



**UNIVERSITY  
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# **Language Use, Attitudes, and Women's Rights in Abortion Discourse: A Qualitative and Comparative Study on Left and Right Winged British Newspaper Articles on Abortion**

Eva-Lydia Eleonoora Mäki

Master's Thesis

Language Specialist Degree Program, Department of English

School of Languages and Translation studies

Faculty of Humanities

University of Turku

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This thesis is a critical discourse study on abortion discourse in British left and right leaning newspaper articles. This study examines the language use, attitudes, and women's rights in the articles, and compares the differences between the articles from the more left leaning and right leaning newspapers. The data consists of ten articles from six different British newspapers: The Guardian, The Daily Record, The Daily Mirror, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, and The Sun. This study aims at examining the word choices, attitudes, opinions, present voices, and whether women's rights are supported or violated in abortion discourse.

The theories and methods draw from Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse, social theory, and Michelle Lazar's feminist critical discourse analysis. The analysis focuses on the agencies of the writers of the articles. Those agencies include: specific word choices and whether they are positive, negative, or neutral; intertextuality, that is, quotations from other people's voices involved in the articles; ideologies, that are the people's attitudes and opinions present in the articles towards abortion or abortion legislation and politics; and engagement.

The results showed that, in fact, there were no noteworthy differences to be found in the language use, attitudes, or views towards women's rights between the more left leaning or right leaning newspaper articles. Thus, the hypothesis was proven to be false. However, an aspect in which there was a certain difference to be found, was between those articles where the writers' voices were more neutral and subtle, versus these where they were more visible and opinionated. The first group used more quotations and other people's voices, whereas the latter group had less of these. Otherwise, the two groups, that is, left and right leaning articles, did not have any major differences in any of the features that were looked at.

Even though the hypothesis of this study was proven to be false, the topic of this study, that is, abortion and women's rights, has been relevant to examine. Earlier similar studies have revealed that negative media presentation on the topic of abortion has affected negatively on the formation of people's opinions and views towards abortion. Media presentation has also affected the general ideologies in the society, too.

**Key words:** Critical discourse analysis, feminist critical discourse analysis, social theory of discourse, abortion, women's rights, abortion discourse, newspaper articles

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## Abbreviations:

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

FCDA: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

T: The Telegraph

G: The Guardian

DMirror: The Daily Mirror

DMail: The Daily Mail

DR: Daily Record

S: The Sun

# 1 Introduction

Conversation around abortion has existed throughout history all over the world and it has been intense for the last fifty years since the execution of Roe v Wade law in the USA in 1973, and the Abortion Act in Britain in 1967 (Linton 1989, Purcell et al 2014). Yet the discussion has been especially heated during the recent few years (see e.g., Cohen et al, 2021 and Cullen & Korolczuk, 2019). However, the discussion has been particularly relevant and topical in 2022 due to the overturning of the Roe v Wade law in the United States on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, which affected the abortion discussion everywhere in the world. Generally, the discussion and people's opinions on abortion seem to be very polarised and it is something that has caused a lot of debate and conversation through time, but especially now. The topic of abortion is interesting because it is very broad and functions on multiple different domains in society: Human rights, women's rights, politics, the matter of law, religion, and ethics.

Discussion and discourse about abortion is relevant and topical especially now, since the overturning of the Roe v Wade law took place in the USA in the summer of 2022, and so the matters of abortion legislation changed drastically, for the worse. Thus, this topic is worth investigating and analysing more closely in this MA thesis. Firstly, it is a topic that touches many women, and other people too, in such an important and personal level. Secondly, it is a matter of human rights, and thus women's rights to decide about their own bodies their selves, and it is interesting and confusing that these kinds of human rights issues are still debated on today. There are other studies about abortion discourse that focus on different points of views of the problems, such as linguistic or social sides (see e.g. Larsson et al 2015; Saurette & Gordon 2013 and Macleod 2012). However, in my opinion, this topic needs further studying today, especially from linguistic and human rights point of view. Also, it is relevant to conduct updated research on newer conversation and material. Furthermore, the type of research of abortion recognizing the distinction between the political stance of the studied newspapers has not been done very much, but in this study the political stances of the newspapers are taken into consideration. Abortion discourse in print media has been studied over the last ten years (e.g. Purcell et al. 2014; Larsson et al. 2015; Macleod 2012; Koralewska and Zielinska 2022) without taking into account the political stance of the papers.

The focus of the present thesis is on abortion discourse in British media. Even though America and its legislations regarding abortion is also discussed, the primary material and thus the core of the study is specifically on Britain in the material. The UK was chosen as the

main focus because comparing the USA and UK abortion discourses would have been too broad scale for the scope of the present thesis, and I wanted to focus more on the UK. However, the abortion politics in the US are still relevant to be included in this thesis, because of the impact that those changes had on the UK and its abortion discourse there as well. The legal changes in the US are reflected in multiple of the British newspaper articles that are also used as data in the present thesis. The collected data consists of abortion discourse in the news. The primary focus is particularly on the discourse side of the matter that is, word choices, use of negative or positive words, attitudes behind the words, thoughts, argumentation, quoting of other parties, and the overall nature of the discourse. However, the matter of human rights does remain along in this MA thesis and is present despite the primary focus being on the linguistic features in the primary material. Discourse analysis is relevant since it is a combination of studying both the linguistic and the societal side of the matter. I conduct a critical discourse analysis based on the specific methods I have chosen to best suit this topic and the analysis of the data that handles human rights. The methods include looking at agencies, engagement, and intertextuality in the articles, and drawing outcomes based on the findings in the material. In addition to these, I have chosen three critical discourse analysis frameworks according to which I will analyze and interpret the findings in the data. These frameworks are Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework of Discourse, Fairclough's Social Theory, and Michelle Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. As material, I have used ten different British newspaper articles that are introduced more closely in the material and methodology section. The material is divided into two categories: Half of the articles situate politically more to the left side of the continuum, and the other half on the right side based on the newspapers they were published in.

The goal of this study is to see whether there are any differences or similarities to be found between those newspaper articles that belong to the left winged political group, or the right winged political group, based on the political stance of the newspapers. However, it needs to be noted that the political stance in the newspapers is a continuum, and even though the material has been divided into two different groups based on the newspapers' political stance, the papers in the same group are not necessarily in the exact same political position. The materials are introduced in more detail in the materials and methods section.

I have set three sets of research questions that this MA thesis seeks to answer. These three questions should be kept in mind throughout this thesis. The research questions are the following:

1. How is the language use in the articles, and how is the positive and negative word choices present in the articles? How do they differ between the more left winged and right winged newspaper articles?
2. How are the writers' own thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards abortion? How are the thoughts, opinions, attitudes, and quoting of other voices and in the left and right winged articles?
3. How does the discourse in the newspapers on the topic of abortion either violate or support women's rights, or their right to have an abortion?

My first hypothesis is that the language used in the newspaper articles that belong to the politically more right winged group is to be found more patriarchal and derogatory towards women undergoing abortion and condemns abortion. The second hypothesis is that on the other hand, the more left winged newspaper articles are more supportive towards access to abortion and take a kinder approach towards the women having abortion.

I have introduced the overall topic, research questions, and hypothesis of this thesis in this introduction. In the next section I present the backgrounds of this topic, explaining the necessary information of abortion first on a general level, and the necessary information of abortion in the UK and the USA. In section three, I proceed to explaining the theoretical side of the matter, introducing the essentials of critical discourse analysis and the more precise theoretical approaches of CDA used in this thesis. The used theories are Fairclough's Social Theory of Discourse, the Three-Dimensional Framework of Discourse, and Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. After this, I present the materials and methods of the thesis in section four, where I introduce the ten articles and present the criteria of the newspapers and the articles when collecting the data. In the methodology section, I also explain the methods of the present thesis. After the methodology section follows the analysis itself in section five, where the articles are analysed and discussed by conducting a close-reading method. The sixth section is the discussion section, where the findings of the study are presented, and how they relate to this study is discussed. In addition to these, possible problems and things that could have been done differently are discussed. Also, the ideas for further research based on the current research are considered. The last section of the thesis is the conclusion section, where a summary of the goals and findings of the thesis are presented, and I answer to the research questions that were set in the introduction.



## 2 Background

In this section I first briefly introduce the history and the current situations in the UK and the USA concerning abortion and abortion rights. In section 2.2 I define the necessary terminology for reading the present thesis. Even though the present study does not deal with abortion in the USA, I argue that it is relevant for the reader to be aware of what has happened in the USA in 2022 regarding abortion law, when the Supreme Court decided to overturn the old *Roe v Wade* law making access to abortion significantly harder for those wanting it. The reason why the US situation is relevant to this study is because that topic is very much present and reflected in the UK newspapers as well, and thus in the data of this thesis. Also, the overturning of *Roe v Wade* is mentioned and discussed in the material multiple times, too. The *Roe v Wade* law will be further discussed later in the thesis.

Some relevant earlier studies on this topic are for example Saurette and Gordon's (2013) study on the new anti-abortion discourse in Canada, which focuses on studying language use and attitudes in discourse in the Western world, and Larsson and other's (2015) study on discourses on abortion in Ugandan daily newspapers, which on the other hand centres in a developing country. It is worth noting that both linguistic and social factors are included in these two studies, which is characteristic to discourse analysis. Other two studies worth mentioning are McDonnell and Murphy's (2019) media framing study on abortion politics in Ireland and Purcell and other's (2014) print media study on representation of abortion in Great Britain, that centres even more on the critical discourse analysis side of the matter. These studies are relevant to be mentioned since they all are similar to the present thesis and share same features and focuses. They study abortion discourse and have a CDA focus, and the material is also similar with the material of the present thesis, in the sense that it is print media.

### 2.1 Abortion

In this section I first briefly explain the basic information on abortion and describe the situation regarding abortion in the UK and the USA today. I also introduce the historical side of the matter, which is relevant regarding the current situation. There is particularly lot of information on abortion precisely in developing countries, where abortion is still very much a taboo and the issues of safe abortion and the rights to it are even harder to access than in most of the western countries (World Health Organization, Amnesty International). However, the

present thesis does not deal with abortion in the developing countries, and thus I do not cover this matter in detail and provide only the amount of information regarding abortion in developing countries that is necessary. Hence, the primary focus is on the UK and the USA. Nonetheless, I still argue that understanding and being aware of abortion rights in developing countries, too, helps in grasping the bigger picture of abortion situation in the whole world. (see e.g. Larsson et al 2015; Saurette & Gordon 2013 and Macleod 2012).

Amnesty International, one of the biggest human rights organizations in the world, defines abortion or induced abortion as “a medical procedure that ends a pregnancy”. According to Amnesty International, abortion is basic healthcare that is needed by millions of people all over the world. It is estimated that every fourth pregnancy ends in abortion. (Amnesty International). Abortion access is one of the most fiercely debated topics worldwide and the discussion is filled with misinformation about the real consequences of restricted access to this basic healthcare service, abortion (ibid.). Abortion can be done in two different ways, which are medicinal abortion and procedural abortion. Medicinal abortion uses medicines to end the pregnancy and procedural abortion is a procedure in which the pregnancy is aborted by removing the contents of the womb (MedlinePlus).

### 2.1.1 Abortion in Britain

Abortion has been legal in practice in the UK since the Abortion Act in 1967. According to Zhou, Blaylock and Harris (2020) it was decided in the Abortion Act that “all abortions must be approved by two doctors, reported to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and be performed by doctors within licensed premises”. However, in theory, abortion still remains a criminal offence under the Offences Against the Person Act 1981, when it does not fulfill the set criteria. For example, in reality, 98 percent of the registered abortions in the UK are recorded as a risk for the woman’s mental health (Sheldon and Wellings 2020, 11). The grounds for permitted abortion in England, Scotland, and Wales are: a risk on the life of the pregnant woman, risk of physical or mental health injury of the woman or already existing children, or the possible risk of mental or physical abnormalities of the possibly born child (Sheldon and Wellings 2020, 8).

In sum, the current abortion law in the UK is archaic and problematic. It is expressed as unclear and old, and it is in contradiction with the Abortion Act which was created to ensure safe abortions (Sheldon and Wellings 2020, 9). Even though abortion is de facto legal in the

country, as has been said, there are problems with the currently operative Abortion Act. These problems have to do with legal access to abortion and human rights issues, such as strict limitations on who or how far pregnant people can have abortion. Moreover, the current state of affairs in the USA is even more troubling because of the setbacks of the summer of 2022, since the access to abortion there is even more restricted and violates human rights.

### 2.1.2 Abortion in the USA

In the US, abortion was legalized in every state for the first trimester, and thus women's rights to get abortion was made more easily accessible and safer in 1973, with the passing of the legislation, in theory. Despite giving the power of regulating, limiting and codifying abortion to the states and thus granting them the right to decide about their abortion law, social stigma, and political efforts that limit access to abortion, such as financial limitations, continued to increase. There has been multiple different problems throughout the fifty years regarding the matter of abortion in the USA (The British Journal of Social Work). With *Roe v Wade* legislation in 1973, federal protections for pregnant women to get an abortion were ensured and states could not entirely ban abortion before the fetus reaches the point that it could survive outside the womb. Due to limited funding sources, anti-abortion activists worked enthusiastically to limit access to abortion and thus managed to promote some policies that ban certain procedures and recognize the personhood of a fetus, which then led ultimately to changes in different states (ibid.). Briefly summed, it can be said that abortion policies in the USA have always been debatable and still continue to be. In the USA, the controversial nature of abortion is intense, polarized and controlled. Decisions about abortions are very much done firsthand accordingly to the states' policies, instead of giving the pregnant person their own right to decide what they want to do with the pregnancy, and thus appreciation of privacy and decision making of ones' own body, are limited (McCoyd, 2008).

All the debate that has occurred over the last fifty years culminated on June 24, 2022, when the Supreme Court overturned the *Roe vs Wade* law, restoring the decision of abortion rights for the states (Guttmacher Institute). In practice, this enactment affected 46 states and made it much harder for women in the USA to get an abortion. At the time of writing this section of the present MA thesis (Autumn of 2022) the situation in the USA is that in 18 states there is either a full ban on abortion or it is limited to either six, 15, 18 or 20 weeks; in 19 states abortion is either legal or legal but limited, and in ten states the ban of abortions has been temporarily blocked (The New York Times, 2022). The debate and discussion over the

overturning of Roe v Wade law continues to this day all over the world. Because of this, the discussion and reporting of abortion matter has increased in the United Kingdom, too, and several of the articles used as material in the present thesis also mention the situation in the USA.

## 2.2 Terminology

In this section I introduce the necessary terminology that the reader must know to understand the thesis, regarding abortion. The terms introduced in this section are essential terms that touch the topic of abortion, not critical discourse analysis, which is covered later in this thesis in section 3.1.1

### 2.2.1 Pro-life & pro-choice

The terms “Pro-life” and “Pro-choice” are relevant terms on the topic of abortion on a general level, and usually they are referred to or mentioned in abortion discussion. Thus, these terms are relevant to be introduced in this thesis also, even though they are not particularly central in the material and the thesis does not study the use of these specific terms explicitly. These terms are mentioned on the primary material as well.

Briefly defined, “pro-choice” refers to the belief that everybody should have the right to choose whether they want to have children or not ([plannedparenthood.com](http://plannedparenthood.com)). On the other hand, “pro-life” means opposing abortion and believing that the potential fetus has a right to live (*ibid.*). In essence, people who take a pro-choice stance in the abortion conversation, usually think that women should have the right to have an abortion if they want to, and to have the right to make that decision about their own bodies. In other words, the term essentially refers to having the right to choose.

While this division of pro-life people and pro-choice people into two camps is generally relatively straightforward and characteristic in a way, this type of dichotomy does not function on *every* part of the abortion discussion. The division is not adequate in the current state of the abortion debate, since nowadays it is rather complex and there exists a whole different conversation on abortion depending on the sex of the fetus (Amery 2020, 4). This, however, does not further relate to my thesis and I consider the two terms according to the traditional division.

It is also worth discussing here that traditionally those people who are extremely religious tend to belong to the pro-life camp. This is especially common in the US, where religion is immensely a part of the every-day life, and the majority of the population belong to some religion (Pew Research Center). Typically, those people who believe in God or belong to some religion, tend to believe that abortion is wrong, at least to some degree (Pew Research Center). Naturally, it is not as straightforward that all religious people would be pro-lifers, but it must be acknowledged that generally this tends to be the situation. However, I will not discuss this matter in more detail here, since the religion related matter regarding the abortion discussion is not eminently present in the data used in this thesis, and the data does not encompass the US. Thus, it is not particularly relevant to emphasize this point and discuss it further, even though it is imperative in the general pro-life and pro-choice abortion discussion.

### 2.2.2 Women's Rights

Amnesty International, an international human rights organization, states that “[w]omen’s rights are human rights” and defines women’s rights according to the following quote: “We are all entitled to human rights. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical or mental health; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn equal wage” (Amnesty International).

However, across the globe these rights are not fulfilled depending on the place, and many women and girls face discrimination based on their sex and gender. Gender inequality causes many of the previously mentioned inequality issues, and among them also the issues of sexual and reproductive rights (Amnesty International). Amnesty International says that “[e]very woman and girl has reproductive rights. This means they are entitled to equal access to health services like contraception and safe abortions, to choose if, when, and who they marry, and decide if they want to have children and if so, how many, when and with who”. This, however, is not the case in the present world. Many girls and women still cannot access legal and safe abortions (ibid.). In multiple countries, people who either need or want abortions, do not have the access to it and they have to put their life at risk by getting an illegal and life-threatening abortion or go to jail. For example in the UK, the British legislation simply does not unequivocally secure full autonomy for women to choose, and there are occasions when women are prosecuted and jailed for having an abortion, and sometimes even are not allowed to have one.

Regarding human rights in the present thesis, throughout this thesis, I use both terms “women’s rights” and “human rights”. Also, it must be noted that I use the word “women” on multiple occasions when talking about pregnant people or people who can get pregnant, even though I acknowledge that there are other people than just women who can get pregnant. Due to a few reasons, I use the words “woman” and “women”: Firstly because this distinction of for example pregnancies of non-binary people is not addressed at all in the data, and secondly, it generally looks better and is more simple to talk about women rather than for example “people with uteruses” or “people who can get pregnant”, even though I am aware of the negative sides that using the word “woman” can carry in this context. Thirdly, the data used in this thesis also uses the words “women” and “woman”.

### 2.2.3 Abortion Discourse

In the present thesis, the term “abortion discourse” refers to the discourse around abortion or on the topic of abortion. Each of the ten articles used as data are on the topic of abortion or they have something to do with the problems in the current abortion legislation in the United Kingdom. Throughout this thesis, I use the term “abortion discourse” since it describes the topic of the present study the best and most distinctively, even though there are other terms used such as abortion debate, regarding this topic.

The term abortion discourse can also be approached from the point of view of the opposing ideology, that is, anti-abortion discourse. According to Koralewska and Zielinska (2022, 674) in anti-abortion discourse, the characteristics of personhood of a fetus further enhance the negative associations of abortion and present it as a murder. It does not take into consideration the bigger picture that involves the woman having rights of her own, but merely emphasizes the fetus’ independence. Thus, it can be concluded that the term abortion discourse refers to the general discourse on the topic of abortion.

### 2.2.4 Media Discourse

Media discourse is a multidisciplinary field that can be used in multiple different domains of research, especially in linguistic studies. The importance of media is particularly nowadays so extensive that it is almost impossible to not to consume any media at all. Also, since discourse too has a vital role in people’s lives, the significance of power and influence of media discourse are apparent (Talbot 2007, 3). Talbot (2007, 4) claims in her book that “[i]t is well understood in media and cultural studies that – as viewers, readers and listeners, people

‘merely’ engage with representation”. Thus, the interactions behind all media representations are in reality more complex and not everything worth noting is always represented in the media, and thus, it is a complex field. It must be also noted that online media and print media has their differences, and the boundaries between those two are ambiguous.

In discussing media discourse, it is relevant to regard the influence that media has on society and culture, too, and vice versa. Talbot (2007, 5) claims, that in the modern world, media is one of the most significant factors in creating and distributing culture, that is, ‘shared meanings’. Thus, language has an important role in this distribution also. Regarding culture, or creating and distributing it, meanings are produced in different stages and ways, that is a continuous process (ibid). So, representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation all affect each other and create a complex process of creating meanings, and thus, culture.

Regarding the present study and the primary materials, the production and distribution of information via for example these types of newspaper articles (online broadsheets and tabloids) are also affected by other media, other articles, and other people and vice versa. Talbot (2007, 13) explains that discourses are bodies of practice and knowledge, which then further shape people. According to Talbot (2007, 13) these bodies of practice and knowledge give different types of power positions to some people, but not others, and they can exist in certain situations in social interaction. All these situations exist in a dialectal relationship that are dependent on each other (Talbot 2007, 13). For example, particular discursive events, such as reading a paper, does not occur in a situation without any social context, but they are shaped by both social and institutional structures (Talbot 2007, 13). However, these institutional and social structures are also shaped *by* the discursive event. Discursive practices can either help maintain the current status quo or then contribute to changing it (Talbot 2007, 13). The same approach can be applied to the data of the present thesis: The discursive practices present in the newspaper articles have been shaped by ideologies and previous texts and discourses, but the texts, discourses and ideologies present in the articles themselves, on the other hand contribute to the shaping of other social practices. Culture is presented in the media via for example those underlying ideologies, traditions, ways of thinking, and even the topics displayed. The discursive and social practices are discussed in more detail later in section three of this thesis.

Matters discussed above can be applied to how people learn to think about abortion. At the end, a relatively great deal of people's opinions in general come from other people's views or are at least affected by them. The media is full of other people's opinions, and this also applies to abortion. For example, in those times when abortion was treated even more negatively in the world, people could learn these negative views and thoughts about it from the media, where it was presented in a negative way. Nowadays, abortion is viewed in a bit more acceptable way and the media discourse about it is no longer as brutal as it was. These developments are a slow result of those subtle changes in individual people's minds, that progressively have affected the media.

In the light of what has been discussed above, it can be concluded that this study of language use on abortion in British media is timely and important. It is important and interesting to see whether there are changes to be detected between differently positioned newspapers and their articles. For example, if there are evident differences to be found between the articles, certain conclusions about the readers of each newspaper can be drawn.



### 3 Theoretical Approaches

In this section I present the theories used in the thesis. I start by introducing discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis which are common and used methods in language studies, to help understand and unwrap hidden or subconscious meanings and attitudes behind words in texts. I also introduce Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework of Discourse and then proceed to the two more precise theories of CDA used in the analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Social Theory of Discourse.

#### 3.1 Critical discourse analysis

The present thesis is a critical discourse analysis on ten newspaper articles. In this section I focus on explaining the necessary information first on (critical) discourse analysis generally and then introduce the more focused theories. The terms discourse analysis (DA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) are sometimes used interchangeably, however, they have their differences. DA is a very broad and complex concept, and it can be used in multiple different ways in different types of research such as history, anthropology, psychiatry, sociology, political science, or education, and it is an interdisciplinary approach (Handford & Gee 2012, 5). DA is a branch of both linguistics and social sciences, which is why it suits many types of research, and within the specific fields, it can be used in different ways, focusing on different elements or forms in the text (*ibid.*). CDA has a stronger political core focusing on different types of issues in discourse regarding for example social phenomena, power, and ideologies, whereas DA traditionally only focuses on describing a text or discourse. I only introduce DA and CDA on a very general level, without diving in too deep to the functions of it and focus more on introducing the chosen specific theories used in this thesis.

In the present study the main focus of conducting a critical discourse analysis is on abortion rights, women's rights, and thus human rights in the data. In this CDA study, the political stances of the newspapers are relevant regarding the differences between the two politically differently situating papers (left and right). However, the political stances are not as clear in the data articles themselves even though the matters of abortion are generally a political subject.

Essentially, DA studies language in use. The main focus of DA is the meanings given to language and those events that are carried out when language is used in certain contexts (Handford & Gee 2012, 2). These contexts can be for example culture, society, history,

identity, institutions, politics, and power. In essence, those things that are created by language (Handford & Gee 2012, 5). Titscher et al state that “[d]iscourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory. Critical analysis implies a systematic methodology and a relationship between text and its social conditions, ideologies, and power relations” (Titscher et. al. 2000, 146). Handford and Gee (2012, 1) explain the use of language in their book according to the following quote:

We do not just mean things with language: we also do things with language. We accomplish actions, goals, and purposes. When a minister says “I pronounce you man and wife,” he or she is marrying two people, not just communicating something to them. When a person calls the union of two gay men a “marriage,” the speaker is helping to create or re-create the institution of marriage in a certain way, as an institutionally sanctioned union between two committed people, and not necessarily a man and a woman. When another person refuses to use the word for the union of two gay men, that speaker is helping to create or re-create a different institution of marriage.

Language use is always subject for change and the meanings and actions of utterances depend on the underlining, situational meanings that can be for example culturally or socially learned (Handford and Gee 2012, 2). Lazar (2007, 142) says that CDA adopts a political view on matters and that it is traditionally used with analysing various types of injustice and social inequality. These apply to the present thesis too, since the topic of abortion is still a matter of inequality today. She also says that “CDA offers a considered theorization of relationship between social practices and discourse structures, and a wide range of tools and strategies for detailed analyses of contextualized uses of language in texts and talk” (2007, 144). Social practises and discourse structures are defined below in section 3.2.

In the present study, the prevailing stance and my personal view on abortion is pro-choice and women’s rights supportive. I think it is important to conduct this type a study and focus on the language use regarding abortion rights, human rights, and attitudes. The general stance of this thesis is to support women’s rights and to take an objective view towards the more focused matters discussed in the articles. Because of my personal stance on the matter, I consider it to be reasonable to take a feminist approach in this thesis and thus I make use of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), which will be later discussed in section 3.3.

### 3.2 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework of Discourse

Fairclough has invented a setting for discourse, that is called a three-dimensional framework of discourse. The three aspects this framework introduces are text, discursive practice, and social practice, which together illustrate what discourse is and how discourse and interpreting it works. The framework is closely connected to the Social Theory of Discourse that will be discussed next in section 3.2.1. The idea of this framework is to bring together the three different aspects of discourse that all need to be considered when doing critical discourse analysis. It is important to understand about this framework that all these three aspects affect each other, and in a way exist in a symbiotic relationship (Fairclough 1992, 71)

According to Fairclough these three components affect each other and contribute to the formations of each other: Social Practices that are for example all types of norms and modes of actions that exists in the society and the ways different things are seen in society, affect the distributions, consumptions, and productions of these issues, and then again contribute to the discourse or text itself. He also says, that “in producing their world, members’ practices are shaped in ways of which they are usually unaware by social structures, relations of power, and the nature of the social practice they are engaged in whose stakes always go beyond producing meanings” (Fairclough 1992, 72), and “members’ practice has outcomes and effects upon social structures, social relations and social struggles around them, of which again they are usually unaware” (ibid.). Thus, he claims that usually for example the participants of a society, are unaware of the fact that they all contribute to the developing of these specific societal structures.

The first component of the framework is *text*. According to Fairclough (1992, 74), it can be assumed that any sort of textual feature, such as book, voicemail, or table of contents in a study, can be significant in discourse analysis, which makes the smallest amounts of text important and relevant. Fairclough (1992, 75) says, that “[t]exts are made up of forms which past discursive practice, condensed into conventions, has endowed with meaning potential”. In the present thesis, the text component naturally consists of the articles, that is, the data of this thesis, which comprise of smaller components such as sentences and words, that all contribute to the bigger picture.

The second dimension of Fairclough's framework is discursive practice. Fairclough (1992, 78) says that *discursive practice* “involves processes of text production, distribution, and

consumption, and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors”. He says that texts are consumed differently in different social contexts and that some texts have simple distributions whereas others have complex ones (1992, 79). In this thesis, the writers’ writing process and the readers reading the article can be viewed as discursive practices. These processes of writing and reading contribute to delivering and changing individuals’ and communities’ social practices, that is, ways of thinking, ideologies, and views.

The third component of the three-dimensional framework is *discourse as social practice*. This component entails discourse in relation to ideologies and power structures and sees discourse through a view of hegemonic power (Fairclough 1992, 86). This component materializes in the present thesis in the ideologies and different views on abortion that are shared by the people and their views present in the articles.

### 3.2.1 Social Theory of Discourse

Social Theory of Discourse is a linguistically oriented theory presented by Norman Fairclough that according to Tan and Renugah (2015, 58) “aims at analysing social and political event in society. In this theory, discourse is viewed as a social practice which establishes power between various entities”. These power relations “lead[s] to the emergence of power and ideological practice in society which provide power in discourse and signifies various world views from different perspectives” (Tan & Renugah 2015, 58). Fairclough (1992, 63) claimed that “language use in society is a social practice rather than an individual activity” and Tan and Renugah (2015, 58) say, that “[t]his notion is correlated to the occurrence of power and ideology in discourse”. Because of this theory’s strong focus on power, and the fact that abortion is very much a political and social event in a society, this theory is suitable to make use of in the present thesis. This theory is also suitable to combine with critical discourse analysis since it has a critical approach to social events and phenomena. The present study is a CDA study because it focuses on investigating and finding out how social relations in abortion discourse affect the language use in newspaper articles and the other way around.

In this Social Theory of Discourse, Fairclough has suggested three principles that are regarded as social practice. Tan and Renugah (2015, 59) summarize the three principles:

First, discourse is both constitutive and constituted, discourse is said to contribute to the shaping and reflection of social structures. Second, social practice constructs the social identities and the social relationships between various entities and classes in society. Third, social practice contributes to the system of knowledge and belief as it leads to other functions of language such as identity, relational and ideational functions.

Moreover, Social Theory of Discourse is interested in how discourse relates to society, focusing on the patterns of interaction between the participants, social aims, and different social events. I claim that this theory is very applicable in the present thesis, since power relations, social structures, and different types of functions of language contribute to the topic of the present thesis.

### **3.3 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Michelle Lazar)**

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (from now on FCDA) is a theory of CDA that takes a feminist approach towards discourse. According to Michelle Lazar (2007), FCDA “as a research program, is known for its overtly political stance and is concerned with analysis of various forms of social inequality and injustice” (2007, 142) Lazar also says, that “feminist CDA has the advantage of operating [...] within a politically invested, explanatory program of discourse analysis” (2007, 144). Thus, much can be learned in FCDA about the interconnection between discursive strategies that are embedded in different “forms of social inequality and oppression” (Lazar 2007, 145), that gives information to critical feminist analysis and methods for social change (ibid.). Lazar (2007, 145) explains, that “[T]he central concern of feminist critical discourse analysts is with critiquing discourse which sustain a patriarchal social order – relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, and disempower women as a social group”. In sum, the collaboration of feminism and CDA offers political critique towards the society. Lazar has formed five principles of FCDA that illustrate the goals of the theory. Zhou (2021, 743) presents these principles in her feminist critical theory. Next, I introduce these five principles using her and Lazar’s definitions.

Firstly, FCDA sees gender as an ideology that divides people into two separate groups, and this division is based on sexual differences and naturalness. Secondly, power is strongly

linked to feminist critique. Zhou (2021, 743) says, that even though the feminist movement has not stopped, the effects of patriarchy in society has made it more difficult for women to seize the power to themselves. The third principle says that gender is performative and constitutive, which essentially means that men and women would be consciously ‘performing’ or living accordingly to the masculine or feminine identities. The fourth principle claims that feminist criticism is reflexive, and that person or institution can use feminism for non-feminist functions. The last principle claims that making society more inclusive and making the concept of gender less of a primary relevance in determining self-consciousness and relations with others is the “ultimate goal” (Lazar 2007, Zhou 2021). In sum, according to Lazar (2007, 145), the aim of feminist political critique and especially that of gendered social practices and human relations is to affect and cause social transformation.

I argue that this Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis theory is relevant to the present thesis, since the topic of this thesis is abortion discourse, which is very relevant and topical side of the current feminist movement and women’s rights movement. Even though the present thesis does not *specifically* and *directly* deal with feminism, it adopts a strong feminist view, since the topic of abortion and abortion discourse is, in fact, very much a feminist issue. Thus, I argue that the thesis benefits from having a feminist critical discourse analytical side to it. I also argue that the views of feminism and feminist theory towards patriarchy and male supremacy in society in general, has something to give to this thesis, since patriarchy and male supremacy exist in for example the abortion discussion, too.

## 4 Materials and methods

In this section I present the primary material and methodology used in this thesis. As the thesis is a comparative study between more left winged and more right winged British newspapers about abortion, I have naturally divided the articles into two groups; left wing leaning, and right wing leaning.

### 4.1 Primary Material

As the primary material in this MA thesis, I have used ten British newspaper articles that all deal with the topic of abortion. I chose all the newspapers used in this thesis among the most popular and read newspapers in Britain. I have selected the articles myself, keeping in mind the specific criteria I had decided on when collecting them. The criteria will be explained in more detail later in section 4.1.3. I set certain limits to the material I was going to use in the thesis. First, I decided to exclude all American and other foreign articles and newspapers, and solely focus on the British ones. Secondly, I decided to include articles from more than just two different newspapers, so that the material would have a bit more variation and be a bit more generalizable. The data consists of ten articles from six different newspapers. Thirdly, I aimed to keep the articles used in both groups as similar and thus comparable as possible regarding the topic. The articles are of similar length and topic, which makes the results more generalizable. Also, since the newspaper articles used as primary material in the present thesis are all already published material, there is no ethical issues involved in using this data as material. I collected the data by first deciding on which newspapers I would collect the articles from. It was obvious that the newspapers had to be left winged and right winged, and for example those newspapers which situate on the centre, could not be selected. Also, the number of left winged and right winged newspapers should be the same.

#### 4.1.1 The Newspapers

The newspapers from which I collected the articles are: The Guardian, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Record, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, and The Sun. The first three lean politically more to the left, and the last three lean more to the right. I gathered three articles from The Telegraph and three from The Guardian. Next I introduce the different newspapers and motivate why these are suitable to use in this thesis.

#### *4.1.1.1 The Guardian*

The Guardian is a British quality newspaper owned by Guardian Media Group and it was found in 1821. The paper has independent ownership and thus it is “free from political and commercial influence” (Guardian 2022). Even though The Guardian does not officially declare to support any specific political stance, but in practise it sits strongly on the left in the political spectrum and is one of the leading British papers to sit on the left (Eurotopics 2022). Also, the general view in the public’s eye is that The Guardian leans more strongly towards the left than the right political orientation (Yougov 2017).

#### *4.1.1.2 The Daily Record*

The Daily Record is a Scottish tabloid type newspaper, founded in 1895. The newspaper is considered one of the most trusted news brands and an “iconic Scottish brand”, known all over the nation (Daily Record UK). It is treated as one of the ‘middle-market’ dailies, and according to David Dick, the editor of the paper, The Daily Record situates politically more to the left, and the paper is known for its “strong social conscience and commitment to the values of equality, justice, and fairness” (ibid.). According to the website of The Daily Record, the paper “aims to provide the people of Scotland with a trusted news resource that presents accurate and comprehensive coverage of local, national and international news, current affairs and sport” (Daily Record uk).

#### *4.1.1.3 The Mirror*

The Mirror is a British ‘red top’, that is, sensationalist type tabloid newspaper founded in 1903 by Alfred Harmsworth. The current editor of the newspaper, Lloyd Embley describes the paper as “one of Britain’s most trusted news brands” (Mirror UK) and tells that the paper is “committed to reporting the news accurately, with energy and vigour” (ibid.). He also says that politically the paper sits on the left of centre, and that it has backed the Labour Party since 1945 (Mirror uk).

#### *4.1.1.4 The Telegraph*

The Daily Telegraph is a British broadsheet newspaper owned by Telegraph Media Group. It was founded in 1855 by Arthur B. Sleigh and is one of the most common and read newspapers in the UK (Telegraph uk 2022). The Telegraph is published in London and is generally seen as one of the “big three” British quality newspapers, the other two of which are



The Guardian and The Times (Agilitypr 2022). The Telegraph is politically situated on the right.

#### 4.1.1.5 *The Daily Mail*

The Daily Mail is a British daily published tabloid type newspaper that was founded in 1896 by Alfred Harmsworth (Britannica.com). The paper is distributed and owned by Daily Mail and General Trust company. It is one of the most read newspapers in Britain and it is considered a ‘middle market’ newspaper and thus is regarded as a rather trusted tabloid newspaper, however not as reliable as a broadsheet paper (BBC uk). The paper is published in London, and it was one of the first papers to popularize its coverage to mass readership and to alter its size to a tabloid. The political stance of the Daily Mail is Conservative, and thus it is a right-wing paper (All Sides).

#### 4.1.1.6 *The Sun*

The Sun is the largest and most read newspaper in Britain, and it was first published in 1964 (agility pr) in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Sun is also a ‘red top’ type newspaper. According to their website, the main topics of The Sun are quality of life, the world, and people (the sun uk). According to their website (the Sun Uk) “politically The Sun stands for ordinary working people” (ibid.) and nowadays stands for the Conservative Party and thus stands on the right side of the political continuum. However, politically The Sun has supported both Conservative and Labour party (the sun uk). However, they tell on their website that “The Sun strives to the very highest standard of accuracy in its reporting and continues to invest in original journalism in print and online” (the sun uk).

**Table 1.** Table of the six different newspapers and their political stances. (Purcell et al. 2014)

Name of the newspaper	Political stance of the paper	Quality of the paper
The Guardian	Left	Serious
The Telegraph	Right	Serious
The Daily Mirror	Left	Tabloid: ‘Red Top’
The Daily Mail	Right	Tabloid: ‘Middle Market’
The Daily Record	Left	Tabloid: ‘Middle Market’
The Sun	Right	Tabloid: ‘Red Top’

In Table 1 above is presented the six different newspapers the data articles for the present thesis are gathered from. The political stance of each paper is also illustrated in the table, as well as how serious, thus, official, or unofficial each paper is. Further definitions of the terms ‘tabloid’, ‘Red Top’ and ‘Middle Market’ are introduced later in section 4.1.3 “Criteria of the Material”.

**Table 2.** Table of the political leaning of UK’s mainstream (Adopted from Smith 2017)

Newspaper	Left leaning %	Centre %	Right leaning %
The Guardian	71	11	19
The Mirror	67	9	24
The Telegraph	13	14	73
The Sun	24	8	68
The Daily Mail	12	6	81

Table 2 shows the most read British newspapers (those that are included in the material of the present data) and their political positioning according to the readers of the papers. Five out of six newspapers that are used in the present thesis is included in the table (The Daily Record is missing). The table illustrates the political continuums of the newspapers either in centre, more left or more right winged. The table is based on Smith’s classification.

#### 4.1.2 Selection criteria of the material

In this section, I present the reasons behind choosing the articles that got selected as the primary material for this thesis. The first thing worth noting about these articles is that some of the articles are from more ‘official’ type, quality newspapers, i.e., Broadsheets, and some are from less official, tabloid type newspapers. The more serious Broadsheet newspapers are The Guardian and The Telegraph (Purcell et al. 2014, 1144), the former of which is a more left winged newspaper and the latter one a more right winged. Thus, the presentation of a more ‘official’ quality newspapers is found in both categories. As for the other newspapers, The Mirror, The Daily Record, The Sun, and The Daily Mail, all of them belong to the less intellectual and less official tabloid newspapers category. The first two are more left winged newspaper and the two latter ones are more right winged.

Tabloid newspapers can be further divided into two subcategories, which are the ‘Red Tops’ and ‘Middle Market’ newspapers. Oxford Reference defines middle-market newspapers as

newspapers that are neither upmarket, i.e., very serious and intellectual newspapers, nor downmarket, that is, very unofficial and sensationalist, but rather something between these two categories and that combine characteristics from both (Oxford Reference 2022).

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines the term ‘red top’ as a British newspaper that has its name written in red at the top of the front page and that has lot of readers but are not considered to be as serious as other, more reliable, newspapers (Longman). This means that The Daily Record and The Daily Mail are slightly on the more official side of the continuum, since these types of newspapers are targeted to an audience that enjoys both entertainment and important news and events (Purcell et al. 2014, 1144). However, there is some countering information on whether some newspapers are ‘middle market dailies’ or ‘red tops’. For example, The Daily Record is one newspaper that has sometimes been categorised as ‘middle market’ and sometimes as a ‘red top’. In the present study I have categorised The Daily Record as a ‘red top’ paper. Nonetheless, in my mind these differences are after all so small that they make no relevant difference to the use of the primary material, since each of the four earlier mentioned newspapers belong to the overall category of tabloids. At the end, the main focus is on analysing abortion discourse in the *left* and *right* winged articles.

#### 4.1.3 The articles

In this section I briefly introduce the ten newspaper articles that got selected for the primary material. First, I introduce the five articles that lean more to the left side of the political stance continuum based on the newspaper they were published in, and then proceed to the more right winged ones.

The three newspapers from The Guardian are headlined “Think abortion is legal in Great Britain? Ask the two women currently facing life sentences” by Charlotte Proudman, “Permanent access to at-home abortions to be granted in England and Wales” by Andrew Gregory, and “Monday briefing: Abortion is safe, supported, and available in the UK. Why is the law so complicated?”. The other two newspaper articles are from The Daily Mirror and The Daily Record, and they are headlined “Woman, 20, jailed in UK for taking abortion pills when abusive partner got her pregnant” (The Daily Mirror) and “Scots anti-abortion protester ‘recruited’ by American religious group to target women at clinics” (The Daily Record).

Regarding the more right winged articles, similarly to the previous group, three of the articles are also from the same paper, The Telegraph. These are headlined “Early at-home abortions to

remain as MPs defy government attempt to scrap ‘pills by post’”, “Why the ‘right to abortion’ doesn’t actually exist in Britain”, and “Decriminalize abortion rather than prosecute women, doctors warn”. The other two articles are from The Daily Mail and The Sun. The article from the Daily Mail is headlined “‘Pills by post’ abortions to become permanent option for women less than 10 weeks pregnant in England and Wales under new law” and the article from The Sun is headlined “It’s your choice. What are the abortion laws in the UK and does the NHS offer terminations?”.

**Table 3.** The newspaper articles chosen for the present study including the abbreviations, titles, and dates of publication, and number of words per article.

Paper	Title	Date	Words	Abbreviation
The Guardian	Think abortion is legal in Great Britain? Ask the two women currently facing life sentences	19 August 2022	971	G1
	Permanent access to at-home abortions to be granted in England and Wales	23 August 2022	601	G2
	Monday briefing: Abortion is safe, supported, and available in the UK. Why is the law so complicated?	4 July 2022	1473	G3
The Telegraph	Early at-home abortions to remain as MPs defy government attempt to scrap ‘pills by post’	30 March 2022	693	T1
	Why the ‘right to abortion’ doesn’t actually exist in Britain	1 July 2022	1110	T2
	Decriminalise abortions rather than prosecute women, doctors warn	7 August 2022	800	T3

The Daily Mail	‘Pills by post’ abortions to become permanent option for women less than 10 weeks pregnant in England and Wales under new law	23 August 2022	914	DMail 1
The Sun	What are the abortion laws in the UK and does the NHS offer terminations?	27 June 2022	907	S1
The Daily Record	Scots anti-abortion protesters ‘recruited’ by American religious group to target women at clinics	17 March 2022	1378	DR1
The Daily Mirror	Woman, 20, jailed in UK for taking abortion pills when abusive partner got her pregnant	7 August 2022	942	DMirror 1

Table 2 presents the key information of each newspaper and the chosen articles. In the table there is illustrated the name of the article, time of publication, the length of each article in words, and the abbreviations used when referring to the articles later in the analysis.

## 4.2 Methodology

In this section I introduce the methods I have used in analysing the data. Ultimately, the results are compared between the more left winged and right winged articles, and they are presented and interpreted in the analysis section. Such elements that are defined here and analysed in the next section are agency, intertextuality, and engagement, which give their own pieces of information to analyse in the articles.

I start this section by defining the term agency. According to Ahearn (1999, 12) the concept of agency started gaining attention in the 1970s, when activists started challenging “existing power structures to achieve racial and gender equality” (Ahearn 1999, 12). She says that “[f]eminist theorists in particular analyzed the ways in which “the personal” is always political – in other words, how people’s actions influence, and are influenced by, larger social

and political structures” (Ahearn 1999, 12). Theorists have also acknowledged that actions are always socially, culturally, and linguistically constrained (Ahearn 1999, 12). Thus, the term agency is referred to in matters such as the capability of individuals to acquire the power and resources they have the right to, to fulfil their full potential.

The second research question in this thesis is concerned with the writers’ own thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards either abortion or the legislation, and what other people’s voices are like, if they might show in the articles, thus, agencies. One method used in the analysis is a close reading method and interpretation of the particular words used by the writers and seeing what they are like, but also other participants’ voices, opinions, and their argumentation and motivation of what they say, that is, agencies. For example, in the articles, agency is studied when it comes to the power settings and heard or non-heard voices of different participants of the articles. The possible participants being for example the women having abortions, the ministers or other decision makers, or the writer of the article. So, agency can be studied when it comes to the writers’ own thoughts and opinions, but other people present in the articles as well. In practice then, by looking at the specific word choices made by the writers of the articles, their agencies can be studied. Words having a traditionally positive or negative connotations have a very strong emphasis and role in this thesis, since they are carefully looked at in the analysis part. Use of language, for example regarding the positivity or negativity, is a key factor in revealing the writers’ own thoughts towards the topics discussed. Sarcasm and use of special characters also contribute to the formation of the text, and the agencies of the participants. Peoples’ agencies are connected to their values and ideologies. For example, agencies in the articles had to do with the attitudes and opinions of the writers’, and other peoples’ attitudes and opinions. These will be looked at more focused in the analysis section.

Looking at other people’s quotes used and presented in the articles then again, too, reveal important information on different participants’ agencies and thoughts, but this on the other hand is connected to intertextuality. Intertextuality refers to the usage of other, different voices in a text, so that the writer’s is not the only voice present, but other voices are included in the text. Intertextuality in the articles realizes as linguistic features such as: how much quotations are used, who are the people that are quoted; are they health professionals or politicians, are their views on abortion or abortion legislation positive or negative or do they support abortion or are they against it; or whether they have strict views on the time scaling of pregnancy weeks up to which abortion could be done, and how the quotes are presented in the

text; are they paraphrased or direct quotations and are for example the more negative quotations treated differently in the text than the more positive, pro-choice quotations. For example, the writers' own views and thoughts about the people's thoughts who have been quoted in the article, are studied through the writers' own word choices on the quote.

Another factor worth noting in analyzing the data is engagement. Martin and White (2007, 35) explain that 'engagement', deals with attitudes and where they come from, and the interaction of voices around discourse. In the present thesis, engagement and attitude play a part. Since attitudes play an important role in the present thesis, they are a relevant factor to study in the articles on abortion discourse. The attitudes are looked at when it comes to for example whether the writers or those people quoted in the articles have negative or positive, that is, degrading, or supportive views and opinions towards abortion, women having an abortion, or abortion politics in general. Also, the woman's rights aspect is worth mentioning here, since the third research question is "how are women's rights either violated or supported in the articles", and attitudes are strongly connected to these. The attitudes are measured by looking at the language again and seeing how abortion is presented in the articles.

According to Martin and White (2007, 38), engagement can be further divided into monoglossia and heteroglossia. However, nowadays heteroglossia is more familiar as "intertextuality", which essentially means the same. Holloway and Kneale (2000, 76) say that an "utterance is always situated in a relation, it is always shaped by the relationship it has with other utterances: its boundaries while being recognisable are never impervious. Therefore, the work of signification or meaning *always* occurs as a part of a *dialogue* between (at least) two utterances". Essentially, it can be said that texts are always influenced by some other texts. Engagement in the articles was more connected to the ideologies and more specifically, where they come from.

In practice, in doing the analysis, I compiled all the relevant parts, for example sentences, individual words, or sentences from the writer but including a quote from an outside party, in a separate word file. In making this separate file and doing the analysis, I kept in mind the categories of writers' own opinions, quotations, and human rights aspects, which are all analysed in different subsections in the analysis section. Agencies, engagement, and intertextuality all contribute to finding those features and doing the analysis, even though they form a rather complex picture, since they are not each directly connected to one part of the

analysis. For example, looking at peoples' agencies in the material includes examining the writers' attitudes, but also other peoples' opinions and thoughts via quotations, whereas in the analysis and in the research questions, quotations and the writers' own thoughts were analysed in different sections. Also, engagement and intertextuality are connected to each other, and those could be used when looking at both the quotations and the more focused topics of each article.

It is worth clarifying that while each newspaper selected as a piece of material in the present thesis has their general political stance, thus, the papers' political stance, the writers of the newspaper articles themselves has their own opinions and stances that are present in the articles. I do not make a distinction between what and how much of the writers' own opinions, attitudes and stances are similar or approved by the newspaper itself, since it is also impossible to distinguish. I acknowledge the political stance of each newspaper and treat the attitudes and stances of the writers of the articles separately from that, but naturally measuring the differences between the discourses used in each article according to the general political stance of the paper, whether they lean towards the left or the right wing.



## 5 Analysis

In this analysis section I first present the analysis and findings of the two groups of articles separately, that is, first the analysis of the five right winged newspaper articles and then the five left winged articles. This way the articles and their findings are more clearly presented first giving a general picture of each group. After this, the two groups and their findings are briefly discussed together and compared to each other. Such elements that were looked at and analysed in the data are: the language use, opinions, and attitudes of the writer(s) of the articles; quotation, language use and voices of other people present in the texts; topics in the articles; and the human rights and equality side of the articles.

### 5.1 Analysis of the Right Winged Newspaper Articles

A general view of the five right winged articles is that they are relatively similar with each other. However, there were some differences in the data too, and in this section, I present the more focused analysis of the data and discuss the features that were looked at. First, in section 5.1.1 I briefly present the topics of each article. In 5.1.2 I proceed to the analysis itself looking at the writers' own voices and opinions in the articles. Then in 5.1.3 the focus is on other voices present in the article and quotes, and finally in 5.1.4, the human rights aspect of the articles is analysed.

#### 5.1.1 Topics of the right winged articles

I start the analysis by presenting a content summary of the topics discussed in each of the five more right winged articles, so that the readers of the present study have a general idea of each of the articles' more precise topic when we continue to analyse the texts themselves.

T1 discusses the preserving of the at-home abortion access by 'pills by post' after Covid. It was planned on to be given up and to be returned to the old practices, but after MPs free vote in parliament, it was decided that the pills by post would be kept. The article discusses the process of this decision and quotes on some MPs opinions on the topic.

T2 deals with the legal side of abortion in the UK. It is discussed that really, the right to abortion is not as straightforward and easy to access as the majority of people think it is. The article deals with the views about how abortion is still technically illegal in some cases, even

though it is legal in theory, and it is highlighted in the article that actions to change these practices are needed. Several MPs' views are presented on the topic in the article.

In T3, the focus is first on giving an overview of why the Government is urged by the ministers to decriminalise abortion, and it informs the reader on some of the cases where women have been prosecuted or jailed for taking an abortion pill or have been suspected about having an illegal abortion. The article then proceeds to highlighting how important it would be to secure abortion without fear and fear of penalty and emphasizes the overall need for improving abortion practices in the UK.

DMail1 is similar to the T1 regarding the topic. It first informs the reader on 'pills by post' debate and discusses the actions done for preserving the method. At the end of the article the general facts of how the abortion pill functions and the legislation in UK presented.

S1 presents an outline of the abortion laws in the UK and focuses on informing the reader on the abortion process itself. Abortion laws in Northern Ireland and USA are also touched. There is presented some statistics on abortion for example on how many abortions were carried out in 2021. Otherwise, the topic in this article is a combination of the more focused topics discussed in T2 and T3, and DMail 1.

To summarise the topics discussed in these five right winged articles, it can be concluded that the general topics were: informing about pills by post, women's rights, abortion legislation, the underlying technical issues in UK abortion legislation and fact information on abortion. The five articles together had much the same basic information regarding abortion and the events in UK, so the overall picture is the same in each of the articles. However, the articles do also have similarities regarding other factors than the topic, and they are discussed next in the following sections.

### 5.1.2 Language use and attitudes of the writers in right wing articles

In all five articles, the views, attitudes, and opinions of the writers towards the matters discussed in the articles are clearly or at least somewhat clearly present. These attitudes and opinions in each of the five articles are positive and supportive towards women and the abortion side of the matter, and negative towards the factors that want to limit for example the access to abortion. These matters relate to the agencies of the writers, discussed in the methodology section, revealing information on their personal opinions and views about

abortion. In three of the five articles, the language use is relatively neutral, but in the other two, it is slightly more opinionated and not as neutral. The articles where the self-positioning and voices of the writers are on the more neutral side are T1, T3, and DMail 1. The articles where the language use is on the more visibly opinionated side are T2 and S1. Such features that reveal to the reader the writers' strong opinions are for example the use of special characters such as exclamation marks, quotation marks and apostrophes, use of positive or negative word choices such as "unfortunately" (S1) or "confusingly" (T2) combined with the surrounding context, and sarcasm. In addition to these, word choices even without looking at the positive – negative continuum in them can indicate the writer's opinions and attitudes about something. For example, if they are talking about someone or something and refer to it as "awkward", it quite strongly expresses the writers' thoughts on the matter. For example, in T1, on the basis of word choices regarding for example when talking about some MPs who defy continuing with the at-home abortion method, it can be said that the writers support the decision to continue the at home abortion practice, even though the language is otherwise quite neutral. However, it needs to be noted that the differences between these two groups of neutral or opinionated articles are only slight, and even in the latter group, where the writers' self-positioning is more visible, it is not particularly evident. It is worth noting here that the italics that are used in all the examples in the present thesis have been added later by me to add emphasis on the exact words.

To give examples of the word choices, language use, and attitudes, the writers of T1 use words and phrases such as:

- (1) Early at-home abortions to remain as MPs *defy* government *attempt* to *scrap* 'pills by post' (T1).
- (2) Remote appointments for early pregnancy terminations were to be *ditched* [...] (T1).

This type of language is used when talking about negative matters discussed in the article, such as the initial plan or order to abolish the at-home abortion practice. In the first example the writer uses strong verbs "defy" and "scrap" to emphasise the negative outcome of the disbanding of the practise, and a strong noun "attempt" to highlight that it was only an attempt, which did not go through. Likewise in the second example the use of a strong negative verb "ditch" indicates that the writer would not have been content were the practise to be ended. However, on the other hand, they use more positively charged words and phrases

when talking about people *supporting* the pills by post practice and women's rights. For example:

- (3) [...] amendment *championed* by [...] (T1).

Here, adjective “championed” carries positive connotation. Even though in this article the stances of the writers are more subtle, via their positively and negatively charged word choices, the underlying opinion is visible after all.

Other examples from the same situation in Telegraph 3 are word choices such as:

- (4) Leading medics are *urging* the Government to decriminalise abortion [...] (T3).  
 (5) [W]omen who have unregulated abortions or try to terminate their pregnancy without medical supervision can face *up to* life imprisonment (T3).

Language like this is used when discussing the negative matters and decisions in the abortion discourse, such as imprisoning women. The use of the verb “urge” indicates to the reader that this is a serious thing that needs change, and the use of “up to” highlights the unfairness of the sentence. Then again, when discussing positive matters such as succeeding in continuing the pills by post practice, the writer tends to use more positive and strong word choices to emphasize the importance of the matter:

- (6) [...] the Government *was forced to back down*, after a free vote by MPs who voted to keep the “pills-by-post” system (T3).

Here, “forced to back down” expresses the importance of the matter.

The last of the three more neutral articles is DMail 1. In the negative associations such words and phrases that the writer of the article used were for example:

- (7) Ministers originally wanted to *axe* the scheme this summer [...] (DMail 1).  
 (8) The general limit for these abortions in the UK is 24 weeks of pregnancy but they can be carried out after under *very limited* circumstances (DMail 1).

The verb “axe” gives very strong and even violent associations, and “very limited” highlights the fact that abortion is very regulated. On the other hand, the language the writer uses when he talks about the positive sides in the matter, he uses language like:

- (9) [...] *rebel* MPs *forced a No10 U-turn* (DMail 1).

- (10) This will *ensure* that children who *do need to access* abortion services *can* (DMail 1).

In example 9 the words used that are in italics are empowering (example 9) and supportive (example 10).

The other two remaining articles from the right winged newspaper articles are T2 and S1. In these articles the language use is somewhat more charged in comparison with the other three, and thus the division into these two groups is justified. Next, I give an example of the language used in these two articles, and thus the attitudes the writers carry with them in the articles. T2 evidently consists of more apparently charged language with attitudes and opinions. Already in the headline of the article, the self-positioning and the stance and attitudes of the writers towards the matter are quite clearly present. The headline being:

- (11) Why the ‘right to abortion’ doesn’t actually exist in Britain (T2).

Here, the use of apostrophes indicates that in Britain, women should, in theory, have the right to abortion, but the writers do not admit that this would be the case in reality, and that there is more to it. They also say:

- (12) [...] woman’s right to choose is more *fragile* than it seems [...] (T2).

Here is further explained the same matter about the poorness of abortion rights discussed previously. Also, other word choices used in the article revealing the writers’ attitudes and showing that the writer acknowledges this problem, were for example:

- (13) In Britain, we have *reassured* ourselves that things are different and there is no similar *rollback of reproductive rights looming*” (T2)

For example, the use of the word “reassured” in the sentence indicates that really things are not as good as they seem, but people in Britain have only shut their eyes from the reality regarding abortion rights. Other features in the article that indicate that the overall language use in T2 is not as neutral but more opinionated regarding self-positioning, is for example such sentences as:

- (14) *It may come as a surprise* that abortion is technically illegal in a country where women can access it freely [...] (T2).
- (15) *Confusingly*, abortion is fully decriminalised [...] (T2).

Here in examples 14 and 15 the writer subtly expresses their own views towards the matter discussed.

The last article to be discussed in this 5.2.2 section is S1. Similarly to the previous article discussed (T2), this article was more actively opinionated, and self-reflective voices were present. Thus, this article, too, was not as neutral but opinionated in style as the three others, and the writer clearly brings themselves and their voice more actively heard. This writer adds small comments of their own in brackets in the text, even though minor, such as:

- (16) [A]bortions are only legal (and as safe as possible) if carried out by a licensed medical practitioner (S1).

These minor comments in brackets are even more visibly the writer's own notions that add the feeling of criticism towards the matter. This type of use of brackets did not appear in the other four articles at all. The writer also has a more causal approach towards the readers, since she talks directly to them by using the pronoun "you", and an imperative form. For example:

- (17) *Speak* to your GP [...] (S1).

- (18) *Visit* a contraception clinic [...] (S1).

Here in examples 17 and 18 the writer advice those readers who may be in a situation where they need abortion and takes an approach of telling directly what to do, helping them through the situation. Another example of casual language use is for example sentence such as:

- (19) For some people, becoming a parent is all they have ever dreamed of – but for others, two lines showing up on a test isn't a happy moment" (S1).

Here the writer says something in a story telling style and aims to evoke feelings in the reader.

### 5.1.3 Other voices and quoting in right wing articles

In each of the five articles either direct or indirect quotations or other paraphrased opinions, thoughts, or voices were heard at least from one person other than the writer themselves. These features deal with intertextuality discussed in the methodology. Most of the quotations included in the text were from people whose thoughts on the matter discussed in the article were positive rather than negative, or they were like-minded with the writer of the article on

abortion matters. However, the non-supportive voices and quotations appeared also, but not as much. For example, in T1, quotations were used from four different people (several times, not only once per person), three of them being from people who support continuing the at-home abortion practice, and one being from a person opposing the at-home method and hoping to return to the old ways. In this section I will inspect each article and the topic discussed in this section individually, to illustrate better the quotations used in each article, since the amount and type differs moderately.

The three people who supported continuing the at-home abortion access in T1 were Conservative party's Baroness Elizabeth Sugg, Labour MP Jess Philips, and Conservative MP Laura Trott. The one who opposed keeping of the at-home abortion access was a health minister, Edward Argar. For example, it is directly quoted in the article that baroness Sugg said:

- (20) Delighted is an understatement. Thank you to all the MPs who voted in favour of supporting women to access their choice of healthcare in a safe and effective way (T1).

This quote shows the supportive stance Sugg has towards abortion. Both direct and indirect quotations are used when the author quotes Laura Trott, a conservative MP, writing:

- (21) Retaining access to abortion at home via telemedicine in England is “what women want” and “a matter for human dignity, for women’s dignity” (T1).

Via these positive, encouraging, and pro-women quotations *and* the more subtle but still strong, opinionated word choices and language use, it is clear that the stance and attitudes of the writers of the article towards the matter are the same, thus, supportive and pro-women. However, as was said earlier, there was one person whose quotations were used in the article that was not supportive towards preserving the pills by post method. Barber and Riley-Smith wrote that Edward Argar said:

- (22) Edward Argar, a health minister, said the Government had remained of the view that medical abortions should return to pre-Covid arrangements and “Face-to-face services resumed given that that temporary change was based upon a specific set of emergency circumstances” (T1).

This quote is negative in the sense that it presents opinions that want to limit women’s access to abortion, by returning to pre-Covid arrangements. Nonetheless, this was the only ‘negative’ quotation used in the whole article, and the positive views were clearly more emphasised.

In T2, quotations from other people were used exceptionally much, in comparison with the other articles. Ten different people were quoted, and six of them were pro-women, thus, supporting women and women's rights, and positive towards abortion rights and saw that they need to be improved. Four of the ten people quoted wanted to reduce the weeks when women could get abortions or otherwise thought that the legislation in Britain is fine as it is now, and thus is seen as having a negative attitude towards abortion. However, it is important to note that the people who had positive views towards abortion were directly quoted more and their views were more emphasised in the article, whereas those people who viewed abortion more negatively or wanted to restrict it, were quoted indirectly and much less. For example, Prime Minister Boris Johnson was quoted saying that:

(23) [T]he Supreme Court's decision in the US was a "big step backwards" (T2).

Here, Johnson's views towards abortion rights are seen as positive, since calling the US' decision a "big step backwards" reveals his negative attitudes towards this change. Also, Katherine O'Brien from British Pregnancy Advisory Centre and Dr Jonathan Lord, a consultant gynaecologist had long direct quotations included in the article, telling the readers facts about abortion legislation, and talking about how archaic it is in the UK (T2). Lord was quoted saying:

(24) As it stands, abortion is still illegal under a law that was passed the same year the American Civil War started, long before women had the right to vote (T2).

Here in this quotation, it is emphasised how archaic and human rights violating the old law is. It is rather directly highlighted that it is old, by referring to the law having passed the same year as American Civil War started, which was in 1861. As for the more negative and anti-women quotations, they are quoted only indirectly or if directly, they are very brief and contained only one word in quotation marks. For example, it is said in the article that:

(25) Conservative MP Danny Kruger *sparked an outcry* when he recently told the House of Commons that women do not have an "absolute right to bodily autonomy" when it comes to terminating a pregnancy and said he wouldn't be "lecturing" the US on the Supreme court decision (T2).

Quotes like these from Kruger are clearly antifeminist, since saying that women do not have an "absolute right to bodily autonomy", does not in any way support women's rights. On the contrary. It is also articulated in the example that the people did not like what he said, by writing "sparked an outcry".



In T3 fewer people were quoted, but these same people were quoted quite a lot. Only two professionals and one association. Each of the people quoted in T3 had very positive and supportive views towards women and abortion, and the opposing, anti-abortion or anti-women views were not present in the article at all. Dr Edward Morris, president of the Royal College was quoted both directly and indirectly a few times. For example, directly:

- (26) To ensure that all women and girls are provided with support without fear of prosecution, abortion must be decriminalised, while remaining subject to the regulatory and professional standards of all other medical procedures (T3).

This again shows clearly the pro-women approach Morris possesses and supports women's rights to safe abortion. Even though in this article different people quoted are not many, their quotes are still important and the fact that there are not any 'negative' stance quotes involved, informs about the importance of the matter and the stance of the writer.

In DMail 1 direct quotations are used relatively little, and only three people are quoted. Some directly and some indirectly. In addition to these, two organisations are also quoted. The Minister for Public Health, Maggie Throup was quoted a few times, saying for example:

- (27) The wellbeing and safety of women requiring access to abortion services is paramount (DMail 1).

This is again clearly a pro-women quote emphasising the importance of safe access to abortions. In addition to this, some quotations from organisations such as The Department of Health and Social Care, a report from the office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the Government were quoted, for example:

- (28) [...] doctors will be required to certify in 'good faith' that the pills are only being used to terminate early pregnancies (DMail 1).

In this article, the negative views on abortion are not presented via quotations at all, but only the positive.

In The Sun 1, direct quotations are used only from one person, and otherwise only the writer's voice is heard in the article. These quotations are positive quotations from Claire Murphy from Pregnancy Advisory Service saying for example:

- (29) There are a variety of reasons why women are choosing to delay motherhood and smaller families (S1).

This quote is rather neutral since it does not particularly show pro-women or anti women attitudes, but merely states a fact. Yet the quote is still in a way supportive in the sense that it highlights the fact that women do have the right to choose whether to have children or not, and it is okay. Other voices heard in the article are only the writer's own and fact information without exactly quoting any source mentioned.

Thus, by investigating the use of indirect and direct quotations in the articles, it can be concluded that generally in the articles, those people who view abortion rights and women's right more positively, are quoted more, and generally directly, whereas those people opposing these positive, pro-women views are generally less, and overall, less visible in the text, quoted more indirectly. However, it must be noted that both indirect and direct quotations are also used for both pro-abortion and anti-abortion views, but the division in the use is more like it was mentioned in the previous sentence.

#### 5.1.4 Human Rights and Equality in right wing articles

In this section cover the 'attitudes' side discussed in the methodology, even though the attitudes have been present in the whole analysis already. Here, the focus is on the attitudes in more general, regarding the women's rights presented in all the articles, rather than individual voices' attitudes. The third research question discusses the questions on human rights and women's rights in the articles. The questions were: "How does the discourse in the newspapers on the topic of abortion either violate or support women's rights, or their right to have an abortion?". Here, again, only the right winged articles are discussed.

In T1, Human rights and particularly women's rights to decide on their own bodies are supported by quotation and telling female MPs' own experiences with abortion and their own opinions on it. It is brought up via the argumentation and language use in the text that dismantling the practice of at-home abortions would be violating women's rights. General presentation of women getting abortion is neutral or positive, supportive. In this article, the power is held by those voices and participants who support the preserving of pills by post practice, since it was decided by MPs that the practice would continue.

In T2 many of the quotes are from those people who do support women's rights in the matter of abortion and by the writers' word choices. It is apparent that they support these views, by using positive words when talking about the quotes. On the other hand, there were fewer of those quotes from people who oppose better access to abortion, and the writer used more

negative words when talking about them. Thus, both views were visible, but the more liberal, pro-women stance, was more visible. General presentation on abortion and women getting abortion is supportive and positive. On the contrary, those people who have anti-women views are treated more rigidly. Thus, abortion rights and women having abortion are presented in a positive and supportive light in the article.

In T3, women's rights are supported and enhanced very clearly. For example, via quoting only the abortion supporting parties, since there was not quoted any of the opposing, anti-women parties. Objective language was used when presenting legal facts of the current situation. For example, when it was said that the system was about to expire last summer, and that some critics were concerned that the system was "ripe for abuse". In this article, too, the presentation of women getting abortion is viewed very positively and women's rights are supported as well. Even though the writer's views on the matter are presented relatively neutrally and objectively, the general positioning of the article can be seen as positive based on the present attitudes in the article.

In DMail 1, the general language use is, again, supportive towards abortion rights and preserving the pills by post practice is viewed as a positive fact in this article as well. The article presents factual information about abortion process in an informative way, and most of the views otherwise presented in it are also supportive towards the matter. Even though some thoughts or voices from other abortion parties are presented, they are articulated in a neutral way, as fact information from for example abortion statistics. The wellbeing and safety of women having abortions are overall the present and highlighted topic in the article, and thus it can be concluded that it is women supportive in nature.

The final right winged article T1, was not found to be different from the previously discussed articles when it comes to the human rights and women's rights matters, and the presentation of women having an abortion. This article also stresses the fact information on abortion and the rights and wellbeing of the women. Even though this article entails more actively and strongly the voices and opinions of the writer than most of the earlier discussed articles, it still has a supportive but professional grip on the matter discussed. Thus, women's rights are supported and women going through abortion are viewed without judgement.

## 5.2 Analysis of the Left Winged Newspaper Articles

### 5.2.1 Topics of the left winged articles

In this section I first summarise the main topics discussed in each of the five left winged articles used as data to give an overview of what each article is about. This overview of the topics is relevant to give, so that the reader of this thesis has a basic idea of what the articles are about and thus can read the present thesis without reading the articles themselves first.

DR 1 is a piece of news informing the reader on a protest that occurred outside an abortion clinic in Scotland. According to the article these protesters were recruited by an American religious group, and in the article, one of these protesters is interviewed about their recruiting and the organisation they are a part of. The article also discusses other people's views on the protesters and generally the right to have an abortion.

G1 examines the legal side of abortion rights in Britain and highlights the fact that abortion is not, in fact, legal in theory in Britain. The article discusses the multiple unfair legal actions that have occurred in Britain over the last few years, when women have been for example prosecuted and jailed for having illegal pregnancies or even having miscarriages.

In G2 the focus is again on the preserving of the pills by post system. The article reports the readers on the MPs' decision to keep the practice and the consequences this has on women's access to abortion in Britain. It is also discussed how the pills by post practice actually works and how and when it will be enacted.

G3 again discusses the politics of abortion in Britain and explains how the law really is. The US Supreme Court's decision is briefly presented and discussed in the beginning of the article, and then the topic proceeds to talking about the situation in the UK. It is said in the article that the law is problematic and controversial, and the current law is criticised. The complicated nature of the abortion law and access to abortion is discussed at the end.

The final left winged article is M1, which again discusses the imprisonment of women who have had an illegal abortion or a miscarriage that has been suspected to be an illegal abortion. The topic is in fact completely the same as in G1 and G3 but focuses even more on the experience of the imprisoned women. Also, the same basic fact information on abortion access in Britain and the problems of it, is discussed.

The topics in these five articles had similarities, since many of the articles discussed exactly on the same matters, since the general conversation at the time of publishing them was intense.

### 5.2.2 Language use and attitudes of the writers in left winged articles

Here is again discussed the agencies present in the articles. An overall view in each of the five articles are similar with each other. This meaning that for example the views of women's rights, abortion rights, pro-choice matters and the legal problems in Britain and the overturning of *Roe v Wade* are values that each of the articles share. On the other hand, regarding the opinions and attitudes of the writers themselves and precisely whether these are visible or not via word choices, they differ depending on the article. Three of the five articles were rather neutral in their language, so that the text was written in an objective way. The writer does not speak for example directly about themselves, and retains the text as professional, not revealing particularly much of the writers' own attitudes towards the matters discussed. However, as will be discussed and exemplified in the coming sections, the writers' own thoughts, opinions and attitudes are present in other ways, integrated for example in the word choices. The remaining two articles, however, were not as neutral and non-opinionated in nature, and contained more casual language and the writers might even speak about themselves directly in the articles, for example using the pronoun "I". The three articles where the voices of the writers were not as visible, and the language was more neutral, were DR 1, G2, and M1. Those articles where opinions and self-positioning towards the matters discussed were more visible, were G1 and G3. However, it needs to be noted, that even though I have divided these articles into these two groups depending on how visible the writers' own voices in the texts are, these articles nonetheless have differences with each other in the degree of how neutral or visible the voices in the text are. Next, each of the five articles are discussed and some examples from them are raised. As was done in the analysis of the more right leaning articles, the italics in the examples are later added by me.

The article discussed first, G1, is rather different from the other articles, when it comes to the voices, attitudes, and presentation of opinions of the writer themselves. Unlike many of the other data articles in the present thesis, this article has quite an active personal voice of the writer. She writes her own thoughts and uses rather opinionated language about abortion rights. A few examples on the rather eager language use and word choices are presented next:

- (30) She is being charged under the Offences Against the Person Act, a law passed by parliament in 1861, *before the invention of the lightbulb and before women had the right to vote* (G1).
- (31) Women in 2022 are being *shackled* by a 160-year-old law *made at the time when we were not even allowed to set foot in the House of Commons*. Urgent reform is needed to protect more women from harm [...] (G1).

These examples give an overview of how the language use is and shows the writer's rather sharp stance towards the matters discussed in the article. In both examples the writer refers to the laws being archaic, expressing the ridiculousness, in their opinion, of the fact that the laws are over 150 years old and have not been changed since. Particularly in example 31, the writer emphasises their opinion on the need for reform in this matter.

The second article discussed here is G3, which is the other one of those articles that has a looser grip regarding the neutral – opinionated language use continuum. This article is not as opinionated as G1, but still leans on the more opinionated language side. Some of the examples where the writer uses negative language are:

- (32) The US supreme court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade ten days ago was *vastly consequential for the millions of American women who will now be denied the right to abortion* (G3).
- (33) The basis for the provision of abortion is the 1967 Abortions Act – *which does not declare that abortion is legal, but instead sets out circumstances under which women and healthcare professionals will not be prosecuted*. If an abortion does not meet those criteria, *it is a crime*" (G3).

Here, again, negative word choices and language, such as "women who will be denied the right to abortion" and "it is a crime" is used when discussing abortion rights and precisely what is wrong with them and how abortion rights and thus women's rights are violated. In these examples, the cornerstones of abortion rights issues are brought up, focusing on the negative results of it. Positive language – which is not very much displayed in this article – is used when supporting abortion rights and discussing the improving aspects of abortion legislation. An example of positive language use in this article is:

- (34) [...] I spoke to Kaye Wellings, a professor of sexual and reproductive health research, [...] who – *at the moment of heightened anxiety* – *gave an incredibly helpful guide* to how all this plays in principle and practice" (G3).

In this example the writer's more relaxed style of writing shows, for example when they say "I spoke" and "at the moment of heightened anxiety", which are a more informal language use. Also, an "incredibly helpful guide" is brought up as a positive thing, in a positive way.

To move on to the articles with more neutral and objective language use, the first to be discussed here is DR 1. The writer's own voice and opinions are not particularly directly present in the text, or very eager, but her attitudes and opinions on abortion are visible via word choices in a more subtle way. Generally, it can be said that when the writer talks about something that an anti-abortion person or body has said, they tend to use more negative language and words, but when they are discussing or quoting a pro-choice topic or person, they tend to use more positive language about the person saying the quote or the topic. This applies to the other articles as well. Thus, even though here in this article, the writer does not display their own thought on the matter directly, it is apparent that she does, however, support women's right to decide about their own bodies. Next, I introduce some examples of the features discussed above.

Examples on the more negative language and associations the writer uses are:

(35) [...] pro-life protest *targeting* women outside a Scots abortion clinic [...] (DR 1).

(36) Women attending appointments via public transport were seen *having to walk past the group before they could access the hospital*, while those arriving in cars *had to stop directly in front of them* to turn into the car park" (DR 1).

In these examples the writer uses negative words like "targeting", "having to walk" and "had to stop" forming a negative feeling to the reader about what the women have had to go through when arriving at the clinic. Also, she writes in the article:

(37) But Rose *claims* [...] (DR 1).

(38) [...] 40 Days For Life *claim* that [...] (DR 1).

In these examples, the use of the word 'claim' indicates that the writer does not agree with these assertions, and the word "claim" in itself is a rather strong word.

On the other hand, the more positive language or language defending women is used when the pro-women and pro-choice views are present, for example in the following example:

(39) [...] a campaign group *fighting* for the right to *harassment-free access to abortion services* in Scotland, *slammed* the group's activities [...]" (DR 1).

Here writer uses the word "fight", which has empowering associations especially when talking about fighting for abortion rights, the word "slammed" having a similar function. Also, "harassment-free" is another positive and important thing to fight for, and the writer in a way contributes to creating it by bringing it up in the article. An interesting finding in analysing this article was that in the article there was more talk and thus examples on the more negative situations, than the positive ones.

The next article to be discussed is G2. This is the shortest article containing quite little the writer's own views and opinions, but there is still something to include in the analysis. This is again an article with relatively neutral, non-opinionated language use, unlike the latest article discussed above, but this article too, still involves some underlying attitudes behind the neutral text. In the article there is a sentence such as:

(40) The move will *benefit thousands of women* who wish to take the tablets needed to end a pregnancy in the privacy of their own home [...] G2).

This exemplifies the fact that even though the language use is on the more neutral side, these word choices still indicate that the writer supports women's right to abortion and says that the 'pills by post' *benefits* women and brings ease to their lives. If the writer were anti-abortionist, they would not have used the word "benefit". Also, the use of the numeral "thousands" adds emphasis to the assertion.

The last article discussed in this section of analysis is M1. This article is again on the more neutral side in language use, rather than opinionated, and the writer's own opinions and attitudes are not very clearly present in this article. One of the few examples where she writes something that reveals her thoughts, is:

(41) The number of women reported to the police for 'criminalised abortions' has been on the rise with 30 so far in 2022 – *already higher than previous years* (M1).

Here, the apostrophes indicate that the writer does not agree with the current legislation being fair, and the clause in italics emphasises the high and increasing number of cases, which is considered alarming. Otherwise, the article is neutral in its language and contains lots of quotations, that are discussed in the next section.



### 5.2.3 Other voices and quoting in left winged articles

Next I discuss the intertextuality in the left winged articles. Similarly to the right winged articles, in the more left winged articles quotations and thus other voices were used less in those articles where the writer's own voice were more actively heard. On the other hand, in those articles where the writer's own voices and opinions were less visible and present and the text was overall more objective, quotations were used more. However, some amount of quotation was used in all five articles, even though the article was on the more opinionated and subjective side. Also, like in the right winged articles, positive views towards abortion and women's right to bodily autonomy were clearly more present and visible in the articles, rather than the opposing, anti-women views.

To start this section with DR 1, it can be said that there was a lot of quotations used from other people than the writer themselves and from rather many different people. This article was one of the longest articles in the data (the second longest), and a relatively great deal of the whole text consists of quotations. In the article, six different people were quoted. In addition to these clearly mentioned specific people, a few times other parties such as "pro-choice campaigners" and "many women" as a whole were also quoted. The majority (6) of these quotations were from pro-choice people. Only two of all the parties or people quoted were anti-abortion bodies. It is also relevant to note that both indirect and direct quotations were used, but direct quotation were used more.

Those people and voices in DR1 who were supportive about protesting outside abortion clinics and saw nothing wrong with it, were one of the protesters and a director of international campaigns at 40 Days For Life. The ones who opposed protesting and saw the protesters' actions as offensive and wrong, were a woman who went through abortion at a clinic where there was a protest going on, a co-founder of Back Off Scotland, a Labour MSP, and an unnamed Scottish Government spokesperson.

The anti-abortion activist is quoted a few times, and it is said about her, in an indirect quote:

- (42) But Rose claims the group, which is affiliated with Cardinal Winnings Pro Life Initiative, stand across from facilities offering to 'help' women who she believes may be 'coerced' into abortion (DR1).

With these word choices put in apostrophes, the writer quotes what Rose has said, but at the same time expresses to the reader that they do not think the same way. In another example,

the writer directly quotes Robert Colquhoun, a director of international campaigns at 40 Days For Life and quotes him saying:

- (43) 40 Days For Life have been organising peaceful, prayerful and legal prayer vigils in Scotland since 2016. We take a non-judgemental approach, we are a non-political group as a prayer ministry and ask our volunteers to reflect Christ's love in their attitude, demeanour and behaviour while in public (DR1).

This is a good example of the more neutral presentation of the writer, since in this quote the writer has not commented on what Colquhoun said in any way, and only the views of the person quoted are displayed.

Quotations from people leaning more to the pro-choice side were more, and next is presented an example from a Labour MSP:

- (44) Abortion is legal in Scotland and women accessing abortion services should be able to do so safely, free from harassment and intimidation. These campaigners won't be satisfied until women are denied the right to have an abortion" (DR1).

This quote is an illustrative example of the women supportive views presented in the article, other than the writers' own ones. Here, the support and desire to help women to access abortions in a positive environment and free from harassment is clearly transmitted to the reader, for example via the use of the modal "should". This use of "should" also expresses that the desire to grant protest free abortions does not fulfil at this time.

G1 was an article that had the most visibly the writers' own voice and thoughts present. Since much of the text was subjective and clearly contained the writer's own thoughts a lot, there were very few quotations included in the text from other people. In fact, either indirect or direct quoting from other parties than the writer appeared only three times. These three parties quoted were the law, the court, and the Abortion Act. What is interesting here, is that none of these three is a person, but a political will. Two of the quotes were direct and one was indirect. Here is one of the quotes:

- (45) The law states that a woman must be "kept in a penal servitude for life" if she procures an abortion (G1).

Each of the quotes have a negative tone to them, that gives the reader an idea of how the current abortion legislation really is and that it should be changed for the better. In example

44 the writer expresses in a sarcastic way what the current law states, and by this the reader understands that the writer does not agree with the law being just.

The next article discussed here is G2, which was the shortest article out of all of them, and thus contains a limited amount of text to analyse. The language used in the G2 is on the more neutral side and does not contain the writers' own thoughts and opinions. Both indirect and direct quotations are used in the article, however, indirect quoting appears more. Those people or other parties quoted in the article are the public health minister, The Department of Health and Social Care and the Government. Each of these three parties quoted are on the pro-women, and abortion rights supportive side, and those quotes that would be on the opposing side, do not appear in the article at all. For example, the public health minister is quoted saying:

- (46) *The wellbeing and safety of women requiring access to abortion services is paramount. With these measures women will have more choice in how and where they access abortion services, while ensuring robust data is collected to ensure their continued safety (G2).*

The other two quotations were both indirect, but they contained the similar, positive and open for change like content as example 46. This example 46, again, accentuates the importance of access to abortion overall, but especially a safe one. Also, when the minister says, "women will have more choice", she already indicates the will to give women power and choice over matters of their own, more than any of the laws give. In this article, by choosing to quote only pro-choice parties, the writer has created a more positive environment of pro-choice viewpoint for the readers.

In G3, the language use of the writer is on the more opinionated side, and thus only two people are quoted in the whole article, even though especially one of those two people was quoted on multiple occasions – both directly and indirectly – and in fact it is said in the beginning of the article that for that newsletter, the writer has spoken to a professor of sexual and reproductive health research, whose quotes appear much in the article. The article is written in a way that for the last third of the article, the writer interviews this professor, and she answers to the question. Here is an example of what Welling has been quoted saying:

- (47) Women are shocked to think they could be doing something which could be seen as a crime", said Wellings, whose work is heavily informed by interviews with women who have had abortions. "A lot of them were terrified that they wouldn't get through the gatekeeping system" (G3).

This quote emphasises the concern that is evoked in women who hear that it would be possible for anyone to be jailed for an abortion, which then again shows how unaware the people in Britain are of their own laws and their flaws.

The last article to be discussed here is M1, which was one of the more neutral articles regarding the language use and opinions of the writers. In this article, quotations are used quite a lot, especially from one woman, who went through an illegal abortion and had to serve two years in prison consequently. There are multiple direct and indirect quotations from her, which all are negative in tone and criticizing the current human rights violating legislation in Britain. An example quote from the writer quoting the woman is presented here:

- (48) She was charged with taking pills that caused her to have an illegal abortion. “I felt I had no other choice than to (plead guilty),” (M1).

This example and other quotes from this woman show to the readers of the article how unfair and inhumane the legislation is and the direct quotation brings emphasis to the realness of the situation. The other two parties quoted in the article are, a director of public prosecutions, Max Hill, and an “open letter” signed by 66 organisations and people. Hill is quoted indirectly in the article saying that:

- (49) In reply, Mr Hill said that abortion cases will be given an additional level of scrutiny from their lawyers before charges are brought against women” (M1).

Hill’s reply does not give the readers of the article a very convincing picture of the situation, and the quote from Hill seems like an answer needed to be stated in a situation like that, when abortion rights and matters are debated on.

#### 5.2.4 Human rights and equality in left wing articles

Human rights and especially women’s rights are strongly present in each five articles, but they also vary depending on the article. For example, DR 1 has its focus very strongly on protecting the women at abortion clinics from the harassment of protesters, and it does not take a stand on the political side of the matter in particular. For instance, when quoting one of the protesters, it is made clear via word choices that the writer themselves does not agree with the protester. The article focuses on the basic matter of women being allowed to have an abortion in a peaceful environment.

On the other hand, the rest of the articles specifically centres around the political side of the matter, arguing and discussing the fact that the legislation violates women's rights. G2 focuses on the right for women to have permanent access to abortion via the "pills by post" service. The "pills by post" was a much-discussed subject, as it has also appeared in several of the ten articles used in the present thesis. The focus in the article is the wellbeing and safety of women to have access to abortion easily. In G2, it is written that ministers were forced to abandon their plans to scrap the "pills by post" service, and the writer says:

(50) The move will benefit thousands of women (G2).

This way, the writer notifies the reader of their pro-women stance in the article. The remaining three articles, G1, G3, and S1 focus on the punishment of the women having an illegal abortion and the articles centre around telling the real-life stories of women who have been imprisoned and highlighting that the law is archaic. They emphasize the fact that how women should have the right to abortion without any absurd rules, and that women are living creatures who have rights. Proudman writes in G1:

(51) Why should women still have to pathologise themselves as mad, hysterical, unfit or suffering to legally access healthcare? (G1).

Each five articles has more or less quotes like this from the writers, showing that they support women's rights, and that they are pro-women.

It can be concluded that women's rights, supporting them, and supporting women are very much present in each of the articles, which is not a surprise considering the fact that the articles do discuss abortion matters.

### **5.3 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework of Discourse in the Data**

This subsection examines the data in light of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse, which was presented earlier in the theory section. The three dimensions are text, discursive practice, and social practice. I give a closer look on the framework in practice, as I present the material used in this thesis considering the framework.

Social practices have ultimately a lot of power regarding the present thesis' articles. Social practices are present in the ten articles in for example the people's (such as the writers and other people somehow included in the article) minds and opinions in general that are visible via their use of language and word choices, and also in the circumstances into which people

have been born to and raised to. These underlying social practices into which people have been taught to believe are always likely or more prone to move on to these people's minds even later, and little by little affect the more general view on the matter in the society on a broader level. What I mean in the light of the articles is that the current situation of abortion legislations both in the world in general and in the UK and USA, for instance, are effects of how the situation has been before. For example, one intense factor that functions as a social practice in this matter is that throughout times, even in the very early stages of pregnancy the potential baby has been treated as a precious life and pregnancies have been seen as alive babies from the beginning. Thus, it has always been debated on, who has the power to make the decision of either ending or continuing the pregnancy. Unfortunately, the current legislations in many countries are done by those people who see pregnancies as a potential baby and thus take the non-feminist stance in making the decisions about women's bodies.

However, hypothetically, the situation could be completely different, if the popular view on pregnancies were that the fetuses would be seen as for example only pregnancy tissue and not as a living creature from the beginning. Naturally it needs to be noted that much depends on the stage of the pregnancy. Nonetheless, it also needs to be noted, that these social practices *have* already changed in time, which is only natural. There are, obviously, a lot of people nowadays who *do* see the flaws in the system(s), and support abortion and giving the pregnant women themselves the right to make the decision about their own bodies. For example, even though the ultimate underlying topic of the articles leads to the old-fashioned social practices of 'saving the babies' lives' in all the ten articles the chosen stance of the text was pro-choice in nature. This, again, is a sign of the social practices changing, and for example the media and the discourse presented in the media throughout years has and will be contributing to those changes. However, as has been shown in the present study, there is still much to do and change regarding abortion rights and women's rights, even though they have improved from what they were like, before.

As Fairclough says, social practices are something that have been built into different forms and types of discursive practices, which then again have the power to either change or maintain the social practices. The discursive practices are thus the processes that distribute, produce, and consume the texts and talks of matters, which maintain, or change the social practices, which has been mentioned before. And these can happen for example in media discourse. These things apply to the articles used in the present thesis. The discursive practices are thus the realizations of these prevailing social practices, and in the articles the

discursive practices are the structures present in the texts. Essentially, the discursive practices present in the articles are the ‘rules’ of abortion in the society, according to which individuals have learned to think and act, what people have learned to think about abortion. This divides people both in the articles and in the world to some thinking that abortion is ‘murder’ and some that it is a human right. These are the processes that are related to the production and consumption of the text itself. In fact, the discursive practices were already discussed previously since they are the ways and processes how and through which the social practices have been *learned*. Thus, the discursive practices in the newspapers contribute to the further learning of the same matter of those who read and learn from those texts.

The last and the most inner piece of the framework is text, which essentially is the tool of presenting the social and discursive practices, and thus thoughts and ideologies one or the society has. Text, on the other hand, is the ultimate realization of the above discussed social and discursive practices. In this component of the theory, the specific textual elements such as words, idioms, use of special characters are central building blocks. In the analysis section some specific word choices and their use was discussed already in detail, and for example the use of apostrophes to add meaning or emphasis, and in general those features that add or change or bring meanings to for example a sentence, were focused on. Also, regarding the word choices, whether they have positive, negative, or neutral connotations alters the ultimate meaning of a sentence. I will not go very much deeper into the text as a component of the framework here since the aforementioned features are discussed in detail already in the analysis.

#### **5.4 Ideologies and social orders in the data in light of Feminist critical discourse analysis**

In this section I explain the underlying ideologies that are present in the newspaper articles that are the material of the thesis. I also try to bind these ideologies and the social orders that are present in the articles together with the theoretical side of the feminist critical discourse analysis that was introduced in the previous paragraph/section.

The first ideology that is present in the articles is in the very core of the abortion discussion or debate, even though it is not highlighted in the present thesis. It is the ideology that some people have about protecting the lives of the fetuses, that is seen as something very precious and worth protecting, no matter what it costs or whether the possible baby is even their own.

An example of this can be found in The Daily Record 1, where a women called “Rose” is interviewed and it is written in the article that:

- (52) Rose claims the group [...] stand across from facilities offering to ‘help’ women who she believed may be ‘coerced’ into abortion (DR1).

Here in example 52, Rose has this idea or ideology in her head that potential babies need to be protected and kept alive, even though they can barely be referred to even as a ‘fetus’. Rose has learned this view via past discourse and present ideologies and sees abortion clinics as a threat to pregnant women. Alternatively, in some articles, views limiting women’s right to access abortion for example after a certain point in a pregnancy, are also present. An example of this is from the article The Telegraph 2, where it is written that:

- (53) Conservative MP Jeremy Hunt has previously said that he would like to see the legal time limit on abortions reduced from 24 weeks to 12 weeks (T2).

The pro-life people have this learned ideology in their mind that the pregnancy or the baby to be is something precious and aborting the pregnancy would be non-acceptable, some of the times even if the pregnancy were just pregnancy tissue of the earliest stages. Obviously, this is a common way of thinking since the current legislation all over the world in relatively many places generally support this ideology. This, however, then again feeds the prevailing ideology despite the active fighting against that ideology, and has consequences in struggling to get rid of the old-fashioned way of thinking and changing the legislations. This ideology is not feminist and does not support women’s rights. It is harmful that there are still people who think that a fetus or a pregnancy is more precious than the life of the woman being pregnant. Also, the fact that the current legislations in some places in the world still support this way of thinking, is extremely harmful. This is the situation for example in the United States where a full ban on abortion prevails in certain states, such as Texas, Oklahoma and Idaho (The New York Times). A characterizing example for the anti-women ideology discussed here, is a quote taken from The Telegraph 2 where it was written about a conservative politician, Danny Kruge, and his views that:

- (54) [...]women do not have an “absolute right to bodily autonomy” when it comes to terminating a pregnancy and said we shouldn’t be “lecturing” the USA on the Supreme Court’s decision (T2).

Here the quotations inside this quotation are directly from Kruge, and the longer quote is from the writer of the article.



Another ideology that is present in the articles is that the women wanting an abortion are not always allowed to make their own decisions about their own bodies. There exists this idea that the women are not allowed and able to do what they want with the pregnancies, even when they are the ones most touched by the consequences if they are not allowed to have the abortion. There is this idea that someone else knows what is best and what should – or should not – be done. Patriarchal constructions that have existed in this world in the past has formed such ideologies that has been discussed here, and resulted in that in some cases it can be generally external factors or legislations that make such decisions for the women (Al  x and Hammarstr  m 2004). There are cases where near ones try to pressure the women being pregnant either to have an abortion – for example with cases of sex selection of the fetus – and on the other hand, those situations where due to external circumstances such as legislation or other forms of pressure, the women are forced to continue with the abortion even if they themselves do not want to (see eg. Sarkin 1998, 147, Macleod and Feltham-King 2012, 738). An example taken for this is from M1, where a young woman was jailed for two years for taking an illegal abortion pill. She is quoted saying:

- (55) They actually had a police officer with me in the hospital the whole time and wouldn't let me speak to anyone other than the police [...]. They literally took me from the hospital, straight to the police station (M1).

This example illustrates the problem and the ideology discussed above well, when in a supposedly modern country, this is the reality of abortion.

The last ideology that is present in the articles and is discussed here, is the women supportive and pro-choice view, that is probably the most significant regarding the articles and is important regarding the developing views, rights, and ideologies in the world in general. In the articles, it is very highlighted that the writers' own views and many other parties' voices heard in them specifically support the pro-women and pro-choice view. In this ideology it is highlighted that both abortion legislation and the general view of how the society still sees abortion as a bad thing, is imperative to change. This view opposing the anti-abortionist view sees abortion as basic healthcare and acknowledges women's bodily autonomy and allows them to decide about their own bodies themselves should be more highlighted and important in the modern society. Even though anti-abortion views are somewhat present in the articles, they are largely present only when discussing the views of other people or parties, and not in the writers' own views, in any of the ten articles. The articles mostly adopting solely a pro-women stance, is a positive thing, since this shows that the pro-women and pro-choice views

are indeed increasing, even though we are not nearly ready and in the right place with these women's rights and human rights discussed in the present thesis. The articles are full of suitable examples of this type of pro-women language, but here are a few illustrative examples from The Guardian 1, where the writer starts the article by writing:

- (56) The overturning of Roe v Wade is horrific, but vulnerable women are being imprisoned for ending pregnancies right now in Britain. It's time to legalise abortion (G1).

And the writer adds at the end of the article that:

- (57) The state currently has a triple lock on women's bodies. By not legalising abortion it has the right to force pregnancy, birth and motherhood upon us (G1).

These views represented in the articles are the most important views to be represented in them, or in any discourse in general as well, since continuous change in these matters are needed.

## 6 Discussion

In this section I present the results and findings of the thesis, compare the findings in left and right winged articles, and discuss them related to the methods. I also contemplate on the details that may have affected to the creation of some unreliabilities and ponder over the elements that could have been done differently and consider some possible further research on this matter.

### 6.1 Comparing the Findings of Left and Right Winged Newspaper Articles

In this section I compare the two groups of articles to each other on the basis of those matters found and discussed earlier in the analysis section. I have divided this comparison to three subheadings which are the attitudes, opinions, and voices of the writers; quotation and other voices present in the article; and the human rights aspect of the articles. The general finding in this thesis is that there were no major differences to be found between the two groups of articles, unlike what was expected in the hypotheses of this thesis. Possible reasons for explaining this could be for instance the fact that evidently the politically more right and left leaning newspapers in Britain simply does not have that much of a difference in the general beliefs or opinions towards abortion rights and politics.

#### 6.1.1 Comparing the Attitudes, Opinions, and Voices of the Writers

The attitudes, opinions, and voices of the writers of the articles were similar in general in the two groups. As was discussed above, there were three articles with relatively neutral, non-opinionated language used in both two groups, and the remaining two articles in both groups were rather opinionated and contained more subjective language. Thus, noteworthy differences were not found. In both groups, it is apparent that the writers are on the pro-choice side and support women's rights to legal and safe abortions. This applies to both article groups with more objective/neutral, and subjective/opinionated language use. As was discovered in the analysis section, the writers tend to use language containing negative words when discussing the problematic and unfair matters, that contain ethical issues, concerning abortion. On the other hand, they tend to use language with positive word choices when discussing abortion rights, supporting women, and other topics that are somehow for example changing for better what comes to abortion matters.

### 6.1.2 Comparing the Quotations and other voices

The use of quotations varied quite between the articles, but again, no major differences were found between the more left or right winged groups of articles. Use of quotations was more connected to whether the article was on the more neutral side (e.g. T1, T3, DMail 1, DR 1, G2, DMirror 1) or more opinionated (e.g. T2, S1, G1, G3,). This could be for instance because in the articles that contained more neutral language from the writer, the focus was more on quoting other people and presenting their views, whereas in those articles where the writers' opinions were more visibly present, the focus was more on them speaking and less other people's ideas. This, however, does not realize in the articles as straightforwardly as presented here, but generally when looking at the articles at large, this is the case. Thus, interestingly, here the more relevant finding is between the more opinionated vs neutral category rather than the more left vs right winged newspaper.

### 6.1.3 Comparing the Human Rights Aspect

As has been shown in the previous sections, no major differences between the more right winged and left winged articles were found, and the human rights presentation aspect is no different. In each of the ten articles it is clear that the writers of the articles support women's rights to have abortions, to have access to equal healthcare, and to be able to have abortions without fear of imprisonment or other fears. Even though the more focused topics within the abortion matters might have varied between the articles, it was always clear that the writers were on the pro-women side of the discussion. Similarly, regarding the voices and opinions of the writers themselves, and whether they were more subtle and neutral or very visible and active, it could always be read between the lines – or directly in within the text – that the writers do stand behind the women's right to have safe, legal, and supported abortions.

Even when looking at the more focused topics discussed in the articles, they tend to be much the same in both groups. In both groups three articles discussed the political side of the abortion discussion. The "pills by post" service was the main topic in three articles. Two in the right leaning group and one in the left leaning group. The remaining one article focused on protecting women in abortion clinics from protesters' harassment, and this article was in the left leaning group. But, essentially, regarding the topics of the articles, there is no noticeable difference to be found between the two groups of articles.

## 6.2 Results and Findings

The hypothesis of the present thesis, around which the whole study centres, is that it was expected to be found out that the articles that lean politically more to the left would be more open minded and accepting towards abortion, and that thus the discourse and language would have been more positive and kinder in the articles. Whereas it was expected that the newspapers leaning more towards right would have adopted more archaic and disapproving attitudes and used more negative language. However, this hypothesis was proven to be false and no differences between these two groups of articles regarding the political division were found. Nonetheless, relevant differences in the number of quotations used were found between those articles with more visible and opinionated voices of the writers and those with more neutral and subtle voices. It was found that quotations were used less in those articles where the writers' own voices were more visible. Thus, the results of the study do not support the set hypothesis.

Even though the hypothesis proved to be false, earlier research on abortion discourse shows that in some countries abortion discourse in the media is very regulated or that *anti*-abortion discourse is the norm rather than just abortion discourse (for example Larsson et. al. 2015 and Koralewska and Zielinska 2022). Thus, I argue that these matters are relevant to be discussed. A study that is more relevant regarding the present thesis is Purcell et. al's 2014 study. In that study on the stigmatisation of abortion in British print media it was found that predominantly negative language was used in discourses on the topic of abortion, and that negative media representation of abortion contribute to the stigmatisation of abortion and the women who have it. This, then again, reflects on the women's decisions on abortion and overall, the views in the society. Even though this study is not identical with the present study regarding the specific focus, material, hypothesis, and research questions, shared features are abortion discourse, media (newspapers), and presentation of women. Thus, on account of previous research, I wanted to see whether there were differences between the two political orientations in the newspapers. It might be that in the material used in this study the political leanings of the newspapers and articles were not as visible, or even present at all, in reality. Even though the newspapers have a political stance, it might not reach to individual article level. Also importantly, the correlation between a right leaning newspaper and anti-abortion stance, and on the other hand left leaning stance and pro-choice stance is not necessarily a thing, as it proves not to be in this study. However, I believe that were I to have conducted this study on American settings, comparing the newspapers identifying as republican or democrat, the

results would have been more accordingly to the hypothesis. Also, I believe that religion aspect would have been a major contribution in the sense that religious people tend to be predominantly more anti-abortion, especially in the US.

The present study is a critical discourse analysis study since it has focused on examining the specific small features in the texts, such as word choices, underlying attitudes, and opinions in abortion discourse and finding out how these features have contributed to creating meanings and results of different kinds. For example, the views of the writers of the articles and other peoples whose voices are present in the articles on abortion and its current legislation and politics in the UK, and in brief in the US as well, have been unravelled. By using CDA in the present thesis, we have unfolded that there were in fact no differences to be found in the language use, attitudes, and presented views on women's rights to be found between the two groups of articles measures, and we have found out how these are in the articles. We have discussed the ideologies and power structures behind the abortion legislation and politics. What contributes to the present study being a feminist critical discourse analysis in more focus, is that the topic is strongly connected to human rights or more specifically women's rights and examining what are the factors that contribute to violating or supporting those rights. It could be stated that like Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse suggests, texts, discursive practices and social practices are in a constant, changing relationship, altering each other. In light of this model, abortion discourse affects people's views and thus ideologies, which then again contribute to changing the texts and production of the texts, that is, discursive practices in the future. This study has shown, that even though politically left and right leaning newspapers could have different views on this studied matter as well, these three components of the model have already changed the general view in the UK in both groups to be acceptive towards abortion.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study and Possible Further Research**

The first matter worth noting in this section concerns the material. In the material, there were three articles chosen from the same newspaper in both the more left winged group of articles (The Guardian) and the more right winged group of articles (The Telegraph), even though they all had different writers. It might have been better in terms of reliability and generalizability of the study to choose all the articles from different newspapers, or all the articles from two newspapers, so that the material would have focused on either only comparing one right winged and one left winged newspaper, or then taken a more general

look by having all the material from different newspapers. For example, all left winged articles could have been from *The Guardian*, and all right winged from *The Telegraph*. However, each of the chosen newspapers are among the most popular and read British newspapers, of which there is a limited number. Also, the present study did not examine or make a distinction between the chosen newspapers themselves, but the focus of the study was on the articles as groups. Thus, on the other hand, the articles themselves were not the focus of the study, but the political category that they represent, so this should not be an issue.

The most significant finding of the present study is that the language use and the underlying attitudes on the topic of abortion did not, however, differ between the groups as much as it was predicted according to the hypothesis. As was illustrated in the analysis section, the language used in each of the two groups showed that the stance of the paper and the self-positioning of the writer was pro-women and supportive towards women getting an abortion. Nonetheless, some differences were however found in the articles. Those differences had to do more with whether the language in the articles were more opinionated or neutral, which was not the focus of this study. Even though the hypothesis was not right, it is still a finding, and possibly even a positive one, since it was proven that all the writers support abortion rights and women's rights. This study's results can be concluded to be relevant, and it can be said that differences were found, even though not in the place where they were expected.

Possible further research could be conducted with a bigger sampling of material, with for example twenty articles. This way some smaller underlying differences could be detected easier and more reliably. Also, alternatively, it would be possible to analyse just one newspaper, focusing more attention on analysing how the attitudes and opinions, and/or the quoting of other voices in the papers. This way a study could press more either the attitudes of the writers or other voices presented in the articles.

Other possible further research could be conducted on the same matters and in the same frames, but in the USAs newspaper articles. In that setting, the division and presentation of abortion rights in left and right leaning newspapers could be clearer than in the British setting. The USA is a much bigger country with stronger and more varying opinions on the topic of abortion, and as was shown even in the present thesis' data in a British newspaper article setting, the legislation in America is very controversial and human rights violating. Especially since the overturning of *Roe v Wade* in the summer 2023. Thus, this topic could be very fruitful to study in the American setting.

## 7 Conclusion

The present study is a comparative discourse analysis study on ten left and right leaning British newspaper articles on the topic of abortion or more specifically, abortion politics. The aim of this thesis was to find out differences and similarities between the articles of these two politically different ways leaning groups of newspapers. The hypothesis was the assumption that the language use, word choices, and attitudes present in the articles would be more archaic and non-acceptive towards abortion in the right leaning newspaper articles, and more liberal and modern in the left leaning newspaper articles. Three research question were set in the introduction of this thesis, and they were:

4. How is the language use in the articles, and how is the positive and negative word choices present in the articles? How do they differ between the more left winged and right winged newspaper articles?
5. How are the writers' own thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards abortion? How are the thoughts, opinions, attitudes, and quoting of other voices and in the left and right winged articles?
6. How does the discourse in the newspapers on the topic of abortion either violate or support women's rights, or their right to have an abortion?

To answer to the first research question, there was a rather clear division between the use of positive and negative language use. In both article groups, the writers tend to use positive language and word choices when discussing the matters supporting abortion rights and women, and on the other hand they tend to use negative language and word choices whenever discussing those matters that are wrong and violate women's right and abortion rights. These topics being for example the unfair abortion legislation, and opinions and language use that violates women's rights by other parties than the writer. The writers of the articles and other voices heard in the articles explained their views drawing on factual information on abortion. There were no differences to be found between the more left and right winged articles in these matters.

In all the ten articles, regardless of their political leaning, the writers of the articles had positive and women supportive views towards abortion. In some of the ten articles, again regardless of the political stance, the writes' own voices, opinions, and thoughts were more visible whereas in some articles they were more neutral or subtle. Similarly to other results of



the research questions of this thesis, the quotations or the number of it did not differ significantly between the two groups. However, differences in the number of quotations used were found depending on whether the article or the voices of the writer(s) themselves was more neutral or active and visible. If the writers' voices were neutral, quotations were used more, but if the voices were more active, quotations were used less.

The last research question was about supporting or violating women's rights. The language use of the writers of the articles themselves did not indeed violate women's rights or their right to abortion in neither of the two groups of articles. On the contrary, these rights were enhanced and supported by the writers, for example by using positive and supportive language, and visibly making it clear that the writers themselves did not agree with those opinions and thoughts presented by other voices such as quoting opposing parties on the matter. Quotations from pro-choice parties and people, such as health professionals, ministers, and women who have gone through abortion themselves, were used more in the articles, than quotations from opposing parties. Abortion itself and women having abortion were presented in the articles in a supportive, informative, and realistic way. The current legislation in both Britain and USA and the flaws in them were presented seriously, and it was clear in the articles that the writers, as well as many other people, do expect the legislation to be changed for the better, supporting towards women. However, such language that does violate women's right to abortion was somewhat present in the articles, but it was always via quotations from other parties or people somehow opposing the right to abortion, women's bodily autonomy, or opposing the idea of expanding the number of weeks when women pregnant can still have an abortion.

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## Appendix: Finnish Summary

### Johdanto

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tutkin kielenkäyttöä, asenteita ja ihmisoikeuksia brittiläisissä sanomalehtiartikkeleissa kriittisen diskurssianalyysin avulla. Tämä tutkielma on kvalitatiivinen ja vertaileva tutkimus vasemmistopainotteisten ja oikeistopainotteisten lehtiartikkelien välillä, ja pääfokus on aborttidiskurssissa. Materiaali koostuu kymmenestä brittiläisestä aborttia jollakin tavalla käsittelevästä lehtiartikkelista, joista viisi on vasemmistopainotteisista sanomalehdistä ja loput viisi oikeistopainotteisista sanomalehdistä.

Aborttikeskustelu on ollut kiihkeää jo usean vuosikymmenen ajan ympäri maailmaa. Se alkoi nousta erityisen paljon pinnalle 1960- ja 1970- luvuilla, kun vuonna 1967 Iso-Britannian parlamentti hyväksyi lain, joka salli abortin tietyin perustein (Abortion Act). Samaten Yhdysvalloissa hyväksyttiin samankaltainen laki vuonna 1973, joka myönsi osavaltioille oikeuden päättää abortin laillisuudesta (Roe v Wade Law). Kuitenkin aborttikeskustelu palasi taas hyvin olennaiseksi ja erityisen keskustelluksi aiheeksi vuoden 2022 kesällä, kun Yhdysvaltojen korkein oikeus kumosi tämän lain, tehden abortista Yhdysvalloissa käytännön tasolla laittoman melkein poikkeuksetta. Tämä päätös johti intensiiviseen keskusteluun koko maailmassa, ja näin ollen myös Iso-Britanniassa.

Yhdysvaltojen kesän 2022 tapahtumien seurauksena keskustelu aborttioikeuksista nousi taas esille koko maailmassa, minkä vuoksi tätä aihetta, ja sitä, miten abortista puhutaan mediassa, on relevanttia tutkia. Tutkimuksia aborttikeskustelusta, joissa fokus on ollut mm. asenteiden tarkastelussa tai sosiaalisten tai kielellisten piirteiden tarkastelussa sanomalehdissä on tehty ennenkin (esimerkiksi Larsson ja muut 2015; Saurette & Gordon 2013 ja Macleod 2012). Kuitenkaan sellaista tutkimusta, jossa yhdistyy aborttikeskustelu, asenteet, sanomalehdet, ja niiden poliittinen asennoituminen, ei ole ennen tehty. Tutkielmassa väitän, että tämä aihe on relevanttia tutkia mm. siksi, että aborttikeskustelu on ollut viime aikoina hyvin kiivasta ja tämä aihe koskee niin monia naisia ja muitakin ihmisiä henkilökohtaisellakin tasolla. Lisäksi tämä aihe käsittelee ihmisoikeuksia, jotka ovat edelleen nykypäivänä parannusta vailla, joten uutta ja päivitettyä tutkimusta tästä aiheesta on olennaista tehdä.

Tämä tutkielma keskittyy nimenomaan brittiläisiin aborttiaiheisiin lehtiartikkeleihin ja niiden vertailuun. Tutkielman pääfokus on diskurssin tarkastelussa, eli huomiota kiinnitetään elementteihin kuten sanavalintoihin, positiivisiin vs. negatiivisiin sanoihin, asenteisiin sanojen



takana, lainauksiin, ja yleiseen kielenkäytön luonteeseen. Kielenkäytön lisäksi ihmisoikeudet ja naisten oikeudet, sekä miten niistä keskustellaan ja miten niihin suhtaudutaan, on myös olennainen osa tätä tutkielmaa. Käyttämällä diskurssianalyysiä on mahdollista yhdistää kielellisen ja sosiaalisen näkökulman tarkastelu. Tutkielman tavoite on saada selville, onko vasemmisto- ja oikeistopainotteisten artikkelien välillä samankaltaisuuksia tai erilaisuuksia, ja jos on, niin millä tavalla ne ovat samanlaisia tai erilaisia. Hypoteesina tutkielmassa on, että poliittisesti oikealle nojautuvien artikkelien kieli ja asenteet aborttia kohtaan ovat vanhanaikaisempia ja negatiivisempia, kun taas vastaavasti poliittisesti vasemmalle nojautuvien artikkelien kieli ja asenteet ovat suvaitsevaisempia ja positiivisempia aborttia ja abortin tehneitä naisia kohtaan.

Selkeyttääkseni mitä tarkalleen haluan selvittää tässä tutkielmassa, olen asettanut kolme keskeistä tutkimuskysymystä, jotka ovat seuraavat:

1. Millaista kielenkäyttö on artikkeleissa, eli millaisia ovat mielipiteet aborttia tai sen säätelyä vastaan tai sen puolesta, ja entä artikkelien kirjoittajien tai muiden positiiviset tai negatiiviset sanavalinnat? Miten nämä eroavat vasemmalle tai oikealle nojautuvissa artikkeleissa?
2. Minkälaisia ovat artikkelien kirjoittajien omat ajatukset, mielipiteet ja asenteet aborttia kohtaan? Toisaalta minkälaisia ovat muiden ihmisten ajatukset, mielipiteet ja asenteet vasemmalle ja oikealle nojautuvissa artikkeleissa?
3. Miten diskurssi aborttia käsittelevissä sanomalehtiartikkeleissa joko rikkoo tai tukee naisten oikeuksia tai heidän oikeuksiansa saada abortti?

#### Teoreettinen tausta

Tämä tutkielma on diskurssitutkimus, jossa on hyödynnetty kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä (*critical discourse analysis*) ja muita kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin liittyviä teorioita, jotka esittelen tässä osiossa. Diskurssianalyysi on laaja ja moninainen käsite, jota voidaan käyttää monissa erilaisissa eri alojen tutkimuksissa, kuten esimerkiksi historiassa, antropologiassa, sosiologiassa, poliittisessa tieteessä ja koulutuksessa. Diskurssianalyysi on esimerkiksi lingvistiikan ja sosiaalitieteiden yksi haara ja sopii siksi monenlaiseen tutkimukseen. Kriittinen diskurssianalyysi puolestaan keskittyy vahvemmin ongelmiin, jotka käsittelevät esimerkiksi sosiaalisia ilmiöitä, valtaa ja ideologioita. Tässä tutkielmassa kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä on käytetty apuna löytämään piirteitä ja tekijöitä aborttioikeuksiin, naisten

oikeuksiin ja ihmisoikeuksiin liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Hyödyntämällä kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä, pienetkin nyanssierot artikkelien teksteissä on mahdollista löytää.

Norman Fairclough on kehittänyt mallin diskurssin kolmiulotteiselle viitekehykselle (*three-dimensional-framework of discourse*), jossa yhdistyy kolme diskurssianalyysille olennaista aspektia. Nämä kolme aspektia ovat teksti (*text*), diskursiivinen käytäntö (*discursive practice*) ja sosiaalinen käytäntö (*social practice*). Yhdessä nämä kolme aspektia muodostavat kuvauksen siitä, mitä diskurssi on ja miten sitä tulkitaan. Viitekehysten tarkoitus on tuoda yhteen kolme diskurssin näkökulmaa, joista kukin tulee ottaa huomioon diskurssianalyysiä tehdessä. On tärkeää huomioida, että kaikki kolme aspektia vaikuttavat toisiinsa ja muuttavat toisiaan. Faircloughin kolmiulotteinen viitekehys on tiiviisti yhteydessä Faircloughin sosiaalteoriaan (*social theory*), joka on myös osa tätä tutkielmaa.

Ensimmäinen kolmesta osatekijästä on teksti. Mikä tahansa tekstuaalinen ominaispiirre, kuten esimerkiksi kirja, ääniviesti, tai vaikkapa tutkimuksen sisällysluettelo, voidaan lukea tekstiksi. Faircloughin mukaan mikä tahansa pienikin tekstillinen piirre voi olla merkittävä diskurssianalyysissä, ja näin ollen tehdä tekstin tärkeäksi ja olennaiseksi. Tässä tutkielmassa tekstinä toimivat luonnollisesti artikkelit. Toinen kolmesta Faircloughin osatekijästä on diskursiiviset käytännöt, jotka pitävät sisällään tekstin tuottamisen prosessit, tekstin käytön ja tekstin levityksen. Näillä tarkoitetaan siis käytännössä esimerkiksi ajatusprosessia tekstiä kirjoittaessa ja lukiessa, mikä pätee tähänkin tutkielmaan. Nämä kirjoittamisen ja lukemisen prosessit osallistavat tuomaan ja muokkaamaan ihmisten ajatuksia, eli sosiaalisia käytäntöjä, niin yksilöllisellä kuin yhteiskunnallisellakin tasolla. Kolmas ja viimeinen osatekijä tässä viitekehyksessä ovatkin sosiaaliset käytännöt, jotka sisältävät diskurssin suhteessa esimerkiksi ideologioihin ja valtarakenteisiin. Fairclough käsittää ideologiat todellisuuden rakenteina, jotka ovat sidoksissa diskursiivisiin käytäntöihin, ja jotka puolestaan vaikuttavat yhteiskunnan rakentumiseen ja muokkautumiseen. Tässä tutkielmassa sosiaalisia käytänteitä ovat ideologiat, ajattelumallit ja mielipiteet, jotka ovat artikkeleissa esillä. Käytännössä siis tässä tutkielmassa esillä olevat ideologiat, ajatusmallit ja mielipiteet ovat aborttiin liittyviä.

Tässä tutkielmassa toinen olennainen teoria on Faircloughin sosiaalteoria (*social theory*), joka analysoi sosiaalisia ja poliittisia tapahtumia yhteiskunnassa. Teorian mukaan diskurssi sosiaalisena käytäntönä luo valtaa usean osatekijän välillä. Nämä valtasuhteet puolestaan aiheuttavat vallan ja ideologioiden synnyn yhteiskunnassa, mikä puolestaan luo valtaa diskursseihin ja välittää näkökulmia maailmasta eri näkökulmista. Teoria sopii tähän

tutkielmaan, sillä se lähestyy sosiaalisia tapahtumia kriittisestä näkökulmasta käsin.

Sosiaaliteoria sopii käytettäväksi tässä tutkielmassa, sillä keskiössä on sosiaalisten suhteiden tarkastelu aborttidiskurssissa ja tarkoitus on saada selville, miten nämä sosiaaliset suhteet vaikuttavat kielenkäyttöön artikkeleissa, tai toisin päin.

Michelle Lazar on kehittänyt feministisen kriittisen diskurssianalyysin (*Feminist critical discourse analysis*), jota on myös käytetty apuna tässä tutkielmassa. Feministinen kriittinen diskurssianalyysi ottaa nimensä mukaisesti feministisen näkökulman diskurssianalyysissä, minkä vuoksi se sopii käytettäväksi tässäkin tutkielmassa. Ihmisoikeudet ja vielä tarkennetummin naisten oikeudet ovat suuressa osassa aborttia ja aborttilainsäädäntöä koskevassa keskustelussa. Feministinen diskurssianalyysi keskittyy tutkimaan esimerkiksi useita sosiaalisen epätasa-arvon ja epäoikeudenmukaisuuden muotoja sekä sukupuoleen liittyvää epätasa-arvoa. Feministinen näkökulma yhdistettynä kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin tarjoaa hyvät puitteet poliittiselle kritiikille yhteiskunnassa, mitä tarvitaan tässäkin tutkielmassa.

#### Tutkimusmateriaalit ja metodit

Aineistona tässä tutkielmassa on käytetty kymmentä eri brittiläistä sanomalehtiartikkeliä, jotka kaikki jollakin tavalla käsittelevät aborttia aiheiltaan. Puolet artikkeleista on sanomalehdistä, jotka nojaavat poliittisesti enemmän oikeiston suuntaan, ja puolet nojaavat enemmän vasemmalle. Materiaalit ovat kerätty yhteensä kuudesta eri sanomalehdestä niin, että kahdesta sanomalehdestä on otettu kolme artikkeliä, ja neljästä sanomalehdestä on otettu kustakin vain yksi artikkeli. Olen valinnut artikkelit itse ottaen huomioon tietyt kriteerit, jotka ovat taanneet parhaan mahdollisen yleistettävyyden ja luotettavuuden tutkimukselle aineiston osalta. Ensinäkin, kaikki artikkelit ovat brittiläisiä ja vuodelta 2022. Toiseksi, yleistettävyyden vuoksi aineisto on poimittu useammasta eri sanomalehdestä kuin vain kahdesta. Kolmanneksi, artikkelien tuli olla melko samanlaisia esimerkiksi pituuden ja aiheen puolesta, jotta niitä on mahdollista verrata toisiinsa. Sanomalehdet, joista artikkelit on kerätty, ovat The Guardian, The Daily Record, The Mirror, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail ja The Sun. Kolme ensimmäistä nojaavat vasemmalle, ja kolme viimeistä oikealle.

Kielen ja tekstin ilmiöitä, joita tässä tutkielmassa on tutkittu, ovat toimijuus (*agency*), intertekstuaalisuus (*intertextuality*) ja sitoutuminen (*engagement*). Näiden ilmiöiden avulla on mahdollista tarkastella tiettyjä piirteitä ja tekijöitä tutkimusmateriaaleissa, jotka puolestaan

osallistuvat tutkielmassa tutkittujen aiheiden muodostumiseen. Toimijuudella tarkoitetaan muun muassa yksilöiden kykyä hankkia valtaa ja resursseja saavuttaakseen parhaan mahdollisen potentiaalin omassa toiminnassaan. Tässä tutkielmassa toimijuuden avulla voidaan tutkia esimerkiksi valta-asetelmia sekä enemmän ja vähemmän kuultuja ja esillä olevia ääniä. Toimijuuteen liittyy vahvasti itse toimija, esimerkiksi sanooko artikkelin kirjoittaja jotakin vai joku ulkopuolinen henkilö lainauksen muodossa, sekä kielenkäyttö ja sanavalinnat. Positiiviset tai negatiiviset sanavalinnat, sarkasmi, sekä ylipäättään esillä olevien henkilöiden ajatukset ja mielipiteet ovat osallisena toimijuuden muotoutumisessa. Toinen tässä tutkielmassa tarkasteltu ilmiö on intertekstuaalisuus, jolla tarkoitetaan artikkelissa esillä olevien osapuolten ääniä, esimerkiksi epäsuorien tai suorien lainausten muodossa, tai sitten artikkelien kirjoittajien omaa ääntä. Artikkeleissa intertekstuaalisuutta koskevia kielellisiä piirteitä on esimerkiksi lainausten määrä, keitä lainatut ihmiset ovat ja mitkä ovat heidän näkemyksensä aborttia ja aborttilainsäädäntöä kohtaan, sekä ovatko lainaukset suoraa vai epäsuoraa ja nähdäänkö ne positiivisina vai negatiivisina. Viimeinen kolmesta tässä tutkielmassa tarkastelluista ilmiöistä on sitoutuminen (*engagement*), joka lyhyesti määriteltynä käsittelee asenteita, sitä mistä ne tulevat ja eri äänten kanssakäymisestä suhteessa toisiinsa diskurssissa. Tässä tutkielmassa keskiössä ovat artikkelien kirjoittajien, sekä muiden mukana olevien äänien asenteet ja se, ovatko ne positiivisia vai negatiivisia suhteessa aborttiasioihin. Lisäksi naistenoikeusasiat ja niihin liittyvät asenteet ovat olennainen osa sitoutumisen teoriaan.

## Analyysi ja tutkimustulokset

Tutkielman analyysiosiossa käyn ensin läpi kummankin artikkeliryhmän erikseen ja vertailen löydettyjä piirteitä ja tuloksia toisiinsa tutkielman keskusteluosiossa. Kummankin ryhmän analyysiosiot koostuvat neljästä alaosiosta, joissa käsittelen ja analysoin tiettyä olennaista näkökulmaa materiaaleissa. Nämä neljä alaosiota käsittelevät materiaalien aiheita, jotka ovat: artikkelien sisällölliset aiheet, artikkelien kirjoittajien kielenkäyttö ja asenteet artikkeleissa, muut artikkeleissa läsnä olevat äänet ja lainaukset, sekä ihmisoikeudet ja tasa-arvo artikkeleissa. Näiden lisäksi analyysin lopussa käyn vielä läpi ja analysoin tutkielman materiaalit aikaisemmin esittelemieni teorioiden valossa, eli Faircloughin diskurssin kolmiulotteisen viitekehyksen mukaan, sekä keskustelen ideologioista ja sosiaalisista järjestyksistä artikkeleissa kriittisen feministisen diskurssianalyysin valossa.

Vasemmisto- sekä oikeistopainotteisten sanomalehtien artikkelien analyysissä kävi ilmi, että aineistossa näiden kahden ryhmän välillä ei ollut havaittavissa merkittäviä eroja missään neljästä tarkastellusta näkökulmasta. Artikkelien aiheet, kirjoittajien asenteet ja mielipiteet, lainaukset ja muut äänet, sekä ihmisoikeusaspektit olivat samanlaisia molemmissa ryhmissä. Tutkielmalle asettamani hypoteesi ei siis toteutunut.

Vaikka tutkielmalle asetettu hypoteesi ei toteutunutkaan, muita mielenkiintoisia sekä mainitsemisen arvoisia löydöksiä, jotka koskivat molempia ryhmiä, kävi ilmi materiaaleja analysoidessa. Silloin, kun artikkelien kirjoittajien kielenkäyttö oli enemmän negatiivista, he useimmiten käsittelivät ja puhuivat sellaisista aiheista, jotka olivat problemaattisia tai epäreiluja ja sisältivät esimerkiksi joitakin eettisiä ongelmia. Esimerkiksi silloin, kun artikkelissa puhuttiin aborttilainsäädöstä, joka ei ole oikeudenmukainen vaan rikkoo ihmisoikeuksia, kirjoittajat käyttivät negatiivista kieltä. Puolestaan niissä tilanteissa, joissa puhuttiin muutoksista parempaan tulevaisuudessa koskien aborttilainsäädäntöä tai naisten oikeuksista ja niiden tukemisesta, kirjoittajat käyttivät positiivista kieltä. Muun muassa tämän pohjalta, sekä kirjoittajien yleinen kielenkäyttö huomioon ottaen, voidaan siis päätellä artikkelien kirjoittajien olevan aborttioikeuden puolesta ja kannattavan naistenoikeuksia sekä aborttilainsäädännön uudistamista. Toinen mielenkiintoinen molemmista ryhmistä löytyvä havainto koskee suorien ja epäsuorien lainausten käyttöä artikkeleissa. Tarkasteltaessa suoria ja epäsuoria lainauksia, artikkelien kirjoittajien omia asenteita ja mielipiteitä sekä artikkeleissa esillä olevia muiden henkilöiden asenteita ja mielipiteitä kävi ilmi, että molemmissa ryhmissä näiden tekijöiden suhde ja kielenkäyttö kulkivat samassa linjassa. Ne artikkelit, joissa kielenkäyttö oli enemmän neutraalia eivätkä kirjoittajien omat asenteet olleet kovin näkyviä, sisälsivät selkeästi enemmän lainauksia. Puolestaan niissä artikkeleissa, joiden kieli oli värikkäämpää ja sisälsi enemmän kirjoittajien omia asenteita ja mielipiteitä, oli käytetty vähemmän lainauksia.

Aineiston analyysissä kävi ilmi, että molemmissa ryhmissä oli kolme artikkelia, jotka olivat suhteellisen neutraaleja eivätkä sisältäneet erityisen jyrkkää ja näkyvästi mielipiteitä osoittavaa kielenkäyttöä. Puolestaan loput kaksi artikkelia kummassakin ryhmässä sisälsivät värikkäämpää ja vahvempia mielipiteitä omaavaa kielenkäyttöä. Näin ollen ryhmät olivat keskenään samankaltaisia, sillä molemmista ryhmistä löytyi niin neutraalimpia kuin vähemmän neutraalimpia artikkeleja. Kielen tai muidenkaan tarkasteltavien osatekijöiden puolesta toinen ryhmistä ei siis ollut näkyvästi pelkästään neutraalia kieltä sisältävä, eikä toinen pelkästään värikästä ja mielipiderikasta kieltä sisältävä. Mitä tulee asenteiden,

mielipiteiden ja kirjoittajien äänten vertailuun, huomattavia eroja ryhmien välillä ei löytynyt, vaan molempien ryhmien artikkelien kirjoittajien asenteet olivat abortin ja naisten oikeuksien puolesta.

Kuten kielenkäytön ja asenteidenkin osalta artikkeleja tarkastellessa kävi ilmi, vasemmisto- ja oikeistopainotteisten sanomalehtien artikkelit eivät eroa toisistaan merkittävästi, niin ihmisoikeuksien kuin tasa-arvonkin puolesta. Kaikissa kymmenessä artikkelissa käy enemmän tai vähemmän selväksi se, että kirjoittaja on ihmisoikeuksien ja täten naisten oikeuksien ja abortin laillistamisen – tai pikemminkin aborttilain päivittämisen – kannalla. Vaikka osassa artikkeleista oli lainausten kautta muiden ihmisten abortinvastaisia mielipiteitä ja ajatuksia esillä, kaikissa kymmenessä artikkelissa on selvää, että kirjoittajat itse eivät ole tätä mieltä. Tämän voi huomata esimerkiksi suoran puheen, heittomerkkien käytön tai muiden tekstillisten piirteiden, kuten esimerkiksi sanavalintojen ja ironian kautta.

#### Pohdinta

Materiaalin analyysin tuloksena kävi ilmi, että tutkielmalle asettamani hypoteesi ei toteutunut. Vasemmisto- ja oikeistopainotteisten sanomalehtien artikkeleilla abortista ei osoittautunut olevan merkittäviä eroja keskenään. Joitakin eroja materiaalien välillä kuitenkin löytyi, vaikka nämä erot eivät olleetkaan vasemmisto- ja oikeistopainotteisten artikkelien välillä. Ne artikkelit, joiden kielenkäyttö ja sanavalinnat olivat enemmän latautuneita ja sisälsivät enemmän kirjoittajien omia mielipiteitä, sisälsivät vähemmän epäsuoria tai suoria lainauksia. Ne artikkelit, joissa kieli ja sanavalinnat olivat puolestaan neutraalimpia, sisälsivät enemmän lainauksia muilta tahoilta.

Vaikka tämän tutkimuksen hypoteesi ei toteutunutkaan, väitän, että on kuitenkin olennaista edelleen tutkia tätä aihetta enemmän. Aikaisemmissa samantapaisissa tutkimuksissa (esim. Purcell ja muut 2014) on löydetty, että negatiivinen kielenkäyttö aborttiin liittyen ja negatiivinen mediapresentaatio vaikuttavat abortin stigmatisaatioon yhteiskunnassa, sekä siihen, miten abortin tehneet naiset nähdään yhteiskunnassa. Uskon myös, että jos tässä tutkimuksessa olisi otettu huomioon ja tutkittu aborttidiskurssia yhdysvaltalaisissa sanomalehdissä, tulokset olisivat olleet erilaiset, ja hypoteesi olisi luultavasti toteutunut. Yhdysvaltojen kontekstissa uskonto olisi todennäköisesti ollut suuressa roolissa, ja luulen, että poliittinen jakautuminen kahteen dominoivaan pääleiriin olisi myös näkynyt materiaaleissa. Tässä onkin yksi hyvä vaihtoehto mahdolliselle jatkotutkimukselle.

Mahdollisia tekijöitä, jotka ovat saattaneet rajoittaa tutkimuksen yleistettävyyttä ja luotettavuutta, on monia. Näitä tekijöitä voivat olla esimerkiksi rajattu aineisto, rajattu ajankohta, ja rajattu tutkittava maa. Laajemman aineiston avulla olisi luonnollisesti ollut mahdollista saada suurempi ja luotettavampi otos. Lisäksi kaikki artikkelit olisivat voineet olla eri sanomalehdistä, tai sitten koko aineisto olisi voinut koostua pelkästään kahden sanomalehden artikkeleista (yksi vasemmalta ja yksi oikealta). Laajemmalla aikavälillä kerätyt artikkelit olisivat puolestaan voineet tarjota informaatiota jostakin muusta ajankohdasta, kun pelkästään vuodesta 2022, ja maan puolesta esimerkiksi Yhdysvaltojen tarkastelu olisi voinut tuoda näkyvämpiä tuloksia. Tulevaisuudessa olisi mielenkiintoista ja mahdollista tehdä samanlainen tutkimus mutta esimerkiksi isommalla aineistolla, ja fokus voisi olla vain yhdessä piirteessä kuten esimerkiksi lainauksissa tai kirjoittajien asenteissa ja mielipiteissä.

### Johtopäätökset

Tässä tutkimuksessa on esitelty Iso-Britannian ja Yhdysvaltojen nykyistä aborttilainsäädäntöä. Kriittisen diskurssianalyysin avulla on tutkittu ja päädytty johtopäätökseen, että merkittäviä eroja artikkeliryhmien kielenkäytössä, asenteissa, ja ihmisoikeuksissa ei ole havaittavissa, vaikka aikaisempien tutkimusten perusteella on todettu, että eroja on olemassa. Tässä tutkielmassa on myös käsitelty ideologioita ja valtarakenteita, jotka vaikuttavat aborttilainsäädäntöön ja ihmisten asenteisiin yhteiskunnallisella sekä yksilöllisellä tasolla. Tutkielman keskeinen fokus on ollut artikkeleissa käytetyssä kielessä, jonka perusteella on ollut mahdollista tutkia syvempiä asenteita ja ihmisoikeusnäkökulmaa.