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ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Revue de littérature et sciences humaines

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N° 16-17

Septembre 2023

Sommaire

The Impact of media framing of Brexit and EU migration on Britain and the European Union [1]

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ملخص

يتمحور هذا البحث حول الطريقة التي تناولت بها الصحف البريطانية مسألة الهجرة صلب الاتحاد الأوربي وكذلك خروج المملكة من المجموعة. أزعم أن الصحف تناولت المسألتين في علاقة بمكانة كل من بريطانيا والاتحاد الأوربي علي الصعيد الدولي مما أثار شكوكا حول الهوية البريطانية كما ستدعمه المقارنة بين التغطية الصحفية واستطلاعات الرأي التي تعنى بنفس المسائل.

ABSTRACT

The paper seeks to argue that British broadsheets framed Brexit and EU migration in relation to Britain's and the EU's international positions, raising doubts about British national identity. Such an argument would be shown through a juxtaposition of media framing of the issues to opinion polls conducted by Ipsos Mori.

Keywords : Brexit; Britishness; Broadsheets; EU identity; EU migration

Résumé

Cet article tente de montrer que les journaux britanniques ont présenté le Brexit et la migration de l'Union européenne en relation avec la position

de la Grande Bretagne, ainsi que celle de l'Union européenne, à l'échelle internationale, soulevant des doutes quant à l'identité nationale britannique.

1. Background to the study

Britain's relationship with Europe has raised a lot of debate and generated a bulk of studies on its main characteristics. Such a relationship is said to be "one of the most divisive" issues which has dominated British politics for decades. Though results of the 1975 referendum showed the endorsement of Britain's membership to the EEC, the European issue has long raised concern in British politics. The Conservatives, traditionally seen as a party of Europe, and Labour, with a majority seen as strong opponents, have changed their stance on the European Union as from the 1990s. Labour has become pro-European whereas proponents among the Conservatives have been struggling "to keep control of policy towards Europe against a background of a rising tide of anti-European feeling in the party" (Baker and Seawright 11).

It has been argued that the European issue put Harold Wilson's government at stake, with his famous 'zigzags' on Europe, refusing to apply for membership in 1962, qualifying in 1966, refusing to apply in 1971 and endorsing Europe in 1975 in a bid to unify his divided party, though Labour split in 1981. Yet, in the aftermath of the 1979 general election, Labour voted to withdraw from the Community without a referendum, moving by 1987 to a pro-European party and becoming more enthusiastic by 1992 (ibid 57-8). As for the Conservatives, traditionally considered as a pro-

British political party, it has appeared more pro-European than Labour despite the fact that both stood against Britain's entry first to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and then to the European Economic Community (EEC). Indeed, both the 1961 application and Britain's entry to the EEC in 1973 were carried out under a Conservative government despite Enoch Powell's opposition to such an institution.[1]

What is more, under Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives were seen as pro-European, possibly attributed to Labour's anti-European attitudes.[2] However, David Cameron, the engineer of the June 2016 referendum, has been regarded as the most Euro-sceptic leader in the Conservative party, appearing as a reluctant European, thus raising calls to withdraw from the EU (Jones 129-33).This argument could be confirmed by his warnings in private, released in the *Daily Telegraph*, that he might side with the Leave campaign if member states did not make some concessions with regards to his demands.[3] Indeed, Euro-scepticism particularly escalated in the aftermath of the fifth EU enlargement resulting in an influx of Eastern Europeans into Britain. Roar against the trend, involving EU nationals whose rights have been enshrined in EU

[1] "The pro-Conservative Press naturally picked up on this issue. The *Daily Telegraph* supported the application, but stressed that 'Membership of the Common Market is a bigger issue for Britain than for any major Continental Power. That is . . . because of the Commonwealth and the vast role that the Commonwealth plays in our trade, our investment and our ways of political, social, legal and cultural thought." (Stephen 1998)

[2] Labour's stance, according to Stephen, could be explained by their strong "attachment to the ideals of the Commonwealth and the special relationship with the United States" compared to the Conservatives (ibid).

[3] Johnston, I. 'Cameron warns European migrant and financial crises add pressure for Brexit.' The ***Independent*** [online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk[Accessed on 20 August 2017].

laws, had a major impact on Britain's socio-political landscape, particularly during the campaign for the 2010 British general election.

Subsequently, the coalition government between the Conservatives under David Cameron and the Liberal Democrats under Nick Clegg promised to reduce EU migration to the tens of thousands. Such a promise, though proved later to be hard to achieve, was also reiterated during the campaign for the 2015 general election when EU migration appeared among the most important issues facing the country. The whole situation paved the way for another referendum in June 2016 resulting in Britons' decision to leave the EU, thus putting European integrity at stake. In this respect, the study is meant to shed more light on the nature of the relationship between Britain and the EU from a media studies perspective, examining the way three British broadsheets framed two important issues, namely Brexit and EU migration, being at the heart of such relationship.

2. Objectives and research questions

The study aims to delve into the way British broadsheets framed Brexit and EU migration, two topical issues which raised major concerns during the period in focus, putting Britain's position, as well as the EU's, at stake. Free mobility within the EU has been controversial since the fifth EU enlargement which resulted in the influx of Eastern Europeans, appearing as one of the most important issues facing the country, thus affecting results of British general elections, particularly that of 2010, yielding a historic coalition government between the Conservatives and the Liberal

Democrats. The intention is to examine the way these newspapers framed Brexit and EU migration through a qualitative analysis of the content of their coverage prior to the June 2016 referendum and in its aftermath, using Maxwell McCombs' model of media framing. The paper seeks to argue that British broadsheets framed the two issues in terms of their impact on British society and Britain's, as well as the EU's, position on the international scene, enhancing British national identity and putting EU identity at stake.

3. Methodology

Corpus of the study consists of two items: articles from British broadsheets, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian* and the *Independent*, chosen for their political affiliation and readership, and opinion polls and surveys dealing with similar themes. The *Daily Telegraph*, appearing as a liberal newspaper for the first 80 years under the name the *Daily Telegraph and Courier*, is now famous for its strongly conservative outlook. As for the *Guardian*, it is a left-of-centre British newspaper owned by the Guardian Media Group since 1993 which remained for many years the only mass-circulation national left-leaning daily. *The Independent* leans slightly to the left, with its editorials occasionally covering issues that appeal to the right, despite its claim from the onset that it would not take part in the press lobby system. From this perspective, content analysis of the corpus from such newspapers could offer more insight about such issues in relation to their impact on Britain, especially in terms of its national identity compared to the European identity.

The keywords used in the selection are 'Brexit' and 'EU migration' in order to consider articles and polls and surveys dealing with such topical issues. Articles were selected from the official websites of the aforementioned newspapers whereas opinion polls and surveys were selected from the official website of Ipsos Mori in a bid to shed more light on the effect of media framing, achieved, according to McCombs (77), through a comparison of opinion polls with content analysis of news media. A total number of 328 articles were considered in this study: 126 articles from the *Independent*, 106 articles from the *Guardian* and 96 articles from the *Daily Telegraph*, in addition to 70 opinion polls and surveys.

Frames are considered as "organizing principles incorporating and emphasising certain lower level attributes to the exclusion of many others. Frames serve as efficient bundling devices of micro-attributes and, in turn, can be thought of as macro-attributes;" framing is "the selection of − and emphasis upon – particular attributes for the media agenda when talking about an object" (McCombs 87-88). In this paper, focus is on the way three British broadsheets framed two major issues, namely Brexit and EU migration, in order to see their effect on Britons' attitudes towards these issues and their impact on Britain and the EU, particularly in relation to British national identity compared to that of the EU.

4. Findings and discussion

Brexit and EU migration were framed in relation to two major themes. The first one is the impact of the two issues on British society, contributing to the introduction of other ingredients to Britain, this time EU nationals, with an increasing number willing to

apply for a British citizenship to protect their rights in their host country, namely Britain. The second theme is the impact of such issues on Britain's position on the international scene, as well as the EU's. Indeed, Brexit and EU migration were covered in relation to such themes, often with conflicting views even within the same newspaper, as reflected in opinion polls and surveys dealing with similar issues.

4.1 Brexit and EU migration and the impact on British society

The two issues were framed in relation to their impact on British society in the sense that they intensified tension between Britons and foreigners, including Eastern Europeans who were subject to serious attacks. In an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* a few days after the June 2016 Referendum, Theresa May addressed Poles, growing as the largest community in Britain, reassuring them that the British government was willing to keep them in their host country. She condemned the 'shameful' attacks in the aftermath of the referendum, arguing that hate crime targeting any community was not accepted in British society no matter what their ethnic or religious background is. She also paid tribute to the Polish pilots whose role in WWII had been crucial in the Battle of Britain. Furthermore, May expressed her willingness to build the "strongest possible relationship" with Poland after Brexit. Her address was preceded by a meeting with Robert Fico, the Slovakian Prime Minister who disagreed with her on restricting freedom of movement, emphasising the difference between Britons' perception of EU migration and that of their counterparts in

Slovakia in the sense that Britons' major concern was EU migrant workers.[1]

An article in the *Guardian* shed light on a new phenomenon resulting from Brexit, namely an upsurge in applications for dual-nationality passports whether among EU migrants in Britain or among Britons in Europe ahead of the June 2016 referendum.[2] It was reported that 1,200 European citizens were either considering changing nationality or citizenship, or in the process of doing so, out of fear that life both in Britain and within the EU would be problematic. Government statistics revealed an upsurge in naturalisations of EU citizens, including A8 nationals, moving from around 10,000 in 2009 to over 18,000 in 2013.

Bart Szydlowski, a twenty-eight year-old Polish multimedia engineer in Britain since 2006, would apply for a permanent resident status the next year in a bid to avoid some uncertainty about his situation in the host country as he was not sure of his ability to work, arguing that a job in his home country would not offer the same standard of living in Britain. But this Polish engineer already refused the option offered by his British girlfriend to get a British citizenship through marriage, a decision that should not be made under any kind of pressure, though it could be a possibility if he would be forced to leave the country.

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[1] Ben Riley, S. and Hughes, L. 'Theresa May reassures 800,000 Poles living in UK over Brexit and condemns "shameful" post-referendum attacks.' The ***Daily Telegraph*** [online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk [Accessed on 7 August 2017].

[2] Henley, J. 'Rush for dual-nationality passports as EU migrants fear Brexit.' The ***Guardian*** [online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 14 August 2017].

British expatriates in different parts in Europe were also concerned about such situation, including Wendy Joint, a retired civil servant who was worried about health care in France, currently dependent on her state pension in Britain, but would require reciprocal agreements with France and other EU countries after Brexit. Georgina Hodgson, another expatriate in Spain since her eighteenth birthday, was also worried about the repercussions of Britain's leaving the EU; Brexit would be a disaster for her, knowing that she had a career, a home and a partner in Spain, and she had always enjoyed travelling through Europe without a visa. Josie Silva, a young British student teacher who would resume her job at a school in Germany by 2016, after finishing her qualifying period in Britain, had the same concerns about Brexit, thus thinking of dual nationality because she endorsed the EU's openness, being a global community despite her dissatisfaction with its democratic experience. Brexit for her would push the country "over the precipice of xenophobia and isolation on which we have been teetering for the past few years".[1]

Tine Juhlert, a Danish migrant, was also applying for a British citizenship after 20 years of residency, though she would consider herself British as she had a mortgage and a house and paid taxes. She was terrified by UKIP and was really shocked by hearing that one of her closet friends, originally from Canada, had been told to leave after finishing his Ph.D. Samuel Schwarzkopf, a neuroscientist at University College London was another EU citizen who had often thought of applying for a British nationality

[1] Ibid.

since his arrival in 1999 but given up the idea because then Germany would not allow a dual citizenship. Schwarzkopf was thinking of a dual citizenship to feel more integrated and strengthen his sense of belonging, though he might find a job elsewhere after Brexit. His major concern was research, currently heavily supported by the EU with various exchange programmes, permitting the movement of researchers from all over Europe, with some of whom he was working. One of the major concerns among EU migrants after Brexit would possibly be termination of fast-track EU-only lines at passport control.[1]

Such concerns were also reflected in opinion polls, putting Brexit and EU migration as the most important issues facing the country, as the Issues Index of November 2016 revealed.[2] There were 39 per cent of voters who considered Brexit and EU migration as the most important issues, up seven points compared to the October issue of the same year, followed by immigration/immigrants, with 35 per cent and the NHS, with 32 per cent. It is noteworthy that concerns about the EU differed in geographical terms, reaching 56 per cent in Scotland and 46 per cent in south and east England. Other differences were linked to age and gender in that 45 per cent of people aged 55+ showed concerns about the EU, compared to 44 per cent male and 35 per cent female voters. These differences would later materialise in the messy situation in Britain throughout Brexit negotiations, given the difficulty in finding

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[1] Ibid.

[2] The poll was conducted on a sample population of 973 persons aged 18+ around Britain who were interviewed face-to-face in-home between 4 and 24 November 2016 from 184 sampling points around Great Britain.

a compromise whether between Britain and the EU or between the House of Commons and May's government.

More concerns were raised in an article in the *Independent* prior to the start of formal negotiations for Brexit, reporting on a rally outside the Houses of Parliament led by hundreds of EU nationals asking for the protection of their rights in Britain. Isabel, a French woman living in York with her English husband and three young children, was among the participants, holding the French and British flags, expressing her fears of a split in her family in case of hard Brexit, as it would make it difficult for her husband to live in France and for her to live in Britain. Another participant was Ilaria Miarible, an Italian researcher, with a ten-year residency in Britain to accomplish her Ph.D., but left the country in many occasions, which could hamper her from qualifying for a permanent residency.[1]

An article in the *Daily Telegraph* reported on reactions against May's reciprocal deal to protect the rights of 1.2 million Britons in Europe and 3.3 million EU nationals in Britain. May's suggestion to grant EU citizens the right to remain in Britain in exchange for allowing the same rights to Britons in Europe was appreciated by twenty EU countries, though rejected by Angela Merkel. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, who claimed that Brexit resulted in anxiety and uncertainty, was also against the deal, insisting that May should trigger Article 50 in a bid to remove such

[1] Siobham Fenton, S. 2017 'My family is being broken': EU migrant parents of British children demand clarity on right to stay after Brexit.' The **Independent** [online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk [Accessed on 26 August 2017].

feelings. Such attitudes were criticised by Euro-sceptic MPs, accusing the different parties of "playing politics with people's lives".[1] With hindsight, uncertainty would be intense throughout the negotiations, particularly with growing divisions among May's cabinet, leading to a series of resignations of a number of Senior Cabinet ministers, including Boris Johnson and David Davis.

The implication is that both Brexit and EU migration affected British society to the extent of creating potential communities who could no longer feel at ease. In the case of EU nationals, it would be difficult for them to integrate into the mainstream society. As for British expatriates, it would also be difficult for them to enjoy all the benefits of EU citizens before Brexit in different parts of Europe, particularly in Spain where there is a large number of expatriates who have made it their home for long, mainly the area *Costa del Sol*. In this sense, the two issues, namely Brexit and EU migration, were framed as a threat to both EU nationals in Britain and British expatriates in Europe.

An article in the *Guardian* raised the same issues resulting from Brexit, emphasising the situation of British expatriates all over Europe who would potentially need to apply for visas to cross the Channel. In addition, Britons in Spain would possibly be subject to integration rules, including master of Spanish to gain long-term residency status. In Britain, more passport checkpoints and customs controls would be needed on the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, the potential back door for

[1] Swinford, S. 'Angela Merkel says "nein" to Theresa May's calls for early deal on rights of EU migrants and British ex-pats.' The **Daily Telegraph** [online]. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk [Accessed on 15 August 2017].

entry into Britain from the EU.[1] Indeed, one of the main controversial issues during Brexit negotiations would be the Irish backstop, making any attempt to reach a compromise more than difficult. Another article in the same newspaper reiterated the same issues associated with Brexit and its impact on EU citizens in Britain, as well as British expatriates in Europe, emphasising the confusion resulting from the Leave and Remain campaigns discourse. While Leave campaigners claimed that any new immigration laws would not target EU citizens, promising to keep the status quo, the Remain campaigners sent warnings that existing EU nationals would lose automatic right to come and work in Britain after Brexit.[2]

As for Britons living abroad, according to Dominic Grieve, a former attorney general, they could theoretically become illegal, though mass expulsion would not be feasible, if their home country does not keep some form of freedom of movement as part of the deal with the EU. But other lawyers stated that British expatriates' rights would be protected under the 1969 Vienna Convention on the law of treaties while some others believed that such rights would not possibly include rights to benefits, pensions and healthcare. In the same vein, it was pointed out that Britons working for companies within the EU and depending on British revenues, unlike those

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[1] Allen, K., P. Oltermann, J. Borger and A. Neslen. 'Brexit – what would happen if Britain left the EU?' The *Guardian* [online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 15August 2017].

[2] O'Carroll, L. and J. Henley. 'What does Brexit mean for EU citizens in Britain – and Brits in Europe?' The *Guardian* [online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 11 August 2017].

paid in Euros and covered by the host country's social security, would be concerned about the exchange rate.[1]

An article published in the *Daily Telegraph* later addressed the same issues related to British expatriates, bearing a picture of some British tourists in a café in Spain sharing the same concerns of their compatriots living in the Diaspora, estimated by the UN in the range of 4.5 million, with 1.3 of them in Europe. Some of Britons' concerns could be out of fear of the potential revenge that some European countries may take because of Brexit. For example, retired Britons in Spain could be asked to cover their healthcare according to the Centre for European Reform's John Springford, or possibly prevent them from enjoying healthcare services.[2] Yet, there was some reassurance by the House of Commons Library, for instance, stating that withdrawal from any treaty would release the parties from future obligations, but would not have any impact on the rights or obligations already acquired before withdrawal. This implies that Britons in Europe would be expected to preserve their right to remain in their host country and enjoy all the benefits they already had, but this could not be applicable to expatriates moving after Brexit, potentially causing more problems for post-Brexit British expatriates.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Bennett, A. 'What will Brexit mean for British expats?' The ***Daily Telegraph*** [online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk [Accessed on 15 August 2017].

4.2 Brexit and EU migration and the impact on Britain and the European Union

Brexit and EU migration were also framed with respect to their impact on Britain's position, as well as the EU's, on the international scene, particularly in relation to national identities, enhancing that of Britons after leaving the EU despite David Cameron's attempts to negotiate a new settlement agreement in the EU as an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* emphasised.[1] Cameron was said to have been backed up by his Polish counterparts on his 'emergency brake' on benefits reforms, the core of his draft agreement on the new settlement under which in-work benefits for EU migrants would be upheld for four years, though Konrad Szymański, Poland's Europe minister, was dissatisfied with this measure. It was argued that the Polish government, the first to be elected with an absolute majority since the end of Communism, emphasised their willingness to build strong ties with Britain, considered as their natural ally in Europe.

An article published in the *Guardian* dealt with similar issues, highlighting the implications of Brexit on Britain, as well as the EU.[2] For example, Brexit implies that EU students would pay full tuition fees to enter British universities and would not be able to get loans. As a result, it would be difficult for poor Bulgarians and Romanians to get into Britain, as they would fill in a large number

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[1] Wilkinson, M. 'Poland ready to back David Cameron's flagship EU deal as PM faces down critics.' The **Daily Telegraph** [online] Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk [Accessed on 14 August 2017].

[2] Allen, K., P. Oltermann, J. Borger and A. Neslen 'Brexit – what would happen if Britain left the EU?' The **Guardian** [online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 15 August 2017].

of forms before entry whereas the rich French or Germans would get into the country relatively easy.[1] As for British students in the EU, they may be excluded from the Erasmus scheme[2] after Brexit, as another article in the same newspaper revealed. Brexit was said to potentially exclude Britain from "one of the glowing successes" of EU membership, a scheme from which tens of thousands of British students, as well as their counterparts in Europe, have benefited, enjoying up to one-year in European universities and vice versa. Brexit, for Ruth Sinclair-Jones, Erasmus Director in Britain, would put an end to thirty years of "enrichment of so many lives," pointing out that more than 200,000 British students have participated in Erasmus since its inception in 1987, benefiting from grants paid by the EU.[3]

The impact of Brexit on such a scheme was obviously articulated by Doctor Hywel Ceri Jones, among the early senior British appointments to the EEC as head of its first education and training department. Jones stated that he was "bereaved by Brexit, and if it leads to the end of freedom of movement and exclusion of the UK from Erasmus, this would be devastating – a tragedy of staggering proportions for universities throughout the country".[4] The same idea was conveyed by Professor John Grattan, Volcanic Geologist

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Erasmus, "named after the Renaissance humanist philosopher, was launched by the European commission in 1987, since when more than two million young people have benefited from the EU-funded grants to study across 27 countries" Vulliamy, E. 'Erasmus scheme may exclude British students after Brexit.' The **Guardian** [online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 14 August 2017].

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

and Vice Chancellor of Aberystwyth University, one of the most international universities in Britain, admitting that more than 100 EU students had withdrawn their applications, half of them on Brexit day, which would have major financial repercussions on the university. Grattan claimed that Brexit resulted in anxiety among academicians, knowing that the decline in British 18-year-olds at the university was compensated for by international students.[1]

More concerns about the impact of Brexit on academicians were revealed in another article in the *Independent*, presenting the views of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee. It was argued that Brexit would have a major impact on British researchers who would be discriminated against in EU science projects, which could be harmful to areas such as natural sciences, medicine and humanities, and thus damaging the British economy. The Committee was also critical of Amber Rudd, then Home Secretary, for her worries about student migration, calling for the exclusion of students from the Government's target to put down immigration figures.[2]

It was also pointed out that the weight of Britain in the EU is undeniable, being one of the "Big Three" in financial terms in addition to its size and imperial history. In this sense, Brexit would be costly as the country would lose its power within the EU, though young Europeans would still be attracted to the country's music, literature and popular culture, given that English is a lingua

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Lister, S. 'Brexit having "corrosive effect" on science sector.' The **Independent** [online]. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk [Accessed on 20 August 2017].

franca.[1] Yet, it was argued that Brexit would minimise Britain's position as an international power, an argument advanced by Feng Zhongping, the assistant president of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, who considered the EU as a major world power and China's biggest market and trade partner. In this respect, Brexit would be harmful to Britain more than the EU. Contrastively, Samir Saran, a political analyst from the Observer Research Foundation in Delhi, did not see Brexit as a weakening sign of Britain, given its strong ties with India which never considered Britain as part of the EU, but rather as a "distinct identity because of its history and the Indian diaspora".[2]

Interestingly, a global survey carried out on the significance of the EU showed that the European project has been successful, though less so for key European countries in that 57 per cent among Europeans believed that the EU was heading in the wrong direction. But 73 per cent of voters in the nine European countries were satisfied with the flexibility in travelling within the EU and 64 per cent were satisfied with its role in trade between member states.[3] This contrasts with a previous poll conducted prior to the June 2016 referendum, showing that 48 per cent of Europeans among eight other EU countries believed that Brexit could lead to a

[1] Allen, K., P. Oltermann, J. Borger and A. Neslen. 'Brexit – what would happen if Britain left the EU?' The *Guardian* [online] Available at: http://www.theguardian.com [Accessed on 14 August 2017].

[2] Ibid.

[3] The survey was carried out between 17 February and 3 March 2017 on online adults aged under 65 in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States.A total number of 18,021 adults aged 18-64 in the US and Canada, and age 16-64 in all other countries were interviewed via the Ipsos Online Panel system.

'domino effect', i.e. resulting in more splits within the EU, with 40 per cent who believed that the EU would be weaker by 2020.[1]

In the same vein, a poll conducted between 26 and 29 July 2016 revealed that a significant number of respondents would identify themselves as British rather than any other identity, with 60 per cent who would rather be British citizens than any other, though higher among people aged 55 to 75, with 71 per cent. Indeed, 29 per cent agreed and 31 per cent strongly agreed that they would rather be British citizens. It was revealed that Britishness, along with other national identities scored better than the European identity, with 4.5 points for Britishness, 4.6 for Englishness and Scotishness, for instance, and only 0.9 point for the European identity.[2] The implication is that Britishness appeared stronger than the European identity among Britons. What is more, a poll conducted on 12 December 2016 revealed that 79 per cent of Britons believed that another European country would consider leaving the EU, with a higher percentage among Conservative supporters, compared to 70 per cent among Labour ones.[3]

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[1] The study is based on interviews, conducted via Ipsos Golobal @dvisor Online Omnibus from 25 March to 8 April 2016, with 11,030 (between 500 and 1005 per country) adults aged 16-64 in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and the US.

[2] Ipsos MORI conducted online interviews with a sample of 1,099 adults aged 16-75 across Britain from 26 to 29 July 2016.

[3] A sample of 1,003 adults aged 18+ across Britain were interviewed by phone on 9-12 December 2016.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that Brexit and EU migration, two topical issues in Britain, were framed in relation to two major themes: the impact on British society, and the impact on Britain's position, as well as the EU's, on the international scene. Such themes were also reflected in opinion polls and surveys showing growing concerns among Britons about the impact of such issues on the future of Britain and that of the EU. The three broadsheets focused on the repercussions of Brexit and EU migration on world order, knowing the weight of Britain, particularly in relation to its ties with the US, creating an atmosphere of doubt on the shape of Britain after Brexit, as it has always sought to regain its major role as a world power in the post-WWII era. It seems that Britain's decision to leave the EU could be read against Britons' feeling of belonging to a former imperial power, with some remnants which are still evidence of its greatness such as the Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic, home to a few thousands of British people leading the same way of life as their countrymen in the home land. But since there has been no compromise on the terms and conditions of the Brexit deal, it is not easy to make any predictions on the role that both Britain and the EU would ultimately play on the international scene in the future.

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