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HISTORY AS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE FUTURE

– A study of Nick Clegg’s and Nigel Farage’s use of history during the United Kingdom’s 2016 EU referendum

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with history within Nick Clegg's and Nigel Farage's political discourse during the six months leading up to the 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union. Using Thematic Analysis combined with Klas-Göran Karlsson's typology of the use of history, Jörn Rüsen's typology of historical narrative and drawing on the theoretical framework of historical consciousness, this research paper aims to provide a further understanding of history's role in political discourse as a legitimisation of arguments for specific expectations of the future.

Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage position themselves as complete opposites on the UK's membership in the EU – Clegg as a Europhile and Farage as a Eurosceptic. Clegg builds his historical consciousness on a liberalist belief in international institutions and integration as the future. Nigel Farage builds his historical consciousness on a nationalistic pride of British history and populist disdain of the political class since the creation of the European Union. Clegg's historical narratives focus on processes that span the three temporal forms, such as globalisation and climate change. His arguments build on his generation's responsibility to give future generations the best prospects of facing these challenges which can only be done through increased international integration. Farage uses history more extensively and instead focuses on the responsibility of his generation to previous generations – mainly those who fought in the two world wars of the 20th century – to pass on the legacy of democracy and peacekeeping in Europe to future generations which can only be achieved by leaving the undemocratic European Union, as he sees it.

In both politicians' discourse, history serves the purpose of legitimising their view of present situations and their expectations on the future. History is selectively chosen and aligned to their ideological beliefs in order to create a meaningful connection between the past, the present and the future in order to convince voters of the legitimacy of their arguments.

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1 Introduction

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.

- George Orwell

This thesis is a comparative analysis of the use of history in Nick Clegg's and Nigel Farage's discourse during the campaign leading up to the 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union. It positions Farage, who is a prominent nationalist and populist, against the liberal and pro-European Clegg, who is considered Farage's complete opposite according to both politicians. Political discourse aims to convince voters of the legitimacy of a politician's arguments and this thesis aims to analyse the role, the form and the purpose of history in political discourse and its role in legitimising political arguments. History, in these cases, most often come in form of a historical narrative where a present situation is put into relation to historical events or eras in order to construct an expectation of the future (and legitimising it). The thesis draws upon the research in history didactics – the study of the use of history – by Jörn Rüsen and Klas-Göran Kalrsson, within a Thematic Analysis approach, to analyse history's role and function in the political discourse of Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage.

Neither Clegg or Farage belong to the two major political parties in British politics – Labour and the Conservatives – but in contrast to these parties, UKIP and the Liberal Democrats have both positioned themselves on the complete opposites on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Parliament. Both Labour and the Conservatives lacked unity on this question and many politicians from both parties joined either the 'Remain' camp or 'Leave' camp. The firm position as a Eurosceptic, with Farage, and a Europhile, with Clegg, presents an interesting point of study for different uses of history to argument for why the UK should remain or leave. This, along with both politicians' description of each other as opponents, is the reason why they are the focus of this thesis rather than, for example, David Cameron – the person who negotiated the deal and who wanted the British people to accept it.

Nick Clegg was up until the general election of 2015 the party leader of the Liberal Democrats in the UK. Due to a significant loss in mandates he stepped down during the

autumn of that year but still actively participated in the debate on the UK's EU membership – after the referendum he also became the Brexit spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats. As a Europhile, Clegg participated in several debates on the EU with Nigel Farage both in the years previous to the referendum as well as during the campaign leading up to it. Nigel Farage won his first seat in the European Parliament in 1999 and was, according to himself, only one of three politicians who wanted their member state to leave the European Union. As the leader of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which started as a single-issue Eurosceptic party, Farage became one of the most prominent figures of the 'Leave' camp during the referendum campaign in 2016.

The 2016 referendum on EU membership was, similarly to the previous referendum in 1975, partly due to internal disunity within the Conservative party and, in both cases, a referendum was seen as a way of uniting consolidating the party. After the partial victory of the Conservative Party in 2015 – where they became the largest party but did not manage to secure a majority – David Cameron did what he had promised during the general election, namely to try to renegotiate the UK's deal with the EU and then let the people vote on whether they wanted the deal or wanted to leave. The referendum resulted in 51.9% of voters voting in favour of leaving – a so called 'British exit' or 'Brexit'.

1.1 Research Question

The questions which form the basis of my thesis tries to critically analyse and discuss differences and similarities in Nick Clegg's and Nigel Farage's use of history leading up to, and including, the referendum on the 23rd of June 2016. The thesis aims to analyse the way they construct their historical narrative based on the purpose of the history used, the future it tries to connect to and how the history is organised based on ideology. More specifically, the analysis will be based around the following questions:

- What history is used and how is it chosen and organised based on ideology?
- What history is deemed important and how is it interpreted by the user?
- What purpose does this selection serve and is it done with a specific future in mind?

1.2 Thesis structure

The thesis starts with an introduction to the topic that is being researched followed by the presentation of the research questions that I will try to answer. The literature review gives a short and summarised review of related research while also positioning this thesis' research in relation to the different fields. The theoretical framework aims to introduce the key theories used as well as a description of the material and methodological approach. Historical consciousness is the first theory introduced since it forms an important part of Rösen's typology of historical narrative and Karlsson's typology of the use of history. The methodology combines Thematic Analysis with the two typologies, as a way to focus the analysis on the use of history, to analyse Clegg's and Farage's discourse. The analysis first presents and discusses Farage's discourse followed by Clegg's discourse. Both parts are divided into themes based on the methodological approach. The thesis then goes on to discuss both similarities and differences between Clegg's and Farage's discourse before presenting my conclusions.

1.3 Literature review

There are a plethora of research relating to Brexit and Euroscepticism in the UK. This chapter aims to give an overview of research in areas relating to that of this thesis and how the research conducted here adds to research on Brexit. As will be discussed below, there is already a lot of research on Euroscepticism and populism in the UK. However, the research on history didactics – the use of history – is predominately present within the field of historical studies while history didactics applied to contemporary political discourse is hard to find. This thesis, therefore, tries to add to the already broad field of research on Brexit by studying the use of history in the nationalistic, populist and Eurosceptic political discourse of Farage and the liberal and pro-European political discourse of Clegg. It is the study of history as a way to substantiate and legitimise arguments through conveying ideologically constructed historical consciousnesses to potential voters.

Kevin Hickson and Jasper Miles look at Eurosceptic tradition in the Labour Party, investigating Euroscepticism on the moderate wing since the Second World War in contrast to the contemporary belief of Euroscepticism in the party being centred around the hard-left

wing.¹ The research paper looks at both internal factors – such as their view on the nature of European integration – and external factors – such as evolution from EEC to the EU – as well as the belief that a membership would end British sovereignty. Oliver Daddow, in a similar way, looks at British Euroscepticism in a comparative study on Margaret Thatcher’s and Tony Blair’s foreign policy speeches.² In his study, he finds that the Euroscepticism that Thatcher popularised during the late 80s was problematic for Blair’s ambition to Europeanise British national identity with little being done to counteract the more entrenched Euroscepticism. Both these studies highlight the strength of British Euroscepticism and the underlying weight of British national identity that led to the referendum.

Continuing with national identity, Ailsa Henderson, Charlie Jeffery, Dan Wincott and Richard Wyn Jones found that, although not an exclusive reason, English national identity was constituted a “significant driver of the choice for Leave”.³ Looking at different factors across the UK, they found that the difference between the voting patterns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to a large extent relied on English nationalism and therefore conclude that “Brexit was made in England because of England’s population weight in the United Kingdom”. Immigration also constituted a significant factor in the vote, something that Matthew Goodwin and Caitlin Milazzo also mention.⁴ However, Goodwin and Milazzo looked at how, rather than if, immigration was significant factor in the referendum. They conclude that “increases in the rate of immigration at the local level and sentiments regarding control over immigration were key predictors of the vote for Brexit, even after accounting for factors stressed by established theories of Eurosceptic voting”.

¹ Kevin Hickson and Jasper Miles, “Social Democratic Euroscepticism: Labour’s Neglected Tradition,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 20, no. 4 (November 2018): 864–79. doi:[10.1177/1369148118787148](https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118787148).

² Oliver Daddow, “Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15, no. 2 (May 2013): 210–27. doi:[10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00534.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00534.x).

³ Ailsa Henderson, Charlie Jeffery, Dan Wincott and Richard Wyn Jones, “How Brexit was made in England,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 19(4) (November 2017): 631-646. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117730542>

⁴ Matthew Goodwin, and Caitlin Milazzo, “Taking Back Control? Investigating the Role of Immigration in the 2016 Vote for Brexit,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3 (August 2017): 450–64. doi:[10.1177/1369148117710799](https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117710799).

Chris Gifford notes that the British membership in the European Community was largely “an elite-driven strategy to transform and modernize a post-imperial British state from the 1960s onwards”.⁵ However, Gifford also describes how the political elite has wanted to differentiate Britain from the EU, or more specifically, the Eurozone.⁶ Britain, or the UK as it turned into, suffered from identity crisis following the dissolution of the British Empire – the unifying concept of “Britishness”. Gifford brings up how the UK long has seen itself as different from the rest of Europe and that “British political development is exceptional and antithetical to the continent.”⁷ This has eroded the legitimacy the argument for a continued membership in the EU among parts of the British people. This has further tied into the populist anti-establishment movement that UKIP, and therefore Farage, represent. The decline of the British economy during the latter half of the 20th century is, by more than only Gifford, considered fuel for the fire which populism revolves around. Farage’s use of history should therefore be seen in the context of a British nation in decline after the dissolution of the British Empire as “Euroscepticism emerged as the guardian of powerful national myths and drew on assumptions about British political identity that appeared to further the process of post-imperial decline”.⁸

Moving on to Clegg and Farage, Michael Bossetta presents a research paper on debates between Clegg and Farage in 2014.⁹ In this paper, Bossetta focuses on the rhetoric of the two politicians and how a mainstream politician will adopt a populist style of debating. While Farage had a consistent style of debating, Clegg altered his own after losing the first debate leading to “ultimately undermin[ing] the persuasiveness of his pro-EU message”.¹⁰ The paper studies the persuasion and perceived authenticity of the politicians’ argumentation. This thesis, in contrast, instead looks at the substance of the arguments rather than their persuasive aptitude – how and why rather than how well.

⁵ Chris Gifford, “The rise of post-imperial populism: The case of right-wing Euroscepticism in Britain,” *European Journal of Political Research*, no. 45 (July 2006): 851-869. doi:[10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00638.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00638.x)

⁶ Chris Gifford, “The United Kingdom’s Eurosceptic Political Economy,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18, no. 4 (November 2016): 779–94. doi:10.1177/1369148116652776.

⁷ Gifford, “The rise of post-imperial populism,” 854

⁸ Gifford, “The rise of post-imperial populism,” 857

⁹ Michael Bossetta, “Fighting Fire with Fire: Mainstream Adoption of the Populist Political Style in the 2014 Europe Debates between Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 4 (November 2017): 715–34. doi:[10.1177/1369148117715646](https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117715646).

¹⁰ Bossetta, “Fighting Fire with Fire,” 731

2 Theoretical framework and methodology

2.1 Theory

This thesis draws upon the theoretical concepts of historical consciousness, historical narrative and the use of history. As mentioned in the introduction, the theoretical framework is based on the work of the two historians Jörn Rüsen and Klas-Göran Karlsson. Both historians are active in the field of history didactics which is the study of the use history. Rüsen, however, is more focused on historical narratives while Karlsson is more focused on the different ways that history can be used, which will be further defined below. Historical consciousness lies at heart of both historical narrative and the use of history and will therefore be defined first in this chapter.

2.1.1 Historical consciousness

Karlsson describes historical consciousness as being “a mental procedure in which the contemporary human being orientates him-/herself and his/her life situation temporally, in the light of experience and knowledge of the past, and of expectations for the future”.¹¹ The historical consciousness therefore builds on the active process of people relating the past to the present in order to understand the present and describe (an expectation of) the future. History, through the historical consciousness, becomes an important tool for people to orient themselves in time. Relating oneself to one’s parents or grandparents, or a collective memory such as historical events in the city you were born, help building an identity by offering (some) answers to the question ‘who am I?’. However, as both Karlsson and Rüsen argues, humans are not only shaped by history, but also shape it. We are not passive ‘recipients’ of history as the orientation is not based on a universally true historical consciousness. It is based on individual or collective experiences and interpretations of the past that connect to the present and the future.¹² As an example from the discourse of Clegg and Farage, both politicians bring up Margaret Thatcher – the Prime Minister of the UK between 1979 and 1990 – as an example of how here politics legitimise their own where Farage interprets her as a Eurosceptic while Clegg argues that her politics made the British the Europhiles they are today. The historical consciousness of individuals therefore affects their use of history

¹¹ Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 43

¹² Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* (Lund: Studentlitteratur AB, 2009), 48

in their own discourse – how an event or historical person is perceived and connected to the present and the future.

Our individual perception of history lies at the basis of our connection to it. It forms our identity and how we orient ourselves in time. Historical consciousness becomes this process of orientation and identity building, but it also influences how we express things. The relevancy of different historical events according to our perception of them also influences what parts of history we perceive to be important and what parts we perceive to be unimportant. These historical events are used to connect the past to situations in the present in order to describe and legitimise one's expectations of the future. When analysing political discourse, the politician's historical consciousness becomes a way to discern ideological tendencies – how history is chosen based on ideology – and how the three temporal forms are connected in a way to base the expectations of the future on the connection of historical events to a situation in the present.

2.1.2 Historical narrative

A historical consciousness can be expressed in different ways. Jörn Rüsen constructs and presents a typology meant to help identify four ways that historical narrative can be constructed. These are traditional narratives, exemplary narratives, critical narratives and genetical narratives. Rüsen describes historical narration as “a system of mental operations defining the field of historical consciousness”.¹³ Historical consciousness lies at the heart of these narratives as the historical narration builds on the ‘author’s’ connection to history, both his/her perception of it and his/her connection to it. Narration therefore becomes the expression of historical consciousness as a way to make sense of the experience of time – a process of “[mobilizing] the experience of past time [...] so that the experience of the present time becomes understandable and the expectation of the future time is possible”.¹⁴

Traditional narrative is strongly connected to traditions in the sense that traditions have always been traditions and will always continue to be traditions. This is because this

¹³ Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration-Interpretation-Orientation* (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 10

¹⁴ Rüsen, *History*, 11

narrative view time as a ‘sense of eternity’, meaning that what was true in the past is true in the present and is true in the future. It views traditions as unchangeable and eternal with Rüsen describing it as a narrative that “remind one of the origins constituting present systems of life”.¹⁵ History becomes a template for the present and the future which stands in contrast to the exemplary narrative where history only acts as an example for the present and future.

Exemplary narrative, on the other hand, views history less strictly and more as, as the name suggests, valuable examples rather than immovable systems. The present time builds on history, in this narrative, rather than being the exact same as history, which is what traditional narrative effectively expresses. The examples of the past are applied to a situation in the future to create a sense of direction for the future, with Rüsen describing time in this narrative gaining “the sense of spatial extension” and history more as rules of conduct.¹⁶

The genetical narrative, in contrast to the exemplary narrative, views the present as an evolution of or development from history. In a sense, history serves as an example for the present and the future, like in the exemplary narrative, but views the timeline consisting of the three temporal forms as a timeline of the transformation “of alien forms of life into proper ones”.¹⁷ Time gains a “sense of temporalization” in this narrative and events become products of their own time and should therefore be viewed as such. The signing of Magna Carta in 1215 was not the creation of a democratic and parliamentary system, but it marks the start of the several hundred years long transformation that has resulted in the contemporary parliamentary system of the United Kingdom.

Critical narrative is, as its name suggests, a narrative built on critique, namely that of the past and the present. Time in this narrative, as Rüsen describes it, “gains the sense of being an object of judgement”.¹⁸ It tries to achieve a change in the present for the benefit of the future. Furthermore, Rüsen argues that the critical narrative constitutes the catalyst that enables the transformation of traditional to exemplary and exemplary to genetical. This

¹⁵ Rüsen, *History*, 13

¹⁶ Rüsen, *History*, 12

¹⁷ Rüsen, *History*, 12

¹⁸ Rüsen, *History*, 12

means that the narratives are closely connected and, according to Rösen, a combination of the four different narratives can be found within one single text.

2.1.3 The use of history

Karlsson present a typology of seven different ways history can be used, based on his own research in history didactics. These are: a scholarly-scientific use, an existential use, a moral use, a political-pedagogical use, an ideological use, a non-use and a commercial use of history.¹⁹ The differences between these uses, that Karlsson identifies, are the need, the actor/user, and the function of using it. This typology of the uses of history should not be seen as a definitive description as Karlsson adds and redefines uses during his continued research on the topic. The commercial use, as an example is present in the newer source – *Historien är nu* – while being absent from the three years older source also used here – *Echoes of the Holocaust*.²⁰ The two books offer the same description of the different examples of the use of history, but the newer book provides more context and examples. His typology, however, offers a way to understand and analyse another layer of Clegg's and Farage's use of history. From going through all the discourse produced by Clegg and Farage, three uses of history, based on Karlsson's typology, seem to be more prevalent in their discourse: the political-pedagogical use, the ideological use and the non-use. The description of these uses will be more in depth as Karlsson's description of these uses provides more relevant and applicable theoretical concepts for the analysis of my material.

A scholarly-scientific use of history stems from a need, or desire, to discover and reconstruct history to verify and interpret historical events, persons, processes etc. and is mainly used by historians and history teachers. Historians scour through historical documents and artefacts to discover and bring forth new historical findings while teachers presents history to his/her pupils. Traditionally in Sweden, Karlsson claims, this has been the most common understanding of how history is used.

¹⁹ Karlsson, *Historien är nu*, 59

²⁰ Karlsson, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 38-41

The existential use of history relates closely to the historical consciousness of individuals. It stems from a need to remember or forget history as a way of orienting ourselves in time and with history as our anchor. Karlsson describes the existential use of history as a mainly private matter, but it should, however, be noted that the existential use of history as a mainly private matter is debated amongst historians in regard to whether it is a result of change – connected to the emergence of modern society – or if it has always been the case. Regardless of what the case is, the existential use of history is more developed in people or groups who experience external pressure or in rapidly changing society as a way to make sense of the world around them.

A moral use of history stems from a need to resurrect historical ‘truths’ to restore or rehabilitate the contemporary world. It is used by the well-educated stratum and intellectuals who believe the present state, or parts, of society to be undesirable while the previous state of society is considered to be desirable. It can be expressed as righting a historical wrong as well, such as the forced sterilisation of certain groups of people or the ‘re-education’ of the Sami to make them more Swedish. In both these cases, a reparation for inhumane practises during the 20th century was the goal.

The political-pedagogical use stems from the need to illustrate, present and debate history as part of a narrative to legitimise one’s claims or arguments. It is used by intellectuals, political elites and pedagogues as a tool to instrumentalise or politicise history, and Karlsson describes it as a metaphoric, symbolic or comparative use of history. The comparative element is described as something that simplifies the comparison between now and then in an unproblematic way. As Karlsson further argues, the role of the political use is, in contrast to the scholarly-scientific use, not to discern similarities and differences, but rather to make a more or less explicit express the similarities between the present and the past. The aim of this use is to substantiate one’s arguments by using history as a simile and a guidance for the future. History, in this case, can according to Karlsson be positive examples, but more often than not it is examples of the most despicable and immoral historical decisions or events as this use revolves around examples used for their emotional, moral and political charge. These examples are, of course, highly subjective and based on the individual’s own historical consciousness and expressed through historical narratives. The more pedagogical side of the

political-pedagogic use is, on the other hand, does not share this focus on negativity but still presents the similarities between the past and the present in a simplistic and unproblematic way.

The ideological use of history strives to legitimise structures or ideas by constructing a relevant and meaningful context with history. Karlsson describes it as something that is used by intellectuals and political elites to ‘correct’ the historical timeline by toning down the bad parts, such as mistakes or problematic events, and highlighting the things that supports their ideology and arguments – sometimes both history and its connection to the present and the future is constructed instead of relying on facts. This use is expressed through things such as analyses that lack nuance, strong lines of continuity or absolute chronologies. Nationalism and socialism/communism are the two most relevant ideologies in this use of history, according to Karlsson. Both ideologies have a self-described historical progression with a turbulent past, a present fraught with conflict and a utopian future. The nationalist ideology, in the contemporary, often emphasises a connection between the own nation state and a specific territory – connected to the history of the nation – that is needed for the nation to be able to fulfil its purpose. The ideological use revolves around the mobilisation of people through the use of history to legitimise arguments and narratives. Furthermore, the ideological use often relies on strong pedagogical forces in the systems of ideas that are constructed. This can make the kind of historical use debatable in examples – whether history is used political-pedagogical or ideological, or a combination of both. Karlsson notes the problematics in discerning one use from another as well as several uses also reinforcing each other when both are present.²¹

The non-use of history is, according to Karlsson, a variant of the ideological use of history with the same actors and purpose. Unconsciously forgetting the past does not constitute a non-use as it is the deliberate act of omitting and ignoring history. This can come in the form of a focus on present situations such as the socioeconomic contemporary conditions or the description of a positive future without connecting either to history, which Karlsson labels as a ‘modernistic’ ideological use of history. It can also be expressed through the idea that history simply is not relevant for the present situation and the expectations for the future – a

²¹ Karlsson, *Historien är nu*, 68

belief of the dark parts of history once and for all being behind us and that we should focus on the bright future that lies ahead of us. Similarly to the ideological use, history can be something that needs to be corrected.

The commercial use of history constitutes the connection between increased interest in something or increased sales of something that is connected to or expressed through history. Karlsson mentions examples such as historical movies depicting popular historical events or eras. It revolves around linking the emotional pull of certain parts of history to a product which also makes it related to the political-pedagogical use of history. Karlsson also asks whether “the Holocaust, when it reaches Hollywood, becomes Americanised through the addition of American and commercial values that sometimes can be hard to even imagine”.²² As noted above, the field of history didactics is still changing and Karlsson notes that there are many things that are still being discussed and that should be discussed. The above description of Karlsson’s typology is therefore more of a theoretical framework meant to help analyse use of history rather than an absolute description of how history is used.

2.2 Source material

This chapter acts a description of what my source material is, how and from where I collected it and how I worked with it before analysing it. Due to the discrepancy in the quantity of sources available for each politician, a discussion on the reasons behind it and its implications for the thesis is also added.

Data collection consisted of several different steps. The first thing that was done was to specify the search criteria. The search criteria included a specific timeframe – January 1st, 2016 and July 1st, 2016 – and key words – “Nick Clegg”, “Clegg”, “Nigel Farage” and “Farage”. David Cameron had during the general election of 2015 promised to renegotiate with the EU and then take the deal back so that the people would be able to vote on it in a referendum. The beginning of 2016 marked the start of renegotiations and with politicians viewing it as the soft start of the referendum campaign even though the referendum was only announced on the 22nd of February. Clegg, as an example of this, starts the year off by

²² Karlsson, *Historien är nu*, 68

wishing “we win the debate for staying in the EU”.²³ An initial search showed that the potential amount of data would not be overwhelming, and I therefore decided to rather be overinclusive than to miss any potentially relevant data. All results adhering to the specified timeframe and any of the keywords were skimmed through on Google Search, YouTube, Parliamentlive.tv (an online archive of and by the House of Commons) as well as British news websites.

The second step was the selection criteria which primarily focused on discourse produced by Clegg and Farage. This was interpreted in a broad sense as to include speeches held, articles written, debates they participated in and interviews (both recorded and written). Furthermore, the discourse was required to be related to Brexit or the EU in any way. The resulting data consisted of 40 sources pertaining to Farage and 15 pertaining to Clegg of widely different lengths. Most speeches – 26 for Farage and 2 for Clegg – were around 10 to 20 minutes with some exceptions in either direction. The debates – 5 for Farage and 4 for Clegg – were mainly longer debates with several participants, but the average length of either Farage’s or Clegg’s participation was around 20 minutes. A majority of the interviews – 9 for Farage and 1 for Clegg – were around 10 minutes with exceptions in both directions as well as one written interview with Farage. Finally, 10 articles written by the politicians – 3 by Farage and 7 by Clegg – were also included.

Once all the material had been collected it was sorted and organised according to its type – interview, debate, article or speech – and in a chronological order. The material was further prepared for the analysis by fully transcribing or partially transcribing the videos. The transcriptions focused on what Clegg or Farage said, with the questions preceding their answers added for context where needed, and none of the debates were therefore fully transcribed as they included people irrelevant to the aim of this thesis. Written sources – all articles written by Clegg or Farage, one interview with Farage and one article on one of Clegg’s speeches – were added as they were.

²³ Nick Clegg, “Nick Clegg: My birthday wish is that we win the debate for staying in the EU”

Before moving on to methodology and analysis, the difference in the number of sources collected must be acknowledged. The 40 sources pertaining to Farage and the 15 sources pertaining to Clegg constitutes all available sources that adhere to the criteria discussed above. It is therefore important to ask why there is such a significant difference in the quantity of sources available. Clegg stepped down as leader of the Liberal Democrats a couple of months prior to the specified timeframe above. Furthermore, he was also active in other political questions during this period that had no direct connection to the EU membership or the referendum. Farage, on the other hand, has centred his political career around the British membership in the European Union and frequently stated that this would be his generation's only vote on the matter. Furthermore, populism was widely covered in the news with its rise globally. Clegg and Farage represent two different trends – one upgoing and one down going – influenced by a lot of different aspects. With all the information available, it is hard to give any further answer to why there is such a significant difference in the number of sources available. The implications of this for the analysis will be a broader data set available for analysing Farage which, in turn, should be seen as beneficial for the description of Farage's use of history.

2.3 Method

My methodology builds on the combination of Thematic Analysis (sometimes referred to as Thematic Content Analysis) and the theoretical framework presented above – historical consciousness, Rüsen's typology of historical narrative and Karlsson's typology of the use of history.

The use of history in political discourse can be studied in several different ways but my research questions steers this thesis towards studying patterns in Clegg's and Farage's discourse. Braun and Clarke describe Thematic Analysis (TA) as a qualitative approach for “systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set”.²⁴ TA has not been, and to some extent still isn't, a uniformly defined method with different researchers presenting different ways of how to use TA. This has led me to base my methodological approach on Braun and Clarke as they provide a

²⁴ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Thematic Analysis” in *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology: Vol. 2. Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*, edited by Harris Cooper, 57. Washington: American Psychological Association, 2012

systematic approach on how to use TA and are widely referenced on TA. Additionally, a comparative discussion on the differences and similarities between TA and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), which are two very similar approaches to qualitative research, has been referenced to provide clarity to the form and function of TA as it will be used here. Mojtaba Vaismoradi and Sherrill Snelgrove, for example, notes that TA allows for the analysis of latent content which is relevant when studying how history is used and interpreted – the use of history is put in relation to other descriptions of history which leaves a lot of latent content that require an interpretive approach.²⁵ QCA, in relation to TA, has a more descriptive approach as the frequency acts as the basis for the development of the themes.

TA allows more flexibility and less focus on the frequency of certain (here) historical examples or references – the frequency does not dictate the development of themes but can still provide useful data. Vaismoradi, Hannele Turunen and Terese Bondas describe the importance of a themes as “not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question”.²⁶ This, however, can be argued to constitute a weakness with TA as it moves it away from objectivity and relies more heavily on subjective interpretations. A well-defined theoretical framework is therefore needed in order to provide validity to the analysis and conclusions and the development of themes in this approach will be focused by the theoretical framework above. The addition of a theoretical framework and Rösen’s and Karlsson’s typologies as methodological tools will also help counteract the descriptive tendencies of TA. Historical consciousness, historical narrative and the use of history are therefore merged with TA in the analysis of the material in order to focus the analysis on the research questions specified at the start of this thesis.

²⁵ Mojtaba Vaismoradi and Sherrill Snelgrove, “Theme in Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis,” *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, no. 20(3) (2019). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.3.3376>

²⁶ Mojtaba Vaismoradi and Sherrill Snelgrove, “Theme in Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis,” *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, no. 20(3) (2019). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.3.3376>

TA, similarly to Content Analysis, starts with a systematic coding of all the material. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke propose a “six-phase” approach that I follow in this thesis²⁷:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data
 - This step involves transcribing videos and rereading the collected material until one is familiar with it – the extent of the transcriptions is mentioned in “2.2 Source material”. Furthermore, initial notes and ideas are written down.
2. Generating initial codes
 - Here, coding of the entire data set is done in an inclusive way as to not miss possibly interesting aspects. The coding, for this thesis, focuses on anything related to the three temporal forms and connections drawn between them.
3. Searching for themes
 - Codes are sorted in this step to find potential themes.
4. Reviewing potential themes
 - The code and the potential themes are examined in relation to each other and the entire data set in order to check the validity of the potential themes.
5. Defining and naming themes
 - The themes are, through continual analysis, both defined and named. Additionally, the “overall story that the analysis tells” is compounded.
6. Producing the report
 - This step represents the “final opportunity or analysis” where the themes are presented through exemplification and a discussion relating back to the research question and theoretical framework.

Step 2 through 6 includes the use of historical consciousness, Rösen’s typology of historical narrative and Karlsson’s typology of the use of history as analytical tools with which the analysis is focused. Rösen’s typology of historical narratives is constructed with the intent of providing an analytical tool to analyse reasoning and arguing in historical narratives in order, as he puts it, to “[make] sense of the experience of time”.²⁸ As a methodological tool, the typology of historical narratives offers a way of identifying and analysing the temporal aspect of the use of history – how the past is connected to both the present and the future

²⁷ Braun and Clarke, “Thematic Analysis,” 60-69

²⁸ Rösen, *History*, 18

through a narrative, and what legitimacy it ascribes the state of the world in these three temporal forms. Karlsson's typology shares the intent of analysing reasoning and arguing in discourse but, instead of focusing on the historical narrative, the typology becomes an analytical tool to analyse the use of history by users and the intent behind this usage towards the "recipients". He describes his typology as an instrument for historical research to show how different user groups, with different needs and interests, use history. As a methodological tool it therefore becomes more of a description of why history is used and what the ideological (or non-ideological) reasoning is that stands behind it, which stands in contrast to the typology of historical narratives that has a greater focus on how history is used, or rather retold. Historical consciousness lies at the heart of analytical purpose of this thesis and constitutes an important part of both Rösen's and Karlsson's typologies. It is both the self-orientation of politicians and the tool used by politicians to legitimise their ideas and convince the electorate of the validity of these ideas. Both Rösen's and Karlsson's typologies tries to present a non-definitive categorisation of the use of history in an effort to provide methodological tools for the analysis of expressions of history. These 'soft' categorisations aim to analyse material in the context of a theoretical framework on historical consciousness.

3 Background

3.2 Farage – UKIP

While Farage was an outspoken Eurosceptic even before winning a seat in the European Parliament, he started advocating a complete dissolution of the European Union following a Dutch and a French referendum in 2005 that voted against a European constitution. According to Farage, the constitution was brought in through the backdoor in the Lisbon Treaty despite these referendums.²⁹ His party, at the time of the UK referendum in 2016, was largely a single-issue party fighting for a Brexit. His politics are populist, libertarian and nationalistic in nature.³⁰

²⁹ YouTube, "Nigel Farage first speech post-Brexit vote: You're not laughing now"

³⁰ Britannica Academic, "Nigel Farage", last accessed August 19, 2019, <https://academic-eb-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/levels/collegiate/article/Nigel-Farage/608986>

3.3 Nick Clegg – LibDem

Nick Clegg is a member of the Liberal Democrats in the UK and, like Farage, was elected Member of the European Parliament in 1999. Between 2007 and 2015, he was the leader of the party, but stepped down after the bad result for the Liberal Democrats in the general election of 2015 where they lost most of their seats. He represents the pro-European liberalism in UK politics.

4 Analysis and discussion

4.1 Nigel Farage

In Farage's discourse, several themes are commonly found. His speeches in the European Parliament, which in contrast to the other source material is performed in front of politicians, uses political integration, democracy, immigration and his perceived failure of the European Union as a political union. It is important to note that these speeches were made only a couple of months after record-high waves of immigrants made their way into Europe with many fearing an even greater number to come. The immigration issue was therefore very topical which can both be seen in Farage's reference to Angela Merkel's, the German chancellor, message of welcoming refugees and the sexual harassment of women around the Cologne train station on New Year's Eve 2015/2016. On several occasions, Farage ties these events together to both each other and history, which will be further detailed later on. However, his main focus in the European Parliament revolves around democracy and his perception of the lack of it within the EU. Farage likens democracy to a 'disease' that is spreading among the people of Europe and that it is something the politicians in the European Parliament (excluding himself and other populists) will not like. In most cases, these examples use a historical narrative to legitimise and delegitimise his arguments. The European Union's evolution into a political union becomes the focal point for delegitimising arguments. As one of his examples, Farage claims that the Euro has been a catastrophe for Southern Europe and the further integration goes against the people's will.

Farage's debates, interviews, campaign speeches and articles share the more direct message to voters but do possess some differences as the audience varies from loyal supporters to potential supporters. As previously mentioned, Farage was very active during the campaign leading up to the referendum, which is very evident from the amount of campaign speeches he gave around the UK. Several themes can also be discerned in regard to the arena for and audience of the discourse. A speech held in the European Parliament in front of politicians from around Europe is of course quite different from a campaign speech held at Manchester in front of 'leave' supporters. The themes presented directly to voters revolve around the British people's capability throughout history to rule themselves, which he still believes to be the case, a political elite that do not care about the common people and a responsibility to both previous and future generations to pass on Britain's historical legacy of democracy and peacekeeping in Europe.

4.1.1 The people versus the establishment

History, in Farage's discourse, is both plentiful and centred around the capability of the British people to govern themselves, but also around the perceived neglect of the common people by the establishment and political elites. The anti-establishment sentiment that is part of Farage's historical consciousness is expressed through populist narratives – most commonly a memory of previous glory days and the perceived downfall led by the political elites. The referendum on the British membership in the European Economic Community in 1975 serves as the symbol for this perceived neglect in Farage's discourse. The generations that voted in 1975 were not asked if they wanted to become part of a political union and instead, they were merely asked whether they wanted to stay a part of an economic union. Farage even goes as far as to claim that he would have voted yes in the referendum of 1975, provided that the vote only was a question of an economic union and not a political one. The latter half of the 20th century saw the collapse of the British Empire and the slow fragmentation of British industry. This has, in Farage's discourse, now been combined with a populist anti-establishment sentiment that puts the British nation at the emergence from the Second World War at the top of a downward curve. The difference in what the people voted for in 1975, where they were explicitly asked “do you think that the UK should stay in the European Community (the Common Market)?”, and what the European project turned into becomes an example of how the political elites of the UK and EU have lied to the people of Britain.³¹ Through this critical narrative, that Farage constructs, of the politicians' willingness to bring the UK into a political union with the Treaty on European Union (also called the Maastricht Treaty), which the voters never had agreed to, the contemporary politicians are, in a simplistic way, described as a continuation of those. The ideologic use of history – the people versus the establishment – unproblematically equates the ‘lies’ of the political elites in 1975 to the arguments presented by the political elites in 2016. The anti-establishment argument, substantiated through this historical narrative, tries to discredit the arguments of the politicians' who are ‘against’ the people rather than ‘with’ the people. One example of history used in this way is the Dutch and French referendum on a proposed European constitution in 2005 and “the French said ‘no’, the Dutch overwhelmingly with a very loud, sharp, Eurosceptic bang said ‘no’” [...] [but] within weeks they [the political elites] rebranded the constitution as the Lisbon Treaty, they hadn't

³¹ David Ramiro Troitiño, Tanel Kerikmäe and Archil Chochia, ed., *Brexit: History, Reasoning and Perspectives* (Springer International Publishing AG, 2018), 122

surrendered a single power that had been in the original document”.³² Further adding that nothing stops the elites, or ‘these people’ as he puts it.

4.1.2 Democracy, common law and the decline of the House of Commons

With proclamations such as ‘I want my country back’ and ‘let’s take back our birth right’, Farage makes it clear that take back control in order to once again become “a free independent democracy”.³³ The lack of democracy within the EU and as part of the EU lies at the heart of Farage’s discourse. Continuing on the topic of populism, the anti-establishment sentiment forms a red line throughout his discourse during the referendum campaign together with the notion of the lack of democracy. Taking back the power that has been given to the EU and making the people who pass laws, that affect Britain, accountable to the British people ties the question of democracy to the populist ideology. In other words, Farage views the unelected bureaucrats in Europe – which is his description of the European Commission – as an undemocratic elite that imposes laws on the UK without the British populace being able to affect it. Historical narratives on the undemocratic nature of the EU, it should be noted, is significantly more frequent in his speeches in the European Parliament. The purpose of this, as mentioned above, I would argue to be that of finding allies across the different member states to join Farage on his quest to bring down the political union.

During one of his speeches in the European Parliament, he describes democracy as a disease that is spreading across Europe.³⁴ However, the disease is ‘true’ democracy that is bad for the political elites in Brussels and a disease that Farage himself is ‘enthusiastically’ afflicted by. The ‘disease’ first afflicted the Greeks several thousand years ago and more recently it sprung up, in its new form, in Denmark in the 90s – this refers to the foundation of the nationalistic and populist Danish People’s Party in the early 90s. Continuing this timeline he is constructing, he adds that this disease has continuously been suppressed while popping up here and there all over Europe before becoming a thing that was here to stay after the Dutch and French referendums in 2005 that are been mentioned above. This becomes part

³² YouTube, “Nigel Farage Dutch Interview”

³³ YouTube, “Nigel Farage introduces Special Guest at Grassroots Out campaign launch”

³⁴ YouTube, “Farage: A contagion is spreading across Europe”

of Farage's populist narrative with its focus on discrediting democracy as wielded by the political elites. The utopian future in this narrative is, again, a future where British politicians on a national level are solely responsible for all legislation affecting Britain and her people. Furthermore, Farage's speeches in front of his colleagues in the European Parliament, as already mentioned, has a future Europe without a political union in mind. The purpose of the speeches in the EP, however, differs from that of his campaign speeches in that it advocates the dissolution of the union more heavily. With the increase of Eurosceptic parties and politicians in the European Parliament and European nations, his speeches do not (only) try to convince the other politicians that the UK and the politicians' respective countries should leave, but instead seeks support for his opinion of the EU as a failed project doomed to die. As he himself did, when he first won his seat in the EP in 1999, some Eurosceptic politicians might only think of their desire to leave the EU, and Farage's speeches serves as an invitation for them to think 'bigger' – of the EU not only as something bad for their nation state, but something bad for Europe and all European nation states. What started as a peace project focused on trade between neighbours has, in Farage's eyes, become an obsolete union that undermines Europeans' hard-earned democracy.

Farage goes on to connect the decline of the House of Commons, again through a critical narrative, to the membership in the European Union. The movement of power to the supranational and regional levels is something that, according to him, is a deliberate way of the European elite to centralise power within Europe and try to “subsume the nation state within a new identity”.³⁵ In a reference to Margaret Thatcher, Farage also adds that she was unable to reform the political direction of the EU as she wanted international cooperation rather than international integration. In a comparison to the past, Farage says that “the House of Commons, in the 60s, used to discuss nuclear weapons, you know, huge global debates that went on in Westminster and that's what they did, and now our MPs are more like local councillors”.³⁶ McCormick notes this change as well but presents a different conclusion. According to him, this has come as a result of shifting balance of power from the House of Commons to the government thus leading to the government handling more big topics which the House of Commons are not presented an opportunity to discuss and debate.³⁷ McCormick

³⁵ YouTube, “Nigel Farage Dutch Interview”

³⁶ YouTube, “Nigel Farage Dutch Interview”

³⁷ John McCormick, *Contemporary Britain* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 94

does, however, note that the power of the government in London has been reduced by the expansion of at European and local levels, but that the marginalisation of the House of Commons by several consecutive Prime Ministers has still been the most impactful thing on the debates held in the parliament. Whether this constitutes a non-use of history by Farage or not is hard to say. Connecting the decline of the House of Commons to the membership in the EU can, however, be argued to be an ideological use of history regardless of whether Farage is aware of McCormick's conclusions or not.

Farage's historical narrative on democracy in Britain starts with Magna Carta in 1215. In the historical consciousness he expresses in his narrative, modern British democracy can trace a clear line back to the barons who forced the king to sign a charter that became the first step towards the separation of power in a feudal society as well as laying the first brick of a parliamentary system of government. Since the signing of Magna Carta, it has also, in Farage's words, meant that Britain "has had the most progressive system of law, has given its citizens the best protection against tyranny and that we feel we'd be better, and more fairly, governed by our own supreme court rather than a European court of so called 'justice' in Luxembourg".³⁸ In this, he connects the past, the present and the future together in a desire to undo the mistakes of the past. History before the 'mistake' serves as an example of British prominence, but also expresses a form of British exceptionalism – a sort of mentality that Britain is different from the rest of Europe and better capable of governing herself. This is a narrative he brings up on several occasions, both in front of voters during his campaign speeches and in front of other politicians at the European Parliament. Continuing on this timeline, Farage also upholds the role of the British colonisation across the globe and Britain's imperialistic history in spreading parliamentarism across the globe – parliamentarism and democracy is closely related in his discourse. The slow evolution of parliamentary democracy culminated, according to him, with the British defence of it during the two world wars of the 20th century. These four things – Magna Carta, colonisation, imperialism and the world wars – leads up to the point that Britain is losing the democracy that is so enshrined in British culture by being and staying a part of the European Union. He exemplifies this by saying that the way laws are made and controlled "is the death of parliamentary democracy, it is the death of everything we have been against as a country

³⁸ YouTube, "We want our Country back! Nigel Farage Brexit speech"

and indeed sold to the rest of the world over the course of the last many centuries”.³⁹ This narrative seems to be along both a populist and nationalist ideological use of history. The loss of democracy, as previously mentioned, is connected to the political elites through an anti-establishment narrative, while the nationalistic ideological connects cherry-picks desirable parts of history while also, through the non-use of history, glossing over the undemocratic state of colonise and dependencies when Britain itself had become moderately democratic. This, again, aligns to Karlsson’s definition of the ideological use (which includes non-use) of history with history being used in an unproblematic way to link it to the present situation – power on a national level going to a supranational level perceived as undemocratic – and a, sort of, utopian view of the future – a UK where laws are made by Brits and Brits being held accountable for them.

The progressive system of law since Magna Carta, as Farage views it, has through their membership in the EU been turned on its head. He states that “what I’m saying is that European law goes against everything our judicial system has ever stood for”.⁴⁰ The purpose of the historical narrative in this case is to appeal to the British pride over their historically progressive judicial democratic systems. The desired future he paints is a more ‘British’ one as he upholds the British judicial system to be sort of the *crème de la crème* which the political elite has allowed to be turned on its head in the near past and present. The British historical legacy is something Farage is very particular about defending and respecting. The numerous references to the sacrifice of ‘those who came before us’ seemingly aims to appeal to a sense of responsibility to previous generations and for the generations to come. It talks about a tradition that must not be broken, or that must be taken back – the present and the future should be the same as the past. It is the people’s ‘responsibility’ to honour and preserve this legacy that has been passed on to the people of present-day Britain. The quote Rösen: “traditional narratives remind one of the origins constituting present systems of life”.⁴¹ But at the same time, the present system of life is also a deviation from the original past where 1973 to present day constitutes a break from road that the UK should once more walk on.

³⁹ YouTube, “No to the EU peterborough Nigel Farage speech”

⁴⁰ YouTube, “Nigel Farage EU law is unjust”

⁴¹ Rösen, *History*, 13

With Magna Carta as a starting point, with the British people's role in spreading parliamentarism, and therefore the seeds of democracy, across the world and with the British role in defending democracy during the two world wars of the 20th century, Farage's historical consciousness builds on the idea of the British people being the torchbearers of democracy. His narrative centres around a perceived responsibility to previous generations – mainly the ones who fought against fascism during the two world wars – to keep the torch lit or pick the torch back up again in the present. The present's connection to the future becomes the responsibility to the next generations – the children and grandchildren – to pass the torch and its legacy on to the new torchbearers. The populist narrative, in this case, becomes the fight against the establishment while the nationalist narrative becomes the connection and obligation to the history of the British people.

4.1.3 Legacy of the two world wars and the British Empire

The responsibility to 'those who came before us', as Farage often labels them, is mainly centred around the wars of the 20th century. He expresses that "this campaign must be about those who went before us and defended parliamentary democracy against a world at war, and our determination to hand that legacy of freedom, liberty, justice and pride in who we are to our children and grandchildren".⁴² While Britain's democracy is traced back throughout history in Farage's discourse, the more recent history is seemingly more related to his contemporary Britain. Farage's fondness of history from the first half of the 20th century is exemplified in an interview when the interviewer asks him about his hobby of visiting battlefields from the First World War. Farage says that "whenever I go there, I always think, what would I have done? If I was a 19-year-old, fresh out of college... would I have been a proper man or not?".⁴³ To fight for honour and your country was part of the national romantic mentality that was prominent during the early 20th century which still, to some extent, forms a part of contemporary nationalism. Farage's historical consciousness builds very strongly on a nationalistic view of 20th century British history and its role in the contemporary, as will be discussed below.

⁴² YouTube, "Grassroots Out London Nigel Farage speech"

⁴³ Henry Mace, "Lunch with the FT: Nigel Farage," *Financial Times*, April 8, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/864c3a96-fbf1-11e5-b5f5-070dca6d0a0d>

Winston Churchill becomes a part of Farage's historical narrative on a couple of occasions. One of these is a rebuttal in the European Parliament where Farage agrees that Churchill did support a United States of Europe, but that he also "made it absolutely clear at all times that the United Kingdom should not be a part of it".⁴⁴ Tying it in with his own perception of the EU as undemocratic, Farage adds that he thoroughly doubts that Churchill would approve of what the union has become "because he was a democrat".⁴⁵ As context to this, McCormick's description of Churchill notes that he indeed wanted regional integration, mainly between France and West Germany, and that the UK was "with Europe but not of it" and should therefore stay out of any such integration.⁴⁶ While Churchill was voted out of office almost as soon as the Second World War ended, he has become an important figure of 20th century history in Britain. The recent movie *Darkest Hour* is a depiction of Winston Churchill during the Second World War and includes his speech, commonly referred to as, *we shall fight on the beaches*. The movie shows his determination to not surrender to the Germans and this is something that still forms an important part of British historical consciousness – the last, unyielding defenders of democracy in Europe. Historian John Broich, however, suggests that his speech did not inspire the British populace as much as the film portrays. Furthermore, both McCormick and Broich notes that Churchill wanted to preserve the British Empire with Broich going as far as saying that "Churchill doesn't get high marks as a democrat" as a result.⁴⁷ Farage also brings up Churchill by saying, in agreement to him, that "democracy is a dreadful system but is by far the best mankind so far has invented".⁴⁸ This was brought up both in an interview and a campaign speech. The context of these are the perceived undemocratic reality of the European Union and that, while democracy is not perfect, it is better than what the membership in the EU entails. Again, this – Farage's references to Churchill – is along the line of an ideological use of history as it tries to align history to his narrative where the negative parts of history are deliberately ignored. Churchill becomes a symbol for modern democracy in an unproblematic and simplistic way in Farage's representation of him.

⁴⁴ YouTube, "Farage: A contagion is spreading across Europe"

⁴⁵ YouTube, "Farage: A contagion is spreading across Europe"

⁴⁶ McCormick, *Contemporary Britain*, 22

⁴⁷ John Broich, "What's fact and What's Fiction in *Darkest Hour*" Slate, December 8, 2017,

<https://slate.com/culture/2017/12/whats-fact-and-whats-fiction-in-darkest-hour.html>

⁴⁸ YouTube, "'Why Cameron wants short EU campaign' – Nigel Farage"

In Farage's discourse, Britain's way forward lies partly in its past: The Commonwealth. The EU membership has, according to him, forced the United Kingdom to turn its back on its historical partners. However, McCormick argues that "[the Commonwealth] is perhaps more important for nostalgic cultural reasons than for hard political reasons" but it still influences the way Britain defines itself in the modern world.⁴⁹ It is the legacy of imperialism and the British Empire, consisting of more than two billion people and tied together through history and the English language. In the words of Farage, the Commonwealth is "almost family" that have stood by the Britain's side, fighting shoulder to shoulder with them, in two world wars.⁵⁰ Adding to this, at another occasion, that "common law and contract law are nearly always very similar [within the Commonwealth], [and] they actually like us and [...], when we are in trouble, [they] come and stand side by side with us".⁵¹ But the relationship within the Commonwealth can also be complicated. It is, as mentioned, a relationship formed through the imperialistic history of Britain, and, as McCormick notes, its defining features have sometimes been "what divides it [rather] than what unites it".⁵² Farage's reference to the greatness of the Commonwealth, as a middle-aged white man in front of people seemingly predominantly white and in their 50s, 60s and 70s, seems to appeal to the memory of how good the Commonwealth was for Britain when it was a much more tightly knit community. Only once, and then only passingly, does Farage mention that the relationship has also had its negative periods, but the positive memory of Britain as one of the great powers of the world becomes an example of both the importance of again reinforcing those ties in the future and how an exit from the European Union is the only way of achieving that. This undifferentiated interpretation of Britain's imperialistic past becomes, I would argue, problematic and one-sided. When the British colonies gained their independence during the 20th century, much of the relations within the Commonwealth were characterised by the opposing interests of its (partly former) white elite and the much poorer non-white populations.⁵³ This has changed significantly since, but, more importantly for Farage, the membership in the then European Economic Community meant that Britain *did* relinquish its often preferential trade agreements with parts of the Commonwealth. The historical

⁴⁹ McCormick, *Contemporary Britain*, 211-212

⁵⁰ YouTube, "'Why Cameron wants short EU campaign' – Nigel Farage"

⁵¹ YouTube, "No to the EU peterborough Nigel Farage speech"

⁵² McCormick, *Contemporary Britain*, 212

⁵³ McCormick, *Contemporary Britain*, 212

consciousness he conveys builds on nostalgic memories of the British Empire and through a non-use of history, Farage builds a narrative where Britain's past is its way forward. The nationalism in the British colonies and those who fought for independence have to leave way to a historical narrative of how the British Empire

Farage's view of the EU being inherently bad is not something that he claims to have always had. When Britain joined the EEC in 1973, tariffs were high, but has since then gone down radically. Farage therefore even claimed in an interview that he would have voted 'yes' in the European referendum in 1975, if he had been old enough to vote back then.⁵⁴ This, however, puts his firm agreement with Churchill's belief that the UK should never be a part of the EU to question. In Farage's defence, the benefit of tariff free trade as a member of the EEC is more frequently used and more heavily emphasised than his agreement with Churchill. Moreover, Churchill's belief that the UK should not be a part of the European Union was only brought up in the European Parliament where Farage has a greater focus on how the UK never should have been a part of a political union.

The Second World War meant a huge strain on the British Empire. Its economy hard pressed after two devastating wars and nationalist movements in its colonies and dominions. The Suez Crisis during the 1950s, as McCormick notes, became the wake-up call for the British people to realise that the British Empire had come to its end and it was summarily, and orderly, dismantled.⁵⁵ This also had the effect of moving more of the UK's political interests back to Europe which also made them slowly drift towards the more and more integrated cooperation of the continent. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the parliament made the decision to join the EU and first in 1975 was the public given an opportunity to make its voice heard. Farage, however, views the political class of contemporary Britain as a continuation of the one that began the dismantlement after the Suez Crisis. The political class has, according to him, lost faith in the UK's ability to make their own laws, control their own borders, make their own trade deals and stand on its own on the world stage. The critical narrative he constructs links the fall of the British Empire after the Second World War, and the UK joining the European Union in 1973, to the political class not having the faith in their

⁵⁴ Mace, "Lunch with the FT: Nigel Farage"

⁵⁵ McCormick, *Contemporary Britain*, 210

own country as Farage does. He uses both examples such as the implications of the Suez Crisis and a debate with Nick Clegg in 2014, where Clegg talks about how about the UK needs to stay in the EU to fully achieve its global ambitions, to describe the political class as people who have lost faith in their country's ability to decide its own laws and control its own borders. Again, Farage connects his arguments to the present and his belief in the importance and capability of the British people to rule themselves once again. This would, according to him, also once again allow the British people to make their own laws and hold their politicians directly accountable for their politics.

One of his most commonly used phrases, in slightly different variations, talks about what 'our' grandparents, or "those who went before us", fought and, in some cases, sacrificed their life for in the two world wars: "our liberty, our freedom and our independence".⁵⁶ Their sacrifice was done in the interest of ensuring a Europe of free independent democracies, according to Farage. The Second World War, in particular, holds a very important place in the minds of the British people with things such as the 'Dunkirk spirit' after the civilians' role in helping evacuate more than 300'000 soldiers from the besiege city of Dunkirk in 1940. As Rachel Lewis writes in the Time, "today, [the Dunkirk spirit is] frequently cited by British social media users as testament to courageous behaviour in the face of adversity".⁵⁷ While Farage's discourse focuses on independence rather than the resilience of the British people, the history he brings up as an example for how the present and the future should be, is strongly connected to a perception of a collective memory of a British prominence during the Second World War and Britain's capability of standing on her own two leg. This, in turn, becomes another expression of nationalism in his discourse and an example of Farage's own historical consciousness.

The legacy of the British Empire is still very much present in contemporary Britain and Farage's memory of it focuses on the benefit of the heartland and not the colonise and dependencies. In his historical consciousness, the British Empire is seemingly an admirable era in British history. Both Karlsson's description of ideological use of history and his

⁵⁶ YouTube, "Nigel Farage Bolton Brexit speech"

⁵⁷ Rachel Lewis, "Why the British Still Talk About the 'Dunkirk Spirit'" Time, July 20, 2017, <https://time.com/4860620/dunkirk-spirit-phrase-history-world-war-2/>

description of the non-use of history are expressed in Farage's discourse when he talks about Britain's role in creating and spreading democracy as well as its role in defending it.

4.1.4 The EU and the 21st century

All the problems of the EU are not related to democracy in Farage's discourse. The financial crisis in 2008 and the Eurozone crisis marks two moments in more recent history that are still fresh in people's memory. Farage's view of the present is that the worries of 2008 as well as the fear of another Eurozone crisis are back. The EU also struggles with economic differences between its northern parts and southern parts. Farage views the difference as the result of the creation of the Eurozone, stating that "look what the Eurozone has done to Southern Europe; it has driven them into poverty".⁵⁸ This ties into the previously mentioned, and perceived, failure of the EU – it's a union that hurts its member states instead of helping them. A future without the EU becomes a utopian view in Farage's narrative where the negative history tries to legitimise his ideological standpoint of intergovernmental cooperation rather than international integration through institutions.

While history from before the 21st century forms the sort of backbone of Farage's discourse, the more recent history of the 21st century forms an important theme that closely connects the financial instabilities and crashes along the pressure put on European nations' ability to integrate the unusually high numbers of immigrants during the past couple of years. As I initially mentioned, the migrant crisis of 2015 is a contemporary issue Farage frequently brings up. It is, in his discourse, connected to the previously discussed movement of power away from the UK but it serves as a plea for the future to take back control over the British borders. Farage has long been an opponent of 'excessive' immigration, as he calls it, to the UK. After the refugee crisis in 2015, his main focus shifted from Eastern European immigrants to Middle Eastern immigrants. The problems and causes he identifies with these two main groups differ somewhat. The immigration from Eastern Europe stems from the Eastern Enlargement in 2004 and has had a negative effect on the rest of Europe and EU because "some of them with human rights records that are, frankly, shocking and abysmal, and others in which corruption is so rife that these countries have not made the transition to

⁵⁸ YouTube, "Nigel Farage Grassroots Out Manchester"

being full western democracies”.⁵⁹ The main problem for Britain, according to Farage, is the dumping of wages that these immigrants cause across the UK. During a debate, he attributes the positive state of migration in Europe before the Eastern Enlargement to the fact that the initial members had similar living, education, welfare and healthcare standards, and the Eastern Enlargement was a mistake since it brought in such poor countries with vastly different living standards.⁶⁰ The (mainly) Middle Eastern immigrants, however, are instead described from an equality perspective. Farage describes that the female emancipation of the 20th century in Britain started when “the women of this country went to work in factories because the men were away [during the First World War], they earned their first proper wage packets, they went down to the pub, they got the vote”.⁶¹ He connects this to the events of New Year’s Eve 2015/2016 at the Cologne train station by saying that these young immigrant men, who sexually harassed women, will have German passports within a couple of years. That his own passport begins with the words “European Union” is something he brings up on several occasions, and these words, according to him, means that a German passport is basically same – i.e. he is saying that these people will have free access to the UK.

To me, if you allow the unlimited access of huge numbers of young male into the European Continent who come from countries where women are at best second class citizens, don’t be surprised if scenes that we saw in Cologne don’t happen more often, but for goodness sake, do we want those young men within five years to have EU passports and all to be able to come to our country and to reverse a 100 years of female liberation and change our entire way of life? Surely, the answer must be ‘no’⁶²

The culprit in this case, which hinders the UK from stopping these men, is the EU and the lack of control allowed over national borders. As everything else in Farage’s discourse, the simple solution is to leave the EU.

⁵⁹ YouTube, “June 23rd will spell end to entire European project - Nigel Farage MEP”

⁶⁰ YouTube, “UKIP’s Nigel Farage VS Labour’s Vernon Coaker - University of Ulster EU Debate”

⁶¹ YouTube, “No to the EU peterborough Nigel Farage speech”

⁶² YouTube, “Grassroots Out Newport Nigel Farage Speech”

History from the 21st century is connected to a nationalistic fear of other people's and culture's influence and impact on British society. It is a fear that their history and historical progress is threatened and must be defended. A supranational institution forcing laws upon the nation state becomes a threat to the nation's ability to handle and combat the threat of uncontrolled waves of people making their way towards their borders. While the migrants from other European countries are not perceived as a significant threat to British culture, they are instead seen as freeloaders who come to Britain to take away job opportunities and exploit British welfare and medical care. This theme is quite prominent in Farage's discourse, but builds mostly on contemporary issues and events, although the nationalist ideology links it to British history. As stated above, his simple solution to all these problems is a Britain outside the EU.

4.2 Nick Clegg

As a Europhile, Clegg is all but happy with David Cameron's decision to jeopardise Britain's future. The referendum is "about the future of our country, not the future of a divided conservative party", as he begrudgingly states.⁶³ Clegg had in the years prior to the referendum engaged in several debates with Farage on the EU and the UK's membership in the EU – something both politicians referred to during the referendum campaign. The common themes in his discourse during the campaign were focused on not leaving instability and uncertainty to future generations, the hypocrisy in the 'Leave' camp, globalisation, Britain's place in the world and the strength of cooperation. While he was most active towards the end of the referendum campaign, he wrote articles throughout where he expressed his views. His arguments, and the historical examples he used, mainly remained along the same line during this period. There are some differences that stem from reactions to events, such as Obama's visit and the 'Leave' camp's talk about different possible models after leaving – i.e. Norwegian, Icelandic or Swiss model as some examples. His arguments and narratives are predominantly focused on the present and the future, but there are still several instances where history is used to reinforce his arguments.

4.2.1 Safety in numbers; stronger together

Clegg's belief in the legitimacy of international institutions and the benefit of international integration is frequently expressed through his argument of 'safety in numbers' and 'stronger together'. History, the contemporary world and his perception and expectation of the future are presented in historical narratives that express the validity of a continued membership in the EU based on a sense of continuation of the past, the past as valid examples of rules for the present and the future, and a continual and ever-improving transformation of the UK and the EU in the world. As a politician in the Liberal Democratic party, and the former leader of the party, Clegg expresses a liberalist ideology in his historical narratives. This liberalist thinking lies at the heart of Clegg's historical consciousness – the importance of international institutions as the way of the future. Steven L. Lamy, a professor in International Relations, notes that contemporary liberalists firmly believe in free trade, the pooling of states' resources and even surrendering "some of their sovereignty to create integrated communities

⁶³ "Monday 22 February 2016," Parliamentlive.tv, <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/0efcd00b-79dd-4536-8eef-cfe29ccb6dab?in=16:08:40>

to promote economic growth or respond to regional problems”.⁶⁴ The legitimacy of the EU in Clegg’s historical consciousness builds on these beliefs of the benefit of international institutions and trade within a more integrated market to create more prosperity. Lamy adds that contemporary liberalism focuses on “issues of cooperation, international political economy, and, most recently, the environment”.⁶⁵ Clegg’s historical narrative includes explicitly stated examples of this where he describes the contemporary world by stating that “we live in an era of globalisation, climate change, cross-border crime [and] economic financial flows around the world”.⁶⁶ Furthermore, liberalism views the world as increasingly interconnected and interdependent, and international institutions thus becomes the tool for nation states to stand strong in such a world. Clegg frequently uses the argument of ‘stronger together’ and ‘safety in numbers’ to describe his view of how the world functions and therefore what is the best way for the UK to achieve its global ambitions and increased national prosperity. The evolution of the EU from a strictly trade focused cooperation to the increasingly integrated political union it is today, is purely a development that has followed the ever-changing world, according to his arguments.

History in Clegg’s discourse view the processes leading up to the 1973 membership, and the 1975 referendum on that membership, quite differently from Farage. The British Empire and its fall are still a relatively recent event and, through the UK’s continued strong ties to the different parts of the former Empire, it is still very much a part of most political discourse. Clegg’s references to the previous imperial history of his country comes in two forms: a continuation of Britain’s global interests and the world having moved on from “an era of gun boat diplomacy”.⁶⁷ Processes, like the move from gun boat diplomacy, is found in many places, such as the evolution of the European Union and the increasing globalist nature of both trade and diplomacy. Globalism has, according to him, caused the whole world to “[coalesce] into their single markets of their own because they realised that it is better for

⁶⁴ Steven L. Lamy, “Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism,” in *The Globalisation of World Politics: An introduction to international relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 132

⁶⁵ Lamy, “Contemporary mainstream approaches”, 127

⁶⁶ YouTube, “Murnaghan | Nick Clegg”

⁶⁷ “Wednesday 15 June 2016,” Parliamentlive.tv <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/d7f0a82d-fe82-4130-8e68-eade0a956078?in=14:16:11>

trade, and trade is better for economic dynamism, and economic dynamism helps people in jobs, generates taxes which we can put into our hospitals and schools”.⁶⁸

Clegg’s historical narrative, that connects these processes and regional integrations of the past to the present and the future, becomes both an ideological use of history and non-use of history, as some history is fitted into the timeline of the three temporal forms while other cases of history are deemed not relevant or undesirable. The liberalist view of strength in numbers is also expressed as a safety in numbers, by Clegg – if the future is brighter together, then the future is darker alone. He also draws a comparative line between the UK and the EU by stating that “it is as valuable to work together in Europe as it is to work together in our own union”.⁶⁹ The success of the United Kingdoms as a political union becomes, through this, a reason why the EU is and will be successful. As a Europhile, Clegg’s historical consciousness builds on the idea of international integration having been the cause of stability and prosperity. However, while also stating that the EU is not perfect, he paints the evolution of the EU as another historical, and contemporary, process. According to Clegg, the bumps in the road, the problems and imbalances, have all been what has propelled the European integration forward and improved it. The oil crisis in the early 70s, as one of his examples, led to the thinking of a borderless market as a long-term solution for the economy.⁷⁰

The growth of globalisation during the 20th and the 21st centuries becomes one of the central themes in Clegg’s discourse. To him, as someone who is growing up in an era of globalisation, “whether you like it or not, if you want to exercise control over your own fate in an era of globalisation you can only do so by seeking to control things with others because you just gain greater control by doing things with your European kith and kin”.⁷¹ Furthermore, he describes our age as defined “above all by a profound sense of insecurity. Terrorism, climate change, globalisation, mass immigration — all conspire to create an overwhelming feeling of insecurity among millions of our fellow citizens. Yet we cannot

⁶⁸ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

⁶⁹ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

⁷⁰ YouTube, “The EU Referendum: Brexit or Bremain? | Nick Clegg & Andrea Leadsom”

⁷¹ YouTube, “The EU Referendum: Brexit or Bremain? | Nick Clegg & Andrea Leadsom”

tackle a single one of these forces on our own”.⁷² Globalisation, in his narrative, is the glue that ties the (more recent) past, the present and the future together. He also describes terrorism, climate change and mass immigration as forms of globalisation, and the EU, according to Clegg, is “the world’s most sophisticated responses to globalisation in which nation states recognise that they deal with globalisation, both its opportunities and threats, by working in consort with each other”.⁷³ This historical narrative connects the challenges of the future to the solution to it by grounding both in history. However, as the challenge is the growing process of globalisation, Clegg desires more cooperation, and not less, to continually evolve the solution alongside the growing challenge.

With a legacy of a global presence, the British nation’s place at the world stage, both in the present and historically, is something that Clegg also brings up on several different occasions. In his discourse, the UK has always held an important role in maintaining balance in Europe. As examples, he mentions the British involvement in the War of Spanish Succession and the Seven Years’ War, both of which took place during the 18th century, as well as the two world wars of the 20th century. Britain’s role during these conflicts have been that of “architects and co-authors of stability in Europe” and he adds that “[the British] were not bystanders and outliers”.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the special relationship between the UK and the USA during the 20th century is something that in the present (2016) relies heavily on EU membership, according to Clegg, as the USA in his view relies on the UK to represent its interest in Europe and in the EU, and a UK outside the EU therefore loses some of its relevancy.⁷⁵ With history as his building blocks, Clegg tries to create a meaningful connection between Britain’s role in European history to the UK’s membership in the EU in the present. Adding the importance of the special relationship with the USA, Clegg tries to convey the expectations of the ‘wrong’ future – a future outside the EU. However, Clegg also paints the UK as a nation that both has been and is impactful in Europe’s history while expressing the desire for the British to act as the leaders of Europe and not leaving it. He wants the UK to become further invested in the European project to shape the EU’s future and work towards increased integration. History, through an ideological use, tries to

⁷² Clegg, “Nick Clegg: My birthday wish...”

⁷³ YouTube, “The EU Referendum: Brexit or Bremain? | Nick Clegg & Andrea Leadsom”

⁷⁴ YouTube, “The EU Referendum: Brexit or Bremain? | Nick Clegg & Andrea Leadsom”

⁷⁵ YouTube, “The EU Referendum: Brexit or Bremain? | Nick Clegg & Andrea Leadsom”

legitimise both the international institution that is the EU as well as Britain's role in it, while relying heavily on the belief of 'stronger together' and 'safety in numbers'.

4.2.2 The Europeanness of the UK and the Britishness of the EU

The British people's lack of a European identity, or 'emotional commitment to European integration', as Clegg describes is, has always been a part of the debate in the UK on their membership in the EU. Clegg relates this to the rest of Europe where the membership has had an important function for many countries:

If you're Dutch, German, Italian or French, there's a visceral commitment basically that the European integration represent peace over war. My wife is Spanish, for the Spaniards, the Greeks, the Portuguese, it's democracy over fascism. For us, frankly, in the 1970s we, sort of, shuffled into the European community with a slightly, sort of defeated, shrug of our shoulders like: 'we're not the Empire anymore, but we can't beat them so we might as well join them'. We've always had a more slightly lightly held, loosely held conviction about our European identity, and I do think that sets us apart, but I do not think that's sufficient reason to tear it all apart.⁷⁶

The connection between history and the EU for many other European countries has made a European identity a part of their collective historical consciousness, according to Clegg, which has yet to happen to the British. However, the Europeanness of the UK or, rather, the Britishness of the EU is a claim that Clegg brings up. Most central of these is his repeated mentioning of the inventor of the European single market – Arthur Cockfield. Lord Cockfield was sent by Margret Thatcher to the EEC and helped write the paper that led to the Single European Act.⁷⁷ This led to the creation of the world's largest borderless marketplace, as Clegg points out. In a debate with a professor of economy, Patrick Minford, Clegg points out this fact by saying that the "the Single Market was created by [Minford's] former boss, Margret Thatcher".⁷⁸ In another debate, Clegg also adds to this by arguing that

⁷⁶ YouTube, "The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate"

⁷⁷ Troitiño et al. *Brexit*, 116

⁷⁸ YouTube, "Professor Patrick Minford schools Nick Clegg and the BBC on free trade"

Britain has always been an open trade economy and claims that “[Thatcher] made us the pro-Europeans who, like it or not, we are”.⁷⁹ However, it should be noted that Thatcher was not a supporter of continual integration of the European project as she saw it as a danger to European societies, liberties and way of life and, to some, she has instead become a symbol for Euroscepticism.⁸⁰

Clegg emphasises the UK’s active role in the shaping the EU since the creation of the Single Market. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe extended a hand of friendship and partnership to the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe which Clegg describes as “the most brave thing done by any generation of recent political leaders” and that it was “a British achievement against the objections of other countries and [directed at Nigel Farage and the leave campaign] you guys complain that we don’t get our own way”.⁸¹ This further expresses Clegg’s view of Britain as a leader in the European Union and how the UK has been instrumental in shaping the EU. Through it, Clegg seemingly uses history ideologically in an attempt to paint Europe and being Europeans as part of a British identity or part of a collective historical consciousness. Through his arguments, he tries to construct a historical narrative connecting the British people to the EU. History becomes the reason why the British people should consider the European Union as something British and themselves as Europeans.

4.2.3 Westminster and the EU

Clegg has long been critical of aspects of Westminster and after the LibDem’s success in the general election of 2010, he tried to both change from a first-past-the-post electoral system to an electoral system based on proportional representation and make the House of Lords more democratic in structure – both failed to gain enough support. He describes Westminster as “hopelessly stuck in the past: MPs are not allowed to shake each other’s hands on the parliamentary estate; we can’t call each other by our names and must instead use arcane titles such as ‘my right honourable friend’ or ‘the gallant and learned gentleman’. We are not allowed to clap in the Commons so we register our approval by manically guffawing and

⁷⁹ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

⁸⁰ Troitiño et al. *Brexit*, 116

⁸¹ YouTube, “EU referendum debate | Guardian Live”

waving papers instead”.⁸² Adding to this, Clegg mentions that there was a rifle range below the House of Lords up until 2015 and the cloakrooms still have hooks for MPs to hang their swords. He also calls the members of the House of Lords, who complain about democracy in the EU, hypocrites as they themselves are part of an unelected parliament who can revise and amend the laws of the land. In Clegg’s narrative, Britain’s own parliamentary system acts as an example of how nothing is perfect, stating “so [the EU] is imperfect, but guess what, so is Westminster and Whitehall”.⁸³ Furthermore, he also states that the EU is not “some sort of super state trampling our Magna Carta rights”.⁸⁴ Clegg frequently expresses that the EU is not without flaws of its own, but he also believes that flaws are not reason enough to abandoned something, as “I would never advocate [...] that Westminster and Whitehall should be razed to the ground or that we should quit our democratic institutions altogether. Yet that is precisely what Brexiteers are inviting us to do: respond to the flaws in the EU, which are numerous, by turning our backs on it altogether”.⁸⁵ Through a critical narrative where Westminster and the EU are simplistically compared, Clegg advocates a change for the future, but not through abandoning the institutions formed by history, instead it should be a continued evolution of things. The flaws of both systems are outweighed by the benefits of them, Clegg concludes.

The European integration is also something he connects to flaws or problems, saying that the EU has never been a smooth journey but rather having been propelled forward by problems and imbalances. The oil crisis in the early 70s was one of the driving factors in the creation of the single market, according to him, as well as the UK’s increased interest in being a part of the European project. The economic imbalances between the north of Europe and the south of Europe is, in Clegg’s narrative, part of problems the EU faces, but he considers the Eurozone to be the solution, although the positive results lie in the future. However, the journey, despite its bumps, has largely been a positive one as Clegg argues that “you’d think that this club which we’ve have been a member of for 41 years has been the fault of all misery, [but] how come we are still an independent free, and broadly speaking,

⁸² Nick Clegg, “Nick Clegg: Brexit lords have a cheek to complain about EU democracy”

⁸³ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

⁸⁴ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

⁸⁵ Clegg, Nick Clegg: Brexit lords...”

prosperous nation if we've been a member of it for over four decades? And I simply think that might apply to his example".⁸⁶

In Clegg's discourse, the membership in the European Union is more central than the time before. Needless to say, his pro-European views connects the history of their membership in the union to positive events in both the past and present along positive outcomes for the future. However, in a very genetical narrative, the EU has had, and still has, flaws which need work and Clegg views a continued membership as a way of continuously changing and improving the EU.

4.2.4 The road ahead

Clegg's discourse has a large focus on the future – both the scenario of staying in the EU and leaving the EU. The United Kingdom is a union of its own representing the historical integration of four kingdoms – England, Scotland, Wales and (Northern) Ireland – into a single nation. Clegg brings up the hypocrisy of the Brexiteers who had, only two years prior to this referendum campaign, argued about the safety in numbers and greater strength as part of a union during the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. Furthermore, he casts doubt on whether the union of the United Kingdom will be able to survive with the Scottish National Party threatening to call for another referendum as they only stayed in the union of the UK as long as the UK remained a member of the EU. Leaving the EU would also mean being dragged back “into the furnace of that economic disaster [in 2008] from which we are still escaping from right now”.⁸⁷ Clegg brings up the trauma from the financial crisis of 2007/2008, which they are still recovering from, and relates it to a constitutional and political instability in an uncertain future – i.e. in the case of Brexit. As mentioned previously, Clegg believes strongly in international institutions as the only way forward. In his narrative, the only reason the UK has managed to stay relevant on the world stage is its membership in the EU. Leaving would result in Britain having its role marginalised in the world and reduce its global influence. Clegg's narrative, and ideological use of history, paints an uncertain and unstable future if the British people vote to leave.

⁸⁶ “Wednesday 15 June 2016,” Parliamentlive.tv

⁸⁷ “Wednesday 15 June 2016,” Parliamentlive.tv

Another point Clegg frequently brings up is the question about responsibility. The connection between the present and the future, in Clegg's narrative, becomes exemplified by the question he asks himself on "what is the best decision for the next generations?"⁸⁸ The uncertainty mentioned above is put into relation with the certainty of voting to remain as to appeal to parents' desire to do the best thing for their children. The safety and certainty – knowing what to expect – seems similar to Rösen's description of traditional narrative where the EU constitutes the tradition which fuses the three temporal forms together to form a sense of certainty and safety. Furthermore, the 'Leave' camp often accuses the 'Remain' camp of using fear to sway the voters and in a way the use of traditional narrative to describe the safety of continuation, and the threatening uncertainty of a break in continuity, can quite fairly be argued to appeal to people's desire for safety over uncertainty. Clegg brings these arguments back to the questions of the responsibility of the current generation to the future generations. Globalisation, as discussed earlier on, is something that Clegg believes will be better handled within the EU for the benefit of the future generations to give them the best tools to handle its continued growth in the world. The future in Clegg's discourse is, however, not only possibly catastrophic, but instead also a great opportunity as the united strength of the EU constitutes a major influence on the rest of the world. This influence will help combat global challenges, such as climate change. In a counterargument to Brexiteers blaming EU for all misery, Clegg states that if the fact that Britain has been a member for 41 years "how come we are still an independent free, and broadly speaking, prosperous nation if we've been a member of it for over four decades?"⁸⁹ The future of the UK is, in Clegg's narrative, either the downfall of the UK or daring to take responsibility needed to give our children greater opportunities. His focus on the future, which is built on his liberal historical consciousness and expectation of the future, tries to convey these two possibilities.

⁸⁸ YouTube, "The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate"

⁸⁹ "Wednesday 15 June 2016," Parliamentlive.tv

4.3 Comparison and discussion

Rüsen's and Karlsson's typologies provide two different perspectives on the use of history in Clegg's and Farage's discourse. Rüsen's typology offers a way to analyse the narrative that binds the past, the present and the future together. It represents the way history is perceived, deemed relevant or irrelevant and retold. Karlsson's typology, on the other hand, is used to identify the intentions of using this history – what historical consciousness they want to convey in order to persuade the voters of the legitimacy of their political arguments. Together, these two typologies have allowed me to both look at more overarching themes and dive deeper into other themes by analysing things such as, for example, ideologically constructed historical narratives. They provide answers to different perspectives or different parts of my research questions. Therefore, the discussion below aims to compare and discuss the historical narratives and the different uses of history of Clegg and Farage corresponding to the three research questions specified at the beginning of this thesis.

As a self-described Eurosceptic and a self-described Europhile, it is not surprising that the way they build their historical consciousness in their respective narratives differs as much as they do. Clegg and Farage were, after all, analysed and compared because of the contrast it provides. Both politicians construct their narratives based on very ideologically different historical consciousnesses. Clegg and Farage represent two very different views of history's connection to the present and the future. In short, it can be compared to a mentality of the need to go back versus a mentality of history being just a leg of the journey on the road to the future. Farage's despise of the contemporary establishment and admiration of the British nation of the first half of the 20th century conveys a view of the need to look at history in order to correct the present and create expectations of the future that are 'correct'. Clegg, on the other hand, views history more as part of the process that involves the present and leads to the future. This very differing view of history influences the frequency in which it is used. Clegg, with his more modernistic view with the focus on the ongoing processes rather than their origin, seemingly view the potential outcome of the future as more relevant than the history behind it. History still forms an important foundation for his arguments and by linking contemporary processes to their start in history, but in a modernistic non-use of history, the future should not be defined by the dark parts of history or history beyond the historical processes that are present in the present. Farage's use of history is a lot more frequent as the nationalist ideology revolves around history – the origins of the nation state.

Both politicians align history to a narrative that fits their respective historical consciousness, both in an ideological use of history and a non-use of history. These represent the two dominant ways that history is used by them in their discourse. History is selected and aligned to their respective ideological convictions. Farage's selection of history is very much based on a nationalistic historical consciousness with the evolution and history of democracy in Britain as well as the era of British prominence under the British Empire serving as symbols of a British exceptionalism and prominence in the present. While the nationalistic narrative that he constructs tells the story of British prominence, the populist narrative builds on the perception of an undemocratic and elitist political class who has given away Britain's claim to power on the world stage. During these narratives several things are 'corrected' and omitted in order to fit into the historical timeline he constructs.

Clegg, on the other hand, mainly refers to historical events and processes during the last 50 years. His historical consciousness seems to be, as stated above, based on the idea of history mainly being something of the past and not for the future. The historical events or processes he builds into his narrative is also predominantly related to things that are present in the present – i.e. the EU and globalisation. Furthermore, these are things that are considered important in the future within liberalism – international institutions and increasingly globalised challenges such as climate change.

In some cases, both Clegg and Farage refer to historical personalities or events. This can be seen in both politicians' references to Margaret Thatcher. In this example, both Clegg and Farage pick and choose the things that support their own historical narrative. Farage, for example, describes the side of Thatcher that fits in to his own constructed historical timeline – Thatcher's failure to steer the EEC away from becoming a political union as she only wanted international cooperation and not international integration. Clegg, on the other hand, brings up the opposite side of Thatcher by describing her integral part in the evolution from the Common Market to the Single Market, which Clegg views as the biggest pooling of sovereignty ever entered into by any British government. In his eyes, Thatcher becomes a symbol of European integration. In a combination of both an ideological use of history and a non-use of history – as described by Karlsson in his typology – both Clegg and Farage cherry-pick the parts that fit into their narrative, align some other parts to fit into their

narrative and ignores other parts that do not fit into their narrative. Both politicians add, through this, Thatcher to their individual historical consciousness – making her politics part of their orientation and understanding of the present.

The role of Britain through history and the UK's role in the present and the future is a theme both politicians bring up. At a first glance, they seem to agree on Britain's important role in keeping and upholding stability and peace in Europe. Both agree that Britain played an important role in the two world wars of the 20th century, but while Clegg's focus is on said stability and peace, Farage's focus on these two wars revolves around the notion of the British people being the defenders of democracy. Both interpretations of history represent an exemplary narrative where the past lies at the centre of a continued ambition for a future of peace, stability and democracy. Subsequently, Clegg's firm belief in international institutions as the successors of peace and stability paints the European Union as a necessity for the continued peace and stability on the European continent. Farage, as a populist proponent of intergovernmental cooperation, views the EU more as a hindrance to the UK's continued role as Europe's peacekeeper. Furthermore, the EU is, in his mind, a step towards more insecurity and instability in Europe. His historical consciousness, that he conveys in his discourse, revolves around a Britain that was one of the absolute great powers of the world and the creators and defenders of modern democracy. The conclusions that they draw, or tell through their historical narrative, are two opposite desires for the future. Clegg views further integration as a continuation of UK's peacekeeping role while Farage views and exit from, or preferably dissolution of, the EU as the only way to maintain the peace and stability we now enjoy. This once again highlights the clashing views of intergovernmental cooperation as the norm versus international institutions as the norm. Both views constitute an ideological use of history with the aim of legitimising their differing views of the EU.

The historical development of Britain during the 20th century adds onto the discussion above. The loss of the British Empire marked a huge change for the nation, which subsequently became known as the United Kingdom as a result. Farage's view of the nation that emerged after the dismantlement is a populist view of a political elite that has lost faith in the capabilities of their own nation. Farage frequently, and proudly, states that he does not agree and instead believes that the UK can be a strong power on its own in the modern world and

says that “I believe in Britain, I believe in the British people”.⁹⁰ It is a view of Britain never losing its strength and that it only needs to realise it again to reclaim its relevancy at the world stage. Clegg present a very different view of the future with, instead, his strong belief in the strength in numbers and the safety of working closely together in an increasingly globalised world. He does, however, describe the UK joining the European Economic Community with a “defeated shrug of our shoulders like ‘we’re not the Empire anymore, but we can’t beat them so we might as well join them’”.⁹¹ Regardless, in Clegg’s eyes, the EU presented the opportunity for the UK to remain at the forefront of world events as a leader and not a follower.

Economy is another theme they both touch upon, although more briefly than the other themes. Their views of the past, the present and the future positions them completely opposite of each other. Farage views the Eurozone crisis as disaster caused by the EU and the Euro, and the EU’s evolution since as a potential step closer to another financial crash like the one in 2008. In his view, the Eurozone is to blame for poverty in Southern Europe and the economic imbalances between the south and the north. These examples are fit into a critical narrative on the EU where history is put into an ideologically constructed timeline to legitimise a Brexit. Clegg, as the complete opposite, views the problems, more often than not economical in character, as the necessary catalyst for great ideas and solutions to the many problems that have faced, are facing and will face the European Union. The Eurozone becomes the future solution to the economic imbalances between the north and south of Europe in Clegg’s ideologically constructed narrative.

The imbalances within the EU is also something Farage mentions on several occasions. He does not paint the European project as an instant failure as he even states that he would have voted yes back in 1975, had he been old enough to vote. The initial balance within the EU was built on nations with similar living standards which was slightly brought out of balance when the southern European countries joined and then completely wrecked with the Eastern Enlargement in 2004 where former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe were brought into the EU. In Farage’s eyes, the European project has uncontrollably spiralled

⁹⁰ YouTube, “Nigel Farage introduces Special Guest at Grassroots Out campaign launch”

⁹¹ YouTube, “The Great Intelligence Squared Brexit Debate”

downwards without any possibility to salvage the situation. Clegg's view of the several enlargements of the European project is that it is something to be proud of. He views it as an assurance of peace and democracy in countries that have a long history of war and authoritarian rule. Clegg's focus is not on the economic imbalances that, as he admits, are present within the union, but it is instead on the social aspects that unites the European nations. History is viewed from two very different angles and becomes a part of two very different historical narratives that try to justify and legitimise their own version of the future.

The future, as the last of the three temporal forms, represents the goals of Clegg's and Farage's arguments. The historical narrative they construct and the historical consciousness, that lies at the heart of this construction, together try to create, convey and legitimise specific expectations for the future. For both politicians, responsibility is the focal point for the future but, however, the role of history varies significantly in its relation to the future. Responsibility in Farage's discourse is in line with previous examples – that history is relevant and important. Responsibility ties the three temporal forms together, in a traditional narrative, to express the importance of the democratic legacy of the past, the importance of honouring it in the present and the importance of passing it on to future generations. Democracy is, in Farage's discourse, one of Britain's most treasured and valuable traditions which, through a populist narrative, is described as something that must be taken back from the political elites and be given back to the people in the present and the generations of the future. British history, as deemed valuable and correct by Farage, constitutes another thing that his generation has the responsibility to both preserve and pass on, so as to not to let it diminish or strayed away from. Clegg, on the other hand, expresses a more modernistic view of history's connection and relevancy to the future. In contrast to Farage's view on the obligation to previous generations, Clegg instead emphasises his generation's obligation and responsibility to future generations. History, in his discourse, is not what defines the future, although he agrees that history influences both the present and the future. In his narrative, the historical processes that affect both the present and the future – i.e. globalisation climate change and cross-border crime – results in an obligation for Clegg's own generation to focus on what is best for the future. Along the lines of the non-use of history, Clegg seemingly expresses a view of history as something that lies behind us and future as the thing that lies ahead.

5 Conclusions

This thesis has looked at Nick Clegg's and Nigel Farage's use of history as a means of substantiating their political arguments during the months leading up to the referendum on UK membership in the EU in 2016. Rösen's typology of historical narrative and Karlsson's typology of the use of history allow us to compare the similarities and differences of history's meaning and purpose in political discourse. It also helps us discern what history these historical narratives are built upon and how they connect the past, the present and the future together to convey an orientation in time – Clegg's and Farage's own historical consciousnesses. Furthermore, it provides an exemplification of ideologies' role in forming historical consciousnesses and historical narratives.

Farage views history as the origins of contemporary Britain and leans heavily on references to it to bring meaning to present situations. His nationalist ideology upholds historical events and eras as the way that Britain should be in the present but will be in the future if they leave the European Union. The historical line that connects modern British democracy to the signing of Magna Carta back in 1215 also connects to his populist ideology of the political class's betrayal of British historical legacy by forcing the British people into an undemocratic political union they never voted for. The responsibility to honour the legacy of the current generation's parents and grandparent who defended democracy in Europe during the two world wars ties into Farage's historical consciousness where the EU constitutes the betrayal of the democratic legacy of previous generations. Furthermore, his historical consciousness builds on a nationalistic pride of British history and strength that he uses to construct historical narratives that tells of the meaninglessness of being a part of a supranational institution. The history used is based, organised and interpreted according to his nationalistic and populist convictions.

Clegg's historical focus lies on processes that are still active in the present and will be active in the future. He identifies globalisation as the most prevalent challenge of today and for the future and the EU as an ever-evolving answer that creates a more safe and certain future. As these processes will only continue to grow, according to him, the contemporary generations have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to give them both strong options and safety to ensure that they will be able to handle the challenges of the future. Along a liberal

ideological thinking, international integration through international institutions connect the past to the present situation and the expectations of the future. In Clegg's historical consciousness, these liberal convictions also result in frequent 'use' a non-use of history in his belief that historical events, such as Magna Carta, hold little relevancy for the contemporary world and how the future should be. Furthermore, the history that is used is interpreted based on these liberal convictions which can be seen in his use of Margaret Thatcher as symbol for British Europeanness. History is both corrected and connected to relevant situations in the present to legitimise a future of greater British involvement in shaping the EU in the future.

History in the case of Clegg's and Farage's political discourse during the referendum campaign represents two different selections of history, organisation of history through historical narratives and interpretations of history based on ideology. For both politicians, history serves as an explanation for situations in the contemporary and the justification for and legitimisation of specific expectations of the future. The analytical findings of this thesis provide a further understanding of history's role in political discourse in the UK. What will happen to the United Kingdom is, as of writing this research paper, still uncertain. If the UK leaves, the possibility of a comparative study of the UK before, during and after their membership in the EU opens up. Furthermore, a comparative study of historical narratives of the referendum in 1975 and the referendum in 2016 already constitutes further research within the political discourse on UK membership in the EU.

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