

Overarching Academic Themes

The theories employed are a means of providing tools to unravel how and why newspapers have gone about constructing the EU for general consumption.

The EU, it is argued, is both communicated and understood through the prism of nation—and national newspapers. It is argued that the press (including online) is causally significant in influencing national publics over Europe, often feeding Euroscepticism and taking it to new heights.

Newspaper discourse is often more than just a reflection of national(ist) perspectives on the EU that draws on history and collective memory. Instead, at times it is the *very basis* for the discursive construction of Europe for national publics. To that end the book systematically challenges and unpicks the notion of an impartial *British fact-centred press* covering Europe, and deepens our understanding of how partisan papers in Italy cover the continent.

The British press is as persuasive, if not more so, than its Italian counterpart, which harbours no illusions of impartiality and rigorously argues, cajoles and convinces its Italian readership, also often Eurosceptic, but triggered by a whole series of very different cultural phenomena. Yet much like its British counterpart, it only addresses some aspects of the EU story in question, to suit the *coherence constructed* by the newspaper—and thus persuading, reinforcing and developing *certain* Eurosceptic perceptions of the EU at the expense of others.

The first presupposition some readers of this book may harbour is that Euroscepticism is somehow specific to Britain alone. Although apparently

originating in the UK, it pervades much of the continent and is alive and well in Italy.

For all the talk of the global village in the digitalised age, the EU is understood through the prism of a hardy nationhood (Billig 1995). The *EU story* is only conveyed insofar as it affects the nation.

In order to conduct an effective exposition of what finally appears in newspapers, in the form of a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of newspapers, it is first necessary to unravel the *layers of context* in order to fully comprehend those endeavouring to influence that initial draft of history—the newspaper story—and the power struggles and competing voices involved.

The final layer of that context is provided by a series of research interviews conducted with British and Italian politicians and journalists, journalists-cum-politicians and vice versa, with briefs relating to the EU. Their presuppositions, persuasive positioning and prejudices about Europe could subsequently surface in what manifests itself in newspaper copy. Equally, it is hoped, they may also reveal something of the conflicts and pressures that permeate through to the final newspaper discourse. That, too, can inform understanding.

POLITICIANS, THE PRESS AND THE MERRY DANCE OVER EUROPE

To understand how journalists finally produce their EU story, we need to unravel all that precedes it. By using theory as a means of exploring and analysing, we can see the influence of the wider society—and how it colours what journalists write. But as one former journalist put it to me, newspapers often *push the pendulum further*, for their own ends.

The analysis will bore deeper still, peering into the media-centricity and the context of the newsroom; the inter-relationships between journalists and politicians; and cultural and economic capital.

Comparative theory is employed to challenge various preconceptions inherent in conceptualising the world through the prism of nation and national newspapers and to help us understand the constraints under which the national media work—*within* media structures. The ethnocentricity that has been referred to is challenged. The Italian media works in a very different way and undergoes very different pressures to its British counterpart. To *denaturalise* and demonstrate, say, that the British media also produces commentary-laden news—much like its

Italian counterpart—challenges readers to revisit their understandings and preconceptions.

Unravelling the inter-relationships and interactions between politicians, the press and those that move between these fields in terms of Europe is important to reveal the conflicts and pressures that permeate through to the final newspaper discourse. For instance, the British foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, was formerly a Brussels correspondent; Beppe Grillo, leader of Italy's Five Star Movement, has used his blog to circumvent engagement with the Italian media, which he regards as part of the corrupt elite caste (together with politicians). Interviewees included: a veteran Italian MEP and doyen of the left, who previously founded and worked on a newspaper; an Italian political correspondent, who used to run a government press office; the head of the European Commission (EC) office in London, who used to be the BBC Northern Ireland editor; and Nick Clegg, former leader of the Liberal Democrats, who used to be a *Financial Times* correspondent.

Providing a textured analysis of the political power play is pertinent here, as it ultimately influences that first draft of history: the *EU story* in tomorrow's paper. Benson and Neveu (2005: 9) argue that the 'public sphere, as an empirical concept, would be much improved through the kind of detailed specification of structures and processes that field theory could provide'. Field theory facilitates such a structured approach. Benson and Neveu (ibid.: 2–3) argue that an empirical approach is necessary to establish the inter-relationships between various actors in society. Bourdieu (2005) talks of *fields* and increasingly specialised spheres of action, such as politics, economics, religion and cultural production. The argument is that both within and between such *fields*, relationships of power fundamentally structure all human action. Within fields, presuppositions, known as *doxa*, are internalised:

These practical scheme – implicit, tacit, very hard to make explicit – are constitutive of the *doxa*, as the philosophers call it, in other words the universe of the tacit presuppositions that we accept as the natives of a certain society. But there is also a specific *doxa*, a system of presuppositions inherent in membership in a field. (ibid.: 37)

Applying the structure of field theory helps us to discern when journalists are just feeding wider national prejudices about the EU; when they

are guilty of ‘group think’ amongst reporters; or perhaps the internalised dynamics (and indeed political and economic pressures) of the newsroom culture; or when a combination of the above plays out in the final *EU story* published.

There is the notion of discourse being constituted by social practice—but also constituting it (Wodak 2001: 65–66). Newspaper discourse is no doubt influenced by the surrounding society. But the core thesis here is that in *finally* constituting it, the discourse on Europe is discursively constructed by newspapers. This can be seen when the arguments advanced go beyond the Eurosceptic positions of presiding Italian or British governments and include or exclude salient facts, depending on which way the news is cooked.

Bourdieu (2005) argues there are spheres of internal conflict and struggle, with competing actors seeking control. However, Benson and Neveu (2005: 6) argue that the journalistic field is a crucial mediator between all other fields. When ideas, embedded in the language of stories, become ordered and internalised, they are hard to extricate (Heer and Wodak 2008: 3).

Internal struggles (Benson and Neveu 2005) are significant, and they are discussed in terms of both the Italian and the British discourse. Distinctions are drawn concerning struggles between national governments and supranational EU institutions, such as the European Commission—and tensions between journalists and proprietors within a news organisation. This book investigates the role of the proprietor of *The Times*—Rupert Murdoch, and *Il Giornale*—the family of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, and how their positioning can impact on the newspaper copy produced.

The book includes an analysis of the complex interplay between the journalistic and political fields (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Marchetti (2005: 75) argues that news is never just the product of *media logic*. To avoid media-centric bias, comparative research examines journalism in its complex inter-relations with the other social spaces. Benson and Neveu (2005: 18) also argue that field theory offers the best defence against media-centricity, thus helping us situate journalism in its larger systemic environment.

When we read a newspaper, we mobilise the resources of spontaneous sociology, imputing everything to the responsibility of individuals or the nature of institutions, Bourdieu (2005) argues. These things can only be understood by ‘analysis of the *invisible structures* that are fields’ and the relations between fields (ibid.: 30). In rendering the invisible visible,

Bourdieu (2005) argues that when, for example, a social scientist is talking to a journalist, beyond it being a chat between individuals, ultimately a journalist represents a determinate position within the journalistic field, and a social scientist likewise within the social sciences. This can best be approached by being aware of when journalists and politicians being interviewed remain on message, conveying the sentiments of their media organisation and party—and when instead they express a personal view.

As alluded to earlier, the media can pander to the national public's prejudices—especially in the digital age, when the commercial pressure brought to bear on a struggling newspaper industry (including online) is ever more intense. Bourdieu (2005: 41) argues that the journalistic field is increasingly heteronomous, subject to the constraints of the economy and of politics—yet is also increasingly imposing its constraints on all other fields. Bourdieu (2005: 43–44) argues that this commercial heteronomy is gaining ground, so that journalism and other fields are governed by an *audience ratings mentality*. Thus within the journalistic field there is permanent competition to appropriate the readership, but also to appropriate what is thought to *secure* the readership, such as early access to news and the use of big names—and, of course, a story that reaffirms your Eurosceptic tendencies. What is subsequently analysed is how, for instance, the newspapers tapped into the disaffection and desperation of struggling, working-class Brexiteers in Britain and conveyed and arguably amplified the clarion call: *we want our country back*.

NEWSPAPERS, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM

Newspapers regularly parade their Euroscepticism (sometimes in Italy, not just Britain). They regularly reassert the conversation individuals have about what nation they are a part of and what that means. Theory offers us a means of unpacking what is at play within the national psyche, which is reflected and sometimes contorted by the media.

The discursive constructions of national identity and nationalism are investigated in a bid to deepen the analysis and gain a better comprehension of how European integration *within* nation is perceived and presented. The starting point in comprehending key components of identity construction is the notion of being the *same* or *different*.

The analysis of *positive self-presentation* and *negative other-presentation* (Wodak 2006: 105) constitutes a first step when investigating discourses of national identities. Billig (1995) suggests that it is not only political

elites that are involved in this discursive process. Billig (1995) argues that ideological habits in everyday life reaffirm positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Billig (1995) writes of a *naturalisation* of nation, with nation continually positively *flagged* by the media. Conversely, Hallin and Mancini (2004) write of the need to *de-naturalise* in media analysis, a process undertaken in this book by often placing analysis of Italy before that of Britain, aware that writing for the anglo-phone world, and the notion of Euroscepticism being most pronounced in the UK, can mean the reader reaches for that section first.

Billig (1995: 15) also argues:

We must question – or put into ideological brackets – the very concepts which seem so solidly real to us and which enable us to understand the assumptions of the daily news. These include concepts such as a ‘nation’, even ‘a language’.

It is this *naturalness* that has to be negotiated in an attempt to reveal that perceptions of European integration are discursively constructed *within* nation. As Massimo d’Azeglio declared: ‘We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians’ (Hobsbawm 1992: 44). Billig (1995: 25) notes how the creation of Italy was presented as a revival of something ancient, which accords with the concept of *Geschichtspolitik*, that is, functionalising history for political ends (Heer and Wodak 2008: 5).

Much as it is argued that newspapers discursively construct Europe, so in turn the nation itself is a construct. What appears as irrefutable and very real is actually contrived. Benedict Anderson’s notion of *imagined community* (1999) explores how national identities are discursively produced and reproduced. For instance, the newspaper reader at home identifies with a fellow countryman at the front fighting a war, although they have never met. Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, and the premise that national identity is somehow distinctive, is also pertinent to this investigation. Benson and Neveu (2005: 3) describe habitus as *socialised subjectivity*. Habitus organises practices and the perception of practices, with the subjective as social and collective. Newspapers can reinforce this subjectivity.

Habitus explores how an individual’s predispositions, assumptions, judgements and behaviours are the result of long-term socialisation, most importantly in the family and subsequently in school and professional education. It is constantly modified (Bourdieu 1993, 1994).

How national identity is internalised in the course of socialisation (Wodak et al. 1999: 28) is integral to the investigation. The national *we-group* is distinguished from certain *out-groups*. The complex also includes common or similar *emotional attitudes* and *behavioural dispositions*. As the title of this book indicates, Euroscepticisms evolve, and an attempt will be made to note, decipher and analyse those changes as vociferous populists, for example in the form of Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and Beppe Grillo, articulate anti-immigration rhetoric, creating new perceptions of Europe in Britain and Italy respectively.

It is often said that politicians speak in tongues, communicating different messages to divergent audiences (domestic and international, political or the general public). The same can be said of newspapers. In order to help us understand how politicians convey notions of Europe—and indeed how newspapers reinforce or question those notions—the work of Malešević (2006: 309) can assist analysis. Malešević argues that there are two principal layers through which political ideologies operate: the realm of the *normative* and that of the *operative*. The domain of the normative offers a template of fundamental goals and values. The normative is formulated to espouse key tenets of a particular *Weltanschauung*, providing elaborate statements about the past, present and future of an entire society. The normative offers uncompromising ethical prescriptions and is predominantly universalistic. The normative also defines itself through reason and ethics, challenging other *Weltanschauungen*, by finding faults in their ethics and reasoning (ibid.: 308).

Conversely, the domain of the operative is in the arena of everyday life, with all its complexities, contingencies and flux. Malešević argues:

This is a domain of existential ambiguity and a constant value dynamism, where different images of the world and different diagnoses of reality compete for the ‘souls’ of each and all. (ibid.: 310)

The operative addresses the majority of the population, using simplified concepts and language, and is more likely to use emotional discourse: the debate on what should be done about the immigrants from Africa arriving on the Italian coast, or how Britain will regain its sovereignty on leaving the EU. The key principles are also more likely to be personalised, referring to concrete individuals, so as to be recognisable and acceptable to the mass public. Malešević (2006) also argues that the language used can be that of collective self-interest, which suggests Bourdieu’s (2005) fields are in conflict.

Malešević describes a Britain with a normative ideology transcending the particular, with a system of government founded on reason and the division of powers, with the concept of parliamentary sovereignty confirming that all are equal before the law (Malešević 2006: 315).

Particular populist messages are expected to surface in the discourse of Berlusconi's *Il Giornale*, giving voice to the particular and normative expressions of Italy as, for instance, *a central player* in the EU. It is expected that the operative will also be functionalised in the newspaper discourse elsewhere, for instance as the tension that surfaced in the UK between popular and parliamentary sovereignty after the EU referendum, which manifested itself in newspaper discourse.

Tony Blair, as prime minister, said of the British in 1999 (ibid.: 316): 'what makes us different is our character: hard working, tolerant, understated, creative, courageous, generous.' Malešević (ibid.) sees the nationalism of operative ideology as not having achieved unity, but as involved in a contested and unending struggle, shaped by political, social and historical contingencies. He then argues that nearly all societies legitimise their existence in nationalist terms. However, 'This is not to say that nationalist discourse is the only one present in the rhetoric of state leaders, school textbooks or tabloid newspapers' (ibid.: 317). Instead Malešević argues that for normative principles to resonate with the general public, they have to be articulated in a nation-centric way: '[t]he success of a particular normative doctrine lies in the process of its "translation" into its operative counterpart' (ibid.: 317). Both Malešević (ibid.) and Wodak (2006) refer to the *banal nationalism* of Michael Billig (1995).

Very particular notions of nationalism are the conduit through which various articulations of the EU have to pass, in both Britain and Italy. Yes, politicians and indeed the media will use the operative notions described to prick the emotions—while also sometimes seeking to translate a normative concept (say the EU constitution) to the national level. But sometimes the nationalism thus roused is more fervent.

Hutchinson (2006) argues that *hot didactic nationalism* instils the idea of a nation as sacred and a transcendent object of worship and sacrifice (ibid.: 298), which can become a community of sacrifice in times of war (ibid.: 300). This nationalism is self-conscious, systematic and prescriptive. Hutchinson notes how war can deepen a sense of nationalism—as well as undermine it (ibid.: 301). Conversely, with *banal nationalism*, populations consume nationalism in a relatively un-self-conscious way, in

songs, political posters, bank notes and brand names. Hutchinson (ibid.) describes the appeal of nationalism as a constructor of meaning that is able to trump attachments of family, class, region and religion. In this interpretation, national identities are not constructed from above but consumed from below, by an emerging civil society—and the media is key.

As Wodak (2006) argues, national identities are not static but susceptible to change, as is evolving Euroscepticism. Hutchinson (2006: 300) argues that nationalism as an ideological movement is episodic, triggered when the nation is perceived to be in danger, such as in the face of sudden threats to autonomy or identity as presented, especially in the British tabloids, with regards to Europe. The public can be stirred up, of course, when presented with such threats in the media. Hutchinson (ibid.: 304) notes how nations are actually fluid, with self-ascription maintained by marking boundaries with *others*. Hence banal nationalists will become *hot* when *defending* elements, such as cultural distinctiveness, homeland integrity, economic power and political autonomy.

The tool used here to concretise the nature of inter-relationships between nation and newspaper, post-Second World War, in the specific Italian and British contexts is *comparative theory* (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Thus the investigation has a better grasp of a number of issues: (a) how and why news and comment are understood differently; (b) how and why the relationships between governments, political parties and newspapers function in conflicting ways; (c) why the resulting perceptions that can become embedded in conveying nations, and the *European project* within those nations, are articulated and structured in ways which are completely at odds with each other. The investigation scrutinises the inter-relationships between nation, national politics and newspapers, and in turn the microcosm of newspaper cultures—and more specifically still, the cultures of *The Times* and *Il Giornale*. Statham (2008: 418–419) argues that journalists would adapt if (national) politicians made European governance more salient (but he does not offer an analysis of those politicians and their interactions). Statham's point may resonate if, in exploring newspaper discourse, it is found that there is an absence of national politicians talking about or showing, in terms of policy, what the EU does or is doing for the nation—as opposed to reacting to the EU in a more oppositional vein. Trenz (2007: 89) argues that there is a 'common distinction' between news reporting and commenting (but does not consider potentially distinct national interpretations and complexities, which do surface).

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Journalism often portrays itself as autonomous—a bastion of free speech holding governments to account. That it has close links with advertising, commercial concerns and the vested interests of owners, including Berlusconi and Murdoch, can be eclipsed—but needs scrutiny. *Field theory* (Benson and Neveu 2005; Bourdieu 2005) argues that journalism is heteronomous, lacking autonomy and closely linked to advertising, the commercial imperative of a wide audience and other outside concerns. On these points alone, the investigation should consider whether the need for a wide audience means the newspapers studied challenge the audience's presuppositions and habitus over Europe—or rather reinforce them further, or a combination thereof.

One residual aspect of field theory that should be considered is the possibility that journalists from very high cultural or economic capital backgrounds are most likely to have the motivation and capacity to change the field (Benson and Neveu 2005: 6). This could prove relevant to specific journalists within *The Times* and *Il Giornale*. Similarly, this aspect may be utilised when looking at the subfield of Murdoch and Berlusconi within these publications. Bourdieu (2005) uses the metaphor of Einsteinian physics:

the more energy a body has, the more it distorts the space around it, and a very powerful agent within a field can distort the whole space, cause the whole space to be organized in relation to itself. (Ibid.: 6)

Both field theory and comparative theory refer to the overlap between the journalistic and political fields and how there can be considerable leakage in both directions. A further rationale for employing comparative theory relates to the context of fully comprehending the interactions between national politics and the press—and the resulting effects on final media discourse. Comparison can help the study challenge assumptions in media research. Hallin and Mancini point out:

Most of the literature on the media is highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country, yet is written in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal. (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 2)

The problem of ethnocentricity (ibid.: 2) is arguably more pervasive still, affecting social scientific research generally. Britons and Italians will have a different sense of nationhood and a different understanding of what news regarding Europe is relevant to them. Ulrich Beck (2003: 454) argues that our assessments are easily distorted by the role of *methodological nationalism*. The assumption Beck (ibid.) challenges is that every nation has a right to self-determination within the frame of its own cultural distinctiveness. This normative claim he describes as *methodological nationalism*, which in turn is linked to the organisation of society and politics.

These basic tenets have become the main perceptual grid of social science. Indeed, the social scientific stance is rooted in the concept of nation state. A nation state outlook on society and politics, law and justice and history governs the sociological imagination. To some extent, much of social science is a prisoner of the nation state. (ibid.: 454)

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 2) argue that certain aspects of media systems are so familiar they are not perceived at all. They argue that comparison forces us to *de-naturalise*, so to conceptualise more clearly which parts of the media system actually require more explanation. This will help in revealing how newspapers discursively construct Europe for the public. Blumler and Gurevitch (1975: 76) say comparative analysis has the ‘capacity to render the invisible visible’.

Statham argues that we know little about political communication and news organisations from a comparative perspective, and ‘even less about how news differs cross-nationally in terms of the reporting of domestic and European political affairs’ (Statham 2008: 121). This investigation tries to address some of these issues.

In articulating the notion that something is good for the country—in relation to Europe, for example—politicians, the press and the public will sometime employ what is referred to as *common sense*, as if that is an unassailable argument that is somehow inherently true. Yet it is just another reflection of cultural subjectivities, harnessed to justify a position.

Gramsci (1978: 419) describes common sense as ‘the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed’. Gramsci (ibid.: 423) argues that ‘common sense is an

ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth, is a nonsense’.

Habitus (Wodak 2007: 210–211), as referred to earlier, can be understood as those aspects of culture that are anchored in daily practices of individuals, groups, societies and nations. Habitus includes the totality of learned habits, perceptions and other non-discursive knowledge that might be said to ‘*go without saying*’. In that sense it is another articulation of *common sense*. It is this *common sense* that is flagged daily in newspapers and that, as Billig (1995: 15) argues, needs to be held to account. Many examples are touched upon in this book as articulated by newspapers: Italy should leave the euro; with Brexit, Britons have got their country back.

The subsequent analysis of newspaper discourse includes use of metaphors in constructing a public common-sense understanding of Europe. Bourdieu (2005) refers to the battle in the construction of common sense between journalists, politicians and others. Bourdieu (ibid.: 38) suggests there are *common-sense* taxonomies in Martin Heidegger’s philosophical work, *das Mann*. Bourdieu (ibid.: 38) argues that ordinary class racism, such as mentioning *distinguished* people and *vulgar* people, is ‘likely to pass unnoticed before the eyes of a philosophy professor’. Bourdieu (ibid.) also refers to such taxonomies showing who is in and who is out, for instance who are the citizens and who are the foreigners. And so it may come to pass today, as xenophobia sometimes masquerades as Euroscepticism, regarding immigrants and indeed EU migrants.

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Evolving Euroscepticisms in the British and Italian Press

Selling the Public Short

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