**Framing Brexit: the role, and the impact, of the national newspapers on the EU Referendum**

**Khabaz, D.**

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## Abstract

A content analysis of the top selling newspapers in the UK shows a significant level of support given to the pro-Leave campagin in the run up to the Referendum on June 23, 2016 on whether or not the UK should remain a member of the European Union.

The national newspapers' influence on the outcome of the Referendum can be seen through the application of repetitive frames that highlighted long-established concerns around 'taking control', 'democracy' and 'sovereignty'.

**Introduction**

On 23rd June, 2016 the British public voted to 'leave' the European Union in a national referendum. The result was an overall vote to leave the EU, of 51.9% on a national turnout of 72%, the highest even for a British referendum and the highest for any national vote since the 1992 General Election. The result was rather unexpected mainly because most experts were predicting a majority vote to 'remain'.[1] With the exceptions of London, Scotland and Northern Ireland, every major region of the UK voted to leave the EU.[2]

The referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union highlighted two very important issues; that it had become the biggest political event in Britain in recent memory and that the media, particularly the newspapers, responded proactively with their extensive coverage, editorials and in-depth discussion of various issues related to benefits or disadvantages of Britain's membership.  Whilst the media's involvement was hugely influential in providing the people with relevant information, however, various studies have shown that the newspaper coverage of the campaign was 'biased' towards the 'Leave'.[3]The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, for example, showed that the newspaper coverage of the referendum campaign was biased towards Brexit. After analysing 2,378 articles, the report reveals that of the pieces focused on the referendum 41% were pro-leave while 27% had a pro-remain frame. This trend is further calculated after factoring in the reach of the different outlets, with 48% of all articles showing a pro-Leave leaning and 22% pro-Remain line.[4]

In another extended research, the Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Communication and Culture examined 1,127 news stories published by ten daily papers since the start of May 2016, and found a five-all split in terms of their pro and anti- EU coverage. However, when weighted to circulation, researchers found the Leave Campaign commanded a massive 82% of the national daily newspaper readership. The Report's author Professor David Deacon argued that 'if your factor in the strength of papers' endorsements and the size of their circulation, Leave campaign has an 82% to 18% advantage over Remain.'[5]

These major studies have clearly established a link between national newspapers support of the 'Leave the EU' campaign and the outcome of the referendum. In fact, these studies underline the significance of the press in agenda-setting in British politics, particularly with regards to the EU. As one commentator notes: "Newspapers might not be able to tell people what to think, but they can affect what they think about, and News International, with willing support from ideological Eurosceptics across the top-selling UK tabloid and broadsheets, has proved effective at keeping the British public in a permanent state of 'war' with the EU since the 1980s"[6]

The aforementioned studies, however, say very little about the textual complexities of 'selling the Leave' campaign messages to the readers. The present study will examine three most commonly cited frames in the national press for a better understanding of 'selling the Leave' messages.

Before proceeding to discuss these particular media frames, British public's general attitude to the EU prior to the Referendum, will be discussed for a better understanding of events leading up to the referendum in 2016.

## Anglo-EU relations: an unhappy marriage since the beginning

Britain joined the European Economic Community (EEC) on January 1st 1973. When membership was put to a referendum in 1975, it had the support of main parties and all it national newspapers. The result was resounding with more than 67% voting in favour.[7] Almost immediately after joining the EEC, Europe became a toxic issue in British politics; causing major 'divisions between political parties as well as deep divisions within parties'.[8]

There is little doubt that the relationship between Europe and Britain has been problematic for a number of reasons. First, there has to be some understanding of Britain's colonial heritage. As a former imperial power, Britain found it rather difficult to adjust and narrow its political interests only to Europe. Indeed, sporadic antagonism with France and increasing affiliation with the USA is another critical element.[9] Secondly, Britain joined the EU primarily for economic reasons at a very difficult economic period when the country was experiencing major economic difficulties. However, EU's demand for greater political, social and monetary union was met with increasing discontent amongst the political classes as well as the general public. Thatcher's blatant hostilities to EU's increasing desire for further integration, greatly contributed to Britain's isolation in Europe.[10]

Indeed, Britain's difficult relationship with the EU is reflected in general Euroscepticism that has been widespread in recent years. During the course of the last thirty years, British Social Attitudes[11] has asked different questions designed to tap the public's overall view about Britain's relationship with the EU. In their 2014-15 Survey, BSA showed that Euroscepticism has been widespread in recent years. The following is the main summary of the public's attitude to the EU:

- Faced with the simple choice between staying or withdrawing, 35% now say they want Britain to withdraw from the EU.
- Even 43% of those who feel European now say they want the EU's powers reduced[12].

Crucially, British public have consistently been among the 'least knowledgeable' of the EU citizens on such EU category as 'objective knowledge of the European Union'. The Eurobarometer 2015, found that only 28% of British respondents answered all of the 'European knowledge' questions correctly as opposed to 66% of Slovenians.[13]

In another survey, the British respondents were asked questions about UK's financial contribution to the EU budget. Most Britons believed that the average estimation of the UK contribution to the EU budget was around 23%. The actual figure stood at around 0.21%[14]

In an extensive study of British public attitude to 2004 EU enlargement, Dursun-Ozkanca argues that while Tony Blair's Labour government was strongly in favour of the EU enlargement, British public opinion was predominantly against it.[15]

According to British Social Attitudes and Eurobarometer, therefore, it is clearly evident that prior to the 2016 Referendum, the British public's attitude to the EU was rather lacklustre at best and, by and large, sceptical about Britain's membership of the EU.

**Framing analysis: literature review**

Frame analysis, as a methodological tool, is increasingly featured in mass communication research (see for example Scheufele[16]; Weaver[17]; Price, Tewksbury and Powers[18]; Scheufele and Tewksbury[19]). Its application in media studies began only in the early 1990s, with the publication of Entman's article about 'framing as a fractured paradigm'[20] Since then, the use of the terms 'frame' and 'framing' has grown steadily in research about news and journalism.[21] According to Entman, frames enables journalists to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text'.[22]

Goffman suggests that it is unlikely for people to fully understand certain aspects of complex events happening around them. Instead, they must continually apply interpretive schemas or 'primary frames' to categorize information in order to construe those events meaningfully.[23] Similarly, Konig argues that frames are 'basic cognitive structures that influence and model the perception and representation of reality'.[24] Frame analysis is also described as 'facilitating the ordering of the world in conjunction with hirearchical rules of inclusion and exclusion'.[25]

Frames, therefore, are unconsciously adopted in the course of communicative processes and is often used to transform an event into a news text through the choice of key words or phrases.

It is important to note that most authors seem to regard frames as 'unavoidable' in any communication process and as such they should not be seen as purposefully constructed propaganda tools.

That said, application of frames in media research is structured around two central questions that deal with the distinction between 'frames' and 'framing': how does a frame come about and what consequences does the frame have. Viegenthart claims that many authors fail to differentiate between content features of news (frames) and process or contextual features of news making and receiving (framing). Thus, media analysts successively discuss research about 'frames', frame building (how does a frame come about?) and frame effects (what consequences does the frame have?).[26]

In terms of theory, significant amount of research have examined both framing and frame building and have shown that they are not synonymous theoretical constructs. D'Angelo and Kuypers argue that the theoretical and methodological pluralism in news framing research is based on the underlying assumption that the news media are social actors that play a critical role in how the public perceives the social universe.[27]

For Hellman, frame building is influenced not just by journalists, but also by interest groups, policy makers, and others who have an interest in shaping the agenda. Individuals then use these frames to form impressions on certain issues about which they receive information.[28]

Similarly, Hanggli found that in complex political events such as general elections and referendums there are at least three important factors involved in frame building in news media: power, the salience of the frames and the multiplication of effect of the political actor.[29] The salience of the frames, therefore, is a critical element of frame analysis and one which played an important role in the Brexit referendum in June 2016.

Crucially, these studies show that media have the ability of wielding a major impact on public opinion and that this process is, by and large, through framing. Thus, media is a critical element in developing a common reference frame with regards to the EU referendum. Indeed, as De Vreese demonstrates, most Europeans depend on media for their information on various EU issues, media frames play a critical role in the way citizens form a good understanding of relevant events and for their opinion formation.[30]

Most studies on recent European referenda have shown that political awareness of the voters has a major impact on their voting behaviour. Dvorak's study shows that voters who are more informed about the election issues have a greater understanding of how these issues impact their personal life and will vote accordingly. [31]

Whether the research is on frame-building or 'framing', the one major problem associated with the application of frame analysis is that it is seen as individualist and voluntarist in its orientation. It also assumes individual journalists and individual audience members are autonomous in their news production and consumption.[32]


**Research questions**
The literature on the media coverage of the Brexit campaign indicates partiality towards the 'Leave'. However, the textual complexities of 'selling' the Leave campaign messages to the readers remains relatively unexplored. This study aims to examine the process of 'selling the Leave' messages by posing the following research questions:

**RQ1**: *How were the campaign messages framed in the national press?*
**RQ2**: *Which frames were 'repetitively' deployed and how were they related to the public's concerns about the EU?*

These questions, grounded in framing research tradition, has taken into account both theoretical and practical challenges in frame analysis by developing a method of generic and issue-specific frames.

**Methodological criteria**

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on seven top-selling national newspapers' articles on EU Referendum that were published between June 1st and June 25th, 2016 inclusive.[33] Most national newspapers are now available in multi-platform including in print, mobile apps, websites and the social media. (Table 1). However, for operational reasons, the research mainly focused on the printed version of the national newspapers. The sample included most newspapers in the top-selling bracket (Table 2). The lowest daily sales of the newspapers included in the sample (*Daily Star*) was around 425.000 and the highest (*Daily Mail*) sold around 1.8 million copies per day[34]. The time frame selected, coincides with the period of campaign intensification by all political parties as well as the media on the UK's membership of the EU.

All the newspapers included in the research officially declared their support for the Leave campaign in June[35]. The total circulation of the seven national newspapers included in the research was around 6.5 million per day in June 2016.[36]

For the purpose of reliability, the research included the entire published articles from June 1st and June 25th, 2016 inclusive. The inclusion criteria were based on any articles (editorials, opinion, comments, and published letters to the editors) that had any news, direct reference or included in-depth discussions on the Referendum.

Using a software application[37], certain 'key words and phrases' were generated from the online version of the newspapers. A substantial number of published texts were examined and the results underlined a greater frequency of three 'salient' frames. (Table 3)[38]

For the purpose of reliability, the online versions were consistently compared with the printed texts. The published frames were often juxtaposed together with public concerns about 'immigration, economy, open borders, and the country's ability to make its own laws'. Incidentally, a timely research by Ipsos MORI, published in January 2016, identified immigration, economy and the concerns related to the European Union as some of the major issues facing Britain. (Table 4) The research identified three major frames from the overall analysis of the most popular national newspapers. (Table 5) These frames will now be discussed individually.

### 1- Getting my/our country back: Besieged nation

The rather ambiguous frame 'getting my/our country back' formed a potent slogan and was first used by Nigel Farage[39]. As the campaign intensified, the phrase increasingly appeared in most newspapers; including those that supported the Remain vote. Whilst the term 'getting our country back' was never adequately defined by the politicians who used it, the phrase seems to imply that the country was 'besieged' by East European migrants, plagued by open borders, subjected to EU diktats and had subsequently lost its national sovereignty. A commentator in *Sunday Times*

argued, that 'We all know what "getting our country back" means. It's snorting a line of that most pernicious and debilitating Little English drug, nostalgia.[40]

However, the phrase' getting our country back' seems to have a greater implication than just seeking bygone nostalgia. *Daily Express*, for example, insisted that the referendum "was about us to be a self-governing, democratic, independent nation. This is the word we used to use… sovereignty. This is about us governing our country; it's about us controlling our borders. We need to be saying 'we want our country back".[41]

On June 25, two days after the Referendum, *Daily Express* proclaimed that "It's taken years but we've FINALLY got our country back" [42]

On June 18, *The Daily Star* argued that "To stay within Europe is much more risky and uncertain. It boils down to the fact that if we leave we have control of our own destiny and we are not controlled by others… As a father and grandfather I want my country back for now and for the generations to come."[43]

The *Daily Telegraph* discussed the impact of the EU on agricultural policy and argued that: "So, is the European Union good or bad for farming and the countryside? … I shall be voting in the EU referendum. I want to get my country back. I will be voting with my head and my heart - I am voting out."[44]

Alice Thompson deliberated the relevance of 'getting my country back' in a piece on home ownership: "Second-home owners have driven up house prices, arriving on Friday nights with their cars crammed full of rack of continental lamb, leaving their rubbish on Sunday night. "I want my country back' Harry Crawford, a B&B owner, says simply."[45]

Evidently, 'I want my country back' was used in a number of different formats, as exemplified in the range presented above. However, immigration into the UK formed the core message, denoting a 'besieged country' that should be claimed back by voting to leave the EU. Indeed, as Kenan Malik argues, "I want my country back' has been the sentiment of those opposed to immigration into Britain. Immigrant, so the critics claim, have taken over 'our' country, turning cities into mini-Kingston of Little Lahores, creating, in the words of David Goohhart, former director of Demos, 'an England that is increasingly full of mysterious and unfamiliar worlds'. Or, as David Coleman, a vocal opponent of mass migration, puts it 'many of our cities are more like foreign countries than those of the ordinary English domestic scene' ".[46]

## 2- Undemocratic EU: dysfunctional super-state

The newspapers supporting the Leave campaign consistently referred to EU as 'undemocratic super state' that subjugates British people to 'irrelevant' edicts. The leading proponents of the

Leave campaign, Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Gisela Stuart, regarded EU as "dysfunctional bureaucracy that has no proper democratic oversight."[47]

The frame 'undemocratic EU' frequently featured in the newspapers supporting the Leave campaign. *The Sun*, devoted the entire front page to invite its 'army of readers' to "fly the flag for Brexit with our patriotic poster. Stick this up in your home or shop to show you back our call to leave inefficient and undemocratic EU on June 23." [48]

Boris Johnson (who is now the Foreign Secretary in Theresa May's Cabinet) wrote an extensive piece in the *Daily Telegraph* inviting the readers to vote Leave:

"Please vote to Leave on Thursday- we'll never get this chance again; this will be Britain's only opportunity to take its own destiny back from the undemocratic EU project."[49]

Peter Egan, in an article published by *The Express* Online argues that "The EU is undemocratic but let's not close our borders. The mass movement of people throughout Europe, and indeed the world, is putting huge pressure on the infrastructure of most nation states. I believe this movement will continue to happen regardless of our membership of an undemocratic EU." [50]

The idea of EU as super-state was also extensively debated in the pro-Leave newspapers. *The Sun,* for example, argued: "for decades, Britain has protested the idea of an EU superstate. But we'd now be voting to Remain on unchanged terms. Once they had finished whooping, the Eurocrats would get on with merging us into a European bloc."[51]

Melanie Phillips claimed that "The EU has metastasised into a full-blown superstate project. In the intervening years, the damage it has done to core British industries such as fishing, its crippling effect on Britain's economic bedrock of small businesses and its increasing subjugation of domestic to European law have steadily ratcheted up public fury."[52]

However, the idea of laws dictated from Brussels by unelected lawmakers is simply derisory. Jenifer Rankin of *The Guardian* argued that: "The idea that laws are dictated from Brussels by unelected bureaucrats is simply wrong. In fact, EU laws have to pass high hurdles before they get onto the British statute book. The British government has considerable clout in shaping those laws despite the growth of qualified-majority votes.  When leave campaigners talk about laws made by Brussels, what they mean is "laws made by the EU's directly elected governments and more often than not the European parliament through the co-decision procedure". Not as snappy, but more accurate."[53]

### 3- Take control of our own destiny: regaining national sovereignty

The Leave campaign's leading proponents made the question of sovereignty as the core reason for leaving the European Union. Figures like Boris Johnson and Michael Gove consistently argued that by leaving the EU Britain would be in a much better placed to shape its 'own destiny' and as such this will, in the long term, empower the elected Parliament at Westminster. The following is a

selection of the articles published by the national newspapers discussing various issues related to the notion of taking control of own destiny and thereby regaining national sovereignty[54].

The *Daily Telegraph* published an article by Liam Fox, an ex-cabinet minister in David Cameron's Government: "We are at the Centre of the Commonwealth and have a special relationship with the United States. We are right to take control of our own destiny, recognizing that cooperation is an indispensable part of the era of globalisation in which we live. We are a land of opportunity, in a world of opportunity. We have huge natural economic advantages that we can exploit and build upon." [55]

In one extended news item, *Daily Express* positively reflected on Nigel Farage's contention that Britain urgently needs to take control of its own destiny: 'NIGEL Farage yesterday urged Britons to "vote with pride in this country and its people". "We can vote to take control of our country back, we can vote to get our borders back, we can vote to get our pride and self-respect as a nation and our pride as to who we are as a people back," he said'. [56]

Steve Hawkes in *The Sun* underlines the importance of taking control in implementation of a new immigration system. "Last night pro-Brexit Tories including Boris Johnson and Priti Patel vowed to take control by introducing an Aussie-style points system at the border if Brits vote to quit the EU on June 23."[57]

The *Daily Mail* devoted two pages to Boris Johnson's idea that a Brexit vote by women means taking control of your family life: "Boris Johnson today warns the out of control immigration system is depriving families of certainty over access to school places, housing and healthcare. In a direct appeal to women voters, he says the only way for families to be in control of their own destiny is to vote to leave the EU on Thursday."[58]

The veteran political commentator, Steve Hilton, argued that Brexit will give power back to the people; the 'take control' argument isn't airy-fairy nonsense: it's central to immigration and the economy':

"Conversely, some commentators, including Philip Collins, dismissed the Leave campaign's message (that it's time to Take Control) as mistakenly placing abstract notions of sovereignty ahead of hard-headed economic reality. In the context of this referendum, they are one and the same thing."[59]

The Leave campaign's rhetoric on 'taking control' seems to misconstrue the idea of British sovereignty and the supremacy of the Parliament in British politics. Historically, Britain has always been a keen member of influential international organisations such as the UN, the Commonwealth and NATO. In this respect, Britain has always actively 'shared' sovereignty through committing to a series of international treaties. In an article published by the *Independent*, Jack Straw and Kenneth Clarke reviewed the main reasons why staying in Europe gives Britain more control over its destiny. "Because of our special status [in the EU], we retain complete control of our public spending; interest rates; defence and foreign policy; justice, policing and home affairs policy; as well as public services like healthcare, education and public transport. We are not run by Brussels.

We are not in the euro and not part of the Schengen Area. We retain full control of our currency and borders. And our Parliament remains sovereign. The very fact we are having a referendum, passed into law by our Parliament, is a testament to that. If we don't want to be part of something anymore- be it the EU, Nato, the UN- Parliament can make that happen."[60]

The frame 'Take Control' seems to reinforce a particular campaign slogan that was concurrently applied to immigration from the EU, costs of the EU membership to the UK and undemocratic EU bureaucracy. Steven Barnett argues that "The barrage of headline designed to reinforce campaign slogans will have shored up Leave strategists with confidence to pursue their simple message. An orchestrated tabloid campaign around EU pen-pushing bureaucrats, EU costs to the UK and untrammelled EU immigration lent itself perfectly to the oft-repeated mantra of Take Back Control".[61]

**Discussion and conclusion**

A qualitative content analysis of the articles published by the top-selling national newspapers during the campaign period leading up to the EU Referendum showed a 'significant' support for the pro-Leave messages. RQ1 asked how the campaign messages were framed in the national press. This study identified three major frames; 'take my/our country back, Undemocratic EU and Take Control' that had scored consistent repetition across the seven most popular newspapers. (Table 2) The research also showed that whilst each frame received significant publicity on their own they were often juxtaposed together with public concerns about 'immigration, economy, open borders, and the country's ability to make its own laws'[62].

RQ2 asked which frames were 'repetitively' used and how were they related to the public's concerns about the EU. The analysis of each frame indicates that the national newspapers used them repetitively and often in a distorted and, to an extent, ideologically driven manner. 'I want my country back' was used in a number of different formats, however, immigration into the UK seemed to be the core message of a 'besieged country' that should be claimed back by voting to leave the EU.

The newspapers frequently referred to EU as 'undemocratic super state' that subjugates British people to 'irrelevant' edicts. However, the idea of laws dictated from Brussels by unelected lawmakers is simply incorrect. Jenifer Rankin of *The Guardian* argued that the EU laws have to pass high hurdles before they get onto the British statute book'[63].

The frame 'take control' was often used in conjunction with the notion of national sovereignty and one fundamental reason for UK wishing to leave the EU. However, the rhetoric 'take control', argued Straw and Clarke, seems to misconstrue the idea of British sovereignty and the supremacy of the Parliament in British politics[64].

One important element of the current research relates to the role of the media in the process of 'political socialisation' where the voters are exposed to repetitive messages by the media.[65] As

indicated in the research, the national press effectively linked EU with key issues such as 'take control' 'democracy' and 'sovereignty' through a sustained and repetitive process.

Ultimately, the frames examined in the research seem to resonate with the sentiments expressed Steven Barnett who argued that… "in 2016 our mainstream media failed spectacularly. Led, inevitably, by the viscerally anti-EU *Mail*, *Sun*, *Express* and *Telegraph* papers, most of our national press indulged in little more than a catalogue of distortions, half-truths and outright lies: a ferocious propaganda campaign in which facts and sober analysis were sacrificed to the ideologically driven objectives of editors and their proprietors."[66].

Finally, while consistent with other research linking national newspapers' frame promotion to anti-European rhetoric, the current study is restricted by its methodology, which is limited to the content analysis of newspapers' published articles. Future studies can improve on this by including the content of television news and thus making a greater emphasis on frame-building and analyzing frames in terms of their theoretical connection.

## ENDNOTES

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[54] For 'take control' category, the research included various combinations that included the phrase. However, the most prominent combinations were 'take control of our country' and 'take control of our destiny' both of which were included in the research.

[55] Liam Fox, *The Daily Telegraph*, June 30, 2016, 7.

[56] *The Daily Express*, June 23, 2016, 4.

[57] Steve Hawkes, *The Sun*, June 1, 2016, 2.

[58] James Slack and Daniel Martin, *Daily Mail*, June 20, 3-4.

[59] Steve Hilton, 'Brexit will give power back to the people', *The Times*, June 13, 2016, 28.

[60] Jack Straw and Kenneth Clarke, 'Why staying in Europe give Britain more control over its destiny', The *Independent*, 28 March, 2016. Accessed June 16, 2016, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/why-staying-in-europe-gives-britain-more-control-over-its-destiny-not-less-a6956636.html
Jack Straw and Ken Clarke are both former Home and Justice Secretaries.

[61] Steven Barnett, 'How our mainstream media failed democracy'. Accessed November 22, 2016, http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-4/how-our-mainstream-media-failed-democracy

[62] See Table 4 – Issues Facing Britain in January 2016

[63] Rankin, 'Is the EU undemocratic?', 32

[64] Jack Straw and Kenneth Clarke, 'Why staying in Europe give Britain more control over its destiny', 27

[65] Mike Berry, 'Understanding the role of the mass media in the EU Referendum'. Accessed 22 November, 2016,  http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016

[66] Steven Barnett, 'How our mainstream media failed democracy'

# List of Tables

**Table 1- National Readership Survey monthly audience data for the year to September 2016-**

| Title | Net Print, PC and Mobile Total | Total Print | Total PC | Total Mobile |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily Mail / dailymail.co.uk | 29263 | 10068 | 7418 | 20437 |
| The Guardian / theguardian.com | 26197 | 4037 | 6972 | 21839 |
| Daily Mirror / mirror.co.uk | 24969 | 5902 | 4374 | 19256 |
| The Sun / thesun.co.uk | 24022 | 10661 | 2077 | 16544 |
| The Daily Telegraph / telegraph.co.uk | 22223 | 3819 | 6740 | 16600 |
| Metro / metro.co.uk | 17639 | 10582 | 1517 | 9374 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No Print Publication / independent.co.uk | 16940 | 0 | 4211 | 14569 |
| Daily Express / express.co.uk | 12033 | 2724 | 3104 | 7646 |
| London Evening Standard / standard.co.uk | 11012 | 4986 | 1530 | 7069 |
| Daily Star / dailystar.co.uk | 6362 | 2569 | 1069 | 3383 |
| The Times / thetimes.co.uk | 5763 | 4378 | 662 | 1487 |

Source: http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/nrs-readership-data-suggests-the-sun-has-gained-11m-readers-per-month-since-the-fall-of-its-paywall/ Figures are comprised from NRS data based on a reader survey over 12 months along with Comscore UK ratings for September 2016.

## Table 2 - Most popular national newspapers

| Newspaper | Total daily circulation |
|---|---|
| *The Sun* | 1.8mil |
| *Daily Mail* | 1.5mil |
| *Mail on Sunday* | 1.5mil |
| *Daily Telegraph* | 490.000 |
| *Sunday Telegraph* | 435.000 |
| *Daily Express* | 430.000 |
| *Daily Star* | 425.000 |

Source: http://www.political-intelligence.com/brexit-where-do-the-papers-stand

## Table 3- Salient frames

| Frame | Number of repetition |
|---|---|
| Getting my/our country back | 124 |
| Undemocratic Europe | 81 |
| Take control | 87 |

**Table 4- Issues Facing Britain**

# Issues Facing Britain: January

**What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?**

Top mentions %

Change since Dec.

| Issue | % | Change % | Position |
|---|---|---|---|
| Immigration/immigrants | 46% | +6 | +1 |
| NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare | 38% | +4 | +1 |
| Economy | 26% | 0 | +1 |
| Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism | 23% | -19 | -3 |
| Poverty/Inequality | 17% | +1 | |
| Housing | 17% | +1 | +1 |
| Education/Schools | 17% | +1 | -1 |
| European Union/Europe | 16% | +11 | +9 |
| Unemployment | 15% | +1 | -1 |
| Low pay/fair wages | 12% | +1 | -1 |
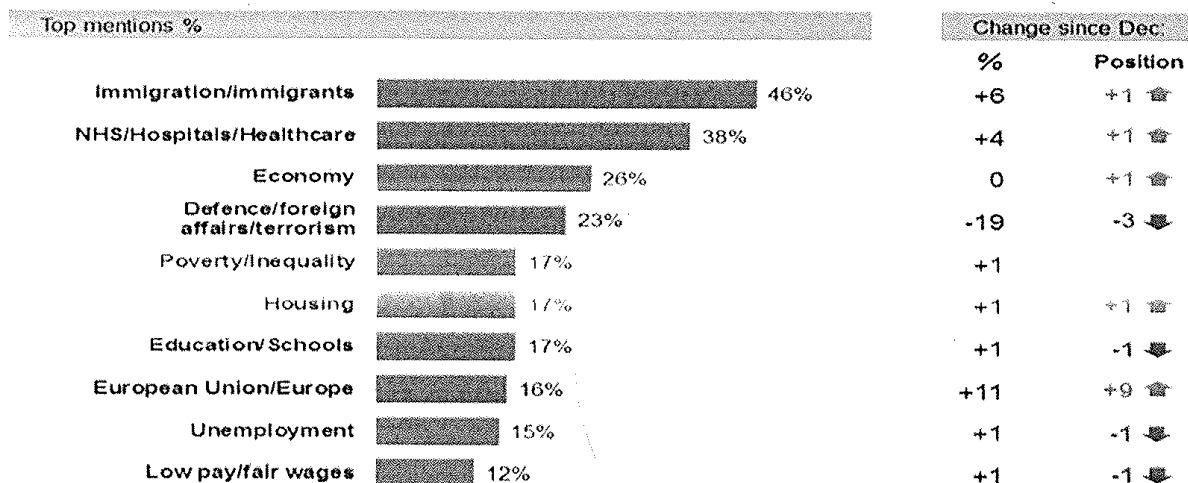
Base: 1,011 British adults 18+, 7ᵗʰ – 20ᵗʰ January 2016          Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI - https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3691

## Table 5- Individual newspaper usage of each frame

| | Getting my/our country back | Undemocratic Europe | Take Control |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Daily Mail* | 21 | 11 | 12 |
| *The Sun* | 18 | 19 | 10 |
| *Mail on Sunday* | 16 | 11 | 14 |
| *Daily Telegraph* | 11 | 9 | 10 |
| *Sunday Telegraph* | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| *Daily Express* | 28 | 14 | 18 |
| *Daily Star* | 22 | 8 | 16 |
| **Total repetition** | 124 | 81 | 87 |