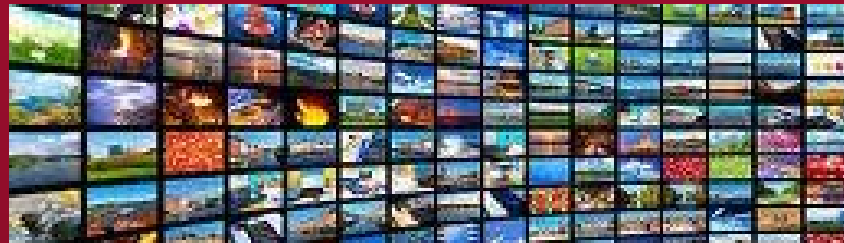


Even Cox murder did not change the overall negative media frame on EU

Coverage of the EU, January-June 2016
BBC news and Financial Times

- *TV coverage was only balanced in the last week after the murder of Jo Cox*
- *Anti-EU sentiment dominate the news for the whole of June*
- *Leave campaign quoted more prominently on TV*



Long-term negativity led to Brexit vote

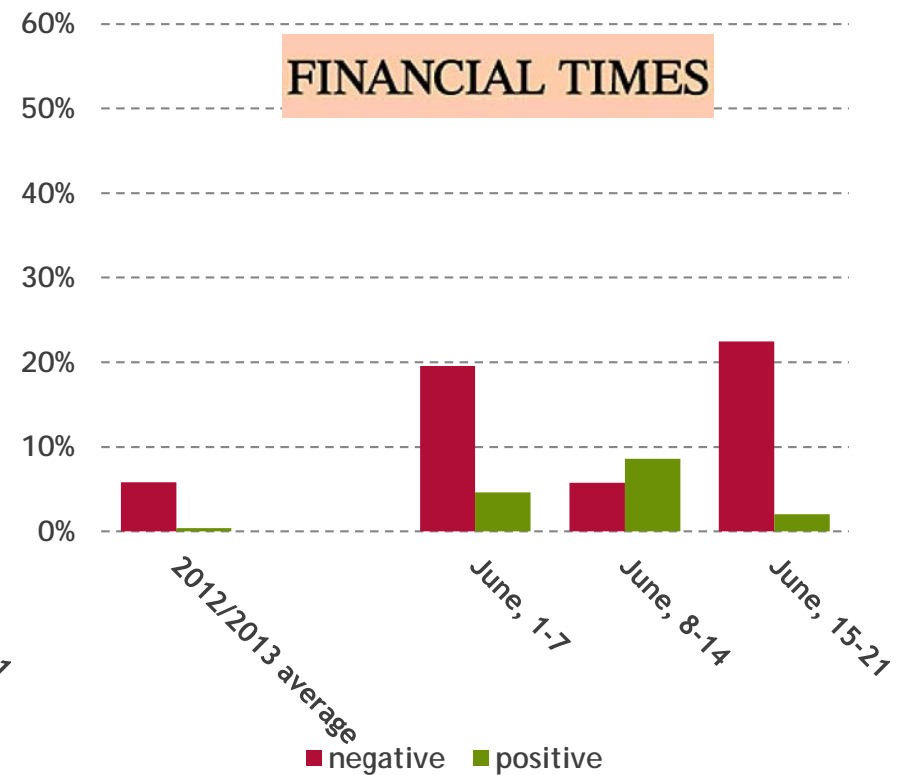
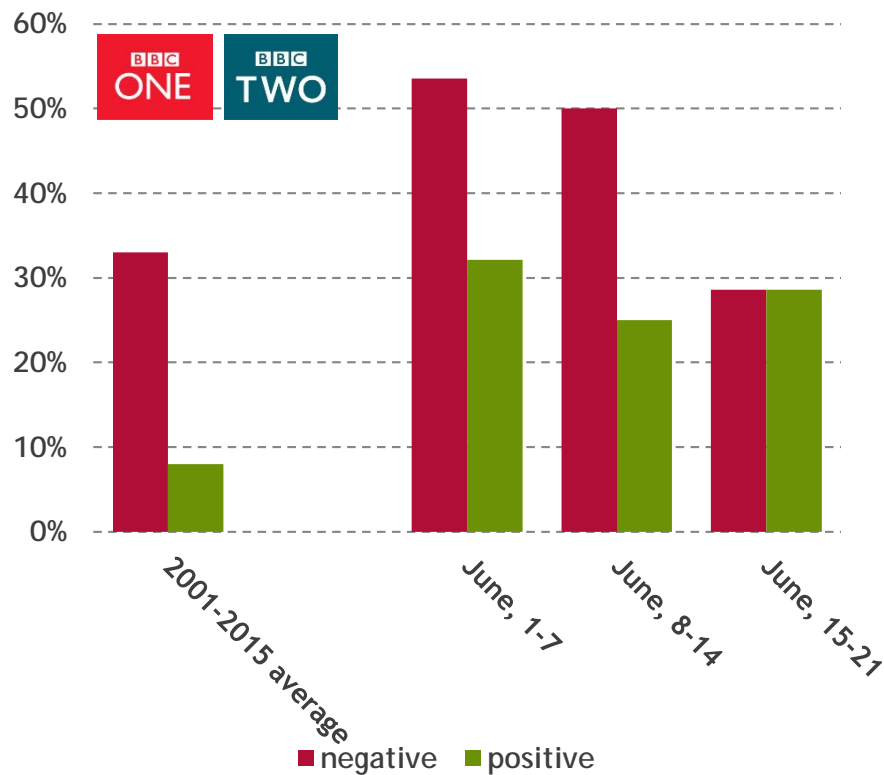
Zurich, June 24, 2016. As The Guardian, Newsweek, and Politico had alerted their readers already weeks ago: The Brexit vote was less a referendum and more of a reflex on how opinion-leading media have framed Brussels and Strasbourg for a long time. “Already years ago we have warned Prime Minister David Cameron not to go for a referendum when opinion-leading media present the Continent as a *quantité négligeable*”, Roland Schatz refers to the long-term media impact analysis of the Media Tenor International Institute. “Nobody wins a referendum against an opposing media narrative - not in the U.K., not in Switzerland, and not in the U.S.”

Even the murder of Jon Cox did not change the overall news selection in a way that could create a last-minute swing: “The reporting about of the murder led to a more balanced coverage, but this was not sufficient to compensate for years of negativity”, Schatz explains the most recent results.

Who is to blame? Both, the BBC as well as the FT never provided a journalistic picture of Europe, the EU or the European Parliament: Negative aspects were presented in a way as if they were more representative of the overall development on the Continent than the neutral or positive results achieved for Europe and the U.K. At the same time nobody in Brussels or the other European capitals should be under the impression that their media report differently and more friendly about the European Commission and Parliament.

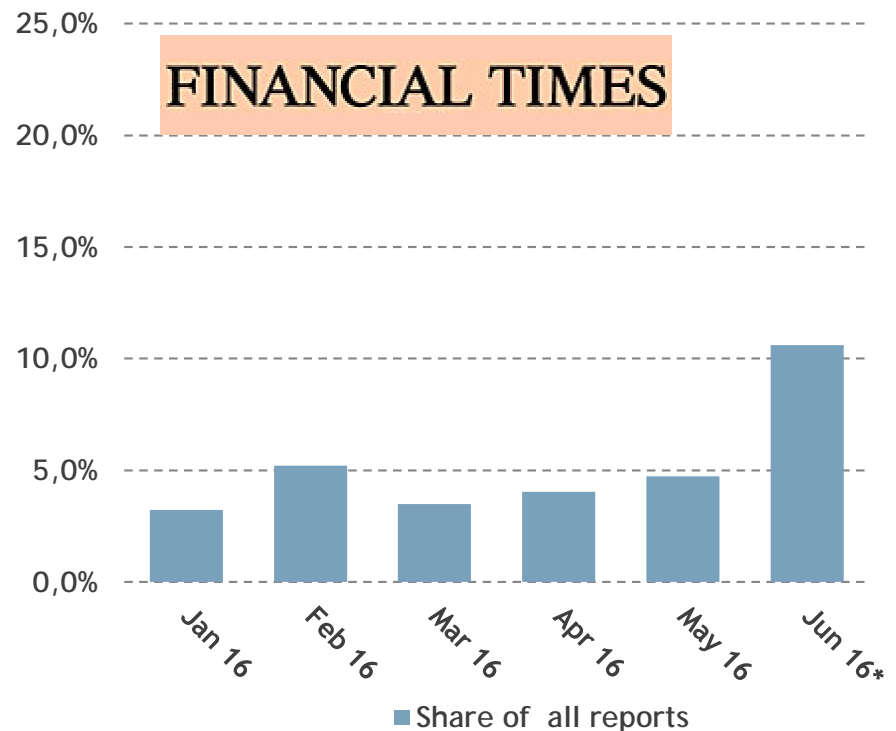
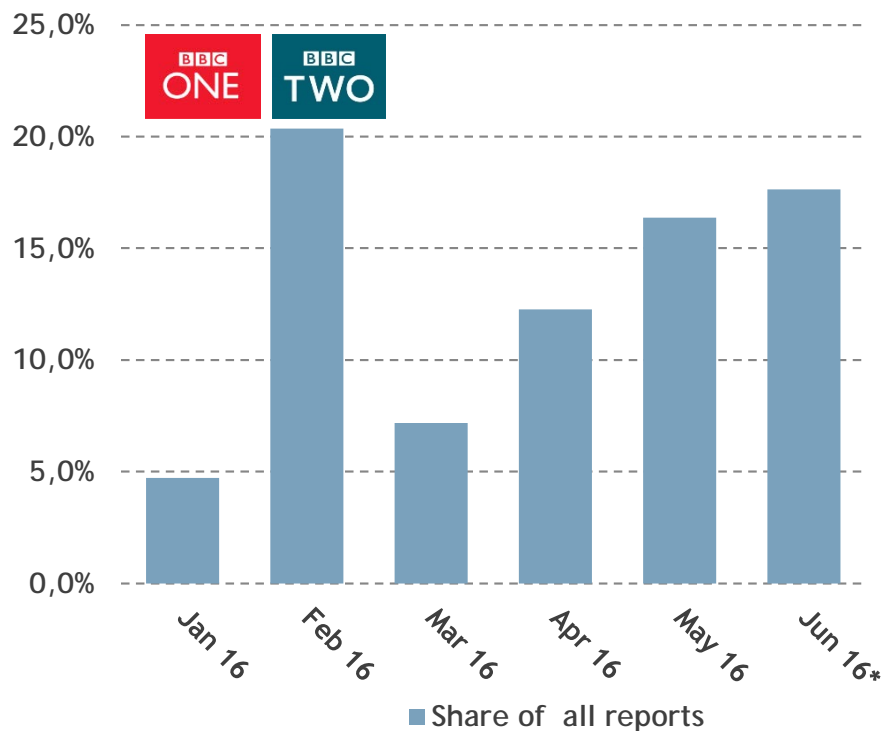
For this report Media Tenor International has analyzed all 100,749 reports about protagonists in BBC One Ten o'clock news, BBC Two Newsnight and Financial Times. All stories have been examined by human coders. Inter-coder reliability averaged 88% in the 1st quarter of 2016.

After the Cox murder, Leave Campaign became more quiet



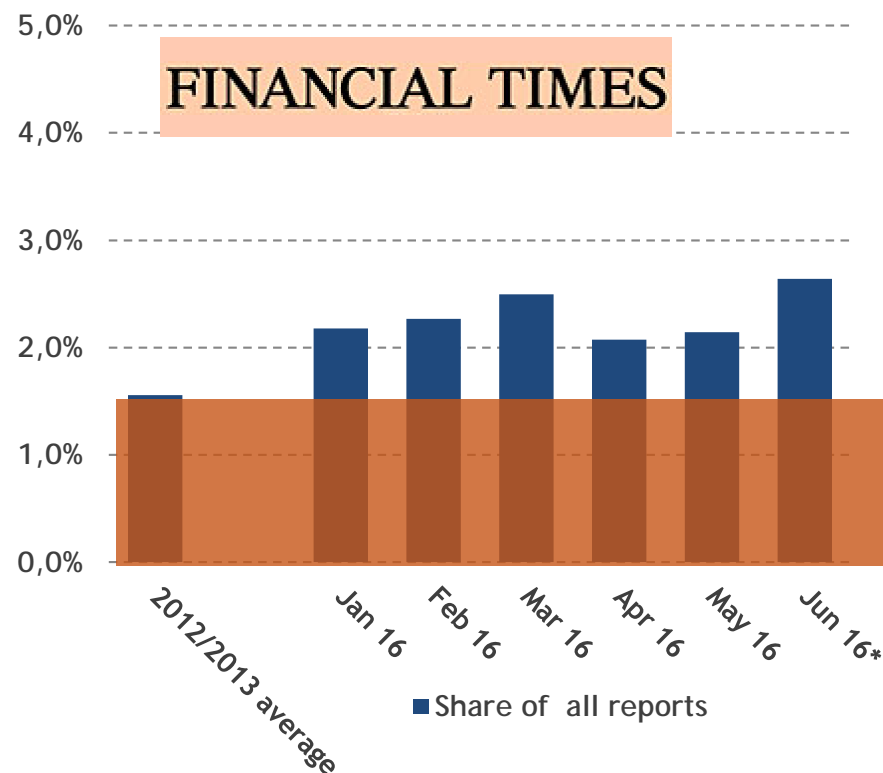
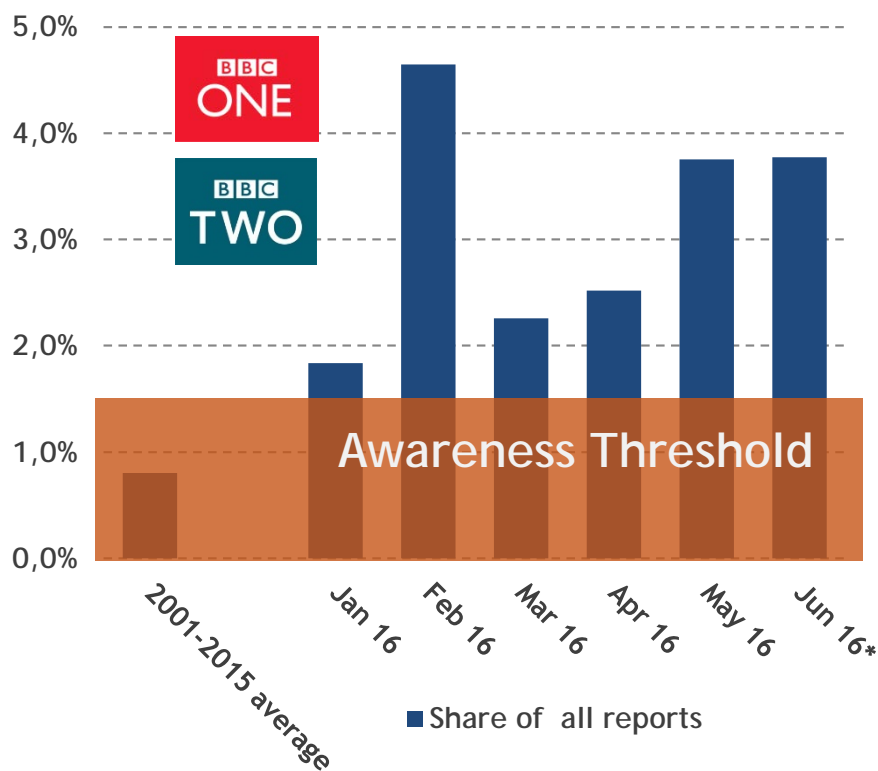
In the week after the murder of Jo Cox, the share of negative reports about the EU on British TV dropped significantly, while the share of positive reports remained stable - leading to a highly polarized but balanced image. Negativity rose in the *FT*.

Cox murder froze Brexit debate



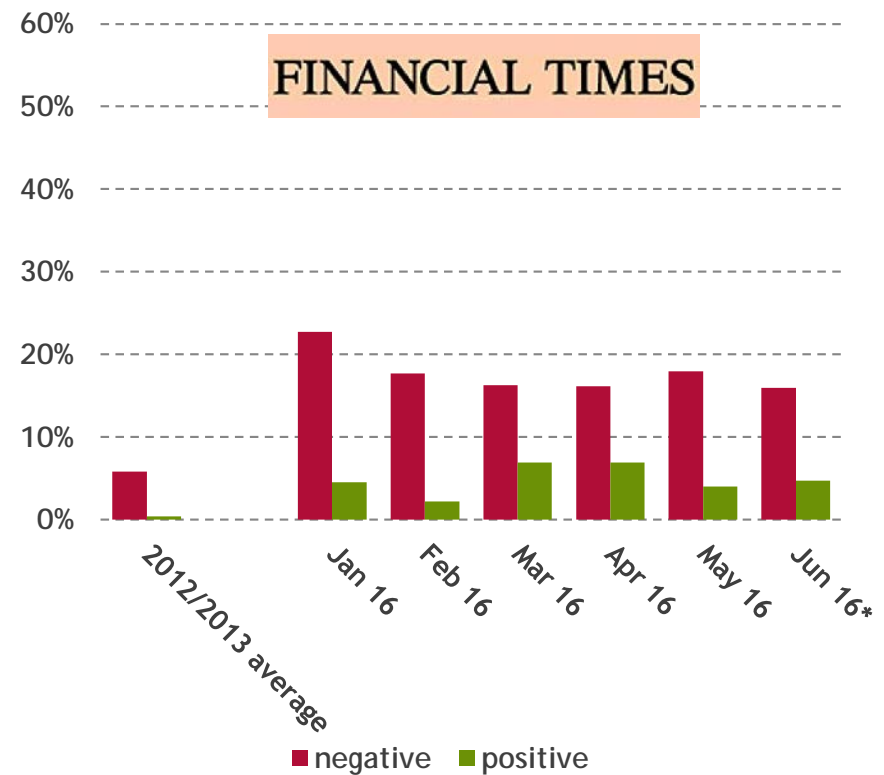
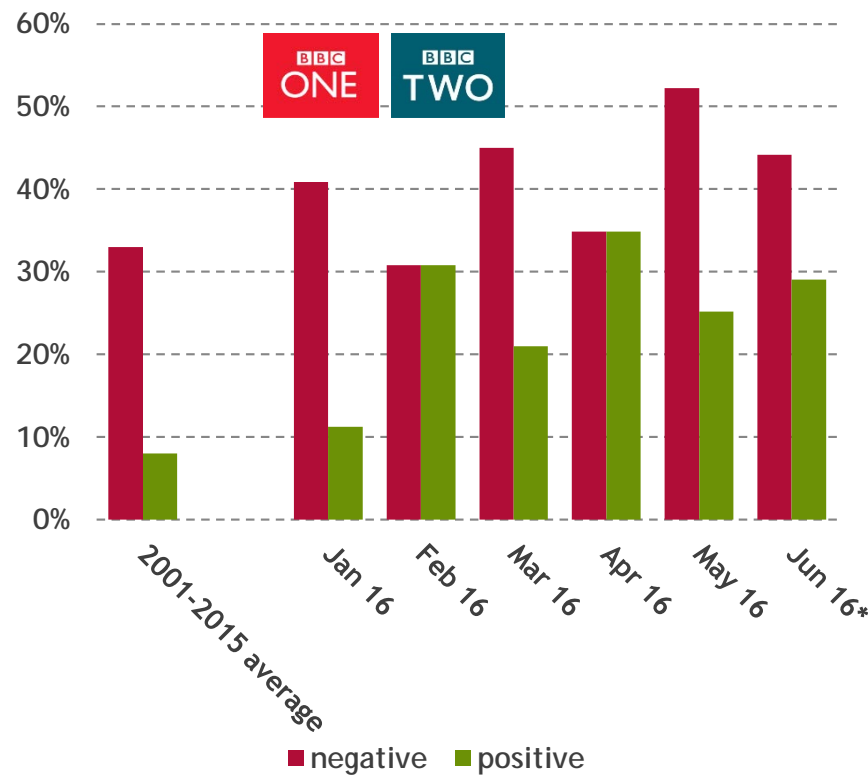
The intensity of Brexit coverage has not increased any more in the last week before the referendum as the murder of Jon Cox led to a temporary suspension of the campaigns. The Brexit has become the most salient topic on TV and in the *FT* in June.

European Union stayed in the background



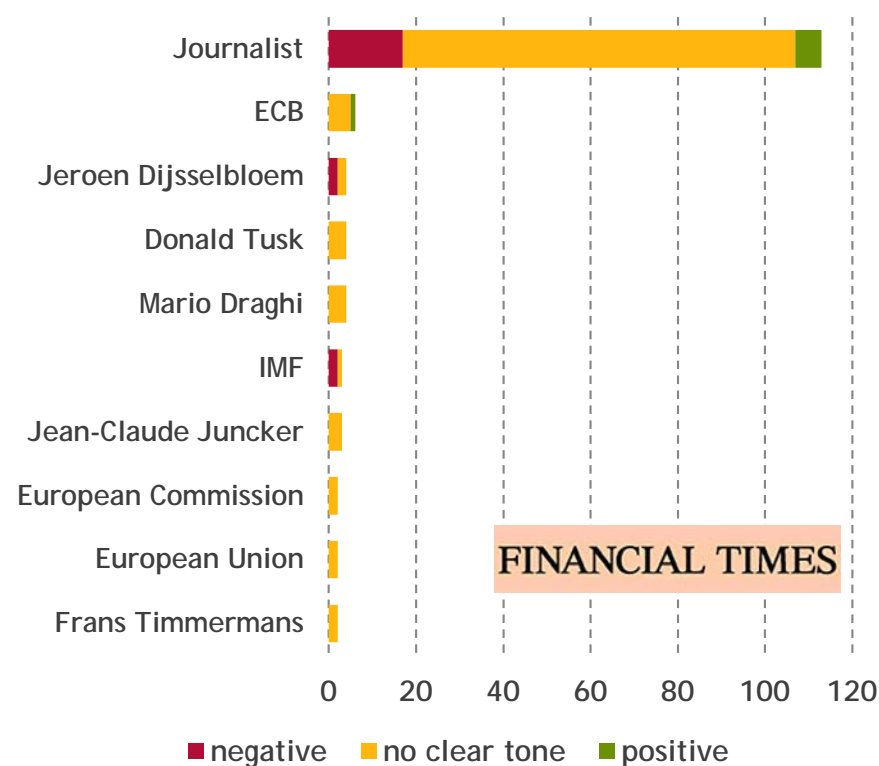
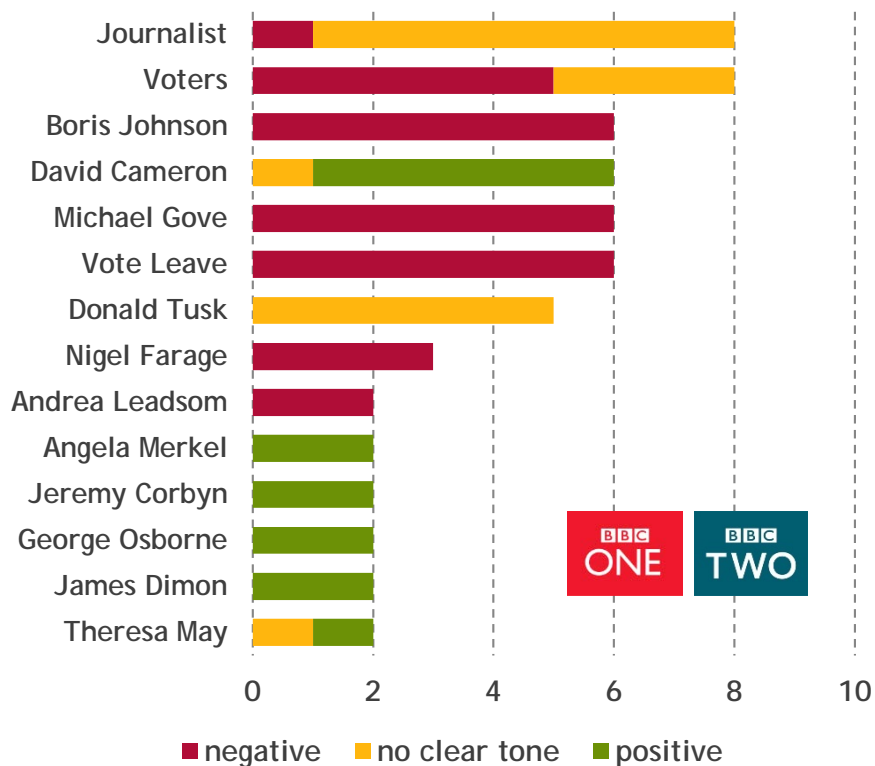
Despite the intensive coverage of the Brexit debate the EU and its institutions have not been in the focus of reporting, as the media focused on the activities of the “in” and “out” campaigns and the options and risks for the U.K.

Negative voices have been more prominent since May



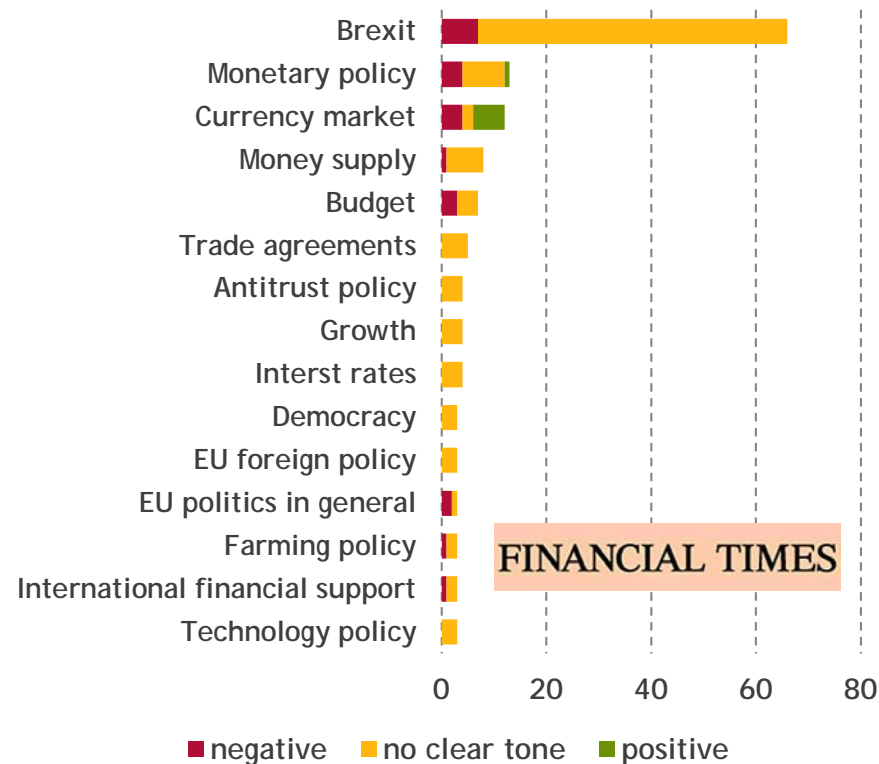
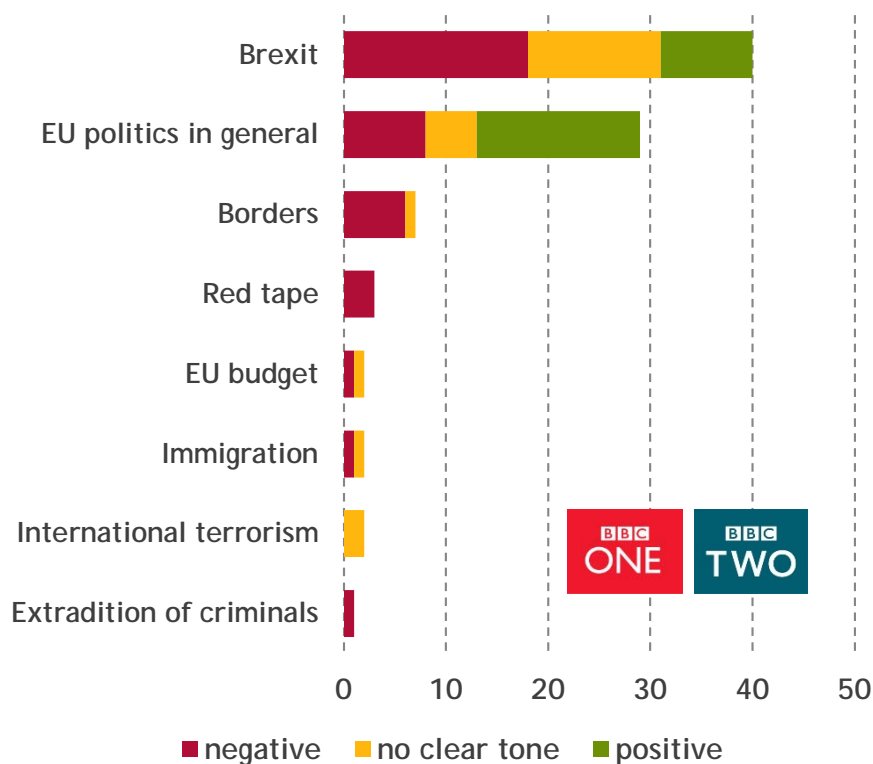
On balance 44% of the reports about the EU have been negative in BBC News in 2016 and 18% in the *FT*, only 26% resp. 5% were positive. As the referendum approached, negativity has risen significantly. TV coverage is highly polarized - broadcasting arguments for both positions.

Brexiteers quoted more often



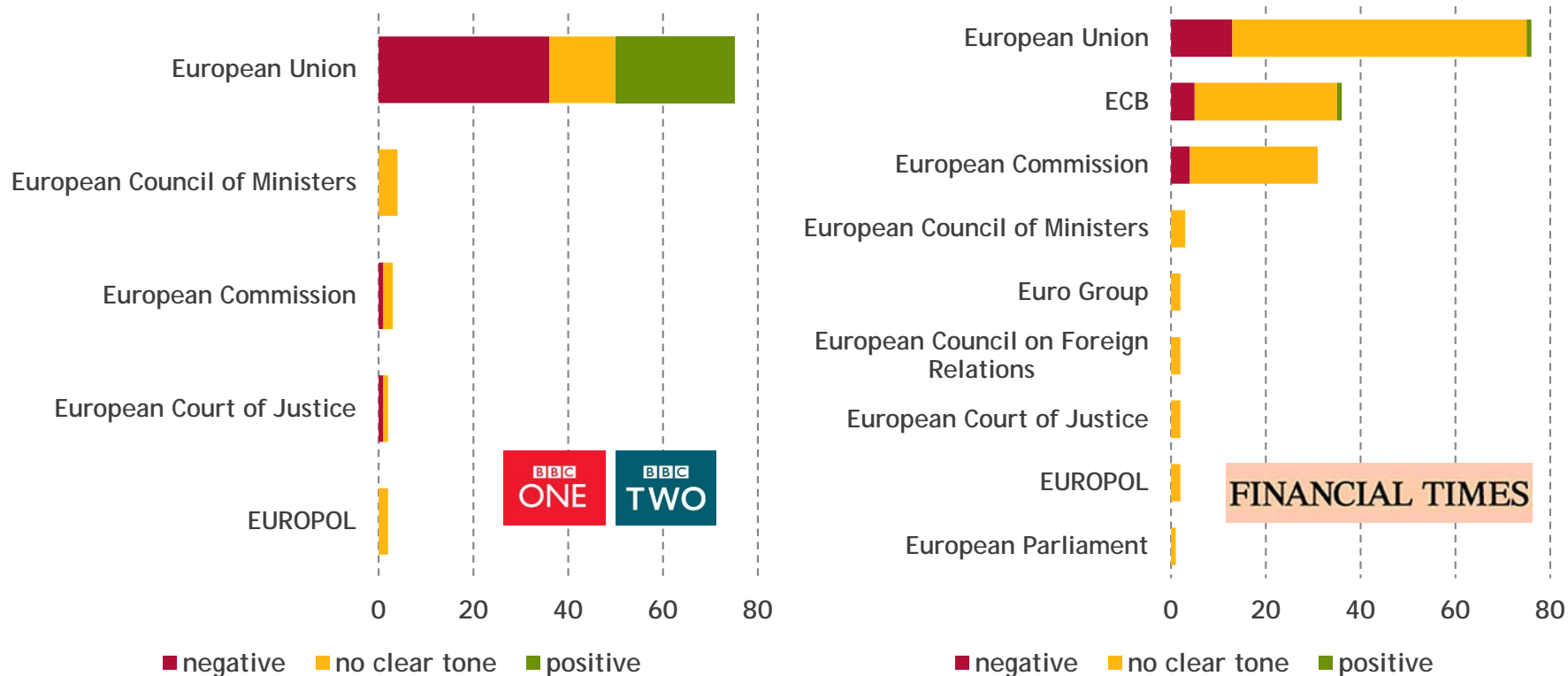
In June 2016 the representatives of the Leave Campaign have been quoted more prominently as the main voices in *BBC One Ten o'clock news* and *BBW Two Newsnight*. In the *FT* the view of the journalists shapes the evaluation of the EU.

Bremainers without convincing arguments



Support for the EU remained more or less abstract, citing the negative consequences of leaving the EU. Even supporters for remaining addressed the problems of the Union and mentioned few of the achievements. Immigration and border control featured prominently in the news.

European institutions faded from British screens



The institutions of the EU were barely mentioned in the Brexit debate on *BBC* in June. Thus the perception of the EU as featureless, domineering bureaucracy is reinforced. The European Parliament was not even covered once.