

What's in a Frame?

Media Framing in the 2016 'Brexit' Referendum

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Abstract

This thesis endeavours to test the predictions of previous research on framing during referenda, by specifically studying the campaign leading up to the June 2016 referendum on whether or not the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union. The thesis studies the framing taking place in newspapers during three separate weeks where there were significant shifts in public opinion, to determine whether these shifts were preceded and caused by framing in the news. The results of this study support the previous findings that the mere presence of a frame in the public debate is insufficient for it to be influential, but that the contextual setting rather matters greatly. It also supports the previous studies showing that arguments regarding the economic benefits of EU membership are the strongest frame present in the debate. Additionally, it suggests that fluctuations in which issues the public considers to be salient, potentially due to external factors such as terrorist attacks, may cause different frames to resonate, if only temporarily.

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List of Abbreviations

Bremain	Britain remaining in the EU
Brexit	Britain leaving the EU
BSE	Britain Stronger in Europe
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EC	Electoral Commission
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GO	Grassroots Out Movement
ISIS/Daesh	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
Lib Dems	Liberal Democrats
MP	Member of (British) Parliament
NHS	(British) National Health Service
PM	Prime Minister
RAS	Receive-Accept-Sample
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TUSC	Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party

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1 Introduction

If [the Leave campaign] can turn the vote into one about migration, they will win.¹

– The Economist

In the European Union (EU) Member States, referenda have become an increasingly popular way of dealing with major developments of European integration. More than three-quarters of the 44 European referenda that have been held to date happened after 1990, and they are being held on an increasingly multitudinous range of European issues. Referenda have been held on issues such as treaty revision, adoption of the single currency, specific cooperation deals with non-member states, and accession to membership. Major developments in the Union's history, such as the failure of the Constitutional Treaty after the French and Dutch electorates rejected it, have come about due to such referenda. In June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) will hold a referendum on whether or not to remain a member of the European Union. Although many referenda have been held on accession to the Union, the UK is the only Member State which has previously held a referendum on whether or not to continue its membership. This was held in 1975, when the British electorate decided to remain a member of the European Economic Community (EEC). In the 2016 referendum, they could become the first Member State to choose to leave the Union, if its electorate vote in favour of what has popularly been termed 'Brexit' (Britain's exit from the European Union).²

Despite the severe consequences that such referenda can have for both domestic and European politics, the process of opinion formation in the electorate when deciding how to vote is under-researched. Previous research into opinion formation in referenda has shown that voters often decide how to cast their vote depending on issues which are more or less unrelated to the question on the ballot, and that they are affected by the rhetoric present both in the campaigns and in the debate more generally. This means that a wide range of factors, such as the popularity of the incumbent government or the state of the domestic economy, may 'hijack' an event

¹ Brexit brief: Immigration. "Let them not come." *The Economist*, April 2nd-8th 2016.

² Greenland held a referendum and decided to leave the EEC in 1979, after being granted home rule from Denmark. However, as they remained a part of Denmark and did not become an independent state, it is a different situation. Algeria also left the European Communities after its independence from France in 1962, but did not hold a referendum specifically on membership.

such as a referendum on European integration. This may happen due to successful ‘re-framing’ of the issue on behalf of one actor or another. In such re-framing, the actor is successful in making the electorate think about the issue in a new or different way, potentially causing a shift in public opinion and even changing the outcome of the referendum entirely.

This thesis aims to test some of the predictions made by the existing literature on framing effects in the context of the 2016 British referendum, in an attempt to determine whether the rhetoric used in British newspapers when discussing news on the referendum has caused shifts in public opinion. Developing a better understanding of how such shifts in opinion come about is crucial if we are to better understand the mechanisms behind referenda, and thus future decisions on European integration.

1.1 Aim and Research Question

To summarise, this thesis aims to test some of the existing predictions of framing theory in the context of the British referendum on whether or not to remain a member of the European Union, by answering the following research question:

How has framing impacted the public opinion of the British electorate in the context of the 2016 referendum on European Union membership?

1.2 Outline

The outline of the thesis is as follows; Chapter 2 discusses the previous research in the area of framing, and the theoretical framework of the thesis. It begins with a more general outline of the background of the field, before narrowing to discuss first framing mechanisms in referenda generally, and then specifically in the context of European referenda. The chapter ends with a discussion of the United Kingdom as a case study, and by motivating why the ongoing referendum campaign is a suitable context for testing the validity of framing theory. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework within which the thesis takes place, and explains how the variables have been operationalised and how the data has been collected. It explains the selection of the three examined time periods, and gives a more specific account of how the material has been selected. Chapter 4 is dedicated entirely to a discussion of the primary frames identified in the campaign material, and to giving examples of and illustrating the types of rhetoric I have strived to categorise in the newspaper articles. Chapter 5 presents the results of the data collection, and provides a modest discussion of these findings. The results of the three examined time periods are presented separately, and briefly summarised before continuing to

the analysis in Chapter 6. This chapter aims to identify the patterns within the data, and to discuss in what ways it supports or contradicts the theory that the thesis has strived to test. I conclude that no correlation between mere 'loudness' of a certain frame in the debate and a shift in public opinion in its favour could be found, but that the data seems to support the more specific finding that thinking about the European Union in terms of the economic benefits gained by membership increases the probability of voting in favour of membership. Finally, the thesis concludes by discussing the implications of the findings, and making suggestions for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned, this chapter firstly outlines the origins and foundations of framing theory, before moving to discuss framing in referenda more generally, and then specifically in referenda on issues related to European integration. The chapter concludes by summarising the empirical expectations drawn from the previous research, and what they mean for the specific case study of this thesis.

2.1 Framing

Extensive studies have been conducted on what conditions and characteristics cause people's opinions to change at the individual level. Agenda setting is a memory based model of information processing, where the amount of attention an issue receives in the press and public debate influences how important it is to the public. During the development of the theory, scholars of agenda setting realised that opinions can be influenced simply by someone talking about X rather than Y, even if the information is presented without any particular opinions in mind. This means that the information people receive in their everyday lives can have a vast impact on their political opinions, making it crucial for the construction of political ideologies.³ A number of branches exist within agenda setting theory, of which the theory on framing is most relevant for the content of this thesis.

While agenda setting at the most basic level deals with whether an issue is on the agenda or not, framing theory has to do with how issues are presented and interpreted.⁴ A frame is “a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration.”⁵ Goffman argues that it is impossible for individuals to understand the world fully ‘as it is’; they must constantly apply interpretive schemas or ‘primary frameworks’ (frames) to classify information and interpret it meaningfully. Frames are used by journalists and other communicators to present information and reduce the complexity of an issue, in a way that resonates with

³ Justin Lewis (2001). *Constructing Public Opinion: How politicians do what they like and why we seem to go along with it*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 102

⁴ Stefaan Walgrave, Jonas Lefevere and Michiel Nuytemans (2009). “Issue Ownership Stability and Change: How Political Parties Claim and Maintain Issues Through Media Appearances.” *Political Communication*, 26.2. p. 169

⁵ Jesper Strömbäck and Toril Aalberg (2008). “Election News Coverage in Democratic Corporatist Countries: A Comparative Study of Sweden and Norway.” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 31.1. p. 94

underlying themes the audience can use to understand it.⁶ Frame building is influenced not just by journalists, but also by interest groups, policy makers, and others who have an interest in shaping the agenda. Individuals then use these frames to form impressions on certain issues about which they receive information. Frames provide them with the tools to process complex issues, which they could otherwise not understand.⁷ When interpreted in this way framing is unavoidable, since it is needed to make communication meaningful. It is, in other words, not necessarily a purposeful propaganda process.

Framing can also be used to suggest connections between concepts, causing audiences to accept them as connected after being sufficiently exposed to the frame.⁸ In the USA, for example, a link between welfare and ‘lazy people on benefits’ has been created. This is evident in opinion polls, where a question about ‘support for the poor’ receives 30-40 percentage-points more support than a question about ‘welfare’, which has become a negatively loaded term.⁹ This shows the importance of language in politics, and how politicians can use framing to gain support for their policies. It is, however, impossible to predict when and where a particular frame will be influential by resonating with the public and having an effect on opinion.¹⁰ Identical frames may become very powerful in some contexts, while they pass by unnoticed in others. The effects of framing are thus conditional on a wide range of external factors.¹¹

This impact is described in frame cycles by Miller and Parnell Riechert. They argue that the frames of a certain actor become powerful only when they resonate well with the underlying values and experiences of the public. When this happens, a frame will gain the ability to drive out opposing frames, and dominate the discourse. When groups, such as journalists, notice this resonance, they adjust their rhetoric accordingly to maximise the spread of their opinions.¹² They further argue that groups increase the efforts of promoting their frames when they have a chance of

⁶ Dietram A. Scheufele and David Tewksbury (2006). “Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models.” *Journal of Communication*, 57.1. p. 11-12

⁷ Jesper Strömbäck (2012). “The Media and Their Use of Opinion Polls: Reflecting and Shaping Public Opinion.” *Opinion Polls and the Media: Reflecting and Shaping Public Opinion*. Eds. Christina Holtz-Bacha and Jesper Strömbäck. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 94

⁸ Scheufele and Tewksbury (2006), “Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models”, p. 15

⁹ Lewis (2001), *Constructing Public Opinion: How Politicians do what they like and why we seem to go along with it*, p. 112-113

¹⁰ Michelle Wolfe, Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner (2013). “A Failure to Communicate: Agenda Setting in Media and Policy Studies.” *Political Communication*, 30.2. p. 185

¹¹ Strömbäck (2012), “The Media and Their Use of Opinion Polls”, p. 2

¹² M. Mark Miller and Bonnie Parnell Riechert (2008). “The Spiral of Opportunity and Frame Resonance: Mapping the Issue Cycle in News and Public Discourse”. *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*. Eds. Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy and Jr. August E. Grant. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. p. 111

winning ‘converts’. This ‘spiral’ is then further driven by positive motivations to change, once a frame begins to resonate.¹³

2.1.1 Zaller’s Model of Opinion Formation

One of the most successful models for explaining the formation of public opinion at the individual level, is Zaller’s ‘Receive-Accept-Sample’ (RAS) model. Zaller rejects the idea that individuals have ‘true’ opinions on a given topic, and argues instead that an individual’s opinion at any given moment is a function of the external stimuli available to them.¹⁴ His model is based on four premises¹⁵:

1. Individuals have differing attitudes to politics, and are therefore exposed to different levels of political information in their everyday lives.
2. An individual is only able to react critically to the political communications he or she receives if he or she has a certain level of political awareness.
3. People do not have fixed ‘true’ political opinions, but rather they create them haphazardly as they are confronted with different issues.
4. When constructing these ‘on the fly’ political opinions, individuals tend to rely on the political information most salient to them at any given moment. Information which has not recently been called to mind will take longer to retrieve, and therefore play a smaller role in the individual’s opinion formation.

The core conclusion of Zaller’s research is that the discourse among political elites, communicated through the mass media, influences public opinion. However, this effect is to some extent mediated at the individual level by political knowledge and awareness. The RAS-model explains opinion formation as follows: The public discourse consists of a number of conflicting political messages, competing for the individual’s attention. Generally, more politically aware individuals are more likely to *receive* these messages, due to their more active participation in the public debate. More politically aware individuals are also more likely to be able to reject, or *accept*, political messages which conflict, or are in accordance with, their own pre-existing political preferences. Accordingly, an individual’s political opinion at a given moment will be a *sample* of the political arguments available to him or her at that moment, depending on both external (political communication from elites) and internal (political awareness) factors.¹⁶

This model can be illustrated by using a bucket analogy: Political communications and considerations enter your head as if it were a bucket. When asked about your opinion on a given topic, you reach into the bucket and extract a sample of the

¹³ Ibid, p. 112

¹⁴ John R. Zaller (1992). *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 34.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 51.

opinions most readily available to you (at the ‘top of your head’). The more recently you have recalled a certain argument, the more readily available it is. The average of those considerations will be your political opinion at that given moment. Continuing this analogy, a politically aware individual will be exposed to more political communication as they more readily seek out news and other sources of information (there will be more potential information to put in their bucket), but they will be more selective when deciding what political information to accept into their sample. Accordingly, the information in their bucket should be more consistent, as it has been filtered through their pre-existing values and preferences. A less politically aware individual, on the other hand, will be exposed to less information (and thus have less potential information to put in their bucket). They will, however, be less selective with what information to accept. Thus, their bucket will contain more conflicting and inconsistent information to base their opinions on, and their political opinions should accordingly be less stable and consistent than those of the more politically aware individual.¹⁷

Zaller’s RAS-model has been the basis for much of the existing research on how individuals form opinions in direct democracy, which is discussed in the following section.

2.1.2 Framing in Referenda

In a referendum context, voters are presented with a different type of choice than in an ordinary election. Rather than choosing between parties or candidates, voters choose between specific alternatives that may be more or less unfamiliar to them. Referenda temporarily replace representative democracy with direct democracy, enabling electorates to decide on issues directly instead of relying on their elected representatives to do so on their behalf. However, referenda are still initiated by elites. Higley and McAllister argue that “[b]y forcing relatively uninformed voters to give simple answers to complex constitutional or policy questions, referend[a] invite elites to make claims that are often more simplistic and deliberately misleading than those they employ in elections.”¹⁸ Evidence also shows that voter turnout is much more varied in referenda than in elections, which leads to a larger potential for turnout effects from the success (or failure) of either side to mobilise its electorate.

Initially, the academic debate regarding how voters form opinions and make decisions in direct democracy focused on whether voters decide based on considerations directly regarding the issue put to a vote, or if their decisions are rather grounded in their assessment of the incumbent government, or simply

¹⁷ Ibid, p.36, pp. 266-267.

¹⁸ John Higley and Ian McAllister (2002). “Elite Division and Voter Confusion: Australia’s Republic Referendum in 1999.” *European Journal of Political Research*, 41.6. p. 845.

following the directions of their political party. Moving forward, the debate became more nuanced. Rather than focusing on the binary contrast between party affiliation and issue voting, researchers endeavoured to determine under what conditions and to what extent voters take different types of considerations into account when casting their vote. This centred primarily around two types of considerations: *secondary* and *issue preferences*. When a voter makes a decision based on issue preferences, the basis of his or her decisions will be his or her underlying preferences towards the issue at stake. If a voter decides based on secondary preferences, on the other hand, he or she relies on considerations that are not necessarily directly related to the ballot proposal (such as other domestic political matters or the popularity of the incumbent government).¹⁹ Generally, this research has been based on Zaller's previously discussed RAS-model of opinion formation, which highlights the crucial role of information as a mediator. Well-informed voters make decisions based on issue preferences to a higher extent, and they are more resistant to manipulation. They also have more stable opinions. Based on the logic of Zaller's model, this research has stressed the importance of campaign intensity and electorate knowledge about the issue at stake for the relative presence of secondary and issue preferences in voters' opinion formation.

Under certain conditions, referenda tend to take on many of the characteristics normally associated with ordinary elections. LeDuc argues that when a campaign involves social cleavages and ideology, and the political parties align according to familiar ideological positions, there should be minimum campaign volatility. What voters observe is familiar and in accordance with their existing political knowledge, leading to less potential for sudden opinion change. This effect is enhanced if the campaign surrounding the referendum reinforces strongly held predispositions. When this is the case, referenda take on the characteristics of elections, where traditional ideological and societal cleavages play an important role, and voting behaviour tends to conform to party-affiliated familiar and relatively predictable patterns.²⁰

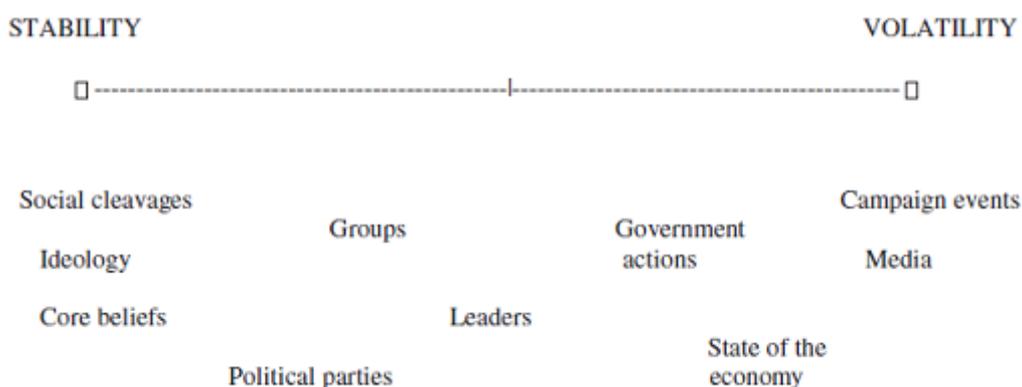
However, if a referendum campaign instead introduces an issue which has previously been little discussed (or entirely absent) in the public debate, or when parties are internally divided and/or align in non-traditional or non-ideological ways, LeDuc argues that there should be more potential for short-term campaign effects and volatility in the opinions of the electorate. In other words, the less well-informed voters are about the issue put to a vote, the more likely they are to have rapid short-term changes in opinion as a result of campaigning.²¹ LeDuc illustrates this in Figure 1 below.

¹⁹ Sara Binzer Hobolt (2009). *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 42

²⁰ Lawrence LeDuc (2002). "Opinion Change and Voting Behaviour in Referendums." *European Journal of Political Research*, 41.6, p. 711.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 713.

Figure 1: Elements leading towards stability or volatility in referendum voting²²



In referenda with familiar and well-known issues, the long-term variables on the left hand side of the spectrum will play an integral role in the opinion formation of the electorate. In unfamiliar or unknown issues, the more short-term variables on the right hand side of the spectrum may instead be promoted. In other words, referenda where there is little partisan, issue, or ideological basis upon which voters form an opinion, tend to be least like elections. According to LeDuc, referenda involving multiple issues, complex international treaties, or large packages of constitutional provisions, often fit such a profile.²³ In such referenda, large changes in opinion can occur even over very short periods of campaigning, as voters have few stable points of reference onto which they anchor their opinions.²⁴

For LeDuc and other authors who base their research on the logic of Zaller's RAS-model, the mediating role of information is crucial for stability. If information is lacking, cues from influential figures or political parties can instead act as 'shortcuts'. When voters are unable to rely on such familiar ideological cues from parties or their own underlying basic values, they will need to draw information from elsewhere, such as the media or the campaign discourse.²⁵ In other words, the voters 'need' the information provided by campaigns to form an opinion on the issue.²⁶ In the theoretical framework of LeDuc, framing effects should only occur when voters are rather confused or uninformed about the issue at stake, and should be accompanied by low-intensity campaigning.²⁷ In other words, a lack of information on behalf of voters leads to increased probability of framing effects and campaign volatility.²⁸

²² Ibid, p. 714.

²³ Ibid, p. 717.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 718.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 713.

²⁶ Tomáš Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 23.4. p. 369.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 368.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 370.

Hobolt reaches similar conclusions in her research, but through a different methodology. In her model, voters cast their votes according to the expected utility $E[U_{ix}]$ of the different outcomes of the ballot proposal, as represented in the following equation:

$$E[U_{ix}] = w_{ix}(-(p_x - I_i)^2 - \sigma_{ix}^2) + (1 - w_{ix})c_{ix}$$

This utility depends primarily on the distance between the perceived position of the proposals (p_x) and the voter's own ideal position (I_i). The model also includes a variable for all other issues not associated with the proposal itself (secondary preferences), c_{ix} . The expected utility decreases with the variance of the voter's perception of the ballot proposal, σ_{ix} .²⁹ This informational uncertainty exists as voters do not possess perfect information regarding the locations of the alternatives proposed by the ballot, nor about the exact location of their own ideal points.³⁰ Finally, the model contains relative weights for the issue- and secondary preferences, w_{ix} and $(1 - w_{ix})$ respectively. These weights indicate how important the voter perceives the issue- versus secondary preferences to be, and are constructed in such a way that an increase in the weight of one issue automatically leads to a decrease in the weight of the other issues. Simply put, the model states that a voter decides how to vote in a referendum depending on how close to his or her preferences he or she perceives the ballot proposals to be, but that he or she may also be influenced by external factors. The more information a voter has about the issue put to a vote, the smaller the uncertainty variable σ_{ix} . More information will also (according to this model) increase the value of w_{ix} , meaning that voters to a larger extent take into account considerations directly related to the ballot proposal, rather than secondary considerations.³¹ Like LeDuc, Hobolt finds that information carries a mediating effect, and that political awareness should both mediate framing effects and promote issue voting.³²

However, LeDuc acknowledges another aspect which has been found to influence the opinion formation of voters in referenda. In some instances, the opinion formation during a referendum on a well-known issue can take on the unpredictability and volatility usually associated with referenda on less familiar issues. In such cases, the issue changes direction over the course of the campaign, leading to an unanticipated outcome.³³ This may come about when the issue put to a vote becomes entangled with other political factors, which may be more or less related to the issue itself.³⁴ These may be what we previously referred to as

²⁹ Hobolt (2009). *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*, p. 47.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 42.

³¹ Ibid, p. 43.

³² Sara Binzer Hobolt (2005). "When Europe Matters: The Impact of Political Information on Voting Behaviour in EU Referendums". *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 15.1. p. 89-90.

³³ LeDuc (2002). "Opinion Change and Voting Behaviour in Referendums." p. 718.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 712.

secondary preferences (not directly related to the proposal), but they may also be the result of some actor succeeding in making voters view the issue as something different than traditional ideology or partisan cleavage. This contradicts Zaller's model to some extent, as such re-framing of an issue would cancel the mediating effect of previously received information.³⁵ Research by Darcy and Laver suggests that in referenda with intensive campaigning where a wide range of salient values are brought to the attention of the public, the public discourse often causes polarisation among the electorate. This polarisation in turn causes voter confusion, accompanied by elite withdrawal and shifts in public opinion.³⁶ Instead of showing the mediating role of information, this suggests a decisive role for political elites and value conflicts for the shaping of public opinion. Intense and conflictive campaigns, rather than lack of information, are thus associated with opinion reversals.³⁷

Other research has found that different information affects voters in different ways. According to Chong and Druckman, individuals use the information they possess selectively.³⁸ At any given time, they are restricted to considerations that are *available*, *accessible* and *applicable*. The *availability* of a concern refers to an individual's understanding and familiarity with it, and their ability to link it to existing attitudes. If an individual has no concept of national identity, for example, they will not use it when shaping an opinion on an EU-issue, and they will not be affected by a frame which emphasises it. The *accessibility* of a concern simply means that an individual has to be exposed to a certain argument regularly to be affected by it. The third condition, *applicability*, refers to whether a certain argument is judged as relevant or irrelevant for that specific issue by the individual when forming an attitude.³⁹

According to Zaller's model, the accessibility of a frame is the most important factor determining a frame's success in competitive environments. In other words, the relative volume of competing messages in a campaign should be the most defining characteristic determining their influence.⁴⁰ Druckman points out that more than simple accessibility is needed to cause framing, as "individuals consciously and deliberately think about the relative importance of different considerations."⁴¹ These framing effects are thus not results of a lack of information, but rather of a combination of intense campaigning and the availability

³⁵ Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty", p. 369.

³⁶ R. Darcy and Michael Laver (1990). "Referendum Dynamics and the Irish Divorce Amendment." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51.1, p. 15.

³⁷ Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty", p. 368.

³⁸ Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007). "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10: 103-126 and Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007). "A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Elite Environments." *Journal of Communication*, 57: 98-118.

³⁹ Chong and Druckman (2007). "Framing Theory." p. 108-109.

⁴⁰ John Zaller (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 81-86, 311.

⁴¹ John N. Druckman (2001). "On the Limits of Framing Effects." *Journal of Politics*, 63:4. p. 1043.

of a greater number of considerations in the public debate and in the minds of individuals.⁴² Further, Chong and Druckman focused on the impact of strong frames in relatively uncompetitive environments, where a strong frame dominated the public debate. A frame's strength, according to Chong and Druckman, is defined by its availability and applicability. "Strong frames emphasise available and applicable considerations [while] weak frames focus on unavailable considerations or are judged inapplicable".⁴³ Their research showed that strong frames, at least in these uncontested environments, impacted politically informed and uninformed individuals equally, casting doubt on the idea that politically knowledgeable individuals are more resistant to such manipulation.

I will now move on to discussing the effects of framing specifically in the context of referenda held in the European Union Member States on issues related to European integration.

2.1.3 Framing in European Union Referenda

The relative presence of secondary and issue preferences can have especially widespread consequences when a referendum deals with a broad issue such as European integration. Referenda on European issues have become increasingly common in the recent past. More than three-quarters of the 44 European referenda that have been held to date, happened after 1990.⁴⁴ The result of such a referendum significantly impacts a much larger number of people than just those eligible to cast a vote. This, combined with the fact that voters are generally less informed about European issues than domestic ones (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter), should be a cause of concern. To illustrate the presence and consequences of secondary preferences in European referenda, we will now look at the example of the French referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, held in 2005.

A Eurobarometer carried out at the time of the French referendum showed that 74% of the respondents fell into the categories of people who either had heard of the treaty, but knew "very little" of it, or who had not heard of the treaty at all.⁴⁵ Despite this, the referendum had a 69% turnout, during which 55% voted against the adoption of the treaty. This rejection resulted not only in the failure of the treaty in France, but in the EU as a whole.⁴⁶ A Flash Eurobarometer carried out just after the referendum found that 70% of those who voted felt that they had sufficient information to make an informed decision. Despite this, only 18% replied that their

⁴² Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty, p. 374.

⁴³ Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007). "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review*, 101.4. p. 640.

⁴⁴ John McCormick (2014). "Voting on Europe: The Potential Pitfalls of a British Referendum." *The Political Quarterly*, 85.2. p. 215.

⁴⁵ *Standard Eurobarometer 63* (2005). "Public Opinion in the European Union."

⁴⁶ McCormick (2014). "Voting on Europe: The Potential Pitfalls of a British Referendum." p. 215.

opinion of the treaty itself was the factor which had most influenced their vote. In contrast, 34% answered that it was their opinion of the EU more generally which had the final say, and 43% replied that either the social or economic situation in France, or their opinion of those who led the campaigns for or against the adoption of the treaty, had been decisive for their decision regarding how to vote.⁴⁷ In the words of McCormick:

*[T]he EU constitutional treaty failed because it was rejected by 26 million voters (who constituted just 5.5% of the EU population at the time), living in a country where nearly three-quarters of the population admitted to knowing little or nothing about the content of the treaty, and where almost half of those who voted were influenced by domestic political considerations.*⁴⁸

Studies of referenda on European integration have produced empirical evidence to support Darcy and Laver's previously mentioned finding that intensive and polarised campaigns are more decisive than lacking political awareness on behalf of the voters when judging framing effects. The repeated referenda on the Maastricht and Nice treaties in Denmark and Ireland respectively, where both proposals were initially rejected before being approved in a second vote, have frequently been analysed in this respect. Researchers such as Hobolt and Marsh argue that the different outcomes of the second referenda depended on increased campaign intensity followed by an increased role for issue preferences,⁴⁹ but there are also hints that the changing outcomes were caused by framing effects.⁵⁰

In the first Danish referendum of 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was rejected by a narrow majority. A few months later, another vote was held, in which the treaty was accepted.⁵¹ Leading up to the first vote, the communication presented in the public debate was characterised by two things; the focus was put on the role of the referendum in furthering political integration of the European Union (1), and the possible negative consequences of a rejection for EU-Danish relations were not highlighted (2). As further political integration was unpopular with the Danish voters, the treaty was rejected. However, before the referendum was repeated, the government instead focused on stressing the economic benefits of the treaty, and they presented the consequences of a rejection as severe for both Denmark and the EU. The Danish electorate had an underlying positive attitude to the benefits of

⁴⁷ *Flash Eurobarometer 171* (2005). "The European Constitution: Post-Referendum Survey in France."

⁴⁸ McCormick (2014). "Voting on Europe: The Potential Pitfalls of a British Referendum." p. 216.

⁴⁹ Hobolt (2005). "When Europe Matters: The Impact of Political Information on Voting Behaviour in EU Referendums", Hobolt (2009). *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*. See also Michael Marsh (2007). "Referendum Campaigns: Changing What People Think or What They Think About?". *The Dynamics of Referendum Campaigns: An International Perspective*. Ed C. H. DeVreese. New York: Palgrave. pp. 63-83.

⁵⁰ Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty", p. 371.

⁵¹ Sara Binzer Hobolt (2006). "How Parties Affect Vote Choice in European Integration Referendums." *Party Politics*, 12.5. p. 636-640.

membership of the Single Market, and the harnessing of these sentiments led to an approval in the second referendum.⁵²

Similarly, in 2001 the Nice Treaty was rejected in the first Irish referendum, only to be accepted in a second vote held a year later. Marsh showed that the proponents of the treaty the second time succeeded in framing the referendum as a question of the future of the European Union, rather than as a question of political integration and a restriction of Irish neutrality, which would have caused much more scepticism among the electorate.⁵³ Intense campaigning and an increased role of issue preferences were also part of causing these changes, but both Hobolt and Marsh highlight the crucial role of (re)framing effects for the outcomes of the second referenda. The discussion of these two referenda thus indicates two different mechanisms of opinion formation, of which the second is of the greatest interest for this thesis:

1. Political awareness and campaign intensity increased from the first to the second referenda, leading to an increased role for issue voting
2. The interpretation of the underlying qualitative merits of the proposals changed between the two referenda, due to a reframing effect which was not directly related to the level of political awareness

Dvořák builds on these findings, to show that framing effects do not always stem from lack of information on behalf of voters, and that political awareness does not necessarily mitigate its effects. He instead proposes that framing effects are caused by value ambiguity or inconsistency, and illustrates this using an expectancy-value model of attitudes. This defines an individual's attitude about some object i as the weighted sum of distinct considerations, as shown in the following model:⁵⁴

$$Attitude = \sum w_i v_i$$

In the above equation, v_i is an evaluation (a value or belief) of the object i , and w_i is the weight associated with that attribute. An attitude can thus change either because the relative weight (w) of the considerations changes, or because there is a change in the evaluative component itself (v). To explain these changes, Dvořák distinguishes clearly between persuasion and framing. Framing causes a change in w , while persuasion changes v . Dvořák uses the example of evaluating a new welfare policy to illustrate this difference. A communication about a new policy would have a framing effect if it caused a consideration about personal responsibility to become more important than a consideration about the threats of the new law to poor children. In this case, the individual's opinions about whether or not the law is a threat for poor children, and his or her opinions about whether or not personal responsibility should be encouraged by legislation, remain unchanged.

⁵² Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty", p. 371.

⁵³ Marsh (2007). "Referendum Campaigns: Changing What People Think or What They Think About?" p. 79.

⁵⁴ Dvořák (2013). "Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty, p. 373.

What changes is instead the relative importance of these two evaluations. The individual may go from thinking that the threat to poor children is large enough to undermine the benefits of the legislation in terms of the more principal based promotion of personal responsibility, to believing that such an encouragement outweighs the risks. A persuasion effect, on the other hand, would keep the relative importance of the two opinions fixed, but instead change the opinions of the individual. In other words, he or she would go from believing that the law is a threat to poor children, to no longer thinking that this is the case.⁵⁵

In terms of Dvořák's attitude change model, an attitude change can come about due to a change in value relevance. Such a change can thus occur either due to the importance of a particular attitude dimension changing, or when a new value is brought into the campaign discourse. To illustrate, we will use Higley and McAllister's study of the 1999 referendum held in Australia regarding whether to transform the country from a monarchy to a republic. The proposal was soundly rejected, with 54.9% of Australians voting against the transformation.⁵⁶ This was a puzzling outcome, as polls had persistently shown substantial support for such a change throughout the 1990s. However, in the final months leading up to the referendum, the polls signalled a significant shift in public opinion, shrinking republican support by 10 percentage-points. Higley and McAllister found that this shift was due to a strong framing effect during the campaign.

During the period of campaigning, the Australian government allotted A\$7.5 to the "yes" and "no" campaigns respectively, and additionally funded a neutral educational campaign to provide voters with sufficient information to make an informed decision about the ballot proposal.⁵⁷ The specific question to be answered by the electorate was "[Do you approve of a republic] with the Queen and governor-general being replaced by a president appointed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Commonwealth Parliament?"⁵⁸ This wording is crucial, as the successful framing of the "no"-campaign considered the specific appointment method of the potential future president. The "no"-campaign pushed the message that the proposed reform would create a 'politicians' republic', and that those truly in favour of a democratic head of state would support a directly elected president, rather than the indirectly appointed one proposed by the ballot.⁵⁹ Post-election surveys showed that even at the time of the vote, only 24% of Australians actually favoured keeping the monarchy. The defeat of the proposed transformation depended instead on the significant share of republicans who preferred a directly elected president to an appointed one strongly enough to vote against the republic

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 373.

⁵⁶ Higley and McAllister (2002). "Elite Division and Voter Confusion: Australia's Republic Referendum in 1999." p. 845.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 850.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 850.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 852.

altogether (22% of voters).⁶⁰ In other words, for a substantial part of the electorate, the ballot proposal was predominantly interpreted as choosing between two ways of electing the head of state (in a hypothetical future republic), rather than choosing between a monarchy and a republic as such. The “no”-campaign was therefore successful in portraying the proposal as an elitist project, which was not genuinely democratic.⁶¹ Republican supporters’ preference for a directly elected president did not change with their level of political knowledge and awareness, rejecting the idea of a shift simply due to an underlying lack of information on behalf of the voters.⁶²

Looking specifically at the referenda on European Union membership conducted in Central and Eastern Europe, Dvořák further develops the empirical support for the influence of frames. He uses the Czech referendum on accession to explain his findings more broadly. In previous research on referenda regarding European integration, economic versus national identity considerations have repeatedly been identified as the main narratives in the public discourse. Dvořák found that thinking about the EU in terms of its economic benefits leads to a higher probability of voting “yes” to further integration (or in this case voting “yes” to accession to EU membership), while thinking about membership in terms of loss of national identity and sovereignty leads to a higher probability of voting “no”. The economic pro-EU frame was found to be the significantly stronger of the two, with a positive answer to just one question regarding the relationship between accession and the economy increasing the probability of voting “yes” with as much as 20%.⁶³ Knowledge about the EU was not found to have any significant impact on vote choice, suggesting that information did not induce issue voting or mitigate framing effects. Instead, the key indicator for an individual’s opinion on membership was their attitude to whether the accession would bring about prosperity and economic welfare for their country. This suggests that the presence of just one strong frame in the public debate caused political awareness to have no effect.⁶⁴

With this theoretical framework in mind, I will now discuss the specific case of the United Kingdom’s 2016 referendum on continued EU membership.

2.2 Case Study: The United Kingdom

As discussed in the previous section, the existing research has found ample evidence for the presence of framing effects during referendum campaigns. Such effects are crucial to understand, as they have been found to directly impact the outcomes of such referenda. The previous section identified some factors that make

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 854.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 852.

⁶² Dvořák (2013). “Referendum Campaigns, Framing and Uncertainty, p. 378.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 381.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 382.

framing more likely to occur. I will now discuss how some of these factors express themselves in the current context of the British referendum.

2.2.1 Political Awareness

The predominant conclusion (although not entirely unquestioned) among the previous research on opinion formation in referenda, is that the level of political awareness among the electorate plays a significant role. An electorate which is more highly informed about the issue put to a vote better understands how the ballot proposals affect their own personal utility, and will vote accordingly. They will also be less receptive to attempts by other actors to sway their opinion one way or another. For this thesis, in other words, the British people's knowledge about the United Kingdom's relationship to the European Union matters. Unfortunately, studies of awareness of European level politics in the EU Member States is usually dire reading.

The Eurobarometer has been measuring public awareness of the European Union institutions and policies in its Member States since the 1980s. Such polls consistently find that people have lower awareness of these issues at the EU level than they do at the domestic level. In 1997 for example, 40% of respondents considered themselves "quite well" informed about national political institutions, while only 18% thought the same with regard to the European political institutions. Between 1997-2006, the institute asked respondents to grade themselves on how well they thought they knew the Union, on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 10 (a great deal). Across the EU-15⁶⁵, the average ranged quite consistently from 4-4.5, and little changed after the eastern enlargement of 2004. Equally consistently, the Britons ranked among the least knowledgeable of the EU citizens, with an average of about 3.2.⁶⁶ More recent polls have repeated this pattern, and these self-estimated levels of knowledge are also generally backed up by studies where the Eurobarometer instead asks factual questions about the EU. The spring 2015 standard Eurobarometer, for example, found the Britons beating only the Latvians in the category of "objective knowledge of the European Union". The following three true-or-false statements were addressed:

1. The Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each Member State.
2. The European Union currently consists of 28 Member States.
3. Switzerland is a member of the EU.

⁶⁵ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁶⁶ McCormick (2014). "Voting on Europe: The Potential Pitfalls of a British Referendum." p. 212-213.

Only 28% of Britons could answer these three true-or-false statements correctly. In the most well informed country, Slovenia, 66% of respondents could give three correct answers.⁶⁷

There are, however, some areas where misconceptions are more widespread, and few are quite as striking as the perceptions among ordinary EU citizens of the size and distribution of the European Union's budget. For example, it is a persistent misconception throughout the Member States that the biggest part of the EU budget is spent on administration, which in fact accounts for only 6% of expenditure. Again, the Britons are among the least well-informed. In a 2009 Flash Eurobarometer, Britons were asked questions regarding the UK's financial contribution (in terms of GNI) to the EU budget. 48% of respondents indicated that they simply did not know, but they felt that the economic costs of membership (which they did not know) exceeded the benefits. Of those who responded with a figure, the average estimation of the UK contribution to the EU budget (in terms of GNI) was 23%, a handsome increase from the real figure of 0.21%.⁶⁸ Even among those who felt well informed about EU matters, only one in eight estimated the UK contribution to be lower than 3%.⁶⁹

From this, it can be concluded that the UK electorate is largely lacking in political awareness of European Union matters.

2.2.2 Domestic Political Factors

Another factor identified by the previous literature as important for creating a fertile breeding ground for framing effects during referendum campaigns, is the domestic political climate. We recall that both Hobolt and other researchers concluded that cues from political elites, interest organisations, or other influential figures, can give voters 'shortcuts' in situations where information is scarce. LeDuc's findings on referenda in which parties align according to traditional ideological patterns is one such example, as this gives voters hints of how to vote according to previously familiar patterns. Recall also that LeDuc found that referenda in which parties were aligned according to unfamiliar patterns, or where parties were internally divided, tended to lead to more volatile campaign environments where short-term factors such as the media or political campaigns were more likely to be influential. He also found that referenda regarding complicated matters, such as international treaties or significant constitutional changes, were more likely to produce these kinds of effects. The contextual setting of the June 2016 referendum in the United Kingdom fulfils these criteria in many aspects. Firstly, there can be little doubt that the issue

⁶⁷ European Commission. "Public Opinion in the European Union." *Standard Eurobarometer 83*, Spring 2015. p. 131.

⁶⁸ European Commission. "Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom." *Flash Eurobarometer 274*. p. 15.

⁶⁹ "Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom." *Flash Eurobarometer 274*. p. 16.

of the United Kingdom's "to be or not to be" in the European Union is a complex and multifarious one. Secondly, I will consider the alignment of the domestic political parties.

The political parties of the UK, especially the Conservatives, have traditionally been divided on the issue of 'Europe'.⁷⁰ Since the announcement in September 2015 of the specific question⁷¹ to be answered by the referendum, four campaign camps have emerged, of which two have been nominated the official In- and Out-campaigns respectively. The "remain" side is championed by Britain Stronger in Europe (BSE), while the "leave" side is led by Vote Leave. The nomination on the leave-side was highly contested, with the Grassroots Out Movement (GO), and the late-comer Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) also targeting the nomination. The internal configuration of these campaigns are a very clear illustration of the domestic political climate surrounding the referendum. We will discuss the specific features of these campaigns later in this thesis, but at this stage we will note that all campaigns (except TUSC) competing for the official status have representatives from several of the primary political parties. Britain Stronger in Europe is the most politically diverse of the campaigns, with board members from both the Conservative Party, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and other interests such as the Trades Union Congress, businesses and the army. However, both Vote Leave and GO have board members from the Conservative Party, Labour and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), as well as business representatives and other interests. GO additionally has a board member from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).⁷²

This shows that the British political parties are all more or less divided on the issue of the EU membership. The existence of splinter-campaign groups such as "UKIP to Stay"⁷³ and "Liberal Democrats for Leave"⁷⁴ shows that even the most Eurosceptic and Europhile parties have internal exceptions.

2.3 Empirical Expectations

This chapter has outlined the existing predictions of framing theory, which conclude that when referenda on complex and relatively unknown issues are put to a relatively uninformed electorate, short term factors such as the media and campaigns have a larger impact and cause volatility of public opinion. The final section of the chapter gave evidence to suggest that the 2016 referendum campaign

⁷⁰ McCormick (2014), "Voting on Europe: Potential Pitfalls of a British Referendum." p. 215.

⁷¹ The specific question is as follows: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"

⁷² Wheeler, Brian and Alex Hunt. "The UK's EU Referendum: All you need to know." *BBC News*. Last accessed on 18 May 2016.

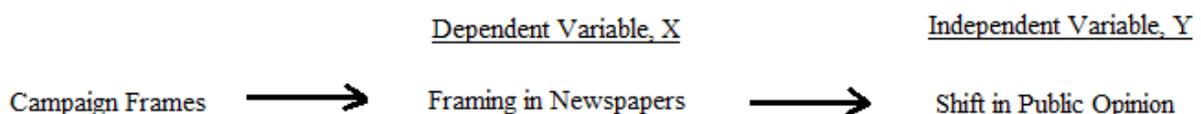
⁷³ "Ukip to Stay." Twitter Page. Last accessed 19 April 2016.

⁷⁴ "Liberal Democrats for Leave." Twitter Page. Last accessed 19 April 2016.

held in the United Kingdom is an example of such a situation, and we therefore expect that the framing identified in the media is likely to have an impact on public opinion.

3 Method and Data Collection

As I have shown throughout Chapter 2, the way that the issue put to a vote is framed in the public debate has an impact on how individuals proceed to judge that same issue. This effect is suggested to be significant enough to potentially change the outcome of the referendum entirely. In the context of the upcoming British referendum, this would mean that if one campaign manages to successfully transfer its frames onto the debate as a whole, it should receive positive feedback in the polls. Due to the scope of the project, my main focus lies with examining the link between media coverage and public opinion, with the campaign material being largely used as reference material. The framing taking place in the media when reporting referendum issues is thus my dependent variable, and the public opinion my independent variable.



The method used in this project is based on three steps, and three types of data. Firstly, the material produced by the different campaigns will be examined to identify their respective primary frames. The reason for studying the campaigns in this manner, is to more easily be able to categorise the frames into the remain- and leave-camps respectively. This relies on the assumption that most, or all, of the main arguments surrounding the referendum debate will be covered in the respective campaigns. As the campaigns are all multi-party and multi-issue ventures, this seems a reasonable assumption. However, to minimise the risk of excluding relevant frames from the study, the possibility of the newspapers using additional frames has been kept in mind and accounted for. By going through the campaign material, I will under this assumption be able to identify, in a straightforward and reliable manner, which arguments belong to which side of the debate. This eliminates the risk of classifying a remain-argument as belonging to the leave-side, and vice versa.

Once the frames are identified, I will turn to data collected from opinion polls regarding voting intentions in the referendum. Looking at this data, I will select three time periods where a significant change has occurred in the public opinion, either in favour of “Leave” or “Remain”. Having selected these dates, I will look at all articles surrounding the referendum published in the largest British newspapers during the preceding week. These articles will be analysed in terms of the frames

they use when presenting their information, to examine whether this corresponds with the identified shift in public opinion.

I will now discuss the operationalisation and data collection for the different variables.

3.1 The Framing of the Campaigns

Four different campaigns applied to the Electoral Commission (EC) to become one of the official campaigns: Britain Stronger in Europe, Vote Leave, the Grassroots Out Movement, and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. As one can largely deduce from the names, the first of the four campaigns aims for people to vote ‘remain’, and the last three for people to vote ‘leave’. Two of these campaigns (one for ‘remain’, and one for ‘leave’) have been granted official status by the EC, whose decision was published on 13 April 2016.⁷⁵ On the remain side, BSE had no challenger and was named the official campaign. On the leave side, the fight for official status was dominated by Vote Leave and GO, with TUCS submitting its application only two weeks before the EC’s deadline. In the end, the nomination was won by Vote Leave. This is important, as the nomination comes with a range of perks. The official campaign receives a public grant of £600,000, is allowed to make referendum broadcasts, and benefits from a free single mail shot to every home in the United Kingdom. They are also allowed to spend up to £7 million on campaigning during the official campaign period (15 April – 23 June), while other registered (but unofficial) campaigns may spend a mere £700,000.⁷⁶ In other words, the nomination matters greatly. However, as all the time periods analysed in this thesis took place before the nomination, I have considered all the campaigns fighting for the nomination, to ensure that all frames are covered.

To identify the frames used by the campaigns, I have looked at the visual material posted on the official Facebook-pages⁷⁷ of the respective campaigns. The material has been taken from the “Timeline photos” of the pages. For both BSE and Vote Leave, I have analysed all photos posted from the launch of the campaign pages (17 September 2015 and 13 October 2015 respectively), until 11 April 2016. This was done to ensure the most accurate representation of the nature of their campaigns. GO, launched on 23 January 2016 as an umbrella movement of several pre-existing campaigns, had less clear representation. To be as representative as possible also in this case, I have chosen to examine the material created by Leave.EU. Leave.EU is

⁷⁵ Electoral Commission. “Guidance for campaigners for the referendum on the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union.”

⁷⁶ Brian Wheeler and Alex Hunt. “The UK’s EU Referendum: All you need to know.” *BBC News*. Last accessed on 18 May 2016.

⁷⁷ “Britain Stronger in Europe”, Facebook Page. Last accessed on 11 April 2016. “Vote Leave”, Facebook Page. Last accessed on 11 April 2016. “Leave.EU”, Facebook Page. Last accessed on 11 April 2016. “TUCS – Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition”, Facebook Page. Last accessed on 11 April 2016.

the largest sub-campaign taking part in GO, as it is much larger than the umbrella movement itself. To illustrate, on 14 April 2016, the Facebook page of Leave.EU had 626,481 “likes” on Facebook, while GO had only 15,038. Leave.EU was launched earlier than the other two campaigns, but I have only analysed material posted between 17 September 2015 – 11 April 2016. The final campaign, TUSC, has been excluded from the study, as it only submitted an application for official status on 1 April 2016, and had at the time of writing produced little to no material similar to that of the other campaigns. The campaign material will be discussed in more detail shortly.

3.2 Public Opinion

During this project, I have considered two aspects of public opinion. The first concerns the salience accorded to different issues by the British public, and the second concerns voting intentions leading up to the referendum. The first aspect plays a mainly explanatory role when analysing the data and results collected during the course of the project, while the second aspect is my dependent variable.

3.2.1 Issue Salience

As the effectiveness of frames has been found to largely depend on how relevant or important the public considers a certain issue to be for the topic in question, it is relevant to consider data on which issues the British public considers to be the most important ones facing their country. To operationalise this, I will use the monthly Issues Index produced by the polling institute Ipsos MORI. These polls ask Britons which issues they consider to be the most important ones facing their country at the time. Respondents are asked to both name the single most important issue facing the country, as well as some alternative issues that they also consider to be important. The data is then combined, to give an indication of which are the most frequently mentioned issue areas, both as primary and secondary answers. Figure 2 below, for example, represents the answers given for January 2016.

Figure 2: Issues Facing Britain: January 2016

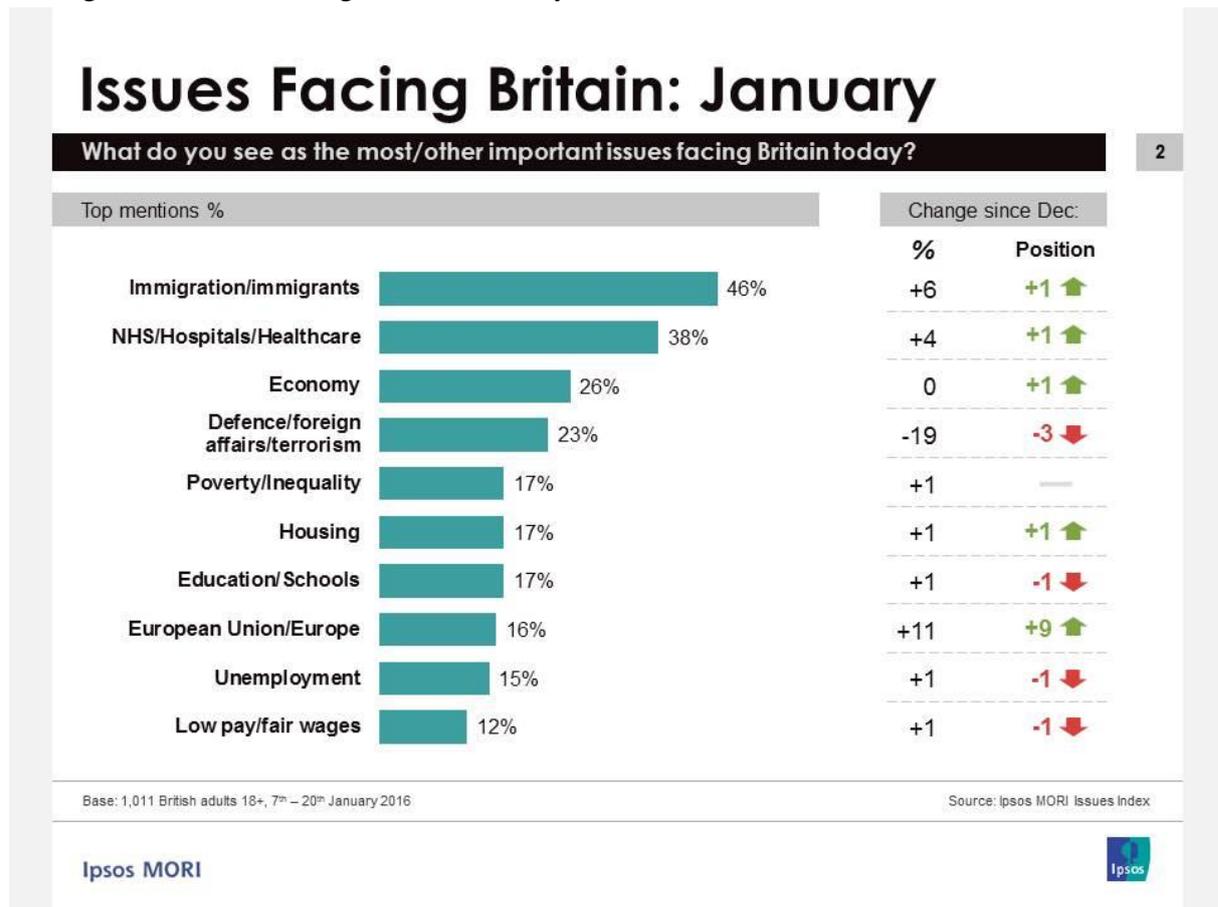


Image Source: Economist/Ipsos MORI Issues Index

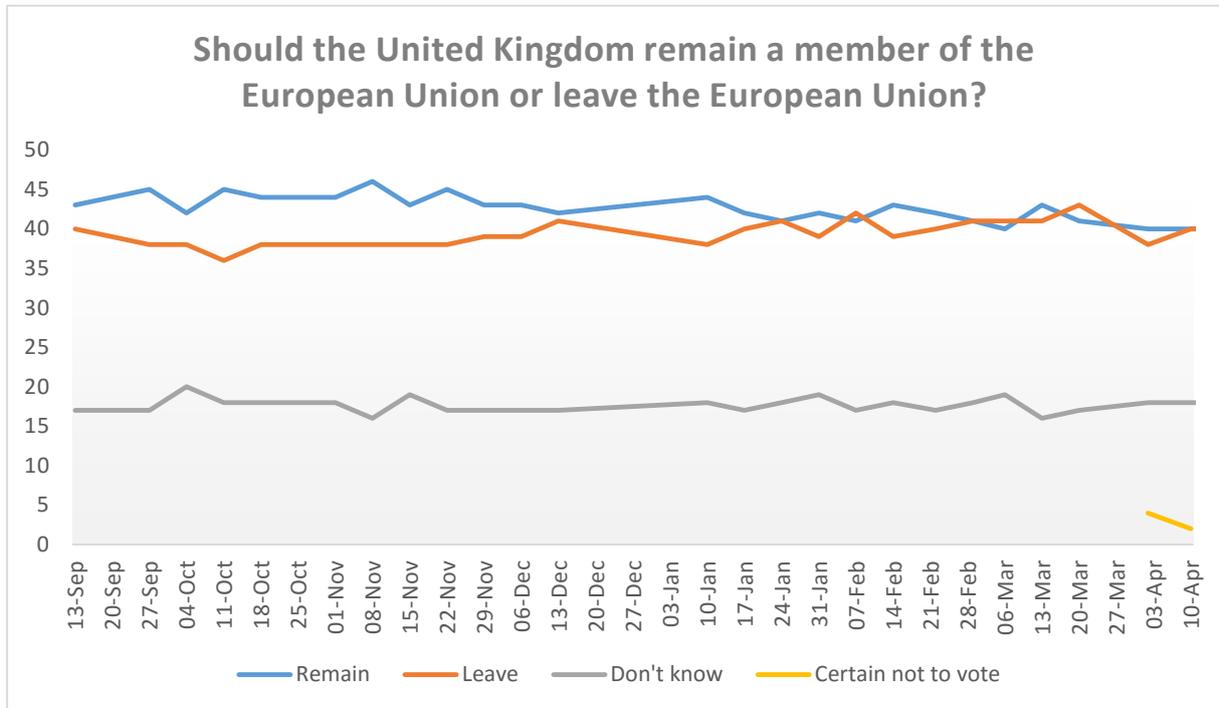
This data is important for this project as frames regarding the most salient issues for the public should be more likely to resonate well, and therefore become stronger. It has been used to analyse the and explain the trends identified in the data collected on the frames and public opinion.

3.2.2 Referendum Polls

The second type of data that has been considered is polling data on voting intentions for the referendum. As this research project deals with short term changes due to rhetoric in the media, I have chosen to use the weekly polling data produced by ICM Unlimited. Ever since the finalised referendum question was chosen in late September 2015, this institute has produced a more or less weekly poll regarding how the respondents intend to vote in the upcoming referendum. The options for respondents were “remain”, “leave” or “don’t know” from September 2015 – March 2016. In April 2016, ICM introduced a new variable, weighting the results according to how certain the respondents were that they were going to vote in the referendum. Due to this discrepancy, data before and after this change in

methodology on behalf of ICM will not be compared directly. Their findings have been summarised in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Opinion polls, September 2015 – April 2016



Source material: EU Referendum Tracker, ICM Unlimited

This polling data has been used to determine which time periods to analyse. By looking at the polling data, I have identified three weeks where a significant change in support for either the Remain or Leave-camps occurred. These are 4-11 October 2015, 10-17 January 2016, and 7-14 February 2016. This selection is made as the scope of this thesis does not allow me to investigate the full time period after the launch of the campaigns. Instead, I have chosen to focus on these three weeks when there was a significant shift in public opinion, and to concentrate on identifying short-term framing effects following news reports. As such a change in public opinion has been identified by the polls, I can establish a change in my dependent variable (Y). After identifying these shifts, I have looked at the newspapers published during the preceding week. If the theory on the effects of framing holds true, I should be able to identify a framing effect in the media discourse, which corresponds to the shift in public opinion. This framing effect is my independent variable (X). Identifying such a framing effect would allow us to conclude that it preceded the shift in public opinion, suggesting a causal relationship between my independent and dependent variables.

3.3 The Newspapers

Having identified the frames, I turned to the media to measure the presence of these frames in the public debate surrounding the referendum. As the aim was to get a representative image of the information regarding the referendum that Britons are presented with in their daily lives, I chose to look at the five daily newspapers (and their additional Sunday editions) with the highest readership. As can be seen in Figure 4 below, this means that the study will examine the Daily Mail and The Mail on Sunday, The Sun and The Sun on Sunday, The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph, the Daily Mirror and the Sunday Mirror, as well as The Guardian and The Observer. From this point forward, I will refer to the newspapers by using the name of their daily publications only, but I also include their Sunday publication in the considerations.

Figure 4: British Newspapers by Readership

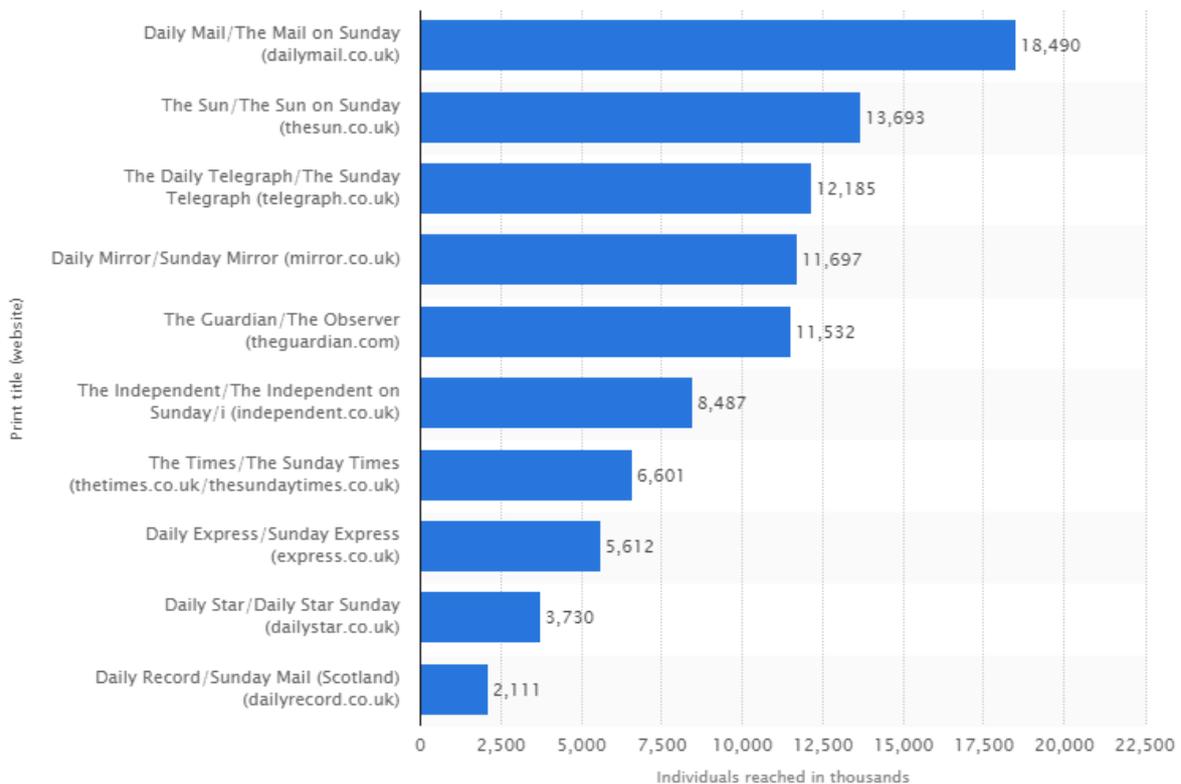


Image source: Statista⁷⁸

To access articles from the Daily Mail, the Daily Mirror and The Guardian, I have used the database Retriever Research, which has access to these newspapers for the relevant time periods. For The Daily Telegraph, which was not available through

⁷⁸ “Monthly reach of national newspapers and their websites in the United Kingdom (UK) from January 2015 to December 2015.” Statista: The Statistics Portal.

Retriever Research for the required time-frame, I used the online archives on their website.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, I have not been able to access The Sun at all for the specified time periods, and it has therefore not been included in the study.

These articles, apart from being the five largest in terms of readership, provide us with a varied image of British news. The Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror are tabloid newspapers, while The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph are broadsheet newspapers. They also have varied political stances. The Daily Mail is a Conservative paper, while the Daily Mirror is affiliated with the Labour Party. The Daily Telegraph is a centre-right/conservative paper, and The Guardian is centre-left. Traditionally, we would expect the more right-wing papers to be more Eurosceptic, and the left-wing papers more pro-EU, according to the opinions of their affiliated political parties. These newspapers should therefore be well suited to provide a varied representation of the British political debate.

As mentioned, I used the database Retriever Research to find the Daily Mail, the Daily Mirror and the Guardian. To find articles concerning the referendum or the EU more generally in Retriever Research, I have chosen a set of five key words to search for. For each time period, I have searched for each of the key words in each newspaper separately, and then proceeded to judge whether the articles are relevant or not. These are: *European Union*, *EU*, *referendum*, *remain*, and *leave*. These key words were deliberately chosen to ensure a very broad range of articles among the results. More specific key words, such as *Brexit*, were set aside as they would give me a more limited selection of articles to analyse. Additionally, any article containing such specific key words, is highly unlikely to not mention one of the broader ones on my list as well. The last two key words, in particular, ensured a very large number of articles among the results, from which I then identified the articles that were relevant for this study. For the key word *referendum*, for example, articles regarding other referenda have been excluded. Likewise, the words *remain* and *leave* yielded a large number of articles concerning entirely unrelated issues such as the latest developments in reality shows on British television, which have naturally not been included here.

For The Daily Telegraph, I used the online archive available on their website to access the articles. The archive is categorised by date, so I cross-checked the pages for all the examined dates individually. To identify the relevant articles, I used the same five key-words as mentioned above. However, as the main page for each date only gave me the titles of the articles, while Retriever Research searched for the key words in the entire articles, I also considered some articles whose titles did not contain the key words, but which were still clearly relevant for this study. These were articles that directly concerned the referendum in substance, even though their titles lacked my key-words. The article “The Labour Party must keep Britain in

⁷⁹ Archive, The Daily Telegraph. < <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/archive/> >

Europe”⁸⁰ is an example of such a title, which lacked all five key words but still clearly discussed the referendum.

Once selected, I analysed the articles to determine which of the pre-identified frames they use. I then categorised the articles accordingly, to identify which frames are the most prevalent in the news-reports regarding the referendum. When categorising the articles, the frames identified in the campaign material were used as a reference point to ensure that the frames were categorised correctly as belonging to either the leave- or remain side. However, to ensure that no frames were excluded from the study due to being absent in the campaign material, I have kept the possibility of identifying additional frames open. A full list of all the analysed articles from the different time periods can be found in the list of references.

⁸⁰ Riddell, Mary. “The Labour Party must keep Britain in Europe.” *Daily Telegraph*. 6 October 2015.

4 Identifying the Frames

This chapter will focus on the contents of the material produced by the different campaigns. Due to the scope of the project, I have not been able to take into account other aspects such as the methods used by, or the intensity of, the campaigns. The campaign material will instead mainly be used as a reference point to determine the main frames surrounding the referendum debate, as I do not aim to assess the effectiveness of the campaigns themselves. I expect the different campaigns to cover most of the frames present in the public debate, and therefore I will use the campaign material to identify the types of rhetoric that will later be categorised in the newspaper articles.

The message conveyed by each picture has been analysed, and then categorised and counted to determine which frames are the most recurrent for each of the campaigns. If a picture could be categorised as belonging to several frames, such as for example discussing both immigration and the National Health Service (NHS), it has been counted in both categories. The numbers presented are therefore not equal to the number of pictures analysed, but rather the number of frames identified. Pictures with several messages were not uncommon. When giving examples below, however, pictures with one single message have generally been chosen for the sake of clarity. The five most common frames have been selected from each of the three studied campaigns and will now be discussed individually. A full list of the identified frames can be found in Appendix A.

4.1 Britain Stronger in Europe



Britain Stronger in Europe is supported by key figures such as the Conservative Prime Minister (PM) David Cameron, and (less enthusiastically) Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. Several political parties, including the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, and the Scottish National Party all officially support the campaign for ‘Bremain’.⁸¹ As previously mentioned, Dvořák pointed out that the public debate on European integration tends to be split between primarily economic arguments from the pro-EU camps, and national identity- and sovereignty-oriented arguments from the more Eurosceptic ones. BSE largely confirms this, with an overwhelming majority of their material pushing the message that leaving the EU would harm Britain economically. In total, 165 messages posted between 17 September 2015 and 11 April 2016 have been analysed. Below, the five main frames found in the campaign’s Facebook-material have been summarised in Table 1. These five frames together cover 123 of the 165 messages, or 75% of their published material.

Table 1: The Frames of Britain Stronger in Europe

Frame	Number of occurrences
The Economic Risks of Brexit	67
Increased prices for consumers	19
Weakened UK defence after Brexit	13
Reduced safety in Britain	12
Uncertainty over what ‘Brexit’ would look like	12

I will now discuss each of these frames individually, in more detail.

4.1.1 The Economic Risks of Brexit

The most common frame used by BSE deals with the economic risks that Brexit would pose for the UK, or with the economic benefits associated with remaining. The picture below, where an economic institution of some kind has produced an estimation of the consequences of Brexit for the UK economy, is a common example of how such an argument is presented. Images dealing with the dependency of British businesses on the EU as an export market, or the increase in unemployment that would follow from Brexit, have also been categorised under this frame.

⁸¹ Brian Wheeler and Alex Hunt. “The UK’s EU Referendum: All you need to know.” *BBC News*. Last accessed on 18 May 2016.

“If the UK votes to leave the EU, it is likely to entail an immediate and simultaneous economic and financial shock for the UK”

Credit Suisse Analysts,
January 2016

Britain's economy is stronger in Europe: strongerin.co.uk/join

4.1.2 Increased Prices for Consumers

YOUR POUND COULD BE WORTH 20% LESS IF WE LEFT EUROPE

THAT MEANS...

Petrol **Home gadgets** **Weekly shopping** **Holidays**



COST MORE

The second most used frame is also economic, and closely related to the previous one. It deals directly with the impact of Brexit on prices paid by British consumers, rather than with the more general consequences for the economy as a whole. These arguments mainly concern the increase in prices due to tariffs and other trade

barriers, but also with the impact that Brexit could have on the value of the British pound.

4.1.3 Weakened UK Defence after Brexit

The third most common frame identified in the campaign material concerns national security and defence. It highlights the crucial role of a strong and united Europe for stability and common security, not seldom referring to external threats such as Putin's Russia (as seen in the image below). Prominent people such as the NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg and other military figures are often cited in these arguments. The example below features Shadow Foreign Secretary Hilary Benn.

"President Putin would shed no tears if Britain left the EU. He would see Brexit as a sign of our weakness and of the weakness of European solidarity."

Hilary Benn, Shadow Foreign Secretary
11/02/2016



4.1.4 Reduced Safety in Britain

The fourth frame is also related to the issue of national security, but more along the 'safer streets'-rhetoric of fighting organised crime and terrorism. It often highlights the role of the European Arrest Warrant (as in the image below), or of intelligence-sharing between the EU Member States to ensure more efficient action against threats such as terrorism and organised crime.

FIGHTING TERRORISM: BRITAIN IS STRONGER IN EUROPE

- The **European Arrest Warrant** has seen **675 criminals** who fled abroad returned to Britain to **face justice**
- Including **Hussein Osman**, a terrorist involved in the July 2005 London bomb attacks

THE EUROPEAN ARREST WARRANT ONLY APPLIES TO EU MEMBERS - WE'D LOSE IT IF WE LEFT. BRITAIN IS STRONGER IN.

4.1.5 Uncertainty over what Brexit would look like

LEAVE CAMPAIGNERS HAVE CLAIMED BRITAIN SHOULD TRY TO BE LIKE:


MACEDONIA


BRUNEI


LIECHTENSTEIN


ALBANIA


NICARAGUA


SERBIA


COLOMBIA


MONTENEGRO


ANDORRA


MOROCCO


VANUATU


SOUTH KOREA


MOLDOVA


NORWAY


ICELAND


CANADA


MEXICO


BOSNIA


SWITZERLAND


UKRAINE


PERU


TURKEY


AUSTRALIA

**NO THANKS! WE'D RATHER BE BRITAIN,
STRONGER IN EUROPE**

The fifth frame concerns the uncertainty of what Britain's role and relations with the EU and other countries would look like post-Brexit. It often argues that not even the 'Brexiters' themselves know what the alternative to EU membership looks like. The image above is a quite common example, where the focus lies with the various differing proclamations given by the Leave-side over what kind of deal Britain

should aim for post-Brexit. It argues for the safety of the status quo, rather than a ‘leap into the dark’. This frame, like the two most mentioned frames, often regards economic matters such as what kind of trade deals Britain would achieve with the European Union and other countries if it should leave.

4.2 Vote Leave



Vote Leave is the official campaign on the Leave-side, supported by prominent political figures such as the Conservative former London Mayor Boris Johnson, Conservative Secretary of State for Justice Michael Gove, and UKIP’s only Member of Parliament (MP) Douglas Carswell. UKIP is the only main political party to officially endorse ‘Brexit’⁸², but its front figures are divided between Vote Leave and Leave.EU.⁸³ The campaign material produced by Vote Leave was less consistent than that of BSE, with the top five frames only covering 74 of the 126 identified messages (59%). While BSE had economic arguments for EU membership as their main frame, Vote Leave’s top frame concerned discrediting those campaigning for the Remain-side. The third frame, Cameron’s renegotiation, is also closely related to this type of rhetoric. It is also interesting to note that neither national identity- nor sovereignty-related arguments entered the top five, where we instead find immigration and national security. Due to the frames concerning

⁸² The Conservative Party is notoriously divided on the issue of EU membership, and the only main political party to not have an official stance.

⁸³ Brian Wheeler and Alex Hunt. “The UK’s EU Referendum: All you need to know.” *BBC News*. Last accessed on 18 May 2016.

national security and the economic risks of EU membership having the same number of occurrences, Table 2 below contains the top 6 frames of Vote Leave.

Table 2: The Frames of Vote Leave

Frame	Number of Occurrences
Discredit the Remain-side	15
Immigration	14
Cameron's Renegotiation	14
No change due to Brexit	11
EU endangering British national security	10
The Economic Risks of Remaining	10

4.2.1 Discredit the Remain-side

Mandelson on the Euro

What he said then:

"Staying out of the Euro would prove a disaster... The price we would pay in lost investment and trade and jobs would be incalculable"

(May 2003)

What he says now:

"What I was in favour of was keeping the option open and deciding whether it was in Britain's interest to join"

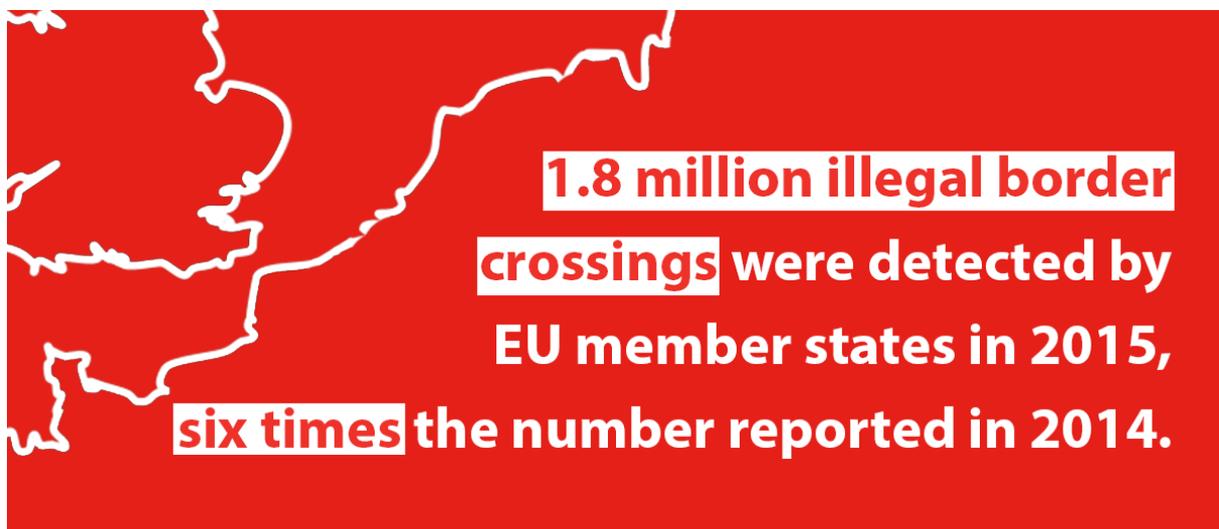
(March 2016)

Vote Leave, take control

The most frequently used frame in the Vote Leave-material presents the key figures or arguments of the Remain-side as incompetent, untrustworthy, or manipulative. The example above is an example featuring Peter Mandelson, former European Commissioner for Trade and Cabinet member for Labour under Tony Blair. Many of these pictures focus on statements made by people like Mandelson before the Euro-crisis, and compares them to the statements the same people are making during the current debate (as seen in the above example). They may also focus on other subject areas relevant to the debate where the person has significantly changed their stance in the recent past. The aim is to present the Remain-side as untrustworthy, and thereby undermine their arguments.

4.2.2 Immigration

The second most frequently used frame focuses on immigration, or more specifically the ongoing refugee crisis. These arguments accuse the EU of weakening or entirely dismantling the British borders, and causing British authorities to lose control over who enters the country. They are not infrequently linked to arguments about economic migrants or ISIS/Daesh-related terrorists taking advantage of the situation to enter the UK. These frames are also often paired with those focusing on the threatened future of the NHS. The message conveyed is that leaving the EU would allow Britain to take control over the number of immigrants the country receives.



 Vote Leave, take control

4.2.3 Cameron's Renegotiation

This frame is closely related to the frame aiming to discredit the campaigners of the remain-side, but focuses specifically on the renegotiation deal presented by Prime Minister David Cameron in February 2016. Before presenting the deal, the PM declared that he would campaign for Remain only if he achieved real change in his renegotiations. The arguments categorised under this frame argue that no such change has been achieved, and that the PM's deal is in fact void or at the very least severely insufficient.



David Cameron promised:

“EU migrants must have job offers to come to the UK”

Since then:

EU citizens are free to enter the UK, job or no job

DON'T GET CONNED AGAIN

 Vote Leave, take control

4.2.4 No Change due to Brexit



“Let's get one thing straight. The UK government will continue to give farmers and the environment as much support - or perhaps even more - as they get now.”

George Eustice
Farming Minister

 Vote Leave, take control

The fourth frame contains arguments which aim at toning down the (often economic) uncertainty following from a potential Brexit, and reassuring the population that the doomsday scenarios described by the Remain-side are widely exaggerated and have little or no validity. Arguments saying that Brexit will have little effect on trade, or that subsidies will continue (as in the example above), or that the UK will be able to access the same benefits even without being a member of the EU, fall under this frame. They are often supported by politicians or other experts in the relevant areas, as with George Eustice, Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State for Farming, Food and the Marine Environment, in the above example.

4.2.5 EU Endangering British National Security



“To remain in the EU is in my judgement a more dangerous option for British security.”

Lord Owen
Former Labour Foreign Secretary

 voteleavetakecontrol.org

The fifth frame contains arguments that the UK’s national defence is weakened by EU membership. The pictures mention the current ‘dangerous times’, and state that Britain would be more secure outside of the EU. Again, the arguments are often supported by the importance of the people quoted.

4.2.6 The Economic Risks of Remaining

The final frame deals with arguments concerning the economic benefits of leaving the EU, and the economic risks of remaining. Arguments such as the possibility of protecting domestic firms and jobs in situations like the ongoing steel-crisis (rather than being hindered by EU state aid legislation), or the ability for the UK government to decide what to spend its resources on more freely, fall under this frame. It also often deals with the risks of being anchored to turbulent group like the Eurozone-countries, and the possibility that this will drag Britain into another financial crisis.



 Vote Leave, take control

4.3 Leave.EU



Leave.EU is the largest sub-campaign of GO, and most prominently supported by UKIP leader Nigel Farage. Leave.EU largely uses similar frames as Vote Leave, but with a larger focus on the economic benefits of leaving the EU. It is worth noting that they also give attention to the infamous ‘democratic deficit’ of the EU, which was not used at all by Vote Leave. Like in Vote Leave, arguments surrounding national identity and sovereignty fail to reach the Leave.EU top five. Leave.EU is by far the campaign that has produced the most material in the studied time period, with 632 messages. The top five frames represent 333 of these, or 53%. This is the lowest percentage of the three studied campaigns, and Leave.EU is also the

campaign that uses the largest number of frames in its material. To see all these frames, refer to Appendix A.

Table 2: The Frames of Leave.EU

Frame	Number of Occurrences
The Economic Risks of Remaining	116
Immigration	84
Discredit the Remain-side	56
EU Lack of Democracy	40
Cameron's Renegotiation	37

4.3.1 The Economic Risks of Remaining

The main frame of Leave.EU is much the same as the final one of Vote Leave, highlighting the economic risks of remaining in the EU, or the economic benefits of leaving.

50:50

HOW SHOULD YOU DEAL WITH AN INFLUX OF CHEAP CHINESE STEEL?

A: LIKE THE USA, IMPOSE 266% ANTI-DUMPING TARIFF TO PROTECT DOMESTIC INDUSTRY.

B: LIKE THE EU, TAKE MONTHS TO AGREE A PUNY 24% TARIFF THAT PLACES 15,000 UK JOBS AT RISK

LEAVE.EU

JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" TO 81400.
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES)

WWW.LEAVE.EU

4.3.2 Immigration



OVER 1.8 MILLION ILLEGAL MIGRANTS ENTERED THE EU LAST YEAR

EU BORDER AGENCY ADMITS “STAGGERING NUMBER OF EU CITIZENS” WHO JOINED ISLAMIC STATE ARE RETURNING POSING AS REFUGEES

FRONTEX

LEAVE.EU

JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" TO 81400.
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES)

WWW.LEAVE.EU

Again, a similar frame to that used by Vote Leave. The arguments between the two leave-camps have largely revolved around the role that immigration should play in the campaign, with Leave.EU being a proponent of it having a larger role. Also Leave.EU often pair these frames with those of protecting the NHS, or the risk posed by returning ISIS/Daesh-fighters disguised as refugees.

4.3.3 Discredit the Remain-side

The third frame is again one that Vote Leave and Leave.EU have in common. Leave.EU, however, tends to be more aggressive, as seen in the below example. While the Vote Leave material often portrays PM David Cameron as unreliable or uninterested in representing British interests in a forceful manner during the negotiations in Brussels, Leave.EU uses strategies such as comparing the Prime Minister to the North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un. This particular image criticises the pro-EU leaflets sent out by the government to all British households in April 2016. It aims at discrediting those campaigning for the Remain-side.

**KIM JONG CAMERON
TO SPEND £9.3 MILLION
OF YOUR MONEY ON
EU PROPAGANDA**

LEAVE.EU JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GRASSROOTS
MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" TO 81400.
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES) **WWW.LEAVE.EU**

4.3.4 EU Lack of Democracy

The fourth frame focuses on the EU's 'democratic deficit'. The below example contains two other frames (the supremacy of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) over British courts, and national sovereignty), but is still a clear example of this type of rhetoric. Often, these arguments refer to the 'faceless bureaucrats' of Brussels who dictate rules that the British people have no say over.

**“ I OBJECT TO THE EU'S
DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT.
I BRISTLE WITH INDIGNATION
THAT OUR SUPREME COURT
IS NOT SUPREME, THAT OUR
PARLIAMENT IS NOT FULLY
SOVEREIGN. ”**

SIR MIKE JACKSON

LEAVE.EU JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GRASS ROOTS
MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" TO 81400.
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES) **WWW.LEAVE.EU**

4.3.5 Cameron's Renegotiation

- **UK CAN BLOCK EU LAWS IF 55% OF EU STATES AGREE.**
- **CHILD BENEFITS TO STILL BE SENT HOME TO NON-UK RESIDENTS**
- **THE EU WILL RECOGNISE MORE THAN ONE EU CURRENCY.**
- **THE EU WILL INCREASE EFFORTS TO CUT BUREAUCRACY**
- **'EMERGENCY BRAKE' WILL NEED EU PERMISSION TO ACTIVATE**

IS THAT IT MR CAMERON?

LEAVE.EU

JOIN BRITAIN'S FASTEST GROWING GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT BY TEXTING "LEAVE EU" TO 81400.
(TEXTS ARE CHARGED AT STANDARD RATES)

WWW.LEAVE.EU

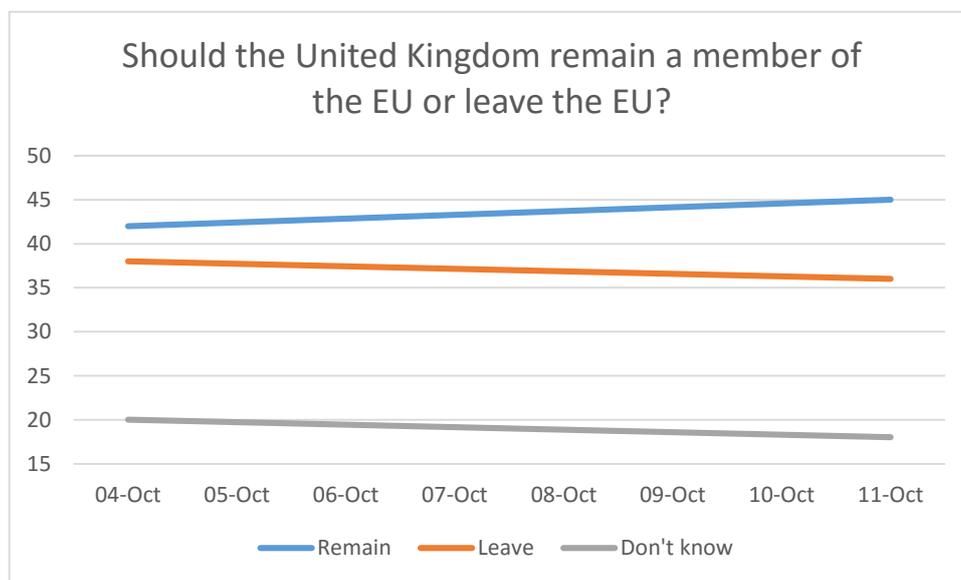
The final frame is again one that Leave.EU has in common with Vote Leave. It aims to show that the deal negotiated by PM David Cameron does not in fact lead to any real change, especially not in the areas where it is most needed.

5 Results

In this section, I look at the identified time periods individually, and categorise the frames identified in the newspapers during the respective time periods. As during the presentation of the campaign material, the number of total frames does not equal the number of articles, but rather the number of frames. A single article rarely contained only one frame, and some frames were almost always appeared paired with certain others.⁸⁴ This chapter aims to present the data and provide a modest discussion of the findings, which is then continued more in depth in chapter 6.

5.1 4 October 2015 – 11 October 2015

Figure 5: Opinion polls, 4-11 October 2015⁸⁵



The first time period to be examined in more detail is 4-11 October 2015. 107 articles were analysed from this week. Of these, 44 were from the Daily Mail, 10 from the Daily Mirror, 27 from The Guardian, and 26 from The Daily Telegraph.

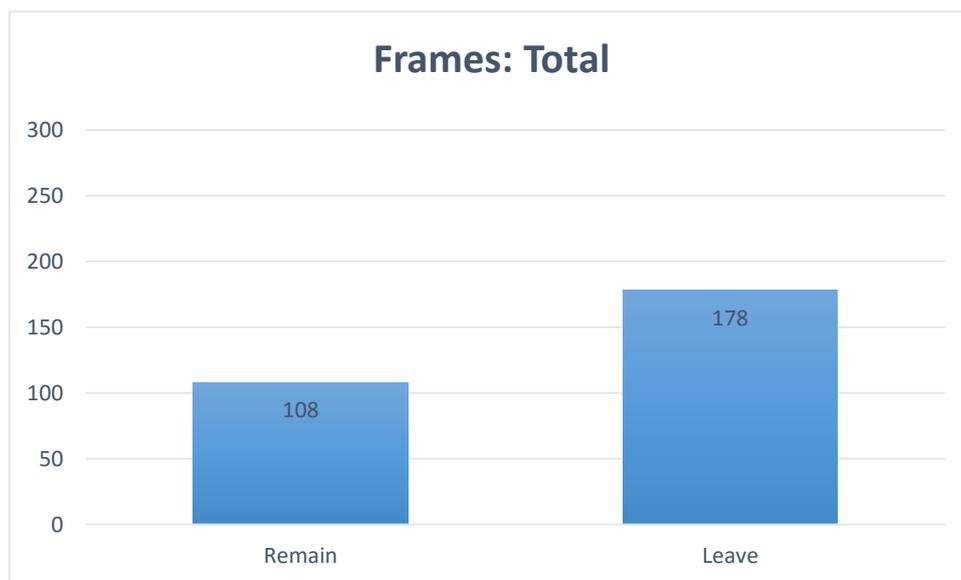
⁸⁴ For example, on the remain side, the uncertainty arguments rarely appeared without references to the economic risks. On the leave side, arguments regarding protection of the NHS or the increased risks of terrorism rarely appeared without mention of immigration.

⁸⁵ Data source: EU Referendum Tracker (5 October 2015), ICM Unlimited, and EU Referendum Tracker (14 October 2015), ICM Unlimited.

During this week, the support for remain increased from 42% to 45%, while the support for leave decreased from 38% to 36%. The share of respondents indicating they did not know how to vote also decreased, from 20% to 18%.

In figure 6 below, we can see the distribution of the 286 identified frames. 108 frames (38%) were classified as remain, and 178 (62%) as leave. There were thus 60 more occurrences of frames corresponding with the leave-side, than with the remain-side.

Figure 6: Frames (Total), 4-11 October 2015



The following tables will show more specifically which frames were identified in the different newspapers, in order of frequency. Table 4 shows the frames of the remain-side, and table 5 the frames of the leave-side. On the remain side, the frame regarding the economic benefits of a continued membership was significantly more frequent than the other identified frames. The uncertainty frame was also frequently occurring, while the other frames most often identified in the campaign material (increased prices, weakened defence, and reduced safety) were significantly less common. All the frames identified in the newspaper articles except one (Scottish independence) were also found in the material produced by BSE.

On the Leave-side, the media framing was more closely aligned with the frame-distribution in the campaign material. The immigration, renegotiation, and economy frames, as well as the arguments aiming at discrediting the remain-side, were all among the most frequently occurring in both the newspapers and the campaign material. It is worth noting that the sovereignty frame plays a more prominent role in the articles than in the campaign material. This split between economic benefits and national sovereignty has been identified as the main narratives of the respective sides in previous referenda on EU integration. All the frames identified in the articles were also present in the leave-campaigns.

Table 4: Frames (Remain), 4-11 October 2015

Frame	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Economy	8	3	7	10	28
Cameron's Renegotiation	0	1	6	6	13
Public Figure	1	2	4	5	12
Uncertainty	2	2	2	6	12
International Influence	3	1	2	3	9
Scottish Independence	3	0	2	3	8
Discredit Leave	2	0	1	3	6
Weakened Defence	0	1	2	3	6
Environment	0	1	1	3	5
EU influence	0	1	0	3	4
Reduced Safety	0	0	2	0	2
Worker's Rights	0	0	0	1	1
Democracy	0	0	0	1	1
Increased Prices	0	0	0	1	1
	19	12	29	48	108

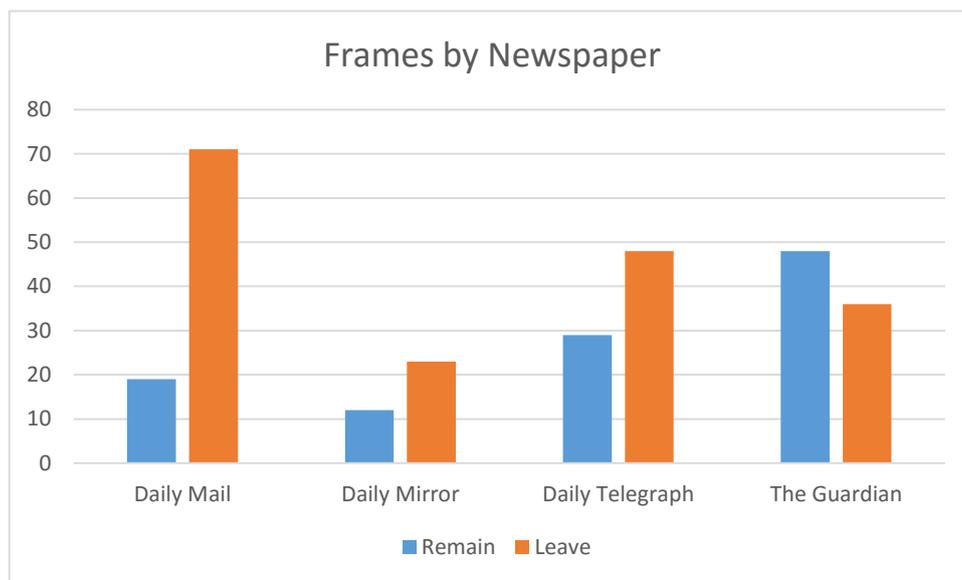
Table 5: Frames (Leave), 4-11 October 2015

Frames	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Immigration	22	5	6	12	45
Cameron's Renegotiation	12	3	7	3	25
Sovereignty	6	2	4	7	19
Economy	4	1	7	2	14
Discredit Remain	6	4	1	0	11
Public Figure	3	2	3	2	10
ECJ	7	1	2	0	10
Democracy	2	0	4	3	9
Red Tape	1	0	3	1	5
NHS	3	1	0	1	5
Fees	1	1	2	0	4
Workers' Rights	0	2	0	1	3
Wrong then	1	0	2	0	3
No change	1	0	2	0	3
Waste	1	0	2	0	3
TTIP	1	0	0	1	2
Uncertainty	0	1	1	0	2
Elite vs People	0	0	0	2	2
Protectionism	0	0	1	1	2
International Influence	0	0	1	0	1
	71	23	48	36	178

Table 4 shows that of the remain-side frames appearing in the newspapers, the one dealing with the economic risks of Brexit was by far the most common. These types of arguments claimed 26% of the identified remain-frames, making it twice as common as the second most frequent frame (Cameron’s renegotiation). The immigration-frame had a similar dominance on the leave-side, covering 25% of all its frames.

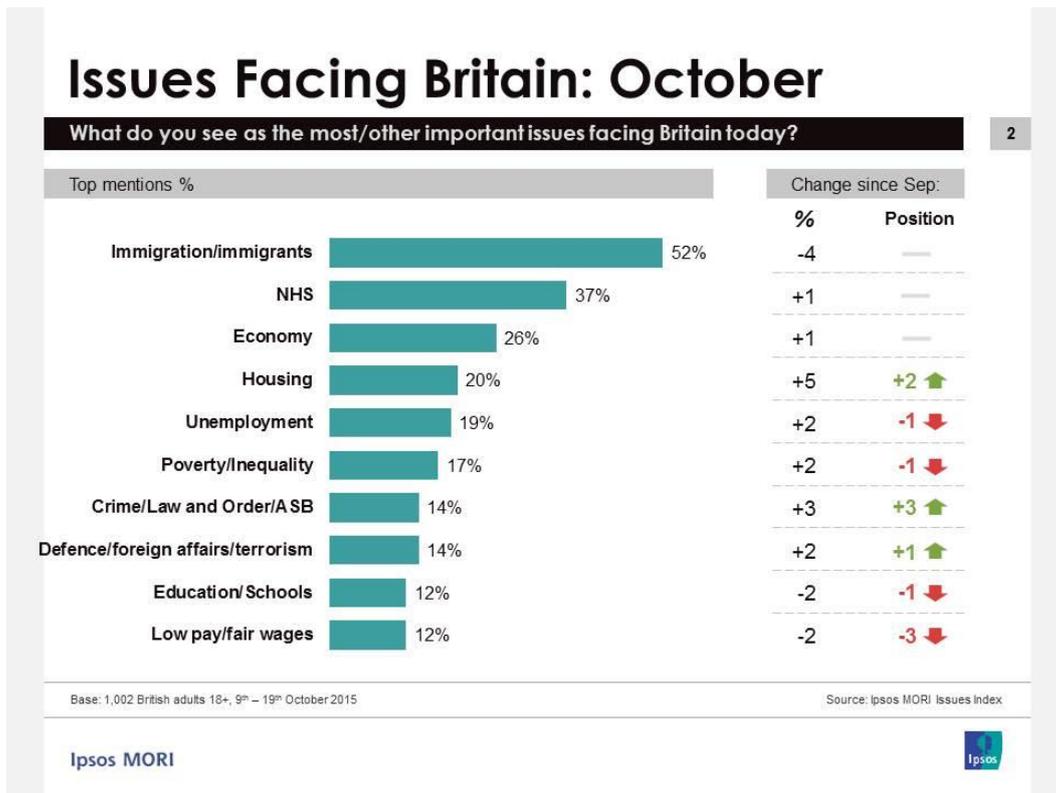
The following figure shows the share of frames corresponding to leave and remain in the different newspapers. All the examined newspapers except The Guardian had a larger number of frames associated with leave, than with remain. Thus, the surplus of leave-frames does not only cover the total amount, but also applies to the studied media channels more generally. As this week saw an increase in support for the remain-side, this suggests that mere ‘loudness’ of one side or the other is insufficient to cause opinion change.

Figure 7: Frames by Newspaper, 4-11 October 2015.



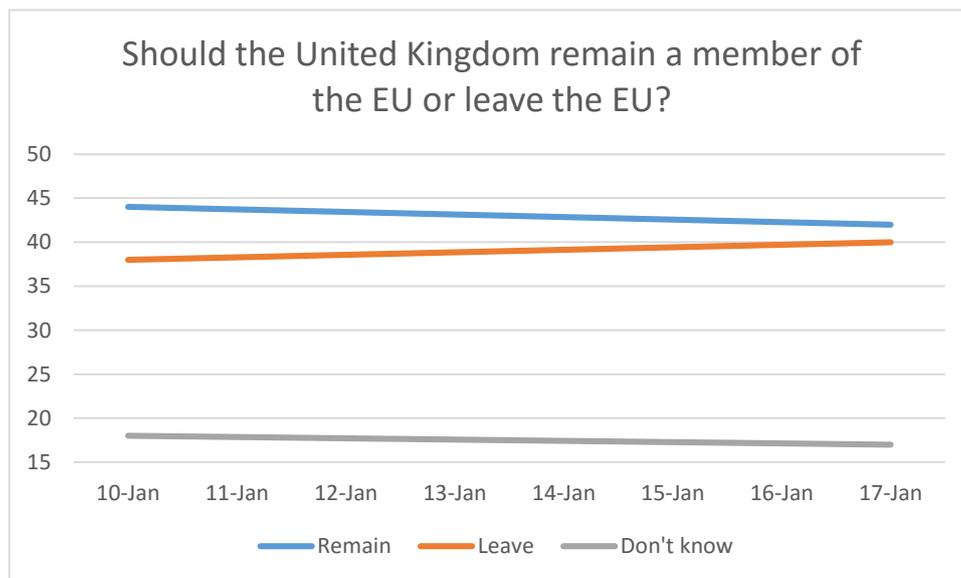
Finally, I looked at the data provided by the Ipsos MORI issues index for October 2015. The most common frame on the leave side, immigration, is the issue that was ranked most important for the British electorate that same month. However, it should be kept in mind that this ranking includes both those hostile to immigration, and those who ranked it as important that Britain should accept more immigrants than they were doing at the time. The economy is also ranked as a salient issue, while the EU does not feature among the top 10 most mentioned. In other words, the top frames from both campaigns are ranked as salient issues by the British electorate.

Figure 8: Issues Facing Britain, October 2015



5.2 10 January 2016 – 17 January 2016

Figure 9: Opinion polls, 10-17 January 2016⁸⁶

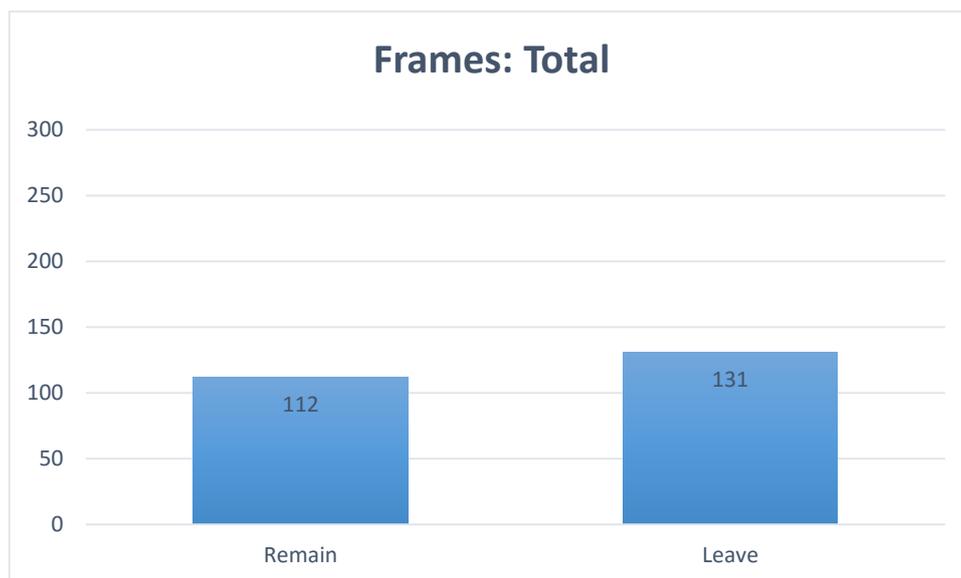


⁸⁶ Data source: EU Referendum Tracker (14 January 2016), ICM Unlimited, and EU Referendum Tracker (22 January 2016), ICM Unlimited.

The second time period to be analysed is 10-17 January 2016. 77 articles were analysed from this week. 27 of these were from the Daily Mail, 9 from the Daily Mirror, 18 from The Guardian and 23 from The Daily Telegraph. During this week, the support for remain decreased from 44% to 42%, and the support for leave increased from 38% to 40%. The share indicating that they did not know how to vote decreased from 18% to 17%.

Figure 9 below shows the distribution of the 243 frames. 112 frames (46%) were classified as remain, and 131 frames (54%) as leave. This week, there were only 19 more occurrences of leave-frames than remain-frames, compared to the previous week's difference of 60. In other words, there was a much smaller difference in the relative presence of remain- and leave-side frames this week. However, the balance remains in favour of the leave-side.

Figure 10: Frames (Total), 10-17 January 2016



Tables 6 and 7 on the following pages give a more detailed description of which frames were used from the leave- and remain-sides respectively. Again, the framing on the leave-side is more similar to that used in the campaigns, than the framing on the remain-side. Compared to the previous time period, the primary frames are much less 'dominant' in terms of number of occurrences.

Table 6: Frames (Remain), 10-17 January 2016

Frame	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Cameron's Renegotiation	6	3	5	8	22
Economy	5	3	4	5	17
Public Figure	7	1	4	5	17
Discredit Leave	1	1	6	3	11
Weakened Defence	4	1	1	4	10
Uncertainty	2	0	4	3	9
International Influence	1	2	0	3	6
Scottish Independence	1	0	2	3	6
EU Influence	0	2	1	3	6
Increased Prices	0	1	1	1	3
Women's Rights	0	1	0	2	3
Worker's Rights	0	1	0	0	1
Reduced Safety	0	1	0	0	1
	<i>27</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>112</i>

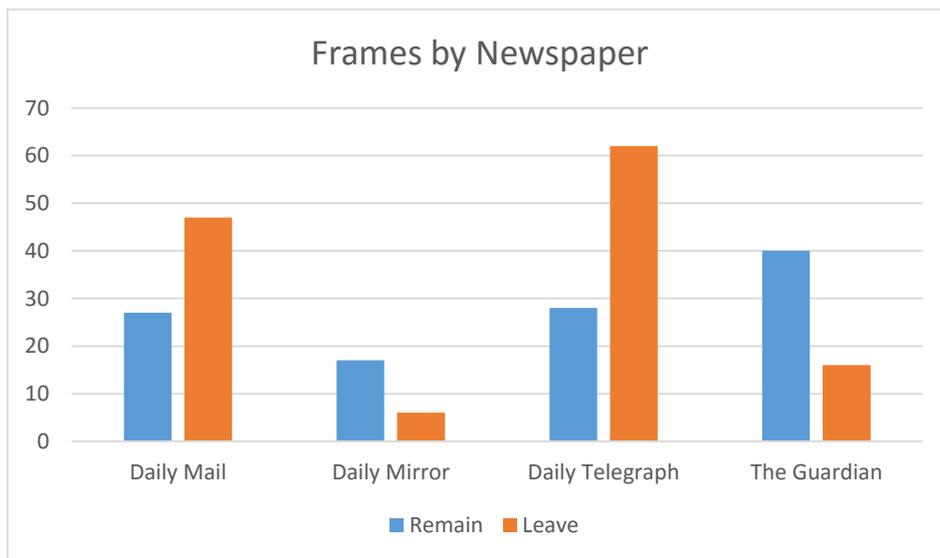
Table 7: Frames (Leave), 10-17 January 2016

Frame	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Discredit Remain	12	2	10	2	26
Immigration	8	4	7	2	21
Cameron's Deal	7	0	5	4	16
Sovereignty	3	0	6	2	11
Public Figure	2	0	3	4	9
Economy	3	0	5	1	9
Democracy	5	0	3	0	8
Reduced Safety	4	0	2	0	6
Red Tape	1	0	3	0	4
No change	1	0	3	0	4
Project Fear	0	0	4	0	4
Weakened Defence	1	0	2	0	3
Elite vs People	0	0	2	0	2
Good Deal	0	0	2	0	2
Workers' Rights	0	0	1	0	1
ECJ	0	0	1	0	1
Wrong then	0	0	0	1	1
International Influence	0	0	1	0	1
EU Influence	0	0	1	0	1
Women's Rights	0	0	1	0	1
	47	6	62	16	131

For this week, the economy frame is no longer the most frequently occurring of the remain-frames. Instead, discussions of Cameron’s renegotiation claim the largest share. With the exception of the economy frame losing its dominant position and the environment frame being entirely absent during this week, the spread of the remain-side frames is largely similar to that of the October week. On the leave-side, the biggest difference is the increase of the frame aiming to discredit the remain-side. Note also the appearance of both the defence- and safety arguments on the leave-side, neither of which were present during the October week.

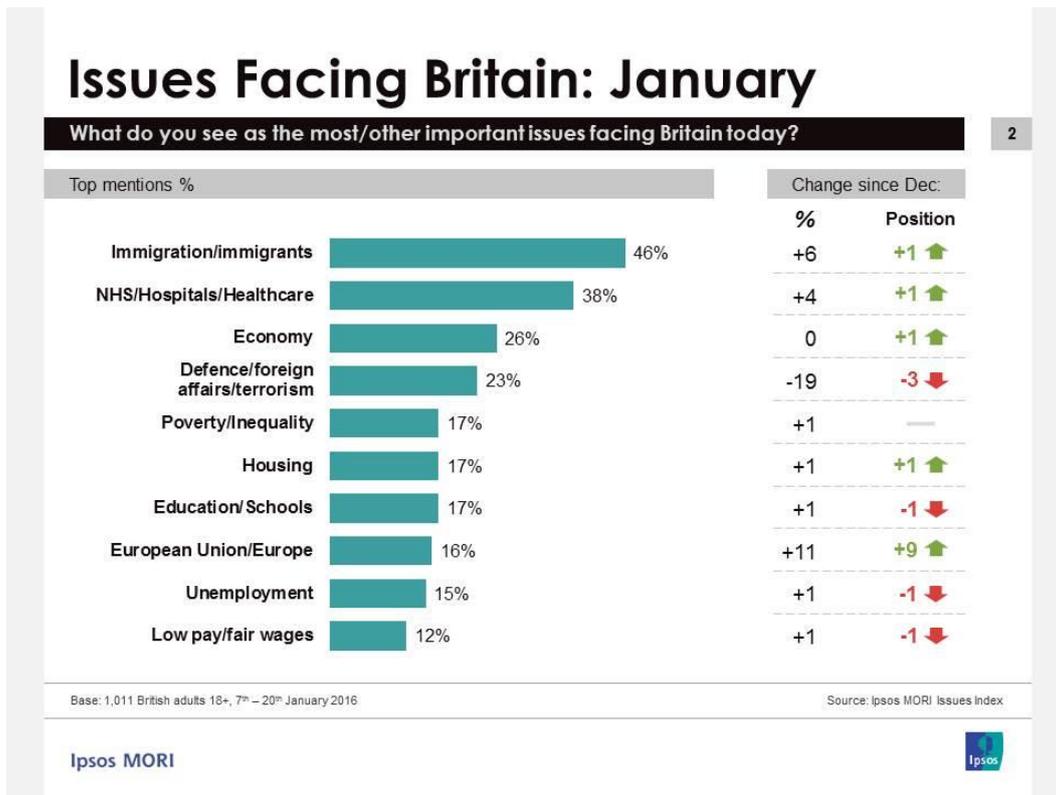
Next, Figure 11 presents the distribution of these frames by newspaper. The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian are dominated by the same side as the previous time period, while the Daily Mirror has a majority of remain-side frames compared to its previous majority of leave. In other words, this is in accordance with the expected distribution of more Eurosceptic rhetoric in the right-wing papers, and more pro-EU material in the left-wing papers.

Figure 11: Frames by Newspaper, 10-17 January 2016



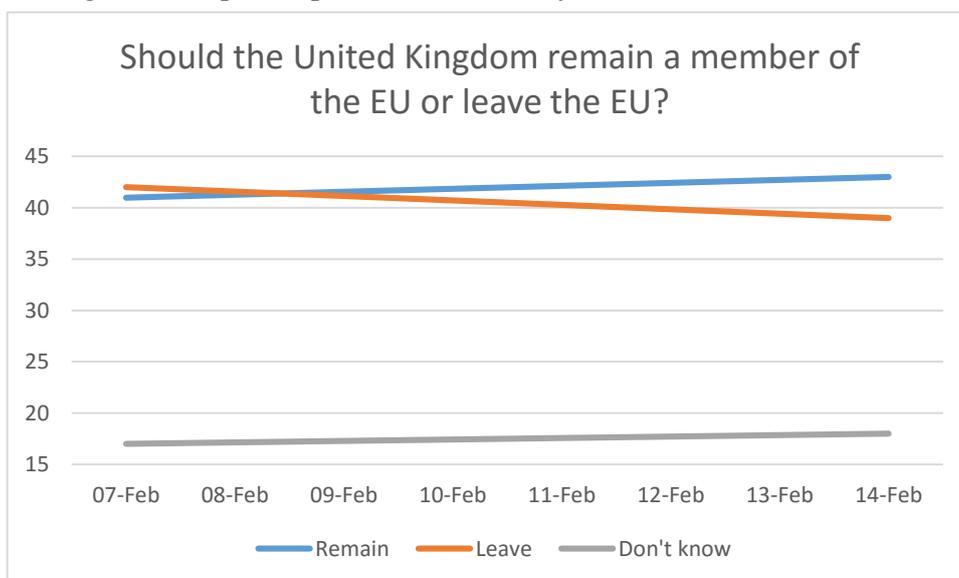
Finally, I have considered the Ipsos MORI issues index. Notably, the issues of EU/Europe and Defence/Foreign Affairs/Terrorism have both increased significantly in salience, while Crime/Law and Order/ASB has exited the top 10 in the January polls when compared to the October issue index. Immigration remains the main concern. It is worth noting that between this time period and the previously studied October-week, the November 13th terrorist attacks conducted by ISIS/Daesh took place in Paris. This may explain the increased salience of defence and terrorism in the public opinion. The frames regarding defence and safety are (as mentioned) also more prominent on the leave-side this week than during the October week, when they were entirely absent. The defence and safety arguments are more or less constant in frequency between the two weeks among the remain-frames.

Figure 2: Issues Facing Britain, January 2016



5.3 7 February 2016 – 14 February 2016

Figure 12: Opinion polls, 7-14 February 2016⁸⁷

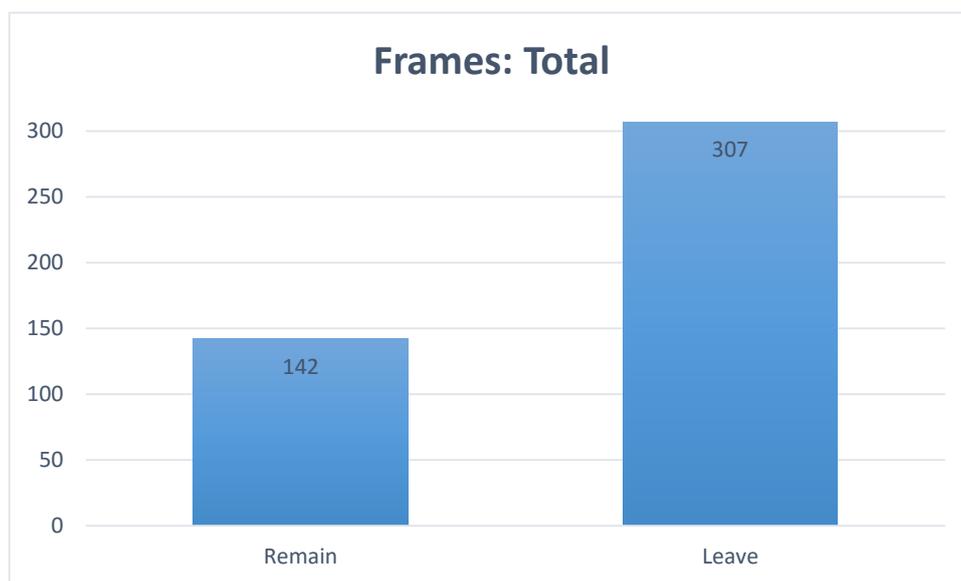


⁸⁷ Data source: EU Referendum Tracker (10 February 2016), ICM Unlimited, and EU Referendum Tracker (18 February 2016), ICM Unlimited.

The third time period to be examined was 7-14 February 2016. 135 articles were posted during this week, 57 in the Daily Mail, 8 in the Daily Mirror, and 35 each in both The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. In terms of public opinion, the support for remain increased from 41% to 43%, and the support for leave decreased from 42% to 39%. The share of undecided respondents increased from 17% to 18%.

Figure 13 below shows the spread of the 449 frames. 142 (32%) were classified as remain, and 307 (68%) as leave. This means that there were 165 more leave-frames than remain-frames, which is the biggest difference of the three time periods I have examined. Like the two other weeks, the balance is in favour of the leave-side arguments.

Figure 13: Frames (Total), 7-14 February 2016



Tables 8 and 9 on the following pages show the specific distribution of the frames on the remain- and leave-sides respectively. During this week, the economy frame was once again the most frequent one on the remain-side, covering 18%. The arguments regarding the potential weakening of the UK's defence following Brexit also increased compared to the January week. The leave-frames most frequently discuss Cameron's renegotiation, which was reaching its final stages in Brussels during this week. However, the immigration and discredit frames are not far behind. Note the increase of the frame aiming to discredit 'Project Fear', the alleged scaremongering by the remain-side regarding the consequences of Brexit. The concept of 'Project Fear' was taken from the campaigns for Scottish independence, where it criticised the 'Better Together'-campaign for painting a doomsday scenario of what would happen if Scotland voted yes to independence.⁸⁸ The frequency of the defence and safety-related frames has decreased somewhat compared to the January week.

⁸⁸ Carrell, Severin. "Scotland Stronger in Europe pledges to be 'Project Cheer', not 'Project Fear'." *The Guardian*. 10 February 2016.

Table 8: Frames (Remain), 7-14 February 2016

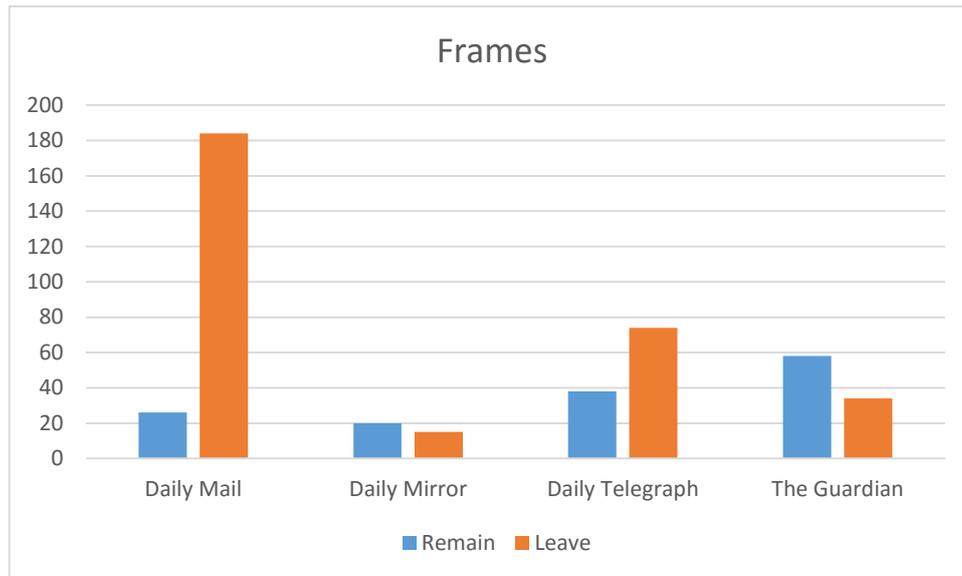
Frame	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Economy	3	4	6	12	25
Weakened Defence	6	2	5	5	18
Public Figure	5	3	2	7	17
Uncertainty	1	2	4	10	17
EU Influence	5	1	4	4	14
International Influence	0	1	4	4	9
Discredit Leave	2	0	2	5	9
Reduced Safety	0	2	2	3	7
Worker's Rights	0	1	2	1	4
Scottish Independence	1	1	2	0	4
Environment	0	1	1	1	3
Increased Prices	1	1	1	0	3
	26	20	38	58	142

Table 9: Frames (Leave), 7-14 February 2016

Frames	Daily Mail	Daily Mirror	Daily Telegraph	The Guardian	Total
Cameron's Renegotiation	30	3	12	5	50
Immigration	25	3	9	5	42
Discredit Remain	30	2	8	2	42
Sovereignty	23	1	8	4	36
Project Fear	9	3	6	8	26
Democracy	13	0	4	2	19
Economy	9	1	4	2	16
Public Figure	10	0	4	2	16
ECJ	9	1	3	2	15
Red Tape	6	1	3	0	10
Fees	5	0	2	0	7
Elite vs People	2	0	3	1	6
NHS	4	0	0	0	4
Waste	3	0	1	0	4
Uncertainty	1	0	1	0	2
Weakened Defence	1	0	1	0	2
EU Influence	0	0	2	0	2
TTIP	0	0	0	1	1
No change	1	0	0	0	1
International Influence	1	0	0	0	1
Reduced Safety	0	0	1	0	1
EU Corruption	1	0	0	0	1
National Identity	0	0	1	0	1
Good deal	1	0	1	0	2
	184	15	74	34	

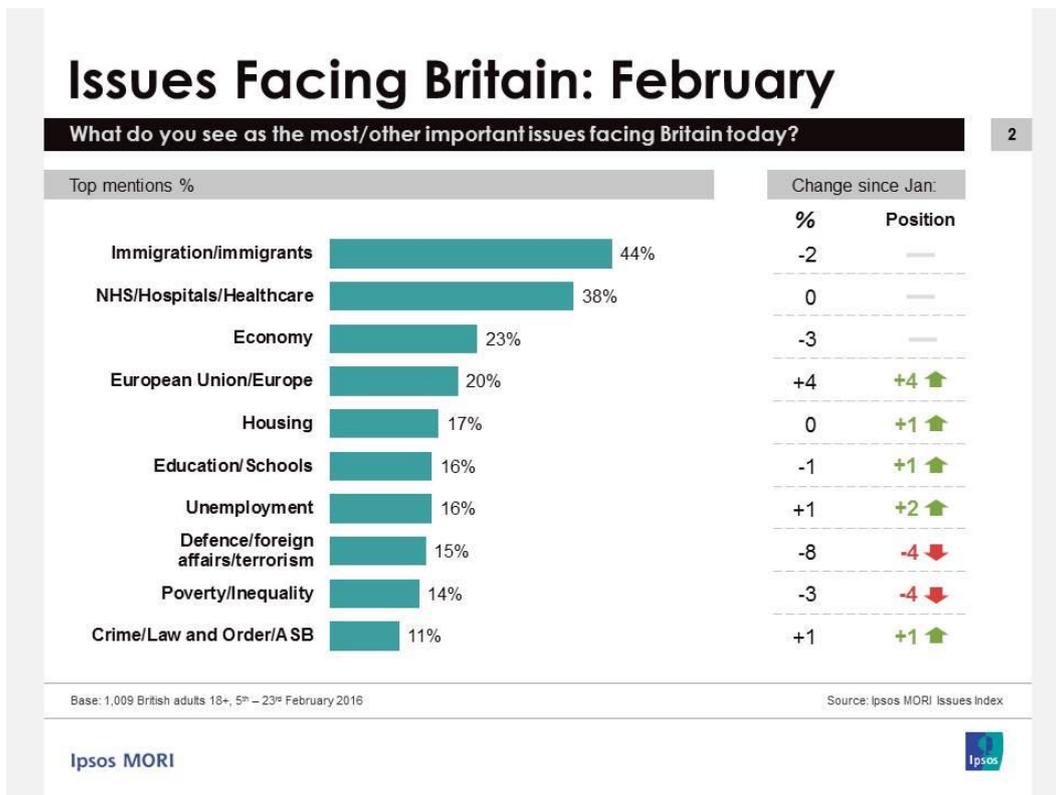
Below, figure 14 shows the distribution of leave and remain in the examined newspapers. Just as during 10-17 January, the two right wing papers used predominantly frames from the leave side, and the two left wing papers mainly frames from the remain side. In other words, the internal distribution of the newspapers is again in accordance with the expectations.

Figure 14: Frames by Newspaper, 7-14 February 2016



Finally, I considered the Ipsos MORI issues index for February 2016. Compared to the January index, the issue of EU/Europe had increased in salience, while defence/foreign affairs/terrorism fell back to its October levels. This reduction in defence and terrorism may come from this week occurring between the November 13th Paris attacks, and the March 22nd Brussels attacks. The issue of immigration persistently remains the most salient, and the economy also still ranks highly on the index.

Figure 15: Issues Facing Britain, February 2016



5.4 Summary

For all three examined time periods, there was a surplus of frames from the leave-side, albeit varying in size. This surplus was largest in the period where the support for the leave-side decreased the most (7-14 February), and smallest during the period where the support for the leave-side increased (10-17 January). Generally, the right wing newspapers (the Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph) were predominantly Eurosceptic, and the left wing newspapers (The Guardian and the Daily Mirror) were pro-EU, although the Daily Mirror broke this trend during the October week.

In terms of the frames, the Leave-side framing in the newspapers was more closely correlated with the frequency of frames found in the campaign material. The frames regarding immigration, Cameron’s renegotiation, sovereignty and discrediting the remain-side were the most commonly used for all three time periods, with especially immigration persistently ranking among the top-two. During the January week, when support for the leave-side increased, I also identified a slight increase in the presence of arguments regarding defence and terrorism. This is worth noting, as these issues saw an upswing in the salience index that same month. Other than this, the salience of the main issues remains relatively constant over the three

examined months, with immigration and the economy ranked in first and third place respectively.

On the Remain-side, the frames regarding the economy, Cameron's renegotiation, and endorsement by public figures were the most prominent. On this side, the economy frame was persistently among the top two. During the two weeks when the support for remain increased, the economy was the most frequently occurring frame. Additionally, the share of the remain-side frames claimed by economic arguments was largest in the week when the support for the remain-side increased the most, and smallest when their support decreased.

In the following chapter, I discuss these findings in more detail, and examine what they mean in terms of the theory that this thesis has aspired to test.

6 Analysis

Firstly, let me shortly recall the theory that this thesis has endeavoured to test, discussed at length in chapter 2. Zaller's 'Receive-Accept-Sample'-model predicts that an individual's political opinions are a function of the external stimuli available to them at any given moment, and their own political awareness and preferences. We compose our political opinions about an issue 'on the fly' as a question arises, and an argument which has recently or frequently been called to mind will be more accessible when this opinion is formed. LeDuc's research showed that in referendum campaigns where the domestic political parties are internally divided or untraditionally aligned, and voters are uninformed about the issue being put to a vote, short-term information sources such as the media acquire an influential role for the formation of public opinion. A referendum on a complex and relatively unfamiliar issue, put to an uninformed electorate with few traditional cues to rely on, therefore creates the most fertile breeding ground for framing effects from the media. As I have previously concluded, the ongoing referendum campaign on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union fits very well with these criteria.

As can be seen in the results in the previous section, this study has not found an obvious relationship between the relative presence or 'loudness' of leave and remain frames and a corresponding shift in public opinion. All three time periods that have been examined have a significant surplus of frames associated with the leave-side, and the newspapers were relatively consistent in their internal distribution. Rather than leading to a persistent lead in the public opinion, the data suggests that the periods with a larger surplus of leave-rhetoric in the newspapers instead led to an increased level of support for remain, and a decreased support for leave. During October, when the support for leave decreased by two percentage-points, there were 60 more leave-frames in the newspapers than remain-frames. For the February week, when the support for leave decreased by three percentage-points, the difference was 165. In January, when the support for leave instead increased by two percentage-points, the difference was only 19 in favour of the leave side. This suggests that the larger the surplus in favour of the leave-side frame, the more their support decreases in the public opinion. This is the opposite of what was expected.

Secondly, I have looked more closely at the specific frames used in the articles. The support for the remain-side increased during two of the three periods, October and February. Looking at the specific frames used by the remain-side during this time period and compare it to the January week (when support for remain decreased), I found that both October and February saw the economy frame as the most

frequently occurring, while January had Cameron’s renegotiation as its primary frame. During the October week, the economy frame represented 26% of the identified remain-frames, while the second most frequent (Cameron’s renegotiation) only claimed 12%. This week saw an increase in support for the remain-side of 3 percentage points. During the February week, the economy frame represented 18%, and the second most frequently used frame (weakened defence) 13%. The difference between the primary and secondary frames was thus smaller this week, when the remain-side saw an increase in support by two percentage-points. During the January week, when support for remain decreased by two percentage-points, the economy frame was only the second most used, representing 15% of the identified frames. This week, Cameron’s renegotiation instead claimed 20% of the identified frames. This finding merits closer discussion.

In chapter 2, we discussed Dvořák’s study of the influence of specific frames in the context of referenda on European integration. Several studies have found that the debate is generally split between economic arguments on the pro-EU side, and arguments surrounding sovereignty and national identity on the Eurosceptic side. Of these two frames, Dvořák found the economic pro-EU argument to be the stronger one. In Dvořák’s study of the EU accession referenda held in Central and Eastern Europe, a positive answer to just one question regarding the economic effects of joining the EU increased the probability of voting “yes” with as much as 20%. Whether or not the individual thought that the EU membership would be economically beneficial for the country was found to be more important than the level of political knowledge the individual held about the EU. This relationship was found to be much stronger than any similar correlation on the Eurosceptic side.

Keeping this in mind, I again turn to my empirical findings. During both the periods where the level of support for Remain increased, the most frequent frame on the remain-side was the economic one. The week with the largest increase in support for remain (October) also saw the largest share of the remain-frames presenting economic arguments. Further, the frames labelled ‘economy’ are not the only arguments dealing with the economic side of a potential ‘Brexit’ or ‘Bremain’. The frames dealing with the uncertainty of what ‘Brexit’ looks like, and the one highlighting the specific risk of increased prices for consumers, both also largely deal with the economic side of the debate. If I combine these frames, as seen in table 10 below, the pattern remains.

Table 10: Economy-related Frames

Time Period	No of frames	Share of ‘remain’	Change in ‘remain’
October 2015	41	38%	+3
January 2016	29	26%	-2
February 2016	45	30%	+2

In other words, the data suggests a correlation between a larger presence (in percentage terms) of the economic arguments for Britain to remain in the EU in the newspaper articles, and an increased level of support for Remain in the opinion polls. This seems to support Dvořák's finding that this is the most powerful frame in the debate on European integration, also in the context of the United Kingdom. This is additionally supported by the seeming lack of patterns drawn from the framing on the leave-side. I will, however, note one possible additional explanation for the increase in support for the leave-side during the January week.

As mentioned in chapter 5, the issues index saw a significant increase in salience for the issue of defence/foreign affairs/terrorism during January compared to the two other months I have discussed. Looking at the distribution of the frames for this week, chapter 5 also noted that the leave-side frames regarding these topics were slightly more common during the January week than during the other two weeks I have studied. This may suggest that, in addition to the economy-frame receiving less emphasis on the remain-side, the leave-arguments managed to tap into a temporary increase in salience of issues related to defence and terrorism. It is especially worth noting as this frame was often paired with the immigration frame, which is consistently ranked as the most salient issue for the British public. It may be the case that in the aftermath of the Paris-attacks, the strength of the arguments that returning ISIS/Daesh-fighters and other potential terrorists take advantage of the ongoing refugee crisis as a way of entering the United Kingdom, was temporarily increased. This could be an example of a change in the external contextual factors causing a certain frame to resonate well in the public debate. This does, however, require further research.

I will now discuss the importance of these findings for further research and democracy more generally, before concluding.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to test some of the predictions of the existing theory regarding the impact of framing on public opinion in the context of referenda, by specifically studying the ongoing referendum campaign in the United Kingdom. The previous literature suggests that the arguments present in the public debate on a certain issue significantly impacts how people think about that same issue, to the point that the debate climate surrounding a referendum may entirely change the outcome of the vote. As referenda are increasingly common on questions surrounding European integration, it is crucial for researchers to develop a clearer understanding of the dynamics behind the opinion formation in such referenda. Without such a development, we will not be able to understand the basis upon which an increasing part of crucial decisions regarding the future of the Union rests.

Starting in opinion polls on voting intentions for the referendum, I identified three weeks where a significant change took place in the polling data. Taking these three time periods, I turned to the media. Based on visual material produced by the Remain and Leave campaigns respectively, I examined the language used by four of the largest British newspapers in the articles published on the referendum during the respective weeks. All the frames identified in the articles were counted and categorised. All three weeks showed a surplus in frames for the leave-side, despite the fact that two of the three weeks showed an increase in the level of support for the remain-side. A possible explanation for this was found in a more detailed analysis of the specific frames identified in the articles, as the data suggested that when the remain-side was dominated by the economic frames, their level of support increased. This is in line with the findings of previous research on the EU accession referenda held in central and eastern Europe, where the economic frame of the pro-EU side was found to be the strongest frame present in the debate. I also found hints that a temporary increase in salience of issues related to defence and terrorism potentially led to an increase in support for the leave-campaign. This suggests that they managed to create frames that resonated more effectively with the public in the wake of the November terrorist attacks in Paris. Both these findings, specifically related to the frames, also confirm that it is not merely the ‘loudness’ of the respective frames that determines their strength in the public debate, but that additional factors are at play.

These findings leave many suggestions for future research. The first suggestion is to investigate a longer time-period. Due to the limited scope of this thesis I did not have the opportunity to study the full period between, say, September 2015 and April 2016, which would have been preferable. Such a study would have been able to better identify alternative patterns, such as delayed effects of framing or more

persistent trends in the media and opinion polls respectively. Likewise, such a larger study could identify more long term effects, rather than the short-term shifts that this study has focused on. Particularly, it would be interesting to investigate further the suggested effect found in the January week regarding the increased salience of defence and terrorism-matters.

Another suggestion, which will be possible once the referendum has taken place and the outcome is clear, is to investigate the findings of studies like this one by studying data collected from interviews with voters on which issues ultimately led them to vote one way or the other. If relationships like the one identified in this thesis can be found over a longer time period, and in interviews with voters, it will give strong support for Dvořák's findings on frame strength in debates on European integration.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to broaden the study to take into account other forms of media and news channels. Television has long been a highly influential source of news information for (western) populations, and in recent years the internet and other forms of social media have quickly risen in importance. Taking all these different forms of media into account would provide a more complete image of the media climate, and hopefully further interesting findings. Social media, in particular, would be very interesting to study further. Providers such as Facebook and Google provide their users with customised news feeds based on what they have previously responded positively to. Research clearly indicates that the effects of framing are significant for all individuals. If people increasingly only receive information that is already aligned with their own opinions, what are the consequences for the foundations of democracy? What happens to their metaphorical 'information buckets'?

The findings of this study suggest that media framing can in fact significantly impact public opinion. Further studies like this one can give valuable insights and better understanding of the mechanisms behind opinion formation in direct democracy. With referenda on such fundamental European issues as the monetary union, treaty revisions and new or continued membership becoming increasingly common, it is crucial that we understand to what extent individuals are influenced by the more general debate taking place around them. In the long run, such an understanding may assist in improving the very mechanisms of referenda and democracy.

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9 Appendix A

1. Britain Stronger in Europe

Frame	Number of Occurrences
The Economic Risks of Brexit	67
Increase in Prices for Consumers	19
Weakened UK Defence	13
Reduced Safety in Britain	12
Uncertainty over Nature of Brexit	12
Discredit the Leave-side	10
Reduced International Influence following Brexit	8
Protection of Workers' Rights through staying in EU	7
Endorsement by Public Figure	6
Reduced British Influence over EU Affairs following Brexit	5
Protecting the Environment	2
Cameron's Renegotiation	2
Protection of Women's Rights	2
Better External Crisis Management through EU	1

2. Vote Leave

Frame	Number of Occurrences
Discredit the Remain-side	15
Immigration	14
Cameron's Renegotiation	14
Brexit would not cause large change	11
EU endangering British National Security	10
The Economic Risks of Remaining	10
In-campaign were wrong about the Euro, and they are wrong now	8
EU Endangering British Defence	7
Regaining Control	6
Endorsement by Public Figure	5
Loss of British Sovereignty through EU	5
Freedom from European Court of Justice post-Brexit	4

Britain would get a good trade deal post-Brexit	4
EU Red Tape Crippling British Business	3
Protection from terrorism better outside EU	3
Britain has no influence over EU policy	2
Protection of the NHS	2
Membership fees could be better used	1
Britain would gain international influence from Brexit	1
EU is inefficient and wasteful of resources	1

3. Leave.EU

Frame	Number of Occurrences
The Economic Risks of Remaining	116
Immigration	84
Discredit the Remain-side	56
EU Lack of Democracy	40
Cameron's Renegotiation	37
Loss of Sovereignty through EU	33
EU Red Tape Crippling British Business	31
Membership fees could be better used elsewhere	22
Britain has no influence over EU policy	22
Remain is an elite project, while the British People want to leave	20
Brexit would not cause large change	19
Protection of the NHS	18
Britain would gain international influence from Brexit	17
Britain would get a good trade deal post-Brexit	12
TTIP	11
EU endangering British Safety	11
EU is inefficient and wasteful of resources	10
Freedom to take protectionist measures post-Brexit	10
Protection of Workers' Rights better outside EU	10
EU endangering British Defence	10
Turkey will soon become a member of the EU	9
Freedom from European Court of Justice post-Brexit	9
Endorsement by Public Figure	7
Undermining British National Identity	5
Uncertainty of what remain means – EU will change	4
In-campaign were wrong about the Euro, and they are wrong now	4
Protection of Women's Rights better outside of EU	2
Protection of the Environment better outside EU	2
EU causes Regulatory Race to the Bottom	1