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European Identity Constructions in Public Debates on Wars and Military Interventions

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Abstract

Drawing on the classical distinction between community (Gemeinschaft) and society (Gesellschaft) by Tönnies (1963) and the related analytical distinction between strong and weak forms of collective identities, this paper analyses European identity constructions in 'future-of-Europe'-debates on war and military interventions in German, British and Polish mass media between 1990-2006. Based on a discourse analytical framework the empirical analysis scrutinises the ways in which the European Union (EU) is represented as a distinct political space. The paper illustrates that discursive constructions of the EU as a cooperative enterprise – a political entity mainly constituted by the self-interest of its members – and as a community with a shared ethical self-understanding occur almost equally frequent in all of the three analysed public debates. Yet, there are considerable national differences with respect to the exact arguments that are employed to construct these two larger discursive dimensions.

Keywords

Introduction

'The European Union has still not succeeded in crafting a common sense of "who we are"' (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 1).[1] In the last fifteen years an impressive body of literature has emerged dealing with the question of a European identity. In line with Checkel and Katzenstein's assessment most studies remain sceptical as to the question whether a European identity exists or whether it could possibly emerge in the near future. With the growing importance of EU activities in foreign and security policy (Wagner 2002, 2007) and other areas traditionally perceived as 'high politics' at the heart of national sovereignty – the alleged lack of a common European wide sense of belonging is particularly worrying. Focusing on democratic legitimacy normative political theorists suggest that one major reason for the democratic deficit of the European Union is mainly rooted in the absence of sociocultural presuppositions, such as a European identity. They underline that a high sense of loyalty towards a particular political community is a precondition for legitimate democratic governance since it assures that citizens are willing to accept inconvenient decisions made by the European Union (for a recent elaboration on this argument see Scharpf 2009; see also Offe 2001). Given the importance of a viable European identity for legitimate European governance it is no wonder the issue of European identities continues to attract empirical investigators.

This paper is a contribution to the empirical study on European identities. In contrast to many other studies dealing with European identity formation processes, this study relies on a discourse analytical framework and investigates European identity constructions in public debates on wars and military interventions in Germany, Poland and Great Britain between 1990 and 2006. Media debates on foreign policy in general and on wars and military interventions in particular are exceptionally suitable to witness identity formations at work.

The relationship between foreign and security policy and collective identities is extensively theorised in the academic literature. Most studies analyse the link between foreign policy and identity by taking collective identities as a starting point and investigate what role they play in structuring foreign and security policies. In this respect, Adler and Barnett's (1998) revival of the concept of security communities represents a path-breaking study. Their contribution conceptualises the link between security and community by showing how questions of identity might imprint on issues of international security.[2]

A different strand of research investigates the link between foreign and security policy and collective identities from a different angle. Here, the role of foreign and

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[1] This study was conducted in the context of a larger research project with the title 'In Search of Europe's International Role. Public Discourses about Humanitarian and Military Interventions and their effects on European Identity Formation (1990-2006)'. The project was situated at the Free University Berlin and led by Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse and Dr. Cathleen Kantner. I would like to thank Wolfgang Wagner for constructive comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[2] For the Western European context the theory of foreign policy proposed by Wæver (2005: 33) is particularly prominent. He argues that that '[...]"we" concepts, like state, nation, and Europe in the major European states can explain and up to a point predict developments in their over-all policies on security and Europe.' In a similar vein Larsen attempts to explain the European foreign policies by taking into account discursive constructions of collective identities (Larsen 2004). For the East European context, including Poland, Russia and the Ukraine the study by Prizel (1998) provides illuminating insights into the link between collective identity and foreign policy formation.

security policy in shaping collective identities or, indeed, sparking off identity formation processes is scrutinised. Wallace (1992: 65), for instance, refers to the 'grand strategy' of foreign policy by underlining that foreign policy is about collective identities itself, since it deals with 'the source of national pride, the characteristics which distinguish a country from its neighbours, the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad.' While the role of foreign policy in shaping collective identities has mainly been analysed for the national context the link between foreign policy and European identities still constitutes a research desideratum (Kantner et. al 2008; Aggestam 2004). Risse and Grabowsky (2008:11) stress that the 'EU's foreign policy is part and parcell of a process of identity construction during which the EU exports its values externally and reifies its identity internally'. In search for a role in world politics, the EU has to revise its fundamental values thereby contributing to European identity formation. In line with these assumptions, the discourse of EU practitioners on the Common Foreign and Security Policy is replete with references to a European identity (Sedelmeier 2004). The preamble of the Lisbon treaty likewise asserts that the member states of the European Union are resolved 'to implement a common foreign and security policy [...] thereby reinforcing the European identity'.

According to this literature general foreign policy issues and, more specifically, issues relating to wars and military interventions can initiate and reinforce processes of collective self-understanding. Building on these theoretical insights and the underlying assumption that questions of war and military interventions are particularly prone to spark off soul-searching debates about the meaning of collective identities – including European identities – this study consists of a qualitative in-depth analysis of processes underlying the discursive construction of European identities in the context of public debates on wars and military interventions.

Rather than covering the whole public debate on wars and military interventions for a timespan of 16 years, this paper takes a closer look on European identity constructions in media debates on the *future of Europe* in the context of discussing war and military interventions. Since the debate on the future of the European Union touches on fundamental questions what the EU is and where it leads to, it is inextricably linked to questions relating to a European self-understanding (Tietz 2002).[3] The study follows the assumption that statements dealing with the identity of the European Union are particularly likely to emerge in articles addressing the future of Europe within the context of war and military interventions. Thereby it draws on the empirical insights of a number of studies which explicitly emphasise that debates on the future of Europe are particularly suitable to analyse European identity constructions (Weiss 2003; Wodak and Weiss 2004).

Analytically, this study draws on Tönnies' (1963) classical distinction between *society* and *community* and the related distinction between weak (*commercium*) and strong forms (*communio*) of collective identities introduced by Kantner (2004a, 2006; see also Tietz 2002). By taking up this analytical distinction, the empirical part of the paper

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[3] Since the full sample of articles dealing with war and military interventions between 1991 and 2006 in seven countries consists of 489,508 articles a useful reduction of the empirical data had to be undertaken to make an in-depth discourse analysis of European identity constructions feasible. In this respect the focus on debates on the future of the European Union is particularly illuminating, since this subsample offers a richness of articles in which the identity of the European Union is discussed in great detail. Further methodological questions are discussed below.

aims at exploring *what kind* of European identities are constructed in public debates on war and military interventions and seeks to illuminate the *discursive mechanisms* underlying the construction of European identities. In sum, the paper is guided by three interrelated questions: (1) What *labels* are employed to categorise and to represent the European Union as a distinct political space in the context of debates on humanitarian and military interventions? (2) By means of what *arguments* is the European Union represented as a distinct political space? (3) In how far do these representations of the European Union correspond to a *commercium-* or *communio*-like political entity respectively?

In the first part of the paper I will establish the analytical distinction between strong and weak forms of collective identities and relate it to other similar conceptualisation in the literature. In the second part, different methodological approaches towards studying European identities are discussed. Special attention is given to the added valued that is constituted by a discourse analytical approach. The particular methodological approach of this study – i.e. an argumentative analysis of European identity constructions – is dealt with in the third part of the paper. The final part is devoted to a detailed discussion of the empirical results.

Theorising European identity

Tönnies' (1963) classical distinction between society (Gesellschaft) and community (Gemeinschaft) lends itself as a starting point for theoretical considerations on collective identities. Tönnies understood both society and community as expressions of different forms of social relationship (Delanty 2003: 32). For Tönnies these two conceptual devices were understood as two polar extremes which were introduced in order to establish a range within which transitional and intermediate forms can be comprehended (Loomis and McKinney 1963: 12). A community is a personal form of social relationship which is based on deeper cultural values. It captures a social relationship that is characterised by an 'initimate, private and exclusive living together […]' (Tönnies 1963: 33) in which tradition plays a central role and which is threatened by processes of modernisation (Delanty 2003: 31). A society, on the other hand, is conceived of as a 'mere coexistence of people independent of each other' (Tönnies 1963: 34). It represents a more impersonal interest-based form of social relationship. In a Gesellschaft type of social relationship everyone looks after his or her own personal interests (Tönnies 1963: 69). The meanings of these concepts were developed against the background of contemporary thought which has certainly lost a good deal of its relevance. Yet, the rather broad and general distinction between social entities which are mainly constituted by the self-interest of its members and those in which members' share 'thick' normative convictions that relate to the community as a whole is evident in a number of other analytical categories proposed to capture the social relationships that exist within the European Union.

For instance, this differentiation is also inscribed in the three RECON models of reconstituting democracy in Europe (Eriksen and Fossum 2004, 2007; Sjursen 2006, 2007; Eriksen 2009). In order to capture the complex character of the European Union and to establish different configurations for reconstituting democracy in Europe Eriksen, Fossum and Sjursen proposed to conceive of the European Union in terms of a problem solving entity, a value-based community or a rights-based union. In

particular, the first two of the three concepts follow the classical distinction between society and community.[4] The concept of a problem solving entity relies on the notion that utility, efficiency and the promotion of member states' interests are a characteristic logic of integration. According to this concept the EU is understood as 'a functional type of organisation whose purpose is to promote the interests of the member states.' (Eriksen 2009: 62) Within a problem-solving entity there are no collective tasks or obligations beyond the narrow interests of the member states (ibid.: 61). Members of a value-based community on the other hand, share a collective identity that is based on particular European values. The emergence of this type of community is dependent on '[r]evitalising traditions, mores and memories of whatever common European values and affiliations there are – be they the cultural tradition of Greek and Roman antiquity, of the Christian-Jewish religion or of the Enlightment [...]'. (Eriksen 2009: 66, see also Sjursen 2007: 3). Evidently, both analytical categories – the problem-solving entity and the value-based community – rely on different types of social relationships that exist within the respective community.

Based on this distinction, Eriksen and Fossum infer models of democracy that rely on different forms of institutionalisation (Eriksen and Fossum 2007). The cooperation that takes place in a problem-solving entity is best maintained through institutions complying with an intergovernmental rather than a supranational logic. The European Union, understood as a problem-solving entity, would be based on indirect forms of legitimation. Its legitimacy would mainly be derived from the democratic character of the member states (ibid.: 12). Therefore, the member states would retain core decision making powers within the Union's institutional structure. Such a functional regime would solely address problems which the member states cannot resolve by acting independently. Therefore, 'the EU's conferred policies would be foremost in the operation of the common market' (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 12). The scope of common action in other policy fields would be quite narrow. By contrast, a value-based community in which a sense of 'common destiny' and 'imagined common fate' (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 16) exists, fulfils the preconditions of democratic governance and is therefore based on direct forms of legitimation. 'The EU's legitimacy basis, from this perspective, would be based on the community of values that emanates from the revival of European traditions' (ibid.: 16). These common values would render collective decision making at European level possible. A *multinational federal European state* is the institutional form that most suitably corresponds to a value-based community (ibid.).

The general distinction proposed by Eriksen, Fossum and Sjursen is particularly useful as it offers different forms of conceptualising collective identities. Tönnies conceptual decision to put society and community into radical opposition an to idealise the community, led to a confusion of several analytic dimensions of 'identity' and to an overestimation of strong forms of collective identity (Kantner 2006: 501). In contrast to this, the distinction between a problem solving entity and a value-based community accounts for both types of collective identities and does not follow the tradition of ignoring those convictions that exits within society-like political entities.

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[4] Since the concept of a rights-based union sketches a cosmopolitan model of European democracy beyond the classical options of society and community it shall not be further addressed in this paper.

Yet, the concept of a value-based community tends to be conservative, for it relies on tradition and culture as the *only* basis of European values. Eriksen, Fossum and Sjursen stress that a value-based community is dependent on 'collective processes of self-interpretation', by revitalising a cultural heritage, common traditions or collective memories (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 441; Sjursen 2007: 3). However, references to a common cultural heritage, traditions and memories are not the only means by which a collective self-understanding can be constituted. Any attributes may be reified into goods which in turn can become values that are important for the ethical self-understanding of the members of a community (Kantner 2006: 518). The crucial point is that members of a community discursively agree upon what counts for them as 'good life'. A collective self-understanding can also be based, for instance, on commonly shared perceptions of the future. A value-based community must not necessarily rely on history and tradition as the sole basis of its shared ethical self-understanding.

For these reasons I will rely on a slightly different conceptualisation of weak and strong forms of collective identities, introduced by Tietz (2002) and Kantner (Kantner 2004a; 2004b; 2006). They distinguish between particularistic communities whose members share a weak sense of identity – a *commercium* – and other communities whose members share a strong sense of identity, the so-called *communio*. The concept of a *commercium* strongly resembles the one of a problem solving entity as proposed by Eriksen and Fossum (2007). Members of a *commercium* are merely 'aware of being involved in a cooperative enterprise' (Kantner 2006: 511). 'The affiliation within a community in this minimalistic sense consists of an awareness by the individual participants of being – willingly or not – part of the 'game' [...]' (Kantner 2006: 512). The members of such a community still follow their own desires and interests. Such a particularistic European community emerges when citizens 'experience in numerous spheres of life that the relevant economic, legal and political space is not longer exclusively the national state' (Kantner 2006: 511) and decide that certain purposes can better be achieved by cooperating with each other. Shared ethical motivations or convictions do not play any role in this cooperative enterprise. A *communio*, on the other hand, significantly differs from a value-based community as discussed above. It is a slightly broader analytical category since it does not rely on traditions and memories as the sole basis of a collective ethical self-understanding. Members of a *communio* share values and 'certain conceptions of what counts for them as a 'good life'' (Kantner 2006: 513). A European identity in a strong sense thus emerges when citizens begin to share collective preferences and do no longer solely act according to their own preferences. 'Yet, these values are not necessarily constituted by references to traditions or collective memories. Tietz, for instance, underlines the possibility of post-conventional identity formation processes in which an ethical self-understanding is constituted by references to common future projects (Tietz 2002: 268).

In the following argumentative analysis of European identity constructions in the media, the two concepts of a *commercium* and a *communio* are perceived as larger discursive dimensions. These discursive dimensions can be constructed by a variety of different arguments. A *commercium*-like political entity is constructed in media discourses, if the speaker represents the EU as a cooperative enterprise whose members follow individual preferences and are mainly interested in advancing their own interests. This could be done, for instance, if a speaker argued that an essential characteristic of the European Union is the promotion of national interests. On the other hand, arguments referring to the EU as a community whose members have collective preferences and share a common conception of a 'good life' are means for

constructing the EU as a *communio*-like political entity. Since any attributes may potentially be constructed as part of an ethical self-understanding of the European Union it is all the more important for the empirical analysis to scrutinise whether certain attributes are articulated as a common good that addresses the EU as a whole or not. Only in the first case can we speak of a discursive construction of a *communio*. In sum, the research objective of the forthcoming study is to investigate which kinds of arguments are employed in the analysed discourse to construct a *commercium* or *communio* respectively and to point out the qualitative differences between argumentation patterns (see Table 1).

Before engaging in a more detailed explanation of the methodological framework on which this study is based, I will give a short overview of the existing empirical approaches of studying European identities. After commenting on the merits and demerits of the different strands of empirical research, I will point out the added value that is constituted by a discourse analytical framework.

Table 1: Operationalisation of the two analytical categories *commercium* and *communio*

Discursive Dimensions	Discursive construction of the EU as a *commercium* (cooperative enterprise)	Discursive construction of the EU as a *communio* (community with a shared ethical self-understanding)
Arguments	↑ Arguments referring to the distinctiveness of the EU by underlining the interests of its members	↑ Arguments referring to the distinctiveness of the EU by drawing on attributes that are articulated as a common good that addresses the EU as a whole

Methodological approaches towards studying European identities

In recent years an impressive body of literature has emerged in which the theoretical debate on European identity is substantiated by empirical studies. The existing empirical research roughly falls into two groups. Most empirical studies focus on people's attitudes towards and their identification with Europe by relying on data generated in mass surveys. An utterly different approach is taken by political scientist or sociologists concentrating on the discursive dimension of a European identity. Both approaches have generated valuable empirical data, enriching our understanding of European identities. However, in the following part I will argue that the two methodological approaches rely on different understandings of the concept of 'European identity'. Moreover, it is only the latter methodological framework that takes the constructedness of collective identities – and thereby the tensions and disagreements that are characteristic of collective identity formation processes – sufficiently into account.

Studying attitudes towards the European Union

By far most frequently, political scientist concentrate on the analysis of attitudes towards the European Union and rely on public opinion data to investigate European identities (for a recent overview see Kaina 2009). The Standard Eurobarometer comprising questions related to citizens' identification with a European political

community certainly offers a richness of data which have been used by a variety of studies for secondary analysis. Public opinion research mainly focuses on factors determining the formation of European identities. Quantitative surveys suggest that the well educated are particularly inclined to identify with Europe (Citrin and Sides 2004; Duchesne and Frognier 1995). In addition, age, political ideology (Citrin and Sides 2004) and income level (Duchesne and Frognier 1995) constitute decisive factors. Moreover, Westle (2003) underlines that satisfaction with the national democracy and – even more important – with the democratic political system of the EU constitutes an essential factor influencing the development of European identities.

Besides elucidating the factors influencing European identity formation processes, public opinion surveys have also contributed to the question whether individuals can identify with more than one collective and how the relationship between these multiple collective identities might look like. There is sufficient empirical evidence for the assumption that identification with more than one collective is very common. On EU average the majority of the population claims a European identity of some sort (Citrin and Sides 2004: 167). Based on these findings academic discourse has also shifted to acknowledge that attachments with more than one collective are the rule rather than the exception (Herrmann and Brewer 2004; Kohli 2000; Risse 2004).[5] To understand the relations different collective identities might form, Thomas Risse (2004) suggested an analytical model, which has meanwhile guided a number of empirical studies.[6] Risse (2004) differentiates between *separate*, *cross-cutting* and *nested identities*. While the three mentioned concepts rely on a hierarchical conceptualisation of relations between different collective identities Risse suggests a fourth way of conceptualising these relationships. According to the *marble cake model* European and national identities cannot be neatly separated, they 'mesh and blend into each other' (Risse 2004: 251-252). This is, for instance, the case when 'Europeanness' is already an integral part of a national identity which makes it difficult to differentiate between these two attachments.

Opinion surveys focusing on attitudes towards the European Union rely on one specific conceptualisation of European identity. European identities are measured in terms of citizens' *identification* with Europe (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 14). Furthermore, studies relying on opinion data take identities as something given, as something comparatively static that people simply have. The struggles and tensions that accompany collective identity formation processes are neglected.

Discourse analysis and the construction of European identities

An entirely different methodological approach for studying European identities is constituted by discourse analysis. This approach does not take collective identities as given but considers them to be discursively constructed. From this perspective,

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[5] Surveys relying on Eurobarometer data measuring the different levels of attachment towards the town/village in which the questioned person lives in, the respective region, the own nation state and towards Europe emphasize that national identities might reinforce European identities (Deutsch 2006; Westle 2003). In other words, a person who feels attached to his or her nation is more likely to develop a European identity that a person identifying with the region he or she lives in. In a similar vein, Duchesne and Frognier (1995: 208) conclude that the 'development of a European identity (…) is accompanied by a weakening of local attachments and not a weakening of national identities (…). These findings support the view that it is the nation which enables the individual to learn abstract solidarity stripped of personal life experience, the very type of solidarity which is needed at the European level.'

[6] See the contributions in Herrmann et al. 2004) and Lewis 2005).

> [...] identity is about attributing meaning, and a precise meaning is not an essential property of words or things: meaning develops in context dependent use. Meanings are always the outcome of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of contention, to some extent shared and always negotiable.
>
> (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 210)

When discourse analysts engage in examining European identities, they are primarily interested in the processes that make political entities such as the EU meaningful. Discourse analysis aims at uncovering the logics of the formation of political identities (Howarth 2000: 137). For discourse analysts 'Europe' or the 'European Union' are contested concepts. 'Consequently, what is often described as the 'search' for Europe's identity is not so much a search as a construction or an 'imagination' of Europe' (Diez 2004: 320). Within the broad field of discourse analysis there are, indeed, various different methodological approaches towards studying European identities, depending on the concept of discourse that underlies these studies. In general, however, the following aspects clearly distinguish discourse analysis from public opinion research in which citizens' attitudes are the main focus of interest. While public opinion research treats collective identities as a comparatively stable and cohesive property that characterises a given individual or a given group at a given point in time, discourse analysis attempts to investigate the systems of meaning that form the identity of political entities such as the European Union. Therefore, a major advantage of a discourse analytical approach towards studying European identities is the fact that it takes internal inconsistencies, tensions and re-elaborations of political identities into account (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 208). Moreover, discourse analysis is context-sensitive as it follows the premise that there is no such thing as one European identity. Instead, it stresses that different identities are constructed according to context (ibid.: 213). Finally, discourse analysts are particularly interested in processes of othering, since identities are always constructed against the difference of an 'Other' (for an elaboration of processes of othering in the case of the European Union see Diez 2004).

Political elites and European identity constructions

Most empirical studies investigating European identity constructions concentrate on political elites' discourses. This research strand follows the assumption that political elites play a pivotal role in the discursive construction of political identities. Wodak and Weiss (2004, see also Weiss 2003), who apply the methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, identify constructions of Europe in so called 'speculative speeches' (Weiss 2003: 183), which where held by many heads of government in response to Joschka Fisher's Humboldt speech in May 2000. They emphasise the context-dependence of European identity constructions (Wodak and Puntscher Riekmann 2003: 287). According to them, representations of the European Union are shaped by particular national contexts. Weiss underlines that French and German politicians mean different things when talking about the European Union. More specifically, Weiss (2003: 196) demonstrates that Joschka Fischer is following the German model when propagating the idea of a European Federation. Through this discursive strategy of transferring national ideas of legitimate political order to the European level, 'new' constructions of European identities are made compatible with national collective identities.

While the analysis of discursive constructions of European identities has hitherto had a strong focus on *national* political elites, recent studies are paying more attention to other discursive arenas, scrutinising European identity constructions in EU

institutions such as the European Convention (Krzyzanowski and Oberhuber 2007) the Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Wodak 2004; 2007; 2009).

Another strand of research that heavily relies on political elites' discourses for the analysis of the discursive construction of Europe/the EU is the Copenhagen School and their theory of discourse as a layered structure (Wæver 2004, 2005). The quasi-structuralist discourse theory proposed by the Copenhagen School explicitly aims at explaining and predicting developments in over-all policies on security and Europe. Wœver (2005) argues that general lines of foreign policy are based on different concepts of Europe which are in turn made possible by articulating different concepts of 'state' and 'nation'.[7]

European identity constructions in media discourses

Media discourses constitute a further auspicious research field to investigate the discursive construction of European identities. Amongst others, Fairclough (1995) has recurrently stressed the importance of media discourses for the analysis of collective identities. In line with his understanding of discourse as a particular form of social practice (Fairclough 1995: 2), Fairclough underlines that any language use is always simultaneously constitutive of identities (ibid.: 55). More specifically, he emphasises that any text makes its small contribution to shaping collective identities and other cultural aspects (ibid.).[8] In his framework language use both reproduces existing social identities *and* helps to transform them (ibid.). Media language is just one field amongst others in which identities are shaped and reshaped, yet a particularly influential one:

> Analysis of the construction of relations and identities in media texts is, I suggest, a significant constituent in addressing a range of important sociocultural questions. This is so because of the uniquely influential and formative position of the media in contemporary societies.
>
> (Fairclough 1995: 126)

A very common methodological approach for the study of European identities that takes the role of media discourses for shaping political identities serious is frame analysis. There are two different strands of frame analytical empirical research on European identities. Díez Medrano (2003, 2009), for instance, uses frame analysis to examine how the media conceives of the EU polity. He focuses on 'the ways in which social and political actors characterise the EU when making claims in the public

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[7] He suggests an analytical concept to understand the discursive construction of Europe which is hierarchical and has a tree-like structure. The first layer comprises basic ideas of what 'state' and 'nation' refers to while the second layer is made up of the relational position vis-à-vis Europe. Depending on these two layers different conceptions of Europe become meaningful (cf. Wæver 2005: 39). One of the advantages of the concept of a layered structure is that it can specify 'change within continuity' (ibid.: 36). Discursive change occurs most often on the exterior layers, i.e. discourses on the 'content of Europe' (ibid.: 39). While deeper layers, i.e. discourses on concepts such as 'state' and 'nation' 'are more solidly sedimented and more difficult to politicize and change, partly because they are more abstract and thereby logically implied across a wider spectrum' (ibid.: 37).

[8] In fact, in his analytical model he distinguishes between, 'social identities', 'social relations' and 'systems of knowledges' which are shaped by language use (Fairclough 1995: 55). As the focus in this paper is on collective identities, I will not go into more detail as far as the two latter categories are concerned.

sphere' (Díez Medrano 2009: 94) and observes a rising conflict between different 'conceptualisations of Europe-as-polity' (ibid.: 106) between member states.[9]

Frame analysis is also used to scrutinise the usage of deictic expressions such as the personal pronoun 'we'. Here the focus is not on the question how the media conceptualises and represents the European Union. The interesting question is, instead, whether and how often a European 'we' is constructed in media discourses.[10] Empirical results underline that a European collective is referred to in a variety of media texts yet the proportion remains comparatively low. Europe ranges way behind the own nation state or 'the West' as object of identification though on a temporal scale the proportion is constantly rising.[11]

It should be noted that the frame analytical approach relies on a certain positivist understanding of discourse (Howarth 2000: 3). 'Frames' or 'cognitive schemata' are primarily understood as 'instrumental devices that can foster common perceptions and understandings for specific purposes and the task of discourse analysis is to measure how effectively they bring about certain ends [...].' (Ibid.) There are only few empirical studies dealing with the discursive construction of European identities in the media that rely on a more comprehensive concept of discourse. Amongst them is the study by Oberhuber and his colleagues (2005) who apply the methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis to examine representations of the EU/Europe in newspaper coverage on the failed Intergovernmental Conference in December 2003, which was the first attempt to reach agreement on the 'Draft Constitutional Treaty' proposed by the European Convention. The study by Kutter (2007), provides yet a further illuminating example. In her discourse analysis representations of European Integration in Polish Print Media Debates on the EU Constitutional Treaty are analysed by relying on a poststructuralist understanding of discourse. The following discourse analysis of European identities in public debates on the future of Europe heavily draws on the methodological framework developed by the Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis. The applied methodological approach is explained in greater detail in the following part.

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[9] For a frame analytical study on European identities in Poland see (Buecker 2006) and Díez Medrano (2009).

[10] These studies are usually linked to the research on the emergence of a European public sphere. This is so because most analytical concepts of a European public sphere implicitly or explicitly suggest that the latter must necessarily include the notion of a European identity (Risse 2002; Lucht and Tréfas 2006; Risse and Grabowsky 2008). It is argued that the existence of some minimum sense of belonging to the same political community must be part of a concept of a European public sphere. That is why many empirical studies on the emergence of a European public sphere included an indicator for collective identities or for a sense of belonging to the same community respectively (Renfordt 2007; Wessler et al. 2008; Kantner et al. 2008).

[11] Wessler et al. (2008: 50) state that 'the Europeans' constitute 6 per cent of all collectives mentioned in 1982 and rising slightly to 10 per cent in 2003. The empirical results by Lucht and Tréfas (2006) who conducted a media content analysis for a time span of 54 years concentrating on particular discursive events suggest that constructions of a European 'we' are highly dependent on the thematic context. The proportion of articles in which Europe is constructed as an object of identification ranges between 2 per cent in articles dealing with the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961 and 28 per cent in those articles discussing the EU constitutional referenda in France and the Netherlands in 2005.

Methodological approach – an argumentative analysis of European identity constructions in the media

In line with the discursive approach towards identities explicated above this study starts from the assumption that the meaning of the European Union is primarily a discursive construct. Therefore, the research objective of the forthcoming analysis is to lay open the discursive strategies employed in the constant (re-)construction of the identity of the European Union. More specifically, the following discourse analysis will scrutinise the discursive construction of different *conceptions* and *visions* of the EU within articles dealing with the future of Europe. *Conceptions* are static definitions of the EU. Statements coded as conceptions of the EU deal with the question what the EU is now. Often these kinds of statements refer to the history of the EU to give evidence for the propositions made on the current state of the EU. *Visions* of the EU are future-oriented and tend to speculate on the future shape and form of the European Union (for a similar differentiation see Krzyzanowski and Oberhuber 2007: 132).[12]

As far as the categories of analysis are concerned I will mainly draw on the methodological framework developed by Wodak and her colleagues for the analysis of the discursive construction of collective identities. Their discourse-analytical tools were originally applied for the analysis of national identities, in particular the Austrian identity (Wodak et al. 2008) and has meanwhile proved to be useful for analysing the discursive construction of European identities (Weiss 2003; Wodak 2004; Wodak and Weiss 2004; Oberhuber et al. 2005; Krzyzanowski and Oberhuber 2007; Wodak 2009). Wodak and her colleagues distinguish between different discursive strategies which play a pivotal role for the discursive construction of collective identities, two of which will receive special attention in the forthcoming empirical analysis (see Table 2). They emphasise that collectives are constructed and represented by particular membership-categorisation devices and by tropes such as metaphors (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 55). [13] The analysis of *nomination strategies* aims at laying open these particular processes of categorisation. The first research objective is thus to investigate how the EU is named and labelled. However, the investigation of names and labels only constitutes a minor part of the discourse analysis. The main part is devoted to the *argumentative analysis* of European identity constructions in the media. The analysis of argumentation is based on the elaboration of different *topoi* used to justify the European Union as a distinct political space.[14]

> Within argumentation theory 'topoi' [...] can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable

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[12] General demands on how the EU should/must look like, occurring quite often in the analyzed corpora, voiced in a very emphatic way, were always coded as visions (and not as conceptions) due to their inherently future-oriented character.

[13] Within the analysis of nomination strategies a crucial role is attributed to metaphors. However, the role of metaphors as categorization devices will not be covered sufficiently in the following study. For a detailed investigation of the significance of metaphors in EU political discourse see Drulák 2008 and Musolff 2004.

[14] A commonly known distinction of topoi is the one between general and specific topoi (Wengeler 2003: 62). General topoi are based on a set of classical topoi such as cause, consequence, difference and authority. They are abstract structural principles of argumentation and are not restricted to certain topics (for a typology of formal topoi see Kienpointner 1992). On the other hand specific topoi are content and context-dependent. They are more concrete and are only applicable within certain issue fields (Wengeler 2003).

premises. They are content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim – as such they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion

(Wodak 2001: 74)

Drawing on this definition, this study conceptualises *topoi* as implicit or explicit argumentation patterns employed to argue for the distinctiveness of the EU as a political space. Thereby only highly generalised statements, in which allegedly central characteristics of the EU are discussed, were coded. Articles were only chosen for an in-depth qualitative analysis if they contained statements that refer to fundamental questions such as what the EU is (conception) or where the EU leads or should lead to (vision).

Statements emphasising the distinctiveness of the EU are often accompanied by an explicit or implicit *evaluation* of the EU. The European Union can be represented as distinct for the benefits it creates, for instance, in terms of economic gains. The speaker might underline that a central characteristic of the EU is that being involved in the EU provides an economic advantage (*topos of benefit*). The topos of benefit, however, can either be employed to evaluate the EU in a positive or negative way by underlining the economic advantage of being involved in the EU or by complaining, for instance, that 'the essence of the European problem, […] is that it has not, for some time, brought the bonuses of economic gain [and] high employment […] that it used to bring.' (Guardian, 14.4.1994) In both cases the speaker refers to the implicit premise that creating benefits is a central feature of the EU. Yet, the evaluation of the EU significantly differs. That is why, in addition to the analysis of different topoi employed in media discourses to stress the distinctiveness of the EU, the evaluative tone of the statement has also been coded.

Table 2: Categories of analysis

Discursive Strategy	Devices	Research Questions
Nomination	Membership categorisation	How is the EU named and labelled?
Argumentation	Topoi used to represent the EU as a distinct political space (in a positive or negative way)	By means of what arguments is the EU represented as distinct political space?

Source: adapted from Wodak (2001: 73).

The analysis follows a strictly inductive approach. The research objective is to identify a) a typology of labels and topoi used to justify the EU as a distinct political space and b) to define the actual scope and qualitative features of these arguments. In a second step, the defined topoi are reordered into greater dimensions of arguments and linked to the aforementioned analytical distinction between a *commercium* and a *communio*. It will be assessed whether and in what way the two analytical categories are indeed relevant for the examined discourse. Do perceptions or visions of a European collective resemble those of a cooperative enterprise (*commercium*) or those of a community sharing an ethical self-understanding (*communio*)? And which labels and topoi are most prominently used to represent the European Union as a *commercium* or a *communio*? The analysis must be perceived as actually scrutinising the way in which different arguments construct the two larger discursive entities of a *commercium* or a *communio* respectively.

As mentioned before, this study was conducted in context of a larger research project investigating European identity formation processes in public discourses about war and military interventions. For the purpose of my study, a subsample of articles was drawn explicitly dealing with the future of Europe.[15] Within this subsample, articles were only selected for an in-depth analysis, if they contained at least one statement addressing the distinctiveness of the European Union by referring to the current or the future state of the EU. In sum, I have coded 885 statements in 118 articles. The subsample of articles on the future of Europe focuses on a relatively broad time span between January 1990 and March 2006.[16] For Germany and Great Britain two opinion-leading papers – one of the (centre-) left and one conservative – were chosen: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) *Guardian* (GRD) and *Times* (TMS). For Poland, only the *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW) was electronically available, when I conducted the study.

Exemplary analysis

The following analysis will illustrate how exactly the analysis was performed and will exemplarily demonstrate some of the categories of analysis. Example:

> Only a determined continuation of the policy of European integration can counteract the danger of a new nationalism. In this spirit, following the end of the cold war and the overcoming of the division of Germany and Europe, the Maastricht Treaty sought, by creating the European Union, to prevent, on an enduring basis, the renationalisation of European politics. It is all the more urgent that we pool our resources and achieve a common perception of our interests since, now that the cold war is over, we face new global challenges. And for these challenges, there are no "British" or "German" solutions - only European solutions. Worldwide hunger and under-development, mass migration, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international crime and terrorism, the threat to the very basis of natural life – all European states are affected by these, irrespective of their geographical location. No country on its own can find an effective answer to these problems, let alone carry through an appropriate policy.
>
> (Genscher, GRD, 19.02.1996)

In this passage Genscher, former German foreign minister, expresses a particular *conception* of Europe, very commonly referred to by German politicians. In this passage European integration is perceived as a guarantee for preventing processes of re-nationalisation. He therefore evokes the *topos of nationalism* which can be paraphrased by the following formula: the EU is a distinct political space, because it prevents processes of renationalisation. Often, this argumentation pattern occurs with reference to the principle of shared sovereignty, which is introduced as a characteristic feature of the European integration process. The topos of nationalism solely occurs in combination with a positive evaluation of the European Union. This is also the case in Genscher's conception of the European Union since nationalisation is presented as a 'danger' only to be 'counteract[ed]' by the integration process. He then

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[15] The key words of the sampling strategy focused on the one hand on the term *futur* and on the other hand on the term *europ* including terms such as 'European Union', 'European Community' etc. Abbreviations such as 'EU', 'EC', 'WEU' etc. were also included.

[16] For the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* the years 1990-1992 are missing. For the Süddeutsche Zeitung the year 1990 and January in 1991 are missing.

switches to another argumentation pattern. Starting with the third sentence a certain *vision* of Europe is evoked by Genscher. Here the distinctiveness of the European Union is defined in terms of the EU's ability to solve current and future problems more effectively than by dealing with it on the national level (*problem solving topos*). The problem solving topos most frequently occurs in combination with references to the joint affectedness of problems that exceed the sphere of the nation state and/or functional pressures which necessitate 'European solutions' and make a closer cooperation on the EU-level inevitable. In this case it is '[w]orldwide hunger', 'under-development', 'mass migration' and security problems such as 'international crime and terrorism' that are constructed as problems that all member states are affected by. As far as the evaluative tone is concerned, it is a positive vision that Genscher evokes by making use of the *problem solving topos.* He emphatically demands that 'we pool our resources and achieve a common perception of our interests'. Thereby he makes it clear that for him the vision of the EU as a problem solving entity is a vision the EU should undoubtedly strive for.

Empirical results

The presentation of the empirical results is divided into two parts. In the first part a general overview of the distribution of topoi is presented. Thereby the empirical relevance of the two analytical categories introduced above – the one between a *commercium* and a *communio* – will be assessed. Due to striking national differences a short depiction of central characteristics of European identity constructions within each country will follow in the second part.
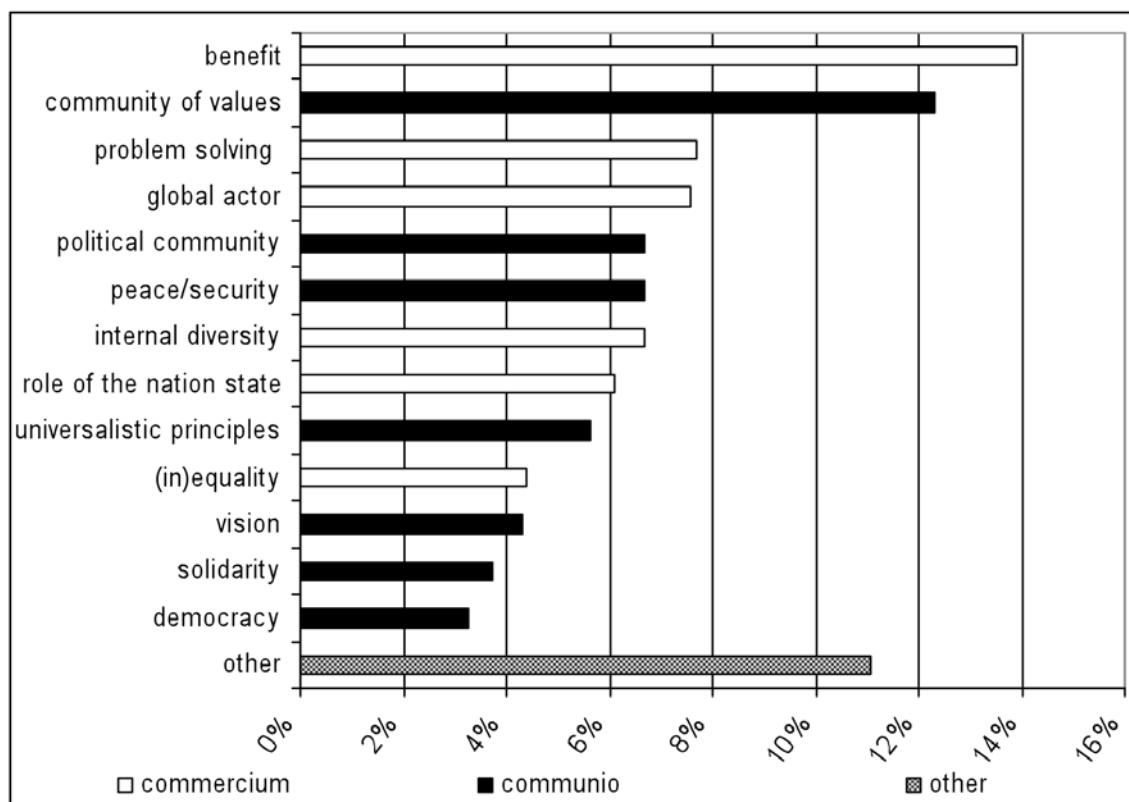

Figure 1: Distribution of topoi used to represent the EU as a distinct political space, n=885

The EU – 'an alliance of interests' or 'a community of values'?

As explicated above there are various arguments by which the distinctiveness of the European Union may be (re-)constructed in the media. Figure 1 gives an overview of the distribution of topoi found in the empirical material.

Interestingly, the two most frequent argumentation patterns point to completely different understandings of the EU. The *topos of benefit* is the most prominently employed argumentation pattern to represent the EU as a distinct political space. It is rather broad and includes both arguments about the free market as a central characteristic of the EU and other kinds of argumentation patterns drawing on national interests in a very general sense. It relies on the idea that states are members of the EU due to the expectation that this would more effectively protect their interest – be they economic or of different kind, not further specified in the text. Working together 'under one roof', member states can prosper more than if they were to act independently. A typical example is the following:

> Mr Gingrich joyfully calls the US the world's military hegemon and says that the purpose of the military is to enforce one's will. If those were just political slogans for a macho-electorate, we should not need to worry. But policy increasingly follows them and it is into fanciful and dangerous strategies that this deeply unequal relationship is sucking us. We can see what those strategies are going to be by looking at the weapons and technologies now being researched and developed. [...] The questions for us are these: is the rest of the world likely to accept a future of self-appointed US domination? Is that a future we should try to further? I believe not. I do not want to see this country tied any longer to the apron strings of a deluded giant. So what now are our permanent interests? They are the same as they always were; peace, freedom and prosperity. All of them depend on justice, both at home and abroad. Our security future, as well as our economic and social future, lies in the European Union.
>
> (GRD, Lord Kennet, 18.12.1995)

While the *topos of benefit* can be employed to evaluate the EU in a positive or negative way, it is most often a positive evaluation of the EU (68.7 per cent of all statements) that is suggested when referring to this particular argumentation pattern. Labels occurring in combination with this argumentation pattern include representations of the EU as a 'great economic power' (GRD, 29.07.2004), 'the largest single agglomeration of the rich and the free' (GRD, 09.06.2005), as an 'economic community' (GRD, Howard, 13.03.1990) and as an 'alliance of interests' ['Interessenverband'] (SZ, 15.07.2005) or an 'alliance of convenience' ['Zweckgemeinschaft'] (FAZ, Juncker 02.08.2001) respectively. Moreover, this particular figure of argumentation is often accompanied by categorisations of the EU that imply flexibility and informality such as the 'European project' (GW, 30.10.2004), the 'European experiment' (GRD, 29.07.2004) or the depiction of the EU as a 'unique enterprise' (FAZ, Juncker, 02.08.2001).

It is notable that benefit-based arguments are not as dominant in the analysed media discourse on European identity as is generally assumed. Other types of arguments are likewise prominent. In particular, there are a vast number of statements representing the EU as a community of values. Like the topos of benefit, the *community of values topos* is also a rather broad argumentation pattern including references to commonly

shared European values often with an explicit reference to history, tradition or culture.[17] The community of values topos is employed in statements implicitly or explicitly assuming a European common good which fundamentally differentiates this argumentation pattern from the aforementioned one based on utility and efficiency:

> The Iraq crisis has united Europeans and armed them with a clear sense of shared values and future vision. Millions have taken to the streets in the largest unified public protests in European history. People from every political persuasion, from every demographic category and from the entire rainbow of ethnic persuasions, joined together to condemn the unilateral policy of the Bush White House in Iraq and, by so doing, provided the first dramatic expression of a new European identity.
>
> (GRD, 26.04.2003)

Labels occurring in combination with argumentation patterns drawing on culture, history or tradition are grounded in territorial concepts. A vast array of labels such as 'our continent' (FAZ, 28.06.2000), 'the common European space' (SZ, 01.07.2005) or other territorial categorisations[18] are an inherent part of this figure of argumentation.

The significance of this argumentation pattern becomes even more evident, if its distribution is compared to other studies. In this respect, the study by Díez Medrano (2009) is particularly illuminating. Although he uses a different methodology based on frame analysis, his results lend itself as a point of comparison, since one of his categories also comprises statements in which the EU is depicted as a community of values.[19] In his study, whose sample of articles was not restricted to questions of wars and military interventions, this particular understanding of the European Union is only invoked in 6.1 per cent of all statements. In contrast to this, the conceptualisation of the European Union as a community of values seems far more prominent if the identity of European Union is discussed in the context of wars and military interventions. In the subsample of articles analysed in this study the distribution of this argumentation pattern is twice as high (12.3 per cent), with only minor

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[17] The *community of values topos* should not be mixed up with the larger discursive dimension of a community based on a shared ethical self-understanding (*communio*). As I noted above, the concept of a *communio* relies on the notion that the ethical self-understanding of a community must not necessarily be derived from collectively shared memories and traditions. Any good can be reified into a value and become part of an ethical self-understanding of a community. The crucial point is that these values are articulated as part of a collective understanding of a European 'common good'. In contrast to this, statements drawing on the *community of values topos* are rather backward-looking and rely on history and traditions as the sole basis of European values. The *community of values topos* is, therefore, only one means for constructing the larger discursive entity of a *communio*.

[18] Most importantly, value-based argumentation patterns often make use of the term 'Europe' to refer to the EU. This makes a clear-cut classification challenging. Occasionally, it was difficult to decide whether a particular argument holds valid only for the European Union or for the continent 'Europe' in general. This problem was solved by taking the larger context of the statement within the complete newspaper article into consideration. The argumentative analysis focuses exclusively on those statements in which the reference to the European Union has been clearly established by the speaker somewhere in the article.

[19] Díez Medrano (2009: 95) coded this frame whenever speakers in the public sphere explicitly referred to some sort of European values although 'there is no elite consensus on what those values are'. According to him, this category most often comprises statements by public actors which simply refer to a community of values without further specifying what it consists of. Sometimes, however, explicit references to certain values were made most often by referring to Enlightenment or Christiantity (ibid.). His conceptualization of this particular category thus bears strong resemblance to the one employed in this study.

differences between Germany (13.9 per cent), Great Britain (10.8 per cent) and Poland (11,0 per cent).

In general, argumentation patterns referring to values or to benefits are the two most frequently employed means to justify the European Union as a distinct political space. At the same time, these two *topoi* embody certain understandings of the European Union that can most easily be attributed to the two analytical categories introduced at the beginning of the paper. While the *topos of benefit* clearly points to a conception of the European Union resembling a *commercium*, the *community of values topos* – self-evidently – suggests a *communio*-like understanding of the European Union. But what about the other topoi encountered in the empirical material? In how far do they correspond to conceptions of a *commercium* or *communio*-like political entity respectively? While not being able to discuss each and every topos extensively, I will at least comment on those topoi employed most frequently in the analysed discourse (i.e. those illustrated in Figure 1).

Constructing the EU as a commercium

Besides the already mentioned topos of benefit, the problem solving topos is a prominent argumentation pattern for constructing the EU as a *commercium*-like political entity (see Figure 1). This figure of argumentation has already been alluded to in the exemplary analysis. It is partly related to the topos of benefit; still the argumentation pattern is significantly different. It relates to the functionalist notion that a closer cooperation within the European Union is needed to solve current and future problems by which all European states are equally affected. Therefore, it differs from the topos of benefit in its emphasis on 'the forces of globalisation' (FAZ, 01.07.2005), the 'power of globally working facts' ['Macht der global wirksamen Tatsachen'] (SZ, 24.04.1998), the 'destructive effects of economic processes' (FAZ, 24.04.1998) or other global pressures – most often in the field of economic, immigration and security policy – that make further integration inevitable. It is not national interest in the strict sense that makes membership in the European Union a profitable option. The European Union is rather presented as the only political organisation able to confront global problems and to protect its member states. The conceptualisation of the EU as a problem solving entity has been introduced by Eriksen and Fossum (2004) and Sjursen (2007). However, this conceptualisation should not be mixed up with the understanding of the EU underlying the problem solving topos. The categorisation of the EU as a problem solving entity in the mentioned literature is much broader. It conceptualises the EU as a 'looser organisational form that emphasises binding economic cooperation' (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 439). The EU is conceived as a 'functional type of organisation whose purpose is to promote the interests of the member states' (ibid.). According to the categories of analysis of this study such an understanding of the EU could be constructed by at least two figures of argumentation. The topos of benefit and the problem solving topos are both based on the idea that creating material benefits is the major purpose of the EU. Yet, the specificity of the problem solving topos as conceptualised in this study is rooted in the emphasis that is given to external pressures, necessitating cooperation on the European level. Statements in which the problem solving topos is invoked often refer to the fact that a cooperation within the EU strengthens the own capacity to act in the context of foreign and security policy.

A typical example has already been introduced in the exemplary analysis. The problem solving aspect is also present in most of the labels that are attributed to the European Union in connection with the said topos. The EU is presented as a

'changing coalition for solving particular problems' (FAZ, Spidla, 01.09.2003) as a 'key instrument for collective problem solving' (FAZ, Weidenfeld, 03.07.1998), a 'bulwark against the power of the dollar' (SZ, 24.05.1997), as an 'economic defence alliance' (ibid.) or as a "recipe against future angst" ['Europa als Rezept gegen Zukunftsangst'] (FAZ, 05.12.1996).

Furthermore, a striking characteristic of the analysed discourses is the frequency with which the *global actor topos* occurs.[20] This figure of argumentation is generally used in two different ways depending on whether the speaker portrays the future of the EU or discusses the current state of the EU. If the latter is the case, this argumentation pattern is employed to express harsh criticism on the current 'decline in Europe's significance' (GRD, 29.07.2004) as far as foreign policy is concerned. The EU is portrayed to be 'under America's wing' (TMS, 20.11.1993) or a 'military protectorate of the United States' (GW, 24.06.2000) and is destined to 'growing provincialism' (GRD, 29.07.2004), preoccupied with 'self-absorption' and a 'sense of introversion' (ibid.) preventing it to take over responsibilities in foreign policy affairs. Needless to say, in statements dealing with the current state of the EU the global actor topos is almost exclusively invoked in negative evaluations of the EU. If, however, the future of the EU is discussed this argumentation pattern occurs in form of rather emphatic demands of the EU to take over responsibility particularly in defence and security policies. With respect to the two different analytical categories between a *commercium* and a *communio*, the global actor topos is most frequently introduced in conceptions or visions of the EU corresponding to a *commercium*-like political entity. Strengthening the EU's role on the global stage is mainly seen as a question of efficiency or utility, safeguarding vital national interests. In addition, this argumentation pattern co-occurs comparatively frequently with the topos of benefit and the problem solving topos within one article thus providing further proof of the notion that it is a *commercium*-like political entity that is invoked by drawing on this topos.

The same is true for *the topos of internal diversity*, the *topos of the role of the nation state* and the *inequality topos*. The topos of internal diversity is used to produce arguments in which the diversity of the EU in terms of national identity, history, culture and tradition is emphasised as the defining characteristic. Often this takes place in opposition to conceptualisations of the EU as a federal state or a European superpower. The topos of the role of the nation state strongly resembles the internal diversity pattern of argumentation since the latter also stresses elements that usually characterise nation states (tradition, identity, culture). Yet, it differs from it in the explicitness with which the sovereignty of the nation state is discussed. A comparatively large number of statements in each country deal with the (alleged) 'decline of the nation state' (GRD, 29.07.2004) and the future of statehood. Often this figure of argumentation comes with a demand for protecting the sovereignty of states and for making nation states the key actors in the integration process. Finally, the last of the above mentioned topoi, the (in)equality topos, is mainly related to the emergence of the idea of a 'core Europe'[21] since the Humboldt speech by then German Foreign Minister Fischer in May 2000. In particular, the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza* discusses this concept extensively, invoking the (in)equality topos to draw a bleak

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[20] The frequency of this particular argument is surely related to the sample of articles from which my sub-sample was drawn. The basic sample consists of articles dealing with war and military interventions between January 1990 and March 2006.

[21] The concept of 'core Europe' goes back to a communiqué formulated by Schäuble and Lamers in 1994 but had been pushed by Fischer in his Humboldt speech in May 2000.

picture of the future or the current state of the Union respectively, as the following example illustrates:

> Neither the fact that the European Union has taken part in important international operations in a number of conflict regions since 2003 nor the fact that it is leading nine peacekeeping missions in three continents [...] has caused the EU to engage in a shared and united diplomacy and foreign policy. It is still lacking the political willingness to act unitedly. With this respect, there is an urgent need for change. The mechanism of enhanced cooperation might be helpful. Yet, the new member states are critical or suspicious of the programme to build a Europe of different speed, variable geometry or of different integration circles. They are afraid that hegemonic tendencies by bigger and wealthier states are hidden behind these terms; that instead of the principle of inner equality an Orwellian differentiation between those "equal and more equal" will emerge.
>
> <div align="right">(GW, 31.12.2005)</div>

All three of the above discussed figures of argumentation depict the EU as a loose cooperative enterprise. No common interest or collective understanding of a European 'common good' is addressed. Instead these arguments subscribe to a *commercium*-like conception of the European Union. They rely on the notion that member states' preferences are the driving force behind the integration process and most often stick to the idea that member states are the key actors.

Constructing the EU as a communio

The argumentative analysis has hitherto illustrated that there are a whole variety of arguments to represent the European Union as a *commercium*-like political entity. In a similar vein, the discursive construction of a *communio* is also established by a broad range of arguments. Value-based arguments in the strict sense, i.e. those arguments referring explicitly to commonly shared traditions, values, culture and history are not the only arguments by which a community based on a common self-understanding in the sense of a *communio* can be discursively constructed. Another topos frequently employed in this sense is the one representing the European Union as a political community. Articulations on a 'political Europe' as against a mere free market are part of a normative discourse that tends to justify actions in terms of the 'common good' (see also Schmidt 2009). The project of a 'political union' is presented as a distinct common enterprise grounded in a commonly shared perception of a 'good life'. The following passage, taken from the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza* makes this point clear:

> The integration process has created – or reinforced – the notion of European unity. This is an accomplishment which should not be underestimated. It can be a point of departure to define the European project, which would correspond to the task of "creating Europeans". To put it simply, such a project must be political in character, it must aim at defining a role for the united Europe able to deal with globalization processes, it must give European citizens the opportunity to realise their aspirations [...], it must protect the environment and ascertain a balanced progress, guaranteeing people peace and security.
>
> <div align="right">(GW, 31.12.2005)</div>

Also in line with this argumentation is the *topos of solidarity*, employed to draw the picture of a 'social Europe' in response to the 'dictatorship of the free market' (GW,

06.08.2002). By means of this argument the European social model and the concept of 'European solidarity' (FAZ, Weidenfeld and Janning, 03.07.1991) are constructed as distinct features of a collective European self-understanding. Similarly, democracy is often presented as an inherent European 'value' in the analysed discourse. This is why, the *topos of democracy* is also considered to be a means for reconstructing the EU as a *communio*-like political entity.

A particular ambivalent argumentation pattern is the *topos of peace and security*. As I underlined above with reference to the global actor topos, security arguments are generally linked to the promotion of national interests and presented as a question of efficiency and utility. Yet, the peace and security topos significantly differs. The latter argument is employed when the security of Europe as a whole and not the security of particular states are at issue. Security, peace and stability are articulated as a common good that addresses the EU as a whole (see also Sjursen 2007). Moreover, statements in which the provision of peace and security is presented as a distinct characteristic of the European Union are often linked to a collective experience of conflict and war in Europe. Additionally, these statements frequently allude to more general values that Europeans share due to these violent experiences. Amongst them are pacifism, multilateralism, the rejection of the paradigm of the balance of power and the emphasis on a post-Westphalian order. The following statement is a particular good example:

> [...] the US decision to bypass the UN security council and act virtually unilaterally in Iraq have convinced many Europeans that the US is hopelessly locked into a Hobbesian view of the world. Europeans, on the other hand, have had their fill of wars and centuries of conflict. They are in search of Immanuel Kant's vision of universal and perpetual peace, and increasingly they see US policies and objectives as an anathema to the forging of a truly global consciousness.
>
> (GRD, Rifkin, 26.04.2003)

A further vitally important discursive means of constructing a community based on a shared ethical-self understanding (*communio*) is to represent the European Union as a vision or a way for the future. The *topos of vision* has also been identified by Wodak (2004, 2009) as a recurrent argument in EU political discourse. This argumentation pattern is often employed in a very emphatic way to address the EU as a whole and to represent it as a future-oriented project. It sits well with the concept of a 'post-conventional community' explicated by Tietz (2002, see also Kantner 2006), who convincingly argues that under the conditions of modernity a commonly shared ethical self-understanding will no longer be based on a simple reference to traditions and history. Conceptions of a 'common good' might also be based on constructions of a common future and the question how people want to live together in the future. The notion of a future-oriented European Union is evident in a number of labels that occur in combination with this particular topos. The EU is depicted as a 'model of the future, the laboratory of a new kind of postmodern state' (GRD, 29.07.2004) a 'community based on [...] the future' (GRD, 18.07.2001), as a 'project of collective future construction' (SZ, 15.05.2004) or more ambivalent in the *Gazeta Wyborcza* as a 'utopia or a remote ideal to which you have to run incessantly' (GW, 25.11.1999).

I will finish this overview of significant topoi encountered in the analysed discourse by a short reference to the *topos of universalistic principles* which occurred, after all, in 5.6 per cent of all statements. This particular figure of argumentation is, in fact, a

conglomeration of different arguments. Every time a speaker referred to universalistic principles such as human rights freedom or justice as a distinct characteristic of a European self-understanding, I coded the universalistic principles topos. In the analysed corpus of articles Lord Dahrendorf most forcefully argued for a conception/vision of the EU by making extensively use of these particular arguments. In his 'plea for an open Europe' (SZ, 15.07.2005) he emphasises, that

> In contrast to them [to Jürgen Habermas and Jaques Derrida] we have a tougher position, which does not exclude regime change as a goal of an international intervention. We should not aim for a Europe that resembles a peaceful welfare paradise; instead we should seek a model for an order that is basically valid for the whole world. Therefore, the European political imperative is: act the way, that everything you do can also be a valid principle of a universal order. Europe's success is dependent on its contribution to freedom in the world.
>
> (Ibid.)

This example clearly illustrates that in liberal societies universalistic principles become 'values' of a particularistic community (Tietz 2002: 112) – in this case of the European Union. They become an integral part of the ethical collective self-understanding.

To all intents and purposes, the analysis of different topoi employed in articles dealing with the future of Europe reveals that there are various different arguments by which the distinctiveness of the EU is justified. Yet, on closer examination it becomes clear that these arguments can be reordered into two larger discursive dimensions. Arguments of what the EU is or where it leads to can either be employed to construct the EU as a *commercium*-like political entity, i.e. an enterprise in which members cooperate for the purpose of different aims, or as a *communio*, i.e. a political community based on a shared ethical self-understanding. The following figure gives an overview of arguments used to construct either of the two political entities (see Figure 2).

In sum, communio based arguments occur slightly more frequent (50.8 per cent) than commercium based arguments (49,2 per cent). Whether this is a specificity of the subsample of articles dealing with wars and military interventions cannot be completely answered, since existing studies focussing on European identity constructions in public debates rely on different conceptual and methodological frameworks. Yet, the comparison with the frame analytical study by Díez Medrano (2009; see also Pfetsch 2004: 42-59) suggests that arguments referring explicitly to European values are more pronounced in the context of discussing wars and military interventions than in other issue contexts, which sits well with the introductory assumption that security issues are particularly prone to spark off soul-searching debates in which fundamental values of a community are negotiated. Still, further research is needed to clarify the relationship between issue contexts and European identity constructions.

As far as the distinction between perceptions and visions of the European Union is concerned an interesting tendency can be observed: argumentation patterns constructing a *commercium*-like political entity are far more often used when the future of the EU is explicitly discussed. Almost 60 per cent of all statements dealing with the future state of the EU make use of argumentation patterns corresponding to an understanding of the European Union that resembles a cooperative enterprise with

national preferences being the driving force. On the other hand, statements dealing with the question what the EU is now tend to rely far more often on figures of argumentation corresponding to an understanding of the EU resembling a *communio*. Around 61 per cent of those statements dealing with perceptions of the EU employ arguments that are part of the larger discursive dimension of a *communio*.
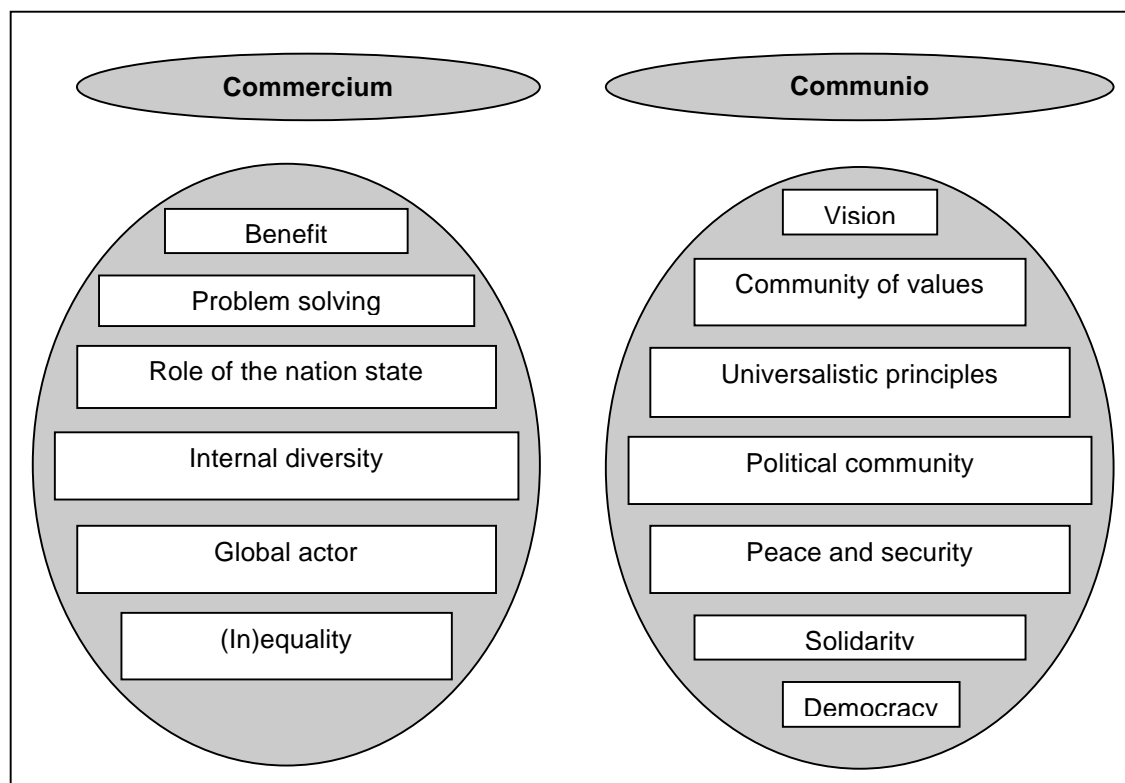

Figure 2: Topoi applied in statements constructing a *commercium* or a *communio*

National conceptions and visions of the European Union

This general categorisation of arguments into larger discursive dimensions holds true for all of the three analysed national media discourses. Yet, there are considerable national differences with regard to the frequency and quality of certain arguments. The most remarkable national characteristics of perceiving and envisioning the EU are discussed in the following part.

Germany

Unlike the Polish and the British media discourses on the future of Europe in the context of discussing wars and military interventions, the German discourse is characterised by the fact that those groups of arguments constructing the EU as a *communio*-like political entity are slightly more often employed (52.6 per cent) than those constructing the EU a *commercium*-like political entity (47.4 per cent). It is particularly the community of values topos that has gained a dominant position in the analysed discourse (see Figure 3). The German media discourse is the only analysed discourse in which the distinctiveness of the European Union is justified more often by drawing on culture, tradition and history (community of values topos, 13.9 per cent) than by referring to the benefits it creates (9,6 per cent). This dominance is even more obvious, if one differentiates the data with regard to the question whether

perceptions or visions of the EU are discussed. If the distinctiveness of the current status of the EU is referred to, almost a quarter of all statements (23.7 per cent) draw on the community of values topos.

As explicated above the community of values topos is a conglomerate of different argumentation patterns including explicit references to a European culture, European traditions and, most significantly, historical arguments which underline the distinctiveness of the EU. It should be noted that within this rather broad figure of argumentation, it is the latter argument that occurs particularly often. In no other country are historical argumentation patterns to justify the distinctiveness of the European Union as prevalent as in Germany. Most often, the past is constructed as the (mainly menacing) 'other' against which the EU emerges as a remedy for past failures.[22] This argument has been made most succinctly by a journalist in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: 'The question therefore is: is the past catching up again? The EU is designed as project against the return of the past' (SZ, 15.05.2004).
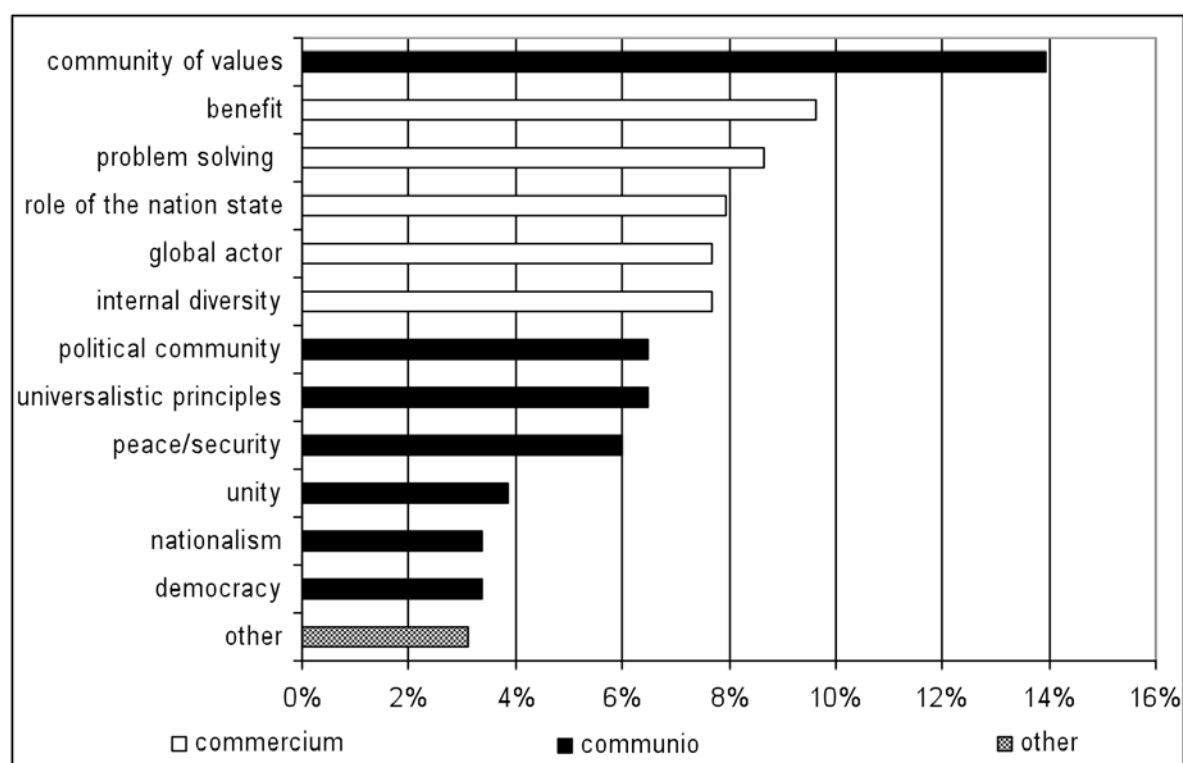
Figure 3: Distribution of topoi used to represent the EU as a distinct political space (GER), n=416

This 'temporal othering' (Diez 2004: 325) cuts across other argumentation patterns as well. It is, for example, implied in the peace and security topos where the reference point is more specifically the war-torn past. By contrast, the European integration

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[22] Other empirical studies provide evidence for the thesis that the own past is a central reference point in European identity construction in the German discourse (see for instance Marcussen et al. 2001; Díez Medrano 2003). Most prominently, Giesen proposed the idea that one specific type of memory has served as an essential reference point for the construction of European identities. According to him, traumatic memories are becoming the hallmark of a European identity (Giesen 2004). Others, however, have criticized Giesen's suggestion. Delanty, for instance, stresses that the trauma thesis generalizes from the German postwar experience. According to him, Giesen ignores that 'the incorporation of more perspectives into the public sphere inevitably results in a pluralisation of memories' (Delanty 2005: 136).

project is then represented as a force for peace. It is also inherent in those statements drawing on the topos of nationalism, which represents a remarkable specificity of the German discourse. In no other country is this particular argumentation pattern as visible as in the German discourse (see also Wagner 2002: 214 for a similar finding with respect to the parliamentary discourse on the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union).[23] By drawing on the topos of nationalism the European Union is depicted as a guarantee for preventing processes of re-nationalisation. In these statements the past as the 'other' is undoubtedly implied.

United Kingdom

The literature on British discourses on the European Union is broad but unequivocal: most studies suggest that a specific conception of the EU dominates both political elites' (Diez 1999) and media discourses on the European Union (Mautner 2000). Put simply, the EU is said to be primarily perceived as an economic community ensuring free markets and prosperity. The results of the argumentative analysis of public debates on the future of Europe provide yet further empirical evidence for these assumptions. The topos of benefit is the most prominently employed argumentation pattern to represent the EU as a distinct political space (14.3 per cent, see Figure 4). In general, constructions of the EU as a cooperative enterprise, i.e. a *commercium* (53.2 per cent), are slightly more common in the British media discourse than constructions of the EU as a community with a shared ethical self-understanding, i.e. a *communio* (46,8 per cent).

Beside the dominance of the topos of benefit and the general prevalence of arguments pointing to a *commercium*-like understanding of the European Union, there are some rather unexpected empirical findings. In particular, the comparatively frequent reference to the *global actor topos* seems surprising (9.1 per cent of all statements). In statements dealing exclusively with the future of the EU (as opposed to the current state of the EU), references to the responsibility of the EU in foreign policies is – together with the topos of benefit – the most frequently used argumentation pattern to represent the EU as a distinct political space. The prominence of this argument certainly reflects the radical shift of the British government towards the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) since 1998. Increasing demands by the United States to take over responsibility in security and defence policies and the Balkan war led the British government to adopt a more favourable attitude towards a European Security and Defence Policy (Kirchner 2002). Accordingly, the analysed media discourse abounds in statements emphatically demanding the EU to 'to punch its full weight on the world stage' (GRD, 30.06.2000). Future constructions in which a greater commitment to peace and security policies is presented as a central characteristic of the EU, play a pivotal role in the analysed British media discourse. Yet, as explained above, it must be stressed that the global actor argumentation pattern corresponds to a *commercium*-like understanding of the European Union. Strengthening the EU's role on the global stage is mainly seen as a question of efficiency or utility, safeguarding vital national interests.

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[23] The share of statements relying on the topos of nationalism is 3.6 per cent in Germany. It is even higher in the British discourse (3.9 per cent). However, this is only due to a number of speakers such as Gerhard Schröder, Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher who recurrently appear as speakers in the British discourse.
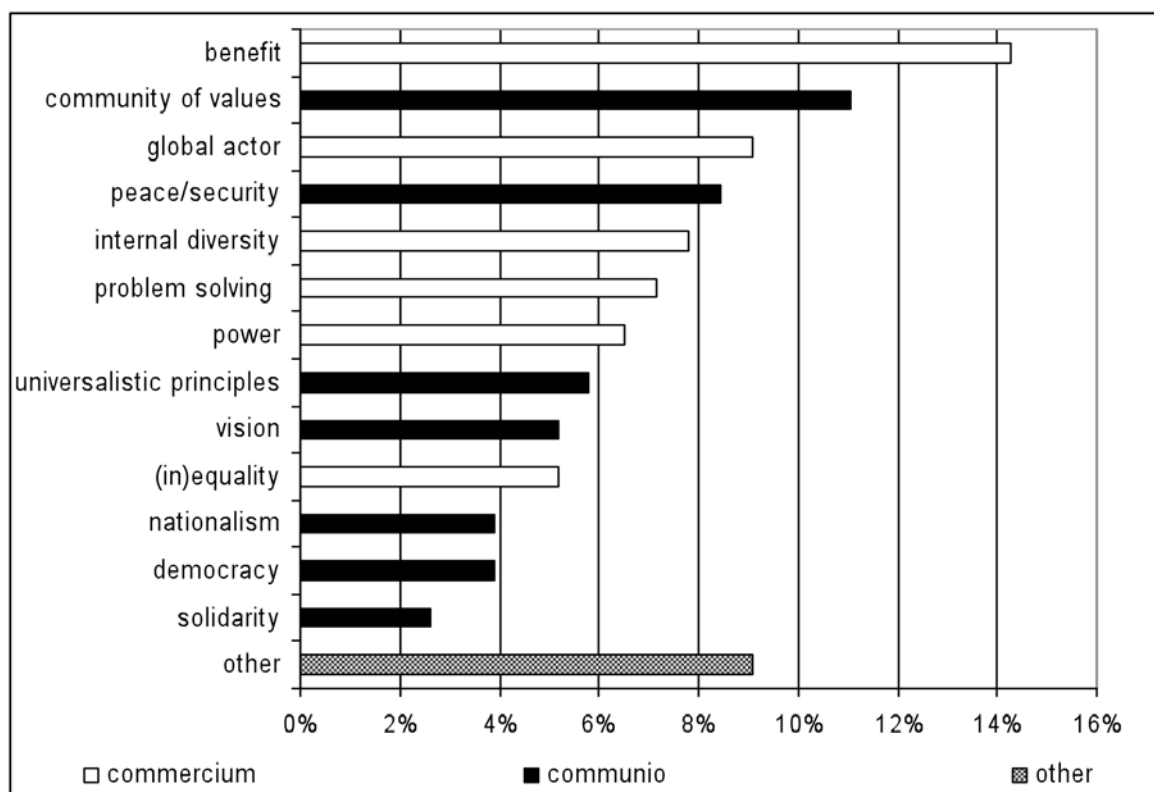
Figure 4: Distribution of topoi used to represent the EU as a distinct political space (UK), n=154

In line with this assumption, Diez (1999: 168) argued that the quest for a greater role of the EU in foreign affairs in the British political discourse should not be mistaken as a quest for more competences of supranational EU institutions in this policy field. The nation states are supposed to remain the key actors. The form of cooperation that is aspired complies with an intergovernmental rather than a supranational logic.

A final remarkable feature of the analysed British discourse is the frequency with which the *topos of power* occurs. This argumentation pattern is invoked in statements in which the power of the EU is presented as a distinct characteristic often combined with a sharply critical evaluation of the EU. Statements in which the speaker complains about the EU for having acquired too much power often in conjunction with labels such as a 'European superstate' (TMS, 17.12.2000) an 'ever-closer union' (TMS, 07.10.2004) or a 'federal system' (GRD, 25.11.1998) are typical of this figure of argumentation. While not being worth mentioning with respect to the Polish or the German media discourse (with a share of only 1.9 per cent or 2.6 per cent respectively), the topos of power does indeed play a significant role in the analysed British media discourse – particularly in statements dealing explicitly with the future state of the EU. The prominence of this topos reflects the well-known British desire to protect the country's sovereignty and its rejection of supranational forms of government (Diez 1999; Díez Medrano 2003).

Poland

The Polish discourse on the identity of Europe is clearly characterised by the prominence of arguments drawing on benefits to represent the European Union as a distinct political space (see Figure 5). The topos of benefit is the most frequently used figure of argumentation for both types of analysed statements, that is those dealing

with the current state of the EU and those dealing with the future of the EU. This empirical finding corresponds to other empirical studies in which Polish perceptions of the EU voiced either in the media (Díez Medrano 2009) or in interviews with citizens (Buecker 2006) were explicitly scrutinised. While cultural or value-based understandings of the European Union seemed to be particularly prominent in the early 1990s there has obviously been a shift in the general perception of the EU. Highly idealised, value-laden and cultural perceptions of the EU in which the concepts EU, Europe and the West were used almost interchangeably (ibid.) seem to have given way to more pragmatic and interest-based understandings in the course of the accession period (Biegoń 2006).

Even if a highly idealised perception of the EU as a community of values has evidently lost in significance in the Polish discourse, the EU is still comparatively often represented as a political community with a shared ethical self-understanding where actions are justified in terms of the common good. Almost half of all analysed statements (49.5 per cent) make use of topoi corresponding to a *communio*-like understanding of the EU. As explained above in greater detail, references to a commonly shared culture, history or tradition are not the only means by which a community based on a shared ethical self-understanding can be represented. In the Polish discourse, for instance, the political community topos, the peace and security topos and the solidarity topos are frequently employed argumentation patterns for the discursive construction of a *communio* (see Figure 5).
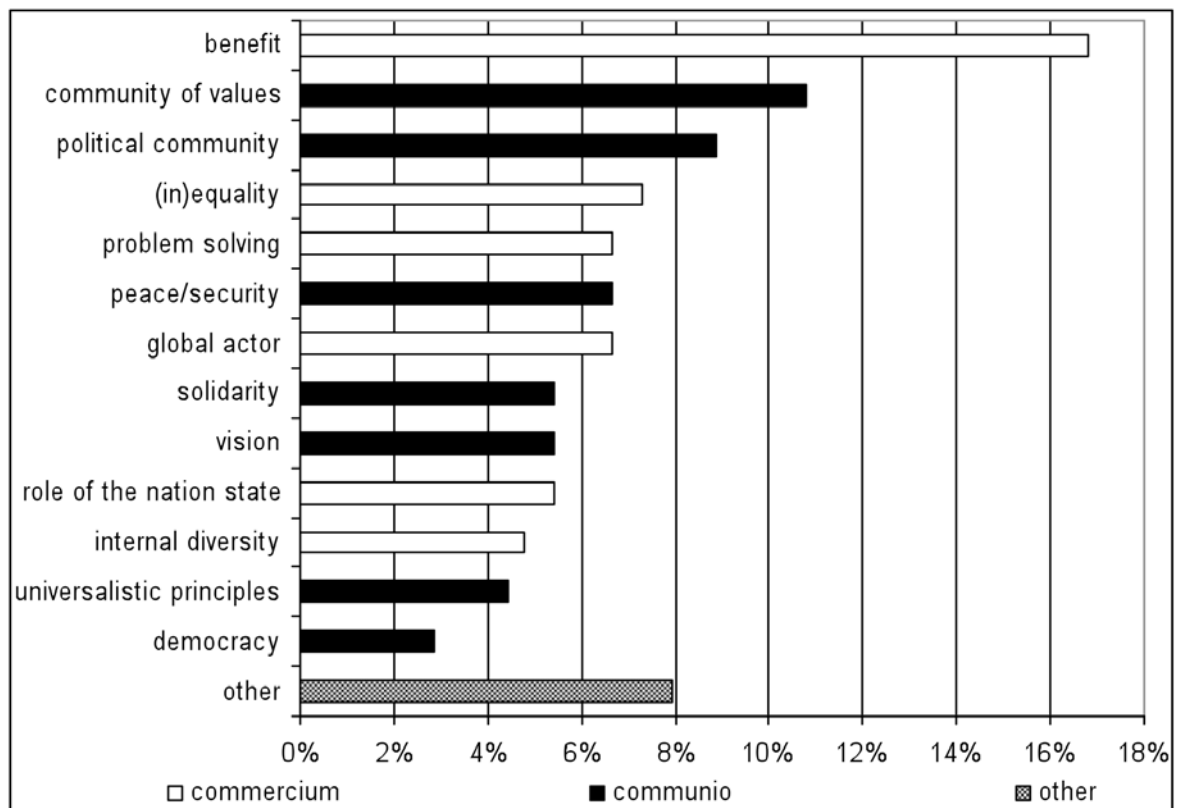

Figure 5: Distribution of topoi used to justify the EU as a distinct political space (PL), n=315

Conclusion

The analysis of European identity constructions in future debates in the context of wars and military interventions in German, British and Polish mass media has illustrated that discursive constructions of the EU as a cooperative enterprise (*commercium*) and of a community with a shared ethical self-understanding (*communio*) occur almost equally frequent. In the analysed German media discourse, representations of Europe resembling a *communio*-like political entity are slightly more prominent than in Great Britain or in Poland. On the whole, however, there are only marginal differences between the three countries as far as these two greater discursive dimensions are concerned: representations of the EU as a social entity mainly constituted by the self-interest of its members are as dominant as representations of the EU resembling a community with a shared ethical self-understanding. However, there are considerable national differences with respect to the exact arguments that are employed to construct these two larger discursive dimensions. While, for instance, arguments drawing on history are particularly prone to emerge when the EU is constructed as a *communio*-like political entity in the Geman media discourse, the Polish media discourse significantly differs: here articulations on a 'political Europe' as against a free market, which adress the EU as a whole, justifying actions in terms of a European 'common good' are particularly prominent.

The same can be said for representations of the EU resembling a cooperative enterprise. In Great Britain, for instance, the discursive construction of a *commercium*-like political entity often relies on arguments that are linked to security issues. Strengthening the EU's role on the global stage is presented as a vital means to safeguard national interests. By contrast, in the analysed German discourse articulations representing the EU as a *commercium*-like political entity make use of functionalist arguments – referring to global pressures and challenges – and present the EU as the only political organisation capable of confronting global problems.

What conclusions can be drawn from the empirical analysis with respect to the three models of reconstituting democracy in Europe proposed by Erik O. Eriksen and John E. Fossum (Eriksen and Fossum 2004; 2007; Eriksen 2009; see also Sjursen 2006)? In order to capture the complex character of the European Union and to establish different configurations for reconstituting democracy in Europe these authors proposed to conceive of the European Union in terms of a problem solving entity, a value based-community or a rights-based union. As I highlighted above, in particular the first two analytical categories, make strong assumptions about the social relationships that exist within a particularistic community. A problem solving entity is a 'functional type of organisation whose purpose is to promote the interests of the member states' (Eriksen 2009: 62). Such a political entity is mainly constituted by the self-interests of its members, i.e. the member states. By contrast, members of a value-based community share a collective identity that is based on particular European values. The emergence of a value-based community is dependent on collective processes of self-interpretation (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 441) by revitalising a cultural heritage, common traditions or collective memories. Measured against these yardsticks discursive constructions of the European Union resembling a value-based community, relying on references to a common cultural heritage, traditions and memories are comparatively rare. Yet, the empirical analysis has also shown that there are a large number of representations that strongly resemble the concept of a value-based community introduced by these authors. For instance, representations of the EU in terms of a political community, solidarity community or as a vision for the

future imply a shared ethical self-understanding and address the EU as a whole without referring to history and commonly shared memories. These representations clearly invoke commonly shared European values and go beyond the idea of conceiving the EU as a functional type of organisation whose purpose is to promote the interest of its member states, which is characteristic of a problem-solving entity. Yet, these discursive constructions are neither captured by the concept of a problem solving entity nor by a value-based community. In sum the empirical analysis illustrates that the concept of a value-based community might be too narrow to capture all the varieties of representations of Europe that we find empirically.

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