The State of the European Identity

A four-dimensional idea analysis

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Abstract

This thesis examines how European identity is expressed and articulated in the European Union's *State of the Union* speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018 by using the method of idea analysis. The analytical dimensions of the methodology are based on four key aspects of identity formation - *action*, *narrative*, *difference* and *multiple* - which are operationalised as methodological tools applied to the speeches. These dimensions can be seen as both performative and descriptive. Through this method, we arrived at the conclusion that European identity is expressed and articulated in the speeches through; the action dimension by the EU's overcoming of formative challenges and crises, the narrative dimension by rhetorically defining what values, standards and ethics the EU identifies itself with, the difference dimension by defining the European self-image by differentiation from *Others*, and the multiple dimension by acknowledging other identities as a part of European identity.

Keywords: European identity, EU, identity formation, othering, idea analysis.

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1. Introduction

Ever since the development of the nation-state, it has been the main frame of identification for collective units. However, its role as the main referent object of socio-territorial belonging might start to shift along with globalisation, internationalisation, and the development of transnational units such as the European Union (EU). The change in how individuals and collectives define themselves results in a need to examine the concept of identity from other contexts than the national one.[1] Hence, this thesis aims to examine transnational identity in the context of the EU, more specifically the idea of a European identity.

The concept of European identity is a controversial and contested subject. A majority of researchers agree that European identity derives from the shared cultural memories of Europe, such as the Christian tradition, Roman law and ancient Greek philosophy.[2] With this being said, there is still no consensus on how European identity should be defined. However, it is undeniably a notion that affects the EU as well as its inhabitants.[3]

1.1. Purpose Statement

The main purpose of the thesis is to examine how European identity is expressed and articulated in the European Union's yearly State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018. We will study the speeches through the method of idea analysis, using theoretical dimensions of identity formation as a methodological and analytical tool.

The thesis question is:
- How is the idea of European identity expressed and articulated in the EU's State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018?

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[1] Bo Petersson, and Eric Clark, "Boundary Dynamics and the Construction of Identities," in *Identity dynamics and the construction of boundaries*, ed. Bo Petersson, and Eric Clark (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 8.

[2] Cris Shore, *Building Europe: the cultural politics of European integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), 16; Anders Hellström, "(Re)making European Unity," In *Identity dynamics and the construction of boundaries*, ed. Bo Petersson, and Eric Clark (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 188; John A. Agnew, *Reinventing geopolitics: geographies of modern statehood* (Heidelberg: Dept. of Geography, University of Heidelberg, 2001), 22; Hülya Ağcasulu, , and Ringo Ossewaarde, "Turkey's Otherness in the Identity Discourses of European Parliament," *Ege Academic Review* 19, no. 3 (July 2019): 363.

[3] Mats Andrén, "The controversial concept of European identity," in *Cultural borders of Europe: narratives, concepts and practices in the present and the past*, ed. Mats Andrén (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 160; Murray Stewart Leith, Duncan Sim, Arno Zwet, and Elizabeth Boyle, "What Does Brexit Tell Us about Our Understanding of European Identity?" *Political Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (September 2019): 560.

1.2. Disposition

The introductory chapter, which consists of the purpose statement, previous research and a conceptual clarification, is followed by a background and contextualisation. The theory chapter that follows defines the topic of identity on a national and transnational level before elaborating on the process of identity formation. This process is summarised into four key aspects of identity formation that will correspond to the methodological and analytical dimensions. Here the concept of *Othering* is also elaborated on, before moving on to the method and material chapter. In the next chapter, the methodology of idea analysis is described, its construction and the process of usage. The analytical apparatus is presented, along with the conversion of the four concepts of identity formation into dimensions and a description of how these are operationalised in the analysis. This is followed by a description of the material along with a declaration of how the methodology was used in the analytical process. The analysis chapter, which is divided up by the three speeches, consists of an introduction of each speech followed by a discussion of their analytical dimensions one by one. Last of all, is a summary of our results and findings, concluding thoughts, suggestions for future research and a bibliography.

1.3. Previous Research

The theoretical focus of the thesis project will be on the formation of a European identity. The concept of a European identity has been widely researched and theorised in numerous ways. A major part of the mentioned publications will reappear in the theoretical and analytical discussion, however, some of them are only presented here in order to further elaborate on the subject.

British professor and sociologist Gerard Delanty's book *Formations of European Modernity: a Historical and Political Sociology of Europe*, addresses European identity as one important factor for the creation of European modernity. Political scientists Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein intend to map the evolution of European identity, as well as comments on its challenges and drawbacks in their anthology *European Identity.* Professor of social anthropology Cris Shore's book *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* adds to the subject from the perspective of European cultural policy. Professor of political science Bo Petersson and Professor of human geography Eric Clark, merge together the concepts of identity and boundaries in their book *Identity Dynamics and the Construction*

of Boundaries. Along with this, the book also elaborates on the concept of *Othering* based on discussions from a cross-disciplinary course at Lund University in 2001-2002.

The Swiss-Swedish professor of international conflict research Lars-Erik Cederman discusses the approaches of essentialists and constructivists on the matter of (political) identity which provides two different explanations to how identity is shaped. Within essentialism, it is believed that the formation of political identity is directly linked to variables of cultural background. The perception is that there is a straight line from the 'cultural raw material' to the desired political identity. This calls for a "rough one-to-one correspondence between ethnic units and nation-states".[4] However, constructivism considers this too simple as a result of the emphasis constructivists put on politics. Instead of a straight line, there is an active process that manipulates cultural symbols in favour of identity formation. It is the political activist who must select a given cultural area to influence.[5] Today's social scientists have adopted the dominant approach of constructivism.[6]

1.4.   The Conceptual Confusion of European Identity

The mentioning of the concept of *European identity* demands a clarification since the term implies the inclusion of all states belonging to the geographical continent of Europe. However, within this research field, *European identity* tends to refer to the common identity of the EU-member states solely. It could be seen as a discursive demarcation of political boundaries.[7] In the thesis, we will henceforth label the topic of the study *European identity*, even though it is referring to what could be called EU-identity, whilst advising awareness of this linguistic complication.

2.   Background and Contextualisation

The European Union today is the result of an ongoing process of European unification. Its predecessor was created in 1956 with the uniting of 6 member states and has since then enlarged

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[4] Lars-Erik Cederman, "Political boundaries and identity trade-offs," in *Constructing Europe's identity*, ed. Lars-Erik Cederman (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001),10.
[5] Ibid., 10-11.
[6] Magdalena Góra, and Katarzyna Zielińska, "Competing Visions: Discursive Articulations of Polish and European Identity after the Eastern Enlargement of the EU." *East European Politics & Societies* 33, no. 2 (May 2019): 333.
[7] Gerard Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 263-264.

to consist of 27 member states with a population of over 500 million people. However, there is still not quite an agreed-upon definition of what the EU is although there are many interpretations such as a political coalition, a multinational peace project, a pan-European sovereign superstate, a mere wishful notion, or an emerging superpower.[8] One thing that is clear is that the EU is a European project that is steadily growing along with the debated concept of its identity.

The original idea behind the foundation of the EU was to avert conflicts by forming political bonds between European nation-states rather than economic bonds. By implementing this idea, a mutually interdependent relationship was established, and political confrontations were avoided. This was established through the Schuman plan in 1950. However, the 1970s brought a shift in the focus and vision of the EU, which then became characterised by a more humanistic approach involving bringing together the people of a culturally diverse Europe.[9] The collaboration between the European nations evolved in multiple stages, from the initial coal and steel community, which developed into an economic community and eventually formed the European Union as it is today. As the humanistic approach progressed, the perception of integration changed from being seen as a side effect of the achieved economic and legal successes, to a cultural matter that worked as a political device for furthering the identity formation process.[10]

3.   Theoretical Perspectives

In order to analytically discuss how European identity is articulated and expressed in the selected material, the concept of identity itself must first be defined and applied to a European context. In this chapter, the concept of identity is firstly explained in a general sense, followed by further perspectives of socio-territorial belonging and the importance and challenges of European identity. Thereafter, the key aspects of the identity formation process are described. Then, identity is examined further in relation to the concept of *Othering*.

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[8] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 242, 264.
[9] Shore, *Building Europe: the cultural politics of European integration*, 16.
[10] Ibid., 1.

3.1. Identity as a Concept

Identity is a complex and abstract concept which can be elaborated into several different categories. In short it could be defined as "self-interpretation: an identity is the expression of how an individual or group sees itself; it is a specific kind of self-understanding".[11] Each individual has personal identities, as well as collective or systematic ones that affect their consciousness, self-awareness and the image they hold of themselves. All identities are to a certain extent socially constructed and imaginary which renders them subject to change.[12]

3.1.1. Socio-territorial Belonging

The national belonging has been firmly established as the main referent for collective identity for centuries, hence people identify themselves as Swedes, Germans, Italians and other nationalities alike. According to international relations professor Barry Buzan, this is in line with how the sovereign state is seen as the primary governing unit within the international system. He claims that: "the state has transcended, and often crushed, all other political units to the extent that it has become the universal standard of political legitimacy".[13] However, it could be argued that nation-states are no longer the only main referent on the contemporary global arena. It is possible that individuals and collectives could develop a (perhaps secondarily) transnational identity such as a European or a global one. In the words of Petersson and Clark, this is because of: "globalisation and supra-national regionalization (e.g. EU) from above, and sub-national and trans-national regionalization and strengthened local identities from below".[14] Delanty calls this process the "transnationalization of the nation-state"[15] which is similar to how the patterns of collective identification were once changed from the regional and local level to the national one.[16] Along with this paradigm-shift comes consequences for how humans define their socio-territorial belonging, meaning the attachment of their identity

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[11] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 265

[12] Roberta Capello, "Cohesion Policies and the Creation of a European Identity: The Role of Territorial Identity." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. 3 (April 2018): 492; Neil Fligstein, "Who are the Europeans and how does this matter for politics?" in *European Identity*, ed. Jeffrey T. Checkel, and Peter J. Katzenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134-135; Sam Pryke, "National and European Identity." *National Identities* 22, no. 1 (February 2020): 98.

[13] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era* (Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2007), 66.

[14] Petersson and Clark, "Boundary Dynamics and the Construction of Identities," 8.

[15] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 250.

[16] Ibid., 289.

to a geographical area, or "the feeling of belonging to territorial communities".[17] Considering this, there is a need to analyse identity from other perspectives than the national one.[18]

3.1.2. The Importance and Challenge of European Identity

It is in the interest of a nation (or any other unit) to aid the formation of a collective identity that brings its people together. This is in agreement with Buzan's theories on the essential components of a state, which consists of three parts:

> They must have a physical base of population and territory; they must have institutions
> of some sort which govern the physical base; and there must be some idea of the state
> which establishes its legitimacy in the minds of its people.[19]

The *idea of the state* that Buzan speaks of, could be seen as related to the concept of identity. The idea is an abstract but central component of the state, a common uniting thought that constructs meaning and identity and gives a notion of purpose.[20] It is of high importance, because without a sense of identity, without a binding idea of itself, a state might be "unable to sustain its existence in a competitive international system".[21] Therefore, it is one of the most central parts of constructing a well-founded and stable state or any other governing unit. The idea of the EU is inspired by the idea of the state; in other words, the formation of European identity is inspired by the makeup of national identity. It can be seen in how the EU has introduced symbols normally associated with the nation-state, such as the euro-currency, the 'national'-hymn, the EU-flag, the motto, the '*.eu*' online domain and Europe day. These so-called banal symbols are a way of expressing identity and consolidating it in the minds of the people.[22]

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[17] Patrizia Venturelli Christensen, "Until Further Notice: Post-Modernity and Socio-Territorial Belonging." *International Review of Sociology* 15, no. 3 (November 2005): 549.

[18] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 250; Petersson and Clark, "Boundary Dynamics and the Construction of Identities," 8.

[19] Buzan, *People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*, 71.

[20] Ibid., 74.

[21] Ibid., 70.

[22] "EU Symbols," About the EU, European Union, last modified June 20, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols_en.; Shore, *Building Europe: the cultural politics of European integration*, 47-49, 111; Sam Pryke, "National and European Identity." *National Identities* 22, no. 1 (February 2020): 96-97; Kaelble, "Identification and politicization of the EU" in *European Identity*, 203-204; Steve Fenton, and Robin Mann, "Nation and National Identity as a Boundary: The English, the British, and the European Union." *Anthropological Notebooks* 25, no. 1 (January 2019): 83.

However, in the case of the EU, there is an additional challenge in forming an identity without rivalling the national one, although still creating a sense of cohesion, togetherness and belonging. Furthermore, there is a profound challenge in forging together already established and diverse national, cultural and religious identities into a coherent form that could be applied to a European 'superstate'.[23] The EU has attempted this by adopting the motto 'Unity in Diversity', which refers to the continent's richness of cultures.[24] Senior lecturer in political science Anders Hellström, claims that the motto could be seen as a rhetorical device that "can be used to achieve greater homogeneity among the actors involved in the process of identity construction".[25] According to this line of thought, the actors could be seen as all EU-citizens, which are unified by the fact that their diverse cultures contribute to the European identity rather than dividing them from each other.

With this being said, it is important to note that the concepts of national and transnational identity do not have to be mutually exclusive, and to consider it as such is a so-called false opposition.[26] In the words of Delanty: "[w]hile it can be argued that the EU has created a European political identity, this has not replaced national identities, but sits alongside national identities to varying degrees of tension".[27] German historian and professor Hartmut Kaelble, states that the development of a European identity is not meant to overrule the national one, but merely to strengthen the cohesion within the EU-member states, and to work alongside the national identity. These different collective identities are not meant to be competing, but rather complementing each other.[28]

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[23] Buzan, *People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*, 138.

[24] "The EU motto," About the EU, European Union, last modified March 25, 2020. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/motto_en; Leith, Sim, Zwet, and Boyle, "What Does Brexit Tell Us about Our Understanding of European Identity?," 560; Valon Junuzi, "Refugee Crisis or Identity Crisis: Deconstructing the European Refugee Narrative." *Journal of Identity & Migration Studies* 13, no. 2 (November 2019): 122.

[25] Hellström, "(Re)making European Unity," 182.

[26] Holly Case, "Being European: East and West" in *European Identity*, ed. Jeffrey T. Checkel, and Peter J. Katzenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131.

[27] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 255.

[28] Kaelble, "Identification and politicization of the EU" in *European Identity*, 208; Góra, and Zielińska, "Competing Visions: Discursive Articulations of Polish and European Identity after the Eastern Enlargement of the EU," 346.

3.2.   The identity Formation Process

After reflecting on the subject of identity through multiple points of view, we have established four key aspects of identity formation which can be summed up by the words; *action*, *narrative*, *difference* and *multiple*.[29] These aspects can be seen as both descriptive and performative, meaning that they are both parts of the creation of identity (i.e. identity formation) as well as the expression and manifestation of identity.[30] Therefore, these key aspects will be used as guidelines in examining how the European identity is formed as well as expressed or manifested in the material. These key aspects of identity will be further developed below, and reoccur as analytical dimensions in the methodological work, which can be found in chapter 4.

3.1.1. Action

Identities are created in action. All actions contribute to the formation of ourselves and our identity, both when we are the initiators of these actions and when we are affected by others' actions towards us. The identity of an individual has been shaped by all the experiences, happenings, activities, and doings that individual has lived through. The individual's identity is shaped by the sum of all its growth, development, successes, progresses, downfalls, and crises. Thus, the action dimension can be seen as the most indicative of the performative side of identity.[31]

3.1.2. Narrative

Identities have a narrative dimension. A simplified way of defining narratives is to say that narratives are stories. In identity formation they are the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, as well as the way we tell these stories, our narrative self-image. It is the discourse we use to speak of our own history, our lives, but also how others speak of it. At times, others might try to impose ideas of our identity through the overtaking of our narrative, for example by means of political propaganda or manipulative history usage.[32]

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[29] Mattias Nowak, "Allt om Metod" (Powerpoint Presentation, EUHA27, Lund University, Lund, May 2, 2018).

[30] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 265.

[31] Ibid., 265.

[32] Capello, "Cohesion Policies and the Creation of a European Identity: The Role of Territorial Identity," 491-492.

3.1.3. Difference

Identity is based on difference. In order to define ourselves and our identity, we need someone or something to define ourselves against, which gives us a sense of the boundaries of our identity. The dichotomous relationship between the *self* and the so-called *Other* is central within the topic of identity and can also be described as the relation between *Us* and *Them*. The Other can also be defined in numerous different ways, which we will address further in the section below, named *Othering*.[33]

3.1.4. Multiple

Identities are multiple. There is not just one sole identity residing in each individual. Identities are layered, multifaceted, ever-growing and changeable; certain ones being more apparent depending on the situation we are in. Individuals can identify themselves through their gender, profession, generation, nationality, religion and so on - all at the same time. Our multiple identities are not mutually exclusive, they do not have to contradict or cancel each other out. We also have collective identities shared within certain groups or communities on both big and small scales such as families, friends, schools, sports teams, regions, nations, and similarly.[34]

3.3.   Othering

When defining our identity, we need a contrary referent to differentiate ourselves from in order to establish the boundaries of our identity. This dichotomous way of expressing what we are and what we are not can be referred to as the relationship between the Self and the Other. It can also be interpreted as the relationship between Me and You, Us and Them, and other binary oppositions. However, the dual view of the Self and the Other is, in fact, more complex than what it might seem; the Other is not always manifested in a common 'enemy' to unite against but can be embodied in a multitude of different ways. The discussion below will illustrate this along with examples of how Othering can be applied to the European Union.

Scott McIver, Senior Lecturer in Global Political Studies, elaborates on the concept of Other and Othering by defining the term as "a concrete, known group who are differentiated from

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[33] Craig Calhoun, "The virtues of inconsistency, identity and plurality in the conceptualization of Europe," in *Constructing Europe's identity*, ed. Lars-Erik Cederman (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 47-48.

[34] Fligstein, "Who are the Europeans and how does this matter for politics?," 134-135.

us".[35] This definition could be seen as vague, but McIver makes the following categorisation to clarify it further:

- *The Other in friction with*. The idea of the 'in friction with' can be seen as the interaction between sea and land. Just as the landscape is shaped by the sea, so is identity shaped 'in friction with' its Other. It is through comparison and differentiation with the Other that the identity formation occurs.[36] The EU may be interpreted as 'in friction with' East Europe. The definition of East Europe has been inconsistent and changeable ever since the division of East and West after World War II. Today, after the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the 'East' is essentially associated with Turkey and Russia.[37]

- *The threatening Other*. The threatening presence of an Other can cause fear on the Self and therefore affects the formation of its identity. This type is a classic example of how the Other has most commonly been perceived as an enemy. An example of the threatening Other could be seen in how European nations in the past have viewed each other in times of war.

- *The admired Other*. The Self looks up to the admired Other and compares itself to it in an idealising way. The threat-based motivation imposes fear on the Self while the opportunity-based induces inspiration.[38] Nations could compare themselves to the admired Other for "aspirational purposes – that is, the improvement of the nation(-state)".[39] The EU could be seen as the admired Other by other nations who wish to be part of the Union, which is illustrated by its accessions and enlargements over the years.

- *The Other contained within us*. The concept of an Other 'contained within us' refers to how there are conflicting interests within the Self. [40] For example, within Europe and the EU there are divisions of north, south, east, west and central, which are based on differences.[41] Another way of viewing of Other 'contained within us' is through the groupings of nations such as the Benelux Union, the Visegrád Group and the Schengen area.

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[35] Scott McIver, "Contextualising National Identity: Others, Othering and Irishness," In *Identity dynamics and the construction of boundaries*, ed. Bo Petersson, and Eric Clark (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 45.

[36] McIver, "Contextualising National Identity: Others, Othering and Irishness," 47.

[37] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 90; Merje Kuus, "Multiple Europes Boundaries and Margins," *Geopolitics* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 568.

[38] McIver, "Contextualising National Identity: Others, Othering and Irishness," 49-50.

[39] Ibid., 51.

[40] Ibid., 46.

[41] Kuus, "Multiple Europes Boundaries and Margins," 569.

- *The mirror-image*. The Other seen as a mirror-image has similarities to the Other 'contained within us' since it is a reflection of us. We are mirrored by the Other, not opposites nor quite the same but rather reversed or inverted.[42] The USA could be seen as the mirror-image of the EU, since they both have federal characteristics, although with the distinction that the USA is one country while the EU is made up of multiple countries in collaboration.[43]

In conclusion, Othering is more complex than a binary relationship between Us and Them. Since identities are multiple and multifaceted, so are the Other which we differentiate the many sides of our identity against. Thus, depending on the situation and perspective, the EU can both be seen as the Self and the Other.[44]

4. Method and Material

4.1. Method

Since the concept of identity is an abstract notion and idea, idea analysis is a well-suited method for analysing the topic of this thesis. In the analysis we assume a hermeneutical position. The hermeneutic tradition, meaning the theory of interpretation, takes into account that our conclusions can be seen as merely one interpretation out of many possible ones. In accordance with the hermeneutic circle, the material in its entirety is interpreted through the perspective of its individual parts, and its individual parts are interpreted through the perspective of the material as a whole. Thusly, European identity is interpreted in its entirety from the perspective of the separate dimensions of identity, and vice versa. In the analysis we are also aware of how our own reflexivity affects our interpretation, meaning our previous knowledge and experience within this research field.[45]

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[42] Ağcasulu, and Ossewaarde, "Turkey's Otherness in the Identity Discourses of European Parliament," 362.

[43] Shore, *Building Europe: the cultural politics of European integration*, 15-16; Kuus, "Multiple Europes Boundaries and Margins," 568; Luiza Bialasiewicz, and Claudio Minca, "Old Europe, New Europe: For a Geopolitics of Translation." *Area* 37, no. 4 (December 2005): 365-366.

[44] Leith, Sim, Zwet, and Boyle, "What Does Brexit Tell Us about Our Understanding of European Identity?," 560; Kuus, "Multiple Europes Boundaries and Margins," 569.

[45] Göran Bergström, and Kristina Boréus, "Samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys," in *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys*. 4. ed, ed. Kristina Boréus, and Göran Bergström (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2018), 31.; Göran Bergström, and Per-Anders Svärd, "Idé- och ideologianalys," in *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text-*

The method and material chapter continues with a definition of idea analysis as a method and is followed by an outline of the methodological process. Thereafter, the previously mentioned theoretical concepts (the four main aspects of identity formation which were introduced in chapter 3) are restated as methodological tools and applied to the context of European identity. The chapter is concluded with a more elaborate presentation of the primary material, the State of the Union speeches.

4.1.1.   Idea Analysis

Idea analysis and ideological analysis are often mentioned synonymously, although both methodologies can be used either in interaction with each other or separately. The exact definition of the term idea is difficult to determine since ideas are abstract notions with ambiguous significations to each person. However, when compared to the term ideology the meaning becomes more comprehensible. Ideologies can be defined as politically characterised ideas or a decided upon collection of ideas and social beliefs. Considering this, ideas can be seen as more generally held thoughts and beliefs. An ideological analysis is focused on examining different ideological standpoints, so-called *isms* such as liberalism, socialism, conservatism, and others alike. These types of political standpoints and opinions are also frequently occurring in formal addresses and statements such as the State of the Union speeches. However, this analysis is limited to focus on the ideas that are being expressed in the speeches, rather than the underlying political and ideological factors behind these expressed ideas. Thus, idea analysis constitutes a more suitable method for the purpose of the thesis rather than ideological analysis.[46]

According to the Swedish professor of political science Ludvig Beckman, idea analyses can be executed in several different ways; through descriptive idea analysis, explanatory idea analysis, critical idea analysis or a combination of all three.[47] The method will contain elements of mainly descriptive and explanatory analysis, with an emphasis on the former. However, the name descriptive idea analysis is slightly misleading as it does not only consist of descriptions

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och diskursanalys. 4. ed, ed. Kristina Boréus, and Göran Bergström (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2018), 153.

[46] Bergström and Svärd, "Idé- och ideologianalys," 133-135.

[47] Ludvig Beckman, *Grundbok i idéanalys: det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer* (Stockholm: Santérus, 2005), 48, 55, 80.

of the ideas that are being studied. A descriptive idea analysis should convey something about the material that is not already given and self-evident or assist in uncovering new interpretations of the material, in order to contribute with scientific value. The purpose of using descriptive idea analysis in the thesis is to systematise and clarify the significance of the arguments and ideas which are being expressed, whilst also deepening the understanding of these ideas in relation to the subject of European identity.[48]

There are two methodological tools most commonly used within idea analysis: ideal types and dimensions.[49] Ideal types can be explained as constructions of thoughts that try to capture the characteristics of a viewpoint or an idea. It is important to point out that since ideal types are a concentration of thoughts, they are an extreme image that does not necessarily have resemblance to reality, "but against which reality can be measured".[50] The point of ideal types is to compare and distinguish the differences that are noteworthy in the research material by merging together constituents of ideas and arguments into one cohesive viewpoint. Dimensions, on the other hand, disassemble these constructions into smaller subcategories to be able to differentiate the parts of an argumentation or ideology.[51]

Dimensions can be said to consist of the most important and relevant aspects or features of the idea in question. In order to create relevant dimensions, it must first be decided what phenomena or arguments are of interest to the study. These phenomena or arguments are then specified into different dimensions and operationalised into an analytical tool in order to make them measurable and usable in an analytical sense. However, there is no universal rule for how an idea analysis should be formulated and in each case the choice of analytical tools is always adapted to the topic and material in question. In this thesis, the most important features of the concept of identity must be defined, in order to be applicable on a European level. Therefore, the usage of dimensions goes in line with the purpose of the study. In our case, the four key aspects of identity formation (as mentioned in chapter 3) are converted into analytical dimensions and used to examine how European identity is expressed in the material. These

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[48] Bergström and Svärd, "Idé- och ideologianalys," 140-141; Beckman, *Grundbok i idéanalys: det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer*, 49-51; Ludvig Beckman, and Carina Ljungwald, "Idéanalys," in *Juridik och rättsvetenskap i socialt arbete*, ed. Katarina Alexius Borgström, and Anna Hollander (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2009), 69-70.

[49] Beckman, *Grundbok i idéanalys: det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer*, 25

[50] Beckman, and Ljungwald, "Idéanalys," 74.

[51] Beckman, *Grundbok i idéanalys: det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer*, 28-29

dimensions are then applied in the form of questions addressed to the material, in order to search for both the explicit and implicit messages of the text.[52]

4.1.1.1. Action

How is the European identity created in action? In the context of the EU, the actions that will be significant are the Union's development, growth, successes, progresses, downfalls and crises articulated in the material. All of them are not necessarily physical acts per se, but rather larger processes that develop over time. One prominent part of the action dimension consists of the crises the EU has endured during the last ten years since the material reflects a period that in many ways can be defined as the EU's time of crisis. The common EU-identity might partially have been forged by going through different strenuous crises over the last decade; both internal ones such as the 2008 financial crisis, and external ones like the refugee crisis in 2015.[53] Delanty argues that: "it has often been noted that identity arises most strikingly in moments of crisis".[54] Thus, these crises challenge the idea of European identity but could also work as a common denominator to unite against and cooperate around in formative action.[55] With this in consideration, one of the main focuses of the action dimension is on the rhetorical repetition of crises such as the financial crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit.

4.1.1.2. Narrative

What narrative dimensions can be found in European identity? The narrative dimension will examine how the EU speaks of itself and shapes its self-image, based on how the speeches express and articulate the EU's visions, values, ideals and norms. When examining these expressions, a distinction can be made between three different types of narrative perspectives. Firstly, there are expressions that say something about what the EU is or stands for. Secondly, there are expressions that say something about what the EU is *not* or does *not* stand for. Thirdly, there are expressions that say something about what the EU wants to be or stand for in the future but does not yet live up to. The analysis will also take notice of any descriptions of the

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[52] Beckman, *Grundbok i idéanalys: det kritiska studiet av politiska texter och idéer*, 24-28; Beckman, and Ljungwald, "Idéanalys," 69-73; Bergström and Svärd, "Idé- och ideologianalys," 140-141,153, 170.

[53] Francesca Romana Ammaturo, "Europe and Whiteness: Challenges to European Identity and European Citizenship in Light of Brexit and the 'Refugees/Migrants Crisis.'" *European Journal of Social Theory* 22, no. 4 (November 2019): 551; Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe*, 149.

[54] Delanty, *Formations of European modernity: a historical and political sociology of Europe,* 266.

[55] Ammaturo, "Europe and Whiteness: Challenges to European Identity and European Citizenship in Light of Brexit and the 'Refugees/Migrants Crisis,'" 550.

EU's history and shared heritage since these factors make up an integral part of the narrative dimension of identity.[56]

4.1.1.3. Difference

What or who is the Other to the European identity, and what type of Other is it? Wherever there is a comparison of the EU, there might also be a possible indication of an Other; be it a nation, another continent or even an equivalent union. However, in some cases the Other might not be explicitly expressed, therefore these references will be located in the material in order to determine the subject of the Other. It will also be noted what type of Other is implied; the 'in friction with', the threatening, the admired, the 'contained within us' or the mirror-image.

4.1.1.4. Multiple

How can European identity be said to be multiple? The multiple dimension will examine how the speakers balance the expression of a collective European identity with already established national, regional and other identities of the inhabitants of the member states. Kaelble suggests viewing European identity as "part of an ensemble of multiple identities".[57] The analysis will describe how they present national identities in comparison to supranational ones, and if they have a particular focus on either formulation.

4.2. Material

The material consists of three State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018. As the name would suggest, the EU's State of the Union speeches serve the purpose of keeping the EU representatives and citizens informed of the current state of the Union. They set a discursive, communicative agenda for the priorities that will come within the next year. Aside from European election years, the speeches are held every autumn and are reminiscent of the yearly State of the Union Address in the USA. The speeches were established in the 2010 *Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission* in the Lisbon Treaty, with the incentive:

> Each year in the first part-session of September, a State of the Union debate will be held in which the President of the Commission shall deliver an address, taking stock of the current year and looking ahead to priorities for the following years. To that end, the

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[56] Capello, "Cohesion Policies and the Creation of a European Identity: The Role of Territorial Identity," 265, 297.
[57] Kaelble, "Identification and politicization of the EU," 208.

President of the Commission will in parallel set out in writing to Parliament the main elements guiding the preparation of the Commission Work Programme for the following year.[58]

Since then, eight State of the Union speeches have been held in total. The inclusion of three different speeches, held a few years apart from each other, intends to provide a widespread and thorough basis for studying the topic of European identity. Since the yearly tradition of presenting the State of the Union speech began in 2010, the very first of the speeches provides a natural point of departure for this study. The State of the Union speech from 2015 is included specifically because of its coverage of the refugee crisis from the same year, which is of interest in the context of crises in relation to European identity. Additionally, it would have been ideal to include a more recent speech from 2019. However, because of the European election in 2019 and the following change of commission in the EU, there was no State of the Union speech held in September of 2019. At the time of writing, the 2020 State of the Union speech has not yet been held. Thus, the final speech of the analysis is the latest State of the Union speech from September 2018.

These three State of the Union speeches are the primary sources of the thesis, taken directly from the official website of the European Commission. They are available to download in several official EU-languages for free, each being between 10-20 pages long in print.[59] The focus on only three speeches is due to limitations in time and capacity, even though further research could be done by examining additional speeches and material published by the EU. The actors behind the material are the representatives of the European Commission, which could also be seen as the representatives of the European Union as a whole. Naturally, these speeches alone cannot be said to represent all aspects of European identity, since identity is expressed and manifested in a multitude of ways. The ideas expressed in the State of the Union speeches merely constitute one part of a larger process of identity formation. Thus, the analysis

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[58] "Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission," Interinstitutional Agreements, Official Journal of the European Union, last modified November 20, 2010, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:304:0047:0062:EN:PDF, 16.

[59] "State of the Union speeches by President Jean-Claude Juncker," Priorities, European Commission, accessed April 23, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/state-union-speeches_en; "José Manuel Durão Barroso President of the European Commission State of the Union 2010 Strasbourg, 7th September 2010," Press corner, European Commission, accessed April 23, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411.

could be considered as presenting a few examples of our interpretation of identity formation on an EU-level.

The three State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018 were all written and held under different prevailing circumstances and contexts, even though the overall function of them remains consistent. Therefore, the four dimensions; action, narrative, difference and multiple; will be varyingly apparent in each speech. Certain dimensions will take up more or less space in the analysis depending on what examples and evidence can be found in each speech. Additionally, it could be noted that the four dimensions are interacting and at times overlapping each other. Therefore, some examples from the speeches could be placed into several of the dimensions, even though they are only presented in the ones that we consider to be most relevant.

5.   Analysis

The analysis will consist of the three chosen State of the Union speeches presented in chronological order, which will be studied with the four theoretical, methodological and analytical dimensions in mind: action, narrative, difference and multiple. To begin with, there will be an introduction of each speech before the analytical dimensions are discussed one by one. Within each dimension, there will be excerpts included from the speeches as well as a motivation for why we consider them to be representative of the chosen dimension.

5.1.   State of Union 2010

This was the first State of the Union speech held by the former president of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso in Strasbourg on the 7th of September 2010. The speech was the very first of its kind and focused heavily on the Union's progress, advances and greater goals for the future in a visionary way. However, the effect of the euro-crisis in 2008 is also noticeable throughout the speech.

5.1.1.   Action

The 2008 financial crisis and its effects on Europe are still apparent in the theme of the 2010 State of the Union speech. Barroso states: "[t]he citizens of Europe expect us to take the action

needed to get out of this crisis".[60] Here is an example of how Barroso himself points out the connection between action and crisis. He aims at inspiring the EU and its member states to act for the common good rather than separate interests. Moreover, he stresses: "[o]ver the last year, the economic and financial crisis has put our Union before one of its greatest challenge [sic] ever. Our interdependence was highlighted and our solidarity was tested like never before".[61] However, the crisis did not only bring hardships with it but also had positive effects. The action dimension is not limited to entail crises solely but positive effects as well, which is illustrated by the following quote:

> When we deal with our every day problems, we sometimes lose perspective and forget our achievements. A peaceful and successful transition to a European Union that has doubled in size and is negotiating further accessions. A sound currency, the euro, that is a major currency of the world. A strong partnership with our neighbourhood that strengthens us all. If we act decisively, then we have nothing to fear from the 21st century.[62]

Amidst the time of crisis, Barroso points to the achievements of the EU and its people. He accentuates the importance of looking towards what has been accomplished, rather than the negative outcomes, especially when a crisis affects the continent. Additionally, he encourages the Union and its people to take action for the future.

5.1.2.   Narrative

As previously mentioned in the method, the narrative dimension can be viewed through three different perspectives; expressions of what the EU is or stands for, expressions of what the EU is not or does not stand for, and expressions of what the EU is not yet, but wish to be in the future. The following quote implies what European identity is and what it currently identifies itself with: "[e]verything we do is for the citizens of Europe. A fundamental dimension of our European project is precisely building an area of freedom, security and justice".[63] Here certain values that the EU stands for can be noticed, which are values that the EU want to build its future on. Barroso elaborates on these values further:

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[60] José Manuel Durão Barroso, "State of the Union 2010" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 7, 2010). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411, accessed April 23, 2020, 10.
[61] Ibid., 2.
[62] Ibid., 8.
[63] Ibid., 6.

Europeans will find that their fundamental rights and obligations exist wherever they go. Everyone in Europe must respect the law, and the governments must respect human rights, including those of minorities. Racism and xenophobia have no place in Europe. On such sensitive issues, when a problem arises, we must all act with responsibility. I make a strong appeal not to re-awaken the ghosts of Europe's past.[64]

Here a duality can be noticed, since the quote expresses both what the EU is and stands for and what it is not and does not stand for. The first part of the quote illustrates the positive values that the EU wants to uphold, whilst the mentioning of racism and xenophobia are clear examples of what the EU condemns. Continuing to the last perspective, the following quote can be said to refer to aims and goals that are not yet fully achieved, but sought after as a part of the future European identity:

Many of the decisions we will take this year will have long-term implications. They will define the kind of Europe we want. They will define a Europe of opportunity where those that aspire are elevated and those in need are not neglected. A Europe that is open to the world and open to its people. A Europe that delivers economic, social and territorial cohesion.[65]

These visions are not expressed as if they were already fulfilled, but as aspirational. In regard to the performative aspects of identity, this articulation of aims and goals can be seen as part of the process of European identity formation.

5.1.3.   Difference

The first State of the Union speech was focused on visionary goals and desires rather than the differentiation between Europe and Others. This can be seen in the dimension of difference due to the fact that it takes up less space than the other dimensions in the 2010 speech. Despite the lack of a pronounced Other, an indication of Othering can be discerned embedded within the material:

Being a global player also means standing up for our values. Human rights are not negotiable. I am shocked about how the rights of women are being infringed in many countries. I am appalled when I hear that Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani is sentenced

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[64] José Manuel Durão Barroso, "State of the Union 2010" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 7, 2010). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411, accessed April 23, 2020, 7.
[65] Ibid., 2.

to death by stoning. This is barbaric beyond words. In Europe we condemn such acts which have no justification under any moral or religious code.[66]

Regardless of the fact that there is no concrete Other within this quote, it can still be considered as a type of Othering. Here it is shown through the opposing of different values and standards rather than an articulated entity. Focusing on the last sentence, it could be argued that it refers to an Other 'in friction with' or even a threatening one that stands for differentiating values.

5.1.4.   Multiple

A reoccurring argument within the speeches is the idea of the EU member states being stronger together rather than separately. The use of this argument can be seen as a way of encouraging multiple identities, rather than favouring the European identity over all other ones. Within these quotes the President refers to several different types of collective identities other than the European or even the national one:

> This is Europe's moment of truth. Europe must show it is more than 27 different national solutions. We either swim together, or sink separately. We will only succeed if, whether acting nationally, regionally or locally we think European.[67]

> At the end of the day, we are all in the same boat, the European institutions, the Member states, the regions. The Union will not achieve its objectives in Europe without the Member States. And the Member States will not achieve their objectives in the world without the European Union.[68]

These quotes allude not just to national and supranational identities, but regional and local identities as well. However, as can be seen in the first quote they are all mentioned as incorporated under one European umbrella. The different types of identification do not challenge each other, but are in fact all part of the European identity, as established by Kaelble.[69] The expressions 'swim together, or sink separately' and 'we are all in the same boat' further strengthens the imagery of togetherness and belonging. Fenton and Mann also acknowledge the last expression as commonly used in promotion of national identity. They

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[66] José Manuel Durão Barroso, "State of the Union 2010" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 7, 2010). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411, accessed April 23, 2020, 9.
[67] Ibid., 2.
[68] Ibid., 10.
[69] Kaelble, "Identification and politicization of the EU," 208.

refer to this tactic as "sameness".[70] Furthermore, Barroso indicates the presence of European identity through these multiple levels of identification:

> Europe is not only Brussels or Strasbourg. It is our regions. It is the cities, towns and villages you come from. When you walk round your constituencies, you can point to the European projects that are so important for their prosperity.[71]

The final quote can be considered as one way of pointing to how the European identity is present in the everyday lives of Europeans. The EU is directly or indirectly affecting the identity of the EU-citizens on both a large and small scale, albeit subconsciously.

5.2. State of Union 2015

This State of the Union speech was held by Jean-Claude Juncker in Strasbourg on the 9th of September 2015 and was the first of Juncker's State of the Union speeches since his admittance as the president of the European Commission in 2014. The title *Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity* can be said to refer to the refugee crisis, which is very much reflected in the speech since it is presented in a much more serious and reprimanding tone.

5.2.1. Action

As in the former speech, crisis response is also on the agenda in the 2015 speech. This year it was the refugee crisis that hit the continent hard. Juncker addresses the refugee crisis and Europe's reaction: "now is not the time to take fright. It is time for bold, determined and concerted action by the European Union, by its institutions and by all its Member States".[72] The crisis forces the EU to take action and by doing so the performative process of identity formation is furthered. These actions have created *re*-actions which are also a part of the European identification process. However, the reactions might not always be positive which becomes apparent in the following quote:

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[70] Fenton, and Mann, "Nation and National Identity as a Boundary: the English, the British, and the European Union," 82-83.

[71] José Manuel Durão Barroso, "State of the Union 2010" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 7, 2010). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411, accessed April 23, 2020, 10.

[72] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2015" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 9, 2015). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 6.

More fundamentally, the crisis has left us with very wide differences across the euro area and the EU as a whole. It has damaged our growth potential. It has added to the long-term trend of rising inequalities. All this has fuelled doubts about social progress, the value of change and the merits of belonging together.[73]

As can be seen, the negative reactions of the crisis add to negative consequences. Here Juncker illustrates how these consequences cause the EU's development to stagnate or decline due to a lack of action. He attempts to change the focus from viewing these challenges as problems to regarding them as opportunities instead: "[l]et us not forget, we are an ageing continent in demographic decline. We will be needing talent. Over time, migration must change from a problem to be tackled to a well-managed resource".[74] In this sense, the refugee crisis could be seen as having positive outcomes for the European continent. This could also be beneficial for the migrants as they might have a chance to help shape the future for Europe.

5.2.2. Narrative

The first narrative perspective, regarding how the EU perceives itself, can be noticed when Juncker mentions: "Europe today, in spite of many differences amongst its Member States, is by far the wealthiest and most stable continent in the world".[75] He highlights the EU's positive achievements as main factors of its prominence on the global arena. However, there are also instances when the EU demonstrates dissatisfaction with itself and refers to aspects that could be improved upon which can be seen in the following quote:

But pushing back boats from piers, setting fire to refugee camps, or turning a blind eye to poor and helpless people: that is not Europe. Europe is the baker in Kos who gives away his bread to hungry and weary souls. [...] Europe is the policeman in Austria who welcomes exhausted refugees upon crossing the border. This is the Europe I want to live in. The crisis is stark and the journey is still long. I am counting on you [...] to show European courage going forward, in line with our common values and our history.[76]

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[73] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2015" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 9, 2015). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 15.
[74] Ibid., 10.
[75] Ibid., 7.
[76] Ibid., 11.

Here it is apparent what is referred to as being 'not Europe' as well as what 'Europe is'. The 'is'-argument points towards values that the European identity complies with, and the implicit message could be interpreted as the EU being a defender of these ethics and values. The speech focuses heavily on encouraging solidarity, which is a central value to the narrative dimension of European identity. This is apparent when Juncker states:

> I have said in the past that we are too seldom proud of our European heritage and our European project. Yet, in spite of our fragility, our self-perceived weaknesses, today it is Europe that is sought as a place of refuge and exile.[77]

The quote refers to how history has shaped the way Europe and the EU is today. It serves the purpose of reminding the audience, which could be considered as all the inhabitants of the EU, not to forget their shared history. This historical element is an important part of the narrative dimension of identity.

5.2.3.   Difference

In this dimension there are two distinct occasions where the Other is expressed. The first occasion is when Juncker talks about the refugee crisis and how Europe is sought after by the refugees. Juncker says: "[i]t is Europe today that represents a beacon of hope, a haven of stability in the eyes of women and men in the Middle East and in Africa".[78] This example is in accordance with the concept of the admired Other which puts the EU in the position of the admired one and the refugees as the admirers. The statement is then followed by: "[t]hat is something to be proud of and not something to fear".[79] However, from the perspective of the European people, the refugees are regarded as the threatening Other. The perception of the refugees as the threatening Other could be based on feelings of uncertainty.[80]

In a later part of the speech another example of Othering is indicated. Juncker mentions the EU's border security and cautions countries on the outskirts of the EU: "[w]e need unity when it comes to the security of our Eastern Member States, notably the Baltics. The security and the borders of EU Member States are untouchable. I want this to be understood very clearly in

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[77] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2015" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 9, 2015). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 7.
[78] Ibid., 7.
[79] Ibid., 7.
[80] McIver, "Contextualising National Identity: Others, Othering and Irishness," 49.

Moscow".[81] Here, the referral to the capital of Russia insinuates a type of Othering. It could be argued that Russia here poses as the threatening Other and Juncker wants to send a clear signal to Russia not to overstep their boundaries. Russia could also be interpreted as the Other 'in friction with' since they are seen as having an influence on the EU border. Therefore, Juncker defends the border by asserting it as impermeable.

5.2.4. Multiple

The severe effects of the refugee crisis are also reflected in the multiple dimension. The argument of being stronger together is still apparent, but here with an emphasis on the solidarity aspect. Juncker states: "we can achieve much more by acting collectively, than we could each on our own",[82] which is indicative of the need to help each other out in order to endure difficult times. All member states must also be involved in the common cause of shaping the future that they want. Additionally, he speaks of the different sides of the European Union, which can be interpreted as multiple aspects of its identity:

> Who is the Union that represents Europe's 507 million citizens? The Union is not just Brussels or Strasbourg. The Union is the European Institutions. The Union is also the Member States. It is national governments and national Parliaments. It is enough if just one of us fails to deliver for all of us to stumble.[83]

This quote can be described as an expression of how the different types of identification, both the European and national one, are all interdependent. What affects one identity directly affects all indirectly, which becomes even more evident in a moment of crisis.

5.3. State of Union 2018

The latest State of the Union speech as of date, was held by Jean-Claude Juncker in Strasbourg on the 12th of September 2018 and is titled *The Hour of European Sovereignty*. It was his fourth and final State of the Union speech as president of the European Commission, before the European election in 2019. The speech deals with the consequences of the Brexit-referendum, and the continuous debate on how the Brexit-procedure should be handled.

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[81] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2015" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 9, 2015). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 20-21.
[82] Ibid., 20.
[83] Ibid., 24.

5.3.1. Action

The action dimension focuses heavily on crises, which is also reflected in the general attitude of uncertainty of the population. Juncker speaks of ways the EU can be improved in order to better reassure the European people: "Europeans deserve better than uncertainty and confused objectives. They deserve clarity of intent, not approximations or half-measures".[84] He expresses this to convey that the EU intends to take more initiative. The depiction of the Europeans' uncertainty goes in line with Ammaturo's reasoning on how the European climate has been characterised by precariousness and a presumption of approaching crises.[85] The intention of improving the Union can also be seen in how the EU is showing an awareness of how it is not yet perfect, but keeps learning from its experiences and mistakes: "our efforts will continue unabated. We will keep working to render this imperfect Union that little bit more perfect with each passing day."[86] Considering how the European identity is created through its performative actions, this quote refers to how it is an ongoing process.

The most prominent crisis referred to in the 2018 speech was the UK's departure from the EU. Brexit was the result of an action that was not initiated by the EU, but by one of its member states. However, the EU was still greatly affected by this decision, which Juncker comments on in the speech: "we respect the British decision to leave our Union, even though we continue to regret it deeply".[87] The European Union was forced to take action on this matter and express its stance on the situation, which can be summed up in the quote: "the European Commission, this Parliament and all other 26 Member States will always show loyalty and solidarity with Ireland when it comes to the Irish border".[88] Since the border that is being referred to is between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, it could also be seen as a border between the EU and the UK. Juncker makes it clear that the EU will stand with EU member states rather than former member states in this conflict of interest. Naturally, this course of action has affected the EU since it has lost one of its member states and thereby a part of its identity. Although

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[84] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 10.

[85] Ammaturo, "Europe and Whiteness: Challenges to European Identity and European Citizenship in Light of Brexit and the 'Refugees/Migrants Crisis,'" 551.

[86] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 2.

[87] Ibid., 9.

[88] Ibid., 9.

Brexit is regrettable from the EU's point of view, there are signs that the European identity will not be significantly negatively affected in the long run, but on the contrary.[89]

5.3.2. Narrative

When considering the three types of narrative perspectives, this first quote adheres to the perspective of what the EU is or stands for. Juncker describes concrete values that the EU represents and wants to uphold, such as: "Europe's high standards for food safety, workers' rights, the environment and consumer rights".[90] These values are sought after to such an extent that the EU considers them to be one of its main exports. Another example of how the EU regards itself can be noticed in the quote: "Europe is the guardian of peace. We should be thankful we live on a peaceful continent, made possible by the European Union".[91] It refers back to the goal of peacekeeping that was in mind when the European Union was first established. Another example that could be placed in the first narrative perspective is when Juncker states: "Europe is a continent of openness and tolerance. It will remain so. Europe will never be a fortress, turning its back on the world or those suffering within it".[92] The difference here is that this quote describes both what the EU regards itself as, and what it does not identify with; and thereby fulfils the criteria for both the first and second narrative perspective. Continuing with the historical side of the narrative dimension, the following quote goes further into the historical aspects of the European self-narrative:

> There can therefore be not a moment's respite in our efforts to build a more united Europe. Europe can export stability, as we have done with the successive enlargements of our Union. For me, these are and will remain success stories – for we were able to reconcile Europe's history and geography.[93]

This quote serves the purpose of reminding the audience of Europe's common history and shared heritage. The foundation of the EU's current moral values and identity is to be found in its past experiences. Learning from past mistakes and achievements help to shape the future

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[89] Leith, Sim, Zwet, and Boyle, "What Does Brexit Tell Us about Our Understanding of European Identity?," 563.

[90] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 3.

[91] Ibid., 2.

[92] Ibid., 6.

[93] Ibid., 4.

that the EU wants. Juncker further stresses this by saying that it is Europe's "eternal duty, our perpetual responsibility"[94] to make sure that Europe never again has to experience war.

5.3.3.   Difference

To begin with, there is a clear example of Othering in the speech, although it is not apparent which type it could be considered as: "[w]e must find unity when it comes to the Western Balkans – once and for all. Should we not, our immediate neighbourhood will be shaped by others".[95] The phrase 'shaped by others' brings the Other 'in friction with' to mind, which goes in line with McIver's reasoning of how the interaction between sea and land shapes the landscape.[96] Thus, the 'others' referred to could be interpreted as countries in the periphery of the EU. As mentioned earlier, the term European identity often solely refers to EU-identity. However, in both the previous and next quote Juncker speaks of a wider European context which includes non-EU member states: "we must show that Europe can overcome differences between North and South, East and West, left and right. Europe is too small to let itself be divided in halves or quarters."[97] The quote could be interpreted as the Other 'contained within us'. The inhabitants of the Union could be seen as strangers to each other which is something Juncker wants to eliminate. He argues that there is no space or place for discord, the people of Europe must stand united and stop Othering each other.

Juncker later presents the idea of Africa as "Europe's twin continent".[98] This opens up the possibility of seeing Africa as an Other in this case. However, not as it has been perceived in Europe's past through exotification and colonialism, but rather as a sibling. Juncker also addresses the former relationship between the continents by saying: "Africa does not need charity, it needs true and fair partnerships. And Europe needs this partnership just as much".[99] This coincides with the notion of the Other as a mirror-image. Here, Africa poses as a mirror-image to Europe, and as its equal.

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[94] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 2.

[95] Ibid., 4.

[96] McIver, "Contextualising national identity: others, othering and Irishness," 47.

[97] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 6.

[98] Ibid., 8.

[99] Ibid., 8.

5.3.4. Multiple

These quotes from the 2018 State of the Union speech can be said to illustrate the EU's intention for the European identity not to overrule the national identity, but to work alongside it: "European sovereignty is born of Member States' national sovereignty and does not replace it. Sharing sovereignty – when and where needed – makes each of our nation states stronger".[100] This reasoning could be applied to European identity simply by replacing the word sovereignty with identity since the premises remain the same. Thus, European identity is born from the national one. In the following quote comments on the other side of the spectrum, the type of nationalism that could have negative effects on both European and other collective identities. Juncker states: "I would like us to reject unhealthy nationalism and embrace enlightened patriotism. We should never forget that the patriotism of the 21st Century is two-fold: both European and national, with one not excluding the other".[101] Juncker accentuates that nationalism is excluding of multiple identities. On the other hand, in patriotism both the national and the supranational identity are included and can therefore coexist. This logic is in agreement with Kaelble's thoughts on how European and national identity complement each other.[102]

Finally, Juncker states: "This belief that "united we stand taller" is the very essence of what it means to be part of the European Union".[103] The quote can be interpreted as reflecting the dynamic relationship between the EU and its member states. The European identity cannot exist without the national one, and the national identity is enhanced through the European perspective.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this thesis was to investigate how European identity is expressed and articulated in the European Union's State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018.

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[100] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 5.
[101] Ibid., 12.
[102] Kaelble, "Identification and politicization of the EU," 208.
[103] Jean-Claude Juncker, "State of the Union 2018" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf, accessed April 23, 2020, 6.

This was done through a methodological idea analysis using dimensions as analytical tools. The dimensions were constructed from four theoretical aspects of identity formation - *action*, *narrative*, *difference* and *multiple* - which were applied to the context of European identity and operationalised into a methodological and analytical apparatus. Thus, the four aspects of identity formation reoccurred in our thesis as both theoretical, methodological and analytical dimensions. Through these dimensions we found both explicit and implicit examples of expressions and articulations of European identity in all three State of the Union speeches. The main points of these findings will be summarised below.

In the action dimension, the focus of the speeches is placed on crises that have changed the European political landscape and identity. The actions that have affected the EU have resulted in an enlargement of its geographical area, as well as diminishment through the loss of a member state. Crises such as the financial crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit; have contributed to the European identity formation in both positive and negative ways by presenting challenges to it, but also contributing to the making of a stronger European unity and cohesion.

One of the main features of the narrative dimension of European identity is how it can be divided into three different narrative perspectives along with the addition of a historical viewpoint. It can be noticed how the statements that fit the first perspective, i.e. what the EU is, are mostly expressed in a positive manner in the speeches. However, when the speaker begins to refer to negative sides of European identity, these are often expressed through the second narrative perspective, i.e. what the EU is not. It could be seen as a rhetorical way for the EU to not identify with its negative characteristics, but merely seeing them as areas of improvement. This aligns with the performative idea of how the articulation of narrative matters for the identity formation process.

Several examples of the difference dimension can be noticed in the State of the Union speeches, however not quite through the presumptive binary relationship between the Self and Other that one might expect. The Other to European identity is not necessarily portrayed as a total opposite, but rather different types of Other. The examples in the speeches could be interpreted as the Other 'in friction with', the threatening Other, the admired Other, the Other 'contained within us' and the mirror-image. Given the changeable nature of identity it is difficult to specify

a continuous Other, and just as European identity is multifaceted so is the relationship to the Other.

When examining the three speeches through the dimension of multiple identities, it can be concluded that the idea of European identity is not presented as superior to the national one or any other collective form of identification. By acknowledging different types of collective identities, the EU seeks to enhance the relationship between multiple identities as natural and essential. They are in fact seen as a vital part of each other.

In summary, we have found that European identity can be expressed and articulated through the performative dimensions of identity formation. In the State of the Union speeches from 2010, 2015 and 2018 we consider European identity to be expressed:

- Through *action* by enduring and overcoming formative challenges and crises.
- Through *narrative* by defining what values, standards and ethics the EU identifies itself with.
- Through *difference* when defining European self-image by differentiation from others, including aspirational ways.
- Through *multiple* by acknowledging other collective and individual identities as a fundamental part of European identity.

In conclusion, the idea of European identity and its formation is dynamic, just as the concept of identity in itself. As we have noticed from our analysis, identity manifests itself in many different ways. There are several references of European identity embedded in the State of the Union speeches, even though these references are not always apparent without viewing them from the proper perspectives. Finally, there is not just one European identity, but multiple European identities. Since the 500 million citizens of the EU member states all have different ideas of what the European identity entails, it will continue to be a contested and debated topic. However, we encourage the discussion of this idea in order to further the constantly evolving formation of European identity.

7.   Further research

As mentioned in the presentation of the material, the 2020 State of the Union speech has not yet been held at the time of writing this thesis. Thus, it is understandable that it can not be included as part of our material, even though it would provide a great addition to the analysis of this thesis. However, further research would be encouraged on the topic of European identity applied to the 2020 State of the Union speech, even more so considering the global crisis we are currently undergoing. Furthermore, the speech of 2020 will take place a decade after the very first State of the Union speech, which presents a perfect opportunity for a comparative analysis on the changes that the Union has been through in the last ten years. Further research could also be done on to what extent the above-mentioned crises affect European identity as a whole.

At the beginning of chapter 4, Method and Material, it is mentioned how the focus is on the expression of ideas of European identity in the State of the Union speeches, rather than the underlying political and ideological factors behind these expressions. Further research could be done on the very same topic, although through the perspective of ideological analysis. Another idea for future research is the overall importance of a European identity for the long-term cohesion and development of the EU. It could also be investigated whether the idea of European identity is imperative for the survival and future of the European Union. It is a difficult question to answer, nonetheless an interesting and important one which could be further elaborated in a more extensive thesis.

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