The existence of a democratic deficit in the European Union (EU) has been a matter of controversy in academia[[1]](#footnote-1), in the media[[2]](#footnote-2) and has very real implications for policymakers in Europe – politicians and voters in favor of Brexit, the divorce between Great Britain and the EU, heavily relied on the idea to gain legitimacy and ultimately win the vote.[[3]](#footnote-3) At the heart of the controversy lies the aforementioned question: are European citizens actually represented by the EU? If not, then what drives the voting behaviors of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), the only democratically elected officials that make up the EU government? These questions have important implications, but also present an opportunity to better understand the link between citizen preferences and the behavior of their elected officials. More broadly, the concept of a democratic deficit harkens back to the earliest questions

As such, my thesis will attempt to investigate the democratic deficit in the European Union by correlating citizen preferences at the regional level with their elected official’s voting behavior

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2. Sternberg, J. (2018, February 16). The European Union's Democracy Deficit. Retrieved October 23, 2020, from https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-european-unions-democracy-deficit-1518739588 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Alemanno, A. (2020, January 21). The EU won't fix its democratic deficit with another top-down 'conference'. Retrieved October 23, 2020, from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/21/eu-democratic-deficit-top-down-conference-verhofstadt [↑](#footnote-ref-3)