DOMESTIC ADAPTATIONS OF EUROPE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DEBATES ON EU ENLARGEMENT AND A COMMON CONSTITUTION IN THE GERMAN AND FRENCH QUALITY PRESS

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates why a specific European issue is debated in one country but disregarded in another, and why issues are debated differently in different European countries. To understand this national filtering, expectations are formulated as to how specific policy traditions and issue-specific conflict constellations within a country are reflected in media debates. A systematic content analysis of the debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution for the years 2000–2002 in the German and French quality press reveals considerable variation in issue salience, actors' prominence and actors' responsibility attributions between and within the countries. This variation can be seen to be connected with different policy traditions and conflict constellations. The study seeks to go beyond merely describing variations in media coverage across Europe and systematically uses cross-national and cross-issue comparative research to understand this variation.

Although researchers have underlined the importance of the national media in publicizing the details of European integration, little is known of the factors that trigger whether and how the media open up the European debate. Studying these factors, however, is important for at least two reasons. The debates on EU integration are first a precondition for the 'democratization' of European politics. Up to the Maastricht treaty, a purely output-oriented type of legitimacy (see for a distinction Scharpf, 1999) was regarded as sufficient for the European Union. Now and increasingly researchers stress the need for European input legitimacy referring to the fit between any decisions

made and the will of the people (see e.g. Höreth, 1999, p. 253, Lepsius, 1999; p. 209). Input legitimacy relies not only on institutional factors, but also on the communication flows that allow interest mediation and social integration within Europe (see e.g. Baker, 1998/1999). Interest mediation is a two-sided process: information on the positions of political elites allows citizens to control the political process, and information on societal interests tells politicians which problems are urgent and which positions are prominent.

Second, studying the factors that trigger European debates in the national mass media is important since these debates may influence *European politics*. So far the success story of European integration has relied on elite-based compromises reached behind closed doors and based on the citizens' permissive consensus. This nonpublic mode of policy-making seems to have reached its limits as the permissive consensus is in decline and at best is being replaced by a 'reluctant acceptance' (Mittag & Wessels, 2003, p. 417) or even a rejection—if one thinks of the referenda in France and the Netherlands regarding the European Constitution. Public debates might have the potential to change citizens' attitudes and to integrate them into a European community. On the other hand public debates on European issues could change traditional policy-making within the EU undermining the adjusted processes of decision-making and compromise finding (Kriesi, 2001, p. 18).

Most of the studies that seek not only to describe, but also to explain, the debates on EU integration in national media have highlighted factors that account for commonalities between countries. Researchers have shown that Europe and European actors enter the national media in those *issue fields* in which competences have actually been shifted to European levels (Koopmans & Erbe, 2004, Pfetsch, 2004). In addition, research shows that European issues figure in the national media *outside routine politics*: for example, summit meetings involving national politicians have significant news value (e.g. De Vreese, 2003, p. 116). Political crises also have 'conflict' news value (Berkel, 2006). Last but not least, research has shown that specific types of *media* open up communication flows dealing with European issues: for example European issues and actors are more visible in the quality than in the tabloid press, and in public more than in private television (Kevin, 2003, Peter & De Vreese, 2004; Peter, Lauf, & Semetko, 2004). While this might demonstrate some common features in media debates within different European countries, it does not help us to understand why a specific European issue is debated in one country but disregarded in another, or why issues are debated differently in different countries. Peter et al. (Peter & De Vreese, 2004; Peter et al., 2004) have taken the first steps to explaining this cross-country variation in the representation of EU integration in their study of the effects of public

satisfaction with democracy and of the polarization of elites' opinions towards the EU.

The explication of variations between countries is advanced in this study by introducing a new variable that may account for different forms of such debates—and that is the policy tradition of a country. Moreover, it is acknowledged that media debates do not only differ between countries, but also within countries if different European topics are debated. Such variations seem likely, considering the concept of 'issue publics' (e.g. Kunelius & Sparks, 2001) as used by students of the public sphere. Scholars of policy-making have also highlighted the importance of 'policy domain specific subsystems' which are shaped by the *combined* impact of policy- and country-specific contexts (Kriesi, Adam, & Jochum, 2006).

Since it focuses on explaining differences, this study does not seek to analyze those factors that have been identified to explain commonalities between and within countries. Consequently, the study does not compare issue fields with different EU competences, nor does it differentiate between media types or consider policy phases. Instead, it concentrates on European debates (enlargement and constitution) in the quality press over a period of three years (2000–2002) in Germany and France and highlights the factors that account for differences between and within countries. This shifting of research towards an explanation of differences facilitates the potential inherent in comparative research within the European Union as it allows to follow the 'most similar system design' (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). In Europeanized policy fields, a common European input impacts on (similar) nation states. General and issue-specific differences between these nation states can be used to explain the variation in debates on specific topics not only between, but also within, different countries. Such an analysis may help us to understand why a specific European issue is debated in one country and disregarded in another and why issues are debated differently in different countries.

In order to understand how European issues are domesticated we shall proceed in three steps. First, the national actors and their communication strategies are identified as crucial in shaping national media debates on Europe as these actors may give Europe an identifiable 'face' and bring closeness to the issue. The national actors' strategic communication—we further claim— will depend on policy traditions and issue-specific conflict constellations within each country. Following the assumption that EU media coverage—to some extent—responds to these national settings, expectations can be formulated for the empirical study of the German and French debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution. Second, the data and methodology of the study are explained. Third, the results from a cross-national and cross-issue press analysis are examined within the framework of

the theoretical expectations. This examination can only increase the plausi-bility of the arguments as content analysis data alone is not sufficient to make causal inferences concerning the factors influencing media content. However, it is a start (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 28).

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

NATIONAL ACTORS AND CONTEXTS

News factors influence what is reported and commented upon in the media. News factors such as conflict, closeness, status, relevance, etc. are regarded characteristics of events, but also as attributions by those individuals who select events for coverage (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Schulz, 1997). European politics lacks these news factor determinants as compromises prevail over conflict there, administrative regulations over personalities and unclear responsibilities over clear-cut cleavages (Gerhards, 2000, p. 298). How then do European topics get a 'face', gain relevance for national audiences and show conflicts? It can be seen that national actors may serve as bridges between distant European politics and national media debates because, if these actors discuss Europe, then its news value increases (Kevin, 2003; Peter et al., 2004; Berkel, 2006).

Consequently, we propose to focus on national (political) actors in order to understand the variations in European debates between countries and also within different countries regarding specific issue fields. For them control of the *national* public arena is especially important as the national *demos* determines who is going to be elected—even in European elections. As a consequence all actors, especially those who need to win votes, shape public debates strategically (Pan & Kosicki, 2003). Communication thus takes place mindful of the possible consequences of publication (Kepplinger, 1989). It follows then that national actors pursue their own interests when they decide on their communication strategies towards Europe. The first question then is whether national political actors have an interest in setting Europe on the national agenda or not. Some national actors may actively engage in setting a European issue on the national agenda, others seek to prevent topics from reaching the agenda at all. If these national actors do put an issue on the agenda, questions arise concerning the framing strategy employed. Framing in this context is defined as an ideological contest over the scope of an issue, over matters such as who is responsible and who is affected, which ideological principles or enduring values are relevant and where the issue should be addressed (Cobb & Elder, 1983, Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988).

The most influential national actors in this respect are the national political elites. It is less likely that outsiders of the national political process lacking formal access to decision-making can succeed in giving prominence

to a European issue on their own. The reason lies in the 'principle of cumulative inequality' (Wolfsfeld, 1997, p. 24): those who are powerful in the political process also have priviliged access to the media. The media themselves can also become actors if they raise their own voices evaluating political actors and their positions (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2006). This follows the trajectory of reasoning by political scientists and media scholars (Page, 1996) who argue that the media are not only a forum but also autonomous actors in political communication. It is an open question whether the media are able to use this role to set Europe on the agenda independently of other national actors.

The communication strategies of national actors are bound to factors operating within the nation state (Adam, 2007). Whether national actors actively engage in setting European issues on the agenda depends on the *conflict constellation* in a specific country regarding a specific issue. One factor that is assumed to influence framing strategies of national actors is a country's *policy tradition*. Both factors will be detailed in the following.

Political actors and the public shape the *conflict constellation* in a specific country regarding specific issues. For the political actors, we can distinguish an elite and outsider variable. The degree of conflict within the political elite is the first dimension of the conflict constellation allowing us to differentiate polarized issues from consensual issues (Zaller, 1992; Kriesi, 2001; Peter & De Vreese, 2004; Peter et al., 2004). The second dimension refers to the presence or absence of outsiders of the political process who do not have formal access to decision-making but do have the potential to mobilize opinion (Kriesi, 2001, p. 30). As a third dimension, public opinion comes into play. Public opinion as the aggregation of individual opinions is understood as the distribution of individual preferences towards political objects and issues (Converse, 1987, p. 13). Public opinion inevitably influences the actions and strategies of those participating in the political process (for interest groups Kollman, 1998; for a generalization Kriesi, 2001). The importance of this factor increases if the public regards an issue as central. Also public opinion can be either polarized or consensual. In a polarized situation differences in opinion divide the population.

These variables allow us to distinguish between issues in which the elite and the public agree ('Fit'), and issues in which there is a 'misfit' between the elite and the public. The latter situation also occurs in a weaker manner in cases where an elite consensus meets a polarized public ('weak misfit'). In issue fields that are characterized by an elite dissent but consent in the public, those parts of the elite that are supported by the public are strengthened. If the elite and the public are divided one can speak of a 'camp conflict' in which each camp is supported by specific segments of the population. All of these conflict constellations can additionally be differentiated according to the

FIGURE 1 **Conflict constellations as domestic context**

Out-siders	present		present		present		
	not present		not present		not present		
Elite	PRO (consent)		Polarized (dissent)		CONTRA (consent)		
Public							
PRO (consent)	Fit		Strengthening of the pro-camp		Misfit		
Polarized (dissent)	Weak Misfit		Camp conflict		Weak misfit		
CONTRA (consent)	Misfit		Strengthening of the contra-camp		Fit		

presence or absence of outsiders within an issue field. If outsiders are present, political actors potentially have to struggle more to control the public arena. The different conflict constellations are summarized in Figure 1.

Conflict constellations are expected to affect national actors' willingness to discuss Europe. However, they do not relate to the manner in which national actors put an issue on the agenda. In order to understand the differences in the framing of EU issues we can draw on the idea of *policy traditions*. Policy traditions refer to long-standing, basic values within a policy area that shape a country's policy-making. These policy traditions are rarely changed. They often remain in place even if elections change the formal power structures. Such policy traditions are intertwined with a country's history. Risse, Cowles, and Caporaso (2001, p. 18) for example, highlight this factor when they show that the domestic adaptation of Europe strongly rests on a country's history. They show that member states attach different meanings and connotations to Europe and the integration process. For this article, one of the most basic policy traditions regarding Europe is referred to: that there are countries which emphasize the intergovernmental character of EU integration, while others favor a supranational form of integration. This policy tradition is crucial as it raises the question of the degree of sovereignty of national entities.

DOMESTIC ADAPTATIONS OF EUROPE

Following the assumption that EU media coverage—to some extent—responds to these national settings, expectations can be formulated as to how specific conflict constellations and policy traditions are reflected in debates. Two key indicators are proposed for studying the impact of conflict constellations: the salience of an issue and the prominence of (specific) national versus transnational actors. The policy tradition of a country in turn is expected to be reflected in the frames visible in a debate. To analyze frames, we focus on responsibility attributions to different EU institutions.

Different conflict constellations may yield variations in issue salience and actor prominence. The basic assumption is that any national actors supported by public opinion will actively engage in setting the agenda; while those opposed by public opinion will try to avoid putting an issue on the agenda (Gerhards, Neidhardt, & Rucht, 1998, p. 40, Kollman, 1998, pp. 155ff.). This holds true for political actors in government as well as in the opposition. Actors without direct access to political negotiations ('outsiders') may try to reach out to the masses even if they are not supported by a majority, but an important minority of citizens (Kriesi, 2003). These strategic aspects are assumed to be reflected in media coverage.

In the situation of a *fit* between the elite and the public one can expect national political actors to actively put an issue on the agenda as they can profit from it. Such an issue then has a high chance of becoming salient. This salience however, might well be accompanied by a relatively strong focus on national actors compared to those of Europe or member states. Thus an opening towards the issue might be combined with a closing towards transnational actors. In a situation, however, where the elite supports what the public rejects (*misfit*), national actors have no interest in setting the agenda. This is expected to lead to the low salience of an issue. The lack of a national voice might, however, privilege transnational actors compared to national ones. If the elite is only supported by part of the citizens (*weak misfit*), government actors will try to mobilize if a topic is important for the public. They also have the possibility of avoiding a topic if it is unimportant for the public. The opposition however, cannot profit from discussing this issue as they do not offer an alternative to government policies. Consequently, national governments have higher prominence values compared to the opposition. And as there is a national anchor, the debate may gain salience and national actors will remain important compared to transnational actors. A *camp conflict* characterized by dissent in the elite and the public is expected to lead to debates between the pro- and contra-coalition of a country. In such polarized situations, actors from the opposition will actively engage in setting the agenda since they support a position different from government. Consequently, one may expect high issue salience combined with a strong focus on national actors in media debates. Last but not least, there is a form of conflict that strengthens those elite actors who are supported by the public (*strengthening of a camp*). They seek to set the topic on the agenda; those opposed seek to oppress it. This situation makes it difficult to derive expectations. However, European issues here also have a higher chance of becoming salient as they are partly anchored with the national level, compared to situations where no national actors have any interest in domesticating Europe.

The conflict constellation also indirectly influences the prominence of the media as speakers, and this is reflected mainly in editorials and opinion columns. If a specific conflict constellation invites national political actors to

put Europe on the agenda, this topic also becomes a subject for comment by the national media. The national anchor gives European issues a prominence and brings them closer to the national audiences. Independent agenda-setting of the media seems to be the exception. Whether misfit situations trigger the media to become advocates of the citizens as they discuss Europe when the elites seek to avoid the subject needs to be studied.

Policy traditions are expected to be reflected in the frames visible within a debate—more exactly in the responsibility attributions to European institutions. In those countries that emphasize the intergovernmental character of EU integration, it is expected that national actors attribute more responsibility to the EU Council, the institutional guarantor for a Europe of sovereign states, than to the supranational institutions. By contrast, national actors tend to stress the importance of supranational institutions in Europe when the policy tradition refers to a supranational integration model. The impact of the national level, however, does not stop here. It is assumed that national actors' emphasis on specific policy traditions is also reflected if transnational actors raise their voices in national debates. Transnational actors that attribute responsibility in a similar way to national actors have a better chance of passing through the selection filters of national media. The differences shown in the framing of national actors also impact upon the overall debate.

EU coverage in this study is understood to respond—to some extent—to events and communication strategies outside the media organization (see for similar assumptions Peter & de Vreese, 2004, Peter et al., 2004). This assumption is supported by empirical research which shows that different press titles within the same country argue with a similar vigor and in a similar direction when discussing the field of EU integration in their editorials (Pfetsch, Adam, & Berkel, 2007). This similarity in editorials—a format where the press can raise their own views independently of the input—indicates that factors within the media organization are at least not the only ones influencing EU coverage. However, this is not to reject the notion that the individual journalist, media routines and media organizations (see for a list of factors, Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Esser, 1998) also construct media depictions. As no single study can take all of these factors into account (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 271), this study is limited to factors outside the media organization. In light of the lack of detailed explicative accounts regarding the domestication of EU integration, it seems justifiable to begin by explaining country- and issue-specific differences in debates.

METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN

METHOD

To study how national media domesticate Europe, two quality newspapers in France and Germany were content analyzed regarding the issues of EU

enlargement and a common constitution. The analysis is based on a conservative (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Figaro*) and a left-liberal (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Le Monde*) newspaper in each country. The political and economy sections were coded for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. These quality newspapers are not representative of the media systems in any of these countries. Nevertheless they do allow the study of domestic adaptations. To manage the workload the study is based on a sample of 312 newspaper editions in each country, selecting one edition a week, with different rotating schemes for the two papers in a country. As the sample for the commentary analysis has been denser than the one for newsreporting, the commentary data were weighted to create a common data set.

All the data are part of a larger research project called 'Europub' (Koopmans & Statham, 2002) financed by the European Commission, which analyzed the Europeanization of public debates in seven countries. The media's reporting and commenting (see for the codebooks Adam et al., 2002; Koopmans, 2002) were coded by native speakers in country teams, which were carefully trained before coding and supervised throughout the whole coding period. The coder trainers of the country teams were constantly in contact to solve coding problems. Two separate reliability tests were conducted for the project in general: one for the editorials and one for the media's reporting. For the former, coders in each country team coded a random sample of seven commentaries from *The Scotsman*, *The Times* and *The Guardian* of the year 2002. The inter-coder reliabilities were measured as the average match between the coders. The overall reliability calculated on the core variables of the analysis turned out to be highly satisfactory with an average match of 75 percent. The reliability of the coding of media reporting was tested on the basis of one issue of *The Guardian*. The average match between the coders on the core variables was 87 percent. As the detailed issue delimitation turned out to be problematic, the author checked on the basis of a string variable that captures the content of each coding unit whether it belonged to the two issue fields under study. The reliability for specific variables is indicated at the bottom of the respective tables or figures.

As a consequence of the focus of this study on environmental effects on media content, the debates in the two national newspapers of a country are not analyzed separately but are taken as indicators for a country's debate (see for a similar procedure Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). If however, newspapers raise their own voices,[1] then each one is regarded an actor comparable to all other political actors who raise their voices.

The coding unit of the content analysis is 'claims'. Following Koopmans and Statham (1999), a claim is defined as a unit of strategic action in the

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[1] The media act as speakers not only in their commentating, but also when they overtly take a position in news reporting. Each commentary is regarded as one claim by a journalist.

public sphere that consists of the purposive and public articulation of political demands. Strategic actions refer not only to verbal statements but also to physical actions such as decisions or court rulings. An article can contain several claims. A claim usually consists of the following variables: (a) a claimant—who can be a political actor or a journalist; (b) the addressees who are held responsible or who are the targets of criticism or support; (c) the affected actors whose interests are or would be positively (beneficiarily) or negatively affected by the claim and (d) the topics the claim refers to.[2] Claims thus show media depictions of reality in a twofold manner. First, they make explicit comment by journalists visible. Second, they show which other claimants make it through the selection filter of the media.

The claims data have been analyzed on two levels: a claim-level and a level that focuses on each single communicative relation within such claims. On a claims-level, we can determine the *salience of an issue*. The number of claims coded in each issue field within a country is taken as indicator for the importance of the issue. Claims that deal with the relation between Europe and the citizens, with the structures and competences of political order in the EU or with core goals for the integration project per se are coded under the label 'constitutional issue' (see for the definition European Council, 2001). Enlargement claims refer to the question of who should belong under which criteria to the Union and what are the consequences thereof. Three types of issues can be distinguished: a low-salience issue, a 'constant issue' or an 'event jumper'. A constant issue is debated over a long period of time on a relatively high attention level. An 'event jumper' is an issue that does not capture attention in phases of routine politics, but does so at specific events and thus binds attention cyclically. Finally a low-salience issue is characterized by a constantly low level of reporting and comment and thus has little chance of attracting the audience's attention.

The prominence of (specific) national versus transnational actors and the actors' framing are studied by analyzing communicative relations within such claims. On this level of analysis, each responsibility attribution from a claimant (up to three can be coded in each claim) to an addressee (up to three can be coded in each claim) is regarded as a unit of analysis. This perspective places actors and their communicative relations within a specific issue at the center of attention (see for the respective network definition Pappi, 1987) and thus views debates as symbolic networks. They are symbolic in a sense that they do not represent social relations, but communicative relations that pass through

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[2] An example for a claim could be: 'The European Commission criticizes the French and German governments for not giving enough money to support the accession of Eastern European countries.' Here the European Commission is the claimant, both governments are coded as addressee, the Eastern European countries are those affected, and the topic refers to enlargement.

TABLE 1 **Case numbers**

	German newspapers		French newspapers	
	Constitutional issue	Enlargement issue	Constitutional issue	Enlargement issue
Claims level				
Number of articles	338	485	294	192
Number of claims	518	763	482	299
Network level				
Number of articles[a]	277	392	250	172
Number of claims[a]	415	618	409	267
Number of relations	696	1050	569	348

[a]Articles and claims that contain at least one relation between speakers and addressees.

the filter of national media (for the symbolic dimension of politics see Edelman, 1964, Sarcinelli, 1987).

This form of analysis firstly allows us to calculate how *prominent* a specific claimant is by counting the relative share the claimant has among all the responsibility attributions within the debate. This prominence measure has been described by network analysts as an actor's 'outdegree' (Freeman, 1979). Prominence in a network-analytic sense must be distinguished from traditional analyses that define prominence as the pure visibility of actors. By contrast, prominence here results from an actor's communicative activity within a network: the more communicative relations (responsibility attributions) a claimant defines, the more prominent he is. Second, this detailed level of analysis can reveal the framing of each claimant present in the debate. By *attributing responsibility* to specific actors and institutions, a claimant defines who is responsible to solve problems. Each claimant in this perspective can be regarded as a frame-sponsor (Pan & Kosicki, 2003; Carragee & Roefs, 2004)—that is: someone who frames problems by defining responsibility. For each claimant then, one can define how many of its respective communicative relations are directed towards specific actors. This focus on each single claimant is termed ego-centric network analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1999).

Table 1 summarizes the case numbers of the following analysis. On the claims-level those articles and claims are selected that refer to the analyzed issue fields. In total, the analysis is based on 1309 articles containing 2062 claims. On the level of networks and communicative relations only those claims that contain at least one relation between claimants and addressees can be incorporated in the analysis. This results in 1091 articles with 1709 claims containing 2663 communicative relations between claimants and addressees. As one claim can contain, at maximum, three speakers and three addressees—and thus up to nine relations—the case numbers of this second level of analysis indicate the number of relations between actors.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The German and French debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution have been chosen as they allow to follow a most similar system design (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). This requires a systematic variation of the independent variables while controlling for other differences. First, differences are minimized as these two issues produce a common *European input* that hits the nation states. In the period from 2000 until 2002, enlargement and a common constitution were 'hot' issues in Europe: during this time the biggest enlargement (10 mostly Eastern European countries) in European history was prepared and, in December 2002, finally decided upon. At the same summit the Heads of State opened the doors for negotiations with Turkey about membership. The constitution was also at the top of the agenda: a pre-Convention debate with summits and various heads of states proposing their ideas on the future of Europe was followed by the work of the newly created Constitutional Convention. Second, differences are minimized by comparing these debates in *countries* that are the 'big' founding members of the Union, and also regarded as engines of the European integration project.

The selection of these cases however, allows for a systematic variation of the independent variables. The conflict constellation in the *German constitutional issue* can be characterized as a 'fit' between the elite and the public in support of a European Constitution. On the elite side, there is a broad and stable consensus on European integration (Jachtenfuchs, 2002, p. 281). German elites traditionally support strengthening of the European Parliament and the Commission, aiming for an economically and politically unified federation of Europe (Maurer, 2003). As Eurobarometer data show, the German population strongly supports the Constitutional project. However, this consent fades if one looks at the possible contents of such a Constitution (European Commission, 2002). As these different preferences have not yet made their way into election results, the conflict constellation is classified as a 'fit'. Outsiders are traditionally weak in policy fields dealing with constitutional issues (Jachtenfuchs, 2002, p. 292) and thus are not expected to strongly influence the agenda.

The conflict constellation in *France* with regard to the *constitutional issue* can, by contrast, be described as a 'camp conflict'. The question of European integration deeply divides the French elites (Goulard, 2002; Jachtenfuchs, 2002, p. 281). France is one of the few European countries where Europe has created a new cleavage within the party landscape (Mittag & Wessels, 2003, p. 419). Parties have split over the question of European integration,[3] while parties at the extreme oppose it anyway. The main parties today are also

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[3] The 'Mouvement pour la France' was founded as a Euro-skeptic split-off from the UDF (1992); the 'Mouvement de Citoyens' as a split-off from the socialists (1993); the 'Rassemblement pour la France' as a split-off from the RPR (1998).

internally divided over the question of European integration (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2004, p. 278). The French citizens, on the other hand, support the project of a European Constitution in general but are—like the Germans—divided on specific contents (European Commission, 2002), but show this divide—in contrast to the Germans—in their voting behavior. In the European elections of 1999, and also in the national ones of 2002, euro-sceptic parties won more than 30 percent of the votes (Goulard, 2002; Ziebura, 2003). As there are only few EU-specific groups (e.g. 'CAFECES' or 'Mouvement européenne') and civil society organizations are traditionally weak in French politics, a strong role for outsiders is not expected in this policy field.

The *German dispute on enlargement* in general can be characterized as a 'weak misfit' between the elite and the public. Where Turkey is concerned, the conflict constellation strengthens the contra camp. The German elite strongly supports Eastern enlargement of the European Union (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2002). Over Turkey, however, the elite is divided: the governing coalition of social democrats and greens (1998–2005) has paved the way for membership negotiations with Turkey, which the conservatives reject. German citizens are also divided on the question as to whether the ten new members should join the Union (European Commission, 2002). When it comes to Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria they deeply reject enlargement. As the enlargement issue stretches over a variety of issue fields, it is expected that outsiders (agricultural organizations, unions, etc.) will become more strongly involved compared to any constitutional issue.

A misfit between the elite and the public characterizes *French politics on EU enlargement* in the period between 2000 and 2002. In the 1990s the French elites tried to prevent enlargement (Froehly, 2000, p. 38). But, as the enlargement process was already on track, the French elite—hesitantly—supported it. By contrast French citizens reject all possible enlargement processes by a large majority (European Commission, 2002). The French rejection is the strongest in all Europe (Ziebura, 2003, p. 307). As enlargement is such a broad issue field, it can be expected that outsiders mobilize in their respective areas (agricultural organizations, etc.). Table 2 summarizes the conflict constellations regarding the two issue fields in Germany and France.

Turning to the *policy traditions*, the two countries differ fundamentally. Traditionally, Germany as a result of its history supports a supranational model of EU integration (see e.g. Maurer, 2003). After the Second World War, Germany was isolated and the 'national model' had a negative image. France, by contrast, has always been the 'nation state par excellence' (Ziebura, 2003, p. 238) since the French Revolution, defending national sovereignty in Europe. This consensus on an intergovernmental Europe has faded in the last

TABLE 2 **Conflict constellations in Germany and France**

Public opinion	Opinion of the political elite		
	Pro (Consent)	Polarized (Dissent)	Contra (Consent)
Pro (Consent)	Constitutional issue in Germany		
Polarized (Dissent)	Enlargement issue in Germany	Constitutional issue in France	
Contra (Consent)	Enlargement issue in France	(Enlargement issue in Germany with regardtoTurkey)	

Note: Shading indicates the presence of outsiders is expected for this issue.

years, but compared to Germany those calling for an intergovernmental Europe are still strong.

RESULTS

ISSUE SALIENCE

Figure 2 shows that the salience of the German and French debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution differs. This analysis is based on the number of claims made visible in the press in the course of time. It shows that the French debate on EU enlargement can be characterized as a 'low-salience issue', whereas the constitutional issues in both countries seem to be classical 'event jumpers'. Only the enlargement issue in Germany comes close to what has been called a 'constant issue' (Figure 2).

What is striking is the extreme parallelism of the German and French debates on a European Constitution. In both countries, reporting and commentating follow the same events (see for a detailed analysis Adam, 2007). By contrast, debates on enlargement differ drastically between Germany and France. In France, enlargement becomes an issue only at the end of the year 2002. This is the time when negotiations are finished and the heads of states finally decide on the biggest enlargement in the history of the EU and on the possibility of the accession of Turkey. Before that time enlargement was not an issue on the French agenda. In Germany, enlargement questions were debated throughout the whole three-year period triggered by different events and topics.

These results meet our expectations. In situations where the conflict constellation makes it unattractive for the national political elite to put an EU issue on the agenda, the issue is likely to remain below a specific threshold

FIGURE 2 **Importance of public debates in the course of time**
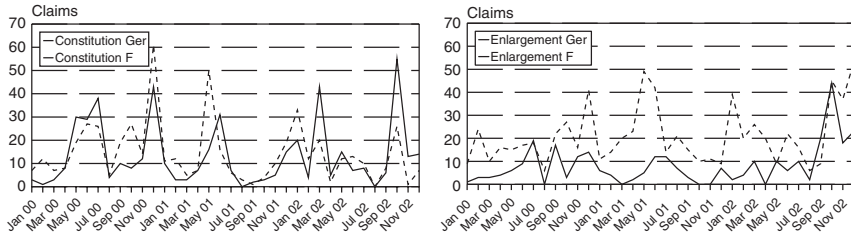
Basis: coded claims in four newspapers ('SZ', 'FAZ', 'Le Monde', 'Le Figaro'), reporting and commentating. Reliability match of news analysis: news article selection 83 percent; claims selection within news articles 84 percent; broad issue field (issue 1/2/3): 96 percent/98 percent/97 percent detailed issue field coding was done by the author on the basis of a string variable. Reliability match of commentary analysis: Selection of commentaries has not been tested as commentaries are defined in a strict sense as the opinion articles of a journalist or editor and appear every day in a specific layout. Claims selection within commentaries 99 percent (per definition each commentary contains at maximum one claim); broad issue field (issue1/2/3): 98 percent/74 percent/95 percent; detailed issue field coding was done by the author on the basis of a string variable.

and thus to become a low-salience issue.[4] Such a conflict constellation exists regarding the issue of EU enlargement in France. The misfit between the elite and the public makes it unattractive for national elites to discuss the topic. Consequently, the issue lacks a national anchor, which is reflected in the low salience of the issue in the press. The national issue-specific conflict constellations thus seem to have an impact on the salience of EU issues. However, this factor needs further refinement as it cannot explain why a topic becomes an event-jumper or a constant issue. Additionally, this factor needs to be tested in more cases.

ACTORS' PROMINENCE

Table 3 shows how prominent a specific category of claimants is by counting the relative share it has on all responsibility attributions in a debate. The results show clearly that national claimants strongly shape the constitutional debates and the enlargement debate in Germany. Here the national actors' share on all responsibility attributions amount to 42–50.3 percent. In the French enlargement debate the national speakers' share amounts to 23 percent (Table 3).

These results meet our expectations. In the French enlargement debate where one expected national elites to avoid the issue, national claimants were not prominent at all in the press debates. Only 23 percent of all responsibility

[4] Whether the French enlargement debate can already be called a 'low-salience issue' depends on the criteria one uses. A comparison on the basis of absolute numbers cannot say anything about the importance of an issue on the overall agenda. Nevertheless such a comparison allows the evaluation of how much is actually reported and thus how likely it is that the audience notices the issue.

TABLE 3 **Prominence of claimants**

	Constitutional issue		Enlargement issue	
	Germany (n = 696) Percent	France (n = 569) Percent	Germany (n = 1,050) Percent	France (n = 348) Percent
National claimants	50.3	45.2	42.0	23.0
Established political actors	23.8	28.8	17.0	13.7
Executive	10.3	12.1	9.7	5.7
Right		3.8		3.2
Left		7.8		2.0
Legislative and political parties	13.5	16.7	7.3	8.0
Right	10.7	8.8	5.8	3.4
Left	2.4	4.2	1.0	2.0
EU-opponents	–	3.4	–	2.0
Civil society	1.6	6.8	3.4	1.7
Media	24.9	9.5	21.2	7.5
Right	10.9	5.3	10.0	2.3
Left	11.2	4.0	10.0	4.9
Transnational claimants	49.7	54.8	58.0	77.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The general categories contain more cases than the sub–categories as not all cases can be assigned to a sub–category.
Basis: all communicative relations.
Reliability match of news analysis: claimant 1/2/3 (function) = 85 percent/99 percent/100 percent; claimant 1/2/3 (scope) = 100 percent/99 percent/100 percent.
Reliability match of commentary analysis: Claimant is per definition the journalist writing the commentary.

attributions are made by national actors. In total this equals 80 responsibility attributions in a three-year period. On average, French national actors become visible with one responsibility attribution in every forth newspaper edition. By comparison the national actors in the German enlargement debate are responsible for 441, in the German constitutional debate for 350, and in the French constitutional debate for 257 responsibility attributions.

A closer look also reveals a correspondence between the conflict constellation and the prominence of the established actors. The national governments, for example, are responsible for around 10–12 percent of all communicative relations. Only in the debate characterized by a strong misfit between the attitudes of the elites and the citizens does the government become silent compared to the other actors: in the French debate on EU enlargement, the national government is responsible for less than 6 percent of all communicative relations. The left-leaning government under Jospin generally avoided talking about the issue. As expected the legislative body, where opposition parties have a strong voice, is a less important claimant in

the enlargement debates compared to the constitutional ones because in the former it supports the position of the government which the public (partly) rejects and thus cannot profit from an intensified debate. In both countries, the share of responsibility attributions made by the legislative on enlargement is about half the share of these attributions by the legislative on the constitution. Also, in France, parties that oppose EU integration do not put the enlargement issue on the national agenda.

Interestingly, national civil society organizations are not prominent in any of these debates. In three out of four debates their share is marginal. Only in the French debate on a European constitution are they responsible for about 7 percent of all communicative relations. We expected them to be more prominent in the enlargement rather than in the constitutional issue as here their interests are concretely affected. Whether civil society lacks prominence because of missing communication strategies geared at the public or whether civil society organizations fail to get through the filter of the national media cannot be evaluated within this particular research design. Whatever the reason, the lack of civil society organizations in disputes on EU integration (see for the same results on a broader data base Koopmans, 2004, p. 30) privileges national elites as they are the only ones who can give Europe a face and bring it closer to the citizens. The national elites however, strategically decide whether they give Europe a national anchor or not.

Last but not least, there are the media who become claimants themselves if they raise their voices. Here we find substantial differences between the countries. The media are more prominent in German than in French debates. This can be explained to some extent by different formats: the analyzed German newspapers publish 3–5 editorials daily whereas there is only one in each French newspaper. The crucial question concerning the media is whether they follow the national anchor and remain silent in the situation of a misfit, in which national politicians attempt to avoid the issue. As the relative prominence of the media as claimants within a country varies little, one can conclude that the media do not succeed in making up for the missing voice of national politicians by raising their own voice more prominently.

ACTORS' RESPONSIBILITY ATTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS EU INSTITUTIONS

Table 4 shows to which EU institutions national and transnational claimants attribute responsibility for solving problems. This analysis is based on all responsibility attributions that are directed towards European institutions. These results also highlight the fact that European issues are domesticated and that this domestication is impacted by national conditions. In Germany, a country with a strong supranational policy tradition in EU politics, national actors in both debates attribute around 47 percent of all responsibility attributions towards the EU to the supranational institutions (Commission,

TABLE 4 **Responsibility attributions towards EU institutions**

	Supranational institutions:		Inter-governmental institution: EU Council	EU in general	Other	N
	Commission, Parliament	Conventions				
Constitutional issue						
Germany						
National claimants	34.6	12.5	23.1	26.0	3.8	104
Transnational claimants	35.9	24.8	19.7	17.9	1.7	117
France						
National claimants	15.0	15.0	32.1	32.1	5.7	140
Transnational claimants	10.2	26.1	43.9	17.8	1.9	157
Enlargement issue						
Germany						
National claimants	45.0	1.8	16.5	34.9	1.8	109
Transnational claimants	34.0	1.3	18.6	44.9	1.3	156
France						
National claimants	22.7	9.1	25.0	40.9	2.3	44
Transnational claimants	20.7	7.4	23.1	45.5	3.3	121

Basis: all responsibility attributions that are directed at the EU; row-wise percentages.
Reading example: National claimants in the German constitutional debate direct 34.6 percent of all their responsibility attributions to the EU to the Commission and the Parliament.
Reliability match of news analysis: claimant 1/2/3 (scope) = 100 percent/99 percent/100 percent; addressee 1/2/3 (EU Institution) = 97 percent/100 percent/98 percent.
Reliability match of commentary analysis: claimant is per definition the journalist writing the commentary; addressee 1/2/3 (EU Institution) = 74 percent/84 percent/86 percent.

Parliament, Conventions). The intergovernmental EU Council, by comparison, has only a share of between 16 and 23 percent. In France however, national claimants, when referring to the EU, call roughly equally for problem-solving of supranational institutions (around 30 percent) and intergovernmental ones (between 32 and 25 percent). This debate thus seems to correspond with the French policy tradition: a traditional focus on intergovernmental integration has been replaced by a struggle as to how integration should proceed.

Interestingly, Table 4 shows that transnational actors who appear as claimants in the national press attribute responsibility in a similar way as the respective national claimants. National policy traditions thus do not only shape national actors' framing but also the framing of transnational speakers in the debate. The strong supranational focus of national claimants in the German constitutional debate is topped by an even stronger supranational focus of

TABLE 5 **National claimants' responsibility attributions as shapers of transnational claimants' responsibility attributions (Regression analysis)**

	Adj. R²	Sign.	β	N (relations): Attributions to EU		N (actors)
				National actors	Transnational actors	
Constitution Germany	0.63	0.007	0.847	104	117	7
Constitution France	0.55	0.026	0.813	140	157	7
Enlargement Germany	0.89	0.002	0.956	109	156	7
Enlargement France	0.96	0.000	0.985	44	121	7

Basis: All responsibility attributions that point from national or transnational claimants to the EU. The EU is differentiated into seven actor categories: Commission, Parliament, Convention on Human Rights, Constitutional Convention, Council, EU in general and other EU actors.
Calculation: Regression analysis wtih national actors' responsibility attributions towards the EU as independent variable and transnational actors' responsibility attributions towards the EU as dependent variable. Program: UCINET 6
Note: The level of significance is determined by comparing the actual results of the analysis with results of a high number of regressions in which the values of the dependent variable have been randomly permuted. This procedure allows to calculate regressions for variables that are not independent and thus violate the classical assumption of statistical analysis. Network indicators are per definition not independent of each other.

transnational claimants (around 60 percent). The same holds for the lack of attention to the EU Council. Transnational actors in France, by contrast, bring in a strong intergovernmental focus (43.9 percent), which resembles the national actors' framing. Similar patterns can be observed in the enlargement debates.

Whether there is a relation between national actors' responsibility attributions towards the EU and transnational actors' responsibility attributions, can be tested with regression analysis. With these analyzes we seek to predict, on the basis of national actors' responsibility attributions, how transnational actors depicted in the media would frame the same issue. This modeling results in high, statistically significant relations between national actors' and transnational actors' responsibility attributions towards the EU as depicted in the press (Table 5). The domestication of Europe is thus first the result of national actors' framing. This framing however, impacts on how the overall debate is structured. Transnational speakers who appear in the national media do not thus necessarily make debates more similar between different countries.

CONCLUSION

So far, research that seeks to explain debates on EU integration has focused on factors that help understanding commonalities in the reporting and commentating on issues across Europe. Issues that produce a European

input as competences have been shifted to EU levels, and specific European events and conflicts that alter routine politics in the Union have been identified as factors that open national debates. Acknowledging the importance of these factors, this article has made an attempt to understand when and how a specific European issue is debated in one country and disregarded or debated differently in another. A common European input enters the nation states but then experiences a 'domestic adaptation with national colors' (Risse et al., 2001, p. 1).

To understand these domestic adaptation processes, national actors and contexts have been identified as shaping factors. The willingness of national actors' to actively discuss Europe was seen to be connected to the conflict constellation and their framing of issues to a country's policy tradition. The analysis of the issue salience, the prominence of claimants and their responsibility attributions towards EU institutions in the German and French press debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution indicates the relevance of these factors. It seems that the *issue-specific conflict constellation* in a country affects the salience of an issue and actors' prominence in the press. For the national elites themselves it is a strategic decision as to whether to actively engage in putting a European issue on the agenda or to avoid it. This is reflected in the press debates: those national elites who cannot profit from discussing a European topic have a lower share of the overall prominence as claimants than those whose interests are served by putting Europe on the agenda. So far outsiders hardly challenge the elites' strategic game in putting Europe on the agenda. And the media, when raising their own voice, do not push an issue onto the agenda on their own when it lacks national attention. Consequently, it is the national political actors who domesticate Europe. If, however, they cannot profit from such domestication, an issue will probably become a low-salience issue—as can be seen in the French enlargement debate. Thus Europe gains news value if national speakers participate in the game. Also *policy traditions* are reflected in the debates: while supranational EU institutions dominate the German debates, a stronger focus on an intergovernmental Europe is found in France. Interestingly, the policy traditions are not only reflected in national actors' framing but in the overall debate. This indicates that those transnational actors who use similar frames as national actors do have a better chance of passing through the selection filters of the national media.

The study shows clearly that the common EU input is filtered at the national level. To further understand how European issues are domesticated, one needs to test the proposed factors on a broader basis and make the underlying mechanism manifest by validating them with external data. To do that it is necessary to take account not only of general country differences but also of issue-specific constellations within each country. Comparisons thus

need to be cross-national and cross-issue to understand 'domestic adaptations with national colors' (Risse et al., 2001, p. 1).

As a consequence of the filtering at the national level, the European communicative space has as many faces as countries. As debates on Europe are regarded a precondition for democratization of the European Union, there is a need to answer the question of whether, and how, the plurality of debates on European issues might foster legitimacy and integration. It is clear that integration by public communication cannot mean homogenization, but—if at all—calls for integration in plurality. This form of integration allows that debates on EU issues will differ between countries if they reflect the dependency of the European Union without walling off the own nation state (Adam, 2007).

The results also yield cautious—as based on only four test cases—implications for the political process in the European Union. This process, which has taken place behind closed doors for the last decades, has the opportunity to be confronted with public debates if national politicians foster that. If, however, they do not put Europe on the agenda, other national or transnational actors will have a difficult time compensating for their failure. Consequently, public debates have also not freed themselves from the elitist character of EU integration. In addition the analysis has shown that if Europe becomes public, factors engrained in the nation state—like policy traditions—are deeply reflected within the national depictions of EU integration.

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