

WORKING PAPER

KFG
The
Transformative
Power of Europe

The Emergence of a European Community of Communication

Insights from Empirical Research on the Europeanization of Public Spheres

Marianne van de Steeg and Thomas Risse

No. 15 | AUGUST 2010



KFG Working Paper Series

Edited by the *Kolleg-Forscherguppe* „The Transformative Power of Europe“

The KFG Working Paper Series serves to disseminate the research results of the *Kolleg-Forscherguppe* by making them available to a broader public. It means to enhance academic exchange as well as to strengthen and broaden existing basic research on internal and external diffusion processes in Europe and the European Union.

All KFG Working Papers are available on the KFG website at www.transformeurope.eu or can be ordered in print via email to transform-europe@fu-berlin.de.

Copyright for this issue: Marianne van de Steeg / Thomas Risse
Editorial assistance and production: Corinna Blutguth, Julia Stark

van de Steeg, Marianne / Risse, Thomas 2010: The Emergence of a European Community of Communication: Insights from Empirical Research on the Europeanization of Public Spheres, KFG Working Paper Series, No. 15, August 2010, Kolleg-Forscherguppe (KFG) „The Transformative Power of Europe“, Freie Universität Berlin.

ISSN 1868-6834 (Print)

ISSN 1868-7601 (Internet)

This publication has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Freie Universität Berlin
Kolleg-Forscherguppe
„The Transformative Power of Europe:
The European Union and the Diffusion of Ideas“
Ihnestr. 26
14195 Berlin
Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30- 838 57033
Fax: +49 (0)30- 838 57096
transform-europe@fu-berlin.de
www.transformeurope.eu

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
DFG

THE EMERGENCE OF A EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF COMMUNICATION

INSIGHTS FROM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON THE EUROPEANIZATION OF PUBLIC SPHERES

Marianne van de Steeg and Thomas Risse

Freie Universität Berlin

Abstract

A European public sphere emerges out of Europeanized national public spheres if the following two phenomena are verified. First, if and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time with similar frames of reference, meaning structures, and patterns of interpretation across the various media sources. Second, if and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in a discourse that frames the issues at stake as common European problems. We present empirical evidence from other scholars and two case studies of our own, namely Eastern enlargement and the sanctions against the Austrian ÖVP/FPÖ-government. The main finding is that at least when European issues are discussed, that a European public sphere is constituted and re-constituted through the discursive connections and debates across borders.

The Authors



Marianne van de Steeg prepared a research proposal on media discourse and democracy in the European Union during her fellowship at the Research College “The Transformative Power of Europe”. She is about to publish a monograph on European public sphere theory and research. She defended her PhD on a European public sphere at the European University Institute in 2005. After that she worked as an Assistant Professor at Utrecht University on the European Council’s public accountability. Contact: marianne.vandesteeg@fu-berlin.de

Thomas Risse is professor of international relations and director of the Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin. His major research interest lies in the field of Transatlantic Relations, Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood and European Public Sphere. Since October 2008, he coordinates the Research College “The Transformative Power of Europe” together with Tanja A. Börzel.



Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. The Europeanization of Public Spheres	7
2.1 <i>European Public Sphere: Concepts, Indicators, and Empirical Findings</i>	7
2.2 <i>Two Case Studies: "Haider" and "Eastern Enlargement"</i>	9
3. Public Sphere as Polity: European Identity and an Emerging Community of Communication	16
3.1 <i>Public Spheres and the Emergence of Collective Identities</i>	16
3.2 <i>A European Community of Communication?</i>	17
4. Conclusions: An Emerging Public Sphere in the European Union	22
Literature	24
Appendix	26

1. Introduction¹

A lively political and academic debate has emerged about the normative viability and the empirical possibility of a European public sphere. This debate is linked to the controversy about the democratic or legitimacy deficit of the European Union (EU). An open, pluralist, and critical public discourse rooted in independent media is considered crucial for providing an interface between state and society in a democratic polity. This raises the issue of a European public sphere.

For quite some time, the debate about a European public sphere was largely confined to normative reasoning in the absence of valid empirical data.² Grimm (1995) saw a public sphere as a precondition for a viable European democracy. Kielmannsegg (1994, 1996) argued that the EU lacks basic premises to develop towards a “community of communication”, because language differences inhibit Europeans from speaking meaningfully to each other. One of the first empirical studies on the subject matter came to a similar conclusion, namely that there is a European “public sphere deficit” as part of the larger democratic deficit (Gerhards 1993).

Almost fifteen years later, a veritable research community has formed studying the emergence of a European public sphere from a variety of perspectives (for an overview see: Meyer 2004). This research mostly concentrates on mass media (and the internet) as – albeit problematic – proxies for the (non-) existence of a European public sphere.³ These studies no longer search for a European public sphere outside of and separate from national public spheres. Rather, the emphasis is on the degree to which national public spheres are gradually Europeanized and European issues are regularly dealt with by the various national media.⁴ Moreover, the existing literature can be distinguished according to the role attributed to the media.⁵ First, one can analyze the media as political actor in its own right that contribute to and comment on European policy-making. Studies then typically analyze editorials and other opinion articles in the media (e.g. Pfetsch 2004).⁶ Second, one can also study media – as the term implies – as

1 This article is based on research funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Association) in a collaborative project directed by Bernhard Giesen (University of Konstanz) and Thomas Risse. We thank our collaborators Bernhard Giesen, Valentin Rauer and Sylvain Rivet. See also Van de Steeg et al 2003; Risse 2003; Van de Steeg 2005, 2006. In addition, we thank Klaus Eder, Jürgen Gerhards, Cathleen Kantner, Barbara Pfetsch, Peter Wagner, Jaap Dronkers, Bernhard Peters (+), and Gerard Delanty for their comments at various stages of the project.

The publication of this paper has been made possible by the Kolleg-Forschergruppe (KFG) „The Transformative Power of Europe“, hosted at the Freie Universität Berlin. The KFG is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and brings together research on the diffusion of ideas in the EU’s internal and external relations. For further information, please, consult www.transformeurope.eu.

2 e.g. Abromeit 2003; Abromeit / Schmidt 1998; Gerhards 1993; Grimm 1995; Kielmannsegg 1994, 1996; Schlesinger 1993, 1995; Zürn 1998).

3 e.g. Diez Medrano 2003; Kantner 2004; Kantner/ Renfordt 2007; Koopmans/ Erbe 2003; Kutter forthcoming; Liebert 2007; Meyer 2002, 2007; Oberhuber et al. 2005; Pfetsch 2004; Pfetsch et al. 2006; Renfordt 2006, 2010; Siffert et al. 2007; Statham 2007; Trenz 2002, 2006; Van de Steeg 2006, 2010.

4 For conflicting views see for example: Trenz 2006, on the one hand, and Siffert et al. 2007, on the other hand.

5 We owe the following point to Barbara Pfetsch.

6 Trenz/Münzing (2003) employ the same methodology. However, even though the research material of Siffert et al. (2007) consists mostly of editorials and opinion articles, they use it to theorize about the Europeanization of public discourses in general. We find this approach problematic.

observers, mediators, as well as reflections of a larger public discourse. This approach is chosen by the majority of research teams – our own included – who then often use frame analysis to examine particular debates concerning the degree to which issues are debated from merely national perspectives or from a common European point of view enabling transborder communication.

It follows that a European public sphere constitutes a social construction in the strict sense of the word (see also Kantner 2004). It does not pre-exist outside social and political discourses. Rather, it is being constructed through social and discursive practices creating a common horizon of reference and, at the same time, a transnational community of communication over issues that concern “us as Europeans” rather than “us as British, Germans, French, or Dutch”. From this perspective, the question of whether we can observe the emergence of Europeanized public spheres enabling transnational communication is very closely related to issues of collective identity. In fact, one could argue that the Europeanization of public spheres constitutes one of the sites where European identities are constructed through discursive practices.

This article explores the relationship between the Europeanization of public spheres, on the one hand, and of collective identities, on the other. Public spheres in the European Union are Europeanized if and when the following two indicators can be confirmed:

- I. If and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time with the same criteria of relevance.
- II. If and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which a) participants not only observe each other across national spaces, but also b) contribute regularly to cross-border debates as legitimate speakers thereby recognizing that c) “Europe” constitutes a question of common concern.

We argue that the more debates are Europeanized, thereby creating a common horizon of reference, the more a transnational community of communication in terms of a European polity is emerging. In that sense, heated and even polarized debates about Europe, the EU, and the direction of European integration contribute more to European community-building than any document agreed upon by the European Council can ever do. We illustrate our points empirically with regard to two controversies that have shaken the EU in recent years: First, the so-called Haider debate in 2000 concerned whether the EU should interfere with a member state’s domestic politics to sanction the entry into government of a right-wing populist party. The second debate that is still lingering on concerns EU enlargement and thus, the borders of Europe.

We proceed in two steps. First, we discuss the Europeanization of public spheres using the Habermasian concept of a public sphere as our theoretical point of departure. Second, we discuss the above-mentioned link between Europeanized public spheres, community of communication, and European identity. In each part, we use the Haider debate and the controversy about Eastern enlargement as empirical illustrations. We conclude this article with some policy implications.

2. The Europeanization of Public Spheres

2.1 *European Public Sphere: Concepts, Indicators, and Empirical Findings*

Jürgen Habermas developed the concept of the public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) in his study “The structural transformation of the public sphere” (1989). With the emergence of the bourgeoisie in the 18th and 19th century, a public sphere arose as a forum in which the private people came together to form a public, and readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion (p.25). Accordingly, Habermas’ concept of the public sphere can be characterized by the following three elements:

1. Openness to participation;
2. Challenges to public authority to legitimize decisions;
3. Ideal of rational-critical discourse.

By definition, a public sphere should be public, that is, in principle, open to everyone who wants to follow the discussion and actively participate. Media, of course, are mostly open with regard to the first aspect, namely passive participation. Active participation in media discourses and debates is usually restricted to the political, economic, and cultural elites. Europe and the EU are not different.⁷

Public spheres are about questioning public authority, compelling decision-makers to legitimize their policies in front of the citizens. This aspect is probably linked most closely to the normative role of media in a liberal democracy, and the EU should not be an exception. No matter how one positions oneself in the debate about the legitimacy deficit of the European Union (see e.g. Moravcsik 2002; Follesdal/Hix 2006; Scharpf 1999), a lively public sphere constitutes a prime requirement for democratic European polity.

The public sphere is linked to deliberation by various authors. Indeed, the deliberative quality of a public sphere can be used as a yardstick against which to measure existing public debates from a critical perspective. However, while the first two elements of Habermas’ conceptualizations of a public sphere are significant in our context, the deliberative aspect only concerns us here to the extent that the give and take of argumentative discourse can be used to describe public spheres as clusters of relatively greater density of communication (see Calhoun 1992; on deliberation and reason-giving see also Risse 2000, 2004).

What do these general remarks mean for the conceptualization of a Europeanized public sphere? Let’s start again with Habermas: In his response to Dieter Grimm (1995), he described a European public sphere as “a political public sphere which enables citizens to take positions at the same time on the same topics of the same relevance” (Habermas, 1995: 306). Inspired by this insight, Eder and Kantner (2000) have formulated the following rule of thumb: there is a European debate when the same issues are discussed at the same time using the same criteria of relevance (see also Kantner 2004). These so-called “Eder-Kantner criteria” start from the assumption that a transnational European public sphere can be built on the basis of the various national media discourses. As long as in the press the same issues are discussed at the same time we do not need European-wide media based on a common language.

⁷ Interestingly enough, a study of internet communication flows seem to suggest that the internet is not more open to civil society and NGOs than traditional media, but rather reflects media discourses. See Koopmans/Zimmermann 2003.

An ideal typical European public sphere for the European Union would then emerge:

I. If and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time with the same criteria of relevance.

This indicator of a Europeanized public sphere can be tested by answering the following two questions. First, are the same (European) themes discussed at similar levels of attention across national public spheres in Europe? Second, are the same criteria of relevance used to discuss these themes? This first question can be answered relatively easily by using quantitative tools with regard to e.g. issue cycles. One can simply count the number of articles on a particular theme in the various media sources and then examine whether the peaks and lows in the issue cycles of media reporting follow similar patterns across countries. Several studies show that regarding the issue cycle there is a transnational public sphere in the European Union. Dereje et al. (2003), who analyzed newspaper articles containing the word “Europe” published in the year 2000, conclude that in comparison to The New York Times (NYT), newspapers from EU member states publish significantly more articles on the EU. In this respect, the difference of being published within the EU or outside of the EU outpaces the differences between countries and between the media sources from the same country. The data by Siftt et al. appear to confirm these result (Siftt et al. 2007).⁸ Moreover, we can learn from the studies by Koopmans and Erbe (2004) and Trenz (2004, 2006) which types of European issues are discussed at the same time and at a similar level of attention (see also Pfetsch 2004). Apart from debates on European integration itself, Europeanized issues concern mostly those policy areas in which the EU has assumed major policy competences, such as monetary policy. In contrast, Kevin (2001) has shown that elections for the European Parliament (EP) are not occasions that trigger a similar clustering of communication across the European Union on the same issues. This confirms the finding of electoral studies according to which EP elections continue to be secondary to national elections.

Thus, the first question regarding a Europeanized public sphere is answered affirmatively by most of the available studies: The same themes are discussed at the same time. Things get more complicated with regard to the second question related to the Eder-Kantner criteria on the emergence of Europeanized public spheres across the EU. Are the “same criteria of relevance” used when the same themes are discussed across Europe? This criterion needs to be specified. It could mean, for example, that speakers adopt a European rather than a national or otherwise partisan perspective. But what does “European perspective” mean in this context? If it means that an issue is addressed as concerning “us as a community of Europeans” so that the relevant community is Europe rather than individual member states or other particular groups, such a “European perspective” can be a valid indicator for a Europeanized public sphere (we will discuss this point in more depth below, see 3.). But “European perspective” cannot and should not mean that speakers adopt a neutral position above partisanship. Why should they argue from neutral positions while discussing European questions when we cannot expect them to do so while addressing national policy questions? After all, a lively public sphere is about debate and controversy, as argued above.

⁸ Note, however, that this study suffers from methodological shortcomings. The study’s sampling is based on four artificially constructed weeks in 1982, 1989, 1996, and 2003 using four newspapers from four different countries. Strictly speaking, this method does not allow to draw conclusions on temporal developments.

1. However, a pre-condition for meaningful debate and controversy is that we share an understanding of what the debate is all about and what its reference points are. Otherwise, we talk past each other, whether in a national or in a European public sphere. “Same criteria of relevance” then requires that issues are framed in similar ways across nationally based media sources, and that we can observe similar meaning structures and interpretive reference points irrespective of national background or political standpoint of the respective media source. The second question on whether the “same criteria of relevance” are used can, thus, be answered by analyzing whether similar frames of reference, meaning structures, and patterns of interpretation are used across various media sources.

Many empirical studies, including our own, have focused on an analysis of such frames of reference, or meaning structures in debates on specific issues: Hodess (1998) for the InterGovernmental Conferences (IGCs) in 1985 and 1990/91 in the German and British press, Meyer (2002) for the news production during the Cresson scandal that led to the fall of the Santer Commission, Díez Medrano (2003) and Trenz and Münzing (2003) for op-editorial articles in the quality press on European integration, Semetko et al. (2000) for the launch of the Euro, Renfordt (2006) for the debate about the Iraq war, as well as Oberhuber et al. (2005) on media representations with regard to the failed 2003 Brussels EU Summit on the Draft Constitutional Treaty. These studies all demonstrate the emergence of similar meaning structures across countries and across different media sources for the debates they analyzed.⁹ Most important, in none of these cases one could predict the position of individual media sources based on the country of origin. Rather, general ideological orientations (the left-right dimension) or the individual media’s position in favor of or opposed to European integration proved to be the most salient indicators. Moreover, one study (Renfordt 2006) that used U.S. newspapers as a control, demonstrated that the frames of reference of the European debate differed substantially from the way in which the U.S. media framed the issue.

Our own empirical research corroborates these findings. In the following, we briefly discuss our own results so as to illustrate what “similarity of interpretive frames” as an indicator for the Europeanization of public spheres actually means.

2.2 Two Case Studies: “Haider” and “Eastern Enlargement”

The Haider case concerns the political crisis unleashed in the EU when Jörg Haider’s right-wing and populist Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) entered the Austrian government in February 2000. The other EU member states agreed to impose some diplomatic sanctions against Austria to protest the decision to let this party accused of xenophobia and Nazism participate in the government. A European-wide debate on the legitimacy of the EU’s intermingling in the domestic politics of a member state followed. In our research, we coded 2160 articles sampling every third article from 15 newspapers (both quality papers

9 Oberhuber et al. claim their study shows “how press coverage in each country differs on the level of semantics, thematic structures, and structures of relevance and argumentation” (2005: 227). A close reading of the article reveals, however, that one cannot predict an individual newspaper’s position on the subject matter simply on the basis of its nationality. Rather, the main dividing line is between pro-EU and EU-sceptic newspapers. This represents a European-wide cleavage that is not confined to individual countries. In sum, their findings are consistent with our interpretation here.

and tabloids) published in five EU countries (France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, and Austria) and the US (see list of newspapers in the appendix) between October 1999 and September 2000. We conducted a frame analysis of the Haider debate. The main focus was to analyze the dominant interpretive schemata used by the various print media to encode and judge the Haider case and the European reaction to it. We aimed at providing a comparative typology of the dominant frames of reference (see Snow/Benford 1992, for more information on frame analysis).

The second case study concerns EU enlargement of Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC). Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the enlargement with these countries has been on the top of the EU's political agenda. We coded 1322 articles sampling every eighth article from eight quality newspapers and four weeklies from four EU countries (Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK) and the Swiss newspaper *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (NZZ) as an example of a non-EU newspaper over the time-period between 1989 and 1998 (see list of newspapers and weeklies in the appendix). In contrast to the Haider case study, an ordinary content analysis was conducted for which all information elements of an article related to enlargement were coded.

The results of the qualitative coding were then submitted to quantitative statistical analyses. In order to know whether the EU media sources employ similar meaning structures when they discussed Haider and the sanctions against Austria or EU enlargement with the CEEC, we conducted a linear regression analysis. The unit of analysis was the whole article. The dependent variable was the content of the newspaper and weekly articles. The four factors that served as the dependent variable were created by, first, coding respectively the frames and the information elements contained in the article with the aid of software for qualitative content analysis (Winmax). Subsequently, the ensuing data set was introduced in SPSS and a factor analysis was carried out to elicit the underlying dimensions in the content of the articles. These factors then formed the dependent variables for the regression analysis (see appendix for details). In the following section, we will discuss for each case, first, the most frequent codings regarding the content of the debates, and, second, all the underlying dimensions.

The content and frame analysis of the Haider case yielded four frames that from a total of 24 detected frames were used by far most often in the various newspapers:

1. "Haider, the Nazi": This frame depicts Jörg Haider as a Nazi and fascist.
2. "Haider, the xenophobe": This frame depicts Jörg Haider as a xenophobe and racist.
3. "European moral community": The EU is not just a market, but a moral community based on the respect for human rights and democracy.
4. "European legal standards": The EU is primarily a legal community based on the rule of law and legal standards.

Table 1: Distribution of the four most frequent frames (N=2160) (frequency within an article by frame)

	Haider Nazi	Haider xeno	Eur. moral community	Eur. legal standards
0	1753	1756	1802	1901
1	303	325	261	210
2	71	66	71	37
3-7	33	13	26	12

However, since none of these master frames was mentioned in more than 20% of the articles coded, as can be seen in table 1 above, we opted for a factor analysis to get at the underlying dimensions and the meaning structures employed by the various newspapers. This factor analysis of newspaper reporting on the Haider cases yielded four underlying dimensions for all newspapers which loaded differently on the various frames from the content analyses:

1. “Waving the European flag”: This is a visionary dimension that portrays the EU as a community based on moral values and legal standards. In this factor, the moral community and legal standards frames combine with support for the European sanctions against Austria.

Example: The Italian President Ciampi states that “[t]he EU is not only an alliance between states, but also a supranational unity. Now, the fact that in one of these countries [...] may enter in government a political party that manifests understandings which are not completely respectful of the values founding the Union, and that which I call *pax europea*, well, that arouses concern” (Il Corriere della Sera, 2 January 2000).

2. “Holding up the law”: This is the counter-vision to “Waving the flag” insofar as it portrays the EU as a community based on clear and precise legal standards. This factor leads to strong opposition against the European sanctions and against interference with the composition of a democratically elected government (as long as Austria does not break the law). This factor also loads on frames defending Austria against accusations of being a Nazi and racist country.

Example: “The programme of the Prime Minister for the withdrawal of the sanctions states: The sanctions can be removed via a comprehensible system of mutual understanding and respect. The EU should develop a standard that clearly and impeccably defines how it is related to democracy, the rule of law and human rights” (Neue Kronenzeitung, 17 May 2000).

3. “Haider is a Nazi”: This factor loads heavily on strong evaluative frames, such as “Haider is a Nazi” or “Haider is a xenophobe”, and “Austria is a Nazi country”, as expressed by the author of the respective article.

Example: “Only slogans of blue - since it is the colour of the FPÖ, whose liberal component is a minority today - were conspicuous because of their populist and xenophobe violence. ‘Ueberfremdung’, cried out the posters, without fearing to borrow from the Nazi terminology by shouting about an ‘overflow’, and the ‘dissatisfaction’ about the immigrants, judged profiteers and robbers of employment” (Le Soir, 29 January 2000).

4. “Haider, the alleged Nazi”: In contrast to the 3rd factor, this one emphasizes equally strong evaluations, not by the article’s author, but by foreign actors cited in the article.

In the content analysis of the Eastern enlargement, from a total of 40 information elements, nine were used by far most often in the various media outlets. For purposes of clarity, these nine information elements can be grouped together under four headings:

1. Information elements related to the procedure towards enlargement:

- The time-table for enlargement: When will the negotiations start? When will the CEEC become member states?
- A list of candidate countries.
- Steps towards enlargement, such as the joint meetings with the candidate countries during the European Council Summits, progress reports by the Commission and the opening of the negotiations.

2. Information elements related to the CEEC:

- Mentioning one or various CEEC for a more elaborate discussion than just listing the candidate countries.
- The economic situation in the candidate countries.
- The political situation in the candidate countries.

3. Information elements related to the EU:

- A need for institutional reform in general (without any precise specification).
- A view on an enlarged EU: the identification of the (future) EU.

4. Information element related to the political agenda:

- The Nato and EU enlargement with the CEEC are related to each other.

Table 2: Distribution of the eight most frequent information elements (N=1322) (number of articles receiving no code, or at least one code)

General category	Code name	Art. no code	Art. at least 1	Range of codes
<i>Procedure</i>	Time-table	906	416	0-15
	List candidates	922	400	0-7
	Steps to enlargement	986	336	0-10
<i>The CEEC</i>	Elaborate discussion	889	427	0-11
	Economic situation	1022	300	0-10
	Financial situation	1041	281	0-6
<i>The EU</i>	Institutional reform	1111	211	0-6
	View on enlarged EU	1104	218	0-6
<i>On the agenda</i>	Related to Nato enlargement	1027	295	0-7

The factor analysis of the information elements coded in the articles on Eastern enlargement case yielded only two factors:

1. “Bill”: The enlargement as a catalyst of institutional and financial problems for the current member states. This factor loads high on the various information elements related to institutional reform and the financial consequences of enlargement for the budget and the agricultural, structural and cohesion policies.

Example: “[t]he process of enlarging the EU [...] will be long and difficult: The EU has to revise its institutional and financial structure, and reform its policies in order to make this enlargement possible, while the candidates have to do their part of the homework” (el País, 13 March 1998).

2. “Focus”: A focus on the kernel of the issue, namely the CEEC and the process of enlargement.

Example: “[a]ccording to the Polish press, the German interior minister has made it clear that closer ties with the EC depended on the steps Warsaw takes to limit immigration” (The Guardian, 16 February 1993).

As mentioned above, these factors were then submitted to a linear regression analysis in order to find out according to which background characteristics the meaning structures in the articles differed from each other. The following background characteristics formed the independent variables for the regression analysis (see appendix):

1. Country of origin of newspaper: Do German newspaper differ systematically from, say, French newspapers? Do newspapers in EU member states differ systematically from U.S. (Haider case) or Swiss newspapers (enlargement case)?
2. Ideology: Do center-left and liberal newspapers employ different meaning structures as compared to center-right or conservative newspapers?
3. Quality paper vs. tabloids: Can we observe a difference between the quality press and tabloids? (Only for the Haider case.)
4. Idiosyncrasies of the media: Can differences in meaning structures be explained on the basis of some inherent features of individual newspapers?

In addition, we used two more independent variables in the enlargement case:

5. Time: Are their systematic differences over time?¹⁰
6. Format of article: This variable was used as a proxy to correct for the differences in the length of articles between daily newspapers and weeklies. In order to be able to compare the weeklies with the daily newspapers it is necessary to control for the difference in the amount of codings caused by the difference in format.

¹⁰ A regression analysis that included “time” as an independent variable was also made for the Haider case. However, since it turned out to be either insignificant or with hardly any explanatory power and no impact on the other variables, we decided to make the regression analysis presented in this article without it.

The aim of the regression analysis is to establish whether the meaning structures employed in the EU media are distinctly national or have already Europeanized. To determine whether appertaining to a specific EU member state does not any longer have a decisive impact on the meaning structure, the regression analysis should confirm the following two hypotheses. First, we should find that the EU newspapers are as such significantly different from the non-EU newspapers. Second, independent variables other than nationality should contribute more to explaining the variance in meaning structure.

The models for the regression analysis (see appendix; for more details see Van de Steeg 2006) were designed in such a way that chances were highest to conclude that news reporting is conducted from distinctly national perspectives. The regression analysis starts with the countries, followed by the more general independent variables, and finally the individual newspapers. By starting with the countries, the regression model will indicate the maximum explanatory power for this independent variable. Other analyses, with an inverted order, were made to calculate the minimum explanatory power of nationality as well.

To cut a long story short: The conclusion for both cases regarding the similarities or differences of meaning structures is unambiguous. The main difference across all these variables concerns the meaning structures employed by newspapers and weeklies from EU member states, on the one hand, and those employed by non-EU media, on the other, be they Swiss or be they American. EU media report differently about the two issues under investigation here as compared to non-EU media. Moreover, belonging to a particular EU member state explains less of the variance in meaning structure than other background characteristics. For example, there is no distinctive German view discernible in German newspapers or French in a French newspaper etc. (see also Van de Steeg 2005, 2006).

In the Haider case, the US newspapers use significantly less the discourse on “Holding up the law” in comparison to the EU newspapers (regression coefficient $-.07$) and report significantly more on “Haider, the alleged Nazi” (regression coefficient $.09$) (see the full regression models in the appendix).¹¹ Furthermore, other independent variables than the nationality of EU newspapers explain more of the variance in meaning structure, even when the order in which the independent variables are introduced into the model allows for a maximum impact of “nationality”: either being a US newspaper, ideology or the idiosyncrasy of the individual newspapers has most explanatory power. Only for “Haider is a Nazi”, the nationality of the EU newspapers explains more than other independent variables. To sum this up, while allowing for a maximum impact, the nationality of the EU newspapers has less explanatory power than other independent variables for three out of four factors.

11 We are aware that the explanatory power of our models is rather low, especially in comparison with sociological or political science studies in other areas, such as electoral studies. However, the aim of this study is to establish whether the nationality of a newspaper has a decisive influence on the meaning structure in media debates in comparison to other ways of grouping the media outlets (e.g. ideology or being published in the EU). Had the aim of this study been to explain the content of the media articles, we would have included independent variables such as authorship and influence of news agencies. While the absolute value of the adjusted R² is less important for this study, what matters is the relative contribution to explaining the meaning structure of the independent variables specifically related to the public sphere.

Another way of putting the conclusions from the regression analysis is to say that the U.S. newspapers report on the Haider case from the perspective of a distant observer. Haider and the debate the events in Austria created were reported as happening “over there in Europe”, i.e. elsewhere. This observer perspective can already be seen in the headlines, for example “Europe moving cautiously in punishment for Austria” (The New York Times, 2 April 2000) and “Report clears way for Europe to drop Austrian sanctions” (The New York Times, 9 September 2000).

In comparison to the US newspapers, the EU newspapers deal with the advent to power of Haider’s FPÖ as an issue that concerns not only Austrians but also other Europeans. There is a common horizon of reference, even though different positions are taken in the debate on this issue. For example, the German Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) and the Austrian Die Presse paid much more attention to arguments against the sanctions, while the Belgian Le Soir, the French Le Monde and - surprisingly – the Austrian Der Standard used considerably more space for arguments in favor of the EU sanctions. However, even though the editorial positions of these newspapers were clearly visible, other opinions on the matter were fully included. In the end, both sides of the debate on the Haider issue acknowledged the values on which the European Union should be based. This was particularly true for the Austrian newspapers included in our sample. Not only did Die Presse and Der Standard disagree on the question of EU sanctions. They also did not distinguish themselves in any way from the other newspaper we analyzed. In fact, the EU-wide pro-sanction camp was led by the French Le Monde, while the German FAZ defended Austria vigorously against the EU policies. In this case then, a veritable European public sphere emerged – via the national media.

The case of EU Eastern enlargement confirms this picture. In this case, it was the Swiss Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) that differed most substantially from the newspapers and weeklies published in EU member states (see the full regression models in the appendix). The Swiss newspaper dedicated significantly more attention to “Focus”, the dimension that loads especially on information elements related to the situation in the CEEC and the process of enlargement in general (regression coefficient .10). For both dimensions “Focus” and “Bill”, the nationality of the EU media outlets matters less to explain the variance than other independent variables such as the time period and the individual specificity of the media outlets. This is more difficult to see in the regression models that include the independent variable “format” to control for the difference between the dailies and weeklies. The analysis has been repeated for only the dailies. In that case, the specific nationality of the EU newspapers matters less than being an EU or non-EU newspaper for the dimension “Focus”, and it matters less than the time period for “Bill”.

The fact that the Swiss newspaper pays more attention to the situation in the CEEC and the process towards enlargement and the EU newspapers and weeklies put much more emphasis on the financial and institutional consequences of enlargement can be interpreted from the perspective of the outsider we saw before in relation to the US newspapers in the Haider case. Independent of being in favor or against the Eastern enlargement, a major concern in the EU press are the changes that have to be made in the institutional structure of the EU and to the agricultural, structural, and cohesion policies in order to mitigate the impact of enlargement. The Eastern enlargement has consequences for the position of the “old” member states – a group of which Switzerland is not a member.

This shows, once again, that the non-EU media appears to report on EU matters from the perspective of an outside observer, while the EU media concentrates on the issues of concern for the European Union. Thus, they report and comment from the perspective of insiders. Membership of the European Union induces citizens, politicians and the press to discuss European issues in a similar manner. A shared meaning structure and a common discourse emerge, because, inside the EU, we have to deal with each other and take each other's position and arguments into account. In this sense, a common horizon of reference is a consequence of membership in the same political community.

3. Public Sphere as Polity: European Identity and an Emerging Community of Communication

So far, we have demonstrated that there is enough empirical evidence to suggest the emergence of a European public sphere in terms of Europeanized public spheres. We have shown that the Eder-Kantner criteria mentioned above are largely met in reality: When it comes to questions that concern "us" as Europeans or EU citizens, these themes are indeed being discussed at the same time at similar levels of attention and using similar frames of references and meaning structures. These are necessary conditions for a transnational public sphere insofar as they enable people to communicate meaningfully across borders. However, are they actually sufficient? In the following, we argue that conceptualizing a European public sphere inevitably raises the issue of a European identity.

3.1 Public Spheres and the Emergence of Collective Identities

The older literature on the subject assumed that identity is a pre-condition for the emergence of a public sphere. A community must be in place in order to be able to communicate with each other. Claims about the absence of an EU public sphere, therefore, usually contain the argument that since there is not a sufficiently strong European identity, there cannot be a public sphere (for example Kielmannsegg 1994; Offe 2003). This argument is based on the assumption that citizens enter the public sphere with a given identity and that the debate in the public sphere should be aimed at transcending differences in identity, position, or interests (see Calhoun 2002 for a critique). Here, identity is treated as a given, established prior to and outside of the public sphere. If there is no collective identity, there cannot be a public sphere almost by definition.

We agree with the argument that the concept of a public sphere has to be re-connected to the question of collective identities. However, the relationship between identity and the public sphere is less troublesome from a social constructivist understanding of collective identities (see, for example Eisenstadt/Giesen 1995). Here, public spheres and identities are not treated as a given. Public spheres emerge in the process during which people debate controversial issues. The more we debate issues, the more we engage each other in our public discourses - and the more we actually create political communities. This is related to Calhoun's argument that identities are defined and redefined in the public sphere, which makes them open to change: "Participation in democratic public life is not, however, separate from the processes through which culture is produced and reproduced in modern societies; it is integral to them, and likewise part of the process

by which individual and collective identities are made and remade” (Calhoun 2002:157). Unfortunately, the literature on European public spheres has largely forgotten about the inherent connection between debating in the public and creating political communities.

This implies that similar meaning structures and frames of reference constitute a necessary condition to enable transnational communication across borders but they are not sufficient per se to constitute a public sphere. In order to communicate meaningfully, we need to be aware of each other. Engaging in a debate requires listening to each other’s arguments and trying to persuade each other (Habermas 1981). It certainly implies contestation and it may or may not lead to consensus. But a community of communication in a public sphere implies, at a minimum, that speakers in a public sphere recognize each other as legitimate participants in a debate. We might disagree fundamentally but we take each other’s statements seriously in a democratic polity. Nationalists deny this legitimacy. Polarizations along national lines by definition create boundaries using national “self-other” distinctions. This implies that a certain degree of collective identification with the European Union is necessary to treat fellow Europeans from other member states as legitimate voices in one’s own national public sphere. It does not imply a deep sense of loyalty toward each other, but some minimum sense of belonging to the same political community is required.

However, this sense of community ought not to be treated as a prerequisite of a communicative discourse. Rather, it emerges in the course of a debate in the public sphere, in the process of arguing and debating. Actively engaging in a discourse on issues of common concerns actually leads to collective identification processes and creates a community of communication rather than presupposing it. Why should Europe be an exception?

This line of thought implies that “debating Europe” actually builds the community of fate in a European public sphere. It constitutes Europeans as Europeans who can no longer remain neutral observers, but have to take a stance in a community of communication. This argument further implies that controversies about European policies are good, not bad for the sense of community and for construction of a European polity. We will come back to that point in the conclusions.

3.2 A European Community of Communication?

While debating European issues, Europeans answer basic questions of identity, namely “who are we?”, “what are our values?”, and “where are we going to?”. In exchanging arguments, Europeans discursively establish their identity. This is captured in the second indicator for a common public sphere in the European Union. There is a shared public sphere:

II. If and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which a) participants not only observe each other across national spaces, but also b) contribute regularly to cross-border debates as legitimate speakers thereby recognizing that c) “Europe” constitutes a question of common concern.

Let us comment on each of these different components of a community of communication. As to the first (and least important) one – mutual observation, the available studies suggest that this condition is usually

given, even in cases in which there is little cross-border agreement on either frames of reference or the definition of the common problem (see e.g. Trenz 2002; Maurer 2003; Kantner 2004; Erbe 2005). The second component – the mutual recognition of fellow Europeans as part of the community rather than “foreigners” – can be tackled in two manners. Usually, the few studies that contain this component focus on the extent to which actors from other EU member states or from the EU institutions participate in a media debate, in comparison to the actors from the member state in which the media outlet is published. If the mutual recognition of belonging to a shared community is measured in this way, the jury is still out given the contradictions between the few available studies. The data by Sifft et al. suggest that discursive references to fellow Europeans follow as a distant second to references to national speakers – except in articles on EU governance itself where fellow Europeans are referred to much more frequently (Sifft et al. 2007).¹² Pfetsch shows, however, that primarily EU actors – Commission, Parliament etc. – are referred to in editorials covering European issues rather than actors from other European countries (Pfetsch 2004).

However, whether fellow Europeans are being recognized as legitimate speakers in the own (national) community can be measured more fruitfully by inverting the perspective. What matters is that actors from one’s own nationality are shown to take part in a cross-border debate with fellow Europeans. In the studies by Sifft et al. and Pfetsch the presence of actors from the own nationality is treated as a given; which it is not. The most striking difference between the EU and non-EU media in the two debates analyzed is in fact that while the stage is populated with actors from various EU member states, the Swiss and US political communities are (almost) absent in the coverage in respectively the NZZ, and the US newspapers. In the NZZ, the only Swiss “politician” quoted is the Swiss ambassador to the EU. The only two politicians quoted in the US newspapers are the former right-wing independent presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, who appeared once in the the NYT, and the Hillary Clinton campaign team for the Senate in two articles from the Washington Post (WP). The absence of US politicians in the Haider debate in the WP and NYT is even more conspicuous than the absence of Swiss politicians in the NZZ. President Clinton and State Secretary Albright played according to the EU newspapers an active role in the debate on the Haider affair.¹³ The White House has imposed diplomatic sanctions on the ÖVP/FPÖ government. The Austrian Der Standard even talks about a “Clinton doctrine”. The fact that respectively the Swiss and the US politicians may have an opinion on the Eastern enlargement or the Haider case, but that only actors from EU member states are quoted in the Swiss and US media is a sign that from their perspective these debates are a foreign affair. Since these debates are apparently of no domestic concern for the Swiss and US political community, there is not any cross-border exchange in their media outlets with politicians from the EU member states.

In order to establish whether there is a mutual recognition of fellow Europeans as part of the community rather than “foreigners”, it is necessary to identify own nationals as well as other nationals. A consistent presence of own nationals is a sign that this is a domestic debate, not something happening “out there”. A consistent presence of other nationals is a sign that they are treated as fellow citizens whose opinion matters. From this perspective, it does not matter that in the German FAZ, the German voice is rather loud,

12 Note, however, the limitations of this study (only one newspaper per country) which we commented on above.

13 A total of 23 articles from 8 newspapers in the sample contain statements by President Clinton or State Secretary Albright.

and in the Dutch NRC, fellow Europeans speak out more on enlargement than the Dutch politicians.¹⁴ In both the German FAZ and the Dutch NRC, there is a wider European community of legitimate speakers. In that case, the findings from Sifft et al., Pfetsch and our own study point into the same direction. In debates on European political issues, politicians from the own member state and other member states are treated as legitimate speakers in the EU media.

What about Europe and the EU as issues of common concern in a transnational community, the third component of our indicator above? Very few attempts have been made to study identity in relation to the question of an emerging EU public sphere. Sifft et al. (2007), for example, found that the use of “we” referred to the author’s own nation-state in 40% of the cases and that “Europe” came in as a distant second object of identification. As a result, the study concluded that there is not much Europeanization of identities to be found in newspaper editorials. Our own research on the Eastern enlargement case confirms that references to a national “we” are by far more frequent than a European or EU “we”. It remains unclear what this means, however. At least, one should distinguish between the usage of “we” in a matter-of-factly way and a usage with an explicit identity connotation, as in “we Germans should...” or “we as Europeans must...”.

In comparison, the approach adopted by Oberhuber et al. (2005) within the tradition of critical discourse analysis seems more promising. They conducted a qualitative analysis of newspaper reporting on the 2003 Intergovernmental Conference that failed to adopt the “Constitutional Treaty”. The EU-Europe is represented in this debate as a space where conflicting interests meet and power struggles dominate. Various metaphors for struggle and conflict are used. The member states are also called upon to reach viable settlement for their disputes and to put the common interest over their national egoism. However, the conclusion by Oberhuber et al. that “within each country a different EU seems to be represented and different issues are debated” (Oberhuber et al. 2005:263) is not consistent with the data that they themselves present. One problem is methodological. The results from the newspaper analysis are first aggregated by country and only subsequently compared. This approach tends to neutralize differences within countries and reinforces those between countries. Nevertheless, the data presented by Oberhuber et al. actually do show an emerging community of communication: While there is little agreement among the newspapers what the problem of the Constitution is and who was to blame for the summit’s failure, no distinct national perspective is discernible. In fact, many newspapers from different countries contrast the vision of a Europe that solves common problems with the reality of the EU of power struggles among member states. This, however, constitutes a significant indicator for an emerging polity in which a normative ideal is used to criticize the shortcomings of reality.

Our own research on media reporting concerning the Haider case and EU’s Eastern enlargement strongly indicates that communities of communication with strong identity components emerged during the public debates in both instances. Regarding the enlargement case, this is not too surprising, since the integration of new members provides the occasion to reflect on the EU’s identity and to redefine it. The controversy with regard to the European sanctions against Austria is more crucial in this regard. In this particular instance, several identity constructions would have been discursively possible. For example,

14 The FAZ contains 144 statements on the Eastern enlargement by German politicians in a national role, as against 36 statements from politicians representing the EU institutions and 50 statements from politicians from other member states in their national role. The picture in the NRC is exactly the opposite, namely: 30 statements by Dutch politicians to 25 by EU institutions and 51 by fellow Europeans.

one could have constructed the whole incident as “Europe against Austria”. In this hypothetical case, we should expect Austria being fiercely criticized in the non-Austrian press, and an Austrian perspective, such as Austria as the victim of European arrogance, in the Austrian press.¹⁵ Another construction was also discursively available: An attack of two big member states – Germany and France – against a small one, Austria.¹⁶ The situation in 1999/2000 contained enough elements for both types of discursive frames. The EU sanctions and the criticism could just as well have been perceived as an attack on the Austrian “self”, which could have led to identifications with the Austrian nation against the EU-14 as “the other”.

None of these possibilities carried the day in the fifteen newspapers from five countries (incl. Austria) that we analyzed. On the contrary, Austria is explicitly identified as clearly belonging to the European political community. Both Austrians and fellow EU citizens use this type of framing.¹⁷ For example, “Europe with Austria, yes. Europe with Haider no.” were slogans in favor of the sanctions during a demonstration in Brussels (Le Soir, 21 February 2000) and in Vienna, many Viennese have simply chosen to put up the flag of the European Community during the demonstrations against the ÖVP/FPÖ government (La Repubblica, 20 February 2000). Or, to quote from a commentary in the FAZ which has been critical to the sanctions:

“Austria remains morally the winner in the battle with its European partners. While these partners abandoned any kind of solidarity, imposed sanctions (...) – and thereby damaged those values and principles that they claim to want to protect, the humiliated Austria remains faithful to the Union, even up to the point that it denies itself.” (FAZ, 14 March 2000).

In the Haider debate, we found no signs that Europe was depicted as the out-group against which the Austrian identity is defined, nor that Austria was the out-group of a European identity. The “bad one” against which the EU Europe was constructed was Haider, the personification of Nazism and xenophobia in this debate.¹⁸ In contrast, the EU was referred to as a community based on values and principles, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This image of Europe as a moral community was shared by newspapers that favored as well as by newspapers that opposed the EU sanctions, as can be seen in the example above by the FAZ.

In sum, the debate about Haider was a debate about what constituted the EU as a political community. Irrespective of one’s view of the so-called sanctions, the EU was constructed as the new, modern, and united Europe based on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The modern EU’s “other” was Europe’s own past of World War II, the Holocaust, Nazism and xenophobia, represented today by Jörg Haider and his party. In other words, a particular European identity was constructed in the course of the debate itself that depicted core values of the European in-group against which the “other”, the out-group was positioned. Those who supported the EU sanctions, used this identity construction to expel Haider and his followers discursively from the community as “ghosts from the past”. Those who argued against

15 In fact, such constructions of the European reaction against the Austrian government were confined to the letters to the editor in *Die Presse* and *Der Standard*.

16 This discursive frame was used later in various attempts to critically compare the ‘Haider sanctions’ with the European non-reaction when Silvio Berlusconi assumed power in Italy, one of the Big Four in the EU.

17 The frame ‘Austria is European’ is used in 163 newspaper articles. Usually, the actors quoted are Austrians themselves thereby expressing the desire to be fully accepted in the EU. *ard*.

18 An extremely powerful cartoon by Plantu was published by *Le Monde*. It depicted a puzzled looking person holding the European flag in which one of the twelve stars had been replaced by a swastika. Below, Haider was portrayed as the piper who is followed by rats.

the sanctions, did not deny the vision of a Europe of moral and legal standards, but focused particularly on the legal issue to suggest that sanctions were an inappropriate answer to Haider. Interestingly enough, this identity construction of the EU as a legal community also featured very saliently in a European-wide debate about a completely different issue, namely the question of participation in the US-led intervention in Iraq in 2002/2003. An analysis of British, German, and U.S. newspapers demonstrated that the emphasis on (international) law distinguished European (British and German in this case) from U.S. media (Renfordt 2006, 2010).

In the enlargement case, the same mechanism of discursively constructing the European Union as the positive answer to Europe's own past can be recognized. However, in this case, Europe's negative past was not a single moment, but consisted of a series of narratives: the rivalry between the European great powers Germany, France, and the UK that led to several wars; the hegemonic Germany that tried to rule the continent and provoked two World Wars; Europe divided in two by the Iron Curtain; and, more recently, the civil wars and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. In conjunction with this complex depiction of Europe's past, the community that was constructed in the enlargement debate was not identified with democracy or the rule of law, as in the Haider debate, but more generally with peace, security, and prosperity and unity. For example,

“Enlarging Nato is, however, a poor second to enlarging the European Union. Nato extends a brittle security to new members; only the EU offers the prosperity to make that security self-sustaining and buttress it with the political support democracies need.” (The Guardian, 15 February 1997).

The European Union is connected with the values of peace, security, prosperity and unity in all the media sources published in EU member states. Even the Eurosceptic *The Times* criticizes EU politics while paying honor to the value of unifying Europe to overcome the old division into two. For example, “While all pay lip service to the imperative of ‘bringing the new democracies into the European family’, they are worried (...)” (*The Times*, 1 July 1997). Instead, the non-EU, Swiss *NZZ* expresses the same kind of criticism to EU politics as *The Times*, but only defines the EU as a manner of governance and a partition of competences.

Comparing the Haider and the enlargement cases, we can notice the effects of contestation on the discursive construction of collective identity. The Haider case was strongly politicized and extremely contested as a result of which identity-related issues assumed center-stage: “who are we as Europeans?”, “how do we treat each other?”, “where should we go?”. Those in favor of the “sanctions” answered the questions with “a Europe in which there is no place for xenophobes in government”. Those against the sanctions said “a Europe in which the member states can still democratically form their own governments”. In contrast, identity-related themes played a much lesser role in the public debates concerning enlargement. If there was contestation, it was mainly about money and the financial implications of Eastern enlargement (as a result, “Bill” popped up in the regression analysis as the main framing dimension in EU media sources). During the debates about Eastern enlargement, the identity of the European polity was not contested; it was rather taken for granted. While the Haider debate represented a case of “community in the making”, the enlargement debate was about “a community in being”. In sharp contrast, the contemporary discussions about Turkish entry into the EU resemble the Haider case again insofar as they focus on identity-related issues, for example., the place of religion in the European community.

4. Conclusions: An Emerging Public Sphere in the European Union

We argued in this paper that we can meaningfully speak of a European public sphere emerging out of Europeanized national public spheres

I. If and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time with the same criteria of relevance.

II. If and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which a) participants not only observe each other across national spaces, but also b) contribute regularly to cross-border debates as legitimate speakers thereby recognizing that c) “Europe” constitutes a question of common concern.

We also suggested that a community of communication with some degree of collective identification of the speakers and their audiences with each other and across borders cannot be taken as a given, but emerges through discursive practices. In other words, there is no European public sphere “out there waiting”, but it is constituted and re-constituted through the discursive connections and debates across borders.

If we use these criteria to interpret the empirical state of the art on a public sphere in the European Union, the conclusion seems to be clear: At a minimum, we can observe the emergence of Europeanized national public spheres, at least when European issues are being discussed. They might not always be as obvious as in the Haider or in the Eastern enlargement cases. They might also be fragile, fragmented, sometimes even segmented, and constrained to particular sets of issues. But it is remarkable that similar reference points and meaning structures emerge, when people debate European issues, irrespective of one’s particular viewpoint in the issue at question. There is little evidence that media reporting about Europe and the European Union varies dramatically from one member state to the other, as far as the frames of interpretation are concerned. Thus, we are able to understand each other and to debate across borders when the issues at stake concern us as Europeans.

Whether and under what circumstances these Europeanized public spheres connect to form veritable transnational communities of communication (the third criterion) is harder to evaluate and the empirical jury is still out. The cases of the Haider debate, of Eastern enlargement, of the Iraq war, and of the controversies surrounding the Constitutional Treaty might all be exceptions to the rule and one should be careful not to generalize too quickly. However, these cases do confirm our suggestion that communities of communication based on collective European identities are being established through discursive practices. The more we debate across borders about the issues that concern us by virtue of our being EU citizens, the more we actually start identifying with each other.

The policy conclusions from this article appear to be equally apparent. They run counter to what appears to be the current mood among policy-makers and many analysts across Europe. For example, one of the policy conclusions from the Haider debate was that the EU should never again mingle in the internal political affairs of its member states. Hence the collective European silence about Silvio Berlusconi who arguably did more to violate European values during his tenure than Jörg Haider was ever able to! Moreover, the failure of the Constitutional Treaty in the French and Dutch referendums has apparently convinced political elites across Europe in a similar fashion that controversial debates about the European Union and EU policies will endanger and slow down the European integration process. Hence the collective silence about the “future of Europe” since the summer of 2005!

This collective silencing of debates is not only questionable from a normative point of view in a democratic polity that requires that elites continuously justify their actions in front of a critical public. If our argument is correct that collective identities are shaped and created through public arguing, then silencing is actually detrimental for the European cause. Contestation and politicization of European affairs serve a European purpose: They not only create a community of communication, but also have a positive effect on issue salience and the significance of European affairs in national polities. Our data on frames of reference and shared meaning structures strongly suggest that contestation and politicization of European affairs will not drive Europeans further apart, but will actually pull them together in a common public sphere.

Literature

- Abromeit, Heidrun* 2003: Möglichkeiten und Ausgestaltung einer europäischen Demokratie, in: A. Klein, A./ Koopmans, R/ Trenz, H-J./ Klein, L./ Lahusen, C./ Rucht, D. (Eds.): Bürgerschaft, Öffentlichkeit und Demokratie in Europa, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Abromeit, Heidrun/Schmidt, Thomas* 1998: Grenzprobleme der Demokratie: konzeptionelle Überlegungen, in: B. Kohler Koch (ed.): Regieren in entgrenzten Räumen, Politische Vierteljahresschrift 39 Sonderheft 29, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 293-320.
- Calhoun, Craig (ed.)* 1992: Habermas and the Public Sphere, Cambridge (Ma): MIT Press.
- Calhoun, Craig* 2002: Imagining Solidarity: Cosmopolitanism, Constitutional Patriotism, and the Public Sphere, in: Public culture 14/1,147-171.
- Dereje, Cornelia,/Kantner, Cathleen/ Trenz, Hans-Jörg* 2003: The quality press and European integration. European public communication between consonances and dissonances, in: Paper presented at the conference 'Europeanisation of public spheres?' Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung Berlin, Berlin, June 2003.
- Díez Medrano, Juan* 2003: Framing Europe: Attitudes toward European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Eder, Klaus/ Kantner, Cathleen* 2000: Transnationale Resonanzstrukturen in Europa. Eine Kritik der Rede vom Öffentlichkeitsdefizit, in: M. Bach (ed.): Transnationale Integrationsprozesse in Europa, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel N./Giesen, Bernhard* 1995: The Construction of Collective Identity, in: European Journal of Sociology 36, 72-102.
- Erbe, Jessica* 2005: 'What do the papers say?' How Press Reviews link National Media Arenas in Europe, in: The Public 12:2, 75-92.
- Follesdal, Andreas/ Hix, Simon* 2006: Why There Is a 'Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 44:3, 533-562.
- Gerhards, Jürgen* 1993: Westeuropäische Integration und die Schwierigkeiten der Entstehung einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit, in: Zeitschrift für Soziologie 22:2, 96-110.
- Grimm, Dieter* 1995: Does Europe need a constitution?, in: European Law Journal 1:3, 282-302
- Habermas, Jürgen* 1987/1981: The theory of communicative action. Vol. 2. Lifeworld and system: a critique of functionalist reason, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen* 1989: The structural transformation of the public sphere. An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen* 1995: Comment on the paper by Dieter Grimm: 'Does Europe need a constitution?', in: European Law Journal 1:3, 303-307.
- Heinderyckx, François* 1998: L'Europe des medias, Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.
- Hodess, Robin* 1998: News coverage of European politics: A comparison of change in Britain and Germany, in: M. Jopp/ Maurer, A./ Schneider, H. (Eds.): Europapolitische Grundverständnisse im Wandel. Analysen und Konsequenzen für die politische Bildung, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag.
- Kantner, Cathleen* 2004: Kein modernes Babel. Kommunikative Voraussetzungen europäische Öffentlichkeit., Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kantner, Cathleen/ Rendfordt, Swantje* 2007: Public Debates on Humanitarian and Military Interventions in Europe and the US (1990-2005), in: Paper presented at the ISA Annual Convention March 2007, Chicago.
- Kevin, Deidre* 2001: Coverage of the European parliament elections of 1999: National public spheres and debates, in: Javnost. The public 8:1, 21-38.
- Koopmans, Ruud/Erbe, Jessica* 2004: Towards a European public sphere? Vertical and horizontal dimensions of Europeanised political communication, in: Innovation 17:2.

- Koopmans, Ruud/ Zimmermann, Ann* 2003: Internet: A new potential for european politicalcommunicatio, in: Paper presented at the International Conference ‚Europeanisation ofPublic Spheres? Political Mobilisation, Public Communication, and the EuropeanUnion‘, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Berlin, 20-22 June 2003.
- Kutter, Amelie forthcoming*: Petitioner or Partner? Constructions of European Integration in Polish Print Media Debates on the EU Constitutional Treaty, in: Cortese, G./ Fairclough, N. (Eds.): Discourse and Social Change, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Liebert, U. (ed)* 2007: Europe in Contention: Debating the Constitutional Treaty, Special issue of Perspectives on European Politics and Society 8(3). London: Routledge.
- Maurer, Andreas* 2003: Mass Media Publicized Discourses on the Post-Nice Process, in: IWE Working Paper Series, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Forschungsstelle für institutionellen Wandel und europäischen Integration, Nr. 40, June 2003.
- Merrill, John/ Carter Bryan/ Alisky, Marvin* 1970: The foreign press. A survey of the world’s journalism, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Merrill, John C./ Fisher, H.A.* 1980: The world’s great dailies: profiles of fifty newspapers, New York: Hastings House.
- Merrill, John C.* 1983: Global journalism: a survey of the world’s mass media. New York: Longman.
- Meyer, Christoph* 2002: Europäische Öffentlichkeit als Kontrollsphäre: Die Europäische Kommission, die Medien und politische Verantwortung, Berlin: Vistas.
- Meyer, Christoph* 2007: The Constitutional Treaty Debates as Revelatory Mechanisms: Insights for Public Sphere Research and Re-Launch Attempts, in Recon online Working Paper 06, Oslo, University of Oslo, July 2007.
- Meyer, Jan-Henrik* 2004: Gibt es eine Europäische Öffentlichkeit? Neuere empirische Studien zu Demokratiedefizit, Legitimation und Kontrolle in Europa, in: Berliner Journal für Soziologie 14:1.
- Moravcsik, Andrew* 2002: In Defence of the ‘Democratic Deficit’: Assessing the Legitimacy in the European Union, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 40:4, 603-624.
- Oberhuber, Florian/ Bärenreuter, Christoph/ Krzyzanowski, Michal/ Schönbauer, Heinz/ Wodak, Ruth* 2005: Debating the European Constitution. On Representations of Europe/the EU in the Press, in: Journal of Language and Politics 4:2, 227-271.
- Offe, Claus* 2003: Is there, or can there be, a ‚European society‘?, in: Katenhusen, I./ Lamping, W. (Eds.): Demokratien in Europa. Der Einfluss der europäischen Integration auf Institutionenwandel und neue Konturen des demokratischen Verfassungsstaates, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Østergaard, B.S. (ed.)* 1992: The media in Western Europe. The Euromedia handbook, London: Sage Publications.
- Østergaard, B.S. (ed.)* 1997: The media in Western Europe. The Euromedia handbook. London: Sage Publications.
- Pfetsch, Barbara* 2004. The Voice of the Media in the European Public Sphere: Comparative Analysis of Newspaper Editorials, in: Integrated Report WP3, Europub.com.
- Pfetsch, Barbara/Adam, Silke/ Berkel, Barbara* 2006: The Voice of the National Press on European Integration. A Comparative Analysis of Agenda Setting and Framing in Western Europe, Stuttgart.
- Renfordt, Swantje* 2006: Der Streit über die Irak-Resolution 1441 als ein gemeinsamer europäischer Rechtsdiskurs, in: Berliner Debatte Initial 17:6, 64-75.
- Renfordt, Swantje* 2010: How international law standards pervade discourse on the use of armed force. Insights into European and US newspaper debates between 1990 and 2005, in: KFG Working Paper No. 13, May 2010.
- Risse, Thomas* 2000: ‚Let’s argue!‘ Communicative Action in International Relations, in: International Organization 54:1, 1-39.

- Risse, Thomas* 2003: An emerging European public sphere? Theoretical clarifications and empirical indicators, in: Paper presented at the EUSA conference, Nashville (TN), March 2003.
- Risse, Thomas* 2004: Global Governance and Communicative Action, in: *Government and Opposition* 39:2, 288-313.
- Schlesinger, Philip* 1993: Wishful thinking: Cultural politics, media, and collective identities in Europe, in: *Journal of Communication* 43:2, 6-17.
- Schlesinger, Philip* 1995: Europeanisation and the media: National identity and the public sphere, in: *Arena Working paper No. 7*, February 1995.
- Semetko, Holli/ De Vreese/ Claes/ Peter, Jochen* 2000: Europeanised Politics – Europeanised Media? European Integration and Political Communication, in: *West European Politics* 23:4, 121-142.
- Sifft, Stefanie/ Brüggemann, Michael/ Kleinen-von Königslow/Katharina/ Peters (+), Bernhard/ Wimmel, Andreas* 2007: Segmented Europeanization: Exploring the Legitimacy of the European Union from a Public Discourse Perspective, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45:1, 127-155.
- Snow, D. A./ Benford, R.D.* 1992: Master frames and cycles of protest, in: *Morris, A.D./Clurgh Mueller, C.M. (Eds.): Frontiers in social movement research*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- Statham, P.* 2007: Political Communication, European Integration, and the Transformation of National Public Spheres. A Comparison of Britain and France, in: *Fossum, J.E./ Schlesinger, P. (Eds.): The European Union and the Public Sphere. A Communicative Space in the Making?*, London: Routledge, 110-134.
- Trenz, Hans-Jörg* 2002: Zur Konstitution politischer Öffentlichkeit in der Europäischen Union. Zivilgesellschaftliche Subpolitik oder schaupolitische Inszenierung?, Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Trenz, Hans-Jörg* 2004: Media Coverage and European Governance. Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers, in: *European Journal of Communication* 19:3.
- Trenz, Hans-Jörg* 2006: Europa in den Medien. Die europäische Integration im Spiegel nationaler Öffentlichkeit, Frankfurt/M./ New York: Campus.
- Trenz, Hans-Jörg/Münzing Christoph* 2003: 'Quo vadis Europe?' Quality newspapers struggling for European unity, in: Paper presented at 'Europeanisation of public spheres? Political mobilisation, public communication, and the European Union', Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung Berlin, Berlin, June 2003.
- Van de Steeg, Marianne* 2005: The public sphere in the European Union. A media analysis of public discourse on EU enlargement and on the Haider affair, Phd thesis defended January 2005 at the European University Institute.
- Van de Steeg, Marianne* 2006: 'Does a public sphere exist in the European Union? An analysis of the content of the debate on the Haider case', in: *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 45, nr. 4, June 2006: 609-634
- Van de Steeg, Marianne* 2010: Theoretical reflections on the public sphere in the European Union: A network of communication or a political community?, in: *Bee, Cristiano/ Bozzini, Emanuela (Eds.): Mapping European Public Sphere: Institutions, Media and Civil Society*, Ashgate Publishing, January 2010.
- Van de Steeg, Marianne/ Rauer, Valentin/ Rivet, Sylvain/ Risse, Thomas* 2003: The EU as a political community. A media analysis of the 'Haider-debate' in the European Union, in: paper presented at the EUSA Bi-annual international conference, Nashville TN: March 2003.
- Von Kielmansegg, Graf Peter* 1994: Läßt sich die Europäische Gemeinschaft demokratisch verfassen?, in: *Europäische Rundschau* 22:2, 23-34.
- Von Kielmansegg, Graf Peter* 1996: Integration und Demokratie, in: *Jachtenfuchs, M./ Kohler Koch, B. (Eds.): Europäische Integration*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Zürn, Michael* 1998: Regieren jenseits des Nationalstaates. Globalisierung und Denationalisierung als Chance, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.

Appendix

The media sources analyzed for the Haider case¹⁹

		Austria	Belgium	France	Germany	Italy	USA
quality, elite	left	<i>Standard</i> 1 year: 412	<i>Soir</i> 1 year: 78	<i>Monde</i> 1 year: 132	<i>SZ</i> 1 year: 232	<i>Repubblica</i> 1 year: 237	
	right	<i>Presse</i> 1 year: 185	<i>Standaard</i> 1 year: 96	<i>Figaro</i> 1 year: 56	<i>FAZ</i> 1 year: 196	<i>Corriere</i> 1 year: 181	
	other						<i>Washington Post</i> 1 year: 29 NYT 1 year: 56
popular	left			<i>Parisien</i> 1 year: 24			
	right					<i>Nazione</i> 1 year: 131	
	other	<i>Neue Krone- zeitung – NKZ</i> 1 year: 115					

The media sources analyzed for the enlargement case²⁰

		Germany	The Netherlands	Spain	UK	Switzerland
daily	left	<i>SZ</i> 91-98: 180	<i>Volkskrant</i> 94-98: 82	<i>Pais</i> 96-98: 41	<i>Guardian</i> 89-98: 95	
	right	<i>FAZ</i> 93-98: 322	<i>NRC</i> 91-98: 145	<i>Mundo</i> 94-96: 27	<i>Times</i> 89-98: 94	<i>NZZ</i> 93-98: 121
weekly	left	<i>Spiegel</i> 89-98: 45		<i>Cambio16</i> 89-98: 42	<i>New States- man</i> 89-98: 42	
	right	<i>Elsevier</i> 89-98: 86				

19 Sources: for the quality newspapers published in Europe, see Heinderyckx (1998); for the media systems in the various EU member states, see Østergaard (1992, 1997).

20 Sources: for the quality newspapers published in the EU see Heinderyckx (1998); for the media systems in the various EU member states, see Østergaard (1992, 1997); for the US newspapers, see Merrill et al. (1970); Merrill & Fisher (1980), and Merrill (1983).

The regression model for the four indices of the Haider debate in 15 EU and US newspapers in 1999 - 2000.

Variables	Waving the European flag			Holding up the law			Haider is a Nazi			Haider, the alleged Nazi#				
	Model 1	Mod. 2	Mod. 3	Model 4	Mod. 5	Mod. 6	Mod. 7	Mod. 8	Mod. 9	Mod. 10	Mod. 11	Mod. 12	Mod. 13	Mod. 14
Country ^a														
<i>US</i>														
<i>Belgium</i>	.09**	.08**	.21**											
<i>France</i>	.10**	.09**	.12**											
<i>Germany</i>														
<i>Italy</i>														
Background														
Left ^b	.05*		(-.03)											
Right ^c														
Popular ^d														
Newspaper ^e														
<i>WP</i>														
<i>Standard</i>														
<i>NKZ</i>														
<i>Standaard</i>														
<i>Figaro</i>														
<i>Corriere</i>														
<i>Nazione</i>														
<i>Repubblica</i>														
adj. R2	.015	.024	.041	.009	.013	.040	.059	.008	.010	.017	.017	.021	.021	.028

For abbreviations of the newspapers see Annex A. (N=2160)

a Reference: Austria. b Reference: right wing and other. c Reference: left wing and other. d Reference: quality press. e Reference: Die Presse. Only significant newspapers.

Repeating the regression analysis using SPSS 11.5, the NYT instead of the WP is introduced into the model: US 20**, NYT - 09*.

*p < .05. **p < .01. () p > .05.

The regression models for the two indices of the enlargement debate, 1989-1998. First, for the whole file (13 media sources), then, for only the dailies (9 newspapers).

Variables	Bill. Whole file			Focus. Whole file			Bill. Only dailies			Focus. Only dailies					
	Model 1	Mod. 2	Mod. 3	Mod. 4	Mod. 5	Mod. 6	Mod. 7	Mod. 8	Mod. 9	Mod. 10	Mod. 11	Mod. 12	Mod. 13	Mod. 14	Mod. 15
Country ^a															
Switzerland/NZZ					.08**	.08**	.10**	.10**				.15**	.17**	.18**	.17**
Germany												.09**	.10**	.10**	.08**
Netherlands	.06*	(.01)	(.06)	.06*											
Spain	.08**	(.03)	(.02)	.11**	-.07*	-.10**	-.13**	.12**	.12**	.12**	.13**				
Background															
Format ^b		.25**	.26**	.16**	.20**	.18**									
Time period ^c															
91a													.08**	.08**	.08**
92b													.06*	.06*	.06*
97b			.17**	.16**				.16**	.16**	.16**					
98a			.11**	.11**				.08*	.08*	.08**					
Medium ^d															
Cambio16				-.08*											
Mundo							.08*								
Pais															
NRC										.09**					
Spiegel				.25**		.06*									-.07*
adj. R2	.007	.062	.095	.151	.006	.010	.046	.053	.015	.040	.047	.021	.026	.035	.038

a Reference: UK. b Reference: dailies. c Reference: 98b. d Reference: the Times.
Only significant time periods and newspapers. Ideology is not significant and thus is not included. *p < .05. **p < .01. () p > .05.

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe - Encouraging Academic Exchange and Intensive Research

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe (KFG) is a new funding programme launched by the German Research Foundation in 2008. It is a centrepiece of the KFG to provide a scientifically stimulating environment in which innovative research topics can be dealt with by discourse and debate within a small group of senior and junior researchers.

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe „The Transformative Power of Europe“ brings together research on European affairs in the Berlin-Brandenburg region and institutionalizes the cooperation with other universities and research institutions. It examines the role of the EU as promoter and recipient of ideas, analyzing the mechanisms and effects of internal and external diffusion processes in three research areas:

- Identity and the Public Sphere
- Compliance, Conditionality and Beyond
- Comparative Regionalism and Europe’s External Relations

KFG The
Transformative
Power of Europe

