

A War of Words: British and French News Media Framing of the 2021 Post-Brexit Jersey Fishing Row

Introduction

In light of the UK Conservative Party's promise to 'take back control of our borders' (Conservatives n.d.) through Brexit, the question of fishing rights in the waters between the UK and Europe was a contentious issue throughout the negotiations. The Channel Islands, finding themselves literally caught in the middle, agreed to join the UK–EU deal, but Jersey fishermen were reported to be 'disappointed' with its terms (BBC 2020). Following growing rumblings from early 2021, the issue came to a head in May 2021 when an explosive row over fishing licences erupted between Jersey (supported by the UK) and France (supported by the EU), escalated through tit-for-tat threats, protests and the dispatch of navy vessels from both sides, which dominated the news cycle for several days. Using framing analysis, this essay will evaluate a selection of the coverage of the crisis on both sides of the Channel to assess whether tried-and-tested frames on the theme of Brexit were utilised by pro-Leave and pro-Remain (or anti-Brexit) newspapers to present the situation as validation of earlier arguments surrounding the referendum, or whether an alternative, cross-national UK-versus-France frame took precedence.

Context

As Phillipson and Symes (2018: 168) explain, before Brexit neighbouring EU coastal states were entitled to 'equal access' to the sea life stocks in the waters around Britain through the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. The UK's withdrawal from the UK necessitated the creation of a new boundary, the implementation of which Phillipson and Symes presciently warned would need to be carefully handled to avoid compromising the possibility of post-Brexit 'peace, prosperity and harmony' (ibid.: 173).

The UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which came into force provisionally on 1 January 2021 and formally on 1 May 2021, allows EU fisherman continued access to waters within 12 miles of the UK coast until 2026, provided certain conditions are met: the possession of licences and evidence of ‘past fishing activities’ in those waters (Heffer 2021). Similar conditions were imposed by Jersey on waters within 3 miles of its coasts, though an interim amnesty on fulfilling these was in place for boats over 12m long until 30 April 2021 (BBC 2021). When the list of licences for large boats was published by Jersey on 30 April, 17 French boats had been denied access due to lack of evidence, while the 41 that did receive licences were subject to ostensibly unexpected conditions (Boffey 2021). The French government declared these to be ‘null and void’ (ibid.), and thus the dispute broke out.

Theoretical Framework

‘Frames’ and ‘framing’ are understood in a variety of ways; this essay will use the terms as defined here and applied in the context of news content analysis. As Tuchman (1978) explains, when journalists produce news about an occurrence, it becomes an event, which is then ‘transformed into a news frame’ (cited in Watkins 2001: 84). Frames constitute a selection of ‘aspects of a perceived reality’ that are made more ‘salient’ (i.e., more ‘noticeable, meaningful, or memorable’) to readers at the expense of other aspects (Entman 1993: 52-54). These elements are organised around a central idea or ‘theme’ (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 59) which is thus implied to be ‘the essence of the issue’ (Gamson & Modigliani 1989, quoted in de Vreese 2005: 53).

A number of framing devices have been identified by scholars. While Tankard (2001: 101) points to 11 structural elements of news articles (such as headlines, subheads, pull quotes, and images) (cited in de Vreese 2005: 54), Gamson and Modigliani (1989) present a list that focuses more on the content of such elements: ‘metaphors’, ‘exemplars’, ‘catch-

phrases', 'depictions' and 'visual images' (cited in de Vreese 2005: 54). Pan and Kosicki usefully organise these devices into four categories: 'syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure' (1993: 59), as will be elaborated in the analysis.

Literature Review

Although the use of frames is typically unconscious rather than deliberate (Khabaz 2018: 499) and does not guarantee a particular audience response (Entman 1993: 53), it still has a significant impact on shaping reader understanding of events and, by extension, public opinion (Khabaz 2018: 499), making news coverage of Brexit a rich seam for content analysts to mine. Khabaz's analysis of self-declared pro-Leave newspapers in the UK in the lead-up to the referendum identified three frames in frequent rotation through variations on three key phrases: 'getting my/our country back', 'undemocratic Europe' and 'take control', which tied in closely with the Leave campaign's emphasis on 'sovereignty' and associated slogans (ibid.: 502). These frames were often connected to discussion of concerns around immigration, the economy, borders and powers around law-making (ibid.: 506).

Maccaferri's discourse-historical analysis of newspapers on both sides during the same time period identified similar common themes: immigration ('taking back control'), the economy, EU bureaucracy and borders (2019: 394), often juxtaposed with 'discursively (re)constructed' historical narratives of the UK–Europe relationship, including references to the Second World War (ibid.: 392, 396). Pro-Leave newspapers were found to be setting the agenda while pro-Remain papers responded, taking a negative stance that did not celebrate the benefits of the EU but instead centred around predictions of economic crisis, thus cementing the position of the 'macro narratives of auto-determination and control, sovereignty and security' at the top of the agenda (ibid.: 394).

Across the Channel, Bijsmans, Galpin and Leruth's (2018: 839-840) qualitative framing analysis revealed that even Eurosceptic newspapers in France, Germany and the Netherlands were critical of Brexit in the lead-up to the referendum, representing it as a threat to EU cohesion and the economy but focusing predominantly on negative consequences for the UK through an EU-versus-UK frame. This was in part corroborated by Krzyżanowska's (2019: 488) discourse-conceptual analysis of European news media, which identified a tendency to refocus discussion of Brexit debates onto the relevant national context, spotlighting concerns around knock-on effects and the potential for economic and EU political crises. A tendency to draw on and recontextualise historical crises, connecting these to the present situation and future possibilities, was also demonstrated (ibid.: 466), which, in tandem with Maccaferri's (2019) findings, suggests this is a key aspect of Brexit framing on both sides of the Channel.

Research Questions

This analysis aims to examine the use of frames in news articles on the Jersey fishing row to suggest possible initial answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: Did pro-Remain UK newspapers frame the situation as an inevitable consequence of Brexit and a manifestation of the crisis they predicted, drawing on previous frames?

RQ2: Did pro-Leave UK newspapers frame the situation as evidence of the necessity of Brexit and 'taking back control' of UK borders, drawing on previous frames?

RQ3: Did anti-Brexit French newspapers frame the situation as evidence of the concerning knock-on effects and UK crisis they predicted, drawing on previous frames?

Data Set

One newspaper was selected to serve as a sample for each research question. Of the UK national newspapers, *The Guardian* was selected as representative of the pro-Remain perspective and *The Telegraph* as representative of the pro-Leave perspective, drawing on Maccaferri's (2019: 393) findings on press positioning during the referendum campaign. Of the French national newspapers, right-wing paper *Le Figaro* was selected for continuity with Bijsmans, Galpin and Leruth's (2018) study. The online versions were consulted in all cases. The date span was set to 4-7 May as the period in which tensions (and coverage) peaked. The full set of articles from this timespan has been presented for context in drawing conclusions (see Appendix 1), but in each case one article (from the category of 'news' rather than 'opinion') has been selected from 6 May, the day of the protest blockades, for in-depth analysis.

Methodology

A qualitative analysis of the articles was conducted in light of the small sample size and Entman's assertion that coding elements in content analysis without 'measur[ing] the salience of elements' results in unrepresentative data (1993: 57). The approach taken to frame identification was largely 'deductive', in that particular frames were defined before the analysis (de Vreese 2005: 53) (see Literature Review), though it was expected that alternative, less 'issue-specific' and more 'generic' frames (de Vreese 2005: 55) may be observed as well. Consideration was also given to the role of translation in the production of the articles.

Analysis and Discussion

The Guardian

The Guardian published nine articles on the controversy within the timespan, four of which include the term 'Brexit' in the headline, which Pan and Kosicki characterise as 'the most powerful framing device of the syntactical structure' (consisting of macro-level structural elements) (1993: 60). The opinion piece (G8), human interest piece (G9) and selection of reader's letters (G5) on the topic all highlight Brexit as the source of discord, chiming with the negative predictions identified earlier by Maccaferri (2019: 394). As Pan and Kosicki (1993: 62) point out, the labelling of certain articles as 'opinion' serves to position other news articles as impartial and purely factual, increasing audience receptiveness to their frames, which makes apparently straightforward news articles the most interesting site for investigation.

In terms of its thematic structure (relating to themes and sub-themes; *ibid.*: 60), the selected article (G6; see Appendix 2) appears to fall into the category of an 'issue story', involving a 'hypothesis-testing' approach whereby evidence (e.g., quotations, observations) is presented to support a hypothesis about a particular issue or topic (*ibid.*). Here the lead presents the hypothesis: 'New restrictions and deep cuts to allowances mean both French and Jersey boat owners feel betrayed by Brexit' (lines 2-3). The lead is a key 'framing mechanism' (Tankard 2001: 101) and here constitutes a concise summary of the frame, demonstrating their tendency to 'diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe' (Entman 1993: 52). Two sub-themes can be observed: firstly, the administrative chaos brought on by Brexit, supported by a quote from a Jersey resident referring to 'administrative-political shambles' (57-8) and paraphrasing of an unnamed source 'close to negotiations' pointing to 'labyrinthine channels set up ... for life outside the EU' as 'the underlying cause of the

dispute' (98-9); secondly, the inevitable continuation of the row, as emphasised by the headline ('... the dispute will go on') and selection of quotes from both sides that constitute the closure of the article (103-112), both elements of the syntactical structure (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 59).

The article is largely sympathetic to the plight of the French fishermen, which manifests in a number of ways: the article opens by evocatively setting the scene, positioning the reader among the French fishermen at 3am that morning, a 'rhetorical device' used to 'increase vividness' and thus intensify effect (ibid.: 62). Also used as part of this 'thematically reinforcing cluster' (Entman 1993: 53) are facts, such as the statistic that some French fisherman 'rely on their Jersey catches for up to 80% of their annual turnover' (27-8), and numerous quotations from French sources (69% of attributed quotes) sharing non-hostile frustrations. Assuming these have been translated, a stylistic choice has been made to use British slang ('taking the piss', 52; 'it's rubbish', 74; 'an absolute joke', 110), facilitating empathy from UK readers. In addition, the four quotations selected to represent Jersey's perspective (56-61, 62-5, 84-90, 105) are critical of UK PM Boris Johnson and his Brexit deal, and a report of aggression from a French boat is mitigated by a witness report stating it 'did not represent the overall atmosphere' (45-6).

A UK-versus-France frame is therefore nowhere to be found, and instead the French are positioned as fellow victims of the inevitable chaos brought on by Brexit, representing a continuation of the pro-Remain negative predictions frame identified by Maccaferri (2019: 493). This frame could be seen to have evolved post-Brexit into an 'issue-specific' (de Vreese 2005: 54) version of the generic 'attribution of responsibility' news frame identified by

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000: 96), placing blame with the government responsible for Brexit.

The Telegraph

The Telegraph published 20 articles on the controversy within the timespan, three of which include the term 'Brexit', while three reference war. The readers' letters (T16) are universally critical of France, while the numerous opinion pieces (T4, T12, T14, T15, T17) mostly focus on criticisms of France and the EU in varying ratios.

The selected article (T11; see Appendix 3) offers an interesting point of comparison with the *Guardian* article. The headline and lead do not set up any hypothesis but rather the expectation that the article will fairly present the French perspective due to the author's situation 'on board with the French fishermen' (line 1) and the jovial tone ('the crew joke', 3) – although undertones of the 'conflict-and-confrontation' frame (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 65) apparent in the body of the article are present ('kill', 1; 'walk the plank', 4). This generic frame 'emphasizes conflict ... as a means of capturing audience interest' (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000: 95) and can be an effective tool for 'marginalizing opponents' (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 65).

This is contributed to in the body of the article through a sub-theme of war that manifests through 'lexical choices' (ibid.: 62) ('laid siege', 9; 'tactics', 81; 'flotilla', 90), depiction of scuffles between the two sides (31-6) and quote selection (one of Tankard's 'framing mechanisms' (2001: 101)): 'next time it will be war' (97-8) and 'we're ready to restage the Battle of Trafalgar' (37-8), the latter of which is used as an opportunity for a jibe about France's loss in said battle (38-9), which is consonant with Maccaferri's (2019: 392) findings about the repurposing of historical narratives. The combination of these devices is

sufficient to outweigh the earlier quotation from a French skipper stating 'We don't want war' (18).

Indeed, the latter brief quote is the only nuanced French perspective included; quotes from fishermen Jean-Claude la Vaullée (37-9) and Cyril Piraud (94-6) that were contextualised in *The Guardian* with reference to their devastation and frustration are presented in isolation and cut down to just the phrases instigating conflict. Meanwhile, numerous lines (60-73) are given to a Jersey-based mediator's commentary on 'dealing with the French', which, though sympathetic, de-personalises their perspective and thus perpetuates the 'us-versus-them' frame, which is compounded by reference to stereotypes elsewhere (e.g., 'famously hot-headed French fishermen', 10-11; 'rosbifs', 12). Moreover, the quotation selected from the Jersey Fisherman's Association is directly critical of France (76-81), suggesting this part was deliberately omitted in quote selection from the same source by *The Guardian*.

Thus, in this case, Brexit-specific frames appear to have been supplanted by a UK-versus-France conflict-and-confrontation frame, in which context the responsibility for post-Brexit bureaucratic inefficiencies mentioned (64, 87-9) may be perceived as lying with the EU.

Le Figaro

Le Figaro published five articles on the topic within the timespan, of which four included 'Brexit' in the headline and one referenced war. No opinion pieces or readers' letters were published, limiting available context for conclusions drawn from the selected article (F4; see Appendix 4).

The headline of the article immediately suggests a 'conflict-and-confrontation' frame (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 65) and sub-theme of war, labelling the 'French-British naval face-off' ('face-à-face naval franco-britannique') the 'Battle of Jersey' ('Bataille de Jersey') in an apparent reference to a 1781 battle during the Anglo-French War. This continues in the supporting paragraph (another element of the syntactical structure; *ibid.*: 65), which immediately evokes said battle and alludes to other historical conflicts between the two countries (lines 7-9; 'Anglo-French wars'/'guerres franco-anglaises'), chiming with Krzyżanowska's (2019: 466) finding regarding the recontextualisation of historical crises. The military sub-theme continues throughout with reference to 'the French flotilla' ('la flotille française', 32), the selection of a quotation referring to the French blockade as 'like an invasion' ('comme une invasion', 30) and the use of two idioms, a framing device similar to that of metaphors (as identified by Gamson and Modigliani 1989, cited in de Vreese 2005: 54): 'lit the touch paper' ('mis le feu aux poudres', 45) and 'crossing the steel of their bows' ('croisant l'acier de leurs étraves', 97).

The 'us-versus-them' frame is also added to by the statement that French–British relations are unstable (14-15) and that the issue of fishing will continue to 'poison' ('empoisonner', 63) UK–EU relations going forward, enveloping Europe into a wider conception of 'us' through the 'past/present-to-future dimension of discourse' highlighted by Krzyżanowska (2019: 466) pre-Brexit as a 'tool in connecting ... collective experiences with ... projections for the common UK, European or international future' (*ibid.*). Indeed, the French source selected to voice criticism of the UK's actions is a Member of the European Parliament, who asserts that the British are trying to 'reduce the rights of Europeans' ('réduire les droits des Européens', 68) – rather than just of the French – through 'illegal means' ('des moyens ... illégaux', 69).

Here traces are present of the EU-versus-UK frame highlighted pre-Brexit by Krzyżanowska (ibid.: 488) and Bijmans, Galpin and Leruth (2018: 840), with the focus on knock-on effects of Brexit for the EU and reference to negative consequences for the UK, as when British fishermen are said to feel ‘betrayed by Boris Johnson’ (‘trahis par Boris Johnson’, 56), continuing earlier presentations of Brexit ‘as an act of self-harm for the UK’ (ibid.). Thus what initially appears to be a generic France-versus-UK frame is built on throughout to construct a confirmation and continuation of the anti-Brexit frames used in the lead-up to the referendum.

Conclusion

Although the sample size is too small to draw definitive conclusions and wider-ranging analysis would be needed to confirm the findings presented here, contextualised analysis of the sample articles found evidence of Brexit-specific frames previously identified by scholars in both anti-Brexit newspapers, suggesting an affirmative answer to RQ1 and RQ3. In the case of the pro-Leave paper, a generic UK-versus-France frame took precedence, though signs of Brexit-specific frames could be detected in opinion pieces within the timespan, resulting in an inconclusive answer to RQ2. Of particular interest is the tentative finding that a historically supported ‘us-versus-them’ ‘conflict-and-confrontation’ frame (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 65) is more likely to be used by right-wing newspapers on both sides of the cross-national Brexit debate, meriting further investigation as the two countries navigate a turbulent post-Brexit landscape.

Word count: 3000

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Note: See Appendix 1 for details of articles analysed, all of which were last accessed on 27 May 2021.

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Appendix 1: List of Articles

Note: Stand-alone videos, cartoons, picture galleries and newsletter extracts were excluded from the list.

Table 1: The Guardian

No.	Date	Author name	Title	Shortened URL
G1	4 May	Daniel Boffey	France threatens to cut off power to Jersey in post-Brexit fishing row	https://tinyurl.com/38adn7wt
G2	5 May	Daniel Boffey and Lisa O'Carroll	UK sends navy vessels to Jersey amid post-Brexit fishing row with France	https://tinyurl.com/3psw92v8
G3	5 May	Lisa O'Carroll and Daniel Boffey	French fishers threaten to blockade Jersey ports as row escalates	https://tinyurl.com/ftaezzmh
G4	6 May	Daniel Boffey	What is behind the dispute over fishing rights around Jersey?	https://tinyurl.com/4znmjtwx
G5	6 May	[Letters from readers]	Now is not the time to draw battle lines against France	https://tinyurl.com/4bx4vkta
G6	6 May	Jon Henley, Lisa O'Carroll and Steven Morris	French fishers' protest over Jersey rights is over but the dispute will go on	https://tinyurl.com/yt6dj89p
G7	6 May	Lisa O'Carroll, Jon Henley and Daniel Boffey	EU accuses UK as France seeks to 'rapidly defuse' Jersey fishing row	https://tinyurl.com/2z62y86j
G8	7 May	Marley Morris	The Jersey fishing standoff shows Brexit has only just begun	https://tinyurl.com/9v2m2meh
G9	7 May	Steven Morris	'We're piggy in the middle': Brexit has made life impossible, say Jersey fishers	https://tinyurl.com/5kv8xbs4

Table 2: *The Telegraph*

No.	Date	Author name	Title	Shortened URL
T1	4 May	James Crisp, Harry Yorke and Henry Samuel	France threatens to cut off Jersey's electricity as Brexit fishing row grows	https://tinyurl.com/fkwtwrm
T2	5 May	Rachel Millard	Jersey crisis exposes UK's dangerous reliance on undersea power cables	https://tinyurl.com/de3badj4
T3	5 May	James Crisp, Harry Yorke and Henry Samuel	'At least the Nazis kept the lights on': UK blasts France for threat to cut off Jersey's power	https://tinyurl.com/3vyyx3zh
T4	5 May	Ben Habib	Britain should get used to hostile tactics from the EU	https://tinyurl.com/8muuabxm
T5	5 May	Harry Yorke, James Crisp, Rachel Millard and Henry Samuel	Royal Navy ships ordered to Jersey as French fishermen prepare blockade	https://tinyurl.com/4m2apkbj
T6	6 May	Harry Yorke, James Crisp, Henry Samuel, Danielle Sheridan and Lizzie Roberts	'Scallop wars' loom as European Commission backs France in Jersey fishing row	https://tinyurl.com/2z8z8fp5
T7	6 May	James Crisp	Brexit Britain's 'war on France' is a perfect storm in a teacup	https://tinyurl.com/36827s6d
T8	6 May	Henry Samuel	The fisherman's daughter with a 'pirate's soul' who threatened to turn off Jersey's power	https://tinyurl.com/tc8myaxv
T9	6 May	Lizzie Roberts	French 'nutcase' rams boat defending Jersey against blockade	https://tinyurl.com/x82ydctc
T10	6 May	Rachel Millard	Britain threatens to cut France out of future electricity links	https://tinyurl.com/y4edjyv9

T11	6 May	Henry Samuel	'Jersey government kill us': On board with the French fishermen staging a post-Brexit blockade	https://tinyurl.com/5dhksm9x
T12	6 May	Telegraph View	French belligerence is only the start of the fishing industry's worries	https://tinyurl.com/yy2fbmtf
T13	6 May	Louis Ashworth	Royal rumble: Jersey blockade threatens potato shortage	https://tinyurl.com/ytu9jisp6
T14	6 May	Patrick O'Flynn	Sending ships to France might be a 'stunt'. But it's a very good one	https://tinyurl.com/5x47jc62
T15	7 May	Ben Marlow	Channel crisis shows we need a minister for resilience	https://tinyurl.com/k36ta8bz
T16	7 May	William Whittington, Eugene Allen, Rachel Avery and readers	'An embarrassment for France' – Telegraph Readers on this week's biggest stories	https://tinyurl.com/jfs6cabz
T17	7 May	Telegraph View	Free market Britain needs to develop some self-reliance	https://tinyurl.com/j5z2k8yt
T18	7 May	Lizzie Roberts	Calm after the storm as Jersey's fishermen head back out to sea	https://tinyurl.com/mfubhtva
T19	7 May	Rachel Millard	How Britain came to depend on French energy	https://tinyurl.com/umm5ymxa
T20	7 May	Lizzie Roberts, James Crisp, Harry Yorke and Henry Samuel	French authorities ban Jersey fishermen from landing catch at three ports	https://tinyurl.com/tere9z3t

Table 3: *Le Figaro*

Note: Title and extract translations are my own.

No.	Date	Author name	Title	Shortened URL
F1	4 May	<i>Le Figaro</i> with AFP	Conditions de pêche post-Brexit : la ministre française de la Mer menace Jersey de retorsion [Post-Brexit fishing conditions: the French Minister of the Sea threatens Jersey with retaliation]	https://tinyurl.com/4vpze6xm
F2	5 May	Valérie Samson, AFP agency and Océane Herrero	Pêche post-Brexit : les pêcheurs français quittent les eaux de Jersey [Post-Brexit fishing: French fishermen leave the waters of Jersey]	https://tinyurl.com/5ss4x2m8
F3	6 May	<i>Le Figaro</i> with AFP	Brexit : pourquoi la situation se tend entre la France et le Royaume-Uni sur les droits de pêche [Brexit: Why the situation between France and the UK on fishing rights has grown strained]	https://tinyurl.com/ayhd9fpk
F4	6 May	Arnaud De La Grange	«Bataille de Jersey» : les droits de pêche déclenchent un face-à-face naval franco-britannique [“Battle of Jersey”: Fishing rights trigger a French-British naval face-off]	https://tinyurl.com/2whjmb9u
F5	7 May	<i>Le Figaro</i> with AFP	Pêche post-Brexit : «le droit est très clair», la France ne transigera pas, affirme le ministre du commerce [Post-Brexit fishing: ‘The law is very clear’, France will not compromise, says Minister of Commerce]	https://tinyurl.com/33tavwzf

Appendix 2: *The Guardian* article (G6)

Note: Images and their captions have not been included in the versions below.

- 1 **French fishers' protest over Jersey rights is over but the dispute will go on**
 2 New restrictions and deep cuts to allowances mean both French and Jersey boat owners feel
 3 betrayed by Brexit
 4 Jon Henley, Lisa O'Carroll *and* Steven Morris *in St Helier*
 5 Thu 6 May 2021 18.08 BST
- 6 Dawn was still four hours away and the small Normandy port of Carteret was alive, some
 7 boats hurriedly unloading their catch for a rapid turnaround, others turning on their lights
 8 and firing up their engines for the first time that night.
- 9 Minutes after 3am on Thursday they had left the quayside and, in pitch darkness and a
 10 gentle swell, were pushing smartly out to sea to join a growing armada of 60-odd boats from
 11 Cherbourg right the way round to St-Malo.
- 12 Ring in their ears were the words of David Sellam, from the Caen office of France's inter-
 13 regional maritime directorate, who had told them at a fiery impromptu meeting in Granville
 14 market on Monday that they were up against "people of ill-will".
- 15 The island of Jersey was in the hands of "extremists", Sallem said. "All they want is to see
 16 French fishing diminished, and they are using Brexit to do it. We want peace but we must
 17 prepare for war. If we want to bring Jersey fishing to its knees, we can."
- 18 Acts of war were not yet, however, what Laurent Blondel and Michel Duchemin, captain and
 19 first mate of the *Presque'île II*, were considering. "We're here to make ourselves heard, to
 20 protest, not to insult," said Duchemin. "We will stay peaceful."
- 21 The Jersey authorities "have to listen", Blondel told a reporter from Ouest-France onboard
 22 his boat. "We cannot work with their new licences, with restrictions on the number of days
 23 we can fish, the species we can catch. We have to remedy that."
- 24 Until 31 December last year, when the UK finally left the EU's orbit, fishing rights in Jersey's
 25 waters were governed by the Napoleonic Treaty of the Bay of Granville, which Normandy
 26 fishers had believed would form part of the Brexit fisheries agreement.
- 27 It did not. French boat owners, some of whom rely on their Jersey catches for up to 80% of
 28 their annual turnover, are now obliged to apply for individual licences and must submit
 29 proof of historical fishing activity in the island's waters. An initial list of 41 licences published
 30 on Friday also included multiple new restrictions.
- 31 "There are boats that used to fish for three or four species and can now only catch one,"
 32 Blondel said. Some have been barred from fishing for species they are specially equipped to
 33 catch; others allowed into Jersey waters only seven days a year.

34 According to the Normandy and Brittany fishers' federations, which have combined their
35 organisations for the Jersey campaign, about 250 French boats are concerned by the island's
36 measures, representing about 900 families, along with 2,000 jobs on land.

37 In riposte, local authorities in Granville and St-Malo earlier this week barred Jersey fishers
38 from selling their catches at the two ports' markets. But at Monday's meeting in Granville,
39 many French fishers felt a more forceful protest was needed.

40 Gathered off St Helier in the grey light of dawn, some soon began letting off flares. A few
41 Jersey boats sailed out to join them, including the Normandy Trader, owned by Chris Le
42 Masurier, who has been strongly critical of the Jersey government.

43 Others were less charitable: French fishers photographed a sleek speedboat with two men
44 on board, raising a middle finger. A French boat was later filmed ramming the stern of what
45 appeared to be the same boat. A witness said it had been "antagonising" the flotilla and the
46 incident did not represent the overall atmosphere.

47 Watched by two Royal Navy patrol vessels, the HMS Severn and HMS Tamar, several flotilla
48 members sailed into St Helier at 7.30am, briefly blocking the departure of the weekly freight
49 ferry to St-Malo before being promised a meeting with authorities.

50 With two French patrol boats, PCG Athos and PCG Themis, by now also on station just
51 outside Jersey waters and tensions mounting, the French launched another incursion just
52 before 10am. "They're taking the piss, we're going back in," shouted one fisher.

53 In St Helier, flags were dotted around the buildings not because of the French blockade, but
54 in preparation for Liberation Day, celebrated each year on 9 May, to mark the end of the
55 occupation by Nazi Germany during the second world war.

56 The mood was mixed – some bristled at the French fishers' actions, others had sympathy.
57 "It's all a bit absurd, really," said Eleanor from St Helier. "It seems to be an administrative-
58 political shambles which is being exploited by the UK and French governments and the EU."

59 She said she found Boris Johnson's "electioneering and gunboat diplomacy baffling, and
60 bound to make the situation worse. Jersey and French fishing have suffered massively from
61 Covid and Brexit. We're hoping a diplomatic solution can be found."

62 Mike, a taxi driver, disliked the idea of the UK prime minister stepping into a "local" dispute.
63 "We can look after ourselves," he said. "The way to sort out this sort of problem is for
64 people to talk about it in a civilised way, not with the threat of violence that boats with guns
65 inevitably bring."

66 Soon after 10am, the French armada's VHF channel announced – to cheers – that the
67 island's external affairs minister, Ian Gorst, would meet a delegation of the fishers, including
68 their leader Dimitri Rogoff, onboard the Normandy Trader within the hour.

69 The hour came, and went.

70 In the event, it was not until 11.40am that Le Masurier's boat collected the half-dozen
71 delegates and carried them to meet Gorst and the Jersey environment minister, who were
72 on another boat in the harbour. Two hours later, the Normandy Trader re-emerged and
73 the French boats gathered round.

74 The news was not good. "It's rubbish, frankly," Cyril Piraud, the skipper of the Pearl from
75 Granville told the assembled fishers over the VHF. "I'm devastated. I wonder why we even
76 went to see them."

77 Piraud said the Jersey authorities "are putting all the blame on the French state, which they
78 are claiming did not send the right information". The fishers' dispute would have to be
79 continued on dry ground and by other means, he said.

80 "If nothing is done, they'll just get rid of us, one by one," Piraud said, according to Ouest-
81 France, adding that the French maritime affairs minister, must now "carry out her threat"
82 to cut off Jersey's power supply from the mainland.

83 Don Thomson, head of the Jersey Fishermens Association, said no one had been panicked by
84 the day's events, but "it was good to have the navy ships on the scene, and the support of
85 the government". He said Jersey fishermen felt shafted by the deal Johnson had done on
86 fishing.

87 "Because of the ban on live bivalves we are still banned from landing any scallops in the EU,"
88 Thomson said. "It is really a big issue to have to sell your boat and leave the industry your
89 family has been in for generations. These guys are essentially getting licences for free to fish
90 in our waters."

91 Heading back to France beneath sodden grey skies at 2pm – just as most of the British press
92 landed en masse from Southampton – a fisher from Gouville insisted it was French fishers
93 who had been hardest hit.

94 Jersey was being particularly tough on young fishers, he said, some of whom were repaying
95 loans of up to €800,000 (£700,000) on new boats but by definition have little evidence of
96 prior fishing activity in the island's waters. "They just want to keep them out," he said. "It's
97 daylight robbery, basically."

98 One source close to the negotiations said the underlying cause of the dispute was the
99 labyrinthine channels set up by London and Brussels for life outside the EU.

100 Since Brexit, Jersey has the right to impose conditions on fishing, but must notify the UK
101 first, which in turn had to inform Brussels and then France. "Somewhere on the way, the
102 notification about the licences got lost," the source said.

103 Thomson, meanwhile, predicted the standoff was far from over. He was confident Gorst had
104 not conceded any ground on the French demands that the conditions on fishing days and
105 equipment be dropped. "It is important that they stay," he said.

106 But French fishers appeared equally determined. Jean-Claude La Vaullée, from Carteret, said
 107 the battle now had to be fought ashore. He had been fishing off Jersey for more than 40
 108 years and had been astonished to see that his new licences permitted him to continue doing
 109 so for all of 11 hours a year.

110 “It’s a joke,” he said. “An absolute joke. They don’t want to take onboard a word of what
 111 we’ve said. At least we’ve done what we could to get our message across. Now it’s up to the
 112 government to take over and defend us.”

Appendix 2: *The Telegraph* article (T11)

1 **‘Jersey government kill us’: On board with the French fishermen staging a post-** 2 **Brexit blockade**

3 Inside the cabin, our French correspondent laughs uneasily as the crew joke about
 4 making him walk the plank

5 *By Henry Samuel PARIS CORRESPONDENT*
 6 6 May 2021 • 6:12pm

7 Red flares raged and foghorns blasted as an armada of up to 70 French fishing
 8 boats staged a dawn blockade of Jersey on Thursday morning.

9 But as they laid siege to the Channel Island’s main port of St Hélier, refusing to let
 10 any vessels out a day after threatening to cut off its electricity, the famously hot-
 11 headed French fishermen insisted the real extremists were on the other side.

12 They accused Jersey officials, fishing bosses and “les rosbifs” (the British)
 13 of unilaterally changing the rules late last month on their right to catch lobster,
 14 crab, scallops and sea snails in waters they say are essential to their livelihood.

15 The Jersey government insists it is merely implementing new requirements under
 16 the terms of the UK-EU trade deal for boats to submit evidence of their past fishing
 17 activities to obtain permits.

18 “We don’t want war, we just want to maintain our right to fish in these waters as
 19 we have done for decades,” said Olivier Andreani, 32, skipper of L’Omerta, a French
 20 fishing boat just under 12 metres, as he hastily erected a cloth banner on the back
 21 of the boat emblazoned with the English words: “Jersey government kill us.”

22 Inside the cabin, his crewmates Jean-Charles Gustin, 25, aka Popeye, and Benjamin
 23 Sabine, 29, chain-smoked, cracked jokes and sipped strong, hot coffee as they
 24 waited for the drama to unfold. Adding to the angst, the cabin was periodically
 25 punctuated by bloodcurdling screams as in their spare moments, the crew watched
 26 *The Walking Dead* dubbed into French.

27 “I hope we can come to an agreement. Otherwise, nobody leaves and we’ll cut off
28 electricity to the island and prevent them from selling their catch in France,” said
29 Mr Andreani.

30 It didn’t take long for tempers to fray.

31 As the French approached the coast, one Jersey fisherman hurled insults and stuck a
32 finger in the air as he entered the port and a small French boat was caught on film
33 ramming its Jersey rival.

34 Those French who dared approach Jersey soil were pelted with bottles full of water
35 and tin cans, while a lone member of the Jersey Militia re-enactment group was
36 even filmed shooting a blank-firing musket out to sea from Jersey’s Elizabeth Castle.

37 Jean-Claude La Vaullée, skipper of Le Cach, said: “I’ve refuelled the boat – we’re
38 ready to restage the Battle of Trafalgar” – a curious threat given it was not France’s
39 finest hour.

40 Local maritime police circled in fast boats as two imposing Royal Navy patrol
41 vessels, HMS Severn and HMS Tamar, watched from a distance. Then word got
42 around that the French had also sent two patrol boats to the area – Athos and FS
43 Themis – in response to British “intimidation”, though these kept well away.

44 The initial plan was to simply make a show of strength and leave but when the radio
45 crackled into life, it was clear that the skippers from Normandy and Brittany were
46 bent on more than a mere sailpast.

47 “I haven’t come all the way from Saint-Malo for this. I’m going into the port,”
48 shouted one. “That would be very foolish,” said a Norman colleague. “If you go in,
49 you run a real risk of having your boat impounded and ruining your career.”

50 “I’ve got an Englishman onboard”, said Mr Andreani, sparking widespread mirth and
51 mutterings of walking the plank. Already green at the gills, this journalist slunk
52 outside for a spot of fresh sea air.

53 To break the deadlock, Chris Le Masurier, 45, skipper of the 27m Normandy Trader,
54 one of a few Jersey vessels which had come out to offer support to their Gallic
55 counterparts, then offered to broker talks with local officials.

56 But as the clock ticked and no Jersey official was forthcoming, blood pressure
57 started to rise. “This is taking the p—,” said one French fisherman on the radio.
58 “There are 70 boats blocking their port and they can’t send anyone. In that case, we
59 stay put.”

60 Mr Le Masurier said: “I don’t know what the Jersey lot are playing at. I told them
61 come on guys, I’ve managed to appease the French and stop them coming into the
62 port but can’t hold on forever. But two hours later, they’re still mucking about.”

63 He said he was “sympathetic to both sides because I deal with the French every
64 week and since Brexit we’ve had to find ways round this bureaucratic rubbish”.

65 He added: “There are ways to deal with the French, and that’s normally sitting
66 round a table over lunch. We’re in an awkward position. We are steaming into
67 French ports with Jersey shellfish on board right under their noses so we have to be
68 diplomatic.

69 “But unfortunately, Jersey fishermen are being led by a fishermen’s association that
70 has a couple of bosses that are anti-French – there is no way to dress it up. They are
71 very short-sighted as they say if we kick the French out of our waters, we can catch
72 more. But if you can’t sell it to Europe, what are you going to with it? We need that
73 access.”

74 But Don Thompson, president of Jersey Fishermen’s Association, urged the Jersey
75 government to stand firm.

76 He said: “The French fishermen out there want conditions removed from their
77 licences so that they can fish with no constraints in our waters, whilst our boats are
78 subject to all sorts of conditions about how much they can catch, where they can
79 go.”

80 It would be “grossly unfair” if the Government did “capitulate to that”, meaning the
81 French tactics might be used “again and again in the future”.

82 **Blockade breaks up ... but the rhetoric intensifies**

83 Finally, talks got under way and the blockade was eased, with a cargo boat allowed
84 out.

85 Back aboard L’Omerta, Mr Andreani said it would be far better if there were fewer
86 middle men.

87 “The problem is our hands are tied. (The Jersey government) has to pass everything
88 to London and we have to go through Brussels, then Paris and Normandy and
89 Brittany fishermen. No wonder it’s a mess.”

90 After 10 hours at sea, the French flotilla finally started chugging back to the
91 mainland. However, as it approached the Normandy coast, word got out that Jersey
92 was refusing to budge. Predictably, the French were furious and vowed to return
93 with a vengeance.

94 Cyril Piraud, skipper of a Normandy boat called The Pearl, demanded France make
95 good its threat to cut off electricity to the island. “We’re calling on Annick Girardin,
96 the minister of the sea, to put her threats into action,” he said.

97 On board L'Omerta, crewman "Popeye" warned: "We will go back, and next time it
98 will be war."

99 "It'll be just like in Port-en-Bessin," he said, referring to the site of recent scallop
100 wars with British fishermen in the Channel.

101 Then to add insult to injury, French navy patrol boats they thought were being
102 dispatched to offer support ended up stopping Gallic fishing boats to check their
103 papers. "And we thought they were on our side!" despaired Mr Andreani.

Appendix 4: *Le Figaro* article (F4)

1 **«Bataille de Jersey»: les droits de pêche déclenchent un face-à-face naval franco-**
2 **britannique**

3 RÉCIT - Une cinquantaine de bateaux français ont convergé jeudi vers l'île pour
4 dénoncer les restrictions imposées par les Britanniques après le Brexit.

5 Par Arnaud De La Grange

6 Publié le 06/05/2021 à 19:55

7 Les mânes des guerres franco-anglaises flottaient jeudi sur les eaux brumeuses de
8 Jersey. Rappelant ces heures où les rois d'Angleterre et de France se disputaient l'île
9 posée si stratégiquement en Manche, la chaîne ITV a montré un homme vêtu de
10 l'antique uniforme de la milice locale tirant - à blanc - au mousquet sur la flotte de
11 pêcheurs français... Boris Johnson ne venait-il pas de rappeler aux postes de
12 combat, en faisant cingler la Royal Navy vers les eaux anglo-normandes? Au-delà du
13 folklore, quatre mois après l'entrée en vigueur du Brexit, la pêche continue à être
14 un rude point de friction. Et la météo des relations franco-britanniques n'a rien de
15 très stable.

16 Il y avait du monde en face du port de Saint-Hélier, jeudi matin. Une bonne
17 cinquantaine de bateaux de pêche français, d'abord, venus de Normandie et de
18 Bretagne pour protester contre les restrictions d'accès aux eaux de Jersey. Puis,
19 deux navires de guerre britanniques, les patrouilleurs de haute mer *HMS*
20 *Severn* et *HMS Tamar*, que Boris Johnson a fait appareiller dans la nuit. Après des
21 discussions d'urgence avec John Le Fondré, chef du gouvernement de l'île, le
22 premier ministre a, en effet, averti mercredi soir que tout blocus de Saint-Hélier
23 serait «*totale*ment injustifié» et décidé l'envoi de bateaux «*par mesure de*
24 *précaution*». À cela, se sont ajoutés deux navires français, envoyés jeudi matin par
25 Paris pour «*garantir la sécurité des personnes en mer*», le patrouilleur de la
26 gendarmerie maritime *Athos* et de celui des affaires maritimes *Themis*.

27 Les pêcheurs français se sont avancés à l'entrée du port, mais sans en bloquer
28 l'accès. Certains ont allumé fumigènes et fusées de détresse. Contemplant ce
29 spectacle depuis la jetée, un jeune pêcheur jersiais a raconté que «*c'était comme*
30 *une invasion*». «*Les Français sont les Français, ils ne plaisantent pas. Ils peuvent*

31 *bloquer leurs propres ports, alors ils n’hésiteront pas à le faire chez nous»,* a déclaré
32 Josh Dearing. Pourtant, la flottille française a quitté sans accrochages ces eaux dès
33 le début de l’après-midi. Une décision saluée par Downing Street dans un
34 communiqué. Le Royaume-Uni a d’ailleurs annoncé avoir rappelé les deux
35 patrouilleurs de sa marine.

36 **À la Ministre de tutelle d’œuvrer**

37 *«La démonstration de force est faite. C’est le politique qui doit prendre le relais*
38 *maintenant,* a déclaré Dimitri Rogoff, président du comité régional des pêches de
39 Normandie, *ce n’est pas aux pêcheurs de faire un blocus de Jersey pour obtenir ce*
40 *qu’ils veulent. Désormais, si on n’obtient pas gain de cause, il faut que la ministre*
41 *coupe la lumière.»* Une allusion aux propos de la ministre française de la Mer,
41 Annick Girardin, qui a affirmé que la France était prête à recourir à des *«mesures de*
42 *rétorsion»*, mettant par exemple sur «off» l’électricité acheminée par câble sous-
43 marin depuis la France.

44 C’est la publication, vendredi dernier, de la liste de navires français autorisés à
45 pêcher dans les eaux de Jersey qui a mis le feu aux poudres. Sur les 344 demandes,
46 seules 41 ont été acceptées, avec de nouvelles exigences *«inadmissibles»* selon
47 Paris. Armateurs et pêcheurs se sont ainsi aperçus que la licence était assortie de
48 conditions restrictives et contradictoires avec l’accord de Brexit, comme des
49 autorisations valables seulement pour certaines zones, périodes ou techniques de
50 pêche (et donc espèces de poissons). Un pêcheur de Granville n’est ainsi autorisé à
51 entrer dans les eaux jersiaises que 11 jours en 2021 quand il y naviguait plus de
52 40 jours auparavant, et seulement pour la coquille Saint-Jacques alors qu’il
53 rapportait aussi des bulots.

54 Il y a bien sûr beaucoup de gesticulations. Côté Royaume-Uni, cet appel à la Navy
55 est arrivé opportunément un jour d’élections et alors que les pêcheurs britanniques
56 se disent trahis par Boris Johnson, qui aurait sacrifié leurs intérêts sur l’autel
57 de l’accord commercial. Et le cas de Jersey est particulier puisque les îles anglo-
58 normandes n’appartiennent ni au Royaume-Uni, ni aux territoires britanniques
59 d’outre-mer. Ayant le statut de dépendances de la Couronne britannique, elles
60 reconnaissent la reine Elizabeth II comme chef d’État mais n’envoient pas de
61 députés au Parlement de Westminster et élisent directement leurs propres
62 assemblées et gouvernements locaux. Mais le problème de la pêche est plus vaste
63 et n’a pas fini d’empoisonner les relations entre le Royaume-Uni et l’Europe.

64 **Quotas 2021 à définir**

65 L’accord post-Brexit prévoit une période de transition jusqu’à l’été 2026, date à
66 laquelle les Européens renonceront à 25 % de leurs droits de pêche. *«C’est un*
67 *accord-cadre avec les détails à mettre en place et c’est là que les Britanniques*
68 *cherchent à réduire les droits des Européens, par le biais de dispositions techniques.*
69 *Ce sont des moyens détournés voire illégaux pour réduire notre présence dans leurs*

70 *eaux*», commente Pierre Karleskind, eurodéputé et président de la commission
71 pêche du Parlement européen.

72 Il y a deux semaines, ce sont les marins-pêcheurs de Boulogne-sur-Mer qui se
73 mobilisaient contre les obstacles mis à l'accès aux eaux anglaises, prêts à bloquer
74 les camions en provenance du Royaume-Uni et transportant du poisson
75 britannique. Sur 120 bateaux du grand port français, seuls 22 avaient alors reçu une
76 licence permettant d'accéder à la zone dite «côtière» des 6-12 milles nautiques
77 britanniques. Une exigence de Londres, sur l'antériorité de pêche, est
78 particulièrement contraignante. Les pêcheurs français doivent prouver qu'ils
79 pêchaient dans cette zone sur la période 2012-2016. Un problème pour les bateaux
80 de moins de 12 mètres, qui ne sont pas tenus d'être équipés d'un système de
81 géolocalisation permanente (Vessel Monitoring System, VMS). Certains en sont
82 réduits à rechercher les relevés de bornage de leurs téléphones portables...
83 Preuve des blocages, les quotas de pêche pour 2021 n'ont toujours pas été définis
84 alors que nous sommes au mois de mai. Tous les ans, le Royaume-Uni et l'UE
85 devront en effet se mettre d'accord sur une quantité maximale de poissons pêchés,
86 espèce par espèce, zone par zone. Un accord minimal vient d'être reconduit pour
87 trois mois. *«Les négociations de cette année sont primordiales car si on lâche, nous*
88 *allons traîner de mauvaises dispositions comme un boulet pendant des années*», dit
89 Pierre Karleskind. Aujourd'hui, ses craintes de voir l'accord déboucher sur
90 une *«négociation perpétuelle»* semblent se concrétiser.

91 Dans l'accord, des mesures de rétorsion sont prévues en cas de restrictions non
92 fondées. Les Européens peuvent suspendre la réciprocité dans leurs eaux ou
93 imposer des droits de douane sur les produits de la pêche britanniques et même
94 d'autres biens. La Commission européenne a toutefois *«appelé au calme»* en
95 déclarant continuer les discussions avec Londres. En espérant que la Manche cesse
96 de prendre des allures de mer de Chine, avec flottilles de pêche et navires d'États
97 croisant l'acier de leurs étraves.