

THE EUROPEANIZATION OF NATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERES

POLITICAL DISCOURSES IN
GERMANY, SPAIN, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

by

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July 2005

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Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole Earth.” And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down there and confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the Earth, and they left off building the city.

(Genesis 11: 4-8)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis draws on theoretical ideas and empirical data from the ongoing *Europub* international research project on the “Transformation of Political Communication and Mobilization in European Public Spheres” (see Koopmans & Statham 2002, or visit the project’s website at <http://europub.wz-berlin.de>), funded by the European Commission in the context of its Fifth Framework Program (project number HPSE-CT2001-00046). I have served as a research member of the Spanish team under the supervision of Juan Díez Medrano, formerly International University Bremen (IUB) and now University of Barcelona, since September 2003. Sections of this thesis will form part of a forthcoming coauthored chapter (with Ruud Koopmans and Jessica Erbe) in an edited volume on our collaborative research project.

Europub is coordinated by Ruud Koopmans, Free University of Amsterdam and currently Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University. Other team leaders are Jos de Beus, University of Amsterdam; Donatella della Porta, European University Institute; Virginie Guiraudon, currently Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute, Hans-Peter Kriesi, University of Zurich; Barbara Pfetsch, Hohenheim University; Paul Statham, University of Leeds. My greatest thanks to all researchers who made this work possible.

For support and guidance, I wish to express my utmost gratitude to both my supervisors, Juan Díez Medrano at *Europub* and International University Bremen, as well as Geoffrey Edwards, Jean Monnet Professor of European Studies, Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. Useful comments, advice, and assistance were also provided by Ruud Koopmans, Christoph Pohlmann, Julie Smith, and Corina Stratulat. I received financial support for my MPhil studies from Pembroke College and the *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes* (German National Academic Foundation). I would also like to thank my tutor at Pembroke, Loraine Gelsthorpe, and the two Wendys at the Centre of International Studies. I wish to acknowledge Ruud Koopmans for reference to the above extract on the “tower of Babel.”

ABSTRACT

This study forms part of the ongoing debate on the *Europeanization of national public spheres* – meaning that European issues, actors, and institutions become increasingly important in political communication and mobilization of the different member states – as a means of overcoming the problems of democracy in the European Union. Drawing on original data collected as part of a transnational research project, the study measures several theoretically possible forms of this process across three comparative dimensions: countries, policy domains, and years. The study shows that in all the countries, a fairly high degree of Europeanization can be observed for those policy fields where the EU enjoys a great amount of political competences, whilst the findings are almost negligent for those issues where the member states have retained their autonomy. The study thus reaches the conclusion that the “democratic deficit” does not stem primarily from the lack of Europeanized political debates covered in the mass media. Instead, the essence of the problem is shown to be the differential access political actors have for participating in political discourses. So far, European public spheres are overwhelmingly populated by the so-called elites – state and party actors – while civil society actors find it increasingly difficult to get a foothold beyond the nation-state level. Institutional reforms need to address this problematic trend by putting “the public” back into the public sphere.

Keywords

- Europeanization ■ democratic deficit ■ public sphere
- political mobilization/communication

I. INTRODUCTION

EUROPE IS ALLEGEDLY A PLACE of many deficits – “democratic deficits”, “legitimacy deficits”, “information and communication deficits”, “public sphere deficits”, the list seems endless. During the last few years we have come to witness a plethora of important developments in the European Union, including the introduction of the single currency in most member states, the launch of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the eastward expansion to ten new countries (and in the future possibly Turkey), as well as the ongoing attempt to bestow Europe with its own constitution. However, just as the European flagship continues to steer at breakneck speed towards that elusive destination of “ever closer union”, the common citizen has so far remained uninformed, disinterested, and politically unengaged about this journey.¹

Inevitably, it is the media which is often blamed for this lamentable state-of-affairs (e.g. Gerhards 1993, 2000, Anderson & Weymouth 1999). Considering that almost seventy percent of all national legislation is now decided through Brussels, and affects the lives of roughly 450 million citizens, it is astonishing how sporadically European topics continue to feature in mass communication. At the end of the day, Europe simply fails to satisfy the selection criteria of many journalists, except perhaps when it becomes necessary to find a scapegoat for something. Indeed, whenever the media bother to report about the European Union, it is “more likely to be accounts of inefficiency, incompetence, and failure than of European cooperation and good governance” (Norris 2000: 314). And if there is nothing negative to present, some media outlets exhibit a remarkable tendency to spice up EU stories in some other fashion. Take for instance *The Sun*, source of countless Euro-myths in recent years, which argued on February 4, 2004 that the EU’s waste electronic and electrical equipment directive – which merely stipulates that retailers are obliged to take back electronic goods for recycling free of charge – actually required customers to return all used domestic appliances before buying new ones, including “worn-out sex toys.”

Of course, this is not to say that there exists no reliable information on Europe and varying degrees of coverage and reporting of the issues at stake. Newspapers such as *European Voice*, *Financial Times*, or *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* devote substantial space to the European Union and have established for themselves a base of loyal readers. At the same time, however, these examples represent either highly specialized media outlets or are directed at very specific and limited groups of receivers, the so-called “politico-business elites” (see Schlesinger 1999: 272–76). When it comes to the general public, then, it is not surprising that one remains extremely hard-pressed to find any extensive debates, deliberations, and communications about the potential benefits or downsides of the various developments in the EU. This seems to be the case even for those issues that are highly

¹ As this opening paragraph shows, I use the terms Europe and European Union interchangeably, although I am aware that the latter comprises only a part of the former.

conspicuous to the public eye, and occupy a particularly salient position in the people's everyday life, such as the euro. This lack of information and communication about Europe leads to a high degree of bewilderment and phobia about the EU, which became all too apparent when the populations of France and the Netherlands rejected the European Constitution, due to mostly unfounded concerns or dissatisfaction about things not even related to the document.

Nevertheless, if there is a general lack of public discussion on European topics within the various countries, one can reasonably assume that this is even more the case at the pan-European level. Whenever public debates about Europe and citizens' participation in relevant policy processes do take place, these continue to be located at the nation-state level and directed at national authorities (Koopmans & Erbe 2004). Similarly, Imig and Tarrow (2001) have shown that instances of collective action by transnationally organized actors need to be searched for with a magnifying glass. Interest groups and political parties operating at the European level also remain mainly attached to the nation-state and its interests. These observations stand in stark contrast to the increasing shift of political competences from the nation-states to the European Union, and the fact that many important decisions are now taken at the European level in supranational or intergovernmental institutional arenas. Despite the EU's institutional development and increasing influence on the citizens' conditions of life, the national political space has remained preeminent as the main arena for public debates, collective identification, and notions of citizenship (Koopmans & Erbe 2004). The European integration process has therefore not gone hand in hand with the simultaneous emergence of a common European space of communication and mobilization.

In the academic literature, this phenomenon has come to be known as a "public sphere deficit"², which, according to Trenz (2004: 292), has two important implications. In quantitative terms, it entails that there is too little public communication in Europe. In qualitative terms, "public communication in Europe lacks the basic understanding and agreement that distinguishes a political community and marks its competence for democracy." Various authors have therefore argued that the lack of a European public sphere is *the* defining feature of the democratic deficit (e.g. Grundmann 1999, Eriksen & Fossum 2000, 2002, Habermas 2001, Giorgi *et al.* 2001, Calhoun 2003). For a long time, however, scientific discussion on the European public sphere had a tendency to remain purely theoretical and speculative, whilst those few studies which did test empirically the emergence of a communicative space in Europe most of the time merely supported the expectation that it was lagging behind the process of economic and political integration (see especially Gerhards 2000, but also e.g. Kevin 2001, 2003, Peter *et al.* 2003). As a result, the transnational *Europub* research project has

² The term was first coined in German by Gerhards (1993) as "*Öffentlichkeitsdefizit*". This is representative for the fact that the question of the (non-)existence of a European public sphere has so far been treated and debated most extensively in the German scholarly literature, as suggested by the abundance of recent edited volumes on this topic (e.g. Baerns & Raupp 2000, Kaelble *et al.* 2002, Klein *et al.* 2003, Hagen 2004, Franzius & Preuss 2004). Ironically, it thus seems that even concerning discussion of a lacking European public sphere, one finds a lacking European public sphere.

sought to remedy this “empirical deficit”, and test the assumption of a lack in public communication and mobilization in Europe by means of a comparative analysis of different countries as well as different policy domains across time (see Koopmans & Statham 2002).³

In this thesis, I wish to focus on a limited, albeit still extensive, set of our collected data by focusing on three cases – Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom – during the period from 1990 to 2002. The present work is shaped by the underlying conviction that the European Union needs to become more democratic than it currently is and – more importantly – *can* become more democratic. Although I concur that there is a fundamental trade-off between so-called “system effectiveness and citizen participation” (Dahl 1994), and attaining the same standards of democratization as in the different member states of the EU would thus be an undesirable let alone impossible endeavor, the concept of the European public sphere suggests that the “democracy-efficiency trap” is to some extent avoidable. Buttressing these theoretical arguments by an empirical analysis on the evolution of three national public spheres during the last decade, it is expected that this study will provide valuable indications to the broader question on the future of democracy in the European Union and the potential limits of European integration.

I shall proceed in the following steps: Section II provides a theoretical overview of the problems for democracy presently experienced in Europe and the potential role of the public sphere in helping offset the democratic deficit. Section III addresses the issue of how best to transpose the notion of the public sphere from the national to the European level. Section IV explains the research methodology used in this study as well as how the emergence of a European public sphere is measured. Sections V and VI analyze the various data by studying where debates in the public sphere originate from and how they are “framed”, which will give an indication as to the degree of Europeanization of political discourses in the three countries. Sections VII and VIII seek to explain these results by drawing on various approaches prevalent in political sociology. In addition to the previous discussion on the presence of the European dimension in national deliberations, Section IX asks which types of political actors have access to the public sphere. Section X provides a conclusion and draws out the main implications of this study.

³ Other important collaborative research projects on the European public sphere that I am aware of are Eder *et al.* (2000), Giesen & Risse (2000), and Peters (2003).

II. EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

One can hardly deny that we are currently living in a world where the cultural, economic, and political sectors of our societies are being inherently affected by the process of globalization. Factors such as advances in communication, information, and transportation technologies have since the 1960s led to a tremendous acceleration of different transactions across national borders, thus creating an ever-greater interpenetration and interdependency of human relations on a global scale. At the same time, however, the challenges and problems posed by globalization to national political systems in general, and to the notion of democratic governance as effective collective self-determination in particular, have not gone unnoticed either (see e.g. Kaiser 1979, Held 1991, Dahl 1994, McGrew 1997, Beck 1998, Zürn 2000).

For one, in the currently globalizing world, citizens are ever more affected by political decisions and processes occurring outside the boundary and jurisdiction of their own state, without having, at the same time, the chance of democratic participation and legitimation in these important issues that impinge upon their collective interests. In other words, nation-states are increasingly subject to forces and political decisions beyond their control, which can no longer be controlled through the democratic process alone. In this regard, globalization has been said to create problems of so-called “input incongruence” (Zürn 2000). In addition, due to globalization, the autonomy of national democratic communities to reach certain political goals, and adequately ensure the common welfare of their constituencies, is increasingly undermined – nowadays, for example, a social policy beneficial to, and supported by, the majority of the population in a country could become unviable due to reasons of international competitiveness. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that many newly emerging issues, such as increased environmental pollution in the wake of globalization, affect citizens of different countries, but go beyond the capacity of their individual respective governments to deal with effectively by themselves. Globalization therefore also leads to democratic “output incongruence” and a loss of what Dahl (1994) termed “system effectiveness.”

For many years, European integration was primarily legitimated on the grounds that it was a sensible response for coming to terms with the political challenges of globalization, by restoring and maintaining levels of system effectiveness and output congruence. Majone (1996) maintains, for instance, that the transference of regulatory functions from the nation-state to the European Union was a direct result of the increasing inability of the former to act as a mechanism for regulating the nature of contemporary markets. In this regard, “the solution of vital problems [...] has moved beyond the reach of individual states and has called for institutionalized commitment and cooperation on a [European] level” (Stein 2001: 489–90). The emphasis, in other words, was on “output legitimacy” (Scharpf 1999a), meaning that political choices were seen as legitimate because they effectively promoted the common welfare of the constituency in question. Conversely, “input legitimacy” – derived from acceptance brought about by citizen participation in the political decision-making

process – was largely left out of the equation (at least until 1979 and the introduction of general elections for the European Parliament).

Arguments made in the literature often seemed to support this absence of structures for democratic input, invariably citing problems of scale, the weakening link between the constituency and representatives, the increased complexity of political life, or the lack of a European *demos* as reasons why democracy at the European level was a “no-no”. One prominent example is Robert Dahl (1994), who claimed that citizens and leaders of EU member states are presented with a “democratic dilemma”: since the EU cannot by definition guarantee full-fledged citizen participation as we are accustomed to at the national level, system effectiveness will have to come at a democratic cost.⁴ Fellow Yaliam Fritz Scharpf (1998) thus contends that:

“popular approval and popular demand are becoming less and less sufficient for assuring, or even for justifying, corresponding policy choices. As a consequence, input-oriented legitimating arguments will become less plausible, and government at the national level must increasingly depend on output-oriented legitimation arguments alone.”⁵

In this view, the democratic deficit becomes a logical and inevitable consequence of the European integration process. Others contest the idea that Europe suffers from a democratic deficit altogether, and wonder what all the fuss is about. For Michael Zürn (2000: 186), the European Union is not so much the cause of democratic input problems, but rather “a normatively sensible response to the problems for democracy that are caused by globalization.” Finally, Andrew Moravcsik (2002: 603) points to the fact that “its institutions are tightly constrained by constitutional checks and balances: narrow mandates, fiscal limits, super-majoritarian and concurrent voting requirements and separation of powers.” Overall, the EU “redresses rather than creates biases in political representation, deliberation and output.”

These claims miss one essential point, however, namely that the question whether the EU truly suffers from a democratic deficit is rather inconsequential; what really matters is that Europe is widely *perceived* to suffer from one, not least among the people. The use of “academic arguments” that the democratic deficit is either a mere fallacy or due to unavoidable structural preconditions will not convince even the most gullible citizen to stop bemoaning the lack of institutional structures for democratic input. As a result, the realization that input legitimacy cannot and must not be neglected has nowadays become widely accepted – “government for the people” is no viable full-fledged

⁴ On the one hand, citizens could choose to preserve the authority of a smaller democratic political unit, within which they could act more effectively to influence the conduct of their government, even though some important matters might remain beyond the capacity of that government to deal with effectively. On the other hand, they could choose to increase the capacity of a larger political unit to deal more effectively with these matters, even if their ability to influence the governance in a democratic fashion were significantly less in the larger unit (i.e. the EU) than in the smaller one (Dahl 1994).

⁵ It is thus not surprising that for Scharpf, the democratic deficit does not stem so much from the input but rather the output side, caused by the European Union’s inherent bias towards market liberalization (“negative integration”) over social protection (“positive integration”).

alternative to “government by the people”. This is reflected, for instance, in the Laeken Declaration of 2001 that “the Union needs to become more democratic, more transparent and more efficient.”

The necessity of democracy in the European Union can be justified on normative as well as practical grounds (Jachtenfuchs 1997). On the one hand, by taking collectively binding decisions that intervene in the lives of the people, the latter need to have some voice in the system and a realistic chance of influencing the course of events. Lord and Beetham (2001) have argued that the classification of the European Union as a non-state political system does not remove the need for meeting the same standards of legitimation as a liberal-democratic state. Nor are substitute forms of legitimation – e.g. output legitimacy or indirect legitimation through nationally elected executives – enough on their own to deliver the core attributes of democratic governance, which they take to be public control with political equality.

On the other hand, Jachtenfuchs (1997) reminds us that democracy and system effectiveness are not part of a zero-sum game, given that the former also *increases* system stability and problem-solving efficiency. Since it would be impossible to govern against strong citizen opposition, democratic legitimacy should hence be seen not only as a matter of performance, but also of the public’s acceptance of it. The consent of citizens will be necessary especially when decisions could run counter to their established interests, such as on the controversial question of Turkish membership. Otherwise, it may not take too long for Europeans to increasingly start voicing their discontent with the European integration process. In fact, such tendencies have been gaining momentum at least since the early 1990s with the transformation of Lindberg’s “permissive consensus” into something resembling its opposite, a “constraining dissensus” (Hooghe & Marks forthcoming). This became apparent for the first time after the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which was to a large degree due to the “abrupt heightening of awareness about possible trade-offs” between democratic input and output congruence (Dahl 1994: 23). However, if this red card to Europe managed to raise a few eyebrows in European capitals and temporarily halt the integration process at the time, then the recent French “non” and Dutch “nee” to the European Constitution have thrown the EU into its biggest crisis to date.

In this respect, then, neofunctionalists did get one thing right: European integration has become an increasingly controversial and contested issue. On balance, however, opinion polls show that support for European integration among the public has not risen but steadily declined (Eichenberg & Dalton 2003), as has trust in European institutions (Schmitt & Thomassen 1999), and voter participation in European elections (Smith 2004). Finally, in many member states we are witnessing tendencies of a “renationalization” of politics, as evidenced in the increasing support for xenophobic parties, which usually have a strong anti-European profile, or the emergence of Euroskeptic parties. Given these worrying trends, the present study argues that the increasingly controversial nature of the integration process, the need to reform the EU’s institutional structure and decision-making process in

the context of enlargement, as well as the heightened visibility of Europe in people's everyday life, make further steps in the integration process ever more dependent on an active engagement, acceptance, and legitimacy among the citizenry (Koopmans & Erbe 2004: 97–98, Koopmans, Erbe & Meyer forthcoming). Or to paraphrase Philippe Schmitter (2000), we better start thinking of how to democratize the European Union... and we better start bothering now.

So far, there has been a tendency to explain the democratic deficit in terms of the institutional design of the European Union or a lack of interest in, and identification with, the EU among European citizens. Many proposals for democratizing the European Union therefore tend to focus solely or primarily on institutional reform (e.g. Schmitter 2000, Hix 2002, Schneider & Verdier 2003), or on methods of dealing with the low turnout in European elections (e.g. Smith 2004).⁶ Examples include ensuring a more transparent and accountable policy-making process, increasing the competences of the European Parliament, or directly electing the Commission and its president, for instance by national parliamentarians. Institutional measures have also proven to be the preferred means of successive Treaty reformers for addressing the perceived democratic deficit. The legislative powers of the European Parliament vis-à-vis the Council and Commission and the use of qualified majority voting (QMV) have been constantly extended during the 1990s. More recently, the open method of coordination or the convention method for preparing the draft Constitutional Treaty were other (albeit unsuccessful) attempts of bringing Europe closer to the citizen.

Various scholars have taken issue with these institutional approaches and argued that a more fundamental question relates to the extent to which a public space of communication has evolved in recent years, in which citizens discursively interact with one another as well as European institutions and actors (e.g. Grundmann 1999, Giorgi *et al.* 2001, Ward 2001; but see Meadowcroft 2002). Although institutional reform may well be needed to make the EU more transparent and accountable, this view maintains that the success of both structural amendments and efforts to strengthen citizens' identification with Europe ultimately depends "on the development of an intermediary public sphere of political communication and mobilization that can help bridge the gap between European policies and institutions and the European citizenry" (Koopmans & Statham 2002: 4). As formulated by Ward (2001: 77), "if the EU fails to engage with the imagination of its citizens, institutional change at the polity level alone will not bring about the desired directly accountable democratic structures." What is needed, therefore, are not just more accountable systems of governance, but rather a "discursive superstructure" which would make a democratic political community possible in the first place. The interaction of different individuals with one another, as well as governmental institutions and actors, is seen to be essential for facilitating the praxis of citizenship, and enabling disparate members of a

⁶ Others argue that the solutions must be found not at the European level but in the nation-states. Dahl (1994: 33), for instance, maintains that democratic institutions *within* countries would need to be strengthened, given that "stronger democratic institutions would provide whatever democratic control may be possible over the authority delegated to transnational decision makers and thus help to prevent delegation from becoming in effect a total and permanent alienation of control."

society to identify with such a political community. According to Giorgi *et al.* (2001: 74), “citizens subscribing to a form of European collective identity could possibly overcome both the actual and the perceived democratic deficit. [...] A democratically viable Europe, then, requires a ‘public space’ or ‘public sphere’.”

Inevitably, studies that emphasize the need for a European public sphere in order to overcome the present democratic predicament, and lack of public identification with Europe, draw heavily on the arguments of German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1989). In his seminal work, he maintained that the replacement of local and regional levels of political organization as the predominant unit of political space by the nation-state was not just a matter of institution-building from above, or pre-existing identifications among the citizenry, but depended to a great extent on the development of a civic public sphere, which acted as an interactive field allowing citizens to participate in national public debates and collective action (Statham & Gray 2005: 63). The most important feature of the public sphere as it existed in the eighteenth century was the public use of reason in rational-critical debate, which was essential for keeping a check on the domination by the state or the illegitimate use of power. In its classical form, the public sphere consists of:

“a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body [...] Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion [...] about matters of general interest” (Habermas 1974: 49).

In principle, such a space of citizen interaction is “independent of both the market and the state. [...] Individuals relate to one another not in terms of market transactions, nor in terms of power relations, but rather as politically equal citizens (subjects) of a polity” (Giorgi *et al.* 2001: 74). As a result, it is expected that citizens will have an incentive to lay aside their own self-interest and adopt a “public interest” perspective centered on the common good.

Habermas has been widely criticized for this idealistic conceptualization of the public sphere and its historical accuracy (cf. Curran 1991), partly because the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere described in his work rested to a large degree on the systematic exclusion of different groups of citizens based on class, race, and gender (Fraser 1992). Consequently, the notion of European public sphere employed here differs in fundamental ways from Habermas’ original usage of the term.⁷ Most importantly, this study does not advance a conceptualization of the public sphere as independent of the market and the state, in which the economic and political dimension is excluded. Since European integration has always been an elite-driven project with its main focus on economic integration, it

⁷ At the same time, one must not forget that the concepts “public sphere” as used in the English-speaking literature and the word *Öffentlichkeit* in German are not coterminous. The arbitrary choice of the former for translating the original concept has introduced issues into the English discussion, most notably the spatial discussion, which were absent from the way Habermas used the term (Kleinsteuber 2001).

appears rather misguided to exclude these two defining characteristics. Moreover, it seems unrealistic to expect that discussions in a public sphere need to be centered around some form of common good criterion. “The idea that participants within the European public space should set aside their own self-interest and instead pursue the public interest is [...] an epistemological impossibility” (Meadowcroft 2002: 189). Instead, the concept of European public sphere proposed in this thesis follows broader and less restrictive approaches rooted in the deliberative notion of democracy, which can be defined as “collective decision-making with the participation of all who will be affected by a decision [...] by means of arguments offered by and to participants who are committed to the values of rationality and impartiality” (Elster 1998: 8; see also e.g. Barber 1984, Fishkin 1991, and especially Eriksen & Fossum 2000).

Although questions may be raised about the appropriateness of his particular notion of *Öffentlichkeit* for the project of democratizing the European Union, Habermas’ (2001) claim that the democratic deficit will only be overcome once Europe develops a public sphere, in which the democratic process is embedded, appears more convincing. Contrary to those who dismiss the notion of democracy in the European Union as wishful thinking, widespread public deliberations and discourses could perform a variety of Pareto-improving functions without falling into the “democracy-efficiency trap” discussed previously. This means that input legitimacy could be enhanced without, at the same time, undermining the effective working and problem-solving capacity of the EU.

It is generally agreed that for their legitimacy and effectiveness, modern democracies rely upon multiple channels of intermediation between private actors in civil society and public authorities (Risse 2003):

“Democratic legitimation in complex societies derives from the interplay of institutional consultation and decision-making operations with informal, media-transmitted, opinion formation processes within a public sphere of communication. Within democratic constitutional states, the public communicative infrastructure plays the ideal-type function of crystallizing problems of common social concerns within discourses, such that citizens are given the opportunity to orient themselves in line with equally weighted arguments and take a positive or negative stance on controversial contributions (Habermas 2001: 19).”

The various benefits of a public sphere have been extensively discussed in the past. On the one hand, opportunities for citizens to take part in public deliberation and decision-making allows for the creation of an “informed and enlightened citizenry” (Dahl 1994: 31) as well as “civic virtues” (Putnam 1993). The perhaps most serious problem facing the EU at present is the general lack of knowledge about its functions and operations. A public sphere would help render it more visible and understandable to the general public. On the other hand, public debates and political mobilization serve as an input to the elite-led policy processes in the form of information on the demands, opinions, and interests of the citizenry, and thereby increase the responsiveness and legitimacy of policies and

institutions (Koopmans & Statham 2002). The public sphere is basic to the concept of democratic legitimacy, as it centers on the possibility of including all potentially affected by a political decision (Eriksen 2004). Similarly, information and critical evaluation of policies and institutions provided within the public sphere are crucial for ensuring that policies and policy-makers can be held accountable, and that political decisions are *justified*, and not simply spoon-fed to an unassuming citizenry. As shown in the case of the corruption scandal of the European Commission (Meyer 2002), the European public sphere is essential for ensuring a basic function of democracy: the ability “to throw the rascals out.”

Given these various insights, instead of simply reforming the institutions of the European Union, this thesis argues that tackling the democratic deficit is likely to be “resolved more effectively by an increasing engagement of intermediary actors, such as political parties and civil society actors, in acts of political communication. Such interaction [would] build communicative linkages between EU elites and the citizenry, which in turn may then help create a European political process with better political institutional arrangements and stronger forms of citizenry identification” (Statham & Grey 2004: 64). In order to ensure a satisfactory level of democracy, the European Union will therefore need to follow a process of “integration through deliberation” (Eriksen & Fossum 2000), the goal of which should be the creation of a European public space of political communication and mobilization.

III. ON CONCEPTUALIZING EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERES

As Koopmans and Pfetsch (2003) have suggested, while the need for a common European space of communication is widely agreed upon, the scholarly debate has mostly focused on controversies about how it should be conceptualized theoretically. This is an important question, since different notions have in the past inevitably led to distinct conclusions about the theoretical possibility and actual presence of such a transnational space of debate and discussion in the EU (Risse 2003). In the literature, one can generally differentiate between two main – although not necessarily mutually exclusive – arguments of how a European public sphere could come into existence.

A first group of authors (most notably Grimm 1995, Kielmansegg 1996) advocates a very demanding conceptualization, by viewing the European public sphere as structurally identical to national ones, just on a much larger scale. The prerequisite for the emergence of such a “genuine” supranational European public sphere would then be that national collective actors, media, and publics all became transnationalized and superimposed on the established national public spaces (Neidhardt *et al.* 2000). It is hardly surprising that the empirical evidence of these authors indicates that such a development is not taking place (e.g. Schlesinger 1995, 1999). The conditions that permitted the emergence of public spaces in the individual European nation-states are simply lacking on the European level.

So far, a pan-European civil society remains virtually non-existent (Imig & Tarrow 2001). Actors that operate on the European level remain firmly rooted in their respective nation-states, or direct most of their efforts at national administrations. The domestic side in their “multi-level games” therefore continues to be preeminent. The same applies to organized lobbying groups such as the Union of Industries in the European Community (UNICE) or the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which derive most of their activity from national or regional interests (Schlesinger 1999, see also Marks & McAdam 1996). Similarly, despite the increasing relevance of transnational party organizations, which have been considered as embryonic parties at the European level (Bardi 1994), it is the national parties that remain the key players. And whenever “parties compete on a European level, it is clear that domestic considerations take precedence over European ones” (Taggart 1998: 384).

Most importantly, however, the pan-European media system continues to be nothing but a bad joke. So far, all past attempts of establishing a European-wide mass media have failed – such as the newspaper *The European* – are confined to a limited elite audience that communicates in English, or take the form of non-political media that focus on sports and music (Kevin 2003: 38–41). Due to this absence of developed channels of mass communication, Grimm (1995) adopts a very pessimistic view about the possibility of European democracy through the development of a European public sphere. He maintains that only a pan-European media system could act as a sphere of debate and discussion,

and guide the political decisions of the European institutions, thereby grounding them in the legitimacy of the people (Ward 2002).

Moreover, the prospects of a pan-European audiovisual or press sector ever establishing themselves in the future are rather bleak, to say the least (Schlesinger 1995). Prime reasons for this include the specificity of national media structures, channels of communication, and consumers, as well as the deep-rooted nationalistic structural features of the existing media systems: “the way the media are organized and funded, the training of their journalists and editors, the expectations of their audiences, the political and economic pressures under which they labor, even the very languages that they use, are all primarily defined in terms of the system of sovereign states” (Kunelius & Sparks 2001: 10). These observations are in line with Hoskins and Mirus’ (1988: 511) notion of “cultural discount”, which is commonly cited for explaining the absence of European-wide channels of communication (Morley & Robins 1995, Ward 2002): media programs such as news, current and political affairs, and informational content all have a very low trade potential to other public spheres by virtue of their close proximity to very specific regional interests.

In order to deliver a final knock-out punch to the possibility of pan-European political communication and mobilization, Grimm adds a further insurmountable barrier by arguing that a fully developed European-wide media system transcending the borders of national media would need to be supported by the establishment of a *lingua franca*. Despite the arguments of some authors who see the English language assuming such a role in the future (e.g. De Swaan 1993), it is clear that this has so far not occurred and is neither particularly likely. Since Europe is characterized by a plurality of languages, which incidentally increases with each passing round of enlargement, Kielmansegg (1996) maintains that it could never form a community of memory and common experience, nor could it develop a European identity and civil society. Without the possibility of becoming a “community of communication”, it simply lacks the necessary preconditions for democratization. On balance, then, presuming that a unitary European media system, supported by a common language and ideally a shared culture and identity, would be required, one can safely conclude that a full-fledged supranational European public sphere, identical to national ones, seems rather unlikely for the moment. In this view, “a transnational public sphere on a European scale seems not only a rather improbable prospect but almost a contradiction in terms” (Kunelius & Sparks 2001: 11).

However, this “one-size-fits-all” approach has been criticized as being fundamentally flawed and suffering from a variety of theoretical and practical inconsistencies (e.g. Kantner 2003, 2004, Van de Steeg 2002). The currently dominant view in the literature on European integration has been to see the EU as a new and complex form of multi-level polity, not strictly superimposed hierarchically on the existing European system of nation-states (e.g. Jachtenfuchs & Kohler-Koch 1996, Hooghe & Marks 2001). This new multi-level polity clearly “constitutes in many respects a historically new type of political organization and not just a replication on a higher level of spatial aggregation of

developments and processes that have characterized the emergence of the classical nation-state” (Neidhardt *et al.* 2000: 3). As a result, applying the traditional conception of a national public sphere to the European level seems to be an inappropriate approach, setting up both unrealistic and unnecessary conditions for the emergence of a European public sphere. In fact, a single European public sphere with a *lingua franca* and common European media could even be undesirable, since most people would want to be informed and communicate in their own mother tongue, and remain loyal to their customary sources of information such as the local newspaper (Kurpas 2005).

The conventional view is also problematic because it presupposes a degree of linguistic and cultural homogeneity not even found in many well-functioning democratic states, such as the Netherlands and Switzerland. Already Habermas’ (1989) initial depiction of the national polity as a *single* public sphere was widely criticized for being too restricted. Nancy Fraser (1992) maintains, for instance, that even within national polities, one finds a *plurality* of competing publics, characterized by diverse interests and backgrounds but still able to engage in “interpublic discursive interaction.” Similarly, Calhoun (1995, cited in Schlesinger 1999: 265) challenges us to think in terms of a “sphere of publics,” of “multiple intersections among heterogeneous publics, not only as the privileging of a single overarching public.” Consequently, if speaking the same language, using the same media, and a common culture are not necessary requirements to be able to communicate within national borders, it begs the question of why heterogeneity must invariably lead to the demise of the European “Tower of Babel”. In fact, quite the opposite may be the case, since it is feasible to assume that a lively public sphere should be able to provide a wide range of views and opinions. Thomas Risse (2003: 5) has suggested that contestation ought to be considered as a crucial requirement for the emergence of a European public sphere, rather than an indicator for its absence: “the more contentious European policies and politics become and the more social mobilization occurs on European issues, the more we should observe truly European debates.” Therefore, one may argue that features such as a common European perspective would be produced in the process of interaction itself, and need not be present *a priori* (Van de Steeg 2002: 505).

The obvious conclusion, according to Kunelius and Sparks (2001: 12), is that “whatever the European public sphere in its concrete manifestations might look like, it will never really exist as an ideal public sphere.” It should not be perceived as a unified and coherent whole, but rather “as a series of non-integrated, fragmented and autonomous public spheres formed not by association with a national or a European state but by new modes of contestation, claims-making, and collective action” (Rumford 2001: 207). Based on such considerations, Gerhards (1993, 2000) has rightly argued that instead of a supranational European public sphere in the singular, the more likely scenario would be that of a *Europeanization of national public spheres*, meaning that European issues, actors, and institutions become increasingly important in the political discourses of the different EU member states. Gerhards proposes to take the national public spheres as a starting point for the emergence of a

European public discourse, and view them not so much as obstacles to be overcome, but rather as the very building blocks on which a European public sphere could evolve. Moreover, this view does not stipulate that nationally based media and civil society have to become transnationalized. Instead, their object of focus may merely become less fixed on the context of the nation-state, and increasingly focus on what happens in the institutions of the European Union and other European public arenas. However, although most scholars have now subscribed to this account, there still remains much controversy with regard to “how much transnationalization of national public spheres is sufficient to constitute a European public sphere” (Risse 2002: 5). The different conclusions of whether Europeanized public spheres can be observed in the EU are thus again largely dependent on the distinct conceptualizations employed.

Gerhards (2000) himself mentions two different criteria, namely that national public spheres must come to increasingly communicate about European rather than national issues, and that the issues at stake must reflect a European perspective that extends beyond the own country and its interests; political discourse must therefore be “framed” within a European dimension. Gerhards assumes that since European actors are the most likely to frame an issue from a European view, the number of statements of such EU officials in the national media coverage can be used as an indicator for the degree of Europeanization. Using data drawn from Kepplinger (1998), he shows that in Germany there has hardly been an increase in the saliency of such European themes and actors, and thus reaches the conclusion that the emergence of a European public sphere has been lagging behind the processes of economic and political integration.

One may agree with Gerhards that the presence of European actors and themes in national media does appear to be an important indicator. However, apart from the doubts that can be raised concerning his data, which was collected for different purposes and may thus not accurately reflect the European dimension of themes and actors and the complexity of multi-level politics, one needs to be skeptical concerning his second criterion, given that it appears unnecessarily restrictive by demanding an “orientation on a European common good in order for an act of public communication to qualify as Europeanized” (Koopmans & Erbe 2004: 100, see also Trenz 2000). Similar to Habermas’ conceptualization discussed earlier, if one were to apply such a notion, one would need to exclude a whole range of relevant actors, such as socio-economic interest groups, which would in every case reduce the European public sphere to an empty shell.

A less restrictive perspective has been adopted by Eder and Kantner (2000) and Eder *et al.* (2000), who maintain that due to the complexity of multi-level politics, one may not necessarily find a strong orientation of public communication just towards European institutions. In their view, the Europeanization of policies and regulations may instead lead to a coordination and convergence between various national public spheres, in the sense that increasingly the same topics are discussed at the same time and with the same frame of relevance. Eder *et al.*’s insistence that direct references to

the EU are not a necessary precondition for the Europeanization of public spheres constitutes an important missing piece of the puzzle. However, by speaking of “common frame of relevance”, their notion is essentially open to similar criticisms as Gerhards’ focus on a European frame or perspective (cf. Risse 2003). Ironically, their conceptualization also only partially conforms to what one of the three authors recently described as the two principal analytical elements of the public sphere: the visibility and connectivity of communication (Trenz 2004).

Concerning the first feature, Eder *et al.*’s view neglects the fact that even if the same topics are discussed at the same time, as long as the European dimension is not visible in media coverage, one can hardly term this as constituting Europeanization. Consider the example of the wide-spread and more or less simultaneous debates on asylum policies in different European countries during the 1990s, following discussions on the supranational European-level and the subsequent Dublin Agreement (cf. Koopmans & Erbe 2004: 100, Koopmans, Erbe & Meyer forthcoming). In this case, the fact that these asylum policies originated on the European level were hardly mentioned in the media coverage of these debates, which means that one could not speak of a Europeanization of national public spheres, since the public perceived the issues as belonging purely to national debates. If anything, this example illustrates the nature of the public sphere deficit, rather than being a solution to it. Consequently, “the visibility of communication is the necessary precondition of the public sphere: it denotes that European media and the public observe communication with reference to European politics” (Trenz 2004: 292).

Concerning the second criterion – the connectivity of communication – Risse (2002) has pointed out that it is not sufficient that the same topics be discussed at the same time and with the similar level of relevance in different national public sphere. Otherwise, the Eder *et al.* definition suffers from the opposite problem of Gerhards’ view, namely that it is already *too flexible*, making it almost impossible not to find a Europeanization of national public spheres. Instead, it is necessary to also have some interconnection and mutual exchanges between these national public spheres through discursive interaction. This means that national public spheres have to be in contact with one another and be open to fellow European speakers, who are treated as legitimate participants in national discourses and debates. This horizontal type of Europeanization does not consist so much of direct references to supranational European actors and themes, but rather increased attention for public debates and mobilization in other European countries. As a result of European integration, political developments in other member states increasingly have important repercussions on the domestic economic and political systems. A greater focus on what happens on the other side of the fence is thus just as much a cause of Europeanization as looking towards Brussels.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Drawing on the various conceptualizations discussed in the previous section, this study will now measure three different theoretically plausible forms of the Europeanization of public communication and mobilization (cf. Koopmans & Erbe 2004, Koopmans, Erbe & Meyer forthcoming).

- (1) *Supranational Europeanization*: the development of a “genuine” supranational European public sphere, structurally similar to existing national public spheres, with European-level mass media, political parties, interest groups, social movements, and other collective actors all taking active part in political debates. As indicated, such a full-fledged European public sphere seems unlikely for the moment, but this does not exclude the possibility of its partial emergence, for instance in specific policy domains.
- (2) *Vertical Europeanization*: the establishment of communicative linkages between the national and the European institutional level, which occurs by European topics and European actors becoming increasingly part of national communicative spaces. Two basic variants of this pattern can be identified, namely a bottom-up one, where national actors address European actors or make reference to European issues, and a top-down one, where European actors intervene in national policies and public debates in the name of European regulations and common interests.
- (3) *Horizontal Europeanization*: the creation of communicative linkages between different European countries through the diffusion of public opinion and political debates from one public sphere to another. One may distinguish a weak and a strong variant. In the weak variant, the media in one country merely cover what happens within the national political spaces of other member states, such as debates and public contestations, but without representing communicative interaction between actors from different countries. In the stronger variant, actors from one country increasingly participate in political communication and mobilization in the public sphere of another member state, for instance by explicitly addressing or referring to specific actors or relevant policies.

The present analysis measures these different theoretically possible forms of the Europeanization process across three comparative dimensions – countries, time, and policy domains (see Koopmans & Statham 2002). First, in this study, I focus on the case studies of Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom.⁸ This cross-national set of countries was chosen in order to include three of the five most important EU member states in terms of size, and to provide for sufficient variation along potentially relevant dimensions, such as the date of entry into the EU, the different political systems (e.g. federal versus centralized, majoritarian versus consensus), and support for European integration (e.g. traditional widespread Euroskepticism in the UK, compared to a rather strong pro-European elite consensus in Germany).

⁸ At *Europub*, we also looked at France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Preliminary results for these countries are available at the project’s website (<http://europub.wz-berlin.de>).

Second, the Europeanization process is studied along a time dimension by comparing the years 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2002. If Europeanization is a process, as the name implies, then there should be a discernible trend towards more focusing on European actors and issues over the years, as a result of advancing European integration. Studying Europeanization over time also enables one to investigate to what extent important institutional changes – such as the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 or the *de facto* introduction of the common currency in 1999 – have had an impact on levels and forms of Europeanization of public discourses.

Third, the emergence of a European public sphere is examined across several different policy domains, characterized by a varying degree and form of involvement of European institutions. The choice of domains is based on the EU's pillar structure, as stipulated in the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties, which defines different distributions of political competences for decision-making, policy-development, and implementation between the national and European levels. Given the importance of the first pillar as the driving force behind integration, two issue areas belonging to the common market framework of the European Communities are chosen. Similarly, two cases are selected from policy areas outside the Treaty structure, in order to include an example of a more socio-economic topic, as well as one dealing with a cultural and educational issue. Accordingly, the following different policy fields are selected:

- Common market policies (Pillar 1):
 - **Monetary politics**: currency politics and interest rate adjustments (e.g. introduction of the euro, the Stability and Growth Pact)
 - **Agriculture**: subsidies, livestock and dairy quotas, animal disease control (e.g. BSE, EU quota regulations, GATT negotiations on agricultural subsidies)
- Foreign and defense policies (Pillar 2):
 - **Troop deployment** for both military and humanitarian purposes (e.g. former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq)
- Justice and internal policies (Pillar 3):
 - **Immigration politics** (e.g. Schengen cooperation, asylum and refugee policies)
- Cooperation outside the Treaty structure (socio-economic):
 - **Retirement and pensions** (e.g. retirement age, pensions funds)
- Cooperation outside the Treaty structure (culture and identity):
 - **Education** (e.g. primary, secondary, and tertiary education, Bologna process)

Finally, given the present research question, it appears reasonable to also include the meta-field of **European integration** itself – in the strict sense a *polity* rather than a *policy* issue – which embraces the institutional and normative issues of European integration not referring to Europe's role in a specific substantive issue field, such as matters of the EU's institutional structure, its collective identity, its normative foundations, as well as the issue of EU enlargement.

Data Basis

This study relies on empirical data gathered as part of the *Europub* research project, which was collected using the methodology of *political claims analysis* (Koopmans & Statham 1999). This approach was inspired by protest event studies of social movement, but extends this methodology to include not only demonstrations and other unconventional protest forms, but also discursive features such as public statements, interviews, or press conferences.⁹ A political claim is defined as a strategic act of political communication in the public sphere and consists of the expression of a political opinion or demand through any form of physical or verbal action – for instance press conferences, demonstrations, criticisms, or decisions – and which originates from any type of collective actor, such as government officials, political parties, NGOs, or interest groups. A political claim can be broken down into different elements, for each of which a number of variables and subvariables can be coded for subsequent analysis. The four broad categories most relevant to the present analysis are the following (although the ideal claim would contain all of the following elements, at times one of these pieces of information may be missing from a statement, in which case no entry was coded):

1. *Claimant*: who makes the claim?
2. *Addressee*: at whom is the claim directed?
3. *Issue*: what is the claim about?
4. *Object actor*: who or what would be affected if the claim were realized?

For each of these four variables, the geographical or polity level at which they are situated were coded, and the results were then categorized in this study according to the following five political spaces: national (own country), national (other European), national (non-European), transnational European, and transnational non-European.¹⁰ National (other European) refers to the respective public spheres of all European countries apart from the one in which the claim is reported in the media. This category includes not only the twenty-seven current and future member states of the European Union, but also all European states apart from Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union. National

⁹ At the same time, this method also goes beyond traditional forms of media content analyses by focusing not only on how media professionals frame the particular subject matter, but also considering the role of non-media political actors and, more importantly, the relations between them, their role in public debates, and the positions they take with regard to specific issues. Traditional methods could at best provide an indication of the frequency and co-occurrences of different actors and issues mentioned in the media, but do not enable one to establish the communicative interactions, linkages, and relations between these factors, which is necessary for distinguishing between the different forms of a Europeanization of public spheres (Koopmans 2003).

¹⁰ Consider, for instance, the following fictitious statement reported in the German media: “The European Commission (*claimant*) issues a statement in which it criticizes the German government (*addressee*) for its continued breach of the Stability and Growth Pact (*issue*), arguing that it could have negative repercussions on other member states (*object actor*).” Here, the claimant would be of a transnational European scope, the addressee would be a national from the same country in which the claim was reported, the issue would refer to the transnational European political space, and the object actor to nationals of other European countries.

(non-European) refers to all countries from the rest of the world and their national public spheres.¹¹ The transnational European political space includes all supranational European institutions and common policies, most notably those of the European Union, but also others like the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) or the Council of Europe. We are therefore speaking about genuine “Europeanization”, as opposed to just “EU-ization” (although the latter may certainly be the most important feature of the former). Finally, transnational non-European encompasses all global supranational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Court of Justice, or the United Nations (UN), as well as international treaties and conventions.

The claims in the three countries were drawn from a set of newspaper articles. The print media is thus treated as a representation for the publicly visible part of the various forms of claims-making in national public spheres. This is certainly not the only arena for presenting claims, since some actors are either less dependent upon the mass media by virtue of enjoying direct access to relevant decision-makers, whilst others are less able to influence the mass media and thus need to resort to alternative communication channels. However, one can reasonably assume that the printed media is one of the most important arenas, and that most actors will, at one stage or another, use it in order to make their views public (Della Porta & Caiani 2004). Similarly, not all attempts at making public claims will reach the columns of the news media. For the present research question, however, it is precisely the publicly visible claims that matter, since by definition only those that become public can contribute to a Europeanization of public spheres (Koopmans 2003).

The various claims were obtained from four different types of newspapers, namely two daily quality newspapers of a nation-wide reach and a moderately center-right and left-liberal political affiliation respectively, as well a regional paper, and a tabloid. The papers selected were the following: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Leipziger Rundschau*, and *Bild Zeitung* in Germany, *El País*, *El ABC*, *La Vanguardia*, and *El Mundo* in Spain, and *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Sun* in the United Kingdom.¹² By focusing on the most important newspapers in each country in terms of readership, and different types in terms of the target audience, this selection is believed to offer a fairly comprehensive and reliable representation of the print media landscape in the three countries.

The data was coded from Lexis-Nexis or microfilm versions of the newspapers by trained coding assistants using a standardized codebook, with subsequent conventional inter-coder reliability tests. Owing to the limited resources and the labor-intensive nature of the type of content coding employed, not all issues of all newspapers for all years could be coded. Consequently, a sampling strategy was employed. Concerning the two quality papers in each country, two issues per week for

¹¹ It is worth pointing out that within each of the national political spaces, one could have additionally drawn the regional, local, and sectoral levels. Nonetheless, for the sake of brevity as well as clarity, these subnational spaces are left out of the picture and treated as part of the larger national political spaces.

¹² Given that no genuine tabloid was present in Spain, the choice of *El Mundo* depended on the particular composition of the national media landscape.

the years 2000 and 2002, and one issue per week for the years 1990 and 1995 were chosen. The regional and tabloid newspapers were only coded for the year 2000 on the basis of one issue every two weeks. In order to overcome this bias, and ensure that the results would not be skewed towards the more recent years which have a higher density, the data was weighed in such a way that each year would contribute equally to the overall result. Finally, in this study I focus only on the analysis of the factual coverage of statements and events in newspaper articles, leaving out any comments and evaluations made by reporters or editors, such as opinion pieces or editorials.¹³ For more detailed information on the coding rules, I wish to refer to the *Europub* codebook, which is available online.¹⁴

Operationalizing Europeanization of Public Communication

In recent years, several studies have measured the emergence of a European public sphere by analyzing media reporting and debates on particular European issues, such as the participation of Jörg Haider's extremist party in the Austrian government, the introduction of the euro, the BSE epidemic, the issue of EU enlargement, or the corruption scandal of the Santer Commission (e.g. Grundmann 1999, Eder & Kantner 2000, Trenz 2000, 2002, Meyer 2002, Van de Steeg 2004). As Risse (2003) points out, most of these studies have observed that European issues are being discussed and reported in the media of different European countries at the same time and in a similar fashion. Furthermore, particular European themes are framed in a quite similar manner, leading to similar interpretative schemes and structures of meaning. Not surprising then, these studies tend to be more optimistic concerning the emergence and existence of a European public sphere than those authors who merely measure the salience of European issues and actors in national news coverage compared to regional, national, or global questions (Gerhards 2000, Peter *et al.* 2003, Kevin 2003). Observing commonalities in media reporting of different countries, in terms of similar criteria of relevance and similar frames of reference when discussing European issues, supposedly constitutes an important precondition for the presence of a transnational European space of communication and deliberation.

Despite the valuable insights provided by these studies, Gerhards (2002: 145) argues that they suffer from two important methodological problems. On the one hand, he maintains that debates such as the corruption scandal constitute very exceptional moments, which cannot be taken as representative of how the media usually selects and deals with different topics and speakers in their coverage. It is therefore hard to draw valid generalizations from these specific and selective case studies. On the other hand, studies which focus on a single event or topic are unable to satisfactorily uphold the claim that there is an increasing Europeanization of a public sphere, for which a longitudinal time series analysis encompassing several years, ideally across different countries, would

¹³ The *Europub* project did undertake a very extensive separate analysis of the media's own voice (see Pfetsch 2004 for the main results), but this dimension needs to be left out of the present study due to space limitations.

¹⁴ At <http://europub.wz-berlin.de/Data/Codebooks%20questionnaires/D2-1-claims-codebook.pdf>.

be needed. This thesis, and the research project on which it builds, is the first serious attempt of meeting this highly demanding empirical task. By focusing on the period from 1990 and 2002 in three different countries, this study is better situated to represent general trends in the Europeanization of national public spheres. Furthermore, the present approach goes beyond previous research by focusing on the broader institutional setup in which topics such as the BSE epidemic, the Haider debate, or EU enlargement are embedded, and is thus able to offer a more encompassing explanation of the Europeanization process.

Following Koopmans and Erbe (2004) and Koopmans, Erbe and Meyer (forthcoming), this study proposes that trends in the Europeanization of national public spheres can be measured by investigating different patterns of communicative flows, and assessing the relative density of public communication within and between different political spaces. In Figure 1, the aforementioned five different geographical and polity levels, according to which political claims were categorized, are represented by a set of concentric circles, numbered from 1 to 5. In terms of this model, the three different theoretically possible forms of a Europeanization of public spheres – supranational, horizontal, and vertical – are now constituted by the relative density of communicative linkages within and between these five spaces (symbolized in the figure by arrows a to r).¹⁵

According to this operationalization, one may speak of the emergence of a *supranational European public sphere* to the extent that claimants, addressees, issues, and object actors all have a transnational European scope (meaning they are all situated in circle 3). An example would be the European Parliament urging the Council to undertake institutional reforms for improving the EU's efficiency in policy-making (represented by arrow k). Moreover, a second form of supranational Europeanization occurs whenever political claims relating to Europe and its institutions refers to political spaces situated outside of Europe (i.e. circles 4 and 5). Such political claims constitute the foreign political dimension of the European polity, for example when the EU and USA criticize one another's position in the GATT negotiations (arrow l), or when the EU General Affairs Council agrees on embedding the WEU in NATO structures (arrow m). The degree to which one can speak of the evolution of a supranational European public sphere is then measured by the relative amount of all communicative action that conforms to both these supranational patterns of claims-making. Consequently, a fully supranationalized European public sphere would have a density of 100% of such communicative linkages.

Concerning the model of *vertical Europeanization*, one may again distinguish a number of varieties in which vertical communicative linkages between the national and the European political space can be made. On the one hand, this form may occur whenever claims refer at the same time to the own country and the supranational European level, without making reference to other European

¹⁵ The following explanation draws heavily on the operationalization developed as part of the *Europub* project, which first appeared in Koopmans (2003).

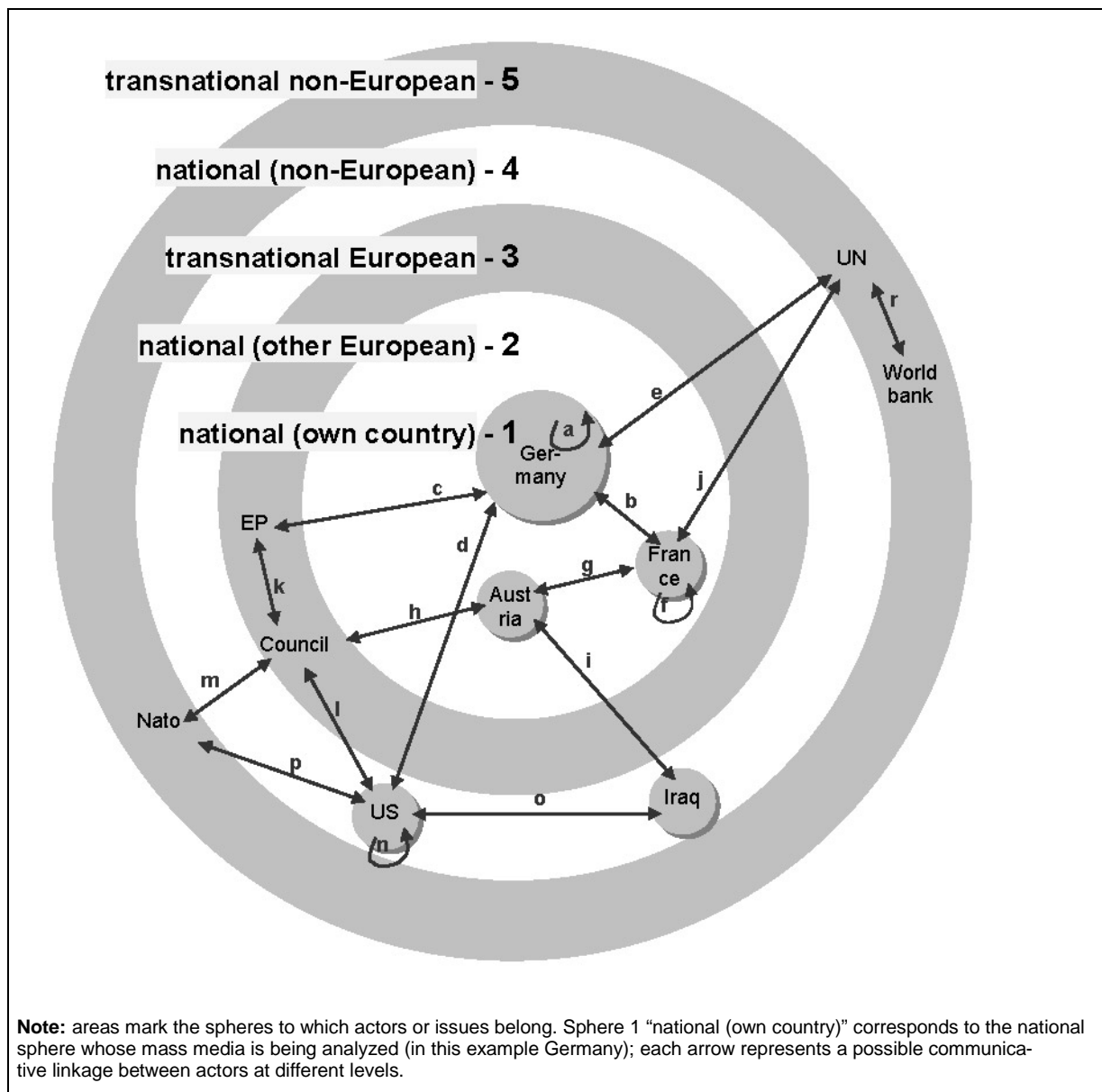


Figure 1: Model of intra- and inter-sphere communication from the perspective of national media from European countries (Source: Koopmans & Erbe 2004: 102, to be reprinted in Koopmans, Erbe & Meyer forthcoming).

countries (arrow c). This includes both the bottom-up as well as the top-down variant discussed earlier. An example of the former would be a national claimant directly addressing a European institution, or national claimants addressing national authorities, asking them to promote the group’s interests on the European level. An example of the latter is when European-level actors address national actors regarding common European issues and interests. Alternatively, vertical Europeanization could be said to occur whenever the media of one country report on the relations and interactions between European institutions or actors and another European country (arrow h). In this case, the four elements of the claim would only have scopes belonging to the “national (other European)” and “transnational European” categories. Finally, it is also possible to have multi-level

linkages with both vertical and horizontal features, such as when the media report at the same time on the relations of the own country with other European countries and the European supranational level. This occurs, for instance, when government representatives of several member states issue a common statement on some European issue, such as proposals for institutional reform of the EU.

With regard to *horizontal Europeanization*, the stronger variant is brought about by direct communicative linkages between the political spaces of the own country and other European countries, without reference to the supranational European level. In this case, claimants, addressees, issues, and object actors would have scopes of either “national (own country)” or “national (other European)” (arrow b). An example would be if a national claimant addressed a political actor in another country, or if a national actor directed a claim to a domestic addressee, but concerning an issue that involves another European country, thus inserting a European dimension in the domestic public debate. The weak variant of horizontal Europeanization occurs whenever the domestic media merely reports on what happens within the national political spaces of other European countries (arrow f) or relations among other European countries (arrow g). Similarly, a further possibility relates to the national media reporting on the external relations of other European countries with non-European countries (arrow i) or institutions (arrow j). In both cases, however, the degree to which such coverage represents a form of Europeanization of the national public sphere can only be evaluated in a relative sense. Horizontal Europeanization may be said to occur if coverage of other European countries is over-represented in comparison to that of non-European countries, for instance if in the German public sphere references to France are much more frequent than the United States, or if coverage about the foreign policies of other European countries is more common than the international and supranational politics of non-European states (e.g. relations between the US and Russia).

It is important to note that despite these Europeanized forms of claims-making, there are also three types of communicative linkages that are obvious competitors to Europeanized political communication. The most prominent of these types is when claims in the national media remain solely confined to the national political space. An example would be a German newspaper article reporting on a German claimant making demands on a German addressee in the name of the interests of a German beneficiary, with a set of aims and frames that refer only to the German political space. Moreover, even if a transnationalization of public communication and mobilization does occur, this must not necessarily be of a European dimension. For instance, it is possible that most of the resulting linkages beyond the national level completely bypass the European level by referring solely to non-European countries (arrow d) or to supranational institutions (arrow e). Finally, a substantial part of foreign political news coverage consists of the internal affairs of non-European countries (arrow n), relations between such countries (arrow o), between them and supranational institutions (arrow p), or among supranational institutions (arrow r). If such forms of political communication and contestation receive prominent coverage that increases relative to other types of coverage over time, one may

certainly consider them as an indicator of a denationalization or transnationalization of the national public spheres, but not of a more specific and delimited form of *Europeanized* public communication.

Summing up, this study on the print media's role in European integration is based on a notion of Europeanization of public spheres that goes beyond the usual simple frequency measures of European actors and issues in national media, or comparing how a particular topic is covered in different countries. Instead, it is argued that one can speak of a Europeanized public sphere to the extent that a substantial, and over time increasing, part of public communication and mobilization as reported by the national mass media progressively transcends national borders, but remains at least partly grounded in Europe. Media reporting about the internal and foreign affairs of other member states constitutes a borderline case and can only be interpreted as a form of Europeanization if it is increasingly more prominent compared to such coverage of non-European countries.

V. THE DIMENSIONAL SCOPE OF PUBLIC CLAIMANTS

This section considers where the different types of political actors involved in debates in the public sphere originate from, followed in the next section by an investigation of the multi-level structure of claims reported in the media, taking into account not just the claimants, but also the addresses, object actors, and substantive issues at stake.¹⁶ Moreover, in Section IX, the study will also consider the important question of which types of actors – such as state and party actors, civil society actors, the media – participate in political discussions, which should give an indication regarding the access to the public sphere enjoyed by actors characterized by different degrees of power and institutionalization.

Levels of Europeanization of political communication across policy issues

In all of the three countries, actors from the same country in which the claim is reported – from local, regional, and particularly national levels – dominate in public communication and mobilization, accounting for 45%, 50%, and 68% of all claims in Spain, Germany, and the UK respectively during the period from 1990 to 2002 (see Table 1 in the appendix). Comparing European-level actors and nationals of other European states, in all three countries the latter are more prominent in the public sphere, although in Spain their share is almost identical. Quite striking in this regard, however, are especially the low levels attained by these actors in the United Kingdom, who account for only 7% and 12% of all claims. In Spain these values are significantly higher – 20% in both cases – whilst in Germany they are 13% and 22%. The values for claimants from non-EU countries and supra- and international organizations are very similar across the board. The former are equal to 12% in all three countries, whereas the latter do not exceed 3% in any of the cases. However, these total percentages are only of limited interest for the present purposes, given that they aggregate averages across all seven policy fields, and may thereby conceal significant variations across the different issue areas.

Figures 2–4 (visualizing results from Table 1) indicate that in public claims-making on the issue of monetary politics, European actors play a much more important role in public communication. In Germany (Figure 2), 45% of public statements on monetary issues are voiced by German actors, but, at the same time, political actors from the European level account for 17% of all claims. In Spain, the role of European claimants is even more pronounced, with as much as 32% of all instances of public political communication in monetary politics coming from the various European institutions (Figure 3). National actors are only slightly more present in the media (with 36%). Not surprisingly, the UK, a member state that has not adopted the euro, is the odd one out (Figure 4). Here, almost 71%

¹⁶ The subsequent two sections thereby follow to some extent Koopmans and Erbe's (2004) approach for the German case in 2000, but significantly expand on those findings by also including differences across countries and years. In Koopmans, Erbe & Meyer (forthcoming), we will analyze in this manner all of the seven countries of our research project.

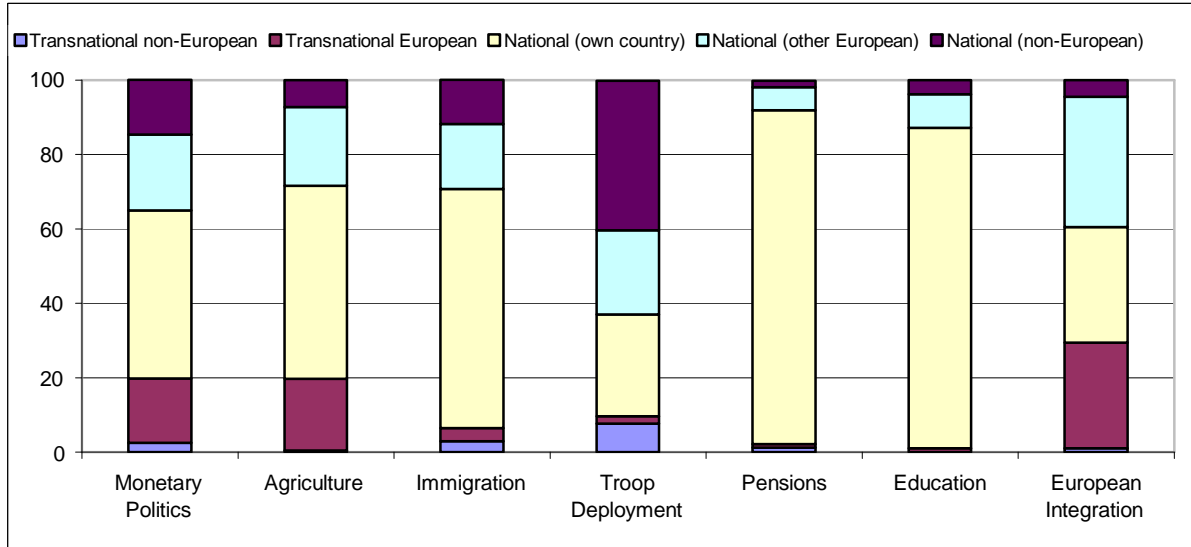


Figure 2: Dimensional scope of claimants by policy field in Germany (N = 2803)

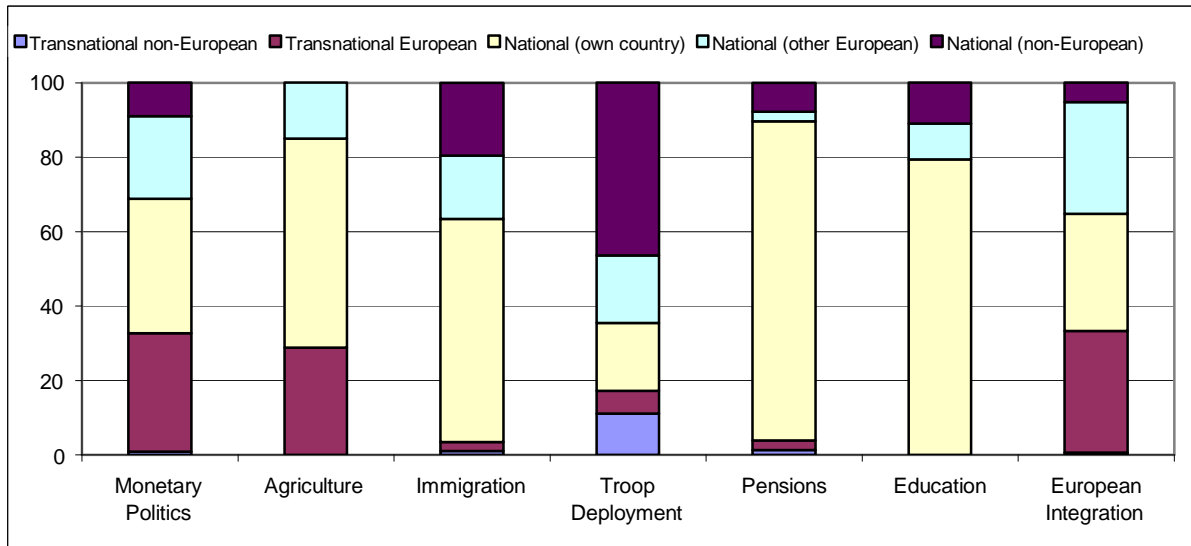


Figure 3: Dimensional scope of claimants by policy field in Spain (N = 1130)

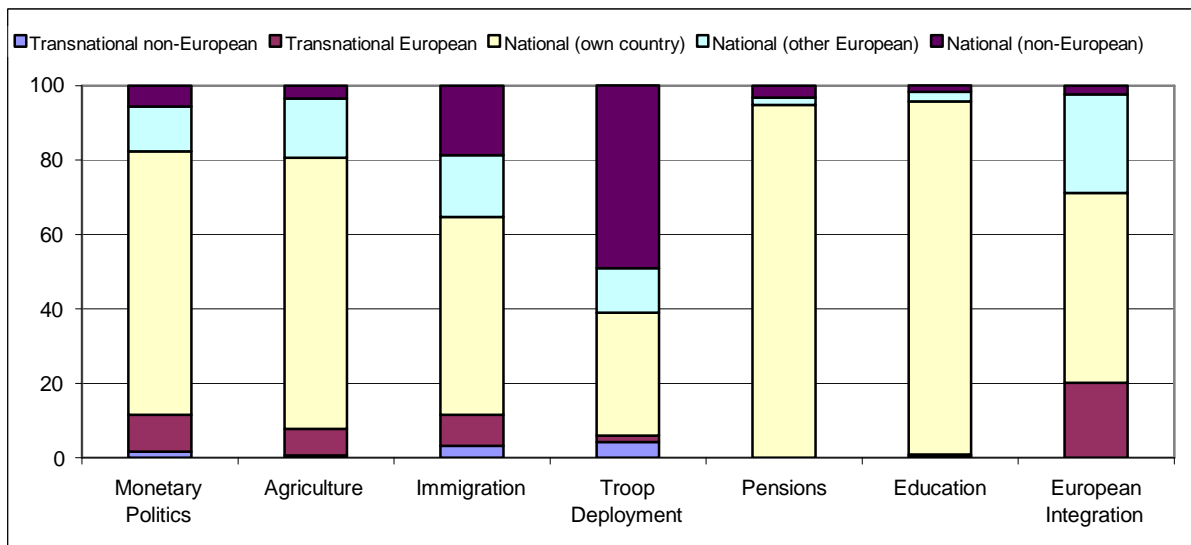


Figure 4: Dimensional scope of claimants by policy field in the UK (N = 2069)

of claims continue to come from British nationals, while only 10% come from the EU. Since monetary policy continues to be controlled domestically, the role of European-level claimants is as a result markedly less significant in the newspaper coverage. A similar pattern can be observed for public claims coming from nationals of other European countries. In Germany and Spain, 20% and 22% respectively come from speakers from states other than the own, which as part of EMU now play an important role domestically, whereas in the UK this value is only 12%. Moreover, in the German media one can also detect a substantial share of claims (15%) coming from non-EU nationals, especially the USA, explained by the continued importance of the dollar in the field monetary politics. Conversely, in all of the three countries, the role of actors from other supra- and international institutions is rather marginal.

The field of agriculture exhibits strikingly similar results. In both Germany and Spain, the dominant role of political actors from the own country (52% and 56% respectively) is complemented by a noteworthy share of speakers from European institutions (19% and 29%) and other countries (21% and 15%). Again, however, the UK partly defies this pattern. Although the number of speakers from other European countries is similar to Germany and Spain (at 16%), the percentages of public statements by national actors reported in the media is disproportionately higher (73%), and the role of the European institutions is by all measures insignificant (a mere 7%). Even though the UK does not have a large agricultural sector in comparison to other member states such as France and Spain, the fact that the European dimension is virtually non-existent whenever articles in British newspaper do deal with agricultural issues is a noteworthy indicator. Compared to monetary politics, EU institutions play a very significant role in British agriculture, not least through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and legal provisions meant to ensure the free movement of goods as part of the Common Markets pillar. Even in Germany, like the UK traditionally an industrially oriented economy, public statements on agriculture from the European supranational level are reported on more frequently.

Indeed, the only issue field in which there appears to be in all three countries clear evidence in favor of a truly Europeanized public sphere – both vertically and horizontally – is on the process of European integration. Again national actors dominate media reporting on this topic (31% both in Germany and Spain) and again their share is disproportionately higher in the United Kingdom (at 51%). However, in all three countries, European-level actors and nationals from other EU member states enjoy a quite prominent role. In the UK, public statements from the EU account for 20%, in comparison to 28% in Germany and 33% in Spain. The Spanish media is in fact the only one which covers statements by the EU institutions on the integration process more frequently than by national political actors. Of further notice is the fact that in all the three countries, actors from other European states appear with a relatively high degree of frequency, ranging from 27% in the UK, 30% in Spain, to 35% in Germany.

After considering the three issues in which the competences of the European institutions are most strongly pronounced, we now turn towards the fields of troop deployment and immigration, which correspond respectively to Pillars II and III of the European Union institutional structure. These fields continue to be much less strongly institutionalized at the European level than those belonging to the first pillar, with EU decision-making being more intergovernmental and less supranational. However, the level of intergovernmental activity at the European level is far from insignificant, and therefore the present findings that European-level actors and also nationals from other member states do not play nearly as an important role in the media coverage as in the three previous policy fields can be seen as rather surprising.

Regarding the issue of troop deployment, in all three countries the percentage of statements made by European-level institutions and actors reported in the newspapers is extremely low: 2% in both Germany and the UK, and 6% in Spain. Similar figures are found in the immigration field. Troop deployment is, in fact, the only topic in which actors from non-EU countries – most notably the USA – account in all three countries for roughly half of all claim-makers, and are therefore even more important than nationals from the own country and from other EU member states. In immigration, they are not as prominent, but still more so than other European nationals in Spain and the UK. Finally, troop deployment is also the field in which the role of supranational actors beyond the Europe, such as NATO and the UN, is the strongest of the seven issue areas, although they play virtually no role in immigration. Consequently, particularly troop deployment, and to a lesser extent immigration, appear in all three countries as strongly transnationalized policy fields, but not ones in which European-level institutions or actors from other European countries play an important role. Even though the European Union has begun deploying troops only recently, such as Operation Artemis in 2003, it is surprising that the media has failed to adequately report on the widespread discussion about the need for military capabilities, as evidenced by the inadequacy of Europe's military resources in the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts during the 1990s. Consequently, especially regarding the issue of troop deployment, the weakness of the European dimension in political discourses must be perceived as a very troubling indicator, in view of the European Union's attempt of establishing a genuine and effective Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the inability of Europe to act with a powerful and unitary voice in the recent controversial military conflict against Iraq.

Finally, moving towards the two issues outside the EU's Treaty framework, education and pension politics, the results indicate that both are, as expected, highly dominated by national actors. This is not surprising given that in both fields, it is the national institutions that continue to be preeminent, and the European institutions have no formal competences but at most a coordinating task. As a result, vertical Europeanization – i.e. statements by representatives of the European institutions – is by all measures non-existent, although in view of recent EU-supported coordination efforts such as the Bologna process as well as the Socrates and Erasmus initiatives, one could have expected some

higher values. Furthermore, for the education field, there exists a slightly higher, albeit still very modest, indication for horizontal Europeanization in Germany and Spain (10% and 8% respectively), but not the United Kingdom (only 3%). Claims by other supranational institutional actors and from nationals outside the EU play no role whatsoever. In general, therefore, one can state that media reporting in both fields is still predominantly and overwhelmingly nationalized in all three countries.

Trends over time in the Europeanization of political communication

Europeanization of political communication in national public spheres is not just a matter of relative degree, but needs to be considered over time as a developing process (Koopmans 2003). Even if the previous results do not indicate high levels of Europeanization, it is possible that in recent years there have been important increases in relative terms, and which may continue in the future, leading to genuinely Europeanized public discourses in due course. Moreover, during the last few years, many important developments have occurred in the European Union, such as the introduction of the euro, the 1995 and 2004 enlargements, and the Convention on the Future of Europe. Generally, one should expect political communication in the media coverage to follow suit, and take these changes into account, in order to keep the public adequately informed about significant developments, as well as European policymakers concerning the demands and wishes of the citizenry.

		In % within year				Total	
		1990	1995	2000	2002	In %	(N)
Germany	Transnational non-European	2.6	3.7	2.1	2.2	2.4	68
	Transnational European	9.5	8.2	13.6	14.9	12.8	358
	National (own country)	45.2	46.7	55.3	48.7	50.4	1413
	National (other European)	23.9	26.5	20.2	20.2	21.5	604
	National (non-European)	18.8	14.9	8.7	14.1	12.8	360
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	2803
Spain	Transnational non-European		2.9	2.1	0.8	1.6	18
	Transnational European	18.1	9.4	21.4	22.9	20.1	227
	National (own country)	37.9	53.6	43.6	46.4	45.1	510
	National (other European)	21.6	18.8	22.8	18.2	20.7	234
	National (non-European)	22.4	15.2	10.1	11.6	12.5	141
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	1130
UK	Transnational non-European	0.6	3.0	2.2	0.6	1.4	30
	Transnational European	5.8	5.1	7.8	6.9	6.7	138
	National (own country)	62.9	63.1	73.5	67.4	67.8	1402
	National (other European)	11.6	16.0	10.8	11.2	11.9	246
	National (non-European)	19.1	12.7	5.7	14.0	12.2	253
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	2069

Table 2: Dimensional scope of claimants by year in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

To investigate the empirical validity of this expectation, it is therefore imperative to study not just the overall presence of political actors reported in the news media, but also how the levels have evolved from 1990 to 2002. In this regard, however, Table 2 indicates that in none of the three countries there have been spectacular changes in the levels of public claimants. In Germany, the percentages of national political actors reported on in the news media has remained constant throughout the years, whereas in Spain and the United Kingdom they have on the whole even increased in prominence between 1990 and 2002. Adding insult to injury, actors from the supranational European level and from other European countries have not seen any greater coverage in the media (in some cases even decreasing ones), which raises serious doubts as to the existence of vertical and horizontal forms of Europeanization of national public spheres. However, it is important not to overestimate these preliminary results, since there may again be significant differences across the seven different policy fields.

Table 3 does indeed bear out this expectation. Looking at the results for the field of monetary politics, one can see that in Germany and Spain, the percentage of public statements made by German and Spanish nationals respectively has continuously declined during the twelve-year reference period. In 1990, as much as 62% of claims reported in the German print media came from within Germany, whilst by 2002 this number had dropped to a mere 40%. In Spain, the fall has been even more spectacular, from 63% in 1990 to a meager 11% in 2002. In both countries, this decline in the importance of national political actors has been accompanied with *a steady raise in the role of European-level actors*: in Germany from 6% in 1990 to 21% in 2002, and in Spain from 4% in 1995 to 51% in 2002. In Spain, therefore, political claimants from the institutions of the European Union are already significantly more important than national actors. Such a declining importance of national claimants, coupled with a respective increase of EU actors in the public sphere, is certainly consistent with an increased vertical Europeanization.

Conversely, the data provides less of an indication for the existence of horizontal Europeanization in these two countries. In Germany, the share of nationals of other European countries making political claims in the public sphere has actually decreased (from 22% in 1990 to 19% in 2002, after reaching a peak of 30% in 1995); currently, even non-EU nationals appear to be equally prominent. In Spain, there has been a slight increase of other European nationals, from 13% in 1990 to 19% in 2002, but certainly not of the same dimensions as actors from the European institutions. Finally, it is not surprising that the United Kingdom – which, as highlighted previously, had very low numbers of claimants with a European dimension to begin with – exhibits trends of neither vertical nor horizontal Europeanization. The dominant position of national actors in the British public sphere on issues of monetary politics has remained constant at roughly 70%, as have the values for speakers from other polity levels.

		In % within issue field and year																															
		MON				AGR				IMM				TRP				PEN				EDU				EU I							
		90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02
Germany	Transnational non-European	4.4	3.3	1.7	2.1	1.1				4.3	3.9			1.9	2.3	12.6	22.4	4.5	0.6				2.5					2.9	1.8				
	Transnational European	5.9	11.1	21.1	20.6	16.2	15.4	14.9	28.1	6.5	2.0			5.8	2.3				6.1	1.8	4.2				2.5	5.7	1.0			21.0	23.2	27.3	35.0
	National (own country)	61.8	43.3	45.6	39.7	37.8	30.8	62.8	48.4	45.7	72.7	69.9	60.6	15.9	26.4	14.3	35.3	90.0	75.0	94.9	84.0	80.0	76.0	84.5	94.6	45.7	31.9	27.6	28.8				
	National (other European)	22.1	30.0	16.1	19.0	29.7	46.2	18.1	15.6	28.3	9.1	14.4	21.2	28.4	25.3	8.2	22.6	10.0	12.5	3.8	8.6	8.6	16.0	10.7	4.5	23.8	43.5	39.8	31.4				
	National (non-European)	5.9	12.2	15.6	18.5	16.2	7.7	3.2	7.8	15.2	18.2	9.8	10.6	53.4	33.3	49.0	35.7	8.3				0.6	2.5	5.7	8.0	3.9	0.9	6.7	1.4	5.3	3.1		
	Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	68	90	180	189	37	13	94	64	46	44	153	104	88	87	49	221	10	24	158	81	35	50	103	111	105	69	304	226					
Spain	Transnational non-European	2.0								1.1			1.1	13.3	25.0	5.0	5.3								3.6	1.0							
	Transnational European	25.0	3.8	35.6	50.8	33.3	33.3	25.6	31.4	12.5	3.4			6.3	6.3			10.0	5.4								29.3	35.7	29.8	38.8			
	National (own country)	62.5	62.3	33.7	11.1	66.7	66.7	69.2	40.0	18.8	50.0	60.2	68.9	28.1	13.3	3.1	30.0	100.0	84.2	83.8	89.5	100.0	50.0	73.1	83.8	29.3	39.3	30.9	31.6				
	National (other European)	12.5	30.2	21.8	19.0	5.1				28.6	25.0	6.3	21.6	13.3	18.8	26.7	6.3	30.0	5.4				25.0	19.2	2.7	31.7	14.3	34.0	25.5				
	National (non-European)	3.8			6.9	19.0					43.8	43.8	13.6	16.7	46.9	46.7	59.4	25.0	10.5	5.4	10.5	25.0				7.7	13.5	9.8	7.1	5.2	3.1		
	Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	16	53	101	63	3	3	39	35	16	16	88	90	32	15	32	20	2	19	37	19	6	4	26	37	41	28	191	98					
UK	Transnational non-European	3.0			1.7	1.4	1.7				6.3	9.1	6.5	1.0	1.2	9.9	13.5	1.2	1.3														
	Transnational European	8.7	4.5	9.3	13.8	5.3	6.8			10.5	18.2			9.7	8.2	4.8	1.4	0.6		1.3				0.6	17.1	13.9	21.6	24.7					
	National (own country)	75.4	77.3	65.7	71.7	65.8	100.0	71.2	71.9	68.8	45.5	58.1	50.0	22.9	21.1	51.4	39.3	50.0	100.0	97.2	93.0	100.0	86.3	96.2	95.6	46.3	52.8	57.8	43.8				
	National (other European)	11.6	10.6	14.5	10.1	15.8	20.3			15.8	18.2			16.1	19.4	12.0	23.9	2.7	8.6	50.0	2.3			5.0	0.6	3.9	31.7	31.9	19.6	28.1			
	National (non-European)	4.3	4.5	8.7	2.9	13.2	1.8			25.0	9.1	9.7	21.4	59.0	43.7	32.4	50.3	2.8				4.7	7.5	1.3	0.4	4.9	1.4	1.0	3.4				
	Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	69	66	172	138	38	16	59	57	16	11	31	98	83	71	37	163	2	15	36	43	80	80	156	228	41	72	102	89					

Table 3: Dimensional scope of claimants by issue field and year in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

Concerning the issue field of agriculture, one can again witness a decreasing prominence of national political actors in recent years: in Germany from 63% in 2000 to 48% in 2002, and in Spain from 69% in 2000 to 40% in 2002. The same period has seen a simultaneous increase in coverage on European-level political speakers (from 15% to 28% in Germany, and 26% to 31% in Spain).¹⁷ In the United Kingdom, however, national claimants have not lost any political clout. Agriculture continues to be a topic dominated by a select group of national British political actors, with the European dimension – both vertically and horizontally – not seeing any important increases throughout the years. Things are slightly different in media coverage on the topic of European integration, where in all countries there has been a raise in the number of speakers from the European level. At the same time, however, nationals from other European countries feature, on balance, less prominently and have generally not seen their share expand over the years.

As expected, the remaining four policy fields, which had low shares of European speakers and claimants from other European countries in the first place, also do not experience any significant changes in terms of horizontal and vertical Europeanization. In other words, this indicates that only in the fields where the role of national political actors is complemented by a significant number of representatives from the European supranational level and other European countries – i.e. the fields of monetary politics, European integration, and to some extent agriculture – do we also see any important changes in the relative degrees of the different claimants involved in political communication and mobilization across the years.

¹⁷ It is, however, debatable to what extent these changes are due to Europeanization, or simply the fact that pressures for agricultural reform, most prominently concerning the CAP, have increasingly been on the European agenda since 2000. I wish to acknowledge Geoffrey Edwards for pointing this out to me.

VI. THE MULTI-LEVEL STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL DISCOURSES

Even though it is very important to study from what geographical and polity levels political speakers that appear in the media originate from, an inspection of such claim-makers alone does not provide a sufficient basis for drawing conclusions about the nature of public communication. This is because according to our conceptualization, a Europeanization of public spheres may occur even if national actors continue to dominate newspaper coverage on most policy issues, as long as they increasingly refer in their political claims to policies, institutions, or interests related to the European level or other EU member states. Hence, this section will consider not only the different political claimants involved in public discourses, but also the question of who is addressed, whether the issue is of a European dimension, and which are the formulated substantive aims and frames.

For this purpose, we return to the operationalization of the various types of communicative linkages between different geo-political spaces outlined in Section IV. For reasons of clarity, the seventeen possible types of linkages that were distinguished in Figure 1 have been grouped into eleven main categories, which are shown in Table 4 according to the theoretical form of Europeanization they represent.¹⁸ Average percentages are given for all seven issues taken together, as well as excluding the issue of European integration. In contrast to the other policy domains, claims in this field have by definition a European dimension, and may therefore bias the overall average towards supranational and vertical forms of Europeanization (Koopmans & Erbe 2004).

The previous section has shown that national actors remain the most prominent speakers in the media coverage. Table 4 below indicates that even if all four elements of political claims are taken into account, public discourses in the media that are entirely confined to the own national political spaces continue to be by far the most important category in the three countries. In Germany, purely national claims – i.e. having a German claimant, addressee, issue, and object actor – account for 25% of claims across all seven policy fields, and 33% if one looks only at the six substantive policy fields excluding the meta-issue of European integration. In Spain, these values are 19% and 27% respectively, whereas in the United Kingdom they are 39% and 46%. At the same time, however, Table 4 indicates that if one includes all seven policy fields, Europeanized forms of claims-making are already more prevalent in Germany and Spain (58% and 64%) than those which make no reference to Europe whatsoever. In the UK this is not that case, since political discourses are significantly less Europeanized (44%). This is very much in line with the previous results, which showed that national political actors were most prominent in the UK, followed by Germany, and finally Spain. In other words, the public spheres of Germany and Spain are much more denationalized than in Great Britain and, on balance, Spain has the most Europeanized public sphere.

¹⁸ The letters in brackets in Table 4 show which categories correspond to which arrows in Figure 1 above.

		In % within country and issue fields					
		Germany		Spain		UK	
Form of public communication	Type of multi-level linkage [Letters refer to the corresponding arrows in Figure 1]	All 7 policy fields	6 policy fields (excl. Eur. Integration)	All 7 policy fields	6 policy fields (excl. Eur. Integration)	All 7 policy fields	6 policy fields (excl. Eur. Integration)
Non-Europeanized forms of claims-making		41.9	55.9	36.3	52.9	56.1	65.7
	Purely own country [a]	24.9	33.3	18.5	27.1	39.1	45.8
	Foreign relations own country outside Europe [d, e]	6.8	9.1	8.4	12.3	8.1	9.5
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe [o, p, r]	10.2	13.5	9.4	13.5	8.9	10.4
Europeanized forms of claims-making		58.1	44.1	63.7	47.1	43.9	34.3
Supranational	Purely supranational European [k]	6.7	4.2	12.9	9.5	3.4	1.8
	European-level foreign relations [l, m]	3.0	2.4	3.7	2.2	1.6	1.4
Vertical	Relations own country with supranational European level [c]	14.4	11.6	18.5	13.1	20.1	15.1
	Relations other European countries with supranational European level [h]	14.1	5.9	16.5	8.8	7.7	4.3
Mixed vertical/horizontal	Relations own country with other European countries and supranational European level [combination]	7.3	3.3	4.1	2.3	3.0	2.2
Horizontal	Relations own country and other European countries [b]	3.3	4.4	1.3	1.8	2.3	2.7
	Relations among and within other European countries [f, g]	4.2	5.6	3.3	4.5	1.9	2.3
	Relations other European countries with countries and institutions outside Europe [i, j]	5.1	6.8	3.5	4.9	3.8	4.5
Total (%)		100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)		2803	2099	1130	772	2069	1765

Table 4: Average multi-level linkages within claims

Comparing the three different forms of Europeanization, Table 4 shows that the vertical type is the most common type of claims-making. Altogether, 36% of claims (21% excluding the issue of European integration) in Germany, 39% (24%) in Spain, and 31% (22%) in the United Kingdom link the European to the national level in one way or another.¹⁹ If one looks only at claims related to the supranational European political space, it is surprising that relations between the own country and European-level actors and policies are covered more extensively in the British media than in Spain or Germany. This is to some extent offset, however, by the scarcity of coverage concerning the interactions between other European countries and the European Union (only 8% in the UK, compared to 14% in Germany and 17% in Spain).

Concerning horizontal Europeanization, 20% of claims in Germany, 12% in Spain, and 11% in the UK (same percentages in all three countries when excluding European integration) establish communicative linkages between two or more European countries. Moreover, most of the horizontal linkages belong to the weak variant in which national media report about claims by actors in other

¹⁹ These percentages are obtained by summing all vertical forms and adding those from the mixed category. The same applies for the horizontal categories.

European countries that do not refer to the own country. As previously argued, such claims can be seen as a form of Europeanization of political discourses only if they are over-represented when compared with the foreign news coverage of non-European countries. Yet, Table 4 does not suggest that this is necessarily the case, as claims belonging to international politics without any reference to Europe and its member states are more frequent (around 10% in all countries) than claims about relations between and within other European countries or their foreign relations (9% in Germany, 7% in Spain, 6% in the UK). With regard to cross-country differences, references to actors and policies in other European states have the lowest value in the British public sphere, thus confirming the general patterns found so far. On average, Germany and Spain pay more attention than the United Kingdom to the relations of the own country with other European nations, as well as domestic political events in other member states and their foreign relations.

Finally, confirming this study's expectation and the theoretical arguments found in the literature on the European public sphere, the supranational variant is indeed the least common form of Europeanization, with only 10% of all claims (7% excluding European integration) in Germany, 17% (12%) in Spain, and 5% (2%) in the United Kingdom belonging to this category.

However, as the analysis in the previous section has made clear, one needs to be careful in drawing conclusions about the Europeanization of public communication from these results, since one finds significant differences depending on the particular policy field. Figures 5 to 7 (see Table 5 in the appendix for the exact percentages) generally confirm the trends already seen in the previous discussion on claimants. The four issue fields with the highest percentages of claims which indicate no degrees of Europeanization are also the ones in which very low values of speakers from the supranational European level and other European countries were found, namely the issue areas of immigration, troop deployment, pensions, and education. On the other hand, in those two fields where the competences of the EU are greater, namely agriculture and monetary issues, the content of claims is far less nationalized. Although in the previous section we saw that national actors from the own country remained the most frequent claim-makers in these fields, the present figures suggest that their claims commonly refer to transnational geopolitical contexts beyond the own country. The data shows that only 30% of political claims on agriculture in Germany and Spain remained purely confined to the national level, whilst in the United Kingdom, 40% is focused completely on the domestic political sphere.²⁰ Purely national claims are even less frequent in the case of monetary politics for all three countries (29% in the UK, 13% in Germany, 9% in Spain).

If one looks only at the claims with reference to a supranational European actor or issue (Table 6), the European dimension is very much present in those fields where the EU is a relevant actor. By definition, 100% of claims in the field of European integration refer to the European level

²⁰ However, even in Germany and Spain, given the high concentration of regulative power in the field of agriculture at the European level, the frequency of claims without any reference to Europe whatsoever is still surprisingly high.

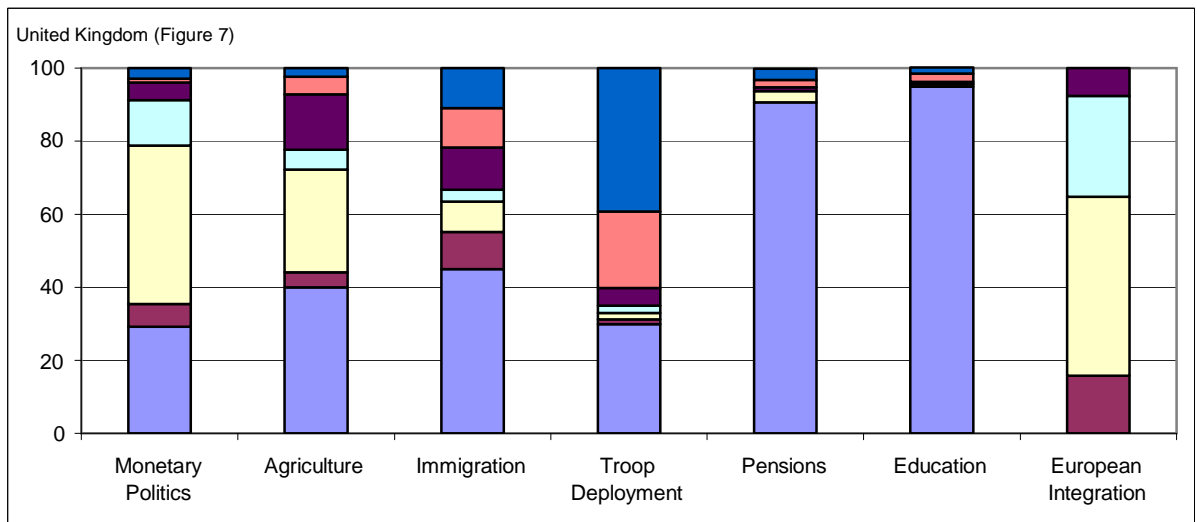
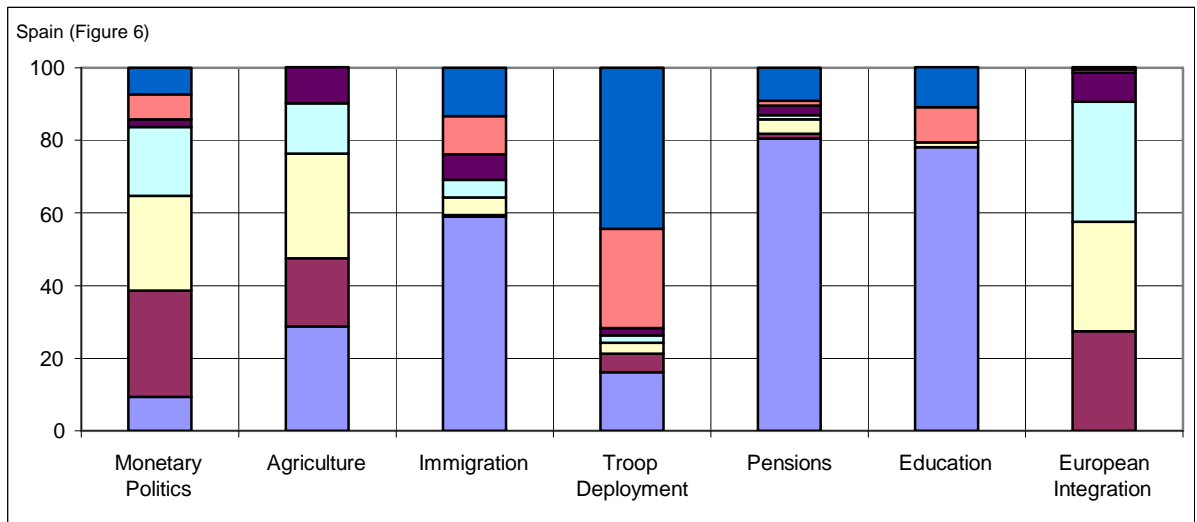
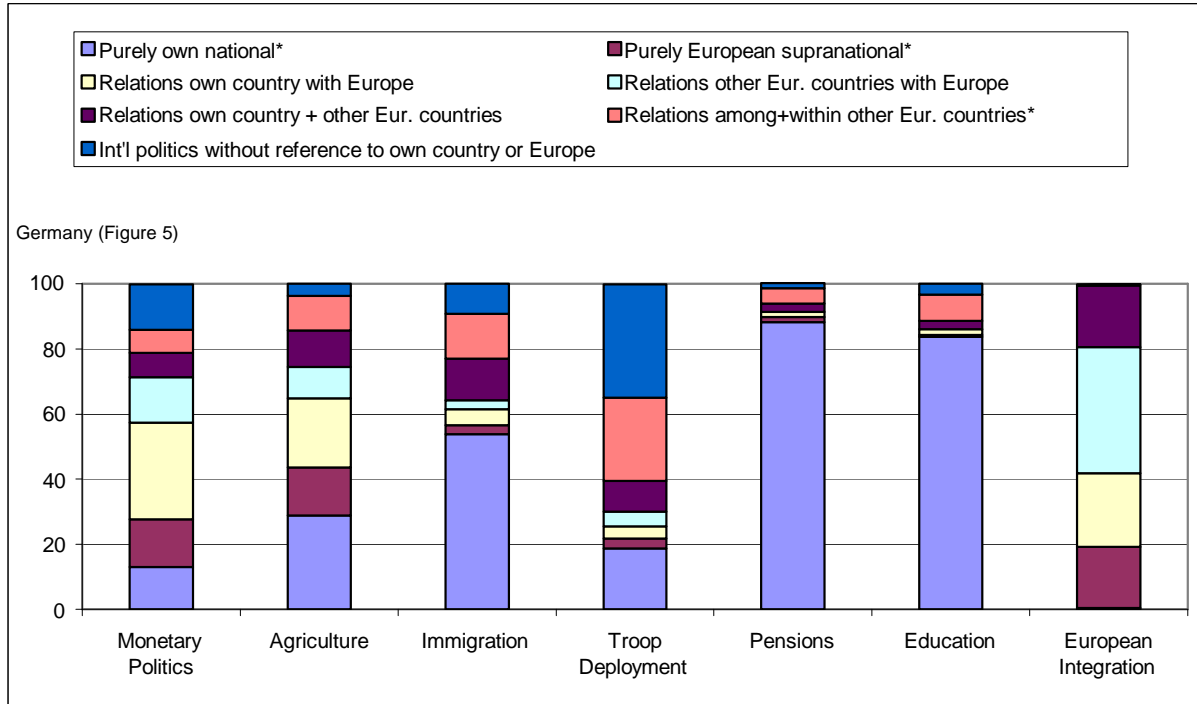


Figure 5-7: Multi-level relations within claims by policy fields in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom (* = incl. foreign relations with non-European countries or institutions)

		MON	AGR	IMM	TRP	PEN	EDU	EU I	Average (7 Policy Fields)	Weighted average (exc. EU I)
Germany	%	64.7	50.0	11.8	11.9	2.9	2.3	100.0	44.7	26.4
	Total (N)	527	208	347	445	273	299	704	2803	2099
Spain	%	75.5	67.5	12.9	10.1	7.8	1.4	100.0	55.4	35.5
	Total (N)	233	80	210	99	77	73	358	1130	772
UK	%	66.1	47.1	23.7	4.2	3.1	0.7	100.0	35.6	24.5
	Total (N)	445	170	156	354	96	544	304	2069	1765

Table 6: Claims with a reference to a supranational European actor or issue, as a percentage of all claims within each policy field (Table combines the supranational, vertical, and mixed forms of Europeanization of Table 4).

(either in the form of supranationally or vertically Europeanized claims) but, more interestingly, this is also the case for 65% of claims on monetary politics in Germany, 76% in Spain, and 66% in the United Kingdom. Thus, with the introduction of a common currency, monetary politics has very quickly become a field that is debated and contested almost entirely from a European perspective (even without including claims of the horizontal type) (Koopmans & Erbe 2004). Even in the UK, which has not yet adopted the common currency, the European level plays an important role that cannot be neglected. This is less the case in the field of agriculture politics, where 50% in Germany, 68% in Spain, and 47% in the UK of claims refer to the European Union in one way or another. A possible explanation for the lower percentages could be that member-state governments play a much more important role in determining the budget for the Common Agricultural Policy than in monetary policy, characterized by the very centralized decision-making power of the European Central Bank.

In the other policy fields, the European level plays a very modest role. In Germany and Spain, the EU is referred to in 12% and 10% respectively on troop deployment, whilst in the UK the value is as low as 4%. Similar figures are found for the third pillar on immigration (except in the UK, where 24% of claims refer to the EU). In these two fields, one may probably speak of a deficit of public communication, since these relatively low percentages do not seem to adequately reflect the influence of the EU in the foreign policy and immigration fields. Finally, concerning those issues outside the EU institutional framework, the values for claims on pensions and retirement policies are 3% in Germany as well as the UK and 8% in Spain, and only between 1% and 2% in the three countries on education. However, the lack of strong supranational or vertical forms of Europeanization is in some of these policy fields partly compensated by significant levels of horizontally Europeanized claims (see Table 5), which refer to debates and policies on these issues in other member states. This is the case in the fields of immigration and troop deployment, where claims referring to other European states are not negligible.

As in the previous analysis of claim-makers, it is also important to place these findings within a temporal dimension. One can see in Table 7 (in the appendix), confirming the previous results on

claimants, that no overwhelming increases in Europeanization can be detected. If anything, one even finds tendencies of a “renationalization” of political communication and mobilization, with purely own national claims increasing on average in all three countries. However, as one may have expected by now, the results are very different depending on the issue field. Table 8 (appendix) shows that in monetary politics, one does find significant changes in public claims-making, with the European dimension constantly increasing in Germany and Spain across the years. Most significantly, we also see that between 1995 and 2000 there is a tremendous decline in the number of purely national claims and simultaneous increase of European supranational claims, which corresponds with the introduction of the single currency in 1999. Media reporting has therefore reacted quite quickly to the shift in monetary competences from the national to the European level.

VII. INSTITUTIONALIZATION & EUROPEANIZATION: EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES ACROSS POLICY ISSUES AND YEARS

In the previous two sections, the levels and forms of Europeanization of public communication were found to vary greatly across the seven different policy domains, depending on the distribution of decision-making and implementation competences and capacities between the supranational European and national levels. In each of the three countries, a higher degree of Europeanization was observed in those policy domains that are supranationalized, a lesser degree for intergovernmental policies, and almost none for national ones. This finding clearly indicates that the level of Europeanization of public spheres correlates with the extent to which political competences have been transferred to the European Union in each policy domain: the greater the institutional power of the EU, the more public debate about the issue is Europeanized.²¹ Time, on the other hand, does not appear to be as an important factor as the degree of institutionalization, given that the topic of agriculture, which has been on the European agenda since the 1960s, is less Europeanized than the monetary policy field. Therefore, the results lend empirical support to Eder and Trenz' (2003: 118) claim that "public spaces develop [mainly] as a by-product of the multi-level expansion of political institutions."

In general, these results are very much in line with prevalent research on political mobilization and social movements, and more specifically the *political opportunity structures* approach (e.g. Kriesi *et al.* 1995), which stipulates that forms of political claims-making in European public spheres emerge and develop in response to shifts in the broader political and institutional environment. To the extent that European integration results in the replacement or decline in the importance of the nation-state as the exclusive seat of formal political power, Marks and McAdam (1996, 1999) suggest that European integration creates a multi-level polity which offers a set of new political opportunity structures for participation and influence on the EU level (see also Nentwich 1996, Greenwood & Aspinwall 1998, Reising 1998). Furthermore, such "shifts in the geographic locus of institutionalized power can be expected to be accompanied by simultaneous changes in the structure and locus of mass politics" (Marks & McAdam 1996: 250). Similarly, Imig and Tarrow (2001: 7) maintain that "if Europe is becoming a polity, [...] sooner or later ordinary citizens will turn their claims and forms of contentious politics beyond their borders and toward this new level of governance." This may occur if citizens directly address European-level actors and institutions, or if they continue to address national ones – the more likely and indeed prevalent scenario – but concerning a European issue or frame. In both cases, political discourses in the public sphere are likely to react as competences are shifted to the European level, and become more Europeanized.

²¹ A similar correlation between degrees of Europeanization and institutionalization at the EU level was recently pointed out by Christoph Meyer (2005), who showed that fiscal policy co-ordination leads to more Europeanization of media discourse, as compared to the "softer" governing mode in the area of employment policy.

This was further corroborated by the analysis over time, which showed how political communication and mobilization reacted to shifts in competences from the national to the European level, with a European frame of reference coming to overwhelmingly dominate German and Spanish public discussion on monetary politics only one year after the introduction of the single currency. In other words, if significant power is transferred to the European level and the institutional responsibilities are transparently demarcated, then something resembling a spill-over effect occurs, whereby the “political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new political center” (Haas 1961: 196). The results thus give credence to those schools of European integration theory, including neofunctionalism, neo-institutionalism, and multi-level governance, which believe that as the locus of power shifts to the EU over time, domestic actors and mass media reporting will also adapt to the new institutional realities.

At the same time, these findings contradict some of the underlying predictions of the intergovernmentalist strand of integration theory. Andrew Moravcsik (1998) has underlined, for instance, that national preferences in policy sectors are the key driving forces behind European integration, while geopolitical factors or ideology play merely a secondary role. National governments aggregate the various domestic pressures and interactions from nationally-based economic actors as represented in political institutions and interest groups, and then represent the economic interests of their national constituencies in international negotiations at the European level. However, Moravcsik predicts that domestic debates over integration vary “by both issue and country” (1998: 28). Consequently, the higher the salience of an issue in national politics, the more Europeanization in this domain is likely to occur and generate contention activity against the EU. For intergovernmentalist theories the prime determinant of Europeanization is thus not that the particular sector has been supranationalized, but the endogenous preferences of the different member states (Statham & Guiraudon 2003). The current data indicates, however, that Europeanization follows the *same pattern of variation* across all three member states, regardless of how high or low national stakes are in a particular issue field.

How are we to interpret the findings of this study in light of the alleged democratic deficit and public sphere deficit? On balance, the present results certainly cannot be read as providing unequivocal evidence either for or against the existence of a European or Europeanized public sphere; the answer again depends on the different issue field.²² Public contestation around the meta-issue of European integration as covered in the media of the three countries quite closely approaches the ideal of a Europeanized public sphere, with actors from the European level and other European countries both playing a significant role in claims-making. As a result, the information about the integration

²² A serious flaw of previous studies has been the tendency to reach conclusions about the presence or absence of a public sphere deficit simply by gathering data across all possible political issues, and computing a summary measure of the degree to which European institutions and policies are mentioned. Such an approach inevitably hides considerable differences between issue fields, some of which may be highly Europeanized, while others may be debated largely in a national context (Koopmans & Pfetsch 2003).

process that newspaper readers get in the three countries is clearly not limited to a parochial national view on the issue, and provides ample room for expressions of opinion from European institutions and actors in other member states (Koopmans & Erbe 2004).

Concerning the two policy fields where the EU's competences are firmly established, political communication dominated by a European frame of reference were found in both agriculture and especially monetary politics. The generally lower than expected levels of Europeanization of claims-making in agriculture can be partially explained by the fact that member states have retained more autonomy than in monetary politics, as well as the shifting of decisions to supra-European institutions, such as the WTO. However, especially the results for the field of monetary politics provide support for the idea that the alleged "public sphere deficit" of the European Union is merely a derivative of a lack of strong and clearly demarcated competences on the European level (Koopmans & Erbe 2004). With the ECB, and the relatively transparent delineation of its prerogatives and those of the Commission in this field, a clear focus for public communication has been created that has led to the quick establishment of a strongly Europeanized pattern of public contestation over monetary politics. The results thus challenge Verdun and Christiansen's (2000: 162) observation that in the case of EMU, European governance suffers from "dilemmas of legitimacy" insofar as it "rests on the creation of a set of powerful institutions with direct and executive authority in an area of policymaking", while their establishment "precedes the emergence of a political community in which such decisions, or, more significantly, the procedures for the taking of such decisions, can be grounded."

The finding that the most important determinant for patterns of mass media coverage is simply where the decision-making power in a policy field is concentrated also entails that the low levels of claims with European references – either of the supranational, vertical, or horizontal type – in education and pensions policies cannot be reasonably taken as evidence for the lack of a Europeanized public sphere. These domains remain fully under the control of the member states, with the EU enjoying little or no power and influence. As a matter of fact, rather than the result of a general lack of interest of the media in Europe or of a parochial concentration on national interests, Koopmans and Erbe (2004) maintain that the modest place given to European actors and issues in these fields results from the media fulfilling, rather than failing in, their function to provide the citizenry with an accurate coverage of those actors and issues that matter most politically. The media thus manage to comply with their legitimacy, accountability, responsiveness, and participation functions quite accurately.

Nevertheless, there is more reason to have doubts about whether the discourse in the mass media adequately reflects the influence of European institutions and policies in the fields of troop deployment and immigration. Even though in these issues the supranational European level does not as yet have extensive powers, and at most can influence outcomes through intergovernmental procedures, immigration politics and foreign policy issues do form part of the EU institutional pillar structure. Moreover, given the institutional interdependencies among member states, one could have

expected more attention to debates on these topics occurring in other countries. Concerning Germany and Spain, at least, flows of migration to the own country are no longer independent from other states' immigration policies as a result of the opening of the internal EU borders in the context of the Schengen agreement. Furthermore, the recent enlargement will have important immigration consequences, especially for Germany, which shares long borders with two of the most important accession countries, namely Poland and the Czech Republic.

Similarly, although much of the present period of study has been characterized by the institutionalization of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) lagging behind the rhetoric used by many of Europe's politicians, this has changed at least since the Franco-British St. Malo Declaration of 1998, with moves towards enhanced defense cooperation within the EU becoming more substantial. And although the EU has only during the last three years become actively involved in policy-making on deploying troops, one could have expected that media coverage in European public spheres would have at least featured the wide-spread discussion over European military capabilities (or lack thereof) for troop deployment. The results thus lend empirical support to what has so far only been speculated about, namely that in the CFSP "there still is no 'European public space' – there is only a juxtaposition of national public spaces, capped by a jumble of intergovernmental and supranational bureaucracies" (Hoffmann 1999: 38–9).²³

²³ Recent work by Mary Martin (forthcoming) suggests, however, that especially the events of the last three years – most notably the attacks of 9/11 and the ensuing War on Terrorism, including the debate about military action in Iraq – have led not only to a significant convergence of existing public discourses but also the creation of new European level discourses. This discursive convergence therefore indicates an at least modestly developing common European public sphere in the domain of foreign affairs.

VIII. “GOODNESS OF FIT” & “RULE OF APPROPRIATENESS”: CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACHES FOR EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES ACROSS COUNTRIES

Although the general pattern of variation across the seven different policy fields is the same in all three countries, there are however important differences in the total levels of Europeanization of political discourses in Germany, Spain, and Britain. On average, the UK was found to have the most nationalized and least Europeanized public sphere, followed by Germany and then Spain. How are we to account for these disparities?

A first feasible explanation draws on traditional theories of International Relations, and concerns the different benefits a country stands to gain from the European integration process. In the past, neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist theories have both stressed the role of domestic self-interests and preferences in determining the degree of openness vis-à-vis international markets and institutions. Ernst B. Haas (1958) argued, for instance, that interest groups and political parties are the key actors in driving European integration forward, since they would consider further integration as being in their interest, and as a way of resolving the various problems they faced domestically. Although different groups inevitably have different problems and ideological positions, they would all see regional integration as a means to their desired ends. Similarly, as highlighted above, (liberal) intergovernmentalist theories underscore the important role played by domestic interests – particularly the “commercial interests of powerful economic producers” (Moravcsik 1998: 3) – in creating a *demand* for cooperation on the European level. The greater the material gain and interest towards market integration by these dominant actors, the higher the support for and calls towards cooperation on the European supranational level and regional market integration.

Based on these interpretations, Hooghe and Marks (forthcoming) maintain that it is reasonable to expect residents of countries that are net recipients of European Union spending to support European integration, and those in donor countries to oppose it. The same logic is often at work in regional or federal states, where poorer regions advocate centralization to increase redistribution while prosperous regions favor decentralization. Consequently, one would expect the degree of Europeanization in terms of the development of a European discourse to be higher in those countries that are more advantaged by European integration, both directly in terms of net transfers from the EU, and indirectly in terms of national economies which would gain more from the construction of a free European market (see Della Porta 2003). The present findings, however, give only limited support to this hypothesis. Among the three countries, Spain has the smallest economy in terms of GDP per capita, thus being objectively the most dependent in political and economical terms upon the outside world, and has also benefited the most in terms of cohesion-oriented transfers from the EU in the past. In line with the previous rationalist arguments, it is thus not surprising that the Spanish public sphere is the one most oriented towards Europe.

The Spanish case, however, contradicts another argument which would resonate with rationalist integration theory, namely that one would expect the longer a country has been a member of the European Union, the more developed its interests in Europe would have become. Yet, of the three countries in this study, Spain was the last to join (in 1986), almost forty years after Germany and thirteen after the United Kingdom. Furthermore, economic rationalist explanations fail to account for the fact that the German public sphere is significantly more Europeanized and less nationalized than the British. First, in terms of annual GDP figures, the German economy is still larger than the British, and, at the same time, *comparatively* not as dependent on foreign direct investment flows (Della Porta 2003). Furthermore, if one considers net material gains from European integration, Germany has traditionally been a much larger net-payer of the European Union than the United Kingdom. Ever since Thatcher decided to get her “money back” in the early 1980s, Britain has enjoyed an even more favorable budgetary balance compared to Germany, as part of the UK rebate agreed upon at the Fontainebleau summit in 1984.²⁴

Turning towards alternative explanations for justifying different degrees of Europeanization of public spheres, the present study finds instead more supportive evidence in approaches of sociological (constructivist) institutionalism (e.g. March & Olsen 1998, Wendt 1999, Christiansen *et al.* 2001, Checkel 2001). Risse, Green Cowles, and Caporaso (2001: 1) have recently argued that the Europeanization process is characterized by “domestic adaptation with national colors” in which national features continue to have important influences in shaping the various outcomes, and which depends on the “goodness of fit” between European processes and national political institutional settings, rules, and practices. “The lower the compatibility (fit) between European institutions, on the one hand, and national institutions, on the other, the higher the adaptational pressures” (*ibid.*: 7). Conversely, if European institutions were to fit perfectly with national ones, there would be no need for adaptation. In other words, Europeanization is only likely to result in domestic change if it is “inconvenient” (Börzel & Risse 2003). For the present purpose, I argue that compatibility and adaptational pressures are important for explaining differences in the Europeanization of public spheres, but one can turn the “misfit” assumption on its head and propose that the *better* the fit between national political institutions and the institutions of the European Union, the higher levels of Europeanized political communication and mobilization. I thus follow authors such as Bulmer (1997) and Katzenstein (1997), who argued that institutional *congruence* between Germany and the EU in terms of constitutional order, norms and conventions, patterns of meso-level governance, and policy goals not only facilitated domestic adaptation, but also allowed Germany to play a leading role in shaping the integration project.

²⁴ This is not meant to suggest that Germany has not benefited substantially in economic terms from European integration, for instance concerning access to new markets. Moreover, economic factors are certainly not the only plausible rationalist explanation, but they are widely seen as one of the most important, particularly for explaining attitudes to Europe and propensity to Europeanization within different member states (e.g. Eichenberg & Dalton 2003).

As a first step, I test this hypothesis using Lijphart's (1999) latest typology of majoritarian versus consensual models of democracy. Previous scholars have applied his definition of a consensus democracy for characterizing the political system of the European Union (Lord 1998: 46–54, Schmitter 2000), which is thus expected to resonate more with other consensual-type institutions. The present data should thus show higher levels of Europeanization for those countries coming closest to the consensus model in comparison to the majoritarian one. Considering four main indicators – the separation of power between parliament and government, the degree of independence of the judiciary, the autonomy of the national bank, and the geographic distribution of power – Della Porta (2003: 12–13) shows that of the three countries considered in this study, Germany is the one approaching the consensual model the most. The German political system is characterized by a large division of power, partly due to its bicameral parliamentary structure and proportional electoral system, and at the same time highly independent and strongly autonomous judiciary and central bank. Moreover, being a decentralized, federalist state, Germany again enjoys a high degree of compatibility with the institutions of the European Union.

The United Kingdom, on the other hand, is a majoritarian system *par excellence*. Given its adversarial, unicameral parliamentary system, single party government, majoritarian electoral system, and low number of effective parties, the political system in the UK is characterized by the predominant role of the executive, and low separation of power between the government and parliament. Furthermore, compared to Germany and Spain, the judiciary in the UK has the weakest degree of autonomy, and the Bank of England is far less independent than its German counterpart (although slightly more so than in Spain). The United Kingdom also has the most centralized and unitary political system of the three countries. All these factors thus lead one to expect a low fit with the EU institutional structure and as a result, low levels of Europeanization of the public sphere. Finally, according to della Porta (2003), Spain occupies a position between both poles, on some indicators tending more towards the consensual model (e.g. high jurisdictional autonomy, semi-federal state system), whilst in others to the majoritarian one (e.g. high percentage of minimal winning coalition-governments, low number of effective parties). In terms of Europeanization, one would thus expect to find Spain located between Germany and the United Kingdom. As we saw previously, this was not the case, however, since political discourses in Spain were in fact the most Europeanized.

Apart from looking at the political institutions, and due to the fact that the object of this study are “mediated” public spheres, it also makes sense to consider differences in the three countries' media landscapes. Here too, it is suggested that the institutional congruence model can be used for comparing the characteristics of media systems that may influence the process of Europeanization of public spheres. The better a country's media system fits the requirements to depict European politics, the greater one can expect the potential to be to find a Europeanized public sphere.

Adam, Berkel and Pfetsch (2003) have argued that two major dimensions – the information capacity of national media systems and the patterns of political discourse in national public spheres – determine the chances of a Europeanization of media-induced public spheres. The first dimension refers to the media's ability of providing a diversity of viewpoints as well as offering complete and reliable information, and is measured in terms of the plurality (i.e. the degree of representation of varying interests, opinions, and attitudes) and commercialization of the media system. Adam *et al.* show that in terms of the variety, degree of ownership concentration, and geographical diversity of media outlets, the German print media has the highest degree of plurality, followed by Spain and then the United Kingdom. Germany and Spain have a greater distribution of daily newspapers, both in absolute terms and per capita, whereas in the UK, one finds fewer papers, which implies a more pronounced concentration in the readers' market. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom the five most popular daily newspapers have a share of about half of the circulation – compared to 29% in Germany and 38% in Spain – and about 90% of the readership is shared by the top four publishing companies, the most important being the Rupert Murdoch-owned News International. Germany and Spain also have a greater number of regional or local papers, with the United Kingdom characterized by a strong national press. Concerning the degree of commercialization, the lowest degree is found in Spain, with significantly higher percentages in Germany and the United Kingdom. The Spanish newspapers can thus devote the most space to (political) information compared to advertising, which could explain the higher levels of Europeanization than in the other two countries.

Adam *et al.*'s second dimension refers to the complexity and abstractness that media allow for in public discourses, and is measured in terms of the politicization and “media culture” of the different national media systems. Concerning the degree of politicization, the authors show that political elites can influence, dominate, or control substantial parts of the media system the most in Spain and Germany, especially in the former due to the media's dependence on the state for its tax-based form of financing. It is argued that the media will thus tend to show a higher elite-orientation, leading to a higher information focus and reflection of the emphasis and attitudes of the political elites towards Europe. Conversely, the estimation of how strongly governments and political parties can influence public broadcasters is very low for the United Kingdom. Finally, Adam *et al.* argue that both Germany and especially the UK are characterized as a “tabloid culture”, whilst in Spain quality newspapers are the market leaders, which have a higher ability of reporting on complex and argumentative discourse, and thus greater chance for a Europeanization of the public sphere.

Consequently, the goodness of fit model as used in this study gives quite useful predictions, both in terms of compatibility with Europe of the political and media institutions. In line with the results of this study, it correctly predicts the low degree of Europeanization of the British public sphere and comparatively higher levels for Germany and Spain. At the same time, however, it is only partly able to account for the fact that Spain's public sphere is the least nationalized. Due to

Germany's consensual political system and higher degree of media plurality, one would have expected it to be more Europeanized than Spain. We thus need to also consider alternative explanations.

In Europeanization studies, there is a consensus that “national institutions *and* actors matter, in the sense that they have a profound, if not determining, effect on how European integration as a force of polity and politics change plays out in the domestic context” (Hix & Goetz 2001: 20, emphasis added). For this reason, it makes sense to additionally draw on the insights of constructivist studies which focus not so much on the institutional structure and context, but rather the role of different political agents (e.g. Knill & Lenschow 1998). Such studies commonly draw on March and Olsen's (1998) conception of a “logic of appropriateness”, in which individual actions are seen as being rule-based, as opposed to deriving from conscious calculations of self-interest:

“Human actors are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations. Action involves evoking an identity or role and matching the obligations of that identity or role to a specific situation. The pursuit of purpose is associated with identities more than with interests, and with the selection of rules more than with individual rational expectations” (*ibid.*: 951).

Drawing on these insights, one can expect public debates on Europeanization to be influenced not so much by institutional features, but rather general attitudes towards Europe, in both the public and the elites, and the extent to which the image of Europe resonates with different national identities. Where a broad elite consensus on European integration prevails at national level, one can expect low levels of conflict over European integration issues and a predominance of positive references to Europe (Della Porta 2003). I test this hypothesis by looking in Table 9 at the general attitudes towards the European integration process by the most important political parties in each country. For this, the data used in this study has been reduced to include only claimants from political parties and their evaluation of the European integration process.²⁵ A value closer to +1 corresponds to support for European integration, whereas a value closer to -1 indicates Euroskepticism.

Germany	Mean	Spain	Mean	United Kingdom	Mean
CDU	0.48	PP	0.11	Conservative	-0.25
CSU	0.06	PSOE	0.18	Labor	0.27
FDP	0.68	CiU	0.10	Liberal Democrats	0.58
SPD	0.43	IU	-0.20	Green Party	-0.33
Die Grünen/Bündnis 90	0.43			Independence Party	-1.00
PDS	0.33				

Table 9: Support for European integration by political parties in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

²⁵ A score of +1 was given if a party claimant expressed support for the European integration process or if the claim implied extensions in the rights and prerogatives of European institutions (or a rejection of restrictions in these prerogatives). A score of -1 indicates opposition to the integration process or implications of the claim that restrict the rights and prerogatives of European institutions. A score of 0, finally, indicates positions that are neutral or ambivalent toward the integration process.

As can be seen, in Germany there is a strong consensus among the elite that European integration should be supported, coupled with a virtual absence of purely anti-European parties (apart perhaps from the “Republikaner”). All of the major German parties strongly support European integration, with little to no political polarization over this issue. The same applies to Spain, where there has always been a clear and widespread association between membership of the EU and its own democratic consolidation. As a result, there is a general consensus in favor of European integration and anti-European parties or movements are almost non-existent. Nevertheless, support for European integration is clearly not as pronounced in Germany. Moreover, in recent years the national left-wing coalition Izquierda Unida (IU) has expressed some opposition and resistance toward certain aspects of European integration, adopting a position conceptually close to “soft-Euroskepticism” (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2002).

Finally, the present data supports the expectation that Britain’s political elites have been most divided on the question of European integration, which helps explain the consistently low level of attention and support for Europe in the British public sphere. The current Labour administration under Blair as well as the Liberal Democratic party adopt a pro-European outlook, whilst the Tories, opposed to Britain joining the euro and to the European Constitution, have a significantly greater proportion of Euroskeptics. Among the fringe parties one also finds widespread opposition to European integration, such as the UK Independence party and Green Party, the former specifically established to campaign against further European integration and advocate Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union altogether.

Apart from the elites, the degree of general attitudes to Europe in public opinion is also deemed to play an important role. Consequently, it makes sense to look at support and opposition regarding European institutions and the integration process in the public at large. Various authors have observed, for instance, that individuals who strongly identify with their national community and who support exclusionary norms tend to perceive European integration as a threat (Carey 2002, Luedtke 2005). Similarly, McLaren (2002: 553) points to the fact that “antipathy toward the EU is not just about cost/benefit calculations or about cognitive mobilization [...] but about fear of, or hostility toward, other cultures.” Overall, it may thus be expected that countries with weaker national identification and lower levels of trust in national institutions will manifest a stronger propensity to Europeanization since integration is seen as a way of overcoming identity and governance problems at the national level (Della Porta 2003: 20).

In his study on attitudes to European integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, Juan Díez Medrano (2003) argues that national cultures are a key determinant of how citizens perceive, or “frame”, their own nation-state and the European Union. Díez Medrano shows how these identifications are largely shaped by different national historical legacies and major events. Regarding attitudes to Europe, the defining event was World War II and the degree to which each country

realized its particular “supranational project” following 1945. Only the United Kingdom succeeded in consolidating and retaining an extra-European Empire for a while, whereas Germany and Spain quickly abandoned their corresponding aspirations. These differences meant that these countries’ populations developed different degrees of identification as Europeans and, partly in consequence, different degrees of support for the building of a federal Europe. Given Britain’s special history of empire and its resulting obsession with cultural singularity, Britons now mostly perceive European integration as a threat to their national identity and are thus less supportive of European integration. In this regard, then, a more suitable description of British attitudes to Europe would not be “Euroskepticism” but “Europhobia”. Conversely, Díez Medrano argues that West Germans were more inclined to develop a pro-European identity due to a pragmatic desire to reassure other countries, whilst Spaniards have come to see European integration as a proxy for strengthening its modernization and democratization process.

On balance, the results of this study seem to be quite in line with Díez Medrano’s (2003: 3) constructivist approach “in which history and culture trumps economics and geopolitics as the major forces behind European integration.” As shown previously, rationalist arguments only partly explained differences in the degrees of Europeanization of national public spheres and why the British public sphere is by far the most nationalized. A more feasible explanation is that due to its greater sense of cultural distinctiveness, there is a lower readiness to identify with a supranational level and thus focus on European actors, institutions, and issues in British political communication and mobilization. On the contrary, Spain and Germany, due to their less nationalist and exclusivist identification and more favorable attitudes to Europe, are more predisposed to frame political debates in the public sphere with a European dimension.

Finally, Sánchez-Cuenca (2000: 147) has suggested that “the higher citizens’ opinion of the functioning of supranational institutions and the lower that of national institutions, the greater their support for integration. This is so because the worse the opinion of the national political system, the lower the opportunity cost of transferring sovereignty to Europe.” I address the question of different degrees of trust in national and European institutions by comparing in Table 10 the claimant’s evaluation of addressees from the own nation, other European countries, and supranational European level.²⁶ As is shown by the prevalence of negative evaluations, criticism predominates in public political communication in all of three countries, but particularly in the United Kingdom. However, one can also see that in Spain, EU-level actors and institutions receive a more positive evaluation than domestic ones. Spaniards thus tend to believe that their own governments are more unreliable

²⁶ This was calculated in a similar way as in Table 9. When actors are the target of political claims, this may entail criticism or support, or a more neutral appeal. This is measured by giving each addressee a score of +1 if it is the target of support, -1 if it is the target of criticism, and 0 if it is targeted in a neutral or ambivalent way. These scores are then averaged across claims per addressee. The resulting score on a range between +1 and -1 indicates to what extent a particular political actor or institution is evaluated positively or negatively by other actors in the public sphere

	Own Nation	European Institutions and Actors	Other European countries
Germany	-0.31	-0.33	-0.34
Spain	-0.33	-0.20	-0.12
United Kingdom	-0.37	-0.43	-0.43

Table 10: Support for different political actors and institutions in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

than the European institutions. The most negative evaluation of the supranational European level is – one should have guessed by now – found in the United Kingdom. In the UK, domestic political institutions and actors are strongly criticized, but they are nonetheless evaluated more favorably than their European counterparts. Germany occupies a role in-between these extremes, with national and European institutions evaluated more or less equally.

The same pattern also holds when one considers how political actors and institutions from other European countries are perceived. In Spain, political leaders and institutions from other European countries are evaluated significantly more positively than national ones, which goes a long way in explaining why the Spanish public sphere exhibits the largest degrees of horizontal Europeanization. Conversely, the British public sphere's Euro-distant attitude and low horizontal Europeanization is also reflected in the most negative evaluation of other European countries compared to the own institutions.

IX. THE LIMITED ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

So far, this study has measured the degree of Europeanization of three national public spheres and then explained the different extent and forms by drawing on insights from research on political mobilization and theoretical approaches on European integration and Europeanization. Contrary to previous assumptions, the results have shown that there is a remarkable level of Europeanized debate in the print media in those issues where the EU “matters”. As a result, there is only little evidence for a democratic deficit stemming from the absence of a European public sphere or a communications deficit manifested in low coverage on EU-related issues. Nevertheless, before declaring the democratic deficit as a fallacy, for which there is no empirical evidence, it is important to consider a factor that has so far intentionally been left out of the picture, namely the question of *who* exactly has access to these Europeanizing public spheres. After all, it is one thing to show that claims in public spheres are increasingly characterized by a European dimension, quite another that also everybody – from the general public to state and party actors – participates in political communication and mobilization.

To address the question of the “winners” and “losers” of Europeanized claims-making, Table 11 (appendix) looks at the geopolitical level at which different types of actors participating in the public sphere are organized. The results suggest that political communication and mobilization in the three countries is overwhelmingly dominated by state and party actors. This is particularly the case for the supranational European level, where around 95% of all actors that appear in the public debates are state and party actors. Conversely, the focus on both economic and non-economic civil society groups organized at the European level is, as one would expect, extremely low. More interesting is, however, the finding that media reporting on other European countries also focuses overwhelmingly on national politicians. Indeed, only when the media reports on *domestic* public speakers are other actors taken into account. For instance, in the United Kingdom about 21% of claims are made by non-economic civil society actors, such as citizens’ organizations or professional groups. In all three countries, the role of state and party actors is thus much less predominant among national claimants.

We now turn to the participation of different categories of actors in public debates on the seven issue fields (Table 12). As one can see, state and party actors are again the most important category. In Germany and Spain, this group accounts for 72% and 75% of all claims respectively, whereas in the UK this value is 60%. In Britain one detects the highest percentages of economic interest groups and other civil society actors as well as media representatives participating in the British public sphere. Conversely, Spain has the lowest figures for non-state and party actors among the three countries. Germany occupies a middle position but tending more towards the Spanish extreme. These results are highly significant, since they indicate *an inverse relationship between the degree of Europeanization and the degree of access to national public spheres*. Europeanization of public debates has a tendency to exacerbate power differentials, by biasing participation in the public sphere even further towards actors who command strong institutional power.

		In % within issue field							Total	
		MON	AGR	IMM	TRP	PEN	EDU	EUI	(%)	(N)
Germany	State and party actors	59.0	77.9	72.9	80.0	70.0	58.9	81.8	72.2	2025
	Economic interest groups	25.2	12.0	5.8	0.7	17.2	8.0	2.8	9.7	272
	Media and journalists	12.0	3.8	7.5	13.5	5.9	8.0	10.4	9.6	270
	Other civil society actors	2.8	4.3	11.2	4.7	7.0	24.7	4.3	7.4	207
	Unspecified	0.9	1.9	2.6	1.1		0.3	0.7	1.0	29
	Total (%) (N)	100 527	100 208	100 347	100 445	100 273	100 299	100 704	100	2803
Spain	State and party actors	73.8	65.0	75.2	78.8	75.3	50.7	82.4	75.2	850
	Economic interest groups	16.7	22.5	3.3		16.9	9.6	0.6	7.6	86
	Media and journalists	6.4	2.5	5.2	10.1	6.5	16.4	10.6	8.2	93
	Other civil society actors	2.1	3.8	9.5	2.0	1.3	21.9	1.3	4.6	52
	Unspecified	0.9	6.3	6.7	9.1		1.4	5.0	4.3	49
	Total (%) (N)	100 233	100 80	100 210	100 99	100 77	100 73	100 358	100	1130
UK	State and party actors	49.2	54.1	67.9	82.5	41.7	48.0	75.7	59.9	1240
	Economic interest groups	26.7	23.5	3.2	0.8	24.0	12.5	2.6	12.9	266
	Media and journalists	16.0	6.5	12.2	10.2	6.3	4.2	13.8	10.1	208
	Other civil society actors	7.9	14.7	14.7	5.6	28.1	34.6	6.6	16.3	338
	Unspecified	0.2	1.2	1.9	0.8		0.7	1.3	0.8	17
	Total (%) (N)	100 445	100 170	100 156	100 354	100 96	100 544	100 304	100	2069

Table 12: Actor type category of claimants by policy field in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

The same holds true when one considers the different policy fields. While civil society actors are also underrepresented in national public debates, their position is even more marginal in debates on European issues. European integration, previously shown to be by far the most Europeanized topic, is at the same time the most elitist, with state and party actors dominating public debates more strongly than any other fields. It has been pointed out that if Europe were indeed to open up new opportunities for actors whose interests are more weakly represented on the national level, then these actors should be more visible in debates on European integration than in the other fields where the nation-state context is still important or even predominant (Koopmans 2003). Contrary to this expectation, debates on European integration turn out to be highly discriminatory. Economic interest groups and other civil society groups are much less prominent in debates on European integration than in the other issue fields. Only the media and journalists appear somewhat more often than average as speakers on European integration issues – a finding which corrects the popular misperception that the democratic deficit would be related to a lack of media interest in European affairs (Koopmans & Pfetsch 2003). Finally, the United Kingdom – the least Europeanized in this particular polity issue – is at the same time the country with comparatively the most egalitarian public sphere in debates on European

integration. The other policy fields show more fluctuations with regard to this pattern. Nonetheless, pensions and especially education – the least Europeanized issues – are the most open to the whole range of actors, not just the elites.

Finally, Table 13 shows the actors' support of the European integration process. The main results in the different countries are strikingly similar. Everywhere support for the integration process is stronger among state and party actors than among the various categories of civil society actors: economic interest groups, the media, and other civil society groups. Civil society actors, who find themselves on the losing side of Europeanization, are also most critical about European integration and institutions, whereas the state and executive actors who dominate European public debates display the strongest support. On balance, these results suggest that European integration finds most support among actors that are already powerful on the national level, namely those of the executive, legislative, and judiciary within the state sector. Actors who are less influential in Europeanized public debates also tend to be more critical of European institutions and less supportive of the integration process. This is not to suggest a linear causal explanation between access to the public sphere and support for European integration. However, the study proposes that the impact of European integration on the distribution of influence in public debates should be seen as one important factor for explaining different attitudes to Europe of political actors. This assumption can also be derived from the literature on political opportunity structures, which has argued that closed political institutions tends to provoke confrontational challenges, whereas open opportunity structures invite more consensual and cooperative forms of claims-making (Kriesi *et al.* 1995: 44–51).

How are we to explain these results? As highlighted above, European integration has been argued to provide a new structure of political opportunities “to exit from domestic constraints, either to promote certain policies, or to veto others, or to secure informational advantages (Hix & Goetz 2001: 10). Nonetheless, Koopmans (forthcoming) maintains that European integration is far from always being a “win-win game” in which every actor is continuously benefited and nobody is disadvantaged at one point or another. The implication is that shifts in political opportunity structures are not a neutral process, and may thus affect the relative power and influence of different actors by providing greater opportunities and resources for some groups compared to others. Likewise, the transfer of

	Germany	Spain	United Kingdom
State and party actors	0.32	0.14	0.13
Economic interest groups	0.13	0.09	0.14
Media and journalists	0.23	0.05	-0.07
Other civil society actors	0.19	-0.02	0.05
Unknown	0.30	0.09	-0.30

Table 13: Support for European integration by actor type category in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom

political competences from the national to the European level may also negatively affect those actors who previously enjoyed institutionalized links to national resources and opportunity structures. In this view then, “European integration unavoidably implies a redistribution of power, not just institutionally, but also regarding public debates and political mobilization” (*ibid.*, see also e.g. Moravcsik 1994, Marks & McAdam 1999, Rucht 2000).

While there is a general agreement in the literature that European integration facilitates and constrains the strategic opportunities of different actors in different ways, the question of which actors stand to profit and which stand to lose from the Europeanization process is far more contentious. If European institutions work as an additional level of opportunity, it is open to debate whether the actors who are powerful at national level also tend to be powerful at the supranational European level, or whether the European institutions offer more leverage to actors who are comparatively powerless at home (Della Porta 2003). On the one hand, Europe is seen to be a potential counterweight to the entrenched national powers, like executive actors and business interests, by offering new opportunities for those actors that are relatively weak and marginalized at the national level – such as regional minorities, NGOs, social movements and other civil society actors (Green Cowles 2001). Hix and Goetz (2000: 14) maintain that “the openness of the EU policy process and the pursuit of neo-pluralist strategies by the Commission (such as subsidizing under-represented groups) ensure that both diffuse and concentrated interests tend to be able to pursue exit and veto opportunities and have access to key information.”

On the other hand, an equally plausible possibility is that power is cumulative and that Europeanization would thus strengthen even more those who are already powerful on the national level and further marginalize the weaker political actors (Della Porta 2003). Moravcsik (1994) has shown, for instance, that European integration has mostly further strengthened the national executives, due to their abundance of political resources (initiative, institutions, information, and ideas). Although autonomy with regard to their foreign counterparts is diminished when policies are transferred from the domestic to the European arena, it widens the autonomy of executives in relation to other *domestic* actors. It is thus reasonable to start from the assumption that “the extent to which domestic actors are able to exploit new opportunities depends on their previous resources and identities provided by domestic institutions” (Risse *et al.* 2001: 11–12).

Koopmans (forthcoming) contends that apart from different opportunity structures on the national and European levels, a further factor that may influence the chances of actors to intervene in Europeanized public debates are differences in the news selection process between national coverage, on the one hand, and international or European news coverage, on the other. For instance, national news reporting may literally be “closer to the people”, and subject to less strict selection pressures than international or supranational news coverage. Conversely, in foreign news coverage, international press agencies play a much more important role, and among foreign correspondents one finds a stronger tendency to rely on institutional sources and news routines (Meyer 1999). Such differences

between national and international news selection processes imply greater difficulties for less resourceful actors to get access to European and foreign news coverage, and a greater reliance in such news on institutional actors, especially executive and governmental actors such as the European Commission, or national foreign ministers or heads of state (Koopmans forthcoming).

The degree to which the findings presented in this section are due to opportunity structures or news gathering and selection routines can be determined by comparing the figures for European-level actors to those for actors from other countries than the own country (Table 11 in the appendix). If the emphasis on the executive and the neglect of civil society actors in coverage of European-level actors are due to the different features of foreign compared to national news gathering, one should find a similar bias in the coverage of claims of actors from countries outside the home country. However, if more closed opportunity structures on the European compared to the national level are the most important factor, one should find that actors from other national contexts resemble national actors, and that they include less executive and more civil society actors than one finds among European-level actors (Koopmans 2003).

By looking at the results, the answer seems to lie in between these two extremes, since national actors from other countries are situated almost exactly in between national and European-level actors. This suggests that part of the reason why coverage of European-level actors focuses more strongly on the executive and less strongly on civil society actors lies in the characteristics of foreign news gathering and selection routines, which also affect coverage of actors from outside the own country. However, the results also show that this cannot be the whole story since the bias against civil society actors and in favor of executive actors is much stronger among European-level actors than among foreign national actors. Since there is no reason intrinsic to the working routines of journalists that would give a plausible account of why correspondents in Brussels would be so much more focused on the executive arena than national correspondents in capitals such as London, Paris, or Washington (*ibid.*), one must conclude that an important part of the answer must also lie in the nature



of political opportunity structures within the EU. The EU political process apparently puts up important barriers for less institutionalized civil society groups, and seems to be especially suited to the publicity needs of actors from the executive.

One can thus conclude that the Europeanization of public contestation has above all strengthened the influence of state and executive actors who have almost exclusive hegemony in debates over European issues. Civil society actors, on the contrary, have hardly gained any foothold on the European level and are much better represented in debates that remain within the national political arena. In other words, the penetration of national public spheres by European actors, institutions, and issues has so far tended to make public debates less inclusive and less egalitarian. The results are in line with Schlesinger's (1999: 264) claim that "inasmuch as a media-sustained, supranational communicative space is presently emerging because of European Union integration, this is class inflected and has become predominantly the domain of political and economic elites and not that of a wider European public." Similarly, Trenz (2004: 301) has pointed to the "clear media bias towards institutional and governmental actors and away from civil society. Although NGOs and civic associations have become progressively included in European governance and quite often play a decisive role in EU policy deliberation and decision-making, this activity is not documented in news coverage." However, civil society is widely seen as the fundamental life-source for the possibility of an emerging European public sphere (cf. Perez Diaz 1998, Closa 2001, Soysal 2001). What's more, the differential access of actors to European public debates is strongly related to actors' evaluation of the European integration process and their assessment of European institutions. This suggests that the unequal access to European public debates can have serious negative repercussions on support for European integration, especially among civil society actors, and the future of the European Union.

X. CONCLUSIONS

At the time these concluding paragraphs are being written in early June 2005, it seems that for days the media have been reporting on nothing else but the ratification crisis of the European Constitution, triggered by the resounding rejections of the treaty in France and the Netherlands, as well as the suspension of the referendum in several other member states. Hardly a communication or information deficit, but rather a *surplus*, dominated mostly by sensationalist and speculative headlines – “Mutiny in Europe”, “The death of the EU”, “The end of the Euro?” – as well as solemn remarks by usually ever-optimistic Eurocrats that the EU “no longer makes people dream.” However, whilst such comments may be exaggerating and over-dramatizing the current situation, the unequivocal results of the referenda have been a heavy blow to, and placed a big question mark over the future of the European Union.

Who knows, perhaps the extensive debates, comments, and coverage on the present crisis may even generate substantial and lasting discussions about other European issues and thus contribute in the long run to a greater awareness and sense of proximity regarding the EU. What the events of this month have shown, however, is that the elitist logic of integration will no longer lead to satisfactory results. More than any other event in the history of the European Communities – more so than the Danish and Irish rejections of the Maastricht and Nice treaties – the French and Dutch referenda mark the people’s long-overdue entry onto center stage of the European integration process. No longer content by having their lives dictated for them by Brussels, the voters have sent a clear message in favor of “government by the people” and being sufficiently involved in the development of the European Union. Although the European Convention for drafting the Constitutional Treaty was a first serious attempt of creating a common space of political communication where actors from different national backgrounds could participate on an equal footing, in hindsight it was too limited in scope and impact, and too little too late (Kurpas 2005). In this regard, then, the need for a larger and more decentralized European public sphere becomes as pressing as ever.

This study has argued that instead of transposing on a higher level of spatial aggregation the features that characterize national public spheres, a European public sphere is more likely to emerge out of the increased focusing on European actors, institutions, and issues in political communication of the different nation-states. This study has operationalized three different theoretically possible forms of this Europeanization of national public spheres: supranational, vertical, and horizontal. On the basis of data collected through political claims analysis in the *Europub* research project, the relative presence of these three different forms was analyzed in a cross-time, cross-issue, and cross-country perspective. The results have shown that for those policy domains in which the EU is a relevant institutional actor, political communication and mobilization has been increasingly characterized by a European Union context. There is thus sufficient reason for optimism about the emergence of a European public sphere for those policy fields where the EU is a relevant actor and where it enjoys a

substantial amount of competences. The empirical results for these policy fields indicate that a European public sphere is not a utopia, but to some extent already a reality.

Instead, a more serious question was found to be the type of actors that have access to this emerging space of communication, which is overwhelmingly populated by state and party actors. The democratic deficit is therefore not, as commonly expected, due to the media providing little coverage about European actors, institutions, and issues, but given the obstacles that less powerful and institutionalized civil society groups face in gaining access to the presently Europeanizing public spheres. The main problem regarding the Europeanization of political communication is not of a quantitative, but rather of a qualitative nature. The implication is that the solution to the deficits of the European public sphere must not be sought first and foremost in the media themselves, but rather in the structure of the European policy process, which so far strongly privileges national state and party actors, as compared to interest groups, NGOs, and other civil society actors. Institutional reforms will need to address this problem by improving the general accessibility to the European policy process and placing “the public” back in the public sphere. Otherwise, as the present study suggested, support for European integration and institutions may continue to erode amongst the European citizenry, putting into serious doubt the future of the European project.

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APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL TABLES

		In % within issue field							Total	
		MON	AGR	IMM	TRP	PEN	EDU	EUI	(%)	(N)
Germany	Transnational non-European	2.5	0.5	2.9	7.6	1.1		1.0	2.4	68
	Transnational European	17.3	19.2	3.5	2.0	1.1	1.0	28.4	12.8	358
	National (own country)	45.2	51.9	64.3	27.4	89.7	86.3	31.1	50.4	1413
	National (other European)	20.3	21.2	17.6	22.7	6.2	9.0	35.1	21.5	604
	National (non-European)	14.8	7.2	11.8	40.2	1.8	3.7	4.4	12.8	360
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Spain	Transnational non-European	0.9		1.0	11.1	1.3		0.6	1.6	18
	Transnational European	31.8	28.8	2.4	6.1	2.6		32.7	20.1	227
	National (own country)	36.1	56.3	60.0	18.2	85.7	79.5	31.6	45.1	510
	National (other European)	22.3	15.0	17.1	18.2	2.6	9.6	29.9	20.7	234
	National (non-European)	9.0		19.5	46.5	7.8	11.0	5.3	12.5	141
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
UK	Transnational non-European	1.6	0.6	3.2	4.2		0.4		1.4	30
	Transnational European	9.9	7.1	8.3	1.7		0.4	20.1	6.7	138
	National (own country)	70.8	72.9	53.2	33.1	94.8	95.0	51.0	67.8	1402
	National (other European)	12.1	15.9	16.7	11.9	2.1	2.6	26.6	11.9	246
	National (non-European)	5.6	3.5	18.6	49.2	3.1	1.7	2.3	12.2	253
	Total (%) (N)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Table 1: Dimensional scope of claimants by policy field

		In % within issue field						
		MON	AGR	IMM	TRP	PEN	EDU	EUI
Germany	Purely own national*	12.9	28.8	53.9	18.7	88.3	83.6	0.3
	Purely European supranational*	14.8	14.9	2.6	3.1	1.5	0.7	18.9
	Relations own country with Europe	29.6	21.2	4.9	3.8	1.5	1.7	22.7
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	14.0	9.6	2.9	4.5			38.6
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	7.4	11.1	12.7	9.4	2.6	2.7	19.0
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	7.2	10.6	13.8	25.6	4.8	8.0	0.1
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	14.0	3.8	9.2	34.8	1.5	3.3	0.3
Spain	Purely own national*	9.4	28.8	59.0	16.2	80.5	78.1	
	Purely European supranational*	29.2	18.8	0.5	5.1	1.3		27.4
	Relations own country with Europe	26.2	28.8	4.8	3.0	3.9	1.4	30.2
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	18.9	13.8	4.8	2.0	1.3		33.0
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	2.1	10.0	7.1	2.0	2.6		8.1
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	6.9		10.5	27.3	1.3	9.6	0.8
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	7.3		13.3	44.4	9.1	11.0	0.6
UK	Purely own national*	29.2	40.0	44.9	29.9	90.6	94.9	
	Purely European supranational*	6.3	4.1	10.3	1.4			15.8
	Relations own country with Europe	43.4	28.2	8.3	1.7	3.1	0.7	49.0
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	12.4	5.3	3.2	2.0			27.6
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	4.7	15.3	11.5	4.8	1.0	0.6	7.6
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	1.1	4.7	10.9	20.9	2.1	2.4	
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	2.9	2.4	10.9	39.3	3.1	1.5	

Table 5: Multi-level relations within claims by policy fields (* = incl. foreign relations with non-European countries or institutions)

		All 7 Policy Fields				6 Policy Fields (exc. EU I)			
		1990	1995	2000	2002	1990	1995	2000	2002
Germany	Purely own national*	27	26	36.3	31.1	36.6	31.8	51.2	40.3
	Purely European supranational*	8.5	6.9	10.6	10.2	4.9	4.2	7.5	7.3
	Relations own country with Europe	18	13.3	14.3	13.5	8.1	10.7	13	11.8
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	10.5	11.9	16.2	14.2	4.9	6.2	5.7	6.4
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	8.7	14.1	10.6	10	8.8	13	5.7	7.3
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	13.9	14.6	4.8	10.1	18.7	17.9	6.8	13.1
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	13.4	13.3	7.2	10.8	18	16.2	10.2	13.9
Spain	Purely own national*	19.0	29.7	24.1	32.3	29.3	37.3	38.4	44.3
	Purely European supranational*	13.8	8.7	17.1	19.9	6.7	2.7	14.6	13.3
	Relations own country with Europe	17.2	23.2	19.3	16.0	13.3	20.0	13.3	9.8
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	17.2	7.2	20.4	14.1	5.3	3.6	10.5	9.8
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	5.2	2.9	7.0	4.1	2.7	2.7	5.0	4.2
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	10.3	17.4	4.9	4.1	16	21.8	6.8	5.7
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	17.2	10.9	7.2	9.4	26.7	11.8	11.5	12.9
UK	Purely own national*	45.3	41.4	45.0	52.0	51.7	52.9	54.4	58.3
	Purely European supranational*	5.2	2.7	5.4	5.6	3.1	1.2	3.7	3.6
	Relations own country with Europe	17.3	20.5	28.8	14.7	13.9	10.4	23.4	11.7
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	7.0	7.6	9.4	6.9	3.5	3.1	6.1	3.9
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	5.2	7.3	4.2	5.3	4.9	6.2	3.9	5.1
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	5.2	16.0	2.5	4.2	5.9	20.5	3.1	4.7
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	14.9	4.5	4.6	11.4	17.0	5.8	5.5	12.8

Table 7: Multi-level relations within claims by years (* = incl. foreign relations with non-European countries or institutions)

		In % within issue field and year																													
		MON				AGR				IMM				TRP				PEN				EDU				EU I					
		90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95	00	02	90	95
Germany	Purely own national*	54.4	17.8	5.0	3.2	16.2		41.5	23.4	34.8	59.1	59.5	51.9	13.6	1.1	6.1	30.3	90.0	75.0	94.9	79.0	68.6	74.0	82.5	93.7	1.0			0.3		
	Purely European supranational*	2.9	8.9	19.4	17.5	16.2		13.8	18.8	4.3		1.3	4.8	3.4	5.7	8.2	0.9				4.9	2.9		1.0		18.1	18.8	18.1	20.4		
	Relations own country with Europe	7.4	20.0	38.3	33.9	24.3	38.5	14.9	25.0	2.2	6.8	5.2	4.8	5.7	6.9	8.2	0.9		4.2		3.7	8.6		1.0	0.9	44.8	24.6	17.4	19.0		
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	7.4	13.3	16.1	14.8	8.1	7.7	9.6	10.9	2.2		2.0	5.8	5.7	6.9	2.0	3.6									25.7	37.7	41.8	40.7		
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	5.9	11.1	5.6	7.9	10.8	7.7	9.6	14.1	23.9	18.2	10.5	8.7	3.4	19.5	2.0	9.5	10.0	4.2	2.5	1.2	5.7	6.0	1.9	0.9	8.6	18.8	22.4	19.5		
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	14.7	14.4	2.2	5.8	18.9	46.2	8.5	1.6	23.9	2.3	12.4	16.3	25.0	31.0	10.2	27.1		8.3	2.5	8.6	8.6	12.0	9.7	4.5	1.0					
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe	7.4	14.4	13.3	16.9	5.4		2.1	6.3	8.7	13.6	9.2	7.7	43.2	28.7	63.3	27.6		8.3		2.5	5.7	8.0	3.9		1.0			0.4		
Spain	Purely own national*	12.5	26.4	5.0	1.6			46.2	14.3	18.8	68.8	59.1	64.4	28.1	6.7	3.1	25.0	100	68.4	81.1	89.5	100	50.0	69.2	83.8						
	Purely European supranational*	12.5	3.8	34.7	46.0	33.3	33.3	17.9	17.1			1.1		6.3		9.4				2.7						26.8	32.1	21.5	37.8		
	Relations own country with Europe	50.0	34.0	27.7	11.1	33.3	66.7	23.1	31.4	6.3		4.5	5.6				15.0	10.5	2.7					3.8		24.4	35.7	29.3	32.7		
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	18.8	7.5	24.8	19.0			5.1	25.7	6.3		5.7	4.4			3.1	5.0			2.7						39.0	21.4	37.2	25.5		
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	6.3	1.9	3.0		33.3		7.7	11.4				10.2	6.7		6.7		5.0	5.3	2.7							9.8	3.6	10.5	4.1	
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*		22.6	2.0	3.2					31.3	6.3	11.4	6.4	21.9	66.7	12.5	30.0		2.7			25.0	19.2	2.7				1.6			
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe		3.8	3.0	19.0					37.5	25.0	8.0	12.2	43.8	20.0	71.9	20.0		15.8	5.4	10.5	25.0	7.7	13.5		7.1					
UK	Purely own national*	27.5	54.5	19.8	29.7	47.4	87.5	23.7	38.6	87.5	27.3	51.6	37.8	21.7	2.8	45.9	42.3	50.0	86.7	97.2	88.4	98.8	86.3	96.8	95.2						
	Purely European supranational*	1.4	3.0	7.6	8.7	7.9		3.4	3.5		9.1	9.7	12.2	6.0												19.5	8.3	13.7	22.5		
	Relations own country with Europe	47.8	24.2	50.6	41.3	10.5	12.5	42.4	29.8		36.4	3.2	8.2	2.4	1.4	2.7	1.2	13.3		2.3		1.3	2.5	0.6		41.5	56.9	54.9	39.3		
	Relations other Eur. countries with Europe	8.7	9.1	16.3	10.9	2.6		1.7	12.3			3.2	4.1	3.6	2.8		1.2									31.7	23.6	25.5	31.5		
	Relations own country + other Eur. countries	8.7	3.0	2.3	6.5	18.4		18.6	14.0		9.1	6.5	15.3	1.2	18.3	2.7	1.2	50.0		2.3				0.6	0.9	7.3	11.1	5.9	6.7		
	Relations among+within other Eur. countries*	5.8	1.5			5.3		10.2			18.2	19.4	9.2	12.0	64.8	5.4	9.8					5.0	0.6	3.5							
	Int'l politics without reference to own country or Europe		4.5	3.5	2.9	7.9			1.8	12.5		6.5	13.3	53.0	9.9	43.2	44.2			2.8	4.7	6.3	1.3	0.4							

Table 8: Average changes in forms of public communication by issue field and year (* = incl. foreign relations with non-European countries or institutions)

		In % within issue field					Total	
		State and party actors	Economic interest groups	Media and journalists	Other civil society actors	Unspecified	(%)	(N)
Germany	Transnational non-European	88.2		1.5	10.3		100	68
	Transnational European	97.2	2.5			0.3	100	358
	National (own country)	63.7	14.4	12.0	9.5	0.5	100	1413
	National (other European)	72.7	5.1	14.4	6.0	1.8	100	604
	National (non-European)	77.2	8.1	3.6	8.3	2.8	100	360
	Total (%) (N)	72.2 2025	9.7 272	9.6 270	7.4 207	1.0 29	100	2803
Spain	Transnational non-European	83.3			16.7		100	18
	Transnational European	94.7			0.4	4.8	100	227
	National (own country)	64.1	13.3	14.9	5.9	1.8	100	510
	National (other European)	81.2	5.1	3.8	3.0	6.8	100	234
	National (non-European)	73.0	4.3	5.7	7.8	9.2	100	141
	Total (%) (N)	75.2 850	7.6 86	8.2 93	4.6 52	4.3 49	100	1130
UK	Transnational non-European	80.0	3.3		16.7		100	30
	Transnational European	94.2	2.2		2.9	0.7	100	138
	National (own country)	49.1	16.3	13.4	20.8	0.4	100	1402
	National (other European)	79.7	6.9	4.9	6.1	2.4	100	246
	National (non-European)	79.8	6.7	3.2	8.7	1.6	100	253
	Total (%) (N)	59.9 1240	12.9 266	10.1 208	16.3 338	0.8 17	100	2069

Table 11: Dimensional scope of actor type categories in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom