

Fabian Landes

## **CAN MONEY BUY LOVE?**

The Impact of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union  
on European Identity

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# ABSTRACT

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This Master thesis explores the relationship between Cohesion policies of the EU and European identity. After first describing the history and context of Cohesion policies of the EU, the literature on European identity studies is reviewed. This discussion develops an economic utilitarian argument, that citizens in Europe develop their identification with the EU partly on rational considerations, and that the added quality of life provided by investments of the EU would positively influence their European identity. This effect is expected to be different throughout European regions.

The hypotheses are tested in a quantitative analysis of Eurobarometer data and economic indicators of gross domestic products and Cohesion policy spending on a regional level. In a multilevel model, the effect of Cohesion policy on European identity is investigated through the period of 2000 – 2014 on a regional and national level.

The results suggest that Cohesion policy investments have a positive impact on the share of citizens, that identify both with their nation state and the European Union. At the same time, a negative effect of Cohesion policy investments on citizens who identify only with their national state can be shown. This effect is very different between the member states of the EU, which suggest that in some countries, European identity underlies stronger economic utilitarian considerations than in others. While the results are promising, the rigid quantitative method applied in this study creates some conceptual and methodological problems with the findings. By looking at some separatist regions, the problem of third variables such as political ideologies or education is discussed, which relativizes the research results.

Keywords: European Identity; Cohesion policy; European Union; Regional Policy, quantitative Methods; Multilevel Modelling

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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# 1. Introduction

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*“You cannot fall in love with a Common Market [...] That is why I am constantly stressing the need not only for a frontier-free area but also for the flanking policies which will open up new horizons for the men and women who make up this Community of ours”*

Address to the European Parliament by Commission President Jacques Delors in 1989

The fact that it is very hard to fall in love with the European Union has been the reason for many Eurosceptic arguments. The complaints that the anonymous bureaucracy of Brussels generated a vast distance between the citizens of Europe and the European authorities has been repeated over and over, but since President of the European Commission Jacques Delors addressed the European Parliament in 1989, this distance seems to keep growing. Today many voices argue, that the idea of a European identity is a presumptuous myth of European elites and cosmopolitan academics, that have no idea of the ordinary citizens’ desires and problems.

The rise of Eurosceptic populist parties continues to threaten further political integration of European countries and when a small majority of the British population decided to leave the European Union in 2016, many saw the EU standing at the edge of precipice. Although the United Kingdom (UK) seems to be on the losing side after a destructive and pernicious negotiation process which brought the most severe constitutional crisis of the modern area to the UK, the idea that all citizens in Europe would accept the EU as a common source of self-identification still stays utopian. While this generally provides only little hope for the emergence of a European identity, the EU did develop flanking policies whose aim is to provide concrete value and quality of life to the citizens in order to make the economic success of European integration visible.

The overall ambitious goal of the Cohesion policies, or often referred to as the Regional policies of the EU, is to harmonize living standards in all European regions and to reduce economic, social and environmental inequalities. The rationale is that the EU invests money in projects from its own budget, that help regions to create growing, sustainable and liveable regional communities, whereas economically disadvantaged parts of the Union would receive greater attention than

wealthier regions. For fulfilling these ambitions, the investments need a considerable amount of money: over one third of the entire budget of the EU is devoted to fostering regional development and creating economic and social cohesion between European regions. It represents a massive financial redistribution mechanism.

While both academia and policy makers were interested in the effects of Cohesion policy interventions since they came into live, these evaluation studies overwhelmingly focused on assessing the economic impact of the money that the EU invested in Europe's regions. The focus lied always on the question whether regions economically benefit from Cohesion policy investments. It is only since recent years, that scholars started to become interested in the question on whether Cohesion policy also influences the citizens perspective towards the Union. (Borz, Brandenburg, & Mendez, 2018; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017; Pegan, Mendez, & Triga, 2018; Verhaegen, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2014)The number of studies that examined the relationship between European identity and Cohesion policy – both concepts that have become part of standard research agenda in European Studies (Bachtler, 2016; Smith, 1992) – is still fairly small and of great theoretical and methodological heterogeneity.

This thesis aims at reducing this research gap by studying the interconnection between European Identity and Cohesion policy funding. The main theoretical argument of the analysis is that European identity formation follows in part a rational economic-utilitarian consideration. When the Union and its policies produce a tangible added value to their citizens' lives, it is more likely that they would start to identify themselves as a citizen of the European Union. To account for the great number of regional circumstances in Europe, a second hypothesis assumes that this effect would differ between European regions and that the country in which the region lies is only of secondary importance for the characteristics of regional patterns of European identification.

To test these two hypotheses, the present thesis developed a large data set that combines indicators for the citizens' level of European identity from Eurobarometer Data with economic indicators on the EU's spending activities in the regions and regional economic activities. The scope of the analysis stretches over the period from 2000 – 2014. To account for the strong regional focus of Cohesion policy, the lowest unit of analysis are regions and not countries. The analytical technique used is a three-level multilevel model regression analysis with random slopes and intercepts. This allows to

investigate the characteristics of the effect on both the country- and the regional level, and it provides tools for comparing different territorial units.

The analysis presents evidence for a positive impact of the amount of Cohesion policy investments in the region and their citizens share that at least report a mixed identity between their nation state and the European Union. Likewise, the model shows a negative impact on EU investments on the share of citizens, that identify solely with their country. This effect however does not vary much between regions of one country, but rather between countries. This indicates that national circumstances have a strong effect on how the citizens identify with the EU leading to a rejection of the second hypothesis.

The next section provides the theoretical background of the thesis. First the European Structural and Investments Funds are described from both a historical and a policy perspective, and a short overview on evaluation studies of Cohesion policy is given. This is followed by a literature review on the most important studies on European identity which leads to a discussion of the theoretical mechanisms on how Cohesion policy can influence European identity and to formulating the hypotheses. Chapter three gives insights in the operationalization of the considered variables and presents the data set that was developed during this thesis project. Each variable is discussed on a descriptive level and the chapter ends with developing the multilevel-model that was used to analyse the dataset. The fourth chapter presents the results from the statistical analysis. Besides presenting the regression parameters of the three multi-level regression models, three separatist regions in the UK, Spain and Italy receive special attention. This elaboration shows, that although the patterns of the overall effect are dominated by the country level influences, some special regions fall out of this line. In the discussion, the results are considered in light of the hypothesis and theoretical assumptions that were made beforehand. This is followed by a discussion of some of the most important methodological and conceptual problems that relate to the analysis. The conclusion summarizes the research results and puts it into a broader perspective.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

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The aim of this first chapter is to develop a comprehensive theoretical background of the study. This theoretical background is created in order to develop scientifically sound hypotheses for the empirical research. Therefore, it resembles a literature review of relevant publications. To study the relationship between EU cohesion policy and European identity, consequently two theoretical concepts must be elaborated on: Cohesion policy and European identity. By doing so, this chapter is organised in two major parts: the first section focuses on Cohesion policy. It gives some insights in the history and the policy process of Cohesion policies and finishes with discussing some of the most important evaluation studies that have been done already. The second major part focuses on the academic field of European identity. Besides being of theoretical nature, this section also includes an examination of measurement problems of European identity, as this operationalization problem resembles also some conceptual implications and therefore it makes sense to have this discussion already in the theory section of this thesis. The chapter finishes with defining the hypotheses that are to be tested in the empirical part of the paper.

### 2.1. Cohesion Policies of the European Union

Cohesion policies are the EU's main tool for tackling regional economic disparities between regions. It consists of the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRE), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agriculture Fund for Regional Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (European Commission, 2019b). While they have slightly different objectives and different target groups (especially the EMFF and EAFRD, their overall goal is to reduce economic and social differences in the European regions (European Commission, 2019c). As such, they are planned and implemented on regional governance levels. Member states and their regions develop Operational Programmes (OP) for each 6-year funding periods. But before describing the policy process of the Cohesion policy interventions, the following section will give a short historical overview on the development of the Cohesion policy in the EU, since it has been subject to major changes and reforms. This section will end with discussing evaluation studies that have studied the success of Cohesion policy investments.

### 2.1.1. A brief History of Regional Policies of the European Union

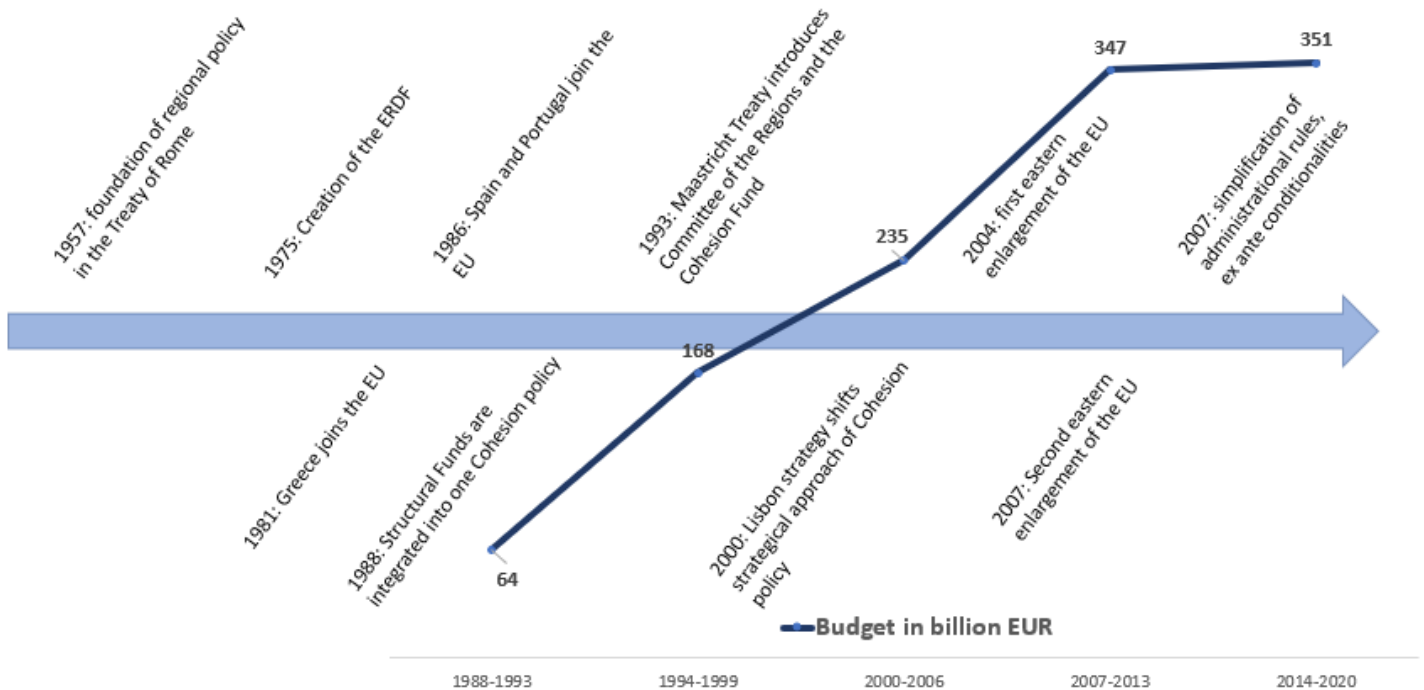


Figure 1: timeline of the Cohesion policy of the EU. Data Source: European Commission (2018)

As seen in figure 1, the budget of the EU cohesion policies experienced a steady increase over the last decades. The basis for an ambitious set of policies that would strengthen the regional economic and social cohesion of the territory of the European Union was already laid out in the treaty of Rome. The founding fathers of the EU agreed that the precursor of the EU – the European Economic Community (EEC) should contribute to *“strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions”*. (European Union, Treaty of Rome, 1957: Preamble) While this wording only expressed the intention to work towards regional cohesion, it did not at all provide grounds for an extensive regional investment policy, as the EU cohesion policy is today. In fact, there were some serious doubts about the necessity and effectiveness of such an investment policy in the beginning of the EEC. In the early stage of the EEC, politicians believed that general integration of economic policies among European countries would be sufficient to create economic cohesion between regional economies in Europe. (Barca, 2009) While the European Social Fund was developed from the European Coal and Steel Community Fund already in 1957, further steps for creating a comprehensive regional policy were not taken until the accession of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark in 1973. As the United Kingdom did not expect to receive much funding from

the already existing Common Agriculture Policy, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created in 1975 as a concession towards the United Kingdom for pursuing it to join the European Community. (Dudek, 2014)

A few factors lead to a steady increase in importance and therewith rise in budget of regional policies in the following years. With the southern enlargement in the 1980s, Spain, Portugal and Greece joined the European project – all countries that at that time had considerably weaker economies and thereby increasing the disparity of the territories represented by the EEC. Furthermore, the Commission presidency of Jaques Deloir introduced a strong political will for more solidarity between regional economies in Europe. This resulted in an explicit foundation of cohesion policies in the Maastricht treaty, where the heads of states and governments agreed that the newly created European Union should *“aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions, including rural areas.”* (European Union, Maastricht Treaty, 1992: Title XIV, Article 130a).

The Maastricht Treaty added the Cohesion Fund (CF) to the existing ERDF and ESF, which was designed to target especially regions and countries with economic disadvantages. In 1993, the budget of Cohesion policy spending rose to over 32% of the whole budget of the Union, and the foundation of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 showed the growing importance of regional governments in the policy process of the EU. (Barca, 2009) The eastern enlargement of the EU in the early 2000s shifted the attention of Cohesion policies towards the new eastern territories.

Through the eastern enlargement, the average GDP of the EU fell by 10% which moved the focal point of regional investments eastwards. (Kesner-Skreb, 2010). The more recent reform debates have been mainly discussing the effectiveness of Cohesion policy spending. Many regions have now received financial support for decades but still lacking fundamental economic improvements. Combined with a stronger constraints on public budgets after the Euro crisis, the need for a reform that aimed at increasing the effectiveness gained more attention in the 2010s. (Bachtler, 2016)

The EU responded with the concept of Regional Innovation System for Smart Specialization (RIS3). The reform that was implemented in the ongoing funding period 2014-2020 requires regions to formulate strategies on how public funding can be best invested in the local economic context. These strategy formulations are so-called ex-ante conditionalities for receiving funding from EU Cohesion policies. The rationale behind this is, that local economic and political actors would best

understand the regional economic context and would therefore be the best ones to judge which industrial sectors need the most financial support in order to benefit the regional economy the most. (McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2015) The strong focus is on supporting innovation and research and development funding while giving the detailed decisions into the hands of local actors. It is too early to judge the success of this reform yet, however the focus on upgrading local governance structures through formulating RIS3-strategies seems to be an important step towards a more effective and result-orientated Cohesion policy. (McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2016)

### 2.1.2. The policy process

The process of formulating and implementing the individual funding programs under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF – refers to the sum of funds under the Cohesion policy) reflects the complex multi-governance structure of the European Union. The whole budget is decided within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) by the EU for a 6 years period. The member states play a crucial part here, since the European Council, the institution that represents the member states, is required to agree to the Commission's proposal unanimously. Not only the budget is decided in this MFF, but also some key strategic goals are set that should be achieved by spending the money.

For the ERDF in the current MFF 2014-2020, the strategic goals are for example innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the low-carbon economy. (European Commission, 2019a) In total there are 11 thematic objectives which are divided to the three main ESIFs (which are the ERDF, ESF and CF). For the concrete planning, the Commission formulates Partnership Agreements for each country, which lay out each member states' strategy on how to spend investments under the Cohesion policy. These partnership agreements may already include some proposals for concrete funding programs. In addition to that, member states also submit proposals for Operational Programs (OP), which outline the concrete implementation plans for ESIFs.

The OPs can either be of thematic nature, e.g. that a country submits one OP for climate change adaption or one OP for promotion of social inclusion, or they are structured by regions, e.g. that the member state submits one OP for each region. The Commission negotiates the Partnership Agreements and the OPs with the member states, and once they agreed, the Commission pays the negotiated sum to the member states. (European Commission, 2019d) Within the member states'

administrative systems, usually one ministry holds the responsibility of distributing the money from the EU to either other ministries or authorities within the country or directly to beneficiaries, as agreed in the Partnership Agreements. The OPs and the Partnership Agreements also include reporting and evaluation mechanisms, since each member state has to submit regular reports on the progress of the projects that are funded by Cohesion policy. Each program that is funded is usually subject to regulations by the Commission, for example the compulsion to use official symbols and logos of the EU in public documents.

### 2.1.3. Research on Cohesion Policy evaluation

Since the emergence of the outcome orientated paradigm of Cohesion policy, also the academia became interested in studying and evaluating the effectiveness of regional investments. This literature will be reviewed in the following section. Generally the literature can be classified in two categories: scholars that studied regional context and the effect of various local government and economic structures on Cohesion policy spending, and literature that aimed at assessing the net impact of money that has been invested in European regions. (Crescenzi & Giua 2017)

Besides the growing number of publications from both working professionals and academics, no consensus has been reached on whether Cohesion policy spending contributes to the economic and social cohesion of European regions. (Bachtler, Begg, Charles, & Polverari, 2016) A number of studies could show that Cohesion Policy spending contributed both to growth of regional economies and the reduction of regional Gini-coefficients. (Fiaschi, Lavezzi, & Parenti, 2018; Rosik, Stepaniak, & Komornicki, 2017) Especially concerning accessibilities of regions, there is a number of evidence that Cohesion policy spending improved regional and national infrastructures and made remote regions more accessible. (Pontarollo, 2017)

Besides these results, others reinforced the importance of regional contexts for an effective regional policy. There has been some authors who stressed that the effectiveness of Cohesion policy depends very much on contextual factors, and when some are not in place, Cohesion policy spending can have no or even negative effects on regional economic situations. (Bachtrögler, Fratesi, & Perucca, 2019) Others argued that especially the RIS3-reform and its ex-ante conditionalities would create much confusion and hamper the streamlining between various economic policies in the EU. Also it has been criticized that on the one side, local actors have general little knowledge on smart specialization and the Commission on the other hand provides an only vague and ambiguous

definition of the concept while still making it a requirement for applying for funding. (Bachtler et al., 2016) The strong local responsibility for applying for Cohesion policy support has led some to argue that regional policies mainly benefit wealthier regions since underdeveloped regions usually also lack the institutional environment needed for successful planning and implementing funding from the EU. (Kroll, 2017; Medve-Blaint, 2017)

One common theme that all these evaluations have in common is however, that they evaluation criteria are overwhelmingly economic. Studies almost exclusively focused on either whether the Cohesion policy interventions lead to economic effects in the beneficiary regions, or whether administrative costs of implementing Cohesion policy instruments are higher than the economic benefits. There is only a small although growing number of studies that started to investigate whether European cohesion policy spending also impacts the peoples' identities, which is the aim of this thesis. Some of them join the evaluation scholars and try to evaluate the success of Cohesion policy in creating a European identity, sometimes even at order from the European Commission to improve Cohesion policy interventions (Aiello, Brasili, & Reverberi, 2018; Borz et al., 2018; Pegan et al., 2018). New types of research consortia started to break out of traditional lines of academic research, by employing both consultancy firms specialized on policy evaluation and traditional academic professionals together. Others approach the subject from a more academic perspective trying to contribute to explaining the phenomena of European identity. (Osterloh, 2011; Verhaegen et al., 2014) The results of this new trend of thinking about Cohesion policy is more elaborately discussed in section 2.3.3., but to foreshadow the discussion: the research community is yet far from reaching consensus on the EU Cohesion policy's impact on European identity.

To sum it up, evaluation studies on Cohesion policy focused on the *economic impact* of investments, and the role of *regional context* in policy implementation. The research community has reached *no consensus* yet on whether Cohesion policy is a good instrument for fostering regional economic development, and has only recently started to acknowledge, that Cohesion policy might influence *European identity*.

## 2.2. European Identity

The most important concept of the thesis is that of European identity, since it is the phenomenon to be explained by the analysis, or in other words: the dependent variable. It is however not at all an easy concept to define, and researchers have put forward various concepts and ideas of European identity. This section aims at giving an overview over these ideas. It first discusses the principle concept of a social identity and continues with looking at the problematic of multiple territorial identities. Afterwards, some factors that have an influence on European identity on macro- and micro levels are discussed, especially highlighting the role of Cohesion policies. It finishes with problematizing different measurement strategies of European identity.

Research on European Identity has been an integral part of European Studies – a discipline that emerged together with the rise of the European Union and the following Europeanization of the European continent. (Haas, 1958) In the early age of the EU, these studies on European identity have focused on the political elites' identity with Europe. Early empirical studies on EU identity thus always had bureaucrats and politicians as research objects. With the European Parliament gaining more influence and the general EU affairs receiving greater salience due to forthcoming political integration, the studies of European identity started to focus on the mass public and the citizens' identification with Europe. (Pollack, 1998)

Since then, European identity has been approached by many disciplines with numerous methodological, conceptual and theoretical approaches. Despite the variety of studies and their conclusions, the scientific community seemed to agree on some basic features and processes of European identity. A comprehensive review of European identity studies seems neither useful nor feasible in the framework of this thesis. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to summarize those core themes of European identity on which most researchers agree on, and thereby give an overview of the current state of European identity research. In the end of this chapter, there shall be a general understanding of some of the concepts and characteristics of European Identity, that will help in operationalizing the concept in the empirical part of the paper.

### 2.2.1. Social Identity

To understand the concept of European identity, it is worth to take a look at social identity studies, since European identity is one manifestation of such social identity. (Fligstein, Polykova, & Sandholtz, 2012) Social or collective identities refer to the phenomena that an individual feels

solidarity with or belonging to a group of individuals. In that sense, the group members accept, or at least are able to identify, some common traits that are of defining nature of the group. (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) There can be very different kinds of traits that serve as defining characteristics for social groups, but some of the most common traits are ethnicity, language, citizenship, age, social class, religion or blood relationships. (Smith, 1992) Of great importance are group boundaries for social identities. For as there is a collective “we”-feeling, there must also be a conceptualization of who are “they”. It must be possible for the group members to define who is in the group and who is outside the group. (Cederman, 2001) While this definition will never be coherent among the group members, the need for group boundaries is an essential part of identity formation.

In the case of European identity, the group boundaries are very fluctuant and blurry, since it is not at all clear who can consider themselves as ‘European’ and who not. Group boundaries can be geographical borders. In Europe however, this is very complicated: is everyone European who lives on the European subcontinent? Are citizens of the Russian city Yekaterinburg, which lies just 40km east of the artificial border between the Asian and European continent not European, while the city Perm, which is located just on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains is called the most eastern metropolis of Europe? Quite many would intuitively argue, that Russia would not at all belong to Europe, because it is not a member state of the European Union. This would define the group boundaries on a political dimension. But again, this definition is everything but unequivocal. Are citizens of Switzerland or Norway Europeans? Afterall, Switzerland is located in the very heart of Europe, but is not a member state of the EU. What happens, if the United Kingdom leaves the EU? Are all citizens of the UK then suddenly not Europeans anymore?

Another possibility to define group boundaries are shared values and cultural roots, which would allow countries like the UK or Switzerland to be called European while excluding Russia, referring to different cultural histories that created different norms, values and practices. This however brings the researcher in the awkward position to define what the common shared European culture and values are, which is certainly hardly feasible if not impossible to achieve. To put it in a nutshell: one cannot simply define what is the content of the feeling of ‘Europeanness’. Nevertheless, this problem was addressed by quite some studies which will be discussed in the following section. Important terms are those of the identification ‘object’ and the identification ‘subject’. This will become especially important in the next section, where different notions of identity with the EU or Europe will be discussed.



Of great importance for conceptualizing collective identity are *the cognitive, affective* and *evaluative* dimension of identity, which are acknowledged and used by many scholars that study European identity. (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017). The *cognitive* dimension refers to the knowledge of individuals of belonging to the group and whether they are able to identify themselves as a group member. The *affective* dimension describes the feeling of the identification subject to the identification object. The content of the identification is described by the *evaluative* dimension. The most prominent categorization of the evaluative dimension of identity in the European context is the civic/ethnic categories of identification contents.

*Civic* or cultural contents of identification consist of either shared historical experiences, shared culture and rituals or similar values, rights or principle understanding of how the society should be organized. Hence, civic contents of identity can be ideas such as parliamentarism, humanism or the rule of law. The *ethnic* category of identity contents is more exclusive in nature. They might refer to a common ethnicity, religion or heritage. Civic identities are more associated with openness and inclusiveness. Since an individual is able to adopt and obey to the shared values and cultures, the individual may be accepted as a group member. In ethnic identities, this is much more difficult since new members can often only be born into the group, leaving out the possibility of becoming a member of the group. (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010) In the European context it seems hard to construct ethnic contents of a common identity, since there is a great variety of peoples living on the European continent. Indeed, many scholars acknowledged the importance of the civic component of a European identity. Smith (1992) for example describes European identity as a 'family of cultures', highly emphasising the civic component of European identification, and Habermas (2012) strongly advocated for the importance of a cultural patriotism in Europe. The norms and values are therefore expected to play a much more important role in forming a European identity, then for example skin colour or language do. This is also supported by some empirical research findings. (Agirdag, Phalet, & van Houtte, 2016; Bail, 2008)

Some findings also suggest that there are elements of ethnic European identity hold by a minority of Europeans. These elements mainly refer to a common historical heritage and Christian and occidental traditions. (Bruter, 2003b) It is also argued, that this ethnic-European identity is mainly constructed against outgroups such as Muslims and immigrants from North-Africa and the Middle-East and is especially prominent among proponents of far right-wing of political ideologies. Thus in

these cases, European identity is mainly created through defining who is not European (Fligstein et al., 2012).

In a nutshell, the *group boundaries* of the social group of Europeans are very hard to define. The content of European identity has been described to mainly of a *civic* nature, with cultural elements being the most important contents of European identity.

### 2.2.2. Multiple Territorial Identities

When thinking about territorial identities as one special form of social identity, one will very quickly arrive at a principle dilemma of identity studies: no human has one single identity. In society, there are always many sources of identification with very different characteristics. But even considering territorial entities, it is very unlikely that one person only identifies with one single entity. People always are inhabitants of their municipalities, their regions, their countries, their continents and even the planet earth. Thus, when discussing European identity, one should always pay attention to identifications with other territorial entities. There are several models of how different sources of identification might interact.

A very simple way of thinking identity configuration is to theorize identities as separate from each other. This *cross-cutting model* of identity can work well with different dimensions of identity sources. (Mendez & Bachtler, 2017) For example, one may identify oneself as christian Finnish academic. The identity sources of religion, nation state and social class don't necessarily interact with each other. In the case of multiple territorial identities, this seems implausible, since barley anyone would describe herself as to be a member of only one specific regional group.

A model, that accounts for multiple sources of identification of the same dimension is the *nested model*, that follows the metaphor of the Russian doll 'Matuschka'. It describes the relationship of national and European identity as something which resembles concentric circles. It assumes that people have strong and narrow regional and national identities, on top of which is added the layer of European identity. Every member of a small community is also member of a larger community. (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004)

Furthermore, especially in the case of European identity, the so-called '*marble cake*'-model has been introduced. The principle argument is, that national and European identity cannot be separated from each other. (Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001) The European identity is an inherent part of the

national identity; therefore, a German citizen cannot think of herself as German and non-European. The Europeanness is an integral characterization of her Germanness.

There is no solid agreement on which model would describe the European identity most accurately. There are however strong empirical findings, that European and national identities are not thought as separate concepts. (Risse, 2003) Mummendey and Waldzus (2004) argue, that the dual conception of national and European identity is not only empirically shown, but also desirably in order to create a “Europe of the Fatherlands” in which nationals of different countries can live together in a united Europe. This resembles the ‘Matuschka-model’ of European identity. Some empirical evidence also hints at a distinction between identification with the European Union – e.g. the European citizenship and the EU institutions – and a more geographical European identity. This is an interesting insight, since it makes it possible that the EU can have an impact and manipulate the citizens’ identification with the EU (Breakwell, 2004) – and thereby lies the basis for the arguments in this paper.

To sum it up, multiple territorial identities can be separated from each other, they can be thought of layers adding on top of each other or as intertwined with each other.

### 2.2.3. Explanatory factors for European Identity

The following section will give an overview of some of the most important explanatory factors of European identity. Finding explanatory factors for European identity refers to finding out components, that influence the individual or collective level of European identity. The literature generally distinguishes between micro- and macro-level factors that have an effect on European identity. (Mendez & Bachtler, 2017) At the end of the discussion of those factors, this section will elaborate specifically on the role of Cohesion policy in forming a European identity and therewith develop the argument that will be tested during the analysis of Eurobarometer data in this thesis.

#### *Individual level explanations*

Sanders, Bellucci, Toka, and Torcal (2012) categorise the literature on European identity into four basic theoretical assumptions: the cognitive mobilization, instrumental rationality, affective and identarian perspectives and political mobilization theories.

In the early stage of European studies, European identity was generally seen as a positive attitude towards the EU and EU integration. Inglehart (1970) developed the famous model of *cognitive*

*mobilization*. He argued that cognitive mobilization is necessary to interpret information about a given political community. This requires elevated level of education, since only if the person is intellectually capable of understanding a political process, she can develop a sense of identity with it. Considering, that the EU institutions have a relatively indirect and abstract impact on the citizens' life, the effect of education is even higher compared with attitudes to national governments. Based on data from opinion surveys in France, Italy, West Germany and Great Britain, Inglehart saw his hypotheses of cognitive mobilization confirmed. (Inglehart, 1970) Even though the salience of European affairs have been grown immensely since then and the impact of EU policies are nowadays much more direct than in the 1970s, education still plays an important role in explaining EU identity. Sanders et al. (2012) confirmed the albeit moderate role of education and added to it the role of age, arguing that the social class with the strongest EU identification were young students.

*Instrumental rationality* approaches to European identity describe the identity process as a cost-benefit calculation of the EU membership and the performance of the EU. Since the EU was in the beginning (and still is) a project that focuses on economic development and welfare creation, citizens should judge the EU on the basis of economic arguments. (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993) The individual economic situation should thus be an important factor in explaining European identity. It has been argued, that individuals with a better economic situation are more likely to have positive feelings towards the EU. (Clements, 2011) A positive European identity is therefore rather a function of economic advantages that the individual had or imagines experiencing in the future. The literature distinguishes between actual and perceived economic benefits, which is more of a measurement discussion, but also has theoretical consequences. (McLaren, 2007) This has led to the critic, that the EU only benefits the upper social class, since it is them who have the most personal benefits from European integration. While this point of criticism assumes, that the EU only benefits the upper social class, it is widely assumed that in general the upper spectrum of society has a stronger identification with the EU as the lower spectrum. (Roose, 2013)

In contrast to rational theories, *affective* and *identarian* perspectives see European identity a result of an emotional process. It does not pay much attention to the EU as a political project, but rather to social and emotional parts of European identity. An important factor in the identity formation process of affective and identarian perspectives are transnational contacts. The 'Erasmus-effect' was object to some research that showed, that students or young professionals, who spent time in another European country were much more likely to develop a sense of European identity. There is

indeed a considerable amount of empirical evidence, that having transnational contacts through spending time abroad has an considerable positive impact on the formation of European identity. (Mitchell, 2012, 2015)

*Political mobilization* theories often argued that the existence of a strong national or regional identity system may have a hampering effect on European identity. (Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001) Some studies could present evidence for this argument, theorizing national identity as a counterpart of European identity. Sanders et al. (2012) show that the level of European identification varies considerably between member states. The very broad pattern that they describe is that the level of Identification is highest in the South and lower in the North of Europe, with eastern European member states having the lowest levels of Identification with the EU.

Also, the importance of regional attachment has been highlighted, although the direction of the effect was not as clear. Chacha (2013) for example argues, that it very much depends on whether EU policies are supportive and empowering regional authorities to develop and foster. Hooghe and Marks (2005) show that regional attachment can have a positive impact on European identity if the national elites are strongly divided over European issues.

To sum it up, it seems to be agreed that the national and regional attachments have considerable impact on European identity according to *political mobilization* theories. The nature and strength of the effect however seems to be dependent on national and regional contextual factors such as mass media, national and regional political elites and party cues. Other factors that have been discussed in the literature are education in the *cognitive mobilization* theories, considerations of personal benefits in *instrumental rationality* approaches, and transnational contacts in *affective* theories.

### *Macro-level explanations*

Macro-level explanations that help understanding European identity refer mainly to top-down processes. The focus lies on macro-level phenomena, that have an influence and might thereby also possibly manipulate an individuals' or groups' level and nature of European identity.

There are multiple ways of how institutions can translate identity to the citizens. First, there is the simple hypothesis of incremental socialization through frequent interaction. Already formulated by Deutsch (1953), the principle argument is that growing influence of European affairs will lead to more frequent contact of citizens with institutions of the EU. Over time, more frequent contact will

automatically create a sense of a European community. (Deutsch, 1953) More elaborately, Checkel (2005) describes this as a socialization process while differentiating between “type I” and “type II” socializations. In the first type, individuals are just aware of their membership and follow the rules and norms of the identification object without questioning the moral validity and desirability of the institution. In the second and deeper type of socialization, the institution causes an identity shift in the individual and changing their attitude and affection towards the identification object. (Checkel, 2005) Similarly but focusing more on the active role of institutions in identity formation, the socialisation through persuasion has been discussed. It refers to the active attempt of political elites or institutions to generate a common identity by using for example symbols, rituals or other collective narratives that frame a given group as a collective. (Risse-Kappen & ebrary, 2010)

One very famous attempt for such active identity creation was the introduction of a common currency, the Euro. The Euro bills and coins are full of European symbols, and while the coins do have national symbols, the bills only feature European symbols such as the European flag and a map of Europe. The common currency is interpreted as a key stone in building the picture of a united Europe. (Kaelberer, 2004) There is however also evidence, that usage of symbols may have a negative effect on European identity. In experimental research designs, it could also be shown that EU-symbols, when not presented in context, might be received as a threat. EU-symbols might threaten national cultures and identities, which then causes negative association with EU symbolic. (Patrikios & Cram, 2016)

Since in this paper attempts to find out the relationship between Cohesion policy investments and European identity, the next part will focus on theoretical arguments for describing this relationship. The role of cohesion policy in the formation of European identity has been of growing attention to a number of publications. (Capello, 2018; Chacha, 2013; Chalmers & Dellmuth, 2015; Medeiros, 2017; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017; Osterloh, 2011; Pegan et al., 2018; Verhaegen et al., 2014)

Besides the problem of finding out whether there is such an effect at all, the literature also discussed some causal mechanisms on how cohesion policy can lead to a stronger European identification. The discussion distinguishes between three principle arguments that have been discussed: (1) the *economic utilitarian argument*, (2) the *awareness argument* and the (3) *regional argument*.

The *economic-utilitarian argument* goes in line with the instrumental rationality approaches for explaining individual-level European identity. With the only difference, that it considers EU cohesion

policy spending as the source of the cost-benefit calculations. This basically means, that people who live in regions with a high cohesion policy spending would consider the EU as a source of identity, because it contributes to the wellbeing of their everyday lives. Osterloh (2011) examined the influence of structural policy on public support of the EU. His quantitative analysis of Eurobarometer (EB) data showed that there is a positive impact of structural policy on a positive public opinion of the EU, however he argued that this influence is dependent on personal traits and especially awareness of cohesion policy. He looked at this relationship from a public opinion perspective, and not from an identity perspective, thus he described structural policy as a vote purchasing tool and not as a catalyst of European identity. (Osterloh, 2011)

Other studies attempted to entangle the nature of the impact of cohesion policies on a positive attitude towards European integration. (Chalmers & Dellmuth, 2015; Verhaegen et al., 2014) The results however are somehow indefinite. Chalmers and Dellmuth (2015) conclude that economic considerations are not the key factors for explaining public support of European integration. They argue that individual level factors (especially education) and European identification are more important for explaining public support for European integration policies. While Verhaegen et al. (2014) propose that European identity is independent from economic utilitarian considerations, they argue that economic utilitarian considerations are in fact key explanatory factors for both having a favorable opinion towards the EU and for developing a European identity. Their analysis shows evidence for the economic utilitarian argument, but they acknowledge that EU funds will most likely influence EU-identity only on a cognitive level, and not on an affective level (Verhaegen et al., 2014).

The *awareness argument* considers the awareness of cohesion policy as a transition factor for a positive effect on European identity. It therefore refers to Inglehart's theory of cognitive mobilization. Cohesion policy could only have an impact on European identity if people would be aware of the existence of such policy mechanisms. (Borz et al., 2018; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017) Thus, scholars supporting the awareness argument also stress the importance of an active communication strategy of cohesion policy intervention in order to create a stronger identification with the EU. In the latest large-scale survey on the relationship cohesion policy on European identity, Mendez and Bachtler (2017) found that the effect of Cohesion policy on European identity transmits over communication and awareness of cohesion policy interventions. If citizens know and experience the benefits to them personally or for their regions, the effect of CP is much higher than

when they don't know (ibid.). The novelty of this approach was the regional focus of the study, since most previous studies have used aggregated Eurobarometer data. This effect is argued to be overestimated by Pegan et al. (2018), who found in a qualitative focus group research design, that Cohesion policy is not effective in influencing citizens' identification with the EU. In interviews, people did not express that this relationship would exist (Pegan et al., 2018). However, this effect might play subconsciously, so that individuals could not express that there is such an effect. Also, the qualitative research design does not allow for generalizations.

One problem with the awareness argument is that of the independence of independent variables. It is very likely, that individuals with an already existing high level of identification are also more likely to be aware of European policies such as the regional funds. After all, the idea of cognitive mobilization is arguing exactly for this, that knowledge of the EU and identification with the EU are not independent from each other, but rather influencing each other. While Mendez & Bachtler (2017) acknowledge this problem theoretically, they provide empirical evidence for it to be unlikely that prior European identification is a predictor of awareness of Cohesion policy. They show that both perceived benefits of Cohesion policy funding and awareness of structural development funds are positively correlated with actual Cohesion policy funding per capita.

While it is correct to conclude that Cohesion policy spending has an influence on whether individuals are aware of the policies and perceive them as beneficial, it is difficult to exclude European identification as an explanatory factor of awareness of Cohesion policy. This would require a much more complex multiple regression analysis that can compare the effects of Cohesion policy spending and European identity on awareness of Cohesion policy. Correlation and causality are two very different things. While it is not the intent at this point to discredit the findings of Mendez & Bachtler (2017), the aim is simply to raise the point that there are theoretical arguments for European identity being a factor that influences awareness of European policies such as Cohesion policy.

The third line of argumentation considers regional attachments or identification as an important part in generating European identity through cohesion policy mechanisms. The *regional argument* very much highlights the importance of regional context for successful creation of European identity through Cohesion policy. When citizens have a high regional attachment, they would perceive policies, that empower local or regional authorities as something very positive. Especially if inhabitants of a region that has a strong longing for regional autonomy, the EU is often seen as the



institution that provides regional authorities with the means to pursue their own policies. In an empirical test, this effect of inclusive regional attachment has been approved. (Chacha, 2013) Furthermore, Capello (2018) argued for the importance of territorial identity for the success of Cohesion policy. In ideal cases, citizens with a very strong regional attachment have a perfect matching between private and public interests. When individuals have a high interest in contributing to fostering the local economy, they also have a strong interest in implementing Cohesion policies very efficiently. Their strong knowledge of the region combined with the longing to help the local or regional society could lead to a very efficient spending of cohesion policy money, which in turn would lead the citizens to develop a positive image of the EU, since the money from the EU is something very helpful for the region. (Capello, 2018)

#### 2.2.4. Measuring European identity

Aside from conceptualizing European identity, the literature on European identity has faced the problem with empirical evidence for European identity. Besides the academic discourse, this matter was strongly driven by the European Commission and its pan-national survey 'Eurobarometer'. The Eurobarometer is a European survey that repeatedly asks some sets of questions to all European citizens since 1974. (European Commission, 2019e) It also regularly includes some items on European identity, and the majority of studies on European Identity have used data from Eurobarometer surveys.

Sinnott (2006) distinguishes between two principle types of relationships that have been tested in major surveys: identification and proximity. The latter is usually measured with questions that ask for how close respondents feel to an entity, while identification is often measured with questions like "do you think yourself as...?", "do you feel attached to...?" or "do you belong to...?". Both of them are sometimes measured on a scale or on basis of ranking of different territorial entities. Sinnott (2006) also compares the strength of various items in terms of their correlation with a series of independent variables and concludes that measurements that ask for identification and provide a rating scale seem to be the most superior measurement tools. This so-called 'Moreno question' was initially developed for studying regional territorial identities in the autonomous regions of Catalan and Scotland.

The original wording was:

*“We are interested to know how people living in Scotland see themselves in terms of their nationality. Which of the statements on this card best describes how you regard yourself?” (Moreno, 2006)*

- 1. Scottish, not British*
- 2. More Scottish than British*
- 3. Equally Scottish and British*
- 4. More British than Scottish*
- 5. British, not Scottish.*

Since then it has been often modified and used widely in many European surveys, and also was the basis of many studies on European integration. (Borz et al., 2018) It compares the respective national identity to the European identity.

Being the largest provider of data for European identity research, it has been also criticized that the Commission would try to influence the questions in order to produce results that are seen as desirable on the eyes of the Commission. The critics argue, that Eurobarometer is not only a tool for providing information but rather to manipulate the discourse on European issues in favour of the European institutions. (Nissen, 2014) Besides the political criticism, there are also conceptual problems with measuring European identity. In fact, conceptually, what defines a person’s identity can never be compared to another persons’ identity, because it is the individual who defines the identity. Any general definition of identity is by nature an externally forced concept that is different from an individuals’ definition of their self-identification. (Bruter, 2003a)

The dilemma that the research community faces, is whether the formulated question measures the variable that is intended to measure. What citizens mean when they answer a question of a survey remains inaccessible for the researcher. This is not a problem only associated with European identity measurements but of course a fundamental problem of quantitative methods of social sciences. The complexity of identity and the heterogeneity of the European population however aggravates this problem tremendously in this area. Also the multilingual context of Europe leads to translation problems and misunderstandings due to unprecise and ambiguous wordings and formulation in the different national languages. (Mendez & Bachtler, 2017)

Further criticism has been raised on the assumed conflict between European and national identity. As discussed earlier, European identity does not necessarily negatively influence national identity, but that it is rather complementary to it. Duchesne and Frogner (2008) argue that the relationship

between national and European identity is very complex and depends for instance on election campaigns for European elections and salience of certain political debates (especially immigration).

Adding to the critics, the differentiation between 'national and European' and 'European and national' answer categories was discussed. It is questionable that the second answer category would be interpreted as a higher degree of identification as the first answer category. Also, since in Eurobarometer Surveys, the phrasing was "*In the near future, do you see yourself as...*" there were some problems with the formulation. The phrase "in the near future" was often interpreted as growing influence of the EU in the future and not the self-created European identification. (Bruter, 2008) One way to tackle this, is to conceptualize European identity as a latent variable. Aiello, Brasili, Calia, and Monasterolo (2018) created a quite sophisticated model that combines a range of indicators for the latent variable of European identity.

In response to this critic of weak measurements of Eurobarometer survey and the conceptual dilemma with measuring European identity, some studies suggested qualitative approaches to study European identity. (Armbruster, Rollo, & Meinhof, 2003; Maier & Rittberger, 2008; Pegan et al., 2018) Interestingly, studies that employ qualitative research designs often conclude that European identity is much more complex and that the level of identification with Europe is much lower than suggested by results of quantitative surveys. (Armbruster et al., 2003; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017) However Cram (2012) stressed the salience of implicit identification, that would not be measured by traditional survey items which focus on explicit identity. Therefore she argues that quantitative research methods generally underestimate the level of European identity. (Cram, 2012) This mixed result therefore does not allow any conclusion of whether quantitative methods are more precise on generating evidence for European identity. The well-known strengths and shortcomings of both qualitative and quantitative research designs also apply to the field of European identity and it can hardly be argued that one method would be in all research questions superior to the other. It rather depends on the context and aim of the study.

### 2.3. Hypothesis

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of Cohesion policy on European identity. Hence it aims both at finding reasons for the collective formation of European identity and evaluating the effect of Cohesion policy. By doing so, this study will follow the *economic-utilitarian argument*, which has been developed by Osterloh (2011) and Verhaegen et al. (2014). The general logic of the

economic-utilitarian argument is, that citizens need to recognize a tangible added value to their quality of life in order to appreciate the European Union. (Mendez & Bachtler, 2017; Osterloh, 2011; Verhaegen et al., 2014) It provides a theoretical causal mechanism on why Cohesion policy investments would impact the citizens identity with the EU.

*The awareness argument* put forward by Borz et al. (2018) has been problematized above and therefore does not seem to provide a good theoretical framework for explaining the influence of Cohesion policy on European identity. Besides bearing the danger of a circular causality, the awareness argument is trying to explain how citizens perceive regional investments of the EU, and not how those investments influence their attitude or identity with the EU. It thus has a slightly different perspective as the research questions in this paper.

*The regional argument* might provide good explanations for individual regional effects; however, it does not seem to be adequate for explaining the effect on a macro scale. It very much focuses on the regional contexts of Cohesion policy. (Capello, 2018; Chacha, 2013) If regional contexts influence the effect of Cohesion policy on European identity, it might be difficult to judge whether there is a general impact on a macro level. One could of course criticize that such an effect is not at all generalizable and is different in different regions, but then one would neglect any economic-utilitarian considerations.

The approach of this thesis is to somehow balance between finding general effects and regional contexts. To acknowledge the importance of regional context, this study will examine this effect on a regional level. This will allow in the end to recognize regional variability of the effect and possibly even find reasons for regional variations. The two hypotheses for the empirical analysis reflect both the economic-utilitarian and the regional argument.

*H1: Cohesion policy spending has a positive impact on the regional collective identification with the EU*

*H2: The effect of Cohesion policy on European identity will vary between different regions.*

### 3. Research Design

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The following section will discuss the research strategy for the empirical analysis. For providing evidence for the above formulated hypothesis, this chapter will develop a quantitative research design. The hypotheses postulate a general effect of Cohesion policy on European identity, which requires data, that have statistical significance and allow some sort of generalization. In any social science research, generalization of results should be done very cautiously. There are always conceptual and empirical problems that should be kept in mind when attempting any sort of generalizations. Nevertheless, this analysis is designed in order to minimize and control such problems. The created dataset combines indicators from European identity based on Eurobarometer surveys, and economic indicators of Cohesion policy spending and Gross domestic products. Since it is argued, that the effect will differ between regions, all data were collected on a regional level. The source for economic data of Cohesion policy spending is the European Commission (2018) and for regional GDP is Eurostat (2018).

In order to account for the gradual nature of the effect, the dataset includes measurements of a longer period of time. Each variable was measured annually from 2000 to 2014. This period is chosen for a number of reasons: it includes two funding periods (2000-2006 and 2007-2013). These periods mark a growing influence of Cohesion policy: the place-based reform introduced in 2007 aimed at making Cohesion policy spending more efficient and effective by including local actors in the planning and implementation process. In addition to that, the eastern enlargement of the EU starting in the early 2000s caused a steady rise of Cohesion policy budget and also concentrated the money flow to the east. This means that the spending per capita in eastern European countries became extremely high which should have a greater effect on European identity. Nonetheless, the availability of data restricted the possible periods to the said time frame of the years 2000-2014.

The main analytical tool will be a multilevel model regression analysis with a repeated measurement random-slope/random-intercept regression model with three levels. The following chapter begins with discussing the operationalization of the variables. Since the different sources of data did not have coherent regional codes, one section will be devoted to explaining the strategy of merging the regions into one coherent regional structure followed by a brief description of the structure of the

dataset. It will continue with describing the variables and finally present the analytical strategy for the final data analysis.

### 3.1. Operationalization

#### 3.1.1. European identity indicator

For a research project that needs data on European identity over a longer period of time and a sufficient sample size for statistical analysis and with no financial resources, there is generally no choice but to use Eurobarometer data. There are two general items that regularly measure levels of European identity. The first asks for attachments for territorial entities such as city, town, region, country, Europe or the European Union. The answer scales range from 1 – very attached to 4 – not at all attached. Figure 2 shows the mean value of this item per country for the years 2000-2014. Unfortunately, the formulation of the question was sometimes changed, and some years of the time period of interest are missing. While values for 2001 and 2002 are missing, in the years 2000, 2005

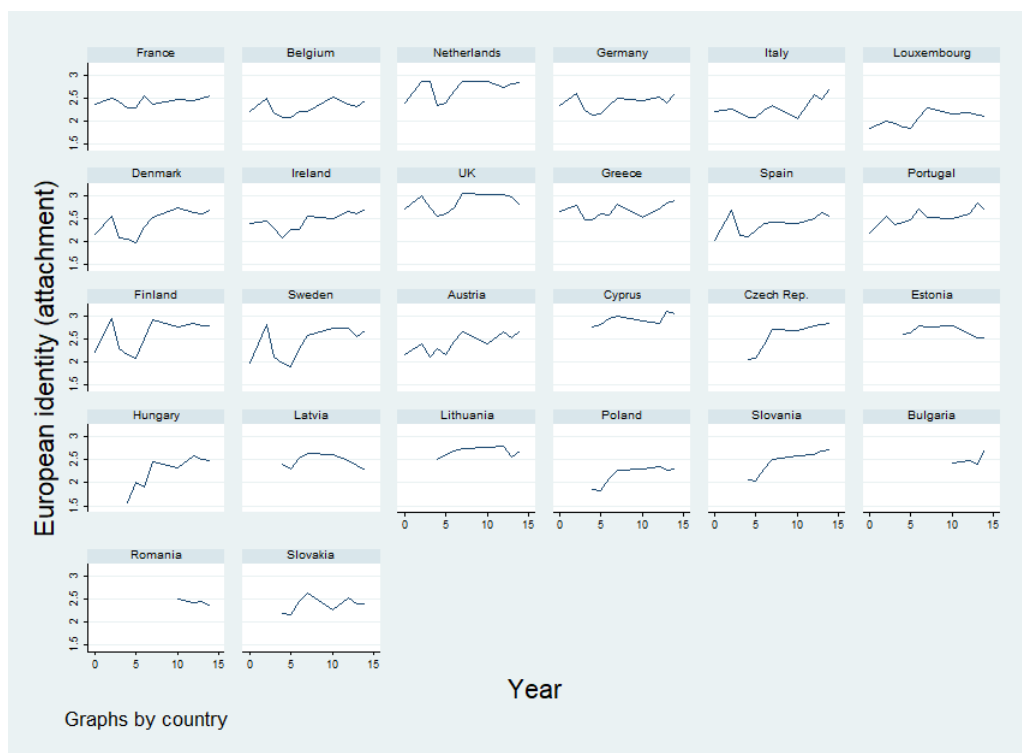


Figure 2: mean values of European identity (attachment) per country. Data source: Eurobarometer as in 8.1.

and 2006, the question was for the attachment to *Europe* and not the *EU*. When looking at the graph, the mean values are clearly higher during the years when the question was asking for the citizens' attachment with Europe. This indicates that citizens differ between Europe and the EU, and that they tend to have a higher attachment with the first. This is not as much surprising, as the EU has more enemies than the term 'Europe'. However, this makes the item useless for the present analysis, as it does not provide a consistent measure of levels of European identity.

Luckily, there is another item that has been asked on a regular basis: the famous Moreno-question, which has been already discussed above (see 2.2.4.). This will be the measurement of European identity in the following study. The usage of the Moreno-question has been also highly controversial. Even though the scientific community is divided on the issue of the validity of the Moreno-question, it is still used in a variety of recent studies on European identity. (Fligstein et al., 2012; Mendez & Bachtler, 2017; Roose, 2013) While Aiello, Brasili, and Reverberi (2018) explicitly forgo the Moreno question as measurement because of the validity problems, they do acknowledge that by not using Eurobarometer data, they are not able to analyse different points in time. (Aiello, Brasili, & Reverberi, 2018).

The great advantage of Eurobarometer data is, that it allows comparing results over countries and over time. (Hobolt & Vries, 2016) The usage of the Moreno-question in this thesis is therefore justified by weighing the advantages of data availability and comparability over time and countries against the conceptual shortcomings that the wording of the question bears. As other scholars continue to use the item in their studies, it seems that some authors came to the same conclusion. The wording of the question used in Eurobarometer data goes:

*In the near future, do you see yourself as...?*

- 1 [NATIONALITY] only
- 2 [NATIONALITY] and European
- 3 European and [NATIONALITY]
- 4 European only
- 5 Don't know
- 6 none (the category was only introduced after 2010)

One could pose the same criticism to the Moreno-question as was discussed above: It is not explicitly asked, whether the respondents would feel as a citizen of the EU, but if they feel European. As said earlier, Europe and the EU are quite different concepts, and Cohesion policy is a policy instrument

of the latter, and therefore it is unlikely that it would influence the identification with Europe. However, hearing the word European in context with the nationality frames the word European very much as a term describing European citizenship. In fact, other, more explicit formulations such as “do you feel as a citizen of the EU or of [NATIONALITY]?” would more likely lead to confusion and misunderstandings. Questions in large surveys, especially in multilingual surveys should always aim at formulating the question as efficient as possible. Not least is the title of the item in each Eurobarometer survey “European citizenship – feeling”. Because of this and since the first category that is mentioned is the nationality, the term European is likely to be understood as in the sense of being a citizen of the EU and not as an inhabitant of the European continent. Therefore, it is considered to measure the respondents’ identification with the EU.

The lowest unit of analysis in this study is the region, and not the individual. Hence, the variable was recoded into 5 variables, each providing the share of respondents who chose a respective category. The variable “National identity” reports the share of respondents that chose answer category 1 in region X, the variable “European identity” reports the share of respondents that chose answer category 2 in region X and so forth. The fact, that the category “none” was introduced after 2010

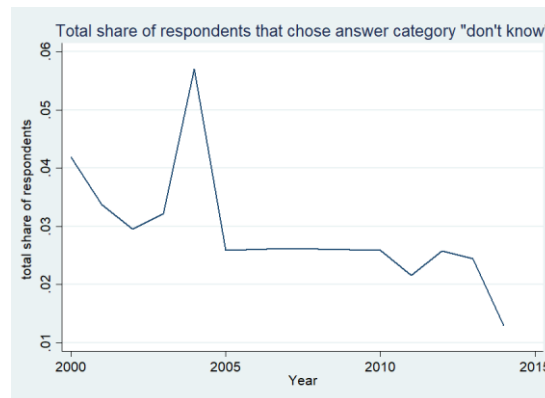


Figure 3: total share of respondents with answer category "don't know".  
Data source: Eurobarometer as in 8.1.

might constitute a problem. While this bears the risk of a bias, it should however be noted that the share of respondents for the category “don’t know” did decline when the category “none” was introduced (see figure 3). This provides hints that the introduction of the category “none” mainly was to the detriment of the category “don’t know”. This of course does not prove anything, because a decline of respondents that answered with “don’t know” can have many reasons. If a respondent before 2010 however was missing the category “none”, it is rather likely that s/he would choose “don’t know” than any other category. Therefore, it is not considered a major problem in the



following study. To acknowledge the criticism that it might be hard to differentiate between the order of the categories, i.e. that answer category 3 would represent a stronger affiliation with the nation than category 4, both categories were added into the variable “mixed identity”. Thus, the variable “mixed identity” provides the share of respondents that either chose answer category 3 or 4 in region X.

To generate a dataset that covers a wider range of time, a number of Eurobarometer surveys were combined into one set of data. This is as said to be the great advantage of Eurobarometer, since the same question was repeatedly asked, this kind of combination of different surveys into one dataset is possible. Unfortunately, the period from 2000-2014 that is under investigation lacks three years, in which the particular question was not asked: 2006, 2008 and 2009 are treated as missing values.<sup>1</sup> In Eurobarometer surveys, each national sample has almost the same size (n=1000). To correct for the fact, that each country contributes different shares to the European population, a post-stratification weight is provided that adjusts each national sample to the actual share of the European population. This so-called population size weights are also implemented in this analysis.

### 3.1.2. Regional Economic Indicators and Cohesion Policy spending

The two important independent variables in this analysis are indicators for Cohesion policy spending and gross domestic products on a regional level. The data for Cohesion policy spending is provided by the European Commission, Directorate General Regional Policy (European Commission, 2018).

Measuring the expenditure of Cohesion policy funding is very complex. It has been criticized that many studies use undifferentiated terms such as payments, expenditure or reimbursement. (Lo Piano, Chifari, & Saltelli, 2017) The core problem is, that the money flow goes from the Commission to the member states, who distribute it internally to regional actors, who then finally pay the money to the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries can be very different, ranging from private companies to nongovernmental organisations. While the commission publishes data on when and to whom they send money under Cohesion policy funds, there is no systematic data on when and where exactly this money is spent. For the analysis however, this information is of great importance. Cohesion policy funds can only have an impact on European identity, when it is actually spent on projects that

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<sup>1</sup> The following Eurobarometer waves were used: 54.1, 56.2, 58.1, 60.1, 62.0, 64.2, 67.1, 73.4, 76.4, 77.3, 79.3, 82.3. Full bibliographic references are found under 8.1.

benefit the citizens in the regions, and not when it is just transferred by the commission to the member states.

To tackle this problem, the Commission provides a model for regional Cohesion policy expenditure. This model is based on simulations of expenditure patterns in the member states and regions.<sup>2</sup> Using this model as an indicator of Cohesion policy expenditure seems to be more accurate than just using the payments made by the Commission, and thus it constitutes the indicator for the independent variable of Cohesion policy expenditure in this study. It includes the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). Together, these three Funds make up the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The ESIF also include the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). While the ERDF and ESF do not have regional specific regulations, the other three Funds are subject to certain regional regulations, thus not every region or member state receives funding from the CF, EMFF or the EAFRD. The EMFF and EAFRD are designed to target regions with large agriculture or fisheries industries and as such they are meant to support the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) of the EU. They provide different financial instruments than the CAP, since the beneficiaries of the EMFF or EAFRD are usually not farmers or fisheries industries, but other organizations that support the industries through indirect actions such as infrastructure or knowledge provision.

The Cohesion Fund on the contrary is designed to target member states, whose gross national income is below 90% of the EU average. (European Commission, 2019b) While having similar goals than the ERDF and the ESF, the CF is designed to support especially poor regions. Therefore, it is argued, that the aim of EAFRD and the EMFF are fundamentally different from the ESF, CF and ERDF, which justifies the choice of only taking these three funds into account in the following analysis. Article 36 of the Common Provisions Regulation of the ESIF even allows a common planning of actions under the ESF, ERDF and CF in the framework of the Integrated Territorial Investments (European Parliament and European Council, 2013)

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<sup>2</sup> For further details on the statistical and mathematical techniques used in this model, see Lo Piano et al. (2017)

There are several reasons for including the regional GDP as a control variable. First, the regional economic situations are part of the reasons for deciding the budgets of Cohesion policy. Thus, for an unbiased result, the regional GDP should be controlled. Another reason is the size of the effect. One could expect, that spending the same amount of money in a region with a lower regional GDP has a greater impact and a greater visibility than in a region with a higher regional GDP. The purchasing power is expected to be different in regions with different GDPs, thus one can achieve more with the same amount of money in low-GDP regions. The source of data is EUROSTAT for both regional GDP and regional population data, in order to generate the indicator GDP per capita.

### 3.1.3. Modelling European Regions: NUTS2.1.-level Regions

As said earlier, the unit of analysis are the NUTS2-level regions of the EU and not the nation states. The universe of regions under consideration consists of 26 member states of the EU. The countries Malta and Croatia were excluded. The latter because of its only recent accession to the EU, and Malta because of the lack of Eurobarometer data. The problem is however, that European countries don't have a consistent structure of regions. The national administrative systems range from federal to centralist states with various characteristics, which makes hard to create a consistent set of regions over time and among member states. In some countries, regions are not an administrative unit with no regional authorities or similar institutions.

Because of this heterogeneity of national administrative systems in the EU member states, the EU introduced the *Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics* (French: *Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques*, short: NUTS). While NUTS was only formally adopted through the Regulation 1059/2003 of the European Council and the European Parliament, it has been developed already in the 1990s and has been used by statistical agencies of the EU ever since.

The purpose of NUTS is twofold: first it serves as a statistical tool to generate comparable data on different regional levels to inform policy makers and civil servants. But secondly, it was explicitly created to plan and target interventions under the European structural funds. (Eurostat, 2015) For harmonizing the European regions, Eurostat uses three fundamental principles: first, they are strictly hierarchic in nature with three levels. NUTS1-level refers to the highest level, which is divided in NUTS2-level regions which are further divided in NUTS3-level regions. That means a given NUTS2-level region can always be defined by the aggregation of its constituting NUTS3-level regions. The second principle is the priority for existing administrative regions, i.e. NUTS-regions should represent already existing administrative units. But as mentioned, those units not always exist in all member states. In these cases, NUTS-

categorization should take “*geographical, socioeconomic, historical, cultural or environmental circumstances into consideration.*” (Eurostat, 2015: p. 6) The resulting regions, that do not represent existing regional administrative units are called “Non-administrative regions” and sometimes “statistical regions”. Furthermore, NUTS-regions are defined by some minimum and maximum populations in order to account for their hierarchic structure:

Level	Minimum	Maximum
NUTS 1	3 million	7 million
NUTS 2	800 000	3 million
NUTS 3	150 000	800 000

Table 1: Population sizes of NUTS-regions. Source: Eurostat 2015, p. 6

The challenge that arose while combining three sources of data in this thesis was to establish a consistent set of regional differentiation. While measurements of regional GDPs and historical payments of Cohesion policy funds were relatively consistent in their regional categorization, Eurobarometer unfortunately don’t provide coherent regional codes. The aim of the analysis is to retrace the regional level, on which Regional policies are planned and implemented. According to article 99 of the Regulation 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and European Council (2013), the level of planning should be the NUTS2-level, if otherwise agreed. Thus, the NUTS2-level of regions seems to be the most appropriate for the analysis.

In some countries however, for example Germany or the United Kingdom, Eurobarometer only provides bigger territorial entities in the waves. Therefore, the regions in this study do not solely refer to the NUTS2-level. The changes over time and between sources of data made it impossible to aggregate all data on the NUTS2-level. Rather, the data were aggregated always to the smallest possible entity, but no smaller than NUTS2-level. This means that some statistical regions in the following analysis are larger than the official NUTS2-level or may refer to older NUTS2-level structures that were used in older Eurobarometer data. In the Baltic states and Luxembourg, it was not possible to trace regions within the countries, thus the nation states are the smallest entity. In Sweden the regionalized data differed in such ways, that the smallest possible regions were the three big urban regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, while the whole rest of Sweden had to be coded as one single region. Similar problematic were Denmark and Ireland, in which only three and two regions could be generated respectively. However, it should be noted, that also the planning of regional policy does don’t solely represent the NUTS2-level. There is no public

documentation on the decisions and agreements between the EU and the individual member states, what regional level should be used for planning and implementing regional policies. But in the cases of UK and Germany and the Baltic countries, the operational programmes for regional policies are formulated on NUTS1-level regions, which are also represented in this analysis. (European Commission, 2019f) As a result, this paper considers only 196 regions, which compares to 281 regions that are classified by the EU as NUTS2-level regions (EUROSTAT 2015). The full list of regions used in this analysis is given in the Annex.

### 3.2. The Dataset

Before starting the analysis, this section’s aim is to introduce the dataset and give some descriptive overview of the three variables European identity, Cohesion policy spending and regional GDP. The unit of analysis are the regions (laid out in the Annex). Each variable was measured yearly in the period from 2000 – 2014.

#### 3.2.1. Dependent Variable: European Identity

The ordinal nature of the variable required to generate three dependent variables: the share of respondents with an only national identity, with a mixed identity, and with an only European identity. Table 2 shows the basic distribution of the three variables. The minimum and maximum value are between estimators, so they report the minimum and maximum values of means within one region over time.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>St. dev.</i>	<i>Overall mean</i>
<i>National identity</i>	0.16	0.73	0.1	0.4
<i>Mixed identity</i>	0.24	0.73	0.09	0.54
<i>European Identity</i>	0	0.12	0.02	0.03

**Table 2: distribution of European and national Identity. Data source: Eurobarometer as in 8.1.**

Both national and mixed identity have the same maximum value, while national identity shows a smaller minimum. One can conclude that the general level of mixed identity is slightly higher, while there are some extreme cases of very low shares of national identity. The share of only European identity is expectedly very low, with 0 as minimum (meaning that there is at least one region that had not one single respondent in 14 years to say that s/he feels as only European) and 0.12 as a maximum, which is still lower than the minimums of the two other variables.

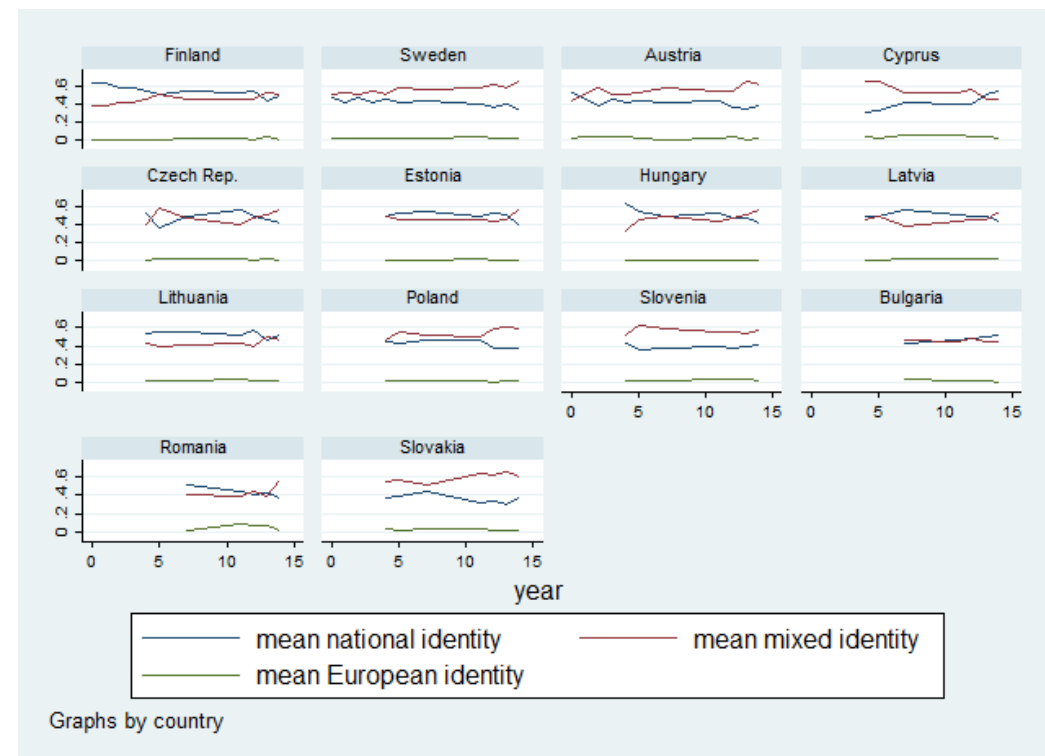
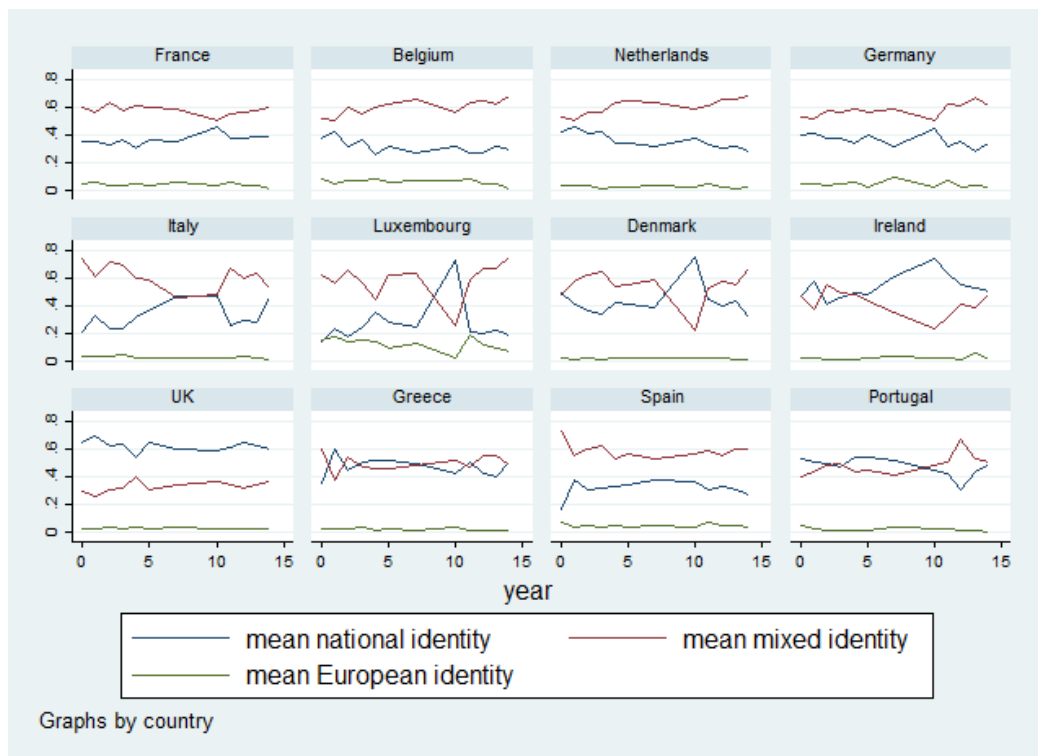


Figure 4: distribution of national, mixed and European identity over countries. Data source: Eurobarometer as in 8.1.

Figure 4 depicts the regional distribution of the three variables over country and year. The regional distribution supports the assumption that there is a generally very low level of only European identification.

Another interesting characteristic to notice is that the development of national and mixed identity seems to mirror itself over time. This means that if in one country the development shows a rising share of mixed identity, then it comes to the expense of only national identity. Only European identity however is rather stable at the bottom with only minor changes during the years. In some countries one can observe a peak in only national identity around the early 2010s, that again dropped in the most recent years. In general, it should be stressed that the countries are very different. Not only in the change over the years, but also whether the share of national identity is higher than mixed identity. But since the level of analysis are the Regions, the regional level should also get some attention in the descriptive analysis of European identity. As there are 196 regions in the dataset, it is very difficult to generate clear visualization of the data on a regional level.

Looking at some extreme cases is however very informative. Table 3 shows the top- and bottom 5 rankings of the regions for national, mixed and European identity. First, the mirror-like structure also shows on the regional level. Almost all regions that are in the top 5 of mixed identity appear in the bottom 5 of only national identity and vice versa. The top 5 regions with the highest share of national identity are all British, while also the last five places for mixed identity go to the United Kingdom. Poland has three of the five regions with the lowest share of only European identity, the other two being in Hungary and Italy. Two other facts stand out in this ranking: among the regions with very extreme characteristics, there is a considerable high number of autonomous regions. The Spanish regions of the Basque country and Catalonia are both in the top 5 of European identity, and the Basque country has also the second lowest share of national identity. Similarly, the Italian autonomous island of Sardinia leads the field with the highest share of mixed identity and one of the lowest shares of only national identities. All of these three regions are known to have a very strong regional identity and more or less strong independence movements.

Interestingly, also the informal capitals of the EU Brussels, and Luxembourg, which also hosts a number of EU institutions rank very high in European identity, and Brussels even ranks high in mixed identity and shows the lowest share of national identity. The Belgium province Brabant-Walloon is the neighbouring region of Brussels on the French-speaking side of Belgium and shows similar

characteristics. Thus, it seems that the omnipresence of the EU and its institutions has a special effect of European identity in the Belgium capital area and in Luxembourg. The reason could however also lie in national characteristics, since Belgium as a whole has a very high share of mixed identity, as can be seen in figure 4. These observations have some implications for the following multilevel regression analysis. First it should be expected, that the cohesion policy spending has impact on only mixed and national identity. Only European identity is very stable both between countries and over time, and if there is not much variation in the dependent variable, it is unlikely to find an effect in a regression model. Secondly, there are already some hints for doubting the second hypothesis, that the effect would be different between regions. Countries show a large variation of the different types of identity, but in the ranking regions within one country show rather similar characteristics, such as regions in the UK. This could indicate, that regions within one country are similar, but countries are different. Since not all regions have been discussed yet, at this stage is merely an educated guess.



Rank	Only European Identity			Mixed Identity			Only national Identity		
	Region	Country	Mean Value	Region	Country	Mean Value	Region	Country	Mean value
1	Luxembourg	LU	0.12	Sardegna	IT	0.73	North East	UK	0.73
2	Catalune	ESP	0.095	Bruxelles	BE	0.7	Wales	UK	0.68
3	Pais Vasco	ESP	0.095	Luxembourg (Belgium)	BE	0.68	Yorkshire and the Humber	UK	0.67
4	Bruxelles	BE	0.085	Estremadura	PT	0.68	East Midlands	UK	0.67
5	Liege	BE	0.083	Brabant-Wallon	BE	0.67	North West	UK	0.66
...			...			...			...
192	Kujawsko- pomorskie	PL	0.005	East Midlands	UK	0.3	Brabant-Wallon	BE	0.22
193	Trentino	IT	0.005	Scotland	UK	0.29	Sardegna	IT	0.21
194	Lódzkie	PL	0.004	Yorkshire and the Humber	UK	0.29	Cantabria	ESP	0.19
195	West Transdanubia	HU	0.004	Wales	UK	0.28	Pais Vasco	ESP	0.17
196	Podkarpackie	PL	0	North East	UK	0.24	Bruxelles	BE	0.16

Table 3: Ranking of the Regions with highest and lowest shares of national, mixed and European identity. Data source: Eurobarometer as in 8.1.

### 3.2.2. Independent Variable: Cohesion Policy Spending

Figure 5 shows the modelled annual expenditure per capita over the time from 2000-2014 on the national level. The figures for total expenditure would be almost the same (except from the scale of course), therefore they are not reported here. While Cohesion policy expenditure in some especially smaller western European countries is very low, the money concentrates in southern and eastern European countries. This has been discussed already, and it has been the intention of Cohesion policy to support lower income member states.

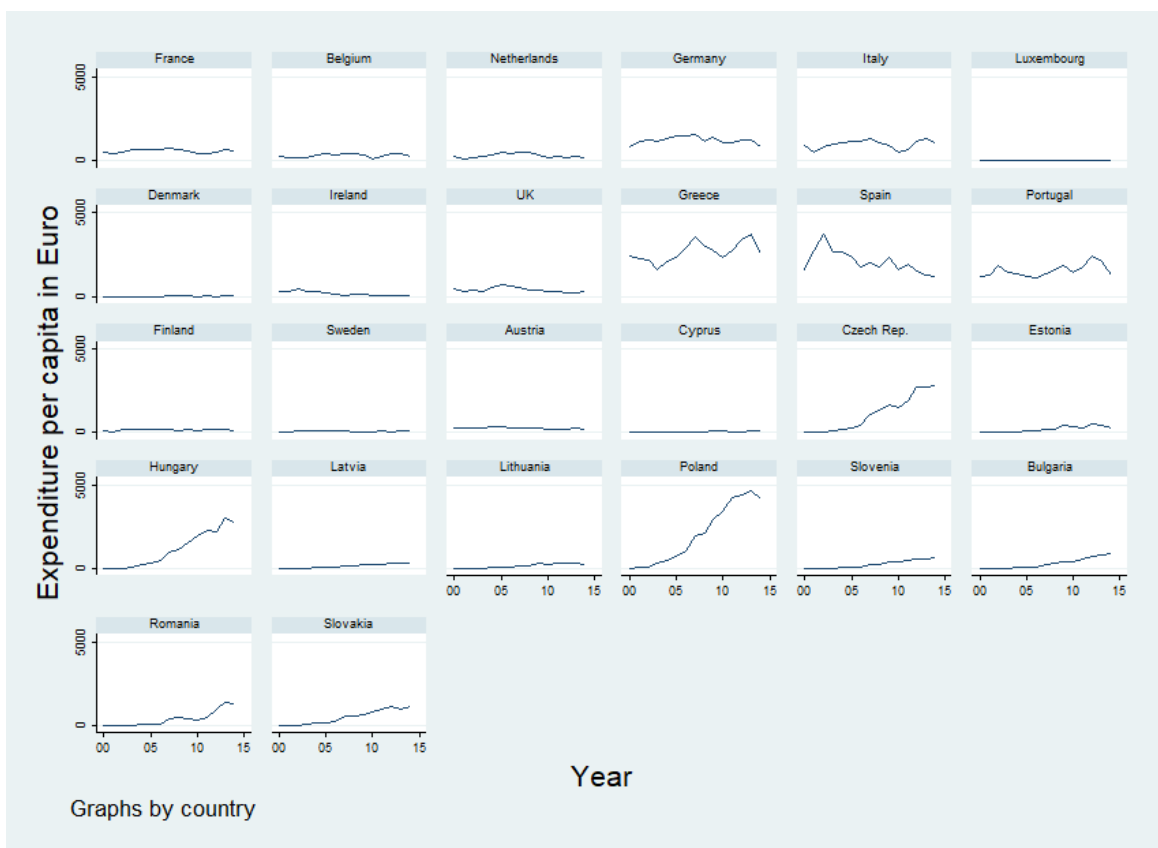


Figure 5: Cohesion policy expenditure per capita and country over the time of 2000-2014. Data source: European Commission (2018)

It should also be noted, that eastern European member states received funding already prior to their accession to the EU. Cohesion policy investments was one tool of the EU for harmonizing the national economies with the European Single Market (Medve-Bálint, 2018), therefore the graphs show expenditure already in the early 2000s for those states. The expenditure before the accession of eastern European countries was however fairly small, compared to the rise in investments after the eastern enlargement. In general, it can be stated that the expenditure in southern Europe (Spain, Portugal and to a lesser extent Greece) decreased while the expenditure increased significantly in eastern European countries (especially Poland, Hungary and Czech Rep.). The

boxplots in Figure 6 give an idea on domestic distribution of the funding. All regions are plotted over time (thus every region appears 15 times), and the countries are ordered by their median values (indicated by the red line). The first thing to notice is that some countries have outliers and some countries don't. The highest outliers of each country are labelled with their name and the year in which the peak was measured. Outliers in general speak for a greater difference of the domestic regional distribution of Cohesion policy funding. While also eastern European countries show a large variance (as indicated by wider boxes and longer whiskers), this change most likely occurred over time and not between regions. The change has no extreme high values (as indicated by the lack of outliers), therefore the variation should be somehow regionally balanced. Germany and Italy for example have a relatively low median values but some comparably strong outliers and a long upper whisker. This speaks for a stronger regional difference in funding allocation. In the case of Germany, the main recipients are eastern regions on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic, while in Italy the Cohesion policy funding is concentrated on the underdeveloped regional economies of the South. The Mediterranean countries Greece, Spain and Portugal have the most extreme outliers that show more than three-times of their respective countries' median values. This

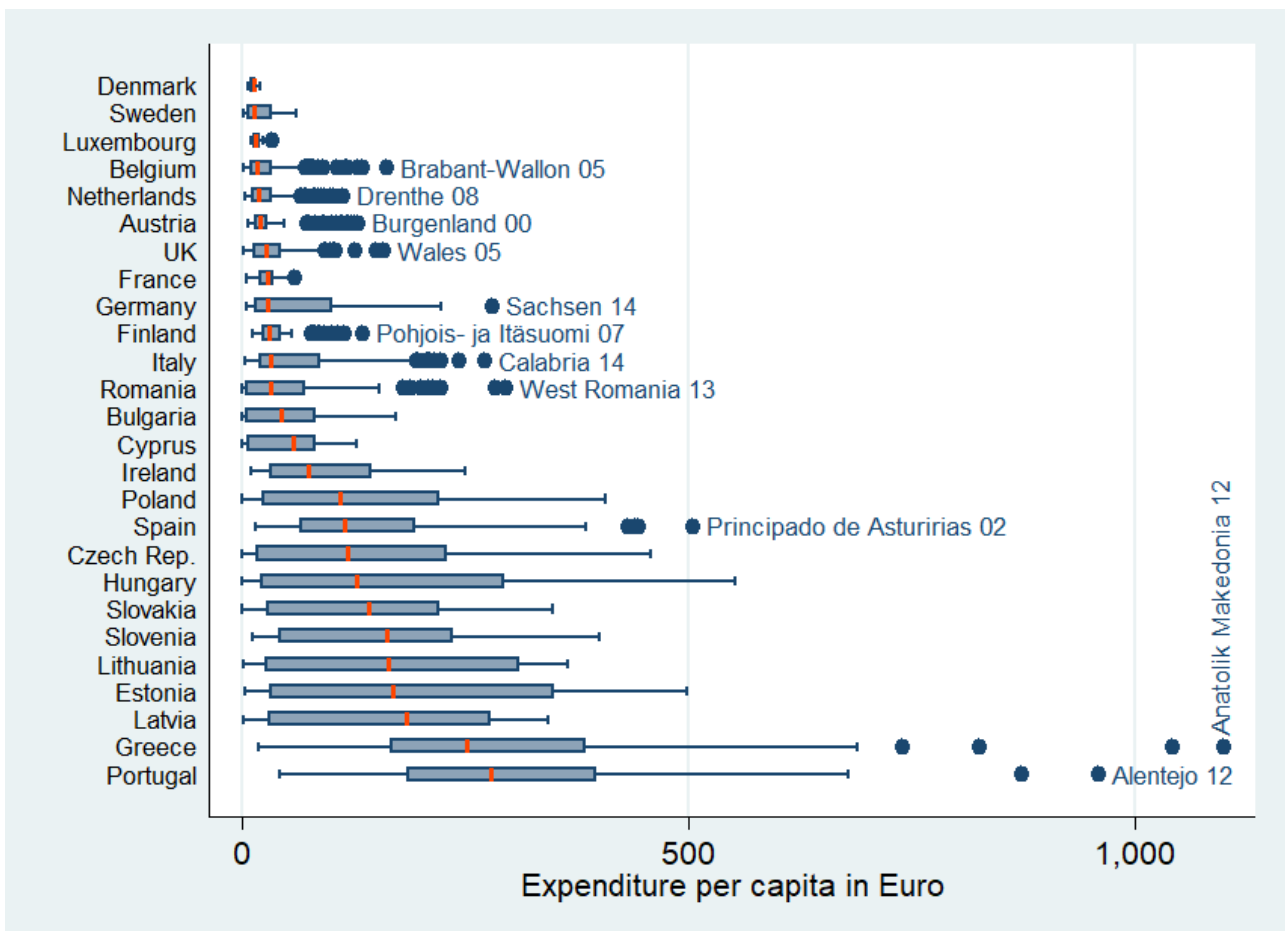


Figure 6: Boxplot of Cohesion policy expenditure per capita in each region over country. Data source: European Commission (2018)

shows an even stronger unbalanced regional distribution of Cohesion policy funding. However, in these countries, the amount of money also varied considerably over time, making this assumption difficult.

To sum it up, as already indicated by figure 4, Cohesion policy spending per capita remained relatively stable in northern and western Europe and shows greater variation in the South and East of Europe. The variation that does appear in middle- and southern European countries is mostly due to differences between regions. In eastern Europe, the regions tend to be more homogenous in terms of the money that is spend there, however they experienced a greater increase over time.

### 3.2.3. Control Variable: GDP

The regional variation of GDP is depicted in the boxplots of figure 7. It shows the distribution of regional mean GDPs per capita over the time of 2000-2014, so all variation is due to regional differences and not to differences over time. Before discussing it, it should be noted that the picture might be misleading, since some countries have few and larger regions, which automatically would show a smaller variation. Some small countries (Luxembourg, Cyprus and the Baltic countries) are coded as only one single region, therefore they show no variation at all (see Annex for complete list of regions). First of all, the mean GDP/capita differs greatly between western and eastern European countries. The GDP/cap in Bulgaria which has the lowest median GDP/cap is more than doubled by the leader Denmark<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the economic power of capital cities is astonishing.

Considering the fact, that capital cities also usually have the largest population, the economic power of capital cities is immense. This phenomenon has been also confirmed in studies that used many more sophisticated economic indicators than just GDP/capita. Germanys capital Berlin stands out with a relatively low GDP per capita compared with other European capitals, due to its recent history as a separated city.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Not considering Luxembourg due to its small population and special economic status

<sup>4</sup> Note that in Germany, Hamburg stands out only because of its special position as an independent region (Ger.: "*Bundesland*"). If compared with other cities, and not regions in Germany, Hamburgs GDP/capita only ranks on place 21.

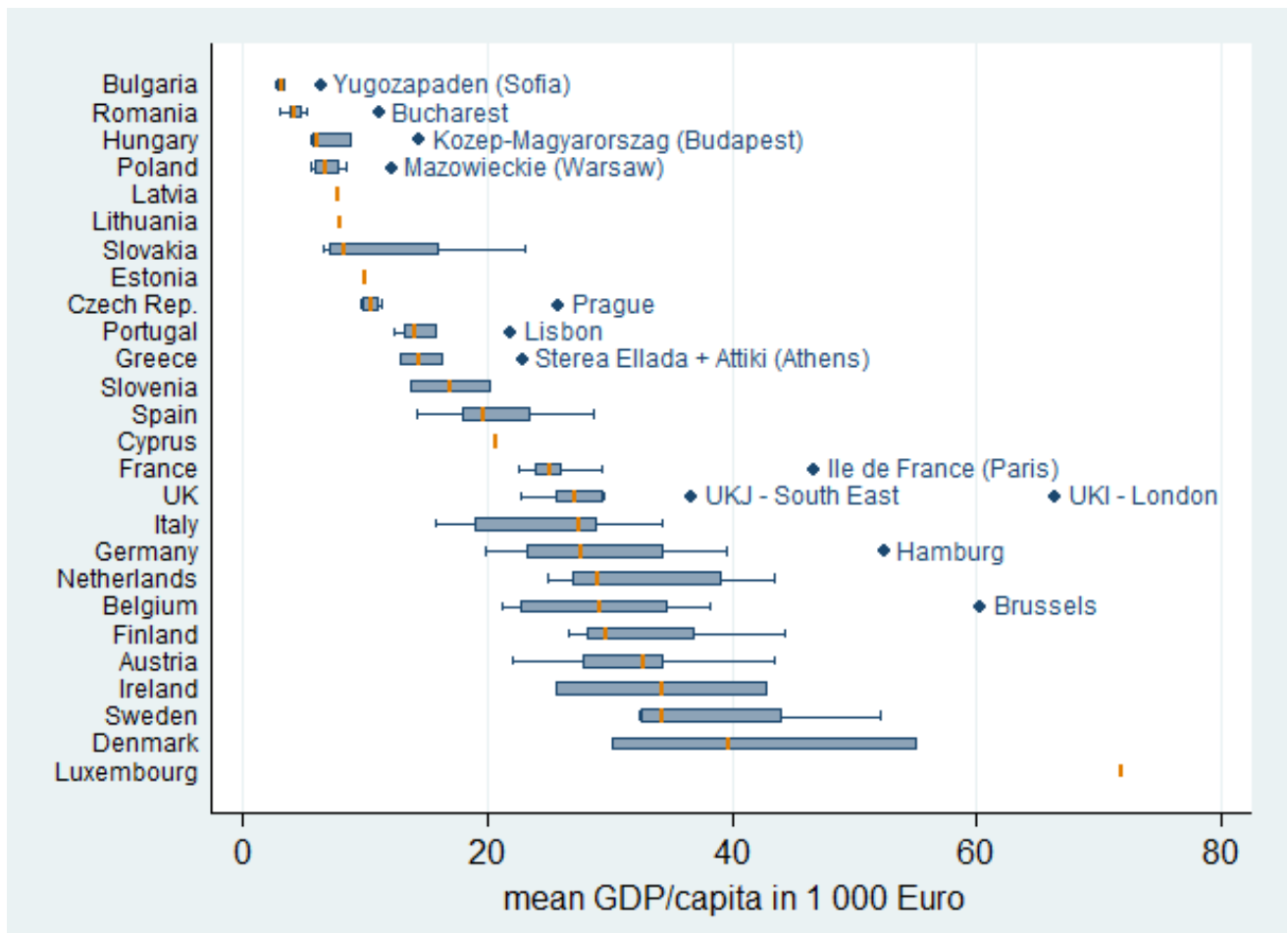


Figure 7: Boxplot of mean regional GDP/capita per country in 1 000 Euro. Data source: Eurostat (2018)

Rank	Country	Region	Growth rate in percent
1	RO	Bucharest	+197
2	RO	South	+167
3	RO	South-East	+165
4	RO	North-West	+149
5	RO	Central	+148
...			
192	GR	Center and Dyktiki Macedonia	-10
193	GR	Crete	-11
194	GR	Thessaly	-12
195	GR	East Macedonia and Thraki	-12
196	IE	Border, Midland and Western	-15

Table 4: Growth rate of Regions' GDP/capita in the time of 2004-2014. Data source: Eurostat (2018)

When looking at the growth rate of GDP per capita over the last 10 years of the observation period, all top 5 ranks go to Romania. Although having the second lowest median mean GDP per capita, Romanian regions experienced a tremendous relative growth over the years of 2004-2014. The looser of this ranking are Regions of Greece and Ireland. While Greece in total has been in a recession ever since the Euro crisis, Ireland as a whole actually experienced a growth in GDP per capita. This growth however strongly concentrated on the capital Dublin and the south western part of the island, leaving the northern part behind with the strongest recession in GDP per capita in all of Europe.

There would be much more to explore in the regional differences of GDP, but this is not the aim of this analysis. Regional GDP serves as a mere control variable to control for the fact, that investments in regions with differing economic power will have different impacts. When comparing GDP and expenditure per capita, it is interesting to compare the ranks of the countries. In some countries, for example Denmark, Sweden and Luxembourg, the median values do mirror themselves: While their regions received the lowest per capita expenditure from Cohesion policy investments, they also show the highest mean GDPs per capita. This is something we would expect, as regional economic indicators are used to determine the level of investment in the regions. It is the Cohesion policy's rational to support economically disadvantaged regions over wealthier regions.

In some instances, though, this seems not to be quite the case. Bulgaria and Romania, the countries with the lowest median mean GDP/capita only receive a merely average amount of Cohesion policy support per capita, while the highest recipients of Cohesion policy spending per capita – Greece and Portugal – have an average median mean GDP per capita. The regional GDP is of course not the only indicator used to determine the amount of money a region receives from Cohesion policy funds, but the fact that southern European countries are long members of the EU and have been the main beneficiaries before the eastern enlargement might hint at some path dependencies in the distribution of regional investments. Pearson's correlation coefficient between Cohesion policy spending per capita and GDP per capita is 0.34, which can be interpreted as an only minor correlation. While this is good news for the analysis, since the multicollinearity of the independent variables is at an acceptable level, it shows that Cohesion policy investments are not only determined by the regional GDP.

### 3.3. Multilevel-Modelling

This section will discuss the choice of the analytical technique that is used in this thesis, namely multilevel-modelling. Originally developed by social psychology scholars, multilevel models have been adapted by political scientist in the 1990s. Although there is a considerable amount of studies using multilevel models, it remains a rather new statistical technique that has yet to become a mainstream method in social sciences.

Multilevel models exploit the hierarchical structure of the data, which is at the same time a necessary condition for the application of multilevel model analysis. The basic assumption is always that lower levels of data are nested into higher levels, for example pupils that visit a school, or patients that were treated at one hospital. The pupils or patients represent a lower level, that are embedded in a higher level – the school or the hospital respectively. A third level can be introduced by including a time variable. If each patients' data has been recorded over several points in time, then each observation represents level 1, the patient level 2, and the hospital level 3. The great advantage of using multilevel model analysis is, that the researcher can control for the causal heterogeneity of the research object. (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002)

Different hospitals can have different effects on the patients' treatment, or different schools can have different effects on the pupils' performance in tests. Multilevel models can account for this heterogeneity. Furthermore, if a shared context of certain individuals is ignored in the analysis – as it is usually done with conventional regression models – than the assumption of independent errors is violated. Individuals that share the same context are not statistically independent from each other. Therefore, there are also statistical motivations for choosing multilevel models. (Luke, 2004) One big advantage is that multilevel models can incorporate both fixed and random effect assumptions at the same time.

When investigating statistical effects, there are two basic assumption that one can make about the effect. Either the effect is fixed, meaning that regression parameters are not random, or that the effect is random, in which regression parameters underly truly random characteristics. In other words, the fixed-effects assumption is, that if a new sample is drawn from a population, the measured effect is expected to be different, as it is dependent on the samples' characteristics. The model parameters are not considered to be independent from independent variables. The random-effects assumption is however, that if a new sample is drawn from the population, the effect should

be the same (at least if the sample is large enough). The model parameters are assumed to be totally independent from other variables. In the present model, the fixed effect is considered for the whole model. That means, the model assumes, that if a different sample would be generated (which would consist of different regions, as the region is the unit of analysis), then the effect would be different, as it is connected to the region-specific characteristics. On the lower levels however, the model assumes random effects. On the lowest level, when drawing a new sample within one region, (e.g. when looking at a different year within one region) the model predicts that the measured effect should be the same, as the present model assumes time invariant effects. It is also called a repeated measurement model. Similarly, on the second level, when generating a new sample on the country level, the model assumes that the effect would be the same.

The importance of context cannot be overestimated in the present analysis. The European and national identity is by nature very much shaped by the national context in which citizens live. The descriptive discussion of the data already showed tremendous differences between the member states in terms of their identity structure. Thus, the context must be taken into account in the following analysis. In the following, three three-level model will be considered. The lowest level is a single observation  $n_{ijk}$  in year  $k$  within region  $j$  within country  $i$ . So, each region can be defined by all years, and each country can be defined by all its regions. The two independent variables are regional GDP and regional Cohesion policy spending. There are however three dependent variables:

1. Share of respondents with an only national identity
2. Share of respondents with a mixed identity
3. Share of respondents with an only European identity

Hence, three models are required. To test hypothesis 1, namely to estimate the effect of Cohesion policy expenditure and GDP on all of the three dependent variables, a fixed-effects model is applied. However as argued, the context is extremely important in the present case. It is hardly reasonable to assume, that Cohesion policy has the same effect on Identity in all European countries and regions. Therefore, a random-effects model is added, to allow the model to have both random slopes and random intercepts. To test hypothesis 2, random slopes are introduced both on the country and on the regional level. This enables comparison of the variability of slopes between regions within countries and between countries, thus allowing to assess whether the effect of Cohesion policy spending varies between regions or between countries. At the same time, it will



make it possible to compare regions and countries in terms of size and direction of the effect, so that the role of regions and countries in the effect of Cohesion policy on identity can be explored. The model specification of a three-level repeated measurement model with random intercepts and random slopes is indicated below, that will be considered for all three dependent variables. The model uses a linear ordinary least squares estimation technique.

**Model specification:**

$$\begin{array}{l}
 ID_{ijk} = a + b_1 (\text{CP exp.}) + b_2 (\text{gdp}) + \\
 u_{0i} + u_{1i} (\text{CP exp.}) + \\
 u_{0ij} + u_{1ij} (\text{CP exp.}) + e_{ijk}
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{l}
 \left. \vphantom{ID_{ijk}} \right\} \text{fixed part of the model} \\
 \left. \vphantom{ID_{ijk}} \right\} \text{Random part of the model}
 \end{array}$$

k: year (level 1)

j: Region (level 2)

i: country (level 3)

ID: any of the dependent variables

CP exp.: Cohesion policy expenditure per capita

gdp: GDP per capita

## 4. Results

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The following section proceeds in two steps: First, the empirical findings for all three multilevel models are presented, each of which has a different dependent variable. The results are further compared and elaborated on in the discussion. After a general interpretation and discussion of the implications of the findings for the hypothesis, the autonomous regions of Scotland, Catalune and Sardegna will be discussed as examples for special regional circumstances.

### 4. Empirical findings

For each model, the output parameters of both the fixed and random effects part of the models are shown in tables. For the fixed effects part, the regression coefficients of both independent variables and the constant with their significant levels and standard errors are presented. This is not possible for the random effects' parameters. The purpose of a multilevel random slope-random intercept model is that each country and region has a different regression coefficient and constant. Therefore, only indicators of the variation of the respective parameters is given in the tables. For a more elaborate interpretation and comparison of the random effects parameters, slopes and intercepts will be plotted for each level and model. Besides scatter plots, each graph will also contain a fitted values line. This allows to investigate the cross-level interactions between the country and the regional level. Interpreting the distance of residuals towards the fitted values line is a helpful tool to discuss the relationship between countries and regions with the model.

Note that the observations themselves cannot be plotted against the regression line for two reasons: the model contains two independent variables which would require a three-dimensional graph that is rather difficult to interpret. Second, to account for the different levels of the model, each region and country would need an individual graph. Analysing 26 graphs on the national level and 196 graphs on the regional level does not seem as a useful tool to interpret the results of the model, it would rather lead to more confusion. Plotting the regression parameters in one scatter plot is much more efficient, although it requires some level of abstraction when interpreting the graphs. After presenting the results for all three models, results of three autonomous regions are presented separately. This should shed light into the special role of European identity in separatist regions.

#### 4.1. Model I: only national identity

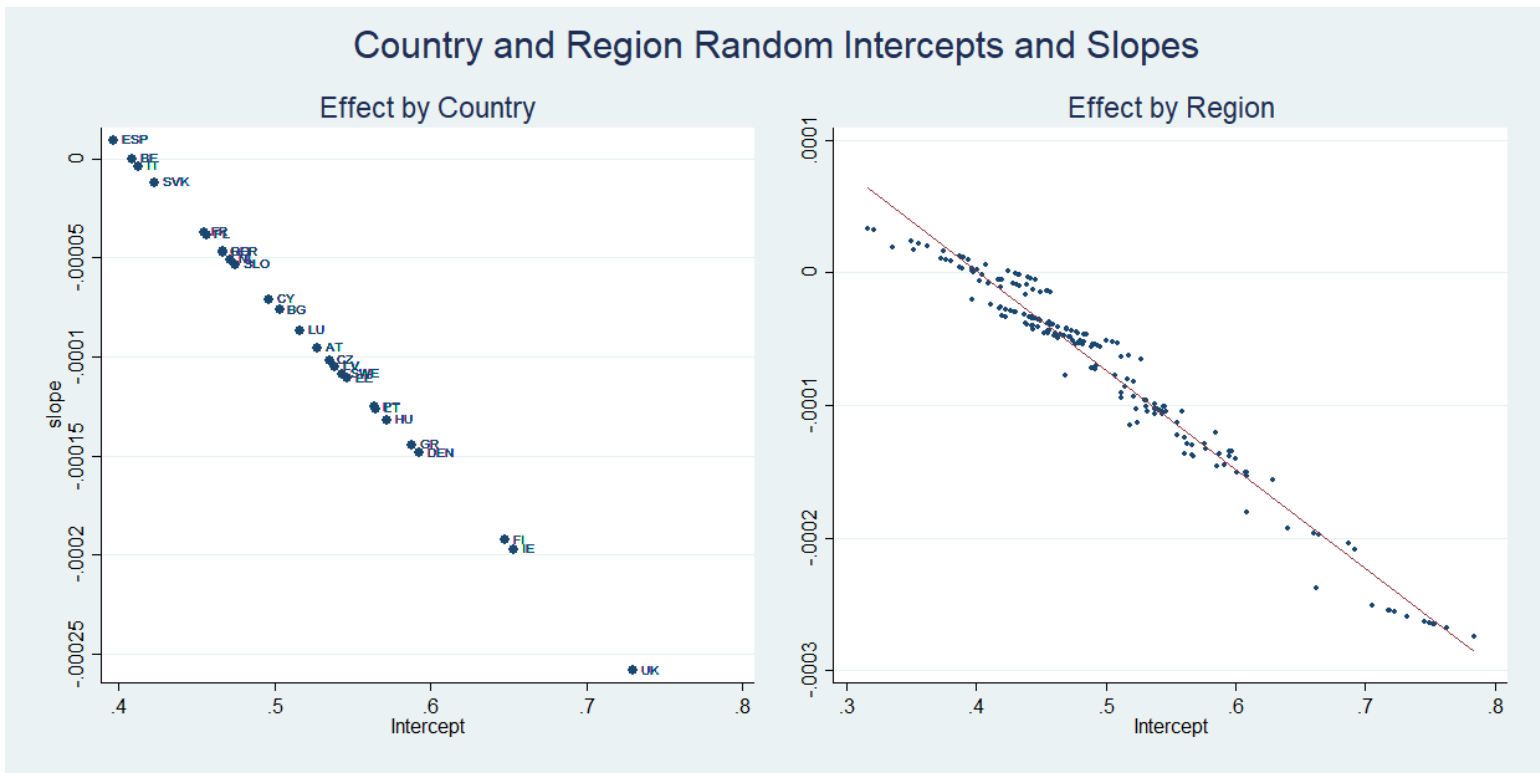


Figure 8: Model I: Country and Region random intercepts and slopes

	national
Expenditure/cap in EUR	-0.00009** (0.00003)
gdp/cap in 1 000 EUR	-0.0035*** (0.0004)
_cons	0.523*** (0.0203)
<i>N</i>	1963

level		Var
Country	slope	$4.72e^{-09}$
	intercept	0.0073
Regional	slope	$1.44e^{-10}$
	intercept	0.00158
	residuals	0.0134

Table 5: random effects parameter model I

Table 6: fixed effects parameters model I

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The first model is highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Table 6 shows that both GDP and Cohesion policy expenditure have a significant negative effect on the share of citizens with an only national identification. The model predicts that by increasing the Cohesion policy expenditure per capita or the GDP per capita by 1 000 EUR, the share of citizens with an only national identification would

decrease by 9%<sup>5</sup> or 0.3% respectively. Thus, Cohesion policy funding has a stronger effect on national identity than on GDP.

The constant (0.52) is to be interpreted (although admittedly only hypothetical) as the predicted share of citizens with a national identity, given there would be zero GDP and no investments under the Cohesion policy funds. This interpretation is of pure theoretical nature and cannot be translated to the real world. However, it gives an idea on the country-specific characteristic of identity. Countries and regions that have a very high constant can be seen as territories that have some special place-based characteristics that lead to a very high identification with the nation state. Let's take the United Kingdom for example, for which the model predicts the by far largest constant of 0.74. That means that the model assumes, that in a fictive world where there would be no GDP and no Cohesion policy investments, 74% of the population would identify solely with the national state. It's the UKs specific conditions that lead to the situation, that in this fictive situation a great majority of the population would adopt a nationalistic identity. When looking to the real world, it is quite reasonable to consider the UKs' identification with their nation state to be of special nature, especially when considering the UKs referendum on EU membership where a small majority voted for leaving the European Union. But again, the regression intercept cannot be interpreted literally. It rather isolates the country or region effect on identity and gives an idea of country and region-specific qualities of identification.

The random effects parameters are to be found in table 5. On both levels, the slopes have a smaller variance than the intercept. This indicates, that the nature of the effect is quite similar between both countries and regions, while the predicted share of citizens with a national identity with zero Cohesion policy expenditure and GDP varies more. For both slopes and intercepts, the variability is slightly higher on the country level than on the regional level. This could be hint at a strong impact of the country specific characteristics than region specific characteristics. The predicted effect in Region A in country X is more similar to region B in country X than to Region C in country Y. Figure 8 shows the graphical relationship between intercepts and slopes on both levels. The relationship is negative. This means that the model predicts that if the share of citizens with an only national

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<sup>5</sup> The scale of the variable expenditure per capita is 1 EUR/capita. Introducing the variable with the more convenient scale 1 000 EUR/capita would have exceeded the computing efficiency of the software due to very small numbers.

identity is higher, the effect of Cohesion policy spending and GDP in reducing this share is even stronger. The region-level relationship clearly shows the similarity of the effects by countries (the dots are scattered around lines by country). Some regions however are very far from their national countries' scatter cloud, which shows that some regions differ more from their countries than others. The effect of autonomous regions is further discussed in section 4.4. In statistical terms however, it is not considered problematic that the model predicts a positive effect on national identity for some regions, due to their special regional characteristics.

Overall, the results provide some evidence for the first hypothesis. Increasing the Cohesion policy expenditure will decrease the share of respondents with a national identity in the model. It however casts some doubts on the second hypothesis. The difference of this effect largely appears on the country level, while regions within countries show stronger similarities (except from some especially autonomous regions). The factors that influence national identity thus remain to be strongly shaped by national characteristics, and Cohesion policy expenditure and GDP have different strong effects in different countries.

#### 4.2. Model II: mixed identity

The second model with mixed identity as dependent variable is also statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Now both GDP per capita and Cohesion policy spending per capita have a significant positive effect on the share of respondents with a mixed identity. The relative size of the effect of Cohesion policy expenditure is higher than in model I: by increasing the expenditure per capita by 1 000 EUR, the model predicts that the share of respondents with a mixed identity would increase by 14%. Compared to the GDP, the predicated rise in mixed identity is only at 0.3%, similar to model I. While in both models, expenditure per capita is under the 0.05 significant threshold, the error probability in model II is even smaller than in model I.

On the first glimpse, the random effects parameters in model II show a similar distribution than in model I. The variance of the slopes is very small, while the intercepts show a greater variability. Even when plotting the slopes and intercepts of the countries, the graph looks very similar to model I. There is a strong negative relationship between slopes and intercepts, although all observations have positive slopes. This means that the higher the predicted share of citizens with mixed identity

assuming zero Cohesion policy investments and zero GDP, the less would be changed by increasing either Cohesion policy expenditure or the GDP.

### Model II: Country and Region Random Intercepts and Slopes

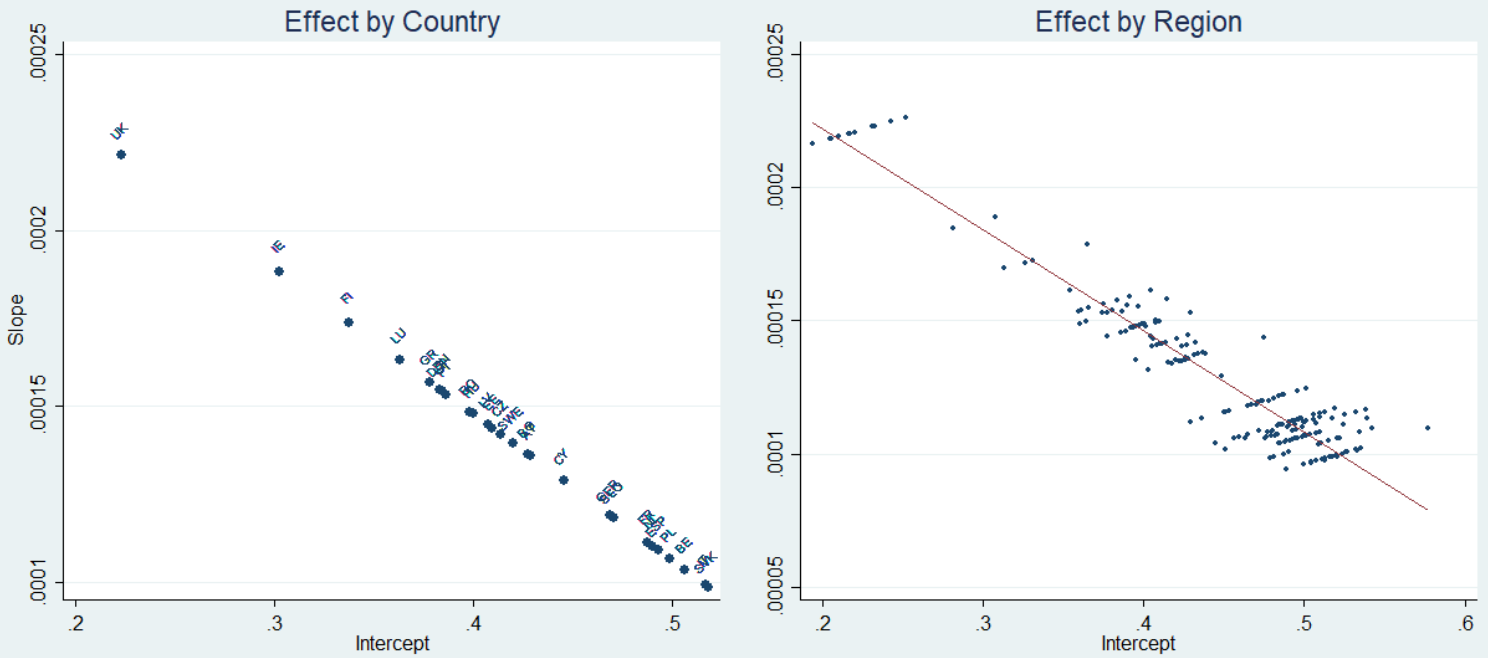


Figure 9: Model II: Country and Region random intercept and slopes

(2)	
mixed	
Expenditure/cap in EUR	0.00014*** (0.00003)
gdp/cap in 1 000 EUR	0.0034*** (0.0004)
_cons	0.421*** (0.019)
<i>N</i>	1963

*t* statistics in parentheses  
 \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 8: Fixed effects parameters of model II

level		Var
Country	slope	$9.4e^{-10}$
	intercept	0.005
Regional	slope	$2.48e^{-11}$
	intercept	0.0008
	residuals	0.0136

Table 7: Random effects parameters of Model II

This speaks for some sort of threshold of mixed identity, over which the share of citizens would not rise regardless how much investments or GDP are increased. Increasing the investments in the UK would have a much greater effect on the share of respondents with a mixed identity than for example in Belgium. It could be deduced, that European identity in the UK is much more characterized by economic-utilitarian considerations than for instance in Belgium.

When looking at the distribution of intercepts and slopes of regions, one can clearly again recognize the importance of the country on the effect. The regions of every country are scattered around a quite clear line. Interestingly however, this line represents a positive relationship between intercepts and slopes for each countries' regions. This means that within a given country, the effect of Cohesion policy spending is stronger the higher the predicted share of citizens with a mixed identity. The random effects parameters reveal two important information: (1) the size of the effect of Cohesion policy spending on mixed identity is substantially dependent from the country and (2), the share of citizens with a mixed identity cannot be increased indefinitely. The negative relationship between slopes and intercepts suggest a saturation effect at somehow between 60% and 70% of the population. If the share of the population would be higher than that, Cohesion policy spending would have no effect anymore.

#### 4.3. Model III: only European identity

Model III differs from the previous two models. Firstly, the significance is lower ( $p=0.004$ ) although still at an acceptable range. Table 10 shows that the GDP per capita however is not significant in model III, while Cohesion policy expenditure still has a significant effect on the share of citizens with an only European identity. Surprisingly, the model predicts a negative effect. With increasing the Cohesion policy investments by 1 000 EUR, the share with citizens is estimated to decrease by 3%. From the theory the contrary is expected. The random effects, as presented in table 9, show that the intercepts are again similar to model I and model II with more variation in the intercepts than in the slopes. Compared to the first two models, the variance of the intercept is smaller. This leads to a very homogenous distribution of slopes and intercepts as seen in figure 10. There is no visible difference between regions of different countries as they all scatter on a neat line. The relationship between slopes and intercepts continues to be negative, meaning that the higher the estimated share of citizens with an only European identity, the higher the negative impact of Cohesion policy spending.

## Country and Region Random Intercepts and Slopes

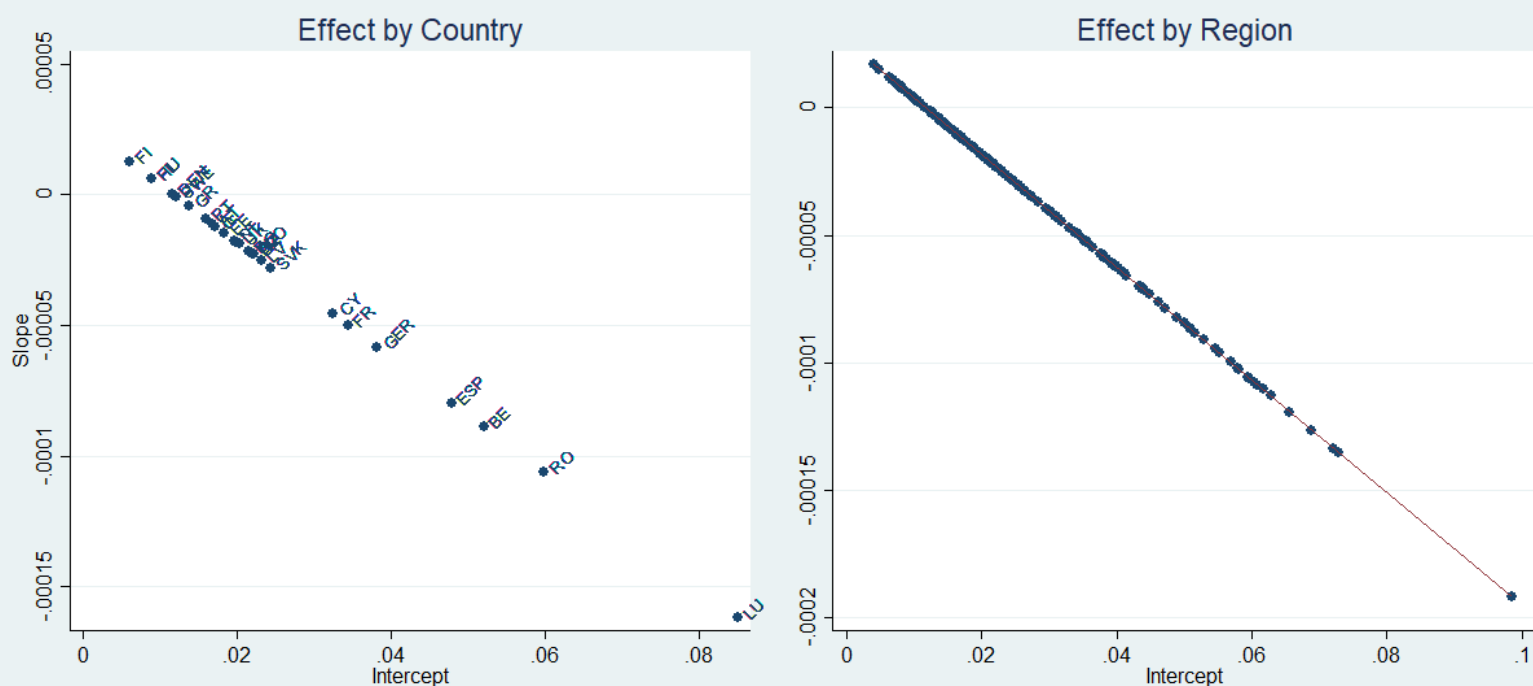


Figure 10: Model III: Country and Region random intercepts and slopes

(3)	
European	
Expenditure/cap in EUR	-0.00003** (0.00001)
gdp/cap in 1 000 EUR	0.00001 (0.00001)
_cons	0.0259*** (0.005)
N	1961

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 10: fixed effects parameters of model III

level		Var
Country	slope	$1.88e^{-09}$
	intercept	0.0004
Regional	slope	$4.29e^{-10}$
	intercept	0.00008
	residuals	0.00102

Table 9: random effects parameters of model III



These results should be considered with great care for a number of regions. First and most importantly, as earlier discussed in figure 4, there is no substantial variation in the dependent variable. The variation is not only small within each country over time, also the share of respondents with an only European identity between countries is very homogenous. This provides a strong argument for not considering the model as a whole. Secondly, the absolute numbers of the dependent variable are very small, with many regions having mean share of citizens with an only European identity close to 0. Thus, the dependent variable has very homogenous and very small values, all of which are not optimal preconditions for a multiple regression analysis. Furthermore, the countries with the strongest negative impact of Cohesion policy on European identity (Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain) are also the countries in which the top 5 regions with the highest share of inhabitants with an only European identity lie. This undermines claims that model III is somewhat biased. As discussed, their regional characteristics are very unique (strong presence of the EU through institutions in Belgium and Luxembourg, and strong autonomous regional characteristics in Spain). The model overestimates the effect in those countries because of a relative high variation of the dependent variable. Due to the overall small values of the dependent variable, it is likely that the few regions with higher values have a greater impact on the model and thus produce biased results.

While the strong influence of the nation state on the effect of Cohesion policy spending on European identity is very clearly derivable from the results in Model I and II, there are some regions that do not easily fit in this explanation model. Therefore, the following section will focus on discussing the results of the autonomous Regions Sardegna, Cataluna and Scotland.

#### 4.4. The problem with separatist regions: Sardegna, Cataluña and Scotland

In all models, separatist regions play some sort of special role. This confirms the intuitive expectation that regions with strong separatist or independence movement would have special qualities of their identity patterns. Taking this thought the other way around, one would assume that in those regions, the effect of cohesion policy spending is not dominated by country level effects, but by region level effects, meaning that the nature of the effect in those regions is somehow different from the effects in their respective countries. The following section aims to discuss this assumption on the examples of the separatist regions of Catalune in Spain, Scotland in the UK and Sardegna in Italy. The restricted space does not allow to carry out elaborated case studies and this section will probably fall short of adequately describing the specific characteristics of the respective regional

Identities. The aim is rather to explain the special role of regions with strong independence movements in the above presented model.

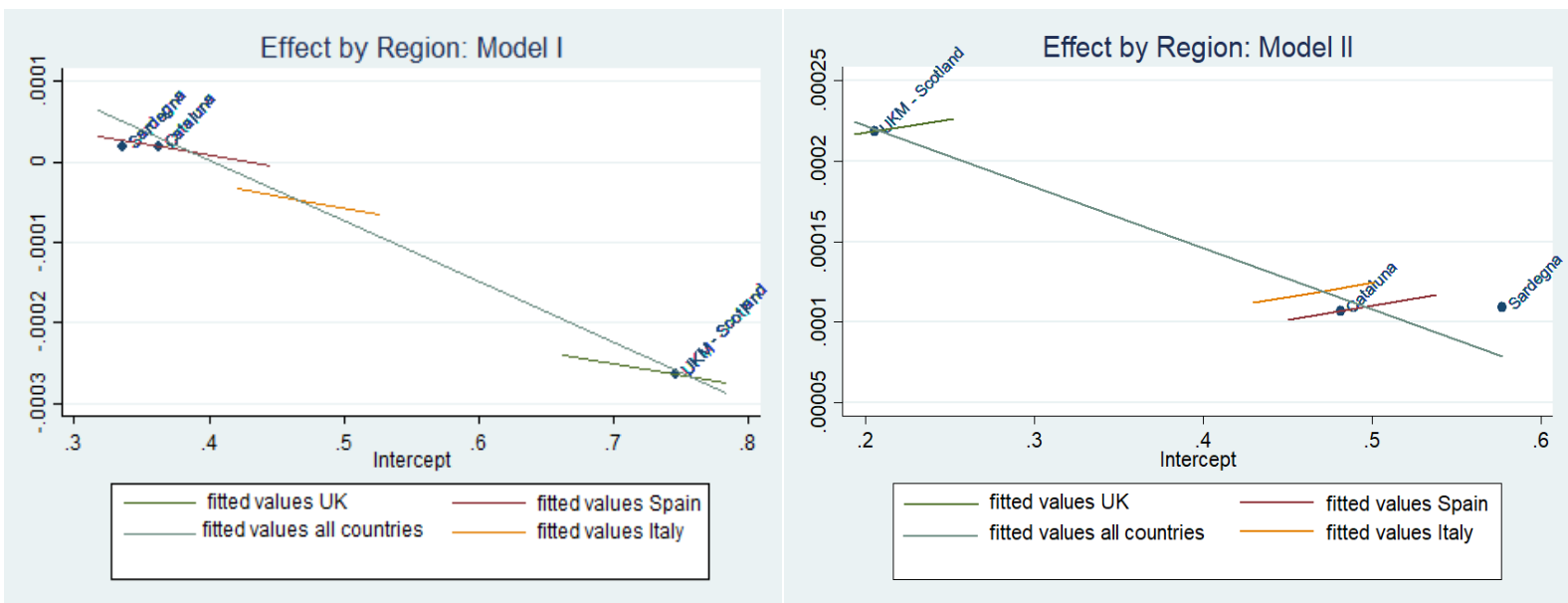


Figure 11: Location of Scotland, Catalune and Sardegna in both models in comparison to their countries and all regions

Figure 11 shows the same graphs as already presented in Figure 8 and 9, with the only difference that the location of the three regions is highlighted and the fitted values lines of their respective countries are indicated. In Model I and Model II, Catalu a and Scotland position themselves quite close to the fitted values lines of both their countries and of all countries, while Sardegna is an extreme outlier. It is not even close to the fitted values line of Italy. This tells that the effect of Cohesion policy spending on the share of citizens with national and mixed identity in Sardegna is quite different from Italy, while the effect in Scotland and Catalu a is rather similar to the effects in the UK and Spain respectively. Model I even predicts a positive effect for Sardegna on national identity, while Italy is expected to have a negative effect of Cohesion policy spending.

Explanations can be found when looking closer at the nature of identification in those regions. In Catalu a and Scotland, the independence movements and the political parties leading those movements have been described as one of the most Europhile parties in Europe. (Duerr, 2015) The narrative of their independence ideas is to create independent nations of Catalu a and Scotland within Europe. Especially in Scotland, where the majority of the population voted to stay in the EU during the Brexit referendum, this narrative of creating an independent Scottish state that would be a member of the EU, while the rest of the UK leaves the EU is very strong. The secessional

sentiments are mainly targeted at the national authorities while the EU is seen more as a friendly enabler for the creation of an independent nation. (Duerr, 2015)

In Sardegna however, this is quite different. It has been argued that the insular situation of the population has created a strong mental distance between the islanders towards the mainland, which includes both the government in Rome and the authorities in Brussels. (Hepburn & Elias, 2011) The position of the independence movement of Sardegna towards the EU is much more complex and there are in fact strong Eurosceptic sentiments among proponents of an independent state of Sardegna. The proximity to African countries shaped a stronger narrative of colonial and imperialist powers in Europe, which created a very reserved position towards the EU. (Hepburn & Elias, 2011) Having these considerations in mind, the outlier perspective of Sardegna is expectable and fits well into the model.

This small discussion on some secessionist regions showed, that political ideologies may play an important role shaping the effect of Cohesion policy spending. While generally, the sources of those ideologic positions are national level politics, in the special case of Sardegna the regional level plays a much more important role. Furthermore, this discussion unveils some of the shortcomings of a rigid quantitative method, which will be elaborated on further in the discussion.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Implications for the research findings

The aim of the following section is to connect the results presented above with the hypotheses posed earlier and connect the results of the statistical analysis with the theoretical arguments that have been discussed in this paper.

Overall, the analysis provides evidence that supports hypothesis I, that Cohesion policy spending would have an positive impact on European identity. leaving Model III aside due to the problems with the dependent variable, model I shows a significant negative effect of Cohesion policy on the share of citizens with only national identity, and model II shows a significant positive effect of Cohesion policy on the share of citizens that have a mixed identification between identity with the nation state and the EU. This and the fact that both models and the independent variables meet the criteria of significance allow to accept hypothesis I, that Cohesion policy spending positively influences the level of identification with the EU.

European Identity does however not replace the identification with the member state, as the strongest effect was measured in model II with a mixed identity. Cohesion policy spending rather contributes to accept the EU as a source of identification *besides* the nation state, it does not replace it nor does it seem to be in competition with national identification.

While the models report the existence of this effect, the size of the effect does greatly vary between countries. While the model predicts the UK to increase its share of citizens with a mixed identity by over 20% when increasing the Cohesion policy investments by 1 000 EUR, in Belgium the same incline is estimated to be only at around 10%. This has some consequences for the understanding of the economic-utilitarian argument. The formation of an identity with the EU does depend on economic-utilitarian considerations, but not on a similar level in all over Europe. In some countries, results of rational considerations seem to have much more impact on European identity than in others.

This leads to the second hypothesis and the connected regional argument: the second hypothesis, that the effect of Cohesion policy investments varies between regions cannot be simply accepted on the basis of these results. The distribution of the effects suggest that countries vary strongly between each other, while regions within countries follow more or less similar patterns. This speaks

for a very strong impact of country level factors. It is still the nation state that provides the framework on how identity with the EU is formed, and not the regions. When thinking about the EU, citizens seem to orient themselves more at the national level than at the regional level. While there is variation between regions of each country, this variation is much smaller (given in the random effects parameters tables) and the variation follows a very similar pattern as indicated by the scatter plots for model I and II. The regional context does matter, but the country matters more. It is the national environment that determines how strongly an individual's identity with the EU is influenced by economic-utilitarian considerations, and therefore how much they are influenced by the EU's investments activity in their regions as part of the Cohesion policy mechanisms.

This also means, that there are other variables at work that influence the size of the effect of Cohesion policy on EU identity. While the present models provided evidence for such an effect, they do not unveil variables that determine whether economic considerations are important or not. It is possible, that this solely depends on case-specific characteristics, meaning special qualities that only appear in certain countries. Despite this, the results do not allow for any such conclusions. It is very reasonable to argue, that other, macro-level systematic variables might influence this effect on a greater level. This is however not the only problem with the discovered results. There are more methodological and conceptual shortcomings of the model, which will be discussed in the next section.

## 5.2. Shortcomings

Every result that is produced by a quantitative study in social sciences should be taken with a very fine pinch of salt. In the end, the research object of any social sciences research is always the human being and reducing the complexities of human social interactions to numbers bears danger of oversimplifying. Therefore, the following section is dedicated to discussing some of the most important conceptual and methodological shortcomings of the present study that should be always kept in mind when considering the results that were presented above. A lot of the problems that will be discussed recall a trade-off process between research resources and stringent methodological and conceptual validity.

A very obvious point of criticism is the validity of the measurement of the dependent variable. Although already discussed in the operationalization section, it should be highlighted here once more. Some points that are directed against the usage of the Moreno-question were already

discussed and shall not be repeated in full length. One point that should be added however after discussing the special roles of regions with strong independence movements is, that it should be considered problematic that the question lacks an answer category for the regional level or simply "other". As seen before, autonomous regions displayed some extreme values and having this category would produce much more unbiased results. Again, the usage of the item is justified by the data availability and the advantages of using Eurobarometer data.

The criticism of measurement validity is not necessarily directed against the Moreno-question only. Indeed, every single-item measurement can be criticised for falling short in capturing the immense complexities associated with an individuals' identification with a supranational entity. Although some studies, that have attempted to develop much more complex measurements of European identity, are more likely to reach more valid measurements of the level of identity, the core problem is of conceptual nature. The idea of generating any indicator that indicates the level or strength or type of identity of an individual with a state or a supranational entity is very much a humane construct. By definition it is the individual who defines their identity, and thereby it is literally impossible to develop a measurement that indicates this for a large group of individuals. Every such measurement would need to simplify the reality and thereby disregard some sort of information. In the end, creating such a measurement item is a trade-off process between generating comparable data while accounting for the individual nature of the measured concept. In this thesis, the trade-off was made predominantly in favour of comparability of data. Thus, it can be criticized that in the trade-off generalizability was chosen over measurement validity, but any such critic should keep in mind that the process of finding an adequate measurement for complex social phenomena will always be confronted with this dilemma. An adequate criticism should henceforth suggest a qualitative research design for examining the effect of Cohesion policy on European identity. The previous section very briefly outlined what kind of knowledge such qualitative research design could add to our understanding of the effect of Cohesion policy. It will however be difficult to derive general rules or guidelines for practitioners or scientific theories, as qualitative research designs usually come with a low degree of generalizability. Again, this is a fundamental dilemma of social sciences that yet waits to be adequately resolved by theorists and methodologists.

Adding on the problems of social science methodology the issue of causality should be shortly mentioned. A regression analysis measures correlation between variables, and as the correlation measured in this paper is backed by some theoretical considerations it can be considered to be

adequate to accept the hypothesis. In earlier sections, statements like “when increasing the Cohesion policy investments by 1 000 EUR, the model predicts that share of citizens with a mixed identity is rising by X%” were repeatedly made in order to compare the size of the effect between models and countries or regions. The key term in this statement is however “*the model predicts that...*”. It would be false to assume that this statement would be true for the real world. It is true for the statistical model, but it is quite unreasonable to assume that the effect would appear in the real world by exactly those terms. While the model does have implications for the real world, namely that it is likely that Cohesion policy does have a positive effect on the formation of a European identity, it would be wrong to interpret the values of the models literally. Besides all the problems that come with the model which are discussed in this section, it is just a model or a simulation, which when applied to real life will have very different consequences.

One more practical problem with the present models has been shortly outlined above. The fact that countries have such different effects of Cohesion policy on European identity suggests that there are confounding variables at play, that influence European identity instead of Cohesion policy investments. One very obvious one is provided by the idea of cognitive mobilization. Cohesion policy investments aim at increasing the general welfare of the citizens. By increasing the economic welfare, the general level of education is also expected to rise. Some Cohesion policy interventions also aim directly at increasing the educational level through funding educational programs. Following the cognitive mobilization theory, the more educated citizens are, the more likely they are to develop a positive attitude towards or identification with the EU. In that sense it would be education that increases the level of identification with the EU, which in turn is stimulated by EU investments. A direct effect of Cohesion policy on EU identity is under those considerations rather unlikely. While this study aimed at controlling for this by including regional GDP as a control variable, this again seems to be a fairly simple indicator of regional welfare. For reaching better results, including more control variables would be crucial. There are however some problems with including more control variables, which are also the reason why more variables were not implemented in this study.

First it is very difficult to receive sound comparable data on regional level across all European regions and across time. Even with only three variables in this study, the different regional territories in which the variables were measured created many difficulties in generating one single data set that has a consistent set of regions. A research project with the aim of including more variables such as

education, party ideologies or more sophisticated economic indicators would need either much more time and resources to recode the data or simply generate the data themselves. Second including more variables in a multi-level model with random slopes and random intercepts requires a lot of statistical considerations. If not chosen carefully, the computing capacities of conventional statistical software quickly reaches their limits, thus every variable should be chosen for good reason.

This discussion has some consequences for the reliability and validity of the study. Concerning the reliability, the present study provides a sufficient level of reliability. The items that were taken into account for the study were highly consistent over time, since the same question was repeatedly asked in the Eurobarometer surveys. Also, external validity can be considered to be good, as the sample sizes were large, and the results are accepted by the common significance criteria. A big problem concerns the internal validity, which is very low. The measurement problems of European identity have been discussed already, however they raise the question if the concept of European identity was actually measured by the surveys. At the end of this chapter, it should be highlighted that all results are only the results of statistical models. It is very difficult to express complex phenomena in statistical terms, and some might argue that it is impossible. This should always be kept in mind when talking about or using the results of this thesis.



## 6. Conclusion

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The analysis resulted in some evidence, that economic-utilitarian considerations has some influence on the citizens identity formation process. The positive significant regression coefficient in model II and the negative significant regression coefficient in model I show that increasing the Cohesion policy expenditure is positively correlated with the regional shares of citizens that identify both the EU and their home country and a negative correlation with the regional share of citizens that only identify with their nation. The negative values in model III can be explained by the measurement of the dependent variable and the following low values and small variety of the dependent variable in model I. It is not considered to contradict the overall research results. Therefore, hypothesis I, that Cohesion policy investments have a positive impact on European identity can be confirmed.

The regional distribution of the effect is more complex. While the effect of Cohesion policy on mixed identity is very different between the member states, it is very similar between regions in each country. While some regions fall out of this line, a more qualitative analysis reveals that regions, that have a strong regional separatist movement, party ideologies can play a greater role in this effect. The strong coherence of the effect among regions within countries suggest that the national level and the related characteristics are an important determinant on this effect. One factor seems to be the existing level of identifications: countries that have a smaller share of citizens that have a mixed identity are also countries in which Cohesion policy can have a greater difference, and vice versa.

So, what is the answer to the question that was posed in the title? Can money buy love? The answer is – as so often in social sciences - maybe. We have some evidence that Cohesion policy investments positively influence the level of the citizens' identification with the EU. But the results can be criticised from many viewpoints and there is much more work to be done until we could make such statements with greater confidence and precision. There are many conceptual and methodological issues that can be legitimately subject to criticism. They range from the argument, that the Moreno-question is an inadequate measurement of European identity, over statistical problems with low variety and low values in the independent variable to the uncertainty over other confounding variables.

Academics have only just started to recognize the relationship between Cohesion policy and European identity as a field of research, and this study should be regarded as the starting point for many more research questions. While other studies already acknowledged such a positive relationship between Cohesion policy and European identity, (Aiello, Brasili, & Reverberi, 2018; Osterloh, 2011; Verhaegen et al., 2014) this thesis for the first time introduced a European wide analysis of the effect. As a result of this European-wide perspective, it allowed to compare this effect between regions and countries, which opens the door for further investigations.

First it should be investigated, why the effect that was found in this study differs so much between countries. What factors influence the size of this effects and why are some countries exposed to a greater impact of Cohesion policy than others? When using a similar method as in this study, it would require including much more independent variables. This could also show whether there are confounding variables that produced the results in this analysis. Alternatively, a more comparative approach could be taken in order to compare some countries with each other with a more mixed set of methods. Secondly, the short discussion of examining some special autonomous regions could also motivate to exercise more case studies. Although qualitative case studies have only limited possibilities to test hypothesis, they can contribute to building theories and concepts. This remains extremely important, especially because the research area of Cohesion policy and European identity remains somehow undertheorized.

The results of this study should encourage practitioners, policy makers and European, national and regional civil servants to continue working on and improving the European regional policy. While many unsolved problems remain, ranging from corruption, inefficiency and unfair procedures, this thesis contributed to the understanding of the Cohesion policy's influence on a very important common good – European identity. This can serve as a powerful argument for future budgetary decision, especially in current debates where the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2020-2026 are well underway. In order to secure the wealth, the peace and the stability that the European Union brought to the European continent, a stable European institutional landscape and society is of utmost importance. Without having a common sense of identification among European citizens, this seems fairly impossible to maintain. Maintaining and fostering the European identity is thus very far from an utopian imagination of Brussels' elites and wealthy cosmopolitans. It is the breeding ground for a wealthy, prosperous and most importantly united Europe.

## 7. Annex: list of regions

Region	MS	Region	MS	Region	MS
Ile de France	FR	Emilia Romagna	IT	Vorarlberg	AUS
Champagne-Ardenne	FR	Toscana	IT	Tirol	AUS
Picardie	FR	Marche	IT	Salzburg	AUS
Haute-Normandie	FR	Umbria	IT	Ober-Österreich (Upper Austria)	AUS
Centre	FR	Lazio	IT	Steiermark (Styria)	AUS
Basse-Normandie	FR	Molisee Abruzzi	IT	Kärnten (Carynthia)	AUS
Bourgogne	FR	Campania	IT	Nieder-Österreich (Lower Austria)	AUS
Nord-Pas-de-Calais	FR	Puglia/Basilicata	IT	Burgenland	AUS
Lorraine	FR	Calabria	IT	Wien (Vienna)	AUS
Alsace	FR	Sicilia	IT	Cyprus	CY
Franche-Comté	FR	Sardegna	IT	Praha	CZE
Pays de la Loire	FR	Luxembourg	LU	Stredni Cechy	CZE
Bretagne	FR	Hovedstadsområdet (Copenhagen area)	DEN	Jihozapad	CZE
Poitou-Charentes	FR	Sjaelland, Lolland-Falster, Bornholm (excl hovedstadsområdet)	DEN	Severozapad	CZE
Aquitaine	FR	Jylland + Fyn	DEN	Severovýchod	CZE
Midi-Pyrénées	FR	Southern and Eastern	IE	Jihovýchod	CZE
Limousin	FR	Border, Midland and Western	IE	Stredni Morava	CZE
Rhône-Alpes	FR	UKC - North East	UK	Moravskoslezsko	CZE
Auvergne	FR	UKD - North West	UK	Latvia	LV
Languedoc-Roussillon	FR	UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber	UK	Lithuania	LT
Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur	FR	UKF - East Midlands	UK	Eesti	EST
Hainaut	BE	UKG - West Midlands	UK	Kozep-Magyarország (Central)	HU
Limburg	BE	UKH - East of England	UK	Eszak-Magyarország (North)	HU
Namur	BE	UKI - London	UK	Eszak-Alföld (North Great Plain)	HU
Oost-Vlaanderen	BE	UKJ - South East	UK	Del-Alföld (South Great Plain)	HU
West-Vlaanderen	BE	UKK - South West	UK	Del-Dunantul (South Transdanubia)	HU
Liege	BE	UKL - Wales	UK	Kozep-Dunantul (Central Transdanubia)	HU
Luxembourg	BE	UKM - Scotland	UK	Nyugat-Dunantul (West Transdanubia)	HU
Vlaams Brabant	BE	UKN - Northern Ireland	UK	Dolnoslaskie	PL
Antwerpen	BE	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki (East Macedonia and Thrace)	GR	Kujawsko-pomorskie	PL

Bruxelles	BE	Kentriki Makedonia kai Dytiki Makedonia	GR	Lubelskie	PL
Brabant wallon	NL	Thessalia (Thessaly)	GR	Lubuskie	PL
Groningen	NL	Ipeiros (Epirus)	GR	Lódzkie	PL
Friesland	NL	Peloponnisos kai Dytiki Sterea	GR	Malopolskie	PL
Drenthe	NL	Sterea Ellada + Attiki (Central Greece+athens)	GR	Mazowieckie	PL
Overijssel	NL	Kriti (Crete)	GR	Opolskie	PL
Gelderland	NL	Andalucia	ESP	Podkarpackie	PL
Flevoland	NL	Aragon	ESP	Podlaskie	PL
Utrecht	NL	Principado de Asturias	ESP	Pomorskie	PL
Noord Holland	NL	Illes Balears / Islas Baleares	ESP	Slaskie	PL
Zuid Holland	NL	Canarias	ESP	Swietokrzyskie	PL
Zeeland	NL	Castilla y Leon	ESP	Warminsko-mazurskie	PL
Noord Brabant	NL	Castilla - La Mancha	ESP	Wielkopolskie	PL
Limburg	NL	Cataluna	ESP	Zachodniopomorskie	PL
Schleswig-Holstein	GER	Extremadura	ESP	Bratislavský kraj	SLV
Hamburg	GER	Galicia	ESP	Západné Slovensko	SLV
Niedersachsen	GER	Comunidad de Madrid	ESP	Stredné Slovensko	SLV
Bremen	GER	Region de Murcia	ESP	Východné Slovensko	SLV
Nordrhein-Westfalen	GER	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	ESP	Zahodna Slovenija	SLO
Hessen	GER	La Rioja	ESP	Vzhodna Slovenija	SLO
Rheinland-Pfalz	GER	Comunidad Valenciana	ESP	Severozapaden	BG
Baden-Württemberg	GER	Cantabria	ESP	Severen tsentralen	BG
Bayern	GER	Pais Vasco	ESP	Severoiztochen	BG
Saarland	GER	Norte	PT	Yugoiztochen	BG
Berlin	GER	Centro	PT	Yugozapaden	BG
Brandenburg	GER	Lisboa	PT	Yuzhen tsentralen	BG
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	GER	Alentejo	PT	Nord-Est	RO
Sachsen	GER	Algarve	PT	Sud-Est	RO
Sachsen-Anhalt	GER	Lansi-Suomi (West Finland)	FI	Sud-Est	RO
Thüringen	GER	Helsinki-Uusimaa	FI	Sud-Vest	RO
Valle d'Aostae Piemonte	IT	Etela-Suomi (South Finland)	FI	Vest	RO
Liguria	IT	Pohjois- ja Ita-Suomi (North & East Finland)	FI	Nord-Vest	RO
Lombardia + Milano	IT	Rest of Sweden	SWE	Centru	RO
Trentino	IT	Stockholm area	SWE	Bucharest	RO
Veneto	IT	Göteborg	SWE		
Friuli, Venezia, Giulia	IT	Malmö area	SWE		

# 8. References

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## 8.1. Eurobarometer data

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