Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union

Volume 2012 *2012* Article 7

April 2013

Cohesion Policy of the European Union: Facilitated by Supranational Institutions and Regional Autonomy or Hindered by National Sovereignty?

Caitlin Daw
The George Washington University, cdaw@gwmail.gwu.edu

5

Cohesion Policy of the European Union: Facilitated by Supranational Institutions and Regional Autonomy or Hindered by National Sovereignty?

Caitlin M. Daw
The George Washington University

Abstract

The economic, cultural, and political diversity of European Union member states is both a blessing and a curse with respect to the success of its integration. Political discord and economic inequality across the regions of the European Union are continuous concerns for policymakers. Regional disparity limits the potential for further integration, foments possible political instability, and contributes to the concentration of resources necessary for economic growth, such as capital, labor, investment, technology, and innovation. Establishing economic cohesion at the sub-national level with respect to the rest of the EU has become a paramount issue for policymakers of the central European Union institutions as they finalize the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and assess their progress in meeting the objectives of the *Europe 2020* Agenda while simultaneously attempting to resolve the current eurozone financial crisis. Using the case studies of the Basque country, Scotland, and Slovakia, this paper tests two hypotheses to examine the relative success of EU Regional policy. The research hypothesis argues that enhanced cooperation between regional authorities and EU institutions have resulted in achieving many of the cohesion policy objectives. The alternative hypothesis argues that the success of regional policy has been hindered by a variety of factors within regions and member states. The preponderance of evidence supports the research hypothesis.

Keywords

European Union, supranational institutions, cohesion policy, regional economic development, political autonomy, devolution

Introduction

The economic, cultural, and political diversity of the member states of the European Union is both a blessing and a curse with respect to the success of its integration. These dissimilarities are quite evident not only at the national level, but also at the regional level, within individual member states. Political discord and economic inequality across EU regions are continuous concerns for policymakers. Regional disparity limits the potential for further integration, foments possible political instability, and contributes to the concentration, or agglomeration, of resources necessary for economic growth, such as capital, labor, investment, technology, and innovation. Establishing economic cohesion at the sub-national level with respect to the rest of the EU has become a paramount issue for supranational policymakers as they finalize the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and assess their progress in meeting the objectives of the *Europe 2020* Agenda while simultaneously attempting to resolve the current eurozone financial crisis.

The European Union (2007) consists of 271 NUTS 2 regions[1], each represented at the supranational level by the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The Committee of the Regions is an advisory agency, providing a platform for regional actors to interact with EU institutions. The European Union defines regions as the following:

> *The functions of government require power to be exercised by administrative units at a lower level than the nation state, either through 'top-down' devolution of responsibilities or through a federal structure. The limits of regions are usually based on natural boundaries (such as rivers, mountains, and coastlines), historical boundaries and/or administrative boundaries (that may be more or less arbitrary), some of which may coincide. (The European Union, 2007, p. 5)*[2]

These natural, cultural, linguistic, and political boundaries can be quite divisive, hindering cooperation between regional authorities and national governments. Several EU regions have obtained substantial autonomy as a result of the devolution of political authority from their respective national governments (Mitchell & McAleavey, 1999).

This research paper analyzes regions with extensive political autonomy and unique cultural and linguistic identities. This paper examines the Basque country, Scotland, Flanders, and Slovakia. The Basque country (*País Vasco*), one of the most autonomous regions in Spain, has historically been very proactive in its attempts to gain autonomy—and even complete independence—from the central government (Sodaro, 2011). Scotland gained its self-governance through the devolution of political powers from the UK Parliament in 1999 (Chapman, 2008). Due to its geographic boundaries and low population densities, access to business and enterprise is limited (European Commission Regional Policy, 2007f, 2007g). During the accession of Central and Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007, the budget for cohesion policy was expected to increase. For these new member states, EU cohesion funding was—and still is—necessary to stimulate growth in their economies (Mercier, 2005). According to Michael Baun (1999), enlargement generated skepticism among the original periphery member states as to whether the levels of funding were sustainable for the future expansion of the Union.

---

1 EU regions are classified into three NUTS levels. There are 97 NUTS 1 regions; 271 NUTS 2 regions; and 1,303 NUTS 3 regions.

2 From The European Union (2008). *Regions of the European Union: A statistical portrait—2009 edition.* (Eurostat Publication KS-EP-08-001-EN-C) Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

This paper examines cohesion policy in Eastern Europe with the case of the Visegrad Four, also known as the "V4" countries. The Visegrad Four—Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic—has become more active in recent discussions on the future of cohesion policy (Euractiv, 2011b). This paper will focus on Slovakia, the second poorest country of the eurozone (Kulish, 2011). Cohesion funds are vital for the country's economic growth, but wide regional disparity remains between Slovakia's rural and urban areas (Mercier, 2005).

Background Information and Key Terms

The role of regional entities in the European Union has changed dramatically through integration and the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The CoR provides sub-national actors a platform to interact directly with EU institutions. The Committee of the Regions was established in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1994, and through the ratification of the Amsterdam, Nice, and Lisbon Treaties, its responsibilities have grown (Roy & Kanner, 2006). Current CoR President Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso of Spain presides over the advisory committee of 344 appointed representatives (Committee of the Regions, 2011d). According to Roy and Kennan (2006), the CoR gives "an institutionalized voice to those responsible for implementing the majority of EU legislation—local and regional governments" (pp. 29-30).

Cohesion policy was introduced in the mid-1980s after the accession of Spain, Portugal, and Greece to the European Economic Community (EEC). Spain, Portugal, and Greece—and also Ireland after its accession to the EEC in 1973—were known as the original periphery countries. According to Baldwin and Wyplosz (2009), "These nations were substantially poorer than the incumbent members, and importantly, their farmers did not produce the goods that the CAP supported most heavily (mainly wheat, sugar, dairy, and beef)" (p. 405). Structural funds were introduced to distribute financial assistance to regions with stagnated economic growth.

Regions with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is less than 75% of the EU average are eligible to receive structural funds. These funds are designed to promote economic development, establish infrastructure, and increase employment. The ultimate goals of cohesion policy are to increase market competitiveness, to enhance the global legitimacy of the European Union, and to establish economic parity between the 'core' and the 'periphery' (Farole, Rodríguez-Pose & Storper, 2011). Farole et al. (2011) define the core as "those regions within which are located the largest economic agglomerations," and the periphery is defined as "regions generally lacking similar agglomerations and often the potential to generate scale economies" (p. 1092). The core—the wealthiest regions of the European Union—is defined as a "geographical line" beginning in London and southeastern United Kingdom and continuing through Paris and northeastern France, to regions along the Rhine River, and Milan. The periphery—the poorest regions of the European Union—is defined as Central and Eastern European member states, southern Italy, southern Spain, Portugal, northern Sweden, and Finland (Brunazzo, 2010).

Cohesion policy originally consisted of six objectives, representing the areas of development that were essential to reduce economic disparity across the European Union. As the Union expanded, cohesion policy was streamlined from six to three objectives to distribute structural funds more effectively. The 2000-2006 Objectives were reformed again for the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework to align cohesion policy with the goals of the *Europe 2020* Agenda (European Commission Regional Policy, 2008).

Cohesion and regional policy represents approximately one-third of the EU budget.

For the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework, €347.41 billion is allocated to regional policy (European Commission Regional Policy, 2008). The current three objectives are Convergence; Regional competitiveness and employment; and Territorial cooperation (European Commission Regional Policy, 2008). The Convergence objective provides funding to the poorest regions of the European Union, and over 80% of structural funds are spent in Objective 1 regions. Increasing employment rates across the EU and providing more opportunities for high-skilled employment are the goals of Objective 2, which comprise 16% of structural funds. Objective 3 is designed to foster collaborative development projects between the border regions (Euractiv, 2011c).

The negotiations for the 2014–2020 Multiannual Financial Framework have sparked debate across the Union about the future of regional policy. The Commission has called for aligning cohesion policy objectives more to the *Europe 2020* Agenda goals, which include raising employment, stimulating economic growth, and promoting social inclusion (Euractiv, 2011c). The Commission has proposed increased monitoring and evaluation on the regions' use of regional funds. Commissioner Hahn has called for reserving a portion of the EU Cohesion policy budget as a "bonus" for regions that exceed their convergence targets (Euractiv, 2010a).

Strengthening communication between governmental institutions at the regional, national, and supranational levels is a key component to a successful post-2013 Cohesion policy. The Commission has attempted to establish more connections through the annual Open Days Meetings in Brussels. During these meetings, individuals can voice their concerns and opinions on regional policy. The Open Days Meetings serve as a lobbying platform for regional entities (Committee of the Regions, 2008). EU institutions are able to gauge the success of cohesion policy and recognize what improvements are necessary to erase regional disparities.

While EU supranational institutions have provided a platform for regional authorities to be involved in the discussion on cohesion policy reform, national member state interests often conflict with the goals of autonomous regional governments. The clash of national and regional interests has spurred debate as to whether structural programs should be renationalized or more centralized at the supranational level (Euractiv, 2010e). This conflict of regional, national, and supranational interests on the future of cohesion policy presents an arduous task for EU policymakers as they attempt to enact reforms and resolve a financial crisis that is spreading rapidly among the peripheral member states.

Research Hypothesis

The growing presence of sub-national actors at the EU level has facilitated more communication between regional and supranational institutions, particularly through the auspices of the Committee of the Regions. Accordingly, my research hypothesis is that international factors, such as (a) the EU's commitment to reducing economic disparities across its many regions, (b) pressures from the EU's Committee for the Regions for regional economic development, (c) requests from the regions (and the CoR) for EU support in sustaining cultural identity, (d) and efforts by various regions to deal directly with EU institutions, have resulted in close cooperation between the EU and regional governments, enabling them at times to circumvent their respective national governments. The independent variable for the research hypothesis is that international factors, such as CoR pressures to improve economic development and the regions' efforts to seek EU assistance and political autonomy, determine the success of relations between EU level institutions and the regions, the dependent variable.

Alternative Hypothesis

National and domestic factors provide an alternative approach to analyze why economic divergence still persists within the European Union and the obstacles to effective communication between regional authorities and EU institutions. Accordingly, my alternative hypothesis is that national and domestic factors, such as (a) divergent economic, social, and political conditions in various regions, (b) resistance on the part of national government leaders, (c) opposition political parties, and (d) the general public to increase autonomy for the country's regions, and (e) central government resistance to the effort by regional governments to deal with the European Union directly, have restricted political and financial ties between the EU and regional governments. For the alternative hypothesis, the independent variable is that the national and domestic factors, such as pressures from national governments, opposition parties, and the public to limit regional autonomy, have hindered the relations between the EU and the regions, the dependent variable.

Levels of analysis. The hypotheses relate to the international level of analysis in the discussion of the European Union's role in establishing and implementing cohesion policy throughout the Union. The European Commission for Regional Policy and the Committee of the Regions play significant roles in initiating reforms and interacting with individual regions, respectively. The hypotheses relate to the national/domestic level of analysis in the discussion of the role of EU regions, their autonomy within member states, and their pursuit for regional funding from EU institutions. National member state interests and the concerns of the general public with respect to regional political autonomy are examined in this paper.

Expectations. If the research hypothesis is correct, then (a) the European Union acts at the supranational level to reduce economic disparities across the regions and (b) these regional governments have sought to obtain assistance directly from the EU for purposes of economic development, acting mainly through the CoR. The regions (c) have sought EU assistance to enhance their cultural identity and, in some cases, obtain more autonomy from their national governments, and they (d) have sought to enhance their cooperation with one another or with other regions, independently of their respective national governments. Central EU institutions (e) have been willing to deal directly with these regions, bypassing their national governments.

If the alternative hypothesis is correct, then (a) EU regions differ with respect to their size, economic endowments, and relative success in using EU funds for economic development, and (b) national governments have sought to retain as much control as possible over funds for their regions as well as to lobby the European Union for more development funding. National governments have (c) sought to limit regional autonomy in their respective countries. Opposition parties (d) and the public (e) also favor limited regional autonomy. National governments (f) have sought to limit or block direct ties between their regional governments and the EU in an attempt to retain control over their regions.

Literature Review

Regional and cohesion policy in the European Union has generated substantial scholarly discussion in a number of academic disciplines, such as economics, political science, international affairs, and economic geography. There are numerous approaches to analyze cohesion policy, including discussions about the interaction of regional entities and supranational institutions; the complexity of balancing regional, national, and supranational interests while simultaneously addressing economic development and cultural identity; the impact of regional disparity on facilitating the political and economic integration of Europe; and the geographical distribution of economic resources and how the free movement of persons, capital, services, and labor has contributed to regional disparity across the European Union.

From an economic perspective, scholars have analyzed the impact of agglomeration on economic growth at the regional level. The fundamental economic analysis on resource distribution is the Hecksher-Ohlin Model, which states that winners and losers emerge as a result of differences in resource endowments (Suranovic, 2010). When applied to EU cohesion policy, new economic geography models, theorized by economists, such as Paul Krugman, illustrate that the core and the periphery are derived from market integration and economies of scale. Endogenous growth theories emphasize the importance of market innovation and adaptability of firms to maximize production possibilities (Farole et al., 2011). Farole et al. (2011) discuss these previous analyses of resource agglomeration. The authors emphasize that successful cohesion policy in the European Union requires strong regional and supranational governmental institutions. Ricardo Crescenzi and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose (2011) discuss the need for investment in convergence regions. Lagging regions not only experience limited access to capital, labor and technology, but also a lack of investment from private firms. Investment and EU structural funds can stimulate economic growth in poorer regions, making them more economically competitive.

The political discussions of cohesion policy often focus on the interaction between regional actors and supranational institutions. Liesbet Hooghe (1998) has argued that cohesion policy illustrates the multilevel governance of the European Union and the extant tension among regional, national, and supranational polities. A commonly used phrase in the discussion of cohesion policy is "Europe of the regions." Hooghe and Marks (1996) state that "Europe with the regions" is a more appropriate term to describe the diverse levels of regional autonomy and multilevel governance.

This paper incorporates an economic and political analysis to compare the theses of the aforementioned scholars and assess the interaction of regional, national, and supranational institutions in facilitating economic development, retention of cultural identity, and integration across the regions of the European Union. Other secondary sources used include Nugent's (2010) *Government and Politics of the European Union,* 7th Edition to discuss the political ramifications of cohesion policy and Baldwin and Wyplosz's (2009) *The Economics of European Integration*, 3rd Edition to discuss the economic ramifications of cohesion policy.

Additional primary sources for this paper include news articles from Euractiv, *The Economist*, *The Seattle Times*, *De Standaard*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph,* and *The New York Times*. European Union documents and publications used in this paper include the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework; the *Treaty of the European Community*; and the operational programs of the case study regions. Eurostat publications used in this paper include *Regions in the European Union: Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics*; *Regions of the European Union: A statistical portrait—2009 edition*; and *Eurostat regional yearbook 2010.* The Special Eurobarometer 307 report is used to gauge public opinion on regional authority and their awareness of Committee of the Regions and its purpose in the European Union.

Testing the Research Hypothesis

The first expectation of the research hypothesis is that the European Union acts at the supranational level to reduce economic disparities across the regions. The European Union is quite active at the supranational level to reduce economic disparity and promote social inclusion through cohesion policy. Economic parity is one of the core goals of integration, and promoting cohesion and the "overall harmonious development" of the continent were the founding objectives of the EU, as stated in Article 158 of the Treaty of the European Community (The European Union, 2002). Cohesion policy was introduced in the mid-1980s to ensure that economically backward regions could attain similar standards of economic growth as the rest of the Community. The 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the European Union were catalysts for reforming cohesion policy to ensure a fiscally responsible distribution of funding to all regions.

Cohesion policy is the second largest EU expenditure and includes contributions from national governments and the European Union (European Commission for Regional Policy, 2007a; 2011a). In the 2007-2013 budget, cohesion policy represents 35.6% of the budget and is listed under "1b. Cohesion for growth and employment" (The European Union, 2011c).

Table 1: Growth Rates and Cohesion Funding of Case Study Regions, 2007-2013a

Region	2008 GDP per capita (in terms of PPS)	% of EU-27 GDP	Objective Classification	% of total EU regional aid given to Member State	Total EU Funding	Total National Public Contribution
Basque country	€34,500	138%	Regional Competitiveness & Employment	0.7%	€240,582,157	€259,774,909
Scotland	€29,075	90%	Regional Competitiveness & Employment	4.6%	€497,820,236	€703,295,678
Slovakia	€41,800; €12,700-17,400	167%; 51%-69%	Convergence; Regional Competitiveness & Employment	13.3%	€1,532,000,000	€270,352,942
EU-27	€25,100	100%	----	----	€347,410,000,000	----

Sources: The European Union (2011a; 2011b); Eurostat (2008a, 2008b); European Commission Regional Policy (2007c-i)

aAll Slovakian regions qualify for structural funds; the total amount of cohesion policy funds from the EU and national public contributions for Slovakia represents the four NUTS 2 regions. The total contributions for Scotland include the total funding for the Highlands and Islands and the Lowlands and Uplands. For the "% of EU investment in the Member State" column, the data shows the amount cohesion funding from the EU to the region as a percentage of the total cohesion funds given to the member state. For example, the cohesion and structural funding given to the Basque country is 0.7% of the total amount of cohesion and structural funds given to Spain for the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework.

bThe data for Slovakia includes the capital region Bratislava, which has a GDP per inhabitant 167% of the EU average. The remaining three NUTS 2 regions' GDP per inhabitant are 51-69% less than the EU Average.

Since the accession of Spain to the European Union in 1983, its regions have been eligible for supranational regional aid. *País Vasco* continues to receive EU cohesion and structural funding under Objective 2. The Basque country's structural program facilitates opportunities for employment and research and development, including funding to increase Research and Development as a percentage of total GDP; educate and train workers; facilitate private investment; and encourage sustainable and efficient transportation services to the rural and urban areas (European Commission Regional Policy, 2007c).

Since devolution from the United Kingdom's Parliament to Scotland began in 1999, Scotland has been very proactive in increasing its regional autonomy, with some political parties advocating complete independence from the UK, such as the Scottish National Party. Scotland's experience with regional policy has been rather successful. In 1994, Scotland was originally classified as an Objective 1 region (Pilkington, 2001). The Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland are now classified, as Objective 2 regions while the Highlands and Islands are still remain convergence/phasing-out regions. The operational program for the Highlands and Islands includes increasing entrepreneurial enterprise. The cohesion funding priorities for the Lowlands and Uplands are designed to enhance urban development and strengthen the economic competitiveness of sparsely populated areas (European Commission Regional Policy, 2007f; 2007g).

The economic situation of Slovakia's regions demonstrates the wide regional disparities across the member state. Bratislava experiences substantially more economic growth in comparison to Western, Central, and Eastern Slovakia and is considered an Objective 2 region. The Commission's priorities for Bratislava's cohesion policy include improving its transport infrastructure, enhancing the region's knowledge economy and encouraging environmental sustainability. The operational program for Western, Central, and Eastern Slovakia is designed to increase access to education and social services and to improve transport infrastructure (European Commission Regional Policy, 2007d; 2007i). The first expectation is correct in that the European Union acts at the supranational level to reduce economic disparity across the regions, crafting individual regional programs.

The second expectation is that regional governments have sought to obtain assistance directly from the European Union for economic development. This expectation discusses how active individual regions are in obtaining regional funding from supranational institutions. The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is one of the primary instruments that regional authorities can utilize to become involved in cohesion policy reform negotiations. The 344 appointed members of the CoR serve an ambassadorial role for the citizens of the regions (Committee of the Regions, 2009).

The CoR, however, has only an advisory capacity, and the Commission, Parliament, and Council may elect to ignore CoR opinions on legislation (Brunazzo, 2010). CoR representatives, such as Michael Schneider, president of the European People's Party group, are concerned with the lack of communication between the central EU institutions and the CoR and the lack of dialogue between member states and the regions on the future of Cohesion Policy (Euractiv, 2010f). Communication at each level of governance—regional, national, and supranational—is requisite to create an agreement for a successful post-2013 cohesion policy. The second expectation of the research hypothesis, therefore, is correct in that the regions have sought to obtain assistance directly from EU institutions, mainly through the auspices of the Committee of the Regions.

The third expectation of the research hypothesis is that the regions have sought to enhance their cultural identity and obtain more autonomy from their national governments. Cultural identity and linguistic differences are the cardinal origins of regional dissimilarity in the European Union. Regions with a distinct cultural identity have been quite proactive in pursuing political autonomy and, in some cases, complete independence; such pursuits contribute to political instability between national governments and regional authorities. The Basque country and Scotland are the archetypal case regions that have sought and successfully obtained political autonomy from their national governments.

In Spain, the Basque country is one of the most autonomous regions, and the region's desire for self-rule and, even, independence, was spurred by its experiences under the Franco regime. Since devolution began in the late 1970s, the Basque has sought substantial political autonomy. Although the region is the wealthiest in Spain, the Basque country has maintained a presence in Brussels since the mid-1980s and has utilized its EU structural funds for economic development and entrepreneurship.

Scotland and the UK have historic tensions with respect to Scottish political autonomy and independence. The Scottish Parliament continues to seek more political autonomy, such as the power to levy taxes; the Scottish National Party (SNP) is in favor of complete independence from the United Kingdom. SNP leader and First Minister Alex Salmond introduced plans for a referendum for independence in 2009 (The Associated Press, 2009). Scotland remains quite active in improving its economic development, protecting the interests of the Scottish people, and enhancing its presence in the EU with the establishment of two lobbying offices in Brussels (Committee of the Regions, 2008).

The third expectation shows mixed evidence that the regions seek EU assistance to gain more autonomy and retain cultural identity. Historic cultural and linguistic differences have catalyzed regional political autonomy in several member states, but evidence of the regions' uses of EU funding to maintain cultural identity and regional autonomy varies.

The fourth expectation of the research hypothesis is that EU regions have sought to enhance their cooperation with one another or with other regions, independently of their respective national governments. The institutions of the European Union have encouraged regions and member states to work collaboratively to achieve the objectives of integration and the *Europe 2020* Agenda. European Commission President Jose Barroso calls the regions "the key players" in cohesion policy (Euractiv, 2011c). EU cohesion policy encourages cross-border cooperation among the regions. Through cohesion and structural funds, French and Belgian border regions, for example, have collaborated to provide better access to hospitals and emergency health care facilities for citizens in these regions (European Commission for Regional Policy, 2007j).

Central and Eastern European regions, on the other hand, face a similar economic situation: stagnating growth rates; limited investment from public and private sources; and restricted access to labor, capital, and technological resources. Entire member states, such as the Visegrad Four countries, have collaborated to create a united stance in the debate on cohesion policy reform. The Visegrad Four—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia—receive substantial cohesion and structural funding packages from the European Union, totaling approximately €140 billion (Visegrad.info, 2010). While they are collectively supportive of the EU's proposal to align cohesion policy objectives with the *Europe 2020* Agenda, the V4 countries have stressed that member states and regions should be able to establish spending priorities for their cohesion and structural packages. Daniel Braun, a deputy minister from the Czech Republic, said, "We stress the need for a sufficient level of flexibility so that member states and regions are able to define the main priorities that cover their needs" (Euractiv, 2011b).

The fourth expectation is largely correct in that individual regions have collaborated with other regions, independent of their national governments. Regions have worked together to establish territorial cooperation, facilitate economic development, and discuss the future of cohesion policy. In Central and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, entire member states with similar economic situations and policy interests have collaborated to issue a common response to the Commission's proposals on regional policy reform.

The fifth expectation is that central EU institutions have been willing to deal directly with the regions, bypassing their national governments. The European Union has supported increased regional involvement in the implementation of cohesion policy, and the Committee of the Regions is the primary collaborative channel for supranational institutions. Through the CoR, central EU institutions receive opinions from the regional representatives on pending legislation and engage in policy debates. Central EU institutions have acknowledged the vital role that European regions will play in supranational policymaking and in the future of integration (Committee of the Regions, 2011a). The CoR's initiatives, such as the Open Days Meetings, indicate its willingness to engage in more debate with local and regional entities rather than national governments. The fifth expectation of the hypothesis is correct in that central EU institutions are willing to deal directly with the regions, bypassing their national governments. The Committee of the Regions is the most willing to interact with the regions, providing various platforms to discuss cohesion policy and regional interests.

The first expectation of the research hypothesis was correct in that the European Union acts extensively at the supranational level to reduce economic disparities among the regions. The second expectation was correct in that regions have sought EU regional assistance through the auspices of EU institutions, mainly the Committee of the Regions. The third expectation showed mixed evidence. Although European regions are active in their pursuit of regional autonomy, there is limited evidence that EU assistance was utilized to facilitate these efforts. The fourth expectation is largely correct in that regional governments have cooperated with other regions, independently of national governments. Sub-national cooperation was facilitated through Regional Partnerships and cohesion policy projects. National level cooperation in Central and Eastern European countries, on the other hand, is a more effective method to create a united stance on the proposed reforms to regional and cohesion policy. The fifth expectation of the regional hypothesis is correct in that central EU institutions have been willing to deal directly with these regions, bypassing their national governments.

Testing the Alternative Hypothesis

The first expectation of the alternative hypothesis is that the regions of the European Union differ with respect to their size, economic endowments, and their relative success in using EU funds for economic development. Despite extensive supranational efforts to achieve economic parity, regional inequality still exists in Europe. While some regions have been more successful with their economic development, over 100 regions, such as those in Southern Spain and Western, Central, and Eastern Slovakia, are still classified as convergence regions. These regions still require substantial cohesion and structural funding for economic growth (Euractiv, 2011c). Although the 2000-2006 Cohesion policy created 1.4 million jobs and reduced income disparity indices by 1/6, regions continue to experience negative growth, indicating that economic integration has spurred regional disparity rather than economic convergence across the EU (European Commission Regional Policy, 2008).

Enlargement contributed significantly to an increase in regional disparity across the EU. The 2004 enlargement consisted of ten countries, and their combined GDP per capita was 46.5% of the EU-15 average. The GDP per capita of both Bulgaria and Romania was just 37.5% of the EU-25 average at the time of their enlargement in 2007 (Barnes & Barnes, 2010). The twelve countries admitted to the Union were in the midst of transitioning from being centrally planned socialist economies to market-oriented capitalist economies and required cohesion funding to stimulate economic growth. Current EU member states were concerned about possible decreases in their funding and began to lobby for the protection of their regional aid.

Individual regions have established lobbying offices in Brussels, allowing sub-national authorities to maintain direct contact with EU institutions and other regions. There are more than 250 regional offices in Brussels (Brunazzo, 2010). Regions with substantial amounts of cohesion and structural funding sought to ensure that their current levels of funding would be maintained; the number of regional offices in Brussels increased substantially in the past two decades. In 1988, there were just 15 regional offices in the European Union capital; ten years later, there were over 120 offices in Brussels representing regional governments. The increase in the number of offices is indicative of the sub-national efforts to protect regional interests (Mitchell & McAleavey, 1999). Table 2 below provides information pertaining to the regional offices of the case study regions of this paper.

Table 2: Offices of Case Study Regions in Brussels

Region	Year Est.	Office Staff Size	Policy Priorities
Basque Country	1986	14	Legislative initiatives related to Spain's autonomous communities
Scotland[a]	1992; 1999	10, 12	Sustainability, fisheries, R&D
Slovakia[b]	2002	1	Regional policy, education and culture, energy and transport

Sources: Committee of the Regions (2008); Scotland Europa (2011); Scottish Government EU Office (2011)

aScotland has two regional offices in Brussels. Scotland Europa is an organization seeking to enhance the presence of Scotland in the EU and was established in 1992. Scottish Government EU Office addresses policy areas affecting Scots on a daily basis and was established in 1999.

bSlovakia has several regional offices in Brussels. The data in this table discusses the regional office for Bratislava, which was created by the Bratislava Self Governing Region.

Although there is no direct evidence of competition among the regions for cohesion and structural funding, the increase in the number of regional offices in Brussels demonstrates that regions are becoming more active to obtain EU funds. The first expectation, therefore, is correct in that economic disparity exists across the regions of the European Union.

The second expectation is that the national governments of EU regions have sought to retain as much control as possible over funds for their regions as well as to lobby the EU for more development funds. There is no direct evidence of competition over Structural and Cohesion Funds at the national level. In the case study regions of this paper, their regional and cohesion funding is predominantly managed at the sub-national level instead of the national level (European Commission Regional Policy, 2011a–e). The second expectation of the regional hypothesis, therefore, is incorrect; European Union member states have not sought to retain as much control as possible over funds for their regions. Sub-national governments remain the primary managing authorities on the implementation of regional and cohesion policy.

The third expectation is that national governments have also sought to limit regional autonomy in their respective countries. Through the process of devolution, national governments gave regional authorities certain political powers, such as the ability for the regions to provide for their educational structures, health care systems, and law enforcement. The progression of devolution across the EU has varied significantly, and in some cases, such as in Spain, regional political autonomy is retracting as a result of the financial crisis.

Regional debt in Spain reached 22%, or $176 billion, in September 2011. As a result of immense overspending by regional governments, the central government in Spain introduced austerity cuts to reduce the deficits, according to *The New York Times* (Daley, 2011). With a newly elected conservative party—the Popular Party—now in power in Spain, the trend toward self-government is reversing in several of the regions, including the Basque country, representing a dramatic shift in the progression of autonomy in Spain. The ability for Spanish regions to maintain that independence will be a challenge in the midst of the economic crisis (Daley, 2011).

In the UK, soon after the May 2010 elections, Prime Minister David Cameron called for renewing and improving ties between Scotland and the national government (BBC, 2010). Although the Conservatives support a "radical" devolution of powers to local councils and municipalities, they do not support the complete independence of Scotland (Conservatives, 2011). The issue of Scottish independence will continue to be a source of debate between the UK Parliament and the Scottish National Parliament as a result of the 2012 SNP announcement calling for a referendum on Scottish independence in 2014 (BBC, 2012).

The third expectation indicates mixed evidence in that some member state governments, such as Spain and to some extent the UK, want to reverse the trend of expanded regional self-governance while other member states, such as Belgium, are bestowing more autonomous political powers to its regions[3].

The fourth expectation is that the opposition parties of the national governments support limitations to regional autonomy in their respective countries. This expectation was deemed inconclusive. Opposition parties at the national level did not express their opinions on the expansion of regional autonomy or detail their platform to limit regional autonomy.

The fifth expectation is that the general public supports limitations to regional autonomy in their respective countries. Eurobarometer (2009) published a survey on EU citizens' opinions on regional authority and their awareness on the Committee of the Regions. Several of the case study member states, such as Spain, the UK, and Slovakia, responded that regional governments have the most impact on their daily life.

Although there is significant member state trust in local and regional authorities, EU member states, on average, have limited awareness of the Committee of the Regions. Only 24% of the EU-27 is aware of the Committee of the Regions. Of the case study countries of this paper, Slovakia is the most aware of the CoR with 36% of respondents indicating their

3 Note that while the Flanders region was not included in the edited version of this paper, Belgium is a case country in the original version.

knowledge of the committee. Only 19% of the respondents from the United Kingdom were aware of the CoR and its purpose (Eurobarometer, 2009).

While there is no evidence of public opposition to expanding regional autonomy from the results of this Eurobarometer survey, the results do elucidate that citizens experience more direct contact with their local and regional governments, particularly in Western European regions. The scant awareness of the Committee of the Regions illustrates that EU citizens feel they do not have substantial direct interaction with this agency, which is designed to facilitate better communication between the regions and EU institutions. A majority of EU-27 citizens, however, would like more information about the CoR and their regional representatives, indicating that perceptions towards regional autonomy may change with greater understanding of the interactions between regional and supranational institutions to foster potential economic development and social inclusion (Eurobarometer, 2009).

When analyzing public opinion in the case study regions with respect to the expansion of political autonomy, the results glean interesting results. In the results of a 2010 YouGov survey on Scottish independence published in *The Telegraph*, only 27% of Scots supported independence from the UK and 55% opposed it (Johnson, 2010). Public opinion indicates that Scots support "strengthened devolution" rather than total secession, according to the results of a 2011 Ipsos MORI survey. Sixty-seven percent of Scots support the devolution of tax-raising powers to the Scottish Parliament, illustrating that Scots favor more control over their fiscal policy and the ability to generate revenue through levying taxes (Ipsos MORI, 2011).

In 2002, 67.4% of Spanish citizens supported the *Communidades Autónomos* and providing regions with more political autonomy. Support for complete independence from Spain is quite limited, and this sentiment was more common among radical separatist groups, such as the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) in the Basque country. Public opinion in the Basque country, on average, favored maintaining the current levels of regional autonomy (Schrijver, 2006). The fifth expectation of the alternative hypothesis is, therefore, incorrect. Public opinion supports the expansion of regional autonomy rather than limiting political devolution.

The sixth expectation is that these national governments have sought to limit or block direct ties between their regional governments and the EU in an attempt to retain control over their regions. There is no evidence that member states have tried to use the Committee of the Regions to limit ties between regional governments and the EU. The Mission of the Committee of the Regions is designed to involve sub-national actors in policymaking rather than national actors. The sixth expectation, therefore, is deemed inconclusive; there is not enough evidence to show with absolute certainty that member states have sought to limit or block direct ties between their regional governments and the EU in an attempt to retain control over their regions, particularly with respect to the ongoing negotiations for the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy.

The first expectation of the alternative hypothesis is correct in that economic disparity continues to exist across the regions of the European Union, spurring regions to become more active in the pursuit of regional aid from central EU institutions. The second expectation is incorrect; national governments have not sought to retain control over the funds for their regions. Sub-national governments remain the primary managing authorities for implementing regional policy. The third expectation of the alternative hypothesis contains mixed evidence in that some national governments oppose increasing political autonomy to regional governments while other member states are expanding autonomous powers to regional authorities. The fourth expectation was inconclusive as to the current opposition parties' position on restricted regional political autonomy. The fifth expectation is incorrect; public opinion supports expanding regional autonomy. Support for complete independence, however, is quite low, indicating that EU citizens find political autonomy more sustainable rather than complete separation from the nation state. The sixth expectation is inconclusive as to the efforts by national governments to limit or block direct ties between their regional governments and the European Union.

Conclusion

The evidence of the research hypothesis is largely consistent with the expectations. The European Union acts at the supranational level to reduce economic disparity across the regions and is willing to interact with the regions. The regions seek to obtain EU funding for economic development, primarily through the Committee of the Regions. The regions, through the auspices of the CoR, have cooperated with other regions; cooperation is quite common among border regions. Many Central and Eastern European member states find acting at the national level a more effective way to promote cooperation and engage in cohesion policy discussions at the supranational level. While regions are quite active in protecting their autonomy, the extent to which they utilized EU assistance to maintain that autonomy is quite limited, and this expectation, therefore, provided mixed evidence.

The evidence of the expectations of the alternative hypothesis is mixed; two of the six expectations were deemed inconclusive. Regional disparity still exists across the European Union. The 2004 and 2007 enlargements further increased the economic disparity between the regions in the core and the periphery. Although national governments have mixed sentiments with respect to the expansion of devolution, public opinion shows support for more regional self-governance. Support for complete regional independence is rather low. Although the public has limited knowledge of the activities of the Committee of the Regions, they do seek more information about the CoR and their respective representatives. There was little evidence to indicate that national governments were attempting to limit or block ties between regional governments and the European Union.

Bottom Line

The bottom line is that international factors are the primary stimuli for successful relations between the institutions of the European Union and the regions. Why? Political devolution from national governments increased the regions' autonomous powers. The regions utilize their self-governance to communicate directly with central EU institutions, such as the CoR and the Commission. Although regional disparity still exists and the pace of political devolution varies substantially across the regions, sub-national polities are more active in Brussels. Regional lobbyists and CoR representatives intercede on the behalf of sub-national governments to procure regional funding. Although the financial crisis and recent political elections have stimulated a retraction of regional authority in some member states, public opinion, in general, supports increased regional autonomy.

Regional participation at the supranational level in the CoR and in the annual Open Days Meetings indicates that regions are seeking to improve their economic situation. The European Union provides substantial structural assistance that is reflective of the economic and social needs and political interests of the regions. Cohesion policy funding is designed to eliminate regional inequality, close the gap between the core and the periphery, and truly integrate Europe.

Scenarios

Although social scientists cannot give predictions regarding the outcome of a policy, positing scenarios can be useful in understanding its ramifications for the future. Cohesion policy reforms, however, are currently legislative proposals and require further debate and analysis by the Council and the Parliament. It is difficult, therefore, to propose scenarios when legislation is subject to change during multilevel negotiations. The reforms, however, must consider the pending enlargement of the European Union with the July 2013 accession of Croatia.

Croatia is already the recipient of Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPAs); this funding is designed to improve a candidate country's economy prior to its accession to the EU (European Commission Regional Policy, 2007b). The IPAs for Croatia are allocated towards improving sustainability, increasing transportation networks, and strengthening its global economic competitiveness. Upon its accession to the EU, Croatia will likely be classified under the Convergence objective, receiving funding packages similar to those of other Central and Eastern European member states. While cohesion policy reform is being debated in the midst of the financial crisis, structural fund packages are at risk of becoming smaller. The Commission's proposal, however, calls for keeping funding at its current level. The EU must thoroughly evaluate the current operational programs of cohesion policy and provide more sustainable funding in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework to make the integration process more seamless for future candidate countries.

Recommendations

As seen in the evidence presented in the research and alternative hypotheses of this paper, EU cohesion policy demonstrates great complexity as it has both economic and political ramifications at multiple levels of government. The intricacy of this policy can prove to be a hindrance in its efficacy to reduce economic disparity across the regions. A key recommendation for the post-2013 cohesion policy is that simplified access to funding is necessary for convergence regions, which have growth rates substantially below the EU average. The efforts by the Committee of the Regions and the Commission to reduce regional economic disparity are admirable, particularly in this time of economic crisis and austerity cuts. Cohesion policy is designed to benefit individual regions, and more communication between supranational and regional authorities is vital for this policy to be successful.

Although the discourse on Cohesion Policy predominantly occurs between supranational and sub-national institutions, member state governments should be more involved in the implementation of the policy in order to reduce the gap between the core metropolitan areas and the peripheral rural regions. Working in conjunction with EU institutions, national governments could provide more oversight to monitor the regions' utilization of cohesion and structural funds. Rather than retracting political autonomy with large austerity budget cuts, joint national and supranational oversight of cohesion policy can serve a dual purpose. Supranational institutions can ensure that the regions effectively use their funding, and national government oversight can assess regional expenditures and reduce budget deficits in this time of economic crisis.

Cohesion policy is designed to make regions more competitive; such economic potency at the sub-national level enhances the legitimacy of the European Union on the international stage. When the regions have strong economies, the EU becomes a stronger economy. One way to make all regions economically viable is to encourage public and private investment. Investment facilitates the exchange of information; increases job opportunities; and provides labor and capital resources. Reforms to cohesion policy must adopt an investment focus and illustrate that all regions can benefit substantially from local and international investment.

Countries thrive economically when they specialize in the goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage; this same economic rationale is applicable to EU regions. Creating cohesion and structural fund packages that cater to the economic strengths of the regions can facilitate faster, effective economic growth. The 2014-2020 EU Cohesion Policy, however, must focus on improving the industries and sectors in which regions have (or appear to have) a comparative advantage. Capitalizing the regions' current economic strengths to improve long-run productivity benefits not only the regions, but also the European Union collectively. This application of Cohesion Policy can create a sustainable system of long-term economic development programs that establishes economic parity across the EU-27 and enables all European regions to be key players in the global economy.

Author's Notes

The topic and research for this paper was conducted as part of a Senior Seminar Course on the European Union in The Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University with Professor Michael J. Sodaro in Fall 2011. This paper was shortened from the original version for the purpose of the Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the EU in April 2012. The original version of this paper contained additional case studies of the Flanders region in Belgium and Sicily in Southern Italy.

References

The Associated Press. (2009 November 30). Scottish party outline independence plan. *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved 7 January 2012, from <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2010391623_apeubritainscotland.html>.

Baldwin, R., & Wyplosz, C. (2009). *The economics of the European Union* (3rd Edition). Berkshire, UK: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Barnes, I., & Barnes, P. (2010). Chapter 26: Enlargement. In Michelle Cini, N. P-S. Borragán (Eds.), *European Union Politics* (3rd Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baun, M. (1999). Preparing for EU Enlargement. In L. Cram, D. Dinan, & N. Nugent (Eds.), *Development in the European Union*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

BBC. (2010, May 14). Cameron calls for Scots 'respect.' Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/8680816.stm>.

---. (2011 October 3). David Cameron wants Scotland to remain in UK. Retrieved 7 January 2012, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-15157223>.

---. (2012 January 10). Salmond calls for independence referendum in 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-16478121>.

Brunazzo, M. (2010). Chapter 18: Regional Policy. In M. Cini, & N. P-S. Borragán (Eds.), *European Union Politics* (3rd Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burns, J. F. (2011 October 20). Basque Separatists Halt Campaign of Violence. *The New York Times.* Retrieved 20 October 2011, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/21/world/europe/eta-basque-separatists-declare-halt-to-violence-in-spain-and-france.html?pagewanted=1&_r=3&emc=na>.

Chapman, R. (2008). Chapter 3: The United Kingdom. In M. Baun & D. Marek (Eds.), *EU Cohesion policy after enlargement*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Committee of the Regions. (2008). Regional office directory, open days meetings. *Eurostat*. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2008/doc/pdf/catalogue_en.pdf >.

–––. (2009). Mission statement. Retrieved 5 January 2012, from <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PresentationTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=19e72e24-e2f2-4483-a33c-3c3e6003b101&sm=19e72e24-e2f2-4483-a33c-3c3e6003b101>.

–––. (2011). Commission Vice-President Šefčovič in CoR plenary: We need your leadership at regional and local level. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=e3e9cb83-00a7-43af-9ced-f3af153224b8>.

Conservatives. (2011). Policy: Local Government. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Local_Government.aspx>.

Council of European Union. (2005). Proposal from the Presidency for the Financial Perspective 2007-2013, (15915/05). Brussels. Retrieved from <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/misc/87677.pdf>.

–––. (2011 December 7). Cohesion policy legislative package—Presidency report. *Interinstitutional File: 2011/0276 (COD)*. Brussels.

Crescenzi, R., & Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2011). *Innovation and growth in the European Union, advances in spatial science*. Berlin, Germany: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.

Daley, S. (2011 December 30). As Spain acts to cut deficit, regional debts add to woe. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 31 December 2011, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/31/world/europe/as-spain-trims-deficits-scrutiny-falls-on-regional-governments.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&sq=spain%20regions&st=cse&scp=1>.

The Economist. (2011 December 3). Belgium's new government: An end to waffle? The markets abruptly break a stalemate between Walloons and Flemings. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.economist.com/node/21541074>.

Euractiv. (2010a November 11). Commission wants regional funds to match 2020 goals. Retrieved 14 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/regional-policy/commission-wants-regional-funds-match-2020-goals-news-499646>.

–––. (2010b October 21). Doubts grow over future EU budget for regions. Retrieved 5 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/specialweek-regions2020/doubts-grow-over-future-eu-budget-regions-news-498342>.

–––. (2010c September 30). Future of cohesion policy sparks EU row. Retrieved 5 November, 2011 from <http://www.euractiv.com/regional-policy/future-cohesion-policy-sparks-eu-row-news-497081>.

–––. (2010d October 4): Hahn: 'I want regional policy to keep its current budget.' Retrieved 15 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/specialweek-regions2020/hahn-i-want-regional-policy-keep-its-current-budget-interview-498375>.

–––. (2010e October 8). Panel wants EU regional payouts centralized in Brussels. Retrieved 5 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/specialweek-regions2020/panel-wants-eu-regional-payouts-centralised-brussels-news-498600>.

––. (2010f October 7). Schneider: EU institutions are ignoring regions' assembly. Retrieved 5 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/specialweek-regions2020/schneider-eu-instititions-are-ignoring-regions-assembly-interview-498530>.

---. (2011a November 29). Belgium emerges from historic political crisis. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/elections/belgium-emerges-historic-political-crisis-news-509249>.

---. (2011b January 18). Eastern EU joins forces to shape regional spending. Retrieved 15 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/regional-policy/eastern-eu-joins-forces-shape-regional-spending-news-501368>.

---. (2011c July 4). EU Cohesion Policy 2014 – 2020. Retrieved 13 November 2011, from < http://www.euractiv.com/regional-policy/eu-cohesion-policy-2014-2020-links-dossier-501653>.

---. (2011d October 10). 'Historic' state reform deal spells end to Belgian crisis. Retrieved 5 November 2011, from <http://www.euractiv.com/elections/historic-state-reform-deal-spells-belgian-crisis-news-508240>.

European Commission Regional Policy. (2001). Entrepreneurship and adapting to new technologies: Nine tools for competitiveness. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/details.cfm?pay=ES&the=17&sto=444&lan=7&region=682&obj=ALL&per=ALL&defL=EN>.

---. (2007a). Cohesion policy 2007-2013: Building a Union of modern, attractive, dynamic regions. Retrieved 30 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgenerinformat/pdf/insrf_cover_en.pdf>.

---. (2007b. Centre for green approach to energy. Retrieved 30 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/details_new.cfm?pay=UK&the=68&sto=2228&lan=7&region=532&obj=ALL&per=ALL&defL=EN>.

---. (2007c). Croatia: IPA Regional Development Programmes. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/ipa/croatia_development_en.cfm>.

---. (2007d). Operational Programme—Basque Country. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_OBJ=ALL&gv_PAY=ES&gv_reg=ALL&gv_THE=ALL&gv_PGM=1113&LAN=7&gv_per=2&gv_defL=7>.

---. (2007e). Operational Programme—Bratislava. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=SK&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1013&LAN=7&gv_PER=2&gv_defL=7>.

---. (2007f). Operational Programme—Flanders. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=BE&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1079&gv_defL=9&LAN=7>.

---. (2007g). Operational Programme—Scotland: Highlands and Uplands. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=UK&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1015&gv_defL=7&LAN=7>.

---. (2007e). Operational Programmes—Scotland: Lowlands and Uplands. Retrieved 30 December 2011 from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=UK&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1010&LAN=7&gv_PER=2&gv_defL=7>.

---. (2007f). Operational Programme—Western, Central, and Eastern Slovakia. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=SK&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1229&LAN=7&gv_PER=2&gv_defL=7>.

---. (2007g). Pooling health resources along Belgian-French border. Retrieved 5 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/details_new.cfm?pay=BE&the=45&sto=2199&lan=7&region=679&obj=ALL&per=ALL&defL=EN>.

---. (2008). EU Cohesion Policy 1988-2008: Investing in Europe's future. R. Goulet (Ed.), No. 26.

---. (2011a). Managing Authorities—Belgium. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=be#1>.

---. (2011b). Managing Authorities—Slovakia. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=sk#1>.

---. (2011c). Managing Authorities—Spain. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=es#1>.

---. (2011d). Managing Authorities—United Kingdom. Retrieved 9 January 2012, from <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=uk#1>.

The European Union. (2002). *Treaty establishing the European Community (Nice consolidated version)-Part Three: Community policies-Title XVII: Economic and Social Cohesion – Article 158- Article 130a- EC Treaty (Maastrict consolidated version).* Brussels. Retrieved 30 December 2011, from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12002E158:EN:HTML>.

---. (2007). Regions in the European Union: Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics NUTS 2006/EU-27. (Eurostat Publication KS-RA-07-020-EN-N). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

---. (2009). *Regions of the European Union: A statistical portrait—2009 edition.* (Eurostat Publication KS-EP-08-001-EN-C) Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

---. (2010). *Combating poverty and social exclusion: A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010, 2010 Edition.* (Eurostat Publication KS-EP-09-001-EN-C) Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

---. (2011a). Committee of the Regions. Retrieved 29 December 2011, from <http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/cor/index_en.htm>.

---. (2011b). *Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2011.* (Eurostat Publication: KS-HA-11-001-EN-C) Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

---. (2011c). Financial Programming and Budget. Retrieved 23 December 2011, from <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/budg_system/fin_fwk0713/fin_fwk0713_en.cfm>

Eurostat. (2008a). Regional gross domestic product (PPS per inhabitant in % of the EU-27 average), by NUTS 2 regions. Retrieved 5 January 2012, from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tgs00006&plugin=1>.

---. (2008b). Regional gross domestic product (PPS per inhabitant), by NUTS 2 regions. Retrieved 5 January 2012, from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tgs00005&plugin=1>.

Farole, T., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Storper, M. (2011). Cohesion Policy in the European

Union: Growth, Geography, Institutions. *Journal of Common Market Studies, 49*(5), 1089-1111.

Hooghe, L. (1998). Introduction: Reconciling EU-wide policy and national diversity. In L. Hooghe, (ed.), *Cohesion policy and European integration: Building multi-level governance.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (1996). 'Europe with the regions': Channels of regional representation in the European Union. *Publius, 26*(1), 73-91.

Ipsos MORI. (2011 September 6). Scots back full fiscal powers but not independence. *Ipsos Mori*. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2856/Scots-back-full-fiscal-powers-but-not-independence.aspx>.

Johnson, S. (2010 March 1). Scottish independence support at record low. *The Telegraph.* Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/7346922/Scottish-independence-support-at-record-low.html>.

Kulish, N. (2011 October 7). Slovakia may hold key to Euro debt bailout. *The New York Times.* Retrieved 15 November 2011, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/08/world/europe/slovakia-is-key-to-survival-of-euro-currency-zone.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=globaleua2>.

Mercier, G. (2005). Which territorial cohesion policy for the new EU members? The example of Slovakia. *The Town Planning Review, 76*(1), 57-68.

Mitchell, J., & McAleavey, P. (1999). Promoting Solidarity and Cohesion. In L. Cram, D. Dinan, & N. Nugent (Eds.), *Developments in the European Union*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Morata, F., & Popartan, L. A. (2008). Chapter 5: Spain. In M. Baun & D. Marek (Eds.), *EU cohesion policy after enlargement.* Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nugent, N. (2010). *The government and politics of the European Union* (7th Edition). United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pilkington, C. (2001) *Britain in the European Union today* (2nd Edition). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Roy, J., & Kanner, A. (2006). *The A to Z of the European Union*. Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Schrijver, F. (2006). *Regionalism after regionalization: Spain, France, and the United Kingdom*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Scotland Europa. (2011). Networking Scotland in Europe. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.scotlandeuropa.com/>.

Scottish Government EU Office. (2011). The Scottish government. Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/>.

Sodaro, M. (2011). Briefing Book: September 2011 [class notes]. Senior Seminar Course on the European Union in The Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University.

Suranovic, S. (2010) *International trade: Theory and policy. Irvington*. New York: Flat World Knowledge.

U.S. Department of State. (2011). Background Information: Spain. Retrieved 8 January 2012, from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2878.htm>.

Visegrad.info. (2010 May 25). Cohesion policy in the Visegrad. *Visegrad.info.* Retrieved 6 January 2012, from <http://www.visegrad.info/regional-development/factsheet/

finding-cohesion-in-visegrads-regions-.html>.