1 Introduction

1.1 An historical inquiry into the European public sphere

The idea of a European public sphere emerged and gained greater currency in a Europe-wide debate among intellectuals in the early 1990s as a response to the advances of European integration. As the European Union (EU) increasingly adopted state-like features and as the “permissive consensus” among citizens appeared to be waning in the wake of the Maastricht Treaty, academic and political observers started to voice their concerns about a growing democratic deficit. Critics tended to judge the EU by the familiar and seemingly self-evident standards of national democratic institutions. Consequently, some of them called for a European constitution that would install the tried and tested institutional instruments of the nation state at the European level, too. However, contrasting Europe to the nation state, many critics questioned the societal preconditions for democracy at the European level: Above all, it was difficult to define Europe’s sovereign, the European people. The German constitutional court even argued that there was no European demos. The lack of a solid European identity, an active European civil society and a critical European public sphere seemed all too obvious. Accordingly, many of the critics doubted that legitimate democratic governance at the European level was possible.

Jürgen Habermas criticised such essentialist notions of the nation implicitly defined as an ethnic or cultural community and called for a civic identity based on transnational communication instead. Similarly, the sociologists Klaus Eder and

2 For the time period of my study, I will use the historically appropriate term European Community/ies (EC). However, for phenomena that continue to be of relevance or mainly relate to the post-Maastricht period, I will use European Union (EU).
6 Bundesverfassungsgericht, „Maastricht-Urteil,” BVerfGE 89 (12 October, 1993).
8 Habermas, „Remarks on Dieter Grimm’s „Does Europe need a constitution?“,“ 306.
Cathleen Kantner warned against the fallacies of “methodological nationalism”. They argued that the national model could not simply be transposed to the European level. The notion of an emerging “European society”, the specific problems of European democracy and the European public sphere required novel conceptualisations and political solutions. Eder and others emphasised that the concept of the European public sphere had to take into account both the specific normative expectations with regard to European democracy and the particular empirical conditions for communication in the context of European integration. The transnational controversy in respect of the European public sphere triggered a wave of conceptual investigations and empirical research. Thus, from the end of the 1990s onwards, social and political scientists started various research projects in order to gather empirical evidence.

The concept of the European public sphere is polysemic. At least three different meanings can be distinguished. The idea first emerged as a political concept in the specific context of the EU in the post-Maastricht period. Subsequently, the term has been used both as an analytical concept for empirical research and as a descriptive term for the empirical reality of European public communication. When they began to study the European public sphere empirically, social scientists faced the challenge of operationalising a normative political idea. Ever since Habermas introduced his notion of the public sphere in the 1960s, the term had carried strong normative and critical connotations. At the same time, researchers had to devise an analytical concept adequate for empirical research at the European level. They assumed that the function of public sphere was to ensure transparency and participation and thus buttress democracy. Even scholars critical of Habermas have accepted that the key role of the public sphere was to provide the communicative preconditions for democracy.

14 Cf. Habermas’ classical study about the decline of the public sphere: Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, MA, 1989 [1962]).
European public sphere should serve as the yardstick for assessing the empirical phenomena of European public communication and their democratic “quality”. Inevitably, the empirical phenomena were bound to remain deficient against this standard. However, the degree of deficiency could serve as a measure. Finally, like many analytical concepts, the term European public sphere has been conveniently used as a generic descriptive term for the empirical reality of European public communication. In order to distinguish the theoretical idea and the analytical model from the empirical findings, in this study the latter shall be described as European public communication.

This historical study seeks to address some important lacunae in the existing body of research on the European public sphere in both the social sciences and contemporary history. While social scientists have made various claims which imply change over time, longer-term perspectives and research covering the time period before Maastricht have largely been lacking. Optimistic observers in the debate frequently claimed that there was an “emerging European public sphere”, noting that the tacit “permissive consensus” had yielded to a more vivid public debate and that the discourse in the media had set in motion the “democratising dynamics of the European public sphere”. By contrast, pessimists argued that European public communication remained deficient and largely confined to national perspectives. For instance, Jürgen Gerhards claimed that the European public sphere has been “lagging behind” the advances of European integration, thus aggravating the democratic deficit. Even though such claims imply a historical perspective, social science research remained limited to the 1990s and 2000s. Nonetheless, it will be impossible to establish the degree of change and the nov-


17 Communication is about as elusive a term as the public sphere, however, communication does not carry the same normative overtones. For an overview on the concept of communication see e.g. Roland Burkart, “Kommunikationstheorien,” in Öffentliche Kommunikation. Handbuch der Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft, ed. Günter Bentele, Hans-Bernd Brosius, and Otfried Jarren (Wiesbaden, 2003).


elty of phenomena under investigation here if information on European public communication in the immediately-preceding period is conspicuously absent. Consequently, this study will enquire into public communication during the time period up to Maastricht, in order to complement the research and the debate in the social sciences.

At the same time, this inquiry will make a contribution in two areas historians of postwar Europe have frequently discussed, but where empirical research has remained very limited so far. First, social historians have acknowledged the importance of the question of an emerging European society in the second half of the 20th century, discussing in particular the role of European civil society and the European public sphere. Nevertheless, the existing historical works mainly consist of conceptual or historical overviews that rely heavily on secondary literature. A properly systematic historical inquiry into political communication as a reflection of a European public sphere has thus been lacking so far.

Secondly, historians of European integration have recently started to re-examine the period from the summit of The Hague in 1969 to the relaunch of European integration from the mid-1980s. While traditional interpretations tended to dismiss this period as the “dark ages” of European integration, a group of historians led by Franz Knipping and Matthias Schönwald have called for a re-evaluation of this approach. According to this view, the political achievements of Europe’s “second generation” in the 1970s and early 1980s deserved more attention. They argue that in the wake of the summit of The Hague the Community had established its own resources, and that subsequent sectoral expansion into further new policy areas such as the environment and the successive enlargements should...
also be acknowledged as considerable advances in European integration. Arguably, the EC has succeeded in turning itself into a supranational polity with its own institutions and policies. How European public communication responded to these changes in European integration during this period remains as yet unexplored.

Focusing on the period between 1969 and 1991, this study will provide the first systematic historical evidence of European public communication from a longer term perspective. It will thus contribute to current research agendas both in the social sciences and in history. Informed by the interdisciplinary debate on the European public sphere, the first goal of this study is to trace continuity and change in the structure of European public communication between 1969 and 1991, in order to place current research in the social sciences in an historical perspective. How do the findings of the period between 1969 and 1991 relate to the results of research relating to more recent years?

The second goal is to provide insight into the previously unexplored history of the European public sphere in the two decades before Maastricht. How did European public communication evolve? Did European public communication actually lag behind the advances of European integration as Gerhards has claimed? Was media coverage constantly low and even declining during these decades, as he assumed? Which conclusions can be drawn with respect to the debate about “Europe’s second generation”? Does the evidence of European public communication in the 1970s and 1980s suggest that these were the “dark ages” of the European public sphere or rather Europe’s “second generation”?

The third goal is trying to make use of one of the core advantages of historical inquiry. Historical research usually places great emphasis on taking various aspects of context into account. I will thus be considering the long-term context of European integration, the short-term context of the events that were chosen as case studies, the traditions of national discourses on Europe and the conditions of the media and reporting on European integration. By systematically linking these various aspects of context to the structure and content of European public communication, it will be possible to draw some tentative conclusions as to what explains the development.

The fourth and final goal is to discuss the implications of these findings for the debate on European democracy. In the remaining part of this introduction I shall briefly explain how the concept of the public sphere has been adapted to research on the European public sphere. Furthermore, I will present the main findings of the ever-growing body of research and sketch the main axes of my own research its temporal and spatial scope, the sources I will use and the organisation of my study.

31 Knipping and Schönwald, „Vorwort,” ix.
34 The answer to this question has to remain provisional. A comprehensive treatment would require a comparison with the period before 1969.
1.2 What is the European public sphere?

The public sphere is conceived as an arena of communication in respect of all issues of public concern, particularly political and societal affairs. This arena is to be a public one that is visible, audible and accessible to all. It is meant to provide a space independent of the state in which society can discuss its own affairs. At the same time, it is the place where government, civil society and citizens communicate with each other. An independent public sphere is a central precondition for democracy, because it provides a forum in which opinions are formed. For analytical purposes, different levels of the public sphere have been distinguished. Public spheres of encounters, of assemblies and of the media are distinct in their immediacy, their scope and the opportunity for participation they provide. A general rule applies: The wider the potential audience, the more restricted the access to active participation and the more institutionalised the procedures for selecting who gets to voice his or her views. Despite such systematic restrictions, the public sphere of the media is the key arena for opinion formation in modern mass societies, because it manages to reach a large share of the population. Consequently, this study focuses on the European public sphere of the media. Nonetheless, media-based public communication largely takes place as communication between different actors and mediators that is only observed by the public as an audience.

The public sphere is the space between state and society in which citizens and policy makers are able to form an opinion on political and societal issues. Opinion formation requires transparency. In order to ensure transparency, access to ideas and for participants must be open and equal. In the debate in the public sphere the relevance of opinions and the advantages and disadvantages of ideas are discussed and evaluated. As a consequence, citizens and policy makers find orientation in relation to various issues, ideas and opinions, and can eventually form their own opinions. Furthermore, the public sphere serves to hold political actors accountable. At the same time, it is the place for debates on the self-understanding of society and the legitimacy of the polity.

As an “intermediary system” between state and society, the public sphere is linked to the polity that makes binding decisions for society. I will hence define the European public sphere as the political public sphere that links the European citizens in

36 Ibid., 49–56.
38 Ibid., 8f.
40 Of course, what takes place in the public sphere is also relevant for the realms of the economy, culture and other aspects of society. However, I am focusing on a political public sphere, which discusses issues of political relevance and which takes the political system as its point of reference.
41 Habermas, „Remarks on Dieter Grimm’s ‘Does Europe need a constitution?’,” 306.
their public communication to the political system of the EC / EU. In other words, it is the sphere of communication in which the European polity is the point of reference, the explicit or implicit addressee of communication.\textsuperscript{42}

The concept of a European public sphere as a political public sphere – juxtaposed to the emerging European polity – may appear increasingly anachronistic the further back in time we go. Even though the EC only slowly acquired the broader range of powers that turned it into a supranational polity, from its inception the EC was already more integrated than traditional international intergovernmental organisations. Institutional choices, such as the supranational Commission, majority decisions in the Council of Ministers as a basic principle and the goal to establish a directly elected European assembly, are cases in point.\textsuperscript{43} Particularly in light of the creation of its own resources in 1969, the EC can arguably be considered an emerging supranational polity. Even though the apparent absence of a European public sphere was only perceived as a problem in the period after Maastricht, it still makes sense to explore the history of the European public sphere in a longer term perspective. Clearly, the democratic deficit that the European public sphere was expected to alleviate mainly arose as a consequence of wider EC competences and the introduction of majority voting with the Single European Act. Nevertheless, only by taking a longer term perspective it is possible to elucidate a historical process of emergence\textsuperscript{44} and elicit those structural patterns of European public communication that may account for its apparent inertia. Extending the concept of the public sphere to the European level requires the inclusion of two sets of criteria: its democratic quality and its European scope. First, how does European public communication contribute to European democracy? Secondly, how does European public communication actually ensure the inclusion of the Europeans across national borders and connect them to the emerging European polity?

1.2.1 Democratic quality

Various benchmarks for assessing the quality of public communication have been suggested, depending on the underlying normative model of the public sphere. While the \textit{liberal-representative} model focuses on transparency and accountability, the \textit{discursive} model is more demanding. In a discursive public sphere, participation should involve civil society: A rational mode of arguing will ensure the “discursive quality” of communication.\textsuperscript{45} In this study I will take note of two normative principles that Bernhard Peters has suggested as key.\textsuperscript{46} Together they ensure

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{43} Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, Rome, 25 March 1957, (Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and connected documents, 5–183, Publishing Services of the European Communities, Luxembourg), articles 138.3 & 148.
\bibitem{44} Klaus Eder and Cathleen Kantner, „Interdiskursivität in der europäischen Öffentlichkeit,“ \textit{Berliner Debatte Initial} 13 (2002): 85.
\bibitem{46} Peters, „Der Sinn von Öffentlichkeit,“ 67f.
\end{thebibliography}
transparency and are a necessary precondition for the formation of public opinion. First, the public sphere should be open to a diversity of views and opinions. Secondly, the principle of equality demands that participation should be as broad and diverse as possible. In the public sphere of the media, there are various limitations to openness and equal participation. Nevertheless, these principles may serve as a normative yardstick for the analysis of public communication.

1.2.2 European scope

The European public sphere differs from national and international public spheres with respect to the political space it refers to. Historians who dealt with the European public sphere tended to treat Europe as a geographical concept. Exploring transnational communication, they included countries from Eastern as well as Western Europe. In this study, however, I have focused on the political European public sphere. For this reason, the institutional point of reference is the EC as a political entity, rather than as an ensemble of European countries. Two criteria may be used to define the European scope of the public sphere: its contents or its structure.

The first and defining criterion of a political European public sphere is that it is the arena of communication in which the European polity is the point of reference. It is the place where actors address and refer to European institutions and discuss their actions and policies. Eder has argued that the European public sphere emerges at the moment when European institutions are at the origin of public communication, are the addressees or the object of communication. Thus, at the most basic level, the European public sphere encompasses all public communication in relation to European politics and policy-making in which the institutions of the European polity are explicitly or implicitly addressed or referred to. The European public sphere can hence be defined by its content.

A second criterion requires that the structure of communication is also of European scope, including communication across intra-European borders. Two different indicators have been used: The synchronicity of issues and evidence of transnational communication. First, based on a remark by Habermas, Klaus Eder and Cathleen Kantner argued that the synchronicity of issues across media from different European countries demonstrated that the structure of communication was of European scope. A European public sphere hence required that “the same issues [were discussed] at the same time using the same criteria of relevance”. The synchronicity of issues meant a discursive integration of the public sphere across Europe.

47 Requate and Schulze-Wessel, eds., Europäische Öffentlichkeit.
50 Habermas, „Remarks on Dieter Grimm’s ‘Does Europe need a constitution?’,” 306.
This was intended to ensure that actors and audiences across Europe were not only aware of the motivations of their European partners but were also able to argue with them about their reasons for action. However, other researchers have challenged the assumption that a synchronous debate necessarily meant that there was communication across national borders.

For Marianne van de Steeg public communication should not only be synchronous, but also involve actual transnational communication. Only a substantial level of actual exchange across borders ensured that the discussion of the same issues did not take place within essentially separate national public spheres. It was thus necessary to examine the evidence of exchange processes and transfers. However, transnational communication is very difficult to research empirically, because the flow of ideas often remains invisible. In order to explore exchanges across borders, it is necessary to inquire into the mediators, such as correspondents and journalists who act as “cultural brokers.” These are pivotal actors in the enabling of transnational communication. Additionally, transnational references, namely those that arise in the discussion of the political views of foreign actors, provide a good indication of the intensity of transnational debate. This is arguably the closest approximation of a transnational debate that can be found when studying the media.

Finally, the European public sphere is not only a structure of communication, but also a sphere of action. Actors discuss, negotiate, and discursively construct Europe’s self-understanding. Various researchers have argued that increased transnational communication will have consequences for how the transnational political space in Europe is imagined. Expecting a shift or an extension of identification to the European level, they have treated “European identification” as a criterion that indicates a transnational European public sphere. Such assumptions require additional theoretical reconsideration. Still, it remains essential to study the European public sphere “at work” by examining the discursive construction of

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53 Eder and Kantner, „Interdiskursivität in der europäischen Öffentlichkeit,” 82–84.
56 Neidhardt, „Europäische Öffentlichkeit als Prozess,” 54f.
European self-understanding. Based on these definitions I will explore five characteristics of the European public sphere in an analysis of media content during the period between 1969 and 1991.

**Five research questions for the analysis of European public communication**

1. **European polity as a point of reference**: Did the European polity increasingly become a point of reference, improving transparency in respect of European affairs?
2. **Synchronicity**: Were the same issues increasingly discussed at the same time at the same level of relevance?
3. **Mediators’ transnational involvement**: Did the structure of mediators change in a way that suggests increased transnational communication and broader participation?
4. **Transnational communication**: Is there an indication of growing transnational communication and an increasingly diverse range of actors covered?
5. **European self-understanding**: Is there evidence of a common conceptualisation of the European political space? Was there growing European identification, a European sense of community?

These questions will guide the analysis of European public communication in this study. However, what are the findings of the recent wave of European public sphere research concerning these five issues?

1.3 What do we empirically know about the European public sphere to date?

The body of knowledge relating to European public communication has been rapidly expanding in recent years. Most research projects limit themselves to the public sphere of the media.\(^{60}\) In what follows, I will provide a brief overview of this research, considering the types of media studied, the different designs of the studies and their temporal scope, before presenting recent findings concerning change over time.\(^{61}\)

While there has been occasional research on transnational European media,\(^{62}\) most studies have compared national media across a number of European coun-

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\(^{60}\) Juan Díez Medrano also attempts to consider the public sphere of encounters. Juan Díez Medrano, *Framing Europe: attitudes to European integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom* (Princeton, N.J., 2003), 16–19. The public sphere of assemblies has been touched upon by protest research and research on European civil society, e.g. Hans-Jörg Trenz, *Zur Konstitution politischer Öffentlichkeit in der Europäischen Union. Zivilgesellschaftliche Subpolitik oder schaupolitische Inszenierung?* (Baden-Baden, 2002).


\(^{62}\) E.g. Olivier Baisnée and Dominique Marchetti, „La production de l’information „européenne“. Le cas de la chaîne paneuropéenne d’information Euronews,” in *En quête d’Europe: médias euro-
tries. Most research projects have focused on national broadsheet newspapers, which devote ample attention to national and international politics and the economy. As opinion leaders they are the central point of reference for other media in the national context. News magazines, regional and tabloid newspapers have been less frequently considered. Researchers from media studies have contributed some analyses of television. A number of studies have also combined various print and audio-visual media in order to arrive at a comprehensive over-

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63 Trenz, „European Dilemmas. The European Public Sphere. Contradictory Findings in a diverse Research Field,” 410.


view of “Europe in the media”. Great hopes had been attached to the internet as a novel transnational medium. Nevertheless, research has demonstrated that the internet has largely reproduced national patterns of conventional media usage.

Researchers have used three distinct designs for case selection, covering different modes of political communication. While “normal” or “routine” political communication comprises the day-to-day coverage of political affairs, “crisis communication” (Krisenkommunikation) describes exceptionally intense debates that arise whenever major political, societal or moral questions are at stake. Studies based on representative samples from a given time period mainly cover routine communication, enabling researchers to capture and compare the average level and structure of coverage. Other studies follow the debates on certain (European) issues. If the debates are observed for a longer period of time, this design consists of both routine and crisis communication. There has also been research on the debates on Eastern enlargement, Turkish accession, European security policy, etc.

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68 Kevin, Europe in the Media. 54–59. She analyses tabloid, broadsheet and regional press, private and public television.


72 The EUROPUB project compared the coverage of different policy areas: Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres. A Research Outline (EUROPUB, 18 February 2002), 19f.


74 Andreas Wimmel, Beyond the Bosphorus. Comparing German, French and British Discourses on Turkey’s Application to Join the European Union (IHS Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna, 2006). Andreas Wimmel, Transnationale Diskurse in Europa. Der Streit um den Türkei-Beitritt in Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien (Frankfurt, 2006).

economic policy, agricultural policy and institutional reform and even the problems of biotechnology policy and other environmental risks. The debates centred around the European Constitutional Convention and the process of Constitution Making in 2001–2003 as well as the ensuing ratification phase have been covered in a vast number of research projects. A third type of analysis focuses on crisis communication pure and simple. These studies target debates that follow a singular event considered to be of the highest European relevance. Cases in point are the


77 Barbara Berkel, Konflikt als Motor europäischer Öffentlichkeit. Eine Inhaltsanalyse von Tageszeitungen in Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien und Österreich (Wiesbaden, 2006).


BSE scandal in 1996, the “Haider affair”, i.e. the “sanctions” against the Austrian government in 2000, the “Prodi affair”, namely, suspicions as to Commission President Prodi’s lack of leadership in 2001, or the “Berlusconi-Schulz-case”, when Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi compared the German Social Democrat MEP Martin Schulz to a kapo in June 2003. The singular event of the introduction of the Euro was also studied as were recurrent events such as European Councils and European Parliament elections.

Almost all of the studies focus on the 1990s and early 2000s. Even though researchers like Hans-Jörg Trenz have highlighted that “only a longitudinal survey with systematic time-series data […] could sustain the thesis of the Europeanisation of political communication”, cross-time data remain limited. Only two research projects include cases from the 1980s, namely Robin Hodess’ comparison of the summits in the context of the SEA 1985 and Maastricht 1990–91 and Bernhard Peters’ project on the “Transnationalisation of the public sphere” project (1982 and

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83 I.e. a prison guard in a concentration camp.


What do we empirically know about the European public sphere to date?

Only Jürgen Gerhards and Juan Díez Medrano analysed data for the entire post-war period (1951–1995 / 1946–1995). However, as they relied on very small samples or on data for just one country, their findings may only be treated as indicative. Stefan Seidendorf compared debates on Europe in 1952 and 2000, but deliberately chose years of substantial attention on Europe, thus making it impossible to generalise from his evidence. The EMEDIATE project, which applied a broader conceptual history approach towards the European public sphere, compared eight crisis events from the 1956 “Hungarian revolution” to the debate on the “Mohammed cartoons” in February 2006. This project was also the first to include Eastern Europe. Both EMEDIATE and the project of Jens Lucht and David Tréfas, who presented the first findings of a time series analysis that attempted to cover the entire period between 1951 and 2005, do not focus on the structure of European political communication, but on the content of the discourse, in particular the concept of Europe and European identity.

Differences in the underlying theoretical concepts of the European public sphere, in the definition, the operationalisation and measurement of European public communication have produced research results which do not lend themselves to drawing clear-cut conclusions. This concerns particularly the level of coverage, which is crucially contingent on the operationalisation.

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89 Hodess, „News Coverage of European Politics.“, Bernhard Peters, „Die Transnationalisierung von Öffentlichkeit und ihre Bedeutung für politische Ordnungen am Beispiel der EU. Forschungsantrag für Sfb 597 Staatlichkeit im Wandel,“ (Bremen, 2002), 463f.
90 Díez Medrano, Framing Europe. 267f, Gerhards, „Das Öffentlichkeitsdefizit der EU im Horizont normativer Öffentlichkeitstheorien,“ 143, Gerhards, „Europäisierung von Ökonomie und Politik und die Trägheit der Entstehung einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit,“ 296.
92 Bo Stråth and Ruth Wodak, „Europe-Discourse-Politics-Media-History: Constructing ‘Crises,’“ in Europe in Crisis: The ‘European Public Sphere’ and National Media in the Post-War Period, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruth Wodak, and Michal Krzyzanowski (Basingstoke, 2009).
93 Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruth Wodak, and Michal Krzyzanowski, eds., Europe in Crisis: The ‘European Public Sphere’ and National Media in the Post-War Period (Basingstoke, 2009).
96 Neidhardt, „Europäische Öffentlichkeit als Prozess,“ 47–49.
97 E.g. Eilders and Voltmer find a similarly low level of commentary on EU affairs in German newspapers in the mid-1990s as Gerhards (around 5.6% vs. Gerhards’ 6.9%). Sift et al., who also analysed commentary, agree with these findings of a level of EU coverage of below 10%. Nevertheless, Kantner and Trenz who analysed the political news sections find substantially higher levels of European coverage in the year 2000 of on average 15.6% of the articles focusing on EU affairs. Christiane Eilders and Katrin Voltmer, “Zwischen Marginalisierung und Kon sens. Europäische Öffentlichkeit in Deutschland,“ in Die Stimme der Medien. Pressekomentare und politische Öffentlichkeit in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed. Christiane Eilders, Friedhelm Neidhardt, and Barbara Pletsch (Wiesbaden, 2004), 372, Gerhards, „Europäisierung von Ökonomie und Politik und die Trägheit der Entstehung einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit,“ 295, Cath-
compare data over time – applying the same indicators – will it be possible to observe a trend or development. I will address the five characteristics of the European public sphere in turn.

1.3.1 European polity as a point of reference

*Did the European polity increasingly become a point of reference?*

In 2000, Jürgen Gerhards became the first to address this question empirically. In a secondary analysis of data on German news coverage for the entire postwar period, he found that the share of European coverage actually declined until the end of the 1980s and only increased in the first half of the 1990s. Consequently he concluded that media attention devoted to European politics lagged behind the advance of European integration. Similarly, Seidendorf observed that the debate on Europe was about as extensive in 1952 as in 2000. While these results support Gerhards’ finding that there was a high level of attention to Europe in the early 1950s, Seidendorf’s observations are not exactly comparable because he specifically selected the year 1952 due to the vivid debate in France and Germany at that time.

Most of the studies available by 2008 suggest an increase in media attention on the EU as a point of reference since the 1980s. Sifft et al. noted a “robust and statistically significant trend towards Europeization” in their analysis of “discursive articles” from *FAZ* (D), *Le Monde* (F), *The Times* (UK), *Die Presse* (AT) and *Politiken* (DK) between 1982 and 2003. The average share of articles focusing on European governance steadily grew from 2% in 1982 to 9.2% in 2003. The proportion of articles mentioning the EU increased from 8.3% in 1982 to 21.8% in 2003. Similarly, Koopmans found that European integration had increasingly become a point of reference for political actors’ “claims” in the media between 1990 and 2002. A growing share of them addressed the EU. Various policy areas were increasingly discussed as policies of European scope. Additionally, the number of claims concerning European integration policy and polity making was higher in 2000–2003.
than it had been in 1990/1995. In her analysis of British and German media around four summits in 1985 and 1990/91, Robin Hodess found an increase in European coverage by 167% between the Single European Act (SEA) and the Maastricht negotiations.

It is more problematic to draw conclusions about change over time from data based on the analysis of debates, because such data are strongly contingent on the content and the context of these debates. However, there is some evidence of growing attention to the EU. In her media analysis of three international crises, namely the Gulf War of 1991, the Kosovo War of 1999 and the 2003 Iraq War, Antje Knorr found an increasing share of references to debates at the EU level between the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War. During the 1999 Kosovo War, the level was substantially lower. Similarly, on the basis of media coverage of all military and humanitarian interventions between 1990 and 2005, Kantner and Renfordt concluded that the “intensity with which the EC is perceived as an international actor is slightly increasing in European countries.” All in all, there is substantial evidence that the EU has increasingly become a point of reference since the 1990s. Evidently, in the wake of Maastricht, transparency in relation to European affairs improved. Still, Sifft et al. essentially agree with Gerhards that public scrutiny has been lagging behind the growing political importance of the EU. The growth of EU coverage did not really keep pace with the increase in EU legislation, they found.

Information about the development of EC coverage for the 1980s is more limited, while for the decades before that, systematic analyses are entirely lacking.

1.3.2 Synchronicity

Were the same issues increasingly discussed at the same time at the same level of relevance?

There is ample evidence that the same (European) issues have frequently been discussed at the same time at roughly the same level of relevance, i.e. receiving a similar level of media coverage. Issue attention cycles frequently ran parallel to each other, such as in the debate on the European constitution, in the debate on enlargement, but even as early as the debate on the ECSC and the Sarre question in 1952. Moreover, in her analysis of European Councils in 1985 and 1990/91,
Hodess found that the British and German media covered the specific themes with similar levels of frequency. Generally, events that were considered relevant throughout Europe apparently received similar amounts of attention. Synchronous coverage could also be found in debates on biotechnology and on international crises. The synchronous coverage of international crises – at the same level of relevance – was not limited to Europe, but frequently included the US, too. This suggests that the European debate on these issues was indeed part of a broader international public sphere.

The importance of national differences with regard to the level of attention remained contentious. In his Franco-German comparison of Europe as front page news in the quality newspapers, Nicolas Hubé found that the German newspapers were more likely to place EU affairs as the lead story on the front page than their French counterparts. Similarly, Seifert stressed national differences concerning the presence of “national ensembles of mass-media, actors and symbolic codes”. Conversely, Steeg and Risse placed greater emphasis on qualitative indicators such as “meaning structures” in their analyses of the debates on enlargement and the Haider affair. They highlighted the shared frame of reference, an insider’s perspective on common European problems. This, they argued, was what marked the specific difference between EU and non-EU media.

There are some indications of convergence. In their analysis of actors’ claims in the media, Koopmans found that between 1990 and 2002 actors across the European countries increasingly agreed on whether an issue was relevant to the European level or not. Hodess observed that by 1990/91 the British media’s level of EC coverage had become closer to that of the German media. Seifert demonstrated the emergence of a synchronous European debate on biotechnology from 1996/97 onwards, whereas earlier debates on biotechnology had been limited to individual countries. He attributes this development both to the growth of European competences, but also to international media events such as the first cloned sheep “Dolly”.

In the analysis of debates on international politics, which were arguably part of a wider international, rather than a more narrowly circumscribed European public sphere, Kantner found there to be international convergence including the US in the early 2000s. Synchronous coverage clearly varied with the perceived political relevance of the issues in the different countries. Knorr’s and Kantner’s analyses of debates on international conflict found there to be convergence between the continental countries Germany and France on the one hand, and the United Kingdom and the United States on the other – in quantitative terms (Kantner) and with regard to the patterns of interpretation in relation to the Iraq war (Knorr). In a situation when a political rift cut across Europe between those in support and those in opposition to US policy, this result was not surprising.\(^{118}\)

All in all, there is evidence that the criterion of synchronous coverage has frequently been met. However, information relating to the 1970s and 1980s is lacking. There has been tentative evidence of convergence in recent years. Not least due to varying operationalisations, researchers arrived at different results with respect to the magnitude of national differences in media coverage. The Eder-Kantner criterion of the public sphere has also been applied to the analysis of the coverage of international politics. Evidence of synchronous coverage beyond Europe, or cutting across Europe, suggests that debates vary in geographical scope according to the perceived relevance for the respective country. Consequently, it is very much to be expected that the coverage of European politics will be similar and synchronous across EC countries that are affected by EC decisions. Synchronous coverage seems an important, however not a sufficient indicator for the analysis of a public sphere. If the European public sphere is not only defined by the coverage of European affairs, but is also conceived as a structure of transnational communication across national boundaries in Europe, will be is necessary to take transnational communication into account.

1.3.3 Mediators’ transnational involvement

Did the structure of mediators change in a way that suggests increased transnational communication and broader participation?

There is very little information on the historical development of European journalism.\(^{119}\) Most studies focus on the present. The Brussels correspondents have been the most important transnational mediators of European politics, acting as the main brokers of EU-related information at the central exchange in Brussels. The number of EC/EU correspondents increased with the successive waves of enlargement from about 150 in the late 1960s to 480 by 1987. While numbers remained almost stable until the 1991, with 520 correspondents, the 1990s saw a boom of Brussels journalism.

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In the early days of European integration, news agencies were the main employers of Brussels correspondents. It is only since the late 1960s that newspapers have increasingly had their own correspondents in Brussels, such as Philippe Lemaître, who has reported for *Le Monde* since 1966.\(^{121}\) However, more specific information in respect of Brussels journalism in the 1970s and 1980s is not available. Christoph Meyer’s study of Brussels journalism in the 1990s demonstrates changes in the structure of the group of Brussels correspondents and concomitant alterations in their self-understanding, professional norms and transnational cooperation. With the growing influx of Northern European journalists, particularly after the Northern enlargement of 1995, and the overall growth and rejuvenation of the press corps, professional norms in Brussels journalism changed: from a self-perception as “fake Eurocrats without the wages” to the ideal of the critical “watchdog”. For the first time transnational cooperation in investigative journalism was so effective that it brought down the Santer Commission in 1999.\(^{122}\) European correspondents’ attitudes and their transnational cooperation before the 1990s have so far remained unexplored. Hodess noted that between 1985 and 1990/91 the number of European correspondents of British and German newspaper and public service television increased. In the German media in particular, a wider group of journalists got involved in the coverage of European affairs. Whether this development ultimately led to a different treatment of European news, remains to be explored.

### Transnational communication

*Is there indication of growing transnational communication and a diversifying range of actors?*

Evidence of change in the extent of transnational communication is ambiguous. For the postwar period, the EMEDIATE project and Stefan Seidendorf’s analysis of European debates in 1952 showed that there has long been mutual awareness of the European policy of the European neighbours. German and French newspapers observed their neighbours’ parliamentary debates on the EDC and the Sarre issue.

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**Table 1: Development of the number of accredited journalists in Brussels 1955–2003**\(^{120}\)

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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>ca. 150</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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\(^{121}\) Baisnée, „La production de l’actualité communautaire.“. 107f, 113.

as early as 1952.\textsuperscript{123} In the debate around the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, communication and debate crossed the Iron Curtain. East European media and actors were frequently quoted in Western media and vice-versa. Transnational communication in Europe was not limited to European integration, but even persisted amid the situation of mutual hostility during the Cold War. Nevertheless, the specific differences between modes of transnational communication in both contexts require further exploration. Schulz-Forberg noted that Daniel Cohn-Bendit’s expulsion from France in 1968 triggered a transnational debate in which actors and media referred to each other across national borders in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{124}

Whether transnational exchange has become more intense with the advance of European integration is contentious among researchers. Information on the period before the 1990s is virtually absent. Gerhards noted that the share of references to actors from European institutions in German newspapers increased slightly in the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{125} However, both Sifft et al. and Koopmans found essentially stable shares of references to actors from other European countries as participants in the debate between 1982/1990 and 2002/03.\textsuperscript{126} Only Scherer’s and Vesper’s study of references to newspapers from other countries quoted in German newspapers between 1994 and 2000 observed growing transnational exchange across national borders.\textsuperscript{127} Not only did the quantity of references grow, but the range of issues also diversified. Increasingly, not only views from large and neighbouring France,
but also from a variety of countries that shared the Euro currency were included. Andreas Wimmel found a substantial amount of transnational discursive references in the debate on Turkish EU membership since the late 1990s. However, this debate, which had become more intensely transnational between 1999 and 2002, retreated back into a largely national mode in 2004. Evidently, the quantity and the scope of transnational references were contingent on the issue and on the phase of the debate. Consequently, with regard to the Haider debate, Steeg and Risse argued that it was not so much the quantity of transnational references which indicated that public communication was actually of European scope, but the conspicuous absence of references to non-Europeans.

Journalists tend to “domesticate” European affairs by linking them to the views and actions of domestic actors. The degree of domestication and transnational openness differed along national lines. British newspapers were found to be the most domestically oriented ones. Pfetsch et al. noted that 72% of the claims by commentators addressed the national government in British newspapers – as against 51% in German newspapers and 42% in the French ones. In the same way, the EU and other European countries featured substantially less prominently in the British newspapers. With respect to the presence of societal actors such as civil society organisations, there were hardly any national differences between newspapers. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the share of references to societal actors hardly changed. Hodess, however, notes a decline in attention to governments and a growing presence of experts, interest groups and other civil society organisations in German and British newspapers between the European Councils of 1985 and 1990/91.

Whether the European partners’ views have actually been discussed more frequently, remains unclear. The larger and more comprehensive studies suggest that there was little change. Newspapers from different European countries differed in their openness to views from other European countries. Again, information here is essentially limited to the 1990s and early 2000s. If transnational communication hardly increased, what happened with regard to shifts in identification? Various researchers have assumed that increased transnational communication should lead to the emergence of a European sense of community.

128 Scherer and Vesper, „Was schreiben die anderen?,” 201f., 206f.
129 Andreas Wimmel, „Transnationale Diskurse in der europäischen Medienöffentlichkeit,” Politische Vierteljahresschrift 46 (2005): 278f
130 Steeg and Risse, The Emergence of a European Community of Communication, 17.
131 Eilders and Voltmer, „Zwischen Marginalisierung und Konsens,” 372.
132 Barbara Pfetsch et al., The Voice of the Media in European Public Sphere: Comparative Analysis of Newspaper Editorials. Integrated Report (EUROPUB. The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres, 15 July 2004), 20f, table 10, 11.
133 Hodess, „News Coverage of European Politics,” 464.
1.3.5 European self-understanding

*Is there evidence of a common conceptualisation of the European political space? Has there been growing European identification, a European sense of community?*

With regard to a nascent European sense of community, empirical findings have so far been ambiguous. Journalists’ use of “we-references” has frequently been analysed in order to examine their identification with political communities, such as the nation or the “West”, for example. Sifft et al. found an increase of European we-references from 1% in 1982 to 6% in 2003. However, the margin of fluctuation was so wide that they could not elicit a clear trend. 135 In their analysis of various European events between 1951 and 2005, Lucht and Tréan noted that in the context of the foundation of the EEC in the mid-1950s, European we-references had been more frequent, accounting for 7% of the total. In the following decades, European we-references normally only accounted for less than five per cent, this figure increasing drastically to 28 per cent in the context of the debate on the European constitution in the early 2000s. Nevertheless, the share of national we-references has always been larger than that of the European ones. 136 In their analysis of the Haider and enlargement debates Steeg and Risse observed a similar predominance of national we-references. However, they were aware of the limitations of this indicator: 137 Since the usage of “we” in the newspapers is very much contingent on language and style, it is a problematic indicator in comparative research. Consequently, I shall not be using this in the present study.

Research on European identity has demonstrated that the term ‘Europe’ has evoked numerous associations: Europe has been conceived as a community of law, as a community of peace and prosperity, as a counter-concept to the US, as a community of shared responsibility, or as a departure from the past. Steeg and Risse argued that a European sense of community was discursively constructed in controversial debates about normative ideals in which visions of Europe played a role. They found that at the core of the Haider debate there was the shared invocation of Europe as a community of law. In the debate on Eastern enlargement, however, various narratives and interpretations of the history of Europe played a role. Furthermore, Europe was associated with “peace, security, prosperity and unity”. 138 In the debate on the Iraq war of 2003, Knorr observed that French and German media constructed an image of Europe based on respect for international law in opposition to the US in the debate on the Iraq war. In the face of British support for US intervention, British newspapers did not share such constructions. Similarly, Seifert found mobilisation against US industry in the debate on GM food. 139 Kryzanowski and Wodak interpreted the construction of shared European responsibility in the debate on the Mohammad caricatures as a novel phenomenon. 140 According to Seidendorf, the reinterpretation of Europe’s history in the postwar

135 Peters et al., „National and transnational public spheres,” 149.
136 Lucht and Tréfas, Hat Europa eine Identität?, 22.
137 Steeg and Risse, The Emergence of a European Community of Communication, 17.
138 Ibid., 20–22.
139 Knorr, Europäische Öffentlichkeit und transnationale Kommunikation im sicherheitspolitischen Bereich, 230f; Seifert, Synchronised National Publics as Functional Equivalent of an Integrated European Public. 8. Seifert only mentions this in passing, while stressing the dominance of national and local identifications.
140 Michal Kryzanowski and Ruth Wodak, Case Studies of Media Discourse. Introductory Note
period had already begun in the 1950s in Germany. The new Europe was to be built in opposition to Europe’s past of war and fascism as Europe’s “other.” Similar conceptualisations spread throughout Europe during the postwar period. Similarly, commentators in the European quality newspapers in 2000 engaged in the construction of what Hans-Jörg Trenz described as “progressive Europeanism”. They encouraged European identification by associating Europe with progress and the departure from its nationalist past. Díez Medrano singled out the common basis of a European imagined community throughout Spain, Germany and the UK that was stable over time. This related to the benefits of the large European market, but also to the downsides of EU integration such as bureaucracy and democratic unaccountability.

At the same time, Díez Medrano stressed the different associations Europe evoked in different national contexts: fears about sovereignty in the UK, hopes for modernisation and overcoming isolation in Spain and qualms about the democratic deficit and fears concerning the Labour market in Germany. More fundamentally, some researchers rejected the expectation of growing European identification. Instead they stressed the persistence and preponderance of national identifications and framings of Europe. For instance, Seifert argued that the issue of healthy food elicited sub-national, regional and local, rather than European identification. Europeans were apparently not aware of their shared rejection of GM food. Reporting the results of the EMEDIATE project, Krzyzanowski and Wodak highlighted the fact that instances of European crises in the postwar period were strictly perceived in national terms. European crises had not in fact led to the invocation of European values and the association of Europe with certain values. However, two questions remained unexplored: First, to what extent did conceptualisations change? Secondly, which conditions account for shared or differing concepts and identifications?

In sum, this review of the state of empirical research demonstrates that it is very difficult to draw clean-cut conclusions from a variety of studies that operationalise similar research questions in very different ways. Furthermore, research covering the European public sphere from a longer-term perspective is almost entirely absent. Most research results refer to the 1990s and 2000s. During this period, the EU increasingly became a point of reference. Essentially, the same issues were discussed at the same time at the same level of relevance. This was increasingly the case, even though in various respects national differences persisted. The number of European correspondents grew. Transnational communication, meas-

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142 Trenz, Europa in den Medien. 360–373.
143 Díez Medrano, Framing Europe. 249.
144 Seifert, Synchronised National Publics as Functional Equivalent of an Integrated European Public, 16.
145 Michal Krzyzanowski, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ruth Wodak, „Conclusions: Europe, Media, Crisis, and the European Public Sphere,“ in Europe in Crisis: The 'European Public Sphere' and National Media in the Post-War Period, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruth Wodak, and Michal Krzyzanowski (Basingstoke, 2009), Krzyzanowski and Wodak, Case Studies of Media Discourse, 37.
ured in terms of the debate of opinions from abroad, remained essentially stable. However, in some countries, e.g. in Britain, newspapers were more domestically oriented than in others. In the discourse on European integration, various conceptions of Europe were discursively constructed. While some of them were shared, nationally different conceptions continued to persist. To what extent these concepts implied a European identification, requires further research. In many cases, the evidence concerning the five aspects of the European public sphere is ambivalent or sketchy. Due to the absence of a longer-term perspective it is impossible to draw conclusions with regard to the development of European public communication. In an attempt to address this lacuna, this study will undertake a systematic historical comparison in order to generate reliable time series data for the first time, which will enable conclusions to be drawn in respect of the much-debated emergence of a European public sphere. The remaining part of the introduction will explain the selection of cases and sources.

1.4 Cases in time and space

Inquiring into the history of European public communication, this study is comparative in two senses: a temporal dimension – considering change over time – and a spatial dimension – involving comparisons between European countries. When choosing cases, two criteria have to be weighed. First, only a limited number of cases can be selected, in order to reduce the amount of data and keep the project manageable. Secondly, the cases selected have to be comparable. The goal of case selection is to hold constant as many variables as possible, in order that variation can largely be attributed to change over time or differences between countries or media.

1.4.1 Time

Two reasons informed the choice of the time period. First, by selecting the period that immediately precedes the well-researched post-Maastricht era, it will be possible to extend the temporal horizon of current research and allow for a longer-term assessment of continuity and change. Secondly, by covering the two decades between 1969 and 1991 this study focuses on two decades which differ substantially with regard to the intensity, the pace and the modes of European integration. So far the period between 1969 and 1985 has largely been dismissed as Europe’s “dark ages”. Only the recent debate on “Europe’s second generation” has called for a reassessment of this time. By contrast, the period from 1985 until 1991 has been celebrated as the period of European relaunch. Driven by Commission activism and converging member state interest, European integration made an unprecedented leap with the completion of the the Single Market and the move towards

146 Jürgen Kocka, „Comparison and Beyond,“ History and Theory 42 (2003): 41.
the European Union. Juxtaposing these two periods allows for an analysis of the relationship between European integration and the European public sphere. In other words, did more rapid European integration bring about a growth in and a diversification of European public communication?

My research design takes an event-based approach. As the newspaper sources for this period are not accessible in electronic format, but only as microfilms, it is impossible to carry out electronic sampling for a debate on a certain topic. An event-based study enables a certain number of issues around a certain date to be covered. A continuous, comprehensive sample of a number of consecutive days can be analysed in a variety of ways. First, patterns of European coverage developing around the event can be singled out. Since newspapers might not have covered the same issues on exactly the same day, this ensures completeness. Moreover, selecting specific events facilitates the historical contextualisation. Finally, since the average level of routine European public communication has long been low, I selected some of the most prominent events in European politics, events which are likely to have been focal point of “crisis communication” and to mark the peaks of media attention during the respective time period.

European summits of the heads of state and government have taken place more regularly since 1969. They were institutionalised as the European Council at the summit of Paris 1974. As important recurring events, they lend themselves to comparison across time. Summits make particularly suitable cases for study: From the Summit of The Hague in 1969 onwards, European integration in the 1970s was characterised by intergovernmental initiative at European summits. Key decisions were made at meetings at the highest political level. Until the present, EU summits have been the most visible events of the politics of European integration.

Five summits have been selected for their political relevance. At the summits selected, some of the most important and most consequential political decisions of European Community politics were finalised. From a normative perspective, this is a valid choice, as important European decisions should have been discussed in the public sphere. In order to cover the entire period, the events should be evenly spread throughout the two decades. The 1969 summit of The Hague, which opened the door for British membership, marks the beginning of the period studied. The new French president Georges Pompidou set targets “achèvement”, “approfondissement” and “élargissement”, which have determined the trajectory of European integration until the present. Among the summits of the mid-1970s, the Paris summit of 1974 produced the most tangible results: The Regional Development Fund was set up, and a number of institutional innovations were introduced, such as the European Council and the agreement on direct elections to the European Parliament. In the latter half of the 1970s, the Brussels European Council


150 Alternatively, European elections could have been considered. However, as the first direct elections only took place in June 1979, it would not have been possible to cover the entire time period.

151 For the selection, I have relied on the historiography of the European integration and the European Council. Clearly, the historical and political relevance that appears in retrospect does not necessarily coincide with contemporary perception.

152 This was highlighted by Sir Ralph Dahrendorf at the „Konstanzer Meisterklasse“, directed by Bernhard Giesen, September 2002.
of 1978 marks the most important policy innovation during this period, namely introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS). The European Council in Luxembourg 1985 decided upon the Single European Act (SEA), the first treaty revision in the history of the EC, which kicked off the Single Market Programme. At Maastricht in 1991, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) drastically widened the scope of EC policy-making, notably including Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Monetary Union (EMU).

These summits are also comparable in a formal sense: They all took place on a Monday and Tuesday in early December, thus occurring at the same moment in the weekly and the annual news cycle. I chose to study a period of two weeks around the summit, namely the entire week before the event and the remainder of the week after. I thus covered the preparatory work in the run-up to the summit and the reactions to the meeting, including e.g. the governments’ presentation of the summit results to the national parliaments. The following table gives an overview of the place and dates of the summits, the main decisions taken, and the period of study.

1.4.2 Space

As indicated above, the space that the political European public sphere refers to is that of the European Community. In this study, European integration is limited to the process of EC integration that started with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. This Europe of the Six signed the Rome Treaty in 1957 comprised the European Economic Community (EEC), EURATOM and the original ECSC. By many standards, this was the most dynamic and successful attempt at European integration, EC integration having created a multi-level polity, surpassing mere intergovernmental cooperation. Limiting this study to the EC excludes other European institutions such as the Council of Europe, which deals mainly with human rights, or defence institutions such as NATO and the WEU. It also ignores alternative European institutions such as COMECON during the Cold War, intended to strengthen economic exchange in Communist Eastern Europe, or EFTA, the free trade agreement Britain encouraged as a response to the founding of the EC. Most of their members eventually joined the EU in various waves of enlargement. In the period between 1969 and 1991 the geographical

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153 In preliminary research of a longer period of time I found that nearly the entire coverage relating to the summit was limited to the two-weeks period.


155 W EU has been integrated into the EU framework only by the Maastricht Treaty: „The union requests the Western European Union (WEU), which is an integral part of the development of the Union, to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications.“ (Treaty on European Union (TEU), title 5, article J4, 2). For WEU’s history see: Anne Deighton, ed., *Western European Union 1954–1997: defence, security, integration* (Oxford, 1997).

scope of the EC changed three times: First in 1973 with the accession of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, then in 1981, with the inclusion of Greece, and again in 1986 with the so-called Iberian enlargement to Spain and Portugal.

In an ideal world, a study of the European public sphere should comprise European public communication in all member states. However, not even collaborative projects have been able to cover the EU in its entirety. Limiting this study to three countries, I will not be able to draw conclusions in respect of the whole of European public communication. Only including large countries, while ignoring smaller ones, may lead to a systematic distortion. However, choosing three countries of similar size and political importance will improve the conditions for comparison, and will allow this comparison to be situated solidly in its historical context.¹⁵⁷

Table 2: Important European summit conferences 1969–1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place – Year – Presidency</th>
<th>Main results</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Period of study</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Hague 1969, NL</td>
<td>F accepts UK membership, agreement on „own resources“, completion, deepening, enlargement</td>
<td>Mon. 1/12 and Tue. 2/12/1969</td>
<td>Mon. 24/11/ – Sat. 6/12/1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brussels 1978, D</td>
<td>Decision to introduce European Monetary System, commission for the preparation of the institutions for enlargement</td>
<td>Mon. 4/12 and Tue. 5/12/1978</td>
<td>Mon. 27/11/ – Sat. 9/12/1978</td>
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The United Kingdom, France and (West) Germany\textsuperscript{158} are comparable cases, because they are similar in many respects.\textsuperscript{159} They are the most populous West European countries with roughly similar populations of around 60 million (until German reunification) and comprise the largest economies. Between themselves, they accounted for the majority of the population in the Community of the Twelve. Accordingly they represented a large part of the audience in the European public sphere. These three countries are also the most powerful and politically most visible member states. At the same time, their historical experiences, particularly in the postwar period, were very different and led to diverging expectations of European integration. Hence, political attitudes towards European integration continue differ. This accounts for interesting variations in the comparison. Even though the UK only joined the EC in 1973, I have covered Britain from 1969, when the decision to eventually accept Britain as a member was taken in The Hague,\textsuperscript{160} an event that was closely observed by the British public.

1.5 Sources

My study is limited to the public sphere of the media, because in modern mass societies this is where politics are debated and where people learn about European integration.\textsuperscript{161} Due to the marginal role played by transnational European media,\textsuperscript{162} I will rely on national media. Despite occasional criticism that public sphere research has focused too much on national quality newspapers,\textsuperscript{163} they remain the central arena for information and critique not only of national but also of international and European politics. Quality newspapers mainly write for an elite audience of the well-educated and affluent strata of society. Even so, broadsheets have a pivotal role as opinion leaders in national media systems. Their agenda-setting, their coverage and commentary are closely observed by fellow journalists. Hence they can be considered opinion leaders. Assuming that European integration was covered only superficially during the pre-Maastricht period, quality newspapers have been chosen as the “most likely case” for observing European public communication.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{158} In the following, for reasons of readability and convenience, I will frequently use the term Germany also for West Germany before re-unification in 1990. As the German Democratic Republic was not a relevant player in West European integration, this will not lead to ambiguities. Likewise, I will use United Kingdom (UK) and (Great) Britain interchangeably, even though the first term is a political one, while the second one is a geographical term that does not include Northern Ireland – which is part of the UK.

\textsuperscript{159} Haverland, „Does the EU cause domestic developments?“ 139.


\textsuperscript{162} Cf. Vetters, „Konvent + Verfassung = Öffentlichkeit.“. 66–73.

\textsuperscript{163} Trenz, „European Dilemmas.“ 410.

In line with the practice in other comparative media studies I selected two newspapers per country, in order to roughly account for political divisions within national national public spheres. For France I selected *Le Monde* (LM) and *Le Figaro* (LF), for the UK the *Guardian* (GU) and the *Daily Telegraph* (DT), and for Germany the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). Whereas *Le Monde*, the *Guardian* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* tend to be left of centre, *Le Figaro*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the FAZ represent the conservative views in the respective countries. Some studies additionally include a newspaper from the USA as an external benchmark. The external comparison enables them to elicit more clearly what European media have in common and what distinguishes European public communication. Methodologically, this is good practice. However, in my study, I did not include such an external comparison for three reasons: First, Marianne van de Steeg has demonstrated that the debate on EU issues in the non-EU media significantly differs from the one in EU media. Second, it is difficult to find an an appropriate external benchmark. The US are distant, large and barely affected by EU decisions. Thus it can be expected that the amount and the mode of coverage of EU news strongly diverge. The role of Swiss media, particularly the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, with its large international coverage and its large audience outside Switzerland, is more ambiguous. Switzerland is politically outside the EU, but it has been connected to the EU and, earlier, to the EC by a great number of political, economic and geographical ties. These links call into question the rigid juxtaposition between inside and outside. Finally and most importantly, as I understand European public sphere as an arena of communication with a view to the European polity, the European public sphere is limited to the EC by definition. Consequently, an external comparison would only be indispensable when trying to “prove” the existence of the European public sphere as an

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165 Marianne van de Steeg found significant quantitative differences e.g. between SZ and FAZ in her analysis of enlargement. Hence, it is problematic to solely rely on one newspaper per country. Steeg, “The public sphere in the European Union.”. 146.
166 *Le Monde* does not appear on Mondays, but the Sunday issue features as a Sunday-Monday issue. Therefore I count it as the Monday paper.
167 *The Daily Telegraph* was chosen instead of the traditionally more renowned Times, because the Times did not appear from Dec. 1 1978, for more than one year, due to an industrial dispute. Given that the Brussels summit took place in Dec. 1978, the sample would have been incomplete. The archives replace the Times with *The Daily Telegraph* which might be interpreted as interchangeable. *The Daily Telegraph* – nicknamed “Torygraph” stands for more pronounced conservative views, however, it was used to represent the British quality press along with *The Guardian* also by Hodess, “News Coverage of European Politics.”
168 For a similar choice, e.g. Vettes, „Konvent + Verfassung = Öffentlichkeit.”. 148.
170 Haverland, „Does the EU cause domestic developments?” 139, 144.
171 E.g. Steeg, „Does a public sphere exist in the EU?,” 621f, Steeg, „The public sphere in the European Union.”. 141. Knorr’s finding that coverage does not differ in the debate on international politics is irrelevant here. Cf. Knorr, Europäische Öffentlichkeit und transnationale Kommunikation im sicherheitspolitischen Bereich, 220–225.
172 Cf. for systematic considerations and for Switzerland respectively the US as a comparative case Haverland, „Does the EU cause domestic developments?,” 139–141.
empirical phenomenon through a comparison with other public spheres.\textsuperscript{173} However, this study seeks to inquire into structural changes throughout time.

The limitation to quality newspapers admittedly implies an elite bias. However, regional and tabloid newspapers were excluded from this study mainly for methodological reasons. Given the differences in media structures between the three countries, it would have been difficult to find comparable cases. While in Britain and Germany tabloid newspapers are very important, there is no such tradition in France. Conversely, regional newspapers are very important in Germany and France, but rather marginal in the UK, where the London newspapers dominate.\textsuperscript{174} Even though it is difficult to underestimate the role of television in opinion formation within the public sphere, TV was excluded for methodological and practical reasons. The analysis of audio-visual materials requires a complex methodology and the consideration of additional contexts such as the different traditions of TV news programming. Finally, access to historical TV sources is prohibitively expensive. Broadcasters’ archives are run as profit centres providing services for TV production and have to be paid for at commercial rates.

Even though public opinion is at the core of the concept of the public sphere, the effect of European public communication will not be examined in this study.\textsuperscript{175} Reception research is highly complex and near-impossible to undertake in a historical perspective, due to a lack of suitable sources. Using Euro-Barometer poll data could serve as a very rough proxy; however, it is impossible to systematically link these data to the media coverage in a credible way. The focus in this study is on the content and the structure of European public communication in the media instead. In addition to written sources, I conducted interviews in Brussels in July 2004 with the current and occasionally also with the former European correspondents of all the newspapers I have used. Additionally, I spoke with the press representatives of the permanent representations of France, the UK and Germany, as well as the retired press officer of the Council of Ministers. Most of the information from the interviews relates to the present. However, some of the interviewees were able to provide information on Brussels and summit news practices and their traditions. These interviews largely served as background material.

1.6 Organisation of my study

This historical study of European public communication takes the theoretical debate on the European public sphere as its point of departure. The second chapter explores the theoretical background in greater detail, to develop hypotheses and guiding questions in a more thorough manner and explain the choice of methods applied. Chapter three will provide the necessary context for the analysis, in particular an assessment of those factors which are likely to have influenced the de-

\textsuperscript{173} This is the approach suggested by: Risse, „Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Kommunikationsgemeinschaft,“ 144.

\textsuperscript{174} Pfetsch et al., The Voice of the Media in European Public Sphere, 11.

development of European public communication. Considering the development of European integration from a longer-term perspective, as well as with regard to the short-term context around the summits will allow the link between European integration and the European public sphere to be examined: Has the latter really lagged behind the former? Specific national ideas on Europe as well as the conditions and traditions of the newspapers are likely to have shaped European public communication. In chapter four, I will present the findings of the comparative analysis of the newspapers, addressing the five research questions in turn. In the final part, I will summarise the development of European public communication and draw conclusions with respect to the history of European integration, the possible reasons for the development and the implications for the debate on European integration and democracy.