

Communicating Europe online

An exploratory investigation of the Europeanization of political
communication on the Web

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communication on the Web

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Introduction

Renée Van Os

Introduction

Renée Van Os

The PhD project this dissertation reports on started in June 2003. It follows upon a study investigating the role of the Internet in the local democratic process of the Dutch city of Hoogeveen (Jankowski & Van Os, 2004; Van Os & Jankowski, 2004). At that time, the Nijmegen Department of Communication Science became involved in an international collaborative project concerned with the role of the Internet during election campaigns (see Kluver, Jankowski, Foot & Schneider, 2007). A research team was formed, assigned with the execution of fieldwork for the Dutch and French case in this large scale project including 22 countries around the world.

Initially, this PhD project was designed to be part of this Internet & Elections Project. The initial plan was to complement the content analysis ('feature analysis') developed by the coordinators of the project with interviews with website users and producers in five EU member states, using an interview guide developed especially for this purpose. However, during the year 2004 the focus of the project shifted towards other manners of investigating the relationship between Internet and political participation. It was decided to only finish the Dutch case (Hagemann, Van Os, Voerman and Jankowski, 2006; Van Os, Hagemann, Voerman and Jankowski, 2007), and develop a series of new research projects for this dissertation. Whereas the Internet & Elections Project merely focused on *formal/structural* aspects of Internet-based communication, the studies composing this dissertation focus on the *content* of Internet-based communication.

This introductory chapter has four sections. First, in the following section the key notion of the dissertation is presented. Second, in section 2 the central concepts of the dissertation are outlined. Third, in section 3 the study aim, study design and overall research question are addressed. The body of the dissertation (Chapters 3 to 6) consists of four separate but sequential research projects, each touching on the central theme "Communicating Europe online". In section 4 these research projects are briefly discussed.

1. Background

The starting point of this dissertation is the possibility of Internet-based communication to contribute to reducing the *crisis of democracy* many Western nations have been faced with during the last two decades. In this situation, citizens have become increasingly disenchanted with the traditional institutions of representative government, detached from political parties, and disillusioned with older forms of civic engagement and participation (Norris, 2001: 96). Important indicators of this disenchantment are citizens' decreased membership of political parties, and low voter turnout during elections in the last decades, both considered core elements of a well-functioning political system (Depla, 1995; Norris, 2001). Moreover, as mentioned by for example Putnam, this disenchantment has led to a reduction of social capital of societies, debilitating the ability of communities to work together to solve common problems (Putnam, 2000). These kind of developments have taken place within all levels of society: at the local, national and European level; citizens' political participation has lowered within all these levels in the last two decades.

Many scholars have recognized the undesirable situation Western democracies are faced with and have proposed tools for revitalizing the democratic quality in nations and increasing citizen engagement, one of these being digital technologies such as the Internet (e.g., Coleman & Gotze,

2000; Mitra & Cohen, 1999). It is through Internet-based communication that the distance between citizens and their political representatives can be reduced, and that citizens can be mobilized to participate in political processes. Opportunities of digital technologies that are stressed by diverse scholars include (1) increased possibilities for citizens to obtain information in a direct and easy manner, (2) increased possibilities for citizen deliberation (both citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-authorities communication) and (3) increased possibilities for direct decision making (Tsagariousianou, 1999). In this context, scholars speak about ‘electronic democracy’, conceptualized by Hacker and Van Dijk as “a collection of attempts to practice democracy with the limits of time, space and other physical conditions, using ICT or CMC instead, as an addition, not a replacement for traditional ‘analogue’ practices” (Hacker & Van Dijk, 2000: 1-2). Emphasis is placed on the potential of the Internet to incorporate *public spheres*, communicative spaces in which public legitimacy can be obtained through political communication (Habermas, 2006) and in which processes of community building can take place (Risse, 2003).

The object of study concerns political communication about Europe as present on the Internet, and more specifically on websites produced by a variety of political actors in multiple EU member states. These websites together serve as a platform for a (shared) public sphere. The reason for this particular choice lies in the long standing, tainted reputation of the European Union as being in a crisis situation of ‘democratic deficit’ (e.g., Beetham & Lord, 1998; Blondell, Sinnott, & Svensson, 1997; Burgess, 2002).

2. Central concepts

2.1 The European public sphere

It is in the last two decades that the concept of public sphere, initially elaborated by Habermas in *The structural transformations of the public sphere* (Habermas, 1989), has begun to play a central role in academic discussions about European integration. Various models regarding the possibility of a public sphere existing at the European level have been presented by academic scholars and several of these are outlined in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. My interpretation of what constitutes the European public sphere places emphasis on political actors, including citizens, *communicating about Europe*, either directly (face-to-face) or indirectly through media or Internet-based representations – acknowledging that this type of communication can, in the present situation, mainly be found within national media systems, produced by mainly national political actors. It is through communication about Europe, in any format, that the lack of legitimacy and the lack of citizen involvement in European political affairs can be reduced or even overcome (e.g., Koopmans et al., 2004; Meyer, 1999; Ward, 2001). This broad interpretation of what constitutes the European public sphere provides ample space for diverse conceptualizations – as will be discussed in the next sub-section.

2.2 Conceptualizing the European public sphere

In the literature, three approaches are distinguished that measure the existence of a European public sphere: (1) measuring *the extent to which* political actors in various (nationally based) mediated environments communicate about Europe; (2) measuring whether political actors (including the mass media) in various EU member states communicate about Europe *in a similar manner*; and (3) measuring the *structure/connectivity* of communication between political actors across EU member states. In the various chapters constituting this dissertation, it is argued that these approaches measure Europeanization of political communication, as indicator of the existence of a European public sphere,

or alternatively, of the Europeanization of national public spheres.¹ In this context, Europeanization should be considered an ongoing process of social construction at the European level. In this view scholars as Delanty and Rumford are followed, whose vision on European integration highlights the creative self-construction of social reality and the transformative capacity of societies, and who put less emphasis on institutional processes or policy making when speaking about European integration (Delanty & Rumford, 2005: 17-18).

Chapter 2 provides an extensive overview of empirical studies conducted within all three approaches mentioned above. Most of these studies have been performed by investigating communication about Europe and related issues in newspapers and, in some cases, television news. The four research projects in this dissertation all focus on the Internet, especially the World Wide Web. In Chapter 6, however, comparisons are drawn with communication about Europe in newspapers. The projects can either be placed in the first approach (Chapter 3), or in the second approach (Chapter 4, 5, 6).

Academic scholars have not been very consistent in defining (aspects of) the approach they have selected as conceptualization for their study on Europeanization of political communication/ the existence of a European public sphere, especially as concerns the second approach measuring the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe. Here, terminology shifts from 'perspective' (Gerhards, 2000), to 'interpretative frames', 'interpretative context' or 'framing' (Trenz, 2004; Semetko, De Vreese & Peter, 2000), 'image' or 'portrayal' (Gavin, 2000), 'discourse' or 'discursive practices' (Van de Steeg, 2002), 'interpretative schemes' or 'schemata' (Risse, 2003, Van de Steeg et al., 2003), 'patterns of interpretation', 'interpretations' or 'interpretative patterns' (Eder, Kantner & Trenz, 2002; Trenz, 2004), 'thematic field' (Trenz 2004) 'public debates' (Eder & Kantner, 2000) and 'structure of meaning' or 'horizon of reference' (Risse, 2003). As concerns the first and third approach, only limited diversity in terminology could be observed.

Part of this diversity in terminology is reflected in the various chapters of this dissertation – being published one after the other, and all in the past. This may be unfortunate, but on the other hand the succeeding chapters together show the process of conceptualization of the European public sphere as mentioned in the literature. As concerns the first approach, Chapter 3 addresses about the 'visibility of communication' about Europe on the Internet – actually counting how often Europe/ the EU, European institutions, events and affairs are mentioned on the websites included in the study. Occasionally other chapters speak about 'the salience of European issues' when referring to research performed within the first approach: slightly different terminology for the same approach measuring *the extent to which* political actors communicate about Europe.

The reader will observe more diversity in terminology when in the next chapters *the manner in which* political actors communicate about Europe is discussed. Chapter 2 is concerned with 'interpretations' and 'interpretative schemes' in which political actors address European issues – terminology also briefly used in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe is specified in terms of three 'interpretative frames/patterns' *interests, identity* and *values* – yet in Chapter 5 these three are referred to as 'issue domains/contexts'. At that point in the project, I began to realize that the typology proposed by Eder, Kanter and Trenz (2000, 2002) could better be seen as a tool for identifying and categorizing issues in communication about Europe, instead of a conceptualization of the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe. In Chapter 5, besides measuring the context (issue domains) in which political actors communicate about Europe, two other *manners* – referred to as 'presentations' – are investigated: the focus in which these issue

¹ Some scholars prefer to speak about Europeanization of national public spheres instead of the existence of a European public sphere, as will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

domains are addressed (European – national focus), and the attitude towards Europe a political actor expresses (positive – negative). As concerns Chapter 6, in Fall 2006 I became acquainted with the work of Baldwin van Gorp, a specialist in framing theory. The propositions he makes as concerns the reconstruction and investigation of frames in texts appeared to match the approach of measuring *the manner in which* very well. Therefore, following the propositions of Van Gorp (2005, 2007), Chapter 6 speaks about ‘framing’ again. To conclude, it should be clear that each term fits the approach measuring *the manner in which* at a sufficient level, as will also be discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 7.

2.3 The Internet as a relatively new communicative space

Since the rise and popularization of the Internet in the 1990s, scholars have been discussing the role the Internet could play in democratic and political processes. Early ‘cyber optimists’ like Rheingold (1993), who claimed that the Internet could fuel the process of democratization through opportunities for deliberation and direct decision-making, have been succeeded by ‘cyber pessimists’ like Margolis & Resnick (2000), who warned that the Internet would even widen the gap between the engaged and the apathetic. Scholars like Norris (2001; 2003), Foot and Schneider (2002; Schneider & Foot, 2002) and Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003) take a more ‘middle ground’ position, and suggest a balance between these two extremes, pointing out specific positive developments or aspects. For example, Foot and Schneider stress the importance of independent political websites developed by national and state advocacy groups, civic organizations and mainstream and alternative press (Foot & Schneider, 2002). Norris mentions the existence of websites produced by minor and fringe parties, enabling citizens to learn more about the range of electoral choices than was previously possible (Norris, 2001; 2003).

As concerns political communication about Europe, it should be stressed that during recent years (5-10 years) a broad range of websites have become available to citizens for information or communication about European political affairs. Together, these websites – created by politicians and political parties, lobbyists and advocates who represent the interests of a specific group, moral entrepreneurs and intellectuals trying to generate public attention for particular issues, and finally media actors – serve as platform for a (shared) public sphere, thereby offering insight in the variation of views on Europe existing in society. Furthermore, these websites contain unmediated communication about Europe, in contrast to communication in newspapers and television news, which makes them extremely relevant as an object of research. In a general sense, it can be said that journalists apply similar strategies in selecting and presenting European political affairs; in contrast, communication present on the World Wide Web is more representative for issues and opinions existing in society. As a result it will be more difficult, but also more valuable to find similarities in the extent to and manner in which diverse political actors communicate about Europe on their websites as opposed to communication in the traditional mass media.

3. Study aim, study design and overall research question

The main argument of this dissertation follows directly upon the statement made in the previous section. I believe that the existence of common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ being shared among diverse political actors from various EU member states – manifest through the extent and manner in which these actors communicate about Europe on their websites – can be considered an indicator of the existence of a European public sphere.

Therefore, against the background described above, the overall aim of the research projects reported on in this dissertation is to obtain more knowledge about the extent and nature of online communication about Europe and the contribution of this communication to the development of a

European public sphere. Considering the Internet, like other mass media, as a venue for public representation of a public sphere at the European level, the research projects all focus on political communication about Europe on websites produced by political actors in various EU member states. The overarching research question of the dissertation is as follows:

To what degree do common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ exist among political actors from a range of EU member states, manifested through the extent to and manner in which these actors communicate about Europe on their websites?

The main body of this dissertation consists of four research projects all investigating content present on websites in which actors communicate about Europe. Each project has its own focus and research design. The separate projects should be seen as sequential studies – that is to say of increasing complexity in terms of operationalization of theory, and of methodology used. The next section will describe in more detail the research design of each of the separate research projects.

4. Description of the research projects

Chapter 2, entitled *Exploring the online European public sphere: The Web and Europeanization of political communication in the European Union*, co-authored by N.W. Jankowski and F. Wester, elaborates on the notion of Europeanization of political communication and the related concept ‘European public sphere’. A number of empirical studies in this area, performed within a mass-mediated environment, are reviewed. Stressing the potential of the Internet to contribute to or enhance the European public sphere, the chapter concludes with the presentation of six research projects that focus on Europeanization of political communication on the Internet.

The study presented in **Chapter 3**, entitled *Political communication about Europe on the Internet during the 2004 EP election in nine EU member states*, co-authored by N.W. Jankowski and M. Vergeer, investigates the visibility of political communication about Europe on the Internet in nine EU member states: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The context of this study is the 2004 EP election campaign. Europeanization of political communication is measured by looking at the extent to which websites produced by various political actors (parties, candidates, governmental organizations, NGOs, press actors) contained communication about Europe. Four features were considered indicative for Europeanization of political communication: ‘EP election content on front page’, ‘European content on front page’, ‘EU/EP-related news in news section’, and ‘European content elsewhere on the site – within two links from front page’. The value of this study especially lies in its large-scale design: over 800 websites are investigated. This study gives us an impression of ‘what is out there’ in terms of the extent to which communication about Europe is present on the Internet.

Chapter 4, entitled *Framing Europe online: French political parties and the European election of 2004*, presents an exploratory study investigating similarities and differences in the manner in which French political parties addressed European issues on their websites. Again, the context of this study is the 2004 EP election campaign. This study focuses exclusively on French political parties, but yet tries to compare the eleven parties included in the study on the basis of their political orientation (left wing vs. right wing). The theoretical starting point for the study is the typology proposed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz: according to these scholars, European issues can be addressed in the context of the three ‘interpretative patterns’ *interests*, *identity* and *values* (2000, 2002; Trenz, 2004). In addition, this chapter examines whether a European or national focus could be observed in parties’ online communication about Europe. Some interesting preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this explorative study, which have served as main starting point for the study presented in Chapter 5.

The study presented in **Chapter 5**, entitled ***Presentations of Europe on political party websites during the 2004 EP election campaign***, co-authored by F. Wester and N.W. Jankowski, can be seen as directly succeeding the study presented in Chapter 4. Here, party websites from three EU member states are included in the study: France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands during the 2004 EP election campaign. The main goal is to identify whether common understandings exist cross-nationally among political parties as representatives of various political positions in society: whether cross-national similarities can be observed in these actors' online communication about Europe, mainly among parties upholding a similar political orientation, in a more systematic way than was done in the explorative study presented in Chapter 4. Two types of 'presentations of Europe' are investigated: whether parties employ a European or national focus (already carefully touched in the study presented in Chapter 4), and whether they express a positive or negative attitude towards Europe when communicating about Europe – in the context of the issue domains interests, identity and values. Cross-national use of similar 'presentations' as common understandings can be considered an important indicator of Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently, of the existence of a European public sphere.

The final study presented in **Chapter 6**, entitled ***Successful joint venture or out of control: Framing Europe on French and Dutch websites***, co-authored by B. Van Gorp and F. Wester, focuses on a broader range of political actors communicating about Europe on their websites: besides websites created by political parties, NGO websites are also investigated.² Furthermore, unlike the previous three studies, in this final study communication present on websites produced by political parties and NGOs is compared with communication about Europe in newspapers. The context of this study also differs from the previous ones: the 2005 referendum on the European Constitution as it played out in France and the Netherlands – the two countries included in the study. Three frames have been reconstructed through an in-depth analysis of a small, representative sample of texts, and subsequently examined for their presence in a larger set of texts collected during the 2005 referendum campaign on the European constitution in France and the Netherlands. Within each frame Europe is portrayed differently: as a *successful joint-venture*, as a *superstate*, or as *out of control*. Cross-national portrayal of Europe, embedded in the frames political actors produce across various EU member states would suggest, again, the existence of a European public sphere.

In **Chapter 7** the main conclusions of the separate research projects are reviewed. Overarching conclusions regarding the Europeanization of political communication are presented.

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² NGOs include: issue advocacy groups, social movement organizations, action groups, special interest groups (incl. labour unions) and religious organizations.

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Exploring the online European public sphere: The Web and Europeanization of political communication in the European Union

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Exploring the online European public sphere: The Web and Europeanization of political communication in the European Union

Renée Van Os, Nicholas W. Jankowski & Fred Wester

1. Introduction

This chapter commences with a sketch of the manner in which the notion of Europeanization of political communication and the related concept of ‘European public sphere’ have been formulated and investigated during the past decade. We elaborate on our interpretation of what constitutes a European public sphere, by placing emphasis on political actors, including citizens, *communicating about Europe*. We review a number of studies related to this interpretation, mainly performed within a mass-mediated environment.

The first part of the chapter considers the potential of the Web to contribute to or enhance a European public sphere. Particularly in the case of European issues, it is important for political actors to maintain websites as means of communication with supporters and the electorate at large in as much as these issues are generally less intensely covered by the mass media than national political issues. In this chapter, we argue that such online communication about Europe by political parties deserves scholarly attention. It is through their Websites that political actors – participants in the public sphere – can offer a particular perspective on European news, issues and events, suggesting whether and why issues concerning Europe are socially and politically relevant. Such utilization of the Web can be considered an indicator of Europeanization of political communication on the Web and, consequently, of an online European public sphere.

In the second part of the chapter, several research projects are presented that focus on the Europeanization of political communication on the Internet, specifically the World Wide Web, within three areas of research: visibility of communication, interpretative schemes in which European issues are addressed, and the online structure of communication about Europe as determined through hyperlink analysis. The research designs and outcomes of these studies are examined. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for a more overarching empirical investigation of the European public sphere.

2. Conceptualising the European public sphere

Against the background of the democratic deficit of the European Union, scholars recognise that the process of European integration must be accompanied by Europeanization of political communication in order to overcome the lack of legitimacy and popular involvement in the EU by European citizens (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003). The concept of public sphere, initially elaborated by Habermas in *The structural transformations of the public sphere* (1962/1989), has more recently begun to play a central role in discussions about European integration.³ Various models regarding Europeanization of political communication across the EU, and the possible development of a European public sphere have been presented in the last decade by a variety of scholars, and several of these are outlined in this section. In

³ This discussion is – at least partially – nourished by normative demands. Scholars argue about the *need* for the EU to have a public sphere, and the *need* for political actors to address or discuss European issues and events.

general, scholars seem to agree that the mass media serve as the main venue for public representation of a public sphere functioning at the European level. The actual development of a European public sphere, however, is lagging behind economic and political integration at the European level, as argued by, for example, Gerhards (2000).

Yet, scholars disagree about how to deal, both theoretically and empirically, with the notion of public sphere at the European level. Early scholars, dealing with the possibility of a public sphere functioning at the European level, such as Gerhards (1993), Grimm (1995) Graham (1992), Kielmansegg (1996) and Schlesinger (1996; 1999), retain the original Habermasian notion of the public sphere. This notion, generally speaking, involves “the space within which the affairs of the state could be subjected to public scrutiny” (Kunelius & Sparks, 2001: 11). These scholars are willing to consider the possibility of a European public sphere at the supra-national level only on the condition that Brussels becomes more of a political centre in which decisions are taken independently of national governments. They, to different degrees, place emphasis on the lack of political actors, such as political parties and interest groups, operating at the European level. They also refer to the lack of European-level mass media, to the diversity of languages across Europe, and to the absence of a collective European identity. Schlesinger, for example, considers the lack of a single European public problematic: “without the broad mass of European media consumers organized transnationally as common audiences or readerships, there is no basis for talking about a single European public for political communications” (Schlesinger, 1999: 276-277). These scholars prefer to speak of ‘Europeanization of national public spheres’, instead of the development of a ‘European public sphere’ when referring to Europeanization of political communication across the EU.

Other scholars have criticized this view as being excessively strict and based on an idealized notion of an essentially homogeneous national public sphere to be replicated at the European level (Eder, Kantner, & Trenz, 2000; Koopmans et al., 2004; Risse, 2002, 2003; Van de Steeg, 2002, 2004). In this regard, early scholars such as Schlesinger, Gerhards and Grimm “base their conceptualisation on unsubstantiated assumptions concerning the character of the public sphere and its relation to key concepts such as language, the media system and the state’s frontiers” (Van de Steeg, Rauer, Rivet, & Risse, 2003: 2). Instead of considering a pre-existing community that almost automatically translates into a public sphere, Risse and Van de Steeg propose considering public sphere as a discursive community, that emerges around debating a specific issue (Risse, 2002, 2003; Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Van de Steeg et al., 2003). As Risse argues: “A European public sphere does not fall from heaven, and does not pre-exist outside social and political discourse. 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 British, French, Germans or Dutch” (Risse, 2003: 2).

Although it is not our intention here to take a position in this debate about the (non-) existence of a European public sphere – this seems to be essentially a matter of definition – we do agree with Risse and colleagues on the centrality of communicative interaction about common European issues or events, either directly (face-to-face) or indirectly through media or Internet-based representations. Therefore, scholarly research should focus foremost on the extent to which, and the nature of which political actors (including citizens) are *communicating about Europe*.

3. Communicating about Europe: review of empirical studies

Few empirical studies measure aspects of the Europeanization of political communication. One study by Eder and Kantner does take on this challenge and the authors suggest a valuable point of departure (Eder & Kantner, 2000). They place emphasis on the ‘parallelisation’, or transnationalization, of

public debates across Europe. For them, the key indicator of a shared public debate and, at the same time, of a European public sphere, is whether similar European issues are being simultaneously addressed in different national media.⁴ Gerhards, extending the proposal made by Eder and Kantner, advocates a more normatively demanding stance towards what constitutes Europeanization of political communication (Gerhards, 2000). He argues that it is not only important that actors communicate about a European issue or event; they should also “evaluate it from a perspective that extends beyond one’s country and interest”. This position, formulated succinctly, emphasizes that Europeanization involves communication from a European *perspective* (Gerhards, 1993; 2000: 293). Related to these differences in interpretation, Risse and Van de Steeg, in a review of recent empirical studies, distinguish two approaches in measuring Europeanization of political communication: measuring (1) visibility of communication about Europe and (2) cross-national appearance of similar interpretive schemes in which Europe is addressed in the mass media (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003); Trezz distinguishes a third approach, namely via connectivity of communication across Europe (2004). These three approaches, which we call ‘visibility of communication’, ‘interpretative schemes’ and ‘connectivity of communication’ are discussed in turn in the next three sub-sections.

3.1 Visibility of communication

The first approach essentially *counts* how often Europe, European institutions and European affairs are mentioned in the mass media (Gerhards, 1993, 2000; Groothues, 2004; Hodess, 1997; Kevin, 2001; Trezz, 2004). Four studies are discussed here that measure visibility of communication about Europe. First, Gerhards (2000) investigates the news coverage about European issues within three German newspapers in the period 1951-1995, and compares the extent of European issue coverage with coverage of national and international issues. Overall, during the entire period, 60% of the news coverage dealt with national issues; 40% dealt with international issues (a news item can both with deal international and national issues); only 7% of the news coverage during the entire period dealt with European issues, with no large variation; slightly higher percentages (about 10%) could be noted for the period 1951-1955, right after the foundation of the Union, and for the most recent period in the study 1991-1995 (Gerhards, 2000: 294-295).

Second, Groothues compares the number of (primetime) news items dealing with EU affairs to (1) news items dealing with other European countries, (2) domestic news items, and (3) non-European items, during two ‘routine’ weeks in 2003 for three television stations: one in France (France 2), one in Germany (ARD) and one in the UK (BBC 1). For all three stations, only a small percentage of news items dealt with strict EU affairs: 2-4%. On average, 25% of the news items dealt with events/issues in other European countries (variation between the stations: 20% for France 2, 31% for ARD); a majority of the news items, however, dealt with purely domestic issues (an average of 68%, with differences between the three stations ranging from 57% for ARD and 75% for France 2) (Groothues, 2004: 9).

Third, Kevin investigates the extent to which national media outlets in eight EU Member States⁵ (both print and television) covered the 1999 EP election during the last week of the campaign. She finds considerable variation between the various EU Member States regarding the number of articles dealing with the election: 263 for France compared to 99 for the UK and 47 for the Netherlands (Kevin, 2001: 27-28).

⁴ Eder and Kantner are inspired by Habermas, who considers a public sphere “a political public sphere which enables citizens to take positions at the same time on the same topics of the same relevance” (Habermas, 1996: 190). See also Eder et al. (2000) and Koopmans et al. (2004)

⁵ Countries included in this study are: France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

A final example is a study conducted by Trenz (2004), who investigates 11 newspapers in six EU Member States⁶ in the period September to December 2000. Trenz differentiates between: (1) European articles – articles that discuss European topics as the dominant issue, (2) Europeanized articles – articles that discuss national topics as the dominant issue with reference to one or several European sub-issues, and (3) articles with a European referential frame – articles that discuss non-European issues but make different rhetorical references to Europe (Trenz, 2004: 293-294). The outcomes of the study show that European political communication (all three of the above categories) constitutes 35% of the newspaper articles. Differences were noted between the newspapers, however, ranging from 55% for the German *FAZ*, to 24% for the French *Libération* (Trenz, 2004: 297-298).

Overall, when recapitulating the studies presented in this section, one can say that considerable variation exists between the EU Member States investigated regarding the level of Europeanization of political communication, conceptualized as visibility of European affairs in the mass media. Also, for individual Member States the results of the studies vary: for France Kevin observes European issues to be relatively salient in the French news media, in contrast to Groothues and Trenz, who discover low salience of European issues in the French print news media.

However, in a general sense, one can conclude that the issue salience (visibility) of European affairs in the mass media has increased during the last ten years (see also: Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz, 2004, makes a similar argument). But, compared to coverage of national political issues, ‘European’ issues are still less addressed by the mass media. Future research can investigate whether the trend of an increasing visibility of European issues in the mass media persists.

3.2 Interpretative schemes

A second, more qualitative approach concentrates on the interpretative schemes in which media address European issues, referred to by others as *framing* (De Vreese, 2003; Eder & Kantner, 2000; Eder et al., 2000; Gavin, 2000; Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Semetko, De Vreese, & Peter, 2000; Trenz, 2000, 2004; Van de Steeg, 2002, 2004). These studies observe that European issues are being discussed and reported in various media across Europe at the same time, at similar levels of attention in the issue cycle of media reporting, and in a similar fashion. Risse and Van de Steeg view the framing of particular European issues in similar ways across national media as being “an important precondition for the emergence of a viable European public sphere” (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003: 4). Similarly, Trenz speaks of “the specific meanings, expectations and world views that are channelled through and conveyed by debates” (Trenz, 2004: 308). He criticizes studies that only measure the visibility of European affairs in the news media, considering this a “minimalist indicator for the emergence of a European public sphere.” He argues that scholars should not only observe what is communicated, but also how and why it is communicated. Gavin makes a similar argument, stating that “we need not to think just about the level of prominence of European news; the way it portrays Europe’s political institutions and processes is also important” (Gavin, 2000: 369). A first empirical investigation within the second approach measuring interpretative schemes in which media address European issues, is executed by Gavin (2000). In particular, Gavin investigates economic entitlements offered to British citizens, and the portrayal of material benefits or losses for Britain, in European economic news coverage on British television. Gavin found that British coverage put a greater emphasis on the negative economic implications of engagement with Europe, rather than economic benefits (Gavin, 2000: 364-366).

⁶ Countries included in this study are: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

Second, Semetko, De Vreese and Peter investigate the extent to which European issues, events and persons in national news in Britain and Germany are framed as ‘European’ or ‘domestic’. They conclude that a ‘European’ frame is increasingly present in national news, versus a national frame. European integration and the EU are not only present in news coverage of genuinely European issues, but are also increasingly an integral part of national political and economic coverage (Semetko et al., 2000: 129).

Third, Van de Steeg (2002) presents an explorative study on the debate on the EU enlargement in national weeklies in four EU Member States. She observes two interpretative schemes being discussed in all four weeklies, namely: (1) ‘widening and deepening’ (similar rhetorical moves and arguments are put forward in the four weeklies in comparable quantity), and (2) costs and benefits of enlargement for the EU. An interpretative scheme that did not appear similarly across the four weeklies was the categorization of EU enlargement as something ‘foreign’ or something ‘domestic’; only the Dutch *Elsevier* categorized EU enlargement as taking place across national frontiers (Van de Steeg, 2002: 514-515). To a certain extent, Van de Steeg considers this cross-national occurrence of similar interpretative schemes an indicator of public opinion formation taking place at the European level and, similarly, of development of a European public sphere (Van de Steeg, 2002: 517).

Fourth, Risse and Van de Steeg consider the debate that emerged across Europe in 2000 regarding the rise of a right-wing populist party in Austria, Jörg Haider’s FPÖ. They investigate the extent to which newspapers from various countries used similar interpretative schemes when addressing the so-called Haider issue (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Van de Steeg et al., 2003). Risse and Van de Steeg discover that six similar interpretative schemes emerged frequently across all 15 newspapers in five EU member states included in the study.⁷ Four interpretative schemes related directly to Jörg Haider, for example “Haider as a Nazi or xenophobe”. Two of them were directly related to Europe: “Europe as a moral community” and “European legal standards” (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003: 6-7).

Finally, Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000; see also: Trenz, 2004) investigate to what degree the three interpretative schemes *interests*, *identity* and *values* are shared across European countries within different national news media.⁸ Eder, Kantner and Trenz argue that these interpretative schemes tell us whether and why an issue is relevant, and therefore, that their cross-national appearance should be considered “the qualitative criteria for the existence of a European public sphere” (Trenz, 2004: 308-309). In an analysis of news coverage of European governance and policymaking during 2000, 85% of the articles in the sample contained an ‘interests’ frame, 38% were coded in normative terms (‘values’ frame), and 27% contained an ‘identity’ frame. Typical issues, which were linked to interest negotiations among Europeans, are institutional reform, competition policy and the debate on the Euro. Few articles referred to purely normative or identity-based framings; 45% of the articles made use of multiple framings, raising issues in the context of interests and/or values and/or identities. The enlargement of the EU with countries located in Eastern Europe, for example, was predominantly framed in instrumental terms (interests), but was regularly linked to normative questions and questions of collective identity. The relationship between the EU and Turkey was mainly framed in identity-related terms (Trenz, 2004: 309-310).

A diverse picture emerges from these studies investigating the cross-national appearance of similar interpretative schemes in which European issues are addressed. First, scholars have investigated whether European issues/events have been framed as ‘European’ (‘foreign’ in the terminology of Van de Steeg), or as national or ‘domestic’. In a general sense, an increase in usage of a ‘European’ frame

⁷ Countries included in this study are: Austria, Belgium, Germany, France and Italy.

⁸ Countries included in this study are: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

by various mass media across the EU has been observed (for example, by Semetko et al., 2000). Second, scholars have identified specific interpretative schemes in which the mass media address European issues: (1) a material benefits and losses frame (as put forward by Gavin, 2000; and Van de Steeg, 2002), which is also covered by the ‘interests’ frame identified by Eder and colleagues.⁹ Their ‘interests’ frame also includes legal issues (identified by Risse and Van de Steeg, 2003), (2) the frame ‘Europe as moral community’ of Risse and Van de Steeg (2003) roughly corresponds to the ‘values’ frame identified by Eder and colleagues; and (3) the ‘identity’ frame identified by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000). In conclusion, the three frames identified by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (see also: Trenz, 2004) seem to be the all-inclusive, overarching general frames, that, in our opinion, deserve more scholarly attention in the future. We believe that the scarcely examined academic field investigating the interpretative schemes in which European issues are addressed, should benefit from structured research following the typology as proposed by Eder and colleagues.

3.3 *Connectivity of communication*

Trenz (2004) mentions a third approach that measures Europeanization of political communication: via the *connectivity* of communication within a given, but changeable, communicative context. This corresponds to what others have referred to as the ‘structure of communication’ (e.g. Koopmans & Erbe, 2004). In this regard, Koopmans and Pfetsch argue that “the spatial reach and boundaries of public communication can be determined by investigating patterns of communicative flows and assessing the relative density of public communication with and between different political spaces” (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003: 13).¹⁰ First, they define three levels of communication: the national public sphere, other national public spaces – which comprise the EU (candidate) member states, and the transnational, European political space – in which the European institutions and common policies are situated. The degree to which public spheres can be deemed national, transnational or European depends, according to Koopmans and colleagues, on the density of communicative linkages within and between these spaces (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003: 11-12). Accordingly, they speak of “horizontal Europeanization” if, for example, the German media report on what happens in other national public spaces, and of “vertical Europeanization” when communicative linkages are made between the national and the European public space (Koopmans & Erbe, 2004: 103-104).

Second, in order to assess the role of the media as compared to other actors, they recommend moving “beyond the usual article-level types of content analysis to consider individual public claims by different collective actors” as a means to measure communicative linkages (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003: 13-14). Thus, their units of analysis are individual acts of political communication, which they term ‘public claims’.¹¹ One of the main conclusions of the EUROPUB project was that for all countries included in the study (except the non-EU country Switzerland), the number of claims on European integration was higher in 2002 than in 1990. Especially regarding the issue fields of ‘monetary politics’ and ‘agriculture’, the number of claims with a European scope (claims made by European-level actors – vertical Europeanization) increased from respectively 40% and 36% in 1990 to 78% and 61% in 2002. Within other issue fields only a modest increase in vertical Europeanization could be observed; no clear vertical tendencies could be found within fields in which the EU has very little power and influence (e.g., education and pension issues). For horizontal Europeanization, they observed a slight decrease – from 18% across all countries in 1990 to 17% in 2002 (Koopmans et al., 2004).

⁹ For a more extensive elaboration on the three frames identified by Eder et al, see: Van Os (2005)

¹⁰ Koopmans is co-ordinator of the EUROPUB project, see <http://europub.wz-berlin.de> for more information.

¹¹ The EUROPUB project analyses the communication through which political actors make public demands on selected issues. A claim is defined as “an instance of strategic action in the public sphere” (Koopmans & Erbe, 2004: 98).

One of the conclusions of the EUROPUB project corresponds with the outcomes of research related to the first approach measuring Europeanization of political communication presented at the beginning of this section: increased visibility of European issues in the mass media. However, Koopmans and colleagues provide additional information on the nature of this increased Europeanization of political communication. European-level actors particularly are increasingly raising their voices in the (national) public sphere, within selected issue fields.

4. Public sphere and the Internet

The Internet and, more specifically, the World Wide Web (WWW), are often said to have the potential to provide a public forum where everyone is able to obtain and maintain a virtual presence (e.g. Mitra & Cohen, 1999: 180). For the politically concerned – interest groups, NGOs, political parties and candidates, governments and lay citizens – the Internet potentially serves as a space where information can be shared, issues discussed and where those interested can engage in political action. These elements are often considered important components of the political process and, accordingly, the public sphere. Expectations have, however, lowered considerably since the rise and popularisation of the Internet in the 1990s. Early ‘cyber optimists’ like Rheingold (1993), who claimed that the Internet could fuel the process of democratisation through opportunities for deliberation and direct decision-making, have been succeeded by ‘cyber pessimists’ like Margolis and Resnick (2000), who warned that the Internet would even widen the gap between the engaged and the apathetic. Scholars like Norris (2000; 2001), Foot and Schneider (2002; Schneider & Foot, 2002) and Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003) take a more ‘middle ground’ position, suggesting that a balance should, and can be found between these two extremes. First, Foot and Schneider stress the importance of independent political websites developed by national and state advocacy groups, civic organizations and mainstream and alternative press. In their research, they concentrate upon the online structure of politically-oriented websites, and the political action such online structure facilitates: information gathering and persuasion, political education, political talk, voter mobilization and candidate promotion (Foot & Schneider, 2002). Second, Norris mentions the existence of websites prepared by minor and fringe parties, and considers these an asset for democracy, enabling citizens to learn more about the range of electoral choices than was previously possible (Norris, 2003). In this context, she speaks of the emergence of a ‘virtual political system’ (Norris, 2001: 95).

During recent years, more and more websites, produced by a variety of political actors, have become available to citizens of European countries for political communication about European issues. In the case of European (political) issues and events, it is particularly important for political actors to maintain websites as a means of communication with supporters and the electorate at large, since these issues are generally less intensely covered by the mass media than are national political issues (Hix, 2005: 193; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997). In this chapter, we argue that, similar to the mass media research presented in the previous section, one can measure Europeanization of political communication and the possible development of a European public sphere by looking at the extent to which and the nature of political actors (including citizens) communicating about Europe on their websites. The proposed conceptual frameworks within a mass-mediated environment, as elaborated in the former section, can be used in the investigation of online communication on websites produced by political actors. Moreover, such online content contains indications about the Europe political actors have in mind, in contrast to the opinion or attitude towards Europe the mass media attributes to actors when reporting on them. It is through their websites, that political actors – participants in the public sphere – can offer a particular perspective on European news, issues and events, suggesting whether and why issues concerning Europe are socially and politically relevant. Similar to Trenz and colleagues, we consider an increased visibility of political communication about Europe, as the cross-

national appearance of similar ‘interpretative schemes’ in which European issues are discussed, indicators of the existence of an online European public sphere.

5. Empirical research: European public sphere and the Web

This section elaborates on empirical research conducted within the online environment of the Web, and is similarly structured around the three previously-mentioned approaches which are analytical elements for measuring Europeanization of political communication: visibility of communication, interpretative schemes, and connectivity of communication.

5.1 Visibility of communication

Zimmermann and Koopmans (2003) investigate the degree of Europeanization of political communication on the Internet within six different policy categories, plus one ‘European integration’ category, as unfolded via search engines within six EU member states and Switzerland in two periods in 2002. In order to determine the degree of Europeanization of this online political communication, Zimmermann and Koopmans look at various dimensions of transnationalism at the level of each website: (1) language used; (2) external linking to actors from other EU countries or from the EU level; (3) reference to actors and the information provided on the site from other EU countries or from the EU level; (4) reference to sources from other EU countries or from the EU level; (5) actors that become visible as ‘claimants’ on the site and their (European/national) scope; and (6) the perceived (European/national) scope of the issues they address. For the entire sample,¹² 23% of the cases included a European dimension, either because one of the actor types involved was organised at the European level or because the issue was seen in a European frame of reference. Zimmermann and Koopmans refer to this situation as ‘vertical Europeanization’ (Zimmermann & Koopmans, 2003: 41-42). They distinguish a second form of Europeanization: ‘horizontal Europeanization’, meaning the establishment of horizontal communicative linkages between EU member states. A considerably lower amount of horizontal Europeanization (10%) was found as compared to vertical Europeanization (Zimmermann & Koopmans, 2003: 42). As concerns vertical Europeanization, variation was observed between the countries included in the study, especially between the EU countries and the one non-EU country Switzerland, in which only 12% of the claims had a European dimension. This percentage contrasts to the relatively higher figures for Italy (32%) and Spain (31%). For the other countries included in the study, the percentages fluctuated around the overall mean. As concerns horizontal Europeanization, these two countries score relatively low: 5% for Italy and 8% for Spain in comparison to 16% for the UK and 12% for Denmark (Zimmermann & Koopmans, 2003: 42). As with the other dimension, the horizontal Europeanization measured for the other countries fluctuated around the overall mean; see Table 1.

Table 1 Horizontal & vertical Europeanization of online political communication, Koopmans & Zimmermann (2003)

Country	Vertical Europeanization (%)	Horizontal Europeanization (%)
DE	23	12
ES	31	8
FR	18	11
IT	32	5
NL	24	9
UK	20	16
CH	12	12
Total	23	10

¹² Six policy categories are included here, the category ‘European integration’ is excluded.

In contrast to Zimmermann and Koopmans, who investigate online political communication with regard to general policy issues at a randomly chosen point in time and determine the degree of Europeanization by looking at the presence of a European dimension within that online communication, Van Os, Jankowski and Vergeer (2007) study the specific online communication about Europe provided by a selection of political actors on their websites during the 2004 European Parliament (EP) election campaign.¹³

This study focuses on nine EU countries, including three new member states. For each country, in the two months before the 2004 EP election, coders searched for sites they expected to be involved in the 2004 EP election campaign by consulting search engines, politically-oriented portals and other depositories of potential website addresses. Stratified samples of 100 sites were drawn from the collection of identified sites per country within five actor-type categories: candidates, political parties, governmental sites, NGOs and labour unions, and other actors. For each site, four features were coded as contributors to Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently a European public sphere, two of them being: ‘EP election content on front page’, ‘European content on front page’. In this study 68% of the websites included in the study actually had EP election-related content on the front pages at the time of the election, a percentage the researchers considered relatively low, in particular because of the search strategy followed. The researchers interpret this limited referencing of the election as indication that political actors considered the election not particularly important (Van Os, Jankowski and Vergeer, 2007). Especially NGOs and labour unions provided relatively little EP election-related content: 38%.

However, when examining the second feature, ‘European content on front page’, which included not only EP election-related content, but also more general content on European issues, NGOs and labour unions scored higher: 46%. For all actor types together, the total score for this second feature was 73% (compared to 67% EP election-related content). Apparently some actors considered Europe sufficiently important to note on their websites, but not the 2004 EP election. A possible explanation for this difference may be the negative reputation of the European Parliament regarding legitimacy and power in relation to the other EU governmental bodies. Variations existed between the countries included in the study. Ireland, for example, scored low on both EP election-related content (31%) and European content on front page (47%). The United Kingdom scored high on both features, respectively 92% and 88%. In France, much variation between the two features was observed: 52% for EP election-related content, compared to 77% for European content on the front page; see Table 2.

Table 2 EP election / European content on front page websites, Van Os, Jankowski & Vergeer (2007)

Country	EP content (%)	European content (%)
CZ	74	89
FI	77	83
FR	52	77
HU	58	70
IR	31	47
IT	64	58
NL	65	63
SL	97	96
UK	92	88
Total	68	73

Both studies presented in this section compare, in a quantitative manner, various countries with each other as concerns the degree of Europeanization of political communication present on websites

¹³ This study is presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

produced by a variety of actors in these countries. However, the two studies vary considerably in the operationalization of this notion, as well as in search strategy used to select websites, and, as a result, they cannot be compared. In a general sense, there are no countries that turn out to be extreme exceptions in both studies, either in a positive or a negative manner. Only the UK seems to reside in the upper region in both studies as concerns the degree of Europeanization of political online communication.

5.2 Interpretative schemes

An exploratory investigation by Van Os (2005) is structured around the three interpretative schemes *interests*, *identity* and *values* identified by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000, 2002). Van Os investigates these three interpretative schemes within political communication about Europe present on websites maintained by the 11 largest French political parties in the context of the 2004 EP election.¹⁴ Van Os adds one component to the typology of Eder and colleagues: whether interests and identities mentioned in the online communication of parties have a national or European orientation. First, Van Os observes that most political parties emphasized to some degree European interests in their online communication, usually in combination with an indication of benefits of European integration for the French electorate. Second, only about half of the political parties mentioned a European identity in their communication about the 2004 EP election; others firmly expressed a French, national identity. Third, universal values, such as democratic principles and governmental transparency, were mentioned by almost all parties in relation to the EU: political parties consider sharing these values as necessary for a well functioning European Union. Van Os argues that these expressions, related to the three interpretative schemes interests, identity and values, as formulated by French political parties on their websites, “can be considered indicators of a feeling of ‘belonging to Europe’, and qualitative measurements of Europeanization of political communication, and possibly the development of a European public sphere” (Van Os, 2005: 214).

In a subsequent paper, Van Os, Wester and Jankowski (2007) compare the online communication of French, British and Dutch political parties, again investigating the interpretative schemes *interests*, *identity*, and *values*, in which Europe is addressed on political party websites in the context of the 2004 EP election; see Table 3.¹⁵

Table 3 Aggregated means frames per Country, Van Os, Wester & Jankowski (2007)

Country		Interests (%)	Identity (%)	Values (%)	Tenor*
UK	European	23	10	18	2.15
	National	31	25		
	Regional	16	15		
NL	European	42	18	24	1.93
	National	17	13		
	Regional	1	0		
FR	European	51	24	26	2.08
	National	25	17		
	Regional	1	0		
Total (1701)	European	41	18	23	2.04
	National	23	18		
	Regional	-	-		

* N tenor = 1294; Tenor scale: 1 = positive, 2 = neutral, 3 = negative.

¹⁴ This study is presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

¹⁵ This study is presented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Again, this paper differentiates between European and national interests, and a European and national identity frame. Another additional indicator was included, namely *tenor of reporting*, which measures the general attitude towards Europe a party shows in its online communication: as advantageous/positive, or merely disadvantageous/negative. Variation was observed between the three countries as concerns the appearance of the interpretative schemes within political parties' online communication.

British parties more often mentioned national interests and a national identity frame in their online communication as compared to Dutch and French parties, which more often mentioned European interests and a European identity frame (percentages are noted in Table 3). British parties also showed the most negative attitude towards Europe. However, most parties did not mention values very often. Van Os, Wester and Jankowski also compare the appearance of the three interpretative schemes cross-nationally along parties' positions in the political spectrum. They discover cross-national similarities in parties' online communication, especially among the liberal (democratic) parties, the 'green' parties, and the sovereign/extreme right-wing parties; more diversity was observed among the social democratic parties and centre-right parties. First, the liberal parties united in the European Group *Alliance of Liberal Democrats in Europe* (ALDE, with national delegations: Dutch VVD, French UDF, British *Liberal Democrats*, Dutch D'66) mentioned European interests relatively often, and, in some cases, a European identity frame. These parties generally approve the focus on EU economic development, which was manifest in a positive tenor of reporting. In contrast, the sovereign/extreme right-wing parties (French *Front National*, British *National Party*, Dutch *Nieuw Rechts*, French sovereign parties MPF, RPF, CPNT) mentioned national interests relatively more frequent, and often a national identity frame. These parties, in a general sense, are opposed to European integration, which was manifest in a negative of reporting.. Finally, the 'green' parties (British *Green Party*, French *Les Verts*, Dutch *GroenLinks*), mentioned values relatively often in their online communication. These parties almost only stressed European interests, and a European identity frame. In a general sense, more similarities in interpretative schemes were observed cross-nationally among parties with similar political orientation than among parties within one country. Van Os, Wester and Jankowski consider these cross-national similarities in interpretative schemes an indicator for Europeanization of political communication and for development of a European public sphere (Van Os, Wester, & Jankowski, 2007).

5.3 Connectivity of communication

Zimmermann, Koopmans and Schlecht (2004: 26) investigate the EUROPUB conceptualisation of (horizontal versus vertical) Europeanization as previously described, in an online environment, by looking at hyperlink structures among websites of a pre-selected group of social actors already active in the 'offline' world, relating to issues regarding agriculture, immigration and European integration in six EU member states and Switzerland. The aim of the study is "to explore the degree to which newly-emerged communicative and informative spaces on the Internet may contribute to a Europeanization of European public spheres" (Zimmermann, Koopmans, & Schlecht, 2004: 3). A Web crawler was employed that automatically collected the information (hyperlinks) from the selected URLs. Each (outgoing) hyperlink was then examined and coded for country of actor, actor type, party/issue affiliation and organizational scope (e.g., local, national, EU). The results suggest, first of all, that 50% of all hyperlinks were directed to national actors, followed by actors from other countries (19%). European actors received 14% of the total number of hyperlinks (N = 17,951). Furthermore, 68% of the hyperlinks provided by national actors directed visitors towards actors of the own country; 11% of these hyperlinks directed visitors towards EU actors. Slightly more often hyperlinks to national actors from other countries (12%) were provided. More than half (54%) of the EU level actors provided hyperlinks to other EU level actors. According to Zimmermann, Koopmans and Schlecht, these figures

suggest a low degree of horizontal Europeanization through hyperlinks. Forms of vertical Europeanization through hyperlinks from national actors to European actors were more developed, but strongly concentrated on state actors (Zimmermann, Koopmans & Schlecht, 2004: 26). The authors also report on the density of the hyperlinked groups of actors. No significant hyperlink relations appeared to exist between the countries in the sample. Significant vertical relationships were, however, observed between the national and EU level, the latter being mainly EU institutions.

A preliminary report about the debate around the European constitution in France in 2005, as played out on the Internet, is prepared by Ghitalla and Fouetillou (2005). The objective of the study is to obtain an overview of the political debate on the Web and to comprehend how the online debate on the European constitution was organized in terms of relations between the sites. Between 30 May and 1 June 2005, a Web crawler searched for website addresses by following hyperlinks present on other websites. The search started from a dozen sites addressing the European constitution identified by the researchers. Some 12,000 sites were collected, of which more than 6000 were in English and therefore excluded from the study. Ultimately, 5000 sites were accessed and, of those sites dealing with the European constitution, 295 were selected for further study. These sites were classified as ‘YES-sites’, ‘NO-sites’, ‘sites that do not take position’, ‘sites produced by institutions’, and ‘sites produced by media corporations’. Actors taking a position against the European Constitution produced two-thirds of the sites (the ‘NO-sites’). This is, Ghitalla and Fouetillou note, in contrast to the debate that emerged on the three largest television channels: in that medium, 70% of the speakers claimed to be in favour of the European constitution. Ghitalla and Fouetillou (2005) suggest that: “the Web has served as a public outlet for those who feel rejected by the mainstream mass media of television.”¹⁶ They conclude that two, almost distinct ‘competitive communities’ emerged on the Web around the YES and NO camps. The NO camp turned out to be less open than the YES camp: 79% of the links provided on NO-sites were “intra-community”, in comparison to 64% for the YES camp.

These two studies, although, again, different in the operationalization of Europeanization of political communication, present interesting results. In both studies, Europeanization is measured by looking at hyperlink structures on the Web. A central analytical element in the first study by Zimmermann and colleagues is the level on which actors who produced the sites operated: European, national or another EU member state. The degree of Europeanization is determined by the degree of connectivity between these levels. Koopmans and colleagues found a higher degree of Europeanization between the levels (vertical) than within the levels. In contrast, a central analytical element in the study by Ghitalla and Fouetillou, is the attitude (opinion) towards Europe (the European constitution) a French actor displayed on its website. By far the most hyperlinks were identified between websites displaying a similar position towards the European constitution. When speaking about Europeanization of political communication, Ghitalla and Fouetillou’s study shows us that attitudes towards Europe, becoming manifest through hyperlink analysis, can be a binding factor between actors ‘belonging’ to a particular community. Relationships, measured by the degree of hyperlinks, between the actors within one group were much higher than between actors belonging to different groups.

6. Conclusions & suggestions for future research

In this chapter, various conceptualisations of, and empirical research about, European political communication, and related, a European public sphere are discussed. In our interpretation, we place emphasis on political actors, including citizens, communicating about Europe. Despite the growing body of research focusing on the Europeanization of mass mediated communication, almost no

¹⁶ This text has been translated from French by the first author.

research has been conducted to examine online communication / Internet-based representations of European issues.

In the second part of this chapter we reviewed the few studies available on Europeanization of political communication on the World Wide Web. Only two studies focused on the visibility of European issues on the Web. Both the study by Zimmermann and Koopmans (2003), and by Van Os, Jankowski and Vergeer (2007) draw comparisons between different EU member states regarding the degree of Europeanization. Although these studies differ in operationalization of the notion of Europeanization, in both studies the UK scored in the upper region. Through these two studies on the visibility of communication about Europe on the Web, we have initiated exploration of Europeanization of political communication and, subsequently, development of an online European public sphere. It is through measuring visibility of political communication about Europe on diverse political actors' websites that we can say something meaningfully about the extent to which a European public sphere is developing on the Web. The studies presented in this chapter, and especially the study performed by Van Os, Jankowski and Vergeer (2007), suggest that variation exists not only between the different countries included in study, but also between different types of actors concerning the extent to which they communicate about Europe on their websites. Therefore, this –tentative– online European public sphere seems incomplete in a sense that both institutionalised and non-institutionalised actors are participating.

Second, although network analysis as an approach to analyse the Web is becoming popular, only two studies were found that investigated Europeanization of communicative interaction measured through hyperlink analysis. The focus and conclusions vary substantially: one study reports a partially 'European' network of national and European level actors (Zimmermann, Koopmans & Schlecht, 2004); the other study notes two distinct competitive communities of mainly national actors emerging around one particular European issue (Ghitalla & Fouetillou, 2005). Both studies reveal the emergence of (hyperlinked) networks of political actors on the Web, either evolving at the national level about a particular European issue, or at the pan-European level about general policy issues. This suggests some form of Europeanization of political communication and that a European public sphere is developing on the Web.

Finally, two exploratory investigations conducted by Van Os and colleagues are discussed with regard to the interpretative schemes in which political actors – in these particular studies political parties – address European issues on their websites (Van Os, 2005; Van Os, Wester and Jankowski, 2007). Although more research is needed, these studies provide a model for further investigation. It is through measuring the cross-national appearance of interpretative schemes in which European issues are addressed by political actors on their websites (or by the mass media) that we can obtain a more profound understanding of the way these participants in the public sphere view and feel about Europe; by discovering similarities in this online political communication about Europe, we can draw the contours of a developing European public sphere. In the studies conducted by Van Os differences were observed in interpretative schemes, and 'portrayal' of Europe between the three countries included in the study. British parties in particular scored low on the presence of European interests and European identity in their online communication; these parties mainly mentioned national interests and a national identity frame. In contrast, some cross-national similarities in interpretative schemes in which Europe is addressed were observed among parties with similar a political orientation in France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which is considered an indicator for Europeanization of political communication and possibly for development of a European public sphere.

The six studies presented in this chapter that examine online communication / Internet-based representations of European issues are too few by far. Much more research is needed in order to assess

the potential of the Web to incorporate or enhance a European public sphere. As previously mentioned, the Internet is increasingly becoming an object of study in empirical investigations of the public sphere, especially because of the possibility for political actors to maintain websites as a means of direct, unfiltered communication with supporters and with the electorate at large. We have argued that, in the case of European issues and affairs, this possibility is particularly important. Not only can political actors themselves determine the extent of communication about Europe, but they can also determine the manner in which European issues are addressed, rather than being dependent on the mass media. For academic researchers, this opens up a new field of investigation. Online documents as research material are, in a sense, comparable to mass media material. Conceptual frameworks proposed in a mass-mediated environment, can therefore be used in the investigation of online communication. Research is needed within all three areas discussed in this chapter: visibility of communication about Europe on the Web, the cross-national appearance of interpretative schemes in which European issues are addressed on political actors' websites, and the online structure of communication about Europe.

It seems particularly interesting to draw comparisons between the extent to which and the nature of Europeanization of political communication is becoming manifest simultaneously on the Web and in the mass media, for example during a future European event. These communicative interactions, in our opinion, all contribute to, or enhance, ONE European public sphere. Through such an integrated research design studying simultaneously online and offline political communication about Europe, it becomes possible to determine whether such a single European public sphere is developing; at this moment, online and offline communicative interactions are investigated too far apart from each other. Cross-national research is of the uttermost importance, as is the inclusion of more diverse EU member states – especially 'new' Eastern European member states; so that, a more complete picture of 'Europe', or at least of the European Union which fills a large part of that Europe, can be obtained.

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Political communication about Europe on the
Internet during the 2004 EP election campaign in
nine EU member states

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Political communication about Europe on the Internet during the 2004 EP election campaign in nine EU member states

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Abstract. This article considers the possibility of a European public sphere contributing to a reduction of the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ through engagement of citizens in the European project and enhancing processes of identification beyond the local or national environment. We elaborate on our interpretation of the European public sphere, emphasizing that political actors, including citizens, are engaged in *political communication about Europe*, either directly or indirectly through media or Internet-based representations. The study presented in this article investigates the extent of Europeanization of political communication on the Internet, by measuring the visibility of communication about Europe on websites produced by various political actors in nine EU member states in the context of the 2004 European Parliament election. Two-thirds of the websites included in the study actually had European Parliamentary election-related content on the front pages at the time of the election; a percentage we consider relatively low because of the search strategy followed. Actors addressed general European issues somewhat more frequently on their websites: in nearly three-quarters of the cases, which can be considered an indicator of the existence of a European public sphere.

1. Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that public support for European Union (EU) policy and institutions is low in most member states; European Parliament (EP) elections have been frequently criticized as having little significance to voters: since they are – still – organized along national lines instead of European ones, they cannot be considered truly ‘European’ elections, but rather mid-term national contests, or ‘second order national elections’, which focus on domestic rather than European issues. As a result, European issues and events tend to attract less attention from all political actors such as political parties, interest groups and the mass media in comparison to national political issues (Franklin, 2001; Hix, 2005: 177, 193).

It is within this context that scholars have begun to recognize that the process of European integration from above must be accompanied by Europeanization of political communication in order to overcome the lack of legitimacy and popular involvement in the EU by European citizens (Koopmans, Neidhardt, & Pfetsch, 2000: 12; Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003). Political communication about Europe, facilitated within a European public sphere, could reduce the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ by enhancing processes of identification among participants living in different EU member states (e.g., Koopmans et al., 2004; Kunelius & Sparks, 2001).

In this article, we explore the manner in which the concept of ‘European public sphere’ has been formulated during the last decade, and present a concrete approach to investigating this concept with direct reference to the Internet. Specifically, as an indicator of Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently of the existence of a European public sphere, we examine the visibility of communication about Europe on websites produced by a variety of political actors in nine European countries. This study has been performed in the context of the 2004 EP election in the following EU member states: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The investigation is guided by the following research question: *To what extent do national political actors address European issues on their websites in the context of the 2004 EP election campaign?* This article stems from a pan-European collaborative

empirical investigation exploring the use of the Internet during the 2004 EP election and analysis of data collected by research teams in nine EU member states.¹⁷

2. The public sphere in a European context

In the current discussion on European integration, the notion of the public sphere, initially elaborated by Jürgen Habermas, has begun to play a central role. This notion, as elaborated by Habermas (1962/1989), places emphasis on the deliberative and discursive aspects of democracy. Given that public affairs increasingly extend beyond the boundaries of the nation state, scholars have argued for a new public sphere functioning at the European level (e.g., Kunelius & Sparks, 2001). However, in this context scholars seem to disagree about whether a supranational European public sphere is emerging, or whether one should merely speak of ‘Europeanization’ of national public spheres when referring to Europeanization of political communication. Early scholars dealing with the possibility of a public sphere functioning at the European level retain the original Habermasian notion of the public sphere. This notion, generally speaking, involves “the space within which the affairs of the state could be subjected to public scrutiny” (Kunelius & Sparks, 2001: 11). These scholars argue that a ‘genuine’ supranational European public sphere can only emerge once Brussels becomes, at least partially, an independent political centre with its ‘own’ political actors, its ‘own’ mass media, and its ‘own’ public – which is not the case in the present situation in which the EU is faced with a democratic deficit (e.g., Gerhards, 1993, Grimm, 1995; Schlesinger, 1996, 1999; Schlesinger & Kevin, 2000). In various degrees, they place emphasis on the lack of transnational political actors like political parties and interest groups at the European level, the lack of European-level mass media, the diversity of languages across Europe, and the absence of a collective identity; for this reason, most of these scholars prefer to speak of ‘Europeanization of national public spheres’ when investigating Europeanization of political communication.

Other, more recent scholars, consider this view about what constitutes a European public sphere as too restrictive, and based on an idealized picture of an almost homogeneous national public sphere which is then replicated at the European level (e.g., Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003). According to Koopmans and colleagues, for example, this view “presupposes a degree of linguistic and cultural homogeneity and political centralisation that cannot be found in many well functioning democratic nation-states” (Koopmans et al., 2004: 10). Koopmans and colleagues use Switzerland as example of a country that has managed to create a national public sphere despite the presence of three language groups and no newspapers that can be considered national in character (Koopmans et al., 2000). Instead, these and other scholars place emphasis on *parallel public debates* across Europe as an indicator of the existence of a European public sphere. In this view, a European public sphere must be considered a *social construction* produced through discursive practices (Eder, Kantner, & Trenz, 2000; Risse, 2002, 2003; Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Van de Steeg, 2002, 2004). As Risse argues: “A European public sphere does not fall from heaven, and does not pre-exist outside social and political discourse. 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 British, French, Germans or Dutch” (Risse, 2003: 4).

¹⁷ We wish to thank the following persons for making data available for this paper: M. Gregor, Charles University Prague, Czech Republic; T. Calson and K. Strandberg, Abo Akademi University, Vasa Finland; E. Danyi and A. Galacz, Central European University, Budapest Hungary; J. Ward, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; M. Miani, University of Bologna Italy; G. Voerman, DNPP University of Groningen, The Netherlands; K. Zeljan and S. Delakorda, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; W. Lusoli, University of Chester, United Kingdom.

A rule of thumb often used as point of departure by scholars attempting to empirically measure Europeanization of political communication is offered by Eder and Kantner (2000). They suggest that the key indicator for a shared public debate at the European level, is whether similar European issues are being addressed in different national media at the same time, using the same criteria of relevance (Eder & Kantner, 2000: 102). Gerhards extends this proposal by advocating a more normatively demanding stance towards what constitutes Europeanization of political communication. He argues that in order for Europeanization to take place, an actor communicating about a European issue or event, should also “evaluate it from a perspective that extends beyond one’s country and interest” (Gerhards, 2000: 293). Others seem to agree with Gerhards on this point and consider it of equal importance that actors not only communicate about European issues, but that they also communicate from a European perspective. Related to these different interpretations of what constitutes ‘Europeanization’, roughly *two approaches* can be separated in measuring Europeanization of political communication.

The first approach essentially counts how often European issues are mentioned in the mass media, thereby measuring the *visibility of communication about Europe* (Gerhards, 2000; Groothues, 2004; Hodess, 1997; Kevin, 2001). For example, Groothues compares the number of (prime-time) news items dealing with EU affairs to (1) news items dealing with other European countries, (2) domestic news items, and (3) non-European items, during two ‘routine’ weeks in 2003 for three television stations located in France (France 2), Germany (ARD) and the UK (BBC 1). For all three stations, only a small percentage, 2-4%, of news items dealt with strict EU affairs. On average, 25% of the news items dealt with events/issues in other European countries (variation between the stations: 20% for France 2, 28% for BBC 1, and 31% for ARD); a majority of the news items, however, dealt with purely domestic issues (an average of 68%, with differences between the three stations ranging from 57% for ARD, 67% for BBC 1, and 75% for France 2) (Groothues, 2004: 9).

The second, more qualitative, approach concentrates on analysing media reporting on particular European issues, and focuses on the simultaneous appearance of *interpretative patterns*, or alternatively *frames*, in which European issues are addressed across national media (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003). For example Semetko, De Vreese and Peter have investigated the extent to which European issues, problems, events and persons in national news are framed as ‘European’ or ‘domestic’. They conclude that European and Brussels-based news has become more important in the last few years for national news media (Semetko, De Vreese, & Peter, 2000: 129). Second, Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000) identified three frames: *interests*, *identity* and *values*, and investigated whether these three interpretations of Europe are shared across European countries within the different national media (Eder et al., 2000; see also Trenz, 2004: 308-309). In an analysis of news coverage of European governance and policy making during the year 2000, 85% of the articles in the sample contained an interests frame, 37% were coded in normative terms (values frame), and only 27% contained an identity frame (Trenz, 2004: 309-310).

In this article, we focus on communication about Europe present on the Internet. We believe that the proposed conceptual frameworks for investigating Europeanization of political communication in the mass media can be also used in the investigation of online communication about Europe on political websites. This article utilizes the first approach, which measures Europeanization of political communication via the visibility of communication about Europe.

The study focuses on the extent to which a variety of political actors such as political parties, NGOs, governmental organizations and press actors address European issues and events on their websites in the context of the 2004 EP election. Similar to Koopmans and colleagues we consider the mass media not only as conveyors of information or channels of communication through which other political

actors communicate with the public, but also as political actors (press organizations) in the public sphere themselves who legitimately make their own voice heard, and who nowadays produce their own websites. The investigation of websites makes it possible to treat each different type of actor as an equal participant in the public sphere.

3. The Internet and the public sphere

The Internet, it is often claimed, potentially provides a space that is accessible to a wide variety of political actors – citizens, governments, political parties, advocacy groups and alternative social movement organizations – to share information, discuss issues, and propose and engage in political action, on- and offline (e.g. Mitra & Cohen, 1999: 180). These elements are often considered important components of the political process and accordingly the public sphere (Jankowski & Van Selin, 2000; Tsagarousianou, 1999). Scholars, however, disagree about the impact of such engagement. First-generation ‘cyber-optimists’ stress the opportunities for deliberation and direct decision-making among a broad spectrum of the public in an Internet environment (e.g., Rash, 1997; Rheingold, 1993). Later, ‘cyber-pessimists’ warn that the Internet may widen the gap between the engaged and the apathetic (e.g., Margolis & Resnick, 2000). These scholars claim that cyberspace increasingly reflects the political forces that dominate politics and social life in the real world, and that “political life on the Net is therefore mostly an extension of political off the Net” (Margolis & Resnick, 2000: 2-3, 14).

Norris (2001) suggests that a balance should be found between these two extremes and proposes a middle ground position, thereby positioning herself as a ‘cyber-skeptic’ (Norris, 2001: 233-239). She emphasizes the possibility for substantial transformation of the political arena when “transnational advocacy networks and alternative social movements ... have adapted the resources of new technologies to communicate, organise, and mobilise global coalitions around issues” (Norris, 2001: 238-239). Similarly, Foot and Schneider (2002) argue that the impact of the Internet can be found in changes at the structural level of the political system. They stress the importance of independent political websites developed by national and state advocacy groups, civic organizations and the mainstream and alternative press. Complementing this perspective, they view the websites of political parties as components within a larger overall political arena (Foot & Schneider, 2002).

Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003) summarize the main areas where political transformation has been anticipated and argue that, although a revolutionary transformation of politics is not to be expected, “our early research indicates that the Internet will make a modest positive contribution to participation and mobilisation” (Ward, Gibson, & Lusoli, 2003: 667). In all likelihood, as others (Bimber, 1998) have suggested, the Internet may play a role in conjunction with other societal trends in contributing to a transformation of politics.

These ideas and studies constitute the backdrop for our investigation of the use of the Internet by political actors during the 2004 EP election campaign. During recent years more and more websites, produced by a variety of political actors, have become available to citizens for political communication on European issues and events. In the case of the European Parliament elections, often considered ‘second order national contests’, it is important for political actors to maintain websites as a means of communication with the electorate for several reasons. First, European issues and events are generally less intensely covered by the mass media than national political issues (Hix, 2005: 193; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997) and therefore, websites may be an effective alternative for disseminating European issues. Second, during the last two decades there has been a tendency for the media to offer analysis rather than straight reporting of election campaigns. As Gulati, Just and Crigler (2004) stress, it has become acceptable for both television and the print media to include “an interpretative, and

therefore inherently subjective, component to their campaign coverage” (Gulati, Just, & Crigler, 2004: 243). The Internet seems to be the perfect medium for political actors to circumvent this ‘interpretative reporting’, and to inform citizens directly and systematically about their positions on EU policy and legislation for the upcoming period (see also Nixon & Johansson, 1999; Ward, Gibson, & Nixon, 2003).

For the reasons outlined above, namely the ‘second order’ image of EP elections and the ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Parliament in general, one may question whether an EP election serves as appropriate occasion to measure the existence of a European public sphere (see also: Van de Steeg, 2004: 145). On the other hand, previous studies have supported the notion that media attention to EU events and issues is cyclical, and can mainly be found in the context of major EU events such as EP elections (De Vreese, 2001). Political actors may apply a similar strategy when addressing political issues on their websites. Furthermore, as De Vreese, Peter and Semetko outline, using a common European event to investigate the mass media reporting on Europe has the following advantage: we may obtain better measures for cross-national comparison of communication about a common event than would be possible with general political and economic coverage about unrelated domestic events (De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001).

Here, we acknowledge the importance of political actors addressing European issues and events on their websites, and consider this an indicator of Europeanization of political communication, and, subsequently, of the existence of a European public sphere (see also Zimmermann & Koopmans, 2003). In this article we investigate the visibility of European issues and events on websites of political actors in the context of the EP election as played out in 9 EU member states in June 2004, as will be outlined in the next section.

4. Data collection and analysis

This study is part of an international collaborative investigation concerned with the role of the Internet during election campaigns. Building on the experience and methodological procedures and tools developed by WebArchivist (<http://webarchivist.org/ie>), empirical projects were established around national elections in seven Asian countries, the United States, and the 2004 European Parliament election held in 11 EU member states. This study focuses on nine of these 11 EU countries: the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom. Three of these countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia – are new EU member states as of 2004; five countries – France, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom – have been represented in the EP since the first election in 1979; Finland first participated in the European elections in 1999. The sample can not be considered as representative for the entire EU, but as a theoretical sample to facilitate development of theory. In the analysis comparisons are drawn between the three ‘new’ Eastern European member states and the six ‘old’ member states (including Finland), and between different actor types. Only websites produced by national political actors are included in the study.

For each country included in the study, during a three-week period running eight to five weeks prior to the election, coders searched for sites they expected to be involved in the 2004 EP election campaign by consulting search engines, politically-oriented portals and other depositories of potential website addresses. Much variation exists between the number of sites identified per country, ranging from 123 (Hungary) to 617 (United Kingdom). In countries in which the EP election was organized at the regional level more EP election-related websites were identified than in countries in which the election was organized at the national level: 318 in France and 617 in United Kingdom. In the Eastern

European member states fewer sites were identified than in the older member states: 166 for Czech Republic and 163 for Slovenia, in comparison to 240 for Italy and 318 for The Netherlands.¹⁸

Five weeks prior to the election, a sample of 100 sites was randomly drawn for each country, stratified for actor types: 30% candidates, 15% political parties, 10% governmental sites, 10% NGOs, 10% labour unions, and the remainder of the sample was distributed across other actor types.¹⁹ In the two weeks prior to the election, sites were coded for the presence of 36 information and engagement features. This article focuses on four of these features in order to measure the visibility of communication about Europe on the Internet, which can be considered indicative for Europeanization of political communication: ‘EP election content on front page’, ‘European content on the front page’, ‘EU/EP news in the news section’, and ‘European content elsewhere on the site – within two links from front page’. EP election content is defined as ‘website content related to the European Parliament election’; European content is defined as ‘website content related to the EU and/or to the EP election’. Coding was completed before the election took place.²⁰

At the time of the actual coding, however, not all content on the 100 sites in the samples could be coded on all variables. Some websites were shut down completely, others were partly dysfunctional. Furthermore, some content was not or inconsistently coded. Of the 860 initial websites, 18 have been coded ‘missing’ on the variable actor type, and five sites were not coded on ‘EP election content on front page’ and subsequently excluded from the study. The total N of the study is therefore 837.²¹ Sites that were coded inconsistently on ‘European content on front page’ in comparison to the variable ‘EP election content on front page’ were also excluded from further analysis (110 sites, which lowers the N from 837 to N=727 for this feature). Furthermore, only when websites contained ‘European content on front page’, content was coded on ‘EU/EP-related news in news section’ (N=530), and ‘European content elsewhere on the site’ (N=530).

The analysis took place through cross tabulation of the variable actor type against the variables ‘EP election content on front page’, ‘European content on front page’, ‘EU/EP-related news in news section’ and ‘European content elsewhere on the site’. These two-way cross tabulations were extended by the variable country as an additional dimension. Due to the low number of cases in this three way cross tabulation, percentages should be viewed with caution. Since the number of valid cases for variables differs, pairwise deletion of missing cases was applied in the cross tabulations.

5. Results

As shown in Table 1, the first striking result is the low number of political actors having EP election content on the site front page: 68%. Apparently, for one-third of the actors included in the study – all selected because of their politically active focus or attitude – this event was insufficiently important to consider placing information on their sites. Somewhat more often, however, actors communicated about general European issues on the site front page: 73%. This section reports on observed variations (1) between the countries included in the study, and (2) between the different actor types.

¹⁸ The table elaborating on the number of identified sites per country is provided in Appendix A.

¹⁹ Actor types originally consisted of 12 categories, subsequently collapsed into six categories: candidates, government, NGO/labour union, ‘other’, political party, press. A press organization is defined as ‘news/publishing organization that creates its own content’. This includes for example community portals that are operated by publishers of local magazines and newspapers.

²⁰ The coding template for this study is provided in Appendix B.

²¹ An overview of the sample of sites included in the study is provided in Appendix C.

Table 1 reports on the observed variations between the nine EU member states (average percentages calculated per country). For the first variable ‘EP election on front page’, most countries scored around the average percentage (± 10 percentage points). However, both Slovenia and the United Kingdom scored exceptionally high on this feature: respectively 97% and 92%. These two countries also scored high on the other three variables. Countries scoring much lower on ‘EP election content on front page’, were France and Ireland: respectively 52% and 31%. France, however, scored much higher on the other variables, 77% for European content on front page, 40% for EP/EU-related news, and 71% European content within two links from front page. For French actors, general European issues were clearly more important than the EP election as a specific event; their online political communication still was quite Europeanized. This was much less the case for the Irish actors, who also scored low on more general European content variables, such as 47% for European content on front page. When comparing the percentages of the three new Eastern European countries with those of the six old member states, no clear pattern can be observed.

Table 1: EP election/ European content, aggregated for EU-9 sample per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page		European content front page		EU/EP-related news		European content within 2 links	
	N*	%**	N	%	N	%	N	%
CZ	95	74	98	89	81	88	81	95
FI	94	77	94	83	78	22	78	49
FR	93	52	91	77	70	40	70	71
HU	87	58	86	70	60	52	60	53
IR	98	31	95	47	45	58	45	69
IT	98	64	78	58	45	60	45	47
NL	97	65	87	63	55	56	55	53
SL	94	97	48	96	46	46	46	76
UK	99	92	57	88	50	54	50	72
Total EU-9	855	68	727	73	530	53	530	66

* N = total number of sites included in EU-9 sample containing the specific feature, differentiated per country. This table also reports on the 18 sites coded ‘missing’ on the variable actor type.

** % of total number of sites containing the specific feature, differentiated per country.

Looking more specifically to the observed differences between the various actor types (percentages aggregated for the EU-9 sample), as shown in Table 2, it is especially NGOs and labour unions that did not often provide EP election content on the site front pages (38%), while at the same time these actors scored much higher on the other variables: 46% for ‘European content on front page’, 56% for ‘EP/EU-related news’, and even 84% for ‘European content within two links from front page’. As mentioned, these actors apparently considered ‘Europe’ in general more important as topic for reports than the EP election.

An explanation for this difference in perceived importance by NGOs and labour unions may be found in the long-standing tainted reputation of the EP regarding legitimacy: actors consider the EP as having limited powers in relation to other EU bodies, such as the Council of Ministers. As a result, intense campaigning was not observed outside the institutionalized, traditional actor types of parties and candidates. In comparison, candidates scored 89% for EP election on front page and 95% for general European content on front page; see Table 2. Parties scored respectively 88% and 90%.

In a more general sense, it is remarkable that in the EU-9 sample the overall percentage for ‘EU/EP-related news in news section’ (53%) is lower than for ‘European content on front page’. Reasons may lie in the level of sophistication of the sites. As elaborated elsewhere (Van Os, Hagemann, Voerman, & Jankowski, 2007), sites produced by candidates, governments and labour unions can be quite basic in terms of information and engagement features incorporated, and as a result, often do not have a

news section. Last, in relation to ‘European content within 2 links from front page’, it is a well-appreciated practice of press actors and NGOs/labour unions to compose online dossiers focusing on central themes, such as the European Union, or the EP election in specific. This practice may have led to a high score on ‘European content within 2 links from front page’ for press actors (85%) and NGOs/labour unions (84%).

Table 2: EP election/ European content, aggregated for EU-9 sample per actor type

Actor type	EP election content front page		European content front page		EU/EP-related news		European content within 2 links	
	N*	%**	N	%	N	%	N	%
Candidate	189	89	179	95	170	45	170	47
Government	140	61	114	70	80	53	80	65
NGO/Labour	144	38	119	46	55	56	55	84
Other	139	52	118	56	66	42	66	74
Party	145	88	125	90	112	58	112	74
Press	80	64	72	65	47	77	47	85
Total EU-9	837	67	727	73	530	53	530	66

* N = total number of sites included in EU-9 sample containing the specific feature, differentiated per actor type.

** % of total number of sites containing the specific feature, differentiated per actor type.

Tables 3 through 7 elaborate on the EP election/EU related content provided by respective actor types within different sections of their websites, sorted per EU member state. First, when looking at Table 3, candidates provide much content related to both the EP election and to the EU in general: respectively 89% and 95%. French and Hungarian candidates seem to be the exception to this generally high score: only 64% of the French candidates and 44% of the Hungarian candidates provided EP election content. All French candidates, however, provided general EU content on the front page, in contrast to Hungarian candidates of which only 38% provided general European content on the site front pages.

Table 3: EP election/ European content provided by candidates per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page (N = 189)	European content front page (N=179)	EU/EP-related news (N=170)	European content within 2 links (N=170)
	%	%	%	%
CZ	91	95	63	84
FI	100	100	11	03
FR	64	100	32	52
HU	44	38	100	67
IR	83	83	100	100
IT	90	92	39	26
NL	100	100	60	37
SL	100	100	0	100
UK	100	100	67	93
Total EU-9	89	95	45	47

With regard to France, this is probably related to the regional organization of EP elections in France, where political parties established websites for each of the eight regions in the country. Much information was provided on candidates on these sites, which may have lowered the need for active personal campaigning for French candidates in the EP election campaign. Accordingly, these sites provided general European content, but no specific EP election content. No clear explanation is evident for the low level (38%) of general European content on sites of Hungarian candidates. On comparing the percentages of the three new Eastern European countries with those of the six old

member states, once again no clear pattern is apparent with regard to the extent to which candidates address EP/European issues.

With regard to Table 4, the most remarkable contribution seems to be the high percentage of Slovenian and British governmental sites providing EP election content on the front page: all governmental sites in these samples provided this type of content. For Slovenia, this may be due to its first participation in this pan-European event; governmental organizations may have placed much information, relatively speaking, on the EP election for this reason. However, another eastern European country participating for the first time in this election was Hungary. In this country only 52% of the governmental websites provided EP election content on the front page. The score for European content on the front page was slightly higher in the Hungarian sample: 69% of the governmental sites contained this type of content, about the EU-9 average. In the United Kingdom regional elections were held simultaneously with the 2004 EP election. British governmental actors may have been more motivated to provide content on their websites related to elections in general – the EP election just being one of the two – in comparison with other countries in the study. Furthermore, little EU/EP-related news could be found in the news sections of French and Finnish governmental sites (respectively 38% and 29%), which is not consistent with the relatively high percentage of European content on front page in the same samples. Similarly, the British governmental sites provided no EU/EP-related news. As mentioned earlier, governmental sites often do not incorporate sophisticated features such as an up-to-date news section on their websites. This may explain these low percentages. Irish governmental websites scored quite low on the variable EP election on their front pages: 19%. Again, in comparing the percentages of the three new Eastern European countries with those of the six old member states, no clear pattern is present regarding the extent to which governmental organizations address EP/European issues.

Table 4: EP election/ European content provided by government actors per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page (N=140)	European content front page (N=114)	EU/EP-related news (N=80)	European content within 2 links (N=80)
	%	%	%	%
CZ	67	100	78	100
FI	78	89	38	75
FR	70	88	29	100
HU	52	69	50	56
IR	19	55	47	41
IT	40	25	100	0
NL	56	43	67	67
SL	100	100	64	79
UK	100	100	0	0
Total EU-9	61	70	53	65

Table 5 focuses on websites produced by NGOs and labour unions. Again, Slovenia and the United Kingdom are the positive exception: all six Slovenian and 21 British sites provided both EP election content and general European content on their front pages. As mentioned before, it is especially within this category that large differences can be observed between the variable ‘EP election content on the front page’, and the variable ‘European content on front page’. In particular, the Czech, Finnish and Hungarian NGO and labour union websites contained relatively large amounts of European content on their front pages in comparison with EP election content: the Czech sample (respectively 61% and 28%), the Finnish sample (respectively 56% and 28%) and the Hungarian sample (respectively 59% and 23%). In the samples for these countries, percentages were similar or even higher for the variables

‘EU/EP-related news in the news section’ and/or ‘European content within two links from the front page.

Table 5: EP election/ European content provided by NGOs/labour unions per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page (N=144)	European content front page (N=119)	EU/EP-related news (N=55)	European content within 2 links (N=55)
	%	%		%
CZ	28	61	100	100
FI	28	56	30	100
FR	32	47	44	100
HU	23	58	57	57
IR	6	31	40	60
IT	29	31	100	100
NL	21	18	33	67
SL	100	100	50	75
UK	100	100	0	0
Total EU-9	38	46	56	84

Again, no substantial differences were found between Eastern and Western European NGO/labour union websites. The general picture for these actors, a low percentage of EP election content and a higher percentage for general EU content, seems to be consistent with the frequently made argument that NGOs and labour unions do not have direct interest in elections. The role of these actors seems to be directed towards lobbying and organizing public actions outside electoral periods.

Table 6 reports on websites of political parties. Political party websites score relatively high on all variables across the EU-9 sample. It should be mentioned that this category consists of a variety of websites produced by political parties; in addition to a general website and/or a website devoted to the EP election, some political parties also produced their own online journals or websites devoted to youth audiences. These websites did not always contain European content or focus on the 2004 EP election.

Table 6: EP election/ European content provided by political parties per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page (N=145)	European content front page (N=125)	EU/EP-related news (N=112)	European content within 2 links (N=112)
	%	%	%	%
CZ	96	96	96	96
FI	79	79	36	91
FR	57	86	42	67
HU	86	85	64	55
IR	71	64	56	89
IT	100	100	60	50
NL	100	100	57	71
SL	100	100	33	80
UK	100	100	43	14
Total EU-9	88	90	58	74

Furthermore, some websites were produced by political parties that only participate in national elections. In some national samples, as a result, political party websites scored quite low on this variable, especially the political party websites in the French sample (57%). Dutch, Italian, Slovenian and British party websites, on the other hand, scored 100% on the variable ‘EP election content’, and on ‘European content on front page’. French political parties scored higher on this last variable (86%);

they apparently considered ‘Europe’ as a general issue important enough to report on, despite their lack of involvement in the EP election. In contrast, only 33% of the Slovenian political party websites provided EU/EP-related news in the news section; Finnish political party websites also scored low in this variable (36%). In comparing the percentages of the three new Eastern European countries with those of the six old member states, no clear pattern is evident regarding the extent to which political parties address EP/European issues.

In Table 7 the results are outlined for the actor type press. It should be mentioned again that a press organization was defined as ‘news/publishing organization that creates its own content’. This includes, for example, community portals that are operated by publishers of local magazines and newspapers. Of the press organizations in the EU-9 sample, considered by many as the ‘watchdog’ of state power, only 64% provided content related to the EP election. Large variations could be observed, however, between the countries: only 11% of all the press sites in the Irish sample contained EP election content on their front pages, in contrast to 100% in the Czech sample. However, a substantially higher percentage of the Irish press websites provided general European content elsewhere, either in the news section, or within two links from the front pages. Similar observations were made for other countries. The Eastern European countries in the EU-9 sample seem to score relatively high (Czech Republic 100%, Hungary 86%, Slovenia 89% on the variable EP election) in comparison to the Western European countries. A possible explanation for this difference may be that the press takes its role as ‘watchdog’ of the government in these former Communist states more seriously than is done by press organizations in the Western European countries.

Table 7: EP election/ European content provided by press actors per EU member state

Country	EP election content front page (N=80)	European content front page (N= 72)	EU/EP-related news (N=47)	European content within 2 links (N=47)
	%	%	%	%
CZ	100	100	100	100
FI	88	88	43	100
FR	50	60	100	100
HU	86	86	67	83
IR	11	33	100	67
IT	67	63	100	100
NL	30	13	0	0
SL	89	100	43	71
UK	67	63	100	60
Total EU-9	64	65	77	85

6. Conclusions

This study suggests that within the context of the 2004 EP election campaign, in nine EU member states, there are multiple websites communicating about Europe and/or the European Parliament election as a specific event. This observation is similar to what Eder and Kantner (2000: 102) define as the key indicator of a shared European public sphere: whether the same European issues are being addressed on various websites in different European countries at the same moment in time.

In one sense, the percentage of websites in the EU-9 sample that contained EP election content, 68%, is not high, in particular because of the search strategy followed. This seems surprising, mainly because of the status of the European Parliament as being one of the two legislative bodies of the EU whose decisions affect all EU citizens. At the same time, the political actors in the sample did communicate more often about more general European issues, either on the site front page or on a page within two links from that page. In particular non-institutionalized and less traditional actors such

as NGOs and labour unions used their websites to communicate relatively more frequently about Europe and general European issues than was done about the EP election – apparently these actors considered their own influence in this election minor, or simply did not care about the event because of their own national focus. Still, a high degree of Europeanization could be found on websites produced by these actors. We consider this an indicator of the existence a European public sphere.

The extent of Europeanization also varied substantially between the countries included in the study. Websites produced by British and Slovenian actors often contained communication about Europe, on both the EP election and more general European issues; Irish actors scored relatively low on both variables. Most other countries scored around 68% on the variable EP election. When comparing Eastern and Western European countries, clear variation was only found with the site actor type 'press'. Individual countries, however, do suggest interesting deviant situations, like the Slovenian governmental organizations and NGOs/labour unions that provided a relatively high amount of European content on their websites. Also, French candidates and parties scored relatively low on the variable EP election content in comparison to the high average scores for the EU-9 sample. These political actors, however, communicated in a more general sense about Europe and European issues on their websites, like most other political actors in the EU-9 sample. In so doing, these individuals and organizations may have influenced the ongoing political discussion during the period of the campaign. In all likelihood, these websites contributed to a general European public sphere: actors gained a degree of visibility unavailable through the traditional mass media and had the possibility to address particular European issues and express opinions.

This investigation, it should be stressed, is exploratory and, consequently, limited. The fact that political actors on their websites simultaneously address particular European issues and events on their websites is only one indicator of the existence of a European public sphere. We know little about the characteristics of the 'European content' present on websites, we only know the extent to which this content is visible on websites of political actors. As outlined in the theoretical section of this article, we consider it of equal importance in the construction of a European public sphere that this online communication contains a European perspective or shared interpretative context. Further research should focus on this aspect. For the time being, however, these results suggest that political actors do use their websites to communicate about European issues and events.

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Framing Europe online: French political parties and the European election of 2004

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Framing Europe online: French political parties and the European election of 2004

Renée Van Os

Abstract. In this article, the notion of Europeanization of political communication and the possible development of a European public sphere is explored. The article offers a concrete approach to investigating this notion with direct reference to the Internet. Specifically, I examine the unfolding of communicative interaction on the websites of French political parties in the context of the 2004 European Parliament election. Through their websites, parties offer a particular perspective on European news, issues and events, suggesting whether and why discrete issues broadly concerning Europe are (or should be) socially and politically relevant. Three interpretative frames, derived from theory, are examined in the paper: *interests*, *identity* and *values*. It was found that the three frames coexist in various sections of the websites within the French sample. Specifically, European interests and identity are usually expressed in combination with national interests and values. Universal values are frequently expressed, both in relation to France and the EU. Overall, the findings point to a general ‘feeling of belonging to Europe’ among a number of the French political parties included in the sample. These parties did, to a degree, communicate from a ‘Europeanized’ perspective.

1. Introduction

It is commonly argued that public support for EU policy and institutions is low in most EU Member States, what is referred to as the EU ‘democratic deficit’. Many scholars have argued that a European shared discursive space has the potential to reduce this democratic deficit of the European Union (EU), and the European Parliament (EP) as its only directly elected body, by enhancing processes of identification among participants living in different EU Member States (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003; Koopmans et al., 2004). Communicative interaction on European issues or events, in direct face-to-face interaction, or indirectly through old and new media representations, is considered central to the construction of this shared, discursive space (Eder & Kantner, 2000; Risse, 2003; Van de Steeg, 2002).

In this article, I explore the notion of Europeanization of political communication, and the possible development of a European public sphere, and present a concrete approach to investigating this notion with direct reference to the Internet. Specifically, I examine in an exploratory manner the unfolding of communicative interaction on the websites of French political parties in the context of the 2004 European Parliament election. Through their websites, parties offer a particular perspective on European news, issues and events, suggesting whether and why discrete issues broadly concerning Europe are (or should be) socially and politically relevant. This article explores the *framing* of Europe within these online communicative interactions, with specific reference to three different interpretative frames: interests, identity and values. Are European issues addressed by political parties in the context of the EP election? If so, are national or European interests stressed? Is an identity present in the text, be it European, or other group identities such as a national, regional or ethnic? Can expressions be found that refer to universal values when European issues are addressed?

2. Europeanization of political communication – the notion of ‘European public sphere’

The notion of ‘public sphere’ has firstly been elaborated by Jürgen Habermas in his study *The structural transformations of the public sphere* (Habermas, 1989). This notion, that places emphasis on the deliberative and discursive aspects of democracy, could be summarized as being the intermediary space between politics and society, or as the “forum in which the private people come together to form a public” (Habermas, 1989: 25). In the academic tradition that has emerged around Habermas’ initial contribution, the public sphere has been granted the normative status of being “the

space within which the affairs of the state could be subjected to public scrutiny” (Kunelius & Sparks, 2001: 11).

In the current discussion on European integration, the notion of ‘public sphere’ has begun to play a central role. Against the background of the democratic deficit of the EU, scholars recognise that the process of European integration from above must be accompanied by a Europeanization of political communication in order to overcome the lack of legitimacy and popular involvement in the EU (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003).²² Scholars however disagree how to deal, both theoretically and empirically, with the notion of public sphere at the European level. Early scholars as Grimm (1995), Kielmansegg (1996) and Schlesinger (1999) have insisted on the non existence of a European public sphere, based on unsubstantiated assumptions concerning the character of the public sphere and its relation to key concepts such as language, the media system and the state’s frontiers (Van de Steeg, Rauer, Rivet, & Risse, 2003). They claim none of these to be present in the current EU, and therefore prefer to speak of the ‘Europeanization of national public spheres’ instead of the development of a ‘genuine’ European public sphere. Others hold a less strict attitude towards what constitutes a ‘European public sphere’, and consider a public sphere not as a pre-existing community that then translates into a public sphere, but rather a discursive community that emerges around debating a specific issue (Risse, 2003; Van de Steeg et al., 2003). As Risse argues: “A European public sphere does not fall from heaven, and does not pre-exist outside social and political discourse. Rather, it is being constructed through social and discursive practices creating common horizon of reference and, at the same time, a transnational community of communication over issues that concern ‘us as Europeans’ rather than British, French, Germans or Dutch” (Risse, 2003: 2).

Although I do not have the intention here to take a position in this debate about the (non-) existence of a European public sphere – this is essentially a matter of definition – I do agree with Risse and colleagues that scholarly research should focus foremost on the extent in which, and the nature of people *communicating about Europe*.

Only few empirical studies are available that measure elements of Europeanization of political communication. Risse and Van de Steeg (2003) distinguish two approaches. The first approach essentially counts how often Europe, European institutions or European affairs are mentioned in the mass media (Gerhards, 1993, 2000). Both Risse and Van de Steeg, as well as Trenz, conclude that the issue salience (visibility) of European affairs in the mass media has raised during the last decennium (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz, 2004). A second, more qualitative, approach concentrates on analysing media reporting on particular European issues (Eder & Kantner, 2000; Trenz, 2000; Van de Steeg, 2002, 2004); these studies observe that European issues are being discussed and reported in the various media across Europe at the same time, at similar levels of attention in the issue cycle of media reporting, and in a similar fashion. Risse and Van de Steeg argue that these framings of particular European themes in similar ways across national media lead to similar interpretative schemes and structures of meaning, which they consider an important pre-condition for the emergence of what they refer to as a ‘transnational community of communication’, and accordingly a European public sphere. Similarly, Trenz speaks of the ‘thematic field’, i.e. “the specific meanings, expectations and world views that are channelled through/conveyed by these debates” (Trenz, 2004: 308).

²² This discussion is – at least partially – nourished by normative demands: scholars argue for the *need* for the EU to have a public sphere, and the *need* for political actors (including citizens) to address/discuss European issues and events.

Trenz (2004) distinguishes another analytical element of a (European) public sphere: the *connectivity* of communication within a given, but changeable, communicative context. This aspect corresponds to what others have referred to as the ‘structure of communication’. For example, Koopmans and colleagues argue that “the spatial reach and boundaries of public communication can be determined by investigating patterns of communicative flows and assessing the relative density of public communication with and between different political spaces” (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003: 13; Koopmans et al., 2004: 12). This approach has however not been incorporated in this article.

3. Framing Europe

This article draws upon the argumentation of Risse and Van de Steeg in the understanding of the Europeanization of political communication, and the possible development of a European public sphere. It focuses on discursive aspects of online communication about European issues and events, and investigates whether similar meaning structures and patterns of interpretation are used within one (part of a) national public sphere when European issues are addressed. Comparisons with other countries (EU member states) are not drawn in this article.

Similar to Risse and Van de Steeg, Trenz argues that it is the interpretative context in which European news, issues and events are addressed in the media, which tells us whether and why an issue is relevant. He even views this interpretative context, or frame, in which European issues and events are addressed, as “the qualitative criteria for the existence of a European public sphere” (Trenz, 2004: 308-309). Producers of mediated representations, such as newspaper articles and television news frame their messages about European issues from particular perspectives (Eder, Kantner, & Trenz, 2000). Textual elements – such as the usage of particular words, expressions, and/or connotations – are functional to the formation of a particular image, or portrayal, of Europe. In this article, I argue that, in a similar fashion, political actors apply a particular perspective when addressing European issues and events on their websites. Furthermore, in this manner, these online documents contain indications about the Europe the producers – that is to say, political parties themselves – have in mind; this in contrast to the opinion or attitude towards Europe the mass media attribute to parties when reporting on them.²³ Research performed in this area has, however, been performed within a mass-mediated environment; the proposed conceptual frameworks can, nevertheless, be used in the investigation of online communication of political parties on their websites. This section will elaborate on the most important contributions.

Often referred to as point of departure, is Jürgen Gerhards’ claim that, in order for a Europeanization of communication-process to take place, an actor when communicating about a European issue or event, should also “evaluate it from a perspective that extends beyond one’s country and interest” (Gerhards, 2000: 293). Others seem to agree with Gerhards on this point, and consider it foremost important that actors not only communicate about European issues (as put forward by Eder and Kantner), but that they also communicate from a European perspective (De Vreese, 2003; Hodess, 1997; Kevin, 2001; Semetko, De Vreese, & Peter, 2000). For example, Semetko, De Vreese and Peter have investigated the extent to which European issues, problems, events and personages in national news are framed as ‘European’ or ‘domestic’. They conclude that European and Brussels-based news has become more important in the last few years for national news media. European integration and

²³ I acknowledge that there is only modest contribution of the Internet generally, and websites of political parties specifically, to the public sphere, and therefore also to a possible European public sphere. Despite its remarkable growth and level of use, the Internet remains of minor importance in election campaigns as compared to the mass media or print materials distributed by political parties. In France only 49% of the citizens reports using the Internet, which is below the EU-15 average of 53%. Source: Flash Eurobarometer 135. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl135_en.pdf.

the EU are not only present in news coverage of genuinely European issues, but are also increasingly an integral part of national political and economic coverage (Semetko et al., 2000: 129).

Risse and Van de Steeg (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Van de Steeg et al., 2003) have focused on the debate that emerged across Europe in 2000 about the rise of a right-wing populist party in Austria (Jörg Haider's FPÖ). They investigated to what extent newspapers from various countries used similar frames of reference when addressing the Haider issue. Risse and Van de Steeg discovered that similar meaning structures emerged across all 15 newspapers from five EU member states; of the 22 frames identified, six appeared frequently in every newspaper: two of them were directly related to Europe: "Europe as a moral community" and "European legal standards" (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003-7). Risse and Van de Steeg consider these common collective understandings of what the EU is all about as a precondition for a viable European public sphere.

These and other empirical studies constitute the backdrop for an explorative investigation of the framing of Europe on websites of French political parties in the context of the 2004 EP campaign. This investigation is structured around three frames, 'patterns of interpretation', in which European issues are addressed in the mass media, identified by Eder et al. (Eder et al., 2000; Eder, Kantner, & Trenz, 2002). First, an article may raise a European issue in the context of particular interests: the producer of the text suggests that the issue is relevant for us because it touches our particular sphere of interests. This frame, referred to as *interests* or *instrumental* frame, is under consideration when, in relation to a particular issue, rational arguments and/ or motivations are put forward that refer to specific interests or strategic actions. Interest can potentially be conflicting with other interests inside Europe, or between Europe and other actors. But also the emphasis in the text on particular advantages or disadvantages in relation to a European issue, or a reference to functional obligations, indicates the presence of an interests/instrumental frame (Eder et al., 2002: 45-46). Second, an article may raise a European issue in the context of particular identities: the text suggests that the issue is relevant for us because it touches our collective identity. An *identity* frame is present when arguments and/ or motivations are put forward that refer to the ethnic self-awareness or the collective identity of a particular community. In this manner, a 'WE relation' is created.²⁴ The 'WE group' determines itself as regional, national, ethnic or as a European 'WE group'. Examples of an identity frame are references to 'our homeland' and 'our culture', reference to a 'European community', and emphasis on a shared past and a common future (Eder et al., 2002: 44). Third, an article may raise a European issue in the context of particular moral values: the issue is considered relevant because it touches a universal sphere of values. A *values* frame is, according to Eder, Kantner and Trenz present when, in relation to a particular European issue, arguments and/ or motivations are put forward that refer to universally acknowledged moral principles. Here, 'values' are thus understood as universal values. Statements with regard to an issue may construct an explicit relation with general normative principles that are considered valid for the institutional context of the EU, candidate Member States or any other country with which the article deals. Example of these universal values are: democratic principles, freedom, human rights, political equality, and tolerance²⁵ (Eder et al., 2002: 44-45). Eder, Kantner and Trenz thus provide us a tool for investigation of political parties framings of Europe on their websites in the context of the 2004 EP election. Before these questions are addressed, however, I elaborate on the 2004 EP election and the Internet in the next section.

²⁴ National, regional or European identities should be seen as social identities. Social identities are defined in terms of internal coherence and external closure: on one hand sameness within a social group is emphasized (WE-group), on the other hand differences with other social groups are put forward (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004; Hijmans, 2003; Triandafyllidou, 1998).

²⁵ A more extensive elaboration on the instrument of Eder, Kantner & Trenz is provided elsewhere (Van Os, Wester, & Jankowski, 2007).

4. The 2004 European Parliament election and the Internet

EP elections have frequently been criticised as having little significance for voters. They are often qualified as ‘second order national contests’, and tend to attract less attention by all political actors – parties, interest groups, candidates, voters – and the mass media. Reasons are partially situated in the limited powers of the European Parliament in the EU, which has only recently been granted so-called ‘co decision’ powers with the Council of Ministers (Hix, 2005; Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997). Scholars argue that EP elections cannot be considered truly ‘European’ elections, because they are still organized along national lines instead of European ones, and, as a result, are fought over domestic rather than European issues (Franklin, 2001; Hix, 2005). Low voter turnouts characterized the 2004 EP election, the average turnout for the EU was 48.2% and fell for the first time in the history of EP elections below the 50% level. In France, only 43.1% went to the ballot box, compared with 46.8% in 1999.

In 2004, for the first time in French history, the EP election was organized at the regional level. In earlier EP elections, parties competed at the national level, presenting national lists of candidates. For the 2004 EP election, the government decided to form eight electoral districts. Parties were obliged to present separate lists of candidates in each of the eight districts. This decision was criticized by many as “having no correspondence to the current situation in France; not at the political level, nor at the administrative, geographical, or historical level”²⁶ (Perrineau, 2005: 21). This situation resulted in 8 “peripheral” campaigns, which were hardly visible and often led by second-class political leaders (Perrineau, 2005: 21-22).

One new feature of this EP election, missing from previous EP elections, was the widespread availability of the Internet. It is the unlimited possibility for every person or organisation to place a website, which can (potentially) be accessed by a large number of people, within the public domain of cyberspace, which is frequently referred to as the uniqueness of the Internet (Mittra & Cohen, 1999). Early ‘cyber-optimists’ like Rheingold referred this situation as the ‘democratic potential’ of the Internet (Rheingold, 1993). Although expectations have been lowered substantially since the 1990s, the Internet is still considered having the potential to facilitate modest transformation in the political arena (Norris, 2001). Empirical research carefully starts to verify this position. Norris points towards the progress made by minor and fringe political parties in terms of Web presence and sophistication of websites (Norris, 2003). Foot and Schneider mention the importance of the independent political websites developed by advocacy groups, civic organizations and mainstream and alternative press (Foot & Schneider, 2002).

As concerns political party websites, in two comparative studies, Gibson and colleagues observed that websites of political parties in the UK and in the US primarily provide ‘standard’ information about the party organization and policy, and in some cases, personality (Gibson, Margolis, Resnick, & Ward, 2003). They conclude that “parties do not exploit the Internet to its full potential”; they thereby refer to parties’ apparent disinterest to incorporate participatory elements on their websites (Gibson, Nixon, & Ward, 2003). Villalba, in a study on the Internet use by French political parties, found a similar focus on information provision. He concludes that both candidates and parties consider the supplying of information that allow citizens to make their choice as most important. Yet, Villalba seems to hold a more positive assertion on this preference of political parties to provide mainly static information on their websites. He merely stresses advantages for citizens, who could obtain considerable information by comparing the different party programmes online. In this context, he speaks of the ‘Internet-citizen’, who would truly become the agent of his or her information (Villalba, 2003). Furthermore,

²⁶ French quotations throughout this article have been translated by the author.

scholars who have investigated people's motivations for visiting a political party or candidate website during election campaigns, discovered that visitors themselves were primarily looking for information about the positions of the party, and information about the party and candidates themselves. Participation in political discussion and contact via email were less often mentioned as reasons for visiting a political party website (Stromer-Galley, Foot, Schneider, & Larsen, 2001; Voerman & Boogers, 2005).

These issues have led to the choice of analyzing party websites' online 'static' content. Although many scholars who have studied party websites in the context of election campaigns seem to consider participatory elements as most promising feature for enhancing citizens engagement in elections/politics, or more generally, in the public sphere (Kamarck, 1999), I argue here that other, static elements on websites, and especially elaborations on the party's positions, also play an important role in informing about and engaging citizens in the electoral campaign, and consequently have their own particular function in the public sphere. As Norris argues, within representative democracy (she links this notion directly to the public sphere) multiple sources of information need to be available, so that citizens can elect their governmental representatives from an informed position (Norris, 2001). In this interpretation, old and new mass media hold a central position in modern society.

In the situation of European Parliament elections which are, as mentioned before, often considered 'second order national contests', it may be even more important for political parties to maintain a website as an alternative for disseminating European issues, which are generally less intensely covered by the mass media than national political issues (Hix, 2005; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997). Second, during the past two decades, it has become acceptable for both television and the print media to include "an interpretative, and therefore inherently subjective, component to their campaign coverage" (Gulati, Just, & Crigler, 2004: 243). The Internet seems to be the perfect medium for political parties to circumvent this 'interpretative reporting' of the mass media, and to inform citizens directly and systematically about their positions on EU policy and legislation for the upcoming period (Nixon & Johansson, 1999; Ward, Gibson, & Nixon, 2003).

One may question whether an EP election serves as an appropriate occasion event to measure (non-) existence of a European public sphere. As Van de Steeg argues: "It might sound rather negative for the state of democracy in the EU, and the role of the European Parliament, but the parliamentary elections are probably one of the least likely cases for an EU public discourse" (Van de Steeg, 2004: 145). On the other hand, previous studies have supported the notion that media attention to genuine EU events/issues is cyclical (De Vreese, 2001; Norris, 2000). De Vreese, for example, has found that in the context of three major EU events – one of them being the 1999 EP election – 'Europe' was only marginally visible on the television news agenda prior to the events and vanished almost completely after a peak of varying intensity (De Vreese, 2001). Political actors may apply a similar strategy when addressing political issues on their websites. Furthermore, as De Vreese, Peter and Semetko outline, using a common European event to investigate the mass media reporting on Europe has the following advantage: we may obtain better measures for cross-national comparison of framing of a common event than would be possible with general political and economic coverage about unrelated domestic events (De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001).

5. Method and research questions

Of the 41 political parties that participated in the 2004 EP election campaign, only 10 fielded candidates in all 8 districts.²⁷ The district in which most political parties participated was the district *Île-de-France*, which is located around Paris: 28 different lists of candidates. In contrast, in the district

²⁷ Source: <http://francepolitique.free.fr/> (Consulted: 7 April 2005).

Outre-Mer only 15 parties yielded candidates. Included in the study are political parties that fielded candidates in at least seven of the eight districts, and that were expected to obtain seats in the EP in this election, based on previous election results and opinion polls. Table 1 provides an overview of the parties and sites included in the study.

As Table 1 shows, seven parties established temporary websites devoted to the 2004 EP election campaign: UMP (*Union Mouvement Populaire*), UDF (*Union Démocratie Française*), *Front National*, RPF (*Rassemblement Pour la France*), MPF (*Mouvement Pour la France*), *Parti Socialiste* and *Les Verts*. The last two parties in the row had also produced election-oriented websites for each of the eight electoral districts in addition to the national election site. For comparative purposes, these regional sites are not included in the study. The election website of MPF had even temporarily replaced the ‘general’ party website. The parties LCR (*Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*), *Lutte Ouvrière* (who were competing together with one, combined list in this election), and CPNT (*Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Tradition*) had not created a specific election website, but had devoted a specific part of the general website to the 2004 EP election. *Parti Communiste* was the only party in the sample that did not have a specific website or section of the general website in which EP-election oriented content was placed. *Parti Communiste* placed this type of content within different, essentially two, parts of the website.

Table 1 French political parties examined during 2004 EP election

Party Name	Aff.*	Website	Election website	Seats**
Parti Socialiste	L	http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/	http://www.europesocialiste.org/	31
Les Verts	L.Eco	http://www.les-verts.org/	http://elections.lesverts.fr/	6
UMP	R	http://www.u-m-p.org/	http://www.ump-europeennes2004.org/	17
UDF	R	http://www.udf.org/	http://www.udf-europe.net/	11
Liste de Villiers (MPF)	R.Sov	http://www.autre-europe.org/	http://www.villiers2004.com/	3
Front National	Ex.R	http://frontnational.com/	http://www.europeennes2004.com/	7
Parti Communiste	L	http://www.pcf.fr/	-	2
Liste Pasqua (RPF)	R.Sov	-	http://www.europe-des-nations.com/	0
Lutte Ouvrière	Ex.L	http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/	-	0
LCR	Ex.L	http://www.lcr-rouge.org/	-	0
CPNT	D.Sov	http://www.cpnt.asso.fr/	-	0

* Affiliation: Ex.L = Extreme Left; L = Left; L.Eco = Green Left; R = Right; R.Sov = Right Sovereign; Ex.R = Extreme Right; D.Sov = Diverse Sovereign.

** Source: <http://francepolitique.free.fr/> (Consulted: 7 April 2005).

Nomination of candidates for the EP election closed on 17 May 2004, four weeks before Election Day, which allowed only a relatively short period for campaigning. The campaign was concentrated during the last 10 days. The corpus of websites was archived twice in that period: on 1 and 2 June 2004, and on 8 and 9 June 2004. These two moments provide data at the beginning and close to the end of the campaign.²⁸

This study investigates the online-only texts plus images that accompany the text, produced by the party especially for this outlet, in which they elaborate on their issue positions and argumentations on Europe. This means that articles originally produced by press agents and placed online by the party in the news or press section of their websites have not been included in the study. Some parties placed their offline magazines (weekly/monthly) on their websites; there are also not included. Weblogs maintained by a party leader and/or an campaign team, which usually report on campaign activities and not on the party's position on Europe, are also not included. Included in the study is all other

²⁸ Sites were archived with the tool *Teleport Ultra*. See <http://www.tenmax.com>. In addition, I would like to thank Annie-Claude Salomon of the Pacte CNRS-IEP Research Centre in Grenoble, France, for providing me access to their archive of party websites.

online-only material present on the websites: for example news articles produced by the party, formal elaborations on the party's positions (usually a short version of the more extensive, 'offline' party manifesto), and more informal deliberations on particular aspects of the EU or European integration.

The selected content of political party websites was coded in a qualitative, interpretative manner. The coding scheme as developed by Eder et al. (2002) for the identification of the three interpretative frames of Europe was used. For each of the frames, this coding scheme contains a general description of the frame, plus a listing of key words.²⁹

The explorative investigation presented in this article will lead to answering the question: *In what manner do French political parties frame Europe on their websites in the context of the 2004 EP election?* More specifically, following in the approach of Eder, Kantner and Trenz, three particular frames are investigated here. First, are national or European interests stressed? Second, is an identity present in the text, be it European, or other group identities such as a national, regional or ethnic? And third, can expressions be found that refer to universal values when European issues are addressed?

6. Framing of Europe on French political party websites

This section reports on an explorative investigation performed on the archived websites created and maintained by the ten largest French political parties in the campaign period prior to the 2004 EP election. The section is structured per frame and reports on whether and how these frames appear on the websites in the sample.

6.1. Interests frame

Generally speaking, the degree to which a political party places emphasis on European or national interests within its online content seems to be related to its general attitude regarding European integration (whether they are in favour of or against further European integration). Two political parties included in the study are opposed to further European integration and, as a result, stress only negative aspects of the EU. First, the extreme right political party *Front National* portrays the EU as being harmful and disadvantageous for France and its citizens. *Front National* speaks of the "insanity of Europe" and the "loss of sovereignty" for France.

"Let's denounce this permanent wish of Brussels to reconsider our industrial means, to attack our public services."

Front National wants a "Europe `a la carte', which implies modification of existing treaties in line with national interests and refuses to sign new contractual agreements contradictory to national interests. The second right-wing, contra-EU political party *Mouvement pour la France* (MPF), considers Europe as currently governed by the Commissioners as "not protecting our safety, our jobs or our identity." According to the MPF, France should regain its power and control in the EU, and reflects this position on its site as reflected by the following quote: "We refuse to allow our agriculture and countryside to be killed by Europe."³⁰

It is, consequently, not surprising that on the websites of these two political parties no expressions can be found that emphasize European interests or positive aspects of the EU for France; only national interests are noted.

²⁹ The coding scheme for this study can be found in Appendix D.

³⁰ <http://www.villiers2004.com/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

All of the other eleven political parties included in this study present, in varying degrees, European integration as advantageous for France. They thereby seem to portray Europe, at least partially, as a single entity with shared interests. Two groups can be identified: those that fully support the current process of European integration, and those that are in favour of a unified Europe, but not in the present format. The latter group is formed by three – extreme – left wing political parties: *Parti Communiste*, LCR and *Lutte Ouvrière*. Both *Lutte Ouvrière* and LCR, which collectively ran candidates for office in the 2004 EP election, mention frequently that “ ‘their’ Europe is not ‘our’ Europe,” as reflected in this quotation from the site of *Lutte Ouvrière*:

“Their Europe is only concerned with increasing the profits of the industrials and financial groups.”³¹

With ‘they’ and ‘their’ *Lutte Ouvrière* and LCR refer to domination by – from their perspective large – capitalist groups in the EU. They claim to defend the interests of European citizens, and more specifically European workers, against capitalists that govern Europe. As *Lutte Ouvrière* argues:

“Borders do not protect workers against the bourgeoisie. Unfavourable decisions are taken in the last years both by national governments and European institutions.”³²

In sum, these parties seem to consider Europe as one entity, facing common issues and problems. These parties do yet not show much affection towards this entity.

The last roughly divided group of political parties is those generally in favour of European integration, three of them being large political parties seated in the National Assembly. Related to, and perhaps as a result of this positive attitude towards European integration, the political parties *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP), *Parti Socialiste*, *Union pour une Démocratie Française* (UDF), *Les Verts* and *Rassemblement pour la France* (RPF) portray Europe as still under construction, but nevertheless an entity to which they hold a generally positive attitude. Although not sharing the same opinion on the direction of further integration, they generally portray the EU and its Member States as having shared interests; advantages of the EU are emphasized, such as the Euro and the free exchange of goods and people after the borders were removed between Member States. As argued by *Parti Socialiste*:

“Faced with challenges related to terrorism, international crime, traffic of human beings, national answers are no longer sufficient.”³³

Parti Socialiste frequently mentions the defence of interests of the European citizen in general, without mentioning specifically the benefits for or interests of the French citizens. UMP, UDF and RPF express such references more frequently. They combine emphasis on European interests by mentioning at least some benefits of European integration for France and its citizens. For example UDF, which demands the EU to act as beneficiary for European farmers in general, and the French farmers specifically.³⁴

So, generally speaking, most French political parties, in the online content in which the 2004 EP election and related issues are addressed, seem to emphasize European interests, usually in combination with the mentioning some benefits of European integration for the French electorate.

³¹ <http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/> (Consulted 1 June 2004).

³² <http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/> (Consulted 1 June 2004).

³³ <http://www.europesocialiste.org/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

³⁴ <http://www.udf-europe.net/> (Consulted 2 June 2004).

These expressions can be considered indicators of a feeling of ‘belonging to Europe’ as formulated by these political parties, and can further be considered qualitative measurements of a Europeanization of political communication, and possibly the presence of a European public sphere.

6.2. Identity frame

As previously mentioned, most political parties seem to portray Europe as one entity, at least to some degree. Not all parties formulate such expressions with affective terms such as ‘we’ and ‘us’ when referring to the EU. It could be argued that those that do not use such terminology do not consider themselves truly part of this entity. *Les Verts* speak much in terms of ‘us, Europeans’ when addressing European issues. Being member of the European Green Party, that unites the different European ecological political parties, they claim to be ‘truly European’. They make reference to a shared past, and also a common future of ‘Europe’/the EU, which can be considered strong indicators of the presence of a European identity:

“The results of the European elections of 2004 to be held in an enlarged EU of 25 countries, determine our common future.”³⁵

At the other extreme, both *Front National* and MPF, opposing European integration in whatever format, only speak in terms of a national identity in their online communication. These parties speak in terms of ‘our’ culture, ‘our’ identity, but only in reference to France. Most political parties express, however, a more mixed identity in relation to this event, that is to say both European and national features of identity could be observed within their online communication. For example PRF, which expresses on one hand:

“Europe, that is the pride of a great history and a great civilization.”³⁶

On the other hand, however, this party claims to be in favour of a ‘Europe of the peoples’ that “respects our culture, our jobs and our companies.” With ‘our’ they clearly refer to the French culture, jobs and companies, that RPF wants to be preserved.

Also UMP claims that the defence of a French identity in Europe has their priority, “and with its identity, also its language, its way of life and its cultural diversity.” On the other hand, UMP states the EP election to be important because Europe is “the common horizon of our peoples, and because Europe is the frame in which decisions are taken that directly and concretely affect our daily life.” So also UMP seems to show a mixed identity.

The left-wing parties *Lutte Ouvrière*, LCR, *Parti Communiste*, as well as the more ‘mainstream’ left-wing party *Parti Socialiste*, usually communicate about Europe without expressing much identity (national/European) references. They speak in general terms about how they would prefer Europe to develop in the future. Both *Lutte Ouvrière* and LCR express a ‘protector of the workers’ identity instead of a specific national or European identity.³⁷

In short, not all French political parties seem to express something like a European identity in their online content related to the 2004 EP election. Some firmly claim to defend a national identity, others prefer to be non-committal in terms of identity when addressing European issues, or replicate their ideological identity to the European situation. This practice, however, does not need to indicate the

³⁵ <http://elections.lesverts.fr/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

³⁶ <http://www.europe-des-nations.com/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

³⁷ <http://www.lcr-rouge.org/> (Consulted 1 June 2004).

absence of a European identity among these actors, since it does seem to indicate some ‘feeling of belonging together’, and ‘sharing the same identity’ across the EU and its Member States.

6.3. Universal values frame

Most political parties mention democratic values when referring to the EU, usually in relation to the European Constitution project. Except for *MPF* and *Front National*, they all state that the EU will become more democratic with the adoption of the European Constitution in 2005. As UMP states:

“The project of the constitutional treaty constitutes a major historical step forward on the path towards a more democratic, efficient and transparent European Union.”³⁸

Both *Parti Socialiste* and *Parti Communiste* refer to the principle of ‘citoyenneté’ when addressing European issues. This idea, which can best be described as a form of citizenship including social and political rights, can in their view be applied to every society, thus also to a European one. As *Parti Communiste* argues:

“Citoyenneté supposes effective rights that are recognized and assured for everybody, establishing a backdrop for this European community.”³⁹

Human rights and equality are mentioned by most political parties. For example *Lutte Ouvrière* claims to be “in favour of equal rights between the European peoples, between men and women, between immigrated and French workers.”⁴⁰

Les Verts also stress the presence of universal values shared throughout the EU. They consider their ecological politics to be:

“The only key allowing to advance towards a Europe corresponding with our aspirations and with those of the large majority of our citizens, towards a Europe capable of responding to today’s great challenges within the areas of solidarity, social justice, cultural diversity, the environment, democracy and peace, within and outside its borders.”⁴¹

Among other things, here *Les Verts* refer to “the chance of Europe to become the multicultural and multiconfessional ‘melting pot’ that may be capable of calming the world.”

Universal values are, in different degrees, expressed by French political parties in relation to European issues in the context of the 2004 EP election. It appears most political parties consider sharing these values as necessary for a well functioning European Union. These could be considered, again, qualitative measurements of a Europeanization of political communication, and the presence of a public sphere across national boundaries within the EU.

7. Conclusions

In this article I have suggested that an alternative formulation of European public sphere that places emphasis on the discursive practices about Europe, provides a fruitful basis for exploring the Europeanization of political communication. Furthermore, I have presented a concrete approach for

³⁸ <http://www.ump-europeennes2004.org/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

³⁹ <http://www.pcf.fr/> (Consulted 1 June 2004).

⁴⁰ <http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/> (Consulted 1 June 2004).

⁴¹ <http://elections.lesverts.fr/> (Consulted 9 June 2004).

investigating the concept in an interpretative manner within an online environment: through examining how Europe is framed within documents only available on websites produced by French political parties in the context of the 2004 EP election.

Three frames have been investigated. First, it appeared that most of the eleven political parties included in the study emphasize to some degree European interests in their online communication, and that they usually combine that with indication of benefits of European integration for the French electorate. Second, only about the half of the political parties addressed the 2004 EP election and related European issues in affective terminology (using words such as 'we' and 'our' when referring to Europe). Some expressed a European identity, others remained non-committal in terms of identity when addressing European issues, or firmly expressed a national identity. Cross-national references to identity were also observed in expressions of a shared ideological identity across the EU, such as an ecological identity or a workers identity. Third, universal values were expressed by almost all political parties in relation to the 2004 EP election and related European issues. In was particularly in relation to the European constitution and proposed membership of Turkey to the EU that universal values such as democratic principles and human rights were put forward.

Much additional analysis of the selected material is required in order to draw more substantiated conclusions on the questions raised in this paper. Most important at this stage is inclusion of other member states in the study so that cross-national comparisons can be made and comparisons across the political spectrum. Such comparisons will allow determination as to whether similar patterns of interpretation are present across national public spheres when European issues are addressed in the context of the 2004 EP election. As mentioned in the theoretical section of this article, the simultaneous appearance of particular frames in the mass media across nations may be considered an indicator of the Europeanization of political communication and possibly of the existence of a European public sphere. At this stage in the investigation it is too early to draw such a conclusion.

Still, several preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this exploratory study: all three frames have been found on sections of the websites within the French sample. European interests and identity are usually expressed in combination with national interests and identity. Universal values are frequently expressed, both in relation to France and the EU. These findings suggest the presence of some 'feeling of belonging to Europe' among some of the political parties in the sample: these parties did, to a degree, communicate from a 'Europeanized' perspective.

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Presentations of Europe on political party websites during the 2004 EP election campaign

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Presentations of Europe on political party websites during the 2004 EP election campaign

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Abstract In this article we investigate the online communication about Europe as present on websites produced by French, British and Dutch political parties during the 2004 European Parliament (EP) election campaign. It is through the manner in which Europe is presented within this online communication that political parties' view on what constitutes "Europe" becomes manifest. It is argued that the existence of common understandings of what constitutes "Europe" being shared among political parties from various EU member states can be considered an indicator of Europeanisation of political communication and, subsequently, of a European public sphere. This article elaborates on the national and cross-national differences and similarities regarding *the manner in which Europe is presented* in the content of political party websites. We report on two presentations: (1) the *focus* (European versus national) in which the issue domains interests, identity and values are mentioned in parties' online communication about Europe, and (2) the *attitude* towards Europe (positive versus negative) expressed by these parties. Cross-national similarities in parties' online communication about Europe were observed among the liberal parties, the sovereign and extreme right-wing parties, and the green parties. More diversity was observed among the social democratic parties and centre-right parties.

1. Introduction

In this article we explore the online communicative practices of French, British and Dutch political parties during the 2004 European Parliament (EP) election campaign. Through their websites, parties, as other actors in the public sphere, offer a particular perspective on European news, issues and events, suggesting whether and why issues concerning Europe are socially and politically relevant – their view on what constitutes "Europe" becomes manifest. It is argued here that the existence of common understandings of what constitutes "Europe" being shared among political parties from various European Union (EU) member states can be considered an indicator of Europeanization of political communication and, subsequently, of a European public sphere.

The study investigates online content of political party websites, and involves comparisons along parties' national basis, as well as cross-national comparisons along parties' political orientation. Furthermore, it is argued that the Internet, in contrast to other mass media outlets (e.g., leaflets, party manifestos, articles in newspapers), offer producers the possibility to prioritise particular information, by putting it on the homepage of a site. For this reason, the analysis presented here also focuses on whether the presentation of Europe on parties' central pages (main site home page and election site/section home page) is representative of the overall manner in which parties present Europe in their online communication. Central in the study are parties' common understandings of what constitutes 'Europe'. The general research question of the study is:

What differences and similarities can be observed in the manner in which French, British and Dutch political parties present Europe on their websites during the 2004 European Parliament election campaign?

2. Theory – Presenting Europe

In the current discussion on European integration, the notion of public sphere has begun to play a central role. However, scholars disagree how to deal, both theoretically and empirically, with this notion at the European level. Early scholars, such as Grimm (1995) and Schlesinger (1999), have insisted on the non-existence of a European public sphere, based on unsubstantiated assumptions concerning the character of the public sphere and its relation to key concepts such as language, media

system and state frontiers. Others hold a less strict view on what constitutes a European public sphere and define it not in terms of a supranational community that translates into a public sphere, but as a community that emerges through the debate of specific issues (e.g. Risse, 2003; Van de Steeg et al., 2003). As Risse argues: “A European public sphere does not fall from heaven, and does not pre-exist outside social and political discourse” (Risse, 2003: 2). Central in this second view on what constitutes a European public sphere are direct (face-to-face) or indirect (mass-mediated representations or the Internet) communicative interactions about European issues.

Risse and Van de Steeg (2003) distinguish two approaches that measure elements of a mediated European public sphere. The first approach essentially counts how often Europe, European institutions or European issues are mentioned in the media (e.g. Gerhards, 2000; Trenz, 2004). In a general sense, scholars conclude that the salience of European issues in the media has risen during the last decennium (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz, 2004). A second approach concentrates on the cross-national appearance of similar presentations of Europe in the mass media (e.g. Trenz, 2000; Van de Steeg, 2002).⁴² These studies observe that European issues are being discussed and reported in various media across Europe at the same time, at similar levels of attention in the issue cycle of media reporting, and in a similar manner using similar perspectives (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz, 2004). Semetko, De Vreese and Peter (2000: 129) conclude a European perspective is increasingly present in the British and German national news in addition to a domestic (national) perspective. Also, Risse and Van de Steeg discover similarities in presentations of Europe across 15 newspapers from five EU Member States in the context of the rise of the controversial Austrian politician Jörg Haider; two presentations directly related to Europe appeared frequently in each of the newspapers: “Europe as moral community”, and “European legal standards” (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003: 6-7).

The research presented in this article can be placed within the second approach proposed by Risse and Van de Steeg, but focuses on Internet-based representations. We investigate whether and to what degree common understandings about what constitutes “Europe” exist among Dutch, French and British political parties. These common understandings become manifest through the manner in which Europe is presented by parties on their websites during the 2004 EP election campaign.

The theoretical starting point of this study is the typology developed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000, 2002), who investigated three what they term “thematic fields” in which Europe is addressed in the mass media (see also: Trenz, 2004). We believe this typology constitutes three of the most essential *issue domains* of communication about Europe.⁴³ The first issue domain, *interests*, is present when rational arguments and/or motivations are put forward that refer to specific interests or strategic actions. Examples of this issue domain include references to advantages or disadvantages of European integration, consequences of EU legislation, and economic/market issues addressed in the text. The second issue domain, *identity*, is present when arguments and/or motivations are put forward that refer to the self-awareness or the collective identity of a particular community.⁴⁴ Examples of this domain include references to “our homeland” and “our culture,” reference to a “European community,” and emphasis to a shared past and common future. The third issue domain, *values*, is present when arguments and/or motivations are put forward that refer to universally acknowledged moral principles. Examples of this domain include references to: democratic principles, freedom, human rights, political

⁴² Others refer to this approach as ‘framing’. Roughly speaking, framing theory is concerned with the presentation of issues (Pan and Kosicki, 1993). In a general sense, a frame, through emphasising some elements of a topic above others, provides a way to understand an event or issue (De Vreese, 2005: 53).

⁴³ Prior to this study, in a pilot study on French political party websites, conducted by the first author of this article (Van Os, 2005), the typology provided by Eder, Kantner and Trenz was examined.

⁴⁴ For a more extensive elaboration on social identities, see: Herrmann and Brewer (2004).

equality, and tolerance (Eder, Kantner & Trenz, 2002: 44-46). In an analysis of news coverage of European governance and policy-making during the year 2000, Eder, Kantner and Trenz found that 85% of the articles in the sample contained interests issues, 38% values issues, and 27% identity issues; most articles contained multiple issue domains (see: Trenz, 2004: 309-310).

In this study we adapt the typology developed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz, adding two components we consider missing in their typology – which, in our opinion, mainly serves as a tool for identifying and categorising issues in communication about Europe, instead of a theoretical foundation for investigating the manner in which Europe is presented within that communication. First, we feel it important to gather information about whether political parties, when mentioning the three issue domains, *employ a European or national focus*. This would lead to a more specified knowledge of the party's view on Europe and related European issues: does a party consider Europe as one entity with shared interests and a shared identity, or does a party consider these to be reserved for the nation state. In the first example, a European focus is employed, in the second example a national focus. For values, it turned out that parties only employed a European focus when communicating about values; therefore, we only report on European values.

Second, we feel it important to gather information about whether political parties, when communicating about Europe, *express a positive or negative attitude*. This would lead to a more specified knowledge about whether the EU, European integration and related issues are considered a positive or negative development or situation by the producer of the text. In this study we have incorporated these two components *focus* and *attitude*. We consider them important indicators of Europeanisation of political communication, and subsequently, of a European public sphere.

3. Research questions and method

EP elections have frequently been criticised as having little significance for voters. They are often qualified as “second order national contests,” and tend to attract less attention by all political actors – parties, interest groups, candidates, voters – and the mass media (Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997). As a result, the 2004 EP campaign in all three countries included in the study was relatively short and mainly concentrated during the last 10 days.⁴⁵ In this situation, it is particularly important for political parties to maintain websites as means of communication with supporters and the electorate at large so they can compensate for the lack of communication about Europe by the mass media. Also, it offers parties the possibility to circumvent “interpretative reporting” of the mass media (Gulati, Just & Crigler, 2004), and to inform citizens directly and systematically about their positions on EU policy and legislation for the upcoming period (Ward, Gibson and Nixon, 2003). Also, as argued before, it offers producers the possibility to prioritise particular pieces of information, by putting them on the homepage. In the last decennium, the Internet has increasingly become an object of study in empirical investigations of the public sphere, especially because of this new possibility of direct and unfiltered communication. This study contributes to this field of research.

3.1 Research questions

The study involves content analysis of political party websites, and will lead to answering the general research question:

⁴⁵ All websites included in the study were archived at least once in the specified period. Sites were archived with *Teleport Ultra* and *HTTrack*; see www.tenmax.com and www.httrack.com. In addition, we would like to thank Annie-Claude Salomon of the Pacte CNRS-IEP Research Centre in Grenoble, France, for providing access to their archive of party websites. Also, some sites were coded from the Internet Archive: www.archive.org.

What differences and similarities can be observed in the manner in which French, British and Dutch political parties present Europe on their websites during the 2004 European Parliament election campaign?

More specifically, the following research questions are posed:

- To what extent do parties mention the issue domains interests, identity and values on their websites?
- To what extent do parties employ a European or national focus?
- To what extent do parties express a positive or negative attitude towards Europe?
- Can variation be observed between the manner in which parties present Europe on their central pages, and within their entire online communication about Europe?

Table 1 Political parties examined in the study

Party name	Country	Website	Election website/section	Seats	Group
CPNT	FR	www.cpnt.asso.fr/	section	0	ID
Front National	FR	www.frontnational.com/	www.europeennes2004.com/	7	N.I.
MPF (Liste Villiers)	FR	www.autre-europe.org/	www.villiers2004.com/	3	ID
LCR	FR	www.lcr-rouge.org/	section	0	GUE*
Les Verts	FR	www.les-verts.org/	http://elections.lesverts.fr/	6	Green*
Lutte Ouvrière	FR	www.lutte-ouvriere.org/	section	0	GUE
Parti Communiste	FR	www.pcf.fr/	-	2	GUE
Parti Socialiste	FR	www.parti-socialiste.fr/	www.europesocialiste.org/	31	PES
RPF (Liste Pasqua)	FR	-	www.europe-des-nations.com/	0	UEN
UDF	FR	www.udf.org/	www.udf-europe.net/	11	ALDE
UMP	FR	www.u-m-p.org/	www.ump-europeennes2004.org/	17	EPP*
BNP	UK	www.bnp.org.uk/	-	0	N.I.
Conservative Party	UK	www.conservatives.com/	section	27	EPP
Green Party	UK	www.greenparty.org.uk/	section	2	Green
Labour Party	UK	www.labour.org.uk/	section	19	PES
Liberal Democrats	UK	www.libdems.org.uk/	-	12	ALDE
Plaid Cymru (Wales)	UK	www.plaidcymru.org/	-	1	EFA*
SDLP (N.I.)	UK	www.sdlp.ie/	-	0	PES
SNP (Scotland)	UK	www.snp.org/	http://voteforscotland.snp.org/	2	EFA
UK Independence Party	UK	www.independencuk.org.uk/	-	12	ID
UUP (N.I.)	UK	www.uup.org/	section	1	EPP
CDA	NL	www.cda.nl/	http://europa.cda.nl/	7	EPP
CU-SGP	NL	www.christenunie.nl/	www.eurofractie.christenunie.nl/	2	ID
D'66	NL	www.d66.nl/	www.zondertwijfelvooreuropa.nl/	1	ALDE
Democr. Europa	NL	www.democratischeuropa.nl/	-	0	EFA
Europa Transparant	NL	www.europatransparant.nl/	section	2	EFA
GroenLinks	NL	www.groenlinks.nl/	section	2	Green
Leefbaar Europa	NL	www.leefbaareuropa.nl/	-	0	ID
LPF	NL	www.lijst-pimfortuyn.nl/	section	0	ID
Nieuw Rechts	NL	www.nieuwrechts.nl/	www.michielsmit.nl/	0	N.I.
Partij vd Dieren	NL	www.partijvoordedieren.nl/	-	0	ID
PvdA	NL	www.pvda.nl/	section	7	PES
SP	NL	www.sp.nl/	http://europa.sp.nl/	2	GUE
VVD	NL	www.vvd.nl/	-	4	ALDE

* Abbreviations:

GUE = GUE-NGL

Green = Greens-EFA A (constructed group)

EPP = EPP-ED

EFA = Greens-EFA B (constructed group)

3.2 Selection of research material

In France and United Kingdom, the 2004 EP election was organised at the regional level; for France there were 8 electoral districts, for the United Kingdom 12. In both countries, most parties participated in only some of these electoral districts. Included in the study are political parties that participated in most districts (7 out of 8 in France, 11 out of 12 in the UK), and/or that were expected to obtain seats in the EP in this election, based on previous election results and opinion polls. As a result, for the United Kingdom some parties are included that participated in only one district, such as Plaid Cymru in Wales, and Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland. In contrast to the French and British situation, in the Netherlands parties competed at the national level in the 2004 EP election campaign. For this country, all participating parties (except for two fringe parties) are included in the study. Table 1 provides an overview of the 34 parties and their websites included in the study.

This study focuses on the online texts plus images that accompany the text, produced by the party especially for the site in which they elaborate on their issue positions and argumentations on Europe. This means that articles originally produced by press agents placed online by the party in the news or press section of the websites have not been included. Some parties place their offline magazines (weekly/monthly) on their websites; these are also not included. Weblogs maintained by the party leader and/or the campaign team, which usually report on campaign activities and not on the party's position on Europe, are also not included. Included in the study is all other online content only present on the websites: e.g. news articles produced by the party (as of 1 January 2004 – date of archiving), formal elaborations on party positions (usually a short version of the more extensive, “offline” party manifesto), and informal deliberations on particular aspects of the EU or European integration.

3.3 Coding procedure and analysis of coding results

A content analysis of French, British and Dutch political party websites was conducted. Online communication was divided into coding units; each separate webpage was considered a syntactical coding unit.⁴⁶ Yet, in some cases, content present on a page was again divided into thematic coding units.⁴⁷ This was because every website producer designs sites differently: some put much text on one page; others construct a new page for every part of one narrative or explanation. Herein, we have followed the layout the producer has used in composing the text.⁴⁸ In this manner, we believe, it is possible to draw comparisons between sites more equally, besides retaining the original characteristics of the material as much as possible. Each coding unit was coded in an interpretative manner.⁴⁹ This means that the coder needed to determine for each coding unit whether: (1) a particular issue domain is addressed,⁵⁰ (2) a European or national focus is employed,⁵¹ and (3) whether a positive or negative attitude towards Europe is expressed by the party.⁵²

⁴⁶ Krippendorff defines a syntactical unit as “‘natural’ relative to the grammar of a communications medium” (Krippendorff, 1980: 61).

⁴⁷ Krippendorff defines a thematic unit as “identified by their correspondence to a particular structural definition of the content of narratives, explanations or interpretations” (Krippendorff, 1980: 62).

⁴⁸ A clear ‘start’ of a document is acknowledged as being the beginning of a coding unit. Succeeding coding units are distinguished when the producer has inserted a heading, or when various points or positions are listed. An image, related to the text, is also considered a separate coding unit.

⁴⁹ All codings have been executed by the first author. We acknowledge the possibility that the results may have been influenced by this situation. Nonetheless, 60 randomly selected coding units (about 1/30 of the total number) have been coded twice; there was sufficient overlap between the two coding moments – ranging from 94 to 100% for the issue domains, from 86 to 100% for European vs. national focus, and 83% for positive vs. negative attitude. This indicates a high level of intra-coder consistency.

⁵⁰ For identification of the issue domains within each coding unit, we have used the coding scheme developed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000, 2002). We adapted their scheme slightly to new terminology and current developments in the European Union. The coding scheme was not defined/fixed a priori, but the result of an

In the analysis, percentages were calculated per party that stand for the degree of presence of an issue domain within the entire online communication of each party; these percentages were calculated separately for European and national focus. For the second presentation “attitude towards Europe,” a mean score on a scale ranging from 1 tot 3 was calculated per party. Aggregated country percentages and scores were also calculated. Parties’ central pages, defined as the main site home page and the election site/section home page,⁵³ were analysed separately and in a more exploratory manner. Here, quotes are taken from these pages that provide more insight into the nature of the presentations investigated in the study; for each party the results of this exploratory analysis were compared to the percentages for the entire online communication.⁵⁴

In total, 1701 coding units were included in the study; 618 for France, 425 for United Kingdom and 658 for the Netherlands. Numbers of coding units per party vary between 8 (British National Party, UK) and 130 (Partij van de Arbeid, NL). Comparisons are drawn along national basis and political orientation of the political parties included in the study. Political orientation is determined by party affiliation with one of the 8 political groups in the EP, which unite national delegations (parties) into groups of similar political orientation. For newcomers at the European level, we estimated the political orientation at the European level on the basis of position in the respective national political spectrums.⁵⁵

4. Results - Parties’ online communication about Europe

A considerable number of parties only placed an announcement of the 2004 EP election on the home page of their main website; usually a hyperlink guided visitors from the party home page to the site or section where the election-related content could be found. Twelve of the 34 parties included in the study did not communicate about any of the three issue domains on their central pages; here, parties presented their candidates, announced particular election-related events, explained the procedure for the election, or criticised the campaign strategy of other political parties. Likewise, in 407 of the 1701 coding units no issue domain could be identified (24%).

Looking more closely at the 22 parties that mentioned issues within at least one of the three issue domains when communicating about Europe on their central pages, interesting patterns occur. First, interests issues were usually mentioned in combination with identity issues. Furthermore, interests

alternating process of induction and deduction. It contains a general description for each item, plus a listing of keywords.

⁵¹ In the coding scheme *focus* was questioned as follows: “To which entity does the party exactly refer to when mentioning an issue domain: Europe/the EU (in a more general sense), and/or the nation state (specifically)?” The coder was instructed to choose as much as possible between a European, national or, alternatively, a regional focus, and to only assign more than one focus if explicitly present within one coding unit.

⁵² In the coding scheme *attitude* was questioned as follows: “Does a party speaks about Europe/ EU/EU institutions/EU laws etc. in a positive, neutral or negative sense?” If attitude was not clear, or mixed, the code ‘neutral’ also ought to be assigned. Attitude was only determined within coding units in which at least one of the issue domains was identified.

⁵³ Here, no differentiation was made between whether a party had created a separate election site or had put its election-related content within a (separate) section of the main site. These were treated on an equal basis.

⁵⁴ Especially for the minor parties the percentages should be interpreted with caution, since these are based on low numbers. Still, for comparative purposes, it seems worth while mentioning percentages for every party.

⁵⁵ For comparative purposes, the European group Greens-EFA is divided into two separate groups: the Green parties in one group (Greens-EFA A), and the ‘Free Alliance’ parties in another group (Greens-EFA B). Also, for the purpose of comparison, the Non Attached members have been put into one group too: it concerns the three extreme right-wing national parties *Front National* (FR), *British National Party* BNP (UK) and *Nieuw Rechts* (NL). All groups constructed for the study consist of at least of three national parties from at least two countries included in the study, except for the European group UEN; only the French party *Rassemblement Pour la France* (RPF) makes part of that group.

issues with a European focus (European interests) were usually mentioned in combination with identity issues with a European focus (European identity); interests with a national focus (national interests) were usually mentioned in combination with identity issues with a national focus (national identity). Also, regional interests, exclusively mentioned by British parties, were in all cases stressed in combination with regional identity issues. Values issues, exclusively with a European focus, were not often mentioned by parties on their central pages, and almost never solely (without mentioning either interests or identity issues). Regarding the attitude towards Europe, few parties expressed an explicit negative attitude towards Europe on their central pages; most parties expressed a neutral or positive attitude.

The remainder of this section focuses on the extent to and the manner in which these patterns appear within the entire online communication of the parties included in the study; comparisons are drawn with results of the exploratory investigation of parties' central pages; quotes are taken from these pages. Table 2 provides an overview of the extent to which parties grouped by country mention issues within the issue domains (interests, identity or values) in their entire online communication about Europe, indicated in percentages. Parties mainly mentioned interests when communicating about Europe on their websites – 63%, compared to 23% for values and 21% for identity issues; this ranking corresponds with that found by Eder, Kantner and Trenz in a study of mass-mediated representations during the year 2000: 85% interests, 38% values and 27% identity (Trenz, 2004: 309-310; see also: Eder, Kantner & Trenz, 2000, 2002). However, especially the overall mean for interests turned out to be much lower in our study than in the study by Eder, Kantner and Trenz; this can be explained by the fact that in 24% of the coding units included in our study parties solely announced particular election-related events or presented their candidates without mentioning issues within the issue domains. In this context, the overall mean for identity issues mentioned by political parties in their online communication about Europe should be interpreted as relatively high. This roughly corresponds to the results of the explorative investigation of parties' central page communication. Especially British parties mentioned a considerable number of identity issues on their central pages (39%).

Table 2 Issue domains per country*

Country	N	Interests (%)	Identity (%)	Values (%)
UK	425	64	39	18
NL	658	63	13	24
FR	618	62	18	26
Total	1701	63	21	23

* Each coding unit may involve more than one issue domain.

The remainder of this section differentiates between European, national and regional interests, and between European, national and regional identity issues (European vs. national focus). Table 3 provides an overview per party and the aggregated means per country. Additionally, means have been calculated for positive versus negative attitude.

Table 3: Interests, identity and values issues in online communication of political parties in France, the UK and The Netherlands (in percentage of all coding units produced by a party)

Party	N	Country		Interests (%)	Identity (%)	Values (%)	Attitude*
BNP	8	UK	European	25***	25	13	2.75
			National	38	38		
			Regional	0	0		
Conservatives	62	UK	European	34	8	19	2.49
			National	45	50		
			Regional	0	0		
Green Party	45	UK	European	40	11	45	2.03
			National	9	7		
			Regional	0	0		
Labour	35	UK	European	91	3	3	1.50
			National	34	26		
			Regional	0	0		
Lib Democrats	13	UK	European	54	15	46	1.40
			National	31	62		
			Regional	0	0		
Plaid Cymru	26	UK	European	19	8	27	2.00
			National	15	4		
			Regional	54	35		
SDLP	87	UK	European	23	20	18	1.41
			National	1	2		
			Regional	29	28		
SNP	21	UK	European	11	0	23	1.90
			National	0	5		
			Regional	62	67		
UKIP	90	UK	European	11	2	4	2.75
			National	73	44		
			Regional	0	0		
UUP	38	UK	European	24	11	8	2.12
			National	21	13		
			Regional	55	45		
UK total	524		European	23	10	18	2.15
			National	31	25		
			Regional	16	15		
CDA	95	NL	European	55	36	23	1.56
			National	33	25		
			Regional	4			
CU-SGP	36	NL	European	33	22	8	1.82
			National	3	6		
			Regional	0	0		
D'66	104	NL	European	40	35	33	1.56
			National	18	17		
			Regional	0	0		
DE	26	NL	European	50	4	46	2.41
			National	27	23		
			Regional	0	0		
ET	12	NL	European	33	8	58	2.89
			National	8	0		
			Regional	0	0		
GroenLinks	99	NL	European	63	7	18	2.14
			National	5	5		
			Regional	0	0		
LE	40	NL	European	35	3	20	2.29
			National	0	3		
			Regional	0	0		
LPF	19	NL	European	32	5	21	2.64
			National	32	16		
			Regional	0	0		
Nieuw Rechts	16	NL	European	56	25	31	2.50
			National	32	31		
			Regional	0	0		
PvdD	15	NL	European	47	0	7	2.25
			National	0	7		
			Regional	0	0		

PvdA	130	NL	European	52	16	19	1.71
			National	21	16		
			Regional	0	0		
SP	44	NL	European	73	7	32	2.79
			National	11	5		
			Regional	0	0		
VVD	22	NL	European	59	18	23	1.47
			National	18	0		
			Regional	0	0		
NL total	658		European	42	18	24	1.93
			National	17	13		
			Regional	1	0		
CPNT	54	FR	European	50	11	37	2.71
			National	32	20		
			Regional	0	0		
Front National	62	FR	European	21	11	5	2.97
			National	74	37		
			Regional	0	0		
LCR	12	FR	European	50	25	17	2.80
			National	17	0		
			Regional	0	0		
Les Verts	84	FR	European	49	27	36	1.86
			National	0	2		
			Regional	0	0		
Lutte Ouvrière	10	FR	European	40	0	30	2.71
			National	0	0		
			Regional	0	0		
MPF (Villiers)	17	FR	European	24	18	29	2.88
			National	65	88		
			Regional	0	0		
Parti Comm.	23	FR	European	91	52	52	1.74
			National	9	4		
			Regional	0	0		
Parti Socialiste	129	FR	European	32	25	24	1.78
			National	10	4		
			Regional	0	0		
RPF (Pasqua)	30	FR	European	53	23	43	2.79
			National	47	47		
			Regional	0	0		
UDF	89	FR	European	51	34	27	1.62
			National	9	10		
			Regional	3	2		
UMP	108	FR	European	40	23	15	1.54
			National	40	25		
			Regional	0	0		
FR total	618		European	51	24	26	2.08
			National	25	17		
			Regional	1	0		
Total	1701		European	41	18	23	2.04**
			National	23	18		
			Regional	-	-		

* Attitude scale: 1 = positive, 2 = neutral, 3 = negative.

** Total N for attitude is 1294; in these coding units at least one issue domain was identified.

*** In 25% of all coding units produced by BNP (N=8) European interests were identified.

4.1 European vs. national interests

As shown at the bottom of Table 3 for the entire collection, the aggregated mean for European interests is 41% and 23% for national interests. Regional interests were only mentioned by a small number of parties, and almost solely by British parties; therefore, no aggregated mean for the entire collection was calculated for regional focus. When looking separately at the three countries included in the study, British parties mentioned the least often European interests: only 23%, compared to 31% for national interests and 16% for regional interests. Especially the British *UK Independence Party* often mentioned national interests in its online communication about Europe: 73%. On its main site

home page, this party also mentioned national interests; it stated to be against the EU membership of United Kingdom and considered contributing financially to the EU “a waste of money”. Dutch parties, in contrast, relatively often mentioned European interests: 42%, compared to 17% for national interests, which is below the overall mean. French parties mentioned most often European interests: 51%, and to a large degree national interests, 25%, which is well above the overall mean.

Considerable variation was however observed between the parties within each country, as can be seen in Table 3. Therefore, this section continues with reporting on cross-national similarities and differences observed among national parties holding a similar political position. First, the liberal parties, united in the European group *Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe* (ALDE), mentioned relatively often European interests: 59% for the Dutch *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD), 54% for the British *Liberal Democrats*, 51% for the French *Union Démocratique Française* (UDF), and somewhat less often, 40%, for the Dutch *Democraten '66* (D'66). Especially the percentage for *Liberal Democrats* is remarkably high, compared to the British country mean for European interests: 23%. Without exception, by addressing advantages of European integration, these liberal parties all also mentioned European interests on their central pages. One of the most frequently mentioned advantages was the possibility to tackle terrorism and international crime in a strong, collaborative Europe. Also, these parties mentioned relatively less often national interests, all below the respective country means, except for *Liberal Democrats*, 31%, which is close to the British country mean for national interests.

Second, the Green parties, associated in the constructed European group Greens-EFA A (*The Greens/European Free Alliance*), also mentioned relatively often European interests: 40% for the British *Green Party* (which is quite high compared to the British country mean for European interests), 63% for the Dutch *GroenLinks*, and 49% for the French *Les Verts*. The last two parties also mentioned European interests on their central pages. For example *GroenLinks* stated Europe should prioritise people and the environment above “market and coin”. The Green parties mentioned almost no national interests in their online communication.

Third, most sovereign and extreme right-wing parties often mentioned national interests, although some of them also frequently stressed quite often European interests (but in a negative sense; see “attitude”). On their central pages, these parties all mentioned national interests; they spoke about the loss of national sovereignty, and about Europe being the cause of criminals and terrorists entering the respective country’s territory. For example, *Mouvement Pour la France* (MPF) mentioned: “they have promised us a Europe that brings security; instead, illegal immigrants, carriers of drugs, mafia, and terrorists come and go as they like, benefiting from the dismantlement of our borders”. MPF mentioned national interests in 65% of its entire online communication. The other two French sovereign parties scored somewhat lower, 47% for *Rassemblement Pour la France* (RPF), and 32% for *Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions* (CPNT); the last percentage is only slightly above the French country mean. The extreme right-wing party *Nieuw Rechts* was even the only Dutch party mentioning national interests on its central pages. *British National Party* mentioned national interests in but 38% of its entire online communication. However, for this party only eight coding units were relevant; four of these coding units addressed no issue domain at all; of the other four, in three coding units national interests were mentioned, which is quite high. In two coding units, *British National Party* mentioned European interests. The extreme right-wing party *Front National* mentioned national interests in 74% of its entire online communication; this party also mentioned national interests on its central pages, as most other sovereign and extreme right-wing parties included in the study.

Fourth, some similarities have been observed among the social democratic parties united in the European group *Party of European Socialists* (PES). Especially the British *Labour Party* and the

Dutch *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA) often mentioned European interests, respectively 91% and 52%. These two parties also mentioned European interests on their central pages. *Labour Party* for example argued that “the enlarged EU will become the biggest trade block in the world”. *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA) spoke about their propositions for a more efficient Europe, in proposing to “quit with the monthly waste of money ‘removal circus’ to Strasbourg.” In contrast, the French *Parti Socialiste* mentioned European interests in only 32% of its entire online communication. *Parti Socialiste* in general mentioned few interests issues: not much national interests were mentioned either by this party: only 10%. The other two social democratic parties scored around the respective country means for national interests. Parties holding a more extreme left-wing position, such as the French *Parti Communiste* and the Dutch *Socialist Party* (SP) also mentioned relatively often European interests, respectively 52% and 73%. Thus, *Parti Socialiste* seems to be the outlier among the left-wing parties; *Labour Party* and PvdA showed more similarities in their communication.

Finally, the centre-right parties united in the European group *European People’s Party – European Democrats* (EPP-ED) also reflected some similarities. All three parties – British *Conservatives*, Dutch *Christen Democratisch Appèl* (CDA) and French *Union pour une Mouvement Populaire* (UMP) – mentioned 15-20% more national interests than the respective country means, respectively 45%, 33% and 40%. *Conservatives* and UMP also mentioned national interests on their central pages. *Conservatives* on its central pages claimed firmly to stand up for Britain’s best interests in Europe; this party spoke about its unwillingness to “hand over powers to the EU”, and about the “supremacy of EU law”. On the other hand, *Conservatives*, like CDA, mentioned 10% more European interests than the respective country means; UMP mentioned European interests proportionally less European interests in its entire online communication, but mentioned European interests on its central pages, in contrast to *Conservatives*, which only mentioned national interests on its central pages. UMP argued both for “a protective, strong and independent Europe in service of peace” [European interests], and for “defending French interests in PAC”⁵⁶ [national interests]. A mixed picture, in other words, emerges from these data.

4.2 European vs. national identity

As shown at the bottom of Table 3, the aggregated mean for both European and national identity issues for the entire collection is 18%. French parties mentioned the most often European identity issues: 24%, compared to 18% for the Dutch parties, and only 10% for the British parties. It is also the British parties that mentioned the most often national identity issues (25%) and regional identity issues in the case of the regionally-oriented British parties; see, for example, the *Scottish National Party* (SNP, 67%) and *Ulster Unionist Party* (UUP, 55%). Some of these parties also mentioned regional identity issues on their central pages. For example SNP noted: “Voting for SNP will give us a strong voice in Europe”.⁵⁷ Dutch parties mentioned national identity issues in only 13% of the coding units, French parties in 17%.

Variations were observed, however, between the parties within each country, as can be seen in Table 3. Therefore, cross-national similarities and differences between national parties holding a similar political position are reported. First, the liberal parties UDF and D’66 relatively often mentioned European identity issues, respectively 34% and 35%. The other two liberal parties, *Liberal Democrats* and VVD mentioned less often European identity issues, respectively 15% and 18%; yet, these scores are still above or around the respective country means for European identity. However, only UDF mentioned European identity issues on its central pages, which is quite remarkable because of the general high percentage for European identity issues of the liberal parties. Here, UDF argued that “a

⁵⁶ PAC = Politique Agricole Commune.

⁵⁷ Emphasis in quotes not contained in original text.

strong Europe needs to have its own identity and its own borders”. As concerns national identity issues, especially *Liberal Democrats* scored high: 62%; the other three liberal parties scored much lower, 0% in the case of VVD.

Second, the Green parties did not mention identity issues often, either European or national identity issues. Only the French *Les Verts* scored relatively high on European identity issues: 27%, which is around the French country mean for European identity.

Third, the French sovereign and extreme right-wing parties mainly mentioned national identity issues, 47% for RPF, 37% for *Front National* and 88% for MPF. Also the Dutch *Nieuw Rechts* mentioned relatively often national identity issues: 31%, which is about twice as high as the Dutch country mean. On its central pages this party spoke about Dutch citizens feeling uncomfortable and not belonging to Europe. Also CPNT mentioned national identity issues on its central pages, in claiming for “the recognition of the uniqueness of traditional French products such as foie gras, cheese and wine, in order to prevent these to disappear through European integration”. However, *British National Party*, some French sovereign parties, and even *Front National*, quite remarkably, addressed some European identity issues. All these parties, in addressing the possible entry of Turkey to the EU, argued the Turkish religion, traditions and culture to be different than in Europe [European identity issue]. MPF and RPF placed such remarks on their central pages. Fourth, for the centre-right parties similarities could only be observed for national identity issues. All three parties in this group, and especially *Conservatives*, mentioned relatively often national identity issues; 50% for *Conservatives*, and 25% for both UMP and CDA. *Conservatives* and UMP also mentioned national identity issues on their central pages. Here, *Conservatives* claimed that “*British* want to control their own lives”. In a similar manner, UMP mentioned “to defend France’s identity, its language, way of living and cultural diversity”. However, UMP and CDA also mentioned relatively often European identity issues (compared to the respective country means). This is in contrast to *Conservatives*, which hardly ever mentioned identity issues with a European focus.

Finally, for the social democratic parties, no clear pattern could be observed regarding the focus and extent to which parties communicated about identity issues. *Parti Socialiste* stressed in 25% of its online communication European identity issues, which is comparable to the high French country mean, and the high score of other French left-wing parties for European identity, such as *Parti Communiste* (52%) and *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR, 25%). *Parti Communiste*, for example, mentioned on its central pages: “progress, solidarity, and peace are the binding elements in Europe”. This party claimed to believe that these elements could counterbalance the ultra-liberal Europe proposed by right-wing parties. In contrast, *Labour Party*, stressed national identity issues in 26% of its coding units (comparable to the country mean), and almost no European identity issues. This party also mentioned national identity issues on its central pages. In response to *UK Independence Party* proposal to withdraw from the EU, *Labour Party* argued that: “withdrawing to the margins would be a disaster for *our* future prosperity and influence in the world”. *Parti Socialiste* on the other hand, stressed almost no national identity issues. PvdA scored around the Dutch country mean for European identity issues.

4.3 European values

As shown at the bottom of Table 3, the aggregated mean for values for the entire collection of sites is 23%; these were all addressed with a European focus. Variation between the countries was not very high for this issue domain, however. French parties mentioned most often European values (26%), followed by Dutch parties: 24%, and British parties: 18%.

When looking at the parties separately within each country, slightly more variation could be observed. Therefore, cross-national similarities and differences found among national parties with similar political orientation are reported. First, *Liberal Democrats* often mentioned European values: 46%, in comparison to 33% for D'66, 23% for VVD and 27% for UDF, which is all still slightly above the respective country means. Also, three of these four liberal parties, except for VVD, mentioned European values on their central pages.

Second, *Green Party* often mentioned European values: 45%, compared to 36% for *Les Verts* and only 18% for *GroenLinks*. Both *Green Party* and *Les Verts* also mentioned European values on their central pages. Here, *Green Party* addressed human rights as being protected by EU law. *Les Verts* spoke about a shared Green vision on Europe among the various Green parties in Europe, namely “a democratic social and environmental Europe, which can create durable politics”. In contrast, *GroenLinks* solely mentioned interests on its central pages, which is consistent with the low percentage for European values in the entire online communication of *GroenLinks*. *GroenLinks* is the outlier here.

Third, for the sovereign and extreme right-wing parties, no clear pattern for European values could be observed. RPF often mentioned European values: in 43% of its entire online communication. RPF also mentioned European values on its central pages, although in a negative sense: RPF accused the European Parliament of rejecting European values. The other sovereign parties mentioned far less European values; *Front National* even mentioned almost no European values: only 5%, followed by *British National Party*: 13%. These two parties did not mention European values on their pages either.

Fourth, for the centre-right parties, UMP mentioned not very often European values: only 15%, which is considerably below the French country mean of 26% for European values. In comparison with CDA (23%) and *Conservatives* (19%), both of which score around the respective country means, UMP is a slight outlier. *Conservatives* also mentioned European values on its central pages, addressing the incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into EU law and the possible consequences of that Charter for Britain's asylum policy.

Finally, both the social democratic parties *Parti Socialiste* and PvdA scored around their respective country means regarding European values. PvdA also mentioned European values on its central pages, arguing for the need of the EU to become more democratic and transparent. Thus, *Labour Party*, again, is the outlier; in only 3% of the online communication of this party European values were mentioned. In contrast, the percentage for values of the regionally-oriented social democratic party SDLP was close to the British country mean.

4.4 Attitude towards Europe

Table 3 also indicates on whether a positive or negative attitude towards Europe is expressed by parties, on a scale from 1 to 3, in which 1 = positive, 2 = neutral and 3 = negative. Some variation could be observed between the country means for attitude: the British parties expressed the most negative attitude: 2.15; Dutch parties expressed the most positive attitude towards Europe: 1.93. The aggregated mean for French parties was 2.08.

Considerable variation could, however, be observed between the parties within each country. Therefore, cross-national similarities are addressed here. First, all four liberal parties expressed an explicit positive attitude towards Europe: 1.56 for D'66, 1.47 for VVD, 1.40 for *Liberal Democrats*, and 1.62 for UDF. These parties all also expressed a positive attitude on their central pages. Especially

for *Liberal Democrats*, this is exceptional, since only two British parties expressed a positive attitude on their central pages.

Second, in a general sense, the Green parties were somewhat less positive than the liberal parties, expressing a more neutral attitude towards Europe. This could also be observed on the central pages of these parties. Yet, more variation was also observed between *Les Verts* (1.86) and *GroenLinks* (2.14). *Green Party* scored inbetween these two (2.03).

Third, the sovereign and extreme right-wing parties expressed, without exception, an extremely negative attitude towards Europe, ranging from 2.50 to 2.97. Most sovereign and extreme right-wing parties also expressed a negative attitude on their central pages, although some like CPNT expressed a neutral attitude.

Fourth, for the centre-right parties, a more diverse picture appeared: *Conservatives* expressed a much more negative attitude towards Europe (2.49) as compared to CDA (1.56) and UMP (1.54). Similar diversity was observed for these parties' central page communication (for *Conservatives* and UMP).

In contrast, the social democratic *Labour Party* expressed a more positive attitude towards Europe (1.50) compared to PvdA (1.71) and *Parti Socialiste* (1.78). *Labour Party* also expressed a more positive attitude on its central pages, compared to PvdA (no central page coding units for *Parti Socialiste*). As concerns attitude, *Parti Socialiste* and PvdA were not backed by the more extreme left-wing parties SP (2.79), *Lutte Ouvrière* (2.71) and *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR, 2.80), as was earlier the case when reporting on the European versus national focus in which the issue domains are addressed.

5. Conclusions

The study presented in this article was guided by the general research question: *What differences and similarities can be observed in the manner in which French, British and Dutch political parties present Europe on their websites during the 2004 European Parliament election campaign?* Based on the results we can first of all conclude that the typology developed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz covers a large part of the online communication about Europe produced by the parties included in the study: in 76% of the coding units, at least one of the issue domains was identified. Furthermore, parties address foremost issues within the issue domain interests when communicating about Europe. Values and identity issues were mentioned less often by parties on their websites during the 2004 EP election campaign. All values were mentioned within a European focus.

The ranking of issue domains corresponds with the outcomes of the study performed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz, who investigated the appearance of the three issue domains interests, identity and values within a mass-mediated environment, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, parties (in this study) seemed to mention relatively more often identity issues in comparison with the mass media (in the study by Eder, Kantner and Trenz) when communicating about Europe and European issues. This also became manifest in the explorative investigation of parties' central pages; relatively often, on these pages parties mentioned identity issues, usually in combination with interests employing a similar European or national focus for both. This could be interpreted as a sign of a higher degree of perceived attachment, and in the case of a European focus, of a sense of "belonging to Europe" of parties in comparison to mass media actors. We consider this an indicator of Europeanisation of political communication, and subsequently, of the existence of a European public sphere. Comparing the parties included in the study along their national basis, a European focus – in which both interests and identity issues are mentioned – was particularly observed within the online

communication of Dutch, and slightly less frequently, of French parties. British parties, generally speaking, more often mentioned national interests and national identity issues. British parties also expressed the most negative attitude towards Europe; especially Dutch parties expressed a more positive attitude towards Europe. These patterns in presentation of Europe by parties became also manifest in the explorative investigation of the parties' central pages. These national comparisons, however, are rough and generalised; much variation was observed between parties within each country. More similarities in presentation of Europe were observed cross-nationally among parties with similar political orientation.

Comparing the parties along their political orientation, similarities were especially observed among the following three groups of parties with similar political orientation:

1. The liberal parties mentioned relatively often European interests and, somewhat less frequent, European identity issues. These parties generally approved the focus on EU economic development, which became manifest in a positive attitude.
2. The sovereign and extreme right-wing parties mentioned relatively often national interests and national identity issues. These parties, in a general sense, oppose against European integration, which became manifest in a negative attitude.
3. The Green parties (*Green Party*, *Les Verts*, *GroenLinks*) relatively often mentioned values and only employed a European focus in their online communication about Europe, combined with a neutral or positive attitude.

More diversity was observed among the social democratic parties and the centre-right parties. It was mainly the British *Labour Party* and *Conservatives*, employing more often a national focus and expressing more often a negative attitude than their French and Dutch sister parties, that made these two groups more diverse. Also here, the central pages roughly provided the same picture; these pages seem adequate representations of the overall manner in which parties present Europe within entire online communication.

These cross-national groups of parties represent the five largest political movements in Europe. Among three of them, we have found cross-national similarities in the manner in which they present Europe within their online communication. We can thus conclude that there exist certain common understandings of what constitutes Europe among political parties from various EU member states with similar political orientation and the political movements they represent in Europe. In our opinion, this can be considered an important indicator of Europeanisation of political communication, and subsequently, of a European public sphere.

The outcomes of the study presented in this article verify the results of the explorative investigation of French political party websites conducted by the first author (Van Os, 2005). In this first study the applicability of the typology developed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz was demonstrated within an online environment. The study presented in this article, which reports on a larger number of political parties from three EU member states, provides more systematic and detailed evidence. In both studies similarities in the manner in which political parties communicate about Europe on their websites were observed.

In this article, we described two manners in which parties present Europe: in terms of focus and attitude. Yet, we believe that Europe can be interpreted and presented in more diverse manners than these two presentations. Further analysis should therefore focus on more diverse presentations of Europe. Furthermore, we consider it valuable to compare the online communication about Europe of political parties – as relatively institutionalised political actors in the public sphere – with the online communication of less institutionalised actors, such as NGOs and social movement organisations.

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Successful joint venture or out of control? Framing Europe on French and Dutch websites

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Successful joint venture or out of control? Framing Europe on French and Dutch websites

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Abstract. This paper focuses on online political communication about Europe produced by French and Dutch political parties and NGOs in the context of the 2005 referendum on the European constitution, and compares this Internet-based communication with news in French and Dutch newspapers in the context of the same event. The aim of this study is to disclose the (sometimes hidden) *frames* within these various types of political communication, and determine whether these frames, conceptualized as common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’, are cross-nationally shared among political actors. In the inductive phase of the study, three frames have been reconstructed. In each frame Europe is portrayed in a different manner: (1) in the “Donor” frame Europe is portrayed as a successful joint venture; (2) in the “David vs. Goliath” frame as an oppressive superstate; and (3) in the “Invention” frame as out of control. In the deductive phase of the study, the three reconstructed frames were subsequently examined for their presence in a larger set of texts ($n = 268$). The most commonly shared understanding appeared to be the “Donor” frame, which was employed by 81% of the political actors in the two countries.

1. Introduction

This study is executed within the context of the referendum on the European constitution held in spring 2005 in France and the Netherlands. We focus on Europe-related lines of reasoning provided by French and Dutch political actors (i.e., political parties, NGOs, and journalists) in their communication about Europe, European integration, and/or the European constitution (henceforth: Europe). The theoretical starting point is the notion of *European public sphere*, which takes shape through the sharing of common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’. This sharing of common understandings is manifest in the cross-national employment of similar *frames*. In earlier studies we have shown that political actors with the same political position (left/right-wing) employ a similar European or national focus and express a similar attitude towards Europe (Van Os, 2005; Van Os, Wester & Jankowski, 2007), but we do not yet know whether various types of political actors apply the same frames in their external communication about Europe. Therefore, the aim of the study is to disclose the (sometimes hidden) frames within political communication about Europe present in newspapers and on websites produced by political parties and NGOs, and to determine the extent to which these frames are cross-nationally shared. The general research question is:

Can cross-national similarities be observed in the manner in which various political actors in France and the Netherlands employ frames in their communication about Europe during the 2005 referendum campaign on the European constitution?

Online political communication from political parties and NGO’s will be compared with offline communication about Europe in newspapers. In contrast to journalists, who create news based on professional criteria of newsworthiness, political parties and NGOs produce content from their own perspective on issues and events in society. These extensions of the mediated public sphere potentially help citizens to become better or more broadly informed about European political affairs, something which is considered an asset to (European) democracy (e.g., Norris, 2001, 2003; Tsagarousianou, 1999).

In the next section, the theoretical notions of a (European) public sphere and framing are discussed. Then, the two phases of this study are methodologically outlined, and subsequently the results of these two phases are presented. In the inductive phase of the framing analysis a repertoire of potential frames is reconstructed by defining the framing and reasoning devices by which the frames may

manifest themselves in texts. It is followed by a second deductive phase, consisting of a systematic investigation of the extent to which the frames are shared among a larger set of diverse texts – produced by the online actors political parties and NGOs as well as by journalists of offline newspapers.

2. Theory

2.1 *The public sphere and the Internet*

The notion of *public sphere*, firstly elaborated by Jürgen Habermas (1964/1974, 1989), places emphasis on the deliberative and discursive aspects of democracy. It could be summarized as being the intermediary communicative space between politics and society, or as the “forum in which private people come together to form a public” (Habermas, 1989: 25). In the academic tradition that has emerged around Habermas’ initial contribution, the public sphere has been granted the normative status of being “the space within which the affairs of the state can be subjected to public scrutiny” (Kunelius & Sparks, 2001: 11).

During the last two decades, scholars have agreed that this ideal type of public sphere, if it ever existed, does not exist any longer. Mass media such as newspapers and television seem to have largely taken over the role as communicative space. Nonetheless, several scholars have also argued that this mediated public sphere is in fact less open in terms of equal access for private individuals, since it is created by media organizations that have their own selection criteria (for a review of this hegemonic perspective see, e.g., Bennett et al., 2004; Savigny, 2002).

In this context, scholars have been discussing the role the Internet could play in democracy and the public sphere. Early ‘cyber optimists’ like Rheingold (1993), who claimed that the Internet could fuel the process of democratisation through opportunities for deliberation and direct decision-making, have been succeeded by ‘cyber pessimists’ like Margolis and Resnick (2000), who warned that the Internet can even widen the gap between the engaged and the apathetic. Scholars like Norris (2001, 2003), Foot and Schneider (2002; Schneider & Foot, 2002) and Ward, Gibson, and Lusoli (2003) take a more ‘middle ground’ position, and suggest a balance between these two extremes, pointing out specific positive developments or aspects. Foot and Schneider (2002) stress the importance of independent political websites developed by national and state advocacy groups, civic organizations, and mainstream and alternative press. Norris (2001, 2003) mentions the existence of websites produced by minor and fringe parties, enabling citizens to learn more about the range of electoral choices than was previously possible.

Taking the moderate position of these scholars into account, the added value of the Internet should particularly be seen as potentially facilitating citizens broadening their knowledge about political opinions and the views existing in society. In comparison to a public sphere that manifests itself in the traditional mass media, more diverse actors participate in an online public sphere. In modern society, a broad range of websites is available to citizens for information or communication about political affairs, thereby serving as platform for a (shared) public sphere. These websites are created by diverse political actors, such as politicians and political parties, lobbyists, and advocates who represent the interests of a specific group, moral entrepreneurs, and intellectuals who try to generate public attention for particular issues, and finally media actors.

2.2 *The notion of European public sphere*

In the last two decades the concept of public sphere has begun to play a central role in academic discussions about European integration. Our interpretation of what constitutes the European public

sphere places emphasis on political actors, including citizens, *communicating about Europe*, either directly (face-to-face) or indirectly through media or Internet-based representations. This Europeanized political communication can, in the present situation, mainly be found within national media systems, and is often produced by national political actors (e.g., Koopmans et al., 2004; Meyer, 1999; Ward, 2001).

Roughly two approaches can be distinguished that measure elements of Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently a (mediated) European public sphere. The first approach essentially measures how often Europe, European institutions, or European issues are mentioned in the mass media (e.g., Gerhards, 2000; Trenz, 2004). A second approach concentrates on the occurrence of cross-national similarities in the manner in which the mass media communicate about Europe. Scholars refer to this approach as *framing* (Risse, 2003; Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003; Semetko, De Vreese, & Peter, 2000; Van de Steeg, Rauer, Rivet & Risse, 2003; Trenz, 2004). An extensive overview of empirical studies conducted within both approaches is provided elsewhere (Van Os, Jankowski & Wester, forthcoming). The research project presented in this article can be placed within the second approach: it investigates whether similar frames – common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ – are employed by political actors from various EU member states in their communication about Europe.

2.3 Framing in the (European) public sphere

Simon and Xenos (2000) discuss the dynamics of a public sphere in which various political actors participate: political actors all try to define political and social issues by using certain *frames*, an act which results in an often implicit indication of the underlying problems of the issues, the designation of causal and treatment responsibility, and the passing of moral judgments (see also Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Entman, 1993). Cappella and Jamieson (1997) stress that frames select particular aspects of reality, organizing those aspects around a central idea and, thus, emphasize how to look at and interpret issues and events (see also: Gitlin, 1980: 11; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Reese (2001: 11) defines frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.” Finally, Trenz (2004: 308) speaks of a *thematic field*, that is, “the specific meanings, expectations and world views that are channelled through and conveyed by debates in the public sphere.”

Framing analysis is concerned with the investigation of frames as competitive ways of making sense of reality that manifest themselves in the public sphere. Each of these competing frames makes a validity claim to define the situation at hand. Many scholars identify *generic frames* in texts: frames that trace journalists’ habits in reporting the news (cf. Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Examples of generic frames that have been investigated within media communication about Europe are the ‘Conflict frame’ and the ‘Human-interest frame’ (De Vreese, 2005). However, this approach does not provide a straightforward way to define or give meaning to the reported news event or issue under debate, which can be seen as the main function of framing (Entman, 1993).

A second type of frames does involve different definitions of an issue or event: *issue specific frames*. For example, Risse and Van de Steeg (2003) have defined two frames in news about the rise of the controversial Austrian politician Jörg Haider: the ‘Europe as moral community’ frame, and the ‘Europe’s legal standards’ frame (Risse & Van de Steeg, 2003: 6-7). Schuck and De Vreese (2006) have investigated the presence of two frames evaluating the EU enlargement either as a risk or as an opportunity for Europe in the news. These *valenced frames* evaluate political issues or situations in either positive or negative terms, whereas we want to focus on frames that go beyond notions of negative and positive, or favorable and unfavorable (see also Tankard, 2001: 96). *Issue frames* are

closely linked to the particular issue they are developed for, whereas we prefer to focus on frames that are not exclusively connected to Europe but that make an appeal to already existing cultural knowledge. As such, the process of social construction underlying the incorporation of these frames by message receivers remains largely invisible and unnoticed; as a result these frames are probably more credible and convincing than other kinds of frames (cf. Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992).

In this study we look for certain ways of thinking about Europe that are promoted and legitimized by political actors and which assure an association between Europe and a broader cultural phenomenon. It is exactly this collective character and the frames' cultural embeddings that make them suitable for giving meaning to *various* issues, events, and to a new reality, that is, to Europe and the European constitution. Framing analysis should therefore first of all be aimed at disclosing the broader cultural phenomenon to which the issue or event under investigation appears to be associated with by frame sponsors, in our case by political actors communicating about it. The analysis starts with an inductive phase, in which a repertoire of frames and the reasoning devices by which the frames manifest themselves in texts is reconstructed from a small sample of texts. Next, in a deductive phase, the extent to which the frames are employed in the larger set of relevant texts is determined (see also Van Gorp, 2005).

3. The inductive phase

3.1 Method

As argued by Van Gorp (2007), frames can be reconstructed and presented as interpretative *frame packages* (cf. Gamson & Lasch, 1983). Each package includes two types of indicators by which the frame can be identified: *framing devices* and *reasoning devices*. Framing devices include metaphors, lexical choices, and catchphrases (see also Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Further, a frame package consists of reasoning devices, which are causal statements that are connected to the four functions of framing in the communication process, as identified by Entman (1993: 52): defining a problem, assigning responsibility, passing a moral judgement, and reaching possible solutions. Reasoning devices can be latently present in the text, whereas framing devices are always manifestly present. The true weight of the package is the *central idea* that connects the various framing and reasoning devices in a particular text with culturally shared phenomena such as values, myths, or archetypes.

The reconstruction of the frame packages in the inductive phase can most adequately be performed through an in-depth qualitative and interpretative analysis of a small sample of texts that are representative for the material to be included in the study. The goal of this interpretative analysis is to identify logical chains of framing and reasoning devices across the separate texts (Van Gorp, 2005: 487; cf. Tankard, 2001). In the study presented in this article, websites produced by three Dutch political parties were closely studied on statements made by these actors in the 2005 referendum campaign. The selected parties hold various political positions in the political system: one left-wing party (*Socialist Party*, SP), one right-wing party (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, VVD) and one centre party (*Christen Democratisch Appèl*, CDA). By including websites produced by parties with different political positions, we expected to find a broad variety of statements on all kind of aspects of the European constitution that would show clusters of related statements.

Per frame package, the reasoning devices were formulated by answering the following questions for each text: (1) How does the author define the problem or situation? (2) Does the author give an indication of the source creating the problem or situation? (3) To whom/what does the author assign responsibility for the problem or situation (cause)? (4) Does the author suggest solutions/remedies to solve the problem or ameliorate the situation? (5) What moral judgements are made? Across the three websites and the various texts, statements logically 'belonging' to each other were combined together

in a frame package. An extensive list of feasible statements was thus collapsed into three mutually exclusive frames, each with its particular central idea and structure of framing and reasoning devices. Also, for all three frames a counter-frame was defined, that is, a frame which challenges the legitimacy of the opposite frame by resisting it, or by re-framing the issue in terms of an alternative cultural idea. A limited number of frames and their respective counter-frames were reconstructed, because we wanted to reach acceptable levels of coder agreement in the deductive phase (see Tankard, 2001: 102-103).

The overall packages and reasoning devices composing these packages were finally checked for their applicability to websites created by three French political parties upholding similar political positions (the left-wing party *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*, the extreme right-wing party *Front National*, and the centre-right party *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*, UMP), and five Dutch and five French NGO websites; this check concerned an examination of the presence of the identified reasoning devices for each frame package within this small selection of these websites. No new reasoning devices were formulated during this check. Simultaneously, a list of framing devices was composed for each frame: combinations of words, catchphrases, and metaphors reflecting aspects of the frame were taken (literally) from both the French and Dutch texts.

3.2 Results: three frames giving meaning to 'Europe'

The *signature matrix* presented in Figure 1 presents the result of the inductive phase. Such a matrix presents the coherent structure of framing and reasoning devices for each frame package (see also Gamson & Lasch, 1983).

In the process of reconstruction of the frames we first recognized the cultural archetype of the helper or donor, addressed by Propp (1928/1958) as central idea. Propp identified this archetype as one of the key narratives in folk tales: a donor, as magical agent, takes care of the hero, providing him/her with a magic potion. We found that political actors also apply implicitly this archetype to the European context: they refer to Europe as an agent taking care of its citizens (through cooperation, legislation, policy, etc.). Accordingly, the "Donor" frame defines Europe by emphasizing the positive consequences of European cooperation for citizens, for example, in terms of peace and safety, but also in economic and social terms. Here, the definition of the situation is: 'Europe delivers a distinguished surplus value'. In the "Donor" frame Europe is presented as *successful joint venture* providing European citizens with all kinds of goods and services. Globalization is the main reason why individual member states must continue and even expand their cooperation in order to cope with issues such as migration, external trade, and terrorism. For example, the Dutch party *Democraten '66* argued that: "This constitution brings the Netherlands economic strength; together it will become easier to solve large-scale problems such as terrorism, international crime and environmental issues". The French *Parti Socialiste* makes a similar argument: "This constitution will bring citizens more security, facing international crime together (terrorism, money laundering, and violations of human rights)".

Within the "Donor" counter-frame this surplus value is resisted. For example, the left-wing party *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* argued that: "This constitution is dangerous, it consecrates the absolute superiority of the 'free market'". The extreme right-wing party *Front National* also employed the "Donor" counter-frame: "We oppose this antisocial Europe that destroys our jobs".

Figure 1 Signature matrix

Frame	Europe as...	Problem/situation definition	Problem/situation source	Problem/situation cause	Policy solution	Moral/ emotional basis	Counter-frame
<i>Donor</i>	Successful joint venture	European cooperation has surplus value or is necessary	Individual member states cannot handle affairs on their own any longer	Globalization and problems that manifest themselves on an increasingly large scale (across national borders)	Continue, or even expand, European cooperation within the EU	It is in everyone's best interest – we all benefit from European cooperation; the EU is a 'necessary evil'; feelings of belonging ("we are in this together")	European cooperation has no surplus value – cooperation causes a decline
<i>David vs. Goliath</i>	Superstate	The nation state loses unique character, identity and national sovereignty (no longer in charge of its own affairs)	The EU (or: large countries in the EU) dominates the political scene, has become too powerful; the aspiration to unite all nation states into one entity or polity (especially among political elite)	EU elite (politicians, technocrats and officials in Brussels) and national government "who allow it all to happen"	Restrict European cooperation and the EU or reverse it; return power to nation state	The nation state should stay in charge of its own affairs; the nation state's collective identity is under attack; feelings of dependency, inferiority and nationalism	The nation state does not lose unique character or national sovereignty, on the contrary: these are preserved by EU; it is desirable to transfer power to EU in order to increase EU's position at global level
<i>Invention</i>	Out of control	Europe has deteriorated into an elephantine, ungovernable and undemocratic body; the gap or distance between 'Brussels' and European citizens has become too large, citizens have no say	European citizens have lost control over EU; legislation has got out of hand (bureaucracy); too many undemocratic decisions have been taken in the past by political elite	Urge of the EU elite to over-regulate and over-control	Increase the democratic nature of EU; more transparency and stimulation of more involvement among citizens	Every (democratic) state should serve its citizens; feelings of "not being taken seriously"	The EU is not undemocratic and ungovernable; citizens do have a say, their opinions count in the EU; the EU merely exists by the grace of its citizens

Second, we identified the cultural motive addressed in the Bible story of David and Goliath (cf. Dahinden, 2006) as central idea. In this story, David is a shepherd boy who opposes a suppressing force represented by the giant Goliath. At the end of the story, David defeats Goliath. Political actors applied this cultural motive to the European context: the individual nation states are challenged by the EU, or large countries within the EU, that has become too powerful. The policy solution they put forward is that nation states should conquer the 'giant' Europe by restricting or even reversing European integration. Accordingly, the "David vs. Goliath" frame addresses the loss of national sovereignty and identity to a dominant Europe. In this frame, Europe is presented as *superstate*. For example, the Dutch *Socialist Party* argued that "The European constitution means handing over even more authority and power to Brussels. It will become a superstate. The Netherlands, as small country, will have no say over its own foreign, defence and justice policies anymore". Second, the French

Front National argued that “The European constitution handles over total power to the European institutions. It is a death threat to our nation. We must remain in charge of our own destiny”.

In the counter-version of the “David vs. Goliath” frame, the idea of Europe as a superstate is resisted by arguing that the unique character and sovereignty of the individual nation state is not threatened by European integration but preserved. For example the Dutch *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA) argued that “We do not have to fear Europe’s interference in everything. Issues like the Dutch drugs policy, gay marriage and euthanasia – there is no need to fear that The Netherlands has to give up anything in any of these areas”.

Third, we recognized the cultural myth of an invention that ends up turning against its inventor – with the monster of Frankenstein as extreme example – as central idea. This iconic character from the novel written by Mary Shelley, intended to be beautiful, turns out to be a horrid creature. More realistic examples of such inventions are dynamite and nuclear power. We discovered that political actors applied this cultural myth to the European context: they claim European citizens have lost control over the European Union – an invention they created themselves, and that was initially intended to serve them. Accordingly, the “Invention that turns against its inventor” frame (henceforth: “Invention” frame) deals with the current state of the European Union: how it has deteriorated over time into an elephantine, ungovernable and undemocratic body. In this frame, Europe is presented as *out of control*: European citizens have lost control because European legislation is too complex and is the result of one-sided decisions taken by the European political elite. Policy solutions include increasing the democratic character of the EU with more transparency and involvement of European citizens. The moral basis appealed to by the frame is the idea that a democratic EU should serve its citizens and not vice versa. For example, the Dutch *Socialist Party* stated that: “If you say YES to this European constitution, you say YES to an undemocratic and non-transparent Europe in which citizens have no say”.

Within the “Invention” counter-frame the idea of Europe being or becoming undemocratic and ungovernable is resisted. This idea is for example expressed by the Dutch *Democraten* ’66: “The European constitution makes the European Union more democratic and resolute through more effective decision making, better division of powers and more control on European policy”. Resistance to the “Invention” frame also becomes manifest in statements like “Citizens should take responsibility by becoming more actively involved in European issues, instead of only complaining they were not informed” (*Parti Socialiste*).

4. The deductive phase

4.1 Research questions

In the deductive phase of our analysis we surveyed a large collection of French and Dutch websites and newspaper texts on the use of the three frames reconstructed in the inductive phase. Comparisons of the use of the frames are drawn between the two countries included in the study, between the various political actors, between the two different types of communication, and between advocates and opponents of the European constitution. This has lead to the following specific research questions:

- RQ1 To what extent do French and Dutch political actors employ the three frames in their communication about Europe?
- RQ2 Do differences exist concerning the ‘richness’ of the three frames, in terms of numbers of reasoning devices explicitly elaborated on within each frame?
- RQ3 Can differences in frame use be observed between opponents and advocates of the European constitution in the Netherlands and France?

RQ4 Can differences in frame use be observed between the various actor types, that is, political parties, NGOs, and newspapers, in France and the Netherlands?

4.1 Method

Selection of texts. Texts were selected based on the criterion of containing Europe-related lines of reasoning: those not (only) focussing on national political affairs and/or not (only) focussing on campaign-related affairs, but rather on particular aspects of Europe, European integration, the EU, the European constitution, or consequences on a social, economic, political policy and/or legislative level.

As concerns the collection of websites, in the six weeks prior to the referendum in both countries search engines⁵⁸ were used on a weekly basis to search for sites produced by NGOs⁵⁹ and political parties expected to be involved in the 2005 referendum on the European constitution. In the week prior to, and in the week after the referendum, all collected sites were archived with the tool Teleport Ultra.⁶⁰ Only eight French and nine Dutch political parties turned out to provide Europe-related lines of reasoning on their websites in the 2005 campaign on the European constitution. These were mainly the political parties with seats in the European Parliament. Other political parties were, as a result, not included in this study. In both countries quite a few NGOs turned out to provide Europe-related lines of reasoning on their websites. Yet, more French ($n = 65$) than Dutch ($n = 49$) NGOs did so and therefore were included. This can be considered a sign of a higher level of political activity concerning European political issues outside the institutionalised political order in France. For each website, one key document was selected in which the actor put forward its “Europe-related” lines of reasoning – used to advocate or oppose the European constitution.

Further, a collection of newspaper articles focusing on the 2005 referendum was composed for both countries. In total, 69 Dutch and 72 French newspaper articles were included. These articles were selected in the two weeks prior to the referendum and in the week after the referendum, based on the criterion to contain Europe-related lines of reasoning.⁶¹ There was significant attention paid to the referendum on the European constitution in the newspapers included, but only a small part of this news stories truly dealt with the aspects that interested us.

Coding instrument. On the basis of the matrix resulting from the inductive phase, a coding instrument for the deductive analysis was developed that measures the *actual* presence of the framing and reasoning devices in the entire collection of texts. The coding instruction and the coding sheet contained three separate parts: (1) actor’s opinion on the European constitution; (2) presence of framing devices; and (3) presence of reasoning devices.

First, the actor’s *opinion* on the European constitution was measured. Coders could choose between (a) advocate; (b) neutral/ unclear/ mix; and (c) opponent. For each actor, its opinion towards the

⁵⁸ For the Netherlands, the search engines www.google.nl and www.ilse.nl were used. For France www.google.fr and www.altavista.fr were used. Keywords: “Europese grondwet” for the Netherlands, and “constitution européenne” for France. The first 500 hits (50 pages) were checked for their relevance to increase the chance of finding not only the mainstream organizations, but also the minor/fringe organizations.

⁵⁹ NGOs include issue advocacy groups, social movement organizations, activist groups, special interest groups (including labour unions), and religious organizations.

⁶⁰ See: <http://www.tenmax.com>.

⁶¹ Dutch newspapers included in the study: *Volkskrant*, *NRC Handelsblad* and *Telegraaf*. French newspapers included in the study: *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*. If possible, on each day one relevant article was taken from the front page, and one from the first section of the newspaper. If the newspaper had devoted a specific section to the referendum, one or two relevant articles were taken from that section, too. In total, approximately 20 up to 25 articles were selected for each newspaper during the three week period.

European constitution was measured on a scale from advocate (score 1) to opponent (score 3). In a general sense, French actors appeared to have a slightly more negative opinion ($M = 2.09$) on the European constitution than Dutch actors ($M = 1.90$), although this difference was not significant: $t(266) = 1.827, p = .069$. More variation can be observed when the two countries are compared. In France, for political parties ($M = 2.38$) and NGOs ($M = 2.40$) quite negative means were calculated, in contrast to the relatively positive mean for French newspapers ($M = 1.77$), $F(2, 141) = 9.122, p < .001$. In the Netherlands, a similar but slightly less contrasting pattern could be observed: newspapers ($M = 1.72$) were more positive than political parties ($M = 1.89$) and NGOs ($M = 2.15$), $F(2, 121) = 3.884, p < .05$.

Second, coders were instructed to highlight the *framing devices* in the text with a felt tip pen. For each frame, a list of lexical choices (framing devices) plus possible synonyms was included in the coding instruction, both in French and Dutch. Coders also needed to determine which of the identified frames was *dominant* in the text by weighting the number of sentences in which the framing devices of the frames are present. Coders could choose between (a) frame not present in the text; (b) frame present but not dominant; and (c) frame present and dominant in the text. Third, at the more interpretative level, coders needed to determine whether the *reasoning devices* systematically put together in the matrix were present in the text. The coding instruction elaborated on the statements in detail – explaining the core components of each statement. In some cases, the statement was manifestly present, but in many cases the statement needed to be extracted from the text and was only latently present. Training sessions were aimed at reaching a sufficient level of inter-coder agreement among the six coders about the level of interpretation: it was important to know when to stop interpreting. This was especially important for the reasoning devices and their (potentially) latent presence in a text. This knowledge was obtained by practicing together using several example texts.

Reliability. A stratified sample of 55 texts (about 20% of the total number of texts) was double-coded in order to determine the exact level of inter-coder agreement. For each variable, two reliability coefficients were computed: Holsti and Krippendorff's α .⁶² Whereas Holsti only calculates the percentage of agreement, α corrects for chance agreement in computing a reliability assessment (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005: 149). As lowest level of reliability we considered the following figures acceptable: .60 for α and .80 for Holsti. In doing so we follow the lead of scholars who consider these figures acceptable for studies with a qualitative, interpretative nature (cf. Riffe et al., 2005: 151). Those variables that met both criteria were included for further analysis.⁶³ Other variables appeared to be too complex or difficult to identify in the text, especially those variables that were mainly latently present in the texts. These variables are not reported on in this article.

It was within the following two areas that the inter-coder agreement was insufficient. First, the extent of domination of all three counter-frames had not been coded reliably enough. Compressing the two

⁶² There are three reasons for having chosen Krippendorff's α : (1) it is uncertain whether we can report on Scott's π in our study, since it is questionable whether the absence/presence of a variable can be considered a ordinal-level measure (minimal demand for Scott's π); (2) both Krippendorff's α and Cohen's κ compute higher reliability figures than Scott's π when one value of a category is used much more often than others, which is the case for some variables in our study. So Scott's π will not be reported on; (3) Krippendorff's α corrects for small samples, in contrast to Cohen's κ (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005: 148-153).

⁶³ Opinion on European constitution: Krippendorff's α .80, Holsti .87; Dominance "Donor" frame: .66, .80; Dominance "David vs. Goliath" frame: .67, .83; Dominance "Invention" frame: .64, .78; Presence counter-frame "Donor": .63, .82; Presence "Donor" frame: .78, .89; Presence "David vs. Goliath" frame: .63, .84; Presence "Invention" frame: .67, .84; Reasoning device "Donor – definition": 1.00, 1.00; Reasoning device "Donor – source": .75, .88; Reasoning device "Donor – cause": .87, .94; Reasoning device "David vs. Goliath – definition": .61, .86; Reasoning device "David vs. Goliath – cause": 1.00; 1.00; Reasoning device "David vs. Goliath – solution": .61, .86; Reasoning device "Invention – definition": .89.

measures *present but not dominant*, and *present and dominant* into one measure *present* resulted in one of the reconstructed counter-frames meeting the criteria. As a result, this article only reports on one counter-frame, that is, the “Donor” counter-frame; for the other two frames, the normal and counter versions of the frame are jointly reported on (as one frame). Second, some of the elements within the logical chain of reasoning devices in the three frame packages had been coded insufficiently reliable, especially those that were not very often present in the texts. By only looking at statements made within the *dominant* frame in the text, however, most statements were coded reliably.

4.2 Results: cross-national comparisons in employment of frames

In Table 1 the overall employment of the three frames by the political actors is presented. In both countries political actors employed the “Donor” frame the most often: in 81% of the 268 texts the “Donor” frame could be identified. The other two frames were less often employed – in about 50% of the 268 texts. This means that in most texts two frames were employed. French actors employed the “Donor” frame somewhat more often than Dutch actors: (86% compared to 75%). Yet this difference is not significant. In contrast, Dutch actors employed the “David vs. Goliath” and the “Invention” frame significantly more often than French actors: 65% versus 38% for the “David vs. Goliath” frame, and 67% versus 36% for the “Invention” frame. The “Donor” frame is more dominant in France than it is in the Netherlands, where each frame was used to about the same extent.

Table 1 Presence of frames differentiated per country

Frame	France N=144	Netherlands N=124	Total N=268
Donor	124 (86%)	93 (75%)	217 (81%)
David vs. Goliath	55 (38%)	81 (65%)	134 (50%)
Invention	52 (36%)	83 (67%)	134 (50%)

Note: Observed differences that are statistically significant (Pearson’s χ^2 , $p < .05$) are displayed in *italics*.

Our next question concerns the extent to which political actors elaborated on the various elements of the frame packages outlined in Figure 1. The extent in which political actors explicitly include one or more of these elements in their texts is an indicator of the ‘richness’ of their use of these frames. However, as mentioned earlier, the coding of the reasoning devices turned out to be quite difficult. Still, if we concentrate only on the dominant frames in texts, the following can be concluded for all the three frames: nearly all political actors elaborate on the definition of the situation/ problem. For example, in 107 of the 110 texts (97%) in which the “Donor” frame was dominant, the reasoning device ‘European cooperation has surplus value’ could be identified. For the “David vs. Goliath” frame this percentage was 88%, for the “Invention” frame 95%. Political actors elaborated less on the other three elements of the frames. For example, in the texts in which the “Donor” frame was dominant, actors elaborated only in 23% of these texts on the source and in 40% on the causal responsibility for the problem.

As most of the texts contained lines of reasoning for voting ‘YES’ or ‘NO’, we then investigated the frame use of advocates and opponents of the European constitution. Table 2 elaborates on the observed similarities and differences between advocates and opponents of the European constitution as concerns their employment of the three frames.

Table 2 Presence of frames differentiated per advocate/neutral/opponent

Frame	France			Netherlands			Total		
	ADV N=55	NEU N=21	OPP N=68	ADV N=49	NEU N=39	OPP N=36	ADV N=104	NEU N=60	OPP N=104
Donor	49 (89%)	16 (76%)	59 (87%)	37 (76%)	30 (77%)	26 (72%)	86 (83%)	46 (77%)	85 (82%)
David vs. Goliath	26 (47%)	1 (5%)	27 (40%)	36 (74%)	19 (49%)	25 (69%)	62 (60%)	20 (33%)	52 (50%)
Invention	12 (22%)	7 (33%)	33 (49%)	33 (67%)	27 (69%)	23 (64%)	45 (43%)	34 (57%)	56 (54%)

Note: Observed differences that are statistically significant (Pearson's χ^2 , $p < .05$) are displayed in *italics*.

Table 2 shows that advocates, neutrals and opponents of the European constitution employed the “Donor” frame to a similar extent. 83% of the advocates and 82% of the opponents employed the “Donor” frame. When looking at the differences in employment of the normal and counter versions of this frame, it becomes clear that advocates particularly employed the normal version of this frame (82%, in contrast to 13% of the opponents). In contrast, opponents employed the “Donor” counter-frame the most often (76%, in contrast to 6% of the advocates). Political actors with a neutral opinion on the European constitution employed the two versions of the frame to about the same extent.

The “David vs. Goliath” frame was employed somewhat more often by advocates than by opponents; 60% versus 50%. This pattern is visible in both countries, yet differences are not significant. The neutrals employed this frame much less often: 33%. Because of unreliable coding, no difference could be made between normal and counter version of the “David vs. Goliath” frame, as was also the case for the Intervention frame.

As concerns the employment of the “Invention” frame, variation was mainly observed among French actors; here, advocates of the European constitution employed this frame less often in comparison to the opponents: 22%, in comparison to 49%. Among Dutch actors, this variation was not observed – all employed the “Invention” frame to a similar extent, around 67%.

Next we come to the question whether frame use is related to the actor type producing the text: relatively extensive texts from political parties elaborating on all kinds of subjects related to Europe, compared to small texts from NGO's discussing some subjects relevant to their perspective, and small texts from newspapers related to European news events. In Table 3 the three actor types are compared with each other on their employment of the three frames; also this table compares the actors along the lines of their national basis. The overall variation in the employment of the “Donor” frame between French and Dutch actors (as outlined in Table 1) can be observed among all three actor types. Variation was especially observed among French and Dutch news actors: in 70% of the Dutch newspaper articles the “Donor” frame could be identified – in contrast to 85% of the French newspaper articles.

For the “Donor” frame it was measured separately whether the frame was employed in its normal or counter version. Results show that almost all Dutch political parties employed the normal “Donor” frame (eight out of nine of the Dutch parties included in the study), whereas the French political parties were more mixed in terms of either employing the normal or counter version of this frame. For the other two types of actors, French and Dutch counterparts showed a similar pattern: (1) NGOs particularly employed the counter version of the frame: 54%, in contrast to 36% normal version; (2) newspapers employed the normal version of the frame most often: 59%, in contrast to 34% counter version.

Table 3 Presence of frames differentiated per actor type

Frame	Political parties			NGOs			News		
	FR N=8	NL N=9	Total N=17	FR N=65	NL N=46	Total N=111	FR N=71	NL N=69	Total N=140
Donor	8 (100%)	8 (89%)	16 (94%)	56 (86%)	37 (80%)	93 (82%)	60 (85%)	48 (70%)	108 (77%)
David vs. Goliath	6 (75%)	9 (100%)	15 (88%)	18 (28%)	22 (48%)	40 (36%)	29 (42%)	49 (71%)	78 (56%)
Invention	5 (63%)	8 (89%)	13 (76%)	27 (42%)	29 (63%)	56 (50%)	20 (28%)	46 (67%)	66 (47%)

Notes: Observed differences that are statistically significant (Pearson's χ^2 , $p < .05$) are displayed in *italics*. Unit of analysis for political parties and NGOs is *website* (one key document was selected per website); unit of analysis for newspapers is *article* (about 20-25 articles were selected per newspaper).

With regard to the other two frames, the “David vs. Goliath” frame and the “Invention” frame, as mentioned before it was the Dutch actors that employed these frames significantly more often. Only one French actor type employed these frames to a similar extent than its Dutch counterpart: the political parties. As concerns the other two actor types, the results show that Dutch NGOs and newspapers employed these frames significantly more often than their French counterparts. For example, 48% of the Dutch NGOs employed the “David vs. Goliath”, in comparison to 28% of the French NGOs. Additionally, in 67% of the Dutch newspaper articles the “Invention” frame could be identified, in comparison to 28% of the French newspaper articles.

5. Conclusions

The type of frames investigated in this study differs from other types of frames often being discussed in framing literature. *Generic frames* seem to lack the quality or suitability to define issues and to identify causal and treatment responsibility. *Issue-specific frames* do not correspond to the rule of thumb that the same frame should be applicable to define multiple issues. Therefore, in this study we have opted for reconstructing frame packages in which a culturally shared idea functions as a central organizing idea. Yet, this does not mean that a focus on culturally embedded frames needs to be seen as a totally new approach to framing: there are clear linkages with both generic and issue-specific frames. The “David vs. Goliath” frame falls under the umbrella of the “Conflict” frame, which is dominantly used in news stories and has a much stronger capacity to construct meaning. If this familiar story is applied as a core idea, it becomes clear that we should sympathize with the weakest side in a battle in which unequal weapons are used. In contrast to the “Social responsibility” frame and the “Economic consequences”, two generic frames which are often perceived as mutually exclusive frames, we perceive aspects of responsibility and consequences of importance for each frame. For example, when the “Donor” frame is applied to define the European Union it becomes clear that this supranational structure is not driven by self-interest but that it places itself in the service of the economy and social well-being of the European member states and their citizens. Finally, with the use of the “Invention” frame the opposite idea is expressed, that is, the European Union has become a purpose in itself; moreover, it turned *against* its creators, the individual member states.

The limitation in the inductive phase to only three frames seemed to be a requirement for achieving sufficient inter-coder reliability coefficients. Although the identification of frames can be rather subjective, we expanded the inductive study with a deductive analysis in which the three frames were systematically coded for their presence in newspapers and on websites. The deductive phase has demonstrated that within one media text multiple frames can be applied; the use of one frame does not necessarily exclude the use of another, even an opposing one. The same is true for websites and newspapers. Existing research shows that within a text usually only one frame suffices to turn a story into a comprehensible whole (see, e.g., Van Gorp, 2005). The complexity of the issue at stake in our

study – Europe, European integration, and the European constitution – likely means that the use of only one frame is not sufficient to make the issue understandable and comprehensible for the general public.

A comparison of the extent to which all constituting parts of the pre-defined frame-packages are explicitly included within a single newspaper article or website shows that the definition of the situation is touched upon in more than 9 out of 10 texts. By contrast, the ‘richness’ of the applied frames is rather limited, because the causal and treatment responsibility, the possible solutions, and the moral basis on which one relies are less frequently included, especially by French newspapers and NGOs. With regard to the inclusion of several reasoning devices, only the political parties, both in France and in the Netherlands, adequately refer to the background of the issue at hand. This may partially be related to the fact that the texts produced by these actors turned out to be relatively long, in comparison to texts produced by NGOs and in newspapers. In these rather extended texts, political parties usually put forward various arguments. One limitation of our study is the fact that we did not take the length of the texts into account. In addition, it was not always possible to make adequate comparisons between several types of actors. The infrequent presence of part of the reasoning devices in the material is the main reason why this aspect turned to be difficult to code in a sufficiently reliable way. In attempting to reveal the latent meaning structures of texts, and to make a cross-cultural comparison of common understandings, we have inevitably run into difficulties of inter-coder reliability. By being very explicit about our coding procedures we leave the decision to the reader as to whether this attempt was successful and worth a follow up.

The inclusion of counter-frames, that is, frames which argue against the general idea which is expressed by the opposite frame, enabled us to make a distinction between the directions in which the three frames were applied, something which is often not included in a framing analysis. The “Donor” frame was employed by most political actors in the two countries, either in the normal version or in its opposing variant, that is, the counter version. This cross-national employment of the “Donor” frame is an indicator for the sharing of common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ among French and Dutch actors, namely being a successful joint-venture that is able to handle problems that manifest themselves increasingly on a large scale within Europe.

Also the “David vs. Goliath” frame and the “Invention” frame form common understandings, yet these were less present than the “Donor” frame – especially among French actors, who employed these frames less often in comparison to their Dutch counterparts. Observed variations could be linked to the opinion an actor appeared to hold on the European constitution and to a lesser degree to the actor type. Actors with a relatively positive opinion (particularly newspapers) employed the “Donor” frame more often; actors with a relatively negative opinion (particularly NGOs) preferred to employ the “Donor” counter-frame. However, none of the three frames can be labelled as negative (the David vs. Goliath-frame and the Invention-frame) or as positive (the Donor-frame) *as such*. This implies that framing goes beyond notions of ‘pro’ or ‘con’ on a certain issue.

The results of our cross-national comparison and focus on a diversity of actors lead to a more general conclusion about the notion of public sphere in an online environment. The Internet indeed provides a forum to (decedent) voices that are often overlooked by the mainstream news media, as was illustrated by the many NGO websites gathered in our collection. For citizens who want to be informed on European issues, the Internet contains a lot of communication about Europe produced by a variety of political actors. Most of these actors, especially NGOs as less-institutionalized actors, are not visible in the mass-mediated public sphere. Yet our study has also shown that these actors do not communicate in a very ‘rich’ manner when employing a frame (especially the French NGOs). Political parties as online actors score better on this aspect, providing more diverse frames in their

communication about Europe. Nonetheless, we believe this situation to be an asset to European democracy, as is also pointed out by scholars such as Norris (2001, 2003). The question as to whether this online communication about Europe enhances citizen's involvement in the European political process (thereby reducing the EU's democratic deficit) has not been investigated in this study. We can only speculate on this matter.

As concerns the reconstruction of the three frame packages, we make no claim to be exhaustive; there are probably other alternative frames used to give meaning to Europe. As we wanted to be certain of acceptable levels of inter-coder reliability, a repertoire of only three frames seems to be both acceptable and unavoidable. Yet we have confidence that the three reconstructed frames cover important lines of reasoning about Europe as present in the collected material in the context of the referendum on the European constitution. Whether this is also true for political communication about Europe during any other event, or in other countries, can also be the object of future research.

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General Discussion

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This dissertation aimed to obtain more knowledge regarding the extent and nature of online communication about Europe, and the contribution of this communication to the development of a European public sphere. Four empirical projects were established, measuring aspects of the Europeanization of political communication on websites produced by diverse political actors from various EU member states, as an indicator for the existence of a European public sphere. Each project had its own focus; yet they were developed sequentially, benefitting as much as possible from each other in terms of how to interpret and measure ‘Europeanization’, and to determine the exact position of common understandings in this notion. This approach allowed investigation of this social phenomenon in an exploratory manner, clearing the existing terminological indistinctness in the field, as addressed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

Europeanization of political communication was measured by looking at cross-national similarities and differences in the extent to and manner in which political actors communicate about Europe on their websites. Because of its unmediated nature, this type of political communication can be considered more representative for issues and opinions existing in society compared to political communication in the mass media. Through communicating about Europe, political actors give meaning to various issues and events related to Europe, European integration, and/or the European Union (henceforth: ‘Europe’). The investigation of similarities and differences in this communication about Europe, made it possible to obtain more knowledge about existing common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ among these actors as representatives. I consider these common understandings essential in a European public sphere since these are signs of Europeanization as a social construction – a social-cultural process towards one European entity to which citizens feel they belong. Therefore, the overarching research question was as follows:

To what degree do common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ exist among political actors from a range of EU member states, manifested through the extent to and manner in which these actors communicate about Europe on their websites?

Before providing an answer to this research question in the next section the main conclusions of the four research projects are discussed.

1. Summary of project conclusions

The study presented in **Chapter 3** investigated the visibility of political communication about Europe on the Internet during the 2004 EP election in nine EU member states by looking at the extent to which websites produced by diverse political actors contained communication about Europe and/or the 2004 EP election as a specific event. A total of 855 websites were included in the study. This first study in the PhD project aimed at obtaining a general overview of ‘what is out there’ in terms of political communication about Europe on the Web by including a sample of countries and political actors representative for the entire European Union. Four variables were measured indicating Europeanization of political communication: ‘EP election content on front page’, ‘European content on front page’, ‘EU/EP-related news in news section’, and ‘European content elsewhere on the site – within two links from front page’. The **main conclusion** of this investigation was that political actors to a substantial degree communicated about Europe and/or the 2004 EP election as a specific event on

their websites: political communication on the Web turned out to be quite Europeanized. Institutionalized actors, like political parties and candidates, especially communicated about the EP election on their websites (respectively 88% and 89%). Less institutionalized actors like NGOs and labor unions particularly communicated about more general European issues (84%, in contrast to 38% EP election content). Apparently the EP election as an event was of minor importance for this type of political actors. Some variations were also observed when comparing the included political actors on the basis of their nationality. Websites produced by British and Slovenian actors contained relatively frequent communication about Europe in comparison to French actors: only 52% of the French actors provided EP election content on the front page of their websites, in contrast to 97% for the Slovenian actors and 92% for the British actors. The other six countries included in the study were around the average (plus or minus 10%). Yet a clear contrast between Eastern and Western EU member states was only observed among press actors: press actors in the Eastern European countries Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia communicated more often about Europe and the 2004 EP election on their websites than their Western European counterparts. Apparently, the Eastern European press actors took their role as ‘watchdog’ of state power more seriously. The study’s main observation that a large part of websites produced by political actors from various EU member states contain political communication about Europe, indicates Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently of the existence of a European public sphere.

After having obtained a general overview of the extent of political communication about Europe on the Web, in the study presented in **Chapter 4** Europeanization of political communication was measured from a different, more sophisticated approach: investigating whether common understandings existed among political actors as concerns the issues they mentioned when communicating about Europe on their websites. This study was meant as preparation to the study presented in Chapter 5. As a result, only one country – France – was included. Political communication about Europe present on websites produced by the eleven largest political parties was compared on the basis of the political orientation of political parties. The goal of the study was to explore whether the categorization proposed by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000, 2002) forms an adequate tool for investigating the existence of common understandings among political actors, as indicator for Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently the existence of a European public sphere. The three issue domains *interests*, *identity* and *values* were investigated for their presence in the selected material. In addition, the focus (European vs. national focus – further outlined in Chapter 5) a party employed in its online communication about Europe was examined in this study – as a *manner* in which parties communicate about Europe. The **main conclusion** of this study was that the three issue domains formed common understandings among the political parties included in the study: the parties mentioned at least one, and usually multiple, issue domains in their online communication about Europe. Interests issues were mentioned the most frequently, about half of the parties mentioned identity issues, and quite a few parties also mentioned values issues. With regard to the first issue domain, interests, both a European focus (e.g., European interests), and a national focus (e.g. national interests) were employed by the political parties included in the study, depending on their political orientation. Identity issues were also mentioned with a European or national focus. Universal values were mentioned almost solely with a European focus.

The study presented in **Chapter 5** directly flows from the study presented in Chapter 4. Based on the exploratory observations made in Chapter 4, the instrument used in Chapter 5 investigated the presence of the three issue domains and the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe in a more systematic way. In addition, websites produced by political parties from three instead of just one EU member state (France, the United Kingdom, The Netherlands) were investigated in order to be able to identify cross-national patterns as an indicator of Europeanization of political communication. The goal of study was to determine whether common understandings of what

constitutes ‘Europe’ existed among political actors from the three EU member states – being representatives of a variety of positions within the European political spectrum. Two aspects were considered: (1) the presence of the issue domains *interests*, *identity* and *values* in parties’ communication, and (2) the manner in which parties communicate about Europe, consisting of (a) the focus a party employs (European vs. national focus), and (b) the attitude towards Europe a party expresses (positive vs. negative attitude) when communicating about Europe. The **main conclusion** of this study was that there exists common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ among a portion of the political parties included in the study with regard to the above mentioned variables. Cross-national similarities were particularly observed among three groups of parties upholding a similar political position: the liberal parties, the sovereign/ extreme right-wing parties and the green parties: common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ existed among these groups of parties. More diversity was observed among two other groups of parties: the social-democratic parties, and the centre-right parties, mainly because the British *Labour Party* and the *Conservatives* communicated differently about Europe than their French and Dutch counterparts. For these two parties, their national basis turned out to be a stronger indicator regarding understanding of what constitutes ‘Europe’ than their (potentially cross-national) position in the political spectrum: they employed a national focus more frequently and expressed a negative attitude towards Europe compared to their French and Dutch counterparts. Also, more often identity issues were stressed by these British parties. Despite these exceptions the observed cross-national similarities among part of the groups of parties, being common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’, can be considered an indicator for Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently of the existence of a European public sphere.

In the final study presented in **Chapter 6**, the *manner in which* political actors communicate about Europe was investigated in a different, more complex manner. The goal of this study, once again, was to determine whether common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ existed among political actors from different EU member states. Yet the kind of common understanding focused upon in this study is different than in the previous two studies. Whereas in the Chapters 4 and 5 political actors’ focus and attitude *towards* Europe was investigated, in Chapter 6 portrayals *of* Europe as shared among political actors were investigated: portrayals that provide information about the content of and the characteristics attributed to Europe (what it is and what it should be) by political actors as representatives of issues and opinions existing in society. More diverse political actors were included in the study; in addition websites produced by political parties, NGO websites were also included in the study. Moreover, the context of this study differed from the previous ones: the spring 2005 referendum held upon the acceptance of a European Constitution in France and The Netherlands – the two countries included in the study. By selecting a different context, it was possible to investigate whether the patterns could be observed across contexts – this comparison will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter. For similar reasons political communication about Europe in newspapers was also investigated in this study. In this manner observations could be made as to whether these actors communicate similarly about Europe as political actors on their websites. Three portrayals of Europe, each embedded in a particular frame – as manners in which political actors communicate about Europe – were developed in an inductive phase and subsequently tested for their presence in a large set of texts (present on both websites and within newspapers) in a deductive phase: the “Donor” frame, in which Europe is portrayed as a *successful joint venture*; the “David vs. Goliath” frame, in which Europe is portrayed as *superstate*; and the “Invention” frame, in which Europe is portrayed as *out of control*. The **main conclusion** of this study was that the three portrayals of Europe embedded in the frames formed common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ among the political actors included in the study. The first frame, the “Donor” frame, was employed by most political actors in both countries: there clearly existed a common understanding of Europe as a successful joint venture, able to handle problems that manifest themselves increasingly on a large scale throughout Europe. Political actors either confirmed (50%) or resisted (43%) this understanding – depending on the

opinion they held on the European constitution. The other two frames, “David vs. Goliath”, and “Invention” were also employed quite often by the actors included in the study, yet mainly by Dutch political actors. Only one French actor type, the political parties, employed these frames to a similar extent as their Dutch counterparts. Here, too, the national basis of actors turned out to be a strong indicator with regard to their understanding of what constitutes ‘Europe’. Yet the cross-national implementation of the “Donor” frame can be considered an indicator of Europeanization of political communication across the two countries, and across the various political actors included in the study. For the other two frames, it appeared that political parties share an understanding of what constitutes ‘Europe’ to a larger extent than other types of political actors (including newspapers). The comparison of political communication in newspapers with political communication on websites showed similar employment of frames, and similar portrayals of Europe by these two different media types. Variation could only be observed in diversity of arguments put forward – together forming a ‘rich’ frame – within the two types of media: political communication on websites contained more diverse arguments in comparison to political communication in newspapers.

2. Overall conclusion of the dissertation

The moment has come to formulate an answer to the overall research question presented in the introduction chapter and, again, at the beginning of this chapter. Can the conclusion be drawn, on the basis of the executed empirical projects, that there exists common understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’ among political actors from various EU member states – as an indicator of Europeanization of political communication, and subsequently the existence of a European public sphere?

Three general conclusions can be formulated:

1. *Political actors from various EU member states communicate about Europe on their websites.* Europe is visible on the Web, on websites produced by a variety of political actors: political parties, governmental organizations, NGOs and labor unions, and other types of (social/political) organizations or individuals. Yet, as is shown in Chapter 3, whereas political parties merely communicate about official events such as the 2004 EP election, NGOs communicate more about daily affairs and procedures taking place within the European Union. Apparently, in the process called ‘Europeanization’ institutionalized actors focus on different aspects of ‘Europe’ than less institutionalized actors. At the same time, the referendum study (Chapter 6) has shown that many NGOs communicate about this event on their websites, so it may have been the 2004 EP election as specific event being of not enough importance for NGOs to report on. This situation contrasts the expectation that NGOs use the Internet to advise citizens in their electoral choices by providing information on the issues at stake. This would be especially valuable since in Western mediated democracies the traditional mass media mainly report on political parties during elections. This study has shown that NGOs do not consider it their ‘duty’ to do so. Yet, a year later multiple NGOs provide information on the European Constitution on their websites, apparently with the intention to influence citizens’ votes in the referendum. Reasons may lie in the difference in perceived effects of influencing citizens’ votes during the two events. A ‘NO’ vote in the referendum would immediately reject the European Constitution; a vote for a particular political party in the European Parliament election does not directly influence decision making procedures taking place in the European Parliament. NGOs may have taken this difference into account.
2. *Political actors from various EU member states communicate to a similar degree about the three issue domains in their online communication about Europe.* Chapter 4 and 5 have shown that political actors foremost mention interests issues when communicating about Europe; less often they address identity and values issues. Apparently, for most political actors ‘Europe’ primarily constitutes an instrumental entity, and to a lesser degree a community based on a shared identity and values. The results presented in Appendix I confirm this conclusion: this appendix elaborates

on the presence of the three issue domains *interests*, *identity*, and *values* in communication about Europe and the spring 2005 referendum on the European constitution as specific event, produced by the three actor types political parties, NGOs and newspapers in France and The Netherlands. This was not reported in the article (Chapter 6), because of its specific focus on framing. Almost all (91%) of the political actors included in this study mentioned interests issues in their communication about Europe, compared to 38% identity issues and 65% values issues. Appendix I also shows that ‘online’ communication produced by NGOs and political parties contained more identity and values issues compared to ‘offline’ communication in newspapers. This was already suggested in Chapter 5, when the results of this study were compared to the results of a study conducted by Eder, Kantner and Trenz (2000, 2002). Finally, a comparison of the communication about Europe produced by political parties during the two events shows that these actors put forward arguments related to their self-awareness and collective identity much more frequently when communicating about the European constitution than when communicating about the 2004 EP election. The different nature of the two events probably explains this discrepancy.

3. *Political actors from various EU member states do communicate about Europe in a similar manner.* The studies in this dissertation have shown that common understandings about what constitutes ‘Europe’ exist among political actors from various EU member states. These common understandings usually exist among particular cross-national groups of actors. Chapter 5 has shown that political actors upholding a similar political position (left wing – right wing) employ a similar focus and attitude towards Europe. Chapter 6 has shown that political actors with a similar opinion on the European constitution portray Europe similarly by employing a similar frame. In these cases, political position and opinion on the European constitution are stronger indicators for the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe than an actor’s national basis. In Chapter 6 one common understanding is presented that existed among almost all political actors included in the study, being both ‘online’ and ‘offline’ actors: the “Donor” frame in which Europe is portrayed as successful joint venture. Chapter 6 has however also showed that particular frames are over-used by political actors from one nation state. Particular national debates are debit to this situation. For example, the use of the “Invention” frame, in which Europe is presented as out of control – elephantine, ungovernable and undemocratic – by a large part of the Dutch political actors can be situated in the nationwide debate on the undemocratic state of the European Union initiated by former European Commission official and current MEP Paul van Buitenen in Winter 2004-2005.

Do these observations together provide sufficient reason to speak of ‘Europeanization’? I raise the question because, as already mentioned, in the various studies patterns have also been observed that indicate the existence of common understandings among political actors from one nation state, in addition to cross-national patterns among political actors from various EU member states. Examples are the over-use of identity issues by British political parties in Chapter 5, and the over-use of the ‘Invention’ frame by Dutch political actors in the study presented in Chapter 6, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. Nevertheless, I think we can speak about ‘Europeanization’ based on the observations of the various studies. One should not forget that in any society (being a nation state, a small city or the European Union) diverse patterns of common understandings of a social phenomenon exist, whether national, regional, religious, ethnic, age-based etc. So why would there not exist multiple understandings of what constitutes ‘Europe’, some being nationally based, others cross-nationally based? The intention of this dissertation was to find those common understandings that exist cross-nationally among various types of actors. We have found several of such common understandings existing within the countries under investigation.

The observed variations between the two events that have served as context for the studies in this dissertation show that common understandings are not fixed, but can shift according to the context:

discussing one event involves merely economical, juridical or administrative issues, while discussing a second event involves issues related to community formation and the existence of a collective identity among Europeans. Yet the base stays the same: actors communicate about Europe.

In this dissertation, more knowledge has been obtained about the extent and nature of communication about Europe present on websites produced by various political actors. We have identified cross-national patterns within this online communication. What remains to be discussed here is the contribution of this communication to reducing the European Union's democratic deficit, as suggested in Chapter 1. Such a discussion goes beyond the conclusions presented so far in this chapter. The observed patterns suggest that political actors do feel involved in Europe. Not only do they communicate about Europe, they also express a positive opinion on the European Union and its future constitution (Chapter 6) or employ a European focus (Chapter 5) on their websites. However, those actors that express a negative opinion, or employ a national focus also feel, to certain extent, involved in Europe: Chapter 6 has shown that it is possible that similar common understandings exist both among advocates and opponents, shared among the widest possible range of representatives of existing issues and opinions in society.

Does such communication containing common understandings about Europe increase citizens' involvement in Europe as visitors to the websites on which this communication is present? Citizens have a broad range of websites from which to select information. They can even create their own websites and become political actors themselves. Whether this information reaches the less attentive, less engaged citizen, however, remains uncertain. Further research may provide an answer to this question, as will be discussed in the next section.

3. Discussion

Some final issues deserve attention and these will be discussed here. First, I discuss the possibility of generalizing the conclusions drawn in the various research projects with regard to the existence of a European public sphere to all of 'Europe' (instead of the few EU member states included in the research projects). Second, I discuss the contribution of my work to the academic debate on the Europeanization of political communication. Finally, the role of the Internet as communicative space in the European public sphere is discussed.

As concerns the first issue, the possibility of generalizing the conclusions drawn in this dissertation to all of 'Europe', only a limited number of EU member states were investigated in the studies included in this dissertation. One may question whether in this situation it is still possible to speak of the existence of a European public sphere. Theoretically, excluding just one of the 27 member states in a comparative study potentially may introduce biased results. Moreover, one may even question whether an investigation on the existence of a European public sphere should not include more European countries than the 27 EU member states. The annual Eurovision Song Contests, for example, suggest that many more countries feel they belong to 'Europe' than the current 27 EU member states; in the 2007 edition 42 countries participated. In this context it is important to stress the exploratory nature of the research projects of this dissertation. In an exploratory manner cross-national patterns have been revealed in political actors' communication about Europe, and described among which actors in a selection of countries these patterns could be observed. Describing the nature of these patterns is particularly relevant for development of theory as concerns Europeanization of political communication from a socio-cultural perspective: it gives an idea of the status and nature of European integration – not only in the countries put under investigation, but also throughout a wider Europe.

To a certain extent, it can be expected that the observed patterns of common understanding will exist across a larger set of countries than those included in the studies of this dissertation, maybe even across European countries not part of the EU. For example, it can be expected that similarities in communication about Europe exist among more liberal parties united in the European Parliament group ALDE (*Alliance of Liberal Democrats for Europe*) than among the three individual British, French and Dutch liberal political parties investigated. Further research should therefore include more countries, which would make conclusions with regard to the Europeanization of political communication and the existence of a European public sphere more firm. Then, it would also be possible to draw more complete comparisons between Eastern and Western European countries, between old and new member states, and possibly even between EU member states and other countries on the European continent.

Concerning the second issue, the starting point of this dissertation was a social-cultural interpretation of what constitutes Europeanization (see Delanty & Rumford, 2005: 17-18). In this interpretation Europeanization is considered a social construction: (the result of) a process of European integration at the socio-cultural level (this in contrast to for example European integration at the political or economic level). I add to this notion the idea that the existence of common understandings about what constitutes ‘Europe’ shared among political actors (including citizens) from various EU member states can be considered an indicator for Europeanization at the social-cultural level. These common understandings become manifest through political communication about Europe by these political actors. As elaborated in this dissertation, Europeanization concerns both *the extent to* and *the manner in which* common understanding of ‘Europe’ are shared among various political actors. Also, it concerns political actors addressing similar issue domains when communicating about Europe. These should all be considered indicators of European integration – that is to say of EU member states and their citizens becoming increasingly involved in one entity called ‘Europe’. Such an involvement does not replace involvement in the nation state; these two can exist alongside one another, as do many other forms of involvement (e.g. those based on religion, ethnicity, age). Those that count as ‘Europeanization’ are ways of involvement in Europe. I have documented these existing across EU member states.

Therefore, the type of political communication investigated throughout this dissertation should be seen as means of social construction of an entity called ‘Europe’. The result is the existence of a communicative space functioning at the European level: a European public sphere. Other scholars (e.g. Koopmans et al., 2004; Schlesinger & Kevin, 2000) emphasize this same communicative aspect, but prefer to speak about the notion of ‘Europeanization of national public spheres’ instead, because of the current situation in which communication about Europe mainly takes place in national media systems. Despite the fact that these scholars are right on this point (there are no ‘European’ media), throughout the dissertation I have spoken about “the existence of a European public sphere” when referring to the same type of political communication and its possible role in creating citizen involvement in the European Union. As earlier mentioned in Chapter 2, what really separates these two seems nothing more than just a matter of naming the social phenomenon under investigation. In the end, within both interpretations the same social phenomenon is investigated, with the intention to unravel the nature of existing patterns within that social phenomenon.

Related to the foregoing, an unaddressed issue in the dissertation, is the fact that most scholars (including myself) to a high degree ignore the process-oriented nature of Europeanization when speaking about ‘Europeanization of political communication’, at least at the level of the design and execution of empirical studies investigating this notion. Olson, for example, argues that Europeanization includes dynamics of change (Olson, 2002: 923). Delanty and Rumford speak about Europeanization as “transformation process”, and about “changes caused by European integration”

(Delanty & Rumford, 2005: 6-7). Yet, scholars use the term mainly for describing observations at particular moments in time instead of describing observed changes across time. Comparisons are drawn between EU member states, but not between, for instance, the 1990s and the 2000s as concerns the extent to and manner in which ‘Europe’ is communicated. In this dissertation, at the theoretical level the term Europeanization is used for describing the process of social construction towards one European entity (see Delanty & Rumford, 2005: 17-18); at the empirical level the term is used for describing the result of that process: indicators for the existence of that European entity.

In Chapter 3, an indicator for the Europeanization of political communication was the observation that a large part of the included 855 political actors from nine EU member states communicate about Europe on their websites. In Chapter 5, as an indicator of Europeanization, it was observed that French, Dutch and British political parties communicate in a similar manner about Europe on their websites, which included the addressing of similar issues domains, the employment of a similar focus and the expression of a similar attitude. Finally, in Chapter 6 the similar employment of the “Donor” frame by French and Dutch political actors, and to a lesser degree the “Invention” and “David vs. Goliath” frame, formed an indicator of the Europeanization of political communication. All these indicators however do not measure Europeanization as *process* of social construction, since no comparisons are drawn across time. Future research should include this dimension; a longitudinal study on the increase or decrease in the extent to which political actors communicate about Europe across time would be very valuable for the academic field investigating the development and existence of a European public sphere. The study of Gerhards (2000) could be taken as an example, which investigated the visibility of news coverage about European issues in the mass media in the period 1951-1995; relative high degrees of coverage about European issues were observed in the period 1951-1955, right after the foundation of the European Union, and in the most recent period in the study 1990-1995 (Gerhards, 2000: 294-295). In line with the outcomes of the research projects presented in this dissertation, longitudinal research projects should also be developed investigating whether the manner in which political actors communicate about Europe fluctuates over time: whether different issues are addressed, and whether different frames are employed. One may expect, for example, that the employment of frames in communication about Europe changes once the European constitution is accepted and implemented by the EU member states – having resolved some of the major problems with the European Union’s democratic deficit.

A final suggestion for future research in this context concerns the inclusion of network or hyperlink analysis as approach in empirically measuring the Europeanization of political communication on the Internet. As already discussed in Chapter 2, this approach measures the degree of connectivity between political actors from different political levels (national, European) – as indicator for the existence of a Europeanized communicative space on the Internet. In Chapter 2, two relevant studies were discussed (Ghitalla & Fouetillou, 2005; Zimmermann, Koopmans & Schlecht, 2004). A large scale analysis focusing on the connectivity of communication between online political actors from various EU member states could unravel interesting and relevant patterns as concerns the Europeanization of political communication on the Internet.

As concerns the third and final issue, the Internet’s role in the European public sphere, I would like to start with the following statement: in comparison to other scholars, I have no particularly high expectations of the Internet’s contribution to democracy and to the public sphere in general. I do not expect that the Internet has the capacity to massively transform a political system, at least not in the near future. The added value of the Internet should particularly be sought in facilitating citizens ability to broaden their knowledge about political opinions and views existing in society. In an online public sphere, in comparison to a public sphere that manifests itself in the traditional mass media, more diverse actors participate through creating a website. I have less confidence in the often claimed more

‘advanced’ contributions of the Internet to democracy: facilitating serious political debate (citizen meets politician, discuss issues and eventually reach consensus) and enhancing direct decision making (including electronic voting). These two are often stressed to be important aspects of ‘electronic democracy’ (e.g. Tsagariousianou, 1999). Yet research has shown that these interactive possibilities are seldom employed by political actors. Less institutionalized actors (NGOs, social movement organizations, labour unions) in particular do not often incorporate these possibilities for interactivity on their websites (Kluver et al., 2007).

As has been shown in the chapters of this dissertation, multiple websites created by all types of political actors are available to citizens for political communication about Europe. Furthermore, in contrast to the more traditional mass media, these websites contain unmediated communication: texts elaborating on European affairs created by political actors themselves, instead of by journalists who create news based merely on their own criteria. This situation provides citizens with unique insight into the broad range of views and opinions existing in society. Although finding the websites of minor or fringe actors may at times be problematic on the World Wide Web, these websites together serve as a platform for the European public sphere, containing more pluralist and direct political communication than the traditional mass media – considered a core value in democracy (e.g., Norris, 2003). Perhaps more problematic to find is political communication about Europe present on other parts of the Internet than political actors’ websites, such as weblogs or discussion fora. These alternative types of Internet-based communication were not investigated in this dissertation. Further research should include these communicative spaces. The operationalizations and instruments developed in this dissertation can, in an adapted form, be used in the analysis of political communication about Europe present within these online communicative spaces.

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Achtergrond

In veel Westerse landen kan men de laatste twee decennia een toenemend *democratisch tekort* constateren, dat wil zeggen een beperkt functioneren van de democratie. In deze situatie participeren burgers steeds minder in besluitvormingsprocessen die binnen een representatieve democratie plaatsvinden, als gevolg waarvan de legitimiteit van de genomen besluiten in feite afneemt. Niet alleen zijn burgers in afnemende mate verbonden aan politieke partijen, ook andere (oudere) vormen van maatschappelijke betrokkenheid en participatie zoals vrijwilligerswerk binnen de gemeenschap zijn tanende. Deze ontwikkeling is terug te vinden op verschillende niveaus: de politieke participatie van burgers is afgenomen op lokaal, nationaal en Europees niveau.

Sinds de opkomst van *het Internet* in de jaren '90 discussiëren wetenschappers over de rol die dit medium zou kunnen spelen in het (opnieuw) betrekken van groepen burgers bij democratische en politieke processen. 'Cyber-optimisten' zijn van mening dat het Internet het democratische proces zal bevorderen (vgl. Rheingold, 1993). 'Cyber-pessimisten' gaan ervan uit dat het Internet ervoor zal zorgen dat het gat tussen betrokken en niet-betrokken burgers alleen maar groter wordt (vgl. Margolis & Resnick, 2000). Een derde groep wetenschappers neemt een middenpositie in, en legt de nadruk op specifieke positieve ontwikkelingen; zo wijst Norris op het bestaan van de vele websites van kleine, secundaire politieke partijen. Deze websites zorgen ervoor dat kiezers zich breder kunnen oriënteren en dus een meer afgewogen keuze kunnen maken, bijvoorbeeld bij verkiezingen (vgl. Norris, 2001).

Ook de Europese Unie wordt vaak een democratisch tekort toegedicht. Betrokkenheid van burgers bij de EU en haar instituties is laag, wat zich onder andere uit in lage opkomstpercentages bij Europese Parlementsverkiezingen (hierna: EP verkiezingen). Ons onderzoek richt zich op *politieke communicatie over Europa op het Internet*, vanuit het idee dat deze politieke communicatie zou kunnen bijdragen aan het reduceren van het democratisch tekort van de Europese Unie, door burgers – als bezoekers of makers van websites – meer te betrekken bij politieke kwesties. De hoofdstukken 3 t/m 6 van dit proefschrift doen ieder afzonderlijk verslag van een onderzoeksproject dat ingaat op deze Europeanisering van politieke communicatie op het Internet. In de eerste twee hoofdstukken van het proefschrift worden de maatschappelijke, theoretische en methodische achtergronden van de onderzoeken besproken. Het laatste hoofdstuk 7 geeft een samenvatting en presenteert de overkoepelende conclusies.

In het recente verleden is vaker onderzoek gedaan naar de mogelijke bijdrage van politieke communicatie over Europa aan het reduceren van het democratisch tekort van de EU (o.a. Schlesinger, 1999; Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2003; Gerhards 2000; Van de Steeg, 2002). In deze onderzoeken heeft de focus vooral gelegen op *gemediëerde communicatie* over Europa, te weten berichten en commentaren in kranten, televisienieuws of actualiteitenrubrieken. Het onderhavige onderzoek daarentegen stelt de politieke communicatie over Europa op websites centraal. Deze websites worden gemaakt door allerlei soorten politieke actoren: politieke partijen en hun kandidaten, lobbyisten en vertegenwoordigers van belangen van specifieke groepen burgers, morele ondernemers en intellectuelen die proberen publieke aandacht te trekken voor specifieke onderwerpen. In tegenstelling tot communicatie over Europa in kranten en op televisie bevatten deze websites van politieke actoren *ongemediëerde communicatie* over Europa. Deze communicatie is niet ingegeven door professionele criteria van nieuwswaardigheid die voor journalisten en hun redactie vaak bepalend zijn, maar bevat een mening over Europese kwesties die geuit wordt door actoren (organisaties, individuen) die onderdeel uitmaken van het

politieke systeem. Bij elkaar genomen zal deze communicatie via websites wellicht een meer representatief beeld geven van de onderwerpen en opinies die voor betrokkenen van belang zijn, dan communicatie die in de massamedia naar voren komt.

Dit onderzoek richt zich op politieke communicatie over Europa op websites van bovengenoemde politieke actoren, in de context van twee gebeurtenissen: de Europese Parlementsverkiezingen in 2004, en het referendum over de Europese Grondwet in 2005. Gekeken wordt naar de mate waarin en de manier waarop deze politieke actoren over Europa communiceren, en of er overeenkomsten te ontdekken zijn tussen (1) verschillende soorten politieke actoren ('geïstitutionaliseerde' politieke partijen en overheidsinstanties tegenover minder 'geïstitutionaliseerde' actoren als NGO's en vakbonden), en (2) tussen politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten. Waar mogelijk zijn vergelijkingen getrokken tussen politieke communicatie over Europa tijdens de twee verschillende gebeurtenissen – de Europese Parlementsverkiezing en het referendum over de Europese Grondwet. Overeenkomsten in politieke communicatie over Europa wijzen op het bestaan van wat wel een 'Europese publieke sfeer' genoemd wordt. Een dergelijke publieke sfeer faciliteert de uitwisseling van politieke standpunten binnen Europa, wat bij kan dragen aan het verhogen van de legitimiteit van de Europese Unie als politieke eenheid.

De Europese publieke sfeer

In dit proefschrift wordt de nadruk gelegd op de potentie van het Internet om *publieke sferen* te bevatten: communicatieve ruimtes waarbinnen publieke legitimiteit kan worden verkregen door middel van politieke communicatie (vgl. Habermas, 2006), en waarbinnen processen van gemeenschapsvorming plaats kunnen vinden (vgl. Risse, 2003). In de *Europese publieke sfeer* wordt over Europa en de vormgeving van het EU-beleid gecommuniceerd door politieke actoren die problemen constateren, voorstellen doen of hun mening geven. Deze communicatie kan zowel direct (face-to-face) plaatsvinden, als indirect via de massamedia of het Internet. In de literatuur worden drie benaderingen onderscheiden om het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer empirisch vast te stellen: (1) meten in welke *mate* politieke actoren uit diverse EU-lidstaten over Europa communiceren, (2) meten of politieke actoren uit diverse EU-lidstaten op *dezelfde manier* over Europa communiceren, en (3) meten van de *verbondenheid* van de communicatie van politieke actoren uit diverse EU-lidstaten. In de diverse hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift wordt beargumenteerd dat deze drie benaderingen aspecten van *Europeanisering van politieke communicatie* meten, als indicator voor het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer. Europeanisering kan gezien worden als een continu en voortgaand proces van gemeenschapsvorming op Europees niveau (vgl. Delanty & Rumford, 2005).

Doel van het proefschrift en onderzoeksvraag

Dit proefschrift heeft als doel meer kennis te vergaren over online politieke communicatie met betrekking tot Europa. Het proefschrift bevat vier empirische projecten die op verschillende manieren aspecten van Europeanisering trachten te meten. Daarbij is gebruik gemaakt van de eerste twee bovengenoemde benaderingen. Onderzocht wordt in welke mate en op welke manier politieke actoren tijdens twee politieke gebeurtenissen over Europa communiceren. Wij gaan ervan uit dat een onder politieke actoren van diverse EU-lidstaten *gedeelde betekenisverlening* over wat Europa inhoudt de beste uitdrukking is van het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer. Deze gedeelde betekenisverlening komt tot uiting in cross-nationale overeenkomsten in de mate waarin en de manier waarop deze politieke actoren op hun websites over Europa communiceren. Deze overwegingen hebben geleid tot de volgende centrale onderzoeksvraag, welke als leidraad dient voor de vier onderzoeksprojecten:

Is er sprake van gedeelde betekenisverlening aan Europa onder politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten, zich uitend in de mate waarin en manier waarop deze actoren op hun websites over Europa communiceren?

Alvorens een antwoord te geven op deze centrale onderzoeksvraag, zal een overzicht gegeven worden van de belangrijkste uitkomsten van de vier onderzoeksprojecten.

Uitkomsten deelprojecten

Hoofdstuk 3 doet verslag van het eerste onderzoek dat betrekking heeft op de aandacht voor Europa in de periode van de Europese Parlementsverkiezing van 2004. Het **doel** van dit onderzoek was te inventariseren hoe zichtbaar Europa is op het Internet. Onderzocht is in welke mate politieke actoren in EU-lidstaten op hun websites aandacht schenken aan Europa, de Europese Unie, Europese politieke kwesties en/of de Europese Parlementsverkiezing als specifieke gebeurtenis (samengevat: 'Europa'). Ook is gekeken hoe prominent Europa zichtbaar is op websites van politieke actoren: op de voorpagina, op de nieuwspagina, of op een andere pagina. In totaal zijn 855 websites van diverse soorten politieke actoren onderzocht: politieke partijen, overheidsinstellingen, NGO's, sociale bewegingen e.d., en wel in negen EU-lidstaten (Finland, Frankrijk, Groot-Brittannië, Hongarije, Ierland, Italië, Nederland, Tsjechië en Slovenië). Uit de resultaten blijkt dat geïnstitutionaliseerde actoren, zoals politieke partijen en kandidaten, in ruime mate aandacht schonken aan de Europese Parlementsverkiezing (respectievelijk 88% en 89%). Minder geïnstitutionaliseerde actoren zoals NGO's en vakbonden schenken vooral aandacht aan algemene Europese politieke onderwerpen (84%, in tegenstelling tot slechts 38% aandacht voor de EP verkiezing). Communicatie over Europa was bij dit laatste type actoren ook minder vaak te vinden op de voorpagina van de website, maar eerder op bijvoorbeeld de nieuwspagina of op een pagina waarop de actor een dossier bijhoudt met betrekking tot Europese thema's. Blijkbaar was de Europese Parlementsverkiezing als specifieke gebeurtenis van ondergeschikt belang voor dit type politieke actoren. Desalniettemin is de belangrijkste **conclusie** van deze studie dat een groot deel van de politieke actoren in de negen EU-lidstaten aandacht schenkt aan één of meerdere aspecten van Europa. Geconstateerd kan worden dat politieke communicatie op het Web behoorlijk geëuropeaniseerd is, hetgeen wijst op het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer.

In **Hoofdstuk 4** wordt een eerste stap gezet om vast te kunnen stellen of er sprake is van gedeelde betekenisverlening aan Europa onder politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten. Europeanisering van politieke communicatie is gemeten door te inventariseren welke onderwerpen of invalshoeken actoren aandragen als zij over Europa communiceren op hun websites. In deze exploratieve studie zijn de websites van de elf grootste politieke partijen in Frankrijk vergeleken op basis van de politieke oriëntatie van deze partijen. Context van de studie was wederom de Europese Parlementsverkiezing van 2004. **Doel** van de studie was om uit te vinden of het instrument dat Eder, Kantner en Trenz (2000, 2002) gebruikt hebben om de berichtgeving over Europa in kranten te onderzoeken, ook gebruikt kan worden om informatie op websites te kunnen beschrijven. Eder, Kantner en Trenz onderscheiden drie onderwerpcategorieën als het gaat om berichtgeving over Europa: *belangen*, *identiteit*, en *waarden*. Naast het meten van de aanwezigheid van de onderwerpcategorieën in het onderzoeksmateriaal is ook onderzocht of partijen een nationale of juist een Europese focus gebruiken wanneer zij over deze onderwerpen communiceren. Uit de resultaten blijkt dat politieke partijen tenminste één, maar meestal meerdere onderwerpcategorieën gebruiken in hun communicatie over Europa. Ook kwam naar voren dat het gebruik van een Europese of nationale focus door politieke partijen voor een groot deel afhankelijk was van hun politieke oriëntatie: soevereine en nationalistische partijen gebruikten bijna uitsluitend een nationale focus wanneer zij over belangenonderwerpen of onderwerpen met betrekking tot identiteit spraken. Liberale en socialistische partijen daarentegen gebruikten vooral een Europese focus. Universele waarden werden door alle

partijen bijna uitsluitend naar voren gebracht met een Europese focus. De belangrijkste *conclusie* van dit exploratieve onderzoek is dat via de drie onderwerpcategorieën de gedeelde betekenisverlening aan Europa zichtbaar wordt: partijen blijken namelijk dezelfde thema's aan de orde te stellen.

In **Hoofdstuk 5** wordt verslag gedaan van een onderzoek naar 47 websites van politieke partijen uit drie EU-lidstaten: Frankrijk, Groot-Brittannië en Nederland, wederom in de context van de Europese Parlementsverkiezing van 2004. Het onderzoek sluit direct aan op de exploratieve studie in Hoofdstuk 4. Het instrument van Hoofdstuk 4 is verder uitgewerkt, zodat op een meer systematische manier de overeenkomsten en verschillen in de wijze waarop politieke actoren over Europa communiceren konden worden onderzocht. Het *doel* van de studie was om te bepalen of er in de drie landen een gezamenlijke betekenisverlening over wat Europa inhoudt kan worden vastgesteld. Ook was het doel uit te zoeken of de politieke oriëntatie van partijen bepalend is voor de wijze waarop men over Europa communiceert en welke onderwerpen men naar voren brengt. Naast de onderwerpcategorieën *belangen*, *identiteit* en *waarden* werd nagegaan met welke focus (Europees of nationaal) het onderwerp naar voren wordt gebracht, en welke houding ten opzichte van Europa (positief of negatief) partijen uiten. Cross-nationale overeenkomsten werden geconstateerd binnen drie groepen partijen: de liberale partijen, de nationalistische en extreemrechtse partijen en de groene partijen. Binnen elk van deze groepen was er onder partijen uit de drie landen een gedeelde betekenisverlening over wat Europa inhoudt. Ook binnen de sociaal-democratische en centrum-rechtse partijen uit Nederland en Frankrijk werden gedeelde invalshoeken geconstateerd; de Britse vertegenwoordigers binnen deze groepen weken echter af. Zowel de *Labour Party* als de *Conservatives* stelden vaker identiteit gerelateerde onderwerpen aan de orde, gebruikten vaker een nationale focus en toonden vaker een negatieve attitude ten opzichte van Europa in vergelijking met hun Franse en Nederlandse collega-partijen. Ondanks deze twee uitzonderingsgevallen is de globale *conclusie* van dit onderzoek dat de betekenisverlening over wat Europa inhoudt langs politieke lijnen kan worden onderscheiden. Dit is een aanwijzing voor Europeanisering van politieke communicatie in de EU-lidstaten en daarmee het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer.

De laatste studie in **Hoofdstuk 6** onderzoekt naast websites van 17 politieke partijen ook websites van 111 NGO's: non-gouvernementele organisaties die de belangen van specifieke groepen burgers behartigen of zich inzetten voor bepaald thema's zoals het milieu, godsdienstvrijheid, of mensenrechten. Ter vergelijking zijn in dit onderzoek 140 krantenartikelen over Europa meegenomen. De studie focust op twee EU-lidstaten: Frankrijk en Nederland. In beide landen heeft in het voorjaar van 2005 een referendum plaatsgevonden over de Europese Grondwet. Wederom was het *doel* van de studie om te bepalen of ook in de context van het referendum gedeelde betekenisverlening aan Europa bestaat onder politieke actoren. Het onderzoek had een interpretatief karakter, en was gericht op de invalshoeken (frames) van waaruit over Europa wordt gecommuniceerd. Meer specifiek is nagegaan of in deze twee landen dezelfde *beelden* van Europa naar voren komen in zowel online als offline communicatie. Een beeld wordt gecreëerd doordat in teksten verscheidene samenhangende argumenten naar voren worden gebracht waarin bepaalde – vermeende – karakteristieken van Europa aan de orde worden gesteld. Zo vormen de argumenten 'Europese samenwerking is noodzakelijk', 'individuele lidstaten kunnen het niet meer alleen aan', 'globalisering zorgt ervoor dat problemen steeds meer grensoverschrijdend spelen', en 'Europese integratie moet gecontinueerd worden' samen het beeld van Europa als *succesvol samenwerkingsproject* om gezamenlijke problemen aan te pakken. Een verzameling argumenten om een bepaalde problematiek te diagnosticeren wordt een *frame* genoemd (vgl. Van Gorp, 2005). Frames die regelmatig terugkeren in discussies en journalistieke berichtgeving zijn veelal geworteld in een reeds bestaand cultureel thema. Dit thema helpt zowel de maker als de lezer van de tekst Europa te interpreteren als sociaal fenomeen met bepaalde karakteristieken. Zo vormen bovenstaande argumenten samen het Voorziener-frame, welke zijn basis heeft in het culturele archetypen van *helper* of *donor*, zoals die veelal in volksverhalen voorkomt (vgl.

Propp, 1928/1958). In de inductieve fase van het onderzoek zijn in totaal drie beelden van Europa ontwikkeld: (1) het bovenstaande Voorziener-frame waarbinnen Europa afgebeeld wordt als *succesvol samenwerkingsproject*, (2) het David tegen Goliath-frame waarbinnen Europa afgebeeld wordt als *superstaat* welke de afzonderlijke naties overheerst en (3) het Uitvinder-frame waarbinnen Europa afgebeeld wordt als het monster van Frankenstein dat voor zijn scheppers *oncontroleerbaar* is geworden. In een deductieve fase is vervolgens gekeken in hoeverre deze beelden ook daadwerkelijk gevonden kunnen worden in teksten over Europa aanwezig op websites van politieke actoren en in berichtgeving in kranten. De belangrijkste **conclusie** van dit onderzoek is dat politieke actoren ten tijde van het referendum op dezelfde manier betekenis verlenen aan Europa; dezelfde beelden over Europa komen in hun communicatie naar voren. Met name het Voorziener-frame bleek in beide landen in grote mate gebruikt te worden door zowel de ‘online’ politieke actoren als door kranten. Afhankelijk van hun opinie ten aanzien van de Europese Grondwet bevestigden (50%) of ontkenden (43%) actoren het beeld van Europa als succesvol samenwerkingsproject. Het David tegen Goliath-frame en het Uitvinder-frame werden vooral gebruikt door Nederlandse politieke actoren. Alleen één type Franse politieke actoren, namelijk de politieke partijen, spraken ook regelmatig over Europa als *superstaat* en *oncontroleerbaar*. Het sterk gedeelde gebruik van het Voorziener-frame wijst erop dat de discussie over Europa cross-nationaal in dezelfde termen plaatsvindt.

Algemene conclusie van het proefschrift

In deze paragraaf wordt antwoord gegeven op de vraag of op basis van de vier bovenstaande deelonderzoeken de conclusie getrokken kan worden dat er een gedeelde betekenisverlening over wat Europa inhoudt bestaat onder politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten – als indicator voor Europeanisering van politieke communicatie, en achtereenvolgens voor het bestaan van een Europese publieke sfeer.

Drie algemene conclusies kunnen geformuleerd worden:

1. *Politieke actoren schenken aandacht aan Europa.* Europa is zichtbaar op het Internet, en wel op websites van diverse soorten politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten. Hoofdstuk 3 heeft laten zien dat politieke partijen vooral aandacht schenken aan officiële gebeurtenissen zoals de Europese Parlementsverkiezing, in tegenstelling tot NGO's, die vaker berichten over dagelijkse zaken en procedures die plaatsvinden binnen de EU. Aan de andere kant heeft Hoofdstuk 6 laten zien dat NGO's wel communiceren over het referendum over de Europese Grondwet als officiële gebeurtenis. Het kan dus specifiek de Europese Parlementsverkiezing zijn geweest welke NGO's niet belangrijk genoeg vonden om over te rapporteren. Zeker gezien het feit dat de massamedia in de meeste Westerse democratieën in verkiezingstijd vooral berichten over politieke partijen, lijkt dit een gemiste kans voor NGO's. Men zou verwachten dat deze minder geïnstitutionaliseerde actoren het Internet juist gebruiken om burgers te informeren over belangrijke verkiezingsthema's, en hen eventueel te adviseren op welke partij te stemmen.
2. *Politieke actoren dragen dezelfde onderwerpcategorieën aan in hun communicatie over Europa.* Dit wijst op het bestaan van gedeelde betekenisverlening onder politieke actoren uit verschillende EU-lidstaten over wat Europa volgens hen inhoudt. Hoofdstuk 4 en 5 hebben laten zien dat Europa voor de meeste actoren vooral een instrumentele eenheid is ('wat levert het mij/ons op'), en daarnaast, maar in mindere mate, een eenheid gebaseerd op een gezamenlijke identiteit en gedeelde waarden ('wat maakt ons tot een echte gemeenschap'). De resultaten in Appendix I onderstrepen deze conclusie. Deze bijlage gaat nader in op de aanwezigheid van de drie onderwerpcategorieën *belangen*, *identiteit* en *waarden* in communicatie over Europa tijdens het referendum over de Europese Grondwet, zowel op websites van politieke partijen en NGO's, als in kranten. Appendix I maakt het ook mogelijk een vergelijking te trekken tussen websites en kranten voor wat betreft hun communicatie over Europa. Deze vergelijking laat zien dat

maatschappelijke actoren (NGO's en politieke partijen) ten opzichte van kranten vaker over Europa spreken door te onderwerpen aan te dragen die gerelateerd zijn aan identiteit en aan universele waarden. Kranten benoemen veelal alleen de instrumentele voor- en nadelen van Europese integratie. Als laatste laat Appendix I zien dat actoren in het kader van het referendum over de Europese Grondwet vaker argumenten aandragen die gerelateerd zijn aan het zelfbewustzijn en de collectieve identiteit van Europeanen dan dat zij doen in de context van de Europese Parlementsverkiezing.

3. *Niet nationaliteit maar politieke oriëntatie van actoren is bepalend voor de manier waarop zij over Europa communiceren.* Politieke actoren verlenen op dezelfde manier betekenis aan Europa. Hoofdstuk 5 heeft laten zien dat partijen uit verschillende EU-lidstaten met dezelfde positie in het politieke spectrum (links versus rechts) dezelfde focus gebruiken en dezelfde houding ten opzichte van Europa uiten. In Hoofdstuk 6 is duidelijk geworden dat politieke actoren met dezelfde opinie over de Europese Grondwet Europa op dezelfde manier afbeelden. Echter, dit hoofdstuk heeft ook laten zien dat sommige beelden van Europa vooral naar voren komen bij politieke actoren van één land, doordat in dit land bepaalde kwesties actueel zijn. Zo kan het frequente gebruik door Nederlandse actoren van het Uitvinder-frame, waarin Europa wordt afgebeeld als een log, onbestuurbaar en ondemocratisch orgaan, grotendeels geplaatst worden binnen de in 2004 en 2005 heersende nationale discussie over de ondemocratische staat van de Europese Unie, aangezwengeld door de huidige Europarlementariër Paul van Buitenen.

Naast cross-nationale overeenkomsten in de manier waarop politieke actoren over Europa communiceren zijn binnen de bovengenoemde onderzoeken dus ook *nationale* overeenkomsten in politieke communicatie over Europa gevonden. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn de nadruk van Britse politieke partijen op nationale belangen en een nationale identiteit (Hoofdstuk 5), en het frequent gebruik van het Uitvinder-frame door Nederlandse actoren (Hoofdstuk 6). Deze observaties staan echter grotendeels los van de *cross-nationale* overeenkomsten in communicatie over Europa die gevonden zijn in de vier onderzoeken die samen dit proefschrift vormen. Voor de vorming van een Europese publieke sfeer, en dus ook die van een Europese gemeenschap, zijn het juist de cross-nationale overeenkomsten in betekenisverlening aan Europa die een belangrijke rol spelen. Het bestaan van een dergelijke gemeenschap op Europees niveau gebaseerd op gedeelde belangen, identiteit en waarden, en waarbinnen dezelfde betekenis wordt verleend aan de eigen gemeenschap, sluit het bestaan van andere gemeenschappen niet uit; een mens behoort tot vele, elkaar deels overlappende gemeenschappen. Immers, naast een Europese of nationale gemeenschap maakt een mens ook onderdeel uit van een lokale gemeenschap, een geloofsgemeenschap, een sportgemeenschap, een Hyves-gemeenschap, enzovoort. Ook bij deze gemeenschappen voelt een mens betrokkenheid, en ook aan deze gemeenschappen verleent een mens betekenis door beelden te creëren die dit gevoel van 'behoren tot' een plaats geven.

Dit proefschrift heeft tot slot ook aangetoond dat betekenisverlening aan een gemeenschap van vorm en inhoud kan verschillen naarmate de context verschilt. Zo wordt over Europa binnen de ene context vooral gediscussieerd over economische, juridische of bestuurlijke onderwerpen, terwijl binnen een andere context vooral gesproken wordt over het bestaan van een collectieve identiteit tussen Europeanen onderling. Toch blijft de basis hetzelfde: *actoren communiceren over Europa*. Verder moet men niet vergeten dat deze politieke communicatie op websites of in kranten voor burgers een enorme bron aan informatie kan zijn. Zelfs kunnen zij zelf een website maken, met als doel anderen te informeren, of met elkaar in discussie te treden. In hoeverre deze informatie ook minder betrokken burgers bereikt, blijft echter onzeker. Hiervoor is aanvullend onderzoek naar het gebruik van Internet noodzakelijk.

Dankwoord

Aan vijf prettige, maar vooral ook leerzame jaren is een einde gekomen, met als resultaat dit proefschrift. Verschillende mensen hebben mij geholpen de afgelopen vijf jaar redelijk soepel door te komen.

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Curriculum Vitae

Renée van Os is geboren op 22 december 1976 in 's Hertogenbosch. In 1996 behaalde zij haar VWO diploma aan het Stedelijk Gymnasium van 's Hertogenbosch. In het najaar van datzelfde jaar begon Renée aan de studie Communicatiewetenschap aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Na terugkeer van een studieverblijf in Genève (Zwitserland), rondde zij in de zomer van 2002 haar studie af met een scriptie getiteld *Democratie in de gemeente Hoogeveen*. Geïnteresseerd geraakt in het wetenschappelijk onderzoek begon ze in juni 2003 aan haar promotieproject. Exact 5 jaar later verdedigt ze aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen het resultaat van deze proeve der bekwaamheid: een proefschrift met de titel *Communicating Europe online*.

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Appendices

Total number of sites identified per country as potentially involved in 2004 EP election

Internet & Elections Project, May 2004

Country	Number of sites identified
Czech Republic	166
Finland	183
France	318
Hungary	123
Ireland	164
Italy	240
Netherlands	318
Slovenia	163
United Kingdom	617
Total	2292

Coding Template 2004 EP election study

Internet & Elections Project, May 2004

Template Description:

Captures information on European versus national discourse.

Operational Instructions:

Complete this Supplemental Coding Template for each of the sites included in the sample for which you are responsible. Generally, the questions can be answered by consulting the front page of the site. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to link to another page on the site.

Questions:

1. EP election content on front page

Does this site provide EP election-related content on the front page?

- Yes.
- No. There is no EP election-related content on this site.
- Not clear. Use 'not clear' if a section cannot be seen due to a broken link, or any other circumstance where the coder cannot access the material to be coded.

2. European content on front page

Is there content on the front page of the site related to the EU (more in general – including the 2004 EP election)?

This content can be a text, a logo, an illustration and/or a picture.

- Yes.
- No. There is no EU/EP-related content on this site
- Not clear. Use 'not clear' if a section cannot be seen due to a broken link, or any other circumstance where coder cannot access the material to be coded.

3. EU/EP-related news

Are there EU/EP-related news items in the news section of this site?

Usually news items are posted on the front page. If not, check the news section of the site to code this question.

- Yes. Paste in target URL.
- No. There are no EU/EP-related news items in the news section of this site.

4. European content within two links from front page

Is the content related to EU/EP located elsewhere on the site (within two links from front page)?

- Yes, within the same basic URL. Paste in target URL (e.g. www.cda.nl/europa). **OPENENDED**
- Yes, but present through a link to a page produced by same site producer. Paste in target URL (e.g. www.europa-cda.nl). **OPENENDED**
- No. Not within two links from front page.
- Not applicable, e.g. this is already a specific election-oriented website.

Sites in sample per country 2004 EP election study

Internet & Elections Project, May 2004

Czech Republic

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.zverina.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.zieleniec.cz/eurovolby-homepage.html	CZ	Candidate
http://www.zahradil.cz/html/index.htm	CZ	Candidate
http://www.sweb.cz/veronika.nedvedova	CZ	Candidate
http://www.sequens.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.sefzig.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.paveldobes.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.ouzky.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.liborroucek.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.karasj.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.kaplan-uef.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.jajtner.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.hynek-fajmon.cz/index/index.php	CZ	Candidate
http://www.hybaskova.cz	CZ	Candidate
http://www.holejsovsky.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.hamacek.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.falbr.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.eva-novakova.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.davidmacek.cz/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.cabrnock.cz/uvod.html	CZ	Candidate
http://mail.upce.cz/~schueller/	CZ	Candidate
http://www.vlada.cz	CZ	Government
http://www.senat.cz	CZ	Government
http://www.psp.cz/kps/pi/index.htm	CZ	Government
http://www.mzv.cz	CZ	Government
http://www.mvcr.cz/volby/ep.html	CZ	Government
http://www.evropsky-parlament.cz/	CZ	Government
http://www.euroskop.cz	CZ	Government
http://www.elections2004.eu.int/ep-election/sites/cs/yourparliament/	CZ	Government
http://www.asia-itc.org/index_cs.htm	CZ	Government
http://www.volny.cz/os-sklo/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.osz.org/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.ospo.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.oskovo.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.ngo-eu.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.libinst.cz	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.konzervativci.cz	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.humanea.cz/index.php	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.hnutiduha.cz/volby/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.fscr.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.frt.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.euroskeptik.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.cpssu.org/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.cmkos.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.cevro.cz	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.asocr.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://pdemokracie.ecn.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour

http://federace.unas.cz/	CZ	NGO/labour
http://www.volny.cz/ingvesely/	CZ	Other
http://www.socr.cz	CZ	Other
http://www.seznam.cz	CZ	Other
http://www.europeum.org/cz/default.asp	CZ	Other
http://www.euractiv.cz	CZ	Other
http://www.eis.cuni.cz	CZ	Other
http://www.cs-magazin.com	CZ	Other
http://www.centrum.cz/	CZ	Other
http://www.bohumildolezal.cz/	CZ	Other
http://www.agrocr.cz/Evropska_unie.htm	CZ	Other
http://web.volny.cz/noviny/index.php	CZ	Other
http://portal.redbox.cz/portal	CZ	Other
http://eu.dwec.org/	CZ	Other
http://czechia.wz.cz/	CZ	Other
http://www.zeleni.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.vseobecnaobcanskastrana.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.szj.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.svobodni.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.stranazdravehorozumu.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.stranaos.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.socdem.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.snk.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.skos.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.sds.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.republikani.com/	CZ	Party
http://www.politikon.cz/hob.htm	CZ	Party
http://www.ods.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.nestranici.cz/index.htm	CZ	Party
http://www.narodni-koalice.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.kscm.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.kozeny.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.korunaceska.org/	CZ	Party
http://www.kdu.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.humanistickaaliance.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.edemokrate.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.delnickastrana.cz/	CZ	Party
http://www.cibulka.net/petr/	CZ	Party
http://www.balbinka.cz	CZ	Party
http://www.tyden.cz/	CZ	Press
http://www.rozhlas.cz/cro6/portal/	CZ	Press
http://www.reflex.cz/	CZ	Press
http://www.radio.cz/cz/	CZ	Press
http://www.cdkbrno.cz/proglas.php	CZ	Press
http://www.blesk.cz	CZ	Press
http://respekt.inway.cz	CZ	Press
http://pravo.novinky.cz/	CZ	Press
http://lidovsky.centrum.cz/	CZ	Press

Finland

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.viveka.nu/	FI	Candidate
http://www.villeitala.net	FI	Candidate
http://www.viiviavellan.com	FI	Candidate
http://www.vehkis.com/	FI	Candidate
http://www.vayrynen.com/	FI	Candidate
http://www.urhonen.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.ulpu.fi/	FI	Candidate
http://www.tanjasolehmainen.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.satuhasi.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.riittavaisanen.net	FI	Candidate
http://www.petakoski.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.palkkimaki.com	FI	Candidate
http://www.oker-blom.com	FI	Candidate
http://www.markusosterlund.com/	FI	Candidate
http://www.maripuoskari.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.mariannemarenk.fi	FI	Candidate
http://www.kontro.info/	FI	Candidate
http://www.kokokansan.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.juhakankkunen.com	FI	Candidate
http://www.joukojaaskelainen.com	FI	Candidate
http://www.joonaslepisto.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.jehki.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.ilpopaaso.com/	FI	Candidate
http://www.ilkkataipale.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.helenamolander.info/	FI	Candidate
http://www.hakannordman.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.folkesundman.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.dreamcatcher.fi/kristiina/	FI	Candidate
http://www.audas.multi.fi/	FI	Candidate
http://www.arirajamaki.info/	FI	Candidate
http://www.arihalme.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.anttiniemiario.net	FI	Candidate
http://www.anterokekkonen.net/	FI	Candidate
http://www.anna-kaisa.net	FI	Candidate
http://www.ahlskog.net	FI	Candidate
http://www.aaromikkonen.net/	FI	Candidate
http://personal.fimnet.fi/private/antti.liikkanen/	FI	Candidate
http://www.valtioneuvosto.fi/vn/liston/base.lsp	FI	Government
http://www.valkeala.fi	FI	Government
http://www.vaalit.fi	FI	Government
http://www.tpk.fi/suomi/	FI	Government
http://www.kuntaliitto.fi	FI	Government
http://www.kauniainen.fi	FI	Government
http://www.europarl.fi	FI	Government
http://www.eurooppa-tiedotus.fi/fi/	FI	Government
http://www.eduskunta.fi	FI	Government
http://www.vane.to/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.valry.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.tt.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.suomensisu.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.suomalaisuudenliitto.fi/	FI	NGO/labour

http://www.sttk.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.slu.fi.c.optinet.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.sak.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.prokarelia.net	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.paneuropa.org/~fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.palvelutyöntajat.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.naisjärjestöjenkeskusliitto.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.mtk.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.kansio.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.kaapeli.fi/~veu/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.journalistiliitto.fi	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.akava.fi/	FI	NGO/labour
http://hometown.aol.com/vapaatradikaalit/	FI	NGO/labour
http://www.vaikuttamo.net/portal/	FI	Other
http://www.uutisboti.com	FI	Other
http://www.testimaa.com	FI	Other
http://www.polemiikki.net	FI	Other
http://www.perjantaporssi.com	FI	Other
http://www.makupalat.fi	FI	Other
http://www.keskipohjanmaa.net	FI	Other
http://alpskari.vip.fi/~avs/blosxom.cgi/Yhteiskunta	FI	Other
http://www.vihrealiitto.fi	FI	Party
http://www.vasemmistoliitto.fi	FI	Party
http://www.vapaansuomenliitto.fi/	FI	Party
http://www.sosialidemokraatit.fi	FI	Party
http://www.sfp.fi	FI	Party
http://www.perussuomalaiset.fi	FI	Party
http://www.muutosvoimat-suomi.fi/	FI	Party
http://www.liberaalit.fi	FI	Party
http://www.kristillisdemokraatit.fi	FI	Party
http://www.kolumbus.fi/sinivalkoiset/	FI	Party
http://www.kolumbus.fi/koyhienasialla/	FI	Party
http://www.kokoomus.fi	FI	Party
http://www.keskusta.fi	FI	Party
http://www.kaapeli.fi/~ktp/	FI	Party
http://www.yle.fi	FI	Press
http://www.turunsanomat.fi	FI	Press
http://www.nelonen.fi	FI	Press
http://www.mtv3.fi	FI	Press
http://www.iltasanomat.fi	FI	Press
http://www.helsinginsanomat.fi	FI	Press
http://www.aamulehti.fi	FI	Press
http://kaleva.fi	FI	Press

France

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.samuelmarechal.com/liste.html	FR	Candidate
http://www.pmcouteaux.org/	FR	Candidate
http://www.onesta.net/	FR	Candidate
http://www.mhdescamps.com/index2.htm	FR	Candidate
http://www.margie-sudre.info/	FR	Candidate
http://www.lang2004.com/	FR	Candidate
http://www.harlemdesir.com/home/	FR	Candidate
http://www.gollnisch.com/accueil.php	FR	Candidate
http://www.france-referendum.org/	FR	Candidate
http://www.europemartinez.com/	FR	Candidate
http://www.electionseuropeennes2004.com/	FR	Candidate
http://www.charles-pasqua.com/	FR	Candidate
http://www.catherine-guy-quint.org/	FR	Candidate
http://www.bruno-megret.com/	FR	Candidate
http://www.alima-boumediene.org/	FR	Candidate
http://www.alainlamassoure.com/index_html.htm	FR	Candidate
http://www.adelinehazan.net/	FR	Candidate
http://williamabitbol.ifrance.com/williamabitbol/	FR	Candidate
http://onesta2004.net/	FR	Candidate
http://membres.lycos.fr/arlettelaguiller/accueil.html	FR	Candidate
http://lipietz2004.net/	FR	Candidate
http://islerbeguin.lesverts.fr/	FR	Candidate
http://flautre2004.net/	FR	Candidate
http://bloglipietz.net/	FR	Candidate
http://bennahmias2004.org/	FR	Candidate
http://www.rhone-alpes.pref.gouv.fr/dag/elections/	FR	Government
http://www.paysdefougeres.com/commune/elusparlement.cfm	FR	Government
http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/	FR	Government
http://www.industrie.gouv.fr/eic/index.htm	FR	Government
http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/actu/article.asp?ART=41480	FR	Government
http://www.equipement.gouv.fr/	FR	Government
http://www.consulfrance-sydney.org/actualite/pages/election_euro_2004.fr.htm	FR	Government
http://www.consulfrance-sanfrancisco.org/form_admin/fa_e.html	FR	Government
http://www.consulfrance-osaka.or.jp/10_ELECTIONS/Elections%20Europe%20juin04.HTM	FR	Government
http://www.consulfrance-barcelone.org/elections.htm	FR	Government
http://www.vivelarep.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.upa.fr/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.sudeducation.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.solidaires.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.sgen-cfdt.org/actu/sommaire.php3	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.republicanisme.fr.st/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.medef.fr/staging/site/page.php	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.generationslepen.com/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.fsu-fr.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.forumjeunesse.org/fr/our_work/advocacy_work4.htm	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.fenetreeurope.com/actu/home.htm	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.fen.fr/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.droitdechasse.com/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.club-nouveau-siecle.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.cgpme.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.cfecgc.org/010-Home/10-10_Home.asp?	FR	NGO/labour

http://www.cfdt.fr/edito.htm	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.cerclesliberaux.com/	FR	NGO/labour
http://ecorev.org/	FR	NGO/labour
http://www.uni.asso.fr/	FR	Other
http://www.robert-schuman.org/sondage/default2.htm	FR	Other
http://www.quid.fr/2000/Q024720.htm	FR	Other
http://www.noelmamere.org/	FR	Other
http://www.jean-monnet.net/main3.html	FR	Other
http://www.globenet.org/	FR	Other
http://www.europelibre.com/	FR	Other
http://www.eurolibe.com/pages/pagesbiblio/memoguide/parlement.html	FR	Other
http://www.dialogue-initiative.com/site/	FR	Other
http://www.christian-blanc.net/	FR	Other
http://pro-us.blogspot.com/	FR	Other
http://pluriel.free.fr/fn4.html	FR	Other
http://netpolitique.free.fr/	FR	Other
http://fr.news.yahoo.com/	FR	Other
http://bonjourlemonde.chez.tiscali.fr/c1/articles/archives/calendrierelectoral.html	FR	Other
http://www.sudest.europesocialiste.org/accueil_sudest	FR	Party
http://www.ouest.europesocialiste.org/accueil_ouest	FR	Party
http://www.lutte-ouvriere-journal.org/	FR	Party
http://www.les-verts.org/	FR	Party
http://www.ladroitelibre.com/site/index.php	FR	Party
http://www.jrg-fr.org/	FR	Party
http://www.journaldesverts.com/	FR	Party
http://www.jeunesradicaux.net/	FR	Party
http://www.gaucherepublicaine.org/	FR	Party
http://www.francaisdabord.info/	FR	Party
http://www.energiesdemocrates.com/	FR	Party
http://www.d-s-f.net/	FR	Party
http://www.alliance-royale.com/	FR	Party
http://mrc-france.org/	FR	Party
http://www.union-nationale.com/index	FR	Press
http://www.professionpolitique.com/	FR	Press
http://www.lexpress.fr/info/	FR	Press
http://www.lesechos.fr/	FR	Press
http://www.leparisien.fr/home/index.htm	FR	Press
http://www.lci.fr/	FR	Press
http://www.infodujour.com/scripts/act_det.php?actID=1179	FR	Press
http://www.france5.fr/	FR	Press
http://www.20minutes.fr/journal/lille/article.php?id=20411	FR	Press
http://conflits.revues.org/article.php3?id_article=129	FR	Press

Hungary

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.szajer.hu	HU	Candidate
http://www.mim.hu/hegyigyula/	HU	Candidate
http://www.medgyasszay.hu/index.html	HU	Candidate
http://www.lezsaksandor.hu/indexyes.htm	HU	Candidate
http://www.herenyi.hu	HU	Candidate
http://www.demszky.hu	HU	Candidate
http://www.davidibolya.hu	HU	Candidate
http://generator.szdsz.hu/users.php?uid=7	HU	Candidate
http://generator.szdsz.hu/users.php?uid=21	HU	Candidate
http://www.veszprem.hu	HU	Government
http://www.valasztas.hu/04/hu/	HU	Government
http://www.szeged.hu	HU	Government
http://www.pecs.hu	HU	Government
http://www.om.hu	HU	Government
http://www.obuda.hu	HU	Government
http://www.mkogy.hu	HU	Government
http://www.miskolc.hu	HU	Government
http://www.medgyessy.hu	HU	Government
http://www.kum.hu	HU	Government
http://www.ktm.hu	HU	Government
http://www.im.hu	HU	Government
http://www.ihm.gov.hu	HU	Government
http://www.honvedelem.hu	HU	Government
http://www.gyor.hu	HU	Government
http://www.gyism.hu	HU	Government
http://www.gkm.hu	HU	Government
http://www.fvm.hu	HU	Government
http://www.fmm.gov.hu	HU	Government
http://www.eu2004.hu	HU	Government
http://www.eu.hu	HU	Government
http://www.elsovalasztto.hu	HU	Government
http://www.debrecen.hu/	HU	Government
http://www.csongrad-megye.hu	HU	Government
http://www.budapest13.hu/	HU	Government
http://www.bp18.hu	HU	Government
http://www.bp-xi.hu/	HU	Government
http://www.baz.hu/	HU	Government
http://www.b-m.hu/	HU	Government
http://www.zofi.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.pillar.hu	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.pdsz.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.nonprofit.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.liganet.hu	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.liberalisalapitvany.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.europeer.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.europeanhouse.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.eucivil.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.eduport.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://www.c3.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://europa.kontextus.hu/	HU	NGO/labour
http://193.91.64.41/mszosz/site/page.php	HU	NGO/labour

http://www.tarki.hu	HU	Other
http://www.szondaipsos.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.median.hu	HU	Other
http://www.marketingcentrum.hu	HU	Other
http://www.idf.hu	HU	Other
http://www.hirstart.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.hircenter.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.gallup.hu	HU	Other
http://www.fidelitas.hu	HU	Other
http://www.fiatalbaloldal.hu	HU	Other
http://www.extra.hu/euzoli/index1.htm	HU	Other
http://www.europepeople.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.europapa.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.euportal.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.ekint.org	HU	Other
http://www.dori.hu/	HU	Other
http://www.ceu.hu/polsci/	HU	Other
http://tek.bke.hu/	HU	Other
http://eu.startlap.hu/	HU	Other
http://buster.mtapti.hu/mtapti/index.php	HU	Other
http://www.zoldpart.hu	HU	Party
http://www.zd.hu	HU	Party
http://www.ujgeneracio.hu	HU	Party
http://www.szdsz.hu	HU	Party
http://www.szdp.hu/	HU	Party
http://www.piku.hu/index.php	HU	Party
http://www.nemzetiszovetseg.hu	HU	Party
http://www.mvvp.hu	HU	Party
http://www.munkaspart.hu	HU	Party
http://www.mszip.hu	HU	Party
http://www.miep.hu	HU	Party
http://www.mdf.hu	HU	Party
http://www.jobbik.hu	HU	Party
http://www.fidesz.hu	HU	Party
http://www.mtv.hu	HU	Press
http://www.mti.hu/	HU	Press
http://www.ma.hu/page/	HU	Press
http://www.kisalfold.hu/	HU	Press
http://www.indymedia.hu/	HU	Press
http://www.hvg.hu	HU	Press
http://index.hu/	HU	Press

Ireland

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.labour.ie/ivanabacik/	IR	Candidate
http://www.labour.ie/hughiebaxter/	IR	Candidate
http://www.labour.ie/brendanryan/	IR	Candidate
http://www.derossa.com/	IR	Candidate
http://www.cassellsforbrussels.ie/main.html	IR	Candidate
http://homepage.eircom.net/~mwhite/	IR	Candidate
http://www.valoff.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.udaras.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.transport.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp	IR	Government
http://www.oic.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.oasis.gov.ie/government_in_ireland/	IR	Government
http://www.oasis.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.limerickcorp.ie	IR	Government
http://www.justice.ie/80256976002CB7A4/vWeb/fsWMAK4Q7JKY	IR	Government
http://www.irlgov.ie/oireachtas/frame.htm	IR	Government
http://www.irlgov.ie/audgen/	IR	Government
http://www.irlgov.ie/ag/	IR	Government
http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/index.html	IR	Government
http://www.finance.gov.ie/ViewDoc.asp?fn=/home.asp	IR	Government
http://www.europarl.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.euireland.ie/home.htm	IR	Government
http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/homepage.asp?sNavlocator=1	IR	Government
http://www.eu2004.ie	IR	Government
http://www.environ.ie/doi/doihome.nsf?Open	IR	Government
http://www.education.ie	IR	Government
http://www.dublin.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.doh.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.defence.ie/website.nsf/home+page?openpage	IR	Government
http://www.courts.ie/home.nsf/lookuppagelink/home	IR	Government
http://www.cer.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.centralbank.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://publicjobs.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/	IR	Government
http://debates.oireachtas.ie/Main.aspx	IR	Government
http://www.usi.ie/usi/asp/section.asp?s=1	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.tui.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.trocaire.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.olderinireland.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.irms.org/irms.html	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.into.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.impact.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.ictu.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.ibec.ie/ibecweb.nsf/wHome?OpenForm	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.gorta.ie/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.europeanmovement.ie	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.cooperationireland.org/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.consumerassociation.ie/	IR	NGO/labour

http://www.comhlahm.org/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.banbloodsports.com/	IR	NGO/labour
http://www.ul.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.ucc.ie	IR	Other
http://www.tnsmrbi.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.svp.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.politics.ie	IR	Other
http://www.politicalcommunications.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.pmckenna.com/	IR	Other
http://www.nui.ie	IR	Other
http://www.nua-research.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.npc.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.johnbruton.net/	IR	Other
http://www.ipa.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.imsl.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.eoinryan.ie	IR	Other
http://www.banotti.ie/	IR	Other
http://www.avrildoyle.ie/	IR	Other
http://taint.org	IR	Other
http://seaderry.co.uk/cgi-bin/index.pl	IR	Other
http://212.2.162.45/news/	IR	Other
http://www.yfg.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.willieodea.ie	IR	Party
http://www.swp.ie/html/home.htm	IR	Party
http://www.socialistparty.net/	IR	Party
http://www.progressivedemocrats.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.labour.ie/euro2004/	IR	Party
http://www.labour.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.greenparty.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.finegael.ie/index.htm	IR	Party
http://www.fiannafail.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.fiannafail.ie	IR	Party
http://www.comunistpartyofireland.ie/	IR	Party
http://www.castletown.com/National.htm	IR	Party
http://socialist.csn.ul.ie/frames.html	IR	Party
http://greenparty.ennis.ie/	IR	Party
http://free.freeppeech.org/republicansf/	IR	Party
http://comharcristai.org/	IR	Party
http://www.tv3.ie	IR	Press
http://www.todayfm.com/	IR	Press
http://www.thepost.ie/web/The%20Newspaper/Sundays%20Paper/index.asp	IR	Press
http://www.thepost.ie/	IR	Press
http://www.irishnews.com/	IR	Press
http://www.gcn.ie/newgcn/home.asp	IR	Press
http://www.farmersjournal.ie/2004/0515/news/currentedition/	IR	Press
http://www.dublinpost.com/	IR	Press
http://www.breakingnews.ie	IR	Press

Italy

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.votaberlusconi.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.vittorioagnoletto.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.valeriagangemi.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.teresiodelfino.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.tanadezulueta.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.simonegargano.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.robertomusacchio.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.renatobrunetta.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.pialocatelli.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.pecorarosciano.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.pasqualinanapoletano.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.monicafrassoni.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.mauriziotoccoli.net/	IT	Candidate
http://www.massimodalema.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.mariellamazetto.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.marcofollini.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.lucianoracco.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.lilligruber.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.gasparri.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.enricoletta.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.emmabonino.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.donatagottardi.net/	IT	Candidate
http://www.diegonovelli.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.deofogliazza.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.cristianoceriello.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.chiaramoroni.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.benedettodellavedova.com/	IT	Candidate
http://www.angelilli.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.andrealosco.it/	IT	Candidate
http://www.welfare.gov.it/	IT	Government
http://www.alessandramussolini.it/	IT	Government
http://www.senato.it/	IT	Government
http://www.politicheagricole.it/	IT	Government
http://www.ministeroitalianinelmondo.it/	IT	Government
http://www.mininterno.it/	IT	Government
http://www.istruzione.it/	IT	Government
http://www.giustizia.it/	IT	Government
http://www.comunicazioni.it/	IT	Government
http://www.camera.it/	IT	Government
http://www.affariregionali.it/	IT	Government
http://www.unicef.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.uil.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.ugl.it	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.softwarelibero.org/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.retelilliput.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.greenpeace.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.emergency.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.cisl.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.cgil.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.arci.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.amref.it/	IT	NGO/labour

http://www.amnesty.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.aidos.it/	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.accri.it	IT	NGO/labour
http://www.vatican.va/	IT	Other
http://www.uniroma1.it/	IT	Other
http://www.unina.it/	IT	Other
http://www.triciclisti.it/	IT	Other
http://www.sergiocofferati.it/	IT	Other
http://www.runningonline.it/	IT	Other
http://www.retionline.it/	IT	Other
http://www.libero.it/	IT	Other
http://www.ita-bol.com/	IT	Other
http://www.internetbookshop.it/	IT	Other
http://www.fast.mi.it/	IT	Other
http://www.excite.it/	IT	Other
http://www.elledici.org/	IT	Other
http://www.dehoniane.it/	IT	Other
http://www.datamedia.it/	IT	Other
http://www.confindustria.it/	IT	Other
http://www.christianismus.it/	IT	Other
http://www.cappellanipolizia.it/	IT	Other
http://www.bncrm.librari.beniculturali.it/	IT	Other
http://www.azionecattolica.it/	IT	Other
http://www.unitinellulivo.it/	IT	Party
http://www.socialdemocrazia.it/	IT	Party
http://www.sdionline.it/	IT	Party
http://www.rifondazione.it/	IT	Party
http://www.pri.it/	IT	Party
http://www.pml.i.it/	IT	Party
http://www.partitodellabellenza.org/	IT	Party
http://www.nuovoulivo.it/	IT	Party
http://www.margheritaonline.it/	IT	Party
http://www.leganord.org/	IT	Party
http://www.forza-italia.it	IT	Party
http://www.democraziacristianauropea.it/	IT	Party
http://www.democraziacristiana.it/	IT	Party
http://www.antoniodipietro.it/	IT	Party
http://www.alleanza-popolare.it/	IT	Party
http://www.unita.it/	IT	Press
http://www.repubblica.it/	IT	Press
http://www.rainews24.ra.i.it/	IT	Press
http://www.mattinopadova.quotidianiespresso.it/	IT	Press
http://www.lastampa.it/	IT	Press
http://www.ilsole24ore.com/	IT	Press
http://www.emilianet.it/	IT	Press
http://www.corriere.it/	IT	Press
http://www.ansa.it/	IT	Press

The Netherlands

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.zondertwijfelvooreuropa.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.vanhulten.net	NL	Candidate
http://www.toinemanders.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.stemwytze.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.stemted.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.lilyjacobs.pvda.nl/http://	NL	Candidate
http://www.lambertvannistelrooij.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.kallenmorren.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.jeaninegoeseurope.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.janmulder.net/	NL	Candidate
http://www.ivandenburg.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.ingridvisseren.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.hantenbroeke.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://www.hannekeboerma.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.estherrommel.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.estherdelange.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.dogangok.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.cornelisvisser.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.corbey.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.bertdoorn.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.barthopronk.com	NL	Candidate
http://rommel.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://plasschaert.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://manders.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://konings.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://kallen.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://http://www.sophieintveld.nl/	NL	Candidate
http://hansblokland.nl	NL	Candidate
http://ep2004.bramhoutenbos.net	NL	Candidate
http://cherribi.vvd.nl	NL	Candidate
http://www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl/?lc=nl	NL	Government
http://www.ukomttochook.nl	NL	Government
http://www.minvws.nl/	NL	Government
http://www.minlnv.nl/	NL	Government
http://www.minfin.nl/	NL	Government
http://www.minbzk.nl/home	NL	Government
http://www.europaportaal.nl	NL	Government
http://www.0900-jeugdraad.nl/	NL	Government
http://europabestbelangrijk.nl/	NL	Government
http://www.vakcentralemhp.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.stvda.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.republikeinse-socialisten.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.politiekdebat.nl/pj/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.oneworld.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.offensief.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.ocnv.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.mkb.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.indymedia.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.horecabond.fnv.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.hbbcnv.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.groenfront.nl/nl/index.html	NL	NGO/labour

http://www.fnv.nl/abvakabo/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.fnv.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.fnv-kiem.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.europaindewereld.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.consumentenbond.nl/	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.cnv.net/	NL	NGO/labour
http://cgi.jocnv.nl/site/www/index_nw.htm	NL	NGO/labour
http://www.referendumplatform.nl/overons/campagnes.htm	NL	Other
http://www.politiekonline.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.parlement.com/	NL	Other
http://www.opzoeknaareuropa.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.maxvandenbergh.nl	NL	Other
http://www.kamerlid151.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.kaasstolp.nl/weblog.php	NL	Other
http://www.intellectueel.nl/index.php3	NL	Other
http://www.gayvote.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.europese-beweging.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.destemvan.net/	NL	Other
http://www.cbs.nl/	NL	Other
http://www.aanbesteden.info/	NL	Other
http://www.zonnet.nl/nieuws	NL	Other
http://www.sp.nl	NL	Party
http://www.sgp.nl/	NL	Party
http://www.sgp.nl	NL	Party
http://www.respect.nu/	NL	Party
http://www.partijvoorhetnoorden.nl/	NL	Party
http://www.michielsmit2004.nl/	NL	Party
http://www.js.nl/?id=welcome	NL	Party
http://www.jongefortuynisten.nl/	NL	Party
http://www.eurolib.org/	NL	Party
http://www.democratischeuropa.nl	NL	Party
http://www.d66.nl/ep2004/	NL	Party
http://www.d66.nl/	NL	Party
http://www.cdja.nl/	NL	Party
http://pvda.nl/	NL	Party
http://europa.cda.nl	NL	Party
http://www.sp.nl	NL	Party
http://www.vpro.nl/programma/buitenhof/index.shtml?2785571+2848316	NL	Press
http://www.telegraaf.nl/	NL	Press
http://www.sdu.nl/staatscourant/vandaag/	NL	Press
http://www.refdag.nl/website/refdag.php	NL	Press
http://www.opinie.nl/	NL	Press
http://www.nrc.nl/	NL	Press
http://www.novatv.nl/	NL	Press
http://www.netwerk.tv/index.jsp	NL	Press
http://www.kro.nl/reporter/home.asp	NL	Press
http://new.else4.nl/	NL	Press

Slovenia

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.peterle.si	SL	Candidate
http://www2.gov.si/eurovoc/eurovoc.nsf/0/af19879359b4e9bfc125684f0051c836?	SL	Government
http://www.vrhnik.si/php/novice_more.php?id_novica=3376	SL	Government
http://www.velenje.si/default.asp?id=325	SL	Government
http://www.uvi.si/slo/koledar/arhiv/2003/07/index.text.html	SL	Government
http://www.statistik.bayern.de/euw2004/anschr_slowenisch.doc	SL	Government
http://www.sempeter-vrtojba.si/	SL	Government
http://www.radovljica.si/povezave/radovljica.asp?langID=1060	SL	Government
http://www.mvcr.cz/2003/volby/ep/formular.doc	SL	Government
http://www.mnz.si/si/139.php	SL	Government
http://www.metlika.si/novice_metliske_01_04.htm	SL	Government
http://www.maribor.si/povezave/admin/sraka_media.asp?id=3847	SL	Government
http://www.lobbach.de/aktuellausdemrathaus/europslowenisch.htm	SL	Government
http://www.lasko.si/aktualno.php	SL	Government
http://www.kr-plzensky.cz/article.asp?itm=10349	SL	Government
http://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/download/Flyer_Europawahl_2004.pdf	SL	Government
http://www.euskirchen.de/wahlen/ew2004/slowenisch.pdf	SL	Government
http://www.europarl.si/poslanci.html	SL	Government
http://www.europa-waehlt.de/files/wahl_slowen.pdf	SL	Government
http://www.elections2004.eu.int/ep-election/sites/sl/sitemap/	SL	Government
http://www.dz-rs.si/si/aktualno/eu-koticek/dokumenti/nica-slo.pdf	SL	Government
http://www.dol.si/OBJAVA%20PLAKATNA%20MESTA%202004.htm	SL	Government
http://www.dobrna.si/novice/novica.php?id_nov=19	SL	Government
http://www.cerkno.si/obcina/index.php	SL	Government
http://www.beltinci.si/obcina/index.php?id=plakatiranje	SL	Government
http://www.ajdovscina.si/aktualno/volitve_evropa.pdf	SL	Government
http://evropa.gov.si/evropomocnik/category/181/	SL	Government
http://193.41.36.136/bazeul/URED/2002/096/B/5248033002.htm	SL	Government
http://www.umanotera.org/telo.html	SL	NGO/labour
http://www.ukomttochook.nl/upload/Verkiezingen_Slowe.pdf	SL	NGO/labour
http://www.skls.si/novica.php?id_novice=150	SL	NGO/labour
http://www.mss.si/index.php?id=63	SL	NGO/labour
http://www.amnesty.si/clanek.php?id=200	SL	NGO/labour
http://europa.bunto.free.fr/prezento-sl.htm	SL	NGO/labour
http://www.volitve.si/cgi-bin/forum/forum.pl?msg=199	SL	Other
http://www.slon.net/~uzpavlek/dogodki.html	SL	Other
http://www.rkc.si/aktualno/?id=616	SL	Other
http://www.pomurje.net/start.asp	SL	Other
http://www.ninamedia.si/vprasanja.phtml?mesec=feb04	SL	Other
http://www.najdi.si/nk/new.jsp?locid=sl	SL	Other
http://www.media-forum.si/slo/pravo/pravni-viri/zakon-o-volitvah-evropski-parlament.pdf	SL	Other
http://www.matkurja.com/eng/resources/government/parties/	SL	Other
http://www.kopa.si/pls/tim/pvz_izpis.startup?vrsta=novosti	SL	Other
http://www.ius-software.si/novice.asp?ID=39577	SL	Other
http://www.flamme.si/cgi-bin/admin/tella2add.cgi?ID=7617	SL	Other
http://www.fhs-kp.si/izvori/4-5-3.htm	SL	Other
http://www.ef.uni-lj.si/jm-chair/data/datoteke/mejniki1995-jmpage.doc	SL	Other
http://kskjlife.com/news/Maj12%20page%206.pdf	SL	Other
http://24ur.com/naslovnica/eu/20040321_2037913.php?Rxn2=102	SL	Other
http://www.zveza-zns.si/	SL	Party
http://www.zlsd.si/	SL	Party

http://www.zlsd-velenje.com/RAZPRAVE/razprava29.php	SL	Party
http://www.zeleni.si/	SL	Party
http://www.sms.si/	SL	Party
http://www.sls.si	SL	Party
http://www.sjn.si/	SL	Party
http://www.seg.si	SL	Party
http://www.nsi.si/	SL	Party
http://www.nova.generacija.org/aktivnosti/index.asp?IDA=18	SL	Party
http://www.mld-maribor.net/napovednik.html	SL	Party
http://www.mladaslovenija.org/vomitator/indeks.asp?ID=33	SL	Party
http://www.ivancnagorica.sds.si/Slovenski%20demokrat.pdf	SL	Party
http://www.desus.si/Novica18.html	SL	Party
http://users.volja.net/zelenisi/ZS_sporocilo200403.htm	SL	Party
http://users.volja.net/m6pol9x/	SL	Party
http://freeweb.siol.net/mforum/konferenca.htm	SL	Party
http://www.tv-nm.si/si/opodjetju/	SL	Press
http://www.salomon.si/informacija.asp?id_informacije=1287	SL	Press
http://www.radiotriglav.si/PrvaStran.htm	SL	Press
http://www.radiokaos.info/novice.php?cat=1	SL	Press
http://www.radio-sora.si/volitve04.htm	SL	Press
http://www.kabi.si/si21/tv/paprika.html	SL	Press
http://www.dnevnik.si/clanekb.asp?id=82880	SL	Press
http://www.delo.si/	SL	Press
http://radio.ognjisce.si/volitveEU.php	SL	Press
http://www.tv-nm.si/si/opodjetju/	SL	Press
http://www.salomon.si/informacija.asp?id_informacije=1287	SL	Press
http://www.radiotriglav.si/PrvaStran.htm	SL	Press
http://www.radiokaos.info/novice.php?cat=1	SL	Press
http://www.radio-sora.si/volitve04.htm	SL	Press

United Kingdom

URL	Country	Actor type
http://www.syedkamall.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.sir-robertatkins.org/	UK	Candidate
http://www.sarahludfordmep.org.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.robertevansmep.net/index.html	UK	Candidate
http://www.robertadamson.info/	UK	Candidate
http://www.richardbalf.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.newton-dunn.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.neilparishmep.org.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.morgan2004.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.michaelcashmanmep.org.uk/index.html	UK	Candidate
http://www.martinmep.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.martincallanan.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.juliagash.org/	UK	Candidate
http://www.jeffreytitfordmep.co.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.jamesprovan.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.glynford.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.garytittley.eu.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.dendovermep.co.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.davidsumberg.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.corbett-euro.demon.co.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.claudemoraes.net/	UK	Candidate
http://www.chrishuhnemep.org.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.charlestannock.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.billmillermep.com/	UK	Candidate
http://www.bashirkhanbhai.co.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.arlenemccarthy.labour.co.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.andrewduffmep.org.uk/	UK	Candidate
http://www.alexanderstockton.com/	UK	Candidate
http://bfewster.members.gn.apc.org/	UK	Candidate
http://www.postalvotes.co.uk/	UK	Government
http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/electserv.nsf/a/electoralservices?opendocument	UK	Government
http://www.lgib.gov.uk/ep2004/index.htm	UK	Government
http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/Central_Serv/Documents/Elections/european%20elections.htm	UK	Government
http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/	UK	Government
http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page1.asp	UK	Government
http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/	UK	Government
http://www.ossesc.gov.uk/	UK	Government
http://www.oft.gov.uk/default.htm	UK	Government
http://www.congleton.gov.uk	UK	Government
http://www.prolife.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.nfu.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.drugscope.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www2.the-rba.org/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.ybf.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.ssta.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.rmt.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.poptel.org.uk/against-eurofederalism/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.new-europe.co.uk/contents.html	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.napo.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.mcdpolitics.org/	UK	NGO/labour

http://www.kfat.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.gftu.org.uk/html/regular.html	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.gftu.org.uk/html/nudago_index.html	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.eis.org.uk/latest.htm	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.cwu.org/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.cdna.tvu.ac.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.bcodp.org.uk/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.adamsmith.org/	UK	NGO/labour
http://www.theenglandproject.net/mt/	UK	Other
http://www.publicinterest.blogspot.com/	UK	Other
http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/	UK	Other
http://www.mabonline.net/media/news/index.htm	UK	Other
http://www.lse.ac.uk/	UK	Other
http://www.eureferendum.blogspot.com/	UK	Other
http://www.eauk.org/contentmanager/content/politicsandsociety/aboutus.cfm	UK	Other
http://www.eauk.org/	UK	Other
http://www.danhamilton.co.uk/weblog/index.php	UK	Other
http://www.anthony-dacko.net/	UK	Other
http://plasticgangster.blogspot.com/	UK	Other
http://concom.blogspot.com/	UK	Other
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/	UK	Other
http://www.politicsdirect.com/	UK	Other
http://www.eurosceptic.com	UK	Other
http://www.sinnfein.ie/	UK	Other
http://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/	UK	Party
http://www.laboureast.labour.co.uk/	UK	Party
http://www.eurogreens.org	UK	Party
http://www.englishdemocrats.org.uk/	UK	Party
http://www.east.libdems.org/	UK	Party
http://www.cpgb.org.uk/	UK	Party
http://www.comunist-party.org.uk/	UK	Party
http://www.bringingbritaintogether.info/	UK	Party
http://www.welcome.to/ukup	UK	Party
http://www.ukup.org/	UK	Party
http://www.omrlp.com/	UK	Party
http://www.niwc.org/	UK	Party
http://www.firstdemocrat.org/	UK	Party
http://www.theherald.co.uk/politics/	UK	Press
http://www.poptel.org.uk/scgn/	UK	Press
http://www.leedstoday.net/	UK	Press
http://www.itv.com/news/Britain.html	UK	Press
http://www.bbc.co.uk/england/	UK	Press
http://news.scotsman.com/	UK	Press
http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/	UK	Press
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/default.stm	UK	Press
http://www.wtps.co.uk	UK	Press

Coding instrument explorative study French political parties

Three frames are investigated for their presence in communication about Europe/ European issues present on websites produced by French political parties

1. Interests frame

An article may raise a European issue in the context of particular interests: the producer of the text suggests that the issue is relevant for us because it touches our particular sphere of interests (Eder et al., 2002: 45-46).

- Rational arguments and/ or motivations are put forward in relation to a particular European issue, that refer to specific interests or strategic actions.
- Interest can potentially be conflicting with other (national) interests inside Europe.
- Emphasis in the text on particular advantages or disadvantages in relation to a European issue, or a reference to functional obligations, indicates the presence of an interests frame.

4 categories of interests:

- General advantages/disadvantages are stressed in relation to a European issue
 - Keywords: (dis)advantage, (un)useful, demands/obligations, (material) assets
- Juridical issues are stressed in relation to a European issue
 - Keywords: judiciary, justice, laws, statutes, court house, lawsuit, legal actions, juridical explanation, interest in common legislation, incompatibility national-European law systems, legality
- Economical/market issues are stressed in relation to a European issue
 - Keywords: Distribution conflict, economical damage/harm, fair/unfair competition, concurrence, world market, competitiveness, efficient distribution/division, economic growth, growth of balance of goods and services, costs, benefits, loss, gain, 'Euroland', 'neoliberal Europe', risk prevention, flexibility
- Administrative/governmental issues are stressed in relation to a European issue
 - Keywords: Interest of power, power game/contest, trial of strength, problems with implementation of power division, (shortcoming) perseverance, European interests in world power, (in)efficient implementation/enforcement of measures, use/non-use of taken/planned measures, speeding up/slowing down the process of integration, increasing/reducing control/power, bureaucracy, administrative elite, principles, general interests (well-being, welfare, social tolerance, -safety, treats to these), (mal)function of administrative work

2. Identity frame

An article may raise a European issue in the context of particular identities: the text suggests that the issue is relevant for us because it touches our collective identity (Eder et al., 2002: 44).

- Arguments and/ or motivations are put forward in relation to a (European) issue that refer to the ethnic self-awareness or the collective identity of a particular community.
- A 'WE relation' is created. The 'WE group' determines itself as regional, national, ethnic or as a European.
- Keywords: We-Them contrast, 'our homeland', 'our culture', defence of cultural artefacts, traditions and characteristic properties of a nation, region or Europe, 'we, the Dutch/Europeans', nationality, identity, reference to a shared past or future, 'to learn from the past', (European) community, patriot, consensus, to hold together/be faithful to each other, common strength, inclusion & exclusion (who belongs to 'us').

3. Universal values frame

An article may raise a European issue in the context of particular moral values: the issue is considered relevant because it touches a universal sphere of values (Eder et al., 2002: 44-45).

- Arguments and/ or motivations are put forward in relation to a particular issue that refer to universally acknowledged moral principles. Here, ‘values’ are thus understood as universal values.
- Statements with regard to an issue may construct an explicit relation with general normative principles that are considered valid for the institutional context of the EU, candidate Member States or any other country with which the article deals.
- Keywords: democracy (democratic values and rules of the game), freedom, human rights (violation of human rights, intolerance, racism, xenophobia, multiculturalism), basic rights/values, (political) equality (participation, citizen interest, legislation, parliament), Europe of its citizens, values of the Enlightenment (tolerance), good-bad division (related to values existing in particular groups of society).

Coding Instrument presentations of Europe by political parties

Coding instrument for content analysis of French, Dutch and British political party websites during the 2004 EP election campaign

Part 1 Presence of issue domains

*Q: Are the three issue domains **interests** (CODE 1), **identity** (CODE 2) and/or **values** (CODE 3) mentioned in the coding unit? For each issue domain a general description is provided, plus a listing of additional keywords/ specifications.⁶⁴*

Response options: issue domain (1) present or (2) Absent

Interests

4 categories of interests

- General interests:
Advantages/disadvantages are mentioned in the text (in a general sense, possibly in terms of useful, harmful, bad)
- Juridical issues: legislation, juridical problems, problems with implementation of EU legislation at national level), importance of common regulation is stressed, incompatible laws
 - European laws/legislation superior to national laws/legislation. FR: ‘legislation’, ‘directive’, NL: ‘regeling’, ‘richtlijn’
- Economical/market issues: fair/unfair competition, rivalry, put at a disadvantage (economically), conflict of distribution/division, economical growth/progress, increase of wealth balance, costs/benefits, loss/profit, winner/loser, Euro-country, neoliberal/ultra-liberal Europe
 - Europe is (too much) an economic entity, economical development, economical interests go first, (un)affordable Europe, internal market, waste of money, Eurozone, EU budget, European economy, (Growth- &) Stability Pact, EU costs too much, free market/free trade, liberal Europe, extravagant European bureaucracy
- Administrative/governmental issues: (take/transfer) power, power politics, implementation problems, persistence, European interests in international trial of strength, bureaucracy, accelerate/slow down European integration, increase/decrease/repair domination/power/sovereignty, EU elite, promoting/supporting the general interest/benefit, welfare, welfare state, (threat of) security, (mal)functioning of EU administration/government
 - (principle of) subsidiarity (→ surplus value of European cooperation should be evident), sovereignty, interference of Brussels, (in)competence of Europe, right of veto, necessary collaboration for fighting international crime, mismanagement, fraud, strong/powerful Europe, EU brings peace/security, Europe as international actor, conflict of power, administrative body, EU institutions are (too) powerful, bad governance. FR: ‘délocalisations’, NL: ‘achterkamertjes’

Identity

- ‘us’ versus ‘them’
 - In- and exclusion (“Turkey does not belong to the EU”)
- Usage of ‘we’/‘us’ in direct reference to Europe/ EU or the nation state
 - *note: this does not include ‘we’ as political party: “we propose the following ...”*
- European/national community (NL: ‘gemeenschap’)
 - EU/Europe as common project
- (Sharing of) solidarity among Europeans/ ‘belonging’ together, or nation state
 - Reciprocity, NL: ‘lotsverbondenheid’
 - *note: this does not include international solidarity*

⁶⁴ First (black) bullet: descriptions for each issue domain taken from Eder et al. (2000, 2002). Second (circle) bullet: keywords/ specifications added by the researcher.

- European/national inheritance, (defence) of European/national tradition/culture/cultural artefacts/language
 - FR: ‘foie gras’; European/national flag, European/national anthem
- Emphasis on a shared past (ancestors) and/or a common future
 - History/ future of Europe – ‘patrimoine’/ heritage
 - Judeo-Christian/ humanistic traditions that are shared across Europe (note: j-c values = issue domain values)
- Appointing specific characteristics to/of Europeans/European people(s), or nation state (‘the Dutch’, ‘the French’, ‘Europeans’ etc.)
 - the European territory, the French/Dutch/British territory
 - European family
 - European/ British/ French/ Dutch citizens/people
 - Our fellow (European) citizens
 - FR: ‘citoyenneté européenne’; NL: ‘Europeaan’

Universal values

- Democratic Europe (undemocratic)
- Transparent Europe/European institutions (not transparent)
- Freedom
- Equality – “all citizens are equal” (NL: ‘iedereen is gelijk’)
- Human/basic rights (protection)
 - Fundamental rights – women’s rights – rights of immigrants – children’s rights – gay rights
- Political equality
- Citizen participation
 - All citizens must have a say – must be consulted
 - ‘Europe of the people’ (NL: ‘Europa van de burgers’)
- Tolerance
- Common values (e.g. Judeo-Christian values), Europe as community with shared values
 - Philosophy of Europe
- *Note: this does not include “L’Europe des Démocratie et Différences”, which is a political group in the EP*

Part 2 Focus

Q: To which entity does the party exactly refer to when mentioning an issue domain: Europe/the EU (in a more general sense), and/or the nation state (specifically)? The coder should choose as much as possible between option A or B, unless both perspectives are explicitly stressed.

Response options: A or/and B

CODE A: European interests/identity/values

The issue is explicitly stressed in direct reference to the EU/ Europe/ European peoples/ European citizens, or formulated in a general sense

- “a state...” = general = A (e.g. “every member state should remain sovereign”)

CODE B: National interests/identity/values

The issue is explicitly stressed in direct reference to the nation state and/or its citizens/inhabitants

Part 3 Attitude

Q: Does a party speak about Europe/EU/EU institutions/EU laws etc. in a positive, neutral or negative sense?

Response options: 1, 2, or 3

CODE 1: Positive

Party speaks about Europe/the EU/EU institutions/EU laws etc. in a positive sense

CODE 2: Neutral

Party speaks about Europe/the EU/EU institutions/EU laws etc. in a neutral sense. If attitude was not clear, or mixed, the code 'neutral' should also be assigned

CODE 3: Negative

Party speaks about Europe/the EU/EU institutions/EU laws etc. in a negative sense

Sites of political actors included in 2005 referendum study

French NGOs	URL	Type*
AC (Agir ensemble contre le chômage et la précarité)	www.ac.eu.org/	SMO
Action Consommation	www.actionconsommation.org/	SIG
Action Française (centre royaliste d'action française)	www.actionfrancaise.net/	SMO
Action Libérale	www.action-liberale.org/	SMO
Agir contre la guerre	http://agircontrelaguerre.free.fr/	issue
Alter M - 100% altermondialistes	www.alter-m.org/	SMO
Altermonde	http://altermonde.le-village.org/	SMO
Alternative Libertaire	www.alternativelibertaire.org/	SMO
Apeis	http://apeis.org/	SIG
Appel des 200	http://appel200.net/	action
ARRI (Association Réalités et Relations Internationales)	www.arri.fr/	SMO
Attac France	www.france.attac.fr/	SMO
Attac Paris	www.attacparis12.lautre.net/	SMO
Cercles Libéraux	www.cerclesliberaux.com/	SMO
CERF (Cercle d'Etude de Réformes Féministes)	www.c-e-r-f.org/	SMO
CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail)	www.cfdt.fr/	SIG
CFE CGC (Confédération française de l'encadrement CGC)	www.cfecgc.org/	SIG
CFTC	www.cftc.fr/	SIG
CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail)	www.cgt.fr/	SIG
CGT CL (Continuer la CGT)	www.assoc.wanadoo.fr/continuer_la_cgt/	SIG
CGT Finances	www.finances.cgt.fr/	SIG
CGT Société Etudes (Fédération CGT des Sociétés d'études)	www.soc-etudes.cgt.fr/	SIG
CGT Technip – UGICT	www.cgttp.eu.org/	SIG
CGT UGFF (Union Générale des Fédérations de Fonctionnaires)	www.ferc-sup.cgt.fr/	SIG
Confédération Etudiante	www.confederation-etudiante.org/	SIG
Confédération Etudiante - Oui Etudiant	www.oui-etudiant.fr/	SIG
Confédération Paysanne	www.confederationpaysanne.fr/	SIG
Confrontations	www.confrontations.org/	SMO
Conscience politique	www.conscience-politique.org/	SMO
Convention Citoyenne	www.conventioncitoyenne.com/	SMO
CROAC (Collectif de Résistance et d'Offensive Anti-Capitaliste)	http://collectif.croac.free.fr/	SMO
Délivrance	www.delivrance-infos.com/	SMO
Ensemble pour le OUI	www.ensemblepourleoui.fr/	action
FFMJC (Fédération Française des Maisons de Jeunes et de la Culture)	www.ffmjc.org/	SIG
FNSEA (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles)	www.fnsea.fr/	SIG
Gauche en Europe	www.gauche-en-europe.org/	SMO
Gaullisme Social	http://gaullismesocial.free.fr/	SMO
Grain Vert	www.grainvert.com/	SMO
Inter-LGBT (Interassociative Lesbienne, Gaie, Bi et Trans)	www.inter-lgbt.org/	SIG
Jeunes Européennes	www.jeunes-europeens.org/	SMO
Le cactus Républicain - la Gauche	www.la-gauche.org/	SMO
Le Militant	www.le-militant.fr/	SMO
Les Alternatifs	www.alternatifs.org/	SMO
Les Ogres (Ouvertures Géographique Religieuse Ethnique Sociale)	www.lesogres.org/	SMO
Les Pénélopes	www.penelopes.org/	SIG
MMLF (Mouvement des Maghrébins Laïques de France)	www.mmlf.org/	SIG
Mouvement Européen France	www.mouvement-europeen.org/	SMO
MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples)	www.mrap.asso.fr/	SIG
Novethic	www.novethic.fr/	issue
OALE (Observatoire Antilibéral de l'éducation et des services publics)	www.oale.org/	SMO

Oumma	http://oumma.com/	religious
Rassemblement Citoyen	www.rassemblementcitoyen.org/	SMO
Réso (Réformistes & solidaires)	www.re-so.net/	SMO
SIPM-CNT (Syndicat Interprofessionnel de la presse et des medias)	http://sipm-cnt.org/	SIG
SNCS-FSU (Syndicat National des Chercheurs Scientifiques)	www.sncs.cnrs-bellevue.fr/	SIG
SNES (Syndicat National des Enseignements de Second degré)	www.snes.edu/	SIG
SNJ (Syndicat National des Journalistes)	www.snj.fr/	SIG
SNUIPP (Syndicat Nationale Unitaire des Instituteurs Professeurs des écoles et Pegc)	www.snuipp.fr/	SIG
Solidaires	www.solidaires.org/	SIG
SUD Education	www.sudeducation.org/	SIG
SUD PTT	www.sudptt.fr/	SIG
Tête de Turc	www.tetedeturc.com/	SIG
UNEF (Le syndicat étudiant)	www.unef.fr/	SIG
UNSA Education	www.fen.fr/	SIG
Vive la République	www.vivelarep.org/	SMO

* NGO types: action group (action), issue advocacy (issue), religious group/organization (religious), social movement organization (SMO), special interest group (SIG – includes labour organizations).

French political parties	URL
Front National	www.frontnational.com/
Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR)	www.lcr-rouge.org/
Mouvement pour la France	www.autre-europe.org/
Parti Communiste	www.pcf.fr/
Parti Socialiste main site	www.parti-socialiste.fr/
Parti Socialiste ‘non socialiste’	www.nonsocialiste.net/
Parti Socialiste ‘oui socialiste’	www.ouisocialiste.net/
Union Mouvement Populaire (UMP)	www.u-m-p.org/
Union Démocratie Française (UDF)	www.udf.org/
Les Verts	www.les-verts.org/

Dutch NGOs	URL	Type*
Amnesty International Nederland	www.amnesty.nl/	issue
Attac Nederland	www.attac.nl/	SMO
Beter Europa	www.betereuropa.nu/	action
CAS - Comité Anti Stierenvechten	www.stieren.net/	issue
CG Raad (chronisch zieken en gehandicapten)	www.cg-raad.nl/	SIG
Cisa (centrum voor individu en samenleving)	www.cisasite.nl/	SIG
CNV	www.cvn.nl/	SIG
Dierenbescherming	www.dierenbescherming.nl/	issue
Dierenrechten Europa	www.dierenrechteneuropa.nl/	issue
Dovenschap (organisatie voor en door doven)	www.dovenschap.nl/	SIG
EU nee	www.eunee.nl/	action
Eurodusie	www.eurodusnie.nl/	SMO
Europese beweging Nederland	www.europese-beweging.nl/	SMO
FNV	www.fnv.nl/	SIG
FNV - Een beter Europa (2e site)	www.eenbetereuropa.nl/	SIG
Free Europe	www.free-europe.org/	SMO
FvO (federatie van ouderverenigingen)	www.fvo.nl/	SIG
Grayhound Rescue	www.greyhoundsrescue.nl/	issue
Grondwet Nee	www.grondwetnee.org/	action
Kerk en vrede	http://cgi.kerkenvrede.nl/	action
LBR (landelijk bureau ter bestrijding rassendiscriminatie)	www.lbr.nl/	issue
Libertarian	www.libertarian.nl/	SMO
Meer vrijheid	www.meervrijheid.nl/	SMO
Natuur en milieu	www.snm.nl/	issue
Natuur en milieu - Europeanatuurlijk (2e site)	www.europeanatuurlijk.nl/	issue
NEN (Nederlands centrum van normalisatie)	www.nen.nl/	SMO
Novib	www.novib.nl/	issue
NPOE (Nederlands platform ouderen en Europa)	www.npoe.nl/	SIG
Omslag (werkplaats voor duurzame ontwikkeling)	www.omslag.nl/	SMO
Pantera	www.pantera.nl/	issue
Referendum Platform	www.referendumplatform.nl/	action
Referendum Platform - Europees Referendum (2e site)	www.europeesreferendum.nl/	action
Referendum Plaza	www.referendumplaza.nl/	action
Schreeuw om leven	www.schreeuwomleven.nl/	religious
Sociale Databank Nederland	www.sdnl.nl/eu-grondwet.htm	SMO
Stem Nee	www.stemnee.nl/	action
Tiye International	www.tiye-international.org/	SIG
Trefpunt van Socialisme en Levensovertuiging	www.zingeving.net/Trefpunt/eugrwt.htm	SMO
Vluchtelingen Werk Nederland	www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/	issue
VNV nation (Victory not Vengeance)	http://home.deds.nl/~shepherd/4sheep/stop_ritueel_slachten.html	action
Vrouwen tegen de Europese grondwet	www.vrouwen-tegen-eu-grondwet.nl/	action
Vrouwenbelangen	www.vrouwenbelangen.nl/	SIG
Wakker Dier	www.wakkerdier.nl/	issue
Werkgroep Stem Tegen Grondwet	http://home.tiscali.nl/mijneerstemiljoen/stemnee/	action
WISE (anti-kernbeweging)	www.tegenstroom.nl/	SMO
Wolves Unlimited	www.wolves-unlimited.com/	issue

* NGO types: action group (action), issue advocacy (issue), religious group/organization (religious), social movement organization (SMO), special interest group (SIG – includes labour organizations).

Dutch Political parties	URL
Christen Democratisch Appel (CDA)	www.cda.nl/
Christen Unie (CU)	www.christenunie.nl/
CU-SGP Eurofractie	www.eurofractie.christenunie.nl/
Democraten '66 (D66)	www.d66.nl/
Europa Transparant	www.europatransparant.nl/
GroenLinks	www.groenlinks.nl/
Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)	www.pvda.nl/
Staatskundige Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)	www.sgp.nl/
Socialistische Partij (SP)	www.sp.nl/ en www.europa.sp.nl
Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)	www.vvd.nl/

Codeerinstructie frameanalyse politieke communicatie over Europa

Instructie: Ieder bericht heeft een unieke code gekregen. Deze staat bovenaan het bericht. Noteer deze unieke code in het vakje op het codeersheet. Noteer ook je naam/initialen bovenaan het bericht.

Deel 1 Issue domeinen

Instructie: Lees het bericht goed door, noteer vervolgens op het codeersheet voor ieder issue domein of het voorkomt in het bericht. Meerdere issue domeinen kunnen in één bericht voorkomen.

Antwoordmogelijkheden per issue domein: JA, NEE.

N.B. De issues moeten expliciet/letterlijk in de tekst genoemd worden – minimale interpretatie van de tekst. Bepaal aan de hand van de omschrijvingen of de inhoud van het bericht ‘economisch’, ‘politiek/bestuurlijk’ of ‘justitieel’ van aard is, en/of dat identiteit- en/of waarden kwesties naar voren worden gebracht in het bericht.

1. Economische/markt issues

- Economische groei/voortgang of juist achteruitgang
- Winst/verlies, winnaar/verliezer, kosten/baten (op economisch/geldtechnisch gebied)
- Interne markt/ vrije markt(economie)/ vrijhandel
- Economie/euro/Euroland/Eurozone/EU budget/EU begroting/betaalbaar of juist onbetaalbaar Europa/ EU kost te veel/geldverspilling
- (Groei &) Stabiliteitspact
- Europa is (te veel een) economische eenheid, economische belangen staan voorop, (ongerichte) liberalisering, ultra-/neo-liberaal Europa/te veel gefocust op economische ontwikkeling
- Open competitie/Europa (te veel) gericht op concurrentie
- Economisch bevoordelen/benadelen

Geen: (1) sec benoemen welvaart/werkgelegenheid, deze moet gerelateerd zijn aan economische issues (i.t.t. eerder bericht); (2) sec benoemen kosten/baten, moet ook gerelateerd zijn aan economie/geld.

2. Politiek/bestuurlijke issues

- Taakverdeling/ verdeling bevoegdheden tussen ‘Brussel’ (EU elite) en de lidstaten – wie doet wat/ wie heeft wat te zeggen in EU verband
- Waar ligt de macht: machtsbelangen, machtsconflict, machtsspel, krachtmeting, machtsconcentratie, subsidiariteit(sprincipe/beginsel), délocalisations (FR), vetorecht, soevereiniteit (Brusselse bemoeienis), autonomie
- Kritiek op administratief/bestuurlijk handelen EU: Europa incompetent, bureaucratie, ontransparant, ondemocratisch, bestuurlijke/administratieve elite, slecht functioneren EU (achterkamertjes, mismanagement, fraude e.d.). Europa als bestuurlijk apparaat, er is sprake van slecht bestuur

3. Justitiële issues

- Wet- en regelgeving staat expliciet benoemd – er wordt gesproken over Europese wetten/regels
 - Artikelen uit een bepaalde wet staan opgesomd. Ook: richtlijn (FR: directives, bv. de Bolkestijn richtlijn). Dit mogen ook artikelen uit de grondwet zijn – alleen benoemen van ‘grondwet’ is niet genoeg, er moet in juridische zin over gepraat worden
 - Juridische problemen/kwesties
 - Implementatieproblemen – wanneer bedoeld wordt op het EU recht dat het nationale recht/wetgeving aantast of ondergeschikt maakt, incompatibiliteit nationaal en Europees recht
- Geen:** sec benoemen Europese grondwet – er moeten juridische kwesties ‘bij’ besproken worden.

4. Identiteit issues

- Issues benoemd m.b.t. Europese integratie die te maken hebben met ‘self-awareness’ of collectieve identiteit van ‘de Europeanen’ of juist ‘de Nederlanders/Fransen’.
- Europa/NL/FR als community (met ‘medeburgers’), als één familie met eigen ‘territory’, met een eigen cultuur/cultureel erfgoed en tradities (incl. artefacten als vlag, volkslied, taal, maar ook foie gras, en zelfs het abortus/euthanasie/softdrugsbeleid).
- Referentie naar onderlinge solidariteit als groep, het ‘bij elkaar horen’, of zelfs ‘lotsverbonden’ zijn. Niet: internationale solidariteit
- Referentie naar een gedeeld verleden (‘patrimoine’, ‘héritage’, ‘erfenis’) en/of gezamenlijke toekomst. Europese integratie als gezamenlijk project met gezamenlijke doelen (of juist niet).

5. Waarden issues

- Issues benoemd m.b.t. Europese integratie die te maken hebben met universeel aanvaarde morele principes zoals, vrijheid, gelijkheid, mensen- cq. dierenrechten, tolerantie, maar ook democratische principes (representatieve democratie waarbinnen volksvertegenwoordigers de burgers vertegenwoordigen, en moeten blijven betrekken in de besluitvorming)
- Gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen, rechten van immigranten, kinderen, homo’s en andere minderheidsgroepen
- Europa van de burgers/ burgerparticipatie
- Waarden die Europa als gemeenschap deelt of beschermt (zou moeten beschermen), bijvoorbeeld joods-christelijke of humanistische waarden. Filosofie van Europa

Deel 2 Opinie/attitude

Instructie: Lees het bericht nogmaals goed door. Noteer vervolgens het antwoord op de volgende 2 vragen op het codeersheet

1. Opinie t.a.v. Europese grondwet

Wat is de opinie van de actor (producent van de site) ten aanzien van de Europese grondwet? Kruis op het codeersheet aan welke van de volgende keuzemogelijkheden van toepassing zijn op het bericht (één antwoord mogelijk):

Antwoordmogelijkheden: VOOR, TEGEN, NEUTRAAL/ ONDUIDELIJK

NB: deze opinie moet hetzij expliciet gegeven worden (“wij zijn voor de Europese Grondwet”), hetzij impliciet maar duidelijk traceerbaar aanwezig zijn in het bericht (“voor ons wegen de nadelen niet op tegen de voordelen die de Europese Grondwet met zich meebrengt”). Let op: het gaat om de opinie van de producent van het bericht, niet om de opinie van een andere actor waarnaar gerefereerd wordt in het bericht. Probeer alleen in noodgevallen voor de optie “ONDUIDELIJK” te kiezen. Noteer in het notitievak waarom de opinie t.a.v. de Europese Grondwet ONDUIDELIJK is.

2. Algemene attitude t.a.v. Europese Unie

Wat is de algemene attitude van de actor ten aanzien van Europa/de Europese Unie als project en/of als eenheid? Kruis op het codeersheet aan welke van de volgende keuzemogelijk van toepassing zijn op het bericht (één antwoord mogelijk):

Antwoordmogelijkheden: POSITIEF, NEGATIEF, NEUTRAAL/ MIX/ ONDUIDELIJK

NB: probeer het grotere ‘plaatje’ van het bericht te zien – bijvoorbeeld: 1 x een negatieve opmerking weegt niet op tegen 4 positieve. Let op: het gaat om de attitude van de producent van het bericht, niet om de attitude van een andere actor waarnaar gerefereerd wordt in het bericht. Probeer alleen in noodgevallen voor de optie “ONDUIDELIJK” te kiezen. Noteer in het notitievak waarom de opinie t.a.v. de Europese Grondwet ONDUIDELIJK is.

Deel 3 Framing devices

Instructie: Op de pagina's 4-10 vind je een overzicht van de tot nog toe geïdentificeerde framing devices die horen bij de drie frames. Highlight in het bericht de framing devices die in het overzicht staan genoemd (of nieuwe varianten daarop).

- Gebruik een **gele stift** indien het een framing device betreft behorend bij het “Voorziener” frame.
- Gebruik een **roze stift** indien het een framing device betreft behorend bij het “David vs. Goliath” frame.
- Gebruik een **groene stift** indien het een framing device betreft behorend bij het “Uitvinder vs. uitvinding” frame.
- Indien er sprake is van een framing device behorend bij het counterframe, schrijf dan een hoofdletter C in de linkerkantlijn.
- Tel het aantal zinnen (van . tot .) waarin de framing devices behorend bij de respectievelijke frames voorkomen, en noteer dit aantal op het codeersheet.
- Bepaal vervolgens welk frame het meest dominant is, a.d.h.v. het aantal zinnen waarin de framing devices van het frame voorkomen. Noteer op het codeersheet de volgende codes achter ieder frame:
 - 3: alleen dit frame is dominant in het bericht. De andere frames kunnen alleen nog de code 1 of 0 toegewezen krijgen (geen: 2);
 - 2: twee of drie frames zijn even dominant/ bepalend in het bericht. Een eventueel derde frame kan de code 1 of 0 toegewezen krijgen;
 - 1: het frame is wel aanwezig in het bericht, maar is niet dominant of bepalend
 - 0: het frame is niet aanwezig in het bericht

*N.B.: Neutrale uitdrukkingen zijn geen framing devices. Bv. “Europa moet bestuurbaar blijven” of “D66 staat voor een modern, transparant en democratisch Europa” is té neutraal – er wordt geen **duiding** gegeven en/of **betekenis** verleend. Het sec noemen van bijvoorbeeld ‘democratische waarden’ is niet voldoende om als framing device aangemerkt te worden.*

N.B.: Houd bij het toekennen van een Counterframe altijd ‘het algemene plaatje’ in de gaten.

N.B.: Per zin kan in de meeste gevallen maar één frame worden gehighlight – zo veel mogelijk kiezen tussen de frames. In sommige gevallen (veelal lange zinnen) kunnen devices van meerdere frames gehighlight worden.

A. Framing devices “voorziener” frame

Door Europa/Europese samenwerking/Europese eenwording/Europese integratie/de Europese

Grondwet kunnen grensoverschrijdende problemen	beter	aangepakt
	effectiever	opgelost
	eenvoudiger	bestreden worden

* *grensoverschrijdende problemen: bv. internationaal terrorisme, criminaliteit, milieuproblemen, asielbeleid, bedreigingen ‘van buitenaf’*

Counterframe: Door Europa/Europese samenwerking kunnen grensoverschrijdende problemen helemaal niet beter aangepakt worden. Sterker nog: de situatie wordt onveiliger: het wordt voor criminelen/asielzoekers gemakkelijker hun activiteiten grensoverschrijdend uit te voeren.

De meerwaarde/noodzaak van Europese integratie wordt benadrukt:

- We/lidstaat hebben/heeft Europa nodig
- We/lidstaat kunnen/kan niet zonder Europa, kunnen/kan het niet in ons eentje
- Noodzakelijke samenwerking
- Europese samenwerking heeft meerwaarde

Counterframe: We hebben Europa helemaal niet nodig. We kunnen het prima/ wel/ beter in ons eentje af. Er is geen noodzaak tot samenwerken. Het is niet noodzakelijk afstand te doen van soevereiniteit/vetorecht. Europese samenwerking heeft geen meerwaarde.

Europa levert iets op

We/de lidstaat verdient aan Europa

We/de lidstaat profiteert van Europa

We/de lidstaat heeft baat bij Europa

Counterframe: We hebben geen baat bij Europa, we er niks verdienen aan. Sterker nog: het geeft alleen maar problemen.

Europa/ Europese samenwerking/ Europese eenwording/Europese integratie/ de Europese Grondwet:

Zorgt voor	(mensen/dieren)rechten/rechtsstaat, vrede,
Bewaakt	welvaart, veiligheid, voorspoed, economische
Beschermt	groei/voortgang, werkgelegenheid/banen,
Bevordert	vrijheid, rechtvaardigheid, gelijkheid,
Brengt	duurzaamheid, sociale zekerheid/voortgang
Draagt bij aan	

Counterframe: Europa belemmert/ houdt deze zaken tegen/ draagt niet bij.

Europa/Europese integratie als kans, mogelijkheden benadrukken

Europa & interne markt (cq. openstellen interne grenzen) brengt welvaart/economische groei/voortgang

Counterframe: Europa brengt geen welvaart/economische groei. Sterker nog: zorgt voor economische achteruitgang. Ultra/neo-liberale focus zorgt voor sociale dumping.

Europa als gezamenlijk project, als één gemeenschap, met gezamenlijke waarden en gezamenlijke toekomst/verleden (evt. in conflict), evt. met gezamenlijke identiteit

Counterframe: Europa is niet één gemeenschap/gezamenlijk project, er is geen sprake van gezamenlijke waarden, gezamenlijk identiteit

Europese samenwerking/integratie moet gecontinueerd/uitgebreid/voortgezet worden.

De Europese grondwet draagt hier in positieve zin aan bij

Voorbeeldcitaten “voorziener” frame

Frame

“Door Europese samenwerking kunnen misdadigers niet meer ontsnappen door simpelweg een grens over te steken”

“Het bestrijden van het internationale terrorisme en de grensoverschrijdende criminaliteit wordt door de Europese grondwet effectiever en eenvoudiger”

“Door de Europese grondwet kunnen milieuproblemen beter aangepakt worden”

“Nederland moet veiliger worden. Dat kunnen we niet in ons eentje, daar hebben we Europa voor nodig”

“De Nederlandse economie profiteert enorm van Europa”

“Nederland heeft baat bij Europa. Voor een exportland als Nederland is een grote, Europese, interne markt erg belangrijk”

“Dat er decennialang al geen oorlog is geweest in Europa danken wij aan de Europese eenwording”

“Europa zorgt voor pure winst voor consumenten en werknemers”

“Ook dieren worden beter van de Europese grondwet, welke hun rechten beter bewaakt”

“Europa heeft ons vrede en welvaart gebracht”

“De Europese grondwet zorgt voor een betere bescherming van de grondrechten van burgers, zoals het recht op onderwijs, en de gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen”

« La sécurité des citoyens vis-à-vis de tous les crimes transnationaux en sera considérablement facilitée »

« La Constitution européenne nous donne une capacité d'action collective sur des sujets-clefs pour lesquels nous ne sommes plus assez efficaces au niveau national »

« Plus compétente pour lutter contre le terrorisme, le grand banditisme international, pour protéger les frontières communes et devenir une politique [...] de l'immigration »

« Ce texte est nécessaire, malgré ses imperfections. Nous sommes prêts au consensus »

« Nous avons besoin des avances que contient ce traité constitutionnel »

« L'Union européenne a beaucoup fait pour nous »

« Bénéficier/profiter de l'Europe »

« La France est bénéficiaire de l'élargissement à 25. L'ouverture des marchés de l'Est créera plus d'emplois en France qu'elle ne motivera de délocalisations dans ces pays »

« Ceci au profit des citoyens »

« La Charte des droits fondamentaux protège/défend les femmes contre toute discrimination »

« Bonne contagion en Europe »

« Le traité constitutionnel marque d'incontestable progrès sur le plan social. Il permet à l'Europe de progresser et ne comporte aucun recul »

« Les services publics sont garantis »

« L'égalité entre femmes et hommes sera assuré »

« Le traité accorde les citoyens de nouvelles protections »

« La lutte contre toutes les discriminations est (ré)affirmée »

Counterframe

“We hebben Europa niet nodig”

“Europese samenwerking heeft er juist voor gezorgd dat criminelen zich vrij kunnen verplaatsen door Europa. Frankrijk/Nederland is er niet veiliger op geworden”

“In plaats van dierenwelzijn in Europees verband te beschermen, keurt de Europese grondwet allerlei dierenvriendelijke tradities en gewoonten goed. In het huidige en toekomstige Europa hebben dieren geen rechten, zij blijven ondergeschikt aan alle willen en grillen van mensen”

« Europe détruit nos emplois, notre économie »

« Cette Constitution est dangereuse »

« Il faut arrêter la politique destructrice de dumping social de l'Europe »

« Cette constitution remet en cause des acquis sociaux et les services publics »

« Le OUI sera un oui aux politiques libérales qui enferment l'Europe et notre société dans la crise »

« La Constitution ne reconnaît pas le droit des femmes à choisir grâce à l'accès libre et légal à l'avortement »

« L'adoption de la Constitution européenne fera obstacle au développement des activités économiques équitables et solidaires »

« Chaque jour qui passe, montre à quel point, le projet de Constitution européenne va constituer une régression des droits sociaux des salariés »

B. Framing devices “David vs. Goliath” frame

Door Europa/ Europese samenwerking/ Europese eenwording/Europese integratie/ de Europese Grondwet:

Verliest de lidstaat	Macht
Raakt de lidstaat kwijt	Invloed, zeggenschap
Moet de lidstaat inleveren/afstaan/overdragen	Belangen
Wordt de lidstaat aangetast in	Beslisbevoegdheid
Verdwijnt	Soevereiniteit, zelfstandigheid, autonomie

Counterframe: Er is geen sprake van verlies van soevereiniteit/macht aan Europa. Evt.: door de Europese grondwet krijgen (kleine) lidstaten juist meer te zeggen.
 Of: Het is juist wenselijk macht af te staan aan Europa, een sterker (minder verdeeld) Europa kan grotere rol spelen op wereldtoneel (tegenwicht/weerwerk/ tegenspeler aan VS, met één stem spreken/één vuist maken tegen VS/op wereldtoneel).
 Of: Het is noodzakelijk afstand te doen van vetorecht/macht, i.v.m. bestuurbaar houden EU/ zaken te kunnen doen.

Binnen de EU is er sprake van een machtsconflict/ongelijke machtsverdeling/-verhouding tussen kleine en grote lidstaten; Grote landen/EU elite maken/maakt de dienst uit

Counterframe: Er is geen sprake van een machtsconflict/ongelijke machtsverdeling; maken de dienst niet uit

“Brussel”/technocraten/EU elite bemoeit zich te veel met (beleid/wetgeving enz.) lidstaat; beïnvloedt beleid te veel; EU elite “laat het allemaal maar gebeuren”, of zelfs de nationale overheid

Afhankelijkheid lidstaat wordt benadrukt:

- Lidstaat (en haar wet-/regelgeving) is/wordt afhankelijk/ondergeschikt van Europa/grote lidstaten.
- Het afleggen tegen
- Lidstaat wordt/is gedegradeerd tot provincie van Europa
- Lidstaat is niet langer ‘baas in eigen huis’

Counterframe: Ontkennen dat lidstaat (en haar wet-/regelgeving) afhankelijk/ondergeschikt is/wordt. Ontkennen dat lidstaat gedegradeerd wordt/is tot provincie. Ontkennen dat lidstaat niet langer ‘baas in eigen huis’ is door Europese integratie

Taakverdeling/verdeling bevoegdheden van EU tegenover lidstaten is niet goed (genoeg) vastgelegd (let op: niet taakverdeling EP tegenover bv. Raad van Ministers)

Counterframe: Taakverdeling is wel goed (genoeg) vastgelegd

Er zijn grenzen aan Europa, evt. deze zijn nu bereikt. De EU zou moeten terugtreden (ten gunste van lidstaten), evt. alleen handelsunie

Counterframe: Grenzen zijn nog niet bereikt. Juist geen terugtrekkende unie

Europese is verworpen tot (federale) superstaat/ Verenigde staten van Europa/ Gecentraliseerd Europa (Europa is te gecentraliseerd)

Counterframe: Ontkennen dat er sprake is van een superstaat Europa

De eigenheid van de lidstaten wordt aangetast (verlies eigen taal, culturele tradities, culturele artefacten – bv. foie gras, stierenvechten, vlag, volkslied, maar ook euthanasie-, abortus-, sofdugsbeleid)

Counterframe: De eigenheid van de lidstaten wordt niet aangetast – “eenheid in verscheidenheid” is mogelijk

De Europese grondwet draagt in negatieve zin bij aan creëren Superstaat

Voorbeeldcitaten “David vs.Goliath” frame

Frame

“De Europese grondwet zorgt er voor dat Nederland opnieuw veel bevoegdheden en politieke macht aan Brussel overdraagt”

“Nederland verliest steeds meer zeggenschap over haar eigen beleid aan Europa”

“De eigenheid van lidstaten wordt aangetast door Europa”

“De Europese grondwet brengt een Europese superstaat dichterbij”

“Door de Europese grondwet wordt Nederland gedegradeerd tot een provincie van Europa”

“Bij een ‘nee’ blijft Nederland nog enigszins baas in eigen huis, terwijl bij een ‘ja’ opnieuw Nederlandse zeggenschap in de grote pot van Brussel verdwijnt”

“In een verenigd Europa legt Nederland het af tegen grote lidstaten”

“Het overduidelijke en overtuigende ‘nee’ is en ‘ja’ voor een slanker Europa, een Europa dat zijn grenzen kent. Het is een roep om een terugtrekkende Unie die terugtreedt ten gunste van de nationale staten”

« Europe comme destructeur de notre souveraineté »

« Abdiquer la souveraineté de la France »

« Rester maître de son destin »

« La subordination de notre charte fondamentale à la Constitution européenne, reléguant la France au rang de province soumise à Bruxelles »

« La mort de la nation »

« Dans la Constitution européenne, les parlements nationaux ne sont que des instances consultatives, subordonnées aux institutions européens »

« Le projet constitutionnel européen proclame la primauté du droit européen sur la Constitution française »

« Les gouvernements nationaux seront les « maires du palais » ou les secrétaires du gouvernement européen »

Counterframe

“De zelfstandigheid van de lidstaten wordt juist benadrukt in de grondwet. Nederland blijft gewoon Nederland”

“De Europese grondwet creëert echt geen superstaat. Nederland wordt geen provincie. Brussel kan ons geen bevoegdheden afnemen als we dat zelf niet willen”

“Wij hoeven niet bang te zijn dat Europa zich met alles gaat bemoeien. Kwesties als het Nederlandse drugsbeleid, het homohuwelijk en euthanasie, dat zijn terreinen waarbij we niet bang hoeven zijn dat Nederland iets moet prijsgeven ten gunste van Brussel”

“De Europese grondwet ondersteunt en beschermt juist de eigenheid van lidstaten”

“Grote landen kunnen binnen de EU geen invloed uitoefenen op Nederlandse wetgeving. De Europese grondwet regelt alleen de afspraken tussen lidstaten”

“We moeten binnen Europa gezamenlijk een vuist maken naar de VS”

“In de wereld van vandaag kan Europa zich geen verdeeldheid veroorloven. Gezamenlijk kan Europa tegenwicht bieden aan de VS”

“Nederland doet inderdaad afstand van haar vetorecht, zoals alle lidstaten. Dat is noodzakelijk als je in een Unie van 25 zaken wilt doen”

« La constitution européenne clarifie la répartition des compétences entre l’ Union et les Etats membres, en conviant aux parlements nationaux le contrôle et le respect de cette répartition »

« Une Europe plus forte. On dit de l’Europe qu’elle manque de puissance par rapport aux Etats-Unis »

« Le traité européen donne enfin à l’Europe une politique étrangère et de sécurité au service de la paix »

« Il est temps pour l’Europe de se dégager de la tutelle américaine et de faire le choix d’une stratégie de paix »

« La Constitution européenne donne la possibilité d’agir ensemble sur la scène internationale »

C. Framing devices “uitvinder vs. uitvinding” frame

De EU is verworden tot/ zou minder moeten zijn:

- Onbestuurbaar, onhandelbaar
- Te veel bureaucratie, slecht bestuur
- Niet slagvaardig, efficiënt en daadkrachtig (genoeg)
- EU is oncontroleerbaar voor burgers/ voor lidstaten/ voor parlement/ voor pers
- De EU is ondemocratisch/ het democratisch gehalte van de EU is laag/slecht.
- Te weinig transparantie/ openbaarheid
- Geldverspilling/ de EU is een geldverslindend orgaan

Counterframe: De EU is niet onbestuurbaar. Er is geen sprake van slecht bestuur of te veel bureaucratie. Ontkennen dat EU niet slagvaardig, efficiënt of daadkrachtig (genoeg) is. Ontkennen dat EU oncontroleerbaar, ontransparant en/of ondemocratisch is. De EU is geen geldverslindend orgaan.

In Europa heeft de burger (kiezer/bevolking) niet genoeg:

- Te zeggen
- Macht
- Invloed op de politieke agenda/ besluitvorming(sprocessen) in de EU
- Er ligt te veel macht bij niet-democratisch gekozen EU commissarissen, bij (bestuurlijke/financiële) EU elite, technocraten

Counterframe: de Europese burgers hebben wel genoeg invloed. Ontkennen dat er te veel macht ligt bij niet-democratische EU commissarissen.

Er is sprake van te veel regels/ te complexe regelgeving

Er is sprake van verstikkende, belemmerende, benadelende, gebrekkige regelgeving
“Brussel”/EU elite & hang naar regelneverij

Counterframe: Er is geen sprake van complexe regelgeving. Er is geen sprake van verstikkende e.d. wetgeving

M.b.t. de relatie burger – EU elite (technocraten, ‘Brussel’) is er sprake van:

- Wantrouwen, vertrouwensbreuk
- Onvrede
- Een kloof/ afstand
- Staan te ver van elkaar af
- De burger(s) heeft te weinig grip/ controle op Europa
- De burger(s) wordt niet genoeg betrokken bij/gekend in beslissingen
- De EU kent te weinig legitimiteit
- Europa is niet meer van de burgers (zou wel moeten)

Counterframe: Er is geen sprake van wantrouwen/kloof. Ontkennen dat er een gebrek aan legitimiteit is. Ontkennen dat burgers niet genoeg betrokken worden in beslissingen.

Of: De EU ben je zelf, je kunt zelf de situatie veranderen/verbeteren. Iedereen maakt deel uit van de Europa, je kunt zelf actief meer betrokken raken. Klagend achterover leunen is te gemakkelijk. Een beter Europa begint bij jezelf.

Het democratisch gehalte van de EU zou verhoogd moeten worden

De kloof tussen ‘Brussel’ en de Europese burgers moet verkleind worden

De Europese grondwet verbetert de situatie

De Europese grondwet verslechtert de situatie

Voorbeeldcitaten “uitvinder vs. uitvinding” frame

Frame

“De Europese grondwet is nodig om een democratisch, transparant en daadkrachtig Europa te waarborgen dat in dienst staat van de Europese burgers”

“De Europese Unie is verworpen tot een bureaucratisch, ondemocratisch, geldverslindend monster met te veel macht”

“De huidige EU wordt gekenmerkt door spijzucht op de verkeerde beleidsterreinen”

“Als je JA zegt tegen deze Europese grondwet, zeg je JA tegen een ondemocratisch en ondoorzichtig Europa”

“Door de Europese grondwet wordt Europa democratischer en krijgen burgers meer invloed”

“Nog te veel besluiten worden in Brussel achter gesloten deuren genomen. Met het burgerinitiatief, vastgelegd in de Europese grondwet, kunnen burgers direct invloed uitoefenen op de politieke agenda van Europa”

“Door de Europese grondwet krijgt de Europese burgers meer te zeggen in Europa”

“Er is veel onvrede over Europa. In veel landen is er sprake van een vertrouwensbreuk tussen de Europese politieke elite en de bevolking”

“De afstand tussen ‘Brussel’ en de burgers is veel te groot geworden”

“De Europese grondwet is de eerste stap om de kloof tussen burger en Brussel te verkleinen”

“De kiezer krijgt meer grip [greep] op Europa”

“Europa zou moeten staan in dienst van de (Europese) burgers”

“Als je JA zegt tegen deze Europese grondwet, komt de besluitvorming verder van de burger af te staan”

“Hier hebben de burgers nooit om gevraagd”

“Dat Brussel voortaan van alles en nog wat voor ons regelt, bevalt heel veel mensen helemaal niet”

« Une Europe plus démocratique. Le traité donne la première place aux institutions démocratiques. Le parlement européen verra ses pouvoirs élargis. Un million de citoyens pourront prendre l’initiative d’une loi européenne »

« Une Europe plus efficace. Le traité améliore le fonctionnement de l’Europe et donne à la France les moyens de peser davantage »

« Il faut donner la parole aux peuples d’Europe »

« La Constitution européenne offre les citoyens la première place ; ce sont eux qui seront les législateurs européennes et le chef de l’exécutif de l’Europe »

« Fracture entre les peuples européens et leurs dirigeants »

« Des forces politiques/les oligarchies politiques »

« Mépris pour les peuples européens »

Deel 4 Reasoning devices

Instructie: Onderstaand wordt voor ieder van de drie frames het centrale thema geschetst. Op de volgende pagina wordt in een matrix voor ieder frame de centrale argumentatiestructuur ontleed aan de hand van zes reasoning devices. De 3 schetsen van het centrale thema en de matrix mag je ten alle tijden bij dit deel van de analyse raadplegen.

“Voorziener” frame

Dit frame gaat over de positieve gevolgen die Europese samenwerking voor iedereen met zich meebrengt op het gebied van vrede en veiligheid, maar ook in de economische/sociale zin: Europese samenwerking bewerkstelligt meer welvaart en welzijn (voor zowel mens en dier). Europa ‘levert voor iedereen wat op’ als voorziener, en is in veel gevallen zelfs noodzakelijk. Europa wordt gepresenteerd als *samenwerkingsverband*.

“David vs. Goliath” frame

Dit frame gaat over de overheersing van Europa als grote, machtige reus (Goliath), waar nationale lidstaten ongeschikt aan zijn/worden gemaakt. Zij moeten zich (net als David) tegen hun overheerser verzetten. Door Europese integratie hebben de lidstaten hun eigen soevereiniteit verloren, alsook wordt hun culturele eigenheid aangetast. Er moeten grenzen gesteld worden aan Europa: de EU zou moeten terugtreden ten gunste van de lidstaten. Europa wordt gepresenteerd als *superstaat*.

“Uitvinder vs. uitvinding” frame

Dit frame gaat over de staat van het huidige Europa, en hoe het in de loop van de tijd verworpen is tot een log, geldverslindend, onbestuurbaar en ondemocratisch orgaan, welke in sommige gevallen zelfs gevaarlijk kan zijn. De Europese burger (en haar nationale vertegenwoordigers) heeft de controle verloren over iets wat zij zelf gecreëerd heeft – en wat juist in dienst van deze zou moeten staan. Kritiek en/of verbeteringen worden aangedragen om de bureaucratie te verminderen, en het democratische gehalte van de EU te verhogen. In extreme gevallen wordt Europa gepresenteerd als *monster*.

De 6 reasoning devices in de matrix zijn:

- (1) het frame definieert het probleem en/of de situatie
- (2) het frame gaat in op de bron/oorsprong van het probleem/ de situatie.
- (3) het frame geeft aan wie of wat het probleem/ de situatie veroorzaakt heeft
- (4) het frame suggereert hoe het probleem/ de situatie kan worden opgelost
- (5) het frame velt een moreel oordeel
- (6) ieder frame heeft ook een counterframe. Dit counterframe omvat argumenten die tegengesteld zijn aan (c.q. ontkenning van) één of meerdere argumenten die het frame omvat.

Framematrix politieke communicatie over Europa

Frame	Europa is...	Probleem-/ situatie definitie (problem/situation definition)	Oorsprong van probleem/situatie (problem/situation source)	Oorzaak van/ verantwoordelijke voor probleem/situatie (problem cause)	Oplossing voor probleem/situatie (policy solution)	Morele/emotionele basis (moral/emotional basis)	Counterframe
<i>Voorzitter</i>	Samenwerkings- verband	Europese samenwerking heeft meerwaarde, of is zelfs noodzakelijk	Individuele lidstaten kunnen het niet meer (goed) alleen Het is onvermijdelijk op bepaalde terreinen beslisbevoegdheid over te hevelen naar Europa	Globalisering en problemen die op steeds grotere schaal (grensoverschrijdend) spelen	Europese integratie binnen EU continueren/ voortzetten, of zelfs uitbreiden <u>Europese grondwet</u> draagt in positieve zin bij	Iedereen wordt er beter van – het levert iedereen wat op Evt. gevoelens van ‘noodzakelijk kwaad’, of gevoelens van gemeenschappelijkheid (‘we zitten in hetzelfde schuitje’)	Geen meerwaarde – samenwerking zorgt juist voor achteruitgang
<i>David vs. Goliath</i>	Superstaat	De eigenheid/sovereiniteit van de lidstaten gaat verloren/wordt aangetast. De lidstaat wordt afhankelijk	De EU als tē gecentraliseerde staat (cq. grote landen binnen de EU) maakt de dienst uit, overheerst Eenheidsworst (voornamelijk onder de niet-democratisch gekozen politieke elite)	De EU elite (technocraten/ambtenaren in Brussel) en de nationale overheid ‘die het allemaal laat gebeuren’	Grenzen stellen aan de EU (alleen handelsunie), of zelfs een terugtrekkende EU <u>Europese grondwet</u> draagt bij aan creëren Superstaat (negatief)	Baas in eigen huis blijven Aangetast zijn/worden in gemeenschappelijke identiteit (‘wezen’) Afhankelijk/ ondergeschikt voelen Evt. nationalistische gevoelens	Eigenheid/sovereiniteit lidstaat gaat niet verloren, worden juist beschermd/in ere gehouden Het is juist wenselijk macht af te staan aan de EU i.v.m. sterke positie op wereldtoneel (VS/China) of i.v.m. bestuurbaarheid EU
<i>Itivinder vs. uitvindig</i>	Monster	Europa is verworpen tot log. geldverslindend, onbestuurbaar en ondemocratisch orgaan De kloof/afstand tussen ‘Brussel’ en de burger is te groot geworden, burgers hebben niks te zeggen	De Europese burger heeft controle op eigen ‘maaksel’ EU verloren, heeft hier nooit om gevraagd De regelgeving is uit de hand gelopen (bureaucl.) In het verleden zijn te veel ondemocratische beslissingen genomen door politieke EU elite	De EU elite (technocraten/ambtenaren in Brussel) en hun hang naar regelneverij	Verhogen van het democratische gehalte van de EU, transparantie, meer betrokkenheid onder burgers creëren, kloof verkleinen <u>Europese grondwet</u> verbetert c.q. verslechtert de situatie	Iedere (democratische) staat zou in dienst moeten staan van haar eigen burgers Evt. gevoelens van “niet serieus genomen worden” De EU ben je zelf, een beter Europa begint bij jezelf Burgers hebben wel iets te zeggen, er wordt wel rekening met ze gehouden	De verantwoordelijk- heid ligt niet alleen bij politieke elite, maar ook bij burger zelf

Instructie: Noteer op het codeersheet (zet een kruisje in het betreffende vak in de lege matrix) welke reasoning devices in het bericht voorkomen.

*NB: Let op: er kan zowel **manifest** over gesproken worden in het bericht, als dat enige interpretatie van de codeur noodzakelijk is op basis van in het bericht aanwezige (combinatie van) woorden en argumenten (**latent** aanwezig). Kijk dus verder dan je neus lang is! Doorloop voor ieder bericht de onderstaande checklist, teneinde de reasoning devices op een gestructureerde wijze te identificeren. **Herinnering:** je mag de matrix alsook de 3 schetsen van het centrale thema te allen tijde raadplegen. Probeer alleen in nood bij twijfelgevallen een ? in een vak te noteren.*

1. Wordt in het bericht de **situatie** geschetst dat Europa/de Europese Unie/Europese samenwerking/Europese integratie/Europese eenwording **meerwaarde** heeft en/of **noodzakelijk** is?
2. Wordt in het bericht de **situatie** geschetst dat de **eigenheid** en/ of de **soevereiniteit** van de lidstaat **verloren gaat**/wordt aangetast door Europese samenwerking/ integratie? En/of wordt de situatie geschetst dat de lidstaat afhankelijk wordt van Europa/grote lidstaten?
3. Wordt in het bericht de **situatie** geschetst van de **huidige staat** van de Europese Unie als een log, geldverslindend, onbestuurbaar en ondemocratisch orgaan en/of dat de **kloof** tussen 'Brussel' en de Europese burger te groot is geworden c.q. dat burgers niks te zeggen hebben in Europa?
4. Wordt in het bericht het argument dat individuele lidstaten het **niet meer** (goed) **alleen aankunnen** naar voren gebracht als **bron/oorsprong** tot Europese samenwerking?
5. Wordt in het bericht het argument dat de EU als **tè gecentraliseerde staat** (cq. de grote landen binnen de EU) **de dienst uitmaakt** en/of overheerst naar voren gebracht als **bron/oorsprong** van het verlies van eigenheid/soevereiniteit? En/of wordt in het bericht gesproken over/gesuggereerd dat er **eenheidsworst** heerst onder de (niet-democratisch gekozen) politieke EU elite?
6. Wordt in het bericht het argument dat **men** (Europese burgers) **iedere controle** op het eigen 'maaksel'/'uitvinding' **verloren heeft** ("men heeft hier nooit om gevraagd") naar voren gebracht als **bron/oorsprong** van de huidige staat van de Europese Unie? En/of wordt in het bericht gesproken over/ gesuggereerd dat de regelgeving binnen de EU **uit de hand gelopen is** (te veel bureaucratie). En/of wordt in het bericht gesproken over/ gesuggereerd dat in het verleden te veel **ondemocratische beslissingen** genomen zijn door de politieke EU elite?
7. Wordt in het bericht de **oorzaak/verantwoordelijkheid** van noodzakelijke/meerwaarde hebbende Europese samenwerking gelegd bij **grensoverschrijdende problemen** die door globalisering op steeds grotere schaal spelen?
8. Wordt in het bericht de **oorzaak/verantwoordelijkheid** voor het verlies van soevereiniteit/eigenheid gelegd bij de **EU elite** (technocraten/ambtenaren in 'Brussel') en/of de **nationale overheid** "die het allemaal maar laat gebeuren"?
9. Wordt in het bericht de **oorzaak/verantwoordelijkheid** van de huidige staat van de Europese Unie gelegd bij de **EU elite** (technocraten/ ambtenaren in Brussel), evt. met hun hang naar regelneverij?

10. Wordt in het bericht gesuggereerd of gesproken over het continueren, voortzetten, of zelfs **uitbreiden van Europese integratie**/samenwerking binnen de EU als **oplossing** om grensoverschrijdende problemen beter te kunnen aanpakken?
11. Wordt in het bericht gesuggereerd of gesproken over het stellen van grenzen aan de EU (bv. alleen handelsunie), of zelfs van een **terugtrekkende EU** als **oplossing** om het verlies aan eigenheid/soevereiniteit terug te draaien/te verkleinen?
12. Wordt in het bericht gesuggereerd of gesproken over het **verhogen van het democratische gehalte** van de EU, bewerkstelligen van meer transparantie, het creëren van meer **betrokkenheid** onder burgers en/of het **verkleinen van de kloof** tussen ‘Brussel’ en de Europese burger als **oplossing** om de huidige staat van de EU te verbeteren?
13. Wordt in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat “iedereen beter wordt” van Europese samenwerking/integratie en/of dat Europese samenwerking/integratie “iedereen wat oplevert”? (of iets in die richting) En/of wordt er gesproken over “noodzakelijk kwaad”, doelend op Europese samenwerking/integratie? En/of wordt er gesproken gemeenschappelijkheid, over “we zitten allemaal in hetzelfde schuitje”? (**moreel oordeel – schrijf citaat op**)
14. Wordt in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat de lidstaat “baas in eigen huis moet blijven”, en dat men zich aangetast voelt in de gemeenschappelijke identiteit (‘wezen’, ‘we’)? (of iets in die richting). En/of wordt er in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat “lidstaat (‘we’) afhankelijk/ ondergeschikt wordt”? En/of worden in het bericht nationalistische gevoelens/uitspraken geuit? (bv. ‘wij’ Fransen zijn beter dan anderen) (**moreel oordeel – schrijf citaat op**)
15. Wordt in het bericht naar voren gebracht dat “iedere democratische staat in dienst zou moeten staan van haar eigen burgers”, en/of dat men/burgers zich “niet serieus genomen” voelt? (of iets in die richting) (**moreel oordeel – schrijf citaat op**)
16. Wordt in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat Europese samenwerking/integratie **geen meerwaarde** heeft, en/of dat Europese samenwerking/integratie (juist) voor **achteruitgang** zorgt? (**counterframe 1**)
17. Wordt in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat de eigenheid en/of soevereiniteit **niet wordt aangetast** door Europese integratie/de Europese Unie, en/of dat er **geen sprake is van een tè gecentraliseerd Europa**? En/of wordt er in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat het juist **wenselijk** is macht af te staan aan de EU i.v.m. een sterke positie als Europa op het wereldtoneel (tegenwicht VS/China) en/of i.v.m. bestuurbaar houden EU? (**counterframe 2**)
18. Wordt in het bericht gesproken over of gesuggereerd dat de betrokkenheid bij/controle op Europa door de Europese burger, alsook het democratische gehalte van de EU, niet uitsluitend de verantwoordelijkheid van de EU elite is, maar ook **die van de burger zelf**? Burgers zouden wat minder achterover moeten zitten en klagen, maar zelf **actie** ondernemen om de situatie te veranderen. Wordt er bijvoorbeeld gesproken over “een beter Europa begint bij jezelf” of “de EU dat ben je zelf”? (**counterframe 3**)

Instructie: bevestig het codeersheet met een nietje aan het bijbehorende bericht

Codeersheet frameanalyse politieke communicatie Europa

*Instructie: Noteer in het linker vak de **actorcode** die bovenaan het bericht staat, en in het rechter vak je **voornaam /initialen***

Actor:

Naam:

Deel 1 Issue domeinen

Instructie: Noteer voor ieder issue domein of het voorkomt in het bericht (meerdere domeinen mogelijk)

1. Economische/markt issues

☐ JA ☐ NEE

2. Politiek-bestuurlijke issues

☐ JA ☐ NEE

3. Justitiële issues

☐ JA ☐ NEE

4. Identiteit issues

☐ JA ☐ NEE

5. Waarden issues

☐ JA ☐ NEE

Deel 2 Opinie/attitude

1. Opinie t.a.v. Europese grondwet

Instructie: Kruis één van de volgende antwoordmogelijkheden aan

- ☐ VOOR
☐ TEGEN
☐ NEUTRAAL / ONDUIDELIJK – noteer reden/citaat voor onduidelijkheid in onderstaand vak

De opinie van de actor t.a.v. de Europese Grondwet is onduidelijk, omdat.....

2. Algemene attitude t.a.v. Europese Unie

Instructie: Kruis één van de volgende antwoordmogelijkheden aan

- ☐ overwegend POSITIEF
☐ overwegend NEGATIEF
☐ NEUTRAAL / MIX / ONDUIDELIJK – noteer reden/citaat voor onduidelijkheid in onderstaand vak

De attitude van de actor t.a.v. de EU is onduidelijk, omdat

Deel 3 Framing devices

Instructie: Noteer per frame het aantal zinnen waarin de framing devices voorkomen + cijfer voor dominantie (3= alleen dit frame dominant, 2= dit + een/twee ander(e) frame(s) bepalend, 1= aanwezig maar niet bepalend, 0= niet aanwezig)

	<u>Aantal zinnen</u>	<u>Aantal C</u>	<u>dominant</u>	<u>C dominant</u>
1. Het “voorziener” frame
2. Het “David vs. Goliath” frame
3. Het “uitvinder vs. uitvinding” frame

Deel 4 Reasoning devices

Instructie: Zet een kruisje in het vak behorende bij de reasoning device(s) die in het bericht voorkomen. De cijfers in de vakken corresponderen met de cijfers in de codeerinstructie. Bij morele/emotionele uitdrukkingen: noteer citaat i.p.v. kruisje.

Frame	Europa is...	Probleem-/ situatie definitie	Oorsprong van probleem/situatie	Oorzaak van/ verantwoordelijke voor probleem/situatie	Oplossing voor probleem/situatie	Morele/emotionele uitdrukkingen <i>Noteer hier citaat i.p.v. kruisje</i>	Counterframe
<i>Voorziener</i>	Samenwerkings Verband	1	4	7	10	13	16
<i>David vs. Goliath</i>	Superstaat	2	5	8	11	14	17
<i>Uitvinding vs. Uitvinding</i>	Monster	3	6	9	12	15	18

Issue domains investigated in the 2005 referendum study

		Interest issues (%)	Identity issues (%)	Values issues (%)
PP*	FR (8)	100	63	100
	NL (9)	100	44	100
	<i>PP total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>100</i>
NGOs*	FR (65)	91	37	83
	NL (46)	83	39	91
	<i>NGO total</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>86</i>
Newspapers**	FR (71)	93	23	42
	NL (66)	94	52	45
	<i>News total</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>43</i>
Total	FR (144)	92	31	64
	NL (124)	90	47	66
	Total (268)	91	38	65

*: Unit of analysis for political parties and NGOs is *website*.

**: Unit of analysis for newspapers is *article*.

NB: it should be mentioned here that in the study executed in the context of the 2005 referendum on the European constitution, in contrast to the studies presented in Chapter 4 and 5, only one key-document per website was selected for investigation. This key-document was usually taken from the front page of the website, or from the front page of a section devoted to Europe/the referendum. In the two other studies entire websites were investigated. Additionally, in the study presented in Chapter 5 the websites were subdivided into coding units. Percentages noted in this study represent the number of *coding units* containing the issue domains, while in this appendix percentages noted represent the number of *sites* containing the issue domains. We do not consider this as problematic, since one of the outcomes of the study presented in Chapter 5 was that parties do not communicate differently about Europe on the front page of their website than on other pages of these same sites.

Yet it may be the case that because of these slight differences, the percentages for the issue domains in the study presented in Chapter 5 have turned out somewhat lower. This because the division of one website into coding units has inevitably led into a situation in which some coding units contain none of the issue domains; would these have remained part of one site (or key document, as in the Chapter 6 study) as coding unit, the issue domains would have been coded present within this website as coding unit. The larger the coding unit, the more likely a variable to be present within the coding unit, at least in this case.

For the actor type ‘newspapers’, a slightly different approach was chosen: here multiple articles from six newspapers were selected. Therefore, for this actor type percentages noted in Table 1 represent the number of *articles* containing the issue domains. Articles from three newspapers are aggregated per country.