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Dutch Europhilia?

Identification with Europe in Dutch Political Party Manifestos
between 1989 and 2004



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Abstract

This thesis analyses Dutch political party positions towards European integration in order to debunk the image of Dutch Europhilia. This goal will be achieved by using frame analysis, which is useful in clarifying the justification that the parties used for their position. Parties can justify support for integration both with utilitarian arguments, related to a pragmatic position, and with more cultural arguments related to a federalist, Europhile position. These cultural frames exist out of more multiculturalist identifications with Europe and more nationalist exclusive identifications with the nation-state. By studying political party manifestos for the European Parliament elections between 1989 and 2004, using this framework, this study will find that the positions and justifications of parties were more complex than other studies suggest.

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Introduction

On the 17th of November 2017, the Dutch site NOS published the following news:

"It is a special and important moment in our parliamentary history, namely that we have a flag in our plenary room.' The placement of the flag had been a proposal of SGP-leader Van der Staaij and PVV-leader Wilders. They believe that the flag has 'a nice and clear function as a symbol of the nation'".¹

After a motion, supported by a large majority, the Dutch Parliament decided to place the Dutch Flag in the plenary room of the House of Representatives. It was argued that the flag would serve as a beautiful symbol of the nation state. While the placement of national flags in government buildings is common in most other countries, the Dutch government had – up until now – always refused to hoist its flag. Interesting enough, the suggestion of the Green Party to place the European Flag next to it was quickly neglected, even though this is common in other member-states as well. This event raises some important questions, such as; what does it mean to place a national flag in the house of representatives, but not a European? What does this say about the relationship between national and European identities? While it is not the purpose of this thesis to analyze the placement of the Dutch national flag, this example serves as a good illustration and starting point. It shows signs of friction between these two identities through the symbolism of the two flags: should we only feel Dutch, or also European? What is the role and view of political parties in this decision? The topic of identity is not only very relevant today, but has also been important in debates on European integration from the 1990s.

During the 1990s, the Dutch political parties were perceived to be 'Europhile', often pushing for further political integration and more supranational governance at the European level. When, in 2005, the Dutch voters rejected the constitutional treaty, the (international) media perceived this as a large shock and a defeat for the mainstream parties which had campaigned in favor.² Several studies show that one of the reasons to vote 'no' in the referendum was a fear of losing national identity.³ Later, however, parties signed the Lisbon

¹ NOS (17-11-2017) 'De Nederlandse vlag staat in de Tweede Kamer' <https://nos.nl/artikel/2202773-de-nederlandse-vlag-staat-in-de-tweede-kamer.html> Translated from Dutch: *Het is een bijzonder en belangrijk moment in onze parlementaire geschiedenis, namelijk dat we een vlag in de zaal hebben." De komst van de vlag was een voorstel van SGP-leider Van der Staaij en PVV-leider Wilders. Zij vinden dat de vlag "een mooie en duidelijke functie heeft als symbool van de natie".*

² Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke partijen', 177.

³ Nederlanders en Europa, 191 ; De Kwestie Europa ; Marcel Lubbers, 'Regarding the Dutch 'Nee' to the European Constitution: A Test of the Identity, Utilitarian and Political Approaches to Voting 'No'', *European Union Politics* 9, no. 1 (March 2008): 59–86 ; Andreas R. T. Schuck and Claes H. De Vreese, 'The Dutch No to the

treaty, which was similar to the initial constitution but had less symbolic and identity-related value. In the media, this rejection was seen a fundamental shift from Europhilia to a more sceptic position, but was this image of Dutch 'Europhilia' accurate?⁴ The most basic distinction to be made on positions towards the European union (EU) is between opposition and support. However, there are two different reasons for these positions, relating to costs and benefits and to more 'affective' reasons such as identity.⁵ Europhile parties are in favor of a supranational union with European citizens, while Euro-pragmatic parties support integration on the basis of national interests.⁶ Similarly, a party can oppose integration in stating that it threatens national identities or based on utilitarian reasons relating to the perceived costs of integration.⁷ Looking at those identity related, affective justifications of support therefore indicates whether a party is 'Europhile' or 'pragmatic'.

Within this thesis I will argue that the image of Dutch Europhilia in the 1990s is not completely historically accurate, as most parties had shifted towards a more pragmatic position. The 1990s are chosen as a time-frame, as during these years the topic of identity became salient in relation to European integration. As Hooghe and Marks argued, the early 1990s were marked by a shift from a 'permissive consensus' to a 'constraining dissensus'.⁸ In short this meant that the topic of European integration became a topic of domestic political contestation and public debate. Consequentially, the EU sought to improve its public image and to legitimate its authority. Several scholars argued that there was a need to create a sense of European identity or community in order to achieve this.⁹ However, other studies have linked (exclusive) national identities, or a lack of identification with Europe, to opposition to integration. Yet, not all people with these exclusive national identities oppose integration, but political entrepreneurs first have to connect these identities to political issues. As such, they are able to frame the relationship between national identity and European integration as incompatible.¹⁰ Political parties are

EU Constitution: Assessing the Role of EU Skepticism and the Campaign', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 18, no. 1 (February 2008): 101–28.

⁴ Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke partijen': 177

⁵ Ben Clements, 'Understanding "Utilitarian" Support for European Integration in Scotland and Wales: The Role of Economic Interests, National Identity and Party Support', *Regional & Federal Studies* 21, no. 1 (1 March 2011): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2010.505042>.

⁶ Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke Partijen', 101.

⁷ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks. 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus', *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1 (January 2009).

⁸ Hooghe and Marks. 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration', 1–23.

⁹ For example: Lauren M. McLaren, *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration*, (PalgraveMacmillan 2006); Neil Fligstein. *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe* (Oxford University Press 2010); Michael Bruter, *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity* (Palgrave Macmillan 2005).

¹⁰ Hooghe and Marks. 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration'.

important mediators between Europe and citizens as they form one of their main sources of information.¹¹¹²

The topic of identity is thus related to the justification of both support for- and opposition to European integration. This thesis analyzes the evolution of identification with Europe within Dutch political parties' manifestos for the European elections between 1989 and 2004. This will allow for a substantial analysis of the justification that Dutch parties used for their positions towards European integration. By mapping official positions and voting behavior of parties, for example, the image of the Dutch Europhilia in the 1990s remains. Conversely, scholars studying the political discourse on European integration found that the general tone had already shifted to more critical in the 1990s.¹³ However, not all scholars agree if and when there had been such a shift. The main goal of this thesis is to show that the image of Dutch idealistic 'Europhilia' is not completely accurate, as studying the argumentation reveals a more complex image of the party positions during the 1990s. In order to show this, firstly the historiographical debate will be outlined in order to show that this approach can contribute to a better understanding of Dutch political party positions. Secondly, the topic of identification with Europe will be defined and its relation to legitimation of supranational authority. Thirdly, the concept of framing will be discussed which will provide an analytical framework for the analysis. After a brief justification of the used sources, the party manifestos will be analyzed using the concepts of earlier chapters. Finally, this will lead to the conclusion that while the parties' identification with Europe both differed over time and across parties, most parties had increasingly become more critical and pragmatic towards European integration during the 1990s.

¹¹ Hans Vollaard and Gerrit Voerman 'De Europese Opstelling van Nederlandse Politieke Partijen' in *Van aanval! Naar verdedigen? De opstelling van Nederland ten aanzien van Europese integratie, 1945-2015* (Hans Vollaard, Jan van der Harst and Gerrit Voerman ed.) (Den Haag 2015), 99.

¹² In this sense the media are another important 'mediator', but will within this thesis not be analyzed due to reasons of space and complexity. Further, there exists a large body of literature that analyzes media framing such as: Juan Diez Medrano, *Framing Europe: Attitudes to European integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*, 2010; Sven Leif Ragnar de Roode. *Seeing Europe through the Nation: The Role of national Self-Images in the Perception of European integration in the English, German and Dutch Press in the 1950s and 1990s*. (2012).

¹³ Robert Harmsen, 'The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse: Defining the "Limits of Europe"', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9, no. 3 (1 September 2008): 316–41, Pieter de Wilde, 'Reasserting the Nation State: The Trajectory of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands 1992-2005', *RECON, RECON Online Working Papers Series* (1 January 2009), 3.

Historiography

As has been argued before, there are different ideas about party positions and visions for European integration in the Netherlands. Several scholars argue that the rejection of the constitutional treaty in 2005 was the evidence of an elite-mass gap. This meant that while support for European integration among political elites was high, citizens were more critical and opposed the EU.¹⁴ On the other hand, several studies argue that this gap was not as big as perceived, as Dutch political parties had gradually become more critical of European integration since the 1990s.¹⁵ By looking at how political parties ‘framed’ European integration during the 1990s, focusing on the use cultural and identitarian frames, this thesis aims to make a contribution to this debate.

This thesis can be placed within the broader debate on national parties’ positions on and narratives of European integration. This literature assumes that there are ‘distinctive, identifiable national ‘frames’ through which the process of European integration is differentially interpreted, reflecting differing national political cultures, institutional structures and historical experiences’.¹⁶ Within the chosen time frame of the 1990s to the early 2000s, the largest amount of this literature is preoccupied with growing ‘Euroscepticism’. It should be noted first that Euroscepticism itself is a contested concept, originating from political sciences in the 1990s, and there exists a lack of consensus on its definition.¹⁷ It is used here to describe the body of scholarship focusing on growing domestic political contestation of the European project.

There are two approaches to studying party-based Euroscepticism¹⁸. The first focuses on *political party positions* related to European integration, as such it maps the extent to which European issues are domestically contested. The problem with most of these studies is that parties are allocated static and single positions, causing the studies often to overlook interaction

¹⁴ Harmen Bennema and Ben Crum, *Euroscepticism as a Carrier of Elite-Mass Incongruence: The Case of the Netherlands*, 2007; Aarts, Kees, and Henk van der Kolk. ‘Understanding the Dutch “No”: The Euro, the East, and the Elite’. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 2 (2006): 243–46.

¹⁵ Robert Harmsen, ‘The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse: Defining the “Limits of Europe”’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9, no. 3 (1 September 2008): 316–41; Vollaard and Voerman. ‘De Europese Opstelling van Nederlandse Politieke Partijen’: 177; Gerrit Voerman. ‘De Nederlandse Politieke Partijen en de Europese Integratie’, in K. Aarts and H. Van der Kolk (eds), *Nederlanders en Europa. Het Referendum over de Europese Grondwet*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2005 pp. 44-63.

¹⁶ Robert Harmsen, ‘The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse: Defining the “Limits of Europe”’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9, no. 3 (1 September 2008), 318.

¹⁷ Amandine Crespy and Nicolas Verschuere, ‘From Euroscepticism to Resistance to European Integration: An Interdisciplinary Perspective’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 10 (1 September 2009): 377–93,

¹⁸ Pieter de Wilde, ‘Reasserting the Nation State: The Trajectory of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands 1992-2005’, *RECON, RECON Online Working Papers Series*, (1 January 2009), 1.

between and within parties and the particular issues parties are opposed to. The second approach looks how Euroscepticism is expressed in *public discourse* by political parties.¹⁹ It reflects how actors frame European integration – how they organize symbols, images and arguments to a particular issue²⁰. The approach clarifies how political parties attribute meanings to European integration and emphasizes the historical development through interaction of actors. The problem is that most of the time these studies focus only on the dominant narrative in a member state because they often analyze media content. It thus does not take into account the domestic contestation and different interpretations to the European project²¹. Within this thesis, the problems of both strands of research are sought to be overcome by analyzing how political parties frame European integration, which will not only show *how* European integration is framed, but also by *whom*.²² Rather than focusing on a ‘national narrative’, party manifestos will be studied and placed within its historical context. It should further be noted that this thesis is not about Euroscepticism but about identification with Europe – which can both be positive and negative. However, the extensive body of literature on Euroscepticism should not be neglected as it can provide useful insights.

A qualitative heuristic historical account of political parties positions, as has been argued, can help overcome the problems that occur in most social and political scientific approaches. On the particular case of the Dutch political party positions, there are not many historical reports written. The few exceptions that have studied party positions to European integration²³ are broad and are in general more descriptive than analyzing. Further, the topic of identification with Europe or the role of identity as such has only been discussed briefly in – mostly sociological – studies of the Netherlands.²⁴ The studies that have written about identification in the Netherlands have focused either on other actors²⁵ or different time

¹⁹ de Wilde, ‘Reasserting the Nation State’. P.1

²⁰ William A. Gamson, *Bystanders, Public Opinion, and the Media*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK 2004: 245, in de Wilde, ‘Reasserting the Nation State’, 2.

²¹ de Wilde, ‘Reasserting the Nation State’.

²² Marc Helbling, Dominic Hoegliger & Bruno Wüest ‘How political parties frame European integration’ *European Journal of Political Research* 49, no. 4 (2010), 498.

²³ Harryvan, AG. and Harst, J. van der (2013a). *Verloren Consensus: Europa in het Nederlandse parlementair-politieke debat 1945-2013*; Vollaard, H., and Boer, B. (2005) *Euroscepticis in Nederland*. Utrecht: Lemma; Voerman, Gerrit (2005) ‘De Nederlandse politieke partijen en de Europese Integratie’ in K. Aarts and hans. van der Kolk. *Nederlanders en Europa*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 44-63; Harmsen (2008)

²⁴ Bennema and Crum. *Euroscepticism as a Carrier of Elite-Mass Incongruence: The Case of the Netherlands*, 2007; Aarts and van der Kolk ‘Understanding the Dutch “No”’: The Euro, the East, and the Elite’. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 2 (2006).

²⁵ Sven Leif Ragnar de Roode. *Seeing Europe through the Nation: The Role of national Self-Images in the Perception of European integration in the English, German and Dutch Press in the 1950s and 1990s*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012.

periods²⁶. In general, historical literature on identification with Europe is scarce. This has to do with for example the availability of sources beyond elites, the link between European historiography and national history, and lastly the fear to participate, once again, in the construction of an identity that might be misused by politicians.²⁷ The question is then why it is important to study identification with Europe. First, in contemporary European integration studies, the concept has become highly salient and in general cannot be neglected when studying European integration. As many forms of collective identity are based on shared history, historical research is necessary for the debate. Secondly, in recent political debates and elections, nationalist sentiments are growing together with Euroscepticism as strong, exclusive national identities are mobilized by elites in order to oppose European integration²⁸. If historians have participated in the creation of these nation-state identities, they might also be best placed to react to these developments critically.

²⁶ Robin de Bruin, “‘Gelovige Ambachtslieden, Bezig Met Een Nuchter Handwerk’”, *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 130, no. 1 (1 February 2017): 47–64, <https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGESCH2017.1.BRUI>. Robin de Bruin "The 'elastic' European ideal in the Netherlands, 1948-1958: images of a future integrated Europe and the transformation of Dutch politics." *Euroclio. Etudes et Documents* 57 (2010): 207-216.

²⁷ Hartmut Kaelble, “Identification with Europe and politicization of the EU since.” *European identity, Chapter 8* (2009), 193.

²⁸ Hooghe and Marks, ‘A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration’.

European identity and legitimacy

Within this thesis, the image of the Dutch political parties' Europhilia in the 1990s is studied by focusing on cultural frames of justification. As has been argued, this Europhile position is related to support on a more affectionate and identity-related basis. Within this chapter the concept of European identity and its relation to legitimacy will be explained. After arguing that political entrepreneurs have attempted to promote a sense of European identity to legitimize political integration, the concept of 'framing' will be outlined. This concept, in turn, will provide a useful framework for analyzing how parties justified their positions.

Academic interest in the topic of European identity has emerged in the larger debate on the 'democratic deficit' of the European Union. With the growing scope and pace of the European integration process during the 1990s, the project became more contested. In short, the institution had been operating on a rather technocratic basis, deriving its legitimacy from its effective 'output' and democratic nation-states. With more decisions taken on a supranational level, it was argued that the EU should have more input legitimacy – that is governance *by* the people, which means that citizens should be able to influence it through for example voting. Increasing the powers of the European Parliament was the main objective, but with low election turnouts it was not enough. Scholars argued there was a need for a European 'demos', a community or public sphere with a sense of collective identity that should bring its citizens closer to the EU.²⁹ This idea is based on the theory of social constructivism, which implies that in order to legitimate growing 'material power', i.e. political and economic, it should be complemented with 'symbolic power', the ability to 'determine shared meanings that constitute identities, interests and practices'.³⁰ In the actor – or 'agency' – oriented approach of this theory, political entrepreneurs are able to create political symbols that, if they are effective, foster popular support, give meaning to- and legitimize European integration.³¹

The idea of a European identity brought about two important normative questions: is it necessary and possible – the latter particularly with regard to its form and relation to existing nation state identities. There are three positions within this debate: the first position assumes a European identity is both unnecessary – as in intergovernmental cooperation, legitimacy should be derived from national spheres – and impossible, since it would conflict with national identities. The second position assumes it is necessary – as legitimacy for a federal Europe

²⁹ Viktoria Kaina and Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski, 'EU Governance and European Identity', *Living Reviews in European Governance* 8 (2013).

³⁰ Tobias Theiler, *Political Symbolism and European Integration* (Manchester University Press, 2005), 13

³¹ Theiler, *Political Symbolism and European Integration*, 8.

should rest on a supranational identity similar to national identities – but this form of ‘European Nationalism’ is seen as unlikely as most scholars agree that national identities will likely persist.³² In both these cases, the relationship between the two identities could be described as ‘zero-sum’ or ‘exclusive’, as a person can either identify with Europe or with its nation-state. It is based on a ‘thick’, ‘essentialist’ conception of national identity, which assumes that nations are formed on the basis of cultural ‘raw material’ in a community, such as language, ethnicity and a shared history. A third position, however, argues that it is both necessary and possible, but that a European identity takes a different – post-national – form and can therefore exist next to national identities³³. Mainly associated with Habermas’ ‘Constitutional Patriotism’, this form of identity combines civic symbols and meanings of a European society and more cultural national self-images and results from, so-called, ‘communicative processes’.³⁴ In this sense there is a crucial role for national debates as they can both strengthen this form of European ‘we-feeling’, and challenge it by articulating tensions or clashes with national identities.³⁵ The 2005 rejection of the Constitutional treaty led to critique on this form of European identity, as a common constitution served as one of the most important civic symbols in Habermas’ theory.³⁶ Even though most scholars now agree on this ‘positive-sum’ relation between the two levels of identity, the other two positions remain influential at the political and public level. Political debates have largely been dominated by the alternative of either a national – favored by Euro-skeptics – or a European identity – which is favored by strong Euro-federalists.³⁷

The question of the necessity for a European identity is thus intertwined with ideas about the long-term roots of European integration. As most scholars agree that there has not yet emerged something like a single European identity³⁸ to be used as an analytical concept or distinctive social unit, it should be seen as a political project.³⁹ From the 1980s, the EU has made several attempts to stimulate a sense of European identity by creating political symbols. These include a flag, an anthem, myths, traditions such as the celebration of ‘Europe day’, and

³² Anthony D. Smith. "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 68, no. 1, 1992: 55-76.

³³ Castiglione, ‘Political identity in a Community of Strangers’, 41.

³⁴ Jürgen Habermas. "The postnational constellation: Political essays." (2001).

³⁵ Ulrike Liebert, ‘Two Projects of European Identity’, in *Collective Identity Formation in the Process of EU Enlargement; Defeating the Inclusive Paradigm of a European Democracy?*(Ed. Magdalena Góra and Zdzisław Mach) (2008), 32.

³⁶ Kaina and Karolewski, ‘EU Governance and European Identity’, 37.

³⁷ Dario Castiglione, ‘Political Identity in a Community of Strangers’. In *European Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 2009: 34.

³⁸ Kaelble, “Identification with Europe and the Politicization of the EU”; Checkel & Katzenstein, ‘European Identity’; Liebert, ‘Two Projects of European identity’.

³⁹ Liebert, ‘Two Projects of European identity’; Sophie Duchesne. "Waiting for a European Identity... Reflections on the process of identification with Europe." *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9, no. 4 (2008)

a common currency: the euro. In order to become effective, the symbols must be transmitted and spread, which happens primarily through cultural, audiovisual and educational policies.⁴⁰ However, due to its institutional structure, the EU relies for an important part on the willingness of national elites to share power over symbolic tools and identity-related policy fields. So far, the symbolic power of the EU remains limited, which according to Theiler has resulted from national elite's resistance to share this power because they did not see European integration as a 'socially, culturally and psychologically state-transcending undertaking'.⁴¹ Turning this argument around, the willingness of national elites to promote and transfer symbolic authority to the European level can also provide an indication of their vision for the EU itself.

European identities should further be seen as 'plural' as they are rooted in local, regional and national attachments. This form of multiple identification can be described as 'inclusive', and is largely related to the more post-national form of European identity. This is then distinguished from more 'exclusive' identifications with an in-group, mostly found on the national level. These exclusive national identities are related to opposition to European integration, but only when they are mobilized by political elites. Collective identities do not speak for itself in relation to political objects, but these connections have to be constructed. Political parties thus have a crucial role in framing the relationship between national identity and European integration as incompatible⁴².

To conclude, the construction of a European identity is strongly intertwined with the legitimation of the EU and ideas about its institutional nature. On the European level, political entrepreneurs have attempted to create and distribute political symbols that foster this identity. However, to do this effectively, they rely on national political elites who can either mobilize collective identities to legitimize European integration or to oppose the project. Since national identifications are likely to persist, identification with Europe is only possible as a form of inclusive 'multiple identification'.⁴³ What then matters is the relationship between two levels of identification and how this is mobilized by elites. This thesis will focus on this elite mobilization by using framing analysis.

Framing

The concept of framing used within this study is derived from an actor-oriented approach originating from research in social movements. Frames here are 'action oriented sets of beliefs

⁴⁰ Theiler, *Political Symbolism and European Integration*, 13-17.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 150.

⁴² Hooghe and Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration'.

⁴³ Duchesne, "Waiting for a European Identity" : 403

and meanings'⁴⁴, that can be used by political actors in order to communicate and justify their positions on issues. Even though frame analysis is interested in a broad range of topics, it will be used here on a narrower sense focusing on the specific aspect of 'patterns of justification'⁴⁵. In this way, the aim is to better understand how political actors define a problem and how they justify their positions rather than analyzing the effects of framing on individual attitudes⁴⁶. In taking the definition of Entman: to frame is to: 'select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation'.⁴⁷

On the most basic level there can be distinguished three types of frames: cultural, economic and 'other utilitarian' frames. These reflect the types of arguments found in studies on individual-level attitudes towards- and media discourses on European integration.⁴⁸ Within the cultural frames, further, there are identity-related and moral-universalist frames.⁴⁹ Identity-related frames consist out of ideas and values essential to a certain community. One important type within this category is nationalistic frames which emphasize national identity and sovereignty.⁵⁰ These frames are often mobilized to protect national boundaries and culturally homogenous communities and can refer to exclusive national-, regional- or European identities.⁵¹ Examples of this type of frames are statements that express fears of mass immigration, xenophobic attitudes or the 'Islamisation' of Europe or a need to protect the common 'Christian heritage'. Further, it concerns arguments about 'sovereignty' and the protection of national independence because of its inherent or in other words its 'symbolic', political value⁵². The moral/multicultural-universalist frames, on the other hand, favor cultural openness and are related to a the more 'inclusive' types of identity. These frames advocate moral and universal civil rights, international solidarity and political rights such as democratic

⁴⁴ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow. "Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment." *Annual review of sociology* 26, no. 1 (2000): 614

⁴⁵ Helbling, Hoegliger, and Wüest, 'How Political Parties Frame European Integration' : 237

⁴⁶ Helbling, Hoegliger, and Wüest. 'How Political Parties Frame European Integration'.

⁴⁷ Entman, R.M. 'Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm' *Journal of Communication* 43(4) 1993: 52 in Helbling, Hoegliger & Wüest 'How Political Parties Frame European Integration': 498.

⁴⁸ McLaren, 2006; Hooghe and Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration'; Helbling, Hoegliger & Wüest, 'How political Parties Frame European Integration'; Edgar Grande et al., 'Framing Europe: Are Cultural-Identitarian Frames Driving Politicisation?', in *Politicising Europe: Integration and Mass Politics* (Ed. Swen Hutter, Edgar Grande and Hanspeter Kriesi) (Cambridge University Press, 2016)

⁴⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and application: Remarks on discourse ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1993; Helbling 2010: 499-500

⁵⁰ Grande et al. 'Framing Europe'

⁵¹ Helbling, Hoegliger, and Wüest, 'How Political Parties Frame European Integration'.

⁵² Helbling Hoegliger, and Wüest, 'How Political Parties Frame European Integration'.

participation beyond the nation.⁵³ Even though this thesis will focus on analyzing cultural frames, utilitarian frames will be shortly described to be able to make a clear distinction. Utilitarian frames or arguments are in general pragmatic, instrumental and goal-oriented⁵⁴. They can be economic, emphasizing social security or economic prosperity and look in other words at the costs/benefits of European integration.⁵⁵ However, they can also be non-economic, focusing on political effectiveness and efficiency. These can for example be used to emphasize benefits or costs of integration for security, peace and effective protection of the environment.⁵⁶

Selection of sources

In order to analyze how political parties identified with Europe, party manifestos for the European Parliament elections will be analyzed using the cultural frames described in the previous chapter. Even though the EP elections are largely regarded as ‘second-order elections’ and have a low turnout, the manifestos are one of the clearest expressions of the general visions and guidelines of the different parties regarding European integration. Further, as the documents are both widely available across-time and countries, they are useful for further research and comparison.⁵⁷ By using official party documents, it is possible to exclude possible influences of the media. Newspapers, for example, are in a sense secondary sources to party positions as journalists use frames themselves in their articles. Since the purpose of this thesis is to determine whether the image of the Dutch ‘pro-federalist’ position is accurate, only the mainstream parties will be analyzed: the CDA (Christian Democrats), PvdA (Labor Party), VVD (Conservative Liberals), D66 (Progressive Liberals). These four parties have all been part of the government during the chosen time frame and have participated in all four elections. Some of the smaller parties are excluded from the analysis due to reasons of space and the fact that not all of them have participated in all elections. Rather, they will be treated as contextual factors that possibly influence party positions. Instead of a quantitative frame analysis, the frame types will within this thesis mostly be used as referential points or ‘ideal-types’ in which arguments can be bound together.

⁵³ Grande et al. ‘Framing Europe’.

⁵⁴ Grande et al. ‘Framing Europe’.

⁵⁵ Hooghe & Marks ‘A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration’.

⁵⁶ Grande et al. ‘Framing Europe’.

⁵⁷ Dumitrescu, Delia and Sebastian Adrian Popa, ‘National but European? Visual Manifestations of Europe in National Parties’ Euromanifestos since 1979’, in *Party Politics* Vol 23 (2015) 5, 2.

Dutch political parties and European integration in context

Within this chapter, a brief overview of the context of both party positions and European integration in the early 1990s will be discussed. Due to reasons of space not everything is taken into account, rather the focus will lay on the identity-related context.

With the Treaty of the European Union in 1992, major steps towards European unification were taken, adding a more political dimension to the project. It introduced the legal category of European citizenship, which gave people rights to free movement and residence and to vote and stand as a candidate for the European elections. Other identity-related measures included the expansion of EU competences in the fields of education, youth and culture which have traditionally been related to community building in nation-states.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the plans for the implementation of a single currency in 1999 had a high symbolic value, as money has often been used as a tool to construct political identities and social boundaries.⁵⁹ As Council president at the time, the Dutch government had made up a proposal for an even more ambitious political union, but this was rejected by most member states.⁶⁰ This diplomatic fiasco and disappointment came to be known nationally as the ‘Black Monday’, the first of October 1991. After this day, the Dutch parliament became a little more cautious towards integration and the pro-European consensus would gradually start to break down during the following years. The first major party to explicitly criticize European integration was the Conservative Liberal Party, VVD. Its leader, Frits Bolkestein, was opposed to European integration on a federal basis and criticized the Dutch contribution to the EU budget. While he was, mirroring the liberal party position, in favor of economic cooperation he argued that there was a lack of European identity and community to sustain this form of political project, and predicted an increasing gap between mass and elite support.⁶¹ Finally, he re-introduced an explicit discourse of national interest to European policy debate.⁶² Earlier, only smaller parties had opposed the federalist-ideal such as the orthodox protestant party SGP. The green party (GroenLinks) initially had also been critical of European integration but shifted in the late 1990s towards a federalist position, similar to that of the progressive democrats (D66). The Christian Democratic party (CDA) had been in favor of a federal Europe, but its position gradually became a little more reserved during the

⁵⁸ Ian Bache, Simon Bulmer, Stephen George and Owen Parker. ‘Maastricht and Amsterdam (the late 1980s to the late 1990s)’ in *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, fourth edition, 2015, 154.

⁵⁹ Matthias Kaelberer, Matthias. "The Euro and European Identity: Symbols, Power and the Politics of European Monetary Union." *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004), 161.

⁶⁰ Harmsen, ‘The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse’, 320.

⁶¹ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 65.

⁶² Harmsen, ‘The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse’, 321

1990s. The preservation of national identity and the principle of subsidiarity became major factors in its position. Similarly, the labor party (PvdA) started to mention national identity and sovereignty in the 1994 domestic elections.⁶³ Most European Parliament elections had been marked by low public interest and voters turnouts. This changed in 2004, where the turnouts were significantly higher as the Dutch government had invested in a large public campaign. This did, however, not automatically lead to higher levels of identification with Europe amongst voters as 20% had voted on Eurosceptic parties.⁶⁴ The 2002 murder of populist and Eurosceptic party leader Pim Fortuyn, and the parties' popularity in national elections, influenced several mainstream parties to change their positions on Europe and placing more emphasis on the Dutch identity.⁶⁵ The 2004 elections were further marked by a large increase in – smaller – participating parties, of which several were highly critical of European integration. These developments led to a more dynamic political debate on Europe.⁶⁶

⁶³ Hans Vollaard and Gerrit Voerman 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke partijen', 132.

⁶⁴ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 89

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 92.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 102.

Cultural frames in party manifesto's

The 1989 elections: federalism and Europhilia

The 1989 elections were held in the prospects of the 1992 single market completion, but the campaign was, in the end, dominated by domestic issues as national elections were planned a few months later. Most parties were optimistic, as they hoped for a more extensive treaty in comparison to the limited supranational characteristics of the 1985 Single European Act.⁶⁷

The party programs for the elections generally reflected this federal ideal of Europe. The VVD and CDA, who both made use of the manifesto of its European fraction – respectively the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) and the European People's Party (EPP) – referred to federalism most explicitly. The vision the VVD had for Europe was that of a federal state, described in similar terms to the system of the United States. The CDA document referred to European unification as its 'historical mission' and stated to strive for the realization of a 'United States of Europe'.⁶⁸ D66 was also very positive about further political integration, but did not refer to a federal state. The PvdA was most cautious and pragmatic about further integration, as it spoke of increasing 'European cooperation' but only where it was necessary and would lead to more effectiveness. This federalist ideal, however, did not mean that the parties supported a totally supranational institution. Rather, emphasis was placed on decentralization⁶⁹ and the principle of subsidiarity.⁷⁰

Apart from utilitarian arguments, all of the parties predominantly made use of multicultural/universalist frames. For the parties D66 and VVD, this was in line with their liberalist background, as this included values of further democratization, open societies, freedom and equal, non-discriminatory rights. Even though the positions of the PvdA and the CDA were based on different ideologies, i.e. social- and Christian democratic, they highlighted similar values to the liberalists while slightly placing more emphasis on solidarity and (social) justice. Further, all parties believed it was important to stimulate or protect the rich cultural diversity within Europe while also acknowledging and developing a common cultural awareness. In this light, D66, CDA and PvdA, emphasized protecting the rights of cultural minorities. In order to stimulate and raise awareness for this common cultural heritage and rich

⁶⁷ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 53-54.

⁶⁸ CDA, and Europese Volkspartij, (1989) *In het hart van de Europese samenleving*, 3-4.

⁶⁹ D66, (1989) *Europees Verkiezingsprogramma 1989-1994*; VVD and ELDR, *Een Europa van vrije en bewuste burgers : Europees verkiezingsprogramma '89 van de Europese Liberaal-Democraten* (1989).

⁷⁰ CDA and Europese Volkspartij, *In het hart van de Europese samenleving*.

diversity, the four parties supported EU involvement in cultural policies – such as creating a common broadcast system and promoting exchanges of cultural goods – and education – stimulating mandatory classes in second languages and student exchanges. PvdA, CDA and VVD further included education in culture, history and politics of different member-states in this educational policy. The VVD further specifically referred to a European identity: *We want to raise awareness among Europeans, that we belong to a European cultural entity that reflects its moral, social and intellectual values. This will strengthen our common European identity*.⁷¹ They sought to achieve this by creating common symbols, such as a European driver's license, currency and constitution.⁷² Their aim to stimulate a sense of European community was further reflected by consistently using the term 'Europeans' in addressing its voters. The CDA also emphasized common symbols, such as a common driver's license, a European residence permit, and usage of the European anthem and flag – of which the latter should be frequently used by member-states including at the 1992 Olympics.⁷³ Within its campaign, on the other hand, the CDA placed more emphasis on the national element. As surveys had shown that people were insecure about the removal of internal borders, the CDA responded to this in their slogan 'Strong and united for the Netherlands in Europe' and its poster that showed both the EPP logo and the national flag.⁷⁴ D66 did not specifically refer to a European identity, but emphasized the need to raise democratic participation and involvement of citizens at the EU level. The PvdA, further, emphasized that integration should not lead to giving up national identities. Finally, all parties framed Europe as a 'civilian power', as it had a role in stimulating international peace and solidarity.

The 1994 elections: stirrings of dissent?

The 1994 elections were the first held after the official establishment of the European Union. At the time, the pro-European consensus was slightly starting to change due to criticism of VVD-Leader Bolkestein. Despite its leader, however, the VVD remained largely in favor of integration and supported the ELDR manifesto. While many aspects remained similar to the 1989 document, the new manifesto is less idealistic and explicitly 'federalist'. This is reflected by a shift to more pragmatic, utilitarian arguments relative to cultural frames. The identification

⁷¹ VVD and ELDR, *Een Europa van vrije en bewuste burgers*, 30.

⁷² VVD and ELDR, *Een Europa van vrije en bewuste burgers*, 3-4.

⁷³ CDA and Europese Volkspartij, *In het hart van de Europese samenleving*, 15.

⁷⁴ Appendix Figure 1.

⁷⁵ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 56.

with Europe remains multiculturalist, using frames of civic values and openness and they remain supportive of developments in cultural, educational and audiovisual policy. The more cautious and pragmatic tone is, however, reflected by the fact that the party now refers to ‘citizens’ or ‘citizens of member-states’, instead of ‘Europeans’.⁷⁶ Further, since 1994 the VVD refrained from using a special EP election poster, recycling its national election poster instead.⁷⁷

The CDA/EPP manifesto is also less explicitly referring to the EU as a federal state and places significantly more emphasis on utilitarian frames relative to the 1989 document. Even though cultural frames are less frequently used, the party still promotes an inclusive form of identification with Europe. They state for example to believe in the ‘unitary power of Christian values and European culture’⁷⁸, argue that cultural diversity is not incompatible with supporting measures that encourage a common cultural awareness,⁷⁹ and in fact that these different cultural traditions have enriched each other and together form the European culture.⁸⁰ What has changed, however, is that they do not specifically refer to common symbols but instead highlight the principle of subsidiarity and the role of ‘lower spheres of influence’ in the transfer of values and culture.⁸¹ Different from the 1989 campaign, the national flag was no longer displayed on the CDA poster.

Having joined the Party of European Socialists (PES) in 1992, the PvdA based its significantly shorter program on the first PES manifesto. While the frames used are still predominantly utilitarian, they slightly place more emphasis on the narrative of ‘European integration to overcome nationalism and war’, and the promotion of peace and human rights in international spheres. Another multicultural frame frequently used is their vision for a European community based on civic values want a true European community based on civic values in which cultural diversity is both strengthened and preserved.⁸²

Even though D66’s vision on European integration had not changed much in 1994, cultural frames are used less frequently relative to utilitarian arguments. The chapter on culture has been moved to the background, and places more emphasis on the protection of cultural diversity rather than common culture. Even though they explicitly refer to a multiculturalist,

⁷⁶ VVD and ELDR, *Bouwen aan het Europa van de burger : verkiezingsprogramma 1994 van de Europese Liberaal-Democraten*. (1994), 6 .

⁷⁷ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 60.

⁷⁸ CDA, and Europese Volkspartij, and EVP, (1993) *Europa 2000: eenheid in verscheidenheid : Actieprogramma 1994-1999 van de Europese Volkspartij*, point 525.

⁷⁹ CDA, Europese Volksparty and EVP, *Europa 2000*, point 628-642.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, point 631.

⁸¹ Ibidem, point 630.

⁸² PvdA, and PES, *Manifest voor de verkiezingen voor het Europees Parlement van juni 1994* (1994), 16.

inclusive European identity, their argumentation has become more defensive: ‘In our view, national and European identity do not exclude each other at all. The one is part of the other’.⁸³ They frequently state that further integration, in their vision, does not lead to uniformity.⁸⁴ Lastly, they emphasize the narrative of European integration as a peace-project, in contrast with the ‘evil’ nationalism of the 19th century – reacting to the situation in Yugoslavia.⁸⁵

The 1999 elections: towards the 21st century

Despite the consistently low turnouts for the European Parliament elections, most parties kept supporting European integration and signed the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. The CDA, PvdA and D66 were further in favor of a ‘European Constitution’, for which a framework had been set up by the European Parliament.⁸⁶

Next to the ELDR manifesto, both the VVD and D66 – who had joined the fraction after the 1994 elections – used additional programs in order to run separate campaigns. The ELDR manifesto is predominantly based on multiculturalist and utilitarian frames but also emphasizes the positive-sum relationship between national and European identities. It describes the importance of European citizenship and a shared sense of community, and impose that this has to be based on mostly civic or political conceptions of identity. ‘The growing European affinity of the citizen is not a substitute for state or national identity but a supplement to it. European citizenship contributes to a greater awareness of living within a political community under the rule of law, and underpins the concept of freedom of movement within the Union’.⁸⁷ Further, the European union is seen as a civilian actor in international settings, spreading human rights and liberal values. Next to this document, the VVD made up a short ‘ten-point plan’ whereas the D66 produced a larger manifesto. The ten point plan is significantly less positive on European integration than earlier manifestos. Mostly using utilitarian arguments to increase further integration – however, only when it is necessary for effectiveness and efficiency – it has a different tone from earlier manifestos. The only time a cultural frame is slightly is when they mention that immigration should be limited, however, this argument is more practical of nature than cultural. Further, they are in favour of European interests only in combination and in line with national interests.⁸⁸ In the D66 manifesto, the culture-related paragraph is also absent from

⁸³ D66, *D66 voor een duurzaam, democratisch en open Europa*, (1994), 6.

⁸⁴ D66, *D66 voor een duurzaam, democratisch en open Europa*, 6 and 29.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 5.

⁸⁶ Voerman and van der Walle, *Met Het Oog op Europa*, 77.

⁸⁷ ELDR, *Unity in Freedom: The Liberal Challenge for Europe* (1999), 3.

⁸⁸ VVD, *VVD-10 punten Europese verkiezingen 10 juni 1999* (1999), 1.

the manifesto. Further political integration is seen as desirable, and should again be based on political values and the acknowledgement of cultural diversity. Overall, utilitarian frames predominate in the document, significantly more than earlier elections. Further, they now state that while their ideal for Europe remains the same, they are now more ‘critical’.⁸⁹

The CDA had for the first time established its own program for the elections, even though it is still loosely based on the EPP program. Reacting to the new extremes on the left- and right flank, the party believes it is important to clearly position themselves, which is reflected by their usage of straight-forward language. They further emphasize that the traditional Christian-Democratic view on European integration has always been unambiguous and differs from others that ‘perceive Europe as a foreign country’.⁹⁰ In a specific paragraph called ‘respect for identity’, the cultural frames used are primarily nationalist:

*‘European integration should not threaten the religious, linguistic or cultural identity of citizens. On the contrary, the EU must take into account this individual character of culture and respect the cultural diversity in Europe in all its activities. The new challenges [...] ask for a European public dialogue on norms and values. This is why the Union respects and supports the role of organizations with a Christian or ideological identity’.*⁹¹

Their statements seem to reflect a multiculturalist position, as they perceive Europe as something domestic and are positive about cultural diversity. However, their argumentation is based more on a protective position than that of cultural openness and inclusiveness. This is reflected, again, in the paragraph on asylum which emphasizes the need to limit excessive immigration.⁹² The campaign poster, however, reflects a stronger identification with Europe as it is displaying the European flag.⁹³

The PvdA made use of both its own as the PES manifest. Within the PES document many cultural frames are used, relating to a multiculturalist identification based on universal values, the richness of- and tolerance towards cultural diversity, and the establishment of common (constitutional) rights.⁹⁴ While referring to the PES document, the PvdA program itself

⁸⁹ D66, *Het succes van Europa : D66 manifest voor de verkiezing van het Europees Parlement 1999-2004* (1999), 20.

⁹⁰ CDA, and Europese Volkspartij, and EVP, (1999) *Op weg naar de 21e eeuw : manifest van de Europese Volkspartij*, 1.

⁹¹ CDA, and Europese Volkspartij, and EVP *Op weg naar de 21e eeuw*, 3.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 6.

⁹³ Appendix figure 2.

⁹⁴ PES, *Programma voor de Europese verkiezingen van 1999* (1999), 2-3, 11, 12 and 14.

places more emphasis on utilitarian frames. The few cultural frames used in the document are similar to the PES position.

The 2004 elections: the rise of populism

Reflecting the wish of political parties to reach more voters during the 2004 elections, the party programs were more accessible as they were significantly shorter, made up out of more 'popular', public language and was directly addressing the Dutch voters.

Using the EPP manifesto again, the CDA profiled itself as a multiculturalist supporter of European integration. Cultural frames are more frequently used in comparison to both the 1994 and 1999 elections, and emphasis is placed on the inclusive character of a European identity. They explicitly mention that: 'the importance of culture in the development of a European identity has to be emphasized'.⁹⁵ This identity is, then, culturally based on the heritage of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the renaissance, the reformation and the Enlightenment.⁹⁶ Even though this emphasis on culture could lead to more exclusive, nationalist frames, the party specifically connects it to the more multicultural values of democracy, human rights, solidarity, freedom, tolerance and peace.⁹⁷ It is argued that it is important to remain loyal to the European ideal as it ensures the protection of these values and that of open societies. However, relative to earlier elections, the manifesto places more emphasis on the protection of the traditional cultural roots of the European nation-states.⁹⁸ The CDA campaign, however, placed more emphasis on national identity reflected in the campaign motto 'For an own place within Europe' and the national orange color on the background of its poster.⁹⁹

The ELDR election-program includes several multiculturalist frames. A vision for Europe is promoted of an open and non-discriminatory society, both internally and towards possible new member-states. Further, they refer to the universal liberal rights of citizens and respect for the diversity of cultures and languages in the European union.¹⁰⁰ While both the VVD and D66 supported this program, they used their own programs again to emphasize different views on integration. The VVD had become more sceptic towards integration and was, different from the ELDR, critical of enlargement and increasingly portraying Brussels as a

⁹⁵ Europese Volkspartij, and EVP, and CDA, (2004) *Actieprogramma van de Europese Volkspartij 2004-2009*.

⁹⁶ Europese Volkspartij, and EVP, and CDA, *Actieprogramma van de Europese Volkspartij 2004-2009*, 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, 40.

⁹⁹ Figure 3. Motto translated from Dutch: 'Voor een eigen plek in Europa'. Oog op Europa, 94.

¹⁰⁰ ELDR, *Visie van de ELDR voor Europa* (2003), 2.

problem.¹⁰¹ Their campaign slogan ‘In favor of Europe, but with limits’, reflected this more critical position.¹⁰² The manifesto, however, shows that this criticism was largely based on utilitarian arguments, as cultural frames were totally absent from the manifesto.¹⁰³ The D66 manifesto, in contrast, is emphasizing the (multiculturalist) cultural frames even more than in the previous elections. Different symbolic aspects of a European identity are mentioned, such as explicitly referring to ‘Unity in Diversity’, which had become the official EU motto in 2000.¹⁰⁴ Further they suggested that the 9th of May should become a national holiday, and referred to the narrative of European peace and prosperity against the historical ‘other’ of 19th century nationalism. D66 further reacts to the recent rise of Euroscepticism, by stating that although they are critical, they do not want to participate in the trend.¹⁰⁵ Other examples of multiculturalist frames in the document are arguments on the richness of different religions and cultures, the protection of human rights and liberal values, and ensuring the rule of law.

Unlike the earlier elections, the PvdA argued that it is important to differentiate itself from its European fraction. These differences are possibly emphasized in order to relate more closely to the Dutch voters. While frequently referring to the principle of subsidiarity, they are in favor of further political and social integration and support a common constitution. While utilitarian frames are still important, more emphasis is placed on cultural frames relative to earlier elections. Multiculturalist frames used include references to democratization and a European identity based on democracy, peace and stability. They further perceive this identity as inclusive or positive-sum to national identities: ‘When respect for one’s own national identity is linked to awareness of a common destiny for all Europeans, the citizens perceive themselves as both Dutch and European’.¹⁰⁶

The evolution of the Dutch party positions on European integration

Comparing the different party manifestos across time and parties, there are several important differences observable. The 1989 documents were marked by relatively many cultural frames in which the parties either explicitly referred to a European identity or to its symbols. Further, the CDA and VVD documents clearly revealed a federal vision for Europe. During the 1994 and 1999 elections, however, cultural frames shifted to the background in most manifestos, as the parties mainly based their position on utilitarian arguments. Interesting enough, within the

¹⁰¹ VVD, *Een liberaal Europa* (2004), 1.

¹⁰² Translated from Dutch: ‘Voor Europa, maar er zijn grenzen’ Oog op Europa P. 95

¹⁰³ VVD, *Een liberaal Europa* (2004), 1.

¹⁰⁴ D66, *Een succesvol Europa* (2004), 2.

¹⁰⁵ D66, *Een succesvol Europa*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ PvdA, *Een sterk en sociaal Europa* (2004), 2-3.

CDA manifesto of 1999 cultural frames returned, while relative to other years the other parties made the least use of identity-related arguments. In 2004, however, in documents of three out of the four parties, cultural frames have reclaimed their prominent role. In some cases these frames are even emphasized more relative to the 1989 elections and in comparison to utilitarian frames. The VVD, however, had gradually shifted from one of the most Europhile parties to a more pragmatic and critical position, which was also reflected by a decrease in the use of cultural frames. Important to note is that this critical position was not based on a turn to a more 'nationalist' identification, but was rather justified by the utilitarian arguments of perceived costs and benefits. When the party documents of the D66 and VVD are compared to the ELDR programs, it further becomes clear that both parties emphasize different aspects of the European manifesto. Where D66 focuses on the multicultural position, based on liberal values, the VVD highlights economic benefits of integration and relies on more utilitarian arguments. Another interesting position is that of the CDA. Out of the four parties, the Christian democratic party emphasizes the cultural aspects of integration the most. While in the manifesto's they promote a multiculturalist, inclusive identification with Europe, the campaigns of 1989 and 2004 highlight the national aspect more. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that in most elections, the party only used the manifesto of its European fraction, but also by their emphasis on subsidiarity and protection of national cultures. Even though the PvdA had been one of the parties that had pushed the extensive supranational proposal for the 1992 treaty¹⁰⁷, the 1989 manifesto indicates a more pragmatic vision towards European integration. Relative to other parties, the parties' first three documents were marked by significantly less cultural frames. The return of identity-related arguments during the 2004 elections further could be related to the growing populism at the time. In earlier years, opposition to integration was either primarily based on utilitarian arguments, such as the SP, or remained limited to the smaller parties, for example the SGP. With the quick rise of the LPF, however, opposition to the EU was increasingly framed in cultural terms. Arguments relating to the protection of national identity were for example used, which tapped into public sentiment at the time.¹⁰⁸ This led in some of the mainstream parties to become more defensive about their European ideal, or in the case of the more critical VVD to shift to more pragmatic argumentation.

The analysis of party manifestos, focusing on cultural, identity-relating frames thus reveals a more complex image of the Dutch party positions. By analyzing media discourse, for example, Harmsen found that the VVD position had changed in the 1990s based on the

¹⁰⁷ Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke Partijen', 131.

¹⁰⁸ Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke Partijen', 168.

criticisms of Bolkestein.¹⁰⁹ The party manifesto's, however, reveal that the party did not immediately follow its leader, as its position only gradually shifted to more pragmatic, but only in 2004 their position really became more critical. The cultural-frames based analysis, further, also leads to a different image of party positions in comparison to studies on the voting behavior. During the 1990s, the four parties have for example voted in favor of all treaties, which included the Maastricht treaty in 1992, the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 and the Treaty of Nice in 2000.¹¹⁰ Further, all four parties had campaigned in favor of the European constitution. In this case, it thus seems that all parties had been very supportive on European integration.

¹⁰⁹ Harmsen, 'The Evolution of Dutch European Discourse', 321.

¹¹⁰ Vollaard and Voerman, 'De Europese opstelling van Nederlandse politieke Partijen', 175.

Conclusion

Within this thesis, it is argued that the image of the Dutch political parties' federalist and Europhile position during the 1990s is more complex than what international media and studies on party behavior suggest. First it is argued why it is important to look at frames of justification instead of media discourses or voting behavior. As voting behavior suggests that the parties were very supportive of further integration, studies on discourse reveal that there had been a critical turn during the 1990s. The analysis of party manifestos as has been done in this thesis, however, reveals a different, more complex image. During the 1989 elections, the four parties could be described as highly federalist, making use of many cultural frames and strongly identifying with Europe. However, the positions of the parties during the 1994 and 1999 elections could better be described as pragmatic, as they predominantly made use of utilitarian frames. The critical turn, as described by studies on discourse, is also not as unambiguous as in 2004 the PvdA, D66 and CDA positioned themselves as Europhile again, and strongly referred to their identification with Europe.

Within the thesis, party manifestos are chosen as sources as they express the vision and general policy guidelines of the parties. Further, they are widely available across the time period and across countries, which makes them particularly useful for further studies and comparison. However, for further research it might be interesting to compare these findings to the Dutch public opinion, both relating to the influence of party positions on the citizens and of this public sentiments on the party positions. Because of the fact that there are not many studies available on Dutch political parties positions on European integration, it is not possible to cover everything. For example it might be interesting to compare the findings of this thesis to the positions during the national elections or to media coverage of European issues in the time period. It is further argued that a focus on identification and cultural frames can help to indicate whether the justification for European integration is more related to reasons of affection or to a pragmatic position. Since the 1990s, the topic of identity has become more important in the study of European integration. While the European Union sought to legitimize its growing political power by promoting a sense of European identity, Eurosceptic parties mobilized national identities to oppose further integration. The construction of a European identity should first and foremost be seen as a political project, related to an ideal of a strong, supranational European order. In order to justify political integration on a federal basis, it has thus been argued that Europhile parties promoted identification with Europe. As the concept of European identity is rarely studied by historians, the thesis necessarily relays on theoretical approaches of other disciplines. This is mainly due to the interdisciplinary character of both European integration

studies and the concept of identity. As has been shown, a qualitative historical analysis of European identification in primary sources can contribute to a better understanding of party positioning. Even though historians are reluctant to study the concept of identity, more historical research is needed, and this thesis has been a contribution to its start.

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Appendix



Figure 1. CDA poster 1989.



Figure 2. CDA poster 1999.



Figure 3. CDA poster 2004.



Figure 4. D66 poster 1994.



Figure 5. VVD poster 2004.