Post-Truth may not be new. Delving into the evolution of rhetoric may offer some insight into previous manifestations of these issues, when looking at the language of politicians and journalists.

The roots of political rhetoric and its evolution, seeking to understand how it has changed and in what circumstances, may offer us clues as to what is afoot in today’s age. Traits of what is now dubbed Post-Truth are investigated later.

Keith and Lundberg (2008: 5) argue, regarding rhetoric: “Whether active or passive; specific or general; in the political, social, intellectual, or other spheres; persuasion is the key to coordinated action. Persuasion is the glue that holds the people to a common purpose and therefore facilitates collective action”. On June 23, 2016, that action in the UK was to vote to get our country back. For a minority, collective action meant verbal abuse, beatings and in one instance, the killing of a Pole (Quinn 2016). There is that common purpose, that belief, held by the current UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, that the will of the people means he could be minded to defy what was the will of Parliament and the law, in pursuing a no deal Brexit at the end of 2020. It is in that vein that Johnson speaks. Johnson speaks for the people—but they will not be consulted again before the end of 2020 and an arguably likely no deal.
Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 265) argue democratic legitimacy has to be the result of discourse: “performed under the condition of largely egalitarian reciprocity and located within the different public spheres or fields of political action, of a free, open and rational formation of public opinion about political problems and questions of shared interest”. So was some democratic legitimacy lost among the press? This is akin to Plato’s challenge of the Rhetoric of the Sophists, which is now commonly understood by the pejorative ‘sophistry’. Plato argued dialectic was required and the exchange of positions, supported by logic, what we would now commonly understand as evidence and truth (Toye 2013).

The possibility that the following is prevalent will be explored. Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 266) argue: “how is it possible that in post-war Europe such explicit discrimination against certain groups of ‘foreigners’… migrants, Jews, Roma… is still encountered and even helps to win votes, is politically functionalised to create scapegoats and out-groups, and is acceptable and tolerated?” Nearly twenty years since this book’s publication, it is not just that such press discourse is still happening—but as will be explored, is directed not at minority groups, but all EU migrants, in the case of the UK and definitely at say Romanians in Italy.

Richardson (2007: 171) argues:

Racist rhetoric not only reflects the extent to which such views have ‘become part of what is seen as ‘normal’ by the dominant group’... but also is (re)productive and transposable, modifying, material power relations in other fields... Such rhetoric should be met head-on and confronted without equivocation.

Both this utilising of in- and out-groups, coupled with discriminatory rhetoric will form part of the subsequent analysis of rhetoric. Toye (2013: 3) argues that just as politicians “position themselves with voters, we position ourselves in relation to a peer group (real or imagined), with rhetorical inflections of which we are frequently unconscious”.

The circumstances in which a text, be it a political speech or columnist writing (in the case of Johnson, frequently both) is written, considering the contextual hinterland and the way the text was mediated, delivered and received, is important (Toye 2013: 5). One cannot exclude the notions of dramatic effect, physicality and crucially technology, as Matteo Salvini, Luigi Di Maio, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn can all address
audiences on Facebook and Twitter and not just through the vessels of *La Repubblica* or the *Daily Telegraph*.

Leith (2012: 3–5) makes the point that rhetoric is understood in the context of its utterance, also noting the “intrinsic rhetoricality” of all language and that it is not just the domain of speech theorists, structural linguists or literary critics. Similarly Toye (2013: 5) stresses the importance of the social, political and cultural context, but then makes a point worth considering and running tandem with subsequent analysis of language: “Above all, we need to appreciate that rhetoric is not merely the means by which ideas are expressed, it is also a means by which they are generated”. In the same vein, Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 65–66) argue, in relation to discourse:

> On the one hand, the situational, institutional and social settings shape and affect discourses, and on the other, discourses influence discursive as well as non-discursive social and political processes and actions. In other words, discourses as linguistic social practices can be seen as constituting non-discursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, as being constituted by them.

Clearly Salvini tried and failed to shape Italian discourse, arguing it was time for the League to govern alone. This spectacularly backfired, driving his coalition partner, The Five Star Movement, under Luigi Di Maio, into coalition with the centre-left Democratic Party, something both political groups had previously said was unthinkable. Salvini’s provocative rhetoric did perhaps help to shape the narrative, but not as intended, instead driving two adversaries together.

In a similar vein, Boris Johnson, through the use of populist rhetoric, is trying to shape British discourse, contemplating and possibly driving the country to a no deal Brexit. This similarly has resulted in adversaries becoming bedfellows, with Labour in agreement with the Liberal Democrats, Scottish Nationalists and Greens and Conservatives leaving the party to join the Liberal Democrats. Had the list system been used in the UK’s 2019 general election, then there would have been a hung Parliament and the possibility of a ‘rainbow coalition’ ameliorating the most Eurosceptic outcomes possible wanted by the far right of the current Conservative party (Forrest 2019). That proportional representation system would have given the Liberal Democrats 70 MPs and a say in the political outcome and similarly a very different emotive rhetoric
ardently pro-Remain, counterposed with the Brexiteering of Boris, would have created a different kind of language in government (making the very big assumption that Johnson would have gone into coalition with them, rather than muscle on as a minority government). Here Gifford’s (2014) thesis of proportional representation systems creating more broad, centrist governments, would have proved correct. Here too, returning to Toye’s (2013: 5) earlier point, the political rhetoric of the uneasy bedfellows of the second Conservative-Liberal Democratic government would have not only “expressed” different ideas over Brexit. They would have also been “a means by which they” were “generated”. The power of political rhetoric, if given a platform is not to be underestimated, in relation to Euroscepticism, as this case exemplifies. The British media, even the extreme ends of the right-wing press, would have been forced to convey the rhetoric of a prime minister less nationalistic and bullish over Brexit—if he wanted to avoid another four years of minority government, with what would have been a reinvigorated Liberal Democratic party blocking him at every fork in the road.

To paraphrase Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 65–66) in relation to this specific context: media discourses can constitute social practices, including how we view, understand and ultimately engage in Europe and the EU as well as be constituted by them. This runs in concert with my previous offering (Rowinski 2017), in which I argued that the press in Italy but more overtly in Britain had discursively constructed Europe. That is not to forget the discourses of those masterful in the art and craft of political rhetoric and indeed social media actors, all of which help to influence media discourses.

As Toye (2013: 5–6) argued: “familiar thoughts, spoken in a new context, may take on new meaning. The requirement to take a stand, and to interact with the rhetoric of both supporters and opponents, not only crystallises ideas, but creates new ways of thinking as well as speaking”. As mentioned, political adversaries can find common truck and end up speaking in a common tongue. In Italy, Five Star Movement politicians mitigated their adversarial language towards the Democratic Party, as they entered government together. In Britain, former Conservatives developed a more centre-right perspective as they deserted Johnson to join the Liberal Democrats. And had there been a PR system in the UK, a Conservative-LibDem government under Johnson would have mitigated his adversarial and sometimes hateful language, analysed later.
A deeper delving into the evolution of rhetoric is necessary, as issues relating to truths and indeed half-truths and competing conceptualisations of the forms rhetoric take, are pertinent to what is to come. The Sophists in Greece stood accused by Plato of “favouring arguments based on probability over those based on truth. …The charges of quackery and disregard for truth may have been unfair, but they were amplified and put into a powerful form by the Sophists’ most searing critic: Plato” (Toye 2013: 9). As Leith (2012: 6) argues, rhetoric is: “made up of three. It is made of repeated phrases. It is made, as often as not, of half-truths and fine-sounding meaninglessness, of false oppositions and abstract nouns and shaky inferences”.

In The Republic, Plato (Toye 2013) argues that objective, absolute knowledge can only be obtained through dialectic. Plato appeared to object to relativist conceptions of morality. This absolutist position is useful, as it is argued that relativism is part of the maelstrom that gave rise to Post-Truth, hence a connection. Calcutt (2016) and AC Grayling (Coughlan 2017) argue post-modernism and relativism are at the roots of Post-Truth, as does Keyes (2004), harvested by the left but now being exploited by the far right. As part of that relativism, journalists followed academics in rejecting objectivity in the mid-nineties (Calcutt 2016; Gaber 2014). There is a need to address the manifestation of Post-Truth in Eurosceptic political rhetoric and the subsequent mainstream media discourse.

Plato leaves us thinking that public politics and rhetoric are wholly suspect. They gave rise to the pejorative word ‘sophistry’. In his book, Gorgias (2004) Plato argues for the need for the quest for truth, through logical argument between individuals. In the text, Plato presents a quasi-fictional version of Socrates’ conversations with the Sophist, Gorgias (2004) and is a struggle over the purpose of rhetoric, in which Socrates (who was killed by Athenian democrats) catches out Gorgias (Plato, circa 380BC):

**Socrates:** It turns out, then, that rhetoric is an agent of the kind of persuasion which is designed to produce conviction, but not to educate people, about matters of right and wrong.

**Gorgias:** Yes.

**Socrates:** A rhetorician then, isn’t concerned to educate the people assembled in law courts and so on about right and wrong; all he wants to do is persuade them. I mean, I shouldn’t think it’s possible for him to get
so many people to understand such important matters in such a short time.

_Gorgias_: No, that’s right.

This, it could be argued, is the precursor to Post-Truth, where the facts in such rhetoric are not the thing, but the feelings and emotions conjured and their persuasive power. Further parallels too, can be formulated with Plato, who argued dialectic was the only proper method of argument and the only valid medium for political life—and those that lament the ‘coarseness’ of current political discourse, with strong adversarial positions taken and little understanding of the counter-argument sought. To some, this coarseness means out-and-out xenophobia and hate speech (ECRI 2016a, b; Liberty 2017a, b; Corcoran and Smith 2016) and Post-Truth rhetoric, creating an environment inciting hate acts, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson accused by a Labour Seikh MP of inciting hatred of veiled Muslim women on the floor of the House of Commons, following Johnson’s _Daily Telegraph_ article (Proctor 2019).

Plato argued that rhetoric created “belief without knowledge” (Toye 2013: 12). This resonates, with Post-Truth denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). This resonated further with a Reuters article the author happened to be reading while writing: a piece about League leader, Matteo Salvini and his rallying cry in Pontida, northern Italy, to disrupt the work of the new Italian government. Alex Sirani, a League supporter from Brescia, put it simply, when interviewed by Reuters (Camilli 2019): “Whatever Salvini does is right”.

Aristotle (Barnes 1984) in turn, offers us deeper parameters, which will be employed to help the author develop a more nuanced understanding of what is being said by politicians and the press in subsequent analysis. Aristotle saw rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic and separate from it, putting them on an equal footing, rather than being dismissive of the former and arguing only for the latter, as Plato had done. Aristotle referred to three types of _proof_ a speech might contain. This in turn will extend beyond the utterances of politicians and consider the news and commentaries of journalists.

The first depended on the personal character of the speaker (Ethos). Leith (2012) stresses the first few moments of an address as the foundation on which all else follows, creating the connection between the
speaker and the audience. Beyond the realms of television, political orators are no longer reliant on a description of what they said, by a print or internet journalist. Johnson’s or Salvini’s videoed speeches appear immediately above the story in *La Repubblica* or *The Guardian*—or they reach their audiences via Twitter or Facebook, circumventing the need for the mainstream media at all. Yet perhaps our age is different here. Remember the mantra “Whatever Salvini does is right” (Camilli 2019). Similarly it appears as if, despite various questioning of his character, as long as Johnson ‘gets us out’, regarding exiting the European Union, many seem to regard the nature of his character as immaterial. Ethos may not be holding in our digital age, as a key ingredient.

**The Erosion of Trust**

The next point made by Leith (2012) could also be contested, in light of the current environment, created by the exponential rate of change in the media, thanks to the technologies. Leith (2012: 48) argues that: “Your audience needs to know (or to believe, which in rhetoric adds up to the same thing) that you are trustworthy…and that you speak in good faith”. In this particular sense Post-Truth may be taking us into the realms of new territory, denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). This is less about trust here and more a willingness to believe what is said, whether the orator is trustworthy or not. Trust seems to be a secondary issue in the current climate. The Pew Research Centre (Simmons et al. 2018) carried out research in eight western European countries, including Britain and Italy. They found that Europeans with populist views would typically trust the news media less than others and that in many countries they are more likely to get their news from social media. In Italy 26% of populists trusted the news media, compared to 34% of non-populists. In Britain it was 26–43%, respectively. This also demonstrates a low level of trust of the mainstream media more generally. This would suggest that British and Italian audiences are susceptible to the filter bubble and would go directly to Farage, Grillo, Johnson or Salvini on Facebook and Twitter rather than *Corriere della Sera* and *The Times*. One-third of those with populist views would pay no attention to the original source of articles they see (Simmons et al. 2018).
Trump and Johnson have persistently been accused of lying. This has not reduced their poll ratings and popularity. Somehow their trustworthiness does not seem to matter, in the age of Post-Truth and relativism. Yet the erosion of trust in the media, is having a corrosive effect. The thrust of this book, in defence of good journalism is this all does matter. Leith (2012: 48) however then adds: “Your arguments will tend to prosper if they are founded on the common assumptions of your audience; or in special cases, if the audience is minded to defer to your authority”. There is something about our age, perhaps created in part by the silos we live in online with Facebook pumping at us reaffirmation of our particular view of the world, that suggests we are more likely to defer to those authorities not less, an assumption that is hard to qualify, but will nevertheless be explored, in terms of qualitative critical discourse analysis of texts.

I return to the Salvini supporter (Camilli 2019): “Whatever Salvini does is right”. This is far removed from the dialectic of Plato or the discourse of Socrates. Maybe the technology has created another arena for discourse. Sirani, the source of the quote, has been persuaded. Blind faith has followed. Such blind faith also led Mussolini and Hitler to power. Worrying times.

Another way of articulating the notion of common assumptions is to describe them as common sense, much as Gramsci did. Gramsci (1978: 419) wrote about the philosophy of common sense: “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”. Some believed what they wished to believe and some common myths, explored later, were accepted. Gramsci (1978: 423) argued: “common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth, is a nonsense”. In the context of the very particular articulation of Euroscepticisms in Britain and Italy, that common sense can mean a different form of active forgetting, quietly airbrushing out both in word and deed, elements of the historical record that reveal the incongruence of the argument or the contradictions belying it, to create what appears to be consistent. If you will, this can create a series of assumptions many can collectively buy in to (despite them being deeply flawed). In reaffirming certain truths, others (regarding the narrative of a country in Europe) can be sidelined in what Nietzsche described as active forgetting (Heer and Wodak 2008: 4) Common sense can shroud the contradictions and inconsistencies. It was noted in the words and deeds of Salvini and Johnson, that
they were often employing such a notion of common sense, albeit that it was not articulated overtly, it nevertheless bunches a series of assumptions together, presenting a flawed yet for the audience, nevertheless a compelling coherence.

Reaching your audience and meeting their expectations, seems to be another aspect of Aristotle’s Ethos, as articulated by Kenneth Burke (1969: 55): “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his”. The touch of the common man or woman: Marie Le Pen, discussing French cuisine and pressing the flesh around a food market; Nigel Farage having a regular pint of bitter in his local; Boris Johnson travelling around London on his bike and getting Brexit done.

The notion of a truthful character, one can trust in the formulation of rhetoric, resonates with aspects of the methodological approach, to be employed later. Drawing on argumentation theory (Wodak and Reisigl 2001) will hopefully help the author to lift the veil on how strong political orators and indeed mainstream media commentators (and sometimes even news journalists) persuade, cajole and in many instances manipulate what appeals to the public, to their advantage, relying on the notion they can be trusted or are somehow believed. After all, what they write is common sense. Again I would stress, what would prove more effective would be to challenge this rhetoric and reaffirm the need for quality journalism—rather than engratiating and amplifying the political rhetoric of the populists. But that is easy to say and far harder to perform in a cut-throat media market, where many mainstream news outlets are very busy, fighting for space and time in the social media age. D’Ancona (2017: 140) argues: “political disappointment is the handmaiden of Post-Truth, a solvent of trust and a cue to further tribal huddling”. And as the populists respond to publics disaffected by the shortcomings of the political mainstream, it is likely to continue.

Wodak and Reisigl (2001) and Oberhuber et al. (2005) refer to topoi, in which such argumentative strategies are more fully explored. In argumentation theory, topoi can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are content-related warrants or conclusion rules, connecting the argument with the conclusion and justifying the transition from the former to the latter. In relation to Post-Truth, the path to this conclusion may be thin on facts, but laden with persuasion and indeed the discursive construction of common sense.
Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 71) argue there are violations of the rules in persuasive, manipulative, discursive legitimation of say ethnicist and nationalist discrimination, relevant to this study. Lurking in the hinterland of a previous investigation (Rowinski 2017), but arguably growing stronger in the current turmoil, with the voices of the League in Italy and until recently, the Brexit Party in Britain. Now the League has dropped the notion of a separate north, embraced the whole of Italy and under Salvini’s leadership, is the largest party in the country. In Britain, until very recently, the new, dominant force driving Brexit was the Brexit party, under the leadership of the charismatic Nigel Farage. The Conservatives got the message, started to occupy the Brexit Party’s far-right Eurosceptic territory and then trounced them and indeed everybody else under Boris Johnson, securing the largest parliamentary majority since Thatcher.

Salvini, Farage and the current Conservative PM, Boris Johnson, all employ their persona to good effect, all masters of ethos and reaching out to their respective publics. All capable of wielding a quote, journalists cannot ignore. The crucial thing is how those journalists frame those quotes and if they are placed in a predominant position or conversely in some instances, discredited, with further research establishing the lies told, rather providing for it and legitimising the lying.

In argumentation theory, violations are called fallacies. The argumentum ad verecundiam is the misplaced appeal to deep respect and reverence. This fallacy entails backing one’s own standpoint, by means of reference to authorities considered competent, superior or sacrosanct. The appeal to such authority is always fallacious, if the respective authority is neither competent nor qualified, is prejudiced or quoted inaccurately (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 72) and, as an appendage to their point, speaks inaccurately or untruthfully. A special ‘fallacy of authority’ consists of presenting oneself as an authority if one is not, falsely parading one’s qualities. This fallacy violates several of the rules characterising and discerning reasonableness in critical discussions (Kienpointner 1996: 26; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994). One of the rules, number seven, stipulates that: a standpoint must not be considered to be conclusively defended, if the defence does not take place by means of commonly accepted schemes of argumentation, which are plausible and correctly applied. Another rule (number four) states that a standpoint may be defended only by advancing argumentation relating to that standpoint (Kienpointner 1996: 26; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994).
Mautner (2008), in analysing *The Sun*, noted that an argumentative strategy was used to denounce immigration by linking it to crime. Again such false correlations both in the oratory of populist politicians and their political bedfellows will be the source of subsequent analysis.

Aristotle’s *Logos*, is what drives the argument forward, with one point leading to another, resulting in the conclusion being the only right and reasonable one to be reached. As Leith (2012: 57–58) noted: “Aristotle remarks, shrewdly, that the most effective form of argument is one that the audience is allowed to think it has worked out itself: one whose conclusion, in other words, the listener reaches just before, or just as, the speaker makes it”. The audience is pleased having anticipated the point. It is worth momentarily returning to the definition of Post-Truth, to establish any parallels.

Post-Truth became joint US-UK word of the Year in 2016: *Post-truth* (Adjective): “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” (Oxford Dictionaries 2016: Post-Truth). They explained further: “The concept of Post-Truth has been in existence for the past decade, but Oxford dictionaries have seen a spike in frequency this year, in the context of the EU referendum in the United Kingdom and the presidential election in the United States. It has also become associated with a particular noun, in the phrase *post-truth politics*” (Oxford Dictionaries 2016: Post-Truth).

The author will explore how controlling immigration is one of the populist mantras of the current political creed in both countries and often the oratory, as will be explored in greater detail, leads the listener or reader to the same point: *and therefore we need to control immigration*. The audience often arrives just ahead of the politician, in drawing that conclusion.

In Aristotle’s Logic, the notion of *proof* is woolly, dealing with probabilities rather than certainties, with the use of analogy and generalisation. This creates scope for the use of metaphors, common in persuasive argument. Simon Singh (2002) illustrates the different gradients of mathematical proof. An astronomer, physicist and mathematician are on a train hurtling to Scotland. Having crossed the border they see a black sheep standing in a field. The astronomer declares that Scottish sheep are black. The physicist corrects him, saying “some sheep in Scotland are black”.
The mathematician in turn corrects the physicist, declaring that in Scotland there exists at least one field, containing at least one sheep, at least one side of which is black.

Toye (2013: 14) offers an effective critique of Aristotle’s rhetoric in that Aristotle insisted rhetoric dealt with proof, emphasising its dependence on reason rather than emotion—yet simultaneously claiming that ethos and pathos (the appeal to emotion) were themselves varieties of proof, thus “elevating potentially manipulative techniques to a similar status as logic”.

While a comprehension of rhetoric is clearly useful in providing a basis for deepening our understanding of Post-Truth and the language used, it is not the end point. That analogy is utilised by orators, does indeed give them scope, not only to persuade and feed prejudices, but also to base this on lies. The bar will be higher and more rigorous in subsequent analysis, than that offered by the notion of Aristotle’s logic—because, returning to the central thrust of this book, populist politicians must be held to account by journalists and both parties should be basing their argument on substantiated, corroborated fact—or you end up with a maelstrom threatening the very tenants of democracy, as is the case with Brexit Britain—and a media arguably starting to abrogate its responsibility, in not holding those helping their circulation figures—to account.

To illustrate the point further, analogical metaphors will form part of the subsequent analysis. In 1992, a popular metaphor was the European train leaving the station without Britain. Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher deemed this to be a misleading analogy. Thatcher countered, that if the train was heading in the wrong direction (concerning European integration), Britain was better off not to be on it all. Later British press discourse would also conjure the metaphorical imagery of the train doing better to go slowly and safely, rather than rushing headlong into disaster. Thatcher warned that anyone dealing with the European Community should pay careful attention to metaphors, arguing Britain had learned the hard way by agreeing to apparently empty generalisations or vague aspirations, Britain was later deemed to have committed to political structures contrary to national interests, according to the former prime minister (Thatcher 1993: 319). In the same country and dealing with the same issue, the emotional pull of the analogical metaphor of Brexit being ‘oven ready’ with Boris ready to ‘get it done,’ although simple was very effective with a battle-weary public, desperate for closure on the issue.
Musolff (2004) argues that there are three serious claims about political imagery that result from analogies: (i) metaphors and analogies that either lead or mislead and commit users to certain practical consequences; (ii) users may not even be aware of the commitments entered into, by subscribing to a particular metaphor; and (iii) politicians (like Thatcher) are necessary to minimise the impact of metaphors, by guiding the populace back to the realm of practicalities. That may also go for journalists challenging the seductive power of populist emotive rhetoric.

Political metaphors are integral aspects of argumentative reasoning, which typically aim to prove a contested issue and thus also legitimise a certain course of action. Musolff (2004: 32) advances a similar position to that articulated in argumentation theory (Wodak and Reisigl 2001). If metaphors, in this case, can be deemed to lead to conclusions that bind politicians and states, they must function like warrants in an argument. They must appear to give a valid justification for using particular premises, in order to arrive at a certain conclusion. Musolff (2004: 33–34) argues this unconscious conceptual framework is a form of ‘argumentation-by-metaphor.’

Musolff (ibid.: 34–35, 37) argues that the family metaphor in America and the married couple metaphor in the EU draw on normative suppositions, such as a family being organised according to the morality of a strict father. The argument is that in traditional social settings such presuppositions are deemed normal or true, yet as warrants in an analogical argument, they take on a new significance because they are used to vindicate contentious evaluative conclusions. For example: the father of European unity must always be treated with unconditional respect; or we must join the European train as quickly as possible.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 123) make the epistemological claim that metaphorical thought is primary and metaphorical language is secondary. Hence, if our social experiences and conceptualisations are organised, in terms of metaphors, then politics as part of the social (as is indeed journalism), must also be perceived and constructed metaphorically (Musolff 2004: 2). A pervasive Euroscepticism stands at the centre of how many Britons understand themselves (Gifford 2014). Increasingly this can be said of many Italians also.

The argumentation analysed, is sometimes linked to lack of or misinformation. Nevertheless readers are led to certain conclusions through
emotive rhetoric, despite paucity of substantiation. Perhaps this is Post-Truth. A minority of Britons responded to the perceived threat (sometimes articulated through *hate speech*) posed by immigrants (Lyons 2016; Siddique 2016; Weaver 2016). Albeit isolated, some hate crimes were committed, ahead of the Brexit vote. And now one of the key architects of that Brexit victory, the current Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, is accused of such hate speech and racism on the floor of the House of Commons, as he prepares the country for what seems likely to be a *no deal* departure (Proctor 2019). These are unprecedented times indeed.

The importance of Pathos in Aristotelian rhetoric is well articulated by Quintilian (2015) when he argues that unless the orator can entice the audience with delights; or the ability to plead; or even disturb, with emotional appeals, just and true causes will not prevail with the public.

**Post-Truth and the Intensification of Rhetoric**

Garton-Ash (2005) argues some 22 million Britons—nearly three out of every four daily national newspaper readers, “pick up a daily dose of Euroscepticism” (ibid.: 31, 271). Garton-Ash (2005) argues distinguishing between fact and opinion in these newspapers has long disappeared. British governments and UK newspapers—often claim to speak to and for the nation (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 242). Morgan (1995: 303) argues British journalists cover Europe aware of “what will be considered acceptable first to their London editors and then to the British public”. Morgan (1995: 324) argues copy can attain a “direct, Eurosceptic inflection” from London-based editors. Weymouth and Anderson (1999: 5, 91) analyse *Euroscepticism* in British newspapers. They argue there can be a deliberate exaggeration of the principles, beliefs and intentions of the European *Other*, with the notable exceptions of the Scottish nationals, The Herald and the Scotsman. Gifford (2014: vii) argues Euroscepticism has become fundamental to constituting Britishness in the post-imperial context—despite EU membership (ibid.: vii).

The question that has to be asked is, in true journalistic fashion, is the one most pivotal to all manner of investigations in both academia and journalism. Why? Why do the facts appear to matter so little to the audience at this current juncture? What lies embedded in the zeitgeist that means they are somehow marginalised?

Liberal rage can point too strongly at the likes of Trump. D’Ancona (2017) argues that Trump is a consequence rather than cause. What needs
to be understood is the climate of disaffection among the public that has created a platform for not only Trump, but also Johnson and Salvini. Aaron Banks the businessman that bankrolled the Leave. EU campaign, reflected on our times: “The Remain campaign featured fact, fact fact, fact. It just doesn’t work. You’ve got to connect with people emotionally. It’s the Trump success” (Worley 2016). It is the societal climate that needs to be noted. It means that Kellyanne Conway, senior aide to Trump, could say that: “There’s no such thing, unfortunately, anymore as facts” (D’Ancona 2017: 13).

D’Ancona (2017) refers to the disappointment so many of the disaffected have come to feel with the mainstream political class—and by association the mainstream media. Kaltwasser (2014: 470) argues populism raises issues that are entirely legitimate and “we should avoid treating populism as an irrational impulse”. D’Ancona (2017: 140) argues: “political disappointment is the handmaiden of Post-Truth, a solvent of trust and a cue to further tribal huddling”.

The consumerist age and the use of social media as integral to it, has perhaps numbed the senses. D’Ancona (2017: 141) refers to the “partial infantalisation of the public” the state serves. He goes on to lament the reframing of public services as retail products and of patients, parents and passengers as customers, blurring the boundary between the state and the private sector, making citizenship increasingly indistinguishable from consumerism. D’Ancona (2017: 142) argues:

in your neighbourhood; when you communicate with the social media ‘friends’ you never meet more than you see your real friends; when your notion of the ‘public space’ is confined to the screen in your hand: all this removes the sinew from citizenship. It encourages the passivity that is so important to Post-Truth.

Martin Luther King wrote in his ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ (1963) of how indifference is the greatest challenge of those who speak the truth. Indifference is perhaps the greatest challenge journalism faces. King wrote: “The Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Councilor or the Klu Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice…”.

D’Ancona (2017) argues that we have to be proactive, like the Occupy movement, arguing we need a loose-knit alliance in response to Post-Truth, shaking us out of our passivity. It can be argued that goes for
passivity and lazy Post-truth journalism as well, in my humble view. Davis (2017: xii) asks why the usual human habit of seeking truth has in some cases been overridden: “The premise underlying this approach is that it takes more than a liar to create a false belief – the recipients of the lie are often willing accomplices to the falsehood”. Yet again we return to the Salvini example (Camilli 2019): “Whatever Salvini does is right”.

As this book journeys through the language of Post-Truth in the media, any signs that demonstrate how the public maybe such willing accomplices, will be investigated. When the media organisations give the Post-Truthers a platform and are themselves also willing accomplices to the falsehood, will also be examined.

**The Filter Bubble**

The passivity that could feed Post-Truth, as D’Ancona (2017) puts it, needs further exposition. The game changer may be the “circumstances”, returning to the dictionary definition (Oxford Dictionaries 2016: Post-Truth). Baudrillard (1994: 79) suggested 35 years ago that there is exponential growth in information, but less and less meaning. There is what film-maker, Adam Curtis, calls the *filter bubble* of contemporary mediated digital content and its influence on forming and entrenching opinion (Curtis 2016). As Laybats and Tredinnick (2016: 4) argue: “The filter bubble of social media is perhaps only a mirror of the filter bubble that individuals have always created for themselves by choosing to prioritise relationships and to consume information content that reinforces their existing values, opinions and beliefs”. The difference is perhaps the scale on which this is now possible, amplified very quickly, so “where information proliferates freely, inevitably, so also do untruths” (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016: 4). An Ofcom (2019) study found that half of the UK’s adults use social media to keep up with the news. Appeals to emotion can be amplified within seconds on social media. AC Grayling (Coughlan 2017) concurs, arguing that the circumstances have resulted in a coupling of the 2008 economic crash and the anger and disaffection people feel and the conduit of social media to channel that fury, with what he calls the “I-bite” where strong opinion overshadows evidence, eclipsing the sound bite. Everybody can play and this is a new celebrity.

D’Ancona reflected on his book at a lecture at the London School of Economics (Lulie 2017). D’Ancona noted the paradox that the very infrastructure that could be used to verify facts became the propagator
of fake news, pseudoscience and conspiracy theories. The internet and social media saw, as he put it ‘a tsunami of nonsense tailored for everyone’s emotions and beliefs’. In his farewell address President Obama said (Lulie 2017): “For too many of us, it’s become safer to retreat into our own bubble...surrounded by people who look like us and share the same political outlook and never challenge our assumptions...And increasingly, we become so secure in our bubbles that we accept only information, whether true or not, that fits our opinions, instead of basing our opinions on the evidence that’s out there”. D’Ancona said that this is no accident. If fake news is the software of post-truth, social media is the hardware. He told his LSE audience: “It isn’t the unintended consequence. The algorithms link us to what we like”.

At some point the language used by politicians, repeated by the mainstream media and in circulation on social media, leaves the territory of emotive Post-Truth rhetoric behind and enters the realms of hate speech, potentially inciting violence.

Social media providers are adopting further measures to combat the spread of hate speech online. The recent publishing of Facebook’s guidelines stating that they “will not allow a presence from groups advocating terrorist activity, organised criminal activity or promoting hate”.

The tension between maintaining freedom of speech and freedom of the press—and impeding language that can incite violence is always prevalent. The German government backed proposals in April 2017 to introduce fines of up to 50 m euros for social media firms who failed to remove illegal hate speech from their platforms. In July 2019, the German government fined Facebook two million euros for violating that hate speech Law (Delcker 2019).

The investigation will face various conundrums, regarding when newspaper discourse morphs from persuasion to Post-Truth and then on into hate speech. The employment of various methodological tools may not sit perfectly in or between these phenomena. Through the pain there will be gain in a more nuanced comprehension of these recent discussions within the media and their interrelationships.

Wodak and Reisigl (2001) note persuasion can be double-edged. Überzeugen and überreden (Kopperschmidt 1989: 116–121) can both be translated into English as to persuade. Überzeugen can be translated as to convince. Conversely, überreden denotes a particular, restricted consent, under conditions of suspended rationality. Here, forms of non-argumentative compulsion, such emotionalisation, suggestion and
brainwashing, can *compel approval* by repressing the ability of rational and logical judgement and conclusion. This, it is argued, chimes with the notion of Post-Truth, in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 265) indeed argue that democratic legitimacy has to be the result of discourse where there is a free, open and rational formation of public opinion. This rationality is oppressed with *überreden* and Post-Truth. Various manifestations of *überreden* will be articulated through various fallacies, which will be referred to and examined, when they surface (Wodak and Reisigl 2001). There are also rules for characterising and discerning reasonableness in critical discussions (Kienpointner 1996: 26; van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1994). These will be referred to, should they materialise in the case studies investigated.

**Hate Speech, Misinformation and Inaccuracy**

At which point does Post-Truth haemorrhage into hate speech? The Council of Europe in their European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, June 2016a: 16) Report on the United Kingdom, defines hate speech as:

> the advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all these types of expression, on the grounds, among others, of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The ECRI (2016a: 17) noted “considerable intolerant discourse, coming from the populist anti-immigrant UK Independence Party (UKIP) as well as other political actors” with a core focus on immigration, noting terms such as “invasions”, “floods” and “benefits tourism”. The ECRI (2016a: 18) considered “using such terms contributes needlessly to an increase in xenophobic sentiments”. The ECRI noted hate speech was a “serious problem” in UK traditional media. An example cited was a Sun article, published in April 2015, headlined: *Rescue boats? I’d use gunships to stop migrants*. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasised
decades of “sustained and unrestrained anti-foreigner abuse” in the press, which has continued in Britain “unchallenged under the law for too long”.

The UN (2019) Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech stipulates:

There is no international legal definition of hate speech, and the characterization of what is ‘hateful’ is controversial and disputed. In the context of this document, the term hate speech is understood as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor. This is often rooted in, and generates intolerance and hatred and, in certain contexts, can be demeaning and divisive.

Rather than prohibiting hate speech as such, international law prohibits the incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence (referred to here as ‘incitement’). Incitement is a very dangerous form of speech, because it explicitly and deliberately aims at triggering discrimination, hostility and violence, which may also lead to or include terrorism or atrocity crimes. Hate speech that does not reach the threshold of incitement is not something that international law requires States to prohibit. It is important to underline that even when not prohibited, hate speech may to be harmful.

The tension between maintaining freedom of speech (as enshrined for both Italy and the UK in their respective EU-based Human Rights legislation) and freedom of the press—and impeding language that can incite violence is always prevalent. As Liberty (2017a), the organisation that seeks to protect civil liberties and promote human rights in the UK argues: the right to freedom of expression is crucial in a democracy, arguing that “criminalising even the most unpalatable illiberal and offensive speech should be approached with grave caution in a democracy” but adding: “Criminalising the incitement of violence or threats can be seen to be a justifiable limit on freedom of expression. What is controversial is the criminalization of language (or behaviour) which may be unpleasant, may cause offence but which is not inciting violence, criminality”.

The ECRI (2016a, b) have offered us definitions. Liberty (2017a, b) however has articulated at which point it believes there is criminality: when there is a clear incitement of violence or threats that result. The UN (2019) on an international level also shares the belief incitement is
a criminal act. This will aid the investigation if such scenarios manifest themselves, as a result of the words of politicians or the press.

On a wider level, but stopping well short of hate speech, it can be argued that sections of the media in the UK have pandered to and fed prejudice directed at Europe. This accounts for at least creating a cultural climate facilitating greater viciousness on these issues. For years the BBC’s flagship radio news programme, Today, would start any debate on the EU with an interview with agent provocateur and arch EU rival, current Brexit party leader, Nigel Farage. That particular framing of the debate has had consequences, in the humble view of this journalist. Geoffrey Martin, a former head of the UK office of the European Commission, argues that the BBC is not only pandering to public prejudice, but also the tabloid hysteria feeding it. He says of his time in office:

The BBC current affairs programmes, including the Today programme, move backwards and forwards across a spectrum ranging from scepticism to mild interest. They were following the headlines of the tabloids, because I was in the studios answering their charges. Very few people would accept that. (Rowinski 2017)

Martin and other EU civil servants argue their job was to inform. Yet they too are left feeling they were selling Europe. Martin regularly took the Daily Mail to the Press Complaints Commission over what he described as factually inaccurate “EU caricatures”. He lost every time. Dr Martin Bond is an ex-BBC producer, and former head of information for the European Parliament. Bond ran information campaigns before the 1994 and 1999 European elections, including those concerning the new electoral system.

“There were three or four BBC stations who contacted us and said sorry, what we need is the other side, you are pro, we were not pro, we were just trying to say how it works” (Rowinski 2017).

That current British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson was vilifying a group (ECRI, 2016a: 16) of people as he returned to Parliament, after the Supreme Court ruled his proroguing of the House of Commons illegal, in September 2019, was clear. His comments fell under the “among others” category:
the advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all these types of expression, on the grounds, among others, of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, gender identity and sexual orientation. (ECRI 2016a)

Johnson’s attacks were not based on race or sexuality for instance—but indeed all those parliamentarians opposing No Deal and wanting a deal or Remain. Is that not even worse? Whether the ECRI will include these momentous events in their next report, remains to be seen. The investigation will scrutinise closely Johnson’s comments in Parliament on September 25, 2019, subjecting them more importantly still, to the possibility they could have incited violence (UN 2019; Liberty 2017a, b).

when it comes to Europe, Johnson’s career was all but built on willful distortion. All those comedy stories of meddling EU bureaucrats – directives demanding square strawberries and smaller condoms – were inserted into the public domain by the Telegraph’s Brussels correspondent in the 1990s, one Boris Johnson. As a former colleague, Sarah Helm, has recalled: ‘Johnson’s half-truths created a new reality … correspondents witnessed Johnson shaping the narrative that morphed into our present-day populist Euroscepticism.’ (Freedland 2016)

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasised decades of “sustained and unrestrained anti-foreigner abuse” in the press, which has continued in Britain “unchallenged under the law for too long” (ECRI 2016a: 18). Dubbing their complaints to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), the *Hateful Eight* (Dixon and Lythgoe 2016a) and *Sinful Six* (ibid.: b), stated (2016a):

The Telegraph, Mail and Express have published a string of stories on migration, terrorism, crime and control of our borders, that contain factual inaccuracies and/or distortions….This comes on top of years of hostile EU coverage that have planted many myths in the minds of the electorate.

IPSO’s (2019) Code of Practice stipulates: “The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images,
including headlines not supported by the text”. A series of stories in the InFacts dossier included many pieces by The Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph. InFacts then complained to IPSO again, regarding the Sinful Six (Dixon and Lythgoe 2016b), which included a complaint about claims regarding an EU army. Further stories by the Mail and Telegraph again and also The Sun materialised. The Mail published a series of corrections in relation to several migration-related stories, interwoven into the analysis of Mail stories in this study (Greenslade 2016b; Khomami 2016).

Greenslade (2016a) concludes:

it is not just the Leave campaign that is pumping out falsehoods...The big guns of the Eurosceptic press are going all in for out...The Telegraph, Mail and Express have published a string of stories on migration, terrorism, crime and control of our borders that contain factual inaccuracies and/or distortions...This comes on top of years of hostile coverage that have planted many myths in the minds of the electorate.

It is stressed, myths may have been planted, but there is no direct correlation between press coverage and some of the hate speech and crime that followed the EU referendum. The Guardian, in its key editorial arguing for a Remain vote, wrote: “The backdrop has been the most unrelenting, unbalanced and sometimes xenophobic press assault in history” (Guardian, June 20, 2016).

IPSO (2019), in its Editors’ Code of Practice refers in point 12 to discrimination: “The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual’s race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability”. All this suggests that the argument for legal constraint on inciting violence as a result of hate speech, as argued by the ECRI (2016a), without, as Liberty (2017a, b) argued, encroaching on freedom of speech, as enshrined in the human rights act, is very necessary. Nothing has happened in decades.

Italy has not ratified protocol 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which it signed back in 2000. The protocol provides for a general prohibition against discrimination (ECRI 2016b). Much like in Britain, Italy also has politicians who can sometimes be guilty of hate speech and some of this has been targeting EU migrants and immigrants more generally. In 2013 a local politician for the then Northern League, Matteo Salvini’s party, published an offensive comment on the internet about the then Minister for Integration, Cecile Kyenge, who is
of Congolese origin. In April 2013 another league politician, this time an MEP, accused all Roma (who are mainly EU citizens from Romania) of being thieves. In March 2015 another league MEP accused the Roma of being the “dregs of humanity”, in a televised debate. The ECRI noted that judicial proceedings followed against the aforementioned politicians. There have been no such prosecutions for hate speech, regarding British politicians. However, the ECRI (2016b: 16) regarding Italy, still noted: “this has not prevented the continuing use of aggressive and offensive language and even hate speech in political debate on radio and television against groups with ECRI’s remit”.

The rantings of Salvini more recently, regarding immigration was beyond the scope of this 2016 report. The same can be said for Johnson. The use of language by both and indeed the framing of their quotes by the media will be a central tenet in the subsequent investigation.

**False Equivalence**

The Nieman Report (Lewis 2016) raises the issue of *false equivalence*. This mainly relates to how to report on Trump, so political actors themselves. Nevertheless, the following points have some transferability and can be applied to how the EU was covered by the British and Italian press, both when key political actors were being quoted and when indeed the journalists themselves were constructing a *false equivalence* in their copy over Europe.

As Nicco Mele, director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard (Lewis 2016) argues, the pressure to be “balanced” belies an important fact: *false equivalence* is itself a form of untruth. Mele argues Trump’s presidential campaign forced newsrooms to confront false equivalency head-on. What do you do when the overwhelming accumulation of facts lies on one side of the argument? Do you have to be seen to offer exactly the same amount of copy for the counter-argument? Think back to the BBC’s coverage of ‘Europe’ over the last decade. The number of times the BBC’s flagship morning news programme, Today, would start with an interview with Nigel Farage, leader of the then peripheral anti-EU UKIP. Was this not creating a false equivalence—which has now, post the vote for Brexit, become mainstream? Farage, who was once a marginal voice, was, until the Tories stole his clothing, on the brink of potentially forming a coalition government with the Conservatives, with the centre-right media describing the
Conservatives standing against a hard Brexit, *the rebels*, a volte face from just a few years ago. Maybe the framing of Europe on flagships like the Today programme have contributed to not only a false equivalence but a skewing of the debate that helped create a platform for Farage and Johnson?

BuzzFeed’s editor-in-chief of news, Ben Smith recognised early on that reporting on Trump necessitated relinquishing typical assumptions about political coverage. “The structure of political reporting is to tacitly assume that candidates typically tell the truth about basic things, and that lies and open appeals to bigotry are disqualifying”, he says. “Trump violated all these rules without—in the eyes of the Republican primary voters who mattered—disqualifying himself”. In December of 2015, Smith declared that BuzzFeed staff could call Donald Trump both a liar and a racist. “He’s out there saying things that are false, and running an overtly anti-Muslim campaign”, he wrote in a memo (Lewis 2016).

Evan Osnos of the New Yorker was one of the first to take Trump’s presidential candidacy seriously. Osnos argued the alternative Conservative media that built up around Trump: “acculturated readers to comfort with conspiracy theory and unreality” (Lewis 2016) chiming with the original Oxford English definition (2016) of Post-Truth, where facts are secondary. It is pertinent to remind readers of Wodak and Reisigl’s (2001: 265) argument that democratic legitimacy has to be the result of discourse in an environment of egalitarian reciprocity and the rational formation of public opinion about politics.

### Post-Truth Emotive Rhetoric Couched in the Context of Eurosceptic Populism

Literature on *Euroscepticism* does not reflect sufficiently on the discursive construction of it by the media, in both Britain and Italy (Rowinski 2016, 2017). Newspapers and their online versions are themselves discursively constructing their nation’s relationship with European integration—not just reflecting it—and in recent years this has meant an ever-stronger articulation of Euroscepticism—as populist politicians come to the fore: Johnson, Farage, Grillo, Di Maio, Salvini, Le Pen.

The very different manifestations of Euroscepticism in Italy and Britain have resulted in different cultural contexts for the populism of Johnson in Britain and Salvini in Italy, drawing on different triggers and variant flashpoints.
The trajectories of these two countries in the post-war period have been at odds and have understandably come to understand Europe in divergent ways. Often populists and the press when they give them a platform, reaffirm a sense of nationhood that is nationalistic—quietly sidelining elements that do not suit their line of persuasion: again an active forgetting, as Nietzsche put it. In this section, those uncomfortable elements are revisited, as a means of making the reader initially aware of how, when they do not suit, these elements are again airbrushed out, in the first draft of history: national newspapers (Heer and Wodak 2008: 4). This airbrushing can result also in the manifestation of, beyond distortions, lies and the sidelining of facts in the rush to capture the emotional pulse of a nation in the Post-Truth age.

This section will catalogue key junctures in the development of the post-World War II European project. In so doing it will chart the tensions between the two key opposing positions and traditions that have developed in relationship to the project: intergovernmentalism and federalism. This will have a bearing when newspaper discourse refers back to national historical contexts in Europe and how Britain under former Prime Minister, David Cameron, saw Europe in a more intergovernmental light (it was not always so), whereas Italy (perhaps to a lesser extent today) was until recently closer to the federalist approach. It clearly could be argued that the post-Cameron era has ushered in the post-intergovernmental phase in Britain’s relationship with Europe. Britain is out of the EU and there are no plans to remain in the single market and maintain free movement. Cooperation with Europe almost now seems to be an anathema, with the UK government in March 2020, declining to work with Brussels in providing ventilators for tackling the Covid-19 pandemic, which has killed thousands across Europe. Britain, it appears, is not even inter-governmental any more. Britain’s current government, it appears, is seeking to distance the country from Europe, as much as possible.

As has been apparent from previous analysis (Rowinski 2017) Italy traditionally wants more Europe not less, but is losing faith and indeed patience, with the project, as the fallout over the euro and now Covid-19 is demonstrating. Jean Monnet, the founding father of the post-war ‘project’ said that Europe would be forged in crises (Lelliot 2020). Italy pleaded for fellow EU countries to send them medical equipment at the start of the pandemic. Nothing came. Italy had to rely on the help of China. Italy’s Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, argued vociferously that among other things, Europe also needed to pool its debt, sharing the burden across the community and the creation of Corona bonds,
supported also by France and Spain. Conte’s bond proposal was initially rejected by Germany, Holland and Brussels. Conte said: “If Europe does not rise to this unprecedented challenge, the whole European structure loses its raison d’être to the people. We are at a critical point in European history” (Lelliot 2020).

Lelliot (2020) argued: “That just about sums things up. The message being sent out is that Europe is a project for the good times and that when the going gets tough people can only really rely on their own government and the nation state”. The EU’s reaction at this critical moment, almost feeds populist nationalism and is will analysed, it is through the shortcomings of the mainstream political class that populism has found favour. As D’Ancona (2017: 140) argued earlier and as a disaffected Italy and indeed Spain, lick their wounds: “political disappointment is the handmaiden of Post-Truth, a solvent of trust and a cue to further tribal huddling”.

Many interpreted Conte’s comments, leading a Eurosceptic government, that a furious Italy could contemplate walking away from the EU. Britain may have moved from an intergovernmental position to a rejectionist one, regarding Europe. But Italy, on the strength of these recent events, appears to have moved from a post-war federalist position to an intergovernmental position, at best, if not more cynical still.

Intergovernmentalist member states have historically regarded the European project as the basis for cooperation between nations—but short of relinquishing too many national powers to supranational institutions, whose laws all member states can be bound by. Conversely, federalist member states have accepted and in some cases embraced varying degrees of supranationalism. From its inception, the European post-World War II project contained and maintained a strong notion of the nation state, within its structure. This structure has contributed to the maintenance of national narratives and collective memories that contribute to national-bound presuppositions, world views and framing over European integration. Conversely, some European institutions have attempted and thus far, largely failed, to construct a European collective memory and identity. In other words, Europe has yet to create a discourse with the emotive power conjured and established by the nation state (over Europe).

One should not assume however, that the current EU needs to develop along the same lines as a nation, as Fossum and Schlesinger (2007) point out. Instead the focus in this investigation is how and why national perceptions frame conceptualisations of European integration and more
Dedman (1996: 7) draws a distinction between “integrated and interdependent organisations”. NATO is, for instance, an example of interdependence, with national governments cooperating in certain policy areas. Agreements are based on mutual cooperation. Conversely, integration requires the creation of supranational organisations, such as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and subsequent European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, which were the key early institutional stages in post-World War II Europe. Member states transfer some policy decisions to a body representing all of them, whose decisions are binding. Nations within supranational organisations transfer some national sovereignty to them. The supranational body can impose sanctions on governments, in cases of non-compliance.

Dedman’s (1996) initial interpretation of integration draws from political science: the increased complexity of both the post-1945 international order and the range and functions of the modern nation state. Countries are inexorably entwined in a network of international bodies (e.g. NATO), in which the scope for independent action is curtailed by collective decision taking. Dedman (ibid.) argues that once integrated organisations are formed further integration is inevitable and refers to the 1986 Single European Act leading to economic and monetary union (1992 European Union treaty) later resulting in the euro. Dedman’s (ibid.: 12) further explanation for European integration is entirely historical and is based on the work of political, diplomatic and economic historians. For example, Alan Milward’s thesis, derived from empirical evidence drawn from a variety of national archives, explores the origins and motivations for European integration.

the Milward thesis states that European integration only occurs and only works when it is actually needed by nation states, there being no fundamental antagonism between European integration, and the nation state.  

(Dedman 1996: 12)

Dinan (1994: 3) concurs with the Milward thesis, arguing that “intergovernmentalism and supranationalism are not irreconcilable, rather they jointly characterise the European Community”.
The federal movement in Europe surfaced during World War II. One of the potential motivations for integration was to prevent a future war, making nations answerable to an overarching body of European institutions, which accords with Dedman’s (1996) second interpretation of integration. Lipgens (1985) argues that the resistance movements favoured a federal state with supranational powers. According to Lipgens (ibid.), the French resistance movement hardly ever favoured a return to the pre-war system of nation states. The *Europeenne de Federalistes* (UEF) subsequently emerged and its membership doubled between 1947 and 1950, reaching 200,000. Resistance publications towards the end of the war, stressed wanting a supranational European federation, with political, military and judicial institutions to maintain peace and freedom (Lipgens 1985: 674–675). Winston Churchill in assisting Charles De Gaulle against the Nazis made a series of speeches, in which he spoke of the need to build a new Europe, with a great Germany and a great France at its heart (Dedman 1996: 20–23; Judt 2005). The UK’s United Europe Movement was founded by Duncan Sandys, Churchill’s son-in-law, and had Churchill (now out of office) as President. Churchill’s speech in Zurich on September 19, 1946, called for:

> a kind of *United States of Europe*…(the) first step is to form a Council of Europe….France and Germany must take the lead together…Great Britain, the British Commonwealth, mighty America – must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe.

(Brinkley and Hackett 1991: 20)

Churchill, one of the founding members of the Council of Europe in 1949, worked closely with Italy’s first post-World War II Prime Minister, Alcide de Gasperi, as both countries shared a vision. The equivocation in Britain over whether it wanted in or not, was apparent over this period. Forster (2002: 23) argues that in the run-up to the 1950 general election “pressure from Tory grandees was exerted on Churchill to tone down his pro-Europeanism, as the Labour majority was cut to six”. Doubts about the electoral wisdom of a pro-European stance intensified (Onslow 1997: 55).

The work of the Council of Europe was concerned with human rights, education and culture. In 1951, West Germany joined. This was an act of reconciliation suggested by Churchill (Judt 2005). The Council of Europe was the first post-World War II European institution formed.
However, although Churchill put aside his earlier ideas and precluded direct, post-World War II British involvement in European integration, he remained an advocate of a strong Europe. Instead he advanced the cause of an English-speaking union, including America (Davies 1997; Judt 2005). British newspapers today instead evoke a one-dimensional Churchill, the national war leader, which Garton-Ash (2005: 31, 271) describes as the ‘meta-story’ of a plucky Churchillian Britain.

French President, Charles De Gaulle, was for L’Europe de Patrie, rejecting Churchill’s vision of a United States of Europe and offering his own. De Gaulle regarded the possibility of European nation states merging into a United States of Europe, as “a dangerous delirium that could only lead to the disappearance of France” (Brinkley and Hackett 1991: 170). America was in favour of close European economic integration, wanting Britain to advance the cause of federalism (Judt 2005). Britain did not see the opening up of markets as its mantra but came to this view later (Gillingham 1991: 134–135).

Gillingham argues (ibid.) that Britain refused to play the federalising and open market role cast for it by American foreign policy. Instead Britain sought a return to the easy-going ways of empire and a resistance to viewing itself as anything but a component of Europe. The Americans felt European integration was stalled without Britain. There may have been an active forgetting (Heer and Wodak 2008: 6).

Jean Monnet was the Frenchman who created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which meant coal and steel production, between former adversaries, would be pooled. Italy was among the six founding countries, together with France and Germany and the Benelux countries. Britain chose not to join. Monnet is often seen as the founding father of the modern European project. His vision was very different from De Gaulle’s (Brinkley and Hackett 1991; Judt 2005). Monnet wanted close economic and political integration from the start, drawing from American ideas concerning federalism and the structuring of the economy. He also had close connections with the United States, having lived and worked there. Monnet struggled to reconcile French and German visions for Europe. France regarded much of the project as a means of containment of a previously aggressive Germany (Brinkley and Hackett 1991; Judt 2005).

France, and Germany under the new Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had different interpretations of how the initial coal and steel community could best create the climate for future economic integration (Brinkley
and Hackett 1991). Monnet was to later admit failure at being unable to create supranational economic control and the opening up of the market, thus allowing as Gillingham (1991: 157) explains, German protectionism to be maintained. French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, was the author of the initial ECSC text. Gillingham notes:

His message was dramatic, as it was simple: France was willing to sacrifice national sovereignty for the common good, and thus invited her neighbours to join a venture that would end ancient rivalry, prevent war, and lead to a brighter future...At the very moment of its announcement, the proposal for a European coal-steel pool became an established part of the context of events, a force for change, and a myth.

(Gillingham 1991: 137–138)

Britain chose not to take part in the ECSC negotiations, but sent an observer to the Messina Conference of 1955, in Sicily, affording Italy some symbolism. Churchill felt that the subsequent supranational European Economic Community (EEC), formed in 1957, was also not for Britain. This presents us with the ambivalence of Churchill and a nation. De Gaulle was instrumental in blocking Britain’s attempts to join the EEC in 1961 and 1967 (Judt 2005: 307). Prime Minister Harold Macmillan focused on the continuing relationship with America and on the Commonwealth (Judt 2005). Economic necessities precipitated further engagement with Europe and eventually Britain applied to join the European project (Judt 2005). Jean Monnet, with deep conviction, supported Britain’s candidacy. However, as Gillingham points out:

De Gaulle opposed it with equal determination, not only because, in his view, the British presence would complicate or even prevent the treaty’s execution in full, but because Britain’s entry would in effect be America’s entry. The Common Market, he thought, would become a worldwide free trade area, that would be the end of Europe, which would cease to be European.

(Gillingham 1991: 169)

Britain finally joined the EEC more than twenty years behind the founding six, in 1973 (Judt 2005). At the post-World War II Congress of Europe, fundamentally different visions for a future European Parliament (EP) emerged. Dinan (1994: 12) notes that for unionists, that body
would be a consultative assembly bound to defer to government ministers. Instead for federalists, the EP would be an assembly “charged with drafting an EU Constitution for the United States of Europe”. Here we see tensions between intergovernmentalism and federalism, at the outset.

During the Iraq War a reference to Old Europe and New Europe by American secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, created a new European divide along a different fault line (Judt 2005: 787). Germany and France (old Europe) were against the war but many of the accession states, such as Poland and Hungary, together with Britain, Italy and Spain (new Europe) advocated war. Two separate European positions emerged—at the precise moment when Europe was no longer geographically divided.

Protests against the Iraq war were planned across Europe on a specific day. Former French finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn declared: “On Saturday, 15 February, a new nation was born on the street. This new nation is the European nation” (Garton-Ash 2005: 55). Here the people were mobilised into Europe-wide action. That same summer Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida (old Europe) made an appeal for a rebirth of Europe, which appeared in many European newspapers. This was also a response to the Letter of Eight, the pro-Atlanticist European leaders (new Europe), in support of the Iraq war (Garton-Ash 2005: 55).

Italy’s wartime experience was distinct from that of Britain’s and in itself not uniform, with the north and south suffering in different ways (Judt 2005). The north endured German occupation after the Italian armistice, halfway through the war and the south was liberated by the Allies. It should be noted that Italy has often been invaded, occupied and divided many times (Ginzborg 2003).

Judt (2005: 259) noted Italian distrust of bureaucratic structures and how its post-World War II economy succeeded in spite of, and not because of, Italy’s institutions. This, coupled with a need for a fresh and peaceful start, made Italians enthusiastic proponents of Europe, as evidenced in involvement from the start. Dedman’s (1996) interpretation of integration, helping to keep the post-World War II peace, was at least part of the Italian calculation. In Italy’s case, some Italians wanted their fellow countrymen to be constrained by Europe. Judt (2005) noted how many fascist administrators during the war, could still be found working, many years later.

Italy secured preconditions at the outset of the post-World War II project. The ECSC had stipulated the need to eliminate the falsification of competitive conditions, while at the same time equalising wage and
working conditions. Gillingham (1991: 144–145) notes that Italy gained a preferential ore arrangement, subsidies for coal and special tariffs for steel. He argues that: “though required to prevent massive dislocation, Italy’s deal, like the one for Belgium, made a mockery of the equality principle, and eroded the substance of the community” (ibid.: 144).

Italy showed a demonstrable commitment to Europe. On the left was Altiero Spinelli, the arch federalist, and on the right, Prime Minister Alcide de Gasperi. Another national reason for Italian ECSC membership was as a means of facilitating emigration, lessening crippling unemployment. Ginzborg (2003: 239) argues:

At the end of the twentieth century, Italy’s image as a nation-state was ever more defined by its relation to Europe. It has long been the argument of the most distinguished historian of the European Community, Alan Milward, that the European nations who signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 were moved to action predominantly by self-interest, by the need to ‘rescue’ the nation-state.

Ginzborg (2003: 239) cites two key factors which have mitigated Italian progress in Europe: first, an intensely inward-looking, localistic, clientelistic and power-seeking Italian political elite; and secondly, the nature and failings of Italian public administration. The complex and labyrinthine nature of Italian politics and life has precluded many Italian initiatives on the European stage (Bainbridge 2000). The Christian Democrats, under De Gasperi, consulted the Vatican on major political initiatives and indeed the Catholic Church is woven into the tapestry of Italy’s post-World War II narrative. Berlusconi as Prime Minister, declared himself in favour of referring to a Christian Europe in the EU Constitution. Romano Prodi, Berlusconi’s political adversary (and subsequently prime minister) was a devout Catholic who regularly met the Pope during his premiership (Ginzborg 2003).

One of the methodological tools for unravelling national perceptions concerning European integration will be an analysis of conceptual metaphors. The audience draws on national historical contexts and collective memories in forming their common-sense understanding of Europe (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Musolff 2004).

Various attempts to conjure a supranational collective memory of Europe have been explored thus far: Strauss-Kahn’s European nation; bureaucratic patriotism; Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida (old
Europe) appealing for a *rebirth of Europe*. However, subsequent analysis of the public sphere suggests the conjuring of a collective, internalised and socialised Europe, has some way to go (Fossum and Schlesinger 2007).

So what of Euroscepticisms and the very different means of articulating it, resulting from the narratives of Italy and Britain? The origin of the term *Euroscepticism* appears to be a series of articles in *The Times* in 1985 and 1986 (Spiering 2004: 127). It was a term used to refer to a section of the British right within the Conservative party that was increasingly opposed to the second wave of integration initiated by the Delors Commission.

It is necessary to comprehend how European history itself has been discursively constructed, posing questions already about what we (within our national spheres) understand by Europe, leading us to subsequent comprehensions of Euroscepticism(s) as a further articulation of that understanding. Our collective memory of Europe (seen through the prism of nation) has subsequently coloured our understanding—and in some instances led to various and sometimes very different manifestations of Euroscepticism.

So what is history? Theodor Lessing argued that history is a conscious reflection of life, but it is not life itself (Heer and Wodak 2008: 1):

> history as a retrospectively composed and meaning-endowed narrative is always construction and fictionalization. Historical phenomena resulting from social processes arise amongst contradictions and conflict; these determine which events from the past will become carriers of the consensual values and ideals, and which therefore have value as objects in collective memory.

In terms of historical narrative, a coherence is constructed for us. Heer and Wodak (2008: 2) refer to how memory is a highly active system of connected cortical, sensory and motor processes. In this context, the repetition of specific stimulus patterns is seen as a significant structuring factor in perception and a basic element in learning processes. The visual system responds with heightened awareness to structures and sequences of events, which have shown themselves to be coherent and ordered in earlier experience (ibid.: 245).

Within this historical narrative, it has been argued that prejudices are internalised. Heer and Wodak (2008: 3) refer to van Dijk’s (1998) socio-cognitive model, internalising this way. For example, someone with anti-Semitic inclinations will interpret even positive experiences with Jews
negatively. Hence prejudices, stereotyping and ideologies can be explained through the internalisation of cognitive schemata. Once cognitive and emotional schemata are acquired and reinforced through socialisation, they can only be prised open with difficulty. Heer and Wodak (2008: 4) argue there are studies that show how “collective memory exists as the sum of ‘real’ group memories and how groups preserve their stability and construct of identity by integrating positive memories and rejecting negative ones”. This can also be described as active forgetting (ibid.: 6) as a way of dealing with the past. Political and journalistic actors seeking to control the discourse on European integration may practice Geschichtspolitik, functionalising history for political ends. For this investigation, Geschichtspolitik will relate to the harnessing of national historical comprehension of the post-World War II European project (ibid.: 5).

This is relevant, in coming to understand how certain prejudices and presuppositions regarding the wider sense of Europe and much later in relation to the EU, were absorbed and internalised in Britain and Italy—while others were rejected. Such historical strains and their residue, surface in the populism of politicians, appealing to the emotions of a nation felt and the media occasionally challenging but more often feeding those sanitised national narratives.

The interplay between Italian and British politics and the press should be integrated into the contextualisation of these national narratives. The extent to which the particularities of how news is produced, within these two cultures, impacts upon how Europe is conveyed and constructed. At times the influence of the governments, journalists and editors and their agendas is apparent.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) have formulated various models of media systems, of which the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model regularly refers to Italy, and the North Atlantic or Liberal Model to Britain. It should be noted that the authors are aware that generalisations can surface—yet do provide sufficient details concerning the two countries.

**ITALY AND THE ITALIAN PRESS**

Liberal institutions, including capitalist industrialism and political democracy, developed later in southern Europe and this impacted on the development of the Italian press. The forces of the church were stronger and liberalism only overcame protracted political conflicts in the twentieth century. Italian newspapers were historically the focus of literary minds
sharing their thoughts with the elite of society. Journalist Forcella (1959) argues in his essay, *Millecinquecento lettori* (Fifteen Hundred readers) that newspapers in Italy have always focused primarily on politics and still serve a well-informed, discerning elite, a strong public (Fraser 1992)—despite the introduction of mass-circulation newspapers.

In 2012 (World Association of Newspapers) Britain had 408.5 newspaper sales per 1000 adult population compared with 121.4 in Italy. The latter figure is significantly depleted if one removes Italian mass-circulation sports newspapers. Subscribing to an Italian paper is virtually non-existent. In Italy, there is a tradition of political advocacy. Political journalists saw their role as publicists, influencing opinion (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 26). Often journalists would enter politics and until fairly recently, nearly all newspapers were closely linked to political parties and often subsidised by them or the Italian state. The first post-World War II licences went to anti-fascist papers (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 100).

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 27) argue:

> party-press parallelism was the degree to which the structure of the media system paralleled that of the party system. It exists in its strongest form when each news organization is aligned with a particular party, whose views it represents in the public sphere.

For example, the first issue in January 1976 of *La Repubblica* carried an article by founder Eugenio Scalfari declaring the paper to be a “journal of information that doesn’t pretend to follow an illusory political neutrality, but declares explicitly that it has taken a side in the political battle...” (Poggioli 1991: 6). In the 1990s, two new newspapers emerged, *Il Giornale* and *L’Indipendente*, both seeking wider readerships. *Il Giornale* produced Italy’s first sensationalist headlines. Yet *Il Giornale* remains the voice of Silvio Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* (even though he has been sidelined). *L’Indipendente* was closely aligned to the right-wing NL, a party which has in the last two decades often held the balance of power in Berlusconi’s Forza Italia-led governments—yet until recently, still talked of independence for the north (Giordano 2004). Hallin and Mancini (ibid.: 102) argue that despite Italian newspapers becoming more market-orientated, the rise of Berlusconi has now actually intensified partisanship.
Advocacy, with Italian journalists advancing positions (Hallin and Mancini 2004) on another level was sometimes a resistance to secularism by the church, and was a topic strongly conveyed in newspapers. The counter-trend was the important role of the Communists in post-World War II Italian society. They too had newspapers that were very much the voice of the party. L’Unita, for instance, was at one point one of Italy’s largest selling newspapers. The church and the Communists were arguably Italy’s subcultures. The dominant political force in post-World War II Italy was the Christian Democrats, the political arm of the Church, formed nearly all the Italian governments until the early nineties (Ginzborg 2003).

The other link that should be made to advocacy is that of clientelism, contrasted with the Anglo-Saxon conceptualisation of professionalism. When clientelism is linked with advocacy, as traditional undercurrents in Italian journalism, the concept of objectivity ceases to resonate. Indeed a news story has traditionally been expected to include comment, as part of the process of keeping readers informed. There is a strong tradition of intellectuals providing the main article in Italian newspapers. However, Hallin and Mancini (ibid.: 136) argue clientelism, the notion of patronage influencing copy, is being increasingly undermined. European integration is imposing common standards replacing particularistic ties and subcultures with a common professional culture. Ginzborg (2003: 239) argues clientelism among the political elite is indeed one of the key factors, which has mitigated the Italian contribution to Europe. There is therefore an Italian impetus within the political and journalistic fields, to embrace European integration further.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) refer to majoritarianism (the concept of an electoral system resulting in a clear victor at an election). This is relevant to the journalism produced in Britain. By contrast, Italian politics consists of complex coalitions and factionalism. Majoritarianism impacts upon journalism. There is a clear political line from a victorious party with a normally large mandate, enabling it to speak to, and for, the nation, as indeed UK newspapers sometimes do.

In Italy, political regionalism is very strong. Salvini’s League manifesto, until recently, called for a separate state. The League grew out of the Northern League and the call for a separate state (Ginzborg 2003: 301). A clear political majority is never the outcome of an election and Italian newspapers naturally reflect the fractiousness of the body politic, contingent with a politically divided nation. In Britain, the majoritarian system
normally results in a clear victor. So in comparison, a clearer, homogenous national picture in the London-based press is easier to reflect, belying a reality which is far more complex. Scotland, under First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, has declared the intention to have another referendum on independence, in the light of the ‘English’ vote for Brexit. Scotland voted clearly to remain in the EU.

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 61) argue in Italy: “The notion of politically neutral journalism is less plausible where a wide range of competing world views contend”.

The Tagentopoli scandals in the 1990s revealed widespread corruption across the political class. Since Italian judges took centre stage in the Italian press, systematically exposing the scale of the crisis, both the judges and the press became more powerful, as the traditional political partisanship was transcended, with both claiming to speak for public opinion (Pizzorno 1998).

Instrumentalisation results in Italian journalists being influenced by powerful owners or other powerful interests, colouring their news judgement and compromising them. Journalist Pansa (1977) describes this as the “giornalista dimezzato”—the journalist cut in half—by which half of an Italian journalist belongs to powers outside journalism: media owners, financial backers and politicians. Donsbach and Patterson (1992) in a survey of journalists in Italy, Germany, Britain and the United States, found 27% of Italian journalists stated that pressures from senior editors or management created very, or quite important limitations on reporting, compared with 15% in Britain.

Berlusconi succeeded, on becoming Prime Minister, in getting around competition laws for his burgeoning media empire despite claims of a conflict of interest. Some journalists argued it was a threat to Italian democracy. Three ministers resigned over what they regarded as unfair media competition laws, allowing Berlusconi to have a near media monopoly. Nevertheless Berlusconi was back in power in 2010 for the third time and is widely acknowledged through overseeing state television and its appointees and his own highly popular private national television networks, is in a position, even now as a peripheral figure, to colour public thinking disproportionately (Ginzborg 2003: 285–324).

The dominant genre of Italian political reporting from the 1960s was the pastone, written by the most prestigious journalists and appearing on the front page (Dardano 1976). Pastone combined a review of the major political developments of the day with comments
by the journalist. Despite journalism’s increased market-orientation this commentary-oriented journalism has yet to be abandoned (Roidi 2001). Forcella (1959: 454) began in journalism, thinking facts and news were paramount. Instead he learnt that:

Facts for a political journalist never speak of themselves. They either say too much or too little. When they say too much you have to make them speak more softly, when they say too little you have to integrate them to give them their proper meaning. Clarity in this work is a cumbersome virtue.

Putnam (1973: 81–82) conducted a comparative study of political elites in Britain and Italy. He notes in Italy that there was a distinctive discursive style, with adherence to explicit social and moral principles, connected with higher levels of partisanship. Putnam (1973: 81–82) argues: “In journalism, this style is reflected in the fact that facts are not seen as speaking for themselves, commentary is valued, and neutrality appears as inconsistency, naiveté or opportunism”, reflecting an Italian media culture, in which the pastone can thrive.

Romano Prodi was the Italian centre-left Prime Minister several times. In November 1996, Prodi successfully negotiated Italy’s re-entry into the European Monetary system, paving the way for euro membership. Two months earlier the NL, seeking secession, declared Padania independent, the Latin term for the northern Italian region in the Po Valley (Ginzborg 2003: 305). The declaration, by the league’s then charismatic leader, Umberto Bossi, carried no weight (Giordano 2004). At that juncture, the league was pro-European, seeing a chance of distancing itself from Rome—by developing links with Brussels (Giordano 2004: 63). The league joined the EU’s Committee of the Regions, giving a voice to those below the nation state, but the EU was not to prove the panacea that Bossi had hoped. Bossi vociferously argued Italy had to join the euro, fearing the damage of non-membership for northern trade. He coupled this fear, with again campaigning for independence (Giordano 2004: 65). A miscalculation. It may be that the current leader, Matteo Salvini, learnt from this episode and while an ardent Eurosceptic, the League is now no longer the Northern League and has long ceased to campaign for secession.

The centre-left government of Prodi, succeeded in meeting the euro convergence criteria. In 1998 Prodi left office to become President of
the European Commission, with Massimo D’Alema becoming Premier for the centre-left coalition. Under the guidance of D’Alema’s government—with Prodi coordinating the introduction of the euro, across the continent—Italy prepared to join and started using the currency in January 2002, with Berlusconi then just back in power.

The then Northern League (NL), still argued for independence, but its economic justification was no longer viable (Giordano 2004: 66–68). There was also a massive switch of support to Berlusconi’s Forza Italia. A key reason was that Forza Italia addressed economic issues concerning small and medium-sized businesses, which was very similar to the NL’s claims. Yet the central tenet of separation scared many voters, who felt their economic concerns were being increasingly met. The issue that had been the NL’s central reason for existence and initially a basis for electoral success in the 1990s became a liability and problem at the turn of the century (Giordano 2004: 66–68). The league subsequently made a volte face, arguing vociferously against the EU, claiming it was too bureaucratic and was taking too much sovereignty from member states, coupled with a strong anti-immigration policy (Ter Wal 2002: 157–176). Milward’s theory (see Dedman 1996: 12) of European integration advancing only when it suits nations (or in this case a pivotal political party) resonates.

Berlusconi formed coalition governments were all reliant on the NL, which held the balance of power. In 1996, Berlusconi fought with other partners against the left. The NL fought the Italian general election alone—and the left won (Ginzborg 2003: 301). The Euroscepticism of the league is, therefore, of importance and may still surface as a strain in a range of arenas: the political discourse on Europe; in Italian society; the interrelations between national politics and the press and the media discourse within Berlusconi’s Il Giornale paper.

Giordano (2004) demonstrated how the continuing pivotal role of the Northern League in Berlusconi-led coalitions may have influenced the policy on Europe. Where the Euroscepticism of Berlusconi and then Forza Italia stopped and the league continued, is hard to discern. Berlusconi had to distance his coalition from the anti-Europe rhetoric of the league’s leader Bossi on several occasions (Giordano 2004: 73). Berlusconi, although sceptical in some areas, publicly professed his enthusiasm for Europe (Owen 2002; Johnson and Farrell 2003). Nevertheless, on joining the euro in 2002, there was a distinctly lukewarm response from Berlusconi’s coalition government (BBC 2002), elected the year before.
The political dynamics of the pro-euro Prodi as President of the European Commission and future national political adversary of Berlusconi combined with Berlusconi having to sometimes listen to Forza Italia’s coalition partner, the NL, may have accounted for the government’s negative response.

**Britain and the British Press**

This book challenges any naturalised assumptions British-based readers have about the British press and European coverage. The tradition of party-press parallelism started in Britain and many aspects of it are still prevalent in British journalism. However, because of its enduring party-press parallelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004), Britain is atypical of the Liberal model. Britain has also proved the exception in its perceptions of Europe (Trenz 2007).

While the majority of the press support the Conservatives, although clear-cut party allegiance has weakened in recent years (Seymour-Ure 1996), The Times (historically Conservative) supported New Labour under Blair, but emerged as Remain rather than Leave, as the positioning of papers over Brexit, became a new, important faultline in the media landscape. Regardless of party political support, Euroscepticism in Britain should be considered as the domain of the right-leaning press (Garton-Ash 2005; Weymouth and Anderson 1999), as there is a right-wing populist stance, emphasising nationalism in the British tabloid press (Harcup and O’Neill 2001). The Times (quality broadsheet) is in Murdoch’s Newscorp as is The Sun (tabloid). Hallin and Mancini (2004: 211) argue that the popular press in Britain present the newspaper as “speaking for the common citizen and common sense” and Barnett and Seymour (2000) contend that tabloid news values are increasingly found in traditionally non-tabloid media, including quality British newspapers and broadcasting.

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 211) note that quality newspapers, like The Times, have an interpretative style. Henningham and Delano’s (1998: 153) survey of British journalists, found that 83% felt it was “very or extremely important” for journalists to “provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems”.

Commercial British newspapers developed relatively early at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Høyer and Pöttker 2005) expanding with little state involvement. Altick (1957: 322) argues “the
increasing value of newspapers as advertising mediums allowed them gradually to shake off government or party control and to become independent voices of public sentiment”. However, this commercialism is mitigated by the enduring *party-press parallelism*. There are significant links between newspaper titles, capital generated from advertising revenue and audiences. Access to audiences is sold to advertisers.

De Tocqueville (1969: 519) wrote of a US newspaper that it can only survive “if it gives publicity to feelings or principles common to a large number of men”. Donsbach and Patterson (1992) found that 28% of British journalists reported that stories had been changed to enhance audience interest, as opposed to 15% in Italy. There is some evidence that party–press parallelism has declined in recent years “in favour of a more American-style coverage driven by journalists’ market-oriented judgements of what makes a ‘good story’ (Franklin and Richardson 2002). But, as Gifford (2014) asks, does this not mean that *The Times*’s news values (over Europe) are more susceptible to popular Euroscepticism?

Recent years have seen the evolution of more ferocious and muscular Euroscepticisms, in the form of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in Britain now very much usurped by Nigel Farage’s new Brexit Party and the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League in Italy (until recently in coalition government). These Euroscepticisms may have influenced to varying degrees the wider societies and indeed coloured the debate on Europe-related issues. More caustic still in Italy, is the League, formerly the Northern League. Under the guardianship of Matteo Salvini, the party dropped the notion of creating a separate northern state of Padania but simultaneously maintained and arguably developed its extreme right agenda, much of which has been anti-immigration and vociferously Eurosceptic.

The rise of such populist parties (or possibly movements) has been meteoric. They celebrate their outsider status, removed and very much celebrating their difference from the political elite, which has disappointed and disaffected populations. Populist parties have harnessed this Euroscepticism to the point where Italy could still leave the euro, under the guardianship of the M5S (although this is looking less likely) and Britain has now left the EU, spearheaded by its key flag-bearer: the Brexit Party. Analysis will include the sometimes emotive rhetoric of Beppe Grillo, founder of M5S, but as referred to at the outset, the context this is posited and most importantly, accentuated by the further writing of journalists, will be noted.
In light of the wave of populism that has swept across Britain and Italy—and indeed the election of the new US president, Donald Trump, some grasping and conceptualisation—insofar as it informs subsequent linguistic analysis—seems worthwhile.

There appears little agreement on how to conceptualise populism (Moffitt and Tormey 2014). Some cluster around the idea of populism as damaging to democracy; allowing the rise of chauvinistic and fundamentalist forces, seeking to dismantle checks and balances; jettison the rule of law and establish a new regime where political power relies on the will of the people. This chimes with the environment in which Post-Truth and emotive rhetoric has come to the fore. Conversely, Kaltwasser (2014: 470) argues populism raises issues that are entirely legitimate and “we should avoid treating populism as an irrational impulse”. This suggests that such emotive rhetoric could be calculated to provoke—an issue for consideration in analysis newspaper copy.

As Moffitt and Tormey (2014: 382) argue: “the concept of populism has become so widely used – and usually in a derogatory manner to denigrate any political personality we do not like – that it has lost its analytical value and has become meaningless”.

Moffitt and Tormey (2014: 385) note how some populism literature tries to verify the universal applicability of a framework, without illuminating or truly analysing the subject at hand. The subsequent discourse analysis will endeavour to do the latter. Populism is integrated into the tapestry, as a strand interwoven into the vote for Brexit, for instance.

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