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Debating the European Constitution

On representations of Europe/the EU in the press*

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In this article, we analyze the newspaper coverage of the concluding session of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) which took place in Brussels on the 12th and 13th December 2003 and which was the first attempt to reach an agreement on the "Draft Constitutional Treaty" proposed by the European Convention. Placing it in the larger context of EU 'constitutional' reform, the media pictured the Brussels Summit and its eventual failure as an event of high symbolic relevance. In a qualitative in-depth discourse analysis, we comparatively investigate how the Summit was represented in 15 newspapers from eight EU countries. Using analytical categories from various key theoretical approaches of Discourse Analysis, the data are analyzed according to three interrelated sets of questions: (1) Which actors are selected in the press coverage, how are they labeled, and what are their main activities? (2) What metaphors, images and topoi are applied for representing and explaining the European Union as a unique political space? (3) How is the Brussels Summit placed in the political and historical context of European integration, who is blamed for its failure and why, and what scenarios for the future are discussed or proposed?

Results are presented on two dimensions: firstly, in a case study approach, it is shown how press coverage in each country differs on the level of semantics, thematic structures, and structures of relevance and argumentation. Secondly, a systematic cross-section analysis is carried out and the repertoire of the fundamental representations of EU-rope used in the press is reconstructed.

Keywords: European Union, Intergovernmental Conference 2004, constitutional debates, media analysis, representations of Europe

1. Introduction

One year after the “Convention on the Future of Europe” had concluded its work, at their meeting on 18th June 2004, the Heads of State or Government of the now 25 EU member states adopted a revised version of the “Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe”.¹ Establishing a compromise among others on the ways of calculating the qualified majority vote in the Council, the stalemate which had caused the breakdown of the first attempt to reach an agreement, the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) under the Italian Presidency in 2003, had thus been overcome.

In this article, we focus on the public resonance of these events, namely the coverage in 15 European newspapers of the concluding session of the (Italian) IGC taking place on the 12th and 13th December 2003 in Brussels. Media attention for this event was especially high since it condensed a long process of negotiations in a singular crucial meeting on the level of Heads of State or Government.² The following study aims at analyzing the way mass media represented the theme of ‘giving a constitution to Europe’ which was the ultimate goal of the IGC as the final decision-making authority in the long process leading from the Summit of Nice (2000) to the European Convention (February 2002 to July 2003).³ Placing it in this larger context of EU ‘constitutional’ reform, the media pictured the Brussels Summit as an event of high symbolic relevance, and, in the same way as many political actors (cf. the debates in *Europäische Rundschau* 32/1, 2004), emphasized both its important status as an expression of the nature of the European⁴ political space (what are the relevant political forces, what does the failure of the IGC express about the EU?) and as an indicator of further developments.

In what follows, we focus, on the one hand, on the general characteristics of how media represent the European political space: Who are the key political actors selected in the coverage, and how are they related to each other? (Who has power? Who is capable of acting? Who is central and who is peripheral?) What metaphors, images and topoi are applied for representing and explaining the European Union? Furthermore, against the background of these representations of the EU and Europe, how is the eventual breakdown of the Summit interpreted, evaluated and explained, in what historical context is it placed, who is blamed for its failure and what scenarios for the future are proposed? On the other hand, we investigate the differences according to the national origin of the newspapers analyzed.⁵

The results of our research are presented on two dimensions: firstly, the analysis has shown that in each country media coverage of the Summit is inscribed in what can be called a common discursive space, and thus we chose country-by-country case studies for summarizing the data (Section 3); secondly, a systematic cross-section analysis according to the main research questions has been carried out (Section 4). In the following section, some — necessarily brief — theoretical remarks on the representation of politics in mass media will argue for the relevance of such research on European integration.

The European Union and/in the media

In contemporary societies, for the vast majority of the population the mass media are the one and only source of information on EU political processes. Mass media observe the political system according to their own criteria of relevance and logic of representation, and thus they construct a specific reality by selecting certain topics, representing political actors, making various conflicts visible etc. (cf. Luhmann 1995). Hence, discourse analysis, studying how certain worldviews are implemented and realized through language, finds a most promising research object.

Concerning the process of drafting a Constitutional Treaty for the European Union, the representative function of the media is of special political importance: in the following two or more years, we will witness the process of ratifying the new Constitutional Treaty in the 25 EU member states. In many of them, this will be done not only by parliamentary approval, but in a referendum.⁶ Consequently, the debate on the ‘future of the EU’, which was, despite the efforts of the Convention, mostly limited to the micro-discourses of political experts and small segments of society, will reenter the public sphere.

The agreement on the document of the Constitutional Treaty on 18th June 2004 marks a provisional end of negotiations in the political sphere.⁷ However, for the wider public, the fundamental questions concerning the political bond — “what is the political collective?”, “who decides?” and “why are decisions legitimate?” — are unclear and in a state of flux. From this perspective, it still holds true what Joseph Weiler wrote in 1999, that we have

“a constitutional legal order the constitutional theory of which has not been worked out, its long-term, transcendent values not sufficiently elaborated, its ontological elements misunderstood, its social rootedness and legitimacy highly contingent” (Weiler 1999: 8).

The quality of public debates, and ultimately the meaningfulness of democratic procedures like referenda, will depend on finding ways of representing the crucial issues in the format of mass media and thus rendering politics visible and readable for the public. The event studied in this article is an excellent case for investigating processes of this kind. The Brussels Summit allowed condensing a complex subject (treaty revision) to a few symbolic issues and to conflicts at the highest political level. Moreover, other than the Convention (dealing with the same issues), it was limited to a very short period of time (two days only). Thus, the press coverage can be viewed as ‘transcribing’⁸ the long process of constitutional debate and reform in the political system according to its own media logic, that is, it proposes certain topoi, images, metaphors (what also could be called ‘public constitutional concepts’) for representing and explaining the European political space. Reconstructing this process is the aim of the present study⁹ (cf. below for detailed research questions and analytical categories).

2. Data and methodology

Data

Our corpus is taken from the coverage of the Brussels Summit in fifteen European newspapers from eight countries. The following principles of selection have been applied:

- The countries have been chosen according to their relevance in the dramaturgy of the Summit (Germany, France, Poland, and Spain) and according to their political weight in the EU (UK). The two medium sized member states analyzed (Sweden, Austria) have been selected due to pragmatic reasons (language competence). Finally, Italy has been added as the country holding the Council presidency.
- Secondly, in each country only quality newspapers have been selected owing to our aim of reconstructing the complete repertoire of practices of representing and making meaning of Europe rather than focusing on the possible impact of press coverage on the public. However, further research will extend to the tabloid press as well.
- To rule out a political bias, in each country one more ‘conservative’ (right) and one more ‘liberal’ (left) newspaper have been selected.¹⁰
- Since our focus is on studying the practices of representing and making meaning of one single event, the period studied has been limited to five

days from Friday the 12th to Tuesday the 16th December 2003. Within this period, *all* articles (print and online editions) reporting from or commenting the Brussels Summit have been included in the corpus; visual data (cartoons, photographs etc.) have not been analyzed.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the corpus according to genres and number of articles.

Methodology

Our analyses are based on a well-established, broad approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (cf. Wodak and Busch 2004 for an overview of CDA research on media texts). Contrary to methods such as content analysis or other quantitative methods of text analysis, our study is based on a qualitative in-depth discourse analysis. In order to show the far-reaching links between texts, discourses and their social and political anchorage and influence (following some of the main principles of CDA, cf. Fairclough and Wodak 1997), our focus is the systematic study of a relatively small corpus of texts.

The analysis presented below was conducted along a set of clearly-defined steps. First, we selected a corpus of texts according to their national, political and editorial origin. Then, within a 'pilot-study', we defined which of the linguistic units of texts are recurrent and re-appearing and which are unique for particular texts according to their national/political allegiance. Having defined a set of key analytic categories corresponding to the recurrent textual/discursive units (full list of categories below), we then proceeded with applying the analytical matrix of categories onto the entire corpus of texts taken under consideration. First, comprehensive analyses were done for each of the newspapers separately, and then reports on a country-by-country basis were written up highlighting the similarities and differences between the newspapers analyzed. Finally, these reports were summarized again for the present article by focusing on the main characteristics of the respective countries with respect to our research questions (see Section 3 below).

The analytical process was not however a one-way process, i.e. the analysis proceeded 'back and forth' in order to constantly reassure the validity of the selected categories. Finally, the links between overlapping elements of various categories (e.g. discourse topics and topoi, varied roles of social actors in discourse, cf. below for details) were also kept in mind.

Table 1. Genres list

Genre	TEL (UK)		GU (UK)		GW (PL)		FAZ (D)		SZ (D)		LM (F)		LF (F)	
	Conservative		Liberal		Liberal		Conservative		Liberal		Liberal		Conservative	
R	3.25 %		1.7 %		28.64 %		21.45 %		15.46 %		20.51 %		13.48 %	
RC	4.33 %		5.36 %		2.4 %		7.15 %		4.13 %		9.23 %		3.11 %	
C	5.42 %		4.29 %		2.4 %		3.7 %		4.13 %		2.5 %		1.4 %	
GC	-		2.14 %		-		-		1.3 %		1.3 %		5.18 %	
I / IE	-		-		6.14 %		-		1.3 %		1.3 %		1.4 %	
BG	-		-		-		1.2 %		4.13 %		5.12 %		4.15 %	
O	-		2.14 %		6.14 %		14.31 %		3.9 %		1.3 %		-	
TOTAL	12.100 %		14.100 %		44.100 %		46.100 %		32.100 %		39.100 %		27.100 %	
Δ words	790		908		388		394		474		555		650	

Genre	DP (AUT)		DS (AUT)		DN (SWE)		SvD (SWE)		CDS (IT) ¹¹		LS (IT)		ABC (ES)		EP (ES)	
	Conservative	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Conservative	Conservative	Conservative	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Conservative	Conservative	Liberal	Liberal
R	22.58 %	25.58 %	9.34 %	9.34 %	3.23 %	3.23 %	3.100 %	3.100 %	3.75 %	3.75 %	12.42 %	12.42 %	14.50 %	14.50 %	6.22 %	6.22 %
RC	4.11 %	2.5 %	7.27 %	7.27 %	2.15 %	2.15 %	1.25 %	1.25 %	2.7 %	2.7 %	5.17 %	5.17 %	3.11 %	3.11 %	3.11 %	3.11 %
C	2.5 %	7.16 %	7.27 %	7.27 %	-	-	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %
GC	1.3 %	3.7 %	1.4 %	1.4 %	1.8 %	1.8 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	1.3 %
I / IE	2.5 %	2.5 %	-	-	13.100 %	13.100 %	3.100 %	3.100 %	4.100 %	4.100 %	29.100 %	29.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %
BG	1.3 %	4.9 %	1.4 %	1.4 %	426	426	697	697	757	757	604	604	743	743	743	743
O	2.5 %	-	1.4 %	1.4 %	454	454	454	454	454	454	454	454	454	454	454	454
TOTAL	38.100 %	43.100 %	26.100 %	26.100 %	3.100 %	3.100 %	3.100 %	3.100 %	4.100 %	4.100 %	29.100 %	29.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %	28.100 %
Δ words	413	362	454	454	426	426	697	697	757	757	604	604	743	743	743	743

Abbreviations

(1) Newspapers: TEL — *The Daily/ Sunday Telegraph*; GU — *The Guardian / Observer*; GW — *Gazeta Wyborcza*; FAZ — *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; SZ — *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; LM — *Le Monde*; LF — *Le Figaro*; DP — *Die Presse*; DS — *Der Standard*; DN — *Dagens Nyheter*; SvD — *Svenska Dagbladet*; CDS — *Corriere della Sera*; LS — *La Stampa*; ABC — ABC; EP — *El País*.

(2) Genres: R — Report; RC — Report with strong elements of commentary; C — Commentary; GC — Guest Commentary; I / IE — Interview / Interview with Experts; BG — Article providing background information; O — Other

Detailed research questions and analytical categories

The data were analyzed according to three interrelated sets of questions:

1. Which actors are selected in the press coverage (e.g. countries or governments, individual politicians, abstract interests etc.), how are they nominated and predicated, and what are their main activities?
2. How is EUrope represented as a unique political space (e.g. a struggle for power, a complex landscape of diversities, a process leading to ever closer integration, etc.)?
3. How is the Brussels Summit placed in the political and historical context of European integration, who is blamed for its failure and why, and what scenarios for the future are discussed or proposed?

For each set of questions, a number of analytical categories taken from various key theoretical approaches of CDA were chosen:

From the Discourse-Historical tradition of CDA, we adopt the analysis of strategies of 'self- and other-presentation' (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) in general, while focusing on *argumentation and rhetoric* as well as *nomination and predication* as the key elements. Our analysis encompasses the search for various uses of argumentative strategies characterized by the application of various topoi which are either formal (and based on 'classical' topoi such as the topoi of 'difference', 'analogy', 'example', 'equality', 'consequence', etc., cf. Kopperschmidt 1989) or context-dependent (i.e. characteristic for the particular context of the textual material analyzed, cf. Kienpointner 1992). Our study of rhetorical forms is limited to the analysis of *metaphors*.¹² Within the latter, we specifically focus on the political role of metaphors (cf. Strahle et. al. 1999) by reconstructing their actual discourse-constructive role (e.g. metaphors of war).

Following Theo van Leeuwen's (1996) Actors Analysis, we investigate in which ways certain social and political actors are represented, portrayed and positioned. According to the research questions above, we do not use the entire, broad apparatus proposed by van Leeuwen, but we focus on such categories as: (a) *role allocation* (specific roles that social actors play in particular representation), (b) *nomination* (representation of social actors in terms of their unique identity), (c) *genericisation and specification* (representing social actors as either classes, or as "specific, identifiable individuals", van Leeuwen 1996: 46), (d) *categorization* (representation of social actors in terms of identities or functions they share with others), or (e) *personalization and impersonalization* (presentation of actors as human beings capable of agency on the one hand, and abstraction/objectivation on the other).

An exemplary analysis

Owing to space restrictions, our case studies only summarize the original in-depth analyses, and examples from the corpus are restricted to a small number. In order to illustrate how the analyses were performed, as well as the adequacy of the analytical categories, let us consider an example: The article “Europe’s grand folly” appeared in *The Observer* on Sunday, 14th December 2003. Below, we focus on the first few paragraphs of the 2000 word commentary:

“Title: Europe’s grand folly

Lead-in: This weekend’s summit was supposed to endorse a bright new EU constitution: instead Poland and Germany walked out and now everything is on ice, report Gaby Hinsliff in Brussels and Ian Traynor

He managed to walk in through the cobbled courtyard for the benefit of the cameras, but afterwards he sank straight back into his wheelchair. Days after a near-fatal helicopter crash in which he fractured his spine, the determination of Poland’s Prime Minister to attend this weekend’s crucial summit over the future of the European Union symbolised just how high the stakes were.

Leszek Miller may today be forgiven for wondering whether it was worth it. After another round of inglorious horsetrading over Europe’s new constitution — the flagship project meant to redefine what the EU is for — collapsed in failure in less than 24 hours, the real casualty in Brussels may be the dream of a united and harmonious Europe combining to form a mighty trading block and a serious political force, reinvigorated by a closer bond with its people.

The project now appears, if not terminally ill, at least as bruised as Miller. Behind closed doors in the rose-pink granite block of the Justus Lipsius building, the EU has torn itself apart for two days over a document so obscure — and so dull — that even Foreign Secretary Jack Straw joked yesterday that journalists would be ‘bored to death’ by his briefing on the intricate details.”

Looking at the semantic macrostructures,¹³ we summarize this text in the following way: (1) the Summit meeting was very important, (2) it should have allowed to constitute a better Europe, (3) instead, it failed and ended up in horsetrading and fighting.

Very clearly, the Summit is placed in the context of EU constitutional debates and institutional reform: it is referred to as “the crucial summit over the future of the European Union”, namely aiming at giving a new constitution to Europe which is “meant to redefine what the EU is for”.

The main social actors represented in this short example are: Europe, the EU, Poland, Germany, and Leszek Miller. ‘Poland’ and ‘Germany’ are actually metonymies for the respective governments and political representatives

taking part at the Summit. They are portrayed as active agents “walking out” and thus ending the negotiations. However, they are not particularly blamed for this, since it was “the EU” which “has torn itself apart” in an “inglorious” way. The failure of the Summit is rather “Europe’s” failure than the one of Germany or Poland. At the other hand, the way Leszek Miller is portrayed in this text (e.g. he “may today be forgiven for ...”) might be interpreted as indicating a negative evaluation of his role, or Poland’s role, at the Summit. However, the passage analyzed here does not allow final conclusions on this point.

At the heart of the text is the topos of comparing an ideal with reality which appears several times and at several levels of the text. In the lead-in, what was ‘supposed’ to happen is compared with what happened ‘instead’. While the former is positively evaluated (“endorsing a bright new EU constitution”), the latter is negatively evaluated (“everything is on ice”). At the level of local semantics, the representation of the EU constitution as “bright new” needs to be further analyzed, for example, by investigating the immediate co-text. In paragraph two, the constitution is referred to as “Europe’s flagship project”, while in paragraph three it is referred to as “a document so obscure — and so dull — (...)”. What is predicated as dull and obscure is the reality of the constitution (the document); it is connected with the “rose-pink granite block of the Justus Lipsius building” (a common metaphor for Brussels bureaucracy), with “intricate details” and also with “inglorious horsetrading”. Referring to the EU constitution as “flagship project” and as “bright new” thus seems to be an ironic way of highlighting the difference between an ideal and reality. The ideal is described in paragraph two: “the dream of a united and harmonious Europe...” Only bringing about *this* kind of Europe would warrant talking of a “bright” constitution and a “flagship project”. It is “Europe’s grand folly”, that *instead* the Summit is horsetrading and haggling over “intricate details”. In these clauses, metaphors and evaluations mark two visions of Europe and serve to contrast the ‘banal with the glorious’.

Finally, the content of the “dream” evoked in paragraph two of our sample text needs to be analyzed. It is a “united and harmonious” Europe as compared to a Europe “torn apart”. It is a “serious political force” as compared to the horsetrading of the Summit. Europe should also “form a mighty trading block” and be characterized by “a closer bond with its people”. To fully interpret these two discursively constructed dichotomies and motives, we would have to include intertextuality into our analysis, namely the larger context of the British discourse on Europe (cf. Mautner 2000) and of discourse on the EU’s so-called ‘democratic deficit’.

3. Country case studies

In what follows, we try both to reconstruct the common discursive space for each country and to highlight major differences between the individual newspapers. Each case study (a summary of in-depth text analyses) is divided into three sections: (1) main similarities and differences of the newspapers studied, (2) ways of representing the European political space, (3) contextualization and interpretation of the Summit and the question of who is to blame for its failure.

Austria — Realism and ambivalence

Reading the coverage from the Brussels Summit in the two Austrian newspapers analyzed — the liberal-conservative *Die Presse* (DP) and the social-liberal *Der Standard* (DS) — a set of characteristics concerning genre and style can be noticed: plain, simple language is used, short reports neutrally listing direct and indirect quotes from politicians make up the bulk of the corpus, emotional language and authors' interpretations are kept to a minimum, and, if at all, are often mitigated. Both newspapers, thus, do not communicate a strong vision of Europe, but rather present a panorama of various politicians' voices. In *Die Presse*, this panorama is generally interpreted in terms of a 'metaphor of struggle' (i.e. divergent interests are clashing at the Summit). *Der Standard*, on the other hand, stands out in our corpus because it seems to lack any coherent representation of the European political space or of what happened at the Summit. Even the verbs used to embed politicians' statements — highly differentiated in the case of *Die Presse*¹⁴ — hardly convey any particular bias in the way actors are represented: neutral verbs like *say*, *emphasize*, *propose*, *think*, *announce* predominate.

Managing a complex political space

In an article from 12th December 2003, *Der Standard* provides its readers with background information on the EU member states after the Enlargement. A picture of Europe is painted in terms of key characteristics of states (population size, membership to NATO, economic power, etc.) and of sub-groups of states and potential conflicts between them: opponents versus supporters of the Iraq war, 'big' versus 'small' states, members of the Euro-zone or of Schengen, Northern countries, poor versus rich and so forth. No overriding organizing principle (e.g. core and periphery) can be discerned in this merely factual description. Also, metaphors are virtually absent from the corpus.

Die Presse also represents the EU as a complex space of divergent interests. However, it goes beyond mere description by organizing this representation according to several variations of a metaphor of struggle: politicians are presented as *opponents* or *allies*, they have *bilateral talks*, there are *political bargains* [*Abtauschgeschäfte*], there are *tough fronts* [*verhärtete Fronten*]. Concerning this struggle, to be sure, not every EU institution and member state is equally powerful. As usual, *Germany and France* (often presented as aggregated actors) are the key players in terms of agency and power.

In accordance with this pragmatic, ‘realist’ perspective, EU politics are described as, among other things, a *showdown for power, struggle for resources* [*Verteilungskampf*], *fight for money, tug-of-war* [*Tauziehen*], *struggle for the constitution* [*Ringens um die Verfassung*]. Taking a closer look, these war-metaphors are complemented with accounts of the concrete event of the Summit which are personalized, focusing on politicians’ emotions and resentments (e.g. Poland was “defiant” [*trotzig*] (DP, 151203), Schröder was *angry* and *filled with wrath*), on their culturally and historically shaped visions of Europe, and also on the typical gamesmanship of EU summits [*Poker, Bluff*], the intrigues, the squabbling, the contingencies (DP, 131203). In some articles, the Convention is presented as a more rational alternative to this way of decision-making, but there is no pervasive vision going beyond the ‘realist’ EU of member states. Rather, hope is invested in a process of learning (the metaphor of ‘driving lessons’ [*Fahrtechnikkurs*] is used), maybe triggered by crisis, making it possible to tame and civilize the struggle for power and to place a common good over petty national interests (DP, 151203).

The coming of Kerneuropa?

Concerning the representation of the Summit itself, both newspapers show no surprises, either in terms of the definition of stakes (an EU constitution), or in terms of identifying the main cleavages or discussing who is to blame for the failure: Spain, and more pronouncedly Poland, are presented as privileged by the calculation of voting rights agreed upon in Nice;¹⁵ these privileges were “defended” against the “probably more just, and surely more transparent” system of double majority advocated by France and Germany (DS, 121203).

In *Die Presse*, the Summit is placed in the context of long-standing conflicts of interests which have become ever more complex and difficult to reconcile, also on account of the enlargement to the East. While Poland is apportioned the main share of blame, on several occasions it is made clear that all countries — despite their sometimes altruistic rhetoric — are egoistic. Especially in

articles published on Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th, a part of the blame is put on Germany and France and also on Silvio Berlusconi and his “unprofessional” way of managing the Summit. Starting from similar arguments, *Der Standard* attempts to draw additional conclusions from the failure of the Summit. A commentary from 15th December 2003 reads, very much in line with the paper’s lack of a coherent image and vision of EUrope: “One must not expect too much from Europe and thus should postpone the decision on the constitution.”¹⁶

Finally, in both newspapers a pronounced interest in the issue of *Kerneuropa* (core Europe¹⁷) can be found in most of the articles published after the failure of the Summit. The perspectives of *Kerneuropa* are discussed, its pros and cons, and especially the meaning of this concept for Austria. Generally, a certain ambivalence can be noted, characteristically expressed in a commentary (DS) from 15th December 2003. On the one hand, it is argued that Austria is threatened with being excluded from the club of *Kerneuropa*; on the other hand: “The ‘Europe with several speeds’ which (psychologically) exists already is becoming the decisive factor.”¹⁸ On the one hand, the very idea of *Kerneuropa* is opposed to the one of a common constitution. On the other, much seems to indicate that it *will* be established in one way or another. What remains is ambivalence and developments which one cannot influence:

“Europe with several speeds, EU-avantgarde, core Europe: after the failure of the Summit in Brussels, these slogans dominate the political debate on where the journey of the old and future member states should go.” (DS, lead-in, 151203)¹⁹

France — The Franco-German axis in line with Europe-vision?

While both French newspapers analyzed, *Le Monde* (LM) and *Le Figaro* (LF), share the representations of EUrope in terms of concentric circles surrounding the Franco-German axis and of an opposition of Europe-vision and Europe-reality (cf. Busch and Krzyżanowski forthcoming), a closer look reveals important differences. In LF, the vision of *Europe-puissance* (as for instance communicated in three guest commentaries) is defining both, the topological center of EUrope (France and Germany) and the meaning of the ‘European spirit’. LM, on the other hand, has a less concrete conception of Europe-vision, which is rather an ideal of justice, progress and democracy transcending the interests of any member state. The difference between the two newspapers can also be observed at the level of language, which is more neutral and mitigated in LM and more involved in LF.

EUrope and its center

Both newspapers share a guiding topological representation of the EU: it is pictured in terms of several concentric circles. The center is occupied by *the founding members* [*les pays fondateurs*], the core of which are France and Germany (“*France et Allemagne en tête*”, LF, 121203), the central *axis* or *motor*. Around these countries there is a ring of more ambivalent allies, the most important being Great Britain. In *Le Monde*, the accession countries, often aggregated under the title of newcomers inexperienced with the “European way of cooking” [*la cuisine Européenne*] (LM, 121203), are more anxious to retain their sovereignty as well as their good relationship with NATO and the USA (the topos of Iraq plays a central role here). In *Le Figaro*, this aspect is presented more sharply: countries sometimes named the *Atlantics* [*les atlantistes*] or *pro-américains*, with an explicit reference to the Iraq war, or *les Niçois* with a reference to the contested issue of weighing of votes, are clearly seen as opponents to the Franco-German core equated with progress or even with ‘the European’ as such.

In *Le Figaro*, this topological imaginary is strongly linked with a certain representation of a Europe-vision (see above). While the *atlantistes* like Poland and Spain are identified with their (particularistic) “national interests” and often represented in a very personalized way and in activities with negative connotations [*prendre gout à jour, se livrer à tractations, marteler, brandisser un veto* etc.], the pro-Europeans, or, as in one article, the *Europeans tel-quel* (LF, 121203), are identified with a more universalistic mission transcending the national interest. It is ‘Reason’ itself which is on their side, namely the necessity of giving a Constitution to the European Union which had been framed in a rational, transparent and democratic way by the European Convention. Moreover, France and Germany embody the vision of the EU as a powerful actor on the global scene, equal to the USA (LF, 121203).

Le Monde, on the other hand, does not identify the ‘core’ states with Europe, but rather criticizes France and Germany for often failing to live up to the European spirit and thus betraying their European mission for national interests. The idea of an ‘*avantgarde*’ (primarily associated with France) is seen critically: it ultimately would imply a renationalization of the Union and thus risk a major split within the 25, while the European spirit is rather manifested in the “*méthode Monnet*” (LM, 161203). Accordingly, the realization of a Europe-vision (identified with common rules, progress, democracy etc.) is viewed as a difficult endeavor, since the reality of divergent interests is obvious. “For saving Europe from crisis, it does not suffice to have good ideas. More than that, we

need to be patient in order to convince our allies.”²⁰ Europe-vision, thus, seems to exist where member states interact in a spirit of justice and fairness (LM, 161203).

The Constitution and its enemies

Both newspapers interpret the breakdown of the Summit in terms of “failing to give to Europe a Constitution” with a capital ‘C’ (LF, 151203). Also, both papers are explicit in marking the difference between the vision or ideal (constitution, progress, a strong EU etc.) and the reality (crisis, nationalism, horse-trading etc.), although *Le Monde* does it in a less ‘heroic’ way. For explaining the breakdown of the Summit, in *Le Figaro* foreign policy plays a central role, and the *fiasco* of Brussels is explicitly traced back to the Iraq crisis. This cleavage, it is argued, goes back to before the Iraq crisis and continues even now, when Poland has compromised a common EU constitution (LF, 121203). Generally speaking, Europe-vision and the EU as *acteur mondial* (ibid.) are closely linked here: Europe-vision is personified and pictured as a strong and powerful actor, especially in those articles reporting on the adoption of a common defense policy and contrasting the EU with a US vision of the world. However, this vision of a strong EU contrasts with the reality of divided member states. Using the topos of comparison, unity (*Europe, common, own vision of the world, pacific, cooperate, collective* etc.) is contrasted with division (*Iraq, inability [impuissance], incapable, crisis* etc.).

Concerning the apportioning of blame, interestingly, both papers show marked differences in their coverage of the time before and after the breakdown of the Summit. While at first no doubt is left that Poland is ‘intransigent’ and aggressive, and that the Spanish former Prime Minister Aznar is playing the nationalist card in order to gain advantages in the upcoming elections (LM, 121203), after the Summit the ‘tone’ changes, and much more mitigated evaluations of the events are presented. It seems as if there was great awareness of a need to avoid scapegoating, and thus the attribution of blame is explicitly mitigated and, in *Le Monde*, the main focus is now even placed on the vices of Germany and France who, on many occasions in the past, have played the game of national interests and thus produced an image of hypocrisy and double standards. Apart from this reference to the nationalist ‘sins’ of the two central member states, the crisis is also placed in the context of the long history of EU-integration which is represented as an ambivalent story of progress and mistrust in the relationships of nation-states lacking any clear vision for the future:

“As Jacques Chirac has emphasized, the history of Europe is one of ‘crises overcome’. These crises have not prevented the European Union from continuing its progress. But each of them has slowed down the course of progress by creating between its members a climate of mistrust that is difficult to remove.” (LM, 161203)²¹

And in *Le Figaro*, Luc de Barochez formulates in the same spirit: “Europe is meeting Sisyphus” [*L’Europe a rendez-vous avec Sisyphé*] (LF, 121203).

Germany — Europe: Which idea and what realities?

European Constitution, Europe with several speeds, the transatlantic relationship, the meaning of the European ‘spirit’ — these are some of the keywords and central issues of the German coverage of the Brussels IGC. On the one hand, the liberal *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) offers a pronouncedly ‘federalist’ perspective and finds a powerful symbol in the notion of the first continental *Grundgesetz*. Its evaluations of the Summit and the Polish responsibility for its failure, as well as arguments in favor of deeper integration — aiming at the vision of a *unified Europe* — are voiced in an emphatic and unmitigated way.

In many ways, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (FAZ) reads like the conservative answer to SZ (and vice versa): in both, the significance and the political reasonableness of the EU constitution are questioned, and the emphatic word *Grundgesetz* is never used to refer to the doubtful EU-counterpart of the cherished German *Verfassung*. Rather, the reality of a “conglomerate” [*Konglomerat*] of different traditions, cultures, geo-political orientations and interests in the EU is emphasized (FAZ, 151203). In view of this diversity of the enlarged EU, a new and profound phase of reflection [*Besinnung*, FAZ, 151203]) is called for, since the EU of the future might look quite different from the model underlying the efforts of the Convention.

Europe-vision vs. Europe-reality

Generally speaking, both newspapers show a double representation of Europe as reality on the one hand and vision or idea [*europäischer Geist*] on the other. The reality can be characterized as intergovernmental, that is member states with different characteristics, different attitudes and different interests. They do not necessarily build strong opposing blocks, like the ‘small’ versus the ‘big’, and are hardly represented according to the topological metaphor of concentric circles. In the FAZ, it is rather the very diversity of perspectives and voices that is made visible, among other things, by means of short reports characterizing

most of the 25 member states²² and by quotations from important European newspapers. Here and elsewhere, the conservative paper uses neutral language when reporting the different interests and perspectives of member states.

The SZ hardly lends to Europe-reality the concrete face of different member states' voices, but rather uses the abstract images of a struggle for power and of petty national interests compromising the common European good. On the other hand, a Europe-vision — left quite unclear in *FAZ*, or limited to the realm of managing the common market according to common rules (*FAZ*, 121203) — is frequently invoked: it means unity, strength, efficiency, power in the world, and it is in the best interest of both, citizens and states. Europe-vision is “a unique construction of shared sovereignties” [*einzigartige Gebilde geteilter Souveränitäten*] allowing for the political shaping of a common space (*SZ*, 121204). However, since *Souveränitätsverzicht* is the key to its success, this “European spirit” is at the mercy of member states. As long as they are “not ready”, that is, particularly “in their heads” [*in den Köpfen*] they adhere to old-fashioned images of power politics, Europe-vision cannot become reality (*ibid.*).

Blaming Poland vs. blaming the system

Consequently, giving a constitution to the EU — something seen as *the* theme of the Brussels Summit by both newspapers — is welcomed by the SZ as a joyous moment of great historical significance (cf. “giving a *Grundgesetz* to diversity” [*der Vielfalt ein Grundgesetz geben*], *SZ*, 121203). The constitution — and the Convention — is identified with rationality, simplicity, transparency and democracy. Clearly, it belongs to the side of Europe-vision. In a commentary from 15th December, Stefan Ulrich writes about hopes for “a well-constituted [*gut verfasstes*] Europe without borders” and contrasts it with the reality of waking up “stunned and without constitution” [*fassungs- und verfassungslos*] in an EU of governments' red lines. Here, progress, the common good and so forth are juxtaposed with blockades, standstill, vetoes, and arrogance. “Power struggle in EU puts constitution at risk”, this is the bottom-line as formulated in a sub-heading from 12th December 2003, and, from the same day: “For most states, more important than more Europe is their own influence in Brussels.”

As mentioned above, the *FAZ* explicitly questions this kind of argument or, more precisely, limits its validity to the realm of the common market only. In political terms, however, the very plurality of visions and interests in the enlarged EU itself denounces deeper integration according to one single vision (*FAZ*, 151203). Not only the “most European of the German Europeans”

[*des europäischsten der deutschen Europäer*], German Foreign Minister Fischer, had to learn this lesson (FAZ, 131203). The Convention method, too, was put back in its place at the Brussels Summit: true, it was a more rational, transparent and open way of negotiation, especially compared with what the inter-governmental method had achieved at the Summit of Nice (2000). However, European realities cannot be ignored, and, thus, the model of EU integration itself has to be rethought (FAZ, 151203). On the other hand, a clear alternative for the future is not presented, although some kind of “differentiated integration” might hold the key to success (FAZ, 151203).

Not surprisingly, the question of who is to blame for the failure of the Summit is treated differently in the two newspapers. While for the *FAZ*, which is critical of the idea of the Summit itself (an EU constitution), its failure is rather attributed to the current state of the EU-system, in the *SZ* Poland is very explicitly made responsible. Clinging to its own privileges, it has compromised the success of the EU. And only to avoid the appearance of looking for a scapegoat, Spain, Berlusconi, and, in principle, all member states who are still not ready to give up their little special interests, are also made responsible.

Thus, which scenarios for the future? In its commentaries, the *Süddeutsche* seems to portray a dilemma: on the one hand, an EU of 25 is too heterogeneous to work by the old formulae; on the other hand, the Summit showed that a compromise is not in sight. Consequently, a “Europe with several speeds” or *Kerneuropa*, just as for the *FAZ*, would be a natural solution. However, this carries with it certain dangers, namely risking an eventual break-up of the Union. Consequently, hoping for a Europe-vision to finally materialize seems to constitute the only option for the liberal newspaper, while the *FAZ* keeps looking for some kind of alternative. One thing, however, is emphasized in both newspapers: the French plans of an *avantgarde* without Great Britain and against the USA should not be allowed by the German government (SZ, 161204).

Italy — Silvio Berlusconi and the role of the presidency

In the case of the Italian media, we decided to focus on the interpretation of the Summit and the role of the Italian presidency in those articles published after the breakdown of negotiations.²³ Generally, having the Council presidency constituted a peculiar situation for the Italian media concerning the interpretation of the failure of the Summit and the question of who was responsible. The controversies concerning Silvio Berlusconi,²⁴ both internationally and domestically, added to the complexity of the situation.

In general, *Il Corriere della Sera* (CDS) seems to present a more benign evaluation of Silvio Berlusconi's role at the IGC than *La Stampa* (LS). The Summit, CDS affirms, was to be seen as a "complex riddle" [*un rebus troppo complicato*] made up of the entangled power relations in the EU (CDS, 141203). Neither one single government nor the Italian presidency should be blamed for the failure of the Summit. The notion was created that Berlusconi could not succeed since the various countries' diverging points of view did not allow for any agreement. Accordingly, the "magic stick" [*la bacchetta magica*] that is in the hands of the President of the Council could do little "compared to the power of France, Germany, Great Britain and, as we have seen, also Poland". "Italy does not bear any specific responsibility". Rather, the notion of a kind of political bazaar is created, a back and forth between political leaders which leads nowhere: "for a couple of hours the Italian delegation" leading the talks "turned into the ball of a pin-ball machine" [*la delegazione italiana si trasforma nella pallina di un flipper*] (CDS, 141203).

La Stampa, too, emphasizes that the four most important actors were Germany, France, Spain and Poland. Each of them has used their veto on the compromise motions put forth by the Italian presidency, and each of them for different reasons. Nevertheless, this 'realist' presentation of the Summit is not used to support Silvio Berlusconi who is, unlike the treatment in CDS, not identified with Italy as such. The strategy of "self-defense" [*autodifesa*] of Berlusconi, who believes that he emerged from the Summit with "military honor" [*l'onore delle armi*], is not shared by LS (141203). Rather, the Italian presidency is criticized for its lack of European vision and spirit. What vision this could be is voiced in an article by Antonio di Padoa Schioppa (15th December): abolish the member states' power of veto, also concerning future revisions of the constitution, and enhance the democratic control of the European Parliament. This might even be done, initially, within the framework of 'reinforced cooperation', and, if necessary, even without Italy: "Because the future of our citizens, their security, their interests and their values can no longer be secured in the world of today and tomorrow, if this is not done at the European level" (LS, 151203).²⁵

The *Corriere della Sera*, on the other hand, does not share this kind of vision in the articles analyzed. While what happened at the Summit is considered a sad failure, realism is nevertheless called for. "One learns from this lesson", that "the diplomacy of joking and of good will can do nothing against the knots of power" (CDS, 141203). Also the securing of an EU agency for the city of Parma is placed in this context. While it is ironically referred to as "success" (LS referred to it as Italy's "booty" [*il "bottino" tricolore*], LS, 141203), it is

nevertheless legitimized as part of European reality: “At the end of an unfortunate semester, this is the consolation prize that remains” (CDS, 141203).²⁶

Poland — Summit failure? No disaster!

The material analyzed comes from Poland’s major daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW), a widely-renowned publication presenting a central-liberal standpoint and a strongly pro-European, intellectual background.

Surprisingly, the paper’s standpoint seemed to be rather ‘reserved’ and no clear position on the Summit was presented. Furthermore, a fairly frequent and recurrent emergence of the topic ‘Growing invalidity of former alliances within EU-Enlargement (CEEC) Countries’ seems to be typical of the analyzed newspaper. GW, which stems from the former CEEC dissident tradition, always promoted and favored close cooperation with other post-communist countries of the region, as embodied by, for example, ‘the Visegrád Triangle’ (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) or similar regional alliances. Therefore, although this is not really mentioned in other forums, the paper strongly emphasizes that former CEEC alliances became invalid in the politics of ‘losses’ and ‘gains’ which every country of the region started playing vis-à-vis the EU, both in negotiations, and, later, within the European Convention and the IGC.

Europe of divided, national interests

The main picture of Europe that appears is that of varied national interests subsumed under the common roof EU rather than of any political union. Additionally, as mentioned before, the EU brings a particular challenge to old, CEEC regional alliances, since “the EU summit has shown that declarations about regional cooperation are one thing, whereas national interests are a completely different issue” (GW, 151203). It is worth mentioning that the lexical item (national) interest(s) [*interes narodowe*] is the most common one throughout the entire corpus. In a similar vein, the EU is also portrayed as being made up of coalitions which were particularly fostered by the Summit, namely coalitions of “Poland, Spain and also Great Britain” which “could not find a common language with France and Germany”²⁷ (GW, 141203), while others are built from Germany along with “France, UK, other founding members of the EU as well as some of its new members” (GW, 131203), or, quite surprisingly, by “France and Belgium” as opposed to “what Poland, Spain and Germany seemed to accept” (GW, 131203).

Core and periphery logic obviously feeds into such an image, yet is elaborated on as, on the one hand, “old jargon” and “idea”, and, on the other hand, as political, European reality. ‘Core’ as idea “would kill the big Union” [*to by zabiło dużą Unię*] (GW, 141203, death/killing metaphors are very common), and, if it exists at all, it is fostered by “the old union (which) does not trust us” [*stara Unia nam nie ufa*] (GW, 141203, us vs. them rhetoric). The core is also synonymously nominalized as “hardcore” [*twarde jądro*] or as “avant-garde of the pioneer states” [*awangarda krajów pionierskich*] (GW 131203).

An EU divided into core and periphery is seen as being “already there”, being part of reality, and characterized by “circles” of cooperation such as “the Euro, uncontrolled trans-border movement (Schengen), police cooperation of the big five (without Poland)” (GW, 141203).

As far as the main actors are concerned, Prime Minister Miller, with his position endorsed by President Kwasniewski, plays the main role, with Schröder and Chirac being presented as his opponents. Berlusconi is pictured as incompetent and over self-confident, while Blair as the “good one”, the peacemaker, because he supports Poland. The representation of actors is however deprived of any dynamics, particular predications and additional characteristics.

Trivializing the fiasco

The failure of the Summit is described with unemotional language (*reporting, saying, being discontent with, failure/fiasco*, etc.) reduced to ‘rational’ and ‘balanced opinions’. This serves as a strong reproduction of the image of the newspaper as moderate, rather than presenting facts or commenting on them. As the Summit itself is labeled as a “controlled and pre-planned fiasco” which was anyway better than “murderous negotiations, throwing mud at one another, and, finally, a bad compromise”²⁸ (GW, 131203, key elements here show the frequent use of the topos of comparison, i.e. to present what the Summit could turn into — connotations of *mud, bad, murderous* — and what it actually became with the help of Poland — *moderate, balanced, friendly*, etc, see above). Poland emerges from the Summit as not responsible for the failure, and rather as holding a “consistent and mature position” [*konsekwentną i bardzo dojrzałą merytorycznie postawę*] (GW, 131203), while Miller (v. above) is portrayed as “presenting our [Polish] rationale irrespective of personal difficulties”²⁹ (GW, 131203). While looking for villains, intergovernmental politics are to be blamed (with “national egoisms not allowing the reaching of agreement”, GW, 141203), and, in addition, Berlusconi’s “incompetence” as a politician, exaggerated self-esteem as a leader, and his stupid jokes are given some importance.

The failure is further trivialized by being referred to as “no disaster” or “catharsis” (GW 141203) which gives “everyone the opportunity to rethink what kind of Union we want”³⁰ (GW 141203). Here, the strategic use of ‘we’ dissolves the guilt, both everyone and no one seems responsible for the failure. Irrespective of the outcome, it is emphasized (as if it is particularly feared) that Poland will maintain relations with Germany as its “strategic partner” [*strategiczny partner*] (GW 131203, a term ascribed to Germany since the beginning of the post-1989 era). Proceedings of the failed Summit are additionally mitigated by the consistent avoidance of war/battle metaphors (cf. press reports from other countries), and, on the contrary, the talks were held “in a very friendly atmosphere” [*w bardzo przyjaznej atmosferze*] (GW 131203). As is suggested (quoting President Kwasniewski), “we are in the united Europe not to fight and die against others, (...) but to unite them to Polish needs and aspirations”³¹ (GW 131203). Although Europe is predicated as “united”, ‘they’ are, quite illogically, juxtaposed with ‘we’, Poland.

Spain — Striving for power?

It should be noted that both newspapers analyzed have a strong focus on the consequences of the Brussels Summit on Spain’s power or *capacity of vetoing* [*capacidad de bloqueo*] within the EU. However, while the social-liberal *El País* seems to take a more neutral stance on Spain’s position, blaming Aznar for isolating Spain within the EU and considering the negative implications for the EU, the conservative *ABC* defends the position of the Spanish government and is mainly worried that Spain will lose the power gained through the Treaty of Nice.

Both newspapers represent the Brussels Summit as a *battle* or even a *war* for the distribution of power between different alliances of member states (EP, 131203). France and Germany are presented as the main alliance in the EU, which uses its power to define the future of Europe. Generally, member states are distinguished according to their power status inside the EU.

By and large, both papers contain many hybrid articles with a strong element of evaluative commentary. The language of commentaries is very vivid, using many adjectives and metaphors.

Spain (and Poland) vs. France and Germany — A power struggle?

In general, it can be argued that the Spanish press constructs a schism of the European Union between France and Germany on the one hand, and Spain, Poland

and the UK on the other, which, apart from the disagreement about the constitution, can also be perceived in other issues like, for example, the Iraq war.

Not maintaining the voting system gained in the Treaty of Nice is interpreted by both newspapers as a decrease in power or *capacity of vetoing* for Spain in the already assumed power hierarchy of the EU. The *ABC* represents the Nice Treaty as “correcting a historical discrimination and bringing Spain closer to the four big countries” [*corregir una discriminación histórica y acercarse a los cuatro grandes*] (*ABC*, 131203). France is also blamed for being inconsistent because it opted for the Nice Treaty in order to avoid a situation where Germany gains more power but later on craves for an alteration. Furthermore, the importance of the Nice Treaty for Spain is explained in great detail, but only in terms of the power being given to Spain and not in terms of its consequences for the functioning of the EU after the enlargement.

Nevertheless, the Convention is evaluated as a positive and very productive process compared to the IGC, with the exception that president Giscard d’Estaing is accused of not having allowed sufficient time for the institutional debate and of defending mainly the interests of France and Germany (*ABC*, 121203). In this respect, some historical resentment can be observed in the shape of personal attacks or mockery against France and Giscard who is depicted as “one of those Frenchmen who said that Africa starts at the Pyrenees” (*ABC*, 121203).

The *ABC* is legitimizing the power struggle by presenting France’s and Germany’s point of view as a selfish position and justifying Spain’s right to defend itself. In this respect, the threat of the net payers of reducing the budget for EU Regional Development Funds is presented as a “threat” [*amenaza*] of the powerful countries and, after the breakdown of the Summit, as a “punishment” [*castigo*] for Aznar’s insolence. Both papers also see a threat to Spain and Europe in “the Europe of the two speeds”.

El País, on the other hand, foresees the dangers of Aznar’s politics for Spain, not so much for the EU, and describes him as isolated. The fact that Poland is on his side does not seem to be of much relevance, because Poland belongs to the new member states.

In the *ABC*, France and Germany are critically depicted as having double standards when acting in Europe and trying to impose their opinion and interests. Often metaphors are used by the Spanish press to represent alliances. France and Germany’s alliance is described in both papers as an unstable “love affair” [*idilio*]. The article “Two teams in front of two groups of audiences” published in *El País* metaphorically compares the Summit with a football game

of the team Paris-Berlin with the founding members as allies against the team Madrid-Warsaw-London, which has an “inferiority complex” but forms “the only possible alliance capable of stopping the French-German roller” [*la única alianza posible capaz de poner coto al rodillo franco-alemán*] (EP, 121203).

However, the power dispute is presented differently in the two papers. Whereas *ABC* interprets the position of the Spanish government as “our position” or uses the pronoun ‘we’ as an equation to Spain, *El País* uses personalization (*Aznar’s politics*, etc.).

The failure of the Summit, search for guilt and consequences for Spain

The two newspapers not only blame Poland and Spain. The EU is presented as being in a big crisis (Iraq, different conceptions of Europe, violation of the Stability Pact, loss of credibility of the Commission) at the time of the Summit, especially in *El País*. Also the general mistrust between institutions, old and new member states, big and small countries, between pro-Americans and Europeanists on security issues that has accumulated for years is mentioned as evidence of the “ice-cold” climate of the Summit (EP, 131203).

Spain and Poland are not represented as equally guilty. Poland is characterized as threatening to put a veto on the constitution and as having a less flexible standpoint, whereas Spain is seen as being capable of two-way conversation and ready to achieve a compromise.

The ‘incompetence’ of Berlusconi and his failure as president is also seen as a crucial reason for the breakdown, especially in view of the fact that at the start of the Summit, both newspapers, when depicting the chances of Spain’s position, mention Berlusconi’s friendship with Aznar as a possible advantage for Spain.

On the other hand, *El País* blames Aznar for “one of Europe’s biggest failures, if not the biggest” [*uno de los más estrepitosos fracasos de su historia, si no el mayor*] and for isolating Spain. He has “saved the furniture — the Nice Treaty — but not the house” [*El presidente español ha salvado los muebles — el Tratado de Niza —, pero no la casa*, EP, 141203]. “Aznar has preserved the weight of Spain in institutional terms but not necessarily his influence and his alliances in the EU. Being the best ally of the US does not mean being the best member state in the EU.”³² The Spanish integration into Europe historically is evaluated as a factor of internal stability, but now Spain has lost the chance to be with the ‘avant-garde’ countries. If the “European bicycle comes to a standstill, not only Europe but also Spain will have a fall” [*Si la bicicleta europea se para, no sólo se puede caer Europa, sino tropezarse España*, EP, 151203].

In both papers the resonance of the breakdown of the Summit in Spain's domestic politics is given a detailed description. The accusations of the opposition against Aznar's politics which has destroyed the pro-European culture that Spain developed in the past are also shared by *El País*: "Spain was in the avant-garde of the pro-European countries and Aznar has removed it from there" [*España estaba en la vanguardia de los europeístas y Aznar la ha sacado de ahí*, EP 141203].

After the failure of the Summit, both papers discuss the letter of the net-payers which is interpreted as a punishment of Spain and Poland for vetoing the constitution. "The war between euros and votes or vice versa has started" [*La guerra de los euros contra los votos, o viceversa, acaba de empezar*, EP, 171203].

Sweden — "A historical failure"

The two Swedish newspapers that were included in this study — *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) and *Svenska Dagbladet* (SvD) — both reported on the breakdown of the Summit with a partly very evaluative style. Even many of the more 'factual' articles included more or less explicit evaluations of the events. Generally, the failure of the Summit was assessed in very negative terms. *DN* called it "The big disappointment" [*den stora besvikelsen*, 141203] as well as a "depressing surprise" [*nedslående överraskning*, *ibid.*] and a "fiasco" (141203: p. A9), while in *SvD* it was labeled a "historical failure" [*ett historiskt misslyckande*, 151203: p. 4]. This appraisal is based on a positive evaluation of the work of the European Convention and a negative assessment of the course of the negotiations at the IGC.

Personalization and personification

Both newspapers rather frequently make use of strategies of personalization and personification for describing and explaining the events at the IGC. According to this perception, the behavior of politicians (personalization), and to a lesser degree the notion of national interests, is central for explaining the events. Consequently, following *DN*, it was a "lack of will to reach an agreement" [*brist på vilja att komma överens*] (DN, 141203) that led to the breakdown of the Summit. The personalization of the events is especially striking in an article in which the failure to agree on an EU constitution is explained by personal animosities between Jacques Chirac and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (SvD, 151203). In *DN*, a similar article can be found in which Jacques Chirac is accused of being responsible for the IGC's breakdown: he talks "beautifully" of

“the foundations and values of Europe”, but actually does not behave in such a way as to promote European integration.

Frequently, countries appear as actors. In many cases in the Swedish media countries are not presented in terms of “fighting for their national interests”, but rather as acting as if they were persons (personification). Accordingly, one can read of France firing a “warning shot” at Poland or of Germany and France who will not accept “being ridden over” (DN, 141203). In this context, *DN* also made ample use of metaphors. On 12th December, p. A12, for example, a “bitter fight for power” was referred to, and it was said that “Germany on her side is persistently fighting, with France giving her rear cover”. France was also labeled Germany’s “carrier of weapons” [*vapendragare*]. Contrary to *DN*, *SvD* hardly made use of metaphoric language.

Moreover, in *SvD* and *DN*, Germany and France are frequently presented as acting together (DN: “the French-German leading duo”). However, the “German-French driving engine” is no longer strong enough to move “the whole Union”. Sometimes Great Britain and Italy are also included in this group. In this context, the notion of ‘big powers’ in contrast to ‘small states’ is sometimes referred to by *DN*. On 12th December 2003, *DN* quoted the Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson who feared “compromises of the big powers” [*stormakt-kompromisser*] who might “pass over the smaller states” [*kan gå ut över mindre länder*]. One day later, it is stated that the “common institutions have decreased in weight and influence” and that this implies “the risk [...] that the machine is taken care of by the heads of governments in the big countries”.³³ In order to achieve a “long-term stable cooperation”, however, a commission “that forcefully secures that the rules that have been agreed upon are observed”³⁴ is required.

Complex contexts

This positive evaluation of a deeper European integration in both newspapers is also phrased in terms of an improved democratic quality of the Union that could have been achieved by the constitution as suggested by the European Convention. For example, in *SvD*, it is labeled “a creation that would have given a more understandable and concise treaty to the ever more EU-skeptic citizens”.³⁵ The Nice Treaty, on the contrary, is said to contain “convoluted and, according to many, unjust rules concerning voting rights” [*snåriga och i många tycke orättvisa röstregler*] (DN 141203). *DN* also pointed out that the Convention “spread the discussion outside the conference room” and triggered a discussion in which “many Europeans participated in a lively manner and with commitment”. Only when the politicians “took over” the project failed.³⁶

Apart from the improved democratic quality that could have been achieved by a European constitution, *SvD* puts special emphasis on economic arguments to explain the importance of a success of the Summit. With reference to the “Lisbon goals”,³⁷ it is stated that “Europe risks falling behind the USA and Asia” (*SvD* 121203). In this context, especially Germany and France — “the villains” [*bovarna*] — are blamed for having infringed the “Stability Pact” by ignoring “the requirement to ‘put money under the mattress’ during the years of decent growth”. By doing so they have “ridden over and humiliated the EU-commission”.³⁸ With this argument, a prehistory to the IGC which stretches back long before the Brussels Summit took place is constructed.

Another way of putting the events into a historical context can be found in *DN*, which often makes references to the Iraq war from early 2003. However, no unequivocal line of argumentation can be discerned. On 14th December 2003, on page two, the notion is put forward that the “atmosphere from the crisis over Iraq last winter” could be seen as a “signal for the present situation” of the “new EU”. However, this statement is mitigated by stating that “European cooperation has already previously gone through many crises”. In another article from the same day (p.9), the fact that “Great Britain, Spain and Poland during the Iraq crisis” worked “together with the USA and against France and Germany” is presented as being “worrying” for Paris and Berlin. According to this argument, the Iraq war is a conflict through which inner-EU power games, which are reflected in the IGC and which are decisive for the future development of the EU, are settled. Generally, France is given a particularly prominent role for the course of the events. In combination with the personalization of the events that were mentioned above, France is blamed for bearing major responsibility for the failure of the Summit. According to *DN*, “the French government” did not want to achieve an EU constitution as it prefers “a model with an inner core that proceeds towards an ever closer cooperation”.³⁹ Thus, France “under Jacques Chirac” turned into the “EU’s big political worry” [*EU:s stora politiska bekymmer*] and into a “threat to the future of the EU” [*ett hot mot EU:s framtid*].

As a consequence of the failure to agree upon an EU constitution, *DN* sees the “menace of an EU of two speeds” [*Nu hotar i stället ett EU i två hastigheter*] (*DN* 141203). Similarly, in *SvD* it is predicted that “Germany, France and the other founding nations” will strengthen their cooperation while “the members who are less willing to integrate will fall behind.”⁴⁰ While this development is not presented as desirable, in both newspapers no opinions are expressed as to whether or not Sweden should be part of the “group of pioneers”.

United Kingdom — Inside or outside of EUrope?

The material analyzed for the UK comes from two quality daily newspapers (Sunday's issues included), i.e. from *The Daily* and *The Sunday Telegraph* (representing conservative views and Euro-scepticism) and *The Guardian / The Observer* (representing liberal and pro-European standpoints). As the division into pro- and anti-European standpoint is clear in the British press, the respective 'strands' are analyzed separately in the British case study.

Between visions of Europe and British pragmatism

In its vision of Europe, *TEL* envisages the split in the European space as being constructed on the basis of support for deeper integration (favored by the 'core', see below) or its demise or uncertainty about it (here, "Britain, Ireland, the Nordics, Spain and the 10 newcomers have grave misgivings" *TEL*, 121203). This 'actual' representation is not elaborated, with the exception of an overtly contentious attitude to the failure, in respect of the Polish-Spanish position at the Summit (see below). However, the clear positioning of Britain as highly skeptical and reluctant towards visions and ideas of a deeper European integration is a typical element of the widely-debated British pragmatism with respect to European integration (cf. Mautner 2000: 188–196).

A broad description of the criticized "concentric vision of Europe" (core-intermediaries-periphery logic) is provided. Within this logic, "Germany, France and Italy" (*TEL*, 121203), also called "the old Carolingian members" or a "pioneer group" (*TEL*, 141203), are contrasted with Poland and Spain, with a more peripheral and passive role ascribed to Poland, i.e. a newcomer to EU politics. Still within the criticized core-periphery logic, the 'intermediate' states are seen to play less significant roles (with Italy given some importance owing to its holding the EU Presidency). Additionally, the main conflict between core and periphery is also given strictly bilateral dimensions, namely using the topos of history: Poland is perceived as never submitting to the dictate of Germany, for historical reasons. The British foreign and domestic politics (with relevance to European Affairs) are given significant attention in *TEL*. Britain, in this very context, is perceived as an ambiguous satellite, which on the one hand "has been encouraging Spain and Poland from the sidelines" (*TEL*, 121203), yet was not explicitly on any of the sides of the conflict. Tony Blair appears here as a key actor, yet his role is made negatively explicit, while the *TEL* uses clear distancing from the British Prime Minister who (unlike other actors) never replaces Britain (nor UK) and British politics, and so on. In a nutshell, the British standpoint in the conflict was negative and unclear, since Blair "made no attempt

to play down the difficulties” and did not live up to his role of (predicated + nominated) “European Union peacemaker” (TEL, 131203). Blair was “at the centre of an EU argument” (TEL, 161203), while his uncertain position made “the core” angry, as Blair was “blamed” (TEL, 141203) by France for not having supported the Franco-German axis in the constitution row.

Surprisingly, like the conservative press, the liberal *GU/OBS* newspapers criticize the core-periphery logic. The EU is seen as differentiated, primarily, between old members and newcomers, with the core being a “fast track alliance of Germany, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg” (OBS, 141203), yet the newspaper distances itself from the ‘core-periphery logic’ by claiming that the “two-tier Europe” is just “a leftover jargon” (GU, 151203). The bilateral, historical and contemporary conflicts of Poland and Germany are given an additional dimension in the discourse; as in the conservative press, the topos of history is evoked (“Warsaw remembers its past so vividly — show Germany we can all be equals now”, GU, 151203), while, also in contemporary emotional terms, both countries are “paranoid” or “intensely worried” (OBS, 141203) about each other. Additionally, the Iraq topos is constantly evoked as forming the background to the struggle between the French-German and Polish-Spanish coalitions (“the wounds left by Baghdad”, GU, 151203). Finally, Germany is ascribed a particularly active role as the gatekeeper of the Constitution, because it not only argues with Poland and Spain, but also “warns” (GU, 131203) them with budgetary punishment if the agreement were to fail. *GU/OBS* position with regard to Tony Blair and the British position at the Summit is far less clear than in the conservative press, and, therefore, the image of Britain-British Politics-Blair (this time used interchangeably) is much more diffuse. Britain’s position after the failure is effectively portrayed with the use of ‘traffic metaphors’ (“Britain languishes not so much in the slow lane as broken down on the hard shoulder”, OBS, 141203), while the failure of the Summit is also presented as helping Blair in the domestic political arena as “it could allow him to defuse the issue, or even delay it until after the likely 2005 general election” (GU, 151203).

The democracy/legitimacy topos is used in various ways throughout the corpus, since the “people” carry the spirit of Europe, or are “believing” (very often) in various shared principles (“their civilizations” notwithstanding, OBS, 141203). This is contrasted with, either overt or latent, yet most commonly negative implicatures on EU politics, politicians and the EU. EU politics are seen as “Brussels hegemony” dipped in “squabbles”, ending up “in haggling at 3 a.m.”, as well as being “hijacked by ideologues” and giving “the impression of an overbearing elite riding roughshod over the people” (metaphors are again

crucial here). EU political elites are trivialized and ironically portrayed as a crippled and inactive group which can become “frustrated by a mere tactical dispute” (GU, 151203). Yet, the trivialization makes it possible to perceive the EU political elites in a far more ironic rather than (as was the case with the conservative press) highly negative way.

European elites and their Constitution

The Summit and the EU constitutional debate are often compared by *TEL* to the US Philadelphia Convention. Within this comparison, the Summit is seen as “founded on the most tangential of questions” (*TEL*, 141203), i.e. over voting weights (and “it is as though the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 had failed because no one could agree on where the signing ceremony should take place”, *TEL*, 141203). EU political elites (irrespective of national origin, although the reference to “pioneer states” or “Franco-German” plans, Blair notwithstanding, is made explicit) are made guilty for the failure of their project, owing to mistakes and blind faith in the ever-tighter European integration. Those elites “have almost forgotten the original declared purposes (...) in their determination to integrate, always and everywhere” (*TEL*, 141203). The elites are further metaphorically compared to “the apparatchiks of the Eastern bloc (...) who kept going because they did not know what else to do” (*TEL*, 141203). The topos of legitimacy and democracy is additionally used, with European elites portrayed as unaware of the fact that “the desire for national democracy” (*TEL*, 141203) could catch them sooner or later. All in all, however, the failure is contextualized as a minor point in the ongoing integration, fuelled by the desires of the aforementioned elites, since “the process goes on” (*TEL*, 141203) and “neither Spanish amour propre, nor German obstreperousness, nor popular opposition, nor (...) one or two ‘no’ votes in referendums will stop it” (*TEL*, 141203).

The British liberal press contextualizes the failure of the Summit in a less dynamic way (i.e. not so vividly as a process), with many more attempts at painting the image of conflicting lines (cf. above) and positions as stable and clashing on the occasion of the Summit. The failure per se is seen as stemming from conflicts which have arisen in the development of European integration (development of positions), and which have an effect on the future of the EU. The failure is portrayed in an ambiguous way, either being trivialized or mitigated (“it will not stop the EU functioning when it expands”, GU, 131203, “Europe can live without the new constitution”, OBS, 141203). The comparison with the Philadelphia Convention is, as in the conservative press, highly rep-

resented in contextualizing the failure. In this respect (“Giscard’s Dada-esque gesture and Jefferson’s simple pragmatism”, OBS, 141203), contrasting of past vs. contemporary political actors is provided, while both constitutions are also compared in terms of their length. Metaphorically, the EU Constitution is an “impenetrable potpourri”, “a hodgepodge”, “soundbite”, or no “great rhetoric” born “during the interminable consultation process”, whilst “Jefferson was working in a tradition of brevity, simplicity and transparency” (OBS, 141203).

4. Cross-section analysis

In what follows we present a cross-section analysis reconstructing a repertoire of representations of EUrope used in the media and summarized in the case studies above.

Reporting from an IGC — General observations

An IGC represents an important and recurrent event in EU politics with a certain dramaturgy: high profile politicians from the member states meet to negotiate crucial changes to the treaties which organize the political life of the Union. The Brussels IGC 2003 had the theme of deciding on the Draft Constitutional Treaty presented by the European Convention which had finished its work in July 2003. These parameters constituted a general theme for the press, as well as the conflict over voting weights in the Council, with France and Germany on the one side, and Poland and Spain on the other. However, many other variables such as the nomination and presentation of these actors, the inclusion of other relevant forces or actors, the historical contextualization and evaluation of the Summit’s efforts, or the causal attribution of its eventual failure and discussion of future scenarios, led to many different representations among the newspapers studied.

Beyond the above mentioned ‘logic’ of the event, common characteristics of the press coverage studied can also be attributed to the structural conditions of reporting from an IGC. All newspapers share these conditions, where information from the Summit itself (taking place behind closed doors) is quite restricted, i.e. coming from press conferences, official communications, news agency reports, information from diplomatic or other insider sources, and interviews. Consequently, (direct or indirect) quotes from these sources are the main means of reporting.

For our analysis, two aspects are important in this context: first, who is included as social actor, and second, how is her/his agency represented and contextualized?

In contrast, the situation after the breakdown of the Summit is much less narrowly circumscribed in terms of scene, theme, relevant actors and issues. Consequently, the newspapers' leeway for defining the situation increases, although it can be noted that key actors like Germany and France still are at the center of the coverage.

Concerning the topics, however, each country has a different horizon of relevance, and thus certain issues are reported exclusively while others are left out. By the same token, in each newspaper agents from domestic politics are represented. Moreover, while key players in EU politics or the main conflict of the Summit are pictured in all the newspapers studied, the occurrence of other social actors is unevenly distributed owing to factors like political salience or closeness of language to the country of origin of the newspaper.

The main repertoire of representing the European political space

Newspapers use, we claim, a limited repertoire for representing the European political space. Some of those representations are suggested by the nature of the event itself and are thus common throughout the data corpus:

- *Europe — the power struggle*: Since the Brussels Summit was ('intergovernmental') negotiations between EU member states, representing the European Union as a space where conflicting interests meet and power struggles dominate was a default option. The main organizing principle of such a representation of Europe is the differential amount of power member states and alliances of states have. However, the degree of personalization of these political powers varies (cf. Straehle et al. 1999), and so does their evaluation and interpretation. Moreover, different metaphors are used in order to refer to the power struggle in Europe (e.g. metaphors of war, sports, gambling).
- *Haggling and squabbling behind the scenes*: From a historical perspective, there is a long tradition of representing gatherings of leading statesmen as theater scenarios of a particular kind. Of course, an IGC, too, lends itself perfectly to reporting from night-long bargaining, from horse-trading and tug-of-war, from intrigues, gamesmanship and bluffs (cf. the Nice Summit!). In this type of report, light is shed on the irrational, emotional, all too human side of the struggle for power. Concerning the Brussels Summit

of December 2003, newspapers produced such reports especially after the breakdown of negotiations, which was thus attributed to politicians' personal idiosyncrasies and particularly to the 'irrational way' of leading the Summit by the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

- *Centrality of actors*: Throughout the corpus, the central protagonists of the Summit — Poland, Spain, Germany, France and Great Britain as the third 'big' member state — constitute givens, while the other member states/politicians are rather represented as commentators of the events, or appear as part of various aggregated actors like 'the small' or the 'supporters of the Iraq war'. Furthermore, Italy is mostly not presented as an interested party, but rather as neutral arbiter and mediator according to its role as holding the Council Presidency.
- *Criticizing the presidency*: After the breakdown of the Summit, however, many newspapers published stories heavily criticizing or ridiculing Silvio Berlusconi's way of leading the Summit (e.g. *Die Presse*, *Der Standard*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the Spanish newspapers).

Irrespective of the Summit itself, a number of other representations of EUrope can be listed, some of which are shared by nearly all the newspapers analyzed, others typical of only one or two of them:

- *Interests and persons*: Within the framework of representing EUrope according to a metaphor of 'struggle', distinctions between interests as impersonal 'forces' and personalized social actors, be it individual politicians or countries, can be observed. The strategy of personalization can moreover be connected with a general critique of intergovernmental negotiations in the EU and a positive evaluation of the 'community method' in general and the Convention in particular (cf. the Swedish case study).
- *Diversity*: Often EUrope is represented by means of drawing a complex landscape of different qualities, interests and groupings of the EU's member states without any overriding organizing principle. This representation might be used to denounce the project of organizing the EU according to one single vision (i.e. the German *FAZ*), or, conversely, it might be used to affirm the need of a constitution (i.e. the German *Süddeutsche*).
- *Topological metaphors*: Imagining EUrope according to topological metaphors — most well-known are the ones of core and periphery and of concentric circles — is widespread and realized in different variations (cf. Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Within this frame of reference, often a leading role of France and Germany is perceived (as an element of the EU's living

constitution) which is either affirmed or discussed critically. The concept of *Kerneuropa* or of a 'Europe with several speeds' is placed in this context, too (cf. the case studies on Austria and Spain).

- *EUrope — the art of conflict resolution*: In some articles, a specifically EU culture of negotiation and of resolving conflicts by particular strategies in a particular institutional setting is identified (for example referred to as the "*cuisine européenne*", LM, 121203). In this respect, accession countries are often characterized as newcomers who still have to 'learn the game'.
- *The topos of Euro-elites*: Especially the British press often portrays 'Brussels' as well as national political elites involved in EU politics as an aggregated group of people sharing certain (negative) characteristics. Compared to what (democratic) politics should be, they are pictured as remote, self-appointed, opaque, bureaucratic, etc.
- *European versus national interests*: Contrasting a (general, universal) European and a (particularistic, egoistic) national interest makes up one of the most common topoi in discourses on the EU. In the French case (in *Le Figaro*), the European interest is also equated with the EU as powerful actor on the global scene.
- *Europe-vision versus Europe-reality*: Doubling the signifier 'Europe' in an ideal and a real component is often used when explaining setbacks in the process of integration and discussing future scenarios. Consequently, articles are often looking for a (real) actor capable of representing and thus materializing a Europe-vision. In the British conservative press, on the other hand, it is Europe-reality that is affirmed while Europe-vision is denounced as undemocratic, abstract and leading nowhere.
- *EUrope as a process*: From its very beginning, European integration has been conceived as a 'project' and a process with an indeterminate future (cf. Abélès 2000; Drulak 2003). In the newspapers studied here, this image is reproduced in various forms and presented with connotations ranging from heroic (the German *Süddeutsche*) via ambivalent (the Austrian *Der Standard*) to negative (the British conservative press). Moreover, often EU member states are categorized as to whether they are more or less 'integrationist'.
- *The Constitution topos*: Most pronouncedly in the German *Süddeutsche*, an EU Constitution is often presented as a value in itself which might be capable of transforming EU politics from a power struggle into a common space of legal rights and justice. As in the Swedish case, this might also be

linked to arguments for more democracy in the European Union and a positive evaluation of the Convention.

The Brussels Summit: What went wrong?

Our second research objective has been to reconstruct how the breakdown of the Summit was discursively interpreted, evaluated and explained, in what historical context it was placed, who was blamed for its failure and what scenarios for the future were proposed. Again, the newspapers studied found quite different answers to these questions depending on two main variables:

1. the way they viewed Europe and the European political space,
2. and their political opinion concerning European integration, on the one hand, and various countries' and politicians behavior at the Summit on the other.⁴¹

Looking at the first of the above-mentioned variables, it can be stated that pro-integration newspapers generally tended to blame individual member states for the failure of the Summit, while newspapers critically evaluating the European project tended to blame 'the system' as such.

The German *Süddeutsche* and the French *Le Figaro*, for instance, clearly condemned Poland for placing national interests over the common European good. *Le Monde* or the Swedish newspapers, on the other hand, rather emphasized the vices of Germany and France in terms of pushing national interests, while for the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the Italian *Corriere della Sera*, every participant of the Summit was equally responsible. At the same time, throughout the coverage studied, a great awareness of a need to avoid looking for scapegoats can be observed and thus apportioning of blame was usually mitigated. — As it seems, the newspapers analyzed tried to respect positions of foreign countries as legitimate and to understand their perspectives instead of adopting a pronounced nationalist standpoint.

The British *Daily Telegraph* is an example for critically evaluating European integration in general and the project of an EU constitution in particular. Here, it was not an individual member state but EU political elites who were made responsible for the failure of the Summit. In a similar way, the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine* was explicitly criticizing attempts to look for individual 'villains', but was rather suggesting that different ways of organizing the highly fragmented European political space would be necessary, for instance along the lines of a 'Europe with several speeds'.

In terms of historically contextualizing the Brussels Summit, the following main strategies of argumentation can be observed:

1. the Summit is another event in the long history of a struggle for power in Europe (e.g. the Italian *Corriere della Sera*, the Austrian *Die Presse*);
2. the Summit should have been the key event in Europe's quest for a Constitution (beginning with the Convention), and thus its failure has to be considered a fiasco of great historical significance (e.g. the Swedish newspapers, the *Süddeutsche*);
3. the Summit reveals certain fundamental cleavages among key EU member states tracing back especially to the Iraq war (e.g. the Spanish newspapers, the French *Le Figaro*);
4. the Summit is another incident in the story of progress and setbacks in the relations of member states which is characteristic for the process of European integration (e.g. the British newspapers, the Austrian *Der Standard*).

Finally, concerning scenarios for the future, most newspapers analyzed appear to be skeptical, since the state of affairs and possible future of Europe are perceived as unclear. None is putting forward a blueprint for success, but articles are rather discussing the pros and cons of certain tendencies (e.g. the 'Europe with several speeds') or highlight the always precarious and difficult character of the European project. Some of the pro-integration newspapers tend to reaffirm their interpretation of Europe-vision by taking the failure of the Summit as an additional motivation to carry on. Others are rather suggesting that one should proceed carefully and not push beyond what can realistically be achieved.

5. Conclusions

Democratic politics is not only an operative process of planning and decision-making, but also involves a representative function of making society visible, readable, and understandable for itself (cf. Rosanvallon 1998). It could be shown that this conception is already implied in Max Weber's analysis of political authority: other than power, authority depends on recognition, that is a belief in its legitimacy. Thus, transcending a purely functional organization of power, political authority rests on 'shared meanings' defining the relations of human beings with each other (for example as citizens of a certain collective, as electorate, as parliamentarians, and so on). In the case of the EU, the funda-

mental questions concerning the political bond are in a state of flux and debate, and (since the 1990s) this debate is reaching out beyond the micro-discourses of experts and becoming a matter of public interest.

For the vast majority of consumers of EU politics, their imaginations and conceptions of the EU are influenced by the reporting of mass media. Consequently, the media practices of representing and making meaning of EU politics are of key importance. The 'repertoire' of discursive representations reconstructed above can be seen as a list of 'public constitutional concepts', that is as 'glasses' through which a wider public is looking at the EUropean political space.

Our condensed discourse analysis illustrates that the press coverage of the EU Summit in various countries differed substantially among others on the level of semantics, thematic structures (e.g. contested issues), and structures of relevance and argumentation (e.g. apportioning of blame). The meanings of EUrope remain unclear and contested (cf. Stråth 2001), and within each country a different EU seems to be represented and different issues are debated. Consequently, the one representation common to all the 15 newspapers studied seems to indeed capture an important characteristic of EUropean political reality, namely the understanding of EUrope as an arena of a power struggle between the member states.

From the perspective of political theory we might add that the European Union is in fact not built according to the modern concept of sovereignty (Hobbes, Rousseau): the members of the European polity do not dissolve into a unitary structure of political authority, but they remain separate political entities of their own right (cf. Duso 2003). Consequently, keeping up the political bond in EUrope seems to involve recognizing and reconciling the diverse political forces, imaginations and desires. In this respect, we might note the absence of scapegoating in the coverage analyzed as a positive element of a specific culture of dealing with the other, which Joseph Weiler, from a legal perspective, has characterized as 'constitutional tolerance'.

Notes

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presented at the conference “POWI ‘04” at the Institute for Advanced Studies (Vienna, May 2004). Insights gathered from the discussion have greatly benefited this article. We would also like to thank the reviewers of the *Journal* for their valuable comments. Finally, special thanks are due to Christiane Prorok who generously translated several articles from Italian newspapers into German and thus made the Italian case-study possible.

1. To enter into force, the Treaty has to be ratified by each of the signatory countries. After negative referenda in France and the Netherlands, the European Council suspended the ratification process at a meeting in June 2005. High turnout rates and intensive public debates preceding the referenda revealed a high political salience of the issue. However, structures of relevance in the debates departed significantly from those at the elite level.

2. From October 2003, a working party of experts from the member states had been negotiating a number of changes to the document which the Convention had drawn up. The final session of the IGC in December was left with a few contested questions concerning core aspects of the EU's balance of power, namely: ways of calculating the qualified majority vote in the Council; extension of the qualified majority vote in the Council; the composition of the European Parliament and of the Commission. In the end, agreement was not reached on the qualified majority vote, and the Italian presidency decided to terminate the Conference.

3. In December 2000, in Nice, the European Council reached an agreement on the revision of the Treaties with a view to adapting the institutions of the Union to enlargement. Three phases were envisaged: a first phase of open debate; a second, more structured phase, the details of which would be determined by the Laeken European Council in December 2001; and, lastly, a new IGC discussing and reaching agreement on Treaty change. One year later, on 15th December 2001, the Laeken European Council set up a Convention which was convening from 28th February 2002 to 10th July 2003 in Brussels. It proposed to integrate the existing structure of multiple treaties into just one consolidated ‘constitutional treaty’.

4. We use the term ‘Europe’ and ‘European’ to highlight the changes brought about in the symbolic order due to the growing geographical and semantic equation of Europe and the EU in the course of ‘widening’ and ‘deepening’ of integration. As it seems, the European Union is projecting a certain idea and image of ‘Europe’ as political ‘we’, which is not only concerning the institutional identity of the EU, but also the meaning of ‘Europeanness’ and the way people think of themselves as ‘Europeans’.

5. Previous research (Wodak and Weiss 2004a, b, c; Weiss 2002; Mokre, Weiss and Bauböck 2002; Wodak and Puntsher-Riekman 2002) has already illustrated that visions of Europe differ strongly according to historical national discourses and *Weltanschauungen*. Thus, the rhetoric of French, British and German politicians, for example, on visions for Europe is very different. The latter focus on organizational aspects, the French on a ‘European project and adventure’, whereas British politicians still have to persuade their audiences that the UK is actually part of Europe. Research on debates in the European Convention (Oberhuber 2005; Krzyzanowski 2005) has underlined that those divergent ideas and visions of Europe cannot easily be overcome. While a ‘discursive intercultural’ common to people from diverse national backgrounds working in the context of EU institutions allows them to cooperate effectively, this does not amount to the abolition of national differences.

6. By the time this article was finished (August 2004), ten countries had declared they would hold a referendum (cf. the overview at http://europa.eu.int/constitution/ratification_en.htm).

7. To be sure, the adoption of the text of a Treaty does not determine the 'living constitution' which depends on its interpretation in political practice and by the European Court of Justice.

8. The concept of 'transcriptivity' has been proposed by Ludwig Jäger, who recently used it for analyzing the relationship of 'discourses of political planning' and 'discourses of public representation' (Jäger 2004).

9. This is a different focus, both in terms of research questions and in terms of methodology, compared with most of the previous studies on 'Europe in the Media' (cf. Kevin 2003) or on the 'European Public Sphere'.

10. In Poland, due to a lack of digital archive resources, only the centrist *Gazeta Wyborcza* has been included.

11. Due to a lack of resources, in the Italian case only a limited number of articles have been translated and analyzed. Thus, we focused on the interpretation of the Summit and the role of the Italian presidency in those articles published after the breakdown of negotiations, exclusively.

12. In a conference paper, Petr Drulák (2003) has distinguished three key 'Metaphors Europe Lives by': the 'equilibrium among containers', 'several containers merging into one', and the metaphor of Europe as a 'flow'. While this abstract analysis addresses the most basic mental images for 'thinking EUrope', the present article stays closer to the empirical data and is attempting to reconstruct a very fine grid of representations of EUrope used in the press (cf. Section 4 below; also Musolf 2004).

13. From a meaning-interpretative standpoint, we can define discourse topics as "the most 'important' or 'summarizing' idea that underlies the meanings of a sequence of sentences in a discourse, (...) a 'gist' or an 'upshot' of such an episode" (van Dijk 1984: 56).

14. "Germany and France" — often presented as aggregated actors — are activated by means of verbs representing concrete activities rather than mere commenting (e.g. *make plans, brace themselves against, bring into play*). Other countries and political representatives, too, are represented as agents, like Great Britain, Poland, and to a lesser degree Spain. Often, quotes from politicians representing these countries are introduced by means of verbs involving a directive illocutionary force (*demand, threaten, insist on*). Conversely, quotes from politicians representing smaller countries are often introduced by merely representative verbs (*say, explain, think, expect that*).

15. Poland and Spain stood up for retaining the regulations on voting rights as set down in the Treaty of Nice, where they had got a very good deal. France and Germany on the other hand advocated the system of 'double majority' which had been proposed by the Convention and which clearly favored the most populated member states, above all Germany.

16. “*Man darf Europa nicht überfordern und muss die Realisierung des Verfassungsprojekts aufschieben*” (DS, 151203).
17. The notion of ‘*Kerneuropa*’ had been pushed by German Foreign Minister Fischer in a speech from 12 May 2000 (http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/ausgabe_archiv?archiv_id=97).
18. “*Das jetzt schon — psychologisch — existierende ‘Europa der verschiedenen Geschwindigkeiten’ wird zum bestimmenden Faktor*” (DS, 151203).
19. “*Europa der zwei Geschwindigkeiten, EU-Avantgarde, Kerneuropa: Schlagworte bestimmen nach dem Scheitern des Verfassungsgipfels in Brüssel die politische Debatte, wohin jetzt die Reise der alten und künftigen Mitgliedsländer gehen soll.*” (DS, lead-in, 151203)
20. “*Pour sortir l’Europe de la crise, il ne suffit pas d’avoir de bonnes idées; encore faut-il être assez patients pour en convaincre nos alliés.*” (LM, 161203)
21. “*Comme la souligné Jacques Chirac, l’histoire de l’Europe est celle de ‘crises surmontées’. Ces crises n’ont pas empêché l’Union européenne de continuer sa progression. Mais chacune en a ralenti le cours en créant entre ses membres un climat de méfiance difficile à effacer.*” (LM, 16103)
22. E.g. characterizing Poland as “*Störenfried*”, Spain as “*statusbewußt*”, Italy as “*Vorsitzender*”, Great Britain as claiming “*red lines*”, the Czech Republic as aiming for compromises, etc...
23. Three articles (reports with strong elements of commentary) from *Corriere della Sera* (all from 141203) and four articles (one commentary, three reports with strong elements of commentary) from *La Stampa* (two from 141203, one from 151203) have been translated and analyzed.
24. With his right-wing ‘*Casa delle Libertà*’ coalition Silvio Berlusconi won the Italian general elections in May 2001 and became Prime Minister. Domestically and internationally, his political style has attracted frequent criticism. Moreover, critics suggested that Berlusconi’s combination of political power and editorial control have endangered freedom of the press in Italy.
25. “*Perché il futuro dei nostri cittadini, la loro sicurezza, i loro interessi e i loro valori non sono ormai più tutelabili nel mondo di oggi e di domani se non nel quadro europeo.*” (LS, 151203)
26. “*Al termine di un semestre sfortunato, questo è il premio di consolazione che ci tocca*” (CDS, 141203).
27. “*Polska i Hiszpania, a także Wielka Brytania nie znalazły wspólnego języka z Francją i Niemcami*” (GW, 141203).
28. “*Będzie lepsze od morderczych negocjacji, obrzucania się błotem i w końcu złego kompromisu*” (GW, 131203).

29. "Nie bacząc na trudności osobiste przedstawiał nasze racje" (GW 131203).
30. "Daje to wszystkim okazję do lepszego przemyślenia, jakiej Unii chcemy" (GW 141203).
31. "Jesteśmy w zjednoczonej Europie nie po to, aby walczyć (...) ale, żeby zjednywać ich do polskich potrzeb i aspiracji" (GW 131203).
32. "Aznar ha preservado el 'peso de España' en términos institucionales, pero no necesariamente su influencia ni sus alianzas . Ser el mejor aliado de EE UU no le convierte necesariamente en el mejor socio europeo." (EP, 141203)
33. "De gemensamma institutionerna har minskat i tyngd och inflytande. [...] Risken med denna ordning är att maskinen tas om hand av regeringscheferna i de stora länderna." (DN, 131203)
34. "Men för det långsiktigt hållbara arbetet behöver de en kommission som med kraft kann hålla på de regler man kommit överens om." (ibid.)
35. "En kreation som skulle ha givit de alltmr EU-skeptiska medborgarna ett mer begripligt och överskådligt fördrag." (SvD 151203)
36. "Det konvent som utarbetade författningsförslaget spred diskussionen också utanför förhandlingsrummen i Bryssel. [...] många européer deltog med liv och lust i diskussionen om Europas framtid [...]. Så tar politikerna över — och så blir det inget av." (DN 141203)
37. At the special meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, the strategic goal was set of becoming the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world. (cf. <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.asp?BID=76&DID=60917&from=&LANG=1>)
38. "Bovarna i det här dramat är de två stora ekonomierna Tyskland och Frankrike, som nonchalerat kravet på att 'samla i ladorna' under de hyggliga tillväxtåren 1998–2000 [...] EU-kommissionen [...] har körts över och förnedrats." (SvD 121203)
39. "[...] en modell med en inre kärna som går vidare i ett allt tätare samarbete, det är inte en otålig europés andrahandsalternativ, det är så den franska regeringen i själva verket vill ha det." (DN 151203)
40. "Tyskland, Frankrike och de andra grundarnationerna kommer att förstärka samarbetet inom allt fler områden — och de mindre integrationsvilliga medlemmarna kommer att halka efter." (SvD 151203)
41. In some countries, the newspapers studied defended opposite positions on a certain issue (like in a real dialogue), e.g.: for or against Aznar's strategy at the Summit (Spain), positively or negatively evaluating Berlusconi's role (Italy), favoring a Constitution for the EU or not (Germany). Consequently, the question of who was to blame for the failure of the Summit was answered differently in those cases.

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