

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

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**PERCEIVE**

Perception and Evaluation of Regional and Cohesion Policies by Europeans and Identification with the Values of Europe

**Perception and Evaluation of Regional and Cohesion Policies by Europeans and Identification with the Values of Europe**

**PERCEIVE**

GA nr. 693529

**D 5.4 'Report of the comparative analysis of the correlation between topics emergent from regional discourses on the one hand, and the awareness and perceptions of the EU (from Eurobarometer) on the other hand'**

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## Table of contents

Summary.....	3
EU identity .....	5
Explanatory variables .....	8
<b>Media representation</b> .....	8
<b>Other Explanatory variables</b> .....	11
<b>Controls</b> .....	12
Methods.....	13
<b>Data</b> .....	13
<b>Measures</b> .....	13
<b>Models' specification</b> .....	17
Results.....	18
<b>European identification</b> .....	18
<b>Meanings of being European - live and work in other member countries</b> .....	21
<b>Meanings of being European - the Euro as common currency</b> .....	23
<b>Meanings of being European - Christian religion</b> .....	25
<b>Meanings of being European - common European flag</b> .....	27
<b>Meanings of being European - common history and culture</b> .....	29
Discussion .....	31
<b>Comparative discussion</b> .....	31
<b>Further reflecting on European identity and media representation</b> .....	33
References .....	37

## Summary

### SCOPE and NOVELTY

The report at hand focuses on the statistical test of an eventual relationship between media representation of EU regional cohesion policy, among other explanatory variables, and individuals' level of European identification as well as their different definitions of being European.

At present time, it is largely acknowledged that individuals do not possess an innate sense of being European, rather, the meaning of such status is socially constructed. Accordingly, extant research has explored the role of the media in shaping the opinions of the general public. However, only recently has research started focusing on the potential role of cohesion policy in shaping EU identity and many aspects of this phenomenon are still unexplored.

We claim that by extending knowledge in this still unfolding area our work contributes to the wider debate on European identity in several ways:

- a) by performing a media analysis in seven different countries we offer one of the first international evidences as most of the media analyses are conducted in individual national contexts;
- b) our study is based on a large ad-hoc designed survey which allows us to capture so far largely overlooked aspects of EU identity such as the multiplicity and synchronicity of levels – i.e. individual, regional and national – in a way that Eurobarometer-based research could not do so far;
- c) our survey also allowed us to explore in unprecedented depth the factors associated with different definitions of being European;
- d) we analyse media in a bottom-up way, that is, without using pre-coded frames of valence characterising most of extant research;
- e) along with standard interpretive techniques, we use formal methods for representing national media spaces such as topic modelling and sentiment analysis. We believe that this mixed method approach makes our study more replicable than purely qualitative ones, still, nuances and complexities of extracting meaning from text are better preserved than purely quantitative studies;

### EMPIRICAL DESIGN

Using data as well as media content indicators generated in previous activities of the PERCEIVE project, we have empirically explored the statistical association between several covariates on the one hand and European identification and meanings of being European on the other hand. We have tested this association through multilevel regression analyses.

## **MAIN RESULTS**

Our main aim in this study was to test statistically the significance of factors associating with citizens' level of European identification. In particular we were interested to the effect that policy representation in the medy might have had on European identification.

To this extent, our results indicate that:

a) the level of media representation of EU cohesion policy through topics which in the aggregate portray positively a "contribution to economy and society" positively and with strong significance correlates with levels of European identification in our sample.

b) the level of media representation of EU cohesion policy through topics which in the aggregate portray ambiguously or negatively implementation experiences or mirror "divisive themes" negatively and with moderate significance correlates with levels of European identification in our sample.

While this results is somehow commonsensical, this hypothesis has never been tested before through an empirical design like the one proposed here (see elements of novelty above).

Our results also constitute one of the first instances of testing the synergy among different levels of identification. In more detail we demonstrate that both regional and national identification positively and significantly associate with European identity.

As a secondary objective we wanted to statistically test the significance of mostly the same explanatory factors on the level of different elements constituting the definition of being European.

To this extent results are not entirely straightforward and will need more testin in future research. However thigs worked out better (more clearly) in the case in which we have intentionally "provoked" respondents by asking to which degree the "common Christian religion" can be considered constitutive of being European. We believe that models taking responses to this question as dependent variable can be used to disentangle some aspects of Euroscepticism.

## EU identity

We consider two aspects important throughout the report, namely: a.) the degree to which individuals see themselves as Europeans (i.e. membership in a social group), and b.) the meaning they attribute to being European (i.e. attainment to values such freedom, or reference to symbols such as the European flag).

Our theoretical framework – in its most basic foundations – builds on social psychological approaches to identity (see also Deliverable 5.1, Barberio et al., 2017a). More specifically, social identity theories provide the starting point for our conceptualising of European identification/identity.

In this vein, social identity serves as the perception of oneself as part of a larger group (or groups), and provides a link between the self and the group (Bergbauer, 2018, p.16). It is further understood as the *“part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group [...] together with the value and emotional significance of that membership”* (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). This self-perception entails further implications based on membership: questions of “who am I like?” call for questions of “who am I not like?” In this regard, social identities are always construed in relation to other social identities, and in- and out-group categorisations are made resulting from the perception of similarities and differences (Marcussen et al., 1999). European and national identities can then be regarded as examples in the sense that they denote social groups in which social identities are construed in relation to other social identities (Citrin & Sides, 2004; Herrmann & Brewer, 2004). We refer to this process as ‘identification’ (a) with a certain group, or in this specific case, the European Union, the Member State, or the region.

As regards the notion of ‘identity’ (b), we refer to identity as a social construct. While multiple persons might identify with the European Union, there are different perceptions of what constitutes European identity. Within this context, two main understandings of European identity have emerged, namely Europe as a cultural community, and Europe as a civic community (Bruter, 2003; see also Risse, 2010). Further understandings might entail Europe as formed against a ‘significant Other’ (Delanty, 1995) (potentially in view of religious backgrounds, see for instance Schneeberger, 2011 for the specific case of Turkey). Wodak and Boukala (2015) in a more discourse-oriented categorisation for instance distinguish European identity as national identity, as civic/post-national identity, and elite identity.

Ultimately, and mirroring the multiple theoretical approaches to EU identification and identity, there are no definite analytical instruments in research on European identity (Kaina & Karolewsky, 2008). In fact, empirical studies are spread across a large range, mostly disconnected from one another in view of methods, operationalisation, and measurement. Building on our introduction to social identity theory, we define European identity on the grounds of **(a) identification with the EU in view of multiple identities**, and **(b) meaning-making of European identity**. Both will be elaborated in the following.

### **(a) Identification with the EU: Multiplicity of identities**

In line with social identity theory (Bergbauer, 2018, p. 20), we assume that individuals can identify with multiple social groups. This naturally raises the issue of how citizens' identification with the EU might interfere with more locally-grounded identities (i.e. national and regional identity) and vice versa (Bruter, 2005). Risse (2004; see also Hermann & Brewer, 2004) specifically brings forward three different models explaining the interrelationship of multiple identities, namely: **nested/layered identities, cross-cutting identities, and the 'marble cake model' of multiple identities**. Nested identities comprise layered identities in the sense that a regional identity might be nested in a national identity, which then again is nested in a sense of European identity<sup>1</sup>. Cross-cutting identities on the other hand presume that members of one identity group do not necessarily identify with another identity layer entirely. In this sense, one can feel both a national and a European sense of identity, but not all who identify as national will inevitably identify as EU citizen. Lastly, the marble cake model assumes that identities cannot be "*neatly separated on different levels*" (Risse, 2004, p.153) in the sense of nested, or cross-cutting identities. Rather, identity components may be influenced by or intertwined with each other (see Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001).

In this regard, most research on European identity has focalised the relationship of European and national identities - not least due to Eurobarometer data covering questions at EU and national level. Data indeed suggests that European citizens identify with both their national community and with the EU (Risse, 2003, Polyakova & Fligstein, 2016). More specifically, Eurobarometer data seems to indicate a large number of citizens for whom a national identity is predominant, but a European identity is present too (in the sense of 'nation first, Europe second'). While, up until 2010, this group has grown smaller (Polyakova and Fligstein, 2016), it has recently reached the pre-crisis levels of the 2000s again (Risse, 2014). In fact, most recent Standard Eurobarometer suggests that most Europeans identify with their nation mostly, and the EU second (53 per cent); followed by nationality only (37 per cent) (European Commission, 2016, Standard Eurobarometer 86, November 2016).

The following question has been elaborated in Deliverable 1.3 (Charron & Bauhr, 2017) to capture citizens' identification with the European Union. While answer options included identification with the region (a), the country (b), and Europe (c), only option c was consulted for the dependent variable: **Q9.c (Multiplicity of identities):** *On a 0-10 scale, with '0' being 'I don't identify at all, and '10' being 'I identify very strongly', how strongly you identify yourself with the following?: Europe*

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, we refer to 'EU identity' and 'European identity' interchangeably.

## **(b) The meaning of EU identity**

There are multi-dimensional conceptualisations of what constitutes European identity (Kaina & Karolewsky, 2008). In this sense, there are different understandings of what the substance of a common European identity is. Bruter (2005) for instance describes both **civic and cultural components** of political identities: a civic identity as based on identification with a political structure, rights, or rules; and a cultural identity based on a certain culture, social similarities, values, ethics or religion (p. 12). Rather than thinking of European identity exclusively as one or the other, he describes both civic and cultural components as components thereof. Moreover, he finds that European citizens specifically distinguish between Europe as a cultural/historical space and the EU incorporating Europe as a political entity (Bruter, 2003).

Related to this distinction are **symbols** of the EU, generally referring to cultural rather than civic components (Bruter, 2005). In this sense, a flag, an anthem, or a 'national day' all play into modelling the EU after the traditional model of a State (resembling national systems). Moreover, this set of symbolic initiatives is set in place by the EU deliberately aiming at creating a sense of common belonging (Sassatelli, 2002).

Further connotations are made with regard to Europe and a **'significant Other'** (Hall, 1996; Neumann, 1999), instanced for example by questions of EU enlargement. Schneeberger (2011) in the specific case of Turkish enlargement emphasises the role of religion (hence linking to a sense of cultural identity based on culture, social similarities, values, or religion) in view of identity, but proposes that Europe's historical transformation as well as its diversity speak against claims of Europe defined as Christian unity.

The following question has been elaborated in Deliverable 1.3 to capture the meaning of being European/a sense of European identity: **Q10 (meaning of EU identity):** *On a scale from 0-10, where '0' means "not at all important" and '10' means "very important", how important are the following for you in terms of 'being European'?*

a. *The right for all EU citizens to live and work in any other EU country*

Bruter (2005) captures components of a civic European identity through reference to EU rights and liberties, such as: *"the right to travel to another EU country without passing through customs/having to show your passport"* (p. 106).

b. *Having the common Euro currency*

The Euro has been studied as both maker of a European economic union and an identity marker of a common EU identity (Roth, 2014; e.g. Fornäs, 2008). Risse (2003) refers to the Euro as symbol which citizens identify with (i.e. an identity marker). Hymans (2004) similarly describes the common currency as encompassing European values.

c. *The Christian religion*



Christian religion plays into cultural identity connotations of religion, ethnicity, and history (Bruter, 2005) (particularly important with regard to questions of EU enlargement; see Castiglione, 2009).

d. *Having a common European flag*

Bruter (2005) refers to the European flag as symbol of European integration. When it comes to distinguishing categories of symbols of Europe (p.85), he uses the European flag to showcase different perceptions thereof. For one, it fits the idea of a nation-state with an apparent civic value, but it comprises ethical meanings conveying cultural values too.

e. *Sharing a common European history and culture*

The sharing of history and culture is almost a clear-cut definition of Bruter's cultural identity components and have been used in instances of "*sharing a common heritage*" (Bruter, 2005, p.107) or "*a common European history*" (p. 108).

## **Explanatory variables**

### **Media representation**

We relied on newspaper articles to analyse the impact of media representation of cohesion policy within the European framework on identification with the EU. Social construction of reality in this regard is performed in media through the struggles deployed by agents, institutions and meaning (Gurevitch & Levy, 1985), and "*in the mobilization of legitimacy, the media simultaneously acts as a stage and a key player*" (Meyer & Höllerer, 2010, p. 1245).

Newspapers, in particular, provide "*clues as to what elites are thinking and doing*" (DiMaggio et al., 2013, p. 573), as their coverage of topics depends on the attention that is devoted by institutional agents to actions, debate and legislative proposals (Janssen et al., 2008; Molotch & Lester, 1974; Reese, 1991). Specifically, there are at least five factors that explain how media coverage of events can shape collective understanding and meanings diffusion (as reported by DiMaggio et al., 2013): i) *priming of existing schematic representations*, as reported discourses may buttress existing understandings (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987); ii) *development of new representations*, as topic references may create new meanings associations (Price & Tewksbury, 1997); iii) *integration with broader schemata*, when information regarding a new or unknown topic resonates with broader worldviews (Feldman, 2003); iv) *indirect influence through selective re-telling*, as readers often communicate media representations in their daily discussion, thereby reinforcing them (Bird, 2011), and v) *proxy value*, as newspapers tend to report what opinion leaders propose regarding topics under discussion (Boczkowski, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).



Our focus on newspapers builds on the fact that the media are the primary source of information for the majority of European citizens (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009). As noted in COHESIFY research paper 3 (Triga & Vadratsikas, 2017), then, communication scholars agree on the importance of the impact of public communication on popular support for European integration and the construction of European identity. European identity is treated by Olausson (2010) as a discursive construct that is embedded and concealed in media discourses. This identity is formulated unintentionally as an established discursive habit and is affected by the ways in which the EU is depicted by media.

Bruter (2003), as discussed, distinguishes a civic and a cultural dimension of identity. The former entails identification with Europe as a political system; the latter deals with identification with cultural symbols, that reflect on the perceived sense of belonging to a human community. His paper shows that both components can be affected independently by media, and that both regard identification with the EU. News concerning the EU affects individuals' perceptions on the political system, and thus the civic component of identity. On the contrary, exposure to the symbols of the EU provides citizens with shared images and a sense of belonging to a human community; mobilising their cultural identification with the EU. Overall, positive and negative news regarding the EU generate positive and negative evaluations respectively, while different stimuli affect different aspects of the subjects' identity.

## Topics

In a first instance, we operationalise media representation using the following two variables: i) Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society; and ii) Divisive themes.

The way European affairs are presented may affect citizen's identification. European identity, in particular, can be positively correlated to a national one, if Europe is depicted in positive terms. In general, the more positive images of Europe are, the greater the degree of identification with the EU (Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001). A relevant stream of research analyses the impact of framing regarding the EU and citizens' feelings towards the union. The assumption is that positive assessments of the EU and its policies lead to positive citizen attitudes towards the EU and, thus, promote a sense of European identity (Vliegenthart et al., 2008). For example, Kandyla and De Vreese (2011) studied the media coverage of news related to the EU common foreign, security and defence policy: as this policy was depicted by media in positive terms, a potentially positive impact on citizen attitudes was possible.

We capture positive images conveyed by media regarding cohesion policy through the variable **"Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society"**. We describe in the following data section the way we constructed this variable. Nonetheless, as frames used by media may affect citizens' identification with the EU, it is important to focus on both positively and negatively charged frames, as they can have significant implications on citizens' attitudes

(De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Powell, 2009). Several authors focused on troubling aspects of EU coverage: journalists for instance often do not cover EU affairs that are deemed insignificant, and yet lament a lack of transparency in the EU decision making process (Jochen et. al, 2003). In general, as negatively charged frames may engender low levels of identification with the EU, we capture troubling themes using the variable **“Divisive themes”**. We describe in the following data section the way we constructed this variable.

## **Sentiment**

We assume that another way to characterise the contribution of cohesion policy media representation to shaping citizens’ EU identity operates through “generalised” sentiments. A “feedback effect” between policy and public opinion has been long argued about (i.e. Zaller, 1992; Campbell, 2012). More recently, the idea of “generalised sentiments” has been introduced to this debate. For example, Flores (2017) recently studied the impact of an anti-immigrant law passed in Arizona in 2010 on sentiments traced on tweets regarding immigrants. The author finds that the policy negatively affects the average sentiment of social media discourse about immigrants, however, this has not to be attributed to shifting attitudes toward immigrants, but to the mobilisation of different actors and voices on the topic.

In a similar vein, we are interested in exploring whether an association can be traced between sentiments (i.e. positive vs. negative) characterising the national discourses on EU cohesion policy emerging in newspapers on the one hand, and citizens’ EU identification and definitions of being European on the other hand.

For this purpose we have created two types of variables: (a) the average topic sentiment per country, and (b) the sentiment associated with the most used topic per country.

Based on the evidence reported above, the two variables we produced do not need to be interpreted as measuring the attitudes of the general public about the EU and cohesion policy. Rather, the vocabulary used in the news is to depict that “what is being said on” EU policies is somehow sentiment/emotion-loaded.

## **Vocabulary structure of topics**

Finally, concerning media representation of EU policies, we are interested in exploring whether structural characteristics of national media spaces as “networks of topics” significantly relate with citizens’ EU identification and definitions of being European.

In our previous work on the topic we have developed a representation of national media spaces as networks in which the nodes are topics and the links are shared vocabulary between topics. We have used this modelling approach in PERCEIVE’s deliverable 5.3

(Barberio et al., 2017c) to assess if meaningful groups of topics can be found in the discourse about EU regional cohesion policy happening in newspapers of different countries.

While we have not yet theoretically grounded this approach, following the encouraging empirical results of our previous work we produced a simple variable to measure the overall degree to which topics in a country share the same vocabulary. We call this variable “density” as in network analytical terms shared vocabulary produces links between topics hence more shared vocabulary means denser networks of topics.

As anticipated, we do not have a conceptual way of interpreting this variable yet, still, we can look at it as a sort of control for media representation of policy to be discussed after the comparative results are available.

## **Other Explanatory variables**

### **National and regional identification**

Because the interrelationship of national, regional, and EU identification follows different conceptual models (see section on EU identity, (a) Identification with the EU: Multiplicity of identities, i.e. nested/layered identities, cross-cutting identities, and the ‘marble cake model’ of multiple identities), there are different underlying assumptions regarding their interdependence.

**Conceptually**, Inglehart (1977) suggests a positive relationship between national and European identity, and a negative relationship between regional and European identity based on the premise that European and national identity both presuppose a certain degree of cosmopolitanism. Assuming nested identities, Lawler (1992) argues that a proximity rule takes effect, in which identity with lower-order nested groups is more likely when compared to higher-order groups – except when the higher-order group provides better for its members. Bergbauer (2018) builds on social psychology research (e.g. Brewer, 2001) and argues that national and European attachments should either be uncorrelated or reinforcing each other if the case that citizens believe their country to play an important role, or gain from European integration, or if being European is part of the national identity. Likewise, she argues for the contrary in the sense that national sovereignty and integrity object to identification with both the nation and Europe. As a result, those who identify with the nation, will identify less with Europe.

**Empirically**, there is inconclusive evidence regarding the interrelationship between the degree of identification with Europe and the degree of national and regional identification (Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2011). Literature has partially pinpointed national and EU identities to be **replacing or conflicting each other**: while Inglehart (1977) finds positive correlation between national and European identity, he showcases negative correlation

between regional and European identity. Duchesne and Frogner (1995), too, find a negative relationship between regional and European identity. Hooghe and Marks (2005) maintain that those who perceive their national identity exclusively are considerably more prone to Euroscepticism than those with multiple, nested identities. Others have described the two to **co-exist in harmony**, potentially even re-inforcing one another: Diez Medrano & Gutierrez (2001) show that both regional and national nested identities in Spain are compatible with a European identity. Citrin & Sides (2004) demonstrate that maintaining a European identity does not result in eroding attachment to one's national identity. Risse (2014) too argues that a gradual Europeanisation of identities is observable. Bergbauer (2018) finds strong support for a positive relationship between national identity and European identity.

In light of the inconclusive findings, both a positive relationship between regional/national and EU identity, and a negative relationship between regional/national and EU identity can be expected.

## Controls

Research on European identity has produced a variety of control variables which have become standard practice. More specifically, in this report we largely build on Bergbauer (2018) and Bruter (2006) to measure various social, political and demographic control variables. In this vein, we control for the following determinants affecting European identity: **gender, age, education level, area of residence, occupation, income level, political orientation, and mobility**.

**Age** is negatively related to having a European identity with younger people described as feeling more European (Citrin & Sides, 2004; Duchesne & Frogner, 1995; Fligstein, 2008). Additionally, we controlled for **gender**, with men being more likely to think of themselves as Europeans when compared to women (Duchesne & Frogner, 1995; Fligstein, 2008; Gabel, 1998).

Using four-category items, we control for the **education level**, with respondents with higher education levels more likely to view themselves as being European (Fligstein, 2008; see also Diez Medrano and Gutierrez [2001] who control for education based on Inglehart's argument of more educated respondents being more receptive to the abstract notion of European identity). Moreover, politically aware individuals are less susceptible to media manipulation (Zaller, 1992). Similarly, **occupation** and **income level** have been controlled in view of individual endowment with resources (Kaina & Karolewski, 2009).

As regards **political orientation** (by means of self-identification), Fligstein (2008) for instance describes those who identify themselves as being more right-wing in their political orientation as less likely to inhibit a European identity, and be more nationalist in their orientation (see also Citrin & Sides, 2004; Risse, 2010). We control for political orientation through multiple items capturing political and social values (rather than using a left to right

categorisation) as well as their political commitment (in the sense of having voted in multiple elections).

As regards **area of residence**, we control for city dwellers as more likely to feel European when compared to small town-residents (Kuhn, 2012). The same is true for **mobility** (in the sense of living in the same place for a certain period of time), in which mobile citizens are more open to European identity than immobile citizens.

We further control for a set of variables more closely related to cohesion policy and consisting of **satisfaction with the current economic situation in the region, perception of the economic situation** when compared to five years ago, as well as **economic indicators such as the GDP in 2014, Objective-1-status, and the amount of EU funding received**.

## Methods

### Data

We use data from three different sources:

- Data to measure variables at the individual level are taken from a European-wide survey carried out in PERCEIVE's WP1 and described in Deliverable 1.3;
- Secondary data (i.e. Eurostat and Eurobarometer) clustered at regional level stems from the database described in Deliverables 1.2;
- Data helping us to measure media representation of EU cohesion policy and taking the forms of "topic models", "sentiment analysis scores" and "semantic network statistics" are described in PERCEIVE's Deliverables 5.2 and 5.3.

We point the reader to these sources for a detailed description of how data has been collected and organised into databases. Here we should mention that as our main independent variables, those on media representation, are based on PERCEIVE main national samples (Italy, Poland, Romania, UK, Sweden, Austria and Spain), other data-sets (i.e. PERCEIVE citizens' survey and regional dataset) filtered to include only these cases as well.

### Measures

In order to measure the impact of media representation of EU cohesion policy, we created two variables based on the topics we previously elicited. In particular, and as described in Deliverables 5.2 and 5.3 for each case of our sample, we collected newspaper articles from five to six sources to elicit the meanings deployed in the public sphere. We then elicited a 20-topic model for each Member State, which we described in the previous Deliverable 5.3.

To create explanatory variables based on the topic relevance in national contexts, we comparatively analysed the topic models created, and grouped topics into two specific sets. We then transformed each set into an explanatory variable.

- **Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society:** This set encompasses topics that refer to the mainly positive effects of cohesion funds on specific national industries. Industries affected differ from case to case: for instance, in the Italian case we found a topic dealing with the relationship between structural funds and employment and another dealing with structural funds and the development of the domestic productive system. In the Austrian case, a topic focuses on the effect of cohesion policy on renewable energies, while in the Polish case a topic focuses on the effect of EU-funded projects for sewage systems and water treatment.
- **Divisive themes:** This set comprises topics dealing with critical issues, such as the political mismanagement of funds, or fraud and corruption related to cohesion policy. Moreover, this set encompasses topics referring to sensitive topics such as EU constraints of national economic policies.

All topics that do not belong with these sets were grouped in a set termed “other”, these latter topics did not feed the models. The following table describes, for each Member State, the topics that constitute each set<sup>2</sup>.

Table 1 – Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society

	<b>Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society</b>
Italy	Topic 0 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT Topic 2 – EUROPE IN THE REGIONAL DISCOURSE ON FISHING AND AGRICULTURE Topic 4 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE OF SOUTHERN REGIONS Topic 7 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS Topic 8 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES Topic 10 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND SOLIDARITY Topic 14 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND SUSTAINABILITY Topic 15 – EUROPE IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE OF CALABRIA REGIO Topic 17 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP Topic 18 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'MEZZOGIORNO
Austria	Topic 9 – EVENTS IN AUSTRIA Topic 10 – RENEWABLE ENERGIES Topic 11 – AUSTRIAN INDUSTRIAL SECTORS AND COMPANIES (changes of production, turnover, clients over the years) Topic 13 – (THE BENEFITS OF) R&D Topic 15 – HEALTH INSURANCE RESTRUCTURING IN AUSTRIA Topic 18 – OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES, COHESION POLICY IN AUSTRIA: Topic 19 – (COHESION POLICY IN) BURGENLAND
Poland	Topic 0 – INCREASE OF GDP Topic 1 – EU FUNDS FOR SMEs/COMPANIES Topic 2 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS (REGIONS, INFRASTRUCTURE ENVIRONMENT) Topic 3 – PRENATAL HEALTH CARE PROJECT

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough description of each topic please refer to Deliverable 5.3.

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

	<p>Topic 4 – POLISH SCIENCE/NATIONAL PRIORITY PROJECTS</p> <p>Topic 5 – CAP, RDP, EU FUNDS FOR AGRICULTURE</p> <p>Topic 7 – COHESION POLICY</p> <p>Topic 8 – ERDF FOR ROAD</p> <p>Topic 9 –EU GRANTS FOR SMEs FOR INNOVATION, ADVISORY</p> <p>Topic 11 – STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS/PLANNING</p> <p>Topic 13 – WATER CONSUMPTION AND USE (EU FUNDS FOR SEWAGE SYSTEMS, WATER TREATMENT STATION, WATER POOL)</p> <p>Topic 14 – CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT, FESTIVAL</p> <p>Topic 15 – BANK'S CREDIT LINES FOR FIRMS</p> <p>Topic 17 – UNEMPLOYED AND YOUTH</p>
Romania	<p>Topic 1 –INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Topic 2 – EU FUNDING</p> <p>Topic 6 – EU AND NATIONAL BUDGET FUNDED PROJECTS</p> <p>Topic 9 – INFRASTRUCTURE:</p> <p>Topic 10 – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Topic 12 – EDUCATION AND TRAINING</p> <p>Topic 15 – AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Topic 18 – CULTURE AND HERITAGE</p>
Sweden	<p>Topic 0 – EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>Topic 2 – AUTO INDUSTRY INVESTMENTS</p> <p>Topic 15 – AUTOMOBILE POLICY</p> <p>Topic 16 – SOCIAL WELFARE AND TAXES</p> <p>Topic 17 – ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Topic 19 – SWEDISH REGIONAL POLICY INVESTMENTS</p>
Spain	<p>Topic 3 – AREAS AND KEY AGENTS TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE EU FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Topic 4 – SOCIETY AND SERVICES</p> <p>Topic 5 – AGRARIAN SECTOR</p> <p>Topic 9 – SPANISH ECONOMY</p> <p>Topic 10 – REGIONAL COHESION FUNDS</p> <p>Topic 11 – PROJECTS CO-FINANCED WITH FUNDS</p> <p>Topic 12 – EUROPEAN POLICY RELATED TO COMMUNITY FUNDS</p>
UK	<p>Topic 10 – INVESTMENT IN ESSEX REGION</p> <p>Topic 12 – LOCAL EVENTS</p> <p>Topic 15 – TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION</p>

Table 2 – Divisive themes

	<b>Divisive themes</b>
Italy	<p>Topic 1 – DIVISIVE THEMES IN THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL DEBATE</p> <p>Topic 9 – STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND CRIME</p> <p>Topic 12 – EUROPEAN CONSTRAINTS FOR NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY</p> <p>Topic 19 – POLITICAL MISMANAGING OF EU FUNDS</p>
Austria	<p>Topic 0 – COHESION POLICY BENEFICIARIES OR EU-SKEPTIC COUNTRIES Cohesion Policy beneficiaries or EU-sceptic countries</p> <p>Topic 1 – EU MEMBERSHIP/BORDERS</p> <p>Topic 16 – (ECONOMIC) CRISIS AND NOTIONS OF HARDSHIP</p>
Poland	-
Romania	<p>Topic 5 – EU FUNDING PROBLEMS</p> <p>Topic 8- BUDGETARY DEFICIT</p> <p>Topic 11 – CORRUPTION</p> <p>Topic 19 – EU FUNDS MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY</p>
Sweden	<p>Topic 3 – EUROPEAN FINANCIAL CRISIS</p> <p>Topic 9 – HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS</p> <p>Topic 13 – PROJECTS FOR ROMA INCLUSION IN SWEDISH REGIONS</p>



PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

Spain	Topic 6 - MISUSE OF EU FUNDING Topic 14 - ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE EU
UK	Topic 7 - UK REBATE Topic 9 - AUDITING OF EU BUDGET Topic 13 - EUROZONE BAILOUTS

For each set and each national case, we then produced the average use of the topics to construct a variable. The following table thus presents the average prominence of each set for the national cases.

Table 3 – Average prominence of each national set

State	Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society	Divisive themes
Italy	49,3%	23,9%
Austria	25,8%	11,4%
Poland	80,6%	0%
Romania	36,9%	25,9%
Sweden	23,7%	13,5%
Spain	38,5%	9,1%
Uk	11,7%	19,7%

Finally, we constructed two variables by defining a numerical variable based on the percentage. In example, regarding the variable ‘Effects of cohesion policy on economy and society’, the level associated with Poland is 0,8 out of 1, being that the average presence of that set amounts to 80,6% in our sample.

As for the sentiment characterising national media spaces, our metric approach has been very “straightforward”: with each topic made of 100 words, we have automatically translated those words in English and then tagged them with a sentiment label – positive vs. negative – according to their match with status of the art pre-built lexicons (see Deliverable 3.3, Barberio et al., 2017d for more details). This procedure gave us a count of both positive and negative words per topic. The ratio of negative/positive counts has then been computed for each topic. Finally, the average ratio across all 20 topics per country gave us our first variable called “NpAll”, while the negative/positive ratio referred to the most used topic per country (see Deliverable 5.3) gave us the second sentiment related variable “NpTop”.

Concerning the measurement of national media spaces as network we used only a simple metric of the overall connectivity referred to as density. While a formal definition can be found in standard social network analysis manuals (i.e. Wasserman & Faust, 1994), this measures can be summarised as the count of links between topics (NI) over the number of topics minus 1 (NT-1) in a national media space.

## Models' specification

We specified six regression models to explore the statistical associations among variables of interest in this report. The main difference among the models resides in the fact that the first one has the level of European identification as a dependent variable, while the remaining five have different possible definitions of being European (the dependent variable of each model might serve as independent of other models). For this use, PERCEIVE survey's (Deliverable 1.3) question 10.c was used: *"People have many different opinions about what 'being European' means. On a scale from 0-10, where '0' means 'not at all important' and '10' means 'very important', how important are the following for you in terms of 'being European'?"*

- a.) *The right for all EU citizens to live and work in any other EU country,*
- b.) *Having the common Euro currency*
- c.) *The Christian religion*
- d.) *Having a common European flag*
- e.) *Sharing a common European history and culture.*

In order to analyse the relationship between explanatory factors among which media representation of policy on the one hand and European identification and definitions of being European on the other hand, controlling at the same time for individual and context characteristics, we use a linear approximation for the outcome variables (measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 10) and consider a multiple linear regression model:

$$y_{ir} = \beta_0 + \sum_{k=1}^K \beta_k x_{kir} + \varepsilon_{ir} \quad (1)$$

where  $y_{ir}$  is the response variable for individual  $i$  in region  $r$ ,  $x_{kir}$  are  $K$  covariates (which include individual characteristics as well as context variables at regional level) and  $\varepsilon_{ir}$  are the error terms. However, to account for correlation among individual responses in the same region, we can split the total residual error into two error components:

$$\varepsilon_{ir} = \zeta_r + u_{ir} \quad (2)$$

The first,  $\zeta_r$ , is shared between individuals of the same region and  $u_{ir}$  is unique for each individual. Substituting (2) into the multiple regression (1) we obtain a linear random intercept model with covariates:

$$y_{ir} = (\beta_0 + \zeta_r) + \sum_{k=1}^K \beta_k x_{kir} + u_{ir} \quad (3)$$

that is a regression model with a regional specific intercept  $(\beta_0 + \zeta_r)$ . The random intercept  $\zeta_r$  is not estimated along with the fixed parameters  $\beta_k$  (supposed constant across regions) but its variance is estimated as well as the variance of the error terms  $u_{ir}$ . This is the simplest example of a linear mixed effect model where there are both fixed and random effects (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2012).

The random intercept (or level-2 residual)  $\zeta_r$  is a region specific error component, constant across individuals in a region, which represents the combined effect of omitted region characteristics or unobserved heterogeneity at the regional level. Because it is shared by all responses for the same region, it induces within-region dependence among the total residuals  $\varepsilon_{ir}$ , i.e. between respondents located in the same region caused by unobservable factors. The model is estimated via the Maximum Likelihood method (see Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2012, for further details).

## Results

### European identification

We start discussing results of testing the association between explanatory variables and the extent to which respondents identify themselves with Europe. In order to interpret the findings made, table 4 below showcases the estimated coefficients of covariates on the level of identification with Europe.

As far as media representation is concerned, model 1, which includes only the effects of the two topic-based covariates (CPEcSoc and DivTh) shows a rather commonsensical result, that is the presence of discourse about the impact of cohesion policy for economy and society associates positively with European identification while the presence of divisive topics entails a contrary relation.

In model 2 (the one which in the end was selected for overall interpretation), discourse on the “effects of cohesion policy for economy and society” has a moderately significant positive effect on European identification. Discourse on “divisive topics” remains negatively related to European identification, however significance disappears when introducing negative vocabulary (NpAll). This latter effect however becomes strongly significant when using NpTop instead of NpAll.

The negative vocabulary ratio across all topics (NpAll) has a significant negative association with European identification. As in the case of divisive topics this result could be simplistically interpreted as: where negative sentiment is generalised in national discourse, citizens identify with Europe less than the average in our sample.

Density of national semantic spaces as networks of topics is not significant (model 4). Introducing this variable (in model 4) decreases the significance of DivTh from strong to moderate.

Interestingly, identification at the national (q9\_2) and regional level (q9\_1) suggests a positive and highly significant relationship to European identification. Further, those who understand being European (see q10) as “the right to live and work in any other EU country”, having a common currency, and a common flag, identify to a larger extent (highly significant), while religion (negative) and a common history (positive) suggest less significant effects.

While it is less the focus of this study, the influence of individual characteristics partly mirrors those in extant literature (see also Deliverable 2.2, Lopez-Bazo & Royuela, 2017). Education is thus positively associated with European identification in the sense that the higher the education, the more likely a citizen will feel as European. The level of identification for those having graduated from university is on average 0.35 points greater than those having less than a secondary school degree. The per capita GDP is also positively and strongly associated to identification with Europe, however this effect is only present in model two.

Interestingly, however, our findings suggest that women identify with Europe to a larger extent than men – contradicting earlier presumptions following Duchesne & Frogner (1995) or Fligstein (2008). As regards age and occupation, no statistically significant association is observed. As regards residency, having lived in the same place for a longer period of time is negatively related to identifying with Europe (highly significantly so), while living in a large city suggests a significant positive relation therewith.

As regards political and social values, political orientation (q11-q14) is significant only for those who have voted in the last two EU parliamentary elections; in the sense that it is positively related to identifying with Europe. The same is true for general openness and trust in people entailing a significantly positive relationship. As expected, more restrictive viewpoints regarding immigration are negatively (significantly) linked to European identification. This equally applies to the wish for a strong leader suggesting a highly significant negative relationship.

Table 4 – European identification

<b>Dependent q9_3: European identification</b> - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional level
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PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

Variable	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4
q9_3				
Gender (female=1)	0.2006**	0.1987**	0.1998**	0.1991**
Age	-0.0186	-0.019	-0.0187	-0.0189
age2	0.0003	0.0003	0.0003	0.0003
Education (reference category : less than secondary)				
2	0.1827	0.1801	0.1807	0.1799
3	0.3592***	0.3565***	0.3569***	0.3552***
4	0.4623***	0.4519***	0.4587***	0.4529***
Occupation (reference category: public sector)				
private s..	0.1849	0.1867	0.1856	0.1863
self empl..	0.0681	0.0676	0.0648	0.0645
Unemployed	-0.0053	0.0115	0.0084	0.014
Housewif..	-0.112	-0.1058	-0.1075	-0.1054
Pensioner..	0.0963	0.0933	0.0933	0.0924
Student ..	0.0846	0.0881	0.0932	0.0942
Other	0.1948	0.1875	0.1898	0.1861
Areatp (refere categ. Rural area)				
2	0.0754	0.079	0.0823	0.0831
3	0.1504**	0.1430*	0.1627**	0.1580**
Income				
Medium	-0.0962	-0.0938	-0.0902	-0.0902
High	0.0392	0.0364	0.0351	0.0348
Don't kno..	0.1099	0.0993	0.1033	0.099
years_area	-0.0093***	-0.0092***	-0.0094***	-0.0093***
Vote (ref. category: Neither)				
Once	0.1496	0.1507	0.1507	0.1515
Both times	0.1838*	0.1888**	0.1917**	0.1934**
(d/k-ref~d)	-0.1396	-0.1319	-0.1322	-0.1297
q11	0.0435**	0.0437**	0.0426**	0.0428**
q12	-0.0277**	-0.0268*	-0.0283**	-0.0278*
q13	-0.0108	-0.012	-0.011	-0.0114
q14	-0.0409***	-0.0409***	-0.0388***	-0.0392***
q16_1	-0.0673***	-0.0652***	-0.0668***	-0.0659***
q16_2	-0.0621**	-0.0614**	-0.0584**	-0.0586**
q16_3	0.0323	0.0318	0.0325	0.0323
Satisfy (Yes, NO)	0.0992	0.0879	0.0876	0.0846
Perception of economic situation (refer category: better)				
About the..	-0.1045	-0.0983	-0.1066	-0.1026
Worse	-0.2003**	-0.1896*	-0.1976**	-0.1927*
GDP_14	0.0019	0.0036***	0.0008	0.0016
object1_14	0.1091	0.1704	-0.0291	0.0093
SFund2	0.0008	0.0006	0.0009	0.0008
q9_2	0.3576***	0.3576***	0.3569***	0.3570***
q9_1	0.1033***	0.1030***	0.1037***	0.1036***
q1_1	-0.0702	-0.0611	-0.0634	-0.06
q1_2	-0.0322	-0.0358	-0.0419	-0.042
q1_3	0.2670***	0.2671***	0.2718***	0.2708***
q1_4	0.0242	0.0312	0.0305	0.0329
q10_1	0.1733***	0.1722***	0.1734***	0.1730***
q10_2	0.1489***	0.1498***	0.1500***	0.1503***
q10_3	-0.0233*	-0.0243*	-0.0243*	-0.0246*
q10_4	0.1051***	0.1056***	0.1054***	0.1055***
q10_5	0.0392*	0.0416*	0.0405*	0.0414*
CPEcSoc	0.6796*	0.9493**	0.083	0.1614

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

DivTh	-1.0088*	-0.4294	-1.6013***	-1.5224**
nPall		-1.9749*		
nPTop			-0.8000*	-0.7881*
Density				0.6038
_cons	0.4194	1.0653	1.3949*	1.098
Statistics				
N	8531	8531	8531	8531
LogLikelihood	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04
chi2	9.20E+03	1.20E+04	9.40E+03	1.30E+04
P	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.0102**	0.0094**	0.0094**	0.0091**
legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01				

### Meanings of being European - live and work in other member countries

In a second battery of models, we have tested the association between media representation of European cohesion policy (at the national level) and individuals' definitions of being European.

Table 5 below reports results for the possibility to “live and work in other EU countries” as a dependent variable. We regard such possibility of movement as a part of the very definition of the EU value of “freedom”. We interpret model 4 where most of the variables of interest (media representation) are significant.

The presence of topics on the consequences of cohesion policy for economy and society (CPEcSoc) has a moderately significant positive relationship with the value that individuals would assign to freedom/mobility as constitutive of EU identity. This result seems reasonable as the mobility/freedom EU value per se might have been more central in early years' discussions about EU integration in general, moreover, it only moderately relates to the specifics of cohesion policy.

Interesting too is the fact that both the extent to which divisive themes (DivTh) and the ratio of negative sentiment vocabulary in the most used national topic (nPTop) have a positive and highly significant impact on individuals defining EU identity in terms of the civic value of mobility/freedom. This result can be ascribed to the fact that when the debate about policies and actions of the EU is “heating up”, voices in defence of the EU tend to recur to stress how basic EU values have translated into tangible advantages for all citizens. Therefore it seems reasonable that people would frame EU identity rather in terms of EU values (i.e. mobility) when the divisive themes and negative sentiments are characterising media representation of EU policy.

As regards other explanatory variables European identification (q9\_3) suggests a positive and highly significant relationship to the understanding of European identity as “the right for all EU citizens to live and work in any other EU country”. The same is true (although to a lesser extent) for regional identification.

As expected, wishing for more restrictions regarding immigration entails a negative (and strongly significant) relationship – which makes sense in view of mobility and immigration restrictions counteracting each other. Similarly, believing that national government should reduce income equalities within the country is positively (and highly significantly) related to the “mobility”-understanding of Europe.

As regards institutional quality (q16\_2), a perceived low institutional quality at the national level suggests a highly significant positive relationship. Perceived pessimistic or “approximately the same” views on the development of the economic situation (when compared to five years ago), suggests a negative relationship.

Table 5 – European identity as right to live and work in any other EU country

Dependent q10_1: live and work in other EU countries - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional level				
	model1	model2	model3	model4
q10_1				
Gender (female=1)	0.1134*	0.1134*	0.1137*	0.1138*
Age	-0.0102	-0.0099	-0.0098	-0.01
age2	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Education				
High school	-0.0218	-0.0257	-0.0253	-0.0251
University	-0.0402	-0.0408	-0.0404	-0.039
Post-graduate	-0.0355	-0.0376	-0.0361	-0.0374
Occupation				
private s..	0.0077	0.0074	0.0073	0.0087
self empl..	-0.055	-0.0557	-0.0555	-0.052
Unemployed	0.1473	0.1459	0.1431	0.1376
Housewif..	0.0142	0.0122	0.011	0.0099
Pensioner..	-0.1009	-0.0991	-0.0984	-0.0939
Student ..	0.1014	0.0994	0.0989	0.0925
Other	-0.3769	-0.3779	-0.3764	-0.372
Areatp				
Small and medium towns	-0.2133**	-0.2185**	-0.2190**	-0.2246**
Large towns	-0.0537	-0.0555	-0.0542	-0.0697
Income				
Medium	0.1003	0.1027	0.1022	0.0962
High	0.2316**	0.2335**	0.2340**	0.2366**
Don't kno..	-0.1005	-0.0954	-0.0939	-0.0958
Years in the area	-0.0026	-0.0026	-0.0026	-0.0024
Vote				
Once	-0.1384	-0.1437	-0.1439	-0.1463
Both times	0.0594	0.0532	0.0522	0.0442
(d/k-ref~d)	0.4473**	0.4486**	0.4476**	0.4432**
strust in people	0.0736***	0.0737***	0.0736***	0.0745***
More restriction in immigration	-0.0445***	-0.0451***	-0.0452***	-0.0437***
Increase income distribution	0.0949***	0.0951***	0.0953***	0.0950***
strong leader	0.0063	0.0061	0.0061	0.0036
q16_1	-0.025	-0.0251	-0.0253	-0.0243
q16_2	0.0983***	0.0977***	0.0975***	0.0935***
q16_3	0.0121	0.0117	0.0118	0.0112
satisfaction with economic situation in region	-0.0677	-0.0635	-0.0616	-0.0554



PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

Perception of economic situation (5 years ago)				
About the same	-0.2828***	-0.2875***	-0.2886***	-0.2854***
Worse	-0.2423**	-0.2457**	-0.2476**	-0.2457**
GDP_14	-0.0072***	-0.0053**	-0.0058**	-0.0018
object1_14	-0.2234	-0.3991	-0.4171	-0.038
SFund2	-0.0005	0.0004	0.0005	-0.0001
q9_3	0.2556***	0.2559***	0.2558***	0.2557***
q9_2	-0.0096	-0.0088	-0.0088	-0.0077
q9_1	0.0437**	0.0435**	0.0436**	0.0430**
q1_1	0.2714***	0.2749***	0.2732***	0.2694***
q1_2	-0.1664*	-0.1675*	-0.1667*	-0.1551*
q1_3	-0.1435*	-0.1456*	-0.1458*	-0.1513**
q1_4	-0.1122	-0.1154	-0.1167	-0.1229
CPEcSoc		0.6342	0.5532	2.0153**
DivTh		1.068	0.8958	2.6481***
nPall			0.5841	-1.2755
nPTop				1.6706***
_cons	5.8224***	5.1708***	4.9782***	3.5218***
Statistics				
N	8531	8531	8531	8531
Ll	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04	-1.80E+04
chi2	1.30E+03	1.30E+03	1.30E+03	1.40E+03
P	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.0288**	0.0285**	0.0285**	0.0240**

### Meanings of being European - the Euro as common currency

In another test of the associations with perceptions about the meaning of EU identity (i.e. being European), we have considered “having a common currency” – the Euro – as a dependent variable. In this case we observe that the extent to which topics on the effects of cohesion policy for economy and society characterise the national media spaces has a negative and weakly significant effect on the dependent variable. Hence, in cases in which these matters are discussed more, there seems to be less of a conception of being European in terms of the common currency. We look at this result as reasonable when regarding the Euro a symbol of the EU more than an object of economic and monetary concern. In fact, consequences of cohesion policy are eventually more concerned with regional development stories than with either symbolic or monetary discourse.

Divisive themes are negatively and strongly significantly associated with defining EU identity as “having the Euro as a common currency”. This can be interpreted in light of the fact that criticisms on EU actions and policies, but also more euro-sceptic discourses, often recur to anti-euro-rhetoric and this might in the end have an effect on the general perceptions of citizens. This interpretation corresponds to the strongly significant and positively correlated coefficient for the ratio of negative vocabulary appearing across all national topics (nPAll).

In model 4, the coefficient measuring the density of the semantic space (network of topics) is also slightly significant and negative. This indicates that national discourses with less

overlapping topics are rather associated with understandings of being European as “having the Euro as a common currency”.

As to what regards further explanatory and control variables, questions regarding occupation represented an interesting case: more specifically, housewives showed a highly significant and positive relationship with the perception of EU identity as “having a common currency”. With a view to social values (q11), perceiving others as “trustful” suggests a highly significant positive relationship too.

Questions of perceived institutional quality at EU level (q16\_1) indicated a negative relationship to the meaning of EU identity as “having a common currency” (highly significant). Identifying with Europe (q9\_3) suggests a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable. As to what regards national and regional identification, no statistically significant observations could be made.

Table 6 - European identity as common currency

Dependent q10_2: Common currency - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional level				
Variable	model1	model2	model3	model4
q10_2				
d1	-0.1412	-0.1412	-0.1392	-0.1389
Age	0.0228	0.0227	0.0231	0.023
age2	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001
recoded2				
2	0.1895	0.1908	0.1907	0.1895
3	0.2568	0.2561	0.2564	0.2565
4	0.1839	0.184	0.1863	0.1849
recoded5				
private s..	0.1132	0.1136	0.1135	0.1141
self empl..	0.1079	0.1082	0.1099	0.1137
Unemployed	0.0644	0.0661	0.0551	0.0505
Housewif..	0.7374***	0.7388***	0.7351***	0.7328***
Pensioner..	0.0405	0.0391	0.0417	0.0428
Student ..	0.2338	0.2361	0.2372	0.2318
Other	-0.063	-0.0622	-0.0577	-0.0553
Areatp				
2	-0.085	-0.0825	-0.0859	-0.0909
3	-0.1812	-0.1802	-0.1746	-0.1864
recoded7				
Medium	0.1228	0.122	0.1198	0.1155
High	0.1705*	0.1698*	0.1717*	0.1722*
Don't kno..	-0.149	-0.1515	-0.1465	-0.1457
years_area	-0.002	-0.002	-0.0021	-0.0019
q7				
Once	-0.1006	-0.0985	-0.0996	-0.1016
Both times	0.1877	0.1912	0.187	0.1809
(d/k-ref~d)	-0.0408	-0.0397	-0.0449	-0.0482
q11	0.1034***	0.1033***	0.1029***	0.1036***
q12	-0.0292	-0.0288	-0.0292	-0.0283
q13	0.0304	0.0303	0.0312	0.0307

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

q14	0.0029	0.003	0.003	0.0016
q16_1	-0.1504***	-0.1503***	-0.1515***	-0.1510***
q16_2	0.0613*	0.0618*	0.0615*	0.0589*
q16_3	-0.0132	-0.0131	-0.0127	-0.0127
Satisfy	0.2393*	0.2372*	0.2459**	0.2496**
q18				
About the..	0.071	0.0729	0.0681	0.0694
Worse	-0.1185	-0.1167	-0.1254	-0.1251
GDP_14	-0.0017	-0.0071	-0.0202**	-0.0078
object1_14	-1.5716**	-0.9151	-1.3407*	-0.2022
SFund2	-0.0017	-0.0042	-0.003	-0.0044
q9_3	0.4241***	0.4241***	0.4239***	0.4239***
q9_2	-0.0315	-0.0318	-0.0319	-0.0315
q9_1	0.018	0.0181	0.0184	0.0181
q1_1	-0.026	-0.0263	-0.0325	-0.0344
q1_2	-0.1385	-0.1383	-0.1355	-0.129
q1_3	-0.0756	-0.0739	-0.0735	-0.0755
q1_4	0.1199	0.1222	0.1154	0.1112
CPEcSoc		-2.1599	-4.2047*	1.0804
DivTh		-2.3486	-6.7738***	0.8358
nPall			14.5049***	
nPTop				5.5907***
Density				-6.8600*
_cons	3.0706***	4.9389***	0.0852	1.0082
Statistics				
N	8531	8531	8531	8531
LI	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04
chi2	1.90E+03	2.40E+03	2.40E+03	3.20E+03
P	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.1766**	0.1717**	0.1485**	0.1314**

## Meanings of being European - Christian religion

In a third test of the factors associating with perceptions about the meaning of EU membership, we have considered “Christian religion” as a dependent variable. In this case we interpret the results of model 4 where most of the interest variables are significant.

Here we observe that media representation of the “effects of cohesion policy for economy and society” positively link to respondents defining “Christian religion” as more important to European identity. This effect is strongly significant. It can be interpreted as indicating that the religion and the EU, as well as its policy, are not to be regarded as necessarily competing with or contrasting each other.

The relevance of divisive topics to the composition of national media representation spaces also has a positive relationship and a strongly significant link to the definition of being European in terms of being a Christian. This result seems pretty reasonable given that where the public debate on the EU “heats up”, religion tends to be a topic that often gets touched upon.

The ratio of negative vocabulary over the positive (in the most used topic per country) negatively and significantly associates with the dependent variable. This result also seems to

point in the direction of a religion component of EU identity not being in contrast with the regional development discourse on cohesion policy.

In this case, and differently from all other tests so far, we observe that the density of the media space – vocabulary overlap among topics – associates positively with EU identity being defined more in terms of attainment to Christian religion.

Strikingly, the education level of respondents shows a strong negative relation to understanding European identity as built on Christian religion. Corresponding negative connections regarding the income levels of respondents could be made.

Further, the wish for immigration restrictions at Member State level (q12) suggests a positive link to understanding EU identity on religious grounds (highly significant). Interestingly, while perceived corruption at EU level (q16\_1) suggests a positive relationship, corruption at national level (q16\_2) suggests the contrary.

Moreover, identification at Member State level (q9\_2) entails a highly significant and positive relationship to understanding European identity as based on Christian religion. Statistically significant observations regarding both regional, and EU level could not be made.

Table 7 – European identity as Christian religion

Dependent q10_3: Christian Religion - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional level				
Variable	model1	model2	model3	model4
q10_3				
d1	0.2393**	0.2443**	0.2411**	0.2416**
Age	0.0037	0.0047	0.0037	0.0038
age2	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
Education				
2	-0.3785**	-0.4020**	-0.4095***	-0.4121***
3	-0.5263***	-0.5229***	-0.5256***	-0.5274***
4	-0.7527***	-0.7656***	-0.7857***	-0.7912***
Occupation				
private s..	0.0686	0.0771	0.0807	0.0818
self empl..	0.1738	0.1836	0.1846	0.1807
unemployed	0.3611	0.3497	0.3824*	0.3924*
Housewif..	0.5589*	0.5596*	0.5766*	0.5836*
Pensioner..	0.0904	0.1071	0.101	0.099
Student ..	0.0151	0.0198	0.0309	0.0476
other	0.4311	0.4487	0.4369	0.4326
Type of area				
Small & medium towns	0.0031	-0.0336	-0.0319	-0.0277
Large towns	0.0218	0.0051	-0.0137	0.0054
Income				
Medium	-0.3700***	-0.3647***	-0.3601**	-0.3539**
High	-0.3536***	-0.3427**	-0.3477***	-0.3494***
Don't kno..	-0.4304**	-0.4221**	-0.4452**	-0.4525**
years_area	0.004	0.0044	0.0046	0.0045

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

Vote				
Once	-0.1347	-0.156	-0.1535	-0.151
Both times	-0.2155**	-0.2475**	-0.2366**	-0.2265**
(d/k-ref~d)	0.2054	0.1971	0.2056	0.2083
q11	0.0437*	0.0442*	0.0453*	0.0440*
q12	0.1845***	0.1832***	0.1848***	0.1839***
q13	-0.0135	-0.0117	-0.0137	-0.0128
q14	0.1474***	0.1451***	0.1448***	0.1470***
q16_1	0.1103***	0.1093***	0.1123***	0.1114***
q16_2	-0.1972***	-0.2005***	-0.1984***	-0.1932***
q16_3	0.0271	0.0257	0.0252	0.0259
satisf	0.1936	0.2184*	0.1972	0.1904
Perception of economic situation				
About the..	-0.2694*	-0.2983**	-0.2881*	-0.2929**
Worse	-0.1595	-0.1853	-0.1648	-0.1668
GDP_14	-0.0203***	-0.0061	-0.0002	-0.0054
object1_14	1.1000***	-0.1702	0.0247	-0.413
SFund2	-0.0073***	0.0001	-0.0004	0.0001
q9_3	0.0186	0.0208	0.0226	0.0235
q9_2	0.1945***	0.1981***	0.1978***	0.1967***
q9_1	-0.0339	-0.0348	-0.0352	-0.0344
q1_1	-0.0628	-0.0562	-0.0371	-0.032
q1_2	0.2105*	0.2194*	0.2134*	0.2033*
q1_3	-0.0741	-0.0763	-0.0719	-0.0648
q1_4	-0.196	-0.2281*	-0.2180*	-0.2155*
CPEcSoc		4.6001***	5.4936***	3.2768***
DivTh		8.1981***	10.1200***	6.9268***
nPall			-6.4539***	
nPTop				-2.2449***
density				2.9325**
_cons	4.7948***	-0.082	2.0401*	1.3206
Statistics				
N	8531	8531	8531	8531
ll	-2.20E+04	-2.20E+04	-2.20E+04	-2.20E+04
chi2	1.50E+03	1.60E+03	2.20E+03	2.30E+03
p	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.0644**	0.0292**	0.0240**	0.0214**

## Meanings of being European - common European flag

In a fourth test of the factors associating with perceptions about the meaning of being European, we have considered “the European flag” as a dependent variable. In this case the model to be interpreted is mainly model 4.

Media representation of the effects of cohesion policy associates positively and in a moderately significant way with European identity being defined more strongly in terms of the common flag - a fundamental visual symbol of the EU.

While the effect of divisive themes is not significant in model 4, it is significant and negative in model 3 which does not include the correlated variable measuring the negative/positive sentiment ratio in the most used topics’ vocabulary. This latter variable is instead strongly significant and positive in sign in model 4. That means that where the most nationally used

topics are characterised by higher negative sentiment than elsewhere, citizens might develop more of an understanding of being European in symbolic terms. Whether “symbolic” has to be associated with a positive or negative valence is difficult to say, however we can observe that identifying with Europe (q9\_3) is also significantly and positively associated with the flag as constituting part of EU identity.

The degree to which topics overlap in terms of shared vocabulary in national media spaces has a negative and highly significant effect on the dependent variable of the current model.

As to what regards education, a strong negative relationship between the education level and the understanding of European identity as based on a common flag is evident. The strongest link is evident at post-graduate level (highly significant).

Furthermore, the wish for a “strong leader to solve problems quickly” (q14) corresponds positively to understanding European identity as built on a common flag, resembling nationally-grounded images. The perceived corruption at EU level (q16\_1) is slightly negatively connected to the “common flag”-understanding (highly significant).

As has been pointed out, identification with Europe (q9\_3) entails a positive relationship with the understanding of the common flag, while statistically sound observations for both national and regional level could not be made.

Table 8 – European identity as common flag

Dependent q10_4: Common flag - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional level				
Variable	model1	model2	model3	model4
q10_4				
Gender (Female=1)	0.2422**	0.2408**	0.2466**	0.2450**
Age	-0.0215	-0.0215	-0.0207	-0.0212
age2	0.0004	0.0004	0.0003	0.0003
Education				
High School	-0.0821	-0.0811	-0.0836	-0.0829
University	-0.4100**	-0.4065**	-0.4044**	-0.4022**
Post-graduate	-0.4795***	-0.4830***	-0.4771***	-0.4742***
Occupation				
private s..	-0.0796	-0.0823	-0.0832	-0.0824
self empl..	-0.1921	-0.1936	-0.1891	-0.1843
Unemployed	0.122	0.125	0.1019	0.1011
Housewif..	0.3818*	0.3840*	0.3739*	0.3723*
Pensioner..	0.1749	0.1744	0.1775	0.1789
Student ..	-0.2022	-0.2021	-0.1982	-0.2125
Other	-0.0169	-0.0268	-0.016	-0.0119
Type of area				
Small & medium towns	-0.0164	-0.0161	-0.029	-0.0318
Large towns	-0.0911	-0.094	-0.0816	-0.1045
Income				
Medium	0.0791	0.0781	0.0731	0.0687
High	0.1886	0.1854	0.1869	0.1869
Don't kno..	-0.2881*	-0.2945*	-0.2805	-0.2806

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

years_area	0.0001	0	0	0.0002
Vote				
Once	0.1278	0.131	0.1277	0.1257
Both times	0.3017**	0.3041**	0.2944**	0.2870**
(d/k-ref~d)	0.3367	0.3264	0.3077	0.3086
q11	0.1158***	0.1163***	0.1154***	0.1170***
q12	-0.001	-0.0006	-0.0016	-0.0002
q13	0.0384*	0.0382*	0.0400*	0.0386*
q14	0.0876***	0.0878***	0.0882***	0.0862***
q16_1	-0.0884***	-0.0888***	-0.0922***	-0.0904***
q16_2	0.0695**	0.0696**	0.0696**	0.0650**
q16_3	-0.0097	-0.0087	-0.0068	-0.0077
satisfy	0.1422	0.1367	0.1572	0.1561
Perception of economic situation				
About the..	0.0179	0.0226	0.0088	0.0144
Worse	-0.1539	-0.1475	-0.169	-0.1626
GDP_14	0.0002	0.0019	-0.0139***	-0.0019
object1_14	1.2041*	0.5081	-0.035	0.8742*
SFund2	-0.0044	-0.0044	-0.0028	-0.004
q9_3	0.3891***	0.3886***	0.3882***	0.3878***
q9_2	-0.0405	-0.0411	-0.042	-0.0408
q9_1	0.0136	0.0135	0.0144	0.0134
q1_1	0.3018**	0.2997**	0.2875**	0.2869**
q1_2	-0.1394	-0.14	-0.1367	-0.1277
q1_3	-0.0066	-0.0078	-0.0037	-0.0093
q1_4	0.0267	0.0229	0.007	0.0065
CPEcSoc		1.8010*	-0.6744	4.0130**
DivTh		-1.3531	-6.7162***	0.7594
nPall			17.9065***	
nPTop				4.2488***
Density				-7.6412***
_cons	1.8033*	1.2066	-4.8452***	-0.6186
Statistics				
N	8531	8531	8531	8531
LI	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04	-2.10E+04
chi2	1.90E+03	2.40E+03	2.40E+03	3.10E+03
P	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.0905084	0.084879	0.0477535	0.0528104

## Meanings of being European - common history and culture

In a fifth and last test of the explanatory factors associating with the meaning of being European, we have considered “a common history and culture” as a dependent variable. In this case we decided to interpret model 4.

The extent to which consequences of cohesion policy for economy and society characterises national media spaces associates positively and with strong significance, with the dependent variable.

The ratio of negative sentiment vocabulary in most used national topics has a positive significant impact on the dependent variable.



The semantic density of the national media space of topics has a negative and strongly significant association with the dependent variable.

With a view to further explanatory and control variables, the following observations could be made. A positive relationship emerged between those who believe that other people can be trusted (q11) and the understanding of European identity as based on a common history and shared culture (highly significant).

Furthermore, the association between identifying with Europe and understanding European identity as based on a common history is strongly positive.

Table 9 – European identity as common history and culture

Dependent q10_5: Common history and culture - Mixed effect model with random effect at regional				
Level				
Variable	model1	model2	model3	model4
q10_5				
d1	0.0172	0.0152	0.0203	0.0184
Age	-0.0400**	-0.0401**	-0.0378*	-0.0388*
age2	0.0005**	0.0005**	0.0005**	0.0005**
recoded2				
2	-0.1076	-0.1052	-0.1032	-0.1035
3	-0.2231	-0.2186	-0.2063	-0.2065
4	0.0933	0.0904	0.111	0.1117
recoded5				
private s..	-0.1577	-0.1603	-0.1571	-0.1575
self empl..	-0.2041	-0.2054	-0.193	-0.1896
Unemployed	0.1441	0.1498	0.1358	0.133
Housewif..	0.0305	0.0349	0.0367	0.0316
Pensioner..	-0.0959	-0.0966	-0.0836	-0.085
Student ..	-0.2592	-0.2572	-0.2344	-0.2585
Other	-0.0695	-0.0799	-0.0545	-0.054
Areatp				
2	-0.0686	-0.0664	-0.0802	-0.0821
3	-0.1945*	-0.1977*	-0.1839	-0.2111*
recoded7				
Medium	0.0309	0.0297	0.0273	0.0221
High	0.1286	0.1241	0.1202	0.1216
Don't kno..	-0.0039	-0.0137	-0.0116	-0.0077
years_area	-0.0018	-0.0019	-0.0019	-0.0017
q7				
Once	-0.0887	-0.0837	-0.0864	-0.089
Both times	0.2177**	0.2224**	0.2121**	0.2038**
(d/k-ref~d)	0.1246	0.1141	0.0974	0.0992
q11	0.1255***	0.1261***	0.1255***	0.1274***
q12	-0.0289	-0.0283	-0.0294	-0.0279
q13	0.0462**	0.0458**	0.0474**	0.0457**
q14	0.0418**	0.0422**	0.0444**	0.0416**
q16_1	-0.0736**	-0.0738**	-0.0762**	-0.0743**
q16_2	0.0379	0.0384	0.0402	0.0344
q16_3	0.0309	0.032	0.0338	0.0326

PERCEIVE DEL. 5.4: REPORT OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TOPICS EMERGING IN REGIONAL DISCOURSE AND AWARENESS/PERCEPTION OF THE EU (EUROBAROMETER)

satisfy	0.0291	0.0203	0.032	0.0318
q18				
About the..	-0.1733	-0.1667	-0.1866*	-0.1782
Worse	0.0362	0.0449	0.0198	0.0288
GDP_14	0.0106	0.0114*	-0.0081*	0.005
object1_14	1.3424**	0.4615	-0.2114	0.7716*
SFund2	-0.0012	-0.0021	-0.0001	-0.0014
q9_3	0.2607***	0.2602***	0.2603***	0.2596***
q9_2	0.0009	0.0002	-0.0008	0.0006
q9_1	0.0397	0.0397	0.0407	0.0395
q1_1	0.2407**	0.2385*	0.2283*	0.2273*
q1_2	0.0262	0.0252	0.0252	0.0362
q1_3	-0.0696	-0.0704	-0.0652	-0.072
q1_4	-0.0822	-0.0848	-0.1026	-0.1014
CPEcSoc		2.1098*	-0.9653	4.3747***
DivTh		-2.9170**	-9.5858***	-0.7991
nPall			22.2948***	
nPTop				4.7473***
Density				-10.2225***
_cons	3.0565***	2.7327**	-4.8937***	1.4422
Statistics				
Observations	8531	8531	8531	8531
ll	-2.00E+04	-2.00E+04	-2.00E+04	-2.00E+04
chi2	2.80E+03	3.40E+03	4.40E+03	4.70E+03
P	0	0	0	0
ICC	0.1225718	0.108265	0.0346736	0.0466974

## Discussion

In our analysis, we investigated European identity by analyzing the statistical relationships between features of public discourse, among other variables, and different components of European identity itself. We now want to: first, draw a short comparison of the results illustrated so far; second, get back to main two features of the public discourse empirically explored so far in an attempt to broaden our initial reflection on the findings. These features are a) *divisive themes* and b) *effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society*.

## Comparative discussion

We start the comparative discussion with a table summarizing the results for the effects of variables modelling media representation of EU regional cohesion policy on European identification and five different elements composing a possible definition of being European.

Table 10 - Summary table (number of signs are significance levels while signs are directions of correlations i.e. +++ means strongly significant positive association. 0 means variable non significant in the model. NA means variable not present in the model. Reference model is indicated in columns' labels).

variable	<b>Identificati on with Europe  Model 2</b>	Freedom of live and work in EU	Euro as a common currency	Christian religion  <b>Model 4</b>	EU common flag  <b>Model 4</b>	Common history and culture  <b>Model 4</b>
Effects of CP for economy. and society	++	++	-	+++	++	+++
Divisive themes	0 (- in model 1)	+++	---	+++	0 (--- in model 3)	0 (--- in model 3)
Negative sentiment average	-	0	+++	NA (+++ in model 3)	NA (+++ in model 3)	NA (+++ in model 3)
Negative sentiment most used topic	-	+++	NA	---	+++	+++
Density of topics/vocabulary in media space	0	NA	NA (- in model 4)	++	---	---

Based on the previous table 10, which summarizes our results, we can summarize some of our results in a nutshell. Firstly we tested models where the dependent variable is identification with Europe. In this model, the effects of CP on economy and society are positively correlated with identification. Education and GDP are positively associated with European identification. Our findings suggest that women identify with Europe to a larger extent than men. As regards political and social values, political orientation (q11-q14) is significant only for those who have voted in the last two EU parliamentary elections; in the sense that it is positively related to identifying with Europe.

In a second battery of models, we have tested the association between media representation of European regional cohesion policy (at the national level) and individuals' definitions of being European, defined as *Freedom of live and work in EU, Euro as a common currency, Christian religion, EU common flag, and Common history and culture.*

Regarding Freedom of live and work in the EU, the presence of topics on the effects of cohesion policy for economy and society has a moderately significant positive association with the variable, Both "divisive themes" and the ratio of "negative sentiment vocabulary" in

the most used national topic have a positive and highly significant impact on individuals defining EU identity in terms of the civic value of mobility/freedom.

Regarding Euro as a common currency divisive themes are negatively and strongly significantly associated with the variable, while a strongly significant and positively correlated coefficient for the ratio of negative vocabulary appears across all national topics.

Regarding Christian religion, media representation of the “effects of cohesion policy for economy and society” positively associates with people defining “Christian religion” as more important to European identity. The relevance of “divisive topics” to the composition of national media representation spaces also associates positively and in a strongly significant way to the definition of being European in terms of being Christians. The ratio of negative vocabulary over the positive on (in the most used topic per country) negatively and significantly associates with the dependent variable. In this case, and differently from all other tests so far, we observe that the density of the media space – vocabulary overlap among topics – associates positively with EU identity being defined more in terms of attainment to Christian religion.

Regarding EU common flag as a dependent variable, media representation of the effects of cohesion policy associates positively and in a moderately significant way with European identity being defined by this variable. While the effect of divisive themes is not significant in model 4, it is significant and negative in model 3 which does not include the correlated variable measuring the negative/positive sentiment ratio in most used topics’ vocabulary. This latter variable is instead strongly significant and positive in sign in model 4. The degree to which topics overlap in terms of shared vocabulary in national media spaces has a negative and strongly significant effect on the dependent variable of the current model.

Finally, considering common history and culture as dependant variable, effects of cohesion policy for economy and society associates positively and with strong significance with the dependent variable. The ratio of negative sentiment vocabulary in most used national topics has a positive significant impact, while the semantic density of the national media space of topics has a negative and strongly significant association.

## **Further reflecting on European identity and media representation**

### *Divisive themes*

An global consideration of our work reported in this paper leads us to think that that *Divisive themes* might unveil some elements of Euroscepticism populating public discourse. Negatively charged frames used by the media may affect citizens’ identification with the EU, thus prompting low levels of identification with the EU (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Jochen et. Al, 2003; Powell, 2009). Therefore, in general, we assume that divisive

themes should work as a predictor of low identification. As shown in the foregoing. Models 1, 3 and 4 in table 4 validate this intuition. The more divisive themes are present in the public discourse of a country, the less individuals tend to identify with Europe. However, we assume that Euroscepticism is a complex construct that may be grounded on different underpinnings. For example, skepticism may be generated by nationalistic sentiments, by the fear of traditions' dissipation or it may originate from the disagreement on the institutional form that the European Union took on. Therefore, the way in which the surfacing of divisive themes in the public debate is a precursor of identification with the European Union is not straightforward.

In this light, we further posit that the presence of divisive themes reveals skepticism that targets European institutions – economic, symbolic and cultural – rather than the European identity. In other words, in countries in which public discourse is innervated with divisive themes, not necessarily citizens do not feel European, rather they might prefer to emphasize those dimensions of their European identity that are crystallized into traits that do not involve the institutions of the European Union. Euroscepticism may arise as the disagreement with the specific institutional form that European Union took. For example, the idea that the European Union is the 'Europe of bankers', an institution too much influenced by economic criteria, objectives and constraints, may underpin a European identity in conflict with the institution of the European Union. Therefore, one could expect that the presence of divisive themes would predict negative identification with economic and symbolic institutions of the European Union, such as the common currency and the common flag:

Looking at the results reported in table 6, in models 3 and table 8 model 3, the hypotheses that the presence of divisive themes in the public debate is negatively correlated to identification based on both a common currency and a common flag are confirmed.

On the other hand, we would expect the presence of divisive themes to predict EU identity in terms of a common Christian tradition. This is because, in countries in which divisive themes emerge in the public discourse, European identification mobilizes a common belonging to pre-union institutions, such as, for example, the Christian religion or a common history. Therefore, the presence of divisive themes in the public debate should positively correlate to identity based on a common culture and history and to European identification (Q.9\_3)

Looking at model 4 in table 9, we see that the coefficient for European identification is positive and significant, thus our data support the idea that the presence of European identification is positively correlated to EU identity based on common history. In table 9, however, we see that the coefficient for divisive themes in model 4 is negative and significant thereby rejecting the hypothesis connecting divisive themes and identification based on common Christian religion in a positive way. Taken together, these hypotheses speak to the subtlety of the relation between Euroscepticism and identification with Europe. Euroscepticism is rooted into the rejection of the communitarian institutions that

threaten national traditions and history. In this respect, Christianity is seen as a common root that underpins that trait of European identity that is considered as a robust trench in the face of impending globalization and multiculturalism. On the other hand, Euroscepticism has a profound nationalistic component that counter the identification in a European common history. We may say that a component of Euroscepticism, rather than rejecting the fact of being European, implies the rejection of the constraints that the belonging to the European Union implies. More specifically, what Euroscepticism seems to reject is the principle of the *acquis comunitario*, that is, the acceptance of the political, economic and monetary constraints of the Union.

As for the identification with the European freedom to travel and work in the Union, we interrogated our data in two directions. A first direction follows the lines of what was presented in the foregoing to that the presence of divisive themes predicts negative identification with this specific trait of European identity. This is because Euroscepticism has both a xenophobic component and a protectionist attitude. Both these two elements discourage the acceptance of the principles of freedom of movement and work. Therefore, we would expect the presence of divisive themes in the public debate to be negatively correlated to identification based on a work/life mobility.

Another direction that we took for investigating our data speaks to the Euroscepticism that originates from the competition between the principles underpinning the constitution of the European Union, the Copenhagen principles. In particular, a recurring argument pits one against the other the economic and the political aims of the Union. In this respect, a recurrent concern is the dominance of the economic over the political aims, these latter materializing into the rights that the Union grants to citizens (among the other the freedom of movements and work in the state of the Union). From this perspective, we posit that the presence of divisive themes in the public debate is positively correlated to identification based on a work/life mobility.

Interestingly, positive and significant coefficient in model 4 in table 5, seems to confirm that the presence of divisive themes in the public debate is positively correlated to identification based on a work/life mobility. Therefore, grounding on our data we speculate that a component of Euroscepticism might be anti-economic and pro-individual-right.

#### *Effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society.*

We assume that the presence in the debate of themes regarding the *effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society* reveals an informed discourse taking place in a community that takes for granted the belonging to the European project. Indeed, as the way European affairs are presented may affect citizen's identification, several authors assume that positive assessments of the EU and its policies lead to citizens' positive attitudes towards the EU and, thus, promote a sense of European identity (Kandyla and De Vreese, 2011; Vliegthart et al., 2008). Our variable *effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society* collects themes that refer to the positive impact of Cohesion Policy on different national industries

and economic sectors. Therefore, we expect that this taken-for-grantedness and the positive presentation of the impact of Cohesion Policy produce a positive relationship between the effect of CP and the fundamental economic, political principles and symbolic aspects upon which European Union grounds. Thus, we expect that the presence of themes on the effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society in the public debate is positively correlated to i) identification based on a common currency; ii) identification based on a freedom of live/work, and iii) identification based on a common flag.

.The positive and significant coefficient of model 4 in table 5 confirms the positive correlation between the effects of CP on economy and society and identification based on a freedom of live/work. The positive and significant coefficient of model 4 in table 8 confirms the positive correlation between the effects of CP on economy and society and identification based on a common flag. On the contrary, the negative and significant coefficient of model 3 in table 6, rejects the hypothesis on the positive correlation between the effects of CP on economy and society and identification based on a common currency. This interesting result invites further speculations. We conjecture that the intensification of political and economic themes in the public discourse brings about an informed debate that reveals the fragmentation of positions towards the European currency. Therefore, talking about economic and political issues, and taking for granted the existence of the European Union, not necessarily implies the agreement on the form of existing economic institutions and the identification with these latter.

Finally, we assumed that the presence of the effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society related themes in the public debate reveals an informed discourse that is not related to the identification with Christian values or a common history. The underpinning rationale is that these themes speak to aspects of the identity that are not connected to religious values and/or to the mobilization of a common history. Therefore, we posit that the presence of themes on the effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society in the public debate is weakly correlated to i) identification based on a common religion, and to ii) identification based on a common history.

The positive and significant coefficient of model 4 in table 7 rejects the hypothesis connecting effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society and identification based on a common religion. Apparently, the intensity of the discourse on the effects not only elicits the identification with European symbols and fundamental rights but reveals the presence of Christianity as a strong component of European identity.

Similar considerations refer to hypothesis connecting effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society and identification based on a common history. The positive and significant coefficient of model 4 in table 9 rejects our hypothesis.

Interestingly, the presence in public discourse of themes reflecting the effects of Cohesion Policy on economy and society is negatively correlated only with the identification with the European common currency. This finding vividly illuminates the fractures that permeate the



European public debate over the form, the opportunity and the desirability of a common currency. On the other hand, by eliciting a positive and significant correlation between the discourse on the effects of Cohesion Policy and all the dimension of identification (apart the one based on the common currency) our data confirm that the intensification of these themes in the public discourse discloses the taken-for-grantedness of the existence of the Union, and predicts a multi-dimensional European identity.

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