

European Identity and Education in Germany and Sweden - a Mixed-Method Study

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Abstract

European identity is a crucial feature for supra-national institution building in times of renewed far-right nationalism and countries leaving the European Union. High-school education may help to prepare young students to become European citizens. Eurobarometer survey data suggests that European identity and education are strongly linked to each other. This statistical connection could be mere coincidence or evidence of a causal effect. My thesis aims to identify whether a significant relation exists between the two. The hypothesis rests on the statistical fact that older, as well as less-educated individuals, show less of a European identity. This would partly be due to the kind of education they received.

Further the hypothesis rests on Gellner's theory of nation building and national identity – but adapted for the European context.

The assumption will be tested by using a mixed-method approach and by investigating Sweden and Germany as case studies. The main finding is that stronger European content in schoolbooks is associated with a higher European identity. While not entirely surprising, the thesis is one of the first to translate Gellner's to a European context and test it with a rigorous comparative politics approach. The underlying idea of my thesis is that a solid attachment to the European Union is highly desirable. It enables governments and institutions to steer the European project into a sustainable future. The empirical data exhibits a robust pattern across time and countries, and the thesis makes a contribution to the literature on European identity.

How schools and education policies contribute to European identity would therefore be an excellent starting point to foster a more united European community.

Keywords: European Identity, Education, Europe, European Union, comparative politics Sweden, Germany

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1 Introduction

On December 8, 2020, Margaret Keenan, a 90-year-old British lady, received the first shot of a Covid-19 vaccine in Europe. The UK had given the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine national authorization by the end of November. At that point, the European Union's health authority EMA would still be reviewing the BioNTech-Pfizer product for approval in the member states for another four weeks.

Two months later, the UK had administered almost a third of its population a first shot against the Coronavirus while the European Union barely had started its vaccination campaign. This discrepancy in speed and volume between the UK which had just left the Union, and the remaining EU member states incited a huge debate. Politicians and publicists in many EU states blamed the slow progress of vaccinations on EU bureaucracy and insufficient economic integration of member states. Single states struck individual deals with vaccine manufacturers to secure more shots for their citizens. Many Germans thought it unjust that BioNTech, the German-based vaccine developer, had started exporting shots to the rest of the world whilst they were still waiting for the approval of the vaccine in Europe. Eastern European states like Hungary concluded deals to buy the Russian vaccine Sputnik V.

The widespread impression that EU citizens had to suffer from the slow decision process and a deficient procurement process of the Brussels bureaucracy deeply challenged the core beliefs of the European Union. The EU was seen as a millstone around the neck that kept member states from supporting their citizens amidst a full-blown humanitarian and economic crisis.

The corona crisis once again added to a general uneasiness towards the EU that has evolved over the past decade. Especially in times of crisis the EU came under fire. First, the EU was heavily criticized during the financial crisis of 2007/8. The especially hard-hit countries of the south complained the EU was not pushing enough for financial stimulus. On the other hand, better-off members like Germany or the Benelux countries would not subscribe to the necessary heightening of the general debt/GDP ratio. The influx of migrants from war-plagued Syria in 2015 also displayed an obvious lack of solidarity of member states. In contrast, Greece or Italy had to deal with hundreds of thousands of refugees landing on their shores, other member states completely refused to help.

Today, criticizing the EU for its crisis management has become commonplace. The problems of a community of 27 democratic states with acting quickly and decisively in exceptional situations almost make its citizens forget the big advantages of the EU.

The European project has given the citizens of member states the ability to live and work freely all over the EU. The increased cooperation between European nations has led to unprecedented growth and prosperity in all member countries. And most importantly, the constant cultural exchange and economic integration within the EU is the leading force for lasting peace in a region where over the last 110 years, the two worst wars ever raged.

The more than 75 years of peace in Europe are based on close economic relations between the member states of the EU. The EU has turned into a global advocate of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. It has promoted its values and norms around the world and may rightly be called one of the superpowers of the world.

To maintain its leading worldwide role and economic impact, the EU needs to stick together tightly. Therefore, European core beliefs need to be accepted and promoted by its member states. Sharing a common European identity is decisive in strengthening this integration. European identity is the basis on which people from different countries, religions, and ethnic backgrounds agree on the same set of norms and values. And it results in European solidarity.

Despite all the criticism and attempts of going it alone, all EU finally adhered to the common vaccination program. After more than 17 months into the pandemic, the EU shows better results in the vaccine rollout than the UK and even the US, as these two independent nations started out earlier and with a bigger supply of vaccines. The EU member states waited for the European institutions to work through the difficulties, resulting in a well and fair organized distribution of the vaccine. It even produced a multi-billion Euro Plan to rebuild their Covid-battered economies in a more sustainable way.

Thus, the pandemic eventually proved how successful the EU stands together in times of crisis, even though its policies may not be perfect and need to be discussed and evaluated.

A strong European Union can obviously produce good policies and outcomes that benefit its citizens. But such a strong EU relies on high levels of European identity and consequently solidarity. This thesis tries to establish that education can be a solid starting point for fostering European identity.

1.1 Hypothesis

Over time education policy and mass education have become more central issues to various government institutions and interest groups. Schools form the official environment for learning and skill development in various areas ranging from literacy and numeracy to general social or scientific skills. The socialization received in schools through the influence of teachers, and fellow students will be considered one of the important points of this thesis. Specifically, this thesis will look at how the education system impacts the feeling of European identity.

The cases studies that stand forth as examples for this project are Sweden and Germany. They will showcase how European identity relates to education in different countries. This comparison should be useful to identify the deeper roots of varying degrees of European attachment.

Following this red thread, various sources and methods will be applied to search for an answer: A content analysis of schoolbooks from Sweden and Germany is the main empirical contribution of this thesis. The results will be set in contrast to survey data from the Eurobarometer. Furthermore, a covariance analysis with education being the independent variable and European identity the dependent one, will be performed.

Using the case studies, two hypotheses will be tested:

- 1) Older generations show a lower level of European identity than younger ones because they have received less education on European matters.
- 2) An increase in education accounts for a higher level of European identity.

Beyond checking the above hypotheses for Sweden and Germany, this thesis pursues the wider aim of validating them as research questions for other countries throughout the EU and even the former member United Kingdom.

This study will be enhanced by a strong theoretical foundation in case study research as well as a further mixed-method approach from both the quantitative and qualitative sides of the spectrum.

The underlying theory of this research has been developed by Ernest Gellner (1983). The Czech anthropologist, sociologist and philosopher set the standard hypothesis that language, culture, and education have the biggest impact on national identity. This work will apply his theory to the case of European identity and thereby add to academic debate. Gellner based his hypothesis on examples rather than proving it with data. This thesis combines Gellners theory with content analysis as well as data from Eurobarometer surveys to yield a more solid empirical approach.

Even the mere look at the survey data for Germany and Sweden shows that Gellner's hypothesis should be solidified by the content analysis. Both the cases studies and the statistics suggest a causal relationship between education and European identity. However, this study recognizes that European identity has multi-factorial reasons that will be discussed in the literature review.

The method chapter will in detail describe the analysis used in this thesis, followed by the theory section providing more context on Gellner's influential work. The last two chapters contain the analysis and then the discussion of the research question: How is high school educational content related to European identity in Sweden and Germany?

1.2 Aim and scope

Being part of the European Union has been at the heart of many member states for almost three decades. Belonging to the Union fostered their economic well-being; citizens enjoyed free travel and worked across national borders. These advantages and rights made the EU attractive to societies as well as individuals. Nevertheless, the euphoria has waned over the last few years. Great Britain has finally left the Union. Eurosceptic movements have risen in long-term members like Germany as well as in newcomers like the Nordic countries. Many EU citizens are increasingly dissatisfied and vote for nationalist, right-wing parties that sizable gross votes across all EU countries. Europeans seem to have lost their attachment and affiliation to the Union that brought them unprecedented peace and prosperity – as can be measured by their European identity – using the degree of such identity, every year captured by Eurobarometer surveys, to investigate how the European people feel about the EU today. The thesis aims at describing how a feeling of European identity emerges by focusing on educational institutions and their policies. Studying the educational systems of certain European countries can generate valuable insights into how a national – and even more importantly – a European identity develops.

The research will scrutinize the curricula designed by ministries of education and the actual lessons taught in history, social science, and economics classes today and in the past. School books on these subjects will be used as reference points. The books will be categorized with statistical content analysis to find how they relate to the notion of European identity.

This empirical data will then be contrasted with the degree of European identity found in the respective states. While comparing and contrasting the 'Europe education' in all 27 member states exceeds the scope of this thesis, it will concentrate on Germany and Sweden. If the study finds that one country has a higher degree of European identity based on a significant relation with what is being taught in schools, it will additionally draw up a co-variational analysis. The co-variational analysis objective will be to find other policies that might have a bigger influence on European identity in a given country.

2 Literature review

This section examines the literature on European identity and its relation to education. It also investigates alternative factors that influence this notion – such as the use of a common currency or the degree of trust put in the European institutions, as described by scholars such as Verhaegen & Hooghe, 2013. There are two goals to this literature review: It tries to contrast the reasoning of this study with research done by others and describes its relation to existing theory and methodology.

Earlier work on this topic will be considered first. Then emphasis will be put on contemporary research, analyzing and weighing its contributions to the arguments of this thesis and to overall insights on the broader topic of European identity. It is slightly tricky to precisely nail the direct inherent connection of education in an individual state to the overall idea of European identity in existing research. Most work in this field considers only smaller case studies within a narrowly defined qualitative field. That's why this study will use a mixed-method approach that incorporates some of the existing papers.

European identity can be defined through two dimensions. Firstly, through society as a whole and secondly through the perception of the individual. European identity should be defined as a set of embedded policies when viewing society as a whole. This is where European states come together and value the same norms, rules, and regulations (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004). Through the individual's eye, the perception of European identity is highly personal. It depends on the overall feeling of attachment to the EU of a single person.

Furthermore, it becomes a trade-off between the legitimacy to rule on one hand and the sovereignty of the people of the other. In a single a country, rulers need the legitimacy to decide on the population's behalf. They have to ensure that they provide sovereignty in the form of safety and economic stability to their people (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004).

Jürgen Habermas (2011), a renowned scholar on European integration, emphasizes the importance of European identity. He defines such a common identity as '*the most important alternative for a sometimes-undemocratic process of European integration*' (Verhaegen & Hooghe, 2013a, p.129). Nevertheless, European identity has not taken the place of national identity. It instead coincides with it (Fligstein et al., 2012). National identity is a part of European identity. They

both contain the traits of a shared culture, territory, value system, and joint decision-making (Adaškeviien & Janinait, 2004).

2.1 European identity and National identity

The topic of European identity has increasingly been studied since 1950 (Bourne, 2015). Back then, European identity was not primarily measured by the feeling of attachment to the EU by individual citizens. Scholars rather looked at how integrated member states and their populations were into the Union.

After the EU started adding more and more member states and more states tried to join the economic Union, the focus of research somewhat changed. Important authors in that context are Ernst Haas and Karl Deutsch.

Haas (1958), for example, analyzed how political 'loyalties' in member states had to change for European integration. Moreover, he showed that 'new political centers' had to emerge after the national settings lost importance and gave way to more multilateralism (Haas, 1958, p.16).

Deutsch, in contrast, defines European integration through a feeling of community (Bourne, 2015). Rosemund (2007) describes the increase of debate around European identity and integration through 'internal' and 'external' factors. External factors were, for example, the fall of the Soviet Union, resulting in a power vacuum in Europe or the war on terror after 9/11. They resulted in the EU's enlargement to the Baltic States or prompted member states to consider a common security policy. Following this increased relevance of the EU, political science increasingly emphasized European integration and European identity in its analysis. Internal factors such as the Maastricht and Lisboa-Treaties or the implementation of the Euro as the common currency contributed to this growing interest.

Education about the EU can also be interpreted as one of these internal factors. EU politics literature from some 20 years ago shows how enthusiastic scholars then were about the EU. They even considered turning the Union into a federal state. Much has changed since the beginning of the new millennium: Euroscepticism has risen as well as right-wing populism with Brexit as its latest culminating point. EU literature has turned more conservative and less optimistic. Focus has shifted from expanding and deepening the EU to strengthening and upholding the existing system of the EU. Critical periods like the world financial crisis or the corona pandemic have shown that the EU often does not have the authority or legitimacy to decide on policies together for a common goal. The EU often lacks competencies in fields where the national governments still have the upper hand. However, there

are quite a few important issues where the EU decides commonly – for example, in monetary policy or trade relations.

With the danger of the dissolution of the EU mounting, it has become exceedingly important for European policy makers to keep together what is at hand. Existing commonalities and institutions still form a solid basis for the future of the Union. In this respect, the notion of European identity has become ever more important to augment interest and appreciation for EU institutions and a sense of community.

But how can this European identity be fostered? Educating Europeans on the intrinsic value of the Union does recommend itself as an adequate way to increase this identity (Smith, 1992). However, education policy is one of the undisputed competencies that lies solely with the power of individual member states. The EU does not influence national school curriculums. Every state decides its own school policies and educational systems. This thesis has no intention whatsoever to try and conclude that education policy should be decided on an EU level. It rather aims at analyzing how states could incorporate the promotion of European identity as a highly relevant topic into their respective school systems.

2.1.1 European identity

European identity has a lot in common with national identity. A study analyzing the formation of national identity in Finland concluded that the Nordic country is smoothly transforming into a nation-state under the umbrella of the European Union (Piattoeva, 2009). The article stated that national and cultural values were heavily represented in history and social science classes in Finland's schools and contributed to national identity building (Piattoeva, 2009). Furthermore, Piattoevo (2009) argues that today multiple conceptions of citizenship are being taught in Finland. This leaves room for a European identity that exists parallel to national citizenship.

In 2004 the Finnish government had declared it a national goal to create a learning environment that teaches national and European as well as world citizenship. This was supposed to prepare pupils for life as open-minded and well-integrated citizens of Finland and the European Union. The curriculum of 2004 also aimed at the inclusion of migrants. Newly minted Finns should be able to have more than just one identity, thereby keeping the connection to their ethnic heritage (Piattoeva, 2009). Promoting multiculturalism seems to be an important aspect of fostering European identity. It is possible to remain Finnish at the core and add on an identity as a European and as a member of the global community of mankind.

When this research analyzed Sweden and Germany as case studies, it found the same idea of multilayered citizenship in both countries.

Phillippou, Keating, and Ortloff (2009) investigated the homogenization of European school curriculums regarding European identity and citizenship today. They examined several school curricula from all over Europe, searching the existing literature on citizenship and its impact on European integration. They found that the topic of European identity was closely connected to that of national identity in all countries surveyed. Usually, it dealt with the question of how far the respective country had gone in the process of integration into the European Union and how it was affected by globalization. Philippou et al. view the character of this approach towards European integration with caution: In some case studies, they found that the idea of 'Europeanness' was often used to distinguish, even separate European citizens from the rest of the world.

This notion concurs with a theoretical aspect noticed by Gellner. He argues that the concept of national identity only works when a nation sees itself as exclusive, possessing certain traits that distinguish one country from another (Gellner, 1983).

These ideas differ substantially from the new streamlined teaching approach of multilayered citizenship that can be found in curricula across Europe (Philippou et al., 2009). The spectrum of curricula has also increased in scope. Across Europe, pupils learn more about the institutional frameworks of Europe, human rights, and cultural history.

However, it is striking that Philippou et al. found that in some countries, European citizenship is taught as a passive civic engagement while national citizenship is represented as a more active role. The authors observed this phenomenon in the UK, Ireland, and the Greek Cypriot curriculums. The German and Spanish curricula, on the other hand, gave more incentive for active participation in European citizenship (Philippou et al., 2009).

The article concluded that it is vital to keep teaching about the EU and its institutions as the knowledge about them is still relatively slim. Finding ways to engage students and teachers towards the topic of European citizenship would help foster European identity (Philippou et al., 2009; Portera, 2019).

National and European identities are obviously closely related to each other. However, there is little research on the nature of this connection. Literature usually deals with the question of how European identity can be promoted in the classroom. Furthermore, investigations are made into the relationship between national and European identity. A paper by Sophie Duchesne and Andre-Paul Forgnie (2008) looks at this question through a statistical lens. They collected data from Eurobarometer surveys and compared it to surveys conducted about national identity. They found European and national identity in an inverse relationship between 1994 and 2000. During this period, national identity was high when European identity was low and vice versa. After the introduction of the Euro in 2002, the EU became a more prevalent issue in both media and education. As a

result, Duchesne and Frogner identified a positive relationship, with European and national identity rising in unison. They argued that a significant degree of this increase in positive relationships could possibly be due to education. Other variables like the media and policy decisions within European integration policy had to be controlled for.

The article further argues that the 'we feeling' that makes for an important part in the construction of national identity does not necessarily have to be exclusive. Having a sense of community, sharing core beliefs and values can also contribute significantly to a feeling of European identity (Duchesne & Frogner, 2008). Up to here, this literature analysis has concentrated on the positive effects of education on European identity. This chapter considers studies that are critical towards this approach.

Soetkin Verhaegen and Marc Hooghe (2013b) of the University of Leuven in Belgium, for example, asked themselves whether more robust knowledge about the EU leads to higher European identity in adolescents in 21 member states. They used data from the International Civic and citizenship education study (2009) that analyzed three factors: European identity (EI), knowledge about the EU and EU integration, and finally, political trust. The study shows that the effect of increased knowledge about the EU on European identity is not as striking as one might expect. Economic advantages and trust in political institutions bear a more important role (Verhaegen & Hooghe, 2013a).

Verhaegen & Hooghe explain the importance of economic advantages via the concept of opportunity cost. If not being an EU member bears a higher opportunity cost for an individual than actually being part of the Union, then individuals are more likely to be positively minded towards the EU. Gaining economic benefits from living in an EU member state, therefore, increases European identity.

The other important factor, according to the Belgian scientist, is trust in political institutions. Institutions like the European Commission or European Parliament uphold the norms and values of a member state. 'There is a positive relationship between trust in national political institutions and the development of a European identity' (Verhaegen & Hooghe, 2013a, p.131). The authors state that the average European usually does not have a lot of contact with citizens from other member states. Therefore, they have to trust their governments or trust the EU that norms and values are upheld by the authorities. If they do so, their European identity rises (Verhaegen & Hooghe, 2013b).

However, this striking finding does not necessarily discredit the hypothesis of education influencing European identity. This study does not narrow down education to mere factual knowledge about the EU. Education in the classroom, especially in high school or university, is much more than passively taking in information. Besides imparting facts and methods, schools contribute a good deal

to character-building. They enable and foster critical thinking, give perspectives for the future of students, and most importantly, provide them with the necessary tools and skills to make independent decisions in today's societies.

One last aspect that needs to be considered in this literature review is the possible impact of the Euro as a common currency. In a psychological study, Müller-Peters (1998, 2001) examined attitudes towards the Euro. She found people with nationalistic tendencies (leaning towards excluding others outside their national boundaries) were more inclined to keep their national currency. More Europe-oriented individuals (categorizing themselves as less exclusive of foreigners) rather appreciated the Euro (Risse, 2011). Risse argued that this phenomenon would go both ways, thereby attributing the Euro an impact on European identity. Risse used Eurobarometer data to compare Germany, Italy, and the UK. He found that the Euro only had a limited impact on the 'identification process' (Risse, 2011, p. 492).

The Euro does not function as a control variable in the co-variational analysis of this thesis, as only Germany has the Euro as currency, and Sweden still uses the Swedish Kroner.

Analyzing schoolbooks for their content on how much effort is put into how the EU works is a critical starting point for the analysis, as schoolbooks today are still the most common tool for teaching students. They are a highly relevant source of information to understand the aim/background and curriculums in classrooms today and in the past, establishing insight on what material is being taught in schools and what is deemed important.

Another reason why the analysis of schoolbooks is highly relevant for this thesis is that they deal with issues like multiculturalism, openness, and democracy. This thesis tries to give a holistic view of how education as a whole can positively impact European identity in the societies of Europe today. Showcasing this on the sample countries Germany and Sweden should prove insightful: By describing the differences between the two systems one can possibly identify which narrative creates a higher impact on European identity. How a country pushes for more knowledge, more inclusion, more multiculturalism, more democracy or more innovation plays a big role in how its citizens view Europe. And it begins in schools.

2.1.2 National identity

This part provides insights into the relationship between the state and national identity. It will use the example of Hungary to show how governments can misuse education as a tool for authoritarian rule underpinned by nationalist feelings.

National and European identities take different forms in today's world. Defined as a feeling of belonging together, the notion of national identity can be traced back

to the Roman empire. The Romans used the idea of citizenship to include individuals in or exclude them from their nation-building process. Over time scholars have expressed many different opinions about how national identity originated and what exactly its implications are.

According to some authors the concept of “nation-states’ is currently changing again due to globalization and a more connected world (Stahl, 2017). The article argues that the forces of globalization need to be kept in mind when designing policies for integration and education. Nevertheless, the corona crisis has shown that national boundaries still play a massive role in the decision process of governments. Even countries inside the EU are handling the crisis very differently. For example, the import and export of vaccines is still regulated by single state entities rather than supranational organizations.

Bearing the current tendency of re-nationalisation in mind, the question of how education will evolve in the future becomes ever more important. This thesis argues that the role of education will remain crucial for individual countries as well as for the cooperation of nations. With the world facing huge challenges like tackling the climate crisis or healing global inequality, education could play a growing role in fostering a much needed cohesion of states – be it within the EU or other forms of intragovernmental cooperation.

Modern democratic governments usually seek the trust of the citizens to legitimize their legislative power. When their subjects lose trust in authorities, ruling turns more and more into a hard challenge. The same argument goes for the EU. If Europeans doubt the legitimacy of EU institutions, it becomes even harder to reach accord on pressing issues within the Union than it is today.

The Eurobarometer identifies the degree of European identity by asking how attached citizens feel to the EU. This can be taken as a measure of the trust citizens have in the Union. When a certain degree of identity can be observed, institutions and legislation enjoy a sound basis to function appropriately. Should education provide a valid source of European identity as it serves as an essential factor in the legitimization of its decision making?

This assumption goes for democratic governments. It becomes more complicated when autocratic regimes rule. They also use the tools given to them to legitimize their legislation – one of them is education. In Hungary education was used to persuade the public into accepting government policy. Prime Minister Victor Orbán drastically changed the curricula of primary and secondary schools towards a nationalistic narrative (Dunt, 2020) that dismisses any sort of multiculturalism. Introducing xenophobia and non-acceptance of different concepts of life is non-democratic and anti-European. Hungary, for example, had not accepted any refugees into the country when the EU attempted to evenly distribute them

among member states. This reluctance to participate in solidarity within the EU has raised an ugly debate around the very principle of humanitarian aid and cooperation.

Abizadeh (2008) discusses the link between cultural identity and political theory, naming language and culture as parts of identity. She argues that one cannot form an identity if one does not exclude other individuals from the political context. The sense of belonging evolves around limits that define who belongs and who does not. Today citizenship sets those limits. In this sense, European countries (as well as all others) exclude people from other nations to give their own citizens identity: If you have a German passport, you're a German. This approach can be interpreted as being part of a nationalistic political view.

Abizadeh's thinking provides an important aspect for this paper. It investigates the kind of values that are taught in the countries. Do they prefer a society that excludes non-citizens, or do they take a multicultural approach? Therefore, the aspect of inclusion and exclusion will be considered when analyzing the content of schoolbooks in Germany and Sweden.

The general idea behind this thesis maintains that States should establish solid foundations of national and supranational education because it fosters European identity. This common ground helps the EU to continue to grow economically as well as uniting against external and internal threats. That's why this research tries to establish empirical proof for a supposed connection between schooling and European identity, as it is still not clearly understood and needs to be investigated further.

2.2 Education

This section examines the literature on education, which stands in relevant context to the thesis.

2.2.1 The European schools

European schools are an intergovernmental education system for the children of employees of EU institutions, and they are spread throughout Europe. Learning about different cultures and multinational backgrounds is a crucial part of their curriculum. That's why these schools create a great opportunity for smaller case studies: Researchers can see how the curricula aimed at teaching a high level of Europeanness affect pupils. The children are taught in their mother tongue, in order not to lose contact with their heritage, and still engage in a Europe-centric curriculum. The mix of both European and national topics was described by

Schuhmann as to 'Europeanise without denationalizing' (Shore & Finaldi, 2000, p. 10).

As far back as 1974, W. Halls wrote an article for the journal of comparative education on whether school systems in Europe were converging. He also warned common school curricula in Europe could neutralize national cultural values. School curricula should, therefore, merely add a 'European Dimension' (Halls, 1974, p. 214), he recommended. This research will take a closer look at Hall's statement. It tries to evaluate if curricula in Germany and Sweden only take cursory notes of the EU or if, over time, the amount of teaching material on the EU, its institutions, values, and beliefs have increased substantially.

A paper by Nicola Savvides (2009) analyzed one of these European schools by evaluating its curriculum and interviewing students and teachers. She found that it was tough for teachers to promote European identity as they were unsure how it was to be identified. On the other hand, the study showed that pupils gained Europeanness more indirectly – for example, through different school activities. Therefore, it was only partly due to the actual teaching that pupils felt European, but primarily through having a diverse school environment and learning together with children from different places and different cultural backgrounds (Savvides, 2009).

This finding emphasizes the importance of multiculturalism as a founding base for teaching European openness. This, in turn, means that schools that offer little interaction with different languages and cultures have a hard time promoting European identity. Under mono-cultural circumstances, the feeling of internationalism has little chance to flourish in the same way it does in a multicultural environment.

Another encouraging factor promoting European identity among pupils was the standard curriculum that is followed at European schools. Providing kids with the same orientation towards certain values gives them a more united feeling and a more common identity (Savvides, 2009).

Savvides finished another piece of research in 2006, where she compared the opinions of teachers in European schools in Spain, England, and Belgium. In-depth interviews revealed that teachers commonly saw the European schools as helping with the promotion of European identity. But this happened mainly through socialization with other internationals and not through actual teaching. The teachers themselves also did not see it as their most important task to turn their students into 'perfect Europeans'. They rather tried to ensure the good academic progressions of pupils in school (Savvides, 2006a, p.401).

The article further notes that good school policy is essential for promoting European identity in schools. But in the end, it depends on the students themselves

on how they use and incorporate the knowledge they receive. Students with a closed mind and ignorant opinions rarely develop a European identity.

Extensive research has been done on the effects that European schools have on European identity, as they are quite forward-thinking in this respect (Rhode-Libernau, 2020; Savvides & Fass, 2015; Savvides, 2006b). Rhode-Libernau (2020), for example, studies how European schools create ideal conditions for fostering multicultural identity. She also sees the upside of mixing children from different backgrounds. She establishes that learning different languages as well as about different cultural heritage has a positive effect on building European citizenship.

But Rhode-Libernau also identifies the challenges of this approach. For example, she argues, does the EU lack a clear vision on how to promote citizenship through educational institutions. The usually employed style of top-bottom teaching with passive learning does not foster European identity to the degree that would be satisfactory. Engaging students in critical thinking activities is as important as ensuring a journey of lifelong learning and development (Rhode-Libernau, 2020).

The research done on European schools provides valuable insight into the relationship between education and the formation of European identity. The most important impact is obviously created by the international ambiance in the multicultural student body inherent to such an institution. An important role can also be attributed to the curriculum of European schools, which puts emphasis on issues concerning the European Union.

Still, literature shows that even in European schools it is by far not easy to foster open-mindedness towards the European Union. Therefore, creating a common European identity in the average national school seems to be even more of a challenge.

For them, it is almost impossible to create the multicultural atmosphere present in European schools. The focus of this study is therefore shifted to the content taught on a national level: How does schooling material cover topics surrounding the EU and the notion of common European identity?

The average high school in any European country might not consider European identity and multicultural integration as its top priority. Still, this extensive comparative study aspires to identify the positive and negative effects of the respective educational systems on European identity. Thereby hoping to lay some more groundwork for policymakers to help them achieve the goal of fostering a European sense of community.

This research examines Germany and Sweden as case studies. In a first step, the schooling material on European matters in the respective countries is identified. When analysing this material, insights gained in the literature on European schools will be used. Teaching open-mindedness, multicultural interest, and critical thinking obviously contribute to the formation of European identity. Therefore,

these aspects will be incorporated in the content analysis of German and Swedish schoolbooks.

2.2.2 Primary school education

Claudia Borca (2019), for example, analyzed the building of European identity in primary schools. She argues that Europeans have a genuine right to be educated on European matters. Only such knowledge prepares them to become active, informed, and mature citizens. To foster European identity this educational process should start from a young age and at a fundamental level.

Borca did a case study in third and 4th grade in western Romania. She examined the competencies of teachers to impart knowledge on Europe in a playful yet educative manner. She acknowledges that half of the EU countries have not set educational policies that expect teachers to have knowledge about the EU. Nor do they train teachers systematically on European matters (Borca, 2019). Enabling teachers to educate their students about European values and institutions should therefore become a priority in education systems across Europe. Schools are undeniably an important starting point on the path to proper EU citizenship.

Especially older teachers often lack knowledge about the EU and its institutions (Borca, 2019), (Eurobarometer, 2018). In her study, Borca interviewed primary school teachers in Romania that possessed fundamental knowledge about the EU. However, most thought that teaching about the EU at the primary level would not be promising. They argued that children were too young to understand the abstract concept of the European community. The European Council strongly disagrees: It considers it extremely important to educate even small children in Europe. It suggests simple tasks like acquainting kids with flags of European countries or identifying their geographical location on a map as practical starting points to a better understanding of the foundations of the European Union (Borca, 2019). The paper concludes that teachers should not be left alone with the burden of teaching European core values to children. They have to be supported, trained and funded efficiently.

2.2.3 Erasmus

The chapter on European schools mentioned that multicultural experiences are vital to becoming an open and accepting European citizen. Eurobarometer (2018/19) data shows that the degree of education also positively impacts European identity. That makes the student exchange programs known as Erasmus an important topic to examine in this literature review.

Studies relating to Erasmus have found both - significant (Jacobone, 2015) and less significant (Van Mol, 2018) outcomes concerning European identity. Jacobone (2015) found a positive impact because exchange students acquired cultural and linguistic experiences they highly appreciated. Other studies (Van Mol, 2018) believe that Erasmus does not create any benefits for European identity overall. The students who decide to go on an exchange program are already open-minded towards other cultures and have a pre-existing high level of European identity. However, the studies do not show a negative relationship between European identity and the Erasmus program.

Jacobone emphasizes the aspect of learning another European language during a semester abroad. Erasmus students named the linguistic experience more formative than the academic aspect of their studies. Generally, living in a different country offers individuals a better opportunity to learn a foreign language than just sitting in a classroom for a few hours per week. These findings coincide with Gellner's theoretical understanding. Gellner argues that identity formation is done through common culture, language, and education (Gellner, 1983). As Europe is an environment of many different languages, most Europeans still share English as a common second language. When students go abroad, they become easily acquainted with other European languages. This language proficiency gives them a feeling of inclusion and general Europeanness.

Experiencing different cultures in various places enhances this feeling (Jacobone, 2015). Kuhn (2012) criticizes that people going on exchange already possess high levels of openness and European identity. She tested the hypothesis that transnational interaction will have a higher effect on people with lower education than on individuals with higher education. By using statistical results from Eurobarometer data (Kuhn, 2012) she showed that less-educated individuals could make up for their lack of education with transnational interactions. These experiences increased their level of Europeanness to that enjoyed by higher-educated peers.

This comes to no surprise as her analysis already emphasized the importance of multiculturalism in the context of education. The results point out an inequality for people with lower education or more minor economic abilities, not having the same options for going abroad. This indicates that exchange programs should be promoted at lower levels of education and also for those choosing a vocational track.

According to the literature, the inclusion of good education and coming in contact with other cultures become clear indicators for promoting European identity.

2.3 Country studies

Precisely what values are being taught in schools varies from country to country. Sandström Kjellen et al. focuses on the values surrounding citizenship education in Sweden, Great Britain, and Finland. The researchers held focus groups with students from each country and analyzed the respective countries' literature. The study revealed that the Swedish educational system is more 'process and development-oriented', leaving more space for open discussion (Sandström-Kjellen et al. 2010). Swedish pupils felt like they were heard in the classroom and could participate in a discussion in a democratic manner. In England, more emphasis was laid on individual development and overall school efficiency (Sandström-Kjellen et al. 2010). In Finland, students felt they were not given any room for discussion at all. Being used to a conservative style of teaching, they felt being only on the receiving end. They were just taking in information and did not discuss or question the material learned to a great extent (Sandström-Kjellen et al. 2010).

2.3.1 School books and their importance for the analysis

Education systems differ in countries, and so do educational approaches. However, all countries use schoolbooks as the primary tool for teaching students - today and in the past. Therefore, systematically analyzing schoolbooks provides a more promising approach to comparing the impact of education on European identity in different countries.

Textbooks are the result of government curricula designed to teach young and old throughout society. Therefore, they are a good source of information on the government's aims in education. Schoolbook analysis is frequently used to estimate the impact on certain educational aspects in society. Hardwicks et al. (2010), for example, did thorough textbook analyses to compare the United States and Canada in their educational and civic beliefs. He underlined that several assumptions and biases in each country could be led back to schoolbook material through content analyses.

One example is contained in an article by Hardwick and others (2010): It states that Canadians have more affinity towards multiculturalism and acceptance towards others due to their multilingualism. In the US, more affiliation could be found towards the melting pot symbolism, where several identities and cultures somehow form into one common American identity. Another example was the stronger patriotic affiliations in the US (Hardwick et al., 2010). These assumptions must be interpreted with caution since they are not supposed to condemn the US or Canada in one direction or another. They are just supposed to show different trends within

different societies. Hardwick et al., therefore, do not make definite assumptions about the US and Canada in their analysis but interpret their findings together with stereotypical beliefs.

Kaarel Haav (2018) analysed Estonian textbooks. He identified that the books did not properly reflect what the curricula had set out for them to do. For example, they failed to identify democratic hierarchies within institutions or emphasize civic participation, nor did they explain the different political channels available to the Estonian people today (Haav, 2018).

The journal of social science education published various articles on the importance of textbooks in the context of civic and citizenship education. Ferreira et al. (2018) make interesting points in their article 'European identity and citizenship in textbooks'. They argued against the idea that schoolbooks on European identity-building are outdated or even obsolete because pupils and students today are digital natives. As digital learning tools are still scarce in the EU (less so in Sweden than in Germany) and teachers often lack the competence to create a learning environment with high-end gadgets or digitized material, the schoolbook still plays a central role in the classroom.

The authors also discuss that textbooks are not needed anymore because schools are filled with the first generations of 'Native EU citizens' today (Ferreira et al., 2018, p. 2). They quote Eurobarometer data from 2017 showing that an overwhelming majority of young Europeans want to learn more about active European citizenship as well as the rules, regulations, and workings of EU institutions (Ferreira et al., 2018).

Therefore, checks and balances from the public, institutions, and other interest groups have to observe whether states in the EU uphold their responsibility to educate upcoming generations about European core values and beliefs. That is another reason why analyzing schoolbooks and national curriculums for their effectiveness in creating European identity is much needed.

Ferreira et al. suggest asking four questions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of schoolbooks in teaching European values, beliefs, norms, and rules:

1) To what extent are textbooks and curricula able to provide young people with opportunities to acquire the skills and the practical competencies (i.e., critical awareness, media literacy, etc.) necessary to take part in contemporary political, economic and social life?

2) To what extent do textbooks and curricula promote (or hinder) active engagement of young people in their social, political, and educational communities, at the local, national and European level?

3) To what extent is Europe and/or the European Union presented as a community that offers young people the opportunity to practice

citizenship, and in more general terms, which discourses on Europe and European identity are conveyed by textbooks?

4) To what extent are visions of "us, the Europeans" or "us, the Nationals" presented as complementary or opposing, and how is diversity, within Europe and within the Nation, represented (positive vs. negative, desirable vs. undesirable...)? (Ferreira et al., 2018, p. 2-3)

Combined with insights from an article by Hardwick et al. (2010), these questions lay the foundation of this analysis of Swedish and German schoolbooks. Ernest Gellner's theory defining the key of identity formation, being education, culture, and language, adds another dimension to examine the role education plays in the development of European identity in Sweden and Germany (Gellner, 1983). More on the theoretical background of Ernest Gellner will be discussed in the theory section.

The envisioned combination of a content analysis combined with quantitative surveys of the Eurobarometer should lead to some relevant insights on the relationship between education and the feeling of European identity. Also, the comparison of Sweden and Germany in a covariance analysis might strengthen the arguments already found in the literature review (for a detailed description, please refer to the methodology section).

2.3.2 A view on curricula in Sweden

Arensmeier (2018) compares different Swedish curricula for the academic and vocational track that Swedish students can choose from. It quickly becomes evident that the academic track prepares pupils better in certain areas of the social sciences. They enjoy more in-depth discussions of political ideology and democratic institutions (Arensmeier, 2018). The academic track also provides a more in-depth focus on political events in its curriculum than the vocational track. However, teaching about EU institutions is part of both curricula, but specific topics and capabilities are exclusive for each track. In the vocational track, 'critical processing of information and reliability of sources' is emphasized. In the academic track, students are expected to go a step further by critically analyzing different theoretical approaches, models, and concepts (Arensmeier, 2018, p.11). Report writing is another capability exclusively taught in the academic track.

Regarding the textbooks, the vocational track provides less civic education than the schoolbooks for the academic track. But still, the content analysis of the authors shows that none of the analyzed books achieved a deep understanding of concepts and frameworks. The apparent imbalance in teaching in civic engagement in the vocational track might indicate inequality in the Swedish education system, argued

Arensmeier. As there was no significant increase or exclusivity in teaching on European institutions and as students in the vocational track attend the same years of schooling as those on the academic track, this study's influence might be limited. However, the critique on civic engagement being less important will also have to be compared in the cases presented by this study (Sweden, Germany). As civic engagement is a big part of political identification it also feeds into European identity (Adaškeviien & Janinait, 2004).

The teaching of values and political beliefs is not the primary objective of this study. However, these issues do play a vital role when trying to analyze the impact of education on European identity as it is closely related to common European values. To incorporate this bigger picture some material on these more general topics is included in this literature review.

3 Theory

This chapter will showcase the theory of Ernst Gellner on identity. The chapter is divided in two parts. The first discussing Gellner's thoughts and influences and the second part adapts his theory to the European context.

3.1 Gellner and nation-building

In doing so, this study relies heavily on the work of Ernst Gellner (1983) on state forming and national identity. His arguments will be transferred to the concept of European identity.

When reading Gellner's seminal work, the importance of education stands out (Gellner, 1983). He says that language, education, and culture are the vital ingredients for the formation of any kind of identity. This identity, in turn, results in the building of states or in a strengthening of society.

While Gellner was mainly concerned with the emergence of nationalism when dealing with the context of national identity, his work is still highly relevant when discussing the emergence of European identity in this study. He serves as the crown witness to this study that claims education to be an essential means to form European identity.

This section shows how – in addition to the insights gained from literature – Gellner's theories help explain the mechanism behind the formation of a European

identity. Thereby, they lay out a solid foundation for the envisioned case studies on Sweden and Germany.

Gellner states that when a state enjoys a higher degree of national identity, the legitimacy of its political institutions is strengthened. If the level of identity is low, this justification is weakened (Gellner,1983). The same argument goes for European identity: If Europeans do not feel attached to the Union, its *raison d'etre* dwindles.

Gellner explains logically why education plays such an essential role in forming European identity. Examples of how this relationship works shall be given throughout this section.

Hong Kong stands out as a good example. This former British colony had adapted several ways of teaching and thinking in their school system, leading to its inhabitants' proud feeling of multicultural identity. After Hong Kong was resituated into Greater China in 1997, the Chinese government immediately started changing the education system. The communist regime tries to ensure that coming generations build up a national identity that judges China positively. For example, it changed curricula towards history lessons that teach about the outstanding achievements of the Chinese state. At the same time, it exchanged existing teaching staff for teachers loyal to China. Creating a common identity is crucial for China to successfully assimilate Hong Kong. This is a clear signal that education is viewed as an integral part of identity, just as Gellner (1983) argued decades ago.

Another example could be the use of English as the de-facto common language of the EU. Most students in European states learn English as their first foreign language as prescribed in national curricula. This shows that educational policies in the member states aim at creating a common language in the EU.

3.1.1 Gellner thoughts and influences

Gellner discussed how cultural, economic, and social changes affect the idea of national identity. According to him, nations first emerged in modern times. Industrialization and the evolution of new technologies are at the heart of this development. As empires grew in the modern era, they needed a productive workforce to manufacture goods of value. Ruling many people from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds would only be possible when a diverse population shared a sense of identity. At the same time, these people needed to be educated to turn them into a productive workforce (Gellner, 1983). Hence Gellner sees the rise of industrial production as the starting point of nation-building as it is conceived today.

According to Gellner (1983), common language, culture, norms, and rules are at the pinnacle of this process as they serve to unify separated groups of individuals.

As all of these elements are transmitted via education. At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between states and nations. States can exist without being a nation, and nations can also exist without a state. However, most nations desire to incorporate into some form of a state that protects their values and beliefs. This emergence of a nation-state, Gellner argues, happens through the built-up of national identity. When the fundamentals of a common identity, of common rules and regulations are in place, educational systems evolve in order to train and educate the people (Gellner, 1983).

In his book, 'Nations and Nationalism' Gellner (1983) calls on a plethora of other thinkers. His basic idea was highly influenced by the concepts of Woodrow Wilson, who argued that individuals enable the process of state-building through self-determination (Stahl, 2017). This ability enables national groups to create their own internationally recognized states. Plus it gives a theoretical argument to rulers that need to legitimize their power in some way: They execute the will of their citizens. Opposing views that interpret nationalism as an ideology can be seen in the work of Carlton Hayes and Hans Kohn (Stahl, 2017, Kohn, 1944; Hayes, 1926).

Karl Deutsch was another influential thinker Gellner aligned himself with. Deutsch analyzed the impact of social communication in nation-building and argued that education, culture, and language stood at the frontier of nation-building (Deutsch, 1953) – ideally in sync with Gellner's basic idea.

Gellner's approach is functionalistic based on a theory by Bronislaw Malinowski (Stahl, 2017). The Polish social anthropologist sees citizens as being the enablers of institutions, legitimizing them through culture and customs. Gellner also included sociological positivism in his work to explain how people interact with their political institutions.

Gellner himself proved to be influential to other thinkers. Benedict Anderson, for example, was convinced by his arguments and further emphasizes the importance of communication in nation-building. Anderson saw language being the dependent variable for communities and nations to flourish (Anderson, 1983). This was further enhanced by print language and capitalism (Stahl, 2017).

Gellner's ideas can be used as a thinking model for the concept of building a European identity. States' economic and political convergence in a European Union relies on a highly educated and mobile workforce. Just like in the military: each soldier needs basic training to function effectively throughout his service.

This argument makes even more sense for a population in general. As young children and adolescents receive basic literacy and mathematics training, the foundation of an educated and productive workforce is put in place. Gellner, therefore, argues that a sound education system is indispensable for any state.

It is vital for this state to avoid the segregation of its education system. A high level of cultural identity rests on equal chances of education for all citizens. This is

the only way every member of a society can learn about its norms and values as well as develop a feeling of belonging together. The education system is responsible for teaching the shared values to all ethnic groups and making no difference between pupils from various economic backgrounds.

An excellent example of the importance of a common education system is the unification of Germany. Before 1990 Germany was separated into the capitalist West and the socialist East. Gellner argues that the unification of these two states was possible because they still shared a common identity after 45 years of separation. After the Berlin wall fell in 1989, the newly elected West-German government made it a top priority to promote a strong national identity. Over the years, education proved to be one of the best tools to integrate the formerly separated nation. Even today, more than 30 years after reunification, it remains important to teach common values and enhance the "we-feeling" because there still is quite a big economic difference between the east and the west of Germany.

3.1.2 Gellner's theory and analyses

Gellner's book 'Nations and Nationalism' (Gellner, 1983). is based on hypotheses, arguments, and examples. He used very little actual data to support his theories. Critics of Gellner's theory, therefore, voiced their skepticism shortly after the publication of 'Nation and Nationalism'. Most complained that his theories were primarily based on historical examples from Europe and gave little interpretation for developments beyond the European continent (Said, 1993). The criticism towards Gellner's Eurocentrism may well be valid. Nevertheless, it has no adverse effect on the usefulness of Gellner's theories for this thesis. It also has a mere European focus as it solely deals with the formation of European identity in Germany and Sweden.

A criticism of Gellner by historian Nick Stargardt even helps to advance the arguments foregone in this thesis. Stargardt argues that in Britain, mass education had begun before the times of industrialization. Therefore, he thinks the other elements of Gellner's analysis (language and culture) were less important in creating nationalism than education (Stargardt, 1996). This actually strengthens Gellner's case for education as the basis for nation-building. Therefore, the argument supports the general assumption of this thesis: The creation of a national – in this case European – identity happens faster and more efficiently when a system of mass education is in place.

The United Kingdom exemplifies the importance of Gellner's argument: He emphasized that Wales, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland could unify into one nation thanks to their common culture, language, and education. Wales, for

example, has fully adapted to the standard English language. Younger generations there rarely know their native language.

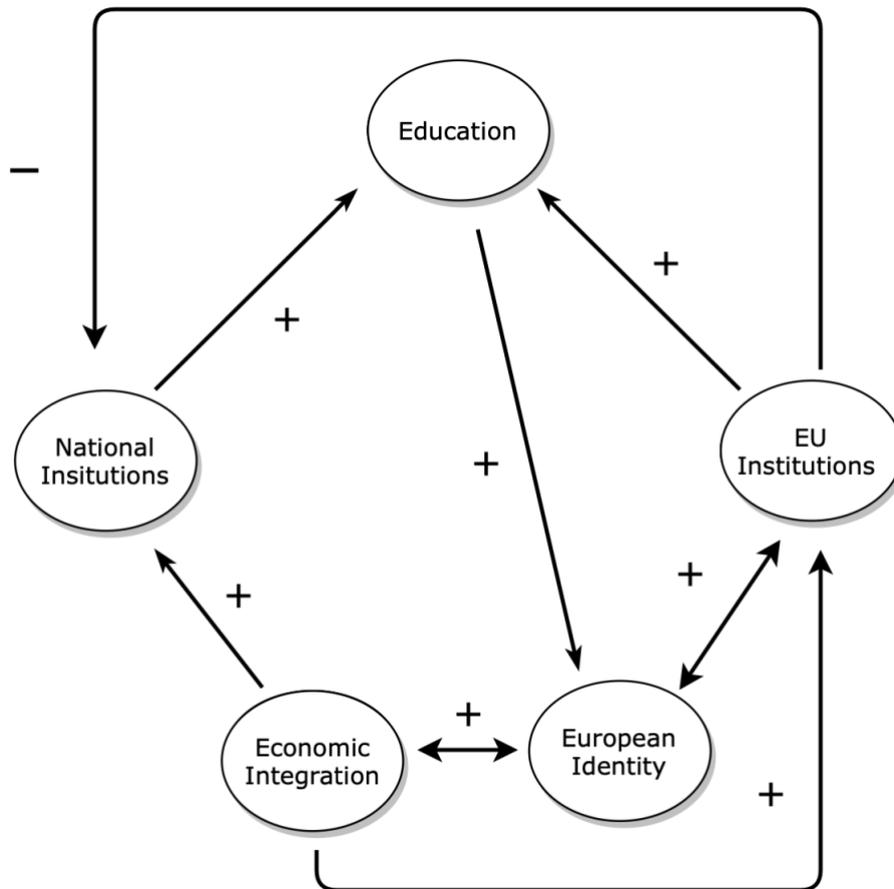
Of course, the views expressed in 'Nations and Nationalism' should be viewed with caution: The book's primary purpose is to explain the origins of nationalism. However, Gellner's concept of nationalism does not comply with the mainstream understanding that views nationalism mainly as an ideology.

Gellner, on the contrary, interprets nationalism as the phenomenon behind state and nation-building. In his mind, nationalism is the decisive factor that unites a population into being one nation. That is why explaining the forces behind this momentum are highly relevant for this thesis: If education had a significant impact on national identity in history, it might as well be an important factor for building a European identity today.

Contemporary Europe had gone through a long period of transitions before it reached the level of integration it has today. Charles Taylor analyzed the interaction of society and political institutions behind this development. He added to Gellner's thoughts by applying his theories to other places in the world (Taylor, 1998).

3.2 Adaptation of Gellner theory to the European level

Figure 1: Theoretical Model of the European Identity Causal Chain



Further strengthening the argument of this thesis, a causal chain is helpful to illustrate how the different components of the causal process interact and interfere with each other. This is illustrated in figure 1. Logically the main component of this causal chain is European identity which also in this figure remains central as the dependent variable caused by education. Education and European identity do not stand alone in this causal chain as they affect and are affected by other variables considered. This has become a causal chain of action-causing reactions. The plus signs next to the variables are supposed to indicate a positive effect on the named variable.

The results of the co-variational analysis are supported by the causal chain. The description of the self-reinforcing mechanisms behind the interaction between education and European identity helps further investigate their causal relationship. Path dependency is essential in this case to find the correct causal pathway between the different influences and causes of European identity.

The causal chain is helpful to illustrate how the different components of the causal process between education and European identity interact and interfere with

each other. The main component of this causal chain is European identity, represented by the central element of the presentation. Education and European identity do not stand alone as they affect and are affected by other variables considered. The action-causing reactions of the different variables are represented by the connecting lines between them. Plus-signs next to the variables indicate a positive effect on the affected variable.

This is how the causal chain works: Education affects European identity positively. A high degree of European identity, in turn, strengthens the EU institutions and fosters economic integration of European countries. Trade relations between EU countries improve and contribute to economic growth. This positive development strengthens national institutions in the participating countries. They can spend more – for example, on the school system. Thus, it creates a positive influence on the education system, improving education in Europe. A positive feedback loop of reinforcement starts. In this chain reaction, all factors influence each other positively. This way, a high degree of European identity creates an even stronger feeling of attachment to the EU. The rising popularity of the EU increases the Unions legitimacy, inducing the EU to improve its educational programs like the Erasmus+.

Strong European institutions have an additional positive impact on European identity. If they work effectively, they promote norms and values through other channels than education. This could, for example, be achievements in trade relations or environmental policies benefitting European citizens. Strengthening economic integration also creates positive effects on European institutions as they benefit from the resulting economic growth via an improved revenue stream and generally better economic conditions.

However, there might be an adverse pathway originating from stronger European institutions. European identity may diminish if the national government is forced to render competencies or rights to powerful EU institutions. Then the EU may be perceived as having too much of a say in the affairs of member states.

Overall, the positive effects of education on European identity by far surpass this single negative side effect of a strong European identity.

This theoretical model on the causal pathways on European identity and education can complement the theoretical model from Gellner. As he sees the importance in especially education, this model is able to contextualise how exactly education can have a theoretical impact on Europe. To further build on the theoretical foundation, the next section will explain the methods of analysis which will be applied to examine the data of this thesis.

4 Method

In this research, the mixed methods approach will be used. According to Bourne (2015), it yields the most promising results. A positivist perspective will be taken by quantitatively measuring the rise and fall of certain topics on the public agenda. Besides that, different theories from political science (policy analyses, institutionalism), sociology (didactic, national identity), and economics (quantitative) will be used.

4.1 Research design

When investigating European identity, usually, either a qualitative or a quantitative approach is being used (Manners et al., 2015). However, studies, which have decided to take the pathway of mixed-method yield the most promising results. That is why the concurrent mixed-method approach described in this chapter will be used.

4.1.1 Ontology and epistemology

The central research design of this thesis is a comparative study between two European countries – Sweden and Germany based on a most-similar-systems design (Anckar 2008). Using quantitative measurement, the levels of European identity in both countries will be gauged. Then the researcher hopes to establish relations between the respective level of identity and educational policies, institutions, and educational contents in each country. These relations are then used to test the main hypothesis of the study: Education does have an impact on the level of European identity (see theory). This mixed-method approach contains an ontological as well as an epistemological part.

As for the ontology, of what type of underlying reality is assumed, this study does not underestimate that reality is multiple and relative. Therefore, it will not simply view the research topic from just one angle as a positivistic approach would want to imply (Lok, 2019). This research uses the observations found in data from the Eurobarometer in a general quantitative approach as a measurable reality of individual attitudes toward the European Union. Additionally, a content analysis of schoolbooks will be performed. Thereby the thesis combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The qualitative aspect rests on the coding and thus the interpretation of the identified phrases and words in the computer-based qualitative content analysis. Every reader perceives text differently. Therefore, clearly stating the aim and purpose of the content analysis as well as respecting its boundaries are crucial.

The content analysis still lies somewhat on the quantitative side of the spectrum: Certain observed words and phrases in the schoolbooks will be coded by frequency and then scaled numerically. Knowing what any individual or pupil felt while reading the schoolbooks is way beyond the scope of this thesis. Doing such a survey would ask for a mainly qualitative study. That's why even the content analysis in this study slightly tends towards positivist assumptions as opposed to a purely subjective interpretation of facts that would, for example, rely on in-depth interviews. Those are not part of the study.

For epistemology, the way we can learn things about reality, this study tries to find meaning in the data. The retrieval of data varies in method and scope. Survey data results from quantitative measurement. The content analysis of schoolbooks rests on a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. Both will be conducted for both country cases. Trying to generalize the retrieved hypothesis for the whole of the EU shows the studies' tendency towards a positivist approach (Bourne, 2015) again.

This approach of reflecting critically on the observed attitudes and content of schoolbooks resembles critical institutionalism because it checks on '*the political nature and effects of the prescriptive societal interventions that critical institutional theory is likely to produce*' (Lok, 2019: 346). The content search gets coded into deductively identified categories. These categories are based on the theoretical framework from Hardwick et al. (2010) and Ferreira et al. (2018), combining the ideas from both papers (see Literature Review – Country Studies). And proceeds ranking the coded data into a numeric scale. This coding is based on a subjective interpretation but provides examples for transparency. However, the categories are deduced from theory, and the content analysis is also based on word frequency, hence partly objectively measurable. The Eurobarometer is partly based on the subjective opinion from people taking the surveys and assumes these attitudes to be observable and quantifiable from the survey responses.

Such critical institutionalism finds itself in the middle ground between subjective and objective perspectives. They are neither exclusively positivistic nor constructivist.

4.1.2 Case Study Design

Researchers are often categorized by their research style as either qualitative (case study) or quantitative (cross-case studies). The different forms of research are set in stark contrast to each other, even placed in opposition to each other (Gerring, 2007). Gerring argues that different research styles should not be viewed as 'opponents' but rather as 'complements' (Gerring, 2007, p.12). This research also aims to fuse qualitative and quantitative research by using several methodological

approaches. The core of this research is formed by the case studies on Sweden and Germany. It consists of a content analysis of schoolbooks that will be described later on in this chapter.

Qualitative and quantitative elements complement each other in this study. It starts by using Eurobarometer surveys on the topic of European identity in Sweden and Germany. This data represents the more quantitative side of the study. The Eurobarometer Statistics will be combined with the information obtained in the content analyses to establish possible relations. These will be set in contrast to a co-variational analysis. Following these research steps should result in a robust understanding of the causal inference between education and European identity in Sweden and Germany.

The essential methodological advantage of a case study is that it uses proven evidence to explain a phenomenon in a specific case. The scope may then be taken further to more cases, thereby making the study cross-sectional (Gerring, 2007). When applying the case study method, it is vital that the assumption made in one case can equally be applied to other cases. A comparison can only be incorporated into the research when the cases in question provide a similar setting. This definitely goes for Sweden and Germany, as they both are European countries with similar economic and societal structures.

4.1.3 Hypothesis testing versus generating case studies

As this study primarily consists of a case study about Sweden and Germany, one needs to understand the implications of case studies. A case study consists of an in-depth analysis of one or a few cases. In political science, typical nation-states are examined as cases. However, it is also common for researchers to look at regions, municipalities, or political elites as objects of case studies. The case study stands in contrast to a large N study which has benefits as well as downfalls. Usually, case studies generate a hypothesis. Testing a hypothesis is generally the task of Large N studies.

But of course, these contrasting methods are never black or white. Hypotheses can be tested in case studies, even though this approach is less common. Gerring argues that an in-depth study of a few examples usually provides a better picture of a specific research endeavor. He proves his point with various crucial findings from Newton to Freud. All these great scientists based their research on the few rather than on extensive samples. Conjecture and refutation, according to Gerring, create a circular interaction that renders case studies extremely useful in validating research (Gerring, 2007). Nevertheless, case studies are more than an educated guess or something that needs to be falsified. They are highly exploratory and allow researchers to test a multitude of hypotheses.

Why and how the independent variable influences the dependent variable is based on theory. On this theoretical basis, a hypothesis about the relationship is formulated using a dependent and an independent variable. In the case of this study, the hypothesis says: Education (independent variable) does have an influence on European identity (dependent variable). However, the exact variable employed in a case study does not need to rely entirely on the theory. It only needs to exhibit some level of interplay with it (Blume& Blatter, 2008).

4.1.4 A strong, weak causal relationship

When studying the effects of causal inference in a population case, one needs to establish a solid causal relationship. Gerring (2007) describes it as: 'the magnitude and consistency of X's effect on Y across a population of cases' (Gerring, 2007, p. 54). He furthermore argues that if a relationship is strong, a scholar can deliver a more useful and straightforward analysis.

This thesis argues that the relationship between European identity and education or schooling fulfills this requirement. Generally, scholars argue the case study format works with causal arguments. These are often seen as deterministic compared to large N studies that usually deal with likelihood and probability.

The analysis of the Swedish and German populations performed in this research shows a strong causal link between education and European identity. While education in Swedish and German schools obviously is not the only determining factor influencing European identity, it proves to be a viable factor. It heavily influences both national and European identity as will be shown by employing several linking points – as well in statistical data as in the content analysis of schoolbooks.

Furthermore, it is crucial to correctly define the scope, measure, and boundaries of the population in question (Gerring 2007). Defining the population's scope ensures the analysis is directed towards the proper causal inference. In other words: Being concise in what and where you want to find answers will help determine a causal relationship. Once scope and focus are clearly understood, one needs to cross-check whether the cases are homogenous enough to be comparable. Employing the control variables explained above will ensure this homogeneity.

Another crucial element in establishing a strong causal relationship is to underpin the hypothesis with a theory that gives meaning and interpretation to the analysis. In this thesis, the work of Ernst Gellner, one of the pioneering scholars on national identity (Stahl, 2017), was used. He argues that shared culture and education generate a common national identity. This basic idea will be applied to the formation of European identity.

To prove the point that education influences European identity, an additional hypothesis is applied in this study. It maintains that education has more of an impact on European identity today than in the past.

The case studies on Sweden and Germany display strong empirical and statistical evidence for this hypothesis. Eurobarometer surveys show that the increase of schooling over the years has resulted in more European identity (Eurobarometer,2004,09,18), as will be detailed in chapter five. Another indication is that older people display less of a sense of European identity than younger people. This also applies to people who have been in the schooling apparatus for a longer time or are currently studying (Eurobarometer, 2018). These results are reflected by the sociodemographic measures of the Eurobarometer surveys. They asked how attached people feel to the European Union in different age groups and educational levels. The direct relation between time spent in education and attachment suggests at least a strong link between education and European identity.

One of the most critical aspects of this thesis is to find evidence for this link over time. This will be done by performing a content analysis of contemporary and older schoolbooks. This qualitative approach results in an even more substantial proof of the link between education and European identity. Using both quantitative and qualitative elements enhances this research's quality – just as Gerring (2007) and Blaather & Blume (2008) would expect. They see a significant advantage in using mixed method approaches as they incorporate the best of two worlds.

4.1.5 Most Similar System Design - causal inference - control variables

The most similar system design (MSSD) helps in testing theories. It aims at keeping control variables constant while only the independent variable under scrutiny is supposed to vary. MSSD is usually performed when doing a co-variance analysis to strengthen its expressiveness.

MSSD guarantees that the analysis is performed on a systematic level and that the variables used are generated deductively (Ancker, 2018). This systematic and deductive approach asks the scientist to identify the independent variable clearly and establish a causal relationship with the dependent variable. In this study, the dependent variable will be European identity. The independent variable consists of certain indicators of education, e.g., Eurobarometer statistics or the results of the content analysis of schoolbooks.

MSSD clarifies the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. For this thesis the research aim is an analysis of the specific relationship between the independent variable (education) and the dependent variable (European Identity). The research focuses on the independent variable education. The

dependent variable European identity with all its possible variations and definitions does not stand forth. The crucial factor of this work is the relationship with the independent variable (Ancker, 2018).

At the beginning of this MSSD-based research project, the independent variable was identified as the starting point of the analysis. The method hence begins with theoretical reasoning based on the work of Gellner (1983), as explained in the theory section. His argument that education is an important contributor to the formation of identity constitutes the basic idea of this research.

The dependent variable European identity is represented by the level of attachment to the European Union expressed by citizens of Sweden and Germany in Eurobarometer surveys.

The independent variable was defined by multiple factors deducted from Eurobarometer statistics as well as a content analysis of schoolbooks.

The final condition of the MSSD was to develop a set of control variables to enable the comparison of the two cases Sweden and Germany. The control variables used can be seen in chapter 5.1. They are to be found as more or less equal in both cases because differences in the independent variable education should have a noticeable impact on the dependent variable European identity (Ancker, 2018).

4.1.6 Why Sweden and Germany

This thesis decided to use case studies of both Sweden and Germany. They both are good examples of European countries that have various similarities but also some significant differences. The most interesting difference for this thesis is the difference in European identity, which is estimated by Eurobarometer surveys from the European Union. In these surveys, Germany has scored higher than Sweden, giving an exciting starting point into the possible reasons why. To ensure that both countries are comparable, control variables are established that can be seen in chapter 5.1. Furthermore, the countries also have been chosen due to a language bias. Being able to read and understand analysed texts in their original form was important for the interpretation of the results.

4.2 Research methods

This section will give detailed information about the co-variance and content analysis.

4.2.1 Co-variance analysis

The co-variance analysis is methodologically located in the middle ground between positivism and constructivism. It acknowledges that empirical observations are highly relevant and that a theory can be validated through empirical observations. To do so, co-variance analysis deals with dependency. It acknowledges that the dependent variable may exhibit a causal interference with many different independent variables besides the ones observed in certain research. These touchpoints may occur over time, in different spaces, or in comparative settings.

The hypotheses employed in the co-variance analysis will be based on theoretical foundations and complemented with empirical findings. This method should result in finding or not finding a causal relationship between the dependent and different independent variables. To ensure that cases are comparable, the researcher must find similar cases where all aspects are similar. Only the one aspect that shall cause the desired effect should be different in the cases observed (Liphart, 1975). This approach is comparable to natural science experiments. These scientists create *Ceteris Paribus* situations. These are environments where all things are equal except for the one that causes a change, for example, a specific catalyst causing a chemical reaction. Ideal *Ceteris paribus* conditions are not possible within social sciences. Countries always display differences that do not allow for a perfect comparison. Therefore, social science uses co-variance analysis (Blatter & Blume, 2008).

4.2.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is defined as providing a replicable analysis of a text that produces a valid inference. Replicability means a different researcher will achieve the same results when he applies the same method and data. Furthermore, content analysis has to be able to produce valid results and test a hypothesis.

The general hypothesis of this thesis maintains that more information on European matters results in a higher degree of European identity. The primary research idea is that older schoolbooks contain less information on Europe than contemporary ones. This hypothesis will be tested by searching both books for specific keywords that are connected to Europa. Should older books indeed contain less Europe-related content, then this should, in turn, result in a lower degree of European identity in older generations. A second finding should be that people with less education, who read neither the older nor, the newer books, feel less attached to Europe because overall, they receive less information on Europe than people exposed to the books under scrutiny.

Berelson (1952) provides the theoretical framework for the content analysis in this research. He defines content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication' (Berelsons,1952, p. 18).

Hardwick (2010) used this theoretical concept to do a content analysis similar to this study: He checked American and Canadian schoolbooks to find a causal interference between education and national identity in these two countries. In his research, he used a robust quantitative method: He coded certain keywords and terms he thought to be related to national identity. He then searched systematically for them in books and scaled the results statistically. Simply counting how often terms like 'nationality' or 'national identity' appeared in the books proved to be an efficient way to see how the literature treated the topic. In a second step, Hardwick coded for the attributes that were connected to his search terms. This way, he could gauge whether they had more of a positive or a negative connotation. Furthermore, Hardwick looked for other terms he thought to be insightful in his research on national identity: Those were, for example, multiculturalism as opposed to assimilation. These terms would show which norms and values the books tried to convey to pupils. Do they intend to teach the advantages of a multicultural society, or do they rather promote the idea of a melting pot where all citizens follow the same norms?

Hardwick's (2010) article concentrated on terms specific to American and Canadian culture. However, his basic idea can be applied to the analysis of Swedish and German schoolbooks. This research will first look for the frequency and use of words and terms connected to European identity and Europe. Then they will be scrutinized for arguments going for and against multiculturalism as one of the essential elements of a European identity. Also, they will be analyzed for terms associated with national pride and patriotism as well as civics and the common good.

Checking the Swedish and German schoolbooks for these key topics should provide a holistic view of the educational direction each of the respective countries takes. Analyzing books from different publishing years will show how attitudes and priorities in teaching European identity and citizenship have changed over time.

Even if the content analysis promises interesting results, they need to be kept coherent with the cross methodological approach of this research. The solid literature review of chapter 2 provides the context for the data extracted from the content analysis. The theoretical basis derived from Berelson (1952) and Hardwick (2010) defines the fundamentals and limitations of the analysis. When performing the content analysis, both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used. The coding of the keywords will be done using the software Nvivo, a data analytics tool that efficiently gathers information.

There is also a comparative element to the content analysis. The schoolbooks under scrutiny differ in discipline, publishing date, and language. The contemporary ones are chosen from the subject of social sciences; the other two are history books. The literature has identified both subjects as valid starting points for analyzing citizenship and cultural identity (Hardwick, 2010).

The history books were published in the 1990s in Sweden and Germany. A comparison is valid as they are both aimed at pupils in years 11 to 13, thus upper secondary school. Nevertheless, the language barrier needs to be accounted for. This hurdle shall be overcome by precise interpretation and translation.

The more contemporary books published in 2015 are aimed at social science classes upper secondary education in Sweden and Germany. With almost two decades between the publishing dates of the history and the social science books, there should be ample opportunity to identify significant changes in their Europe-related content.

Searching for the keywords, concepts, and phrases chosen for this research should enable the author to quantify the amount of teaching on European identity in these books. This amount will be represented on a scale from one to five: Five being the highest possible amount, one the lowest.

Then results will be compared to Eurobarometer statistics on European identity in Sweden and Germany. The most crucial point is that the survey data is divided systemized by socio-demographic factors. The researcher can therefore specify different age groups and levels of education of the respondents and set the answers of these subgroups in relation to the amount of Europe-related education they received. He is, therefore, able to check whether the literature-based hypothesis that a larger amount of education on Europe leads to more European identity holds true.

4.3 Data

This section will give some more details on the case study and data availability

4.3.1 Case study execution

To do a case study properly, Gerring requires the researcher to clearly define the population under scrutiny. He illustrates the need for a detailed description of the scope of the endeavor with the famous example of apples and oranges. If oranges are supposed to be analyzed, then only oranges should be examined and not apples. However, if the fruit is the research subject, then both oranges and apples should be included.

Defining the population – as Gerring terms it - is crucial for finding causal inference between the variables under observation. In this study, the population is rather big as it consists of the citizens of Sweden and Germany. However, the scope narrows when looking at the extent of the content analysis, which forms the central element of the case study. To obtain a measure for the content of education, that Swedes and Germans received on European subjects, schoolbooks will be analyzed. This way, the population decreases to the people that attended school in a limited number of years in the 1990s and the 2010s. The social science books were course literature in upper secondary schools for a couple of years, starting with the publishing date 2015. Therefore, persons that did not receive higher education are not included in the population. Bearing this fact in mind, the study intends to find different levels of European identity in Eurobarometer statistics depending on the respondent's level of education. According to the hypothesis of this thesis, people with a higher level of education should feel more attached to the EU as they received more education on related topics. Individuals with fewer years of schooling are expected to display a lower level of European identity.

Another aspect to be accounted for in the research population is immigrants. Both Sweden and Germany are home to large communities of immigrant workers. For example, in the 1980s and '90s, Germany invited Turkish "guest workers" into the country. As these people did not attend the German school system, they do not apply to the hypothesis under inspection. It would be interesting to see if immigrants in Sweden and Germany, that did not attend high school there display a lower degree of European identity than the overall population. However, one would have to account for migrants that originated from other European states. Plus, the schooling systems of these countries of origin would have to be analyzed as to their impact on European identity. There is ample need for further research beyond this study.

Case study research, according to Gerring, often tries to generalize its findings. Therefore, the definition of the population needs to account for this intention as well as the theoretical hypothesis has to be applicable for generalization. This study aims to generalize its hypothesis to Swedes and Germans that attended upper secondary school. It attempts to be representative of the wider population chosen for analysis. When talking about the representative aspect, one should be aware that a lot of people attended school before the 1990s. Due to the limited scope of this thesis scope, further investigation into the historical aspects of schooling needs to be done.

However, the Eurobarometer survey data covers all age groups in the analyzed countries. It provides sufficient data to account for the development of the schooling system over time (Eurobarometer, 2018). Therefore, it is justified to assume that an

education system that teaches more on European matters has increased its impact on European identity.

4.3.2 Data availability

The ample availability of data on European identity is one of the most positive aspects of this thesis. Proving a causal relationship between variables is based on the reliability, comparability, and precision of data. This study uses two primary sources of data:

- 1) Empirical data is extracted from history and social science schoolbooks from the 1990s and 2015. It was a challenge finding good content for the 1990s, as the Swedish and German textbooks needed to be comparable to each other. Fortunately, the Swedish and German educational systems both have an upper secondary school for students between the age of 16 and 19. How similar the contents taught there will be discussed in the final analysis.

Only after comparing articles and searching vintage book sales, suitable schoolbooks from the 1990s could be retrieved. These were still on sale today. Had the study tried to examine books from an even earlier time, the search for suitable material would have been even harder. Overall, four schoolbooks were checked for keywords (Europe, European, EU) with the help of Nvivo software:

- 2) Eurobarometer surveys provide information on the degree of European identity within respondents from Sweden and Germany. The EU regularly asks its citizens their opinion around European matters. The surveys are done each autumn and spring. They ask various questions in polls, surveys, and interviews in all European member states. One of the questions is how attached respondents feel to Europe. Various papers concerned with European identity use the Eurobarometer as a source of information on the sentiments of Europeans about the EU. The Eurobarometer provides this information since 1973 in a comparable and uniform way. This enables the author to use measures on European identity from different years. Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer does not always ask the same questions in every survey. Therefore, it was crucial to find the proper surveys in the right year to ensure that cases are comparable. The most important part of this study is the socio-demographic analysis. Thus, the answers to the question 'How attached do you feel to the European Union' are broken down into subcategories. They are sorted

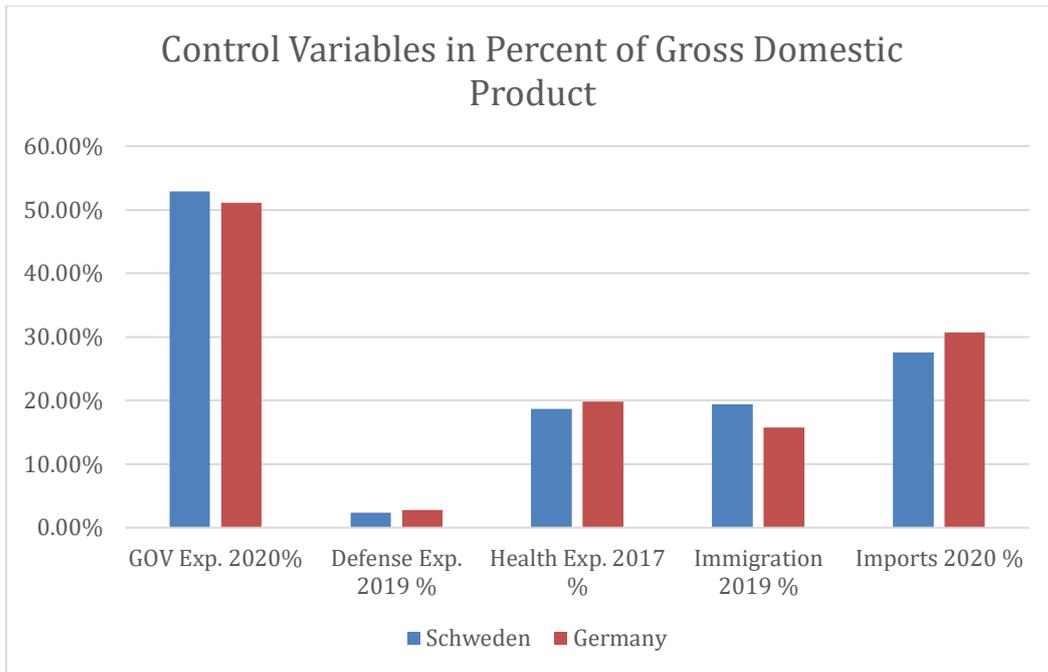
by age, gender, income, and education level. This highly differentiated material provides a key element of this research project.

The data on European identity will be set in contrast to the content analysis of the textbooks. The socio-demographic details open up the opportunity to exactly compare groups of the same age or level of education. As the data is available for both countries under consideration as well as for the years from the 1990s through to today, an analysis over time and in different geographical locations is possible.

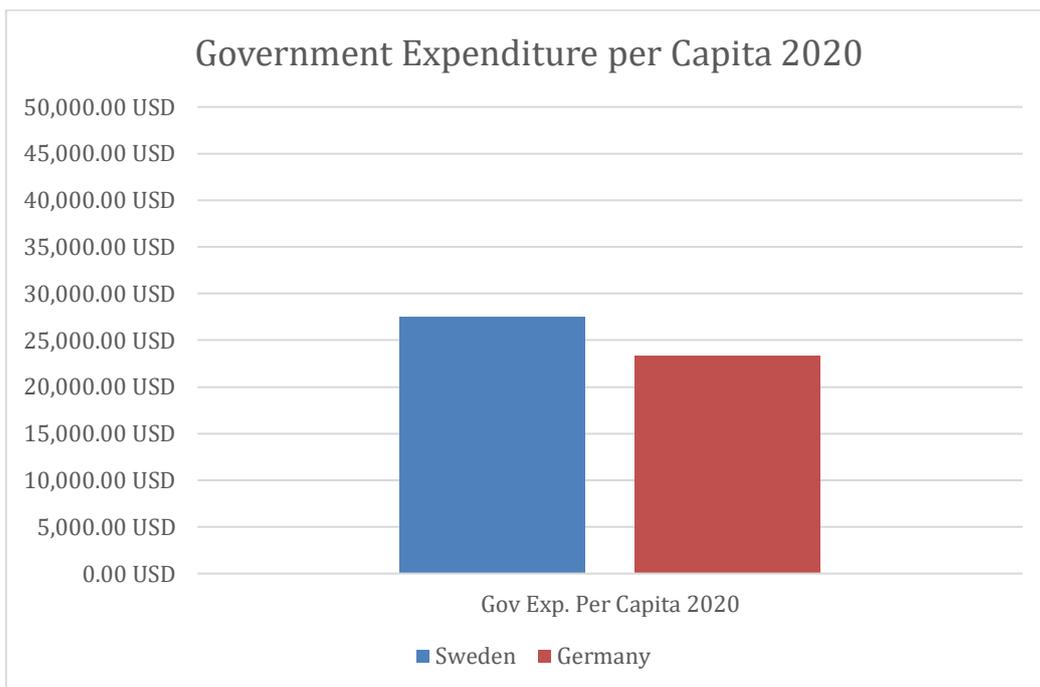
5 Analysis

This section contains the results of the content analysis and the relevant observations of the Eurobarometer surveys. The analysis is split into two sections. The first one deals with the Swedish education system. It provides key facts and evaluates the data derived from the two Swedish schoolbooks. These are then related to the survey of Swedish citizens in the Eurobarometer. The second section does the same for Germany. The individual case studies are then gauged against each other in the co-variational analysis. The last section contains the comparison between Sweden and Germany.

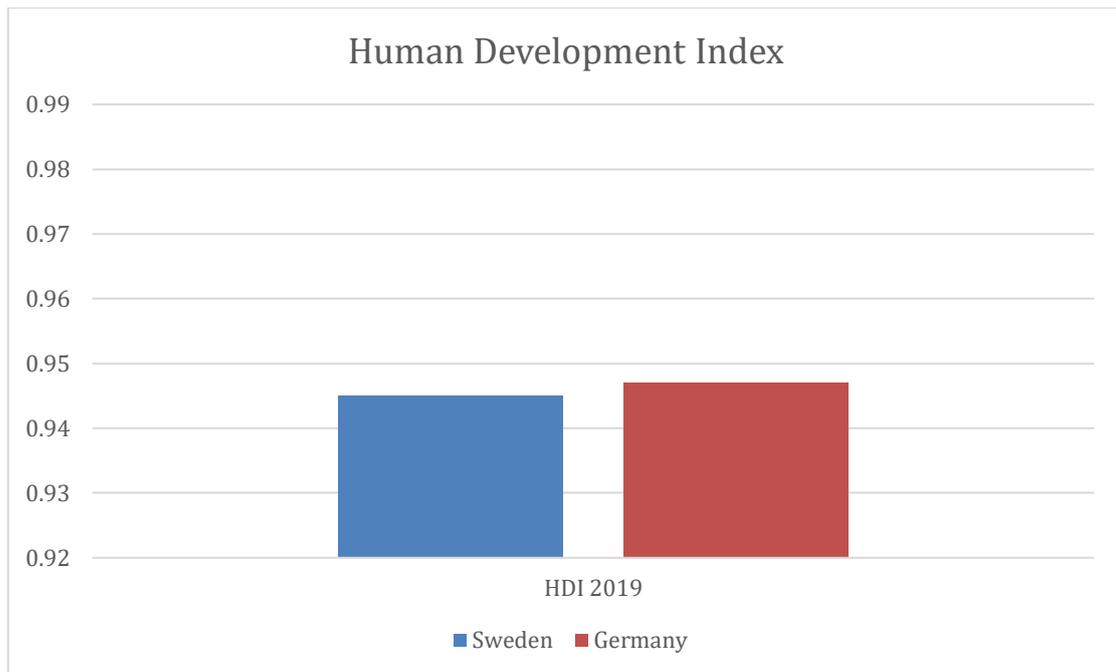
5.1 Case study execution



Source: World bank



Source: World bank



Source: World bank

5.1.1 Sweden - school system

The Swedish education sector went through a significant shift in 1991. The compulsory schooling system was decentralized and put into the responsibility of the municipalities. This is one of the biggest shifts in funding or responsibility in this sector (Lakomaa, 2009). Even when viewed in the context of all OECD countries, decentralization was a major transformation as, before 1991, Sweden had one of the most centralized schooling systems (Ahlin & Bjork 2008) among them. Today it can be classified as one of the most decentralized systems. The idea behind this shift was to enable tailored education for Swedish citizens (Wikström 2006). This highly individualized system makes it more challenging to come to comprehensive conclusions for the entire country. Still, this research deems it possible to draw conclusions from the content analysis. The schoolbooks under scrutiny are widely used all over Sweden and represent the actual content taught in Swedish schools even though they are run by the municipalities.

The Eurobarometer anyway applies to the whole population allowing for a holistic view.

All Swedish children complete nine years of compulsory schooling in the so-called Grunnskola. There they attend from first to ninth grade. An option to go to preschool also exists that could be counted as class zero.

After compulsory schooling, students may choose further education at the Gymnasium, the Swedish equivalent to high school. At the Gymnasium, one has the choice between several different specializations preparing either for a university

career or a vocational track. Teaching all children and teenagers in one schooling apparatus helps counter inequality and promotes equal opportunities. Approximately 80 percent of the Swedish population had attained secondary education in 2019 (Statista, 2019). 22.12 percent of the Swedish population even enjoyed a post-secondary education of three years or more (Statista, 2020).

Spending on upper-secondary schooling has steadily increased over the years in Sweden. 89,000 Swedish Kronas were invested per student in 2008; ten years later, this sum had increased to 122,000 Swedish Kronas (Statista, 2020). Higher spending on education is seen as beneficial to Swedish society. Expenses on primary schools and higher education also increased in Sweden (Statista, 2019).

Having a high number of people visiting upper secondary schools is extremely valuable for this study. A large part of the population has gone through social science classes at the high school level, where the contemporary social science book analyzed for this study is generally used. Therefore, most students have worked through the same social science school curriculum and material.

5.1.2 Content analysis

This section discusses the content analysis of the Swedish social science book from 2015 and the history book from 1990 that were applicable to the majority of Swedish pupils. The lag between the publishing date of the sample books is big enough to reflect the development of curricula over time. Figure 1 graphically represents the results of the content analysis, showing the depth of knowledge students were offered.

The content analysis evaluates how much of the content of the schoolbooks dealt with elements of the European idea. The keywords and terms coded for the analysis are based on four questions extracted from the Ferreira article as well as from the concept of multiculturalism portrayed by Hardwick et al. (2010). This resulted in seven categories that are seen as essential for acquiring European identity (Ferreira et al., 2018).

- 1) **Critical awareness of topics surrounding Europe and the EU.** Only if students learn to think critically, they acquire the ability to truly assess complicated systems and ideas. It helps them to properly judge what to trust and believe, which is an essential prerequisite for European identity.
- 2) **Elements of multiculturalism and international cooperation.** Students need to learn that multiculturalism has a positive impact on their lives. They should also see the importance of liberalism. This way, they understand that the promotion of international treaties, trade, and partnership results in a higher

standard of well-being in society. Both of these components should be transmitted as inseparable from the context of the EU and Europe.

- 3) **Factual information about Europe and the EU.** Historical events that shaped the EU, as well as the functions of the EU as a political and economic system, should be conveyed. The literature review highlighted the importance of knowledge about the EU as a key element for identity formation as one cannot feel attached to something one does not know about.
- 4) **Encouragement for active participation.** Students should learn about how they can include politics in their daily life and how they might politically engage in the context of the EU.
- 5) **Direct mentioning of European identity.** The literature review showed that schools rarely teach the concept of European identity, and schoolbooks do not examine this phenomenon directly. Still, it is interesting to see how often and specifically the topic is mentioned.
- 6) **Nationalism.** The nationalist category is supposed to see if there is a high amount of content built around achievements explicitly made by the country examined. Examples of this could be historical events of outstanding achievements of the individual country. And it needs to be evaluated if these topics are praised in a way that it distances the country from other nations.
- 7) **Positive view towards the EU.** This last category must be seen as the counterpart to the nationalism mentioned above. The Pro European view interprets achievements or events related to the European Union in a positive way.

Figure 2 shows how these categories have been evaluated in a numerical fashion: 5 is the highest possible achievement on related content, one the lowest. A word frequency count on both the older history and the newer social science book showed that the more recent publication contains more content concerning the European Union and Europe than the older book. The words 'Europe, European or EU' were mentioned 443 times in the Swedish social science book (4.33% on the entire books content) and 210 times in the Swedish history book (2.10% on the entire books content).

Results for coded categories show that the newer Swedish Book engages more in the categories: 'Critical thinking and multiculturalism.' Both categories were mentioned with higher frequency and a deeper level of understanding than in the history book. The section 'information on Europe and the 'EU' displayed an equal concentration of content in both books. Both scored a high level of engagement with this topic. The last four sections were equally low in both publications. Both books have approximately the same length and are both aimed at Swedish high school pupils.

Figure 2. Content comparison old and new Swedish schoolbooks

Content	Swedish History Book from 1990	Swedish Social Science Book 2015
Critical thinking	1	2
Multiculturalism	1	2
Information about Europe/ EU	3	3
Active Citizenship	1	1
Identity	1	1
Nationalism	1	1
Pro Europe	1	1

5.1.3 Eurobarometer

The Eurobarometer 89.1 published in 2018 is the reference point for this analysis. It will be used even though it is slightly dated as it contains the results on European identity that are closest to the publishing year of the newer schoolbook analyzed in this research. This book is still in use in schools in Sweden today.

The Eurobarometer is a research organization of the European Union that regularly performs surveys of the European populations on various issues. These surveys are integral for this analysis. The Eurobarometer is highly standardized, enabling comparisons between several variables across time and geographical location. For this research on European identity and education, the following question was utilized as a good measure of European identity: 'How attached do you feel to... The European Union' (Eurobarometer, 2018) To be precise, the participants are asked whether they feel: Very attached, fairly attached, not very attached, or not at all attached'. The answers are accumulated into 'Total attached' and 'Total Not attached (Eurobarometer, 2018). Apart from providing an overview of the degree of attachment to the EU, the survey also describes who exactly answered the question. These sociodemographic factors specify age, educational level, employment status, and field. This study is particularly interested in the variables age and educational level.

Overall, 51 % of the Swedish population felt attached to the EU. 47% did not feel attached, and 2% did not know. At first glance, these numbers show a rather low level of attachment in Sweden. However, when considering subcategories, the picture changes: Individuals that still are in education (e.g., those above the age of 20 and still at university or in another form of education) displayed an attachment

rate of 53%, and only 43% did not feel attached. In comparison, individuals that finished education at the age of 15 displayed lower attachment levels: 49% of them felt attached, and 49% did not feel attached. Pupils that ended their education at the age of 19 had the highest level of attachment: 56% attached and 42% not attached. These differentiated results support the hypothesis that individuals with a higher education show higher levels of European identity. However, not by strikingly high numbers.

The second hypothesis that the older generation has less European identity finds more proof in the surveys. In 2018 in Sweden, 72% percent of 15-24-year-olds felt attached to the EU (25% not feeling attached). Of the 40 to 54-year-olds, on the other hand, only 43 % felt attached, while 55 % did not feel attached. This was the lowest degree of European identity found in Sweden. Those older than 55 felt attached by 49% and not also attached by 49%. These numbers show clear evidence that older generations in Sweden display less feeling of attachment to the European Union than younger generations.

Another interesting fact is revealed by a look at the attachment level of unemployed people. Their attachment level is deficient, scoring only 38% of attached versus 62% not attached. This effect may be due to the fact that unemployed individuals usually achieved lower levels of education and display less trust in the political systems in other surveys (Eurobarometer, 2018).

5.1.4 Causal relation

Relating the content analysis to the survey data takes the case study on Sweden a decisive step further. The hypothesis that a general relationship between education and European identity does indeed exist was proven by mere analysis of the Eurobarometer data. The data for Sweden showed clear signs of a relationship between education and attachment to the EU. These percentages retrieved from the surveys could have been more striking, but nevertheless, a link definitely is at hand.

But the simple relation between survey results and socio-economic factors does not take into account that there is no single cause to identity formation. Influences from parents, family, friends or other official institutions as well as personal experiences and cultural background exert a big impact on identity – just as Gellner said in his theory, that assigns education, language, and culture leading roles in the formation of identity.

Statistics for Sweden still provide ample reasons to argue that the lower level of European attachment of older generations can at least partially be explained by the lower degree of education they received on Europe and European politics in their history books. The contemporary Swedish social science book provides a lot

more details about European issues. Additionally, it emphasizes critical thinking – an essential element for European identity - a good deal more than the history book.

The newer Swedish book also scored higher in issues surrounding multiculturalism. As discussed in the literature review, realizing and appreciating cultural differences is crucial for open-mindedness, a prerequisite for European identity. Moreover, the promotion of multiculturalism conforms with European values and norms, therefore fostering identity building.

The fact that unemployed people and people who did not attain secondary school education had lower levels of attachment to the EU provides further proof of the hypothesis of this research. These people never had the opportunity to think about Europe and the EU in the way the Swedish curriculum had in mind when choosing the social science book. However, as discussed earlier, most Swedes do visit high school and receive this form of education. This widespread attendance is mirrored in the high levels of attachment young Swedes displayed in the 2018 Eurobarometer survey. For the older generations, it was less common to visit upper secondary schools. Moreover, if they did, they learned from a history book with less emphasis on Europe and the EU.

5.2 Germany - school system

The German school system consists of various schools and educational institutions. Educational policy lies in the responsibility of the Bundesländer, the German federal states. Despite some aspects being coordinated by the German central government, the German system is still evaluated as a decentralized system – just like the Swedish. Therefore, studies of the German school systems are usually conducted on the basis of curricula and school literature from North-Rhein-Westfalia. This state is the most populous of Germany. The almost 18 million inhabitants allow for a generalization for the whole country. A more detailed analysis of the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, would account for the differences between the eastern and western states requiring a more detailed case study.

In Germany, schooling starts at the age of 6 and is compulsory until the age of 16. The so-called *Grundschule* equips children with basic skills in numeracy and literacy. This first element of the compulsory school system consists of 4 years of class. Before entering school, children may attend Kindergarten, which is not mandatory. After finishing 4th-grade, pupils get a recommendation as to which further educational institution to attend. The choice is between *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gesamtschule* and *Gymnasium* (Anon, 2009).

The *Hauptschule* prepares for basic vocational education and consists of grades 5 to 10. Most children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds get sent to these schools. The *Hauptschule* teaches the same core subjects as the *Realschule* and the *Gymnasium* but at a slower teaching pace. The *Realschule* is the next higher instance and leads to higher vocational schooling. It also consists of classes from 5 to 10 and prepares students to participate in an apprenticeship starting right after school.

The *Realschule* also offers the opportunity to switch to the *Gymnasium*, the highest form of secondary education. The *Gymnasium* consists of grades 5 to 12 or 13, depending on the location of the school. At the end of the *Gymnasium*, one receives Abitur, the entry qualification for universities, equivalent to the A levels in the UK. The *Gymnasium* requires a broad range of subjects to receive the *Abitur*, including learning two foreign languages, natural sciences, math, politics, and history.

Lastly, the *Gesamtschule* is the newest model of schooling available in Germany. It is designed to replace and combine the systems of *Realschule* and *Hauptschule*, and *Gymnasium*. *Gesamtschule* also consists of classes 5 to 13 and provides the possibility of receiving all qualifications available in the German educational system (Anon, 2009). The *Mittlere Reife* is the qualification you receive after class 10 and is equivalent to the qualification you receive at the *Realschule*, but you can also move on to Abitur. Many in Northrhine-Westfalia prefer the new *Gesamtschule* with its 13-year system where the last three years are taught at a slower pace than at *Gymnasium*.

5.2.1 Content analysis

In the content analysis of the German schoolbooks, the same categories as in the Swedish case study apply for a valid comparison. The seven categories based on the concepts of Hardwick et al. (2010) and Ferreira et al. (2018) observed for figure 3 are identical to those in figure two. However, the outcome of the analysis showed some significant differences from the analysis of the Swedish books.

The German social science book published in 2015 mentioned Europe, the EU, and its concept to a much higher degree than its Swedish counterpart. The book mentioned them 998 times, amounting to 9.98% of the content of the book. This is by far the highest word frequency in the books up for analysis. The German history book mentioned Europe and the EU 217 times, showing close to an equal sum of words than the older Swedish history book.

Word frequency provides a first good indicator for content analysis. Nevertheless, its implications need to be considered carefully. Only mentioning a word in a high frequency does not mean the respective book engages with the

concept on a deeper level. Both the Swedish and German history books have a similar amount of word frequency. However, further analysis reveals that the German book engaged more with topics in some categories. The comparison between the Swedish and the German books will be described in more detail in the co-variational analysis.

Word frequency and further content analysis of the German schoolbooks clearly show that the newer book engaged more with the topic of Europe and the EU than the older book. Both books contain a relatively high degree of discussion surrounding the topics analyzed. The newer book scored higher in critical thinking and information about Europe, in the promotion of European identity, and positive views towards the EU.

Figure 3. Content comparison old and new German schoolbooks

Content	German History Book from 1990	German Social Science Book 2015
Critical thinking	3	4
Multiculturalism	3	3
Information about Europe/ EU	4	5
Active Citizenship	1	2
Identity	1	2
Nationalism	2	1
Pro Europe	2	3

5.2.2 Eurobarometer

For Germany, the same Eurobarometer analysis 89 from 2018 is used. This survey asks how attached German citizens feel to the EU and divides the results into sociodemographic categories of age, employment, etc. Germans overall show a generally high degree of European identity. Germany scores highest in this survey question compared to the other six big EU countries (France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Greece). A total of 69% of the population feels attached to the European Union. The UK, for example, only showed an attachment of 44 % in 2018.

The breakdown of this already high score reveals the same tendencies as the Swedish case – but not as highly visible. The age group between 15 and 39 displays a higher level of attachment compared to older parts of the population. The level of attachment was 5 % lower in older groups of people.

The relation between European identity and education becomes more obvious when scrutinizing the educational level. Germans with the highest level of education or still studying showed over 80% attachment towards the EU. Germans that finished school at the age of 15 only had an attachment rate of 63 %. These results can be interpreted as clear indicators for the close relationship between education and European attachment.

The German example also shows shallow figures for unemployed people. They only displayed an attachment of 44%, the lowest of all occupations. This can be viewed as another strong indication of the vital role of education in the formation of a European identity, as unemployed individuals mostly have lower education.

5.2.3 Causal relation

The hypothesis of this thesis could be validated for the German case. A clear relation between the results of the content analysis and survey data from the Eurobarometer was established. The increase of European content in schoolbooks over time coincides with a rise in pro-environmental values in society.

The older generation displayed a lower level of attachment which relates with them being offered less European content in the German history book published in the 1990s. Over the years, more European content was included in German schoolbooks. Obviously, the promotion of European unity increasingly became a priority in German curricula. This is clearly reflected in the high degree of European attachment in younger generations.

The broader representation of European issues in education exposed students that visited schools for longer to even more European content. The extended exposure provides the base for a higher degree of European identity, which is clearly mirrored in Eurobarometer Data of 2018. The higher the level of education, the higher is the degree of European attachment. German university students display the highest increase in the level of attachment.

The socio-economic factor education in the Eurobarometer survey data clearly supports the argument of higher education playing a significant role in European identity, just as the theoretical literature for this thesis suggested.

At this point, the author wants to emphasize that even as he proved his hypothesis valid, the entire issue of factors influencing European identity is multifactorial. Singling out education may help in understanding some of the mechanisms of identity building and could provide an excellent starting point for a widespread improvement of European identity.

5.3 Co-variational analysis

As discussed in the methodology section, a co-variational analysis is needed to verify that a causal relationship between dependent and independent variables exists. Doublechecking with Eurobarometer statistics validated both the first and the second hypotheses of this study: older generations or less educated people showed a lower degree of European identity. Younger generations or better-educated individuals, being exposed to more schooling on European matters, felt more attached to Europe. These results provide proof for a general relation of education and attachment to Europe.

However, the third hypothesis of this thesis needs to be validated by a co-variational analysis. The comparison of the case studies of Sweden and Germany attempts to prove that quality of education also has a significant influence on the level of European identity. As seen in Eurobarometer data, the German population overall reaches a higher level of European identity than the Swedish population. At the same time, the German social science book contains more European content than the Swedish book.

Does this observation prove that education significantly contributes to the formation of European identity? Or are there other variables that might influence the attachment to Europe?

As discussed in the methodology section, a co-variational analysis will be performed to evaluate the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Deductively found control variables will control for the validity of this relationship (see 5.1).

To this end, the present case study is based on the most similar system design described in chapter 4.1.6 (MSSD). On several occasions, the thesis has acknowledged that European identity formation is based on multiple factors. The aim of this thesis is to isolate the influence of education in this formation. However, the execution of the co-variational analysis is challenging as countries never display exactly the same characteristics. The control variables for Sweden and Germany are nevertheless good indicators for making Sweden and Germany comparable.

The co-variational analysis will check the expected dependency against 7 control variables found deductively (see figure 4).

Government expenditure overall could exert an influence on European identity. Both the German and the Swedish governments spent about 50 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of their respective countries in 2020. As no major difference in public spending could be observed, this factor can be excluded as a disturbance to the hypothesis. Government expenditure per capita (2019) also does not show a significant variation in both countries.

Even checking for variables like the percentage of expenditure on defense (2019) or on health (2017) as possible contributing factors to European identity did not show much variation in the two cases. The United Nations` human development

index (2019), combining levels of education, life expectancy, and per capita income, are also comparable in Germany and Sweden.

Two more factors could influence the feelings of people towards Europe: The number of immigrants and the level of imports, as an indicator for economic integration. Both variables reach a similar percentage in the two cases.

Figure 4 Co-variance analysis Sweden - Germany

	Sweden	Germany
European Identity	o	+
GOV Expenditure 2020 %	+	+
GOV Expen. per Cap 2019	+	+
Defense Expen %2019	+	+
Health Expen 2017 %	+	+
HDI 2019	+	+
Immigration 2019 %	+	+
Imports 2020 %	+	+
EU Education	o	+

The co-variational analysis indicates that a comparison of Sweden and Germany is justified as both countries do not differ significantly in factors that might exert a big influence on European identity. However, this study will not attempt a classic comparison where one factor excludes the other. Both countries showcase a positive relationship between education and European identity. The co-variance analysis, therefore, firstly proves a positive relationship between education and European identity.

Figure 5

Main Findings of Eurobarometer and Content analysis

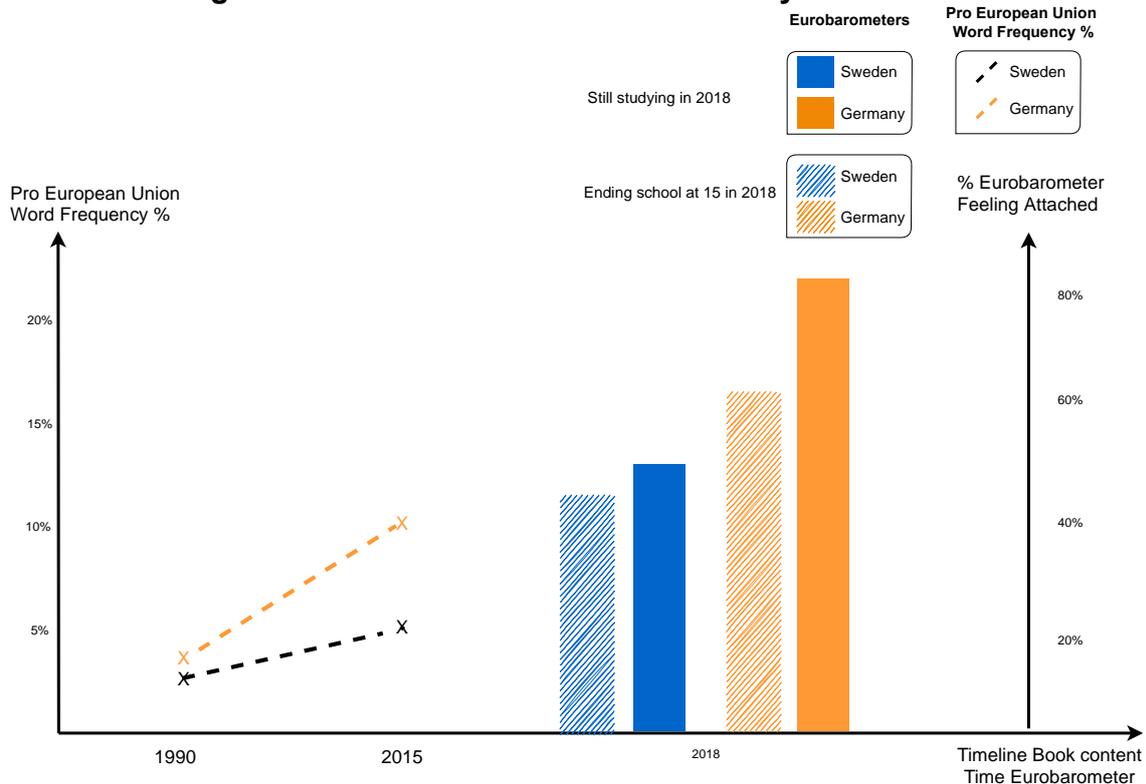


Figure 5 gives an overall visualization of the results. Showing in the dotted lines the increased level of European content in schoolbooks in both Sweden and Germany between 1990 and 2015. Furthermore, it illustrates the levels of European attachment in Sweden and Germany in 2018 between the individuals that ended school at the age of 15 and those who are still studying. The increase of feeling attached to the EU is high in both Sweden and Germany for the group that is still studying. Thus, the group that visited high school to continue with further studies. Those that finished school at 15 never visited high school and also did not have the chance to be taught as much in social science as those that attended school for a longer period of time.

The trend can be more clearly observed in the German example as the German level of European attachment is higher in the Eurobarometer surveys (Total attachment Germany 69%, Sweden 51 %) (Eurobarometer, 2018).

The level of European education in German textbooks is also rated higher than in the Swedish counterpart. This could partly explain that the German example showcases the relation more clearly than the Swedish example.

However, the Swedish example also showcases the positive relationship between education and European identity. The degree of both is just lower, as shown by Eurobarometer data and the results of the content analysis. Therefore, Sweden does not get assigned a minus in figure 4. The circle in figure 4 indicates

the lower intensity of the same relation. However, for the Swedish example it is especially interesting that the age group 15-24 ranked 72% in European attachment. This higher by 3% in comparison to the equivalent age group in Germany in 2018. This result is counterintuitive towards the results of the content analysis of the schoolbooks. Therefore, it becomes again important to see that other factors also might influence European attachment; for example, Erasmus or upbringing might also be crucial factors that are important to examine in further research.

Still, the comparison between Sweden and Germany illustrates that education – taken as an isolated factor – exerts a viable influence on European identity. The lower degree of education on European matters in Sweden *ceteris paribus* explains the lower degree of European identity among the Swedish population.

6 Conclusion

This thesis has successfully drawn up the relation between education and European identity. The multi-method approach consisting of case studies on Sweden and Germany, a content analysis of schoolbooks from both countries containing material on Europe, and a co-variance analysis that compared the two cases provided promising results. They created viable insights into the motivations that lead to the formation of European identity in Sweden and Germany. The applied methods were contextualized by the theories Ernst Gellner formulated on national identity formation. His hypothesis is that identity formation stems from education, language, and culture (Gellner, 1983). This general idea was verified by studying Eurobarometer surveys for Sweden and Germany. The data clearly showcased a relationship between education and European identity.

Gellner's theories heavily relied on examples he described in his seminal work 'Nations and Nationalism' (1983). This thesis adopted his theory to the supranational European context and substantiated his anecdotal evidence with a comparative empirical analysis. The core research hypothesis is that education indeed exerts a substantial influence on European identity. In a most-similar-systems design, the thesis controlled for the importance of other factors that may have an impact on European identity. For example, cultural exchange or language proficiency or economic development and integration were debated as important influences on European identity.

The approach of the case studies on Sweden and Germany analyzed the relation between the independent variable (education) and the dependent variable (pro-

European values). The Eurobarometer survey data for older and younger generations in both countries show a clear pro-European trend. Firstly, older generations commonly display less of a European attachment/identity than younger generations. Secondly, individuals with more years of education show higher levels of European identity than people who visited a school for a shorter time. However, the results for Sweden demonstrated the age effect more clearly, while the German example creates more substantial proof for the influence of education.

The impact of education on European identity in the two countries was measured by tracing European content in schoolbooks from the 1990s and 2015 to show development over time and compare this between countries. The content analysis that coded for seven different categories of Europe-related content provided additional proof for both hypotheses.

Firstly, it showed that the generational gap in European identity could be traced back to the differences between the old and the contemporary book. The new books contained more than twice the Europe-related content of the old books. Additionally, the new books put more emphasis on themes around multiculturalism and critical thinking, two important prerequisites for developing a European identity.

The second hypothesis that young people with less education acquire less European identity is at least partly validated by the content analysis. As they did not receive the amount of schooling on European topics as their counterparts, who went to upper secondary school, they developed less attachment to the EU. This effect could be distinctly observed in Germany: The attachment to the EU increased by almost 10 percent for those who attended upper secondary school as opposed to pupils that ended their education with grade 10.

To give the comparative case studies more rigor, the two countries were compared in a co-variance analysis. After controlling for seven other factors that might influence European identity, the co-variance analysis indicates a positive effect of education on European identity for both countries, however less pronouncedly so for Sweden. This result is supported by the content analysis of the Swedish social science book, which showed a lower level of Europe-related content than the German book. These results imply that there is a clear relationship between pro-European values and European content in high school education. The more students are exposed to Europe in their education, the more they tend to exhibit pro-European values. This, in turn, has important implications for educational policies across Europe.

These fairly clear relations identified in this thesis are a good starting point for further investigation in the field. Still, this thesis leaves ample room for more research delving deeper into the causal analysis of what aids the development of European identity. Applying the theory and methods in this work to other European

countries could provide further insights and test the robustness of the results. Creating a solid scientific base for a further built up of European identity is essential for a sound development of Europe in the future.

A robust European identity is not just important as a concept. It will become increasingly vital to uphold the core beliefs and values of the European Union. Cooperation between EU member states constitutes the basis of lasting peace and prosperity in the region. Therefore, research on the creation of European identity will hopefully gain more attention. It could help promote solidarity and equality between member states, thereby creating innovation and improved well-being for Europe's citizens.

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