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Eurosceptic Regionalists: Flemish and Walloon Identities Compared

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The recent secession referenda in Scotland and Catalonia underscore that regionalism is still a legitimate political force in the EU. However, the nature and content of this regionalism warrants closer investigation. The central assumption in the literature is that regionalists are more supportive of European integration.¹ This is presumed to be particularly true in regions like Scotland and Catalonia, where regional identity is constructed along “civic” rather than “ethnic” lines, making elites and citizens, both, more progressive, forward thinking, and Euro-friendly.² However, this assumption was formulated in the heyday of the “Europe of the Regions” idea, and may no longer accurately reflect the positions of contemporary regionalists, who have increasingly become more Eurosceptic.³ Furthermore, the same literature assumes that the attitudes of voters are aligned with those of parties. Citizens who self-identify as regionalists are typically construed as Europhiles, and this belief is predicated on the notion that pro-EU regionalist

1. Michael Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change* (Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998); Thomas Risse, *We the European Peoples? Identity, Public Sphere, and European Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); Seth Jolly, “The Europhile Fringe? Regionalist Party Support for European Integration,” *European Union Politics* 8, no. 1 (2007): 109-130.

2. Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*.

3. Anwen Elias, “From Euro-enthusiasm to Euro-scepticism? A Re-evaluation of Minority Nationalist Party Attitudes towards European Integration,” *Regional & Federal Studies* 18, no. 5 (2008): 557-581.

elites cue their constituents to support integration. This assertion has gone largely untested in the literature, but has important political implications at a time when the EU seeks to legitimize its existence, particularly in light of the European migrant crisis.

What is the relationship between regional identity and support for European integration? How is this relationship mediated by inclusive and exclusive identities at the individual level and reflected in attitudes towards immigrants and regional sovereignty? Furthermore, is there evidence that ethnic regions are more Eurosceptic than civic regions?

This paper explores these questions using the case of the Flemings and Walloons in Belgium, arguably the most federalized state in the EU. The Belgian media consistently portrays the country as on the brink of falling apart, a divide that is fueled largely by the Flemish elites who view their region as a nation in the making.⁴ The constitutional arrangement, which creates numerous bodies of regional administration, only serves to encourage citizens to think of themselves as Flemish or Walloon first, and Belgian second.⁵ Flemish identity is typically construed as “ethnic”—steeped in blood and ancestry—and Flemish elites and citizens are portrayed as largely xenophobic. Walloon identity, on the other hand, is predicated on more “civic” values that support the democratic process, and Walloons regionalists are perceived as more cosmopolitan and open to outsiders. Hence, the Belgian regions can tell us much about how regional identity construction shapes political attitudes and provide fruitful points of comparison to the regionalist movements in Scotland and Catalonia.

I begin with a review of social identity theory, which posits that individual-level regional identity can be either inclusive or exclusive. Individuals who are successful at reconciling their regional and national identities are considered to be more open to outsiders, and hence more likely to support integration. Next, I turn to the concept of objective regional identity, or the observable characteristics of the region, as propagated by regional elites. Regions with an ethnic identity are presumed to be more ethnocentric and Eurosceptic than regions with a civic identity. I test these hypotheses using the 2003 General Election Study Belgium dataset, compiled by the Inter-University Center for Political Opinion Research (ISPO/PIOP).⁶ The analysis reveals that despite the distinctly civic character of Wallonia, Walloon regionalists are as ethnocentric and Eurosceptic as their Flem-

4. Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten & Jaak Billiet, “The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons. An Empirical Investigation,” in *Nationalism in Belgium: Shifting Identities, 1870–1995*, ed. K. Deprez and L. Vos (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 199; Bart Maddens, Jaak Billiet and Roeland Beerten, “National identity and the attitude towards foreigners in multi-national states: the case of Belgium,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 45–60.

5. Maddens et al., “National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons.”

6. ISPO/PIOP, *2003 General Elections Study Belgium: Codebook and Questionnaire* (Leuven/Louvan La Neuve, 2003).

ish counterparts. In the Belgian context, regional identity at the individual level dampens support for European integration. However, at the regional level, the data moderately support the notion that civic identity construction leads to less ethnocentric and Eurosceptic attitudes.

Social Identity Theory: Distinguishing Between Inclusive and Exclusive Identities

Regional identity is a type of social identity and is typically operationalized at the individual level as attachment to one's region. Social identity is the psychological link between individuals and the social groups to which they belong.⁷ A strong group identity fosters feelings of mutual obligation among group members and impels attachment and loyalty to the in-group, frequently at the expense of the out-group.⁸ Social identity simultaneously integrates and divides people resting on shared beliefs about inclusion and exclusion.⁹

As Hogg points out, people have as many social identities as the groups they belong to, and these identities vary in subjective importance, in how accessible they are in people's minds, or in the immediate context.¹⁰ For many, the nation remains the primary level of social identification. However, this is not the case in federalized countries with strong sub-national movements (Keating 2006). Regional attachment is significantly higher in regions with a distinct regional language, a level of economic development that differs from the national average, and a party system that differs from the national system.¹¹ Unsurprisingly, the regions receiving the most scholarly attention are those that meet these criteria—Catalonia and Basque Country in Spain, Scotland and Wales in the UK, and Flanders and Wallonia in Belgium.

Public opinion studies traditionally rely on the Moreno Question to ascertain the compatibility of regional and national identities. The question asks respondents whether they (1) I feel [regional adjective] only, (2) I feel more [regional

7. Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge University Press, 1981); Dominic Abrams & Michael A. Hogg, *Social Identity and Social Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

8. Tajfel, *Human Groups*, 255; John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, & Margaret S. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

9. Craig Calhoun, *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 9-36; Marilyn B. Brewer, "Multiple identities and identity transition: Implications for Hong Kong," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23, no. 2 (1999): 187-197; Marilyn B. Brewer and Wendi Gardner, "Who is this 'We'? Levels of collective identity and self representations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71, no. 1 (1996): 83-93.

10. Michael A. Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, ed. P.J. Burke (Stanford University Press, 2006), 115.

11. Rune Fitjar, "Explaining variation in sub-state regional identities in Western Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* 49, no. 4 (2010): 522-544.

adjective], (3) I feel equally [regional adjective] as [national adjective], (4) I feel more [national adjective], and (5) I feel [regional adjective] only.

These studies reveal that many citizens in federalized states develop multiple territorial identities and can successfully negotiate between them based on the political and social context at hand.¹² Hence, these individuals are construed as *inclusive identitarians*. Still, a smaller proportion of EU citizens have exclusive identities, be it national (*exclusive nationalists*) or regional (*exclusive regionalists*) and are incapable of attachments to other territorial levels. Unfortunately, these studies tell us little about the impact of inclusive and exclusive regional identity on support for integration because EU-related questions are infrequently included in national-level public opinion surveys.

To formulate plausible hypotheses about regional identity and support for integration, it is instructive to look at the literature on exclusive and inclusive national identity. For decades, EU scholars have used the standard Eurobarometer question that ask respondents whether they conceive of themselves as 1) [nationality] only, 2) [nationality] first and European second, 3) European first and [nationality] second, 4) or European only. Studies show that inclusive identitarians (individuals who incorporate national and European identities in variable proportions) are less xenophobic and less racist. Similarly, they are more supportive of integration and less likely to feel that EU-related immigration threatens their national culture.¹³

Exclusive nationalists are opposed to integration for a variety of reasons. Carey finds that the stronger the bond that an individual feels towards the nation, the less likely that the individual will approve of measures that decrease national influence over economics and politics.¹⁴ This leads to a relationship where a strong national identity reduces support for European integration. McLaren shows that exclusive national identity and anti-Europeanism reinforce one another for the subgroup of individuals who care deeply about the preservation of their national culture.¹⁵

12. Gary Marks, "Territorial Identities in the European Union," in *Regional Integration and Democracy: Expanding on the European Experience*, ed. J. Anderson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 69-91; Luis Moreno, "Scotland, Catalonia, Europeanization and the 'Moreno Question'," *Scottish Affairs* 54, no. 1 (2006): 1-21.

13. Jack Citrin & John Sides, "More than Nationals: How Identity Choice Matters in the New Europe," in *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*, ed. Richard Herrmann et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 161-185; Lauren McLaren, *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Liesbet Hooghe & Gary Marks, "Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration," *European Union Politics* 6, no. 4 (2005): 419-443.

14. Sean Carey, "Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?" *European Union Politics* 3, no. 4 (2002): 387-413.

15. Lauren McLaren, "Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis or Perceived Cultural Threat?," *The Journal of Politics* 64, no. 02 (2002): 551-566.

Although exclusive regionalism, as measured by the rejection of national identity, has gone underexplored in the literature, a number of studies suggest that it comes in two varieties. Moreno argues that what we see emerging in the EU regions is a type of *cosmopolitan localism* where societal interests are aimed at developing a sense of local community and participating simultaneously in the international context.¹⁶ This sentiment is particularly strong in minority nations that have been subsumed under the centralizing institutions of the host state. While cosmopolitan localists may maintain a relatively antagonistic relationship with the national level, which they view as the historical oppressor of their culture and language, this hostility is not rooted in ethnocentrism and is not transferred to other groups, such as foreigners and immigrants.¹⁷

In conjunction with positive attitudes towards out-groups, we should see that cosmopolitan regionalism is closely associated with two other political attitudes. The hostile relationship between regional and state actors should translate into greater preference for decentralization, where greater competencies are transferred to the regional level and regional autonomy is increased. Furthermore, because the EU provides structural opportunities to increase regional competencies and circumvent national governments, cosmopolitan regionalists should be more likely to support integration.¹⁸ Similarly, the EU's single market reduces the economic penalty for regional autonomy by affording regions the means to move beyond the national economic sphere in search of new trade partners.¹⁹

It is equally possible to envision a *parochial regionalism* that is more Euro-hostile. Economic integration opens up borders and increases the potential for an influx of foreign capital and labor.²⁰ This increased labor mobility, particularly in the form of immigrants from outside Western Europe, threatens the cultural homogeneity of the region.²¹ Hence, if like exclusive nationalists, exclusive regionalists are concerned with the protection of regional culture, they are likely to view this new labor as both a cultural threat that dilutes the content of their regional identity and an economic threat that redistributes their resources from

16. Luis Moreno, "Local and Global: Mesogovernments and Territorial Identities," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 5, no. 3-4 (1999): 61-75; Moreno, "Scotland, Catalonia, Europeanization."

17. Risse, *We the European Peoples*; Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*; Michael Rosie & Ross Bond, "National Identities and Politics after Devolution," *Radical Statistics* 97 (2008): 47-65.

18. Liesbet Hooghe & Gary Marks, *Multi-level Governance and European Integration* (Baltimore: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Gary Marks & Carole Wilson, "The Past in the Present: A Cleavage Theory of Party Response to European Integration," *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 03 (2000): 433-459.

19. Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*; Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present"; Jolly, "The Europhile Fringe?"; Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

20. Liesbet Hooghe & Gary Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus," *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 01 (2008): 1-23.

21. Jolly, "The Europhile Fringe?"

the in-group to the out-group.²² As a result, these exclusive regionalists are likely to be hostile to European integration.

These studies allow us to generate a number of hypotheses regarding the five Moreno categories. First, inclusive identitarians should be less ethnocentric and more supportive of integration. Exclusive regionalists who are not hostile to outsiders are construed as cosmopolitan localists, and are more likely to support integration. Conversely, exclusive regionalists who are more ethnocentric are construed as parochialists, and should be less likely to support integration. As I elaborate below, the level of regional ethnocentrism is contingent upon how regional elites shape the discourse on regional identity and community membership.

Theorizing the impact of exclusive nationalism is more difficult, given that the term was originally developed in the context of the Eurobarometer survey where national and European identities were pitted against one another. In this analysis, an exclusive nationalist is an individual lacking a regional component to their identity. This can be generated by two possible mechanisms. First, it can indicate an absence of a salient regional identity, which is unlikely given the highly politicized nature of Flemish and Walloon identities. Second, it can be a rejection of lower-order, and more parochial, social values, leading to more cosmopolitan and pro-Europe attitudes. In either case, I expect that exclusive nationalists are more likely than exclusive regionalists to support integration, and should not differ significantly from inclusive regionalists.

Ethnic versus Civic Models of Regional Identity

Paasi argues that scholars must distinguish between individual-level regional identity and the objective identity of the region.²³ The latter is predicated on observable characteristics that make it politically, culturally, or economically distinct from other regions. There is great variation in the salience and content of regional identity throughout Europe and it is likely that these regional differences translate into a diverse set of regional attitudes towards the EU.

In his seminal work on national identity, Brubaker distinguishes between “ethnic” and “civic” models of nationhood.²⁴ These models have been similarly extended to the regional level, particularly in the case of minority nations. Some European regions, such as Flanders and the Basque Country, foster an ethnic

22. Ireneusz Karolewski, “Regionalism, Nationalism, and European Integration,” in *Nationalism and European Integration: The Need for New Theoretical and Empirical Insights*, ed. Ireneusz Karolewski and Andrzej Suszycki (NY: Continuum, 2007), 9–32.

23. Anssi Paasi, “The resurgence of the ‘region’ and ‘regional identity’: theoretical perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. S1 (2009): 121–146.

24. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

regionalism that correlates with parochial attitudes.²⁵ In these regions, identity is ascribed, i.e., based on ancestry, race, religion, and language. This conception of regional identity is largely static and not open to change. For ethnic regionalists, cultural heritage is something that is to be passed on to future generations and safeguarded.²⁶ As a result, an ethnic regional identity is likely to translate into stronger ethnocentrism.

Other regions engender a civic regionalism that fosters cosmopolitan attitudes. Catalonia is a prime example where cosmopolitanism and openness are treated as desirable values that should be actively encouraged. Civic identity is acquired and generated by action-related components, such as respect for institutions and laws and shared political values.²⁷ Cultural identity is not treated as static—something to be protected from foreign influence—but rather as a constant dialogue and blending with other cultures.²⁸ Therefore, civic identity is associated with weaker ethnocentrism. Wallonia falls more closely on the civic rather than the ethnic side of the divide. As a result, ethnocentric attitudes should be weaker there than in Flanders.

Where do these ethnic and civic notions of regional community membership come from? Regional identity does not exist in a political vacuum, but relies on political and social entrepreneurs to give it context and meaning.²⁹ Regions as “imagined communities”³⁰ require citizens to relate to people whom they only know from second-hand experiences, through the media, political parties, or broader social institutions. To make these imagined communities meaningful spaces for collective action, regional elites are constantly engaged in a process of region-building that defines the character of that region and prescribes the norms of in-group/out-group relations. The extent to which regional identity is compatible with the idea of an integrated Europe relies on whether and how regional elites choose to frame integration as a beneficial process for their regional community.³¹

25. Anna Brigevidh, “Peeling Back the Layers: Territorial Identity and EU Support in Spain,” *Regional & Federal Studies* 22, no. 2 (2012): 205-230; Maddens et al., “The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons.”

26. Maddens et al., “National identity and the attitude towards foreigners.”

27. Michael Keating, *Nations Against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Antonia Ruiz-Jiménez, Jaroslaw Górniak, Maren Kandulla, Paszkal Kiss, and Ankica Koscic, “European and National Identities in the EU's Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components,” *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 8, no. 11 (2004). Retrieved from (<http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011a.htm>).

28. Maddens et al., “National identity and the attitude towards foreigners.”

29. Frans Schrijver, “Electoral performance of regionalist parties and perspectives on regional identity in France,” *Regional & Federal Studies* 14, no. 2 (2004): 187-210; Paasi, “The resurgence of the “region.””

30. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

31. Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*.

If the discourse emanating from regional elites is framed in ethnocentric terms, with an emphasis on keeping out immigrants and tightly controlling access to regional institutions for outsiders, the regional public will subscribe to an ethnic conception of community membership. This out-group hostility should intensify as the strength of regional attachment increases, with exclusive regionalists displaying the most negative attitudes towards outsiders. Conversely, if regional elites opt for less stringent criteria for community membership and are more accepting of out-groups, then regionalists should be no more likely than inclusive identitarians or nationalist to exhibit ethnocentric attitudes.

The top-down regionalism approach is more ambiguous in its predictions for how regional elites will incorporate support for integration into their political agendas, or how this support correlates with ethnic or civic models of identity. On the one hand, ethnic regionalism should translate into less support for integration, as integration opens up regional borders and threatens the ethnic homogeneity and cultural integrity of the region.³² However, it is possible to envision a scenario where the negative effects of immigration are offset by positive political gains derived from integration, even in highly ethnocentric regions. If increasing regional competencies vis-à-vis the national government is the primary concern of regional elites, then integration support can potentially be high, even in ethnic regions like Flanders.

Regionalists are presumed to be more supportive of integration because it brings the regional level to the forefront of economic competition.³³ However, not all European regions are equally well equipped to compete in this environment. Some scholars argue that economic integration pushes poorer regions to develop protectionist policies because the single market facilitates capital exit and “over-foreignization” of the economic and social spheres.³⁴ Hence, economically backwards regions may engender greater Euroscepticism. If this is true, we may well find that civic regions with struggling economies (Wallonia) are more likely to reject integration on the grounds that open borders encourage labor flight and the redistribution of valuable community resources from the in-group to the out-groups.

Regional and National Identities in Flanders and Wallonia

How compatible are regional and national identities in the Belgian regions? The complicated federal arrangement in Belgium, where power is dispersed across three territorial regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels) and three language

32. Brigevidch, “Peeling Back the Layers.”

33. Jolly, “The Europhile Fringe.”

34. Karolewski, “Regionalism, Nationalism, and European Integration.”

communities (Flemish, French, and German) reinforces the notion that the Belgian state is merely a geo-political expression rather than a nation.³⁵ In spite of this, public opinion surveys indicate that Belgian national identity is in ascent and not in decline.³⁶

Table 1. Responses to the Moreno question in Flanders and Wallonia, frequency and percentage, (Source: ISPO/PIOP, 2003)

	FLANDERS		WALLONIA	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1) [Regional Adjective] Only	78	6.48	25	3.26
2) More [Regional Adjective] than Belgian	277	23.01	61	7.95
3) Equally [Regional Adjective] and Belgian	520	43.19	326	42.5
4) More Belgian than [Regional Adjective]	185	15.37	143	18.64
5) Belgian Only	144	11.96	212	27.64
Total	1,204	100	767	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses across the five Moreno identity categories in Flanders and Wallonia. Respondents who answer “*I feel* [regional adjective] *only*” are construed as exclusive regionalists, while those that answer, “*I feel Belgian only*” are exclusive nationalists. Respondents in the three middle categories are considered to be inclusive identitarians, although a distinction is made between those that are primarily regionalists (“*I feel more* [regional adjective]”) and primarily nationalists (“*I feel more Belgian*”). Respondents who feel equally attached to their region and to Belgium are referred to as multilevel identitarians for the purposes of disambiguation.

Given that Flemish identity is assumed to be the stronger of the two, it is no surprise that the proportion of regionalists is greater in Flanders. Roughly 30% of Flemish respondents identify themselves as primarily or exclusive regionalists, while only 11% of Walloons do so. The weakness of regional identity in Wallonia

35. Michael Keating, “Europe, the State, and the Nation,” in *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*, ed. John McGarry and Michael Keating (Routledge: London, 2006), 23-34.

36. Jaak Billiet, Bart Maddens, & André-Paul Frogner, “Does Belgium (still) exist? Differences in political culture between Flemings and Walloons,” *West European Politics* 29, no. 5 (2006): 912-932.

is complemented by a strong national identity, with 46% of respondents identifying themselves as primarily or exclusively nationalists. This stands in contrast with Flanders, where only 27% of respondents have a strong national identity. Finally, the proportion of respondents who are equally attached to their region and Belgium is the same between the two regions (43%). This is somewhat surprising, since the Walloons are frequently touted as being the more inclusive of the two regional groups and the Flemish are purported to be more hostile to the Belgian state.

Flemish identity is more salient for a number of reasons. First, the Flemish regional government frequently pursues a genuine policy of nation-building aimed at creating a Flemish national consciousness.³⁷ The merging of the Flemish Region and the Flemish Community has resulted in a single sub-nation with one government and one parliament that serves as a focal point for the Flemish national consciousness. On the Francophone front, the government's desire to craft a sense of Walloon identity is less obvious due to elite disagreements on what community-building strategy to pursue. The Walloon Region and the French Community are two separate institutions. While some elites advocate an explicitly Walloon regional consciousness, others wish to promote identification with the *Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles*. This division in both institutions and policy visions limits the formation of a national consciousness in Wallonia.³⁸

Second, the distinctly ethnic representation of Flemish identity in elite discourse is likely to draw sharp boundaries around the Flemish in-group and the Francophone and immigrant out-groups. This heightens the salience of the Flemish identity and conditions public support for protecting Flemish culture. Van Dam shows that Flemish elites associate the idea of Flanders with the protection of Flemish cultural heritage, including the Flemish language.³⁹ This association leads to more defensive attitudes towards foreigners, which is underpinned by the xenophobic platform of radical right-wing parties like the Vlaams Blok and its successor Vlaams Belang.

The political agenda of the Flemish radical-right and its popularity with Flemish citizens, (by 2004 the Vlaams Blok was the most popular party in Flanders), underscores the complicated relationship between ethnocentrism, secessionism, and Euroscepticism in the region. Prior to the party's 2004 rebranding, the Vlaams Blok effectively combined virulent xenophobia with militant calls for Flemish secession from Belgium. As part of its seventy-point program, the Vlaams Blok moved to give "national" preference for social services, jobs, and

37. Maddens et al., "The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons"; Maddens et al., "National identity and the attitude towards foreigners."

38. Billiet et al., "Does Belgium (still) exist?", 915.

39. Denise Van Dam, *Blijven we buien in België?: Vlamingen en Walen over Vlamingen en Walen* (Leuven: Halewyck, 1996).

housing to ethnic Flemings and demanded a limit on the number of mosques.⁴⁰ In their party manifesto, the Vlaams Blok claimed that membership in the Flemish nation is “*based on the ethnic community being a naturally occurring entity whose cultural, material, ethical, and intellectual interests need to be preserved.*”⁴¹

The Vlaams Belang has only slightly modified the political platform of its predecessor and has maintained the Blok’s original anti-EU position. According to its manifesto, the party adopts “*a restrained and critical attitude towards the European Union with its bureaucracy and tendency to meddle where the sovereignty of the people should prevail.*”⁴² The Vlaams Belang’s Euroscepticism is highly linked with Flemish sovereignty. Hence, in the case of Flanders, strong ethnocentrism is coupled with desires for greater regional autonomy and a rejection of the European Union.

The Vlaams Belang does not have a monopoly on identity construction in Flanders. Since 2001, the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA), a conservative, pro-independence party, has put forth a civic nationalism-oriented vision of Flemish identity that is EU-friendly. The N-VA brands itself an inviting, inclusive party that offers newcomers a chance to integrate into the Flemish community. The N-VA states that, “*Our nationalism is not an exclusive nationalism. There is no question of excluding certain social groups.*”⁴³ However, the party does advocate the exclusive use of Dutch in the government sector and works towards a gradual and peaceful independence for Flanders. Unlike the Vlaams Belang, the N-VA envisions an independent Flanders within the context of a stronger Europe and favors further integration in economic, defense, and migration policy. Although the N-VA is presently the largest party in Flanders, their electoral success was marginal in the early 2000s. Given that the survey used in this analysis was conducted in 2003, I predict that Flemish regionalist attitudes will conform to the ethnocentric vision of the Vlaams Belang and not the more inclusive position of the N-VA. Flemish regionalism in this analysis should take on a largely parochialist character.

The two secessionist parties in Flanders must also contend with a number of mainstream parties that support a unified Belgium. The pro-Belgium forces present Belgium as a model of intercultural cooperation, bound together not by common heritage, but by the acceptance of the basic rules of the Constitution.⁴⁴ Belgian nationalism in Flanders takes on a distinctly civic value and is coupled

40. Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

41. As cited in Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester University Press, 2002), 96.

42. As cited in Sofia Vasilopoulou, “Varieties of Euroscepticism: The Case of the European Extreme Right,” *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 5, no. 1 (2009): 9.

43. New Flemish Alliance (2016), Party Manifesto accessed at <http://english.n-va.be/frequently-asked-questions#ideology>.

44. Maddens et al., “The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons,” 204.

with more positive images of the EU. Maddens et al. underscore that Flemish citizens with a primarily Belgian identity are less likely to be protective of their Flemish cultural heritage and more open towards outsiders.⁴⁵

Walloon regional identity is presumed to manifest itself in civic and inclusive values, which makes the relationship between regional and Belgian identities less conflicting. This serves to lower the salience of the identity issue, as evidenced by the fact that there is no secessionist party in Wallonia that rivals the popularity of the Vlaams Belang or the N-VA. Walloon elites are less concerned with the protection of the Walloon cultural heritage and the French language. As a result, Walloon elites and citizens are presumed to be less ethnocentric, more cosmopolitan and forward thinking, and more amenable to supporting European integration.

However, these civic-based values are potentially at odds with how elites and citizens evaluate the declining economy of Wallonia. Once the privileged region in the industrial heartland of Belgium, the decline of heavy industry in the 1950s decimated the traditional sectors of the Walloon economy. The region has yet to recover and is marred by high unemployment rates and lower GDP per capita figures than Flanders. At times, this economic disparity breeds hostility between the two regions, with Flemish politicians pushing for further decentralization and the decoupling of Walloon and Flemish economies. At the center of this conflict is the social security system, which the Flemish regionalist parties wish to see federalized. Both the Vlaams Belang and the N-VA assert that Flanders has taken on an undue financial burden as a result of the mismanaged Walloon economy and deeply resent fiscal transfers from Flanders to Wallonia.

Walloon elites have responded to these economic hardships and interregional hostility in a number of ways. Van Dam shows that for Walloon elites, regional identity is rooted primarily in the socio-economic emancipation of the Walloon region.⁴⁶ Regional autonomy is construed as necessary for the protection of Walloon socio-economic interests, although not for the protection of a Walloon cultural heritage and language. At the same time, Walloon elites are less likely to press for the federalization of social security, given that they have the most to lose from such a move.⁴⁷ Walloon elites, then, have to perform a difficult balancing act between pushing for greater regional autonomy on the one hand and sustaining economic viability on the other.

This helps explain why Walloon citizens, on average, are less interested in decentralization than the Flemish. However, Walloons are highly concerned with the state of the social security system in the region. While almost six out of ten

45. *Ibid.*

46. Van Dam, *Blijven we buien in België?*

47. Billiet et al., "Does Belgium (still) exist?", 918.

Belgians feel that foreigners threaten their social security system, this feeling is much more pronounced in Wallonia than in Flanders. At the same time, Walloons are less likely to view foreigners as cultural or political threat than the Flemish.⁴⁸ This conflicting attitude towards foreigners complicates our assumptions about the relative openness of Walloon regionalism. It is unclear to what extent Walloon regionalists should be less ethnocentrically inclined than Flemish regionalists. Given the dominant view that Walloon regionalism is civic-based and of the cosmopolitan localist variety, I hypothesize that Walloon regionalists are less ethnocentric than Flemish regionalists.

Similar to Flanders, the pro-Belgium forces in Wallonia endorse a more multiethnic and open society. However, this civic version of Belgian nationalism is at times interfered with by the ethnic representation of the extreme right.⁴⁹ While the extreme right is more marginal in Wallonia than in Flanders, parties like the recently dissolved *Front National* have enjoyed a small degree of popularity amongst Walloon nationalists. Modeled on its French sister-party, the Walloon *Front National* was similarly hostile to Muslim immigrants and endorsed a strong, unitary Belgium capable of dealing with the foreign threat. On the whole, the Walloon extreme right is averse to regionalism although past parties like *Agir* have advocated for greater Walloon autonomy.

Since little empirical research has been done on Walloon identity, the relationship between exclusive nationalism and ethnocentrism remains ambiguous. I follow the mainstream literature in hypothesizing that Walloon exclusive nationalists are slightly less immigrant-friendly than exclusive regionalists, given the influence of the extreme right. In Wallonia, preference for less decentralization should be coupled with greater ethnocentrism. If the civic identity literature is correct, and Walloon regionalists are indeed cosmopolitan localists, then they should be more likely to support integration than Flemish regionalist.

Table 2 summarizes the predicted impact of regional and national identities on political attitudes in Flanders and Wallonia. Inclusive identitarians in both regions are presumed to react the most positively to immigrants and to the EU. They are also assumed to have largely positive attitudes about decentralization, which they view as means of strengthening regional institutions without compromising the functionality of the state. The more parochial exclusive regionalists in Flanders are expected to be more hostile to immigrants and the EU than the more cosmopolitan Walloon exclusive regionalists. Exclusive nationalists are presumed to be more immigrant- and EU-friendly in Flanders than the exclusive regionalists, while the relationship is reversed in Wallonia.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Maddens et al., "The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons"; Maddens et al., "National identity and the attitude towards foreigners."

Table 2. Territorial Identity Types and Predicted Effects in Flanders and Wallonia

	<i>Immigrants</i>	<i>Decentralization</i>	<i>EU</i>
<i>Both Regions</i>			
Inclusive Identitarians	Positive	Positive	Positive
<i>Flanders</i>			
Exclusive Regionalists	Negative	Positive	Negative
Exclusive Nationalists	Weakly Positive	Negative	Weakly Positive
<i>Wallonia</i>			
Exclusive Regionalists	Positive	Positive	Positive
Exclusive Nationalists	Weakly Positive	Negative	Weakly Positive

In the following section, I use ANOVA means testing to evaluate the hypothesized differences between the Flemish and Walloon respondents more broadly, and between inclusive and exclusive identitarians specifically.

Ethnocentrism, Decentralization, and EU Citizenship

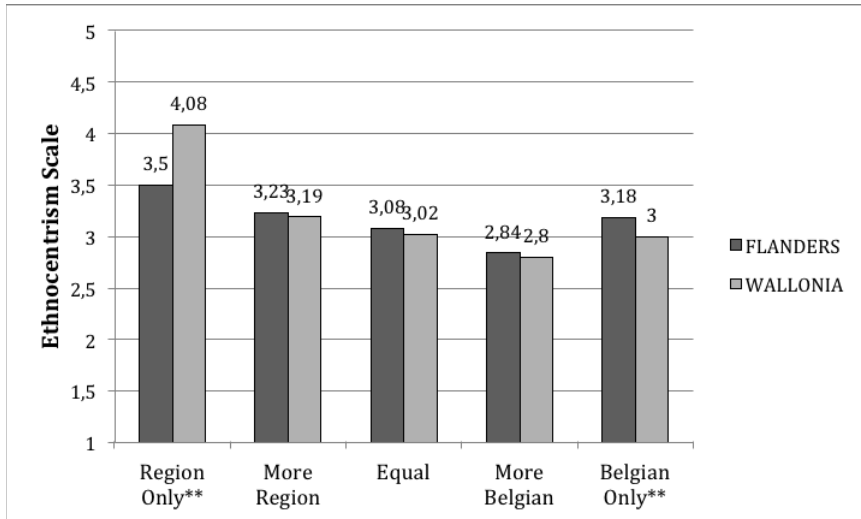
To measure ethnocentrism, I construct a scale by taking the average of eight ISPO/PIOP 2003 survey questions about foreigners in Belgium. The questions ask respondents to which extent they feel that 1) immigrants can be trusted; 2) guest workers contribute to the country’s welfare; 3) immigrants exploit the social security system; 4) legal guest workers should be granted the right to vote in local elections; 5) Muslims are a threat to the country’s culture; 6) different cultures enrich the social life of Belgium; 7) political refugees should be allowed to stay in Belgium; and 8) Belgium has to close the door to asylum seekers. Factor analysis confirms that all questions load on one principal factor. The ethnocentrism scale runs from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5, as all the component questions are on a five-point scale. Higher values indicate more negative attitudes towards foreigners.

The sample mean is 3.11 for Flanders and 3.01 for Wallonia, indicating that the Flemish are more ethnocentric than the Walloons ($p<.01$). While this is in line with the literature on Flemish and Walloon identities, I also wish to see how the mean scores for ethnocentrism vary by the Moreno categories in each region.

Figure 1 graphs the mean scores on the ethnocentrism scale for the Moreno categories in Flanders and Wallonia. The means only partially conform to expectations. In Flanders, exclusive regionalists score the highest on hostility towards immigrants. However, multilevel identitarians are not the least ethnocentric. Respondents who answer that they feel Belgian first and Flemish second are the least

ethnocentric. Furthermore, Flemish exclusive nationalists are more ethnocentric than multilevel identitarians and primarily nationalists. The results suggest that the overall “ethnic” nature of Flemish identity trumps the “civic” rhetoric emerging from the pro-Belgium camp.

Figure 1. Ethnocentrism levels by Moreno Identity Categories in Flanders and Wallonia



Source: ISPO/PIOP, 2003

Note: ** indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) between Flemings and Walloons

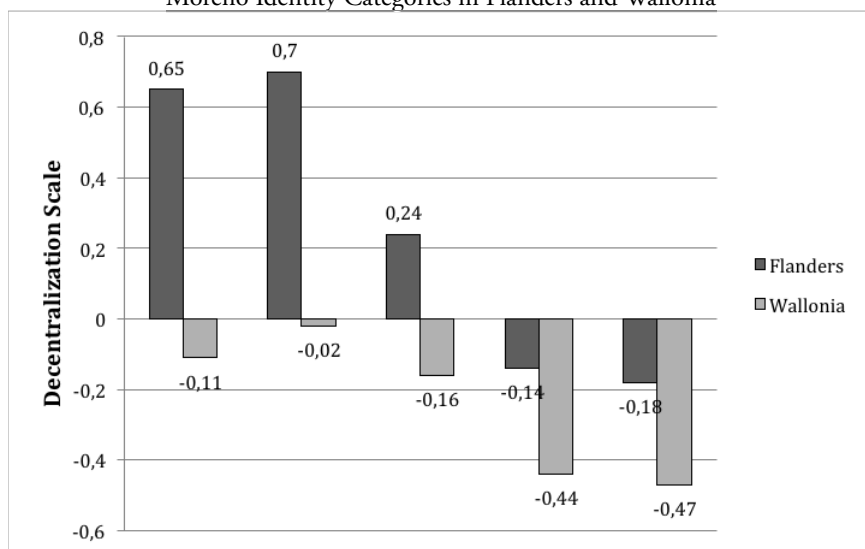
In Wallonia, exclusive regionalists are the most ethnocentric, even more so than their Flemish counterparts ($p < .01$). There is no significant difference between primarily regionalists in Flanders and Wallonia, and the same holds for the multilevel identitarians. A strong regional identity in Wallonia depresses acceptance of outsiders in a similar manner as in Flanders. No doubt, the protectionist mentality of Walloons towards their lagging economy translates into greater hostility towards immigrants. On the other hand, despite the occasionally more “ethnic” rhetoric emerging from the nationalist camp in Wallonia, Walloon exclusive nationalists are more hospitable to outsiders than the Flemish ($p < .01$).

The mean scores reveal that there is a great deal of similarity between Flemings and Walloons. Stronger regional identification in both regions results in more ethnocentric attitudes. The least ethnocentric respondents are those who blend their regional and national identities, but prioritize the national identity.

Next, I turn to respondents’ attitudes towards decentralization. Regionalists from both regions are likely to favor decentralization more than the nationalists, although there should be a more sizable gap between regionalists and nationalists in Flanders. To measure preference for decentralization, I construct a three-question *decentralization scale*, which taps into how much power a respondent

wishes to see transferred to the regional government. The survey questions ask 1) whether the social security system should be completely federalized; 2) whether the regions should be able to make all important political decisions on their own; and 3) whether more powers should be transferred to the regions or to the central government. Principle components analysis indicates that all three questions load on only one factor. Because the questions are on different scales, I standardize the responses to each of the questions and take their average. The scale minimum is -1.44 and the maximum is 1.63, with higher positive values indicating greater support for decentralization.

Figure 2. Preference for Greater Decentralization by Moreno Identity Categories in Flanders and Wallonia



Source: ISPO/PIOP, 2003

Note: The difference between Flemings and Walloons in each category is statistically significant ($p < .01$)

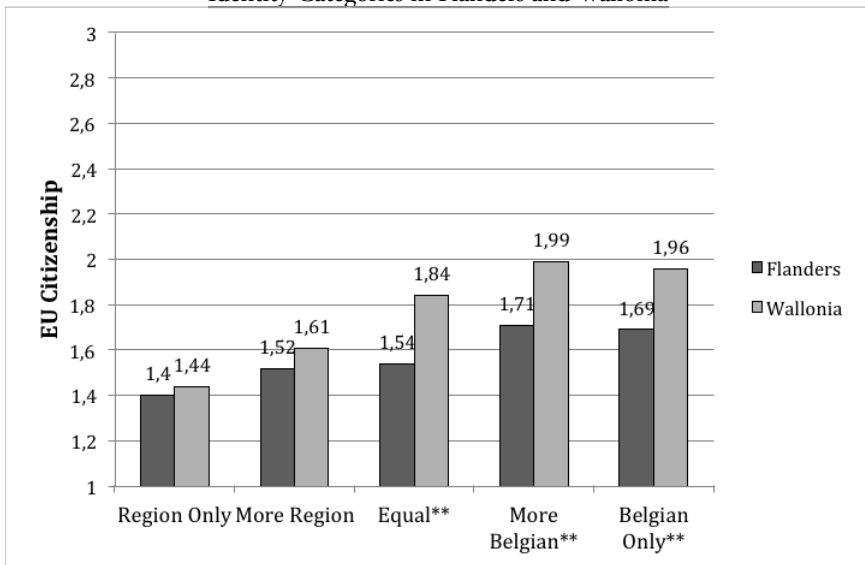
The mean for Flanders is 0.65 and -0.29 for Wallonia, indicating that the Flemish are more supportive of devolving power to the region than the Walloons ($p < .01$). Figure 2 graphs the mean scores on the decentralization scale for the five Moreno categories, and conforms to expectations. Both Flemish and Walloon respondents with a strong regional identity favor decentralization more than those with a strong national identity. There is also a significant difference in the strength of decentralization preferences across the two regions, with all identity categories in Flanders preferring greater decentralization than their Walloon counterparts.

Figures 1 and 2 clearly show that the literature is more successful in predicting the relationship between regional identities, ethnocentrism and calls for decentralization in the case of Flanders than in Wallonia. In both regions, regional

identity goes hand in hand with greater ethnocentrism and greater preferences for decentralization.

Finally, I wish to see how attitudes towards the European Union vary across the two regions. The ISPO/PIOP 2003 data does not include a question that explicitly queries about integration support. As a proxy, I use a question that asks respondents how frequently they think of themselves as EU citizens. A number of studies show that questions about European citizenship and integration support are highly correlated and tap into a respondent's identification with the political regime of Europe.⁵⁰

Figure 3. Feelings of EU Citizenship by Moreno Identity Categories in Flanders and Wallonia



Source: ISPO/PIOP, 2003

Note: ** indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) between Flemings and Walloons

The EU citizenship question is on a three-point scale, where 1 = never; 2 = sometimes; and 3 = frequently. The regional mean in Flanders is 1.57 and 1.86 in Wallonia ($p < .01$), indicating that Walloons are more likely to think of themselves as European citizens. Figure 3 shows how these feelings break down by Moreno category. Flemish exclusive regionalists are the least likely of all five Moreno identity groups (in both regions) to think of themselves as European citizens, clearly demonstrating that a strong Flemish identity depresses integra-

50. Michael Bruter, "Winning Hearts and Minds for Europe: The Impact of News and Symbols on Civic and Cultural European Identity," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 10 (2003): 1148-1179; Michael Bruter, "On what citizens mean by feeling 'European': Perceptions of news, symbols and borderlessness," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 21-39.

tion support. Flemish national identitarians are less likely to find the idea of EU citizenship problematic.

Once again, the literature on Walloon regionalism overstates the more inclusive tendency of Walloon regionalists—a strong regional identity in Wallonia depresses feelings of EU citizenship. There is no significant difference between exclusive and primarily regionalists in Flanders and Wallonia. At the same time, a strong Belgian identity fosters more positive attitudes towards the EU. Exclusive and primarily nationalists are significantly more likely to feel like European citizens in Wallonia than in Flanders.

The bigger surprise is that the multilevel identitarians in both regions are not the most Europhile. In Flanders, the multilevel identitarians trail behind the primary nationalists and exclusive nationalists, suggesting that regional identity, in general, depresses EU attitudes. The multilevel identitarians in Wallonia are more supportive of integration than their Flemish counterparts, but still trail behind the primary nationalists.

The analysis in this section suggests that we must reevaluate our understanding of regional and national identities in Belgium. However, the results presented here do not control for a variety of other factors that may condition a respondent's political attitudes. I turn to statistical analysis to investigate these attitudes more thoroughly.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis in this section evaluates the varying attitudes of regionalists and nationalists on three political attitudes: ethnocentrism, preference for decentralization, and feelings of EU citizenship. Because the impact of territorial identities is presumed to vary across the Belgian regions, two separate sets of analyses are presented for Flanders and Wallonia. OLS regression is used for all three models. All data come from the 2003 ISPO/PIOP elections study survey. The Flemish sample draws on a pool of 1,204 respondents, while the Walloon sample has 767 respondents. The measurements of the dependent variables are outlined in the previous section.

The primary exploratory variables of interest are the Moreno identity categories. The five identity categories are treated as categorical variables. Multilevel identitarians are the baseline category for all three regression models.

The literature on ethnocentrism in Belgium identifies three personality traits that condition ethnocentric attitudes: *authoritarianism*, *anomie*, and *utilitarian individualism*. Authoritarianism is a personality trait defined by submission to

authority and aggression. According to Billiet et al., submission and aggression may be responsible for the tendency of authoritarian people to identify strongly with their in-group and counter-identify with out-groups.⁵¹ Authoritarianism here is measured by taking the average of a respondent's score on two questions. The first asks whether a respondent agrees that most social problems would be solved if society could only get rid of immoral people, no matter at what cost. The second asks whether the respondent agrees that strong leaders are needed to tell people what to do. Both questions are on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating a more authoritarian mentality.

Scheepers et al. argue that authoritarian attitudes may be generated as compensation for feelings of powerlessness, or anomie.⁵² Individuals suffering from anomie are more likely to look for social and moral points of departure, and hence more likely to identify with their in-group and contra-identify with the out-group. Anomie is measured using a *general anomie scale*. This five-point scale is constructed by taking the average score for a respondent's answers to five questions that ask about feelings of general societal distrust and the ability to relate to and understand what is happening in society today. Higher scores indicate greater general anomie.

The analysis here makes a distinction between general anomie and feelings of political powerlessness, with the latter focused specifically on political institutions and actions. While the two frequently go hand in hand, it is possible to conceive of an individual who is well adjusted socially, but still holds little faith in the political process, and is therefore more likely to seek out anti-establishment parties. Research in several European countries has shown that radical right voters feel less politically efficacious, more alienated, and more dissatisfied with established parties and political institutions.⁵³ Because these voters are typically attracted to the radical right's xenophobic rhetoric, we should expect to see that feelings of political powerlessness correlate highly with ethnocentric attitudes. I construct a five-point *voting anomie scale* that tracks the respondents' answers to five questions dealing with the perceived futility of voting and distrust with politicians. Principle component analysis reveals that the questions used to devise the *general anomie* and *voting anomie* scales load on two factors, underscoring that these are two distinct concepts.

Finally, Billiet finds that ethnocentric attitudes are correlated with *utilitarian individualism*, or the unrestrained striving for personal gain and success at

51. Jaak Billiet, "Church Involvement, Ethnocentrism, and Voting for a Radical Right-Wing Party: Diverging Behavioral Outcomes of Equal Attitudinal Dispositions," *Sociology of Religion* 56, no. 3 (1995): 303-326.

52. Peer Scheepers, Albert Felling & Jan Peters, "Social conditions, authoritarianism and ethnocentrism: a theoretical model of the early Frankfurt School updated and tested," *European Sociological Review* 6, no. 1 (1990): 15-29.

53. Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*.

the expense of others.⁵⁴ Studies show that feeling threatened by immigrants and out-group scapegoating are associated with reduced solidarity between people. Hence, greater feelings of utilitarian individualism should condition greater ethnocentrism. The concept is measured here using a five-point *utilitarian individualism scale* that uses three survey questions dealing with feelings of brotherhood and solidarity, the desire for personal success even at the expense of others, and the importance of securing personal pleasure.

While authoritarianism, general and voting anomie, and utilitarian individualism are predicted to have an effect on ethnocentric attitudes, I expect they also matter for feelings of EU citizenship, as questions of EU citizenship are related to in-group inclusion and out-group exclusion. Furthermore, I expect that feelings of EU citizenship are impacted by the respondent's level of *cognitive mobilization* and *satisfaction with democracy* in her own country. Individuals who frequently follow the news are more likely to be familiar with the EU and its policies. Hence, they are more likely to trust and support EU institutions.⁵⁵ Cognitive mobilization is measured using a four-item scale, with higher scores indicting more politically interested individuals. Furthermore, Anderson argues that most individuals know very little about the EU.⁵⁶ Instead, they use their perception of the country's domestic situation, such as the state of the country's democratic process, to arrive at their attitudes about the EU. Higher levels of satisfaction with country democracy are expected to translate into stronger feelings of EU citizenship.⁵⁷ Satisfaction with democracy is measured on a four-point scale, with higher values indicating greater satisfaction.

The analysis also controls for a number of standard socioeconomic factors, such as a respondent's *age, education, income, religiosity, and gender*. Younger people who have grown up with the EU as a constant presence in their lives are more likely to identify with Europe and are more open towards outsiders.⁵⁸ The age variable is divided into six categories, ranging from 18 to 25 years of age on one end and 65-85 years of age on the other. More educated individuals are presumed to be less hostile to immigrants and foreigners, as well as towards the EU. Education is operationalized using an ten-point scale, where 1 = no formal education and 10 = university education.

54. Billiet, "Church Involvement, Ethnocentrism, and Voting."

55. Ronald Inglehart, "Cognitive Mobilization and European Identity," *Comparative Politics* 3, no. 1 (1970): 45-70.

56. Christopher J. Anderson, "When in Doubt, Use Proxies: Attitudes toward Domestic Politics and Support for European Integration," *Comparative Political Studies* 31, no. 5 (1998): 569-601.

57. Klaus Armingeon & Besir Ceka, "The loss of trust in the European Union during the great recession since 2007: The role of heuristics from the national political system," *European Union Politics* 15, no. 82 (2013), 82-107.

58. Neil Fligstein, *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

Table 3. OLS Regression Results for Flanders

	<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	<i>Decentralization</i>	<i>EU Citizenship</i>
<i>Exclusive Regionalist</i>	.092 (.090)	.458** (.101)	.044 (.102)
<i>Primarily Regionalist</i>	.156** (.052)	.428** (.054)	-.036 (.055)
<i>Primarily Nationalist</i>	-.055 (.059)	-.400** (.060)	.089 (.061)
<i>Exclusive Nationalist</i>	-.009 (.065)	-.414** (.069)	.235** (.069)
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>		.118** (.034)	-.127** (.034)
<i>Decentralization</i>			.019 (.034)
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	.134** (.026)	.010 (.028)	-.006 (.027)
<i>General Anomie</i>	.105** (.034)	-.022 (.036)	-.059 (.036)
<i>Voting Anomie</i>	.180** (.031)	-.013 (.033)	-.053 (.032)
<i>Utilitarian Individualism</i>	.168** (.028)	-.003 (.030)	.013 (.030)
<i>Cognitive Mobilization</i>	-.068** (.026)	.109** (.029)	.122** (.029)
<i>Satisfaction Democracy</i>	-.137** (.034)	-.060 (.037)	.001 (.036)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	-.008 (.014)	.025 (.015)	-.006 (.015)
<i>Education</i>	-.054** (.009)	.030** (.010)	.024** (.010)
<i>Sufficient Income</i>	.001 (.034)	.025 (.036)	-.024 (.036)
<i>Age</i>	.003 (.015)	.004 (.015)	-.008 (.015)
<i>Gender</i>	.023 (.041)	-.097* (.044)	.008 (.043)
<i>Constant</i>	2.231** (.259)	-.391 (.288)	1.881** (.287)
<i>N</i>	993	881	869
<i>R2</i>	.38	.27	.15

Notes: ** indicates statistical significance at the .01 level; * indicates statistical significance at the .05 level. Standard errors in parentheses. The baseline identity category is multilevel identitarian.

Wealthier individuals have the most to gain from economic integration and therefore more likely to support the idea of Europe.⁵⁹ While the ISPO/PIOP survey does not ask about the respondent's annual salary, it does ask whether the respondent feels that her household income is sufficient to cover her expenses in a satisfactory way. Responses range from 1 = "we do not have enough money and it is very hard for us to live" to 4 = "we have more than enough, we even manage

59. Matthew Gabel, "Public support for European integration: An empirical test of five theories," *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 02 (1998): 333-354; McLaren, *Identity, Interests, and Attitudes*.

to save money.” Furthermore, studies of the frequency of church attendance in Belgium and the Netherlands find that frequent churchgoers are less likely to be hostile to immigrants, while more marginal churchgoers are more ethnocentric.⁶⁰ Church attendance is operationalized on a six-point scale where 1 = never and 6 = weekly. Finally, women are typically perceived as the “losers” of integration and are expected to oppose it more than males. Males are the baseline category in the analysis.

Table 3 presents the regression analysis for the three political attitudes of interest in Flanders. The ethnocentrism model conforms to expectations. The positive coefficients for the exclusive and primarily regionalist groups indicate that they are more ethnocentric than multilevel identitarians. The negative coefficients for the primarily and exclusive nationalist groups show that nationalists are, on average, less ethnocentric than multilevel identitarians, with exclusive nationalists the least hostile to immigrants. The coefficient for the primarily regionalist group is the only one to reach statistical significance, vis-à-vis the baseline category. When the model is rerun with alternative baseline categories, the only other significant difference that emerges is between primarily regionalists and exclusive nationalists, with the former displaying more ethnocentric attitudes than the latter. Primarily regionalists are the most ethnocentric group in Flanders. The lack of significance of the coefficient for exclusive regionalists may be driven by the fact that exclusive regionalists constitute such a small proportion of the Flemish sample (6%). On the whole, the model underscores that strong regional attachment conditions more hostile attitudes towards outsiders.

The first model confirms that authoritarianism, general anomie, voting anomie, and utilitarian individualism lead to more ethnocentric attitudes. All four variables are statistically significant ($p < .01$), with voting anomie exerting the strongest impact on ethnocentrism. Moving from the minimum to the maximum on the voting anomie scale intensifies ethnocentric attitudes by 20%. Similarly, individuals with the highest levels of general anomie are ten percent more ethnocentric than those with the lowest general anomie levels. Respondents who score higher on the authoritarianism scale are more likely to display ethnocentric tendencies, as are respondents who are more motivated by personal gains. Individuals who are less concerned with the wellbeing of others are more likely to be anti-immigrant. Both cognitive mobilization and satisfaction with democracy result in a significant negative impact on ethnocentrism. Individuals who are more engaged in the political process are less likely to fear immigrants, as are those that are more satisfied with Belgian democracy. Finally, higher education levels are associated with less ethnocentrism.

60. Billiet, “Church Involvement, Ethnocentrism, and Voting.”

As a whole, the variables in the first model account for 38% of the variance in ethnocentric attitudes. However, the identity categories alone are relatively poor predictors of ethnocentrism. When only the Moreno categories are regressed on ethnocentrism, the R^2 drops to four percent. General and voting anomie, authoritarianism, utilitarian individualism and satisfaction with democracy are much more powerful predictors of ethnocentrism than inclusive and exclusive identities, at least in the case of Flanders. Therefore, the next two models incorporate the ethnocentrism scale alongside the identity categories with little fear of multicollinearity.

The second model evaluates individual preferences for greater decentralization of power to the Flemish Region. All of the identity categories are statistically significant ($p < .01$), indicating that all four groups are distinct from the baseline category. As predicted, stronger identification with the region results in greater preference for decentralization. Ethnocentrism also has a significant effect. Individuals with high ethnocentric attitudes are 20% more likely to support decentralization than those with low ethnocentric attitudes. Cognitive mobilization has a significant positive effect. Individuals who follow the news closely are more likely to internalize the Flemish government's demands for further decentralization. Finally, educated respondents are more supportive of decentralization, while women are less so.

The Moreno identity categories are more successful predictors of decentralization preferences than ethnocentrism. While the R^2 of the second model is smaller than the first, the Moreno categories are responsible for 21% of variance explained. As this is still a relatively small proportion, I include the decentralization scale as an independent variable alongside the identity categories in the third model.

The third model evaluates the extent to which individuals feel like EU citizens, and largely underscores the fact that a more ethnic representation of Flemish regional identity leads to more parochial attitudes towards Europe. The negative coefficients for the exclusive and primarily regionalist categories indicate that strong regionalism is at odds with integration support. Even multilevel identitarians, who have traditionally been identified as most likely to support the European project, are less likely to think of themselves as EU citizens than primarily or exclusive nationalist, although this difference is only significant for the latter category. The positive and significant coefficient for the last Moreno category indicates that exclusive nationalists are the most likely to frequently think of themselves as EU citizens. When the model is rerun with alternative baseline categories, one more significant difference emerges—that between exclusive regionalists and exclusive nationalists. Overall, the findings reinforce the notion that Belgian identity is more civic-values oriented and pro-integration than Flemish identity.

Ethnocentrism is by far the most important predictor of integration support in this model. Individuals with low ethnocentric attitudes are 20% more likely to feel like EU citizens than individuals with high ethnocentric attitudes. In fact, ethnocentrism explains ten percent of the overall variance in the model. As predicted, cognitive mobilization and satisfaction with democracy increase the likelihood of feeling like and EU citizen. However, none of the socioeconomic variables have an impact on integration support.

Table 4. OLS Regression Results for Wallonia

	<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	<i>Decentralization</i>	<i>EU Citizenship</i>
<i>Exclusive Regionalist</i>	.572** (.190)	.189 (.184)	.120 (.194)
<i>Primarily Regionalist</i>	.062 (.121)	.171 (.109)	-.168 (.114)
<i>Primarily Nationalist</i>	-.093 (.083)	-.251** (.072)	.014 (.077)
<i>Exclusive Nationalist</i>	-.098 (.075)	-.263** (.067)	.148* (.071)
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>		-.126** (.037)	-.190** (.039)
<i>Decentralization</i>			.076 (.047)
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	.117** (.036)	.079* (.032)	-.005 (.034)
<i>General Anomie</i>	.138** (.051)	.017 (.045)	-.058 (.047)
<i>Voting Anomie</i>	.265** (.043)	-.116** (.039)	-.046 (.041)
<i>Utilitarian Individualism</i>	.055 (.038)	.055 (.033)	-.042 (.035)
<i>Cognitive Mobilization</i>	-.116** (.038)	-.151** (.034)	.124** (.037)
<i>Satisfaction Democracy</i>	-.060 (.051)	-.080 (.045)	.107* (.047)
<i>Church Attendance</i>	-.005 (.021)	.011 (.018)	.004 (.019)
<i>Education</i>	-.029* (.013)	.005 (.012)	.018 (.013)
<i>Sufficient Income</i>	.078 (.050)	-.025 (.045)	-.070 (.047)
<i>Age</i>	.032 (.020)	-.070** (.018)	.026 (.019)
<i>Gender</i>	-.026 (.063)	.182** (.055)	-.108 (.059)
<i>Constant</i>	1.506** (.346)	.782** (.316)	2.467** (.335)
<i>N</i>	597	512	508
<i>R2</i>	0.31	0.19	0.22

Notes: ** indicates statistical significance at the .01 level; * indicates statistical significance at the .05 level. Standard errors in parentheses. The baseline identity category is multilevel identitarian.

Overall, the results for the three models in the Flemish sample are consistent with expectations. Strong regionalism goes hand in hand with ethnocentrism, greater preference for decentralization, and failure to identify as a EU citizen.

Table 4 shows the OLS regression results for the Walloon sample. Interestingly, and counter to predictions in the literature, the results largely mimic those of the Flemish sample. In the first model, we see the same pattern as in Flanders, with greater regional identification resulting in more ethnocentric attitudes. There is a significant difference between exclusive regionalists and multilevel identitarians ($p < .01$). Rerunning the model with alternative baseline categories reveals that there is a significant difference between exclusive regionalists and all other identity categories. This calls into question the presumably cosmopolitan localist nature of Walloon regionalism.

Authoritarianism, general anomie, and voting anomie all have a positive effect on ethnocentrism, although the impact of voting anomie is larger than in Flanders. In both regions, lack of trust in political institutions is the largest predictor of ethnocentrism. However, in Wallonia, individuals with high anomie are 27% more likely to display ethnocentric attitudes than those with low anomie, as compared to 18% in Flanders. Cognitive mobilization and education have a negative effect. At the same time, utilitarian individualism, or the lack of community solidarity, is not a sufficient explanatory factor in Wallonia, nor is satisfaction with democracy. As in Flanders, the identity categories are poor predictors of ethnocentrism, accounting for only five percent of the variance explained.

In the second model, strong regional identification results in greater calls for decentralization. However, unlike in the Flemish case, only the two nationalist categories have statistically significant coefficient, indicating that in Wallonia, the divide is between those with a strong regional identity on the one hand and those with a weak or nonexistent regional identity on the other. The effect of the identity categories is also much smaller in Wallonia than in Flanders, as indicated by the smaller coefficients. Unlike in Flanders, the identity categories are poor predictors of preference for decentralization, and account for only six percent of the variance explained in the model.

As in Flanders, ethnocentrism has a significant effect in the second model. However, the direction of the effect is reversed, with more ethnocentric attitudes conditioning less preference for decentralization. This is in line with the literature on Walloon identity construction, where ethnocentric elite rhetoric emerges from the pro-Belgium camp. As another point of difference between the two regions, authoritarianism and voting anomie have a significant effect in the second model. More authoritarian tendencies translate into greater support for decentralization, although it is not clear why this should be the case in Wallonia. Voting anomie has negative effect, indicating that individuals who feel politically disaffected are

more likely to favor a unitary Belgium. Equally interesting is that greater cognitive mobilization in Wallonia correlates with preferences for a more unitary state. This suggests that politically informed individuals in Wallonia are more in tune with the message put out by the pro-Belgian forces rather than the Walloon regionalist elites. This makes sense in that the pro-Belgian forces are more likely to dominate the political discourse, given the lack of salience of the Walloon regionalist movement.

Finally, the third model shows that regional identity has a similar impact on feelings of citizenship in Wallonia as in Flanders. Stronger regional identification dampens feelings of EU citizenship, while exclusive nationalists are the most likely to support integration. These results call into question the notion that Walloon regionalists are more akin to cosmopolitan localists, and help highlight the overall exclusionary nature of Walloon regionalism. As in the Flemish sample, greater ethnocentrism reinforces Euroscepticism, while preference for greater decentralization has a negligible effect. Greater cognitive mobilization and education heighten integration support.

Taken together, the Walloon models in this analysis underscore that the literature on Belgian identities has to be re-evaluated. Even when controlling for other political attitudes and a variety of socio-economic variables, the regression results show little evidence of a more cosmopolitan Walloon identity.

Conclusion

The Scottish and Catalan independence referenda have recast what we know about European regionalism in a new light. Gone are the days when regionalist movements attempt to secure greater autonomy for their territory without pushing for outright succession from the central state. While both referenda failed to pass, it has become increasingly clear that a significant proportion of regional citizens are no longer able to reconcile their regional and national identities. What is not clear is the way that these citizens perceive their region's future in the context of the EU. This paper examines the impact of regional identity in Flanders and Wallonia on attitudes towards outsiders, preference for greater decentralization and support for integration. It does so on two levels. First, it evaluates the long-standing assumption that individual-level regional identification is associated with more Europhile attitudes. The findings reveal that a strong regional identity dampens support for integration in both Flanders and Wallonia. This Euro-hostility is strongest for exclusive regionalists. Counter to expectation, Walloon exclusive regionalists are more Eurosceptic than their Flemish counterparts. The most Euro-friendly respondents are those with an exclusive Belgian identity.

Second, this paper evaluates the effect of an objective regional identity, or the observable characteristics attributed to a specific region. The paper compares

the impact of ethnic identity construction in Flanders with civic identity construction in Wallonia. Based on elite discourse over ethnocentrism and decentralization in Belgium, a more nuanced picture of regional identity emerges. In Flanders, a more ethnocentric vision of community membership is coupled with greater calls for regional sovereignty. For a significant portion of the Flemish population, particularly the supporters of the radical right Vlaams Belang, integration compromises the sovereignty of the Flemish "nation." Hence, ethnocentrism and decentralization correlate with more negative EU attitudes in Flanders. In Wallonia, ethnocentric attitudes are comparatively weaker. It appears that Walloon elites do pride themselves on the open and fluid nature of Walloon identity. However, the deteriorating Walloon economy has raised concerns among elites and citizens about the region's way forward. The economy's poor performance has made Walloons more protectionist and ethnocentric, although less Eurosceptic than the Flemings. The analysis suggests that in Wallonia, ethnocentrism is coupled with less preference for decentralization. A stronger Belgium has the potential to aid the Walloon economy through government transfers and to keep out immigrants. That being said, much more research must be done on Walloon identity to successfully unpack regionalist attitudes towards integration.

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of regional identity in Flanders and Wallonia on ethnocentrism, preference for greater decentralization and support for integration. It does so on two levels. First, it evaluates the assumption that individual regional identification is associated with more Europhile attitudes. The analysis reveals that a strong regional identity dampens support for integration in both Flanders and Wallonia. Second, the paper compares the impact of ethnic identity construction in Flanders with civic identity construction in Wallonia. In Flanders, a more ethnocentric vision of community membership is coupled with greater calls for regional sovereignty. For a significant portion of the Flemish population, particularly the supporters of the radical right Vlaams Belang, integration compromises the sovereignty of the Flemish "nation." In Wallonia, ethnocentric attitudes are comparatively weaker. However, Wallonia's poor economic performance has made Walloons more protectionist and ethnocentric, although less Eurosceptic than the Flemings.

Résumé

Cet article examine l'impact de l'identité régionale en Flandre et en Wallonie sur l'ethnocentrisme, la préférence pour une plus grande décentralisation et le soutien à l'intégration. Il le fait à deux niveaux. Premièrement, il évalue l'hypothèse que l'identification régionale individuelle est associée à des attitudes plus europhiles. L'analyse révèle qu'une forte identité régionale affaiblit le soutien à l'intégration à la fois en Flandre et en Wallonie. Deuxièmement, le document compare l'impact de la construction de l'identité ethnique en Flandre avec la construction de l'identité civique en Wallonie. En Flandre, une vision plus ethnocentrique des membres de la communauté est couplée à une plus grande demande pour la souveraineté régionale. Pour une partie importante de la population flamande, en particulier les partisans du radical de droite Vlaams Belang, l'intégration compromet la souveraineté de la « nation » flamande. En Wallonie, les attitudes ethnocentriques sont relativement faibles. Cependant, la mauvaise performance économique de la Wallonie a rendu les Wallons plus protectionnistes et ethnocentriques, bien que moins eurosceptiques que les Flamands.