

Modelling Regional Identities

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ABSTRACT

There are big differences in the degree to which people identify with sub-state regions across Western Europe. In some regions, nearly half of respondents in Eurobarometer surveys claim a stronger attachment to the region than to the state. In others, hardly anyone identifies more strongly with the region than with the state. This paper examines whether such differences can be explained by economic, political, cultural and geographic characteristics of the regions themselves. It finds that regional identities are likely to be stronger in regions where a regional language is spoken and in regions that do not border the state capital, confirming the expectations of a cultural and a centre/periphery dimension to regional identity formation. However, it also finds a potentially more strategic aspect to identification, in that regional identities tend to be stronger in prosperous regions and in regions with a high occurrence of regional voting.

The literature on nationalism has focused on the construction and maintenance of national identities as a crucial element in securing the integrity of nation-states in the 20th century. Similarly, the construction of a European identity has been a key strategy in the processes of European integration. Political scientists have increasingly come to realise that the relationship between identities and politics – on all levels of government – are crucial to understanding contemporary societies. Over the last twenty years, regions have become increasingly important across most of Western Europe, and the relationship between identities and politics has arguably been particularly important in this process. In countries such as Spain and the United Kingdom, regions with well-established regional identities have gained competencies and autonomy, whereas regions without such a sense of identity have not.

Given the importance of regional identities from a political perspective, it is important to understand where regional identities are strongest and what causes these differences in the extent to which people identify with regions. This paper explores the causes of variation in the levels of regional identity across all regions in thirteen Western European countries¹, examining whether historical, linguistic, political and economic characteristics of the regions can explain variation in their inhabitants' identification with them.

While several studies have explored the formation of identities within individual regions, few have so far studied variation across a larger cross-national sample of regions. The Eurobarometer survey series offer an opportunity to conduct a large-N analysis of the self-defined identities of inhabitants in most Western European regions. This paper recodes the indicators of regional and country-level attachment in the Eurobarometer surveys into a Moreno question in order to construct a reliable indicator, and combines the findings from four Eurobarometer surveys² to reduce the error margins of the estimates for individual regions. The paper examines regional characteristics that have been hypothesised to have an effect on the strength of regional identities, showing that foreign immigration, peripheral location and regional language are the strongest predictors of regional identity, followed by economic development, distinctive party systems and European integration.

1 The countries are Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

2 These are Eurobarometer 36: Regional Identity and Perceptions of the Third World (1991), Eurobarometer 43.1: Regional Development and Consumer and Environmental Issues (1995), Eurobarometer 54.1: Building Europe and the European Union (2000) and Eurobarometer 58.1: European Enlargement and Financial Services (2002).

HYPOTHESES

Immigration

Foreign immigration is a controversial political issue across most of Western Europe. There are two reasons why immigration might be expected to influence regional identities. Firstly, regions with high levels of immigration might diverge culturally from other regions in the state, creating a reduced sense of affinity with the nation. Secondly, immigration might trigger a defence mechanism that causes people to attach more weight to local identities.

Hypothesis 1: Foreign immigration causes people to identify more strongly with their regions

This variable therefore measures the annual number of foreign immigrants as a proportion of the region's population. Eurostat (2004) provides data for most regions³ for at least parts of the period 1990-99, and by taking the average levels for the years in which data is available; it is possible to obtain a decent measure of relative levels of foreign immigration.

European integration

The increasing influence of the EU is undermining the traditional dominance of the national level in territorial politics, and this has created a political space for regions in the EU countries (Rokkan and Urwin, 1982, Bullmann, 1997). Specifically in relation to political identities, the EU has made conscious attempts at improving public identification with the union through promoting pan-European symbols such as the Euro and the EU flag and hymn, and supporting cross-border relations through a range of policy programmes (Bruter, 2005). All of these measures might reduce popular attachment to the European nation-states, which could open up a space for regional identities.

Hypothesis 2a: People who support the EU are likely to identify more strongly with their region

³ The data is not available on the regional level for France, United Kingdom, Norway and Finland. For all regions in these countries, the scores on the index are set as equal to the national average for the relevant country.

This can be measured by looking at the extent to which people in a region are willing to let the EU extend its political authority, based on the idea that citizens want to be governed by a unit that they identify with. The need to improve the legitimacy of the EU institutions was arguably a crucial part of the rationale behind the EU's attempts at building a European identity (Bruter, 2005), so this operationalisation should capture the concept reasonably well⁴. Furthermore, EU institutions are likely to be more successful in creating a new economic and political framework for the regions if the regional public actually supports the transfer of powers to the European level. A useful operational measure of Europeanisation can therefore be obtained by measuring preferences for state or EU responsibilities in different policy areas. Several Eurobarometer surveys present respondents with a list of policy areas, asking whether they think it should be the responsibility of the EU or of national governments. By looking at the average number of policy areas that people believe should be the responsibility of the EU rather than the state, it is possible to get a measure of the extent to which the EU is seen as a viable alternative institutional framework to the central state, which conforms closely to the theoretical mechanisms predicted by the literature⁵. The top ten and bottom ten regions on this measure are presented in table 4.2.

4 Another possibility would obviously be looking at survey questions where people rate their attachment to the EU. However, these questions face the same methodological problems as did the “absolute index” in section 3.1.2 in that the quantification of attachment is subjective and determined by cultural norms that vary across different regions.

5 See Fitjar (2007) for an outline of the policy areas covered and the technical procedures for transforming the responses into a standardised measure of Europeanisation that covers three Eurobarometer surveys (1991, 2000 and 2002). As Eurobarometer only produces data on the Swedish regions in the 1995 study, the Europeanisation measures for Sweden will be taken as being equal to the series mean for the average of the other three studies. In this way, they will not affect the parameter estimates in the regression analysis.

Table 4.2: Top ten and bottom ten Europeanised regions

<u>Top ten</u>		<u>Bottom ten</u>	
Umbria	2.02	North Trøndelag	-2.46
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1.79	Kainuu	-2.16
Cantabria	1.45	Buskerud	-1.96
Tuscany	1.32	Burgenland	-1.94
Liguria	1.24	North Savonia	-1.73
Galicia	1.24	Finnmark	-1.66
Aquitaine	1.18	Satakunta	-1.62
Calabria	1.17	North Ostrobothnia	-1.56
Limburg (BL)	1.11	Telemark	-1.55
Hamburg	1.08	Nordland	-1.54

Source: Eurobarometer.

Structural funds

While regional identities may be side-effects of the construction of a European identity, they could also be affected more directly by the union's direct relationship with specific regions through policies such as the structural funds.

Hypothesis 2b: People are likely to identify more strongly with regions that benefit from structural funds

One can study the effects of the EU's direct efforts at strengthening the regions through looking at whether there is any connection between the union's structural funds expenditure and regionalism in the recipient regions. This variable is based on data from the 1999 annual report on the structural funds (European Commission, 2000), and it measures the total payments to each region through all of the various objectives in the structural funds programmes for the period 1994-99. The indicator is adjusted on a per capita basis, with one unit being equal to € 100 per capita of structural funds payments. The top ten recipients of structural funds are presented in table 4.3. If the EU structural funds have indeed succeeded in strengthening regionalism, we would expect regionalism to be more prevalent in the regions that have received the most such funds.

Table 4.3: Top ten recipients of structural funds

La Rioja	39.38
Azores	26.84
Aragón	25.29
Asturias	24.63
Thrace	17.34
Cantabria	16.60
Madeira	15.76
East Macedonia	12.23
Saarland	10.02
Bremen	8.21

Source: European Commission (2000).

Economic development

The literature disagrees on the nature of the relationship between regionalism and economic development. Some authors argue that the feeling of being treated unfairly is likely to lead to solidarity among people in poor regions, thus boosting regional identity (Lafont, 1967, Hechter, 1975). On the other hand, prosperity may create a sense of regional pride that is conducive to identity construction (Gourevitch, 1979, Fitjar, 2006).

Hypothesis 3a: People are likely to identify more strongly with prosperous regions

Hypothesis 3b: People are likely to identify more strongly with deprived regions

Economic development will be measured in terms of GDP per capita per region (GDPR).

Party systems

In regions where a national opposition party is in power, regional executives have incentives to attempt to mobilise regional identities insofar as this might lead to devolution of power to the regional government. This is particularly the case if the party is consistently in government in the region and consistently out of government on the central level, in which case devolution of power might be its only opportunity to extend its power. The likelihood of such long-term differences between the composition of the regional and national governments occurring increases when the difference between the regional and national party systems increases.

Hypothesis 4a: People are likely to identify more strongly with regions where the party system differs strongly from the national party system

The distinctiveness of the regional party system is measured through comparing the distribution of votes on the regional level with the state-wide distribution. For each region, the regional party system is compared to the state party system using the Lee Index⁶ (see Hearl et al., 1996, Caramani, 2002). Table 4.4 shows the ten regional party systems in the study that are most distinctive from their respective state-wide party system, as well as the ten least distinctive party systems.

Table 4.4: Ten most and least distinctive regional party systems

<u>Top ten</u>		<u>Bottom ten</u>	
Wallonia (average)	60.5	Salzburg	1.5
Bavaria	45.1	Östergötland	1.8
Basque Country	43.5	Epirus	2.3
Flanders (average)	36.3	Vorarlberg	2.8
Lapland	31.5	Västra Götaland	2.8
Catalonia	29.5	Thessalia	2.9
Ostrobothnia	27.2	Uppsala	3.0
Trentino Alto Adige	25.9	Champagne-Ard.	3.1
Kainuu	25.9	Peleponnesos	3.1
Saxony	25.6	Gelderland	3.4

Source: Caramani (1999) and Ministero dell'Interno (1996).

Regionalist parties

In addition to the variation in support for national parties, the question of specifically regionalist parties is of particular interest in this connection. Regionalist parties have an interest in mobilising regionalism, as this is likely to increase their electoral support.

Hypothesis 4b: The existence of a regionalist party is likely to increase public identification with the region

⁶ The index measures the extent to which the election results in a particular region are different from the results in the country as a whole through summing the absolute differences between the state and regional level for the vote shares of each individual party. The data is based on the parliamentary election that falls closest to 1995 in each country and voting data for each constituency is recoded to develop a measure of the distribution of votes in each region. See Fitjar (2007) for a complete outline of the technicalities of this operationalisation.

Whilst the success of regionalist parties is to a large extent a function of regional identities themselves, their existence as such might be regarded as being less dependent on regional identities. The variable is therefore a dummy that takes the value one if the region has a non-trivial ethnoregionalist party and zero if it does not. In this way, it can examine whether the existence of regionalist parties has an impact of the levels of regional identity, regardless of whether or not they achieve electoral success. The ethnoregionalist parties are drawn from Lane, McKay and Newton's (1997) handbook. Parties listed as ethnic in their classification are included, provided that they have a specifically regional basis.

Language

In the literature on cultural regionalism, linguistic differences are often quoted as the most crucial cultural difference that might create a strong sense of regional identity in a region (e.g. Anderson, 1991). Linguistic differences make integration more difficult, as the cultural differences between the regional population and the national population are both obvious and a barrier to communication. They also create a need to build institutions that can safeguard the status of the regional language and improve language education.

H5: Levels of regional identity will be higher in regions where the spoken language is different from that which is dominant in the state as a whole.

In order to measure the impact of linguistic differences, an additive index will seek to capture the importance and indigeneness of the regional language. The index is made up of the following items, with one point awarded for each item:

- There is an indigenous regional language that is different from the dominant (plurality) language in the state.⁷
- The regional language is spoken by at least half the region's population.
- The language is not the dominant language of any state.⁸

Table 4.5 shows how the regions covered by this study rank on the regional language index. The seven regions that score the maximum three points all have a completely indigenous

⁷ The data on regional languages is mainly based on Mackenzie (1994). See Fitjar (2007) for further details on the procedure.

⁸ This indicator distinguishes between languages that are embodied in a neighbouring state (for instance Swedish in Finland) and exclusively minority languages (for instance Catalan in Spain).

language that is spoken by a majority of the population. The relevant languages are Catalan (or Valencian), Gallego, Frisian, Friulian and Sardinian. The second highest category includes several other indigenous regional languages that are not spoken by a majority of the population, including most prominently Basque, but also Welsh, Breton, Gaelic and Sami. The remainder of this category is made up of regions where a majority of the population speak the language of a neighbouring state, such as Flemish (Dutch) and French in Belgium, Swedish in Finland and German in Northern Italy. The final category contains regions where a substantial minority of indigenous people are native speakers of the language of a neighbouring state.

Table 4.5: Distribution on the regional language index

3 points	2 points	1 point
Balearic Islands	Aquitaine	Alsace
Catalonia	Basque Country	Burgenland
Friesland	Brittany	Carinthia
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Brussels	Central Macedonia
Galicia	Finnmark	Finland Proper
Sardinia	Flanders	Lorraine
Valencia	Langued.-Rousillon	Navarre
	Norrbotnen	Nord-Pas de Calais
	North Karelia	Piedmont and Aosta
	Ostrobothnia	Saxony
	Scotland	Schleswig-Holstein
	Trentino Alto Adige	Sicily
	Wales	Kymenlaakso
	Wallonia	Thessaly
		Uusimaa

Historical sovereignty

Regions that have a history of independent statehood are likely to be less integrated into the state and their former status might serve as a basis for identity construction. The problems of integrating with the state are likely to be present also in regions that have once been part of different states from the one that currently has sovereignty over the territory. The problems should be particularly acute in regions that have been included fairly recently into the state of which they are currently part.

H6: Levels of regional identity will be higher in regions with a history of political independence or autonomy.

An index of the region's historical sovereignty seeks to capture the extent to which the region has historically been governed by itself or by other powers than the state of which it is currently part. This can be taken as an indication of the extent to which its history might serve as a basis for mobilisation. The index assigns the highest score to regions that have a fairly recent history as independent states, and the lowest score to regions that have formed part of the state since its establishment. Regions that have historically been part of several different states, fall somewhere in between these two extremes. The index is based around three criteria, with one point awarded if the region possesses each of the following characteristics:

- The region has not been part of the current state since its formation.
- The region was not part of the current state for the entire 20th century.
- The region has been an independent state.⁹

The distribution on this variable is shown in table 4.6. Only one region covered in the study has been politically independent within the last 100 years – Crete, which was an independent republic from 1898 to 1913. The second-highest category is dominated by regions that changed hands at the end of one of the two World Wars during the past century, including several Greek regions, Alsatia and Lorraine in France; and Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige in Italy. The category also includes some regions that have been independent *after* the formation of the state of which they currently form part, including Scotland, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. The final two regions in this category are Catalonia and the Basque Country, due to the statutes of autonomy that these regions enjoyed prior to the Franco dictatorship. The final category includes several regions that have older histories of independent statehood or of belonging to different states, including a large number of regions in Germany and Italy, where state-building was a late and gradual process.

⁹ These indicators are based on Parker (1993).

Table 4.6: Distribution on the historical sovereignty index

3 points	2 points	1 point	
Crete	Aegean Islands	Andalusia	Prov.-Alpes-C'd'A
	Alsatia	Brandenburg	Rhône-Alpes
	Baden-Württemberg	Epirus	Sardinia
	Basque Country	Franche-Comte	Saxony
	Bavaria	Halland	Saxony-Anhalt
	Catalonia	Hesse	Schleswig-Holstein
	Central Macedonia	Jämtland	Sicily
	East Macedonia	Langued.-Rousillon	Skåne
	Friuli-Ven. Giulia	Lombardy	Thessaly
	Lorraine	Mecklenburg W P	Thuringia
	Scotland	Navarre	Tuscany
	Thrace	Nord-Pas de Calais	Valencia
	Trentino Alto Adige	N Rhine-Westphalia	Veneto
		Piedmont and Aosta	Västra Götaland

Geography

Fundamental centre-periphery theories hold that states are formed as centres conquer and colonise surrounding areas, which subsequently form peripheries in the national states (Deutsch, 1966, Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). From this perspective, one would expect resistance to the centre in the form of regionalist sentiments in the peripheries. The peripheries might be expected to want to take back autonomy over their own affairs, whilst centres should be expected to remain faithful to the state that they created themselves.

H7: Levels of regional identity are lower in state capitals.

This effect is captured by a dummy variable that distinguishes between regions that border the capital and are hence classified as being in the centre, and those that do not.

Population

The population variable reflects the assumption that size matters, which is implicit in some of the literature on regionalism. For instance, some writers (such as Hooghe and Marks, 2001) do not count regions in the Nordic countries as regions because they regard them as too small, which certainly seems to reveal an expectation that a certain population size is necessary for the development of regionalism. One would also expect populous regions to be better equipped for autonomy, as they resemble nation-states to a larger extent. For instance, North

Rhine-Westphalia, with its 18 million inhabitants, would have been a fairly large European country if it had been an independent state. Conversely, a small region might be expected to be more dependent on the central state, and it might be considered too small to be able to function efficiently as a unit of governance.

H8: Levels of regional identity are higher in more populous regions.

The population variable tests these hypotheses by measuring the population size of the region (in millions) and examining to what extent it explains variation in the regionalism index scores. A separate variable measures the regional population as a proportion of the state population, in order to examine whether relative size matters.

Predictions

Table 4.7 summarises the predicted relationships between each independent variable and regional identity. As the table shows, each of the independent variables is predicted to have a positive impact on regional identity. The same is true for the control variables, which are listed in a separate column in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Expected effects

<u>Economic and political</u>		<u>Cultural and geographical</u>	
Globalisation	+	Regional language	+
Support for the EU	+	Historical sovereignty	+
Structural funds	+	Periphery	+
Economic development	+	Population	+
Vote distinctiveness	+	Relative size	+
Regionalist party	+		

DEPENDENT VARIABLE AND DATA UNITS

The most common indicator of regional identity in the existing literature is the so-called Moreno question, which has been used in several regional and national surveys, for instance

in Spain (Moreno et al., 1998, Maíz and Losada, 2000), Scotland (Brown et al., 1998) and Belgium (de Winter and Frogner, 1999). The Moreno question takes the form of a bi-polar scale asking respondents to *compare their attachment to the regional community with their attachment to the state community*. Respondents are given five answer options, for instance (in the case of Catalonia):

1. Catalan, not Spanish
2. More Catalan than Spanish
3. Equally Catalan and Spanish
4. More Spanish than Catalan
5. Spanish, not Catalan

The Moreno question remains the most popular measure of regionalism for individual regions, but unfortunately, surveys that include it have only been carried out in a few regions. There are therefore few studies that attempt to use the Moreno question in a cross-sectional design. The above-mentioned study by Moreno, Arriba and Serrano (1998) does compare Catalonia with other Spanish regions, but it does not stretch beyond the national context. Martínez-Herrera (2005) covers five regions in three different countries, but he uses the Moreno question exclusively to compare the developments across time within each of these five regions and does not compare across the regions. It is therefore necessary to consider which questions are posed on a larger cross-sectional scale, and how these might be used in the study of regional identities.

The Eurobarometer series have included questions on regional identities at irregular intervals, presenting an opportunity to study variations in regionalism across a large number of regions. Between 1980 and 2003, four Eurobarometer surveys asked such questions, conducted in 1991, 1995, 2000 and 2002. This paper will combine data from all four surveys into an average measure of regional identities across the period. This will maximise the number of respondents from each region (and hence minimising the error term), which will strengthen the comparison across regions.

As opposed to the bi-polar Moreno question, which asks for relative attachment, Eurobarometer surveys ask respondents to rate their attachment to their region, as well as their town/village, country, the EC and Europe, on an absolute level. Respondents are asked “how

attached do you feel to...” for each of these geographical levels, with the answer options “very attached”, “fairly attached”, “not very attached” and “not at all attached”. Compared with the Moreno question, the benefits of the Eurobarometer series is that they cover all regions within the European Union¹⁰, and they therefore allow for the construction of a much larger data set.

Marks (1999) develops an index on the basis of these alternatives, coding the alternatives with values from 1 to 4. Subsequently, he uses the averages as measures of the levels of regional identity, and compares this with levels of local, national and European identity. For these purposes, this approach works well. However, when it comes to comparing regional identity across regions, the approach runs into problems because the quantification of attachment levels is highly subjective, and people are therefore not likely to agree on where to draw the difference between “very attached” and “fairly attached”. This has the result that some people state that they are very attached to all sorts of geographical units, whereas others do not consider themselves to be attached to anything at all. Indeed, if we study the relationship between “attachment to region” and “attachment to country”, there is a strong and significant positive correlation between them – a point picked up both by Bruter (2001) and Marks (1999) himself, among others.

Furthermore, there is a great deal of variation across different countries and regions with regards to how likely people are to quantify a given attachment as very high or fairly high. The optimal solution therefore seems to be combining the validity of the Moreno question with the data availability of the Eurobarometer series. This can be done by recoding the responses for the questions on respondents’ attachment to their regions and to their countries into a single variable covering their relative attachment to their region vis-à-vis their country. Here, a regionalist is considered to be someone who is more strongly attached to his region than to his country. Respondents who state a higher level of attachment with their region than with their country are classified as primarily regional identifiers¹¹, and the proportion of primarily regional identifiers within a region can be used as the operational definition of the

10 Although the set that is used here does not include Northern Ireland, Corsica and the French overseas departments, for which no data was available.

11 This would be equivalent to answering “Catalan, not Spanish” or “more Catalan than Spanish” on the Moreno question example in section 3.1.1.

level of regionalism in that region. This measure will henceforth be referred to as the Moreno index.

Defining the unit

The word “region” means different things to different people, particularly in a cross-national analysis. Even focusing on political regions leaves a heterogeneous bunch of units. Among the European Union member states, there are hardly two states that have identical meso-level administration structures. This paper defines regions as sub-state administrative units and uses NUTS regions in order to ensure data availability. NUTS 2 regions are used in most cases, except for Germany, where NUTS 1 regions are obviously more appropriate. Ireland, Denmark and Luxembourg are excluded from the analysis on the grounds that they do not have any meaningful regions on the two highest NUTS levels.

REGIONAL IDENTITIES ACROSS WESTERN EUROPE

Some of the data derived from the Eurobarometer survey series regarding the distribution of regional identities across Western Europe can now be presented.

Table 3.4 shows the ten regions with the most extreme average values on either end of the scale. The list of the strongest identity regions contains several of the most frequently studied regionalisms in Western Europe, with the Basque Country, Catalonia, one Scottish and two Flemish regions all featuring in the top five. The top ten list further includes three German regions and two peripheral island regions in the Atlantic – the Canaries and the Azores. The list of the weakest identity regions includes only regions from Spain, Greece and Finland, and it is dominated by areas close to the capitals of these three countries, although the lowest ranking region on the measure, Northern Savonia, lies in the eastern central part of Finland, close to the Russian border.

Table 3.4: Regions with highest and lowest Moreno index scores

Based on average scores across all the four surveys, excluding regions with two scores or less

The 10 strongest identity regions			The 10 weakest identity regions		
Basque Country	45.4	(±6.6)	Northern Savonia	3.3	(±2.9)
West Flanders	35.8	(±4.4)	Epirus	3.4	(±2.7)
Highlands & Islands	34.2	(±15.1)	Tavastia	3.7	(±4.1)
Catalonia	34.1	(±3.7)	Madrid	4.0	(±1.7)
East Flanders	34.1	(±4.0)	Castile la Mancha	4.1	(±2.9)
Mecklenburg W Pom	34.1	(±4.3)	East Central Greece	4.1	(±1.0)
Canary Islands	33.6	(±7.6)	Castile and León	4.9	(±2.6)
Berlin	31.4	(±4.1)	Satakunta	4.9	(±3.5)
Azores	31.2	(±9.4)	Cantabria	5.5	(±6.0)
Saarland	30.9	(±10.1)	Murcia	5.7	(±4.4)

Note: Figures in parentheses denote 95 % confidence intervals for the proportions.

Linguistic minorities

Table 3.5 presents a list of regions with significant minority languages. In this context, this means that either a majority of the regional population speaks a different language from the majority language in the state, or that there is a completely indigenous language in the region. This leaves 20 regions with significant minority languages covered by this study. It is interesting to note that 16 of these 19 have index scores above the series average of 15.5. The Basque Country and Catalonia are still in a league of their own when it comes to regional identities, but a large number of these linguistic regions score above 20 on the index.

Table 3.5 Regions with significant minority languages

Basque Country	45.4	(±6.6)	Aquitaine	20.5	(±5.7)
Catalonia	34.1	(±3.7)	Norrbotten	20.0	(±14.1)
Flanders*	29.7	(±1.9)	Wallonia*	19.7	(±2.1)
Balearic Islands	27.8	(±10.4)	Friesland	18.7	(±4.9)
Finnmark	27.3	(±26.3)	Sardinia	18.7	(±7.4)
Scotland*	26.5	(±4.3)	Languedoc-Roussillon	16.1	(±5.7)
Trentino Alto Adige	26.3	(±11.4)	Valencia	14.3	(±3.5)
Brittany	24.0	(±5.9)	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	13.5	(±6.8)
Wales*	23.7	(±5.8)	Ostrobothnia	12.2	(±6.5)
Galicia	21.5	(±4.8)	North Karelia	9.7	(±5.7)

Note: * = Weighted average for all sub-regions within Flanders, Wallonia, Scotland and Wales.

Among the regions featuring in the top half of this list are some of the less well-known nationalisms in Europe, such as Brittany and Trentino Alto Adige (South Tirol). The Moreno index scores are higher in both these regions than in places such as Wales and Wallonia, although the differences are not statistically significant. This shows that regional identity is still an important phenomenon in these regions even though there has not been a lot of focus on them in recent years. Even a well-known autonomist region such as Scotland only just manages to eclipse Brittany and Trentino Alto Adige on this measure. Compared to Wales, around three percentage points more of Scots claim a primary regional attachment, although the difference between these two regions is also not statistically significant.

In Northern Europe, regional languages appear to be less of a factor for identity construction. The two Finnish regions of Ostrobothnia and North Karelia are the lowest scoring of all the regions with minority languages in this study, and both have regional identities that are weaker than the series average. On the other hand, the northernmost regions in Norway and Sweden, which both have a minority Sami-speaking population, score substantially higher on the Moreno index. Finnmark in Norway is the fourth highest scoring region in this sub-set, whilst Swedish Norrbotten also score above the series average. However, for both of these regions, the data is based on a very small number of respondents, and the estimates are therefore highly insecure.

Islands

Islands can be quite different from other peripheral regions. Due to the more complicated communication with the mainland, and possibly the different way of life that islands encourage, it is easy to see how islands can develop separate identities. It is also easy to distinguish the borders of island regions, making it obvious for everybody where the region ends. Table 3.6 presents the Moreno index scores for the regions in Europe that consist exclusively of islands or groups of islands.

Table 3.6 Island regions

Canaries	33.6	(±7.6)
Azores	31.2	(±9.4)
Balearics	27.8	(±10.4)
Sardinia	18.7	(±7.4)
Sicily	17.8	(±4.1)
Madeira	17.0	(±7.4)
Gotland	10.0	(±16.3)
Crete	7.4	(±3.5)
Eastern Aegean Islands	6.6	(±4.1)

There is a great deal of variation when it comes to the island regions of Western Europe. The more remote islands in the Atlantic tend to score fairly well on the Moreno index, with the Canaries and the Azores both among the top ten identity regions in the study. In both of these regions, more than three in ten respondents claim to identify more closely with their region than with Spain and Portugal, respectively. On the other hand, Madeira scores more modestly, rising barely above the mean with 17 percent primarily regional identifiers. Allegiance to the Portuguese state seems to be much higher there than in the more distant Azores.

At the other end of the spectrum, the two Greek island regions of Crete and the Eastern Aegean Islands score well below the average on the index. In both of these regions, well under one in ten respondents claims to identify predominantly with the islands vis-à-vis the Greek state, and Greek national identity thus seems to have a fairly strong foothold on the

islands as well. This might be due to the contents of Greek national identity, which is certainly partly based on myths and imagery from the islands. Arguably, islands form a more important part both economically and politically of the Greek state than any of the other states in this study. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the Greek islands differ from the rest of the set with regards to regional identities. The Swedish island region of Gotland also scores below the average on the index, although again, the estimate for this region is highly insecure given the low number of respondents.

National capitals

Contrary to the historic regionalisms considered above, national capitals are usually regarded as having low levels of regional identities. After all, in the classic centre-periphery theories, capitals are seen as conquerors of the other regions within the state and could be expected to remain loyal to their own creation. In centralist states, capitals also benefit economically from being a political centre, and one would therefore not expect them to favour decentralisation of power. Levels of regional identities in national capitals can thus say something about the extent to which the centre-periphery paradigm holds for people living in the centre across different countries in Europe. Table 3.7 presents a list of the average levels of regional identity in the ten national capitals for which there is data for at least two time-points.

Table 3.7 National capitals

Berlin	30.1	(±4.1)
Brussels	17.3	(±3.5)
North Holland (Amsterdam)	15.5	(±2.8)
London	15.1	(±3.2)
Vienna	12.8	(±2.8)
Ile de France (Paris)	12.5	(±2.4)
Lazio (Rome)	10.5	(±3.2)
Lisbon	9.8	(±1.6)
Uusimaa (Helsinki)	9.6	(±2.1)
East Central Greece (Athens)	4.1	(±1.0)
Madrid	4.0	(±1.7)

As the table shows, nine of the eleven capitals score below the series average on the Moreno index, with the exceptions being federal Berlin and Brussels. Berlin is an extreme outlier in this set, but the German capital has also had quite a distinct history in the post-war period. Under communism, West Berlin was isolated from both East and West Germany, and it seems that a distinct Berliner identity developed during this period and remains alive today. To a much less extreme extent, Brussels presents a similar story of being an enclave, isolated through geography from Wallonia and through language from Flanders.

Both Berlin and Brussels are capitals of decentralised countries, and a lot of political power is situated outside these capitals. The latter is also true for Amsterdam, which ranks third in this set. Whilst the Netherlands is a unitary state, the distribution of political power between Amsterdam and The Hague means that Amsterdam does not benefit from all of the advantages of being a capital city. Competition between various cities for primacy might also contribute to the development of regionalism in Berlin and Amsterdam, suggesting that there might be a difference between monocephalic and polycephalic states in this regard. However, Rome does not score particularly highly on the index despite it being the capital of a polycephalic country, and similarly, Vienna does not score very highly despite being the capital of a federal state.

The rest of the capitals cluster in the bottom half of the Western European regions, with the Greek and Spanish capitals distinguishing themselves as extreme outliers in the bottom of the set. Madrid is the most nationalist of the capitals, possibly as a reaction to the strong regionalisms in other parts of the country, and together with Athens, it makes up the bottom end of the list.

RESULTS

In table 4.8, each of the independent variables outlined above has been regressed on the logged Moreno index scores¹². Due to the small sample size of 212 units, a confidence level of 90 percent is taken as the benchmark. The “model 1” column contains the full model with all the independent variables, whereas the “model 2” column contains the parsimonious model that resulted from the stepwise selection.

¹² For details on the regression analysis design and related diagnostics, see Fitjar (2007).

Table 4.8: Examining the model of regional identities

Dependent variable: log (Moreno index)

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Foreign immigration	0.035	(0.007)	0.28	0.035	(0.007)	0.28
Support for the EU	0.096	(0.050)	0.11	0.102	(0.046)	0.11
Structural funds payments	-0.014	(0.010)	-0.07			
Vote distinctiveness	0.009	(0.004)	0.14	0.010	(0.004)	0.16
Regionalist party	0.113	(0.122)	0.06			
Regional GDP per capita	0.311	(0.124)	0.16	0.333	(0.113)	0.17
Control variables						
Regional language index	0.148	(0.054)	0.17	0.182	(0.050)	0.21
Historical sovereignty	0.051	(0.059)	0.05			
R. does not border capital	0.283	(0.069)	0.23	0.310	(0.065)	0.25
Population, millions	0.019	(0.013)	0.09	0.025	(0.012)	0.12
Relative population size	-1.008	(0.321)	-0.20	-0.984	(0.304)	-0.19
Constant	1.678	(0.146)		1.601	(0.125)	
Adjusted R ²	0.56			0.56		
N	212			212		

The figures in the columns denote (from left to right): Unstandardised regression coefficients, standard errors of the estimates, and standardised regression coefficients.
Numbers in **bold**: P (two-tailed) < 0.10.

Overall, both the full model 1 and the parsimonious model 2 can explain around 56 percent of the variance in the logged Moreno index, as measured by the adjusted R² statistic. Among the independent variables, one indicator related to each theoretical hypothesis has a significant effect on regional identities. Foreign immigration emerges as the strongest of the independent variables in both model 1 and model 2, measured in terms of the standardised regression coefficients. The second strongest independent variable is economic development, which also has a strong and significant positive impact in both models. The impact of Europeanisation is

somewhat weaker, and only one of the two variables is significantly related to regional identities. The main indicator, measuring support for the EU, has a significant positive impact in both models. On the other hand, the structural funds variable does not have a significant impact on regional identities when the model controls for other variables. Indeed, the direction of the relationship even goes in the opposite direction of what was expected, as regions receiving more structural funds tend to have weaker identities than other regions. This is reasonable given the relationship between economic development and regional identities, as structural funds are mainly provided for the poorest regions. However, the findings do question the idea that structural funds income would lead to growing regional identities, particularly when structural funds expenditure does not appear to be associated with regional identities even when economic development is controlled for.

Differences in regional party systems also appear to be closely related to regional identities. On the other hand, the existence of specifically regionalist political parties does not appear to have an independent effect once the distinctiveness of the regional party system as a whole is controlled for. The relationship between the regionalist parties dummy and regional identities is positive, as expected, but it is not statistically significant. Among the control variables, the centre/periphery variable has the strongest effect on regional identities. Regional languages are also closely associated with identities. On the other hand, there does not appear to be a significant relationship between identities and historical sovereignty. The historical sovereignty index is positively related to identities, but not significantly so.

The two population variables relate to regional identities in somewhat contradictory ways. The analysis shows that large regions are indeed likely to have stronger identities, as expected, but the same is true for regions with a small share of the state population, once other variables are controlled for. It thus seems that there is a tendency for relatively strong regional identities in small regions in large countries, whereas weaker identities would be expected in large regions in small countries. It is worth noting that the two variables are closely connected, so that if one of them is removed from the model, the other one ceases to be significantly related to regional identities. The relationship between population size and identity does therefore appear to be fairly complex, and it is necessary to take relative as well as absolute population size into account.

As the regression model explains variation in the logarithmic transformations of the original Moreno index scores, the results are less straightforward to interpret than for an ordinary regression model. However, model 2 can be used to calculate predicted scores on the Moreno index for regions with specified values on each of the independent variables. This will make it easier to interpret the results in terms of the effect that each variable is expected to have on regional identities. Table 4.9 demonstrates how the predicted Moreno index scores change when each independent variable is specified as taking a low, average or high value, whilst all other independent and control variables are kept constant.

Table 4.9: Predicted Moreno index scores

	Low	Average	High
Foreign immigration	10.8	12.3	14.2
Support for the EU	11.0	12.3	13.6
Vote distinctiveness	11.3	12.3	13.7
Regional GDP per capita	11.1	12.3	13.6

Predicted scores on the Moreno index when all other independent and control variables are kept constant, whereas one independent variable is varied to the 10th and 90th percentile levels.

The score of 12.3, listed in the average column, represents the expected Moreno index score for a region that does not border the state capital and does not have a regional language, whilst it is precisely average when it comes to foreign immigration, Europeanisation, vote distinctiveness, economic development, and absolute and relative population size. The figures in the low and high columns then represent how the predicted Moreno index score changes when the relevant independent variable is varied to a high and low level.

Country dummies

The regions in this data set constitute parts of various countries, and there is a chance that the effect of some of the independent variables depends on which country the region is in. Regions might cluster in groups according to their country, and the model could then be expected to fit in a reasonably similar way to all regions within any given country, while being a poorer fit when it comes to explaining variation across countries. This hypothesis can be tested by introducing a dummy variable for each country into the model. Through introducing country dummies, it is possible to check whether the model is capable of

explaining variation within each country, in which case the independent variables will still have a significant impact on regional identities even when country dummies are controlled for. It is also possible to test whether the model can explain variation across different countries, in which case the country dummies themselves will not have a significant effect on regional identities.

In table 4.10, I have included such country dummies for each of the countries in the study. This produces a large increase in R^2 , with the explained variance of the model increasing by 0.19 compared to model 2. When the country dummies are introduced, the model can explain 76 percent of the variation in the Moreno index. This suggests that the model has been underspecified, or that there is a substantial national element to the phenomenon of regional identity (the political structure and the political culture of the country might be part of this explanation).

Table 4.10: Introducing country dummies

Dependent variable: log (Moreno index). Baseline for country dummies: France.

	Model 2			Country dummy model		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Foreign immigration	0.035	(0.007)	0.28	-0.013	(0.009)	-0.10
Support for the EU	0.102	(0.046)	0.11	0.208	(0.064)	0.23
Vote distinctiveness	0.010	(0.004)	0.16	0.013	(0.004)	0.21
Regional GDP per capita	0.333	(0.113)	0.17	0.326	(0.141)	0.17
Regional language index	0.182	(0.050)	0.21	0.256	(0.038)	0.29
R. does not border capital	0.310	(0.065)	0.25	0.170	(0.050)	0.14
Population, millions	0.025	(0.012)	0.12	-0.011	(0.013)	-0.05
Relative population size	-0.984	(0.304)	-0.19	-0.330	(0.345)	-0.06
Germany				0.857	(0.168)	0.40
The Netherlands				0.265	(0.131)	0.11
Austria				0.276	(0.168)	0.10
Great Britain				0.167	(0.134)	0.07
Norway				0.206	(0.200)	0.05
Portugal				-0.036	(0.140)	-0.02
Sweden				-0.142	(0.167)	-0.04
Italy				-0.164	(0.116)	-0.07
Belgium				-0.302	(0.200)	-0.11
Finland				-0.442	(0.145)	-0.21
Spain				-0.598	(0.110)	-0.29
Greece				-0.526	(0.152)	-0.31
Constant	1.601	(0.125)		1.944	(0.164)	
Adjusted R ²	0.57			0.76		
N	212			212		

Numbers in **bold**: P (two-tailed) < 0.10.

The country dummies broadly cluster into three or four different groups. Germany forms a separate cluster where regional identities are underestimated by the model compared to all other countries. At the other end of the spectrum, Greece, Spain and Finland form a cluster of countries where regional identities are overestimated by the model. Most other countries form one large cluster, although the differences within this cluster are fairly large. Three of the independent variables of the model remain significantly related to regional identities.

Europeanisation is actually even more strongly associated with regional identities once the analysis controls for the country that the regions are in, with the effect of an increase in

Europeanisation being more than twice as strong as in model 2. Similarly, the effects of regional party systems are also stronger once countries are controlled for. The relationship between economic development and regional identities remains approximately the same whether or not countries are controlled for, with only minor differences in the coefficients.

Conversely, the relationship between foreign immigration and regional identities changes completely when country dummies are controlled for. The variable now actually has a negative impact on regional identities, although the relationship is not statistically significant. This suggests that the observed relationship between immigration and identity in the previous models might have been an artefact of variations in foreign immigration across different countries. Certainly, one plausible explanation would be that the foreign immigration variable actually picked up some of the impact of the country dummies, rather than itself being significantly related to regionalism.

Two of the control variables still have a significant impact on regional identities, although controlling for countries has a diverging effect on them. The impact of the centre/periphery variable is drastically reduced. On the other hand, the impact of regional language is strengthened. However, the two population variables are no longer significantly related to regional identities once countries are controlled for, and the impact of absolute population size actually changes direction and becomes negative in the country dummy model.

The analysis of the country dummies shows that the regions cluster around the countries in which they are located. It is possible to take this into account in the analysis by running a multi-level regression model where the regions are clustered by countries. The model would then be run on two levels: Firstly, as a set of regression analyses within each country; and secondly, as a regression across all countries. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assign weights to the different regions in the clustered regression analysis, and therefore all regions are treated equally in this model, regardless of their sampling variances. Therefore, the results need to be treated with caution. Table 4.11 presents the results of a multi-level regression model that clusters the regions by country.

Table 4.11: Clustered regression

Dependent variable: log (Moreno index). Clustered by country.

	Model 2			Multi-Level Model		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Foreign immigration	0.035	(0.007)	0.00	0.009	(0.010)	0.40
Support for the EU	0.102	(0.046)	0.03	0.061	(0.052)	0.24
Vote distinctiveness	0.010	(0.004)	0.01	0.013	(0.004)	0.00
Regional GDP per capita	0.333	(0.113)	0.00	0.269	(0.144)	0.06
Regional language index	0.182	(0.050)	0.00	0.190	(0.037)	0.00
R. does not border capital	0.310	(0.065)	0.00	0.229	(0.065)	0.00
Population, millions	0.025	(0.012)	0.04	0.000	(0.019)	0.99
Relative population size	-0.984	(0.304)	0.00	-0.636	(0.635)	0.32
Constant	1.601	(0.125)	0.00	1.918	(0.160)	0.00
N	212			212		
R ² – within				0.28		
R ² – between				0.41		
R ² – overall	0.57			0.31		
Sigma_u				0.23		
Rho				0.28		

The figures in the columns denote (from left to right): Unstandardised regression coefficients, standard errors of the estimates, and probability level. Numbers in **bold**: P (two-tailed) < 0.10.

The multi-level regression analysis produces similar results as the regression that controls for country dummies. However, the Europeanisation variable does not have a significant impact on regional identities in the multi-level model, although the relationship is still positive. The other variables retain their impacts on regional identities, with vote distinctiveness, economic development, regional language and not bordering the capital still having significant positive effects on identity. Relative and absolute population sizes are still not significantly related to regional identities. The same is true for globalisation, although its impact now resumes being positive. Omitting the insignificant variables from the multi-level model does not change

much in terms of the results, and the results of this are therefore not shown in the table. The same variables are still significantly related to identity, and no new variables become significant as a result of this operation. The only notable difference is that the significance level of the economic development variable is strengthened from 0.06 to 0.01. The model explains around 31 percent of the variation in the set. The model explains 28 percent of variation within countries, and 41 percent of the variation across countries on the Moreno index. The intraclass correlation coefficient, Rho, is 0.28, which means that once the other variables are controlled for, the correlation between different regions in the same country is moderate.

CONCLUSION

While the presence of a regional language and a peripheral geographical position are both closely connected to the construction and maintenance of regional identities, the more surprising finding in this study is perhaps the significance of political and economic factors in identity construction. The analysis shows that regional identities are likely to be more prevalent in regions with a high level of economic development and highly regionalised party systems. The impact of these factors may be interpreted as demonstrating a strategic element in identity construction, insofar as regional identities are highly useful in achieving economic and political decentralisation.

It would be rational for regional publics to mobilise collectively for economic or political decentralisation in prosperous regions with distinctive political preferences. In the first type of regions, there are fiscal incentives to desire economic decentralisation, as prosperous regions often subsidise poorer regions through redistributive mechanisms. In the second type of regions, there are political incentives to desire political autonomy, as this would most likely entail policy outcomes that are closer to the preferences of the majority of the population in the region. In sum, regional identities tend to be strong in regions where people have an incentive to mobilise on a regionalist agenda. Political identities are constructed in order to serve political purposes, and this paper certainly suggests that regional identities tend to be stronger where they have a purpose to serve.

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