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**Between Eurocentrism and Euroscepticism:
A comparison of German and English national political and student
responses to the European education agenda**

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Abstract

National political and educational agendas have been reshaped by the processes of European integration. European policies, such as the 1988 Resolution by the Council of Ministers of Education, have encouraged educators to develop a European dimension in education and have contributed to the institutionalisation of education at European level. Drawing upon qualitative data from documentary sources, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, this paper compares the German and English educational responses to Europe and discusses how these different historical engagements affect contemporary student responses. It shows that Europe has been central for the organisation of the German educational system whereas English policy-makers and politicians have been more Eurosceptic, and refrained from including a European dimension in the National Curriculum. This resulted, for instance, in English students having lower levels of knowledge about Europe than their German peers. However, student responses within one country also differ from school to school, depending on issues such as social class positioning and institutional interpretations of macro-level policies. This paper suggests that developing European educational standards may be one way of addressing these knowledge gaps and disparities between national educational systems in Europe without violating the autonomy of nation-states in education policy.

Speaker

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1. INTRODUCTION

National political and educational agendas have been reshaped by the processes of European integration. Although a few educational issues were mentioned in the 1957 Treaty of Rome including provisions for vocational training (Articles 41, 118 and 128) and for the mutual recognition of diplomas and certificates in Article 57 (Phillips, 1995), the birth of the European dimension in education dated back to the early 1970s (Hansen, 1998). In 1971, education was first mentioned as an area of interest to the then European Community (EC). It was in July of that year that the European Commission decided to set up two bodies which would work on educational issues: (a) a Working Party on Teaching and Education and (b) an Interdepartmental Working Party on Coordination. In November 1971, the Ministers of Education held their first meeting. In their resolution, they stated that the provisions on educational measures in the Treaty of Rome could be complemented by increasing cooperation in the field of education, and they argued that the final goal was 'to define a European model of culture correlating with European integration' (Neave, 1984: 6f.), recognising for the first time the close relation between educational policy and European integration. In June 1974, the Ministers of Education held their second meeting in Luxembourg, arguing for the need to institute European cooperation in the field of education. As a basis for cooperation, according to Diamantopoulou (2006), it was stated that education should not be regarded as a component of economic life, and that the traditions of each country and the diversity of their education systems should be respected. The Ministers of Education also set up an Education Committee composed of representatives of the Member States and of the Commission.

However, it was not until the mid-1980s that the institutionalisation of education took on new forms with the introduction of several educational programmes including *Comett* (cooperation between universities and enterprises regarding training in the field of technology), *Erasmus* (higher education exchange scheme) and *Lingua* (pupil exchange scheme for language learning). Arguably, the most important intergovernmental agreement was the *Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education on the European Dimension in*

Education (1988), prompting educators to 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity and make clear to them the value of European civilisation and of the foundations on which the European peoples intended to base their development today' (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988: 5). The Ministers' agreement aimed at improving young people's historical, cultural and socio-economic knowledge of Europe and invited Member States to take steps to introduce a European dimension in education, particularly in schools and teacher training. Plans were made at the 1990 Rome summit to include European citizenship in the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, which theoretically provided the EU with the legal framework of its involvement in all the educational levels of the national educational systems of its member states. However, Article 126 for general education (the Community 'contributes to the development of education') and Article 127 for vocational training (the Community 'implements policy') explicitly state that Community action is to complement and support action taken at national level (Council of the European Communities, 1992)[1]. The linguistic differentiation between 'contribute' and 'implement' is due to the already existing involvement of the Community in vocational training, which remains the main purpose of the Community's education policy.

The *Green Paper on the European Dimension in Education* (1993) dealt with the direction of the Community's action mainly in the area of school education, seeking for proper enactment of Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty. The third part of the Green Paper focused on general education and suggested possible ways of cooperation amongst students, parents, teachers, administrators and trainers (Council of Ministers of Education, 1993). As a result, the Socrates programme was adopted in 1995. The Comenius strand of Socrates aims explicitly to foster the sense of citizenship with a European dimension both by curriculum development and exchange activities in schools. Notions of a European dimension in education as well as European identity and citizenship have also been promoted by the Council of Europe. The Council's educational activities have influenced national educators and include the *Secondary Education for Europe Project* which involved the development of European dimension curriculum materials for a variety of subjects across the secondary curriculum (Ryba, 2000); the *Modern Language Project* which acted as an

initiator of programmes that promoted a sense of European identity and diversity; and the *Education for Democratic Citizenship* programme which was launched in 1997 in response to member states' requests for further information and assistance with this policy area (www.coe.int/EDC)[2]. Yet, despite these unifying calls, all EU countries are presently autonomous in matters of education which makes it difficult to develop a common approach to these initiatives. Although the institutionalisation of education is likely to continue, with the role of general education becoming more important, the Commission has so far focused on Community action programmes (e.g. Erasmus, Socrates) along the aforementioned lines rather than national curricular reforms or a common European education system.

The aim of this paper is to examine, from a comparative research point of view, the German and English national political and student responses to these European-level education policy developments; and to show how as a result of the different historical engagements with Europe, national governments were setting the framework for schools and students in rather different ways. Analysing the political and educational responses to Europe is particularly difficult in Germany since each of the sixteen federal states is responsible for educational and cultural matters and thus operates its own policy. Rather than looking at all these regional governmental responses separately, I shall focus primarily upon the directives issued by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education in Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK). Whilst the empirical data I draw upon derives from a larger study designed to explore how German and English national agendas and identities are reshaped by European and multicultural agendas at government level and what implications these political agendas have for schools and young people (Faas, 2007a), the main argument of this article is based on a critical review of the relevant literature and policies as well as empirical evidence from four multi-ethnic multi-faith secondary schools, two in Inner London and two in Inner Stuttgart. In early 2004, I distributed a questionnaire to about 100 students in each school to obtain broad insights into students' attitudes towards, and knowledge of, Europe. Then, I conducted six focus group interviews of four to five students in each school (native youth and youth of Turkish descent) to elicit information about what the

different groups of young people thought about Europe, and I also interviewed eight students in each school. Purposive sampling was used in an effort to ensure a gender and ethnic balance. I chose to focus on native youth and youth of Turkish descent because the Turks are a particularly under-researched group. Additional interviews with the Head, the Citizenship coordinator, the Head of Geography and the Head of Religious Education were conducted in each school to learn more about the ways in which school officials responded to European level political and educational developments.

2. GERMAN AND ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES TO EUROPE

Since the 1950s, as a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and the European Economic Community in 1958, Germany has been of central importance to the processes of European integration and successive post-war governments promoted what could be called a 'Europeanised national identity' (Goetz, 1996). A cross-party consensus quickly emerged with policy-makers and politicians embracing a modern Europe as part of the Western community, based on liberal democracy and a social market economy, with Europe's 'other' being both Germany's past and communism (Risse and Engelmann-Martin, 2002). Because of the rather problematic nation-state identity during the first three decades following World War Two, many Germans considered the goal of European unification so self-evident that they did not debate its advantages and disadvantages. German policy-makers and politicians regarded the establishment of a lasting European peace as the ultimate aim of integration (Paterson, 1996). It was not long before the European agenda also started to impact on education. In 1978, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education (KMK) published the document 'Europe in the Classroom' (*Europa im Unterricht*). This was republished in 1990 in response to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Education, mentioned earlier. This not only underlined the enthusiastic approach German policy-makers and educators had toward Europe at the time but also highlighted the role of education in shifting national political identities towards a more European agenda. The 1990 Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK)-directive stated that the goal of education must be:

> To *awaken* in young people the consciousness of a *European identity*; to prepare them to be aware of their responsibilities as citizens of the European Community; to provide as many students as possible with the opportunity to learn several foreign languages; and to promote mutual learning with young foreigners to foster the ability to feel mutual solidarity and to live together peacefully.
>
> (Kultusministerkonferenz, 1990; emphasis added)

The KMK-directive stressed the political justification for a European dimension, arguing that Europe was more than just a geographical term and that the painful experiences of two world wars as well as the developments in Western and Eastern Europe since 1945 had given Europeans every reason to reflect upon their common origins. The task of the school was also seen as conveying insights into geographical diversity; political and social structures; formative historical forces; and the history of the European idea. In 1992, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education published a further review of progress and recommendations. The particular areas for development were identified as foreign languages as part of vocational qualifications; political and cultural education; school exchanges; school links; and teacher exchanges (KMK, 1992). Since 1990, European Schools (i.e. schools that particularly emphasise a European dimension) were set up across the country (Bell, 1995).

The impact of these directives was investigated by educational researchers (e.g. Hauler, 1994; Kesidou, 1999; Natterer, 2001). Research on the European dimension in the curriculum and school textbooks, for example, described how Europe and European integration became part of the German secondary school curricula and textbooks. For instance, Hauler (1994) found that, out of seventy Year 10 annual lesson plans, twenty included eight or more hours of teaching the European dimension; thirteen did not cover this teaching unit at all; and in almost half the classes a mere three lessons were spent on 'European Integration and Unification'. Kesidou's (1999) analysis of the Geography, Political Studies and History curricula of grammar schools (*Gymnasien*) in Baden-Württemberg found that teaching units in both Geography and Political

Studies specifically dealt with European unification. However, at the time, the term Europe referred to central and western (not eastern) Europe.

Youth studies focused particularly on young people's attitudes towards Europe and European integration. For example, Weidenfeld and Piepenschneider (1990) identified five different responses to Europe that were typical of young Germans in the 1980s and early 1990s: the *enthusiastic European* (14%) who is in favour of a unified Europe and feels strongly addressed when people use the term 'the Europeans' in an ordinary discussion; the *interested European* (47%) who is in favour of a unified Europe and feels partly addressed by the term 'the Europeans' and would regret it if the European project failed; the *indifferent European* (14%) who is in favour of a unified Europe and feels partly addressed by the term 'the Europeans' and would not regret it at all if the European project failed; the *sceptical European* (8%) who is in favour of a unified Europe but feels not addressed when people talk about 'the Europeans'; and the *anti-European* (16%) who is against a unified Europe. Since the fieldwork of this study was mainly carried out prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, it did not include the perspectives of young people in East Germany. In 1992, however, East German youth were found to hold different views about Europe compared with West Germans; the former perceived Europe in terms of all the countries in Europe whereas the latter mostly associated 'Europe' with the European Community. Glaab (1992) explained this in terms of the different East and West German political systems in which young people grew up. Asked what the European Community meant to them, most young East Germans said 'a strong economic union' with disparities between the rich central and northern European countries and the poorer southern countries (Glaab, 1992: 109). The European dimension thus presented a new reality for young eastern Germans with which they had to get acquainted.

Although the pro-European attitude of German policy-makers and politicians continued in the early 1990s, reunification created new political and economic challenges for the country which resulted in a less idealistic and enthusiastic approach to Europe. With the costly addition of the poorer regions of eastern Germany, Germany responded more cautiously to European initiatives but

remained ardent proponents of widening (i.e. enlarging) and deepening (i.e. institutionally reforming) the EU. At the same time, several German federal states, such as Baden-Württemberg in 1994, overhauled their curricula to implement a European dimension indicating the connectedness between political commitments and educational developments. The notion of Europe was particularly integrated into subjects such as geography and history. For example, in the geography curriculum of Baden-Württemberg, the entire Year 7 (ages 12 to 13) in extended elementary schools (*Hauptschule*) was spent on Europe; in grammar schools (*Gymnasium*), three out of four teaching units in Year 6 (ages 11 to 12) dealt with Europe. In contrast, citizenship/political education emphasised the federal democratic structure of Germany (e.g. local political decisions, political participation and democratic culture in Germany; cf. Phillips, 2001). The main purpose of citizenship education thus seems to have been to continue to remind young Germans that their country is a federally-organised parliamentary democracy, exemplifying the country's still ambivalent relationship to their past.

England, by contrast, experienced Europe very differently. There was little reason why the country should reconceptualise her national identity in European terms and the processes of Europeanisation have not seriously affected English schools. The politics of Europe, initiated by Germany and France, were undercut by the special relationship with the United States; the geographical detachment from continental Europe; and England's post-war role in the Commonwealth (Katzenstein, 1997). Consequently, England engaged little with the European project until the 1960s when Prime Minister Macmillan realised that his country needed to reorientate as the Empire was rapidly falling apart (Woodard, 1998). After England had joined the EC in January 1973, it spent the first decade of membership arguing about the terms of accession and seeking a budget rebate since, by the end of the 1970s, the country was the second largest contributor to the budget and was close to becoming the largest even though it had the third-lowest gross domestic product per capita of the then nine member states (Geddes, 1999). Given England's more Eurosceptic historical engagement with Europe, compared to Germany, the European dimension received little attention and, unlike multicultural education, did not

specifically appear amongst the cross-curricular themes and dimensions of the 1988 National Curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1988). The largely hostile and national protectionist approach to Europe under Thatcher (1979-1990) meant that, until the 1988 Resolution by the Council of Ministers of Education, English schools received no encouragement to develop young people's knowledge and commitment to Europe whereas, by this time, the European agenda had taken over the issue of identity in Germany.

Arguably, when citizenship education was introduced as a new statutory subject for students aged between 11 and 16 (key stages 3 and 4) in the English National Curriculum in 2002, the ideas of European citizenship and identity were underdeveloped (Osler and Starkey, 2001) although the Council of Ministers of Education recommended that 'education for citizenship should include experiencing the European dimension (…) and socialisation in a European context (…) because this enables each citizen to play a part on the European stage' (Council, of Ministers of Education, 1993: 6). The European guidelines sought to promote citizenship at a European level as part of a self-identity that included national and regional elements (Ross, 2000). Despite the limited acknowledgement of the processes of Europeanisation in citizenship education, which has become a key means of reasserting the concept of Britishness and national belonging, some schools in England developed a European agenda, such as the Anglo European School in Essex. The Department of Education and Science (1991) responded to the 1988 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Education on the European dimension in education, stating that the government's policies were aimed at:

> *Promoting* a sense of *European identity*; encouraging interest in and improving competence in other European languages; helping students to acquire a view of Europe as a multicultural, multilingual community which includes the UK; encouraging awareness of the variety of European histories, geographies and cultures; and imparting knowledge of political, economic and social developments.
>
> (Department of Education and Science, 1991; emphasis added)

Unlike the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Education, the Department of Science's response employed a weaker language; for example, the key phrase 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity' became 'promoting a sense of European identity'. Also, since the 1991 policy statement, the responsibility for the implementation of the European dimension in education rested with local education authorities and schools.

However, despite the fact that schools were asked to develop a European dimension and promote a sense of European identity, the presence of Europe in programmes of study of the National Curriculum was only marginally more than had previously been the case with examination syllabuses in subjects like art, music and history (Tulasiewicz, 1993). Specific advice and curriculum guidance on precisely what content and form the European dimension should assume did not match official British concern with other parts of the National Curriculum (e.g. multicultural and global education), thus indicating a rather sceptic and lukewarm school approach to the European agenda. Unlike Germany, England devoted most of her energy emphasising national competitiveness rather than partnership in dealing with the EU. 'Since approaches to the European dimension are less constrained by examination syllabus prescriptions (…) there are noticeable differences from the traditional parts of the curriculum. It consists of much out-of-school activity [such as exchanges] involving contacts with personnel other than teachers (…)' (ibid.: 246). Thus, a European dimension, according to Tulasiewicz and Brock (2000), should consist of European *knowledge*, meaning that students should be better informed about the continent of Europe; European *skills*, such as travel, hosting, guiding and communication to enable young people to plan and execute activities together in a region they share as Europeans; and European *attitudes,* which would enable students to confirm a commitment to Europe, to develop a European identity and consciousness.

Convey and Merritt (2000) optimistically argued that although in some National Curriculum subjects (notably Geography, History, Art, Music and Modern Languages) the programmes of study ensured that a European dimension was included, 'there is still no specific statement that such a dimension must be

included, and of course an *awareness* of Europe goes beyond *knowing* about Europe' (ibid.: 396; original emphasis). Focusing upon modern European language skills, the authors pointed out that the learning of one foreign language was compulsory from ages 11 to 16 in England and that a second language was always optional in English secondary schools. However, language learning beyond the age of fourteen (at key stage 4) ceased to be compulsory in September 2005 (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) despite the European Commission's recommendation that all students should master at least two European languages in addition to their own by the end of their compulsory education (European Commission, 2001). Instead, the Department for Education and Skills published the guidance paper *Developing the Global Dimension in the School Curriculum* (2005) outlining aspects such as social justice, global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, sustainable development, interdependence as well as values and perceptions. This global dimension is one of four cross-curricular dimensions (the others being creativity, enterprise and cultural diversity) proposed as part of the Secondary Curriculum Review (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007), to be implemented in schools from September 2008.

As a result of these national political developments, contemporary schools in Germany, such as Tannberg Hauptschule and Goethe Gymnasium in Stuttgart[3], reassert in their civic education curricula that Germany is a democracy while promoting a European dimension and identity in several other subjects. In contrast, inner-city English schools, such as Millroad and Darwin School in London, struggle to privilege social inclusion over and above national citizenship agendas and identities whilst marginalising Europe in their schemes of work. This sets a very different framework for the student responses.

3. GERMAN AND ENGLISH STUDENT RESPONSES TO EUROPE

Given that the school system is more or less under direct control of the regional government, one might expect all schools and teachers within a German federal state to promote similar values. However, Tannberg Hauptschule mediated national agendas through a dominantly European and, arguably, at times a

Eurocentric approach with the Head of Religious Education arguing that 'if a religious symbol was allowed in class then it should be the cross and not the headscarf; we are still Christian Occidental [white and European]'. On another occasion, while eating with the students in the canteen, I witnessed that the teacher on duty told a male German student who wanted to help himself to some beef sauce that this is 'Muslim sauce' and that he should rather take some 'non-Muslim sauce'. By contrast, Goethe Gymnasium, whilst allowing young people to keep their ethnic identities, emphasised Europe as a common bond and thus interpreted the European dimension differently from Tannberg. The school prospectus stated that 'the ethos of our school is characterised by mutual respect and tolerance towards other people. Our students learn the manifoldness of European languages, cultures and mentalities and can thus develop their own identities within our school. (…) Europe as a cultural area is one of our guiding principles'. Young people within one country will have therefore experienced quite different messages about Europe.

Arguably, at Tannberg, the at times Eurocentric educational approach made it quite difficult for both native students and students of Turkish descent to relate positively to Europe. Their predominantly working-class backgrounds (about 56% of students had skilled and unskilled parents) may have been another reason why many students engaged in local and national political and identity discourses but did not perceive European and global issues to be particularly relevant to their lives (except for the war in Iraq). Their general knowledge about Europe seemed to be rather limited. The Turkish students listed some concepts including 'the Euro', 'the EU', 'western world' and 'advanced rich countries', but were unable to engage in a wider discussion. Tamer, for example, alluded to the 'united in diversity' motto of the EU (cf. Council of the European Union, 2004) and Ugur referred to its peace-keeping role:

> **DF:** What do you know about Europe, about the European Union?
> **Tamer:** It's a community.
> **Yeliz:** That's what I think too.
> **Umay:** I don't know. I'm not so sure.
> **Tamer:** It's a community of different countries.

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Cari: EU, countries that belong together; they talk about politics of different countries; they have negotiations and debate what they can do. It's a strong, political team.

Yeliz: If a country needs help then the other EU countries will help. They have treaties with each other.

Ugur: The European Union is a good thing; we don't have war today.

Native German students in the study also revealed some factual knowledge about Europe and the EU. For example, the group of boys and girls referred to notions of power as well as transatlantic and inner-European relationships. Not only was Sebastian aware of the strength of the common currency, but he and Tobias also alluded to the political and economic benefits of a united Europe. Drawing upon the dispute over the Iraq war in 2003, Jessica reminded the boys that Europe still does not speak with one voice:

DF: What do you know about Europe and the EU?

Franziska: The Euro.

Tobias: I think it's better now when it's Europe than when the countries were alone. We are too weak. We would have no chance, for example, against America. The Euro strengthens everything, of course. And the English always say 'travel to Europe'; they still think they are on their own. That's a bit silly what they think, I just find that the wrong attitude.

Sebastian: Well, I think the deutschmark used to be weaker than the dollar. Now the dollar's become weaker than the Euro. And when you're together, when you're a community, you're a lot stronger than on your own.

Jessica: Lots of languages, lots of cultures, well, I think that Europe is really a comprehensive image although the countries don't always stick together. You could see that with the Iraq war and America, some countries supported America. Germany didn't. And that's where you can see that the countries don't really always stick together.

Some of these glimpses of factual European knowledge amongst interviewees might be the result of European teaching units in compulsory subjects such as

geography, history and politics in Baden-Württemberg secondary schools. In other discussions, Bülent maintained that 'the EU was founded on the good relations between France and Germany', thus alluding to the 1950 proposal of the French foreign minister Schuman to unite the German and French coal and steel industry. The group of four German girls referred to the country's geographically central location in Europe and also mentioned that Germany and Italy were amongst the six nations that signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

In contrast, as a result of the school's inclusive interpretation of Europe and students' more privileged backgrounds (about 54% of students had professional middle class and routine non-manual parents), young people at Goethe Gymnasium had a wider range of opinions when talking about Europe and also made Europe part of their multidimensional identities. For example, Andreas (a German boy) pointed to the expansion of the EU although he was not exactly sure how many and which countries will join:

> **Andreas:** In a few weeks [1 May 2004], new countries will join the EU, it's getting bigger and bigger which is good and bad. I think that the idea of a European Union hasn't really worked as it should have in the fifteen countries and now even more will join. And in a few years, some more will join again. The borders are open and it's called the EU but they don't really belong to it. The new members slow down the integration process.

Leo (another German boy) argued that 'I think about the expansion, and I also cast my mind back to Columbus. Europe used to be the centre of the world; many things started here', thus alluding to the industrial revolution in 18th-century England as well as the 'discovery' of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492. One of the groups of Turkish students referred to the decade-long debate amongst policy-makers about the future structure of Europe:

> **DF:** What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Europe'?
> **Semra:** Well, Europe consists of countries that have got together, a community with the same currency. But you can't say that that's a giant country cos there are different languages and you can't say that Europe is

one culture. The people are kind of similar but there are nevertheless other cultures and France isn't like Germany and it's different in England. Europe has the same currency but not the same language and culture.

Nilgün: For me, Europe is more geographical. It's also more simple that you can move from one country to another. There's the Euro, but I don't really like it. I mean, people think that all Europeans are the same but, in reality, there are quite different cultures. I've got relatives in France and when we crossed the border it looked quite different. It's not one country.

Sevilin: You can't change the cultures, only the laws. I don't think there'll ever be something like a United States of Europe. That's somehow not possible. Maybe it's just a term cos in America each state has its own laws too but the language and culture is the same, and that's not the case in Europe.

Zeynep: They all see themselves as Americans.

The sample of students at Goethe Gymnasium also had significantly higher scores when asked to locate ten European countries correctly on a geopolitical map of Europe compared to both their counterparts at Tannberg Hauptschule and students in the two English schools. Arguably, the fact that the average scores were higher in both Tannberg Hauptschule (62.6%) and Goethe Gymnasium (77.3%) compared with the two English schools (34.4% Millroad School, 48.9% Darwin School) is a result of both the schools' emphasis on Europeanness rather than German values and the aforementioned macro-political account that Europe became a focal point for the organisation of the German educational system. Table 1 shows that nine out of ten students at Goethe Gymnasium located Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy and France correctly on the map, and over eighty percent of students in the German sample correctly identified the location of six European countries. In contrast, only one country (Britain) was correctly identified by eight out of ten students in the English sample. Students in the middle-class dominated schools (Goethe and Darwin) were also significantly better at locating European countries than students in the working-class dominated schools (Tannberg and Millroad) which probably had to do with the fact that their privileged backgrounds allowed them to take part in school exchanges and travel across Europe.

Table 1: Students' *correct* location of countries on a map of Europe

	Germany (%)	England (%)	Tannberg (%)	Goethe (%)	Millroad (%)	Darwin (%)
Britain	85.6	85.1	76.8	93.5**	81.3	89.1
Germany	89.6	51.0**	85.3	93.5	37.4	65.3**
Spain	86.1	52.4**	78.9	92.5*	38.3	67.3**
Finland	25.7	8.7**	15.8	34.6**	4.7	12.9*
Italy	94.1	64.4**	89.5	98.1*	54.2	75.2**
Turkey	66.8	33.2**	58.9	73.8	33.6	32.7
Portugal	81.2	37.5**	74.7	86.9	28.0	47.5**
Poland	58.9	14.4**	48.4	68.2*	11.2	17.8*
France	85.6	56.7**	75.8	94.4**	43.0	71.3**
Ukraine	30.2	10.6**	22.1	37.4*	12.1	8.9*
Average	73.3	41.4**	62.6	77.3	34.4	48.9

*Significance below 0.05, **significance below 0.01.

Turning now to the English case in greater detail, we not only see that students lost out in terms of locating countries on a map of Europe, but also that young people struggled to talk about Europe in political terms, especially at Millroad School. As a result of the Eurosceptic approach of many policy-makers and politicians, European issues are a relatively low priority in schools. However, given that the English school system and curriculum is not in direct control of the (regional) government, there is considerable room for schools to develop rather different approaches to Europe (and other educational agendas), and I consider the responses of two inner-city multi-faith London comprehensives here. Millroad School, where over 65 percent of students had skilled and unskilled parents, celebrated cultural and ethnic diversity and the present Geography curriculum, for instance, only has one European teaching unit in Year 8 (Italy: a European country) whilst highlighting the importance of an international perspective with units on Japan and Brazil in addition to local and national issues. The Citizenship education curriculum promoted notions of ethnic and cultural diversity with three teaching units (i.e. Britain: a diverse society; promoting inter-racial tolerance; debating a global issue) spent on the multicultural and global dimension whereas only one focused on local, national or European topics. Not surprisingly, therefore, the group of British girls I interviewed did not appear to know much

about the expansion of the EU on 1 May 2004 despite the fact that this discussion took place days before this event. Their discourse very much focused on the disagreement between France and England regarding the Iraq war:

> **DF:** What do you know about Europe, about the European Union?
>
> **Ellie:** [laughing] Nothing!
>
> **Katie:** Nothing.
>
> **DF:** What is happening at the moment in Europe?
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> **Ellie:** Erm, there's a lot of disagreement about the Iraq war, whether it should have happened and stuff. Because, um, England was very go for it, and I know France was very very against it and I think that's I dunno which other countries, but I think there were quite a lot more that were saying we shouldn't do it, and the English government, even though most of the people in England didn't want it to happen, decided to go ahead with it anyway.
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> **DF:** In the UK, they are now talking about this European Constitution; they want a referendum for that. Have you heard of that recently?
>
> **Katie:** Like, I read a lot of newspapers and I watch some news, but I've never heard of that. Well, they may not, you know, advertise it as much as they should do. None of us here heard that; so that must mean that they're not doing as much as they can to make people know that it's expanding.

The girls were not aware of the current debate about a European Constitution, and Katie pointed towards, what she perceived, as a low media representation of European issues in England. Other British students I interviewed, such as Robert, claimed that the political and educational marginalisation of European agendas in England led to his poor knowledge about Europe and its institutions. 'The European parliament is never like televised, we don't know what they actually, if Parliament [Westminster] passes a bill we'll know about it, I don't know what goes on in the European parliament'. Similarly, Turkish respondents had difficulties to make sense of how Europe and the EU work in political terms:

> **DF:** What do you know about the European Union or Europe?
>
> **Baris:** European Union, what's that?

Sarila: Well, nobody knows nothing about it basically.

Baris: What's the European Union?

Sarila: You think I know?

Baris: I heard about it, but I don't know what it is.

Sarila: Me neither.

Halil: Is it the power?

Baris: I'm asking you.

Sarila: I don't really know, no.

Halil: Cos the Union-

Baris: The Union's a bunch of people that decides something, but I don't know.

Other students in the sample, such as Olcay, referred to the Turkish EU membership bid when asked what they know about Europe in political terms. Europe was seen through a Turkish national (i.e. familiar) lens. Those who argued against membership typically said that Turkey's laws and morals do not meet European standards and that the country is very poor with a great deal of people being homeless. Europe did also not fit easily with students' English or Turkish political identities at Millroad. Although geopolitical knowledge is not necessarily the basis of political identities, the evidence in the larger study suggests that it nevertheless affected identity formation. Students in the two English schools did not consider Europe part of their identities (Faas, 2008) whereas young people in the two German schools, particularly at Goethe Gymnasium, partially identified with Europe (Faas, 2007b). It is however, beyond the scope of this article to engage in a wider discussion about the complexities of youth identities.

Similarly, Darwin School (where about 57% of students had professional middle class and routine non-manual parents) made little efforts to integrate students on the basis of common European membership and instead emphasised similarity around notions of Britishness. 'The school strives to be a high-performing inclusive community school, fully committed to active citizenship and academic excellence. We value all who learn and work here; promoting a strong sense of community within and beyond the school' (School prospectus). The European

context was also largely absent from Darwin's citizenship curriculum and other subjects suitable for promoting a European dimension, such as Geography and History, also offered only limited acknowledgement of the processes of Europeanisation. For example, only one Geography teaching unit in Year 8 dealt with Europe. The remainder of the geography curriculum was structured around local, national and global issues (e.g. international disparities, Brazil, Australia, UK climate, vine farm Lincolnshire); and the history curriculum centred on the two world wars as well as British national history. The Deputy Head not only acknowledged that the notion of Europe 'is an area we don't address explicitly in citizenship', but she also admitted that Darwin School has done little teaching about Europe. Consequently, in their discussions about Europe and the EU, fifteen-year-old Darwinians struggled to talk about Europe:

> **DF:** What sorts of things do you know about Europe and the European Union?
> **Anne:** Not much!
> **Victoria:** It's really difficult,-
> **Anne:** I don't know anything.
> **Victoria:** -totally out of my depth.
> **Elizabeth:** It's quite confusing cos it changes so much, that people-
> **Anne:** The Euro.
> **Sophie:** There's places part of it [indistinct]
> **Elizabeth:** Oh, isn't there a referendum coming up for something or other?
> **Victoria:** A what? What's that?
> **Elizabeth:** I dunno. I just heard it, walking through my house and the news was on somewhere, this whole thing about-
> **Victoria:** What's a referendum?
> **Elizabeth:** I don't know.
> **Anne:** I know about the euro because I was in Ireland when it was going through.
> **Victoria:** They don't have it in Ireland.

Arguably, the limited coverage of European issues in the British mass media and the failure of English schools to respond to calls for a European dimension

alongside multicultural and global education (Tulasiewicz, 1993; Convey and Merritt, 2000) were all responsible for this low level of knowledge of, and interest in, European issues. Similar reasons can be deployed to justify the difficulties the sample of Turkish students had to engage in European political discourses. Some Darwin students referred to 'power', 'opposition to America' and 'community of countries'. Typically, however, Turkish interviewees neither knew the purpose of the EU nor how European institutions work. This can be seen in the following quotation from the discussion with a group of male and female students:

> **DF:** What do you know about the European Union or Europe actually?
> **Adem:** It happened after World War Two; France and Germany, they like made an agreement, and then loads of other countries joined or something.
> **Neylan:** What happens when you're in the EU anyway?
> **Afet:** Nothing, you're just
> **Adem:** No, you get to, the United Nations.
> **Neylan:** What do you get?
> **Adem:** You get into the United Nations.
> **Neylan:** So what, who cares? Why can't the whole world be in it? That's not fair.
> **Adem:** Cos they're not.
> **Neylan:** It's just stupid!

In contrast, both native students and students of Turkish origin at Darwin frequently drew upon national discourses when talking about England's role in Europe and the wider world. Students frequently referred to notions of insularity, separateness and detachment and also portrayed the special partnership with the United States of America as a main factor undermining the Europeanisation of British national identity ('we go and side off with the United States and stuff and beg from them and all the other countries think it's a bad idea'; 'in a way I think we are more similar to America because of the language'). Charles alluded to the level of national pride in England suggesting that it was 'quite strong', possibly stronger than elsewhere in Europe, and William referred to,

what could be called, England's 'sitting on the fence' politics where policy-makers and politicians have long been undecided whether to deepen their ties with Europe or America. Arguably, this exemplifies the extent to which students' responses were affected by the national political context. We saw in the opening parts of this paper that scepticism shaped England's relationship with Europe whereas, in Germany, Europe has played a central role with regard to identity formation and education. The stipulation in the 1988 Resolution by the Council of Ministers of Education that schools should 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity', and the response by the Department of Education and Science (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988; DES, 1991), appears not to have affected either Darwin or Millroad School in any major way.

4. DO WE NEED EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS?

European countries have responded very differently to calls for a European dimension in education resulting in different levels of student engagement with Europe. Socio-economic factors and school interpretations of macro-level policies (e.g. Eurocentric education at Tannberg versus an inclusive concept of Europe at Goethe) also affected students' responses and access to Europe, for instance in terms of travelling. Their limited, and at times inaccurate, geopolitical knowledge of Europe raises serious questions about the appropriateness of school curricula of subjects like citizenship, geography and history, where countries like England currently only marginally include European topics while Europe has been central to curriculum development in countries like Germany. These discrepancies give rise to the need of formulating a common (but by no means uniform) European education system, guaranteeing cohesion among national education systems. Central to this, what I would call, 'Bologna process at primary and secondary levels'[4] could be a European core curriculum with specified educational standards or competences that all students in the EU should acquire by a particular grade. Regular testing could be instituted to ensure that these standards are being met. European educational standards could be similar in conceptualisation to national educational standards which, for instance, have only been developed in Germany during the past five years as a result of the country's poor performance in international surveys such as

the Programme for International Student Assessment (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004). However, unlike in Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2005), where such standards have only been developed for mathematics, German, foreign languages (English or French) and the natural sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), there could be a much more pro-active approach at European level including the social sciences (history, geography, citizenship). This would not only help avoid the kinds of knowledge gaps we saw in this paper between students in different European countries, but also enhance mobility amongst students and their parents which is at present unnecessarily complicated by the fact that, even within one country, there are discrepancies with regard to knowledge/curriculum standards and the structure of the education system (e.g. two-track or three-track at secondary level).

However, while establishing European educational (content/curriculum) standards could be one way of reversing these diverging national trends and thus contribute to the development of a European education area, one should also account for the diversity within the EU. While a country like Germany might want to have English or French as a compulsory foreign language in primary and secondary schools, this could be Spanish, French or even Mandarin in English schools. In other words, the binding standard would be to have one mandatory foreign language until a commonly agreed educational level. Similarly, in history and geography, schools in a country like England might want to emphasise a multicultural and global dimension around African or Indian issues whereas these could be Turkish or Italian issues in the German context. Again, the cohesive element would be not to allow for such subjects to be dropped at an early stage of secondary schooling in some European countries (i.e. not to allow for early subject specialisation at the expense of general knowledge acquisition). Arguably, at the core of this could be the question about which of the three knowledge and curricular traditions (humanist tradition, rationalist-encyclopaedic tradition, and naturalist tradition[5]) Europe would want to promote. If the Commission and national policy-makers and educators want to address content (e.g. knowledge) and structural educational discrepancies within Europe, and therefore strengthen the European education

area and knowledge economy, then they may have to move beyond the mere promotion of Community action programmes. The 'Bologna process' has shown the extent to which national and European policy-makers can complement each other (despite the fact for instance that, in Germany, responsibility for higher education policy rests exclusively with the regional governments) and there is little reason why a similarly coordinated effort would not be possible at primary and secondary levels.

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NOTES

[1] This is similar to what the EU proposed in its draft constitutional treaty in 2004, where Article I-17 states that 'the Union shall have competence to carry out supporting, coordinating or complementary action [in] education, youth, sport and vocational training' (Council of the European Union, 2004).

[2] The three-phase Education for Democratic Citizenship project (Phase I: 1997-2000; Phase II: 2001-2004; Phase III: 2006-2009) was established in order to determine which values and skills individuals require in order to become participating citizens, how they can acquire these skills and how they can learn to pass them on to others' and to identify the basic skills required to practice democracy in European societies.

[3] The identities of all schools, teachers and students in the study were protected from outsiders by using pseudonyms.

[4] Elements of cohesion in higher education emerged in the 1999 Bologna Declaration, which aimed to introduce the Anglican Bachelor and Master degree programmes by 2010 and thus to create a European Higher

Education Area. Following the third follow-up conference in Bergen in 2005, forty-five European countries are part of this 'process'.

[5] The humanist tradition (e.g. England) is concerned with the development of the individual child. The rationalist-encyclopaedic tradition (e.g. France, southern Europe) assumes that all children should acquire the main disciplines of knowledge while the naturalist tradition (Scandinavia, northern Europe) focus on the child in the community (McLean, 1995).

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