**CHAPTER 1**

**Reporting the road to Brexit: EU Referendum and the Media**

Anthony Ridge-Newman, Liverpool Hope University

ridgena@hope.ac.uk

**Abstract**

The United Kingdom’s 2016 EU referendum, and its ‘Brexit’ outcome, were major international events that fuelled significant coverage in both national and international contexts. However, did newspapers from around the world construct a homogenous global narrative? If so, how? One BBC News story portrayed international newspapers as framing Brexit as an international crisis akin to a natural disaster. This introductory chapter examines these themes through an engagement with international political communication theories that provide useful concepts like the ‘domestication’ and ‘globalization’ of news content. Furthermore, the chapter offers insights into the project’s major themes; key contexts and definitions; the scope of the book; and a brief outline of the other chapters. It concludes that news media serving locales with closer cultural, political and economic proximities to the European Union appear to exhibit higher discursive intensities in reporting the road to Brexit.

**Introduction**

On 24 June 2016, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News published a story exploring the reactions of newspapers from around the world, following the internationally prominent referendum held the previous day in which voters of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) and Gibraltar (a British Overseas Territory, bordering Spain) voted overall to leave the European Union (EU). The BBC claimed that:

Britain's vote to leave the European Union has caused widespread dismay in the European media and beyond. Many commentators see the future of the entire EU at risk from further Eurosceptic challenges. (BBC News, 2016)

The BBC story presented front pages of select newspapers from around the world, which played into a narrative that the outcome of the referendum was an international crisis akin to a natural disaster, with an emphasis on language like ‘widespread dismay’; ‘Earthquake in Europe’; ‘Goodbye to Europe’; and Domino effect’. Crisis frames and significant political change have a longstanding relationship (Hay, 1999). The discursive activities centred on the 2016 EU referendum are thought to be no exception (Higgins, 2016), which is indicated by a number of chapters in this book.

Caiani and Guerra (2017) suggest that Euroscepticism is a growing crisis across Europe and that the media are central to the relationship between citizens and the democratic functions of the EU. While scholars argue that news media, like broadcast news and the press, play a crucial role in referendum campaigns (for example, Jenssen et al. 1998; de Vreese and Semetko 2002; Dekavalla, 2016), academic analysis of the dynamics between referendums and news media is relatively thin when compared to related areas of political communication, like, for example, the more developed understanding of media and general elections (for example, Strömbäck and Dimitrova, 2006; Strömbäck and van Aelst, 2010; Negrine, 2017; Cushion and Thomas, 2018). Blain et al. (2016) is a notable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between referendums and the media. With a focus on Scotland’s 2014 independence referendum, the collection of scholarly works explores issues of media ‘representation’ versus media ‘construction’ in national and international contexts. It sheds light on how a referendum in one locale can generate public discourse and catalyse introspective debate related to the internal dialogues of another.

This EU referendum project takes a similar approach. It aims to contribute to the growing literature on referendums and the media, with an interest in the representation versus construction question in the context of the 2016 EU referendum and ‘Brexit’ (Britain’s exit from the EU). It aims to do this through presenting and comparing a range of analyses of British and international news media contexts. This introductory chapter aims to offer insights into the project’s major themes; key contexts and definitions; the scope of the book; and a brief outline of the chapters.

**EU Referendum and the Media Project**

Recent developments and global media interest in events such as Spain’s Catalonia independence debate and Brexit suggest a mounting importance for scholarly analyses of the relationships between media discourse, the ‘“global” public sphere’ (Volkmer, 2003: 9) and these increasingly common democratic phenomena. Such analyses fit the study of international political communication in which two key debates around the ‘globalization (homogenization) and “domestication” (diversification) of news content’ (Clausen, 2004: 25) inform observations in international news contexts. The globalist paradigm posits that globalized international political communication flows outside traditional media systems in domestic contexts, thus creating a transformed transglobal media environment in which news media construct a global public sphere characterized by discourses with broader transitional, transregional and transcontinental relevance (Volkmer, 1999; Volkmer, 2003). However, this is in contrast to the notion that international news undergoes a ‘domestication’ process in which global news items are constructed around the ‘dominant ideologies’ of their locale, thus resulting in news outlets ‘domesticating the foreign’ and constructing more ‘culturally specific’ discourses (Gurevitch et al., 1991: 205-6). Clausen (2004) argues that both factors contribute to news production in the global news environment.

Examples like the BBC article above have stimulated research interests in the examination of ideology, bias and framing impacts in media discourses (Cotterrell, 1999; Entman, 2007; Entman, 2010). The chapters of this book engage with such topics and debates using a range of methodological approaches, for example, discourse analysis; and content analysis, in order to examine whether and how news media in different locales constructed events in the run-up to and shortly after the 2016 EU referendum. Therefore, the book focuses on media reaction to the referendum campaign and the result, rather than the lengthy and ongoing aftermath of ‘post-Brexit’ events (see the Preface for context). The study of media and politics offers interdisciplinary opportunities. Therefore, the project aims to take a pluralistic approach in order to engage perspectives from diverse geographical locales. The chapters offer a range of cases for comparison from empirical analyses to essays and think pieces, all of which offer perspectives that contribute to the exploration of the book’s overarching questions.

**The Questions**

Since the 2016 EU referendum, the Europhile ideal in which the European public sphere would embody a transnational citizenry with equal access and ability to understand and interpret communications in relation to EU policies and initiatives (Schlesinger, 1999) seems a distant prospect. Research suggests that European news media are yet to foster a dedicated agenda that engages publics in EU issues and promotes collective support of Europeanization (de Vreese, 2007; Valentini and Nesti, 2010; Papathanassopoulos and Negrine, 2011; Lloyd and Marconi, 2014). So, then, how did international news media react to Britain’s EU referendum?

As indicated above, a consistent curiosity throughout this book centres on themes related to how news media construct narratives around Brexit debates in different contexts that are specific to certain geographical locales. News outputs in reaction to significant global events are thought to embody ingredients that are selected in order to offer a particular flavour for media consumption (Neureiter, 2017; Venkataraman, 2018). It is, therefore, pertinent for academic analysis to explore how media frames and constructed narratives in one context compare to others. As the following section suggests, understanding how international media responded to the UK’s 2016 EU referendum, and Brexit, is ripe for analysis. This edited collection aims to go some way in developing an early elucidation of this question with 18 scholarly contributions that represent media output from diverse geographical locales across the UK, the European Single Market, and beyond.

**The Importance**

Adler-Nissen et al. (2017) suggest that analysing perceptions of Brexit beyond the UK has significant value because: (1) it informs an understanding of British identities and the basis on which Brexit is used to shape new international debates around the European integration project; (2) the way in which Brexit narratives are constructed internationally are likely to impact on EU-UK trade negotiations; and (3) Brexit is not necessarily an isolated case – as chapters in this book will suggest, there are Eurosceptic movements gaining momentum across the EU. Therefore, analysing media representations of the referendum and Brexit provides important international insights for comparison with cross cultural importance and value.

**Democracy, referendums and the news media**

Both referendums and the news media are manifestations of democratic activity in which publics place trust to perform roles and functions in a variety of political contexts. Referendums offer forms of direct democracy to the citizenry at local, regional and national levels (Held, 2006; Caiani and Guerra, 2017). Prominent recent examples include same-sex marriage referenda in Ireland (2015) and Australia (2017); and the independence referendums in Scotland (2014) and Catalonia (2017). These cases all received notable national and international media attention, respective to their locales. Collectively, various forms of media, some newer, some more traditional, play increasingly complex roles in political discourse and the communication of political messages across democratic states (McNair, 2017).

Therefore, it is important to recognize that traditional forms of news media tend to be the focus of this book, with limited reference to the role of social and digital media. Subsequently, this project represents a more focused perspective within a broader and rapidly developing media landscape. Pioneers like Howard and Kollanyi (2016) have begun interesting early work examining the role of automated bots in cyberspace. They found that automated social media output from a small number of Twitter accounts played a strategic role in EU referendum discourse, which was dominated by the Leave stance. Further comparative research examining international digital media responses to Brexit would make a significant contribution to the literature and add further context to the findings of this project.

In the recent UK context, referendums, including the alternative vote referendum (2011), have acted as democratic tools employed by governments in order to consult electorates on significant potential policy developments (Held, 2006). The process exhibits unique characteristics when compared to votes in elections. For example, the campaigns associated with referendums can cut across typical political party identities, boundaries and ideologies (Dekavalla, 2016). In the 2016 EU referendum, key figures, like former prime ministers Tony Blair (Labour) and John Major (Conservative) of the Remain campaign, shared prominent campaign platforms (see chapter 6). Campaign moments such as these can become media events in themselves that in turn catalyse public discourse. Moreover, the campaign discourse associated with referendums can be volatile (LeDuc, 2002; Schuck and de Vreese, 2009). The Scottish and EU referendums in Britain were no exception and left behind deep divides (Ford and Goodwin, 2017). Analogous with the Yes/No choice in the 2016 Scottish independence referendum (Dekavalla, 2016), general media discourse suggests the Leave/Remain binary outcome of the EU referendum contributed to a polarization of the British electorate. Chalmers (2017) argues that Brexit has the potential to undermine the British tradition of representative democracy and, following the EU referendum game-changer, democracy in the UK would benefit from being re-imagined.

**Contextualising and defining the study of Brexit**

Three academics based in UK universities edited this project. For the editors, and for a number of the contributors, the weight and enormity of Brexit has been felt first hand and largely from an ‘insider’ perspective. In other words, a number of the contributors to this book were resident in the UK at the time of the 2016 EU referendum. It is important to recognize the significance of this because, naturally, it has influenced, in some way, the orientation of the book and the subsequent chapter selections. It is also important to recognize that many of the contributors examine the topic from an ‘outsider’ perspective insofar that they were generally resident in international contexts, beyond the UK, where exposure to the referendum and its day-to-day campaign discourse would have been less encountered compared to UK-based colleagues. However, some international colleagues contributed chapters with a focus on UK contexts; and some UK-based colleagues authored contributions focusing on international contexts. Therefore, for clarity, references to the ‘international’ perspective generally refer to chapters focusing on media in locales beyond the UK and its overseas territories. The ‘national’ perspective tends to refer to studies of media based in the UK and its constituent parts.

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The overall result of the EU referendum vote includes the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar; and the UK’s four constituent parts, often referred to as countries and, particularly in sporting contexts, as the ‘home nations’ of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Notwithstanding its historical relationship with the EU, constitutionally, the UK Parliament’s sovereignty is supreme. It holds ultimate legislative power in the UK, with certain powers devolved to the assemblies of Northern Ireland and Wales, the Scottish Parliament, and local governments in England. Pressures related to these complex constitutional and political relationships have been recognised as a challenge to the sovereignty of the UK Parliament (Elliott, 2004; Chalmers, 2017). Moreover, recent Brexit events have brought questions about parliamentary sovereignty to the fore of public discourse (for example, Douglas-Scott, 2017; Hammond, 2017; Watts, 2017).

Given the frequent confusion around the formal usage of the names associated with the UK, in the interest of clarity, it seems pertinent in the context of this project to offer brief clarification. When using the term ‘the UK’ (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the four collective parts that form the sovereign country of the United Kingdom are generally in focus. Moreover, ‘Britain’ is a term that can refer to the UK and, therefore, usually includes Northern Ireland. However, Britain is sometimes confused with ‘Great Britain’, which tends to refer to the island that encompasses the mainland parts of England, Scotland and Wales, thus excluding Northern Ireland. The demonym for the UK is British or Briton, with some citizens identifying as English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, among others, and, more recently, European.

**2016 EU referendum and Brexit**

On 23 June 2016, the British Conservative government, under Prime Minister David Cameron, held a referendum that questioned whether the UK should ‘leave’ the EU or ‘remain’ as a member state. The vote included the UK overseas territory Gibraltar, which has a land border with Spain, another EU member state. At the publication of this book, the EU included 28 member states, including the UK. The referendum resulted in a Brexit outcome in which a 52 per cent majority voted to leave the EU. However, as the first part of this book will examine, the vote revealed the UK as a divided country. Not only was the vote close in percentage terms, but the Leave vote was strongest in England and Wales. Gibraltar, Northern Ireland and Scotland voted to remain in the EU. England’s significantly larger population dominated the overall outcome. Subsequently, the Brexit result triggered a chain of events. Firstly, Cameron resigned as prime minister. His successor, Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May, became famous for her mantra ‘Brexit means Brexit’ – a phrase that came to symbolize her ardent approach to setting Britain’s course towards an exit from the EU, expected on 29 March 2019, following complex withdrawal negotiations (Walker, 2017). (See the Preface for a more detailed timeline.)

**European Union**

The EU is a political and economic union of 28 European countries, which developed from the European Economic Community (EEC). The Treaty of Rome (1957) established the EEC and the principle of a common market in Europe. In 1993, this project was fully realized as a single, or internal, market offering ‘four freedoms’ related to the movement of goods, people, services and capital across the EU. The European Economic Area (EEA) includes countries like Norway and Iceland, which are non-EU countries with negotiated access to the single market. Switzerland is not a member of the EU or EEA, but does have negotiated access to elements of the single market. Canada is a non-European country that negotiated a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the EU. Canada is also a former British colony and part of the Commonwealth of Nations, with strong links to the UK. The editors considered these sorts of historical, political and economic factors when contributions to this project were initially sought; and when the three parts of this edited collection were subsequently organized (see the outline of the book below).

**European integration and the UK**

The EU is a supranational union of intergovernmental states directed by the Institutions of the EU, which include seven decision-making bodies, for example, the European Parliament, European Council, European Commission, and Court of Justice of the EU. The UK has had an inconsistent history and, at points, a sceptical relationship with the EU, its institutions and European integration projects (McLean, 2003). The aftermath of World War II, imperial decline of the British Empire, and complexities around Britain’s relationship with Europe, are key themes related to a delay in the UK joining the EEC, which eventually came to fruition in 1973. Unlike 2016, the UK’s referendum on the EEC in 1975 resulted in two thirds of voters supporting a continuance of Britain’s membership. However, in the 1990s, British Euroscepticism became apparent when the UK did not join the (1) Euro: a currency union between the majority of EU states; and (2) Schengen Area: a borderless area across much of the continent of Europe. Maintaining the British Pound and controlling UK borders and immigration have been two central EU-related issues capturing media interests and the public mood in recent decades (Thompson, 2017; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017).

The UK public mood holds potential to drive political events and outcomes (Rahn et al., 1996). Correlations between media reporting and public mood have been demonstrated, including impact outcomes linked to both negative and positive frames in media output (Leshner and Thorson, 2000; Schuck and de Vreese, 2009). The progressive transition from the EEC to the EU through new treaties, like the Maastricht Treaty (1992), historically captured the attentions of the British media. Furthermore, this transition created contention for many Britons and is argued to have contributed to growing UK Euroscepticism (Startin, 2015). Following the democratically evident Europhilia of 1975, campaigns for a referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU intensified over a 40 year period, which contributed to the labelling of Britain as the ‘awkward partner’ (George, 1990) of Europe.

Decisively summing up the role of the media in the public mood of Britons and their attitudes towards the EU is challenging. Trust in the news media as a source of information has changed significantly over the last four decades. That said, Daddow suggests that there has been a ‘collapse in media support for the EU project’ (2012: 1219), which correlates with trends in British attitudes. However, it is important to remain cautious. The impact of new forms of information and technology are still only beginning to be understood in contemporary contexts (Williams and Carpini, 2011). Furthermore, in the run-up to the EU referendum, British political dynamics shifted considerably, resulting in a fragmentation of the two party system and political identification in Britain (Green and Prosser, 2016). Political pressures on the governing Conservative Party and its indirect relationship with developments in the greatly Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) ultimately culminated in Cameron’s decision to placate his party and the Eurosceptics in granting a long campaigned for referendum on Britain’s EU membership (Startin, 2015). (See the Preface for richer context.)

**Brexit, Trump and right-wing populism?**

Brexit was one of two momentous international news events in 2016 that represented political seismic shifts on both sides of the Atlantic. The other being the election of Donald Trump, a conservative ‘anti-establishment’ Republican, to the office of President of the United States. Both cases have been the centre of scholarly analyses that suggest a shift towards right-wing populism across number of advanced democracies (Inglehart and Norris, 2016; Wilson, 2017). Therefore, in reference to this project, it seems timely to develop further our understanding of how national and international media compare in their responses to the referendum, and Brexit.

**Scope of the book**

The project offers 18 chapters that overall represent 18 geographical locales in the UK and globally. The book is organized into three parts based on the nature of geographical, political and historical relationships between the locales, the UK and the EU. Part one includes the UK and its overseas territories, with seven chapters featuring the locales of Britain, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Gibraltar. Part two has a further seven chapters that analyse nine European Single Market counties, excluding the UK, seven of which are the EU member states of France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece; and two non-EU countries Norway and Switzerland. Part three offers four locales from outside the Single Market, including Turkey, Israel, Canada and Russia. It seems that few other contemporary events could inspire such an eclectic array of geographical contributions on a single academic topic. It certainly adds weight to the assertion that Brexit is a global game-changer with impacts reaching far beyond the UK (Adler-Nissen et al., 2017).

As with any research project, there are always limitations. As globally comprehensive as this project had aimed to be, it falls short in terms of representing some pertinent locales. The included locales above were selected based on the expectation that they would provide interesting and pertinent perspectives rooted in the nature of their relations with the EU and the UK. Given the post-Brexit events surrounding border negotiations between the EU, UK, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, the book’s lack of a detailed analysis from the Irish media perspective is a significant omission. Other interesting contributions would include media perspectives from Australia, the USA, the conservative Middle East and, indeed, representation from Asia, like China and/or India, and South America, like Argentina and/or Brazil. That said, contributing 18 diverse case studies to the wider literature on referendums and the media, and the emerging literatures on the impacts of Brexit, seems a worthy endeavour. It also leaves space for reflection and opportunities for further research.

**Outline of the book**

In the concluding chapter of this book (chapter 20), key theoretical, conceptual and contextual themes introduced above are returned to in order to analyse the book’s main themes across the following 18 contributor chapters. Key findings representing each the three groups are compared in order to offer conclusions related to the central puzzle about whether and how the media across a variety of international locales represented and/or constructed narratives related to the 2016 EU referendum. The following sections offer an outline of the rest of the book.

**Part One**

Following this introductory chapter, part one opens its analysis of the UK and its territories with Oisín Share’s contribution in chapter two. Through a discourse analysis, utilizing post-Marxist analysis of hegemony, Share argues that coverage in the British press constructed discourses of conflict framed around the ‘symbolic migrant’ debates leading up to the 2016 EU referendum. Similarly, in chapter 3, Higgins, Ridge-Newman and McKay’s discourse analysis of Scottish and Welsh press provides evidence of narrative constructions that centred on discourses of danger and fear in relation to the prospect of Brexit. The authors liken it to the construction of ‘project fear’ during Scotland’s independence referendum. Continuing the Scottish theme, Marina Dekavalla’s examination of Scottish television, in chapter 4, employs strategy and policy frames to analyse comparisons between coverage of the 2014 independence and 2016 EU referendums. Whereas in 2014 there were clashes between Scottish political elites, the discourse in 2016 was rather more consensual and, thus, reflective of Scotland’s strong remain vote in the EU referendum. Interestingly, chapter 3 suggests that themes constructed across the Welsh and Scottish press were similar in both cases, whereas chapter 4 indicates to a divergence between television output from Scotland and London, England. Dekavalla suggests that in Scotland, there was less emphasis on the political game and more on policy implications compared to London-generated content. Following this theme and returning to Wales in chapter 5, Simon Gwyn Roberts offers a rich contextual analysis that argues how, unlike Scotland, Welsh voters are largely informed by London newspapers. Roberts suggests that similarities between EU referendum voting results in England and Wales are related to a democratic deficit in Welsh media - a theme that is also touched upon in chapter 3, when comparing the quality of Scottish and Welsh media.

In chapter 6, Stephen Baker, assesses newspaper coverage of the referendum in Northern Ireland and suggests that output was framed in a manner that played to specific readerships that are divided along distinct historical and political lines of unionism and nationalism. Glancing back at chapter 4, and its depiction of Scottish TV output being framed around policy in contrast to London’s emphasis on the elite campaign dynamics, Baker’s findings suggest that press content in Northern Ireland was more akin to that of television news in England. Like chapters 1, 2 and 3, chapter 6 provides evidence of narratives constructed around fears, crises and threats.

Andrew Tolson, in chapter 7, analyses content from three of the main British television news networks, BBC, ITV and Channel 4, and identifies cases in which ‘phoney balance’ (Gaber, 2016) is evident. Tolson identifies a problem embedded within news rituals involving television events in which the interactions of politicians and journalists blurs lines between participation and reporting, resulting in the co-construction of referendum narratives. In keeping with chapter 4, London based television, which is often referred to as ‘British’, but is often viewed as serving English audiences rather than wider UK-interest, appears somewhat frivolous and glib when compared to more geographically specific press in locales like Scotland. In Chapter 8, Ángela Alameda Hernández offers a key example of this through her critical discourse analysis (CDA) of opinion articles in newspapers that serve the British overseas territory Gibraltar. Hernández found evidence of discourses around ‘duty’, in relation to voting, and ‘unity’ and ‘Britishness’, in relation to protecting Gibraltar against the spectre of Spain. Again, like chapters 1, 2, 3 and 6, it appears that Gibraltarian narratives were constructed around fear and framed around threats from Madrid, Spain, following a Brexit outcome.

**Part Two**

Part Two brings together a collection of perspectives under the broad grouping of countries with access to elements of the European Single Market, most of which are EU member states, with the exception of Norway and Switzerland. Chapter 9 marks the departure from the UK, through a symbolic hop across the English Channel with Martin and Binet’s analysis of French newspapers’ reactions to Brexit. The authors assess French media discourse from a political perspective and suggest that the Brexit narrative is constructed around ideological dialogues that largely criticize the UK and, more specifically, the English. A similar critique in the media is evident in chapter 10. Klaus Peter Müller takes a storytelling approach that analyses 2112 media texts in the quality press across Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Müller suggests that key media frames include a dis-United Kingdom and a dis-United Europe that plays into the construction of a narrative around Brexit being a failure of democracy.

Chapter 11, by Birgitte Kjos Fonn, examines reaction to the EU referendum in three Norwegian daily newspapers, through which four competing frames are identified to construct a narrative that centers on the negative impact of a Brexit outcome. The commonly recurring themes, also identified in chapters 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8, of fear, catastrophe, threats and panic, again relate back to the links between significant political change and crisis frames (Hay, 1999) and the BBC News (2016) example presented at the beginning of this chapter. León-Solís, Castelló and O’Donnell also demonstrate this consistent theme within the Spanish context in chapter 12. They suggest that Madrid’s media constructed Brexit as an existential crisis for the EU with the use of frames like danger and disaster; and language related to natural disasters. Again, like chapter 11, this is in keeping with the BBC’s initial post-Brexit portrayal of global media coverage (BBC News, 2016). Chapter 13, by Isabel Simões-Ferreira, examines three Portuguese newspapers using a CDA and political concepts. Simões-Ferreira argues that the media plays a role in both constructing and deconstructing Europe and, therefore, has a responsibility as a discursive agent. In keeping with chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 11 and 12, crisis frames are identified and the author suggests the Portuguese media liken Brexit to a Shakespearean tragedy.

Rinella Cere’s, chapter 14, analyses the Italian press and a television talk show and suggests that there was a clear split along political lines within Italian media in which the left supported remain and the right favored the leave stance of the UK’s EU referendum. It adds further weight to the suggestion that there is healthy Euroscepticism in other EU countries (Caiani and Guerra, 2017). Another EU member that has exhibited Eurosceptic tendencies is Greece, the locale in focus in chapter 15. The authors, Katsambekis and Souvlis, engage in an Essex School discourse analysis in order to examine media constructs in four Greek national newspapers. In sharp contrast to chapter 10 in which the Austrian, German and Swiss media are suggested to have framed Brexit as a failure of democracy, key themes in the Greek case include (1) referenda being constructed as the ultimate expression of democracy; and (2) critiques of German hegemony in Europe.

In chapter 12, the authors make a distinct reference to the Spanish media case being an example of the ‘domestication’ of news (Gurevitch et al., 1991) in that the news media interpreted Brexit as a global event within domestic/Spain-specific frames, which sits in contrast to Volkmer’s (1999) globalization theory presented above. Although less evident in the Norwegian, Austrian, German and Swiss cases, the domestication concept also seems highly applicable to the French, Portuguese, Italian, and Greek cases, in chapters 9, 13,14 and 15 respectively, all of which are EU countries exhibiting elements of Euroscepticism. In part one, domestication is a theme also significantly evident in the Gibraltar case (chapter 8); to some extent in the Scotland case (chapter 4); and to a lesser extent in the Northern Ireland case (chapter 6). Evidence of the domestication theme continues in further international cases in part three.

**Part Three**

Turkey is often considered to be a bridge between Europe and Asia. Therefore, it seems a good place to bridge the transition between parts two and three. The final part of the book groups together the chapters representing locales beyond the UK and other European Single Market countries. In chapter 16, Lyndon Way uses CDA to examine opinion pieces in Turkish English-language online news. In keeping with the domestication theme evident across a range of cases in part two, and to a lesser extent in part one, the chapter argues that Brexit is used as a vehicle to criticize the Turkish government. Samuel-Azran and Galily also examine online discussions in the Israeli context in chapter 17, however, in contrast to the previous chapter, employ trend tracing software to analyse digital data. The authors found that mentions of Brexit occurred most frequently in the financial press; and on Twitter when compared to Facebook. They argue that Brexit was viewed to have limited impact on interests in Israel; and findings from the Israeli financial press data indicates to another case of domestication. Similar to other cases in parts one and two, the term ‘disaster’ was found to be highly frequent in the financial press.

In chapter 18, Christopher Waddell’s essay offers a perspective on how the Canadian media constructed narratives of Brexit. The author argues that Canadians view EU relations through a prism of trade; and the media framed the coverage around questions related to Canadian interests. Again, the Canadian case, a locale with close economic interest in the EU, demonstrates the domestication trend evident in the Turkey, Israel and other cases in parts one and two. Finally, Helena Bassil-Morozow, in chapter 19, takes a similar essay style approach to argue how the government controlled media in Russia exhibit inward looking tendencies that resulted in an apparent lack of interest in events associated with Brexit. The author suggests this is because Russia is distracted by its own significant internal problems, and events like Brexit seem too distant to impact on Russian interests. In this sense, the Russian case is the exception in terms of the media agenda being focused away from wider international affairs, but highlights another case with a tendency towards the domestication of a significant international news story.

**Conclusions**

The UK’s 2016 EU referendum and its Brexit outcome were major international events that fuelled significant coverage in both national and international contexts. However, news media serving locales with closer cultural, political and economic proximities to the European Union appear to exhibit higher discursive intensities in reporting the road to Brexit. Moreover, the use of crisis frames (Hay, 1999) that construct narratives around ‘fear’ and ‘disaster’ are most evident in the British and European cases. This trend represents a degree of European homogeneity and thus supports the globalist paradigm (Volkmer, 1999) in the Single Market context, but less so in the wider international context. Daddow’s portrayal (2012) of a Eurosceptic British news media does not appear to be limited to the UK. The French, Italian, Portuguese and Greek cases also point to what Caiani and Guerra (2017) describe as a growing crisis for the EU.

Gurevitch et al.’s (1991) ‘domestication’ concept is evident as a distinct theme across a majority of chapters. It suggests international political communication around Brexit issues leans towards a heterogeneous construction of more localized narratives. Domestication is most prominent in the international cases, but, interestingly, some UK locales, like Scotland and Gibraltar, also demonstrate features of the trend. It suggests a homogenous UK-wide construction of Brexit in the British media cannot be assumed. In EU countries where there is the potential for deeper self-reflection on the question of Europe, a domestication of Brexit in the media is evident, thus constructing an internal analysis of the locale’s own place in Europe. In countries like Norway and Switzerland, which are outside the EU, and countries like Germany and Austria, which are more Europhilic in nature, the use of Brexit in the media, as discursive tool for self-reflection, seems less evident.

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