THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

**The importance of Beliefs and Emotions to International Relation
How theDutch Perceive Germans and Germany**

Robert Aspeslagh & Henk Dekker

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How the Dutch Perceive Germans and Germany

Robert Aspeslagh & Henk Dekker[1]

Abstract

Several questions are dealt with in this contribution:
* *Do beliefs about a foreign country have any effect on behavior?*
* *Is it relevant to study beliefs about other countries of citizens, who do not belong to the political elites?*
* *Do surveys into beliefs contribute to a better understanding of the nature of international relations?*
* *Is emotionality a distinct variable in international relations?*
* *What can be the consequences of beliefs for Europe?*
* *Can we speak of Germany as a 'normal' state and to what extent could 'normality' support the disappearance of negative beliefs and emotions vis a vis Germany?*

In this paper we will present the surveys into Dutch beliefs about the European Union, in particular with respect to Germany and Germans.

Introduction

Just one week's news clips about Germany in the Dutch press. A Dutch Euro-Parliamentarian, Arie Oostlander, gave an interview in one of the serious Dutch weeklies [HP/De Tijd, 21 November 1997]. He stated that Germany again has become the center of Europe: 'I do not know whether or not in the end Germans can handle this situation. They still can move in a direction other than democracy.' Oostlander described his attitude as vigilant, not fearful. Evidently, his doubts about Germany's *Demokratiefähigkeit* (the ability to be democratic), understandably still present in the Netherlands during the Sixties, when the famous socialist Brandt ran for the chancellorship, still exist fifty years after the establishment of the democratic Federal Republic of Germany.

In the second largest daily newspaper in the Netherlands, De Volkskrant, the father in law of one of the best soccer players in the Netherlands said: "If one of my two daughters had a German boyfriend, for me this would be a disaster.' The headline of an article in a weekly for academics, Intermediair [20 November 1997], declared: 'Prejudices confirmed.' In contrast, the content of that article was quite less confirming: 'The German does not exist: the way they do business differs from Land (state) to Land.' More than one year later, Germany had developed a peace proposal to settle the war with Serbia on the future of Kosovo and the Albanian population. One comment in

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the Dutch press, a quality paper [NRC Handelsblad, 14 April 1999]: 'The Germans should have submitted that peace plan sixty years ago.'

Introducing the Dutch-German relationship in this way could induce a rather negative impression about the quality of the ties between the two countries. We could also have started by pointing out the good political agreement and cooperation between the various German and Dutch governments, in particular with respect to European unification and the fostering of a good Atlantic relationship with the United States. The economic relationship between the countries comprises the second largest volume of international commerce in Europe. In other words, the political and economic relationships between Germany and the Netherlands are excellent.

The political-psychological relationship, however, is problematic from the Dutch side, but not unequivocal despite the random collection of negative cliches and stereotypes about Germany and Germans in this introduction. In this contribution we will deal with three different surveys: (1) among youth aged 15 through 19 years, (2) among citizens and political elites; and (3) among entrepreneurs. Analyzing these surveys we arrive at the conclusion that the relationship between Germany and the Netherlands is equivocal. Nevertheless, in this relationship reason rules over sentiment.

Negative cliches and stereotypes

During the '90s the Clingendael Institute and the University of Leiden carried out three empirical surveys, the first in 1993. Over 1100 young students of secondary schools aged 15 through 19 completed questionnaires about the EU-countries, in particular Belgium, Germany, Great-Britain, France and the Netherlands. Nearly half of the respondents perceived Germany as 'warlike' and as a country which would 'dominate the world'. Only two out of ten respondents perceived Germany as a peace-loving country. The majority of the respondents was of the opinion that Germans were 'dominating' and 'arrogant'. If anything, direct contacts with Germany substantially determined the respondents' attitude about Germany. The respondents' level of knowledge appeared to have little, if any effect on attitudes. Not surprisingly, announcement of the results of the 1993-survey induced a shock that reverberated nationwide.

In the second survey in 1995 school-age youngsters were again queried. New questions were added about emotions with regard to Germany and attitudes toward their own country. Compared with the first poll, attitudes were considerably less negative, as were the cliches and stereotypes. Still, Germany remained the EU-member state with the highest percentage of negative attitudes. Once again, the country received the lowest average sympathy score. Germans were not very popular as neighbors. Responses to questions about moving to other countries and evaluation of 'neighbors' revealed the same preference-correlations as the 1993 study. In 1995 Germany was the EU-member state exhibiting the highest percentage of negative attitudes among Dutch youngsters. The major determinants were emotions evoked by Germany and the Germans, and the cliches about Germany and the stereotypes of Germans. The youngsters revealed that negative views about Germans come from their (grand)parents and friends.

A third study was conducted in 1997. Germany is, as in 1993 and 1995, again the EU-member state with the highest percentage of negative attitudes (38%). This country once more received the lowest average sympathy score. Again Germany receives lowest preference as a country to which it would be desirable to take up residence. Germans once again scored low as potential neighbors (along with the Irish, Swedes, Greeks, Portuguese, and Finns). Germany also scored high on 'is warlike' in 1997 (together with France and in contrast to England, Belgium and Holland). Only three cliches showed significant change. While in 1995 Germany was thought to be 'democratic' by 72 percent, in 1997 the outcome is 62 percent (-10%). In 1995 18 percent of the respondents believed that big differences between poor and rich exist in Germany, while two years later the figure is 27 percent (+9%). In addition, the percentage of respondents that believes that Germany takes few refugees has increased (+9%). 1997 stereotypes of Germans are almost the same as in 1995. Again Germans scored highest on 'are dominant' and

'arrogance', and lowest on 'sociability', 'friendliness', and 'easy to get along with' (these findings contrast with the English, French, Belgians and Dutch). The same is true for emotions which Germany evokes. At the same time, responses about the frequency of stays in Germany hardly differ. On the whole, attitudes, images and emotions regarding Germany hardly changed. The improvement registered in 1995 over 1993 continued, though only incrementally. Overall, images of Germany and Great Britain have been improving slightly, while those pertaining to France and Belgium are worsening.

How can we now explain the resemblances of the findings of the three surveys [Jansen, 1993, Olde Dubbelink, 1995 and Aspeslagh, Dekker, Winkel, 1997] in relation to Germany? Multi variate analysis demonstrates that emotion has greatest effect on attitude. Political emotions are often experienced for the first time at a young age and are generally enduring. They are evoked by rituals and are connected with symbols. With this in mind, one interpretation of the data could be that the three groups of respondents of 1993, 1995, and 1997 were influenced by recent commemorations of the Second World War and other emotional socialization-experiences with respect to Germany. They may awaken sublimated emotions.

Next to emotions cliches and stereotypes influence attitude. Negative images lead to negative attitudes. Images about country and population depend to a large extent on two sources: (1) news broadcast via the mass-media, education, and parental socialization, and (2) actual experiences through direct contact. Though we did not study the news in the mass-media we suppose that the news about Germany had not changed significantly. In general news about Germany is positive, but there are numerous utterances carrying a negative tone. Tidings are positive about the good relationship between heads of government. The former Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences, Mrs. Tineke Netelenbos [1997] revealed that: 'incorrect images are disseminated among pupils. For example, in history textbooks most of the chapters about Germany deal with national socialism and the Second World War. Little recent history or the evolution of a democratic Germany is covered. Frequently used illustrations are pictures which are also related to the war. The continuity of negative Germany-socialization in Holland could provide an important explanation for the striking persistence of negative Germany-images.

Images about Germany also derive from experiences and direct contact. We do have some data relating to the presence and signs of such experience. There is a striking resemblance between data collected in 1995 and 1997 on this point. Almost half the respondents had good experiences (1995: 47%, 1997: 46%). One third report good and bad experiences (36% and 33%, respectively). Bad experiences only were reported by a very small minority (both years 5%). Resemblance of positive or negative experiences in Germany of both groups of respondents of 1995 and 1997 could help to explain the similarity of images in both groups.

Importance of beliefs to behavior

In 1980 Ajzen and Fishbein developed a theory aimed at the explanation of behavior. This theory of reasoned action provides relevant empirical evidence [Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980]. According to this theory, the most direct determinant of behavior is the individual's intention to perform or not to perform the behavior. The stronger his or her intention, the more the individual will be motivated to perform it. The correlation is supposed to exist if the two indicators (intention and behavior) have the same target, action, context and time at identical levels of generality and specificity. The correlation will never be perfect as particular conditions may play a role. E.g., there may be no opportunity to express the behavior. The individual's behavioral intention is in turn determined by the perceived behavioral control, the subjective norm, and the attitude towards the behavior. The perceived behavioral control is the individual's assessment of the difficulty c.q. easiness with which the behavior can be performed. The individual will take into account some of the realistic constraints that may prevent intentions being translated into actual behavior. The subjective norm is determined by the beliefs that specific referents consider one should or should not do (normative beliefs), and by motivations to comply with the specific referents. The attitude towards the behavior is determined by the assessment of positive c.q. negative outcomes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs). At

the next level, 'external variables' come into play, i.e. the attitudes towards the behavioral object, 'personality traits' such as intro-/extroversion, neuroticism, authoritarianism, and dominance, as well as social-demographic variables such as age, gender, profession, residence, and social-economic status.

The theory of reasoned action has been refined through several additions [Kraus, 1995; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Manstead & Parker, 1995]. The relevance of intentions as intermediary between attitudes and behavior has shown to be lower when behavior required little effort while the attitudes had a stronger direct effect on the behavior [Bagozzi, et al., 1990]. Furthermore, attitudes and their beliefs may be less relevant in explaining behavior of individuals who strongly identify with their social group and for whom involvement in group-relevant actions is a means of reinforcing and promoting a valued social identity [Eagly & Chaiken, 1993]. Behavior may also be determined by previously performed behavior, resulting in a habit or performing the behavior in a routine-like manner [Eagly & Chaiken, 1993]. The attitude towards the object of behavior may influence the behavior directly rather than being an 'external variable' [Fazio, 1986]. This object-attitude may also influence the behavioral beliefs that underlie the attitude towards the behavior [Eagly & Chaiken, 1993].

Empirical studies which have applied this set of hypotheses in the field of international relations are still lacking. That may be due to the fact that behaviors in this field are extremely difficult to measure. In most cases, the researcher is not in the position to observe the behaviors him/herself. As a consequence one has to rely on respondents' self-reports, whose accuracy is questionable, especially in cases of behaviors perceived to be socially less desirable.

Research in the field of international orientations trying to explain the orientation that comes closest to the behaviors towards foreign countries and peoples, is research which focuses on attitudes towards these countries and peoples. On these attitudes our own research was focussed. As far as we know, in only two studies these attitudes are not only described but also explained: Inglehart's [1991] and our own.

Inglehart focussed on trust between different nationalities. Trust and distrust are important variables because they 'help shape one's expectations under conditions of imperfect information; they can be crucial factors when the leaders of one nation interpret the actions of another nation' [Inglehart, 1991, 145]. Trust is conceptualized as 'the expectation that another's behavior will be predictably friendly', while distrust is 'the expectation that another's behavior will be harmful or unpredictable' [Inglehart, 1991, 145-146]. Although current political and economic events showed to have an impact on trust between nationalities, there was strong evidence, too, of an underlying stability in patterns of trust: 'absolute levels may go up and down, but the relative rank orders tend to remain stable' [Inglehart, 1991, 177].

Three different sets of variables were included in the regression multi-variate analysis: macro-economic characteristics, such as per capita gross national product and the annual exports and imports per capita; societal characteristics, such as the presence of a democratic system, the distance between the capitals of the rated and rating nationality, and having been on the same side in both World Wars, and finally 'primordial ties', such as belonging to the same 'race', sharing the same religion, and belonging to the same language group. Race, religion and geographical proximity all showed to have little impact when they were controlled for other variables. Belonging to the same language group had a significant impact on trust (probably due to its function of facilitating or inhibiting communication). The level of economic development (in particular the per capita GNP) clearly had the strongest correlation with trust toward other nationalities.

While Inglehart focussed on differences in trust between nations, using each nationality's mean rating on a 'trust index', we have tried to explain differences between individuals in their attitudes towards foreign countries. In order to explain the differences in attitude towards Germany, we included the following variables in our analysis among Dutch youngsters: factual knowledge of Germany, beliefs about Germany (cliches of Germany and stereotypes of Germans), emotions with respect to Germany, direct contact with Germans, as well as the attitude towards one's own country and people. Emotion showed to have the most effect on the attitude, with belief, i.e., the whole of cliches and stereotypes, at second place, while direct contact and the attitude towards one's own country and people came third and fourth respectively. The following path model of our 1997 survey shows which variables have the strongest

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influence on the attitude towards Germany and the Germans.

Path model 1997

Individual's variables	Socialization variables	Orientations with respect to Germany
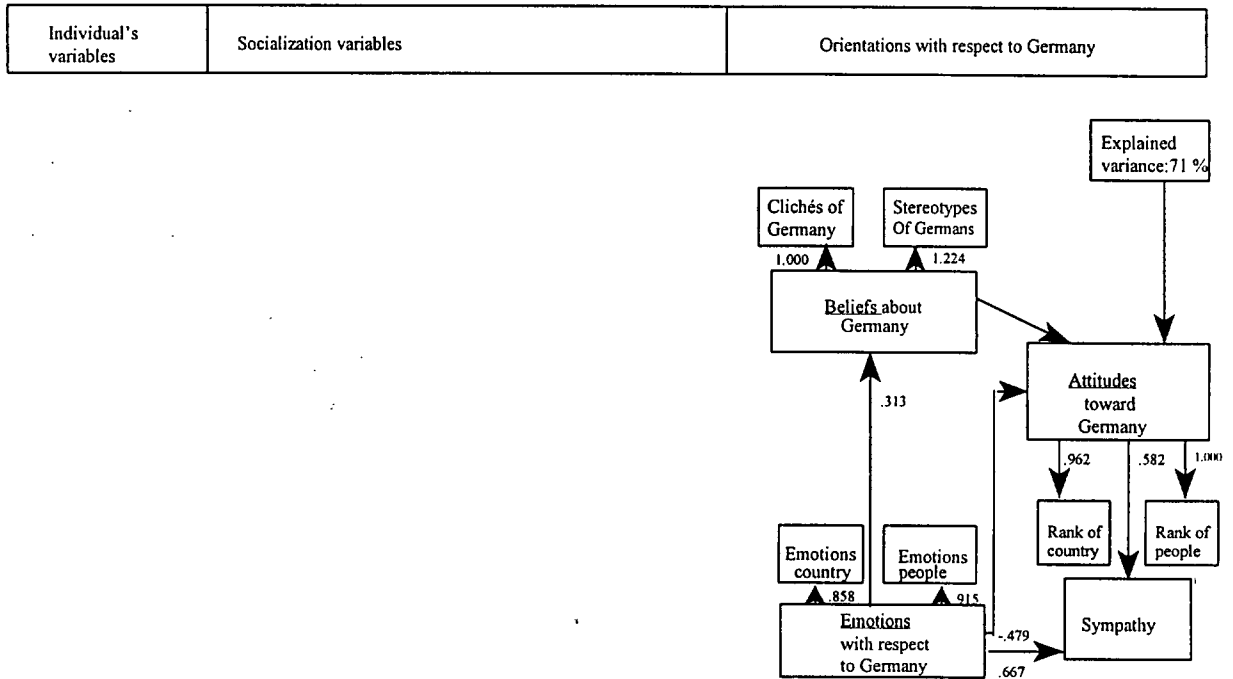
Chi² = 015.00; df = 10; p = .132

Our surveys have revealed that the (positive or negative) beliefs about a foreign country have an influence on the (positive or negative) attitude towards that country. Due to this impact on attitudes the beliefs indirectly influence the (positive or negative) behavioral intention and behavior with respect to that foreign country.

Returning to Ajzen & Fishbein's theory, we may expect, however, that not only the attitude towards the foreign country has an influence on the behavioral intention and the behavior, but also the attitude towards the behavior regarding that country, based on beliefs about the (positive or negative) outcomes of that behavior. In particular situations this behavior-attitude, based on behavior-beliefs, may even have more influence on the behavior than the attitude towards the object of that behavior and its underlying object-beliefs. We assumed that in relationships between the Netherlands and Germany in the field of politics and economics, positive attitudes towards the behavior, based on the belief of positive outcomes of close cooperation with Germany, would often neutralize negative attitudes towards Germany, which are based on negative beliefs about Germany. This will even be more true if one is aware of Dutch economic dependence on Germany and of Germany's leading role in the European Union. In Dutch-German relationships of a personal kind, this may be less often the case, due to less positive attitudes towards the behavior, resulting in negative attitudes towards Germany and Germans prevailing, and ultimately in negative behavior.

There is, however, another important variable. This variable facilitates or inhibits the translation of attitudes in behavioral intentions and the realization of a behavioral intention into real behavior. We are referring to the perceived behavioral control, as explained above. One takes into account realistic constraints that may prevent the translation of attitudes into intentions and intentions into actual behavior. Behavior is less likely the more it is

believed that its performance is difficult and the more constraints are perceived.

Shifting political beliefs: alternating between reason and sentiment

The political relationship between Germany and the Netherlands is excellent. The relationship is close and rests on mutual trust. The confidence of a good relationship with the Netherlands coincides with the way German politicians perceive their own state. They are rightly of the opinion that Germany has become a stable nation, which has taken up its European position in accord with the neighboring countries and the latter are content with this state of affairs. Although the relationship between Germany and the Netherlands is, officially, an example of good international relations, we still have doubts about the underlying sensitivity vis a vis Germany.

First, beliefs of citizens, not belonging to the political elite, are not to be underestimated. Boulding [1969, 423] argues that 'the image of the mass of ordinary people who are deeply affected by these (of the powerful) decisions, but who take little or no part in making them, ... is of vital importance to the powerful.' For public opinion, mold by beliefs and attitudes, influences foreign policy, which will be composed by the political elite.

Beliefs and attitudes of citizens may also have an impact in several other ways. They influence intercourse between nations. An established attitude colors the obtaining of information about others, in our case Germany and Germans. A negative attitude may result in the preferable inclusion of negative information or it may lead to a lack of genuine interest and as a consequence to the inclination to reject the acquisition of information. Furthermore, it may exert influence on opinions about matters, in which the other is involved. Negative attitudes towards Germany may determine the attitude of Dutch citizens towards the European Union, as Germany plays a leading role in her institutions. The future of European cooperation also depends on the question whether forthcoming generations in the individual member states will be able to better understand and appreciate each other. Attitudes can be translated into behavior towards the other. A negative attitude may reinforce the tendency to avoid personal contact. And when contact occurs, this may lead to misapprehension and tension, expressed by uncomfortableness, unevenness and unkindness [Stroebe, et al., 1988; Lademacher, 1991]. As a negative example of this kind one may refer to the 1993 post-card action 'I am furious', Solingen, 29 May 1993 after the attack on a Turkish family by young Germans in the city of Solingen, Germany. This action was supported by more than one million Dutch citizens. A negative attitude may escalate into violence against possessions or even against people, and it can lead to viewpoints and behaviors, which are perceived as hostile by the other country. As a result the economic, political and inter-personal relationships can deteriorate. Hence it is important to perceive beliefs and attitudes within both a societal and an international context in order to be able to assess whether they will have (severe) consequences or whether they have to be regarded as mere folkloristic phenomena.

That the behaviors of the political elite have more direct influence on international relations than behaviors of individual or groups of citizens is self-evident. 'Elites make the actual decisions which lead to war or peace, the making or breaking of treaties, the invasions or withdrawals, alliances, and enmities which make up the major events of international relations' [Boulding, 1969, 423].

Dutch Euro-Parliamentarians reflect a different attitude. A Report to the Government from the Scientific Council for Governmental Policies noted: 'Interest in the political-psychological climate is primarily a Dutch phenomenon, because it determines the limits of the Dutch policy. Dutch officials, entrepreneurs, the military, politicians and others have to reckon with it in defining their policy.' [WRR, 1982, 10] The report continues: "We can ascertain, that almost forty years after the end of World War II there is still talk of 'mixed feelings' on the part of the Dutch with regard to Germany.' (WRR, 1982, 10)

In a community like the European Economic Community (EEC), in which the Federal Republic played such a leading role, the establishment of good contacts between Dutch ministers and their German colleagues is of preeminent importance. 'We wish to export to that country, we are willing to cooperate with the Federal Republic in the EEC and NATO, but many incline to chalk up their feelings to a bad experience with an individual German,

something they won't do in the case of an Englishman or a Frenchman' [Stoel, 1979, 73-83].

On 25 January 1990 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek, proclaimed in his speech to the Second Chamber of Parliament, that the Rapallo era was over. He emphasized his confidence in a democratic Germany, which was firmly connected with the West through the European Union and NATO [Tweede Kamer, p. 1585 a.f.]. The very need to make this pronouncement was characteristic for the mood about German re-unification in parliament and government. The Dutch prime minister, Ruud Lubbers, asserted at a dinner of leaders of governments of the EC, that Helmut Kohl's 10-point-plan would advance the cause of German unification and that 'there were dangers in talking about self-determination and that it was better not to refer to one "German people"' [Thatcher, 1993; 797]. Anyone who understands the trauma of the German partition also understands that these remarks were very offensive and condescending for Helmut Kohl. In his turn the German chancellor in 1994 called Ruud Lubbers 'Somebody full of self-conceit, a book-keeper, and "anti-German"' [de Telegraaf, 16 July 94, 13].

The mixed attitude of the political and other elites in the Netherlands toward Germany creates confusion. On the Dutch part emotion contends with realism for the upper hand in dealing with Germany. On the one hand Dutch elites emphasize strong and good political, military, cultural and economic collaboration. On the other hand it is no exaggeration to state that elite views of Germany mirror public opinion.

Support for this view can be found in the results of Elsevier's study of Dutch parliamentarians of 1990 [Hoedeman]. This survey included a limited number of questions, from which a critical attitude towards Germany can be inferred. Three questions dealt with the commemoration of World War II; four questions dealt with the influence of the War on everyday politics. In total 50% of the members of the Second Chamber participated in the inquiry. From this inquiry it appeared that a large number of parliamentarians was distrustful of the new Germany. It was striking that 65% of them admitted to anti-German feelings and 68% thought about World War II in that connection. Nearly 85% connected the human rights violations with the Second World War. Among the parliamentarians 90% anticipated economic expansionism from a unified Germany. A large minority of 36% was of the opinion that unified Germany might be tempted to use military means to extend German influence. It was also striking that more than half of those born after 1950 answered 'sometimes' or 'often' that they harbored anti-German feelings. One might attribute these emotions to the view widely held amongst parliamentarians, that the government has kept alive memories of the Second World War. But a majority of 79% denied that it suffered any emotional damage because of the War. Elsevier concludes, 'thus there is talk of a "living past", which plays an active role in political decision making' [Hoedeman, 1990, 41]. The article concludes with a quotation of a member of the political party D'66: 'I fear that Germany continues to be a bigger risk than other countries' [Hoedeman, 1990, 43].

In an attempt to achieve mutual understanding the Advisory Council for Peace and Security published a report in 1994 [AVV, 1994.]. It opens with empathy for the German situation: 'During the Cold War, no state in Europe has experienced the consequences of the barriers drawn through Europe as divided Germany' [AVV, 1994, 1]. The report advanced five recommendations aimed at improving the political-psychological climate, based on the premise that the Netherlands should develop greater understanding for the legitimate concerns of Germany about the increasing instability in Eastern Europe.

This change in opinion is also reflected in Schiweck's research [1997; Vol. I, TC46]. The majority of Dutch parliamentarians were of the opinion that German policy with respect to European integration is fair and that Germany is a very important partner in the EU. Most of the MP's were apprehensive about Franco-German cooperation, but the vast majority was very positive about the economic and political relationships with Germany. In other words, recent research suggests that the Dutch political elite has changed its attitude towards Germany. Dutch MP's are satisfied with the way Germany has processed its bellicose past and commend Germany's political leaders for their country's achievements. A mellowing of sentiment towards Germany after 1991 has resulted in a more rational image of that country.

Entrepreneurs, profit and more profit

The relationship between Germany and the Netherlands, however, is, despite differences, very intensive. Germany is the biggest importer of Dutch products. After France and Italy the Netherlands is the third largest exporter to Germany. The Netherlands is, after France, the second major trade-partner of Germany. Trade relations between the Netherlands and Germany are stable, Dutch enterprises are competitive with German firms, even if we take into account German firms operating in the low-income countries in Eastern Europe. Despite the good economic climate between the countries, the atmosphere is not free of clouds.

Joint ventures between German and Dutch companies have not been very successful. The main merger attempts failed: Fokker-VFW and Fokker-Dasa in aviation; Hoogovens-Hoesch in steel; and Philips-Grundig in electronics. An important contributing factor in such failures are 'Cultural differences'. While in agriculture, services and chemicals, the Netherlands enjoy a high profile in Germany, Dutch firms have failed to penetrate the German capital goods market. Dutch investments in East Germany mainly come from trading companies and some industrial companies. Differences between German and Dutch consumers are not sufficiently acknowledged by Dutch producers. Dutch products sometimes have an image problem: *Wassertomaten*, chemical coloring of cheese, etc., attributable mainly to ecological consciousness in Germany.

Dutch managers emphasize Anglo-American business experience and management-methods. A Dutch management consultant, Robert Ogilvie, stated that 'the recognizable obsession for Anglo-American management style arises from a series of prejudices about Germany, and these are reinforced by an apparently ineradicable post-war resentment' [Elsevier, 2-6-1993, 59]. Sure, there are differences in management style between Dutch and Germans, but these are neglected by the Dutch and sometimes appreciated by Germans. If we characterize these cultural differences in one line, we can state that Germans incline to do business first and have a drink, whilst Dutch prefer to have a drink together before business. Very specialized enterprises are better equipped to overcome differences in management culture than middle-sized and more traditional companies.

In order to acquire a better insight into the cultural aspects of international undertaking the Netherlands Center of Directors and Governors (NCD) and the Netherlands Institute of International Relations *Clingendael* took the initiative in organizing the inquiry 'Boundless undertaking' among 5000 members of the NCD. The aim of the survey was to examine the cultural differences that influence international business with Netherlands' main trade-partners: Belgium, France, Germany, Great-Britain and Italy.

The results of the survey make clear that for trade, industry or services cultural aspects indeed play an important role. Dutch cultural artefacts such as the precarious connection between vicar and merchant ('Preach to everyone, trade with anyone'), are commonly acknowledged. Dutch generally speak proudly of their global orientation, frankness and tolerance. Less positively speaking, Dutch are too uncouth and blunt to be good and flexible international traders.

Dutch entrepreneurs favor business with the Germans in the first place, closely followed by Great-Britons and Belgians. They still perceive the five other European countries as alien, the least alien is Germany, the most Italy.

Reliability in keeping agreements scores especially highly among Dutch entrepreneurs. They also favor Germans because they are economical with materials and processes, and exhibit respect for fellow-workers and subordinates. Germans value the experience of the older employee as well as the quality of their products. Moreover, Germans have a good record with respect to honesty and directness in their judgement of results. Concerning the sense of responsibility imputed to entrepreneurs for a livable world, Germany has a clear lead over other nations.

Alongside this positive image of German entrepreneurs are some inconvenient matters that hamper business with Germany: Germans' inclination to formality, strict hierarchical relations and lack of humor. The positive attitude of the Dutch entrepreneurs about Germany is also reflected by a question we pose in the Clingendael survey discussed in the next section: if there is an emergency situation and you have to leave the country, where would you go? After Belgium, Germany is the second choice. German entrepreneurs and Germany are on the one hand undisputedly

preferred as the number one location to do business, but on the other hand also the most inconvenient country to deal with.

Emotionality and international politics

Having thus established that among Dutch youth, in citizens' beliefs as well as in the opinions of politicians emotions do play an important role, the next question is to what extent are they relevant for international relations? As a point of departure we must refer here to the classical distinction within the theory of international relations between realism and idealism or utopianism. However, the Dutch-German relationship, as we will see, does not apply to this well-known dichotomy in the theory of international politics, but has been characterized over the years by another dichotomy: on the one hand rationality (which is well-described in theory), and on the other emotionality (which is largely neglected).

With 'rationality' we follow Harsanyi [1969; 370], who defines it as: 'the assumption that each participant (or "player") has a set of well-defined and mutually consistent basic objectives, and will choose his actual policies in accordance with these objectives without any mistake.'

In his critique on scientific utopianism of the science of peace Morgenthau [1985, 44] mentions both notions in a rather negative manner: 'Except for ignorance and emotion, reason would solve international conflicts as easily and as rationally as it has solved so many problems in natural sciences.' Moreover, Stanley Hoffman (1960; 34.) argues that 'the emphasis on the "rationality" of foreign policy and the desire to brush aside the irrational elements as irrelevant intrusions, as pathological deviations, are understandable only in terms of cabinet diplomacy, where such deviations appear [...] to be rare.' In his opinion, rationality, because of its narrow theoretical conception, may have disastrous consequences in areas such as contemporary strategic doctrines. Thus faith in the rationality of human behavior has diminished over the decades. Post-modern philosophy finally has removed the last remnants of Enlightenment. May one assume this also counts for rationality?

Adherents to the neo-realist theory of international relations, however, are distancing themselves from the pure realist position, which proceeds from the idea that realism taken to the extreme is a denial of the existence of an international society (Jackson, 1995, 114), because international anarchy inhibits the willingness of states to cooperate, even when they share common interests [Grieco, 1990, 27.]. Morgenthau [1960, 55.] also states that 'realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however, imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws.' He continues his plea for a rational foreign policy by asserting that political realism considers a rational foreign policy to be a good foreign policy; 'for only a rational foreign policy minimizes risks and maximizes benefits (...)' [Morgenthau, 1960, 58-59]. The neo-realist accepts the rationalist theory as a workable logic in international politics, because it 'assumes a world of habitual diplomatic and commercial intercourse between independent states which are legal persons connected by international law and civility.' [Jackson, 1995, 114] The dominant paradigm in international relations theory, therefore, is based on rationalistic arguments.

It could also be meaningful to take into account what Morgenthau and the neo-realist theory regard as the most characteristic feature of international relations, i.e., the national interest. Hence the application of rationality in foreign policy-making proceeds from the idea that a country's foreign policy reflects the interests of that country, which are partly consistent with respect to its security and territorial integrity, and for another part variable. If the national interests change, the foreign policy of a state will change too. Interactions between states can be analyzed, therefore, through the study of the internal political system and of decision-making procedures. Other domestic features which may influence foreign policy-making are the internal equilibrium between perceptions and reality, between interests and power (internal balance of power), between norms and benefits, between structure and interdependence, and between cooperation and conflict (strategy) [Kindermann, 1996, 22-25].

This very brief elaboration on the importance of rationality in international relations and politics, however, does

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not provide an answer to the question whether or not Dutch relations vis-a-vis Germany can be exclusively captured by the idea of realist, or even idealist theory of international politics. We have to recognize that other elements too can influence international relations and politics. From our surveys and the attitudes of citizens and politicians towards Germany and Germans we have observed the strong correlation of attitudes and emotions [Dekker, Aspeslagh, Du Bois-Reymond, 1997, 121-123] as an influential factor in the Dutch-German relationship.

Applying the notion of emotionality in international politics is rather unusual. Only a few politicians admit that emotionality forms part of their foreign policy. Moreover, studies from the 1960's emphasize in some cases the issue of emotion with respect to public opinion as well as the psychological dimension of foreign policy. Using the examples of decisions of several United States presidents, Rivera [1968, 122] argues, that 'all that reasoning is an attempt to create an alternative that will satisfy one's interests without disturbing an underlying structure of highly emotionally charged relationships.'

While at present we witness a growing interest in the role of emotionality and emotions in human relations, we have to admit that theories of international relations are not yet dealing with this issue. Still there is more to say about it. Since the beginning of the 1980's scientific research on the working of the brain has grown and in its wake the role and function of emotions has been emphasized. Daniel Coleman [1996] regards emotions as the main impulses to all human actions.

The role of emotions as an important factor which cannot be ignored has also been raised in the field of negotiations. While in the past it was advisable to keep negotiating parties at a distance, because emotions could lead to scuffle, in today's practice it is also important for negotiators to develop networks of good relations. Nowadays, a close relationship built on confidence between negotiator and his principal is considered indispensable. Intense emotional involvement by negotiating parties may lead to a situation where mutual misperceptions are common, tensions are high, and the most fundamental need and interests are threaded. In such a setting traditional bargaining behaviors are not likely to produce an appropriate or fair solution, with the result that the conflict will be pursued [Hopmann, 1996, 95]. Group emotions in international relations - we may refer to the conflicts in the Lebanon and in the former Yugoslavia, but throughout the world they have become sources of other tensions within and between countries - are hardly dealt with either, in spite of their devastating effects on the own population and the international community.

An angle to approach the problem of the role of emotionality and emotions in international relations is through the study of human nature. However, in the realist theory of international relations human nature does not play a major role, since this theory holds human nature as essentially constant, or at least not easily to alter: human nature is not innately good or perfectible. Nevertheless, a key aspect in (neo-)realist theory, as we have seen, i.e. rationality, can be conceived as an aspect of human nature. An element like perception does not play a significant role as a contribution to international relations in realist theory. Emotionality as an aspect of international relations must, therefore, sound even more odd in the ears of realists, particularly if we recall the first quotation of Morgenthau, which classed ignorance under emotion.

Human nature indeed plays a role. Among the many explanations of the contribution of human nature to international policies and international conflict Dougherty and Pfalzgraff [1990, 272-310] distinguish a.o.: theories of aggression, frustration, socialization, displacement and projection, etc. Theories focusing on the meeting of basic needs or on ontological and biological drives for survival, assert that frustration or suppression of those basic needs should be considered as a primary source of conflict [Bercovitch, 1996, 155]. But in this series of human factors emotionality and emotions are absent.

So we have to admit that the role of emotions in international politics still lacks a proper theoretical fundament. Some theory can be found in literature about psychopathology in relation to war, but more light can be shed by behaviorist theories, such as the behavioral inhibition system. This system defines our actions and consists of three elements: emotion, information and behavior through controlled impulses. Moreover, the whole behavioral inhibition system will be triggered by all kind of factors, such as 'alien' and 'unknown'.

The impact of the so-called human factor on international relations may be illustrated by the following quotation

of the eminence grease of Dutch European policy, Edmund P. Wellenstein, on the difficult negotiations in Luxembourg leading up to the establishment of the European Economic Community: 'Building up the Commission from August 1952 it became clear that personal relationships were very important. Seven years after the end of the war a new administration had to be created out of nothing. The selection of personalities was evidently decisive for the result of this first joint European executive committee.' In the built-up of the first Community institutions we can observe that both rationality and emotionality played an important role in the behavior of individuals during the negotiations. Furthermore, we may safely assume that the establishment of a United Nations and a European Union would not be as feasible today as they were immediately after World War II, when strongly felt emotions caused by war devastations and atrocities prevailed.

In this respect we may also refer to statements of German politicians on the position of Germany vis-a-vis her neighbors which are loaded with emotionality. At a meeting in the auditorium of the University of Amsterdam, 4 September 1996, Wolfgang Schäuble, chairman of the Christian Democratic fraction in the German parliament (Bundestag) emphasized the fact that for first time in history Germany was surrounded by friendly nations. On 30 September 1995 the German president, Roman Herzog, had already said in a discussion with youngsters on German television that Germany, for the first time, was on friendly footing with all her nine neighbors. This inclination to be loved - a strong emotional tendency for that matter - is a very striking phenomenon in German foreign policy (Haas-Heye, 1979). The German emotion of being loved is not only a reaction to World War II, but also to the experience of three centuries of hostility by neighbors following the conclusion of the Treaty of Westphalia (Osnabrück) in 1648.

If we thus consider emotionality as a contribution to international relations, 'emotionality' could be conceived as the assumption that each participant (or 'player') has at his disposal a set of human factors such as feelings (fears, joy), beliefs, images, etc. and that he will be influenced by these factors in his political decision-making.

In order to identify the role of emotionality in international politics, particularly in relations between Germany and the Netherlands, we focused on beliefs/images and behavior. The first problem we will come across is the equivocal connection between international relations and images. Kenneth E. Boulding [1969, 423] states: 'We deal with two representative images, (1) the image of the small group of powerful people who make the actual decisions which lead to war or peace, the making or breaking of treaties, the invasions or withdrawals, alliances, and enmities which make up the major events of international relations, and (2) the image of the mass of ordinary people who are deeply affected by these decisions but who take little or no direct part in making them.' On the one hand Boulding emphasizes that images of the political elite should not differ too much from those of the population in order not to lose the support of its rank-and-file. On the other hand he states that 'in a system in which decision-makers are an essential element, the study of the ways in which the image grows and changes, both of the field of choice and of the valuational ordering of this field, is of prime importance.' But how much influence on international behavior do images actually have, since 'images of a state are only one of the many elements that influence the predictions other states make about how it will behave and such predictions are in turn only one of the many elements that influence their foreign policies' [Jervis, 1970, 11].

The gist of the matter

Negative international behavior may be constrained by many factors. As the most important factor in this regard is considered the existence of institutional links between states, i.e., an overarching structure, like a (con)federation or union. In the absence of such an overarching structure, or if it is rather weak, political elites may feel more easily inclined to oppose other countries, to resort to armed violence or even to go to war. In order to acquire mass support political elites may be eager to use existing beliefs and emotions among the mass population, e.g. fear, or in case they do not exist, to create them. While overarching structures do not prevent negative beliefs, they can be a means to diminish hostile ushers by politicians and by the media. This may explain why in one case negative beliefs are not

followed by negative behavior, while in the other they result in serious tensions, conflicts and even in armed conflicts.

The importance of overarching structures, both within and between states, may be illustrated by the developments in the Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina. From the moment the old structures, which controlled the several communities in the country, fell apart, war amidst these communities started. In the Lebanon, war was triggered, among others, because, whereas the balance of power between the various communities remained unaltered, the size of some communities changed. As that change was not reflected in the structure, which had frozen the executive power between them, and socio-economic inequalities were maintained, unrest and armed violence could not be avoided. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, hostility between the different ethnic groups was evoked by the attitude of their political elites. As an example we may take one statement out of innumerable examples of what politicians said about the other community. On 26 December 1996, one of the leaders of the Serbian community in Bosnia, Momcilo Krasjnik, said in an interview [NRC Handelsblad, 27 December 1996]: 'they [the Muslims] want again war in Bosnia,' and ' ......the Muslims wish to dominate us. They want to become 'gospodar' (ruler) over us. The Muslims do not want to cooperate with Serbs.' This attachment to the quality of another national (or ethnic) group, in this case of Serbs about Muslims, can be witnessed in many other cases.

A third example of the importance of over-arching structures is the tense relationship between Turkey and Greece within the framework of NATO. It is not exaggerated to state that NATO has prevented, and still prevents, an armed conflict between Turkey and Greece, although a fairly high level of hostility exists among both Greeks and Turks. International structures, such as the United Nations, NATO, the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OCSE), the Council of Europe, and the European Union still count for all human and state relationships.

As regards relations between European countries the European Union is of special importance. During and immediately after World War II political leaders were prepared to build up structures, which would bring stability and peace: 'a stable peace', in Kenneth Boulding's [1978] words. In this desire they were supported by their respective populations, which were war-tired. Slogans such as 'Nie wieder Krieg' or 'No more war' captured the general feeling after those wretched years in which so many lost their lives. The process of European integration was started, first with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), followed by that of Euratom and the EEC (gradually changed to EC and EU), primarily to prevent an armed conflict between the old adversaries, Germany and France.

However, at present we observe a faltering support for the EU, among the political elites, but even more so among the different populations of the member states. It is called euro-scepticism. We might even go as far as to state that starting up a European Union would not be feasible today, given recent problems, such as the United Kingdom's response to the mad-cow-disease, the fishery wars between France and Spain, and the conflict about drugs between France and the Netherlands. And what to think of the problems the European Union is facing with the development of a common foreign and security policy, which seems urgently required, given Europe's frustration in reaching a common approach to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Even after forty years, the main aim of France through the EU is still to control the power of Germany and at the same time to benefit from Germany's economic strength, while the United Kingdom still (ab)uses the existing fear of a German dominance of Europe in order to frustrate a further European integration and to prevent a further loss of United Kingdom sovereignty. Old images without doubt, but still very useful for political leaders to strengthen their power position. Within the European context those images are often used to thwart the process of integration.

If these movements in conjunction with a strong euro-scepticism among political elites joined by their rank-and-file would eventually culminate in abolishing the superstructure of the EU, the initial pillars of the European Union, i.e. stability and peace on the continent, would be lost. A scenario based on the idea of a community society requires an open and transparent overarching structure. Communities may better pin their faith on an open and democratic EU than on the national state, provided that the administrative distance between citizens and state-authority can be kept small. The picture may be more intricate, however, as negative images about other nations, rooted in old European antitheses and crises, still exist between former adversaries. If that is the case, we have to fear for these

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images turning into the old hostile beliefs, which fueled the outrages of the Europe of yesterday.

Although the response to the Clingendael/RUL survey was beyond expectation we do not want to overestimate the impact of beliefs. Their importance depends on the circumstances in which they come to the fore. As regards Dutch beliefs about Germany and Germans that context is very much determined by the quality of the structures in which they appear. Therefore, they are relatively harmless, as long as the European Union can continue to play its role as a structure, providing stability and peace in Europe. If those beliefs had not been so strongly embedded in the emotions of our respondents - which is the expression of a living past - the reaction in the Netherlands could have been regarded as very sentimental. In case there is no overarching structure which can control communities and/or nation states, negative beliefs among the population will be used to boost up conflicts and to defend self-interests, and to exculpate the political elite from a lust for war. As such, beliefs will not trigger an armed conflict, but they play an essential role in involving the entire population. Thus, in order to diminish the impact of beliefs, structures are required which do not allow the use of hostility against other states within that very structure. They help to control conflicts, which is indispensable, particularly if negative beliefs are accompanied by negative emotions. Hence Jervis was right in saying, that 'images of a state are only one of the many elements that influence the predictions other states make about how it will behave and such predictions are in turn only one of the many elements that influence their foreign policies' (Jervis, 1970, 11). Clichés of a foreign country and stereotypes of its population constitute only one of the variables, albeit an important one, that explain the behavior of the political elites and the mass towards that country.

However, we have to go deeper into the matter, since a tendency such as euro-scepticism forms part of a much broader and intricate process, which is related to a development at the level of global superstructures, the nation state and the society. Such processes can be described through four tendencies within two dyades, i.e. fragmentation and integration, and aggression and cooperation. This will result into the following matrix.

	Fragmentation <	> *Integration*
∧ *Aggression*	Violent desintegration	Global structure of superpowers
Cooperation **∨**	State anarchy with a stable peace	Global society

The worst-case scenario, which reinforces the strongest level of negative beliefs and attitudes exists when fragmentation and aggression merge into one process. In such a situation (as was observed during the 1990's in Albania and Indonesia where society disintegrated) man turns against man and group against group. Hostility and violence dominate the country.

If integration and aggression, i.e. military factors, prevail a structure of superpowers at the global level will emerge. Rivalry dominates within the global system, and will be marked by the rise of new superpowers (China?), a rearrangement of political-strategic relationships and a growing discord. For Europe this would include a deepening process of integration through the realization of a common security and defense identity [Labohm, et al., 1997, 28-29]. In this scenario the political elites of one block will stimulate negative beliefs towards the other blocks.

As a third scenario we observe the process towards a so-called 'community-society' [Van Munster, et al., 1996, 54-57], or what we would like to define as a global situation of state anarchy with stable peace. In such a (global) society people tend to rally around descent, ethnicity, regions, neighborhoods and religion, but in particular their leaders also wish to cooperate with the other groups or nations. The main characteristics of communities are the existence of (i) a coherent system of values (holistic), (ii) an assessment and joining of interests (integration) and (iii) mutual assistance across a wide range of needs (cooperation). In terms of relationships with c.q. contrasts to other communities a community inclines to antagonism.

The most idealistic scenario is a confluence of integration and cooperation. The global relationships are characterized by cooperation and multilateralism. Negative beliefs and attitudes have disappeared altogether or are merely of a folkloristic nature. Based on our theoretical and empirical tour d'horizon we may conclude that elites' and citizens' behaviors with respect to a foreign country are primarily determined by their behavioral intentions with respect to that country, which are in turn primarily determined by the perceived behavioral control, the subjective norm, the attitude towards that country, and the attitude towards that particular behavior regarding that country. The attitude towards that country is influenced by the beliefs and emotions with respect to that country, while the attitude towards the behavior is primarily influenced by the beliefs about the outcomes of that behavior. Beliefs about a foreign country are relevant insofar as they underlie the attitudes that influence the behavioral intention and the behavior itself. Fragmentation and aggression are the main contributors to the preservation of negative beliefs, attitudes (prejudices), intentions and behaviors (hostilities). Cooperation and integration shape the best preconditions for making such human phenomena harmless and in the end meaningless; in other words to make national cliches and stereotypes irrelevant.

Germany's position in Europe

Negative beliefs and attitudes should be regarded in their societal and global contexts. The image of Germany and Germans in Europe, and thus in the Netherlands, has at least a European, if not a global, context. Therefore, in order to understand the underlying processes in the formation of beliefs, we not only have to consider the situation within a nation, but also to look to the position of Germany within Europe as compared to other European countries, in particular the European middle powers.

Among Dutch politicians trust in the Federal Republic of Germany grew when the Schröder/Fischer government took office. The Dutch Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dick Benschop, stated that 'the new European phase and the new generation of politicians in Germany offer the possibility of completing the "normalization of Germany". That normalization is the utmost importance not only to Germany but to Europe as a whole. A Germany, acting more robust and more strongly and more actively on the European and international stage, can release an impulse for the stabilization of the European Union, for example, with regard to the common foreign and security policy. The question whether or not Germany is a normal country could evoke the question whether other countries, such as Great Britain or France, are entirely 'normal' in their relationship with Europe and the world. This also applies to the Netherlands, particularly, in its relationship with Germany. In short, the normalization of Germany and Europe are two sides of the same coin, two sides of the same euro' [Benschop, 1999, 15]. Benschop's statement not only reflects the point of view of the Dutch Government, but probably also the general attitude in Europe towards Germany.

However, the idea of 'normality' seems to be a bit odd. Benschop questioned this concept by asking whether

other countries than Germany or The Netherlands could be called 'normal'. A formal definition of 'normality' which can be applied to both individuals and countries doe not exist; nevertheless, we may try to attempt a simple description: a 'normal' country is a country that is accepted by other, especially neighboring, countries. Acceptance could be interpreted rather broadly in political-psychological terms, with which we have dealt in our surveys. In other words, it may be questioned whether Germany was or is an 'accepted' and thus a 'normal' country.

When Germany came into existence in the middle of the nineteenth century after a long period of fragmentation, it found Europe consisting of independent nation-states. Nevertheless, the newly united Germany was large enough to play a dominant role in Europe, albeit not large enough for hegemony. Bismarck, the first chancellor, tried to create a Germany with which Europe could be satisfied (*saturiert sein*), but there was not much chance of realizing his political goal. William II, lost what Bismarck had achieved, and lead Germany into a disastrous war. In the aftermath of World War I, the Republic of Weimar found itself faced with insuperable problems. The Rhineland was occupied by a foreign army. The Prussian landed nobility, the *Junker*, continuously threw sand in the democratic wheels of the Weimar Republic. Unemployment shooted up, inflation became unbearable. Adolf Hitler lead Germany to its total downfall. The old Federal Republic of Germany, which rose from the ruins of Nazi-Germany, could hardly be called a 'normal' state, because the Allies from World War II could not conclude a peace treaty due to the partition of Germany in the FRG and GDR, as well as to the East-West division. Under those circumstances Germany was irrelevant as a military power and its foreign policy was very much dependent on the foreign policy of the occupation authorities [Markovits/Reich, 1998, 42].

Only after the German unification and the conclusion of the peace-treaty Germany had the opportunity to become a 'normal' state. Germany is not so much a delayed nation (*verspätete Nation*) to which many blame all misery, but rather a state that made a false start and which has not succeeded in being accepted as a full and trustworthy partner in Europe. The german desire to be a 'normal' European state, which found its expression in many statements of leading German politicians, that for the very first time in its history Germany is surrounded by friends, has been associated with Germany's past, the period 1933-1945. Germany, in particular the old Federal Republic, has built up an excellent reputation, particularly, the way it has given attention to that past [Aspeslagh, 1994]. The question of Germany's 'normality' now seems a problem for the Germans themselves to solve. As long as that is not done Germany will, in the eyes of the Germans, not be a 'normal' country. That is the reason why Germans are still struggling with their past; that struggle becomes apperent if we usher to the discussions about, for instance, the megalomane Holocaust memorial in Berlin, the debate as evoked by Martin Walser, who accused Germans for 'a ritualization of the Holocaust, which has the quality of a lip-service' [1998], and the bitter fight about the choice between 'no more war' (nie wieder Krieg) and 'no more Auschwitz' (nie wieder Auschwitz) at the special convention of the Green party, etc. Surprisingly , this debate did not evoke any response in the other countries of the European Union, wich consider that debate an internal German discussion, with which they have nothing to do. If Germany is not a 'normal' country, it is so merely in the eyes of Germans and not of Europeans.

In short, the question whether Germany is a 'normal' country to the other European countries cannot be solved by the manner and extent of processing the Holocaust by Germans, but has to be defined by the using contemporary arguments. *Vergangenheitspolitik*, past-history-policy, and *Vergangensheitszukunft*, past-history-future, are curious and typically German neologisms which diffuse a clear-cut view on the problem of the normalization of Germany. As was stated in the German weekly 'Die Zeit': 'Normalität kann mann nicht verordnen, nur ermöglichen' (One cannot order normality, but one can make it possible) [Assheuer, 1998].

Is Europe satisfied with Germany? Were this question to be answered affirmatively, it would mean a turning-point in the attitude of the European powers with regard to the position of Germany. Only a short time ago that position was certainly not very self-evident. Former British Prime-Minister, Margaret Thatcher, expressed herself in rather strongly anti-German terms at Germany's unification in 1990. She had a conception of Germany which many in the United Kingdom shared with her: 'Since the unification of Germany under Bismarck - perhaps partly because national unification came so late - Germany has veered unpredictably between aggression and self-doubt.'[Thatcher, 1993, 791] In her opinion the power of Germany menaced the balance of power in Europe: 'Germany is thus by its

nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe. Only the military and political engagement of the United States in Europe and the close relations between the other two strongest sovereign states in Europe - Britain and France - are sufficient to balance German power (...).'[Thatcher, 1993, 791]

Thatcher perceived history invariable within various contexts: at the one hand a rended Europe in the nineteenth century in which the main powers sought for balance on the other an integrated Europa in the twentieth century, wherein Germany sought a new position. Thatcher's ideas about a united Germany could be consented without any problem by her illustrious predecessor, Prime-Minister Palmerston. In the first half of the nineteenth century Great Britain was not uncongenial with regard to the liberal national movements which wished to alter the map of Europe by the middle of the that century. In the 25 years after the revolutions of 1948 Italy became united with the agreement and assistance of Great Britain, not Germany: 'Palmerston (....) most strongly, feared that a united Germany would up tariff barriers against British goods; again, British sentiment disliked the military measures by which Germany was united - the Italians did much better to unite their country by losing wars [Taylor, 1971, 13]. Nevertheless, the British initially did not view a German unification during the nineteenth century unfavourably, but they were more interested in the way it was achieved than in the result. In two different moments in history within an interval of roughly hundred years in which Germany has been unified twice, the United Kingdom was against. But the decisive difference to the British, however, was that Germany had its unity not regained by wars, but by winning the peace.

The new Prime-Minister, Tony Blair, has thrown away the old coat of Thatcher, further wore out by John Major. Blair warmly received the social-democratic leader, Gerhard Schröder, when he was campaigning for the office of *Bundeskanzler*, chancellor of the federation. When Schröder won the election at the 27th of September 1998, he hastened to Paris at the urgent request of the French President Jaques Chirac, even before the coalition talks and his installation as leader of the government. The French were afraid to lose the exclusivity of the French-German relationship, because they suspected Schröder of cherishing much sympathy for Great Britain. France tried to retain the lead by suggesting the idea of a greater involvement of the United Kingdom in order to gain more headway for Europe. Moreover, Germany was prepared to play a more prominent role as president of the European Union in the first half of 1999. It was not Schröder who the Serbs compared to Hitler, but Clinton. Also Germany became aware that it was capable of pursuing its own interests without being blamed by the other European partners.

Probably more important were the Schröder statements on the political-psychological dimension of Germany's relationship of with the other European partners: 'The Generation of Helmut Kohl meant, we Germans ought to be Europeans. (....) I say, we also wish to be Europeans [Spiegel, 1999, 42].' The difference in attitude between Kohl and Schröder is significant, for 'this self-evident and voluntary element has the advantage, not only because of our historical duty, that we can deal more open-mindedly with our own interests, than we could in the past.'

The new open-mindedness of Germany, which Schröder propagated and which soon became less unconcerned, because of the harsh reality, was noticed also outside Germany. The Dutch Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Dick Benschop, was of the opinion that 'a Europe, that is grounded on one-sided German reticence, can no longer be accepted as the European model.'[Raven, 1999]. Benschop explained his point of view by stating that a self-assured German diplomacy serves the interests of Europe. For the main issue is that Europe will be able to achieve a stronger position in the current process of globalization. Benschop made clear that for the first time in almost two centuries of German and European policy Germany is not considered a European problem. With that the international political 'normalization' of Germany has become a fact. In other words, what Bismarck tried but failed to achieve, i.e. that Germany would be regarded with satisfaction by the main European powers, has been achieved by the respective German chancellors of the Federal Republic of Germany: Europe is satisfied with Germany, but Germany is not yet satisfied with itself.

Epilogue

The emotional charge regarding Germany and Germans revealed by the surveys of the Clinendael Institute and the University of Leiden is defined by the Second World War. Have, then, these emotions not combined? The annual commemorations, the way history teaching deals with Germany and the continual, casual negative remarks by adults reproduce the negative emotions about Germany and Germans.

Beliefs can be linked to important effects, but their importance depends on the circumstances in which they occur. In the case of beliefs about Germany and Germans in the Netherlands the situation is very much defined by the quality of the structures in which they arise. Therefore, they are relatively harmless, if the European Union continues to provide stability and peace in Europe. Had these beliefs not been so strongly fixed at the emotional level of our respondents - the expression of a living past - the very positive Dutch reaction to European integration could be viewed as overdone. In the absence of an overarching structure that can moderate state behavior, negative beliefs among the population will reinforce conflict and exculpate the political elite of its lust for war. Beliefs as such are not the trigger of armed conflict, but they play an essential role in involving the whole population. Thus structures are required which rule out interstate hostilities and thereby moderate the intensity of negative beliefs and emotions. Still, Euro-skepticism must be acknowledged as part of a much broader and intricate process related to a development at the level of global superstructures, the nation state and the society.

In this regard a special responsibility have the political elites. The political attitudes of the citizens and the underlying emotions, clichés and stereotypes are the resultant of a process of socialization. Political elites have a direct and indirect - education and mass media - influence on the attitude. First, it is important that they make crystal clear that the Netherlands are politically and economically to a large extent dependent on Germany. Their analyses and point of view regarding the German-Dutch relations must be clarified. In this respect taboo-free analysis of the period 1933-1945 is needed. Second, an empirically underpinned analysis of the political and economic position of the Netherlands vis a vis today's Germany is needed. Third, they have to present a answer to the question, how we can cooperate in counteracting common problems. Fourth: they have to develop a strategy for achieving German support for Netherlands points of view and interests in the context of the European Union. Fifth: a point of view for the future development of the European Union should be designed, in which Germany plays an important role.

Beliefs about a foreign country do have relevance in that they underlie the attitudes that influence the behavioral intention and the behavior itself. Cooperation and integration are the best preconditions for making such human phenomena harmless and in the end meaningless; in other words to make national cliches and stereotypes irrelevant.

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