Anne-Dörte Balks

The Mirror of Public Opinion?

Comparing the News-media's Perspective on European Integration in Germany and the Netherlands

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1 Introduction: Establishing Fundamentals

1.1 Starting Point and Research Interest: A Comparison of Public Debate in Media

On May 29 and June 1, 2005, citizens in France and the Netherlands rejected the so-called Constitutional Treaty in referenda. Such decisions taken by a majority of voters, whether in France and the Netherlands in 2005, or the 2009 decision in Ireland on the Reform Treaty, are not spontaneous incidents. Rather, they are usually preceded by political campaigning, media reporting and extensive public debate. In the case of the Dutch negative referendum verdict people stated afterwards that the debate had started too late and that they had not been well enough informed (European Commission 2005c). In the referendum 61.6% of voters decided against the Constitutional Treaty, while only a month before Dutch citizens had counted among those most in favour of a European Constitution in Europe (European Commission 2005d).

In Germany, ratification lay in both cases in the hands of Parliament. Voters were not consulted directly. However, it can be safely assumed that the outcome of a referendum in Germany could not have been predicted either. There the development of public opinion on the European Constitution took a slightly different turn: in November 2004, a majority of citizens supported the Constitutional Treaty (54% in favour, 17% against; ibid.), although less than in the Netherlands at the time. However, in Germany support did not decline. In early summer 2005, when the Treaty was ratified by the Bundestag, 59% of citizens asked agreed with the European Constitution and 21% would have voted against it.

To sum up: support for European integration declined after the referendum in the Netherlands, while it rose in Germany during the same period.

This single incident indicates how public debate and public opinion may develop differently on the same issue within two different, but neighbouring, countries. They may also quickly change over time. The question is, what makes public opinion so volatile and how is it formed in the first place?

Today, mass information media are the most important producers of a public sphere in which issues important to society can be discussed. They carry and impart information and opinion that are necessary for individuals to take part in public discourse. Mass and especially information media thus have a dual function: they provide information and they provide a forum for public debate. This forum, arguably, is directly open for participation mainly to public elites like politicians, experts and important spokespersons of civil society organisations, as well as to representatives of the economic sector. It must not be forgotten, though, that media, by way of their journalists for instance, also take part in the public discourse as actors in their own right. They provide a discursive forum not only for others, but also for themselves. Media may thus influence the thrust of public debate.

The question posed above as to the influences to which public debate and opinion are subjected, is thus partially answered: media coverage is a major influence on the direction of public debate and public opinion.

Early models of media communication, like the so-called Lasswell-formula of 1948[1], were one directional, and assumed that senders (e. g. politicians) either directly or via a mediator (e. g. the media) convey a message to recipients (e. g. voters). The formula thus asks: *Who* (sender) says *what* (message) through what *channel* (mediator) to *whom* (recipient) with what *effect* (influence)? (Jäckel 1999: 70)

In public discourse, however, there are numerous senders, who have diverse messages and possibly even more recipients. Politicians send their messages via different mediators (political parties, campaigns, posters, information media etc.) to their prime recipients in democratic systems: the voters. The voters send their messages to their elected representatives, primarily in the form of votes via the ballot. Just like politicians, other individuals, organisations, and institutions are dependent on raising public awareness of and, if possible, garnering public support for, themselves and their causes. The original Lasswell-formula must thus not be understood as a one-way street, but as a circle of senders, recipients, messages and responses.

To complicate the matter, there is often more than one sender for a single message, or indeed multiple senders with multiple messages, all of which may have diverse recipients. Public debate is, in consequence not just one debate but many, and involves fluctuating participants (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 2 f.). This means that the answer given above is not that simple after all. It also means that "the" public debate or "the" public discourse do not exist. Instead many debates exist simultaneously and may even share participants.

For the moment, let us stay with the easily understandable idea, that, concerning political issues, at least two discourses exist: political discourse and public discourse. Public discourse, in this case, means a discourse among the people of a society as opposed to among political or economic elites. In discourse, it is important to be the author of the most frequently used definition (cf. Dryzek 2000, chapters 5 and 6). For instance: is nuclear energy sustainable or even "green" energy, as its lobbyists argue, or is it actually the "dirtiest" and, in terms of after-costs, the most expensive and dangerous form of energy, as anti-nuclear activists claim? In Germany in 2011, the latter argument beat the former, triggering change in the energy sector, the economy at large and of course society. One discourse "beat" the other.

Thus, the way an issue is – to use the media science term – framed (meaning how an argument is presented), is not simply a matter of using different words. It is a matter of power.

Representative democratic systems foster this form of communicative power. According to Habermas, it is actually the foundation of democratic power. For him, institutionalised public discourses are a prerequisite for democratic governance, because they trigger individual – as well as public – opinion building and will-formation and then facilitate the voicing of these opinions, for instance in elections,

1 The formula is named after Harold Dwight Lasswell, US political and communication scientist, 1902–1978.

but also in public argument within the public sphere. (Habermas 1992, 1996) Communicative power is thus able to trigger political change, either by way of policy reform or, if that is not deemed sufficient, by a change in government.

Given the importance of public debate and public opinion in democratic politics, understanding how it changes is of great significance.

1.1.1 Media as Civil Society Actors within the Public Sphere

Civil society can broadly be understood as the sphere of civic self-organisation between state and market. It is thus also where negotiation processes for conflict resolution and establishing the terms of living together take place publicly and the space in which, according to Habermas, communicative power forms (ibid.). Participants in such negotiations may for instance be civil associations, such as NGOs or less formalised social movements, and the negotiations may take place between members of civil society themselves and civil society and the political and economic sphere. This rather general approach leaves space for more specific definitions following the logic of civil society as a distinct sphere (e. g. Kocka 2006) as well as for definitions that mainly look at a civic logic of action (e. g. Bauerkämper 2003).

Focus here lies on the media in Germany and the Netherlands. Media are understood as means of communication within and about civil society. Obviously media coverage of issues on the public agenda – or which brings issues onto the public agenda – might also lead to negotiation processes within the public. As media usually take a certain position, due to a number of reasons such as political background, editorial policy or the economic interests of the publishing house, they may even find themselves participating as actors in this process of public bargaining over the "correct" interpretation of a social issue. This book will use the term "debate" according to its broader definition as "public debate". While a debate can be understood as a temporally restricted local event with a clear number of participants, a public debate involves numerous actors (the public, essentially), is not restricted to a particular time and space and does not require direct argumentative action and reaction.

Accordingly, the aim is to trace the course of public and political discourse and their representation in media. On the issue of European integration the question, among others, is thus how the "idea" or the "conception of Europe" is discussed in national civil societies and how this discussion is presented in the media.

According to the one-directional Laswell formula cited above, the framing of an issue takes place on the side of the sender. However, modern studies on media effects assume and prove the important role of the mediator in the perception of an issue on the recipients' side.

> "Public opinion is shaped by the way the news media frame issues." (de Vreese 2010: 187)

This quote stems from a study on how economic issues are covered by journalists and how these same issues are then perceived by the public. The quote departs some

way from characterising news media as mere mediators of predefined messages. The study finds that the way media report on an issue – the framing of an issue – directly influences the way it is perceived publicly, deliberately or otherwise. Further, this not only affects public perception, but also the formation of public opinion.

In that sense, did news media in the Netherlands then shape the outcome of the 2005 referendum?

That notion would certainly be rejected by the journalists working for the same news media, since both prior research and that carried out for this book (cf. chapter 4) demonstrate that journalists in Germany and the Netherlands predominantly understand themselves as conveyers of news, not as influencing factors in the formation of public opinion (Weischenberg et al. 1994a; Weischenberg and Scholl 2002; Weischenberg et al. 2006; Deuze 2002).

However, journalists' self-perception may be fostered more by a perceived ideal of the objective journalist than by reality. Modern societies are large structures in which a so-called encounter-public, meaning face-to-face communication, is only possible in very restricted spaces. Such spaces may be living-rooms, market squares, or, in a political sense, the public appearance of a politician directly in front of prospective voters. An area in which communication no longer takes place within earshot thus needs a mediator in order to get messages across. Without such a mediator, large parts of communications would remain private or become only partly or regionally public. For democracy to work on a large scale, that is insufficient.

Matthes (2007: 25 f.) describes the political importance of the media-public. It is of such relevance because it reaches recipients as well as elites, and influences their actions. He argues that in modern societies mass-media discourses thus forego political decisions.

On the level of recipients, Dahl would say that only knowledgeable citizens are able to deliberate and to come to rational decisions regarding the best action to take within their democratic rights and obligations (Dahl 1998). However, knowledge must be gained from a source of information. If information cannot be conveyed by classic conversation, media jump in. In Germany and the Netherlands the main source of information on which the citizens constructed their opinions on European integration was the mass/information media.

In this context, newspapers have been the main source of information for the general public for over three hundred years and have thus been the leading media in public discourse. Still today they are perceived as prestigious media compared to, for instance, TV news. (Behmer 2007: 92) For that reason, newspapers have been chosen here over other kinds of media as the main source for analysis.

This study assumes, like de Vreese (2010), and also Pfetsch and Adam (2008a), that the description of media as mediators is wrong, or better, insufficient. If mediators choose to transfer the message of the sender to the recipient, what makes them do so? What is their motive? Do they transfer the message 1:1? Do they change the original matter? If so, how and for what reason? In sum, these questions all lead to the overarching question as to just how objective mediators in the sender-recipient model really are. Pfetsch and Adam (2008a), Pfetsch et al. (2004) and Neidhardt et al. (2004) all describe the media, and furthermore individual journalists, as actors

in their own right. At the very least, media decide which part of a message to transfer. Turning again to the discourse theoretical terminology, they decide two things: which discourse or parts of a discourse they pick up and turn into news, and how they do so. They thus become mediators, but also very powerful filters. Further, they take part in societal discourse because they choose how to present a specific issue or even construct their own narratives.

How journalists and media filter certain news from others is a question of professional practices. A number of factors influence these choices: the so-called news factors (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Kepplinger and Bastian 2000) which theoretically determine how important an issue is deemed by news makers, journalists' backgrounds, economic considerations, and the perceived audience.

> "In sum, packages[2] succeed in media discourse through a combination of cultural resonances, sponsor activities, and a successful fit with media norms and practices. Public opinion influences this process indirectly through journalists' beliefs, sometimes inaccurate, about what the audience is thinking." (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 9)

The quote plainly states that in order to become prominent news an issue needs numerous attributes: relevance to the cultural background of the medium, prominent people/organisations in society who support the issue and keep it on the agenda, a good fit with how news is produced (e. g. continuity over a certain time span), and journalists to pick it up as being of interest to their recipients.

Thus, news production is internally as well as externally influenced. Internal influences may determine how an issue is picked to become news. External influences may determine what issue is chosen and how it is displayed. Concerning public debate, these factors determine who "sponsors" an issue in media, meaning whose perception of an issue and whose arguments are promoted or "win" and whose "fail".

Thus, on issues too remote from people living in a modern society, the media are decisive in what is perceived of a message by recipients and how this message is perceived. In a very simplified way it could be said that news media take sides. The media, often presented as a unified entity, actually consist of many individuals, each with a specific position in society and with an opinion of their own. Most visible among these individuals are, in terms of news media, the journalists who do the actual reporting. They do the reporting and commenting and in doing so have to take the decisions described above: which issue? How shall it be presented? In that they shape our perception of reality to such a great extent, journalists have a very prominent and important role in society and public debate.

From these deliberations it can be concluded that political, public, and media discourse are in a circular relationship with each other: Media frames may affect public opinion as well as political action. On the other hand, public discourse and political discourse find their way into media reporting either through newsworthiness and/or through the opinions of the producers of news: journalists.

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2 Media packages are, according to Gamson and Modigliani (1989) certain issue fields constituted by different inherent problems, arguments and solutions.

This study will not analyse the influence of media reporting on public discourse, but the other side of the coin. It asks, what discourses and whose perspectives do news media (in this case newspapers) take up most prominently either as their own, or from a critical or a supportive viewpoint? On this issue, Gamson and Modigliani state:

> "General audience media are not only forums for public discourse, but, since they constantly make available suggested meanings and are the most accessible in a media-saturated society […], their content can be used as the most important indicator of the general issue culture." (ibid.)

The content of newspapers will here be used exactly in this way to assess how good an indicator it is for issues in civil society or public discourse and thus how journalists by way of their actions position themselves within the sphere model: between politics, the market and civil society. Civil society approaches are thus combined with theories of public communication. A further qualitative step is the specific definition of the media as actors within civil society from the sphere logic approach or as civil society actors from the logic of action approach.

1.1.2 Issue: European Integration

Given that many different public debates exist in a single public sphere or society, and thus that if more than one public is considered they are multiplied, for analysis to be feasible an example must be chosen.

The start of this introduction reveals one of the reasons why European integration is a good issue for analysis. It is an issue that crosses borders. At the moment, European integration is a public issue in, at the very least, the 28 member states of the European Union. It can be safely assumed, moreover, that it is also debated in countries that strive for accession to the European Union, such as Serbia.

Furthermore, European integration is a process that also cuts across different issue areas: it is a political process, an economic process and a social and cultural process. It affects people at every level of society in every member state and accession state. It affects farmers because of agricultural subsidies, researchers because of European grant structures; it affects everyone because of general everyday issues such as environmental regulations, like the notorious regulation on light bulbs. Furthermore, it does not matter for this study whether people are actually aware of this influence or perceive of it.

However, they often do, and moreover, they form an opinion about whether they think European integration has brought benefits to their lives or has negatively affected them. They talk about these perceptions and in that instant public discourse on European integration has begun. Consequently, the issue is also more or less continuously present in media coverage. That has advantages for research on that same media coverage, no matter whether it is short or long term. In the first case, researchers can be fairly certain that the issue is present, even if they do not pick

a specifically important event for which coverage shall be analysed. In the second case, researchers can be certain that coverage does not become "sketchy" because the issue has declined in importance. It is possible to look at the development of coverage on European integration and explain possible dips or peaks in the quantity of coverage by referring to events concerning the issue alone instead of having to find external explanations like more important events competing for coverage. Also, when choosing a longer time frame, there is no risk that the issue will not return, should it vanish from coverage for a while.

The issue has been covered both very positively as well as very negatively in news (de Vreese 2010: 197). Most importantly, the study has found that negative framing of the European economy does indeed lead to negative evaluations of the same issue among the audiences, and vice versa. For example, people who read about negative developments in the European economy tended to think about costs instead of benefits and were far less supportive of European enlargement than people that were given articles containing positive economic evaluation (ibid.). The question of how such different valences on an issue like European integration may develop in the media and the general public is thus of some importance.

For the author, European integration and the European Union have been the focus of her studies of political science and her personal interest.

The aspect of *cross-cutting borders* is, however, certainly the most important for this study, which is designed as a comparative study: The issue is of importance, as has been stated, in more than just one European country, which facilitates comparison.

1.2 Methodology A: The Comparative Method and Choice of Cases

The comparative method has developed differently in the various disciplines of social sciences and the humanities in general. For some time now it has been part of the standard repertoire of the social sciences and political science. In Germany, focus was initially placed on the institutional framework and constitutional make-up of governments and government action. This focus has been widened, particularly by U.S. scientists following the Second World War, into what today is understood as comparative politics or comparative political sciences. Since then, the approach has become more comprehensive and today also encompasses historical, social, economic and cultural aspects as objects of analysis. (Berg-Schlosser 2001)

However, communication and media sciences have not made much use of the comparison of countries until recently. Even though the comparative method has by now found its way into these disciplines, its usefulness or even the possibility of proper comparison are debated. Agreement has been found though on the possibility of discovering differences and similarities between countries on the subject of analysis and bringing them to light.

This study aims at analysing specific differences and coherences within the public discourses on European integration in Germany and the Netherlands. The question is thereby whether, how far and why such discourses may have developed differently despite the geographical and cultural closeness of these countries. As the comparison will focus on the public debate as reflected in the media – between readers and journalists – it finds itself within the realm of media and communication sciences. However, the focus on political and social developments within both countries that may have influenced the direction of the debates and the characterisation of journalists and the media as actors in civil society signifies a political scientist's approach. This study is thus based within two scientific disciplines and deals with and combines approaches from political as well as communication science.

The comparative method in political science is meant to further scientific knowledge of world politics (Landman 2000). Against the criticism that comparison in political science cannot be as accurate a method as experiments in natural sciences and should therefore be applied as heuristic, not as method (1969; in Lijphart 1975), Lijphart argues for the actual applicability of the comparative method. He ranks it within the standard repertoire of social scientists' methods, next to experiments and the statistical method. (ibid.: 682)

According to Faure, comparing two quite similar cases represents the most usual method within comparative politics (Faure 1994). In comparing Germany and the Netherlands, which are geographically close and culturally similar countries, this study thus applies a most similar systems design (MSSD) following Przeworski and Teune (1970, in Lijphart 1975), also called *comparable cases strategy* (Lijphart 1975), *method of controlled comparison* (Eggan 1954, in ibid.), or *most similar with different outcomes* (or MSDO; Berg-Schlosser 2001).

The MSSD-design is not undisputed. It is attractive because the similarity of cases helps to reduce the number of variables to be controlled for. However, there are no two countries alike enough to guarantee a research design as clean as experiments in natural sciences. (Mill 1970, in Lijphart 1975) Also, the research design favours qualitative studies on a very small amount of countries, which makes the generalisation of results difficult and prone to interpretation. Similar doubts are voiced in communication sciences. Esser (2002: 322) indicates correctly that different contextual factors that influence national media systems in a country-specific way make comparison problematic. Scholl and Weischenberg (1998: 207) argue that because of the strong link between journalism and national norms, and especially national issues, it would for the moment be sensible for theory-based research on media communication to remain within national boundaries.

Despite these sceptical voices comparative studies have since then increased and found their place in media science. In the beginning, the focus was mainly on only a few countries which were researched in detail. German research especially seemed stuck on comparisons involving the U.S., while most comparative research in media science has been done on the possibility of classification of media systems and journalistic culture. (cf. e. g. Hallin and Mancini 2003) These studies will, however, be of some importance here within the comparative chapter on journalistic culture (chapter 4). Still, chapter 2 will prove that while on theoretical grounds scientists

remain cautious as to the value of comparison in communication science, research in the field has simply moved beyond such doubts. Especially in research fields where communication and political science mingle, the number of comparative studies has grown steadily during the last decade. A good example, which is important for this study, is research in the field of the European public sphere, in which trans-border media coverage of European issues is analysed, as well as responses in the media of one member state to coverage in another member state (Koopmans and Pfetsch 2003; Statham and Koopmans 2010; Medrano 2010). Such studies are not feasible without comparison.

Part of communication science, or more specifically media science, is framing research, analysing how issues are framed and by whom. In this case, comparative research has developed only within the last decade.

> "However, little attention has been paid to framing in a cross-nationally comparative fashion." (de Vreese 2001: 108)

This is no longer true, since for instance Medrano (2010) represents a substantive study on media frames (on the European Union) in different European countries. In a later study Medrano and Gray (2010) find that media frames often follow non-media frames (e. g. from politicians, organisations, economic spokespersons). However, the study does not delve into the specifics of where such frames stem from, meaning how they developed historically. Although the earlier study did so it did not include the Netherlands. Instead it focused on Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain. Without a detailed examination of the development of perspectives, arguments and frames, however, it is hardly possible to make a statement about why specific viewpoints are adopted by media and non-media actors today.

This study assumes that qualitative comparison which renders in-depth insights and results not only concerning the existence of differences but also the reasons for their development is of great scientific importance in itself. The statistical comparative method does allow for larger amounts of cases, but it struggles to incorporate the historical, social and cultural backgrounds of the countries of analysis. Their explanatory power therefore cannot compete with the most similar systems design as employed here. Furthermore, the comprehensive view on the development of frames which has been argued for above is taken.

By comparing two countries which, because of their over 60 years of shared European experience are much more easily comparable than countries that entered the EU at a later stage, the cautious voices against the comparison of different systems and cultures are also toned down.

A number of reasons make this comparison – especially for the issue of European integration at hand – very interesting. As founding members of the European Community for Coal and Steel (ECSC), both countries partook in the start of the European integration process in 1955 and can look back on more than 60 years of EU-European politics and experience with integration politics. The public debate on European integration in both countries has therefore developed at around the same time and within the same external political and economic setting. Also, the reasons

for taking part in European integration developed within the same time context after the Second World War.

Considering these similar starting-points the hypothesis is that Germany and the Netherlands both took a similar approach to European politics and indeed both have been known as promoters of a supranational constitution of the European institutional setting and of multilateral solutions to international problems. As will be shown in detail in chapter 5, public approval of European integration has traditionally been high among German and Dutch citizens.

How then did Dutch scepticism about further political integration which culminated in the public rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in May 2005 develop?

This certainly is not the question which this book aims to answer. However, it does highlight the problem which arises for political scientists when seemingly similar situations and settings – whether social, political, cultural or economic – produce different outcomes. Or, were the outcomes in Germany and the Netherlands concerning public opinion really so different? It is possible that the German public, had they been given the chance to express their opinion in a referendum, would have voted similarly to the Dutch. Obviously, this is mere speculation. Nonetheless, one of the reasons for different public opinions on the same issue may be the way that same issue is framed within public debate.

Another reason for comparison of Germany and the Netherlands is the relative similarity of the media/newspaper landscape in these countries. Chapter 4 will deal in some detail with the development of journalism and modern media in both countries. For the moment it is important to note that each newspaper chosen for analysis in one country has a good counterpart in the other country as well.

Germany and the Netherlands will be compared from two perspectives: from a political perspective which examines the background of European integration politics in both countries and the major political arguments which shaped it as well as how the German and Dutch people perceive of the issue; and from a communication/media science perspective, which requires the development of the journalistic profession and self-description.

1.3 Methodology B: A Qualitative Research Design

In his book on qualitative content analysis, Mayring (2005) argues for the importance of qualitative research in conjunction with quantitative research. He makes a compelling argument that both render the best results if the strengths of each approach are considered by the other. In his view, there is a more or less natural order in which qualitative and quantitative research follow each other. Qualitative research develops hypotheses and theory which are then tested by quantitative research. In the end, interpretation of quantitative results by way of reviewing the original hypotheses is again a qualitative research step.

To some extent this study will follow Mayring's recommendation for a symbiosis of the two approaches, though the order he proposes has been changed. For one, a secondary data analysis will help to understand the general public's view in Ger-

many and the Netherlands of European integration. Second, the actual qualitative content or frame analysis will be preceded by a quantitative analysis of the presence of the issue of European integration in German and Dutch newspapers over time. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis of frames in newspapers is greatly aided by an enumeration of these frames according to country and newspaper. Obviously, such an enumeration also supports the comparative perspective, especially as it helps the reader to understand the numerical differences and similarities at a glance.

The frame analysis is, however, based on the premises of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 2005; Strauss 1994) like the constant comparative method in which earlier and later findings (e. g. during the coding process) are constantly held against each other, or "compared", in order to obtain a dense description of the material and in-depth analysis. This constant comparative method is here structured by the tools of qualitative content analysis, according to Mayring (2005). The result is a thorough step-by-step analysis of frames in German and Dutch newspapers that is rare in comparative frame analyses.

The approach deviates slightly from the purely qualitative idea, since for purposes of structure and analytical understanding some hypotheses are derived from theoretical considerations. They are, however, not tested in the sense of a statistical test, rather the results of the different steps of analysis are interpreted against the theoretical background they provide. Thus, such an approach not only promises to yield interesting and telling empirical results, but also allows for a theoretical discussion.

1.4 Disciplinary Links and Gaps to Be Filled

There are numerous examples of where the combination of approaches from political and communication sciences has proven fruitful for research in either discipline. Concerning the issue of European integration, for instance, this has resulted in a number of studies on the issue of a European public sphere. Their common starting point is the question of what the European Union needs to do in order to diminish its often described democratic deficit. (Brüggemann and Schulz-Forberg 2009; de Vreese 2001; Eilders and Voltmer 2003; Erbe 2006; Gerhards 1993, 2002)

In this research field, comparative studies are common, but these studies on a possible European public sphere as a cure for the EU's democratic deficit have a different interest. They find differences in the presentation of European integration in media and asynchronous debates in different member states in Europe, but they do not really examine how those differences develop. How is public discourse, especially regarding long-running and recurrent issues, shaped in the first place? Are the concepts that we use today in order to make sense of events and issues around us new or has there been development? Translating these general questions to the issue of European integration: is that process evaluated negatively or positively on the spur of the moment? Did Dutch voters decide to reject the Constitution because of current political or economic developments? Or has our way of perceiving the

European Union developed over time and long since become, as a political scientist would say, path dependent?

As described, Habermas perceives institutionalised discourse as a means to democratic and political power. But institutions, even those as volatile as discourse, feed on the cultural, social, geographic, political and economic context they stem from. The neo-institutional understanding of the development and proceedings of institutions is the base line for this study, which, like Habermas (1996), perceives of discourse as institution. Institutional make-up does not happen by chance but builds upon contextual factors such as long-term developments and/or the experiences of actors and participants. On a macro-level, public and political discourse are influenced by a certain way of looking at issues based on political developments and cultural peculiarities and these may furthermore be based on the geographical situation of a country and related historical experiences.

Also, professional ethics in journalism, seen as institutions, are derived from a certain understanding of what journalists should do and what they may or may not do. These build upon the historical development of the profession often in relation to political developments and societal change, in the direction of an open and more inclusive society. On the micro-level this affects the behaviour of editorial offices and individual journalists as well as their way of reporting.

When looking at media discourse, it is therefore necessary to treat journalists both as main participants in the discourse, as part of public and civil society where certain discursive traditions have developed over time and in relation to certain issues, and as members of a profession with particular, equally traditional rules.

In that it places European discourse in the context of its development and media discourse among these possible influences, this book fills a gap by explaining the origins of different perspectives on European integration. Furthermore, by clearly accounting for the possible influences of journalists' professional self-understanding and the means of production of European news in the countries of comparison, it furthermore takes a comprehensive view on how media perspectives on a certain issue develop.

Journalists as actors are not only influenced in their reporting by the traditional (political) discourse lines of their respective countries, but also by the professional journalistic culture in which they were socialised. Although Germany and the Netherlands are two countries with similar but nonetheless differing journalistic cultures it is also vital to understand whether these differences may also lead to differences in coverage of a certain issue. Therefore a literature review on journalistic developments and traditions in both countries provides a basic understanding of where journalistic traditions and self-understanding originates. Even though some literature – as has been indicated – exists on the issue, it can hardly be called comprehensive. Existing comparative literature focuses on media systems (Hallin and Mancini 1997) or journalistic training (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 1997) but thus far has not included a comparison of journalistic culture as such. Studies on journalism in Germany or the Netherlands are more detailed in nature but do not look outside national borders (Netherlands: Wijfjes 2004; Wijfjes and Voerman 2009 – from a historical perspective; Deuze 2002 – media scientific approach; Germany: esp. the

project "Journalismus in Deutschland", Weischenberg et al. 1994a; Weischenberg and Scholl 2002; Weischenberg et al. 2006). Direct comparison of journalistic culture, supported by interviews with European correspondents from both countries, is therefore a new undertaking which is vital if we are to explain possible differences in coverage of the same issue.

The main theoretical body of this book is formed by a combination of civil society theory and research into the role of media and individual journalists, combined with the theory of framing. Framing, put succinctly, is the process of describing an issue in a specific way, thus painting a certain picture of reality. It is most often analysed when it is used strategically by prominent actors like politicians, but is essentially a communicative tool applied by all communicators, regardless of their prominence.

Frames are thus applied in public discourse in order to "win an argument" or to steer a debate in a certain direction. They are the connotative part of "messages". On newsworthy issues, they find their way into media. Different kinds of frames can thus be found in information media: external frames that make their way into news coverage by way of being reported upon (e. g. quotes from politicians or civil society actors), internal frames that resonate with particular editorial lines, and journalists' frames which form part of a journalist's mindset.

> "Frames werden in einem Diskurs erkämpft, neu definiert oder sogar je nach Erfolg im Verlauf der Zeit angepasst und ausgetauscht. Ein Zeitvergleich bzw. eine dynamische Sichtweise drängt sich geradezu auf.[3]" (Matthes 2007: 47)

Matthes complains that frame analysis over a certain time span is necessary but rare. He argues that frames, being contested among actors and adjusted during discourse, may change over time in response to new events or new ideas. To return to the example of nuclear energy discourse in Germany, although the issue had been contested before, the "nuclear energy is dangerous and a liability to future generations" frame only dominated the debate after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima in 2011.

Such a radical change in a specific discourse, or better, such a radical repression of frames by another, is not expected from European integration discourse in news media. However, even gradual change is of interest, since in the long run it may also alter public opinion on the issue. It is therefore important to note such change and interpret it in the light of events. For that reason, the qualitative frame analysis applied here encompasses a time span of five years from 2004 to 2009.

Overall this study tries to fill a number of gaps in active research fields. The comparative perspective is vital and is sustained throughout the different steps of research like a comparative mainstream. Each research step looks at the country specifics and analyses similarities and differences thus allowing for a very comprehensive interpretation of research results.

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3 Quote in English, translation by author: *"Frames are eked out within discourses; they are newly defined, or depending on their success adjusted over time and exchanged. A comparison over time or rather a dynamic perspective thus suggests itself."*

Concerning frame analysis, the study furthermore takes a longitudinal perspective over five years of EU coverage in newspapers. It also embeds the analysis in the historic development of European discourse and frames in the countries of comparison and strongly emphasises the importance of news production and journalistic self-perception for the analysis of media frames. It thus fills a gap in framing research, identified by Matthes (ibid.), who criticises the "a-theoretical" approach of most studies on frames, which describe frames in certain media on certain issues and at a given time, but do not ask where these frames might originate.

Lastly, but also most importantly, the study is not limited to comparing the European perspectives of politicians, the public and media in Germany and the Netherlands. Instead, it specifically investigates the implications of these perspectives for the role of journalists in public debate and civil society.

1.5 Research Questions

After this rather general introduction, the following part will discuss the research questions, the approaches taken and of course the methodological considerations. The title of the book *"The Mirror of Public? – Comparing the News Media's Perspective on European Integration in Germany and the Netherlands",* raises a number of questions that need to be answered in order to describe and analyse the issue properly. First of all, the actors in the aforementioned public debate must be defined. In this case, public debate in media is defined as part of civil society discourse. However, it will not be part of the analysis how often and in what context civil society organisations and their claims use media as a forum or are given such a forum by the media. Instead the focus of analysis is on comments from journalists – often EU correspondents – and how these comments and the opinions they reflect concur, differ, or even affect each other. Thereby civil society debate is reflected through the comments of journalists whose opinions (or those of the newspapers they work for) are assumed to influence their target readership while at the same time being affected by the public discourses to which journalists themselves are subjected.

Overarching Question:

Do journalists appear as civil society actors in European integration discourse or do they follow the political discourse?

The question is constituted by the underlying theoretical and research approaches applied within this book. An in-depth look at civil society theory and the approach taken here is laid out in chapter 2. The broad hypothesis is, however, that journalists constitute part of civil society. The question is thus how they fulfil this role in Germany and the Netherlands and of course in the specific discourse on European integration.

Research Questions

1. What is the role that journalists play in civil society discourse on European integration in Germany and the Netherlands?
2. How is this role reflected in their reporting on this issue?

As stated, there are two major influences on journalists' reporting that also need to be examined in order to potentially control for them (question 3a) or in order to use the results as background before which the journalistic positioning in the discourse may be assessed.

3. What influences exist on EU coverage in print media?
   a. Are there differences between the journalistic culture in Germany and that in the Netherlands?
      i. What media culture is predominant in the two countries?
      ii. What is the journalistic role-perception in Germany/the Netherlands?
      iii. How do German or Dutch EU correspondents work?
   b. Are there country-specific (historic) perspectives on European integration in Germany and the Netherlands?
      i. If so, how did they evolve?
      ii. Do these perspectives differ according to status group, meaning political elites and citizens?
   c. How might these perspectives and cultural backgrounds influence the print media debate on European integration today?

The main body of this study is, however, constituted by analysis of the course of EU coverage in newspapers from Germany and the Netherlands. The second group of questions relates to this analysis.

4. How can the print media discourse on European integration be characterised?
   a. Which paths did media debate on European integration take in recent years?
   b. Do differences in EU coverage occur within each country or according to newspaper type?
      What are the main frames in EU reporting in …?
      i. Germany?
      ii. The Netherlands?
      iii. Quality newspapers?
      iv. Regional newspapers?
      v. Tabloids?

Subsequently, the results from the different chapters, at the same time as providing the answers to the above questions, need to be interpreted in the light of the general aim of this thesis. The answers to question 3b will form the possibly different perspectives of politicians and the general public on European integration. The develop-

ment of media coverage will characterise newspapers' perspective on the same issue. It thus remains to ask:

5. Which/whose European perspectives are applied by journalists in EU coverage?

Some premises and hypotheses will also help to guide the analysis. Since they need to be based on theoretical considerations, they are laid out in chapter 2 in which the theoretical grounds for this thesis are explained in detail.

1.6 Plan of the Book

This introduction has, so far, only touched upon the aspects that this book will be dealing with. Chapter 2 will discuss the matter of the public sphere and civil society in greater detail. It will lay out theoretical developments in these two research fields and provide a thorough overview of studies conducted in this area. It will also introduce the existing research on the European public sphere, and state how this study abstains from asking the same questions. Finally, the chapter will show how media, and journalists specifically, may be perceived as part of civil society from a theoretical point of view. From these in-depth discussions of the theoretical background to this book a number of hypotheses emerge that shall guide the research and help to answer the research questions.

A mix of different methodical approaches has been used which is described in chapter 3. Chapter 4 and 5 apply this mix and start with a literature review on the professional development of journalists in Germany and the Netherlands (chapter 4) and the evolution of the political discourse on European integration in both countries. Chapter 4 examines in what ways journalists may be influenced in their workings by traditional role-perceptions in their home country. It describes these role-perceptions for Dutch and German journalists before the background of their training and the development of news media in their countries. The focus is, however, the actual self-definition of journalists as established by earlier studies on this issue. Part of this chapter is also formed by interviews with European correspondents from German and Dutch newspapers. Since correspondents, as regional experts, have a special role among journalists, how they work in Brussels and what characterises cooperation with the editorial office "at home" was of particular interest to this study.

Chapter 5 establishes the long evolution of European integration discourse in Germany and the Netherlands, starting with the 1950s. The historical development of political discourse on the issue has been transcribed from literature on foreign political premises and their changes through time, as well as the establishment of European politics as an individual political field within national politics. The chapter shows that concerning European integration there is some logic inherent to political perception of that process and political action in it. From there the chapter moves on to public opinion on the European Union and public perception of the integration process. This part of the chapter draws primarily on data from the European Commission's Eurobarometer surveyy. It appears that, alongside political "frames" of

European integration, public frames have developed which in some cases differ from the political discourse.

To the background of these patterns of "perceiving Europe", chapter 6 applies a qualitative frame analysis to commentary taken from German and Dutch newspapers on the issue of European integration. This chapter forms the heart of this book. It starts by detailing the development of EU coverage in recent years in the two countries and across different kinds of newspapers. The most important frames for each country are then highlighted and described and analysed in detail. The chapter concludes that some frames appear only in a specific country, while others are inherent to specific kinds of newspapers. The comparison also includes the timeline, meaning that some frames are restricted to particular points of time during the period analysed.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, then answers the question raised in this introduction. Summarising the results from chapters 4 to 6 and interpreting them before the background of the theoretical assumptions and hypotheses from chapter 2, it proposes an answer to the question as to in what respects journalists take part in European discourse as actors in civil society.

2 Civil Society, the Public and the Media

This chapter will introduce the main theoretical approaches taken by this study. The civil society approach from political science is thereby combined with research into journalism and media theory, with the aim of answering the question of to what extent journalists play a role in civil society.

2.1 Civil Society

Today's scientific debate on civil society is characterised by a variety of different approaches and definitions which usually depend on the democratic theory which lies behind them. Liberals define different actors as belonging to civil society than, for instance, do supporters of deliberative or of participatory democracy[4]. There are not only differences concerning the associated actors, but also in the role description assigned to civil society: from provider of welfare services to foundation of (re-) democratisation. Agreement only seems to exist on the fact that the debate on civil society is multi-faceted and complex and that the concept today can only be wholly understood if its long history is taken into account (Heinrich 2005; also Kocka 2006; Reichardt 2006). For that reason the historian Reichardt describes civil society as a *"[...] concept in flux, with changing meanings, norms, actors and adversaries."* (Reichardt 2006: 141) To his colleague Jürgen Kocka, civil society acts like mustard which cannot be nailed to the wall (Kocka 2006: 37).

Civil society has just as often been defined by what it is *not* as by what it consists of. The concept was, and still is, pitted against "the other" (Gosewinkel and Reichardt 2004): barbarism or uncivil society, the state, the economy, the military and violence.

> "To understand the attractiveness of the concept, it is crucial to know against whom or what it was aimed – fanaticism and barbarism, a profit-oriented economy, a clientelistic private sphere, a power-ridden state or a militarized society." (Reichardt 2006: 141)

Heins (2002) nonetheless proposes to define civil society by what it is opposed to, rather than by what it is composed of, in order to sharpen the concept. Dominique Colas goes as far as to demand that:

> "The history of the term's use should be specified for each country and language, and its meaning clarified for every major social thinker from the 1970s to the present." (Colas 2004: 16)

He demonstrates the problem of translation by listing theoretical thinkers and their chosen term for civil society (e. g. Hobbes – "civil society", Rousseau – "société

4 For an overview of civil society actors per theory see Schade (2002: 34) and *Table 2-1* and *Table 2-4)*

civil", Hegel – "bürgerliche Gesellschaft") with what the term in their body of work was associated with and what it was distinct from (ibid.: 18). The German translation – *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* – does not obviously hold the double meaning of society of *citizens* and society that *behaves civilly* as the French and the English terms do. It may be for this reason, among others, that the German debate has turned towards the term *Zivilgesellschaft*. It is therefore important to look not only at the term but more specifically at what it entails: who make up the citizenry? What is civil behaviour?[5]

The term "civil society" has been around in scientific and political language with a variety of meanings and definitions since Aristotle's time. He defined his *politike koinonia* as the community of Athens' citizens with political rights. The later Latin translation *societas civilis* used by Cicero comes closest to the contemporary usage of the term. (Adloff 2005; Kumar 2008)

The modern use of the term "civil society" derives from Hegel[6] (Hegel 1979 [1820][7] §33, the overview in Kumar 2008 and Schade 2002: 12). Hegel combines antique ideas of ethos and civility with the modern idea of universal citizens' rights and the dualism of state and society[8], and describes the economy as the backbone of a society of citizens (Hegel 1979 [1820]). He is also the first to define civil society as the sphere between family and state. Cohen and Arato proclaim Hegel's importance for modern theories of civil society. They state that all theories developed in the aftermath of his work refer to at least one of his six categories in which civil society is embedded (Cohen and Arato 1992): *Polizey* (state administration), economy, jurisdiction, a system of corporations (intermediary associations like estate corporations, estate assemblies), the public sphere and public opinion. In this tradition, this thesis focuses on the last of the six categories in that it defines actors that create publicity as civil society actors.

Based on Hegel, de Tocqueville introduces a triadic conception of state and society. He distinguishes between an administrative state, a political society in which citizens have the possibility to influence politics and a civil society of private and economic actions. (ibid.) The contemporary distinction between civil society and the economy was a still later introduction.

The modern scientific and political debates on civil society circle around three major topics, which show that civil society cannot be discussed separately from the social, political or economic circumstances in question. Civil society was and still is a keyword within transformation from a totalitarian regime into a democracy, for instance in Eastern Europe and Latin America. The term started off as a political catchphrase (in Latin America in the 1960s; Schade 2002: 18) and later entered the

5 On the problem of translation, refer to Koselleck (1991).

6 The historian Sven Reichardt would locate the source of the modern concept of civil society within the Scottish Enlightenment and attributes the idea to its thinkers. (Reichardt 2006: 139)

7 The complete book can be accessed online, of most interest is the chapter "Einteilung" §33: http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Hegel,+Georg+Wilhelm+Friedrich/Grundlinien+der+Philosophie+des+Rechts/Einteilung; last access: February 13, 2016.

8 For an overview of the antique use of the term and its development from ancient Greece through the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment see Adloff (2005) and Kumar (2008).

scientific debate. Grassroots organisations and other civil associations stand for civil resistance against dictatorial repression and are seen as places where democratic values are transferred and democratic behaviour can be learned.[9] (Cohen and Arato 1992: 15)

Secondly, civil society is meant to play a role in the re-democratisation of established Western democracies and in the stabilisation of welfare systems, especially in Europe. Participatory democracy theories regard a strong civil society as a means for citizens to have a stake in the politics of their country and thus to contribute to the input-legitimacy of a democratic regime. Democracy can also be seen as a precondition for the development of a significant civil society. The two concepts are interlinked: democracy benefits a strong civil society which in turn fosters civic virtues like political participation which are necessary for a democracy to function. Furthermore, as increasing globalisation processes diminish the steering capacity of nation states and pressure from transnational markets undermines national welfare systems, there is hope that civil society organisations (CSOs) can fill the gap left when the state has to withdraw (Zimmer and Freise 2008). For these reasons Münkler (2006) describes the concept of civil society as *"desperate wishful thinking"*:

> "Whenever state services threaten to become too costly […] as is mainly the case with regard to social security systems, then civil society, with the market and its mechanisms, is repeatedly brought into discussion in an effort to avoid social dysfunction in the market allocation of goods and services." (ibid.: 92)

Finally, ongoing globalisation or regionalisation (e. g. European integration) raises questions concerning not only the steering capacity of nation states, but also regarding the democratic legitimacy of international organisations. As political power and sovereignty is transferred from the state to international level, the possibility of citizens influencing political decisions decreases. The political level is increasingly removed from the will of the electorate in order to tackle regional or global problems, and because of that it loses the legitimacy gained from the direct input of citizens. Civil society here is theoretically understood as the link between the output- and input-legitimacy of a polity. It is part of the public sphere in which the results of policy output can be discussed, public will-formation takes place and this input-legitimacy is created (Zimmer and Freise 2008: 22). It is therefore argued that civil society is not only necessary at a national level, but is equally essential at a regional or even global level. The European Commission (Commission of the European Union 2001) responds to this request in its "White Paper on European Governance" in which the fostering of civil society at EU level is introduced as a remedy for the democratic deficit. Problems arise, however, with regard to the question of which CSOs are worth working with: grassroots organisations may have a legitimate claim but are usually perceived as unrepresentative (Frankenberg 2003: 14). Concerning global civil society, Kumar asks whether it is only civil society on a larger scale or

9 The democratic teaching function is highlighted in Putnam's theory of Social Capital in particular. However, that originally focused on developments in the U.S. (Putnam 2000)

whether new concepts have to be developed or at least old ones revised for it (Kumar 2008). Kaldor (2003: 6 ff.) even provides five different concepts of types of global civil society.[10]

Because of the vast number of different ideas of civil society, Jensen (2006) looks for a general concept that might encompass different conceptions. This core concept should then be agreed upon, while interpretations and specific designs might still differ. He introduces a classification of different concepts, namely the concept of civil society as distinct sphere, the Lockean concept and the Scottish concept. Of these, the sphere concept is possibly the best known and the one most often used in civil society research, alongside the concept based on logic of action which will be introduced later on. It describes civil society as a social sphere distinct from the state (and economy) in which, according to Jensen, deliberation takes place and civic virtues and norms are transferred. Depending on the context in which civil society is used (or the democratic theory upon which it is based) the economy constitutes a separate sphere[11].

Jensen's Lockean concept could also be called the normative or action concept as opposed to the structural sphere concept. It is based on the literal meaning of "civility" or civil behaviour as opposed to uncivil action or barbarism. For Locke the distinction lay between the states of nature and civil – meaning civilised – society in which stable rules existed, were executed effectively and overseen by independent judges. (ibid.: 46; original by Locke 1980 [1690])[12]

Finally, the Scottish concept perceives civil society as the place where individual or private interests can be pursued publicly and thus be in accordance with the public welfare (Jensen 2006: 42 f.).

Because of the differences between these three conceptions, Jensen concludes that a core concept of civil society cannot exist. Neither one of the three concepts is fit to include the other two, nor could a fourth concept encompass all three without becoming too diffuse to be of any analytical use (ibid.: 43). However, as civil society appears to play a socially and politically important role, research on the concept cannot be abandoned. The author proposes a careful localisation of the concept in a theoretical, historical or practical background and recommends that science should no longer look for an overarching concept of civil (ibid.: 53 f.).

On the other hand, Adloff identifies a generally accepted core within civil society theory and the different conceptions of civil society. He claims that these different conceptions of civil society are combined through the determination of civil society as a sphere of free civic self-determination and self-organisation (Adloff 2005: 18; also Koselleck 1991; Schade 2002: 8/16 f.).

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10 Societas civilis – based on the original term, bourgeois society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft) – as "arena of ethical life in between the state and the family" (Kaldor 2003: 8), based on Hegel, and an activist, neoliberal and postmodern version of civil society.

11 *Tabe 2-1* and *Table 2-3* on civil society actors depending on the theoretical background.

12 The complete book can be accessed online: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370- on difh.htm; last access: February 13, 2016

Possibly better known than the classification of concepts introduced by Jensen is the classification of civil society concepts by Kocka (2006). He describes civil society in three different ways:

1. Civil society denominates a certain type of *social action*, which is most importantly characterized by non-violent behaviour and which accepts a plural society. This perspective, based on logic of action, argues that civil society can only be realised within public discourse. Discourse is meant to respond to and deal with social conflicts and make negotiation over compromises as well as consensus finding and social agreement possible.
2. Civil society can also be understood as *social sphere*. As sphere it is connected to the state or government, to the economy and to the private sphere, but is itself not part of those spheres. In Kocka's words, civil society is a:

   > "[…] societal sphere between state, economy and private life, populated by voluntary associations, networks and non-governmental associations." (ibid.: 16)

   > "[…] a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-governmental institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive and permanently in tension with each other." (ibid.: 41)

3. Finally, civil society is also a *utopian project*, which is contrasted with "uncivil" society or deficits in society. The aim is to normatively describe a working society to which actual societies can be compared. In this way, shortcomings in societies can easily be identified.

This threefold distinction is also used by Zimmer and Freise (2008), who distinguish between the concepts of civil society as utopian goal (correlating with Kocka's third class of concept), as civilised society characterised by non-violence and social discourse, and as sphere between economy and state (Zimmer and Freise 2008: 20 f., Frankenberg 2003; Gosewinkel, *Discussion Paper*, 2003).

From Kocka's classification it follows that studies on the issue may take an empirical approach as well as a normative-theoretical approach. Empirical studies are generally based on the first two possible conceptions, while the latter approach is usually based on the normative or utopian conception of civil society. This difference in research approach is described by Heinrich (2005), who discusses the empirical-analytical as opposed to the normative-theoretical approach. He describes a shift in approaches over time from the 1980s/1990s during which the normative approach prevailed, to current research which is characterised by its focus on empiricism. This shift is ascribed to the recognition that more conceptual coherence is needed in civil society research as normative definitions should always be viewed against the social norms and values of the period in which they were formulated[13]. For that reason defi-

13 See also Gosewinkel (Discussion Paper 2003, 2003: 7): the "actual" core of the civil society concept used in historical research is embedded within historical developments and cultural settings.

nitions tend to become broader and more conclusive in order to provide operational criteria that are not dependent on space and time and can encompass all research conducted on civil society (ibid.). Heinrich criticises this development as it does not address the problem of opaqueness and the lack of clear criteria for defining what or whom civil society involves or what the concept can explain. As thus far no global theory or concept of civil society exists, he makes an attempt to apply a "bottom-up" approach to the existing theoretical body in order to find similarities in existing research[14]. He concludes that there are two general approaches: examining either the structural side of civil society (participating individuals and organisations) or the cultural side, focusing on norms and values within civil society. His proposition is to approach civil society functionally in order to include both structural and cultural research. (ibid.: 214 f.)

The theoretical range of the concept of civil society adds to the difficulties with definitions or the specifications of research approaches. The concept encompasses all three theoretical levels, from a micro-level at which the issue of the civil attitude of individuals is broached (e. g. the social capital approach), to a meso-level of research into organised civil society (e. g. 3rd sector research) to the macro-level at which the focus is on the capability of political society to deal with its own constitution (Zimmer and Hallmann 2005). The concept of social capital was first developed by Bourdieu (1983) and follows the basic idea that social networks have a (economic) value. This was further developed in the 1990s by Putnam who states that strong social networks within a society foster and support trust in that society and individuals' acceptance of democracy (Putnam 1993, 2000; Zimmer and Hallmann 2005; Zimmer and Freise 2008: 13 ff.).[15] Non-profit research rests on different economic or governance theories. According to Anheier (2005), the most prominent is the theory of market and/or state failure in which a public good is not offered by the market and cannot be provided by the state. Here non-profit organisations (NPOs) within the so-called third sector (state and economy being the other two) step into the breach.[16] The capacity of this sector to help democratise transnational organisations such as the EU is also analysed. From a micro-perspective the non-profit approach also

14 Heinrich compares five current research projects in the field of civil society research:
1. the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project (CNP), which looks at the economic dimension of the 3rd sector
2. a project of the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) which gives an annual overview of the sustainability of the third sector in post-communist countries
3. the World Governance Assessment which assesses six categories of governance (e. g. civil society)
4. a study by Marc Howard on the weakness of civil society in post-communist countries
5. the Civicus Civil Society Index which aims at recommendations for action in the field of civil society (Heinrich 2005: 214 f.)

15 For a transfer to the organisational level see: Wollebæk and Selle (2007).

16 On the theoretical background: Anheier (2005); Salamon and Anheier (1998); Salamon and Anheier (1998); on empirical research for Germany: Hohendanner (2009).