

CIFE – CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE FORMATION EUROPÉENNE, MASTER IN
ADVANCED EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

IDENTITY IS THE MESSAGE: HOW THE MEDIA CONSTRUCT EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

A Comparative Analysis of Political and Cultural Identity
Building via the Media Coverage of the European Parliament
Elections and the Eurovision Song Contest 2014

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Abstract: Identity – both national and European – is constructed by the media. The media do so by promoting a demos (if the media in question are informative media), or an ethnos (if they are cultural media). Their impact on the media recipients depends on the structure of media markets and individual strategies of the recipients to reduce complexity. This thesis analyzes the impact by the media coverage of the European Parliament elections and the Eurovision Song Contest on national and European identity formation of recipients.

Table of Contents

Table of Graphs and Pictures	3
1 Introduction	4
1.1 Relevance of the Topic.....	5
1.2 Approach.....	6
2 Theoretical Basis	7
2.1 Identity Theories	7
2.1.1 Psychological Basis	7
2.1.2 The Ethnos and the Demos	13
2.1.3 Constructing Identity.....	20
2.2 Media Theories	29
2.2.1 Media and Reality	29
2.2.2 Market Forces and Structures of Media in Europe.....	30
2.2.3 Media Influences on Identity Building	37
3 Empirical Research	42
3.1 Research Method.....	43
3.2 Research Results	51
3.2.1 Results for Cluster 1	51
3.2.2 Results for Cluster 2	54
3.2.3 Results for Cluster 3	62
3.2.4 Additional Results	67
4 Conclusion.....	69
Bibliography	73
Appendix	78

Table of Graphs and Pictures

Graph 1: Spatial definition of the self	10
Graph 2: Temporal definition of the self	11
Graph 3: The Essentialist Principle of Political Identity-formation	17
Graph 4: The Constructivist Principle of Political Identity-formation	21
Graph 5: Media on Three Markets.....	32
Graph 6: Cost Decrease of Media Products per Recipient.....	33
Graph 7: Two-Step Flow Communication Modell.....	38
Graph 8: Schematic Diagramm of General Communication System	39
Graph 9: Factors of Research	49
Graph 10: Results Cluster 1 Global	52
Graph 11: Results Cluster 1 EPE	53
Graph 12: Results Cluster 1 ESC.....	54
Graph 13: Results Cluster 2 Global	56
Graph 14: Results Cluster 2 EPE	60
Graph 15: Results Cluster 2 ESC.....	61
Graph 16: Results Cluster 3 Global	63
Graph 17: Results Cluster 3 EPE over time	65
Graph 18: Results Cluster 3 ESC over time.....	66
Graph 19: Reach of National versus Regional Media.....	68

1 Introduction

Identity is seldom built on purpose. When Martin Luther translated the Bible from Latin into German in 1522, his aim was to reach the masses, not to create identity; yet, as Benedict Anderson pointed out, the codification and spread of the German language led to the speakers of the different Germanic dialects imagining themselves as a community – as Germans¹. The message Luther intended to send to the readers was one of religion, the message which reached the readers, though, was one of identity. Unintentionally, the German language as a medium became a message in itself, just as Marshall McLuhan theorized almost half a millennium after Luther², and this message was one of group-ness and we-feeling.

In this thesis I argue that the same process is observable in national media in Europe. When media treat European issues – meaning that they send these issues as messages to a mass audience – they inevitably also send identity as a message; yet, which kind of identity this is, depends on the issue in question. The identities built by the media are divided into four categories: first, there is European demotic identity, meaning a political, subjective identification³ with the EU. Secondly, there is national demotic identity, meaning a political, subjective identification with the nation in question. Thirdly, there is European ethnic identity, meaning a cultural, objective identification⁴ with Europe. Finally, there is national ethnic identity, meaning a cultural, objective identification with the nation in question.

Which of these four identities is built, depends again on two things; first we must consider, what kind of media we are talking about. On one hand there are

¹ (Anderson 1991, 37ff.)

² (McLuhan 1994, 7ff.)

³ (Kohn 2005, 16)

⁴ (ibid)

informative media, treating political issues, which construct demotic identity. On the other hand there are cultural media, treating – as the name implies – cultural issues, which construct ethnic identity. Secondly, while the type of media determines, whether demotic or ethnic identity is shaped, the type of treatment determines whether it is European or national identity that will be constructed. Representation builds identity, as Stuart Hall pointed out,⁵ and consequently representation of Europe builds European identity, while national representation builds national identity. In either case though, identity itself is the message.

1.1 Relevance of the Topic

The importance of identity for the EU lies in the fading of the permissive consensus for European integration, as Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks argue. While until the 1990's the European public (or, rather, national publics) tolerated their elites driving integration and the EU as “an ever-closer union”⁶ forward, the decade before the turn of the millennium saw this trend reversing. The European publics became not only increasingly concerned with European issues, but also – and more so – concerned with being on the winning end of every policy and negotiation on the European level. Now, the elites have to closely watch public opinion, when taking steps towards integration, the permissive consensus has been transformed into a “constraining dissensus”⁷.

Hooghe and Marks point out as well, though, that public opinion towards Europe is identity-driven. According to their reasoning, as long as a national identity

⁵ (Hall 1999, 94)

⁶ (Treaty of Rome 1957, Preamble)

⁷ (Hooghe and Marks 2008)

is construed as an exclusive one, it cannot tolerate the transfer of competences from the national to the European level⁸; yet, without a transfer of competences, there is no integration or worse, if Eurosceptic parties want to take back competences, the Union itself is weakened. Therefore the European Union is in need not only of a European identity, but of a political EU identity. This thesis aims to lay out the role of the media in constructing not only such an identity, but European identity in general.

1.2 Approach

To do so, the thesis first outlines the state of the current research on the topic by answering the questions what is identity, what kind of identities are there, and how to build identity. From there on it focuses on the role of the media answering, specifically, how do the media build identity, how are media in Europe structured, and how do the media reach their audience.

My own empirical research answers three questions: whether European cultural or informative media coverage is stronger in identity building (demotic or cultural identity), in which kind of identity building they are stronger (European or national identity), and how this differs between the countries in my samples, France, Spain, Germany, and the UK. The main tool of research is a content analysis, which identifies via thirteen factors the impact on identity building by the media coverage of the European Parliament Elections and the Eurovision Song Contest 2014.

⁸ (ibid, 14)

2 Theoretical Basis

When talking about identity, it is crucial to differentiate between individual and group identity. While the following subchapter *Identity Theories* starts with theories of individual identity, it uses them merely as tools to help define group identities. These group identities – namely ethnic and demotic identity – and their construction is the true focus of said subchapter. How the media conduct this construction is in the spotlight of the second subchapter, *Media Theories*. Here the starting point is the general role of media in how we perceive our world; yet it goes into more detail about how the structures of media do so and which variables influence the impact of media on their audience.

2.1 Identity Theories

2.1.1 Psychological Basis

The first crucial question is of course: *what* is identity? The answer to this question is not easy to define, looking at the multitude of attempts which have been made throughout history. This abundance of definitions has lead scholars to go so far as to dismiss it all together as useless, because the term can mean anything and nothing⁹. Others have outlined its ambiguity, as there are too many ways to measure and interpret it, merely stating that the concept describes three different types:

⁹ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 1)

“First, identity as something collectives or individuals have; second, identity as something a group or a person is; and third, identity as a resource persons or a group of people use, as something individuals or a collectivity do.”¹⁰

Yet, simply ignoring identity for whatever reason is not useful; if we want to talk about a concept, we have to know what it means. Thus, this subchapter serves to take a step back and have a look at where the concept comes from and what a definition itself needs. The aim here is not to give a full-fledged, complete definition of the term, but to define it for the purpose of treating identity building in the European context. Therefore in this subchapter we take a step back and look at the micro-level, at *individual* identity. The key questions for now are: who is the individual? What characterizes a person’s nature, his or her *self*?

The Western academic tradition in analyzing the Self starts – as Charles Lemert notes – with the notion of the psyche, the soul, in Plato’s *Republic*. The nature of any given person depends on his or her soul, the Self defines the individual. However, in *Republic* Plato did not attempt to explore how this soul *is*, but how it *should be*: controlled by wisdom, which leads to justice. This notion leads us to the observation that, even though this oldest account of identity as the psyche leads straight to the academic field of psychology, *Republic* was a political book¹¹; hence the entanglement of identity and politics which will continue to accompany us through the following chapters.

Staying however with identity for now, we can start our definition by noting that there has to be *a difference (or similarity)* in order to make any kind of definition in the first place. Any single thing can only be defined, if it differs from other things. The proverb *to compare apples and oranges* – meaning to compare the incomparable – has the underlying logic that concept A (*apple*) does not equal

¹⁰ (Kaina and Karolewski 2013, 15)

¹¹ (Lemert 2011, 6)

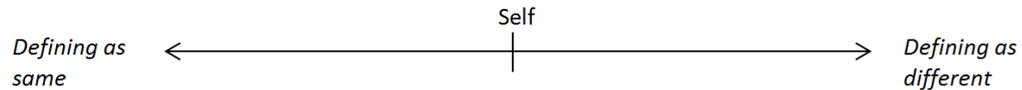
concept B (*orange*): an apple is defined as not being an orange, $A \neq B$; yet, this is a question of definition. If we define A (*apple*) and B (*orange*) as C (*fruits*), then the incomparable becomes comparable, $A = C$ and $B = C$, therefore $A = B$. The same can be said about identity. Individual A is only different from individual B, if they are not defined by being part of group C – no matter, whether C is an ethnic, cultural, or any other kind of group. In other words: there are, depending on the definition, individual identities on the micro level and group identities on the macro level. For the purposes of definition, I want to start here with this individual micro level. Two approaches have formed in its regard:

The first one stresses the differentiation *from* and identification *with* other people. As Sigmund Freud wrote: “Identification is known to psycho-analysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person.”¹². The key words here are *emotional tie with another person*. This point of view maintains that we see ourselves through the mirror of others, which leads to either identifying with them and striving to be like them, or differentiating and being different than them. In other words: our identity is defined by Otherness, either by trying to incorporate the Other or by trying to reject it. This concept lives on in more modern approaches, like the one of social comparison, which explains identity formation as a process of comparison of one’s self with – idealized – others. Interestingly, this is a subconscious process, which the average person is hardly aware of and constantly underrates. In a comparative study Joanne V. Wood and Anne E. Wilson found that “the evidence that social comparison is of paramount importance stands in stark contrast to the views of lay people”¹³. Plus, Wood, Wilson, and Freud focus on the identification with others, while the notion of Otherness is mostly connected to the idea of separating from the others. In fact, we can say that the self may move in

¹² (Freud 1964, 46)

¹³ (Wood and Wilson 2003, 364)

either direction, searching similarities with the Other or outlining differences (compare graph 1).



Graph 1: Spatial definition of the self

The second approach focuses more on the individual himself or herself and how it develops over time. When Peter Weinreich talks about cultural, ethnic or political identity, he differentiates these terms only in respect to his overall definition of identity:

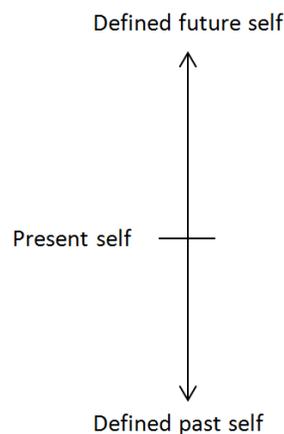
“A person’s identity is defined as the totality of one’s self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future.”¹⁴

From this point of view, one can never know his or her own identity, as it is subject to constant change. Any type of identity – like the above cited cultural, ethnic or political one – exists only through the lens of the past and the striving for the future. Ethnic identity for example is defined by a person’s image of his or her ancestry and on how said person wants to relate to ethnicity in the future¹⁵. Just as with the

¹⁴ (Weinreich 2008, 127)

¹⁵ (ibid)

identification of the self with others, we can thus draw a graph of the definition of the present self towards its own past self and potential future self (compare graph 2). Thus the individual is in a process of constant self-reflection and development into uncertain territory, never knowing fully his or her true nature as this would mean, in Søren Kirkegaard's words, "the sickness unto death"¹⁶. This relation towards the time yet to come bridges Weinreich's approach with the concept of the project identity, in which people relate to something, which will only come into existence in the future. However, it should be noted that neither one's perceptions of the past nor those of the future are – in Weinreich's words – construed consciously. To the contrary, if we stay with the example of ethnicity, we can assume that the perception of one's ancestry depends on outside factors such as education, myths, and media presentation of said ancestry. These key words will be dealt with in later chapters.



Graph 2: Temporal definition of the self

¹⁶ (Kierkegaard 1941)

In both cases however, identity is a matter of perception. Talking about identity formation via Otherness, Michael Bommers notes a “we-feeling”¹⁷, a subconscious sensation rather than something the individual could explain rationally. For Rolf Frankenberger and Gerd Meyer, though, the emphasis is on the dependence of one’s identity on the social context: while during modern times the individual was bound to entities – such as companies, nation states, or families – at an early age and permanently, these boundaries resolve in postmodern times. He who once could identify with the clearly defined societal roles of – for instance – a worker, a French national, and a father, lacks nowadays such orientation in an environment of frequent changes of employers, international interconnectedness, and a less and less conservative gender and father roles¹⁸.

Perhaps even more striking than this dependence on the temporal context is the dependence on the spatial context, as illustrated with the following thought experiment: Otherness first of all means that there has to be at least one Other. Thus, any in community – for example, a nation – the individual can define himself or herself as different from other individuals in the community and as belonging to a subgroup, in this case for example as the member of a specific region versus members of other regions. Once this individual moves to another nation, his or her own regional identity loses grip; in another national community, these regions are not visible anymore and therefore their stigmatism as Other loses grip as well. In this new environment, the individual will thus start to identify with his or her own nation versus members of the other nation. This constitutes an identification process via an in-group and out-group, which is strikingly similar to the one via family ties¹⁹. In effect identity therefore depends both on the context of the time the self exists in, as well as on the context of the space the self exists in. Noteworthy here is that we

¹⁷ (Bommers 1994, 365)

¹⁸ (Frankenberger and Meyer 2008, 7ff)

¹⁹ (Horowitz 1985, 59)

understand the term space not as purely territorial as in the example given above. Most often individuals do not come into contact with other communities, when not moving to these communities. The exception is via the – often simplifying and stylizing – media coverage of said communities. This also means that any given individual influences its own identity via the type of interaction with its temporal and spatial context. After all, it is our own choice, whether we come into contact with other communities by traveling to them, or by turning on the television and bringing their images via the media to us. Therefore, an individual can have multiple, overlaying identities, which may be best represented with the model of a Russian Matruska doll, as proposed by Thomas Risse²⁰.

In conclusion we can thus say that for the purpose of this paper any definition of identity has to contain the following factors: first of all, individual identity is a definition of the self, at least via Otherness and the perception of the self over time. Secondly, identity is a subconscious feeling and dependent on the context, be it the spatial or temporal one. Third, identity is dependent on the interaction with the mentioned contexts. Bringing these factors together for the purpose of this paper, we can summarize: Identity is the space, time, and interaction dependent definition of one's self, expressed as a subconscious feeling.

2.1.2 The Ethnos and the Demos

I insist on this definition, because it provides us with a tool to answer the next important question: *what* kinds of group identity are there? Said answer to this question depends on whether we see identity building along spatial differences between the self and others – meaning Otherness – or along temporal differences

²⁰ (Risse 2003, 490)

between the self in the present and its selves in the past. Indeed, most classifications of identities follow the continuum of spatial differentiation, as most scholars can only agree upon the significance of the Other for identity, but nothing else²¹. In effect, this means that these scholars differentiate between different cultural, ethnic, demotic, or national identities. For my part I argue that a temporal factor is crucial for group identity as well and inseparable from the spatial one, as I will outline in this chapter in order to define the terms culture, ethnos, demos, and nation.

These four terms represent our reference frame, if we want to talk about a European identity, as the formation of European identity lacks precedent. Any theories, which explain the existence – or lack – of European identity have to be borrowed from other academic schools. In order to understand the mechanisms of European identity formation, one needs therefore to understand the mechanisms behind national identity formation and turn to the theories behind this academic school.

Starting with the classifications in terms of a space-dependent definition of the self, the first term to be defined is *cultural identity*. Culture in this context is a “guidance system” within an entity “consisting of specific symbols (e.g.: language, gestures, mimic, dress, greeting rituals)”²². The context of cultural identity is therefore the meaning of symbols used within a specific group. Cultural identity therefore shall be defined here as the symbol dependent definition of one’s self.

From this point of view, *ethnic identity* is merely an upgrade of cultural identity. As soon as someone’s identity is not only about symbols, but includes a belief in common ancestry, history, and experiences, we call it an ethnic identity²³ –

²¹ (Kaina and Karolewski 2013, 15)

²² (Thomas, Kinast and Schroll-Machl 2005, 22)

²³ (Heckmann 1992, 56)

due to the inclusion of history and ancestry, it contains the temporal aspect of identity as well. While ethnic identity is thereby based largely on “objective characteristics”²⁴, meaning cultural symbols, body features, and so on, it does not stop there, as cultural identity does. Ethnic identity connects the cultural symbols with meaning, reflected in the above mentioned beliefs. Ethnic identity shall be here the symbol and belief dependent definition of a group’s self.

Demotic identity on the other hand is the polar opposite of the ethnic one. It is not rooted in the belief in a common ancestry and history, but by a “subjective declaration”²⁵ of values and principles. Values and principles, such as in the case of a European demos: “secularization, state before market, solidarity before competition, awareness of the paradoxes of progress, renunciation of the right of the mighty, peace orientation based on historical experiences”²⁶. Again, just as ethnic identity, demotic identity thereby includes a temporal factor as well. Nevertheless, while an ethnos is a community of symbols and beliefs, a demos is one of values. While an ethnos is at least partially tangible, a demos is in its core abstract. It is a community, in which people strive for volatile and ever changing common values. The important notion here is that these values are the contrary of private: they are not only the sum of all private values, they transcend it. Values are formed via the discourse in a “public sphere”; they are transmitted through “publicity” to “the public”²⁷. In this sense, a public sphere is a communication system, where information – ideas, norms values – flows among its subject – the public – via institutions like mass media – thereby reaching publicity. Nevertheless, the implication of the public sphere as a communication system is that it cannot exist without culture either. In order for people to communicate, they need a common set of symbols: a language for example. Consequently, Jürgen Habermas

²⁴ (Kohn 2005, 16)

²⁵ (ibid)

²⁶ (Habermas 2004, 51)

²⁷ (Habermas 1990, 54f)

himself states that a European public sphere will only be possible, if there will be a common – if second – language in Europe²⁸. A demos needs at least a minimal cultural identity as well. Therefore I define here demotic identity as the symbol and value based definition of a group's self.

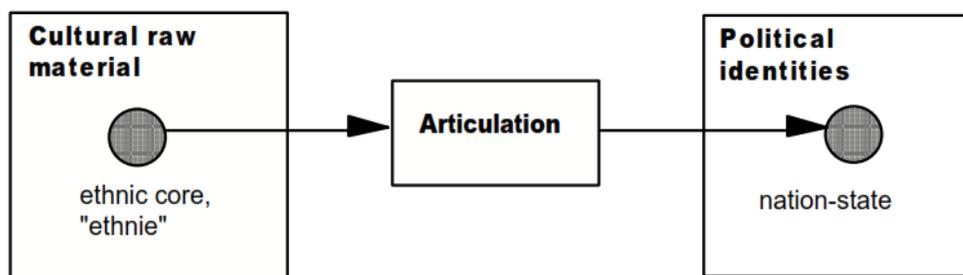
This brings us to the last type of classification: *national identity*. I argue here that national identity is nothing but a wider perspective of either ethnic or demotic identity, just as ethnic – and, to a more limited extend, demotic – identity is nothing but an upgrade of cultural identity. Behind this argument stands the reasoning that the one demand, which all nations have in common – the demand for a right to self-determination – can only emerge, if there is a self to determine. There has to be the (however defined) self of an ethnic or demotic identity of a community first, before this community can call for power over its own destiny. What therefore separates national from ethnic and demotic communities is that national identity includes the latter ones, plus a political factor: a state. I agree therefore with Michael Bommes, that “nations are (ethnic or republican) understood peoples with states, and ethnicities are peoples without states”²⁹. This means also, that national identity does not tolerate competition. Either it determines itself – is sovereign – or not. Any infringement on a nation's sovereignty constitutes thereby nothing less than an attack on the identity of the members of this nation. In effect that means that there are two types of national identities. On one hand ethnic national identity as the symbol, belief, and political dependent definition of a group's self. On the other hand, demotic national identity as the symbol, value, and political dependent definition of a group's self.

As far as these theoretical backgrounds may reach, each has its specific weaknesses. Ethnic identity for once is still in interaction with the context, ipsum est the symbols, believes, and polity of whoever may constitute the Other at a certain

²⁸ (Habermas 1998, 16)

²⁹ (Bommes 1994, 366)

moment. A Breton may feel as a Breton in France, but as a Frenchman in Germany, and as a European in America. Therefore, firstly, I reject the idea of primordialism (compare graph 3), namely, that nations or ethnic groups are eternally unchanging and ever-existing fixed entities³⁰. According to this view, ethnic groups are essential and their formation into a political group is nothing more than the articulation of their nature. Contrary to this assumption, identities change depending on whoever may be the Other in a certain context; they are not primordial.



Graph 3: The Essentialist Principle of Political Identity-formation³¹

Secondly, I disagree with Anthony D. Smith that there has to be “some real historical foundation”³² in order for an ethnic group to exist. According to Smith’s view, the Breton from the example above shows perfectly how nationalization cannot overcome ethnic facts. Brittany, located in the very North-West of France, was never and may never be overtaken by a French identity. What Smith’s ethno-nationalism does not explain, are the cases in which nationalization did overcome ethnic facts. The Franche-Comté – located in the east of France, but just as far from

³⁰ (Coakley 2013, 154)

³¹ As seen in (Cederman 2000, 7)

³² (Smith 1981, 67)

Paris as Brittany – was successfully “Frenchified”, as Eugene Weber calls it, by extending the centralized French education system to this region³³.

Thirdly, I disagree with Samuel P. Huntington that Otherness is construed along the fault lines of civilizations. According to this pan-nationalist theory, nations with similar cultures constitute civilizations, which are in competition with each other³⁴. This theory is lacking in two regards: first, it does not take the context dependency of identity into account. There may as well be a civilizational identity, if someone from civilization A comes into contact with civilization B, but this will not dissolve the various national, ethnic, or cultural identities within one civilization. In addition, this theory does not explain the integration of minorities from other civilizations within a given nation-state. According to Huntington, it should be easier to integrate the European peoples within one – however defined – European identity, than to integrate migrant communities from other civilizations within a national identity. In contrary to that assumption, we witness, as outlined in the introduction, a lack of European identity, while migrant communities are, albeit with difficulty, increasingly integrated in their host societies. In the logic of ethnic identity, different communities within one state have no other choice than to have common experiences and to witness a common history. Exemplary for this process is a study about the Turkish migrant community in the German city of Bremen by Christoph Bähr, who argues that the common experience of the 2006 football world cup promoted a common identity³⁵. It should be noted here as well that the term *to integrate* is misleading; a common experience goes both ways for the migrant community *and* for the host community, changing both.

The weakness of the demotic concept of identity on the other hand is rooted in its emphasis on values. Everyone may agree that the values on which the

³³ (Weber 1976, 100)

³⁴ (Huntington 1993, 25ff)

³⁵ (Bähr 2009, 89ff)

European Union bases itself – be they the ones outlined above by Habermas or the codified Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, embodied in Article F of the treaty of Maastricht – are universal and genuinely good in a normative sense. Theoretically, they should encourage the citizens in Europe to forget differences and join a common demos; yet, when faced with the Euro crisis, the actual power of these values became doubtful. Between 2012 and 2013 alone the support of the EU by the European citizens shrank by 15 percent³⁶. In the same time period, the ethnos-based nation states – at least those with a homogenous ethnicity – did not face a decline in public support. Inversely, nationalist parties are on the rise. Just because certain values are obviously good in a normative sense, does not mean that people put them above their physical needs.

Lastly, it is doubtful, whether we can separate ethnos and demos in practice as much as we can separate them in theory. As outlined above, a certain minimum of a common culture is necessary for both, though culture certainly plays a more important role for an ethnos, while a demos needs merely common symbols rather than a secondary language. In any case, here I want to give a more practical example of how ethnos and demos can overlap. The United States of America have often been described with the image of a “melting pot”³⁷, a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, where different ethne dissolve and form a new unity based on the same ideals. In other words: an ethnos disappears in favor of a demos. In practice though, the image is wrong. “The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen”³⁸, as Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan found in a study about different ethnic groups in the city of New York: the subjects of the study were clinging to their ethnicities. On the other hand, to say that ethnic identities would not disappear at all would be wrong as well. They do not disappear in favor of a demos, but in favor

³⁶ (Pew Research Center 2013)

³⁷ (Glazer and Moynihan 2011)

³⁸ (ibid)

of a new ethnic identity. As Martin Kilson found out, children of ethnically mixed couples do not give up the cultural practices of their parents in favor of an all-American value system; rather, they pick from these practices those which suit them the best and combine them into a “neo-ethnicity”³⁹. The US demos therefore is neither the product of a dialectic process between different ethnē, nor are ethnic identities in the US unchangeable. Instead ethnic and demotic identities can exist simultaneously.

In conclusion, these points about the demos and the ethnōs produce a number of key assumptions for this thesis. First, demos and ethnōs are in practice not as separable, as they seem in theory, or at least one has synergistic effects on the other – language is here the most prominent example. Second, ethnic and demotic identities are not mutually exclusive. They can exist and do exist next to each other. An ethnic or demotic European identity can therefore exist next to an ethnic- or demotic-based national identity. National identity, on the other hand, is a jealous one, which does not tolerate competition for its nation’s sovereignty. Third, identity is not static. To the contrary, even a concept like national identity, which is often perceived as the natural state of a community, is nothing but a product of historical circumstances and can be changed. In that sense, European identity only becomes a challenge for national identity, when the EU competes for power with the nation. The next chapter will outline the theories, which explain these changes.

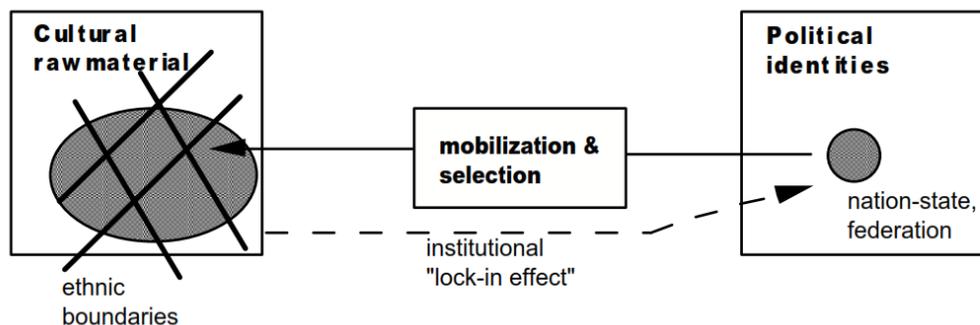
2.1.3 Constructing Identity

The next question to ask is: *how* is identity built? As outlined above in the critique on the primordial, ethno-national, and pan-national models, identity is not

³⁹ (Kilson 1975)

something given, but constructed. Hence, this chapter will introduce the different approaches of the academic field of constructivism and their implication for building a European ethnos and demos.

At the heart of constructivism are the terms *intersubjectivity* and *institutionalization* of ideas⁴⁰. The former refers to the extent to which an idea is spread within a group, be it an idea about culture, religion and ideology, or be it about values and norms. The latter refers to the extent to which an idea is expressed in the practices of the institutions of said group, such as parties⁴¹, an educational system⁴², or a book market⁴³. These two concepts are mutually reinforcing. The more an idea is intersubjective, the more it is put into the practice of institutions. The more an idea is practiced by institutions, the more it gets intersubjective. In this way, political identity picks up cultural raw material and locks it into institutions (compare graph 4). For a European identity this means, that common institutions produce a sense of communality, which leads to more common institutions, and so on, until Europeans have the we-feeling of a community: a European identity.



Graph 4: The Constructivist Principle of Political Identity-formation⁴⁴

⁴⁰ (Wendt 1992, 395ff)

⁴¹ (Gramsci 1971, 208ff)

⁴² (Castells 2003, 34)

⁴³ (Anderson 1991, 44ff)

⁴⁴ As seen in (Cederman 2000, 6)

Here we are already at the heart of the constructivist logic behind nation building, known as the academic school of Nationalism. Depending on the author, nations are either *invented communities* or *imagined communities*. *Invented* in the sense that nation building is an elite and demand-driven process. According to this theory, a nation is only articulated by its specific ruling stratum under specific circumstances, as pointed out by Ernest Gellner⁴⁵. According to him, it is demand driven, as the modern nation provides the needs of an industrialized society. Charlotte Hoffmann supports this view with an example in Europe: English is taught in most EU member states for the simple reason that the citizens are under pressure by globalization to learn English and therefore put pressure on their national governments to teach the language in school⁴⁶. The Gellnerian logic is one of a bottom-up process.

Other authors however argue for a top-down process. Identity building is elite driven, as it is the elites, who are moving first. Miroslav Hroch pointed to three distinct phases, through which this construction emerges: first, a process by *intellectuals*, who construct a common history and culture for a specific community, enshrining these new ideas in institutions, e.g. in the educational system. Second, a process by an *avant-garde*, which seeks to spread this new constructed knowledge among said community, thus making it intersubjective. And third, the emergence of a mass movement⁴⁷. Both the top-down and the bottom-up processes, however, are only starting points. The former starts with creating intersubjectivity, the latter with institutionalization; once started, they are mutually re-enforcing.

Imagined communities on the other hand are driven by both the demand and the supply side. As Benedict Anderson points out in the eponymous book,

⁴⁵ (Gellner 2012, 89ff)

⁴⁶ (Hoffmann 2000, 5)

⁴⁷ (Hroch 2012, 82f)

Martin Luther did indeed translate the Bible in the 16th century into German, in order to reach the masses; yet, his aim was not to build a German identity. Nevertheless – thanks to the freshly invented printing press – the affordable new books provided a powerful motivation for many Germans to trim back their specific local dialects. To read the bible, they had to start using the one dialect it was written in. This started a standardization process for a slowly emerging high language. In that sense the construction of the German nation was not driven by Martin Luther on purpose. His aim – the spread of religious ideas – was rather high-jacked by a cultural idea, i.e. the idea of a common high language, which came to be intersubjective via the spread of books as well. Once the idea of a common language was intersubjective however, it made more and more sense for other authors to write in German too, as opposed to Latin, the main language of publications until this point. After all, the potential number of readers of the slowly standardizing German high language was much higher than the one of Latin speakers⁴⁸. In other words: the process started on the supply side with books in a certain language, leading to demand of more books in that language, leading again to more supply. Again, this process ended with institutionalization and intersubjectivity re-enforcing each other.

It should be noted however, that even though the example above focuses on the construction of *ethnic* identity, it applies to the construction of *demotic* identity as well. While Anderson analyzes the role and development of a book market, Habermas explores the emergence of a newspaper market. The former shows how a medium, the bible, was used to spread culture and beliefs. The latter shows how a medium, the newspaper, provided the ground for public discourse⁴⁹. The newspaper market provided publicity to the discussion around values, thereby spreading them, making them intersubjective. Newspapers, as all media, nevertheless provide not

⁴⁸ (Anderson 1991, 37ff)

⁴⁹ (Habermas 1990, 275ff)

only publicity. They also analyze and judge events, processes, and actions, as long as there is a paying readership. To analyze and judge, however, they use as a measuring rod the same values, which they spread, thereby institutionalizing these values. In the end ethnos and demos are both grounded mainly on very specific institutions: education, language policy, and mass media⁵⁰.

As convincing as this constructivist logic of Nationalism may sound, it struggles to explain two phenomena: first, that by all logical means national and even ethnic identity should be vanishing. As described in chapter 2.1.1, Frankenberger and Meyer argue that traditional ties of communities, such as ethnic and national identities, are disappearing in post-modern times⁵¹. Ernest Gellner follows the same argument: as structural differences are upholding cultural differences, the latter should vanish in industrialized communities, because industrialization erodes traditional structures⁵². In contradiction to this view, we have yet to witness the disappearance of these identities. The reason behind the persistence of national identities is that the process of mutual reinforcement between institutionalization and intersubjectivity of the demotic or ethnic idea of a nation never stopped. As long as people continue to believe in the nation, the nation with all its institutions continues to exist; as long as the nation with all its institution keeps existing, people keep believing in it. They need it to rationalize their place in an industrialized society⁵³. Therefore national identity is locked in a constant process of re-enforcement.

Even if national identities therefore cannot be expected to have vanished, they should have at least diminished in favor of a European identity in the logic of constructivism. At least some national institutions have either vanished or lost

⁵⁰ (Lepsius 1991)

⁵¹ (Frankenberger and Meyer 2008, 24)

⁵² (Gellner 1996, 37f)

⁵³ (Gellner 2012, 120f)

competences to European ones, most notably with the Euro. This weakening of the institutionalization of the idea of the nation should have weakened national identities as well, breaking eventually the lock-in effect. Indeed, as Thomas Risse elaborates, the Euro “left its mark on the identity map of European citizens”⁵⁴, but attachment to the former national currencies is still prevailing. In total, the EU did indeed pool many competences, but citizens still direct their pleas to their national institutions⁵⁵. Unfortunately for the EU, identification with Europe is even decreasing, identification with the nation states is increasing and – most worrying for Brussels – Euroscepticism is on the rise⁵⁶. There are two approaches to tackle this problem. On one hand there is the top-down, identity follows sovereignty, approach by Matthias Waechter. The background of this line of thought is that the institutionalization of the idea of a common European identity has simply not yet gone far enough to be able to compete with the prevailing national identities. In effect this approach states that – if we want a European identity – more competences, power, and sovereignty has to be shifted from the national to the European institutions, for “as long as the pooling of national sovereignty remains incomplete, a European identity will always remain rudimentary”⁵⁷. In short: more competences on the EU level will lead to more institutionalization, which will construct EU identity from above, top-down.

On the other hand, I argue that the European Union’s identity problem is not caused by a *lack* of competences on the EU level, but by the *shift* of competences to the EU level. After all, according to the top-down approach, the identification of the member states’ citizens with the EU should have either slowly risen or stagnated over the last decades, as the EU did indeed pool some – yet insufficient – competences. What we actually witnessed was a stagnation and then decline of said

⁵⁴ (Risse 2003, 495)

⁵⁵ (Waechter 2011, 21)

⁵⁶ (ibid, 15)

⁵⁷ (ibid, 20)

identification since the 1990s⁵⁸ and in the Euro Crisis since 2008⁵⁹. Therefore I provide a different explanation for the EU's identification problem: the emergence of a new political and economic entity, such as the EU, is always accompanied by a shift in powers and resources from established to new groups. Consequently the relative control over power and resources between two groups may change. Even if both groups benefit in the end, one of them may gain more relative to the other, which means that the latter starts feeling marginalized. This leads, as Donald Horowitz predicted, to the creation of a new out-group identity of the marginalized group⁶⁰. In that sense, the modernization of rural France and institution building of the French state made not only "peasants into Frenchmen"⁶¹, as Eugen Weber famously phrased it. It also made peasants into Bretons, who resisted all attempts by the French state to Frenchify them via a top-down process of installing French institutions in Brittany – namely schools⁶². Ultimately, this provided the ground for conflict between these two groups.

Similarly, the shift of relative power and economic resources within the EU – painfully felt by many Greeks in the Euro Crisis – led not to a shift of loyalties to the EU, but to a resistance against the EU. Ironically, even those groups, which were not hit as hard by the crisis, developed a feeling of being marginalized: while the Greek economy suffered relative to the German one, the German treasury suffered from loaning to the Greek one. In effect, both in Greece and Germany groups developed identities, which are focused on being the marginalized and suffering one, leading to a feeling of having the right – if not outright duty – to resist the European Union in order to secure power and resources for themselves. Theirs is a "resistance

⁵⁸ (Hooghe and Marks 2008, 5)

⁵⁹ (Pew Research Center 2013)

⁶⁰ (Horowitz 1985)

⁶¹ (Weber 1976)

⁶² (ibid, 100)

identity”⁶³ based exclusively on a self-perception of being the victims and being treated unfairly⁶⁴. Identity building therefore is a dangerous game and speeding it up via accelerated political integration in the EU will lead to both, to more citizens identifying with the EU and to more citizens developing a resistance identity. In the end, shifting competences will lead to a *division* among Europeans. This is not only quite the contrary of what identity building actually should achieve, but – considering that the Eurosceptic group is much more vocal and at least seems to be more numerous – could end badly for the EU itself.

For this reason I advocate a bottom-up approach to European identity building instead. It was after all not pressure by the EU, but pressure by globalization, which created, in the Gellnerian logic, demand for education in the English language across Europe⁶⁵. Following the logic of constructivism, this will provide a common language as the basis for a European public sphere and cultural identity in the future. This bottom-up approach may lead to the creation of new in-groups and out-groups as well; yet, their resistance identity will at least not be directed against the EU as a political force, but against the economic forces behind the shifts in power and resources. At least in Manuel Castells’ opinion, this is already happening with globalization as the main driving factor behind the construction of resistance identities worldwide⁶⁶. In this way the EU will at least not be seen as the cause for relative shifts in resources and power, but globalization will be seen as such. Adversely, the EU can play its role as a protector of citizens from globalization, e.g. via product standards, which guarantee the quality of imported goods.

Nevertheless, the weakness of the bottom-up approach is obvious: it will take decades until the generations of pupils, who learn English in school today, will

⁶³ (Castells 2003, 8)

⁶⁴ (Calhoun 1994, 17)

⁶⁵ (Hoffmann 2000, 5)

⁶⁶ (Castells 2003, 71ff)

become the elites and majority in terms of population in Europe. Identity building via the bottom-up approach is slow. Even more troubling is that the EU has very limited capabilities to influence this bottom-up mechanism. The EU member states alone hold the competences in the decisive fields of education, language, and mass media. While all three fields are certainly under pressure by citizens to fulfill their demands – again, as seen with the spread of English as a second language in school – the national media sectors are the most sensitive to market pressure, as they are operating to the greatest extent on a free market: while state schools prevail across the European continent, media houses are seldom state owned.

To put it in a nutshell, identity can be constructed in two ways: top-down (supply side driven) or bottom-up (demand side driven). We witness both processes in the EU simultaneously, with all the negative consequences they bring with them. The latter one is in my eyes preferable, as it does not create resistance identity against the EU; yet it curbs the EU's scope of possibilities in terms of identity building. Additionally, these processes construct two different types of identities. While the top-down approach via EU institutions – as proposed by Waechter – focuses on the construction of a demos, the bottom-up approach – as seen with the spread of English as a second language – focuses on culture and therefore much more on the construction of an ethnos. This again leads to two key assumptions: first of all, no matter whether supply side driven or demand side driven, identity construction always follows a shift in power and resources. Therefore it always creates a resistance identity, which has to be included in any research. Second, if we look to the sectors relevant for identity building, mass media are following demand side pressure the most and are therefore the most promising subject of research.

2.2 Media Theories

2.2.1 Media and Reality

If we accept the premise that the media play a key role for European identity building, we have to ask next: *how* do the media build identity? As the underlying mechanisms to answer this question – namely constructivism – have already been outlined in the previous chapter, this one will focus on amplifying factors and specific communication models.

The role of the media for our reality is ever increasing. Most parts of the world we never see with our own eyes, but through the lens of a camera. Our environment consists more of images of objects, than it exists of objects themselves, and we do not make sense to the world by giving meaning to the objects, but by giving meaning to the images. To put it into the words of Jean Baudrillard: we live in a “hyperreal nebula”⁶⁷, where the borders between real objects and their presentation in the media have dissolved. In that sense, it would be wrong to say that the media merely construct our reality. The media *are* our reality.

It is dangerous though to jump from this truth to the conclusion of an omnipotent media kraken, which reaches into every corner of the individual’s mind and determines the individual’s view on reality. If this was the case, our approach to European identity building would be easy: install wide spread mass propaganda and leave the individual no space to escape it. The more absolute propaganda covered all aspects of life – the closer we would come to George Orwell’s *1984* – the better for identity building. Fortunately, media and propaganda have been empirically proven to have much less impact, than Orwell assumed. While they certainly can amplify specific predispositions of an individual, they cannot overwrite

⁶⁷ (Baudrillard 1994, 82)

predispositions, as Tannis MacBeth showed in an example of the influence of violence in media on youth: people, who are prone to violence, are more likely to become violent after being confronted by violence in media. People, who are not prone to violence, remain unaffected⁶⁸. Rather than influencing *what* we think, media are influencing *how* we think. The transition from pictures to movies for example – according to Marshall McLuhan – brought a transition from thinking in series and links to thinking in constitution and composition. In McLuhan’s words: “the medium is the message”⁶⁹.

Following this logic, the modern globalized media are an extension of the senses of their consumers to the entire world and we sense – and therefore think of – a “global village”⁷⁰ because of global media. From that point of view we can assume that Europeans will – or do – think in terms of a European community, only if the media they consume are Europeanized. A European medium, be it a language or a TV channel, would mean that *identity is the message*, just as in the example of the translation of the Bible into German, where the medium *book* brought the medium *language* with it, which in turn provided the message *German identity*. Consequently, I will provide in the next chapter an overview of the landscape of the media in Europe and its consequence for identity building.

2.2.2 Market Forces and Structures of Media in Europe

In this context the next question, which has to be asked, is: *how* are media in Europe structured. At its very basis, when referring to the media here, I am referring to the mass media organizations, as “the entities that control the channels of

⁶⁸ (MacBeth 2004, 218)

⁶⁹ (McLuhan 1994, 7ff)

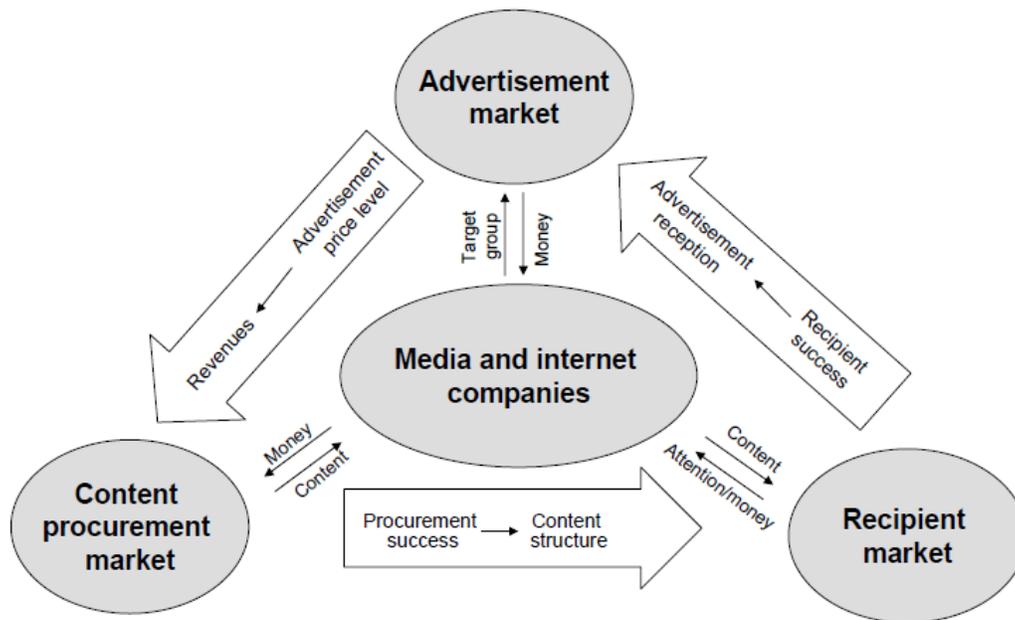
⁷⁰ (McLuhan 2011, 36ff)

communication to potentially large numbers of audience members”⁷¹. As such they have two key qualities: first, they convey information to a mass audience. This quality will be dealt with in the next subchapter. For now, let us stay with the second quality: they do business and are therefore economic actors in a media market. Media markets matter, because structures of public spheres correspond to structures of their specific media markets, or – as Jürgen Habermas elaborated – the structural transformation of the German media market lead to “the transformation of the public sphere”⁷².

The underlying logic of this argument is grounded in the economic specificities of media markets compared to other markets. First of all, media enterprises compete on three markets simultaneously, though these markets are interlinked (compare Graph 5). Most companies in the media sector finance themselves primarily via advertising revenues, not via selling their products to the consumer. Therefore, if we speak about media markets, consumers are usually called recipients. Their number matters for media enterprises just as much as the number of consumers matters in any other market, but not because of media products being sold to the recipients. Instead, media houses sell *advertising reach*, i.e. the number of recipients they reach, to advertisers. To gain recipients on the other hand, media enterprises have to provide content, be it news or entertainment. Therefore there is competition in the media sector for the number of recipients, for advertising contracts, and for content.

⁷¹ (Potter 2009, 47)

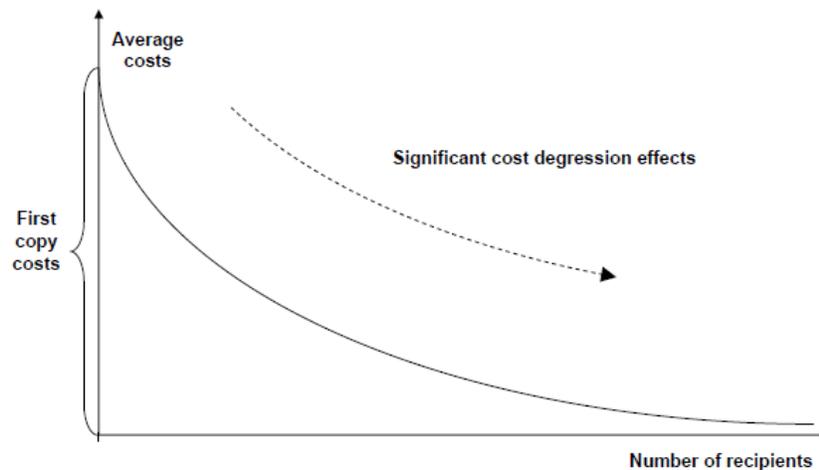
⁷² (Habermas 1990)



Graph 5: Media on Three Markets⁷³

Second, media goods are primarily information and as such not material. True, we as recipients buy a material things, e.g. newspapers; yet we do so not for the material as such – the paper or the ink – but for the articles. Media recipients consume codified information. Equally, media enterprises spend comparably little per piece on material; most costs arise from paying for content. For one article, a journalist has to be paid only once, but – compared to the costs for every time the article is printed – the journalists is paid quite a lot. In economic terms: the cost per produced piece (per printed article) decreases exponentially, the more pieces are produced. This is called the First Copy Costs Effect (compare Graph 6). In other words: mass production and delivery to the recipient is cheap. Therefore media enterprises profit immensely from scale effects.

⁷³ As seen in (Wirtz 2011, 30)



Graph 6: Cost Decrease of Media Products per Recipient⁷⁴

The restricting factor for this benefit from scale effects is the number of participants reached. A newspaper may print one article as often as it wants without spending much money; yet, having this article read by a sufficient number of recipients, is another thing. Media companies therefore try to maximize their recipient base, while minimizing the costs of individualization. The main method of cost reduction in newspaper market – to stay with the example – is a common *mantle*. The term refers to the first pages of a newspaper, where such news is located, which report on topics beyond the territorial reach of this specific newspaper. In a local newspaper, the mantle would treat regional news; in a regional newspaper the mantle would treat national news; and so on. Newspapers therefore can appeal at the same time to recipients, who care about topics beyond their territorial range, and recipients, who care about issues within their territorial range. In short: media companies maximize their recipient base via networks in the recipient market.

⁷⁴ As seen in (Wirtz 2011, 40)

The problem of this system arises from the costs of gathering information from beyond a newspaper's reach. A local newspaper can barely afford to send a correspondent to the national capital, not to speak about a network of correspondents for international news. In order to escape these costs, big media enterprises usually produce their mantle commonly: each local newspaper has access to the articles written by every other local newspaper belonging to the same company. These big enterprises benefit from forming a network. Smaller media enterprises, which lack their own network, often simply buy their mantle from bigger ones. Even though the concept of the mantle originated in the newspaper market, it exists among all other media markets as well. The German Funke Medien Gruppe for example established a network not only between its newspapers, but also between the newspapers and their news sites⁷⁵. The German public-service broadcaster *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten Deutschlands (ARD)* – in English: *Working Group of the Public-Service Broadcasters of Germany* – in itself is a mere network between ten regional television channels. The national news and other national programs are produced by the members of the ARD either in cooperation or shared and then broadcasted across all member channels⁷⁶. In short: media enterprises minimize costs via forming networks in the content market.

To sum up these specificities: size matters for media companies and they reach size via networks, while keeping in touch with local levels via the mantle concept. The ideal type of a network – be it in the form of a unitary media enterprise or a cooperation between multiple enterprises – would be one, which enables on one hand the exchange of content and on the other hand enables localization of said content. Following this logic, it should be in the interest of national media enterprises in Europe to expand beyond national borders. After all,

⁷⁵ (Hanfeld 2008)

⁷⁶ (ARD 2014)

this would mean a greater number of recipients and thus greater profit for these companies, while they can mitigate costs via networks; not to mention that the side effect would be the creation of a European media market and a European public sphere. Unfortunately, the state of Europe-wide media networks and media companies gives a much more heterogeneous picture.

Private media companies should be, according to said logic, the most active towards Europeanizing their business, as they are more under market pressure to make profit than state-owned media and public-service broadcasters. Indeed, the aforementioned Funke Mediengruppe holds shares of Austrian, Hungarian, and Croatian media houses, besides their core business in Germany; yet, there is no supra-national mantle or network to exchange content⁷⁷. In this particular example, we can even exclude cultural and language differences, as at least the German and Austrian newspapers should be able to cooperate without running into much intercultural divergence. Similar trends are observable with other multinational companies. Radio Télévision Luxembourg (RTL) for example broadcasts national versions of its formats across all its national channels – there is a separate version for the RTL format Family Feud, The X Factor, and Pop Idols in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and so on⁷⁸. Notably though, while the formats are the same across all channels, their content is still national. Overall, the networks of private companies do not extend to the three markets, on which media are active. Instead, these networks serve the transfer of capital, e.g. as Funke is investing into foreign enterprises, or the transfer of techniques, e.g. as RTL is dispersing its formats across its national channels.

State-owned media and public service broadcaster, i.e. public media enterprises, provide a different picture. The ARD for its part is a member of various networks in Europe, namely of the Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne

⁷⁷ (Institut für Medien- und Kommunikationspolitik 2014)

⁷⁸ (RTL Group 2001)

(ARTE)⁷⁹ and of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). In the case of the latter though, it should be noted that rather all members of the ARD are also members of EBU, than the ARD being part of EBU independently from its own members⁸⁰. Both serve the transfer of content, in the case of ARTE either via productions by each its members for the television channel, or via shared productions of its members; in the case of EBU, via productions made by EBU itself, namely the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC)⁸¹. Overall, there are indeed networks for the content market for public media enterprises, and – in the case of ARTE – for the recipient market as well.

Lastly we have to consider Euronews, as it does not fit into the crude differentiation between private and public media enterprises. Euronews again is a network, yet one consisting of both private and public media companies. Also it has – unlike EBU – its own channel and – unlike ARTE – is not financed by member contributions, but by its own profits⁸². As such, it does provide both: a network on the content market and a network on the recipient market, just as ARTE does. Both Euronews and ARTE nevertheless face the same problem, a low market share. While these market shares are growing, the former reached only 3.6 percent in Europe in 2013⁸³, while the latter reached 0.8 percent in Germany⁸⁴ and 2.0 percent in France⁸⁵ in the same time period.

In conclusion, we can argue that a European media market is emerging: the number of network members is increasing⁸⁶, as is the market share of European TV channels. On the other hand, we have to admit that there certainly is no European mass media market yet – there are few Europe-wide operating media enterprises or

⁷⁹ (ARTE GEIE 2014, 47)

⁸⁰ (EBU 2014b)

⁸¹ (EBU 2014a)

⁸² (Euronews 2014)

⁸³ (Schwartzberg 2013)

⁸⁴ (Quotenmeter 2014)

⁸⁵ (OffreMedia 2014)

⁸⁶ (ARTE GEIE 2014)

networks with even viewer TV channels, radio stations, magazines, or newspapers covering Europe as whole. The few in existence struggle to attract a mass audience. It would be inaccurate, though, to infer that the lack of a European media market signifies the lack of publicity on European issues; rather, European issues reach a mass audience via national media indirectly.

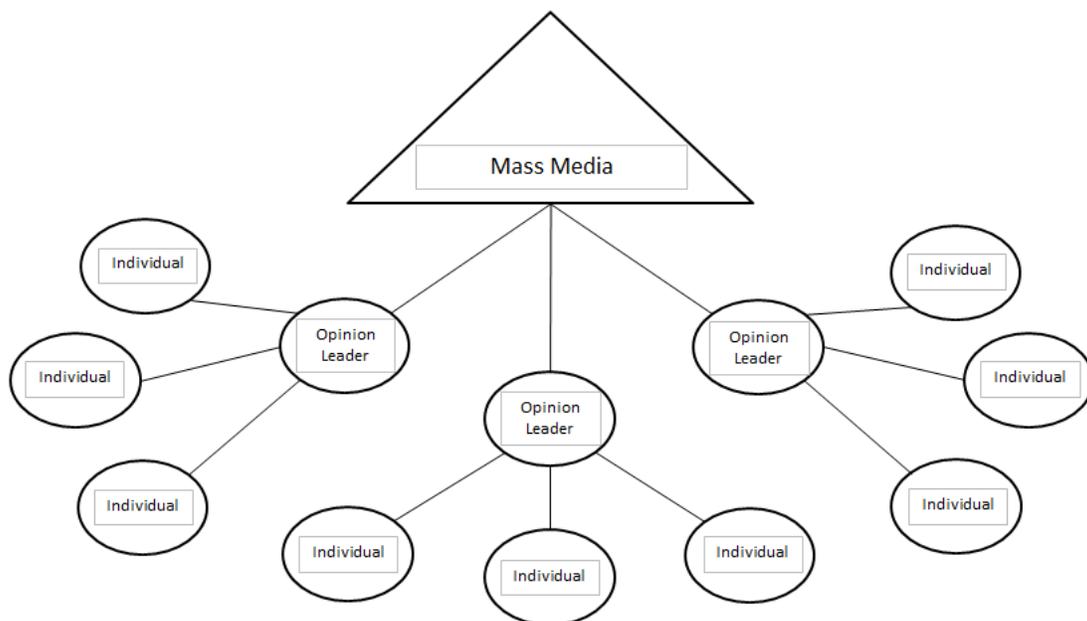
2.2.3 Media Influences on Identity Building

Just as we can conclude from the first quality of the media – they are economic actors – that the role of the media on European identity building is indirect, we can conclude from the second quality that the media create intersubjectivity through a filter. This second quality is conveying information to a mass audience and subsequently explains *how* the media reach the audience. It is because of the mass media that publicity and the public sphere matter for intersubjectivity and constructivism. They matter for cultural identity, as they use and spread symbols; they matter for ethnic identity, as they spread beliefs; they matter for demotic identity, as they spread norms and values; and they matter for national identity, as all of these types of identity culminate in a nation.

First of all, any information or idea brought forth by the media does not enter the individual mind immediately. Ideas are discussed and criticized; sometimes they are accepted, sometimes not. In which direction public opinion swings towards an idea depends on whether it is supported by certain well informed and socially active individuals with a high social credibility, so-called “opinion leaders”⁸⁷. The concept behind this term, developed by Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, assumes that “ideas, often, seem to flow *from* radio and print *to* opinion leaders and *from*

⁸⁷ (Habermas 1962, 315)

them to the less active sections of the population”⁸⁸. In this “two-step flow of communication”⁸⁹ (compare Graph 7) elites, as these are opinion leaders, play a crucial role for making ideas intersubjective and thus for identity building as well. In Europe the spread of ideas therefore depends on elites and, to be more specific, on national ones, as the media structure in Europe – as outlined above – is still a national one.



Graph 7: Two-Step Flow Communication Modell⁹⁰

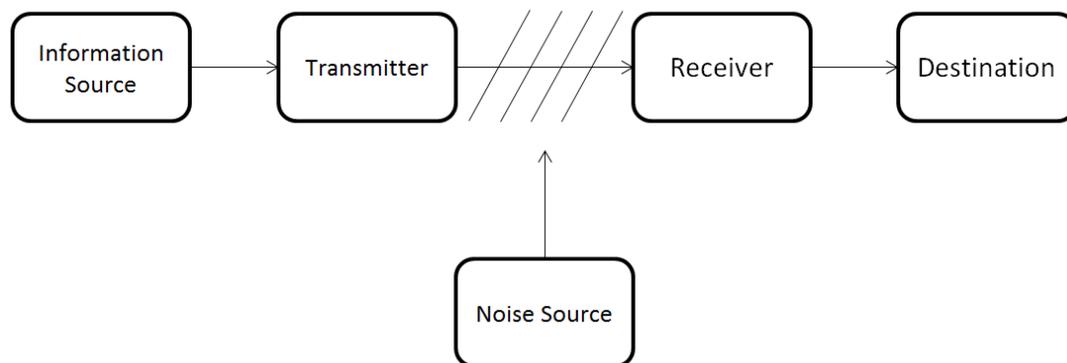
Secondly, the information flow from the media to the audience is filtered, as any information conveyed by the media to the audience necessarily becomes diffused in the process. Claude Edward Shannon argues that communication is nothing but information in movement and goes as a message through a number of

⁸⁸ (Katz and Lazarsfeld 2009, 32)

⁸⁹ (ibid)

⁹⁰ As seen in (Katz and Lazarsfeld 2009)

stages from the information source (here: the media) to the destination (here: the audience). First, a message has to be translated into physical form via a transmitter, e.g. a thought is written on paper. Next, it has to be received, e.g. the written text is read. Ultimately, the message reached its destination, e.g. the reader is thinking the same thought as the writer. The problem of course is that no message can reach its destination without change. Details of the thought may be lost, because the writer saw them as too self-evident to write them down. The meaning of the thought may change, because the reader puts the message in a new context, changing its interpretation; in other words: there is a noise between the transmitter and the receiver, which diffuses information (compare Graph 8)⁹¹. For the role of media in identity building this signifies insecurity about the connection between the message sent and the message received. As outlined earlier, Martin Luther intended to send a religious message by translating the bible into German; yet, this was not the only message, which reached the readers. They also received the message that they had a common language, that they were a community. Identity building ensued.



Graph 8: Schematic Diagramm of General Communication System⁹²

⁹¹ (Shannon 1948, 386)

⁹² As seen in Ibid

For the impact of mass media on European identity building this is a double edged sword. On one hand, media – even if not explicitly aiming on promoting a European identity – do so as a side effect. To provide two examples: even if we assume that the media coverage of the European Parliament elections in 2014 did not aim on identity building, but purely on informing the public, it inevitably provided publicity for the EU. It was building demotic European identity. Even if we assume that the Eurovision Song Contest aims purely on entertaining the public, it inevitably spreads the different national cultures over the continent and promotes intersubjectivity. It was building cultural and subsequently ethnic European identity. On the other hand, no media coverage – no matter how hard it aims on promoting a European identity – can be assumed to fulfill this aim alone. To stay with these examples: The coverage of the European Parliament elections surely raised salience of the issue; yet it also raised salience of critique on the EU, as criticizing per se is an integral task of the media in a democratic system as “the fourth estate”⁹³. It was building a resistance identity to the European demotic one, probably enforcing national identity. The coverage of the Eurovision Song Contest may celebrate the contest’s cultural diversity, but in the end it may be perceived by the audience as just a competition between cultures. It was building a resistance identity to the European ethnic one, again, enforcing national identity.

It would be superficial though to say that noise makes the reception of a message unpredictable. On the individual level we could predict, how a person receives a message, via analyzing his or her framework of context in which each individual places and interprets new information – i.e. the individual’s “frames of thought”⁹⁴. Thereby we could come to conclusions about the message’s quality in terms of identity building. To find these for a mass audience is difficult though.

⁹³ (Schulz 1998, 16)

⁹⁴ (Druckmann 2001, 228)

Frames are a purely personal matter⁹⁵; yet, there are certain *universal* frames or “cognitive-psychological strategies”⁹⁶ for framing, how Peter Vitouch calls them. According to him, these strategies determine not so much, which messages are placed in which frame, but which messages are received at all. After all, frames serve the reduction of complexity and so does the selection of certain messages and exclusion of others. In other words: we can predict a messages impact on identity building via analyzing the factors, which contribute to the selection of a message.

In sum, there are two filters, through which messages have to go in order to reach the recipient, i.e. two filters, through which ideas have to go in order to reach intersubjectivity. The first one consists of two steps, meaning that the media first reach opinion leaders, which then in turn further the – possibly transformed – message to the individual. The second one is noise, meaning the distortion of a message on its way from its source to its destination. Even though these two filters make it difficult to come to conclusions about the actual impact of a message, research on the cognitive techniques of either individuals or groups to reduce complexity of information allows us to predict said impact to a certain extend.

⁹⁵ (Ibid)

⁹⁶ (Vitouch 2009, 61)

3 Empirical Research

From the theories and examples outlined above, we can derive some key assumptions. First, each ethnic and demotic identity cannot only be built *per se*, but both *are being built* simultaneously in Europe – demotic identity for example by strengthening the competences of the EU institutions, ethnic identity for example via English as a second language. Second, despite these examples, both identities are built by the media – ethnic for example by cultural programs, like the ESC, demotic by informative ones, like the coverage of the European Parliament elections. Third, building each ethnic and demotic identity also builds resistance identity as a side effect, here assumed to be national identity. Fourth, the strength of a media product – for example, an article – in terms of identity building can be measured via identifying the factors, which allow the recipients to cope with the complexity of the product's messages.

This allows us to measure the effects of media events in Europe on European identity building and to compare different media events with each other. Moreover, we can, as European media events are covered by national media, compare different countries to each other. Lastly, we can, due to the assumption that different types of events build different types of identities, compare the strength of the media in ethnic identity building to their strength in demotic identity building. This leads to the research leading questions: first, is European cultural or European informative media coverage stronger in identity building? Second, in which identity building are they stronger (demotic European/demotic national for the EPE and ethnic European/ethnic national for the ESC)? Third, how does the effect of media on identity building differ between countries?

3.1 Research Method

Subjects of research: the media events I will examine here are the European Parliament elections (EPE) and the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). Both are media events, as they are staged exclusively for the audience and as they function as a tool of representation⁹⁷ – in the case of the EPE via electing representative members of the European Parliament (MEP) and in the case of the ESC via electing representative members of each country. As this research focuses on explicitly these two media events, any coverage of related topics was excluded, e.g. scandals around elections, broad explanations of the EU's or ESC's history, and so on. In my research I will try to derive general statements first from the EPE results and then use the ESC as a control group to confirm or disconfirm these statements.

Sample: the media events in question will be analyzed via articles from– according to the rating website Alexa⁹⁸ – the three most visited news sites of each the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Germany. The analyzed news sites are:

- Germany: Bild.de, Spiegel Online, Focus Online.
- UK: Daily Mail Online, The Guardian.com, Telegraph Online.
- France: Le Monde.fr, Le Figaro.fr, Le Parisien Online.
- Spain: El Mundo Online, El Pais Online, El Confidencial Online.

For each website I will use the search function with the key words Europawahl and Eurovision (Germany), European Elections and Eurovision (UK), Elections Européennes and Eurovision (France), Elecciones Europeas and Eurovisión (Spain). In total, this amounts to 852 analyzed articles (see Appendix). Online articles were chosen, as access to them is easier than to print, radio or TV.

⁹⁷ (Dayan and Katz 1992, 80ff)

⁹⁸ (Alexa 2014)

Factors of Analysis: ultimately, the type of research here is a content analysis, as content analyses represent tools for qualitative and quantitative research and enables the researcher to evaluate a lot of material and is thus the preferred method of communications scholars⁹⁹. The factors of analysis used here are similar to the ones that are important for selecting messages, which Peter Vitouch described, as mentioned above. For the purpose of this research I divide these factors into two groups: cluster 1 consists of the factors *frequency*, *threshold*, *average threshold*, *continuity*, and *negativity* and measures the impact of the events global in total numbers. Cluster 2 consists of the factors *ambiguity*, *meaningfulness*, *consonance*, *unexpectedness*, *reference to elite nations*, and *reference to elite persons* and measures each article individually in a range from zero (least) to ten (most) per factor, meaning that the rating of cluster 2 also represents the length of each article. Additionally, *accumulated representation* forms its own factor, as it is the accumulation of other factors. These factors are (compare graph 9), inferred from twelve hypotheses about news value by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge¹⁰⁰:

- *Frequency*, the first hypothesis of Galtung and Ruge, is the period of time, in which an event takes place; the longer it takes place, the more likely it is to be noticed by the recipients. While the events EPE and ESC took place in only a couple of days, the media events around them – meaning the coverage of the election campaigns for the EPE and the competition process for the ESC – took considerably longer. As starting and ending points of each event, the events in question also are signals, which have to be faded in and faded out of focus. Think of a radio signal: before being noticed at all, it has to reach a certain frequency. For the frequency of the EPE and the ESC I take here that the starting point is the moment, when two articles about the same event were published on the same

⁹⁹ (Meier 2011, 55)

¹⁰⁰ (Galtung and Ruge 1965)

news site in the same week. I start my evaluation with the second of these articles, as only with the second one frequency is established. Equally, the ending point is, when there are less than two articles published. However, this factor has no informative value about the building of resistance identities. It will purely serve to compare the different countries with each other, as well as the two events.

- *Threshold* is the amount of attention an event has to get, in order to be noticed. The EPE or ESC events may have gone on over a long period of time, but without media coverage, they would not have been noticed by the recipient. For this factor, I will thus count the number of articles about each event and then compare them event- and country-wise. Additionally to this absolute threshold, I will measure the *average threshold* per day.
- *Ambiguity* is the complexity of an event and represents the fourth factor, which I use. The more complex an event, the more likely it is to be shunned by the recipients. I will measure this factor via counting the number of explanations per article, e.g. an article about the EPE will get a point for ambiguity, if it explains the role of the parliament; an article about the ESC will get a point for ambiguity, if it explains the ESC voting system. Here the length of an article, as a longer article means more explanations, comes into play
- *Meaningfulness* is the extent to which an event touches upon the life of the recipient. I will measure this factor via quantifying, how much an article connects the matter of the events to national matters, by counting these explanations. This is the first factor, where resistance identities come into play. We can assume that an article connecting the EPE with national parties does indeed further identity; yet, it will not be a European one, but the national one.
- *Consonance* is the turn of an event according to expectations. Known processes are easier for recipients to cope with, than unknown ones; people comprehend easier, what they expect to happen, than what surprises them. Therefore, in this

factor, articles about expected events will be rated high (e.g. “the ESC has a winner”), the ones about unexpected events low. I will account for this by the tone of an article. E.g. an article with the topic “Scandal: politician X embezzles money” gets a zero, an article about the topic “X provided still no excuse for embezzling money” gets a two, an article with the topic “Scandal around X affects election campaign” gets a three. Naturally, as I exclude any scandals, which are not directly linked to the EPE or ESC, the first two examples provided here would not even appear in my research.

- *Unexpectedness* is the rarity of an event in the frame of the factor *meaningfulness*. It measures that, even though *meaningful* and *consonant* events are easier to comprehend, they are also attracting less attention than surprising ones. E.g. an article with the topic “the ESC has a winner” would fit purely into *consonance*, an article with the topic “the winner of the ESC is X” fits into both *consonance* and in this *unexpectedness*. As a consequence, it is measured similar to *consonance* and should reversely mirror the findings for this factor. Nevertheless, both these factors have no informative value about which kind of identity an article promotes, only about to what extent an article promotes identity overall.
- *Continuity* is the idea that once an event has passed the *threshold*, it will keep attracting attention for a certain time. As such, I will measure this factor via the standard deviation, meaning that I deduce this factor from the *average threshold*.
- *Composition* denotes the competition one event has over the attention of the recipient with other events. While the EPE and the ESC were going on, most headlines for example were concerned with the crisis in Ukraine. As such, this hypothesis would be interesting as a measurement of comparison to other events, but I will exclude it from comparing the EPE and ESC, as these took place roughly in the same time span and thus faced the same competition.

- *Reference to elite nations*, describes the importance a certain region of the world has to the recipient. We can assume for example that the topic “an Austrian won the ESC” attracts much more attention in Germany, because it is a neighbor country of Austria, than in Ireland. Moreover this factor represents the antithesis to *meaningfulness*, as it measures purely European identity building. As elite nations I define here the member states of the EU, plus former colonies, plus the US and Russia. This factor is measured by counting said elite nations.
- *Reference to elite people* represents the importance of certain persons for the recipient. On one hand, readers of an article identify more with the article’s topic, leading this article to be strong in terms of identity building. On the other, there are national and European elite people, meaning that an article can increase both national and European identity. Thus, I will measure both by counting per article the mentioned national elite people on the one hand and European elite people on the other hand in this factor. I define elite people here as all politicians, as well as celebrities, and I define European elite people as all politicians/celebrities in positions on the European level or in other countries, except if they are explicitly referred to as nationals. National elite people are all non-European elite people.
- *Personification* is the idea that recipients can comprehend an event easier, if it is told through the eyes of an individual, instead of explained in abstract terms. Therefore those articles, which are more person centered – especially features and interviews – have a higher impact on identity building than abstract articles. Notably, depending on the kind of person, through whose eyes an event is explained, we can differentiate again between national identity building and European one. I will measure this factor via the number of quotations per article with an additional limit that the maximum points (nine and ten) can only be reached via journalistic forms, which are personalized per se, e.g. interviews, features, and comments.

- *Negativity* is a consequence of other factors. First, it is a consequence of *frequency*, as negative events take place in a shorter time span, yet more intense, than positive ones. A city is built over centuries, but brought down by an earthquake in a day. Second, it is a consequence of *ambiguity*, because negative events are most of the time quite clear to be catastrophes, as illustrated with the example of the earthquake. Third, it is a consequence of *consonance*, as negative events tend to run similar paths. Earthquakes always bring similar kinds of suffering. Forth, it is a consequence of *unexpectedness*, as negative events are seldom known to happen in advance. While we can predict earthquakes to a certain extent, we cannot predict, when, where, and with which force exactly they will happen. For these reasons I will express this last factor as a function of *frequency, ambiguity, consonance, and unexpectedness*.
- As within cluster 2, *ambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, reference to elite nations, and reference to elite persons* measure representation, I follow here Stuart Hall that representation creates identity¹⁰¹. Therefore I will measure these five factors separately, but express them as *accumulated representation*, meaning that any positive value for this factor of an article signifies that this article leans more towards European Identity, while each negative value signifies that an article leans more towards national identity.

¹⁰¹ (Hall 1999, 94)

Empirical Research

Factors	EPE coverage			ESC coverage		
	European identity	National identity	Not specified	European Identity	National Identity	Not specified
F1: Frequency			Time of coverage per country			Time of coverage per country
F2: Threshold			Number of articles per country			Number of articles per country
F3: Average Threshold			F2/number of days of the event			F2/number of days of the event
F4: Ambiguity	Number of explanations per article	Number of explanations per article		Number of explanations per article	Number of explanations per article	
F5: Meaningfulness		Number of connections to national issues			Number of connections to national issues	
F6: Consonance			Value of consonance			Value of consonance
F7: Unexpectedness			Value of unexpectedness			Value of unexpectedness
F8: Continuity			Standard deviation of articles per country and day			Standard deviation of articles per country and day
F9: Reference to Elite Nations	Number of elite nations mentioned per article				Number of elite nations mentioned per article	
F10: Reference to Elite People	Number of elite people mentioned per article	Number of elite people mentioned per article		Number of elite people mentioned per article	Number of elite people mentioned per article	
F11: Personalization	Value of personalization per article	Value of personalization per article		Value of personalization per article	Value of personalization per article	
F12: Negativity			$(F4EI - F4NI + F6 + F7) / F1$			$(F4EI - F4NI + F6 + F7) / F1$
F13: Accumulated Representation			$(F4EI - F4NI) + F5EI - F9NI + (F10EI - F10NI) + (F11EI - F11NI)$			$(F4EI - F4NI) + F5EI - F9NI + (F10EI - F10NI) + (F11EI - F11NI)$

Graph 9: Factors of Research

Representativeness: considering the amount of media publications in Europe, selecting only twelve websites out of only four countries is a very small sample. On the other hand, as there is “a consensus about what is or was interesting”¹⁰² among journalists, we can assume that all media cover similar topics in similar ways at least nation-wide, if not Europe wide.

Reliability: as all factors are expressed numerically, the content analysis is easily reproducible. Nevertheless, we can expect different results from further research with the same method on other events, e.g. future EPE or ESC. No event goes exactly the same way and each event has some specificity, which is not reproducible. While the factorization of the different impacts on identity building allows comparisons, I assume that the subject of the analysis has an impact on the analysis as well. With Martin Schulz, for example, a German was the leading candidate for one of the major parties during the EPE, which most likely influenced the coverage in Germany compared to the other countries. Such specificities per country are not taken into account.

Validity: The main question behind the factors of research is how much impact each one has relative to the others. For this thesis, I assume that they all have the same impact on identity building; yet, there exists no research on whether one of them has more influence than others. Additionally I assume that the way I define the factors of research tilts the results towards more European identity. For example, I exclude experts from elite persons, but journalists interview experts quite often, especially for political topics like the EPE. As – due to language barriers – these

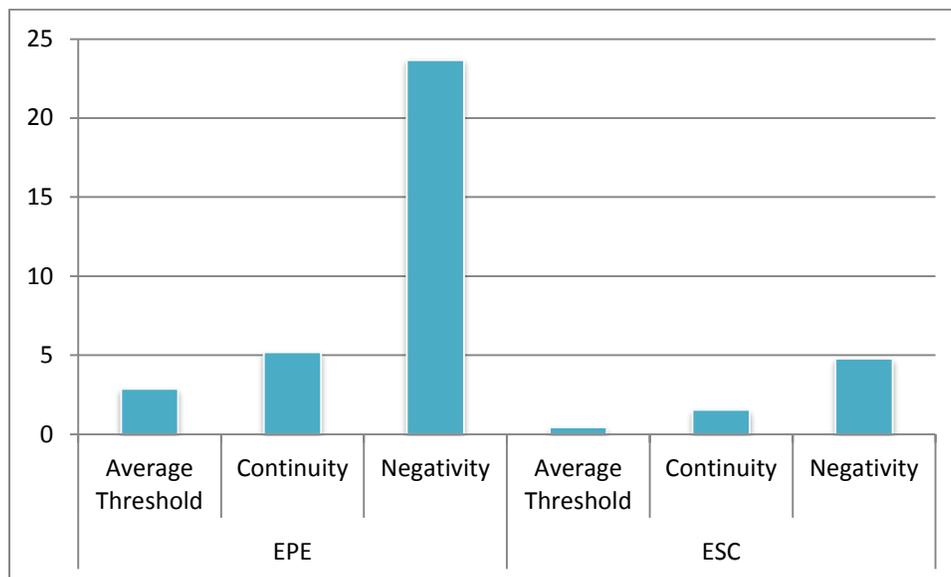
¹⁰² (Frerichs 2000, 38)

experts are mostly national ones, the results for factor 10 would show much more national identity building, if experts were included. For the general impact of the media and types of media in question, I assume that all findings are especially true for younger generations, as they use more online media than older ones.

3.2 Research Results

3.2.1 Results for Cluster 1

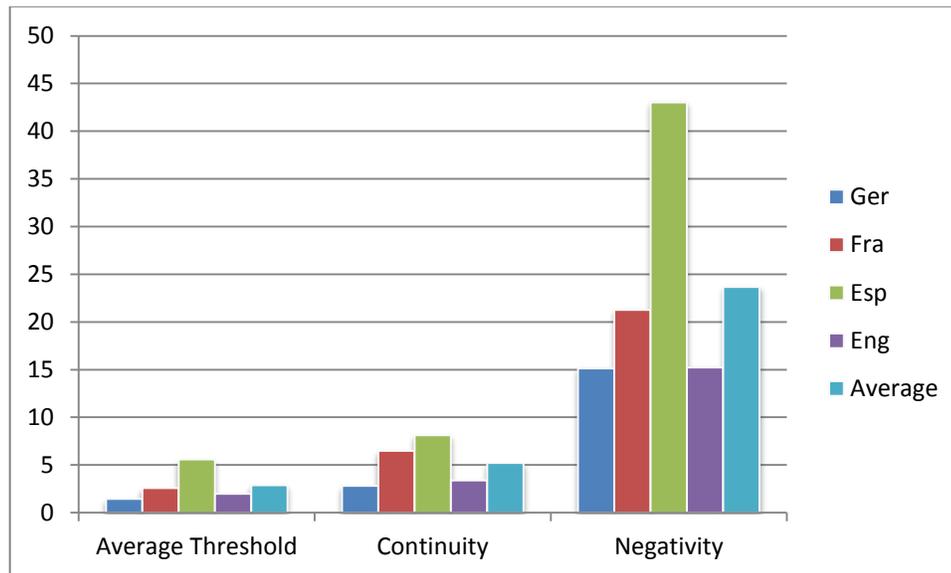
The most striking finding from cluster 1 (compare Graph 10) is that the EPE and the ESC do not differ much in terms of frequency, but a lot in terms of all other factors of this cluster. While the media event of the EPE took 66.25 days on average, the one of the ESC took on average only ten days more. Yet, with 181 articles written in average per country, the EPE reached a much higher threshold than the ESC with 31.5 articles, which translates to an average threshold of 2.89 for the EPE and 0.43 for the ESC. Together with an average continuity of 5.20 for the EPE and one of 1.54 for the ESC and with the EPE's negativity value of 23.66 compared to only 4.79 for the ESC, this provides the picture of the ESC as a silent, yet constant, background noise, while the EPE has more the character of multiple, dramatic outbursts. In total we can infer from this that the coverage of the **EPE had more influence on identity building** than the ESC, but also was all in all **more fuzzy and will likely be framed as something negative** by the recipients.



Graph 10: Results Cluster 1 Global

If we compare the four examined countries with each other, the picture becomes more differentiated though. The EPE remained in France with 90 days much longer a topic than in the other three countries, ranging from 51 in Spain and 58 in the UK, to a 66 days frequency in Germany. On the other hand, the most articles (284) were written in Spain – almost three times as much as the threshold in Germany (95) and still quite more than in France (231) and the UK (114). While France, the UK, and Germany range close together in terms of average threshold – 2.57, 1.97, and 1.44, respectively – Spain sweeps the field with 5.57. This of course reflects in the countries' rating of negativity (compare Graph 11), where again France, the UK, and Germany range close together with values of 21.27, 15.22 and 15.11. Spain on the other hand reaches a value of 43.02. This is easily explained, as in no other country the elections were so much connected to fears of economic downturn and the rise of extremist parties. Therefore especially **in Spain the EPE will be remembered as something negative**. Nevertheless, in terms of continuity both Spain and France scored much higher values – 8.13 and 6.49, respectively –

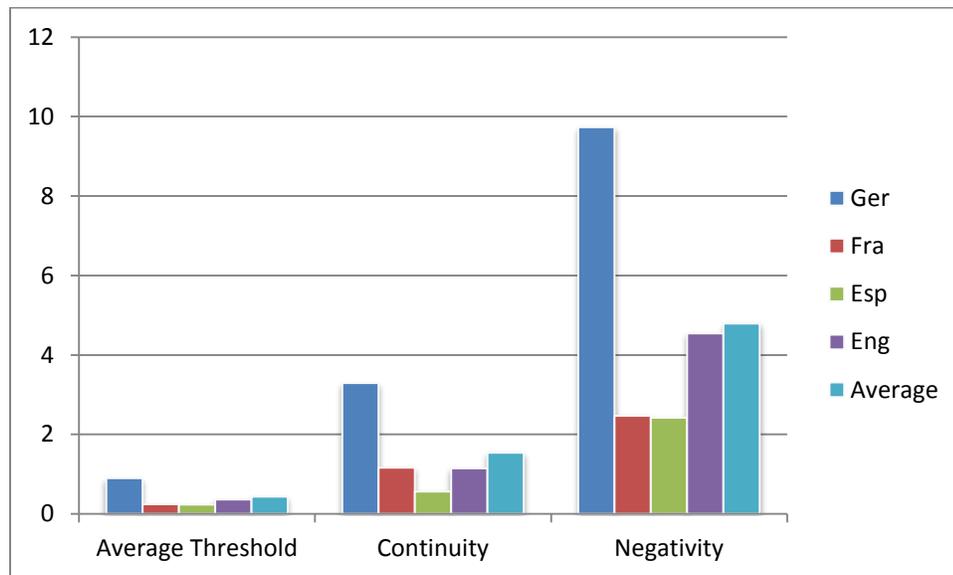
than the UK (3.38) and Germany (2.80). In other words, **in Spain and France the EPE was a dramatic event, while in the UK and Germany it was much calmer.**



Graph 11: Results Cluster 1 EPE

For the ESC (compare Graph 12) the four countries lie much closer to each other in terms of frequency. In Spain the coverage of the ESC took the longest time with 82 days, followed by France and the UK with 78 days each, while Germany took 67 days. Surprisingly though, in these 67 days the most articles were published (60), while the threshold for the UK was 28 and for France and Spain 19 each, resulting in average thresholds of 0.90 (Germany), 0.36 (the UK), 0.24 (France), and 0.23 (Spain). This means that **those countries, which published the least about the EPE, published the most about the ESC and were the most excited about it**, as in Germany and the UK the ESC coverage reached the highest value of negativity, with 9.73 and 4.54 respectively, while France (2.47) and Spain (2.42) remained at substantially lower levels. The only oddballs here are the values for continuity. Even

though Germany scored the highest (3.30), the UK (1.15) comes slightly after France (1.17) with Spain at the very end (0.56). As this difference between the UK and France is very small, I attribute it to measuring inaccuracy.

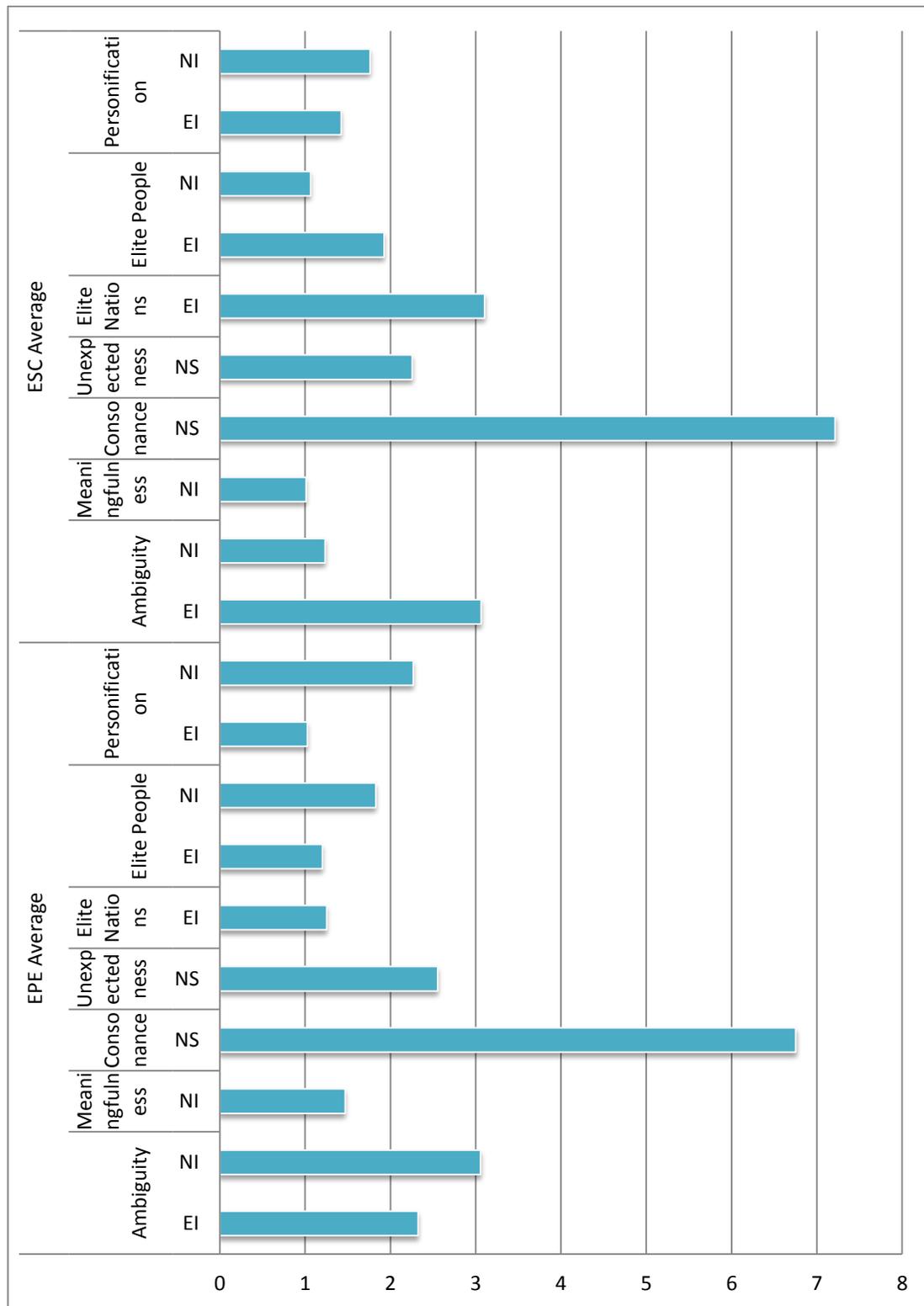


Graph 12: Results Cluster 1 ESC

3.2.2 Results for Cluster 2

The first finding from cluster 2 (compare Graph 13) is that those factors, which do not specify (NS), which type of identity is built – meaning consonance and unexpectedness –, do not differ much between EPE and ESC coverage. On average, the EPE reached 6.75 for consonance and 2.60 for unexpectedness, while the ESC reached 7.21 and 2.26 for the same values, meaning that overall the **EPE drew slightly more attention and caused little more excitement in total**. More enlightening are the other factors: almost whenever European identity (EI) was

measured, the ESC did better than the EPE. Whenever national identity (NI) was measured, it was the other way around. On average, the EPE reached 2.33 points for ambiguity in terms of European identity building (ESC: 3.06) and 3.06 points for ambiguity in terms of national identity building (ESC: 1.24). Similarly, the EPE scored 1.50 for meaningfulness (ESC: 1.01), which measures national identity building only, and 1.25 for elite nations (ESC: 3.10), which measure European identity building only. Also regarding elite people the EPE's value for European identity is only 1.20 (ESC: 1.93), but 1.83 for national identity building (ESC: 1.06). This trend is only interrupted by the factor personification. Even though here the EPE still reached a lower value for European identity building (1.03) and a higher one for national identity building (2.27), the national personification in the ESC (1.76) is still higher than its European one (1.42). We can explain these findings by the structure of the coverage of the two events: the coverage of the EPE was mostly driven by national events, like the rise of national Eurosceptic parties or debates between local candidates. Even when the frontrunners of the leading parties debated – as such a message, which should score high in terms of European identity building – the media I analyzed reported only about these debates, when it took place in their own country. It is easy to blame cultural and language differences for this; yet, the coverage of the ESC, where even more cultures and more languages were represented, had none of these problems. When it came to the Song Contest, journalists cared little about national issues. Nevertheless, the low score of personalization for both the EPE and the ESC is explainable with the lack of access of media to non-nationals. Journalists are often sent out to collect interviews, be it from politicians, experts, or normal people on the street. Naturally, this makes it difficult to reach anyone, who is not close, both in physical and in cultural terms. All in all, this means that **the EPE enforced rather national and the ESC rather European identity**. Nevertheless, **for both events journalists were lacking access to people not belonging to their own nationality**.



Graph 13: Results Cluster 2 Global

Taking a closer look into the different countries for the EPE (compare Graph 14) Germany scored the highest in all factors measuring European identity building. It reached 3.66 points for ambiguity (France: 2.11; Spain: 1.87; UK: 1.65), 1.73 for continuity (France: 1.24; Spain: 0.86; UK: 1.18), 1.86 for elite people (France: 1.01; Spain: 1.01; UK: 0.93), and 1.39 for personification (France: 0.75; Spain: 0.93; UK: 1.04). I explain this by the fact that articles written in Germany were much more focused on Martin Schulz, one of the forerunners in the EPE and a German national, than in the other countries. As I had defined Martin Schulz as one of elite people, this explains why Germany scored so high for European elite people and European personification. On the other hand, German media as well saw Schulz rather as a European than a German; whenever his name fell, his main opponent, Jean-Claude Juncker, was mentioned as well and so were the election programs of these two and their meaning for the EU as a whole, leading to a high rating in ambiguity and elite nations. In other words: **having someone of their own nation as a European elite person leads to more European identity building by the national media.**

It would be wrong though to assume that Germany scored the lowest in terms of national identity building, only because it scored the highest in European identity building. On one hand, in terms of EPE building national identity, it reached with 2.45 indeed the lowest value for ambiguity (France: 3.10; Spain: 3.41; UK: 3.27) and with 1.53 points the lowest for elite people (France: 1.82; Spain: 2.23; UK: 1.74). On the other hand, it also scored the highest in terms of meaningfulness with 2.38 (France: 1.45; Spain: 1.03; UK: 1.03) and got only the second lowest value for personification with 1.94 (France: 1.66; Spain: 2.44; UK: 3.04). While I attribute the latter to measuring inaccuracy, the former is explainable by the way German media handled Schulz and Junkers. While they did treat them as Europeans, they broke down their actions to what they mean for Germany as well, giving them thereby meaning. In other words: **having someone of their own nation as a European elite**

person leads to more connections between national and European issues by the national media.

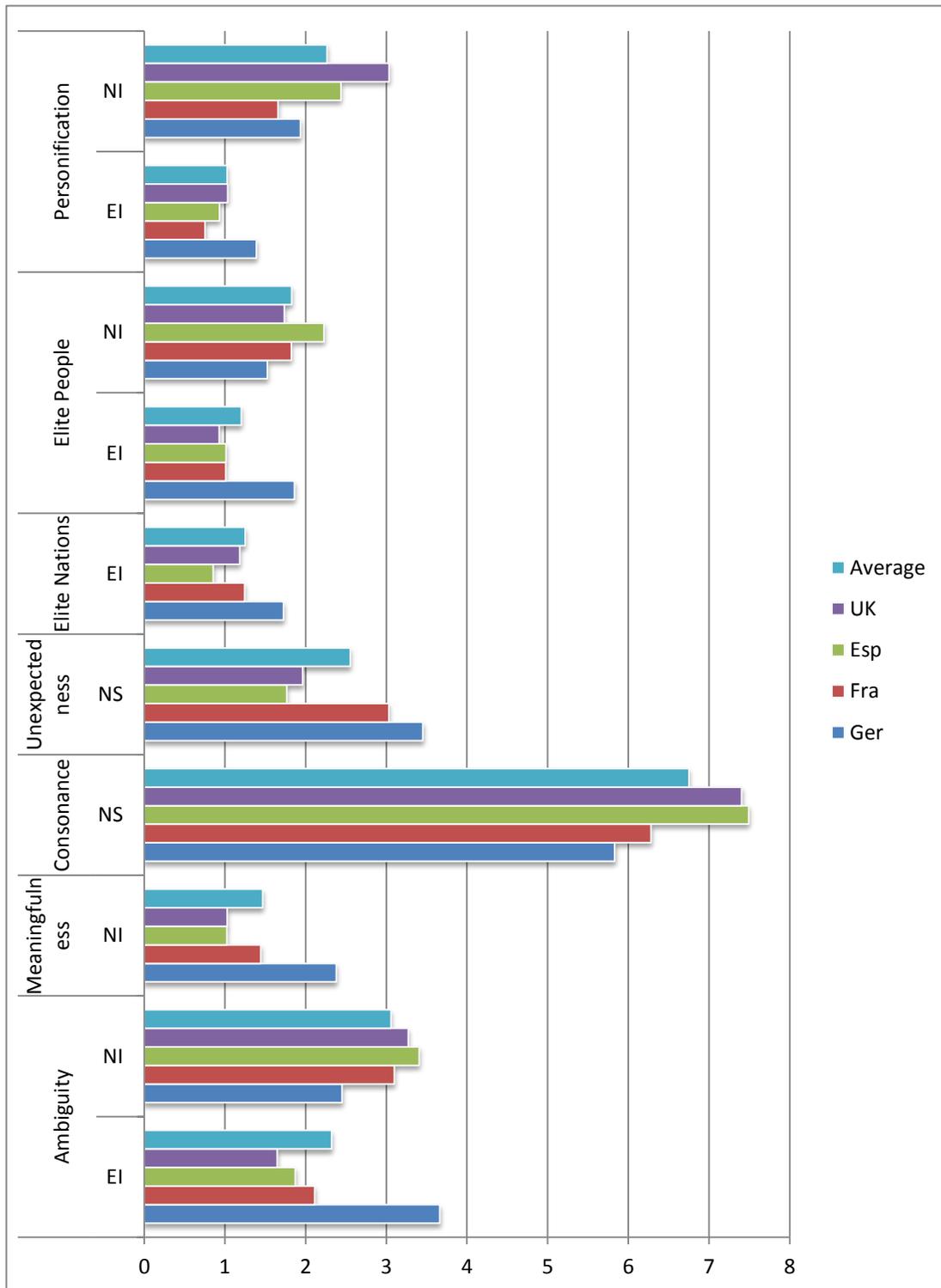
Lastly we see, not surprisingly, that the two factors not measuring a specific identity – consonance and unexpectedness – are directly inverse to each other. While Spain ranks the highest for consonance (7.49), followed by the UK (7.40), France (6.28), and Germany (5.83), their ranking for unexpectedness goes the other way around: Germany scored the most points (3.45), followed by France (3.03), the UK (1.97), and Spain (1.77). This corresponds to the self-image of journalists of their own countries and of other countries. While Spanish, British, and French journalists expected their voters and the voters in other countries to turn to Eurosceptic parties – though probably not to the extent to which the voters did –, German journalists were taken aback by the rise of the Eurosceptics both in Germany and abroad. Subsequently, even though the German Eurosceptic party AfD did less well in the elections than its counterparts in the other countries, it became more of a shock in Germany than in the other countries. For France, Spain and the UK it worked the other way around. This means that **not the comparisons to other events but the expectations of journalists frame, how shocking an event is presented in the media.**

This last point is confirmed by the findings from the coverage of the ESC (compare Graph 15). Again the score of countries for consonance is inverse to their score for unexpectedness. Here the UK scored the highest for consonance (7.82) and the lowest for unexpectedness (1.61), followed by Spain (7.21 and 1.74), Germany (6.98 and 2.68), and France (6.84 and 3.00).

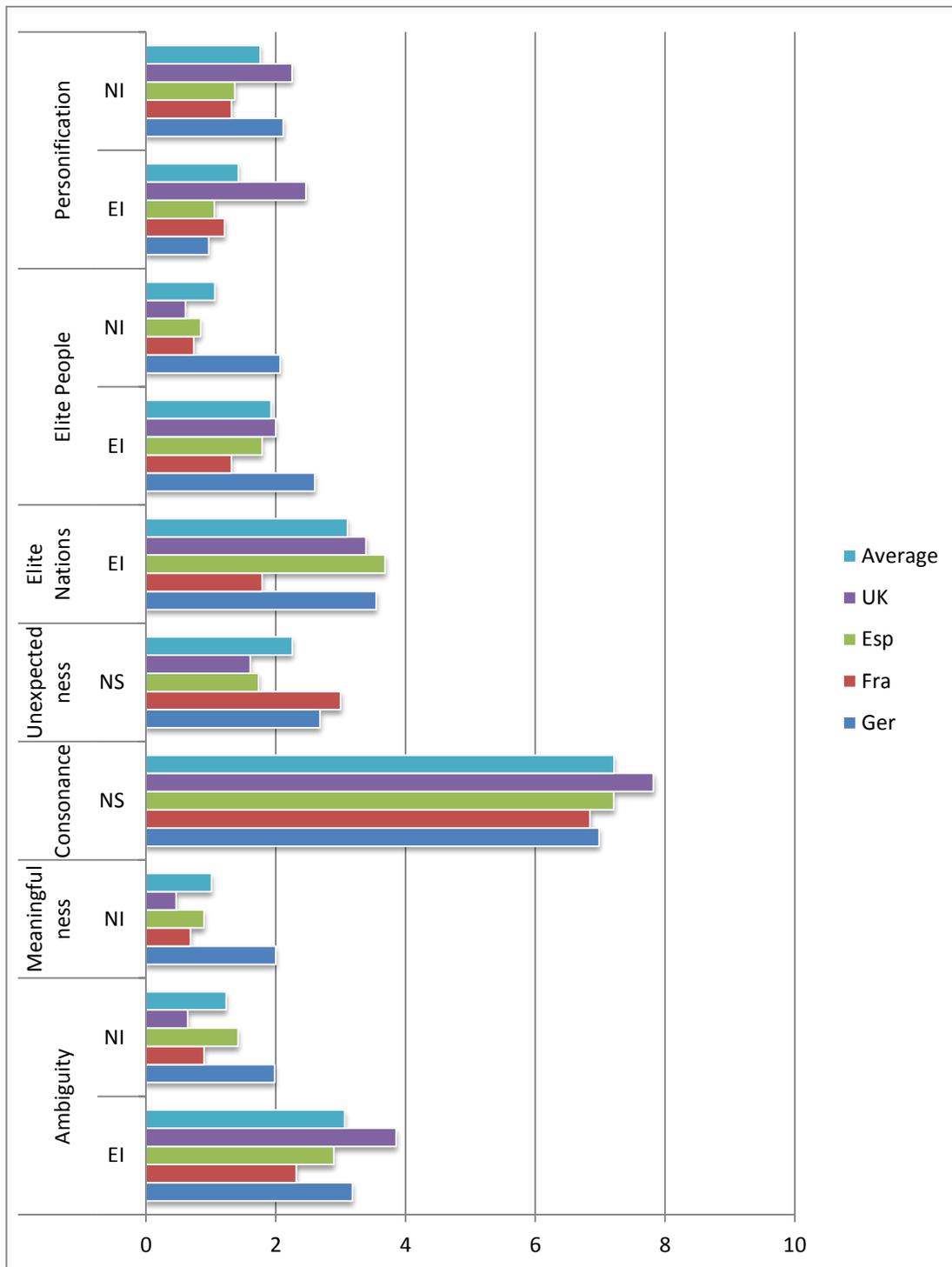
Surprisingly, when it comes to national identity building through the ESC, the UK scores the lowest and Germany the highest. For national ambiguity it has merely 0.64 points (France: 0.90; Spain: 1.42; Germany: 1.98), 0.46 points for meaningfulness (France: 0.68; Spain: 0.90; Germany: 2.00), and 0.61 for national

elite people (France: 0.74; Spain: 0.84; Germany: 2.60). The only partial exception to this trend is the factor personification where the UK now scores the highest (2.25), but is still closely followed by Germany (2.12), with Spain (1.37) and France (1.32) having much lower values. I explain this by the fact that the British press is much more person-centered than the press of the other countries. After all, it scored also among the highest for the factor personification in the EPE, both in national and European identity building (first and second place respectively; see above). Other than the EPE though, the ESC is a very person-centered event. People are in the foreground, not programs, and these people are mostly not belonging to the nation of the medium reporting about the ESC. In that sense, what was true for Germany – that defining Martin Schulz as a European drew more emphasis to Europe as a whole –, is also true for the UK, but inversely: having only one, not very successful, national representative at the ESC drew emphasis away from national topics. In other words: not only having someone of their own nation as a European elite person leads to more European identity building by the national media (see above), but also **not having someone of their own nation as a national elite person leads to less national identity building by the national media**. Plus, not only does having someone of their own nation as a European elite person leads to more connections between national and European issues by the national media (see above), but **not having someone of their own nation as a national elite person leads to fewer connections between national and European issues by the national media**.

These conclusions get confirmed, if we look closer into the building of European identity through the ESC. Here France ranked the lowest, with 2.32 points for ambiguity (Spain: 2.90; Germany: 3.18; UK: 3.86), 1.79 for elite nations (UK: 3.39; Germany: 3.55; Spain: 3.68), and 1.32 for elite people (Spain: 1.79; UK: 2; Germany: 2.60). Just as in the case of the UK with national identity, personification represents the exception for European identity building for France. Here the country ranks with 1.21 points before Germany (0.97) and Spain (1.05), but still far from the UK (2.46).



Graph 14: Results Cluster 2 EPE



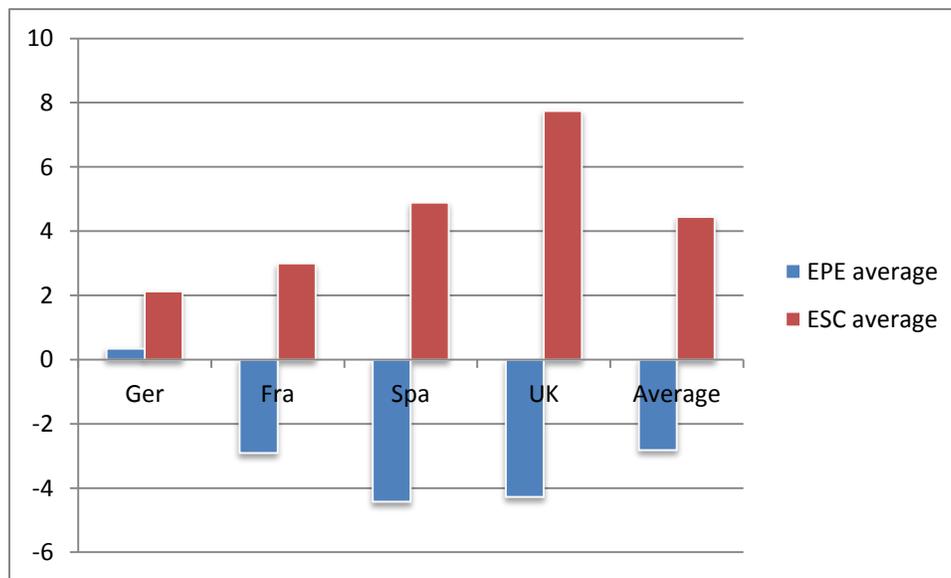
Graph 15: Results Cluster 2 ESC

3.2.3 Results for Cluster 3

If it comes to accumulated representation, meaning the extent to which European or national identity was represented per average article, it becomes clear that **the coverage of the EPE enforced national identity much more, while the one of the ESC promoted European identity** (Compare Graph 16: positive values signify European identity building, negative values signify national identity building). As outlined above, this follows from the ESC being a much more person-centered event, where most elite people are seen as European elite people, leading to the ESC being framed by the media as a European event, while the EPE was framed as a national one. Looking closer to the single countries, Germany is the only one, where the accumulated representation of the average EPE article reached a positive value (0.35), meaning that only in this country the EPE built European identity. Here the media saw the election as a competition of European social democrats versus European conservatives, corresponding to German social democrats and German conservatives. In France on the other hand, with a value of -2.91, the EPE were framed as a fight of Marine Le Pen against Europe, meaning that the average article referred to European issues, elite nations, and elite people, but focused much more on national ones. In Spain and the UK the EPE were presented by the media as a competition between national radical or national Eurosceptic parties against the national established parties. Here European issues were mostly absent, leading to -2.44 points for Spain and -2.47 for the UK. In effect **in most media the European Parliament election was not presented as a European, but as a national event.**

On the other hand, Spain and the UK also reached the highest values of accumulated representation for European identity building via the ESC, 4.89 and 7.75 points respectively, with France (3.00) and Germany (2.13) scoring far less. This I trace back to the extent to which national media are person centered. As

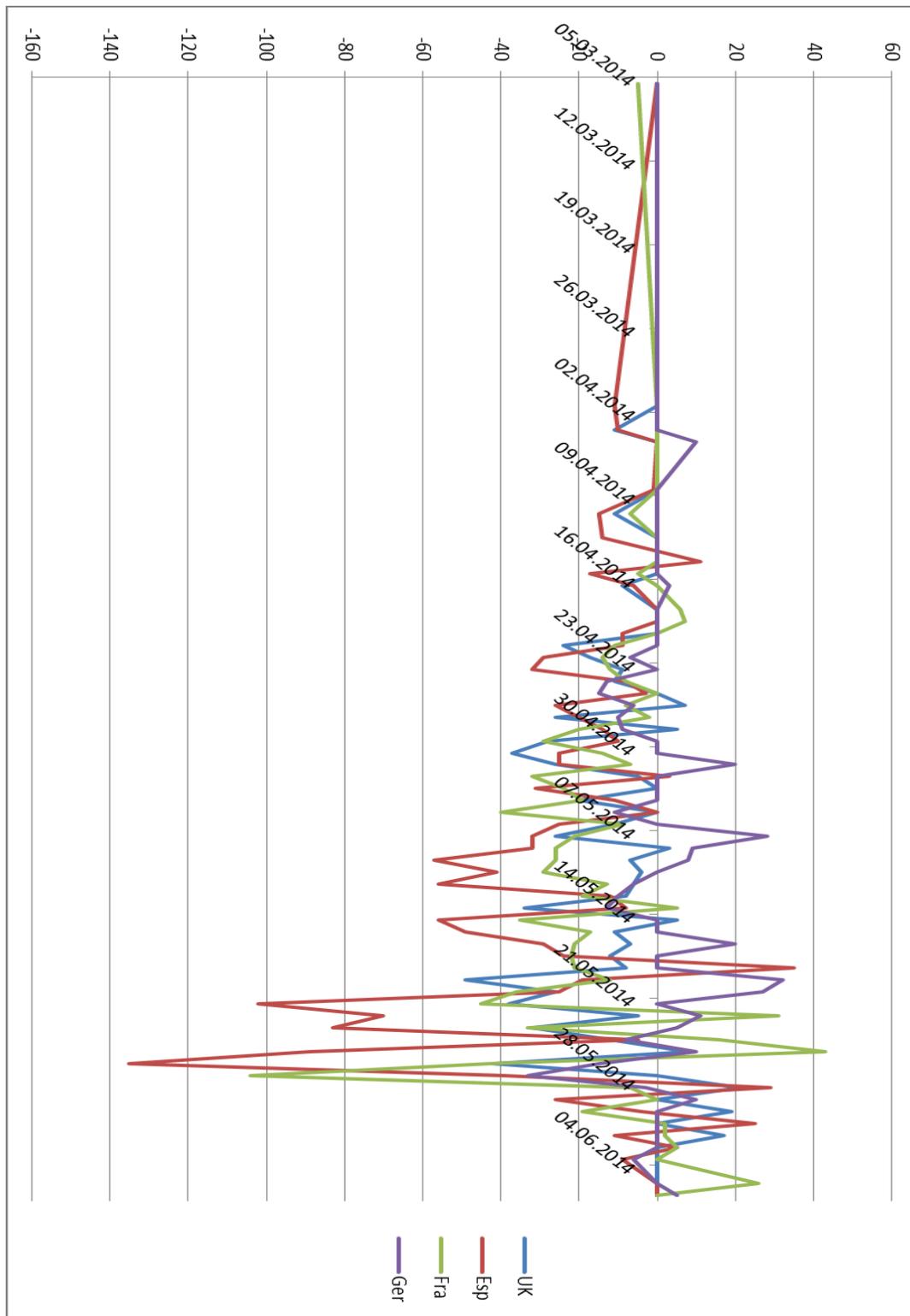
mentioned above, the UK's media focus the most on people and use the most lurid language, while German media focus on explanations and use a much more sober language. The more a medium focuses on people, the more the ESC appeals to it and – vice-versa – the less a medium focuses on people, the less the ESC appeals to it. This means that the UK media presented the ESC primarily as a glamorous event, a multi-national and multi-cultural spectacle. The German media, though, represented it primarily as a system of complex voting, while the event and spectacle was put in the background. Nevertheless, **overall the ESC was presented by the media as a European event.**



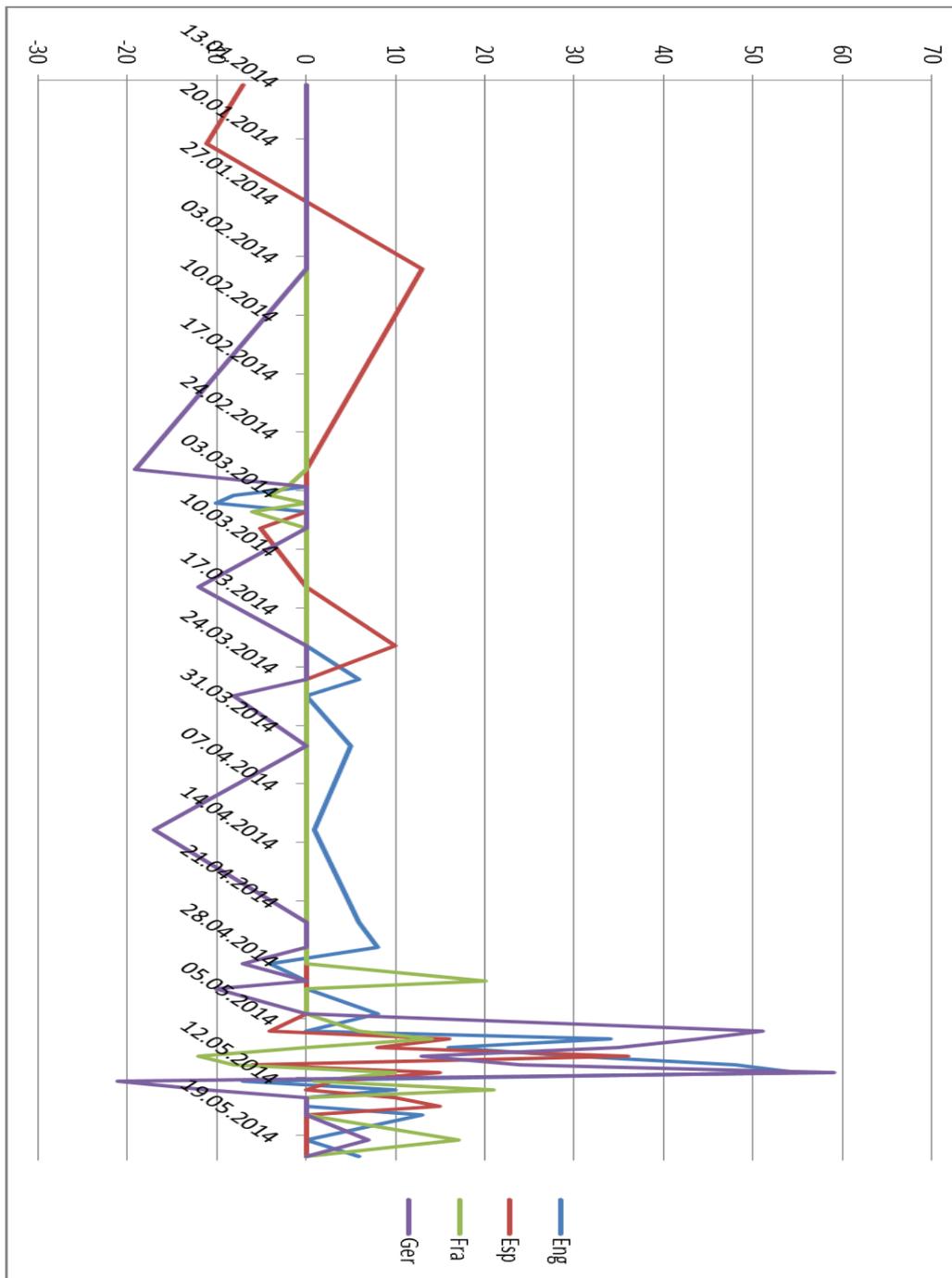
Graph 16: Results Cluster 3 Global

Taking a closer look into the accumulated representation over time, both events follow the same logic (compare Graph 17 and 18). In the **first period** lasting until around one week before the actual event, not only the number of articles per day gradually increases, but the accumulated representation also becomes gradually

more volatile. In this phase the media agenda is set, usually early on by media opinion leaders, e.g. via interviews with elite people or by opinion pieces by renowned journalists, who define in which way the event in question is framed, according to their expectations, as outlined earlier. This framing then is picked up by more and more journalists, leading to more articles and more volatility. The **second phase** starts around one week before the actual event and is characterized by a high number of articles written and a high volatility of the accumulated representation. In this period the event becomes a leading topic in the overall news coverage and articles go more into depth – they provide more explanations, present more elite people, and so on. They do so however in the way, in which the event was framed in phase one: in those countries for example, where the EPE was framed early on as a national event, phase two saw the curve of accumulated representation going clearly towards national identity building and vice-versa for European identity building (compare Graph 17). In the **third phase**, starting five to seven days after the event, the number of articles and volatility of the accumulated representation decreases quickly. In this period other topics take over and the results of the event in question are more and more applied to these new topics instead of being worth their own articles. As journalists spent less time on the old topics, articles also provide fewer explanations, present fewer elite people and so on, meaning that the volatility of the accumulated representation shrinks. All in all, **whether national media coverage is building European or national identity is defined by early agenda setting and framing by media opinion leaders.**



Graph 17: Results Cluster 3 EPE over time

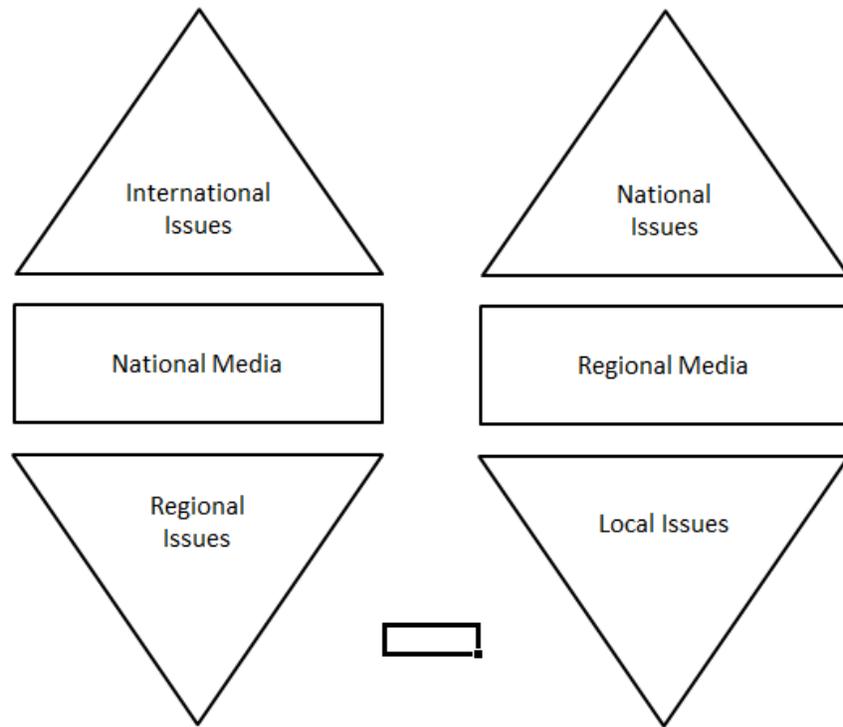


3.2.4 Additional Results

Besides the results presented above, I observed two specificities concerning single media. First of all, those media, which tend to a conservative editorial line (Focus, Daily Mail, and The Telegraph), tend to perform less well in European identity building. As I did not analyze the connection between the political stance of media and their identity building – or defined what a conservative line is, for that matter – more research has to be conducted to confirm this observation. I theorize here that conservative media build less European identity, than media with other political points of view do. Nevertheless, as the research factors by Galtung and Ruge, on which I based my own research factors, were originally developed to differentiate exactly between left-wing and right-wing media¹⁰³, this additional research can be easily done in the future.

The second oddity I observed concerns Le Parisien. As the only regional medium in my sample, it performed decisively less well in terms of European identity building than its national counterparts. I theorize here, that this is due to the structure of how media work: while national media focus on national topics and expand their view to regional and international issues, regional media does not reach as far. They naturally focus on regional topics and extend their view to local and national issues, not international ones (Compare Graph 19). Subsequently, European identity building has an additional restricting factor: locality of the covering media. If the scale goes international-national-regional-local, then the further a medium is down this scale, the less it is building European identity. Again, this theory has to be confirmed via further research.

¹⁰³ (Galtung and Ruge 1965)



Graph 19: Reach of National versus Regional Media

4 Conclusion

Though not part of the analysis in this thesis, I gained the impression that there is substantial difference in terms of European identity building between media, which lean to the political right and those, which lean to the political left. As the factors of Galtung and Ruge, which I applied for my research as well, were originally developed to show differences between left-wing and right-wing media, further research in this regard can be easily done. Additionally I came to the impression that regional and national media differ in terms of European identity building. Again, further research is necessary to illuminate this point.

The findings of the research are that on one hand, as shown with the coverage of the European Parliament Elections, informative media coverage has a stronger impact on identity building than cultural one, subsequently demotic identity is rather built than ethnic identity. On the other hand though, European cultural media coverage, as shown with the Eurovision Song Contest, promotes European identity, while European informative media coverage promotes mostly national identity. In effect the media are thereby moving Europe towards one European ethnos, but also towards various national demes. In this sense, the problem of the EU is not that its own demotic identity is opposed by national *ethnic* identities. It is opposed by national *demotic* identities, while parallel to these demotic identities a European ethnic identity is constructed, with which the EU has no touching point.

On a more technical level, the EU has taken the right steps for identity building. With Jean-Claude Juncker and Martin Schulz as forerunners for the elections, the campaign was personalized, promoting thereby identity building via representation. Unfortunately, this personalization did not reach all the countries:

only in Germany – where Schulz as a German national drew much attention from the media – the media coverage of the elections created European identity. In all other countries analyzed here, the elections were treated by the media as a national event, as they lacked European elite people. The way the media in France, Spain and the UK treated the Elections, these were not European ones, but national ones.

Contrary to that, the Eurovision Song Contest was presented in all countries as a European event. How an event like the Parliament Elections or the Song Contest are treated, depends however on how it is framed early on. Both events went through three distinct phases: in the first one interviews with elite people and opinion pieces by renowned journalists set the event in question on the agenda of other journalists and framed, whether it would be treated as a European or a national one. In the second phase these other journalists picked up the topic and followed the framing, thereby amplifying how the event was presented. In the third phase the event lost importance and disappeared from the media landscape, appearing only when influencing further events, e.g. the Election results influencing the appointment of the President of the Commission.

This framing can be attributed to the way the media work. Journalists like to approach stories from a personal point of view, i.e. by interviewing elite people or featuring them in their articles. However, to do so they need access to these elite people, which they were lacking for European elite people in general, but more so in the case of the European Parliament elections than in the case of the Eurovision Song Contest. Schulz – and likewise Junker – were focused mostly in Germany; in the other countries national elite people, like MEP candidates or national politicians were in the spotlight.

The consequences of said framing on the countries in question are the following: while in all of them the European Parliament Elections were connected to negative events like the rise of Eurosceptic parties, especially in Spain and France

this was presented as something dramatic, while Germans and British were rather calm about the rise of their Eurosceptics. In the latter two countries journalists expected a rise of the Eurosceptics to the extent to which it happened. In France and Spain, however, the Eurosceptic and extremist parties became much stronger than journalists had foreseen. Therefore whether an event like the Elections or the Contest is seen as a shock does not depend on whether it actually is shocking, but on how much it deviates from the expectations of journalists.

From these findings I derived five laws for European identity building by the media: first, having someone of their own nation as a European elite person leads to more European identity building by the national media and to more connections between European and national issues. Equally, not having someone of their own nation as a European elite person leads to less European identity building by the national media and to fewer connections between European and national issues.

Second, having someone of their own nation as a national elite person leads to more national identity building by the national media and to fewer connections between European and national issues. Equally, not having someone of their own nation as a national elite person leads to less national identity building by the national media and, but also to fewer connections between European and national issues.

Third, the coverage of European events goes through three stages: in the first one the agenda is set and the event is framed as either being a national or a European issue, in the second it is strongly presented as such, and in the third it is connected to following events and loses coverage.

Fourth, early access of the media to European elite persons determines, whether an event is framed as a European one. The earlier (in phase one) European

elite persons are presented as the driving forces behind an event, the more European it is treated.

Fifth, not the comparisons to other events, but the deviation from the expectations of journalists on how these events will proceed, frame, how shocking an event is presented in the media. This influences how negative a European or national event is framed by the media.

From these laws I present the following recommendations for EU public relations departments: place national elite people (MEPs, candidates, commissioners) into a European context to make them European elite people. Set the agenda early on by defining topics as European ones and providing access to these elite people. Analyze the expectations of journalists and – if possible – influence an event not to deviate from these expectations.

In total, it would be wrong for us as political scientists to turn our attention only to informative, political, coverage. Cultural coverage, especially the one of mass culture, may be perceived as nothing but a part of *panem et circenses*, bread and circuses. Even if it is merely a way to sway the masses with cheap and senseless entertainment, as the expression implies, cultural coverage has shown in this research its potential in European identity building. More importantly, its counterpart, informative media, prevails to build national identity. Overall, it depends on the framing of an event by the media, which differ in their type, whether the message is national or European identity.

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Appendix

(See separate Excel-table)