bill' or suggest that 'paying nothing' was a viable option:

They are worried about losing our contributions, and that's why they want to get more and more out of us. My concern is that whatever deal we reach, they are not going to agree, it's going to be vetoed by the European Parliament and the Commissioners are not going to agree. And this is why I think it's absolutely imperative that we start preparing for and be seen to be preparing for a 'no deal' situation.

The chart shows that the Winter 2017 survey saw the fourth lowest proportion of UKIP contributors ever recorded by News-watch on the Today programme. The single appearance by Suzanne Evans meant that UKIP accounted for just 0.5% of guests speaking on EU themes. Only the thirteen-week Summer 2011 survey (0.49%), the 47-week survey in 2002-3 (0.3%) and Article 50 survey in Spring 2017 (0%) saw lower proportions of UKIP guests.⁹⁵ By contrast, in the period of the last European Election in Summer 2014, UKIP had accounted for 10.8% of all guests speaking on EU matters.

⁹⁵ In the Summer 2011 survey there was a single UKIP speaker and 205 guests; in the 47-week survey in 2002-3 there were two UKIP speakers from 661 guests; in the one-week Article 50 survey, none of the 124 contributors were from UKIP.



As the data reveals, UKIP tended to receive increased representation in surveys covering UK general elections (indicated by the coloured bars in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017) and European Parliament elections (2005, 2009, 2014), as these survey encompassed periods where formal guidelines were in place⁹⁶, including a commitment to ‘fairness to candidates’.⁹⁷

Since the 2016 referendum, UKIP have been painted widely as something of a spent force, a single-issue party who had achieved their *raison d’être* and descended into internecine squabbling following the departure of leader Nigel Farage and, subsequently, Diane James, Paul Nuttall and Steve Crowther.⁹⁸ As widely predicted, UKIP lost its two Westminster seats in the 2017 general election. Commentators suggested this was a return to ‘two-party politics’ in the context also that the Conservative and Labour parties achieved a combined vote-share of over 80% - a proportion not seen since the 1980s.⁹⁹

But was UKIP’s poor showing at the most recent general election enough for its representatives to be almost entirely excluded from the BBC’s EU-related coverage, as happened during the survey period? UKIP polled the highest share of the vote in the 2015 European Election, securing 24 MEPs, three peers still represent the party in the House of Lords, and there are almost 250 UKIP local councillors. But more importantly, the UKIP position on the ‘divorce bill’, appeared to align closely with the majority view of the general public, who believed that nothing should be

⁹⁶ See, for example: <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/pdfs/2017generalelectionguidelines.pdf>

⁹⁷ It is important to appreciate that News-watch focuses specifically on EU coverage, and the proportions presented here do not reflect politicians speaking on non-EU election themes. Given that UKIP contributors usually speak about the EU in some capacity, it is important not to misread the data here. For example, in the 2017 general election, UKIP guests represented 5.6% of politicians speaking on EU matters, but not 5.6% of total political appearances.

⁹⁸ For example, on 25 May 2017, Today ran a report from Rotherham, where the correspondent spoke to disenchanted UKIP activists and Jane Green from the British Election Study spoke about UKIP being ‘in decline.’

⁹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/01/left-right-two-party-politics-referendum-labour-conservatives>

paid for the 'divorce'. . As such, in this survey period, they were the only mainstream party with an official policy aligned with the public mood.

In April and August 2017, Guardian/ICM conducted and published opinion polls¹⁰⁰ in which respondents were asked if they felt paying an 'exit fee' to the EU 'as the UK's contribution to the spending commitments made by the EU when the UK was a member', and if they believed various amounts would be acceptable or unacceptable. The April poll used three amounts, £3 billion, £10 billion and £20 billion. The August poll dropped lowest (£3 billion) option and added two higher amounts (£30 billion and £40 billion), the alleged justification being that they were using more 'realistic figures' in the second poll.¹⁰¹ The results are tabulated below:

	April 2017			August 2017		
	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Don't Know	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Don't Know
£3 billion	33%	46%	21%	<i>Option not offered</i>		
£10 billion	15%	64%	21%	41%	40%	19%
£20 billion	10%	70%	20%	18%	65%	17%
£30 billion	<i>Option not offered</i>			11%	72%	17%
£40 billion	<i>Option not offered</i>			9%	75%	16%

It is impossible to draw direct comparisons between the two opinion polls or identify trends with any degree of certainty, because of the change in options being offered between the two exercises. It is also striking that 'nothing' was not an option.¹⁰² But both polls illustrate the strength of public opposition. In April 2017, 46% of those asked believed that an 'exit bill' of £3 billion was unacceptable (too much). Four months later, in the next poll, there appeared to be some softening in this. There was an almost even split on the lowest option (£10 billion) with 41% believing it to be acceptable and 40% believing it to be unacceptable. Two thirds of respondents believed £20 billion to be unacceptable, and three quarters that £40 billion to be too much. Those who opposed the higher figures were drawn from both Leave and Remain voters in the referendum.

Given the levels of public opposition to the sums being mooted, it might have been expected that, in the absence of figures from UKIP, Today would find as a key component of their Brexit coverage 'ordinary people' to voice their opinion on the 'divorce bill'. But only one speaker from the cohort of 199 guests was coded as 'general public' - Piotr Kasiński, a former employee at

¹⁰⁰ April 2017: https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017_guardian_apr1_poll.pdf August 2017: https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017_guardian_aug17.pdf

¹⁰¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2017/aug/29/executive-pay-tuc-boss-says-mays-plans-to-curb-excessive-executive-pay-are-feeble-politics-live?page=with:block-59a56620e4b0cee637d6e708#block-59a56620e4b0cee637d6e708>

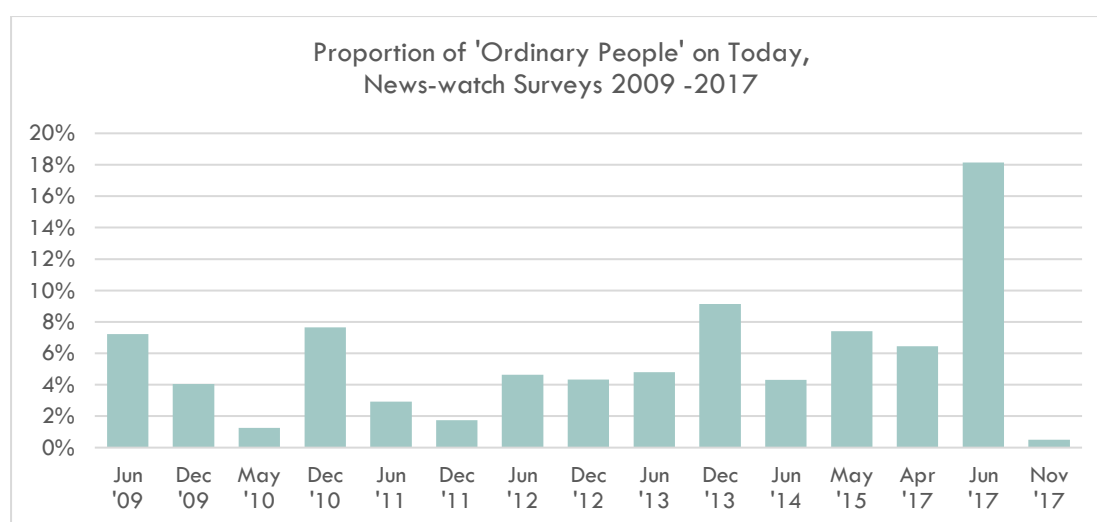
¹⁰² Rival polling organisation YouGov delivered a critique of the two polls, suggesting 'The size of the Brexit bill Britons are willing to pay depends more on the options you give them than the actual amount,' and speculated that the £10 billion option offered in the August poll 'was seen as more palatable because it was the smallest amount on offer.'

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/09/14/why-amount-brexit-divorce-bill-doesnt-matter-much/>

the Royal Opera House who had returned to his native Poland, saying that he had ‘heard stories about racism’ and no longer felt welcome in the UK.¹⁰³ As he was no longer, strictly, a member of the British public, even this classification remains arguable.¹⁰⁴

What is certain is that no one invited onto Today in the survey interval made a clear argument to oppose the framing of Brexit as a ‘divorce’, or to put forward alternate frames (for example that the ‘divorce bill’ could be seen as a ‘demand’, ‘ransom’ or ‘punishment’ by the EU), or to suggest that the UK ought not pay the financial settlement.

The difference between the proportions of ‘ordinary people’ in this survey and previous News-watch investigations is stark. News-watch investigated this using its previous surveys. A definition was set to include all vox pop contributors, voters, and members of the public who gave their views in a non-professional capacity.¹⁰⁵ The table shows the proportions of ‘ordinary people’ contributing to Today in the last 15 News-watch surveys between June 2009 and November 2017.¹⁰⁶



As the chart shows, there was a huge decline between the 2017 general election in May-June, where 49 speakers of the 277 guests on Today had been members of the public (18.1%) and

¹⁰³ Today, 25 October 2017, 7.20am

¹⁰⁴ A further examination of the database identified two other speakers who might conceivably be described as ‘ordinary people’, Caroline Mills and Clive Mills, who contributed to an item on 20 October 2017 at 7.43am. They were coded as ‘campaigners’, they were included on the programme to state their opposition to a proposed Lorry park in Stanford, Kent, and although airing personal views were doing so as part of a local campaign group.

¹⁰⁵ It was noted that there were a number of guests in surveys historically, named and unnamed, who spoke in terms of their professional experience, for example, fishermen and farmers. These were not included in the totals, given that they had clearly been chosen for a particular expertise. ‘Ordinary people’ from EU member states were, however, included where applicable, given that the single ‘general public’ speaker recorded in the current survey was actually a Polish citizen, but the vast majority of guests appeared to be members of the British public.

¹⁰⁶ As with some of the previous comparisons, the 26 week survey of Today’s Business News undertaken between June and December 2016 was ignored for the purpose of this exercise, given that, unlike the other projects, the survey did not assess Today in its entirety.

the current survey, where just a single speaker of the 199 (0.5%) could be categorised in this way.

Four days into the current survey, a serialisation of a book by Today presenter Nick Robinson appeared in the Daily Telegraph. He adopted his own marital metaphor: ‘Impartiality,’ he said, ‘is like marital bliss – something to believe in and strive for but which you must accept you will almost certainly never quite achieve.’ Paradoxically, given the editorial choices made on his own programme during the coming weeks, it contained the following passage:

The biggest cause of viewers feeling any broadcaster is biased is not hearing views from people like themselves. Quite naturally, they assume that the reason they don’t is that their views are deemed unacceptable. This is one reason why since then programmes have placed a much greater emphasis on inviting and airing direct comment from their audiences Impartiality means not just reporting without prejudice and debating without limits, but making sure that viewers can see and hear people like them.

But Today’s audience were not exposed to the views of ‘people like them’ on any EU matter. And on the particular issue of the ‘divorce bill’ nor were they offered political surrogates, either UKIP, or those on the left questioning the legitimacy of paying such huge sums to the EU in a time of austerity.

On 28 November 2017, the BBC reported that Theresa May had agreed a financial settlement of approximately £50 billion, although the Prime Minister later accused the Corporation of ‘misleading’ the public and ‘speculation’.¹⁰⁷ A new Guardian/ICM poll undertaken a few days prior to this announcement asked respondents the same question¹⁰⁸ as it had in April and August, but this time kept the options the same as the August poll, allowing for a direct comparison¹⁰⁹:

	November 2017			
	Acceptable	Change	Unacceptable	Change
£10 billion	41%	+9%	32%	-8%
£20 billion	18%	+10%	54%	-11%
£30 billion	11%	+3%	67%	-5%
£40 billion	9%	+2%	71%	-4%

Although the poll indicated continued strong opposition to the higher amounts, it also provided an apparent sign that public opinion was softening towards the concept of at least paying

¹⁰⁷ <http://uk.businessinsider.com/theresa-may-bbc-misleading-50-billion-brexit-divorce-bill-2017-11>

¹⁰⁸ The question was as follows: “As you may know the negotiation process necessary for the UK to leave the European Union is underway. There have been suggestions that the Prime Minister, Theresa May, and her negotiating team will have to make some compromises during Brexit negotiations. Do you think it would be acceptable or unacceptable for the UK to compromise in the following ways.” Followed by the following responses “Paying an ‘exit fee’ of up to [£10bn, £20bn, £30bn, £40bn] as a one off or in instalments, as the UK’s contribution to spending commitments made by the EU when the UK was a member?”

¹⁰⁹ https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Voting-27thNov17_pv-only-BPC.pdf

something to the EU. A poll by Survation for the Mail on Sunday¹¹⁰, with fieldwork undertaken between 31 November and 1 December supported the Guardian/ICM findings. Survation found that 11% supported the £50 billion figure being reported in the media (slightly higher than the 9% supporting the highest figure in the Guardian/ICM poll). It also found that 31% of those surveyed still believed the UK should pay the EU nothing¹¹¹ (close to the 32% choosing the Guardian/ICM polls lowest figure).

It is impossible, of course, to determine how influential Today's framing of the 'divorce bill' may have been, either for its own audience or in its role as 'agenda-setter' for other BBC programmes and the wider media. According to the academic literature, to shift public opinion relies on the 'reframing' of an issue – a lengthy process:

Reframing is not easy or simple. It is not a matter of finding some magic words. Frames are ideas, not slogans. Reframing is more of a matter of accessing what we and like-minded others already believe unconsciously, making it conscious, and repeating it till it enters normal public discourse. It doesn't happen overnight. It is an ongoing process. It requires repetition and focus and dedication.¹¹²

The polling data shows that while opposition to the 'divorce bill' remains high, attitudes did appear to be gradually shifting, and this may in some part be attributed to how the issue was framed.

The BBC, when challenged over imbalances between the two sides of the EU debate, has asserted repeatedly that it has no obligation to numerical balance, citing that it is committed only to 'due impartiality.' But its Editorial Values contain a clear responsibility, 'to reflect a breadth and diversity of opinion across our output as a whole, over an appropriate period, so that no significant strand of thought is knowingly unreflected or under-represented.'¹¹³ This case study demonstrates – on this major matter of public policy, with the potential to affect the lives of every UK citizen, and at a crucial point in the narrative – Today not only under-represented a significant strand of thought, but negated it entirely. Through editorial choices and the selection and omission of particular guests, along with the repetition of a rhetorical frame which reinforced a particular outcome, Today's coverage suggested a consensus existed both politically and within the country at large, when this clearly wasn't the case.

¹¹⁰ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5139855/Backlash-voters-say-50bn-Brexit-bill-high.html>

¹¹¹ The survey showed that there was significant opposition among both Leave and Remain voters. 37% of Leave voters believed the UK should pay nothing, and 25% of Remain voters.

¹¹² Lakoff, G. Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate, Chelsea Green Publishing 2014, p.xiii

¹¹³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/bbc-editorial-values/editorial-values>

APPENDIX I

Negative presenter approach to Brexit:

This sequence extracts from the output the occasions when presenters were clearly negative in their approach to Brexit. The range of cannot be characterised other than in both individual instances and cumulatively, on a daily basis, there were fundamental assumptions that Brexit was extremely difficult. Some of this has already been touched upon in the previous section, but here it is laid out how the negativity unfolded in the approach to interviews.

October 9: Andrew Parmley, the Lord Mayor of London – who said he was hopeful that London would retain its number one status as a financial centre – was asked in business news by Vivienne Nunis if he was in Dublin to make post-Brexit changes ‘less painful’ and how worried he was about an RBS prediction about an exodus of jobs. In an interview with Bernard Jenkin was asked by Sarah Montague what further concessions would need to be made to the EU, whether Theresa May had sufficient authority to impose her will on the course of talks, whether she was under pressure to sack Philip Hammond, and whether his (Mr Jenkins’) stance was that Mrs May could not compromise much in the Brexit talks. In business news, Helen Dickinson of the British Retail Consortium, was not challenged by presenter Vivienne Nunis in her claims that tens of thousands of EU workers in the UK were concerned about their future. Nick Clegg was challenged mildly by John Humphrys about whether a second referendum was necessary, but he had plenty of space to advance his claim that it was and to plug his book on that theme. James Naughtie, though suggesting the public were fed up of referendums, asked Nicola Sturgeon if she wanted a second referendum on Brexit. She had plenty of space to put the SNP position of wanting to stay in the single market.

October 10: Vivienne Nunis, exploring, asked if hotels business Millennium and Copthorne had positive results because it was ‘taking advantage of the weakness of sterling since the Brexit vote’. On the same theme, she asked Steve Ridgeway of Visit Britain if an eight per cent rise in visitor numbers to the UK was ‘just tourists being wooed by the weaker pound’. A further question about ‘safeguarding tourism after Brexit’ was whether the ending of free movement from the EU would put people of visiting the UK. This elicited the response that there was ‘sensitivity’ about that.

October 11: In business news, Dominic O’Connell suggested to Richard Dunbar of Aberdeen Standard Investments that Philip Hammond’s letter to The Times that morning was ‘clearly a broadside against Brexiteers’ and observed that sterling had been quite wobbly on the back of Brexit to and fro in recent weeks, plus the possibility of a ‘hard’ Brexit. Lord Owen was interviewed by John Humphrys. Lord Owen suggested that the centre ground of politics had shifted and was now with Brexit. Mr Humphrys suggested it (Brexit) was a ‘single issue’. Lord Owen agreed but contended it was nonetheless dominant, and then warned that the government must get its act together and become inclusive in terms of who was involved in the Brexit process. Guy Platten, of the British Chamber of Shipping, was asked by Justin Webb ‘if the industry worried’ about the impact of ‘no deal’ on shipping, and then whether two years would be sufficient time for a transition period. Mr Platten accordingly warned of huge delays and was unsure whether the transition period would be enough. A business news interview by Dominic O’Connell of Phil Bicknell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, was introduced in terms of the negative impact of Brexit, and claims that farm incomes could fall by half. Mr Bicknell warned that farmers could be hit very hard by Brexit, and that unless there was a free trade agreement, their incomes could fall by 50 per cent. An interview with Lord Bilimoria opened with a question whether ‘no deal’ would be disastrous, and gave him plenty of space to flesh this out.

October 12: Claire Perry, minister for climate change, was asked by Justin Webb if comment from within her party that Philip Hammond was acting like a jihadi and a traitor was 'unhelpful'. He asked her also if she would still vote Remain. Nick Robinson's line of questioning in an interview with Marcus Dolman, of the British Exporters' Association, and an executive of the strongly pro-Remain company Rolls-Royce, was whether aircraft would stop flying if there was 'no deal' and also whether big customs queues would form at Dover. Mr Dolman denied this was likely. The interview was preceded by a 'reality check' by Chris Morris. He said that if the Open Skies Agreement with the EU came to an end in a 'cliff edge' departure from the EU, planes might stop flying, and other aspects of the economy might grind to a halt as well. He also suggested that 'no deal' could lead to problems with customs, there would have to be a 'completely new system' of border checks. More than 130,000 companies who did not do so at the moment were going to have to start dealing with customs. Nick Robinson also asked Kwasi Kwarteng, PPS to Philip Hammond, how long Theresa May could 'endure' being undermined by the Jeremiah next door. In the parallel exchange with Hilary Benn, Nick Robinson did not challenge his assertion that with 'no deal' there could be a return to (damaging) tariffs, problems in Northern Ireland and the loss of one million or more jobs. At 8.55am, Justin Webb, interviewing a journalist about Brexit talks problems observed:

It's all too easy to forget sometimes that negotiations about Brexit are meant to be taking place between the UK and the EU, not between different members of the Cabinet, let alone the Prime Minister and the Chancellor.

October 13: Lucy Burton observed in business news that the British Chambers of Commerce had observed that the UK economy had grown at a sluggish rate in the third quarter of 2017, with the services sector static when it was usually the engine of growth. This was the stepping board to interviews with two business figures who described 'startlingly less demand' from 'Europe' because of uncertainty. Andrew Varga warned he would have to double his export team to deal with 'lorry stacks' at borders. An interview with Jeffrey Sachs, the development economist was framed mainly to allow him to voice fears about London draining jobs to other European centres, with one minor challenge from Sarah Montague that some no longer saw Brexit as 'Armageddon'. An interview sequence with Alex Barker, the Financial Times's Brussels Bureau chief, and Matthew Holehouse, Brexit correspondent for the MLex News, was framed to ignore negativities in the Brexit negotiations. It was contended that there was panic in London over the lack of progress in the talks. Mr Holehouse said the EU 27 was in 'shock and alarm' because they no longer saw the UK as a stable or rational country.

October 14: Justin Webb asked Lord Lamont if Theresa May should get rid of Philip Hammond and Boris Johnson together. Sir Martin Donnelly, former permanent secretary in the Overseas Trade Department, was asked why he wanted the UK to have the benefits of the single market. The questioning from Mishal Husain assisted him in his contention that such advantages could be found nowhere else, and that 'no deal' would have very serious negative consequences. John Mills responded to claims by Sir Martin that post-Brexit deal would be very difficult to achieve. Mishal Husain pushed that Sir Martin had said it was very hard to arrive at a replacement for the EU single market, and that alternative trade deals did not include services. (Ms Husain, having given scope for Sir Martin to advance his Brexit-negative views, thus kept the interview in Sir Martin's domain). In the later interview with John Mills about Sir Martin's remarks, Mishal Husain asserted that Sir Martin was not from the Remain campaign had was making it clear on the basis of his expertise how difficult it was to negotiate a replacement to the single market arrangements.

October 16: Kenneth Clarke was asked whether he thought no deal with the EU was better than a bad deal and whether he wanted a second referendum He argued unchallenged that the vast majority of those in Parliament wanted to retain EU regulations and the framework of membership, and that only a few 'hard right' eurosceptics wanted no deal. John Humphrys, interviewing John Redwood, suggested that if – as he contended – reaching a trade deal was not vital, then there was no point in talking to the EU or Mrs May meeting Jean-Claude Juncker. He suggested Mr Redwood's attitude was 'just let's leave, and to hell with it'. Mr Humphrys pointed out that Kenneth

Clarke – despite what Mr Redwood believed – thought that the WTO arrangements were not a land of milk and honey. He also suggested that Labour was playing a ‘canny game’ and allowing the Conservatives to make all the running. Sarah Montague, interviewed the recently retired government national security adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant, and suggested that ‘no deal’ would be very bad for national security-sharing.

October 17: In business news update, Dominic O’Connell reacting to that inflation had hit three percent as a result of the Brexit vote, asked if the story was with wages, in that they had not kept up with inflation. In a later slot, Mr O’Connell asked the chief executive of Eurostar suggested that Brexit loomed large over everything and asked if the ending of free movement would lead to numbers of passengers falling away. John Humphrys interviewed German CDU politician Dr Michael Fuchs, and pushed him on why the EU would not move forward in the Brexit talks. He replied that the UK could not cherry-pick on terms and then stated that he was not happy that Britain was leaving the EU, and warned that opting for a ‘hard’ Brexit would be very tough. Mr Humphrys asked if reaching a deal was contingent on sacking Boris Johnson. Mr Fuchs said not.

October 18: in an interview with French MP Bruno Bonnell, Nick Robinson asked if his position was that the UK should ‘pay up’, and finally whether he was hoping that the UK should change its mind about Brexit.

October 19: Mishal Husain suggested to Owen Paterson that ‘many people’ believed there would be ‘severe economic consequences’ if the UK left the EU without a deal. She added that the Resolution Foundation believed that dairy products would increase in price by eight per cent, meat by six percent and cars by five. She then asked if moving to WTO arrangements would lead to lorry parks being built in Kent, and a slowdown in customs because it no longer would be ‘frictionless’. In an interview with Keir Starmer, Ms Husain’s opening question was what he thought of the ‘no deal’. He strongly attacked that approach. Ms Husain suggested that ‘no deal’ was an alternative, then asked if Mr Starmer would ever walk out of talks and suggested in the light of his answer that he would accept a deal at any cost. Mr Starmer replied that a deal was needed and could be achieved. Ms Husain asked how much he would pay to the EU. Mr Starmer replied that the UK should honour its obligations. Ms Husain asked if Labour would honour a deal reached by David Davis. Mr Starmer said the party would honour a deal that included transitional arrangements equivalent to being in the EU. Justin Webb asked Yanis Veroufakis what his advice was for Mrs May. He replied that the UK must accept a Norway-style deal. Other questions facilitated similarly negative responses.

October 20: In business news, Lucy Burton said it was disappointing news that no progress was being made in the Brexit talks and put that point to her guest, Kirsten Matthias, who said rapid progress to a transitional deal was vital. Ms Burton asked what would happen if there was no progress. Ms Matthias responded that jobs would move to mainland Europe. Ms Burton said this was already happening and read out the recent tweet of Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs to that effect. Justin Webb – having first pointed out that ‘no deal’ was regarded by some as the equivalent of jumping off a cliff – asked Peter Mandelson what he thought of the prospect. Opening the way for him to claim it would be ‘disastrous’, and later asked if he wanted a second referendum. Mr Webb put it to Iain Duncan Smith that Peter Mandelson had said earlier that leaving the EU with a deal would be madness and a ‘disaster’, that planes would stop flying, and that the extra cost of moving car parts around would be £26 billion. Christiane Amanpour asked Hubertus Vath of Frankfurt Main Finance if his city was going to take over from London as ‘the financial centre’. The interview sequence with Alex Barker of the Financial Times, and Matthew Holehouse of MLex News, was framed with no adversarial questions.

October 21: In Nick Robinson’s interview of Roderick Abbott, former deputy director of the WTO, he first noted that some believed that WTO trade rules would work for the UK, and then asked, in effect, why that not the case.

October 23: Justin Webb opened the interview with Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, by asking if Lloyd Blankfein's claims about job losses in the City were correct, or perhaps premature. He responded that they were not and fleshed out why. Mr Webb then asked if a second referendum was needed.

October 25: In Mishal Husain's interview of Judith Bryans of Dairy UK, she explored with her why she was worried about Brexit and why she believed that the 'no deal' adoption of WTO tariffs would cause huge price rises for British produce exported to the EU. Nick Robinson conducted an interview with universities minister Jo Johnson on the basis that universities believed that a letter from Conservative whip Chris Heaton-Harris about EU-related teaching was 'sinister, McCarthyite and idiotic Leninism'. Mr Robinson asked if it should ever have been written or sent, and whether it was at odds with academic freedom. He suggested that the government no longer believed in expertise and independence and that Mr Heaton-Harris should resign from the whips' office.

October 30: Lucy Burton, in business news, asked Jurgen Maier of Siemens UK what he wanted from a transitional deal.

November 1: John Humphrys asked Lord Hague whether the threat of no deal should be taken seriously, and how he would vote if there was a second referendum. Mr Humphrys said that 'serious people' were now thinking that Britain would stay in the EU.

November 3: Mishal Husain asked Ben Broadbent of the Bank of England how much the decision to raise interest rates had been influenced by Brexit.

The positives about Brexit from presenters:

OCTOBER 9: In business news, Dr Andrew Parmley, Lord Mayor of London, was asked if he was in Dublin to make the post-Brexit changes 'less painful'. He replied that he was there to convey a 'very confident message' about the City's future 'in the face of Brexit'. The next question related to how worried he was about a warning from RBS of the exodus of jobs unless transitional arrangements were agreed. Mr Parmley agreed that there needed to be a clear message about transition, and was 'hopeful' that it was being delivered so that a 'cliff-edge' was avoided. Against more questions suggesting that the City would lose jobs and about 'gloom and doom', Mr Parmley said he was 'hopeful' that London would remain number one centre and thought the government was listening to concerns.

Bernard Jenkin was interviewed at 7.50am by Sarah Montague, who introduced the sequence by saying that he had been campaigning for Theresa May to make no more concessions to the EU. Mr Jenkin alleged that the EU, through its intransigence, was dragging the UK into prolonged uncertainty; was continuing to interfere in UK affairs; that it was in everyone's interests that trade continued at its current levels; that if anyone introduced barriers to trade, it would be the EU, not the UK; that he was blaming not individuals (such as Philip Hammond) for current problems, but the Treasury mindset because they gave advice that did not include the perspective of figures such as James Dyson; that Mr Hammond had led an important debate about smoothing the transition in leaving the EU, but that it was now clear that Theresa May did not want a transition period; and the problem was that the EU continued to refuse to discuss free trade.

Sarah Montague's questions were whether further concessions to the EU would be necessary; suggested that the UK should continue to pay for access to markets, and also should 'honour commitments'; that Mr Jenkin was blaming figures in the City and Philip Hammond for the impasse; and whether Theresa May had the authority to impose her will on the negotiations. Afterwards, Laura Kuenssberg – after Sarah Montague noted headlines that suggested there was pressure to sack Philip Hammond – said that Mr Jenkin's stance suggested he was telling Theresa May that she could not compromise much in the Brexit talks.

October 10: It was reported that there had been an eight per cent rise in visitor numbers to the UK since the Brexit vote. Steve Ridgeway of Visit Britain was asked if this was visitors being wooed by the weaker pound. He replied it was one of the 'few pluses' since the Brexit vote. He was asked if the ending of free movement would put people off visiting the UK. Mr Ridgeway accepted there was 'sensitivity' about that.

October 11: Lord Owen, said the centre ground of politics was now with Brexit – it was hard to understand for the elite that their favourite project had been rejected by voters. John Humphrys suggested it was 'single issue'. Lord Owen said it was but it was a dominant one – it had split parties since 1962 over the idea of a federal Europe and Macron in France was now campaigning for that again. Lord Owen warned that the Government must get its act together, the idea that one party fighting among itself about Brexit could deliver it was ludicrous, it needed to bring on board a broader alliance, including supporters from UKIP, the SNP, and the Liberal Democrats. Christopher Nieper (a clothing business executive) - after beer tycoon Lord Bilimoria had described 'no deal' as the 'worst possible outcome' – said that he had to plan for the future and the need was to move to WTO tariffs. He claimed their cost was dwarfed by the currency advantage created by the fall in the pound. John Humphrys immediately suggested the exchange rate could go the other way. Mr Nieper said it had been only in one direction over the past year and that made British goods more competitive. Lord Bilimoria countered that imports were more costly and the country was a net importer. Inward investment would also dry up. Mr Nieper said:

So, what we're doing is we're bringing more of our supply chain into Britain, we're going to build another factory, we're going to open a new printing division, we're going to triple the

size of our selling academy, and we're also taking quite a radical approach to skills, because I think skills is the biggest challenge we face, far more than any tariff.

He added that the UK (as Lord Bilimoria alleged) was not throwing trade on its doorstep away. None of his company's sales offices across the EU thought Brexit would make any difference. The demand for British goods remained very strong, and he could not keep up with it.

October 12: Marcus Dolman, of the British Exporters' Association, and an executive of the strongly pro-Remain Rolls-Royce, said 'no deal' was the worst outcome. But he thought, in response to Nick Robinson, that the possibility of aircraft not flying and big queues at Dover were 'unlikely scare stories'. But he said there could be delays and customs points and businesses had to prepare for that. At 8.10am, Kwasi Kwarteng, PPS to Philip Hammond, was asked if he could defend Mr Hammond, and how long Theresa May could 'endure' being undermined by the Jeremiah next door who had enraged Brexiteers by refusing to spend money on 'no deal'. Mr Kwarteng responded that Mr Hammond was 'clear-eyed' and would provide most of the money for 'no deal' – there was not much of a contradiction. He wanted the best deal for Britain, and was a realist, not an Eeyore.

October 13: Bernd Koemel, of the German party LKR, and Anders Vistisen, of the Danish people's party, vice-chair of the European Parliament foreign affairs committee, were interviewed. Both criticised the EU's negotiating stance. The latter warned that Denmark could leave the EU.

October 14: John Mills was introduced as a donor to the Leave campaign' who was chairman of consumer goods company JML. The interview was in response to claims by Sir Martin Donnelly, former permanent secretary at the Oversea Trade Department that leaving the regulatory structures of the EU would hit badly UK trade. Mr Mills said that what was being claimed was typical of the Remain campaign. He said there was a trade deficit of £111 billion with the EU and this was not a good starting point. Mishal Husain said that Sir Martin (a top civil servant) had explained how hard it was to negotiate a replacement for the single market arrangements. John Mills denied that it took ten years to negotiate a trade deal, Norway had done it faster and more recently Australia in a year. Mishal Husain pointed out that they did not include services. Mr Mills replied that the UK was doing well on the sale of services, but goods sales were abysmal and this needed to improve. Ms Husain repeated that this was harder. Mr Mills conceded that goods and services deals might have to be split, but then pointed out that trading on WTO terms would be possible. He did not think that trade would stop.

October 16: In an interview with John Redwood, John Humphrys asked if leaving the EU without a deal 'really mattered'. Mr Redwood agreed that it did not, but said it was likely that the EU would reach an eleventh hour free trade deal because they would not ant tariffs on exports to the UK. Mr Humphrys asked if therefore there was no point Mrs May meeting Mr Juncker. Mr Redwood said it was always good to talk, and Mrs May was offering a future partnership better than 'no deal'. Mr Humphrys asked what was better, because, 'I sort of thought people like you thought – let's just leave and to hell with it'. Mr Redwood said it would be better to have tariff-free trade with no new barriers. But he was relaxed if they did not offer that because WTO rules would be the fall-back, and that already was the basis of trade with the rest of the world. Mr Humphrys said Ken Clarke disagreed that WTO was a 'land of milk and honey'. Mr Redwood said the rules worked fine, UK trade with the rest of the world had been growing but that with the EU was in 'massive deficit'. Meanwhile, he wanted no further controls from the EU Court and payments to the EU to end soonest. He added that he thought the Withdrawal bill would go through to facilitate the transfer of EU law to the UK. Mr Redwood said that Labour would not stop the bill, and nor would 'lots of Conservative MPs' decide to use the bill to destroy Mrs May. John Humphrys said:

But it does appear that Labour's playing a fairly canny game and they're kind of holding back letting your lot make the running.

Mr Redwood replied that Labour was deeply divided. Conservative MPs believed it in the national interest to fulfil the remit and wishes of the British people, and therefore to leave the EU in 2019 even without a deal.

Sarah Montague suggested to Sir Mark Lyall Grant, recently retired government national security adviser, that 'no deal' would be 'very bad' for national security-sharing. Sir Mark said the key factor here was not the EU but NATO, though the EAW and Schengen were also important, so some sharing with EU partners was needed. Ms Montague asked if no deal would end such sharing. Sir Mark suggested not, because it was in the interests of the UK's European partners to continue. He was also asked what would happen if a 'hard' Irish border was introduced. Sir Mark replied that everyone was on the same page in not wanting disruption to movement of people and capital. Ms Montague suggested he was 'quite upbeat'. Sir Mark said that in comparison to other issues, national security should not be a major problem.

October 17: The CEO of Eurostar, Nicolas Pertovic, said he was optimistic about a rise in passenger numbers, and discounted that the ending of free movement of people would damage prospects.

October 19: Owen Paterson, signatory of a letter which urged Theresa May to declare the possibility of 'no deal', said he wanted this because the EU had refused to move in to trade talks, and a move to WTO rules was thus now on the cards anyway. The EU would then move on because they had a huge trade surplus with the UK, so it was in their interests. Ms Mishal Husain asked if he would accept the 'severe economic consequences' which 'many people said' would ensue. Mr Paterson doubted that there would be, and the UK started from a 'very good base', including zero tariffs, on which rapidly to build new deals using the WTO rules – of which the UK 'should not be terrified'. He added that senior figures had signed the letter, and it would be possible to 'grab the opportunities' of leaving the single market. Ms Husain suggested that the Resolution Foundation claimed that dairy products would go up by eight per cent, meat by six per cent and cars by five per cent. Mr Paterson said tariffs did not have to be applied. Ms Husain asked if UK exporters would have tariffs applied by the EU. Mr Paterson said the UK could decide; while it was inside the EU, the country was not open to trading with the rest of the world and could not do deals where growth was. The European Commission said that 90 per cent of the growth in the world economy was going to be outside the European Union, 'that is where we want to go'. He added:

ideally we want reciprocal free trade with zero tariffs based on conformity of standards. If they're not prepared to talk about that, we should give notice now that we will be working with our own industries, all our administrative systems will be geared up to moving to WTO .
..

Ms Husain asked if that would lead to the building of lorry parks around the Channel Tunnel because there would no longer be frictionless transit and 'slowdown'. Mr Paterson said that was untrue. The World Bank estimated that only two per cent of shipments were actually checked. He added:

...the vast, vast majority of shipments are checked by Chambers of Commerce at point of shipment, that simply isn't right, you're thinking in terms of old customs officers with tricorne hats and stripy bars, stopping a stagecoach, it is not like that these days. Nearly all trade around the world is done electronically. But if . . . we have to face the fact that this summit is not going to discuss any future trade deal, we are ineluctably moving down the road towards a WTO arrangement, so we'd better start preparing for it. If they come back, and we very much hope they would, to talk about a free trade deal, that would be a bonus, that would be . . . a good thing.

October 20: Justin Webb interviewed Iain Duncan Smith in reaction to Peter Mandelson's claim at 8.10am that it would be 'madness' for the UK to leave the EU with no deal. Justin Webb put that claim to him; then that there were claims that 'no deal' would be a disaster, with planes stopping flying; that 'no deal' damaged the UK because for example car parts went between different EU

countries and this would stop, the cost would be £26 billion; and whether the 20 billion offer made by Theresa May to the EU for divorce was 'worrying'.

Mr Duncan Smith strongly rebutted each of the points, and said it was 'right' that the UK met its financial obligations to the EU. In detail, he said it was nonsense to think that the UK, as third biggest aviation power, would stop flying, because it was in the EU's interest also that there was no disruption; that WTO rules dictated that tariffs could only be applied once; that lorry parks were required in parts of the EU, too; and that 'crashing out' was nonsense because there were default rules.

November 1: William Hague said that although he had voted to remain in the EU, it now had to happen. He was asked if the threat of 'no deal' had to be taken seriously. Mr Hague said it should but it would be a 'pretty bad scenario', and this could end in 'a more reasonable way'. John Humphrys asked how he would vote if there was another referendum. Mr Hague responded first that he did not want that to happen, and then that leaving now needed to be 'gone through with'. To have a second referendum would be as divisive as Home Rule had been. Mr Humphrys said there was a view taken by 'serious people' that the UK would stay in the EU. Mr Hague replied that for such to happen, the result of a referendum in which record numbers of people had turned out and voted would have to be overturned. That would lead to a divisive 'hate-filled' campaign that would divide the country, so it was now necessary to make a good job of implementing what had been decided by a democratic country. But there were still risks.

APPENDIX II

This section isolates and lays out in full sequentially the points made on the programme that were negative and positive about Brexit. The overall aim is to show the lack of balance involved from another perspective.

Negative comment about Brexit:

October 9: Helen Dickinson, on business news, of The British Retail Consortium warned that 170,000 families were affected by uncertainties about EU workers. Nick Clegg, former MP, claimed that his book calling for a second Brexit referendum, showed that people had voted Leave for misinformed reasons, and called for a renegotiation of the UK's place inside the EU. John Humphrys suggested he was trying to overturn a democratic decision and claimed the Remain side had made unsubstantiated claims about the negative impact on the economy. Nicola Sturgeon said that SNP policy was not to call (in line with Nick Clegg) with a second referendum yet, but might demand one if terms of the EU deal were not right. James Naughtie pushed that her policy was 'close' to that of Nick Clegg. Ms Sturgeon replied that if the UK 'crashed out' of the EU, a second referendum would be needed. She wanted the UK to stay in the single market.

October 11: Guy Platten, of the British Chamber of Shipping, was asked by Justin Webb 'if he worried' about the impact of 'no deal' on shipping. He warned that unless there was a customs partnership, there would be huge delays. There needed to be a transition period. Mr Webb asked if two years would be enough. Mr Platten was not sure. Mr Webb suggested there needed to be spending on practical measures. Mr Platten wanted this to start immediately. He also said that the government understood the issues and he was talking to ministers. The interview was closed at that point.

At 7.15am, Phil Bicknell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, was said to have warned that farmers could be hit very hard by Brexit; unless there was a free trade agreement, their incomes could fall by 50 per cent. The interview explored how negative the impact would be. Mr Bicknell warned that the bulk of farm businesses could be in the red. There were no questions on the impact of the CAP, though Dominic O'Connell did note that Andrea Leadsom had noted that 'free if the restrictions of Europe' it could be 'a great time for British farms'. Mr Bicknell observed that most of the farming sector's current £18 billion of exports went to the EU, but there could be expand the pork trade to China. Lord Bilimoria, of Cobra beer, was asked if 'no deal' would be 'disastrous'. He said it would be the worst possible outcome, and 90 percent of business and young people wanted to stay in the EU while not being in favour of closer union. John Humphrys asked on a 'practical level' the 'no deal' option would have. Lord Bilimoria said it would be 'terrible', and then denied that British goods would become more competitive. Imports would be hit, affecting curry restaurants, and inward investment would dry up. The UK would throw away 50 per cent of its trade (which was with the EU). Trade deals with the rest of the world could not compensate for that. Christopher Nieper made points against Lord Bilimoria's views but with 401-557 words, was the lesser contribution.

October 12: Claire Perry, the climate change minister, said that the government would fulfil the EU's climate change objectives. Marcus Dolman, of the British Exporters Association (and an executive of Rolls-Royce), said that 'no deal' would be the worst scenario all round. He thought that planes being grounded and big queues at Dover 'were unlikely', but it was prudent to prepare for them. He added that customs issues were a worry, and could lead to goods being held at ports. The thrust of the interview, after a 'reality check' by Chris Morris, was to allow Mr Dolman to say that 'no deal' could lead to serious knock-on effects. Hilary Benn, interviewed with Kwasi Kwarteng, said there

was open disagreement in the Cabinet and contended that 'no deal' would mean a return to tariffs, delays at ports and a hard border with Northern Ireland, together with the loss of one million or more jobs. Nick Robinson did not challenge this, but suggested that 'no deal' would not be good for other EU countries. Mr Benn said it would be worse for the UK. Mr Robinson suggested that 'no deal' was a negotiating ploy. Mr Benn said it would be a catastrophe and it was in the national interest to reach a deal. At 8.55am, Justin Webb suggested that it was easy to forget that the negotiations over Brexit were supposed to be taking place between the EU and the UK, not between different members of the Cabinet. Ryan Heath, of Politico, said that the reality was that Brussels was coping with no deal' not by changing its negotiating position but by planning a different future for Europe, such as the banking union, so that the UK's contribution would not be missed.

October 13: Lucy Burton said that a survey for the British Chamber of Commerce claimed that the UK economy grew at a 'sluggish rate' in the third quarter of 2017, with the services sector - usually the main driver of growth – remaining static. Manufacturer Andrew Varga said there was 'startlingly' less demand from 'Europe' because of uncertainty. He was asked if Brexit was entirely the reason. He said it was. Claire Flynn, of Essential Analytics, said she was 'more optimistic' but maintained that Brexit was causing a 'massive energy suck' and people were 'sort of frozen'. Mr Varga warned that his company would have to double his export team to deal with 'customs friction' and 'lorry stacks' at the borders (Mr Varga had signed a letter in The Independent from 100+ business leaders warning about the dangers of Brexit on the eve of the referendum vote): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/eu-referendum-brexit-letter-remain-barclays-anglo-american-a7094811.html>

Michael Hewson, analyst of CNC Markets, said that small businesses needed help to cope with Brexit uncertainty. He claimed the UK's approach to the Brexit talks was 'shambolic'. At 7.34am, the US economics and development academic Jeffrey Sachs said that Brexit was a cause of uncertainty. Sarah Montague suggested that although no longer saw Brexit as Armageddon, they still believed there would be long term negative impact. Mr Sachs said it was clear that jobs were draining from London and it was a 'trap' for everyone. He saw the need to limit immigration, but Brexit, he claimed, was not the solution. In an interview sequence with Alex Barker, the Financial Times's Brussels Bureau chief, and Matthew Holehouse, Brexit correspondent for the MLex News, it was contended that there was panic in London over the lack of progress in the Brexit talks. Mr Holehouse said the EU 27 was in 'shock and alarm' because they no longer saw the UK as a stable or rational country.

October 14: Sir Martin Donnelly, former permanent secretary in the International Trade Department, in what was billed as his first interview since leaving his post, was asked why he wanted the UK to still have the 'benefits' of the single market'. He warned that if it did not, the benefits could not be found elsewhere 'because that's how the economy works'. Mishal Husain asked if he was saying it was not possible to reach a deal with sufficient access to the single market in the timeframe set-out (including the two-year transition). He thought it likely to be impossible, and also warned that negotiating access to alternative markets was more difficult than people thought. He also claimed that 'no deal' would be a very serious outcome, would create tremendous uncertainty, and would be bad for business, investment and jobs. He spoke 1,129 words, Mishal Husain did not challenge his views, but rather gave a framework for him to advance his fears. John Mills's response was 518 words at the end of the programme and the interview was adversarial. Sir Martin's opinions about the single market were not new. He first aired them in the anti-Brexit newspaper Evening Standard on September 22; <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/no-access-to-the-single-market-is-a-huge-threat-to-british-jobs-a3641206.html>

October 16: Kenneth Clarke was asked whether he thought 'no deal' was better than a bad deal and whether he wanted a second referendum on Brexit. Mr Clarke said he was against referendums and only a few 'hard right' sceptics wanted 'no deal'. They talked as though other countries would throw open their borders. John Humphrys suggested that 165 countries were not in the EU. Mr Clarke said 50 had deals with the EU and the rest were rejecting common regulations. People had various reasons for leaving the EU, but nobody voted after a sensible debate on the single market. It was

vital that trade remained free. John Humphrys asked if Parliament would reject withdrawal if this did not happen. Mr Clarke said Parliament had voted to leave and he accepted that. But a transitional period could be put into the bill. A problem was how the other 27 countries could explain to their voters why they were giving the UK a privileged deal. The short-term impact on the economy could be catastrophic. Mr Clarke repeated that Parliament would not reverse leaving, but said the vast majority of MPs wanted to retain EU regulations and conditions.

October 17: in business news, Victoria Clarke, of Investec, suggested that both inflation had risen and wages had dropped because of Brexit. Dr Michael Fuchs, of the CDU in Germany, was asked if the EU would move on anything. He replied there could be no cherry-picking on the 'four freedoms'. John Humphrys also asked why no movement had been made on the EU side. Dr Fuchs replied that the UYK had to come up with a 'decent proposal' on money. Dr Fuchs maintained this was not the case, and added that he wanted the UK to stay in the EU. The problem was that the UK's position was not unified, and he claimed Boris Johnson was tying Theresa May's hands. He warned that 'no deal' would be very tough on the UK, and the need was to find a better deal. Mr Humphrys asked if that was contingent on Boris Johnson being sacked. Dr Fuchs confirmed he believed he should be fired.

October 18: Bruno Bonell, from president Macron's party in France, was asked what the mood was there about He said it was an ugly and difficult matter and he wanted the UK to 'pay up'. Nick Robinson asked what he said to those who suggested that France was 'posturing' and that French businesses did not want tariffs, so they would end up 'backing down'. Mr Bonnell said the UK would find a different position and 'negotiate something'. Mr Robinson asked if he hoped Britain would change its mind about leaving. He replied that he did.

October 19: Labour's EU shadow Europe minister Keir Starmer was asked by Mishal Husain about a letter sent to Theresa May by some 'former Cabinet ministers' suggesting that the EU should be told that a deal was now considered a bonus with the hope that this would speed matters up. Mr Starmer claimed this would not help in the slightest, and was the last thing that was needed because hundreds of businesses wanted a deal. He also claimed that the UK had walked away from deals on Ireland and the UK's liabilities. Miss Husain suggested that Mrs May was making it clear that the UK would walk away. Mr Starmer said this was irresponsible and not constructive. Ms Husain asked if he would 'never' play the walk-out card. Mr Starmer repeated that it would be irresponsible. Ms Husain asked if he would accept the UK's pension liability was 7 billion euros. Mr Starmer said that Mrs May had 'quite rightly' said the UK would honour this, though he would not commit to a figure on the ground that he had not seen the books. Ms Husain asked if he would pay into the EU budget until 2023. Ms Husain pushed again how much he would pay to leave (suggesting it could be up to £60 billion) but he refused again to commit to figures, and denied that the deadlock was to do with such sums, the issue was points of principle. Ms Husain asked if Labour would honour a deal made by David Davis. Mr Starmer said he supported Mr Davis in keeping the bill as low as possible. What concerned him was that transitional arrangements, including being a member of the single market must be negotiated in the interests of business. Ms Husain suggested he was saying he would honour a deal he liked, but not otherwise. Mr Starmer said he was not offering a blank cheque, but he did want the talks to succeed. Afterwards, Katya Adler said she agreed with Mr Starmer that the talks were about principles and that the EU wanted to hear which commitments the UK would honour. At 8.43am, Derek Hatton, of the Three Million pressure group, was asked if he was heartened by Theresa May's letter to the 3m EU citizens resident in the UK reassuring them about their rights. Mr Hatton conceded that he was but contended that it was 12 months too late. His group wanted more than was being offered, and also the continued involvement of the ECJ. Justin Webb suggested that this could mean that EU citizens would have more rights than UK ones. Mr Hatton disagreed and said new rule changes would disadvantage both British and EU citizens. At 8.53am, former Greek finance minister Yanis Veroufakis said the UK should apply to have the same status as Norway. Radek Sikorski, former Polish foreign minister, maintained that negotiating with the EU would continue to be humiliating for the UK. Justin Webb asked if it could be made less so if the UK went direct to Germany. Mr Veroufakis said it would not. Mr Sikorski claimed that the UK's economy would suffer more than EU countries if a deal was not reached. Justin Webb mentioned the open letter about 'no deal'. Mr

Veroufakis said the UK would suffer long term decline under WTO rules. The approach was underpinned by a xenophobic narrative.

October 20: Kirsten Matthias of The City UK said 'no progress' in the Brexit talks was disappointing news and warned that the City would lose jobs to the EU 'and the rest of the world'. Lucy Burton noted the Lloyd Blankfein predictions in that vein. Neil Dwane, of Allianz Global suggested that disappointing results from the building sector were the result of Brexit. Hubertus Vath, of Frankfurt Main Finance, was asked if Frankfurt would take over from London as 'the financial centre'. He said not but warned it would become the Eurozone financial centre. He was asked why he did not want London to lose influence. Mr Vath said London benefitted Europe. He warned that in the Brexit talks, financial companies could not wait for an outcome and had to make plans, including 'preparing for the worst'. Christianne Amanpour noted that the Office of National Statistics had noted a £490 billion 'shortfall' in 'UK money' and asked if 'that sort of is preparing for the worst'. Mr Vath agreed that it was. Leanne Wood, leader of Plaid Cymru, said she wanted a £30m fund to help cushion Wales from the impact of Brexit. Justin Webb suggested that the people of Wales had voted for Brexit so 'should accept the consequences'. Ms Wood said she was staggered to find there were no contingency plans and there could be 'no deal'. She claimed that Welsh businesses were being hit by uncertainty and investment had been stopped. In the 8am bulletin, Remain champion Gina Miller claimed that the UK negotiators, instead of getting on with the job were 'flip-flopping' around. At 8.10am, stressed that the amount the UK was offering to the EU – with Theresa May tied by some ministers and backbench MPs – was stopping a breakthrough in negotiations. Justin Webb then asked Peter Mandelson if the UK should accept 'no deal'. Mr Mandelson claimed it would be disastrous. Mr Webb asked why when, for example, China traded with the EU under WTO rules. Mr Mandelson replied that 'no deal' would wipe out all existing trade rights and the EU was 'our largest export market'. He claimed further that the UK would be fighting at the EU's borders with every Tom, Dick or Harry and repeated that it would be disastrous, and a national humiliation. Mr Webb said that David Davis claimed it was important to prepare for no deal to give it negotiating purchase. Mr Mandelson asked if it was clever to, in effect, threaten to blow our brains out. During the referendum it was claimed that the talks would be the easiest thing in the world. Now Theresa May was caught between the EU and the factions in her own party. Mr Webb suggested that it was not clear what Labour wanted – for example to stay in the single market. Mr Mandelson said it was clear that during the transitional period, Labour wanted to stay in the single market. Because there was a need for continuity to protect trade and jobs. Mr Webb asked if Labour wanted a referendum on the exit terms. Mr Mandelson said that enough had emerged – for example the size of the Brexit bill – to demand one. Mr Webb asked whether Labour should campaign in the House of Lords for a second referendum. Mr Mandelson said he was not demanding one yet but would wait to see what the public thought of what emerged. He believed Labour would win the next election because the referendum had made divisions within the party even more apparent. At 8.55am, in an interview with Alex Barker, FT Europe correspondent, from Brussels, and Matthew Holehouse, Brexit correspondent for the MLex News service, Mr Barker claimed that the summit had been a disaster for Theresa May. Mr Holehouse added that no one saw 'no deal' as a good outcome.

October 21: Roderick Abbott, former deputy director of WTO interviewed. His appearance was prefaced by a clip from former Cabinet Secretary Lord O'Donnell who suggested that events in Catalonia showed what would happen to the UK if there was no EU exit deal. This included companies moving their headquarters elsewhere. Nick Robinson then asked Mr Abbott to 'stick to the facts' (rather than giving opinions) and asked what would happen if the UK went to WTO tariffs, 'like China and America do business'. Mr Abbott said it would mean the UK was out and 'over a cliff edge' because there would be no relationship other than on WTO rules. He said the UK would lose all its preferential access to the single market and WTO rules would apply, which would mean that every country had to be treated in the same way and it was not possible to discriminate between internal and external trade. Mr Robinson said that 'some people' would argue that exporters would face tariffs, but also importers to the UK would have to pay tariffs, and that money could be used to 'subsidise taxes'. Mr Abbott said he did not see how that would make the UK richer, because exports would fall – and would work in the EU's favour because they were selling more to than the

UK than the other way. The proportion of the EU's total trade to the UK was small (in relation to the EU's overall output), but 45 per cent of the UK's exports went to the EU. Nick Robinson cross referred at the end to a longer interview on BBC Online of Gus O'Donnell.

October 23: Ritu Vehora, of M&G, said that businesses were struggling with Brexit and needed to know what transition looked like sooner than later, and that was by Christmas. He had detected a helpful change of tone by Donald Tusk. Justin Webb opened his interview of Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London (8.10am) with a question whether he had seen Lloyd Blankfein's tweet about jobs relocating to Europe. Mr Khan said that Mr Blankfein was articulating publicly with what other business leaders were saying privately. They were making plans for what would happen after 2019, they had to, which is why the government needed to announce what would happen in the transition period – they needed 'certainty' otherwise, in line with concerns expressed by the CBI, they would have to make plans to move elsewhere. Mr Webb asked if Mr Blankfein was talking too soon about moving. Mr Khan said not, some banks had already announced contingency plans. Mr Webb asked if he thought Mr Blankfein was bluffing. Mr Khan said not. Mr Webb suggested that if the transition period was clarified, this would help matters. Mr Khan said two things mattered – the first giving cast-iron guarantees to EU citizens and the second that there would be a clear transitional phase lasting at least two years. Mr Webb asked if a second referendum was needed on the 'long term' deal, and noted that Peter Mandelson was moving in that direction. Mr Khan did not answer directly, but said he would wait and see what Parliament decided.

October 24: Thomas Moore of Aberdeen Standard, said it was important for business to know in the next two or three months that progress was being made 'given that timelines are tightening'.

October 25: Peter Ruis, of the company Jigsaw, was said to be running an advertising campaign stating that the company 'loves immigration'. Rob Young on business news said this was part of the 'ongoing Brexit conversation about immigration and one poster declared that without it, 'we'd all be selling potato sacks'. Mr Ruis claimed it was not politics but 'basic humanity' - his brand relied on diversity of people and there were very few British people who weren't from somewhere else. Mr Young asked if there were any dangers in the campaign. Mr Ruis said not, people were celebrating the campaign. Mr Young wondered whether those who thought immigrant numbers were too high were welcome in Jigsaw stores. Mr Ruis said they were. Mr Young asked what the impact of Brexit had been on Jigsaw. Mr Ruis said there had been a rise in the cost of overseas materials. He wanted a transition period and certainty about the status of immigrants. Mr Young observed that he had said the UK was a 'declining economy'. Mr Ruis said that consumer confidence had fallen to the extent that the UK had dropped from the top to the bottom of the G7 index. At 7.12am, Mishal Husain interviewed Judith Bryans, the CEO of Dairy UK about her fears that it could become too expensive to export British produce. Ms Husain asked what she wanted. Ms Bryans replied that there needed to be 'a decent transition period', no tariffs and clarity about the Northern Ireland border. Ms Husain asked first about tariffs. Ms Bryans warned that the 20 per cent of UK milk that was exported – 80 per cent of which went to the EU – would become too expensive. Ms Husain asked if she was concerned that they would become 'too expensive'. She said she was – WTO tariffs were prohibitive and would rise the cost of a block of cheddar by 51 per cent. Ms Husain pointed that imports of dairy to the UK would become more expensive, thus helping UK producers. Ms Bryans suggested not, because people would not buy cheddar instead if gorgonzola. Investment into the industry was also likely to be hit. Lord Sugar suggested at 8.38am that the UK negotiations team needed someone who could negotiate.

October 26: Rob Young asked Helal Miah, of the Share Centre, about a fall by four per cent in car production during September. He replied that Brexit could be partly responsible.

October 27: John Bruton, of Stonewater, a social house-building group, said it would not build around 300 homes because of uncertainties of the UK's future relationship with the European Investment Bank, which had meant that a source of low cost loans had dried up. Alexander Stubb, and president of the EIB, was asked about these loans after Sarah Montague pointed out that the EIB wanted

assurances from the UK government that their current contributions would continue through domestic funding after Brexit. He said the relationship with the bank would continue at least until 2054, but the loans had been lowered because of 'uncertainty over Brexit', and because the bank wanted certainty that loans would be repaid. He added that another problem was that the UK economy was on a downward curve because of Brexit. Sarah Montague suggested the assurances required were nothing to do with Brexit itself but fears about the UK economy. Mr Stubb did not deal with directly with the point of difference, but claimed again that there were problems with the UK economy. Ms Montague said the bank's actions looked like punishment. Mr Stubb denied this. He said that Brexit was one of the biggest travesties in the modern era, but he would do everything possible 'to alleviate the pain', but the 'economic facts' were that there were no winners in Brexit. Brexiteers, he claimed were beginning to worry about the impact on international relations and trade. Ms Montague asked if there was a suggestion that the UK would not get the £9 billion it had invested in the EIB until 2054. Mr Stubb claimed the figure was less but confirmed that it would take at least 30 years to get back. Ms Montague repeated that this looked like punishment. Mr Stubb denied this.

October 30: Jurgen Maier, of Siemens UK, was asked what he wanted to see in a transitional deal. He replied he wanted 'as little friction as possible' in terms of customs, though some would be inevitable because the UK was leaving the single market. He claimed there would be associated costs. Francis Campbell, vice chancellor of St Mary's University, in Thought for the Day, observed that 'Europe' was trying to build cohesion in the areas held in common. The debate on Europe in the UK had become 'one of the many issues of sharp polarisation'.

APPENDIX III:

CORRESPONDENT COMMENT

In this section, a summarised list of comment by BBC correspondents is provided. This is used above as the basis for the breakdown into positive and negative commentary.

October 9: Chris Mason concluded in an item about progression to trade talks, that ‘few in Britain expected this to happen’. Adam Fleming said at 6.10am that there was ‘cautious optimism’ about moves to the trade talks. Norman Smith said at 6.39am that Theresa May was attempting to ‘prove the doomsayers wrong’ and hoping EU negotiators would think again. If not the UK was in for a ‘long crawl’ with pressure at home from Brexiteers to sack Philip Hammond. NS observed:

Because I suppose Mrs May’s difficulty is the one that has faced successive Tory leaders going back 40 years, namely she faces a party which is profoundly split over Europe, and that divide, that sort of war in the Tory party which has devoured successive Tory leaders, now that is the possibility she must face up to as well, because as soon as she moves one person in cabinet, she destabilises that uneasy truce within the Tory party over Brexit.

In the 7am bulletin, Chris Mason mentioned Theresa May’s ‘calamitous’ conference speech and repeated that few in Brussels expected progress.

At 7.50am, after an interview with Bernard Jenkin, Laura Kuenssberg observed that even the most optimistic Conservative did not think the party conference had gone well for Theresa May. Mr Jenkin was urging ‘danger, danger’ against compromising ‘very much’. Up until now – and little noticed – Mrs May had kept Brexiteers onside. But to previous leaders they had been ‘the most troublesome group’ (the line was lost), LK was suggesting that Bernard Jenkin was part of the inner circle of Brexiteers.

October 10: At 6.10am, Matthew Price suggested that the troubles in Catalonia reminded him of England during the Brexit referendum, ‘the sort of divisiveness that characterised the debate there’. Business news (VN) suggested that Polar Capital was buying the Millennium and Copthorne hotel group ‘to take advantage of the weakness of sterling’. Steve Ridgeway of Visit Britain was asked if the group was Britain was making plans to safeguard tourism after Brexit. She added:

I mean, we’re looking at a situation without free movement of people coming from the European Union, is that going to put people off visiting Britain?

At 6.35am, Sarah Smith noted that the reduced number of SNP MPs had ‘rather cleverly’ tabled amendments to Brexit legislation ensuring that powers came back to Holyrood rather than Westminster. Norman Smith (6.38am), noting that ‘no deal’ had become a serious Plan B for government, observed:

the danger is we simply get sucked into a long protracted messy negotiation and transitional period at the end of which we end up paying considerable amounts of money for a sort of half in half out arrangement. And what they are now saying is that if there is no progress in the negotiations by December, Mrs May should call it a day, walk away and go down the no deal route.

John Humphrys suggested that it was inconceivable that she would do this as a result of pressure from backbenchers. Norman Smith said events were reaching a ‘tipping point’ with growing nervousness

in backbench ranks about Mrs May's approach, for example in accepting that the UK would still be bound by ECJ rulings in a transitional phase – against a 'red line'. Backbenchers were also worried about how long the transitional phase would last, and the final exit bill.

October 11: In business news, Dominic O'Connell commented that an article in The Times in which Chancellor Philip Hammond had refused to commit money to Brexit in advance of need was a 'broadside against Brexiteers'. He said:

... but it's clearly a broadside at Brexiteers talking about spending money to prepare for a hard Brexit, sterling has been quite wobbly on the back of this to and fro on Brexit in recent weeks, hasn't it, do you think we might see more of the same?

Norman Smith (6.32am) noted that Theresa May had probably refused to answer a question on how she would vote now in an EU referendum on the ground that an answer would probably offend either Brexiteers or Remainers. The trouble was that 'some of her opponents' had concluded she was lukewarm about Brexit. He added that The Times article by Mr Hammond would be seen by opponents as a 'further pushback' by him. In an interview with Guy Platten, chief executive of the UK Chamber of Shipping, Justin Webb explored the extent to which 'no deal' on Brexit worried the industry. At 7.15am, Dominic O'Connell, in a business news interview with Phil Bicknell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, noted that a report suggested that farmers could be hit 'very hard' by Brexit, with incomes cut by a half. Norman Smith (8am bulletin) said that government sources had sought to play down the significance of Mr Hammond's intervention, and had exercised 'treasury caution'. NS suggested that some had branded him as 'too pessimistic'.

October 12: Kevin Connolly declared that this was no sign of 'gathering momentum' in the Brexit talks because the EU was demanding progress on the financial settlement before moving on. Norman Smith (6.33am) said there was a poisonous atmosphere towards Philip Hammond from Brexiteers. He said they were comparing him to Gordon Brown not buying hardware to protect troops from harm in Afghanistan. NS added that Theresa May was performing a 'very, very precarious balancing act' between the two camps in her party. Nick Robinson observed that the programme had been hoping to discuss this with Liam Fox, but he had become suddenly unavailable. Chris Morris, in a reality check, said that theoretically flights to Europe could stop at Brexit if the UK was no longer part of the EU Open Skies agreement. Other aspects of the economy could grind to a halt as well. Of a new customs system, he said:

Well, there's going to have to be an entirely new customs system of one form or another, I think again it depends on how long we have to prepare for it and that is why we have the debate now, a lot of Brexiteers saying, 'Come on, spend some money', because we did have a white paper on Monday, one of the very few official documents where we've actually seen official planning for the possibility of a 'no deal' scenario and it talked of things like companies having to pre-notify the consignments they want to send abroad, it talked about things like checking of consignments being done as far as possible inland to avoid disruption at ports. The thing is, if that's going to happen you need to put in an infrastructure the . . .

He added that HMRC had estimated that 130,000 exporting companies would have to start dealing with customs for the first time. At 8.20am, Laura Kuenssberg confirmed there were 'fault lines' in the Cabinet over preparations for 'no deal'. An issue was how the UK could present a united front in talks with Brussels when every day there were disagreements. At 8.55am, Justin Webb commented that it was too easy to forget sometimes that negotiations about Brexit were meant to be taking place between the UK and the EU, not between different members of the Cabinet, 'let alone the Prime Minister and the Chancellor'.

October 13: In business news, Lucy Burton noted that a survey for the British Chamber of Commerce claimed that the UK economy grew at a 'sluggish rate' in the third quarter of 2017, with the services sector - usually the main driver of growth – remaining static. Kevin Connolly (6.37am) said that the

UK would not get it wanted in terms of trade talks, but might be offered 'a small carrot' relating how the EU might be prepared to talk. Nick Robinson stressed that the UK was not negotiating with one body but 27 heads of state. KC added that they 'valued unity' in a way that was hard to understand from inside the world of Westminster politics. Economics editor Kamal Ahmed (6.38am) commented that many people were wondering whether the IMF's bleak prospects about Brexit were now coming true.

October 16: Ben Wright noted (6am) that Theresa May had denied her latest visit to Brussels was a 'panic dash' to 'unjam' the trade talks. He said that the EU would not proceed to the next round of talks until it agreed enough progress had been made, and that now looked impossible. Norman Smith (6.32am) said Downing Street had denied that the latest visit to Brussels had been a 'desperado dinner'. The hope that this dinner with Jean-Claude Juncker would go better than the previous one and would not be 'bread rolls at 30 paces'. He commented that if no progress was made it would strengthen the hands of 'Tory Brexiteers'. He added:

Businesses are beginning to reach the sort of period when they have to decide whether they trigger contingency plans and at Westminster we are seeing signs of Mrs May's Tory opponents beginning to work with Labour and other parties to engineer potential defeats on Mrs May over key Brexit legislation.

Norman Smith said that he thought the Brexit Bill would not be derailed completely.

October 17: Andy Verity said that researchers had concluded that leaving the EU would hike the cost of living by £500. He said that when people currently bought goods from the the EU's customs union, they benefitted from an absence of tariffs – if the UK exited without a trade deal, the report said food prices would rise by up to 45 per cent. At 6.10am Kevin Connolly suggested that Theresa May's latest visit to Brussels had led to a 'bit of a rebuke' being issued to her for trying to broaden the talks. She did not seem to have got round the impasse over money. Questioned further, KC said that Mrs May had failed to advance the talks beyond the money stage. It was not yet at crisis level, however. Norman Smith (6.32am) said there seemed to be no cause for optimism. There was talk of acceleration, but no new offers with the sticking point money. Katya Adler (7.09am) also said there had been no clear progress, phase two would not now happen until December. The Commission had perhaps not responded because they had been painted as the devil. She added that the EU also wanted a deal on Ireland. At 8.10am, Laura Kuenssberg said that heavy diplomatic lifting had been done, but the UK had used a lot of political capital in trying to project that progress was being made.

October 19: Kevin Connolly (6am bulletin) said it had been clear for weeks that the EU leaders would not move from divorce to trade. He elaborated at 6.10am that Mrs May had been handed a 'consolation prize', the promise of trade talks starting in December. He added that issues remained over the ECJ, citizens' rights and the Irish border. Norman Smith (6.32am) said there was a ratcheting up of pressure from Leave Means Leave for Mrs May to deliver an ultimatum about 'no deal'. Justin Webb responded that 'some believed' that 'no deal' was equivalent to a suicide by shooting in the head. NS said that there were those who thought progress was being made in the talks, including on Northern Ireland. A difficulty was that if Mrs May offered more money there would be a 'ferocious backlash' from Brexiteers and the electorate. Mrs May had worked to keep everyone on board – that might now be 'under threat'. In a 'reality check' at 6.50am, Chris Morris said the UK's commitment to the EU's pension fund was likely to be €30 billion. After an interview with Sir Keir Starmer at 8.10am, John Pienaar said that no one on the British side expected the deadlock to be broken, and speculated the longer was an impasse, the more likely was 'no deal'. Katya Adler said the EU wanted to know what financial liabilities (such as pensions) it would honour. She claimed there was 'no malice' on the EU side, but they would not move on because the UK has signed up to the need to settle the divorce details before moving on to trade.

October 20: Kevin Connelly said Theresa May had issued a 'powerful call' for EU leaders to allow Brexit talks to move ahead. He added that most of the leaders had left without saying anything, though Angela Merkel had acknowledged progress so far. In business news, Lucy Burton suggested that it was disappointing that no progress seemed to have been achieved, as the business community wanted more clarity. Her guest suggested that jobs were already draining from the City, and LB agreed, buttressing her point with a tweet from Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs that he would be spending more time in Europe as a result of Brexit. Adam Fleming (6.30am) said that EU leaders would confirm that not enough progress had been made on divorce issues. He noted that the EU viewed the possibility of 'no deal' only as a negotiating ploy and that Angela Merkel had suggested that the next phase of talks might be even more difficult. He added that Mrs Merkel had said the UK media were viewing the talks as less constructive than they actually were. At 7.09am, Katya Adler opined that the EU leaders did want a deal, though they believed that the UK would lose out most 'geopolitically, economically, in terms of security' if they did not reach one. Christiane Amanpour noted that 'hardliners' in Mrs May's own party were pushing for no deal – did 'Europeans' think that might happen and 'that this might fall off a cliff?' KA said they wanted to reach a deal 'without toppling Mrs May'. Ross Hawkins (7.43am) filed a report which assessed what would happen if the UK adopted 'no deal'. The intro suggested the UK could end up paying £26 billion extra in customs costs. The package contained interviews with residents upset about the idea of inland lorry parks, two hauliers who warned of dire financial consequences, with one counter-voice (a logistics expert) who disagreed. At 8.10am, prefacing an interview with Peter Mandelson, Laura Kuenssberg noted the gap between those who wanted no deal and those who thought it was like jumping off a building and wanting to fly. What seemed like 'baby steps' had been taken towards a deal 'after Theresa May had asked to be helped'. She claimed the issue holding things back was that Mrs May would not offer more than €20 billion; she perhaps wanted to go further, but other in the party would not.

October 21: Damian Grammaticas (7.13am) said that there had been no progress in the talks but the EU wanted to say 'something positive' about the way forward.

October 23: Ben Wright reported that the CBI was demanding an urgent Brexit transition deal to safeguard jobs and investment. Alex Forsyth (6.10am) said that Theresa May would give an upbeat assessment of Brexit talks to the cabinet, even though 'it wasn't very much'. She added that the limited progress (agreeing that trade talks would eventually start) was not what had been hoped for. Theresa May was now facing pressures across Parliament 'because, of course, she does not have a majority'. Ms Forsyth added that the letter from the CBI 'carried clout', and was a stark warning about the consequences of not getting a deal. Adam Fleming read out (8.36am) a report in a German newspaper which alleged Theresa May was viewed by EU officials as 'nervous, disheartened and discouraged, a woman who hardly anyone trusted'. He said the UK had not reacted yet.

October 24: Ben Wright (6.10am) suggested that there had been a hardening of the Government's stance on the Brexit talks in Theresa May's statement to Parliament. Nick Robinson suggested that business leaders would be worried by this, especially the prospect of 'no deal'. Mr Wright agreed that what had emerged would alarm a lot of businesses.

October 25: Kamal Ahmed said that 'Brexit uncertainty' would kick in around the Chancellor's options if the rise in GDP was less than 0.3 per cent. In business news, Rob Young noted that Jigsaw, the fashion business was running an ad campaign stating that it loved immigration. He framed questions which allowed a company spokesman to explain the campaign. IN the 7am bulletin, Kamal Ahmed said consumer confidence had waned because inflation had outstripped the growth in wages. At 7.20am, Kevin Connolly reported from Poland. He said that increasingly, Poles were returning home because the fall in the pound had cut their wages. A research scientist warned that fears about what would happen as a result of Brexit and was causing a 'brain drain' that the UK could regret. KC said the mayor of Lodz wanted workers to return, and people who had been in the UK said he had heard stories of racism and did not feel welcome.

October 26: Eleanor Garnier said David Davis had suggested that Parliament might not get a vote on any deal until after the UK had left because talks would go to the wire, but Downing Street had 'clarified' that the UK would get a deal and Parliament would get a vote. Ms Ganier suggested that Mr David had made a mistake because he had answered a hypothetical question, but some of this was because of the unpredictable nature of the Brexit process. She added that the concern was that it gave ammunition to the government's critics who said they needed to 'get a grip'. She said the episode had caused uncertainty and knocked at the very delicate balancing act Theresa May was 'trying to master'.

October 27: Ross Hawkins, reporting on European Investment Bank loans, said that delays to loans for housing projects in the UK totalling £6 billion were being caused because of Brexit-related due diligence. It was said that delays were being also caused because the EIB was awaiting assurances from the British government, with the result that 30 per cent less homes could be built.

October 31: Kamal Ahmed said that the Bank of England was preparing for 'tens of thousands' (up to 75,000) of job losses, partly as a result of losses to competitor cities, if a trade deal was not secured. He conceded, however that as the UK had a trade surplus with the EU, if there was not trade deal, the EU would lose out most. Sarah Montague pointed out that even with the loss of 75,000 jobs, London would remain the biggest financial centre in Europe.

November 2: Chris Aldridge (bulletins) said that, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council, there had been a sharp decline – up to 90 per cent - in the number of nurses from the EU wanting to work in the UK. Laura Kuenssberg suggested that Theresa May had been weakened by the resignation of Sir Michael Fallon and she also referred to the fragile balance in the cabinet 'with ministers at odds over the approach to Brexit'.

SPEAKER CLASSIFICATIONS

The anti-EU/pro-Brexit range of opinion among non-allied individuals and cross-party (unallied) politicians were:

1. John Godber, of Polar Capital, who suggested that the low value of the pound was helping the hotels business (164 words)
2. Lord Owen, the cross-bench peer, who said that Brexit should be handled not just by the Conservative party.
3. Christopher Nieper, of David Neiper women's wear, who said Brexit would present business opportunities for expansion.
4. John Mills, of JML, who are argued against Peter Mandelson's assertion that 'no deal' would be a disaster.
5. Quentin Letts, of the Daily Mail, who suggested that Chancellor Philip Hammond was not in tune with what people wanted regarding Brexit, and confirmed he believed that the BBC had got it wrong over Brexit.
6. Alex Saint, the travel company Secret Escapes, who said his business was in good shape despite the high value of the pound.
7. Bill McNabb, of the Vanguard Group, who despite passporting issues, remained optimistic about Britain's prospects as a place to do business.
8. Nicholas Petrovic, who said that despite Brexit, he was optimistic about Eurostar's prospects.
9. Suzanne Evans, of UKIP, who said the EU was acting like bullying bureaucrats because they were concerned about losing the UK's contributions, and suggested that 'no deal' preparations were vital.
10. Andrew Baxter, whose company dealt with the logistics of trade, believed that in the event of 'no deal', customs would not allow the UK borders to be blocked,
11. Sebastian Gorka, a former adviser to Donald Trump, who said voters in the US – as with those who supported Brexit – were fed up with 'business as usual politics'.
12. Becky Speight, of the Woodland Trust, who said that post-Brexit, there was an opportunity to review how agricultural grants deal with woods and trees.

Anti-Brexit opinion (non-politically allied):

1. Ferran Brevet, a campaigner against Catalanian independence, said that life outside the EU would be a disaster.
2. Lord Bilimoria, cross-bench peer and founder of Cobra beer, said that, Brexit was causing severe problems for curry restaurants and was a disaster for the economy.
3. Guy Platten, of the UK Chamber of Shipping, warned that 'no deal' would cause huge customs queues and damage the economy.
4. Phil Bicknell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, who warned of a big negative impact on farm incomes unless there was a free trade agreement.
5. Alan Bennett, the author, who said that Brexit, like the Iraq war, made him feel ashamed to be British.
6. Polly Toynbee, the Guardian columnist, who claimed that the Referendum win on Brexit was 'very small' like Donald Trump's 'win' in the US (he had actually 'lost').
7. Martin Dolman, of the British Exporters' Association, who said that 'no deal' would be a bad outcome for the UK, and could lead to delays in customs.
8. Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the development economist/academic, who claimed it was clear that companies were reducing London operations because of Brexit.
9. Claire Flynn Levy, of Essential Analytics, said that Brexit had cause a massive 'energy suck' and people were 'frozen'.

10. Andrew Varga, of Seetru, said that there was no question that a 10 per cent reduction in his company order book was due to Brexit.
11. Matthew Holehouse of the MLex News Service, claimed there was 'near panic' in government circles because Theresa May's Florence speech had not worked.
12. Sir Martin Donnelly, former permanent secretary in the department of international trade, said that trade would be badly impacted by difficulty in reaching a deal with the EU.
13. Hillary Clinton, former Presidential candidate in the US, had warned that Brexit could seriously damage the UK economy if UK businesses relocated and claimed the Brexit vote had been secured through 'fake news'.
14. Dame Wendy Hall (marginal), a very brief point that EU data protection laws were 'good'
15. Dr Michael Fuchs, Germany CDU vice-chairman, who warned that there could be no 'cherry-picking' in the Article 50 negotiations and said the UK had not made a 'decent' offer of settlement of financial liabilities.
16. Bruno Bonnell, a supporter of President Macron, who said the UK must 'pay up' in terms of its financial obligations and wanted a change of mind about exit.
17. Sir Julian King (marginal mention of the EU), the EU security commissioner, said that NATO and the EU worked together in tackling cybercrime.
18. Mike Amey, of Pimco, said there was still a lot of uncertainty over Brexit, there needed to be more clarity.
19. Nicholas Hatton, of the Three Million Pressure Group, complained that assurances to EU immigrants were not sufficient and the right for those here to bring spouses to the UK.
20. Radek Sikorski, the former Polish foreign minister, warned that negotiating with the EU would be a very humiliating experience, and UK exports would be hit.
21. Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek finance minister, claimed that continued pursuit by the UK of xenophobic 'hard Brexit' policies would lead to 'long term decline'.
22. Hubertus Vath, of Frankfurt Main Finance, claimed that Frankfurt would become the eurozone's main financial centre after Brexit.
23. Dr Jennifer Rogers (marginal), of the statistics consultancy at Oxford, described the importance of the EU's statistics day, and introduced a puzzle.
24. Neil Dwane, of Allianz Global Investors, claimed that poor results in a construction company were the result probably of Brexit uncertainty about committing to future investment.
25. Kirsten Matthias, of the City UK, said that it was 'really urgent' that agreement was reached on transitional arrangements, and warned there would be job shifts away from London if it was not.
26. Gina Miller, Remain campaigner, claimed that British negotiators were 'flip-flopping' around.
27. Mark Rutte and Angela Merkel (soundbites, marginal), the Dutch prime minister and German counterpart, both said the latest talks had contained no new financial proposals from the UK.
28. Matthew Webb, an anti lorry park campaigner, confirmed that his group would continue to fight proposals for new lorry parks if the Brexit deal triggered demand.
29. Caroline Mills, warned that new lorry parks would have awful consequences for children, including additional pollution and dirty lorries.
30. Clive Mills, a haulier, said that the relevant civil servants were not prepared for extra customs traffic and did not have a clue what was going to hit them.
31. Roderick Abbott, former deputy director of the WTO, said that if the UK left the EU with no deal, it would be 'out and over the cliff edge'.
32. Gus O'Donnell, the cross-bench peer, warned that the prospect of 'no deal' was triggering companies to move out of London.
33. Paul Romeva (marginal) spokesman for the Catalan government, mentioned the EU.
34. Rita Vohora, of M&G Investments, suggested that businesses were struggling with 'Brexit uncertainty' and needed to know what transition looked like sooner rather than later.
35. Justin Urquhart-Stewart (marginal), Seven Investment Management, said that interest rate rises (triggered by Brexit) could have a negative impact.

36. Judith Bryans, of Dairy UK, said that 'no deal' would hit British farmers hard and could lead to the rise in price of dairy exports from the UK by 51 per cent – 'prohibitively'.
37. Peter Ruis, of Jigsaw fashion, commented on a company advertising campaign focused on the need for immigrants. He claimed there were 'very few' 100 per cent British people.
38. Dioter Kashinsky and Karolina Mirowska, two Polish nationals who had worked in the UK, argued that Brexit was bad for Britain.
39. Professor Les Hebdon (marginal), Office for Fair Access, commented on the row over MP Chris Heaton-Harris's letter asking about universities' EU teaching.
40. Helal Miah, of the Share Centre, was asked about a fall by four per cent in car production during September. He replied that Brexit could be partly responsible.
41. Jon Thompson, the head of HMRC, appearing before a Commons committee, said that the most extreme version of leaving the EU would cost up to £450 million, including hiring 5,000 staff, to deal with a fivefold increase in customs checks.
42. Alexander Stubb, the former Finish prime minister, now head of the EIB, confirmed that a cut in housing grants was because the UK was leaving the EU, and warned that it would be 2054 before involvement in the bank was unravelled.
43. John Bruton, of the Stonewater housing charity, confirmed why his grant from the EIB was being sharply cut and said the bank 'did not make loans 'out of the goodness of its heart'.
44. Carlos Bastarreche, Spanish Ambassador to the UK, discussing Catalonia, described (unchallenged) Brexit as an emergency facing the EU.
45. Jurgen Maier, head of Siemens UK, warned that border 'friction' was inevitable because the UK was coming out of the EU. The changes would 'cost money'.
46. Lindsey Naylor, author of a report for Oliver Wyman about City job losses in the wake of Brexit, said that up to 75,000 could go if Brexit was 'hard'.

Politicians pro-Brexit, anti-EU

1. **Bernard Jenkin, Conservative MP, argued in an interview that further concessions to the EU were unnecessary and would be economically damaging (interview). A bulletin mention of his stance was made.**
2. Theresa May, in Yesterday in Parliament, was quoted as saying that 'achieving partnership' (with the EU after Brexit) would require flexibility.
3. Jacob Rees-Mogg, Yesterday in Parliament, asked for confirmation that the ECJ's writ would no longer operate in the UK.
4. Iain Duncan Smith, Yesterday in Parliament, wanted confirmation that money would be available for 'no deal'.
5. **Kwasi Kwarteng, PPS to Philip Hammond, defended his boss's approach to Brexit (interview).**
6. Theresa May, Yesterday in Parliament had said that money would be available for 'no deal'.
7. Philip Hammond, Yesterday in Parliament, was said to have told a Treasury Committee that such money would not be available.
8. Sir Edward Leigh, Yesterday in Parliament, wanted to know about preparations for 'no deal'.
9. Liam Fox, Yesterday in Parliament, said that he and the Chancellor had no differences in their approach to Brexit.
10. Andrea Leadsom, Yesterday in Parliament, attacked a Liberal Democrat MP for attempting to tie the government in knots over Brexit.
11. Mark Garnier, Yesterday in Parliament, said that Remainers like him had been proved wrong and the government was now getting it right.

12. **John Redwood claimed that the EU would reach an eleventh hour deal with the UK, but trade would continue whatever happened (interview).**
13. David Davis, Yesterday in Parliament, said the UK needed to prepare for various outcomes in the talks with the EU, including no deal.
14. Boris Johnson, Yesterday in Parliament, denied that the government was split or was at odds with Theresa May's Florence speech.
15. **Owen Paterson was asked about a letter to the press advocating 'no deal'. He denied there would be 'severe economic consequences' (interview). There was a bulletin mention of this.**
16. **Iain Duncan Smith, denied Peter Mandelson's claim that it would be madness to leave the EU without a deal, and said that it was 'nonsense' to suggest that planes would stop flying.**
17. Philip Davies, Yesterday in Parliament, was reported to have been pushing that money saved from leaving the EU should go into social care.
18. Theresa May, Yesterday in Parliament, was quoted as saying that a deal with the EU would be reached.
19. Bernard Jenkin, Yesterday in Parliament, was said to have reassured Theresa May that she was not weak and had attacked Labour for undermining her.
20. Charlie Elphicke, Yesterday in Parliament, was said to have initiated a debate on that the UK should put aside £1 billion for 'no deal'. He said that the money should be put aside to update customs because systems were 'creaking'.
21. Philip Hammond, Yesterday in Parliament, said the government's wish was to reach a deal with the EU.
22. Steve Baker, Yesterday in Parliament, said that £250 million had already been put aside for no deal.
23. Geoffrey Clifton Brown, Yesterday in Parliament, asked how many extra staff HMRC would need to deal with a Brexit 'no deal'.
24. David Davis, Yesterday in Parliament, it was reported 'after some confusion Yesterday', that Parliament would get a vote on Brexit before leaving.
25. Sir Desmond Swayne, Yesterday in Parliament, said he was a 'smooth snake' rather than a viper.
26. Philip Hollobone, Yesterday in Parliament, noting that 61 per cent of voters in Kettering had voted to leave the EU, asked David Davis if he could assure Parliament that the UK would leave the EU.
27. Stewart Andrew MP, before an interview with pollster Peter Kellner, figured in a soundbite in which he had asked Labour MP Barry Sheerman if he believed better educated people had voted for Remain.
28. David Davis, Yesterday in Parliament, confirmed again that Parliament would get a vote on Brexit before the UK left.
29. William Hague was interviewed about what he thought were the prospects for 'no deal' and how he would vote in a second EU referendum (interview).
30. Ian Paisley, Yesterday in Parliament, attacked Keir Starmer for suggesting that it was usual for ministers to disclose advice from civil servants.
31. Bernard Jenkin, Yesterday in Parliament, made the same point.
32. Robin Walker, Yesterday in Parliament, claimed that putting such advice in the public domain could damage the government's negotiating position.
33. David Davis, Yesterday in Parliament, said he had missed the previous day's debate about disclosure.
34. Nigel Evans, Yesterday in Parliament, asked Labour members if they had asked for disclosure from the European Commission on similar lines.
35. Robin Walker, Yesterday in Parliament, said he would respond in due course to requests for disclosure.

Politicians pro-EU, anti-Brexit:

1. Nicholas Sturgeon, the leader of the SNP, said that the outcome of the Brexit negotiations risked being 'a disaster' and argued for a 'soft' Brexit, while holding out the possibility of a second referendum (interview).
2. Nick Clegg, ex leader of the Liberal Democrats, explained why he was advocating a second referendum on EU membership (interview).
3. Tom Tugendhat (Conservative MP), discussing Catalonia said he had voted Remain and thought the EU was vital in maintaining peace and ensuring international cooperation.
4. Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat, Yesterday in Parliament, suggested that sacking Boris Johnson would stop the risk of the UK crashing out of the EU.
5. Ian Blackford, Yesterday in Parliament (SNP), wondered whether Theresa May was a convert to Brexit or a 'heretic still'.
6. Jeremy Corbyn, Yesterday in Parliament, said the government was in chaos.
7. Anna Soubry (Conservative), Yesterday in Parliament, said the government should give certainty to business by immediately ruling out 'no deal'.
8. Hilary Benn, chair of the Commons Brexit Committee, warned that 'no deal' would lead to job losses, punitive tariffs, hit the financial sector and cause problems with the Irish border (interview).
9. Heidi Alexander (Yesterday in Parliament), said that 'nbo deal' sounded to be a terrible option supported by the right-wing 'rabid' sections of the Conservative party.
10. Claire Perry, minister for climate change, said he role was helping the EU to move towards clean energy. She refused to say whether she would still vote Remain.
11. Lady Ashton (marginal), former EU foreign policy chief, said that the deal the EU had helped negotiate with Iran was working well.
12. Hannah Bardell (SNP), Yesterday in Parliament, asked for the publication of civil service assessments of the likely impact of Brexit.
13. Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat, Yesterday in Parliament, asked for the exact cost of Brexit to be set out.
14. Bill Esterson, Yesterday in Parliament, said there had been a nine per cent drop in new jobs because of Brexit through the drying up of foreign investment.
15. Lord Cormack (Conservative peer), Yesterday in Parliament, it was said, had praised Philip Hammond's stance on 'no deal'.
- 16. Ken Clarke, former Chancellor, said that only 'hard right' eurosceptics wanted 'no deal' and claimed there had not been a sensible debate on leaving the single market (interview).**
17. Yvette Cooper, Yesterday in Parliament, asked whether the UK would be a secure place if there was 'no deal'.
18. Sir Keir Starmer, Yesterday in Parliament, had accused David Davis of making 'only glacial progress' in the Brexit talks and suggested that only 'fantasists' were talking of 'no deal'.
19. Emily Thornberry, Yesterday in Parliament, suggested that the Brexit bill would be up to €100 billion.
- 20. Sir Keir Starmer, warned of more delay in the Brexit talks, said the UK should stick to its pensions obligations to the EU, and should negotiate a better deal so that business and jobs would not be hit (interview).**
- 21. Lord Mandelson, said that 'no deal' would be disastrous for the UK, claimed that the Conservative party was split in its approach to Brexit, and said it was vital to have a transition period in the single market (interview).**
22. Angela Rayner said that training was needed of British trades people, in order to deal with the shortfall that would be caused by Brexit (interview mainly on portfolio issues).
23. Mike Gapes, Yesterday in Parliament, attacked Theresa May's claims to want to create a 'deep and special' relationship with the EU, it was the new version of 'strong and stable' from an 'empty vessel'.
24. Jeremy Corbyn, Yesterday in Parliament, said that the Brexit talks were like Groundhog Day, there had been no progress.

25. Anna Soubry (Conservative), Yesterday in Parliament, said she had taken up the case of British businesses being hit by uncertainty caused by Brexit.
26. Kirsty Blackman (SNP), Yesterday in Parliament, claimed that 52 per cent of EU national working for FTSE companies would quite the UK by the end of Brexit.
27. John McDonnell, Yesterday in Parliament, challenged Philip Hammond to say 'face down' his Cabinet colleagues and say that he did not support 'no deal'.
28. Lord Patten, in a brief introduction to an interview of Jo Johnson, the universities minister, had claimed that a letter written by MP Chris Heaton-Harris to universities about their teaching of EU-related subjects, was 'idiotic Leninism' (reported quote).
29. Ed Davey, energy minister in the Coalition (Liberal Democrat), said that proposals for a carbon tax at EU borders might be negatively affected by Brexit.
30. Shabana Mahmood, Yesterday in Parliament, said that if the Brexit negotiations went wrong, it would be 'catastrophic'. There would be queues at the ports at Dover, rotting food, and everybody would think, 'Brexit's happened and Britain has become a basket case.'
31. Meg Hillier, Yesterday in Parliament, wondered how a select committee witness could sleep at night because she also believed Brexit could be 'catastrophic' with little time to sort things out if it went wrong.
32. Tom Brake, Yesterday in Parliament (Liberal Democrat), said he wanted another referendum on leaving the EU.
33. Barry Sheerman, Yesterday in Parliament, claimed that David Davis was a 'fudger' who was failing in the Brexit negotiations.
34. Keir Starmer, Yesterday in Parliament, said that David Davis had given contradictory statements about whether Parliament would have a vote on Brexit before it happened.
35. Dominic Grieve, Yesterday in Parliament (Conservative), called for a change in the law so that Brexit could be scrutinised properly.
36. Nicky Morgan, Yesterday in Parliament (Conservative), urged David Davis to accept the Brexit amendment clause and warned that Conservatives would vote against him.
37. Barry Sheerman, it was reported, had claimed on BBC Sunday Politics that voters for remain were better educated (introduction to interview).
38. Caroline Lucas, Yesterday in Parliament, wondered how the government publishing forecasts of Brexit impacts would undermine the UK's negotiating position.
39. Peter Grant, Yesterday in Parliament (SNP), said it could be that the forecasts would show was a catastrophic mistake Brexit was.
40. Wera Hobhouse, Yesterday in Parliament (Liberal Democrat), warned that the government's reluctance to reveal the civil service Brexit impact statements could mean they were hiding bad news.
41. Keir Starmer, Yesterday in Parliament, explained why the Labour party had pushed for the figures to be revealed, why an unusual Parliamentary procedure was being used, and suggested this would force things into the open.
42. Anna Soubry, Yesterday in Parliament (Conservative), said that she wanted the relevant statements to be disclosed.
43. Keir Starmer, Yesterday in Parliament (after the motion above had been lost), said the papers should be handed over by the end of the week.