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History education and students' construction of meaning regarding Europe

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Master Thesis History of Society
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Illustration on cover: ‘Rape of Europa’ (1562) by Titian.

Oil on canvas.

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Preface

The foundation of this thesis was laid on the other side of the world. In 2003, I participated in an exchange-program in Sydney, Australia. It was the first time I left Europe. Up until then, I never really thought of myself as being European. However, it soon became clear my fellow Australian and American students did look upon me that way. Suddenly, and much to my surprise, I was not primarily considered as Dutch. Rather, many Australians seemed to think of me as a European, who, as it happened, was from the European country of The Netherlands.

Paradoxically, as a result of this ascribed identity, I in fact gradually started to feel European. The simple fact that other people regarded me as a European aroused a certain European sentiment in me.

This set me thinking: why did many people from outside of Europe apparently look upon us as Europeans, whereas us 'Europeans' did not seem to think of ourselves likewise? The search for an answer to this question led me through several minor investigations within the framework of my academic studies to an internship and a job at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and eventually ended in this thesis, which sheds some light on the issue.

This would not have been possible without the limitless help and supervision provided by prof. dr. Maria Grever. Her thorough knowledge and experience, her willingness to enter into many discussions about the set-up and contents of my research and her ever quick responses to new versions of my thesis proved to have been indispensable in successfully finishing this thesis.

I would also like to thank Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, who coached me throughout my internship at EUROCLIO, which constituted part of the writing-process of this thesis. Moreover, her instructions and help as co-reader contributed to the overall improvement of this thesis in important ways.

Furthermore, I owe my parents my deepest gratitude for encouraging me to get the best out of myself, for shaping the conditions I needed to get this far, as well as for their unconditional support down the road that led to my graduation.

Lastly, I would like to thank Justus, who endured stress and excitement, laughter and tears, who kept believing in me and shared many a sleepless night…

Suzanne de Visser
The Hague, August 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
I am large, I contain multitudes.[1]

It all started with the abduction of an Asian princess by Zeus, father of all Greek gods, ruler of heaven and earth. According to Greek mythology, the ancient deity fell in love with Europe, daughter of a Phoenician king. When Europe was playing along the beach with her friends, Zeus treacherously disguised himself as a white, playful bull. The girls started to pet the God in disguise, and Europe jumped on his back. This was the moment Zeus had been waiting for: with the girl on his back, he ran into the sea and started swimming, aiming for Crete. After a rough journey, the abducted princess Europe arrived at the continent that from then on would bare her name.

Nowadays, the concept of Europe has different meanings to different people. Ever since the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) of six states in 1958, European countries have increasingly become interconnected. In an attempt to serve the economic and commercial interests of separate nation-states via the creation of a common market, the initiative gradually developed into a European Union of 27 states, whereas several other countries are eagerly waiting to join.

The current Union is characterised by a single market, one currency, and high levels of integration, which – besides the realm of economics – have been extended to politics and decision-making. Many European governments seem to have complied themselves with the idea of one Europe.

Nevertheless, the question remains to what extent the inhabitants of Europe have done likewise. Popular support for European integration was abundant when

[1] W. Whitman, 'Song of myself'.

the project of European integration commenced during the late 1940s. With the horrific events of World War II freshly in mind, the idea of 'no more war' by means of intra-European cooperation strongly appealed to many western-Europeans. Taking this initial popular legitimacy for granted, the sentiments of the population seemed to have been of minor importance and influence for a long period of time.

However, the events characterising the rejection of the European constitution within the countries of France and The Netherlands in 2005, marked a watershed of crucial importance in this conception. Suddenly, the people's outlook proved to be of overriding importance as far as the effective performance of the Union was concerned. Moreover, the outcomes of the referenda with their successive aftermaths clearly revealed that 'unofficial', mentally perceived integration strongly fell behind 'official', economic and political integration.

Additionally, as of the late 1980's a process emerged in which the subject of history gained increasing governmental attention in many European countries. History and historical culture seem to have gained importance ever since.

Several authors point to the fear of a deteriorating national identity due to processes of globalisation and regional integration in explaining this phenomenon.[2] Within this train of thought, it is implicitly assumed that increasing historical knowledge of the nation will create more social cohesion within society. Moreover, knowledge of history might help people to understand the impact they have in shaping the world they are coming to know.[3] Lastly, the assumption that historical knowledge could be of instrumental use in creating a certain amount of mutual understanding amongst different groups within society[4] convinced many of the importance of historical knowledge and understanding within present-day society.

Ever since the late 1960s, the practice of politicising history education seemed to have become a rather rare phenomenon in many western-European countries. However, with the increasing prevalence of considerations such as

[2] M. Grever en K. Ribbens, 'De historische canon onder de loep', 4. See also M. Grever, E. Jonker, K. Ribbens and S. Stuurman, *Controverses rond de canon*.
[3] P. Seixas, 'Historical understanding among adolescents in a multicultural setting', 322.
[4] R. Phillips, 'Government policies, the state and the teaching of history', 10.

described above, the teaching of history gradually once again became subject to government policies. Simultaneously, history education has increasingly been debated by a diversity of pressure groups with different interests.

In engaging in these activities, both governments and pressure groups presuppose that history education is of considerable influence on people's perceptions of the world. Nevertheless, the exact weight history education carries in this respect has hardly properly been researched as yet. Consequently, little is known about how and to what extent history education influences students' outlook towards the world.[5]

1.1 Subject and research questions

The historical background of this thesis is rooted in the increasing awareness of the importance of people's outlook towards Europe, as well as the expanding emphasis on history education. Within this thesis, I will operate at the intersection of these processes. In doing so, I will explore the possible connection between history education and student's outlook towards Europe. For this purpose, students' construction of meaning with regard to Europe will be investigated within the context of history education at secondary schools within The Netherlands.

The Netherlands traditionally represented the supportive side of the continuum as far as European unification was concerned. The German occupation during World War II resulted in a widely held conviction of the necessity of 'no more war'. Consequently, Dutch people seemed to be largely in favor of European unification and were even willing to make certain sacrifices within this context. However, the rejection of the European constitution by referendum in June 2005 indicated the existing restraints of Dutch solidarity towards Europe.

The aim of this thesis is primarily to increase scientific knowledge on the interrelation between history education and students' construction of meaning. Since little is known about how and to what extent history education influences students' outlooks towards the world, this thesis can function as pilot-study to

[5] P. Klep, 'Persoonlijke omgang met het verleden. Tot slot', 97.

investigate this relationship. Moreover, this thesis aims at increasing knowledge on students' outlooks towards the concept of Europe. Furthermore, specific recommendations will be distilled from the results of this investigation, which might be of use in conducting government policy regarding history education.

More specifically, I will investigate the interrelation between history education at secondary schools and the particular ways in which this subject enables Dutch students in their penultimate years of pre-university education to assign a certain meaning to the concept of Europe. My research question will be of instrumental use in increasing knowledge on these issues: *How does history education contribute to students' construction of meaning with regard to Europe and how can this be explained?*

In order to formulate an answer to my research question, my thesis will consist of both theoretical reflections and empirical data. Within the framework of theory and historiography, I will identify two key-issues. The first refers to *history education*:

1. What are the main topics in the contemporary debate on history education among historians?
2. What part does history education play in students' construction of meaning?

Secondly, *Europe and European history* will be amplified:

3. How could the concepts of Europe and European history be defined?
4. How does the European frame of reference influence other frameworks, particularly that of the nation?

The empirical part of the thesis will be made up of three sets of sub questions, which reflect the three crucial issues my research question consists of. The first issue deals with *students' construction of meaning regarding Europe*:

5. What meaning do students assign to Europe?
6. How can this be explained?

The second issue deals with *the concept of Europe within the context of history education*:

7. What have been the contents of students' history classes at secondary school when it comes to Europe?

8. What did students pick up in their history classes at secondary school as far as Europe is concerned?

The third issue is about *the specific part history education plays in students' construction of meaning regarding Europe*. This will be investigated by means of three sub questions:

9. To what extent are the outcomes of both preceding sub questions consistent, and how can this be explained?
10. To what extent are students' constructions of meaning regarding Europe in line with what they learned about Europe in their history-classes at secondary school?
11. How can this be explained?

1.2 Towards an inclusive understanding of Europe

When discussing the specific meaning students assign to Europe, many will implicitly assume the concept of Europe equals the organisational framework of the European Union. Illustratively, I did likewise in the preceding sections. This is neither surprising, nor remarkable: for most people – either living within or outside of Europe – the EU is the most prominent expression of present-day Europe. Moreover, many people are confronted with the EU in several aspects of their lives on quite a regular basis.

However, upon closer consideration, the concept of Europe turns out to refer to much more than merely the economic and political cooperation of some countries in a more or less institutionalised manner. Europe, first of all, represents a geographical unit. A distinct, self-reflective idea of a Europe with a history and meaning of its own only emerged with the French Revolution. Before that, from the time of the ancient Greeks on, the term had merely been utilised as a geographical concept.[6]

Nevertheless, Europe represents more than a mere geographical expression. The concept holds a cultural element as well, which refers to the idea that the

[6] P. den Boer, 'Europe to 1914: the making of an idea', 13.

inhabitants of geographical Europe are part of a single shared culture. Within this context, Europe is a matter of both rationality – an intentionally established cultural unity - and mentality and feelings. Related to the cultural elements of Europe is its historical dimension. It is widely being assumed that there is something unique and shared about Europe's history. The events and ideas in its past are furthermore assumed to be still affecting our ideas and attitudes today.[7]

Lastly, the concept of Europe refers to politics, as the existence of the European Union indicates. However, even in this respect, Europe should not be confined to the EU, which merely refers to the latest manifestation of a European integrative project. European history contains several examples of other initiatives to integrate European politics, such as Charles the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and even Adolf Hitler attempting to establish supra-national units within geographical Europe.

Within this thesis, the concept of Europe should not merely be understood in its limited sense of the European Union. Rather, the concept will be discussed in all of its aspects. When asking students to enunciate their visions towards Europe, I will use a broad, inclusive and all-embracing definition of the concept.

1.3 Sources and design of the thesis

As far as the theoretical part of my thesis is concerned, I will use existing secondary literature. Within the framework of the empirical part, several sources of information will be applied.

In order to investigate students' construction of meaning regarding Europe, I will use both surveys and interviews. Prof. dr. Grever and dr. Ribbens kindly offered me to use their *History* questionnaire[8], which was handed to 670 students at several secondary schools within the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France. Within the framework of this thesis, the questionnaires distributed within The Netherlands will be used. This questionnaire contains several questions concerning the importance students assign to Europe. The answers to these questions will be

[7] J. Slater, *Teaching history in the new Europe,* 7.
[8] See: M. Grever and K. Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden.*

statistically analysed using SPSS. Additionally, a number of students in their penultimate years of the highest levels of secondary school will be selected from this population for in-debt interviews. Furthermore, in order to gather direct and specific information on the ways in which students perceive Europe, a second interview, of which Europe will be the mere essence, will be initiated amongst students in their penultimate year of pre-university education.

Secondly, students' schoolbooks used at the selected schools will be examined to determine the amount and contents of European history within the curriculum. However, within The Netherlands, textbooks often serve simply as background material. They might not even be used during lessons at all. Books are certainly not always gone through systematically.[9] Schoolbooks as the sole source of information about the amount and contents of European history will therefore not draw a complete picture.

To complement the schoolbook-data, teachers' outlooks will be investigated. For this purpose, I will analyse the EUROCLIO questionnaire *Using historical skills and concepts to promote an awareness of European citizenship*.[10] Furthermore, I will interview a history teacher in order to gather supplementary data.

Secondary data will be dealt with in chapters two and three, each of which will refer to one of the main variables my research question consists of. Within chapter two, I will examine theory and historiography of history education. Both historians and experts in the field of didactics have intensely debated the subject of history education. A wide variety of topics have been reviewed as part of this debate, such as whether or not emphasis within history education should be upon knowledge or skills, upon chronology or themes or upon fragments or canons. Within the framework of this thesis, it will particularly be useful to expound the debate on history education as a tool of meaning construction. In order to outline the contents

[9] F. Pingel (et. all.), *The European home: representations of 20th century Europe in history textbooks,* 26.
[10] The questionnaire in included in appendix 4.

of this specific debate, I will contrast the views of several historians towards this matter.

However, in order to come to a balanced judgement towards the possible stances resulting from this debate, one should acquire knowledge about how and to what extent history education *actually* influences students' construction of meaning, even though this is very complicated. If history education proves to be of no significant influence when it comes to meaning-construction, any debate concerning this matter would prove to be rather hollow. Despite the lack of coherent theories concerning this topic, I will therefore outline the (often fragmented) visions of several historians.

Within the framework of this thesis, it is furthermore essential to accurately lay down a clear-cut definition of what is meant when referring to the concept of Europe. In order to ensure all students refer to the same kind of conception when talking about Europe – in other words: to help clarifying what is being measured when interviewing students – a definition of what Europe entails should be formulated and put forward beforehand. In order to come up with such a definition, chapter three will be dedicated to exploring the concept of Europe in its various manifestations. As indicated above, I will aim at establishing a broad, inclusive and all-embracing definition of the concept.

Chapters four and five will represent the empirical part of this thesis. Chapter four will deal with students' construction of meaning regarding Europe. It will explore what Europe means to Dutch students in their penultimate years of secondary school and will investigate how these students construct a certain meaning towards the concept. Furthermore, it will aim at explaining why students assign a specific meaning to the concept of Europe.

Chapter five will be dedicated to the European representation within the framework of history education. It will result in an overview of how Europe is represented within the framework of history education.

Within chapter six, this European representation will be compared to the meaning students assign to Europe in order to decide upon the specific part history

education plays in students' construction of meaning regarding Europe. Furthermore, this chapter will aim at explaining this relationship.

Chapter seven will contain the conclusions of this thesis. Within this chapter, I will formulate an answer to the research question, based upon the results as substantiated in the preceding chapters. Additionally, specific recommendations, deriving from this answer, will be set forth. These might be of use in conducting government policy regarding history education.

1.4 Methodological account

The issues of research to be attended within the framework of this thesis are relatively new. Little well-founded knowledge is available about the ways in which history education influences processes of meaning-construction. Furthermore, people's perceptions of Europe seem to only have become of significant importance after the events characterizing the rise and fall of the European constitution in 2005. No systemised knowledge and theory concerning the research-issues are available as yet. This study should therefore be conceived of as a scientific exploration, aiming at generating coherent knowledge and theory.

Explorative investigations often prove to be most effectively conducted by means of qualitative research methods. A theory-to-be should at any times be strongly embedded in everyday practice, whilst carrying out research in everyday situations is one of the basic characteristics of qualitative research. At the same time, qualitative research particularly applies to getting at people's perceptions and processes of meaning-construction: the accompanying methods tend to stimulate respondents to actively elaborate on certain issues, in order to formulate their perspectives and situation-definitions.[11] Moreover, this study will consider qualitative elements, such as the nature and characteristics of the phenomena to be investigated, rather than quantities like amounts, volumes and frequencies. My research question therefore directs me to employ qualitative research methods.

[11] D.M. Baarda, M.P.M. de Goede and J. Teunissen, *Kwalitatief onderzoek*, 17-21.

In order to safeguard the validity and reliability of the investigation, I will apply data-triangulation. My main source of information will be the topic interview, which represents a tested method to get at ideas, outlooks, and opinions of the persons concerned.[12] Two interviews with students will be complemented with questionnaires and schoolbooks. The reliability of the data will be increased by means of plural measuring. For this purpose, students will be asked several questions, all of which will be related to the same issue or concept.

The selection of research objects involves several strategic choices. With regard to the location and schools, Prof. dr. Grever and dr. Ribbens selected several schools within the city of Rotterdam. For reasons of convenience, I followed their lead and will consider these choices as given. The students to be interviewed will be selected by their teachers. My abilities to exert influence on this selection-process will therefore be limited, although I will lay down some criteria. These will be based upon theoretical considerations: I would like to interview students with varied capacities when it comes to history as a school subject; students of both native and foreign origin; both boys and girls. This way, I will indirectly make a directed sample, based upon theory-indicated selection. Previous experience demonstrates the advantageous conditions this method of selection involves when it comes to explorative research. Moreover, such a reasoned sample based upon maximum deviation will safeguard the possibilities to generalize the results to a certain extent.[13] Nevertheless, this method does involve a methodological problem: I am not sure of the total width of deviation to which students might differ.[14] This could affect the validity of the results: I might not have excluded all interfering variables.

By limiting the research-population to students from a major city and its surrounding areas, my opportunities for generalizing the results of this investigation will be limited. Students from the countryside might have radically different perspectives. Selecting students in their penultimate years at the highest level of secondary school will extend this limitation, as well as the limited number of

[12] Baarda, de Goede and Teunissen, *Kwalitatief onderzoek*, 94.
[13] Idem, 75-77.
[14] Idem, 77.

students I will interview. Moreover, their teachers, who will expectedly select a particular, quite assertive and talkative, type of student, will select the students. Consequently, due to this selectivity, my research question can merely be answered within the scope of certain students in their penultimate years of secondary schools in Rotterdam and its vicinity.

It should be noted however, that neither satiation of content, nor statistical generalization are objectives of this research. This investigation is merely intended to give the initial impetus to an exploration of the research problem, all the more since I will restrict myself to a synchronic – though integral and holistic – approach. The scope of this investigation will therefore both be limited to a certain group of students, being taught history by certain methods, as well as to a certain point in time. Consequently, this research can function as a pilot study, whilst the results of this research should be conceived of as a random indication. Additional research will be necessary in order to substantiate the outcomes.

2. THEORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF HISTORY EDUCATION

If wealth is lost, nothing is lost
If health is lost, something is lost
If character is lost, much is lost
If history is lost, you are lost[15]

In the course of the nineteenth century, the school subject of history was introduced to primary schools all over Western Europe. This achievement was a combined result of national governments establishing increasing control over society at large, and, more importantly, the crowning glory of the process of nation-state building, which had started in the late eighteenth century in France, and then rapidly spread all over Western Europe.

History education, as a consequence, was being deployed as a means of making children aware of their nation and its glory and achievements in the past, which would continue on into the present and future. As such, the subject of history was supposed to arouse a sense of love, pride and obedience to ones country, in order to secure the continuity of the nation-state: history education brought up to patriotism and nationalism.[16]

However, the events characterizing both World Wars revealed the disruptive character of certain manifestations of nationalism, which many believed to have been caused by history education to at least a certain extent.[17] As a result, the patriotic character of the subject was rejected and replaced by the more moderate goals of general training and cultural transference. During the first decennia after the end of World War II, history in most parts of Western Europe proved to be a natural subject, of which the instrumental goals were largely undisputed.[18]

[15] Sikh-saying in D. Lowenthal, *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*, 5.
[16] M. Grever, 'Opvattingen en misvattingen over het geschiedenisonderwijs', 31.
[17] P. den Boer, 'Geschiedenis op school en aan de universiteit', 97.
[18] L. Dorsman, E. Jonker and K. Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur. Geschiedenis in Nederland*, 114.

In many countries, this status quo gradually changed in the early 1960s. As of these years, history education became subject to various intense debates and consequential changes. The contents of these debates within The Netherlands will be outlined in the next section of this chapter, whilst providing an overview of recent developments concerning history education in the country.

2.1 History education: a much-debated topic

Within The Netherlands, a sense of crisis concerning history education crystallized into the endangering of history as a school subject in the 1960s. Up until then, the contents of history education mainly focused on the time frame until the French Revolution, ending the curriculum in 1789. This occupation with pre-modern society led people to question the present use of the subject. It was widely being suggested that history ought to be replaced by the subject of social studies or civics, which would enable students to prepare themselves for their future positions in society in ways that history education – which devoted hardly any attention to modern times – could not.[19] Socially, the subject was increasingly being degraded, and the implementation of the so-called 'Mammoetwet', proved to be a major setback: history was turned into an elective, thereby no longer being compulsory during the last years of secondary school.[20]

In an attempt to revitalise the subject, history education was then being transformed according to the semi-concentric method, in which pre-modern times became the subject-focus during the first three years of secondary education, whereas contemporary history was introduced to the later years. Additionally, historical themes were emphasized at the expense of chronology. [21] As a result, the first outbreak of a continuous debate on themes versus chronology emerged, in which proponents of the new method argued that a thematic approach would make the subject of history more interesting and useful, whereas their opponents feared a lack of historical overview amongst students.

[19] Dorsman, Jonker and Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur,* 116.
[20] Grever, 'Opvattingen en misvattingen over het geschiedenisonderwijs', 29.
[21] Dorsman, Jonker, and Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur*, 116.

Simultaneously, history-teachers massively resorted to emphasising the importance of historical skills in defending their subject's right to exist. This brought about an intense debate on whether or not history education should focus upon teaching knowledge, which might be less stimulating and of limited relevance, as opposed to skills, which comes at the expense of historical knowledge and produces students who know little about what actually happened the past.[22] Illustratively, the didacticians Leo Dalhuisen and Joop Toebes, who, together with Doky Verhagen, co-authored the influential reference book *Geschiedenis op school,* increasingly started to oppose each other in their views on the relative importance of historical knowledge compared to historical skills. Dalhuisen emphasised the importance of skills, whereas Toebes increasingly oriented towards knowledge.[23]

In the early 1980s a compulsory – centrally issued – written history exam was introduced to the final years of secondary education. This event regenerated the existing controversy on a thematic versus chronological approach concerning history education: should the compulsory curriculum address the subject matter in a thematic or chronological fashion? This issue provoked a storm of controversy, intense debate and even flaming rows.[24] History teachers' dissatisfaction with the contents of the centrally issued exams rose to unprecedented levels.[25]

In the mean time, an important movement of professional academic historians worked towards the broadening of their discipline by emphasizing themes as opposed to chronology within the framework of their research and lectures.[26] As a partial result of this process, the debate tipped the scales slightly in favour of the thematic approach: final exams since 1990 contain subject-specific skills, such as being able to distinguish between historical facts and prejudices, as well as between continuity and change, and making well-argued choices. [27]

[22] Den Boer, 'Geschiedenis op school en aan de universiteit', 98.
[23] M. Grever, 'Nationale identiteit en historisch besef. De risico's van een canon in de postmoderne samenleving', 169.
[24] Grever, 'Opvattingen en misvattingen over het geschiedenisonderwijs', 32, 33.
[25] J. van der Leeuw-Roord, 'De weg van de WIEG, 1989-1998', 5.
[26] Dorsman, Jonker and Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur*, 118.
[27] Grever, 'Opvattingen en misvattingen over het geschiedenisonderwijs', 33.

Additionally, as of the 1990s a process emerged in which the subject of history education gained increasing governmental attention. Due to the fear of a deteriorating national identity as a result of increasing European integration and globalisation, governmental interest in national history was growing. The resulting call for more national history in the school-curriculum was not confined to politicians however. Several journalists and professional historians shared politicians' view that children's historical knowledge concerning the nation-state was miserable. These views were channelled into the idea of a national canon, which could serve as a prescribed guideline specifying what students should know about history.[28] However, the contents and design of this canon proved to be food for heated discussions and intense debate, which continue ever since.

Several politicians, intellectuals and academic historians aim at transforming the curriculum into a nostalgic historical canon, consisting mainly of national history. This way, the canon could be used as a binding, uniform-making means of cultural transmission. Within this context, the Dutch historian Els Kloek wonders: *'When did Dutch teachers stop conceiving of Dutch national history as the core of their history classes?'*[29] Kloek aims at redrawing attention to 'the classics' of national Dutch history.[30] Similarly, Jos Palm argues in favour of introducing a *'useable past (...), which reminds us of those qualities that characterised The Netherlands for a long time.'*[31] According to Palm, the specific characteristics of Dutch national history should be clarified.[32]

Others, amongst whom Grever and Ribbens, have contended the initial patriotic goals of history education do not satisfy the demands of the new millennium. Furthermore, historical theory and practice have outdated the Euro-centric approach, which is implied in a nostalgic national canon.[33] Additionally,

[28] A. Wilschut (ed), *Zinvol, leerbaar, haalbaar. Over geschiedenisonderwijs en de rol van een canon daarin*, 7.
[29] E. Kloek (red), *Verzameld verleden. Veertig gedenkwaardige momenten en figuren uit de vaderlandse geschiedenis*, 6.
[30] Idem, 7.
[31] J. Palm, *De vergeten geschiedenis van Nederland. Waarom Nederlanders hun verleden zouden moeten kennen*, 7.
[32] Idem, 7.
[33] M. Grever en K. Ribbens, 'De historische canon onder de loep', 2-7.

historians like Stuurman have rejected the idea of reducing history education to a predominantly national discourse, whilst emphasising the desirability of a world-historical perspective.[34]

Amidst this debate in professional circles, the Dutch government seems to establish an increasing grip on the subject of history education. Illustratively, on 3 July 2007, the Minister of Education decided to make the Dutch history canon as set up by the Van Oostrom-committee,[35] compulsory within the framework of history education.[36] As a result, fifty predefined topics concerning Dutch national history soon will be taught to all Dutch students.

In increasingly regaining control over history education, the national government aims at using history education as an instrument to strengthen national awareness. This practice of purposely deploying history education as a means of student construction of meaning and identity-formation caused another debate, which will be the focus of the next section.

2.2 Moulding identity using history education?

The recent practice of deliberately instrumentalising history education for purposes of meaning-construction and identity-formation within The Netherlands remarkably did not seem to start feelings running particularly high amongst academic historians. As far as I know, the practice has not been under heated historical discussion lately.

Nevertheless, in the course of the twentieth century, some academics did comment on the instrumentalisation of history education, though often in a slightly brief and casual fashion. This section will contrast the views of several authors concerning this matter, thereby reflecting the contents of this particular historiographical debate.

In 1986, Juergen Kocka was one of the first historians to examine the instrumentalisation of history education. In his work *Socialgeschichte,* he

[34] S. Stuurman, 'Een wereldhistorisch perspectief', 36.
[35] H. Sings, *Entoen.nu. De Canon van Nederland.* See also: www.entoen.nu
[36] M. Grever, 'Politici, misbruik de canon niet'.

investigates if, and under which circumstances, history education could be deployed as a means of meaning-construction. According to Kocka, using history education for purposes of meaning-construction and identity-formation is not necessarily problematic, as long as three successive preconditions are kept in mind. First of all, identity-formation should never be the sole purpose of history education. History education, as a consequence, should not be reduced to mere instrumentalisation and politisation. Secondly, identification should never equal mere integration into a fixed and static situation. Identity should be presented as a flexible process, stressing its changeable character, whilst applying a certain amount of self-distance at any time. History education therefore could be used as a means of identity-formation, when identity-formation includes reflected consideration, involves choice and distance, leaves room for continuous change, safeguards both the opportunity for critique and solidarity, and prevents students from one-dimensionally adapting to societal pressure and change. Lastly, when deliberately influencing student identity, history education should avoid manipulation and habituation, and propagate reflection and critical control.[37]

In 1989, Hans Ulrich Wehler provided an important impetus to the highly budding debate by extending the discussion from investigating whether or not history education *could* be deployed as a means of meaning-construction and identity-formation, to discussing whether or not history education *should* be used for these purposes. Wehler starts his argument by emphasising that education in general inevitably contributes to certain feelings of identity by means of the secondary socialisation of young people. However, history as a discipline should not intentionally exert influence upon people's identity, for there is only a thin line between this practice and its dangerous counterparts of brainwashing and propaganda.[38]

History education could however provide students with a means of orientation. It could point out human capabilities and limits, it could provide people with skills necessary to make balanced judgements, and finally, it could teach people

[37] J. Kocka, *Socialgeschichte. Begriff – Entwicklung – Probleme*, 129,130.
[38] H.U. Wehler, 'Geschichtswissenschaft: Afklarung oder Sinnstiftung?', 134.

how to substantiate necessary norms and values. When effectively deploying history education in these ways, it will help prevent brainwashing and propaganda from occurring.[39]

As a result, although Wehler condemns the practice of deliberately deploying history education as a means of identity-formation, he in fact does make a plea for using history education as a tool of meaning-construction. History education should help students to construct a certain sustainable meaning to the world they are living in, in order to arm them against propaganda and brainwashing. It should provide students with an orientation and a critical attitude, which inevitably are prescribed by a specific outlook (meaning) towards the world. Moreover, according to Wehler, history education should enable students to substantiate necessary norms and values. These norms and values by definition are value-laden and implicitly laid down beforehand, and thus, represent a certain meaning regarding society.

With this train of thought, Wehler argues in favour of what Tollebeek and Verschaffel defined as the '*society-scientific* motive'.[40] The society-scientific motive refers to the use of historical information for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of our current society. Tollebeek and Verschaffel indicate there are no fundamental objectives against using historical knowledge according to the society-scientific motive. However, it should be kept in mind this retrospective way of dealing with the past fundamentally differs from 'actual' history. Actual history is confined to dealing with the past on its own merits: real historians are driven by a mere interest in the past.[41] Accordingly, studying the past in view of the present is not actual history.[42]

Therefore, if teaching 'real' historical knowledge is the main purpose of history education, it follows from Tollebeek and Verschaffel's argument that, in contrast to what Wehler advocated, the society-scientific motive should remain absent as far as history education is concerned.

[39] Wehler, 'Geschichtswissenschaft: Afklarung oder Sinnstiftung?', 134.
[40] J. Tollebeek and T. Verschaffel, *De vreugden van Housaye. Apologie van de historische interesse*, 88.
[41] Idem, 89.
[42] Idem, 87.

David Lowenthal subscribes to this point of view. In his work, *The heritage crusade*, Lowenthal introduces a rather rigid dichotomy to the historical spectrum. When dealing with the past, Lowenthal argues, people's activities fall into two broad categories. The category of *heritage* contains all those practices concerned with using and interpreting the past for present purposes. *History*, on the other hand, embraces all efforts to understand the past on its own terms.[43]

When using history education as a means of identity-formation, one basically interprets the past for a present purpose: moulding student identity. Consequently, according to Lowenthal's theory, this practice should be conceived of as heritage, rather than history.

Lowenthal furthermore indicates that, even though heritage uses historical traces and tells historical tales, these tales and traces are stitched into fables that are open neither to critical analyses, nor to comparative scrutiny. Additionally, commitment and bonding – two important aspects of identification – demand uncritical endorsement and preclude dissenting voices. Deviance from shared views is not tolerated.[44]

The above implies that Juergen Kocka's last precondition concerning identity-formation by means of history education appears to be a contradiction in terminus. Kocka indicated history education, when deliberately influencing student identity, should avoid manipulation and habituation, and propagate reflection and critical control. However, if using history as a means of identity-formation should be conceived of as heritage, and if heritage by character is not open to critique and comparison, history education cannot propagate reflection and critical control when at the same time aiming at identity-formation. On the contrary: as dissenting voices are being precluded, and deviance from shared views is not tolerated, heritage actually works to promote manipulation and habituation: something Kocka warned us for.

It is exactly this train of thought historians like Robert Phillips use to demonstrate the adverse and harmful consequences of deploying history education

[43] Lowenthal, *The heritage crusade*, 119.
[44] Idem, 121.

as a means of identity-formation. Phillips argues that the past in any discussion of the relationship between history and identity is heavily implicated in the present. Consequently, history becomes merely a response to the requirements of the present, as opposed to a product of the past.[45]

The English historian Nicholas Tates does not agree with this argument however. Tates strongly subscribes to the positive connotations many politicians attach to the practice of using history education as a means of identity-formation. He is very clear about the issue: the subject of history, by means of its truth-seeking nature and through the procedures it uses to cope with disagreement about both facts and values, can and *should* make a particular contribution to identity-formation. Tates stresses the importance of using the unique potential history education offers. Deploying history education to suit the particular goal of identity-formation would be a very effective way of encouraging young people to feel a sense of belonging to and responsibility for the civic society to which they are members. This is all the more important since belonging to a community continues to be one of the few certainties people have left at a time of rapid change and flux. Summing up his argument, Tates strongly argues in favour of history being taught in ways that will enable people in a particular context and time to understand themselves better and to be clearer about what they wish to do with their lives.[46]

Upon closer consideration, the above debate principally boils down to Lowenthal's distinction between history – in which the past is dealt with on its own terms – and heritage – which refers to dealing with the past for present purposes –, and whether or not deploying history education as heritage is necessarily a bad thing. Tates argues it is not: according to his theory, history can never be taught for its own sake. Trying to deal with the past on its own terms therefore is a farce: everything we do is value-laden.[47] Wehler and Kocka do not seem to have a problem with using history education for present purposes either, although both of them provide us

[45] R. Phillips, 'Reflections on history, nationhood and schooling', 42.
[46] N. Tates, 'History and national identity', 35-38.
[47] Idem, 37.

with preconditions in order to exclude heritage's worst excrescences. Phillips, on the other hand, strongly argues in favour of making history education's subject matter a main product of the past, instead of a response to present requirements.

The Dutch historian Pieter Geyl preferred dealing with history on its own merits as well. Geyl indicated that, even though it might very well prove to be impossible to uncover the real historical truth, historians should at all times aspire to free themselves from any predefined purposes and plans when dealing with history. According to Geyl, this is the only way one will be able to sincerely aim at retrieving the historical truth.[48]

The British historian John Harold Plumb argued along similar lines. Plumb distinguished between *history*, which refers to the past as it actually was, and *the past*, which, according to Plumb, is often deliberately misrepresented to suit present social purposes. History now, has the capacity to advance human progress.[49] Therefore, history should step into the past's shoes.[50]

Both Geyl and Plumb, as well as Phillips, depart from the view that dealing with the past for present purposes and understanding the past on its own terms cannot exist simultaneously. Consequently, both ways of dealing with the past are mutually exclusive. This implies that, as far as history education is concerned, one has to choose between either deploying it as heritage or history: history education cannot both deal with the past for present purposes, whilst understanding the past on its own terms.

However, not all historians subscribe to this train of thought. Marc Ferro indicates that both categories often live side by side.[51] Furthermore, according to the Dutch historian Kees Ribbens, history and heritage not only *can* exist simultaneously: in order for a full historical culture to emerge, both categories *should* be found, for they complement each other.[52]

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[48] P. Geyl, *Use and abuse of history*.
[49] N. Ferguson, 'Introduction', xxxi, xxxii.
[50] J.H. Plumb, *The death of the past,* 145.
[51] M. Ferro, *The use and abuse of history.*
[52] K. Ribbens, 'Tussen verleden en geschiedenis. Omzien met open vizier', 20.

When following Ferro's and Ribbens' points of view, history education might be devoted to both heritage and history. This implies that history education could be deployed as a means of identity-formation, while also dealing with the past on its own terms. The contrasts that characterise the above debate on using history education as a means of identity-formation – which, as I concluded, boiled down to the opposition between history and heritage – consequently might not be as sharp as they appeared.

However, in order to come to a balanced judgement towards the possible stances resulting from this debate, one should acquire knowledge on how and to what extent history education *actually* influences student construction of meaning and identity-formation. If history education turns out to have no significant impact on meaning-construction and identity-formation, any debate concerning this matter would prove to be rather empty.

Nevertheless, the exact weight history education carries in this respect has hardly properly been researched as yet. Consequently, little is known as to how and to what extent history education influences students' outlook towards the world.[53] Despite the lack of coherent theories concerning this topic, I will outline the often-fragmented visions of several historians towards this matter within the next section.

2.3 History education and student construction of meaning

Many historians agree that history influences people's identities in important ways. Plumb argues that history can help us achieve our identity.[54] According to Dorsman, Jonker and Ribbens, historical narratives are important factors in constructing collective identities, for these narratives tend to standardize and explain patterns of social behaviour within well-defined situations.[55] The Dutch historian Von der Dunk believes the past provides us with answers to the question of our identity. By reflex, human beings turn to their personal and common origins in finding out who they

[53] P. Klep, 'Persoonlijke omgang met het verleden. Tot slot', 97.
[54] Plumb, *The death of the past*, 145.
[55] Dorsman, Jonker and Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur*, 39.

are. In doing so, they subconsciously hope to reduce the mysteries of human existence.[56]

Naturally following from this line of argument, Benedict Anderson claims that historical narratives are prerequisites for collective identities to emerge. According to Anderson, identity must be narrated, for it cannot be remembered: awareness of belonging to a particular social group with all its implications of continuity, yet of forgetting the experience of this continuity, engenders the need for a narrative of identity. The frame of this narrative consequentially is historical.[57] Lowenthal agrees with Anderson when indicating that knowledge of the past is essential to human knowing and acting, and therefore is essential for identity to emerge.[58]

Martin Hunt examined history's influence upon human construction of meaning and concluded that it is fundamentally impossible to escape the past when dealing with meaning-construction. Without making some sense of the past, many aspects of people's own lives will be incomprehensible: factors directly influencing the quality of people's lives are only meaningful and understandable in terms of what has gone before.[59] Peter Seixas explains why: historical knowledge provides material for comparisons and analogies, for lessons from the past that help us define the meaning of the present. We use the past to contextualise all aspects of the present.[60]

However, when trying to get at the specific influence *history education* exerts over processes of meaning-construction, we have to take into account that history education is but one of several sources students use to make sense of the past. Consequently, the influence of history upon meaning-construction and identity as discussed above should be specified, accounting for the different sources of information students have at their disposal when it comes to history.

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[56] H.W. von der Dunk, *Sprekend over identiteit en geschiedenis*, 131, 132.
[57] B. Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 204, 205.
[58] Lowenthal, *The heritage crusade*, xv.
[59] M. Hunt, 'Teaching historical significance', 44.
[60] Seixas, 'Historical understanding among adolescents in a multicultural setting', 301.

Enquiries have shown that young people in most countries obtain their notions of history from out-of-school sources, in particular the mass media, peer groups and family, rather than from what is taught in school.[61] However, according to Harnett, studying history through the official curriculum can help children to make sense of what they experience about the past through other sources, for the official curriculum, unlike other sources of information, offers opportunities to critically reinterpret the past, and to reflect and make judgements on what has happened before.[62] Hunt complementarily adds that these opportunities history education offers encourage pupils to develop their understanding of human actions and motives in the past. The perceived significance of specific events can then be drawn to the wider consideration of human conduct and motivation,[63] thereby helping to construct a certain meaning to the world students live in. The emphasis in history education on the use of evidence and processes of enquiry, according to McAleavy, can furthermore help pupils to discuss and reach informed judgements about topical and contemporary issues,[64] which are integral aspects of processes of construction of meaning.

History education is not just said to exert influence upon students' construction of meaning however. By teaching the same kind of history to all students, regardless of their social backgrounds, students are assumed to increasingly share the same past, which is reputed to transcend in a common identity, counteracting the diversity of gender, class, ethnic and other belongings. Consequently, school historical culture is often considered as a basis for collective identity.[65] Schooling, according to Tawil and Harley, could therefore indeed be the primary terrain in which the structure of collective identity is formed.[66]

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[61] Council of Europe Council for cultural co-operation, 'Report of meeting of experts on educational research on the learning and teaching of history'.
[62] P. Harnett, 'Curriculum decision-making in the primary school. The place of history', 35.
[63] Hunt, 'Teaching historical significance', 43.
[64] T. McAleavy, 'Teaching about interpretations', 81.
[65] N. Tutiaux-Guillon, 'Teaching and understanding history: a matter of identity', 170.
[66] S. Tawil and A. Harley, 'Education and identity-based conflict: addressing curriculum policy for social and civic reconstruction', 26.

2.4 Conclusion

According to the above theories, history education, by means of its subject matter and unique methodology, does exert a certain influence upon student construction of meaning and identity. However, as indicated above, theories concerning this topic are scarce and fragmented, and, more importantly, are unexceptionally not substantiated by means of empirical data. This lack of substantiated data in particular suggests a hint of guessing and expectation characterizing any theory concerning this topic. For example, the above assumption that merely teaching the same history to all students ultimately will result in a collective identity passes over the fact that history education does not take place in a vacuum. Students' different personal frames of reference might significantly influence the ways in which the historical substance will be processed. Consequently, uniform input (teaching the same history) will not necessarily result in uniform output (collective identity). Therefore, I will not indiscriminately subscribe to existing theories. Thorough examination resulting in reliable data is necessary in order to substantiate the theories as mentioned above.

Many questions remain as a result. Only when sufficient reliable data have been collected, one might be able to take a stance in the debate as outlined above. Within this thesis, I will make an attempt at initiating this process of data-collection.

However, this thesis is not just about the influence of history education upon student construction of meaning in general, but rather focuses on its influence upon student construction of meaning regarding *Europe*. An inevitable prerequisite for being able to answer this question, is knowing what exactly the concept of Europe entails. After all, I cannot expect students to construct a certain meaning towards the concept if I did not define what Europe actually *is*. The next chapter will reveal this often is not clear at all.

3. EUROPE CONCEPTUALISED

Europe is an open ended, vague and unidentified object
With no final shape
No clear final borders
And no real definition of what it is
This is Europe's most attractive feature.[67]

The above position was put forward by Mark Leonard, Director of the Centre of European Reform. Leonard suggests that its undefined and open character allows Europe to spread without attracting hostility.[68] Indeed, a non-fixed, minimally defined Europe will allow a broad variety of people to be part of it, for its loose character enables people to give the concept a highly personal interpretation.

Nevertheless, without regard to the merits and attractiveness of an open ended, vague and unidentified Europe, within the framework of this thesis it is essential to accurately lay down a clear-cut definition of what is meant when referring to Europe and European history. When talking to students about the meaning they attach to Europe, it should first of all be clarified how Europe is being understood: what exactly entails the Europe they attach a certain meaning to? This is necessary in order to safeguard reliability. After all, it might very well be possible that student's own (implicit) definitions of Europe vary significantly. In order to ensure all students refer to the same kind of conception when talking about Europe – in other words: to help clarifying what is being measured when interviewing students – a clear-cut definition of what Europe actually entails should be formulated and put forward beforehand.

In order to come up with such a definition, this chapter will be dedicated to exploring the concept of Europe in its various manifestations. An integral part of

[67] M. Leonard, 'Europe from the outside', 6.
[68] Idem, 6.

Europe's definition is to be found in its history. Therefore, – prior to elaborating on the current situation – the next section will deal with the history of the European conception.

3.1 History of the European conception

Ancient Greek mythology tells the story of 'The Abduction of Europe.' According to this mythological story, the European continent owes its name to the Asian princess Europe, who got abducted by Zeus, smuggled into the (European) continent, and begot three sons of the supreme deity.

Research shows the term 'Europe' in fact most likely was introduced by the ancient Greeks themselves. The Greeks divided the world into three parts: Africa, Asia and Europe. Within this tripartite division, both Africa and Asia were synonymous with barbarism, suppression and backwardness, whereas Europe was associated with the 'beautiful' notion of liberty.[69]

It was not until the Catholic Church gained substantial influence on people's mindsets, this notion of Europe as the continent of liberty gradually faded away. Instead, Europe became a Christian notion. The Catholic Church, building on the ancient tripartite vision of the world, argued that Europe was, or at least was supposed to be, a Christian continent: homeland of true and destined believers, whereas Asia and Africa were being populated by no more than depraved pagans.[70]

This conviction of Europe as a Christian continent spread as a result of the several crusades taking place during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Despite the internal differences characterising Christianity, the crusades united Christians in a common goal: to free the Holy City of Jerusalem from Muslim-occupation. This resulted in a common Christian identity, which, as a Pope at the time stated, was merely to be found in Europe.[71]

Around 1500, as a result of the discovery of new continents and due to the conquest of areas outside of Europe, the general European outlook towards the

[69] P. den Boer, 'Europe to 1914: the making of an idea', 14.
[70] Idem, 19, 20.
[71] Idem, 28.

world changed. The centre of European gravity shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. The cities of Venice and Genoa lost their pre-eminence and were overtaken by other cities, such as Lisbon, Seville, Antwerp, Amsterdam and London. Trade with distant destinations provided an impulse for the economy. Furthermore, it became clear that Europe was the smallest of the continents. Nevertheless, Christianity, trade and colonisation formed the basis for univocal feelings of superiority.[72] What is more, explorative expeditions and colonialism strengthened the idea that Europeans were superior to other peoples. Illustratively, in 1455, Pope Nicholas V permitted the king of Portugal to '*subject all inhabitants of Africa and the southern coasts to eternal slavery*'.[73] The European expansion resulted in increasing levels of pride amongst the European elite: Europe was referred to as the first continent, based on the 'fine deeds' of its inhabitants.[74]

During the sixteenth century, the Turkish armies managed to fight themselves a way through a large part of Europe. Before the turn of the century, they reached the gates of Vienna twice. Furthermore, the Turkish fleet controlled large parts of the Mediterranean.[75] Within the context of this Turkish threat, the notion of Europe as a Christian continent was reemphasised once more.[76]

The Enlightenment and The French Revolution resulted in radical changes as far as the European conception was concerned. First of all, both developments worked for a fading of the religious conception of Europe during the eighteenth century. European feelings of superiority persisted, but increasingly were based on a conglomeration of ideas proceeding from the Enlightenment, which, in turn, came to be associated with the notion of civilisation. This concept had a clear and positive connotation, and Europe increasingly was regarded as the embodiment of the

[72] Den Boer, 'Europe to 1914', 43-48.
[73] A. Pagden, *Van mensen en wereldrijken. De Europese migratie, ontdekkingsreizen en veroveringen van de Griekse oudheid tot heden*, 83.
[74] P. den Boer, *Europa: de geschiedenis van een idee*, 71.
[75] S. Stuurman , *Staatsvorming en politieke theorie. Drie essays over Europa*, 16.
[76] Den Boer, 'Europe to 1914', 37.

highest level of civilisation.[77] Consequently, European identity came to be associated with such notions as progress, improvement and civilisation.[78]

Furthermore, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution resulted in the ultimate fruitful introduction of the idea of the nation-state to the European elites. Before, both political and intellectual elites dreamed of a new European empire, which was ultimately supposed to succeed the Roman one.[79] However, as a result of both Enlightenment and French Revolution, the nation-state increasingly gained ground as the starting point of European politics. This marked an era of rising nationalism throughout Europe, which brought along a boundless belief in European supremacy, as well as an unlimited European self-confidence. A deeply rooted awareness of one's own nation sharing a vague, but common European destiny emerged as a result.[80]

Additionally, the ever-growing influence of democratic ideals during the nineteenth century increasingly replaced Christianity by antiquity as far as the historical perspective of Europe was concerned. With the call for political democratisation, it became useful to extend the history of Europe further into the past and to make ancient Greek democracy the starting point of Europe. Consequently, it was no longer the establishment of Christianity, but the Athenian democracy, which was to be regarded as the cradle of European civilisation.[81]

This construction of European history became all the more important after the end of the Great War, when it became hard to ignore how the USA, rather than Europe, was becoming the vanguard of invention and modernity. The American success proved to be a significant challenge to the European self-consciousness. However, the Americans, unlike Europeans, could not boast a rich cultural heritage. The shaken European ego therefore sought rehabilitation in the soothing comfort of the past.[82]

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[77] Den Boer, 'Europe to 1914', 44-48.
[78] Stuurman , *Staatsvorming en politieke theorie,* 9.
[79] Idem, 18.
[80] Den Boer, 'Europe to 1914', 77.
[81] Idem, 74.
[82] P. Brugge, 'The nation supreme: the idea of Europe 1914-1945', 123-125.

Nevertheless, the past did not seem to be able to structurally remedy the corroded image of a superior Europe. As a result, both politically and intellectually, 'Europeanness' experienced a strong recession during the period between both World Wars.[83]

World War II left Europe in shock: for many, it was almost unbelievable, yet undeniable, that Europeans had not at all moved beyond cruelty and barbarism. On the contrary: the horrific events characterising World War II caused an image of Europe symbolizing war, nationalism and colonialism. By 1945, the great European powers were either exhausted or had been destroyed. The European road seemed to have led to failure.[84]

Against this background, some European leaders, amongst whom Robert Schuman and Jean Monet, concluded that a lasting peace between their countries could only be achieved by means of economic and political cooperation. After all, far-reaching national ambitions in the fields of economics and politics had led to the outbreak of three French-German wars between 1870 and 1945. These national ambitions were to be contained in order to secure peace. As a result, the first attempts to institutionalise a new European integration during the late 1940's had the air of a cleansing exercise.[85]

The foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) by Belgium, France, Luxemburg, Italy, West Germany and The Netherlands in 1951 proved to be the initial step in the new European integration process. The ECSC placed the power to take decisions about the coal and steel industry in its member-countries in the hands of an independent, supranational body called the 'High Authority'.

European integration was broadened in 1957, when the ECSC countries signed the Treaties of Rome, thereby establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and EURATOM. The EEC aimed at improving economic and social conditions by removing internal trade barriers and at forming a common market. It

[83] Brugge, 'The nation supreme: the idea of Europe 1914-1945', 146.
[84] O. Wæver, 'Europe since 1945: crisis to renewal', 162.
[85] Wæver, 'Europe since 1945: crisis to renewal', 152, 153.

worked for the free movement of goods, service, labour and capital, the abolition of trusts and cartels, and the development of joint and reciprocal policies on labour, social welfare, agriculture, transport, and foreign trade. The establishment of EURATOM was an attempt to tackle the increasing deficiency of energy sources during the 1950's by means of sharing the costs of producing nuclear energy. Consequently, EURATOM aimed at establishing a common market for nuclear raw materials, products and means of production.

In 1965, the 'Fusion Treaty' consolidated the ECSC, the EEC and EURATOM into the European Communities (EC), whilst providing the communities with a common council and commission. The original six members successively were joined by Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1973, by Greece in 1981 and by Spain and Portugal in 1986.

The 1992 'Maastricht Treaty' established the European Union (EU), thereby indicating the increased importance and prevalence of political collaboration besides economic integration. 'Maastricht' provided for levels of cooperation and integration to be extended to the fields of defence and justice and home affairs. The EU successively grew in size with the accessions of Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995, the so-called Laeken-10 nine years later, and Bulgaria and Romania in 2007.

Despite increasing levels of European integration and the consequential professionalisation of the European sphere, a clear-cut definition of what Europe actually entails remains absent. Even when interpreting Europe as an equivalent of the EU, the term holds a certain ambivalence, since there seems to be no consensus as to what for example the tasks and boundaries of the EU are. As Mark Leonard showed us by means of his quote, this undefined and open character of Europe does have its merits: it proves to be quite convenient, especially in the light of the continuing enlargement of the European Union.

However, as is shown in the above historical overview, the term Europe refers to more than just the European Union. Europe proves to be a multi-layered and ambivalent concept, which consists of several ambiguous dimensions, and which had different meanings throughout time. Its complicated character calls for a

broad, inclusive and all-embracing definition of the concept. Formulating such a definition compels us to closely investigate what the concept of Europe refers to. The next section will deal with this issue.

3.2 What is Europe?

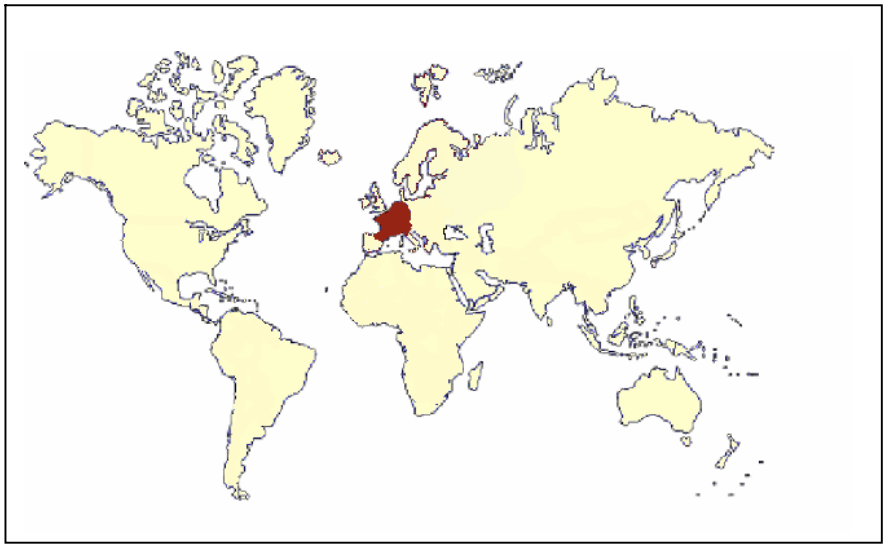
As indicated in the preceding section, the concept of Europe initially mainly referred to a geographical entity. In antiquity, the term was used to geographically distinguish the three regions the world was believed to consist of. Nowadays, these three regions are extended to the five continents. Geographically, Europe excludes the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia and could be defined as a continent in the western part of Eurasia, separated from Asia by the Ural Mountains in the east and the Caucasus Mountains and the Black and Caspian seas in the Southeast. The Atlantic Ocean naturally forms the European borders in the west and north.[86]

However, upon closer consideration, Europe as a geographical entity proves to be hardly unambiguous. For one thing, the conception of where Europe is located changed over time: from the definition of an area of south-eastern Europe in Greek-Roman antiquity and the Byzantine world via the west Roman empire of the early and late middle ages to the inclusion of Russia as a Christian great power in the early eighteenth century. As Europe was recast in the discourses of the nineteenth century and Europeans began to convert and conquer the world, the territory from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and from Lisbon to Moscow belonged to Europe. After 1945, the West reclaimed Europe for itself.[87]

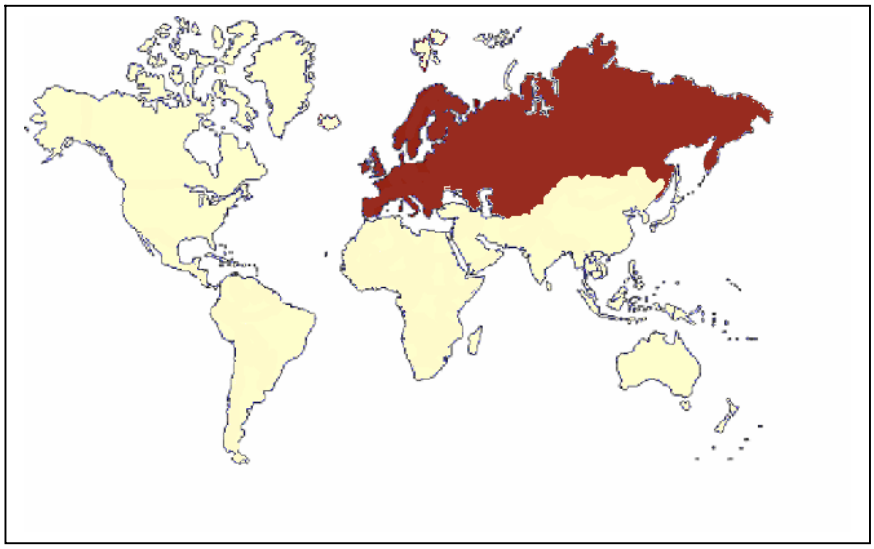
Moreover, despite the established European boundaries which were eventually decided to agree upon, geographical Europe in everyday life varies. In west European usage, Russia for example has often been defined as outside of Europe, whereas Europe in the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries is frequently used to contrast one's own country.[88]

[86] S. Lorentzen, 'Key aspects of European historical consciousness', 32, 33.
[87] A. Heinen, 'Towards a European "Experience Space"?', 105.
[88] Idem, 33.

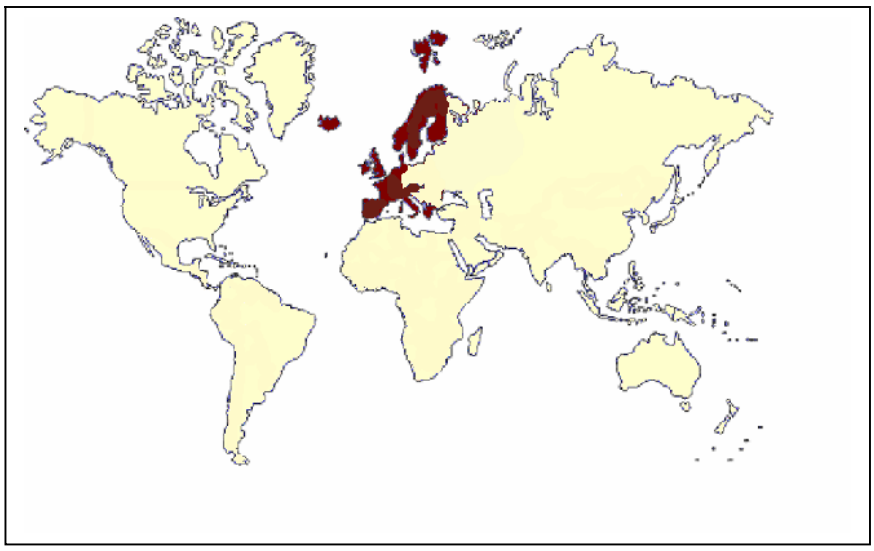
3.1 Europe during Roman antiquity



3.2 Europe 500 – 1000 A.D.



3.3. Europe in the 18th century



3.4 Europe 1945-1989

The same holds for Turkey: in everyday life, the country might simultaneously be perceived to either fully, partly or not at all belong to Europe, depending on who would be asked. According to Rose, locating Europe on a map therefore often has the character of a test of political values.[89]

Apparently, Europe bears an important political component as well.[90] Often, this political dimension deliberately excludes parts of the geographical continent.[91] From the political point of view, Europe nowadays frequently is understood as the unification of democratic states.[92] However, Europe is not what we would recognise as a country: it represents no single state. But nor do European nation-states remain entirely independent of each other. Rather, they joined in a union that links them quite closely, and reflects an uneasy and often confusing compromise between the two incompatible ideas of a federal Europe and one of independent, sovereign states.[93]

As a result, political Europe implicates a partial transfer of sovereignty, whilst also implying a form of cooperation without any loss of national autonomy.[94] This delicate balance between subsidiarity on the one hand, and communautariarism on the other, is continuously subjected to change, and varies from one topic to another.

However, political Europe should not be confined to the EU, for the EU is merely the latest manifestation of a European integrative project. European history contains several examples of other initiatives to integrate European politics, such as Charles the Great, Louis XIV, Napoleon, and even Adolf Hitler attempting to establish supra-national units within geographical Europe.

Geography and politics alone – although probably most obvious since these features are what people are mostly confronted with in everyday life – fail to draw a

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[89] R. Rose, *What is Europe? A dynamic perspective*, 1.
[90] I thoroughly realise Europe bears an economic component as well. However, since economic cooperation has been carried out by means of political cooperation – and in fact was dominated by political cooperation -, I decided to refrain from categorising economics separately.
[91] E. Hobsbawm, *On history*, 291.
[92] F. Pingel, 'How to approach Europe? The European dimension in history textbooks', 206.
[93] R. Scully, 'Developing European institutions: governing European integration', 51,52.
[94] A. Sobisch and S. Immerfall, 'The social basis of European citizenship', 164.

complete picture of what Europe refers to however. Underneath the geographic and political dimensions implicitly lies a widely held assumption that there is something unique and shared about Europe and its history.[95] Europeans are believed to have things in common, which distinguish them from the rest of the world. These 'things' refer to core elements of European history and culture, which can be easily identified as having a common meaning for most of the people in Europe.[96] According to Falk Pingel, history is to be regarded as one of the most decisive features to explain what defines Europe, what its characteristics are.[97] Stuurman agrees: Europe equals the memory of Europe, without history, Europe literally would not exist.[98]

So what exactly are these core elements in European culture and history, which, according to Pingel and Stuurman, are of crucial importance in defining Europe? Ruesen claims that historical processes that have made European culture different from other cultural areas in the world include such developments as the declaration of human and civil rights, the ancient origins of occidental rationality and of rational law, the rise of urban life, and religious developments, especially in Judaism and Christianity. However, it is not merely common grounds that characterise European culture: Europe is as much typified by inner heterogeneity.[99] Faulenbach contributes that Europeans share the heritage of antiquity and technological development.[100] According to Heinen, Europe stands for co-operation on the basis of fundamental values: those oriented towards the right of the individual.[101] Rose adds that the defining characteristic of Europe today is democracy on a continental scale.[102] Sobish and Immerfall agree: civil law tradition, the parliamentary system of government and the party system are commonalities in Europe, which, at least in combination, distinguish the continent from the rest of the

[95] Slater, *Teaching history in the new Europe*, 7.
[96] J. Ruesen, 'Cultural currency. The nature of historical consciousness in Europe', 78.
[97] Pingel, 'How to approach Europe?', 207.
[98] S. Stuurman, *De ontwikkeling van Europa. Identiteit, staatsvorming en modernisering*), 9.
[99] Ruesen, 'Cultural currency', 78 and 79.
[100] B. Faulenbach, 'A forum on contemporary history. Eine Europaische Erinneringskultur als Aufgabe? Zum Verhaltnis gemeinsamer und trennender Erinnerungen', 216 and 217.
[101] Heinen, 'Towards a European experience space?', 109.
[102] Rose, 'What is Europe', 5.

world. Europe is furthermore characterised by a strong commitment to the welfare state, a critical stance towards inequality and a tendency to hand over a fair amount of responsibility to the state.[103]

Some authors adopt critical stances towards such enumerations of European cultural and historical characteristics however. Slater points out that in order for characteristics to be specifically European, they should be both *unique* and *shared*. The assertions of Rose, Sobish and Immerfall concerning democracy consequently are refuted by indicating that democracy is in no way a uniquely European feature. Similarly, the early adaptation of rationality and technology was not at all shared, since it was largely confined to North-western Europe, and – as opposed to claims of Ruesen and Faulenbach – is therefore no specific European feature.[104] Lorentzen calls for prudence in asserting European common roots through the ancient empires of Greece and Rome, for the truth of this notion is highly disputable. Geographical areas in North Africa and Asia may well be given priority in this context, which annuls the European uniqueness of this feature.[105]

Apparently, defining European culture and history is not merely a matter of enumerating some common features. Europe is complex, contradictory, arbitrary and constantly changing.[106] Therefore, changeability should pre-eminently be conceived of as characteristic of European culture.[107] Furthermore, Europe is heterogeneous by character. As a consequence, any attempt to reduce Europe to a single idea is bound to fail. Europe characteristically appears to be a cultural and historical multitude of ideas. This multitude, along with its changeable character, is exactly what characterises European culture and history.[108]

Summing up, the concept of Europe refers to three intermingled dimensions. First of all, Europe is a geographical entity. Even though its boundaries are not exactly fixed, and prove to be changeable, there is a widely held consensus that the term Europe refers to a geographical area, roughly located in the western part of

[103] Sobish and Immerfall, 'The social basis of European citizenship', 144-147.
[104] Slater, *Teaching history in the new Europe*, 10-14.
[105] Lorentzen, 'Key aspects of European historical consciousness', 35.
[106] Slater, *Teaching history in the new Europe*, 17.
[107] Den Boer, *Europa: de geschiedenis van een idee*, 13.
[108] Faulenbach, 'Eine Europaische Erinneringskultur als Aufgabe?', 216.

Eurasia. Secondly, Europe refers to politics. Political Europe implicates a partial transfer of sovereignty by individual countries, whilst also implying a form of cooperation without any loss of national autonomy. Lastly, Europe holds a cultural and historical dimension, which is based upon the idea that Europeans share something unique, which is characterised by change and heterogeneity. This cultural-historical dimension refers to certain feelings of mutual solidarity amongst Europeans, which ultimately might result in the emergence of a common identity.

3.3 Competing frameworks?

Thus far, our exploration resulted in finding out that Europe refers to geography, politics and culture and history. Additionally, Europe proved to be changeable and heterogeneous. This leaves us with one essential element, which up until now has only briefly been addressed when discussing the political dimension of Europe: the position of the nation-states within contemporary Europe. Clearly, present-day Europe in all its dimensions is made up of nation-states. Geographically speaking, individual countries are part of the European continent. Politically, Europe came into being by the gradual integration of separate nation-states. The heterogeneous character of European culture and history is, amongst other things, a result of differing national cultures and histories. This being so, the question remains what the exact status of the nation-state within the concept of Europe contains. This will be the focus of this section. The main question is whether or not Europe rules out the existence of the nation-state.

According to Boytsov, each newborn form of community creates itself at the expense of the older types of human aggregations. The community of Europeans thus appears to deny and dissolve many elements of earlier types of identity, particularly of national ones.[109] Other authors strongly disagree. Sobish points out that 'Europeanness' is no nationality of the Union, but rather a complementary citizenship to that of the member state.[110] Consequently, within the framework of politics, the nation-state still has a right to exist. According to MacDonald and

[109] M. Boytsov, 'No community without history, no history without community', 71.
[110] A. Sobisch and S. Immerfall, 'The social basis of European citizenship', 82.

Fausser, the same could hold true as far as the cultural-historical sphere is concerned: the construction of identity is relative rather than exclusive. We can, and do, belong to different levels of collectivities without this being necessarily problematic.[111] Tutiaux-Guillon proves this to be correct: research amongst French students shows that having a sense of belonging to a region or state is not necessarily contradictory with feeling European. On the contrary: feeling European might even support national identities.[112] Heinen provides us with an explanation for this phenomenon, when indicating that European and national consciousness both draw on different images and involve different structural pre-requisites. National consciousness is based upon lucidity and uniformity, whereas European consciousness implies multitude and diversity.[113]

In my opinion, a sense of belonging – in other words, a collective identity – can only emerge by the grace of other identities. Identities are to be defined ex-negativo: excluding and contrasting others is the raison d'être of identity. However, deploying a European identity does not necessarily mean contrasting this identity against the national one. On the contrary, European and national identity might simultaneously be contrasted against other identities: I am Dutch, which means I am European, which means I am not American. Europe and the nation-state might therefore potentially be mutually exclusive, but might as well be in line with one another. Nevertheless, in our current situation the nation-state proves to be an integral part of Europe in all its dimensions. Apart from being *changeable* and *heterogeneous*, Europe therefore also proves to be *divisible.*

3.4 Conclusion: towards European definitions

Based upon the preceding sections, the working definition of Europe will be formulated as follows:

[111] S. Macdonald and K. Fausser, 'Towards European historical consciousness. An introduction', 18.
[112] N. Tutiaux-Guillon, 'Is there a basis for European consciousness among French students? The results of three empirical studies', 167.
[113] Heinen, 'Towards a European experience space?', 108 and 109.

Europe is a geographical, political and cultural-historical entity, characterised by change, heterogeneity and divisibility. Geographically, its boundaries prove to be changeable, although there is a widely held consensus that the term Europe refers to a geographical area, roughly located in the western part of Eurasia. Within the framework of politics, Europe implicates a partial transfer of sovereignty by individual countries, whilst also implying a form of cooperation without any loss of national autonomy. This delicate balance between subsidiarity on the one hand, and communautariarism on the other, is continuously subjected to change, and might vary from one topic to another. The cultural-historical dimension is based upon the idea that Europeans share something unique, which nevertheless is characterised by change and heterogeneity. The nation-sate is an integral part of Europe in all its dimensions.

Taking Europe's changeable character into account, it should be emphasised that this working definition is highly subjected to change in time and should therefore be conceived of as a random indication of what Europe represents.

Anticipating on the subject matter of the next chapter, it is necessary to elaborate on what these observations imply for defining European history. First of all, it should be noted that the three dimensions Europe consists of are correspondingly to be found in its history. History of Europe will consequently include geographical, political and cultural elements. Furthermore, the observation that Europe is inextricably bound up with the nation-state, caused many authors to understand European history mostly as the history of some large western countries plus Russia.[114] History of Europe includes history of European countries indeed. However, in dealing with European history, there could also be a focus on general, supranational European topics. Most importantly however: it should be kept in mind that Europe's integral heterogeneity implies that there is not merely one understanding of European history. Varying historical narratives are bound to exist in different European regions. Consequently, there is no unequivocal interpretation of European history: the history of Europe consists of many different, often

[114] J. van der Leeuw-Roord, 'Europe in the learning and teaching of history. An introduction', 14.

contradictory, stories and points of view. Moreover, due to Europe's changeable character, these different narratives are likely to be subjected to change throughout time.

European history now will be defined as follows: *European history consists of the history of Europe's geography, politics and culture. It includes both supranational themes, as well as the history of separate European countries and consists of multiple, often contradictory, narratives that are likely to be subjected to change throughout time.*

Returning to the starting point of this chapter, it should be concluded that Mark Leonard was right in observing that Europe has no final shape and borders. Indeed, Europe is an open-ended object. However, being open-ended does not necessarily imply being vague and unidentified. This chapter aimed at defining the concepts of Europe and European history, in order to withdraw Europe from vagueness, whilst respecting Europe's changeable shape and borders. Within the next chapter, the two definitions as established within this chapter will be put into practice.

4. EUROPE FROM THE STUDENT'S ANGLE

"Europe consists of separate countries blaming each other for what they did in the past"
"I do not feel European"

All students assign a certain meaning towards Europe. This chapter will deal with this process of meaning-construction. It will examine what Europe means to Dutch students in their penultimate years of secondary school. In doing so, three main sources will be used. Firstly, I will use prof. Dr. Grever and dr. Ribbens' *History* questionnaire,[115] which was handed to 209 students at several secondary schools within Rotterdam, the second-largest city in The Netherlands. All students participating in the questionnaire attended history as a school-subject. The questionnaire consists of fourteen questions, seven of which investigate the different ways in which students perceive history; two of which examine student identity; and five of which allocate certain 'fixed' variables, such as sex, age, schooltype and country of birth. Three out of the nine questions dealing with the non-fixed variables of history and identity are open for students' own phrasings, whereas the other six ask students to tick appropriate laid down options or to constitute a top-5 out of several determined options. The questionnaire contains several questions concerning the meaning students assign to European history.

Additionally, seven students were selected from the research-population and were interviewed in depth.[116] This group of students was selected by their history-teacher and consisted of both boys and girls, and students of both native and foreign origin, all of them attending the penultimate year of the highest levels of secondary school. They were interviewed by prof. dr. Grever, dr. Ribbens and myself.

This interview mainly focussed upon history and history education in general, whereas the concept of Europe was indirectly dealt with within this

[115] See: Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden.*
[116] A methodological account is included in appendix 1.

context. In order to gather direct and specific information on the ways in which students perceive of Europe, a second interview, of which Europe was the mere essence, was initiated.[117] During this interview, which was conducted by a fellow student and myself, one girl and three boys of native Dutch origin, all of them in their penultimate year of pre-university education, and all of them attending history as a school-subject, were interviewed. These students did not participate in the *History* questionnaire.

The questionnaire and both interviews produced the information needed to provide an overview of the meaning students assign to Europe. Whilst elaborating on students' outlooks towards the concept, this chapter will first of all investigate the ways in which students define Europe. This section will be confined to some rather 'rational' aspects of students' definitions of Europe: what exactly does the concept of Europe refer to, according to students? Secondly, students' constructions of meaning towards Europe will be dealt with, by means of investigating how students assign a certain meaning to Europe. While the first section of this chapter deals with rationality, the second section will examine the perceptive and affective aspects students associate with Europe. Lastly, the gathered data will be used to help explaining the different ways in which students perceive the concept of Europe.

4.1 Europe defined by students

During the second interview, in which Sharai, Marc, Erik and Wilco[118] were the principal persons, the way in which students define Europe was extensively discussed. I started this interview by posing the question 'What is Europe?' The answers to this question showed the students were well aware of the different European dimensions I discerned in the previous chapter of this thesis. According to Sharai, Europe refers to '*Cooperating countries'*, with which she implicitly referred to the political dimension of Europe. For Wilco, the concept refers to the geographical continent. Marc displayed his implicit awareness of the cultural-

[117] A methodological account is included in appendix 2.
[118] The students explicitly approved of the use of their first names within this thesis. However, in view of respecting their anonimity, we agreed on omitting their last names.

historical dimension when indicating that '*Europe mainly reminds me of Western Europe. As far as I am concerned, countries like Ukraine do not really belong to Europe (…) because of the past. The historical development of those countries has been totally different.'*

Initially, the political dimension of Europe seemed merely to refer to the European Union. However, upon closer consideration the students concluded that any form of political cooperation between separate European entities resulting in some measure of unity, could be conceived of as political Europe. Therefore, according to Marc and Erik, the Roman Empire was a manifestation of political Europe as well. Wilco disagrees: '*The Roman Empire covered a large part of Europe. However, I do not think it should be referred to as Europe, since back then Rome simply ruled over the rest of Europe, whereas nowadays participation and involvement are crucial elements.'*

As for the cultural-historical dimension, Wilco indicates that *'A European culture could be conceived of as a compressed diversity of cultures.'* According to Marc, there is no such thing as a single European culture: *'and I like those internal differences. It belongs to Europe, it is what characterizes Europe.'* With this position, Marc implies that, even though individual European cultures differ from one another, the different cultures still belong together. Europe bears something unique, which is merely shared by the countries it is made up of.

Figure 4.1 indicates where geographical Europe is located according to Sharai, Marc, Erik and Wilco.

4.1 Geographical Europe according to the students

Compared to the geographical and cultural-historical dimensions, the political dimension seems to be most explicit and prominent to students: Europe mainly refers to a political unit. However, this political dimension is rooted in geography, history and culture. For Sharai, Europe as a political unit should be in accordance with its geographical dimension: *'I think Turkey should not join the European Union. (…) It does not officially belong to Europe. Geographically, it belongs to Asia, so I really do not see why they want to make it part of the Union.'* Marc on the other hand implies that the cultural-historical dimension should be decisive when determining which countries belong to political Europe: *'The Turkish culture still differs importantly from the European culture. (…) On the other hand, major improvements have been made compared to ten years ago. Therefore, within a couple of years, Turkey might be able to join the Union. It should match the EU and its views.'* Apparently, the political dimension of Europe should coincide either with its geographical or with its cultural-historical dimension, as far as these students are concerned.

Within the preceding chapter, apart from the various European dimensions, I discerned three main characteristics of the European concept: Europe is characterised by divisibility, heterogeneity and change. The students displayed their awareness of Europe's divisible nature when discussing its political dimension. The European concept refers to separate countries aiming at establishing some measure of unity. *'Europe consist of individual countries.' 'Those separate units will always adhere to Europe.'*

Furthermore, the students appreciate Europe's heterogeneous nature. Europe inevitably bears internal differences, especially in the field of culture. *'Mediterranean culture differs importantly from cultures in Northern-Europe.' 'I think the different European cultures should not be blurred.'*

Marc and Wilco disagree about change as a European feature. Marc implies that Europe's form and content might have changed over time, when discussing Europe during antiquity: *'I do not think that present-day Europe is actually based upon antiquity, but the Roman Empire was a different manifestation of Europe.'* Wilco

strongly disagrees: *'I do not think it was Europe at all. (...) It was an Empire and did not consist of separate countries. It was actually one big country.'*

The interview showed that Sharai, Marc, Erik and Wilco display an – often implicit – awareness of all the main elements of the working definition of Europe, as put down in the preceding chapter. The next section will examine what Europe and its characteristics mean to students.

4.2 Students' constructions of meaning towards Europe

Identities refer to what people conceive themselves to be, to which collectivities they belong. Collective identities are the means by which people define a sense of themselves and others.[119] In order for people to identify with a collectivity, this collectivity should have a certain meaning for them.[120]

From these observations of the sociologists Benda-Beckmann and Verkuyten, it follows that in order for students to identify with Europe as a collectivity, Europe should have a certain meaning to them. This section will investigate the meaning students assign to Europe.

The construction of a certain meaning towards Europe proves to be a plural process. By means of analysing the outcomes of the questionnaire and both interviews, I have induced four interrelated stages characterising the process of meaning-construction towards Europe.

First of all, there should be an awareness of the existence of Europe and its characteristics. Students should be aware of the fact that there is such a phenomenon as Europe, in order for them to assign a certain meaning to the concept. This is what I will refer to as the stage of knowledge, for it refers to students' knowledge of Europe and its dimensions.

The second stage refers to cognition. It concerns the extent to which Europe gears to students' perception of their environment. Within this stage of meaning-

[119] K. von Benda-Beckmann and M. Verkuyten, 'Introduction. Cultural identity and development in Europe', 17.
[120] Idem, 19.

construction, it is decided to what extent Europe influences ones personal life: does Europe relate to my everyday life, does it concern me personally?

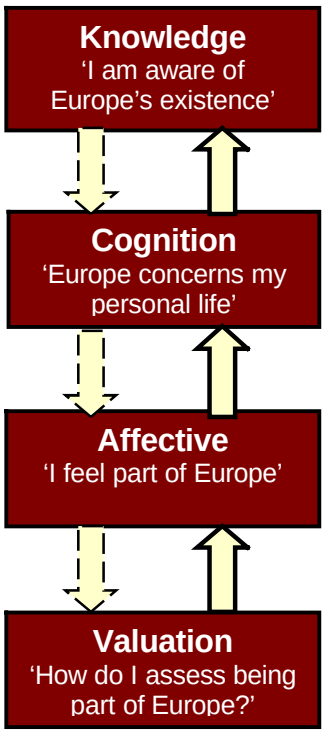
The third stage includes the extent to which students feel they are a part of Europe: to what extent do students experience a sense of belonging to Europe? According to my definition as put down in the preceding chapter, all Dutch students are part of Europe. However, within the framework of meaning-construction, it is important to determine to what extent students actually *feel* like they are. The elements of 'feeling' and 'experiencing' are crucial within this stage. Therefore, I will refer to this stage of meaning-construction as the affective stage.

The final stage in the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe concerns valuation. Within this stage, it is decided how one assesses being a part of Europe. Do students conceive of the fact they are part of Europe as something negative, positive or neutral?

During the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe, all stages might successively occur, although this certainly is not always the case. If a student is not aware of Europe's existence, he or she will not even consider whether or not Europe concerns his or her[121] personal life. In this case, the process of meaning-construction would be finished after the first stage. Likewise, even if a student is aware of the fact there is such an entity as Europe, he might be of the opinion that Europe does not relate to his personal life at all. Consequently, he will certainly not feel he is a part of Europe. His process of meaning-construction will therefore be finalised after stage two.

Nevertheless, the successive stages do inevitably relate to each other the other way round. A student cannot assess being part of Europe without actually experiencing he is a part of it. However, he cannot realise he is a part of Europe without acknowledging that Europe concerns his personal life. Similarly, he will not be able to realise Europe concerns his personal life without knowing that Europe exists. Figure 4.2 schematically represents how the different stages relate to each other. Using this scheme, I will investigate the meaning students assign to Europe.

[121] For reasons of convenience, I will use the masculine form from now on.



4.2 The process of meaning-construction towards Europe

As for the first stage of the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe, the preceding section shows the students I interviewed are aware of the existence of Europe and its main characteristics. Consequently, the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe will at least include stage one and two, as far as these students are concerned.

The *History* questionnaire and contiguous interview provide insight into the second stage of meaning construction. Table 4.3[122] gives an overview of the kinds of history students find interesting. According to this figure, students of native origin tend to be most interested in both Dutch national history and the history of their families.

[122] Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden,* chapter 5.

What kinds of history do you find most interesting?*

Respondents from The Netherlands N=209	No. 1	In top-5
Native students n=88		
History of country one lives in S	24,7%	86,5%
History of family S	33,7%	73,0%
History sub-national country one lives in	4,5%	55,1%
History sub-national country of origin	2,2%	53,9%
History sub-national country of origin parents S	0,0%	24,7%
History supra-national Europe S	4,5%	67,4%
History supra-national world	16,9%	67,4%
History religion S	1,1%	20,2%
History philosophy of life	2,2%	27,0%
History country of origin parents S	2,2%	16,9%
Surinamese & Antillean n=36		
History of country one lives in S	5,7%	45,7%
History of family S	50,0%	88,9%
History sub-national country one lives in	5,6%	52,8%
History sub-national country of origin	25,0%	66,7%
History sub-national country of origin parents S	11,4%	60,0%
History supra-national Europe S	5,7%	37,1%
History supra-national world	17,1%	60,0%
History religion S	8,3%	61,1%
History philosophy of life	0,0%	37,1%
History country of origin parents S	22,2%	77,8%
Moroccan n=41		
History of country one lives in S	7,5%	42,5%
History of family S	25,0%	62,5%
History sub-national country one lives in	10,0%	32,5%
History sub-national country of origin	10,0%	45,0%
History sub-national country of origin parents S	7,5%	62,5%
History supra-national Europe S	2,5%	27,5%
History supra-national world	10,0%	45,0%
History religion S	35,0%	80,0%
History philosophy of life	5,0%	22,5%
History country of origin parents S	12,5%	70,0%
Turkish n=44		
History of country one lives in S	2,3%	43,2%
History of family S	13,7%	63,6%
History sub-national country one lives in	6,8%	40,9%
History sub-national country of origin	2,3%	50,0%
History sub-national country of origin parents S	2,3%	40,9%
History supra-national Europe S	0,0%	31,8%
History supra-national world	15,9%	50,0%
History religion S	31,8%	65,9%
History philosophy of life	0,0%	27,3%
History country of origin parents S	20,5%	81,8%

4.3 Interest in kinds of history
S = significant

*For a methodological account of these data, please refer to Grever and Ribbens 'Methodologische bijlage' in M. Grever and K. Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden.*

Surinamese and Antillean students display a substantial interest in their family-histories, whereas students of Moroccan and Turkish origin are mainly interested in the history of their religion. Compared to native Dutch students, students of foreign origin seem to be much less interested in Dutch national history. Levels of interest in European history are relatively low amongst all groups of students.

The above observations lead to the assumption that students are mainly interested in history of frameworks that noticeably influence their daily lives. Within Surinamese culture, family is considered very important.[123] Consequently, family is likely to influence Surinamese students' personal lives to a great extent. Therefore, the fact that Surinamese students indicate they are most interested in their family-histories should hardly come as a surprise. The same holds true for Moroccan and Turkish students. For many of these students, the Islam exerts an important influence upon their everyday lives: Moroccan and Turkish students generally display a large extent of subjective involvement in the Islamic religion.[124] Accordingly, they indicate their main interest concerns the history of their religion.

The assumption that students are mainly interested in history of frameworks that noticeably influence their daily lives is supported by the interview following the questionnaire, in which students literally indicated they would be interested in learning more about history of topics *'That concern us all.'* According to this argumentation, native Dutch students, who indicate they are most interested in national Dutch history and history of their families, would encounter the frameworks of the nation and family most often.

Similarly, the relatively low levels of interest in European history might indicate the European framework exerts a limited noticeable influence upon students' everyday lives. In other words, Europe only marginally concerns students' personal life, at least as far as students themselves are concerned. Europe does not really gear to students' perception of their environment. This observation is

[123] J. Veenman and H. Houtkoop, *Interviewen in de multiculturele samenleving. Problemen en oplossingen* (Assen 2002), 14.
[124] K. Phalet, C. van Loteringen and H. Entzinger, *Islam in de multiculturele samenleving. Opvattingen van jongeren in Rotterdam* (Utrecht 2000), 47.

subscribed to by Wilco, who, during the second interview, claimed that *'I do encounter Europe, but I never really realise it.'*

Nevertheless, native Dutch students tend to find Europe more interesting than their counterparts of foreign origin. Compared to allochthonous students, they mention European history as part of their top-5 of most interesting kinds of history more than twice as often (67,4% versus 31,9%). This might indicate Europe plays a more prominent part in native students' lives.

While table 4.3 refers to the kinds of history students find *interesting*, table 4.4[125] provides an overview of kinds of history students find *important*. From this table, it appears that interesting kinds of history largely correspond to important kinds of history, as far as students are concerned. Furthermore, native Dutch students find history of Europe more important than students of foreign origin. Allochthonous students do not mention history of Europe as a part of their top-5 of most important kinds of history at all, whereas native students put European history at number four. Once more, this might imply that Europe plays a more prominent part in native students' personal lives.

At the same time, for both native and non-native students, history of other frameworks is viewed as considerably more important than the European one. Within this context, it is striking how all students indicate they find world-history more important than European history.

Summarising, the results of the questionnaire indicate students are most interested in history of frameworks importantly influencing their personal lives. Similarly, they tend to find these kinds of history most important. Correspondingly, it appears from figures 4.3 and 4.4 that the nation, family and religion concern the different students' lives most prominently. Compared to these frameworks, Europe only plays a limited part in everyday student-life. Within the context of the second stage of meaning-construction, it might therefore be concluded that Europe's meaning to students is limited when compared to the meaning of other frameworks, such as that of the nation, family and religion.

[125] Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden,* chapter 5.

What kinds of history do you find most important?*

Respondents from The Netherlands n=209	Rank	% No. 1
Native students n=88		
History country of origin parents (S)	1	33,7
History country one lives in (S)	2	24,7
History supra-national world	3	16,9
History supra-national Europe (S)	4	4,5
Gs sub-national country one lives in (S)	5	4,5
Surinamese &Antillean n=36		
History of family (S)	1	50,0
History sub-national country of origin (S)	2	25,0
History country of origin parents (S)	3	22,2
History supra-national world	4	17,1
History sub-national country of origin parents (S)	5	11,4
Moroccan n=41		
History of religion (S)	1	35,0
History of family (S)	2	25,0
History country of origin parents (S)	3	12,5
History sub-national country of origin (S)	4	10,0
History supra-national world	4	10,0
History sub-national country one lives in (S)	5	10,0
Turkish n=44		
History of religion (S)	1	31,8
History country of origin parents (S)	2	20,5
History supra-national world	3	15,9
History of family (S)	4	13,7
History sub-national country one lives in (S)	5	6,8

4.4 Importance of kinds of history
(S) = significant

*For a methodological account of these data, please refer to Grever and Ribbens 'Methodologische bijlage' in M. Grever and K. Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudige verleden.*

Furthermore, native Dutch students find history of Europe relatively more important than their counterparts of foreign origin. This might indicate Europe relatively plays a more prominent part in native students' lives. In other words, when ranking different frameworks, native students seem to find Europe concerns their personal lives to some extent, whereas allochthonous students seem to feel other frameworks are more important as far as their personal lives are concerned. This indicates Europe has a relatively more pronounced meaning to native students than to students of foreign origin.

Since many students of native origin seem to find that Europe at least to a certain extent concerns their personal lives, it might be concluded that the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe includes stages one, two and three, as far as these students are concerned.

The third stage refers to the feeling one is a part of Europe. During the interview following the questionnaire, students were asked to define European history. According to these students, European history included such topics as classical antiquity, formation of modern Western politics, the Industrial Revolution, both World Wars, the Cold War, and superpowers in every century. However, when asked to indicate what they considered their own personal history, they came up with different topics, none of which included the European kinds of history. Students' own history consists of Dutch national history and, in the case of students of foreign origin, history of their respective countries of origin. Furthermore, history of their personal lives was considered their own history, as well as the history of their city and religion.

Apparently, European history is not viewed as part of students' personal histories. This might indicate students do not realise they are part of Europe. This proposition is supported by the second interview, during which Wilco expressly claimed: *'I do not feel European, I feel Dutch.'* Marc agrees: *'I do not feel European. I differ from a Spaniard as much as from someone coming from outside of Europe. I even think Australia and America relate to me to a greater extent than Spain does.'* Sharai complements this statement by adding that '*it is the same with those Eastern bloc-countries. We differ so much from them, whereas America is more like us, especially as*

far as technology is concerned, and also in the field of knowledge and way of life.' Erik on the other hand is not so sure: *'When I am in a Dutch city, I do not feel like a tourist, even if I would visit a museum. However, if I do the same in Belgium or Germany, I do experience a sense of tourism. That is why I do not think I feel European. On the other hand, if I am in America and I meet a Frenchman, I do have this feeling of recognition: hey, that is a European too. So I am not sure whether or not I am a European.'*

At first sight, it seems that Erik is the only one seriously considering the possibility he is part of Europe. Nevertheless, the unconditional certainty with which the other students claim not to feel European should be modified to a certain extent. Although Marc explicitly claims he does not feel European, he implicitly indicates he does experience a certain sense of 'Europeanness' in certain situations: *'The idea of economic cooperation is good, as well as political cooperation, because this way, we can take a stand against America.'* The same holds true for Wilco when he claims *'America has been useful to us.'* Europe, in this context is referred to as 'us', which means Wilco does feel part of Europe in certain situations, even though he might not always be aware of it.

It is striking that for both Marc and Wilco, as well as for Erik, the feeling of belonging to Europe emerges when contrasting Europe to external entities such as America (which is all the more remarkable, since Marc claims he relates to America more than he does to certain European countries). Apparently, the students tend to experience a sense of Europeanness when focussing upon Europe's external context. Within this context, students implicitly seem to define an inside group (us Europeans), which is contrasted against an outside group (them Americans).

However, when focussing internally, students mainly tend towards concentrating upon Europe's internal differences. Illustratively, Marc, who claims that political cooperation is a positive development, for it enables Europe to take a stand against America, does indicate that *'European countries should not lose their authenticity as far as culture is concerned.'*

As far as the third stage of meaning-construction regarding Europe is concerned, it might thus be concluded that the students, although they not always aware of it, do consider themselves part of Europe in certain situations. This

indicates the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe includes all four discerned stages as far as these students are concerned.

The final stage in the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe includes valuation. During this stage, it is assessed whether being part of Europe should be conceived of as something positive, negative or neutral.

For both Wilco and Marc, being a part of Europe does not seem to have a positive connotation. Marc indicates that *'the EU used to be a good trade-organisation. But at a certain point in time, those new countries joined, and they just do not make a valuable contribution. (…) I think that the EU does not benefit the Netherlands at all anymore.'* Wilco agrees: *'I think that the formation of an economic bloc is a very positive development. (…) But nowadays, Europe plays the underdog-position. It is all nice and well, but the way it goes now, it just harms rich countries that already had things fixed. (…) I really think that is utter nonsense.'*

From these quotes, it appears that both Marc and Wilco certainly do not positively appraise being part of Europe. On the contrary, Wilco even perceives of Europe as hampering rich countries (to which he belongs) from fully exploiting their potential.

Erik on the other hand, does only partly agree: '*I think the EU does have an important position: peacekeeping and development-aid, I think that is very positive.'* Marc: *'But that will be kind of hard to achieve, since Europe does not have any military power'* Erik: *'well, they do influence things.'* As far as Erik is concerned, Europe does represent something positive. Consequently, he might conceive of belonging to Europe as something positive.

As appears from the above, Europe does have a certain meaning to students: the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe includes all discerned stages. Returning to the starting point of this section, it might thus be concluded an important precondition for student identification with Europe is complied with.

4.3 Conclusion

Summing up the above, it could be concluded that the process of meaning construction regarding Europe includes all discerned stages, as far as the students I interviewed are concerned. The students are aware of the existence of Europe and its dimensions and many of them seem to realise Europe concerns their personal lives to at least a certain extent. Furthermore, although they might not at all times be aware of it, the students do consider themselves part of Europe in certain situations, especially when focussing upon Europe's external context. When dealing with this external context, they, often implicitly, define an inside group ('us Europeans'), which is contrasted against outside group ('them Americans'). Nevertheless, when dealing with Europe in an intra-European context, the definitions of inside and outside groups tend to change such that the students do not seem to feel part of Europe-at-large at all. Within the intra-European context, the inside group is defined as 'us Dutch' or us 'Western-Europeans', whereas the outside group refers to 'them Eastern-Europeans', 'them Southern-Europeans' or even 'them non-Dutch Europeans'.

Furthermore, the students generally do not seem to conceive of belonging to Europe as something positive. Both Wilco and Marc explicitly indicate they do not positively appraise being a part of Europe. For them, Europe nowadays mainly represents something negative, something hampering their inside group from fully using its potential. Erik is the only student that might actually positively interpret the fact he is a part of Europe. Not only does he indicate he does feel European in certain situations, Europe for him also represents something positive.

Nevertheless, levels of support for belonging to Europe generally prove to be rather low amongst students. How could this be explained? First of all, low levels of European support are a consequence of Europe's negative image amongst students. In order for students to positively appraise being part of Europe, they should consider Europe as something positive. Europe should be conceived of as ultimately making a positive contribution to the student frame of reference. According to most students, this is not the case however. They rather conceive of Europe as an entity

hampering The Netherlands (as their main frame of reference) from using its potential. This partly explains why students hardly consider belonging to Europe as something positive.

There is an explanation behind this though. As indicated above, students are often unaware of the third stage of the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe. Both interviews showed most students do not realise they are in fact part of Europe. This might indicate there is no such thing as a European entity students feel they belong to. To use Benedict Anderson's terminology[126]: Europe represents no explicit 'imagined community' to which students find themselves connected. Even though they do tend to feel they belong to Europe in certain situations, students might often not be aware of having these feelings. As appears from figure 4.2, this awareness is an important precondition for a positive assessment of being a part of Europe. Consequently, the fact that many students do not realise they are part of Europe, hampers them from positively conceiving of belonging to Europe.

Within the framework of this thesis, the influence of history-education upon students' construction of meaning regarding Europe is investigated. As far as students' construction of meaning regarding Europe is concerned, it is striking that many students do not seem to realise they are in fact part of Europe. Although students indicate they learn about European topics within the context of history-education, history-education apparently fails to effectively make clear to students they are part of Europe. Within the next chapter, I will investigate this phenomenon.

[126] See: B. Anderson, *Imagined communities.*

5. EUROPE IN HISTORY EDUCATION

'Many people are convinced of the need for European cooperation. Economically, the common market results in important advantages, whereas many other issues (…) can only be dealt with collectively.
Nevertheless, not all people are happy with the expanding European unification.
Increasing levels of European cooperation hamper the Dutch government from keeping the upper hand over Dutch society.'[127]

The above position was put forward in a history-textbook, which is oriented towards Dutch students in their last three years of pre-university education. It represents one of the ways in which Europe is presented to students within the framework of history education. This quote might help students to assign a certain meaning to Europe: by enumerating possible advantages and disadvantages of European integration, students are enabled to decide whether or not Europe for them refers to something positive or negative, which, as was made clear in the preceding chapter, ultimately will affect student identification with Europe.

This chapter will be dedicated to the representation of Europe within the framework of history education. History education within The Netherlands is based upon different textbooks. Therefore, an investigation of the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education, should include a textbook-analysis. The students I interviewed are taught history by means of a method called *Memo*. This method provides with a textbook and working-book oriented towards students in their last three years of pre-university education.

However, within The Netherlands, schoolbooks often serve merely as background material within the framework of history education. Books are certainly

[127] C. Backx (et all), *Memo. Geschiedenis voor de Tweede Fase. Handboek VWO*, 181.

not always gone through systematically.[128] History teachers have a relatively large amount of freedom in deciding how to address different historical issues.[129] Therefore, teachers' outlooks will be investigated to complement schoolbook data. For this purpose, I will analyse the questionnaire *Using historical skills and concepts to promote an awareness of European citizenship*, which is included in appendix 4. The questionnaire was developed by EUROCLIO, the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations, within the framework of their annual training conference and professional development course taking place in March 2006 in Malta. The questionnaire was handed to EUROCLIO's member-associations and primarily aimed at raising debate amongst the conference participants.

However, the questionnaire generally proved to have been completed by the boards of the different history teachers associations, often without consulting their members. Since many of these boards do not merely comprise of history teachers at secondary schools – rather, retired teachers, prospective teachers and university and primary school teachers often make up important parts of these boards – their views may not fully represent the outlooks of their colleagues teaching at secondary schools. Therefore, the outcomes of the questionnaire will be complemented by an interview with a history teacher, who – not coincidentally – teaches the students I questioned during the second interview. A written record of this interview is included in appendix 5.

The analyses of both schoolbooks and teachers' outlooks will result in an overview of how Europe is represented within the framework of history education. The next section will deal with the European representation within students' history schoolbooks.

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[128] F. Pingel (et. all.), *The European home: representations of 20th century Europe in history textbooks,* 26.

[129] Recent developments did work to restrict this freedom to a certain extent however. Firstly, history teachers' professional skills are not regulated by law anymore, which might result in decreasing amounts of contents-related knowledge amongst many new history teachers. Furthermore, facilities of teacher-student interaction have considerably been reduced over the past years. Both developments ultimately will result in diminishing possibilities for teachers to arrange their history classes at their own discretion.

5.1 European representation in history schoolbooks

As indicated above, the students I interviewed are taught history by means of the *Memo* text- and working-book, which are oriented towards students in their last three years of pre-university education. Both textbook and working-book are structured thematically, by means of twelve separate modules, each consisting of four chapters, as well as a connecting final module, which explains how the historical issues discussed in the preceding modules relate to each other.

In order to investigate how Europe is represented within these schoolbooks, I will analyse the different modules by means of exploring whether or not Europe is mentioned within the framework of the different historical topics; how often Europe is mentioned; in which contexts Europe is mentioned; which dimensions of Europe are referred to; whether information about Europe is limited to objective facts, or includes normative elements that might influence student construction of meaning towards Europe and whether Europe is presented as something positive or negative. Below, I will present my observations organised by module.

Module 1: Know your classics! Roots of Western civilisation[130]

Module 1 concerns classic antiquity. It successively consists of the chapters Greek politics, Pax Romana, Inspiration (in which the meaning of classical antiquity to later Western society is discussed), as well as a dossier: what is classical?

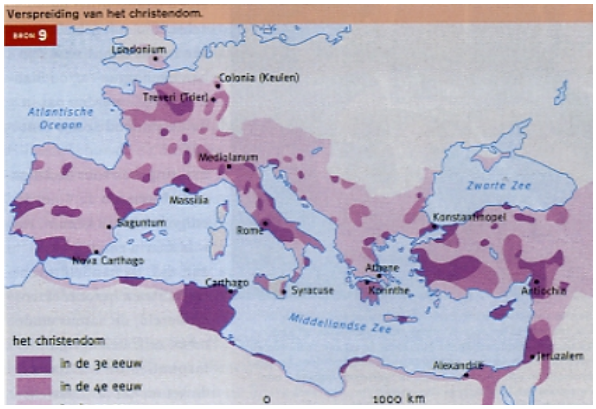
Many important events and processes characterising classical Greek and Roman history emerged within geographical Europe. Therefore, it might be concluded this module, amongst other regions, concerns Europe. The authors of *Memo* do not explicitly present classical antiquity as such however. Within the module's introduction, Europe is indirectly connected to classical antiquity, when it is explained how the euro as a European currency has its roots in classical Greek and Roman history.[131] Nevertheless, apart from this implicit reference to the European concept, Europe is not mentioned within the text at all.

[130] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 6-31.
[131] Idem, 7.

Visually, the different maps displaying the expansion of the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire and the spread of Christianity do show an important part of the European continent however. Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3[132] show how these maps present large parts of geographical Europe as the centre of classical Roman times.

5.1 Visual in Memo: the expansion of the Roman Republic

5.2 Visual in *Memo*: expansion of the Roman Empire



5.3 Visual in *Memo*: spread of Christianity

Even though Europe is not mentioned in the text, this module therefore does provide students with an opportunity to connect classic antiquity to Europe. The maps make clear how Roman antiquity was situated in large parts of Europe. This

[132] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 17,18.

might be the reason students refer to antiquity as European history, as indicated in the preceding chapter.

Module 2: At the stake! Witchcraft and witch-hunting[133]

Module 2 concerns the rise and fall of witch-hunting in late-medieval Europe. This module starts by making clear witch-hunting was an exclusively European phenomenon: *'Witches worshipped the devil. At least, this was a commonly held position within fifteenth- till seventeenth-century Europe. This did not always and anywhere use to be the case however. In many cultures in Asia and Africa, as well as in classical Europe, one did encounter witches. (…) It was only when witches in Christian Europe came to be associated with the devil, actual witch-hunts were organised.'*[134] At the start of the module, the topic of witch-hunting is thus implicitly put in a European context. The same holds true as far as the rest of the module is concerned. Within the first chapter, witchcraft and witch-hunting are connected with the words 'Europe' and 'European' no less than thirteen times.

Nevertheless, the students I interviewed did not mention witchcraft and witch-hunting when enumerating European kinds of history. The topics of witchcraft and witch-hunting were discussed during the interview shortly before the students were asked to enumerate topics concerning European history, thereby making it unlikely the students simply forgot to mention these topics. Most likely, students simply do not perceive of witchcraft and witch-hunting as European history, even though these topics are relatively firmly embedded in the European context within their history-textbooks.

Module 3: Family under steam. Family and the Industrial Revolution in England[135]

Within the preceding chapter of this thesis, it was indicated students perceive of the Industrial Revolution as European history. When analysing module 3 in *Memo*, it

[133] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 32-57.
[134] Idem, 33.
[135] Idem, 58-83.

becomes clear this perception is not likely to be a result of what the students have studied within the framework of this module.

Within this module, the Industrial Revolution is considered entirely from the English point of view. In the three main chapters of this module, Europe-at-large is not so much as briefly mentioned. It is only when discussing the demographic transition in the epilogue of chapter 3, it is for the first time suggested the Industrial Revolution might have concerned larger Europe as well: '*(…) which is why the Western-European population only increased on a very slow pace. This development, known as the demographic transition, was restricted to the industrialised West.'*[136] Consequently, this module is not likely to have been decisive as far as student perception of the Industrial Revolution as a European phenomenon is concerned.

Module 4: China. From Confucius to Mao Zedong[137]

Even though its title rightly implicates this module is primarily concerned with non-European history, Europe is dealt with to a certain extent. Throughout this module, China is often contrasted with Europe: *'While thriving China got back into its shell, Europe arose from the Middle ages. When China turned inwards, Europe expanded its vision towards the outer world.'*[138] *'Despite the presence of the Jesuits, Europe did not manage to impress China. However, within Europe, the interest in China proved to be overwhelming.'*[139]

From these quotes it appears Europe is presented as a unity within this module. Separate European countries, such as The Netherlands, Spain and Portugal are mentioned throughout the module, but when dealing with Chinese-European relations, Europe seems to constitute a whole. In other words: when dealing with its external context (China), Europe is represented as a unity.

This bears resemblance to student construction of meaning regarding Europe: as indicated in the preceding chapter, students tend to experience a sense of 'Europeanness' when focussing upon Europe's external context. When dealing with

[136] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 77.
[137] Idem, 84-109.
[138] Idem, 95.
[139] Idem, 97.

this external context, they, often implicitly, define an inside group ('us Europeans'), which is contrasted against an outside group. In other words: students tend to perceive of Europe as a unity when dealing with supra-European relations. Interestingly, within this module, *Memo* seems to reason along the same lines.

Module 5: The way to prosperity. The Netherlands and The US as from 1870[140]

This module aims at enabling students to answer three questions:

1. When did industrialisation emerge in The Netherlands and The United States and what societal changes did industrialisation cause?
2. Which were the causes of the crisis and how did the Dutch and US governments tackle the crisis?
3. How did a welfare state emerge in both countries after the end of World War II, and how did the welfare state affect both societies?

From these questions, it appears that students, when dealing with this module, are primarily incited to contrast The United States with the entity of The Netherlands.

Interestingly, as appeared from the preceding chapter, the students themselves tend to contrast The US with Europe as a whole. When dealing with The US, students seem to define their inside group more broadly than just 'us Dutch'. Rather, when confronted with the outside group 'Americans' they tend to define their inside group as 'us Europeans'. Apparently, this module, which incites students to consider the US-Dutch contrast, rather than the US-European contrast, did not noticeably affect this stage of meaning construction regarding Europe.

Module 6: Own country and own people. Nations, states, and nationalism[141]

Nation building, the formation of nation-states and nationalism pre-eminently characterised nineteenth-century Europe. *Memo* implicitly recognises this by explaining the different concepts by means of expounding the processes of German and Italian unification.

[140] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 110-135.
[141] Idem, 136-161.

Nevertheless, the issues of nationalism, nation building and the formation of nation states are not explicitly connected to nineteenth-century Europe-at-large. As a result, students might have difficulties relating these concepts to European history, which might explain why these topics were not mentioned when enumerating topics concerning European history.

Module 7: Who is in charge? Politics and polity in The Netherlands and Europe[142]

Within this module, Europe is explicitly discussed for the first time. Chapter 3, which is entitled 'The government retreats', includes a section covering the European Union, thereby discussing the political dimension of Europe. Within this section, the reader is mainly provided with factual, neutral information about the origins, development and institutions of the Union. Nevertheless, the section includes some rather subjective, opinion-forming information as well, which might serve as a handle for student construction of meaning regarding the political dimension of Europe: *'Many people are convinced of the need for cooperation. Economically, the common market results in important advantages, whereas many other issues, such as combating crime and pollution, can only be dealt with collectively. Nevertheless, not all people are happy with the expanding European unification. Often, one hears about the democratic deficit of Europe, (…) which results in diminishing possibilities for the European population to exert their influence upon the process of decision-making. (…) Increasing levels of European cooperation hamper the Dutch government from keeping the upper hand over Dutch society.'*[143] *'You are bound to encounter many different opinions about the European Union. Such as the statement Dutch culture will disappear as a result of European cooperation, or the statement the European Union or the euro weakens the Dutch economy.'*[144]

Furthermore, some of the questions in the working-book might help students to assign a certain meaning to the concept of Europe. Questions like '*are you aware*

[142] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 162-187.
[143] Idem, 181.
[144] Idem, 181.

of any differences between European countries?'[145]; '*How does The Netherlands distinguish itself within modernising Europe?*' and '*Do the Dutch still exist?*'[146] incite students to think about the position of individual countries within Europe. Similarly, the question in which students are asked to write a historically-founded comment about Wim Kok's claim that '*European integration resulted in a high measure of peace, stability, fortune and prosperity*' as well as to enumerate some arguments in favour and against European integration[147], forces students to work out whether or not European integration resulted in something positive or negative, which, as indicated in the preceding chapter, ultimately will affect student construction of meaning regarding Europe.

It is striking the authors chose to discuss the European Union within the context of the retreating Dutch government. Chapter 3, which covers the European Union, aims at answering the question '*Why did the influence of the government over Dutch society diminish?*' Consequently, the European Union is not so much judged on its merits, but is primarily perceived of as a factor resulting in a decreasing amount of influence of the Dutch government. As far as meaning-construction towards Europe is concerned, it follows from this observation that:

1. The Dutch framework, when compared to the European one, is of prime importance.
2. The prime meaning of Europe concerns the diminishing influence of the Dutch government.
3. If the Dutch framework is most important, and the influence of the Dutch framework diminishes as a result of the European framework, the European framework refers to something negative

This way, the textbook implicitly might influence student construction of meaning regarding Europe. In fact, student construction of meaning, as set forth within the preceding chapter, does correspond to *Memo*'s representation of the meaning of Europe to some extent. Erik, for example, indicated *'the individual vote will lose its*

[145] C. Backx (et all), *Memo. Geschiedenis voor de Tweede Fase. Werkboek VWO*, 130.
[146] Idem, 132.
[147] Idem, 130.

influence', after which Wilco claimed: *'I think that is a major disadvantage. It often appears that people do feel connected to their own country, but not at all to Europe, and still decision-making takes place at the European level, so these people have to go along because majority's vote counts.'*

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion student construction of meaning regarding Europe is directly influenced by their history-textbooks. First of all, the European Union only covers an ample two pages whereas the entire textbook consists of 352 pages. It is highly questionable to what extent students will actually remember the discussion of Europe amidst the abundance of information the textbook covers. Secondly, student construction of meaning, as outlined in the preceding chapter of this thesis, concerns issues *Memo* does not cover within this module. For example, Europe's negative valuation amongst students is not merely based on politics: it is mainly the supposed loss of economic power, which leads students to perceive of Europe as something negative.

It might therefore be concluded this module possibly influenced the meaning students assign to Europe to a certain (limited) extent. However, it certainly did not determine student construction of meaning regarding Europe.

Module 8: Dutchman in the East Indies. From the Dutch East Indies to Indonesia[148]

As indicated in chapter 3 of this thesis, colonialism was a European phenomenon, exerting a large extent of influence upon European self-awareness and identity. However, within *Memo*, colonialism is exclusively covered from the Dutch point of view, thereby implicitly representing colonialism as a Dutch, rather than a European phenomenon.

In a few instances, The Netherlands is equated with Europe: *'The internal administration was European (Dutch)'*[149] *'those were Dutch people, and people of mixed European-Indian origin.'*[150] Nevertheless, in general, colonialism is not

[148] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 188-213.
[149] Idem, 194.
[150] Idem, 203.

represented as something European within this module: it is merely covered from a Dutch angle.

Illustratively, most students do not seem to connect colonialism to Europe. When asked to enumerate historical issues concerning European history, the students did not mention colonialism. On the other hand, Erik, and Marc proved they conceive of colonialism as a European phenomenon. When they were asked to name the most important development in European history, Erik indicated: *'I think the foundation of the Dutch East India Company was most important, for it resulted in the world – the Dutch East Indies and such – starting to get involved.'* Marc: *'Yes, not specifically the Dutch East India Company, but such companies in general.'*

Module 9: War and peace. International relations 1900-1940[151]

This module covers the events and developments resulting in the Great War and discusses this War, as well as the run-up to World War II. In doing so, both World Wars are clearly represented as European phenomena. The Great War is referred to as a *'Major European trial of strength'*[152] *'It was the first time a war of such proportions, which killed or injured so many soldiers and civilians, had ravaged civilised Europe.'*[153] Similarly, World War II is presented as something European: *'It was only when Germany unexpectedly attacked Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and France in the spring of 1940, Western Europe actually got involved in the War.'*[154] Students might have adopted this European representation of the World Wars: both Wars are conceived of as European history.

When the intra-European context is dealt with within this chapter, the main focus is upon the different positions of the separate European countries. However, when dealing with Europe's external dimension, Europe unexceptionally is represented as a whole: *'For the first time in history, The United States got involved in a major European war. American soldiers died in a European war. When concluding the peace at Versailles, America played an important part in arranging European*

[151] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 214-239.
[152] Idem, 217.
[153] Idem, 222.
[154] Idem, 233.

affairs.'[155] And, after concluding the peace: *'America (…) retreated from European politics for years.'*[156]

Contrary to module 5, in which the authors contrasted The US against The Netherlands, within this module, America is contrasted with Europe-at-large. This bears resemblance to student construction of meaning regarding Europe: as indicated in the preceding chapter, students tend to experience a sense of European unity when dealing with the supra-European context, especially when dealing with America.

Module 10: Dictatorship and democracy. Germany and Russia C20th[157]

As the subtitle indicates, this module is entirely concerned with German and Russian politics during the twentieth century. Although both Germany and Russia make up part of the European continent, this module does not refer to Europe-at-large.

Remarkably, the students I interviewed indicated European history, according to them, does include the formation of modern Western politics. Dictatorship and democracy both are integrally related to the formation of modern Western politics. This leads to the conclusion the interpretation of modern Western politics as European history is not a result of studying this textbook.

Module 11: From Blitzkrieg to détente. World War II and the Cold War[158]

Module 11 discusses World War II, as well as the Cold War. As was the case within module 9, World War II is presented as a European phenomenon within this module. Within this context, the heading of section 1.1 is quite revealing: '*The War in Europe begins'*[159].

The Cold War, on the other hand, is mainly represented as a Russian-American affair: *'After World War II, the tensions between both power blocks, The*

[155] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO,* 223.
[156] Idem, 225.
[157] Idem, 240-265.
[158] Idem, 266-291.
[159] Idem, 268.

United States and The Soviet Union, resulted in smouldering hotbeds all across the world. Both power blocks were involved in many regional conflicts.'[160] The Cold War is not directly referred to as European within this module. Certain excrescences of the conflict are connected to Europe however: *'An Iron Curtain descended upon Europe.'*[161] It is possibly due to references like these, the students I interviewed indicate they conceive of the Cold War as European history.

Module 12: Islam. History of a religion[162]

As far as the European framework is concerned, the Islam is represented as a non-European religion within this module. Throughout the module, the Islamic religion of the Ottomans and Arabs is frequently contrasted with Europe. When discussing Islam from the Ottoman point of view within chapter 2 of this module, it is implicitly suggested Islamic history opposes European history: *'The technological modernisation in Europe and America, which resulted from the Industrial Revolution, did not penetrate here. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire increasingly lagged behind Europe.'*[163] Rather, it is suggested Christianity, as opposed to Islam, was inextricably connected to Europe: *'It was only when the Turks converted themselves to Islam and started resisting Christian pilgrims, and when violent crusades were employed from Europe, the hostile clash between Islam and Christianity emerged.'*[164]

From these quotes it appears the textbook implicitly suggests Islam and Europe proved to be antithetical throughout important parts of history. As far as the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe is concerned, studying this module might therefore lead to the conclusion Islam does not belong to Europe: Islam does not correspond to European culture.

[160] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 280.
[161] Idem, 275.
[162] Idem, 292-317.
[163] Idem, 304, 305.
[164] Idem, 307, 308.

Module 13: A century completed. Historical overview of the twentieth century[165]

Module 13 could be conceived of as a final, connecting module, explaining how the historical issues discussed in the preceding modules relate to each other. Some of the historical developments discussed in this module are directly or indirectly connected to Europe.

The Industrial Revolution is a development which is related to Europe. As indicated above, the Industrial Revolution was merely considered from the English point of view within module 3. However, within this module, the Revolution is positioned in a broader European context. It is, for example, claimed that: *'The car was just one of the inventions causing quite a fuss in Europe (…) during the turn of the century.'*[166] This European representation of the Industrial Revolution corresponds to student perception of the Revolution as a European phenomenon.

Similarly, the Great War and the run-up to World War II are connected to the European context: *'During the end of the nineteenth century, tensions between European states increased. (…) The shifting balance of power within Europe resulted in increasing tensions as well. (…) The intra-European relations were complicated even more by the situation at The Balkans.'*[167] These tensions eventually resulted in *'a war of a magnitude the European continent never had experienced before.'*[168] *'When Europe rose from the darkness of the War in 1918, the light revealed a devastated and highly impoverished continent.'*[169] The run-up to World War II is discussed within a section entitled '*Dark clouds above Europe'*[170], which suggests World War II is perceived of as a European phenomenon as well. Representations like these correspond to student perception of both Wars as part of European history.

Lastly, this module briefly discusses political Europe. This discussion is confined to a rather factual overview of the history of the European Communities as from the late 1970's until the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, by means of which the European Union formally was established.

[165] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO*, 318-351.
[166] Idem, 320.
[167] Idem, 324.
[168] Idem, 325.
[169] Idem, 328.
[170] Idem, 334.

5.2 *Memo* evaluated

After analysing the *Memo* schoolbooks, I will seize the opportunity to reflect on this method of history education in this section. Within this framework, I will expound on four observations I deduced from my analysis.

One of the first things I noticed while analysing *Memo,* is how the method aims at appealing to students' imagination. Throughout the entire textbook, much effort is devoted to presenting the subject-matter in inviting, attractive and appealing ways. Every effort is made to make clear history education is not about some remote and boring past, but rather concerns important events and developments, which are still affecting present-day society. Whilst presenting the past in these ways, students' historical sensations are the key-focus.

Regardless of the obvious advantages this way of presenting the past brings along, it does involve the risk of getting stuck on the micro-level, which comes at the expense of teaching students the broader historical context. As a result, even though students might learn a great deal from the rich descriptions this method involves, for it enables them to empathise with historical events, their textbooks do not encourage them to consider these events in a wider context. The longitudinal historical perspective is largely neglected: hardly any attention is devoted to longer lines through time and space. Consequently, students might have difficulties exceeding particularism in favour of gaining an overview of the broader historical development.

Memo proves not to be immune to this hazard. Within several modules, historical issues are covered from a micro point of view, thereby failing to make clear to students these issues are part of a broader historical context. For example, module 6, which deals with nation building, the formation of nation-states and nationalism, is entirely covered from the national point of view of several countries. The issues are not connected to nineteenth-century Europe-at-large, – even though these issues pre-eminently did characterise nineteenth-century Europe – which results in students not realising these topics concern European history. The same

holds true as far as the issues of colonialism (module 8) and dictatorship and democracy (module 10) are concerned.

This lack of historical overview is partly compensated by means of adding a final connecting module, which explains how some of the historical issues discussed in the preceding modules relate to each other. Nevertheless, this does not entirely remedy the above hazard, for module 13 by no means does incorporate all historical issues previously discussed.

My second observation refers to the amount of attention *Memo* devotes to the European framework. I found it quite striking how European history is hardly explicitly dealt with, even though certain issues covered would very well lend themselves to be placed in an explicit European perspective. As indicated within section 5.1, this specifically applies to the topics of classic antiquity, nation, states and nationalism, and the emergence of democracy and dictatorship.

Possibly, the authors consciously decided not to explicitly connect these historical issues to the European context in order to avoid the hazard of anachronisms. This goes to the heart of a specifically difficult dilemma in developing history schoolbooks: on the one hand, one will aim at not acting contrary to the core principals of the historical discipline by projecting contemporary concepts to the past or by applying finalism. On the other hand, one has to take students' levels of perception into account: students often still have to be learnt how to reason historically. This necessitates simplifying the historical process at times, which often involves applying finalism or using anachronisms.

However, the observation that Europe hardly explicitly is dealt with within the examined history textbook, might also have to do with the fact one inevitably has to make choices when developing a textbook. It is simply impossible to cover the entire past within the framework of a single textbook, and it furthermore proves to be impossible to represent even a limited amount of historical issues from all available points of view. Developing a history textbook therefore always will involve making a strategic selection. This refers to yet another dilemma authors of history textbooks have to deal with: which criteria should be employed in order to select the subject matter to be covered within the textbook?

Thirdly, from my analysis, it appears the authors of *Memo* – like anyone dealing with history – are not free from providing their readers with implicit subjective information. In my opinion, there is no such thing as presenting a 'neutral' historical truth: dealing with history will at any times include an element of interpretation. One will not be able to fully part from ones context: history will always be considered from a certain frame of reference, which inevitably colours ones impression and representation of historical events and developments. Authors of history textbooks should give due consideration to this matter. From my analyses of both module 7 and module 12, it appears the authors of *Memo* did not entirely succeed in taking this matter into account. By implying Europe refers to something negative, for it diminishes the influence of the national frame of reference, and by implying important parts of European history and Islam prove to be antithetical, both modules contain concealed meanings regarding Europe, which might better have been made explicit or omitted all together. This way, the risk of implicitly imposing the authors' convictions upon students would have been reduced.

Lastly, I observed *Memo*'s authors did miss some important opportunities of making history education more appealing to students of foreign origin and passed over the opportunity of getting these students more involved. This particularly applies to module 12, which covers Islamic history. As indicated above, this module implicitly propagates Europe and Islam used to be antithetical throughout large parts of history. The fact that Islam used to be of major influence upon Europe and its history is entirely passed over, whereas this message might interest many Muslim-students indicating they find history education rather unappealing as it is.

The same holds true for the discussion of both World Wars, which are wrongly represented as mainly European phenomena within *Memo.* Both Wars affected many overseas colonies, and did not merely concern Westerners. For example, World War II proved to be a war of exercising control over economic and human recourses as well. On land and sea, there was fighting over Turkish chrome, Antillean oil, and Surinamese bauxite. Furthermore, many soldiers from Morocco

participated in the War.[171] By omitting these non-Western elements of both Wars, *Memo* misses the opportunity of appealing to non-Dutch students' perceptions. This observation is rather striking, considering my earlier observation that *Memo* makes an important attempt at presenting history education's subject matter in ways that appeal to students.

5.3 Teachers interpreting European history

As indicated before, the contents of history education within The Netherlands are not confined to schoolbooks. History teachers have a relatively large amount of freedom in deciding how to address different historical issues. Therefore, in order to draw a more complete picture of how Europe is represented within the framework of history education, this section will investigate how Dutch teachers deal with Europe during their history lessons. For this purpose, I will use the EUROCLIO questionnaire *Using historical skills and concepts to promote an awareness of European citizenship*, as completed by the board of the Dutch Association of History Teachers, VGN. The VGN represents more than 1800 history teachers within The Netherlands. Furthermore, this questionnaire will be complemented by the outlooks of Sharai's, Marc's, Wilco's and Erik's history teacher.[172] This teacher – male, 33 years old – is one of my fellow students. He teaches history on a part-time basis (0,8 fte), while finishing his Masters' degree in History of Society.

It appears from the questionnaire that the European dimension is not extensively being discussed within the Dutch debate on history as a school subject. Nor does there seem to be a discussion on whether or not the curriculum should contain more European history. This view is subscribed to by the teacher I interviewed, who indicated that: *'Europe is not much of an issue within the framework of history education. It certainly is no topic of debate amongst my colleagues and myself. I have never even so much as talked about it with my colleagues.'*

[171] A. van den Oord, *Allochtonen van nu en de oorlog van toen. Marokko, de Nederlandse Antillen, Suriname en Turkije in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 3.
[172] A methodological account of the interview is included in appendix 3.

Apparently, history teachers generally feel there is no need to discuss European history. This might indicate many history teachers are of the opinion the amount and contents of European history within the curriculum are sufficient. The history teacher I interviewed does think so: *Personally, I approve of the amount of 'Europe' the curriculum provides.*' However, it might also indicate European history is not a topic of prime importance to most history teachers. As a result, teachers might find European history is just not worth discussing, even if one does not agree with its amount and contents within the curriculum.

Figure 5.4 includes question 3 of the EUROCLIO questionnaire, as completed by the VGN-board.

3. Please quote, translating to English, the general aims of your country's history curriculum that refer to <u>European citizenship:</u>

By **European citizenship** we mean not only a set of legal, civic, social rights and responsibilities, but also a means of participation and an affective attachment.

- For ages 13-18 (if applicable):

1. Environmental and family history
2. History of the Middle Ages
3. History of the Second World War
4. The Netherlands as a part of Europe

5.4 Most important topics referring to Europe according to the VGN-board

It appears from this figure that, as far as the VGN-board is concerned, the most important topics referring to Europe within the Dutch history curriculum include such issues as environmental and family history, history of the Middle Ages, history of World War II, and The Netherlands as a part of Europe.

When comparing these European kinds of history to those enumerated by students, the lack of conformity is remarkable. As far as environmental and family history is concerned, the students did not display any awareness of a link between these kinds of history and Europe. The Middle Ages did come up during the second interview, yet the students concluded this timeframe should not be related to Europe in its broad definition: *'You can hardly claim the Middle Ages concerned*

Europe. Everything was so separate back then.' 'I think that, when considering the Middle Ages within the framework of Europe, Europe refers to a totally different concept.' 'Just Europe as a continent.' Lastly, the preceding chapter made clear the students mostly do not conceive of The Netherlands as a part of Europe: when dealing with the intra-European context, many students, whilst claiming they do identify with The Netherlands, do not experience a sense of belonging to Europe. In other words: when dealing with the national frame of reference, students do not feel a part of Europe. It is only when dealing with Europe's external context, the students I interviewed seem to realise they – and with them their country – do belong to Europe. Consequently, the VGN-board and the students I interviewed only seem to agree on World War II as European history.

Within this context, it is striking the history teacher I interviewed indicated the only European historical issues covered within the framework of his history classes include both World Wars: *'other topics are either discussed from a national or world-perspective. Even the European Union is hardly ever dealt with. After all, this is not much of a 'sexy' topic: it hardly appeals to students. Europe as an entity is never being discussed during my classes.'* Both World Wars are covered from a European perspective however. It is mainly made clear to students these developments concern European history by means of Europe's geographical dimension: *'When explaining the causes of and run-up to the Wars to students, I usually draw a map on the blackboard, indicating which countries were involved in both Wars. This inevitably results in drawing a map of Europe, which clarifies the Wars concerned Europe.'*

Summing up the above, it might be concluded that students' views towards topics concerning European history and teachers' outlooks towards this matter deviate in important ways. It is only when dealing with both World Wars, teachers and students seem to subscribe to each others views.

5.4 Conclusion

Based upon the preceding section, it might be concluded there is a discrepancy between what teachers claim to teach students about Europe and what students

actually pick up about this concept. Students and teachers only agree on both World Wars as European issues.

Schoolbooks seem to bear a larger extent of resemblance to students' views on European history. Section 5.1 showed some of the topics students referred to as European history, are in fact – directly or indirectly – represented as such within their textbooks. This applies to the topics of classical antiquity, the industrial revolution, and both World Wars. Nevertheless, certain topics students refer to as European history, such as colonialism, the formation of modern Western politics and the Cold War, are not related to the European context within their schoolbooks. Furthermore, within the investigated history textbook, the topics of witchcraft and witch-hunting are firmly embedded within the European context, whereas students do not seem to perceive of these topics as European history. It might therefore be concluded that schoolbooks only limitedly influence students' perceptions of European history.

As far as student construction of meaning regarding Europe is concerned, it might be concluded students often reason along the lines as set forth in their history textbooks. When dealing with Europe's external context (China, Turkey, The United States), Europe is often represented as a unity within the framework of history education. This bears resemblance to students' constructions of meaning regarding Europe: as indicated in the preceding chapter, students tend to perceive of Europe as a unity when dealing with supra-European relations. Similarly, within module 7, it is indicated European cooperation comes at the expense of Dutch autonomy, which implicitly is represented as something negative. This representation of Europe's meaning does correspond to student construction of meaning to some extent.

Nevertheless, these findings do not evidently lead to the conclusion that student construction of meaning regarding Europe is directly influenced by history education. Student construction of meaning, as outlined in the preceding chapter of this thesis, proves to be a plural process, concerning a variety of aspects, not all of which are dealt with within the framework of history education.

It might therefore be concluded that the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education, only resemble students' views towards Europe to a certain extent. The next chapter will provide with possible explanations for this phenomenon.

6. EUROPE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

'Through history education we should build an open European identity.'[173]

The above position represents one of the main conclusions of the Conference on *Apprendre l'histoire de l'Europe*, which took place in Blois, France on 13 and 14 October 2000. It indicates history education could be deployed as a means of identity-formation, which ultimately implies history education enables students to construct a certain meaning towards Europe. In other words: the above position indicates history education exerts a certain amount of influence on student construction of meaning regarding Europe.

In this chapter, I will investigate whether or not this is indeed the case. Within the preceding chapters, I successively investigated students' constructions of meaning regarding Europe and the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education. This chapter will serve as a synthesis, in which both investigations will be set side by side and conscientiously compared, in order to explore the influence of history education on student construction of meaning regarding Europe. Lastly, this chapter will aim at explaining this relation.

6.1 History education and meaning-construction regarding Europe

Within chapter 4 of this thesis, I identified four subsequent stages characterising the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe. These stages included the knowledge-stage of being aware of the existence of Europe and its dimensions, the cognitive stage of realising Europe concerns ones personal life, the affective stage of feeling a part of Europe, and the stage of valuation: how does one assess being part of Europe?

[173] J. van der Leeuw - Roord, 'History on the European agenda! Conference on *Apprendre l'histoire de l'Europe,* Blois, France on October 13 and 14, 2000'.

As far as the first stage of meaning-construction regarding Europe is concerned, the students I interviewed displayed an awareness of the existence of Europe and its various dimensions. My research indicates Europe's geographical dimension is not discussed within the framework of history education, thereby making it unlikely student awareness of this dimension is influenced by the school subject of history.

Politically, Europe, according to the students, refers to cooperation between separate European entities resulting in some measure of unity, which anyhow includes the framework of the European Union. Within modules 7 and 13 of their textbooks, the students are provided with factual, objective information about the origins, development and institutions of the Union. Although it is likely the students already were well aware of the existence of political Europe beforehand, studying both modules might have enhanced their knowledge of this European dimension.

Student awareness of Europe's cultural-historical dimension might have been influenced by history-education as well. The preceding chapter made clear some of the historical issues students perceived of as European history, are in fact – directly or indirectly – presented as such within the framework of history education. This applies to the topics of classical antiquity, the industrial revolution, and both World Wars. Nevertheless, certain topics students refer to as European history, are not related to the European context within their schoolbooks. Furthermore, certain historical issues are firmly embedded within the European context by either textbooks or teachers, whereas students do not seem to perceive of these topics as European history. Apparently, the ways in which European history is represented within the framework of history education, only resemble students' views towards European history to a certain extent.

Furthermore, Europe's cultural-historical dimension refers to more than just European history. The students indicated it includes such questions as whether or not there is something like a single shared European culture as well. My research indicates this issue is not addressed within the framework of history education, which illustrates students' awareness of Europe's cultural-historical dimension only

partly corresponds to European representations within the framework of history education.

As far as the first stage of student construction of meaning regarding Europe is concerned, it might thus be concluded history education possibly exerts some influence upon students' awareness of Europe and its dimensions. However, the measure of influence is limited and only concerns the political and cultural-historical dimensions.

The second stage of meaning-construction refers to the realisation Europe concerns ones personal life. Grever and Ribbens' *History* questionnaire and both interviews show many students of native Dutch origin seem to find that Europe concerns their personal lives to at least a certain extent. Nevertheless, my research indicates history education does not consider this issue. Neither teachers nor textbooks seem to explicitly deal with this cognitive stage of meaning-construction, by making clear to students Europe does not refer to some remote entity with which students hardly have anything to do, but rather concerns their personal lives. Consequently, history education is likely to be of negligible influence as far as the second stage of meaning-construction regarding Europe is concerned.

The third, affective, stage of student construction of meaning regarding Europe does bear some resemblance to the way in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education. Although they might not at all times be aware of it, the students I interviewed tend to experience a sense of 'Europeanness' when focussing upon Europe's external context. When dealing with this external context, they, often implicitly, define an inside group ('us Europeans'), which is contrasted against an outside group. In other words: students tend to perceive of Europe as a unity when dealing with supra-European relations. Interestingly, their history school books argue along the same lines: when dealing with Europe's external context (China, Turkey, The United States), Europe seems to constitute a whole and is often represented as a unity.

This is not to say history education ascertains the third stage of student construction of meaning however. First of all, the above only describes part of what this stage entails as far as the students I interviewed are concerned: when dealing

with Europe in an intra-European context, the definitions of inside and outside groups tend to change such that Europe no longer seems to constitute a whole. As a result, the students do not seem to feel part of Europe-at-large at all. My research indicates this intra-European context is hardly explicitly dealt with within the framework of history education. Secondly, even when just considering Europe's external context, the external European context only covers limited parts of three modules within students' textbooks, whereas the entire textbook consists of thirteen modules. Moreover, Europe's external context is mostly dealt with in an implicit and indirect manner. Taking into account the large amounts of information history education offers students, it remains to be seen to what extent these indirect bits of information will actually be remembered, let alone used to construct a certain meaning towards Europe.

The final, valuating stage characterising the process of student construction of meaning regarding Europe seems to be influenced by students' textbooks at first sight. Within module 7, it is claimed that European cooperation comes at the expense of national Dutch autonomy, which implicitly is represented as something negative. Students' assessments of Europe largely correspond to this train of thought. Two of the students I interviewed indicate they perceive of Europe as ultimately making a negative contribution to their 'in-group': Europe hampers The Netherlands (as their main frame of reference) from using its potential.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion student construction of meaning regarding Europe is directly influenced by their history-textbooks. First of all, the argument as set forth above only covers an ample two pages, whereas the entire textbook consists of 352 pages. It is highly questionable to what extent students will actually remember the discussion of Europe amidst the abundance of information the textbook covers. Secondly, students' assessments of Europe concern several issues that are not addressed within the framework of history education. Europe's negative valuation amongst students is not merely based on politics: it is mainly the supposed loss of economic power, which leads some students to perceive of Europe as something negative. Furthermore, Europe is by no means negatively valuated by all students.

It might thus be concluded history education only exerts a limited influence upon student construction of meaning regarding Europe. By means of addressing certain issues concerning European history, history education is likely to increase student knowledge of Europe, thereby influencing the first stage of the process of meaning-construction. However, the second stage of this process seems not to be influenced by history education at all. Even though the last two stages of student construction of meaning regarding Europe do bear some resemblance to the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education, it is unlikely history education directly determined these stages. Student construction of meaning regarding Europe therefore largely seems to emerge independently of history education. The next section will provide with possible explanations for this phenomenon.

6.2 Towards possible explanations

As appears from the previous section, history education seems to exert a limited influence upon student construction of meaning regarding Europe. Taking into account history as a school subject is supposed to be of considerable influence when it comes to student identity[174], this conclusion is rather striking. How could this be explained?

First of all, Europe only makes up a limited part of history educations' subject matter. Within the examined textbook, the extensive discussion of a wide variety of topics comes at the expense of European history. Throughout the book, Europe is rarely mentioned. Furthermore, teachers, by means of the EUROCLIO questionnaire, indicated the available curriculum hardly encourages teaching about periods and developments with a European dimension. According to the VGN, the curriculum does not aim at making students aware of the different meanings of Europe. As a result, students learn relatively little about Europe within the framework of history education. Limited input results in limited output: if students are only limitedly

[174] See: chapter 2.

taught about Europe within the framework of history education, the influence of history education upon student construction of meaning will be limited accordingly.

Secondly, when Europe is addressed within the framework of history education, this often occurs in an implicit and indirect manner. Often, it only becomes clear certain topics concern European history by means of indicative descriptions. For example, when discussing witchcraft and witch-hunting, it is claimed that: '*In many cultures in Asia and Africa, as well as in classical Europe, one did encounter witches. (…) It was only when witches in Christian Europe came to be associated with the devil, actual with-hunts were organised.'*[175] From this claim, it can be deduced witch-hunting was a European phenomenon. However, this is not explicitly stated. Due to the absence of such explicit indications students might not recognise topics as European history. As a result, students will not relate certain historical issues to the European context, which implies studying these topics will exert no influence upon the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe.

Thirdly, even if students recognise certain topics as European history, these topics hardly gear to students' perceptions of their environment. For example, module 7 of the investigated textbook is one of the few modules in which Europe is explicitly and directly dealt with. However, even within this module, it is not explicitly made clear Europe concerns students' personal lives. Instead, the module is limited to a rather factual overview of the history and the institutions of the European Union, whilst dedicating a few paragraphs to possible advantages and disadvantages of European cooperation.

As indicated in chapter 4 of this thesis, realising Europe concerns one's personal life is an important aspect of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe: Europe should gear to students' perceptions of their environment in order for them to assign a certain meaning to the concept. From my analyses, it appears this stage is largely absent within the framework of history education. Students are not taught Europe concerns their personal lives. In other words: the second stage of

[175] Backx (et all), *Memo. Handboek VWO,* 33.

the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe is passed over within the framework of history education.

As a result, history education seems to be operating in a vacuum as far as Europe is concerned: if history education fails to make clear to students Europe concerns their personal lives, it will correspondingly fail to make clear students are part of Europe, and will thus fail to exert influence upon students' valuations of Europe. Consequently, history education only limitedly influences student construction of meaning regarding Europe.

However, the limited influence of history education on student construction of meaning regarding Europe is not a mere result of the set-up and organisation of history education in relation to Europe. An important development, of which the origins should be plotted outside the scope of history education itself, seems to have been working for the diminishing influence of history education on student historical construction of meaning in general: the immense flow of information and access to new types of media unsettled the status of the once privileged schoolbook, and undermined the authority of history teachers.[176] As a result, providing students with historical information is not the privilege of history education anymore. Nowadays, the sources available to students to acquire knowledge of the past prove to be numerous, and include such resources as family and neighbourhood; traditions and rituals; education in local and hobby clubs; school and libraries; books, magazines and newspapers; movies; museums; television, radio and internet; DVD's, video's, computer games, and Pod casts; historical tourism and historical theme parks.[177] Amidst this abundance of information, history education increasingly proves to be but one of the sources of information available about the past. Not surprisingly, its influence on student construction of meaning regarding Europe is limited. Students have many different other sources of information to turn to in deciding what Europe means to them.

[176] M. Grever, 'Beyond the canon. What remains of history'.
[177] Idem. See also: M. Grever and S. Stuurman (eds.), *Beyond the canon. History for the twenty-first century* , 10.

6.3 Conclusion

As appeared from the preceding sections, student construction of meaning regarding Europe largely seems to emerge independently of history education. As far as the first stage of meaning-construction is concerned, it might be concluded that, although students most likely already were well aware of the existence of Europe beforehand, studying history might have enhanced their knowledge of Europe and its dimensions. However, the second, cognitive stage of meaning-construction is largely passed over within the framework of history education. Consequently, history education is likely to be of negligible influence as far as this stage of meaning-construction regarding Europe is concerned.

The third stage of student construction of meaning regarding Europe does bear some resemblance to the ways in which Europe is presented within the framework of history education. Nevertheless, even in this respect, the influence of history education is likely to be limited. The same holds true as far as the fourth stage of meaning-construction is concerned: even though this stage largely corresponds to the European representation within the examined textbook, the actual influence of history education on this stage of student construction of meaning is likely to be restricted. It might therefore be concluded history education only influences the process of constructing a certain meaning towards Europe to a certain (limited) extent.

This might be explained by means of three interrelated arguments. First of all, Europe only makes up a limited part of history educations' subject matter. If students only learn little about Europe within the framework of history education, the influence of history education upon student construction of meaning will be limited accordingly. Furthermore, even when Europe is dealt with within the framework of history education, this often occurs in an implicit and indirect manner. As a result, students might not relate certain historical issues to the European context, which implies that studying these topics will exert no influence upon the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe. Lastly, even when students do relate certain historical issues to the European context, they often do not seem to

realise these issues concern their personal lives. As a result, history education seems to operate in a vacuum as far as Europe is concerned: European history does not gear to students' perceptions of their environment. Since this is an important aspect of, and prerequisite for, constructing a certain meaning towards Europe, history education will only limitedly influence student construction of meaning regarding Europe. As a result, students are likely to construct a certain meaning towards Europe independently of what they learn within the framework of history education.

However, the limited influence of history education on students' constructions of meaning regarding Europe is not merely due to the internal structure of history education itself. Over the past decennia, a multitude of new sources of information about the past have become available to students. As a result, history education increasingly lost its hegemony as the prime source of historical information. Students have many different other sources to consult. Consequently, the opportunities of influencing students' outlooks towards the past by means of history education are likely to have been reduced. Therefore, the influence history education exerts on student construction of meaning regarding Europe is limited accordingly.

With these conclusions, this thesis comes full circle. Within the preceding chapters, I gathered the data needed to formulate an answer to the research question as set forth in the introduction of this thesis. Within the next, concluding, chapter, this research question will be answered.

7. CONCLUSION

'Citizens want to be involved in European affairs: Europe needs to be theirs. (...) Citizens need to be better informed. (...) Many people just do not know enough about Europe, and things people are unacquainted with, generally prove to be unpopular. (...) It appears there is a need for more information (...) through education and teaching.'[178]

After a 100-days period of dialogue with citizens, which marked the start of the Balkenende IV cabinet, the Dutch government concluded that Dutch people generally feel they do not get sufficient information about Europe. According to the government's policy program, this lack of information results in relatively low levels of popularity of the European integrative project: after all, concepts people do not know much about often prove to be rather unpopular. Therefore, amongst other things, the government proposed that education at Dutch schools should provide students with satiating information about Europe. Within the policy program, it is implicitly suggested this will lead to increasing levels of support for Europe amongst Dutch citizens.

By reasoning along these lines, the government implicitly assumes there is a relation between teaching about Europe and students' outlooks towards the concept of Europe. By means of education, the meaning students assign to Europe might be influenced.

This thesis dealt with issues like these. It explored the possible connection between history education and students' outlooks towards Europe. In doing so, student construction of meaning with regard to Europe was investigated within the context of history education at secondary schools within The Netherlands. More specifically, I investigated the interrelation between history education at secondary schools and the particular ways in which this subject enables Dutch students in their

[178] Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, *Samen werken, samen leven. Beleidsprogramma Balkenende IV, 2007-2011*, 7.

penultimate years of pre-university education to assign a certain meaning to the concept of Europe. Within the framework of this thesis, I aimed at answering the following research question: *How does history education contribute to students' construction of meaning with regard to Europe and how can this be explained?*

7.1 History education and student construction of meaning towards Europe

Many historians agree that history education influences students' outlooks towards the world in important ways. History education, by means of its subject matter and unique methodology, is believed to exert a certain influence upon student construction of meaning. However, existing theories concerning this topic are scarce and fragmented, and, more importantly, are unexceptionally not substantiated by means of empirical data. This lack of substantiated data in particular suggests a hint of guessing and expectation characterizing any theory concerning this topic. Therefore, I did not indiscriminately subscribe to existing theories within the framework of this thesis. Rather, I aimed at initiating a process of data-collection, which ultimately might result in the accumulation of sufficient reliable data to substantiate existing theories.

An inevitable prerequisite for being able to investigate the influence of history education on student construction of meaning regarding Europe, is knowing what exactly this European concept entails. After all, I cannot expect students to construct a certain meaning towards the concept if I did not define what Europe actually *is*. Based upon a thorough examination of existing literature, I defined present-day Europe as follows: *Europe is a geographical, political and cultural-historical concept, characterised by change, heterogeneity and divisibility. Geographically, its boundaries prove to be changeable, although there is a widely held consensus that the term Europe refers to a geographical area, roughly located in the western part of Eurasia. Within the framework of politics, Europe implicates a partial transfer of sovereignty by individual countries, whilst also implying a form of cooperation without any loss of national autonomy. This delicate balance between*

subsidiarity on the one hand, and communautariarism on the other, is continuously subjected to change, and might vary from one topic to another. The cultural-historical dimension is based upon the idea that Europeans share something unique, which nevertheless is characterised by change and heterogeneity. The nation-sate is an integral part of Europe in all its dimensions.

Taking Europe's changeable character into account, it should be noted this definition is highly subjected to change in time and should therefore be conceived of as a random indication of what Europe represents.

Within the framework of the research question, it could be concluded that Europe, as defined above, does have a certain meaning to students. Students generally are aware of the existence of Europe and its dimensions and many of them seem to realise Europe concerns their personal lives to at least a certain extent. Furthermore, although they might not at all times be aware of it, most students do consider themselves part of Europe in certain situations, especially when focussing upon Europe's external context. When dealing with this external context, they, often implicitly, define an inside group ('us Europeans'), which is contrasted against outside group ('them Americans'). Nevertheless, when dealing with Europe in an intra-European context, the definitions of inside and outside groups tend to change such that the students do not seem to feel part of Europe-at-large at all. Within the intra-European context, the inside group is defined as 'us Dutch' or us 'Western-Europeans', whereas the outside group refers to 'them Eastern-Europeans', 'them Southern-Europeans' or even 'them non-Dutch Europeans'. Students generally do not seem to conceive of belonging to Europe as something positive. Levels of support for being part of Europe prove to be rather low amongst students.

Both schoolbooks and teachers – which, within The Netherlands, are responsible for the better part of history education's contents – seem to draw a different picture of what Europe refers to however. There seems to be a discrepancy between what is claimed to be taught to students about Europe and what students actually pick up about this concept. It might be concluded that the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education, only resemble students' views towards Europe to a certain extent.

Admittedly, history education, by means of addressing certain issues concerning European history, is likely to increase student knowledge of Europe. Furthermore, certain interpretations of the European concept by students do bear some resemblance to the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education. However, history education does not determine students' outlooks towards Europe. Rather, student construction of meaning regarding Europe largely seems to emerge independently of history education.

This could be explained by means of three interrelated arguments. First of all, Europe only makes up a limited part of history educations' subject matter. If students only learn little about Europe within the framework of history education, the influence of history education upon student construction of meaning will be limited accordingly. Furthermore, even when Europe is dealt with within the framework of history education, this often occurs in an implicit and indirect manner. As a result, students might not relate certain historical issues to the European context, which implies that studying these topics will exert no influence upon the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe. Lastly, even when students do relate certain historical issues to the European context, they often do not seem to realise these issues concern their personal lives. As a result, history education seems to operate in a vacuum as far as Europe is concerned: European history does not gear to students' perceptions of their environment. Nevertheless, this is an important aspect of, and prerequisite for, constructing a certain meaning towards Europe. Consequently, history education will only limitedly influence student construction of meaning regarding Europe.

However, the limited influence of history education on students' constructions of meaning regarding Europe is not merely due to the internal structure of history education itself. Over the past decennia, a multitude of new sources of information about the past have become available to students. As a result, history education increasingly lost its hegemony as the prime source of historical information. Students have many different other sources to consult. Consequently, the opportunities of influencing students' outlooks towards the past by means of history education are likely to have been reduced. Therefore, the influence history

education exerts on student construction of meaning regarding Europe is limited accordingly.

Returning to the research question of this thesis, it might thus be concluded that history education only plays a limited part in student construction of meaning regarding Europe. By means of addressing certain issues concerning European history, knowledge of Europe amongst students might be increased. Furthermore, certain meanings students assign to the European concept, do correspond to the ways in which Europe is represented within the framework of history education. Nevertheless, it should be concluded that student construction of meaning regarding Europe largely seems to emerge independently of what students learn within the framework of history education.

This could be explained by the fact that Europe only makes up a limited part of history education's subject matter. Furthermore, even if Europe is dealt with, this often happens in an indirect and implicit manner. Moreover, students often do not seem to realise the European conception as discussed within the framework of history education concerns them personally. As a result, history education operates in a vacuum as far as Europe is concerned. Lastly, the influence of history education on students' outlooks towards the world has been diminished in general, as a result of the abundance of historical information available to students nowadays.

7.2 Towards the incorporation of Europe in education

As appeared from the start of this chapter, the present Dutch government, like many other Western governments, aims at instrumentalising education at schools for the purpose of influencing people's outlooks towards Europe. This thesis showed this proves to be a rather difficult matter. As far as the penultimate year of pre-university education is concerned, history as a school subject currently only exerts limited influence upon student construction of meaning regarding Europe. If the government is willing to commit to introducing Europe to the school curriculum in

order to influence students' outlooks towards the concept, certain preconditions should be kept in mind.

First of all, Europe should get a clear, distinct position within the curriculum. This way, the hazard of providing students with too little information will be overcome. Even though it should be taken into account that input (the subject-matter) does not necessarily equal output (students' outlooks towards a subject), – for students do not passively consume the subject matter offered – more input is likely to result in higher output. Consequently, providing students with more information about Europe might increase educations' opportunities of guiding students' outlooks towards Europe.

Furthermore, distinctively positioning Europe in the curriculum will work for the explicit coverage of the subject. My research indicates that education often diminishes its opportunities of influencing students' outlooks towards Europe by means of discussing the concept of Europe in implicit and indirect manners. Due to the absence of explicit indications that certain topics concern Europe, students might not recognise these topics as European. As a result, students will not relate certain issues to the European context, which implies studying these topics will exert no influence on the process of meaning-construction regarding Europe. In order to avoid this hazard, the subject of Europe should be discussed in direct and explicit ways.

Secondly, if education is to influence students' valuations of Europe, it should be made clear to students that Europe does not refer to some remote entity students themselves hardly have anything to do with. Rather, it should be emphasised Europe actually concerns students' personal lives.

Illustratively, in 1992 and 1993, European integration was the key focus of the compulsory – centrally issued – history exam. As a result, students were provided with a variety of information about Europe. Nevertheless, this exam-topic was not very well received by students. On the contrary: it proved to be rather unpopular. The accompanying teaching materials confirmed existing views of many students that Europe is a boring subject, which refers to some remote entity students themselves hardly have anything to do with. The topic of Europe was

merely embedded in an institutional and bureaucratic context, which did not gear to students' perceptions of their environment. If the teaching materials satisfyingly would have made clear that European integration in fact importantly influences students' everyday lives, the subject might have enjoyed higher levels of popularity, thereby changing the ways in which students perceived Europe.

Furthermore, if education fails to clarify that the European conception as discussed within the classrooms concerns students' personal lives, education might limit its opportunities of influencing students' valuations of Europe. After all, why would students get themselves involved in the activity of assessing whether or not the European conception as set forth within the framework of education according to them refers to something positive, neutral or negative, if this European conception does not seem to have anything to do with them personally? Therefore, Europe should gear to students' perceptions of their environment in order for them to assign a certain meaning to the concept. Within the framework of education, this should be taken into thorough account.

Lastly, it should be noted that school-education is no longer the prime source of information available to students. The immense flow of information and access to new types of media unsettled the status of the once privileged schoolbook, and undermined the authority of teachers.[179] As a result, providing students with educational information is not the privilege of schools anymore. Therefore, the extent to which education at schools can exert influence on students' outlooks towards the world should not be overestimated.

However, school-education might provide students with handles to structure the information they obtain from out-of-school sources. Through education, students might be enabled to interpret the vast amounts of information at their disposal in certain ways. Rather than recklessly assuming education's subject matter will more or less directly translate to students' outlooks, education should therefore aim at handing students the means needed to structure the information they obtain elsewhere in certain ways.

[179] M. Grever, 'Beyond the canon. What remains of history', Paper for the international conference Beyond the Canon, 16 June 2005.

If one aims at influencing student construction of meaning regarding Europe through education, education should be deployed in the ways as described above. By means of education, students could be taught how to interpret the vast amount of information available about Europe. This way, education at schools would work to guide students' outlooks towards Europe.

Within the framework of the school-subject of history, the practice of deliberately deploying education as a means of meaning-construction goes to the heart of a specifically difficult dilemma in dealing with history education, I elaborated upon within chapter two of this thesis. On the one hand, many professional historians argue that the past should be conceived of on its own terms, rather than being used for present purposes. According to these authors, 'real' history is confined to dealing with the past on its own merits. Accordingly, studying the past in view of the present is not 'actual' history: the past should never be instrumentalised. If the purpose of history education is to teach students about 'real' history, it follows from this argument that history education cannot be deployed as a tool of influencing students' construction of meaning regarding Europe.

On the other hand, history education is indissolubly connected with a transfer of knowledge, which implies a certain amount of instrumentalisation of the past. As a result, it is not possible to merely teach history for its own sake.

It seems as though history education gets bogged down an unsolvable dilemma. However, my research indicates that dealing with the past for present purposes and understanding the past on its own terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, they can exist simultaneously and live side by side. This implies that history education could be deployed as a means of meaning-construction, while also dealing with the past on its own terms.

Consequently, even though aiming at influencing student construction of meaning regarding Europe through history-education should be conceived of as an instrumentalisation of the past, this practice does not necessarily come at the expense of teaching students about 'real' history. Deploying history education as a means of meaning-construction regarding Europe is tolerable, as long as the

dangers and boundaries of instrumentalising the past are given due consideration. History should at all times be presented in truthful and accurate ways. It should not be restructured or deliberately represented incorrectly in view of present purposes. To quote Leopold von Ranke: within the framework of history education, historians, didacticians and politicians alike should aim at reproducing history 'wie es eigentlich gewesen war',[180] when attempting to influence students' construction of meaning regarding Europe through history education.

7.3 Final remarks

Ever since the 1960's, didacticians and history teachers alike increasingly seem to fear history education will eventually lose out. People have been questioning the use and relevance of the subject; facilities of teacher-student interaction have considerably been reduced over the past decennia; the subject of history was turned into an elective, thereby no longer being compulsory during the last years of secondary school; and history as a school subject increasingly seems to lose its popularity amongst students.[181]

This results in the actual danger of didacticians and teachers tending to resort to 'appealing' kinds of history, in an attempt to save the subject. By means of this practice, it is aimed at getting students enthusiastic about the subject of history by teaching them about historical topics that already appeal to them. These topics often concern students' existing frames of reference.

Within both The United States and The United Kingdom, these developments resulted in a trend, in the course of which due attention is being paid to local history within the framework of history education. Similarly, national history seems to make up the better part of history education's subject matter within many Western countries.

Obviously, local and national history prove to be easier to relate to students' personal lives than history of rather 'abstract' and less familiar frameworks, such as

[180] Although I realise it is impossible to reconstruct a factual account of what exactly happened in the past, I do believe this is what should be striven for when dealing with history.
[181] R. Phillips, 'Government policies, the state and the teaching of history', in J. Arthur and R. Phillips, *Issues in history teaching* (London 2000) 10-23, 12, 13.

European, non-western, and world history. However, in my opinion, an almost exclusive focus upon local or national history will ultimately contribute to the eroding of the school subject of history.

The rationale of history education's existence, as well as its ultimate value, concerns the opportunities the school subject offers to make students aware of the fact there is more to the world than what they are aware of. It offers students the prospect of exceeding their existing world views in order to broaden their perspectives. It gives them a chance to understand the world they live in, in ways other school subjects cannot.[182]

Both didacticians and history teachers should use these unique features history education offers in making the subject more attractive to both students and society-ate-large, rather than going into its mere local and national shell. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to make a plea for continuing on in attempting to provide students with satisfying information, not just about the European framework, but about a world history in general. I am convinced the subject of history in schools will stand the test of time, as long as sufficient attention is paid to its core values and assets.

With this observation, this thesis comes to its end. Obviously, the need for further information does not stop here. This thesis merely intended to give the initial impetus to an exploration of the research problem. The scope of this investigation was limited to a certain group of students, being taught history by certain methods, as well as to a certain point in time. The investigational scope might be extended to students from other countries, attending different levels of education in various years, being taught history by means of different methods, coming from other cities as well as from the countryside. In conclusion, additional research is necessary to substantiate and build on the outcomes of this thesis.

[182] P. Seixas, 'Historical understanding among adolescents in a multicultural setting' *Curriculum Enquiry* 23/3 (1993) 301-327, 322.

Appendix 1

Methodological account of the first interview

The interview with seven students took place on Thursday 6 April 2006 and lasted 50 minutes.

The students were interviewed by prof. dr. Maria Grever en dr. Kees Ribbens (researchers at the Erasmus University Rotterdam) and myself, in my capacity as a Masters' student. The students were mainly questioned by prof. dr. Grever and dr. Ribbens, whereas I took notes and posed some incidental questions.

The interview was recorded.

During the interview, seven students were questioned:

1.	Girl, foreign origin	Havo-4
2.	Girl, native Dutch origin	Havo-4
3.	Boy, native Dutch origin	Havo-4
4.	Girl, native Dutch origin	VWO-5
5.	Girl, foreign origin	VWO-5
6.	Boy, foreign origin	VWO-5
7.	Boy, foreign origin	VWO-5

The interview was structured by means of the following questions:

1.a. Wat vind je in het algemeen van geschiedenis als vak (leuk of niet, interessant, boeiend/spreekt het je aan) ?
Eventuele vervolgvraag: waarom hebben jullie geschiedenis als vak gekozen ?

Wel leuk, want .....

Niet leuk, want .....

1.b. Vervolgvraag: wat vind je er precies leuk aan: nieuwe dingen leren ? Of herken je juist onderwerpen waar je al iets van weet ?

.....

2. Kom je ook buiten de klas wel eens in aanraking met geschiedenis ? Met andere woorden: merk je wel eens iets van geschiedenis buiten school ?

Ja, want .....

Nee, want .....

Op welke manier ? Historische films, strips, games, boeken, herdenkingen, monumenten (in tweede instantie kunnen wij – als interviewers - die termen zelf suggereren).....
.....

Met wie? Vrienden, ouders, vereniging .....

Herken je in deze gevallen dan ook onderwerpen die in de geschiedenisles zijn behandeld?

Ja. Welke? ....

Nee, want .....

3. Vind je geschiedenis nuttig en belangrijk voor je werk en loopbaan later? (cognitieve vraag)

Ja, want .....

Nee, want .....

Belangrijk om andere redenen.....

Actualiteit in de wereld
Loopbaan later
Algemene ontwikkeling/mee kunnen praten

4. Vind je geschiedenis voor jezelf als persoon belangrijk? Zegt geschiedenis jou iets over wie je bent of iets over waar je vandaan komt? (affectieve vraag identiteit)

Ja, want .....

Nee, want .....

Familie
Streek
Nederland
Herkomstland
Europa
Wereld

5. Er zijn allerlei verschillende soorten geschiedenis. Denk maar aan de geschiedenis van *Europa* of de geschiedenis van *Nederland*. Maar er is ook de geschiedenis van je *familie* of die van de *Indianen*. Als ik nou aan elk van jullie vraag wat jullie 'eigen' geschiedenis is, wat geef je dan als antwoord?

persoonlijk .....

familie .....

woonland .....

herkomstland .....

Europa .....

Anders, nl. .....

6.a. Praat je wel eens met anderen over geschiedenis? Vertel je dan over je eigen geschiedenis of vraag je vooral naar de geschiedenis van die ander?

Ja, aan .....
- In *eigen* kring spreken over *eigen* geschiedenis
- Vragen aan een ander naar *diens* (andere) geschiedenis
- Praten met een ander over de gezamenlijke geschiedenis van de gespreksgenoten

Nee, want .....

6.b. En met wie spreek je dan over (die) geschiedenis?

Met wie? .....

7. Kunnen jullie allemaal één historische gebeurtenis (of ontwikkeling) noemen die absoluut moet behandeld worden in de geschiedenisles?

.....

8. Aan welke historische gebeurtenis of welk historisch onderwerp wordt te weinig aandacht besteed in de les?

.....

9. Willen jullie nog iets anders vertellen of opmerken over geschiedenis?

.....

Appendix 2

Methodological account of the second interview

The interview with four students took place on Friday 2 June 2006 and lasted 90 minutes.

The students were interviewed by Bart Janssens (a fellow Masters' student) and myself. The students were mainly questioned by me, whereas Bart took notes and posed some incidental questions.

The interview was recorded.

During the interview, four students were questioned:

1. Sharai, girl of native Dutch origin VWO-5
2. Wilco, boy of native Dutch origin VWO-5
3. Marc, boy of native Dutch origin VWO-5
4. Erik, boy of native Dutch origin VWO-5

The interview was structured by means of the following questions:

What is Europe?

1. What is Europe?
2. Could you give me an indication of Europe's external boundaries on this map?
3. Continue by means of contrast-questions to get at motivation
4. When, in your own life, do you encounter Europe?
    a. At school
    b. At home
    c. Whilst going out
    d. When hanging out with friends
    e. On TV
5. When are you not confronted with Europe?

Europe and history

6. How old is Europe?
7. Who is Europe's most important hero?
    a. Why?
    b. Did you learn about him/her in school?
    c. If yes: At what subject and during which year?
    d. Where else did you learn about this person?
8. Who is Europe's main outcast?
    a. Why?

   b. Did you learn about him/her at school?
   c. If yes: during what subject and year?
   d. Where else did you learn about this person?
9. How did Europe contribute to the world-at-large?
10. Could you please name two events/processes/developments of crucial historical meaning as far as Europe is concerned?
   a. Why?
   b. Did you learn about these in school?
   c. If yes: during which subject and year?
   d. Where else did you learn about these?
11. What did you learn about Europe in school?
   a. During which subjects?
   b. During your history classes?

What does Europe mean to you?

12. What do you think of Europe?
13. Do you feel European? Why (not)?
14. In my opinion, Europe is made up of several units, which I called dimensions. Europe for instance is related to the field of politics. What other European dimensions can you think of?
15. What comes to mind when thinking of politics in relation to Europe: could you give me some concrete examples? What do you think of European politics? Which advantages and disadvantages do you attach to it?
16. Europe also has something to do with economy: what comes to mind in this perspective? What is your opinion towards these matters?
17. Culture, amongst which history, is also part of what Europe constitutes. What comes to mind when thinking of Europe in relation to culture? What do you think about these issues?
18. Lastly, Europe refers to a geographical entity, like we discussed at the start of this conversation. Europe therefore consists of four dimensions: politics, economy, culture and geography. Which dimension do you consider to be most important? Second? Top-four?

Conclusion

19. What is Europe?
20. Do you want to say or add something?

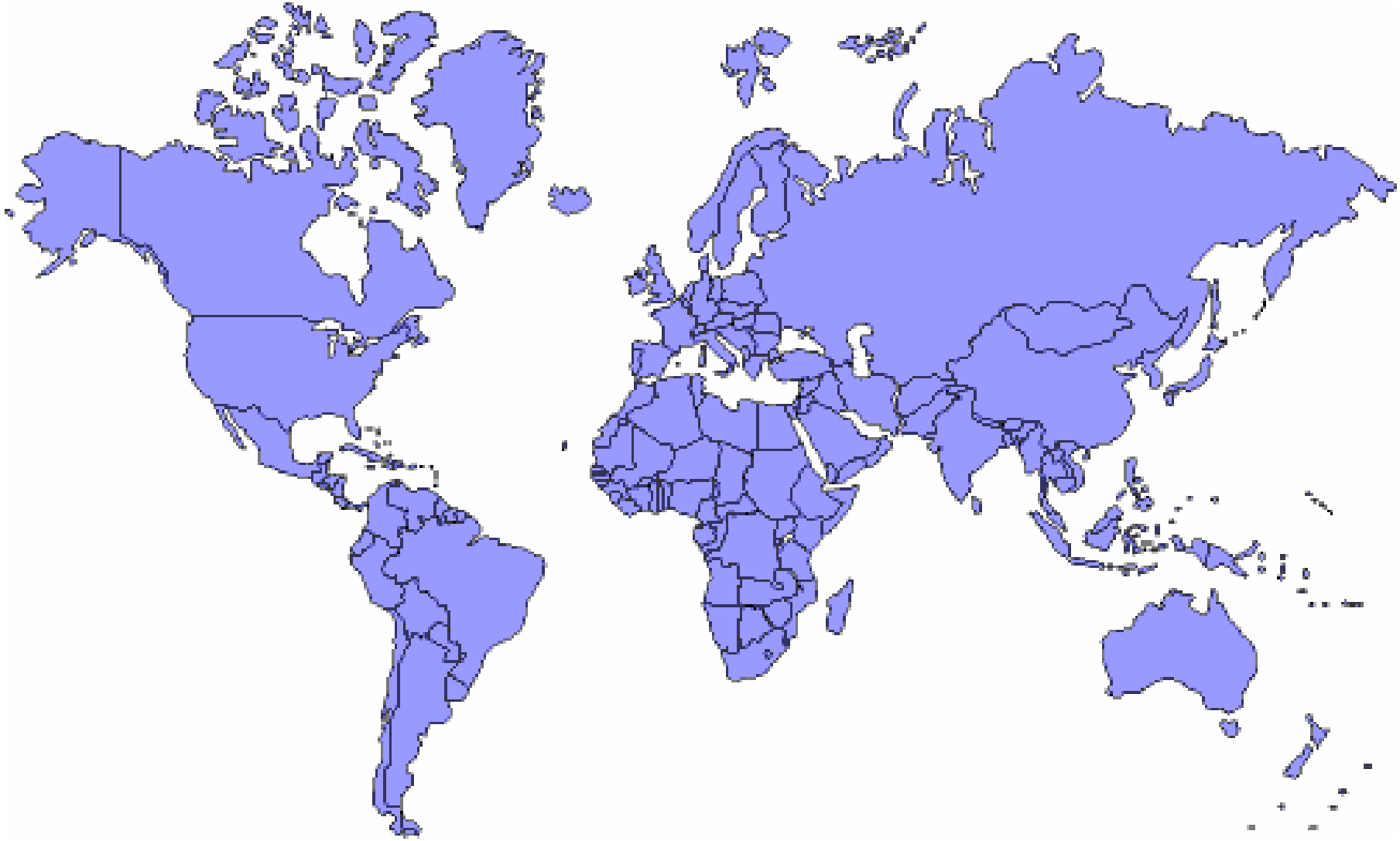
Interview procedure

- Every topic will be introduced by asking an open question, in order to investigate students' initial thoughts concerning the different themes. This furthermore gives me the opportunity to check on the extent to which students already formed an opinion on the topic. Then, some questions will be asked to which answers are rather fixed, to get at the specifics of what I would like to know. This will either be done by means of typical yes-or-no questions, or by putting forward propositions to which students can react.
- I will use recording equipment whilst interviewing the students.
- The students' history-teachers should preferably not be present during the interviews, in order to limit the risk of giving desired answers. If the teacher demands his or her presence during the interviews, he or she should not participate in the conversations in any way.
- Two interviewers will do the interviews. This way, the interviewers will be able to complement each other, whilst the relatively small number of two interviewers will prevent adult supremacy from occurring.
- Interviews will take place in groups of three or four students in order to allow students a chance to respond to each other's answers. By limiting the groups to a maximum of four students, I hope to avoid shy or quiet students to be shouted down by their more forward counterparts.

Structure of the interviews

- *Introduction*: We are XXX of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. We are investigating students' perception of Europe, and we are very interested in your outlooks towards Europe. This is not a test, there are no wrong answers, and we just really want to know your views and opinions. Your answers will be treated confidential, and not even your teacher will come to know what you are going to say. I will not use your names in my thesis.
- *Topic 1: What is Europe?*
  - ✓ Introduce this topic by asking an open question: What is Europe? Then elaborate by means of the European dimensions (geography, politics, economics, (historical) culture)
  - ✓ Geographical dimension: give students an open map of the world and ask them to indicate the boundaries of Europe. Emphasize the fact that I am trying to get at *their* views: European boundaries according to them.
  - ✓ Continue by asking them to motivate their indication by means of contrast-questions: why does Germany belong to Europe? Why does Turkey not belong to Europe? These arguments will enable me to get at the European dimensions students are aware of: Germany always belonged to Europe (historical argument), Germany is an EU member (political dimension). Do not mention the different dimensions in this stage of the conversation: by means of this topic, I just want to get at *their* definition of what Europe means, not mine.

  - ✓ Subtopic *Europe in everyday life*: When, in your own life, do you encounter Europe? (open question)
  - ✓ Then specify by giving them options: How do you encounter Europe at home, school, going out?
  - ✓ In which situations are you not confronted with Europe? (what are Europe's limits in everyday life?)
- *Topic 2: Historical Europe*
  - ✓ How old is Europe?
  - ✓ Who are Europe's heroes and outcasts?
  - ✓ What is Europe's contribution to the world at large?
  - ✓ What have been the most important events/processes/developments within the European context? (If many recent developments, which are no part of the curriculum, are summed up, the influence of history education might be minimal)
- *Topic 3: What does Europe mean to you?*
  - ✓ What do you think of Europe? (open)
  - ✓ Then continue by asking them about the European dimensions. How does Europe benefit you? Politics (EU), economy (Euro), historical-cultural (no more war). Which are the snags attached to Europe? Politically (loss of national sovereignty), economically (national dependency), culturally (loss of national culture).



Appendix 3

Methodological account of the interview with the history teacher

The interview took place on Thursday 19 July 2007 and lasted 30 minutes.

The teacher was interviewed by telephone. I questioned the teacher, while making notes during the interview.

The interview was not recorded.

The interviewed teacher – male, 33 years old – is one of my fellow students. He teaches history on a part-time basis (0,8 fte) at a school in the vicinity of Rotterdam, while finishing his Masters' degree in History of Society.

The interview was structured by means of the following questions:

1. Do you feel Europe is important within the framework of history education?
   a. What part of history education's subject matter does Europe make up?
   b. What do you think of the amount of Europe within the framework of history education?

2. What is European history?
   a. Which historical issues refer to European history?
   b. Which of these issues are taught to students within the framework of history education?
   c. How are these issues connected to the European context?
   d. Are these issues in any way connected to students' personal lives within the framework of history education?

3. Do you feel you are encouraged to teach about Europe and European history within the framework of history education?
   a. If yes: how?
   b. If yes: by whom?
   c. If no: why do you think that is?

4. What are the main issues in history education: sub-national history; national history; European history; other kinds of supra-national history; world history?

Appendix 4
Euroclio questionnaire

European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations
Conférence Permanente Européenne des Associations de Professeurs d'Histoire

History Teachers' Association (Malta)

Using Historical Skills and Concepts to Promote an Awareness of European Citizenship

Questionnaire

for the EUROCLIO Annual Training Conference and Professional Development Course
Malta, 20-26 March 2006

Dear Friends of EUROCLIO

We hope that you are well and creative!

We would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire and urge you to work cooperatively with your Association Members and/or the Board of your Association in filling it out.

Your help and **collective effort** will be valuable in gathering important information on history teaching in each country. With **your input** EUROCLIO will once again raise constructive debate at a European and international level on important issues, such as using historical skills and concepts to promote an awareness of European citizenship.

We would be grateful if you could return a completed questionnaire, by e-mail to Ms Chara Makriyianni, EUROCLIO Policy Officer, at: cm353@cam.ac.uk before 30 January 2006. You can find the questionnaire also on our website: www.eurocliohistory.org

Questionnaire results will be presented and discussed during the Annual Conference, and later on published.

Thanking you in advance

We look forward to receiving **your contribution**

Euroclio Board

European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations
Conférence Permanente Européenne des Associations de Professeurs d'Histoire

EUROCLIO

PART I: DEMOGRAPHICS

Country/Association

1. Please ☑ where applicable:
This questionnaire has been answered by:

The whole Association	
The Board of the Association	
Most of the Board	
A Member of the Board	
A Member of the Association	
An Individual	
Other, please specify	

PART II: DEBATE ON HISTORY TEACHING

1. (A) Is history, as a school subject, debated by the following groups in your country?
Please, ✓ where applicable:

	1 *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*	*Don't know*
Religious Institutions					
Media					
Academic historians					
Teachers					
Parents					
Politicians					
NGOs – Civil society					

1. (B) What are the main themes and controversies of the debate? Please, ✓ where applicable:	✓
More national history	
More European history	
More skills	
More facts	
European dimension	

World War II and the situation in your country	
Totalitarian regimes in your country	
Other, please specify:	

PART III: AIMS, OBJECTIVES, CONCEPTS AND SKILLS IN HISTORY CURRICULUM

For this section, we would like to ask you to have at hand your country's National Curriculum on History (if any) whilst completing the questionnaire, so that the information you provide is as accurate and representative as possible of your country's official policy on history teaching.

1. To what extent are the following recommendations followed in your country's history curriculum?
Please, ✓ tick where applicable.

History teaching should:	**1** *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*
• enable European citizens to enhance their European identity.				
• encourage teaching about periods and developments with European dimension.				
• use every available means to promote European co-operation and exchange.				
• introduce or develop teaching about the history of the building of Europe.				
• use Council of Europe programmes to make new textbooks and educational guidelines.				
• encompass the events and moments that have left their mark on the history of Europe.				
• teach broad European history (political, economic, social and cultural).				
• link local, regional, national and European history				

2. Please list the 3 most important thematic units or topics in your country's history curriculum which refer to European citizenship and integration (if any):

The 3 most important thematic units or topics for ages 6-12 are:

1.

2.

3.
The 3 most important thematic units or topics for ages 13-18 are: 1. 2. 3.

3. Please quote, translating to English, the general aims of your country's history curriculum that refer to <u>European citizenship:</u>

By **European citizenship** we mean not only a set of legal, civic, social rights and responsibilities, but also a means of participation and an affective attachment.

- For ages 6-12 (if applicable):

- For ages 13-18 (if applicable):

4. (A) Which of the following objectives are included in your country's history curriculum?
Please, ✓ where applicable, in column A.

(B) Which of the following objectives are <u>priorities</u> in your country?
Please, list the five most important for your country, in order of priority (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th) in column B.

	No objectives are stated in our country's history curriculum/syllabus	
A ✓	**Objectives**	**B** *1st - 5th*
	appreciate shared aspects of cultural heritage	
	understand how identity is shaped by local, European and international influences	
	enhance national identity	
	develop a European citizenship	
	appreciate the importance of freedom	
	investigate waves of invasion and migration, which have helped to shape Europe	
	become aware of the historical continuity of their nation	
	develop depth of historical knowledge	
	understand the historical evolution of political systems and their impact on societies	
	become aware of the on-going nature of historical research and debate	
	strengthen patriotism	
	promote citizenry and democracy	
	make pupils understand the world they live in	
	enhance critical thinking	
	promote European integration	
	develop a multiperspective approach to historical events	
	become aware of the different meanings of 'Europe'	
	strengthen readiness to sacrifice, if necessary, for their nation	
	understand and appreciate the cultures of people who are different	
	acquire tools for lifelong learning	
	broaden their knowledge and awareness of Europe	

Other important objectives:

5. (A) Which of the following are explicitly stated in your country's curriculum as <u>historical concepts</u> that should be taught?

By **historical concepts**, we mean: words that represent features of the past, which are abstract ideas or notions (for example: democracy; monarchy; revolution).

Please, ✓ where applicable:

Concepts	✓ *Ages 6-12*	✓ *Ages 13-18*	**Concepts**	✓ *Ages 6-12*	✓ *Ages 13-18*	**Concepts**	✓ *Ages 6-12*	✓ *Ages 13-18*
Apartheid			Communism			Globalisation		
Enlightenment			Nazism			Immigration		
Holocaust			Nationalism			European integration		
Genocide			Imperialism			Globalisation		
Partition			Republicanism			Empire		
Slavery			Socialism			Colonisation		
Crusades			Totalitarianism			Independence		
Iron Curtain			Unionism			Explorations		
Industrialisation			Federation			Revolution		
Reconciliation			Monarchy			Terrorism		
Democracy			Invasion			Expansion		
Patriotism			Conquest			War		
Freedom			Tolerance			Citizenship		
Other concepts:								

5. (B) Which of the above historical concepts are explored <u>in more depth</u> in your country?
Please, list **five concepts** in order of priority:

1st:

2nd:

3rd:

4th:

5th:

6. Which historical skills does your country's history curriculum expect teachers to promote when teaching history to pupils aged 6-12 and 13-18?

By **historical skills**, we mean: the ability to carry out historical tasks well and show a competence (for example: judging reliability and usefulness of historical sources, justifying interpretations and providing supportive reasoning).

Please, ✓ where applicable:

Teachers are expected to help pupils:	***Ages 6-12***				***Ages 13-18***			
	1 *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*	**1** *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*
carry out independent research and enquiry								
use historical concepts accurately								
place events in chronological order								
develop chronological awareness								
analyse, evaluate and use historical sources in their historical context								
assess historical significance								
develop understanding of change and continuity								
distinguish facts from opinions								
handle conflicting interpretations								
identify and utilise appropriately different types of historical sources								
recall historical knowledge accurately								
develop and assess hypotheses								
link up historical concepts with new contents								
judge reliability and usefulness of historical sources								
understand the nature of historical study								
identify ways in which language is used for political purposes								
develop analytical and synthetic skills								
become aware of present day historiographic debate								
develop debating skills								
Other **historical skills**:								

7. Which values and attitudes does your country's history curriculum expect teachers to promote when teaching history to pupils aged 6-12 and 13-18?

By **values** we mean: a set of guiding moral principles or ethics (for example a belief in fairness and justice, tolerance and mutual respect). By **attitudes** we mean: ways of acting, feeling, or thinking that show one's disposition and opinion in relation to an object, person or situation (for example being in favour or against death penalty).

Please, ✓ where applicable:

Teachers are expected to promote the following values and attitudes:	***Ages 6-12***				***Ages 13-18***			
	1 *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*	**1** *not at all*	**2** *little*	**3** *moderately*	**4** *to a great extent*
Empathy								
Tolerance								
Mutual understanding								
Critical thinking								
Interest in the past								
Willingness to learn about the problems of society in the past and present								
Respect for other models of society than western ones								
Reservation at making judgments								
Willingness to change their opinion in light of new evidence								
Appreciation of different points of view								
Appreciation of the value and limitations of oral history								
Appreciation of diversity and multiculturality								
Open-mildness and receptiveness to new things and ideas								
Fairness and justice								
Independent argument that is informed by, but not dependent on authorities								
Respect and responsibility for the environment								
Respect for individuals, groups, and cultures in the global community								
Appreciation of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship								
Other values and attitudes:								

8. Compare the weight put on a particular component in relation to the other components by <u>your country's</u> history curriculum.

Please ✓ where applicable:

Age group 6-12		✓ More weight	✓ Equal to other	✓ Less weight
	Content			
	Values and Attitudes			
	Skills			

Age group 13-18		More weight	Equal to other	Less weight
	Content			
	Values and Attitudes			
	Skills			

9. Is <u>Citizenship</u> taught as a separate subject in your country's national curriculum?
Please ✓ where applicable YES☐ NO☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Please return your completed questionnaire,
by e-mail to Ms Chara MAKRIYIANNIat: cm353@cam.ac.uk

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