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Political discourses on Europe and European integration in national election manifestos and party programs

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Abstract How has the European narrative articulated in the political discourses of national parties in the member states, which frames have been adopted and to which direction has such articulations evolved in time? This paper addresses this question and critically discusses political parties' discourses towards Europe and European integration in three EU member states: Germany, which has always promoted further integration; the United Kingdom, which has consistently been a keen supporter of intergovernmentalism; and finally the Netherlands, one of the original six and a willing, yet cautious, supporter of supranational cooperation. Through a textual analysis of national election manifestos issued by the two biggest parties between 1955 and 2013 in each country, we aim to investigate the variance in national political cultures with respect to identity and self-identification with Europe as a determining factor of support for the integration process. This paper concludes that although European integration is structured around a framework of interests in all the six party discourses under analysis, the construction of national identities and hence the articulation of national interest in EU membership as well as the visions for the political structure of the union vary greatly across cases.

Introduction

Since the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam irreversibly paved the way for a tighter Europe, the saliency of European integration has risen considerably in political party debates. In this process, voters' opinions became less susceptible to manipulations by the elites whereas party discourses started to be shaped more by voter preferences (Marks and Steenbergen 2004). Indeed, several studies have pointed out that taking a position on European integration affects the votes that political parties receive in national elections (e.g. Evans 1999, Gabel 2000, Tillman 2004, Evans and Butt 2007). In turn, to explain party positioning on Europe, scholars pursuing different theoretical agendas have focused on ideological cleavages (e.g. Marks and Wilson 2000, Hooghe et al. 2002); strategic calculations in party behavior (Hix and Lord 1997, Scott 2001); the structural role the party plays within the political competition as a mainstream or a niche/protest party (Mattila and Raunio 2009, Taggart 1998, Hix 1999, Mair 2000); and finally on the material interests of the state in which the party resides in (Moravcsik 1998).

As a result of these numerous studies, today we know quite a great deal about the causal dynamics of party positioning in respect to European integration. But we know less

about how political parties justify their positions, how they articulate Europe and European integration, and how they conceive their country's image within the broader European polity. We know equally little about the salient representations and popular themes adopted in the framing process of European integration by political parties. Studying party discourses however is a significant task as it can reveal different formulations of national identities and political culture, which in turn lead to varied attitudes to European integration. Such an inquiry can also help us understand why support for integration has been higher in some countries compared to others and shed more light on the future prospects of the integration process.

Even though there have been partial examinations of how the different levels of national and European identities interact within the political discourses of party elites in member states (e.g. Marcussen et al. 1999, Statham 2008), there is a lack of cross-national comparative and longitudinal research on the role of political parties in representing national and European identities and seeking to make collective (national and European) identities salient in public debates. Systematic textual studies of party discourses for this purpose are rare and limited to media datasets (e.g. Helbling et al. 2010) rather than official party documents. The objective of this paper is to investigate dominant representations and frames in party discourses to uncover variances in collective identities which lead to differing attitudes towards European integration. The enquiry will be based on a discourse analysis of political party manifestos and programs in three prominent EU members: Germany; the UK; and the Netherlands. For each country, two parties, and for each party, the documents published for national elections from the end of World War II until 2012, are selected for investigation.

On a theoretical level, we presuppose that along with ideological cleavages, strategic calculations and national interests, domestic orientations towards Europe are also shaped by national identities and cultures. As Juan Diez Medrano notes, nation-states are key socialization agencies in individuals' lives (2004, 6). The cultural repertoire that are gradually formed through historical and social forces within the bounded space individuals reside in give rise to certain worldviews. These dominant discourses, which can greatly vary across nations, are processed by the social actors and once internalized, affect how actors evaluate social and political issues, including those related to European integration.

Political parties are critical intermediaries in this process. The broader structure of national culture and identities mold political parties' discourses on European integration, and political parties, if they are elected to government, set national interests and decide state policies towards Europe. Political parties also serve as active agents that link political culture and identity to individuals. Discourses generated at the party level are conveyed to individuals who can be passive recipients as electorates through cueing mechanisms (Hooghe and Marks 2005, Steenbergen et al. 2007, Ray 2003) or active participants as party members, through robust political socialization (Dalton and Weldon 2007, Karp and Banducci 2007).

The three countries studied in this paper differ in their attitudes towards European integration and thus are expected to differ in terms of political discourse adopted at the party level. Germany has always acted as the engine of further integration and been a keen supporter of supranationalism. In the words of Katzenstein, Germany is a "tamed power" in Europe (Katzenstein 1997). The Netherlands, another member of the original six, has largely been a willing participant of developing a tighter Europe, but with serious reservations on its effects on transatlantic cooperation and political consequences. While Germany is characterized as an "exaggerated multilateralist" (Anderson 1999), Netherlands could be

called an "instrumental supranationalist" at best (Van Keulen 2006, 96). Finally, the UK, in contrast to the former two, has consistently held back from further integration and been an ardent critic of supranationalism. Winston Churchill once said that the UK is "with Europe, but not of it" and little has changed since then. Choosing three member states with vastly different preferences for the institutional structure of European integration will allow us to uncover the mediated effect of national culture on differing projections of European integration.

The remainder of the paper consists of seven chapters. The first chapter will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of identity construction within the context of European integration and the role of political parties in this process. The second section will discuss the research methods employed in this inquiry. The following three chapters will present the data and highlights of party discourses in three countries on the notion of European integration, national and European identities, and the preferred political structure of further integration. The sixth chapter will discuss the findings and finally, the last chapter will conclude the paper.

Identity construction and political parties

Identity can be defined as "images of individuality and distinctiveness (selfhood) held and projected by an actor and formed and modified over time through relations with significant others" (Katzenstein 1996, 6). Sociologists working on identities propose that social actors gain agency in relations with others by putting the identity they build up for themselves into practice (Berger 1966, Rutherford 1998, McSweeney 1999). In that sense, identities are both a function of an actor's self-understanding and his/her interactions with others. Identities not only address features that are shared among groups of individuals, but also define a community and an 'other' that does not share common ideational characteristics. Consequently, social identities have internal and external dimensions: The internal dimension encompasses the set of norms, values and discourses that creates and holds the social group together (Smith 1991). The external dimension, on the other hand, involves the self-placement of a community relative to similar entities and other actors (Banchoff 1997, 12). Any threats to the internal and external categorizations that constitute the pillars of an actor's identity are considered a source of distress for actors and thus are to be avoided. Social actors therefore, including states, Jennifer Mitzen claims, not only seek to preserve their physical security and address threats to their territorial and structural unity, but also maintain their 'ontological security' and secure their identity as the source of stable preferences and interests (Mitzen 2006).

Within the context of European integration, member states' self-identification with Europe, how domestic groups construct national identity and how they situate themselves within the framework of European integration have an important effect on internal and external community-building processes and thus state decisions to transfer some national sovereignty to the supranational level. A positive identification with Europe and the European Union will advance the notion of "we-ness" and bolster the belief in belonging to the same whole[1]. This will lead to the perception that it is not necessarily a zero-sum game

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[1] According to Karl Deutsch, we-feeling is an essential part of a sense of community which he defines as "a matter of mutual sympathy and loyalties; trust and mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests; of mutually successful predictions of behaviour, and of co-operative action in accordance with it" (Deutsch et al. 1957, 36).

between Brussels and the national capital, instead both parties can equally benefit from the transfer of competencies to the supranational level. A negative identification with Europe, on the other hand, will provoke a threat to the actor's ontological security. A disparity in corporate identities between the EU and the member state will lead the masses to restrict the inclusive concept of "we-ness" only to those sharing the same national affinity. The perception will be that some of the national sovereign rights are "surrendered to the 'others', which do not share the same identity with 'us'" (Koenig-Archibugi 2004, 146). For actors with weak European identification, the EU, as a polity in the making, would be perceived as a threat both to the decision-making autonomy of national institutions and to the core values of national identity and sovereignty (Marks and Hooghe 2003, Risse 2002).

One particular arena that conveys and shapes discussions on the construction of political identity is political parties. Political parties in parliamentary democracies have an important leverage in foreign policy decisions. They can influence leaders' abilities to construct domestic coalitions for the implementations of policies, reject or change foreign policy proposals in parliament (Katzenstein 1996, 8). If elected, they form governments which would be expected to execute policies in line with electoral preferences and sensitivities, as any disparity between the two could result in a letdown in the next elections. At the same time, political parties present issues of national and international politics to a wider audience and thus, influence the formation of public opinion (Zaller 1992, Ray 2003). In situations where the public is disinterested or ill-informed, or the issue is of a complex nature, as European integration tends to be, the parties can also cue the electorate and supplement them with heuristic devices through which they can make sense of the issue and form an opinion (Steenbergen et al. 2007, Hooghe and Marks 2008).

Deriving from these premises, we can infer that political parties are influential mediums in constructing and reproducing the political discourse towards European integration from the mold of a broader social culture and identity embedded in a given polity. Political parties engage in this construction process through framing narratives belonging to Europe and national polity in specific models that are consistent with their ideational orientation as well as the cultural and political orientation of the society, and call on the electorate to take a position. By inducing certain frames, that are "patterns of presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion" (Gitlin 1980, 7), which "define problems" (Entman 1993, 52), political parties set the parameters within which the electorate evaluate the question of European integration (Bleich 2003, Medrano 2003). Depending on the identity they represent, political parties can choose to frame European integration either in a discourse that would promote more supranational integration, by which a portion of national sovereignty would be transferred to Brussels, or more intergovernmental integration, by which nation-states would remain the sole decision makers.

Mobilizing for more supranational integration would require frames underlining the commonalities among Europeans in terms of norms, values, experiences and interests. By promoting a European-wide identity, the message sent to the audience would be that the community of Europe essentially includes the national community in a complementary way such that consenting to the transfer of sovereignty from the national capital to Brussels should be seen as a part of "domestic politics" (Bergbauer 2011). Thus, we can expect that in member states which are more supportive of supranational integration, political parties would be expected to employ more ideational/normative frames in their discourses and focus on the commonalities of their shared identities with Europe while presenting European integration to the electorate.

By contrast, in member states that are closer to intergovernmental integration, political parties would be more likely to reject adopting a common European identity and underline the differences in domestic and European identities. Parties would support the protection of national affiliations and would take a defensive position towards supranational Europe. Any integration would be considered as a threat to national community and its "way of life" (Bergbauer 2011, 10). Such defensive discourses would usually entail functional-utilitarian frames through which European integration is evaluated. That means, rather than as a normative/ideational issue, membership in the EU would be presented and, if necessary, 'sold' to the electorate by its instrumental value.

Research design

A viable way to study how political parties frame and problematize European integration is to analyse party programs and election manifestos. These documents include the ideas, values and policy proposals of their respective parties and the political elites who drafted them. Party manifestos make comparisons and analyses across time and countries possible. Furthermore, as parties compete in the elections for electorate support, their programs would also be expected to reflect the ideational commitments of society.

The typical method of dealing with extensive sources of data in the literature thus far has been content analysis relying on hand or computer coding systems. A primary example of the former is the Manifesto Research Group in the comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP) and the secondary studies using the data extracted in this project. The CMP managed to decipher more than 2,000 party programs using a coding scheme consisting of 56 categories. The project made significant contributions to the literature by enabling comparisons of manifestos against each other and tracing issue saliencies (Volkens et al. 2009). At the same time however, the CMP faced several criticisms over overlapping and missing categories (Pennings and Keman 2002), dubious comparability of manifestos due to differences in length, party sizes, country specificities or participation in government, and potential biases and mistakes of human coders (Gabel and Huber, 2000).

In addressing such problems, several other attempts have been made to advance new techniques of content analysis, such as wordscores used by Laver, Benoit and Garry (2003). Treating manifestos as 'collections of word data', Laver et al. proposed counting word frequencies in reference texts and applying the findings to subsequent texts. The aim of this was to save research from the potential fallacies of relying on personal coding schemes. However, the word frequency method was also criticized for potential unreliability issues in the absence of an authoritative calibrating text (Budge and Pennings 2007).

Though both types of content analyses offer particular benefits for particular research objectives (e.g. measuring issue saliencies or determining party positioning), their appeal in an inquiry which problematizes the interplay between identity and interest in texts is limited at best. This study is interested in exposing the substance of party discourses on European integration, the actual frames that European integration is articulated in and the form of messages used to convey those frames. As such, a multi-level discourse analysis, which investigates the complex relationship between textual structures and interactions in the political realm and scrutinizes how these links transform over time, appears as the more valid method of conduct (Fierke 2007).

Discourse analysis is the preferred method for constructivists with its epistemological objective of exposing the rules, norms and meanings which help constitute the framework which the actors and the structure are embedded in (Fierke 2002). Though the term 'discourse' can integrate a broad range of definitions, the common denominator in all these definitions is that discourses entail complex processes "of social interaction of

which text is just a part" (Fairclough 1989, 24). In this perspective, it is assumed that the language used for any given text is influenced by the social and political context of the society it originates from. At the same time, the text and the language shape the political context. That means, as the political structure determines the discourse, the discourse constitutes the political structure.

Although researchers can extract valuable lessons regarding connections between structures and practices that construct meanings, not every text is of equal value. The more authority the text under scrutiny and its speaker/author has, the stronger the conclusions the research can draw regarding this bidirectional relationship. Given that, party manifestos and programs issued by bigger parties are especially important for the purposes of this paper for four reasons: First, these parties can claim to represent a broader share of the electorate such that the political discourse they adopt would reflect a greater portion of society. Second, while ideological differences constitute a robust source of party competition at the far left and right ends of the political spectrum, party discourses of mainstream, centrist parties would be less driven by ideology but more so by national differences in political identity and culture. Third, these parties have much more experience in governing as well as a greater chance of being in government in the next elections; thus the election manifestos belonging to big parties can be read as the world views and policy proposals of actors with the potential of becoming future policymakers. Fourth, exactly because of this potential, big parties have much less room to strategically distort their perspectives on Europe in an attempt to gain votes. While small, niche parties attempt to highlight outstanding positions on issues they champion and blur other mainstream issues, for big parties misrepresenting and obfuscating positions in mainstream issues is a risky endeavor at the cost of alienating a wider segment of the electorate (Meguid 2005, Rovny and Edwards 2012).

In this study, in each country, the two largest parties from opposite sides of the political spectrum and their national election manifestos are selected for closer examination: the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Germany; the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in the UK; and finally the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the Dutch Labour Party (PvDA) in the Netherlands. The manifestos issued for national elections covering sixty-two years, from 1950 to 2012, as well as party programs belonging to election years or the year before, are examined. The documents are acquired from the Manifesto Project Database (WZB), the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties (DNPP) and individual party websites. Due to the high volume of texts, only the preambles, basic principles, foreign policy and, if available, the European policy sections of manifestos are analysed while excluding domestic policy issues. The number of documents collected for each party are as follows: the CDU/CSU (Germany) 11; the SPD (Germany) 15; the CDA (Netherlands) 17; the PvDA (Netherlands) 18; and the Conservatives and the Labour Party (the UK) 17 each.

The discourse analysis is conducted on three different levels following the typology provided by Best et al. (2012). First is an analysis of the cognitive-evaluative level, which aims to expose the assessment of the parties on the nature of European integration, and their evaluation on the consequences of membership. The investigator questions used for that purpose are: "What does European integration stand for? What is the reason for, or against, integration as proposed by the party?" The second is the analysis of the emotive level, which aims to capture the parties' emotional affiliation and sense of belongings with Europe and their national polities. The questions "What does Europe mean to the party? Does a separate European identity exist? How does it differ from national identity?" will be addressed on the manifestos. Finally, the third is the projective level which aims to uncover

parties' future projections of Europe and the structure of European integration. For that, the manifestos will be processed employing the question of "What kind of Europe/European integration does the party envision?"

The cognitive-evaluative level: discourses on the notion of 'European integration'
For German political parties, the pursuit of the political unification of Europe is nothing less than a "historic mission" (CDU/CSU, 1987). Conforming to the legacy of Konrad Adenauer, thanks to the European Community, the Christian Democrats suggested in 1987, a model for a lasting peaceful order could finally be established in the old continent (1987, p:15). The unity of Europe offered a framework for nations and peoples on how to avoid reverting to aggressive nationalism which had been responsible for the destruction of the World Wars (CDU Grundsatzprogramm 1994, paragraph 122). Similarly for the SPD, "the persistence of historic divisions was disastrous for the peoples of Europe in the past" (1965, 84) and a united Europe is an antidote against such ruptures in the continent. The purpose of the existence of European integration in preserving the peace was deemed equally valid within the post-Cold War context. In its 1997 election manifesto, the SPD pointed out that in spite of recurrent national self-interests, the European Union remains a community of peace and has been an "incomparably successful project for lasting peace" (1997, 30).

Framing European integration around the normative value of peace led German parties to adopt a strongly multilateralist tone in election manifestos. In the German discourse, the unity of Europe is pronounced as the only choice for the states of Europe. In 1976, the CDU/CSU declared that only a united Europe could master its political fate (1976, 5). In the next election manifesto, the party expressed, "Europeans are able to meet the challenges of the future, preserve peace and freedom, solve the energy problem and partner with the Third World only by working together in a political union" (1980, 8). The fragmentation of the nation-state system in Europe should thus be overcome (1980, 7). Fourteen years later, the party was bolder in its call for more multilateralism and supranationalism: "Europe must act where individual nation states are no longer able to solve the basic problems of their peoples [and for that], the necessary powers and political sovereignty should be transferred to the European Union" (CDU Principles and Program 1994 paragraph 124). The belief in a "united Europe" was similarly shared by the Social Democrats. The SPD's 1965 manifesto stated that "the future of Europe depends on its unity" (1965,83) and thus "the United States of Europe, as it was called in the Heidelberg Program of 1925, remains our goal" (1965, 42). In 1990, the party pointed to the limits of the nation-state system in dealing with an increasingly growing set of international problems: "for the great problems of our time, large nation states are too small" (1990,23). Instead, the SPD proposed, the European Community (EC) should act as a building block for a regionally structured world community (Party Program 1989, 12).

In contrast to the German discourse, up until the late 1960s, it was the Commonwealth, not Europe, which was deemed the main multilateral forum that Britain should turn its face to. In 1955, declaring that isolationism was not an option for the UK, the Conservatives announced that "the British Commonwealth and Empire represents the most fascinating and successful experiment in government and in international relations ever known". The Labour Party's discourse was even starker in 1950 as the party boldly declared that Britain should always remember that "we are the heart of a great Commonwealth extending far beyond the boundaries of Europe". According to the British parties, these ties would also help the British economy recover without the assistance of a European integration scheme.

As a consequence of political focus on the lost imperial belongings, until the late 1970s, Europe was largely neglected in British party discourses. Even though it was a Conservative government that filed the first British application for EEC membership in 1961, there were only partial discussions of European integration in the party's election manifestos until the early 1970s. Following the first French veto, in its 1964 manifesto, without providing any details, the party simply announced that entry into the EEC was not an option under the existing circumstances. Six years later, the Conservatives led by Edward Heath were more open, albeit cautiously, towards membership. The 1970 manifesto contended that "if we can negotiate the right terms, we believe that it would be in the long-term interest of the British people for Britain to join the European Economic Community"; but it also issued a warning: "there is a price we would not be prepared to pay". As a result of intense debates, only one year after the accession, in 1974 the Conservatives came to the conclusion that "membership is essential for British interests and withdrawal would confront Britain with the choice of almost total dependence on others or retreat into weak isolation". An interest-based focus was visible again when the party suggested that "there are some Community policies which need to be changed since they do not suit Britain's - or Europe's - best interests" (Conservatives 1979). After all, to the Conservatives: "being good Europeans does not prevent one from standing up for British interests" (Conservative Party 1987).

The Conservatives' apathy towards Europe was similarly shared by its rival, the Labour. Right after the disappointment of the French veto, the 1964 Labour manifesto established that "entry to the Common Market would have excluded our Commonwealth partners, broken our special trade links with them and forced us to treat them as third-class nations [but one shouldn't forget that] the first responsibility of a British Government is still to the Commonwealth". Britain may "be in Europe", the Labour leader, Harold Wilson, announced in 1969, "but our power and influence are not, and must never be confined to Europe" (Kitzinger 1969, 112). Only the next year, the party gave the green light to EEC membership but with a certain degree of caution. In the 1970 election manifesto, it was stated that "Britain's strength means that we shall be able to meet the challenges and realize the opportunities of joining an enlarged Community. But it means, too, that if satisfactory terms cannot be secured in the negotiations, Britain will be able to stand on her own feet outside the Community" (Labour 1970). That year, the party also highlighted the necessity of cooperation between states to deal with the increasing number of transnational problems: "the pressures put on individual national [or] the need for international action to tackle problems of our environment such as oil pollution, […] are all problems which can only be solved by international co-operation" (1970). This positional change was short-lived however. After a change of heart in 1983, the Labour supported British withdrawal from the Community as it "will allow Britain to pursue a more dynamic and positive international policy - one which recognizes the true political and geographical spread of international problems and interests".

The British parties' neglect of Europe peaked during the rule of Thatcher, but came to an abrupt end with the end of the Cold War. Unlike the strong Eurosceptic tone of the 1960s and the 1970s, a relatively benign but distanced tone was vocalized in manifestos belonging to the 1990s. A particular factor of incongruence between the British ideal of European cooperation and supranational integration stemmed from a peculiar obsession with a leadership role embedded in both parties' discourses during this period. The Conservatives' 1997 manifesto contended that "Britain is a world leader as well as a European nation. Our economic strength, our history and our language make us a global

trading nation with links right around the world". Labour led by Tony Blair, the most Europhile British politician in decades, was even more ambitious that year: "There are only three options for Britain in Europe. The first is to come out. The second is to stay in, but on the sidelines. The third is to stay in, but in a leading role. [...] With effective leadership and clear vision, Britain could once again be at the centre of international decision-making instead of at its margins" (1997). Eight years later, the Labour party called itself proud to turn Britain "from a marginal level to a leader in the EU" (2005). Despite the change in party head, the emphasis on a leadership role remained equally vivid in 2010's manifesto: "Our belief is that Britain is stronger in the world when the European Union is strong, and that Britain succeeds when it leads in Europe and sets the agenda for change" (Labour Party 2010). Though the European Union was not mentioned specifically, the Conservatives' manifesto that year also agreed that "Protecting Britain's enlightened national interest requires global engagement, [...] our national identity is bound up in our historic global role as an outward-looking nation" (2010).

        In our final case, the Netherlands, utilitarian and normative frames are closely linked in the discursive articulation of European integration. "Issues in socio-economic fields, environment, energy and economic integration and employment may not be adequately addressed by the individual countries of Europe" and thus, "a wider perspective should be given to the European community", the CDA's party program declared in 1980 (Party Program and Principles 1980, 18). Six years later, Europe's actorness was juxtaposed against other major powers: "Europe's role and influence in the world is at stake" and only "by a real collective policy can the EC compete with the US and Japan" (CDA 1986, 7). "A strong embedding in broader cooperation" is particularly required for small states such as the Netherlands since "the opportunities for independent foreign policy are limited" (CDA 1994, 94). Thus, the party declared, "the future of the Netherlands is in Europe" (1994,94). In 2010, the CDA described Europe as "the engine of internal growth, stability and prosperity and the guarantee of our culture and socio-economic achievements" (2010, 89), adding that "strengthening the Dutch position in the world cannot be done without Europe".

        The instrumental framework is similarly adopted by the PvDA, with a reduced emphasis on Dutch power in favor of the welfare of European citizens. "At a time when the interdependence of domestic and foreign policy is increasingly growing", international cooperation is a "compelling necessity", the PvDA declared in 1956. A united Europe therefore, "is not only necessary for Europe to be free from communism, but also for the peoples of Europe to attain a high standard of living and to help Europe act in the global community as a whole" (1956, 2-3). Fifty years later, in the manifesto published in 2006, the same argument still held: "The PvDA wants an EU that provides stability, prosperity and security to European citizens, which cannot be realized by European countries alone" (2006, 100).

        Yet, the potential benefits that the citizens of the Netherlands, or Europe, would accrue from integration are not the only reason for Dutch parties' support for further integration. Equally determinative is the element of values and principles. For the CDA, there are two interrelated pillars of European integration: To the outside world, European cooperation "will serve the functions of Europe in the world such as the protection of human rights, the promotion of development, the creation of new economic structures and contribute to solving conflicts" (1977, 28), and to the inside, it would help the "people of Europe come closer together, break down prejudices, understand each other's language, lifestyle, culture, as well as promote common values such as democracy, stewardship,

solidarity and empowerment" (1981, 81). In short, the CDA summarized in 2010, "international cooperation is not only founded upon moral obligations and solidarity, but it also serves enlightened self-interests. Rich and developing countries have a mutual responsibility to alleviate the major global problems that we face" (2010, 90).

The emotive level: discourses on European identity

To the German Christian Democrats, Europe represents "the epitome of a liberal and humane way of life" which was advanced through the historic processes shared by the inhabitants of Europe (CDU 1976, 5). "Despite all their national, regional, political and economic differences, the peoples of Europe are linked by certain common traditions and intellectual roots", the party stated in 1994; Europe therefore is a "region with a common culture and system of values, with a shared historic heritage, a common present and a future which should be shaped in cooperation with each other" (CDU Principles and Program 1994, paragraph 121). Given that Europe is essentially a value community, "the EU must be constructed on the basis of freedom, democracy, federalism, subsidiarity and regional rights" (1994, paragraph 124). "In the course of this development", the program continued, "the nation-state will change but not disappear" (paragraph 124). Yet, in the aftermath of 9/11, the Christian Democrat discourse shifted to include not only thin attributes, but also thick ones as the basis of a European identity. "We want a Europe that is committed to its Western Christian roots and the ideas of the Enlightenment" and "remain committed to our goal of making this understanding of values clear with even a reference to God in the EU Treaty" (CDU/CSU 2009, 89). Within the same discourse, the party also pledged to strengthen the German language in Europe and end its *de facto* discrimination in European institutions (2009, 89).

Geographically, the CDU/CSU's rival underlined in 1961, Europe does not stop at the Elbe but includes the Eastern side under the sway of communist regimes (SPD 1961, 37). However, Europe's identity encompasses much more than its territory; the EC should "find its identity in trade and industry, in technology and science, in standing up for an intact environment and lasting development in the Third World", the SPD announced in 1989 (Party Program 1989,16). When the Eastern enlargement process was in full swing eight years later, the party cheered that "Europe has, after decades of division, the chance to be an indivisible union of states, supported by common values and principles and of international solidarity and mutual responsibility" (SPD 1997, 79).

In German party discourses, there is consensus regarding the country's firm place in Europe. The SPD proudly declared in 2002 that "we belong to Europe" (2002, 16), and the CDU/CSU in 1987 that "we belong to the community of values of the Western world" (1987, 6). To the German Christian Democrats, European and national identities are not mutually exclusive; a common European identity promoted by integration does not undermine national identities. The CDU's 1994 party program presented the view that "it is important to have a proper understanding of the cultural characteristics that nation-states in Europe have developed through history, and also to be aware of what elements they have in common", because "Europe is characterized by unity in diversity" (Principles and Program 1994, paragraph 121) and "regional, national and European identities complement each other" (paragraph 124). Subsequently, the emphasis placed on diversity in German manifestos became stronger as European integration deepened over the years. In 2002, the CDU/CSU called self-confident nations and regions the building blocks of Europe and declared that "their historically evolved diversity is Europe's strength" (2002, 64)

In contrast to the value framework embedded in the German discourse, how British parties construct the notion of Europe and how they position the UK within Europe reveals

an extremely utilitarian perspective. The Labour's 1983 manifesto accepted that "geography and history determine that Britain is part of Europe, and Labour wants to see Europe safe and prosperous". Yet, the manifesto went on to support withdrawal as "the European Economic Community, which does not even include the whole of Western Europe, was never devised to suit us" (Labour 1983). In 1992, this time it was the Conservatives who confirmed Britain's role in Europe: "Britain is at the heart of Europe", the party manifesto stated, "as a strong and respected *partner*".

As a consequence of framing integration through utilitarian lenses, both the Labour and Conservatives rejected the view that the integration process should be accompanied by an identity change. "In an uncertain, competitive world, the nation state is a rock of security", the Conservatives' 1997 manifesto argued; "a nation's common heritage, culture, values and outlook are a precious source of stability. Nationhood gives people a sense of belonging". Blaming the Labour Party for its integrationist EU policy which essentially meant "the end of the nation-state", it was suggested that "only the Conservatives can be trusted to stand up for Britain in Europe" and protect British national interests (1997). The Labour quickly responded to these charges by stressing that it did not support a United States of Europe but "believed in a Europe made up of nation states and offering a unique blend of inter-governmental co-operation" (2001).

In the election manifestos of Dutch political parties, Europe is consistently defined as a "community of values" or "value community" (e.g. CDA 1998, 7; CDA 2002, 54; CDA 2012, 26; PvDA 2012, 59). Democracy, solidarity, justice, equality and sustainability are listed as the core values of this community (CDA 2002, 52-53) while respect for human rights, the rule of law and each other's cultures are later added to the list (CDA 2006, 95). Unity in basic values, not in interests, was suggested as the driving reason for the growth of European unity by the CDA in 1993 (1993 Party Program, 43).

According to the CDA's political discourse, just as the EC/EU is a community built around civic values, so too is the Dutch identity and thus, a goodness of fit exists. Further promotion of these values both at the domestic and the European level are deemed essential since only by doing so could one establish a healthy base for a European-wide "we-feeling" (CDA 1998, Article 2.7.2). At the same time, "the European culture is a pluralistic culture", similar to the Dutch one, and thus the preservation of national cultural heritages and identities is of vital importance to both polities, according to the party (1993 Party Program, 39). Therefore, "factors affecting the national identity, including religion, language and culture, deserve protection under the international law norms" (1993, 103).

Similar concerns were expressed by the PvDA, particularly after the Maastricht Treaty. In its 1994 manifesto, the PvDA asserted that thanks to the growth of tremendous international communication and integration, the Dutch have become global citizens of a growing global village (1994, 9). Yet, at the same time, the party warned, "national boundaries are for many people a symbol of protection" and "there is a limit for each country as to how far it opens up to the outside world" (1994, 40). Thus, "any forced compulsion to European unification, however useful for the environment, infrastructure or security, will be counterproductive in terms of the preservation of national identities. […] A dangerous downward spiral can only be prevented [if] the focus of political loyalty and legitimacy around the nation-state remains intact. A shift towards Europe is necessary, but will take time. The emergence of an European identity is mainly promoted by the existence of truly common goals" (PvDA 1994, 44). Repeating the same argument, the 1998 manifesto maintained that "there will always be tensions between national peculiarities and the need for European conformity" (PvDA 1998, 64). Making a reference to Friedman's

conceptualization of globalization, the manifesto of 2006 concluded that "Europe must not be a straitjacket, but appreciate diversity". Therefore, the party declared support for "more Europe in some areas, and less Europe in some others" (PvDA 2006, 101).

The projective level: discourses on the structure of European integration

Within the multilateral discourse embedded in German party manifestos, both the CDU/CSU and the SPD support a federal Europe as a guarantee to protect national cultures and identities without sacrificing further integration. Political Europe must be built according to the federalist principle, the CDU/CSU suggested in 1987, and "the basic federal structure of Germany must be preserved in a united Europe" (1987, 15). A federal system not only "subjects the exercising of power to certain controls and prevents the development of a centralist Europe", but also "ensures the survival of the cultural diversity that should continue to be the hallmark of Europe" (CDU Principles and Program 1994, 125). A similar ideal is portrayed by the SPD: "We want to transform the European Community into the United States of Europe in which the cultural identities of people are is preserved, linguistic-cultural minorities are respected and in which all citizens are assured of equal liberties and opportunities for their development" and for such an ideal, a federal order which respects the integrity and sovereignty of all the countries of Europe is a necessity (Party Program 1989, 17).
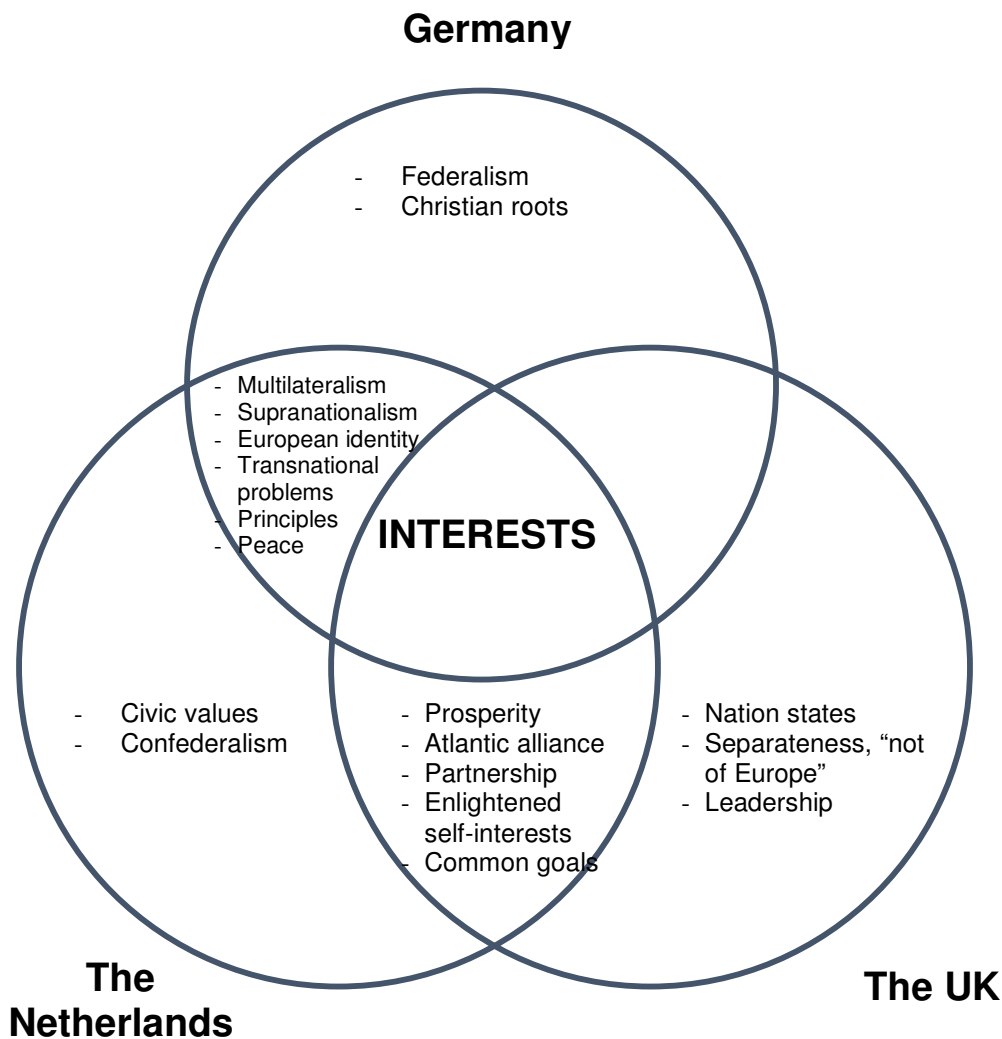
In direct contrast to the German discourse, to the British, the EU is essentially articulated as a "partnership of nations" (Conservatives 1997), thus a tightly organized political structure is thus firmly rejected. Using the exact same wording in its 1997 and 2001 manifestos, the Conservatives announced that Britain may "want to be in Europe, but not run by Europe". "The diversity of Europe's nations is its strength and as more nations join the European Union, it needs to become flexible not more rigid", the Conservatives proclaimed in 1997. In the next elections, when debates on the European Constitution and the Eastern enlargement were at their peak, the party warned the electorate against "a fully integrated superstate with nation states and the national veto disappearing" (2001). Accordingly, "Britain's interests are best served by membership of a European Union that is an association of its Member States" and a federal Europe can thus never be allowed (Conservatives 2010).

The Labour Party started vocalizing explicit criticisms of the dangers of supranational integration much earlier than its rivals, dating back to 1979. In that year's election manifesto, enlargement of the community was supported since it would "provide an opportunity to create a wider and looser grouping of European states, thus reducing the dangers of an over-centralized and over-bureaucratic EEC". After all, it was suggested, "each country must be able to realize its own economic and social objectives under the sovereignty of its own Parliament and people" (Labour Party 1979). Almost two decades later, labelled the New Labour under the energetic Tony Blair, the party was a much more enthusiastic supporter of European integration, but still critical of deepening beyond the control of member states: "Our vision of Europe is of an alliance of independent nations choosing to co-operate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone. We oppose a European federal superstate", the 1997 manifesto highlighted.

As early as 1959, the Dutch Christian Democrats presented the view that the growing interdependence of nations required an international system in which each member makes its contribution and shows its willingness to limit national sovereignty in favor of supranational bodies (CDA 1959, 7). But as the integration deepened, the Dutch parties developed a hesitant position, warning against overcentralization in Brussels and calling for "less Europe in some areas". A European order in which one retains his/her identity can

only be realized with certain democratic guarantees for local and national governments to remain intact, according to the Dutch political discourse. The PvDA affirmed that under no circumstances "should European cooperation lead to the creation of a European superpower" (1982, 28) or a "superstate" with "detailed rules and unnecessarily restricted freedoms" (2006, 100). "Slowly but surely a European identity is created" the PvDA's 2002 manifesto declared, but "this does not mean that everything should now be governed from Europe" (2002, 69). **"The feeling that 'they', those in power, decide when 'we', the ordinary people, have nothing to say has a real basis. […] We Europeans actually start to feel that we as citizens have little democratic control over the European Union" (2002, 64). This is a structural problem which could be best addressed by a properly implemented subsidiarity principle, according to the PvDA. After all, "the essence of democracy lies at the national level" (2006, 101).

FIGURE 1

Germany

- Federalism
- Christian roots

- Multilateralism
- Supranationalism
- European identity
- Transnational problems
- Principles
- Peace

INTERESTS

- Civic values
- Confederalism

- Prosperity
- Atlantic alliance
- Partnership
- Enlightened self-interests
- Common goals

- Nation states
- Separateness, "not of Europe"
- Leadership

The Netherlands

The UK

Discussion

Adenauer's post-war grand scheme (*Westpolitik*) was to integrate Germany in a network of multilateral institutions, of which the European Economic Community was the most critical one, so that war would become economically impossible and politically unimaginable. On several occasions in early post-war election manifestos, German parties defined European integration as a historic mission to eliminate rampant nationalism leading to war. To regain the trust of the international community, to succeed in German unification in the future, and to recover economically were additional factors presented in favor of European integration. By that, European integration was considered the only means to accomplish German national interests. In time however, as the integration process succeeded in bringing peace and welfare to the homeland, the boundaries separating German and European polities disappeared in party discourses. Today, in both the CDU/CSU and the SPD manifestos, German identity is articulated as a part of a broader European identity; and specific values and norms attached to being European are regarded as essential variables in forming German national interests. Consequently, numerous references are made to the commonalities of European peoples, including Germans, in terms of culture, destiny, and values. Since European and German identities complement each other, according to party discourses, any transfer of sovereignty from local and national to the European level and vice versa is not perceived as a threat to either polity. Despite a relatively minor emphasis, deeper political integration is also defended on the grounds that many of the problems of nation-states have become transnational today and thus cannot be effectively remedied by uncoordinated state efforts.

It is also our finding that Germany's rise as an assertive actor on the European scene in the last decade was accompanied by thicker identity formulations, particularly in the Christian Democrats' manifestos. This outcome is partly caused by the increased saliency of matters related to Europe in national elections and the elites' attempts to bring European integration closer to citizens to offset democratic deficit critiques. In the name of democratizing the EU, political parties inevitably invoke more populist sentiments with electoral concerns, which include references to religion or culture. Even though in the long run, this effort can help provoke a debate on community-building at the European level, it also carries the risk of breaking the permissive consensus on Europe that is so deeply embedded among German political actors.

In the UK, a completely different situation applies. Both the Labour and the Conservatives strongly converge on the uniqueness of the British national identity and its fundamental differences from continental Europe including common law, small state and free market economy. This discourse of separateness and the notion of British grandeur appeared as the primary reason for early post-war elites ignoring European integration and, at best, approaching it quite suspiciously in the following decades. Churchill's famous remark, "with Europe, but not of it", was a belief shared by both parties until the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s. Viewing itself as a world power, coming out of the war on the victorious side, and having solid ties to a vast number of countries which were once her colonies were the reasons why Britain stopped seeking being a part of the integration process. However, as British capabilities declined throughout the Cold War, a process finalized with an application for membership, the political discourse changed from total indifference to limited support. In the election campaigns of 1970 and 1974, the British application was presented not as a normative choice, but more as a political and economic necessity. Thus, there were two conditions behind British support: one, that essential British interests and identity were to be safeguarded; and two, that the Community would never aim to be a federal super-state.

It would be difficult to say that there have been dramatic changes in the main axes of the British discourse since then. Both British parties have chosen to frame European integration primarily as "a partnership organization" structured as a *Gesellschaft* connected by organic ties rather than a *Gemeinschaft*[2]. At times when the British felt hard pressed vis-à-vis international challenges, such as nuclear proliferation and being squeezed in between two superpowers in the 1960s or Yugoslavia demanding decisive action in the mid to late 1990s, "partnership", "opportunity" and "price to pay" were frequently employed expressions on election manifestos. At such times, European integration was articulated through the instrumental benefits that a European policy would net for Britain or as an arena where Britain could assert its leadership. On the other hand, whenever Britain felt strong enough, such as during the Thatcher era, emphases on British distinctness increased considerably as a justification for a Eurosceptic position. The continental corporatist Europe was referred to as being simply too different from neoliberal, Anglo-Saxon Britain.

Our final case, the Dutch discourse, presents the interplay between instrumental and normative frameworks. The two major parties, the CDA and the PvDA, evaluate issues of European integration and EU membership mainly as a function of Dutch interests with little reference to its ideational and normative values. However, unlike in Britain, in the Dutch discourse a European identity is not categorically rejected; instead the parties proposed that creating a European-wide political community should be a gradual process with carefully taken steps. Employing a functionalist perspective, both the CDU/CSU and the PvDA frequently suggested that converging policies in response to common problems would accelerate the formation of a common identity. As member states jointly engage in problem-solving efforts, they will develop common perspectives, increase mutual trust in each other, and start identifying with each other in an inclusive way. This reasoning inevitably led Dutch parties to focus on thin attributes such as commitment to the rule of law, democracy and solidarity as the basis of a shared identity, rather than setting for thick ones and seek inclusion and exclusion based on essential differences.

On one level, the saliency of civil themes regarding European integration makes Dutch parties one of the stronger proponents of a particular 'Europe', akin to Duchêne's 'civilian power' (Duchêne 1972) or Mitzen's 'civilizing power' (2006). Such a reflection of Europe's external identity in the Dutch political discourse is wholly consistent with the identity constructed within. In election manifestos, the Dutch are presented as a cosmopolitan society consisting of various cultural, religious and ethnic communities connected by commercial ties under the protection of a healthy democracy. The Dutch, according to this view, are a microcosm of a broader European polity. As such, the Dutch parties vocalize, both the national and European polities must be built on the premises of openness to difference and tolerance; a truly integrated Europe could only be achieved if these principles are upheld.

On another level, the Dutch preference for a thin identity construction as the basis of European integration is also a pragmatic response, deriving from the country's international obligations. From World War II until the end of the Cold War, the parties framed Dutch foreign relations as being the point of intersection of two separate alliances: membership in the EC was utilized for economic recovery and development, while the Atlantic Alliance was for defence and security. As European integration progressed and

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[2] See Tönnies (2001, fist published in 1887) for a detailed discussion on the dichotomies of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

pressures for political cooperation mounted, party manifestos approached it with suspicion on the grounds that any intermeshing between the two alliances could only weaken both. Nevertheless, with the end of the Cold War and as a consequence of the reduced interest of the United States in European security, Dutch parties started developing a growing interest in strengthening the EU as a capable foreign and security policy actor. As a result of this new pragmatic discourse, the Dutch insisted that even though the EU had to become a capable political actor, its identity should be built around civic values that are shared on the other side of the Atlantic so that Europe's actorness would not create a challenge to the Western security umbrella. Only in such a manner, complementary to the broader Western civic identity and in conformity with the Dutch security alliances, was the Netherlands willing to strengthen a common European identity and adopt it without hesitation.

How political parties frame Europe and European integration directly affects the political structure that they envision for the Union. For German parties, federalism is the choice for the future. For the SPD, the main objective from the very beginning was a "United States of Europe" whereas the CDU/CSU employed a more cautious approach, typically preferring the term "Union of European Nations". Yet in both trajectories, federalism ensures diversity, enriches the prospects of a stronger Europe and mutes fears of a strong Germany in others. British parties, by contrast, are ardent critics of any attempts that could weaken the Westphalian state system. Framing nation-states as "a rock of security", any integrationist policy at the EU level according to the British parties could only help soften that rock and lead to instability. By this account, in the British discourse, intergovernmentalism is the only game in town. The Dutch discourse takes a middle position. While further integration is welcomed, any prospect of the EU becoming a "superstate" is strictly rejected. One particular problem with the EU's current structure is its democratic deficit, the Dutch parties underline, and to overcome this, local and regional governments should be given greater control in conformity with the subsidiarity principle. For the pragmatic Dutch, furthermore, only a carefully designed supranational structure with nation-states preserving the various powers at their disposal would enhance the country's position vis-à-vis the big powers, Germany and France in particular. Wary of an 'ever closer union', rather than a federal system, Dutch parties are keener on a confederal structure.

Since this is a small-n study, it would be a stretch to reach conclusions on the effect of the ideological bases of political parties on their position towards European integration. Nevertheless, in all three countries studied in this paper, rather than positions on the left-right scale, national differences tend to be more decisive in forming party attitudes towards European integration. At the same time, within each country, discursive differences between the mainstream center left and right parties under analysis seem minimal. It is true that there are several references in the German Christian Democrats' manifestos to Adenauer's pivotal role but the Social Democrats have been equally embracive of his legacy, confirming the permissive consensus hypothesis (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). Yet, we can note some erosion in the ideational commitment to European integration in both German parties since the start of the new millennium. In the Netherlands by contrast, issue ownership is slightly more the case as the saliency of issues regarding Europe is considerably greater in the Christian Democrats' manifestos.

We also observe that the passage of time has not caused dramatic changes in party attitudes towards integration in the three countries. This confirms the theory that identities are resistant to change; actors become invested in and attached to the routines of engagement with others that anchor their identities (Mitzen 2006, 2). Even though the saliency of Europe in party manifestos has greatly increased over the years (Pennings 2006,

Spoon 2012), the arguments which fabricated party discourses on Europe have remained relatively stable. The only exception to this finding is the Labour Party in the UK. From the second French veto up until 1979, the Labour manifestos displayed an ambiguous disinterest towards Europe, reflecting a split within the party between the opponents of integration and supporters, which included the leadership cadre. After an election defeat in 1979, the party returned to a hardline position and until the second half of the 1980s openly advocated immediate withdrawal from the EC in its election manifestos. Towards the end of the 1980s, the Labour Party once again shifted its position from an anti-EU party to pro-EU. Just before the 1997 elections, under Blair's leadership, Labour was defending one of the most passionate pro-European discourses in British history. Though our study did not reveal similar twists in Germany and the Netherlands, further research should be conducted to present detailed analyses about the effect of time on the content of messages and arguments in relation to Europe that parties refer to in their discourses.

Conclusion

This paper explored political parties' discourses towards Europe and European integration in three EU member states, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands, in an attempt to investigate the role of ideational variables in support for integration. Theoretically, we suggested that party attitudes on European integration are mediated by the political culture and deeply embedded identity constructions. Having analysed national election manifestos from 1950 up until today, it was our aim to question how political parties of three member states with different levels of support for supranational integration frame and politically mobilize issues of Europe and European integration relative to national interests and identity in election manifestos.

Despite varying in degree, European integration is articulated first and foremost around a framework of interests in all six parties' discourses. Yet, what national interest entails varies greatly across cases. In Germany, the primary national interest was formulated mainly as the preservation of peace and for this, a 'united Europe' was deemed essential. In election manifestos, references to the material benefits of further integration were kept to a minimum. For the UK, the EC/EU membership was mostly promoted as a way of enhancing British influence and power in its quest for global leadership. Instead of a 'responsibility discourse', in British manifestos, regular emphasis was placed on the notion of 'leadership'. Britain, according to the dominant discourse, is destined to lead on a global scale and the EC/EU serves this purpose, just as the Commonwealth once did. In the Netherlands as well, power plays have a role in defences of integration, but of a different kind. Both Dutch parties accepted that a small country such as the Netherlands only has a limited number of tools in its foreign policy arsenal; thus the country needs the EC/EU in order to have a greater say in world affairs. Furthermore, although remarks regarding the shortcomings of the nation-state system in coping with transnational problems can be found in all three cases, such references are most numerous in Dutch parties. In this context, European integration was considered a vehicle for further prosperity and security.

The differences in formulating national interests are largely due to the different identity constructions. In Germany, national identity is constructed within the broader framework of Europe. Political actors stress on shared values and norms and portray Europe and Germany essentially as a single community. In this type of identity formulation, European integration is considered as the right thing to do and perfectly compatible with Germany's national interests. By contrast, in the British political discourse the emphasis is on differences between Britain and continental Europe in terms of culture, values and heritage. Since Britain is considered a separate community from the rest, with a separate composition

of identity and interests, European integration is evaluated solely in terms of utility calculations. Thus, only during times when British foreign policy faced serious international challenges did Europe and integration become salient issues of election manifestos. Finally, in the Netherlands, political views on Europe are usually pragmatically driven. In order to prevent any upset of the delicate balance of Dutch international alliances, the national political parties focused on civic values which are shared not only in Europe but also on the other side of the Atlantic as the basis of a common European identity. By constructing national and European identities in this particular way, the Dutch parties defined the community that the Netherlands is a part of as a broader Western world not just confined to the European continent. Consequently, the Netherlands has been largely a willing promoter of European integration, provided that European identity is formed in a thin way that would not discriminate against other members of the Western community and challenge the Atlantic alliance.

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