

Regional Policies and European Integration

Julie Anna Braun

Regional Policies and European Integration

From Policy to Identity

palgrave
macmillan

Julie Anna Braun
Hertie School of Governance
Berlin, Germany

ISBN 978-3-319-67761-3 ISBN 978-3-319-67762-0 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67762-0>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017959966

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For my boys, Matthias and Freddie.

ABSTRACT

Regions are making headlines in European politics: Wallonia is blocking the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA); the South West of England's Cornwall's Council is defying the Brexit vote in their own region because they recognise opportunities in the European Union and are hence keeping their Brussels representation open. Regions are acknowledged as actors in European politics in a growing body of scholarship. Yet, what role do they play in European integration—or disintegration? A glaring gap in our understanding of regions remains: what are the scope and objectives of these regions' respective European policies and programmes—and how diverse are they? And in a time of mixed signals of European cynicism and identity, the question remains how European identity is perceived, fostered and even promoted in regions' European policies.

This book has taken an important step in starting this area of research in presenting empirical findings on four EU regions as case studies, including Germany's Brandenburg, Belgium's Wallonia, France's Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and last but not certainly in the current context of Brexit not least, the South West of England. The book compares four regions' scope and objectives of European policies and engagement (based on a policy and documents analysis); it assesses the political elites' and civil servants' reflections on their regions' European engagement (based on 60 semi-structured interviews) and compares their objectives with those proposed by the Cohesion Policy's designers (further semi-structured interviews). It also evaluates whether the policies and programmes aim to foster long-lasting European integration through European identity-building initiatives, or

whether European policies are Eurosceptic, merely highlighting economic or infrastructure benefits. Drawing on the British case study, the book also identifies strategies implemented, which in turn accelerated a distance or even disdain toward the European Union and most likely had an impact on the subsequent vote to leave it—a warning sign toward other regions.

Besides investigating a new area within political science and European integration research, the findings presented in this book are grounded in political practice—thus offering accurate accounts of what happens on the ground in regional governments of different countries, political systems and political identities. It is a must-read for practitioners of European politics and researchers, and is complementary to the literature in neighbouring fields of politics and theories of European integration. It also offers linkages to research in political psychology and behaviour, as well as European identity and Euroscepticism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While undertaking this thesis, I have received indispensable support from a number of individuals. At the LSE, I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Michael Bruter. I greatly appreciate his enthusiastic encouragement, back when I was preparing my PhD proposal, and his structured feedback, particularly during the final stretch. I am also immensely grateful to my thesis advisor, Professor Edward Page, for his thoughtful feedback and guidance, and also for his careful consideration down to a number of specific words. I also wish to thank colleagues at the Government Department who have given me friendship and support throughout the years. A very special thank you goes to Dr. (!) Linnea Mills, for turning brainstorming breaks into enjoyable memories; for offering reassurance and great friendship.

As part of my thesis research, I was fortunate enough to spend some time in the four case study regions Brandenburg, Wallonia, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and the South West of England, as well as in Brussels. I am grateful to all my interviewees who chose to put their trust in me and reveal information about some sensitive opinions.

During my time at the LSE, I have received financial support from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). I am incredibly thankful for the support and continuous trust in my research.

On a more personal note, I wish to express my immense gratitude to my family, for their unconditional love and never-ending support. I am also very thankful to Dr. (!) Bernardette Cichon, my incredibly reliable friend, who is always “there” for me, even if this requires a satellite phone connection to the most remote rural areas in Africa. And, finally, yet most

importantly, I wish to thank my husband, Matthias Braun—without his love, encouragement, culinary care and enthusiastic support, I know I could have never finished this “essay.”

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | What Role Do Regions and European Identity Play in European Integration and Politics? An Introduction; Literature Review; Hypotheses and Chapters' Outline | 1 |
| 1.1 | <i>How European Integration Has Shaped Regions' European Engagement</i> | 5 |
| 1.2 | <i>Comparative Levels of Regions' Political Authority Within European Governments</i> | 9 |
| 1.2.1 | <i>Institutionalisation of Regions</i> | 9 |
| 1.2.2 | <i>Comparative Levels of Political Authority for Regions to Engage in European Politics</i> | 13 |
| 1.3 | <i>A Common Regional European Policy?</i> | 16 |
| 1.4 | <i>What Role Does European Identity Play in Regions' European Engagement?</i> | 19 |
| 1.5 | <i>Hypotheses</i> | 27 |
| 1.6 | <i>Book Chapters' Outline</i> | 29 |
| 2 | Regional Characteristics Affecting the Scope and Objectives of European Policy: And European Integration or Disintegration | 33 |
| 2.1 | <i>Overview of the Regional Characteristics that Are Suggested to Influence the Scope and Objectives of Regions' European Policies</i> | 34 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 2.2 | <i>The Representativeness of Regional Characteristics and Features Potentially Impacting the Scope and Objectives of Regions' European Policies</i> | 37 |
| 2.2.1 | <i>National Government Systems</i> | 37 |
| 2.2.2 | <i>Regional Geographic Location</i> | 42 |
| 2.2.3 | <i>European Regional Network Participation</i> | 43 |
| 2.2.4 | <i>Duration of EU Membership Affecting Regions' European Policies</i> | 43 |
| 2.2.5 | <i>Language Affecting Regions' European Policies</i> | 44 |
| 2.3 | <i>Levels of European Identity (1990–2015)</i> | 45 |
| 2.4 | <i>Conclusions on Regional Characteristics' Potential Influence</i> | 47 |
| 3 | Comparing Regions' European Policies: A Comparative Policy Analysis and Assessment of the Role of European Identity | 51 |
| 3.1 | <i>First Indications of Variation Amongst Regions' European Engagement</i> | 55 |
| 3.2 | <i>Regions' European Policies: Four Case Studies</i> | 57 |
| 3.2.1 | <i>Nord–Pas-de-Calais</i> | 57 |
| 3.2.2 | <i>South West of England</i> | 60 |
| 3.2.3 | <i>Brandenburg</i> | 63 |
| 3.2.4 | <i>Wallonia</i> | 65 |
| 3.3 | <i>Commonalities Amongst the Four Regions' European Engagement</i> | 69 |
| 3.4 | <i>Variation Amongst the Four Case Study Regions' European Engagement</i> | 73 |
| 3.5 | <i>Preliminary Assessment of the Role of European Identity Within the Regions' European Policies and Programmes</i> | 78 |
| 4 | Is European Policy European? The Political Case | 81 |
| 4.1 | <i>Does European Identity Feature Amongst the Objectives of the Regions' European Policies? Perspectives from the Political Elites</i> | 84 |
| 4.1.1 | <i>Regions' Participation in EU-Funded Programmes: Does European Identity Feature in this Engagement?</i> | 85 |
| 4.1.2 | <i>The Role of European Identity in the Regions' Interregional Cooperation</i> | 87 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 4.1.3 | <i>Bilateral Partnerships: Building a European Identity?</i> | 91 |
| 4.1.4 | <i>Participating in European Regional Networks: Fostering a European Identity?</i> | 93 |
| 4.1.5 | <i>Regions' Brussels Offices: Do They Cultivate a European Identity?</i> | 94 |
| 4.1.6 | <i>Regions' European Communications: Does European Identity Building Feature Amongst Them?</i> | 95 |
| 4.1.7 | <i>Does EU Legal Integration Encourage a European Identity?</i> | 100 |
| 4.2 | <i>Political Elites' Perceptions on the Future Objectives of the Regions' European Engagement</i> | 100 |
| 4.3 | <i>Four Dimensions to the Role of European Identity in Regions' European Policy</i> | 103 |
| 5 | Is European Policy European? Perspectives from Regional Civil Servants | 109 |
| 5.1 | <i>Does European Identity Feature Amongst the Objectives of the Regions' European Policies? Perspectives from the Civil Servants</i> | 110 |
| 5.1.1 | <i>The Management of EU Funding Allocated to the Region: A European Identity-Building Opportunity? Civil Servants' Perspectives</i> | 110 |
| 5.1.2 | <i>Does Interregional Cooperation Foster European Identity?</i> | 112 |
| 5.1.3 | <i>Region's Bilateral Partnerships: Growing a European Identity?</i> | 114 |
| 5.1.4 | <i>Participating in European Regional Networks: Cultivating a European Identity?</i> | 117 |
| 5.1.5 | <i>European Communications: A European Identity Accelerator?</i> | 117 |
| 5.1.6 | <i>Regions' Foreign Direct Investment/Business Connections: Investing in European Identity?</i> | 120 |
| 5.1.7 | <i>Does Regional EU Legal Integration Spill Over to European Identity Formation?</i> | 121 |
| 5.2 | <i>Civil Servants' Perceptions on the Future Objectives of Regions' European Engagement</i> | 122 |
| 5.3 | <i>Variation Amongst Civil Servants' Perceptions of the Role of European Identity within Their European Work</i> | 123 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 5.4 | <i>The Impact of Regions' Characteristics in Shaping the Scope and Objectives of Their European Policy</i> | 125 |
| 5.4.1 | <i>Government System and Political Elites' Interests</i> | 126 |
| 5.4.2 | <i>Geography</i> | 127 |
| 5.4.3 | <i>Language/Heritage</i> | 129 |
| 5.4.4 | <i>European Regional Network Participation</i> | 131 |
| 5.5 | <i>Civil Servants' Perceptions: The Role of European Identity and Impact of Regional Characteristics</i> | 132 |
| 6 | European Regional Networks: Enhancing European Engagement and Identity Building? | 135 |
| 6.1 | <i>Evolution and Objectives of European Regional Networks: Are They Set Up to Help Boost Regions' European Engagement and Cultivate a European Identity?</i> | 136 |
| 6.2 | <i>Case Study on ERRIN: European Regions for Research and Innovation Network</i> | 141 |
| 6.2.1 | <i>ERRIN 2001 to 2006</i> | 142 |
| 6.2.2 | <i>ERRIN 2006 Onwards</i> | 145 |
| 6.2.3 | <i>ERRIN Structure</i> | 146 |
| 6.2.4 | <i>ERRIN Aims and Activities</i> | 147 |
| 6.2.5 | <i>ERRIN Interview Participants</i> | 149 |
| 6.3 | <i>Value Added by ERRIN: Findings from Membership Interviews</i> | 149 |
| 6.4 | <i>Importance of European Interregional Cooperation and How European Identity Features in It</i> | 153 |
| 6.5 | <i>Do European Regional Networks Cultivate a European Identity and Succeed in Boosting Regions' European Engagement?</i> | 155 |
| 7 | The Scope and Objectives of Regions' European Engagement: Lessons Learned and More Questions Revealed | 159 |
| 7.1 | <i>Regional Political Elites and Their Role in Determining Whether European Identity Features in European Policy (Hypothesis 1)</i> | 160 |
| 7.2 | <i>The Role of Civil Servants in Including European Identity-Building Objectives Within Regions' European Policies (Hypothesis 2)</i> | 161 |

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| 7.3 | <i>European Regional Networks and Their Role in Cultivating a European Identity (Hypothesis 3)</i> | 162 |
| 7.4 | <i>European Identity: Cultivated Intentionally or as a By-Product?</i> | 163 |
| 7.5 | <i>Regional Characteristics Affecting Their European Policies' Scope and Objectives</i> | 164 |
| 7.6 | <i>Potential Implications of Research Findings Across 98 EU Regions: Further Questions Revealed</i> | 170 |
| 7.7 | <i>Final Considerations</i> | 172 |
| Appendix 1: Case Study Selection Criteria | | 175 |
| Appendix 2 | | 181 |
| Appendix 3 | | 183 |
| Appendix 4 | | 185 |
| Appendix 5: Network Selection Criteria | | 189 |
| Appendix 6: National Data Used | | 191 |
| References | | 195 |
| Index | | 203 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Table 2.1 | Government systems and border status in European regions | 39 |
| Table 3.1 | Presentation of regional case study selection | 54 |
| Table 3.2 | Political authority index for the four case study regions | 56 |
| Table 3.3 | Cohesion Policy funding per region | 70 |
| Table 3.4 | European engagement of the case study regions | 74 |
| Table A.1 | Regional case study selection criteria based on existing scholarly research and literature | 178 |
| Table A.2 | Interviewees from the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO) | 181 |
| Table A.3 | Interviewees—the political elites | 183 |
| Table A.4 | Interviewees—the civil servants | 185 |
| Table A.5 | Interviewees—the regional network case | 190 |