

FRAMING BREXIT:

**A frame analysis of the EU's press briefings and online media articles
surrounding Brexit**

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Julkisten instituutioiden viestintää sekä erilaisia mediassa esiintyviä tekstejä on tutkittu useista näkökulmista niin kielitieteiden kuin esimerkiksi yhteiskuntatieteidenkin aloilla. Julkisille instituutioille onkin erityisen tärkeää, kuinka media uutisoi instituutioon liittyvistä aiheista ja tapahtumista.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on verrata kehyksiä, joita esiintyy EU:n Brexit-aiheisissa tiedotteissa sekä Brexit-aiheisissa verkkouutisartikkeleissa. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää, millaisia kehyksiä tiedotteissa ja verkkoartikkeleissa esiintyy, ja millä keinoin tiedotteet ja artikkelit pyrkivät luomaan kehyksiä. Analyysi toteutetaan kehysanalyysin, diskurssianalyysin sekä multimodaalisen diskurssianalyysin keinoin. Tutkimuksen aineistona on kuusi EU:n julkaisemaa tiedotetta, kolme verkkoartikkelia isobritannialaisista lähteistä, ja kolme verkkoartikkelia yhdysvaltalaisista lähteistä.</p> <p>Aineiston analyysi keskittyy kehyksiä kantavien semioottisten resurssien identifioimiseen. Näitä semioottisia resursseja ovat mm. sanavalinnat ja niiden konnotaatiot, sitaattivalinnat, otsikot ja väliotsikot, sekä kuvat ja muut visuaaliset tekijät. Analyysissäni kehyksiksi laskettiin sellaiset tapaukset, joissa samassa tiedotteessa tai verkkoartikkelissa esiintyi useampi kuin yksi tiettyyn kehykseen viittaava resurssi. Analyysissä yksittäiset esiintymät on eroteltu kehysten <i>elementeiksi</i>.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että mikäli EU:n tiedotteissa oli havaittavissa kehys tai kehyksiä, nämä kehykset toistuivat myös osassa verkkoartikkeleita. Lisäksi tutkimus osoitti, että konflikti- ja talouskehukset esiintyivät verkkoartikkeleissa tiedotteita useammin. Kehyksiä rakennettiin sekä tiedotteissa että verkkoartikkeleissa pääasiassa sanavalintojen ja sitaattivalintojen kautta, ja verkkoartikkelit käyttivät usein myös kuvia joko luomaan tai vahvistamaan kehyksiä.</p> <p>Tutkimus lisää ymmärrystä paitsi kehyksistä ja niiden luomisesta, myös julkisten instituutioiden kuten EU:n suhteista mediaan ja mediassa esiintyviin teksteihin. Tutkimuksen havaintojen</p>	

vahvistamiseksi vaaditaan lisätutkimusta, ja laajempi aineisto voisi kasvattaa ymmärrystä myös siitä, mitkä kehykset ovat käytetyimpiä suuremmassa mittakaavassa.

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Table of contents

- 1 Introduction.....6**
- 2 Theoretical framework.....11**
 - 2.1. Framing.....11
 - 2.1.1 Framing and related fields.....18
 - 2.2 News discourse.....19
 - 2.3 The EU and its communications22
 - 2.4 Brexit and the media.....24
 - 2.5. Cognitive semantics and constructing meaning.....26
- 3 The present study.....29**
 - 3.1 Data collection.....30
 - 3.2 Methods.....35
 - 3.2.1 Framing analysis.....35
 - 3.2.2 Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.....37
 - 3.2.3 Multimodality and analysis of pictures.....39
 - 3.2.4 Combining Framing Analysis and Discourse Analyses..... 41
- 4 Analysis.....42**
 - 4.1 January 2020.....44
 - 4.1.1 January press releases44
 - 4.1.2 January 29th online article (UK).....48
 - 4.1.3 January 31st online article (US).....49
 - 4.2 February 2020.....51
 - 4.2.1 February press releases.....52
 - 4.2.2 February 3rd online article (US).....54

4.2.3 February 12 th online article (UK).....	56
4.3 March 2020.....	57
4.3.1 March press releases.....	58
4.3.2 March 19 th online article (UK).....	59
4.3.3 March 19 th online article (US).....	61
4.4 Comparisons and quantitative analysis.....	62
5 Discussion.....	66
5.1 Answering the research questions.....	66
5.2 Discussing the findings.....	67
5.3 Evaluation of the process and methods.....	73
6 Conclusions.....	75
Bibliography.....	79

1 INTRODUCTION

The European Union is a political and economic union consisting of 27 member states. As such, it regularly makes policies, votes on legislation, and participates in different international negotiations as a bloc. In addition, the EU also sends out regular communications about its activities and the decisions taken by its legislative and administrative bodies. Much of this communication is done online through the European Union's official website, where press briefings, newsletters, reports, and other materials are regularly published.

A recent issue that has been in the center of much attention during the last three years, not only within Europe, but also beyond its borders globally, is the British exit from the European Union, commonly known and referred to as *Brexit*. As a contentious and recent topic, it has been at the center of media attention, and also at the center of the communications of the European Union. It is for those reasons that this study will focus on analyzing the EU's communications, in this case press briefings, and online articles on the topic of Brexit. Additionally, given that it is an issue with potential implications beyond the United Kingdom and beyond Europe, the regional differences in online articles reporting on Brexit make for an interesting topic of study as well, one that will also be examined in this study as it relates to the differences in reporting between the United Kingdom and the United States.

This study, therefore, aims to analyze communications — specifically press briefings — made by the EU, and compare them to the news texts and stories published online on the same subject. These press briefings and online articles could be approached from a number of perspectives in the field of linguistics and indeed, this study will combine some of these perspectives and frameworks to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis, and thus to provide valuable insights through its findings. Inevitably, the study is also multidisciplinary in nature, as it combines this linguistic analysis with the topic area of a political institution like the EU, which is inherently political and connected to fields such as political science. However, more specifically, this study places the focus on framing, and thus intends to utilize theories and methods of framing analysis. This point of focus allows the study to explore how both the EU's press briefings and the online articles frame the events and issues surrounding Brexit, and whether there are differences between the two. In addition to framing analysis,

the study will rely on methods of three connected fields: Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

In addition to analyzing the kind of framing that is present in the press briefings and the online articles, the study will also examine how this framing is created in each case. For example, frames could be constructed through the quotes used in online articles or press briefings, or through semantic and meaning-making aspects like word choices or photo selection, among other factors. The aim is to analyze to which degree the framing presented by the EU's press briefings is adopted by news organizations in their reporting, or if elements of the frames provided by the EU are at least present in the online articles. In addition, it is of great interest to the study whether the frames in each data set are constructed through similar means, or whether there are significant differences between how the media and the EU attempt to create frames.

Importantly, even though the data of the study is connected to the topic of Brexit, the focus of the study is not on the substance of Brexit itself, nor are its findings limited or applicable only to the topic of Brexit. Rather, the understanding of framing and the press briefings of an institution like the EU that is gained from this study is applicable to public institutions at a much more general level, regardless of topic or the field in which the institution operates. Here, Brexit serves as a way for the study to gather comparable data on the same topic, and as a contentious and political topic, it also provides a recent and thus relevant set of data in which framing can be assumed to play at least some kind of role. In addition, the study will provide important information about the relationship between institutions such as the European Union and the media as it relates to the issue of framing, and this information can be applied to a variety of fields and be used as a basis for future research on similar topics, as more research on this topic is undoubtedly needed. The study, thus, will provide valuable insights that will have pragmatic value in institutions' everyday communications.

This research is particularly important also because for any policy-making body or institution, public support and perception of policy is important. Therefore, the ability to effectively communicate policy priorities, decisions, or on issues in general, is vitally important to any such institution. It is equally important to note that the media undoubtedly plays an important role in this communication, as it relays information to the public. Therefore, understanding how this relaying of information happens, and how the institutions' – in this case, the EU's – communications are reported on by the media, is crucially important and relevant to the

public institution itself. This study is particularly interested in whether or not the frames that the EU constructs in its press briefings through word choices, contextual cues, photo selection, or quotations, are adopted by the news media, and if so, to what degree. In addition, it is also relevant to ask whether different linguistic or structural choices made by institutions can have an effect on this, and if so, what those choices are. With such understanding, future decisions with regards to framing and communication can be informed by empirical evidence. Research on this topic thus has implications not only for future research, but also directly for the European Union and other public institutions that engage in similar communications and share similar communicative goals and objectives.

As it relates to this topic area, much of the previous research focuses either on the strategies of institutional communication or the language used by media and how it influences perceptions (De Vreese 2005). However, not much research seems to exist on institutions' communications, or specifically press briefings, in comparison to media articles that report on them. Some empirical research has been conducted on the influence of framing choices on an audience's opinions and perceptions. For instance, De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) have found that focusing on either the positive or negative aspects of an issue influences the perceptions that an audience forms about said issue. An empirical study conducted by De Vreese and Kandyla (2009) also found that framing something as either risk or opportunity had a similar effect.

While this study does not intend to study the audience perceptions created by certain frames, the focus is on the external communications of the EU, which are meant to be received by the public. To narrow the focus of the study, press briefings have been selected as representatives of these communications. However, it is also important to note that these press briefings represent only one part of what can be understood as the overall communications of the EU, which also include other external communication such as social media content, as well as internal communication within the institution itself.

Because the study focuses on framing, it is also important to understand what is meant by framing. The theoretical concept of framing has numerous definitions and is largely multidisciplinary in nature. These definitions will be introduced in more detail in the theoretical framework of the study. Broadly speaking, the concept of framing can be understood to refer to the notion that the way in which information is presented to an audience, i.e. framed, and the context in which it is placed, influences the way that it is

perceived by an audience (Scheufele and Iyengar 2016). Frames can be constructed through texts, which can include factors such as word choices, quotes, photo selection, among others. These will also be thoroughly examined in Chapters 2 and 3. This study relies mainly on the definitions provided by Gitlin (1980) and Gamson and Modigliani (1989), which state that frames are persistent patterns used to organize discourse as well as packages of information that provide the audience with context. The study also draws on Scheufele and Iyengar's (2016) concept of *emphasis frames*, which convey differing perspectives on the same issue or event.

As a concept, framing is thus broad enough to permit a holistic analysis of text and language as they relate to the society around them. This is beneficial for the purposes of this study because in the case of the communications of a public, policy-making institution such as the EU, a holistic understanding of societal and political aspects is also required. While the aim of the study is not to analyze audience reactions or responses to different frames, it does intend to gain insight into how frames are constructed in both the press briefings and the online articles.

The data analyzed in this study consists of press briefings published by the European Union between January and March 2020 and online articles published in the same timeframe. This timeframe represents the period of time before, during, and immediately following the finalization of the withdrawal agreement. A total of six press releases and six online articles were analyzed.

This study consists of the following chapters. A review of theoretical framework will be presented in Chapter 2. First, I will introduce and discuss the concept framing as well as its different definitions and applications, which forms the main framework of the analysis of the data. This section will also include discussion of the methodology of frame analysis, as well as a discussion of its potential weaknesses and the criticisms that some researchers have levied against it. Second, I will discuss news as a genre and the specific features of news discourse, and third, I will introduce the principles and publicly stated goals of the EU's communications so as to place the data of the study in context and better understand it. Finally, Chapter 2 will include discussion on the topic of Brexit, particularly how it was reported and discussed in the media, as well as a discussion of cognitive semantics as it relates to creating meaning. All of these are relevant to the study and crucial in understanding the topic at hand.

The data and methods of analysis used in the study, framing analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis, will be explained in Chapter 3. This section will also introduce the data and explain the selection process of the data, as well as introduce and discuss the research questions which the study aims to answer, as well as explain how and why these research questions were chosen. The analysis of the data in Chapter 4 will focus on examining the briefings published by the EU and comparing them to the online articles on the same topic. The aim is to understand to which degree the EU's framing of issues and events, among other aspects, is replicated in the reporting in independent media in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The analysis is mostly qualitative in nature, but I will also provide some quantitative analysis, focusing particularly on the frequency of specific frames in each of the text types.

Based on this analysis in Chapter 4, the findings of the study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, which will also provide answers to the research questions and critically examine the methodology of the study, as well as the challenges it presented. This critical assessment of the research methods and the study itself will help provide transparency and thus increase the objectivity of the study and the credibility of its findings. Finally, Chapter 6 will provide conclusions and implications for institutions, as well as implications and suggestions for future research in the field.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will introduce key theories and terminology relevant to this study, based upon previous research. This section combines literature from the fields that are relevant to the study and aims to also provide information on the topic-area that the study concerns. To this end, the discussion of the theoretical framework will progress through the larger theoretical concepts to topic-specific research.

First, I will discuss theories of news framing and framing analysis, as well as theories of how frames can be identified and thus analyzed. This discussion will also include an overview of how framing analysis is connected to the other methods used in this study: Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. Second, I will review news discourse and news as a genre, including a definition of news and news discourse, as well as its characterizing features. Third, I will briefly discuss the European Union's communications, its goals, and theories of institutional communication. Fourth, in order to understand the topic of the texts that will be analyzed in this study, I will examine the issue of Brexit and the ways in which it has been discussed in the public domain. Finally, theories of cognitive semantics in relation to creating meaning will be discussed due to their relevance and interrelatedness to the concept of framing.

2.1 Framing

The theoretical concept of framing has been defined in a variety of ways in literature studying media and communications. As a theoretical concept, it is closely linked with research in fields such as political communication, sociology, linguistics and journalism, and this can be considered one of its strengths: framing research combines elements of several different research areas (Matthes 2011). However, this also leads to the challenge of defining what exactly is meant by framing, or how exactly frames should be defined. Broadly speaking, it can be said that the central underlying idea behind framing research is that people's interpretations of information are dependent on how the information is framed, and in which context it is placed (Scheufele and Iyengar 2016).

More specifically, one of the earlier definitions of framing comes from Gitlin (1980: 7), whose definition refers to ‘frames’ as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse.” In addition to this, the present study will also follow the definition of Gamson and Modigliani, (1989: 143) who place the focus on meaning-making, and emphasize the role of frames as packages of interpretation that provide meaning to the issue at hand. They state that the frame is at the core of this package of interpretation and helps audiences make sense of events, as well as understand what an issue is about. In other words, frames in news help audiences understand what the issue that is being discussed is about, and what is important to know about it. According to Entman (1993), frames “define problems”, “diagnose causes”, “make moral judgements”, and “suggest remedies.”

A more recent definition by De Vreese (2005) defines and discusses framing as a “process” undertaken by news organizations and outlets, and argues that rather than a static state, communication is a dynamic process that involves two different stages: first, frame-building (how frames emerge in communication), and second, frame-setting, which refers to the interaction that takes place between frames present in media and the predisposition that an audience has towards them. While this definition by De Vreese (2005) is useful in understanding how frames are crafted, as well as their significance in the journalistic process, which is inevitably intertwined with the topic of this study, the definition itself places the focus more on the journalistic process than the concept of framing itself. As the aim of this study is to analyze frames rather than the journalistic processes behind them, this definition is less useful, though it is important to acknowledge as understanding framing as a concept also requires an understanding of how they are created.

As mentioned, this study will follow the definitions of Gitlin (1980) and Gamson and Modigliani (1989: 143), which, despite their age, have been broadly utilized in frame analysis and which also provide a clear blueprint of what frames in fact are. As such, these two definitions are also compatible and complement each other to provide a clear understanding of what frames are, what their purposes are, and how they can be constructed.

In addition to these two definitions that provide an understanding of what frames *are*, the study relies on a significant observation made by Scheufele and Iyengar (2016), which helps us understand what frames *do*. They emphasize a distinction between what they call *emphasis frames* and *equivalence frames*. From the perspective of equivalence frames, framing refers to

presenting the exact same information in differing ways. Emphasis framing, on the other hand, is described as a looser definition of framing, in which it is seen as conveying different *perspectives* on an event or an issue (Scheufele and Iyengar 2016). What this means is that from the perspective of equivalence framing, the message is informationally equivalent – or in other words, contains the exact same information – but is presented either through a loss-frame or a gain-frame. For example, to say “You are more likely to survive if you wear a seatbelt” represents the gain-frame, while to say “you are more likely to die if you do not wear a seatbelt” represents the loss-frame, while the information that is being conveyed is exactly the same (Ding and Pan 2016).

For the purposes of this study, however, the concept of emphasis framing is particularly useful, perhaps more so than equivalence framing. Entman and Rojecki (1993) define emphasis framing as focusing on certain aspects of a situation or issue and making those chosen aspects more prominent in communications to highlight a certain viewpoint, moral evaluation, or interpretation of an issue. The reason this is important from the point of view of the present study is because, as pointed out by Ding and Pan (2016), focusing on emphasis framing allows for a more generalizable analysis than focusing on characteristics that are very specific to a certain situation, such as the example about loss-frames and gain-frames in relation to seatbelts.

However, the focus on emphasis framing also has its critics. Scheufele and Iyengar (2016) voice concerns that the focus on emphasis framing has confused framing with other related terms and definitions, such as persuasion and agenda-setting, which are also largely studied in linguistics and communication studies. They are particularly concerned with frames being studied as persuasive effects among many other persuasive effects, thus blurring the distinction between the different terminology in the field. Importantly, they also note that while research of persuasion and agenda-setting is “schema-independent”, schemas are, however, culturally shared. In other words, whether or not a person understands a certain frame can depend on what culture said person is from or familiar with. In studying frames, then, one should be acutely aware of these culturally shared schemas and how they affect the creation of frames, as well as the reception by an audience.

Studying frames also has to include discussion of how frames are created. To this end, frame-building can be defined as the factors that influence the “structural qualities of news frames” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). These can be divided into factors that are internal to

journalism, and factors external to journalism. Frame-setting, on the other hand, refers to the way in which media frames interact with the prior knowledge and predispositions of their intended audience. In other words, frames can affect an audience's perceptions based on the audience's prior knowledge and positions on issues (De Vreese 2005).

In short, theories of framing are not so much concerned with the content of news, but rather, with the presentation of news, which can influence the way information is received and affects perceptions of its recipients. In the case of the European Union, for example, an increase in EU-wide spending on border security could be presented with frames such as military threat or European integrity and unity, both of which could be constructed through specific word choices, or decisions about who is quoted and who is not. It is likely that the choice of frame in such a situation could influence perceptions on the issue. Frames, then, form part of journalistic norms and the discourse of social movements and issues, and also take part in political discourse by engaging in political arguments. They provide the media, as well as institutions, with different ways of presenting and defining issues (De Vreese 2005). While studying the effects of different frames on the public's perception of different issues is beyond the scope of this study, previous research exists to suggest that there is indeed a link between these things. For instance, an empirical study by De Vreese and Kandyla (2009) surveyed 2,081 respondents and found that when EU foreign and security policy was presented by "media and elites" with a frame of "opportunity", it was far more likely to gain public support than if it was presented with a frame of "risk."

In addition, De Vreese (2005) notes that previous research has also shown that the news frames of conflict and economic consequences in particular to have had an influence on an audience's thoughts on a given political issue. In addition, in cases where news frames emphasize either the positive or the negative aspects of an issue, public support for policies can be affected (De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2003).

Based on such research, it could then reasonably be said that the way issues are framed and presented by media has a direct influence on the public's perceptions of said issues, and perhaps even on the public's policy preferences. Given that the European Union has law-making responsibilities through its Parliament, which is elected every five years, public perception of and opinions on policy are then of utmost importance to the EU's work. By

extension, understanding the relationship between the EU and the media that frames its policies is thus also vital to being able to achieve more effective communication.

A central question for the purpose of this study, then, is how these different frames can be recognized and identified in news texts. De Vreese (2005) states that there is in fact little consensus in the field on how and by which tools frames can be identified or classified. The two main approaches emerging from the previous research are the *inductive* approach and the *deductive* approach. In the inductive approach, content is analyzed without any set frames in mind prior to the analysis. In this approach, frames emerge from the content itself if they can be seen to be present. In the deductive approach, the opposite method is applied: frames are “defined and operationalized prior to the analysis of the data” (De Vreese 2005).

The risk identified in the inductive approach is that it can be too broad in allowing for any feature of the material to be viewed or analyzed as a frame. Because of this, many researchers have argued in favor of the deductive approach. For identifying or categorizing frames, Cappella and Jamieson (1997: 47, 89) suggest four criteria that must be present for a feature of the material to be considered a frame. These criteria are:

1. A news frame must have certain “identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics.”
2. A news frame should be “commonly observed in journalistic practice.”
3. A news frame must be “distinguishable from potential other frames.”
4. A news frame must have “representational validity”, or in other words, it cannot be said to exist purely based on a researcher’s claim.

On a more practical and specific level, researchers have suggested a variety of ways for identifying news frames. These include analysis of the “absence or presence of keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, and sources of information” (Entman 1995: 52); “choices about language, quotations, and relevant information” (Shah et al. 2002: 367, as quoted by De Vreese, 2005); and “metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images as framing devices” (Gamson & Modigliani 1989).

Tankard (2001) also presents a comprehensive list of framing devices for identifying and analyzing frames. These devices, also referred to as mechanisms, include ‘headlines’, ‘subheads’, ‘photos’, ‘photo captions’, ‘leads’, ‘source selection’, ‘quotes selection’, ‘pull quotes’, ‘logos’, ‘statistics and charts’, and ‘concluding statements and paragraphs.’ It is therefore important to note that these framing devices include both textual features as well as visual features such as photos or charts. Analyzing frames, then, is inherently multimodal, to the extent that photos, illustrations, or charts are present.

In arguing in favor of the deductive approach to framing analysis, researchers have noted that it would be useful for future research to use a set of frames for different studies, instead of establishing new frames for each study. Neuman et al. (1992) have developed frames that apply to both audiences and media coverage of issues. The frames identified by their research are ‘economics’, ‘moral values’, ‘human impact’, ‘powerlessness’, and ‘conflict.’

The economics-frame was used to highlight “profit and loss”, or in other words, the economic impact of issues. The moral values-frame was used, in many cases indirectly, to make implications or insinuations about morality of decisions or issues. The human impact-frame described the repercussions or effects of an issue on certain individuals or groups of people. The powerlessness-frame described the dynamic between stronger forces and weaker individuals, often focusing on the dominance of the former over the latter, and the conflict frame referred to the practice in journalism to focus on opposing interpretations of or opinions on certain issues. Importantly, the conflict-frame, fits well with the occasional prevalence of strategic news, which in the case of politics, for instance, is often focused on themes of winning or losing. Also importantly, this research showed that these frames were found in relation to a number of different issues, suggesting that they could be more generally applicable than issue-specific frames (Neuman et al. 1992; De Vreese 2005).

In discussing framing, it has also been noted that the sources used in news have a substantial influence on the production of news, and different sources may also have a stake at influencing the framing of issues or news stories. Gamson (1988) makes the argument that particularly sources from political, sociopolitical, or industrial organizations, often seek to influence the framing of news by appearing as experts or voices in news articles or broadcasts. The choices that news organizations make about which sources to include, or to exclude, also strongly influences the final product. In the case of this study, the relevant

question then becomes to which extent news organizations rely on the EU's communications as sources, and to which extent they quote and cite other, outside sources that might also be attempting to promote their own, separate interests.

Garragee and Roefs (2004) claim that the voices that are typically heard the most in these "contests" to frame issues are those of "political elites", such as politicians or interest groups representing certain political interests. However, as Crawley (2007) notes, it is also not uncommon for less dominant groups to participate in promoting certain aspects in framing issues. He cites as examples of this the women's rights movement, or grassroots groups like environmental activists.

In analyzing news stories or communications by institutions, it is also important to acknowledge and understand that there is a distinction between the core facts of the issue (core elements) and the features of the story that participate in the framing (frame-carrying elements.) This distinction can be seen and is applied in most research on framing (De Vreese 2005). Frames can also be specific to a certain issue due to the fact that they are relevant only to a specific set of topics (issue-specific frames), or broader in how they can "transcend thematic limitations" (generic frames) (De Vreese 2005). Related to this is the concept of *episodic framing*, in which social issues are depicted in news as limited to specific events, as opposed to being placed in a larger context or interpretation (De Vreese 2005).

Frames can include, for example, framing issues through a lens of strategy (strategic news.) In cases like this, coverage can focus on themes of winning and losing, contain language relating to games or competition, performers, critics, and audiences, focus on style and perceptions, or give weight to things like polls (Jamieson 1992).

Importantly for the purpose of this study, the prevalence of strategic news can depend on the country and its media culture. For example, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) state that strategic news is more dominant in news coverage in the United States, especially in the case of elections (often referred to as "horse-race coverage"), but also in the case of policy issues. As discussed earlier, while the focus on strategic news might be more prevalent in the United States, the way that issues are framed across the world can be very dependent on the national specificities of each country. Given that my study focuses on the news media in two different countries, this is an important aspect to analyze.

2.1.1 Framing and related fields

The analysis of frames and framing processes is closely related to Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis and thus also needs to be examined and understood alongside the two. For instance, Tannen (1993) notes that discourse analysis is often able to provide valuable insight into the linguistic tools that are used to create frames in interaction. She also refers to frames as schemas, or “structures of expectation”, which are associated with how people act and expect others to act in interactive situations. While this theory discusses framing more in the sense of person-to-person interaction, the framework is also useful for the purposes of this study: These structures of expectation can also be seen as existing in people’s minds when it comes to the media they consume. When reading an article in a newspaper or a press briefing from a public institution, one might have certain schema-specific expectations about what the text should and should not contain.

This can also be connected to Goffman’s (1981:67) concept of interactive frames, by which he means people’s interpretations of social situations. For example, in analyzing people’s interaction, an analysis of interactive frames would be interested in whether the participants think they are teasing or joking. In other words, how participants orient themselves discursively influences the interaction itself, as well as the understanding of it. At least to some degree, this could be thought to be the case with the consumption of media texts or public communications as well.

In addition, Discourse Analysis overlaps with framing analysis and framing theory in that the latter often place a focus on meaning-making, a part of which is the construction of identities through discourse. Discourse Analysis has an interest in both of these phenomena as it analyzes and investigates communication in all its forms. In other words, it could be said that framing analysis and Discourse Analysis are inherently interconnected. Discourse analysts have used aspects of framing analysis in their research, and the concept of framing has also been extended by discourse analysts in such a way that has broadened the understanding of meaning-making as a whole.

Frame analysis, or framing analysis, can also be seen as a method within Discourse Analysis, as argued by Hope (2010), who states that the distinction between the two lies in the specific

interest that frame analysis has in how issues are defined and problematized, as well as the influence that this can have on the more general conversation around the issue.

As for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), these connections to framing analysis are also present. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258) state, discourse is “socially constitutive as well as socially shaped.” In other words, societies shape discourse, but discourse also has a significant role in shaping societies. In this sense, framing analysis can be thought to have many of the same elements: the cultural, political, and societal aspects surrounding, for example, newspaper texts, inevitably shape some of the framing of those texts. However, reversely, the framing used by newspaper texts also helps shape those cultural, political, and societal realities. In contrast, framing analysis at its core is more concerned with the linguistic and textual aspects of meaning-making, and its methods consist of detailed linguistic analyses (Hope 2010).

In discussing framing, it is also useful to mention another related concept: agenda-setting. This refers to the idea that participants often compete to define which issues are most important and should therefore be brought to the forefront of public conversation and media attention. In media agenda setting theory, the way in which the press sets the agenda, or emphasizes one issue over another is of particular interest (Dearing and Roger 1996; McCombs 2014).

2.2 News discourse

To analyze news discourse, we must first define the term *news*, which might not be as simple as it first appears. As Van Dijk (2008) states, the notion of news is quite ambivalent. In the English language, for example, news is often talked about with the term “news stories”, suggesting that there is some narrative aspect attached to news. In a more general sense, news can be taken to mean “new information.” The kind of news discussed in this study could be seen as a combination of these two: The focus is on news items or reports that provide new information about recent events, but in addition, an interest is placed on the frames used in news, which help to provide a narrative aspect.

The traditional structure of a news story or report consists of the following parts: the headline, the intro/lead, and the body or the lead development (Bednarek and Caple 2012: 96). This is the structure generally associated with what Bednarek and Caple (2012) define as a “hard news story”, which reports on new or recent events. It is typical of these news stories to answer the questions who, what, where, and when.

Van Dijk (2008) suggests considering news a “type of text or a discourse.” This framework is particularly useful for this study. In other words, one of the questions that has to be presented is what the structural specifics of news are, and in which ways they make news differ from other discourses. In analyzing news in the media, one must also consider the specific parameters of mass media, and the way in which the medium of communication can affect the form and type of communication that is produced. In analyzing news discourse, then, aspects to be analyzed can include text linguistics, narrative analysis, stylistics, or rhetoric (Van Dijk 1988).

Analyzing news discourse through the lens of linguistics and semiotics, therefore, is useful for understanding the genre as a whole, as well as its conventions. As Bednarek and Caple (2012: 6) argue, the relationships between producers of news media, the institutions or figures that they scrutinize, and the audiences that consume news, are constructed largely through semiotic and linguistic resources. Meanings are created through the use of words, images, and the layout and organization of words and images, among other factors. News discourse can also be studied with a variety of approaches in linguistics. Bednarek and Caple (2012) name a number of these approaches, and the three most relevant to this study will be discussed here: The sociolinguistic approach, the systemic functional linguistic approach, and the critical approach.

In the sociolinguistic approach, the focus can be on the features of news in comparison to their intended audience: the language that newspapers use can vary depending on the targeted audience. In the systemic functional linguistic approach, news discourse is approached from the perspective of genre and register. In addition to an analysis of linguistic features, this approach also includes discussion of an “authorial voice” and expressions of subjectivity in news discourse (Bednarek and Caple 2012: 8). For example, as Martin and White (2005) note, expressions of subjectivity can be analyzed by distinguishing the different voices present in a news story. They categorize these voices as “a reporter voice, a correspondent voice, and a

commentator voice.” Finally, the critical approach is closely related to the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis and is concerned with, for example, power relations and ideologies that underlie news discourse. (Bednarek and Caple 2012).

However, it should also be noted that some researchers argue for a distinction between news *discourse* and news as a *genre*. For instance, Pynnönen (2013: 16-17) states that the genre of a text, such as news, has characteristics that are a lot more fixed, whereas news discourse is more dependent on the specific topic of a given article. The distinction between text and discourse is also highlighted by Wodak (2001: 66), who describes discourses as linguistic acts that focus on different topics at the macro-level.

In terms of the language of news, Bednarek and Caple (2012: 85-92) list some typical linguistic features that traditionally appear in newspaper articles. These features include noun phrases, verbs in the present tense, few modal verbs (*may, can, should, etc.*), frequent use of verbs in the passive, place adverbials and adverbials used to specify time, figures and numbers, and intertextuality. In reporting on quotes from various sources, Bednarek and Caple (2012: 93-94) note that the use of reporting expressions can influence the perceived reliability of the information. For example, the word ‘claim’ carries less reliability than the word ‘reveal.’ Most of these reporting expressions in news have been shown to be neutral, which is linked to the goal of objectivity in news reporting. However, an analysis of these reporting expressions can reveal expressions of subjectivity in news reports that are presented as objective.

In analyzing news discourse, it is also important to understand how news work is constructed. In talking about journalism, Hamelink (2015) notes that there is enormous pressure for journalists to provide news stories that are both simple and complete. The requirement of a complete story, or the requirement of certainty, however, can be difficult to meet, because there are often aspects that cannot be known at the time of reporting. According to Hamelink, these blanks are often filled with what he calls “spin doctors” or “perception managers”, who provide answers to the unknowns. As it relates to this study, it is, then, relevant to ask which voices are present in news stories, what interests those voices represent, and how they participate in creating the frames that are present in news.

2.3 The EU and its communications

According to Valentini and Nesti (2010), in 2005, the EU made an institutional priority of its communication as it launched a communication plan, the goal of which was to “improve the public understanding of EU and its activities and to strengthen common sense of belonging between citizens.” The measures outlined in this plan included the publication of programmatic documents, improvement of existing services, and increasing adoption of new online tools.

However, one of the persisting challenges EU-wide communications is that issues are often discussed very differently and through a different lens in the national media of different countries. As Koopmans and Erbe (2003) note, the absence of a European-wide direct communicative links, the issues relating to the EU rely heavily on the mass media to gain attention or legitimacy.

This, in part, has raised questions about the potential emergence of a European public sphere, or an “Europeanized” public sphere. The term “public sphere” usually refers to the place “where the public opinion takes form through the discussion of problems, political issues and decisions and where the political power is placed under scrutiny” (Fossum and Schlesinger 2007, as quoted by Valentini and Nesti 2010).

Whether or not a common, European public sphere exists is a question that has been discussed among scholars. It can be argued that such ideal European public sphere would “emerge if and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time with the same criteria of relevance” in different countries (Risse and Van de Steeg 2007: 5). However, there are barriers, such as the different languages spoken within Europe, that make this ideal scenario difficult to accomplish, despite the fact that English as a lingua franca within Europe has gained at least some prominence in the last decades. Some argue that a Europeanized public sphere is emerging, while other researchers say that such process has not yet occurred as the debate about the EU in media is still strongly nationally oriented. Finally, the more skeptical research argues that evidence for this kind of Europeanization does not exist at all, because the presence of evidence depends on which topic is chosen for analysis (Valentini and Nesti 2010). Whatever the case may be, it seems clear that any public sphere that exists within Europe is at least very fragmented and at least to some degree, dependent on national

perspectives. This, as discussed before, creates a challenge for the EU in terms of its communications.

The goals of public communication of institutions can be to provide information, raise awareness of certain issues, or to influence attitudes or behavior towards issues or policies. (Mancini 2002). On its website (November 2019), the European Union outlines three main objectives of its communications. The objectives include listening to the public and taking their views and concerns into account; explaining how European Union policies affect citizens' everyday lives; and connecting with people locally by addressing them in their national or local settings, through their favorite media.

However, the communications analyzed in this study – press briefings – are not necessarily intended to be received only by citizens. Rather, the objective of such communications can often be to inform the media, which then, in turn, reports on these briefings and relays the information to the public. It is important, therefore, to note, that there are significant differences in how media systems operate in different countries within the EU: for example, there can be variations in how they are funded or structured, or how politically independent they are (Humphreys 1996). There is no EU-wide media, and as a result, national media tends to view EU policy, and therefore report on it, through a localized lens.

The EU also consistently conducts polls on public opinion and perceptions of certain issues, or themes, in a poll named the “Eurobarometer.” Therefore, based on its own activities, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that communicating in a way that enhances public support of its policies is important to the EU, as it would be for any political body or institution.

The challenges of this, however, have been noted by officials within the EU as well. The former Vice-President of the European Parliament, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, has stated that EU institutions suffer from a “serious and endless communication problem. Europe, as a communication issue, is not very exciting. How can we make Europe exciting?” In 2006, Member of Parliament Graham Watson said: “[The EU] has failed to communicate enthusiasm and optimism to those who hold its future in their hands.” Clearly, communicating the decisions and actions taken by the EU to the public in a way that is exciting, or using language that can be understood and embraced by the public, or national media institutions, has been an enormous challenge.

In analyzing the communications of the EU, then, it is useful to keep in mind this challenge and the aims of EU's communication. From the point of view of this study, it is, then,

important to keep in mind the following: how the EU's communications goals are met in their official publications, and what steps are taken by the EU to combat these challenges. While this study will not focus on the audience reaction or response to a publication made by the EU, nor will it examine the publication process of the EU as an institution, it will critically examine the linguistic and other frame-carrying features in these publications to gain an understanding of how the EU attempts to respond to the challenges outlined in this chapter. The success or failure of these attempts will not be judged based on polls on public opinion or as mentioned before, audience reaction. Rather, it will be judged based on the degree to which these linguistic and frame-carrying features are replicated (or not) in the online articles on the same topics. This is important because in lieu of European-wide news organizations, citizens often get their news from their local news outlets. It is then reasonable to assume that how these outlets represent events and issues is therefore of utmost importance and interest to the EU as an institution.

2.4 Brexit and the media

The British referendum to exit from the European Union took place in June 2016 and is commonly known and referred to as "Brexit." Since then, negotiations have been underway between the United Kingdom and the European Union to determine how and on what terms such exit will take place. As of this study, the exit has not yet occurred and negotiations are still ongoing.

Unsurprisingly, given the historic nature and the vastness of its consequences, the topic of Brexit itself has been studied quite widely, including the shifts and changes in public opinion leading up to and following the referendum. It has also been shown that the British media's coverage and framing of issues played a role in shaping public opinion and shaping the conversations that were had in the country at the time of the vote.

Even though the circulation of British newspapers has dropped since the early 1990's, the press still has significant power to sway elections and public opinion, according to Hinde (2017). He argues that the British press is not only heavily involved in politics, but also somewhat biased. He claims that this bias is not limited to the opinion pages of newspapers, but rather, permeates the reporting as well, hindering the media's ability to present things objectively, also perhaps due to a lack of willingness to do so.

While he acknowledges that it is impossible to calculate the exact impact of the press on the ultimate results of the referendum, he also notes that the coverage of the referendum, and the framing of it by the British press, often made no effort to strive for “balance and accuracy”, which is often expected of newspapers and journalists. He cites headlines in British newspapers that, for example, likened “opponents of the EU to British politicians of the 1930’s who spoke out against Hitler and the Nazis”, or framed the European Union as “greedy elites.”

Importantly, the coverage of Brexit and the way that it was framed in many British newspapers also focused on a number of different issues. “In newspapers like The Sun, the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail and the Daily Express, reporting of Europe has focused on cost, waste, bureaucracy, interference in domestic sovereignty and, particularly in the last ten years, on immigration”, Hinde (2017) states.

In the summer of 2016, before the vote, there was a particular uptick in pro-Brexit stories in these newspapers, which, in many cases, had a heavy focus on the topic of migration. According to Hinde (2017), headlines in newspapers at this time included terminology and phrases such as “invade”, “sneak into”, “migrant crisis”, “open borders”, and “EU killers and rapists” when referring to migrants or the issue of migration in general.

Khabaz (2018) also notes that national newspapers in Britain had an influence on the result of the referendum and claims that the influence can be seen particularly in the repetitive use of certain frames, such as “taking control”, “sovereignty”, and “democracy”, which were not specific to Brexit, but rather, highlighted or brought attention to issues and concerns that had been present long before the referendum itself. Several scholars have also made similar claims by stating that public opinion on the referendum was shaped in large part by national newspapers in the UK, which also participated in distorting the truth on some occasions.

Given all this, it is perhaps not a coincidence that according to a poll of over 12,000 respondents, voting to leave offered the best chance for the UK to regain control over immigration and its own borders ranked as the second most important reason for voting to “Leave” the EU and was favored by a third of “Leave” -voters (Lord Ashcroft Polls 2016). One can reasonably draw the conclusion that the media has at least some power to influence the public’s opinions, priorities, and perceptions of issues. Therefore, the media’s framing and coverage of issues in comparison to the information provided by institutions such as the EU becomes increasingly important to study and understand, although it is also important to state

that the EU, as noted before, also has its own agenda in trying to communicate about its actions and decisions in a way that enhances public support.

2.5 Cognitive semantics and constructing meaning

On the issue of the language used by the EU in its publications, the question of word choice is particularly important, as it may influence the audience's perceptions. However, it is also important to note that the way word choice may influence attitudes or opinions is also dependent upon the recipient's prior political views. For example, in the American two-party system, studies have found that Republicans generally have a more adverse reaction or representation of taxes than members of the Democratic party (American National Election Studies 2004).

In understanding and analyzing language choices, particularly word choice, it is also important to understand the connotations that words have. According to Allan (2007), the connotations of words are "pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference)", as well as an audience's "experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used." In choosing one's words or expressions, then, one must understand the attitudes that a community has towards them.

The study of connotations is inevitably intertwined with the study of meaning on a larger scale as well. This includes questions about what meaning really is, how it is constructed, and what kinds of meanings can be described, and how. Even statements that may seem objective on their surface can in fact be opinion-laden and imply sentiments of the writer, or even to produce certain emotions or responses in a reader's mind (Greene and Resnik 2009; Mohammad and Turney 2010, as quoted by Cruse 2000). The analysis of connotations and word choice, then, has to be expanded into, or be done with an understanding of meaning-making, semantics, and cognitive semantics.

As noted by Cruse (2000), a word on its own does not actually say anything or express a full thought. In order to express whole thoughts, more complex structures, or semantic entities are necessary. Cruse also notes that the context in which a linguistic expression occurs influences its meaning. This variation can be great in scale (Cruse 2000: 96).

To account for such variation of meaning depending on the context, Cruse (2000: 105) suggests questions that must be asked during analysis. These questions include taking into account, for example, whether words typically have multiple meanings, and how it should be decided what constitutes a meaning. It is also relevant to ask if the number of such meanings is finite, and how they might be related to each other. In the analysis of word meaning, it is also important to acknowledge the principle of “identity constraints.” This means that once one has decided upon an interpretation of the meaning of a word, one must “stick with it.” This constraint applies both to the writer and the reader of a text (Cruse 2000: 106). In analyzing the meaning of words in different contexts, therefore, it is important to understand the contexts in which a particular word or expression has been used before.

Related to this idea, another important perspective is offered by Allwood (1999), who talks about the concept of meaning potential. This refers to how a person remembers the previous use of a certain expression, and what information the person thus associates with that expression as a result. In other words, if a person has heard a certain expression used in a certain way or a certain context, he or she is likely to associate similar meanings to that expression upon hearing it again, even in a different context. From the point of view of institutional communication, this highlights the importance of understanding one’s audience and the meaning potentials of specific words or expressions that said audience can have.

What actually determines the meaning of an expression is a cognitive operation. According to Allwood (1999), the function of these cognitive operations is to “achieve compatibility between the meaning potential of a particular expression, the meaning potential of other expressions, and the extralinguistic context.”

In analyzing meaning, it is also important to take into account what Cruse (2000) refers to as perspectives. Essentially, this term in the context of meaning-making means that the perspective from which something is observed influences the way that it is seen and interpreted. Naturally, the perspective which is adopted in each case depends heavily on the observer. For example, an economist studying the world economy might have a different point of view on the topic of Brexit than a historian. Therefore, in studying meaning and how it is both constructed and interpreted, it is important to take into account each party’s particular motivations and how they might influence the perspective that is chosen. This is especially true of the online articles analyzed in this study, which originate from different

news organizations that might all have their unique perspectives, including political persuasions.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, I will introduce the data used in the study. In addition, this section will explain the methods for both collecting the data and analyzing it, as well as introduce the aims of the study and the research questions.

The study has two main aims. First, the study intends to examine the kind of framing that is used by the EU in its press briefings, and to explore whether this framing is replicated in the online articles or not. Second, the study aims to gain insight into how frames are created through the use of framing devices, and whether certain frames or framing devices are more prevalent in one of the data sets, the press briefings or the online articles. Framing devices, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.1. and as described by Tankard (2001) are the different tools that are used to construct frames. These can include, for example, word choices and the connotations of these words, quote selection, or photo selection.

The research questions the study aims to answer are the following:

1. What frames are used in official press briefings by the EU, and to which degree, if any, are these frames replicated in online articles on the same topic in media?
2. What kinds of framing devices are used, or how are frames created, in the press releases and the online articles?

The research questions have been selected so as to set the focus of the study on the framing devices used in the various texts analyzed. The first research question brings the focus of the study on the comparison between the EU's press briefings and the online articles on the same topics. This focus is important because as discussed in the previous chapters, empirical research on this topic is relatively scarce. In addition, this focus is used to provide valuable information about the interactive relationship between public institutions and the media, which can help institutions plan and execute their communications more efficiently.

The second research question has been chosen to place the focus on the framing devices themselves. From the point of view of the present study, it is vital to understand how frames are created, and whether or not there are differences in how the EU creates frames and how the media creates frames. In addition, identifying and analyzing these framing devices can

help audiences recognize them in the media texts they consume, and thus be more informed as consumers of media.

The study also analyzes data, in this case, online articles, from publications from two different countries: the United States and the United Kingdom. While the comparison of the articles from these countries is not the main aim of the study, articles from both countries have been chosen for two main reasons. First, the selection of articles from two different countries attempts to account for the potential biases that might occur in a certain geographic location. Analyzing data from two different countries means that while this localized bias still exists, the same biases are not present in all the data. Second, selecting data from two countries provides two different perspectives and therefore produces insight into whether framing devices and choices are similar across geographic borders.

3.1 Data collection

The data used in this study is divided into two categories, each of which will be introduced individually. The first set of data consists of press briefings from the official websites of the European Parliament (www.europarl.europa.eu) and the European Commission (www.ec.europa.eu), which were published between the months of January and March in the year of 2020. This timeframe has been chosen because it represents the period of time right before, during, and right after the United Kingdom’s official withdrawal from the European Union, which became official on January 31st, 2020. From each of the three months, two press briefings have been selected. The reason for this is to make sure that the same number of press releases and online articles are analyzed. Below is a table of all the press briefings analyzed in this study.

Table 1. Press briefings analyzed in the study.

Date of press briefing	Title of press briefing	Word count of press briefing (excluding headline and lead)	Number of photos in the press briefing
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January 29, 2020	Brexit deal approved by the European Parliament	692 words	One photo
January 31, 2020	EU Presidents lay out priorities for future of Europe	246 words	One photo
February 3, 2020	Future UK-EU Partnership: European Commission takes first step to launch negotiations with the United Kingdom	578 words	No photos
February 12, 2020	EU-UK future relations: “level playing field” crucial to ensure fair competition	481 words	One photo
March 2, 2020	EU-UK future relations: crucial to ensure EU leverage and unity	315 words	No photos
March 18, 2020	Future EU-UK Partnership: European Commission publishes draft legal text	308 words	No photos

The two press briefings from January 2020 are both from the European Parliament and focus on two main things: First, the vote taken by the Parliament to approve the terms of a Brexit deal, and second, the finalization of the British exit from the European Union and discussion of it from the point of view of the EU’s priorities for the future. These two briefings were selected from January 2020 for two main reasons. First, because the vote by the European Parliament, as well as its aftermath, was perhaps one of the most high-profile topics of the month surrounding the EU, and second, because despite their chronological proximity, they were quite different in style: one of them was more focused on a specific event, while the other focused on highlighting the EU’s common voice and relied heavily on the use of quotes.

The press briefings from February 2020 are from February 3rd and February 12th, published by the European Commission and the European Parliament respectively. The focus of these press briefings is on the negotiations with the United Kingdom. Finally, the press briefings from March 2020 are from the European Parliament and the European Commission,

published on the 2nd and the 18th of the month. Both of these briefings discuss the future relationship between the two parties and also attempt to highlight the EU’s priorities in defining this relationship.

Because of the timeframe, these press briefings show not only the chronology of the negotiations and the process of Brexit, but they also show the EU’s somewhat shifting focus from describing the process to laying out its own priorities.

The second data set consists of online articles from publications in two countries: The United Kingdom, because of its relevance to the topic of Brexit; and the United States, because it provides a perspective outside of Europe. Below is a table of all the online articles analyzed in the present study.

Table 2. The online articles analyzed in the study.

Publishing date of the online article	Publishing media organization	Title of the online article	Word count (excluding headline and lead)	Number of photos/videos in the online article
January 29, 2020	BBC (UK)	Brexit: European Parliament overwhelmingly backs terms of UK's exit.	882 words	Two photos, three videos
January 31, 2020	The New York Times (US)	U.K. Leaves E.U., Embarking On an Uncertain Future	2905 words	12 photos
February 3, 2020	NBC News (US)	E.U. and U.K. set out conflicting red lines for post-Brexit deal	692 words	One photo, one video
February 12, 2020	The Guardian (UK)	UK alignment on EU standards price to pay	505 words	One photo

		for trade deal, say MEPs		
March 19, 2020	The Guardian (UK)	Pressure to delay Brexit talks as coronavirus crisis grows	843 words	One photo
March 19, 2020	Politico (US)	Brexit Britain is running out of time	1346 words	Three photos

These online articles have been chosen based on a search of articles from the day of or the day following the publication of the EU’s press releases, using the search engine Google. The search has been done in this way in order to obtain online articles that focus on the same topics as the press releases and are thus comparable to the press releases. From each month, one article from the UK and one article from the US has been chosen for analysis. For the purpose of variety and avoiding too narrow a focus on a specific newspaper, most of the articles analyzed are from different organizations.

The UK articles are from The Guardian and the BBC, and the US articles are from The New York Times, Politico, and NBC News. The selection of the articles was not done based on the news organization, but rather, based on an article’s compatibility to the topic of the press releases from the same time period. However, one other major criterion had to be met for an article to be chosen for analysis: the article had to be from a well-established source, i.e. a news organization that provides news online, was established before the year 2010, and is among the largest online publishers in its country.

The keywords searched to obtain these online articles include terms like ‘Brexit’ and ‘withdrawal agreement’, as well as more specific terms that are found in the press releases, such as ‘future relationship’, ‘dynamic alignment’, or terms relating to the EU’s different institutional bodies, such as ‘European Parliament’ or ‘European Commission.’ The searches were done between February and April 2020. After the search, the articles were chosen based on their appearance on the first page of the search results, so as to make sure that they were

relevant to the searched keywords, and that they were from a well-established source that appears on the first page of the results. However, articles that were marked as advertised were not chosen.

The first two articles analyzed are from January 2020. The first is from January 29th, published by the British organization BBC. The article was published on the day of the finalization of Brexit and focuses primarily on discussing the vote that took place, as well as the comments made by member of Parliament in its aftermath. As a news organization, the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) is a public service broadcaster, which means that its work is funded by an annual license fee paid by British citizens and corporations. According to research by the Pew Research Center (2014), its audience is more likely to be liberal than conservative, which could act as an indicator of the potential political leanings of the content produced by the organization itself.

The second article from January 2020 is from the The New York Times, an American news organization. This article is from January 31st and corresponds to the January 31st press briefing published by the EU, in which the priorities for the negotiations between the parties are discussed. Similarly to the BBC, the New York Times' audience is more likely to be liberal than conservative (Pew Research Center 2014.) The paper has also been found to have a slight liberal bias in some research (Groseclose and Milyo 2005).

The February articles are from the American media publisher NBC News and the British organization The Guardian, from February 3rd and February 12th respectively. The focus of these articles is on the negotiations and the disagreements in them between the two parties, and they thus correspond topically to the EU's press briefings from the same month. As news publishers, NBC News is considered close to the center of the political spectrum, while The Guardian is thought to be more left-leaning (Pew Research Center 2014).

Finally, the online articles from March 2020 are from The Guardian (UK) and the American news outlet Politico, which is also considered slightly left-leaning by the Pew Research Center (2014). The articles were both published on March 19th, and also discuss the negotiations between the parties, but also tie Brexit to the Covid-19 pandemic, which complicated negotiations at the time and influenced the news cycle in its own right. In total, 12 different pieces of data are analyzed in this study.

For the purpose of focusing on purely linguistic and textual aspects and narrowing the scope of the study, broadcast media has been excluded from this study. The focus of the study is on online written media (or in other words, non-broadcast media) because the analysis is focused specifically on the language, rather than the audio-visual aspects of media. However, graphical elements of news articles or press briefings, such as photos or illustrations, will also be analyzed to the extent that they participate in the framing or have frame-carrying elements.

3.2 Methods

The data is analyzed using methods of framing analysis, Discourse Analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis. As the analysis of frames includes analysis of photos and other visual elements, Multimodal Discourse Analysis and analysis of pictures will also be discussed. Combining these methods allows for a comprehensive analysis of the data from a more detailed linguistic analysis to a broader discussion of framing and the social structures at play which affect that framing. In the following sections, all methods are explained from the point of view of their relevance to this study. Finally, I will briefly discuss how these methods used together form a comprehensive methodology for this study, as well as the challenges that they present.

3.2.1 Framing analysis

This study will use the previously discussed deductive approach to framing analysis (De Vreese 2005). This means that the frames are set and determined prior to the analysis of the data, instead of allowing the frames to emerge from the data and then classifying them during analysis. This approach has been chosen for two main reasons. First, it eliminates the researcher's bias by making sure that any elements of the text cannot be considered frames, instead, they are predetermined. Secondly, the use of these predetermined frames, or "generic frames", means that the findings of the study are more broadly applicable to different fields

and future research, instead of being more narrowly limited to the topic of this particular study.

In this deductive approach to framing analysis, I will use the frames outlined by the research of Neuman et al. (1992), which are: Economics, moral values, human impact, powerlessness, and conflict. These frames have been chosen because there is research to show that they are “generic”, or in other words, applicable to a variety of topics and therefore useful from the point of view of objective analysis and future research (Neuman et al., 1992; De Vreese 2005). In addition to these, I argue for the addition of the history-frame, which can also be considered generic: It is not specifically tied to the topic of Brexit, but can appear in news stories particularly through intertextuality (links to other articles), and is relevant to a broad variety of topics that can be placed in a larger historical context.

Using De Vreese’s (2005) definition and approach, the aim is to separate the core elements (core facts of the issue) from the frame-carrying elements of the material. Analyzing these frame-carrying elements includes analysis of headlines, subheads, photos and their captions, the sources selected, and the quotes selected, among other factors. Therefore, to the extent that they are present, visual aspects such as photos will also be a part of the analysis because they can contribute to the framing of an issue.

In order for something to be considered a frame, it needs to have recognizable linguistic features and characteristics, defining characteristics that distinguish it from other frames, and it must have representational validity. In other words, not every aspect of a text or an article can be considered a frame based purely on a researcher’s claim (Cappella and Jamieson 1997: 47, 89).

The key distinction between this and previous studies on framing is that the aim is to compare the frames used by a public institution (EU) and media organizations. This will be done by comparing framing devices like word choices, sources, quotes, photos, and headlines present in the data.

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, however, framing analysis as used and understood in this study is not without its critics. As described by Dearing and Roger (1996) and McCombs (2014) and mentioned in Chapter 2.1.2, the concept of framing is closely related to the concept of agenda-setting. This is related to the criticism of Scheufele and Iyengar (2016), who argue that the two have become too interchangeable in research. In some ways, the methods and points of focus of both are equally valid and relevant to this study, and some terminology

between the two methods overlaps. In using framing analysis, then, it is important to be clear and specific about what is being analyzed, and what the distinctions are between frames and agendas, for instance. This distinction is particularly important as the present study's focus is on emphasis framing rather than equivalence framing. The former has been chosen for its versatility and ability to be generalized and applied to a variety of issues, rather than being limited to the more simplistic gain- and loss-frames. In addition, because equivalence framing is concerned with information that is factually the same, applying it to the data of this study, which consists of two different types of texts, would be difficult.

What this means from the point of view of this study is that while there are aspects of the texts that could also be analyzed from the perspective of media agenda-setting, such as the order in which information is presented, those aspects here are not analyzed in and of themselves. Rather, they will be discussed to the extent that they are relevant to the construction of frames.

The other notable challenge in using framing analysis as the main method is that the identification of frames is always somewhat subjective. This is closely related to Van Dijk's (1988) observations about the subjectivity of Discourse Analysis: Interpretation from the researcher is always required to some degree, and this interpretation can challenge the objectivity of the findings. The use of the deductive approach and generic frames is a way that this study attempts to account for these challenges, in addition to a high level of transparency when it comes to both the presentation and the analysis of the data. In other words, all findings will be justified by examples from the data. Despite this, however, the somewhat subjective nature of both framing analysis and Discourse Analysis cannot be discounted and are therefore acknowledged in this study as well.

3.2.2. Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

This study combines methods of both Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The difference between the two, in short, is that DA focuses on examining discourses, whereas CDA takes a critical stance to, for example, analyze power relations or social prejudices of those discourses.

One of the inherent advantages of CDA is that it allows for an analysis that draws insights from a variety of different perspectives and disciplines, such as linguistics, history, sociology,

and philosophy (Thao and Short 2009). While CDA bears many resemblances to DA, this is one of the main differences. For the purpose of the present study, which combines aspects from communication theories and social issues to a linguistic analysis, this method is therefore, uniquely useful. This is also the case because the topic matter of the data analyzed in the study, Brexit, is inherently political and could be said to contain its own power relations and dynamics as well.

It is also noteworthy that the definition of a discourse and how discourses can be analyzed has caused some debate among linguists and researchers. This study relies on a definition from Van Dijk (2008), which states that “discourse is not only analyzed as an autonomous verbal object but also as situated interaction, as a social practice, or as a type of communication in a social, cultural, historical, or political situation.” This definition is particularly well applicable to the data of this study, which consists of political actors such as the EU and media outlets (which can be seen as political actors in their own right), and the subject-matter of which also has substantial historical significance.

In Discourse Analysis, linguistic features and communicative interactions or behaviors are often treated as the primary objects of analysis. For this purpose, questions like “What is the context?”, “Who are the participants?”, “What are the dominant patterns of interaction?”, or “How is language specific to the context used?” can be useful in conducting analysis (Thao and Short 2009).

For this study, a combination of two approaches to Discourse Analysis described by Taylor (2001) is used:

1. A focus will be on analyzing how language varies and how that variation relates to different environments or users.
2. A focus will be on identifying patterns in the language associated with a certain topic.

Importantly, however, it should be noted that the very nature of analyzing discourse is such that it requires interpretation from the researcher. In other words, it is not enough to merely describe language and its different elements: a researcher must also attempt to interpret what the messages conveyed by that language might be. This possibility and requirement of interpretation demands accountability from the researcher: any interpretations must be

thoroughly justified, and the researcher should act responsibly and avoid exaggerating his or her findings to an audience (van Dijk 1993: 94).

Critical Discourse Analysis, as mentioned previously, differs from this in the sense that the word ‘critical’ signals an inclusion of social critique, or typically, an attempt to analyze and understand power relations that are present in language and therefore, in society at large (Thao and Short 2009). For the purpose of this study, this is not the main aim, but is nevertheless vital to take into consideration, because as discussed with relation to framing and news discourse, for example, the voices present in a news text can signal things like power relations. Conscious choices are made about which voices are included or excluded.

In discussing the methods of CDA, van Dijk (2008) prefers the term “Critical Discourse Studies”, and notes that “CDA uses any method that is relevant to the aims of its research projects and such methods are largely those used in discourse studies generally.” A more specific framework for CDA is offered by Fairclough (2001: 122), who states that three dimensions should be taken into consideration in the analysis that involves three stages. The first part of the analysis is the analysis of what he calls *discursive practice*. By this, Fairclough (1995: 57-62, 53 1992: 78) means the process involved in producing, consuming, and distributing texts. The second stage of the analysis consists of a detailed linguistic analysis, which includes details relating to grammar, word choice, metaphors, and other linguistic features. Finally, the third stage of the analysis focuses more on the ideological, political, and social consequences that result from the discursive practices (Fairclough 2001: 122; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 75). From the point of view of this study, particularly the latter two stages are useful, especially given that access to information about the journalistic practices involved in the production of texts is not always available, as Fairclough (2001: 122) also admits.

3.2.3 Multimodality and analysis of pictures

As the analysis of the data of the study includes analysis of pictures and illustrations, the study is thus multimodal in nature. For this reason, multimodal discourse analysis will be discussed as a method of analysis. In addition, to be more specific, analysis of visual images will also be discussed in this section.

Multimodality refers to the notion that more than one semiotic resource is present in the same text. Multimodal discourse analysis is thus concerned with how these resources interact with one another to create meanings together (O'Halloran 2011). In multimodal analysis, semiotic resources refer to the different aspects that interact together to create meanings, which can include words, images, music, or gestures, among other factors. Multimodal discourse analysis is therefore particularly useful for a study of web pages or online articles, which often include more than one semiotic resource, for example, pictures, text, color, hyperlinks, among others.

Importantly, it should also be noted that the visual elements of different types of content, for example, press briefings or online articles in the case of this study, combine to construct visual imagery through layouts. For instance, then, the placement of visual images such as pictures or illustrations is also important to take into account, as, for example, their placement near the headline could highlight their importance (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996).

In addition, these visual elements not only interact with one another, but they also interact with the text that surrounds them. Barthes (1977: 39) refers to this as the image-text relation. In other words, the analysis of images or visual elements should include discussion of how the images and the text complement each other and relate to one another. For example, it might be relevant to ask whether the image is placed within the body of text, below the headline, or in some other location, and whether the image also includes a caption that verbally connects it to the surrounding text and thus imposes a meaning on it. It should also be noted that pictures are not always limited to their visuality, they are also intimately connected to the text surrounding them, which can include captions or even titles (Aiello 2019).

In analyzing visual images, particularly photographs, the analysis can focus on a number of things. Among them, for example, is the point of view used in the picture: depicting something from above or below eye-level could indicate superiority and respect, or alternatively, inferiority. In this analysis, the concept of visual semiotics is also useful. In addition to visually communicated signs, an analysis of visual semiotics is also particularly concerned with other factors, such as geometry, gestures, or body language like eye contact or other non-verbal communication (Aiello 2019).

In the analysis of pictures or any kind of visual images it is also important to note that similarly to language, pictures can carry certain connotations. In other words, the meaning

potentials an object in the real world has, or the meanings are associated with it, can also be derived from the pictorial representation of that object. (Aiello 2019).

3.2.4 Combining Framing Analysis and Discourse Analyses

Both framing analysis and Discourse Analysis are interpretative in nature. In other words, as discussed by Van Dijk (1988) in relation to DA, some interpretation from the researcher is always required. Inevitably, this raises a question about the objectivity of the study and the analysis of the data. While this interpretative aspect cannot be removed from the methods of the present study, this question of objectivity or subjectivity will be addressed by making the analysis of the data and discussion of the findings as transparent as possible. Setting pre-determined frames prior to the analysis of the data helps make the study more objective and justifying the arguments for the presence of frames by a detailed analysis and a thorough explanation of evidence found in the text also increases the generalizability of the results.

Both DA and CDA, as discussed in Chapter 2.1, are also closely linked with the main method of this study, framing analysis. In fact, framing analysis is seen by some as a subsection of Discourse Analysis (Hope 2010). Importantly, then, the methods of DA and CDA, which include a detailed analysis of linguistic features, as well as analysis of the voices present in texts and the power dynamics they might present or represent, are somewhat intertwined with, or at least similar to the methods of framing analysis. Both of these methods are primarily qualitative in nature, as compared to a more systematic method like content analysis. In addition, both methods are particularly interested in how meanings are constructed.

For these reasons, combining the framework and methods of all three, with a specific focus on framing analysis, is an appropriate and effective way to analyze the data. This is also reinforced by the fact that the analysis of frames is multidisciplinary and multimodal in nature.

To account for this multimodality, the study also utilizes methods of multimodal discourse analysis, particularly as it relates to the analysis of pictures. In this study, however, pictures are not the topic of study in and of themselves. Rather, they are analyzed as framing devices and potentially as frame-carrying elements of the press briefings and online articles. To do this analysis effectively, an understanding of image analysis and multimodal discourse analysis is required.

4 ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data in this section will focus on examining the press briefings published by the EU and comparing them to the online articles on the same topic. The analysis is separated into different sections based on the dates the texts were published. I will first analyze both press releases and online articles from January 2020, then from February 2020, and finally from March 2020. Finally, I will provide an overview of the differences and similarities between the two in terms of what frames are present or not.

The analysis of the data is primarily qualitative in nature, but I will also combine this qualitative analysis with quantitative methods, so as to gain an understanding of the frequency of certain frames in a certain type of text. The purpose of this mixed method analysis is to understand whether certain frames are more common in the EU's communications, or in the online articles, or whether the frames that appear are similar in nature and volume. The quantity of the frames in these texts will be demonstrated through infographic tables in section 4.4.

As discussed in section 2.3., the goals of the EU's communications are to "improve the public understanding of EU and its activities and to strengthen common sense of belonging between citizens." The purpose of the present study is not to evaluate how successful it has been in achieving those goals in terms of the public reaction or response. Rather, the study aims to determine how the EU attempts to fulfill these goals, and what methods it uses in its communications, in this case, the press briefings, to do so. The terms "press briefings" and "press releases" are used synonymously on the different web pages of the EU, so they will also be used synonymously here.

Based on the definitions and categories of De Vreese (2005), the analysis is conducted by using the deductive approach, in which frames are defined and operationalized prior to the analysis of the data. This is done in order to avoid too broad an approach that would allow for any features of the texts to be considered frames. In this study, the frames that will be analyzed are frames that Neuman et al. (1992) and De Vreese (2005) describe as being more generally applicable regardless of topic. These frames include the economics -frame, the human impact -frame, the powerlessness -frame, the conflict -frame, and the moral values -frame, which were identified by the research of Neuman et al. (1995). In addition to these, I argue for the addition of the history frame, which highlights the historical significance or

historical context of an event or issue, and the competition -frame, which is closely related to Cappella and Jamieson’s (1997) term “strategic news”, which was discussed in section 2.1. Below is a table of all the frames and their main features and how they can be constructed.

Table 3. Frames and their main features.

Frame	Main features
Conflict	Word choices with connotation to conflict or disagreement, quote choices highlighting opposing sides of an argument
Human Impact	Highlighting the effect of an event or issue on people’s lives, for example, can include interviews of citizens
Economics	Highlighting the economic consequences of an event or issue, quoting economics experts, discussing trade or similar issues
History	Emphasizing the historical significance of an event or issue, can include use of words such as “unprecedented”, which place an event in historical context
Powerlessness	Emphasizing the power dynamics between, for example, powerful organizations and individuals
Moral values	Highlighting the morality of an event or issue, presenting sides like “right” and “wrong”

The frames were identified in the texts examining the different elements of the data and determining which of them could be considered frame-carrying elements. This determination was done by examining aspects like word choices and their potential connotations or meaning potentials, the choices about whose voice to include in quotes and whose voices to exclude, as well as structural elements such as the order in which information is presented, which creates a sense of prioritizing certain details over others. Pictures or illustrations were also analyzed to the extent that they were present and contributed to the framing in a press briefing or an article. For example, using words or phrases that have connotations of conflict, war, or division, would be considered elements of the conflict-frame. Similarly, quoting a member of

a financial institution could constitute an element of the economics-frame. Identifying the frames, then, consists of a detailed analysis of the texts and their linguistic aspects, as well as interpretation by the researcher, which is thoroughly explained throughout the analysis. The videos embedded in the articles were not analyzed, and were only of interest to this study in terms of the persons whose remarks or statements may have appeared in them.

One of the challenges of this method is that identifying certain frame-carrying elements in a text does not necessarily mean that the frame itself is present in the text. In other words, one instance of a frame-carrying element that points to the conflict-frame does not necessarily warrant stating that the article or briefing in its entirety is framed through conflict. To address this challenge, the analysis makes a distinction between frames and *elements of frames*. For a frame to be identified in a text, more than one element of said frame must be present. These distinctions will also be displayed in the analysis through infographic tables. Several frames could be identified in the same text if these criteria were met. Indeed, many of the texts included more than one frame, or at least elements of several frames.

The analysis will also take into account the perspectives introduced by Cruse (2000), who states that studying the construction and interpretation of meanings requires understanding the motivations of each party, as they might influence certain choices that are made or perspectives that are chosen. In this sense, it is also important to remain particularly mindful of two factors: first, the stated goals of the EU's communications, and second, the potential political agendas or perspectives of the news organizations whose online articles are analyzed.

4.1 January 2020

January 2020 was the last month when the UK was a member state of the European Union. The month culminated in a vote in the European Parliament to approve the Brexit deal, and finally, in the UK's official withdrawal on the 31st of January. The data analyzed from this month will focus on these two events. The EU published a press release about both of these events, and they also gained significant media attention. The briefings were published by the European Parliament.

4.1.1 January press releases

January 2020 was the month that Brexit became official, and the final Brexit deal was approved by the European Parliament on January 29th. On that day, the European Parliament published a press release titled “[Brexit deal approved by the European Parliament](#)” (European Parliament 2020-01-29).

This press release includes discussion of the vote itself, a quote from the Parliament’s President, a subsection titled “Next steps”, and a subsection titled “Background.”

While the title of the briefing refers to a “Brexit deal”, the rest of the text talks about a “Withdrawal Agreement.” This in itself is notable because the term *Brexit*, stemming from the words British exit, has become very common in reference to the British withdrawal from the European Union. The EU using the term “Withdrawal Agreement” in its stead, at least in part, could again be an example of trying to avoid the conflict-frame, and also to present the EU as the active party rather than the UK: For example, the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defines the verb ‘exit’ as “the act of leaving a place”, while the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020) defines it as going out or away. By applying this definition to this context, the UK would be the active party who *leaves* or *goes away*. The verb ‘withdraw’, on the other hand, is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as “removing” something, while Merriam-Webster defines ‘withdrawal’ as “the act of taking back or away something that has been granted or possessed.” By this definition, then, it would be the EU who is presented as an active party.

The briefing’s discussion of the vote itself focuses on the speakers in Parliament, stating that:

“most speakers [...] highlighted that the UK’s withdrawal will not be the end of the road for the EU-UK relationship and that the ties that bind the peoples of Europe are strong and will remain in place.”

The voices that are highlighted, then, were of those who spoke well of the future relationship between the parties. Importantly, the briefing also does not quote them directly, but rather, uses the phrase “most speakers”, implying that there could also have been dissenting voices, even though they were not present in the briefing. This, again, could be interpreted as avoiding the conflict-frame.

The briefing refers multiple times to this “relationship” between the EU and the UK, stating that the “Parliament will have its say on future relationship with UK.” The choice to

emphasize this future relationship might be another attempt to avoid any impression of a conflict-frame.

The frame that could be argued to be present in the press release is the human impact-frame. The briefing talks about the Withdrawal Agreement, which “protects EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in other EU countries, as well as their families”, and goes on to discuss “social security rights” and “citizens’ rights”, which “will be maintained” and “will be guaranteed.” The use of the phrase “will be” is noteworthy, as well as the use of the word “guarantee.” Both are statements of high modality, perhaps seeking to alleviate doubts or concerns that Brexit has created. This could be seen as an element of the human impact-frame as well: perhaps the EU is aware of the fact that its citizens may be affected by the situation, or may at least be concerned about being affected, and is therefore using verbs like ‘guarantee’ and ‘maintain’ to preserve a sense of stability for its citizens.

It could also be argued that the history-frame is present, as the press release refers to “fifty years of integration” and introduces a quote by the European Parliament’s President by saying “commenting on the historical importance of the vote.” These choices could be seen as a way of placing the events in a historical context and therefore highlighting the unprecedented nature of the situation.

The press briefing also includes a picture right below the headline. The picture depicts members of the European Parliament standing in Parliament, holding hands. This cannot be said to hold frame-carrying elements, but it could be said that it contributes to the attempts to avoid the conflict-frame by depicting a sense of unity among the members. The placement of the picture at the top of the press briefing, right below the headline, is also noteworthy, as it places more focus and importance on the picture.

The second press release from January 2020 that will be examined here is from January 31st, 2020, when the British withdrawal from the European Union was finalized. The European Parliament released a press release that day titled “[EU Presidents lay out priorities for future of Europe](#)” (European Parliament, 2020-01-31), and for the most part, it consists of quotes from European Parliament’s President David-Maria Sassoli, links to statements from other EU Presidents, and some additional paragraphs about the situation at hand. The quotes from the Parliament’s president are certainly relevant to the EU’s communications strategy, but they will be excluded from this analysis of framing because they are responses to journalists

rather than written, thought-out statements, and also because the questions from the journalists he is answering are not present in the briefing.

The rest of the press release talks about “the future challenges facing the European Union”, and states that the UK’s departure “marks a new chapter in the history of the European Union.” In addition, this focus on the future is highlighted both in the headline of the article and at the very end of the press release, which states that the statements the EU is making “aim to look ahead at the specific internal and external challenges that need to be addressed in the years ahead and how to involve citizens, civil society and national parliaments more in the discussions and decision-making that will shape Europe’s future.” The appearance of a term in the headline is particularly important for creating frames because the headline is usually the first thing the reader sees upon being introduced to an article.

This seems to emphasize the concept of European unity and also correspond with the EU’s goal of improving the public’s understanding of the EU and its work. The specific mention of national parliaments’ involvement in the discussions and decision-making in the EU might be an attempt to address some of the issues that the UK’s voters often cited as reasons for voting to leave the EU.

The main frame that could be identified in this press release is the history-frame: the use of a phrase like “new chapter” is a clear indication that the situation that is being discussed is unprecedented, and it is presented as such. In addition, the press release includes a link to an op-ed by the presidents of the three main EU institutions, which begins with the statement: “As the night draws in this evening, the sun will set on more than 45 years of the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union”, and includes statements like “Our shared geography, history and ties in so many areas inevitably bind us.”

The human impact-frame could also be seen in the discussion of “internal challenges” and “involving citizens” in the decision-making of the EU. This frame is also highlighted in the linked op-ed, which, for example, states that the agreement ensures that “EU and UK citizens will continue to have their rights protected.” In this sense, the frames are constructed not only through the word choices in the press briefing itself, but also through the intertextuality of the press briefing, which aims to guide a reader to other sites through these links. In other words, the context in which the events are placed participates in creating the frame-carrying elements that can be seen in the text.

4.1.2 January 29th online article (UK)

On the day of the finalization of the UK's exit, January 29th, the British organization BBC published an article titled "[Brexit: European Parliament overwhelmingly backs terms of UK's exit](#)" (BBC, 2020) The article first states the vote that was taken, and then summarizes some of the comments made by members of Parliament, as well as the president of the Parliament. The article refers to the situation as "Brexit", but also uses the phrase "withdrawal agreement" several times.

The article includes several videos of speeches made by the MEPs and consists largely of quotes from those speeches. However, it could be said that elements of the conflict-frame are still present, for example (*emphasis added*): "Wednesday's session saw those *on either side of the Brexit debate*, including the UK's 73 MEPs, *celebrate or lament* the end of British EU membership." The voices present in the article are divided into those who lamented the withdrawal, and those who praised and celebrated it and spoke in a critical tone towards the EU. This contrast between the different sides is highlighted in the article again later: "While Brexit Party MEPs spoke of their joy and relief at leaving, others shared messages of sadness on social media as they prepared to vote for the last time."

Much of the framing, then, is created through the quotes that have been chosen for the article, which highlight the two different sides of the debate. Importantly, among these quotes used are quotes from a speech by President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, which was present as a hyperlink in the EU's press briefing. A total of three relatively short paragraphs of the article are dedicated to von der Leyen's comments. The article also includes a video clip of her speech. In addition, the article has quotes from speeches by the European Parliament's Brexit spokesman, Guy Verhofstadt, and Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier, which were also linked in the press release. While the human impact-frame from the press release is not present, the voice of the EU is clearly present through these quotes. However, the conflict-frame is highlighted also by the fact that the article features clips of a speech by Nigel Farage – a member of the Brexit party – and conservative MEP Daniel Hannan who is described in the article as a "prominent Eurosceptic."

However, these elements of the conflict-frame are contrasted by the photos in the article. In addition to the videos of the speeches, the article includes two photos, which seem to reflect the tone of the EU's press briefing, which emphasized the sense of unity despite the

withdrawal, as well as the historical significance of the vote. The first photo depicts a sign shown to the departing British MEPs, stating “It’s not goodbye. It’s au revoir”, meaning *until we see again*, or *see you soon*. This seems to highlight the fact that because the voice of the EU was present in the article through quotes and videos, the substance of the remarks of the EU representatives is also reflected in the framing of the parties’ relationship as continuing despite Brexit. The second picture in the article, perhaps striking a similar tone, depicts MEPs wearing scarves that say “Always united” with the colors of the EU and the UK’s flag.

Finally, perhaps the clearest frame-carrying elements are present towards the end of the article, representing the economics-frame. The last section of the article focuses on the future of the economic relationship between the parties. These last paragraphs discuss the next steps that will be taken in negotiating and ratifying any such relationship. This section of the article is placed last, perhaps resulting in the economics-frame not being particularly prevalent in the article, but it is present nevertheless through phrases like “economic relationship”, “trade talks”, and “trade deal.”

4.1.3 January 31st online article (US)

On the day of the UK’s departure from the EU, January 31st 2020, the New York Times published an article titled “[U.K. Leaves E.U., Embarking On an Uncertain Future](#)” (The New York Times, 2020.) The subheading says: “Britain formally withdrew from the European Union at 11 p.m. on Friday, after nearly half a century of membership.” The article consists of different sections detailing the reactions and responses of different parties, including the UK and the EU, as well as other EU member states.

The two clearest frames that could be seen in the article are the conflict-frame and the economics-frame. The conflict-frame is present, for example, in the following passages:

It [Brexit] concluded three years of fractious debates over whether the country should really leave the bloc, the terms of its departure and the kind of relationship it should forge with Europe. (The New York Times, 2020)

But as the hour of reckoning approached, Downing Street was remarkably subdued, not wanting to rub salt in the still raw wounds of those who desperately wanted to remain. (The New York Times, 2020)

Phrases like “fractious debates”, “hour of reckoning”, and “rub salt in the still raw wounds” indicate the presence of a conflict. The article also describes British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s remarks as striking a “conciliatory note”, which again brings attention to the underlying conflict: The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2020) defines the word “conciliatory” as “intended to gain goodwill or favor or to reduce hostility”, while the Oxford Dictionary (2020) defines it as “intended or likely to placate or pacify.” In other words, the use of the term presumes an underlying conflict that requires conciliation.

It could also be said that the conflict-frame is enhanced by the selection of quotes in the article. It includes quotes from Prime Minister Johnson, as well as other European leaders, such as French president Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, which depict the reactions of the two different sides of the Brexit debate: those who are still members of the EU and believe in its unity, and those, like Mr. Johnson, who wanted to leave it. This is enhanced by the choice of pictures: one of the pictures in the article depicts Mr. Johnson standing behind a podium at a campaign event, which also includes a sign that says “Get Brexit done.”

The second frame that could be identified is the economics-frame, which is present in various sections of the article. Many of the quotes from European leaders focus on the potential future trade agreement, and the article also includes a section subtitled “Britain embarks on its solo journey with a sluggish economy”, which details the economic situation and potential effect of Brexit. In addition, the article includes quotes from the President of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde in a subsection that discusses the European economy and the possibility of a recession. In discussing the economy and trade, the article also dedicates a section to a discussion of the relationship between the UK and the United States.

The other pictures in the article mostly depict the people whose voices are present in the text, including President Macron of France, the EU’s Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier, Christine Lagarde of the European Central Bank, and Prime Minister Conte of Italy. However, in addition to the picture of Mr. Johnson, there is another picture that could be said to have frame-carrying elements. Underneath a subheading about the British territory of Gibraltar,

there is a picture of a man in Gibraltar walking down an empty set of stairs that have the British Union Jack painted on them. The picture and the paragraphs following it could be said to include elements of the human-impact frame: the picture depicts a man walking by himself, looking somewhat disgruntled or perhaps concerned, and the paragraphs underneath discuss the Spaniards in Gibraltar, stating that they “will not face the loss of their jobs.” The non-verbal communication, in this case the facial expression of the person in the picture, could be seen as what Aiello (2019) describes as visual semiotics: the different semiotic resources in a picture act together to create meanings.

Similarly to the EU’s press release from January 31st, 2020, the article does, then, seem to include the human impact-frame in addition to the conflict-frame and the economics-frame, which were not present in the press release. The subsection titled “At London City Hall, Europeans queue up for advice” also highlights this human impact-frame, as it discusses the concerns of European citizens living in the UK, including quotes from a French citizen who describes the situation as a “stressful process.” This could be connected to the op-ed linked in the EU’s press release, which discussed ensuring citizens’ rights. This point of view, then, is present in both the press release and the media text.

Finally, the article also includes a discussion of the op-ed, including several quotes as well as a picture from the press conference of the three presidents of the EU’s main institutions, similar to the picture in the EU’s press release. The article also ends in one of the quotes from said op-ed.

4.2. February 2020

The month of February 2020 represents the immediate aftermath of the UK’s exit from the European Union. Consequently, the topics of the texts from this month focus heavily on the implications of the exit, including negotiations about a future relationship between the UK and the EU. In this sense, the month of February also represents a shift in terms of the issues that were discussed in the briefings and the online articles: the focus changes from the event of Brexit itself to its aftermath, including the implications that the situation has for both parties as well as their future relationship. In addition, as the analysis will show, perhaps due to this shift in topics, the EU appears more eager to define its role in the negotiations as the active party, perhaps to be perceived as more firm or tough.

4.2.1. February press releases

On February 3rd, 2020, three days following the British withdrawal from the European Union, the EU Commission published a press release titled “[Future UK-EU Partnership: European Commission takes first step to launch negotiations with the United Kingdom](#)” (European Commission, 2020-02-03). The press release is to lay out the steps that will be taken in negotiations between the EU and the UK. It first describes the European Council’s recommendation to the European Council to open negotiations with the UK. It then quotes president of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, as well as the EU’s Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier. Finally, the briefing includes a short section titled “Next steps”, as well as a lengthier section titled “Background”, which describes the Withdrawal Agreement that entered into force on February 1st, 2020, as well as the overall timeline of the negotiations and the process of Brexit. The briefing does not include any pictures.

The relationship between the EU and the UK is described as a “partnership.” This word is used not only in the headline of the press release, but also several times throughout it. Importantly, the headline also frames the EU Commission as an actor, using the phrase “takes first step.” This might be an attempt to strike a conciliatory tone and present the EU as the party that took the initiative to reach an agreement.

The press briefing uses phrases like “new partnership” and “future partnership”, emphasizing the change that has occurred and highlighting the transition into a new era. The words “new” and “future” could certainly be seen as frame-carrying elements, perhaps again used to highlight the historical significance. This could be seen as the history-frame. The use of the word *partnership* is also significant in its own right because it highlights the common ground between the parties, or perhaps the EU’s willingness to find common ground and thus downplay the appearance of conflict.

Further in the briefing, areas of interest for the negotiations are mentioned, which include “trade and economic cooperation, law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, foreign policy, security and defence, participation in Union programmes and other thematic areas of cooperation.” Trade and economics is, then, mentioned, but as both are listed among many other issues and only mentioned once, they cannot be seen to carry the economics-frame.

The next potential frame that can be found in the text is in the quotes from the statements of the president of the EU Commission and the Commission's Chief Negotiator. These quotes mostly focus on the issue from the EU's point of view, but also use phrases like "we will defend EU interests." Although it is not otherwise visible, the use of the word 'defend' could be said to carry the conflict-frame, as the word implies that there is an attack or challenge of some sort that the EU needs to be defended from.

The quotes both also use the phrase "interests of our citizens", presenting the EU as a political entity with unified interests, and thus contributing to the EU's goal of "strengthening a common sense of belonging of its citizens", as outlined in their communications goals. The references to citizens and their rights could also be seen as the human impact-frame, and also reflect the goals of the EU's communications, among which was to strengthen the sense of belonging among citizens.

The second press briefing from February 2020 that will be analyzed is focused on the future relationship between the parties and is titled "[EU-UK future relations: "level playing field" crucial to ensure fair competition](#)" (European Parliament, 2020-02-12). This press briefing was published on February 12th, 2020.

The briefing first explains the vote that was taken in the European Parliament to adopt a resolution that outlines the Members' initial input to the "upcoming negotiations with the British government." It then talks about future trade relations between the EU and the UK, and finally outlines some of the EU's own priorities in the negotiations and future steps.

Importantly, the press briefing uses the word 'must' several times in reference to the future of the EU. For example, it states that "The integrity of the EU Single Market and Customs Union must be preserved", and that "The EU must protect its most sensitive sectors." The briefing also states that "the British government should pledge to update its rules on, for instance, competition, labour standards and environmental protection." In this way, the briefing perhaps intends to portray the EU as the active party in determining the terms of the future relationship, and the party that is making demands to the UK. In total, The press release uses the word 'must' (five times), 'should' (three times), and 'cannot' (one time), all of which are words of high modality and perhaps intended to, first, present the EU as an active actor, and secondly, present a tougher image of the EU in the negotiations.

The main frame that could be identified in this briefing is the economics-frame. The phrase "level playing field", which is present in the title and also further in the briefing, refers to

future competition between the EU and the UK in the economic sector. The briefing refers several times to a “free trade deal” and also refers to the single market, and notably, states as two of the EU’s priorities an “economic partnership” and a “foreign affairs partnership” with the UK. The use of the word ‘partnership’ seems to intend to highlight the lack of conflict, even though the briefing also refers to the future economic relationship as “competition” and states that “if the UK does not comply with EU laws and standards”, the Commission should “evaluate possible quotas and tariffs for the most sensitive sectors as well as the need for safeguard clauses to protect the integrity of the EU single market.”

In some sense, then, it could be stated that while some elements of the conflict-frame are present in the briefing, it attempts to highlight the common interests of the parties and focuses most on the economic frame, perhaps as a way to downplay the conflict.

In addition, the illustration used in the press release depicts the continental Europe painted with the EU flag, and the UK painted with the Union Jack. The illustration is also placed at the top of the press briefing, below the headline, thus adding to its importance. While this cannot be said to represent a frame in and of itself, it is certainly noteworthy, as choosing an illustration that in a sense depicts the border between the two parties is a deliberate choice and could be seen to highlight a divide between the UK and the EU. The illustration could even be seen as being slightly removed from the surrounding text in its meaning: the caption to the illustration states that the “Parliament wants the future association agreement with the UK to be as deep as possible.” In this sense, it could perhaps be said that the image-text relation is contradictory, at least to some degree: the illustration itself depicts the parties as two different entities, while the caption follows the rest of the text in emphasizing a sense of unity and a desire to cooperate.

4.2.2. February 3rd online article (US)

[The NBC News article](#) (NBC News, 2020) from Monday, February 3rd, 2020 could be said to carry elements of two main frames. The first frame that is visible in this article is the conflict-frame, and the second main frame is the economics-frame.

The conflict frame is partly set in the headline, which reads: “E.U. and U.K. set out conflicting red lines for post-Brexit deal.” The use of the word “conflicting” might seem self-explanatory as it emphasizes the conflict and disagreement between the two parties.

Importantly, the headline also uses the phrase “red lines”, which according to the Oxford Dictionary (2020) means “an issue or a demand that one person or group refuses to change their opinion about during a disagreement or negotiations.” In other words, it is a phrase that is used in and connected to situations of conflict and disagreement.

Further, elements of the conflict-frame are also present in the opening paragraph of the article, which states that “the two sides on Monday set out competing positions on the terms of their future relationship” and refers to the disagreement as a “showdown” between the two parties. Certainly, again, this emphasizes the disagreements between the parties, but could also be seen as an example of competition-like language: the noun “showdown” means “a fight or a test that will settle a disagreement that has lasted for a long time” (Oxford Dictionary, 2020), but can also have implications about winning or losing. The Cambridge Dictionary (2020) offers the following definition for the word: “an event, such as a meeting or fight, that ends a disagreement or decides who will win”, while Merriam-Webster (2020) says that it can refer to “the placing of poker hands faceup on the table to determine the winner of a pot.” As a term that is commonly used in the context of the game of poker, it perhaps has certain game-like implications here as well and again fits with the notion of “strategic news”, which according to Jamieson (1992) can contain language relating to games or competition.

The conflict-frame is also constructed through the video that is placed at the top of the article, below the headline. Instead of highlighting the conflict between the UK and the EU, however, the video highlights the conflict within the British population, as it is titled “The UK remains divided over Brexit.” Elements of the conflict-frame, then, appear in two different contexts in the article: between the EU and the UK, and between UK citizens on opposing sides of the debate on the issue. The article does not include any pictures, but further in the article, another embedded video is titled “Brexit countdown finally over as UK leaves the European Union.”

The article also includes quotes, first from British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and later in the article, EU’s Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier. However, these quotes from Mr. Barnier are not directly from the EU’s press release, rather, they are from his remarks to reporters and from his personal Twitter account. Similarly to the EU’s press briefing, the article also talks about a “future relationship” between the parties.

The second frame that could be identified in the article is the economics-frame. The article talks about a trade deal and describes a potential no-deal Brexit as a “disruptive economic

break from the bloc” and goes on to mention businesses that are “alarmed” by that possibility. Words like “disruptive” and “alarm” certainly carry certain implications: they again highlight the conflict-frame, but also create an impression of chaos or disorganization. Importantly, none of these implications were present in the EU’s press releases.

In addition to this, the quotes selected from Prime Minister Johnson are ones that highlight the economic perspective: First, he is quoted as saying that the UK wants a “thriving trade and economic relationship with the E.U.”, and in the second quote he says: “Are we going to insist that the EU does everything that we do as the price of free trade?” While this study does not intend to examine the journalistic process of selecting quotes, it is, however, fair to presume that the choice of particular quotes is also deliberate, and therefore, in the case of this particular article, a deliberate way to highlight the economics-frame.

4.2.3. February 12th online article (UK)

On February 12th 2020, British newspaper The Guardian published an article titled “[UK alignment on EU standards price to pay for trade deal, say MEPs](#)” (The Guardian, 2020-02-12), which talks about the resolution passed in the European Parliament regarding the MEPs input to the withdrawal negotiations. The subheading states: “Vote comes as bloc wields its powers to force change in UK domestic law during transition.”

The article uses the same phrase as the briefing, citing the need for a “dynamic alignment with EU standards across a range of issues” in order to maintain a free trade agreement with the bloc. The discussion of trade negotiations, including in the headline and a reference to “competition policy” in relation to trade, is an indicator of the economics-frame.

The article includes a quote from a French member of the European Parliament, which is not present in the press release. On several occasions, it indirectly quotes the text of the resolution passed by the Parliament: “The resolution, passed by the European parliament on Wednesday, called for EU regulations to continue to set the standard for British lawmakers past 2020”, and “The EU’s executive branch said the levy discriminated against those based in member states” (The Guardian, 2020-02-12).

Despite the fact that the article quotes the EU’s language in this way, there is still a conflict-frame present in the article, which was not present in the press briefing. The conflict-frame

can be seen in some of the word choices in the article. For example, the article states that the EU “wields its powers to force change in UK domestic law.” The word ‘wield’ is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as holding “a weapon or tool and look as if you are going to use it”, or “to have a lot of influence or power over other people.” Both of these, especially the former definition, has a connotation relating to conflict. In addition, the word ‘force’ is similarly related to a situation of conflict.

In reference to the EU’s demands to the UK, the article also uses words like ‘order’, ‘threatening’, and ‘toughen up’, and makes the following statement: “under the terms of the transition period, during which the UK stays in the single market and customs union but none of Brussels’s decision-making institutions, EU law continues to be superior to UK national law” (The Guardian, 2020-02-12).

The use of the word ‘superior’ could also be seen as a frame-carrying element, in this case, related to the conflict-frame. It could also be seen as an indicator of the game-like language in news, as described by Cappella and Jamieson (1997), as presenting something as superior presumes a competition of some kind.

The use of phrases such as “wield power”, “toughen up”, or words like ‘order’ and ‘force’ resembles the press release’s presentation of the EU as an actor, but also perhaps reflects the vocabulary of the press release, which used words like ‘must’ or ‘should’ several times. This kind of language that refers to making demands of some kind seems to be reflected in the way that the EU is presented in this media text as well.

The article also includes quotes from Member of Parliament Nathalie Loiseau, who is also pictured in the photo at the top of the article. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is also quoted. The picture used in the article does not include frame-carrying elements, but its placement and subject are noteworthy: it is placed at the top of the article, highlighting its importance, and it depicts one of the people quoted in the article. In this sense, the image-text relation, as described by Barthes (1977: 39) is rather strong, and the image complements the text of the article by highlighting one of the voices present in the text.

4.3. March 2020

In March 2020, the negotiations between the UK and the EU were still ongoing, and one of the significant events of the month was the EU’s publishing of a draft legal document meant

to outline the parameters of those negotiations. In examining the texts from this month, it is also important to note that the emerging Covid-19 pandemic garnered a lot of attention and was mentioned in both the EU's press releases and in the online articles due to its effect on the logistical arrangement of the negotiations. While the pandemic is not the subject of the framing analysis here, it appears as a backdrop of the texts analyzed from this month.

4.3.1. March press releases

On March 2nd, 2020, the EU published a press briefing titled "[EU-UK future relations: crucial to ensure EU leverage and unity](#)" (European Parliament, 2020-03-02). The briefing includes a statement from the Chair of the European Parliament's UK Coordination Group, David McAllister, regarding the start of negotiations between the EU and the UK, and a separate section with background information about the process, both in relation to what happened in February and what the next steps are going to be.

The briefing refers to the process as "negotiations on a future partnership", again using the word 'partnership', perhaps to emphasize a sense of unity and lack of conflict. The headline itself also mentions the word 'unity' in reference to the EU as a whole, but it is also noteworthy that it uses the phrase "crucial to ensure EU leverage." The literal definition of leverage is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "the action or advantage of using a lever", but in this context, another definition offered by the Cambridge Dictionary is more appropriate: "power to influence people and get the results you want." In this sense, the use of the term in the headline perhaps indicates that the EU again wants to portray itself as a powerful actor that wants to maintain its power.

Mr. McAllister's statement that is presented in the briefing uses phrases like "united", "mutual trust" and "respect" in reference to the negotiations. However, it also states that "the EU must do its utmost when negotiating with the UK to guarantee the European Union's interests", perhaps suggesting that the EU's interests and the UK's interests might be mutually exclusive to some degree.

The second section of the briefing is titled "Background" and reiterates some of the points made in a briefing in February: it again uses the words "level playing field" and "dynamic alignment of EU-UK rules." These same phrases were also used in the press briefing from February 12th and that press briefing is also hyperlinked in this March 2nd briefing.

In this briefing, no identifiable frames can be found as there are no persistent patterns present, and the briefing also does not include any images. However, the use of the words ‘leverage’ and ‘must’ are still noteworthy in and of themselves, as they again emphasize the EU’s active role in the negotiations and its power in the negotiations.

The second press briefing analyzed in this section is from March 18th, 2020, when the EU Commission published a briefing detailing a draft legal agreement for the future of the EU-UK partnership (European Commission, 2020-03-18). The press release is titled “[Future EU-UK Partnership: European Commission publishes draft legal text.](#)”

The first section of the briefing briefly mentions the process that took place to produce the document, then mentions cancellations of a negotiating round due to the Covid-19 outbreak, and finally provides a quote from the European Commission’s chief negotiator, as well as a link to the full legal text. Then, the briefing outlines the next steps, which consists mostly of an explanation of how talks will be conducted via video conference due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Notably, this section states that “both sides remain in close contact with one another”, and that “substantive work on the legal texts on both sides will continue over the coming weeks.” The final paragraph briefly mentions issues that are covered in the legal draft, including trade and economic cooperation, law enforcement, among other issues. The briefing includes no pictures or infographics, and at the very end, there are links to the draft legal text, as well as a link to a guide to the negotiations.

Perhaps, then, it could be said that no clear and identifiable frame is present in this press briefing. Gitlin (1980: 7) defines frames as “persistent patterns of cognition and interpretation”, and it cannot be said that any persistent patterns are present here. However, it is notable that the phrase “both sides” is used twice in this relatively short briefing, perhaps as a way to emphasize the commonality of the parties’ goals and the unified effort to make progress in the negotiations.

In terms of the quotes present in the press briefing, the only voice directly present is the EU’s Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier, who is featured in a short quote. In addition to Mr. Barnier, the briefing only refers to “EU and UK negotiators”, and states that the draft legal agreement “follows consultations with the European Parliament and Council.”

4.3.2. March 19th online article (UK)

On March 19th, 2020, the day following the EU's release of its draft legal document, The Guardian published an article titled "[Pressure to delay Brexit talks as coronavirus crisis grows](#)" (The Guardian, 2020-03-19). The subheading states that "Member states take tough line on fishing as Michel Barnier says he has Covid-19." The article discusses the draft legal document, but also ties the negotiations into the issue of Covid-19. The title already sets the tone for the rest of the article: the use of the words "pressure" and "crisis" indicate urgency.

The article itself presents the EU as the tough actor in the negotiations, stating that the EU has "toughened its demands", and referring to changes to previous drafts as being "demanded by EU member states." In addition to the word 'demand', the word 'insist' is also used in reference to member states. This could be linked to the word choices in the EU's press briefing, which used verbs like *must* and *should*, and thus presented the EU as the active party making demands, but also perhaps contributed to a tougher image of the EU, which at least in part appears to be replicated in the article.

The article also includes vocabulary like "fuelling doubts", "bruising chapters", "tougher approach" and "harder line", and states that the British government wants to "tear up arrangements formalised decades ago" as it relates to fishing rights. These could be seen as elements of the conflict-frame, but it could also be said that they are used to underline and highlight an urgency that is present in the situation.

The article also somewhat departs from the typical news discourse described by Van Dijk (2008) by engaging in what could be seen as subjective speculation. The article states: "Confirmation that the virus has spread to the highest levels of the EU negotiating team is bound to fuel calls for both sides to extend the transition period that ends on 31 December 2020."

The article includes quotes from the EU's legal draft, the EU's Chief Negotiator's Twitter feed, a UK government's spokesperson, British prime minister Boris Johnson, the European commissions' chief spokesman, a German MEP, unnamed EU sources and the head of a Brussels thinktank. The article, however, does not include the quote that was present in the EU's press briefing on March 18th.

Worth noting is that because the EU's Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier announced on his Twitter profile that he had tested positive for the coronavirus on March 19th – which was a day after the EU's press release publishing its legal draft – the news about Barnier somewhat overshadowed the EU's press release and dominated the substance of the article, including a

mention in the subheading and a picture of Mr. Barnier at the top of the article below the headline. The article thus makes choices about emphasizing Mr. Barnier's statements and situation by including him in the photo and also quoting him in the photo caption.

4.3.3. March 19th online article (US)

On March 19th, 2020, the American online outlet Politico published an article titled "[Brexit Britain is running out of time](#)" (Politico 2020). The article refers to Britain as "stubborn", in reference to Prime Minister Johnson's insistence that the transition period of Britain's exit will not need to be extended. Like the EU's press briefing from March 18th, the article also refers to the cancelled negotiations, but states that "hopes of conducting talks by videoconference never materialized", as opposed to the press briefing, which stated that such possibilities were being explored.

The talks are presented overwhelmingly against the backdrop of Covid-19, which is said to have led to "other governments" already dropping "Brexit down their priority list." The main frame present throughout the article is the economics-frame, which is also tied to the discussion of the coronavirus and its economic impact, referred to as a "major economic shock." To this end, the article also repeatedly mentions a trade deal or trade negotiations.

This economics-frame is strengthened by the voices that are present in the article, which include the chief executive of the British Ports Association, an unnamed business figure, an unnamed "industry representative", and the director of the European Centre For International Political Economy. By emphasizing such voices, the article highlights the economics-frame by discussing in depth the economic impact of the situation.

In addition to the economics-frame, the conflict-frame is also present in this article. For instance, it states that "talks were dealt a fresh blow", which carries a strong connotation of a physical confrontation of some kind. Later in the article, the opinions of pro-Brexit conservatives are indirectly quoted as saying "Britain should press on with its threats of no-deal while all sides are weakened." Use of the phrase "press on" and the word 'threat' again relate to language of conflict, as does the phrase "while all sides are weakened."

In addition to this, it is also notable that of the 16 direct or indirect quotes in the article, 8 are from unnamed sources, including unnamed government figures. The subheading of the article also includes the somewhat vague phrase "many experts say." This could be due to a

difference in the style of reporting between different countries and journalistic cultures, but it could be said that the willingness to include and rely on such unnamed sources contributes to an overall tone that seems somewhat speculative. However, from a journalistic standpoint, it could also be argued that government officials might be more likely to offer their real thoughts if they are able to do so anonymously. None of the quotes in the article were from the EU's press releases from the month of March.

Finally, it is also of note that similarly to the UK media text from February, the phrase “level playing field” – which first appeared in the February 12th press release and again on March 2nd – is also present in this article, albeit as a single mention and not with a clear reference to the EU.

The article has a total of three pictures: one of Prime Minister Boris Johnson below the headline, one of former MEP David Campbell Bannerman, who is also quoted in the article, and finally, a picture of a man walking down a street with a face mask on. None of these pictures can be said to have frame-carrying elements, but two factors are noteworthy: first, both Prime Minister Johnson and former MEP David Campbell Bannerman, are both quoted and pictured in the article, and the pictures thus highlight their perspectives and perhaps place a greater value on their statements. Second, the last picture in the article, depicting a man with a face mask on, clearly illustrates how, as was the case with the UK article from March, the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic also influenced what newspapers focused on in their articles relating to Brexit.

4.4. Comparisons and quantitative analysis

In this section of the analysis, I will provide some quantitative analysis and comparisons between the press releases and the online articles. The aspects that will be analyzed include the frequency at which different frames appear in different texts, and the use of quotes, or in other words, how often the online articles use the quotes provided by the press release, compared to how often other quotes are used. This quantitative analysis will provide an idea of how many differences or similarities there are between these different texts in terms of the frames and voices that are present in them.

In this part of the analysis, I will also discuss whether certain frames were more likely than others to be replicated in the online articles, and the similarities in language between the press

releases and the online articles, and whether they contributed to creating frames or not. This is important for the study because it can give an idea of what kind of language can be more likely or less likely to be replicated in the online articles. This information can be used to inform future communications decisions by institutions such as the European Union.

Even though the press releases and the articles are on a specific topic in a given month, the frames can also be discussed overall among all of them because Brexit was a topic that was widely present in the media at the time. In other words, if the EU presented some frame in January, it would still be of interest to this study whether or not that frame was present in the online articles in March. The aim is not only to compare a January press briefing to a January online article, but to also provide an overall picture of all the frames present in the EU's texts and the online articles, and what kind of overlap there is, if any.

A total of six press releases and six articles were analyzed. By the definition of Gitlin (1980), key elements of frames are “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation”, and “selection.” In other words, in order to be considered a frame, persistent patterns of frame-carrying elements needed to be present in the text. One instance of a word, for example, is not then considered a frame.

Relying on the criteria presented by Cappella and Jamieson (1997: 47, 89), frames also needed to have representational validity as well as defining conceptual and linguistic characteristics. What this means is that the presence of a frame must always be justified with evidence that can be identified in the data. In order to make these distinctions clear, particularly in the case of separating frames from mere *elements of frames*, I have marked with an asterisk (*) those instances when an element of a certain frame was present in the text, but the criteria of persistent linguistic patterns were not fulfilled.

In the press releases, the economics-frame and the elements of the conflict-frame were each present in one press release, and the human impact-frame was present in two press releases. The history-frame was also present in two of the press releases. In two of the press releases, no identifiable frames – as understood by Cappella and Jamieson (1997: 47, 89) criteria and Gitlin's (1980) definition – were found.

Below is a table of the frames used in the press releases, in which the presence of a frame in a press release has been marked with an X (Table 4).

Table 4. Frames in the EU's press releases.

	Economics	Powerlessness	Conflict	Moral values	Human impact	History
January 29					X	X
January 31					X	X
February 3			X*			X
February 12	X					
March 2						
March 18						

As for the online articles, three articles from the UK and three articles from the US were analyzed, amounting to a total of six articles. The economics-frame was present in 5 of them, while the conflict-frame was present in all six articles. The human impact-frame was present in one article. The history-frame or the moral values-frame were not found in these texts. The conflict-frame was present in all three of the United States articles, and the economics-frame was present in two. One of the articles also included the human impact-frame. Of the UK articles, the economics-frame was present in all three of the cases and the conflict-frame also in all three cases. Below is a table of the frames in the online articles.

Table 5: Frames in the online articles.

	Economics	Powerlessness	Conflict	Moral values	Human impact	History
January 29 (UK)	X		X			
January 31 (US)	X		X		X	
February 3 (US)	X		X			

February 12 (UK)	X		X			
March 19 (US)			X			
March 19 (UK)	X		X			

Notably, one of the conclusions that can be drawn from this quantitative analysis of the data is that despite the fact that the press briefings from March 2020 had no identifiable frames, the online articles from the same month still had frames, in this case, the economics-frame and the conflict-frame. In other words, the EU choosing to omit frames altogether from its press releases did not result in the online articles omitting frames.

In terms of the quotes used, the online articles routinely used quotes that were not in the press releases. For the most part, these included quotes from members of independent institutions or organizations such as thinktanks or the European Central Bank, or from unnamed officials in the EU or in the British government. However, when the EU’s press release included a quote from one of the presidents of the EU’s institutions, or a link to a statement or a speech, these quotes sometimes appeared in the online articles as well. For instance, the first of the January press releases included a hyperlink to a transcript of a speech from Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the EU Commission. The corresponding online article from the same month also includes quotes from that speech. In the second press briefing from January, there was a link to an op-ed by the presidents of the three main institutions of the EU. In the corresponding media text from January 31st, the op-ed was discussed and quotes from it were presented.

On some occasions, quotes were also from the same people, but they were not the same in terms of their substance. In addition, some of the quotes were from anonymous sources. This was especially true of the United States online articles. In addition, many of the quotes were from members of independent thinktanks or policy institutions, or what Carragee and Roefs (2004) might call “political elites.” This is important to note because as Gamson (1988) has argued, the framing of news is often influenced by different sources, and it is therefore vital to understand which voices are present and which are not, as those voices might also have their own agendas and interests to promote.

5 DISCUSSION

In this section of the study, I will first discuss how the analysis provided answers to the research questions presented in Chapter 3. In addition, I will discuss the findings of the study further and relate my findings to the previous research in the field. This chapter will also include a critical analysis and assessment of the research process.

5.1. Answering the research questions

In this section of the study, I will provide answers to the research questions introduced in Chapter 3. These research questions were selected so as to narrow and sharpen the scope of the study and place the focus on whether or not there were notable similarities in the frames present in the different text types. My first research question was the following:

What kind of framing of issues is used in official press briefings by the EU, and to which degree, if any, is this framing replicated in news reports on the same topic in media?

In answer to this first research question, the analysis of the data found that the most frequent frames present in the EU's press releases were the human impact-frame and the history-frame. The human impact-frame described the consequences of an event or action on individual human beings or groups of people (Neuman et al., 1992), while the history-frame focused on placing an event or issue in a historical context by, for example, highlighting its unprecedented nature. For the most part, the online articles were more likely to frame issues through conflict and economic consequence, but when a clear frame was present in the press briefing, on some occasions, it was also replicated in the online article. It could thus be said that while the press releases and the online articles used different frames at different frequencies, there was also some overlap to be seen. However, certain frames that appeared in the press releases, such as the history-frame, did not appear at all in the online articles. The moral values-frame did not appear at all in either text type.

The second research question placed the focus on the kinds of framing devices used in both data sets. This provided insight into how frames were constructed through different linguistic means, as well as photos and journalistic choices, such as quote selection. In this respect, the analysis of the data found that the most frequently used framing devices in both the press releases and the online articles were word choices and the use and selection of quotes. For example, choosing to quote a member of an economic think tank or the president of the European Central Bank was a way to highlight the economics-frame, while quoting different people with opposing views on an issue was a way to highlight the conflict-frame.

Words and phrases with specific connotations were used to create certain frames: this was the case especially with the construction of the conflict-frames in the online articles, which used verbs and nouns with connotations of conflict or disagreement to describe events or issues. In addition, selecting certain expert voices through quotes, such as economic experts or business people, was used to construct the economics-frame. The online articles were found to be much more likely to also use pictures to either construct frames, or as was the case more often, reinforce frames that were introduced in the text through other means, such as word choices or quotes. In addition, particularly the press briefings used intertextuality to construct frames. This was done, for example, by adding a link to an op-ed published by the EU presidents, or by adding links to videos of comments made by different EU officials.

The answer to my second research question is thus that the frames were created in the press releases and online articles mostly through similar means, predominantly through word choices and quotes, but the online articles also used photos, or in some cases videos, to either construct or reinforce frames. Many of the press releases, on the other hand, did not use photos or illustrations at all.

5.2 Discussing the findings

The human impact-frame and the history-frame were the most frequent frames present in the press briefings but were mostly not present in the online articles. The exceptions to this were the January articles, which included quotes from videos or articles that were linked in the press briefings, and the January 31st online article, which included the human impact-frame present in the corresponding press release. In three cases, a frame present in the press release was replicated in the corresponding online article: In February 2020, when the press briefing

included the economics-frame, that frame was also present in both of the articles examined from the same month. In addition, the human impact-frame that appeared in the January 31st press release also appeared in the January 31st article.

The data suggests that when a frame was present in the EU's press briefings, the online articles were more likely to also have that frame. However, the articles also contained additional frames that were not present in the EU's press briefings, particularly in case of the conflict-frames. This seems to indicate two things: First, the media is more likely to frame issues through conflict, or in terms of competition of some kind. In some instances, with the US articles, the online articles even used game-like language to describe the issues at hand. This seems to be in line with Cappella and Jamieson's (1997) observation that US media is known for more "strategic news" and is more likely to frame things in a competitive, game-like way. This could be due to a cultural difference in news media, or due to the fact that because of the geographical distance between the US and Europe, the US is in this case more removed from the events that take place and is thus more likely to frame them as a game.

The economics-frame was also significantly more common in the online articles than in the press releases. This could be linked to the poll in 2016 that suggested that for 'Remain' voters, "the single most important reason for their decision was that "the risks of voting to leave the EU looked too great when it came to things like the economy, jobs and prices." (Lord Ashcroft Polls 2016).

Secondly, the data analyzed in this study suggests that when the EU provided a frame in a press briefing, the same frame, or elements of it, was replicated at least on some instances in the online articles, whereas when no frame was present in the press briefings, frames were still present in the online articles. The data of this study, then, appears to indicate that it is at least possible that frames provided in press releases are likely to be replicated in online articles to some degree. From the point of view of an institution like the EU, it could then be beneficial to attempt to provide some frames in its communications in order to shape some of the media coverage that certain events or issues get. In other words, omitting frames from the press briefings does not seem to prevent certain frames from appearing in news articles.

A similar conclusion could also be drawn from the fact that even when the EU seemed to try to avoid an appearance of the conflict-frame, such as on January 29th, it still appeared in the online articles. Perhaps it could then be said that the best way to avoid a certain frame is to provide a different one, rather than trying to preemptively avoid it. However, in the case of

the conflict-frame, its frequent presence in the online articles could also have to do with the prevalence of more “strategic news” or game-like language relating to competition. In other words, relying on the existing research on the topic, it could be that the conflict-frame is more prevalent in the media and is likely to appear in articles regardless of the EU’s – or any other public institutions – attempts to avoid it.

It is also notable that when the press briefing provided very specific phrases like “dynamic alignment” or “level playing field”, those terms also appeared in the online articles. The commonality of these phrases is that they both are very specific, both appeared in the headline, lead, or the subheading, and especially in the case of “level playing field”, have some game-like elements that are also typical in some media. Perhaps, then, providing some such phrases allows for the EU to have their terminology and phrases replicated in the online articles. In other words, providing some sort of “catchy” phrase to describe a situation might make it more likely for the media to use that same phrase instead of inventing a new one. Speaking in the language that is typical of the news discourse could then help institutions get their message out more effectively.

In addition to this, the term “withdrawal agreement”, which was used repeatedly in the press releases, also appeared multiple times in the online articles. Perhaps the same conclusion cannot be drawn from this, given that the term is part of the very common vocabulary around the topic of Brexit, but it could perhaps be seen as another example of a specific term used in the press release being replicated in the online articles.

The term “withdrawal agreement”, or simply “withdrawal”, however, is interesting in its own right in the sense that even when it appeared in online articles, they still also used the term *Brexit* to refer to the process and the situation. This could be indicative of two things. First, it indicates that the term *Brexit* has become so commonly used and consequently so synonymous with the topic area that its usage is very frequent. This can be seen also in the EU’s occasional use of the term, especially in its headlines, and could also suggest that including the term in the headline or the lead of the press release could also be a way to inform the audience what the content is about in an effective and understandable, commonly recognized way. Second, the more frequent use of the term in the online articles could suggest that the media attempts to present things in a more condensed way, using these condensed, commonly known terms that it can also participate in creating.

Some of the structural elements of the press briefings were also similar in the online articles. The press releases all shared much of the same structure: They began by introducing or explaining a recent event, then provided some background information, and finally outlined some of the next steps with regards to the issue at hand. This, however, is a structure that is typical in the news discourse described by Van Dijk (2008), so perhaps this could be seen as a case of the news discourse influencing the press releases, not vice versa. In other words, adopting structural elements that are typical in news media can help an institution like the EU communicate effectively, especially in the case of press briefings, whose intended audience can often consist of journalists and reporters in the media.

In discussing the relationship between the EU and the news media, however, it is important to note that on certain occasions, such as with the coronavirus crisis that started around the beginning of 2020, the media might inevitably connect a news story to something else. For example, in the case of the data from March 2020, the EU's press release about the publishing of its draft legal document was linked in the media to the story about the EU's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, announcing on the following day that he had the coronavirus.

The study also provided valuable information about the extent to which quotes were used to create frames, and whether the quotes present in the press releases were present in the online articles. Two key findings were made in this regard. First, particularly the online articles relied on quotes to build frames, especially the conflict-frame. Quotes from people with opposing views, or people from opposing sides of the Brexit-debate, were used to highlight the differences of opinion and present disagreements. This contributed greatly to the construction of the conflict-frame. Quotes were also frequently used in creating the economics-frame by quoting certain people, such as the President of the European Central Bank. Secondly, the online articles used a far larger variety of quotes from a larger variety of people, but when the press releases included quotes or statements from one of the presidents of the EU's three main institutions, they also appeared in the online articles. This could indicate that when a press release includes a quote from a person in a high position within the institution, the media is more likely to use that quote in its reporting. In this respect, the 'status' of the person giving the quote seems to matter. This seems to be linked to the notion presented by Garragee and Roefs (2004), which suggests that in media, there are often 'contests' to frame issues in a certain way, and in these contests, political 'elites' often prevail. The study's findings about the use of quotes as frame-carrying devices also seems to

be in line with Gamson's (1988) observation about sources, in this case direct quotes, having a substantial influence on the production of news, as well as the framing of issues or events.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the EU's press briefings often attempted to present the EU as an actor in a situation, including in headlines. Words like 'must' or 'should' also appeared in some of the press releases, and this tone of higher modality also seemed to be reflected in the corresponding online article, which referred to the EU as "wielding its power" and "toughening up." This could indicate that the way in which the EU presents itself through its own communications is particularly significant and can also be replicated in the online articles, at least in part. While the EU's press releases did not include the conflict-frame, it could be said that this kind of vocabulary in the press releases was used to construct the conflict-frame in the online articles.

As stated in the introduction of the study, assessing the EU's communications should be done in relation to its communications goals stated on its website in November 2019. These communications goals included listening to the public and taking their views into account, explaining the EU's policies and their effects on citizens' lives, and connecting with people locally. The presence of the human impact-frame in two of the press releases is perhaps the clearest indication of these goals in the press releases analyzed in this study, as the use of that frame intends to underline the effects of policies on citizens' lives. It could also be said that the EU's use of phrases like "European Union's interests", "citizens' rights", and "protects EU citizens" are attempts to show that the EU is taking its citizens' views into account. Phrases like this also attempt to accomplish what Valentini and Nesti (2010) highlight as the goal of the EU's communication plan, which is to "improve the public understanding of EU and its activities and to strengthen common sense of belonging between citizens."

In terms of the differences between the press briefings and the online articles, the background literature of the study (Jamieson, 1992; Jamieson and Cappella, 1997) suggested that certain frames, particularly the conflict-frame, and certain elements such as the game-like language, would be more prevalent in the online articles than the press releases. The data analyzed in this study seems to support that notion and confirm that in particular the conflict-frame, but also the economics-frame, were more common in the online articles. In addition, examples of game-like language were found in the online articles but not in the press briefings.

Reflecting the findings against De Vreese's (2005) definition of "episodic framing", the data also suggests that both the press releases and the online articles included certain elements of

this. Some of the press releases in particular placed a heavier emphasis on a certain event, such as a vote in the Parliament, but even on these occasions, all the press releases included a section titled 'Background', which provided further information and often placed the event (or episode) in the context of what had happened before, or in other words, what the larger picture was. It could then be said that episodic framing did not seem to be particularly prevalent in either data sets, even though some elements of it appeared in some of the data that was analyzed.

The literature in the field also suggested that in news discourse, there are often "contests" to frame things in a certain way, or to have certain voices heard and present (Garragee and Roefs 2004). This study seems to support that claim, as the online articles repeatedly had a much larger variety of quotes from a variety of people, representing a number of different institutions or interests. To the extent that quotes from EU officials were provided in the press releases, they were used to some degree in most of the corresponding online articles from the same month. Much of the framing of the online articles was also done through the use of the quotes.

Framing was also constructed or emphasized by two additional factors: intertextuality and visual imagery such as pictures or illustrations. Intertextuality was seen in both the press releases and the online articles, but it was used to construct frames particularly in the press releases. This was done by providing links to other press releases, videos, or in one case, an op-ed published by the presidents of the EU's main institutions, the framing of which was then reflected in the online articles from the same month. While intertextuality and hyperlinks were not listed among the framing devices identified by Tankard (2001), it would seem to be a significant tool for constructing frames or emphasizing frames that are also present in a text through other means.

Pictures and illustrations were also used in both the press releases and the online articles, but their use was much more frequent and common in the online articles. In accordance with Barthes' notion (1977: 39) of the image-text relation, these pictures were placed within the body of the text and thus presented as an inseparable part of the text, also complementing the content of the text and being complemented by the content of the text. Some of the pictures also did not contain frame-carrying elements, and were simply pictures of a person whose statements were featured in the text, thus reinforcing the notion that the images did, indeed, have a complementary role in relation to the text.

5.3 Evaluation of the process and methods

Because the data of this study is limited to six press releases and six online articles, the findings should be seen as preliminary. More research is needed to confirm or disprove the patterns that were found on the basis of the data of this study. In particular, a larger collection of articles, online or otherwise, could be helpful in determining how often the frames of the press releases are replicated on a larger scale. In addition, as argued by Scheufele and Iyengar (2016), it is important to note that frames can be specific to certain areas or locations. This study used generic frames and the deductive approach to framing analysis to avoid some of this location specific bias, but it has to be acknowledged, nevertheless. For example, some of the game-like language used in some of the online articles should be seen as tied to the context of the media in that particular country, rather than as a representation of all media as a whole.

The methods chosen were appropriate for the study at hand. The main method used in the study was framing analysis, utilizing De Vreese's (2005) deductive approach, which provided both an interdisciplinary understanding of framing as a concept and specific and detailed methods for how to identify and classify different frames. In addition, because the study involved analysis of news texts and news discourse, the methods of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis were chosen. As discussed in section 3.2.3, framing analysis and Discourse Analysis are also interconnected in a variety of ways. In this sense, combining the two, as well as principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, was appropriate for the purposes of the study. The methods of Multimodal Discourse Analysis were also vital in analyzing not only pictures and other visual elements themselves, but in analyzing them in the context of the language around them.

However, it should also be noted that despite the appropriate choice of methods for the study and the attempt to increase objectivity by relying on the deductive method of framing analysis, the identification of frames is still somewhat subjective, inherently so. To account for this, I have attempted to provide as transparent an analysis of the data as possible, by both introducing the data thoroughly and justifying the presence of frames through specific examples from the data. I have also followed the standard of finding "persistent patterns" of frame-carrying elements, as provided by Gitlin (1980: 7), to ensure that not any feature of the text was considered a frame. To clarify this further, I have made the distinction in my analysis

between frames and *elements of frames*: To be considered a frame, a text needed to include at least more than one element of a certain frame.

The second notable challenge of the study was the limited scope. The search of the news articles analyzed was done by searching for articles on the day of or the day following the publication of a press release by the EU. This was done in order to ensure that the topics of the press releases and the online articles were similar enough to make possible a comparison of the frames present in them. However, because the study limited the scope and the timeframe in this way, it is not able to make generalizable conclusions about the presence of frames in relation to Brexit. In a larger scale, these frames would almost certainly vary at least to some degree depending on the geographic location of a news outlet, also due to the fact that as discussed by Valentini and Nesti (2010), and as explained in Chapter 2.3., the existence of a Europe-wide public sphere is at least questionable and debatable.

Another challenge faced in this study was that it was not able to gain insight into the journalistic process of the news media, or the process by which the EU compiles its press releases. For information about the EU's goals, the study mainly relied on its publicly stated objectives and research on institutional communications. This should be noted and acknowledged despite the fact that the goal of the study was to analyze frames and other linguistic features in both text types, rather than to gain a deeper understanding of what Fairclough (1995: 57-62, 53 1992: 78) calls the *discursive process*, or in other words, the processes involved in creating, distributing, and consuming texts.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the differences or similarities in the framing of the EU's press releases and online articles from two different countries. Press releases were chosen from a predetermined timeframe and all related to the same topic of Brexit in order to facilitate comparisons. Online articles, likewise, were found by searching for articles with certain keywords from the day of or the day following the publishing of a press release by the EU. The scope of the search was limited to online articles from news outlets from the UK and from the US.

The data was analyzed using methods of framing analysis as well as discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. This included the analysis of features such as word choices, quote selection, photo selection, headlines, and subheadings. These features were analyzed from the point of view of framing, and when appropriate, deemed frame-carrying elements that participated in creating the frames present in the texts. The frames were identified using the deductive approach to framing analysis. In other words, the frames were determined prior to the analysis of the data, so as to avoid deeming any potential feature of the text as a new frame. This approach was also chosen because the frames that were studied can be considered "generic": they are not specific to any specific topic, but rather, are applicable across a wider variety of topic matters. This is useful for future research and helps apply the findings of this study to press releases or online articles in other fields and with relation to other topics.

The analysis of the data was separated into different sections based on the date the data was published. This allowed a direct comparison of press releases to online articles. Based on this data, multiple conclusions can be made.

First, the data showed that the media was more likely to use the conflict-frame and the economics-frame. The conflict-frame was the most common in online articles, while it was the least common among the frames that appeared in the press releases. This seems to be in line with previous research that suggests that conflict-frames and competition-like language are more common in the news media (Jamieson 1992). This could be an indication of the fact that much of the news media operates with a profit-incentive, and it could be theorized that elements of conflict create an urgency in a reader to read and share an article, and thus drive more traffic to a website. In the case of a public institution like the EU, such incentive is not necessarily present. In addition, in the case of the EU, one of the goals of its communications

is to maintain and ensure a common sense of identity and belonging among its citizens (Valentini and Nesti 2010). To this end, it could be argued that even the appearance of a conflict-frame could be counter-productive, and it would thus be in the EU's best interests to avoid it. This also seemed to be the case in a number of the press releases, which commonly used nouns like 'partnership' or 'relationship', as well as phrases like "dynamic alignment" to describe the process and the dynamic between the parties. These examples could indicate a desire to actively avoid the conflict-frame.

The more frequent appearance of the economics-frame in the online articles is also noteworthy: it appeared in all but one of the online articles and only one of the press releases. This could be for a variety of reasons. For example, it could be related to the fact that some news organizations are for-profit organizations whose own interests are contingent on the economic implications of an issue. In addition, the topic of Brexit is also widely seen as an issue that has such economic implications around the world. Alternatively, it could also be related to one of the findings of the polls discussed in Chapter 2. The polling of UK citizens who voted in the Brexit referendum found that for voters who voted *Remain*, the single most important reason was "the risks of voting to leave the EU looked too great when it came to things like the economy, jobs and prices" (Lord Ashcroft Polls 2016). In this light, it makes sense for the media to frame things through the economic viewpoint because it can be assumed that the audience is particularly interested in that viewpoint. However, the direction of the causality could also be argued, because as Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258) note, framing is inherently connected to the world around it, in the political, societal, and cultural senses, as are news organizations. It can, therefore, be difficult to determine whether it is the public's interest in the economic viewpoint that drives the framing decisions, or whether it is the framing decisions that drive the public's interest in the economic viewpoint.

Secondly, the data indicates that when the EU provided frames in the press releases, elements of those frames were often also present in the online articles. When the EU did not provide an identifiable frame, frames were still present in the corresponding online articles. Two of the EU's press releases had no identifiable frames, whereas all of the online articles had at least one frame. This suggests that the media in both the UK and the US was likely to always implement a frame when discussing recent events. The frames in the online articles were built largely through word choices (i.e. use of words like 'crisis', 'order', 'threaten', or 'showdown') that have connotations relating to conflict, or through the selection of quotes that represented two opposing side of a debate or opposing views on an issue.

From the point of view of institutions like the EU, this finding can be used to inform future communications. Based on the data analyzed in this study, providing a frame can be useful in helping desired and beneficial frames be replicated in the news media. When the press release provided a frame, or contained some elements of a frame, at least one of those frames appeared in the corresponding online article three out of four times. In this sense, the data seems to indicate that the EU can influence the frames that are presented to a large public through these news organizations, or at least attempt to ensure that frames that are seen as beneficial to the EU are present in the media, even when other, additional frames are also present.

Finally, the study provides valuable information about the selection of quotes in the online articles as compared to the quotes (if present) in the press releases. This is closely intertwined with the analysis of frames because the selection of quotes participates in creating frames by determining which voices are included or excluded in texts. However, analyzing the selection of quotes in and of itself is also useful, as it can help institutions better understand how to get its own voices in the online articles: to “win the contests” to frame issues in a certain way.

The study found that when the EU provided a quote or a link to a transcript or video of a speech or statement by one of the EU’s presidents, these quotes often appeared in the online articles as well. For the most part, however, the articles used quotes from outside the press releases, including from anonymous sources and different institutions and organizations outside the UK government and the EU.

One of the interesting findings from the study is also the fact that it appears that when the press release provided a very specific phrase, such as “dynamic alignment” or “level playing field”, these phrases appeared unchanged in the online articles as well. It could, then, be theorized that using language that is typical for news stories, such as catch-phrases like these, makes it more likely for that language to be replicated in the news texts.

All of these findings are particularly relevant to institutions like the EU that are concerned with communication to the public. Increasing the extent to which its voice and preferred framing is present in articles in the media could also lead to an increase in public popularity of a policy issue or a better public perception of the institution itself. Previous empirical research from De Vreese and Kandyla (2009) already suggests that public opinion on an issue can vary greatly depending on the way the issue is framed, for example, whether it is framed as ‘opportunity’ or ‘risk.’

Future studies in this field could certainly expand the number of texts analyzed, particularly in terms of the online articles, to gain a larger understanding of the prevalence of certain frames. However, future research in linguistics could also gain from analyzing not only frames, but also more specific details of language, such as word choice, the tense of verbs used, and the way different parties are presented as actors or as passive through language choices. A further comparison of press releases (or other public communications) and online articles based on these aspects can be useful for helping institutions shape their communications further, and to better understand how not only frames, but also perceptions and images are created through text in these contexts.

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