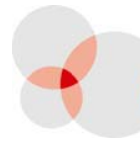




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Is There a European Identity?

A time series analysis of public communication in Europe from 1951 to 2005.

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Abstract

Is there a European Identity?

A time series analysis of public communication in Europe from 1951 to 2005.

Jens Lucht, David Tréfas

European citizens do not seem to approve of Europeanization, as indicated by the rejection of the EU Constitution in France and the Netherlands in the referenda of 2005. Hence, Europe is said to lack democracy, a public sphere and an identity, while the EU accumulates more and more political power. This article will discuss the interrelation of democracy, the public sphere and identity, especially focusing on the latter two. In a time series analysis from 1951 to 2005, six European media arenas were analysed and compared diachronically and synchronically. It is argued that for the purpose of wider European integration – especially after the enlargement phase of 2004 – a European shared belief in common traits (“Gemeinsamkeitsglauben”; Max Weber) is crucial. The results of the analysis of the 1950s and 60s are staggering: Europe has no importance as a transnational reference in the preponderant bipolarity of the Cold War. However, the analysis of recent communication events shows that in public communication Europe is becoming more and more recognised as an important reference and a political actor.

Keywords: Europe, Public Sphere, Identity, European Public Sphere, European Identity, Transnationalisation, Media, medial Public Sphere

1 Introduction

The European integration process has ground to a halt. As the voting behaviour patterns of the French and Dutch electorates in the referenda on the draft European constitution in 2005 showed, some sections of the European population, at least, are no longer prepared to accept the EU as an elite project with limited democratic legitimation. For a long time, this elite project worked through “permissive consensus”, that is as an organisation legitimised solely by its output¹.

However, as soon as burdens and redistribution are anticipated on a larger scale, as was the case, for example, in the 2004 enlargement, it emerges that there are apparently few loyalty dispositions or ‘shared beliefs in common traits’ (“*Gemeinsamkeitsglauben*” – Max Weber) in relation to the EU, and these characteristics remain strictly limited to the nation state. If European integration is also to be successful in structuring its constitution in particular, then a European identity must be formed, since a common democratic society necessarily requires identity dispositions which enable the acceptance of decisions on the part of the overruled minority of the electorate. This *Gemeinsamkeitsglauben* can only come about within a public sphere regarded as generally accessible by the entire electorate. We derive this understanding from the emergence of modern national societies: the creation of national public spheres, the cultivation of nationally constituted spaces of political validity and the constitution of national collective identities are closely interconnected and mutually dependent.² We are thus dealing with a concept of the identity of modern Europe, which is created communicatively and is directly derived from the principle of the public sphere of the Enlightenment. In this light, it is clear that the (previous) combination of the principle of the public sphere with the nation state boundaries of political decision-making is the cause of the deficit of a European public sphere, democracy and identity, following the transnational relocation of political decision-making processes³.

This development has far-reaching consequences: should the stabilisation of this reallocation of power by means of democratic participation fail in the long term, it will increase the development contingency of the European unification process and make the development of a common economic, social, security and foreign policy as set out in the Maastricht Treaty more difficult, if

¹ Habermas: “To date, the project has legitimised itself solely through its outcomes.” 2001

² Imhof 2002

³ Eder 2000, 2003; Eder/Hellmann/Trenz 1998; Gerhards 1993, 2000, 2002; Grimm 1993; Imhof 2002, Project submission; Kantner 2003, 2004; Peters 1999, Risse/van de Steeg 2003; Trenz

not impossible.

2 Theoretical Basis

2.1 Literature Review

These developments and the accompanying issues and insecurities have prompted a veritable flood of research literature on the subject complexes of transnational/European public spheres and collective/European identity since the early 1990s, as outlined in brief below.

(For a detailed literature review, cf. Paper I, Florence, Sept. 05)

a) European Public Sphere

The existing literature on the European public sphere can be roughly divided into two lines of research. The sociologist Jürgen Gerhards, whose approach is close to that of several political scientists such as Grimm and Kielmannsegg, has developed a representative-liberal model of the public sphere, separating himself from the deliberative model. The normative claims that this model of the public sphere has to fulfil are minor; essentially, one main requirement must be met: the creation of transparency for political and societal processes. The intermediary system of the public sphere has to portray all players and opinions; on principle it must grant openness and free access for all. It is only the mutual observation / monitoring of citizens, political figures and other societal groups as a mirror of the public sphere that guarantees the democratic requirement for supervision, information transmission and opinion-forming.⁴ According to Gerhards and other representatives of this strand of research, this requirement is not fulfilled on a European level. Subjects relating to the EU, they claim, are not granted sufficient space in public communication and thus have no particular significance for the people of Europe⁵, which appears to be an extreme problem in the light of the considerable transfer of nation state competences to the transnational, European level: the public sphere – or rather the public spheres – are lagging behind the deconstruction of political borders.

Gerhards suggests two models for rectifying this deficit, the first being the idea of a pan-European mass-medial public sphere. He describes this as a homogenous media system, “the

⁴ Gerhards 1993, 2000, 2002

⁵ Grimm 1995; Kielmannsegg 1996; Scharpf 1999

content of which is distributed in various European countries and received by the people of the various countries.”⁶

His second suggestion is the empirically and theoretically more likely model of a “Europeanisation” of the nation state public spheres.⁷ Gerhards emphasises the political-institutional side of the equation and regards a democratisation of the EU as essential, as the general public is only interested in matters they can also decide on and the political system is only interested in the public sphere when the public has a potential for making sanctions. A European public sphere would then, according to Gerhards, come about “inevitably”.⁸ However, even in the event of a “top-down” democratisation of the EU, he sees few opportunities for the formation of a European public sphere, not least with regard to the many languages spoken.⁹ Kriesi, in contrast, provides an impressive example, in the case of Switzerland, that a media system differentiated along linguistic lines is capable of overcoming not only language barriers but also the firmly established federal structures of the Swiss state, and of constituting a national public sphere, should the relevancy of the issue require such broad scope.¹⁰

In contrast to the above strand of research, Klaus Eder and his colleagues have developed a model of a democratic public sphere with the aim of fulfilling the highly conditional criteria of a deliberative public sphere as proposed by Dewey, Habermas and Peters.¹¹ Despite the normative descent from Gerhards’ approach, Eder comes to the conclusion: “Europe thus produces a diversity of political public spheres in the course of legal-institutional innovations,”¹² a view to which Thomas Risse and Marianne van de Steeg also adhere.¹³ Eder et al. take a model of the public sphere as their basis with a significantly more demanding normative aspect than Gerhards,

⁶ Gerhards 1993

⁷ Ibid.: Gerhards 1993: “A Europeanisation of the national public spheres should be understood as, firstly, coverage of European subjects in the respective national media, and secondly the evaluation of these subjects from a European, non-nation state perspective.”

⁸ Gerhards 1993, 2002

⁹ Kielmannsegg 1996: “Europe is not a communication community, as Europe is a multilingual continent – the most banal fact is simultaneously the most elementary.”

¹⁰ Kriesi 1992. Neidhardt/Koopmans/Pfetsch (2000) adopt a similar perspective, taking Switzerland precisely because of its cultural heterogeneity as a historically comparative case to study the development conditions of the transnational public sphere.

¹¹ Eder 2000, 2003; Eder/Hellmann/Trenz 1998; Kantner 2003, 2004; Trenz 2002.

¹² Eder 2003

¹³ Risse 2002; Risse/van de Steeg 2003

that is a discourse-theoretical concept of the public sphere focusing on (political) conflict. Dissent is taken as an indicator of a transnational public communication process. Accordingly, they look to Habermas for inspiration, adhering to the formula whereby it is decisive whether the same themes are communicated “in an anonymous mass audience at the same time under the same aspects of relevancy,”¹⁴ thus whether “processes of opinion-forming and resolution-building about controversial themes come into play in this anonymous mass audience.”¹⁵

Thus we can see that the basic problems underlying research into the European public sphere and the accompanying controversies are rooted in the theoretical locus and the various requirements of the public sphere: differing theoretical models lead to different empirical indicators and thus also to different empirical data. Tobler quite rightly refers to a methodological Babylon in this context.¹⁶ Therefore, there are two indispensable steps to any meaningful study of the European public sphere: Firstly, scholars must explicitly state which model of the public sphere they intend to use and then operationalize this model in a meaningful way. Secondly, time series studies of the various national media arenas are urgently required, as all previous research studies on the subject of the European public sphere have worked on an insufficient empirical basis.

¹⁴ Habermas 1996

¹⁵ Eder/Kantner 2000

¹⁶ Tobler 2005

b) Collective/European Identity

Parallel to the question of a European public sphere, sociological and historical research has increasingly focused on transnational identity positions since the 1990s. At the very latest since the work of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Liah Greenfeld, it has been well known that the imaginations of national communities are closely linked with the constitution of modern societies. However, the question of whether an identity is being, or can ever be, formed on a European level is controversial. For example, comparisons between the European and the various nation state projects repeatedly emphasise the claim that Europe suffers from a “myth deficit” or a shared view of history.¹⁷ In contrast to nations or other collectives such as religious communities, scholars state that the European community does not possess any significant ritual constructions of collective identity, or any ritual remembrance.¹⁸ Others maintain that Europe is defined less by its history than by its present,¹⁹ or that European identity fundamentally differs from nation state projects in many respects.²⁰ Whereas myths of the nation state are often based on victories, some point out that the European identity is founded on the experience of a (World) War. There has been a growing realisation that nation state and supranational identities are not only not mutually exclusive, but can in fact be regarded as interwoven processes.²¹

Those scholars who do not exclude the formation of a European identity in advance due to a “myth deficit” are generally agreed that the European identity is primarily borne by elites or intellectuals. It is thus no great surprise that studies on elite discourses, from which historical-sociological work on national identities appears to have distanced itself, are still en vogue for the discourse on European identity. Europe is said to exist as an overarching cultural community of the Christian faith, artistic styles, Humanism, the Enlightenment, as a community borne by intellectuals, by monks, scholars and artists and founded on international exchange and communication.²² To this extent, there are a number of analogies and direct references to the emergence of national collective identities. Eric Hobsbawm unmasked the nation states at an

¹⁷ Schmale 1997

¹⁸ Giesen 1999, p.135

¹⁹ Kreis 2004, p. 131

²⁰ Kaelble 1999

²¹ Münch 1999, p. 226

early point as elite projects, which were generally in existence before any emotional involvement on the part of the general population. Taking this view, common traits such as language, tradition, geography etc. are revealed as constructions.²³ Eder and Imhof emphasise that the constructions of joint images of history and thus of communality can only be transported and thereby take effect in public communication.²⁴ No abstract narrative code, which stabilises a community in the constraints of a nation state and allows the distinction of an “us” and “them”, exists in the transnational space per se. However, Eder, Risse, van de Steeg, Kantner and Trenz raise the objection that this collective identity necessary for loyalty dispositions may be communicatively created in a reasoning public sphere. The feeling of community is temporalised by the lack of a foundational myth, an integrative “us” is newly constructed in a constant communicative process.²⁵ This is seen as the locus of the causal nexus between the genesis of a European public sphere and the genesis of a European identity.

Despite these direct tangents between the public sphere and identity, social science research into the European public sphere and historiographical studies on European identity are still mainly unrelated. One main objective of the project section “European public sphere and identity” is to connect these two research strands in order to effectively describe and study the problems outlined above. The aim is to pose and to answer essential questions on the relationship between the European public sphere and European identity, for example the contentious question of whether a European public sphere is at all possible beyond the bounds of the nation state²⁶ and what form this public sphere would have to take in order to fulfil the normative expectations invested in it. Subsequently, there is a need to investigate whether there are initial indications for transnational public communication and to what extent this communication entails the formation of an identity existing above national identities and implies a “minimum” of European *Gemeinsamkeitsglauben* and thus sufficient loyalty dispositions, in order to legitimise majority decisions. The fact that these questions have not been answered to a satisfactory extent to date is

²² Giesen 1999, p. 137

²³ Hobsbawm 2005

²⁴ Eder 2003; Imhof 2002.

²⁵ Eder 2000, 2003; Eder/Hellmann/Trenz 1998; Kantner 2003, 2004; Trenz 2002; Risse 2002; Risse/van de Steeg 2003

²⁶ Grimm 1995; Kielmannsegg 1996; Scharpf 1999

due to a lack of interdisciplinary cooperation, insufficient embedding in social theory, and mainly to the extremely poor status of empirical analysis in the form of time series studies.

2.2 Arena-theoretical Model of the Public Sphere

We hope to tackle these research desiderata on the basis of the arena-theoretical model of public communication, which is based on the theory of social change.²⁷ This theoretical model is, firstly, well embedded in a social theory horizon capable of incorporating the nexus between the public sphere and identity, and secondly, this model does not, like the theories of the public sphere derived from political theory, work on the assumption of an integrated demos.

The starting point for this model is the observation that social change in modern societies finds its catalyst in public communication²⁸. Public communication can be recognised directly as a creative force towards history and identity, in periods in which it itself undergoes radical change. Never do so many individuals communicate on the same subject in comparable intensity as in periods in which the existing societal order undergoes fundamental debate.²⁹

The process of opening and closure of the boundaries of political validity and the political public sphere are made manifest in the discontinuous resonance and relevance of these periods of crisis, in the form of semantics of difference and references to problems with regard to the diverse environments of the general public as an audience. In the course of these processes, the boundaries of the political public sphere are literally broken down by new players, subjects and foci of attention, which can then in turn lead to an internal or external extension or closure of the boundaries of political validity.³⁰ In this light, analyses of the public sphere and identity must focus on conflict-induced consolidations of communication from a diachronic point of view.

The public sphere can be modelled as a communication network or as arenas, differentiated in a functional, segmentary and stratificatory manner and interconnected via never-ending waves of communication events.³¹ If and when communication events simultaneously create a resonance in the various arenas of the public sphere, these are generally events of societal relevance, which

²⁷ Imhof/Schulz 1998; Wessler 2004; Imhof 2005

²⁸ Imhof/Schulz 1998

²⁹ Imhof 2005

³⁰ Imhof 2002

indicate crisis or conflict situations.³²

The mass media are of key significance for the creation of such communication events: they are the only permanent locus of public discourse and allow a continuous observation of society and its partial systems.³³ The leading media of the political public sphere³⁴ play a central role, as leading media are quick to take up discourses from other arenas of the public sphere, and combine communication events that can be observed by mass media, which can trigger subsequent communication in these and other arenas, particularly on the various levels of the arenas of the political system.

3 Methodology

3.1 Operationalization

The aim of operationalizing the theoretical approach for empirical research is to find indicators for measuring the existence and the extent of a transnationalisation of the public sphere and identity. The findings of public sphere analysis in the national sector are very useful in this respect. As a national communication sphere is structured into segmentary arenas of the public sphere as a whole, one can only refer to a nationally integrated public sphere if the social construction of a common identity includes the various public spheres, beyond the boundaries of social milieus, in a national community perceived as a single unit.³⁵ To extend this idea to the transnational sector, a European public sphere must be rooted in a transnational community of communication in possession of common European identity traits above and beyond the national semantics of difference.³⁶

From the study of national public communication, we know that there are two prerequisites for semantics of difference and identity references: Firstly, the medium must feel itself affected in the first place, as otherwise the role of the neutral, uninvolved correspondent is taken on and no

³¹ Imhof 2005; Wessler 2004

³² Imhof 2005

³³ Marcinkowski 2002

³⁴ In contrast to secondary media, niche media, human interest media or media of autonomous public spheres, mass media with a broad reach are referred to as the leading media of a society. Leading media observe each other and make explicit reference to each other and are used by a broad and general public and by the functional elites of a society. Due to their social prestige, leading media have a high power of definition and are essential for the institutionalisation of communication events observed across the whole of society.

³⁵ Tobler 2005

identificative references arise. This concern arises through a perceived threat. In this case, statements are made with claims to validity, which are frequently related to a common “us”-entity. The question of the perceived threat leads to the underlying issue for this study, as to which object or basic value is regarded as under threat, which values are thus decisive for the constitution of a collective identity for Europe. Thus, our first step was to produce a catalogue of values, sourced firstly from the inductive assessment of the communication events and secondly from the current Fundamental Values of the EU. This values catalogue outlines the dimensions of the essential European identity formed over the decades. Behind this construction lies the understanding that public communication containing semantics of identity is inflamed by imagined or actual threats to these identity-forming values.

Secondly, but closely linked to the above, “the other” or even “the enemy” must be perceived, from which the threat generally emanates. A further conclusion drawn from the analysis of national public spheres and already confirmed by our initial inductive assessments is that communication with identity references is only partly characterised by “us”-references, but in the main part by “them”-references to the other. The ultimate decisive factor for our research is how “us” and “the other” are typified. The typifications relate to the aforementioned values catalogue in positive or negative values. The operationalization of the theoretical premises and the corresponding empirical research instructions are described in the project codebook.

Finally, the temporal locus is decisive for any form of collective identity. The references to common pasts and to common aims and objectives or the preparation for future threats add a temporal dimension to the spatial dimension. Measuring the temporal references also allows us to relate individual key communication events at different times to one another.

3.2 Research Design

Within the logic of the research design, these considerations lead to a selection of key communication events, which can be compared synchronously and diachronically by means of the aforementioned indicators and the semantics of identity. Such a time series analysis necessarily refers to both key communication events of European relevancy and to such events whose thematic structure is strongly characterised by semantics of difference. One type of event

³⁶ Neidhardt / Koopmans / Pfetsch 2000

that fulfils these conditions is war communication events,³⁷ as war reporting has been one of the central forms of reporting since the rise of the mass media. Aside from this, war reporting takes place under the conditions of transfer of political tensions from the directly combative protagonists into the political debate of societies not directly involved in the war itself, and the intensive moral loading of war reporting leads to marked semantics of difference and thus to identificative references.³⁸ Secondly, key institutional events also fulfil the above requirements, such as the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the issue of Turkey's possible entry into the EU or the (failed) referenda on the European constitution in 2005 and the subsequent debate on societal models.

Accordingly, our research project involves the diachronic and synchronous study of war communication events and key institutional events in the leading media arena of various European countries, with regard to the inherent semantics of identity from the 1950s to the present day. The study focuses on the analysis of reflexive articles (leaders, commentaries).

We are currently analysing two leading media in each of five different media arenas:

Switzerland: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Tagesanzeiger;

Germany: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung;

France: Le Figaro, Le Monde;

Austria: Arbeiterzeitung/der Standard (only one medium to date / planned: Die Presse);

Hungary: Magyar Nemzet, Népszabadság.

We will also be assessing the British arena with the leading media The Guardian and The Times in future.

The following communication events have been studied to date:

Hungarian Uprising 1956, Founding of the EEC 1957, Sputnik shock 1957, building of the Berlin Wall 1961, constitutional referendum F/NL 2005.

In the further course of the project, the following communication events will also be assessed: founding of the ECSC 1951, Suez crisis 1956/57, Cuban crisis 1962, Prague Spring 1968, attack on Israel/Yom Kippur War 1973, EC expansion 1973, Gulf War I: Iran vs. Iraq 1980, Falklands War 1982, Single European Act (Common Market) 1985, Gulf War II 1990/91, Maastricht Treaty 1992, Bosnia 1994/95, Kosovo 1998, Nice summit 2000, Gulf War III 2003, EU

³⁷ Imhof 1993; Eisenegger 2003

³⁸ Imhof/Schulz 1995

expansion 2004, discussion of Turkey's possible EU membership 2004.

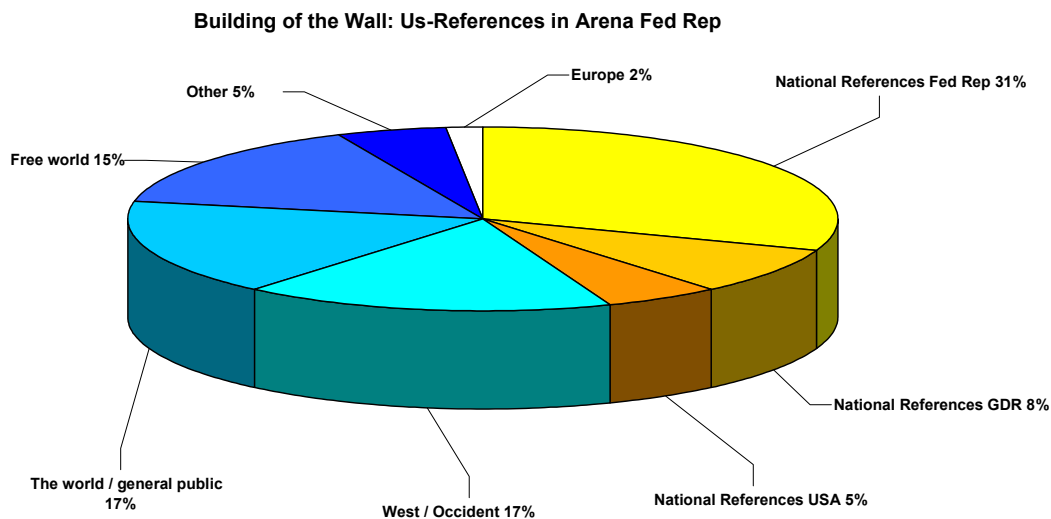
4 Results

4.1 Building of the Wall, 1961

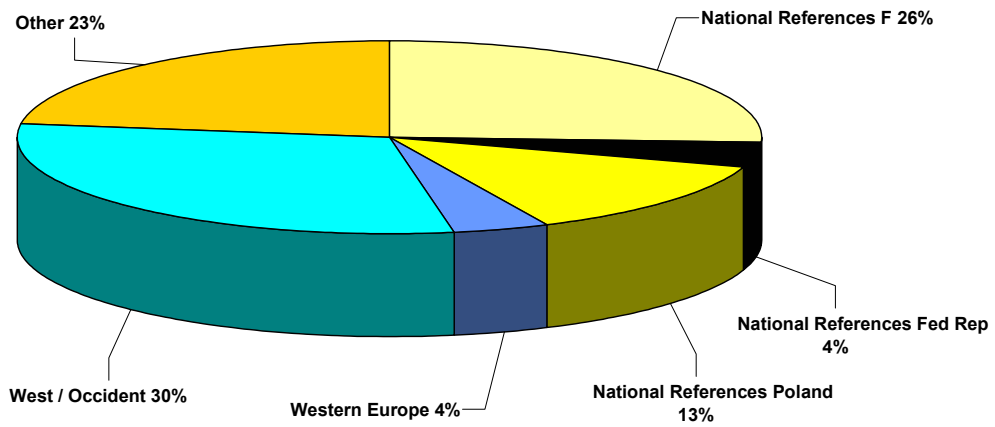
At this point we will present the analysis of the communication event “Building of the Wall,” in 1961, which is exemplary of the four other communication events surveyed up to now. The arenas Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, and Hungary were surveyed from 1 August to 30 October, 1961. A total of 182 articles were surveyed.

The set of data is broken down into the following headings: “us” – references; relationship of distance and empathy to “them” – references; perception of threat; threatened subjects and temporal references.

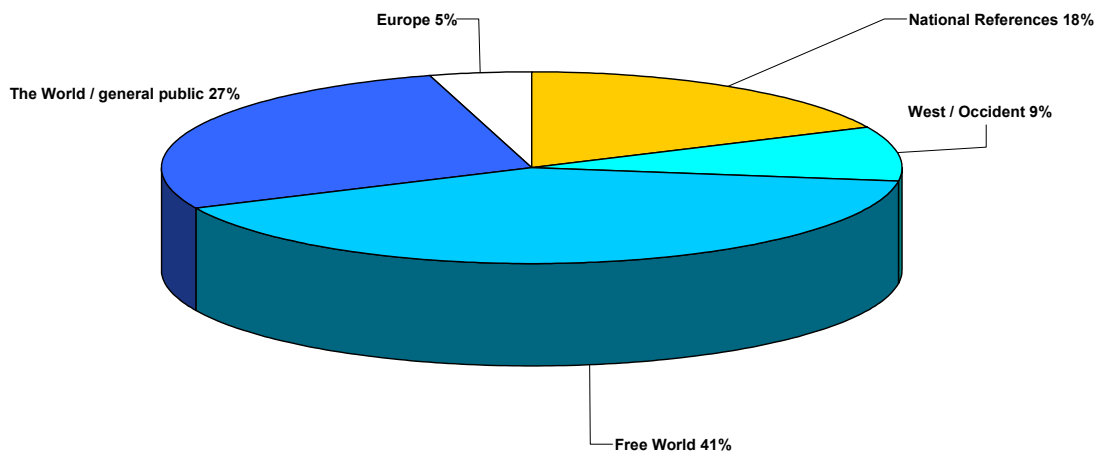
Us-References

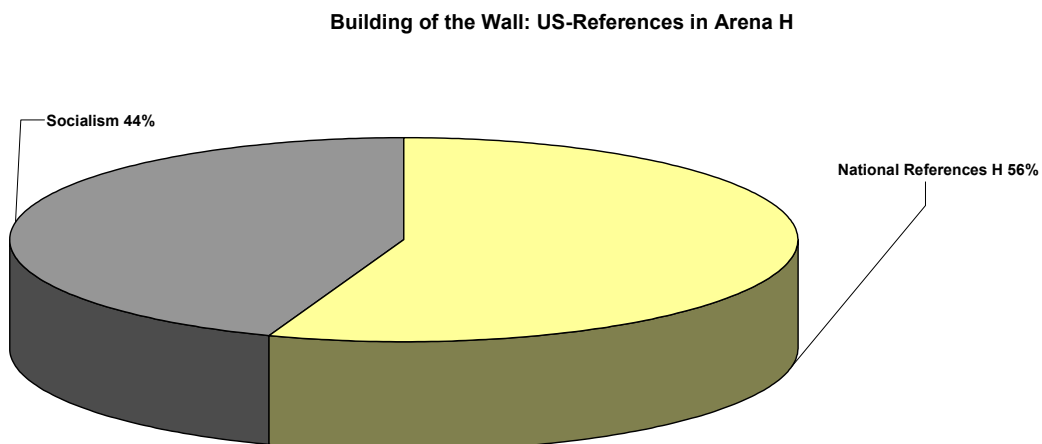
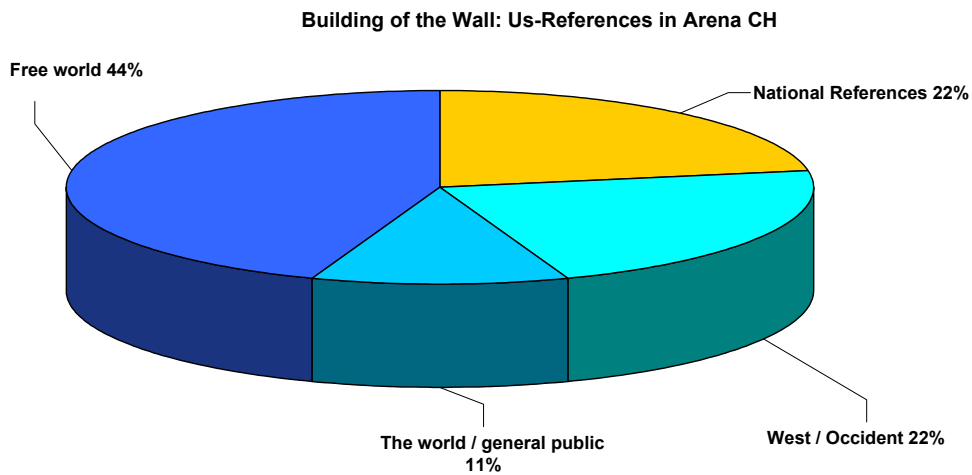


Building of the Wall: Us-References in Arena F



Building of the Wall: Us-References in Arena Aus





Description:

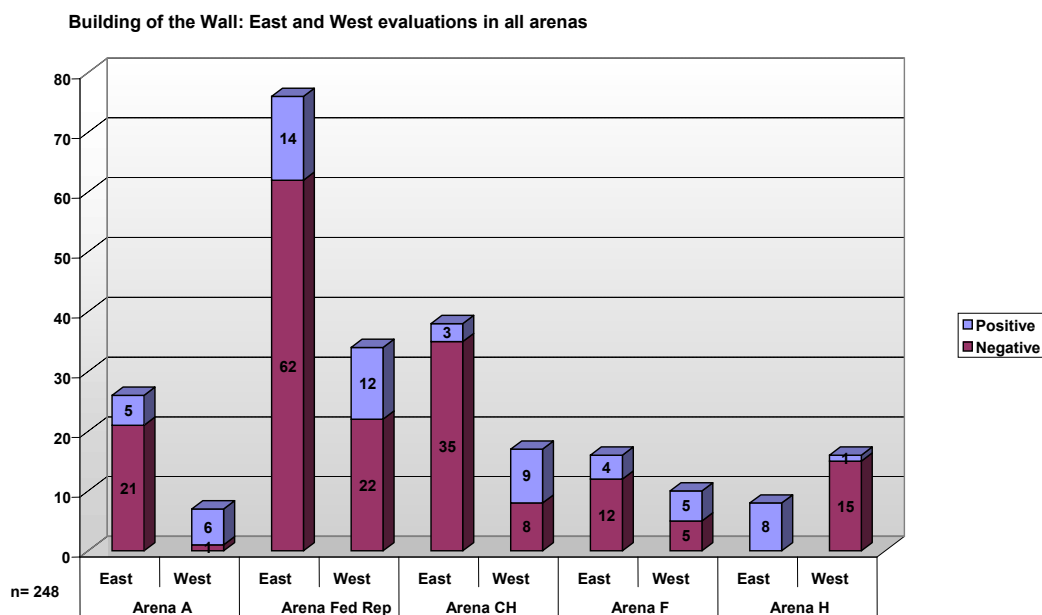
In the arena of the Federal Republic of Germany the national references are especially pronounced. Even stronger are the international us-references “the West,” “world,” and “free world.” The reference “Europe” is minute here.

The arena France also has a high number of us-references, whereby the national and international references more or less balance each other out. In the arena Austria international references predominate, while in Switzerland hardly any national references are present. In the arena Hungary the national and international references are evenly balanced.

Hypothesis:

The media in Germany was primarily interested in the building of the Wall. The high number of us-references in the arena Germany can be explained by this. As an occupying power, France, too, was directly involved. The low number of us-references in the arenas Switzerland, Austria, and Hungary attests to the low level of concern. It is particularly striking with Switzerland, that in comparison to the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, that hardly any national references appear (at that time the national references weighed in with 57%). The building of the Wall is likely understood as a foreign event without direct reference to Switzerland. The arena Hungary pulls itself in line with the interests of socialism, where five years after the Uprising there was still cause for reflection about its own role in this conflict.

Relationship of Distance and Empathy in Them-References



Description:

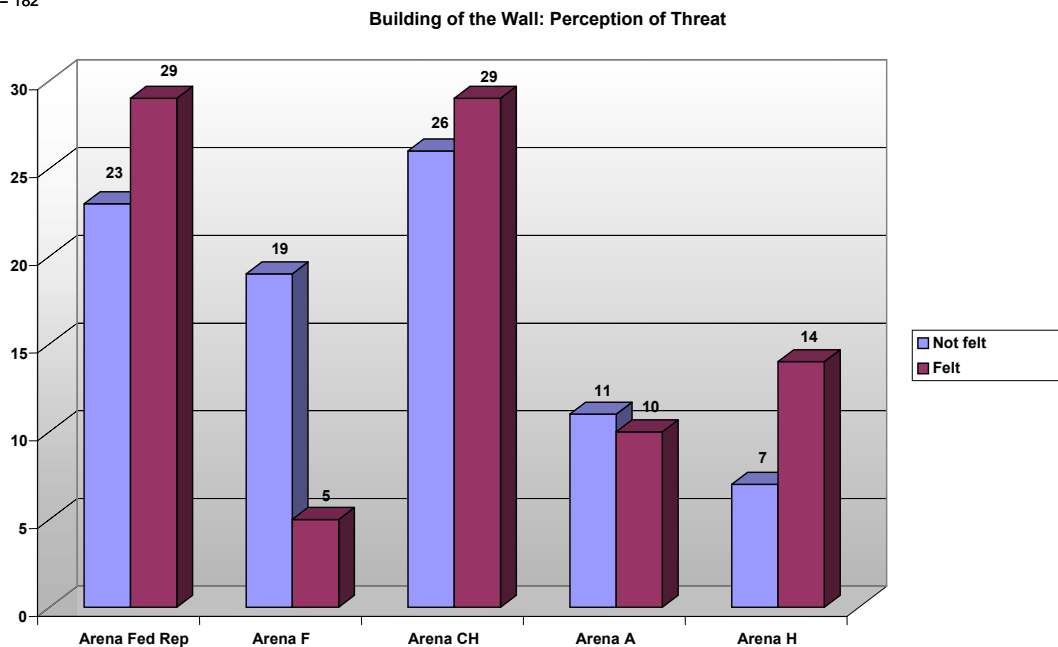
The diagram shows the empathy and distance value in reference to the East and the West, divided into arenas. The category “the East” takes in all Eastern European players, like the USSR or East Berlin, while the category “the West” takes in all references to the western or “free” world. The arenas of both the neutral countries, Austria and Switzerland, prove to be the biggest supporters of the West, while viewing the East very negatively. In the arena of the Fed Rep the East is clearly more negatively judged as the West, though the West, too, is viewed negatively. The arena France has a split opinion of the West, while it too clearly views the East negatively. Only in the arena Hungary does one find the contrary picture: the East is rated purely positively and the West almost only negatively.

Hypothesis:

The division of the world is clearly discernable from this diagram. While the western arenas make references to the East more strongly and criticise it accordingly, in Hungary one sees the opposite picture. The biggest rejection of the East is to be seen in the Fed Rep arena, because the conflict has taken place there on their own soil. The high bar, which attests to the type-casting of the East, correlates with the distinct perception of threat.

Perception of Threat

n = 182



Description:

The building of the Wall evoked in almost all arenas a higher perception of threat, in particular in the Fed Rep and Switzerland in the West and in Hungary in the East. In Austria, too, a heightened perception of threat is to be seen, while in the arena France it is striking that a threat is hardly perceptible.

Hypothesis:

The arena Fed Rep sees itself clearly threatened by the building of the Wall, as the conflict takes place in that country. The arena Switzerland sees the threat less as one posed to that nation in particular, but rather one to the free world or the West. The position of Austria is similar. In the arena Hungary, the Western powers are seen as a threat, above all the “West German revanchists.”

Threatened Subjects

	Arena Fed Rep	Arena F	Arena CH	Arena A	Arena H
Willingness for Peace	11	2	19	4	14
Freedom / Self-determination	9		10	3	
Preparedness to Defend Oneself / Military	6		2	1	1
Existence	5	2			
Morals	5			1	
Respect			5		

Description:

In the arena Fed Rep one sees a very broad diversification of the perception of threat, which is unequalled in all other arenas. In Switzerland the main concern is clearly ensuring peace, as it also is in Hungary. Austria and France, with fewer case entries, have a broader array of perceptions of threat.

Hypothesis:

The arena Fed Rep sees the threat corresponding to a large array of values, whereby it is clear that it feels itself most affected. In Switzerland moral concerns prevail in view of the actions of the USSR and GDR. It is apparent that in all arenas “willingness for peace” is most strongly viewed as being threatened – in the West and East alike.

Temporal References

Rang	Issue	Entries
1	World War II	47
2	17th June 1953 (Worker Uprising GDR)	10
3	Berlin-Ultimatum 1958	8
4	Hungarian Uprising 1956	7
5	Uncertain future	6
6	Yalta Conference 1945 (future of a conquered Germany)	6
7	World War I	5
8	Potsdam Conference (August 1945)	5
9	Munich 1938 (Annexation of Sudetenland)	5

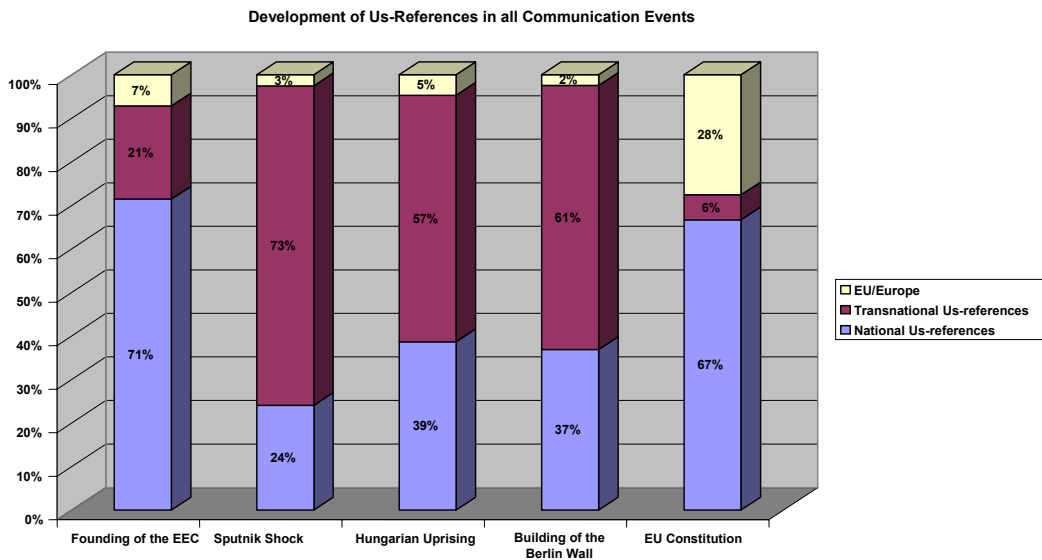
Description:

Temporal references to World War II are clearly visible: 63 of the 107 total references refer to this event (8 references were not considered due to low data count). Seventeen references pertain to the uprisings in the Eastern Bloc.

Hypothesis: The Berlin crisis was seen in all arenas as the result of the post-war order, which the references to the conferences in Yalta and Potsdam suggest above all else.

4.2 Selected Findings in Diachronic Comparison

Development of Us-References in All Communication Events



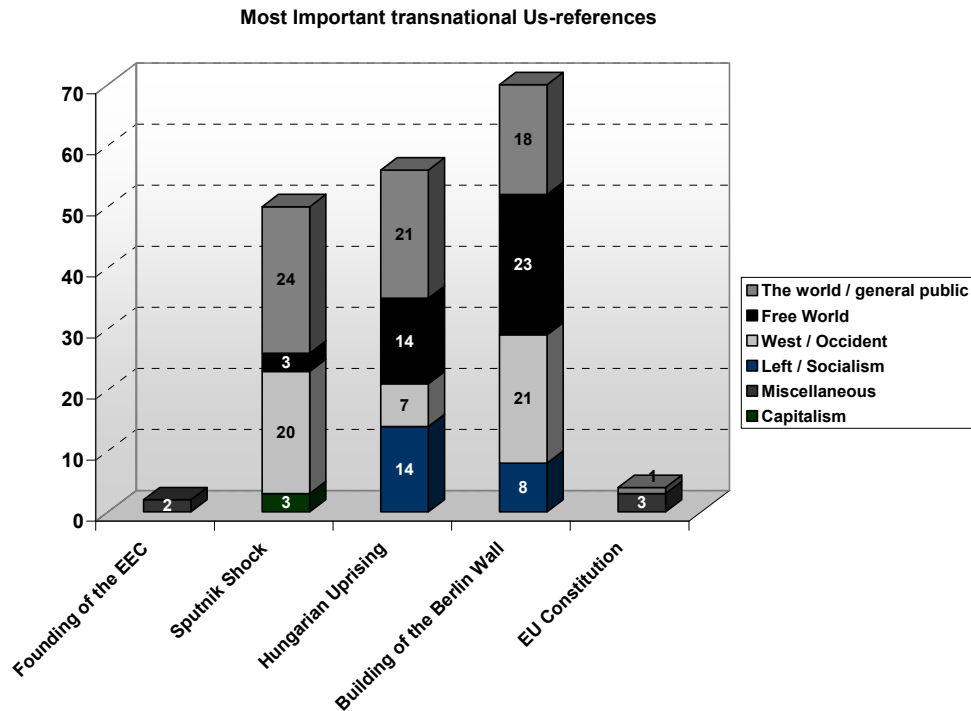
Description:

The diagram shows that during the phase of the Cold War scant European us-references were present. Not until the founding of the European Economic Community in 1957 are us-references to be noted above the 5% level. A significant rise in these us-references to 28% is noted during the discussion of the EU constitution. It remains to be verified whether this rise is in reference only to this communication event or whether in general a rise in European us-references can be determined in light of more recent communication events.

Hypothesis:

A “European-antagonism” can be determined: in both communication events in which the EEC and the EU are the focus of attention, the national references are at the same time very strongly pronounced. This can be explained by the fact that the debates focus strongly on the exercising of national (sovereignty) rights.

Transnational Non-European Us-References



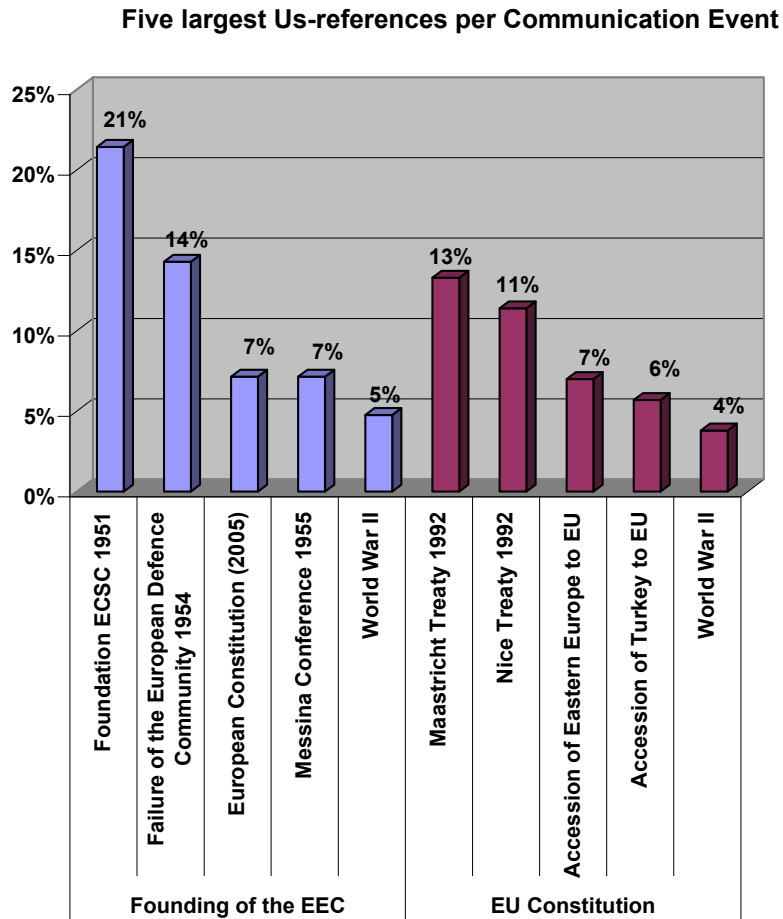
Description:

The institutional EEC and EU events show generally the fewest us-references by far. The war and crisis communication events suggest a polar communication: on the one hand the “free world” and “the West,” on the other “the Left/Socialism.” The concept “world/general public” is normally very undefined, but frequently the “free world” is here implied. “The Left/Socialism” appears as we-reference only in Hungary and on occasion France.

Hypothesis:

The low number of us-references in respect to the institutional EEC and EU events show that the thesis is correct: that war communication events are best for analysis of the semantics of identity as they are very morally charged. The three crisis and war communication events show a clear bipolar development of transnational us-references.

The Five Largest Temporal References per Communication Event



Description:

The largest temporal references show that in respect to the institutional communication events the institutional references are clearly most prominent. The only non-institutional reference cited is World War II. The institutional events remain clearly in the foreground.

Hypothesis:

No clear-cut myth construction – strong reference to institutional events. Nevertheless, World War II could represent a “reservoir of myths.”

5 Thesis Considerations

All in all, it should be pointed out that for the 1950's and 1960's no significant Europe-reference in any of the analysed arenas is to be found. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that an institutional European form did not yet exist, or rather was just coming into existence. On the other hand, the continent was divided into two spheres of interest: an alternative orientation to the large poles of the USA and the USSR, or to traditional political traditions (France, Switzerland) is not yet in view at this time.

- Generally, it is evident that communication in mass media, as far as it is concerned with the semantics of identity, is determined by them-references and clearly less so by us-references.
- The analysed them-references mirror the events of the Cold War: beyond these bipolar forms, no supranational identity can be found in public communication.
- The object most often perceived as being threatened is “willingness for peace.” This correlates to the temporal reference “World War II.” It is evident that this correlation represents a strong argumentative complexity in the events of the Cold War, which continues to the present. In this fashion World War II continues to play a role as a temporal reference in the debacle over the constitution.
- A “Europe-antagonism” can be determined: a stronger European we-reference can be measured in both of the communication events of where the EEC and the EU are the focus of attention. At the same time, however, national references are very well formed. A clear tendency to focus on European and national references can be accounted for in these communication events. Practically no further transnational us-references are present here.

6 Future Prospects/Goals

The goal is to use this methodology to compile and codify all further communication events during the time period ending with the summer, 2007. The media arena Great Britain (with the media The Guardian and The Times) should be included and the arena Austria should be made complete (Die Presse). All communication events that have been analysed to this time will be updated.

It is being discussed internally whether to include further Eastern European countries besides Hungary in the sample. This is only possible at great financial expenditure. Sample analyses for the arenas Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR have shown differences in the evaluations for the 1950's, but analyses after this period seem to conform. It would be a good idea to analyse these arenas for the time period beginning with the end of the Cold War after 1989/91.

It is further intended to broaden the sample of analysis with one tabloid per arena. Especially in light of the question of collective identity this seems indispensable, particularly since tabloids are known to use an emotional and strongly polarising semantic and style of journalism. In this context the television must also be mentioned, which has played a decisive role at least since the 1970's in the reporting of political events. It is to be determined to what extent analyses of certain news formats in the different arenas are possible from a financial viewpoint of research.

From the beginning of 2007 the research methodology will be broadened. In order to be able to analyse more precisely the emergence of a European public, dimensions of convergence and interdiscursivity will be included in the research.³⁹

³⁹ Dimension of convergence: among the different arenas the largest possible overlap of shared interest and relevance structures must be available from similar communication events. Dimension of interdiscursivity: among the arenas there must be a continual communicative exchange process and reciprocity. This is to be seen as an indicator of whether streams of communication are flowing between the arenas. Not until the dimensions of convergence, interdiscursivity, and identity are fulfilled can a communication space which is divided into different public arenas be denoted in a qualitative respect; cf. Tobler 2006.

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