

Freie Universität Berlin
Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science

Master thesis

M.A. Politikwissenschaft / Affaires européennes
Date of submission: 15.01.2021 (15,986 words)

**Tracing Europeanization in the Mass-Mediated Debate
on 2019 EU Leadership Selection**

Author

Christoph Wiesel

Supervisors

Dr. Andreas Hofmann
Prof. Dr. Christian Adam

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2 | Literature: concepts and previous empirical findings | 3 |
| 2.1 | The notion of the European Public Sphere | 3 |
| 2.2 | Europeanization of national media | 5 |
| 2.3 | Framing in EU media coverage | 8 |
| 3 | The Commission president nomination and Europeanization | 10 |
| 3.1 | Background to the case and relevance for research | 10 |
| 3.2 | Theoretical expectations derived from the literature | 12 |
| 4 | Methodological design | 14 |
| 4.1 | Selection of countries, media and timeframe | 14 |
| 4.2 | Procedure for the coding of frames and discourse participants | 18 |
| 4.3 | Guidelines for identifying Europeanization | 22 |
| 5 | Results | 23 |
| 5.1 | Initial overall findings | 23 |
| 5.2 | Main frames identified in the media coverage | 25 |
| 5.3 | Europeanization in terms of frames | 29 |
| 5.4 | Europeanization in terms of discourse participants | 38 |
| 5.5 | Interpretation of the results | 43 |
| 6 | Conclusion | 45 |
| 7 | References | 47 |
| 8 | Annex | 53 |
| 8.1 | Annex I: Coding instructions and detailed coding scheme | 53 |
| 8.2 | Annex II: Shares of frames and speakers in the newspapers | 60 |

List of tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Dimensions of Europeanization | 6 |
| Table 2: Main frames identified | 26 |
| Table 3: Shares of the master frames in the nine newspapers | 30 |
| Table 4: Shares of F2 subframes in the media coverage | 32 |

List of figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Summary of initial findings | 24 |
| Figure 2: Shares of the master frames in the nine newspapers | 31 |
| Figure 3: Shares of F2 subframes in the media coverage | 33 |
| Figure 4: Shares of frames F4 and F5 in the media coverage | 35 |
| Figure 5: Discourse participants in the media coverage overall | 39 |
| Figure 6: Discourse participants in German newspapers | 40 |
| Figure 7: Discourse participants in French newspapers | 41 |
| Figure 8: Discourse participants in Irish newspapers | 42 |

List of abbreviations

| | |
|------------|--|
| CSU | Christian Social Union in Bavaria |
| EP | European Parliament |
| EPP | European People's Party |
| EPS | European Public Sphere |
| EU | European Union |
| Greens/EFA | The Greens/European Free Alliance |
| MEP | Member of the European Parliament |
| SPD | Social Democratic Party of Germany |
| SZ | Süddeutsche Zeitung |
| S&D | Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats |

1 Introduction

When European Council President Donald Tusk stepped before the press on 2 July 2019, he was visibly relieved: “I know that it has taken us longer than planned, but we are still on time [...] I think that it was worth waiting for such an outcome” (Tusk, 2019). Following a marathon set of negotiations, EU heads of state and government had finally agreed on a package of nominations for the bloc’s top jobs, proposing, among others, German minister Ursula von der Leyen for the post of European Commission president (Müller Gómez & Wessels, 2019, p. 72).

The nomination process had proven highly complex and contentious. In several high-level meetings of the European Council, national leaders discussed and eventually had to bring together diverse positions on the names and criteria that should play a role in the selection, such as candidates’ qualification, party affiliation or gender (Nasshoven, 2019, pp. 282-288). The final agreement furthermore provoked strong reactions by members of the European Parliament: MEPs criticized that, with the nomination of Ursula von der Leyen, leaders proposed a politician who had not been a lead candidate in the European elections (Schwarzer, 2019, p. 1).

As of today, however, little is known on whether this intense debate at EU level was also accompanied by a shared, EU-wide debate in the media. In particular, in light of the literature on Europeanization and the European Public Sphere (EPS), it remains an open question whether the media in EU countries advanced nationally distinct accounts of the nomination process or whether reporting was Europeanized, featuring similar frames of reference across borders and involving EU-wide speakers.

The present thesis seeks to address this matter, comparing the quality newspaper coverage in three European countries at the time of the European Council negotiations in June and July 2019. The focus is on the selection of the new Commission president. The research question can be formulated as follows:

To what extent was the media coverage of the 2019 Commission president nomination Europeanized in terms of the framing and discourse participants in German, French and Irish quality newspapers? And what does this imply for the emergence of a European Public Sphere?

The interest of this analysis mainly stems from a frequent argument in the literature that news reporting on European affairs matters for the democratic legitimacy of the EU (De Wilde, 2019, p. 1193). Among others, Europeanized reporting may provide common points of reference to citizens of different member states, thereby facilitating “transnational communication” and “cross-border dialogue” (Dutceac Segesten & Bossetta, 2019, p. 1052) about EU affairs. While shared frames of reference are considered to be of particular importance in this regard (e.g., Risse, 2010, p. 139), it is precisely on the issue of framing that existing findings are least conclusive.

The present thesis contributes to this debate and research in several ways. First, it analyzes a novel and recent case, as has been called for in the literature (e.g., Adam, 2015, p. 7). This allows for expanding and updating the knowledge on Europeanization and EU-wide frames in particular. At the same time, the analysis of the specific case at hand also appears particularly interesting from a more theoretical perspective: Previous research provides reasons to expect both high and low levels of Europeanized reporting concerning the nomination of the Commission president. Therefore, it can serve as a valuable test for the emergence of a European Public Sphere.

Third, in a broader sense, taking another look at the nomination process in 2019 appears justified considering its wider relevance for the EU and European integration. Recently, a number of studies have addressed its implications for procedures such as the lead candidate system or for the distribution of power between the EU’s institutions (e.g., Christiansen & Shackleton, 2019; Nasshoven, 2019). However, no contribution has yet addressed media coverage. The present thesis serves to fill this gap.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: First, the literature on the European Public Sphere, Europeanization and EU media framing is reviewed, so as to define the main concepts and to situate the paper’s research interest in the wider debate (ch. 2). Second, the paper’s case is introduced, providing background on the nomination process and presenting expectations derived from the literature (ch. 3). This is followed, third, by a description of the paper’s research design and method (ch. 4) as well as by the presentation of the results (ch. 5). The concluding chapter summarizes the main findings and points out avenues for further research (ch. 6).

2 Literature: concepts and previous empirical findings

2.1 The notion of the European Public Sphere

The present thesis builds closely on the literature on the European Public Sphere (EPS). Modeled upon the public sphere concept coined by Jürgen Habermas,¹ the EPS may be broadly understood as a “communicative space in which European affairs can be critically discussed” (Barth & Bijsmans, 2018, p. 215) and in which EU citizens are “informed about and involved in debates relating to EU politics and policies” (De la Porte & Van Dalen, 2016, p. 280).²

The relevance of such an EU-wide sphere is commonly discussed with regard to the democratic legitimacy of European integration and the European Union. Indeed, an EPS is frequently considered either an indicator or “prerequisite for democracy in the EU” (De Wilde, 2019, p. 1193). Among others, it has been argued to open EU “decision making to a public critique” (Statham & Trenz, 2015, p. 293), to provide an interface between the level of EU governance and society, to enable EU citizens to “interact and talk about (the same) political issues” (De Vreese, 2007, p. 6) and to increase the chances that feedback is supplied to European decisions and decision-makers.

Certainly, much depends on scholars’ broader normative expectations and understanding of democracy, public spheres and the nature of the EU. For instance, there are also researchers who see little need for an EPS, arguing that decision making in the European Union is already fully legitimized by the domestic election and scrutiny of national governments (see Statham, 2010, pp. 280-281).

The scope of the present paper does not allow for discussing this in great detail. In principle, however, if one agrees that a democratic EU requires some “legitimation beyond the nation-state” and that democracy hinges not only on elections and other “institutional arrangements” (Wessler, Peters, Brüggemann, Kleinen-von Königslöw

¹ According to Habermas (1996), the public sphere can be conceived as “an arena for the perception, identification, and treatment of problems affecting the whole of society” (p. 301).

² In line with the predominant part of the literature and given the thesis’ research interest, the study limits its considerations to “a European sphere that focuses on the European Union” (Pfetsch, Adam & Eschner, 2008, p. 488). For a broader understanding of the EPS, see Koopmans & Statham (2010).

& Sifft, 2008, pp. 1-2), it appears plausible that an EU-wide arena of public debate, connecting citizens and institutions, could at least contribute to the democratic legitimacy of the EU (see also Adam, 2015, p. 1; De Vreese, 2007, p. 8).

The academic research on the European Public Sphere has gained increased popularity since the 1990s (Bijsmans, Galpin & Leruth, 2018, p. 827). Yet while earlier literature sought to identify a unitary, supranational public sphere that would be “based on European media, and require a common language and a shared identity” (Adam, 2015, p. 2), this perspective has been widely dismissed in contemporary research (for more information on this approach, see Grimm, 1995, pp. 294-295).

First, empirically, there is “not much to be found” (Koopmans, 2007, p. 185) if one looks for a singular, pan-European public sphere. More importantly, second, the perspective has proven theoretically unconvincing. By applying an ideal-type conception of the national public sphere, it assumes a degree of “linguistic and cultural homogeneity as well as of political centralization that may not correspond to many contemporary *democratic nation states*, such as Belgium” (Cremenosi, Seddone, Bobba & Mancosu, 2019, p. 671). Noting in particular the “multilevel character of the EU” (Adam, 2015, p. 2), the requirements seem to high.

For such reasons, the present thesis instead follows a second and predominant strand of the literature, suggesting that the European Public Sphere may develop by way of a *Europeanization of national public spheres* (e.g., Gerhards, 2000, p. 293). The term Europeanization, in general, describes the “domestic impacts of European integration” (Koopmans, 2007, p. 185). In the present case, these impacts pertain to the national public spheres. According to the perspective, hence, an EPS can come into being if the existing national communicative spaces open up for debates with a European dimension, integrating linkages to the EU and other member states (Adam, 2015, p. 3; Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 799).

National mass media have a key role in this process as the “main communicative space” (Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2012, p. 445) of the public sphere. Clearly, mass media do not constitute “the only forum, or form, of public debate” (Statham & Trenz, 2015, p. 291). Nonetheless, first, the media are the fora with the broadest public

(Cremenosi, Seddone, Bobba & Mancosu, 2019, p. 673). Second, even more “than on the national level, the communication flow between the EU [...] and the public depends on the mass media” (Koopmans, 2007, p. 184), as most people do not regularly have direct experiences with European Union politics (De Vreese, 2007, p. 7).

Therefore, analyses of national public spheres by and large consist in analyses of national mass media, the present thesis following such research. As the subsequent section will outline, however, a great deal of uncertainty remains about the extent to which the national media have indeed become Europeanized.

2.2 Europeanization of national media

Empirical studies analyzing the Europeanization of national media have so far yielded inconclusive results. In part, this is due to the different criteria and indicators used to measure Europeanized reporting.

A key requirement often formulated is the *visibility* of European issues, events and actors in the media, the term European commonly used to refer both the supranational EU level (vertical Europeanization) and to the developments and actors in other member states (horizontal Europeanization).³ In this respect, the research points towards increasing and, at times, substantial levels of Europeanized news even though differences emerge depending on the particular events, countries, media and policy fields analyzed (Bijmans, 2020, p. 3; Trenz, 2008, p. 300).⁴

Among others, media coverage tends to peak around key events, such as EU summits or European Parliament elections, and to privilege attention to the supranational EU level (De Vreese, 2007, p. 10; Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 799). Furthermore, “[c]ross-country variation in EU news coverage is a common finding” (Gattermann, 2013, p. 439), with higher levels of visibility identified mainly in countries with long-standing EU membership and in more deeply integrated countries (e.g.,

³ As Kleinen-von Königslöw (2012) argues, events and developments in other member states should be visible in an EPS because, due to the interlinkages in the EU, such developments can “have an impact on the EU community as a whole and on each of its members” (p. 445).

⁴ To provide an example, Trenz (2004) found that, on average, one-third of political news in quality newspapers from six EU countries included a reference to European issues, events or themes (p. 297).

Brüggemann & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2009, p. 43; Pfetsch, Adam & Eschner, 2008, p. 484). Finally, the findings pertain largely to quality newspapers, whereas both in tabloids and television news, the visibility of the EU and other member states tends to be more reduced (De Vreese, 2007, p. 12; Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2012, p. 452).

Overall, however, it appears difficult to maintain that “news media in general are wedded to the nation-state and ignore European politics” (Risse, 2010, p. 133).

Such findings notwithstanding, some of the literature has argued that, in addition to visibility, the substantive *content* of and *speakers* participating in mass-mediated debates also matter as far as Europeanization is concerned. Among others, this is reflected in the understanding of Europeanization advanced by Risse (2015), which distinguishes three dimensions and can serve as a basis for the present thesis:

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | the visibility of European and EU issues, policies and actors |
| 2 | the presence of fellow Europeans as speakers and audiences in the public spheres |
| 3 | the discussion of common European themes and issues, using similar frames of reference or making claims across borders |

Table 1: Dimensions of Europeanization

source: own table; based on Risse, 2015, pp. 10-11

Emphasizing the *content* of communication (see Risse’s third dimension), several scholars have argued that Europeanization fundamentally involves a “parallelization of national public spheres” (Koopmans & Statham, 2010, p. 37) and hence a “convergence of the specific content of national debates” (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 799). According to this, Europeanization entails that “within an anonymous mass public the same European issues are discussed at the same time under similar criteria of relevance” (Eder & Kantner, 2000, p. 327; as translated by Pfetsch & Heft, 2015, p. 32), the latter implying similar frames of reference in the media (Kantner, 2015, p. 87). Indeed, the notion of framing is often attributed a particular importance in the literature (e.g., Barth & Bijsmans, 2018, p. 216; De Vreese, 2007, p. 13).

Once again, positions clearly hinge on scholars' broader understanding of and expectations for a public sphere. Yet if one concurs that a "common communicative space requires that we do not talk past each other, that we understand the issues at stake, and that we develop some common reference points in order to enable meaningful conversations" (Risse, 2010, p. 139), studying media frames can indeed be considered "key to unpacking the European public sphere" (Barth & Bijmans, 2018, p. 216). As Risse (2010) underlines, a "debate without common frames of reference is impossible, even if these frames are heavily contested" (p. 109).

From this perspective, however, the existing findings are far less conclusive. Whereas the media tend to discuss the same issues at the same time (see Risse, 2010, p. 136), "studies regarding the convergence of issue interpretations or issue framing are rare and their results vary" (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 800). Not least against this backdrop, it appears fruitful to focus, in particular, on the framing component of Europeanization in the present thesis. Given the ambiguity of the framing concept and its importance for the thesis, chapter 2.3 will present some additional background in this respect and discuss previous findings in greater detail.

Beforehand, however, it should not be left aside that the question of *speakers* as well has figured prominently in conceptualizations of Europeanization (e.g., Koopmans, 2007; Wessler et al., 2008, pp. 47-49). Taken up in Risse's (2015) second dimension, scholars following such an approach commonly argue that Europeanization is marked by the presence of EU-wide discourse participants — that is, speakers from the EU level or other member states — in the national media (p. 10). Where such actors are quoted in news reporting, citizens become aware that issues are discussed beyond national borders and, at least at the level of elites, "speakers from different national public spheres [are] actually talking to each other" (Wessler et al., 2008, p. 12).

The empirical findings indicate that, when European issues are discussed, "speakers from the EU and from other European countries are regularly present in the national media" (Risse, 2010, p. 161). Nonetheless, variations can certainly be observed: To only provide two examples with a view to conciseness, Kaiser and Kleinen-von Königslöw (2017) find a nearly equal ratio of national and European discourse partici-

pants in their case study on the coverage of the euro crisis (p. 809). Wessler et al. (2008), on the other hand, report a “relatively stable level of European speakers at 17 per cent on average” (p. 47) in their long-term, cross-issue content analysis in five EU countries, a share far below the share of national speakers.

In the present thesis, an analysis of speakers is included as a complement to the study of frames, hereby responding to a call in the literature to “focus more on how Europe is debated and who is putting forward the message” (Adam, 2015, p. 7). Tracing the discourse participants may furthermore represent a step towards explaining *why* particular frames are shared across borders or not.

To be clear, this focus does not imply that other dimensions or indicators of Europeanization, such as visibility, are considered irrelevant. Without doubt, Europeanization is best understood as “a multifaceted process” (Cremenosi, Seddone, Bobba & Mancosu, 2019, p. 670). Simply, the research is arguably most advanced as far as visibility is concerned and has a lot to gain from new findings related, in particular, to frames. The subsequent section will put this research project into better perspective, discussing more closely the existing literature on framing in EU media coverage.

2.3 Framing in EU media coverage

In broad terms, frames can be understood as patterns of interpretation, or “interpretative packages” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3), that “promote some aspects of reality at the expense of others” (Barth & Bijsmans, 2018, p. 218). Although various, more specific definitions have been proposed in the literature, to frame generally involves selecting and emphasizing some parts of an issue, making them “more salient in a communicating text” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

A key question frames have been argued to answer is: “[W]hat is at stake?” (Kantner, 2015, p. 98). Frames hence suggest what a given “controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143 as cited in Potthoff, 2011, p. 46). This understanding of frames appears particularly well suited for the present analysis, given a common communicative space may be said to precisely require, as laid out

above, a shared idea of the issues at stake. It is worth emphasizing that this by no means calls for the same *opinions* or a collective European standpoint to be advanced. Simply, the points of reference for describing or evaluating something should be shared across borders, so as to open a common “discursive universe” (Trenz, 2004, p. 316), enabling meaningful conversations (Kantner, 2015, p. 87; Risse, 2010, p. 145).

Similarly to the research on the European Public Sphere, framing studies have experienced a considerable growth since the first half of the 1990s (Weaver, 2007, p. 143). Frames have been analyzed in different disciplines, such as communication science and psychology, as well as at different levels, including but not limited to media content (see Matthes & Kohring, 2004, p. 56; Scheufele, 2004, p. 30).

As far as EU media coverage is concerned, studies have examined, among others, how news outlets in different countries frame events like the European elections or the eurozone crisis (e.g., Touri & Rogers, 2013; Cremenosi, Seddone, Bobba & Mancosu, 2019) and how such framing may matter for public support for European integration (e.g., Vliegthart, Schuck, Boomgarden & De Vreese, 2008).

Studies specifically tracing the similarity of media frames across member states remain scattered, though (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 800; see also De Vreese, 2007, p. 13). While it is sometimes argued that “similar frames of reference are available in the various national public spheres when European questions are discussed” (Risse, 2010, p. 139), several case studies also “point towards the inertia of national characteristics” (Drewski, 2015, p. 267; see also De Wilde, 2019, p. 1995).

For instance, in an analysis of Silvio Berlusconi’s controversial address to the European Parliament in 2003, Downey and Koenig (2006) report that “[e]ven in a case that is ideally suited to be an object of a Europeanized public sphere, we cannot find the same framings at the same time with the same intensity” (p. 184).

Trenz (2000), analyzing the debates over a corruption scandal in the European Commission, finds that German newspapers framed the scandal predominantly as a moral problem, whereas Spanish newspapers linked it to a financial conflict between northern and southern states. Similarly, Drewski (2015) identifies major differences

in the framing of the euro crisis: While reporting in Germany primarily featured a moral hazard frame, reporting in Spain was dominated by a systemic-risk narrative.

Díez Medrano and Gray (2010), on the other hand, studying broad frames of European integration in seven countries, identify more similarities than differences: The national media predominantly represented the EU as an association for the accomplishment of economic goals (pp. 199, 206). Similarly, Wessler et al. (2008) find marked similarities and convergence over time in a long-term assessment of the coverage of military interventions and genetically modified food (see also, e.g., Bijmans, Galpin & Leruth, 2017; Touri & Rogers, 2013; Van de Steeg, 2006).

Importantly, the literature has so far struggled to make sense of such different results even though some explanations have been proposed: For instance, similarly to the findings on visibility, the particular issue, countries and media selected tend to matter (e.g., Pfetsch, Adam & Eschner, 2008, p. 484). Furthermore, results depend on the yardstick against which frame similarity is assessed and on how concretely frames are defined: Naturally, the more abstractly frames are formulated, the more similarities emerge (Risse, 2010, p. 155; Wessler et al., 2008, p. 15).

Even if one takes such considerations into account, however, great uncertainty remains, even more so as far as recent times are concerned. In this context, the present study can make a contribution both to the specific debate on frame convergence and to the research on Europeanization more broadly, as is outlined in detail below.

3 The Commission president nomination and Europeanization

3.1 Background to the case and relevance for research

The present thesis traces Europeanization in the media coverage of the 2019 nomination of the president of the European Commission. This chapter serves to introduce the case, to lay out its theoretical and empirical relevance and to present expectations derived from the literature, so as to better link the study to the existing research. Initially, some context may be helpful: Representing a key event in recent EU politics, the nomination of a new Commission president was part of a process of

high-level appointments to the European institutions that followed the European elections of May 2019 (Müller Gómez & Wessels, 2019, p. 71).

In several rounds of negotiations in June and July 2019, EU heads of state and government put together a list of names to lead, among others, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the European Council. The final package was presented to the public on 2 July 2019 and set in motion different confirmation and election procedures (Tusk, 2019).

The nomination of a successor to Jean-Claude Juncker raised special attention: The European Council's proposal of Ursula von der Leyen not only came as a surprise to observers, but it was also attributed wider implications for the distribution of power between the European Parliament and the European Council, among other things (Hofmann, 2019, p. 111; Müller Gómez & Reiners, 2019, p. 268).

In particular, von der Leyen's nomination represented a break with the *Spitzenkandidaten* process, commonly understood to imply that the "top candidate of the largest political group in the European Parliament would become the natural candidate for the post of President of the European Commission" (De Vries & Hoffmann, 2019, p. 5). Even though this led to criticism among MEPs, she was ultimately elected by a narrow margin in the EP, making her the first ever female president of the Commission and the first German to occupy the post since 1967 (Nasshoven, 2019, p. 281).

As shortly stated in the introduction, a number of research articles have recently addressed the 2019 appointment process, its institutional background and implications (e.g., Christiansen & Shackleton, 2019; Müller Gómez & Reiners, 2019; Nasshoven, 2019). As of today, however, little is known about media coverage, let alone in terms of Europeanization. To the author's knowledge, the only analyses of reporting that address the EU's leadership decisions examined the time before the elections (e.g., Cremenosi, Seddone, Bobba & Mancosu, 2019, p. 679) and notably analyzed the visibility of the *Spitzenkandidaten* in the media (e.g., Gattermann, 2019).⁵

⁵ As far as prior appointment procedures are concerned, research on media coverage is similarly rare and focused on the phase of the election campaign; see notably Hix & Wilks-Heeg (2014) on the visibility of Jean-Claude Juncker and Martin Schulz in the press in Germany and the UK.

At the same time, the European Council's nomination of the next Commission president, in particular, may represent an interesting case for a study of Europeanization — particularly so from the perspective of frames and speakers:

Based on prior research, the nomination negotiations are likely to have elicited substantial coverage in the media, due both to the prominence of the heads of state and government and to the tension surrounding the summits (De Vreese, 2001, p. 299; Touri & Rogers, 2013, p. 177). Above all, the attention most certainly focused on the debate over the “top job” of Commission president (Thieme & Wessels, 2019, p. 95).

While this quite clearly suggests a high level of Europeanization in terms of *visibility*, it simultaneously raises the pertinence of examining *how*, in detail, the national media covered the nomination process: Indeed, when audiences are more likely to come across media coverage of an event, the relevance of whether this coverage provides “common reference points” (Risse, 2010, p. 139) and includes EU-wide speakers appears greater than in situations where an issue is hardly visible in the media at all.

Yet precisely as concerns frames and speakers, the previous research suggests very much contradicting expectations for the coverage of this specific, recent event. This makes it a valuable test case for Europeanization, as the following section will show.⁶

3.2 Theoretical expectations derived from the literature

Based on the existing literature, one could expect both high and low levels of Europeanized frames and speakers in the case at hand.

From one perspective, the nomination process constitutes a difficult case for Europeanization. This is largely due to the intergovernmental nature of the body deciding on the nomination — that is, the European Council — listed among the factors “responsible for the absence of a truly European public sphere” (Della Porta & Caiani, 2006, p. 78): The European Council reunites the heads of state and government, with

⁶ Note that the thesis hence follows studies examining the degree of Europeanized reporting in a specific case, at a specific point in time, providing an indication for how far the broader process of Europeanization has advanced up to a given moment (see Dutceac Segesten & Bossetta, 2019, p. 1054).

each of them representing, by definition, their member state (Article 10(2) TEU). Such a setting makes it likely for an issue to be “discussed in distinctly national or even nationalist colors in the various public spheres” (Risse, 2010, p. 143).

Indeed, “to make EU news coverage relevant to their domestic audience” (Gattermann, 2013, p. 439), the media may easily focus on the respective country’s representative, his or her role and priorities in the negotiations and the concerns most related to domestic debates (see De la Porte & Van Dalen, 2016, p. 284). Hereby, they can score higher on news values such as identification, proximity and prominence (De Wilde, 2019, p. 1206). Reporting would therefore be marked by a predominance of national speakers and by little cross-border similarity in terms of frames.

On the other hand, however, the nomination and ultimate election of the Commission president arguably represents a European issue *par excellence*. It concerned the whole of the EU and required a decision taken conjointly by all or at least a big majority of the heads of state and government (see similarly Van de Steeg, 2006, p. 610). Concerns and positions of EU-wide actors therefore had to be reported on, if only to explain the absence of a quick agreement. In consequence, the same frames as well as EU-wide speakers are likely to appear in the reports of the various national media. Furthermore, media organizations are not neutral arenas and “tend to prioritize conflict” (De Bruycker, 2017, p. 605); this has been shown for EU coverage as well (e.g., De Vreese, 2001, p. 295). A particularly conflictual question in the process concerned whether or not the *Spitzenkandidaten* process would be respected: It had been controversial since the beginning, given French President Macron’s prominent opposition to the system in its present form, and it remained a salient issue with the nomination of Ursula von der Leyen, drawing criticism from many MEPs (Christiansen & Shackleton, 2019, pp. 50-51). One could hence assume that the media coverage in many countries was, in a similar manner, shaped by the conflict over this issue.

Such an expectation is further bolstered by the observation that both political actors and academics tend to discuss the *Spitzenkandidaten* system in terms of democracy, transparency and legitimacy (see Von Sydow, 2019) and several “empirical studies confirm the strong role of elite journalism in promoting the democratization [...] of

the EU” (Trenz, 2008, p. 302). As a result, one may expect not only a similar framing of the nomination process in terms of EU-wide norms but also a prominent presence of those speakers most protective of the *Spitzenkandidaten* system, namely members of the European Parliament and hence European speakers.

Taken together, the nomination of the Commission president thus clearly offered possibilities for Europeanized media coverage even though the setting of the negotiations suggests remaining cautious. In a sense, it can thus be considered a test case for whether supposedly shared EU-wide concerns, such as the democratic quality of the process, are sufficient to outweigh “the traditional segmentation of national media spheres as relatively closed systems of meaning” (Trenz, 2008, p. 299).

Clearly, much of the study’s results will depend on where, how and against which baseline the similarity of frames and the “Europeanness” of discourse participants are measured. Against this backdrop, the subsequent, fourth chapter provides a detailed look at the thesis’ methodological approach.

4 Methodological design

4.1 Selection of countries, media and timeframe

First, the *geographic* scope of the study should be set out. For the present analysis, three countries were selected: Germany, France and Ireland. This selection is mainly guided by the goal to create a “robust test for Europeanization” (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 802) in the case at hand. Clearly, an analysis of media content in three countries is not sufficient to draw any definite conclusions about reporting in the entire EU. Nonetheless, if Europeanized coverage was found for countries that are, from the outset, relatively unlikely to feature similar frames and EU-wide speakers, this would at least hint at a Europeanization in the EU more broadly.

An analysis of Germany, France and Ireland appears suitable in this regard, given that they vary as to important “[issue-]specific factors that might be hypothesized to affect the scope and nature of debates” (Wessler et al., 2008, p. 134) concerning the 2019 nomination process: First, both initial frontrunner Manfred Weber and the final

nominee Ursula von der Leyen are German in nationality, rendering it likely to find a distinct national focus and framing in German reporting, as compared to France and Ireland. Second, the heads of state and government of the three countries assumed very different roles in the negotiations and endorsed different priorities:

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron initially appeared to be in the front line of a conflict: Merkel publicly insisted on her party colleague Manfred Weber and the *Spitzenkandidaten* process, while Macron instead called for a candidate with government experience (Christiansen & Shackleton, 2019, p. 50; Hofmann, 2019, p. 111; Nasshoven, 2019, p. 287). Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, on the other hand, only assumed a more prominent role when Macron and Merkel had collectively decided to back the Socialist candidate Frans Timmermans; Varadkar opposed this agreement largely because it would end the EPP's control over the Commission presidency (Carreño, Psalidakis & Guarascio, 2019).

With the media likely focusing on the role and priorities of “their” national representative (see ch. 3.2), a Europeanized coverage in the three countries is far from a foregone conclusion. Additionally, specific domestic issues tied in with the nomination process in some of the countries, especially in Germany, where the future of the governing coalition was called into question (Bubrowski & Lohse, 2019). This, again, makes national differences in the mass-mediated debates more likely.

Importantly, the selection of Germany, France and Ireland simultaneously ensures variation as to broader “background variables — country size, language, the ‘openness’ of national media systems, length of EU membership, degree of EU skepticism and so on — that we expect to have an impact on the structures and development of public spheres at large” (Wessler et al., 2008, p. 134). This should contribute to the representativeness of the results (ibid.; also Koopmans & Statham, 2010, p. 48).

While Germany and France are both large and founding members, located in the center of Europe, adding Ireland allows for including a small, northern country that only joined in 1973 and does not take part in all of the EU's programs, such as Schengen (Elliott, 2019, p. 562). Furthermore, each of the countries exhibits a different degree of trust in the EU (see European Commission, 2019, p. 136) and represents a different

type of media system: Germany corresponds to the democratic corporatist model, France most closely resembles the polarized pluralist model and Ireland represents the liberal model of media (see Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 90, 143, 198). Finally, in terms of the political systems as well, marked differences can be observed.⁷

Despite this variation, however, it is not suggested that the sample is without any bias. Above all, it would have been desirable to include an Eastern European country. Yet the restricted scope of a master thesis as well as practical, linguistic reasons made it inevitable to make certain compromises in this regard.

As for the specific *media* to be analyzed, national quality newspapers were selected. This follows prior Europeanization research arguing that newspapers remain a key source of information on political issues even though traditional print readership is declining (Koopmans & Statham, 2010, p. 50). Quality newspapers, in particular, continue to play an important role: Online versions make content “more widely accessible and immediate than it was previously” (*ibid.*) and, as *leitmedien*, they are “closely observed by other parts of the public sphere” (Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2012, p. 449).

In contrast to some previous studies (see, e.g., Vliegthart, Schuck, Boomgarden & De Vreese, 2008, p. 422), however, quality newspapers are not considered proxies for the broader media landscape. Notably, research has found the quality press “to be more Europeanized than tabloids” (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 812). This must be taken into account in the interpretation of the findings.

The present thesis furthermore differs from prior research in analyzing a wider array of quality newspapers than usual, in order to get as comprehensive a picture of the reporting in this media segment as possible: The sample includes newspapers representing a range of political ideologies all the while accounting for a substantial share of total newspaper readership.⁸

⁷ For instance, Germany and Ireland most closely represent a parliamentary form of government, while France is often considered a semipresidential system (Lijphart, 2012, pp. 108-111). Also, Germany is marked by federalism, whereas the French and Irish systems are strongly centralized (*ibid.*, p. 178).

⁸ See ACPM (2020), IVW (2020) and iLevel (2019) for data on newspaper circulation in Germany, France and Ireland. Among others, the sample includes the nationwide daily quality newspaper with the highest circulation in each of the countries.

As far as possible, newspapers with similar editorial lines were selected in the three countries to allow for cross-border comparisons: The German sample includes the conservative daily Die Welt, the center-left newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung and the leftist paper taz. In France, the conservative Le Figaro, the center-left Le Monde and the more left-liberal-leaning paper Libération were selected. In Ireland, the conservative Irish Independent, the centrist Irish Examiner and the left-liberal-leaning The Irish Times are included. Clearly, labels such as conservative, centrist or left-leaning represent oversimplifications and can be critically discussed. Most should nevertheless be able to agree that, at least by tendency and as compared to other national media outlets, the selected newspapers lean to the one or the other side respectively.⁹

Taken together, the selection of countries and media hence increases “possible country differences [and] varies possible ideological differences” (Drewski, 2015, pp. 267-268). This is important for the interpretation of the results, as is outlined in ch. 4.3.

In terms of the *timeframe*, articles are analyzed that were published between 17 June and 7 July 2019. This period covers the hot phase of the nomination process in the European Council, including the two main EU summits on the issue and the informal negotiations in Osaka. With the elimination of Manfred Weber (20 June), the debate over Frans Timmermans and the ultimate decision for Ursula von der Leyen (2 July), it also spans the time when the political and media attention for the topic was presumably at its peak (Nasshoven, 2019, p. 281; Thieme & Wessels, 2019, pp. 95-96).

Finally, as for the *selection and retrieval of the articles*, most of the articles are accessed using the LexisNexis database. Only Süddeutsche Zeitung and Irish Examiner had to be accessed via the newspapers’ own archives, given LexisNexis currently does not provide full access to these publications. In order to select those articles in the timeframe dealing with the nomination of the Commission president, the data-

⁹ The classification of the newspapers advanced here is based on a combination of prior Europeanization studies and further sources, in particular Bijsmans, Galpin & Leruth (2018, p. 830), Eurotopics (2020), KAS (2016, p. 4) and Wessler et al. (2008, p. 37). The label “quality newspaper” is commonly accepted as far as the nine papers are concerned. Yet note that the picture is somewhat ambiguous as far as the Irish Independent is concerned (see Gattermann, 2012, p. 86; also Dutceac Segesten & Bossetta, 2019, p. 1057). In the present study, it was decided to include the Irish Independent as a quality newspaper, following recent research (see Hurrelmann & Wagner, 2020).

bases are first scanned for a list of keywords and phrases, compiled based on an initial reading of articles related to the issue.¹⁰

All articles that mention at least one of the search terms are read. Yet only those articles enter into the final analysis that, at least at some point, indeed address the issue of identifying a new head of the European Commission, for example by reporting about the controversies at the EU summits or by presenting one of the candidates under consideration. In the vast majority of cases, articles were found to explicitly refer to the nomination negotiations in the European Council. However, it was decided to also include articles referring, less specifically, to the “selection” or choice of a new Commission president, given this centrally involves the nomination process.

It should furthermore be noted that teasers on the first page of a newspaper issue — a short extract from a main story with a reference to this story — are not included as a separate article. Finally, if an article appears twice in the database, it is included only once in the analysis. This mainly concerns *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* for which LexisNexis sometimes displayed both an original version of an article and a final, updated version; in these cases, only the latter version enters into the analysis.¹¹

4.2 Procedure for the coding of frames and discourse participants

The examination of frames and discourse participants in the articles proceeds using a qualitative content analysis (see generally Mayring, 2015). Content analyses serve to describe formal and content-related characteristics of communication (see Früh,

¹⁰ The following keywords and phrases were used (translated into German and French respectively, feminine variants included): EC president, Commission president, president of the (EU/European) Commission, head of the (EU/European) Commission, leader of the (EU/European) Commission, leadership of the (EU/European) Commission, presidency of the (EU/European) Commission.

¹¹ As far as the *Irish Examiner* is concerned, the retrieval and selection of articles was more difficult, considering the LexisNexis database only includes articles that are published on *irishexaminer.com*. Articles therefore had to be retrieved from an alternative source, the *Irish Newspaper Archives* (INA). This archive grants full access to the *Irish Examiner*; each edition is available in the form of a scanned (photographed) copy. However, the archive is not equipped with a reliable full-text search. Therefore, relevant articles had to be identified manually, following the rules set out for the other newspapers. The respective articles were then transcribed with the help of a text recognition software (OCR) and, as a final step, marked with the date of publication, page number and author.

2011, p. 27) and are regularly applied to analyze Europeanization in terms of frames and speakers (see, e.g., Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017; Wessler et al., 2008).

The choice of a qualitative approach is notably motivated by the aim of providing a more fine-grained and in-depth analysis of the material. Compared to a quantitative analysis, a qualitative design inevitably limits the number of articles and days that can be examined (Barth & Bijsmans, 2018, p. 229). On the other hand, however, it makes it possible to report findings not only on how often certain frames and speakers appear in the articles, but also on how and in which context they occur.

More specifically, the analysis of the material proceeds using a system of categories (see Mayring, 2000): One set of categories is designed to capture the frames in reporting, while the other set serves to analyze the discourse participants (see coding scheme in Annex I). The coding is done with the help of the software MAXQDA.

As far as the *frames* and their corresponding categories are concerned, they are developed both deductively and inductively. Proceeding in an entirely deductive fashion, that is, tracing pre-formulated frames in the material, appeared impossible in the present case – at least if one shares the objective of going beyond such generic and very rough frames as human interest or conflict (see De Vreese, 2005, pp. 54-57):

As has been outlined, the knowledge about the media coverage of the nomination remains limited and, in particular, no pre-formulated package of frames addressing what was “at stake” (Kantner, 2015, p. 98) in the process is readily available from research. Therefore, a deductive analysis using some constructed set of frames would have likely lead to missing salient perspectives in the articles. On the other hand, however, purely inductive approaches tend to be plagued by shortfalls in terms of reliability and intersubjectivity (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 263).

For these reasons, a middle way is pursued (see similarly Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017; Van de Steeg, 2006). First, an initial set of frames is devised, combining insights from a previous Europeanization study by Trenz (2000) and the broader literature on the 2019 selection of the Commission president. Analyzing the media coverage of the corruption scandal in the Santer Commission, Trenz identified three

main frames of the issue: (1) national conflicts and struggles for power between countries, (2) ideological conflicts between different factions in the EP and (3) universal moral standards, in particular the question of democracy (pp. 347-348).

Even though the case analyzed was a very different one in Trenz's study (2000), this set of frames also constitutes a suitable point of departure for the present analysis: First, the three frames closely fit in with the definition of frames underlying the present paper, each of them providing a different interpretation of what was at stake and, hence, suggesting why the event was relevant. Second, the same questions of national power, ideology and democracy feature prominently in the existing academic accounts of the 2019 nomination process (e.g., Maurer, 2019, p. 88; Müller Gómez & Wessels, 2019, p. 73; Thieme & Wessels, 2019, p. 97). From the outset, it is thus at least possible that these frames were also prevalent in news reporting.

The look into the literature, however, equally leads one to expect that several other frames appeared in the coverage as well, such as the issue of the distribution of power between the EU's institutions (see Müller Gómez & Reiners, 2019, p. 268).

Therefore, in a second step, the initial set of frames is supplemented inductively by adding frames during the actual analysis of the newspaper articles. This continuous process is guided by questions formulated on the basis of the definition of frames stated earlier: What is the controversy about? Why is it relevant? Which consequences are discussed and, relatedly, who is presented as shaping or being affected by the decisions? Relevant passages are marked and, taking note of their similarities and differences, the identified "key concepts and thoughts" (Barth & Bijsmans, 2018, p. 219) are gradually subsumed into broader frames (see similarly Van Gorp, 2010).

Where possible, these frames are further organized into frame groups, hereinafter referred to as "master frames" (Risse, 2010, p. 155). In this way, for example, the democracy frame already discussed by Trenz (2000, p. 347) is formulated as a subframe of the wider master frame 'EU-wide rules, norms and interests'. For each frame, a corresponding category in the coding scheme is drawn up, equipped with a clear definition, anchor examples and coding rules, "determining exactly under what cir-

cumstances a text passage can be coded with a category” (Mayring, 2000). The definitions and rules are formulated and revised throughout the coding process.

Finally, to arrive at as much reliability and intersubjectivity as possible, after all of the frames and corresponding categories have been formulated, all articles are scanned again in order to double-check the codings. Clearly, the described process still remains, to an important degree, interpretative and subjective, especially as for the identification of frames. Although such concerns cannot be eliminated entirely, the detailed description of the method and the clear definition of the relevant categories should at least make the necessary decisions transparent.

As far as the *discourse participants* are concerned, the coding is more straightforward and closely follows the existing literature. Geared towards measuring in how far EU-wide speakers appear in national reporting, the coding system includes three main categories: national speakers, EU-level speakers (e.g., members of the European Parliament) and speakers from fellow EU countries (see Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königs-löw, 2017, p. 802). Furthermore, below each of the categories, subcategories are set up distinguishing different types of actors (e.g., heads of state and government, parliamentarians, academics), allowing for a more fine-grained analysis.

Note that for both frames and discourse participants, the articles are not coded as a whole; instead, the coding units are the individual text passages in the articles addressing issues related to the nomination of the Commission president.

A series of further, more detailed rules was devised to ensure the comparability and intersubjectivity of the codings. The full list with explanations and theoretical justifications can be found in Annex I. Among others, concerning frames, it was decided that a category should be attributed, at a minimum, to one full sentence and, at a maximum, to one paragraph; no sentence can be coded with more than one category. Concerning discourse participants, coding focuses on extended quotations, based on the two-sentences criterion proposed by Wessler et al. (2008, p. 47): Every directly or indirectly quoted statement that is at least two sentences long is coded with a speaker category. Guest articles, published interviews and letters to the editor, however, are coded only once and flagged for a separate, qualitative discussion (see Annex I).

As for most content analyses, each of these rules and restrictions may be criticized. However, they appear both necessary and suited to make the coding as transparent and replicable as possible and to focus the study on its research interest.

4.3 Guidelines for identifying Europeanization

Up to this point, it has been laid out how the frames and discourse participants are coded in the material. One also needs to clarify, however, how a *Europeanization* in terms of these frames and discourse participants will be identified.

As far as *frames* are concerned, it is a recurring question “how similar interpretative structures have to be in order to qualify as indicators for the Europeanization of public spheres” (Risse, 2010, p. 155). Clearly, with a view to a shared, EU-wide debate, it should be possible to trace some broad commonalities in the presence and frequency of frames among the newspapers. Nonetheless, this thesis will follow research arguing that, to note Europeanization, it is by no means necessary to identify a uniform debate in all of the newspapers across Europe. Instead, it would be natural to find differences in framing; after all, even the coverage of national issues in national newspapers is usually marked by variation, reflecting notably the different ideological lines of the media outlets (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 800).

What appears more important with respect to Europeanization, on the other hand, is that the similarities and differences in terms of the frames in the newspapers “should not form distinctly national patterns” (Van de Steeg, 2006, p. 612); that is, the patterns identified in the presence and frequency of frames should not, in a Europeanized debate, be easily reduced to differences between countries, superseding all other possible logics, such as EU-wide ideological lines of division (see Drewski, 2015, p. 267; Risse, 2010, p. 119; Trenz, 2008, p. 299).

A crucial observation would hence be if the newspapers of the same country had more in common in the coverage of the nomination than, for example, conservative newspapers from different countries. In this case, the mass-mediated debates would be marked by “national fault lines” (Van de Steeg, 2006, p. 613) and, by uniformly

highlighting specific perspectives, potentially make it harder for citizens in one EU country to understand and connect to the debate in another country (Risse, 2010, p. 109). Against this backdrop, the present paper will compare the presence and frequency of frames *within* and *between* countries. In a first step, basic quantitative measures of frequency are used. In a second step, a subset of frames is considered in a more qualitative manner to allow for fine-grained comparisons.

Concerning the *discourse participants*, on the other hand, the “ratio of national and European discourse participants” (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 809) will serve as the main quantitative indicator. In line with prior research, if speakers from the EU level or other EU countries appear about as frequently as national speakers, the degree of Europeanization in the speaker dimension is considered to be high (ibid.). Again, more fine-grained, qualitative insights concerning the content and context of the quotations are added. Having outlined the paper’s methodological approach, it is now possible to present the results of the study.

5 Results

5.1 Initial overall findings

Before entering into the detailed analysis of frames and discourse participants, some initial findings may help to provide context. Note that where specific newspaper articles are cited to substantiate or illustrate findings, they are hereinafter listed with the respective newspaper, date (month/day, all dates 2019) and title.

First, in the nine newspapers in Germany, France and Ireland, a total of 225 articles were identified as covering the 2019 nomination of the Commission president. Of these, the vast majority of 212 articles included at least one passage that could be coded with a category for frames or speakers. The 13 other articles were typically concerned with a different topic and only briefly touched upon the appointment process or summarized the outcome without going into any details (e.g., Die Welt, 06/18, ‘Kramp-Karrenbauer knöpft sich Günther für Kuscheln mit Linkspartei vor’).

As illustrated in the figure below, most of the 225 articles were published in the week from 1 July to 7 July 2019, and the smallest number of articles appeared in the second week (24 June to 30 June). This suggests that it was above all the outcome of the nomination process, that is, the proposal of Ursula von der Leyen on 2 July, as well as the ensuing reactions that yielded coverage in the media. The general pattern is identical for all of the three countries, pointing to synchronicity.

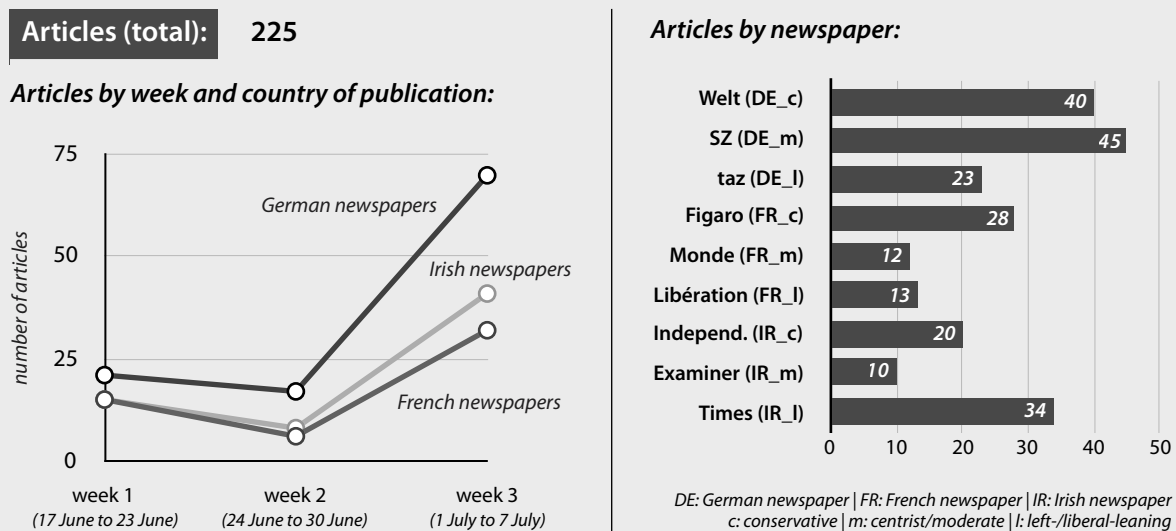


Figure 1: Summary of initial findings

source: own illustration

The figure also points to another finding, though: Reporting overall appears to have been much more intense in Germany than in the other two countries. As mentioned, the visibility or salience of reporting does not constitute the focus of the present analysis, and furthermore, many different pieces of information would have to be combined to draw conclusions in this regard.¹² Nonetheless, it is fair to remark that several initial observations at least point in this direction:

Most notably, in total, 108 articles addressing the nomination of the Commission president were published in Germany, compared to only 53 articles in France and 64

¹² Note, for example, that the number of articles published on the topic is likely linked to newspapers' layout, total number of pages and political scope. Furthermore, the salience of the specific nomination issue in the broader article as well as the length of articles would have to be accounted for in a detailed analysis. Comparing articles' word count may appear expedient in this regard. Such a decision will also face criticism, however, as the word count depends, to some degree, on language.

in Ireland. In addition, more articles appeared in Germany in each of the three weeks, and two German newspapers (Die Welt, SZ) published more articles than any other daily analyzed. Finally, the tendency remains the same if one considers only the articles published on the front page, the most prominent section of a newspaper edition. In Germany, 19 articles appeared on the front page, compared to only four in Ireland. In France, information on page numbers was not available for Libération; in Le Figaro and Le Monde, in total, two articles were published on the front page.

In sum, there are hence several observations that point to national differences in the intensity of reporting, mainly between the newspapers in Germany, on the one hand, and those in France and Ireland, on the other hand. By contrast, the papers' ideological orientation does not appear to play a clear role (see the right side of figure 1).

These differences may be due, in part, to the German nationality of both initial candidate Manfred Weber and final nominee Ursula von der Leyen (see also Gattermann, 2019). As has been explained, the perceived proximity of an event and the prominence of actors are drivers of news coverage (De Wilde, 2019, p. 1196). Further research would be needed, however, to come to more solid conclusions.

The focus of the present analysis is on frames and discourse participants. In this regard, it may be useful to add two initial findings: First, in the total of 225 articles, 1,485 passages were coded with one of the categories for frames. Second, discourse participants were coded in 308 cases. This means that, on average, an article covering the nomination process contained roughly seven frames and a little over one extended quotation. It also suggests that the frames devised both deductively and inductively were, on an overall level, clearly represented in news reporting. On this basis, the next section now turns to a short description of the main frames.

5.2 Main frames identified in the media coverage

Based on the procedure outlined in chapter 4.2, six master frames were identified in the newspaper reports. The table below provides a short overview (for more details, see the coding scheme in Annex I as well as the further explanations below).

Master frames and subframes

| | |
|--|--|
| F1: EU resilience and unity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination is linked to broader questions of the EU's viability/existence and unity (e.g., crisis of the EU, general capacity to find common solutions and agreements, potential disintegration of the EU) |
| F2: EU-wide rules, norms and interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of respecting, supporting or dismissing particular EU principles, broader norms or interests (e.g., the <i>Spitzenkandidaten</i> system, broader values of democracy, diversity) <p>▶ <i>F2.a: Spitzenkandidaten system as such</i> <i>F2.b: Democracy and transparency</i> <i>F2.c: Balance and diversity</i> <i>F2.d: Candidate qualification and standing</i> <i>F2.e: Other EU-wide interests</i></p> |
| F3: Inter-institutional power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of the distribution of power between EU institutions (e.g., the authority of the European Parliament or the prerogatives of the heads of state and government in the European Council) <p>▶ <i>F3.a: Power of the EP</i> <i>F3.b: Power of the European Council</i> <i>F3.c: General/EP vs. European Council</i></p> |
| F4: EU party and policy interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of which party, political group or broad ideology prevails in the EU and of which political agenda is pursued in the EU (policies/reforms) <p>▶ <i>F4.a: Conflicting party interests</i> <i>F4.b: EU policy and reform</i></p> |
| F5: National power, pride and interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of which country or national leader is predominant in the EU, of which country is represented in the candidate line-up and of which country gets to reap specific "national benefits" from the nomination <p>▶ <i>F5.a: Germany/Merkel</i> <i>F5.b: France/Macron</i> <i>F5.c: Ireland/Varadkar</i> <i>F5.d: Viségrad/Eastern Europe</i> <i>F5.e: Franco-German duo</i> <i>F5.f: General/Other</i></p> |
| F6: Domestic and inter-state consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as having consequences/implications beyond the immediate realm of EU policy/politics, affecting in particular domestic politics or the broader relationships between countries <p>▶ <i>F6.a: German politics</i> <i>F6.b: French politics</i> <i>F6.c: Irish politics</i> <i>F6.d: Relationship Germany-France</i> <i>F6.e: General/Other</i></p> |

Table 2: Main frames identified

source: own table; information from Annex I

Some explanations are appropriate. First, as anticipated, most of the master frames contain subframes representing a more detailed view on the nomination process. As suggested by the grouping, these subframes share broad commonalities in the perspective on what was at stake. Nonetheless, the remaining differences should not be brushed off. This is notably the case for the master frame 'EU-wide rules, norms and interests' (F2), containing subframes ranging from considerations of democracy to

the qualification of the candidates. At the same time, the line between some of the master frames may at first sight appear fine, notably if one considers F1 and F2. The detailed descriptions and coding rules in Annex I serve to demonstrate that there are, nevertheless, important differences that can be formulated.

As a short summary, it can be noted that the first master frame, ‘EU resilience and unity’ (F1), links the nomination process to broader questions regarding the EU’s capacity to find solutions and agreements, the EU’s coherence and unity and, ultimately, the Union’s existence itself. The perspective hence stretches beyond the single nomination procedure in 2019, with both “optimistic” and “pessimistic” views on the EU’s state and future being coded with this master frame:

- “Gelingt das nicht, steht der EU ein langer und aufreibender Kampf um Spitzenjobs bevor, der die Gemeinschaft zu spalten droht” (SZ, 06/24, ‘Macrons Zumutung’).
- “Au bord de l’abîme, l’Europe s’est sauvée en revenant au bon vieux schéma classique” (Le Figaro, 07/03, ‘In extremis’).

The ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame (F2), by contrast, addresses not *whether* the EU functions and exists but *how*. The perspective is one of presumably shared standards, principles and interests which may or may not be reflected in the nomination of the Commission president. A set of five subframes captures the specific focus of the respective passages, including for example the debate over the *Spitzenkandidaten* system (F2.a), broader norms of democracy and transparency (F2.b) or the goal of identifying the most qualified candidates (F2.d):

- “Die Fraktionsvorsitzende Ska Keller kritisiert, dass der Rat die Personalfragen in Hinterzimmern ausgehandelt hat” (Die Welt, 07/04, ‘Katerstimmung im EU-Parlament’).
- “Nobody seems to be mentioning the obvious question: who is the best person for this job?” (The Irish Times, 06/22, ‘Leaders holding door for UK like some party guest’).

The third frame (‘inter-institutional power’) introduces the notion of power, albeit limited to the relations between the EU’s institutions. In particular, the nomination is linked to a struggle between the European Parliament, on the one hand, and the European Council, on the other hand:

- “Doch wird es das Europaparlament tatsächlich wagen [...], einen Machtkampf mit den Regierungschefs aufzunehmen?” (taz, 07/04, ‘Auf zum Aufstand im Europaparlament’).

Frame F4 and its subframes, on the other hand, depict the nomination as a question of party, ideology and policy. The focus is on the political agenda that the candidates represent, suggesting that the nomination matters for the policies adopted during the next institutional cycle, as well as on the struggle for power between the parties and political groups in the European Union:

- “*Ms von der Leyen has previously been supportive of greater defence co-operation in the EU, telling a German newspaper earlier this year: ‘Europe’s army is already taking shape’*” (*The Irish Times*, 07/03, ‘*EU summit deadlock broken by surprise nomination*’).
- “*Cela étant, le PPE peut malgré tout être satisfait : il conserve la présidence de l’exécutif européen qu’il occupe depuis 1995 (sauf entre 1999 et 2004)*” (*Libération*, 07/02, ‘*Union européenne : l’heure des femmes*’).

The main cleavage advanced by the ‘national power, pride and interests’ frame (F5) is one between countries or national leaders. Here, the coverage of the nomination is centered on the power and authority of individual countries in the EU, on the nationality of the candidates and on how the choice of a specific candidate relates to a presumed national interest, for example:

- “*The package of top jobs announced by EU leaders reinforces the Franco-German pre-eminence*” (*The Irish Times*, 07/03, ‘*Centre-right bloc sees share of spoils decline*’).
- “*Gewinner und Profiteure — Da ist zunächst einmal Deutschland: Der letzte Deutsche, der die Kommission führte, war Walter Hallstein - und das war 1967*” (*Die Welt*, 07/04, ‘*Die Sensationskandidatin*’).

Note that both F4 and F5 broadly reflect frames already identified in the study of Trezn (2000, pp. 347-348). Finally, while all of the previous master frames deal, in one way or the other, with the EU, the sixth master frame (‘domestic and inter-state consequences’) addresses matters beyond the immediate realm of EU politics. The nomination is discussed as having consequences either for domestic politics or for the broader relationship between countries:

- “*Die Art, wie der französische Präsident sich über Weber äußere, sei respektlos und belaste die Beziehungen zu Deutschland*” (*SZ*, 06/25, ‘*CSU versammelt sich hinter Weber*’).
- “*Certains y ont même vu une raison de quitter la coalition. Comme s’il fallait pousser coûte que coûte vers la crise de gouvernement*” (*Le Figaro*, 07/05, ‘*Allemagne : von der Leyen fait tanguer la GroKo*’).

As has already been mentioned, the present thesis does not suggest that this list of frames is self-evident and entirely exhaustive. Nonetheless, it should reflect the key

perspectives on the nomination process and hence provide a good basis for tracing differences and similarities in the media coverage, also if one keeps in mind that the analysis proceeds along the same categories and rules for each of the newspapers.

5.3 Europeanization in terms of frames

In a Europeanized debate, as explained in chapter 4.3, the presence and frequency of frames in reporting should not follow “distinctly national patterns” (Van de Steeg, 2006, p. 612). In a first step of the analysis, one may therefore consider whether the frames used to discuss the nomination in one country can also be traced in the coverage in other countries.

At the general level of master frames, this indeed appears to be the case. In fact, all six master frames can be identified, at some point, in all of the three countries. There is one qualification, however: Whereas in Germany and France, the six frames are traceable in each of the national newspapers analyzed, this is not true for Ireland. Neither the ‘EU resilience and unity’ frame (F1) nor the ‘inter-institutional power’ frame (F3) could be identified in the reporting of the Irish Examiner.

In part, this may be attributed to the smaller number of relevant articles (10) published in the Irish Examiner. It should be noted, however, that in *Le Monde* (12) and *Libération* (13), the number of articles is not much higher and yet, there, all of the master frames can be traced. The observation hence provides a first hint, at a general level, that the availability and similarity of frames across borders may in fact have been limited. Given the finding applies to only one out of the three newspapers in Ireland, however, it should not be overstated at this point.

A consideration of frequencies should bring greater clarity: What proportion of all of the passages coded in the articles of a newspaper (e.g., *Die Welt*) are coded with a particular frame (e.g., F1)? And how does this compare to the coverage in other newspapers? In the following, these frequencies are expressed as percentages and rounded to the nearest one percent, so as not to exaggerate the mathematical precision of the content analysis. Values with one decimal place are reported in Annex II.

Again, to get an overview, it is useful to first consider the master frames — and once again, at first sight, there are important cross-border commonalities (see also fig. 2):

| Main frames | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| F1: EU resilience and unity | 4 % | 5 % | 2 % | 6 % | 5 % | 5 % | 8 % | — | 6 % |
| F2: EU-wide rules, norms, interests | 40 % | 39 % | 49 % | 29 % | 36 % | 32 % | 26 % | 12 % | 30 % |
| F3: Inter-institutional power | 8 % | 8 % | 7 % | 1 % | 1 % | 1 % | 1 % | — | 6 % |
| F4: EU party and policy interests | 27 % | 27 % | 22 % | 30 % | 32 % | 32 % | 26 % | 38 % | 30 % |
| F5: Nat. power, pride, interests | 13 % | 15 % | 8 % | 24 % | 23 % | 28 % | 24 % | 31 % | 22 % |
| F6: Domestic and inter-state conse. | 8 % | 6 % | 12 % | 10 % | 3 % | 2 % | 15 % | 19 % | 6 % |

Table 3: Shares of the master frames in the nine newspapers

source: own table; data from Annex II (values rounded so that the percentage total in each column is 100; rounding error minimized; most frequent frame in each paper in bold)

Most notably, in all three countries, the ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame (F2) and the ‘EU party and policy interests’ frame (F4) are highly common. They are the two most frequent master frames in eight out of the nine newspapers and jointly account for half of the frames in each paper or more. Remarkably, the ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame (F2) indeed tops the list in most newspapers. Both findings, one could argue, point towards a common debate.

Yet already at this level, there are national peculiarities that suggest caution. Mainly, whereas in all German dailies, a clear predominance of the ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame (F2) is observable, representing the most frequent frame in all three newspapers and by itself accounting for over one-third to almost half of the frames, the other papers display a far more ambiguous pattern:

In French media, ‘EU party and policy interests’ appear about as frequently (Le Monde, Libération) or even slightly more frequently than F2 (Le Figaro). Even more, the

‘national power, pride and interests’ frame (F5) reaches similarly high levels as ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ in *Libération* and, to a lesser extent, in *Le Figaro*.

In the Irish dailies as well, the hierarchy of frames is more ambiguous: In the *Irish Independent*, all three frames are almost equally frequent. In the *Irish Times*, this is true for ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ and ‘EU party and policy interests,’ and the *Irish Examiner* even gives most attention to ‘EU party and policy interests’. At least as far as German newspapers in comparison to Irish and French media are concerned, there are hence indications for a distinctly national pattern.

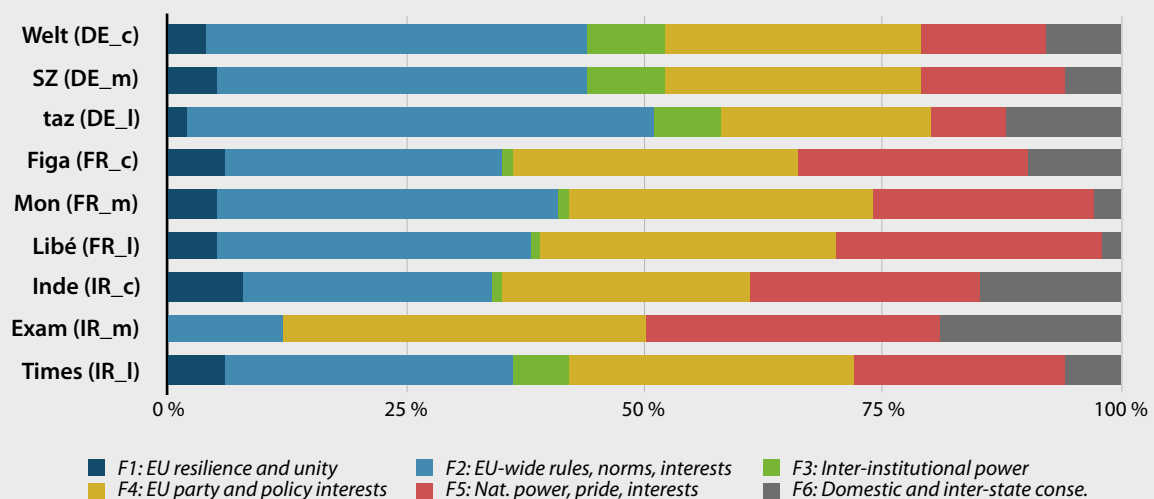


Figure 2: **Shares of the master frames in the nine newspapers**
 source: own illustration; visualizes the data from table 3 (see Annex II)

Ideological patterns across borders, on the other hand, can hardly be discerned at this level. For example, whereas in the most leftist newspaper in Germany (*taz*), the predominance of the ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame is most pronounced, the most left-liberal-leaning newspapers in France and Ireland still devote about the same level of attention to ‘EU party and policy interests’.

It should also be reiterated that the comparison of master frames only provides a first and broad look at the framing in the three countries. In particular, even if the dailies in all countries prominently address ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ and this frame certainly represents a common perspective on what is at stake, great differences remain possible as to whether the *Spitzenkandidaten* system or gender, for

example, are placed in the center of the debate. In this light, the next section addresses the three most common master frames overall in more detail, also incorporating findings of a more qualitative nature: ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ (F2), ‘EU party and policy interests’ (F4) and ‘national power, pride and interests’ (F5).

(1) Concerning, first, ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ (F2), a marked segmentation of the debate indeed becomes visible once one dives deeper into the analysis. Starting again with the frequencies, German newspapers most commonly highlight questions of democracy and transparency, with two out of the three newspapers featuring F2.b as the most frequent subframe (see table 4). The nomination is hence presented as a question of respecting — or not — the citizens’ will, for example:

– “Nun spielt das Brüsseler Schmierentheater das Theaterstück *Peinliche Demokratie: EU-Hinterzimmer-Mafia-Politbüro als oberster Souverän*” (taz, 07/06, “Top of the flops?”).

| Subframes of F2 | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| F2.a Spitzenkand. system as such | 7 % | 12 % | 11 % | 7 % | 5 % | 10 % | 7 % | — | 5 % |
| F2.b Democracy and transparency | 15 % | 9 % | 15 % | 5 % | 2 % | 5 % | — | — | 5 % |
| F2.c Balance and diversity | 2 % | 3 % | 7 % | 6 % | 8 % | 4 % | 11 % | 6 % | 8 % |
| F2.d Cand. qualif. and standing | 13 % | 12 % | 12 % | 10 % | 19 % | 9 % | 7 % | 3 % | 10 % |
| F2.e Other EU-wide interests | 3 % | 3 % | 4 % | 1 % | 2 % | 3 % | 1 % | 3 % | 2 % |

Table 4: Shares of F2 subframes in the media coverage

source: own table; data from Annex II (rounded values; most frequent subframe in each newspaper in bold)

On a more thorough reading, it can be noticed that such discussions of democracy and transparency are commonly tied to the *Spitzenkandidaten* system. Both are then presented as being naturally linked, as in the phrase “die demokratische Errungenschaft des Spitzenkandidaten-Prinzips” (SZ, 06/22, ‘Weber wankt’). Yet the German media’s focus on democracy is also discernible where a link is explicitly denied:

– “Diese Diskussion geht ziemlich durcheinander. Die Spitzenkandidaten waren kein Instrument der Demokratisierung der Europäischen Union [...]” (Die Welt, 07/06, ‘Überzogene Erwartung an die EU, das übernationale Gute zu verkörpern’).

Moreover, the importance attributed to democracy and transparency in German media is also apparent in the headlines – arguably the most prominent section of an article. For example, Die Welt published articles entitled ‘Keine Hinterzimmer mehr’ (06/26), ‘Söder: Triumph des Hinterzimmers’ (07/02) and the two-piece editorial ‘Verrät die EU durch den Brüsseler Deal ihre demokratischen Werte?’ (07/04).

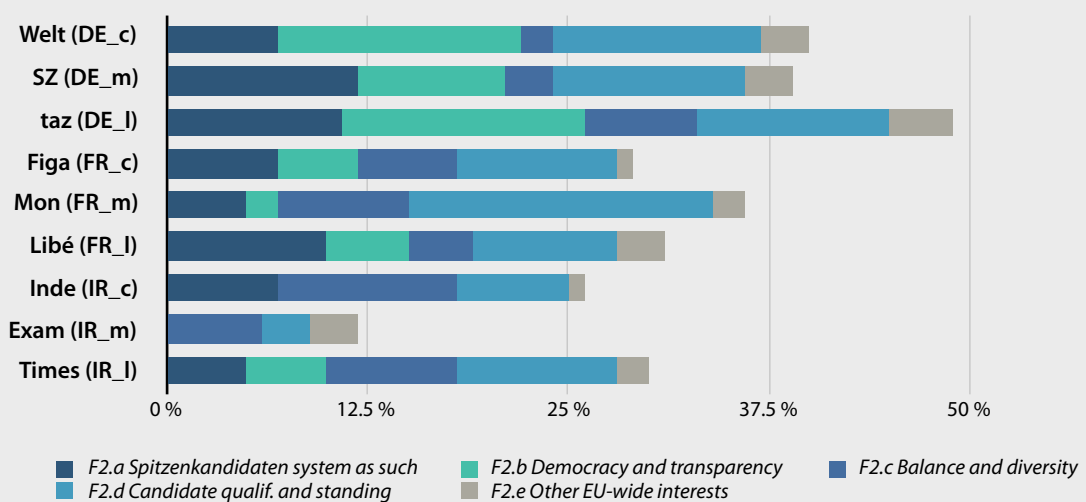


Figure 3: Shares of F2 subframes in the media coverage

source: own illustration; visualizes the data from table 4 (see Annex II)

In France, on the other hand, questions of democracy and transparency are rarely addressed, as indicated by the low frequencies in all three French newspapers. Interestingly, the *Spitzenkandidaten* system does feature in reporting. However, in France, *Spitzenkandidaten* and democracy do not tend to be natural companions. Rather, when the lead candidate principle is addressed, the focus lies on Emmanuel Macron’s opposition to the current system, for example:

– “Le président français est en effet totalement opposé au système des « Spitzenkandidaten » qui consiste à nommer automatiquement à la présidence de l’exécutif européen la tête de la liste arrivée en tête aux élections européennes” (Libération, 06/19, ‘Présidence de la Commission : qui sera l’euro élu ?’).

Even more strikingly, in Ireland, two out of the three newspapers do not feature any passage coded with the democracy and transparency frame (F2.b) at all. There, by

contrast, priority is given to questions of balance and diversity (F2.c), the subframe that appears most regularly in two out of the three Irish papers:

- “Candidates are needed for the other jobs too, with the package requiring a delicate balance of gender, geography and political affiliation” (*The Irish Times*, 06/22, ‘Leaders holding door for UK like some party guest who has overstayed welcome’).
- “Brussels diplomats said work would focus on compromise candidates and a share-out formula” (*Irish Independent*, 06/21, ‘Hogan’s EU post on hold until the top roles sorted’).

On the other hand, in France, news reports tend to focus on candidates’ qualification and standing (F.2d), hence closely following the priorities of French President Emmanuel Macron. This is particularly visible in *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*:

- “Celui-ci, n’ayant jamais eu de fonctions gouvernementales, il n’aurait pas la « carrure » requise” (*Le Figaro*, 06/20, ‘Entre Paris et Berlin, la bataille des postes clés’).
- “Elles ont toutes deux une longue expérience des affaires publiques, européennes et internationales [...]” (*Le Monde*, 07/04, ‘Europe : Un quatuor paritaire et d’expérience’).

Arguably, ‘candidate qualification and standing’ (F2.d) is also prominent in reports in Germany. Hence, not each of the divisions is entirely clear-cut (in this respect, see in particular the SZ in table 4). Nevertheless, it remains that the German newspapers tend to stand out in terms of the attention given to democracy and transparency, whereas other subframes are emphasized more strongly in Ireland and France.

Divisions or similarities based on papers’ ideological orientation, on the other hand, are far less pronounced: One could notably try to argue that dailies at both ends of the ideological spectrum focus more on democracy and transparency than those located towards the center; this is at least visible in Germany and France. Yet even for papers on the left and right, the frequency levels in France and Ireland remain below even the lowest level observed in Germany (SZ). Similarly, as concerns F2.a, F2.c and F2.d, hardly any pattern in terms of ideology can be identified at all (see table 4).

Furthermore, the national divisions with respect to democracy and transparency are also mirrored in the case of a master frame that may, to some, appear related: the distribution of power between the European institutions, including the competences of the European Parliament (F3). Although even in German newspapers, the frame is by no means highly prominent, with frequencies ranging from seven to eight percent, the levels in all three German newspapers are still substantially higher than in

all French newspapers, where the frame is hardly traceable at all (table 3). The latter is equally true for Irish newspapers – with one exception, the Irish Times.

(2) A second important master frame to consider in detail is the ‘EU party and policy interests’ frame (F4). As shortly mentioned, one difference between the news reports in Germany, France and Ireland is that this frame tends to be on a similar footing to the ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ frame (F2) in France and Ireland, whereas the same cannot be said for reporting in Germany.

If one considers the frequencies of F4 in isolation, however, without drawing comparisons to F2, national differences do not appear very clear cut: Generally, the frame tends to feature somewhat more frequently in reports in France and Ireland, but at least Die Welt and Süddeutsche Zeitung reach similar levels as newspapers abroad.

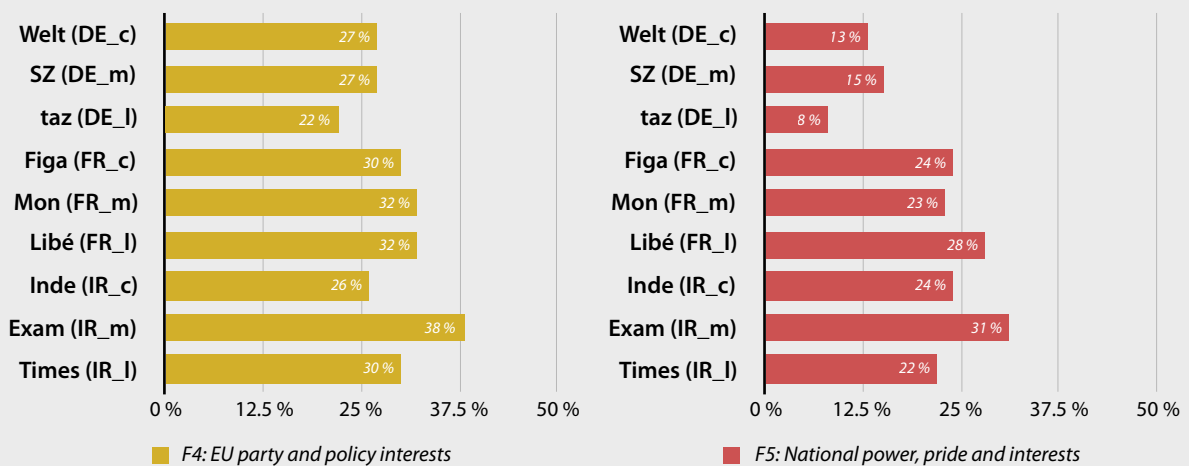


Figure 4: **Shares of frames F4 and F5 in the media coverage**
source: own illustration; data from Annex II (values as rounded in table 3)

Even if one opens the box, the observation of broad similarities remains intact. In seven out of nine newspapers, the predominant subframe is ‘conflicting party interests’ (F4.a), while the ‘EU policy and reform’ subframe (F4.b) is attributed a secondary role (see full table in Annex II). The common focus across borders hence lies on which party grouping has the power and gets to install his or her candidate, rather than on which specific policy agenda will shape the future of the EU. In French newspapers, this prioritization is particularly visible, as illustrated in:

- “C’était sans compter avec la rébellion au sein du Parti populaire européen (PPE), la famille conservatrice. [...] La présidence du Commission est entre les mains de la droite depuis quinze ans” (*Le Monde*, 07/02, ‘A Bruxelles, des nominations au forceps’).

In the Irish press, on the other hand, there is also a marked framing in terms of ‘EU policy and reform’ (F4.b). F4.b is even more frequent than F4.a in one of the Irish newspapers, the Irish Independent. Going into the details, this can be attributed, to some extent, to a preoccupation with Brexit. In all Irish newspapers, Brexit can be identified as an issue that is singled out in the coverage of the nomination process, reflecting the particular situation of Ireland in the Brexit dispute:

- “We can hope her appointment means no change on Brexit” (*Irish Independent*, 07/03, ‘This share-out - especially Ms Lagarde’s appointment - looks like Irish good news’).
- “However, there is no reason to fear that any potential candidate for any of the positions would diverge from the strong EU consensus on Brexit” (*The Irish Times*, 06/20, ‘EU can’t afford ‘jobs for boys’ carve-up of posts’).
- “There is continued speculation as to who will be chosen by member state leaders as the new head of the commission, especially with Brexit still firmly on the agenda” (*Irish Examiner*, 06/27, ‘Varadkar ‘flattered’ to be linked to top EU role’).

In France and Germany, Brexit is rarely ever addressed. Rather, the newspapers in these countries tend to suggest that policy and policy stances, in general, matter in the nomination process, or they discuss different issues in the same breath:

- “Auch in umwelt- und gesellschaftspolitischen Fragen ist sie vielen zu liberal. Und unter Linken gilt die Dänin als zu wirtschaftsfreundlich” (*SZ*, 06/17, ‘Die traut sich was’).
- “Hier matin, il affirmait : [...] « Nous voulons une personnalité qui mette au centre la croissance, les citoyens, les personnes » (*Le Figaro*, 07/03, ‘Quand l’Italie menaçait de voter avec les pays de l’Est contre l’axe Paris-Berlin’).

Without doubt, there are hence certain national specificities in terms of F4. Yet, first, particularly in comparison to ‘EU-wide rules, norms and interests’ (F2), these differences overall seem subtle, and, second, there are also hints at some differences based on ideology (e.g., the highest shares of F4 are observed for two centrist/moderate newspapers; see Annex II), somewhat counterbalancing the national divisions.

(3) As for the ‘national pride, power and interests’ frame (F5), the fault lines reappear with full force. Only considering the frequency of the master frame, there is a clear difference between reporting in German dailies, on the one hand, and the coverage in France and Ireland, on the other hand: Although national power and interests are

also sometimes discussed in Germany, every single French and Irish newspaper directs substantially more attention to such questions. Once again, ideological differences do not measure up to the differences between countries: Note, for example, that the three newspapers where this frame is most frequent are centrist (Irish Examiner), conservative (Le Figaro) and left-liberal-leaning (Libération).

Taking a closer look, further national peculiarities appear. First, while the newspapers in Germany and Ireland tend to focus most on the power and interests of their respective country of publication, French newspapers do not focus on France. Instead, by far the greatest attention is placed on Germany and the role of Angela Merkel — and, remarkably, even more so than in German newspapers, for example:

- *“Si la présidence de la Commission risque encore de lui échapper, l’Allemagne peut toujours s’appuyer sur ses représentants, qu’elle a placés dans la machine européenne” (Libération, 06/19, ‘Au sein de l’Union européenne, l’appétit sans fin de Berlin’).*
- *“Pour Angela Merkel qui joue, au-delà de l’influence de l’Allemagne, son propre héritage politique, la partie sera serrée” (Le Figaro, 06/20, ‘Merkel gênée à Bruxelles par la fragilité de la GroKo’).*

Furthermore, in France, even slightly more than the power and interests of France alone, the Franco-German duo is brought up — a focus that is much less prevalent in news reports in Germany and Ireland (see full table in Annex II):

- *“Il montre aussi un rééquilibrage en faveur des grands pays, surtout du couple franco-allemand, et confirme que l’Europe reste encore une affaire carolingienne” (Libération, 07/02, ‘Union européenne: l’heure des femmes’).*

In the Irish press, the picture is different. While there too, German interests and power represents a prominent subframe in two of the three newspapers (Irish Examiner, The Irish Times), Irish newspapers are mostly marked by a common focus on Ireland (F5.c). This is the most frequent subframe in two newspapers and comes in second in the Irish Examiner. The national focus of the coverage also tends to be stated more openly than in the news reports in the other countries:

- *“With important high-level European Union appointments due to be discussed again at the EU summit starting today, it is important to consider where Ireland’s interests lie” (The Irish Times, 06/20, ‘EU can’t afford ‘jobs for boys’ carve-up of posts’).*
- *“That would be good news for Ireland, but his problem is that he is also linked to the EPP group (Irish Independent, 06/21, ‘Hogan’s EU post on hold until the top roles sorted’).*

Furthermore, even where the focus lies on EU politics and policy, issues tend to be linked back to the national interest:

— *“The Bavarian leader of EPP in parliament, he is affable and said to be a friend to Ireland in engagement over Brexit” (The Irish Times, 06/25, ‘EU’s top jobs: How the main contenders tick the boxes’).*

With respect to Europeanization, however, the most important finding arguably remains that the focus on ‘national pride, power and interests’ (F5), in general, is far more prevalent in Ireland and France than in Germany.

Due to space limitations, it is not possible to go into details as far as the other, overall less frequent master frames (F1, F3, F6) are concerned. To at least mention some key takeaways, ideological divisions are again less pronounced than national differences. Notably, questions of ‘EU resilience and unity’ (F1) are addressed slightly more often in the French and Irish press, with the exception of the Irish Examiner. The pattern is reversed for the ‘inter-institutional power’ frame (F3), as stated above. Finally, there is no clear pattern for ‘domestic and inter-state consequences’ (F6). The frame appears most frequently in two Irish newspapers. At the same time, it is striking that consequences for German politics and, more specifically, for the German governing coalition are addressed cross-nationally, in eight out of the nine newspapers, pointing towards shared points of reference.

Chapter 5.5 will provide a more detailed interpretation of these results. Beforehand, however, the key findings related to the discourse participants are presented.

5.4 Europeanization in terms of discourse participants

Discourse participants represent the second dimension of Europeanization addressed in the present study. As explained, the main quantitative indicator in this respect is the “ratio of national and European discourse participants” (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 809), taking into account extended direct and indirect quotations.

In a first step, one may consider the ratio for all of the newspaper articles published in Germany, France and Ireland combined. Adopting such a broad perspective, national speakers (S1) account for 42 percent of the quotations, EU-level speakers (S2)

account for 31 percent, and quotations of speakers from other EU countries (S3) represent 24 percent of the statements. In total, European speakers therefore account for around 55 percent of all quotations and, hence, for a larger share than national speakers. Based on the benchmark set out earlier, this points to high Europeanization. The remaining three percent of quotations fall into the ‘other/undefined’ category (S4); whether they are included or not, the general finding remains the same.

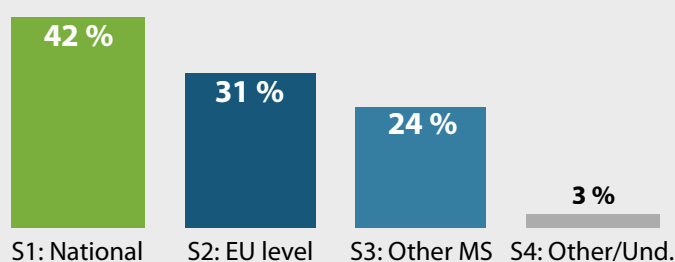


Figure 5: **Discourse participants in the media coverage overall**

source: own illustration; data from Annex II (rounded values, calculation based on all extended quotations in all newspapers)

Clearly, these percentages should not be taken at face value, though. First, given the greater number of articles published in German newspapers, the values may be far more representative of the coverage in Germany than of reporting in Irish or French dailies. Second, a more detailed analysis is necessary to take into account the limits set to the coding of speakers, notably the rule that published interviews and guest articles are coded only once. In a second step, it is therefore sensible to take a closer look at the discourse participants in German, French and Irish media individually.

(1) To begin with Germany, the picture is somewhat more ambiguous than could have been assumed based on the above. Only in *Die Welt*, European speakers (63 percent) clearly outnumber national speakers (37 percent). In *SZ* and *taz*, by contrast, the percentages are very close and even slightly lean towards national speakers. Still, given that quotations of European speakers appear almost as frequently, the level of Europeanization can be considered high in all three German newspapers.

This can be ascribed to different factors: In *Die Welt* and *taz*, the share of European speakers can be attributed almost entirely to EU-level speakers and, more specifically, to members of the European Parliament like Jens Geier (S&D), Reinhard Bütikofer

(Greens/EFA) and Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA), all of whom were highly critical of the nomination process and outcome:

– “Seine Gruppe werde der Ernennung ‘auf keinen Fall’ zustimmen. ‘Sie ist keine Spitzenkandidatin und steht in keinem Verhältnis zum Europäischen Parlament [...]’” (Die Welt, 07/04, ‘Die Sensationskandidatin’).

In taz, Bütikofer even features in a lengthy interview (07/06, ‘Ich bin Nein-Sager’), and in Die Welt, Manfred Weber, MEP and candidate for the Commission presidency, gets the opportunity to present his ideas in a guest article (06/26, ‘Keine Hinterzimmer mehr’). In a way, the EU level is hence even more visible in the reporting of Die Welt and taz than indicated by the frequency table. On the other hand, however, one is quick to observe that all of these politicians are German in nationality. Given their professional functions and following prior literature, they are nonetheless considered, first and foremost, EU-level speakers (see Jentges, Trenz & Vettters, 2007, p. 715).

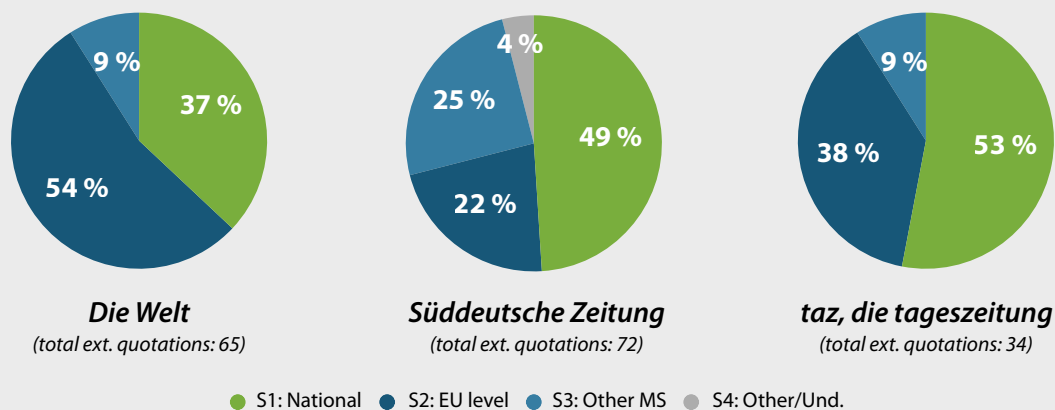


Figure 6: Discourse participants in German newspapers

source: own illustration; data from Annex II (rounded values)

As for the Süddeutsche Zeitung, on the other hand, European speakers are split quite evenly between the EU level and other member states. In contrast to taz and Die Welt, heads of state and government of other member states are substantially more prominent in the coverage, in particular French President Emmanuel Macron. In addition, news reports of foreign journalists are discussed in SZ’s own coverage (07/06, ‘Neugier auf die Kandidatin’). Members of the EP appear less frequently.

(2) In French news coverage, at first glance, the highest levels of Europeanization can be observed. In both Le Figaro and Libération, European speakers account for

more than 70 percent of extended quotations. National speakers constitute less than 20 percent, and the remaining quotations fall into the ‘undefined/other’ category.

The high percentage in *Libération* needs to be considered with some care, though: It is largely due to a single extended press review (07/02, ‘UE: la stratégie Merkel critiquée... mais gagnante’). Also, EU-level speakers are hardly represented in the coverage of *Libération* at all, and the one guest article published by the newspaper was written by a member of the French national government, namely, Amélie de Montchalin, secretary of state for European affairs (06/19, ‘On ne va pas nommer le candidat du PPE à la tête de la Commission comme s’il ne s’était rien passé’).

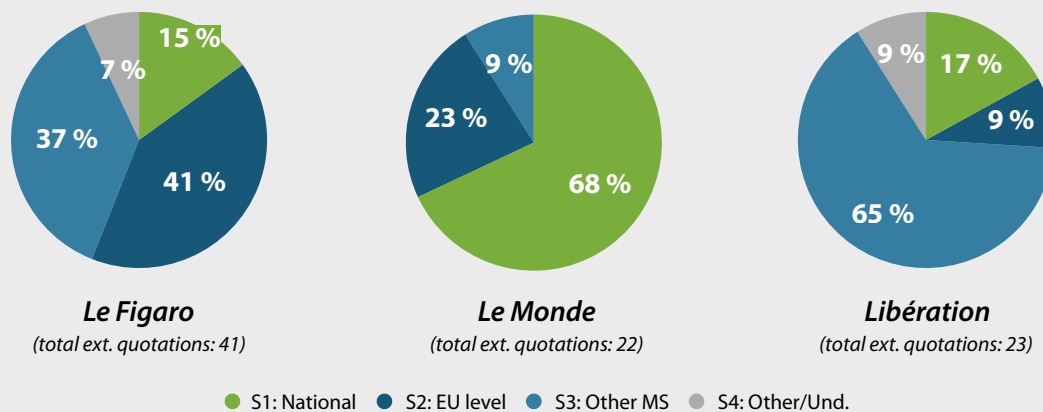


Figure 7: **Discourse participants in French newspapers**

source: own illustration; data from Annex II (rounded values)

In *Le Figaro*, the ratio between speakers from the EU level and other member states is more balanced. Compared to news reporting in Germany, it is particularly noticeable that no priority is given to MEPs of French nationality; instead, German MEPs, such as Daniel Caspary (EPP), also feature in the articles, with the latter likely linked to the fact that Caspary strongly criticized French President Macron in the process:

— “« Il n’y a plus d’axe franco-allemand », a déploré lundi Daniel Caspary, le chef des députés CDU/CSU au Parlement européen, en accusant le chef de l’État de vouloir « tout faire pour détruire la démocratie européenne »” (*Le Figaro*, 06/26, ‘Bruxelles : la CDU/CSU hausse le ton contre Macron’).

As far as speakers from other member states (S3) are concerned, German nationals are again prominent in the news coverage. Particular attention is given to statements of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Yet also Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer,

Martin Schulz and Markus Söder are quoted (see, e.g., *Le Figaro*, 07/03, ‘Ursula von der Leyen, une francophile au profil atypique’).

Surprisingly, the picture is a very different one for *Le Monde*. Here, quotations of national speakers by far outnumber European speakers (68 percent to 32 percent). In particular, French President Macron is quoted extensively. Quotations of Amélie de Montchalin as well as soundbites attributed to “l’Elysée” or “la délégation française” contribute to the high share of national speakers (see, e.g., *Le Monde*, 07/02, ‘A Bruxelles, des nominations au forceps’; 07/04, ‘Le duo Paris-Berlin à la manœuvre malgré tout’). Comparably little attention is given to the EU level or other EU countries.

(3) In the Irish press, finally, Europeanization in terms of discourse participants is overall lowest: In two out of the three newspapers, national speakers account for a clear majority of quotations, that is, 60 percent (*Irish Independent*) and 75 percent (*Irish Examiner*) respectively. These shares can be attributed almost entirely to quotations of Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, indicating a clear focus on the national executive. More generally, it should be noted that in both newspapers, few extended quotations were included in the media coverage at all (10 and 12).

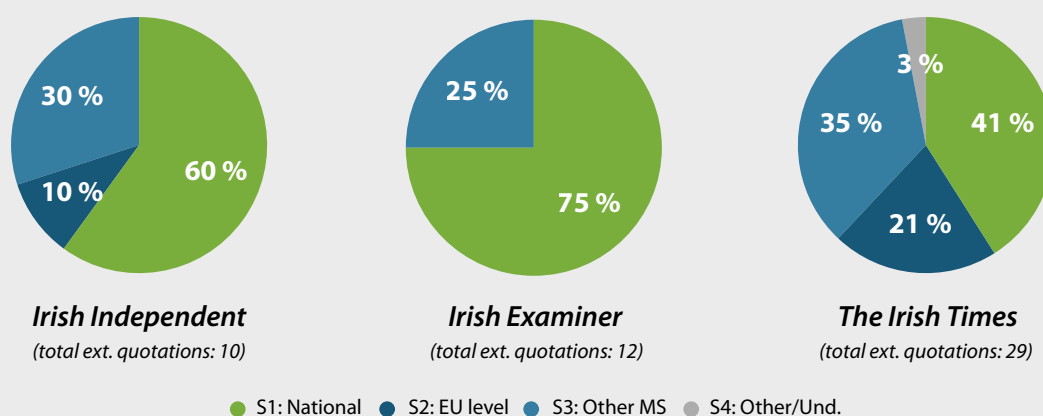


Figure 8: Discourse participants in Irish newspapers
source: own illustration; data from Annex II (values rounded to total 100)

The *Irish Times* represents an interesting exception. Here, national speakers account for only 41 percent of all extended quotations, whereas European speakers account for a majority of 56 percent of quotations. Based on the benchmark set out earlier, the debate is hence clearly Europeanized and even more so than in *SZ* and *taz*. This

conclusion may be upheld even though the one guest article included was written by a national speaker, namely by Bobby McDonagh, former Irish ambassador to the EU and the UK (06/20, 'EU can't afford 'jobs for boys' carve-up of posts').

As far as the ratio between speakers from the EU level and other member states is concerned, however, the Irish Times is again very much in line with the other two Irish newspapers. Soundbites not attributed to EU-level actors clearly dominate in each of the Irish dailies. One observation appears particularly pertinent: No member of the European Parliament at all appears with an extended quotation in any of the Irish papers, whereas the same cannot be said for any newspaper outside of Ireland.

Concerning the speakers from other member states (S3), the focus is most frequently on foreign heads of state and government, at least as far as Irish Examiner and the Irish Times are concerned. Similarly to Le Figaro and Le Monde, quotations of German Chancellor Merkel, in particular, are included.

To summarize, the level of Europeanization in terms of speakers overall appears highest in Germany and France. In Ireland, on the other hand, only one newspaper featured a substantial amount of "European" quotations. Yet given that in each country, there is also one paper that does not correspond to the broader trend, some caution in drawing such general conclusions remains warranted.

5.5 Interpretation of the results

The interpretation of the present paper's findings is not straightforward. On the one hand, one may argue that the results indeed point towards a Europeanized debate: The master frames are broadly shared by the newspapers in the different countries, and there are even similarities in prioritizing 'EU-wide rules, norms and interests' (F2) and 'EU party and policy interests' (F4). Furthermore, European speakers are clearly visible in the media coverage, and if one considers all of the articles combined, European speakers account for a majority of extended quotations.

In the author's view, however, such a condensation of the findings is too rough, especially as far as the frames are concerned: Without doubt, there are broad similari-

ties. Nonetheless, divisions appear already at a relatively general level, and, importantly, most of these divisions indeed follow “distinctly national patterns” (Van de Steeg, 2006, p. 612), which precisely should not be the case in a Europeanized debate. For example, when German newspapers from left to right are marked by frames related to democratic values, whereas French and Irish newspapers rarely address such questions, all the while giving much more attention than German newspapers to questions of national power and interests, a very different image of the nomination and the EU is presented. Given such different frames of reference, conversations across borders can then be expected to be hampered.

Certainly, additional research is needed in this regard, among others to test whether Germany constitutes an isolated case. Indeed, the French and Irish press tend to have more in common even though, at a more detailed level, national peculiarities can also be identified. At least as far Germany is concerned, however, one can clearly trace a nationally specific debate in terms of frames — and remarkably, the segmentation broadly follows a pattern already identified in the study of Trenz (2000):

In his analysis of the corruption scandal in the Santer Commission, he similarly found that German newspapers highlighted universal principles, like democracy, whereas the Spanish media focused on traditional conflicts between countries (Trenz, 2000, p. 353). Trenz concludes that, even where EU-wide norms were addressed, these only reached a national, German audience (ibid.). Albeit in a much attenuated manner, the findings of the present paper point in a similar direction.

The reasons underlying the divisions can of course not be stated with certainty. At any rate, as far as this study is concerned, the differences between the countries in terms of frames cannot be attributed to an exclusion of European speakers:

Both French and German newspapers, with the exception of *Le Monde*, are marked by a high share of European speakers; still, the described differences in the framing are observed. This substantiates previous findings that both dimensions of Europeanization do not necessarily coincide (Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2017, p. 811): The quoting of European speakers alone does not automatically imply an EU-wide

debate in terms of frames.¹³ Instead, particular national circumstances appear to remain of key importance even when EU-wide speakers are included and a supposedly “European” issue or event is discussed. Both issue-specific and broader cultural or historical particularities may have impeded a more Europeanized debate:

Among others, the political elite in Germany arguably placed more emphasis on the democratic value of the *Spitzenkandidaten* principle during the nomination process than politicians in France or Ireland. For the CSU, “democracy” came as a useful argument to justify why Manfred Weber should be nominated, and the SPD eventually presented the “disregard for EU democracy” as a reason to call for the end of the coalition (Bubrowski & Lohse, 2019). The frame was hence salient in the domestic *political* arena, so the national *media* may have given it more attention as well.

Second, given the different political systems, linking the head of the executive to the outcome of elections may quite naturally be of a different importance for democracy from a “French” perspective — even if this does not quite explain a similar rarity of the frame in Ireland. Third, for cultural and historical reasons, it may be more common for journalists in France and Ireland to openly discuss national power and national interests than in Germany, as suggested by direct phrases like: “That would be good news for Ireland” (Irish Independent, 06/21, ‘Hogan’s EU post [...]’).

Such considerations, combined with the intergovernmental nature of the nomination process (see ch. 3.2), could explain some of the differences in framing. Obviously, however, they can only remain speculations at this point and require further research. The final chapter now turns to a summary of the paper’s main findings.

6 Conclusion

This thesis addressed the following research question: “To what extent was the media coverage of the 2019 Commission president nomination Europeanized in terms

¹³ Indeed, journalists may still make different choices as to who *specifically* to quote, which soundbites to include and how many quotations to incorporate at all. In the case at hand, for example, the fact that Die Welt and taz more often than others quoted MEPs criticizing the undemocratic nature of the nomination can partly account for the particular prominence of the democracy frame in these papers.

of framing and discourse participants in German, French and Irish quality newspapers? And what does this imply for the emergence of a European Public Sphere?" The analysis yielded results that need to be condensed with care.

On a general level, it was possible to identify both shared frames and a substantial proportion of European speakers in the media coverage. Taking a closer look, however, marked national differences were found in the use of frames, setting in particular German newspapers apart from news reporting in France and Ireland. Remarkably, it was not least those points of reference which may have been expected to lead to similarities in reporting, such as concern for the democratic quality of the process, that marked national divisions. As far as speakers are concerned, furthermore, the coverage in the Irish press was found to be, in fact, largely nationally confined.

In all, it therefore appears most appropriate to note a moderate level of Europeanization. A truly shared debate could not be observed even though the nomination of the Commission president concerned the EU as a whole and required a collective decision. Considering, in addition, that quality newspapers are most likely candidates for Europeanization, the findings then suggest remaining wary of claims that a common European Public Sphere has already emerged in EU-Europe.

Clearly, the limitations of the thesis need to be taken into account. The study analyzed only a single case and was limited to three countries and a small selection of newspapers. Although these decisions were justified on theoretical grounds, they nonetheless reduce the generalizability of the results. In addition, the qualitative and partly inductive nature of the analysis undeniably leaves room for subjectivity even though attempts were made to at least attenuate such concerns.

Acknowledging these limitations, the study will hopefully still prove useful for research: The analysis of the coverage of the nomination process allowed presenting findings in a recent and novel case that, to some degree, represented a test case for Europeanization. Beyond that, the study identified and described a new set of EU-specific frames that could be examined in further cases. Indeed, the master frames are not necessarily limited to the news coverage of the 2019 nomination process or

other personnel decisions in the EU. The comprehensive codebook with precise coding rules and anchor examples could therefore come in handy in the future.

To carry the present study forward, it would be interesting, on the one hand, to conduct a comparison over time. Notably, it appears valuable to analyze whether, at the moment of Ursula von der Leyen's election in the European Parliament, the debate was more similar in the countries of the EU, suggesting a convergence over time. Similarly, one could trace the levels of Europeanized reporting during the nomination of Jean-Claude Juncker in 2014 and compare them to the present study. This could also help to better identify the reasons underlying the national divisions.

On the other hand, it would be useful to extend the present analysis to a greater set of countries and newspapers. Taking note of the groundwork laid by this paper, a more quantitative analysis with more sophisticated statistical measures could serve to enlarge the thesis' scope and value in the future.

7 References

- ACPM (2020). *Classement Diffusion Presse Quotidienne Nationale 2019-2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.acpm.fr/Les-chiffres/Diffusion-presse/Presse-Payante/Presse-Quotidienne-Nationale> [14.01.2021].
- Adam, S. (2015). European Public Spheres. In G. Mazzoleni (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication* [published online] (pp. 1-9). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc067> [14.01.2021].
- Barth, C., & Bijsmans, P. (2018). The Maastricht Treaty and public debates about European integration: the emergence of a European public sphere? *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 26(2), 215-231.
- Bijsmans, P. (2020). The Eurozone crisis and Euroscepticism in the European Press. *Journal of European Integration* [online first]. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07036337.2020.1740698> [14.01.2021].
- Bijsmans, P., Galpin, C., & Leruth, B. (2018). 'Brexit' in transnational perspective: an analysis of newspapers in France, Germany and the Netherlands. *Comparative European Politics*, 16(5), 825-842.
- Brüggemann, M., & Kleinen-von Königslöw, K. (2009). 'Let's Talk about Europe': Why Europeanization Shows a Different Face in Different Newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*, 24(1), 27-48.
- Bubrowski, H., & Lohse, E. (2019). *Streit um von der Leyen: Und der Verlierer ist...* Retrieved from <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/streit-um-von-der-leyen-spd-in-schwieriger-lage-gegen-cdu-16270212.html> [14.01.2021].

- Carreño, B., Psalidakis, D., & Guarascio, F. (2019). *Emergency EU summit on top jobs runs into trouble again*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-eu-summit/emergency-eu-summit-on-top-jobs-runs-into-trouble-again-idUKKCN1TV0DS> [14.01.2021].
- Christiansen, T., & Shackleton, M. (2019). Spitzenkandidaten 2.0: From experiment to routine in European elections? In L. De Sio, M. Franklin, & L. Russo (Eds.), *The European Parliament Elections of 2019* (pp. 43-55). Rome: Luiss University Press.
- Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union [TEU]*, 26/10/2012, OJ C 326.
- Cremonesi, C., Seddone, A., Bobba, G., & Mancosu, M. (2019). The European Union in the media coverage of the 2019 European election campaign in Italy: towards the Europeanization of the Italian public sphere. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 24(5), 668-690.
- Della Porta, D., & Caiani, M. (2006). The Europeanization of Public Discourse in Italy. *European Union Politics*, 7(1), 77-112.
- De Bruycker, I. (2017). Politicization and the public interest: When do the elites in Brussels address public interests in EU policy debates? *European Union Politics*, 18(4), 603-619.
- De la Porte, C., & Van Dalen, A. (2016). Europeanization of national public spheres? Cross-national media debates about the European Union's socio-economic strategy. *European Politics & Society*, 17(3), 279-293.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2001). 'Europe' in the News: A Cross-National Comparative Study of the News Coverage of Key EU Events. *European Union Politics*, 2(3), 283-307.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*, 13(1), 51-62.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2007). The EU as a public sphere. *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2(3), 1-22.
- De Vries, C. E., & Hoffmann, I. (2019). Great expectations: The New European Commission, its Ambition and European Public Opinion. *eupinions 2019/2*, 1-39.
- De Wilde, P. (2019). Media logic and grand theories of European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(8), 1193-1212.
- Díez Medrano, J., & Gray, E. (2010). Framing the European Union in National Public Spheres. In R. Koopmans & P. Statham (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention* (pp. 195-219). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Downey, J., & Koenig, T. (2006). Is There a European Public Sphere? The Berlusconi-Schulz Case. *European Journal of Communication*, 21(2), 165-187.
- Drewski, D. (2015). Has there been a European Public Discourse on the Euro Crisis? A Content Analysis of German and Spanish Newspaper Editorials. *Javnost - The Public*, 22(3), 264-282.
- Dutceac Segesten, A., & Bossetta, M. (2019). Can Euroscepticism Contribute to a European Public Sphere? The Europeanization of Media Discourses on Euroscepticism Across Six Countries. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57(5), 1051-1070.
- Eder, K., & Kantner, C. (2000). Transnationale Resonanzstrukturen in Europa: Eine Kritik der Rede vom Öffentlichkeitsdefizit. In M. Bach (Ed.), *Die Europäisierung na-*

- tionaler Gesellschaften* (Sonderheft 40 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie) (pp. 306-331). Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Elliott, A. (2019). Ireland's evolving migration policies: Building alliances and a liberal European identity through the EU migration policy crisis. *Irish Political Studies*, 34(4), 551-574.
- Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014). Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness. *SAGE Open*, 4(1), 1-10.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
- European Commission (2019). *Standard Eurobarometer 92. Public opinion in the European Union: Report*. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinionmobile/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/surveyKy/2255> [14.01.2021].
- Eurotopics (2020). *Medienlandschaften*. Retrieved from <https://www.eurotopics.net/de/142186/medien?search=&country=0&language=0&art=0&circulation=0&typ=2#results> [14.01.2021].
- Früh, W. (2011). *Inhaltsanalyse: Theorie und Praxis* (7th ed.). Konstanz: UVK.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). The changing culture of affirmative action. In R. G. Braungart, & M. M. Braungart (Eds.), *Research in Political Sociology* (Vol. 3, pp. 137-177). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1-37.
- Gattermann, K. (2012). *News about the European Parliament: Patterns and Drivers of Broadsheet Coverage* (Doctoral thesis, LSE). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/9302986.pdf> [14.01.2021].
- Gattermann, K. (2013). News about the European Parliament: Patterns and external drivers of broadsheet coverage. *European Union Politics*, 14(3), 436-457.
- Gattermann, K. (2019). The "Spitzenkandidaten" in the media: A comparative perspective. In N. Bolin, K. Falasca, M. Grusell, & L. Nord (Eds.), *Euroreflections: Leading academics on the European elections 2019* (p. 84). Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet.
- Gerhards, J. (2000). Europäisierung von Ökonomie und Politik und die Trägheit der Entstehung einer Europäischen Öffentlichkeit. In M. Bach (Ed.), *Die Europäisierung nationaler Gesellschaften* (Sonderheft 40 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie) (pp. 277-305). Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Grimm, D. (1995). Does Europe Need a Constitution? *European Law Journal*, 1(3), 282-302.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hix, S., & Wilks-Heeg, S. (2014). *Media coverage in Germany and the UK shows why both countries have radically different views over who should be the next Commission President*. Retrieved from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2014/06/09/media-coverage-in-germany-and-the-uk-shows-why-both-countries-have-radically-different-views-over-who-should-be-the-next-commission-president/> [14.01.2021].

- Hofmann, A. (2019). Europäische Kommission. In W. Weidenfeld & W. Wessels (Eds.), *Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2019* (pp. 109-116). Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Hurrelmann, A., & Wagner, A. (2020). Did the Eurozone crisis undermine the European Union's legitimacy? An analysis of newspaper reporting, 2009–2014. *Comparative European Politics*, 18(5), 707-728.
- iLevel (2019). *Irish Newspaper Circulation July-Dec 2018 Island of Ireland Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.ilevel.ie/print/irish-newspaper-circulation-july-dec-2018-island-of-ireland-report/> [14.01.2021].
- IVW (2020). *Quartalsauflagen*. Retrieved from <http://www.ivw.de/aw/print/qa> [14.01.2021].
- Jentges, E., Trenz, H.-J., & Vettors, R. (2007). Von der politischen zur sozialen Konstitutionalisierung Europas. Verfassungsgebung als Katalysator europäischer Vergesellschaftung? *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 48(4), 705-729.
- Kaiser, J., & Kleinen-von Königslöw, K. (2017). The Framing of the Euro Crisis in German and Spanish Online News Media between 2010 and 2014: Does a Common European Public Discourse Emerge? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55(4), 798-814.
- Kantner, C. (2015). National media as transnational discourse arenas: the case of humanitarian military interventions. In T. Risse (Ed.), *European Public Spheres: Politics is Back* (pp. 84-107). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kleinen-von Königslöw, K. (2012). Europe in Crisis? Testing the stability and explanatory factors of the Europeanization of national public spheres. *International Communication Gazette*, 74(5), 443-463.
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung [KAS] (2016). *KASPress Ireland (18.03.16-24.03.16)*. Retrieved from https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=717b3034-5a87-0e5a-4b77-bf37e59c4903&groupId=276969 [14.01.2021].
- Koopmans, R. (2007). Who inhabits the European public sphere? Winner and losers, supporters and opponents in Europeanised political debates. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(2), 183-210.
- Koopmans, R., & Statham, P. (2010). Theoretical Framework, Research Design, and Methods. In R. Koopmans & P. Statham (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention* (pp. 34-59). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (2nd ed.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Matthes, J., & Kohring, M. (2004). Die empirische Erfassung von Medien-Frames. *M&K*, 52(1), 56-75.
- Matthes, J., & Kohring, M. (2008). The Content Analysis of Media Frames: Toward Improving Reliability and Validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58(2), 258-279.
- Maurer, A. (2019). Europäisches Parlament. In W. Weidenfeld & W. Wessels (Eds.), *Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2019* (pp. 83-92). Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2) [published online]. Retrieved from <http://utsc.utoronto.ca/~kmacd/IDSC10/Readings/text%20analysis/CA.pdf> [14.01.2021].

- Mayring, P. (2015). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken* (12th ed.). Weinheim: Beltz.
- Müller Gómez, J., & Reiners, W. (2019). Rivalität mit System? Zehn Jahre institutioneller Wettbewerb zwischen Europäischem Parlament und Europäischem Rat. *integration*, 42(4), 262-279.
- Müller Gómez, J., & Wessels, W. (2019). Die institutionelle Architektur der Europäischen Union. In W. Weidenfeld & W. Wessels (Eds.), *Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2019* (pp. 71-82). Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Nasshoven, Y. (2019). 'To be or not to be?' Das Spitzenkandidatenprinzip in der Europawahl 2019 und zukünftige Szenarien. *integration*, 42(4), 280-296.
- Pfetsch, B., & Adam, S., & Eschner, B. (2008). The contribution of the press to Europeanization of public debates. *Journalism*, 9(4), 465-492.
- Pfetsch, B., & Heft, A. (2015). Theorizing communication flows within a European public sphere. In T. Risse (Ed.), *European Public Spheres: Politics is Back* (pp. 29-52). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Potthoff, M. (2011). *Medien-Frames und ihre Entstehung*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Risse, T. (2010). *A community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Risse, T. (2015). Introduction. In T. Risse (Ed.), *European Public Spheres: Politics is Back* (pp. 1-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scheufele, B. (2004). Framing-Effekte auf dem Prüfstand: Eine theoretische, methodische und empirische Auseinandersetzung mit der Wirkungsperspektive des Framing-Ansatzes. *M&K*, 52(1), 30-55.
- Schwarzer, D. (2019). Was uns der Streit um die Besetzung der EU-Spitzenposten lehrt. *DGAP-Standpunkt Nr. 19 (Juli 2019)*, 1-3.
- Statham, P. (2010). What Kind of Europeanized Public Politics? In R. Koopmans & P. Statham (Eds.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention* (pp. 277-306). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Statham, P., & Trenz, H.-J. (2015). Understanding the mechanisms of EU politicization: Lessons from the Eurozone crisis. *Comparative European Politics*, 13(3), 287-306.
- Thieme, A., & Wessels, W. (2019). Europäischer Rat. In W. Weidenfeld & W. Wessels (Eds.), *Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2019* (pp. 93-100). Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Touri, M., & Rogers, S. L. (2013). Europe's Communication Deficit and the UK Press: Framing the Greek Financial Crisis. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 21(2), 175-189.
- Trenz, H.-J. (2000). Korruption und politischer Skandal in der EU: Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen politischen Öffentlichkeit. In M. Bach (Ed.), *Die Europäisierung nationaler Gesellschaften* (Sonderheft 40 der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie) (pp. 332-359). Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Trenz, H.-J. (2004). Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*, 19(3), 291-319.

- Trenz, H.-J. (2008). Understanding Media Impact on European Integration: Enhancing or Restricting the Scope of Legitimacy of the EU? *Journal of European Integration*, 30(2), 291-309.
- Tusk, D. (2019). *Remarks by President Donald Tusk after the special meeting of the European Council on 30 June - 2 July 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/07/02/remarks-by-president-donald-tusk-after-the-special-meeting-of-the-european-council-on-30-june-2019/> [14.01.2021].
- Van de Steeg, M. (2006). Does a public sphere exist in the European Union? An analysis of the content of the debate on the Haider case. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(4), 609-634.
- Van Gorp, B. (2010). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. In P. D'Angelo & J. A. Kuypers (Eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (pp. 84-109). New York: Routledge.
- Vliegthart, R., Schuck, A. R. T., Boomgarden, H. G., & De Vreese, C. H. (2008). News Coverage and Support for European Integration, 1990-2006. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 20(4), 415-439.
- Von Sydow, G. (2019). Spitzenkandidaten – make or break? In N. Bolin, K. Falasca, M. Grusell, & L. Nord (Eds.), *Euroflections: Leading academics on the European elections 2019* (p. 19). Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet.
- Weaver, D. H. (2007). Thoughts on agenda setting, framing, and priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 142-146.
- Wessler, H., Peters, B., Brüggemann, M., Kleinen-von Königslöw, K., & Sifft, S. (2008). *Transnationalization of Public Spheres*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

8 Annex

8.1 Annex I: Coding instructions and detailed coding scheme

Coding instructions

- Sample: Newspaper articles are selected based on the keywords and rules listed in chapter 4.1.
- In each article, only those text passages are coded that are linked to the 2019 nomination of the Commission president (incl. less specific references to candidate “selection”/“choice”):
 - Hence, digressions (e.g., into the EU’s economic situation) are not coded if they are not explicitly tied back to the candidate selection (general rule: in the same paragraph).
 - Similarly, passages addressing appointments to the other EU posts are not generally coded, unless (1) they discuss the “top job selection” more broadly, also involving the post of Commission president (e.g., “*The EU jobs package creates a balance in terms of gender.*”) or (2) they help to clarify the framing of an immediately preceding or subsequent passage related to the Commission president (e.g., “*The Social Democrat Timmermans would be nominated as Commission president [...] The Liberals would get the post of Council president [...] The Conservatives [...]*”)
- Coding of frames
 - Coding categories for frames are attributed, at a minimum, to one sentence (ending with a period, a question mark or an exclamation mark) and, at a maximum, to one paragraph. Following this rule, if the same frame (category) applies to two consecutive paragraphs, it is coded twice.
 - No single sentence should be coded with more than one category. In difficult cases, particular attention should be paid to the context in order to determine the predominant frame. Cases that remain ambiguous are left uncoded and flagged in order to be able to consider them more closely in a qualitative examination.
 - In general, the context of sentences should always be taken into account in deciding on the attribution of a coding category. It is always preferable to code multiple sentences as a group rather than a single sentence.
 - *These rules serve to prevent fragmentation and a neglect of the context of single words and phrases which is, however, central to the understanding of frames as broader structures of meaning (Elo et al., 2014, p. 5). In addition, they allow for subsequently comparing the frequency or “weight” of each frame in the newspapers.*
- Coding of discourse participants
 - All indirectly or directly quoted statements are coded that are at least two sentences long (Wessler et al., 2008, p. 47; the end of a sentence is indicated by a period, a question mark or an exclamation mark).
 - *The expectation underlying this formal criterion is that such extended statements offer “speakers the chance to express their opinions and to give at least some kind of basic justification for them” (ibid.); the speaker thus takes an active and visible part in the debate.*
 - The “two-sentences’ criteria [is] employed generously, that is if in one article a statement by somebody [is] quoted several times, but each time only in one sentence, then this was still coded” (Wessler, 2008, p. 217).
 - In contrast to Wessler (2008), in order to be able to compare the frequency of specific speakers in the material, each speaker is not only coded once per article. Instead, each new set of two sentences is coded. Exception: Guest articles, interviews or letters to the editor are coded only once but flagged for a qualitative assessment.

Detailed coding scheme (I): Frames

| Category | Description | Examples | Coding rules |
|---|--|---|---|
| F1: EU resilience and unity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination*1 is linked to broader questions of the EU's viability/existence and unity • e.g., crisis in/of the EU, general capacity to find solutions and reach agreements, questions of the EU's existence, exacerbated divisions in the EU, potential disintegration of the Union | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Gelingt das nicht, steht der EU ein langer [...] Kampf um Spitzenjobs bevor, der die Gemeinschaft zu spalten droht."</i> • <i>"Die EU steht deswegen neben dem Brexit vor einer zweiten Krise."</i> • <i>"Au bord de l'abîme, l'Europe s'est sauvée."</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • necessary generalization beyond the single nomination procedure, not just description of leaders currently being in a deadlock • passage is not coded here if a potential "conflict" between EP and European Council is addressed, only if it is made explicit that this conflict may impede the EU's functioning, e.g., referring to a potential "crisis" |
| F2: EU-wide rules, norms and interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed in terms of specific EU rules, principles, norms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F2.a-F2.e) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F2.a-F2.e) |
| ▶ <i>F2.a: Spitzenkandidaten system as such</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a matter of respecting, supporting or dismissing the lead candidate system/principle • either the system itself is debated or the discussion of candidates is centered on their characteristic as (not) being a Spitzenkandidat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Dahinter steht der erbitterte Streit über die Frage, ob nur Kommissionspräsident werden soll, wer als Spitzenkandidat [...] angetreten ist."</i> • <i>"The Spitzenkandidaten system has [...] collapsed under its own lack of logic."</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an isolated adjectival reference along the lines of "Spitzenkandidat Weber" is not coded here • passage is not coded here if the system is discussed but immediately linked to broader norms of democracy and transparency (code as F2.b) or to the power of the EU's institutions (F3) • proposals for a reform of the system can also fall under F2.a |
| ▶ <i>F2.b: Democracy and transparency</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a broader matter of EU democracy, legitimacy and transparency • e.g., respecting the people's will, making decision making in the EU comprehensible and transparent, increasing voter participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Emmanuel Macron est un révisionniste qui fait tout [...] pour détruire la démocratie européenne."</i> • <i>"Ska Keller kritisiert, dass der Rat die Personalfragen in Hinterräumen ausgehandelt hat."</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see coding rules for F2.a: if the lead candidate principle is linked to broader values of democracy or transparency, code here; also applies where proposals for reforming the system are discussed in terms of improving democracy/transparency in the EU) |
| ▶ <i>F2.c: Balance and diversity</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed with a view to balancing different concerns and interests and to selecting nominees that represent the diversity of the European Union, including in terms of gender (selecting a female candidate) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Mr Varadkar also said the nominations were 'very good gender balance.'"</i> • <i>"Yesterday, however, the exhausted leaders agreed a package of names that balanced party, gender and geography."</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passage coded here if "balance" is addressed explicitly or if a range of interests/concerns are addressed in the same breath that had to be reconciled (e.g., geography, gender) • passage may also relate to the "top jobs package" as a whole • also code here if (female) gender is highlighted |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| ▶ <i>F2.d: Candidate qualification and standing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed with a view to candidates' qualification, skills and professional experience as well as to their standing, reputation/public popularity (incl. domestically, based on prior posts held) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Leaders have also been inclined to add the requirement of executive experience." • "Von der Leyen stehe dafür, 'dass Leute, die Fehler machen, keine Verantwortung tragen müssen.'" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • either relevance of experience/skills/standing in general is addressed or candidates are evaluated based on such criteria • evaluations of candidates' prior work life are coded where general judgements are implied (e.g., "not a good leader") or where linked back to job in EU |
| ▶ <i>F2.e: Other EU-wide interests</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination presented in terms of other, allegedly shared EU-wide interests • e.g. EU's image, EU's assertiveness in the world, innovation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dieses Geschachere um Posten schadet Europa, sagte er." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text passage coded here either if a reference to an unspecified "EU interest" or to a specific common concern (not captured by F2.a-e or F1) is made • based on the focus, codings are grouped into subcategories*2 |
| F3: Inter-institutional power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed in terms of the distribution of power btw. EU institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F3.a-F3.c) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see above F2.a: if lead candidate system is discussed with broader link to power between institutions, code here as F.3a/b/c) |
| ▶ <i>F3.a: Power of the EP</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on the power/competences of the European Parliament and MEPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Das EU-Parlament würde [...] auf Dauer seine eigene Herabstufung mitbeschließen." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passage not coded here if the EP's power is discussed in relation to the quality of democracy in the EU (code as F2.b) |
| ▶ <i>F3.b: Power of the European Council</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on the power/prerogatives of the European Council and heads of state/gov. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Jetzt wollen die Staats- und Regierungschefs ihre Übermacht [...] zurück." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description and general rules for F3) |
| ▶ <i>F3.c: General/EP vs. European Council</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a joint focus on the EP and the European Council or with another focus (≠3.a-b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Wird es das [EP] tatsächlich wagen, einen Machtkampf [...] aufzunehmen?" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of an "inter-institutional conflict" is not sufficient; necessary struggle for power/prerogatives/competences |
| F4: EU party and policy interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of which party is in power in the EU and of which policies are pursued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F4.a-F4.b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F4.a-F4.b) |
| ▶ <i>F4.a: Conflicting party interests</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed in terms of which party, political group or broad ideology (such as "the Conservatives") prevails in the EU and finds itself represented in the candidate nomination • party/ideology division presented as the main line of conflict in the process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mr Varadkar's main preoccupation [...] had been to ensure the EPP retained its control of the top commission job." • "Elle appartient à la famille libérale-centriste, ce qui permet de rompre avec le duo-pole conservateurs-socialistes." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • either the issue of particular parties' power/representation in the EU is addressed directly or the discussion of candidates is centered on party affiliation • an isolated adjectival reference, such as "EPP candidate Weber," is not coded; instead, a pattern or juxtaposition centered on party affiliation (e.g., "EPP leaders oppose the S&D candidate") must be identifiable |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>▶ <i>F4.b: EU policy and reform</i></p> <p>(incl. subcategories*² for a more detailed analysis, e.g., <i>Brexit, Economy</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of which political agenda is pursued in the EU, i.e. of which policies or reforms the candidates and other leaders in the EU advocate • suggests that the nomination matters for policies/reforms in the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Ms von der Leyen has previously been supportive of greater defence co-operation in the EU.</i>” • “<i>Auch in umwelt- und gesellschaftspolitischen Fragen ist sie vielen zu liberal.</i>” • “<i>Der Kommissionschef ist allein verantwortlich für alle neuen Gesetzesvorlagen.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passage coded both if the relevance of policy in choosing a candidate, in general, is addressed (see third example) or if the candidates/the process are discussed with reference to specific policies or reforms • if candidates’ policy positions are discussed, they do not have to concern EU-specific policies; they may also be of a more general nature as long as they are linked back to the nomination |
| <p>F5: National power, pride and interests</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as a question of which country or national leader (head of state or government) is predominant in the EU, of which country is represented in the candidate line-up and of which country gets to reap specific “national benefits” from the nomination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: <i>F5.a-F5.f</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passage coded here if power or authority of countries/nat. leaders are addressed directly (see example <i>F5.e</i>), if the discussion of candidates is centered on their nationality (see ex. <i>F5.a</i>) or if the nomination is brought into relation with some alleged “national interest” (see ex. <i>F5.c</i>) • <i>in order to enhance reliability in the coding of F5(a-f), more detailed guidelines were formulated (▶ see note *³ below the table)</i> |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.a Germany/Merkel</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on Germany or German Chancellor A. Merkel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Gewinner und Profiteure: Da ist zunächst einmal Deutschland.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.b France/Macron</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on France or French President E. Macron | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Macron had been determined that at least one job would go to France.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.c Ireland/Varadkar</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on Ireland or Irish Prime Minister L. Varadkar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>The question also arises as to whether specific Irish interests would be best served.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.d Visegrád/Eastern Europe</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on Eastern EU countries/the “V4” (incl. Hungary) and their leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>No politician from the east is among the five nominees.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.e Franco-German duo</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on the Franco-German duo or France and Germany jointly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>The package of top jobs [...] reinforces the Franco-German pre-eminence [...].</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |
| <p>▶ <i>F5.f General/Other</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on another country or a general focus on national power/pride/interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Les postes de direction de l’Union sont entre les mains des six membres fondateurs.</i>” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see category description, general coding rules for <i>F5</i> and note) |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| F6: Domestic and inter-state consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nomination discussed as having consequences/implications beyond the EU level, namely for domestic politics or the broader relationships between European countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see below: F6.a-F6.e) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where consequences for the relationship between countries are discussed, they should not be restricted/linked back to the EU, but be more general • for a closer analysis, codings are further organized into subcategories*2: e.g. German coalition |
| ▶ F6.a German politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on politics in Germany | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Die Nominierung [...] hat neuen Krach in der Koalition ausgelöst.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see general rules above: F6; also see note *4 below the table) |
| ▶ F6.b French politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on politics in France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Das [...] kommt für Macron auch innenpolitisch zu einem günstigen Zeitpunkt.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see general rules above: F6; also see note *4 below the table) |
| ▶ F6.c Irish politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on politics in Ireland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It clarifies the ‘battle lines’ for the next election” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see general rules above: F6; also see note *4 below the table) |
| ▶ F6.d Relationship Germany-France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with a focus on the relationship btw. Germany and France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Il vient compliquer une relation franco-allemande tendue.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see general rules above: F6) |
| ▶ F6.e General/Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... with another focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Orbán ist [...] noch da. Das kann er daheim gut verkaufen.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (see general rules above: F6) |

*1 To be coded with any one of the categories (F1-F6), passages do not by all means have to explicitly mention the “nomination” process or the “nomination” negotiations. Rather, they may also refer less specifically to the “selection” or choice of a Commission president, as this selection centrally involves the candidate’s nomination by the European Council and as all of the articles examined were published during the key phase of the nomination process.

*2 As far as the analysis of F2.e, F4.b and F6.a-c is concerned, the following subcategories were formulated:

- F2.e: common EU interest, EU image, innovation/change in leadership, strength of EU, general/other (e.g., support, credibility)
- F4.b: Brexit, climate change, economy/finance, EU functioning (polity/political system), federalism, migration policy, rule of law/values, security/military, general/other
- F6.a: cabinet posts, coalition CDU-CSU-SPD, Merkel domestic standing/power, relationship CSU-Merkel/role CSU, nomination of German commissioner*4, general/various
- F6.b: Macron domestic standing/power
- F6.c: nomination of Irish commissioner*4, Varadkar domestic standing/power, Varadkar quitting as PM, general/various

*3 The following guidelines were formulated to enhance the reliability and transparency in the coding of category F5.a-f:

- First, corresponding to the coding rules for F4.a, an isolated adjectival reference along the lines of “German candidate Weber” is not coded; instead, a pattern or juxtaposition centered on candidates’ nationality must be identifiable (e.g., “Die Franzosen dürfen Christine Lagarde in die europäischen Institutionen schicken, die Deutschen von der Leyen.”).
- Second, text passages that discuss candidates’ stances on EU policy are, by default, coded as F4.b (and hence not as F5.a-f). This also applies where such policy positions are presented as the

reason why a national leader (or even “country A”) opposes or supports a given candidate. Only where the discussion of policy is entirely subsumed under the consideration of some particularistic “national interest”, the passage is coded as F5.a-f (e.g., “Macron sucht als Präsidenten der EU-Kommission jemanden [...], der unter dem Deckmantel einer europäischen Agenda französische Interessenpolitik betreibt”). More generally, the consideration of a nationally defined/delimited interest is also apparent in formulations such as “The appointments were ‘friends of Ireland’” or “La France pourra compter sur une alliée à Bruxelles [...] Elle connaît bien la France”; such passages are equally coded as F5.a-f.

- Third, where the outcome of the nomination process is described in terms of which country or national leader “won” or “lost” (using terminology of winning, losing and victory), the passage is also coded under F5.a-f.

*4 Where the Commission president selection is described as having consequences/implications for a country’s (e.g., Ireland’s) nomination of its next EU commissioner, the text passage was usually coded as F6(a-e). This is motivated on the grounds that the respective passages rarely considered the EU level, instead presenting the appointment of the next commissioner as a question that concerns the national government, domestic party politics and domestic politicians (e.g., “Mr Varadkar also confirmed the Cabinet will decide who to propose as Ireland’s own commissioner for the new European Commission once the process of appointing a president is complete”; “He said he would wait especially for the deal on who would replace Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker before announcing whether his old party colleague Mr Hogan would get the nod for another five years”). In such cases, F6.c hence appeared to be a more appropriate category than F5, for instance. This applies to both the media coverage in Irish and German media.

Detailed coding scheme (II): Discourse participants

| Category | Description | Examples | Coding rules |
|---|--|---|---|
| S1: National speakers | • extended quotation is attributed to a national speaker, i.e., a person linked mainly to the nat. level (see details below)* | • (see examples below) | • two-sentence criterion applies (for all of the categories) • for a closer analysis, codings are organized into subcategories for each individ. speaker |
| ▶ S1.a National head of state or government | • passage quotes the head of state or government of the country where the newspaper is based | • <i>"Merkel sagte: 'Wenn wir wüssten, was sich morgen ändern soll, [...]"</i> | • subcategories a.o.: DE A. Merkel, FR E. Macron, IR L. Varadkar |
| ▶ S1.b National minister | • passage quotes a minister of the country where the newspaper is based | • <i>"'L'Allemagne n'a pas fait le travail [...]; s'étonnait Amélie de Montchalin."</i> | • subcategories a.o.: FR A. de Montchalin (EU minister) |
| ▶ S1.c National MPs and party leaders | • passage quotes a member of parliament (incl. state parliaments) or a party leader in the country where the newspaper is based | • <i>Fianna Fail leader Michel Martin backed Mr Timmermans, saying: "I find it extraordinary that the Taoiseach is putting EPP [...]"</i> | • (note: quotations of German MP Martin Schulz in German media coded here but marked with an asterisk b/c he was previously a well-known MEP) |
| ▶ S1.d Other national speaker | • passage quotes other national speakers; e.g., "officials", retired national politicians, readers, academics or journalists in the country where the newspaper is based | • <i>"'Un couple déséquilibré [...] explique-t-on à l'Élysée [...]"</i> • <i>"Das Europa der Bürger [...], schimpfte etwa [...] der frühere CSU-Chef Erwin Huber."</i> | • (note: quotations of Daniel Cohn-Bendit in French media coded here but marked with an asterisk b/c he had also been an MEP) |
| S2: EU-level speakers | • extended quotation is attributed to a speaker at EU level, i.e. a person linked mainly to the EU institutions (see detailed definitions below) | • (see examples below) | • for a closer analysis, codings are organized into subcategories for each individ. speaker (nationality and EU party affiliation of speakers is noted) |
| ▶ S2.a European Commission | • passage quotes a member of or candidate for the European Commission (incl. lead candidates, von der Leyen) | • <i>"Weber behauptet zwar, dass ihn das Ergebnis des EU-Gipfels nicht besonders überrascht habe."</i> | • subcategories a.o.: M. Weber (DE, EPP), F. Timmermans (NL, S&D), J.-C. Juncker (LUX, EPP) |
| ▶ S2.b MEPs and party leaders | • passage quotes a member of the European Parliament or a leader of a European party | • <i>"'Il n'y a plus d'axe franco-allemand', a déploré lundi Daniel Caspary."</i> | • subcategories a.o.: DE_EPP D. Caspary, IT_S&D D. Sassoli |
| ▶ S2.c President of the European Council (Tusk) | • passage quotes Donald Tusk, president of the European Council | • <i>"'Tusk stellte aber auch klar: 'Erwarten Sie keinen weißen Rauch.'"</i> | • no subcategories |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ▶ S2.d Other EU-level speaker | • passage quotes other speakers linked to the EU level; e.g. "EU diplomats", "EU insiders" | • <i>"Timmermans est la conséquence [...], réagit une source européenne [...]."</i> | • subcategories a.o.: EU diplomat, EU insider/source |
| S3: Other member states' speakers | • extended quotation is attributed to a speaker who is linked to another EU country (see details in subcategories below) | • (see examples below) | • for a closer analysis, codings are organized into subcategories for each individ. speaker (nationality and EU party affiliation of speakers is noted) |
| ▶ S3.a Foreign head of state or government | • passage quotes the head of state or government of an EU country other than where the newspaper is based | • <i>"Macron kontert umgehend: 'Wir brauchen das beste Team für Europa.'"</i> | • subcategories a.o.: BU_EPP B. Borissow, DE_EPP A. Merkel, LUX_RE X. Bettel |
| ▶ S3.b Foreign minister | • passage quotes a minister of another EU member state than where the newspaper is based | • <i>"The new president of the Commission will have to present plans [...] said Dutch deputy finance minister."</i> | • subcategories a.o.: NL Menno Snel (Deputy finance minister) |
| ▶ S3.c Foreign MPs and party leaders | • passage quotes a member of parliament (incl. state parliaments) or a party leader in another EU country than where the newspaper is based | • <i>"'Je ne suis pas enthousiasmé par M. Macron', a déclaré le président de la CSU Markus Söder."</i> | • (note: quotations of German MP Martin Schulz in foreign media coded here but marked with an asterisk b/c he was previously a well-known MEP) |
| ▶ S3.d Other foreign speakers | • passage quotes other speakers from other member states, e.g., foreign diplomats, advisors, spokespersons, media, academics | • <i>"Eine französische Journalistin will in der Pressekonferenz nach dem EU-Gipfel wissen, ob die Bundeskanzlerin nun ihre Prioritäten geändert habe."</i> | • (note: quotations of Financial Times coded here but marked with an asterisk b/c it has strong global/EU profile) • subcategories a.o.: media/academics (w/ further subcategories for individual speakers) |
| S4: Undefined/ Other | • extended quotation is attributed to a speaker not corresponding to any of the categories above, e.g., due to the vagueness of the description ("a negotiator") | • <i>"'Da werden Wünsche geäußert', sagt einer, der das Verfahren schon ein paarmal erlebt hat."</i> | • for a closer analysis, codings are organized into subcategories for each individ. speaker • subcategories a.o.: "a person with knowledge", US D. Trump |

* The main basis for this coding scheme is the study of Jentges, Trenz and Vettors (2007, p. 715). Note that there is doubtlessly some degree of overlap between the categories. For example, heads of state and government as well national ministers of other member states are considered 'other member states' speakers' (S3) even though they are also members of EU institutions (i.e., of the Council/European Council). The aforementioned study provided guidance in such regards. Particularly controversial codings (e.g., M. Schulz: German MP/former MEP) are flagged.

8.2 Annex II: Shares of frames and speakers in the newspapers

I. Frames

| Frames | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|--|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| F1: EU resilience and unity | 3.9 % | 4.7 % | 2.4 % | 5.8 % | 5.0 % | 5.2 % | 8.2 % | — | 6.2 % |
| F2: EU-wide rules, norms, interests | 40.1 % | 38.7 % | 48.9 % | 28.6 % | 35.7 % | 32.3 % | 26.0 % | 12.5 % | 29.9 % |
| <i>F2.a Spitzenkandidat. system as such</i> | 7.0 % | 11.5 % | 11.2 % | 7.0 % | 5.0 % | 10.4 % | 6.8 % | — | 4.6 % |
| <i>F2.b Democracy and transparency</i> | 14.8 % | 9.1 % | 15.3 % | 4.7 % | 2.0 % | 5.2 % | — | — | 5.2 % |
| <i>F2.c Balance and diversity</i> | 2.1 % | 3.0 % | 6.5 % | 5.8 % | 7.9 % | 4.2 % | 11.0 % | 6.3 % | 8.2 % |
| <i>F2.d Candidate qualif. and standing</i> | 13.0 % | 11.8 % | 12.4 % | 9.9 % | 18.8 % | 9.4 % | 6.8 % | 3.1 % | 9.8 % |
| <i>F2.e Other EU-wide interests</i> | 3.2 % | 3.3 % | 3.5 % | 1.2 % | 2.0 % | 3.1 % | 1.4 % | 3.1 % | 2.1 % |
| F3: Inter-institutional power | 8.1 % | 8.3 % | 7.1 % | 0.6 % | 1.0 % | 1.0 % | 1.4 % | — | 6.1 % |
| <i>F3.a Power of the European Parliament</i> | 4.2 % | 3.6 % | 1.8 % | — | 1.0 % | — | 1.4 % | — | 4.1 % |
| <i>F3.b Power of the European Council</i> | 1.1 % | 1.1 % | 1.8 % | 0.6 % | — | 1.0 % | — | — | 1.5 % |
| <i>F3.c General/EP vs. European Council</i> | 2.8 % | 3.6 % | 3.5 % | — | — | — | — | — | 0.5 % |
| F4: EU party and policy interests | 26.4 % | 26.7 % | 21.8 % | 30.4 % | 32.6 % | 31.3 % | 26.0 % | 37.6 % | 30.4 % |
| <i>F4.a Conflicting party interests</i> | 16.2 % | 16.5 % | 11.8 % | 18.1 % | 25.7 % | 21.9 % | 6.8 % | 18.8 % | 16.0 % |
| <i>F4.b EU Policy and reform</i> | 10.2 % | 10.2 % | 10.0 % | 12.3 % | 6.9 % | 9.4 % | 19.2 % | 18.8 % | 14.4 % |
| F5: Nat. power, pride, interests | 13.4 % | 15.1 % | 7.7 % | 24.5 % | 22.8 % | 28.2 % | 23.4 % | 31.2 % | 21.5 % |
| <i>F5.a Germany/ Merkel</i> | 4.2 % | 7.4 % | 4.1 % | 11.7 % | 7.9 % | 16.7 % | 1.4 % | 15.6 % | 4.6 % |
| <i>F5.b France/ Macron</i> | 2.8 % | 2.5 % | — | 2.9 % | 4.0 % | 2.1 % | — | — | 1.5 % |
| <i>F5.c Ireland/ Varadkar</i> | — | — | — | — | — | — | 19.2 % | 9.4 % | 7.7 % |
| <i>F5.d Visegrád/ Eastern Europe</i> | 2.5 % | 0.5 % | 0.6 % | 1.8 % | 3.0 % | 2.1 % | 1.4 % | 0.0 % | 1.5 % |

| Frames | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>F5.e Franco-German duo</i> | 2.5 % | 2.2 % | 2.4 % | 5.8 % | 6.9 % | 3.1 % | — | 3.1 % | 4.1 % |
| <i>F5.f General/Other</i> | 1.4 % | 2.5 % | 0.6 % | 2.3 % | 1.0 % | 4.2 % | 1.4 % | 3.1 % | 2.1 % |
| F6: Domestic and inter-state conse. | 8.1 % | 6.6 % | 12.4 % | 9.9 % | 3.0 % | 2.1 % | 15.0 % | 18.8 % | 5.6 % |
| <i>F6.a German politics</i> | 7.0 % | 4.4 % | 11.8 % | 7.0 % | 3.0 % | 2.1 % | 2.7 % | — | 1.0 % |
| <i>F6.b French politics</i> | — | 0.8 % | — | 0.6 % | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>F6.c Irish politics</i> | — | — | — | — | — | — | 12.3 % | 18.8 % | 4.1 % |
| <i>F6.d Relationship Germany-France</i> | 0.7 % | 1.4 % | 0.6 % | 2.3 % | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>F6.e General Other</i> | 0.4 % | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 0.5 % |

Percentages may not total 100 due rounding.
Read: 3.9 percent of all passages coded in Die Welt feature the 'EU resilience and unity frame'

II. Discourse participants

| Speakers | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| S1: National speakers | 37.0 % | 48.6 % | 53.0 % | 14.6 % | 68.2 % | 17.3 % | 60.0 % | 75.0 % | 41.3 % |
| <i>S1.a National head of state or government</i> | 12.3 % | 23.6 % | 14.7 % | 4.9 % | 31.8 % | — | 50.0 % | 58.3 % | 17.2 % |
| <i>S1.b National minister</i> | — | — | — | — | 9.1 % | 4.3 % | — | — | — |
| <i>S1.c National MPs and party leaders</i> | 18.5 % | 19.4 % | 11.8 % | 2.4 % | — | — | 10.0 % | — | — |
| <i>S1.d Other national speaker</i> | 6.2 % | 5.6 % | 26.5 % | 7.3 % | 27.3 % | 13.0 % | — | 16.7 % | 24.1 % |
| S2: EU-level speakers | 53.9 % | 22.2 % | 38.2 % | 41.4 % | 22.6 % | 8.7 % | 10.0 % | — | 20.6 % |
| <i>S2.a European Commission</i> | 7.7 % | 8.3 % | 2.9 % | 14.6 % | 4.5 % | — | 10.0 % | — | 10.3 % |
| <i>S2.b MEPs and party leaders</i> | 43.1 % | 6.9 % | 29.4 % | 17.1 % | 13.6 % | 8.7 % | — | — | — |
| <i>S2.c President of European Council (Tusk)</i> | 3.1 % | 5.6 % | 5.9 % | 2.4 % | — | — | — | — | 6.9 % |
| <i>S2.d Other EU-level speaker</i> | — | 1.4 % | — | 7.3 % | 4.5 % | — | — | — | 3.4 % |

| Speakers | DE_c Welt | DE_m SZ | DE_l taz | FR_c Figa | FR_m Mon | FR_l Libé | IR_c Inde | IR_m Exam | IR_l Times |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| S3: Other member states' speakers | 9.2 % | 25.0 % | 8.8 % | 36.7 % | 9.1 % | 65.2 % | 30.0 % | 25.0 % | 34.4 % |
| <i>S3.a Foreign head of state or government</i> | 6.2 % | 12.5 % | 5.9 % | 17.1 % | — | 8.7 % | — | 25.0 % | 31.0 % |
| <i>S3.b Foreign minister</i> | 1.5 % | — | — | — | — | — | 10.0 % | — | — |
| <i>S3.c Foreign MPs and party leaders</i> | — | — | — | 9.8 % | 9.1 % | 4.3 % | — | — | 3.4 % |
| <i>S3.d Other foreign speakers</i> | 1.5 % | 12.5 % | 2.9 % | 9.8 % | — | 52.2 % | 20.0 % | — | — |
| S4: Undefined/ Other | — | 4.2 % | — | 7.3 % | — | 8.7 % | — | — | 3.4 % |

Percentages may not total 100 due rounding.

Read: 37.0 percent of all extended quotations in Die Welt are attributed to 'national speakers.'

Legend

- DE: German newspaper, FR: French newspaper, IR: Irish newspaper
- c: conservative, m: centrist/moderate, l: left-/liberal-leaning
- Welt (Die Welt), SZ (Süddeutsche Zeitung), taz (taz, die tageszeitung)
- Figa (Le Figaro), Mon (Le Monde), Libé (Libération)
- Inde (Irish Independent), Exam (Irish Examiner), Times (The Irish Times)