

Discourse of self-legitimation

Self- and other-presentation in the European Parliament's soft law on Brexit

Monika Brusenbauch Meislová
Masaryk University | Aston University

The article proposes an original conceptual framework that captures the discursive logic of self-legitimation and applies it to the empirical case of European Union soft law and the process of Brexit. Adopting the general orientation of Discourse Historical Approach in Critical Discourse Analysis and working with a dataset of all European Parliament (EP) resolutions on Brexit in the 2016–2023 period, the article investigates how, and interprets the particular ways in which, the EP legitimised itself as an actor vis-à-vis Brexit, through different linguistic and discursive devices in its resolutions. The analysis illustrates that the EP's use of soft law for self-legitimation purposes is an intriguing case of how legal instruments can be leveraged in multifaceted ways beyond their traditional function for broader communicative and political purposes. As such, the article extends the traditional understanding of the purposes of EP resolutions by explicitly acknowledging them as powerful discursive resources for self-legitimation.

Keywords: Self-legitimation, discourse, European Parliament, soft law, Brexit

1. Introduction

The contextual milieu for the European Parliament's (EP) involvement in the Brexit process was not always favourable. Following its unsuccessful efforts to procure a seat at the negotiating table (Gostyńska-Jakubowska 2017, 5), its formal role during the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) negotiations was limited to giving an assent to an agreement that had already been negotiated at the consent stage of the process. In the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) negotiations, even though the legal setting for its engagement was more amenable, the EP was sidelined even more (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2021; von der Burchard

2021). The organizational model adopted for the negotiations proved to be more constraining and created “significant obstacles for the EP to influence the negotiations” (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2021, 24).

Notwithstanding the adverse conditions, the EP skilfully managed to raise its profile during both phases of the Brexit negotiations. During the WA negotiations, the EP evolved into a “quasi negotiator” (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2019, 359) and “an important interlocutor” that co-shaped the negotiations (Meissner and Schoeller 2019, 1087) and was active already in the negotiation phase of the withdrawal process (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2019; Brusenbauch Meislová 2019). During the TCA negotiations, the EP “emerged as an even more empowered institution” and “managed to enhance its own profile” (Larik 2021), having obtained *inter alia* greater capacity to scrutinize the TCA (Brusenbauch Meislová 2023).

A key argument foregrounded in this article is that the strategic use of self-legitimation strategies in its resolutions helped the EP leverage its profile during the Brexit process. The analysis presented below illustrates that the EP’s use of soft law for self-legitimation purposes presents an intriguing case of how legal instruments can be leveraged for broader communicative and political purposes. As such, the article extends the traditional understanding of the purposes of EP resolutions (Archick 2014; Hart 2020) by explicitly acknowledging them as powerful discursive resources for self-legitimation.

This linguistically informed inquiry aims to investigate how, and interprets the particular ways in which, the EP self-legitimised itself as an actor *vis-à-vis* Brexit, through different linguistic and discursive devices in its resolutions. To this effect, an original conceptual framework that captures the discursive logic of self-legitimation is proposed which is then applied to the empirical case of soft law and the process of Brexit. In order to do so, the article adopts the general orientation of the Discourse Historical Approach in Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2001) and works with a dataset of all EP resolutions on Brexit in the 2016–2023 period, surveying the discursive treatment of EP’s self-legitimation during: (1) the withdrawal process (2016–2019), (2) the transition period (2020), and (3) the post-transition period (since 2021), thereby covering all the transformative periods of the Brexit process. As such, the study provides critical insights into how the EP has used soft law to make sense – and shape the reality – of Brexit, applied it to (re)produce shared meaning(s), and legitimised, through language, not only itself but also its perspectives on the United Kingdom (UK) as a (non)member state.

In so doing, the article brings together, and adds to, three strands of academic literature. First, it makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on the legitimation in discourse in a broader sense (Bäckstrand and Söderbaum 2018; Bennett

2019, 2022; Gilley 2009; Elnakkouzi 2023; Halliday, Block-Lieb and Carruthers 2010; Reyes 2011; Suchman 1995; van Leeuwen 2008) by proposing a new heuristic tool for understanding self-legitimation discursive practices.

Second, by focusing on EP resolutions and extending the traditional understanding of their purposes (Archick 2014; Hart 2020) by explicitly acknowledging them as powerful discursive resources for self-legitimation, the article adds to the literature on the discursive perspectives on law (Cheng and Machin 2023; Condor 2023; Coulthard 2013; Gibbons 1999; Huisman 1991). As Cheng and Machin (2023, 244) argue, “Given Critical Discourse Studies’ (CDS) interest in the role of language and communication in the functioning of society [...] it is notable that there has been much less attention to the analysis of the language of law”. There are a couple reasons why law is deemed challenging matter for discourse analysis, including the opaque language, its complex, self-sufficient and self-referential nature and off-putting stylistic features (especially in the sense of archaic words, use of Latin and long, convoluted, repetitive sentences) (Condor 2013; Coulthard 2013; Cheng and Machin 2023, 245, 249; Huisman 1991). What is more, law is often associated with procedural rules and formal structures and might require specialized knowledge (Condor 2013). Yet, it is essential not be deterred. As such, this article heeds the call of scholars, such as Cheng and Machin (2023), advocating for more research on the language of law.

Third, the article makes an original contribution to the scholarly understanding of the EP’s Brexit-related performance (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2019, 2021; Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2021, 2023). With the exception of Rautajoki and Fitzgerald (2022), who explore the ways in which solidarity was invoked and signified through narrative and categorical devices during the EP floor debate following the UK’s referendum, there remains a substantial gap in the academic literature concerning the discursive aspects of such engagement. This study seeks to fill this gap.

The inquiry proceeds as follows. It begins by attending to the theoretical and methodological framework. Following that, the article presents the typology that conceptualizes the discursive self-legitimation strategies. The next section is then devoted to the application of the typology to the empirical case of the EP and Brexit. After unpacking the data, the subsequent section presents the results of the empirical analysis. The final section summarises the key findings, discusses lessons for policymakers and suggests potential next research steps.

2. Theoretical framework

Following Hurrelmann, Gora, and Wagner (2013, 515), the paper understands political legitimation in a Weberian sense as a social activity that can be empirically observed and tested. As to the conceptual distinction between discursive, institutional and behavioural legitimation (Bäckstrand and Söderbaum, 2018), I am concerned with the discursive dimension, which relies exclusively on language. The article builds upon the poststructuralist approach by Diez (2014a, 2014b) who explicitly conceives of discourse as constitutive of reality as we know it (cf. Carta and Morin 2014, 4). The governing assumption underpinning the paper is a dialectical relationship between certain discursive situations on the one hand and the institutions and social structures in which they are embedded on the other (de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999, 157). As Bennett (2019, 18) argues, “In many of the fields of action and genres in which political discourse is manifested, the ultimate endgame is the persuasion of interlocutors to the relative merits of the speaker’s argument (and the weaknesses of the opposition’s claims)”.

Based on Bennett (2022, 370–371), the paper conceptualises legitimation as a discursive process “through which actions and actors are bestowed with legitimacy or marked by their illegitimacy, which in turn are based on socially constructed and communicated values and norms”. Self-legitimation is then understood as an actor’s own strategic attempts at establishing and maintaining legitimation in the eyes of others (in the sense of practices employed by the actor to positively influence the legitimation process) (Hall, Lenz and Obydenkova 2022). The approach adopted in this analysis is actor-oriented and adheres to the top-down perspective within the legitimation research.

3. Methodological framework

In an attempt to detect and interpret the key self-legitimizing discourse practices of the EP in Brexit, the study adopts the general orientation of the discourse historical approach (DHA) to critical discourse studies (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2008; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2001), understanding discourse analysis both as “a theory and a method” (Larsen 2018, 62). The article is concerned with soft law and from the perspective of critical discourse, the law, like any form of language, “carries ideas and values (...) classifies the world and represents identities and human agency (...) shapes, legitimizes and naturalizes social practices” (Cheng and Machin 2023, 244–245; cf. Condor 2023; Coulthard 2013). As such, the law is “infused by discourses that shape both what can be said about a particular thing and how it can be said” (Cheng and Machin 2023, 249). A discursive

strategy is defined here as a “more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 44). The article is interested both in the contents of the discourse – agreeing with Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, 2) that “analysis of political discourse should centre upon analysis of practical argumentation” – as well as in the structure of the discourse underlying the said contents and related linguistic features (Krzyżanowski 2010, 81–83). Importantly, even subtle discursive realisations are important, as “Cognitive images can be projected and, in the process of repetition, legitimized through language use” (Szymańska 2017, 103).

4. Typology of discursive self-legitimation strategies

The paper develops an original conceptual framework that helps identify and interpret discursive practices of self-legitimation. In the first step, the article brings together insights from four key scholars in the field of legitimation in discourse: Aristotle, van Leeuwen (2008), Reyes (2011), and Suchman (1995). Drawing from classical philosophy, Aristotle’s tripartite rhetorical model highlights ethos (character, credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logical argument) and their importance in persuasive communication. Van Leeuwen’s (2008) work emphasises the discursive methods used in legitimation practices, suggesting authorisation (references to the authority of tradition, custom, law), moral evaluation (references to value systems), rationalisation (references to the goals and uses of institutionalised social action) and mythopoesis (legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions) as key legitimation techniques. Reyes (2011) provides an understanding of how elements of authority, rationality, moral evaluation and hypothetical futures and emotions can be deployed for legitimation purposes. Finally, Suchman’s (1995) work offers an organisational perspective, linking legitimation to organisational behaviour and social expectations, focusing on audience self-interest, comprehensibility, and normative approval. Finally, Suchman’s (1995) work offers an organisational perspective, linking legitimation to organisational behaviour and social expectations, focusing on audience self-interest, comprehensibility, and normative approval.

As depicted in Table 1, which integrates these insights, the proposed typology classifies four primary dimensions of legitimation: rationality-based, credibility-based, morality-based and emotion-based. Rationality-based strategies engage with the content of the argument itself, focusing on logic, evidence and intellectual rigor, while credibility-based strategies emphasise the source of the argument, cen-

tring on the trustworthiness, authority and reputation of the individual or entity presenting the argument. In other words, rationality-based legitimation appeals to the mind, whereas credibility-based legitimation appeals to trust and the subjective assessment of reliability and competence. Morality-based strategies then seek alignment with universal principles and appeal to a sense of right and wrong, while emotion-based strategies focus on individual or collective emotional experiences, seeking to influence through feelings rather than principles. The ordering below can be seen as a progression from strategies grounded in reason and evidence (rationality) to those more dependent on the actor’s qualities (credibility), then to those appealing to shared social values (morality), and finally to those that leverage human feelings (emotion).

Table 1. Primary dimensions of legitimation

Primary dimensions of legitimation	Aristotle	Van Leeuwen	Reyes	Suchman
Rationality-based legitimation	Logos (logical argument)	Rationalisation	Legitimation by rationality	Cognitive (based on comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness)
Credibility-based legitimation	Ethos (character, credibility)	Authorisation	Legitimation by authority	Pragmatic (based on audience self-interest)
Morality-based legitimation		Moral evaluation	Legitimation by moral evaluation	Moral (based on normative approval)
Emotion-Based legitimation	Pathos (emotion)		Legitimation by hypothetical future and emotions	

In the second step, the primary dimensions of legitimation are combined with van Dijk’s (1993, 1997) concept of the ideological square, which stems from his work on the role of discourse in social cognition and power relations. According to van Dijk, positive self-presentation refers to how actors assess themselves positively within a discourse with an aim to enhance their credibility, legitimacy or likability in the eyes of their audience. By contrast, negative other-presentation involves portraying others negatively in order to discredit or diminish them and hence improve one’s own legitimacy (van Dijk 1993, 1997).

Combining these two steps, the article presents a new integrative typology of self-legitimation discursive strategies that encompasses both positive self-

presentation and negative other-presentation across four primary dimensions, as captured in Table 2. The resultant framework provides for eight distinct discursive self-legitimation strategies. While the positive self-presentation category combines rationality-based, credibility-based, morality-based, and emotion-based strategies to illustrate how actors legitimise themselves by seeking to bolster their own image or stance, the negative other-presentation category explores the corresponding strategies employed to construct others in a negative light, illuminating how rationality, credibility, morality, and emotion can be used to undermine or critique others in order to reinforce one's own legitimacy.

Table 2. Typology of self-legitimation discursive strategies

Categories of presentation	Rationality-based	Credibility-based	Morality-based	Emotion-based
Positive self-presentation	Employing logical arguments, evidence, and well-structured reasoning to appeal to the audience's intellectual sensibilities	Utilising authority, character, or credentials by highlighting qualifications, experience, or associations with reputable entities to reinforce one's reliability	Emphasising moral values, ethical principles, alignment with societal values or social responsibility to portray oneself as in line with widely accepted norms	Leveraging emotions and hopes to foster a positive emotional connection with the audience
Negative other-presentation	Using rational arguments and highlighting logical inconsistencies, flawed reasoning, and lack of evidence in others' arguments to undermine their positions	Questioning or undermining others' credibility and casting doubt on qualifications, motives, or integrity to diminish their standing	Challenging the moral standing, values, or ethical principles of others, portraying them as out of step with accepted social norms	Utilising emotional appeals, fear, distrust, and disdain through emotional discourse or charged language to cultivate negative perceptions of others

Importantly, when used together, these two categories of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation can reinforce each other, leading to a more powerful self-legitimation message. However, achieving this synergistic

effect requires maintaining a careful balance. Negative other-presentation must be proportional and aligned with the positive attributes being emphasised, as excessive negativity could overshadow the positive message, leading to a perception of aggressiveness or hostility. By integrating these eight strategies into one coherent typology, the article offers a multi-layered perspective on self-legitimation in discourse that can be applied across various domains.

5. Application of the typology: The case of the European Parliament and Brexit

5.1 European Parliament as an actor in the Brexit process

Expanding on the initial discussion in the Introduction, the EP's engagement in Brexit negotiations is a compelling case study that deserves particular attention, for a number of reasons. With Brexit constituting a critical juncture in the process of European integration, (Zappettini and Bennett 2022), the negotiations of Brexit agreements were massively complex, sensitive and emotional, with unusually high stakes (Martill and Steiger 2018). Crucially, the EP's involvement with the process highlights how, despite being sidelined in the negotiations and facing organisational challenges, the assembly sought to assume a role of a tactical actor and "a maximiser of its own powers" (Closa Montero et al. 2021, 164). In line with the assembly's strife for post-Lisbon empowerment as a legislative actor (Meissner and Schoeller 2019), the EP sought to become a *de facto* negotiator, claim its voice in the negotiations beyond the simple power of consent and win governance gains (Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2019, 2021; Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023).

As Brusenbauch Meislová (2023) shows, the EP leveraged its influence over the negotiations of the WA and the TCA through five bargaining self-empowerment strategies of obstructing, moving first, issue-linking, allying with other actors, and mobilising public opinion. The strategy of obstructing proved effective in both negotiations. During the WA negotiations, the EP was keen to threaten to use its veto power to reinforce its bargaining position. However, in the TCA negotiations, the EP applied this strategy more forcefully by delaying its ratification of the agreement, thereby gaining more time to scrutinise the deal and assert its concerns over the Northern Ireland Protocol (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023; Larik, 2021). In employing the first-mover strategy, the EP sought to act as an agenda-setter and input provider. During both sets of negotiations, it actively proposed measures and exerted political pressure through its resolutions (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023). The issue-linking strategy was used differ-

ently in the two sets of negotiations. During the WA negotiations, the EP made its consent conditional on specific issues like citizens' rights and the Northern Irish border. In the TCA negotiations, the EP expanded this strategy to include broader issues like the level-playing field and linked its consent to the provisional application of the TCA to demands for a constructive role in supervising its implementation (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023; Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2021). Alliance-building was another strategy the EP used effectively by forging alliances with other EU institutions and member states. During the WA negotiations, the EP maintained a close alliance with the European Commission and supported Ireland's interests, emphasizing the importance of the Good Friday Agreement. This strategy continued during the TCA talks, with the EP's strong stance on the Northern Ireland Protocol and cooperation with Ireland being key factors in its approach (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023; Bressanelli, Chelotti and Lehmann 2019, 2021; Meissner and Schoeller 2019). Mobilising public opinion was consistently used by the EP to publicise the negotiation process and increase its visibility. During the WA negotiations, the EP engaged closely with the media and held public debates and hearings to promote transparency and gather information. Although the intensity of this engagement was somewhat reduced during the TCA talks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EP continued to emphasize transparency and public participation (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2023).

5.2 Data

The data is analyzed using the DHA, which combines detailed textual analysis with the context in which the texts are produced and received. The dataset comprises all EP resolutions related to Brexit and UK-EU relations adopted since 2016. EP resolutions typify the realm of soft law. Soft law refers to rules and principles that are not legally binding but still have significant influence on the behavior of actors within international and domestic legal systems. These may include guidelines, codes of conduct, recommendations, and resolutions. While soft law does not have the formal status of hard law, it often serves as a precursor to legally binding agreements or complements existing legal frameworks by providing detailed guidance on their implementation (Crawford 2021).

Table 3. European Parliament resolutions on Brexit

Withdrawal period (24.6.2016–31.1.2020)	Resolution of 28 June 2016 (European Parliament 2016)	– Acknowledgement of the referendum decision – Swift and coherent implementation of the withdrawal procedure – Urges the notification to take place as soon as possible
	Resolution of 5 April 2017 (European Parliament 2017a)	– Principle of sequencing of negotiations – Unacceptability of any trade-offs between security and the future EU-UK economic relationship – Emphasis on three key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Citizens’ rights – Northern Ireland peace process – Indivisibility of the four freedoms
	Resolution of 3 October 2017 (European Parliament 2017b)	– Acknowledgement of the insufficiency of the British government’s progress on Brexit – Emphasis on key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial settlement – Citizens’ rights – Irish border
	Resolution of 13 December 2017 (European Parliament 2017c)	– Acknowledgement of the “sufficient progress” in withdrawal negotiations – Emphasis on four outstanding issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Citizens’ rights – Administrative procedures for citizens applying for “permanent residence status” – European Court of Justice decisions – Irish border
	Resolution of 14 March 2018 (European Parliament 2018)	– Proposal for an UK-EU association agreement based on four pillars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trade and economic relations – Foreign policy – Internal security – Thematic cooperation
	Resolution of 18 September 2019 (European Parliament 2019)	– Preference for an “orderly Brexit” resting on the already negotiated WA – Openness to “alternative solutions” – Concerns about safeguarding the rights of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU
	Resolution of 15 January 2020 (European Parliament 2020a)	– Focus on implementing and monitoring provisions on citizens’ rights in the WA – Special focus on the UK government’s EU Settlement Scheme

Table 3. (continued)

Transition period (1.2.2020–31.12.2020)	Resolution of 12 February 2020 (European Parliament 2020b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Initial input to the upcoming negotiations on a new post-Brexit EU-UK partnership – Preference for as-deep-as-possible association agreement with the UK based on three pillars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Economic partnership – Foreign affairs partnership – Specific sectoral issues
	Resolution of 18 June 2020 (European Parliament 2020c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Views on the negotiations, the WA and future relations – Insistence on level playing field guarantees – Strict implementation of the NI Protocol as the precondition for the successful conclusion of the future agreement
Post-transition period (since 1.1.2021)	Resolution of 28 April 2021 (European Parliament 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Evaluation of and expectations from the TCA – Preservation of peace on the island of Ireland as one of the EP’s main goals in agreeing on the future relationship – Insistence that the EP plays a full role in monitoring how TCA is applied
	Resolution of 5 April 2022 (European Parliament 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Future of fisheries in the Channel, North Sea, Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean in the light of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU

As delineated in Table 3, a total of twelve Brexit-related resolutions were passed: ten non-legislative and two legislative ones. The focus on the resolutions is underpinned by their role as “a salient tool that enabled the EP to offer political guidance and substantive comments on the negotiations and contents of the deals in a consistent manner” (Brusenbauch Meislová 2023, 8). Indeed, the EP deviated from its standard practice of issuing resolutions at the conclusion of the negotiation process (Hart, 2020) and instead adopted them while Brexit negotiations were still underway, despite the inherent fluidity and increased potential for error. This proactive approach allowed the EP to both inform and constrain other decision-makers early in the process, thereby establishing itself as a swift, well-prepared, and knowledgeable actor (Brusenbauch Meislová 2023, 8.). The significance of the resolutions was reinforced by the broad intergroup consensus across the assembly, which further amplified their importance and bolstered the credibility of the EP as a formidable negotiating entity. The assembly consistently underscored to all negotiating parties and the public the critical nature of its resolutions, routinely designating the priorities and demands articulated within them as “red lines” (Brusenbauch Meislová 2019, 2021, 2023, 8.).

The scholarly literature has assessed the EP resolutions' purposes, particularly noting that although they are "largely symbolic" (Archick 2014, 16), they constitute essential normative and political governance tools at the EP's disposal (Hart 2020) whose value rests not only in their influence on the other EU institutions, but also in the political signals it transmits to policymakers and officials within member states, and other stakeholders such as businesses, civil society organizations, and the general public (Hart 2020, 351). This article extends this understanding of the purposes of EP resolutions by explicitly acknowledging them as powerful discursive resources for legitimation, showing how they can effectively serve as a potent tool for the EP's self-legitimation.

While a thorough audience reception study would be necessary to fully understand the resolution's impact on the Brexit process, it is plausible to speculate that the EP's strategic use of soft law in its resolutions played a key role in shaping the Brexit discourse. These texts likely contributed to the EP's ability to assert its influence and legitimacy during a period of significant political upheaval. By framing its positions through carefully crafted language, the EP could have effectively communicated its stances to both internal and external audiences, reinforcing its role as a key player in the Brexit process.

5.3 Analysis and results

This chapter details how the EP strategically exploited soft law to make sense – and shape the reality – of Brexit, applied it to (re)produce shared meaning(s) and legitimised, through language, both itself and its perspectives of the UK as a (non)member state. The chapter analytically assesses and interprets some of the ways in which the EP applied the above-outlined eight self-legitimation discursive strategies throughout the Brexit process. It will also refer to concrete textual examples derived from the resolutions to illustrate the argumentation.

5.3.1 *Strategies of positive self-presentation*

Rationality-based positive self-presentation

Rationality-based positive self-presentation emerged as a principal strategy of the EP's self-legitimation efforts, prominently evident throughout the entire Brexit process and manifested in the assembly's utilisation of logical, evidence-based arguments and well-structured reasoning to appeal to its audience's intellectual sensibilities. All of the resolutions on Brexit framed the EP as a rational actor grounded in established legal frameworks, a strategy that positioned it as a guardian of order and stability. All of them meticulously delineated the obliga-

tions for all parties involved and proactively outlined numerous concrete proposals for a future course.

Rooting the EP's positions in a rational episteme, a recurrent theme was the emphasis on legal certainty and portrayal of the EP as ensuring that all Brexit-related decisions be tethered to strict rules (as in “[The EP] believes that transitional arrangements ensuring legal certainty and continuity can only be agreed [...] if they contain the right balance of rights and obligations for both parties” [European Parliament 2017a], which resonated with the ideals of international negotiations rooted in stability and predictability (Firth 1995).

Moreover, the EP also rationalised its authority by spotlighting its own role in the Brexit process and asserting its centrality in the decision-making process, in what can be understood as explicit claim-to-power moves (as in “Insists that Parliament must play a full role in the monitoring and implementation of the Agreement” [European Parliament 2017a; Brusenbauch Meislová 2021, 2023]). A related strategy was the vehement emphasis on the EP's retrospective consistent proactive involvement in the Brexit process throughout the years (as in “acknowledges that Parliament was able to express its opinion on a regular basis” [European Parliament 2021], with the resolutions showcasing a timeline of sustained involvement, thus bolstering its claim to be an engaged decision-making body.

Credibility-based positive self-presentation

Central to the strategy of credibility-based positive self-presentation, present throughout the whole Brexit process, were the EP's efforts to construct itself as an institution deeply rooted in procedural integrity. A key tool here was the inherently self-referential nature of the resolutions, where “each part can reference, and be legitimized by other parts” (Goodrich 1990 in Cheng and Machin 2023, 245), suggesting a unified, credible whole. The EP's discourse on Brexit was, indeed, marked by a steadfast discursive practice of intertextuality, where the resolutions can be effectively conceptualised as “intertextual chains” (Fairclough 2003, 130). This manifested through the consistent referencing of cornerstone legal documents as well as the past resolutions. For instance, the resolution of 5 April 2022 on the future of fisheries refers to as many as 28 distinct documents, agreements, regulations and prior resolutions (European Parliament 2022). Through this diachronic referencing, the EP firmly situated itself within precedent and underscored the historical and procedural consistency that underpinned its stances. By donning the mantle of the “custodian of the treaties”, the EP discursively enriched its claim to be viewed as a trustworthy institution dedicated to upholding its end of commitments. Constant references to procedural rules, such as “having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure” (European Parliament

2016), conjured up the imagery of commitment to thoroughness and procedural depth, augmenting its perceived credibility.

What is more, the assembly's credibility was discursively reinforced by highlighting a convergence between its own views on Brexit and those of the Council and the European Commission (as in "Welcomes the fact that there is a high level of convergence between the negotiating objectives expressed in Parliament's resolution [...] and in Council Decision [...] emphasises that the Commission has Parliament's full support" [European Parliament 2020c]).

Morality-based positive self-presentation

The EP also connected its positions on Brexit to broader moral principles to narrate itself as in line with widely accepted societal norms and ethical values. As the Brexit process unfolded, its employment of this strategy became progressively more evident (especially in the transition and post-transition periods).

An illustrative element of this strategy was the EP's oft-reiterated appeals to universal values such as justice, human rights and non-discrimination (as in "[EP's] continued adherence to democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms" [European Parliament 2020c], which positioned the assembly not just as a political body but as a moral guardian – as a virtuous actor in a complex political landscape, committed to ensuring that all actions adhere to a morally sound framework. Conveying a profound sense of duty and responsibility, the EP constructed itself as ensuring that principles that are dear to the EU and its citizens are not compromised, which in turn reinforced the image of the Brexit negotiations as not just political but morally imperative. The following excerpt illustrates this tendency well:

[...] throughout the process of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, Parliament has sought to protect the rights of EU citizens, protect peace and prosperity on the island of Ireland, protect fishing communities, uphold the EU's legal order, safeguard the autonomy of EU decision making, preserve the integrity of the customs union and internal market.

(European Parliament 2021; see also European Parliament 2017a, 2017c, 2018, 2020b, 2020c, 2022)

Just as importantly, multiple times in the resolutions, the EP justified its Brexit stances as driven by a quest for fairness, emphasizing its commitment to achieving a fair and balanced relationship with the UK (as in "recalls that any final agreement must be based on a balance of rights and obligations" [European Parliament 2020c; similarly also European Parliament 2020b]). Lastly, its recurrent claims to transparency, openness and inclusivity also bolstered the EP's moral image in the negotiation process (as in "Calls on the Commission to continue conducting negotiations transparently..." [European Parliament 2020c]), showcasing the EP's

consideration of diverse stakeholder perspectives (Brusenbauch Meislová 2023; cf. Rautajoki and Fitzgerald 2022).

Emotion-based positive self-presentation

Though more subtle than the previous three strategies, the EP's resolutions showcased a conscious effort to self-legitimise the EP's role and stances within the Brexit process also through emotion-based positive self-presentation. The EP focused on leveraging emotions to foster positive emotional connections, leaning more heavily on this strategy as the Brexit process advanced.

In particular, the EP constantly evoked a deep sense of shared history and cooperation with the UK, as in: "given the shared basis of common values held by the EU and the UK, their close links and current regulatory alignment, the UK's 47-year membership of the EU [...] the UK will continue to be an important partner for the EU" (European Parliament 2020b). By alluding to shared interests and mutual interdependence, the resolutions were designed to cultivate sentiments of unity and collaboration despite the Brexit rift. Routinely represented as 'partnership', the traits attributed to the envisioned future EU-UK relationship included qualities such as "strong, close and special", "ambitious, close and lasting", "deeply integrated and coordinated" and "comprehensive" (European Parliament 2020b), conveying a sense of goodwill, shared aspiration and mutual confidence. Relatedly, the EP mobilised the rhetoric of stability and security through repeated assurances that, despite the changing dynamics, it was committed to upholding the core principles that had governed its relationship with the UK (European Parliament 2020c). This chimes well with the literature showing that the EP was the most approachable of all EU institutions during Brexit (Brusenbauch Meislová 2023).

What is more, the EP's discursive choices highlighted an increasing emphasis on the role of trust in the Brexit process ("[the EP] considers that trust is an essential element of any negotiation..." [European Parliament 2020b], aiming to resonate with the understanding of trust as a fundamental value in any partnership (Firth 1995). Apart from that, the resolutions were also replete with assertions of the EP's protective stance towards EU citizens, which foregrounded it as a caring and responsible entity ("European Parliament represents all citizens of the European Union and will act throughout the whole process leading to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom to protect their interests" [European Parliament 2017a]).

5.3.2 *Strategies of negative other-presentation*

Rationality-based negative other-presentation

The EP also strategically legitimised itself through the discourse of negative other-presentation, with this set of strategies having become more pointed over time, as

the Brexit process faced multiple challenges (Martill and Steiger 2018). For the EP, the conceptualisation of the “other” was invariably epitomised by the UK.

Central to rationality-based negative other-presentation was the EP’s self-representation as a beacon of rationality, methodical planning and consistent approach, juxtaposing its stance against the UK’s portrayed irrational, haphazard and inadequate positioning. This was evident in the way in which the resolutions dissected, in a nuanced manner, the UK’s negotiation strategies, laying bare apparent lapses in reasoning. The EP’s resolutions often drew attention to perceived inadequacies of the UK’s proposals, as in “[The EP] is of the opinion that the United Kingdom’s proposals set out in its position paper of 26 June 2017 fall short in that respect” (European Parliament 2017b). Such critiques extended to pointing out apparent inconsistencies in the UK’s overall stance, suggesting a lack of forethought and rational planning, as in “Whereas she [the UK Prime Minister] has not yet set out a consistent view on future EU-UK relations” (European Parliament 2018), or “Whereas comments such as those made by David Davis, calling the outcome of phase 1 of the negotiations a mere ‘statement of intent’, risk undermining the good faith that has been built during the negotiations” (European Parliament 2017c).

As the Brexit negotiations progressed, the EP’s discursive posture vis-à-vis the UK got even more assertive, more vocally lamenting its endeavours for institutional selectivity (as in “cherry-picking’ approach is unacceptable for the EU” [European Parliament 2020c]; “the EU will not accept the UK’s piecemeal approach” [European Parliament 2020c]; for more on this see Martill and Sus, 2022) and directly attributing the stumbling blocks in negotiations to the UK’s missteps (“whereas the current time pressure in the negotiations is merely the result of the UK’s choices” [European Parliament 2020c]).

Credibility-based negative other-presentation

The EP also framed its resolutions in a way that articulated the UK as a less credible actor, juxtaposing it against its own projected image of reliability and integrity. One salient feature of this strategy was the depiction of the UK as internally divided, a tactic that cast doubt on its ability to present a unified front. A telling instance is the following excerpt that questioned the UK government’s credibility in fully representing the interests of its citizens:

many citizens of the United Kingdom have expressed strong opposition to losing the rights they currently enjoy pursuant to Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
(European Parliament 2017a)

Anchoring its legitimacy further in the notion of credibility, the resolutions routinely highlighted the UK’s deficiencies in what the assembly saw as the UK’s fail-

ure to meet its responsibilities. The EP's criticism of the UK's handling of the Irish border dilemma was particularly pointed, casting the UK as inadequately prepared and thereby eroding its credibility (as in "Strongly believes that it is the responsibility of the UK Government to provide a unique, effective and workable solution that prevents a 'hardening' of the border [...] regrets that the United Kingdom's proposals fall short in that regard" [European Parliament 2017b]). Apart from that, the EP's assessment of the British approach depicted the UK as breaching previous agreements (as in "condemns the UK's more recent unilateral actions, in breach of the Withdrawal Agreement" [European Parliament 2021]).

The strategy was reinforced also by the parliamentary discourse around the TCA which foregrounded the UK's "lack of political will", casting doubt on its dedication to collaborative endeavours ("[EP] regrets nonetheless the limited scope of this Agreement, due to the lack of political will on the part of the UK to engage in important areas..." [European Parliament 2021]). In a similar vein, references to the "extreme last-minute nature of the Agreements" and the UK's "refusal to extend", even in the midst of a pandemic (European Parliament 2021), further cemented the discursive representation of the UK as lacking in credibility.

Morality-based negative other-presentation

EP resolutions also bolstered the body's legitimacy by casting the UK in a morally questionable light. In many instances (especially during the transition and post-transition periods), the EP's challenging of the UK in this sense was very direct. This was evident, for instance, in its accusations against the UK for discriminatory practices, as in "Expresses concern about regrettable administrative practices against EU citizens living in the United Kingdom" (European Parliament 2017b). Similarly, the EP was discursively creating a moral dichotomy by contrasting its commitment to principles such as fairness, justice and community with perceived failings on the UK's part (as in "Reiterates its commitment to ensuring an equitable and fair solution for citizens, and regrets the United Kingdom's lack of progress in safeguarding the rights and dignities of the people involved" [European Parliament 2017b]).

In other cases, the assembly positioned itself on higher moral ground in a more subtle way through references to potential future scenarios. For instance, by urging the UK to enact a new employment bill – ("Urges the UK Government to enact a new employment bill before the end of the transition period" [European Parliament 2020b]) – the implication was that the UK may not have acted responsibly or ethically towards its workers, connoting a potential moral misalignment between the UK and the EU. The resolutions also conveyed an image of the UK potentially acting out of step with accepted norms and ethics: "[EP] requires the fair treatment of EU-27 citizens living or having lived in the United Kingdom [...]"

stresses that any degradation of the rights [...] would be contrary to Union law” [European Parliament 2017a]).

As Brexit progressed, the EP increasingly displayed a higher degree of linguistic assertiveness vis-à-vis the UK, which was mirrored, for instance, in its explicit appeals to action directed towards the UK, “calling on” the UK or declaring that the EP “expected” the UK to act in a certain manner. Sometimes, the parliamentary discourse conveyed the image of the EP having authority to impose an obligation on the UK, via the use of the modal verbs “should” and “must”, thereby making the UK an explicit object of the obligation (for instance, European Parliament 2017c, 2020a).

Emotion-based negative other-presentation

The EP resolutions also rooted the assembly’s legitimacy in an evocative, emotion-driven representation of the other. As the Brexit negotiations unfolded, the emotional intensity with which the EP approached the UK grew stronger.

Most often, the resolutions were marked by a pronounced discourse of regret and disappointment over the UK’s withdrawal (“whereas this will be an unprecedented and regrettable event as a Member State has never withdrawn from the European Union before” [European Parliament 2017a]) as well as over its proposals – (“Regrets that the United Kingdom’s proposals in relation to Ireland and Northern Ireland are not comprehensive and fall short in that regard” [European Parliament 2017b]). To illustrate more specifically, the resolutions, for instance, regretted the UK’s stance towards the free movement principle (“Regrets, in this context, that the UK has announced that the principle of the free movement of persons between the EU and the UK will no longer apply” [European Parliament 2020b]) as well as the UK’s decision not to participate in Erasmus+, an emotion-based appeal highlighting a missed opportunity for young people (“Regrets also the UK’s decision not to participate in Erasmus+, depriving young people of such a unique opportunity” [European Parliament 2021]). Such expressions functioned not merely to convey an institutional stance but to resonate with and elicit comparable emotions in the audience. The frequent use of the emotionally-charged term “regret” instilled a poignant sense of loss, suggesting that the UK’s actions were profoundly sorrowful for both EU and UK citizens, and underscored the missed opportunities that the EP (and the EU as such) continuously championed but the UK chose to forgo.

Emblematic of this strategy were also expressions of anxiety and apprehension, especially when highlighting the UK’s perceived shortcomings (as in “Notes with concern that negotiations [...] have not yet progressed to the next stage and that many issues, in particular citizens’ rights, remain to be resolved” [European Parliament 2017b]). A key element was also the invocation of feelings of eroding

trust, painting certain UK actions as potential threats to the hard-won mutual faith between the two entities, as illustrated by the EP's above-mentioned reaction to David Davis' comments (European Parliament 2017c).

6. Concluding remarks

The analysis has demonstrated that the proposed typology conveniently guides the thinking on varying types of self-legitimation discursive strategies and provides useful theoretical yardsticks to anchor a discussion thereupon. Even though the typically technical, complex, and "dry" nature of the legal language (Cheng and Machin 2023; Condor 2003) might make resolutions an unconventional tool for self-legitimation purposes, their use by the EP illustrates how a legal tool can be leveraged in multifaceted ways beyond its traditional function. The resolutions serve not just as legal instruments but also as strategic communications, reinforcing the legitimacy of the institution while shaping perceptions of a highly complex and politically charged issue.

The analysis shows that the EP resolutions proved to be rich texts that combine all eight strategies of self-legitimation. Through careful wording and structuring, the EP legitimised itself as a rational, credible, ethical, and emotionally resonant entity, using discourse in its resolutions to develop and reaffirm a cohesive institutional identity centring on a set of particular traits and shared normative values. By employing these strategies, the resolutions crafted a narrative where the UK's perceived shortcomings validated and necessitated the EP's positions.

Crucially, the analysis offers several valuable policy lessons when it comes to navigating the land of discursive self-legitimation. First, policymakers should recognise the potential of legal instruments not just for their direct legal impact but also as tools for strategic communication and self-legitimation. Second, it is important to bear in mind that overstepping the bounds of the delicate balance between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation can turn the potentially synergistic relationship into a counterproductive one (cf. Liebrecht, Hustinx and van Mulken 2019). The EP's resolutions during the Brexit process serve as a testament to the assembly's adept navigation of this delicate balance. Even though the EP employed both types of strategies, its primary focus was on presenting itself positively, whilst its use of negative other-presentation served to underscore its own contrasting positive attributes and legitimise its stances. Third, the analysis underscores the necessity of maintaining a balance between emotional and non-emotional elements in discourse, particularly when engaging in negative other-representation. The analysis demonstrated that the EP grounded

the negative portrayal of the Other primarily on factual foundations, as unsubstantiated or overly emotional communication might reflect poorly on the perception of its rationality (Kirman, Livet and Teschl 2010).

Funding

Writing of this article was supported by the Czech Science Agency [project GA23-05958S]. Open Access publication of this article was funded through a Transformative Agreement with Aston University.

Acknowledgements section

I would like to thank the editors of the Journal of Language & Politics and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript.








Bibliography

- Archick, Kristin. 2014. "US–EU Cooperation Against Terrorism." *CRS Report No. RS22030*. December 1, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22030.pdf>
- Bäckstrand, Karin, and Frederik Söderbaum. 2018. "Legitimation and Delegitimation in Global Governance: Discursive, Institutional, and Behavioral Practices." In *Legitimacy in Global Governance: Sources, Processes, and Consequences*, edited by Jonas Tallberg, Karin Bäckstrand, and Jan Aart Scholte, 101–118. Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, Samuel. 2019. "Values as tools of legitimation in EU and UK Brexit discourses." In *Discourses of Brexit*, edited by Veronika Koller, Susanne Kopf, and Marlene Miglbauer, 123–139. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bennett, Samuel. 2022. "Mythopoetic legitimation and the recontextualization of Europe's foundational myth." *Journal of Language and Politics* 21 (2): 370–389.
- Bressanelli, Edoardo, Nicola Chelotti, and Wilhelm Lehmann. 2019. "Negotiating Brexit: The European Parliament between participation and influence." *Journal of European Integration* 41 (3): 347–363.
- Bressanelli, Edoardo, Nicola Chelotti, and Wilhelm Lehmann. 2021. "Managing Disintegration: How the European Parliament Responded and Adapted to Brexit" *Politics and Governance* 9 (1): 16–26.
- Brusenbauch Meislová, Monika. 2019. "The European parliament in the Brexit process: Leading role, supporting role or just a small cameo?" In *Brexit and democracy. The role of parliaments in the UK and the European union*, edited by Thomas Christiansen and Diane Fromage, 235–262. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

-  Brusenbauch Meislová, Monika. 2021. "In the spotlight, or behind the scenes? The European parliament as an actor in article 50 withdrawal negotiations." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 29 (4), 567–583.
-  Brusenbauch Meislová, Monika. 2023. "Game of deals: bargaining behaviour of the European parliament in the Brexit process." *Journal of Legislative Studies*, online first.
- Carta, Caterina, and Jean-Frederic Morin. 2014. "Introduction: EU Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis Making Sense of Diversity." In *EU Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis Making Sense of Diversity*, edited by Caterina Carta and Jean-Frederic Morin, 1–23. London: Ashgate.
-  Cheng, Le, and David Machin. 2023. "The law and critical discourse studies." *Critical Discourse Studies* 20 (3): 243–255.
-  Closa Montero, Carlos, Felipa González de León, and Gisela Hernández González. 2021. "Pragmatism and the limits to the European parliament's strategies for self-empowerment." *Politics and Governance* 9 (3): 163–174.
- Condor, Sarah. 2013. *Interpretation of Legal Discourse*. North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
-  Coulthard, Malcolm, ed. 2013. *Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis*. New York: Routledge.
-  Crawford, E. 2021. *Non-Binding Norms in International Humanitarian Law: Efficacy, Legitimacy, and Legality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
-  de Cillia, Rudolf, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak. 1999. "The Discursive Construction of National Identities." *Discourse & Society* 10 (2): 149–173.
-  Diez, Thomas. 2014a. "Setting the limits: Discourse and EU foreign policy. Cooperation and Conflict." *Conflict and Cooperation* 49 (3): 319–333.
-  Diez, Thomas. 2014b. "Speaking Europe, Drawing Boundaries: Reflections on the Role of Discourse in EU Foreign Policy and Identity." In *EU Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis Making Sense of Diversity*, edited by Caterina Carta and Jean-Frederic Morin, 27–42. London: Ashgate.
-  Elnakkouzi, Rania. 2023. "In the name of the nobility of the cause, what I did is right: Legitimizing the use of force via the hero-protector narrative used as argument." *Journal of Language and Politics* 22 (2): 225–244.
- European Parliament. 2016. European Parliament resolution of 28 June 2016 on the decision to leave the EU resulting from the UK referendum (2016/2800(RSP)). 28 June. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0294+o+DOC+XML+Vo//EN>
- European Parliament. 2017a. European Parliament resolution of 3 October 2017 on the state of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom (2017/2847(RSP)). 3 October. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0361+o+DOC+XML+Vo//EN>
- European Parliament. 2017b. European Parliament resolution of 5 April 2017 on negotiations with the United Kingdom following its notification that it intends to withdraw from the European Union (2017/2593(RSP)). 5 April. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0102_EN.html

- European Parliament. 2017c. European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2017 on the state of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom. (2017/2964(RSP)). 13 December. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0490+0+DOC+XML+Vo//EN>
- European Parliament. 2018. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2018 on the framework of the future EU-UK relationship (2018/2573(RSP)). 14 March. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2018-0069+0+DOC+XML+Vo//EN&language=EN>
- European Parliament. 2020a. European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on implementing and monitoring the provisions on citizens' rights in the Withdrawal Agreement ((2020/2505(RSP)). 15 January. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/238182/TA-9-2020-0006_EN.pdf
- European Parliament. 2020b. European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2020 on the proposed mandate for negotiations for a new partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2020/2557(RSP)). 12 February. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0033_EN.html
- European Parliament. 2020c. European Parliament recommendation of 18 June 2020 on the negotiations for a new partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2020/2023(INI)). 18 June. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0152_EN.html
- European Parliament. 2021. European Parliament legislative resolution of 28 April 2021 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (05022/2021 – C9-0086/2021 – 2020/0382(NLE)). 28 April. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021AP0140>
- European Parliament. 2022. European Parliament resolution of 5 April 2022 on the future of fisheries in the Channel, North Sea, Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean in the light of the UK's withdrawal from the EU (2021/2016(INI)). 5 April. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0103>
- Fairclough, Isabel, and Norman Fairclough. 2012. *Political Discourse Analysis*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, Norman, and Ruth Wodak. 1997. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, edited by T. van Dijk, 258–284. London: Sage.
- Firth, Alan. 1995. *The Discourse of Negotiation*. Pergamon.
- Gibbons, John Peter. 1999. "Language and the Law." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 19, 156–173. EAP Background Reading. <http://www.uefap.com/prepare/research/langlaw.htm>.
- Gilley, Bruce. 2009. *The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Goodrich, Peter. 1990. *Languages of Law: From logics of memory to nomadic masks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gostyńska-Jakubowska, Agata. 2017. "Parliamentarians in Brexit talks: Bulls in a china shop?" *Centre for European Reform*, February.

- doi Hall, Stephen G. F., Tobias Lenz, and Anastassia Obydenkova. 2022. "Environmental commitments and rhetoric over the Pandemic crisis: social media and legitimation of the AIIB, the EAEU, and the EU." *Post-Communist Economies* 34 (5): 577–602.
- doi Halliday, Terence C., Susan Block-Lieb, and Bruce G. Carruthers. 2010. "Rhetorical legitimation: Global scripts as strategic devices of international organizations." *Socio-Economic Review* 8 (1): 77–112.
- Hart, Nina M. 2020. "A 'Legal Eccentricity': The European Parliament, its Non-binding Resolution, and the Legitimacy of the EU's Trade Agreements." *University of Bologna Law Review* 5 (2): 327–361.
- Huisman, Rosemary. 1991. "The relevance of discourse analysis to legal practice." *Australian Journal of Law and Society* (7): 27–37.
- doi Hurrelmann, Achim, Anna Gora, and Andrea Wagner. 2013. "The legitimation of the European Union in the news media: three treaty reform debates." *Journal of European Public Policy* 20 (4): 515–534.
- doi Kirman, Allan, Pierre Livet, and Miriam Teschl. 2010. "Rationality and emotions." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 365 (1538): 215–219.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał. 2010. *The Discursive Construction of European Identities: A Multilevel Approach to Discourse and Identity in the Transforming European Union*. Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał, and Ruth Wodak. 2008. "Theorising and analysing social change in central and Eastern Europe: The contribution of critical discourse analysis." In *Discourse and transformation in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Aleksandra Galasinska and Michał Krzyżanowski, 17–40. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Larik, Joris. 2021. "'The mother of all parliaments'? How the ratification of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement boosts the European Parliament's Profile." *Brexit Institute*. <https://dcubrexitinstitute.eu/2021/04/the-mother-of-all-parliaments-how-the-ratification-of-the-trade-and-cooperation-agreement-boosts-the-european-parliaments-profile/>
- Larsen, Henrik. 2018. "Discourse analysis in the study of European foreign policy." In *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, 62–80. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- doi Liebrecht, Christine, Letticia Hustinx, and Margot van Mulken. 2019. "The Relative Power of Negativity: The Influence of Language Intensity on Perceived Strength." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. 38 (2): 170–193.
- Martill, Benjamin and Monika Sus. 2022. "With or Without EU: Differentiated Integration and the Politics of Post-Brexit EU-UK Security Collaboration." *European Papers* 7 (3): 1287–1302.
- Martill, Benjamin, and Uta Steiger. 2018. "Cultures of Negotiation: Explaining Britain's hard bargaining in the Brexit negotiations." *Dahrendorf Forum IV, Working Paper No. 04*. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/sites/european-institute/files/cultures-of-negotiation-paper.pdf>
- doi Meissner, Katharina L., and Magnus G. Schoeller. 2019. "Rising despite the polycrisis? The European Parliament's strategies of self-empowerment after Lisbon." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (7): 1075–1093.

-  Rautajoki, Hanna, and Richard Fitzgerald. 2022. "Populating 'solidarity' in political debate: Interrelational strategies of persuasion within the European Parliament in the aftermath of the Brexit." *Journal of Language and Politics* 21 (5): 763–784.
- Reisigl, Martin, and Ruth Wodak. 2001. *Discourse and Discrimination*. London: Routledge.
-  Reyes, Antonio. 2011. "Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions." *Discourse & Society* 22 (6): 781–807.
-  Suchman, Mark C. 1995. "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches." *The Academy of Management Review* 20 (3): 571–610.
- Szymańska, Jolanta. 2017. "Profiling of New Europeans in the British Conservative Press: A Case Study of the Daily Telegraph." In *Representing the Other in European Media Discourses*, edited by Jan Chovanec and Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska, 103–120. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
-  van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. "Principles of critical discourse analysis." *Critical Discourse Analysis* 4 (2): 249–283.
-  van Dijk, Teun A. 1997. "What is Political Discourse Analysis?" *Political Linguistics* 11: 11–52.
-  van Leeuwen, Theo. 2008. *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online.
- von der Burchard, Hans. 2021. "EU Parliament promised 'exceptional' powers to police post-Brexit trade deal." *Politico*, 27 April. <https://www.politico.eu/article/euparlament-exceptional-powers-post-brexit-trade-deal/>
- Wodak, Ruth. 2001. "The Discourse-Historical Approach." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by R. Wodak, and M. Meyer, 63–95. London: Routledge.
-  Zappettini, Franco, and Samuel Bennett. 2022. "(De)legitimising EUrope in times of crisis." *Journal of Language and Politics* 21 (2): 191–207.

Address for correspondence

Monika Brusenbauch Meislová
Department of International Relations and European Studies
Faculty of Social Studies
Masaryk University
Joštova 10
Brno, 602 00
Czech Republic
brusenbauch.meislova@email.cz
brusenbauch.meislova@muni.cz

Biographical notes

Monika Brusenbauch Meislová is an associate professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic and a visiting professor at Aston University in Birmingham, United Kingdom. In 2024, she has been awarded the Jean Monnet Chair by the European Commission in EU digital diplomacy. In 2020–2023, she was one of the coordinators of the UACES research network 'The Limits of EUrope'. Her

research work covers issues of political discourse, legitimacy and UK-EU relations. Her most recent research has been published in various journals, including Journal of Common Market Studies, British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Journal of Contemporary European Studies, European Security or Europe-Asia Studies.



<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8581-4000>

Publication history

Date received: 23 December 2023

Date accepted: 29 July 2024

Published online: 13 September 2024