

British press attitudes towards the EU's global presence: from the Russian-Georgian war to the 2009 Copenhagen Summit

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Abstract

This article surveys the way in which British print media have presented the European Union's (EU) global presence in the international arena by analyzing two case studies which reflect two very distinctive areas of EU foreign policy: global climate change policy and the policy towards Russia. It employs frame analysis, allowing for the identification of the way in which the discourse of the press was categorized around a series of central opinions and ideas. Frames underscore the connections made by journalists between different events, policies or phenomena and their possible interpretations. The analysis highlights that acting through the common framework of the EU rather than unilaterally was a strategy preferred by the British press. These findings are in stark contrast with the deep Euroscepticism which characterizes press attitudes towards most policy areas, and is often considered to be rooted in the British political culture, media system, public opinion or the longstanding tradition of viewing the European continent as the other.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, foreign policy, European Union, climate change, newspapers, media
Russia

Introduction

Throughout the years Britain has been considered to be the home of Euroscepticism, seen as embodying overarching criticism towards the European Union (EU), or opposition to the European project and further European integration across various policy areas (Hooghe and Marks, 2007, 2008; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). Such attitudes are rooted in the British political culture (Gifford, 2008), media system (Koopmans and Statham, 2010; White, 2012), public opinion (McLaren, 2005) and the longstanding tradition of viewing the European continent as the *other* (Forster, 2002; Daddow, 2006). British governments have been

instrumental in limiting or opposing deeper degrees of European integration in various policy areas ranging from migration (Maier and Rittberger, 2008) or the common agricultural policy (Machill, 2006) to the constitutional treaty (Spiering, 2004) or the monetary union (Risse 2010). These policy approaches seem to replicate the views of the general public in the United Kingdom (UK), who favours the idea that Britain would be better off on its own, instead of acting through the common framework of the Union. Nonetheless, the EU is not perceived negative in all of its aspects, support being the highest for the idea that the Union has assured peace and prosperity on the continent and that it promotes globally the protection of human rights (Hurrelmann, 2008). British politicians have also embraced the prospect of constructing a truly common and united European foreign policy, perceiving it as an avenue for projecting Britain's reputation and stance in the international arena. One might account for this choice by the fact that the UK stands to lose far less from further European integration and coordination on foreign policy issues than in other policy areas (Menon, 2011). Hence, a common European foreign policy is considered to add reputation and weight to Britain's global interests and share the financial burdens of a global leadership with other member states.

This article surveys the way in which British newspapers framed the EU's global presence in two very distinctive areas of EU foreign policy: global climate change policy and the policy towards Russia. By global presence¹ the article refers to the behavior of the EU in the international arena and the different expectations it arouses in the media. The EU's global presence is seen as a reflection of the practical outcomes and manifestations of its foreign policy. Through the use of frame analysis, the article finds newspaper discourse regarding both case studies to fit outside the deep pattern of Euroscepticism that commonly is thought to characterize British media reporting. Euroscepticism in the British media in regards to the EU's global presence is defined in this article as present when journalists favor the UK dealing unilaterally in the internationally arena rather than through the common framework of the Union. More 'pugnacious, critical and populist as ever' the British media follows suit in portraying and perpetuating Eurosceptic views, a strategy adopted in order to mirror the views of the general public (Gavin, 2009, 777). Moreover, in their study of the way the British press framed the 1997 General Election and during the British EU presidency of 1998, Anderson and Weymouth (1999) have shown that Euroscepticism is widespread in British newspapers. The constitutional debate and the monetary union have also been framed through the prism of Euroscepticism by the press, matching the disaffection of citizens with the EU (Dougal, 2003; Anderson and Price, 2008; Boomgaarden *et al.*, 2011). Gavin and Marshall (2011) contend that the EU receives mostly negative coverage by British journalists who deem newsworthy only stories that contrast the actions of the Union with those of British citizens. In this context, this article finds British newspapers discourse to be more supportive of a British foreign policy conducted through the common framework of the EU than by a adopting a purely national approach. However, accounting for the factors that shape British press attitudes towards the EU's global presence, while a worthy research topic, falls outside the scope of the article.

During the last two decades the EU has been widely seen as a leader in global climate change policy due its ambitious internal policies and progressive global approach. At the same time, the need to tackle the consequences of global climate change has been traditionally backed up by most British political parties; however, this alone does not explain why successive governments have chosen to endorse the EU's global presence in this issue area. Within the British media, climate change is considered to be important news, concerning a phenomenon framed as a threat to the wellbeing of future generations (Doulton and Brown, 2009, 191). Coverage of climate change has been rising during the last decade, with peaks around the United Nations Framework on Climate Change summits (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005). For this reason the case study on climate change focuses on one of the recent summits that took place in 2009 in Copenhagen and was widely viewed as an opportunity to forge a progressive global agreement (Christoff, 2010). The EU was expected to act normatively as a leader in order to secure a fair global deal. On the other hand, Britain's relations with Russia are influenced by its rather indirect engagement with it during the Cold War and their geographical remoteness. The second case study is built around the Georgian-Russian war of 2008 – a turning point in the Union's engagement with Russia. Opposite to climate change, the EU is considered to have a more divided and *Realpolitik* approach towards Russia, where big member states – such as Germany, France or Italy – deal individually with Moscow. By comparing two very different case studies this article seeks to address questions of reliability and rigour, employing a comparative case study approach which can help paint a coherent and relevant picture of the way the British press reported on the two the issue areas of foreign policy analyzed. The selection of case studies covers a wide spectrum of the EU's foreign policy, but the findings of this article should not be generalized to describe the British press' attitude towards any specific event or area of foreign policy. Nonetheless, the analysis identifies a coherent trend within the discourse constructed by British newspapers, contributing in this way both to the literature on the EU's foreign policy and to the study of Euroscepticism.

The EU's global presence

The preference of British newspapers for a stronger and more involved EU global presence in the international arena is not at all surprising. Consequently, with the late 90s, equating the UK's national interest to the development of a strong European foreign policy has become a recurrent theme for British leaderships (Cameron, 1999; Jokela, 2013). For example, former Foreign Secretary David Miliband stressed on many occasions Britain's need to contribute to the foreign policy of the EU and embrace it: 'to be frightened of European foreign policy is blinkered, fatalistic and wrong. Britain should embrace it, shape it and lead European foreign policy' (*The Guardian*, 26 October 2009). Nonetheless, British support for the EU's foreign policy was often limited only to an abstract goal and its possible consequences, but almost never expressed in relation to the methods that could materialize such an aspiration. Criticism towards the European

External Action Service (EEAS) is indicative of British distrust for modes of further integration in foreign policy and diplomacy devised at the supranational level (*The Economist*, 23 May 2011). For example, while Germany seems to prefer the ideas behind European integration in foreign policy, but not its consequences, the UK is keener to cash on the effects of the EU's foreign policy whilst dismissing its policies (Menon, 2011; Timmins, 2011). Public opinion surveys highlight the same tendency for the general public, who is more willing to accept 'more Europe' (German, Marshall Fund 2010) in foreign policy than in other policy areas (European Commission, 2012, 2013; YouGov-Cambridge, 2012), and even consider an individual British approach less desirable than a European unified policy². The case of the UK seems to resemble that of the Nordic member states, where both citizens and policymakers convey more support for a common European approach in foreign policy than in other policy areas (Raunio, 2007; Brommesson, 2010; Fägersten, 2012; Miles and Wivel, 2013). Recent Eurobarometer surveys show for example that in Denmark or Sweden the population exhibits a more positive attitude towards a common EU foreign policy or the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) – close to the EU average – than in the case of the Economic and Monetary Union (European Commission, 2012, 2013).

The EU's global presence and hence its foreign policy has attracted considerable scholarly interest throughout the last decade. Two broad debates can be identified in literature: one regarding the nature of the EU's foreign policy, and the other focussing on its scope. Traditionally it has been considered that foreign policy is a domain of high politics where cooperation still remains intergovernmental (Moravcsik, 1997). As conflicts tend to be pervasive, little agreement can be forged on foreign policy issues within the EU which becomes the result of the 'lowest common denominator' between the national interests of the member states (Nuttall, 2000). Moreover, scholars have observed that big EU member states engage in developing and accept EU foreign policy only when it promotes their interests or doesn't endanger them (Hyde-Price, 2008; Rynning, 2011). On the other hand, Europe's search for a meaning has driven scholars to enquire into the way in which the ontology of the Union predisposes it to behave in the international arena. The idea that the EU is a postmodern power which acts normatively in its international relations has become very popular. Terms such as *force for good* or *normative power Europe* have been advanced in order to create EU's self-image (Eriksen, 2006; Forsberg, 2011). This image implies that a series of democratic norms found at the base of the EU constrain it to promote them in its international relations through a unified European approach (Manners, 2002).

The case studies selected in this article cover both debates found in the literature. Global climate change policy is commonly considered to be a policy area where member states prefer delegating power to the EU, which acts for the wellbeing of all peoples around the world (Vogler, 2005; Hurrelmann, 2008; Wurzel and Connelly, 2011). On the other hand, division among the member states and the primacy of national interest seem to dominate the EU's policy towards Russia (Averre, 2009; Popescu and Wilson, 2009). While the case studies can be considered to be

representative for the trends in British newspaper reporting on the EU's global presence, the findings of the article should not be generalized to encapsulate every area of foreign policy. The specificities of certain international events or developments may prompt policy approaches from the UK that differ significantly from those of the Union. Notorious in this sense is Britain's support for the 2003 intervention in Iraq which was highly contested by the other big member states in the EU and thought to be influenced by Britain's strong Transatlanticism (Lévy *et al.*, 2005).

In the case of the EU's global approach towards climate change, the recent defining moment is seen here as the climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, where the EU expressed a huge sense of disappointment after a constructive international accord couldn't be reached. The Union has always backed up the United Nations (UN) process on climate change and has set in this matter ambitious goals both domestically and globally. Britain's approach to climate change differs significantly from that of other member states. It has had the most important contribution towards emission reductions, thus reinforcing the EU's burden sharing approach. Together with Germany it has pushed for tougher climate change regulations within the EU (Schreurs and Tiberghien, 2007, 25). The official narrative of the failure at the Copenhagen Summit put the blame on other world powers such as the United States (US) or China for their unwillingness to make substantial environmental concessions. The Union's perceived failure in Denmark also had the effect of undermining its assumed normative global leadership on climate change. Official Commission reports (European Commission, 2010) on the post-Copenhagen climate outlook have underlined that the failure in Denmark has made developing countries less willing to trust the EU. In turn, this can only be mitigated if the EU increases its global legitimacy by employing deeper domestic environmental policies.

EU-Russia relations have been characterized by the dichotomy between conflict and cooperation translated in the fact that although as a whole the EU is inclined to accept and establish common rules and norms with Russia, at the national level, leaders are more prone to seek unilateral solutions – special relations – involving Moscow. Consequently, one cannot speak of a common EU approach towards Russia, but of series of bilateral relations between member states and Moscow (Averre, 2009). Bilateral relations involve developing increased economic and energy ties between Moscow and the member states. This, in the end seriously undermines the EU's normative endeavour. For this reason both scholars and politicians have been inclined to argue that Russia's foreign policy is still conducted in a realist paradigm driven by zero-sum thinking, which opposes the normative approach of the EU (Hopf, 2008). The Russian-Georgian War of August 2008 redefined the relations between Brussels and Moscow as the conflict culminated with the symbolic request from President Vladimir Putin – Prime Minister at the time – that all major figures in the foreign policy of the EU sign the cease fire treaty over the conflict with Georgia. Nonetheless, Britain's lack of dependence on Russian energy and its geographical remoteness have made it less interested than other member states in dealing with Moscow on bilateral terms, and more in favour of a European multilateral framework. During the war, David

Miliband spearheaded the opposition towards Russia's aggression by visiting Georgia and reassuring its leadership of Western support. Nonetheless, the limited peace agreement brokered by France and Germany which saw Russia as the *de facto* winner in the region was accepted by the British government (Cornell and Starr, 2009; Asmus, 2010; David, 2011).

Data

The analysis included eight newspapers – *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Mirror* and *The Sun*. The selection of newspapers takes into account the characteristics of the British media system and press culture, namely the key political cleavages, the types of readerships, range of distribution, ability to influence public opinion and the journalistic style. In doing so, the article analyzes a comprehensive cross-section of British newspapers – comprising of quality press, mid-range newspapers, and tabloids – which can be viewed as relevant for the whole of UK media discourse (Meyer, 2005, 128). *The Times* is considered to be committed to conservative values and the centrality of traditional national institutions, while *The Guardian* tends to adopt leftists views. Carvalho (2007, 239) finds that *The Times* has been very vocal in criticizing the UK government or the EU's 'measures to combat greenhouse emissions and legitimate the existing economic and social order'. On the other hand, *The Guardian* focuses more on the global impact of politics, with an emphasis on the need to safeguard the security of future generations and foster the development of a universal norm of responsibility and fairness. *The Independent* seems to sympathize with the Labour Party, but, at many times, delivers mixed signals leaning towards the right (Carvalho, 2007, 226). In their study of British media attitudes towards European integration, Carey and Burton (2004) show that the discourse of Eurosceptic newspapers (*Sun*, *Mail*, *Express*, *Times* and *Telegraph*) is aimed at influencing their readers regarding the negative effects that 'more Europe' can have on their daily lives. This mirrors Werder's (2002) previous finding which underscored that even pro-EU newspapers (i.e. *The Guardian*) tend to oppose integration in a number of policy areas – such as the adoption of the Euro. In examining the two case studies, articles were identified using the Lexis-Nexis database within a period stretching six months before and after each key event. The selection involved an original double reading of the selected newspapers in the two case studies. The first reading excluded the articles that did not present climate change or Russia as political issues, while the second reading identified and coded the predominant frames developed by the British press. In the case of climate change the period surveyed was 1 June 2009 and 1 June 2010 (with 207 articles selected), whilst in the second case study³ 341 were selected between 8 March 2008 and 8 March 2009.

---Insert TABLE 1 here---

The distribution of the sample is in line with the overarching assumption found throughout the literature that quality newspapers are more likely to cover topics related to the EU. Table 1 highlights that an average of around 60% of the articles from the sample was found within the quality broadsheets examined: *The Times* and *The Guardian*. Moreover, the analysis shows that the other six newspapers constructed in both case studies the same frames as *The Times* and *The Guardian*. The disproportionate presence of articles from the two quality newspapers should not be perceived as a surprise, for quality newspapers are the main public vehicle for both political and social discourse. Consequently, it is more likely to find articles about the EU in quality national newspapers than in local sheets or tabloids (Meyer, 2005; Olausson, 2010). For this reason, the analysis of quality newspapers has often been advocated in the literature, due to their ability to provide an outlook of media landscapes in general and their nationwide distribution (Brüggemann and Kleinen-von Konigslow, 2009). Simultaneously, the quality press has been considered to provide the primary stimulus behind gathering popular support for more European integration (Risse, 2010). Additionally, print media is also thought to allow space for more elaboration than television, thus granting journalists an increased potential to act as agenda-setters (Koopmans and Statham, 2010). They have the potential of communicating permissive public consensus and shape official rhetoric and policies (Hooghe and Marks 2008).

Methods

The article employs frame analysis as the primary method in analyzing the British print media, allowing for the identification of the way in which press discourse was categorized around a series of central opinions and ideas. Frames underscore the connections made by journalists between different events, policies or phenomena and their possible interpretations (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005). Journalists construct frames around worldly issues and events, in this way zooming in readers' attention on certain interpretations and structures of meaning. According to Entman (1993, 152), framing means 'to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation'. Frame analysis can paint a representative picture of the agenda-setting powers of the media and the way it views and presents certain phenomena. Hence, the analysis of frames concentrates on the way in which journalists organize their discourse around a series of central ideas, themes and interpretations, in this way ignoring or downplaying other facets of reality (Baum and Potter, 2008). Other scholars have conceived frames as being less dynamic and portraying fixed meanings, which journalists can select in order to present and comment on various political issues, making them clear to the general public (Page and Shapiro, 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1993; Mermin, 1999; Robinson, 2001).

In this article, the frame analysis focused on the strategies employed by journalists in order to select and emphasize certain aspects of reality, events, ideas or perceptions, whilst downplaying others. In the first instance, in each case study a quantitative descriptive analysis of the policy definitions framed by the selected newspapers was operated. More specifically, for each frame, the number of articles containing it was weighed against the total number of selected articles. The same process was then broken down and repeated for each publication, thus providing greater comparative depth to the study. At this stage, media coverage⁴ was also correlated with the policy definitions framed by the press as a means of uncovering their temporal relevance. The second step of the frame analysis involved a detailed qualitative analysis of the way the newspapers constructed each frame. The next two sections present the findings of the frame analysis in the two case studies. Quotes are used at times in the analysis in order to highlight various connections made by the British press. Although these quotes were published in specific newspapers, they were selected due to the fact they mirror common views found throughout all the British publications in the sample – and could be seen as representative.

Analysis

Climate change

The coverage of climate change during the selected period highlights the main frame constructed by the British print media which presented the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit as a crucial moment in the global fight against global climate change. The distribution (figure 1) of articles relating to climate change highlights the importance that newspapers attributed to the summit due to the spike in coverage in the build-up and during to the event⁵. A ‘truly momentous event’ *The Times* (24 October 2009) underlined, where 20000 people from 198 countries converged to discuss the fate of global climate change policy; a tagline or underlying idea that was identified in a large number of articles. Climate change was extensively presented as a threat to global security in the medium and long term, with over 95% of the total articles warning about the risks associated with it. Surprisingly, as table 2 highlights, a considerably lower number of articles considered that climate change was also a present threat happening in front of our eyes. Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband agreed with the views expressed by the press and in an interview for *The Guardian* (26 June 2009) highlighted the fact that ‘people believe climate change is happening in the UK, most people don't think it's a plot or something made up, but most people don't seem to think it will happen in their area.’ By framing climate issues as an urgency that had to be mitigated at the Copenhagen summit, the print media acted as an agenda-setter telling people how to view climate change and pushing politicians for greater commitments.

---Insert FIGURE 1 here---

---Insert TABLE 2 here---

The British press also afforded considerable publishing space to issues of global justice and equality in climate change policy. Thus, the need for a deal that would ‘have at its heart equity and social justice between north and south’ (*The Guardian*, 30 September 2009) was a pervasive theme within British newspapers. Accordingly, the EU was seen responsible for securing an agreement at Copenhagen that would be fair for developing countries. Even though the EU was committed to aid poor countries with several tens of billions of pounds, the press still criticized the fact that politicians were not doing enough to convince tax payers about the need to tackle climate change (*Daily Express*, 4 December 2009; *The Independent*, 9 December 2009). Another frame constructed by politicians and taken up by the print media involved vilifying other states such as China or the US for refusing to comply with international emissions reduction standards. In contrast to these states, Britain through the EU was willing to safeguard the environmental security of future generations and act as a leader by example in global climate change policy. The EU’s unique position of a normative leader in climate change was framed negatively against the US and China. Vilifying the *other* for doing too little or not living up to its commitments was a method found in around 40 % newspaper articles on the Copenhagen summit throughout the period analyzed.

The summit and its aftermath were presented through two major frames by the British press. Firstly, during the Copenhagen summit it became apparent for the British print media that the EU would not be able to assume leadership and broker an agreement on climate change that would commit the US or China and help poor countries – which spelled a disappointing outcome for the summit. In the run-up to the summit the press warned that due to US pressures, the EU was ready to accept a watered down version of the agreement, decreasing its commitment to 20% cuts in emissions by 2020 from 30% by 2025. Britain’s Prime Minister Gordon Brown, in a series of interviews also admitted that failure at the summit was a real possibility (*The Guardian*, 9 December 2009; *The Times*, 9 December 2009; *The Independent*, 9 December 2008; *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 December 2008). Secondly, the press pointed out that Europe had not backed up its ambitious and normative rhetoric, and had lost its global leadership: ‘we now need to see more from Brussels, both in terms of emissions cuts and climate financing’ (*The Guardian*, 10 December 2009). The agreement at the summit was seen as an uncertainty – ‘as more than 115 world leaders descend on Copenhagen to make the crucial decisions, what can we expect? Nobody really knows’ (*The Guardian*, 17 December 2009). *The Times* (18 December 2009) went as far as to set up an online poll and debate where people could express their opinion about the possible outcome of the summit. Hence, the days of the summit determined a shift in the way the EU was seen and presented to the general public as a leader in climate change.

The limited agreement achieved by the EU achieved at the Copenhagen summit and its exclusion from the negotiations between China and the US was presented in the press as a significant failure for both Britain and the Union. A lack of political leadership on the part of the EU was framed as the main cause of the failure in Copenhagen ‘which has put the whole world more at risk’ (*The Independent*, 13 March 2009). For the next three months the Copenhagen summit

became a point of reference, against which British newspapers would compare policy initiatives that did not live up to their goals: ‘like the Copenhagen summit, it has been a largely miserable event, exposing the limits of environmental co-operation’ (*The Guardian*, 23 March 2010). Simultaneously, the press noted that the outcome of the summit had the potential of raising electricity bills thorough Britain, as European industries found it more and more difficult to cope with competition from foreign firms that were not subject to ambitious emissions reduction commitments. Nonetheless, the newspapers surveyed were still highly supportive of a EU that would try to reassert itself as leader in climate change.

The policy towards Russia

The most salient frame stressed Russia’s re-emergence as an important global power with the war against Georgia. The conflict also marked a spike in the number of articles published by the newspapers analyzed. If before August 2008 the UK print media hardly afforded any publishing space to reports, comments and debates concerning the EU’s policy towards Russia, the war and the ceasefire increased attention to a maximum of 20 articles per day – displayed in figure 2. Almost 75 percent – highlighted in table 3 – of the total articles contained a reference to Russia’s new status, which was linked to the need for the West (Europe and the US) to acknowledge and adapt to these new developments. For example, *Daily Express* (9 September 2008) argued that Russia was again a ‘nation to be reckoned with’, while about eight in ten articles both in *The Times* and *The Guardian* highlighted Russia’s new status. Several other frames were also identified to accompany the idea that Russia is again an important international actor. During the first days of the conflict, Russia was presented as the aggressor by over 60% of the articles. Moscow’s intervention was widely viewed as an attack against a country in the process of democratization, which shared aspirations of integrating into Europe. The media campaign to put the blame on Russia for the war was so successful that British newspapers underscored that while Moscow might have won the conflict on the ground, it lost the PR war against Georgia. After the conflict, Russia was presented both as a threat to global security and as a state which was showing signs of adapting to the rules of the international community – and desired peace and stability. The presence of a Russian flotilla at the war games in Venezuela attracted considerable criticism from the UK print media, which viewed the move as a strategic one set to counterbalance the stationing American warships in the Black Sea. Europe’s dependence on Russian energy coupled with Moscow’s political and preferential use of gas prices fuelled the frame that Russia was an ‘energy bully’ (*The Times*, 1 January 2009) and a threat to regional security.

---Insert FIGURE 2 here---

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The divisions among the member states in devising a common strategy towards Russia were framed as the most important hurdle that impeded the Union to constructively involve in the conflict and its resolution. Simultaneously, the EU was criticized for its inefficiency in providing support for the countries in its Eastern Neighbourhood. The ‘newer arrivals’ from central and eastern Europe (*The Independent* 10 August 2008; *The Times*, 9 August 2008) were denounced for being particularly worried about Moscow and for pushing for a tougher EU stance. Nonetheless, their points of view were ‘heavily outnumbered by those such as Germany that prize their relations with Russia, seemingly, above all else’ (*The Times*, 9 August 2008). In the end, France and the other more important states in the EU managed to coagulate a common voice. The European Commission’s aid for the reconstruction of the regions affected by the conflict, and the 200 EU observers sent to Georgia were presented as a huge achievement by the UK press. The EU was framed in over 40% of the articles as the main actor that could solve the crisis in the Caucasus, with *Daily Express*⁶, highlighting the Union’s role in 60% of its articles. A similar number of articles viewed the international community (the US, NATO, or the UN) as responsible for settling the conflict Georgia, often implying that the EU (and consequently Britain) should cooperate with other international actors in order to supplement their efforts. What this shows is a rather confused Euro-optimism, where British newspapers promoted the prospect of a strengthened EU global presence and its potential to bring peace to the Caucasus, and equally considered that the EU did not have the capabilities to gain a leading role in the region. This frame did not refer to the Union’s institutions, but to the EU’s leaders or to a common European approach, which was more or less characterized by internal division. Three expressions mark the UK print media’s interpretation of acting through the common framework of the EU: ‘The EU heads of government’ (*Daily Express*, 14 November 2008; *The Times* 10 August 2008), ‘EU leaders’ (*The Guardian*, 1 September 2008; *Daily Mail*, 20 August 2008), ‘European leaders’ (*The Independent*, 12 August 2008; *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 August 2008).

A small number of reports, in the period before the war, criticized the member states for not agreeing on a common strategy towards Russia. According to these articles, the Union could not afford opposing Russia and not signing a partnership agreement due to Moscow’s potential to unsettle Europe’s energy security. A second criticism constructed by the press denounced the lack of unity among member states in drafting a common response to Russia’s aggression. Poland and the Baltic countries were framed to be responsible for derailing the peace negotiation between EU and Russia. The aftermath of the conflict also saw an increase in the share of articles that approached critically the EU’s policy towards Russia. The weak ceasefire agreement brokered by the Union that left ‘Moscow calling the shots in the energy-rich Black Sea littoral and Caspian basin’ (*The Guardian*, 18 August 2008) was contested by the British newspapers which called for a tougher European stance. *The Guardian* (2 September 2008) even went so far as to call for the suspension of the trade agreement between the Union and Russia, while arguing that Europe’s condemnation of Russia was more of a symbolic gesture, was not wholeheartedly

supported by its members. Russia as a foreign policy issue was thus framed by the British press through a European lenses and very infrequently as a matter that the UK should tackle unilaterally. Engaging with Russia and the conflict through the EU was the desirable route sketched out by the British print media which contributed to low levels of Euroscepticism in comparison to other policy areas.

Conclusion

In contrast to the deep Euroscepticism that characterizes the way in which other policy areas such as migration, the monetary union or the constitutional debate have been framed by British journalists, this article underscored that British newspapers⁷ favour a strengthened EU global presence to which the UK should adhere and work towards. The findings also point to the fact that the analysis could be extended and find fertile ground in the case of media in Nordic member states – where public opinion portrays similar patterns towards the common foreign policy of the EU. Euroscepticism is understood in this article as the privileging by the British media of unilateral approaches and actions by the UK (outside of the EU's framework). The concept of global presence here refers to the behaviour of the EU in the international arena emanating from its foreign policy outcomes and practical manifestations. Two case studies were explored in order to reflect two very distinctive areas of EU foreign policy and provide comparative strength to the article: global climate change policy and the policy towards Russia. In both case studies, the British print media highlighted in various ways the need to achieve coordination and solidarity among the member states at EU level. The British press perceived climate change to indiscriminately affect peoples around the world which made action through the supranational institutions of the EU more legitimate – as the Union was committed to acting multilaterally in global climate change policy. This finding is also reinforced by the large number of references to the European Commission. On the other hand, the lower number (or almost absence) of references to the EU's institutions when referring to the Union's approach towards Russia points to the fact that the newspapers analyzed viewed coordination among the member states to function similarly to intergovernmental alliances (e.g. NATO).

Climate change was presented by the press both as a threat in the medium and long term and as a present occurrence, but more importantly as a global risk. The EU was extensively portrayed as the actor that had the potential and duty to foster a progressive global agreement in spite of the opposition from reluctant states such China or the US. A mix of criticism and support characterized the print media's attitude towards the EU's global change policy within the period examined. Backed by scientific findings and alarming voices from national and international NGO communities, articles often criticized the EU for not trying to do more in the period leading up to the Copenhagen summit. Opinions and commentaries from the general public coupled with sympathetic reports concerning environmental campaigners and protesters were featured in the British press during the summit. Even though, disappointed by the weak agreement which

excluded the EU at Copenhagen, the British print media still continued to present the EU as having the potential to safeguard future generations against the consequences of climate change.

On the other hand, Russia became an important topic in the British media due to its conflict with Georgia in the beginning of August 2008. If before the war, reports about the policy towards Russia, the conflict prompted a significant increase in coverage which remained at a constant rate throughout the sample period – six months after the war. This upward trend signalled and reinforced the frame that Russia had regained its status as an important global power and that Europe and the international community should take account and adapt to these new developments. Contrary to other areas of policy, the analysis of the selected articles highlighted that the British print media tends to favour acting through the common framework of the EU rather than unilaterally. Another important finding, revealed the British media's tendency of equating the actions of the leaders of major states in Europe with those of the EU. The approach of most member states towards Moscow doesn't depart too much from this narrow understanding, as they seem to prefer individual bilateral ties in their relations with Russia. Finally, support for a strengthened EU global presence did not always mean that newspapers perceived the EU as possessing the capabilities and the power to bring about peace in the Caucasus – almost half of the articles urging the EU to cooperate with other states and international organizations.

In the two case studies analyzed, in varying degrees, acting through the common framework of the EU in foreign policy in order to enhance its global presence was observed to be the strategy preferred by the print media rather than employing a unilateral British approach. In the first case study the British press publicized the approach of the UK government, who was convinced that climate change was a threat in the middle or long term – and that the EU should lead globally in tackling this issue. On the other hand, even though there was a lack of interest in the public sphere for the policy towards Moscow – only Russia's intervention in Georgia bringing back echoes and memories from the Cold War – the EU was perceived and presented by journalists as having potential to lead in dealing with Russia and the conflicts in the Eastern Neighbourhood. However, specific events and issue areas can fall outside this trend due to other additional factors: for example Britain's longstanding commitment to a strong transatlantic partnership, in the case of the 2003 Iraq war. Consequently, the findings outline a broad picture which can direct future research towards new avenues. Firstly, extending the analysis to other aspects of the EU's global presence (for example terrorism or international development) and to other policy areas would provide a deeper understanding of the way in which British newspapers construct their discourse towards the EU. Moreover, comparing the reporting of the British print media with that of other member states (e.g. the Nordic member states) would uncover new insights into the study of Euroscepticism in the EU. Secondly, exploring the factors that influence the support conveyed by the British newspapers towards a common European foreign policy can provide new perspectives into the construction of Euroscepticism in the media (in the UK and other member states). Finally, an even further step would imply exploring the link between the media

and the political sphere, and more specifically the way in which democratic legitimacy is granted to political decisions through the actions of the media within the public sphere.

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Notes

1. Smith and Allen have famously applied a more complex understanding of global or international presence, which is 'defined by a combination of factors: credentials and legitimacy, the capacity to act and mobilize resources, the place it occupies in the perceptions and expectations of policy makers' (Allen and Smith, 1990, p. 21).
2. According to the 2011 Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2011) British public support for a common European foreign policy (55%) is below the average of the 27 member states, in contrast to other policy areas where support is much lower: economic and the monetary union and the euro (11 %), or the future enlargement of the EU (37 %).
3. At the same time, articles that focused on the probability of war in the South Caucasus – before August 2008 –, the war itself, its aftermath (the ceasefire) and the post-conflict management by international actors were also included in the analysis after the first reading.
4. Coverage by the media is widely considered to provide citizens with the necessary information that allows them to construct reflexive opinions regarding European issues. As individuals in the EU have few chances to get in contact with decision-makers at the European (supranational) level, news reports and articles supplied by the media fill this knowledge gap, mediating the interactions between society and politics.
5. Moreover, *The Guardian* in the build-up to the Copenhagen Summit increased its staff working on environmental issues to eight (Boykoff, 2012, 253).
6. This finding is surprising, as previous research has uncovered that the *Daily Express* has one of the most Eurosceptic discourses found in British newspapers (Werder, 2002; Carey and Burton, 2004; Carvalho, 2007).
7. Tables 2 and 3 show that British newspapers tended to report on climate change policy and on the policy towards Russia through similar frames. Low levels of convergence in newspapers such as *The Sun*, *The Mirror* or *Daily Mail* translated in the absence of a series of frames. On the other hand, the whole spectrum of frames was found within the quality and middle range newspaper analyzed regardless of their political orientation and readership, all of which presented rates of occurrence regarding most frames close to the total averages.

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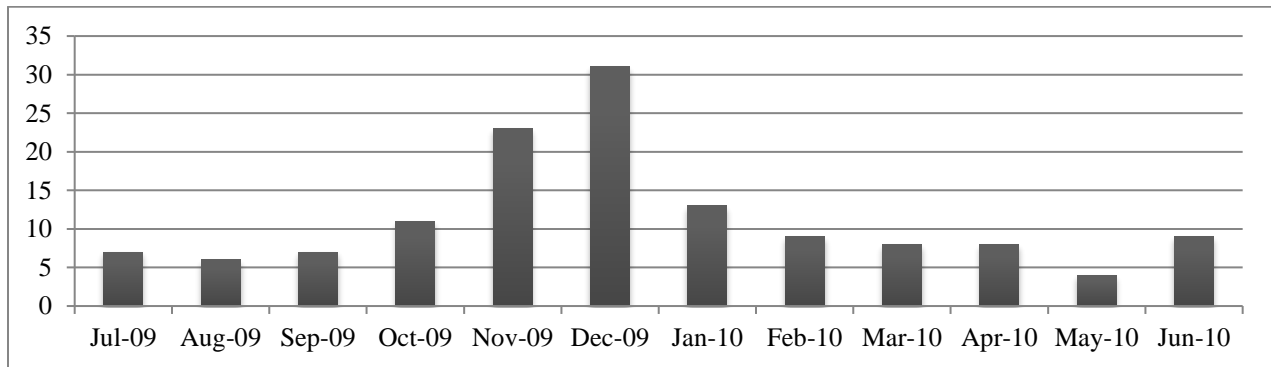
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Table 1: Coverage by newspaper: Climate change policy and the policy towards Russia

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Climate change</i>		<i>Policy Over Russia</i>	
	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Percentage of the Total</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Percentage of the Total</i>
Daily Express	22	10.6	63	18.5
Daily Mail	7	3.4	14	4.1
Daily Telegraph	16	7.7	34	10.0
The Guardian	85	41.1	100	29.3
The Independent	20	9.7	37	10.8
The Mirror	4	1.9	6	1.8
The Times	51	24.7	81	23.8
The Sun	2	0.9	6	1.8

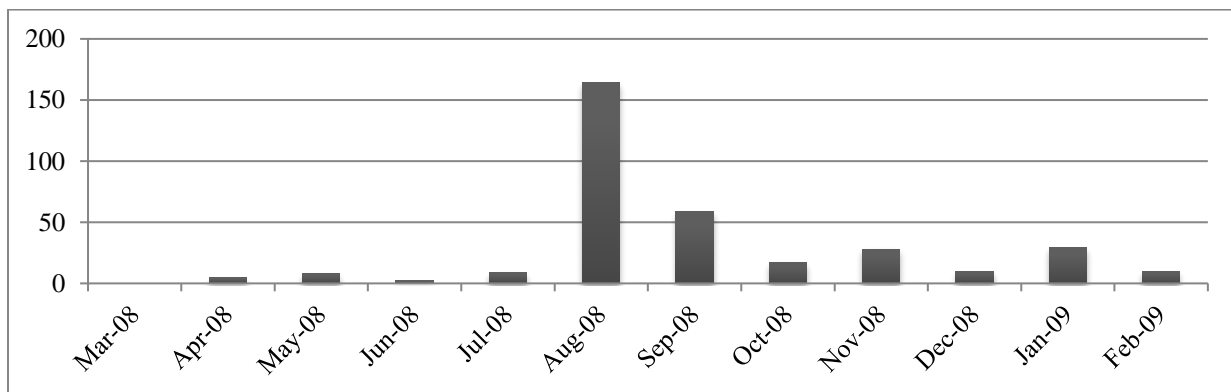
Source: Author's own data.

Figure 1: Media coverage of climate change policy and the Copenhagen summit in UK newspapers: 1 June 2009 – 1 June 2010 (number of articles/month).



Source: Author's own data

Figure 2: Media coverage of the policy towards Russia in UK newspapers: 8 March 2008 – 8 March 2009 (number of articles/month).



Source: Author's own calculations

Table 2: Frames constructed by the UK media – Climate change policy

<i>Frame</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Average rate of occurrence (%)</i>	<i>The Guardian (%)*</i>	<i>The Times (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Express (%)*</i>	<i>The Independent (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Telegraph (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Mail (%)*</i>	<i>The Mirror (%)*</i>	<i>The Sun (%)*</i>
Climate change – medium to long term threat	199	96.1	96.5	92.2	100.0	95.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Copenhagen – a crucial moment	150	72.5	78.8	78.4	27.3	90.0	81.3	28.6	50.0	100.0
Climate change is happening now	125	60.4	58.8	49.0	63.6	70.0	62.5	100.0	75.0	100.0
EU should do more	113	54.6	65.9	72.5	40.9	40.0	6.3	0.0	25.0	50.0
EU the only actor that can forge a global agreement on climate change	89	43.0	43.5	49.0	45.5	45.0	37.5	14.3	0.0	50.0
Vilifying other states	82	39.6	36.5	37.3	22.7	65.0	56.3	28.6	50.0	50.0
Disappointing outcome at Copenhagen***	28**	38.9**	45.5	21.4	18.1	50.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
EU still has the potential to globally lead in climate change***	19**	26.9**	33.3	17.9	9.1	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
UK should lead by example independently	14	6.76	5.9	2.0	27.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
EU lost its global leadership after Copenhagen***	16**	22.2**	24.2	14.3	27.3	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Notes: * Percentages show the proportion of articles from each newspaper that feature the frames identified.

**Takes into account the articles published after the Copenhagen summit (N=72).

***Takes into account the articles published after the Copenhagen summit: *The Guardian* (N=33); *The Times* (N=18); *Daily Express* (N=11); *The Independent* (N=2); *Daily Telegraph* (N=4); *Daily Mail* (N=4); *The Sun* (N=0).

Source: Actor's own calculations (N=207).

Table 3: Frames constructed by the UK media – The policy towards Russia

<i>Frame</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Average rate of occurrence (%)</i>	<i>The Guardian (%)*</i>	<i>The Times (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Express (%)*</i>	<i>The Independent (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Telegraph (%)*</i>	<i>Daily Mail (%)*</i>	<i>The Mirror (%)*</i>	<i>The Sun (%)*</i>
Russia is regaining its great power status	252	73.9	84.0	85.2	66.7	56.8	70.6	64.3	50.0	33.3
Russia is a security threat	219	64.2	65.0	58.0	65.1	64.9	67.6	85.7	16.7	66.7
War seen as a Russian aggression	214	62.8	79.0	64.2	55.6	59.5	35.3	57.1	33.3	66.7
US and NATO shape Europe's approach towards Russia	151	44.3	37.0	54.3	41.3	48.6	44.1	57.1	16.7	33.3
EU main actor in dealing with Russia	131	38.4	40.0	45.7	60.3	29.7	23.5	50.0	50.0	33.3
EU should do more in the Eastern Neighbourhood	115	33.7	45.0	42.0	22.2	24.3	20.6	35.7	16.7	0.0
EU should cooperate with Russia	103	30.2	34.0	38.3	25.4	13.5	32.4	21.4	16.7	33.3
Russia an immediate threat for Europe's energy security	68	19.9	16.0	17.3	27.0	18.9	35.3	7.1	16.7	0.0
Georgia responsible for the war	65	19.1	25.0	17.3	19.0	29.7	8.8	7.1	0.0	0.0
Russia promoting peace and wanting to integrate	60	17.6	19.0	22.2	22.2	5.4	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
The EU is divided in its approach towards Russia – seen in a negative light	52	15.2	17.0	12.3	17.5	21.6	11.8	7.1	0.0	0.0
Russia is part of Europe	34	10.0	15.0	13.6	0.0	2.7	20.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Notes: N=341.

* Percentages show the proportion of articles from each newspaper that feature the frames identified.

Source: Author's own calculations.

