

The Rigid Club Rules: Discourse-historical Perspectives on British and Italian Eurocriticism

Douglas Mark Ponton, Rossana Sampugnaro

Abstract

Last year's dramatic Brexit referendum represents the apotheosis of the Eurosceptic tendencies which have, in some circles, accompanied the EU project since its earliest beginnings. This interdisciplinary collaboration, between researchers from the fields of Political Science and Linguistics, focuses on Eurosceptic/Europhile attitudes in two member countries, Britain and Italy. From the former perspective, it presents data which suggest that over the period 2010-2016, years in which there were elections for the European Commission, Eurosceptic attitudes have hardened significantly across the continent. At both ends of the political spectrum, support for Eurosceptical parties and leaders opposing the EU has increased.

From the point of view of Linguistics, at the level of analysis of 'discursive strategies' and 'linguistic means', the paper focuses on metaphor and evaluative language in political discourse collected from speeches of some of the most prominent figures in EU discourse in those years. The aim is to compare rhetorical patterns and metaphors both diachronically and interculturally, in order to trace similarities and differences in conceptualising support for, or opposition to, the European project.

1. Introduction: rationale and aims of the study

In the wake of the British public's dramatic vote, on 23 June 2016, to leave the European Union, this paper explores the presence of Euroscepticism as a factor in the discursive and rhetorical resources of two important political figures on the European stage. We explore Theresa May's most significant pronouncement to date on the question, the so-called 'Brexit speech' of 17 January 2017 in which, amongst other rhetorical objectives, she provides a justification for the decision to leave and puts down some markers for future negotiations. The choice to focus on May was prompted by the fact

that as British Prime Minister in this historic moment her speech has institutional status. May's personal views positioned her as opposed to Brexit before the referendum; but as elected national leader it is her task to represent the views of the British people to Europe and the world (Ensinn 1997). The speech is of the significant kind noted in Hill (2016: 195), which gives a leader the opportunity to "set out a focussed, specific agenda from which policy, media and public reaction" are directed. She does this in language that alludes to the classic tropes of 'hard' Euroscepticism, i.e. loss of sovereignty, control of borders, resistance to the creation of an undemocratic, monolithic institution, and so on. For comparative purposes, the discourse of Italian leader Matteo Renzi is also explored. Renzi's is not a keynote policy address; rather, it is a more informal speech, to a group of Italian students. However, as a key figure in contemporary Italian politics, the speaker's views on the European theme are those of one who has helped to shape the country's recent relations with the EU. Renzi also expresses Euroscepticism, but it is a milder version, and his discourse is expressive of a practical rather than deontological approach to Italy's membership of the Union. Since both May and Renzi are key political figures in the current European political scene, a study of their discourse allows us to appreciate the varying shades of Euroscepticism across the two national contexts at a moment of extraordinary tension in EU history.

Our research questions are twofold, concerning a 'what' and a 'how': firstly, the paper asks what are the socio-political factors that condition Eurosceptic discourse, and secondly, how do deeply rooted historical factors influence the current discourse, and behaviour, of today's political leaders. The paper is an interdisciplinary collaboration which integrates specialist knowledge from the field of political science with linguistic analysis. Within the nuanced recent history of Eurosceptical, or Eurocritical, attitudes among European populations and their politicians, linguistic analysis of the speeches explores the presence of these nuances in representational patterns, asking how far current political discourse is affected by more general attitudes hostile to the EU. The methodological orientation is informed by the discourse-historical approach (Wodak 2001; Wodak and Chilton 2005; Weiss and Wodak 2007). At the level of linguistic/discourse analysis, what Wodak (Wodak 2001: 72) calls that of *linguistic means*, analysis focuses on features such

as the speakers' discourse frames, their metaphors and patterns of speaker evaluation.

2. Euroscepticism or Euroscepticisms?

The idea of a truly cosmopolitan Europe is still far from being realised, despite the common currency, the abolition of borders, the involvement of millions of young European citizens in the "Erasmus youth" programme, and many other significant steps taken in this direction (Parito 2012). It is still impossible to speak of an authentic public European sphere, able to overcome the nationalist tendencies of member states, or to cope with the apparent de-politicisation of European issues (Hix 1999; Koopmans and Statham 2010; Marini 2004).

It is generally acknowledged, in fact, that Eurosceptic tendencies have accompanied the EU project since its inception (Gifford 2008). One of the EU's earliest proponents was Winston Churchill, whose enthusiastic support for the project, expressed on several occasions, stopped short of concessions involving Britain's fundamental national sovereignty (Troitiño and Chochia 2015). However, it is clear that the founding fathers of the EU were aiming, in the long run, at the creation of some such supranational political entity (Gifford 2008: 26-7). Since the signing of the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties, opposition to the project has grown, not just in Britain but throughout Europe (Conti 2014). Support for Eurosceptic parties and their leaders has increased across the political spectrum, and there have also been manifestations of Euroscepticism within traditional Europhile parties (e.g. European People's Party, Party of European Socialists). Critical attitudes towards Europe are increasing in mainstream media such as television, printed news and digital platforms (Mazzoleni 2008; Belluati and Serricchio 2013). In the digital context, while interest in questions relating to Europe has grown, it is also true that there has been a marked increase in anti-European sentiment (Belluati and Serricchio 2013; 2014).

In order to find a response to our first research question, i.e., *What are the socio-political factors that condition Eurosceptic discourse?* an in-depth investigation of the socio-political background is necessary. This will lead us to a classification of types

of Euroscepticism, which will, in turn, be a fundamental feature of the following linguistic analysis.

In the years following its foundation, the EU found ample consensus, sustained by the two principal European parties (PPE and PES); however, in recent decades, its basic aims of guaranteeing the organic development of its member nations began to be disputed. The first signs of the crisis of unanimity appeared during the mid-90s, with the affirmation of parties that were critical of the EU's agricultural and industrial policies, and its denial of autonomous, local regulation. If such events did not yet indicate the presence of diffuse anti-European feeling, they did signal the end of the "permissive consensus" (Bréchon, Cautrés, Denni 1995), a widespread, largely ill-informed support for Europe. Even if there was some criticism of the EU, critics were in the minority, and "the cost of declaring oneself openly euro-pessimistic [was] greater than that of allowing oneself to be confused with the unthinking mass of euro-optimists", according to Marletti (2000: 176). However, within the space of twenty years, the pro- or anti- Europe axis was to become a fundamental parameter for distinguishing among Europe's political parties. In Italy, for example, convinced Europhiles began to be replaced by "functional Europhiles" who aimed to show the advantages, for Italy, of a place in Europe, and "functional Eurosceptics" with a critical perspective, especially on the obligations deriving from membership. Anti-Europeanism, or a system of thought which tends to blame a nation's problems on the EU, was to become much more entrenched in the years following the introduction of the single currency (Isernia 2005; 2006).

Europe as a "cage" became a widespread metaphorical frame; one that began to delineate a new source of division (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Viviani 2009; 2010). New political entrepreneurs, in many countries, built political groups on the basis of the new fractures that had begun to emerge some years earlier, between the losers and winners of globalisation (Kriesi *et al.* 2008). This latter factor explains the reinforcement of the populist right, which drew support from cultural resistance to mass immigration and European integration, and the next twenty years were to see the emergence of multiple anti-European frames in such circles.

Both Eurosceptic and Europhile frames need more detailed classification than that offered by Taggart and Sczerbiak (2002:

7), in their distinction between hard¹ and soft² Euroscepticism. On Euroscepticism, Kopecky and Mudde, following David Easton's work on forms of support for political regimes (1965: 124), distinguish between two parameters, namely 'diffuse' and 'specific' support for European integration: the first denotes "support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU", while the second refers to "support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it is and as it is developing" (2002: 300)³. Taking these as broad parameters for comparing the two groups, on the first of these Europhiles "believe in the key ideas of European integration underlying the EU", on the basis of pooled sovereignty (political element) and an integrated liberal market economy (economic element), "regardless of how European integration is defined and realized in practise" (Kopecky and Mudde 2002: 300). In its extreme position, for federalists, European integration may become "a project of creating a new supranational state". Europhobes, by contrast, on the basis of nationalist, isolationist and, at times, socialist principles, think that "the idea of European integration is a folly in the face of the diversity existing among European states". In this case, too, there are different shades of opinion, which range from the possibility of co-operation between states⁴ to the positions of the extreme right (e.g. *der Völker*) or extreme left such as the Dutch Socialist Party (SP), which defines the EU as "neo-liberal, antisocial, and undemocratic". Isolationist parties such as the UK

¹ This is "where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived" (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 7).

² This is "where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory" (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 7).

³ E.g.: the working of the European institutions, specific issues and the ways in which these are resolved.

⁴ The reference is to the declaration 'Building a New Europe', signed in 1999 by thirteen Western European parties of the extreme left, aiming to realise a 'social and ecological Europe, a democratic Europe, a Europe of solidarity and of peace' (SP 2002).

Independence Party (UKIP) have similar positions; technically, they “do not oppose the current process of European integration, or the EU, but do not want to be a part of it” (Kopecky and Mudde 2002: 300-2). In terms of the second parameter, or ‘specific’ support for the European Union, EU-optimists trust the direction of development of the EU, even if they may object to certain policies at times. EU-pessimists, by contrast, express a negative vision, even if this does not necessarily mean that all EU-pessimists object to EU membership”.

By combining these two parameters, it is possible to identify four ideal types: *Euro-enthusiasts*, who combine love of Europe with an optimistic attitude; *Eurosceptics* who, even if they are convinced of the usefulness of the EU, have little trust in its future possibilities; *Euro-rejects*, who combine Europhobic and EU-pessimist positions, and *Europragmatists*, who combine Europhobia with an optimistic attitude. The last group may not believe in European integration, but limit their opposition to an attempt to obtain the maximum for their own country or constituency (Kopecky and Mudde 2002). In terms of attitudes to integration policies, Flood (2002) identifies a range of intermediate nuances between rejection and maximum integration: *revisionists*, who hope for modification of the treaties in order to return to former positions; *minimalists*, who approve of the status quo but resist further integration; *gradualists* who favour gradual integration, and *reformists* who call for constructive policies to improve one institution or another. If, then, we wish to understand the latest wave of Euroscepticism, it is necessary, according to Poli (2014), not only to explore the most explicit instances of Euroscepticism (Ukip, National Front, etc.) and Eurocriticism (M5S, Alternative for Germany, etc.), but to explore four axes of thematic differentiation within the galaxy of critical opinion on Europe: namely, nationalism, immigration, national sovereignty and economic problems.

Recent years have seen a reaction against the “privatisation of political institutions”, which implies less participation and more importance for non-representative organisations (Crouch 2013; Formenti 2016). The democratically elected parliament, in the EU, for example, is less central than the European Commission and the Central Bank, which are non-representative organisations. In this context, the “politicisation” of European issues becomes relevant,

particularly where this concerns the process of integration, which, in the phase of permissive consent, was delegated to political élites and European bureaucrats. This was also the case, in 1979, in the critical moments that saw the creation of the European parliament. Only after approval of the Maastricht treaty did a broader, more critical perspective emerge, through consultations of public opinion and referenda in Denmark and France. The combination of Euroscepticism and populism becomes natural to the extent that the European institutions appear as “the quintessence of all which populism detests: government by rules, a remote authority, badly-defined political responsibilities, a distant and foreign power (Mény and Surel 2004: 5). It should be noted that politicisation of the European issue has obliged even traditional parties and their leaders to restructure their discourse, and incorporate tones of Euroscepticism⁵ (Malet 2015).

Leconte (2010) locates the origin of the term ‘Euroscepticism’ itself in the British context, for many reasons, not least experiences linked to the two great European wars of the twentieth century although, as mentioned above, Churchill was at least partially in favour of the project. Margaret Thatcher’s notorious ‘Bruges speech’ in 1988, however, was a landmark address in the history of British Euroscepticism (Daddow 2013)⁶. Attitudes towards the project of political union began to further crystallise during the 1990s, with some high-profile figures expressing extreme views. During the Maastricht treaty debate, for example, Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said that giving sovereignty to the European Commission was “tantamount to giving it to Adolf Hitler”, and that moves toward European monetary union were “a racket designed to take over the whole of Europe” (Medrano and Gray 2010: 214). The question of sovereignty has been a fundamental

⁵ It must be emphasised that European political MPs are more open to integration than to the program of their own parties (Russo, Cotta 2013, cfr. Proksch, Lo 2012).

⁶ According to Kopecky and Mudde (2002) Thatcher saw “European integration primarily in economic terms, as the creation of an economic zone free of restrictions on trade and other commercial activity”. Her point of view was different from that of the ‘founding fathers of the EU’, such as Monnet or Schuman, although she did envisage “a certain degree of pooling of sovereignty towards European supranational institutions, in both political and economic terms”.

one in the British debate, with Brussels frequently portrayed as a sort of super-state, whose politicians and bureaucrats can dictate laws to Britain over which parliament has no right of decision (Teubert 2001). Euroscepticism, it has been suggested, was responsible for the splits that weakened the Conservative party and led to its long exclusion from power during the Blair years (Spiering 2004); Theresa May, like other Conservative leaders before her, cannot afford to alienate either wing.

In Italy, the phase of “permissive consensus” lasted longer than in other European countries, and Europe was never a divisive factor in relations between the two principal political parties, the *Democrazia Cristiana* and the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI), which belong, respectively, to the popular-conservative and the socialist areas. Even if there were certain Eurosceptic tones within the PCI, the general convergence produced a longer period of relative calm. This only began to break during the ‘90s, when the collapse of the parties of the First Republic led to the emergence of critical attitudes towards the EU, expressed by the extreme wings of the political spectrum, (MSI and *Rifondazione Comunista*), and the *Lega Nord*. In more recent times, Beppe Grillo’s *Movimento 5 Stelle* has also expressed its doubts on political and monetary union.

Our study focuses on two models of Euroscepticism, developed within parties that contributed to the birth of the EU itself. Through two recent discourses, by Theresa May and Matteo Renzi, it is possible to analyse two typical kinds of Euroscepticism; one linked to the logic of parties of the right or centre-right such as the Tories, the other closer to that of the centre-left, like the Partito Democratico (Kopecky and Mudde 2002). In neither case is there outright rejection of the European superstructure, but rather criticism of some of its implications: on the one hand, the compression of national identity; on the other, the role of neo-liberal economic policies. Both, however, share an aversion to European bureaucracy and to the implicit lack of democracy within the institutions. The paper shows that, in a context characterised by a pervasive attitude of widespread and general Euroscepticism, it is possible to encounter different shades of the phenomenon in political discourse, which may correspond to differences at the level of ideology or popular support.

3. Methodology

Wodak (2001: 65) sets out the broad aims of the Discourse-Historical model:

In investigating historical, organizational and political topics and texts, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive 'events' are embedded.

Wodak recognises the contribution of socio-historical detail to an accurate contextualisation of the discourse to be analysed, and the foregoing account of the context in which Euroscepticism developed should be understood in this sense. Her model then proposes three levels of discourse analysis: from the broadest to the most fine-grained these are *topics*, *discursive strategies* and *linguistic means* (Wodak 2001: 72). In the May speech, for example, the macro-topic is *Brexit*, around which are organised a variety of sub-topics (British national identity, the nature of Europe, international law, and so on). The discursive strategy to which most attention is paid is speaker evaluation, about which more will be said shortly. Finally, at the level of linguistic means, the analysis attempts to explore the contributions of the lexis to the expression of implicit meaning/s.

A feature of most written text or speech, across a variety of social contexts, is the tendency for the speaker/writer to organise the message around one or more discursive/cognitive structures. These may be more or less explicit, and have been referred to in the literature in a number of ways, beginning with Goffman (1974), who called them 'discourse frames' (see also Schön and Rein 1994; Winston 1995). In Lakoff's words, frames are "mental structures that shape the way we see the world" (Lakoff 2014). Coupland and Coupland (1997) simply use the term 'discourses', and they have also been called 'scripts' (Cap 2013: 95) or 'schemata' (Brown and Yule 1983: 241-50). In the context of political discourse, these features frequently respond to the speaker's rhetorical exigencies, and have been viewed as components in attempts to persuade listeners, while they may also transmit ideologies, overtly or

covertly (Halmarí and Virtanen 2005). Other authors have shown that metaphorical language, arguably, performs analogous functions (Lakoff and Johnson 1984; Lakoff 2009; Charteris-Black 2011). It is useful to think of these structures in the terms set out by Koller (2014), in her discussion of Moscovici's (2001) notion of 'socio-cognitive representations'. She glosses these as coherent cognitive structures, acquired and held by members of a group, that combine beliefs/knowledge, values, norms and expectations. They are "socially and discursively constructed during communication" (Koller 2014: 151). Thinking in these terms will allow us to focus on the way May and Renzi access a commonly held view towards Europe (e.g. Euroscepticism), among their respective populations, and to see this as a focus around which an invisible process of negotiation is carried forward during the discourse.

Adopting a notion current in Cognitive Linguistic Analysis, we follow a view which sees it in terms of the conceptual structures and processes which linguistic constructions invoke in the minds of the audience (Hart 2014: 168). Among these linguistic constructions is speaker evaluation, by means of which speakers position themselves, and attempt to position their audiences, around the proposition/s advanced during their discourse. These are explored using the Appraisal Framework (Martin and White 2005) for purposes of codification. This approach focuses on the three semantic fields in which evaluative language is generally encountered; emotion ("I felt so proud"), judgement of others ("He's a skillful bowler") and assessments of human artefacts ("A useful invention"). Evaluations may be positive (+) as in these instances, or negative (-); each category is further subdivided using a number of semantic nuances⁷.

It has been suggested that a shared understanding of such features between speaker and audience is a key device in the rhetorical construction of solidarity (White 2003: 263). For example, if we take the beginning of May's speech:

⁷ The reader is referred to this seminal text for a complete account of the taxonomical symbols used here.

TABLE I

Theresa May's Brexit speech: opening^{8,9}

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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | A little over six months ago, <i>the British people voted for change</i> (t + J: propriety) ⁹ |
| 2 | <i>They voted to shape a brighter future for our country.</i> (+ App), (t + J: propriety) |
| 3 | <i>They voted to leave the European Union and embrace the world.</i> (t + J: tenacity) |
| 4 | And they did so with their eyes open: accepting that the road ahead will be uncertain (- App) at times, but <i>believing</i> |
| 5 | <i>that it leads towards a brighter future for their children</i> – and their grandchildren too. (t + J: tenacity) |
-

Interpretation of evaluative patterns, in discourse, frequently depends on an understanding of the Discourse-Historical context of utterance, but the discursive/metaphorical frame is also of importance. May here positions the British people as a developing child – a teenager, perhaps – confronting a future which has inevitable uncertainties, difficulties and eventual triumphs, after the inevitable difficulties associated with important life-choices have been overcome. Within this frame is embedded an ideology of Euroscepticism which controls the speaker's evaluations; and, implicitly, involves the EU itself as a topic for evaluation. The 'change' the British people voted for was to leave the EU (1); the 'brighter future' is one without membership (2), and, in (3), the EU is framed as the impediment to the British people's 'embracing' the world. In the context of the metaphor developed here, this represents the adolescent's successful launch on the sea of life. Not to take an autonomous step, through fear of the 'uncertainties' of the road ahead (4) means to risk not enjoying the 'brighter future' (5) that beckons from beyond the limited domesticity of the EU. What the speaker takes for granted, and what she expects to be common ground between herself and the audience, are the 'semantic relations' (Lemke 1998: 96) evoked by the instances where

⁸ The full text of the speech is online at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/17/theresa-mays-brexit-speech-full/>, last accessed 04/10/2017.

⁹ 't' stands for 'token', which is indicated by italics over the relevant stretch of text. This is a resource for indicating evaluative language where meaning is not construed via explicit lexis but 'provoked', 'inscribed', or 'afforded' (Martin and White 2005).

evaluation is used. For example, while ‘brighter’ futures are ‘good’ in terms of Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) discussion of metaphors, brightness in this context refers to socio-political factors such as material prosperity, control over borders, greater autonomy, and so on, while ‘embracing the world’ refers to increased trading opportunities that will become available once Britain has left the EU, and so on. The implicit reference, in other words, is to factors present in a controlling, and implicit, discourse of Euroscepticism.

Wodak (2009: 64) lists some common metaphors for the EU (‘patchwork’, ‘melting pot’, ‘fortress’, etc.), and highlights their essentially political function, as they “point to conceptual frames and possible utopias of what the European Union should achieve in the future and how it should be structured and organized” (Wodak 2009: 63). Thus, May’s metaphorical frame is seen to both depend on a shared/implicit ideology, and at the same time to covertly advance it. She attributes the British people’s Brexit vote to Euroscepticism¹⁰, and the axiological status (the ‘correctness’) of this ideological position guides the evaluative pattern in the text. The following analysis focuses on answering our second research question, relating to the influence of historical factors on current patterns of political discourse and behaviour. We focus on the passages in both speeches where the speakers address the topic of ‘Europe’ explicitly.

4. Matteo Renzi: “Giovani, fatevi largo”, 17 April 2017¹¹

On 17 April 2017, Matteo Renzi, the former Prime Minister of Italy, together with the current minister for Agriculture, conducted a congress for students at Perugia University, entitled “Erasmus Generation”¹². Though Renzi is more overtly positive than May in his representations of the EU, there is also a critique in his address:

¹⁰ It is noticeable, in passing, that May’s formulation assimilates to the Eurosceptic position also the 48% of British people – including herself – who did not vote to leave the EU.

¹¹ This is an idiomatic phrase meaning something like ‘guys, roll your sleeves up’.

¹² Youtube. Matteo Renzi a Perugia. Online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d16CV8wlZ4k>, last accessed June 21, 2017.

TABLE 2

Matteo Renzi on Europe: Europe (i)

Line	Text	Evaluation
1	Per me e per noi l'Europa è la cosa più grande che potessimo immaginare. Detto	+ App: quality (intens.)
2	questo noi siamo quelli che dicono che l'Europa così com'è non funziona più.. non	-App: composition
3	ci prendiamo in giro. L'ideale europeo è meraviglioso, ma <i>se l'Europa perde tutta</i>	+App: quality
4	<i>la sua forza perché insegue dei concetti sbagliati, l'Europa rischia di trascinare</i>	t-J: capacity
5	<i>con sé tutta la storia bella che ha alle sue spalle.</i> Facciamo degli esempi. Maurizio	
6	dice "dall'austerità alla cura". Che vuol dire? Vuol dire che se guardate negli ultimi	t-J: capacity
7	10 anni <i>si sono sbagliate tutte le politiche europee di natura economica... tutte è</i>	
8	<i>un'esagerazione... quasi tutte.</i> Si è scelto di puntare sull'austerità e <i>si sono fatte</i>	t-J: capacity
9	<i>delle misure che sono devastanti.</i> Chi fa economia di voi? O ragazzi, avete visto	
10	che continuano a dire che noi abbiamo chiesto flessibilità, abbiamo ottenuto	
11	flessibilità e <i>fanno credere che noi abbiamo avuto dei margini economici,</i>	
12	<i>macroeconomici migliori di quelli di prima. Non è così!</i> Noi la flessibilità – scusate	t-J: veracity
13	i non economisti se entro un minuto su questo tema – l'abbiamo ottenuta non	
14	paragonate a quelle di prima ma paragonata alle stupide regole del fiscal compact	-App: composition
15	che prevedevano un nostro rientro molto più forte. In altri termini, il deficit del governo Monti o del	
16	governo Letta era più alto del deficit nostro. Noi non abbiamo	
17	fatto finanza allegra su questi temi. <i>Abbiamo avuto un deficit più basso</i> al 2,3, e	t+J: capacity
18	quest'anno, se sarà fatta la manovra dello 0,2 andrà al 2,1 ma è per dire che le	
19	regole con cui hanno immaginato di affrontare la crisi sono le classiche regole in	t-J: capacity
20	cui <i>l'operazione è perfettamente riuscita ma il paziente è morto.</i> ¹³	

¹³ For me and for all of us, Europe is the greatest thing we could imagine. That said, we are the ones who are saying that Europe does not work anymore... let's not fool ourselves. The European ideal is wonderful, but if Europe loses all its strength because it's following the wrong ideas, it risks dragging down with it all of its beautiful past. Let's give some examples. Maurizio says 'from austerity to

In terms of the categories outlined above, Renzi makes several comments that position him as a *Euro-enthusiast*. He has words of high praise for Europe: in (1), his formulation involves what Martin and White (2005: 140) call resources of 'intensification', as he calls it 'the greatest thing we could imagine', and in (3) he refers to the European ideal as 'marvellous'. He also covertly associates his audience of young listeners with his positive evaluation of Europe via the inclusive formula '*per me e per noi*' (for me and for us).

However, his explicit praise is reserved for Europe as an 'ideal', i.e. as something that Martin and White (2005: 48) call 'irrealis', for something that could be, rather than for something that is. The lexical frame 'the ideal of X is wonderful, but..' primes the listener to expect a list of the ways in which the subject of evaluation falls short of the ideal. Europe has 'lost its force' (3-4), it is 'following wrong ideas' (4), it is 'dragging down with it its beautiful past' (4-5), its economic policies have mostly been 'wrong' over the last 10 years (6-8), and have produced 'devastating' results (9). Moreover, Renzi goes on to claim that lies are being told about the so-called 'flexibility' which Italy has received from Europe (10-12). Thus, his criticisms are mostly negative judgements, i.e. evaluations of specific human figures and their behaviour, in the areas of capacity and truthfulness. This also applies to his evaluation of 'stupid' fiscal rules (14); this evaluation 'invokes' the inference that the stupidity really applies to the people who made the rules (see Martin and White 2005: 68).

cure'. What does that mean? It means that, if you look back over the last 10 years, all of Europe's economic policies have been wrong. That's an exaggeration... let's just say, almost all. They chose to focus on austerity and have introduced some measures that are devastating. Are there any economists among us? Oh guys, you know they're still saying we asked for flexibility and we've got flexibility, and they're saying we've had better economic and macroeconomic margins than before. It's not true! We have flexibility – I apologize to the non-economists if I spend a minute on this topic – we've got it, but not when compared to what we had before, but compared to the stupid rules of the fiscal compact that were supposed to be much better for us. In other words, the deficits of the Monti government or the Letta government were higher than our deficit. We didn't go easy on these issues in our fiscal policy. We had a lower deficit, and from 2.3 this year, if the manoeuvre is 0.2 we will get to 2.1, but that just means that the rules they have used to face the crisis are the classic ones under which the operation is perfectly successful but the patient is dead.

At the level of Wodak's macro-topics, Renzi's topic here is that of austerity. He provides data (9-18) that show Italy's compliance with Brussels' economic directives, and argues that, as a measure for responding to the global economic crisis, austerity is simply wrong. The controlling metaphor in this extract comes at the end: 'the operation was perfectly successful, but the patient is dead' (19-20). It is likely that his university audience will interpret the metaphor in economic terms; a stagnant economy and increasing poverty which, in the local context, translates into fewer employment prospects for graduates. However, while May used the 'growing child' frame, as we saw above, to argue for separation, Renzi's use of the ideal/real frame allows the interpretation that there is nothing wrong with the thing in question (Europe), the problem is with the specific ways in which the ideal is being realised (austerity). Thus, Renzi's initial posturing as a *Euro-enthusiast* appears to be rhetorical preparation for a message of a *pragmatist* or *reformist* character. The pragmatic force of his address is not to suggest that Italy should exit from Europe; rather, that Europe's bureaucrats and politicians should begin to adopt (genuinely flexible) economic policies, that permit individual countries to apply local measures to deal with their problems.

This is also the inference of the next extract, in which Renzi argues that Italian Euro-politicians frequently betray the national interests, in the mistaken view that to do so means to act as 'good Europeans':

TABLE 3

Matteo Renzi on Europe: Europe (ii)

Line	Text	Evaluation
1	Essere sinceri europeisti non significa essere contro l'Italia. Invece una parte dei	+ J: veracity
2	nostri pensa che bisogna essere europei, <i>dicendo di sì a tutto quello che va contro</i>	t – J: propriety
3	<i>l'Italia</i> . Io ho trovato delle storie pazzesche non soltanto sulle finanziarie ma anche	
4	sulla agro-alimentare.. abbiamo bisogno di una generazione che sia	+ Aff: satisfaction
5	orgogliosamente europeista <i>ma che faccia l'interesse nazionale</i> . L'interesse del	t + J: propriety
6	Paese non è una parolaccia. Quando arrivano i dani esi e svedesi o i tedeschi alle	

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (continued from previous page)

Line	Text	Evaluation
7	riunioni non è che vengono con la bandierina europea per dire "che bello! siamo	
8	tutti europei!" Sì, certo. Ma quando c'è da discutere sui dossiers <i>picchiano duro</i> , e	t + J: tenacity
9	dobbiamo avere anche noi la stessa forza <i>di difendere quello ch'è l'interesse del nostro paese</i> . ¹⁴	+ J: tenacity, t + J: propriety

Here too, we note the speaker's *Euro-enthusiasm*: to be a 'sincere' European (1) is an implicitly valued position, and the same could be said for his use of the plain adjective 'European' (2). The positive associations of 'European' are further underlined in the collocation 'proudly European' (4-5), and they are also implied in the ironic characterisation of flag-waving by other nations (7). The European flag is a metaphor for the ideal of integration, an imitation of the American flag, where each state has its own star. In an ideal world, Italy and these other nations, sharing the same flag, would also find that the concept of 'national interest' had been superseded by a larger vision; however, Renzi's ironic tone here is apparent. He goes on to outline the hard realities of European negotiations, exemplified by the Danes, Swedes and Germans (8-9).

Once again, then, Renzi's remarks position him as a *Euro-pragmatist*. Within an overall position of enthusiasm for the EU, his fundamental concerns relate to Italy's national interest; in this case, he is not seeking to reform the institution itself, but rather certain attitudes of Italy's representatives within it.

¹⁴ To be good Europeans does not mean to be against Italy. However, some of us think that we have to be Europeans by saying yes to everything that goes against Italy. I have heard crazy stories, not just about finance but about agriculture... we need a generation that is proudly European but which acts in the national interest. The national interest is not a swear-word. When the Danes or Swedes or Germans come to the meetings they don't come waving a European flag saying 'how wonderful! We're all Europeans!' Yes, of course. But when you start talking about the dossiers they don't pull any punches, and we must have the same strength to defend our own national interests.

5. Theresa May's 'Brexit speech'

By contrast with the informal context and style of Renzi's address, Theresa May's speech on Brexit, given at Lancaster House on 17 January 2017, is an official public statement, whose intended audience must be identified with the British public as a whole, as well as other interested European and global parties¹⁵.

TABLE 4

Theresa May's Brexit speech: Europe (i)

Line	Text	Evaluation
1	Our political traditions are different. Unlike other	
2	European countries, we have no	
3	written constitution, but <i>the principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty is the basis of our</i>	t + J: propriety
4	<i>unwritten constitutional settlement</i> . We have only a	
5	recent history of devolved	
6	governance – <i>though it has rapidly embedded itself</i> –	t + J: capacity
7	and we have little history of	
8	coalition government. <i>The public expect to be able</i>	t + J: propriety
9	<i>to hold their governments to</i>	
10	<i>account very directly</i> , and as a result supranational	+ App: composition
11	institutions as strong as those	
12	created by the European Union sit very uneasily in	-Aff: insecurity
13	relation to our political history and	
14	way of life.	-J: propriety
15	And, while I know Britain might at times have been	t -J: capacity
16	seen as an awkward member state,	
17	the European Union <i>has struggled to deal with the</i>	-App: composition
18	<i>diversity of its member countries</i>	
19	<i>and their interests</i> . It bends towards uniformity, not	+J: tenacity
20	flexibility. David Cameron's	
21	negotiation was a valiant final attempt to make it	
22	work for Britain – and I want to thank	
23	all those elsewhere in Europe who helped him	-App: composition
24	reach an agreement – but the blunt truth,	
25	as we know, is that there was not enough flexibility	
26	on many important matters for a	
27	majority of British voters.	

Here, although there are indications of positive attitudes towards the EU (12-13), which would be consistent with what is known of

¹⁵ Theresa May's Brexit speech in full. Online at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/17/theresa-mays-brexit-speech-full/>, last accessed 30/06/2017.

May's private position as a *Europhile*, the overall tone is that of a *revisionist* or *Euro-reject*. If it were possible to revise some of the treaties that have created Europe's 'strong supranational institutions' (6), then May might be arguing for this; since this is not a practical possibility, the only alternative is to provide discursive justification for the decision to leave.

The main social actors evaluated are Britain and Europe; the former personalised, like a rather uncomfortable club member (9), while the latter is the club, whose rules are too rigid to accommodate such members (10). The socio-political history of Britain's institutions is summarised, in text that, as Martin and White say, 'connotes' attitude rather than 'denoting' it (Martin and White 2005: 66). It is possible to read these references as tokens of positive judgement on Britain's tradition of parliamentary sovereignty (2), its rapid adaptation to the challenges of devolved governance (4), and parliamentary accountability (5-6). By inference, these things are 'good'; they represent forms of government and historical traditions that have a positive value, for the speaker and her intended audience, which partly, if not mainly, consists of the British public. Again, by inference, the EU, which lacks these traditions and has a different approach to democracy, is cast in a negative light. Positive evaluation of its 'strong' supranational institutions (6) becomes, in this frame, a negative feature, since they create anxiety amongst the British people (7). Criticism of the EU is mitigated by May's acknowledgement that Britain may have been an 'awkward' member of the club at times (9); however, in the next breath she infers that the EU's rules are too strict (10-11), and in the next sentence this criticism is spelled out (11). Indeed, by means of the phrase 'might at times have been seen as' (9), May removes blame from Britain. The modal 'might' is a nuance that avoids the certainty associated with the absolute formula ('was'), while 'to be seen as' something is not necessarily the same thing as 'to be' something; the fault may lie with the (hypercritical, prejudiced, etc.) observer. The final part of this text completes the 'club membership' metaphor, painting a picture of the member (David Cameron, line 11) engaging in heroic negotiations with certain willing members of the club committee (12-13), but finally losing out to the intransigent, rule-bound majority (14).

A similar pattern is found in the second extract:

TABLE 5

Theresa May's Brexit speech: Europe (ii)

Line	Text	Evaluation
1	<i>Our vote to leave the European Union was no rejection of the values we share.</i> The	t + J: propriety
2	decision to leave the EU represents no desire to become more distant to you, our	+ J: propriety
3	friends and neighbours. It was <i>no attempt to do harm to the EU itself</i> or to any of	t + J: propriety
4	its remaining member states. <i>We do not want to turn the clock back to the days</i>	t + J: propriety
5	<i>when Europe was less peaceful, less secure and less able to trade freely.</i> It was a	
6	vote to restore, as we see it, our <i>parliamentary democracy(i)</i> , <i>national self-</i>	(i) t + J: propriety
7	<i>determination(ii)</i> , and to become even more global and internationalist(iii) in	(ii) t + J: tenacity
8	action and in spirit.	(iii) + J: tenacity

Once more, we find implicit praise of the speaker's in-group, Britain; the out-group, the EU, however, is not as diminished, by comparison, as in the earlier passage. While evaluation in (1) is directed towards Britain's adhesion to a set of values (which include a shared approach to human rights, for example), the EU is not positioned as antithetical to these values but as sharing them. In 2-3 the EU is evaluated in positive, explicit terms as 'friends and neighbours' (3). By inference, in 4-5, the EU's role in promoting the positive values of peace, security and free trade is recognised. Euroscepticism does re-emerge in 6-7, since mention of the need to 'restore' something implies that something has been previously taken away. May specifies what had been taken away, and it is striking that she selects the values of 'parliamentary democracy' and 'national self-determination'; expressing, in other words, a position of *Euroscepticism* that is, in this 'hard' version, not far from one of *Europophobia*.

The presence of mitigation in these extracts may be explained with reference to the fact that May knows she must soon negotiate the terms of Brexit with the EU, addressed explicitly here through the second person pronoun 'you' (2). She is therefore careful to construct the case for Brexit in terms that give as little offence as possible, also using the inclusive 'we' (1) (Flottum *et al.* 2006: 68) to further construe solidarity.

6. Conclusion

Our paper addressed two research questions; we aimed to give an account of the principal socio-political factors affecting Eurosceptic discourse, and to show how these factors influence the current discourse, and behaviour, of today's political leaders. As we have seen, above, Euroscepticism is a growing trend across Europe, and the aftermath of the Brexit vote will, no doubt, have a part to play in future geo-political developments. Analysis allows us to show internal patterns within the current "Eurosceptic wave" (Poli 2014), focusing on analysis of the linguistic and discursive strategies of speakers expressing moderate positions (Eurocriticism), both belonging to traditional parties. Both May and Renzi discursively enact a familiar pattern in political speech-making, the division between a virtuous in-group and a stigmatised out-group (Haussendorf and Kesselheim 2002), and both do so along the same lines: the in-group is represented by the speaker's nation, the out-group by the EU and its bureaucrats and other politicians. Of course, such a limited data set rules out general statements, but the analysis conducted has shown that there are key differences between the 'Eurocriticism' on display in the two speeches. These may correspond to divergent views of the EU that are currently held among the populations of the two countries, though not to the rejection of Europe as a political project. The criticisms reflect the specific positions of the two leaders; the one focusing on considerations of identity, the other on socio-economic matters. Where May emphasises Britain's parliamentary traditions and democratic history as sources of incompatibility with the EU system of government, Renzi upholds the EU as a glorious ideal but laments its economic policy of austerity. Thus, Euroscepticism in May's speech serves as support for the pragmatic consequence that Britain should exit the community, while for Renzi there is never any question of Italy's leaving, but the EU must be made to approximate more closely to its ideal version. The Italian leader expresses a euro-enthusiastic position, though this does not necessarily imply a request for greater degrees of integration. Both speakers refer to 'flexibility' as a specific micro-topic, with analogous pragmatic import: for May, the EU's lack of flexibility is evoked as a reason for Britain's leaving, while for Renzi it becomes a potential area in which the EU needs to improve.

Brexit was voted for by 52% of the British voting public, and we have, therefore, little difficulty in making connections between the implicit assumptions in Theresa May's discourse and attitudes current among the wider population. It remains to be seen, however, whether Renzi's assertion that the EU, in its ideal form, represents 'the greatest thing we could imagine' is still widely held among his own population. Future research might explore these correspondences, as well as the effects of the Brexit vote on different national contexts across Europe.

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