



**REPORTING
THE ROAD
TO BREXIT**

*International Media and
the EU Referendum 2016*

editors

ANTHONY RIDGE-NEWMAN

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palgrave
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ISBN 978-3-319-73681-5 ISBN 978-3-319-73682-2 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73682-2>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018934652

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Cover illustration: Credit by WINS86
Cover design by Fatima Jamadar

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

The decade since the global financial crisis has seen a number of major international events that could be argued to demonstrate a disruption to a period of relative continuity, which some consider to have been characterized by a growing globalized trajectory towards progressive ‘liberalism’ prior to 2008. From the global proliferation of new digital technologies to the election of President Trump in the USA, the public spheres of international media and politics seem somewhat transformed and indicative of, what some might call, a new age. Concerns have been voiced about regressive ‘populist’ political trends becoming more prevalent. Diversions from the status quo have given way to rapid change, uncertainty and, to some extent, episodes of social and economic volatility. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), as a member state of the European Union (EU), contributed significantly to this changing global picture in its own unique way.

Britain’s democratic decision to leave the EU via the 2016 EU referendum has been framed as a wide number of things, including a rejection of globalization, and a lurch towards populism. Frequently denoted by the popular neologism ‘Brexit’ (Britain’s exit from the EU), the outcome of the referendum, which questioned Britain’s membership within the EU, sent shockwaves throughout British society, Europe and beyond. It would be no overstatement to claim that, since the referendum, British news and political agendas have been dominated by Brexit debates, Brexit negotiations and Brexit impacts. Academics, activists,

business leaders, civil servants, governments, journalists, lawyers, politicians, think tanks and, indeed, swathes of wider society have been frantically scrambling to piece together implications and make sense of the decision of the British people to leave the EU.

While this edited collection aims to examine media responses to the 2016 EU referendum in a range of national and international contexts, given the rate of change and often frenetic developments amid a multitude of perpetually unfolding events, it would not be possible to represent all of the complex dynamics associated with the referendum and the Brexit result. This book largely focuses on media coverage in the run-up to and shortly after the referendum. Therefore, this preface seems the most appropriate place to acknowledge briefly other key developments in the Brexit narrative up to the point of this book's final submission in early 2018. Interestingly, but unsurprisingly, the Brexit narrative has been most notably entwined with, at times, turbulent events within the British Conservative Party; the party whose Governments led the 2016 EU referendum and Brexit processes.

Brexit: A Tory Saga

The Conservative Party has had a long-standing internal debate between two informal wings comprising Eurosceptics and Europhiles within its organization, the saga of which has continued well into the 'post-Brexit' context. However, in the run-up to 2016, for some, the party was not Eurosceptic enough and the Conservatives leaked support and members to the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), most famously led by the staunchly Eurosceptic Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Nigel Farage. UKIP's campaign agenda and growing popularity among the British electorate partly placed pressure on the Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron to grant a referendum on Britain's EU membership. On 17 December 2015, the European Union Referendum Act received Royal Assent permitting a referendum on EU membership in the UK and Gibraltar. Either side of this event, Cameron attempted to negotiate a better deal for Britain within the EU. On 23 June 2016, overall, the United Kingdom and Gibraltar voted 52% in favour of the UK leaving the EU. Cameron's resignation on 24 June 2016 was both a reaction to the Brexit outcome, symbolizing his failure to lead a victory for the Remain campaign, and a catalyst for further 'post-Brexit' events.

Filling the void left by Cameron's resignation, the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), Nicola Sturgeon, soon took the

opportunity to capitalize on the stark difference in the EU referendum result between England and Scotland and use it as a rhetorical tool in order to argue for a second Scottish independence referendum. Media attention soon turned to the Conservative Party's contest for a new leader, which was punctuated by some internal party turbulence and alleged backbiting between the prominent Leave campaign colleagues and leadership candidates Boris Johnson and Michael Gove. Further events amid the selection process resulted in Theresa May becoming Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of the UK on 13 July 2016. On 16 March 2017, the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill received Royal Assent. It was followed shortly after by the Prime Minister pushing the proverbial 'red button' by writing a letter to Donald Tusk, European Council President, with notification of the UK's intent to withdraw from the EU. This triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union—Lisbon Treaty, which permits the withdrawal of a member state on constitutional grounds.

Enjoying relatively significant popularity, on 18 April 2017, Theresa May called a General Election that was held on 8 June 2017. Underestimating her main opponent, Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Opposition, and overestimating her own ability to win votes where they counted most for the Conservatives, the election turned out to be a grave miscalculation by May. Her campaign slogan 'strong and stable' was reduced to pejorative 'weak and wobbly' antonyms within hours of a poor Conservative electoral performance (in terms of numbers of seats in the Commons) becoming apparent and resulting in a hung parliament. May gambled, and ultimately exchanged, a comfortable majority for the Conservatives in the House of Commons for a minority government propped up by a controversial parliamentary deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), led by Arlene Foster.

On 19 June 2017, led by David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, on behalf of a significantly weaker Conservative Government, the first round of Brexit negotiations began with the EU. With Brexit negotiations reaching a number of sticking points, like the cost of the 'divorce' for the UK and sensitive border issues between the UK and the Republic of Ireland, the Prime Minister put forward the UK's stance in Florence with a key speech on Brexit on 22 September, and met with Donald Tusk shortly after on 26 September 2017. These events took place against the backdrop of consistent turbulence in the Conservative Party, in which tensions between Leave and Remain supporters continued to intensify.

Following May's lacklustre performance in the 2017 General Election and criticism about her engagement with those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire disaster, which occurred shortly after the election in June 2017, the Prime Minister had been plagued by negative headlines in the UK. Her Leader's speech at the Conservative Party Conference on 4 October 2017 was meant to bring renewal to her position as Leader. However, with a range of challenges during her speech and certain controversies related to comments made by Boris Johnson, her Foreign Secretary, news headlines continued to paint the Conservatives and May in an unfavourable light. Scrutiny of May, the Government, and turbulence in the Conservative Party intensified as the UK approached an impending deadline in December 2017, by which point the first stage of Brexit negotiations were required to be completed.

On 4 December 2017, the Prime Minister met European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. The two were thought to be close to agreeing a way forward, particularly in relation to the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland border issue. However, a call from the DUP's Leader, Arlene Foster, not only interrupted May's and Juncker's lunch together, but resulted in May entering into urgent negotiations with the DUP. Interestingly, the crescendo in the Tories' Brexit saga was yet to come. And, when it came, on 13 December 2017, it came in the form of a rebellion by key members of the Conservative Parliamentary Party, which led to a government defeat in the Commons and paved the way to a parliamentary vote on any final Brexit deal. Some hailed the Government's defeat as Parliament claiming back its sovereignty.

After months of Tory embarrassment, including repeated allegations about the conduct of Conservative ministers of state and a number of Cabinet resignations, the media continued to question May's ability to carry on as Prime Minister. However, within 48 h of the Government defeat in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister successfully negotiated a way forward supported by the other 27 EU member state leaders, thus permitting Brexit negotiations to progress to the next, and more complex, stage of trade deal negotiations. The last-minute success of the first-phase negotiations was accompanied by a tweet of relief by Donald Tusk, who congratulated the Prime Minister. It marked another extension to May's weak and wobbly tenure in 10 Downing Street. At the time of writing, the Prime Minister's future and that of the Brexit process remains in flux and in question.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In researching this Brexit saga, as other scholars can testify, preparing a book project can feel like a saga in itself. An edited collection of this scale would not be possible without committed and extensive teamwork. Therefore, on behalf of my fellow editors, I should like to acknowledge the contributions made to this book by the many dedicated and patient contributors. We cannot thank them enough for their hard work and contributions; without them this project would not be possible. We would also like to thank Palgrave Macmillan, especially the excellent editorial team for all their support throughout this project. Finally, thanks to our family, friends and colleagues for bearing with us and for their ceaseless encouragement.

Childwall, Liverpool, UK

Anthony Ridge-Newman

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONTRACTIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Brexit	Britain's exit from the European Union
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
GB	Great Britain
GLP	Gibraltar Liberal Party
Grexit	Greece's exit from the European Union
GSLP	Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party
Italexit	Italy's exit from the European Union
M5S	MoVimento 5 Stelle
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
UN	United Nations

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PART I

Introduction



CHAPTER 1

Reporting the Road to Brexit: The EU Referendum and the Media

Anthony Ridge-Newman

INTRODUCTION

On 24 June 2016, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News published a story exploring the reactions of newspapers from around the world, following the internationally prominent referendum held the previous day in which voters of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) and Gibraltar (a British Overseas Territory, bordering Spain) voted overall to leave the European Union (EU). The BBC claimed that:

Britain's vote to leave the European Union has caused widespread dismay in the European media and beyond. Many commentators see the future of the entire EU at risk from further Eurosceptic challenges. (*BBC News* 2016)

The BBC story presented front pages of select newspapers from around the world, which played into a narrative that the outcome of the referendum was an international crisis akin to a natural disaster, with an emphasis on language like 'widespread dismay'; 'Earthquake in Europe';

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© The Author(s) 2018
A. Ridge-Newman et al. (eds.), *Reporting the Road to Brexit*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73682-2_1

‘Goodbye to Europe’; and ‘Domino effect’. Crisis frames and periods of significant political change have a long-standing relationship (Hay 1999). The discursive activities centred on the 2016 EU referendum are thought to be no exception (Higgins 2016), which is indicated by a number of chapters in this book.

Caiani and Guerra (2017) suggest that Euroscepticism is a growing crisis across Europe and that the media are central to the relationship between citizens and the democratic functions of the EU. While scholars argue that news media, like broadcast news and the press, play a crucial role in referendum campaigns (for example, Jenssen et al. 1998; de Vreese and Semetko 2002; Dekavalla 2016), academic analysis of the dynamics between referendums and news media is relatively thin when compared to related areas of political communication, like, for example, the more developed understanding of media and general elections (for example, Strömbäck and Dimitrova 2006; Strömbäck and van Aelst 2010; Negrine 2017; Cushion and Thomas 2018). Blain et al. (2016) is a notable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between referendums and the media. With a focus on Scotland’s 2014 independence referendum, the collection of scholarly works explores issues of media ‘representation’ versus media ‘construction’ in national and international contexts. It sheds light on how a referendum in one locale can generate public discourse and catalyse introspective debate related to the internal dialogues of another.

This EU referendum project takes a similar approach. It aims to contribute to the growing literature on referendums and the media, with interests related to the representation versus construction question in the context of the 2016 EU referendum and ‘Brexit’ (Britain’s exit from the EU). It aims to do this through presenting and comparing a range of analyses of British and international news media contexts. This introductory chapter aims to offer insights into the project’s: major themes; key contexts and definitions; the scope of the book; and a brief outline of the chapters.

EU REFERENDUM AND THE MEDIA PROJECT

Recent developments and global media interest in events such as Spain’s Catalonia independence debate and Brexit suggest the mounting importance for scholarly analyses of the relationships between media discourse, the “‘global” public sphere’ (Volkmer 2003) and these increasingly common democratic phenomena. Such analyses fit the study of international

political communication in which two key debates around the ‘globalization (homogenization) and “domestication” (diversification) of news content’ (Clausen 2004: 25) inform observations in international news contexts. The globalist paradigm posits that international political communication flows outside of traditional media systems in their domestic contexts, thus creating a transformed transglobal media environment in which news media construct a global public sphere characterized by discourses with broader transitional, transregional and transcontinental relevance (Volkmer 1999, 2003). However, this is in contrast to the notion that international news undergoes a ‘domestication’ process in which global news items are constructed around the ‘dominant ideologies’ of their locale, thus resulting in news outlets ‘domesticating the foreign’ and constructing more ‘culturally specific’ discourses (Gurevitch et al. 1991: 205–206). Clausen (2004) argues that both factors contribute to news production in the global news environment.

Examples like the BBC article above have stimulated research interests in the examination of ideology, bias and framing impacts in media discourses (Cotterrell 1999; Entman 2007, 2010). The chapters of this book engage with such topics and debates using a range of methodological approaches (for example, discourse analysis; and content analysis) in order to examine whether and how news media in different locales constructed events in the run-up to and shortly after the 2016 EU referendum. Therefore, the book focuses on media reaction to the referendum campaign and the result, rather than the lengthy and ongoing aftermath of ‘post-Brexit’ events (see the Preface for context). The study of media and politics offers interdisciplinary opportunities. Therefore, the project aims to take a pluralistic approach in order to engage perspectives from diverse geographical locales. The chapters offer a range of cases for comparison, from empirical analyses to essays, all of which offer perspectives that contribute to the exploration of the book’s overarching questions.

THE QUESTIONS

Since the 2016 EU referendum, the Europhile ideal in which the European public sphere would embody a transnational citizenry with equal access and ability to understand and interpret communications in relation to EU policies and initiatives (Schlesinger 1999) seems a distant prospect. Research suggests that European news media are yet to foster

a dedicated agenda that engages publics in EU issues and promotes collective support of Europeanization (de Vreese 2007; Valentini and Nesti 2010; Papathanassopoulos and Negrine 2011; Lloyd and Marconi 2014). So, then, how did international news media react to Britain's EU referendum?

As indicated above, a consistent curiosity throughout this book centres on themes related to how news media construct narratives around Brexit debates in different contexts that are specific to certain geographical locales. News outputs in reaction to significant global events are thought to embody ingredients that are selected in order to offer a particular flavour for media consumption (Neureiter 2017; Venkataraman 2018). It is, therefore, pertinent for academic analysis to explore how media frames and constructed narratives in one context compare to others. As the following section suggests, understanding how international media responded to the UK's 2016 EU referendum, and Brexit, is ripe for analysis. This edited collection aims to go some way in developing an early elucidation of this question with 18 scholarly contributions that represent media output from diverse geographical locales across the UK, the European Single Market, and beyond.

THE IMPORTANCE

Adler-Nissen et al. (2017) suggest that analysing perceptions of Brexit beyond the UK has significant value because: (1) it informs an understanding of British identities and the basis on which Brexit is used to shape new international debates around the European integration project; (2) the way in which Brexit narratives are constructed internationally are likely to impact on EU-UK trade negotiations; and (3) Brexit is not necessarily an isolated case—as chapters in this book will suggest, there are Eurosceptic movements gaining momentum across the EU. Therefore, analysing media representations of the referendum and Brexit provides important international insights for comparison with cross-cultural importance and value.

DEMOCRACY, REFERENDUMS AND THE NEWS MEDIA

Both referendums and the news media are manifestations of democratic activity in which publics place trust to perform roles and functions in a variety of political contexts. Referendums offer forms of direct

democracy to the citizenry at local, regional and national levels (Held 2006; Caiani and Guerra 2017). Prominent recent examples include same-sex marriage referendums in Ireland (2015) and Australia (2017); and the independence referendums in Scotland (2014) and Catalonia (2017). These cases all received notable national and international media attention, respective to their locales. Collectively, various forms of media, some newer, some more traditional, play increasingly complex roles in political discourse and the communication of political messages across democratic states (McNair 2017).

Therefore, it is important to recognize that traditional forms of news media tend to be the focus of this book, with limited reference to the role of social and digital media. Subsequently, this project represents a more focused perspective within a broader and rapidly developing media landscape. Pioneers like Howard and Kollanyi (2016) have begun interesting early work examining the role of automated bots in cyberspace. They found that automated social media output from a small number of Twitter accounts played a strategic role in EU referendum discourse, which was dominated by the Leave stance. Further comparative research examining international digital media responses to Brexit would make a significant contribution to the literature and add further context to the findings of this book.

In the recent UK context, referendums, including the alternative vote referendum (2011), have acted as democratic tools employed by governments in order to consult electorates on significant potential policy developments (Held 2006). The process exhibits unique characteristics when compared to votes in elections. For example, the campaigns associated with referendums can cut across typical political party identities, boundaries and ideologies (Dekavalla 2016). In the 2016 EU referendum, key figures, like former prime ministers Tony Blair (Labour) and John Major (Conservative) of the Remain campaign, shared prominent campaign platforms (see Chapter 6). Campaign moments such as these can become media events in themselves that in turn catalyse public discourse. Moreover, the campaign discourse associated with referendums can be volatile (LeDuc 2002; Schuck and de Vreese 2009). The Scottish and EU referendums in Britain were no exception and left behind deep divides (Ford and Goodwin 2017). Analogous with the Yes/No choice in the 2016 Scottish independence referendum (Dekavalla 2016), general media discourse suggests the Leave/Remain binary outcome of the EU referendum contributed to a polarization of the British electorate.

Chalmers (2017) argues that Brexit has the potential to undermine the British tradition of representative democracy and, following the EU referendum game-changer, democracy in the UK would benefit from being re-imagined.

CONTEXTUALIZING AND DEFINING THE STUDY OF BREXIT

Three academics based in UK universities edited this project. For the editors, and for a number of the contributors, the weight and enormity of Brexit have been felt first-hand and largely from an ‘insider’ perspective. In other words, a number of the contributors to this book were resident in the UK at the time of the 2016 EU referendum. It is important to recognize the significance of this because, naturally, it has influenced, in some way, the orientation of the book and the subsequent chapter selections. It is also important to recognize that many of the contributors examine the topic from an ‘outsider’ perspective insofar as they were generally resident in international contexts, beyond the UK, where exposure to the referendum and its day-to-day campaign discourse would have been less encountered compared to UK-based colleagues. However, some international colleagues contributed chapters with a focus on UK contexts; and some UK-based colleagues authored contributions focusing on international contexts. Therefore, for clarity, references to the ‘international’ perspective generally refer to chapters focusing on media in locales beyond the UK and its overseas territories. The ‘national’ perspective tends to refer to studies of media based in the UK and its constituent parts.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The overall result of the EU referendum vote includes the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar; and the UK’s four constituent parts, often referred to as countries and, particularly in sporting contexts, as the ‘home nations’ of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Notwithstanding its historical relationship with the EU, constitutionally, the UK Parliament’s sovereignty is supreme. It holds ultimate legislative power in the UK, with certain powers devolved to the assemblies of Northern Ireland and Wales, the Scottish Parliament, and local governments in England. Pressures related to these complex constitutional and political relationships have been recognized as a challenge to

the sovereignty of the UK Parliament (Elliott 2004; Chalmers 2017). Moreover, recent Brexit events have brought questions about parliamentary sovereignty to the fore in public discourse (for example, Douglas-Scott 2017; Hammond 2017; Watts 2017).

Given the frequent confusion around the formal usage of the names associated with the UK, in the interest of clarity, it seems pertinent in the context of this project to offer brief clarification. When using the term ‘the UK’ (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the four collective parts that form the sovereign country of the United Kingdom are generally in focus. Moreover, ‘Britain’ is a term that can refer to the UK and, therefore, usually includes Northern Ireland. However, Britain is sometimes confused with ‘Great Britain’, which tends to refer to the island that encompasses the mainland parts of England, Scotland and Wales, thus excluding Northern Ireland. The demonym for the UK is British or Briton, with some citizens identifying as English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, among others, and, more recently, European.

2016 EU REFERENDUM AND BREXIT

On 23 June 2016, the British Conservative Government, under Prime Minister David Cameron, held a referendum that questioned whether the UK should ‘leave’ the EU or ‘remain’ as a member state. The vote included the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar, which has a land border with Spain, another EU member state. At the publication of this book, the EU included 28 member states, including the UK. The referendum resulted in a Brexit outcome in which a 52% majority voted to leave the EU. However, as the second part of this book will examine, the vote revealed the UK as a divided country. Not only was the vote close in percentage terms, but the Leave vote was strongest in England and Wales. Gibraltar, Northern Ireland and Scotland voted to remain in the EU. England’s significantly larger population dominated the overall outcome. Subsequently, the Brexit result triggered a chain of events. Firstly, Cameron resigned as prime minister. His successor, Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May, became famous for her mantra ‘Brexit means Brexit’—a phrase that came to symbolize her ardent approach to setting Britain’s course towards an exit from the EU, expected on 29 March 2019, following complex withdrawal negotiations (Walker 2017). (See the Preface for a more detailed timeline.)

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU is a political and economic union of 28 European countries, which developed from the European Economic Community (EEC). The Treaty of Rome (1957) established the EEC and the principle of a common market in Europe. In 1993, this project was fully realized as a single, or internal, market offering ‘four freedoms’ related to the movement of goods, people, services and capital across the EU. The European Economic Area (EEA) includes countries like Norway and Iceland, which are non-EU countries with negotiated access to the Single Market. Switzerland is not a member of the EU or EEA, but does have negotiated access to elements of the Single Market. Canada is a non-European country that negotiated a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the EU. Canada is also a former British colony and part of the Commonwealth of Nations, with strong links to the UK. The editors considered these sorts of historical, political and economic factors when contributions to this project were initially sought; and when the five parts of this edited collection were subsequently organized. (See the outline of the book below.)

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE UK

The EU is a supranational union of intergovernmental states directed by the Institutions of the EU, which include seven decision-making bodies; for example, the European Parliament, European Council, European Commission, and Court of Justice of the EU. The UK has had an inconsistent history and, at points, a sceptical relationship with the EU, its institutions and European integration projects (McLean 2003). The aftermath of the Second World War, imperial decline of the British Empire, and complexities around Britain’s relationship with Europe, are key themes related to a delay in the UK joining the EEC, which eventually came to fruition in 1973. Unlike 2016, the UK’s referendum on the EEC in 1975 resulted in two-thirds of voters supporting a continuance of Britain’s membership. However, in the 1990s, British Euroscepticism became apparent when the UK did not join: (1) the Euro: a currency union between a majority of EU states, known as the Eurozone; and (2) the Schengen Area: a borderless area across much of the continent of Europe. Maintaining the British Pound and controlling UK borders and immigration have been two central EU-related issues capturing media

interest and the public mood in recent decades (Goodwin and Milazzo 2017; Thompson 2017).

The British public mood is thought to hold potential to drive political events and outcomes (Rahn et al. 1996). Correlations between media reporting and public mood have been demonstrated, including impact outcomes linked to both negative and positive frames in media output (Leshner and Thorson 2000; Schuck and de Vreese 2009). The progressive transition from the EEC to the EU through new treaties, like the Maastricht Treaty (1992), historically captured the attention of the British media. Furthermore, this transition created contention for many Britons and is argued to have contributed to growing UK Euroscepticism (Startin 2015). Following the democratically evident Europhilia of 1975, campaigns for a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU intensified over a 40-year period, which contributed to the labelling of Britain as the 'awkward partner' of Europe (George 1990).

Decisively summing up the role of the media in the public mood of Britons and their attitudes towards the EU is challenging. Trust in the news media as a source of information has changed significantly over the last four decades. That said, Daddow suggests that there has been a 'collapse in media support for the EU project' (2012: 1219), which correlates with trends in British attitudes. However, it is important to remain cautious. The impact of new forms of information and technology are still only beginning to be understood in contemporary contexts (Williams and Carpini 2011). Furthermore, in the run-up to the EU referendum, British political dynamics shifted considerably, resulting in a fragmentation of the two-party system and political identification in Britain (Green and Prosser 2016). Political pressures on the governing Conservative Party and its indirect relationship with developments in the greatly Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) ultimately culminated in Cameron's decision to placate his party and the Eurosceptics in granting a long-campaigned-for referendum on Britain's EU membership (Startin 2015). (See the Preface for richer context.)

BREXIT, TRUMP AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM?

Brexit was one of two momentous international news events in 2016 that represented political seismic shifts on both sides of the Atlantic. The other being the election of Donald Trump, a conservative

‘anti-establishment’ Republican, to the office of President of the United States. Both cases have been the centre of scholarly analyses that suggest a shift towards right-wing populism across a number of advanced democracies (Inglehart and Norris 2016; Wilson 2017). Therefore, in reference to this project, it seems timely to develop further our understanding of how national and international media compare in their responses to the referendum, and Brexit.

SCOPE OF THE BOOK

The book is organized into five parts, with Part I offering this introduction and Part V a conclusion to the project. In Parts II–IV, the project offers 18 chapters that overall represent 18 geographical locales in the UK and globally. The organization of these is based on the nature of the geographical, political and historical relationships between the individual locales, the UK and the EU. Part II includes the UK and its overseas territories, with seven chapters featuring the locales of Britain, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Gibraltar. Part III has a further seven chapters that analyse nine European Single Market countries, excluding the UK, seven of which are the EU member states of France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece; and two non-EU countries, Norway and Switzerland. Part IV offers four locales from outside the Single Market, including Turkey, Israel, Canada and Russia. It seems that few other contemporary events could inspire such an eclectic array of geographical contributions on a single academic topic. It certainly adds weight to the assertion that Brexit is a global game-changer with impacts reaching far beyond the UK (Adler-Nissen et al. 2017).

As with any research project, there are limitations. As globally comprehensive as this project had aimed to be, it falls short in terms of representing some key locales. The locales included in this book were selected based on the expectation that they would provide interesting and pertinent perspectives rooted in the nature of their relations with the EU and the UK. Given the post-Brexit events surrounding border negotiations between the EU, UK, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, the book’s lack of a detailed analysis from the Irish media perspective is a significant omission. Other interesting contributions would include media perspectives from Australia, the USA, the conservative Middle East and, indeed, representation from Asia, like China and/or India,