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SHAPING EUROPEAN IDENTITY



HOW DO MEMBER STATES SUPPORT
IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EUROPEAN
UNION?

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I. Introduction: Content and scope of the study

The issue of European identity gets increasingly important in a supranational unit that, despite all backlashes, gets ever closer in economic and political respects. Particularly for a political entity, identification of its people is an essential source of legitimacy. Identity can be seen as the key to ensure popular support for a political system and loyalty to an authority (cf. McGee, 2005: 1).

However, it is well known that most people in Europe rather feel 'national' than 'European'. In general, a common European identity, if at all, exists only to a very limited extent. Whereas originally, European leaders expected a European identity to emerge autonomously, today's measures taken by the European Union clearly show that this hope proved to be wrong. Symbols such as the Europe Day, a European anthem and, above all, the Euro as a common currency in most member states, are some examples of measures taken by the EU.

While it is obvious that the European Union is eager to bring forward a shared identity as this may first of all serve its own purposes, this study shall focus on some member states and their way to shape, or not to shape, a European identity. The member states' – and here especially the governments' – ways of presenting Europe and the country's position in the union might be even more important than supranational measures taken by the EU: The public focus, including the media, is mainly on the national level and attitudes expressed on Europe will reach people much better through the national context.

The central question to be answered in this paper is: *'How do member states shape a European identity?'* The basis for the analysis will be national policy documents in which the topic European identity is treated. As a theoretical background of my study, I will use the constructivist approach. According to social constructivism, identities can be shaped and formed by political actors. Following this approach, a European identity, though it might not exist yet, is possible to be created in the future (cf. e.g. Habermas, 2003: 30f).

The central question mentioned above shall be answered with the help of sub-questions in several chapters. The next paragraph will serve as the theoretical fundament of the analysis and will provide background knowledge concerning this issue. For this purpose, I will first of all define what I mean by 'identity'. As there are several concepts and understandings of European identity, I will present these and clarify which concept will be used for this study.

The presentation of the concept leads me to the question why identification with the EU is needed and what this means both for the people and political actors. Consequently, I will show which problems result from this requirement and what this means for the member states as political actors.

I will then pursue by portray the European Union as the central actor to shape this identity. It shall be shown which measures have been taken by the EU. These policies shall serve as a starting point in order to compare them with the member states' policies in the analysis later.

In the last section of the following paragraph, I will show on the basis of surveys how 'European' people in several member states feel. The findings will help to formulate hypotheses on the policies of the single member states in the following analysis.

Thus, the questions to be answered in this paragraph are: Which concepts of European identity exist and which one is used for this study? What does European identity imply for the people in the EU and for political actors? Which actors may shape a European identity? Why is a European identity needed? Which consequences result from this requirement? Why is identity policy necessary? What policies have been chosen by the EU to shape a European identity and how successful are they? How 'European' do people in the member states feel? Are there differences according to nationality and political system? The overall question for this paragraph is: Why to deal with European identity?

The clarifications to these questions will help to find answers to the central research question insofar that a theoretical framework is constructed on the basis of which the analysis can follow. In other words, it will be shown what issue this study is about at all, why the issue of identity is of importance, why we need to treat it, and, what role, in comparison to the EU, the member states can and have to play in this respect. Moreover, information on the people's actual identifications with several levels of governance will particularly help to hypothesise on the action of the corresponding political actors in the member states.

The third paragraph will contain information on the methodology that will be used for the analysis. Subject of my analysis are national policy documents. The research is thus of qualitative nature. Predominantly, government's positions will be chosen. However, documents presenting the position of parliamentary fractions are also included. Moreover, I intend to use documents that have published in the recent years.

This paragraph will consist of three parts: In the first part, I will name and explain which countries have been chosen for analysis and for what reason. This will include hypotheses on the states and their policies that shall consequently be verified or falsified. Secondly, I will present the documents that will be used in the analysis. In the third and probably most important section, it shall be explained in what way the document analysis will take place. I will expose the categorisation and measurement of the policy documents' content.

Questions to be dealt with in this paragraph are: Which countries and policy documents are chosen and why? How is the content categorised and measured? Which criteria are chosen and why? The overarching question for this section can be called: How will the document analysis take place?

These questions need to be answered before pursuing with the analysis of policy documents in order to clarify the methodological scope of this paper. As this study is based on document analysis, it is only possible to scrutinise a limited number of policy documents and countries these documents are stemming from. This implies that the chosen countries and policy documents are highly relevant

and interesting, yet a generalisation of the findings over all member states of the EU is not the purpose of this study.

The centrepiece of my research will be the actual analysis of national policy documents. In this fourth paragraph I will present my findings. In the first two sub-sections, I will analyse policy documents from Germany and the United Kingdom separately and in detail. In a third section, I will analyse Dutch policy documents. By using documents from three different EU member states, I hope to be able to give more significant statements on how states differ in shaping a European identity. The complete findings of this paragraph will be presented in a fourth section.

This analysis paragraph will treat the most important questions. First of all, I want to find out in what way the EU is portrayed in the policy documents. Thus, I will scrutinise whether rather positive or negative connotations are used in this context. Here, I will differentiate between and compare not only the three countries but also government and parliament fractions' papers. I will turn my special attention to possible comments on an emerging common European identity. The questions to be answered here are unravelled specifications and sub-questions to the central research question of how EU member states shape a European identity, namely: Is Europe mentioned rather positively or negatively? How are the member states' attitudes towards the idea of a common European identity? Is it desired or feared? Are the attitudes similar to the respective population, thus, are the hypotheses confirmed? Additionally, a more general question is: How is Europe presented in national policy documents?

I assume that there are a plenty of text passages in which European identity is mentioned indirectly. The answers to the questions above will thus be very helpful in answering the central question.

Moreover, I want to find out if there is a general will to shape a European identity. Is it seen as necessary for similar reasons that are mentioned in paragraph two? Why do the member states consider a European identity as necessary? How is this need expressed? Which chances and dangers are connected with European identity? In how far do positions towards a European identity differ among the analysed countries and in comparison with the European Commission's position, what approach on identity is adopted? The questions to be dealt with in this paragraph moreover reveal from which perspective I try to answer the main question. A special emphasis is put, for instance, on expected differences among the analysis member states and also, whether these differences correlate with the findings of the people's sentiments toward the EU. I am also interested in the reasoning for or against promoting European identity. In general, the questions are based on my theoretical framework outlined in the second paragraph.

Thus, this paragraph will contribute most to answer the central question 'How do member states shape a European identity?' In this context, I will also be able to corroborate or deny the hypotheses formed in the third paragraph.

The aim of this study therefore is to give an insight in how member states officially shape a European identity. The study might give new cognitions as until now only supranational European positions have been dealt with. Dealing with the issue of European identity is particular moreover as this identity might become the first possible transnational identity worldwide.

Yet, it shall also be made clear that this study as a document analysis is unable to be representative. Documents of only three countries are scrutinised and even these documents are very limited in number and thus not very highly representative of a particular country. Also, this paper deals only marginally with the reasons for and consequences resulting from the actual findings of this research. Nevertheless, this study will give detailed insights of how the Netherlands, and particularly Germany and the United Kingdom deal with the topic European identity.

II. Why European identity?

This chapter will serve as a theoretical background for this paper. It will first of all show that the constructivist concept of identity will be used, according to which identity is not static but can be shaped by political actors, for example. This is necessary to know insofar that this paper predominantly deals with the issue of 'shaping identity'.

I will then pursue to examine what identity, or its absence, implies for political entities such as the EU. I will refer to the legitimacy and democracy deficit of the EU that is, to a big part, due to the lack of identity. Therefore, European identity must be an important topic for everybody interested in living in a democratic system, especially as the EU's sovereignty grows at the expense of its member states.

A political actor intuitively coming to one's mind when thinking about who could shape European identity and thus to tackle the legitimacy problem is the EU itself. However, its capacities, just due to its poor opportunities to directly reach the people, are limited. Nevertheless, I shall briefly present its attempts as it will be interesting to compare the member states efforts in shaping European identity on the basis of those taken by the EU. This paragraph will conclude with the examination of people's attitudes towards the EU and the state of European identity in its member states. On the one hand, it will show how severe the lack of identity and thus the legitimacy problem actually is and on the other, it shall serve as a fundament to hypothesise on the member states' attitudes towards European identity. Basically, my hypothesis is that the degree of support or hostility toward EU identity among the population is more or less reflected in the behaviour of the political actors of a specific member state.

1. Identity: Definition and relevance for this paper

Before figuring out what can be understood of European identity, it shall initially be presented here what I understand by the term identity. In this paper, I adopt the constructivist view on identities according to which these can be shaped and are not static. In other words, adopting the essentialist perspective on identity, the counterpart to social constructivism, would have meant to deny the ability of political actors to seriously shape identification.

Before I come to that discussion, it is necessary for this study to clarify what is understood by collective identities. National as well as a possible European identity are seen as collective identities whereas personal identity refers to the single individual for whom identity means recognising oneself. Claudia Schumacher (2002: 5) names the identification of people towards each other and the naming of commonalities as two key characteristics of collective identity.

“Identity” in this sense can moreover be defined as a “feeling of belonging to a distinctive group or more abstract social unit” (Buecker, 2006: 267). Usually, these are nation-states, but this definition also includes lower regional units – or an entity such as the European Union. Simon Donig (2005: 15) regards identity as a programme to construct community and a feeling of togetherness: “Identität als Programm zur Herstellung von Gemeinschaft und eines Gefühls von Zusammengehörigkeit.”

In this research paper, I use the terms ‘identity’ and ‘identification’. Also, both terms are mentioned in the title. It shall be clarified here that no differentiation is made between the two terms as regards content. If people ‘have’ or ‘make use of’ an identity, this means the same as ‘they identify with’ a certain subject in this paper. The difference of the two terms is thus of linguistic quality only.

Moreover, I will primarily focus on the political aspect of identity at the expense of historic and cultural aspects. On the one hand, a variety of cultural and historic identities is even a characteristic component of Europe. A unifying political identity, on the other, is aimed for in order to achieve legitimacy and the capability to act. The political aspect of identity is generally considered to be the most important when thinking about the becoming of a European identity (Schumacher, 2002: 80f). Political identity can be characterised as a precondition for the legitimacy of democracy. It thus necessarily has to be supported in order to shape a European identity (Meyer, 2004: 21). Additionally, it is political rather than cultural identity that can be shaped in the constructivist sense.

This leads me to the answer to the question whether I am going to deal with ‘EU’ or ‘European’ identity in the following chapters. The difference between the ‘EU’ and ‘Europe’ becomes obvious when looking at Poland, where “‘EU’ does not mean ‘Europe’ anymore but structural funding, adoption of the *acquis communautaire* and agrarian reforms” (Buecker, 2006: 276f).

Political identity refers to the EU as a political union rather than to the cultural and historic Europe where borders cannot be defined clearly. I will thus refer to

the 27 member states in the following. However, I will take into account that the external borders of the EU might further expand in the future.

'EU identity' therefore means the feeling of belonging together of the people living in the member states, including the awareness and the support of common values, achievements and aims. Yet – as shall be shown in following sections – this feeling has not really emerged hitherto.

Missing boundaries of the EU are often mentioned as a problem for the non-emergence of a European identity. There is no equivalent framework of reference within the EU such as the 'nation' is for the population of a sovereign state. Intelligibly, it is more difficult to identify with a regularly growing population from 27 or more nations than with one nation.

In the following, I will nevertheless use the term 'European identity' as it seems more plausible to me once I have cleared what I mean with it. Additionally, many scholars use the term 'European identity' while actually speaking of its political dimension relating to the European Union (cf. e.g. Suszycky, 2006: 180).

A key assumption in this paper is that a political European identity actually can be shaped and changed. Policy programmes, for instance, are a measure to shape identity. This means that I adopt the theory of social constructivism. Concerning the scientific analysis of identity, the constructivist approach can be summarised as follows: "Collective identity is not naturally generated but socially constructed" (Eisenstadt / Giesen 1995: 74; in: Wagner, 2006: 36).

Constructivism assumes that collective identity can elementary be formed (ibid: 37). Identities change over time due to several influences among which policy results are seen as the most important factors (Kocka, 2004: 47).

In opposition to that, the essentialist theory denies this ability and indicates that there are only limited opportunities to highlight or suppress identities. Whereas essentialist thinking as to identity formation is predominant in everyday life, social constructivism is adopted by most scholars. As constructivism refers to the political aspects of identity and essentialism to the cultural aspects, this theory appears more appropriate for this study. For constructivism, pre-political factors such as language, history, habits, etc. are not irrelevant but yet not necessary for the coherence of a society (Wagner, 2006: 37). While constructivists are not interested in Europe's history they rather analyse change and transformation (Barnett, 2006: 268).

This means for this paper that I will have a look at whether national political actors adopt a constructivist or essentialist view. My position is that the constructivist approach is more appropriate to shape identity.

Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that the historic, cultural and political dimension of identity can rarely be separated exactly (Schumacher, 2002: 80).

Daniel Fuss and Marita Grosser (2006: 215) draw three conclusions from the constructivist perspective as regards European identity: a), its emergence is possible, b), national and European identity are compatible with each other, thus, identity is not a zero-sum-game, and c), European identity can be fostered by providing access to those resources that enable to create a supranational

identity. In this context, Habermas (2003, 97f) asks why identity should not emerge beyond national borders, just as European states of the 19th century created national identity.

The Scientific Council for Government Policy in the Netherlands (WRR, 2007) agrees that EU identity can indeed be shaped, yet only in the long term and insofar that political actors can create a “fruitful breeding ground” for identification processes, for instance through getting the population increasingly acquainted with the EU and its policies. If identity is actually shaped depends on a variety of factors, however.

Yet, this finding also implies that a European identity does not exist, or if so only to a very limited extent. Besides the fact that efforts to establish a European constitution itself failed, it is the inability to agree on a formulation on European identity in this constitution that expresses the insufficient state of a common identity even more (Meyer, 2004: 7). So-called ‘Euro-Pessimists’ that can be added to the essentialist perspective even doubt that a European polity can emerge at all (Risse, 2001: 198). The question how ‘European’ people feel in the EU will be dealt with in more detail in the fourth sub-section of this paragraph. Before that, I shall present in the following section for what purpose it is necessary to develop identity in EU level and why – according to the constructivist perspective – the capabilities to shape identity must be used.

2. Why is European identity needed? – Implications and problems

The shift of sovereignty from the national to the European level is probably the most important reason why a European identity is needed (Schumacher, 2002: 33). The more is decided upon on the supranational level, the more identification with this area of decision-making is required. Identity is a precondition for a democratically legitimised European Union. This section therefore deals with the lack of identity among European citizens and its effects on legitimacy and democracy. In the literature, the phenomenon of this legitimacy or democracy deficit is heavily discussed.

As McGee (2005: 1) puts it, a key function of political identity is

“[...] to legitimize the governing power over the governed in order to ensure genuine popular support for the political system and compliance with the requirements of the authority without coercion through the use of force”.

As this precondition is rarely given in the EU context, one can speak of a legitimacy deficit. For Höreth (1999: 255), a supranational identity is necessary for a political community such as the EU. Or put differently: “In the absence of a European demos, there cannot be a democracy on the European level”.

The view that the EU suffers from a lack of legitimacy is widespread. By many people the EU is not perceived as the appropriate sphere for government and polity. The low and even declining turnout in elections to the European

Parliament is one indication. In addition, 'Brussels' appears as an abstract sphere of decision-making far away from everyday life for many people (Fuss / Grosser, 2006: 227). The two authors consider this perceived remoteness together with a lack of cohesion among the variety of EU countries to be "fundamental obstacles for the development of a common sense of European identity" (ibid.: 228). Others point out – as I have mentioned above – that a missing framework of reference for European identity causes that identification with the EU is lagging far behind national identities (Thalmaier, 2006: 169). The confusion whether we speak about European or EU identity makes this problem obvious. Different conceptions of Europe thus shape different European identities (Shore, 1993: 791).

Moreover, many people see no opportunity to influence supranational decisions effectively. Thus, besides a legitimacy deficit, the EU also suffers from a general democratic deficit. Important evidence for this finding are the lack of an overall European public together with the severe lack of intermediary actors such as media and parties primarily covering common European issues. Without further going into detail in this broad topic, what shall be pointed out here is that the legitimacy and democratic deficit both are partly reasons for a lack of attachment to the EU, and in the same way these deficits are caused by this lack (McGee, 2005: 22ff). That is why Thomas Meyer (2004: 8f) calls identity a "precondition for democracy".

According to these problems, identity is one of the four EU's central questions in the conflict between consolidation and extension (Piepenschneider, 2005: 6). What the EU's agenda is to stimulate European identity shall be shown in the next section.

European federalist assess the creation of European identity as an important potential in order to counter this democratic deficit. By enhancing transmission and reception of 'European identity', the argument goes, political legitimacy is improved equivalently (Shore, 1993: 785f).

A major problem in this respect is, however, the actuality that the European Union does not possess the classic instruments of identity policy, like education. They are a matter of national policy. The dilemma is here that

"[...] without a sense of commitment and knowledge of citizenship rights the European peoples cannot establish a democratic identity in the sense of supporting the EU as a legitimate political system" (Walkenhorst, 2004: 5).

The lack of the instrument of identity policy also leads to the EU not being able to demonstrate its benefits for the European people. For instance, its accomplishment to significantly compensate the erosion of the national states' capability to problem-solving in the course of globalisation is hardly realised in public (Thalmaier, 2006: 174). Rather, people perceive the EU as part of the problem of a globalised world (ibid.: 183). Therefore, it is the national parliaments

that are key actors to shift the national debates towards the EU and that subsequently can shape European identity (ibid.: 189f).

Its high relevance is hence one argument for the decision to analyse the national policies as to European identity. Paradoxically, the national parliaments and governments have much greater opportunities to shape European identity than the European Commission or the European Parliament. Put differently, it is up to national actors to shape EU identity.

The crux is here that member states cannot only shape European identity through acting in favour of the EU, but can also do just the opposite. Thalmaier (2007: 182) underlines that national political actors commit to EU values only insofar as these are in line with national identity. In order to shape identity, however, it is necessary that European issues are made public and discussed in the national arena (WRR, 2007).

Whether it is the intention of national political actors to shape European identity or not is a question that shall be answered in the document analysis part.

Attempts to strengthen identification with the EU by the Union's bodies itself can nevertheless not be considered as meaningless. What the EU's measures are to bring forward this identity will therefore be presented in the next section.

3. Efforts of the EU to foster European identity

This section covers the efforts of the European Union in shaping European identity. I assume the EU to be more supportive of a supranational identity than the member states are. I shall present here on what the EU puts its focus and what developments in this policy field can be recognised.

In the previous section I have shown why identity is needed, namely in order to legitimise a political entity. This sequence will reveal how the EU intends to legitimise itself through identity policies.

The original expectation of EU actors concerning the becoming of a European identity was that it would emerge more or less automatically in the course of the establishment of institutions, joint policies and the experiences of European people resulting from increasing contact with each other (McGee, 2005: 7). According to this neo-functional thinking, political and cultural integration and thus identity would follow gradually a pure economic integration without additional identity policies (ibid.: 34f).

Uwe Dempwolff's article's title "Man verliebt sich nicht in einen Binnenmarkt..." (2003) („You don't fall in love with a Single Market") summarises very briefly that this positive assessment obviously proved to be wrong. Today as in the whole history of the EC, the degree of social and cultural integration, including identity formation, stands far behind the economic and political integration.

It was not until after the crisis in conjunction with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty that "European leaders came to realize that the European Union needs to be actively involved in promotion of a common European consciousness" (ibid.: 34f) seriously. However, initial considerations aiming at

fostering European identity can be dated back earlier. The 'cultural policy', developed by the European Commission with the support of the European Parliament has been developed since 1977 and explicitly related to a European *cultural* identity. Even before that, the 'Declaration on European identity' has been published in 1973 (Shore, 1993: 787, 779).

After the EU turned into a political Union with the Maastricht Treaty, European leaders increasingly realised that an emotional bond between the EU and its citizens has to be established for legitimacy reasons (McGee, 2005: 20).

A big part of the EU's efforts to establish European identity are of symbolic nature. The EU gave itself symbols, such as a flag, an anthem and a passport that are similar to the symbols we find in the member states. The Euro as a common currency in many countries even substituted national currencies as a symbol for identification (Wagner, 2006: 14). The influence of symbols on identification with a political entity is disputed, however. Shore (1993: 790) stresses the importance of symbolism since "political reality is symbolically constructed". According to Shore, symbols have a big impact on mobilising sentiment and public opinion.

In opposition to that, McGee (2005: 162) argues that the Union's "efforts to increase EU's salience in everyday life of European citizens through several symbols of European integration" together with the institutional presence of the EU alone "cannot guarantee a genuine sense of belonging at the European level". Apparently, not all measures to shape European consciousness are of symbolic nature. Two EU documents exemplary show the EU's applied efforts. An EU's decision (Document: Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften), for instance, aims at increasing the involvement of Europeans in civil society. Civil society and Europe-wide associations that exist to a very limited extent only today are seen as an important source for European identity. It is intended that projects aiming at supporting civil society shall be financially supported.

An item of written comment of the European Economic and Social Committee (Document: Europäischer Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschusses) intends to support the acquisition of foreign European languages and diversity of languages in Europe. The big variety of languages in Europe is considered as a positive characteristic. At the same time, this diversity often presents an obstacle to the communication among Europeans of different nations. The command of several foreign European languages can thus be seen as supportive for European identity as it can be used to gain experiences in several European countries. It becomes obvious here that national educational policies play a key role in shaping European identity, particularly in the form of language education.

Other examples of applied efforts to shape European identity are awareness campaigns on national identity, the nation-state and political integration in Europe (Shore, 1993: 780). Legal bases for the identity policies of the European Union are the Articles 149, 150 and 151 particularly.

Although the term 'European' is not officially defined by the Commission, it appears that the EU's concept of identity is rather essentialist than constructivist. Shore (1993: 792) describes this concept as "fundamental, historically given and

bounded". The fact that not only initial efforts in the 1970s but also today a wide range of the EU's identity policy stresses Europe's cultural identity primarily supports this view. Yet, efforts as those mentioned above must assume that identity can actually be shaped, otherwise they would be senseless.

However, the predominantly essentialist view is somehow surprising. Since the EU is particularly a political union, an equivalent support for its political identity would be appropriate rather than the stressing of cultural heritage.

Wagner (2006: 99) cautiously criticises the disregarding of the constructivist position. According to social constructivism, 'publicity' plays a key role in shaping identity. Thus he criticises a considerable lack of support for EU-wide communication: "Angesichts dessen drängt sich die Frage auf, weshalb die Förderung europaweiter Kommunikation noch immer in den Kinderschuhen steckt."

Thalmaier (2006: 169) evaluates the overall achievement of EU identity policies negatively. According to her view, these policies did not lead to the becoming of identity as it can be found in the member states. This aim might perhaps be a bit too ambitious after less than two decades of explicit identity policies. At least, a common consciousness cannot be prescribed. Even hostility and prejudices among European peoples might persist despite efforts to shape identity (Dempwolff, 2003: 128). Shaping a common identity is probably even more difficult than breaking hostilities off.

Although we cannot be certain about how successful a predominantly constructivist approach taken by the EU would have been, one can state that the essentialist approach is indeed not appropriate if *shaping* identity is the issue. The EU's references on Europe's common culture and history are fruitless if the people do not culturally identify with Europe. On the other hand, if such a cultural identity was given, the Commission's references might confirm this identity. As this is obviously not the case, I assume that putting the focus on policies fostering political identity by the EU is more promising.

I have so far spoken of the EU's identity and legitimacy deficit and its efforts to counter it. In how far we can speak of a lack of identification among European citizens shall be the issue of the next sequence.

4. How 'European' do European citizens feel? – National and systematic differences

This section shall examine the degree to which citizens in the EU have and use a European identity. I will particularly look at differences among the different countries and further scrutinise whether these differences are due to particular characteristics of a country. The issue of federalism is of explicit interest here. Federal societies are specific insofar that lower levels of governance might, besides the national level, be sources of identity. People in federal states are thus expected to be used to identify with not only the national level. On the one hand, it shall be indicated here that the national and the European level are not the

only actual or possible sources of legitimacy. On the other hand, I will try to answer the question, if indeed people living in a federal political system are more likely to identify with the EU as an additional political actor.

Another aspect of interest is the size of the country and its duration of EU membership. Both variables are expected to lead to higher EU support and identification.

In 2006, 46 per cent of all people living in the EU member states declared to perceive their personal identity as 'national and European', 39 per cent felt 'national only', and the percentages for 'European and national' and 'only European' are very low with eight and four percent respectively (Buecker, 2006: 268).

The results are similar in the Eurobarometer 2004. Compared to this survey, European identity has slightly increased in these two years in the whole EU. In 2004, 92 per cent felt aligned to their respective national identity and only 67 per cent felt aligned to the EU. The findings for the percentages of national and European pride are similar (Wagner, 2006: 93). It can be concluded from these figures that despite the assumption that the "feeling of belonging to Europe" obviously is an "important second mode of identity" (Buecker, 2006: 268), this identity is by far less distinct than the pronounced identification with the respective nation. Particularly compared to other units of identification such as regions within a national state, the EU performs very poor (Schumacher, 2002: 27f).

Probably even more interesting are the differences on identification with Europe among the EU member states. McGee (2005: 104-164) hypothesises that the structure of a state partly accounts for its citizens degree of identification with Europe. The big majority of her hypotheses have been confirmed. For instance, the constructivist approach is supported by the finding that political parties and elites can invoke identities.

It could also be confirmed that the identification with the EU is higher in states with a federal character. It is easier for people living in federal societies to build an identity with several units of governance. As a regional level besides a national level is seen as legitimate already, it is not very difficult for the people to accept the EU as an additional actor. People feel regional, national and supranational at the same time. Typical examples of federal states with relatively high degrees of European identity besides other identities are Belgium, Spain and Germany. Thereby, no trade-off between the different identities can be recognised.

McGee found out moreover that Italians and Germans, for instance, thus, "those who are uneasy with their past" (105), are more in favour of European identity – an identity that is seen in connection with democratic values. McGee as well as Schumacher (2002: 82) found out that people living in one of the initial six EC member states and thus are more familiar with the European regime are more likely to develop a European identity. On the contrary, inhabitants of countries with a high number of victims in World War II are less likely to identify with the

community due to negative memories of other European countries and their citizens.

Further variables supporting a common consciousness are high levels of education, knowledge and a positive image of the EU, support for multiculturalism, and the command of other European languages (also: Fuss / Grosser, 2006: 224). Inglehart's concept of 'cognitive mobilization' strengthens this view. It says that only high levels of education, political awareness, and communication skills enables a person to understand the process of European integration which only then can end up in support for this process and the development of a European identity (Buecker, 2006: 268f).

In a 2006 Eurobarometer edition, three questions dealing with the feeling of 'Europeanness' among EU citizens have been asked in all 25 member states of that time. Although these questions do not directly analyse the issue of European identity, the findings are still interesting in order to form hypotheses about the member states' policies on European identity. 'Socialisation with other Europeans', 'visiting other European countries' and 'consuming media in other European languages' have been the issues of the questions.

People living in Luxembourg prove to be extraordinary 'European', followed by Dutch people. Scandinavians are also quite 'European' according to these findings.

Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Hungarians and Poles show very low overall degrees. Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy all show average results, with Germany being rather 'European' and Italy less so (Special Eurobarometer 251).

Another survey analysed what people think about their country's membership in the EU. People from the Netherlands, Ireland and Luxemburg show the highest support in this respect, people from Latvia, the United Kingdom and Hungary the lowest (Standard Eurobarometer 69).

The pro-European stance of Dutch people might be surprising here. After all, it was them, together with the French, who denied the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. Hence, it can be concluded that the attitude of the Dutch population towards the EU and European identity can either not be defined precisely, or, what is more likely, is ambiguous.

The Netherlands are a founding member of the EU and known for their strong European and international alignment. Thus, their denial in the constitution is as surprising as the French 'No'. However, we have to take into account that in a plenty of member states no referenda have been hold. This means that certainly more 'No's could have occurred. Moreover, dissatisfaction with the national governments in office in both countries as well as uneasiness with the course of the integration in the case of the Netherlands (WRR, 2007), are factors that partly explain and qualify the denials. Nevertheless, the Dutch 'No' is an interesting starting point for analysing what the official Dutch position is as regards the EU.

General little identification with Europe is measured among British and Scandinavian citizens. Exemptions are Scottish and Finnish people. Swedes and

Danes feel secondary European only and strongly identify with their national model of society that is both considered as special and threatened by the EU. Euro-scepticism is a phenomenon that can be recognised particularly in smaller member states (Delanty, 2005: 15).

In Sweden, however, a gap exists between political elites and the voters. In contrast to the politicians, the voters do not feel very European (Suszycki, 2006: 203). These differences have to be assumed in several countries.

On the other side, for people in Germany and France, for instance, the EU is part of the national identity (Banchoff, 1999: 196). For Germans, EU identity is an opportunity to revitalise their own national identity, the French consider a European consciousness as an extension of French national identity (Delanty, 2005: 16). It is very interesting that this holds for two of the biggest and most influential member states. The populations of Germany and France, often seen as the central actors within the EU, obviously perceive the Union as being closer to their own nationality – and even as a part of their own national identity – than do other populations, particularly those of smaller countries.

Germany seems to combine all characteristics of a pro-European population: It has benefitted a lot from the EU, has been re-integrated through the union after World War II and has always been a key force.

Whether this supportive attitude holds for the political elites as well and what implications this may have shall be examined for the case of Germany by analysing documents.

In other countries, among these the United Kingdom, European identity is mostly perceived as contradictory to national identity.

The widely known British anti-European sentiments are revealed in the surveys. One reason for this might be that the UK, despite being a big and influential country, has not been a founding member. Yet, this might not account completely for the British rejection of Europe. I assume that long standing resentments against the French and the Germans as well as the impression of having lost too much status already in the world after having been a world power in former centuries explain these sentiments better. Hence, the UK is one example for a country in which national and EU identity seem not to be compatible.

Taking into account that the EU has to compete more for the grace of the people than national states (Piepenschneider, 2005: 6), the overall development of EU identity should not be assessed too negatively. Although “people support the EU for pragmatic reasons [...] they also increasingly support it for reasons of identification with the values they associate with it” (Delanty, 2005: 15). Significant events of articulating European identity have been the demonstrations against the US-American war in Iraq in several European cities on March 15th, 2003 (ibid.: 18).

This paragraph served as a theoretical underpinning. It can be summed up with the finding that dealing with European identity as a collective political identity

has become important as it is now a precondition for democracy and legitimacy on the EU level. In the course of globalisation, national states lose capability to act. Similarly, a lot of sovereignty is transferred to the European level. However, a common European identity equivalent to the importance of the EU in economic and political terms has not yet developed. The consequence is a legitimacy and democracy deficit within the Community. This deficit has not been solved by several efforts by the EU itself to foster identification with Europe. An important reason for this might be that the EU, just due to this deficit, lacks measures to reach the European citizens. Therefore, I assume that probably the national political actors are much more successful in shaping European identity in the long run because they can reach the population easier, for instance through media, parties and civil society. The following analysis shall present in how far EU member states as influential actors try to solve this deficit by shaping European identification. In order to do that, I will justify my choice of methodology and countries of analysis in the next paragraph. The bases for this choice are the findings on how 'European' the citizens of the member states feel. I have shown that though the average feeling of belonging to the EU is low, there are considerable differences among the countries. One important finding is that federal societies rather identify with Europe than centralist and influential, long-term members such as Germany and France do so more than smaller and younger members.

III. Methodology and units of analysis

On the basis of the theoretical underpinning of this study, it can be continued with the analysis of how member states shape European identity. Before that, however, it shall be presented in this methodological chapter how this analysis will take place. For this reason, the countries and policy documents of analysis are presented here including the justification for their choice. I will also explain how the methodology of document analysis will be applied.

1. Selected countries and justification

For this analysis, I choose policy documents from Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands while the emphasis will be on the former two.

According to the findings in the chapter above, I expect the policy documents of the member states to be similar to the attitude of the respective national population in terms of European identity. Though this must not always be the case as the example of Sweden shows, I assume that political actors cannot severely contradict the people's views.

Thus, I expect German politicians to support the idea of a European identity principally. Moreover, I assume that political leaders, just as most of the German

population, consider national and European identity to be compatible with each other.

All factors that McGee mentions in her analysis effecting support for European identity apply for Germany: Germany is a founding member of the EU, it is a big and thus influential country and moreover has a federal system of governance. Furthermore, Germany's education system is generally pro-European and, due to World War II, Germany's society is uneasy with its past. Therefore, it is not astonishing that Germans show a relatively high level of European identity and see Germany as deeply connected with the European Union. Similar tendencies are found in France and Italy, for instance. Germany is thus representing these big, influential, in tendency pro-European founding members, or what has been called 'Old Europe' in recent times.

As a second country of analysis, I choose the United Kingdom. In contrast to Germany, British citizens and also politicians are known for their overall anti-European attitude. Accordingly, I assume that British policy documents are not supportive, or even hostile, towards shaping European identity. Moreover, the United Kingdom is not among the originally six members of the EU. The strong national pride excludes identification with the EU and includes big pride of the national history. Also, the war on Iraq in which the UK was an ally of the United States can be seen as an example of undermining the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. On the other hand, the United Kingdom is, as Germany, a big and influential state within the EU.

Yet, the UK stands for the EU-sceptic member states that joined the Union after its founding of the original six.

As a third country I chose the Netherlands. In some respects, the country can be regarded as standing 'in between' Germany and the UK in terms of shaping European identity. There are both indicators for and against the assumption that Dutch political actors seriously intend to shape supranational identification. First of all, Eurobarometer surveys show that Dutch people are among the most 'European' in the whole EU and moreover strongly support their country's Union membership. In addition to that, the Netherlands are a founding member state of the EU. However, there are some reasons for assuming that Dutch politicians might not be too welcoming towards a European identity: The Netherlands are a relatively small country within the EU and small countries often fear to be overruled by the more influential states. In addition to that, the Netherlands are a country that suffered a lot from German aggression in World War II. This might still evoke scepticism towards other European nations today. Not least, it was, besides the French, the Dutch people that denied the Constitutional Treaty, even though the reason for that might not only have been anti-European attitudes. However, this denial might also be an evidence for differing positions of political actors on the one side and voters on the other as to this topic.

My hypothesis concerning Dutch policy documents are ambiguous. But still, I assume that European identity is encouraged due to the general positive attitude

towards Europe. The Netherlands represent a big range of small and middle-size member states both in terms of land surface and population.

It would have been very interesting to analyse more countries, among these a Scandinavian and an Eastern European EU member state. However, this probably would have gone beyond the scope of this study. Also, the fact that most policy documents are published in the respective language of the member state only would have presented a considerable hindrance for me.

The three countries of analysis moreover do not differ in terms of economic situation. It would also have been interesting to analyse countries that differ in this respect – thus have a considerable lower GDP, for instance. But again, it was impossible to find policy documents in a language that I understand. Moreover, there is no finding whether people in a country with a lower economic status feel more or less 'European' (Literature used in this section: McGee, 2005; Walkenhorst, 2004; Banchoff, 1999; Special Eurobarometer 251; Standard Eurobarometer 69).

2. Selected policy documents and justification

The documents chosen for the analysis shall present both positions of the national governments and parliament fractions. This will be done in order to show a wide range of positions within a country.

Thus, the policy documents I selected for Germany include both government positions and motions of parliament fractions. On the one hand, a government declaration will be scrutinised (Regierungserklärung der Bundeskanzlerin zum EU-Frühjahrgipfel, 2007) and on the other hand, a motion of the German Liberal Party (FDP) (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16 / 8927, 2008) will show the position of an opposition party.

Whereas these two documents are the centrepieces of analysis, I will add the content of other policy documents in order to substantiate my findings.

In all, positions from four out of five political parties represented in the German Bundestag will be included in the analysis (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16 / 9596, 2008). Additionally, I select a document from the German federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen in order to present the German attitude in terms of educational policy in connection with the EU (http://www.europa.nrw.de/de/mediadatabase/flyer_europaschule.pdf).

For the United Kingdom, the two documents for analysis are a Research Paper on the Constitutional Treaty (Research Paper 04 / 66, 2004) as well as a report on the Euro by the House of Lords (13th Report of Session 2007-08). The first one reveals both government and parliament position on European identity. Therefore, it is not a primary source, but comprises several positions. The other document presents the position of the House of Lords only. By these two papers a range of several positions containing both big political parties in the UK is included.

In addition to the German and British policy documents, a Dutch policy document will be included in the analysis (WRR, 2007). This paper shall extend the findings of how member states shape European identity. There are good reasons to assume that Dutch policy makers are supportive of European identity. However, this assumption is very vague. It is thus interesting to see in how far European identity is supported in the Netherlands. A short text of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as a policy statement of the Dutch Prime Minister are also contained in the analysis.

(<http://www.minbuza.nl/en/europeancooperation/Netherlands>)

As the focus of the analysis is on German and British documents, I only chose to analyse documents reporting on the Dutch government, yet not on parliamentary positions.

3. Operationalisation

The methodology used in this paper is document analysis. In contrast to polls on identification among European citizens, no quantitative data exist about the efforts of member states to shape European identity. Consequently, relevant passages in policy documents will be categorised in the following analysis. In each context, it will be explained first of all in what manner a certain extract is relevant in terms of shaping European identity. Secondly, these passages shall be assessed on the basis of five different categories. Each category contains similar positions as to the subject of European identity. The following scheme presents these categories including their corresponding meaning.

- (++) will be assessed a section in a policy document that very strongly intends to shape European identity. This assessment shall be used if European identity is considered to be necessary in order to assure the EU's democratic legitimacy. Moreover, it shall be applied if the EU is mentioned as an important source of benefits for the respective national and / or European population. Also, the declaration of political actors to be a 'European' and the support of its symbols is a strong effort to shape European identity.
- (+) shall be marked a position that intends to shape European identity. This includes mentioning the benefits of the EU and a positive attitude towards issues connected with European identity, such as supranational problem-solving.
- (/) is the assessment for passages in policy documents that deal with the issue of European identity but either have a neutral position on it or include statements that can be considered both as in favour of and against shaping European identity. If

European identity is presented neither as an advantage nor as a threat or if both aspects are mentioned in the same context, this assessment shall be chosen.

- (-) shall be assessed those positions that present European identity as a disadvantage (for national identity). This could also happen indirectly, for instance by stressing the importance of national identity and sovereignty in a way that supranational regulation appears to be a threat. Additionally, negative passages on the EU in general fit into this category.
- (--) is the assessment for extremely negative presentations of European identity. Similar to the categories (+) and (++), (--) is the more pronounced category compared to (-). It shall be used for hostile connotation towards the idea of European identity as well as the EU in general.

Apart from these five categories that shall indicate how positively or negatively national political actors perceive European identity and how much they bring forward this issue, I want to find out what perception of European identity these politicians have. Is it a rather political and constructivist one as I present it in the second chapter or is it a rather culture-based essentialist one, a position the European Commission seems to take?

A look beyond categorisation shall thus explore what member states' actors mean when they speak of European identity. This also includes focus on the choice of language. The vocabulary used in terms of this issue might be different among the three countries of analysis.

IV. The member states' shaping of European identity

After having clarified which documents will be analysed in which manner, I can now continue with the actual core of the analysis that will predominantly help to answer the central question of how member states of the EU shape European identity. The focus in this analysis will be on the verification or falsification of hypotheses on the member states' attitudes named in the previous paragraph.

These hypotheses base on findings about how 'European' citizens in the EU feel. Moreover, the member states' positions will be compared in relation to the view of the European Commission on EU identity as well as the constructivist stance on identity. It is thus not only important in how far member states shape identity as present themselves as pro- or anti- European, but also which image of the EU and European identity is predominant in the respective country.

In accordance with the order taken hitherto, firstly policy documents from Germany will be analysed, followed by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

1. Findings for policy documents from Germany

The hypotheses made on German policy papers are confirmed to a considerable extent. Documents from Germany reveal a positive attitude towards the EU and serious efforts to shape European identity.

The first one is a government policy statement by Germany's federal chancellor Angela Merkel on the EU summit in spring 2007 (Regierungserklärung der Bundeskanzlerin zum EU-Frühjahrgipfel, 2007).

As in other government declarations, the tenor of this speech is positive as regards European identity basically. The statement "Europe is our future" shows this positive attitude. Due to global trade and security issues, as well as environment protection and illegal migration, there is perceived no opportunity but solving these issues on the supranational European level. This implies that 'Europe' – from the context it can be concluded that obviously the EU is meant – is an actor growing in its importance both for national political actors and the people in the member states.

Moreover, what can be reasoned from this view is that acceptance of the EU as a key player in most political issues is inevitable. I argue that in this connection a certain degree of identification with the political Union by national populations is required in a similar way. As has been shown in former chapters, a democratically legitimised political system cannot exist without a certain amount of identification by its people.

Therefore, this diction of Ms Merkel supports the idea of a common European identity and emphasises its necessity, though not explicitly. This statement can accordingly be assessed with (+).

In the same declaration, Merkel calls Europe an "area of peace, freedom, security and prosperity" for which it is worth to work for.

This statement stresses the achievements and benefits of the EU on the one hand, and on the other, it can be seen as a request for both politicians and citizens to continue this success. Probably, it is intended to arouse pride of these achievements. Pride, in turn, is inextricably connected with identity and perhaps goes even beyond that term in its meaning.

Thus, although again the term 'European identity' is not mentioned explicitly, this statement can once more be seen as a strong appeal to shape and anchor the idea of identification with the European Union. I therefore mark this passage with (++).

Similar attitudes towards the EU and efforts to shape identity can be found in other government declarations. For instance, the support for the symbols that were intended to be included in the Constitutional Treaty is explicitly mentioned.

In the course of the analysis of German policy documents, the focus will now be on two motions brought into the Bundestag, the German second chamber of parliament, by different fractions.

The first one is a motion for a resolution by the Liberal Party (FDP) (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16 / 8927, 2008). This paper of December 2007 is pro-European and supportive of European identity in general, yet less so than the government statements mentioned above. It deals with the Treaty of Lisbon and supports this treaty as it will render the EU more capable of acting and more democratic. Whereas the connection to shaping identity cannot be assumed here, it becomes clear in the support of the single details of the treaty. Even though this treaty has not been implemented, it nevertheless shows what it means to national political actors.

The paper explicitly supports the idea of appointing a European foreign secretary. This innovation is seen as leading to more coherence in representing common interests outward. Foreign and defence policy, however, is a policy area in which little support from European citizens exists and which is seen as an issue of national sovereignty by many people. Thus, I consider this position in favour of a foreign minister and the Common Foreign and Security Policy to be an effort to support European identity. Corporate action in this policy area might particularly lead to the creation of identity. This effort is assessed with (+).

The pro-European and identity supporting stance becomes more obvious in the paper's regret due to the abandonment of European symbols, such as the anthem and flag. These have the advantage to "express a feeling of community". This statement shows that European identity is an important issue for the FDP fraction. This is expressed to public in this document. This reference is thus classified with (++).

Yet, this paper does not only intend to shape European identity. Elsewhere, the discrimination of German interests and the German language within the EU is heavily criticised. It is said that Germans are extremely underrepresented in EU institutions. This state can be ascribed to mistakes in establishing the European Foreign Service.

The discrimination of the German language in EU documents is not only denounced by the FDP, but also by a common motion of four out of the five fractions of the Bundestag, including the FDP (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 16 / 9596, 2008). I argue that it is not important to know in the context of this research whether this complaint is justified or not, but in how far the motions and the choice of words shapes or runs counter the shaping of EU identity. It can be assumed that mentioning publicly the lack of German language and interest representation rather creates a negative image of the EU as something threatening national interests. Although this is not necessarily the intention and European identity is definitely not depicted as a threat to Germany and its people, these statements are provided with (-).

Despite this last finding, the general attitude towards European identity is positive in German policy documents. This position can also be found in policy

documents on education, a national policy field that has been shown to be important in terms of shaping European identity. The EU plays an important role in education in Germany. Walkenhorst (2004: 14) speaks of the “political will [...] to enhance political identification with the European integration process through school education”.

Educational policy is part of the responsibility of the federal states in Germany. A look at a declaration of two ministers as well as the Premier of the most populous German Land – Nordrhein-Westfalen – confirms Walkenhorst’s findings (http://www.europa.nrw.de/de/mediadatabase/flyer_europaschule.pdf).

The Minister for Federal and European Affairs calls the European Integration a “track record”. He considers knowledge about the EU as a necessity and thanks teachers engaged in the European idea.

Similarly, the Minister for School and Further Education says it is important that this notion is fostered in schools. The Prime Minister says that pupils’ “Europeability” (German: “Europafähigkeit”) needs to be supported. Also, the number of so-called ‘Europe Schools’ (German: ‘Europaschulen’) needs to be increased. These statements show a clear effort among German politicians to shape European identity in the field of education and are assessed with (+).

In a nutshell, the analysis of German policy documents enables to confirm the hypotheses derived from the findings about the identification with the EU of the German people. The relatively high degree of ‘feeling European’ among Germans goes along with political support for shaping European identity, however with remarks that German language and German interests in Europe must not be undermined. Both for the population and German political actors, the EU is not seen as the ‘other’, but as an aspect compatible with Germany and its identity. Even more, the impression that it is the EU which, amongst others, is a central force to develop a German *national* identity as a political and democratic one is not wrong. The finding that the terms ‘Germany’ and ‘Europe’ are often mentioned in the same breath confirms the assumption that these two levels of government are perceived as belonging together.

As the findings of the identification of the German people with the EU have revealed in chapter two already, the cognisance that both the people and politicians in Germany obviously perceive EU identity to be not seriously different from German national identity is interesting. It may appear that identification with the EU and relatively strong support for this political system are due to the fact that German interests are somehow hegemonic within the Union. Similarly, some critics speak of the German – and French – imperialism within the EU. The position of the left journal Fifth International (Vol. 2, No. 3, 2007) is representative of this critical position:

“[...] Germany and France (backed by their closest allies in the EU, like Belgium) want to turn the EU into a homogeneous bloc under their leadership, where existing national bourgeoisies will ‘voluntarily’ hand over formal state powers to the European institutions, which will remain dominated by the ‘great powers’”

I agree with this position insofar that Germany and France are probably the most influential countries within the EU and build a kind of spearhead or a 'core Europe'. This, together with the fact that these two countries are founding members, can be an explanation for the high degree of identification with and support of the EU. This also means that the French 'No' to the Constitutional Treaty is at least as astonishing as the Dutch.

However, I reject the allegation of imperialism for several reasons. Firstly, Germany as well as France are both EU founding members of the EU and accordingly have always had a main impact in governing and leading the organisation. Other nations have joined voluntarily in the course of time, certainly by agreeing to the principles set but also by always bringing in new specific interests. Secondly, Germany, France, and Italy, that is seen as one of the 'imperialist allies', are three out of the four most populous member states. Taken these points together, I consider a peculiar position of these states within the EU as legitimate.

One may even go further and argue that the most populous countries are underrepresented in the EU by instancing the comparison of the per capita representation of German and Luxembourgian citizens in the EU institutions.

Taking into account that more populous member states are generally underrepresented in the institutions, I argue that it is absurd to speak of imperialism by the big member states. The German pro-European attitude can thus not be explained by Germany's exceeding influence within the Union. Rather, I assume the factors, 'founding member state', 'federal state', and 'uneasiness with the national past and relatively low development of national identity' to be of importance in the case of Germany.

Coming back to the political documents, the reference to a political European identity is striking in the Federal Republic. The policy documents try to arouse identity on the basis of common achievements in the EU's history as well as political tasks that need to be tackled in the future. Generally, the supranational level is perceived as being appropriate for solving many issues with a transborder context. This corresponds with my findings in chapter two, namely that European identity is primarily needed due to a shift of competencies towards the EU level of governance.

The German perception of identity differs from the Commission's view insofar that though a common fundament of values is mentioned in Europe, the German perception is rather social constructivist in contrast to the Commission's stance which is often essentialist. Political tasks and achievements are stressed rather than common cultural heritage.

2. Findings for policy documents from the United Kingdom

Basically, also the findings of the analysis of policy documents from the United Kingdom confirm my hypotheses. The attitude of British politicians towards the

EU and European identity is rather rejecting and the EU is obviously perceived as the 'other', and thus not belonging to British identity.

In the following, both government and parliament – the House of Lords and House of Commons – positions will be included. This also comprises the stances of the two big parties in the UK.

In a paper of 2004 looking at Part I of the European Constitution (Research Paper 04 / 66, 2004) which has been a subject of debate in the European Union at that time, the British Government's disapproving stance on the inclusion of a clause on mutual defence in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) can be seen as opposing European identity. Mutual defence, such as the CFSP in general, is a strong measure capable to arouse the sense of common identity. The member states – in theory – act in concert in military terms and thus compose a common actor to which attention is drawn by the public. The denial of the clause of mutual defence, though not to the CFSP as a whole, is assessed therefore as (-).

The impression that the European Union is the 'other' is confirmed by having a look at the government's position on attempts to making the EU a single legal personality. This idea is not entirely rejected but it is explicitly stated that "the Government would not accept, for instance, "any proposal that meant giving up its permanent membership of the UN Security Council and the rights which go with that". Again, this statement can be considered as not supportive of shaping European identity. The EU is rather considered as a threat to decline the UK's position in the world. It is also assessed with (-).

Compared to the government, the parliament's attitudes both towards the EU and European identity are partly more negative. Whereas the government's position towards the constitutional article on EC legal primacy is neutral with the note that legal relationships between the UK and the EU remain the same, parts of the parliament have been concerned about implications of this article for national sovereignty.

This position goes along with several similar concerns as to the European Union. For instance, some 'Euro-sceptics' are afraid that the EU might become the 'United States of Europe' due to symbols such as the flag, anthem, motto, currency and Europe Day that are written down in the Constitutional Treaty. Altogether, these and similar positions reveal the animosity of the British parliament towards the EU and repeat typical – often populist – attitudes vis-à-vis the EU. The assessment here is (-).

Yet, another document (13th Report of Session 2007-08) can serve as evidence for a, though indirect, measure to shape European identity. A report of the House of Lords on the Euro, the currency that is often seen as the key symbol of the EU and thus a central object of identification with it, generally presents it as a benefit for the member states. Whereas no negative remarks on the Euro can be found, the report highlights the Euro's influence on "increased trade both within the eurozone and with other countries", its success as a widely accepted transactions currency as well as its resistance to external shocks to date.

Although the report might be based on objective findings and its predominant intention might not be to shape European identity, it can thus be considered to have just this effect. The benefits of the European currency are presented to the British public which in turn might evoke positive sentiments towards the Euro as a symbol of the EU. The report is thus assessed with (+).

In spite of this last finding, the efforts of British politicians in shaping European identity are very low. By having a look at several documents, it becomes obvious that the EU is not seen as belonging to the EU, as it is the case in Germany, for instance. Rather, the EU is perceived as an actor that threatens the UK insofar as it might decline the country's strong position in the world. This finding goes along well with one of my previous assumptions saying that the rejection of the EU and the fall of the UK as a world hegemonic power coincide.

Similarly, the role of the EU as the actor that can solve global issues better than the national level is not appreciated neither among the British public nor the political actors.

As European identity is not wanted by the majority of political actors, little is said about the view that British politicians adopt on this issue. A section in the paper on the Constitutional Treaty explains that the British government does not support a reference to Europe's Christian heritage. Yet, it says only shortly after this that a reference to Christianity is missing the Preamble of the European Treaty. This is a quite brusque paradox that either reveals the UK's uncertainty or simply its disinterest in this respect. There are clues to assume that a rather essentialist view is adopted, yet we can definitely not be sure about that.

This gives us a hint that the British government refers to the cultural aspect of European identity, however no explicit statements can be given in this respect. It is probably reasonable to seize this lack of reference as to European identity in British policy statements as a characteristic. It mirrors the British disinterest in fostering European identity. As a consequence, it is not possible to say whether an essentialist or constructivist view on identity is adopted.

3. Findings for policy documents from the Netherlands

The overall tenor in Dutch policy documents in reference to European identity is positive. Similar to the findings for Germany mentioned above, at least the government considers the Netherlands as deeply aligned with the EU. Roughly spoken, the vague assumption that Dutch political actors are rather supportive of European integration and identity is confirmed. In this section, I shall now present what the findings for the Netherlands are in detail.

Firstly, the government's stance is expounded. In a short text on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(<http://www.minbuza.nl/en/europeancooperation/Netherlands>),

this stance becomes explicit. It says that the Netherlands' as a small country benefits a lot from its membership in the EU particularly in economic terms. As this official government website is likely to be visited by several citizens, I assume

this positive declaration on EU membership to be appropriate to shape European identity and thus assess it with (+).

The reference of benefitting from the EU as a small country is particularly interesting when rethinking of the allegation of imperialism towards the big member states by some critics. The passage supports my view that smaller countries are not disadvantaged in terms of power within the union.

This effort to shape support for and identification with the EU in the Netherlands might be partly due to the findings of a report by the Scientific Council on Government Policy (WRR). This report has been commissioned, in turn, after the Dutch "No" on the Constitutional Treaty and the findings that both knowledge and support for the EU are low in the Netherlands.

I argue that the simple fact that the government commissioned this study mirrors its interest in the population's examination of the EU. The Dutch government obviously has accepted its task to make the people acquainted with the supranational governance level.

In a similar way, however, these efforts have obviously started much too late, namely only after too little knowledge of and identification with the EU have actually been expressed in the denial of the Constitutional Treaty. Until the middle of this decade, hardly any efforts have been taken in order to shape a sense of belonging to the EU among the Dutch population. The paper of the WWR names the too technocratic way of dealing with EU issues in the past. They have not been subject to public debate until the notorious "No" in the Constitutional vote. If we take these two aspects together, a mixed picture can be derived from the findings of the report as to in how far the Dutch government shapes EU identity. The assessment here is thus (/).

This assessment of Dutch policy documents includes only the government's position. There are two reasons for this choice. On the one hand, these documents shall first of all serve as a reference for comparison with the German and British documents which form the centre of this analysis. In this respect, I have shown that the hypotheses made for the Netherlands are generally confirmed and also, the general attitude towards shaping European identity is rather positive.

On the other hand, I do not expect considerable differences by analysing further analysis. The Netherlands are generally seen as a classical example of a consociational democracy in which several political forces form the government together. This is also the case currently.

4. The results in comparison

The outcomes of the analysis approve the hypotheses drawn on the basis of answers to the question how 'European' citizens in the single member states feel. Germany as a country with typical features that usually go along with relatively high identification of its population with Europe, such as federal structure of government, big influence of the country within the EU and its status

as a founding member, shows high approval for European identity both among the population and political actors. I have argued that specific factors account for Germany's positive attitude rather than a French-German imperialism within the EU.

The Euroscepticism among big parts of the British population is confirmed in the analysis of UK policy documents. Except for a paper including positive remarks on the Euro by the House of Lords, at large, the EU is perceived as the 'other' with rather negative implications if its sovereignty and importance is extended further. Generally, there are only few efforts made to shape a pan-European identity.

By comparing British and German policy documents, moreover, it becomes apparent that official government statements on the EU are slightly more supportive of European identity than what can be called everyday parliamentary discussions. It is obviously easier to speak of the benefits and achievements of the EU than focussing on shaping European identity in specific issues that might be contrary to the voters' will.

The attitude of political actors in the Netherlands in shaping European identity is positive and similar to what it is in Germany. This does not contradict the hypotheses, yet the assumptions about the attitude of Dutch political actors have not been that certain as they have been in the other cases. Obviously, in the previous years, particularly after the denial of the Constitutional Treaty by the Dutch people, the importance of this issue has been acknowledged by policy makers and likewise an increased focus has been put on fostering identification of the population with the EU. Yet, EU identity has not been a subject to public debate until then.

Summarised, the EU is mentioned rather positively in the Netherlands and in Germany and European identity is rather appreciated than feared. The opposite is true in both cases for the United Kingdom.

Positive remarks as to the European Union are made in the Netherlands and Germany insofar that the benefits and achievements as well as the congruent interest of the specific country are outlined. This holds particularly for Germany, whereas in the United Kingdom, these kinds of references can hardly be found.

The results also show that public opinion and political action are congruent within the member states. However, political elites tend to be more in favour of supranational identification than the population is. The perception that European or global issues can no longer be solved on the national governance level only and that increased power of the EU has to go along with increased identification with the EU and its institutions seems to be higher among political actors – at least in Germany and the Netherlands.

Again, common interests and aims are presented as a central reason for the need of European integration – and thus identity. However, the need to identify with Europe is never expressed explicitly but rather in the form of more general phrases.

Whereas EU identity seems to be seen as a necessity in Germany and the Netherlands, it is perceived as a danger in the UK insofar that obviously both public and politicians fear the loss of power and sovereignty through the EU. In this context, European identity is one more aspect of the horror scenario of the European 'super state'. Consequently, it is not surprising that identification with the EU is among the lowest in the UK.

Additionally, one can record that the member states intend to shape identity on the basis of politics rather than on culture. This at least holds for the two countries that showed high willingness to shape European identity, the Netherlands and Germany, though through indirect acting and speaking mostly. This leads me to the assumption that they very obviously assume that, probably rather in the long run, (European) identity can be shaped through political action. Thus, and in contrast to the stance of the European Commission, a rather constructivist view on identity is adopted.

This is an interesting finding of this study. In paragraph two I mentioned that the constructivist approach to identity is more appropriate to treat the issue of 'shaping European identity' as it assumes that identity can actually be shaped. Therefore, the fact that the EU at least partly adopts the essentialist view and intends to shape EU identity insofar that it presents identity based on culture and history as given, is astonishing. I rather agree with the social constructivist approach estimating that identity can only be shaped seriously – and in the long run – if it refers to a level of government, hence a political identity. Probably, efforts can be made to shape a culture-based European identity. But these efforts will stay effectless. This is true for the EU's efforts indeed, although they are not purely essentialist and although affected by other constraints.

The presumption one may draw from this is that member states, at least the Netherlands and Germany, not only have better preconditions to shape identity due to their closer connection to the citizens, but they furthermore choose more effective measures to do so.

Due to a lack of reference on it, there is no clear evidence of what British political actors understand by the term 'European identity'. But it can be stated that not much effort is made by the political elites to support identification with the EU.

I do not want to disregard to possibility that other EU member states adopt a more essentialist view on both national as well as European identity. Due to the limited scope of this study in quantitative terms it was unfortunately not possible to include further member states in the analysis. This could definitely be an issue to be analysed in further studies.

Yet, although this analysis only includes three countries, it can be assumed that it covers and represents a wide range of EU member states as the countries of analysis have been chosen on the basis of criteria representing different characteristics of EU member states. However, a further analysis, particularly one including both Scandinavian and Eastern European member states would definitely be interesting and reveal more and deeper insights as well as conclusions on how a pan-European identity is shaped by the member states.

V. Conclusion: Different attitudes to European identity

In this study, I have presented three different approaches of how member states of the European Union shape European identity. For this purpose, German and British policy documents dealing with this issue have been analysed in detail as well as corresponding documents representing the position of the Dutch government in this respect.

I have shown that these countries that are representative of a wide range of EU member states show similar efforts to shape identity. The stances of the political actors often go along with those of the population they represent.

Hence, Germany shows strong efforts to foster EU identity through stressing the EU's importance for Germany as well as the common achievements and future goals. Moreover, Germans seem to regard European identity as very close to their national identity. In this context, I argue that the accusation of German (and French) imperialism within the EU is baseless. I consider other factors to be of greater importance here. Further studies might confirm or falsify my arguments.

For the Netherlands, similar findings could be made. However, obviously only recently the Dutch political actors are keen on shaping European identity, whereas this issue has been neglected in former times, particularly before the denial to the European constitution. If we accept that this 'No' is predominantly due to reasons that have little to do with the constitution itself, one can say that the Dutch people and politicians are similarly pro-European as their German neighbours.

Only very limited efforts to foster EU identity are made by the UK. In general, little reference to supranational identity can be found. In contrast to the other two examples, both the British people and political elites perceive British and European identity as more or less antipodal. Accordingly, the need to shape European identity for several reasons is not recognised.

Also due to the limited scope of this paper, I have not dealt with the reasons for the British Euro-scepticism in detail. As in the other cases, the congruence of views taken by the people and the politicians is striking. Are there other reasons for this apart from the prowl on voters?

Basically, this study may serve as a basement for the further analysis of national policy documents dealing with the issue of European identity. Are my countries of choice really representative? Are there countries or politicians that adopt a rather essentialist view on identity?

In the context of the theoretical background one may moreover scrutinise if the essentialist approach towards identity is indeed as useless as I claim. This could be done by analysing countries taking this approach.

Additionally, further studies might reveal whether indeed national states have better abilities to shape (European) identity and whether they are more successful than the EU as a political actor in the file of identity policy. Moreover, it might be interesting to tackle the questions: 'Do identity policies actually have

an impact?' and 'How have attitudes on EU identity taken by national politicians changed over time?'

The answers to these questions probably will extend the explanatory power of this study. Nevertheless, this paper gave an insight already to the way some member states deal with the issue of European identity and provided results that may ease or encourage further research.

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