Roskilde Universitetscenter – Institut for Samfund og Globalisering
Supervisor: Klaas Dykman

Jan-Erik Refle

Convinced bureaucrats

Master Thesis - Speciale

Perceptions in ministries of foreign affairs and the changed role in a globalised world

Summary

Ministries of Foreign Affairs face a changed role in a globalised world. Other actors than states gain prominence and influence the way decisions are made in ministries. But what ideas matter for civil servants in ministries when decisions on foreign policy are taken? This paper analyses the influence of ideas and identities on decision making processes basing on 55 interviews with civil servants from 22 European countries. Constructivist theory builds the framework and is enhanced by bureaucratic theories. Medium ranked civil servants in Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) are in the focus of the analysis. Based on constructivist theory, civil servants were asked on personal and collective perceptions in form of mid-depth open structured interviews. Diplomats from 20 MFAs of European Union (EU) member states and from two non-member states have been interviewed to ensure comparability between European MFAs.

The results indicate that first of all diplomacy is highly constructed and civil servants are generally like-minded. Terms like human rights, democracy and professionalism are used as categories to compare other European and especially non-European countries. Trust and consistencies are important issues for civil servants and they generally favour positive image creation. The UN, the EU, security and human rights are the most important topics for referral in European MFAs. However, national identities consist with different core values/ core interests that are not ever consistent as interviews showed.

European MFAs also differ in the way decisions are made covering pure top-down and pure bottom-up structures. It has to be noted that bigger MFAs are generally more hierarchically organised. Nevertheless civil servants generally know what they can do and what not because of their professional knowledge and experience as well as through their guidelines. Articulation is important for expressing notwithstanding and for the discussion of new initiatives and new ideas.

Although national identities still play a main role, a European identity is developing. Identity formation regarding other countries occurs on the European level and positions are articulated in European coordination meetings. Therefore, civil servants need to be aware that they articulate explicitly what their country stands for on a European level. Civil servants also expressed support for the European External Action Service (EEAS) and a more coherent image of the EU. The EU is seen very positive even if the own population shares a more negative perception of the EU. Interviewees mentioned, that the EEAS could replace own embassies on the long term when there is no national interest in the country. In case of national interests, additional structures are favoured.

Civil servants still believe in the state system and have no trust in other external actors if they are not part of a state centred system. Civil servants regard non state actors with more scepticism. The UN is seen as positive, but ineffective. NGOs are seen as knowledge base and watchdogs, but also with scepticism. The most negative perception is for media, because of the anti-government or anti-civil servant perspective. Parliamentarians are seen as discussants for ideas, but with limited expertise. Enterprises express the interest based orientation of countries and are supported although they can contradict values.

Processes of reconstruction of identities have been identified and named showing that arguing and articulation play an important role. Overall, the construction on the European level is surprisingly important as are the decision making processes in the ministries and the role of the minister.

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
CE	Central Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
EC	European Commission
EE	Eastern Europe
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NE	Northern Europe
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Commission on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
SE	Southern Europe
WE	Western Europe

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Acknowledgments

1. Introduction

International Relations Theory is used to explain why one actor acts as he does. Scholars referred the action of states, international organisations or individuals to various causes like a negative image of humanity, anarchy in international relations or the influence of various national actors or ideas. The first theories were elaborated and political science as authoritative allocation of values (Weber) not only focused on one community but also on the interrelationship of different communities. We are the United Kingdom, you are the Frenchmen, they are the Russians, and this is Persia. This sentence distinguishes between different communities and divides groups of people or describes specific terrain. Those communities are in the Westphalian system primarily states. However, before and after the Westphalian peace and the elaboration of relations between states and diplomacy, other actors than states were and are still of importance. Finally not states act, but state actors do, namely diplomats. Today, not only states make foreign policy, but also international companies, NGOs or international organisations.   Within a globalised world, a plurality of theories of international relations exists.

Scholars in a classical realist tradition emphasise the negative nature of humanity, while the Kantian tradition of the cooperative human being is an argument of liberal scholars. Neorealists in the tradition of Kenneth Waltz focus on the anarchy in the international system causing violence. World System Theory focuses on different era of systems in history. Institutionalists emphasise the role of international institutions as triggers for decisions. Other scholars like liberalists - depending on their tradition and view - focus on democratic peace, economic interrelationship or common values. After the end of the Cold War other theories like constructivism that focuses on inter-subjectivity of the international system gained in prominence. Furthermore individual and collective perceptions have to be analysed in order to understand human behaviour.

Constructivism, the analysis of perceptions as important factors of decision making, has often been regarded as an interesting concept. However, retracing concrete decisions towards ideas and perceptions has not often been verified scientifically and randomly for the individual level. It was proved being difficult to identify decision making factors for various actions in foreign policy only based on personal views or collective identities, as it remains difficult to clarify these. Retracing personal and collective perceptions makes it possible to show that personal and community ideas

are important decision making factors in international relations. The analysis of foreign policy decision making is one of the cornerstones of international relations theory. The verification of perceptions as decision making factors enables a more detailed analysis on ideas and identities as important factors of foreign policy. But, where to start, when a plurality of actors make foreign policy? Recently, foreign ministries followed a rather ambiguous role, especially in Europe. While other actors than states became more important in international relations, the state authority abroad – the foreign ministry and its embassies - still provides its services and adapts to those changes. But did a change in perception on the ministry itself, on other states, on the emerging European foreign policy or institutions occur? It may be true, that challenges of globalisation force ministries to develop even stronger national identities. States and public services still provide services in international relations and are the starting point for analysis, because they are still able to form an image of the own country and of others. On the other hand they have to face a changing environment that is not acting in the sense of the state. This area of conflict is a typical question of adaptation to globalisation by reframing the own role and is worth to research in detail. Recent research by Checkel and others (Checkel 2004:237) relating to European integration emphasise a return towards the perspective from the nation state towards the supranational or international level. This includes that identities are mainly constructed "at home".

The central question of this thesis is:

What ideas matter in the daily life of foreign ministries?

This implies that foreign policy in ministerial bureaucracies can be retraced towards perceptions and values within the ministry held collectively or individually. The paper aims to identify the perceptions that are crucial for the daily decision making processes in foreign ministries by interviewing several staff members. Underlying the constructivist assumption that identities and ideas matter for actions, the existence of perceptions on the own country as well as other countries (1), the European Union (2) or on international institutions and other actors (3) and consequences for decision making are retraced. Constructivism as meta-theory is scaled down by the inclusion of bureaucratic theories that emphasises the decisive role of ministries and bureaucratic structures for decision making. An interesting question is whether bureaucratic structures favour a national linkage over international identities.

This paper is a comparative qualitative case study on the importance of perceptions for foreign policy decision making. Thereby, several employees of foreign ministries have been interviewed and their perceptions have been analysed. Although most scholars agree that identities and ideas matter, proof remained uncommon. The lack of research on that topic shows the relevance of this study. The verification is conducted for one small part of international relations - foreign ministries. The focus is kept on own perception and perception of others, the perception of the EU and the EEAS and the perception of international actors like the UN.

Decision making may be influenced by other factors like realist assumptions; perceptions may be viewed as unimportant at the end. The paper is open towards final conclusions.

2. Methodology

2.1 Ontological preface

The analysis of human perceptions and values is difficult. Measurement of personal and collective worldviews and interpretations is done by identification of common values, dialogue analysis or retracement of decisions. Nevertheless it remains difficult as human emotions cannot be analysed entirely through observation. Analysis of human behaviour therefore cannot be perfect but parsimonious. This strengthens the overall analysis towards the most crucial aspects.
"Directions" of thoughts of researchers are guided by theories. This implies that theories reduce other aspects that nevertheless might be important if theory is wrong. Theory must be exact but as broad as possible. Different levels of theory help to combine expectations on theory. Assessment of human perceptions is difficult, because the researcher constructs his or her own structures and analysis[1] . There is no "right" or "wrong" decision, as this is a question of scientific argument ideally being most convincing. A research on values can be regarded as wrong, but later be seen as a real breakthrough.

It is more difficult to account different values than fixed numbers, because values, perceptions and interpretations are fluid and can change over time, while the annual report of a company for the year 2007 for example is fixed.   Although constructivism assumes that values change

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[1] For detailed techniques and theoretical limitations of constructivism, I refer to the book of Klotz/Lynch 2007 namely page 19ff.

incrementally, public and private opinion can change rapidly. How can scientists analyse long-term value and perception development if the decisions taken differ and change ad-hoc? Or is there no quick or ad-hoc change, but adapted response on new emerging arguments? This is one of the questions to be answered in the chapter on constructivism.

Overall analysing of human perceptions and the basis of human behaviour is not only difficult, but also interesting. Through the identification of common mechanism for solving problems, scholars could find underlying reasons for decisions that are not obvious on the first view. This encloses not only socialisation towards a fixed image, but also the spontaneity of decisions or decisions against socialised perceptions. The integration and construction of values, perceptions and identities is equally important for the view on countries and on international organisations and enterprises. Those hold different perceptions that may cause power relations or a certain "standing" in social behaviour opening new possibilities for action.

A more political liberal argument for analysing values and perceptions is that the enforcement of values for decision making enables a "better" world, if interests are comparatively weaker than values, and values are followed. This is illusionary because values are not always regarded as universal. However, I would argue that interests are born out of values and perceptions and influence each other.

The mere analysis of values does not change a world that is viewed in the realist tradition. Realist analysis is based on own values and perceptions, only taking the construction of the world as granted. Values do matter in the realist analysed world, although those are very different from liberal or constructivist analysis. This view is rather critical when arguing on the parsimony of analysis. It could be argued, that if the world is for example realistically constructed, than why do we not use realism for analysis. The question is how the world is constructed and therefore I would argue that it ever remains important to start with conducting constructivist analysis before using other theories.

How do we know how to act and how to respond to other's behaviour? The answer can be found in important factors of socialisation, teacher-student relations or individual experience and is clarified in the theory chapter. For the moment, it is to note, that we construct not only our own world, but also expect others to do so and to position themselves. This can cause expectations

that are not always true, as individual perceptions differ. Collective identities can be reflective towards individual or other identities. Those are the basis for decision making. Theory should enable the identification of perceptions that guide our behaviour.

2.2 Problem formulation

Perceptions are the point of departure for all behaviour. We act in relation to others that we see as sympatric, rational or even bad. We then choose from a set of actions that we learned or were socialised in. Those perceptions are the guidelines for action and it is therefore important to be conscious about perceptions when trying to assess policies and decisions made in MFAs.

How to access perceptions in foreign ministries and what influence do they have on the daily decision making process? Although perceptions are commonly accepted as influencing the behaviour and arguing by constructivists, it has ever been difficult to proof this. What causes a foreign policy change and which ideas are important? Although some trials have been made, a detailed analysis on decision making in foreign ministry administration is rarely found with the exception of an analysis of French scholars on diplomacy (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:32). Ministries and especially MFAs are generally seen as black boxes mainly communicating interests and positions through their leaders. A detailed analysis offers a better view on perceptions and the influence on foreign relations if researched. This paper is thereby especially scientifically relevant for understanding perceptions as this has not been assessed for MFAs.

One expectation underlies this view: Foreign ministries represent real or constructed aggregated personal perceptions on the country and on others that cause positive and/or negative responsiveness. This is not only emphasised by the Foreign Ministry itself by creating an image, but also in relation to other countries and actors. The underlying hypothesis includes that MFAs have to construct a specific image, but it is unclear how and if those perceptions are exclusive etc. Construction of clear images is particularly crucial in an environment where more than one actor (the state) makes foreign policy and where different levels are interconnected. One example therefore is the increasing role of the European Union and generally more interaction on a sub-ministerial level that could lead to a construction and policy coordination on lower levels. The increased Europeanization is interesting for research and reasons the focus on European MFAs. Civil servants argue and behave facing other actors strengthening the influence of cognitive factors on foreign relations. Other actors also construct their own role. An analysis of perceptions does

not only help to identify individual views on the own ministry, but also on the connected view on the European Union or International Organisations.

Arguing in the Habermasian tradition as seen in contemporary constructivism by Risse (Risse 2000), is seen as one important factor for change of perceptions while also other factors will be discussed later. The communication of values and identities expresses own positions and helps others in identifying the own position. A change of perceptions can result when new perceptions are articulated or have to be expressed due to the speaker's position. It is furthermore interesting to identify whether staff in foreign ministries resonates "official" positions or is rather sceptical towards them, if they differ from their own perceptions. One hypothesis is, that a foreign ministry builds an identity based on shared perceptions and that they defend this position. It is important to identify perception communities similar to epistemic communities where values and perceptions are shared. In this case it can be expected that those perceptions are decision guiding. It is expected, that MFA build a particular set of knowledge and perceptions.

Factors and conditions for change of perceptions will be discussed in the theory chapter. Where does change why occur and how can other institutions or the media influence foreign ministries into one direction? This is useful for the analysis of foreign policy not only in MFAs but as a whole. Mechanisms for changing perceptions can be identified and it can be explained why a foreign ministry can react sensitive on a campaign by NGOs.

The central question- what ideas matter in MFAs- is particularly important for the understanding of foreign policy decisions. Often the analysis of foreign policy appears as unfocused, facing values, interests or individual factors. On the other hand it is often taken for granted and something in its own right. Therefore some separate theories on foreign policy analysis (FPA) emerged as separate field, but emancipate themselves from international relations theory. Actually, it cannot be absolutely foreseen that MFAs act as they do because of miscellaneous factors that play a role. Foreign ministries build highly integrated and structured identities offering foreign policy services.

2.3 Actors and dependencies

Actors of foreign relations include not only the foreign ministry, but also NGOs, international institutions, civil society, media or even transnational actors. Even foreign ministries are influenced by other political bodies and are more an administrative think thank for concepts, but also for handling the relationship among states. Within a MFA, different actors exist. Although all

actors in an MFA can be described as bureaucrats, meaning that they are part of a bureaucratic system with a specific set of rules and norms for actions, I will mainly speak of civil servants as actors in bureaucracies or diplomats in this specific case of MFAs. The term diplomats excludes Secretaries and facility or operational management and focuses on policy oriented actors that elaborate political positions or are active in consular affairs. Diplomats are civil servants negotiating official country positions. On the other hand, purely administrative staff is excluded by the policy oriented selection of interviewees in medium positions (compare 2.5). It should be kept in mind that bureaucrats or diplomats are already subject to specific roles and obligations of their bureaucratic working environment. Civil servants in MFAs are the persons staying in regular contact with other actors of international relations.

Relationships with other states enclose a contact with the "other" which includes that the actors hold or develop ideas on their own role or perception and on other ones. MFAs are especially chosen, because of their outreach that has not only domestic, but international (multilateral and bilateral) orientation. Particularly, the perceptions of the foreign ministry vis-à-vis international institutions, the European Union or civil society can be underlined.

The European Union is particularly important as the EEAS is emerging and the European identity might become stronger. The new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Lady Ashton and the emerging European External Action Service, build a new bureaucratic body for handling the Unions external relations. This can cause shifts within the foreign ministries. The enlarged role of the European Union might be regarded as a threat or as a new opportunity. Furthermore, multiple identities between national or European identities or more detailed sub-identities like multilateral oriented actors might become more prominent.

The paper further analyses the perceived role for international actors like the UN, NGOs or parliamentarians and their image for diplomats. The UN is a major worldwide acting organisation. The UN might be regarded as universal body, enclosing some general values, while UNCTAD or other sub-bodies are more specifically oriented and perhaps "closer" to the working level. This can cause different views in European countries as some issues might be regarded as something very far and not Western oriented. NGOs are often seen as important factors for democracy (e.g. Dahl 1989:14 a. 23ff.). They polarize by their actions, which might cause an ambivalent image in foreign

relations. How other actors like parliamentarians - as they are partly important in some European countries – are seen by civil servants is researched as well. Media is another important actor. Companies complete the picture of other actors and how they are seen by civil servants.

The relationship between all actors can be analysed in more detail when looking at the general perceptions of those. It can be expected that a more positive view on actors might cause more cooperation if both actors are engaging. The three examples – the own perception, the EU and international actors – are also chosen as they cover different aspects of foreign policy. The concrete perceptions can also be an indicator for the standing of organisations in foreign relations.

2.4 Method applied – a comparative case study

A comparative case study among European Foreign ministry employees is conducted. The often neglected bureaucratic and personal level is focus of analysis. Exploratory, empirical research is done. It is ad-hoc, but might become continuous research, if other aspects are regarded in more detail in another research project. The exploratory level is underlined as this is no systematic variable-by-variable test. To ensure a better focus, only perceptions from between autumn 2010 and spring 2011 are used – which describes the time frame of the thesis. Therefore perceptions might not be time consistent. Change is expected to occur and a more detailed analysis could introduce a larger time frame. Enlarging to a greater time frame or towards other actors could be a subject for future research.

The analysis focuses on primary data that is collected by interviews (see also point 2.6). The data is qualitative and comparative with a moderate number of interviews (Have 1999:29). The outcome of analysis is not predetermined. Results are open and there has been no comparative research – as known – on this special topic before. The limited research on this topic makes the study especially relevant.

The target group for the interviews were medium ranked positions of all departments and included staff members of European MFAs. Those include primarily all EU member states and, for comparison, views from some accession countries. A geographical focus lied on Nordic countries where all countries of that region were covered. The study overall compares perception of civil

servants in MFAs from 20 EU member states and two non-EU member states ensuring a wide range of individual opinions around Europe. The answers of interviewees cannot be generalized for establishing country positions, but is comparative and indicates European perceptions, differences and similarities among European MFAs.

2.5 Variables and design

Key variables are actions and the direction or scope of actions of MFA employees facing especially external actors as dependent variable. The perceptions of external actors as positive or negative on the basis of the own identity for own actions is seen as "independent" variable. However, I argue, that the term independent is misleading, because the perceptions themselves are to be seen interconnected with identities and interests. Further research emphasises that identities are too overlapping or unsettled to be regarded as variables (Klotz/Lynch 2007:70). Positive interpretation of identities of other countries leads towards "positive" behaviour, which can themselves cause positive or negative interpretation. Although those processes are continuous, they can be regarded as closed mechanisms that are repeated by sequences.

The design of the data collection encompassed detailed open structured telephone or direct face-to-face interviews with MFA representatives.

2.6 Tools of Analysis – interview technique

2.6.1 Introduction to the used Interview technique

Interviews are defined as "conversation pursued for the purpose of gathering information to be used for research purposes" (Soss 2006:135). Interviews with medium-ranked civil servants in MFAs serve as basic tool for the analysis in this thesis. Data is collected via an open semi-structured interview technique that allowed reaction on the interviewee (Axinn/Pearce 2006:5f.;McGivern 2006:64). This ensures greater validity but less reliability due to the limited number of interviews[2]. As McGivern underlines (McGivern 2006:64), this is due to cost-efficiency, the clearly defined research objective and the greater range and number of interviewees. Anonymous qualitative open interviews are particularly suitable for exploratory research on people's attitudes and opinions or on sensitive issues (McGivern 2006:185; 358). The interviewer thereby can test and probe on connotations and on the meaning or interpretation of things (Soss 2006:135;147). Interviewees can be better understood through their mimics and forms of formulation etc. and could give meaning to their words on their own (Silverman 1994:95). However, semi-structured interviews are also intensive and demanding for the interviewer in terms of time and skills (Axinn/Pearce 2006:6).
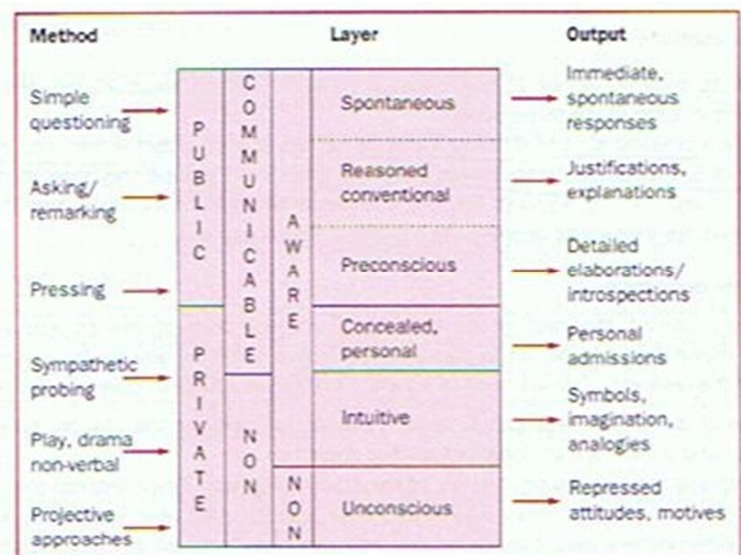
Illustration 1 - Qualitative Interviewing model, McGivern 2006:196

Interviews are chosen because they provide "access to how people account for both their troubles and good fortune" (Silverman 1993:114). The design of the open interview is qualitative and in the form of a "guided conversation" with open questions (Rubin and Rubin in McGivern 2006:64; 362)[3] as will be described in detail in the interview guidelines. The interviews are not recorded and coded for evaluation. Therefore it is more similar towards schools of research like Conversation

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[2] For a detailed discussion on validity and reliability in interviews compare Silverman 1994:156.
[3] Further details are to be found in the interview guidelines in the Annex.

Analysis due to inductive settings, even though the language itself is not separately analysed on connotations and emphasis like for CA (Have 1999:28; 38).

Interviewees might have been aware of the theory used (constructivism) and therefore might have wished to verify or neglect theory according to their motivation and conviction. Furthermore, interviewees could have underreported behaviour or beliefs in sensitive areas (Axinn/Pearce 2006:48). Although being aware of this, it appears inevitable. Every interviewee expresses a particular standpoint. Some of the persons interviewed are aware of their perceptions while others are not. The "state" of self-perception was tried to be assessed during the interview. However an overall accession cannot be achieved and analysis remains imperfect. Those perturbations of the research design or errors in perceptions are ever possible when interview techniques are used. Suggestive questions have been avoided, but it cannot be clearly stated, that interviewees were influenced by the way questions were posed. The "interviewer effect" stands for the effects of verbal expression, tone or use of words or simply positive view of the interviewer and is something that can never be eliminated (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006:120; Soss 2006:140). Questions aimed to achieve immediate, spontaneous responses while also projective approaches have been used to account for repressed motives (ill. 1). Interviewees were also interested in the results of the study. This resulted in open articulation of own positions, but also in the interest to see, how other construct their environment. This can be seen as one argument for the overwhelming interest of civil servants in the participation and results of the study. Human perceptions are open towards multiple interpretations which make analysis particularly difficult for researcher (Trodal et al 2010:19).

Apart from the length of employment, no social data has been collected, as interviewees generally hold a comparable position and education. The argument brought by scholars, that identities are also influenced by social representation (Kaarbo/Gruenfeld 1998:228) is kept in mind.

2.6.2 Candidate selection

Potential interviewees have been contacted between September 2010 and January 2011 starting with Nordic countries and gradually enlarging towards other European countries. This ensures a more comparable view on all European MFAs, not only focusing on Nordic countries and thereby encompassing a more open view across Europe. The inclusion of non-member states of the EU enabled a comparative view towards member states and was necessary to incorporate all Nordic

countries. At the end, most European member states are covered, resulting in a broad and diversified image on European policy making processes. The number of interviews was expected to range around 50. This goal is exceeded although staff of MFAs was expected to be very busy and the rate of success for convincing members was seen as not very high. MFA members were contacted directly via email and dates for telephone interviews of around half an hour were determined. Over 600 requests for interviews towards Directors or their Secretariats in European MFAs were sent. The potential interviewees were introduced to the theme and method of the study to ensure a better acceptance. It is assumed, that interviewees were interested in the topic or attracted by the idea. Some interviewees directly asked for the results of the study when the interview was finished. Another motivation for participation could have been to train oneself in explaining core issues and policies of the ministry.

It was expected, that middle ranked employees are most open as they might not be strongly aware of their job as junior employees and are less busy than seniors in higher ranks. The accessibility of those actors is better. Lower ranked employees might not have the authority to make decisions and are expected to influence the overall perception within the ministry more generally. Furthermore, Director and Deputy Directors as well as Head of Departments hold a view on the perceptions within their department and are expected to be more conscious on their positions than e.g. junior staff members. Basing on the argument of Adler and Barnet in their studies on security communities (Adler/Barnett 1998), reciprocity is expected to be most significant for officials that interact with other international partners and actors. Medium ranked civil servants are seen as being more open when explaining perceptions and have been consequently targeted. However the group of candidates remained open towards higher positions. Mainly Directors, Deputy Directors or Head of Departments down to Counsellors were interviewed including career diplomats. Those positions normally require a higher university degree. In the end, the target group has been met (Ill. 14, Annex).

The perceptions of bureaucratic actors are seen as being important in affecting actors' behaviour as suggested by scholars like Trondal et al and Cox and Jacobson (Trondal et al 2010:18). Whether a diplomat works more bilateral or multilateral has not been assessed separately. However, only civil servants that already worked with multilateral institutions or worked bilateral have been interviewed.

The interviews are representative for a comparison between European medium-ranked civil servants but cannot account for detailed state positions for those countries. As some countries contributed with around seven interviews, those are more representative for country positions than in countries where only one representative has been interviewed. The level of analysis is on the individual and personal perception.

2.6.3 Form of Interviews

Some interviews took place in a face-to-face manner including some interviews at the Danish, German and Austrian MFA and some at embassies of other countries. The venue was nevertheless for all interviewees their personal workplace, for those contacted by phone and those conducted in direct face-to-face conversation, respecting the privacy and anonymous location for conducting such interviews (Axinn/Pearce 2006:41). Some interviews exceeded the half hour scheduled and especially face-to-face interviews occasionally lasted until one hour allowing for deeper interviews. As the actual duration of interviews was relatively short, the saturation of interviewees is expected to be low, although questions included thinking on own positions and cognitive difficult questions (Axinn/Pearce 2006:35; 42). Face-to-face interviews were only conducted where no additional costs and time consumption emerged although face-to-face interviews have a number of advantages like accessibility of the interviewee (McGivern 2006:244).   No interview was recorded, instead notes were taken simultaneously. This ensures that a larger number of interviewees can be included in the analysis, as time for transcription of recordings is saved. That means that no separate coding occurred as the interview focused on articulations. Have emphasises that transcriptions usually are subject to selective renderings and are incomplete (Have 1999:33). Therefore, although ensuring less selectivity, incompleteness could not have been avoided if the interviews would have been recorded. Furthermore trust and openness among interviewees is increased by not recording the conversation.

The interviews met McGiverns definition of Mini-depth interviews as they are short in-depth interviews on a specific aspect, namely perceptions (McGivern 2006:188). The less structured interviewing allowed flexibility and the introduction of new aspects (Axinn/Pearce 2006:11). The language was usually English, although interviews with representatives from Germany and Austria have been conducted in German, while those with the French ministry were in French. As not all

interviews have been conducted in the mother language, this may have an influence on the quality of answers but cannot be avoided due to limited resources (Axinn/Pearce 2006:47).

As was the case for other interview projects like the UN Intellectual history project (United Nations Intellectual History Project 2010), interviews have been sought to be balanced and diversified concerning origin, gender and departmental affiliations. However, positions held have not been diversified as explained above. As not all countries throughout the EU contributed in the interviews due to various reasons; the objective was nevertheless to include most of the member countries of the European Union and also some non-EU members. Due to the start at Nordic ministries and easier accessibility at those, they represent the majority of interviewees.

The interviews were conducted under the guarantee of personal anonymity; therefore no names of foreign ministry employees appear throughout the paper. This ensured the openness of interviewees to explain their personal interpretation and to be not bound by institutional circumstances. However, it cannot be excluded, that some interviewees did not respond open because they fear negative consequences when saying something perceived as "wrong". The anonymity furthermore opened the door for interviews on a sensitive field of MFAs that often appear as closed organisations.

2.6.4 Interview guide

The interviews are based on an open conversation with room for new details and interaction. The interview guide was more a list of topics. Some general ideas on questions were elaborated (ill. 13, Annex), but often posed in another form or not within the same series according to the areas interviewees were working on. Furthermore, as Soss mentioned, the standpoint of the interviewer developed over time, thereby changing the focus on interviews from the start compared to the end (Soss 2006:137). However, some main aspects are fixed for all actors.

Those are the three aspects of:
- Perceptions of the own country and other countries (1)
- EU perception and influence on work (2)
- UN/ international actors perception and influence on work (3)

The three aspects are further distinguished towards different sub areas.

While the perception of the self and other is (1) mainly dependent on the perception of the own work and others, interaction and decision making processes are influential. Therefore seniority, rate of external and internal contacts and decision making processes are questioned in order to establish an individual background of interviewed civil servants. Intragroup and extra group dynamics, as well as the coherence in the group are identified. It has been assessed how far interviewees were included not only in internal coordination work, but also in the external creation of the picture. While most interviewees had a high degree of coordination tasks, due to their position in the ministry, those were balanced with external contacts. Furthermore, the personal interest is considered to be able to establish an individual perception of the work. Perceptions towards other countries are analysed and their influence on decision making is questioned. Preferred partners who are 'favours' (Klotz/Lynch 207:76) for decision making processes are named. Civil servants role in decision making and the view on the own nation was another focus of analysis. As state roles may play a role in foreign policy decision making (Klotz/Lynch 2007:68) for guiding behaviour, these are considered as well. The last aspects in that category includes decision making processes, comprising the question whether different aspects like conformity of issues, personal relations or common interest play an important role for external or general contacts.

Similar questions are established for the perception of the EU and the influence on the work (2) – if contact with the EU is frequent. First of all the image creation of the own country on the European level is analysed. This includes whether other countries are perceived on the European level or bilaterally. Furthermore, the emerging European External Action Service plays an important role and is a starting point for discussion on the role of the EU in comparison to national ministries. Positive and negative aspects are discussed and the perception of the EU as second level of national decision making is questioned. Finally, the emergence of a European identity is assessed and European regional groupings, like-minded groups sharing beliefs and values, are identified.

The perception of the UN and other actors (3) is mainly distinguished into a general perception of good and bad and a more functional and political orientation of the work of the UN. Interviewees

were asked on their view on specialised UN bodies or on other international organisations, because it highlights aspects of a potential North-South or other divide that might be influential on decision making processes. If interviewees were not frequently handling examples from the UN system, other international actors like NGOs, media or parliamentarians were directly introduced. If actors were handling more with UN matters, other actors were only shortly considered due to time limits. Questioned perceptions included also special positive of negative affiliations for the one or other identity. For perceptions on other actors, NGOs were mentioned, including the positive or equal perception of NGOs. Afterwards media and parliamentarians have been shortly questioned on, before contacts with enterprises were generally named. All those perceptions were generally established on a good/bad question that normally developed towards a detailed, justified response why several actors are important while others are not.

In the end of the interview all interviewees have been questioned on their primary identity, is it the national, European or worldwide level or even another one.

A set of prepared directions of conversation guided the interview towards one or another direction depending on the actual knowledge and willingness of the interviewee to talk on those issues. As Schaffer and Hollway/Jefferson underlined, judgement questions -that could indicate positive or negative interpretations- and open question - that allowed participants for detailed description of their own views- were posed (Schaffer 2006:154; Hollway/Jefferson 2000:34). Questions were followed up by more detailed questions using the interviewees' words to ensure more detailed and more valid outcomes (Hollway/Jefferson 2000:36). Interlocutors often responded unanticipated and thereby influenced the direction of the interview. Interviewees have not been grouped by regional considerations to deliberate the study from fixed ideas about regional identities in Europe.

The interpretation of the expressed views was based on the notes that have been taken during the interviews. As Wittgenstein and Austin emphasised, communities are expressed by words and a frequent use of the same words among interviewees directs towards communities (Wittgenstein and Austin in Schaffer 2006:151f.). Expressions have been counted as is suggested by Axinn and Pearce (Axinn/Pearce 2006:88). The overall analysis includes individual expressions that are frequently used by interviewed several civil servants.

2.7 Limitations and Delimitations

Following some scholars, diplomacy changed recently and its values became less universal (Braston 2006:30). This reduces the overall generalisation for foreign policy because states or diplomats are not the only actors. Recent research criticized isolated explications in analysis and underlined the importance of research on connections between multi-level policy practices (Klotz/Lynch 2007:42). The introduction of other organisations like the UN or like civil society organisations enables a view on the reciprocal perceptions. The reduced actuality of foreign ministries in terms of globalisation will be balanced through the inclusion of other international actors that shows the interaction and modified role of MFAs. A limitation remains that this paper cannot account for the perceptions of all foreign policy actors. The analysis of all actors would be too broad and unfocused. Therefore, to ensure a better focus, the analysis only focuses on medium-ranked positions in foreign ministries. This appears more practical and could on the long term enable that interdisciplinary scholars could profit from the results. It shows similarly the changing role of MFAs in a globalised world by illuminating the breakage between national foreign policy and national and international non-state actors making foreign policy.

The analysis cannot account for time consistency, because of limited research capacities. Another issue is the validity-reliability problem, caused by the limited number of interviews. It is expected that the answers on the interview are particularly valid and actual. I am aware that different theoretical concepts lead to alternative interpretations as Klotz and Lynch assigned (Klotz /Lynch 2007:18) and therefore can only claim validity for the results of these interviews.

The perceptions held are not those by foreign ministries, but those of civil servants. Although no official perception of a state can become directly retraced, the civil servants stand for identities within the ministry that can cause official perceptions. Furthermore it needs to be assigned that selection processes, recruitment and formation of diplomats differs among countries (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:8) reasoning different experiences and backgrounds among civil servants throughout European MFAs. The analysis needs to be cautious on the possible capacities for especially smaller countries to develop own positions and perceptions on all aspects of foreign policy. Interviews therefore focused on a broad level of ideas to allow all participants to explain their views. However, it cannot be guaranteed that all interviewees were able to develop a more distinct notion of different topics.

It cannot be ensured that interviewees understand questions in the way they are meant. As Arnim von Bogdandy underlined, structure-giving concepts like "state", "sovereignty" and the like are conceptualised by individuals differently (Bogdandy 2009:373). Furthermore the investigator itself holds a specific set of perceptions (Jacobsen 2003:43). I am aware that not only the research design, but also the perspective and mind-set applied are understandable and retraceable and principally allows for inter-subjectivity.

Some scholars assign that a focus on ideas would be misleading if interests like explanatory patterns for decisions are ignored (Jacobsen 2003:50). The study is therefore open towards different understanding of decision guiding factors like interests and/or ideas as well as identities or norms.

2.8 Sources

Main sources are the interviews as primary source and other literature on the topic as secondary sources. At all 55 employees of MFAs around Europe have been interviewed. Already undertaken research on similar topics is compared to the results of the interviews. Main studies for comparison include a French study on diplomats (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008) and various studies on international bureaucracies (among others Trondal et al 1020) .The research base for comparison includes only few studies.

The theoretical background is provided by principal texts by Alexander Wendt on constructivism (Wendt 1992; Wendt 1994), but also by more contemporary articles on critical constructivism and diverse forms of constructivism (among other Checkel 1988, Hopf 1998). Especially the book by Klotz and Lynch (Klotz/Lynch 2007) is used as basic reference for an overview on contemporary constructivism. The theory is enlarged by referral to psychologist and educational theories (like Windschitl 2002) and authors that undertook research on the interrelationship between people to argue consistently on the retracability of decisions towards perceptions. This study is part of empirical constructivist research that is criticised as being randomly used in constructivist analysis (Steele 2007:30).

Further arguments are bought up by Checkel (Checkel 1998) and Zürn and Checkel (Zürn/Checkel 2005) referring to the inclusion of national levels for analysing international relations and basic

assumptions on constructivism. Those domestic administrative systems are seldom researched in the form of a comparative case study as other scholars assigned (Trondal et al 2010:22). Sources on the constructivist microanalysis of decision making factors in MFAs are in that form not existent. The paper therefore enters a new field of study.

Main knowledge on diplomacy and the relations among states refer to the books by Berridge and Braston as well as further articles. This is related to the bureaucratic theories that exist. Bureaucracies are often described by only explaining formal mandates and legal provisions, while multiple behavioural dynamics or identities are often neglected (Trondal et al. 2010:4). Used literature relies on a symposium on foreign policy and bureaucracies (Stern/Verbeek 1998b). Also in bureaucratic analysis, the focus of studies is laid on descriptive studies, diplomatic history and institutional rules (Bauer 2006:25).

Most sources have been written during the last years and are enriched by basic articles of older origin. Actuality is therefore ensured. The reliability of the interviews is checked with results from other research.

3. Theory

3.1 Constructivism

3.2.1 Introduction to Constructivism

Constructivism developed towards one of the great theories of International Relations as field of research beneath classical realism (e.g. Morgenthal or Carr), neorealism (e.g. Waltz), institutionalism (e.g. Keohane) and liberalism (e.g. Moravsik) and smaller theoretical branches like the English School. The theories focus on the interest and power seeking nature of mankind (realism), on the interests of states and anarchy in international relations (neorealism), on the effects of institutions and processes of socialisation (institutionalism) or on the peace bringing effects of economic ties, common values or democracy (liberalism). They have in common that they focus on a specific image, be it the individual (first image- realism), the domestic community (second image - liberalism) or the international system (third image – neorealism and institutionalism). In contrary constructivism is open towards images and argues for the inter-subjective construction of the world and its structures. Constructivism gained prominence since

Alexander Wendt introduced comprehensive theoretical thinking on constructivism with his work "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics" (Wendt 1992).

Constructivism is the fundamental perspective of this work. Contrary to classical approaches (realism, neorealism), which were limited in their explanatory ability by the arising multilateralism and the end of the Cold War, constructivism dissociates itself from the state as a black box and focuses on individuals (Jackson/Sørensen 2007:162). On the one hand constructivism enables the view on conceptions and identities; on the other hand it opens the view on inclusion and exclusion of actors under and over-half the state level (Schieder 2006:182f.; Ulbert 2006:412). According to constructivism the world is linguistically, conceptually and symbolically constructed and identity perceptions, conceptions of the world, standards, ideas, interests and legitimations for actions are socially generated (Wendt 1992; Barkin 2003:326). This does not mean that the world cannot be a rational one if everyone defines it as such. Actors and especially persons construct consciously and unintentionally and replicate or challenge existing procedures or structures (Klotz/Lynch 2007:7).

States are main actors of international relations when most actors construct it as important. However, the essential structures of the international system have to be seen rather inter-subjective and based on collective meanings (Jackson/Sørensen 2007:166; Zehfuss 2001:318). Institutions - like the UN - appear as independent actors and can therefore change national interests as potential catalysts (Haas/Haas 2002; Wendt 1992; regarding the role of international organisations: Zürn/Checkel 2005; Checkel 1998). Institutions like MFAs are sources of collective identities and values, which influence other collective or individual actors. Structures are seen as being ideational, ideological and practiced and subject to personal alignments and construction (Steele 2007:37).

Constructivism is divided into different directions namely conventional, interpretative, critical or radical variants focusing on cultural, anthropological or other aspects (Martinez-Delgado 2001:841; Klotz/Lynch 2007:65). However, even those general categories are subject to discussion. I explore those basic categories to give an idea about the direction of this study.

As Checkel explains, conventional constructivism examines the role of norms or identities for political outcomes with a positivist epistemological education, tries to produce new knowledge and insights, and introduces a bridge-building perspective towards other theoretical perspectives

(Checkel 2004:230; Jacobsen 2003:52). Interpretative constructivists on the other hand, more prominent in Europe, focus on how possible questions and conduct a "deeply inductive research strategy" targeting the reconstruction of state/agent identities through discourse theoretic techniques (Checkel 2004:231). Critical or radical scholars use an explicitly normative dimension including the researchers own perception and its role for reconstruction of identities or ideas in their studies on the basis of discourse and linguistic approaches (Checkel 2004:231; Martinez-Delgado 2001:842). As outlined in the methodological chapter, this paper uses a combined perspective of conventional and interpretative constructivism. Starting with qualitative process tracing, pattern for arguing and discourse are identified and analysed on the basis of shared argumentation and identity commitment. Constructivism forms „only" a meta-theory or social theory and requires other more concrete theories to obtain results (Risse 1999; Jackson/Sørensen 2007:164). Therefore a bureaucratic approach is used as medium-range theory to concretise constructivism and provide a level of analysis.

Today, constructivism strongly interrelates with other disciplines mostly education where the construction of knowledge plays a major role and notions of construction which later developed to socialisation processes play a role (Elkind 2004:306; Windschitl 2002:136)[4]. However, due to the limits of this paper, socialisation processes and cultural background of interviewees as well as opening up to other theoretical disciplines are coming relatively short.

Critics of constructivism deny the extent ideas are important for analysis or that states and/or the international system are seen as only actors in international relations (Jackson/Sørensen 2007:173). The original Wendtian theory is criticised as being essentially individualistic in contrast to works by scholars like Wittgenstein or Onuf (Palan 2000:583)[5]. Furthermore critics of Wendtian constructivism review the "bracketing of domestic politics" by Wendt and "multiple exclusions which concerns the genesis and type of actor" with scepticism (Zehfuss 2001:332). This can be solved, by including other identities like the analysis of identities in MFAs as done by this paper. Other criticism refers to the "dubious 'idealist' perspective on the international" or to missing sociological approaches (Palan 2000:578;598; Ross 2006:208). This can also be related to the positive orientation of most constructivist scholars where cooperation is explained, while

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[4] For a more critical view on constructivism from an educational perspective see Osborne 1996; Martinez-Delgado 2001:850ff.
[5] For a detailed comparison of constructivism with political philosophy compare Palan 2000.

construction itself must not necessarily be positive, but can be negative (Steele 2007:27). The branding of idealistic constructivism is seen as rather irrelevant, because perceptions can cause conflict and it depends on the perspective of the researcher. A purely Wendtian orientation is rather an exception today (Steele 2007:48) and is not followed in this thesis. It has been assigned by constructivist scholars as well, that the general theory of constructivism is more a "loose paradigm of related interpretations" that is mostly united by the shared social ideas or inter-subjective understandings (Steele 2007:25).

I follow the thinking of construction of identities and ideas throughout this thesis and conventional constructivism focusing on identities as causes for action. The change of identities and ideas is explained using interpretative constructivism and processes of articulation. I further follow scholars like Barnett or Risse claiming that formerly closed units of historical analysis of international relations, namely states or institutions are constructed and that arguing plays a role. However, as diverse actors have shown, theory itself is socially constructed (Raskin/Neimeyer 2003:406) and I argue for a constructivism that partly deliberates itself from clear limits to other theoretical areas. It becomes important to be open towards levels of construction as well as to actors.

3.2.2 Construction and deconstruction of perceptions and identities and their levels

The construction and deconstruction of identities is the first important aspect of using identities to explain behavioural pattern. Mind-sets need to be in place to ensure that they can guide behaviour. Deconstruction is necessary if analysis and change occur.

Critics of Wendtian constructivism emphasise the complexity of identities (Zehfuss 2001:317). This relates to the focus of identity construction to the international level, although identities are not only constructed on that level, but also on national, regional or local levels, and across gender, religion or the like. Constructivists in international relations assign, that states construct a "self" with one or plural identities that is nearly similar to individual identities in the social environment and that states as well as the individual construct a meaning of actions (Palan 2000:581ff; Jacobsen 2003:53). Identity is the main point of analysis for this study.   They form some kind of structure and ensure at least a minimal level of predictability as Hopf pointed out (Hopf 1998:174).

Identities and constructions are therefore the theoretical replacement of structure through a more fluid environment.

As levels of actors are still disputed, identities can be constructed on levels such as the state, but also through communities of experts or scientists and barriers between levels disappear in terms of globalisation (Klotz/Lynch 20007:63). The focus on national identities of civil servants in this paper does not exclude other identities that could be important for decision making among civil servants and the theoretical assumptions allow for open personal and collective identities throughout levels.

Decisions may not necessarily evolve out of self-interests but may be generated out of emotions, conceptions and points of reference (Goldgeier/Tetlock 2001). Identities are affected by values and interests even though constructivists struggle about the relationship between materialist and ideational factors (Meyers 2004; Vadarajan 2004:322).

Perceptions are based both, on an individual and a collective perception and construction (Wendt 1994; Vadarajan 2004:324). This refers to the distinction for the individual level made by Mead between „ME "and „I "(Mead 1973). Actors identify themselves with other identities on the collective level or distinguish a social group (the "us") from another ("them") (Kaarbo/Gruenfeld 1998:228). Identities (individual as well as collective) are consequently held as relatively stable, role-specific, constructed individual understandings and expectations, and with regard to communities as collective expectations (Williams 2001; Windschitl 2002:137). Actors select the "other" to interact with according to the necessity of inclusion or voluntary inclusions constructed and guided on personal choices (Besch 2009:4). Most constructivists focus on collective identities and ignore the individual because of the focus on collective inter-subjective understandings (Checkel 1998:333).

Identity is of importance, if participants identify themselves with one another due to factors such as culture, nationality or common values and the like causing positive effects and/or positive mutuality for inter-individual processes (Wren/Mendoza 2004; Jacobsen 2003:47). This positive approach[6] is valid for individual affiliations and in the case of collective identities favouring the

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[6] Also negative interpretation is possible.

interrelationship with like-minded other collective identities. Not only the interaction between individual actors and their perceptions, but also the interaction between an individual and a collective entity is theoretically possible; this appears normal on a personal level. Collective identities are sustained through interaction and recalling of habits (social practice) that are positively valued between members and could result in overlapping identities (Ross 2006:214; Zürn/Checkel 2005:1046). Interactions build expectations, and actions are interpreted under those expectations (Mowle 2003: 562). Actors deconstruct or destabilize even strongly institutionalised meanings through their own recognition allowing alternative denotations and identities (Klotz/Lynch 2007:67;78).

The scientific deconstruction of identities can be undertaken with regard to the common values held by the actors which identify the collective perception, while individual perceptions need a detailed analysis of every individual perception. I focus on comparing individual perceptions to establish ideally both, collective and individual insights. There is a continuous Interrelationship between collective and individual identities and perceptions. Domestic and international spheres are steadily interconnected (Checkel 2004:236; Jacobsen 2003:54). This has recently been emphasised by Checkel in the case of European integration, where he underlined the role of national identity formation (Checkel 2004:237). Collective identities are – according to Ross – not to be seen as aggregates of individual identities but as streamlined cross-cutting connections of actors that force the perception of a simple aggregate (Ross 2006:214). Foreign ministries should ideally represent the most streamlined perceptions and ideas of its actors. It is particularly interesting to see, what actors do when actors accept common positions despite their own views (Mowle 2003:565). In the case of no existing interests, a specific identity causing those interests might be missing as interests are normally consistent with identities (Hopf 1998:176). States or state actors use identities to perceive other state's "nature, motives, interests, probable actions, attitudes or role" (Hopf 1998:193).
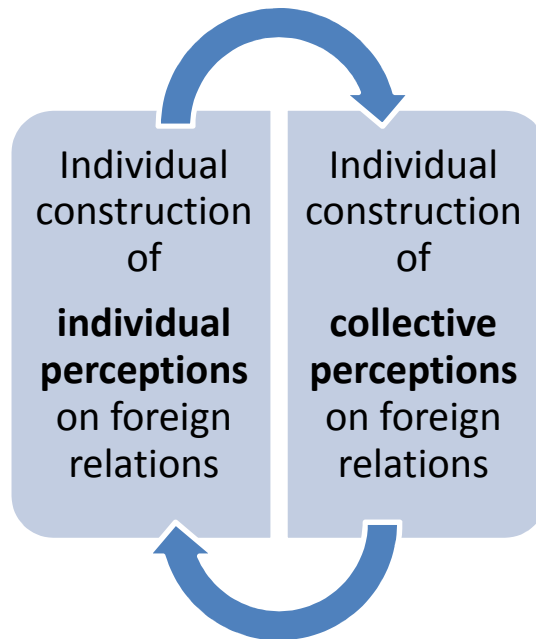
Illustration 2 - Mutually influencing individual and collective perceptions

It is complex to always identify all views and values held by individual actors across levels. This cannot be achieved by parsimonious research. It therefore becomes crucial to identify main levels of identities (individual or collective, international, national etc.), but also orientations like exclusive identities of national citizenship or optional identities as affiliations through association participation like art clubs and the like. The individual identity is further constructed on the basis of individual experience or in Palans terms a "historically constructed ego" (Palan 2000:585). Those are thereby highly different between individuals and cannot be established in this study.

Critics of constructivism argue that most constructivist theories do not show "how processes of persuasion, legitimation, and social learning actually translate into changes in collective ideas" (Tannenwald/Wohlforth 2005:6; Checkel 1998:336). This is solved by the use of processes of argumentation and persuasion as triggers for changes of values or interests hold by actors as underlined in 3.2.3. It shall be kept in mind that systems are constructed. Identities or values and idea are constructed on different scales or the "deepness" differs. On the one hand scholars criticised individualism as focus of analysis (Martinez-Delgado 2001:852f.), while other scholars argue for a more detailed analysis of the individual perceptions and views that are widened on a higher level (Schafer 2003:171).

It needs to be said that states do not provide constant structures or that identities are fixed. They can be changed and something like collective identities are constructed on lower levels and simultaneously reconstructed on various dimensions. In work life, the "we" replaces the individual "I" if community organizing processes are in place. Common identity might therefore not be the same as individual identities but can become a substitute for them, when interaction occurs.

3.2.3 Articulation of perceptions and arguing

The focus on articulation and arguing, persuasion, social influence and rhetorical action emerged out of the need to specify social interaction in the Wendtian thinking (Checkel 2004:235f.; Palan 2000:580).   Following the argumentative turn, interests are reproduced, produced and transformed through discourses (Weldes 1998:218).

A central question remains the use of approaches to language as practical research tools which is party divided between the different schools of theory of arguing/deliberation or theories of persuasion (Checkel 2004:240). While scholars of arguing use mostly Habermasian theory of communicative action, scholars using persuasion draw insights from social psychology and communication theory (Checkel 2004:240). This might not be exclusive, while communicative action is used as a principle perspective in this paper and aspects of persuasion are used to explain the change of ideas and mind-sets. Language builds the "performance of meaning" where identities are constrained and separated from each other (Raskin/Neimeyer 2003:400).

Critique of positions can deconstruct and show alternatives that could lead to the same, better or other achievements that can be consequently been tried out and further internalised (Klotz/Lynch 2007:102). A technique named "altercasting" assumes, that the treatment of an actor as he has already adapted a position that appears as positive for one's own, leads the actor to adapt this position in reality (Zehfuss 2001:323). When articulating a contradicting position in public, the speaker analyses the evidence especially carefully and pays attention to inconsistent positions (Kaarbo/Gruenfeld 1998:232).

Identities are "continuously articulated, rearticulated and contested" and critics assign that it becomes difficult to pin down identities as explanatory patterns (Zehfuss 2001:338;340). This thesis does not ignore the difficulty but tries to assess identities as explanatory factors. As Ross

underlines, "actors need not be conscious of social identities for these to have discursive reality" (Ross 2006:210). This is particularly important because interviewees are expected to argue in consistency with their identity whether or not they are aware of it. Interviewees are expected to explain their views in a form of communicative deliberation in order to convince the interviewer of a specific outcome of study. These theoretical considerations need to be taken into account when analysing the arguments and conversation with interviewees. Processes of persuasion are further difficult be compared as little empirical tests of this exist (Checkel 2004:240). Discourse uses normative and ethical patterns for justification and validation (Besch 2009:6)[7]. The focus on interviews tries to rephrase the discourses within a MFA and on processes on individual cognition. As research underlined, strategic action and communicative action are two concepts that are themselves inherent in diplomatic language and that are – particularly CA - useful for analysing motivations on policy outcomes (Klotz/Lynch 2007:96; 100).

Interaction and expectations about each other subsequently constrain choices (Zehfuss 2001:320; Steele 2007:45). Actors create "commitments" to established identities and something like a self-fulfilling prophecy which finally sustains the created expectations (Zehfuss 2001:321; Besch 2009:8). Actors imagine the expected outcomes of their actions "in their heads" and explain them and adopt their behaviour toward imagined outcomes (Jacobsen 2003:45). Change occurs not only on the basis of immediate value change, but also through argumentation and modification of own positions.

Social interaction or reciprocal exchanges also cause emotions. The influence of emotions and psychological aspects of identities currently is a under researched area, because certain aspects are positively or negatively attributed. As scholars already argued, methodological instruments are not exact enough to cover these aspects (Ross 2006:198; Kaarbo 2003:160; Schafer 2003:174). The extreme of actions, affective responses, are mainly based on positive stimuli like rewards or negative stimuli like threats (Ross 2006:203). Those stimuli and emotions can be part of an explanation why change of identities is incremental, but similarly affective responses are possible. Social practice reduces uncertainty among actors within constructed communities and increases confidence among actors (Hopf 1998:178). Regularized interrelationship among states can create social norms and also respect to multilateralism, while there is generally no guideline on how

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[7] For a detailed evaluation of ethical and value affects in the discursive process and on identity formation see Besch 2009.

states react facing each other and that they cannot create institutions or organisations by themselves (Krotz 2010:153). However, as Krotz argues, if regular interaction is in place, states are expected to be less volatile in diplomatic and policy affairs, and are less influenced by changes in governments and more reluctant towards disruptive effects. Furthermore interaction decreases the likelihood of incompatible policies (Krotz 2010:154f.). This underlines the patterns of thinking and justification which could be retraced and compared. The positive perception of the other leads to a positive or negative identification which again results in more or less collective engagement (Zehfuss 2001:318). I rather emphasise the interconnectedness of identities and interests.

Scholars assign that arguing and bargaining are the most important socialisation mechanisms for states (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1056). This thesis uses interviews and articulation to identify the perceptions held. The interviews conducted are also a direct assessment of articulation of MFA members that can help identifying worldviews and mind-sets.

However, also expressions of interests play an important role as they are developed in "the process of defining situations" (Zehfuss 2001:318). Scholars like Zehfuss see identities as basis for interest and as being constructed on the basis of "cultural-institutional environment" (Zehfuss 2001:318; Vadarajan 2004:323). Scholars assign, that
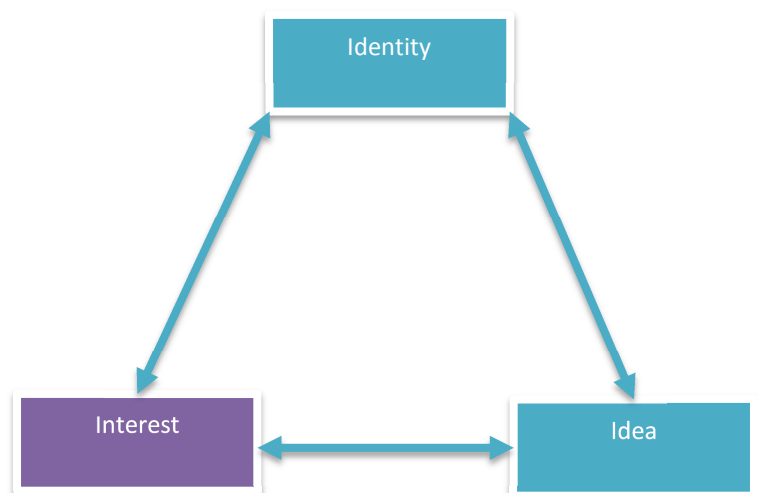
Illustration 3 – Interrelationship of Identity, interest and idea

interests are constructed through perceived material constraints and are influenced by ideas and worldviews (Jacobsen 2003:49). Tannenwald and Wohlforth recently criticized that few researcher incorporated material and ideational causes into their analyses (Tannenwald/Wohlforth 2005:8). This is respected in this paper using both terms, interests and values, as interaction patterns and possible influencers for the construction of identities. I argue that ideational and material motivations for actions cannot be separated entirely as different actors construct their environment in a different way. It cannot be taken for granted that just

values or just interests matter. I argue for an interrelationship of the concepts of ideas, interests and identity. All are constructed on an individual and collective basis.

3.2.4 Identity and perception change

It is still disputed among constructivists whether identities can be seen as fixed variables or as multiple, contingent or fluid or what is actually causing static or change (Checkel 2004:232; Sterling-Folker 2002:75). It is assigned, that meanings can become stable over time creating social orders including rules and norms and that identities form something between structure and fluid meanings (Klotz/Lynch 2007:8;84). Some scholars emphasised the reproduction of state identities through performances in different terrains, recently more in interaction in global economy and international relations (Vadarajan 2004:328).

Following I argue for a way in between fluidity and fixed identities, because, although state identities can change, they are changing slowly and step-by-step and form thereby a slightly time-persistent variable. As argued under 3.2.3 arguing and articulation is important for building perceptions and change. The impact of affective action for emotion is an interesting additional effect that needs further research. Interactions can change identities and thus form collective identities and interests (see illustration 4; Wendt 1994; Zürn/Checkel 2005:1046). Learning is inherent in social acts.
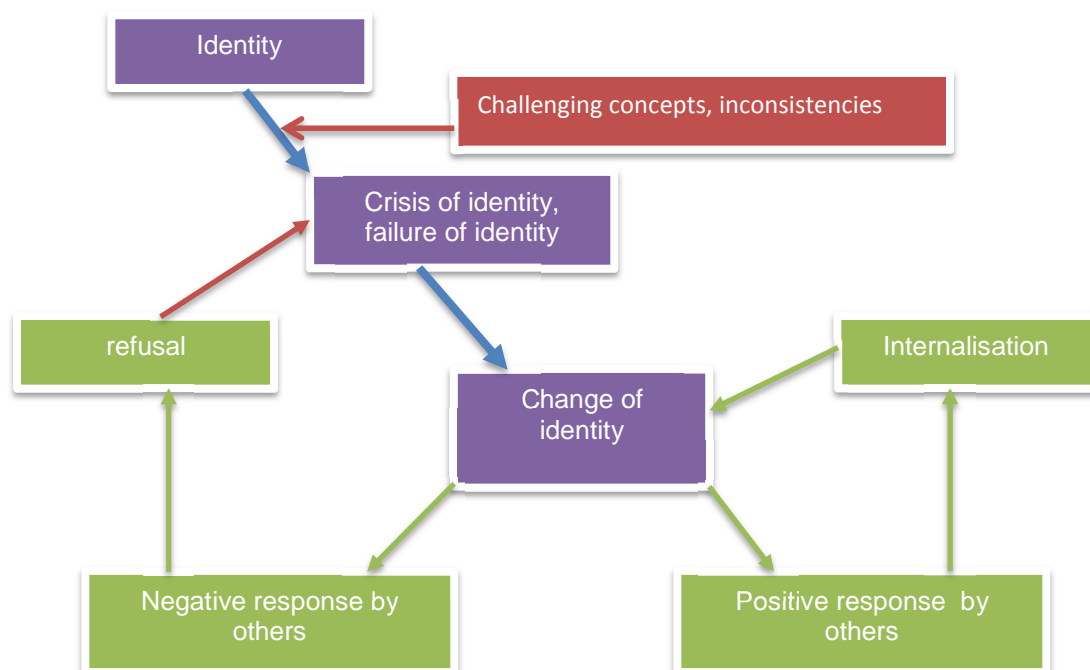
Illustration 4 - Change of identities, own table following Wendt 1992:422

If actors interact, they at least think about the other's (people, institutions) ideas and might potentially find something convincing. If an argument is made public, it increases the likelihood of internalizing these arguments and belief in it is created (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1059). Even personally unwanted arguments can be publicized through hierarchical learning or role adaption and can be changed over time (view also alter casting under 3.2.3). This might be connected to a new or convincing argument that connects the unwanted argument with a more favourable articulation (compare also altercasting in 3.2.3). Finally, if opposition to change is weak, state actors are more likely to be socialized (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1075). Individuals construct perceptions of what they see as socially valued and preferred and the construction of social needs can become a driver for change (Cox 2001:473 a. 496). As Steele showed, inter-subjective understandings can become fragile when they are systemically undermined (Steele 2007:46).

Today, scholars assign that forms of interaction lead from persuasion and teaching, to strategic calculations and incentives to change perceptions, and intensity of contact or career level can influence the construction of perception (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1052;1055f.). Scholars assign the "unspoken or tacit dimension of rule-following" (Ross 2006:211) which underlines the possibility of teacher-student relations, but might also include "dormant" or "potential" identities (again Ross 2006:211). Those potential or dormant identities make it further difficult to assess all identities actors hold. It needs to be kept in mind that not only articulation by words, but also by gestures, symbols and the like plays a role.

Constructivism serves as explanation pattern for action-leading and conception-constructing identities based on common values. Those can serve as common – and unifying - link within a group. Individual approaches of civil servants are aggregated and transferred to decision makers within foreign policy. This results in the danger that individual identities and conceptions are faded out. It can nevertheless lead to the advantage that the aggregation fits better to the construct of the state world. In the analysis I give insights on both, collective views by the group of civil servants in European MFAs, but also individual perspectives that are than named as those.

General criticism refers to the inability of constructivism to explain stasis or stability (Lezaun 2002:231; 233). This is however related to the missing links between stable and unstable identities. Further criticism refers to the question why international identities should be used as

explanatory patterns rather than domestic ones, when national identities are changed through national policies and institutions (compare Nau following Checkel 2004:232). The answer to this question is the multiplicity of identity construction that not only occurs on national, but also on domestic levels and is therefore a question of construction by actors and point of view. It is furthermore important to take domestic identity levels into account and to avoid pre-theorisation as among others Hopf argued (Checkel 2004:233f.; Zürn/Checkel 2005:1047). Checkel emphasised that constructivists should take more attention to "cognitive micro foundations of constructivism" (Checkel 1998:335). A domestic perspective is necessary. Key variables like identities, discourse, public spheres, institutions or norms are seen as being more robust, embedded and institutionalised at the domestic level (following Hopf in Checkel 2004:237). This should be partly provided by the inclusion of bureaucratic models for decision making in 3.3.2.

3.2 The development of diplomacy and bureaucratic models

3.3.1 Diplomacy

Diplomacy is one of the basic institutions of foreign policy also due to its long history as mean of relations among states. The term diplomacy was first used in 1791 by Linguet and later by Robespierre (1792) and Burke (1796) although diplomacy existed under the label of continuous negotiation since Richelieu (Kissinger 1994: 13; Berridge 2005:1,5; Kingston de Leusse 1998: 22.).

The origins of modern diplomacy lie in Italy in the 15th century (Berridge 2005:1)[8]. From the 15th century on, a system of relations between European leaders emerged on the basis of a shared belief (Christianity), comparable social hierarchies and a shared education in European humanism and referral to the Latin language (Bely 1998:20ff.). Diplomacy developed with the introduction of permanent ambassadors in the 17th century and with immunity. The first MFA has been established in 1626 by France which included a language change towards French as European diplomatic language and the adaption of French structures for foreign relations (Kissinger 1994:9, Berridge 2005:5 a. 21ff.). But foreign ministries just gained importance in the 19th century when technocratic diplomacy – that was the very origin of foreign relations - and political foreign policy became unified (Berridge 2006:6ff). Today, ambassadors are the personalisation of pacific exchange between nations and a form of cultural idea, normally of "sang-froid" and habituated in

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[8] Since between 4.000 and 2.000 B.C. existed already communication between kingdoms that is comparable to diplomacy.

tactfulness and self-control (Kingston de Leusse 1998:117 a. 127). The Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations, which should have ensured the persistence of the diplomatic system in times of decolonisation, strengthened the position and security of diplomats (Berridge 2005:115ff.). Diplomats have special protection, are nearly untouchable for the justice in the host country and an embassy is an independent national unit in another territory even in case of conflict; although unpopular diplomats can become expulsed[9] .

Diplomacy is defined as communication between state representatives based on formal conventions and arrangements, and on secret activities (Berridge 2005:1). Another definition sees diplomacy as management of relations between states and management of relations between states and other actors guaranteeing the functions of consultation, diffusion and implementation of foreign policy (Braston 2006:1).

Principal tasks of diplomats enclose information collection (political, economic and social ones), lobbying, clarification of intentions, support for economic and financial relations, support for own citizens abroad and good-will creation for the own foreign policy (Berridge 2005:92; Braston 2006:3; Bely 1998:15). Further tasks include recruitment, formation, financing, security guarantee and communication for the diplomats abroad and also the contact with diplomats from other countries at home (Berridge 2005:3 a. 7; Braston 2006:21). Those tasks are distributed between the home ministry and the embassies abroad.

The social construction of diplomacy is significant when reviewing labels like "petrol diplomacy", " resource diplomacy", "global governance", "transitional diplomacy" or " anti-terror diplomacy" (Braston 2006:1;218 and 230). Those labels show self-constructed or assigned identities of foreign policy. Diplomacy is constructed on the basis of relations with others. This encloses that the diplomat identifies him/herself with structures, self-image and perception of him/her hold by others (Afiron 2006:246).

Altogether, diplomacy and all related structures like protocol, informal relations or official arguing are constructed. The relation with countries bases on the construction of the other and makes a clear and consistent identity important to become recognised by others. Diplomats share "une

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[9] Compare articles 24f., 29 and 45 of the Vienna Convention (Nations Unies 2005:90)

identité professionelle collective" (a collective professional identity) or shared grammar based on the historical and actual construction of institutions, language and gestures (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:9).

Today, foreign policy is not only conducted by MFAs, but also by political, social and economic actors like NGOs, international organisations, religious actors, terrorists or the media (Charillon 2006:5). Even within one state, more actors than the MFA are concerned with foreign policy issues due to the increasing transfer of competencies to the international level especially in the European Union. "Direct-dial diplomacy" today is more and more reduced and replaced by communication between social communities which has led to an intensification of work of foreign ministries to address NGOs and institutions (Braston 2006:14ff.; 19). Some scholars argue, that foreign ministries still have an important influence on national politics due to the expertise of the ministries (Berridge 2005:19f.). The actual positioning of MFAs is difficult to assess in a globalised world and this thesis to some part identifies the self-view on the position.

According to Braston different styles and types of diplomacy exist: Those include a technical and on international institutions based foreign policy of the United Kingdom, a legal tradition in France, a focus on mediation in Norway, cultural diplomacy in Russia, or Japanese focus on international secretariat and diplomatic techniques (Braston 2006:70 a. 84). Furthermore MFAs are relatively similar in their structure in Europe, but are different in structure, style and accounts outside Europe (Afiron 2006:246; Berridge2005: 120). However, even in Europe, foreign ministries hold different positions in the system: While for example France and the United Kingdom have a strong MFA, smaller countries often have a weaker in their national systems (Berridge 2005:14). Often MFAs have a generalist principle with changing positions after a period of around four years. Changing positions in organizational structures favour internalisation of official positions and guarantee loyalty to these positions (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:41).

3.3.2 Bureaucratic models

It must be assigned that - when talking about bureaucratic models and diplomacy - we generally refer to a Western history of diplomacy in the tradition mentioned. However also non-western international relations theory introduced forms of diplomacy that were among others more person based. As civil servants are normally handling within their experiences and Foreign Service

history, it is interesting to see whether the perception of other ministerial models or structures for foreign relations play an important role.

According to the definition, (international) bureaucracies are "compound systems or public administration that blend departmental, epistemic and [...] decision-making dynamics" (Trondal et al. 2010:1). Characteristics of bureaucracy include a fixed division of labour, a hierarchy of positions and authority, administration with written documents, expert training of personnel and a full commitment to official activities and loyalty (Walton 2005:569 following Weber; Trondal et al 2010:112).

Old approaches of bureaucratic analysis include the governmental politics approach which sees bureaucracies as influenced by all governmental policies, which caused ambivalent results (Stern/Verbeek 1998b:206f.). Newer Bureaucratic models emphasise the influence of the bureaucratic position on the decision making process like in Brummers Bureaucratic Politics Model (Brummer 2009:501 a.514). It was recently underlined that non-bureaucratic actors are worth including in the bureaucratic framework (Brummer 2009:501) as is done by questioning the role of other actors in the analysis. Bureaucratic models by times rely on „where you stand depends on where you sit", on competing preferences between actors that are solved in political bargaining processes and individual power (Brummer 2009:504f.). Other bureaucratic models include Allison's bureaucratic and organisational models – including a view on competing individual goals in bureaucracies - which is criticised as being focused to the US political structures and being conceptually weak, or Breuning's investigation of national role conceptions (Kaarbo 2003:158; Garrison 2003a:178). The Westminster or Whitehall model in bureaucratic models sees civil servants as neutral actors and loyal to the institution they work with (Trondal et al 2010:14 a. 111). Further theories emphasise the output oriented role of bureaucracies as achieving the aims of policy actors or lighten the influence of civil servants at the implementation level (Joaquin 2009:249). It is also possible, that bureaucracies resist policies because of political or organizational factors and the expert positions of civil servants (Joaquin 2009:249).

Other models like Weber's theory of bureaucracy focus on the rational-legal authority as basis for governing activities (Walton 2005:569). This model further explains that authority for performing is distributed through the positions that are in need of those and that charismatic and skilful

leadership are necessary elements (Walton 2005:573; Bauer 2006:31). Bureaucracy is a structure that is difficult to destroy once it is established as it encompasses written concepts and standardisation (Walton 2005:574). Bureaucrats are expected to act according to the rational-legal conception. It needs to be noted, that classical public administration theories argue, that robust bureaucratic systems should balance competing dynamics within departmental structures because multidimensional orders are seen as being more robust towards external shocks (Trondal et al 2010:11). In general, approaches to bureaucracies are divided between policy outcome analysis and quality of process analysing (Stern/Verbeek 1998b:209; Walton 2005:570).

Although bureaucratic politics are analysed and a level of analysis is given by bureaucratic models, no coherent bureaucratic theory exists (Welch 1998:212). This is caused by the missing analyses of influences between officials and the organisation, but also of other actors (Welch 1998:214). Analysis cannot provide general propositions when analysing the relationship between bureaucratic factors and state actions as Welch notes (Welch 1998:216). However, scholars emphasise that it is worth researching the political interaction of bureaucracies that cause foreign policies (Hart/Rosenthal 1998:235).

Recently scholars underlined, that civil servants have to establish links with related interest groups, political parties and the media resulting in communities (Stern/Verbeek 1998a:243). It is further assigned, that different roles are activated in different situations and often mixed together (Trondal et al 2010:31). However, the analysis of foreign policy implementation gains little attention because bureaucrats are often seen as having limited impact (Stern/Verbeek 1998b:208). It is normative not accepted that bureaucrats are making policy (Hart/Rosenthal 1998:233) because of their implementing function in an executive Western model. On the other hand bureaucracies are not just governmental tales, but rule-driven bureaucracies, epistemic communities or socialising institutions (Trondal et al. 2010:12). Structures as well as actor-level dynamics and behavioural and role perceptions matter in bureaucratic systems (Trondal et al 2010:12). Some scholars underline that individual leader's perceptions can be important for foreign policy choices (Kaarbo 2003:161). Those are further influenced by public opinion or societal and opposition groups as diverse studies showed[10]. Scholars as Deutsch underlined the

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[10] for a detailed overview on studies relating to domestic societal and cognitive influences compare Kaarbo 2003.

identity forming influence of direct and intensive face-to-face interaction in bureaucracies (Trondal et al.2010:32).

I leave the inclusion of individual perceptions open to analysis because ministries have to propose some basic identity, which nevertheless enable different individuals to bring their own personal experience into discussion and thereby illuminate a topic from different point of views. In this paper I mainly focus on external characteristics that nevertheless are influenced by internal factors such as common perceptions.

Recently other policy outcome analysing models became more prominent, namely FPA. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) discovering the underlying motives for foreign policy in international relations. FPA developed from the perception that grand theories are seen sceptical as tools for explaining foreign policy (Kaarbo 2003:159). However, FPA distances itself further from constructivism (Kaarbo 2003:160) which is not followed in this thesis. Foreign Policy Analysis is named, because it emphasises the policy outcome and because it shows similarity with the actual study. The outcome of foreign policy is not directly analysed by this paper but its development and creation analysed. This forms thereby a basis for the latter policy explanation and could deliver insights for FPA.

3.3 Bureaucratic constructivism

This thesis uses constructivism as basic perspective. However, this would become very broad when no focus on actors is taken. Due to possible changes in the structure of state centred system forced by globalisation, the focus is on foreign ministries and more specifically on the bureaucratic bodies. As MFAs can be described as aggregated identities of their staff members, these are the focus of the study. They hold particularly individual and collective identities on a diversity of issues which are identified. The bureaucratic notion of the newly named bureaucratic constructivism takes the perspective of civil servants in MFAs. This is to so far exclusive as foreign policy is not only the opinion of civil servants, but also those of political decision makers and other actors like companies, media and the like. Identities at home constrain politics abroad and the interaction between domestic and international identities is an important aspect (Hopf 1998:195).

Interviews are used giving insights to policy-making processes as affirmed by Klotz and Lynch (Klotz/Lynch 2007:18). As analysing the outcome of policies is highly subjective and politicised, the quality of the process and the actors involved in decision making processes is regarded. The ideas involved in decision making processes are one focus. As constructivist scholars argued, a model of state action that is not bound to bureaucracies is the key element of analysing politics (Weldes 1998:225). Therefore the interrelationship among actors is important. It is nevertheless useful to focus on one group of actors (civil servants) because different groups of actors construct their environment in different ways (Klotz/Lynch 2007:44). The biased approach of analysing the ideas of civil servants, but also the interrelationship with other actors is used.

Bureaucratic constructivism emphasises the focus of bureaucracies as even liberal models do and uses this perspective to identify perceptions of diplomats. This solves the missing agency theory within constructivism (Checkel 1998:324). It helps understand motivations better and enables predictability of actions. It can further ensure that agents become more aware of sensitive issues or common positions and therefore enhance overall relations to the better. This is a partly normative claim that I am totally aware of, but as other scholars (especially Cox) put it, research is always for some purpose.

While constructivism directs towards the perception of the self (the ministry – collectively - or diplomat/person – individually) bureaucratic models propose the structures of internal organisation and basic aspects of bureaucratic mechanisms. Therefore the focus on external characteristics that influence internal perceptions can be achieved. Constructivist models of decision making processes as argued above are basic for the analysis. Some constructivists already used domestic frameworks to explain policies like for state decision makers or diplomats (Checkel 1998:334). Those had however not a comparable focus. Due to the openness of the study towards levels of influence but also influencing ideas, the thesis has a very open approach. The missing coherent bureaucratic model is further problematic. A detailed theoretical hardening of conceptions comes short. The analysis uses framing of ideas to interpret how civil servants interpret themselves and others (Klotz/Lynch 2007:76), across levels and policy issues.

Principally states are not the actors involved in negotiations, but their civil servants. Authors like Zürn and Checkel emphasise the role of institutions for the formation of preferences and

perceptions (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1054). In this case, the constituting institution is the MFA. The scholars argue for the inclusion of actors' perception into the decision making process for national policies and for more research on the relation between change in perceptions of state actors and the translation in behavioural changes of states. Those "micro-dynamics" need to be connected to the level of state politics (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1055). Thereby a relation between civil servants and state identities is established. Bureaucrats try to convince higher elites that a course of action is also in their interest (Jacobsen 2003:54). Civil servants are expected to bring in their own ideas and perceptions towards the identity creation of the ministry as they constitute it.

It can be expected that ministerial agents adapt to some part with ministry positions. As Zürn and Checkel explain, individuals connect to roles in institutions while agents adopt expectations and justify to themselves (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1058). Policymakers are expected to underlie aspects of efficiency, so that their actions need to adhere to ideas, values and institutions (Jacobsen 2003:50). As Hopf pointed out, "the distribution of identities and interests of the relevant states would then help to account whether cooperation is possible" (Hopf 1998:189). An analysis of dominant identities among diplomats leads towards identification of common positions and diversities among states. In a comparative view, diplomats can establish specific identities for states that help in creating alliances.

Bureaucratic theory considers not only actors as subject of research (civil servants), but also organizational insights and how bureaucratic bodies are organised - or constructed. The focus of analysis is the micro level - the personnel of the ministries of foreign affairs that are seen under the view of the intermediate level of the ministerial identities. As the study is across policies, actor perspectives and aspects of persuasion are consciously held open for the analysis.

4. Analysis

4.1 Perception of the Self and Other

4.1.1 Individual Background

The individual background of civil servants is seen as being comparable. Educational level is assumed to be nearly the same, including a higher university degree. Most interviewees mentioned politics, law or economics as former study subjects when explaining their professional background. Although not directly asked for, interviewees summed up their diplomatic career starting at the national diplomatic academy and then passing different levels. Most civil servants had various posts throughout the respective MFA. In most European MFAs the principle of "generalists" was underlined by interviewees, meaning that everybody can perform generally every position within the ministry. The majority of interviewees has a professional experience within the ministry of an average of 16 years; while five diplomats show experience of less than 10 years and seven interviewees of more than 20 years up to 34 years (compare ill. 5).

Years with the ministry

- under 5 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15-20 years
- more than 20 years
- no answer/not asked
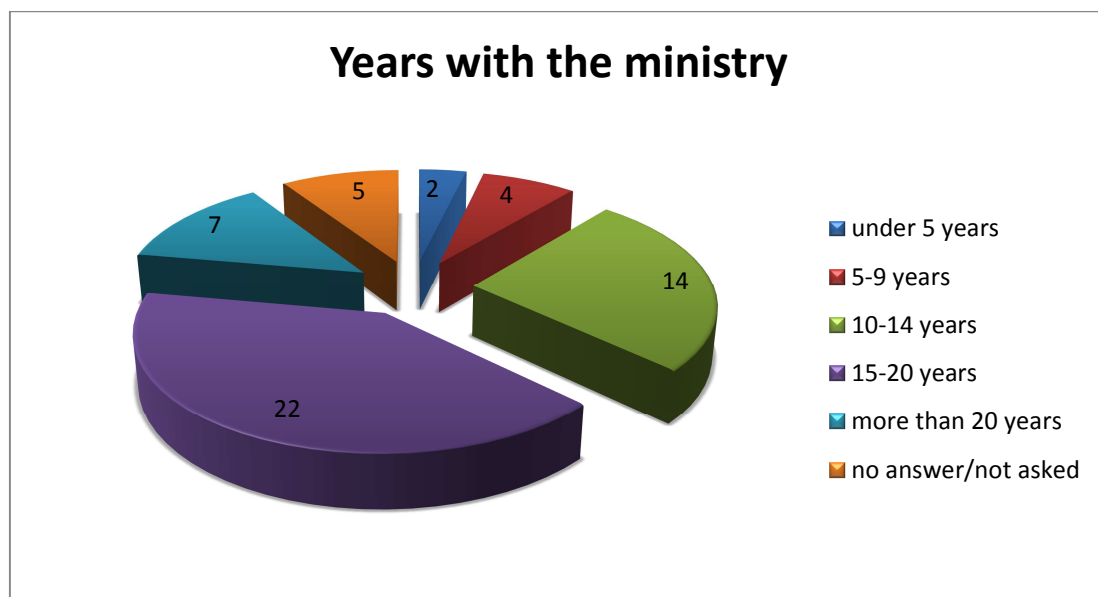
Illustration 5 - Years with the ministry

Interviewees have normally tasks like checking news from emails, reports, newspapers and embassies. They further redirect tasks, hold regular meetings by phone and personally, - internally and externally - and finally prepare speeches and papers.

It needs to be noted, that due to their level, the majority of interviewees named more internal (within the country) than external contacts (with abroad), normally at a rate of around 60:40 per cent. Levels of Head of Department up to Director cause a lot of internal coordination within the

own department, but also between departments and national ministries. Often the MFA holds a coordinating role for all national ministries. Therefore, external contacts that are important for the construction of other countries are of a smaller scope, than internal decision finding and internal identity creation. As interviewees mentioned, international contacts are more frequent on a lower desk level. The target group was partly missed, because those medium-ranked positions are not that influential in the image creation abroad and are not that often in contact with the "other". Nevertheless, they have the oversight on their Departments or Sections and are therefore an important interlocutor for creating pictures in relation to other countries. Furthermore the internal identity is created. As part of the personal identity a lot of interviewees mentioned that they like travelling and coming around expressing their identification with the world and the motivation for work. Other interviewees mentioned that working with different cultures is included in the work perception.

35 out of 55 interviewees were male and 20 were female, which is assumed as being a relatively well representation of the rate among civil servants across European MFAs. Women might be slightly overrepresented due to the high number of interviewees from Nordic Countries where women have at least equal chances as men for promotion towards higher working levels. Rates of women and men in civil services differ strongly between European countries as a comparison between Sweden and Italy and with other actors of all researched countries suggests[11]. Feminisation of the foreign service remains problematic in some countries like France and women are mostly in smaller countries in higher positions (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:54). Female identities are often not that prominent. Female interviewees asked on their role, see different unconscious approaches of women towards policies that could better balance policies of a country. However, feminisation was only asked for few interviewees and the image is far from being complete.

The target group is by no means representative for the overall population as demographic data and background do not fit an overall demographic setting.

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[11] Italy shows a female-male rate 17% to 83% in the MFA - number of women increasing (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy 2010:31), Sweden a female-male rate of 59% to 41% (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2010) resulting in a combined rate of 38% to 62%. Parliamentarians in all researched countries show a combined female-male rate of 26% to 74% (UNECE 2011).

4.1.2 Personal Interest

It is interesting that, although the principle of generalists is normally in place, some diplomats developed a specialization throughout their career. This finding is supported by the study of Loriol, Piotet and Delfolie who assign that personal expertise is developed (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:77; 96). Interviewees mentioned among others cross-sectional topics like security, trade or human rights as personal interests accompanying their career. Some interviewees also mentioned regional affiliations like the Middle East or Latin America, which were more difficult to realize throughout the career, because of shifting posts.

Civil servants in MFAs appear as being very interested in their work. They do not only things that attract their interest, but the personal interest is introduced into general decision making processes wherever possible. Scholars confirm that personal interest in the work is very strong among civil servants, even if the work is not in every case honoured (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:117). One interviewee argued that personal and work interest correlate very much. This leads to the assumption that the own personal identity is defined so large, that it could easily adopt all governmental prerogatives or that there is a principal acceptance for the state and decisions made by higher levels making every questioning of ideas unnecessary. The latter has been expressed in models by Cutler and others on the "belief in the rightness of the authority itself" (Cutler et al. in: Bauer 2006:30). One interviewee from Italy also expressed, that it is the best of his job to be a "clerk of the state" and serve the state not depending on political colours.

Interestingly, one Dutch interviewee was very critical towards the own government and own policies and argued for more open policies and more education of the public on foreign relations. This critique was articulated in an open manner, expressing different views. However, the civil servant would implement most policies, if they not extremely diverge from own convictions. A German interviewee took a more pragmatic view, mentioning that as civil servant he would have to implement decisions by a higher level even though it contradicts own perceptions because of fear of losing the job or position. The personal interest on a topic is in this case brought into discussion before the decision is taken within the ministry. Interestingly, also one Finnish interviewee expressed to not confirm with the current governmental policy. In this case, the civil servant explained, that he tries to influence the decision making processes to include the own position, but finally the ministerial decision is accepted. Articulation of notwithstanding as

expressed by other civil servants is seen as a vehicle for divergent views. If the decision is taken against own views it is nevertheless accepted because of hierarchy or acceptance of the common decision.

Diplomats are generally not arguing being ambitious in bringing own ideas forwards, but are nevertheless trying to give the best alternatives to policymakers. Some interviewees mentioned that they have some kind of "personal mission" they are trying to promote. As one interviewee mentioned, the personal and diplomatic identity are similar.

Interviewees "know" what they can do and what not due to their guidelines and their experience and knowledge in various positions. One Finnish interviewee expressed that a constant learning cycle is passed. The longer the civil servants are working in the ministry, the more they know. I argue further, that corporate (ministry) identities are built through common practices. Personal and corporate identities are not divergent and randomly separated among civil servants. Individual and corporate perceptions are to a high degree overlapping and in case of not conformity tried to be accepted by articulation of notwithstanding or acceptance of authority or decision making processes.

4.1.3 Perception

Evidence from the Danish and Swedish Ministry suggests that foreign ministries strongly construct own identities. Some interviewees were aware of their perceptions while others had to reflect on it before expressing their identity. The interviewees showed also a distinction between interest and value orientation. Swedish interviewees were more value adherent, while Danish interviewees were somewhere between interest and value influence and interviewees from the Austrian MFA were clearly interest dedicated. Especially in the Austrian Ministry employees were reluctant to use the world values and they were consciously aware of this.

Perceptions have been strongly influenced by the country's history. Especially Eastern European countries including the Baltic Countries have been influenced by the changes after 1989. In Romania for example, former communists first remained part of the MFA but resigned around 1996 which offered new possibilities for a young generation. The foreign policy was strongly focused on becoming a part of the EU and in some cases NATO or WTO as several interviewees

from Romania, Latvia or Bulgaria mentioned. When those goals were achieved, Eastern European Countries had to define themselves and interviewees expressed that they are still in a process of forming a new identity and national interests although they become more self-confident in finding their role. As one interviewee from Bulgaria expressed, the country is on the one hand very engaged in being a good and active EU member and on the other hand trying to promote the own position. Similarly, a Romanian civil servant mentioned NATO cooperation as higher than normal to show the own commitment.

As a Latvian interviewee expressed, debates on the foreign policy of the own country are on-going. Democracy and Human Rights have become strongly internalized within Eastern European ministries and are defined as key values. Also from outside, Eastern European countries are seen as not having positions on all topics as they are "just starting their foreign affairs" as a Dutch diplomat explained. Furthermore one representative from Hungary mentioned that civil servants are often fluctuating and staff is changing.

Generally no difference between multilateral or bilateral working civil servants in value preferences appeared although different techniques of approaching others have been named, for example more need for profiling in multilateral encounters, compared to more personal contacts on a bilateral level. Working abroad or in the capital does not matter in the mind-set but in the way of approaching other actors. Civil servants are generally aware of the position they take.

Apart from state identities, other identities like gender or marital status plays a role in Nordic countries. One interviewee from Denmark mentioned her identity as woman and mother as important for her working life. An Austrian interviewee referred the liberalism of Nordic countries to the dominant protestant religion in those countries.

Democracy is for Nordic countries generally important. Especially a Finnish representative expressed that democratic counterparts are important as is a reliable government. Also interviewees from Southern Europe like a Portuguese interviewee mentioned democracy as being important. However, the type of state system generally not inhibits interstate relations. An interviewee from Estonia mentioned that acting towards autocratic countries is not different as there are countries, where "we cannot change". Countries like Ireland on the other hand would not approach not-democratic countries; this would not matter on a personal working level.

Democracy is valued as being important but not ever integrated in approaches and into articulations towards other countries. Nordic countries for example mostly mention human rights in relations with other countries. However, democracy and human rights criticism are also used as tactics for policy or under different notions such as in connection with a human rights problem or in connection with legal status. Democracy is used as a concept for comparability as an Austrian interviewee mentioned. If a country is claimed as being democratic this enables the diplomat to anticipate structures in the country that might be important for policymaking. Democracy builds a common basis and it appears as being easier to get in contact with democracies. Nevertheless some representatives mentioned pragmatism towards autocratic countries because of the imperative to work with everyone. Relations can be very well between an autocratic and democratic state representative, if personal relations are well and the other one is valued. Human rights are promoted through different ways, but mostly through international organizations as an Estonian interviewee mentioned.

Professionalism of another foreign service or other structures of international relations is evaluated and structures exist, where diplomats would hesitate to work with. The perception of being democratic and respecting human rights, or of being professional in the Foreign Service in not EU-member states play important roles for civil servants for orientation and valuation. Especially human rights are an important point of orientation for valuing another country in countries like Sweden. Actors were valued differently like NGOs generally play a more important role in development cooperation.
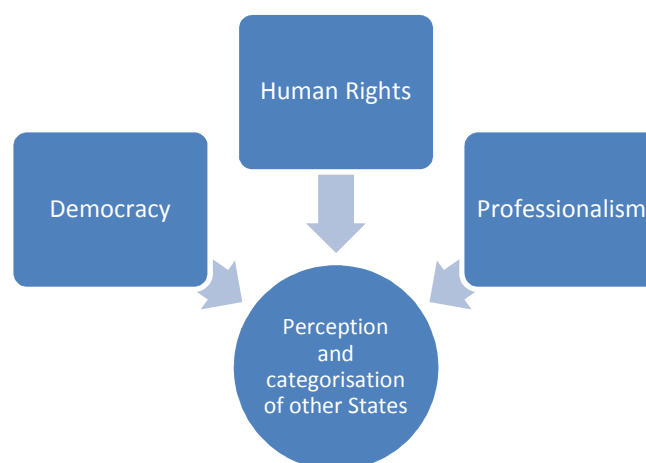

Illustration 6 - Perception and Categorisation

Diplomats try to find common understandings that are comparable to the concept of democracy. Scholars showed that for example French civil servants try to construct "un monde commun" (a

shared world) in negotiations trying to identify common positions (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:67). Dialogue and articulation occurs not only on a policy level, but also on cultural levels or on religious levels. Discussion of problems is seen as the most important aspect of solving those problems. In cases of difficult situations in countries, it is possible to confront the opponent directly, but dialogue is preferred. Discussion of positions takes an important part, especially for greater nations (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:15). If new topics occur, those are discussed among colleagues and higher levels to find a common ground for an official position. This was also expressed by a Slovakian interviewee who mentioned that in unclear situations conversation with a supervisor is searched. However, anticipation of arising problems and elaboration of possible reactions build an important task (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:22). Civil servants can actively construct a foreign policy. The ratification of binding frameworks, namely conventions, is important to create commitments for other states. However, also Austrian Representatives mentioned core elements of Austrian foreign policy like regional cooperation (Donau area), Balkans, free trade among others.

When asked on policy and clear positions, the coherence of the foreign policy has been emphasized by most civil servants while minor changes occurred. A French interviewee for example expressed that in the last 16 years two major changes, namely the merging with the ministry for cooperation and the new structure (1994) took place, but did not influence the policy which is described as remaining even in case of governmental change. Another example from The Netherlands shows that major changes in the Dutch MFA included the introduction of email as a major change, which was not always to the better, because of information overlap and the need for guidelines for the use of the internet. However, also in this case, policies are seen as stable. Possible decisions are legitimated through arguing of continuity of collective decisions and former engagements (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:74). A French diplomat experienced several ministers from different parties, but underlined the consistency of their policy. One recent French development was the reflection on the defence of the European Union and the integration in the allied forces that followed the referendum on the European Union. The defence of French values has been emphasized when interacting with other countries. The French diplomat further explained, that he has to admit to the national policy, following a vision universalist or perspective altruist with an egoistic status of following own interests. French diplomats underline the historic role of France as constructor of the diplomatic system. As the national power is declining, French

diplomats focus on the defence of the diplomatic system and the strengthening as well as on multilateralism and Europeanization. The perceptions of the topics are shared among diplomats in the Foreign Service although some departments can partially voice a different direction.

Different positions and possible blockages are anticipated and compromises are searched (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:72). This counts also for possible positive perceptions. The relations are not only constructed externally towards other countries and allies, but internally towards other ministries (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:74). The construction is done by translating positions of actors abroad by translating speeches and other articulated positions or acts which is part of the experiences diplomats gain during their career (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:84). Other countries are perceived through the interaction with other civil servants, but also through clichés. For example, the German foreign service is perceived as being very formal between low and high levels of hierarchy and overall a high formality in foreign relations.

4.1.4 Role Models

Roles in bureaucracies include being a loyal civil servant according to the Westminster model which has been expressed by some interviewees. This was mainly a work perception as doing "what our masters would like to do" (Swedish Civil Servant). Also other interviewees appeared as being strictly committed to their role as civil servants serving the state and interests of their nation, as was expressed by a French representative. However, most civil servants explained that they have proper interests that nevertheless often correlate with work perceptions. The roles differ between more autonomous and restricted or guided roles. This is mainly related to the decision making processes whether they are top-down or bottom-up. Evidently greater countries restrict their civil servants more, while smaller differ between more or less autonomy for its civil servants. This is also related to the role of the minister, being strong or relatively weak in the area of work. In terms of autonomy, the Austrian MFA poses a very extreme example with relatively high autonomy. Especially countries like France or Germany have more hierarchies and therefore more control functions. This causes policy building processes in greater ministries being normally slightly slower because several levels need to be included.

In general guidelines are published internally within the ministry, covering only general policies and issues. Civil servants interpret those in detail and are responsible for the final policies that need to be approved in some ministries. In some cases, the Ministry in the capital needs to approve most of the policies in an embassy that are not covered in the guidelines which expresses more oversight. Civil servants are sensitive towards "signals" that are sent out by the government that are more or less directly implemented. Other studies confirm, that diplomats played an important role in negotiating official positions in detail, while political decision makers only gave some general guidelines on the topics that have been agreed throughout the hierarchy of the ministry or between ministries (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:75). The agreements of general guidelines pose the frame of interaction for civil servants in MFAs. Within those, the freedom to bring own ideas and expertise into decision making processes is often used.

Departmental associations have been seen as not very prominent for civil servants. The interviewees mentioned that sometimes departmental affiliations become more prominent because of the tasks that are assigned. Normally, general perceptions are shared within the whole ministry. For the French MFA it has been showed that divergent positions between departments or between militaries and diplomats can arise and contrary positions are taken. It furthermore depends on the generation of interest among hierarchies and departments if a position is followed (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:76). Departmental role models are not that often expressed and it is more the general guidance from the hierarchies that matters.

As was expressed earlier, the role as coordinator of ideas is frequent among civil servants, which were also influenced by enhanced communication means. Ministries generally faced technological changes since 1990 and structural changes mostly around 1995 resulting in a matrix structure in the ministry now. The mixture between line departments and regional departments is frequent. Due to an increased level of coordination within the ministry, I argue that identities are seen as being valid for the whole ministry and departmental borders are becoming narrower.

4.1.5 Nation and identity

Interviewees were asked on their primary identities. The answers showed that the national identity is predominant among civil servants. However, some civil servants expressed the national

identity as being only the second or third identity. Normally regional identities were more important than the national identity, but sometimes was also the EU identity.

The interviewee from the French MFA showed a strong French identity which he assigned as being antipersonnel. The interviewee emphasized the role of France in Europe, so the European identity is constructed as extension of the national identity on a higher level. This might also be true for some of the interviewees who mentioned the European identity as being secondary. For a Dutch interviewee the national identity was primary, even though the regional identity as Amsterdamer was very present, too. The European identity was secondary for him. A Dutch interviewee further underlined, that it depends on where you are for formulating identities. Outside Europe, the European identity becomes stronger. As several interviewees expressed, they see themselves more as Europeans outside Europe. An identity as global citizen is of minor importance. Illustration 7 shows the main identities of interviewees.
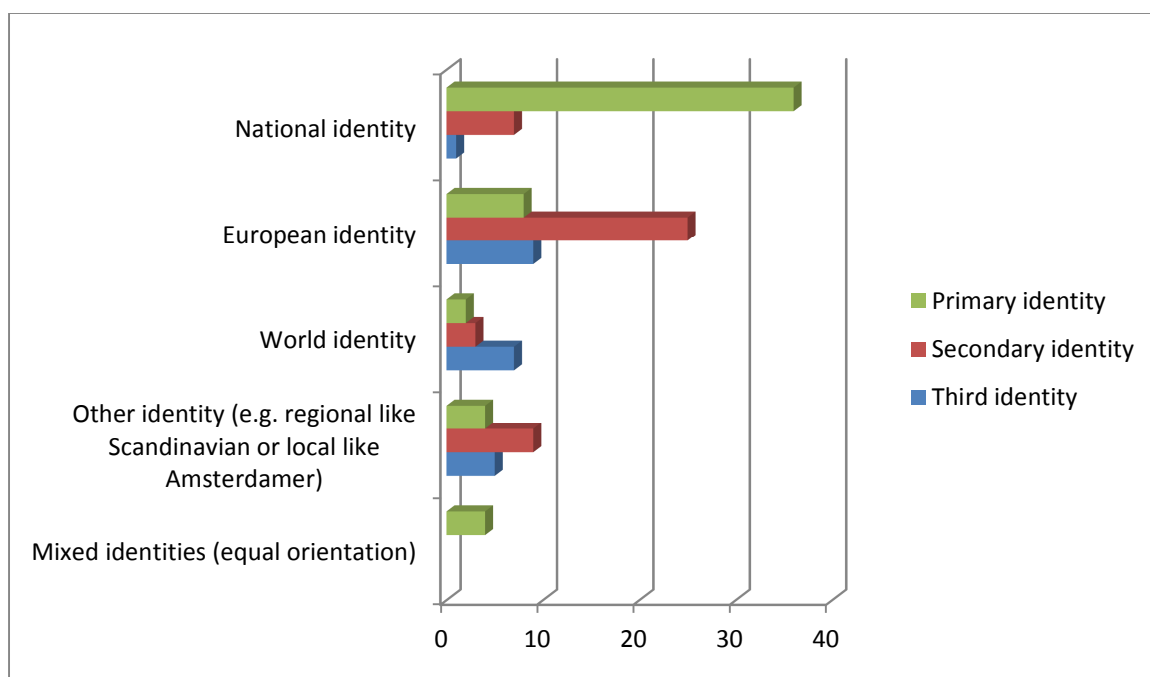
Illustration 7 - Identities of interviewees

It has to be noted, that national identities are more prominent, when the country is not an EU-member state. In EU-member states national identities are primary, but the European identity is often the secondary identity or even the first one. Sometimes equally mixed or unclear identities were named as being the primary identity. Diplomats assign that they have multiple positions and that those can change according to their position.

Civil servants often expressed a perception on their own country ranging from specific norm oriented behaviours, towards key interests of the country. MFA civil servants explained common values for their own countries and identified key components of not only national, but also European identity. This expresses collective ideas leading to decision making processes.

I shortly elaborate on the three countries that showed most respondents (seven and more), namely Denmark, Sweden and Austria.

The Danish perception on their own ministry appears as not being as clear as in other countries like in Austria. Typical core areas of policy in Denmark include Free Trade or generally economic aspects including green economy, but interviewees explained that policies have changed over time without disruptive change. The topics are of general interest not only in Denmark, but across Nordic countries. Further topics named by Danish representatives included human rights or security without clearer focus. From the seven Danish interviewees, it was very difficult to identify common interests or values. It might be related to external impacts causing change and adaptation like the Mohamed caricature that heavily influenced Danish public diplomacy and lead to more explanation of own policies or to less clear positions. This could not been absolutely confirmed.

It becomes clear that the Danish identity or perception of the MFA is narrower compared to other countries. The Swedish identity is consistent including very strong Free Trade orientation, human rights, transparency, openness and continuity as well as more general values like trust and multicultural aspects. The key values and key interests expressed were consistent among interviewees and interviewees showed a strong value orientation for Swedish civil servants. This was expressed by statements like human rights are very influential in the daily work or that value elements are introduced to other policy areas. It was argued that it is being useful to mention human rights and also to telling autocratic system "their truth". This means that the collective identity of the Swedish MFA always takes key values into account and promotes those. The Swedish ministry built a governmental information platform that includes a number of core values and is regarded as a "good instrument" for policy orientation. It was interesting that Sweden was one of the few countries (with Austria and Netherlands), where interviewees not mentioned a primary national or European affiliation of their identity, but a sub-national identity like being

from Halland. Even scholars emphasized, Swedish civil servants are representing the diversity of Swedish society (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:55). This might explain, why especially Swedish civil servants mention other identities than the national one as their primary identity. Furthermore Swedish civil servants expressed that the foreign policy of their country is to around 90% uncontroversial, as was also expressed by some representatives from other Nordic Countries. This statement supports the position of civil servants, because the policies proposed are expected to be accepted by all actors. However, it might also be true that political struggles are fought only on the highest level in the ministry and general guidelines are perceived as remaining very consistent for civil servants. The notion that foreign policy remains stable is heard everywhere around Europe and is a necessity for a clear perception of countries. Some Swedish representatives noted that they are promoting the Swedish identity abroad, which is the task of diplomacy. But this clear statement on the conscious identity promotion shows, that civil servants are aware of the identity of their country. Other Scandinavian countries like Norway have a stronger security oriented national identity with a focus on peace and security as well as NATO and security partnerships and show beneath the support for openness and the like a distinct identity.

The third example takes the Austrian case: The Austrian identity is mainly influenced by its relations to the Western Balkan, by multilateral institutions, but also by cultural dialogue and the Donau region. The UN city Vienna and the multilateral and UN orientation of Austria were named in all interviews. Interviewees expressed further, that they are aware of those issues when talking about other policies, meaning that it directly influences their work by including originally far issues. Austrian civil servants are interest orientated and do not use words like "values". As one interviewee expressed, Austrian diplomats are aware of this and would never mention values for Austria. The construction of identities excludes value perceptions and solely focuses on the interests of the country. Austrians see themselves as a medium country which is inconsistent with the perception of Swedish civil servants which see Sweden as a small country although size and population are both higher for Sweden.

The three examples indicate that Danish civil servants are less aware of the values/core interests of their country compared to Swedish or Austrian civil servants. Although quality of decision making is not further analysed, this can indicate that Danish civil servant are more likely to be unsure on decisions or make the wrong decisions because own core values/core interests are less

clear. While Swedish civil servants are more value orientated, Austrian civil servants are interest oriented and Danish diplomats are somewhat in between, giving possible anchorage for both value and interest oriented civil servants.

In general, the core values/core interests differ among European MFAs. I briefly illustrate this by examples from the Dutch and Irish ministry: Key values of the Dutch MFA include automatically democracy, human rights, Den Haag, impunity, trade, development aid, as well as proud and safeguard for international conferences. The EU and the UN are further principal points of referral. Following the interviewee from Ireland, most important for Irish foreign policy are human rights, peace and security as well as trade and development. For the interviewee herself, human rights and good governance were of personal importance. Those value and interest sets differ between countries with some stable naming of keywords.

Illustration 8 shows all named labels with at least two answers from all European MFAs. The complete list can be viewed under Ill.16, Annex. Multiple answers were possible; every interviewee could name as much core values/interests as desired. Some regional inconsistencies are obvious like the importance of Balkan due to the high number of Austrian interviewees or the focus on free trade and openness due to the great number of Nordic Countries representatives. However, the UN, the European Union and Human Rights were named among most interviewees from European MFAs. It needs to be assigned, that European Countries have an individualistic profile like the Dutch image of "living from outside" or the image of Austria as a cultural nation, even though they of course also share a number of values. French key perceptions focus on the promotion of arts, gastronomy, ecologic, architectural, historic values or economic power (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:60). This is also related to aspects like "nation branding" which occurs in some European MFAs directly.

It is more pluralism and unity rather than exclusive identities. Some civil servants like an interviewee from Bulgaria try to establish a country profile that is not only perceived from others, but especially by the diplomats themselves. Others are not that consciously thinking on the perception by other. Furthermore some countries are influenced by special developments that influence foreign policy like Austria by the governmental entry of the FPÖ, the Mohamed caricature for Denmark, the Iraq war for Spain or the recent developments in Egypt that strengthen the stand of countries like Malta, who are involved in the Mediterranean region.

It needs to be noted, that European member states generally face closures of embassies and reductions in budget due to the restrictions by the financial crisis. This is not related to the merging EEAS, but a budgetary necessary. As one Dutch interviewee mentioned, MFAs are "not used" to cut and as she mentioned, the process of reduction is still on going for around two years as a Latvian interviewee mentioned. This shows implications for future diplomatic services and is an actual trend that has been articulated.
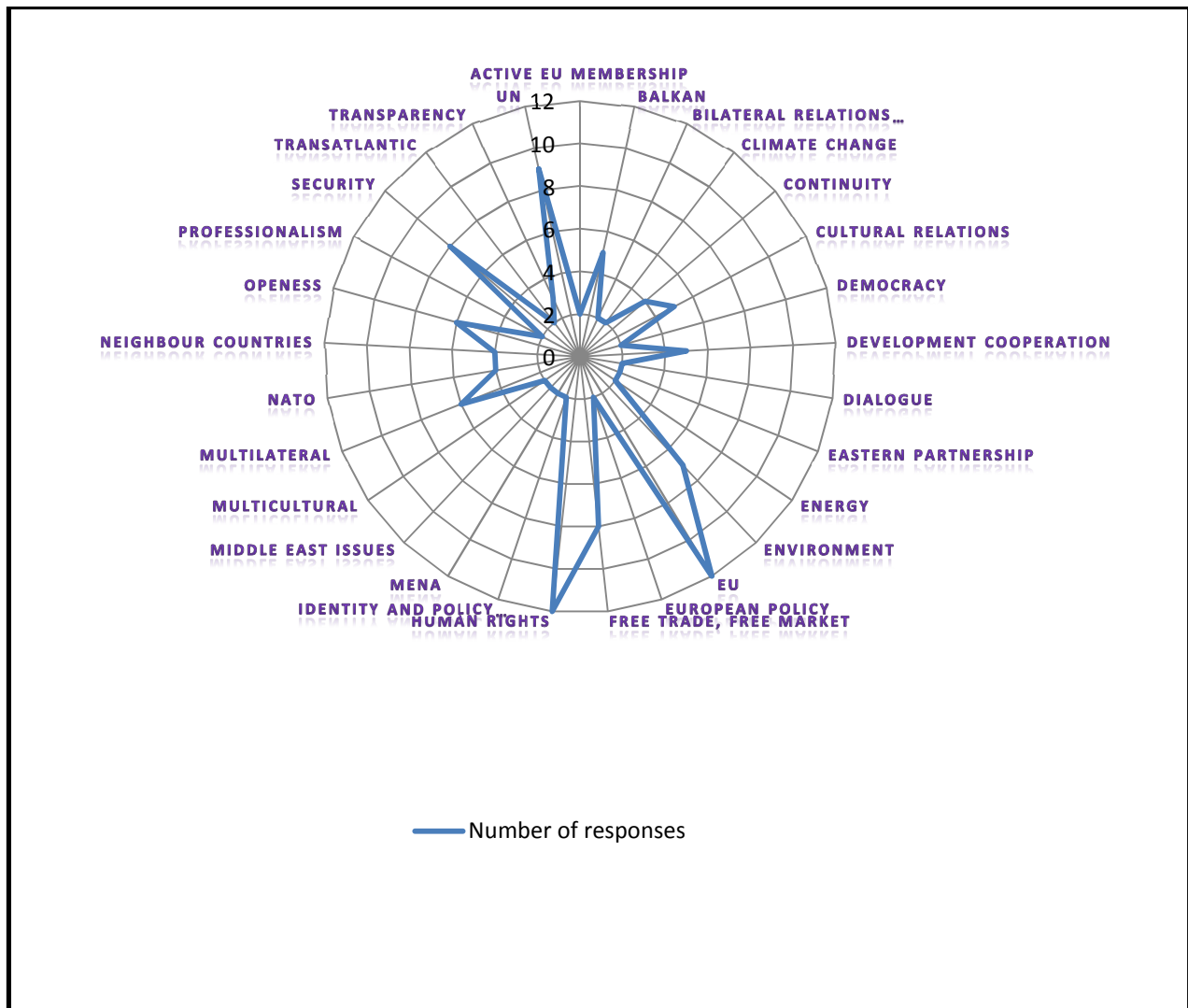
Illustration 8 - Core Values/Core Interests in European MFAs - short version

Danish as well as Swedish representatives see themselves as representatives of a small country in the EU as do most of the interviewees. Only representatives from Germany, France, Poland, Austria and Spain expressed that their country is clearly a bigger or medium European country. I argue, that the notion of being a small country underemphasizes the own role and creates a

specific picture of the country. The motivations have not been researched in detail and could become a focus of future research.

4.1.6 Decision making processes in MFAs

Decision making mechanisms are influential for the way ideas are developed and own perceptions implemented. To the question whether idea development is mostly bottom-up or top-down, countries expressed different models throughout MFAs. All models between strong top-down and strong bottom-up models are existent in European MFAs. Even Nordic countries – typically suspected as being bottom-up oriented - showed different perceptions.

It is important if the minister him/herself is strongly influencing the ministry or if he/she is ùotr using a laissez-faire style. The Swedish model for example is relatively strong top-down with bottom-up elements due to the strong minister Carl Bildt, who develops own ideas that are implemented. The Swedish MFA shows the results of a strong minister (and a strong prime minister): While the decision making processes were mainly bottom-up and consensus based before, those changed with Carl Bildt. Minister Bildt "makes" foreign policy directly via his internet blog; decisions and ideas have to be directly implemented, which is partly seen as negative by several civil servants. These were used to find decisions by an equal and more consensus based mechanism. However, general policies remained constant over time and no fundamental disagreements are seen between civil servants and the minister. Notwithstanding one interviewee expressed that it is even better now because guidelines are clearer and ideas better developed, but this seems to be an individual opinion. Civil servants expressed the governmental change as being very influential in some cases and policy modification in areas such as development cooperation recently occurs in countries like Netherlands or Finland. At least one further Nordic country showed top-down decision making processes, while Finnish civil servants for example showed more team oriented and bottom-up decision making structures. Even an interviewee from Slovakia stated that pure bottom-up approaches are normal in the Slovakian MFA, while a great number of interviewees expressed mixed models.

Various interviewees confirmed that bottom up or top down orientation is dependent on the personal perceptions of the minister, whether he strongly pushes into one direction or is giving

more freedom to the employees.   Employees are always aware of this. Political psychology research showed, that the type of leadership influences the internal advisory allowed within bureaucratic structures (Garrison 2003a:170) which again emphasises the role of the minister. For example a new minister in Netherlands leads currently to reinterpretation of Dutch development aid under the view of the own national interest, rather than under the view of altruism. For Dutch interviewees, top-down approaches in policy making are frequent, because the minister appears as strong and pushing things further. Although governmental changes influence the directions of foreign policy, many civil servants interpreted the foreign policy of their countries as being constant over time. These contradictory findings are more explained by processes than by actual policies.
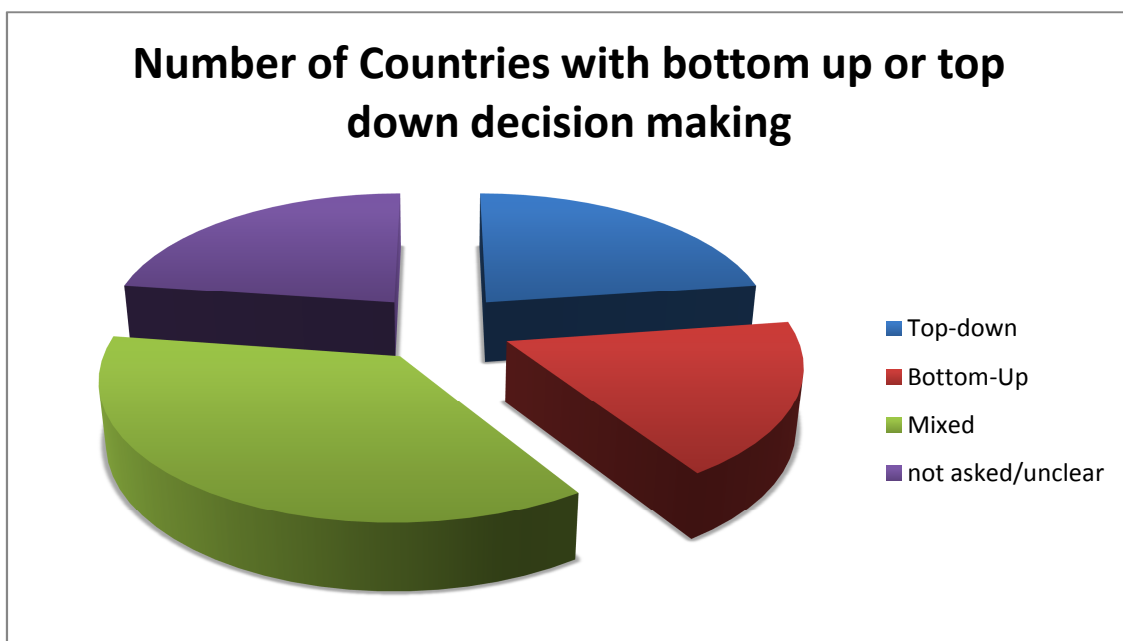
Illustration 9 - Bottom Up and Top Down decision making

Own ideas can be developed freely and often become part of foreign policy in Austria or countries with less top-down directives. Austrian interviewees explained that around 95% of their contributions will become accepted for official policy while around 5 % will be revised. Scholars assign that civil servants have similarly the possibility to elaborate the foreign policy of countries like France (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:16). In those more hierarchical countries, articulation of other positions is seen as being important. As one interviewee mentioned, permanent non-compliance in case of divergent views can lead to risking the own career.

Freedom for making decisions is also dependent on the hierarchy of the ministries. The interviews showed that levels especially in the French MFA are more complex than in smaller countries. This sometimes leads diplomats to assign, that their work is not recognised especially on lower levels (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:32). As a German interviewee expressed, with much hierarchies, change is slow, incremental and a lot of consensus is needed to change basic positions. Another German interviewee mentioned that normal ideas are only realised if people in core positions are on the same line or in a powerful situation. This emphasises the role of inter-ministerial power politics which is seen as being more obvious in greater countries. In other countries very loose hierarchical structures exist. For example in Norway, interviewees expressed that they can call everyone even the minister and are very open in decision making processes. Interviewees also assigned, that debates and "plenty of fights" occur between departments, administration and policymakers. An extensive communication and articulation of own position leads to common position finding.

Articulation of the ministry in form of speeches and the like is well recognised and "retraduite" (retranslated) in policy initiatives by civil servants (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:68). A German interviewee mentioned that he consults the coalition treaty of the governmental parties to know what to do. This is explained by "vorauseilender Gehorsam" (anticipated obedience) by one Austrian interviewee. However, the size of the country, level of expertise and also the number of employees in a MFA is important for the autonomy of civil servants when finding policies. Nevertheless, diplomats have the possibility to implement new ideas based on their own experience.

In terms of freedom of choice, embassies are generally more autonomous than departments at the ministry in the capital. Apart from the frameworks for the country, embassies are relatively free in the way they interact with foreign representatives.

Civil servants assigned that other ministries are often involved in coordinating foreign relations, which is more domestic policy on the international level. Domestic decisions are therefore presented on the international level. Some interviewee expressed this as being the future of foreign affairs.

4.1.7 Preferred Partners

Policy discussion occurs for most EU member MFAs on the EU level. This means that countries identify each other mostly in the EU coordination meetings and build their expectations. However, concerning preferred partners, nearly all interviewees stated that partnerships on the EU level are very fluid and issue dependent. It is not necessarily the case that preferred partners share the same perceptions. However, some regional groupings can be identified like for economic liberalism. The group of promoters of economic liberalism includes all Nordic
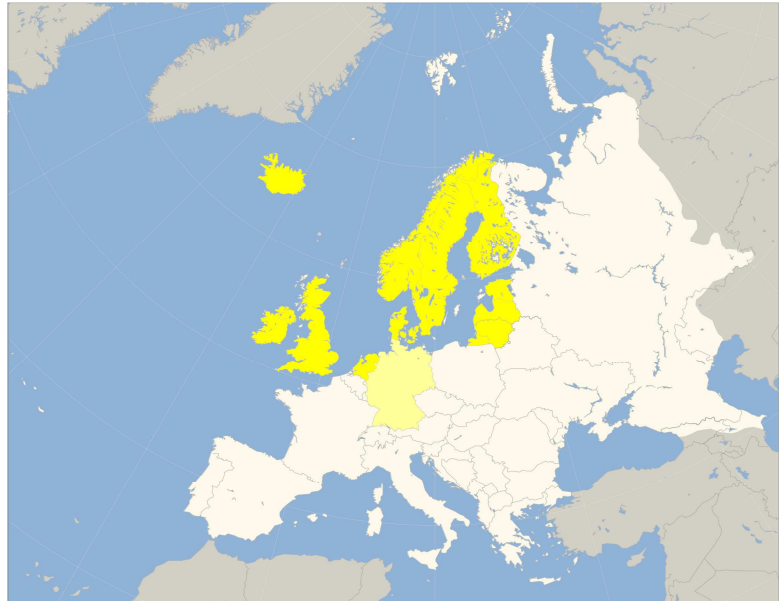
Illustration 10 - Economic liberalism in European countries

Countries and mainly Baltic countries, but also The Netherlands, United Kingdom and Ireland and to a lesser extent Germany. This is articulated mostly by inside identification through group members. Contacts with like-minded countries are seen as being easier because of similar approaches or strategies, which is true for all European countries. Consultations build "natural relations" between civil servants - and overall between states.

Nordic countries generally favour cooperation with Nordic countries, but also with like-minded countries as UK, The Netherlands and partly Germany. The latter is however more issue dependent. As one Finnish interviewee expressed, Nordic cooperation are "natural contacts" and Nordic cooperation is taken for granted. Cooperation with other countries is facilitated if representatives of other countries formulated similar views for example in EU coordination meetings before. Nordic civil servants generally emphasise a common history, culture and language.

Interestingly Northern European countries and to some extent Baltic countries see Southern European countries with a different mind-set and it has been stated that Southern European Countries have different structure, because of their geography, working mentality and "other style". It has been mentioned that it is difficult to work with Southern European Countries.

Southern European Countries did not share the view of Northern European countries, that working mentalities are different. As a Spanish interviewee mentioned it "does not matter if [they are] Northern or the like". They further explained that differences among European Countries are ever existent. Also some interviewees of European MFAs expressed close connections with non-European members such as the United States, Brazil, Russia or New Zealand.

More peripheral member states of the EU and also non-EU members are aware of other geographic partners and even of the negative potential of their neighbours. Representatives from member states with borders to non-member states are very conscious of the non-membership and sometimes even fear those states like articulated representatives from Finland, Bulgaria or Mediterranean countries.

Various other examples of geographic coordination exist and I shortly emphasize some below. Apart from the "coalitions" with Austria, German representatives emphasized only two natural allies, namely France and recently Poland, while other countries are more seen as ad-hoc allies. Germany is seeing France as natural partner although interests often differ.

The Austrian regional affiliation is clearly for the Balkans, but also with other states on an issue dependent basis. Interviewees expressed that there are no clear allies within the European Union. Some topics needs to be handled sensitively for ministries like the Austrian ones, in this case Croatia, where bad governance performance might become less recognized and achievements well applauded even if those deficits are clearly recognized within the ministry. This clear acting against the own conviction is caused by the belief that it is part of the Austrian identity to defend Croatia.

There are officially no preferred partners, although France coordinates closely with London, Berlin and Brussels, as well as with Washington outside the EU. Generally geographic proximity causes early approaching for decision finding. Furthermore a historic engagement exists with Spain and Italy in the French case. French diplomats high lined the wide reach of their diplomatic network which exceeds those of Germany and UK.

Spanish representatives especially emphasized the natural cooperation with Portugal which is often not even mentioned, but also with France. However, countries like Italy and especially Greece are seen as being quite farer away and more divergent in interest. The group of Southern

European countries is not homogeneous, although they share different interests especially concerning frontier affairs of Africa policy compared to Central or Northern European countries.

When asked on other groups of countries in the Union, Nordic countries have not been considered as a common harmonized association, but as countries with different interests, especially on military issues while Iceland is considered as being very far away. Countries like Italy and Greece are also regarded as being peripheral to the EU.
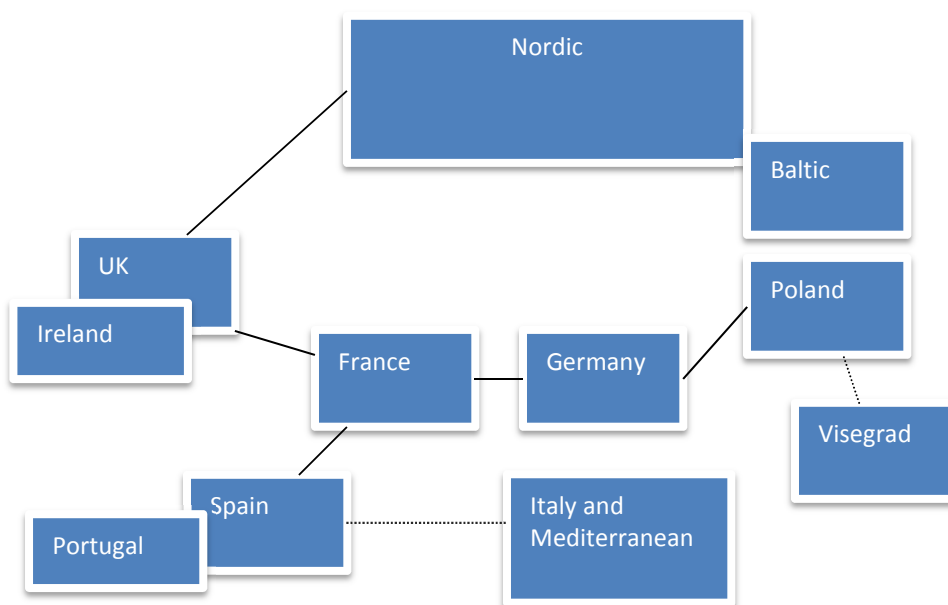
Illustration 11 - Intensive connections in Europe

The positive reciprocal perception of another country can be influenced by regularized inter-governmentalism. Regularized consultations are for Germany normal, where especially German-French relations play an important role, but also regularized consultations with Italy, Spain and Poland are hold (Krotz 2010:148). The German-French relationship is emphasized as holding France and Germany together even in difficult situations by generating social meaning and socialized diplomats (Krotz 2010: 150 a. 168f.). Today it is also possible for French diplomats to work at the German ministry for Foreign affairs and vice-versa and represent the other country – thereby "cultivated cohorts" of diplomats evolved (Krotz 2010:162 a. 171). As different scholars showed, regularized institutionalism enhances positive perceptions. France holds regularized consultations with Spain and Germany, while the United Kingdom holds close relations with the US (Krotz 2010: 148).

Ireland chooses partners depending on topics worked on. The European Union is an obvious partner, followed by Scandinavian countries and the UK as especially like mined. The US relations are good although mostly depending on personal contacts of the diaspora.

Partner categories are normal for European countries. As part of French universalism, cooperation with nearly every country in the world is possible. The intensity of cooperation depends on the "catégorie de partenariat" (partner category) of the respective country. However, if a country is democratic or has a good human rights record is important for this perception. This refers mainly to the international conventions that are ratified by a country, but also that those countries share the same perception.

4.1.8 Personal relations and sympathy

Especially like-mindedness plays an important role, not only in terms of personal relations with like-minded persons that help to enter networks, but also in term of general orientation with whom to act. Diplomats tend to be nice for building trust and confidence with other actors. Civil servants in MFAs try not to show if a counterpart is not sympatric. Personal relations are regarded as something important throughout diplomats including colleagues in other countries, but also in other ministries and with NGOs or think thanks. As one Spanish interviewee mentioned 60-70% of the work are personal relations. This is however not to be seen as an overall truth for all civil servants, but it shows the importance of personal relations. Especially knowing that a contact "is good" is something that is valued and is therefore important with whom to engage. On the other hand, a Polish interviewee expressed that it becomes easier to understand other positions if personal contacts are in place. This is absolutely in line with the theoretical assumptions.

Language is a further issue. Personal relations are important, as is sympathy. The latter is often not articulated openly because diplomats often addict to the professionalism of relationships that are not based on friendships. If someone appears as unfriendly an interviewee from Ireland would assume that this is also the attitude of the country as diplomats represent the country. Nationality and cultural backgrounds matter and humour and attitudes differ. Civil servants expressed individual factors as being influential even though not decisive. Not only networking and especially "testing" ideas are of importance, but also the "chemistry" between counterparts on topic specific

issues. One representative mentioned that the personal sympathy might be influential for how a critique is articulated to a counterpart, mentioning that an official critical point would be remarked softer, when the counterpart is seen as sympatric, while not sympatric counterparts would be criticized more directly. This influence of emotions on actions in foreign relations is an interesting point of analysis, which is often not directly articulated by civil servants. Some civil servants would see such behaviour as simply unprofessional because they follow a role model of the Westminster model. Under that model, personal relations on the basis of sympathy are normatively wrong. On the other hand, it must be assigned that - as one Latvian interviewee put it - "We are all human". Therefore following the Westminster model often also means referring automatically to rationality, loyalty and obedience. Although not named directly, the orientation of civil servants appears as being divided between the strict role model and the natural emotions caused in interrelations. As one Polish interviewee put it, it might happen, that sympathy matters, but it "shouldn't". Personal relations are becoming more important on high ministerial levels. The relation between ministers is normally on a very personal level and can influence the actual decision making processes.

Trust is an important word for diplomats and is achieved through continuous consultation and individual and collective construction of identities covering aspects like age and the like (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:85). When taking the view of a Dutch interviewee, personal relations and friendships are common for the relationship with other. It is important that counterparts like each other, but sometimes especially contacts to non-like-minded actors ensure a better outreach. The diplomats are therefore normally aware of the perceptions by other actors.

Scholars underline that civil servants hold the expertise and personal relations to construct a reference sector within ministries, where knowledge can be assessed (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:32). Civil servants propose new initiatives or are first "testing" them on a higher level and see themselves sometimes as creative hubs and creators of new ideas within the MFA (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:34). Trust building and conferences are official open channels to convince others, while privately everybody talks to everybody. As an interviewee assigned, it is easier to be open with democratic states because trust is higher and interviewees are more conscious for non-democratic actors. If trust is built, "personal remarks are easier to communicate" (Dutch interviewee).

4.1.9 Sub conclusion

It can be argued, that foreign ministries reconstitute themselves by accepting "like minded" employees already in an application process. As one employee suggested, employees of foreign ministries are selected because they hold those views that are compatible with foreign policy. Although the principle of generalists who are able to take every position of international relations is prominent in most of the European ministries, it does not inhibit actors to build personal relations. As interviews suggest, personal relations influence the view on counterpart. Foreign relations are regarded as being subject to professionalism although influences of personal relations on state relations cannot be excluded. As staff members of foreign ministries argue, trust is an important element of diplomacy, which can only be achieved through close personal relations. Even if foreign ministries have a generalist principle, staff members build personal expertise which leads to more involvement on those fields as one staff member explains, who already held several positions on arms control. The UN, the EU, security and human rights are the most important topics of referral in European MFAs.

Another argument emerges when talking about consistency. Consistency has been considered as being one of the key elements of foreign policy across European states causing little or few change in foreign policy on a short term. This strengthens the coherent view within ministries and makes it easier to build coherent ideas even for actors from outside. Foreign Policy is generally seen as being stable, enabling some kind of structure within the ministry. It includes that perceptions become more difficult to change, because civil servants do strongly internalize those key elements. However, not all interviewed civil servants showed coherent perceptions on the ministry. For example, perceptions on the Danish foreign policy differed with the exception of Free Trade, something more economic approaches and a green technology oriented state, but all other central aspects remained more fluid and changed over the last years.

Stability or coherence is only valid if trust and credibility are accepted by other states. When asked on the Swedish value oriented position one interviewee answered that they are absolutely credible because they hold among others their development finance targets. Employees of foreign ministries hold clear or sometimes less clear perception on other countries. Nordic countries would be more aware facing Southern European representatives as they – especially at the first

contact - perceive another working mentality. On the other hand, employees perceive other actors to be interest oriented or value oriented.

Employees see themselves as strong formulators of foreign policy. As many employees argued, they are writing not only speeches, but also developing ideas based on their own experience and perceptions. Some employees were rather surprised by the role civil servants play for formulating foreign policy. Only few cases suggested that parliamentary control was high. Usually employees had rather freedom for developing ideas, until they got restricted by a higher level. This is different for bigger European countries like Germany or France, where ministries are more formally organised, with more hierarchical levels and less freedom for civil servants. Here higher bureaucratic levels play an important role. Furthermore civil servants strongly study for example speeches of the minister for foreign affairs or even coalition treaties to get an idea of the policy to be formulated.

It needs to be assigned that medium ranked positions like directors or deputy directors have often a smaller rate of outside contacts, especially with other countries, than for example desk officers at the working level. Therefore it might be assumed, that the higher the hierarchy, the less familiar are higher officials with other countries and hold less regular contacts with respective countries. This can become problematic when constructing the own and the other country, as desk officers might be more aware of this because of their regular consolations. However, scholars underline that every staff member has passed several function of increasing complexity (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:4) which causes seniors in higher positions being more experienced and also familiar with former desk officer tasks.

Interviewees often mentioned that what they do in relation to foreign policy is part of their professional knowledge. ´We simple know' is something that is often heard, but not often questioned. Professional experiences produce a clearer image of the MFA and enhance the actions as less discussion is necessary. It has also been mentioned that a division between multilateral and bilateral relations exist with a greater need for profiling on a multilateral level and a greater need for personal relations on a bilateral level. It appears as evident that a corporate identity of the ministry is constructed. National identities are the main identities for civil servants in MFAs in Europe, but the European identity is the most important other identity gaining importance.

Bigger countries work much more hierarchical, while smaller countries assign more independent roles to their civil servants. Ideas include not only concepts of economic or political power, but also of diplomatic power. Especially in bigger countries, the national identity is primary, while European and some kind of world identity come far behind. In smaller countries identities are more often mixed up and on equivalent basis, while also regional identities play a role. It is expected that decisions are based on collective interests or values. Smaller countries rather emphasise the role of individuals in taking the right decisions.

When asked if democracy matters when approaching non-democratic countries, nearly all actors claimed this as important. This view is supportive to theoretical assumptions stating that democratic countries are more suspicious towards non-democratic countries (Steele 2007:36). Interviewees expressed that they would question more the motives of non-democratic countries than those of democratic ones. Therefore democracy is a category for like mindedness and comparability. However, some interviewees showed also practical views when it comes to aspects like human rights. While some diplomats would mention the problems with human rights in countries like China, others would focus on the importance of relations with those countries and therefore hold a more pragmatic view.

Trigger for the construction and deconstruction of identities are on the one hand articulation and discussion which regularly occurs and on the other hand authoritative learning processes mainly through implementing political orders. It is important, that small and medium sized countries heavily rely on public diplomacy to show their positions (Kollàr 2010:5).

4.2 The EU and the emerging EEAS

4.2.1 Articulation and Image Creation

It is important to note that coordination meetings on the European level are becoming increasingly influential for policy formulation. Meetings on this level are crucial for the daily work and highly relevant throughout interviewees. This is also related to the direct meetings in Brussels where people are sitting in the same room forced to interact. Civil servants are tending to be nice to European counterparts. While MFAs are generally coordinating the foreign role with other

ministries in the country, they externally rely – especially in smaller MFAs – on the coordination meetings in Brussels. Internal coordination is nevertheless increasingly important in terms of Europeanization and globalization. Nearly all interviewees expressed a strong referral to the European level when arguing on policy decision making. It was further interesting that country perceptions are mainly constructed within those meeting forcing non-member states to establish close ties with member-states. The images of EU member states for others are created in Brussels and to a lesser extent in the embassies abroad. The positions are converging from the identity of the country. Beneath the coordination meetings, European counterparts are in direct regular contact by email or phone. Civil servants expressed a general interest in cooperation on the EU level and in common positions or at least a majority position.

Overall the European Union itself is seen as overwhelmingly positive - a "fantastic example of multilateral cooperation" and a value in being. Only one interviewee from the Czech Republic expresses scepticism towards the European Union, especially towards political integration, while economic integration is supported by all interviewees. This was the only interviewee who named the EU as something negative, while some interviewees – especially a Dutch interviewee - mentioned that the EU could be faster, if policies would be better coordinated. Some civil servants are sometimes "tired of the EU" (Dutch interviewee). Similarly Swedish interviewees mentioned the long time for decision making in the EU context as negative aspect that not overrules the general positive perception. Some EU members are seen as not positioning themselves strategically enough.

The EU is evaluated or valued under different aspects like being a (neutral) "tool", "economic partnership" or a "pacifier" as the most, equally prominent. It is furthermore seen as an "easy organisation", because values are shared, even though views on specific topics can differ.

The overwhelming positive answer on the general perception of the European Union is somewhat surprising, facing the scepticism of the population in some EU member states. Representatives from France, Austria or Denmark see the European Union as something positive, although the population itself is more sceptical as interviewees expressed. One Danish interviewee expressed that the own opt-outs on the EU level are "not nice", but an expression of the negative perception of the population. In other countries, like Ireland, population and civil servants are positive

towards the Union, mainly because the nation profits very much from it. Civil servants expressed that the positive perception is generally assumed to be shared within the whole ministry. I argue therefore that MFAs in the EU have a very positive perception of the European Union. The discrepancies towards population attitudes can nevertheless lead to inconsistencies, when civil servants push the EU further against the will of the majority of the population of the respective country. Civil servants generally argued that although populations are sceptical as affirmed by Eurobarometer, populations would support the EU in the end or are simply unaware of the positive effects. Facing the positive perception, I argue that civil servants across Europe try to develop the European Union further. This might be related to the executive functions of the European Union as several interviewees saw the Union as a "tool" for policy development. One interviewee in charge of image creation of his country mentioned that it is by times easier to promote own values through the European level and to use the European level for another type of policy also in terms of scope of policies.

The European Union is seen as having different juristic, administrative or cultural traditions. Some interviewees mentioned the EU as a national project, which has been particularly emphasised by a French diplomat. The benefits and costs are balanced and the EU is seen as pacifying project with very much solidarity among members. As noticed earlier, non-member-states at the border of the Union seek the membership or at least close cooperation with member states to ensure some access to European policies like in the Norwegian case where cooperation works through the visitor status to the EC and Nordic cooperation.

Beneath the structural changes due to the increased use of email and other technologies in foreign relations, the membership of the EU included a major shift in the structure and policy of all member states that recently joined the Union. Nearly all interviewees who encountered the accession of the own country, expressed this process (and partly also the membership in NATO) as being very important for the development of the ministry. Representatives from European member states see themselves as one big group. However, one Danish civil servant expressed that for him a common EU identity became less important since the enlargement and the high number of member states. Nevertheless especially smaller and medium sized countries see the European Union as a "chance" as own ideas can be brought towards a greater level.

Non-member state representatives show less enthusiastic perceptions on the European Union. As one civil servant from a non-member state expressed, the position in the ministry is diversified between positive and negative perceptions and a more distant view on the Union. The EU is perceived as a "complicated animal" and accession country civil servants are studying and screening the processes of the Union.

4.2.2 EEAS

The EEAS is regarded as something very positive, but also as being in the beginnings. Some interviewees claimed that especially older diplomats in their ministry would see the EEAS more negative. Although some employees are generally interested in joining, they are restricted by new appointments to other positions or family reasons. Some employees of for example the Austrian ministry showed scepticism on the way ministries of medium and small sized countries will still exist. However, no interviewee was aware that his job might become obsolete in the medium term. Only on a long term, they saw their ministries faced with reductions or transmissions towards the European service.

The notions on the EEAS differ: While some interviewees expressed a common counsellor service in 10-15 years as being realistic, other ones saw no reductions in the own ministry and even a stronger national identity caused by the EEAS. For the future a perspective that on the long term a common foreign policy including a coherent foreign service emerges exists among civil servants from different MFAs.

Already today embassies are closed in Sweden and Denmark and in other European countries as consequence of the financial crisis. There is a tendency towards downsizing MFAs. The possibility of being represented through the EEAS in countries where there is no clear interest in seems natural for especially smaller countries. This includes an enhanced capacity for those countries with normally relatively small diplomatic networks. Huge differences in capacity are seen and France and UK and to some part Germany are in a "different league". A German interviewee for example is in doubt whether smaller countries have the capacities and the people to treat tasks equally causing more concentration. This has been confirmed by an Estonian and another interviewee who saw a lacking expertise on some topics and a "limit of reach-out". The question of bigger and smaller countries is mostly a question of capacities and not that much of policies,

because policy divides occur across categories like small or bigger countries, or Northern or Southern European countries. As most interviewees mentioned, coalition building on the EU level is very flexible because all are accepted as EU members. Once joined the EU, every member state is part of the in-group which is consequentially reinforcing the position. However, also a representative from Norway, officially no EU member, sometimes feels like a member country because of the regular consultation with member states, the EC and regarding CSFP.

The EEAS is regarded as a consequential and positive development. It appears as more attractive on a technical level and where countries have no strong interests in other countries. An interviewee mentioned that it is interesting for visa affairs in other countries to reduce own capacities in the country, while they still maintain an embassy in countries where they have an interest in. This view was supported by a number of interviewees. Parallel structures are favoured. National ministries are not seen as being replaced, due to many objections for an effective working of the EEAS that actually exist. One interviewee expressed specific pride for the national MFA. A German interviewee mentioned that greater countries ensure that their own structures for information and the like remain abroad in form of embassies and comparable institutions. Interviewees from Germany or Estonia mentioned that it could be possible to establish consular relations through the EU level, while the possibility of political representation is limited. One Slovakian interviewee even saw the possibility for transferring embassies and competencies on the long term. Furthermore some countries in Europe are seen as being not very active on a foreign policy area by greater countries. One interviewee saw the representation of the EU on the UN level as being blocked, while national interests are more prominent.

However, it needs to be assigned that representatives from smaller countries are aware that bigger EU members might try to implement their own ideas through the EEAS and that a domination can occur. A great number of interviewees claimed a balanced position of the EEAS as being accepted. One Romanian interviewee was concerned that even in cases of common positions this can be articulated differently by all member states. In greater countries the emerging EEAS is seen as something secondary to the national (for example French) identity. Also a German interviewee mentioned that the EU is part of realizing own core values and for spreading own values. The plurality of conceptions could increase the acceptance of the EEAS. The danger of the EEAS is the suspicion of following national influence of greater countries that are

strongly feared by diplomats. Smaller member states are more engaged in EU policies in order to realize their goals. The EEAS has the potential for a much more coherent approach, when the member states are balanced in their interests. Therefore it can be expected that those actors are aware on every policy announcement of the EEAS if it confirms or rejects this position. The emerging EEAS is seen as something very interesting and necessary for diplomats, although the actual process of setting up takes long and the process is "chaotic" (Irish interviewee). Furthermore civil servants see struggles on the European level for their positions in the EEAS. Interviewees mentioned time frames of around 4-5 years for setting up the whole service. Interviewees emphasised that own civil servants – for example French or Swedish diplomats - are included in the process of implementing the service. The own integration into processes of setting up is something valued by other diplomats. Ms Ashton is seen as starting very slow which is to some part seen as expression of a British interest and has a sometimes bad standing among civil servants. Ms Ashton has – according to one Dutch civil servant - an "impossible job" in coordinating between the Commission, Parliament and member states.

The Financial crisis caused closures of embassies, which also led to a streamlining of national positions. An intensified consular front or intensified cooperation could increase the potential of the EEAS. Smaller countries see possible reductions in the own ministry on the long term, which – as was mentioned by one interview – could be negative for the interviewees career development, but better for the countries, as they are better represented globally by the EU. The EEAS will become something important especially for smaller countries and could become more powerful when supported by bigger member states.

4.2.3 Identity Formation

It appeared striking throughout the interviews that there is a European identity emerging. This is only true for member states of the EU. Most interviewees expressed that their European or even EU identity is at least secondary (compare ill. 7). This is due to the extended coordination and policy finding processes on the European level, namely in coordination meetings.

The reciprocity on the European level leads to further identification on the European level. Civil servants regularly encounter their European counterparts and therefore experience regular

reciprocity. The European Union is an "In-group" for all participants and as one interviewee from Estonia expressed Europe is seen as "One".

Younger member states had for a long time the aim of becoming member of the EU and NATO. Especially Eastern European Countries experienced those processes after the end of the Cold War. The European Union has formerly been regarded as some form of "teacher" before the accession to the Union. This changes when countries like Romania or Bulgaria became part of the EU, when they suddenly were asked on their own opinion on topics. This formation of identity and interests is still on-going. The relatively young states do not have positions on every topic and hold a relatively small diplomatic network compared to other European states. However, those member states show an even stronger interest in the EU, as they are aware of the positive effects of the Union. One extreme from a small European MFA even showed that the ministry currently restructures and is nearly exclusively – 90 per cent of all decisions were mentioned – working through the European level and no longer bilaterally

Interviewees accept the results of decision making processes on the European level. As one Danish interviewee mentioned, even EU policies that are not in the own interests are implemented as part of a pragmatic view ("have to do it"). I argue that those processes will continue and even increase. Civil servants of European MFAs are not only working in European, but also in a global context, with a lot of travels and encountering of European colleagues. This means that their national identity becomes weaker compared to the European one. Finally those processes can lead to more political integration if the decision making processes are continuing to be on the European level.

4.2.4 European Groupings

European Groupings mean alignments between European states that are more constant throughout the time or that are perceived by actors as being existent.

Regarding decision making processes, European civil servants see a general divide in the EU context between bigger and smaller countries. Bigger countries are seen as strongly influencing the EU. This is expressed by various interviewees around Europe, including representatives from medium sized countries like some Southern European countries or from Sweden. Civil servants

have by times the perception that bigger countries are pursuing their own interest, "using their power" and are ignoring positions of smaller countries. However, this can also be related to lacking European interest in national policies of smaller countries. Civil servants also assigned that coalitions in Europe are across countries and without fixed partnerships.

Different perceptions within Europe exist between periphery and more central European countries. Regional groupings that are seen as a group with similar values include the Nordic countries, which are perceived as having similar values and interests not only by themselves, but also from outside those countries. Another regional grouping that is mainly perceived by the group members are the Visegrad countries. Civil servants from other member states see those actors mostly as Eastern European Countries and not as Visegrad Countries. The relationship between Germany and France is close to being perceived as a European group though only consisting of two countries. Furthermore Mediterranean countries - especially for Mediterranean policies - are seen as a group by outsiders, while potential group members see differences among each other, especially between Greece-Malta-Italy-Cyprus and Spain-Portugal-France. Other regional groups that are not clearly perceived by more actors, but only by individuals are Benelux and Baltic countries. The Benelux and Baltic relationships are not consistent and are neglected by some members of these groups.

As was stated before I do not use preselected regional European identities. This has been proven right, regarding how countries are seen or see themselves. Most interviewees mentioned that decision making processes are issue dependent. Regional groupings like Northern, Southern, Eastern or Western European countries are not valid. The Baltic countries for example are not part of the Eastern European countries, but of the Nordic countries. This was mentioned not only by interviewees from Scandinavia, but also from Baltic countries. The Netherlands and UK, sometimes also including Germany, are often cooperating partners. The great powers in Europe often cooperate interchangeable, while a special emphasis can be put on the German-French relationship, even though both countries often disagree. Trust and mutuality through intensive cooperation is nevertheless a key of this relationship.

Southern countries are often seen as a coherent group especially by Northern European countries, while they do not see themselves as being one as was mentioned earlier. Even Northern European

countries are sometimes – mostly externally – articulated as being not a coherent group. The already mentioned scepticism towards Southern European countries by Northern European countries is not automatically reciprocal, and is mostly in the North-South direction. This might also be related to different perceptions of speed - faster or slower decision finding as well as policy development - and Nordic countries are suspected to be more progress oriented. Civil servants are sometimes aware of the own construction of the own country and of the construction of other countries. As several interviewees mentioned, like-mindedness, partner or priority countries and friends are categories that are used within their ministries. Like-minded countries are therefore identified beforehand and kept in mind, when searching for coalitions.

As scholars have shown, regular consultations and social links build the basis for reduced uncertainty in diplomatic relations (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:71). This is often expressed by followers for own political initiatives, caused by consultation in form of telephone discussions and anticipation of the others positions and opinions (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:71). The informal addressing by the first name builds further trust on the working and personal level (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:88). This interrelates with the contemporary strengthening of less secret information in international relations as most information is available online or in the press as globalisation necessaries more transparency and open data (Kollàr 2010:2f.).

4.2.5 Sub conclusion

The image of the own country is mainly constructed in Europe and to some part abroad by ambassadors as the interviews with those suggest. However, decisions on country policies are mainly taken at the central of the foreign ministry.

European decisions are mainly influenced by interaction in coordination committees. Therefore actors see themselves and the others as members of the Union and it is discussed on an equal basis. By times, other notions like net-buyers and the like become more prominent and can be used to identify power positions. Generally, coordination on the European level is very intense and civil servants create images of the other through this way. Participants of coordination meetings encounter each other and build perceptions on the bases of the public announced articulations. The perception and construction of other countries occurs on a European level. Positions are

articulated freely. The generally positive perception influences not only the will for cooperation, but also the will to find better or more common positions.

There is a wide support for the EU among civil servants. Even when citizens of the countries are more sceptical like in Denmark, civil servants showed great sympathy for the EU. Furthermore, the EU entry has been regarded as a major step for the foreign ministry by all newer members of the EU. Interviewees expressed that the EEAS can replace national embassies in cases where no key national interests are concerned and for technical reasons. Civil servants also stated the interest, that the EU uses a more coherent position worldwide.

The emerging EEAS and the Lisbon process have been regarded positively and are seen as normal development of the EU towards a common foreign policy. Common goals are seen as being less confusing for third countries. Interviewees see the EEAS not as threatening their competences on a short term, but changes might occur on the long run. It is expected that foreign ministries may focus on key issues and further highline those issues. Interviewees expressed only slight interest in joining the EEAS at the moment due to the actual set up and mainly due to new posts and family reasons. A common consular and a common representation including all functions of an embassy can be possible on a longer term.

4.3 International Organizations and other actors

4.3.1   Perception of the UN and the UN system

Different interests and perceptions are seen between greater and smaller countries within the UN, which are mainly related to capacities and possibilities for articulation. Generally, smaller countries see multilateral institutions like the UN more positive, as their voice is easier heard. Countries with UN-cities like Vienna in Austria are further interested in strengthening the UN. Some interviewees see the UN as generally "on the same line". One Dutch interviewee for example explained that the Netherlands have a 98% overlapping priority with the UN, based on the connotation as political marketplace and the role for building bridges.

The UN is seen as something very positive and important although the efficiency could be improved. One Polish interviewee explained that the UN is seen as stacked and not flexible. Other

interviewees mention various divisions in the UN. Especially the efficiency is criticised by several interviewees and only 10-15% of UN staff are seen as being efficient and competent which is very much lower than the efficiency named for the EU. The UN is – as expressed by one Dutch interviewee – not convincing, but necessary. Those perceptions of the UN are personally mostly more positive because of the stabilisation and freedom brought by the UN. Professional work experience is often not that positive. The UN is seen as "Drehscheibe des Multilateralismus" (wheel of multilateralism) as an Austrian civil servant expressed. A French interviewee had a more national perspective: French key values are thereby the commitment to the United Nations – under the connotation of the history of human rights that have been developed in France through the "Declaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen de 1789"- the European Union, multilateralism and human rights.

There is a wide support, but also some scepticism for the role of the United Nations. The UN is criticised for a lack of reform especially of the Security Council, while the overall perception of the UN remains positive due to the general meaning. The UN Security Council is often high lined as authority, developing norms and rules that are collectively shared and actualised (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:78). The interviewees underlined this perception although reform is seen as necessary. The UN is seen as less positive than the EU and as being on a lower priority than the EU for EU member states.

Some civil servants see divisions in the UN. North-South cleavages are not seen as problematic as relations are more complex. When interacting with other countries, professionalization in the diplomatic service plays a major role, notwithstanding for countries like France which are principally cooperating with all countries. However, one interviewee mentioned that the EU is less coherent presented on the UN level. UN affairs currently remain a question of national affairs. Not all interviewees encounter UN bodies or meetings on a UN level regularly as is the case for the EU. Therefore only interviewees who frequently encounter the UN have been asked on these issues representing only a minority of all interviews.

The general perception of the UN and UN bodies can differ. Sometimes, no coordination of UN bodies is criticised or views have been articulated that the UN could be more positive with a common representation in place. UN bodies like the UNESCO are generally more positively

perceived. Other bodies like UNCTAD are by times seen as being "hijacked" by other topics or politicized. However, some civil servants expressed a more moderate impression. Although the G77 try to be one group, different interests exist among the G77 causing various problems and also more ideologies in political processes. Furthermore civil servants expressed that it is extremely difficult – not to say nearly impossible for some issues - to reach a common position on the UN level, due to the great number of countries involved. Civil servants also mentioned that the interaction on a global level is dependent on US positions, and the pragmatic American position enhanced under Obama without having illusions on a strong influence. Developing countries are seen as becoming more important in the UN context; especially middle power countries are seen as emerging. Those are compared to all Western countries – which are naturally like-minded - often seen as different.

Perceptions on the UN are more differentiated compared to perceptions of the EU. As interviews have shown, some UN bodies are more positively perceived as others – for example UNESCO. I argue that diplomats are currently not that convinced by the UN system, but have no better mechanism to propose. Therefore the UN is accepted under the notion of a multilateral and peace enhancing institution. It is an example for the perception of international institutions. Even if those are based on states cooperation is not automatically natural and the institution not seen as positive.

4.3.2   Perception of other actors – NGOs

For diplomats contacts with NGOs are often regular and valued. NGOs are seen as being important and have to be respected. Especially in contact with developing countries and development cooperation, NGOs are used to provide expertise on specific countries and as utilities to implement policies. Civil servants are generally open towards requests and not ignoring NGOs. However, it appears obvious that civil servants see NGOs as non-state centred and therefore as being less legitimated than every state actor. As no legally binding decisions can be taken, NGOs are of minor importance as a Latvian interviewee expressed. One Dutch interviewee expressed caution as NGOs can become too powerful when providing state services in failed states because they are not the state.

Another notion that has been articulated during interviews covers positions that appear impossible to civil servants. As one Polish interviewee expressed there are some "bullshit" positions of NGOs which are seen as unrealistic by civil servants. Civil servants approve different roles and duties to NGOs compared to state agencies. Again, I underline that diplomats orient themselves mainly at a state structure, which also helps to reinforce the state system. Even other research showed that state actors generally favour state-centric analyses and are reinforcing the state system (Klotz/Lynch 2007:49). Government agencies are subject to "natural cooperation" as one interviewee expressed.

NGOs are useful as watchdogs for own policies or as knowledge providers and in cases when they have easier access to a country, especially the civil society, as entry point. Contact to NGOs is important for civil servants because, as a Polish interviewee put it, we are "not knowing everything, we are only civil servants". NGOs are mainly heard but positions are not taken over. More radical NGOs are less heard. Ad-hoc alliances with NGOs are possible. The basis for ad-hoc coalitions are values that are strongly legitimised and shared among group members and can even include normally opposed actors (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:79;83). Some interviewees from countries like Denmark are aware of the role of NGOs and conduct joined campaigns to reinforce each other's position and to achieve common goals. In the end lines between government and civil society are made clear and it is insisted that the government makes the policy. However, there are even cases like in Norway, where every actor is a possible counterpart for nearly equal discussion. In some cases not states are regarded as being like-minded but civil societies are. Civil servants mainly see NGOs as being more prominent in Nordic countries.

4.3.3   Perception of other actors – media

Even when media is seen as the fourth power of political systems, diplomats are aware of the role of media and criticised in interviews that journalists broadcast complex policies too simplified. As one Polish interviewee put it the media can become too powerful. Normally media actors do not play a role in the daily life of civil servants in MFAs, because media relations are handled through a special department. Media actors are seen as being more relevant to politicians.

As one Dutch interviewee explained, he is cautious when interacting with the media and would not trust them. Media are generally not valued for information of the public, but as knowledge base. Media has access to other actors and sources than civil servants have and it is the plurality of opinions that is valued. However, interviewees mentioned no trust in the media caused by anti-civil servant reports. For example a Bulgarian diplomat expressed media as being the most difficult actor in international relations as it would like to be independent. Therefore civil servants have no access to media and one interviewee saw articles as strongly influenced by the attitudes of the journalist. A positive notion of the media includes control of the government under a democratic view. Furthermore the interrelationship between media and politicians enables new modes of press work and top-level media relations for the MFA as a Southern European civil servant pointed out.

4.3.4   Perception of other actors – parliamentarians

Contacts with parliamentarians are based on mutual information and are regular as part of an overall networking. Depending on the actual interest of parliamentarians, those play not a very important policy finding role for all civil servants.

Parliamentarians are not only knowledge sources, but also policy advising actors that can show diverging perceptions. Contacts differ between countries in Europe. Contacts with parliament are for example mandatory in The Netherlands and under strict rules. Friends are also sitting in the parliament. A strong "nothing to hide" narrative or a "spirit of cooperation" does exist. However, one Dutch interviewee mentioned that the parliament is seen as being partly not patient. In countries like Spain parliamentarians are reported to have a strong influence. In the case parliamentarians are influential, parties do often not matter and civil servants generally talk to all interested parliamentarians. Diplomats approach parliamentarians not without being aware of different standpoints. A civil servant explained that diplomats are cautious that population and parliamentarians are not faced with problems like development aid and may therefore have a wrong perception of problems. A Slovakian interviewee doubts whether all parliamentarians could work equally qualitative. In countries like Romania or Germany, contacts to parliamentarians exist only for selected parliamentarians that are particularly interested. Parliamentary control is weaker

in other countries. However, civil servants value parliamentarians and are often discussing on an accepted basis.

4.3.5   Perception of other actors – enterprises

Enterprises are perceived as actors that enhance the position of the own country. Enterprises are further supported abroad. This support is mainly interest driven and can contradict values. Differing viewpoints from namely economical and value oriented foreign policy, like the support of human rights while own enterprises violate human rights are acknowledged and disputed among civil servants. As an interviewee mentioned, some enterprises would in this case prefer less human rights in third countries, where the civil servant then seeks a balanced approach. A discussion with other levels solves the most urgent needs for answers, but often the conflicts remain. The referral to enterprises and the private sector differs between countries, but has been recently emphasised especially in countries like The Netherlands. The support for enterprises is related to small and medium sized enterprises as one Czech interviewee mentioned. Enterprises are supported to be active on nearly every market. As some scholars showed civil servants even promote French products or defend interests of French enterprises to try to enhance the reputation of France abroad (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:58).

4.3.6   Sub conclusion

Civil servants not only construct themselves, but also external actors. International institutions like the UN are of lower priority than the EU, but of higher importance than non-governmental actors. Scepticism is more frequent. Especially smaller countries emphasise the role of multilateral organisations. However, nearly all civil servants refer to the UN as accepted means for consultation. The UN is often criticised for being ineffective and by times politicised, but the perceptions remain positive due to general aspects including peace efforts and the like.

Interviews suggest civil servants see especially actors like NGOs as actors outside the state system which are to some kind underprivileged. This means that civil servants would listen to NGOs, but would never act as open as towards inner-static or foreign state authorities. This includes the risk of information not coming from the diplomatic system being often not regarded

(Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:32). NGOs might be regarded especially distant because of their role as "bureaucratic watchdogs" (Hart/Rosenthal 1998:239). NGOs are seen as information gatherers and knowledge providers, which sometimes have a wider network than MFAs. Civil servants value the different view and new impulses on the topics emphasised by NGOs. Some countries use NGOs on a more equal basis with more cooperation like Sweden or Norway, while other ones have a reduced role of NGOs. In Norway, NGOS are seen as "like minded", and civil servants are holding nearly no secrets towards other actors. Norwegian civil servants would even talk to everybody including actors like the Hamas, there are simply no limits. As one civil servant expressed "that's the way it is".

Media has generally a worse standing than NGOs, because of the publicity announced criticism or anti-civil servants opinions. Diplomats randomly encounter media, but if, they are very aware of those contacts. The positive notion of media generally refers to democratic aspects as watchdogs. The perception of the media is more negatively than of any other actor.

Parliamentarians are regarded under the light of democracy, but also as they are state centred, as sources for equal discussion. Parliamentarians are regarded as being less informed and holding less expertise than NGOs or other diplomats. Policy has to be explained to them by times. Some countries have strict divisions between parties and ministries like in Sweden where even the minister is partly not allowed to influence independent agencies. Nevertheless no general rule for contacts towards parliamentarians in Europe exists.

Enterprises are seen as being important for interest promotion and serve as vehicle for state interest, by times causing inconsistencies and contradictions between values and interests. Civil servants also see boundaries for economic issues. An interviewee expressed that he is "feeling" the boundaries for involvement of enterprises. Enterprises are an obvious, but distant actor that is generally supported. Particularly interesting is the contradiction between values oriented and interest oriented foreign policy that becomes obvious when talking about economic issues. Those double standards are an interesting point of referral.

It needs to be noted that not every diplomat automatically encounters all of the named actors, and those are more or less important for the respective departments. Therefore the set of relations differs and influencing actors are diversified.

4.4 Relation to theory

Foreign ministry employees are highly constructing their environment. Not only in terms of what it actually means to be a diplomat, including special trainings and education, but also how they see themselves in the ministry. Even though like-mindedness is often seen as issue dependent, there are some general perceptions of "friendly" countries in Europe or of natural allies. Principally all EU countries are "friends", while non- member states are more evil excluding the Nordic countries, where non-member states are nevertheless friends because they are Nordic. The in-group construction of the EU is working strongly and has led to the desire by former accession countries representatives to become a member of this in-group. The identification of in-groups enhances coordination processes and helps understanding policy decisions.

In terms of foreign policy analysis it is rather ignorant to only focus on interests <u>or</u> values. Some country representatives do simply not think in those terms. An Austrian civil servant for example nearly never thinks in terms of values, but of interests, while Swedish civil servants act upon value sets. It matters because representatives mention ever, regularly or seldom the country's core values in diplomatic relations. It is therefore crucial to bear this in mind, when talking about realist or liberal theories of international relations. It is important where the actors in a ministry see themselves to apply a specific theory on it. Furthermore the role of the minister has to be regarded in detail, because hierarchical structures also matter in terms of policy input or conflict decisions. A strong minister can directly influence the idea development in the whole ministry, while weak ministers can leave a great freedom to civil servants for policy formulation.

On the one hand, it is crucial that it is not a dichotomy between values or interests but sometimes values and interests or the one or the other are more dominant in one or another bureaucracy. The findings are supportive for the view of scholars like Wilkenfield, Brecher et al, that argue for two decision making patterns in form of core values that are associated with the state itself and high priority values that are part of ideological or material interests defined by decision makers (the same in Stern 2003:187). While most civil servants could name core values and interests as

described above some issues are dependent on the influence of the minister and his/her core interests or on the overall governmental interest.

The identity of the EU is strongly incorporated in member states, while accession countries do not show this great sympathy for the EU, but sometimes at least a nearly similar sympathy for Europe as a whole. EU identity for example is strongly incorporated in the perception of civil servants of the Danish MFA. This suggests that we find stable national identities within Europe, but also an increasingly stable European identity. However, most civil servants emphasised the primary role of national identities as suggested by Checkel (Checkel 2004:237; Zürn/Checkel 2005:1048). I support the view of Stern (2003) that regional integration, internationalization and globalisation will further erode the distinction between national and international at least for the actors involved – namely civil servants. This tendency has shown as right by this analysis.

It is not surprising, that diplomats rather search for a positive picture of themselves, as evidence from psychology suggests, that it takes "very little to create self-sustaining tensions between members of different factions within a larger collectivity" (Hart/Rosenthal 1998:237). The positive image is tried to be implemented on all levels, but especially on the European level.

Not surprisingly diplomacy is constructed. Also other scholars assign, that diplomats are constructing their profession, representation and their symbolic role which generates legitimation and is subject to qualification for construction (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:52;122). As Palan notes "cognitive regions emerged from shared practical knowledge" or "experience" (Palan 2000:588). This is comparable to what diplomats achieved, although their region is their profession. It is furthermore a part of experience and learning, that civil servants know how to effectively construct the environment and what can be done and what cannot (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:123).

Foreign ministries - or more exactly its personal - act as constructors of foreign relations. They are internally constructing positions that are adapted through articulation and sometimes direct authoritative allocation. They are furthermore externally constructing not diplomacy, but also retracing other perceptions and try to find common identities as basis for trust. Change occurs through discussion and arguing as theory assumes and interviewees confirmed. Articulation is the

point of referral for the identification of the "others" position. It is not military pressure or economic sanctions, but dialogue that is believed as being the key in European MFAs.

When new or disputed issues emerge, those are first discussed among different levels in the ministry, sometimes even between European MFAs. Finally problems are solved by agreements, compromises or authoritative allocations by higher levels. The most unforeseen element that could not been that exactly predicted by theory is the authoritative allocation by a higher level. Agency leadership has been emphasised by studies as important aspect of bureaucratic decision making, as are group interaction and openness (Joaquin 2009:261f; Garrison 2006:182). Especially leadership is part of legitimacy to make decisions based on experience or as part of a teacher-student relationship that have been recently emphasised by Gheciu (compare Zürn/Checkel 2005:1062). Checkel suggests that higher authorities are not persuasive due to their authority, but because arguments are enabled and legitimated by a broader social discourse (Checkel 2004:238). The study shows supporting insights, although interviewees did not answer directly on the psychological motivations of their actions. This could be subject for further research.

The cognitive element in decision making processes is an element that needs to be resolved by constructivist theory on decision making. If everyone constructs the world and arguing and persuasion are not leading towards solution it appears acceptable for civil servants that a higher hierarchy decides. The motivation for this agreement could not have been clearly identified by this study.

Epistemic communities are slightly comparable with ministries. Basic guidelines and principles are only changed seldom and incrementally. They are constitutions of MFAs and are also comparable to epistemic communities, because civil servants in ministries generally agree on those principles and are acting based on them.

A cognitive separation of interests and identity can be stated for some interviewees. This means that values originating from identities must not correspond with interests held. It occurred, more frequently in greater countries, that diplomats hold a personal perception based on an own identity that differs from the official perspective. This may be solved by referring to the group adherence of ministerial civil servants, but is still an inconsistency in perceptions. Some of the interviewees are aware of the mutual influence of identity, interest and values, while others see

values, interests and identities more separated. It is an open question where the position "we are strong in for example trade" comes from. It is possible that it originates from a hazardous response, from an individual perspective or from the collective identity of the ministry or even from higher hierarchical levels. However, the emphasis on *us* indicates that the community perspective is influential for such statements.

4.5 Theoretical implications

In relation to theory it is rather surprising that the perception held by the minister plays an important role in some countries. The minister is seen as a higher authority that gives general guidelines. The cognitive aspects for value and interest formulation cannot be underestimated in this case. Autonomy or dependency of civil servants depends on the actual minister, whether he is strongly involved in more detailed policy formulation. Normally, civil servants are directly constructing new policies based on own perceptions and relations to other. Civil servants are normally only allowed to take minor decisions. However, this does not hinder them from developing positions on topics that are handled in their department.

As noted earlier, the target group for this study has been partly missed as medium-ranked staff has less external contacts and are therefore less subject to international reciprocity than desk officers. However, they are more involved in internal perception building processes. For further research it is recommended, that an external analysis of the perception of one country should start at the desk level of ministries or at embassies abroad. Internal coordination and internal image creation takes mainly place on medium and high levels in MFAs. One important reconfiguration of the plurality of actors in a globalised world is that civil servants in MFAs act more as coordinators or organizers of international relations between states, NGOs, enterprises, media or international institutions (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:93;100).

Interviews among civil servants suggest that identities are primarily constructed from a national perspective – also because they primarily represent those – giving support to scholars, who see "post national" experiences, and conceptions of governance and democracy rooted in national experiences (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1048). Domestic levels for international position taking and the linking between domestic and European or domestic and international level are of importance

(Zürn/Checkel 2005:1068;Checkel 1998:335). The role of integration of new members of especially the EU and the combined modification of beliefs (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1060), is supported by the findings of the interviews.

As Zürn and Checkel argued, regionalism has developed in post-war Europe with common norms and rules and community creation (Zürn/Checkel 2005:1065). Today this is mainly true for Nordic countries, even though this does not mean that those always hold common positions. Other regional groupings include the Visegrad countries and of lesser importance and mostly externally constructed the Benelux countries. Interviews also showed that coalitions are strongly aligned among ad-hoc interests because general trust among EU members is existent. This is to a minor degree true for non-member countries.

Interest and values play a role; from country to country the importance of values or interests differs. Countries that are more interest orientated include for example Austria, sometimes Germany and Denmark, while value orientation is dominant in Sweden, Finland, and Baltic countries. MFAs actually hold a monopoly for state representation abroad (Loriol/Piotet/Delfolie 2008:125). State representatives see other states as legitimate structures, but are constructing other actors like NGOs more sceptical. Perceptions and views are more or less knowingly constructed by e.g. Public Diplomacy Departments in Denmark.

If everyone in a ministry holds similar perceptions, change can be expected as being most difficult and incremental. If MFAs want to ensure the elaboration of new ideas, they need to maintain certain variation without destroying the overall consistency of the foreign policy.

It appears natural that human beings are interacting in foreign relations and are therefore subject to personal implications like sympathy. Even though those are mainly reduced by diplomats, friendly people are enhancing the communication between diplomats. This psychological and interesting point of research may lead towards parsimonious models, but also towards a detailed mapping of identities and decision leading factors. A focus on emotions could show interesting results.

4.6 Further research needed

During this study, only general important issues have been questioned and general perceptions have been elaborated. More detailed studies could offer a more distinct view on political issues and could help predict foreign policy. For example could detailed analysis of all member states of the EU provide patterns of identification for basic country profiles that are perceived by all actors. Cross-checking with other outside and inside perceptions could provide comprehensive views. As interviews were across policy issues and departmental structures, comparison between institutions like UN departments would enhance the results.

EU coordination meetings are important for articulation and point of orientation for most actors and are worth being more deeply researched. Especially the analysis of actors on the European level could shorten analysis because identities have to be presented most explicitly.

As diplomats emphasised trust as an important aspect and try to encourage positive impressions of the own country, the relevance of emotion as suggested by Ross (Ross 2006) could be another interesting field of research. Civil servants mainly connect various issues like the EU with positive attributes, while others, like the UN, were perceived more negatively in connection with different notions like efficiency. Notwithstanding, several civil servants high lined the relevance of personal relations. Those can enhance relations among states if personal relations are based on sympathy rather than necessity. The creation of positive aspects and positive perception is therefore something important for diplomacy.

It is further interesting to compare results from European countries with integration in other regional settings. Among others it is interesting if perceptions in European MFAs are consistent with those in the USA – or also US identification in states like California - or if EU identification is distinct from identification with other organisations in for example Asia. However, EU accession countries showed already different levels of identification with the EU and with regional affiliation (European instead of EU). It makes already a difference if a country is not part of the EU and changes views and mind-sets. However, a comparison beyond Europe could show interesting insights on integration on a global level and especially on perceptions of diplomacy.

It would be interesting to research on the reproduction of MFAs, namely the selection of staff. This however may be very difficult, because human resources departments are one of the few departments often not covered by regular change of actors and are often seen as being more "secret" than other departments. Those want to be perceived as a neutral body that selects the "best" possible employees and not the most like-minded (even those might be best for MFAs).

5. Conclusion

Ideas in foreign relations matter and influence the decision-making processes in terms like diplomacy, when professionalism is valued, in terms of the EU, where member states are accepted as equal or in case of other actors, when NGOs are seen as working on another level than states.

Policy ideas that matter in European MFAs include the EU, the UN, human rights, security and to a lesser extent free trade. Those provide common notions for all civil servants that have been interviewed. A European identity bases on those ideas and they could offer a possibility for a coherent EU or EEAS approach for policymakers. The naming of those key values/key interests of the EU can produce positive effects and lead to more reciprocity among European MFAs.

The levels of importance for civil servants are national coordination on the first level, followed by European coordination, sometimes bilateral relations, then multilateral – mostly UN – coordination, coordination with NGOs, enterprises and parliamentarians and finally media. A gap exists especially in equal approaching between multilateral coordination and coordination with other actors. This is mainly related to the limits of statehood, which are posing a "barrier" for civil servants.

The distant perception of all actors outside the diplomatic system – and not state centred ones - is something that could be problematic or inefficient. When a state acts towards failed states without fixed governmental structures, there can nevertheless be effective NGO or civil society structures. Western or at least European states favour the official structures rather than searching for the most effective structures, that might be non-governmental.
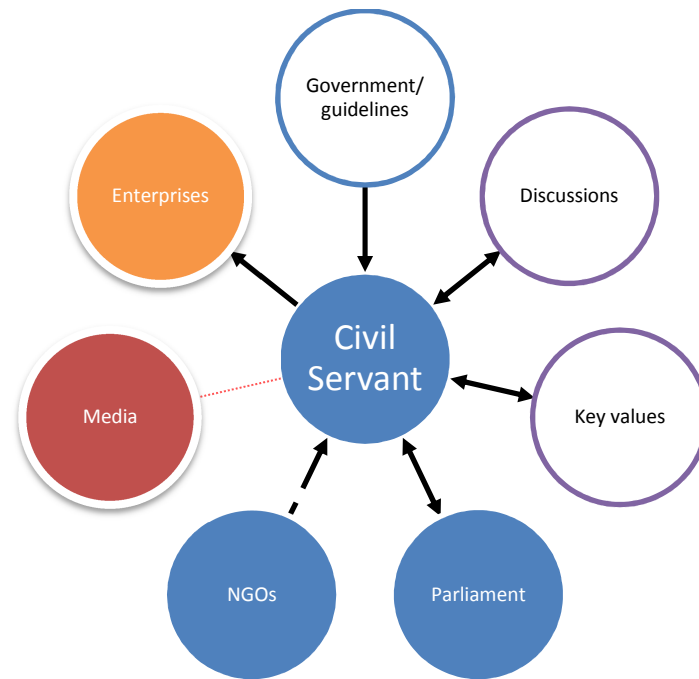
Illustration 12 - Summary of influential actors

Europeanization and Globalization have led to an increased demand for internal coordination between not only departments within one MFA, but between several ministries and between countries and other institutions. Most interviewees mentioned coordination between various actors as being essential to their work. Smaller countries see new possibilities for representation and more power in form of increased European multilateralism. Also smaller countries profit from the wide European diplomatic network balancing the normally great differences between bigger and smaller European countries. The EEAS is highly valued among civil servants although setting up is slow and incremental.

A reconfiguration of diplomacy is necessary, if MFAs should be able to cooperate with NGOs and other non-state actors on an equal basis. Diplomacy once developed from aristocratic systems towards democracy which already implied a change of socialization (Guzzini 2000:153). Now, diplomacy faces globalized systems with open structures. MFAs adapted towards a coordinating role. I argue that this partly deliberates the MFAs from political idea development, as coordination takes more time and MFAs have not been enlarged, even been cut recently.

As MFAs generally exclude non-state actors as being not on the same level, this is one perspective that could be followed. However, if MFAs rely on the authority provided by official structures, they will be unable to maintain their position as formulators of foreign policy because non-state actors

are already building own networks and facilities.   As international companies already hold important positions, another strategy is to become more open towards other actors and to construct new systems of legitimate representation not based on national affiliations. This would not lead to dissolution of MFAs but to more capacity to act adequately in international relations.

During the analysis I was surprised by the high emphasis for the European Union. Furthermore the use of European meetings for image creation is something very interesting that was not foreseen. The results indicate, that representatives of MFAs have been especially explicit in EU meetings, because the clearer the position articulated the better the policy discussion with European colleagues. MFAs can be sure, that civil servants around European MFAs share the named core values/interests which could help in building alliances. Furthermore the three notions of the EU – economic, peace bringing and administrative tool - are to be kept in mind, when arguing on the role of the EU. Civil servants who use all perspectives could address more European colleagues. Regarding the European integration, I argue that the results show towards a strong EEAS over time and to a more political EU. Finally, a stronger discussion of the core elements of the EU and also of the national core values of each member state can lead to more plurality in unity.

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7. Appendix

Illustration 13 – Interview guidelines

Loose qualitative interviews on perceptions in MFAs

Dear Mr./Dear Ms., I appreciate very much that you are passing this short study on decision making.

Introduction: I am actually student in the last semester of my master programme Global Studies at RUC. I am currently interviewing in MFAs around Europe to access perceptions held. The background lies in constructivist theory and on implications of perceptions on foreign policy. Thereby I would like to ask you some questions on your views on different topics, how you see yourself, your own country, but also other countries and international actors. If there is any question you are feeling uncomfortable with, just tell me, so we can skip that one. The answers are totally anonymous and you are free to say that you do not want to answer questions.
In every way, I am very thankful for your cooperation.

Topics:

- **Part 1: Perception of own ministry/own country/background**
    o How would you describe your daily work?
    o How long have you been with the ministry?
    o Where there any major changes in structure or policy since you joined the ministry?
    o Have you a specific image of your ministry?
    o Are you promoting an image of your country
    o What influences most when making a decision, is it the structure of the ministry, or important values, your supervisor?
    o Is it more bottom-up or top-down decision-making
    o Important values
        ▪ What are important values for you?
        ▪ And what would be important values for your country
    o Perceptions of other countries
        ▪ What do you think about other countries, are there some preferred partners?
        ▪ Would you say that other countries construct an identity, do you have an example?
        ▪ What other foreign ministry would you say to be most influential for your own ministry
        ▪ Is it important if another country is democratic/has a good human rights record/works professional in its foreign service?

- **Part 2 - Perception on the European Union**
    o What could you say on the European Union? Is it good or bad?
    o What do you think on the new Representative for Foreign Affairs and the emerging European External Action service?
    o Is this threatening your national competencies?
    o Do you think it is good or not?
    o Do you see divides in the EU context

- **Part 3 - Perception of international organisations and other actors**
    o How would you perceive the work of the UN as a whole
    o How would you describe the work of UN bodies?
    o Do you see any divides within the UN?
    o Could you describe your relationship to other international actors like
        ▪ NGOs
        ▪ Media
        ▪ Enterprises
        ▪ Parliamentarians
    o How important are personal relations?
- How would you describe yourself? As European, Scandinavian, Danish or other identities etc.

Please note that all questions noted above are rather indicating the final manner of questions. As the conversation was more open, the dialogue developed into the one or other direction.

Illustration 14 - Geographic distribution of interviews

Please note that although most MFAs agreed to be quoted by naming the ministry, not all did so. Thereby a geographic distribution with North-South-East-West-Central is used even if it is not followed anywhere else in the thesis. This is only for ensuring anonymity and respecting the agreements.

Code	Position	Date	Time	Region
Central Europe 1	Head of Department	3.11.	15:00	CE
Central Europe 2	Counsellor	12.11.	16:40	CE
Central Europe 3	Deputy Ambassador	22.11.	15:00	CE
Central Europe 4	Desk Officer	22.11.	16:00	CE
Central Europe 5	Deputy Head of Department	26.11.	14:00	CE
Central Europe 6	Counsellor	30.11.	10:00	CE
Central Europe 7		02.12.	11:00	CE
Central Europe 8	Head of Department	06.12.	15:00	CE
Central Europe 9	Head of Department	07.01.	11:00	CE
Central Europe 10	Counsellor	07.01.	14:00	CE
Eastern Europe 1	Director	14.12.	11:00	EE
Eastern Europe 2	Ámbassador	21.12.	11:00	EE
Eastern Europe 3		05.01.	09:00	EE
Eastern Europe 2	Director	07.01.	13:00	EE
Eastern Europe 3	Head of Unit	17.01.	10:00	EE
Eastern Europe 4	Deputy Director	18.01.	14:00	EE
Eastern Europe 6	Head Department	21.01.	10:00	EE
Eastern Europe 7	European Correspondent	21.01.	16:00	EE
Eastern Europe 8	Ambassador	24.01.	11:00	EE
Eastern Europe 9	Head of Department	31.01.	13:00	EE
Eastern Europe 5	Desk Officer	20.01.	10:00	EE
Northern Europe 1	Head of Department	20.10.	11:00	NE
Northern Europe 2	Head of Department	28.10.	09:00	NE

Northern Europe 3	Head of Department	27.10.	15:00	NE
Northern Europe 4	Deputy Head of Department	4.11.	10:00	NE
Northern Europe 5	Desk Officer	02.11.	13:30	NE
Northern Europe 6	Ambassador	08.11.	08:00	NE
Northern Europe 7	Director	10.11.	14:00	NE
Northern Europe 8	Deputy Head of Department	17.11.	11:00	NE
Northern Europe 9	Director	17.11.	11:30	NE
Northern Europe 10	Deputy Director	16.11.	10:00	NE
Northern Europe 11	Director	18.11.	14:00	NE
Northern Europe 12	Senior Advisor	19.11.	14:00	NE
Northern Europe 13	Director	26.11.	10:00	NE
Northern Europe 14	Counsellor	30.11.	13:00	NE
Northern Europe 15		30.11.	15:00	NE
Northern Europe 16	Director	02.12.	13:00	NE
Northern Europe 17	Senior Advisor	05.12.	14:00	NE
Northern Europe 18	Counsellor	05.12.	15:00	NE
Northern Europe 19	Director General	17.12.	11:00	NE
Northern Europe 20	Director	16.12.	15:00	NE
Northern Europe 21	Deputy Director General	05.01.	10:45	NE
Northern Europe 22	Director	05.01.	14:20	NE
Northern Europe 23	Deputy Director General	14.01.	14:00	NE
Northern Europe 23	Head of Unit	21.01.	15:00	NE
Southern Europe 3	Counsellor	20.01.	13:00	SE
Southern Europe 1	Counsellor	14.12.	15:00	SE
Southern Europe 2	Head of Department	14.01.	18:00	SE
Southern Europe 4	Counsellor	09.02.	12:00	SE
Southern Europe 5	Second Secretary	11.02.	11:00	SE
Western Europe 1	Director	22.11.	11:00	WE
Western Europe 2	Deputy Director	14.12.	13:00	WE
Western Europe 3	Deputy Director	17.12.	15:00	WE

Western Europe 4	**Desk Officer**	**21.01.**	**11:00**	**WE**
Western Europe 5	**Deptuy Director General**	**02.02.**	**16:00**	**WE**

Illustration 14 - List of Interviewees

SE Southern European (e.g. Spain, Italy or Greece among others)

NE Northern European (e.g. Finland, Denmark or Sweden among others)

CE Central European (e.g. Germany, Austria or Switzerland among others) WE Western European (e.g. Ireland, France, Netherlands among others)

EE Eastern European (e.g. Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria among others)

Illustration 15 - A history of Diplomacy

Date	Event	Result
Between 4000 and 2000 BC	First relations between kingdoms	
15th century	Relations between Italian Houses	Use of messengers , trust , immunity
1626	Invention of the first MFA in France	Various other MFAs as institution for coordination are invented. Immunity and embassies become institutionalized.
1648	Peace of Westphalia	European State System
1815	Congress of Vienna	Multilateral diplomacy is developing, hierarchy of diplomats.
1909	1st World War	Crisis of diplomacy, renewal of thinking
1919	Emergence of the Society of Nations	Multilateral organization of States
1939	2nd World War	Second rupture of diplomacy
1954	Invention of the UNO	Multilateral diplomacy becomes signified by the UN and the Security Council
1961	Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities diplomat → Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.	Classical diplomacy becomes international law, ratification first by 22 states, today 170 states.
1963	Vienna Convention on Consular Relations	Consular relations become international law.
1975	Vienna Convention on the Representation *of* States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character	Because of the increasing number of international organizations, the Vienna convention on relations with international organizations became necessary.
1989/90	End of the Cold War	Renewal of identities of all actors in international relations
1990-1997	Technical revolution	Email and other technical means become frequent, informality of relations
Today	Multipolar World	

Illustration 15 -The development of diplomacy

Sources: Own table, based on: Kissinger 1994 : 13; Berridge 2005 :1,5 ; Braston 2006 :7; Kingston de Leusse 1998 : 22.

Illustration 16 - All named core values in European MFAs

	Number of responses
Active EU membership	2
Africa	1
Balkan	5
Being known by others	1
Bilateral relations Russia	2
Budget	1
Climate change	2
Close relations	1
Commercial relations	1
Commitment	1
Common goal	1
Consensus	1
Continuity	4
Cooperation	1
Cultural relations	5
Democracy	2
Development cooperation	5
Dialogue	2
Disarmament	1
Donau region	1
Eastern Partnership	2
Energy	2
Environment	7
Equality	1
EU	12
EU accession process	1
European Policy	2
Free movement	1
Free trade, free market	8
Gender	1
Guidelines	1
Human rights	12
Humanitarian assistance	1
Identity and policy promotion	2
International Criminal Court	1
International Law	1
Kosovo/KFOR	1
Latin America	1

Illustration 16 - All named core values in European MFAs

Mediterranean	1
MENA	2
Middle East issues	2
Multicultural	2
Multilateral	6
NATO	4
Neighbour countries	4
Neutrality	1
Nordic Cooperation	1
Openess	6
Peace Efforts	1
Preventing unfarourable decisions	1
Professionalism	2
Public private interaction	1
Respect	1
Rural based governance	1
Security	8
Shared values	1
Southern Europe	1
Stabilisation	1
SubSaharan Africa	1
Trade development	1
Transatlantic	2
Transparency	3
Trust	1
UN	9
Welfare state	1

Illustration 16 - All named core values/core interests in European MFAs