DATEdd.MM.yy28-Sep-98

Constructing Europe?
The Evolution of French, British, and German Nation-State Identities

by

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2nd Draft

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Introduction[1]

This paper investigates the impact of deep-rooted identity constructions and ideas about European political order on the way political elites in France, Germany, and Great Britain since the 1950s have constructed nation-state identities. We try to explain why

- the British (English) nation-state identity since the 1950s virtually has remained the same and why Europe still constitutes the, albeit friendly, 'other';
- two dramatic shifts in French nation-state identity occurred – one with the emergence of the Fifth Republic under President de Gaulle in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the other during the 1980s and 1990s when political elites Europeanized the nation-state identity of the Fifth Republic;
- the (West) German political elites since the end of the 1950s have shared a consensual and thoroughly Europeanized construction of German nation-state identity as overcoming the country's own past.

We argue that a combination of three hypotheses helps us to get a better understanding of this variation. First, new identity constructions and visions of political order need to *resonate* with pre-existing collective identities embedded in political institutions and political cultures in order to be legitimized in the political discourse. Second, political elites select among the identity constructions available to them according to their perceived *interests*, particularly during "critical junctures" when nation-state identities are contested and challenged. Third, once nation-state identities have emerged as consensual among the political majority, they are likely to be *internalized* and institutionalized as a result of which they tend to be resistant to change.

The paper proceeds in the following steps. We begin with some conceptual clarifications of the notion "nation-state identity." Second, we present a brief overview of the empirical evidence to be explained. Third, we offer an approach to understanding changes as well as the continuity of nation-state identities in the three countries.

[1] This paper presents preliminary results from a multi-year project on the Europeanization of nation-state identities in France, Germany, and Great Britain which is funded by the German Research Association (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft)* and the European University Institute, Florence. We thank Walter Carlsnaes, Ulf Hedetoft, Iver Neumann, Bo Straath, Antje Wiener and the participants in the panel 'Identity and International Theory' at the

Nation-State Identity: Conceptual Clarifications

The identity concept we apply in this paper draws on social-psychology, particularly Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories (Oakes, Haslam & Turner 1994; Abrams & Hogg 1990; Turner 1987). Social groups, it is argued, tend to define themselves on the basis of a set of *ideas* to which all members can relate positively. These ideas can be expressed directly in the discourse of the members and in their way of interacting and communicating, or indirectly through the application of common symbols, codes, or signs. The function of these ideas is to define the social group as an entity which is distinct from other social groups. The members thereby perceive that they have something in common on the basis of which they form an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). In this paper, we look at discourses among *political elites* in France, Germany and Great Britain in order to understand their identity constructions with regard to the nation-state and to Europe. Our empirical research shows that five ideal-typical identity constructions can be differentiated from each other in the various discourses. While their origins can be found in the inter-war period (and earlier), they were widely contested during the 1950s:

1. Pure *Nation-State* identities which were compatible with a *Europe of nation-states* in an intergovernmental sense whereby the "we" is restricted to one's own nation: This concept still prevails in Great Britain and dominated in France during de Gaulle's presidency.

2. A wider *Europe as a community of values* "from the Atlantic to the Urals" embedded in geography, history, and culture: This concept gained some supporters during the early years of the cold war and re-emerged after the end of the East-West conflict, particularly in France and Germany.

3. *Europe as a "third force"*, as a democratic socialist alternative between capitalism and communism, thus overcoming the boundaries of the cold war order: This concept prevailed among French socialists and German social democrats during the early 1950s, but then disappeared later when these parties reconstructed their collective identities.

4. A *modern (Western) Europe as part of the Western community* based on liberal democracy and social market economy: This concept became consensual in the Federal Republic of Germany

Third Pan European Conference on International Relations, Vienna, 16-19 September, 1998, for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

toward the late 1950s and to some extent also underlies the more recent Europeanization of French nation-state identity.

5. A *Christian Europe (Abendland)* based on Christian, particularly Catholic values including strong social obligations. This identity construction was rather common among the Christian Democratic parties in France and Germany during the 1950s, but then increasingly amalgamated with a modern Westernized idea of Europe.

While these five conceptions of "the state and Europe" were heavily contested during the 1950s, only two competitors remain in the three countries during the 1990s: The *national* idea of nation-state identity and the modern Western idea of *Europe as a liberal community*. However, the latter concept comes in distinct national colors, particularly in France and Germany.

Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories also argue that, apart from being defined by a set of shared ideas, the commonness of a social group is accentuated by a sense of distinctiveness with regard to *other social groups*. In other words, a social identity defines not only an 'in-group', but also one or several 'out-groups'. When speaking about political order during the Cold War, the elites in the three countries collectively shared an "Other", communism and the Soviet Union. Moreover, British political elites have continuously considered 'Europe' as the friendly 'out-group', whereas German elites have seen the country's own catastrophic past as 'the other', and French political elites have traditionally added the U.S. to their list of 'others'.

Moreover, individuals are *members of several social groups* which might or might not be overlapping. Depending on the immediate context and the various roles individuals play, they can, therefore, be expected to invoke different elements of their social identity in different situations. In this paper we deal specifically with one of these social groups - *party elites* and their nation-state identities as well as their ideas about political and social order. Political parties play a significant role as arenas in which ideas are presented to the broad public and the national and European media. In Europe at least, parties have always been major transmission belts between society and the state rather than being confined to electoral organizations and, as mass integration parties, they instigate, shape, and reflect major political debates.

Related to the previous point, we expect individuals to invoke different elements of their social identity depending on the issue-area they talk about. Because we are interested in utterances about the state and political order, we have chosen to call this particular identity a *nation-state identity* to

distinguish it from other components of the national and otherwise social identities of party political elites. In other words, when speaking about nation-state identities we do *not* claim that the nation as such is carrying this identity - then we would be talking about national identities . What we do claim though, is that party elites, when they speak about political order, in their discourse express visions about the state and Europe and consequently give discursive expressions about their nation-state identities.

Finally, social psychology tells us that social identities, in this case nation-state identities, are *unlikely to change frequently*. Individuals cannot cognitively adjust to the many complex and often contradictory signals from the social world around them as a result of which these perceived signals are integrated into existing cognitive schemes and stereotypes or simply outright rejected if they seem to be incommensurable with existing world views. Nation-state identities therefore tend to be sticky rather than subject to frequent change. However, this does not mean that nation-state identities are completely stable. They do indeed vary over time according to the following logic:

- There is always a leeway for the purposive attempt by political actors to deliberately alter existing ideational frameworks and boundary definitions, but it is particularly during *critical junctures* that the likelihood for success of such attempts is greatest. We define critical junctures as perceived crisis situations which might be brought about by thorough policy failures, but also by external events. Nation-state identities are likely to be challenged under such circumstances. Empirical examples are the catastrophe of World War II and of the Nazi regime for German nation-state identity or the end of the Cold War for the French nation-state identity. In other words, we argue that one condition which must be present in order for elites to be able to promote new ideas about political order is that old ideas are commonly perceived to be irrelevant.
- New identity constructions do not fall from heaven, but need to resonate with *existing identity constructions*. While existing deep-rooted identity constructions are broadly defined and can resonate with a whole series of new identity elements, they nevertheless define the range of options considered legitimate for new nation-state identities. There is no reason to believe that these existing identity constructions are 'givens' and elevated above identity politics and constestation[2]. However, we argue that another condition for the successful promotion of new

[2] See Cederman & Daase (1998) for an attempt to endogenize such deep-rooted identity elements - they call this aspect 'corporate identity' - in policy analysis. Their purpose is to theorize about the 'long duree' whereas we aspire to

ideas about political order is that policy elites convincingly can construct a fit between so-called 'everlasting' values, symbols and myths and the new ideas. In this process of identity politics, ideal typical ideas about the state and Europe, as the five we have mentioned above, reappear in specific national colors so as to appeal to the national elite group writ large.

- When promoting new identity constructions during critical junctures, we expect political elites to act on the basis on what they perceive to be in their perceived interest. These can be concerns about political power, but also economic or security interests. Thus, we do not promote an "interest vs. identity" account, but try to figure out the precise way in which both interact. On the one hand, nation-state identities might define the boundaries of what elites consider legitimate ideas in pursuing their perceived interests. On the other hand, perceived interests might define which identity constructions get selected among those available to actors. The precise causal relationship remains a matter of empirical studies.
- Once a set of identity constructions have become consensual, they are likely to be *embedded in institutions* and in a country's political culture. As a result, the legitimate nation-state identities available in a political discourse narrows down and the institutionalization of nation-state identities in political culture makes them resistant to challenges from new commonly perceived critical junctures and competing ideas about political order. In other words, we would expect the developing institutional set-up of a state to reproduce and consolidate the taken for granted visions about the 'state and Europe'.

In sum, a social psychological definition of social identity holds that nation-state identities hold citizens together and give them a sense of particularity; that the sense of in-group always delimits an out-group, that individuals hold multiple social identities, that social identities are quite resistant to change, once they became consensual and embedded in political culture, but will be challenged particularly during critical junctures in conjunction with the perceived interests of actors.

theorize about medium term 'identity politics' in which one specific social identity is at stake - the nation-state identity.

A Europeanization of Nation-state Identities? Empirical Evidence from France, Britain, and Germany[3]

The Europeanization of French Exceptionalism

Consensual constructions of French nation-state identity by the political elites underwent considerable changes over time. Policy-makers of the Third Republic such as Aristide Briand and Eduard Herriot were among the first who embraced a federalist vision of "*Etats Unis d'Europe*" during the inter-war period (Bjøl 1966, 172-173). However, their visions did not become consensual within their own parties until after World War II. During the 1950s and in conjunction with the first efforts toward European integration, a national debate took place which concerned French nation-state identity and basic political orientations in the post-war era.

World War II and the German occupation served as traumatic experiences as a result of which French nation-state identity became problematic. Many controversies centered around how to deal with Germany as the most significant French "other" at the time. Supporters of European integration argued in favor of a "binding" strategy, of creating supranational institutions in order to contain German power once and for all, while opponents favored traditional balance-of-power strategies to deal with the German problem:

> "There is no Europe without Germany and there is no solution for the German problem without Europe. ... If there is no Europe, Germany risks again to seek a solution of violence."
>
> "Our policy must, first of all, anchor Germany. Thus, one observes that the European army does not only not anchor Germany, but that it increases the German threat".[4]

There was no consensus among the French political elites at the time about European integration as a solution for the German problem. The defeat in the French National Assembly in 1954 of the treaty on European Defense Community, which France itself had originally proposed, showed the deep divisions among the political elites. All five identity constructions outlined above competed among each other during the 1950s. The French Gaullists (RPF) embraced a strictly nationalist view of France based on the values of Republicanism, while de Gaulle himself occasionally supported a wider vision of Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals." Christian Democrats (MRP) promoted the Christian vision of Europe together with the modern Westernized concept. Finally, the French

[3] The following part summarizes Risse forthcoming.

[4] The first quote is from Christian Democratic (MRP) leader Alfred Coste-Floret, "Bilan et perspectives d'une politique européenne", *Politique Etrangère*, November 1952, p. 328. The second quote is from Gaullist (RPF) leader Michel Debré at the Conseil de la République, Oct. 27, 1953, *JOCR Débats*, 1953, 1642.

Socialists (SFIO) tried to push a concept of France as part of a European socialist "third force" beyond the two blocs of the Cold War (details in Roscher 1998).

The war in Algeria and the ongoing crisis of the Fourth Republic served as a "critical juncture" for French nation-state identity. When the Fifth Republic came into being in 1958, its founding father, President Charles de Gaulle, re-constructed French nation-state identity and managed to re-unite a deeply divided nation around a common vision of France's role in the world:

> "When one is the Atlantic cape of the continent, when one has planted one's flag in all parts of the world, when one spreads the ideas, and when one opens oneself to the surrounding world, in short, when one is France, one cannot escape the grand movements on the ground. One has to play one's role straightforwardly and comprehensively in order not to be crushed and, at the same time, to serve the cause of all mankind".[5]

De Gaulle's identity construction related to historical myths of Frenchness and combined them in a unique way. As the leader of the French *résistance* during World War II, he overcame the trauma of the Vichy regime and he related the French *état-nation* - comprising a specific meaning of sovereignty - with the values of enlightenment and democracy (Bédarida 1994). The notion of sovereignty - understood as national independence from outside interference together with a sense of uniqueness and "*grandeur*" - was used to build a bridge between post-Revolutionary Republican France and the pre-Revolutionary monarchy. The understanding of the French *état-nation* connoted the identity of the nation and democracy as well as the identity of French society with the Republic. Finally, de Gaulle re-introduced the notion of a French "*mission civilisatrice*" for the world destined to spread the universal values of enlightenment and of the French revolution. None of these nation-state identity constructions were particularly new, but de Gaulle combined them in a special way and managed to use them in order to legitimize the political institutions of the Fifth Republic. Of course, these understandings of the French *état-nation* and of *indépendence* were hard to reconcile with federalist visions of European order. Rather, "*Europe des nations*" became the battlecry during de Gaulle's presidency. By the mid-1960s then, the Gaullist understanding of French nation-state identity had carried the day in France and won out against the other four identity constructions.

But this nation-state identity construction only remained consensual among the political elites for about another ten years after de Gaulle's resignation. Beginning in the late 1970s, a gradual Europeanization of French nation-state identity took place among the elites which came about as a result of French experiences with European integration as well as two more "critical junctures" - the utmost failure of Mitterrand's economic policies in the early 1980s and the end of the Cold War in

[5] President de Gaulle, speech in Lille, Dec. 11, 1950, D.M. II, 393.

the late 1980s (Schmidt 1996; Schmidt 1997). De Gaulle's immediate successors incrementally changed French policies toward the EC toward a more pro-activist stance. President Giscard d'Estaing, together with German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, created the European Monetary System (EMS) with a view toward a future monetary union.

Given this more active French attitude toward the European Union, it was a question of time when the European integration process would turn incompatible with the particular nation-state identity of the Fifth Republic. The inconsistency between the French nationalist identity and French attitudes toward European integration became apparent when François Mitterrand was elected as the first French Socialist president in 1981. When Mitterrand and the Socialist Party came into power in 1981, they initially embarked upon a project of creating democratic socialism in France based on leftist Keynesianism. This project bitterly failed, so it seemed in 1983 that Mitterrand had no choice other than changing course dramatically if he wanted to remain in power (Uterwedde 1988). This political change led to a deep crisis within the Socialist Party which then gradually abandoned its Socialist project and moved toward ideas once derisively labeled "Social Democratic". In changing course, the party followed President François Mitterrand who had defined the construction of the European Community as a central issue of his time in office:

> "We are at the moment where everybody unites, our fatherland, our Europe - Europe our fatherland - the ambition to support one by the other, the excitement of our land and of the people it produces, and the certainty of a new dimension is expecting them" (Mitterrand 1986, 104).

The re-orientation of the French Socialists toward neoliberal economics - in "French colors", of course - went hand in hand with a change in attitudes toward European integration as a whole which had hitherto often been denounced as a "Capitalist" project. The Socialists now saw the European future in a more or less federal model. They were willing to share larger amounts of sovereignty in various domains because national sovereignty in its traditional understanding was regarded as an illusion in an interdependent world.

The PS's move toward Europe included an effort to reconstruct French nation-state identity. The French Socialists started highlighting the common European historical and cultural heritage. They increasingly argued that the French future was to be found in Europe. As Mitterrand once put it, "La France est notre patrie, l'Europe est notre avenir".[6] The French left also started embracing the notion of a "European France", extending the vision of the French "*mission civilisatrice*" toward

[6] Taken from Mitterrand 1986, 104.

Europe writ large. The peculiar historical and cultural legacies of France were transferred from the "first nation-state" in Europe to the continent as a whole, because all European nation-states were children of enlightenment, democracy and Republicanism. France imprints its marks on Europe. This identity construction uses traditional understandings of Frenchness and the French nation-state - sovereignty understood as enlightenment and republicanism, the French *mission civilisatrice* - and Europeanizes them. By the end of the 1980s, the French Socialists had thoroughly embraced a particular French vision of Europe as part of modernity and the Western community.

Similar changes in the prevailing visions of European order combined with reconstructions of French nation-state identity took place on the French right, albeit later. The heir of Charles de Gaulle's vision of *'Europe des patries'*, the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR), provides another example of the French political elite changing course. In this case, the end of the Cold War was the decisive moment constituting a crisis experience for French nation-state identity. When the Berlin wall came down, Germany was united, and the post-Cold War European security order was constructed, France - *la grande nation* - remained largely on the sidelines (Zelikow and Rice 1995). As a result, large parts of the political elite realized the grand illusion of "*grandeur*" and "*indépendence*". The way out was Europe (Flynn 1995). The political debates surrounding the referendum on the Maastricht treaties in 1992 can be seen as an identity-related discourse about the new role of France in Europe and the world after the end of the Cold War. As in the 1950s, fear of German power dominated the debates. Supporters of Maastricht and EMU, particularly on the French right, argued in favor of a "binding" strategy, while opponents supported a return to traditional balance of power politics. This time, however, and in contrast to the 1950s, the binding argument carried the day, i.e., the support for European integration.

Competing visions about European order held by RPR leaders corresponded to differing views of Frenchness and French nation-state identity. President Jacques Chirac expressed similar ideas about the Europeanization of French distinctiveness as his counterparts among the French left:

> "The European Community is also a question of identity. If we want to preserve our values, our way of life, our standard of living, our capacity to count in the world, to defend our interests, to remain carriers of a humanistic message, we are certainly bound to build a united and solid bloc... If France says Yes [to the treaty of Maastricht], she can better reaffirm in what I believe: French exceptionalism".[8]

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[7] "France is our fatherland, Europe is our future." Quoted from *Le Monde*, Sept. 4, 1992.

[8] Jacques Chirac, *Liberation*, Sept. 11, 1992.

In contrast, a minority of RPR "Euro-skeptics" such as Charles Pasqua and Philippe Séguin stuck to traditional Gaullist understandings of sovereignty and a nationalist view of collective identity during the Maastricht debates (for details see Joas 1996).

In sum, French nation-state identity was heavily contested both in the 1950s and during the 1980s and early 1990s. Each time, however, different identity constructions carried the day and became consensual. In the early 1960s, the Gaullist vision of the French *état-nation* as the Fifth Republic's particular identity prevailed over rival visions. Thirty years and two more "critical junctures" later, however, a Europeanization of this particular nation-state identity won out which gradually embraced the modern Western vision of Europe, albeit in French colors.

Germany's Past as Europe's "Other"

The German case is one of thorough and profound reconstruction of nation-state identity following the catastrophe of World War II. Thomas Mann's dictum that "we do not want a German Europe, but a European Germany" quickly became the mantra of the post-war (West) German elites. Since the 1950s, a fundamental consensus has emerged among the political elites and has been generally shared by public opinion that European integration is in Germany's vital interest. Simon Bulmer called it the "Europeanization" of German politics (Bulmer 1989; see also Hellman 1996; Katzenstein 1997).

The multilateralization of German foreign policy was initiated by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer who regarded the integration of the German nation-state and society in the West as the best means of overcoming Germany's past (for details and the following see Engelmann-Martin 1998). Adenauer himself was a convinced European who had been active in the pro-European wing of the *Zentrum*, the Catholic predecessor party of the German Christian Democrats (CDU) during the Weimar Republic (Baring 1969; Schwartz 1966). Adenauer's thinking about Europe was heavily influenced by ideas and visions of the inter-war period. The Rhinelandish *Zentrum* has to be mentioned here where Europeanism and Catholicism went hand in hand with a distinct anti-Prussian connotation (Bellers 1991), but also the transnational European movement, in particular the *Paneuropean Union* founded by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (Coudenhove-Kalergi 1982).

After 1945, the newly founded Christian Democratic Party (CDU) immediately embraced European unification as the alternative to the nationalism of the past. As Ernst Haas put it, "in leading circles

of the CDU, the triptych of self-conscious anti-Nazism, Christian values, and dedication to European unity as a means of redemption for past German sins has played a crucial ideological role" (Haas 1958, 127). The Bavarian *CSU* declared in 1946:

> "Europe is a supranational community of life among the family of nations. We support the creation of a European confederation for the common preservation and continuation of the Christian Occidental culture" (Eichstätt Basic Program, 1946).

Christianity, democracy, and - later on - social market economy became the three pillars on which a collective European identity was to be based. It was sharply distinguished from both the German nationalist and militarist past and - increasingly so during the late 1940s and early 1950s - from Communism and Marxism. In other words, Germany's own past as well as communism constituted the "others" in this identity construction.

When Chancellor Adenauer came into power in 1949, he built upon and expanded these identity constructions. In particular, he amalgamated the Christian vision of Europe with the modern Western concept into one identity construction. He considered firmly anchoring post-war Germany in Western Europe including military and economic institutions as the best way to overcome another German *Sonderweg*. West German neutrality during the Cold War was not an option for him, not even in exchange for re-unification with East Germany (Baring 1969, 57; Bellers 1991, 27-28).

But throughout the early 1950s, there was no elite consensus on German post-war identity. While the political elites shared the notion that the German past of militarism and nationalism run havoc had to be overcome, they drew different lessons. Within Adenauer's own party, Jacob Kaiser, CDU leader in Berlin, favored a German policy of "bridge-building" between East and West including neutrality between the two blocs. Similar concepts originally prevailed among Adenauer's coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) at the time (Glatzeder 1980). However, the FDP leader at the time, Thomas Dehler, still promoted a German nationalist nation-state identity, albeit embracing democracy and liberalism, which closely resembled Gaullist visions.

The Social Democrats (SPD) were the main opposition party to Adenauer's policies at the time. In the inter-war period, the SPD had been the first major German party to support the concept of a "United States of Europe" in its 1925 Heidelberg program. When the party was forced into exile during the Nazi period, the leadership fully embraced the notion of a democratic European federation which would almost naturally become a Socialist order. As in the case of the CDU, "the 'European idea' was primarily invoked as a spiritual value in the first years of the emigration. ...

What Europe would be like after Hitler was a second-order question, though it was taken as self-evident that it would be socialist. In this period Europe was seen as an antithesis to Nazi Germany" (Paterson 1974, 3; see also Bellers 1991; Hrbek 1972). Thus, the Europeanization of German nation-state identity originated from the experiences of exiled political leaders - both SPD and CDU - in their resistance against Hitler and the Nazis (Voigt 1986). For them, Europe's "other" was Nazi Germany. Consequently, when the SPD was re-founded in 1946, its first program supported the

> "United States of Europe, a democratic and socialist federation of European states. (The German Social Democracy) aspires to a Socialist Germany in a Socialist Europe".[9]

Europe, Germany, democracy, and socialism were perceived as identical. The German Social Democrats under its first post-war leader, Kurt Schumacher, supported an identity construction which closely resembled the French Socialists view of a "third force" Europe. Kurt Schumacher, a survivor of the Dachau concentration camp, argued vigorously against the politics of Western integration, since it foreclosed the prospects of rapid re-unification of the two Germanies (Paterson 1974; Rogosch 1996; Schmitz 1978). During the early 1950s, the SPD led the opposition against Adenauer's policies of integrating the Federal Republic into the West. At the same time, he denounced the Council of Europe and the ECCS as "un-European", as a "mini-Europe" (*Kleinsteuropa*), as conservative-clericalist and as capitalist (Hrbek 1972). At the same time, however, the SPD went at great pains to argue that it did not oppose European integration as such, just *this* particular version.

Two major elections defeats later (1953 and 1957), the SPD slowly changed course. There had always been an internal opposition against Schumacher's policies. Party officials such as Ernst Reuter (the legendary mayor of Berlin), Willy Brandt (who later became party chairman and, in 1966, Chancellor), Fritz Erler, Herbert Wehner, Helmut Schmidt (Brandt's successor as Chancellor in 1974), and others supported closer relations to the U.S. as well as German integration into the West. These Social Democrats were strongly influenced by the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe founded in 1947 and by Jean Monnet's Action Committee. By the late 1950s, they took over the party leadership. The German Social Democrats thoroughly reformed their domestic and foreign policy program. Concerning the domestic realm, they came to accept the German model of welfare state capitalism, the social market economy. With regard to foreign policy, they re-visited the 1925 Heidelberg program and became staunch supporters of European integration. The changes

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[9] Political Guidelines adopted at the Hannover Party Congress, May 1946.

culminated in the 1959 Godesberg program. Two years earlier, the SPD had already reversed its course regarding European integration and had supported the Treaty of Rome in the German parliament (Bellers 1991; Hrbek 1972; Paterson 1974; Rogosch 1996).

From the 1960s on, a federalist consensus ("United States of Europe") prevailed among the German political elites comprising the main parties from the center-right to the center-left. In contrast to Gaullist France, German nation-state identity now embraced the modern Western vision of Europe, with Europe's "other" being both Germany's past and Communism. This consensus outlasted the changes in government from the CDU to the SPD in 1969 as well as the return of a CDU-led government in 1982. It also survived a major foreign policy change of West German policy toward Eastern Europe, East Germany, and the Soviet Union. When Chancellor Willy Brandt introduced *Ostpolitik* in 1969, he made it very clear that European integration efforts were untouchable and had to be continued (Hanreider 1995).

Even more significant, German unification twenty years later did not result in a re-consideration of German European policies. With the unexpected end of the East-West conflict and regained German sovereignty, a broad range of foreign policy opportunities emerged creating a situation in which the German elites could have redefined their national interests. But not much happened. Germany did not reconsider its fundamental foreign policy orientations, since Germany's commitment to European integration had long outlived the context in which it had originally emerged (see Helmann 1996; Katzenstein 1997; Müller 1992; Rittberger 1993). The majority of the German political elite continued to share Chancellor Kohl's belief that only deeper political and economic union can anchor Germany firmly in the West and strengthen European institutions to ensure peace in the years ahead (Banchoff 1997a; Banchoff 1997b, 61-63). German support for a single currency and for a European political union was perfectly in line with long-standing attitudes toward integration and the country's Europeanized nation-state identity. The German political elite – in contrast to German public opinion – shared a consensus that the *Deutsche Mark* should be given up in favor of the Euro. This stubborn support for the single currency by the vast majority of the political elites can only be explained on the basis of their thoroughly Europeanized nation-state identity (Risse et all. 1998).

Europe as Britain's "Other"

In sharp contrast to both France and Germany, the fundamental British[10] elite attitudes toward European integration have remained essentially the same since the end of World War II. More than twenty years after entry into the European Community, Britain is still regarded as "of rather than in" Europe; it remains the "awkward partner" and "semi-detached" from Europe (Bailey 1983; George 1992; George 1994). British views on European integration essentially range from those who objected to British entry into the EC in the first place and who now oppose further Europeanization (right wing of the Conservatives, Labour's far left and far right) to a mainstream group within both main parties supporting a 'Europe of nation-states'. European federalists remain a minority in the political discourse, both among the Tories and within Labour, and only form a majority within the British Liberal Party. The two leading parties share a consensual vision of European order:

> Labour's manifesto for the 1997 elections argued that "our vision of Europe is of an alliance of independent nations choosing to co-operate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone. We oppose a European federal superstate".
>
> The Conservative 1997 manifesto claimed in very similar terms that "the government has a positive vision for the European Union as a partnership of nations. We want to be in Europe but not run by Europe. (...) Some others would like to build a federal Europe. A British Conservative Government will not allow Britain to be part of a Federal European State".[11]

This general attitude has not changed since the 1950s, as the following quote from Winston Churchill shows:

> "Where do we stand? We are not members of the European Defence Community, nor do we intend to be merged in a Federal European system. We feel we have a special relation to both. This can be expressed by prepositions, by the preposition "with" but not "of" - we are with them, but not of them. We have our own Commonwealth and Empire".[12]

British attitudes toward the European project reflect collectively held beliefs about British, particularly, *English* identity.[13] There is still a feeling of "them" vs. "us" between Britain and the continent. In the British political discourse, "Europe" continues to be identified with the continent and perceived as the, albeit friendly "other" in contrast to Englishness, as the following two quotes illustrate:

> Labour Minister of State Younger in 1950: "**We and**, even more, **our friends in Europe** are entitled to adequate guarantees against the revival of the German war potential, and until we can be satisfied that Germany

[10] When we speak about 'British' and 'Britain', we actually mean 'English' and 'England'. We have chosen to use these notions because the empirical material we investigated did so, and we are aware that the analysis do not take account of Welsh and Scottish elite discourse.

[11] Labour manifesto 'Britain will be better with new Labour': http://www.labourwin97.org.uk/manifesto/ index/html; Conservative manifesto 'Our vision for Britain': http://www.conservative-party.org.uk/manifesto/defe3. html.

[12] Speech on 11 May 1953, House of Commons, vol. 513, col. 895. In fact, Churchill's imagery dates back to 1930: "But we have our own dreams. And our own task. We are linked, but not comprised. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are interested and associated but not absorbed." Quoted from Zurcher 1975, 6. On the evolution of British nation-state identity during the 1950s see Knopf 1998.

[13] Britishness is usually identified with *Englishness* when it comes to identity constructions.

is able and willing to take her place as a part of the Western community we do not intend to be stampeded into ill-considered action".

Labour Foreign Secretary Cook in 1997: "... because one of the things that those of us **who have gone to Europe** have learnt is that there is also a change of opinion in Europe. As it happens, when **I first went to Europe**, the first European politician I met was Lionel Jospin".[14]

Neither Younger nor Cook 47 years later consider themselves "Europeans," even though they both view Europeans as part of the Western community and as friends.

The collective identification with *national* symbols, history, and institutions is far greater in the British political discourse than a potential identification with *European* symbols, history, and institutions. The social construction of "Englishness" as the core of British nation-state identity comprises meanings attached to institutions centering around a particular understanding of national sovereignty which is hard to reconcile with a vision of European political order going beyond intergovernmentalism (see Lynch 1997; Lyon 1991; Mitchell 1992; Schauer 1996; Schmitz and Geserick 1996). For instance, the Crown symbolizes "external sovereignty" in terms of independence from Rome and the Pope as well as from the European continent since 1066. Parliamentary or "internal sovereignty" represents a most important constitutional principle relating to a 700 year old parliamentary tradition and hard-fought victories over the King (Wallace 1994). English sovereignty is, thus, directly linked to myths about a continuous history of liberal and democratic evolution and "free-born Englishmen". It is not surprising, therefore, that parts of English nation-state identity are often viewed as potentially threatened by European integration. British objections against transferring sovereignty to European supranational institutions are usually justified on grounds of lacking democratic - meaning parliamentary - accountability. As a result, it is difficult to link this notion of Parliamentary sovereignty to notions about European political order except from one comprising independent nation-states. This is demonstrated again by the following quotes from 1950 and from the 1990s:

Sir Cripps, Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1950: "Thus the history of the advance in European co-operation since the war ... is largely the history of a series of practical steps which have gradually extended the mutual trust and confidence in political and economic co-operation ... It does not, however, seem to us ... either necessary or appropriate ... to invest a supra-national authority of independent persons with powers for overriding Governmental and Parliamentary decisions in the participating countries ..."

Prime Minister John Major, 1993: "Britain successfully used the Maastricht negotiations to reassert the authority of national governments. It is clear now that the Community will remain a union of sovereign national

[14] (emphasis added in both quotes) The first quote is from Mr. Younger (Labour; Minister of State), House of Commons debate on Foreign Affairs, 28 March 1950, col. 216. The second quote from Robin Cook, Speech in the House of Commons, June 9, 1997, column 801, *http//:www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/cm970609/debtext/70609-08.htm.*

states. That is what its peoples want: to take decisions through their own Parliaments. (...) It is for nations to build Europe, not for Europe to attempt to supersede nations".[15]

These and other statements show a remarkable continuity of British attitudes toward the European Union and related identity constructions from the 1950s (and earlier) until today. They also demonstrate that nation-state identities supersede ideological orientations among the two major parties. The British political elites continue to identify with a construction of Englishness which is firmly based on the nation-state with little room for "Europe."

Understanding Continuity and Change in Nation-state Identities

The summary description of almost fifty years of nation-state identity constructions in France, Germany, and Britain revealed continuity and change. The "puzzle" to be dealt with consists of understanding

- two dramatic changes in French collective nation-state identities, the triumph of the Gaullist vision in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as their Europeanization during the 1980s and 1990s;
- the Europeanization of German nation-state identity during the 1950s, and the continuity ever since;
- the remarkable continuity of British-English identity still centered around the nation-state;

Thus, any viable approach needs to account for both continuity and change. As a result, we can probably dismiss two rival approaches out of hand. First, neo-functionalism expected that European integration would gradually lead to the transfer of loyalties to the European level, particularly among those elite members involved in the European policy-making process (Haas 1958; Haas 1964; Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). Our empirical evidence does not support such claims across the board. Twenty years after Britain joined the European Community, its national identity remains firmly anchored in the particular notion of Englishness. German collective identities Europeanized, when the European integration process was too weak to exert any independent effects on identity constructions. Only the French case seems to be consistent with a neofunctionalist path.

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[15] The first quote is from Sir S. Cripps (Labour; Chancellor of the Exchequer), House of Commons debate on the Schuman Plan, 26 June 1950, cols. 1946-1950; second quote from Major, John: "Raise your eyes, there is a land beyond," *The Economist,* 25 September - 1st October 1993, p. 27. For similar views see Margaret Thatcher's speech at the Conservative Party conference in 1990, *Financial Times,* 13/14 October 1990, p. 7.

Second, one can deduce from intergovernmentalism – either in its realist (Hoffmann 1966) or its liberal versions (Moravcsik 1993; Moravcsik 1997) – that Europeanization of nation-state identities should not be expected, since the European polity is viewed as a largely intergovernmental institution which does not require much loyalty transfer to the European level. Both the French and the German cases appear to contradict this argument.

However, there are three assumptions which, taken together, might help us to better understand the variation in our empirical findings:

1. An "*ideas resonance*" assumption argues that new identity constructions and ideas about political order need to resonate with given identity constructions embedded in national institutions and political cultures (see Checkel 1997; Soysal 1994; Ulbert 1997; Jetschke and Liese 1998). Thus, we should expect a Europeanization of nation-state identities, if ideas about Europe are perceived to be compatible with and can be integrated in given deep-rooted identity constructions.

2. A "*socialization*" argument claims that ideas and identity constructions become consensual when actors thoroughly internalize them, perceive them "as their own," and take them for granted (Schimmelfennig 1994; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999). Socialization might account for two processes in our findings. First, socialization might explain how national elite members who became exposed to European identity constructions in transnational discourses, then transferred these ideas into their national political arenas. Second, socialization and internalization might account for the "stickiness" of nation-state identities, once they have become consensual.

3. An "*interest-based*" account argues essentially that nation-state identities are instrumental social constructions developed by elites in their struggle for political power insofar as they rationalize and legitimize the instrumental and material preferences of actors which are taken for granted (Haas 1997; Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Garrett and Weingast 1993; Jacobson 1995). As a result, nation-state identities would be expected to Europeanize if and when this suits the instrumental interests of political elites who also command the political power capabilities to make nation-state identities "stick."

We do not consider these assumptions as mutually exclusive. Each of them might actually help us to understand parts of our empirical puzzle. We take the "resonance" assumption as our point of

departure. Elite members attempting to promote a specific nation-state identity, its Europeanization, or a concept of political order need to make these new ideas fit with pre-existing identity constructions embedded in political culture. New ideas about just political order have to resonate with these classical notions of political order and, if the fit is not commonly perceived to be obvious, then national elites will attempt to construct a compatibility between new and old ideas (Bartram 1996). Sometimes they succeed and sometimes their attempts are considered to be illegitimate as a result of which they will refrain from further ideational manipulation.

As argued in the empirical section, classical British notions of political order emphasize parliamentary democracy and external sovereignty as a result of which we would expect political elites to construct new nation-state identities on the basis of these notions. It is not very surprising, therefore, that only an intergovernmentalist version of European political order would generally be taken to resonate with internal and external sovereignty. A Europeanization of nation-state identity does not resonate well with these deeply entrenched notions of sovereignty in the British political discourse.

In the French case, state-centered republicanism - the duty to promote revolutionary values such as brotherhood, freedom, equality and human rights, in short, "civilization" - constituted a continuous element in the French discourse about political order (Kelly 1996). Therefore. any European idea which resonates with French exceptionalism and which does not violate the state-centered concept of republicanism can legitimately be promoted in France, including a Europeanization of French exceptionalism.

The situation was similar in Germany. German concepts of a social market economy, democracy and political federalism were central elements in the discourse of German exiled elites during the war and among the entire political class after World War II. We would therefore expect that any idea about European political order which resonate with these concepts would be considered legitimate in the German political debate. In addition, a nationalist notion of Germany was thoroughly discredited by militarism and Nazism. Europe provided an alternative identity construction and, thus, a way out.

In short, the "resonance assumption" seems to account for the variation between Great Britain, on the one hand, and France as well as Germany, on the other. European identity constructions were incompatible with Englishness, while French and German elites could easily embrace these notions

and incorporate them in their political discourse. But this argument cannot help us to understand why very different identity constructions carried the day in the two latter countries toward the end of the 1950s and why it took France thirty years more to Europeanize its nation-state identity and its exceptionalism than Germany. As we argued above, several different identity constructions were considered legitimate in the German and French political discourses of the early 1950s. The "resonance assumption" does not tell us which won in the end.

The "socialization" assumption adds to the approach insofar as its *transnational variant* accounts for the fact that very similar identity constructions were debated in France and Germany during the 1950s. Christian Democratic parties in France and Germany – the MRP and the CDU – both embraced the Christian European vision as well as the modern Western concept of European identity. The latter also gained some currency among the reform wing of the German Social Democrats. It is also no coincidence that the German SPD under Kurt Schumacher and the French SFIO shared a similar vision of European identity, namely the Socialist "third force" concept. Leaders of each party were heavily involved in meetings and discussions of transnational European movements at the time (Lipgens 1986; Loth 1990a, Loth 1990b, Loth 1994). For the 1980s and 1990s, we assume that the transnational European party organizations as well as the factions of the European Parliament might have had some impact on identity constructions and concepts of European order among their national members. Transnational influences are considered relevant to explain the Europeanization of the French Socialists' political program as well as the adoption of a more positive attitude toward Europe by the British Labour party (albeit not a Europeanization of its identity construction).

Transnational socialization processes can explain how particular ideas about Europe entered the national discourses and why there are some striking similarities among the concepts discussed across national borders. But, again, the argument cannot account for the fact that different identity constructions carried the day across our parties and countries at various points in time. Here, the concept of "critical junctures" becomes relevant indicating that party elites become convinced that existing visions of political order and of nation-state identity are inapplicable or dysfunctional in a specific political context. As a result, they become sensitive to alternative identity constructions and political visions provided that these resonate and are compatible with pre-existing beliefs about political order.

We argue that the German SPD reached such a critical juncture in the mid- to late 1950s when more and more members of the party leadership recognized that Schumacher's vision of "Europe as a third force" was no longer a viable option given the realities of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the Treaty of Rome, and of two severe federal election defeats in a row. At the same time, the modern Western concept of European identity resonated well with the domestic program of the party reformers supporting liberal democracy, market economy, and the welfare state, while giving up more far-reaching Socialist visions.

A critical juncture of a different kind occurred in France during the late 1950s with the war in Algeria and the crisis of the Fourth Republic bringing Charles de Gaulle into power. His notions of French *grandeur* and *mission civilisatrice* complemented and legitimized the institutions of the Fifth Republic by supplying the French public with a consistent and comprehensive identity construction which resonated well with French traditions of republicanism and the *état-nation*.

The French case reveals two more crisis situations leading to attempts at re-constructing French nation-state identities. When Mitterrand's economic policies bumped against the realities of the EMS in 1982-83, he was forced to choose between Europe and his Socialist goals. He readily opted for Europe and set in motion a process which the German Social Democrats had experienced 25 years earlier – the parallel Social Democratization and Europeanization of the French socialists' identity. This Europeanization later extended to the political Right in French politics when the RPR and its leader Jacques Chirac realized, in conjunction with the end of the cold war, that French exceptionalism was nothing but utopia without Europe. In other words, it took another critical juncture *and* the initiatives of a nation-state leaders - who pursued what they defined as being in their party's interest - to place Europe almost consensually in the French nation-state identity[16].

The French case also illustrates the presence of our third explanatory factor, perceived interests. De Gaulle used the identity constructions of the Fifth Republic to consolidate his power. Mitterrand's policy change and ensuing reform of the French Socialists' ideology were motivated by the desire to remain in power. Power factors were also relevant in the case of the French Gaullists during the early 1990s who tried to position themselves for the post-Mitterrand era. The German SPD thoroughly reformed its program and Europeanized its party identity, because its leaders reckoned

[16] The electoral success of the French right-wing party *Front National*, who openly oppose European integration, does not alter our argument, because it is our view that this group since its creation in the 70s still is considered to be in the periphery of the French political landscape and considered to be illegitimate by the political mainstream.

that this was the only way to win elections. A similar explanation holds for the British Labour Party in the 1980s which had lost two elections against Prime Minister Thatcher and then decided to change course.

But instrumental interests can only explain the variation in our cases *in conjunction* with the other explanatory factors. First, party leaders are not free to manipulate nation-state identities at their leisure. Rather, they can only try to promote those identity constructions which resonate with pre-existing views among the public and the political elites. To posit a European "civilizing mission" would be considered preposterous in the German political context (where missions of a different kind ruined the country and Europe earlier in the century), while it constitutes a perfectly legitimate idea in the French political discourse. To publicly worship European unity can be a dangerous proposition in the British debate, while it is regarded perfectly normal in Germany. In short, the resonance assumption explains which identity constructions are available, considered appropriate, and legitimated in a particular political discourse, while perceived interests might elucidate *which* identity constructions are selected and promoted by party elites.

Second, as argued above, "critical junctures" provide a window of opportunity for party elites to deconstruct, reconstruct, and manipulate given nation-state identities. While they constitute perceived crises and not some quasi-objective reality, it is impossible for leaders to single-handedly manipulate such crises phenomena. At least, they must be able to convince a wider audience that a particular moment in history constitutes indeed a crisis situation whereby nation-state identities are up for grasp.

Finally, we need to distinguish between "open" and "closed" political discourses. When nation-state identities are challenged, contested, and compete among each other, as was the case in Germany and France during the 1950s, strategic interests might explain which parties pick which identity construction and promote it. Once the range of available nation-state identities narrows down and a particular construction becomes consensual and prevails over others, the discourse closes. Challenging the prevailing consensus becomes much more difficult. Here, the second variant of the "socialization" hypothesis has to be considered focusing on *internalization processes*. This explains the stickiness of identity constructions which can no longer be manipulated by political elites. Rather, the collective identity itself can now be exploited for instrumental purposes. The latter was the case in Germany under Helmut Kohl. Given the thorough Europeanization of German nation-

state identity, the German chancellor was able to silence critics of the single currency extremely effectively by arguing that "good Germans" had to support the Euro, as any "good European" would do. Against this power construction, critics had to make the far more complicated argument that "good Europeans" could disagree over the merits of the single currency (see Risse et al. 1998).

The British case also illustrates the point. When old visions about political order remain unchallenged, they tend to become increasingly institutionalized in national institutions and political cultures as a result of which they become difficult to de-construct and to replace[17]. Studying the remarkable similarity of identity-related statements by British party elites from the 1950s to the present, it seems as if the room for maneuver narrows, the longer old ideas about political order remain unchallenged. Traditional British notions of external and internal sovereignty still seem to be relevant until today. A recent example of this is Prime Minister Tony Blair's (failed) attempt to support early British membership of the EMU after taking office in Spring 1997, a support he had to withdraw immediately because such ideas were considered to be illegitimate in the political discourse both within the party system and in the media.

In sum, we posit the following relationship between our three assumptions in order to better grasp our puzzle of continuity and change in nation-state identities as well as their Europeanization. First, new ideas about European identity and European political order are usually transmitted through discourses in transnational organizations and movements (transnational socialization assumption). Second, these ideas are transferred to the national discourses to the extent that they resonate with given and pre-existing consensual identity constructions and concepts of political order embedded in a country's institutions and political culture (resonance assumption). Only those ideas which resonate are considered legitimate in a political struggle. Third, perceived "critical junctures" define situations in political discourses when identity constructions are being challenged and contested. Under such circumstances, political elites select among the available and legitimate identity constructions according to their perceived power interests (interest assumption). Thus, perceived interests and ideas' resonance together determine which nation-state identity construction carries the day. Fourth, however, once identity constructions have become consensual and, thus, collective views, they tend to be internalized by actors as well as institutionalized

[17] We will not be able to expand on this point in this article, but we have a broad range of institutions in mind, such as the media, the educational system, the electoral system, the legal system, the political decision-making procedures etc. What they have in common, is that they tend to consolidate and reify existing and consensually shared ideas about just political order.

(internalization/socialization assumption). As a result, the range of legitimate identity constructions in a political space narrows down, until the next "critical juncture" occurs.[18]

Conclusions

This paper tried to tackle the following puzzle. Why is it that we cannot observe much Europeanization of "Englishness" during the past fifty years, while "Germanness" spells European since at least the end of the 1950s and "Frenchness" comes in European colors at least recently? We argued that a combination of three factors might be able to account for this variation in the extent to which nation-state identities Europeanized. The first condition is that any new identity construction, in order to be considered legitimate, must resonate with core elements of a much older vision of political order such as 'state-centered republicanism' in France, 'parliamentary democracy and external sovereignty' in Great Britain, and 'federalism, democracy and social market economy' in Germany. These older elements of political order therefore constitute the outer limits of what it is possible to construct.

The second condition is that new visions about political order circulating in transnational discourses can most easily be promoted domestically during "critical junctures" when existing ideas about political order collectively are increasingly challenged and contested. Under these circumstances, perceived political interests and the power resources of political actors explain to a large degree which identity constructions among those available in a given context are being promoted and carry the day.

Finally, nation-state identities which have become consensual in a given polity tend to remain rather stable over time, since actors tend to get socialized into their new collective identity and gradually internalize their content. Over time, nation-state identities tend to become embedded in political institutions and political culture which is why the degree to which political elites are able to manipulate identity constructions narrows considerably.

Our empirical findings run counter to two prevailing, but competing views in the literature. Conventional wisdom holds that there either is no European collective identity to speak of at all in the European polity or that there is some convergence among the various European nation-state

[18] Martin Marcussen has developed the concept of an "ideational life-cycle" in this context (Marcussen 1998 and Marcussen forthcoming).

identities toward a common identity. We disagree with both views. The British example shows that there is not much convergence toward a common European identity. But the German and French cases also show that some nation-state identities have thoroughly integrated ideas about Europe and European order. Moreover, one could argue even further that the modern Western concept of European identity incorporating values of liberal democracy, market economy, and the welfare state provides some common ground among the political elites in France and Germany, if not elsewhere. But then again, these Europeanized nation-state identities come in distinct national colors. French Europeans remain French, and German Europeans remain Germans (and Bavarians and Rhinelanders, and so on), i.e., people hold multiple identities, as social psychology would expect. In a certain sense, multiple European and nation-state identities might actually be appropriate for a multi-level system of governance, such as the European Union.

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