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AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE OF EUROSCEPTICISM

Case Study: A Comparative Analysis of two Local Newspapers in the North West of England reporting the EU Referendum

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1 <u>Introduction</u>

On 23rd June 2016, a referendum asked the British public "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" (Electoral Commission, 2016). With a narrow majority of 51.9% of the votes, the UK voted to Leave and this is now known as "Brexit". The referendum has been analysed and, with the benefit of hindsight, scholars and journalists have expressed opinions on whether the third largest member of the European Union made the right decision or not (Eurostat, 2011).[1] Two years after the event, now is the time to look more closely at how and why the referendum became so divisive, as both the UK and EU are fully engaged in negotiating the UK exit from the EU.

Developing simultaneously, euroscepticism has gained momentum as European integration has progressed. Was the EU referendum result in 2016 a crystallisation of opposition towards the European Union? Was it the epitome of euroscepticism as suggested by some scholars (Leruth, Startin & Usherwood, 2018, 3)? Or possibly the UK is an anomaly, truly exceptional and never fully suited to the EU project? Given the importance of the EU referendum in both the UK and the EU, understanding this unique event is a critical point as a research study. For the 51.9% who voted Leave on 23rd June, victory had been secured, but for the 48.1% who voted Remain a loss was felt (Lanchester, 2016). In the literature review there are some recurring variables upon which scholars have placed significance and led to the result: age, education, ethnicity and wealth as participating factors in the decisions to vote Leave or Remain.

This research is designed to investigate how sceptical or supportive messages are in the local press of the EU. Furthermore, whether this might reveal the indicative views at the time of the referendum in the localities studied, and whether this may be applied to other regions. This thesis focuses on analysing the content of two local newspapers in the months before the referendum, from the announcement of the referendum date on 20th February to 22nd June. Through employing multi-method research techniques, this case study will compare how the EU referendum was expressed in two local newspapers. The local newspapers were selected by choosing two areas within a region where the referendum results differed by 27.8%. This research aims to persuade the reader that a more local interrogation of the local newspapers would result in a better understanding of eurosceptic or supportive debates surrounding the EU referendum in a given region.

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[1] The United Kingdom is the third largest EU member state by population.

Through researching articles, an analysis will be made of the eurosceptic or supportive messages in each newspaper, and how the EU referendum debates were conveyed under umbrella "frames". Rengala Hanggi researches the creation of frames which are applied by journalists, defining media frames as "arguments, words, or images that journalists use when relaying information about an issue to an audience" (Hanggli. 2012, 2). Framing is understood as a method of simplifying news and organizing debates about a political phenomenon in such a manner that it is easier to digest. Frames and framing are explored in the literature review of this thesis, and will be employed to analyse the sources found in this research.

1.1   The United Kingdom and the European Union

The UK and the EU have had a long political and economic history, yet there is an argument to be made that the EU referendum in 2016 was one of internal strife. Political discontent within the UK surfaced significantly throughout the referendum campaign. Some scholars have argued that 17.4 million British citizens voted to Leave in a rebellion fuelled by a "disenfranchisement with Britain's political elite" (Financial Times, 11 November 2016), with the emotive language here framing Leave voters' decision in *The Financial Times,* a national newspaper. This evaluation of the Leave campaign's success highlights that political discontent has been framed through eye-catching and bold claims (mostly inaccurate) which purposefully fed eurosceptic views. This framing and emotional pleading has resulted in the EU becoming a topic of discussion for some who might not have concerned themselves with the EU before the referendum.

The typology of euroscepticism used in this thesis is from the work of Taggart and Szczerbiak, whose research highlighted a scale of euroscepticism from soft to hard. A hard eurosceptic is defined as someone who is principally opposed to the idea of the EU, one who does not believe in the project at all, and one who would identify with a political party promising to withdraw its country from the EU. A soft eurosceptic is defined as someone who is not principally opposed to the EU, although is not enthusiastic about increasing its powers (Fitzgibbon, Leuruth & Startin, 1).

The local press is a valuable source, containing opinions and commentary that perhaps could have been a sign of public opinion in the North West of England[2].

The Conservative Party

By 2016 the Conservative Party had witnessed a growing number of "defects" from its supporters who began to favour the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). Paul Webb and Tim Bale comment on the estimation that 60% of UKIP supporters in early 2013 had previously voted for the Conservative Party (Webb & Bale, 2014, 963). Their study argues that a "significant proportion of grassroots Tories might be tempted to vote for, if not actually to join, another party" leaving the Conservative Party with noticeably fewer supporters (Webb & Bale, 2014, 963). Furthermore, this research highlights the sentiments towards an EU referendum and the scholars argue that those who have defected to UKIP are "much more likely to support EU withdrawal" (Webb & Bale, 2014, 964). This defection of voters is significant for this thesis as it highlights that in 2014 eurosceptic voting tendencies had threatened the governance of the Conservative Party in the UK and, moreover, at the expense of the ruling political party in government.

The European Parliament (EP) elections in 2014 were held from 22nd May to 25th May. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) gained substantial momentum and votes, securing 24 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), resulting in the Conservative Party trailing behind the Labour Party. The Conservative Party achieved only 23.9% of the vote, losing 7 MEPs from the elections in 2009 (BBC, 2014). This outcome shows that there were strong eurosceptic tendencies in the UK electorate. It should be noted that turnout was very low in the 2014 EP elections with only 35.6% of the electorate voting in the UK and in other member states across the EU the figure was similarly low (Official website of the European Parliament).

1.2   The EU referendum 2016

The pledge to hold a referendum on the membership of the UK in the EU was made in January 2013 by the Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, in his Bloomberg speech. Cameron pledged that, should he be re-elected in 2015, "I say to the British people: this will be your decision. And when that choice comes, you will have an important choice to make about our country's

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[2] Hereafter simply referred to as the North West

destiny" (Wright & Cooper, 2016). The members of the Conservative Party were given the option to support either the Remain or Leave groups and this led to a loss of party unity and "side-taking" (Lanchester, 2016, 5). The (designated official) leading Remain campaigning group was "Britain Stronger in Europe" and the (designated official) leading Leave campaigning group was "Vote Leave". One criticism of the Remain campaign was that it lacked clear direction which led to scaremongering ("Project Fear"). Consequently, many have argued that the likelihood of a majority to vote Leave was not sufficiently considered.

Table 1: The EU referendum results across the United Kingdom (Electoral Commission, 2016).

Region	Leave %	Remain %
The United Kingdom	51.9	48.1
England	53.4	46.6
Wales	52.5	47.5
Northern Ireland	44.2	55.8
Scotland	38.0	62.0
Regions within England	**Leave %**	**Remain %**
West Midlands	59.3	40.7
East Midlands	58.8	41.2
North East	58.0	42.0
Yorkshire and The Humber	57.7	42.3
East	56.5	43.5
North West	53.7	46.3
South East	51.8	46.2
South West	52.6	47.4
London	40.1	59.9

England and Wales voted Leave, whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland had predominant majorities for Remain. In Table 1 regional differences can be seen and, due to the size of the English population, the overwhelming predominance of their vote influenced the final result (Electoral Commission, 2016).

1.3   Selection of local newspapers within a region

Studies of the media and newspapers have considered mostly their influence on the referendum results, but little research appears to have been carried out on the influences within regions. For this case study the North West will be explored, and within this area, two local newspapers from the areas of Manchester and Blackpool have been chosen.

The North West is the second largest geographical region in the UK and it voted Leave. Within the North West, Manchester and Blackpool were selected for the focal case study because they were extremes of the referendum results.

In the North West 3,665,945 registered votes were cast, resulting in a 53.7% majority for Leave (Electoral Commission, 2016).

Table 2: The EU referendum results in Manchester and Blackpool (Electoral Commission, 2016).

Region	Leave %	Remain %
North West	53.7	46.3
Area	Leave %	Remain %
Manchester	39.6	60.3
Blackpool	67.4	32.5

This region has a mixture of large towns, ethnicities and immigrant populations. The North West was an industrial hub in the UK during the late 19th century and early 20th century. However, as industrial strength has steadily declined, large areas of unemployment and reliance on the social security system have emerged. The region is home to two large conurbations, Manchester and Liverpool. These cities, along with the affluent South Lakes constituency, were the only areas in the North West to vote Remain (Electoral Commission, 2016). There is a map in the Appendix displaying the location of both Manchester and Blackpool.

Now although the two areas had contrasting results the question considered in this case study is how the referendum debate was expressed in the local newspapers.

1.4   The Research Design and Question

This research study examines the North West through two local newspapers, selected from different ends of the referendum results, the areas which voted most to Remain and most to Leave. By enlisting a multi-method research technique, this study will examine how claims made in the campaign period were framed in the local press as eurosceptic or not. Furthermore, the percentage of eurosceptic claims in the papers are compared with the referendum results. A local analysis of the referendum outcome may point to a clearer understanding of how local press framed eurosceptic arguments and how North West local newspapers might have exposed the readers to eurosceptic or support messages.

The research question addressed in this thesis is:

In the North West, voters in local areas made opposing electoral decisions in the EU Referendum.

How differently did two local newspapers report the EU Referendum debate?

Using the analysis of local newspapers as a methodological tool, what can be learnt about euroscepticism and the EU Referendum?

This thesis investigates the comparisons between two local newspapers in their presentation of the EU referendum debates and whether frames can be drawn from both. The hypothesis is that claims in the Manchester publication will reflect the supportive standpoint of the results in that area. Contrary to this, in Blackpool, papers will be predominantly eurosceptic, reflecting the results in this area. Furthermore, it assumes that frames will be presented in both papers, and will overlap to an extent. In Chapter 3 the theoretical debate regarding the EU, public opinion and voting trends or tendencies are discussed. In Chapter 4 the design and methodology used for the analysis of this research is outlined. The findings and analysis are in Chapter 5 with conclusions being made in Chapter 6.

2   <u>Literature Review</u>

Regional research into the referendum results have usually concentrated on England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Research on the result has focused on recurring factors, for example, differences in age or education, within and between the various regions. When one attempts to investigate the eurosceptic rhetoric and framing in the local press within one region during the EU referendum campaign period, there appears to be a gap in the literature. The themes and concepts of euroscepticism are explored in this chapter through a review of the relevant literature, and have become the background to this research.

2.1   Public attitudes towards the European Union and growth of euroscepticism

In the late 2000s, as euroscepticism was widely established within Europe, Crespy and Verschueren note that the press coined the term to "name those opposing the United Kingdom's membership in the European Economic Community" (Crespy & Verschueren, 2009). Furthermore, their argument highlights the contested definition of the term *euroscepticism*. More recently there has been widespread use of the term in political science and in common language, therefore defining its meaning is crucial to understanding literature on eurospecticism or eurosceptics (Crespy & Verschueren, 2009, 382). The definitions and typology of euroscepticism upon which this research is based are discussed in Chapter 3.

As Andrew Duff described in his work on how to deal with euroscepticism, the British public opinion towards the EU is a mirror of public opinion towards internal British politics. Duff notes that the British public "is very distrustful of the EU but so it is also of the Westminster Parliament" (Duff, 2013, 147). Rather than trusting EU institutions more than national ones, (which is common in other EU member states), Duff argues that public opinion views the national and European Parliament with caution and scepticism. In the UK public opinion is often geared towards suspicion when discussing politics, whether from the North West to Westminster or from the North West towards Brussels.

Supporting Crespy and Verschueren's argument, Katz believes that the European project has been plagued by a form of euroscepticism from its inception (Katz, 2008). Katz's analysis questions the

roots of eurosceptic public attitudes and how the ideology has affected voting patterns in the UK. The two main arguments Katz makes for a growth in euroscepticism are, firstly, a growing dissatisfaction due to the democratic deficit criticised in the EU in the 2000s, and, secondly, the lack of unity across the continent in terms of "European-ness", (Katz, 2008). These two factors emphasize that across the EU there is both a policy problem (the democratic deficit of the institutions and their accountability) and a polity problem (the lack of a sense of "European-ness"). Although both issues contribute to growing euroscepticism, the first is perhaps easier to correct through greater accountability and more political participation. However, Katz's second argument regarding "European-ness" is more challenging to confront, as it is linked to personal identity, and citizens have many complex and unique identities. However, often authors suggest that national identity triumphs at the expense of "European" identity. This thesis draws upon this second argument as the British exceptionalism case has often been made towards the European project and polity issue.

Many scholars place emphasis on the expansion in 2004 of the EU from 15 member states to 25 member states (the "Big Bang") known as a watershed moment for the EU and, consequently, the growth of euroscepticism (Official Website of the European Union). As the EU grew by ten new member states in 2004, this signalled for some scholars a decisive shift from economic rationale for membership (a simplified macroeconomic cost-benefit) to a social and political rationale for membership (Hooghe & Marks, 2007). Their argument emphasises that the EU was perceived to have changed from an economic objective to a political initiative, and identity issues became pivotal in the breakdown of the permissive consensus rationale.

By 2013, scholars had identified the decisive shift of euroscepticism from a fringe issue across Europe to a phenomenon more serious in many member states. The literature surrounding eurosceptic ideas in popular discourse often notes how this criticism has moved from disgruntled citizens to the mainstream political parties (Brack & Starin 2015). Much academic literature surrounding the subject has acknowledged that EU-related referendums have, in recent years, become a feature in the European integration process. Decision-making is moving away from Parliaments and into the public sphere. This change is evident through the referendums held in France and the Netherlands in 2005 which rejected the proposed Constitutional Treaty and, thereby, eliminated any further ideas of EU Constitutional Treaty (Startin & Krouwel, 2013). Furthermore, Brack and Startin make convincing arguments that euroscepticism has been accelerated by

increased use of referendums, resulting in the European project being questioned and anti-EU discussions becoming widespread (Brack & Startin, 2015).

The decline of support for the EU is not uniquely found in the UK. The prevalence of euroscepticism in large and influential member states has highlighted the limits of European integration. Juan Diez Medrano notes that this trend is particularly concerning as the decline of support towards the EU project "is especially noticeable among its top three leading member states", France, Germany and the UK (Medrano, 2012, 192). Medrano's analysis of the "worrying aspects of decline in public support" is where this thesis begins its analysis of public opinion found in local newspapers (Medrano, 2012). The decline in public support will be investigated in this study acknowledging that, as Medrano argued, euroscepticism had become a prominent feature of politics across the EU, both in the UK and other member states.

2.2 Euroscepticism and the media

In 2012, Wilde and Trenz discussed the way euroscepticism has become debated more in general conversation and this trend they believe has advanced through mass media. These scholars argue that opposition to the EU was largely an issue of polity, stressing that the "competencies and constitutional settlement of the EU" are what the term euroscepticism refers to (Wilde & Trenz, 2012). The conclusion of their argument is that the concept of euroscepticism is largely tied to the uncertainty surrounding the EU project. Wilde and Trenz argue that "the unfinished nature of the EU" has made euroscepticism possible. Through the actions of the media, rhetoric and framing are used to question the competencies of the EU.

In 2017, after the EU referendum in the UK, Jean Seaton's research paper makes a compelling argument regarding the connection between the regions and the local press on the referendum result. In Jean Seaton's account of the media's reporting of the referendum campaign, she highlights three key points. Firstly, her argument is that Brexit "was won in the regions", where local reporting has been declining (Seaton, 2017, 333). Seaton notes the under-representation of regional communities and their consequent alienation led many to take the opportunity of the EU referendum as a chance to be heard (Seaton, 2017, 334). As the observation is made that the EU referendum

debates were influenced by the region of voters, this thesis is designed for repetition and retesting in another region.

Secondly, Seaton highlights the change social media has had on voting. She notes that rather than increase exposure to different ideas or opinions, social media has decreased exposure to a variety of views (Seaton, 2017, 334). Fuelling a barrage of similar messages, online participation during the referendum campaign lacked different points of view. Social media did not lead to different opinions being heard or seen by people of opposing views. Often it has been remarked upon that some people were not aware of anyone who voted for the other side in the referendum.

Thirdly, Seaton observes newspapers are the traditional form of media which, highlights not the weakness of print media, but the strength of it (Seaton, 2017, 335). The decline of local newspapers is evident; however, the effect of print media on public opinion is still relatively strong which is important for this research.

In 2018, the role of the media in European politics and its influence on national newspapers is a topic covered by Arimina Michailidou. Michailidou comments on the expectation that living in European democracies, one assumes access to political information and an exchange of opinions is readily available (Michailidou, 2018). However, this access is coloured by "the view from Brussels" that a large share of responsibility for ignorance or misunderstanding the European project is due to the negative influence from the media itself. This thesis notes that the local newspapers are analysed with the knowledge that bias and negativity may be already communicated within the local press of the North West.

2.3   Framing in the media of the EU referendum

Khabaz laid the ground work for the media's role in the EU referendum itself in his research on "Framing Brexit" in the top-selling newspapers in the UK. Khabaz argues that through his content analysis of UK national newspapers there is a significant bias given to the pro-Leave campaign (Khabaz, 2018). Khabaz looks at two separate research questions, firstly, to investigate how the campaign messages were framed in national newspapers and, secondly, to investigate which frames were "repetitively deployed" and how they were related to the public's concerns about the EU (Khabaz, 2018). This thesis uses the above literature review and especially the work of Khabaz, to

begin research into how regional newspapers framed the EU referendum. As Khabaz concludes that national newspapers were biased toward the Leave campaign, this thesis investigates whether this was the case in local newspapers in the North West (Khabaz, 2018). The methodology used also derives features used by Khabaz and this is noted in Chapter 4.

This thesis understands the media as a tool where the public are subconsciously guided towards topics to think about. This thesis questions the extent that framing in the local media can have on influencing decision-making amongst the audience and, in the case of the EU referendum, the electorate. Entman argues one must be aware of framing bias and how this can affect the dissemination of news. Entman concisely defines framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them" (Entman, 2007, 164). This definition simplifies our understanding of the use of framing when discussing the EU referendum. Entman continues that "getting people to think (and behave) in a certain way requires selecting some things to tell them about"; his description of frames shows there is a strong element of selectivity in framing. (Entman, 2007, 165).

When discussing the framing of political events in the media, Hellman's research on the EU referendum and media framing offers insights which this thesis acknowledges as pertinent to the literature discussion. Three key issues of decision-making in referenda are highlighted by Hellman. Firstly, she discusses that voters often make decisions based on issues which are "more or less unrelated to the question on the ballot" (Hellman, 2016, 1), and this will be explored in the Findings and Analysis chapter. Hellman highlights this as many scholars acknowledge that questions about the EU and the UK's membership were not high on the agenda for many voters previous to 2016. The issues which Hellman is suggesting are outside the referendum debate. However, these are pertinent, as concerns not included on the ballot paper have been "re-framed" and the electorates thoughts about the referendum are swayed by external factors.

Secondly, Hellman supports Holbolt and de Vries' argument that the majority of politics is too complex for people to understand, and therefore framing is used by journalists "to present information and reduce the complexity of an issue" (Hellman, 2016, 4). This argument highlights that the complexity of EU-UK relations was too difficult for most of the electorate to understand, and therefore framing was engaged, both purposefully and accidentally, in order to resonate with their audience.

Lastly, and linked to the above argument, is the relationship between the more politically aware and the less politically aware. Many scholars have sought to conclude that the amount of exposure to political communication and debates has a direct influence on the voting tendencies of an individual. Hellman argues that one's opinion on a topic is often the most recent and therefore most readily available ("off the top of your head") (Hellman, 2016, 7). The more politically aware one is, the more they will seek out political information and news, leading them to a more selective process of opinion forming. On the contrary, those who are less politically aware, who do not seek out political information and news, will have a less selective process of opinion forming and, therefore, will revert to the most recent argument exposed to them. Hellman's analysis of information-gathering and opinion-making here supports the work of Holbolt and de Vries regarding the education and engagement of Remain and Leave voters (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016,). Hellman's analysis continues to seek justifications and reasons for the use of framing in the EU referendum campaign debates and their portrayal in the media (Hellman, 2016). These three arguments by Hellman have helped this thesis explore the possible frames found in the newspapers analysed in the North West.

Frames in newspapers are explored by Hanggli as a conscious way of influencing public opinion. Hanggli argues that media framing is part of a larger strategy to influence the public's interpretation of policies and politics (Hanggli, 2012, 3). Hanggli highlights the degree of responsibility which journalists have in disseminating information, "the media are assumed to report the frames proportionally to the degree to which they are promoted" (Hanggli, 2012, 3). However, as Hanggli uses the word "assumed" it is clear that journalists do not always use the frames proportionately. This thesis will explore the different frames the EU referendum event was given in the two newspapers analysed.

Heinz Brandenburg conducted his study on the 1997 General Election in the UK, researching the impact of parties on media agenda formation and questioning the influence of each actor on the public's decision-making. Brandenburg's research finds that the general trend "sees the media responding to stimuli from the parties rather than vice versa" (Brandenburg, 2002, 44). Brandenburg's research offers the literature review an insight into the relationship between political parties and the media.

2.4   Tensions in the North West

In the early 2000s, Martin Burch and Riccardo Gomez wrote about the relationship between the English regions and the EU. Their comments include the opportunities which the EU development funds have given the North West. The EU has, in their opinion, offered English regions the opportunity to take a proactive regional stance, and they coined this approach "new regionalism" (Burch & Gomez, 2002, 769). Burch and Gomez note the shift under new regionalism to *governance* rather than *government*. Although their analysis acknowledges that regional governance has developed, it does not comment on the lack of public support for the EU. The EU was an aspect of politics for the North West, however there appears to be little acknowledgement for its significance in regeneration or employment.

There was social unrest in the region more than a decade before the EU referendum. Eric Kaufmann comments that in May 2001 the North West saw riots in Oldham and Burnley, described as two "segregated northern mill towns" (Kaufmann, 2014). These riots highlight that, although the UK was relatively prosperous at the time, tense ethnic relations were growing in urban centres in the North West. Kaufmann questions these turbulent ethnic divisions emerging under Prime Minister Tony Blair's premiership, as Blair sought to create an ideal globalised multicultural vision for the UK (Kaufmann, 2014). Kaufmann highlights the work of David Goodhart in this field. Goodhart's analysis focuses on immigration and racial problems in the 2000s, he argues that tensions had arisen, resulting in the less financially secure in society feeling overlooked for jobs and opportunities in favour of immigrants (Kaufmann, 2014). Kaufmann explains this is a consistent theme of the Brexit debate, "the surfeit of cheap, high quality, motivated labour provided by immigration, notably from Eastern Europe allows a short termist upper middle-class to reap the benefits while ignoring the large pool of deskilled or undermotivated native workers" (Kaufmann, 2014). For this thesis, Kaufmann's analysis was a useful basis for understanding the background of euroscepticism in the North West.

Across the country votes were being cast for UKIP, the anti-immigrant and far-right party in the 2000s, which indicated a decade of growing tension toward immigrants with race and nationalism escalating in the UK.

2.5   Discussions about the referendum results

Political discontent, strong association to national identity, macroeconomic imbalances and immigration have all been themes associated with Leave voters. The Leave campaign was more active and strategic by using these factors to their advantage. The Remain campaign was criticised for having weak arguments and leadership, preferring to justify the status quo. This resulted in their campaign being condemned for a lack of convincing arguments to draw undecided voters to the Remain persuasion.

Euroscepticism in the UK has been evident to a degree from the original British membership into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 as, two years later, the UK held a referendum to decide whether or not to continue to be a member (Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley, 2016, 3). So where did this British brand of euroscepticism come from? Chris Gifford noted that the beginning of eurosceptic sentiment started in the UK through the emergence of the post-imperial crisis, as the UK was forced into economic and political "downsizing" (Gifford, 2008). Gifford argues that the shrinking British economy in the 1960s and 1970s meant access to the common market was of prime importance for some members of the government (Gifford, 2008). Gifford's interpretation is that the government pushed for membership of the EEC as an economic venture. However, some critics now view the EU as an expensive bureaucratic enemy and a hoodwinking of the British electorate in 1973 (Gifford, 2008).

In 2018, after the EU referendum, Nicholas Startin wrote a thesis regarding the British brand of euroscepticism, and its effect on its referendum campaign. Startin notes "a perceived bygone era of a better Britain", (Startin, 2018, 457) which is an apt description of some comments noted in the findings section of this paper. The tradition of euroscepticism in the UK leads Nicolas Startin to question why some commentators argue the result was a shock, as understanding the public attitudes of the time, one would be led to the conclusion that Leave was a real possibility.

3 Theory

This chapter reviews current theories considered helpful for reviewing local newspapers during the campaign period and the rhetoric used. The theories help us understand whether, and how, the areas may have been exposed to eurosceptic framing.

In many member states transferring policy-making to the EU has been increasingly criticised since the Maastricht Treaty. Mainstream political parties have noticed a backlash against pro-EU developments and further integration, witnessing a growing unwillingness to surrendering national sovereignty. In 2007, Hooghe and Marks presented an argument which emphasised the move from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus within member states since the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Hooghe & Marks, 2007). More than a decade later, Gifford and Wellings observed, and agreed, the EU referendum was an outcome of pressure which grew following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (Gifford & Wellings, 2018).

Hooghe and Marks also noted that with further EU enlargement and deeper integration of the European Union, questions arising over membership of the EU have become commonplace, as noted in Chapter 2 (Hooghe & Marks, 2007, 119). In their attempts to explain the change in British public opinion, Evans and Butt concluded the rise of euroscepticism had evolved from a rational balance of economic costs and benefits of the EU to a more subjective political debate. Moreover, they argued "the changing pattern of public attitudes towards the EU" has since been noticed by political commentators as evident through a change in the voting patterns (Evans & Butt, 2007, 174). In the authors' discussions, the change in attitudes was a result of the European Project moving from an economic union towards a political union.

As the EU became more integrated, the potential of the principle of freedom of movement was revealed. Some scholars have placed an emphasis on immigration for rising political discontent. Immigration concerns featured heavily and emotively in the lexicon of the referendum campaign. Amber Curtis suggests the British relationship with immigration is not unique, however this thesis proposes the rise of prejudice was a strong factor for the Leave campaign and furthered their movement significantly (Curtis, 2014). Curtis notes that scholars "continually record a high correlation between affection for ones' own group and prejudice against another" (Curtis, 2014).

Curtis's theory argues the impact of immigration was a factor which created a "them" vs "us" group mentality that was strongly imbedded in some regional and local communities in the UK.

Hooghe and Marks outline the cleavage theory in 2018 which is useful for the debate in this thesis. The authors point to an emerging cleavage between the central state and peripheral communities, a "durable cleavage" which has not been effectively addressed by traditional or mainstream parties, namely the Labour Party and the Conservative Party (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). For the new political parties, the cleavage theory claims they can gain from the losses made by mainstream parties which have not reformed or modernised. Therefore, their conclusion is that a major shift has occurred in voter preferences from traditional political parties to new political parties, for example the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which is effectively a single-issue party. When discussing euroscepticism in member states Hooghe and Marks note "the EU is itself such a shock, because it introduces rule by those regarded as foreigners" (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, 109). This perceived threat of rule by foreigners has led to a backlash against the EU, allowing fringe or single-issue parties to exploit the weaknesses of traditional parties (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, 109). Furthermore, along the same lines, scholars such as Holbolt and de Vries have noted mainstream parties have tended to remain consistently in favour of the EU, as these parties fear they are alienating their voters by becoming too "one sided" on any one issue (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016, 422). Hooghe and Marks reference the arguments of Lipset and Rokken, noting that these new parties are able to "exist alongside, without replacing, parties formed on prior cleavage" (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, 110).

Holbolt and de Vries' theory supports the claim that European integration is no longer led by an elite but is now shaped by public or voter attitudes. Ultimately member states' governments and parliaments are being forced to accept or reject deeper integration. Holbolt and de Vries identify two variants of support for the EU, firstly, regime support (support for the constitutional design of the EU) and, secondly, policy support (support for the collective decisions and actors) (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016, 420). Holbolt and de Vries note characteristics which are typical (or attributable in their view) to eurosceptic views: strong national identity, national pride, negative attitudes toward minority groups or xenophobic attitudes (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016, 421). Their view is that "European integration is too complex and remote from the daily lives of most citizens for them to have sufficient interest, awareness or emotional attachment to base their attitudes on an evaluation" (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016, 421). This thesis uses the argument of Holbolt and de Vries to understand why framing eurosceptic concepts must be done whilst acknowledging nuances of

support for integration. The eurosceptic debates in the Manchester and Blackpool areas hinge on the above characteristics outlined by Holbolt and de Vries.

From an economic point of view, Inglehart and Norris argue that the rise of populism in recent years has been associated with the "have-nots" (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The authors define the "have-nots" as "the low-skilled, long-term unemployed" (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, 2). Inglehart and Norris noted economic insecurity can be placed upon the British variety of euroscepticism and, furthermore, on the voting patterns in the referendum. According to Inglehart and Norris, the voters have become more susceptible to nativist and xenophobic scare-mongering (a by-product of immigration or apparent job-losses to immigrants), both feelings of insecurity being exploited in the Leave campaign (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, 2). Their analysis emphasised that "consequences for electoral behaviour" result from economic insecurity becoming embedded in society (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The North West region changed during the 1970s from heavy industry and manufacturing areas to services (e.g. tourism and education), and went through a period of prolonged economic insecurity. Inglehart and Norris's theory of economic uncertainty could have been a contributory factor to the North West's euroscepticism.

The theories outlined in this chapter have highlighted useful and pertinent research trends. Firstly, there is a school of thought which attributes the growth of euroscepticism to the changing nature of the EU from an economic venture to a political project after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Secondly, rule by foreigners and immigration is brought to the argument, and believed to be a contributing factor to the growth of euroscepticism. Thirdly, the growth of euroscepticism in public opinion has been led by single-issue political parties strengthened by dissatisfaction with mainstream parties.

4   <u>Methodology</u>

This thesis will use multi-method research techniques through a qualitative and quantitative approach. This methodology draws stimulus from the research designs found in the literature review. The differences and similarities will be explored between two local newspapers in the North West. The multi-method approach is used to understand the comparisons between the local newspapers. The findings are shown by the statistical data, and a comparison of different features of the articles.

4.1   Qualitative method: The Comparison of the Newspapers

This thesis will analyse the sources selected through three approaches. Firstly, the sentiment towards the EU of an article is explored through categorisation in the style of Khabaz (Khabaz, 2018, 5), secondly by looking at the classification of articles in the style of Bijsmans (Bijsmans, 2018), and, thirdly, through identifying recurring salient frames in both newspapers. Conclusions will be drawn in relation to literature.

<u>The sources</u>

The sources were taken from two newspapers, the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette.* These two papers are similar, both being local newspapers distributed around the Manchester and Blackpool areas respectively, printed daily (except Sunday) and in tabloid style. Both are available by subscription or one-off purchase. The *Manchester Evening News* is owned by the Reach PLC group which is based in London and, at the time of the EU referendum campaign, Rob Invine was the Editor. The *Blackpool Gazette* is owned by Johnston Publishing Limited which is based in Edinburgh and, at the time, of the EU referendum campaign, Gillian Parkinson was the Editor. The most recent statistics show the average circulation of the *Manchester Evening News* is 39,422 copies (ABC certificate, Manchester Evening News, Jan – Dec 2017), and of the *Blackpool Gazette* is 8,167 copies (ABC certificate, The Gazette – Blackpool, Jan – Dec 2017).   The *Manchester Evening* News is generally understood to lean politically toward the left, whereas the *Blackpool Gazette* is understood to be politically centrist.

Due to varied distribution and newspaper sales points there is no direct mapping nor correlation to the political constituencies within the Manchester and Blackpool areas, although overlap cannot be eliminated as many would be able to access both papers online.

The time-frame

The time-frame chosen to be reviewed was from 20th February 2016 to 22nd June 2016, from the day the referendum was announced by the Prime Minister through to the day before the vote was held.

The units of analysis

The newspaper sources selected any articles which included one or more of the following words "Brexit", "Leave", "Remain", "Vote", "Referendum" and "European Union". All the articles were checked for these words within the two newspapers during the time period, and articles containing these key words were selected as units of analysis. A similar selection process was used for the search of hashtags amongst Twitter users by Llewellyn and Cram (Llewellyn and Cram, 2016). (This thesis regards any newspaper sources which encompassed claims, messages, comments and any referencing with the EU referendum).

The outline of the findings

This thesis enlists the techniques and methodology set out by Patrick Bijsmans in "Varieties of opposition to the EU in the Low Countries: A comparison of the Dutch and Flemish press". Bijsmans draws the distinction between polity and policy areas. Polity being the "position concerning the idea of European integration, including institutional design, EU membership and core elements of the EU" similar to Holbolt and de Vries in Chapter 3 (Bijsmans, 2018, 361). Policy being the "policy fields and policy choices, including, for instance, choices related to stricter budget norms versus more spending" (Bijsmans, 2018, 361). This study focuses on polity areas, positions concerning the idea of European integration, including institutional design, EU membership and core elements of the EU (such as the Euro) (excluding policy areas) due to the principle of the referendum being in a binary format of Remain or Leave.

The methodology for defining the category of articles was taken from the criteria of Khabaz, deciding whether an article was an **editorial, opinion, comment** or **published letters to the editor**.

The published letters to the editor were found under *"Viewpoints"* in the *Manchester Evening News* (no word limit) or under *"Your Say"* in the *Blackpool Gazette* (word limit of 300 words).

Once the newspaper articles were selected and reviewed, the details of each article were catalogued on a spreadsheet. The date and title were taken directly from the newspapers, along with the author's name. See the Appendix in Chapter 7 for detailed results of the findings. The selected articles were catalogued and analysed in the following high-level structure:

1. Category ; 2. Classify ; 3. Frame

These are defined as follows:

1. <u>Category</u>

The articles were **categorised** into **editorial, opinion, comment** or **published letter to the editor**.

- Editorials: articles which represent the editorial board of each newspaper.
- Opinion: articles which were written with an explicit opinion regarding one side of the EU referendum debate which were not written by the editorial board of each newspaper.
- Comment: articles which were written by an individual commenting on the topic of the EU referendum debate, without an explicit opinion, and which were not written by the editorial board of each newspaper.
- Published Letters to the Editor: articles written by members of the public and sent to the editor to be included in the Letters to the Editor section of the newspapers.

2. <u>Classify</u>

The articles were **classified** under four headings dependent upon their stance regarding the EU referendum by: **hard eurosceptic, soft eurosceptic, euroalternativisim,** or **support**.

The claims made were placed into four classifications of positions toward the EU: **hard euroscepticism, soft euroscepticism, euroalternativism** and **support**. These were considered sufficient to review a range of claims, yet not too many to overcomplicate this research (Bijsmans, 2018).

Hard euroscepticism

The definition of hard euroscepticism has been defined in the work of Bijsmans as "Principled opposition to integration and aiming for withdrawal from the EU" (Bijsmans, 2018). Through this definition, this thesis will review the sources for an indication that the author is primarily in opposition to principled European integration.

Soft euroscepticism

The definition of soft euroscepticism is "Support for a form of European integration, but arguing for a more intergovernmental institutional design" in the work of Bijsmans. Using this definition, the sources were analysed for indications that the author was opposed to the EU but not European integration in some form, and supported a more intergovernmental design of the institutions rather than supranational design.

Euroalternativism

Patrick Bijsmans classifies euroalternativism, as one who has "Support for European integration, but arguing for a more supranational institutional design" (Bijsmans, 2018). This research searched for indications that the author did support European integration, although in a more supranational design without intergovernmental elements. Between soft euroscepticism and euroalternativism there are elements which overlap, however the classifications were made on an indication of whether the author implied support for the supranational design of the EU or whether they implied support for the intergovernmental elements of the EU.

Support

Bijsmans defined the polity support category as "Support for European integration and the existing institutional design" which is how this thesis identifies claims which fall into the support category. Support claims highlight the benefits of the status quo, and support for the EU project in the future. In the examples found in the sources there are both instances of support for the polity of the EU (the project itself) and the policies of the EU, which are heralded as beneficial to the UK or the region. As the EU referendum was a binary choice for the electorate, support incorporates both.

3. <u>**Frame**</u>

To enhance the empirical research, the articles were then reviewed in order to allocate them to the appropriate salient frames.

As explored in the literature review, framing is often noted as a simplifying tool by authors, journalists and politicians alike to form a more salient news article for their audience. Khabaz's article identifies three major frames from his research on the most popular national papers (Khabaz, 2018).

1. Getting my/our country back
2. Undemocratic Europe
3. Take control

Khabaz used key words and phrases to draw a number of texts to be examined (similar to this thesis's methodology and choice of units of analysis) and the results were underlined through three frames (Khabaz, 2018). This research will follow the same process and search for recurring "frames" which can be identified amongst the units of analysis sources. No assumption of the title of the frames was made at the beginning of the review. The selection was made after a thorough review of the articles. The frames were gleaned from all the articles: **Our Borders and Our Law, Bureaucracy and Costs, Against UK politics, Informed choice and Misinformation** or **Security and Prosperity.**

4.2   Quantitative method: The results of the EU referendum

The Electoral Commission results of the referendum were used to compare with the findings of the qualitative analysis. The results were used to identify whether there was any discernible correlation or pattern between the claims made in local newspapers and the subsequent referendum results. (The results of the referendum have been taken from the Electoral Commission data found at the Electoral Commission (2017) EU Referendum result visualisations.)[3]

4.3   Hypothesis

The study was carried out to compare the articles on the EU referendum found in two local newspapers within the North West region. An empirical analysis of the newspapers is expected to bring out recurring frames. This analysis will highlight the usefulness of an in-depth comparison of

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[3] < https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/eu-referendum-result-visualisations>.

local newspapers. Given the EU referendum results in this particular case study, the *Manchester Evening News* was expected to have fewer critical claims of the EU and relatively more supportive statements. Furthermore, the expectation was that in the *Blackpool Gazette* there would be more critical claims about the EU.

5 Findings and Analysis

5.1 Qualitative Findings and Analysis

The *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette* newspapers were both reviewed over the period as defined in Chapter 4 the Methodology. The empirical research found 63 relevant articles in the *Manchester Evening News* and 105 articles in the *Blackpool Gazette.*

Further articles regarding Europe and the EU were found during the review of the newspapers, however, these articles were rejected due to irrelevance. For example, news regarding football (the UEFA Euro 2016 was held in June 2016) and articles related to applications for EU funding in flood-damaged regions of the North West. These articles did not specifically mention the EU referendum and were therefore excluded.

The selected articles and the category, classification and frame of each can be found in detail in Chapter 7, the Appendix.

1. Category: The articles were **categorised** into **editorial, opinion, comment** or **published letters to the editor**.

Table 3: *Manchester Evening News*

Category	Percentage
Editorials	7.9
Opinion	34.9
Comment	20.6
Published Letters to the Editor	36.5
Total	100

Table 4: *Blackpool Gazette*

Category	Percentage
Editorials	20.0
Opinion	12.4

Comment	4.8
Published Letters to the Editor	62.9
Total	100

2. <u>Classification:</u> The articles were **classified** under five terms dependant upon their stance regarding the EU in relation to the EU referendum: **hard eurosceptic, soft eurosceptic, neutral, euroalternativism** and **support**.

Table 5: *Manchester Evening News*

Classification	Percentage
Hard eurosceptic	31.7
Soft eurosceptic	7.9
Neutral	28.6
Euroalternativism	0
Support	31.7
Total	100

Table 6: *Blackpool Gazette*

Classification	Percentage
Hard eurosceptic	31.4
Soft eurosceptic	14.3
Neutral	31.4
Euroalternativism	0.0
Support	22.9
Total	100

3. <u>Frame:</u> To enhance the empirical research, the articles were then reviewed to find the **frames** which could be gleaned from the claims. Five common frames were identified.

Table 7: *Manchester Evening News*

Frame	Percentage
Our Borders and Our Law	20.6
Bureaucracy and Cost	9.5
Against UK politics	27.0
Informed choice and misinformation	9.5
Security and prosperity	33.3
Total	100

Table 8: *Blackpool Gazette*

Frame	Percentage
Our Borders and Our Law	21.0
Bureaucracy and Cost	10.5
Against UK politics	20.0
Informed choice and misinformation	26.7
Security and prosperity	21.9
Total	100

The analysis below is a content analysis of the selected articles. The empirical findings were then considered along with the literature review.

1. Category

The categories of articles were outlined in the Methodology chapter and follow application of Khabaz's methodological classifications for articles: editorials, opinion, comment or published letters to the editor.

Table 9: Summary of the category in both newspapers

Category / Newspaper	Editorials %	Opinion %	Comment %	Published Letters to the Editor %

Manchester Evening News	7.9	34.9	20.6	36.5
Blackpool Gazette	20.0	12.4	4.8	62.9

Editorial

An example of an editorial from the *Manchester Evening News* on 16th June 2016 is "Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown is to warn Greater Manchester could return to a 1980s "industrial wasteland" if Britain votes to leave Europe" (Manchester Evening News, 16 June 2016).

Opinion

An example of the **opinion** classification was found in the *Blackpool Gazette* on 20th April, as Colin Maycock the Conservative Councillor for Bispham (an area in Blackpool) gave his opinion on what a Leave vote would mean for the UK, "Leaving the EU will make our institutions supreme, and only answerable to the British people" (Blackpool Gazette, 20 April 2016).

Comment

An example of **comment** would be the observations about the EU membership debate which was held in Blackpool in late April. This is an example of how this category encompassed those articles which simply described the referendum, "a debate on EU membership ahead of June's in-out referendum attracted an audience of around 300 to Lythams Lowther Pavilion" (Blackpool Gazette, 22 April 2016).

Published Letters to the Editor

Published letters to the editor were found in *Viewpoints* in the *Manchester Evening News* and *Your Say* in the *Blackpool Gazette*. One example of a **published letter to the editor** are the comments by Shelina Begum on 3rd March 2016, "Cameron got exactly what he asked the EU elites for - nothing!" (Manchester Evening News, 3 March 2016).

As is evident in table 9 above, the category of **published letters to the editor** is the largest in both newspapers, although significantly larger in the *Blackpool Gazette*. Furthermore, in comparison, there are more **opinion** and **comment** articles in the *Manchester Evening News*, which, if joined together, would be a larger percentage than **published letters to the editor** at 55.5%. The number of **published letters to the editor** is significant as they are representative of the most engaged readers of each paper, however this thesis does not acknowledge them as representative of the areas

studied. Furthermore, **published letters to the editor** are hand-selected by the editor and therefore have an unconscious or conscious bias.

2. <u>Classify</u>

The claims in the articles were classified into **hard euroscepticism, soft euroscepticism, euroalternativisim** and **support.** In the findings of the articles it became clear that a fifth category needed to be introduced, **neutral**. These claims were those that neither expressed support for the EU nor expressed opposition to it or the comments made were purely factual (for example concerning the voting procedure).

<u>Hard eurosceptic</u>

Hard eurosceptic views were expressed in 31.7% of the claims in the *Manchester Evening News*, and 31.4% of claims in the *Blackpool Gazette*. National identity featured in the debates about growing euroscepticism in the literature review. In these newspapers, articles focused on national sovereignty and "encroaching" foreign law (EU law) with the suggestion that the European Court of Justice was attempting to "overrule" British sovereign law.

The Leave majority could be viewed as a response to immigration, evidence of this is seen in the *Blackpool Gazette* "Do you think the UK should control its own borders, immigration numbers and policies? "(Blackpool Gazette, 4th June). Amber Curtis concluded that euroscepticism is fuelled by immigration (Curtis, 2014). The claims classified as hard eurosceptic had many comments on national identity and sovereignty as a reason to vote Leave, reinforcing Curtis's claim. Claims which were classified as **support** rarely comment on national identity, but moreover refuted the claims made of potential damages which remaining a member of the EU would result in.

<u>Soft eurosceptic</u>

Articles found in the **soft eurosceptic** category were similar to **hard eurosceptic** frames. In the *Manchester Evening News*, Graham Stringer (Labour Party Member of Parliament) commented in an article only three days into the referendum period, "How can the United Kingdom be more secure by sub-contracting the right to live and work in this country to regimes like the Hungarian and Croatian, where the rule of law does not apply?", (Manchester Evening News, 23rd February

2016). This comment highlights the emotional response of some voices to the announcement of the referendum and the rebutting of immigration in the UK. Furthermore, some claims hinted that values from European countries are different and could lead to a "diluting" of national identity. This will be explored in the analysis, later in this chapter.

Neutral

An example of **neutral** sources in this research is also evident in the *Manchester Evening News*, as one title reads "our north-south divide on staying or going" (Manchester Evening News, 21 June 2016). As Hooghe and Marks noted, public attitudes had become deeply divided in the EU, a cleavage emerging between the core and its periphery, which is ultimately a UK centric argument (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). In the literature review scholars observed that the British public was accustomed to critical views of politicians and politics (see Chapter 2, Amber Curtis in the literature review). Under **neutral**, observations were made that the EU referendum raised questions about the political controversies within the UK, as illustrated in the longstanding north-south divide argument.

The **neutral** classification included expressions which did not feed into **hard eurosceptic, soft eurosceptic, euroalternativism** or **support** classifications, but moreover discussed the EU referendum in general under **informed choice and misinformation**. On 24th February, one *Your Say* article commented on the emotional versus economic ties to Europe, "Will we vote with our hearts and say leave or with our heads and stay in?" (Unknown, Manchester Evening News, Your Say, 24th February 2016). The author states the dilemma that is seen, yet does not offer the direction which way their vote will go. Furthermore, this question further exemplifies the emotional challenge the referendum was for many, which Holbolt and de Vries argue was not a question of logic but emotion (Holbolt & de Vries, 2016).

Euroalternativism

The suggestion that the EU might be subject to change or alternative integration in the future was problematic in this research as the fundamental nature of the referendum (and referendums in general) allows only for binary outcome. Therefore, due to the Leave or Remain answer, there were no articles which were classified under this classification in this study.

Support

When classifying claims under **support**, the recurring theme was that remaining a member of the EU would promote the values of the status quo, which were advantageous. European values and British values are widely acknowledged to be similar, triumphing human rights, freedom and democracy amongst others. The infringement of national sovereignty has been argued to be a more emotive argument which the Leave campaign used and exploited. In the early months, **support** claims were few in both the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette*. These, however, grew over the campaign period and were comparable with the number of hard euroscepticism claims by June.

3. **Frame**

From a review of the articles this research identified the following salient frames:

- Our Borders and Our Laws
- Bureaucracy and Costs
- Against UK politics
- Informed choice and Misinformation
- Security and Prosperity

The following are the observations of these frames:

Our Borders and Our Laws

Through a review of the sources, examples of claims that the EU is infringing on UK sovereignty and the effects of immigration are damaging for the nation became apparent. In the literature review this theme is also explored through the work of Khabaz and his frame "Take control of our own destiny" and recurred in the Leave campaign efforts. In the source material the frame was observed throughout **hard eurosceptic** and **soft eurosceptic** commentary. The link between the EU and its perceived "rule" over British law and subjects was found to be only a feature of **hard eurosceptic** and **soft eurosceptic** remarks. Those remarks in the **support** sections were not found to greatly advocate foreign law but moreover regarded the virtues of European law or human rights which EU law had implemented. The frame was found in both the *Manchester Evening News* and the

Blackpool Gazette, and encompasses themes of immigration, attitudes against foreign law, and sovereignty issues which recurred in both papers.

In their article, Goodwin and Milazzo note the strong messages surrounding immigration found in the referendum campaign, which they argue persuaded many Leave voters (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017). Their argument is that the emotional message attached to immigration made a definitive impact on those who voted Leave. In the *Manchester Evening News*, the undesirable concept of mass immigration into the UK is a suggestion, "Allowing the whole of Europe to cram into our already overpopulated country" (Manchester Evening News, 1 March 2016). As commented in the literature review, Startin noted a past time of "a better Britain", which mirrors the comments found under this salient frame (Startin, 2018, 457). The frame **our borders and our laws** included criticisms that the UK had "lost control" since joining the EU.

Bureaucracy and Costs

There were articles in both newspapers about the cost of the EU to the UK, the idea that UK (our) money was being given to the EU and redistributed unfairly, with the UK losing out. Firstly, this frame acknowledges claims about the bureaucratic complexity within the functioning of the EU, and, secondly, the cost of the membership fee which the UK pays. This remark about the cost of membership is one which dates back to Thatcher years and her "I want my money back" dialog. In the *Manchester Evening News*, there was an explicit claim in a published letter to the editor in March, "we give 55 billion pounds a year, and only get 22 billion pounds back" (Manchester Evening News, 12 March 2016). In the *Blackpool Gazette*, only a week after the referendum was announced, the argument was made, "If we left Europe, all that money would be ours" (Blackpool Gazette, 26 February 2016). The **bureaucracy and costs** associated with the EU is a theme which runs mostly in **hard eurosceptic** or **soft eurosceptic** articles.

Against UK politics

Against UK politics is coined to include claims commenting on the EU referendum which directly criticise UK politics (including parliamentary processes, government, political parties). Webb and Bale comment that the most concerning element of their research on defection to UKIP is that Conservative Party supporters "do not feel valued or respected by their own leadership, while they regard David Cameron – their own party leader, and the country's Prime Minister – as ideologically

more remote from them than UKIP" (Webb & Bale, 2014, 967). Through the research of the two local newspapers, there emerged claims which criticised UK politics and the Conservative government. **Against UK politics,** as a frame, explores one of the recurring aspects that concerned authors in the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette*.

This frame is exemplified in two ways, firstly, in claims which criticise the Conservative Party for pledging the EU referendum, and, secondly, exacerbating a "us versus them" rhetoric between the North West and the British government similar to Seaton's scholarship. However, in both papers there were a large number of articles which fell into the frame of **against UK politics** especially in the *Blackpool Gazette*. This thesis notes there was a significant amount of angst against the Conservative government and the choice to hold a referendum which is often blamed on Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron.

Criticisms of the government are evident in **published letters to the editor** in the *Blackpool Gazette*. One author claims that the EU is in fact more democratic than the UK, "A good argument can be made that the EU is more democratic than Westminster" (Blackpool Gazette, 11 March 2016). Furthermore, this sense of criticism in **against UK politics** comes out in relation to the next frame which deals with decision-making and lack of informed choice. In the literature review, Hellman comments that often voters make decisions on issues outside the ballot box, and this is an example.

Informed choice and misinformation

One comment made in the frame **informed choice and misinformation** suggested that the government was to blame for pushing this big decision on the general public. An example of the attitude towards the government can be seen in the *Manchester Evening News* just a few days after the referendum was announced "The elected government should govern and take the blame if things go wrong, not hand it back to voters who are least able to govern" (Manchester Evening News, 23 February 2016). This salient frame was found to be common in both the Manchester and Blackpool publications.

A more ambiguous frame, **informed choice and misinformation** was seen in the *Blackpool Gazette*, highlighting the idea that the British public were not well-enough informed to make the decision about EU membership. This idea was visited more frequently in the *Blackpool Gazette*

than in the *Manchester Evening News*, where it was noted 28 times compared to 6 times respectively. One aggrieved commentator from the *Blackpool Gazette* argued that misleading messages around the EU referendum and the UK often used inaccurate information, "Bogus claims abound and have done for years. Britain staying in the EU has not made us any less British" (Blackpool Gazette, 7 April, 2016). This frame highlights elements from the literature review which explored how well the electorate understood the choice they were making in the referendum. As Entman investigates, the media is often simplified as a tool which tells its audience what to think about and consequently what to think (Entman, 2007, 165). The complexity of the EU, as visited in the frame **bureaucracy and costs**, is linked to **informed choice and misinformation**, as a discussion of choices and reliable information has been found in both newspapers.

Security and prosperity

The **security and prosperity** frame encompasses all themes of monetary, trade, crime, defence and security and the prosperity of the UK some of the authors argue. Claims made about the EU referendum which emphasised benefits of being a member of the EU were largely found to suggest the frame of **security and prosperity**. Both of these terms were found recurring in articles, and were also linked together in a large number of the literature review articles and the Vote Remain campaign. Most articles framed as **security and prosperity** were classified under **support**. Their arguments discussed the benefits of remaining a member of the EU and believed the EU membership offered security and prosperity.

A commentator in the *Manchester Evening News* argued that "The most effective way of achieving change in the EU is for Britain to be firmly and positively engaged in Brussels and the other European capitals" (Manchester Evening News, 5 March 2016). The frame **security and prosperity** includes mostly those who support the EU and naturally these authors fall into this frame.

5.2   Comparison of the newspaper classifications and frames

In the tables below there has been a comparison between the eurosceptic stance of the article and the frame which it has fallen into. Below is the comparison of the newspapers using the two techniques.

Table 10: Comparison of the eurosceptic classifications in the newspapers analysed

Classify Newspaper	Hard eurosceptic %	Soft eurosceptic %	Neutral %	Euroalternativism %	Support %
Manchester Evening News	31.7	7.9	28.6	0	31.7
Blackpool Gazette	31.4	14.3	31.4	0	22.9

When comparing the two newspapers, it is clear that **hard eurosceptic** percentages are very similar in both newspaper but more definitive in the *Manchester Evening News* showing that people in this area had made their choice more decisively.

It is notable in both newspapers the **neutral** classification is around 30%, which this thesis finds could suggest these articles were written by those who were undecided during the referendum period.

Table 11: Comparison of the frames in the newspapers analysed

Frame Newspaper	Our Borders and Our Laws	Bureaucracy and Costs	Against UK Politics	Informed choice and Misinformation	Security and Prosperity	Total %
Manchester Evening News	20.6	9.5	27.0	9.5	33.3	100
Blackpool Gazette	21.0	10.5	20.0	26.7	21.9	100

As evident in the table above, in the *Manchester Evening News* and in the *Blackpool Gazette,* the percentage of the first two frames were similar. However, the *Manchester Evening News* had slightly more frames regarding **against UK politics**, whereas the *Blackpool Gazette* was more concerned with the lack of information and therefore **informed choice and misinformation**. The security and prosperity frame was the most common frame in the *Manchester Evening News*.

Table 12: Comparison of the classifications and frames in the *Manchester Evening News*

Frame / Classify	Our Borders and Our Laws	Bureaucracy and Costs	Against UK Politics	Informed choice and Misinformation	Security and Prosperity	Total %
Hard Euroscepticsm	21	6	5			32
Soft Euroscepticism		3	3		2	8
Neutral			16	10	3	29
Euroalternativism						0
Support			3		29	32
Total %	21	10	27	10	33	100

Table 13: Comparison of the classifications of classification and frames in the *Blackpool Gazette*

Frame / Classify	Our Borders and Our Laws	Bureaucracy and Costs	Against UK Politics	Informed choice and Misinformation	Security and Prosperity	Total %
Hard Euroscepticsm	20	6	4		2	31
Soft Euroscepticism	1	3	6	4	1	14
Neutral		1	10	20	2	31
Euroalternativism						0
Support		1	1	4	17	23
Total %	21	10	20	27	22	100

In both papers there are some distinct differences regarding which classification is concerned with a frame. Articles classified as **hard eurosceptic** were more concerned with **our borders and our laws** frame whereas articles classified as **support** were more concerned with the **security and prosperity** frame. This was a presumed reaction to the referendum as the Leave campaign was espoused in foreign law, sovereignty and immigration concerns. Likewise, through the literature review one already presumed that **security and prosperity** would be the common theme for support articles. So the findings support the literature.

In both papers, there was a relatively even spread over the stances under the frame **against UK politics**. This thesis highlights how evident the comments **against UK politics** and Prime Minister David Cameron filtered across classifications in the debate surrounding the EU referendum.

In the *Blackpool Gazette* the frame **informed choice and misinformation** emerged in articles which were primarily **neutral**, with 20% of all articles in both these classifications. This thesis finds the **neutral** category included articles which discussed how informed the public were about making this choice. The literature review stressed that scholars believed that many voters were unsure about the decision, the choice they were making was influenced by journalistic frames. This research highlights that between **hard eurosceptic** and **support** articles there were also articles which were classified as **neutral,** as they did not show one particular political leaning yet were highlighting the lack of information around the EU referendum debates.

5.3   Quantitative Findings of the EU referendum results

The results of the referendum declared Manchester voted to Remain by 60.3%, the highest percentage in the North West. Blackpool voted by 67.5% to Leave, this being the highest percentage in the region for Leave (Electoral Commission, 2016).

Results of the EU referendum in Manchester and Blackpool

Table 14: A comparison of the referendum results between the areas in the North West where the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette* are in circulation.

Result Area	Leave %	Remain %	Turnout %
Manchester	39.6	60.3	59.7
Blackpool	67.4	32.5	65.4
North West	53.7	46.3	70.0
United Kingdom	51.9	48.1	72.2

<u>Quantitative Analysis</u>

In summary the referendum result found Manchester voted to Remain by 60.3% while Blackpool voted to Leave by 67.4%. This is a significant difference of 27.8% of Remain to Leave.

6   <u>Conclusions</u>

In this case study the EU referendum results contrasted in the two areas researched. In Chapter 5, the findings highlight that, in eurosceptic claims in the newspapers were largely similar. At the beginning of this research the argument was made that a review of reporting in local newspapers would offer a clearer understanding of the the EU referendum debate in a region.

An analysis into how the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette* reported and framed the EU referendum has been explored in this thesis. The following conclusions are closing remarks, highlighting why researching local newspapers is beneficial to scholarship of the EU referendum as it reveals a new perspective of the EU referendum debate.

6.1   Discussing the research question

In the North West, voters in local areas made opposing electoral decisions in the EU Referendum.

How differently did two local newspapers report the EU Referendum debate?

Using the analysis of local newspapers as a methodological tool, what can be learnt about euroscepticism and the EU Referendum?

The research question focused on the two local newspapers in localities where the EU referendum results were opposing. Through an in-depth analysis of the rhetoric of articles in each newspaper, classifications and the frames were found and compared. This resulted in drawing comparisons and evaluating the trends in EU referendum period for each local area, which highlighted what aspects of the EU referendum were important for these local areas. This thesis has used methodology to study the North West in a process which can be replicated and retested in another region.

1.   <u>Category</u>

The categories of the articles were the first part of the analysis. In both newspapers the **published letters to the editor** category was the largest section of discussions about the EU referendum, although it is acknowledged that **published letters to the editor** only offer one insight into the most engaged readers of these newspapers, these letters are also subject to moderation or selection by the editorial board. Consequently, these letters may not be representative of the readership. This may be hard to separate or analyse. Notably there were no articles about the EU referendum on the front pages of either paper.

In the *Blackpool Gazette* there were more **published letters to the editor** than in the *Manchester Evening News*. The *Manchester Evening News* editorial board dedicated a larger number to **opinion** and **comment** articles in the EU referendum debate. A comparison of two newspapers is therefore a comparison of two editorial boards; their selection of what the readership might want to read regarding the EU referendum debate.

2. Classify

The hypothesis proposal that **hard eurosceptic** claims would be more apparent by a larger margin in the *Blackpool Gazette*, was not borne out by the findings. The findings show that **hard eurosceptic** claims were found to be substantially similar in the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette* (36.5% and 32.7% respectively). The findings also found that both the newspapers had many articles which were classified as **neutral** (28.6% and 31.4% respectively). However, the percentage of Leave votes in the EU referendum results between Manchester and Blackpool were substantially different (39.6% and 67.4% respectively).

3. Frames

This research identified five frames which recurrently emerged throughout both the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette*.

Within the newspapers' claims regarding UK politics there was a recurring theme of an "us vs them" rhetoric when authors commented on London and Westminster; the frames which exemplified this were **against UK politics** and **informed choice and misinformation**. This attitude extended further to European politics and the EU. Jean Seaton described the "under-served regions", (such as the North West) battling against "an increasingly remote centre" of Westminster (Seaton, 2016, 333). Through the findings in this project, Seaton's observation is supported as

comments in both the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Blackpool Gazette* exemplify this.

Though five frames were identified, some frames were juxtaposed together or overlapped subtly which is expected given they are mirroring opinion to a specific event: the EU referendum. They are not distinctly different.

Other comparisons

The research conducted in this paper was designed by taking into account areas of the methodological frameworks in the papers of Bijsmans and Khabaz, whose studies concentrated on comparing national newspapers and reviewing two different events through eurosceptic framing. By comparison, this study focused on two local newspapers within the North West using similar methodology techniques.

This thesis notes that the language used in articles is significant in defining the stance of the author regarding the EU referendum. The possessive language used (my, our) in some articles shows the emotional disconnect of the region with the EU, as suggested in the *Manchester Evening News*, "There are huge risks staying in the European Union and allowing 27 other countries to decide our laws" (Manchester Evening News, 23 February 2016). Furthermore, a recurring feature of the language used in the sources was around the theme of pride and a consequential loss of it being a member of the EU. As noted in the *Blackpool Gazette* there are some suggestions that the membership of the EU had, in fact, drawn away the pride the UK had, "Before 1973, Britain was a proud self-governing nation" (Blackpool Gazette, 27 March 2016). The ideas around this supposed loss of pride are closely related to the EU laws which the UK adheres to, and are blamed for the corrosion of national sovereignty.

The newspapers frequently referred to the positives and negatives of EU membership, which is why this thesis attempted to separate the different frames the articles were focussing on. The results show a pattern emerged in both papers. Table 12 and Table 13 evidenced a pattern that eurosceptic stances were more concerned with **our borders and our laws**. Under the frame **our borders and our laws**, the recurring element found a dismissal of the economic insecurities which the EU referendum was predicted to deliver, and to emphasis the risk of conceding sovereignty to the EU (as described under **hard eurosceptic** and **soft eurosceptic** classifications).

Likewise, more **support** stances towards the EU were preoccupied with the frame **security and prosperity**. For example, one comment was made in the *Blackpool Gazette* on 25th of May, "The EU will never be perfect; its 28 members all have interests of their own, but they also face common problems that require shared solutions" demonstrating there is some residual support for the EU in an area deemed very eurosceptic (Blackpool Gazette, 25 May 2016). This did not support the assumption that given the referendum results, sentiment in Blackpool would have been more eurosceptic than this thesis finds.

6.2   Further research

The following are thoughts on how further research might add to the scholarship surrounding the EU referendum campaign.

Firstly, the research was limited to two local newspapers, this could be extended in further research. The limited circulation, particularly of the *Blackpool Gazette,* means it might be valuable to compare more local newspapers within the region, or a similar study in another region of the UK. This would focus on a very different demography and very different electoral behaviour, as each local area has different perspectives. One must appreciate the number of articles reviewed in this case study was fewer than the range of the studies in the literature review.

Secondly, a lengthier timeframe could be considered for a more in-depth analysis of understanding how the EU was framed in these newspapers. A wider timeframe would generate more claims regarding the relationship between the UK and the EU, and therefore would also give a broader history of the North West leading to the referendum.

Thirdly, the range of key words may be reconsidered and extended. Further research would reveal more detailed analysis of the papers if additional key words associated with the EU were used. If a detailed analysis were to be carried out of all articles in a local newspaper this would reveal other news topics which were important during the time period researched, exposing another angle to the analysis.

In order to enrich the understanding of these local newspapers it would be beneficial to analyse the readership of these papers and other media which also influenced opinions. Also, as local

newspapers are only one source of news, the readership of these two papers will have been exposed to many other forms of media, including social media. As participants in the EU referendum debate, sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram contained many different frames for sceptical and supportive views on the EU.

6.3   Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the local newspaper coverage did not reflect the results of the referendum.

The hypothesis was that in the *Manchester Evening News* there would be stronger voices of **support** for the EU in comparison to the *Blackpool Gazette* given the fact that the referendum results in Manchester favoured Remain. This case study found in the *Manchester Evening News* most claims were found to be **hard eurosceptic,** this was not a reflection of the results of the referendum. However, in the findings there was a greater percentage of **support** claims in the *Manchester Evening News* in comparison with the *Blackpool Gazette,* although not by a significant margin (28.6 % versus 22.1%). In both newspapers the **neutral** classification was found to be a significant percentage, which had not been considered in the hypothesis.

The findings reveal that the topics discussed and the eurosceptic framing between the two local newspapers was unexpectedly similar. If one were only to review the referendum results data this could be considered a "black and white" approach, merely analysing the statistics on how votes were cast across the country. An intricate analysis on a local level will reveal and give greater clarity to the "grey" areas. Together these approaches have enabled the study to search for nuances (what is important for this readership in terms of the EU) between Manchester and Blackpool. This research was designed to illustrate how an analysis of local newspapers is valuable for scholarship, as even at local level euroscepticism impacted the referendum which led to "Brexit".

7   Appendix

7.1   Location of Manchester and Blackpool

Map of the United Kingdom: European Union regions 2016

(Ordnance Survey, 2016)

7.2   Manchester Evening News

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
22-Feb	Leaders should lead	Heald Green	Cameron urgently needs to get a grip and apply for EU funding to help communities devastated by the floods.		Comment	Neutral	Against UK politics
22-Feb	Respite from the EU debate	Henry Matthews	Brexit could 'marginalise' the UK's position as an international conference and tourist destination.		Comment	Support	Security and prosperity
23-Feb	Your views on EU ote MPs row	Hugh Chadderton	There are huge risks staying in the European Union and allowing 27 other countries to decide our laws.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
23-Feb	Anybody who is undecided on how to vote in the EU Referendum could try asking themselves this question	John Richardson	The elected, government should govern and take the blame if things go wrong, not hand it back to voters who are least able to govern.		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
23-Feb	Look at the big picture over Europe referendum	Alan Entwistle	In all the discussions regarding the ins and outs of staying in Europe, I haven't seen any mention of tourists travelling abroad		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Security and prosperity
23-Feb	EU provides us protection	Steve Ronan	Since the conservative party have been in power, we have had experience of exactly how good a del the people of this country are having and we also know that Boris Johnson is looking to be the next leader of the Conservative Party		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Euroscepticism	Against UK politics
23-Feb	Time to stick together	Steve Ronan	Will we have stronger security, greater prosperity, and enhanced opportunities if we vote to pull out of the European Union?		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
24-Feb	Let Europe vote on keeping UK in EU…	S Thompson	Under the banner 'nationalist uprising', it says they are demonstrating 'for the many Europeans that are being forced onto the breadline whilst our governments bend over backwards to accommodate people that quite frankly should not be here'.		Comment	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
24-Feb	Let's take back control	Graham Stringer, Labour MP	The sustained support shown for the refugees is confirmation that most people reject the hatred peddled by groups like the North West Infidels.		Opinion	Neutral	Security and prosperity
25-Feb	The EU is all we have	Chris Davies - North West Liberal Democrats	UK bottom up Common Law has minimised civil insurrection, compared with the rest of Europe, but is now subverted by Napoleonic top down EU law which cannot be contested.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
25-Feb	best of the web comments on the M.e.b's facebook page	Callum Hulme	There are two things wrong in his decision to do this: 1) The public at large do not understand the EU, which is a very complex issue. This is a very important issue for our country, so why would he entrust us with a decision most people have not got the expertise to do? 2) It will lead to massive internal battles within his own party as we have already seen.		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
27-Feb	We can't leave Europe	Jennifer White	Our government shamelessly gives corporate tax dodgers a free ride at the expense of the rest of us and our public services. This gives no suggestion it can be trusted not to favour foreign big businesses, whose priority is quick profit rather than responsible partnership with the rest of us.		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
01-Mar	All the big guns for and against are convinced that this is a once-and-for-all referendum	Margaret Brown	Not to mention the open borders, allowing the whole of Europe to cram into our already overpopulated country.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
01-Mar	United we stand…divided we fall	Unknown	So, as an energetic European 'innie' I will be exerting myself to try to ensure that a safely large majority prevents any such prolonged war of attrition.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
03-Mar	UKIP disappointment desprite Labout fears	Unknown	The potential risks surrounding the 'uncertainty of leaving' would be greater by an order of some magnitude.		Comment	Soft Euroscepticism	Security and prosperity
03-Mar	London Mayor to address Vote Leave campaigners	Shelina Begum	Cameron got exactly what he asked the EU elites for - nothing!		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Against UK politics

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
03-Mar	Reason to vote Remain	John Futcher	If we exit, the Tory government may run riot to deregulate and diminish workers rights, but they can be removed by British voters and as Cameron has discovered, British influence in the EU is minimal.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Euroscepticism	Against UK politics
03-Mar	UK has allies in the EU	S Domino	I havent fallen victim to ignorance of the complexity of the EU		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
04-Mar	Our north-south divide on staying or going	Unknown	Our influence in Brussels is a fallacy, pure and simple; similarly to all the other members we have just one vote		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
05-Mar	Leaving EU has big risks	Wendy Olsen, Candidate for Irwell Riverside ward Salford, and for Salford Mayor	With all the knowledge you have gained of many years of the current European Union and the way it operates and the rules it passes down, if the UK was not currently a member would you be wanting us to join this club?		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
05-Mar	Six reasons we need to remain in the EU	Unknown	The most effective way of achieving change in the EU is for Britain to be firmly and positively engaged in Brussels and the other European capitals,		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
10-Mar	Leaving EU more risky than staying	Unknown	Now we have Romanian and Bulgarian and other Eastern European gangsters making hundreds of thousands of pounds on the misery of other vulnerable people, men, women and children.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
11-Mar	We're 'ignored' in EU debate	Unknown	One of the biggest problems with the upcoming EU referendum is that many of us don't really know very much about the EU.		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
11-Mar	Referendumb! Fury at school's 'confusing' assembly over EU exit	Beth Abbit	The European Parliament currently uses contracted-out driver services but there is now a plan to provide the chauffeurs and limousines themselves.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
11-Mar	City's lead role in Euro campaign	Jennifer Williams - Editorial	The EP currently uses contracted-out driver services but there is now a plan to provide the chaffeurs and limousines themselves.		Editorial	Hard Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
12-Mar	How will tourists fare?	Alan Semp, Whitefield	We give Pounds 55 bn a year and only get Pounds 22bn back		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
12-Mar	Reducing the size of bins? That is rubbish	Tom Clarkson	All you need to do is look at the number of cranes that currently dot the skyline of Manchester. We're seeing a level of construction and regeneration that wouldn't be possible without European money		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
16-Mar	Northerners do not quit!	George Osbourne	Britain has been, and will continue to profoundly affected by continental Europe whichever way the vote goes		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
30-Mar	Just one more reson of oh so many to vote in June's referendum	Philip Griffiths, NW President UKIP	We need to be IN to have a Voice in Europe.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
01-Apr	Make own decisions	Simon Icke	David Cameron is always meeting workers in factories across the country, spelling out why it is so good to say in the EU, so why is he not up at Port Talbot spelling out to them what the EU and his government can do for them in times of crisis?		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics
12-Apr	A quick profit placed ahead of partnership?	H Andres	As decision day looms large, we are a nation that has always struggled over the question - does Europe mean "them" or "us". As Conservative politician Norman Tebbit puts it in this documentary, perhaps if you're opening the door to your villa in Spain then it's "us", but once you're home, "it's them".		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
14-Apr	Nothing has changed	S Richardson	Mr Johnson, who declared in February that he had made the decision to go against David Cameron and back an EU Exit, will address Brexit campaigners at the Old Granada Studios.		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
26-Apr	Wrong call on EU poll	Miss J Evans	No sane person would call the UK a democracy.		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
29-Apr	Euro MPs drive me mad	Peter Castree	A group of leading business figures from the region has given its backing for the UK to remain in the EU.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
07-May	Boris eyes the PM role...TOMORROW	J Barker	But even in north Manchester, where Labour have regularly worried about losing out to the party, the anti-EU group failed to gain traction and left disappointed.		Comment	Neutral	Against UK politics
07-May	PM has no crystal ball in Euro debate	Graham Stringer, Labour MP	Germany is desperate to keep the UK in the grasp of the European Union as they know that if we leave other member states may well follow our example and their beloved EU project will collapse around their ears.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
16-May	best of the web comments on the M.e.b's facebook page	Jamie Deakin	It's sad that the UK's obsession with racism [the UK being one of the least racist countries in the world - compare France, the Balkans, the USA] means that sensitivities should override common sense.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
17-May	Scepticism about the EU	Councillor Rosa Battle	Neither is it encouraging while the EU is a 'protection racket' for big business, subverting elected governments, with large corporations creaming vast profits without paying tax and widespread unemployment as 10,000 bureaucrats are paid more than our prime minister.		Opinion	Soft Euroscepticism	Bureaucracy and cost
24-May	We can't be held hostage to fortune	W Newham	Being a larger block, where 27 governments have to agree, the EU provides at least some measure of protection of the rights that we have fought hard to achieve		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
30-May	Far-right group plan third Manchester rally in a year	Unknown	The EU is pushing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If they get their way, watch out for such delicacies as the currentlybanned American 'chlorine-washed chicken carcass		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
01-Jun	Our region has special reasons to support EU	C Graham	Well done the EU! I'm on holiday in France. The charges to use a UK mobile here have just dropped dramatically thanks to the EU.		Comment	Support	Security and prosperity
01-Jun	When we joined the EU, or Common Market as it was then over 40 years ago, it was all about trade and certainly not being ruled bby Europe	Ms Fletcher	Being in the EU provides checks and balances, not only in all governments having to agree, but in providing millions of people who face the same threats we do and can be our allies.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
02-Jun	It's time to seize destiny	Bill Newham	We should democratically elect the peole who make our laws and regulations, so that when they perform badly we can kick them out.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
04-Jun	We must show our support for multi-culturalism	Unknown	1. Do you want the elected UK government to make and decide the laws for this country? 2. Do you think the UK should control its own borders, immigration numbers and policies? 3. Should the UK be allowed to trade freely with any country in the world?		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
06-Jun	Tory government may run riot to deregulate	Bill Newham	The Minister for the Northern Powerhouse says Brexit will not affect Manchester's Northern Powerhouse vision and access to funding.		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
06-Jun	The march to Euro-army	Paul Nuttall, NW UKIP MEP	For me it is mostly a sovereignty thing - why do we need the EU to make our decisions for us?		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
07-Jun	EU's bad for environment	J Wood	The future for ourselves and grandchildren are at stake in this referendum, our sovereignty, economy, immigration, defence and security to name but a few of the important issues that are at stake.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
08-Jun	EU bent the rules for VW	Graham Stringer, Labour MP	Those who believe that Britain would be worse off by regaining its sovereignty and democracy, or is incapable of controlling its own financial and justice systems, have never read a history book, or are still in short pants.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
09-Jun	Exit could give courage	Ian Porchetta	Thank the Lord for Euro 2016. At least it will provide some respite from the relentlessly ridiculous European Union referendum campaign.		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics
10-Jun	Myths of 'Porject Fear'	Jim Sokol	If the EU could bring about true devolution for the regions, we could actually start to assert ourselves culturally and economically - something which has become very difficult in the last few decades due to the overwhelming influence of London.		Opinion	Support	Against UK politics

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
11-Jun	Slave trade' is result of EU's failed policy	Alan Levenshulme	And let's not forget the billions that we got back from the EU that helped regenerate Greater Manchester and other depressed areas, which we wouldn't have received from our own government.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
13-Jun	A no-win for Cameron	Harry Singleton	Lib Dem leader Tim Farron has said Manchester's voice has been 'ignored' in the debate over Britain's membership in the European Union.		Comment	Support	Against UK politics
15-Jun	Business figures back EU plans	Shelina Begum	I believe leaving will make no difference to daily life, just as voting in a new party never seems to, but it will cost a lot of public money for effectively nothing.		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
16-Jun	Why let the public decide?	P Moody	The Manchester Evening News believes Greater Manchester will be better off inside.		Editorial	Support	Security and prosperity
16-Jun	Politician defends meeting	Unknown	Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown is to warn Greater Manchester could return to a 1980s 'industrial wasteland' if Britain votes to leave Europe.		Editorial	Support	Security and prosperity
18-Jun	Corbyn: Brexit will cost rights, jobs and money	Jennifer Williams - Editorial	To be honest, nobody knows what the future holds. But we can't expect to jump ship and then have all the benefits we had as part of the crew, or expect to climb back when it suits us on conditions that favour us.		Editorial	Support	Security and prosperity
20-Jun	Shadow Minister calls on PM to help with flood damage	Unknown	A second MP has been criticised for campaigning to leave the EU while events were suspended nationally out of respect for Jo Cox.		Comment	Hard Euroscepticism	Against UK politics
21-Jun	Why do people treat streets as a litter dump?	R Salisbury	The EU referendum is dividing political parties, friends, families and now - according to the best estimates - Greater Manchester.		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
21-Jun	Piccadilly Gardens fountain's an eyesore	Dave Crossley	Thursday should be a historic moment when we can finish off Cameron and Osborne and all their works ensuring we become a selfgoverning, democratic nation again in control of our own laws, borders and money by voting LEAVE.		Opinion	Hard Euroscepticism	Our Borders and Our Laws
21-Jun	Your guide to the big issues	Unknown	The north of England is on the rise. And it's stronger, safer and better off if the UK remains in the EU. So today we're coming together to urge people to do what's best for jobs and livelihoods in this region and vote Remain on Thursday.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
21-Jun	Brexit will not affect powerhouse vision	Lucy Roue	Once again the establishment treat the general public with the contempt we have long come to expect. Do they think we haven't the wit to understand that leaflet drops had been agreed. Or maybe, they think we wouldn't remember that over a period of three days!		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Euroscepticism	Against UK politics
22-Jun	Corbyn cares about workers	Trevor Mooney	A schoolboy begged his mum to vote for Britain to Remain after a 'confusing' school assembly left him thinking his pals would be forced to leave the country.		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice / misinformation
22-Jun	Best of the Rest	Unknown	It's not about the perfections or imperfections of the EU. There are plenty of those.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity

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7.3   Blackpool Gazette

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
20-Feb	Cartoon of the Week	Steve Taylor - Cartoonist	Pressure closes in on Cameron on EU negotiations		Comment	Neutral	Against UK politics
22-Feb	Am I common enough for the Common Market?	Rob Stocks - Opinion Editorial	Labour MP Jess Phillips has zapped us with a seemingly irrefutable argument. She apparently believes that we should stay in the EU because her brother lives in France.		Editorial	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
22-Feb	Brexit: Not a great reason from Labour MP	Unknown	The arguments so far haven't been pitched at the common man"; "both camps wrapped up in a Westminster centred debate"		Opinion	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
23-Feb	Referendum is about more than just EU	Chris Moncrieff - Opinion Editorial	A decision to back Brexit would be a huge blow to Cameron		Editorial	Neutral	Against UK politics
23-Feb	Europe: Read between the lines on EU debate	Derek J Bunting	Our borders will be restricted, only allowing in those authorized.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
23-Feb	Europe: We are better if we stick together	Chris Davies - North West Liberal Democrats	The EU is far from perfect		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
24-Feb	Europe: I'm not expecting the truth over EU	Unknown	If we are not paying GBP 55 million a day to the corrupt and unaccountable EU then the tax burden could be reduced		Editorial	Neutral	Bureaucracy and cost
24-Feb	How has being part of the EU helped us here in Blackpool?	Shelagh Parkinson - Politcal Writer	Will we vote with our hearts and say leave or with our heads and stay in?		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
26-Feb	Europe: European funding is our money anyway	Derek J Bunting	If we left Europe, all that money would be ours.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
26-Feb	Make your EU vote count	Tim Gavell	The Referendim is our chance to have our say		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
29-Feb	EU aid will help flood victims	Unknown	All about floods and money to help damage on Flyde coast		Editorial	Neutral	Security and prosperity
01-Mar	Brexit row will lead to blood on the carpet	Chris Moncrieff - Opinion Editorial	In short, there will be oceans of political blood flowing on the carpets in the House of Commons between now and June 23, the day of this historic referendum		Editorial	Neutral	Against UK politics
02-Mar	Democracy rules in EU, not so in the UK. Europe: Union costs less than some claims	Mike Turner - Flyde Liberal Democrats	Be fair to those who have yet to decide by being respectful and honest in putting forward our arguments.		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
02-Mar	Europe: Let's be respectufl during EU debate	Colin Shrive	Vote Leave reckons that if we were not in the EU, the UK Government would be so awash with money that our NHS would never want for cash again.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Bureaucracy and cost
05-Mar	Let's maintain a very British silence in EU	Blaise Tapp	While I have heard nothing which will convince me that leaving the security of the EU is the right thing to do, I have been left scratching my head by some of the daft arugments that fellow 'innies; have used, such as suggesting it won't be as easy as it is now to visit the continent or eat anything other than egg and chips.		comment	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
07-Mar	Politics: The PM is blissfully unaware of our fears	Harvey Carter	The real worry on the minds of most of us ordinary people is the state of the NHS, overcrowding in our schools, housing, congestion on our roads etc. due to immigration and larger families		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
07-Mar	Withdraw fromEU human rights act. Europe: Cameron has broken promises on Europe	Ian Bancroft	He promised to retake power, for our country, to stop the flood of immigrants		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
08-Mar	Europe: Democracy is the key to EU debate	Derek J Bunting	Do I want to be governed by a regime over which ordinary people have no control, or governed by a democratically elected Parliament who the people can remove?		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
09-Mar	Europe: Anti-European rant had inaccuracies	NJ Wightman	This seems to be yet another rant by anti-European who hasn't got his facts right		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Informed choice and misinformation
11-Mar	Europe: we need to claim what we are owed	Mike Turner - Flyde Liberal Democrats	A good argument can be made the EU is more democratic than Westminster		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Against UK politics

Date	Title of Article	Author	Summary or Extract From Article		CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	FRAME
12-Mar	Europe: Limosines plans show up EU waste	Philip Griffiths, North West President UKIP	Plans to spend millions more pounds on luxury limousines for MEPs really does stretch my incredulity at EU financial waste		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
12-Mar	Europe:Let's play our part to be 'Great' again	Neil Rascoe	Some think that Brexit will make the EU sit up and take notice of our restored "greatness".		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Security and prosperity
17-Mar	Politics: Cameron is in for a fearful drubbing	Joseph G Dawson	Politics is losing its clout, politicians their credibility		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
23-Mar	Politics: Cameron is a 'lame duck' leader	Philip Etherington	I feel his endless jaunts around Europe trying to curry favour with our so-called partners such as Hungary and so forth - countries historically we have had little to do with - to try and get Britain a new deal in the EU, has dimiinished the office of Prime Minister		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
24-Mar	Europe: EU referendum will be our liberation	P Ward	Let us leave the sinking EU ship and go on to prosper in the wider world		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Security and prosperity
27-Mar	EU Vote will decide how we are governed	Roy Hopwood, Blackpool and Cleaveleys branch of UKIP	Before 1973 Britain was a proud self-governing nation.		Opinion	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
27-Mar	Fighting 'fear' over leaving	Roy Hopwood, Blackpool and Cleaveleys branch of UKIP	Fear over the economy and security dives the Prime Minister's campaign to keep Britain in the EU		Opinion	Hard Eurosceptic	Security and prosperity
28-Mar	EU debate - Part of Europe, but not in Europe	Derek J Bunting	The most important element that is missing is self-governance.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
02-Apr	No Evidence for a Brexit scare story	Dr Barry Clayton	Our consent to staying in or getting out is being manipulated daily by unscrupulous persuaders		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Informed choice and misinformation
04-Apr	Governance: Combined authority an omen for Europe	Derek J Bunting	By becoming part of the Combined Lancashire Authority it is no different in principle, and I emphasise in principle than our future relationship with Europe.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
05-Apr	Brexit - Big Debate - Lowther Pavillion 21.04.8.30am	Unknown	Brexit: The Big Debate		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
05-Apr	Line up confirmed for Flye EU debate	Unknown	A proper debate involving politicans and business for and against staying in Europe		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
07-Apr	Politicians in Euro debate	Unknown	There will be two panels - one in favour of staying in the EU and one against - and the audience will have the chance to hear both arguments and submit questions in advance		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
07-Apr	Putting right some bogus EU claims	Roy Lewis	Bogus claims abound and have done for years. Britain staying in the EU has not made us any less British, and we are united in our diversity.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Informed choice and misinformation
07-Apr	Leader's EU exit warning	Shelagh Parkinson - Politcal Writer	The EU for all its flaws has directed money to the town		Editorial	Support	Security and prosperity
08-Apr	I'd rather save the NHS than the EU	Eric Pollitt	Politicians do not explain the reasons for the NHS deficit of 30 billion GBP by 2020		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
12-Apr	We'll be more secure outside the EU	Coun Danny Scott	The real question is what do we lose in terms of security by leaving, and I think the answer would be unprotected borders with the risk of free-movement of terrorists		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
14-Apr	Flyde MEP leads way to reform EU law-making	Unknown	Euro MPs have bacjed measures which it is claimed wiill increase the role of national parliaments in the EU law making process.		Editorial	Soft Eurosceptic	Informed choice and misinformation
18-Apr	Europe: Mr Corbyn has changed his tune	Michael Moulding	The EU had nothing whatever to do with whether a PFI scheme was the preferred option chosen by our government for funding a particular project		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
18-Apr	Europe: Figures don't back Brexit claims	Mike Turner - Flyde Liberal Democrats	Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, has spent his entire political career opposing the European project as undemocratic.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics

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19-Apr	Money: The EU needs to put its house in order	Gordon McCann	Transparency in money matters seems to be top of the agenda right now. So lets see what the European Court of Auditors say about the Eus own spending in 2014.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
20-Apr	Despite PM's deal, it's time to leave Europe	Colin Maycock - Conservative Councillor for Bispham	Leaving the EU will make our institutions supreme, and only answerable to the British people		Opinion	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
20-Apr	Europe: EU poll is becoming a ridiculous riddle	Dr Barry Clayton	As the claims and counter-claims about what will, or will not, happen if we stay in or exit the EU get ever more ridiculous, I am reminded of Winston Churchill's description of the Soviet Union		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
21-Apr	Europe: True cost of staying in has been unsaid	EJ Tilley	We are expected by the EU with our present GBP 55 million daily contribution (likey to rise shortly) to assist these poorer nations, and accept an open border situation where all emigrants are welcome to come, regardless of our limited space to house, educate and heal our present population.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
22-Apr	300 attend debate on membership of the EU	Unknown	A debate on EU membership ahead of June's in-out referendum attracted an audience of around 300 to Lythams Lowther Pavilion.		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
22-Apr	Fylde businessman to speak in exit debate	Unknown	A Flyde businessman well known in the toys world will be one of the speakers in a debate over Brexit		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
26-Apr	No excuse for Obama's Brexit broadsides	Chris Moncrieff - Opinion Editorial	To leave Brussels and have our country and border back with a sovereign parliament		Editorial	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
26-Apr	Europe: Osbourne's spreading false scare stories	C Victor De Nagy	The future of Lancashire's aerospace ondustry would be in jeopardy if Britain voted to leave the EU, senior politicians said on a visit to the county.		Opinion	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
26-Apr	BAE workers' fears about a Brexit vote	Tim Gavell	I do not wish to be patronising, but Obama should really mind his own business		Editorial	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
27-Apr	Obama should keep out of referendu debate	Peter Anthony	I do no believe we should be interfering in each other's democratic rights		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics
02-May	Europe: PM never wanted a referendum	Unknown	I would prefer to cooperate with other nations and not be dictated by them		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
02-May	Europe: Remain camp pulled every trick in book	Unknown	The only reason Cameon promise the British people a referendum on the EU was because he didn't expect to win the General Election		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
05-May	Europe: We must vote no to a European Army	Paul Nuttall - NW UKIP MEP	Those in this country in the Remain camp deny losing our sovereignty but giving up the right to defend ourselves is just a further erosion of that		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
12-May	Brexit Questions unanswered	Tim Gavell	With the EU referendum just seven weeks away, no convinving arguments have yet been made and businesses are going to be left voting on gut instinct, says David Hawke, director at Vincents Solicitors		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
13-May	Europe: Leaving EU would be a shot in the foot	Chris Davies - North West Liberal Democrats	The European Union is bleeding the UK dry and has been disastrous for Britain.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
13-May	Europe: The UK doesn't need the interfering EU	Mr D Barker	It will leave Britain weaker not stronger, isolated no independent		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
14-May	Donald trumps this EU vote in the news	Blaise Tapp	If he beats Hillary Clinton then Trump could easily be the biggest story of the decade and one we in Britain might be really affected by		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
16-May	Flag waving display might be a mistake	Kate Cliff	I drove through Stanning village today and was surprised that at each end of the vollage the flag poles are flying the EU flag. I am sure previously I have seen the Union Jack.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Informed choice and misinformation

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17-May	Europe: We have traded our freedom to the EU	Derek J Bunting	I suffer from a condition called 'eleutheromania' (an obsessive desire for freedom) and it is spreding. Political freedom is the answer.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
17-May	Europe: The 'Remainers' are just not logical	Peter Bye	The reason the 'Remain' camp are saying such silly things is that even they can't see any logical reason why we should stay in the EU.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
19-May	Europe: We don't want to make same mistake	E J Tilley	But our glorious Leader, instead of defiantly rallying our country to leae as one would expect from his original stance has taken the road of least resistance by encouraging us to join his cowardly remain in at any cost policy, threatening dire consequences to our supposed existing financial comfort levels if we leave.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
19-May	Europe: For those about to rock...go postal	Terry Bennett	It is not rock and Roll to miss what may be the most important vote of your life to listen to music		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
24-May	Bananas are bandied about in Brexit battle	Chris Moncrieff - Opinion Editorial	The whole debate seems to have got completely out of hand		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
25-May	Clashes as Miliband backs EU 'Stay' vote	Shelagh Parkinson - Politcal Writer	Mr Miliband told The Gazette he realised many people were still undecided about how they would vote		Editorial	Support	Informed choice and misinformation
25-May	Brexit: Not another Somme with EU	Chris Davies - North West Liberal Democrats	The EU will never be perfect; its 28 members all have interests of their own, but they also face common propblems that require shared solutions..		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
25-May	Europe for all!	Socialist Martin Sean Beck	Let's start to build a truly free and socialist Europe for the people, by the people		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
26-May	Was village asked about flying EU flag?	Margaret Ashley	Who decided to fly these flags and was the whol of Stanning consulted? I doubt it		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Informed choice and misinformation
27-May	Europe campaigns fighting for voters	Unknown	A Flyde group campaigning to leave Europe is making its presence felt with street table events held in Blackpool		Comment	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
27-May	Brexit: Why I'll be voting yes on June 23	Bill Greene	If we are unable to work together in Europe for our joint benefit, how do we expect to work with the rest of the world for our common benefit		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
28-May	Brexit: Politicians up there with astrologers	Dennis Lee	I would bracket all of tehm in the same category as astrology charts		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Against UK politics
28-May	Europe: An open door to eastern Europe	S Ellis	As for Eastern Europeans doing jobs here, blame any governement allowing companies to use overseas agencies or any other foreign national.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
28-May	Brexit: Ignorance endemic in anti-EU brigade	James Bovington	Its actually an unique project sharign soverignty for the common good.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Informed choice and misinformation
01-Jun	Look around and see how the EU has helped our town	Robert Wood - Blackpool South Labour's EU Campaign Co-ordinator	Examples of how EU funding have helped our beautiful town are all around us: trams, sea water, tower, sea defences and prom.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
01-Jun	We're free to move around	Robert Wood - Blackpool South Labour's EU Campaign Co-ordinator	EU migrants in this country pay on average 2 billion GBP more a year in taxes than they claims in benefits		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
03-Jun	I'm happy to be a deserter, thanks. Europe: We could spend EU money on ourselves	Derek J Bunting	Are they going to stop selling us cars? Are they going to ban selling us wine?		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
03-Jun	Europe: Brexit campaigners betray our children	Unknown	How dare he accuse me of being a traitor because I believe fervently that Britain is better off in the EU?		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
07-Jun	Corbyn leads from behind on the referendum	Chris Moncrieff - Opinion Editorial	Pubs do better when the country does better		Editorial	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law

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07-Jun	Pub boss in Brexit campaign	David Nowell	It appears to me that Mr Cameron on one side of the Tory fence and Mr Johnson on the other side pay lip service to Sir Winston but neither take in a word he has said!		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
07-Jun	Politicians haven't listened to Winston	Harvey Carter	How humiliating for Jeremy Corbyn that six of his Labour leader predeccessors have had to come to his rescue in the campaign to prevent the United Kingdom from leaving the European Union		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics
07-Jun	Europe: History reveals the benefits of the EU	GW Collinge	The Remain option in the forthocming referendum is by far the most convincing		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
08-Jun	We must avoid the mistakes of 1975	Marcus Hill	The problem we British have is that (unlike our European partners) we argue the detail of treaties but once agreed we apply the rules to the letter to our detriment.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
08-Jun	Home truths about the EU referendum debate	Kevan Benfold - Blackpool Liberal Democrats	The simple fact is if we leave the EU we do not know what will happen as any renegotiations have ot started yet, let alone been completed.		Opinion	Support	Security and prosperity
08-Jun	Europe: The Leave campaign is running on empty	Jack Croysdill	Britain joined the EU because our manufacturing industries needed to be part of the world's largest single market.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
08-Jun	Europe: I was OUT in 1975 ... but now I'm in	May Thomas	We take for granted how much that Europe has chnged for the better.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
09-Jun	Europe: EU is not necessary for our commerce	Unknown	I would argue our commercial ventures if controlled by a single EU political entity may result in LESS international cooperation not more.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
10-Jun	Brexit bus rolls into town	Shelagh Parkinson - Politcal Writer	Brexit campaigners claimed wages would go up in Blackpool if the UK votes to leave the European Union during a visit to the resot as part of a tour of the North West		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
13-Jun	Europe: Brexit would be a gift for the Queen	Tom Roberts	This would be a priceless gift.		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
13-Jun	Europe: The EU protects our wildlife habitats	Jean Lambert MEP, Molly Scott Cato MEP, Keith Taylor MEP	The European Union is absolutely the best place to work together with our neighbours to do this.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
15-Jun	Europe: EU did not protect our fishing fleets	Derek J Bunting	Westminster will become powerless		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
16-Jun	Europe: What does future hold if we stay in?	Mrs C Forrester	It is common sense to vote LEAVE, before it is too late		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
16-Jun	UK house prices expected to DROP for first time since 2012	Unknown	Referendum uncertainty plus taxt changes take their toll		Editorial	Neutral	Security and prosperity
16-Jun	Europe: Partnership offers hope of progress	Chris Davies - North West Liberal Democrats	For all its faults, the European Union has been a tremendous force for good		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
17-Jun	Europe protected our local beaches. Europe: Brexiteers forget the good EU can do	Carol Fulton	Brexiteers have forgotten the good environmental policies the European Union has introduced		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
19-Jun	Brexit will be great for Great Britain	Ken Swann	Will someone in high places please ask the prime minister David Cameron, is it true when his term of office is over, is he going to live in France and get a cushy job in Brussels?		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Against UK politics
19-Jun	The EU debate highlights a lack of talent	Blaise Tapp	The phrase 'the only thing we know is we don't know' has been trotted out a lot in relation to this issue but that isn't completely true as another thing which has been confirmed during the greatest in or out saga since the hokey cokey is that we are seriously lacking on the political talent front in this country.		Opinion	Neutral	Against UK politics
20-Jun	End the debate early and think for a minute	Barry Freeman	Think carefullly about what you have seen and heard from both sides of the campaign.		Opinion	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation

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20-Jun	Europe: The facts on the EU's fisheries policy	Mike Turner - Flyde Liberal Democrats	The referendum is an opportunity to redress the European balance - a voteto leave will halt the superstate in its tracks and other countries will demand their referenda.		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	bureaucracy and cost
20-Jun	Europe: It's time to redress the union balance	Unknown	The Brexit brigade constantly bang on about the EU being undemocratic but the fisheries policy fiasco was a direct result of the excessively democratic practices of the EU		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
21-Jun	Europe: We are no longer a sovereign nation	Dr Anthony Nixon	The EU has destroyed some of Britain's most prosperous industries		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
21-Jun	Europe: This system needs to be demolished	Unknown	We do not have to be a member of the EU to trade with it		Published Letters to the Editor	Hard Eurosceptic	Our Borders and Our Law
21-Jun	Europe: Leaving the EU is the road to prosperity	Roy Hopwood, Blackpool and Cleaveleys branch of UKIP	Who do you believe?		Published Letters to the Editor	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
21-Jun	Europe: Will we avoid the EU vote juggernaut?	JP	Germany rules the EU Parliament. Don't you think that this system has to be demolished?		Published Letters to the Editor	Soft Eurosceptic	Bureaucracy and cost
21-Jun	Europe: Brexit would deny others oppurtunities	Carla Huvermann	My time in Blackpool was one of the best experience in my life, and I don't want others to miss the opportunity to experience an exchange like this.		Published Letters to the Editor	Support	Security and prosperity
22-Jun	Flyde Coast leading fight to have their say on Brexit	Tim Gavell	As D-Day looms in the EU debate, the resort, community and political leaders speak out		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation
23-Jun	Party lines are drawn in Blackpool	Shelagh Parkinson - Politcal Writer	With cross-party support for both the Remain and Brexit campaigns, the political lines have been blurred over the European referendum taking place today		Editorial	Neutral	Informed choice and misinformation

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