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CONSTRUCTING EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The Construction of the European Identity from 1989 to 2018

by the Presidents of the European Commission

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Master of Arts in European Studies

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Master's Thesis, 30 ECTS

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Submitted: **May 2020**

Abstract

The concept of the European identity is in this thesis regarded as being expressed as a social, political and cultural activity, constructed and narrativized by the Presidents of the European Commission. The aims of executing the research has been to detect the processual development, constant elements or differences concerning the construction of the concept by the different leaders as well as investigating which groups or countries that are enabled to the European identity. The construction of the concept might potentially be problematic, since it can affect the cultural understanding of what the European identity de facto means, and consequently, some European countries are portrayed as the 'other' or as threats to the European identity.

The empirical material, consisting of thirty political speeches produced and performed by the five Presidents of the European Commission between 1989 to 2018, has been analyzed with a mix of qualitative- and narrative analysis. The theoretical framework includes social constructivism, the impact of political speeches and influence of leaders when creating collective identities and the certain narrativization impact of mirroring and orientating identities through time. The historical memory, as well as the historical and European consciousness are especially efficient tools when creating group identity or identification to Europe.

The main findings highlight that the European identity has been constructed with similar elements by all the Presidents and that the emphasis on historical memory and cultural unity are of special relevance. The ingroup of the European people is always the member states of the European Community/European Union which are pictured as a family, bound together by the richness of their diversities. However, the attitudes to the aspiring member states differs, and while the states of former Yugoslavia are used as warning examples of what can happen if nationalism and fragmentation takes over in the member states, the Central and Eastern European countries are seen as family and of need to join the union due to historical ties, duty and legacy. This strengthens the Western European perspective, communicated by the leaders of the European Commission.

Keywords: European Identity, Narrativization, European Commission, Collective Identity, Historical Consciousness, European People

Abbreviations list

EC – European Commission

EEC – European Economic Community

ELDR – European Liberal Democrat and Reform party Group

EP – European Parliament

EPP – Europeans People’s Party

EU – European Union

ILI – Identity Leadership Inventory

IR – International Relations

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

MS – Member State(s)

PES – Party of European Socialists

S&D – Progressive Alliance of the Socialists and Democrats

SOTEU – State of the European Union

TEU – Treaty of the European Union

TFEU – Treaty on the functioning of the European Union

US – United States

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Appendix

1. Introduction

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall became the start for a new dimension of integration between Eastern and Western Europe. The scene of international relations (IR) was posed to be renewed, and this new world order, with reduced threats from the Cold War and Communism, attracted new opportunities and challenges. Consequently, questions accumulated and one of them concerned if the fragmented populations of Europe could come together and unite within new contexts. The way to a prosperous country with a well-functioning democracy and economy seemed to go through a membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Therefore, the former communist countries and the existing member states (MS) in the EEC, in a reciprocal way, started to approach each other. Thus, the values, laws, rules and policies of the EEC became central for all the aspiring MS. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht not only reformed the name of the EEC to the European Union (EU), but it also defined the dimension of the four freedoms: the movement of goods, capital, services and labour. Another addition to this dimension was the concept of the European citizenship, which acquires both the national citizenship and a membership in the EU. The citizenship, bound to integration and Europeanization are therefore put in relation to disintegration and de-Europeanization, works as an illustrative example on how the national- and European identities constantly intertwine.¹ With the Treaty of Maastricht, a new defined objective for the EU, which declared the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe, came into existence.² From now on, the policy making of the EU concerned the creation, enabling and fostering of the concept of the European people as well as an active development of the concept of the European identity.

There is no such thing as one immutable European identity as the concept is part of both a social process and a political project. In this thesis, the European identity can be understood as a composition of three basic concepts, as defined by Cris Shore, professor of Social Anthropology. The first is the concept of the European consciousness, which refers to the connected efforts of the creation of a coherent European culture. The experience and understanding of the cultural and historical memory of Europe gives back legitimacy to the EEC when it is adopted by the masses. The second is the concept of the European citizenship, which legal rights are obtained when a state becomes member of the EU. The third concept is

¹ Rainer Bauböck (ed), *Debating European Citizenship* (Springer Open, 2018), 1-2, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-89905-3>.

² Cris Shore, *Building Europe* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

the European people, which is defined as people living in Europe that feels a connection or can identify themselves with the continent and an imagined collective group.³ While the European citizenship is a status only gained through a EU membership, the European people and the European consciousness are two parts which makes of the construction of the European identity there are to be affected by different actors such as media, national governments, EU institutions, political actors, civil servants and ordinary citizens. The values of the EU are communicated as the positive parts of European integration and are also included in the construction of the European identity and in the identity of the EEC/EU. These values, common the all EU countries, are inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination. The values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law is also an integral part of the European way of life.⁴

One of the actors which have access to influencing the narrative and the path of the European identity is the President of the European Commission (EC).⁵ The EC, which acts as guardian of the treaties as well as representing and promote the general interest of the whole union and its citizens, is politically independent from the agendas of the MS but speaks on behalf of all them in international bodies.⁶ The role of the EC President has changed over time, but the influence of the position has heavily been dependent on individual impact. Prior is the EC Presidents' contributions to the execution of the following years political priorities, as well as his or hers communication of the direction and work program of the EC, which is frequently mentioned in speeches, interviews and statements.⁷ One of the ways to reach and communicate to the European people and to promote or define a European identity is through political speeches. Accordingly, the construction of the European identity, narrativized by the words and influence of the five EC Presidents from 1989 to 2018, Jacques Delors, Jacques Santer, Romani Prodi, José Manuel Barroso and Jean-Claude Juncker, is therefore the subject put into research in this thesis.

³ Shore, *Building Europe*, 126.

⁴ "Goals and values of the EU", European Union, last modified March 31, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en

⁵ Checkel, Jeffrey T, & Katzenstein, Peter (eds), *European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 213.

⁶ "European Commission", European Union, last modified March 23, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en.

⁷ Nereo Peñalver García & Julian Priestly, *The making of a European President* (New York: Palgrave McMillian, 2015), 11.

1.1. Presentation of research problem, aim and research questions

In this section, the research problem, aim and research question, which are the core of the thesis are more closely presented.

1.1.1. Research problem

The construction of the European identity is in this research based on the relation between the concepts of the European consciousness, the European citizenship and the European people. The factor of European citizenship, as defined by the EU, is acquired when a state becomes a member in the union and is therefore a tangible result of less interest of research in this thesis. Consequently, the concepts put in focus will concern the establishing of the European people and the European consciousness, which are connected to the creation of a common cultural heritage. This heritage, which is expressed as a social and cultural activity, is activated through the act of narrativization and especially present when the European identity is defined in relation to time.⁸ However, the impact of the EC President's narrativization of the European identity can be problematic. The subjective personality and habitus of the person behind the post maintain influence on how the general discourse of and the understanding of how the European identity is constructed. Eventually, in- and out-groups and polarizing debates of 'us' and 'them' can be both excluding and affecting the political and cultural understanding of which countries that really belongs to Europe. This due to the tendency in general discourses and outlooks of regarding the European identity as equivalent and exclusively available to the EU MS. Thus, by investigating how the five EC Presidents from 1989 to 2018 have constructed the conditions for a European identity in relation to the European people, a European consciousness and the European citizenship, a wider understanding of the influence and processual development of the construction of the European identity of both the EC Presidents and the institution of the EC itself can be gained.

1.1.2. Aim

The aim of the thesis is foremost to see how the concept of the European identity has been constructed, conditioned and developing through time. With starting point in 1989 and finishing in 2018, the time span of thirty years is under scrutiny to see in which ways the past, present and future of the EU and the European people has been narrativized. Five different actors, i.e. the EC Presidents, have been trying to narrativize and ascribe meaning to the

⁸ Gerard Delanty, *Formations of European Modernity* (Hampshire: Palgrave McMillan, 2013), 265.

European project and the European identity, and the aim is thus to see in which ways they differ and which elements that have been constant throughout the years. Subsequently the aim is to analyze which groups, nations or people in Europe that has been included or excluded in the narrativizations of the European identity. By examining the context and the content of both the speeches and the speakers, tendencies of integration and disintegration and in- and out-groups will be put into relation to the European identity, in order to scrutinize the interplay.

1.1.3. Research questions

The following research questions summarizes the essence of what the thesis will try to answer by asking:

- ◇ How has the concept of the European identity been constructed in the chosen political speeches from each of the five EC Presidents from 1989 to 2018?
- ◇ In which way is the concept of a European identity accounted for in relation to European countries in- and outside the EU?
- ◇ In which ways do the narrativizations and constructions differ from each other, and which elements are constant throughout the time span?

1.2. Structure

Successive of this introduction, where among other things the precise research on the selected area will be described, the second chapter presents the background for providing the necessary context of the thesis. In chapter three, the theoretical framework is pinpointed. Here, the most important concepts and elements of the theories deemed relevant for the research is presented in order to enable the right tools to later be elaborated in the analysis. In chapter four, the empirical material and the methods used for deciphering the material for the analysis is accounted for. Further, the motivation for using both material and methods, as well as their pros and cons, will be described. Following, in chapter five, the analysis of the empirical material will be presented. In chapter six, the examples from the previous chapter will get problematized, compared and discussed. Moreover, both the successes and the parts in need of improvement will be contemplated on. Second to last, in chapter seven, the conclusions and main findings will be accounted for. Lastly, in chapter eight the bibliography is to be seen, followed by the appendix.

1.3. Previous research

In writing moment, there seems to be scant research on how the European identity is constructed within the political speeches of the EC Presidents. The majority of research, made of historians, humanists and social scientists, covers the idea of Europe rather than identification with Europe or the European identity.⁹ However, academic interest in the European identity reflect the evolution of theoretical debates on the EU and internal drivers of the project. One does also include external drivers, such as the post-Cold War, post-Maastricht and the post-war on terror as factors that drives the European integration further. This has led to research concerning the relationship between identities, the legitimacy of the EU institutions, democracy beyond the state and the future of the EU. Due to enlargement, factors of cultural, traditional and religious diversities have entered discussions on how the European identity has evolved. Previous research on the European identity is giving a good idea of how multidisciplinary, complex and abstract the nature of EU- and identity studies in fact are. The European identity consists of multiple identities with different layers that relate to each other in different ways; identities and loyalties to groups can be crossing, separated or intertwined and are activated in different situations and stronger and more present in certain contexts.¹⁰ Additionally, various research is made upon the impact of the State of the European Union-speeches and their content, but since these speeches were introduced in 2010, they do not hold a longer processual perspective. Moreover, many studies concern narratives within political speeches, but often with a national backdrop and without the European supranational impact.

A relevant research is made by Pd Dr. Marcus J. Prutsch's, the senior researcher and administrator at the European Parliament (EP), responsible for cultural and education policies, report for the CULT Committee from 2017. In his report, Prutsch examines the concept, challenges and prospects of a collective identity in a European context. Prutsch acknowledges the complex nature of collective identities in general and a common European identity in particular. Further, Prutsch concludes and stipulates recommendations in how to further foster the European identity.¹¹ Additionally, in 2012 the EC published the policy review "*The development of European identity/identities: unfinished business*", in which the authors

⁹ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, 193.

¹⁰ Kennet Lynggard, Ian Manners, Karl Löfgren (ed by all), *Research Methods in European Union Studies* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 56.

¹¹ Markus J. Prutsch, *Research for CULT Committee – European Identity* (Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, 2017), 3.

resonates about the European identity which has been on the EC's agenda since the early 90s. Different research projects, aiming for reinforcing solidarity among Europeans, have targeted processes of identification with the EU and integration, and analyzed how they've taken shape and evolved over time. The authors of the report work with following theoretical concepts that drive the study of European identity:

1. *European identity and identification with Europe* means that the individual identity is connected to a collective component of a group which the individual orients itself with depending on context. Since the individual can identify with many groups at the same time, the identity is regarded as of a situation specific mosaic character. Thus, the European identity might not be a person's primary identity, but it can be salient in some contexts.
2. *Europeanization* refers to a hypothesized trend towards national institutions and nationally based fields of activity or perspectives being pushed aside by institutions or fields at European level. However, the authors mean that this concept might be invalid if one argues that the Europeanization might be a peripheral variant of the larger trend of globalization.
3. *Transnationalism* refers to 'cross-border' living, where a person, thanks to modern infrastructure, can maintain a social existence in both the current country of residence and the country of origin. This stands in contrast to the concept of permanent migration.
4. *Cosmopolitanism* refers to the act of actively seeking out and appreciating contact with other cultures and therefore coincides with the perceived European values of tolerance and equality.¹²

Accordingly, these concepts are of interest for this research since they are legitimized and defined by the EC themselves as late as in 2012. Arguing that material produced within the same institution might be of familiar character, these concepts can be put in relation to the communicated language from the EC Presidents from this period. Further, in both reports from the different EU institutions, the construction of a European identity is connected to the concept of a collective identity. The European identity is present in policy documents and are increasingly researched upon and put under observation. Both reports add an additional layer of insight in how policies and projects concerning the European identity has been put into practice and will be considered into the context of the material for this research.

¹² European Commission, *The development of European identity/identities: unfinished business* (Brussels: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2012), 5, https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/development-of-european-identity-identities_en.pdf.

2. Background

Chapter two contains the background which provides the context for the analysis that later will be established. The four sections investigate how the European identity has been referred to in general since 1989 and which the challenges to the European identity might be defined as. Further, a closer outlook will be given on the concepts of the European people and the European identity within EU policy. Finally, the role of the EC Presidents and the men behind the presidential posts between the researched time frame will be presented.

2.1. The European identity since 1989

According to Jeffrey T. Checkel, Ph.D. in political science and Peter J. Katzenstein, professor of International Studies, the concept of a European identity was not established until the late 1980s. During this time, the interest for European history from historians and general people returned as an appreciated and discussed topic in the 1990s due to the liberal wave that came into the Western consciousness after the events of 1989.¹³ The European identity is often mixed up between the identification with Europe as an identification with the EU. However, it is necessary to separate that the EU as institution can have an evolving political identity and that this is different from Europeans having a European identity or feel identification with the EU.¹⁴ Moreover, around this time was Europe perceived as one civilization among others, with both pros and cons, engaged in a friendly competition with other countries. This view emphasizes the importance of exchanging best practice, export ideas, goods and services and appreciating immigration as an enriching experience.¹⁵ Also internal diversity got a stronger focus and this type of identification was based on the assumption that Europeans normally prefer multiple identities. This focus was closely connected to the politicization of the EU due to the increasing influence of power the EU got from enlargements, but at the same time, the EU was started to be seen as a threat to the cultural diversity of Europe due to fear of homogenization. This fueled the paradox and the dichotomy of conservation of the own culture while opposing the European threat of 'homogenization'. The ability to feel proud over the own heritage as well as seeing it as a part of a supranational identity is a challenge of thought that many EU enthusiast have tried to communicate frequently. Thus, the identification with European diversity is a reaction to the perceived threat from the EU's

¹³ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, 199-200.

¹⁴ Lynggard, Manners, Löfgren (ed by all), *Research Methods in European Union Studies*, 57.

¹⁵ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, 198-199.

homogenizing powers. However, the trend was clearly pointing to the tendency of liberal, tolerant and cosmopolitan identifications. In the 1990s, the identification to Europe, which before had been most visible through political programs, grew to include European lifestyles, common norms and values rooted in consumption and consumer perspectives. A mix of public debates, media, European institutions and national governments contributed to set this perception and the identification to the European or transnational values did not reject or decline the identification to national values or lifestyles. The new habits of import and export rather increased the knowledge of and the identification to Europe and its populations. Along with the factors of cross-border living, travel, work and studies, the enhanced personal experience of other European countries and lifestyles started to remind Europeans of shared similarities with other groups. This ‘new’ experience of European neighbors slowly started to replace old memories of war, conflicts and propaganda, but the positive identification to Europe was simultaneously undermined by fear for globalization, competition of the labor market, unemployment due to immigration and social dumping.¹⁶

2.2. Challenges to the European identity

The European identity, as communicated through the EU, has had a hard time in the process of getting established as a valid concept among European citizens. This might be due to several reasons, but one explanation is the institutional form and the operational actions through the legal language that EU works by of the diffuse form of the EU organization itself, at the same time intergovernmental, supranational and post-national, could be seen as reflecting its indirect mission. Another argument is that the European heritage and the cultural legacy of Europe opposes collective identity which presupposes a specific actor of the ‘European people’ which does not exist.¹⁷ Additionally, the European identity is mostly relevant for mobile citizens, since it is almost only activated when an individual uses its legal rights when spending time in another EU country than their own.¹⁸ Further, the European constitution provides rights, without demanding any obligations, such as European taxes or contributing to social or military service and another significant difference is the lack of popular European symbols. The most present identity in the everyday life of people seem to be the one in question of most interaction. This means that where one group seeks to advance its interest or assert its self-interpretation, the identity will take a sharper or more outstanding

¹⁶ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, 201–205.

¹⁷ Ibid, 264.

¹⁸ Bauböck (ed), *Debating European Citizenship*, 4.

place. Illustrative, the identity arises strongly and strikingly in moments of crisis.¹⁹ Other possible problems that hinder the relevance of the European identity might be that it is arguably driven by and for the educated elite, which considers the EU to be a project rooted in the European Enlightenment. For those, the union is the most legitimate way to promise that the horrors of the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the fragmentation of Europe never will happen again. As a juxtaposition to the elite, the ‘common’ citizen does not share this knowledge or opinion and therefore lacks the European sense of ‘who we are’.²⁰ The stories about the EU might be underprioritized among popular stories of the nation, traditions or religion. Furthermore, the lack of a common European history, taught in the same way in European schools are missing. The national perspective is dominating, and the common historical memory is more evident than an eventual European. Accordingly, the identification to Europe is statistically weaker in comparison to identification to the nation, although they must not necessarily be put against each other.²¹

2.3. The European people and the European identity within EU policy

The potential united community of Europeans is of many logical reasons necessary, especially as it would legitimate the whole *raison d'être* for the EU as a project. If not only for the cause of political legitimacy and peace, the need for an identification based on cultural values and shared history begun already in the dawn of European integration. European political elites have been trying to add a transnational layer to the already existing national identities to feed a perspective of belonging to the EU, or to Europe, that goes past the economic and institutional dimensions. Thus, in 1973, the Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity was adopted by the nine foreign ministers of the European Communities. In the declaration, it was stated that the time had come to draw up a document on the European identity. The background to the declaration came as an effect from the first enlargement of the EC the same year and the ‘construction of a United Europe’ was open to other European nations who shared the same ideals and objectives. The agreements of common values and principles such as the defense of representative democracies, the rule of law, social justice and respect for human rights was the fundamental elements of the European identity which also consisted of the tangible common market, the customs union, the common policies and the established institutions. This Europeanness would not ignore the dynamism and the national cultures but

¹⁹ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, 265-266.

²⁰ Bauböck (ed), *Debating European Citizenship*, 1.

²¹ *Ibid*, 206–207.

rather evolve as a function of the dynamic construction of a United Europe.²² It was also stated that the nine, in their external relations, should propose progressively to undertake the definition of their identity in relation to other countries or groups of countries. This was grounded on the belief that they by doing so, would strengthen their own cohesion and contribute to the framing of a genuinely European foreign policy.²³ The declaration finished with the commitment of aiming for ‘an ever-closer United Europe’ with the clear emphasis on the need for unity.²⁴

2.4. The role of the President of the European Commission

The President of the EC enjoys authority which originates from the legitimacy of the institution he or she represents. The EC, a mix of a political and bureaucratic institution, is the executive branch of the EU with exclusive legitimacy to propose and initiate legislation. The EC manages the biggest part of EU policy making and the President of the EC and his College works closely with leaders from the whole world. Further, the EC develops and translates strategies from other EU institutions into policies and initiatives, which give the EC President an important communicative role. The role of both the EC and the EC Presidents have changed through out the years, mostly due to enlargement and the increase of the College from nine to twenty-eight members. The Treaties of Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon has all increased the competences of the EC President, including laying down the EC guidelines, managing the internal organization of the collegiate body and appoint Vice-Presidents from the members of the EC.²⁵ Consequently, each President has had his or her own personal style, including aspirations, abilities and authority and previous Presidents have been positioning themselves as everything from leaders or to chairmen, depending on this person’s ambitions. This has affected the relations to the heads of governments from both the MS as well as third countries, since they in a reciprocal way take part in creating and influencing the political agendas of Europe and the rest of the world.²⁶ Another factor to take in consideration when discussing the role of the EC President and the institution is the internalized bias of values and culture the EC employees possibly develops. Shore has studied the integration of EC

²² Prutsch, *Research for CULT Committee – European Identity*, 18.

²³ European Union, “Declaration on European Identity”, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No 12, December 14, 1973, Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities, 118-122, https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_on_european_identity_copenhagen_14_decemb%20er_1973-en-02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32.html.

²⁴ Prutsch, *Research for CULT Committee – European Identity*, 19.

²⁵ Peñalver García & Priestly, *The making of a European President*, 20-21.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 10-11.

employees, including the EC President, and argues that the civil service at the EC shares a specific internal regime which makes the EC officials act in a post-national European order. This order is characterized as pioneering the European consciousness and work as ‘motors of integration’. The interdependence is the heart of functioning for the EC and the only way to guarantee the role of the EC as a mediator between MS and political interests. As guardians of the Treaties, the employees work for the stipulated goals and aspire of doing their job as representatives of the EU and its values justice. Therefore, the EC President and the staff should be seen and understood as actors, more or less internalized in their own institution, while at the same time being regarded as interesting actors of the development of the process of European integration and for the conditions of the European identity.²⁷

2.5. The Presidents of the European Commission from 1989 to 2018

This part of the chapter briefly introduces the five men behind the presidential posts of the EC from 1989 until 2018 and encounter some of the impacts their leading and influence had on the EU and its MS. Further, some of the most important happenings during their presidency is exemplified as later visible in their speeches.

Jacques Delors

Jacques Delors, the EC President from 1985 to 1995, is of French nationality and had party affiliation to the Party of European Socialists (PS). In total, Delors delivered 264 speeches during his ten-year presidency, which makes an average of more than twenty-six speeches per year. The amount of speeches exceeded the years of 1985, 1988, 1989 and 1990 due to major happenings at European level, like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the worsening of status of conflicts and attacks in Yugoslavia when several parts declared themselves as independent states.²⁸ Henriette Müller, professor of Leadership Studies, states that Delors most common topic in his speeches concerned the social dimension of the EEC/EU. Before getting the job as EC President, Delors had previously been minister of finances in France and the interest and knowledge of finances was something he took with him into his new position. Delors massive initiative of the Single Market, which took effect in 1993, and his aspirations for a more integrated economy of the MS correlates with the

²⁷ Shore, *Building Europe*. Routledge, 125–126.

²⁸ Ström Melin, *Världen sedan 1989* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2019), 130.

economic aspects of European integration and identity which became deeply established.²⁹ With the leadership of Delors, the EC took several leap forwards through initiatives of highly put ambitions and apart from the Single Market, concomitant Treaty changes removed the veto from various decision-making areas which enabled more actions to get passed.³⁰ Consequently, the EC became more efficient and the presidential style of Delors was a combination of a modest and self-effacing personality with grand visions and a strong political will. Thus, he made the EC a laboratory for ideas and the key institution for implementation and his main priorities was to create an internal market and increase the social cohesion to counterbalance the negative effects that had arrived with market liberalization.³¹

Jacques Santer

Jacques Santer from Luxembourg was the EC President from 1995 to 1999. He had party affiliation to the European People's Party (EPP) and his last job before the EC President post was Prime Minister. Among the biggest events that occurred during Santer's presidency was when 'the neutral countries' of Finland, Sweden and Austria became members of the EU in 1995, which added a Northern dimension to the European identity. Another important change was the Schengen agreement that was activated which allowed travelling through MS without passport. Moreover, the single currency Euro was in 1998 agreed upon among a majority of the MS which gave the European project a financial dimension and deepened the European integration process. Further, during these years, the conflicts in especially Bosnia and Croatia intensified.³² Santer was the first President after the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty and was therefore elected with a consultation voice from the EP. Thus, Santer was the first nominee who had to meet with the three main parliamentary groups and convince them of his appropriateness.³³ Even if succeeding in the EP, Santer's style of leadership differed a lot from his predecessor. Müller argues that Santer neither could influence senior members of the Council of ministers or communicate a clear vision of the path for the EC. In comparison with earlier Presidents, Santer also lacked charisma and struggled of creating enthusiasm and public imagination.³⁴ Probably due to his modest impact, the amount of and topics of the speeches of Santer is at writing time scarcely researched.

²⁹ Henriette Müller, *Political Leadership and the European Commission Presidency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 89.

³⁰ Peñalver García & Priestly, *The making of a European President*, 11.

³¹ *Ibid*, 25–26.

³² Ström Melin, *Världen Sedan 1989*, 27.

³³ Peñalver García & Priestly, *The making of a European President*, 17.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 27.

Romano Prodi

Italian Romano Prodi, the EC President from 1999 to 2004, had party affiliation to the Liberals and Democrats party (ELDR) and his last job before the EC President post was Prime Minister. One of the biggest events that affected Prodi's presidency was the terror attacks in World Trade Center in the United States (US) in 2001 which changed the world view of terrorism. In 2004, the EU gained ten new Eastern European MS in the 'Big Bang' of enlargement and was growing in power, resources, size and number of obstacles and issues. The repercussions of this growth significantly changed the EU focus and old policies had to be reformed since they worked best when the EU it had a smaller number of MS. According to Nereo Peñalver García, expert on EU and foreign policy and Sir Julian Priestly, former Secretary General of the EP, Prodi's style of leadership was not of the most influential character and sometimes he gave the impression of not caring about his job and seemed to long back to Italian politics. Prodi was described as having a 'sofa government', without coordination, bad communication and discordance. Consequently, this loose-reined leadership caused a fractious and less productive Commission compared to earlier years.³⁵ Yet, Prodi produced a broad variety of different speeches on European integration, Europe's future and Europe's destiny. Unfortunately, it does not seem at writing point to be known how many speeches he did perform.

José Manuel Barroso

José Manuel Barroso, the EC President from 2004 to 2014, is of Portuguese nationality and had party affiliation to the EPP. His last job before entering the president post was Prime Minister. Müller argues that is under the leadership of Barroso that the contradictions and complexities of the presidential role and how it developed and evolved over time is best to be seen. Barroso held a European federalist approach and had in the beginning of his presidency small competence and knowledge of the European Council and the EP. With time he got more experienced, but ahead came challenges due to the enlargement processes which made the EU grow from twenty to twenty-eight MS in a rapid succession.³⁶ Other events that affected Barrosos' presidency was the global finance crisis in 2008, the era of global jihad and fear of terror initiated by the Islamic State and in 2014 the Russian annexation of Crimea made the geopolitical status of Europe more insecure.³⁷ Moreover, Barroso never realized the function

³⁵ Peñalver García & Priestly, *The making of a European President*, 19 and 29.

³⁶ Müller, *Political Leadership and the European Commission Presidency*, 97.

³⁷ Ström Melin, *Världen sedan 1989*, 143.

of Vice-Presidents, which made his own role uncompromised in importance. A study concerning the attitudes of Commission officials towards their leader found that a majority thought that Barroso indeed was the most presidential of the holders of the office along with Delors. Notably, the study also revealed that Barroso and Delors were very different when expressing their presidential features.³⁸ Another similarity to Delors was the topics of the speeches, which can be seen in the 588 speeches that Barroso produced during his ten-year presidency, which makes an average of more than fifty-eight speeches per year.³⁹ Another example of the influence of Barroso was the introduction of the SOTEU-speech in 2010, which added a certain presidential, influential and authorial spirit to his role. The speech was initiated by the Lisbon Treaty in the 2010 Framework Agreement on relations between the EP and EC and is ever since delivered before the EP every year in September with the only exceptions of 2014 and 2019 when the election of a new EC President was on the agenda.⁴⁰ Inspired from the American version, the SOTEU was introduced to give the EC President a chance to reflect upon achievements, challenges and events in the EU from the latest year. The speech is viewed upon as influential and the purpose is as well to present the EC's priorities for the coming year.⁴¹ After the speech is given, a plenary debate is followed in the EP which compose the start of a dialogue between the two institutions. The debate is supposed to prepare the EC for their Work Programme for the year ahead and is consequently seen as the springboard of the year.⁴² However, already at Prodi's time, speeches named 'State of the Union' was communicated, but they were not legislated in a treaty.

Jean-Claude Juncker

Jean-Claude Juncker, the EC President from 2014 to 2019, is from Luxembourg and had party affiliation to the EPP. Before entering the position, he was Prime Minister. Juncker became the first, and at this point the only, EC President who got elected through the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure, which aims to make the election and office more transparent

³⁸ Müller, *Political Leadership and the European Commission Presidency*, 29-30.

³⁹ Ibid, 97.

⁴⁰ European Union, "Interinstitutional agreements - Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission", *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2010, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:304:0047:0062:EN:PDF>

⁴¹ Dr. Valentin Kreiling, "Five things you need to know about the "State of the Union" speech", *Hertie School, Jacques Delors Centre*, September 8, 2018, <https://www.hertie-school.org/en/delorscentre/publications/detail/publication/five-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-soteu-speech/>

⁴² European Union, "Interinstitutional agreements - Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission".

and connect the EC President stronger to the European electorate.⁴³ Juncker early stated that his intention was to be a political president with a political commission and as an ‘EU veteran’ with long experience of high-level executive offices at both national and European levels, he had a clear vision of strongly committing to promote European integration.⁴⁴ With this aspiration, Ingeborg Tömmel, prof. em. in International and European politics, argues that Juncker provided an ambitious leadership, a well-designed and focused agenda and geared through crises with force and will. However, he was not particularly liked from the governments or leaders of the MS, due to his somewhat federalist agenda and bold initiatives. Juncker tried to lead the EU in only legislating ‘big things’ and to be relevant only where the EU was wished for. Most notably, Juncker shifted the role of the President to be more reflective by communicating more to the citizens of the EU in public debates or through his speeches. Thus, Juncker’s leadership made a shift in the EC, by changing the intergovernmental and supranational dimensions of the Union.⁴⁵ Big events during his presidency was the migration crisis of 2015, and the UK referendum of leaving the EU in 2016.

⁴³ Ingeborg Tömmel, *Political leadership in times of crisis: The Commission Presidency of Jean-Claude Juncker* (West European Politics, 2019), 2, [10.1080/01402382.2019.1646507](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2019.1646507).

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 17-18.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and the concepts that were evaluated relevant for the analysis will be explained.

3.1. Social constructivism

Social constructivism is a form of ontology, i.e. a position of the nature of social reality. This approach explains the reality from collective knowledge and the human understanding of it. To exemplify, a social constructivist argues that a banknote differs from a random piece of paper in the meaning of the eyes and understanding of the observer. If one, within one's culture has learned that the banknote is a piece of paper money, which constitutes a central bank's promissory note to pay a stated sum to the owner of the piece, it has a worth mirrored in the understood reality. For a person, without the specific knowledge, the banknote will be a piece of paper, maybe serving no more purpose than being of interest for various reasons of impressions. The banknote is thus yield value due to the socially understood context. The object will be real, but it brings a significant amount of meaning when understood in its right context. Accordingly, social constructivists are, due to the definition from Berger and Luckmann, concerned about the habituality of human activity which corresponds to institutions. Institutions are in their turn characterized by historicity and control which gives roles to establishment and reproduces rules, norms and expectations on individual and groups within the society.⁴⁶ Within the context of European integration, social constructivists are especially interested in how identity and norms establish and plays out within both EU and its MS. The approach of social constructivism is a relatively new within theories of IR and challenges neo-realist and neoliberal perceptions that has dominated the scene for years. The neo-realist and neoliberal theories explain IR through materially given interests, rational actors, commitment to science and a classic positivism school. These approaches in their hand challenges the reflectivist and interpretivist approaches that comes with postmodernism and critical theory. Thus, social constructivism is placed between these two scholars and is useful when analyzing a subject with nuances and abstractions originating from the human factor. Since this approach understand social interests as socially constructed, instead as pre-given or natural, it fits the methodology of narrative analysis. Thus, regular events within IR from the

⁴⁶ Colin Hay, *Good in a crisis: the ontological institutionalism of social constructivism*. (New Political Economy, 21:6, 2016), 520-535, [10.1080/13563467.2016.1158800](https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2016.1158800).

social constructivist perspective are explained as effects played out from shared values, norms or actors and collective meanings, wills, interests and identities. As previously mentioned, these factors are seen as affecting the institutions the actors themselves represents. Accordingly, the majority of constructivists means that European integration should be studied as a process and focuses therefore on social ontologies and social institutions. European integration are explained through the origin and construction of identities as well as including the power of norms and rules, the role of languages, political discourses and narratives.⁴⁷ Consequently, this ontology is relevant for this thesis, when investigating how the individual EC Presidents constructs the conditions for the European identity while representing the EC as well all the MS that are in the EU. Further it gives room to the individual impact and influence originating from one person that will interplay with institutions, IR, collective groups and identities, which fits the research questions in a satisfying way.

3.2. Collective identity in a European context

The concept of identity is present in various forms and for different reasons and reaches into many parts of everyday life. The word itself refers to the capacity of self-reflection and the awareness of the self and can be expressed in different categories such as social, religious, sexual, cultural, gender, national et cetera.⁴⁸ A common perception is that the identity is a mix of the qualities, beliefs, personal traits and expressions that constitutes a human or a group and the identity, as of a psychological nature, is thus socially constructed and based on the self-construct of the past as well as the construes of what one is aspiring to be in the future.⁴⁹ Due to the immense layers of different aspects and theories concerning identity connected to politics, a necessary demarcation of the subject was needed for this research. Consequently, focus will put on the collective identity and how it is constructed in relation to the social group identifying as the European people. Unlike individual identities, Gerard Delanty, professor of Sociology, means that collective identities tend to be singular in their form and expression. This form reminds of collective movements which often define their identity with one clear aim. To exemplify, the movement 'Fridays for Future' by climate activist Greta Thunberg has one clear aim and one settled identity for its followers, i.e. to stop or milden the

⁴⁷ Michelle Cini & Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán (eds), *European Union Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 87-88.

⁴⁸ M. R Leary, & J. P Tangney, *Handbook of self and identity* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 3.

⁴⁹ John Rex & David Mason (eds.), *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 299.

climate crisis.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the foremost common application of a collective identity has been to the context of the nation or the nation state. Anthony D. Smith, historical sociologist, political scientist and professor em. in nationalism and ethnicity, argues that this is due to the success of the ‘nation (state)’ as the most common model for organizing and ordering societies politically, socio-economically and culturally, which has dominated the Western world since the seventeenth century. The appealing power of a collective identity comes from the unison influence of ‘unity’. When having a great ‘sense of belonging’ to a group, such as the nation state, it is easier for the governing mechanisms of the nation to get their citizens to willingly do something for them. When believing in the concept and the conditions of the collective group, it further creates legitimization for the governing leaders, institutions, parliaments et cetera. Therefore, it is of relevance for any form of group to have loyal members.⁵¹ One important part of establishing the basis for loyal members, bound to the aim of the group, is by making use of history, tokens and symbolic representations which helps to put the present in relation to the past. This serves as an orientation in time and helps to create common characteristics with people from the past, present or the future. This is an example on the consciousness of imagined communities, as made known by Benedict Anderson, professor of International Studies, Government and Asian Studies, political scientist and historian.⁵² What is more, the collective identity in the frame of the European context are precisising that the group referred to is a socially constructed European group. The construction of any collective identity can be explained by its self-targeting process that are concerned with defining an emphasizing similarities one share in the specific group to strengthen the collective identity formation. The characteristics of the own group achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups, which means that whenever defining the own group, one also defines an ‘other’ group of less perceived value than the own group.⁵³ This process called ‘othering’ is constantly creating social categories of who is ‘in’ or ‘out’ and how the ‘we’ differs from ‘them’⁵⁴. Thus, collective group identity and ‘othering’ are concepts of high relevance when answering the research questions of this thesis.

⁵⁰ Gerard Delanty, *Formations of European Modernity*, 264, and Fridays for future, “Who we are”, 2020, <https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/about>.

⁵¹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin books, 1991,) 14.

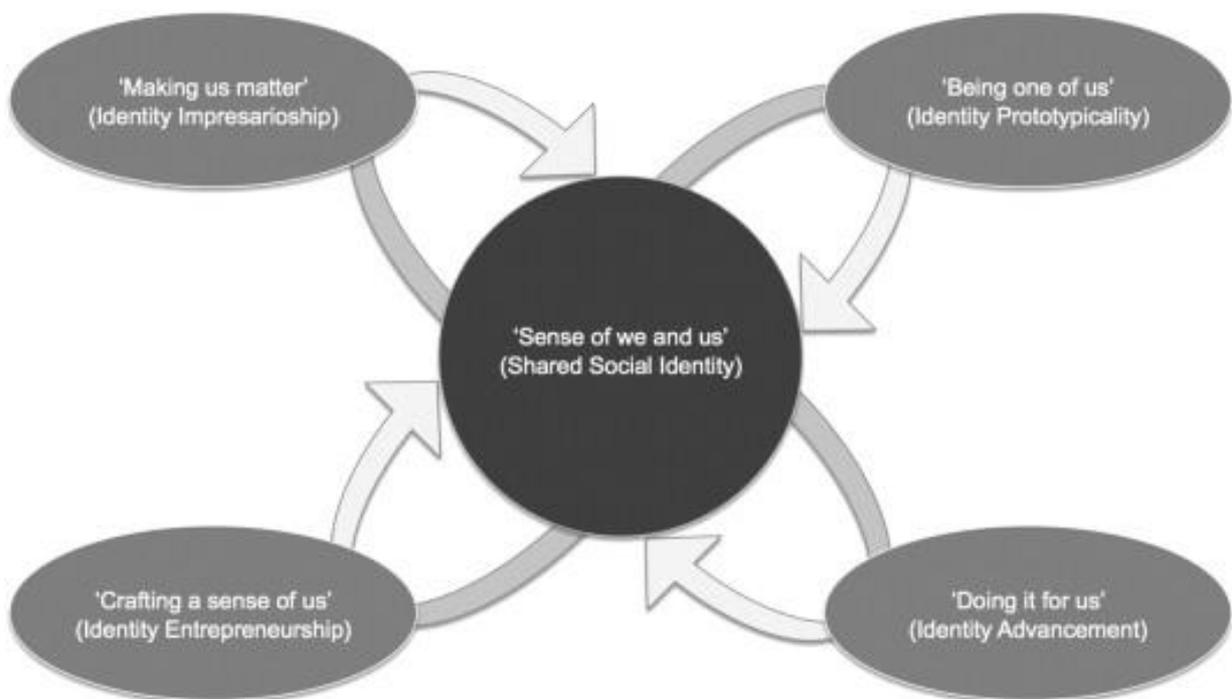
⁵² David Lowenthal, “Identity, heritage and history” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), 43.

⁵³ Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 258.

⁵⁴ Prutsch, *Research for CULT Committee – European Identity*, 10.

3.3. The influence of leaders when shaping collective identities

According to studies executed with the theory of Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI), the leader of a group needs to fulfill four different aspects in order to mobilize and direct the energy of the potential ‘followers’ of the group. First of all, the leader needs to be ‘one of the people’, secondly, his or her actions need to be ‘for the people’, thirdly he or she must create a ‘sense of us’ and lastly ‘embed a sense of us’. These elements, which constitutes the heart of collaborative human enterprise, asks the questions of ‘who are we?’, ‘what do we stand for?’ and ‘how will we progress?’. These questions are accordingly the same questions that are asked when trying to make sense of history, which will be further investigated in section 3.5. Howbeit, these questions are of crucial importance when leaders attempt to get a groups attention and will to mobilize for certain causes. The social group identity is distinctly different from the personal identity since it is orientated towards the interest of the whole group. Thus, the most important theoretical aspect when constructing social identities is the leader’s ability to create, represent, advance and embed the sense of social identity for group members. When successfully directing and developing the group identity, the social influence of the leader makes the followers wanting to contribute to their shared goals. In order to enhance the understanding on how the four elements relates to each other, see the picture below.⁵⁵



⁵⁵ William Gardner (ed), “Leadership as social identity management: Introducing the Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) to assess and validate a four-dimensional model”, in *The Leadership Quarterly*, Volume 25, Issue 5 (Elsevier Inc, 2014), 1001-2002, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.05.002>.

This model helps to picture the relation of how the leader of a group, in this case the EC President, has an important role to analyze within the relationship of powers in the process of shaping, constructing and affecting identities.

3.4. The impact of political speeches

The most apparent way in which political speeches differ from other kinds of political documents in regard of impact comes from the factor of personal charisma. The political agent maneuvers an interplay with the recipient in the intertwined process of storytelling and a well told speech can obtain more impact than a juridical document or a written press release. Powerful rhetorical strategies have been studied ever since the classical period in Ancient Greece and many of the findings are still of relevance today. According to Aristotle, philosopher and polymath, there are three fundamental types of convincing mechanism: ethos refers to the credibility of the speaker, pathos refers to the ability to invoke feelings of the audience and logos refers to the logical arguments and convincing strategies that the speech is built upon. These important components correspond with the speaker, the audience and the speech itself in the communicative process. Together they create a powerful symphony when mediating a message and are thus of use for politicians when aiming to reach a big number of people. Since speeches often become published, transcribed and broadcasted in different medias, a good speech can get new life or audiences after its first appearance and thus have impact for a long time.⁵⁶ Another important factor of political speeches is the meaning of the location, date and time at which it was communicated. Speeches built upon specific dates, commemorations or geopolitical places allows the speaker to refer to time, place, history and ideological values within the same context. The use of these elements can demonstrate a liaison of conviction for an audience and explain why and how narratives are being used. Further, political speeches are used as connecting issues of individuals with problems and issues in society as a collective entity. This relationship contains power and influences discourses, debates and conversations.⁵⁷ Consequently, the political speeches from the EC Presidents are made to create a political impact to the audience, which is the citizens of the EU as well as leaders and citizens in other countries. The speeches from the EC Presidents are of importance since the content describes how the political course and future strategies, to countries in and outside the union, will be attended to.

⁵⁶ Reinemann (red), *Political Communication*, 218-219.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 90.

3.5. Historical consciousness

Earlier in the thesis, the importance of the ability to orientate oneself or the group one belongs to through time has been lightly touched upon. In order to establish imagined communities of ancestors, present fellows and future generations, the need to interpret and develop a historical consciousness is essential. Accordingly, one of the most important factors that constitutes the construction of the European identity within this research is the understanding of the temporality of historical experience. The main definition of the concept in this thesis originates from Karl-Ernst Jeismann, historian and history didactic, who means that historical consciousness incorporates the connection between interpretation of the past, understanding of the present and perspective on the future.⁵⁸ Thus, it is the capacity creating connections between the past, the present and the future with purpose to orientate oneself through time and by this act ‘make sense’ of history by ascribing meaning to life and history.⁵⁹ History creates meaning and context to both individual and groups and the ability to feel historical empathy helps human beings to understand themselves and their place in society. Therefore, the concept of historical consciousness and also the action of writing history is used to maintain or steer the discourse of what the European identity is and for whom it is available. The European consciousness, which is based on common cultural heritage is narrativized and is given meaning by the ability to create meaning of time. As well, the orientation is used in order to work as a unifying factor for the European people. When expressing identity through time, with the aim of creating a coherent understanding of history, the inner narrative helps to build up this construction of the linear time frame that creates the concept of the social society that humans are participating in. Both individual and collective identities can be built through ‘memories’ created from cultural, social and political narrations of the past, present or the future. When building identities through memories, one is also repressing, ignoring or exaggerating which parts of the narrative that is most important depending on which aim that is set. Therefore, to understand the context and the purpose behind certain narratives and historical collective memories, one also need to investigate the cultural context, authorities and leaders. Consequently, the actor who owns authority of narrating history also has influence of the present and the future. Depending on how historical consciousness is

⁵⁸ Karl-Ernst Jeissman & Klaus Bergmann et al (ed.), “Geschichtsbewusstsein”, in *Handbuch Der Geschichtsdidaktik* vol. 1 (Düsseldorg: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1979), 40–42.

⁵⁹ Robert Thorp, *The Concept of Historical Consciousness as an Interpretive Frame for Historical Media*. (Conference paper, Linköping Universitet, 2013), 188-190,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258210159_The_Concept_of_Historical_Consciousness_as_an_Interpretive_Frame_for_Historical_Media,

mirroring the standpoints of the authority of the common discourse, the history can be used to create tolerance, solidarity and acceptance or be the basis for hatred, revenge and distrust. This use of meaning behind history can be an efficient tool when excluding groups and has been used the face of extreme nationalism, as motivation to human genocides or to expulsions of cultural, ethnical or religious groups. Therefore, history is used to explain why the own group have a privileged or exposed position in society, and thus the history can be understood as a collective memory that gives humans help to orientate themselves in how they should live today and how they should make decisions for the future.⁶⁰ Due to this, the historical memory can be used as a compliment to theories of social constructivism and help to interpret concrete historical phenomenon as case studies.⁶¹ The process of interpreting history and ascribing meaning to the temporality of historical experience helps humans to reflect upon and understand the process of human life, grounded on experience and moved by outlooks on the future. As a cultural phenomenon, history is thus the product of narration and it is with the art of narration the events of time make sense and is attributed meaning. The narrative transforms the past to a history and by doing this, the narrative combines both experience and expectation, which is the two existing time dimensions in human life. This is connected to the identity formation since the history is part of culture and the culture is part of the identities of an individual or a social group.⁶² This goes in line with the perception of this thesis where the expression of identity through time is of extra relevance. This is due to the enabling of the EC Presidents to narrate the belonging to and the criteria for the European group and identity, as well as mirroring the past, present and future of the EU.

⁶⁰ Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 11-12 and 25-26.

⁶¹ Jörn Rüsen (ed), *Western Historical Thinking: An intercultural Debate* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), vii-viii.

⁶² Rüsen (ed), *Western Historical Thinking: An intercultural Debate*, 2.

4. Sources and methods

Within this chapter, the empirical material is introduced and arguments for its validity and relevance for this research is elaborated on. Further, the methods used for the analysis of the selected data and their suitability will be accounted for. Finally, implications and limitations and potential weaknesses of the methods will be addressed.

4.1. Empirical material

The empirical material chosen for this thesis consist of thirty speeches, communicated by the five EC Presidents Jacques Delors, Jacques Santer, Romano Prodi, José Manuel Barroso and Jean-Claude Juncker. The speeches were produced between 1989 and 2018 and were chosen due to following criterions:

1. An even distribution of the material, within the time frame of thirty years, tries to be accomplished by analyzing as many speeches as the amount of years the President had his position. Even though Delors was President already from 1985, only six years of his presidency will be included. This is due to the relevance of starting from the year of 1989, which is argued to be especially interesting for the development of the European identity. Accordingly, Barroso was President for ten years and therefore ten of his speeches have been analyzed. Consequently, Santer and Prodi were Presidents for five years each, and thus the amount of analyzed speeches per person here is five. The amount of speeches and years for Juncker is four, due to the end of the period of research from 2018, even though he was President until 2019.
2. In order to analyze the most relevant content from the speeches and to aspire to answer the research questions, the material is not representing every single year from 1989 to 2018. Some years are not represented in the data while other years might have several speeches included due to major events. These events qualify as enlargements of the EU or different crisis, which hypothetically were of more interest since they potentially triggered the concept of the European identity to be more discussed and might mirror both integration and disintegration.
3. To be able to find relevant material, the title or the content of the chosen speeches contains words of interest such as values, identity, heritage, history or similar.
4. If available, the chosen speeches are the sort of a State of the European Union, due to their specific strategical and reflective character.

5. The speeches had to be available at the official EC website, ec.europa.eu, and be communicated on or translated into English. Further they needed to be performed at universities, at important summits or before the EP.

In total, the selected material is consisting of six speeches by Delors, covering the years of 1989, 1992 and 1993, five speeches by Santer which cover the years of 1995, 1997 and 1998, five speeches by Prodi which cover the years of 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003, ten speeches by Barroso which cover the years of 2004, 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2014 and four speeches by Juncker which cover the years of 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.⁶³ The most evident advantage of the material is the high validity since it was retrieved from the official database of the EC and thus originates from primary sources. Further, due to the extensive content of the material, good preconditions that the research questions will be deeply investigated are given. Another advantage of the material is that it covers a lot of different topics through a relatively long period of time. Hence, the data might give both a good sample as well as making a contribution to and enhance the understanding of how the EC Presidents have been constructing a European identity through a processual perspective which can contribute to a more precise interpretation that will fit the research questions delicately. In fine, the amount of material will qualify into a qualitative analysis which arguably will give opportunity for deeper evaluations and more precise conclusions.

4.2. Qualitative analysis

As mentioned above, the selected material will due to the research question be categorized as qualitative data and partly be analyzed with the method of qualitative analysis. Qualitative data is generally viewed upon as of a more diverse nature in contrast to quantitative data and in this case, precise nuances in the material adventures to be missed or coded in a disadvantageous way if analyzed with a quantitative approach. Additionally, due to the structure of the research questions the qualitative approach will enable the material to be better understood and the conclusions will probably be of more interest and value.⁶⁴ There are many definitions and theories on how a qualitative research should be executed, but the one used in this research is defined by Uwe Flick, professor of qualitative research, Ernst Von Kardoff, professor of sociology and Ines Steinke, senior consultant in user experience. Their

⁶³ Full list of speeches available in the appendix.

⁶⁴ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software*. London; Sage Publications, 2014), 2.

characteristics of the qualitative analysis includes the principle of openness, the construction of reality as a basis, the contextuality as guiding principle and the perspectives of participants.⁶⁵ In this thesis, the qualitative analysis are used with the hermeneutical approach, whose strengths includes that it manages the entire framework of the process and the interpretation of the analysis. This means that the meaning of one part only can be understood when contextualized with the entirety and it gives room for analyzing the different levels of meaning when dividing previous knowledge, semantics and eventual 'hidden' information. Consequently, this approach can be both inspiring and stimulating when developing a systematic qualitative analysis and arguable of advantage in this type of research. Further, this approach will provide a more flexible style of interpretation, when analyzing concepts and subjects that stretches through many categories, which will be necessary due to the open and inductive structure of the research questions. Finally, the gain of using the hermeneutical approach within qualitative analysis on political speeches is that it opens up for a balanced mix of analyzing both the conditions and the context the speeches were produced within which in this case it is essential when searching for deeper meanings in the material. What is more, it helps to understand the entirety of the analyzed parts which is profitable when working with this type of data. By the same token, this method is forgiving to definite conclusions which is essential when doing an apprehension and interpretation of this caliber.⁶⁶

4.3. Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis can briefly be summarized as the coherence of action and plot development and is of relevance for research concerning the relationship between narratives and identity politics and/or projects. In the middle of the 1980s, the approach of perceiving and analyze human beings as 'narrative creatures' challenged the old paradigm of rationalism which understood the human identity as firm and unchangeable. The new approach was rooted in the standpoint that human beings needed to be able to orientate themselves through time, in order to find a stable point in a moveable surrounding and find meaningful expressions for past or future events.⁶⁷ When departing in narratives, the identity is perceived as fluid and negotiable and can be internalized through narrative actions and affected by historical consciousness. The art of narrativizing the relationship of time and meaning of human beings, is used by political, religious and spiritual leaders for different reasons, but among those reasons are

⁶⁵ Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software*, 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 16–17.

⁶⁷ Rösen, *History: narration, interpretation, orientation*, 11.

power and influence.⁶⁸ When departing from narrative analysis, the material one investigates is presupposed to contain a story where actions, sequences and time progression are included. The interpretation process for the recipient starts already in the title of the document, but the essence of the narrative analysis is to be able to find the whole construction of the meaningful story and to investigate in which manner the story is told.⁶⁹ Attention is thereby given to the whole context of the narrative and the choices made by the producer when communicating the material. The chronological order, in which the recipient receives information, reveals how the strategical intrigue is used due to the creation of causation which communicates a message. What is not included in the narrative is also of importance since it can be interpreted as an expression of power from the originator.⁷⁰ The definition of a narrative structure used in this thesis is developed by William Labov, professor em. in linguistics and the founder of the discipline of variationist sociolinguistics and Joshua Waletzky, editor and director. Their structure organizes events to an easy and coherent story by using the six following elements:

1. *An abstract*, which introduces the narrative with a brief compilation or summary of the event which aims to spark attention.
2. *An orientation*, that asks the questions of who, when, what and where. This part describes the people, symbols and metaphors that will interact in the story in relation to the time, place and situation.
3. *A complicating action*, or the actual event, which gives a dramaturgic twist and starts the occurrence that moves the narrative forward.
4. *An evaluation*, which asks for the point or reason of the narrative, seen from the perspective of the narrator.
5. *A resolution*, that concludes and marks the end of the narrative.
6. *The coda*, which relevance is to translate and contextualize the narrative to the everyday life. This part helps to form the additional dimension to the basic structure and bring the recipients back to the present. Here, the eventual moral of the narrative might be visible.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Göran Bergström & Kristina Boréus (red.), *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys* (Lund: Studentlitteratur A, 2012), 220.

⁶⁹ Jimmy Vulovic, *Narrativanalys*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur AB, 2013), 7 and 60.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 58.

⁷¹ Bergström & Boréus (red.), *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys*, 229.

Additionally, the holistic approach of analyzing narratives, which means that the researcher investigates if the narrative moves from a light past into a dark future or the opposite, is used. This approach includes the focus on eventual turning points, climaxes, crescendos or heroes which reveals and simplifies connections between historical progression and symbolic mobility.⁷² The simplifying is put in action when speakers borrows or take inspiration from well-known figures and characters from for example childhood stories, like the good, the bad, the evil or the fair, and gives them new life in another context. When other individuals relate and reconnect to the plot and recognizes common characters, a fellowship of a group is created. This strengthens the bond between the performer and the recipients that might be a leader and voters or citizens and might be more effective than the use of complicated figures or hard facts.⁷³ Hence, the narrative analysis is both flexible and interdisciplinary in its construction, which makes it of good use when studying the interplay between the civil society and politics. Additionally, the power factor emphasized by the narrative, is useful when scrutinizing how a certain context or relation between a performer and a recipient affiliates to different identity projects.⁷⁴

4.4. Implications, limitations and possible weaknesses

The combination of qualitative analysis with the classic hermeneutical approach complement each other, while also bringing certain risks. The most evident hazard is the validity criteria of the analysis, which is fully dependent on the capacity of the researcher.⁷⁵ Subsequently, the research approach is of a constructivist, interpretative and inductive nature which makes the finding of narratives predicted, presupposed and entirely based on the researcher's knowledge and errors. The predisposition of somewhat designed results is apart from eventually biased also endangering interesting elements in the material to be overlooked. The narratives in this research were not determined beforehand, which made the course of analytical action inductive and consequently it brings forward the obvious criticism of the vulnerable results, eventually being biased from the foreknowledge or the predisposition from the researcher. Thus, the qualification for the used method are as well a validity drawback. Further, the limitation and selection of the material in this thesis was made in order to create a logical and even distribution of data in relation to the historical time frame. The material, retrieved from

⁷² Bergström & Boréus (red.), *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys*, 236.

⁷³ Ibid, 220.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 225.

⁷⁵ Kuckartz, *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software*, 28.

the official website of the EC, is making a solid basis for the raw material but while the searching engine at the EC website has been of value since it is tracking archived material from the EC, it is unfortunately not as refined as preferable. At the time when this research was done, it was not possible to see every speech ever produced by a certain person and neither possible to list the produced material in a chronological order. It is possible that all speeches ever produced by the EC Presidents is archived in a more coherent way, but since this have not been accessible for the researcher, the material was bound to be retrieved from the EC website. Ergo, important material might have been missed due to unavailability on the website or due to acts of random. This have made the fortuity higher and might have affected the results to be more unprecise then they could have been. While at the same time narrowing down the spectrum of analysis, it also creates potential that in a future research, the validity of the results could be enhanced. Thus, the limitations in this thesis has been both sufficient and in accordance to the given time of the research. Ultimately, the whole selection of the chosen speeches must be seen as a sample among all speeches from the EC Presidents and the result of the thesis must be seen and understood in the light of its weaknesses.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the empirical material with the elaboration of the theories presented in chapter three are presented. The sections will follow the chronological order of which the theories were conferred in order to follow a logical procedure. The first section will highlight social constructivism in relation to the European identity while the second section accounts for how the collective identity in relation to the European identity has been used. The third section exemplifies how the EC Presidents have been using their own personal influence as leaders when shaping the European identity, while the fourth section focus on the importance of geographical sites and historical dates in the speeches. The last section brings examples on how historical consciousness and thus the identification trough time is mirrored throughout the speeches. Notably, due to the fluid and multi-layered character of the material many of the examples must be understood as floating over many categories even if put under one specific section. Worth taking into notice is as well that only the most significant results are being presented, which means that some of the results found in the data will not be accounted for due to their similarity or relevance to other examples presented in the analysis.

5.1. Social constructivism in relation to the European identity

Social constructivism puts extra emphasis on values, norms, collective meanings, narratives and personal interests from the actors in the context of European integration. Also, the role of political narratives is put in relation to the collective knowledge and understanding of an imagined group. To exemplify the visibility of this ontology in the speeches, in 1993 Delors motivates that the abolition of physical frontiers that soon will come will serve as a hands-on symbol for the new era of the Western world. In this narrative, this orientation and use of symbols also act like the abstract or the compilation that sparks attention. The new era is described as the starting point for the new European citizenship which interestingly is called a European citizenship despite the fact that only twelve countries in Europe at this time were members of the EEC. This could be a testimony for a more longstanding aspiration of all forty-four countries of Europe to one day be members or to Eurocentrism. Further, Delors describes the values and norms of the EEC as something needed to be safeguarded and exported. The world is a 'global village' and all destines as intertwined. The EEC, together with the ally of the US, need to tackle the problems of the world after the collapse of

communism in order to live their future through shared values for the people.⁷⁶ The coda, or the moral is to remind the people of the EEC that responsibility is needed to be taken in order to stabilize the new world order. Accordingly, the constructivist approach can be hinted through the managing of IR by the cooperation of the EEC and the US in order to preserve and promote their Western values and norms that they identify as in need of export. On the same line, Santer expresses plenty of times the importance of soft values within IR and the relation to identity building. The EU needs to strengthen people's sense of solidarity and identification with Europe since, according to Santer, the EU's weakest points are considered to be subsidiarity, solidarity and identity.⁷⁷ Further he means that the EU's actions on the international scene is a test of the European identity, due to its allowance for Europeans to identify with the common journey their nations have involved with. Thus, if the EU makes success on the international scene, people will feel strongly connected to the European identity.⁷⁸ Another take on the need of soft power, norms and values comes from Prodi who expresses that the unification of people is dependent on mutual values and principles, rather than the condition of living within the same borders. He emphasizes the cultural aspects of identities rather than a national identity when he expresses that Europe needs a 'soul', consisting of a shared sense of common identity and a common destiny. 'The 'soul of Europe' is the combination of a shared heritage of spiritual values expressed in a wonderful diversity of cultural forms. These values do not only originate from Europe's Christian roots, but also from the experience of reconciling a diversity of peoples and religions, bringing them together in peace and mutual respect. Pluralism, tolerance, solidarity are the values on which the foundation of their common home should be built upon, and the house shall be open with place of dialogue and exchange of ideas.⁷⁹ Apart from the social constructivist focus on the soul and destiny as means of unification, also historical consciousness is mirrored to be the basis of importance together with values when building the open and tolerant home for the contemporary Europeans. Also Juncker urges for the remembrance of the past, in order to promote a helping and courageous Europe, in line with their common values and history.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Jacques Delors, *The US and the EC: Facing Challenges Together in an Interdependent World*, at the IMDI 1993 World Leadership Conference, Washington, March 18, 1993.

⁷⁷ Jacques Santer, *A Message for the Sceptics - the Sicco L. Mansholt Lecture*, before the Association of European Journalists in the Netherlands, Amsterdam, April 21, 1997.

⁷⁸ Jacques Santer, *The EU in the 21st century: political dwarf or world actor*, at the Bologna Centre of the Johns Hopkins University, Bologna, April 23, 1998.

⁷⁹ Romani Prodi, *Rich Diversity: The Union's Strength*, at the Conference of European Mayors, Innsbruck, November 9, 2001 and *The European Project in The World: Between Values and Politics*, at the Fondazione Don Tonino Bello, Alessano (Lecce), June 13, 2003.

⁸⁰ Jean-Claude Juncker, *State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity*, before the EP, September 9, 2015.

This is an example of how the orientation of the history is pushed to activate the European consciousness in order to merge Europe by the role of culture and does also emphasize how the values serves as the important tools for orientating their recent mission.

5.2. Collective identity in relation to the European identity

An important part when constructing the European identity is to form the concept of the European people and create an identification to Europe. Therefore, the attempts to getting the collective group identity to stick to the citizens in Europe are hereupon exemplified by the leaders of the EC. The notion of the ‘other’ or potential threats are as well in need to serve as an amplifier of the own groups feeling of unity. Due to the immense layers of the construction of a collective group, this section contains three subsections; unification, enlargement and threats or the ‘other’ in relation to the European identity.

5.2.1. Unification

An example of Delors’ ambition of unifying the MS is when he pinpoints that tangible efforts were to be done to infrastructure and telecommunications, so that no one, no matter which region they live in within the MS, should risk feeling isolated. It was of importance that every citizen felt that they were taking part of the great European adventure together.⁸¹ However, Delors great focus of unity is prior on economic integration rather than an integration of cultures.⁸² In one example, Delors describes the great quest that they as Europeans stand before: “Are we capable, over the years ahead, of transforming the vision of the founding fathers of the EEC into a plan for a Greater Europe? Can the values of peace and mutual understanding become the common property of the peoples of our continent?” The plan for the Greater Europe is however only implied as something relevant for Eastern and Central European countries while the situation in former Yugoslavia is referred to as a tragedy. The relationship to Central and Eastern European countries is described as duty, due to credibility, the future and for the vision for Europe as a whole. The vision of a Greater Europe, communicated from ‘the ancestors’, is in need of more MS due to its symbolic boost of confidence, involvement and support for the European people of a shared destiny, which they

⁸¹ Jacques Delors, speech delivered at the Ceremony for the Conferment of an Honorary Doctorate at University of Edinburgh, December 10, 1992.

⁸² Jacques Delors, *Environmental Ethics*, at the Sixth Economic Summit Conference on Bioethics, Brussels, May 10, 1989.

owe to younger generations.⁸³ Accordingly, the orientation to the both the past and to the future is set in order to create meaning for the present tasks. As well, the moral of the narrative is settled: the goal of a united Europe is something contemporary Europeans owe to both their ancestors and to their children and thus, both the historical and European consciousness is put on the agenda. Further, the first example of the use of the EEC as a family comes from Delors who means that they just like a family are bend together by ‘blood’. Additionally, he describes the family of the EEC as an anchor of stability, a pole of attraction and the lighthouse of the continent in an increasingly instable world. Their function is to lead the way for those who has chosen the path of freedom. Thus, the holistic approach of whole narratives is here used when Delors give hope to other countries in Europe that they soon can obtain the same success as they have done.⁸⁴ The turning point of the dark story of the communist regime is the fall of the Berlin Wall and thus the symbolic mobility is used. Another significant example from Santer comes from when he encourages the opportunity of integration across frontiers, and searches for a ‘European public opinion’ where European people can identify with Europe and its institutions.⁸⁵ Not only the need for integration but also the need of a communicative platform for the European people is asked for and formulated as something missing in the equation of integration. The European public opinion could as well be seen as an example of the need for knowledge of and understanding about the European project and sphere, as of social constructivist character and the relationship between institutions, identifications and public discourse is visible. Prodi in his turn, describes the need for unity within the EU due to duties to other countries in the world who wants more united action at European level.⁸⁶ He means that the citizens of Europe, both in the existing MS and in the candidate countries, need a real sense of ownership of the EU which comes from that the family of Europe comes together to build a common future. Interestingly, Prodi includes the countries of the former Yugoslavia in his vision when he states that “Enlargement has to go hand in hand with a real policy of solidarity with our new neighbours – some of whom are looking forward to becoming candidate countries themselves one day. I am thinking in particular of the Western Balkans. Our Union is preparing to become a genuinely continent-wide Union.”⁸⁷ Moreover, Prodi demands that they must do their

⁸³ Jacques Delors, *The European Community – Official Partner of the 1993 Hanover Fair*, at the Hanover Fair, Hanover, April 20, 1993.

⁸⁴ Delors, *Environmental Ethic's*.

⁸⁵ Jacques Santer, *Shaping Europe's Future*, at the International Bertelsmann Forum 1998, Berlin, July 3, 1998.

⁸⁶ Romani Prodi, *The Past and future of European Integration*, To the Instituto de Espana, Madrid, February 7, 2002.

⁸⁷ Prodi, *Rich Diversity: The Union's Strength*.

international duty together or not at all, and all the European leaders need courage to be able to shape the Europe the citizens want and owe to future generations. This is a good example on how Santer narrativizes the need to take action of the own destiny, which in this case is the destiny of Europe, and by this orientating and motivating leaders of Europe to choose the ‘right’ path.⁸⁸ Accordingly, the coda of the narrative is used to bring the recipients back to the present, search for determination and translate the message of the speech to find courage to act for more unity. Prodi is of the opinion that if the European citizens clearly can see what Europe means, they can support the EU and, in the longing, identify themselves as a European people.⁸⁹ Thus, Prodi indicates that the people of Europe do not fully understand what the meaning of the EU and therefore the coda of his narrative is to encourage the audience to learn from their cultural and historical memory in order to motivate lust for the present project. Further, Barroso describes the problem of ascribing meaning for the European project and in the longing the collective group as Europeans and means that the problem lies in the inability to make sense of history for the younger generations, which do not identify with the old story of European unification from the post-war times. The identification to the story or the narrative is described as of importance, since it is the core value and unifying element in European integration. The solution is to reestablish the feeling of continuity to the ancestors with help from the world of culture. Barroso highlights culture as the ‘most important element of unity’ which stands in relationship to the European soul and the sense of belonging to the EEC. Accordingly, a new narrative is sought to continuing the story of Europe, by using the collective memory and the ability to articulate meaning for a shared destiny. The new European narrative is meant to ensure the inspiration for European citizens to rise to new challenges and fight for European values.⁹⁰ The coda of the speech is that it is through the finding of the new narrative that the younger generations can continue the story of Europe in order to unify across borders and diversities. Another example of Barroso’s strong will of coming together for a European cause is seen when he calls for a turning point or the starting point for a new narrative for the EU. He states that Europe’s moment of truth has come and that the twenty-seven MS need to show other than national solutions and think more European. The moral is often that if they do not swim together and act as one global

⁸⁸ Prodi, *The Past and future of European Integration*.

⁸⁹ Prodi, *Rich Diversity: The Union’s Strength*.

⁹⁰ José Manuel Barroso, *A New Narrative for Europe*, at BOZAR, Brussels, April 23, 2013.

player and world leader, they all will sink, or together we stand, divided we lose.⁹¹ Another example is when he calls for a federation of nation states, not a superstate, but a federation that provides each individual to better control their own destiny, to make the EU better.⁹² Further, Barroso believes that the European identity is fractured, but has healed a bit more thanks to enlargements.⁹³ In line with his predecessors, Barroso states that the European identity is composed by the extraordinary richness of national and regional cultures, which mirrors the motto of ‘united in diversity’. The diversity does not mean division but is a rather a unifying factor, when understood in the right light. Further, he means that Europe’s true ‘cultural identity’ is made of its different heritages, multiplicity of histories and of languages, diverse literary, artistic and popular traditions and that cultural policies enrich both the European identity and the European citizenship. The relation between culture and identity is important for Barroso, because EU citizens need to gain personal experience in their everyday life on what a European citizenship and identity means. Therefore, he means that transnational cultural exchanges are of big value for the creation of a European identity. The link between culture, identity and citizenship is therefore strong, but Barroso means that the concept of the European people still is missing, which is fatal since Europeans need to re-connect to Europe.⁹⁴ Moreover, he implies that the European people, as a coherent group is disconnected to their heritage and consequently are lost in time. His influence is though there to help the audience to be rightfully guided and create meaning of their differences. The last examples come from Juncker who in one of his speeches make us of the whole classical narrative. In the abstract, he means that the children in Europe deserves a Europe that protects, empowers and defends their European way of life. In the orientation, he urges that everyone needs to take responsibility for building Europe together. Juncker points out, as a complicating action, that the MS are looking for national solutions when EU cooperation and more solidarity is needed. Further he put emphasis on the fact that without cooperation they are nothing and can risk failing, which exemplifies the resolution and the evaluation of the narrative. Thus, as in the title of this speech, the coda is to be seen.⁹⁵

⁹¹ José Manuel Barroso, *EU Enlargement – 5 Years After*, at the Conference on Enlargement, Prague, March 2, 2009 and *Europe and Culture* at the Berliner Konferenz für europäische Kulturpolitik, Berlin, November 26, 2004 and *State of the Union 2010*, before the EP, Strasbourg, September 7, 2010.

⁹² José Manuel Barroso, *State of the Union 2012 Address*, at the plenary session of the EP, Strasbourg, September 12, 2012.

⁹³ Barroso, *Europe and Culture* and *EU Enlargement – 5 Years After*.

⁹⁴ Barroso, *Europe and Culture*.

⁹⁵ Jean-Claude Juncker, *State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a better Europe – a Europe that protects, empowers and defends*”, before the EP, September 14, 2016.

5.2.2. Enlargement

Delors is describing coming enlargements as a moral and political imperative, especially meant to hinder ethnical and national conflicts following the fall of the Soviet Union.⁹⁶ He means that the European blueprint of solidarity and cooperation should be exported and those who shares the same values as the EEC should be welcomed into the union, which is an expression of social constructivist nature. Further, historical consciousness is mirrored when Delors describes the social responsibility the EEC has to build up security and stability on the continent, due to their historical and geographical ties to the rest of Europe.⁹⁷ In one example, Delors is expressing that he is talking from a European perspective, which can seem a bit ignorant, coming from the fact that he only speaks for twelve countries.⁹⁸ This quite isolating method, that he probably uses unconsciously, mirrors a Western European perspective. The process of enlargement is by Santer described as of importance due to economic and political terms for Western Europe and its place in the world. He expresses that they eventually will see the whole European continent reconciled in peace with itself, and that future generations will not forgive them if they miss this opportunity. Santer stresses that the ultimate goal of Europe is peace and stability, which is not only a need but a must for future generations. Therefore, further enlargements will be needed, since it is the continuous story from the founding fathers of the EU and a mission with the clearly defined goal of further integration.⁹⁹ Additionally, Santer means that the EU need to come to terms with the ten latest years and take the opportunity to unite Europe in peace and freedom after almost five hundred years, due to historical and moral duty.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, the mirroring of historical consciousness in order to ascribe meaning to and narrate the story of a united Europe in peace is expressed. However, the countries in former Yugoslavia are used as examples of lessons when observing how ethnical disputes can create conflicts. These countries are not expressed as having an affiliation, apart as lessons, to the EU countries, and thus to the European identity.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Jacques Delors, *The European Community and the New World Order*, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, April 7, 1992.

⁹⁷ Jacques Delors, *1992: A pivotal year*, the presentation of the EC programme for 1992 and the Delors II Package. Before the EP, Strasbourg, February 12, 1992.

⁹⁸ Delors, *The US and the EC: Facing Challenges Together in an Interdependent World*.

⁹⁹ Santer, *A Message for the Sceptics - the Sicco L. Mansholt Lecture*.

¹⁰⁰ Santer, *Shaping Europe's Future*.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Santer, *Europe's Future – My Vision*, before the Corporation of London, London Guildhall, May 4, 1995.

Prodi is the first of the Presidents that communicates that the countries of the Balkans should gradually be approached for the ‘The Greater Europe’.¹⁰² He means that European integration is the first ‘velvet revolution’ of the 20th century which has overturned concepts and attitudes that has characterized centuries of European history. Above all, it has swept away the old idea that citizenship and community only can be related to the nation and the State. Further he expresses that European citizens can have many identities at the same time and that traditional roles of the State now are being carried out at supranational levels. Over the past decade, Prodi means, freedom and democracy had indeed spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe and finally they are reuniting the long-divided continent, not by force but by free choice and on the basis of shared values.¹⁰³ Prodi expresses that for the first time in history, Europe will be united under the banner of freedom and democracy and never before has there been a ‘democratic globalization’ on this scale which will allow all the peoples of the continent to be able to live together in peace and safety.¹⁰⁴ Those included in this enlargement will become a family, and an obvious out-group becomes the rest of the countries in Europe. However, he has a more including and more focused on the value-based focus on citizenship as an integrational force, which is a quite different take on enlargement, compared to his predecessors. Barroso, in his turn, describes the old division of East and West as unnatural and that the enlargement of 2004 enabled the new MS to find their rightful place in the European family.¹⁰⁵ Thus, from Barroso’s perspective, there is no doubt that these countries belong. Juncker, expresses the need for enlargement with the Western Balkans countries due to their need for stability and not because they are belonging to a more united Europe or that it would be a duty for the EU to include them.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, even when welcomed into the EU, the countries in this region are not culturally or historically bound to the rest of the EU countries.

5.2.3. Threats or the ‘other’

Delors frequently points out the dangers of losing their collective memory and their connection to the past, which can lead to ethnical conflicts between people and groups or the revival of nationalism, racism, chauvinism and xenophobia. Delors exemplifies the tragedy in

¹⁰² Romano Prodi, *The state of The Union: 2002, a decisive step towards a greater Europe*, before the EP, Strasbourg, December 11, 2001.

¹⁰³ Prodi, *The Past and future of European Integration*.

¹⁰⁴ Prodi, *Rich Diversity: The Union’s Strength*.

¹⁰⁵ José Manuel Barroso, *A Europe of Values*, at the International Meeting for Peace, Faiths and Cultures – “The Spirit of Assissi in Cracow”, Cracow, September 6, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Claude Juncker, *State of the Union 2017*, before the EP, September 13, 2017.

the former Yugoslavia as a collective reminder and a lesson on what can happen to them, if they forget their history, experiences and sufferings of the past and acts carelessly. Though, Delors reassures that the European strength is to overcome threats and live as a community. Apparently, this strength is not part of the European countries outside the EEC. The factors that will drive the process to all these threats are lack of resources and solidarity, poverty, immigration, unemployment, poverty and a decline in values.¹⁰⁷ As the antidote Delors encourages a global perspective with values from cosmopolitanism and transnationalism.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Delors makes a connection to how important both the social and cultural values, embedded in the historical memory and European consciousness, are for the upholding of a peaceful continent. Accordingly, Santer argues after his predecessor that it does exist clear threats that sweeps away ‘the cornerstones of their European identity’. Like Delors, he pinpoints how unemployment and dismantlement will pave the way for nationalism.¹⁰⁹ Nationalism, which is equal to war, will in its turn increase the fragmentation of the EU, which he is concerned with can lead to the malfunctions in the institutions. Santer argues that this threat is especially dangerous since the European venture they all share is common and that they accordingly should speak with one voice.¹¹⁰ Santer is pressing the European unity, coming from their historical past and the need for them to continue on this path. However, Santer does frequently refer to the situation in the countries of former Yugoslavia as warning examples on how national and ethnical conflicts also can happen to the EU countries if they not stay together. Thus, the former Yugoslavian countries are put as the other group filled with qualities non-desirable for the own group.¹¹¹ Prodi differs from his predecessors due to the fact that he only once mentions threats. In his strategical communication, the focus is rather on describing the EU and the qualities on their unity, without pointing out obvious threats. These threats are defined as poverty and despair as well as conflicts between civilizations and do indeed belong in the same category as the threats expressed by the precious presidents. Nationalism is not mentioned as the reason for the clash of civilization, but however is it implied.¹¹² Further, Prodi argues that globalization dissolves national boundaries and that when ethnical and transnational identities mixes with the national, it

¹⁰⁷ Delors, *The US and the EC: Facing Challenges Together in an Interdependent World*.

¹⁰⁸ Delors, *The European Community and the New World Order*.

¹⁰⁹ Jacques Santer, *Speech delivered at the Davos World Economic Forum*, January 28, 1995.

¹¹⁰ Santer, *The EU in the 21st century: political dwarf or world actor*.

¹¹¹ Santer, *Europe's Future – My vision, Speech delivered at the Davos World Economic Forum and A Message for the Sceptics - the Sicco L. Mansholt Lecture*.

¹¹² Prodi, *The European Project in The World: Between Values and Politics*.

challenges the role of the nation state.¹¹³ Barroso, unlike Prodi, stipulates threats in fifty percent of the analyzed speeches. Like Delors and Santer, Barroso returns to the threat of nationalism which is also combined with imperialism, totalitarianism, racism and xenophobia. Fragmentation and pessimism are once again pictured factors that widens the platform for the threats, but the reasons for this is anti-globalism, terrorism and populism which has not been referred to before. This shows a sample of the discourse that started to catch on during the 00s which implied that the effects of globalism and cosmopolitanism possibly was not only positive. Additionally, the general discourse on populism where the EU seen as the ‘elite’ and the national states as the ‘common people’, is integrated in the categories of menace.¹¹⁴ Another interesting example comes from when Barroso explains that due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia, many Ukrainians now are longing to come into the EU family. However, he does not describe them as obvious members to the EU family or even welcomed. Rather, he uses their will of entering the EU as an argument for the citizens already in the union to realize and appreciate their membership.¹¹⁵ In the speeches of Juncker, the most common threats, like racism, discrimination and fragmentation are similar to those mentioned by previous presidents. However, the threat of nationalism is here described as a threat when it is exaggerated, and patriotism is as well described as a threat, but only when it is of an unhealthy character. This exemplifies how Juncker mildens and adapts his rhetoric in the cause of explaining that the different isms not are dangerous per se, but only when expressed into more extreme ways.¹¹⁶ Juncker also means that European and national patriotism does not exclude each other, and to love Europe is to love its nations and vice versa.¹¹⁷ When Juncker comments on Brexit, he means that the result is tragic and that the EU always will regret it, but Brexit is not the future of Europe and they need to respect the will of the people.¹¹⁸ Accordingly, the UK is no longer part of the European venture, but however, the European identity is not described as fractured. Thus, maybe those words of healed or fractured identities are only used when countries are in the process of joining or have already joined the EU.

¹¹³ Romano Prodi, *Towards the new Europe*, at a Dialogue on Europe Forum, Berlin, March 30, 2000.

¹¹⁴ Barroso, *Europe and Culture, EU Enlargement – 5 Years After, A Europe of Values, State of the Union 2010 and, A New Narrative for Europe*.

¹¹⁵ José Manuel Barroso, *Moving towards a conscience of Europe*, at College of Europe, Natolin, May 9, 2014.

¹¹⁶ Juncker, *State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a better Europe – a Europe that protects, empowers and defends*.

¹¹⁷ Jean-Claude Juncker, *State of the Union 2018 – The hour of European Sovereignty*, before the EP, September 12, 2018.

¹¹⁸ Juncker, *State of the Union 2017*.

5.3. Social influence when creating the European identity

According to the ILI theory, the most important factor for constructing social identities within a group comes from the influence and impact from the leader's ability to create, represent, advance and embed the 'sense of the we and us'. Consequently, the EC Presidents need to mobilize the energy from the European people and by this create the collective identity with the European backdrop. However, they are often bound to 'compete' with the collective identity in the form of national identity and because of this, the construction of the European identity is often portrayed as something that is not challenging the national dimension of the identity but rather something that enhances and co-exists in a friendly manner with it. To exemplify, Santer is in one speech stressing that he with the enlargement processes do not want to see a harmonization beyond what is required to make the Single Market function properly within the MS. Neither does he want to see the loss of important cultural symbols or the loss of European identities. To push his point further and also show that he is 'one of the people' who strongly cares about his national identity, he exemplifies how his homeland Luxembourg has gained from the EU membership and not lost its special national character, but rather enhanced its identity within the EU context:

My fellow Luxemburgers are, as I myself am, attached to our way of life (...). As a founder member of the European Community, whilst Luxembourg has seen great change in the last 50 years, its main cultural symbols remain in place and they will remain so. Our credo in Luxembourg is "we want to remain what we are". This credo could be equally shared in all our Member States.

Consequently, Santer tries to invoke the shared social identity within the European people and also show how they all matter in their variety of cultures, traditions and identities. The in Europe is the real source of richness and that their challenge is to profit from this diversity.¹¹⁹ Apparently, there are room for plenty of identities in the union and it is of importance that they are preserved. Santer also expresses that the people of Europe desire and ask for more Europe which they can recognize themselves in.¹²⁰ The emphasis is put on the need for diversity and the EU is pictured as an amplifier of the national identities rather than a threat. Prodi, in his turn, are convinced that in order to get support from the people for coming enlargements, they need to enable 'grass root democracy'. That is why he pleads to his audience, the mayors and elected local representatives of regions in the MS, to take responsibility for making Europe happen on the ground in daily life. In order to make

¹¹⁹ Santer, *Europe's Future – My Vision*.

¹²⁰ Santer, *A Message for the Sceptics - the Sicco L. Mansholt Lecture*.

Brussels and the EU relevant, Prodi believes in decentralizing powers.¹²¹ This gives an example on how he by ‘crafting a sense of us’ also tries to make the mayors of Europe to ‘do it for us’, which is in line with ‘being one of us’ and ‘making us matter’.

Barroso is also exemplifying the ILI when he tells an anecdote from his visit in Poland:

...when I was arriving here in Warsaw, two young men in their 30s came to me and said: "Thank you Mr Barroso, we are Polish, thank you for coming to Warsaw". I have never seen them before, of course. They said: "We were Erasmus students. And it is so important what the European Union has made for us and for this Erasmus generation".

The European people is here related to the Erasmus students and show how the EU is employing to the identity entrepreneurship. By being one of the Erasmus-generation, the identification with other European citizens gets stronger, through the means of memory and tangible experiences.¹²² In an example from Juncker, when trying to make himself seem like ‘one of the people’, he makes use of common metaphors. In one of his speeches, the whole narrative is built up around the concept that there is no love without pain. This, a classic use of an orientation, gives the story life when connected to the well-known theme of love. In Juncker’s case, he means that the love of his life is Europe and he himself has never lost his love for Europe. Not only does he make use of the identity prototypicality of being an ordinary person, but he also crafts the sense of an us with the well-known references. Additionally, he uses many sail-references which are easy to understand, i.e. the wind is back in Europe’s sails and the crisis was somewhat overcome, but instead of relaxing, action is needed to stay in course and plan for the future: a future with more democracy, strength and unity. Further, the house metaphor is back: the roof of the EU is fixed, but the rest of the house needs renovation. Within this speech, the holistic approach of the narrative, i.e. the movement from a dark past into a bright future, is clearly exemplified.¹²³

5.4. Strategic constructs of the European identity

As previously described, political speeches are powerful tools when strategically trying to convince an audience or create a certain impact. The credibility of the speaker, the invoking of feelings of the audience and the logical arguments are the three components that together

¹²¹ Prodi, *Rich Diversity: The Union’s Strength*.

¹²² Barroso, *Moving towards a conscience of Europe*.

¹²³ Juncker, *State of the Union 2017*.

create a powerful symphony when mediating a message. As mentioned earlier, one of the effective ways of activating feelings in the audience is when referring to actual sites or dates to make certain points stronger. This is to be seen from the EC Presidents and to exemplify, in 1993 Delors makes a point of the importance of the location of the Hanover Fair where the EEC acts like a partner. The fair is perceived as a symbol and an evidence of the importance that companies and trade associations attach to the opportunities opened up by the Single Market. Delors means that it is a true recognition the new-found dynamism of the European economy.¹²⁴ Further, in one of the speeches from Santer from 1995, he emphasizes that his speech about his vision about Europe's future is appropriately held in London due to the city's dynamism, creativity, sheer size, share of foreign exchange and cross border equality.¹²⁵ In 2003, Prodi communicates his speech at the Fondazione Don Tonino Bello and makes a great point that the word of the Christian priests' teachings in sum was peace. From this, he builds his whole narrative on the fact that the great Christian ideal also can contribute with knowledge for the European identity and Europe's responsibilities. Each of Europe's peoples has its own identity, history and culture, and when talking about European identity they mean to add a new dimension consisting of the shared common destiny and the development of joint ways of expressing solidarity. Prodi means that the European consciousness is emerging thanks to the disappearance of national borders, the proliferation of cultural and intellectual exchanges, increased communication and economic transactions. This consciousness enables a sense of belonging to a new political and cultural reality that complement rather than replace national realities and identities.¹²⁶ In 2009, Barroso make use of symbolical geographical spots when he holds a speech in Assisi, Cracow. The location was the home of John Paul II, who convened the first historic gathering for peace in Assisi in 1986, which gives the orientation in the narrative. The timing of the speech is also relevant, since it was performed days after the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and thus brings a reminder of the need for efforts dedicated to the cause of peace. Barroso also remind the recipients that it was in Poland the war began and that no other country symbolizes more the pain and the sufferings of war and the atrocities it brings.¹²⁷ Barroso highlights the value of solidarity when he in Warsaw, due to the twenty-five years celebration of the Solidarność movement describes the significant event in the history of Europe which led to the peaceful

¹²⁴ Delors, *The European Community – Official Partner of the 1993 Hanover Fair*.

¹²⁵ Santer, *Europe's Future – My Vision*.

¹²⁶ Prodi, *The European Project in The World: Between Values and Politic*.

¹²⁷ Barroso, *A Europe of Values*.

revolution of 1989 after the Second World War. In this speech, Barroso stresses that the impact of the revolution crossed borders and social classes, which inspired to democracy throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Barroso also highlights that the fight for democracy was fought by Europeans, since Europe stood as the global symbol for liberty.¹²⁸ Barroso strongly exemplifies how the European solidarity from the past is bound to encourage the contemporary Europeans to not forget the importance of their ancestors and to not take the current state in the EU for granted. This is an example on how the narrative, once again, is used in order to create meaning for the present while orientate it through the temporal space. An example on how Juncker connects the past with both the present and the future and narrativizes the orientation and meaning of time is shown in following quote from 2018:

I will personally pay particular attention to Estonia, to Latvia, to Lithuania and to Romania in 2018. This is the year they will celebrate their 100th anniversary. Those who want to shape the future of our continent should well understand and honour our common history. This includes these four countries – the European Union would not be whole without them.

Accordingly, the EU and the European identity is something that is not whole without these countries and must therefore be seen as something that can be intact or fractured.¹²⁹

5.5. Expressions of the European identity through time

When mirroring the historical consciousness, or in this case a sort of a European consciousness, the EC Presidents try to create a linear time frame with ascribed meaning which can help the European people to identify with the common history. Thus, the past is used to reawaken the memory and the meaning of the European narrative, to let it make sense with the contemporary world and to be able to visualize the path of the future. Another classic use of narrativization and position it in relation to time is when marking a certain starting point or create temporal landmarks to focus on the bigger picture. This psychological technique is also common for individual persons, but is as well used by leaders, companies etc. for creating new aspirations, common goals and motivations.¹³⁰ Delors uses this technique when describing a new dawning or a new horizon for the EEC. When describing the future, Delors means that the future is a location that are destined for the members of the EEC. The

¹²⁸ José Manuel Barroso, *Solidarity as a foundation for European integration*, at the Conference “Solidarnosc to Freedom”, Warsaw, August 20, 2005.

¹²⁹ Juncker, *State of the Union 2017*.

¹³⁰ Hengchen Dai, Katherine L Milkman & Jason Riis, “The fresh start effect: temporal landmarks motivate aspirational behavior”, *Management Science*, October 7, 2014, 2565, [10.1287/mnsc.2014.1901](https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2014.1901)

destiny is thus only relevant for members of the EEC, i.e. the Western European countries.¹³¹ This is an example how the collective group identity is created at the same time as excluding the other parts of Europe. Apparently, Delors try to influence the receivers and give them trust that they can affect the course of history, steer the plot and create support for their collective venture.¹³² An example from Santer is when he tells the history of the EU as a peace project and concludes that today, instead of fighting with weapons, they use words. This is due to reinforce a common purpose and solidarity among the citizens of the EU.¹³³ Here, Santer connects the past to the present, while at the same time encourages to reinforce the important values between the people and strengthen their moral for unity. Prodi, in his turn, make use of the past to describe the past and the future of European integration when he tells the history of the rebuilding of Europe based on real equality between States and the will to cooperate. This, a radically new way of building friendship and co-operation between European nations and peoples, has the purpose to devise a new way in which states can live together. Tolerance and mutual respect are ideals described as deeply rooted in Europe's humanistic heritage and over the centuries, the peoples of Europe had learnt, slowly and painfully, to appreciate and value each other's cultures and belief systems. Prodi means that these attitudes is more needed than ever in today's Europe. Further, Prodi helps the audience to orientate themselves through time and describes how the EU has been built in a series of 'concrete steps' that have given the people of Europe a growing sense of unity and a European identity. Though, as a classic complicating action, Prodi means that due to new enlargements a memento has come to decide the new direction the EU. Prodi explains that for too long they have tried to run Europe as if it were a business, but Europe would must rather be seen as a family of nations and peoples who has come together to pursue common goals. The orientation is the metaphor of a family, working for the same goal as a classic unit, and easy to understand for a listener due to the universal concept.¹³⁴ This classic orientation includes the part of running Europe as a business, without a soul. This has created disruption in the European family and their unity, and therefore it is by changing their outlook that they can come back to a brighter future. Further, Barroso frequently refers to history and the importance of remembering the past and realize the advantages of enlargement which enables Europeans to build a common home, despite their shared history.¹³⁵ Lessons from history needs to be learned in order to invent a

¹³¹ Delors, *1992: A pivotal year*.

¹³² Delors, *The European Community – Official Partner of the 1993 Hanover Fair*.

¹³³ Santer, *Speech delivered at the Davos World Economic Forum*.

¹³⁴ Prodi, *The Past and future of European Integration*.

¹³⁵ Barroso, *Europe and Culture*, and *EU Enlargement – 5 Years After*.

better future for Europe.¹³⁶ Barroso also problematizes the lack of soul of the EU and calls for soul-searching through culture in order to create the context for the contemporary EU. He means that the European soul can give strength and determination for future quests. He also highlights that the sense of belonging to Europe is an essential tool to forge the ‘common destiny’.¹³⁷ This is a good example of how Barroso uses the coda, when explaining how the common destiny or the European soul can be of great use in the every-day life when founding courage. In another example Barroso stresses that they have met a turning point in history and that all the citizens of Europe will gain from more unity. To make his point clearer, he reminds the audience that it soon will be a decade since the First World War broke out, and that this situation could not be possible on the European continent today. Thus, Barroso asks for more pride for the culture, the civilization, the past and for the future, when talking about Europe.¹³⁸ Even in the title of the speech, Barroso urges for a revival of Europe and clearly he use the past of The World War in order to inspire the audience to unify for the future. Juncker also make use of the history when he reminds that Europe’s rallying cry ‘never again war’ is the Europeans eternal duty and reasonability to live up to. Juncker says that the trees they plant today must provide shade for their great grandchildren, whether they hail from the East, West, South or North.¹³⁹ Juncker also urges for solidarity and compassion when he recalls that almost everyone in Europe has an ancestor that once was a refugee and asks for more Europe in their asylum policy and need union in their refugee policy. Juncker reminds that a selection between Jews, Christians and Muslims as refugees cannot be made, since it was a mistake they did in the past. Further Juncker means that it is part of Europe’s DNA to take care of refugees, and what is needed to be done is to create more love and appreciation between the people of Europe.¹⁴⁰ Due to their past, they should unite and make right to their common history, and the orientation and urge to connect to their common European history is present.

¹³⁶ Barroso, *State of the Union 2012 Address* and *State of the Union address 2013*, at the European Plenary session, Strasbourg, September 11, 2013.

¹³⁷ Barroso, *Europe and Culture*.

¹³⁸ Barroso, *European renewal – State of the Union Address 2011*, before the EP, Strasbourg, September 28, 2011.

¹³⁹ Juncker, *State of the Union 2018 – The hour of European Sovereignty*.

¹⁴⁰ Juncker, *State of the Union 2015 – Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity*.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, the examples from the previous chapter will be discussed in relation to the research questions in order to see if they have been satisfactorily answered. Further, the results of this thesis will be compared with findings from previous research. Lastly, parts of the research that have been successfully executed, respectively parts in need of improvement, are contemplated upon.

6.1. Compilation of results

In the introduction, the research questions were put in order to answer how the concept of the European identity had been constructed and narrativized by five different actors throughout thirty years, if the constructions differed or contained constant elements and which countries or groups in Europe that eventually became ignored as entitled to the concept. The concept of the European identity was put in relation between the European consciousness, which was best to be understood as mirrored by historical memories, the European citizenship, which was acquired through the membership in the EEC/EU and the European people, which was the imagined community of people which could identify themselves as belonging to the collective group. Revealed is that the use of classic narrativization with a holistic approach are exemplified by all of the EC Presidents. Apart from the attention-sparking abstract, the orientation of the narrative is often exemplified by the use of the simplifying metaphors of houses, families, sailing boats or lighthouses. The family is also a metaphor for the desired relationship that the European people should feel that they share with other people in the imagined group. In contrast, countries of the Western Balkans or Ukraine are never described as part of the EU family, and apparently the European identity can be whole without them. Further, the complicating action is most often a memento mori of deciding the new path, narrative, road or direction for the EU. There are apparently many times during the thirty years of time that it has been time for the EU's MS and citizens to assemble themselves in order to decide who they want to become in the future. Accordingly, there are threats that complicate the European people and the MS from peacefully unifying. What the threats most often have in common is that they are portrayed as fear, fragmentation within the EU, populism, and the oblivion of their dark past. The similar themes of the threats throughout the time frame are not surprising, since the beginning of the EU as a project comes from the unification of the first MS. Moreover, the evaluation and the resolution of the narratives often concludes more unity, solidarity, courage or the need to take the faith or destiny into own

hands. The coda is also present at almost every speech, and the moral is heavily emphasized by the voice of unity, solidarity or values that enables the European lifestyle or the European identity. Additionally, the holistic approach frequently appears in the speeches in the form of the Presidents describing the dark past of Europe which are on the move, or has already landed in, the success and light of the present or future.

6.1.1. Differences and similarities between the Presidents

The social constructivism grounded on symbols, common values and cultural dimensions in relation to common history, are especially found in Prodi and Barroso's speeches. The European integration is put in relation to the future with the words of the European destiny or the European soul, and more frequently than the other Presidents, Prodi and Barroso highlight the cultural aspect of the European identity and put focus on the European heritage.

Accordingly, the one that makes most use of the symbolism of geographical sites and historical dates in relation to the content of the speeches is Barroso. The frequent use of locations and sites as a direct connection to the historical parts of content in the speeches are together with symbols and values efficiently used within the narratives to emphasize and strengthen arguments. Briefly, the need for unification is described by all the Presidents and is often put within the orientation of both the past and the future. The unification seems to always answer to the legacy from the ancestors as well as to future generations. What stands out is that Prodi emphasizes that the unification of Europe is something the whole world requests and Santer's encouragement of a European public opinion as a method of assembling legitimacy to the present institutions, which highlights the need for a European platform of discussions, ideas and interaction and the movement of information of what happens in the union. Regarding the process of enlargement, it has constantly been of importance and relevance during the thirty years the speeches were produced within. What stands out is Prodi's inclusion of the countries of the Western Balkans as future MS for the union. Prodi expresses this potential enlargement as something bound to the vision of a Greater Europe while Juncker, in contrast, want these countries as MS due to reasons of stability.

Additionally, in order to manifest the contours of the group of the European people, a majority of the speeches contain warning examples of 'others' or definite threats that endangers the European identity and European project. Notably, it is only the former Yugoslavian countries that keeps on being put as the warning example of how disunity leads to conflicts while Ukraine is only referred to after the annexation of Crimea. The European identity is often expressed as being evidently part of the Central and Eastern European

countries, while all other countries in Europe, and outside the EU, are continually ignored in this concept. The European identity seems to, in the words of the EC Presidents, exclusively belong to the ones that are part of the EU. The use of the concept has been constant, no matter of how many MS the EU has been consisting of. Thus, the EU is in the discourse equivalent to Europe, and almost half of the countries in Europe outside the union are not included. Even if the threats are communicated in different forms, they all represent the bad in contrast the good of the European people and closer integration. The threat of toxic and exaggerated nationalism is present in all but Prodi's speeches and is thus a common factor. Additionally, fragmentation and disunity are also constant factors that returns in the speeches of each President. Nevertheless, what seems to be constant in the Presidents efforts and narratives is the focus on portraying diversity between peoples the glue and the amplifying factor for the Europeanness itself. Therefore, the nationalism and the differences are emphasized as a necessary component of the European identity but can be a threat if used in the wrong way in relation to other groups within Europe. Lastly, all of the Presidents' constructions of the European identity are strongly built upon the mirroring of the European identity through time. The orientation explains the meaning of the present and search courage for future quests, while staying consistent to the relation to the past. The past is referred to as a common and shared historical memory and are thus used to change the narrative and the story of the European project to be something of relevance for all people belonging to the European people. Different stories of the past, the world wars, and toxic nationalism is often put to relation of what can happen again if not cautious or might never happen again due to the success of the European project. The arguments vary, but the use of connecting the historical memory to the European consciousness is heavily woven in into the majority of the speeches. When putting meaning into the present, the ancestors and the future generations are recalled in order to make the European group-identity stronger and more present in the mosaic of different identities. The common European perspective of the history is thus constantly referred to in order to orientate and motivate the audience to strengthen their feeling of their European identity.

6.1.2. Previous research in comparison with this research

When looking back at the theoretic elements from the EC policy review from previous research, what is confirmed is that the European identity and the identification with Europe is a topic that keeps on being a central part of the analyzed material. Globalization, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are also concepts that recur in different variations.

Thus, these concepts are part of the construction of a European identity, but the element that is missing in their policy review is the focus of the mirrored representation of historical consciousness and how important its role is. However, this is not expected since the policy review is from 2012 and the focus on historical remembrance did not occur until later. Accordingly, the examples from the material is meeting up the three concepts that were stated to be put in relation of the European identity. The fostering of the European people is strongly connected to the efforts of with historical memory and cultural activities crating the European consciousness. Moreover, the European identity seems to be enabled only to the MS of the EEC/EU. The words ‘the European identity’ is most frequently used in the speeches of Santer, Prodi and Barroso, i.e. from 1995-2014. Neither Delors nor Juncker uses the term of the European identity explicitly, but they are however emphasizing the values of the union which in more or less direct ways promote and construct the European identity. Probably, the concept was not per se integrated in the common discourse during Delors’ time and supposedly was the fatigue of identity politics one reason to why the concept never is used by Juncker in such a direct way. These findings go hand in hand with Prutsch arguing that the focus on European identity has been hugely diminished, at least in its packing, from 2014. Prutsch explains that the emphasis from the 2014-2020 edition of the Europe for Citizens Programme is put on historical remembrance and that the word ‘identity’ is only mentioned once in the legislative text. This, he argues, might be a sign of ‘identity fatigue’, discomfort of the concept or just a shift of focus. Maybe, after years with identity politics and discourses flourishing in all parts of society, the policy officers of the EU machinery wanted a more fruitful way to foster the feeling of unity in the EU.¹⁴¹ Thus, together with Prutsch report from 2017, the findings in this research supports the hypothesis that the EC Presidents narrativization and construction of the European identity has followed the trend as seen in the Europe for Citizens Programme. This programme emphasis the constructional part of using historical remembrance as a new strategy when enabling the unification to the EU and when trying to foster the European people. Accordingly, this would explain why the explicit form of a European identity is scarcely used after 2014 and also support the theory that the EC and the rest of the EU institutions work with similar concepts and rhetoric.

¹⁴¹ Prutsch, *Research for CULT Committee – European Identity*, 22.

6.2. Successes and improvements

The strengths of the both methods in combination to the empirical material have together with the research questions lead to a huge number of possible examples for the analysis. The data contained various examples which made it possible to showcase the most significant cases.

The method of narrative analysis was thankful to use for this purpose since it clearly emphasizes and demonstrates the narrative structure of the speeches as well as providing the essential dimension of how the context, dates and sites corresponded with the background and habitus of each President. Although, the research questions are satisfactory answered, the validity of the conclusions would be possible to strengthen with additional use of a quantitative data analysis. Certain coding systems could have been helpful in order to structure the material in the phase of analysis since the method of qualitative analysis, which allows many sidetracks, sometimes has made the process hard to keep relevant. Howbeit, due to the resources of examples of constructions of the European identity within the speeches, the validity and continuity of the research can be argued as strong and possible to be replicated with other speeches or methods.

7. Conclusions

Chapter seven is linked to the first chapter and will give insight to how the research problem and the aim have been mastered throughout the thesis. The main findings will be concluded and a short suggestion of how the results of the research can be used in further academia will follow.

7.1. Main findings

The aim of the thesis, was apart from detecting the development of the concept of the European identity also to see which elements that were used for the construction. When comparing the research objectives and questions to the actual findings in the material it is possible to generalize that the European identity has been constructed in quite similar ways throughout the decades. Certain elements, especially historical consciousness, has been frequently mirrored within the speeches in order to ascribe meaning to the group and to their common venture. This has also been used for invoking legitimacy for the European people and European project. Thus, the topics and threats in the material stay connected to the backdrop of the ‘history of the EU’, of the founding fathers and the fight to keep the EU relevant for the populations in all the MS and the most common description of countries within the EU is that they are a family and bound together by solidarity, common values and shared historical memory. Another aim was to investigate different in- and out-groups of the concept which was bound to the research problem. The problem treated the potential problematization of the narrativizations and the constructions by the EC Presidents. What is to be seen throughout the data is that the constructions indeed are excluding, especially for candidate countries further away, both culturally and geographically from Western Europe. This can be argued being a narrow perspective from the founding countries of the EU that has been lingering in its formation until this day. The European identity, the European consciousness and the European citizenship are all used in the form of European, while the majority of European countries never are included in these concepts. The understanding of the membership in the EU seems to be equivalent to the access of the terminology of Europe itself, which in the prolonging sets both the understanding of the countries outside the EU and the word into an excluding position. The countries outside the EEC/EU has been differently portrayed as well. The Central and Eastern European countries have constantly been referred to as evident parts of the EU family while the countries in former Yugoslavia have been used as warning examples of lessons that need to be learned of how toxic nationalism might be

used when caution is lost. Rarely, these countries are referred to as having their future within the EU, but when they do, it is due to the need of stabilizing the geographical area and not for reasons of cultural belonging. Consequently, the former Yugoslavian countries are never ascribed the entitlement of the European identity and are never portrayed as belonging to the European people neither culturally nor historically.

7.2. Future research

In this research, the focus was on how the European identity was constructed by the words of the EC Presidents from 1989 to 2018. The importance of the portraying of the European identity and its orientation in time has been elaborated due to the close relation to the narrative analysis method and the logic stretch from narrativization into understanding identity as a cultural and social activity. Though, in future research, a deeper emphasis can be put on other aspects of the construct of the European identity, such as analyzing the role of class, ethnicity, religion or linguistics. Another possible reach is to keep analyzing the coming SOTEU-speeches which would give a further processual perspective. The material would also gain from being analyzed with the use of coding methods in order to see if the results are similar and replicable. Similarly, a deeper investigation of the common discourse of European identity or the support for the EU could be relevant when elaborating further on how the speeches might have enhanced or mirrored general opinions throughout Europe. Moreover, the European identity could be analyzed within official documents or speeches from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in order to see if it differs from the narratives and constructions from the EC Presidents. Accordingly, the findings from this research can be used for deepening the understanding of how the concept of the European identity has been used and for which reasons by the EC Presidents. Further, the findings from this study emphasizes the importance of how the creation of a common historical memory in order to strengthen a collective identity has been used within the context of political speeches. The conclusions of this research bring a wider perspective of the processual development of identity politics and the EU project and also attributes to the view of how the EU has been, and still are, coming from a Western European perspective. Nevertheless, this study is limited and the conclusions general, but hopefully they can contribute to analyze further research topics within the same area in intra-academia contexts, such as in European studies and European integration. In extra-academic applications, the results can be used to enhance the knowledge around the various impacts of the latest EC Presidents and how their speeches have been responding to discourses and debates about identity politics and projects.

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