

INTEGRATION AGAINST THE NATION? THE PERSISTENCE OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN SHAPING POPULAR PRESS DISCOURSES REGARDING EU INTEGRATION IN POLAND, THE UK AND SPAIN

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Abstract

As the EU's competencies have increased, nationalist resistance to EU integration has grown. This contribution argues that persistent national identities colour interest perceptions of national publics, especially among non-elite groups, who are less likely to engage in cross-border interactions. Within this, the news media select events that are likely to violate these perceptions. This paper undertakes content analysis of low-quality, high circulation press in three prominent Member States: Poland, Britain (England & Wales) and Spain. Its findings suggest that EU integration is reflected negatively in both states where concepts of 'the nation' and 'national governance' remain relatively uncontested. Resistance was less pronounced in Spain. The increased contestability of Spanish national identity among conflicting ethno-linguistic groups caused EU integration to be perceived as less threatening. Nationalist popular discourse against integration gained less traction in the more federalized state constructed from distinct sub-state groupings; what constitutes 'the nation' remained normally contested.

Keywords: EU integration, Euroskepticism, National identity, Nationalism, News framing

Introduction

The EU integration has grown progressively more comprehensive since the integration process began more than fifty years ago. As it has continued, actual pressures for integration remain high while signs of supranational involvement become more visible and are contested by national publics (Borzel and Risse, 2009; Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Beyond mere functionalism, this has led the EU to justify further integration through a supranational discourse regarding transactionalist solidarity creation through single market integration (Bellamy,

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2008; Kuhn, 2015; Recchi, 2015). However -- in some states more than others -- a lack of structural change in the manner in which the EU's citizens conceive their national identities has resulted in a clash between them and the supranational discourse used to justify integration based on mutual interest in interaction (Kholi, 2000; Medrano, 2003; Medrano, 2010). This has manifested itself in the form of popular, often nationalist backlash despite the fact that the constructivist approach to identity formation has been posited as a possible enabling factor for the creation of a European identity (Risse, 2010). It is obvious that national identity is not homogeneous; indeed, it can vary insofar as it is also "influenced by factors such as social status, political party identification, regional and/or ethnic origin and so on" (Wodak *et al.*, 2009, p. 188). It is precisely these conceptions that populist national movements can exploit by claiming to put the perceived interests of "the nation" before all (Dolezal and Hutter, 2012; Kriesi, 2014; Ucen, 2007). Still, this does not address variance in the success or existence of such nationalist sentiment across countries. Further, evidence is mixed regarding the tendency of multi-layered federal states' populations to accept a supranational level of governance (Anderson, 2002). By itself, a country's governance structure says little about how that framework is reflected by and interacts with differing national milieus in different countries: How do different identity-influenced conceptions of nationalism and perceptions of national governance influence nationalist discourses related to EU integration across states?

In what follows, this contribution seeks to unpack a possible answer. It does so by suggesting that problematizing only ethno-nationalist makeup or governance structure is insufficient to explain why nationalist Euroskepticism gains traction in some countries more than others. Using news content analysis as a lens through which national discourse regarding the EU can be taken stock of, this contribution analyzes high-circulation, lower quality press in three EU Member States -- Poland, Britain (England and Wales) and Spain -- each with different governance structures, sub-national compositions and relationships to the single market. Findings suggest that the EU was framed in a nationalistically negative manner in both Poland and Britain -- states in which national identity remains relatively uncontested. Resultantly, integration was framed as a self-evident threat to the perceived interests of an already unified national group. However, this was less the case in Spain: a state where contestation between multiple ethnic groupings is commonplace. Instead, nationalist sentiment there viewed conflict between the Member States and the supranational level of governance as somewhat 'normalized'.

1. EU discourse and national identities: actual benefits versus *perceived* interests

As mentioned above, the EU's justification of its integrative powers through a discourse of mutual benefit through interaction in a single market means that it is



intended to be considered an effective rationale for further integration based on common interests and fair outcomes (Kuhn and Recchi, 2013; Pickle, 2003). However, if public identities continue to reflect the primacy of national identity according to socio-economic solidarity, they may regard the supranational institutions' imposition of deregulatory measures as automatically unfair and/or illegitimate despite possible benefits of the integration process. As a result, supranational, interest-oriented appeals, addressed to a not-yet-existent European public sphere, would not constitute an effective or relevant argument for the engenderment of an affective, EU-wide, perception of the single market (Rosamond, 2012; 2014). Instead, the EU-level argument for the benefits of integration as a basis for accordance of affection to a supranational patriotic unit remains a discourse in search of a collective European identity to support it (Cliff and Woll, 2012). In this sense, publics may ignore or reject Union invocations of interest-based appeals for a supranational patriotic affection -- based on common interests -- as a rationale for integration by its institutions. As it will be maintained, such appeals can clash depending on their interaction with identity-based, state-level interest perceptions regarding the legitimacy of the EU to shepherd Member States in the direction of supranational integration.

Significantly, with regard to the EU's discursive appeals, it is important to point out that this rationale has been discussed primarily as an instrumentally interest-based phenomenon within political-economy. In accordance with this line of reasoning, identities should be based on practical interests. However, to address the interest-identity relationship in this way does not address possible sources of the construction of citizens' *perceived* interests. It also fails to take into account how identity and interests can influence each other and may even be construed in a co-constitutive manner; "perceived instrumental interests can only explain the variation [in outcomes] *in conjunction* with the other factors" which largely include citizen's already existing identity constructions (Marcussen *et al.*, 1999, p. 629). Thus, the co-constitutive nature of national identities and the resulting perceived interests require the "assumption of mutually constitutive social action as a significant factor towards the construction of identity and therefore, interests and behaviour in global politics" in order to better clarify from whence perceived interests have been constructed (Christiansen, *et al.*, 1999, p. 535). With specific regard to integration processes, each concept informs the other, often in a mutually self-reinforcing way. Thus, identity conceptions and interest perceptions have the potential to remain rather immutable in the face of incremental change within the relevant institutional environments (Marcussen *et al.*, 1999).

2. All identities are not identical: defining the relevant national discourses

The above framework provides a useful understanding of the manner in which the perceived national interest is constructed and reinforced. Yet, to claim that the entrenchment of national identity causes citizens of all Member States to



resist integration, would be to paint with too broad a brush the diversity among them -- in the environments where various national identities have evolved and exist. Obviously, the non-homogeneity of national identities means that nationalist anti-EU discourse would be more prominent in some segments of society rather than others. Indeed, those who already possess the educational and material resources, which enable them to move about the Union and interact freely with citizens from other Member States, are also most likely to possess more “permeable” identities that dispose them to perceive benefits from membership (Kuhn, 2012). However, this represents only a small minority of the general populace (Fligstein, 2009).

Conversely, those who perceive of themselves and those like them as being at a net loss flowing from integration would be more likely to opt for national demarcation, or the re-entrenchment of national boundaries, than those who perceive of themselves as benefitting from integration (Kriesi *et al.*, 2006; 2008). When identifying which discourses within Member States would choose to argue for the demarcation side of the cleavage, it is tempting to problematize the discursive stance of right-wing populist rhetoric. Such sentiment has been pointed to as championing the cause of those who feel that they stand to lose from integration along national lines, against some form of urgent threat (Dolezal and Hutter, 2012; Kriesi, 2014; Wodak, 2015). With regard to national identity-based discourses, this focus could be especially relevant. Yet, the demarcation rationale has both national as well as socio-economic aspects, which tend to be reflected according to the traditional right-left political dividing lines (Kriesi *et al.*, 2006). However, such a focus does little to address exactly why a certain populist group would perceive ‘the nation’ -- as opposed to a given social class -- to be at a net-loss from the destruction of national barriers. The stance that the relevant nationalist discourses evolve along traditional ideological lines of right-wing versus left-wing populism remains oversimplified and does not account for other, more diffuse forms of non-elite sentiment. Instead, the advent of so-called “centrist” populism, which puts the interests of the ‘nation’ foremost, while not fitting cleanly onto one side of the aisle is more illuminating (Ucen, 2007). Yet, while proving an explanation for what segments of a society would be likely to be most categorically resistant to the EU integration process, as justified by nationalist rhetoric, it does not point to why the public discourses related to that rhetoric are more apparent in some Member States and not in others. Two additional elements may be needed in order to show the manner in which nationalist sentiment can be influenced by its environment.

The EU Member States display diversity in the number of governance layers they possess. Some are more centralized while others represent more federal models. Additionally, they display an array of sub-national ethnic compositions. It has been posited that federal or decentralized states might be more accepting of supranational influence as their populations’ identities are already more accepting of competing layers of government (Schild, 2001). Yet, mixed results have been



found on whether a federal structure makes the national identities of citizens in those states more accepting of the activities of the EU (Anderson, 2002). This might be due to the fact that having a more federal or centralized form of government, by itself, is not sufficient with regard to influencing identity-based perceptions about the normative acceptability of EU integration (Mueller, 2012). Instead, contesting sub-national ethnic groupings, as reflected in those layers of government, could influence the permeability of the nationalist popular discourses to supranational influences in states whose citizens have strong, recognized regional/linguistic attachments below that of the nation-state (Beyers and Bursens, 2013; Chacha, 2012) Thus, the EU discourse ‘gets out’ more, or is at least viewed more mercifully, in the nationalist discourses of those countries.

3. A role for the news media: journalists as purveyors of the national condition

The news media provide a conduit through which such discourses can be communicated to national audiences and whereby the response can serve to constrain coordinating discourse (Koopmans and Statham, 2010). This means that journalism has long played a decisive role in “the battle of ideas with regard to the policy questions of the day” (Schmidt, 2008, p. 305). The positioning of news outlets within the public discourse has developed innately as the media “frames, shapes and packages information and in this function exerts a large and sometimes determinate influence in shaping citizens opinions” (Chambers, 2009, p. 341). When journalists produce a news report, they do so by bundling together certain discrete bits of “reality” into the form of a coherent story, which will be readily acceptable to the conceptions of their intended audiences. Journalists in Europe are themselves members of national societies and conceive of their identities and roles in largely national terms, while the question of ‘Europe’ has not changed the criteria used in newsrooms for selection of events as newsworthy (Heikkila and Kunelius, 2014; Statham, 2004). This remains true even if they are expected to follow a certain editorial or ideological stance: “Common schemas are the ones that form the basis for most individuals’ reactions to framing communications. Elites do not have unlimited autonomy but are constrained to choosing from this cultural stock, which records the traces of past framing” (Entman, *et al.*, 2009, p. 176). Thus, while it might make sense to conceive of the role of journalists and editors as actors, which work to shape public opinion, the stickiness of national identity conceptions limits prospects for their doing so (Cook, 1998; O’Neill and Harcup, 2009).

If national identities are primary, events that clash with identity-based perceived interests may be flagged as news simply for their inducement of visceral emotive reaction on the part of news consumers with little relation to contextualized facts related to them (Kim and Cameron, 2011). Instead of a cost-benefit analysis based on apparent factual interests, identity, thus, may lead news discourses to promote visible events that are seen to be deviant from barriers



accorded by that identity and thereby are reported on as automatically threatening for their evocation of emotional reaction (Lecheler, *et al.*, 2013). In this, the media serves as the conduit through which the pulse of national sentiment can be taken, not only through what events and issues are flagged as relevant, but also through how they are framed in a valenced manner -- i.e. positively or negatively (De Vreese, 2010; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006).

4. Qualitative content analysis: a method for capturing nationalist discourse in news

As mentioned beforehand, this contribution focuses on popular nationalist discourse as reflected in news reports. Resultantly, its analysis is centred on the collection and categorization of articles in the online archives of major tabloid-style or free news outlets that have national outlooks or nationalist bents. As a result, while allowing for the fact that the character of nationalist EU resistance may differ in nature and strength across cases, this remains mainly a study targeted on resistance to the EU as reflected in press discourse, which locates itself mostly on the latter half of the integration/demarcation divide. As Van Dijk (2013) has noted, this type of press encompasses more than simply publications with a populist editorial stance, but unlike quality press, they have in common a tendency to only focus on an event and its perceived consequences in terms of predetermined frames while providing little in the way of substantive context. Focusing on these types of “low quality” press allows for better targeting of the analysis to the relevant nationalist popular discourse due to the tendency of these outlets’ reporting to emphasize simplification of complex events or issues and thus providing a ‘reality’ for the news consumer which is readily intuitive and easily assimilated; populist-style discourses often are based in such simplified appeals (Wodak, 2015).

Because the point of this study was to determine the role of national identity in leading to support for EU dis-integration, three countries were chosen as relevant case studies. Each had a different relation to the single market, while at the same time sporting different sub-national ethnic landscapes and governance structures. They are as follows: Spain, England and Wales and Poland. In greater detail, in Spain, the ‘Mediterranean’ or mid-income country, sub-national governance structures tended to be both rather autonomized and organized along the lines of ethnic communities -- many with their own languages and agendas -- while sharing one common media environment. UK, the North-European state, is nominally a ‘country of nations’; ethnic or linguistic groupings are historically tied to a certain region that is incorporated as a discrete administrative unit. However, the member nations of the UK share (for the most part) a common native language in the modern day, despite the fact that the press regulatory environments of Scotland and Northern Ireland were never incorporated with the English/Welsh one. Further, England and Wales have much more limited autonomy from



Westminster, while the compatibility of Welsh or English identity with that of ‘British’ remains largely un-contentious, and the latter is considered to spread rather unequivocally to the UK’s other member nations (Mandler, 2006).¹ More similarly, Poland, an eastern enlargement Member, is one of the most ethnically homogeneous states in the EU and is largely a unitary republic. The Polish *Województwa* enjoy only superficial autonomy from Warsaw and are organized with basically no regard for the country’s relatively small linguistic/ethnic minorities such as Silesians or Kashubians (Riedel, 2012). According to this, if national identity remains prime as reported in news so as to foment resistance to integration, then EU integration will be viewed as relatively less deviant in those states where national governance of discrete ethnic subunits remains ordinarily conflictual; what constitutes national identity remains a contestable concept. Conversely, if interests remain antecedent, reports will reflect a more cost-benefit style analysis of integration, which takes the EU discourse into account.

Across the three case studies, the papers to be examined were selected such that they may play a role of ‘functional equivalence’, speaking to groups as similar as can reasonably be expected in their respective public spheres (Hofstede, 1998, p. 24). All chosen sources are considered the two most major, national lower quality publications in both their online and printed forms and are likely to resort to nationalist popular appeal in their reports (Jager and Maier, 2009). They are as follows: *Fakt* and *Metro* in Poland, *the Sun* and *the Daily Mail* in England and Wales, *20 Minutos* and *La Razón* in Spain. The decision was made to focus analysis by collection and categorization of articles produced during 2013. The selection of the 2013 timeframe allows for a focus on the tenor of popular nationalist sentiment that could stand to be taken up in light of later events such as the “Brexit” campaign and the Polish and Spanish parliamentary elections of 2015/16, while remaining disentangled from the political horserace.

Content analysis was selected as a method for backing out national conceptions of EU integration against a variety of situational issues. Articles were flagged for inclusion in the corpus by title, for their relevance to EU integration. Content frames -- and in some cases sub-frames -- were created inductively, so as to tailor the findings to the data rather than through predefined keywords. This allowed for the analysis to be carried out without first relying on pre-conceived notions about the findings, while controlling for the fact that the same word can have many different contextual denotations or meanings across languages (Lecheler and De Vreese 2009; 2010). Each article, and beyond that each content frame, was then assigned a value of zero or one, depending on whether it framed integration in a positive or negative manner (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). As we will see, the findings suggest that identity-based resistance to integration remains less pronounced in the country where the governance structures are federal

¹ It is interesting to note that support for the EU is stronger in Scotland, a separate national group that has demanded more political autonomy, or independence from London.



in nature such that they reflect the continued identity-based contestability of the country as a nation.

5. The National in news: divining nationhood from press discourse

The overall corpus encompassed a total of 501 articles with 111 of them being from the Polish sources, 184 originating from the British papers and 206 coming from the Spanish publications. Below, I present valenced content frames regarding what topics related to EU integration made the news across the three sample states. In Poland and Britain both the content frames present integration as an automatic threat to perceived interests of national identity. In the Spanish national press a different picture emerges; some aspects of the integration process were seen to have reasonably negative consequences for Spain. But, the EU integration process was seen to merely reproduce the conflictual multi-layered system of the Spanish ethnicity-based, federalized governance structure, while aiding in the process of nation building.

5.1. A ‘nation’ of unwilling inferiors: topics flagged as newsworthy in the Polish press

Across both of the news outlets analyzed in Poland, articles generally related to the Western EU Member States viewing the Poles as less than their equals, despite what was viewed as an implicit promise of equality, which was to come as concomitant with EU membership. Because there were different aspects to this inequality it was necessary to subdivide this first topical frame into three separate but related sub-frames. Further, each frame tends to mirror another either positively or negatively, i.e. as either causing or standing to assuage an apparent problem. Through this, the newsworthy topics form a two-sided narrative across press articles. Over time, reporting of events that held integration as a negative side of the story, was favoured over the production of news about their positive aspects. However, both aspects were not addressed as concrete costs and benefits, pointing toward identity-based reporting rather than an interest-based account. Below I address main topics that were reported on in the news according to each content frame.

There were nine instances during the examined period in which integration was framed negatively due to a contention that Western member states view Poland and/or its citizens as economically inferior (Table 1 Frame 1.1). The fact that, in all of the cases, economic inequality was discussed as having only implications for “our countrymen” as opposed to ‘Europe’ would seem to indicate that the EU’s discourse of transactionalist or utilitarian benefit regarding this inequality was not



being treated as a key part of the issue.² In cases where the economic inequality frame was used, both newspapers' articles framed ostensibly discriminatory action as self-evident wrongs done to a unified Polish 'in-group'; Western Member States, mostly Germany and the UK, were written off as holding 'obviously' unfounded or hypocritical ideas regarding Polish citizens. This means that those Western European countries were uniformly framed as viewing Poles as being unworthy of equal employment and benefits rights, despite the status of Poles as EU citizens.

Table 1. Content frames in examined articles of Polish news related to EU integration

Content Frame		Combined (of 111)	<i>Metro</i> (of 44)	<i>Fakt</i> (of 67)
1. Contrary to the EU's stated ideals, the EU/Western MS do not view the CEE MS as equals (negative).	1. Total	38/34.2%	14/31.8%	24/35.8%
	1.1 Economically unequal	9/ 8.1%	7/15.9%	2/3%
	1.2 Development-aid related	21/ 18.8%	7/15.9%	14/20.8%
	1.3 Negative opinion of Poles	8/ 7.2%	0/0%	8/11.9%
2. The EU improves equal access to health care (positive).		6/5.4%	3/6.8%	3/4.5%
3. "Brussels" dictates unpopular policy to Poland (negative).		26/23.4%	7/15.9%	19/28.4%
4. The integration increases accountability (positive).		10/9%	7/15.9%	3/4.5%
5. Free movement of persons isn't a great boon of Membership/moving abroad which is unfortunate (negative).		22/18.9%	10/22.7%	12/17.9%
6. Integration means travel and work abroad which are more convenient (positive).		9/ 8.1%	3/6.8%	6/9%

Possibly based on Poland's longstanding status as one of the less developed states in Europe, the frame of unjust inequality most often focused on painting the character of EU integration as normatively being a form of development aid (Table 1, Frame 1.2). EU structural funds were frequently viewed as aid that Poland is entitled to as a result of supposed promises of equality with the West of the EU in terms of development level, as opposed to an interest-based principle of Union-wide fair benefit in a single market, or relative economic convergence over time. Articles rarely mentioned that Poland was already the largest net recipient of EU funding. Conversely, any denial or attempted denial of EU funding by the West was put forth as "taking money from us".³ In context, this was presented as the case because such 'rightful' funding is granted to Poland in practice only because the country must negotiate for it. On the other hand, allocation of EU funds *within* Poland was rarely discussed as contentious due to the actions of Warsaw.

² Stangret, M. Łódź na niekorzystnym artykule w "The Sun" może zarobić. Oto jak. [Łódź can profit from the unfavorable article in "The Sun". Here's how], *Metro*, 8 January 2013, (retrieved from http://metrocafe.pl/metrocafe/1,145523,13165767,Lodz_na_niekorzystnym_artykule_w_The_Sun_moze_zarobic_.html.)

³ Miliony Euro do zwrotu? Komisja Europejska zabiera nam pieniądze [Millions of Euro to be returned? The European Commission is taking money from us], *Fakt* 2 May 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.fakt.pl/Komisja-Europejska-zada-zwrotu-79-9-mln-euro-z-funduszy-na-rolnictwo,artykuly,209839,1.html>.)

The final sub-frame of the more general inequality frame (Table 1, Frame 1.3), was found only in *Fakt*. This frame is similar to the economic inequality frame, except that there were no concrete legal or economic rights of free movement at issue. Instead, this frame presents Western Europeans as simply not liking Poles, and viewing them as ‘careless’ or as held in “not the best opinion”.⁴ Like the economic inequality frame, the EU transactionalist discourse was not countenanced, or not considered a convincing side of the narrative when addressed against the perceived interests of the national in-group that were seen to be under uniform threat.

The general content frame of unjust inequality with Western Europe, despite perceived EU values, is the most dominant of all frames in the popular Polish press. As a contrast, the second main frame can be understood as standing in opposition to this (Table 1, Frame 2). Still, it was rarely used, constituting less than 6 per cent of all cases, and only amounts to one specific provision of the integration process being used instrumentally to the advantage of a people faced with a common problem.

The second overarching two-sided narrative regarded the imposition of EU policy on Poland. One regarded the EU positively, for improving national standards or making accountability of politicians in Poland. But, it was only used in 9 per cent of stories relating to EU integration (Table 1, Frame 4). The other, which interpreted the requirement of implementing EU directives and regulations as self-evidently maligning Polish perceived interests, simply for their origination beyond the nation-state, was the most dominant of any of the specific content frames (Table 1, Frame 3). The actual intentions or consequences of said unpopular regulation were not often mentioned in terms of actual Polish or European interests. Instead, national resolution within the nation-state was presented as the most apt solution to what were framed as scandalous threats to Poland caused by the EU’s “squandering money” or the “stupid idea[s]” of “Eurocrats”.^{5 6}

The next two frames detailed the right of free movement of persons. One of these two was rarely used. It portrayed free movement between Member States as more convenient for purposes of vacation travel, often in context of the Schengen Area (Table 1, Frame 6). The dominant counter-narrative to the travel convenience frame painted the right of free movement of persons as not necessarily being a great positive for Poland (Table, 1 Frame 5). Most often Polish journalists wrote of

⁴ Niemiecka policja: to Polacy obrabowali bank w Berlinie [German police: it was Poles who robbed the bank in Berlin], *Fakt*, 26 January 2013 (retrieved from <http://www.fakt.pl/Czy-to-Polacy-dokonali-zuchwalej-kradziezy-w-berlinskim-banku,-artykuly,197397,1.html>).

⁵ Tak Unia szasta naszymi pieniędzmi [This is how the EU waists our money], *Fakt*, 2 October 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.fakt.pl/unia-europejska-to-mistrzynie-w-szastaniu-pieniedzmi,artykuly,421381,1.html>).

⁶ Unia Europejska Zakazuje Bajek! [The European Union is banning tales!], *Fakt*, 2 January 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.fakt.pl/Bajki-zostanazakazane-przez-Unie-Europejska,artykuly,194082,1.html>).



free movement of persons for employment mostly in bilateral, national identity-based terms, while the EU discourse of common interest or benefit rarely constituted a relevant side of the story. This makes sense due to the fact that, as other research has suggested, Poland's longstanding status as an emigration country has seen to it that such migration has become imbued as a necessity into the Polish collective identity (Maybin *et al.*, 2014; White, 2015). When viewed through the lens of that national identity, migration to Western Europe as a result of the free movement of persons remains relatively undifferentiated from simple emigration. The dependency of Polish self-conceptions on it caused the right of free movement to be subsumed into a lamented need to "depart abroad for bread" that stands in opposition to the EU discourse, especially when the Polish identity-based view of the value of free movement is placed in juxtaposition to the other aforementioned negative narratives regarding integration.^{7,8} This argues against a completely interest-based cost-benefit analysis as would be needed for the EU discourse to have the opportunity to take root, but rather amounts to a lamentation of a seemingly unified national condition.

5.2. The British 'Nation' as betters of Europe: newsworthy topics in the UK press⁹

In the UK, all topic frames were negatively related to integration, for its perceived violation of the interests of a unified British people (Table 2): Unlike the Polish case, the few stories that related positively to the integration process were reported on as happy accidents. The British accentuation of events related to integration build on one another, comprising an argument in which threats are caused by self-evidently harmful supranational integration, which does not recognize the perceived 'special' status of UK national identity and leads to conflict with other "inferior" states' citizens or firms, which were not considered worthy of solidarity in any form (Explicitly, Table 2 Frames 2, 3 & 4). Thus, consequences of integration perceived by national identity also refuse to countenance the real possibility of allowing for beneficial interaction.

Two topics by far were the most prevalent. Namely, these are encapsulated in frames 1 and 5 (Table 2). The first concerned Brussels' dictation of policy to its Member States, most often the UK. While the other (Frame 5) concerned supposed consequences of EU migration. A separate major content frame (Frame 6) focused

⁷ "For bread" (*za chlebem*) is a phrase used with relation to emigration to describe situations in which an individual or family moves abroad because they are not able to meet their basic needs in Poland.

⁸ Wyjazdy na saksy znów są popularne [Departures on vacation jobs are again popular], *Fakt*, 25 February 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.fakt.pl/w-polsce-praca-staje-sie-luksusem,artykuly,201313,1.html>).

⁹ For purposes of brevity, I use the words 'UK' and 'British' to mean 'England and Wales' going forward unless otherwise noted.



on portraying EU citizens as criminals. Going forward I focus on these more prominent frames.

Table 2. Content frames in examined UK articles related to EU integration

Content Frame		Overall (of 184)	Daily Mail (of 107)	The Sun (of 77)
	1. Total	54/29.3%	33/30.8%	21/27.3%
1. "Brussels" dictates unpopular policy to MS (chiefly to UK).	1.1. The EU budget is too big/wasteful.	9/4.9%	4/3.7%	5/6.5%
	1.2. As MS, UK is powerless to resist senseless directives	28/15.2%	20/18.7%	8/10.4%
	1.3. EU integration means bad economic governance	17/9.2%	9/8.4%	8/10.4%
	2. Disintegration is (not?) bad for business.	17/9.2%	13/12.4%	4/5.2%
	3. Pro-EU forces refuse to recognize UK's "exceptionality".	14/7.6%	9/8.4%	5/6.5%
	4. Continental standards are inferior.	8/4.3%	3/2.8%	5/6.5%
5. Integration forces treatment of economic inferiors as equals.	5. Total	68/37.0%	37/34.6%	31/40.3%
	5.1. EU migrants are the "other".	28/15.2%	14/13.1%	14/18.2%
	5.2. EU migrants take British jobs.	15/8.2%	10/9.3%	5/6.5%
	5.3 EU migrants are benefits tourists.	25/13.6%	13/12.4%	12/15.6%
6. EU citizens are criminals.		23/12.5%	12/11.2%	11/14.3%

In greater detail, the first sub-frame of Frame 1 related to the size of the EU budget (Table 2, Frame 1.1). On average, the EU budget was framed as too large and as having ridiculous line items -- including funding for CEE states. This sub-frame related to the EU demanding large sums of British taxpayers' money, which was often seen to be spent on self-evidently 'outrageous and retrograde' "Pet project[s] dreamed up by the European Parliament".^{10 11} In this way, it can be considered to stand in agreement with Polish press discourse regarding the EU's policies being unneeded in that they waste money. However, in the British case, the emotively problematic manner in which money was spent on "subsidizing" other Member States also stood in opposition to the Polish framing of EU funding as rightful aid. Related points of the overarching unpopular policy category related to EU directives or regulations being nonsensical, pointless or even harmful (Table 2, Frame 1.2 & 1.3). Additionally, UK was portrayed as powerless to resist Brussels'

¹⁰ Fuming over EU Cash for Tobacco, *The Sun*, 4 February 2013, (retrieved from https://0-global.factiva.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx#!?&_suid=1467302791055017407308834668633).

¹¹ Peev, G. Euro-MPs reject calls to cut vast Brussels budget and instead demand Britain stumps up more cash, *Daily Mail*, 13 March 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2292799/Euro-MPs-reject-calls-cut-vast-Brussels-budget-instead-demand-Britain-stumps-MORE-cash.html#ixzz3qFUUSiyJ>).



“spreading its tentacles into aspects of...national life” as a result of EU membership.¹²

Within Frame 5 many stories mentioned the end of the Romanian and Bulgarian adjustment periods, in relation to perceived negative consequences for the British caused by allowing vaguely ‘inferior’ other citizens into the country (Table 2, Frame 5.1). Yet they explicitly made note of how these restrictions were being lifted (e.g. because of the EU) much less. Thematically, articles in this frame often related either to “relatively poor” EU citizens being allowed to gain employment in the UK in the context of unemployment or wage differentials.¹³ Alternatively, other stories aired comment on UK firms who hire immigrants while not hiring Brits first as self-evidently “so unfair as to be outrageous” (Table 2, Frame 5.2).¹⁴ These identity-related perceptions of “crimes” against the national in-group seemed to trump the credibility of any statements regarding actual economic or material benefits.

Although fear that EU migrants threatened the job-seeking status of Brits was present in identity-based claims reflected in press discourse, the larger emotive claim made regarded a hypothetical situation in which migrants would come to the UK while *not* intending to seek employment (Table 2, Frame 5.3). The final sub-frame of the broader ‘forced equality of EU migrants’ category was also strongly anti-EU integration. It concerned EU citizens, often from poorer Member States, coming or planning to come to the UK to claim benefits, despite never having worked in the UK or contributed to the system.¹⁵ Oftentimes, however, the EU was framed as negatively related namely because integration was implied to force the UK to treat ‘work-shy’ EU citizens as equal to Brits, in terms of access to welfare benefits¹⁶.

¹² At Last, a Straight Choice on Europe, *Daily Mail*, 23 January 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2267319/David-Camersons-speech-At-straight-choice-Europe.html#ixzz3pbErsE5R>).

¹³ Webb, S. Up to 70,000 Romanian and Bulgarian migrants a year "will come to Britain" controls on EU migrants expire, *Daily Mail*, 17 January 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2263661/Up-70-000-Romanian-Bulgarian-migrants-year-come-Britain-controls-EU-migrants-expire.html#ixzz3pb3AWEaM>).

¹⁴ Groves, J. Brussels offers UK firms £1,000 cash "bribes" to hire foreign workers, *Daily Mail*, 26 July 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2379477/Brussels-offers-UK-firms-1-000-cash-bribes-hire-foreign-workers.html#ixzz3qLs97O5A>).

¹⁵ Such claims were made almost blatantly to play on the fears of the readership, rather than be factual. It is not actually possible for an EU immigrant to simply come to the UK and immediately claim benefits without having first been employed.

¹⁶ Mensch, L. Give us the right of veto on Euro laws, Cam ...Or we will get out, *The Sun*, 2 June 2013, (retrieved from https://0global.factiva.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx#!?&_suid=1464266113131016002696274917616).



The final UK frame portrayed EU citizens as coming to the UK to commit crimes. Within news reports the threat came from the criminals themselves more than the EU institutions, although integrative policy was portrayed as an enabling factor. Disintegration was still positioned as the proper solution if EU citizens' ability to commit criminal acts in the UK was to be circumvented. Two main, related issues were repeatedly produced as news in this frame. The first concerned itself with narrating events in which EU migrants in the UK already do commit crimes more than British people. The second concerned the plans of Romanian and Bulgarian "thieves and benefits scroungers" to travel to the UK.¹⁷ The actual representativeness of these instances is implied but not addressed or evidenced. The threat is merely carried for its perceived possibility to violate the interests of the national in-group, while the EU discourse is absent.

Thus, overall in both the Polish and British cases, integration was viewed as problematic or self-evidently pessimistic for breaking down state-barriers, which historically were normatively synonymous with the boundaries of the nation and the exclusive purview of the national parliament. The EU discourse was not considered to be relevant, or was problematic when viewed through the prism of national identity as reflected in nationalist news discourse. However, which aspects of it were framed as problematic within the sending and receiving countries often conflicted such that assuaging the concerns of those in one state, would amplify what was considered to constitute emotive newsworthiness in the other. Little or no recognition or trust -- as would be required for the construction of a European identity -- was accorded to non-members of the defined national in-group (Nicolaidis, 2007).

5.3. Spain as a nation? Topics flagged as newsworthy in the popular Spanish press

As in the Polish case, the main topics that the Spanish sources chose to highlight related both positively and negatively to EU integration. However, where in Poland the main events in the news were organized around general narratives that reflected negative perceptions about integration, and much less dominant ones that pertained to positively to it, in the case of the Iberian country the pros and cons seemed to be weighed, at least partially, within the main topical frames. As we will see, this pattern suggests that the EU's discourse was able to make inroads, at least partially, despite the antecedent importance of national identity. As it will be argued, it may be the fragmented nature of Spanish identity, combined with how it is reflected in Spain's government that allows this to be the case.

¹⁷ Walker, S. Migrants "plan UK theft spree", *The Sun*, 31 December 2013, (retrieved from https://0-global.factiva.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/ha/default.aspx#!?&_suid=14673546969407454920727483945).



In the case of the first ‘great achievements’ sub-frame it was news about the single market, rather than actual consequences of it, that was flagged by Spanish identity conceptions as a relevant topic about which to produce a news story (Table 3, Frame 1.1). Beyond any uncertainty generated by the contentiousness of the supranational process, a given story in this frame made the news because of the single market’s perceived importance to Spain, rather than common interest of all of its Members. In many cases, this contentiousness came from the fact that the single market was painted as a major reason for the UK to remain in the EU, or was positive for its application of universal rules that did not give special preference to certain groups over others. Despite this, contradicting articles decried the process of market integration when it was seen to have negative consequences for Spain. In others, integration of the single market was seen to offer added protection and security for ‘the Spanish’ who *should*, the nationalist press discourse implies, form a united nation with some common identity.

Table 3. Main content frames in Spanish articles related to integration

Content Frame	Total (of 206)	<i>La Razón</i> (of 118)	<i>20 Minutos</i> (of 88)	
1. Single market is one of the EU’s greatest achievements.	1. Total	45/21.8%	35/29.7%	10/11.4%
	1.1 Single market as one of the most important aspects of integration (positive)	15/7.3%	9/7.6%	6/6.8%
	1.2 Single market is threatened by the other Member States (negative)	30/14.6% ¹⁸	26/22.0%	4/4.5%
	2. Total.	46/22.3%	27/22.9%	18/24.5%
2. The EU means good fiscal discipline/stability	2.1 EU integration is a way out of debt/economic crisis(?) (Positive)	13/6.3%	8/6.8%	5/5.7%
	2.2 EU policies promote growth (positive)	14/6.8%	7/5.9%	7/8.0%
	2.3 The EU doesn’t understand Spanish realities (negative)	18/8.7%	12/10.2%	6/6.8%
3. The EU regulation improves national standards/unity	3. Total.	40/19.4%	24/20.3%	16/18.2%
	3.1 The EU improves lacking national measures (positive)	30/14.6%	16/13.6%	14/15.9%
	3.2 The EU discourages regional succession (positive)	10/4.9%	8/6.8%	2/2.3%
4. EU allows Spaniards better employment opportunities (positive)	3.3. Integration worsens Spain’s/southern Europe’s circumstances (negative)	20/9.7%	8/6.8%	12/13.6%
	4. Total.	14/6.8%	5/4.2%	9/10.2%
5. EU (& more developed MS) as source of funding (negative)	41/20.0%	19/16.1%	22/25.0%	

The main difference between the frames 1.1 and 1.2 was that in the second, the recalcitrance of other EU Member States was the main focus of the articles

¹⁸ In this: UK 19, Germany 8, Other/Southern Europe 3.



(Table 3). The anti-integrative measures of other Member States comprised the main thrust of these articles. This was due to the fact that this framing allowed the integration process to be perceived as a risky and uncertain project, where supranational interactions could hold inherently undeserved consequences for Spain. EU-level discourse, though discussed, was seen to lack credibility as it clashed with national identity conceptions in other Member States, often the UK or Germany, but to a lesser extent with regard to austerity measures imposed as a result of membership. A large subset of articles in this topic frame were concerned with the EU involvement over Spain's ongoing disputes with UK over Gibraltar, and border controls between it and Spain proper. In other words, this topic held the single market as something that would be a net positive for Spain in particular, if it were not for the "instabilities and threats" caused by having to share that market with other national groupings.¹⁹ Interestingly, however, the EU institutions were seen as offering a solution, for their possibility to bring these other states to heel, thus resolving the threat caused apparently by normalized conflictual interaction with other entities for the Spanish as a national group.

The first sub-frame of the second general grouping of topics that were considered to violate perceived national interests related mainly to financial reforms of the Eurozone, or measures taken to stimulate growth (Table 3, Frame 2.1). Reforms, which the EU required of Spain or other indebted Eurozone countries, were framed as having painful consequences for the Spanish and other similar national groupings. But, in many cases said reforms were presented as necessary for the improvement of Spain's long-term financial situation. Within this, there seemed to be a strong discourse which posited that Spain, as a nation, should take responsibility for previous unsustainable spending, which had been made worse by allowing too much leeway to the country's "scandalously indebted" autonomous communities.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, when EU reforms were seen not to have the desired effect, articles related to the EU more negatively in narrative overall. While this could be interpreted as evidence of an interest-based discourse being taken up as relevant in news, more attention was focused on consolidation of Spanish federal governance and identity through a narrative of reigning in the autonomous regions.

More generally, the second topical sub-frame problematized whether EU policies successfully create growth (Table 3, Frame 2.2). Stories here took issue with various EU reforms meant to promote Spanish economic growth, or help to solve structural problems such as unemployment. While the EU discourse of

¹⁹ Flores, J. España no es Chipre y ni siquiera se *parece* [Spain is not Cyprus and doesn't even seem that way], *La Razón*, 24 March 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.laRazón.es/economia/espana-no-es-chipre-y-ni-siquiera-se-parece-FM1619315#.Ttt1ZWY7dZC6qoW>).

²⁰ Vidal, C. Cuando las barbas Chipriotas... [When the Cypriot beards...], *La Razón*, 20 March 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.laRazón.es/opinion/columnistas/cuando-las-barbas-chipriotas-AX1572552#.Ttt1GDqkMeH7hOe>).



common interaction and interest was counted as a relevant part of news here, it was merely presented as a justification for policies that were purported to work to Spanish advantage specifically. Conversely, economic policies “imposed” by Germany, that were perceived as un-advantageous to Spain were viewed skeptically with little regard for the German side of the story, suggesting a lack of affective ties between Member State identities despite a willingness to interact.²¹ Therefore, while news stories were selected for their standing to affect the identity-based perceived interests of the readership, the perceived interest remained based in purely national conceptions, though outcomes were not necessarily viewed as unacceptable. The transactional EU discourse continued not to have its desired effect.

Still, it may be possible to take the above two sub-frames as evidence of partial support for EU integration based on common interest in the single market. However, it becomes apparent that this is not the case when the third sub-frame is taken into account (Table 3, Frame 2.3). EU discourse and justifications were mentioned, but they were considered self-evidently non-credible. These stories took issue with the fact that Spain was expected to apply EU regulations, which were perceived to adversely affect the country or a unit within it; little investigation was given into actual costs, benefits or intentions. Many stories referred to the EU attempting to forbid practices from the “outside”, the halting of which would make it more difficult for Spain, or one of its regions, to cope with the economic crisis, especially when supranational “Technocrats” actions self-evidently demonstrated “difficulty understanding...Spanish reality”.²² Other articles were critical of what was framed as unwise, pro-austerity regulation. Thus, as in Poland and UK, the EU stood as illegitimately causing problems that should be resolved by a Europe of nation states when policy from Brussels was unpopular. However, nationalist press discourse in Spain seems not quite as dismissive of those policies as the outlets in the other two countries. As we will see, the normalized role of Madrid in mediating between Spain’s various communities -- necessitating some wins and losses among them -- caused these actions of the EU to be perceived as much less contentious by the Spanish nationalist discourse.

The specific topics addressed in frame 3.1 (Table 3) related to the EU forcing the improvement of national standards or regulations. In comparison to the other two case study countries, that this was regarded in a largely positive manner is interesting; in both Poland and UK, most stories related to EU policy standards regarded the activity of the EU in national policy as a threat for their origination

²¹ Arroqui, M. Alemania prepara créditos para pymes de España y Portugal [Germany prepares credits for the SME’s of Spain and Portugal], *La Razón*, 27 May 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.laRazon.es/economia/alemania-prepara-creditos-para-pymes-de-espana-IM2439684#.Ttt1KGaqKCREqQm>).

²² Rañé, J. M. El pasmo de la Troika [The shock of the Troika], *La Razón*, 12 March 2013, (retrieved from El pasmo de la troika <http://www.larazon.es/local/cataluna/el-pasmo-de-la-troika-XH1458000#Ttt147C5XSCG7VFb>).



outside the nation-state. However, this does not mean that the Spanish press viewed the capacity building provided by EU policy in a purely interest-based manner. Instead, it was only presented as self-evident normative goodness of helping to solidify a unified Spanish nation when viewed in context of an apparent permeable contestability of that identity. While some articles did refer to the EU's improvement of standards directed to Spain as a whole, a good number of them referred to EU regulation as forcing the improvement of governance in one of Spain's regions, which were framed as delinquent for not being wholly integrated with the federal government. Conversely, when articles referred to the EU's regulation of other country's policies, this seemed viewed in a similar manner to the ordinarily conflictual relationship between the Spanish government and its autonomous communities. Thus, an interesting facet of Spanish identity in its nationalist press is revealed vis a vis the other two case study countries: While in UK and Poland news topics were framed in a national 'us' versus non-national 'them' manner, what constitutes the 'nation' in Spain remains somewhat fraught with contesting positions of its regions, What's more, the manner in which the federal centre is set up to manage these competing sub-state interests may make the EU's activities appear less alien. As the next sub-frame more clearly shows, Spanish national news often framed exclusive regionalist ambitions as more threatening to the crafting of a cohesive Spanish identity; EU integration was presented as a possible solution to this.

The second sub-frame (Table 3, Frame 3.2) of the promotion of unity in national standards category often lauded the EU institutions for standing against the secessionist ambition of sub-state groupings in Spain and more generally in the Union. Obviously, most of these stories addressed questions of Basque or Catalan sovereignty, while the EU's positions on Scotland's independence referendum was also considered as worthy of attention in news. In a majority of cases, the EU was positioned as offering a solution to identity-based threats created by secessionist ambitions, by reinforcing the image of Spain as a cohesive nation.

Related to the positive framing of the normalization of Spain as having a cohesive identity, the final aspect of the "national unity" topic frame addressed instances in which EU regulation was framed as negatively affecting Spain or one of its regions (Table 3, Frame 3.3). In a majority of them, the EU's rationale behind said measures was relevant, however it was interpreted in a self-evidently negative manner when it stood to adversely affect a community within Spain. In the first two sub-frames of the 'national unity' topic, the Spanish regions' disparate identities and ambitions were framed as threatening if not anything new. In frame 3.3, when an EU policy appeared to worsen or not sufficiently benefit one of those regions so as they "consider the conditions [of them] unacceptable", solidarity seemed to be accorded to them as members of the Spanish 'in group'.²³

²³ La Eurocámara aprueba el acuerdo de pesca con mauritania que rechazan La xunta y el gobierno central [The EU council approves the Fishing Agreement with Mauritania that the



The fourth Spanish frame discussed free movement of persons as its main topic. In those instances where EU discourse was considered to be a side of the story, EU austerity-oriented actions regarding Spain's economic situation were what was considered to "have a painful aspect", rather than the emigration in and of itself.²⁴ Mainly, articles related to emigration to Germany and northern Europe. Within this, harmonization of standards regarding recognition of credentials was viewed positively. Thus, like in Poland, free movement proved a somewhat anaemic benefit to fostering positive identification with Europe when viewed in relation to other perceived consequences of integration for the nation-state. At the same time, EU migration was viewed in a less stridently negative manner, perhaps because the regionalized nature of Spanish identity makes it more open to outside influences in the first instance due to its "nested" nature in other identity levels below the nation state, thus allowing movement beyond Spain to be perceived as ordinarily conflictual in terms of interest (Medrano and Gutierrez, 2001).

The final Spanish frame regarded EU funding and viewed integration negatively in terms of consequences for Spain. As in Poland, some articles did problematize the amount of funding given to Spain as automatically illegitimate in terms of reductions. However, this was moderated by the contestability of distribution of funds by Madrid between the Spanish regions, through a recurring conceit regarding the funds that 'their application in Spain 'will not be easy' once the time came for Madrid's federal centre to apportion the funding.²⁵ Thus, wins and losses in terms of funding below the national level remained newsworthy, making similar uncertainties on the supranational level relatively more normalized.

Discussion

In recent years, the increasingly encompassing process of EU integration has encountered rising amounts of nationalist backlash. While the EU institutions have justified their existential purpose through a discourse of common interests in interaction, the objections raised by many nationalist population segments have refused to countenance this supranational rationale. The content analysis conducted

Galician Government and the Central Government Reject], *20 Minutos*, 8 October 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1941146/0/#xtor=AD-15&xts=467263>).

²⁴ González Pons: "No podemos decir que trabajar en la UE es trabajar en el extranjero" [Gonzalez Pons: „We cannot say that to work in the EU is to work abroad"], *20 Minutos*, 2 June 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1832111/0/gonzalez-pons/trabajar-ue/no-es-trabajarextranjero/#xtor=AD-15&xts=467263#xtor=AD-15&xts=467263>)

²⁵ Arias Cañete señala que "no será fácil" la aplicación de la nueva PAC en España [Arias Cañete signals that the application of the new CAP "will not be easy" in Spain], *20 Minutos*, 17 April 2013, (retrieved from <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1789148/0/#xtor=AD-15&xts=467263>).



above suggests that national populist discourse bases its objections not on actual interests, but instead on interests as perceived through the lens of national identity. However, this identity-based resistance has been extant in some EU Member States more than in others. When the sub-national ethnic makeup of the examined states was taken into account, Spain -- the sample country composed of conflicting ethnic groups -- proved more accepting of integrative measures, if not the EU rationale behind them. Whereas in Poland and UK, nationalist discourse as experienced in press rallied around a (supposedly) unified national identity, that could become locked in conflict with a threatening force from its outside. In Spain, the country's fragmented, sub-national nature caused nationalist discourse to centre on the contested question of Spanish nationhood itself. Further, whereas in Poland as well as England and Wales, the national government institutions were unquestioned as that country's legitimate highest authorities in news, the character of the nationalist press discourse in Spain pointed to the federalized government's role in mediating between Spain's conflicting communities as normalizing the role of the EU institutions; they were seen to perform a similar function. While this has only been a study of three EU Member States, the results could suggest that the confluence of ethnic makeup and governance structure could influence identity-based nationalist resistance to integration.

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