

Bachelor project "European identity"

Having a negative attitude towards the European Union without having basic knowledge of the European Union itself.

A research into the relationship between the European identity of students at the University of Groningen and their knowledge of the basic principles of the European Union.



Door: Rosan Dijksterhuis S3149439
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
Faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen (FRW)

Begeleider: prof. dr. D. (Dimitris) Ballas
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Summary

The European Union is a hot topic which is often in the news. One of the European Union's biggest headlines is the Brexit which causes considerable uncertainty to the other member states. Many negative statements are made towards the European Union and highlighted in the media. However, the average knowledge of the peoples about the basic characteristics of the European Union is relatively low. The peoples of the European Union know little about how the European Union functions and what the European Union is doing.

Through several ways: a literature, qualitative and quantitative research is carried out the following main question: *To what extent does the knowledge about the European Union among students at the University of Groningen influence their European identity.*

The population: students from the University of Groningen have been queried using in-depth interviews and questionnaires. These were used to find out how their knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union is and to see how they experience their own European identity. After this it will be checked whether there is a relationship between their European identity and their knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union.

What can be concluded is that the average student at the University of Groningen is not well informed about the basic characteristics of the European Union. Students often receive their information about the European Union in multiple ways but there can be question marks by the quality and depth of this information.

Students who are better informed of the basic characteristics of the European Union see the European Union as more valuable than not well-informed students. However, having knowledge of the basic characteristics of the European Union leads to a greater European Identity is doubtful. The research does not show that the European identity increases when the knowledge level becomes higher. It only shows that the students with a higher knowledge level attach more value to the European Union because the European Union is seen as more useful and handier. The research findings suggest that knowledge of the basic characteristics of the European Union does not lead to a stronger feeling of European identity.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Motivation

On The 23th of June 2016 the citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union by the referendum question: Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? With a small majority of 51,9 percent of the votes, the United Kingdom will be the first country that will leave the European Union probably on the 31th of October (Clarke et al., 2017). After the referendum outcome something remarkable happened: the citizens of the United Kingdom googled massively "What is the EU" (NPR, 2016).

This referendum outcome should not be seen as a vote against the European Union itself (Inglehart & Norris, 2006). This outcome is a vote against the status quo, it is a form of populism that has made an advance within the European Union and his member states the last years (Spicer, 2018). The main reason for the advance is the economic gap between prosperous and declining regions within the member states. Places with "no" future face declining and lagging behind within their daily life. The current economic dynamism which is increasingly dependent on agglomeration economies is their biggest enemy (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). Within these places that do not matter populism is used as a political force to have a say. They are voting down towards a system which offers them no opportunities, the system of the status quo (Spicer, 2018). However, populism is not the best outcome for both the prosperous and declining regions. Populism will affect them both in a negative way, no one will ultimately benefit from it (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

The question how to stop populism and let citizens vote rationally is the motive for this thesis. How can a government ensure that populism does not get the upper hand in important political cases that have major (negative) consequences for nation states? Research has shown that having political knowledge ensures that citizens of the European Union agree to grant more power to the European Union and understand the importance of the existing of the European Union (Cerniglia & Pagani, 2011). Can clarify the basic characteristics of the European Union and emphasizing the importance of the European Union ensure that populism decreases within "Brexit" situations? Is it possible by providing good information about the European Union to let the European identity increase and show the importance of the European Union itself?

1.2 Issue

Within this research students from the University of Groningen will be the population. The knowledge that the university offers about the European Union differs a lot between the faculties and studies which makes this target group very interesting. Within some studies the European Union is not discussed, while complete courses are given in other studies about the European Union. This leads to the following main question and several sub questions:

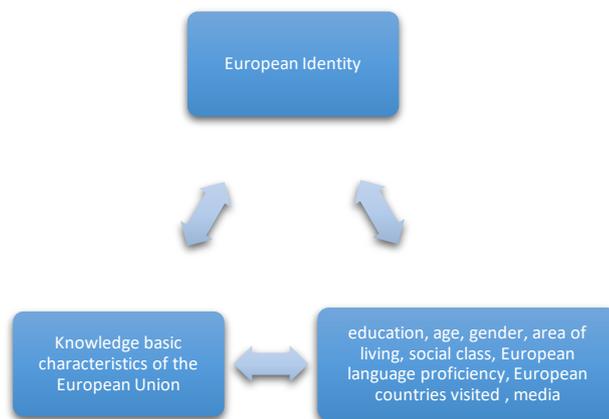
Central question: To what extent does the knowledge about the European Union among students at the University of Groningen influence their European identity?

Before answering this main question, a number of secondary questions will be discussed:

1. What is the knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union among students at the university of Groningen?
2. Through which channels do students of the University of Groningen gather information about the European Union?
3. What is the opinion of students at the University of Groningen towards the European Union?
4. What are other factors that influence the European identity of students at the University of Groningen?
5. How do students experience their own European identity?

The main question will be answered by the five sub-questions mentioned above. These sub-questions will also give a good overview of the current situation within the population: the presence of European identity and knowledge of the basic characteristics of the European Union of students of the University of Groningen. Within this research only primary data will be used, both qualitative and quantitative data will be obtained to answer the main and sub questions. In addition to the data that will be collected a literature research will take place.

Figure 1: Conceptual model European identity



To understand the link between the European identity and knowledge of the basic characteristic of the European Union the conceptual model above is used. The model can be described as follows: The European Identity is influenced by various causes, one of these is " knowledge about the European Union ". Having knowledge about the basic principles of the European Union has positive consequences for someone's European identity (Cerniglia & Pagani, 2011).

In addition to the knowledge that students have of the European Union, there are more characteristics that influence and affect European identity. Other causes that have an impact on the European identity are: education level, age, gender, area of living, social class, European language proficiency, European countries visited, the media, and knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union (Pichler, 2008) (Bakke, 1995) (Plasser 1996). These independent variables can have both positive and negative effects on the presence of student's their European identity. Encouraging the basic knowledge of the European Union to stimulate the European identity is the base for this thesis. Informing the public about the basic characteristics of the European Union is then reflected in a positive way in students their European identity.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In chapter 2 the theoretical framework will be discussed. The most important theories and concepts will be introduced within this chapter. Within chapter 3 the methodology will be described and the choices for the data collection will be justified, both the qualitative and quantitative data collection will be discussed. This chapter will also indicate how the obtained data will answer the five-sub question. The results from both the qualitative and quantitative data will be discussed in chapter 4. After all, chapter 5 will summarize the results from this research in the form of a conclusion, then a references list will follow and various appendixes.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

2.1 European identity

Within the European Union the European commission tries to increase the presence of the European identity for several years. "Identify" can be seen as the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and expression that make a specific person or a group (Leary & Tangney, 2003). The European identity has been a research topic on the European Commission's agenda since the 1990s (European Commission, 2012). It is generally accepted that there is a European identity. An increasing number of people living in the European Union do identify in some way with the European Union next to their Nation-state (Wintle, 2005). What must be noted is that the European identity is mostly not the same as a national identity. The feeling of "Europeanness" and being loyal to Europe is mostly seen in a cultural sense, national identity mostly derives from political legitimacy. These two identities don't need to conflict with each other (Wintle, 2005). The European identity surpasses the borders within the European Union in feeling of attachment to an imagined community of inhabitants of the European Union. These peoples share a common space of the European Union and are embedded within the European Union administration (Brigevich 2012).

Within the basic principles of the union "united in diversity" is an important one. The goal of the European union is not to create an "European nation state", diversity is important and should be protected (European Commission, 2018). "Europeanism" is not what the European union wants to reach. "Europeanism" may mean that the European peoples have a distinctive set of political, economic and social norms and values which are gradually replacing national values (McCormick 2010). The vision of the European Union towards the European Identity is that *"Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union, Citizenship of the Union shall be additional to and not replace national citizenship"* (European Parliament, 2018).

Within the European Union the presence of European identity varied a lot. It has been proven that characteristics such as age, gender, education, area of living and social class have an impact on people their European identity (Pichler, 2008). Besides that a shared language is vital for the formation of a nation state. When the peoples from the European Union share a certain language, this will have positive effect on the European Identity (Bakke, 1995). Mostly English is the shared language between the peoples of the European Union. The growing globalization worldwide due to big improvements within mobility affects the European identity in a positive way (Bakke, 1995). It is becoming increasingly accessible nowadays to visit parts of the European Union which affects the presence European identity positively.

Another important factor that influences the European identity is the media. The (news)media plays a crucial factor for the image the European Union has by his peoples. Because of the market-oriented journalism within the European Union several things come together: a tendency towards personalization in reporting, a tendency away from reporting the important issues, a tendency toward negativism and a tendency towards sports-based dramatization (Plasser 1996). The media has often a negative influence on the European identity by these tendencies and populist parties profit from these tendency's within the media. Populistic parties are highly dependent on public moods and emotions, they make tactical use of it to gain votes (Plasser & Ulram, 2003).

The presence of people's European identity and what exactly includes their European identity differs in a wide range for the peoples of the European Union. Seen as the basic assumption of European identity within this thesis is that the peoples from the different nation states feel a connection with each other through the existence of the European Union (European Commission, 2018). These European identities are driven by integration of the European Union itself.

2.2 Basic characteristics of the European Union

The list below is composed as the basic characteristics of the European Union within this thesis. To compile this list the document *De Europese Unie – Wat ze is en wat ze doet* has been used (European Commission, 2018). This document of the European Commission is 50 pages long and explains what the European Union is and does, made by the European Commission itself. Unfortunately, it was necessary to reduce this document because it was too comprehensive and could not all be seen as basic characteristics of the European Union. The following facts about the European Union will be seen as the basic characteristics of the European Union. As already mentioned above, all information below is from an informative document from the European Commission itself:

- The European Union is in the base a peace project of currently 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe (continent).
- The 4 objectives of the European Union are: promotion of peace its values and the well-being of its peoples, area of freedom security and justice, internal market, economic and monetary Union.
- The European Union is "In Varietate Concordia", united in diversity. The member states all remain sovereign and independent states. They have decided to pool some of their "sovereignty" in areas where it makes sense to work together.
- Within the formation of the European Union the Treaty of Rome (1958), Maastricht (1993) & Lisbon (2009) are of great importance.
- The European Union shows what a liberal democracy should and can be. The European Union does this by the 5 values. The 5 values of the European Union are: freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, and fundamental rights

- The capital of the European Union is Brussels (Belgium). The 5 largest population centres of the European Union are: London, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona and Berlin.
- The European Union has developed an internal single market through a standardized system of law which affects the entire world by the strength of the European trading block. Surround this trading block is a closed border.
- The four freedoms within the European Union are: people, goods, services and capital moving freely between all member states.
- The European Union covers 7.3% of the world population, 3% of the world's landmark and 23% of the worldwide GDP. The European Union has worldwide a big influence by the GDP rate. The European Union has with almost every country within the world trade agreement.
- The largest religion within the European Union is Christianity 71,1%
- The 28-member states are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
- European Parliament: people vote directly for the European parliament by elections. The European parliament amend and vote on legislation for the European Union.
- European Commission: the only institution required to propose a new law or regulation. Controls whether the law is upheld within the European Union.
- The Council of the European Union: convenes in 10 different configurations depending on the discussed subject. The council of the European union exists out of the corresponding minister on the national scale from the member states.
- European Council: Heads of Government of the Member States.
- Court of Justice: has sole authority to interpret the law of the European Union.
- European Central Bank: supervises the monetary system in the Eurozone.
- Economic and Social Committee: give their opinion on new initiatives within the European Union, social interest groups on economic and social issues trade unions, employers, consumer unions.
- Committee of the Regions: represents all the regions within the European Union.
- European court of auditors: controls spending of the institutions within the European Union.
- Harmonization principle: setting and enforcing common standards and procedures. Goals is to remove boundaries to create one internal market.
- Subsidiarity principle: Everything the European Union does is subjected to the notion of subsidiarity "Europe where necessary". The European Union shall act only if and in so far as proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states itself.
- The European Union is powered by law. Every action the European Union is taking is founded in treaties that have been approved voluntarily and democratically by all the member states of the European Union.
- The annual European Union budget was 158 billion euros in 2017, 1% of the total wealth generated by the economies of the member states.
- The European Union works with 7 years-cycle multiannual finance frameworks.
- There are several types of legal acts the European Union can implement: regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Qualitative & quantitative data collection

The 5 sub-questions and the main question will be answered by quantitative and qualitative data collection. Mixed methods are used because of the methodological pluralism which results in superior research (Johnson, 2004). The quantitative data will be obtained by using a questionnaire. The data collection for the quantitative part therefore consists of conducting and analyzing the questionnaires results that have been filled in by students from the University of Groningen. When a student participates in the questionnaires, this will be anonymous. It is not possible to find out which students have filled in the questionnaires. The students will be selected by using a convenience sample. This method has been chosen because of the possibility to approach students directly, which saves time and effort during the data collection process (Burt et al., 2009). The convenience sample can be used well in this situation because it is not expected that a sample based on a respective method will deviate much from the results obtained with a convenience when used with care. The format of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 1.

The qualitative part will be collected by in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview will take place with students who differ in knowledge level of the basic principles of the European Union. There will be in-depth interviews with people who are well informed and people who have little or no knowledge about the basic principles of the European Union. The students for the in-depth interviews will be chosen by a judgement sample. This decision is made because of the possibility to choose participants by my own expertise (Burt et al., 2009). This makes it possible to represent the two groups within the in-depth interviews easily. The structure for the interview will be the semi-structured interview method. The semi-structured interview method has been chosen because it allows new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says during the interview (Punch, 2013). The format of the semi-structured interview guide can be found in appendix 2.

The information obtained through the qualitative and quantitative research methods will be supported by a literature search. The combination of qualitative, quantitative & literature research will answer the five sub-questions. With these sub-questions the main question will be answered. Analyzing the results from the in-depth interview and the questionnaires will take place in different ways. The questionnaire results will be put in an Excel file and will be analyzed within SPSS. To analyze the quantitative data an ordinal regression will be used. Within this statistical test it's possible to explain the relation between one ordinal dependent variable and two or more independent variables (Moore & McCabe, 2006). Therefore, there is a possibility to see if the dependent variable "European identity" is affected by the several independent variables which will be taken into account.

The dependent "European Identity" is measured by questionnaire question 15: "Hoe erg voel je je verbonden met de Europese Unie?". The respondents had the opportunity to choose from 5 answer options: "very connected", "a bit connected", "not very connected", "not connected at all" and "I do not know". The respondents who took the option "I do not know" were removed from the sample to create an ordinal variable.

3.2 Ethical considerations

For the in-depth interviews and questionnaire there are made several ethical considerations to protect the participants within this thesis. The book 'introduction to social research' explains what research ethics are, saying that ethics are: "*the study of what are good, right, or virtuous courses of action*" (Punch, 2013). This is applied within obtaining the data focusing on the participants being as comfortable as possible and taking care of the given answers. Protecting the privacy of the participants is very important and well considered by the following aspects:

- Making sure that the interview/questionnaire takes place in an environment wherein the interviewee feels comfortable.
- Offer the participants an informed consent in which the interviewee knows what will be done with the obtained information and who would have access to the recordings of the in-depth interviews.
 - The obtained data will only be used for this thesis.
 - Myself, my supervisor prof. dr. D. (Dimitris) Ballas and a second corrector will have access to the data.
- No names are mentioned within the text and appendixes, so it is not possible to trace back the data to the participants.

- The questionnaires are filled in anonymously, the names of the participants are not known.
- The interview was completely confidential. The participants are able to withdraw their interview from this thesis at any time, without having to give a reason why.
- The participants may not experience any negative effects from this thesis and the thesis outcomes.

Chapter 4 - Results

4.1 Quantitative data collection

Within the questionnaire, various questions were asked with the aim to get personal information of the participants. This was done to get a good picture of the population and to check whether the population is well represented within the sample.

Table 1 shows that there is a skewed distribution of the faculties within the sample. Several faculties are overrepresented within the sample while other faculties are underrepresented or even not included at all. The sample therefore deviated from the actual population examined.

Table 1: Questionnaire data distribution of faculties

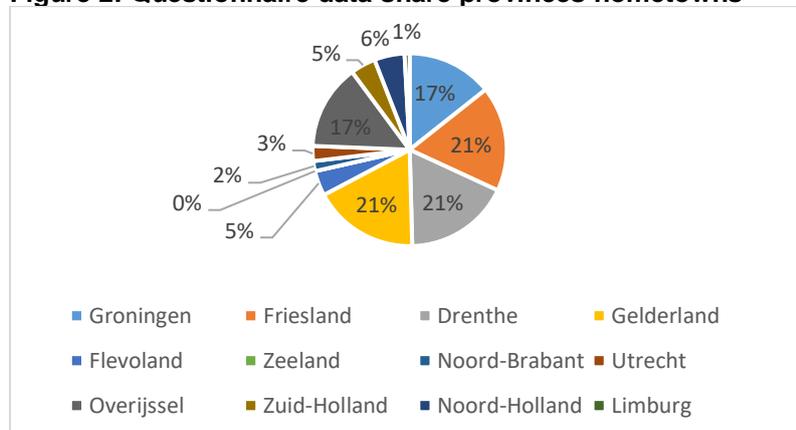
Information channel	Percentage
Economics and Business	11%
Behavioural and Social Science	8%
Theology and Religious Studies	0%
Arts	9%
Medical Science	9%
Law	10%
Spatial Sciences	36%
Philosophy	2%
University College Groningen	3%
Campus Fryslân	1%
Science and Engineering	11%

The male-to-female distribution within the sample fits well with the distribution of the population. Figure three shows that the male to female ratio within the sample is 59% female and 41% male. The ratio within the total population is 52,1% female and 47,9% male (university of groningen, 2018).

Table 2: Questionnaire data gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	41%
Female	59%
Other	0%

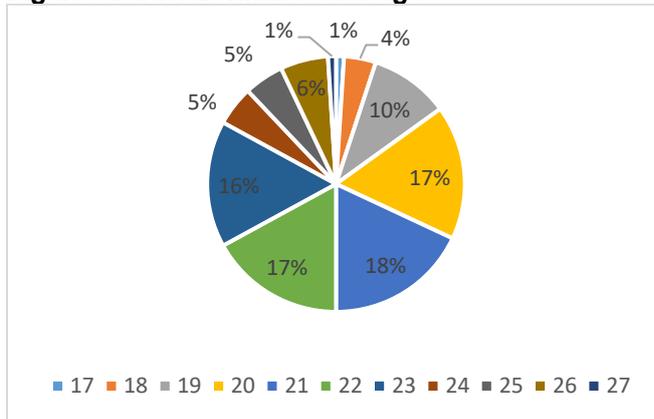
Figure 2: Questionnaire data share provinces hometowns



Within the sample the northern provinces of the Netherlands have the largest share in hometowns. In the four northern provinces grew up 76 of the 100 students within the sample. The modus are the provinces Friesland and Drenthe. This can be explained by the university's location in the north of the Netherlands.

The average age within the sample is 21,67 with a modus of 21 years. The data is normally divided with a tail to the right. The average age suggests that the students in the sample are mainly bachelor students.

Figure 3: Questionnaire data age



21% of the students receives additional grants within the sample. This is a good representation where the national percentage of students who receive supplementary grants is 22% (OnderwijsinCijfers, 2018)

The ratio centrum to periphery is 38% city versus 62% periphery. This ratio differs from the Dutch average but can be explained by the fact that the people in the sample mainly come from the northern provinces. Within the northern provinces the periphery is present in larger numbers than in the rest of the Netherlands (Planbureauvoor deLeefomgeving, 2014).

Figure 4 & 5: Questionnaire data supplementary grant & centrum periphery

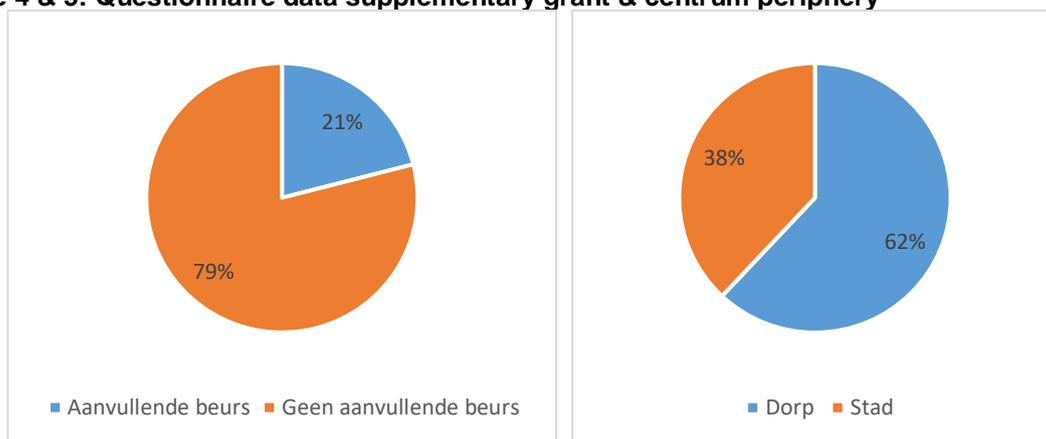


Table 3: Point distribution correct and incorrect answers questionnaire

Question from the questionnaire	Correct answer (percentage)	Incorrect answer (percentage)
Welk van deze landen behoort tot de Europese Unie?	77%	23%
Wat was de belangrijkste reden voor het ontstaan van de Europese Unie?	44%	56%
De enige instantie binnen de Europese Unie die nieuwe wetten kan voorstellen is?	34%	66%
"Een van de doelen van de Europese Unie is een Europa te creëren met steeds meer overeenkomsten tussen de verschillende lidstaten" is deze stelling juist of onjuist?	55%	45%
Welke Europese instantie wordt door de burgers van de Europese Unie rechtstreeks gekozen?	58%	42%

What is immediately noticeable is how varied the questions have been answered per question and per student. The point distribution of the questionnaire is within the entire range: from 0 points till 5 points with a median of 3 points. The conclusion can be drawn that the basic characteristics of the European Union by the average student are not well known.

A gambling opportunity must also be taken into account. Within the questionnaire there was the possibility to choose "ik weet het niet". However, the wrong answer is also often chosen by the students. This can mean that people still gambled answers within the questionnaire even though it was explicitly stated not to do this. So, people who actually didn't know the answer might have guessed answers correct without actually knowing the correct answers. This would mean that the average knowledge level about the basic characteristics of the European Union could be even lower than the results show.

4.3 Channels gathering information European Union

From the questionnaire and the in-depth interview data can be concluded that the students gather their information about the European Union in various ways. The percentages can be found in the table below. Students often gather their information about the European Union in multiple ways not by just one category. The categories "news, newspapers and news sites" and "during high school" are well represented as information channel within the questionnaire.

Table 4: Distribution of information channels to gather information about the European Union

Information channel	Percentage
Gedurende de middelbare school	71%
Binnen mijn huidige WO-opleiding	42%
Via sociale media	53%
Door familie en/of vrienden	48%
Journal, kranten & nieuws sites	81%
Overig	10%
Vorgaande MBO, HBO, WO opleidingen	16%

However, the information that is offered at secondary school is very superficial according to the in-depth interviews. " *In high school I learned a lot about national politics, hardly anything was told about the European Union.* " is a common comment from the students on this topic. Another comment that has been made is that relatively little of the knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union has remained. The information did not impress the students and the relationship with their daily life was not clear, so the students forgot the information rapidly.

A striking point is the confidence that the students have towards the categories "news, newspapers and news sites". The students indicate that they do not immediately accept the news on social media for truth, but they do this for the category "news, newspapers and news sites". However, many of these agencies are commercial orientated and their main objective is making profit not providing good reliable news. The media has a strong influence on the image students have of the European Union. This can cause a distorted picture of the real situation

"if I read something on a site such as Facebook, I do not immediately accept this as truth, a lot of nonsense is around there. when I read something on a site like the NOS or NU.nl I assume it is the truth"

4.4 Opinion towards European Union

The in-depth interviews focused on the student's opinion towards the European Union. It was directly noticeable that the opinions were widely varied around this topic, which could be traced back to the level of knowledge about the basic characteristics possess of the European Union.

"I don't really realize that the European Union exists, I don't understand what they really do"

"It is all very unclear, I do not really know much about the European Union I guess"

The students who did not have a good idea of what the European Union is did not know where the European Union was involved in and what the European Union can and cannot do. There are many misconceptions what the European Union actually is within this not well-informed group. It was noticeable that these students had a less positive image of the European Union and did not understand the importance of the European Union due to a lack of knowledge.

"The European Union costs us a lot of money"

"Everything the European Union does takes so much time. they never make a decision they are just lobbying"

Students who have better knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union have a more positive image of the European Union and this image is also much broader. They are aware that the European Union does more than just stimulate trade. They see that the European Union is active in many ways which all contribute positively to their daily life. Things as subsidies, regulations and the existence of an Erasmus scholarship are mentioned as positive aspects of the European Union.

"I like the idea that all products need to meet strict standards within the European Union. If your child puts his toy in their mouth you don't have to worry if it is toxic or not"

"I would like it if something is done about the image people have of the European Union, there is a fairly negative vibe around Brussels"

What is remarkable is that within this group too, the various authorities and their function within the European Union are less known. The system is understood in the main lines but nothing more. When an explanation of the Dutch political system is asked the explanation goes a lot smoother. The various authorities within the European Union are generally not well known.

"You have the parliament and the council and many more things"

"The European parliament will vote and the ministers have to go back to their countries with the law or something"

4.5 Factors that influence European Identity

The European identity is influenced by various factors, knowledge of basic characteristics European Union has the focus within this thesis but there are more factors to be looked at. Through a literature research various factors have emerged that also influence the presence European Identity and should be taken into account. The information obtained by the quantitative research will be used to see whether there is a relationship between the dependent variable "European identity" and multiple independent variables. The detailed questionnaire outcomes are already discussed within 4.1 quantitative data collection.

An ordinal regression is used to see if there is a relationship between someone's European Identity and the various independent variables taken into account within this thesis. The hypothesis is as follows: there is no relationship between someone's European Identity and their gender, age, birthplace, economic class, media, command of other European languages, visiting European countries and knowledge of the basic principles of the European Union within the population.

It can be concluded that there is no relationship between someone's European identity and the various factors included in thesis seeable in figure 7 below. No relationship has been found between the different factors and someone' "European identity". The complete output can be found in appendix 7.9.

Figure 7: SPSS output European identity – independent variables - ordinal regression

Model Fitting Information				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	175,664			
Final	158,921	16,743	11	,116

Link function: Logit.

It must be mentioned that two variables are significant or close to it within the model. The variable "visited countries" 0,051 and "The only body within the European Union that can propose new laws is=Correct" 0,03. Which means that the amount of European Countries a student has visited and answering the knowledge question correctly influences someone's presence of European Identity

Figure 8: SPSS output European identity – independent variable – ordinal regression – parameter estimates

	Paramter Estimates						
	Estimate	St. Error	Wald	df	Sig	95% confidence Interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
visitecountries	-,122	0,062	3,799	1	0,051	-,244	,001
[Theonlybodywithin theEuropeanUnion thatcanpropsenewlaws is=Correct]	1,233	,568	4,692	1	0,03	,117	2,343

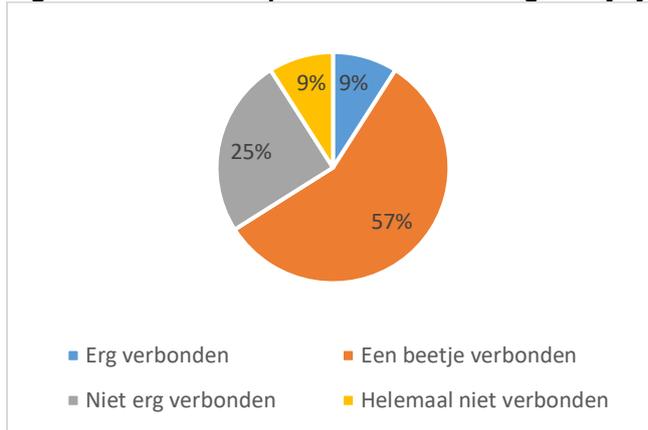
4.6 Experience own European identity

The extent to which students experience their European identity differs within the population. The largest group within the quantitative data feels "een beetje verbonden" 57% with the European Union see able in the table below. "niet erg verbonden" is the next largest group with 25%. The interviewees revealed that the European Union is not seen as a cultural phenomenon but as something useful therefore they feel no real connection as with their Nation state.

"It is all well-organized here and it is very nice to live here, but I am not necessarily proud that I am from Europe I do not feel an European Identity."

What also emerges is that students do not feel an actual European identity with the entire European Union but they do feel it with parts of the European Union. Neighboring countries and holiday destinations are mentioned as places to which this applies. Actually being somewhere ensures that a place gets value what creates a sort of "identity" with this place. Whether a country is part of the European Union is then not decisive, the experience is the main drive for the "identity".

Figure 9 : Outcome questionnaire “Hoe erg voel je je verbonden met de Europese Unie”



"I speak their language and I've been there several times, Germany and Belgium are very close, it doesn't really feel like going abroad"

"I don't really feel connected to the European Union, but I do feel connected to parts of the European Union. For example, Switzerland is not part of the European Union, but for me Switzerland is the same as Austria a member state."

The literature shows that there is a connection between someone's European identity and the various factors that have come up within this thesis. However, the in-depth interviews and the questionnaire do not confirm this outcome. It is clearly visible that the opinion of the students about the European Union differs between the knowledge levels of the basic characteristics of the European Union. However, this is not immediately reflected in the degree of European Identity of the students. Whether having knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union leads to a greater presence European Identity is doubtful. The research does not show that the presence of European Identity increases when the knowledge level becomes higher.

However various findings became clear within the in-depth interviews, it is visible that people who have a higher knowledge level about the basic characteristics of the European Union see the European Union as more important and valuable. These students are more aware of what the European Union actually includes and what it means. But this does not necessarily mean that the European identity presence will become stronger. The students see the European Union as an important authority but do not feel more connected to it when having more knowledge about the basic characteristics of the European Union.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

What can be concluded is that the average student at the University of Groningen is not well informed about the basic characteristics of the European Union. Students often receive their information about the European Union in multiple ways but there can be question marks by the quality and depth of this information. Students who are better informed of the basic characteristics of the European Union see the European Union as more valuable than not well-informed students.

However, having knowledge of the basic characteristics of the European Union leads to a greater European Identity is doubtful. The research does not show that the European identity increases when the knowledge level becomes higher. It only shows that the students with a higher knowledge level attach more value to the European Union because the European Union is seen as more useful and handier. The research findings suggest that knowledge of the basic characteristics of the European Union does not lead to a stronger feeling of European identity.

5.1 Weaknesses

There are various weaknesses within the thesis that have come forward during the process. One of them is that within the survey it was possible to find the answer to one of the knowledge questions within the survey itself. The results of the questionnaire show that this question has been made better than the other questions. The chance is that students did not know the answer to this question but did enter it correctly.

There was also the possibility of gambling in the knowledge section of the questionnaire, even though this was clearly stated this should not to be done by the participants. Both points may have ensured that the knowledge level of the students turned out to be higher than they actually had. Also, the sample did not cover the entire population within this thesis. Some groups were over-represented while other groups were missing within the sample.

A judgement-sample was used to choose the participants for the in-depth interviews. By using a judgement-sample the participants are not randomly chosen but selected with premeditation. Students were needed who were properly informed or not/little informed. By searching selectively for this personal element, it can give a distorted image of the population. Another point of attention is the number of other variables that was taken into account to explain someone's European Identity. Several variables are taken into account within this thesis but there can be more variables that influence someone's European identity by a more comprehensive literature research.

The last point is the way the in-depth interviews has taken place. These in-depth interviews went in general well and without problems. However, interviewing people is new to me and I will become better by practicing with interviewing people, the in-depth interview could therefore have been better if I had more experience with interviewing people.

5.2 Recommendations

For further research I recommend a broader and deeper data collection. For the quantitative part a sample of 100 students who completed a short survey of 16 questions has been used within this thesis. There have also been 4 in-depth interviews for the qualitative part of the thesis. If both samples will be carried out on a larger scale and with more depth, this may have consequences for the research and the results can be different. I also recommend testing the relationship between basic knowledge about the characteristics of the European Union and the degree of European identity among other groups within society. Students do not reflect the entire population of the Netherlands, getting a good picture of the entire population would be interesting for this topic.

Chapter 6 - References

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Chapter 7 - Appendix

7.1 Appendix questionnaire design

Hallo,

Ik ben een student aan de faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen en schrijf op dit moment mijn bachelorscriptie over het onderwerp European identity. Voor het kwantitatieve gedeelte heb ik een enquête opgesteld met betrekking tot studenten die studeren aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Het invullen van de enquête kost ongeveer 5 minuten en de data zal niet terug te leiden zijn naar de studenten die de enquête hebben ingevuld. Ik wil je alvast erg bedanken voor het invullen van de enquête! Wanneer je vragen en/of opmerkingen hebt rondom deze enquête of over mijn scriptie in het algemeen ben ik te bereiken via het e-mail adres: r.dijsterhuis@student.rug.nl. Ik wil je nogmaals bedanken voor de hulp!

Met vriendelijke groet Rosan Dijksterhuis

Opleiding gerelateerde vragen

1. Studeer je aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen?
 - Ja
 - Nee

wanneer je bij de eerste vraag nee hebt ingevuld kun je de rest van de enquête overslaan

2. Aan welke faculteit studeer je?
 - Economics and Business
 - Behavioural and Social Science
 - Theology and Religious Studies
 - Arts
 - Medical Science
 - Law
 - Spatial Sciences
 - Science and Engineering
 - Philosophy
 - University College Groningen
 - Campus Fryslân

Kennis vragen rondom de Europese Unie

bij vraag 3 tot en met 7 is de optie "ik weet het niet" opgenomen. Wanneer je het antwoord op de vraag niet weet graag deze optie aankruisen in plaats van het antwoord te gokken

3. Welk van deze landen behoort tot de Europese Unie?
 - IJsland
 - Noorwegen
 - Kroatië
 - Zwitserland
 - Ik weet het niet
4. Wat was de belangrijkste reden voor het ontstaan van de Europese Unie?
 - Het voorkomen van oorlog
 - Een sterk handelsblok creëren
 - Het reguleren van producten
 - Zorgen voor soepele handel tussen EU-landen
 - Ik weet het niet
5. De enige instantie binnen de Europese Unie die nieuwe wetten kan voorstellen?
 - Het Europees Parlement
 - De Europese Raad
 - De Raad
 - De Europese Commissie
 - Ik weet het niet

6. "Een van de doelen van de Europese Unie is een Europa te creëren met steeds meer overeenkomsten tussen de verschillende lidstaten" is deze stelling juist of onjuist?
- Juist
 - Onjuist
 - Ik weet het niet
7. Welk Europees instantie wordt door de burgers van de Europese Unie rechtstreeks gekozen?
- Het Europees Parlement
 - De Europese Raad
 - De Raad
 - De Europese Commissie
 - Ik weet het niet

Persoonlijke vragen

8. Wat is je leeftijd?
- _____
9. Wat is je geslacht?
- Man
 - Vrouw
 - Anders
10. Ontvang je aanvullende beurs?
- Ja
 - Nee
11. In welke provincie ben je opgegroeid?
- Groningen
 - Friesland
 - Drenthe
 - Gelderland
 - Limburg
 - Flevoland
 - Zeeland
 - Noord-Brabant
 - Noord-Holland
 - Zuid-Holland
 - Utrecht
 - Overijssel
12. Ben je opgeroeid in een dorp of stad?
- Dorp
 - Stad
13. Ik heb de volgende landen binnen de Europese Unie bezocht:
- België
 - Bulgarije
 - Cyprus
 - Denemarken
 - Duitsland
 - Estland
 - Finland
 - Frankrijk
 - Griekenland
 - Hongarije
 - Ierland
 - Italië

- Kroatië
- Letland
- Litouwen
- Luxemburg
- Malta
- Nederland
- Oostenrijk
- Polen
- Portugal
- Roemenië
- Slovenië
- Slowakije
- Spanje
- Tsjechië
- Verenigd Koninkrijk (Engeland, Schotland, Wales, Noord-Ierland)
- Zweden

14. Ik spreek naast Nederlands ook?

- Bulgaars
- Deens
- Duits
- Engels
- Estisch
- Fins
- Frans
- Grieks
- Hongaars
- Iers
- Italiaans
- Kroatisch
- Lets
- Litouws
- Maltees
- Nederlands
- Pools
- Portugees
- Roemeens
- Sloveens
- Slowaaks
- Spaans
- Tsjechisch
- Zweeds

15. Hoe erg voel je je verbonden met de Europese Unie?

- Erg verbonden
- Een beetje verbonden
- Niet erg verbonden
- Helemaal niet verbonden
- Ik weet het niet

16. Via welke kanalen vergaar/vergaarde je kennis rondom de Europese Unie (meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk)

- Journaal / krant / nieuws sites
- Middelbare school
- WO-opleiding
- Sociale media
- Vrienden/familie
- Overig _____

Erg bedank voor het invullen van de enquête

7.2 Appendix in-dept interview guide semi structured

Introduction

1. Kan je iets meer over jezelf vertellen?

- Leeftijd
- Hobby en interesse → is er politieke interesse aanwezig?
- Studie → welke faculteit?
- Woonplaats gedurende levensloop → periferie of kerngebieden
- Sociale klasse → wel of niet ontvangen aanvullende beurs

Topical questions

2. Wat is je mening over de Europese Unie?

- Waardoor vind je dit (why)
- Positieve aspecten rondom de Europese Unie
- Negatieve aspecten rondom de Europese Unie
- Bepaalde gebeurtenissen die grote invloed hebben gehad vormen van mening

3. Door wie en wat is jouw beeld rondom de Europese Unie gevormd, via welke kanalen ben je aan deze informatie gekomen?

- Opleiding
- Nieuws (krant, journaal, nieuwswebsites)
- Vrienden/Familie
- Sociale media
- → welke was de voornaamste en heeft voor de meeste kennis gezorgd

4. Wat weet je allemaal van de Europese Unie?

- Mate van democratie
- Verschillende instanties
- Basisprincipes van de Europese Unie
- Machtpositie van de Europese Unie
- Wat doet de Europese Unie allemaal

5. Voel je je een burger van de Europese Unie naast het zijn van een Nederlandse staatsburger?

- Waarom, wat houdt dit voor je in?
- Verbondenheid met andere landen?
- Economisch belang?
- Creëren sterk blok?

6. Hoe ervaar je je Europese identiteit?

- Positief? Wat zijn aspecten die ervoor zorgen dat je Europese identiteit toeneemt
- Negatief? Wat zijn aspecten die ervoor zorgen dat je Europese identiteit afneemt
- Trots op het zijn van een Europeaan?

7. Welke factoren hebben invloed gehad op hoe je je Europese identiteit ervaart?

- Eurocrisis
- Familie/vrienden
- Opleiding
- Maken van reizen binnen de Europese Unie
- Sociale media
- Nieuws (krant, journaal, nieuwswebsites)

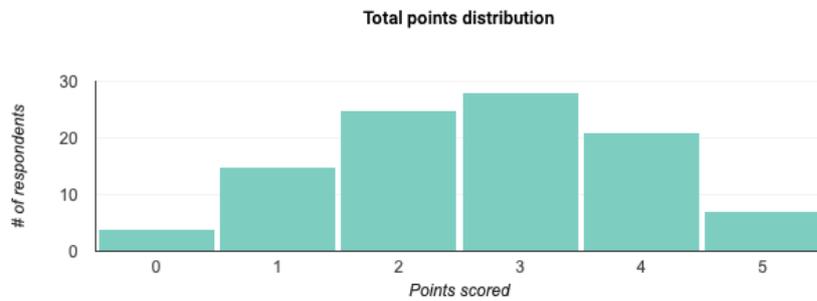
Closing questions

8. Ga je stemmen bij de Europese parlementsverkiezingen op 23 mei?

- 29 zetels voor Nederland (3 meer dan hiervoor door Brexit)

7.3 Appendix point distribution questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

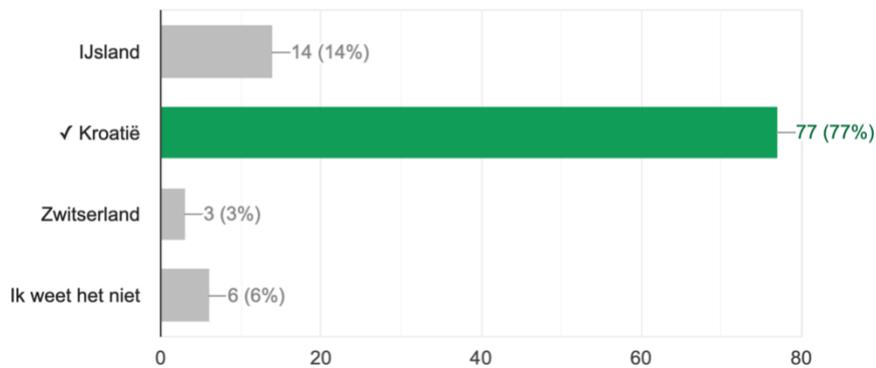
Average 2.68 / 5 points	Median 3 / 5 points	Range 0 - 5 points
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7.4 Appendix answer question 1 questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

Welk van deze landen behoort tot de Europese Unie?

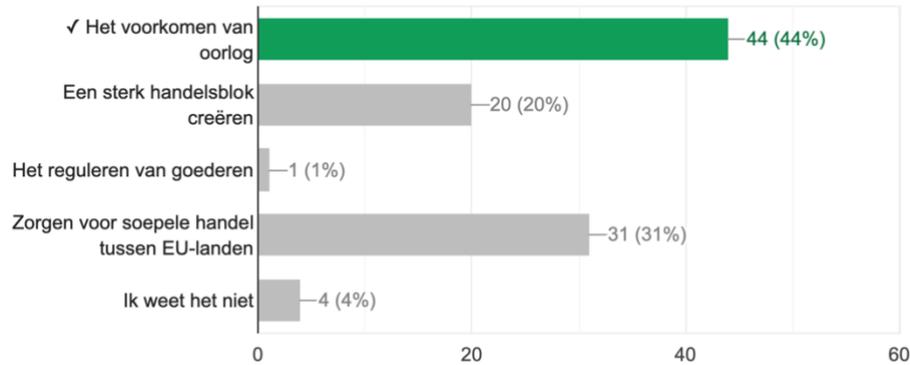
77 / 100 correct responses



7.5 Appendix answer question 2 questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

Wat was de belangrijkste reden voor het ontstaan van de Europese Unie?

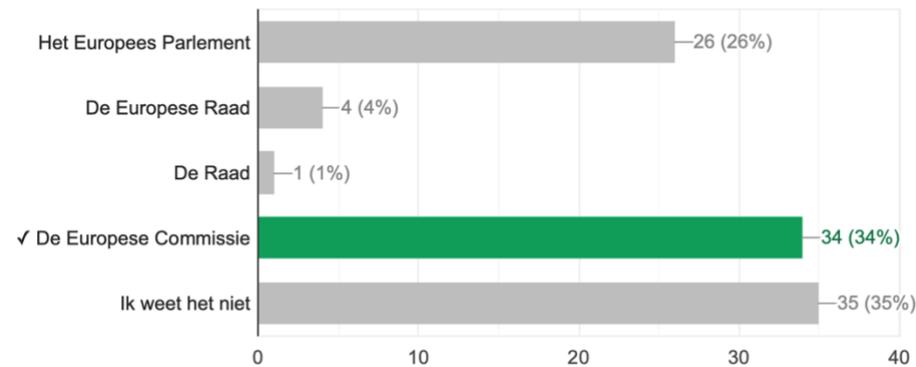
44 / 100 correct responses



7.6 Appendix answer question 3 questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

De enige instantie binnen de Europese Unie die nieuwe wetten kan voorstellen is?

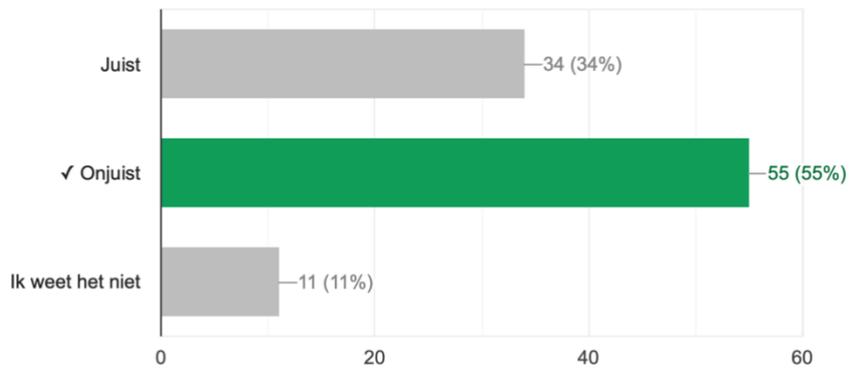
34 / 100 correct responses



7.7 Appendix answer question 4 questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

"Een van de doelen van de Europese Unie is een Europa te creëren met steeds meer overeenkomsten tu...s deze stelling juist of onjuist?

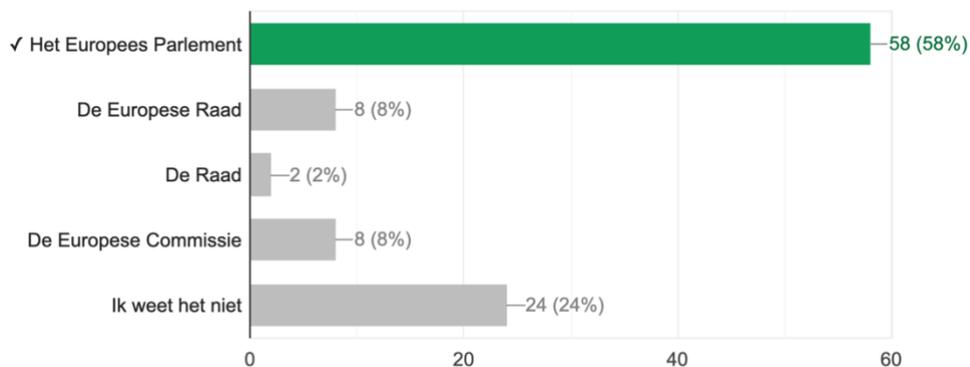
55 / 100 correct responses



7.8 Appendix answer question 5 questionnaire knowledge basic characteristics European Union

Welke Europees instantie wordt door de burgers van de Europese Unie rechtstreeks gekozen?

58 / 100 correct responses



7.9 Appendix SPSS output: ordinal regression European identity and independent variables

Case Processing Summary

		N	Marginal Percentage
How strong do you feel a connection with the European Union?	A bit connected	50	60,2%
	Very connected	6	7,2%
	Not connected at all	8	9,6%
	Not very connected	19	22,9%
Grew up in the center or periphery	Periphery	50	60,2%
	Center	33	39,8%
Receiving supplementary grant	Yes	20	24,1%
	No	63	75,9%
Gender	Male	35	42,2%
	Female	48	57,8%
Which European body is directly chosen by the citizens of the European Union?	Correct	52	62,7%
	Incorrect	31	37,3%
One of the goals of the European Union is to create a Europe with more and more similarities	Correct	29	34,9%
	Incorrect	54	65,1%
The only body within the European Union that can propose new laws is	Correct	29	34,9%
	Incorrect	54	65,1%
What was the main reason for the creation of the European Union	Correct	36	43,4%
	Incorrect	47	56,6%
Which of these counties belongs to the European Union	Correct	63	75,9%
	Incorrect	20	24,1%
Valid		83	100,0%
Missing		17	
Total		100	

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	175,664			
Final	158,921	16,743	11	,116

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	292,730	232	,004
Deviance	158,921	232	1,000

Link function: Logit.

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	,183
Nagelkerke	,208
McFadden	,095

Link function: Logit.

Parameter Estimates

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold [How strong do you feel a connection with the European Union = [A bit connected]	-3,618	3,050	1,407	1	,236	-9,595	2,359
[Very connected]	-3,237	3,044	1,131	1	,288	-9,203	2,729
[Not connected at all]	-2,660	3,037	,767	1	,381	-8,612	3,291
Location Age	-,086	,120	,511	1	,475	-,321	,150
Numbers spoken languages	-,518	,319	2,646	1	,104	-1,143	,106
Visited countries [Grew up location=Periphery]	-,122	,062	3,799	1	,051	-,244	,001
[Center]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.

[Supplementary grant=Yes]	-,109	,558	,038	1	,845	-1,202	,984
[No]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Gender=Male]	,432	,506	,729	1	,393	-,560	1,425
[Female]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[WhichEuropeanbodyi sdirectlychosenbythe citizensoftheEuropea nUnion=Correct]	-,363	,551	,435	1	,510	-1,442	,716
[Incorrect]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[OneofthegoalsoftheE uropeanUnionistocrea teaEuropewithmorean dmoresimilarities=Cor rect]	-,075	,523	,020	1	,887	-1,100	,951
[Incorrect]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Theonlybodywithinth eEuropeanUnionthatc anproposenewlawsis =Correct]	1,230	,568	4,692	1	,030	,117	2,343
[Incorrect]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Whatwasthemainrea sonforthecreationofth eEuropeanUnion=Cor rect]	-,380	,515	,545	1	,460	-1,388	,629
[Incorrect]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Whichofthesecountie sbelongstotheEurope anUnion=Correct]	,163	,555	,086	1	,770	-,926	1,251
[Incorrect]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.