

National Media in Europeanized Public Sphere: The Openness and Support of the Press for European Integration

Paper presented at the State of the art workshop
Organized by the Network of Excellence CONNEX

**“A European Public Sphere:
How much of it do we have and how much do we need?”**

Amsterdam, December 9-10, 2005

by

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Abstract

This paper aims at assessing the role of national press with respect to emerging Europeanised public sphere. It introduces the approach of the “Europub.com” project which set out to study Europeanisation in terms of communicative linkages in the public space of seven countries. Within the framework of this research, this paper focuses on the role and the voice of the press by looking at the claims that are made in editorials. The empirical analysis investigates first the openness of 28 newspapers in 7 countries for European perspectives by assessing the degree to which their editorials feature European scopes. Second, we also examine the media’s opinion about European integration. The overall picture that one can draw from the findings is that the level of Europeanisation of national media depends on the salience of Europeanized issues in public debate, while the support of European integration varies across countries. Thus, we find high levels of Europeanization and high support of EU integration in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The media in Netherlands and Switzerland are more cautious to open their debate even if they support European Integration as an issue. We also see that the UK media deviate substantially from the patterns of communication found in the press on the continent, since the British press excludes European scopes and opposes European integration.

1 Introduction

In the discussions about the democratic deficit of the European Union, scholars have come to acknowledge that European integration from above must be accompanied by a Europeanisation of public communication in order to overcome the EU's lack of legitimacy and popular involvement. The request for public communication has triggered a scholarly debate about the emergence of a European public sphere. Discussing the conditions for such a forum of communication (Neidhardt et al. 2000), most scholars agree that the mass media play a crucial role in public representation of a European public sphere.

According to theories of the public sphere, the mass media are the institutionalised forum of debate, which serves as a central linkage between the public and the political structure. In this function, they are conveyors of information about issues and actors according to their professional norms and values. However, the media are not merely serving other actors as a channel of communication, forum for exchange, and medium of self observation of society. The media must also be seen as political actors in the public sphere who legitimately raise their own voice (Page 1996). They do so in particular by assigning relevance to issues for public debate and by expressing their own opinion.

This paper starts out with a sketch on the current literature, thereby pointing out some theoretical and empirical shortcomings in defining Europeanisation and in sorting out the role of the media therein. In its second part it introduces the approach to Europeanisation by the Europub.com project¹ which set out to study political communication in terms of European communicative linkages in within and across EU-member states (Koopmans/Erbe 2004). Within the framework of this research, this paper investigates the role and the voice of the media in Europeanised public communication. Empirically, the media's voice is analysed on the basis of claims that are made by the press in their editorials². Two aspects are analyzed: first we study the openness of the press to European perspectives by looking at the degree to which the press features European scopes. We also investigate the media's support of European integration.

2 Conceptualising Europeanisation of the Public Sphere and the Role of the Media

In the debate about a potentially emerging European public sphere, scholars have come to emphasize that the communication flow between Europe and the public depends crucially on the mass media³. Thus, a significant strand of research highlights the centrality of media in a

¹ The Europub.com project is coordinated by Ruud Koopmans Free University Amsterdam. Project partners are Paul Statham, University of Leeds; Donatella della Porta, European University Institute Florence; Hanspeter Kriesi, University of Zurich; Jos de Beus, Universiteit Amsterdam; Juan Diez Medrano, ASEP Barcelona, Virginie Buiraudon, CRAPS Lille and Barbara Pfetsch, University of Hohenheim, cf. <http://europub.wz-berlin.de>.

² We concentrate on the press and press editorials since by focussing on this format, we can expect to capture the discursive contribution of media (Kleinen-von Königslöw et al. 2005).

³ According to Eurobarometer data, two-thirds of EU citizens consistently identify the media as their most important source of political information (Peter/de Vreese 2003:3).

potentially emerging European public sphere (Gerhards 1993, 2000, Schlesinger 1997, Schlesinger/Kevin 2000, Kunelius/ Sparks 2001, Kevin 2003, Koopmans/Erbe 2003). Concerning a mass-mediated European public sphere, scholars agree that a genuinely transnational mass media system, that could maintain the political functions of a democratic European public sphere, is rather unlikely. Hence, Europeanisation “is for the most part dependent on the output of the national media” (Kevin 2003: 52). Such Europeanisation of national public spheres would occur when nationally based mass media shift their focus away from the national political arena towards the European level.

Thus far, empirical evidence on such forms of Europeanisation of national public spheres concentrate on rather simple measures, such as the visibility of European issues and actors in national news coverage⁴ (Peter/de Vreese 2003, Kevin 2003, Gerhards 2000, Eilders/Voltmer 2003). The vast majority of the studies demonstrates marginal levels of visibility of European issues and actors in the print media that hardly allow to speak of the development of a Europeanised public sphere. Likewise Peter and de Vreese (2003) conclude for television news: “Although such notions may be desirable and theoretically challenging, the data presented in this article tell us this: there is no European public sphere. (...) Television, it seems, has never left the nation state” (Peter and de Vreese 2003:25). Contrary evidence is provided by Sievert (1998) and Trenz (2004) who found a quite high level of European aspects in national media. Given these rather large discrepancies in the empirical findings and their interpretations, Neidhardt (2006) concludes that there is hardly any generalizable state of the art in research about European public spheres nor any methodological reflexion⁵.

This paper deviates from the previous research, since it argues that the visibility of European issues and actors in the national media as an indicator of European public sphere is too simple in concept and measurement⁶. In addition, we claim that the role of the media in previous research is underspecified. If Europeanisation is so much dependent on the mass media, their role and functions as well as their positions towards the EU need to be assessed in their complexity. It therefore seems indispensable to sharply distinguish between the media’s function to serve other collective actors as forum of exchange and the media’s role as political actors which speak in their own right.

2.1 The Media’s Role in the Europeanised Public Sphere

In European public sphere, the mass media fulfill crucial functions, which Eilders/Voltmer (2003: 9-10) discuss as (1) agenda setting and second level agenda-setting (or framing); and (2) opinion formation which refers to presenting own positions and evaluations of actors. In their agenda-setting role the media shape the news coverage, which is dependent on external

⁴ Often also, conclusions are drawn from secondary analyses of data that were gathered for other purposes and are not always suited to grasp the intricacies of the European multi-level polity (e.g., Gerhards 2000, Eilders/Voltmer 2003).

⁵ The citation is taken from page 6 of the typeset manuscript of the Neidhardt (2006) chapter.

⁶ For a detailed discussion and criticism of previous studies see Koopmans/Pfetsch (2003).

sources and their information. However, if the media act on their own account, they may take the liberty to deviate from the news agenda of other actors. Within the recognized format of editorials and commentaries, they select issues and assign relevance to them as topics for public deliberation (Dearing/Rogers 1996, Protes/McCombs 1991). Thus the issue agenda of the media in the editorial section introduces their own salience in the issue agenda and may not follow the rank order of issues by non-media actors. The same argument applies to the so-called “second-level agenda-setting” function (Ghanem 1997; McCombs et al. 2000) which refers to a process that scholars of public discourse call “framing”. With regard to Europeanisation, one specific question regarding media framing of issues is crucial: Do the media select issues that allow for an opening up of the discourse for transnational scopes? Hence, a significant density of references to European aspects might be an indicator for the readiness of the media to overcome the boundaries of national public debate which might be regarded as a first step towards a European debate beyond the nation state.

The most genuine and active function of the media as political actors refers to opinion formation. This implies that the media take their own stance on issues by commenting on the opinions and actions of non-media political actors. This function is the predominant purpose of editorials. Eilders et al. (2004) demonstrate with the German case that national newspapers express their political preferences insofar as they expose a more or less stable and coherent editorial line. While media are usually bound to the left-right spectrum of politics as regards national policies and debates, their positions and stakes as regards European politics leave more room to maneuver. Therefore one would expect that the freedom of the media to come up with their own position in European issues may be higher than for national ones. Thus, it is an open question to which extent the national media support European integration and whether these positions to some degree reflect the national attitudes towards this issue.

Following these two media functions, the remainder of this paper aims at two research questions: (1) we ask to what degree the national media are open for European perspectives which we view as a crucial condition for the long term Europeanisation of national public spheres. (2) we want to know to what extent the national media support European integration which we see as a condition for the democratic legitimization of the EU politics within and across EU member states.

2.2 The European Public Sphere as a Diversified Structure of Vertical and Horizontal Communicative Linkages

For studying the Europeanisation of public spheres and assessing the role of the media therein the Europub.com-project⁷ refers to the interactive nature of public communication. We propose to investigate the horizontal (between EU member-state) and vertical (between EU member-states and the EU level) communicative linkages that are made by the various actors

⁷ For details see: <https://europub.wz-berlin.de>

intervening in the public sphere. Further, we recognize and take into account that the level and degree of Europeanisation might vary across policy areas. Finally, we are able to assess the media's position by analyzing their claims in editorials.

As regards our notion of Europeanisation, the Europub.com-project conceives of an Europeanised public sphere in a relative sense. Following the work of Koopmans and Erbe (2004), we propose that the spatial reach and boundaries of public communication can be determined by investigating patterns of communicative flows and assessing the relative density of public communication within and between different political spaces. The center of this communicative space is the national public sphere of each country. The next level of communication refers to other national European public spaces, which comprise the EU member countries and those countries that are candidates to enter the EU. The third level comprises the transnational, European political space, in which the European institutions and common policies are situated. The degree to which public spheres can be deemed "national", "transnational", or "European" depends on the density of communicative linkages within and between these spaces.

It follows from this notion that with regard to Europeanisation of national public spheres the media may engage in two basic forms⁸ of geo-political and spatial contextualisation of their public communication: (a) *Vertical Europeanisation* consists of communicative linkages between the national and the European level. (b) *Horizontal Europeanisation* includes communicative linkages between different EU-member states.

In contrast to previous research that considered only vertical Europeanisation, our approach includes the dimension of horizontal Europeanisation. We argue that by looking at vertical and horizontal modes of Europeanisation, our study is well equipped to capture the flow of politically relevant communication within the common European space. Regarding the level and intensity of Europeanisation, we do not expect Europeanised public communication to penetrate the national public spheres on a general level with regard to all themes of public debate or all policy fields. Considering the large differences in the actual competencies of European institutions among different policy fields, it is unrealistic to expect an overall high and stable degree of European debate across all policy fields and issues. Instead, we expect patterns of public communication to reflect the actual distribution of power between the various European and the national levels, as well as whether the European decision-making process is primarily intergovernmental or primarily supranational in nature.

Therefore, the Europub.com-project chose to analyse public communication with respect to seven issue fields that represent various settings and levels of national and European governance. In addition to the meta-field of European integration, six substantive policy domains were selected for analysis. The issue fields vary systematically according to their level of formal Europeanisation, reaching from fully integrated to merely coordinated domains: (1)

⁸ These two forms of Europeanisation are the most basic ones. If all possible linkages and constellations are taken into account, there are at least five forms of Europeanisation (Koopmans/Erbe 2003).

Monetary politics: currency politics and interest rate, and (2) Agriculture: subsidies, livestock and dairy quotas, animal disease control represent issue areas that are characterised by a high degree of EU involvement in national politics, which to an important extent entails supranational powers for EU institutions. (3) Immigration: entry and exit, and (4) Troops deployment mark the policy areas in which we observe increasing EU competencies (or at least attempt to increase the EU's role), but where national decision-making is still predominant and the EU political process is dominated by intergovernmental negotiations. Finally, (5) Retirement and pension schemes and (6) Primary and secondary education are domains that have largely remained under the umbrella of national or regional decision making, and where the role of the EU is very limited. The research design that varies policy areas with respect to EU competences allows to test whether the shift of decision making and responsibility away from the nation state is followed by the opening up of communicative space to supranational angles, actors and interpretations.

2.3 Methodology and Data

The Europub.com- project of which this paper is a part includes seven European countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. For the analysis of the voice of the press, we draw on 5294 editorials of four daily newspapers in each country over a three years period between 2000 and 2002. Regarding the distribution of commentaries, we analysed between 595 and 1004 cases per country⁹: United Kingdom 910, France 678, Netherlands 732, Germany 1004, Switzerland 681, Spain 595, Italy 694.

The general approach to data collection was quantitative content analysis of newspapers which is based on claims as unit of analysis. A claim is defined as an instance of strategic action in the public sphere. It consists of the expression of a political opinion by some form of physical or verbal action, regardless of the form this expression takes (statement, violence, repression, decision, demonstration, court ruling, etc. etc.).

An act of claims making usually consists of :

- a subject actor, or *claimant*, who makes a demand, proposal, appeal, or criticism;
- an *addressee*, who is held responsible for implementing the claim, or is the target of criticism or support;
- an *object actor*, whose interests are or would be positively (beneficiary) or negatively affected by the claim;
- the *substantive content* of the claim, stating what is to be done (aim) and why (frame).

⁹ In order to restrict the coding effort to manageable proportions, we used a sampling strategy: In those countries with a low number of commentaries, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, we selected every day of the year. In the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain – countries that yield a medium number of commentaries - we registered the commentaries on every second day. For Germany, we sampled every fourth day. On the days of the sample we looked through all newspapers and selected all commentaries related to our seven issue fields.

In the editorial analysis we treat the commentator as claimant and the main message of the editorial as one claim by the newspaper. Thus, the coding of media claims¹⁰ recorded the commentator who addresses his demands to actors or institutions (addressees) in criticism or support. We also qualified the initiating event of the commentary, the object actors in whose interests the press claim is made, and the content of the demand and the argumentative framing that supports it. Importantly for determining whether or not we are dealing with Europeanised claims, we coded the geographical or polity level at which the different actors and institutions that are mentioned in the claim are situated (e.g., European or national scope), as well as, in the case of national or subnational actors, the country where they are based (e.g., Germany, France). In addition, we also recorded the scope of the event that triggered media commentary.

We only recorded claims that are explicitly expressed in the editorial. Thus, in the 5294 editorials we found 4739 claims, that is 89.5 % of all editorials. Since one can assume that the editorials represent the political and ideological commentary line of each newspaper, we take the aggregation of claims by individual commentators as the position of the media organization. In order to capture the range of ideological positions in the media system of each country, the variation in styles of addressing the political public and the regional aspect of the media system, we draw on four daily newspapers of different types in each country under study: a centre-left as well as a centre-right quality newspaper, a tabloid newspaper, as well as a regional newspaper in a region with a specific regional identity.

Since not all media systems are able to fit into such a clear cut set of the theoretically defined dimensions, we had to make compromises in the selection of newspapers for the study¹¹. Thus in countries where the media landscape does not feature a clear cut yellow press, we tried to select newspapers for the study that can be regarded as functional equivalents to the tabloid press. In countries where we could not identify such a functional equivalent newspaper, we chose a second regional press title. For analysis, we chose in the UK : The Guardian, The Times, The Scotsman, The Sun; in France: Le Monde, Le Figaro, Ouest France, L'Humanite; in the Netherlands: De Vokskant, Het Algemeen Dagblad, De Limburger, De Telegraaf; in Germany; Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Leipziger Volkszeitung and Bild-Zeitung ; in Switzerland: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Le Temps, Le Matin, Blick ; in Spain : El Pais, ABC, La Vanguardia, El Mundo ; in Italy : La Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera, Il Mattino, La Nazione.

¹⁰ The Codebook for content coding of commentaries was developed by Adam et al. (2002). It is available at <https://europub.wz-berlin.de>.

¹¹ While we were able to detect a left and a right quality paper in all countries under study, we faced some difficulties with regard to the tabloids. As the country reports show, there are different cultural notions about tabloids in the various countries and some media systems hardly include newspapers that would fit in the category at all. For instance, not all national media systems reveal such a sharp contrast between quality newspapers and tabloids like in the UK.

3 The Openness of the Press for European Scopes

The central question of Europeanisation in press claims is addressed in this study by analyzing the degree to which the editorials contain communicative linkages that transcend the national public and political arena. Thus, we try to identify whether the media open up in their editorials to European scopes. In the analysis, we collapse all vertical and horizontal European scopes into one category of European scopes which is contrasted with either only national references or supranational linkages¹². As a measure for the openness of the media to European perspectives we computed a summary score for the European references on four dimensions of each claim. Thus, the variable Summary EU scope takes the value of 4, if a European scope is present (1) in the initiating event of the editorial, plus (2) the most important (“first”) issue in the editorial, plus (3) the most important (“first”) addressee, plus (4) the most important (“first”) object actor. By contrast, the value 0 indicates that none of the claim dimensions refers to horizontal or vertical EU linkages.

Table 1: Summary EU Scope per country

	DE	CH	ES	IT	UK	FR	NL	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
No EU-Scope	47,0	48,6	41,2	41,3	63,0	42,5	56,3	50,2	1970
1 EU-Scope	8,4	21,5	9,9	4,7	14,1	7,8	10,0	10,7	421
2 EU-Scopes	8,9	5,7	11,5	12,3	10,3	8,0	6,1	8,9	351
3 EU Scopes	12,0	6,1	14,4	17,7	7,2	13,3	7,6	10,8	426
All EU-Scopes	23,6	18,1	23,0	24,1	5,3	28,5	20,1	19,3	759
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
Means (1-4)	1.56	1.23	1.68	1.79	0.77	1.77	1.25	1.38	
N	593	442	243	644	806	527	672		3.927

Table 1 depicts the distribution of Summary EU scopes in all seven policy areas across countries. It highlights in a nutshell that the UK press is by far the least European voice in the chorus of the national newspapers: 63 percent of all claims refer to non EU-dimensions. Thus the vast majority of public media statements excludes any European dimension and features national and to a small degree supranational aspects. The outsider role of the UK media is also corroborated if we look at the share of claims that contain all European dimensions. Only 5 % of the press claims are fully Europeanised. Next to the UK, yet with a big distance, we can position the Dutch media. However, they are not as self referential as the British press, since 20% of their claims feature all EU scopes. However, 56 % of all claims in the Dutch newspapers are restricted to non European aspects. A pretty similar pattern is evident for media in Switzerland that are in 49 % of all claims self contained and the all EU scopes score 18 %.

¹² Supranational linkages here include references between EU-countries and International Organisations or bilateral references of EU-countries to Non-EU-countries like the US or Russia or references between Non-EU-countries.

A sharp contrast appears between this group of national media and the press in France. The French media are by far most open to European dimensions of claims making. 29 % of all claims in the editorials of France contain all four EU scopes simultaneously, followed by the press in Italy (24%), in Germany (24%) and in Spain (23%) whose share of fully Europeanised claims dimensions is about the same. Thus, we see nicely that France, Italy, Spain and Germany maintain print media that are prone to register what is happening on the EU level and other EU countries. At least one in four claims is fully Europeanized.

Our conclusions about the prominence of EU aspects in media claims across country to some degree mirror the salience of the issue field of EU integration in the press. In order to get a picture about the level of Europeanisation in policy fields that are not a priori defined by a high EU reference, we compare the Summary EU Scope across countries for all issue fields but EU integration.

Table 2: Summary EU Scope per country (without EU integration)

	DE	CH	ES	IT	UK	FR	NL	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
No EU-Scope	65.8	80.5	54.6	58.5	74.8	61.0	70.2	67.6	1968
1 EU-Scope	7.8	5.6	10.4	6.2	12.4	7.9	9.5	8.9	259
2 EU-Scopes	6.1	1.5	10.9	11.7	6.2	6.5	4.8	6.7	195
3 EU Scopes	7.1	3.4	11.5	9.7	4.3	10.1	5.0	6.8	197
All EU-Scopes	13.2	9.0	12.6	13.9	2.4	14.4	10.4	10.0	291
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Means (1-4)	.94	.55	1.17	1.14	.47	1.09	.76	.83	
N	424	267	183	453	679	367	537		2910

Table 2 gives the results which yield the same structure of claims making across the newspapers in the various countries except for the fact the level of European scopes is lower. Whereas the level of Non-European scopes is 50 % on average if EU Integration is included, it is 68 % if this issue is excluded. On the other end of the scale, claims with all EU-scopes make up for about 20% if EU Integration is contained in the picture, while it is half as much if EU integration is not assessed. Again the UK, the Netherlands and Switzerland form the group of countries where non EU-scopes are most prominent. On the other hand, Spain, Italy, France and Germany feature a considerable share of EU scopes in the media debate, even if EU integration is excluded from the picture.

Table 3: Summary EU Scope per issue field

	Mone- tary	Agricul- ture	Immi- gration	Troops	Pension	Educa- tion	EU- Inte- gration	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
No EU-Scope	16,6	45,1	73,9	85,3	91,3	96,0	0,2	50,2	1970
1 EU-Scope	17,9	13,1	10,1	6,7	3,4	2,0	15,9	10,7	421
2 EU-Scopes	15,1	10,1	5,8	5,2	1,5	1,2	15,3	8,9	351
3 EU Scopes	17,9	12,8	5,8	2,6	1,1	0,3	22,5	10,8	426
4 EU-Scopes	32,4	18,9	4,5	0,3	2,6	0,5	46,0	19,3	759
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
Means (1-4)	2.32	1.47	.57	.26	.20	.07	2.98	1.38	
N	614	328	398	659	265	646	1.017		3.927

If we compare the EU summary scope across issue fields, we see the texture of the press debates: In Table 3 we notice that pension and education in newspaper claims are completely contained within national debate. Immigration and troop deployment are high in Non EU scope as well. Yet this does not mean that the debate in these issue fields is contained in national boundaries. We know from other analyses, the level of supranational and multilateral references is comparatively high in troop deployment and still above average in immigration. The most critical issue with respect to EU scopes is agriculture, since the press claims are equally split between only national scopes and EU scopes. Although EU competences in the political decision making are pretty high in agriculture, still every second claim is confined to the national debate. On the other hand, almost about 20 % of claims that are completely Europeanised. Table 3 further stresses that monetary policies and European integration issues cannot but be debated with a European frame of reference.

Table 4: Summary EU Scope per newspaper type

	Quality press	Regional and Tabloid Press	Total	N
	%	%	%	
No EU-Scope	48.4	52.9	50.2	1970
1 EU-Scopel	9.8	12.1	10.7	421
2 EU-Scopes	8.7	9.4	8.9	351
3 EU Scopes	12.0	9.0	10.8	426
All EU-Scopes	21.2	16.5	19.3	759
Total	100	100	100	
Means (1-4)	1.48	1.24	1.38	
N	2378	1549		3927

Regarding the variation of European scopes across newspaper types Table 4 shows that the differences between the newspaper titles are rather moderate. The national quality press seems to be more inclined to stress European dimensions than the regional newspapers and the tab-

oids, the discrepancy is rather moderate though. Thus, we can assume that the differences in terms of country and issue fields by far outweigh the variation across newspaper types.

The same conclusion holds true if we look at the variation over time. Table 5 shows that Non-EU Scopes have increased between 2000 and 2002. Additional analyses reveal that the increase of No EU-Scopes over the the three years does not mean that claims making has become more national in this period. Instead, the decrease of EU-scopes was compensated by an increase of supranational scopes, especially with regard to the issue field of troop deployment after 9/11.

Table 5: Summary EU Scope per Year

	Year			Total	N
	2000	2001	2002		
	%	%	%		
No EU-Scope	44.2	57.1	49.1	50.2	1970
1 EU-Scopel	11.8	10.4	10.1	10.7	421
2 EU-Scopes	7.7	8.4	10.7	8.9	351
3 EU Scopes	9.8	10.8	11.9	10.8	426
All EU-Scopes	26.5	13.4	18.3	19.3	759
Total	100	100	100	100	
Means (1-4)	1.63	1.13	1.40	1.38	
N	1284	1310	1333		3927

Our findings so far clearly show that the level of Europeanisation in the press strongly varies across the countries and issue fields. Since we described the data in bivariate terms, we have only been speculating which one of the factors does yield the more powerful effects on the Europeanisation of press claims making. In order to assess the strength of the factors that lead to variation in the level of European scopes, we computed a multivariate Analysis of variance with country, issue-field, newspaper type and year as independent variables and EU summary scope as dependent variable. The results reveal the general nature of references in newspaper claims, since our model explains 60 % of the variance of the level of European scopes. The strongest and highly significant effect is caused by the issue field (Beta .745). This means that the Europeanisation highly depends on the issues discussed in the media. Yet, we also find a quite strong significant effect of the country (Beta .230) in which the press claims making is observed. Compared to these two main sources of variation of levels of European scope, the newspaper type (Beta .072) and the year (.125) hardly yields an effect on European scopes. This means that the national press within each country rather share their reference framework of political issues in public debate. Moreover, the newspaper's voice was pretty stable over time in all countries.

4 Evaluation of European Integration

The second dimension of the role of the print media in public sphere refers to whether they support the European integration. We recorded for each claim whether the commentator is overall sympathetic to European integration, which we regard as an indicator for the overall editorial line regarding this issue and its potential implications. Table 6 shows that a majority of claims (55%) is published in which the writers definitely support European integration. Except for the UK, the average of negative claims about European integration is below five percent. If we compare across countries, the most positive attitude towards European integration are found in Italian and French media. More than 80 percent of the media claims in Italy and 78 percent in France are favourable towards EU integration. It seems that in the two countries there is a strong consensus in the press that EU integration is an overall positive project. By contrast, the British journalists seem to dislike European integration. The majority of claims in the UK press (49%) stands out by an overt negative attitude.

Table 6: Editorial Position towards EU integration per country

	DE	CH	ES	IT	UK	FR	NL	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Negative (-1)	2,9	4,0	0,3	1,1	49,0	3,0	6,7	9,0	200
Mixed/ambivalent	30,9	45,7	69,0	14,4	34,8	18,7	41,4	35,6	794
Positive (+1)	66,2	50,4	30,7	84,5	16,2	78,3	51,9	55,4	1.234
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
Positive – negative (%)	63,3	46,4	30,4	83,4	-32,8	75,3	45,2	46,4	
Means	0,63	0,46	0,30	0,83	-0,33	0,75	0,45	0,46	
N	385	278	316	368	296	300	285		2.228

The attitudinal space between the most positive and most negative national media is filled by the press in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. In the Swiss and Dutch media the positive voices override the negative ones by 46 percentage points, in the German press the difference amounts to even 63 percentage points. Finally, the Spanish newspapers are most idiosyncratic regarding the attitudes of the commentators towards European integration. Although the media in Spain rank among the most Europeanised media in terms of scopes, the vast majority of opinions (69%) are mixed, undecided or ambivalent. In addition, the share of 31% of claims with positive attitudes is moderate in the Spanish press if we compare it with other national media.

Table 7: Editorial Position towards EU integration per issue field

	Monetary	Agriculture	Immigration	Troops	Pension	Education	EU-Integration	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Negative	12,2	8,8	3,4	2,0	5,0	0,0	8,2	9,0	200
Mixed/ambivalent	42,5	55,8	48,3	31,4	60,0	50,0	27,9	35,6	794
Positive	45,3	35,4	48,3	66,7	35,0	50,0	64,0	55,4	1.234
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	
Positive – negative (%)	33,1	26,6	44,9	64,7	30,0	50,0	55,8	46,4	
Means	0,33	0,27	0,45	0,65	0,30	0,50	0,56	0,46	
N	640	181	89	51	20	12	1.235		2.228

It is hardly surprising that positive evaluations by journalists predominantly concentrate on the debates in the issue field of European integration. As table 7 indicates, two thirds of claims here are accompanied by positive opinions. It is also quite plausible that the issue fields that are typical for a predominantly national debate, namely pension and education, are characterized by a high level of mixed or undecided attitudes regarding European integration. The highest levels of claims featuring positive sentiments are discovered in monetary policies, immigration and troop deployment. Particularly in the latter issue field journalists agree with the involvement of the EU. Regarding the evaluations in editorials, the most critical issue field is agriculture. In this issue field with far reaching EU competences we see almost 60 % of undecided or ambivalent sentiments of journalists. Moreover, facing 9 % of claims with negative media attitudes, the critical potential is comparatively high.

Table 8: Editorial Position towards EU integration per newspaper type

	Quality press	Regional and Tabloid Press	Total	N
	%	%	%	
Negative	4,6	16,4	9,0	200
Mixed/ambivalent	35,1	36,6	35,6	794
Positive	60,3	47,0	55,4	1.234
Total	100	100	100	
Positive- negative (%)	55,7	30,6	46,4	
Means	0,56	0,31	0,46	
N	1.403	825		2.228

The journalists who speak up in support of European integration are predominantly based in the quality press. We see in Table 8 that the majority of journalists' claims in the quality press is positive (60%) and only 5 % percent are negative. In contrast, the proportion of negative claims in the regional and the tabloid press is four times as high, as we see 16 % of claims opposing European integration compared to 47 % supporting it.

Eventually, we aimed at assessing which factors determine the media positions to European issues. Hence, we conducted a Multivariate Classification Analysis in which the country, the issue field, the newspaper type and the year were introduced as independent variables. The findings reveal that the position of the media can be sufficiently explained by our model. The four independent variables in our model account for 32 % of the variance (R-square). Interestingly enough, the effect of the country (Beta .506) is by far the strongest and most dominant source for variation. The issue-field (Beta .189), newspaper type (Beta .128) and year (.061) had very weak effects. This means that the attitudes of the editorial towards European integration depend predominantly on the country in which the newspaper is published. Thus, if we see that UK journalists hate European integration while French journalists support it, we capture a crucial cleavage in the media induced public sphere in Europe.

5 Summary and Conclusion

Our study allows for identifying the role and the position of the national press as actors in public communication who have the potential to open up the debate for Europeanised scopes. Moreover, the press is seen as actor that holds their own idiosyncratic positions about European issues. The paper presents a comparative analysis of the newspaper editorials across seven countries and issue fields thereby aiming at discerning the voice of the print media in 2000-2002.

The overall picture that we can draw from our findings is that - contrary to previous research - there is a remarkable level of European debate in the press of the countries under study and an even greater potential to further develop transnational communicative linkages within the public space of the European Union. This conclusion can be reached not only from the salience of European integration compared to other issues on the newspaper agenda, but also from the analysis of European scopes in media claims making. Moreover, the evaluations of European integration shows that the European political project is supported by the media of most countries under study. While this general conclusion is true for the majority of countries under study, there is one exception. The British press deviates in all dimensions from the general picture, as European integration is played down on the issue agenda, as European scopes are neglected, as European integration is utterly opposed.

Against the background of this general conclusion, we find of course more or less stark contrasts between the national media that point to the fact that each media culture does feature its idiosyncrasies that are also prevalent in their voice about Europe. For instance, we find that the propensity to open up to European scopes depends largely on whether the media engage in the debates in issue fields that are characterised by strong political competences of the EU. Thus, if the media concentrate on issues like education or social policy which are decided foremost on the national level, there is not much room left for representing European perspectives. On the other hand, if the press is eager to engage in discussing monetary politics or the

issue of European integration, there is space to overcome the parochial perspective. What we can conclude from the analysis of EU scopes is that the more the national debates recognize issue fields with strong political competences of the EU, the more the media open up to transnational perspectives.

While the openness of mediated political debate to EU scopes is largely a residual of the issue fields under discussion, the evaluation of EU integration depends on the country where the newspaper is published. It seems that the medias' opinion about Europe resonate with the position of the national political elites and at the same time reinforces it. For instance, the media in France and Germany are most open to EU scopes and most supporting of the integration and the deepening of the EU, while the British press opposes the political project of Europe strongly. Even the Dutch and the Swiss media, that turned out to be rather reluctant to open up to European scopes, are in favour of EU integration. And while the Italian and Spanish media are most open to European perspectives in their editorials, their opinions about European integration is either mixed or indifferent. Finally, we see that the British press is not only most parochial in their scope, they seem to utterly hate European integration and EU-actors.

As we have emphasized many times, the British media are the clear outsider in the chorus of the national media that are studied in the Europub.com project. The British press seems to try hard to ignore European scopes whenever possible. The UK press is opposing the political project of Europe and the attitudes of journalists towards European integration are overwhelmingly negative. Not surprisingly, we find that the frontrunners in negativism are the British tabloids. There could be no stronger contrast in our data than the contrast between the British and the French press. Our analysis clearly shows that French editorials are most open to European scopes from all national media. Moreover, there is strong support for the enlargement of EU political competences and for EU integration in general. The German newspapers resemble the French media voices insofar as they are rather open to transnational EU perspectives. They also support the deepening of the political EU and a very large majority of commentators hold most favourable opinions about European integration. The Italian media share with the French and the German media their proneness to include European scopes in their editorials. Moreover, Italian journalists seem to be quite supportive of European integration.

Like the Italian press, the newspapers in Spain are among the national newspapers that most eager to represent European perspectives. We find a quite high level of completely Europeanized claims. However, concerning European integration we find a widespread indifference or mixed feelings of Spanish journalists. By contrast, half of the claims in the Dutch press are supportive to EU integration. Yet the Dutch media rank surprisingly low in European scopes. The reason is that the media in the Netherlands in the period of 2000-2002 were strongly occupied with issues in the national political domain. Finally, the Swiss media share with the Dutch media a rather strong reluctance to include EU scopes. The vast majority of claims in the Swiss media do not contain any reference to the EU. The rather strong focus on national matters is all the more plausible as Switzerland has not decided yet to join the EU. On the

other hand, regarding the opinions about European integration, we find that every second commentator of the Swiss press under study is favourable towards European integration.

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