Regionalism after regionalisation: Spain, France and the United Kingdom

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The term regionalism - just like related concepts such as region, nationalism and ethnicity - is used and understood in various ways. Often, regionalism refers to tensions within a state between a territorially concentrated group and the state, or sometimes more than one state. Smith puts forward a rather general definition of regionalism as 'a political or cultural movement which seeks to politicise the territorial predicaments of its region with the aim of protecting or furthering regional interests' (2000, p.686). However, sometimes regionalism is also understood to be a possible outcome of the actions of regionalist movements, the creation of a regional system of government. Just as there is a difference between the concepts of nationalism and nationalisation the first referring to a belief, ideology or movement and the second to placing land, property or industry under state control or ownership, a distinction should be made between regionalism and regionalisation. The terms need to be clearly defined because of their different interpretations and because the usage or avoidance of terms like regionalism, nationalism, autonomy and independence in political contexts is heavily influenced by political strategies. The first section of this chapter introduces the concept of region and territoriality, comments on the enormous popularity of the term in contemporary literature and discusses the changing roles of territory. The following section discusses the dynamics of territorial identities. Section 2.3 reflects on the concepts of regionalisation and autonomy, and political regionalism as the politicisation of regional distinctiveness. The final section offers a framework for the analysis of regionalism after regionalisation.

2.1 Region, territory and territoriality

Etymologically the word region originates from the Latin word 'regio', which had several meanings, namely a direction or line, a border or borderline, an area, neighbourhood or district, and a landscape or 'pays' (Schobben, 2000, pp.9-10). The latter meanings are reflected in today's understanding of the word region as a certain place or area as part of a larger entity. Nowadays, however, this understanding of 'region' as part of something larger is only one of two major interpretations of the word. Gregory includes both in his definition of region which is as follows: "A region is defined as a more or less bounded area possessing some sort of unity or organizing principle(s) that distinguish it from other regions" (2000, p.687).

It is thus defined as a place or area which has the additional characteristics of having, possibly elastic, boundaries or territorial limits, and a number of features that make it distinct from other places. This definition implies that states can be regarded as regions too, with the world divided
into states as political regions (Mamadouh et al, 2002, p.151). However, the word region generally refers to precisely ‘the other’ spatial level next to that of the nation state, and therefore essentially not to that of the state. Traditionally, two usages of the word have developed.

The first uses ‘region’ when describing a piece of land larger than most states. Examples of this use of ‘region’ are ‘South-Asia’, ‘the Balkan’, ‘the Middle East’ or ‘the Orient’. This use dates back to the eighteenth century when it was used to structure stereotypes used by travel writers. Regions were represented as distinctive zones with particular characteristics, like ‘the tropics’, or ‘the Orient’. This interpretation of the term region is used when European integration is discussed as ‘regional integration’ (Loughlin, 1993, p.237).

The second meaning of region, the one closest to the Roman origins of the term, came back into use in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, coinciding with the development of regional geography. It was used to describe distinguishable areas, like the French pays, as part of a larger system (Gregory, 2000). The region in this sense is a piece of land on the spatial scale between the state and the local community. It is this meaning that relates regionalism and regionalisation to the region, and in terms of scale this is what I will refer to when using the word region: an area at a lower spatial level than the state.

Questions of scale aside, regions have been conceptualised in different ways in geography as an academic discipline. Traditional regional geography used the region as an analytical category, as an instrument for classifying and organising geographical data, produced on the basis of academic research, as areas in some way distinctive from other areas (Grigg, 1965, Harthshorne, 1959, Whittlesey, 1954). Later, the role of subjective dimensions and the perception of regions based on images of regions and their inhabitants became a focus of geography (e.g. Jordan, 1978, Shortridge, 1984). However, as Pred (1984, p.279) notes, in this approach as well ‘places and regions have been portrayed as little more than frozen scenes for human activity’, conceived of as ‘inert, experienced scenes’. This paved the way for calls to regard regions as social constructs, based on the historical constitution of regions (Paasi, 1991, Pred, 1984, Taylor, 1991). According to Taylor (1991, p.186), regions are space-time phenomena that ‘as well as being expressed spatially on a map, must be understood as having a trajectory through time’. This shifts our attention from the observation of a region at a certain, coincidental, moment in time to the understanding of how they come into being, and subsequently disappear to make place for others.

What all notions of ‘region’ have in common, regardless of features or spatial scale, is that region is in essence a territorial concept. Territory has been defined as “the bounded social space occupied and used by different social groups as a consequence of following strategies of territoriality” (Agnew, 2000b, p.824), whereas territoriality is “the attempt by an individual
or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sack, 1986, p.19). The emphasis on social space in Agnew’s definition is what differentiates the concept of region from territory as a notion of space including personal (i.e. individual) space (Johnston, 2000). Whereas territory is also used to describe bounded personal space at an individual level, such as a room, home, or workplace (Taylor, 1994, p.151, Sack, 1986, pp.169-215), a region is a portion of space larger than such areas at individual level. The concept of region has a minimum spatial level. Although there is no standard minimum size for a region, with the size varying according to the different usages of the concept region, the size mostly indicates a spatial level at least larger than the local\(^3\) level.

Historically, however, the partitioning of geographical space started on a very modest scale. People initially attempted to maintain control over the space in which they lived by managing accessibility in order to preserve security (Gottmann, 1973, pp.7-9). Still, the delimitation of space in order to control access is an important function of the existence of territories. This use ranges from the large-scale sovereign states with defensive systems and border controls to the bubble of personal space around individuals. Raising fences to regulate the entrance of intruders is certainly not the only function of territoriality.

The partitioning of space and the drawing of boundaries is not only a means of regulating traffic which crosses those boundaries, since it also yields a piece of land to control. Giddens (1985) has described the modern nation state as a ‘bordered power-container’ (p.172). In Giddens’ terminology ‘certain types of locale form ‘power containers’, i.e. ‘circumscribed arenas for the generation of administrative power’ (p.13). The nation state has emerged as the pre-eminent form of power container, and according to Giddens, only the nation state has been more or less successful in laying claim to the formalised monopoly on the means of violence within its territory (p.120). Taylor (1994) elaborates on the container functions of the state, which has ‘acted like a vortex sucking in social relations to mould them through its territoriality’ (p.152). Taylor argues that apart from being power containers, states have developed into wealth, cultural and social containers as well. In a subsequent argument Taylor introduces the concept of the ‘leaking container’, to describe the diminishing pre-eminence of nation states on political, economic, cultural and social dimensions, through the increased

\(^3\) Sometimes the term ‘local’ is used to indicate all sub-national levels, for example when a global-local contrast is stressed (Anderson, 1995, p.83, Junne, 1996, p.514). Amin and Thrift even go as far as to use the term local imprecisely so that it includes levels such as ‘the entire European market’ (Amin & Thrift, 1994, p.6). In the context of this research, in which local is placed alongside regional, local refers to the lower spatial level of government, primarily including the municipal level.
sharing of those functions with territories at other scales. Although Taylor strongly attacks premature 'end of state' theses, the use of the concept begs the question of whether other types of territories can be described as power, cultural, economic or social containers, 'moulding social relations through their territoriality'. The container image has been realised above all in the nation state, and rightly so. In fact, however, every territory is in the same way a bounded space that can act as a mould for social, political, economical and cultural relations and functions. A region can be a territory with such ability, and just as nation states they can emerge not just as arenas of administrative power, but as cultural, economic and social containers as well.

As Ruggie notes, not all bases on which individuals are socially distinguished and bound into collectives are territorial. However, even in those systems of rule that are not defined by territory, territory plays a role (Ruggie, 1993). Sack (1986) identified three main mechanisms or 'tendencies' through which territoriality is put into practice. It involves an efficient form of classification by area, assigning and distinguishing 'ours' from 'yours', it communicates notions of space, and it can be a strategy for enforcing control over space. Classification, communication and control are social interactions, and indeed every act and effect of territoriality is socially constructed. Whereas physical distance between objects, or geographical features often used in the formation of boundaries and territories, such as mountain ranges or rivers, has to be conceived and described, which in itself is an act of social construction, territory is not physically present without its social context. Territory does not exist without, and independent of, the actions of individuals and groups that put the mechanisms of territoriality into work (Sack, 1986, p.30). This applies to all territories. States and regions are no 'natural' entities, but social constructs just like any territory (Keating, 1998a, p.18). The social construction of territory need not be a conscious act. We do not establish and maintain our bubble of personal space through controlled thought. Often, though, territoriality involves a conscious strategy or conduct. This certainly applies to regions as territories. Classification, communication and strategies for enforcing control through territoriality are all three key dimensions of regionalist politics and the maintenance of regional identities, and will therefore be further discussed below.

Brave new world of regions

Consider the global system of transnationalized microeconomic links. Perhaps the best way to describe it, when seen from our vantage point, is that these links have created a nonterritorial "region" in the world economy - a decentered yet integrated space-of-flows, operating in real time, which exists alongside the spaces-of-places that we call national economies. ... This is the world in which IBM is Japan's largest computer exporter, and Sony is the largest exporter
of television sets from the United States. It is the world in which Brothers Industries, a Japanese concern assembling typewriters in Bartlett, Tennessee, brings an antidumping case before the U.S. International Trade Commission against Smith Corona, an American firm that imports typewriters into the United States from its offshore facilities in Singapore and Indonesia (Ruggie, 1993, p.172).

Surely, in such a world there can only be a subordinate role for 'spaces-of-places'? A large and growing number of analyses of globalisation argue that state territoriality is being eroded and social relations are becoming increasingly disembedded from places and territories in a process of deterritorialisation (e.g. Ohmae, 1996, Appadurai, 1996, Strange, 1996, Ruggie, 1993). This has led some to proclaim the death of the nation state (Ohmae, 1996) or of geography (O'Brien, 1992) and territory (Badie, 1995). Others have drawn a parallel with the political system that existed in Western Christendom in the Middle Ages, which was characterised by overlapping authorities, multiple loyalties, and an absence of territorial sovereignty, inspiring the presentation of a 'new medievalism' as alternative to the contemporary state system (Bull, 1977, Anderson, 1996). This analysis triggered a wealth of critique from those who stressed the continued importance of the state (Anderson, 1995, Jones & Jones, 2004, Held et al, 1999, Hirst & Thompson, 1996), or from those who argued that globalisation is more about restructuring than replacing the nation state, and that not just processes of deterritorialisation but also those of reterritorialisation are an intrinsic part of globalisation (Amin & Thrift, 1994, Brenner, 1999, Jessop, 2000). Jessop (2000) argues that globalisation brings about a number of overlapping and interrelated changes, not just deterritorialisation, but reterritorialisation as well, not only destatisation but also restatisation, a reimagining of territorial and extra-territorial political communities as alternatives to those connected with the nation state, as well as new state projects. In this line of reasoning, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation can be described as a 'hollowing out' of the nation state, and as a transformation of territorial organisation on multiple geographic scales (Brenner, 1999). However, in this process, states take on new responsibilities as well, while a clear demise of the nation state exaggerates its former position. The nation state never monopolised political action in the past, and it remains a powerful actor in the present (Keating, 1997, p.383). Awkward terms such as 'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1995, Swyngedouw, 1997) have been introduced to describe this process of rescaling and reordering of political hierarchies. This term expresses the corrosion of the primacy of the nation state from above and from below, and the concurrence of universalism and particularism, and leads to arguments that the 'contemporary assertion of ethnicity and/or nationality is made within the global terms of identity and particularity' (Robertson, 1995, p.26). However, as explained through an apparently global process of globalisation, perceptions of deterritorialis-
tion and reterritorialisation as uniform and omnipresent should be treated with caution. Globalisation takes on different guises in different places, is not a homogenising process, does not emanate from all points on the globe, does not develop evenly, and often exacerbates or prolongs territorial differences and uneven development (Agnew, 2000a, Jessop, 2000, Keating, 1992). As far as 'glocalisation' is concerned, this also applies to the 'localisation' part of the concept.

The process of globalisation, in which places and societies around the world are increasingly interconnected, has not brought about a sameness between places, but has emphasised the continuing significance of territorial diversity and difference (Amin & Thrift, 1994). Metaphors like 'global village' have been used to describe the globalising world, but villages and regions have not been replaced by this 'global village'. This increased the intertwining of regions and localities with global forces and the resulting interregional competition for investment offers opportunities for assertive regions to adapt successfully to those new circumstances (Amin & Thrift, 1994, Anderson, 1995, Loughlin et al, 1999). Some have referred to the attempts of regional actors to exploit those new opportunities as a 'new regionalism' or 'neo-regionalism'. It is seen as a form of modernising, in contrast to traditional provincialisms which attempted to resist change, and is not characterised by conflicts between regions and the central state, but by international and intranational competition between regions as key loci of innovation and socio-economic development (Keating, 1998b, MacLeod, 2001, Storper, 1997). Empirical inspiration is drawn from apparently successful cases such as Silicon Valley, Baden-Württemberg, the 'Third Italy' and the Randstad. Some even argue that these 'natural economic zones' in a borderless world will remain after the expected 'end of the nation state', which was best suited only to the needs of development for a limited, and now past, historical moment (Ohmae, 1996). The process of globalisation is in this way linked to the increasing importance of regions and localities through a crisis of a system of national economies and the nation state.

While those growth poles need not coincide with administrative or political regions, Amin and Thrift (1994) note the importance of systems of governance in those areas of economic development. They introduce the concept of 'institutional thickness' to provide an insight into the requirements for success for those growth poles which are separate from narrow economic factors. Institutional thickness comprises the strong presence of different kinds of institutions (firms, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, unions, local authorities, etc.), a high level of interaction among those institutions, the development of patterns of coalitions and a mutual

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4 The metaphor of the 'global village' was already used in 1962 by McLuhan, to refer mainly to the influence of television and other electronic mass media (McLuhan, 1962).
awareness that participants in the set of institutions are involved in a common enterprise (Amin & Thrift, 1994). Although this involves the broader concept of governance, local and regional government institutions are among those that produce institutional thickness. Moreover, through the initiatives of assertive regional governments, existing administrative regions are presented as being at the forefront of this development. A telling example would be the ‘Four Motors of Europe’ initiative, in which four regions which focus on high-technology – Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy, Rhône-Alpes and Catalonia – cooperate economically and technologically and concentrate on the functional requirements of multinationals, albeit organised by regional governments (Harvie, 1994a).

Those opportunities for economic development which are open to certain dynamic regions underline the fact that, in the globalised economy, development occurs in an uneven and non-uniform manner in different places. This is only part of the substantial amount of criticism of the new regionalism (e.g. Jones & Jones, 2004, Lovering, 1999, Markusen, 1999). Apart from boosting developments in successful cases, the confusion of development in and development of a region, its overemphasis of the importance of new technologies and informational flows as the main drivers of economic development, the faith in ‘competitiveness’ as if it were unproblematic, and an abundance of ‘fuzzy concepts’ are some of the main lines of critique. However, as pointed out by Jones and Jones (2004), policymakers at national and regional level have been keen to follow this regional development thinking.

One example of the rescaling of political organisation upwards and away from the nation state is European integration, which is also an illustration of the globally different occurrences of globalisation. After all, nowhere does supra-national integration acquire the depth that is does on the scale of the European Union. It also offers a prime example of reterritorialisation at different spatial scales in the interplay between the European level and the sub-national regional level, economically, politically and in the reimaginations of communities. This has produced a complex territorial order of networks involving places at different spatial scales (Mamadouh, 2001c).

The increased usage since the 1980s of regional subsidies to promote internal cohesion, and budgetary increases have made the European regional policy a factor that has had an impact on regionalisation of the member states and on regional authorities as actors at European and national level (Balme, 1997, Bullman, 1994, 1997, A. Smith, 1998). Taking optimal advantage of the European Structural Funds became fused with traditional patterns of regional development and planning (Benz & Eberlein, 1998). In this way, supranational integration provided a clear and tangible rationale for regionalisation. The influence on EU regional policy not only stimulates the development of a regional tier of government and governance, but can even have a considerable impact on the creation of regional territories and the
drawing of regional boundaries. For example, the Irish strategy of dividing the country into two regions in 1998 was based on the prospect that one of those would continue to qualify for funds that Ireland as a whole had outgrown (Boyle, 2000). At the same time, regional authorities and organisations have become actors at national and supranational level, and have defended their regions interests through direct or indirect participation in European Union policy making (Hooghe, 1996, Keating, 1998a, Kohler-Koch, 1996) or by the establishment of regional information offices or 'embassies' in Brussels, something which is an increasingly common phenomenon (Jeffery, 1997, Mamadouh, 2001b).

In the early 1990s in particular, the observed growing role of 'the regions' in 'Europe' provoked the articulation of visions of where this dynamic weakening the nation state and empowering supra-national and sub-national tiers might lead to, culminating in the idea of a 'Europe of the Regions'. The somewhat utopian prospect of a 'Europe of the Regions', representing a situation in which regions are the centres in a bipolar territorial organisation and replace the 'obsolete' national level, (De Rougemont, 1963, Kohr, 1957, Nijkamp, 1993, Heineken, 1992) or its variants - such as a 'Europe of ethnies' (Héraud, 1963), a 'Europe for the Regions' (Hainsworth, 1993), and a Europe of '100 nations' (Pedersen, 1992) – or alternatives such as a 'Europe with the Regions' (Hooghe, 1995), were quickly deemed unlikely to materialise, certainly in a uniform way in all parts of Europe (Keating, 1998b, Loughlin, 1997, Borras-Alomar et al, 1994). A 'Europe of the Regions' as depicted by some now seems to be an unrealistic outcome of the development of the European Union into one federal state. European integration has, however, provided a new context in which regionalisation and regional autonomy are no longer just a matter between state and region (Keating, 1998a). With supranational entities as a 'safety-net', many obstacles and risks for regions to act independently, or even secede, have become less significant (Barlow, 2001, Schmitter, 1996). In this way, the conception of regional territory and autonomy for regional authorities has been altered through European integration.

2.2 Territorial identity and classification

As mentioned above, a feeling of regional identity is central to regionalism. The term identity is so much part of everyday speech that it seems unnecessary to define its general meaning. A colourful range of disciplines uses the word identity and gives its own interpretation to the broad concept of identity. Often, as is the case with the concept of territory, a distinction between a personal identity and a group identity is made. Often the importance of separation in the understanding of the concept of identity is stressed (e.g. De Levita, 1965). This applies to personal and group identities. With regard to an infant, for instance, the development of a feeling of being an individual
separate from the mother (and others), is one of the most important form-
mants of identity.

One of the mechanisms for realising this separation is territoriality. By asking and answering the question *where do I belong?* identity is given a ter-
ritorial dimension (Gleber, 1994, p.8). As noted above, according to Sack (1986) the three main ‘tendencies’ of territoriality are classification, commu-
nication and enforcing control. The classifying force of territory is used to bring about a separation by area. The formation of identity through territory is a particular case of classification, creating a division of the social world, and thereby having the social effect of making and unmaking groups (Bourdieu, 1980, pp.65-66). It is the dividing element in territoriality that is involved in the construction of social groups, in distinguishing between a ‘we’ and an ‘other’.

Apart from a distinction between individual and group identities, a distinction is made between identities related to places or identifications with places, and identities of places (Relph, 1976). This is the distinction between the identity of a region, which can for instance be the subject of place-
marketing, and the regional identity or regional consciousness of the inhabi-
tants of the region (Paasi, 1986, pp.132-138). Whereas the identity of a place or region is much closer to the use of the concept of region in traditional re-
gional geography, subjective images of a region fall into this category as well. In this sense, the category can be of importance for regionalism, for instance when a particular stereotypical regional landscape is regarded as valuable and is protected against intrusion by landscapes associated with other places.

The distinction between ‘we’ and the ‘other’ is a central theme of philosophical debates concerning identity and difference. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel (1807) discusses self-consciousness through the relationship between lord and bondsman. The lord is conscious of being lord only through the existence of the bondsman and vice versa. Both are defined by the other and by being acknowledged by the other. ‘Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged’ (Hegel, trans.1977, p.111). The identity of someone, something, or a group exists because of the differentiation with another one, thing or group and a notion of this differentiation. Sartre shows that even though one’s identity is defined through its differentiation from, and existence for, another, this does not mean that it is necessarily the other that constructs the differentiation. This is still done by the subject whose identity is being acknowledged. He illustrates this with the example of shame. When I am ashamed it is because I am ashamed of what I am, having discovered an aspect of my ‘being’. It is not just this discovery that results in shame, but this phenomenon in front of someone else (Sartre, 1943, pp.275-
276): ‘*Autrui est le médiateur indispensable entre moi et moi-même: j’ai honte de moi tel
que j'apparais à autrui. ... Mais cet être nouveau qui apparaît pour autrui ne réside pas en autrui; j'en suis responsable\(^5\) (Sartre, 1943, p.276).

The idea of ‘we’ and ‘other’ often leaves room for a spatial dimension, by locating those different social groups. Or, as Dalby puts it, ‘the other inhabits somewhere else’ (Dalby, 1990, p.20). ‘We’ is connected to ‘here’ and ‘other’ to ‘there’. Paasi shows that analytical alternatives exist of processes combining ‘we’ with ‘there’ and ‘other’ with ‘here’ (Paasi, 1996, p.14). Territorial communities are to some degree bound together by a shared territorial identity, combining ‘we’ with a particular place. Such a community is, however, not made up of people who actually know each other. Most people who share a national or regional, or even urban identity, have never met each other, do not know each other’s name and live completely separate lives. They may even have much more to do with people who live in the territory of another, perhaps neighbouring group. Anderson has incorporated this into his definition of the nation as an ‘imagined community’:

[The nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both limited and sovereign. It is imagined, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 1991. p.6).

This applies for regional communities just as it does for national communities.

Territorial communities are thus ‘imagined’ and invented communities. This does not mean that they are ‘false’ or not ‘true’ communities, because this goes for all communities larger than villages and face-to-face contact. It is therefore impossible to distinguish between authentic or genuine national or regional communities and inauthentic or false ones on objective grounds, other than the objective measuring of the subjective feeling of identity among people in a certain territory. Categorising territorial communities is often a dubious business, because it mostly comes down to using ‘objective’ cultural markers of identity, such as language, or religion, and rarely on people’s perceptions and experiences. Deutsch elaborates on the distinction between the signs or markers, for which he uses the word ‘culture’, of community and community itself:

When we say ‘culture,’ we stress the habits, preferences and institutions such as, as if they were a configuration of disembodied ghosts. When we say ‘community’ we stress the collection of living individu-

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\(^5\) ‘The other is the necessary mediator between me and myself: I am ashamed of myself such as I appeared to the other. ... But that new being that appears for the other does not reside in the other; I am responsible for it’ (translation FS).
als in whose minds and memories the habits and channels of culture are carried (Deutsch, 1953, p.89).

In this way those markers of identity are part of the communication of identity. This is related to a distinction between ‘identity’ and ‘identification’. A number of scholars have criticised the usage of the word ‘identity’ as an analytical category (e.g. Bauman, 2000, Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, Somers, 1994), and proposed using ‘identification’ instead. They point out once again that identities do not simply exist statically to be derived by observers from objective characteristics, but are the result of identification, ‘a never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or choice, are engaged’ (Bauman, 2000, p.129). As Billig notes, an identity is not a thing, but a ‘description for ways of talking about the self and community’ (1995, p.60).

Communication of territorial community

As stated above, a separation of groups of individuals is the foundation of a group identity, but this separation has to be created in the context of a process of identification. When discussing the creation of regional identities as a particular case of struggles over classification, ‘the making and unmaking of groups’, Bourdieu (1980, p.65) points out that those are struggles over the power to make people see, believe, know and recognise the identity and unity of the group, which is what creates the reality of the unity and identity of the group. Distinguishing, or indeed imagining, a ‘we’ and an ‘other’ thus becomes a discourse. Carr stresses the role of narrative accounts of a ‘we’ in the construction of group identities. Such accounts or ‘stories’ should have some continuous existence, seeking ‘a unifying structure for a sequence of experiences and actions’ (1986, p.163). This applies to discourse on and about a ‘we’ as much as an ‘other’.

According to Clark and Dear (1984), who discuss the language of the state apparatus, language is central to the construction, or reconstruction, of social reality, and carries signs, icons or symbols with meanings over and above the words being used. Those signs or icons act as durable marks of identity and structure accounts of group identities. Although they are durable, they should not be seen as eternal or unchanging. They serve as symbols which constitute an image of the territorial community, and that helps to distinguish it from all other communities.

The most important of these symbols or signs is obviously the name of the territorial community. Without a name it will be very hard to ‘imagine’ a community at regional or even local scale. It is also a very powerful symbol, because it can be used historiographically to describe the past of the place in question using its present name. An example would be to call the painter Rubens ‘Belgian’, referring to a time when Belgium did not yet exist, and the
name was only known to a few historians as describing a very different piece of land during Roman times. Another example is when speaking of Italian cities during the renaissance, when people where not conscious of being Italian, but belonged to the several smaller states which the peninsula was divided into. This is a powerful instrument which can be used to 'imagine' a territorial community because it contributes to the feeling that this community does not just exist because of its present inhabitants, but because it has been around for much longer, and that it exists somehow independently of its members and that it is there to last forever (Paasi, 1986, pp.125-127).

Other possible symbols are of course flags, hymns and songs, literature and poetry, and sports teams, as well as regional presidents or other leaders, or language, religion, history, landscape, and other cultural characteristics of the territory and its inhabitants. These can be either truly important characteristics of the territory and its inhabitants, or rather mythical. It is quite possible to use a language that is actually spoken by a small minority, or a type of landscape that can be found in some small, remote part of the territory, as symbols that distinguish the whole community. They may even have disappeared completely, or be made up in the first place, as long as they can be used to characterise the 'imagined' community as a whole. A very successfully mythologised symbol is the Scottish tartan kilt associated with ancient clans. It is portrayed as being an ancient aspect of a distinct Scottish culture, but 'clan tartans' were actually invented as part of a fabricated Scottish history in the nineteenth century. (Trevor-Roper, 1983). History is an important symbol, and relatively easy to 'manipulate'. Many authors have commented on the North Italian region of Padania as a recent and purely artificial construction, yet the invented history of Padania is a little more misleading than the official accounts of established nations. What counts is not whether it is artificial, but whether those symbols are accepted as components of the territorial identity (Paasi, 1986, Carr, 1986). As regards Padania, there is evidence that the message has begun to find an audience and a social base within the region (Keating, 1998b, p.87). Those symbols are forces of communication, and while they may not objectively reflect reality, they form the discourse that constructs territorial group identities. As Bourdieu remarks:

\[\text{Les représentations pratiques les plus exposées à la critique scientifique (par exemple les propos des militants régionalistes sur l'unité de la langue occitane) peuvent contribuer à produire ce qu'apparemment elles décrivent ou désignent, c'est-à-dire la réalité objective à laquelle la critique objectiviste les réfère pour en faire apparaître les illusions ou les incohérences}^6\text{ (Bourdieu, 1980, p.65).}\]

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\(^6\) The practical representations most exposed to scientific criticism (for instance the statements of regionalist militants on the unity of the Occitan language) may contribute to the production of what they apparently describe or rather designate as the
There is a difference between self-identification and the identification and categorisation of oneself by others. Because places cannot think for themselves, the identities of places and regions are always of the last category. However, individuals do have identifications which do not need to correspond with external ideas of their identity. Brubaker and Cooper criticise the idea that identity is something people or a group can have without being aware of it, or about which they can even be mistaken (2000, p.10). This is certainly true if identity is understood to be identification and territorial identity as a certain feeling of belonging or attachment to a particular territory. One can be unaware or even mistaken about one's legal nationality, but not one's identification with a nation or with several nations. Not all classifications or groupings of individuals imply the existence of a community. If we interpret the term identity in this way, a newborn baby has a nationality but not yet a national identity. The same applies for groups. External observers can group individuals in innumerable ways, without necessarily involving any awareness of the individuals themselves. For instance, all drivers of a white car on a certain strip of motorway at a certain time may constitute such a group. This does not make all groups of individuals a community. According to Carr (1986), the term community is reserved for groups that exist in the notion of the individuals involved who consider themselves member of the group.

Bell and Newby (1978) present a contrasting view of community, reserving the term communion for those human associations that involve emotional recognition and affective bonds. They use the term community for 'self-evident' structures that are 'given' and 'simply exist'. Membership of communities is then unconscious, unless it is threatened. They illustrate this with an example of 'neighbourliness' that does not need feelings as a basis of community, but just persist psychically. Such a stand may seem plausible for the example they present of neighbours or family, but it cannot be applied to larger social groups. These do not simply exist, but are constructed through classification. Strong affection or collective enthusiasm is not necessary for membership, but awareness of the community is. This is confirmed by the social psychologist Tajfel when discussing group identification. He stresses the possibilities of an evaluative and an emotional component and the requirement of a cognitive component. He notes that this observation does not tell us about the conditions which determine the creation of the 'social-cognitive consensus about group membership' or about the effects on social behaviour towards those within and without the group. It is, however, 'a useful point of departure for the asking appropriate questions both about these conditions and about their effects' (Tajfel, 1981, pp.229-230).

objective reality to which the objectivist critique refers in order to show the delusions or incoherencies' (translation FS).
Identity and nation

This centrality of mutual recognition between members or between non-members and members or at least cognition of membership in a community, is reflected in definitions of specific types of territorial communities. The nation might well be the most studied type of territorial community, and an element of self-definition is often present in definitions of the term nation. Gellner offers two ways of defining a nation:

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities A mere category of persons becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognise certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members (Gellner, 1983, p.7).

In doing so, Gellner distinguishes a cultural and a voluntaristic approach, and acknowledges both as being an independent ‘definition net’ that generates a catch which is far too rich (Gellner, 1983, pp.52-53).

Purely cultural definitions of ‘nation’, based on a number of objective criteria are bound to fail no matter how ingenioulsy they are put together. One of the best known and most praised definitions is Stalin’s: ‘A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture. … It is only when all these characteristics are present that we have a nation’ (Stalin, 1935, pp.8-9). However, it should be obvious that many entities that are clearly not nations fall into this category, while other entities that are generally recognised as nations do not fit this definition. None of those objective, cultural definitions manages to get over the hurdle of different types of identity markers being used by different nations. Some markers are critical and some irrelevant. As a result, the relevance and importance of certain characteristics may change over time and can be anachronistic or aspirational.

On the other hand, purely subjective, voluntaristic definitions have been criticised as well. One example is Renan’s definition of a nation:
A nation is thus a great sense of solidarity, formed by the feelings of sacrifices that have been made and of those that are about to be made. It assumes a past; yet it is summarised in the present by a tangible fact: the consent, the clearly expressed wish to continue communal life. The existence of a nation is (forgive the metaphor) a daily plebiscite, like the existence of an individual is a perpetual affirmation of life" (Rénan, 1882, p.27).

Hobsbawm argues that such a definition only offers an *a posteriori* guide to what a nation is, (Hobsbawm, 1990, pp.8-9), as it tautologically refers to the concept of nation itself and may be based on any understanding of the concept of nation that any group of people might have at any given moment. It is often a definition which is difficult to use in practice and leads to hasty recognitions of the wishes or claims by a certain section of a population, writers or political activists, who believe that a group is a nation and has the will to be one (or disqualifying assertions that a group is a nation). It may also pose problems of delimitation: do all members of a community need to endorse the claim to nationhood? and if not, does the nation only consist of those members that do, or of all members of the community? Identification with a community that is regarded by some as a nation, even if the identification is very strong, does not automatically mean identification with that community as a nation.

Another aspect of the definition of a nation is the presence of some connection with a political or legal status. This is the case when a nation is defined as the community of citizens of a state or of a more vaguely defined political entity or on the basis of shared legal rights. This is in line with a

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7 'A nation is thus a great sense of solidarity, formed by the feelings of sacrifices that have been made and of those that are about to be made. It assumes a past; yet it is summarised in the present by a tangible fact: the consent, the clearly expressed wish to continue communal life. The existence of a nation is (forgive the metaphor) a daily plebiscite, like the existence of an individual is a perpetual affirmation of life' (translation FS).

8 For instance in the definition by Schnapper: "Comme toute unité politique, la nation se définit par sa souveraineté qui s'exerce. ... Mais sa spécificité est qu'elle intègre les populations en une communauté de citoyens dont l'existence légitime l'action intérieure et extérieure de l'État" (1994, p.28) ('Like every political entity, the nation is defined by the sovereignty that it holds. ... But its specificity is that it integrates populations in a community of citizens of which the existence legitimises the interior and exterior action of the State' (translation FS)).

9 See Kedourie's definition of a nation as "a body of people to whom a government is responsible through their legislature; any body of people associating together, and deciding on a scheme for their own government, form a nation" (1960, p.15).

10 See Smith's definition: "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (1991, p.14).
civic concept of nation, often linked to the French Revolution, and rooted in individual assent and citizenship rather than ascriptive identity and culture (Loughlin, 1993, Keating, 1996). Other definitions also include groups for which statehood would be 'adequate' and for which obtaining a state of its own is a likely probability, or those groups that aspire to an independent state, or something close to statehood. The problem is that most of those definitions, which include aspirations to form an independent state, are too loosely defined as 'claiming the right to rule itself', 'a focus on a homeland', or 'a wish to govern itself', again producing an enormous number of 'nations', including most populations of states or provinces in federations or even all the municipalities in the world. The presence of 'claims' or 'aspirations' also begs the rhetorical question as to whether there should be any support for this claim, and the question of how large and stable this support should be. In a democratic situation one would say that a minimum requirement should be that at least a majority of the population of a community supports this aspiration towards independence. That would produce a very small number of stateless nations, and leave out relatively accepted cases such as Scotland, Wales, or the Navajo Nation. If, however, this voluntaristic approach to defining the nation is used without the connection or aspirations to any legal or political dimensions, self-definition is bound to produce problems of delimitation. The will simply to persist as communities, even when connected to a particular territory, includes nations, but an enormous number of other groups as well (Gellner, 1983). As noted above, mutual recognition is indeed an element of all territorial communities. It is then brought back to the collective imagining of community, noted by Anderson, that is central to territorial communities of a certain size (Anderson, 1991, p.6).

Generally, a civic concept of nation is contrasted with an ethnic one. This tradition stresses aspects of language and culture as characteristics of membership of national identities. Nations are, in the first place, formed by ethnic groups, and national identity is given, mostly through descent, rather than choice. This distinction is reflected in different notions on how to become a member of a nation and what constitutes the basis of nationality. For example, in the archetypical civic nations of France and the USA, living in a state with a certain measure of integration into the national culture is the way to belong to a nation, the ius soli. In the quintessential ethnic nation of Germany, the way to belong to a nation is by birth and ancestry, the ius sanguinis (Miller, 2000).

11 See Weber's definition: "A nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own: hence a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own" (cited in Hutchinson & Smith, 1994, p.25).
12 See Guibernau (1999).
So, what definition of nation should we follow? The cultural or voluntaristic definitions are both much too broad, as is a combination of both without a reference to a status of, or aspiration to, statehood. Moreover, a definition which includes an aspiration to statehood leaves out generally recognised nations. Perhaps we should be satisfied with the notion that, because the concept of nation is understood differently in different places and by different actors, we should not aim to find a general exhaustive definition, but focus on the ways in which nations are defined and constructed and how different conceptions of nationhood give rise to conflict and confusion. In this sense, the subjective distinction of national and regional identities is much more important than the existence of objective differences. As Frederik Barth (1969) argues with regard to the study of ethnic groups, an emphasis on culture-bearing aspects will reduce differences between groups to differences in trait inventories, where attention is drawn to the analysis of cultures instead of ethnic organisation.

One characteristic of nations not yet mentioned is that they are conceived of as existing next to other nations, or in Taylor's (1995) terminology, in a situation of ‘exhaustive multiplicity’, encapsulated in the concept of ‘internationality’. This is based on the idea that every person is a member of a nation, and humanity can be divided into a number of coexisting nations, each defining an ‘us’ that opposes the multiple ‘thems’ of other nations (Taylor, 1995, pp.6-7). Whether this parallel multiplicity of internationality may apply to nations as collectives or not, it does not always apply to individuals. An individual has more than one group with which he or she can identify, and an individual can be a member of more than one nation and have more than one national identity.

Identity? Identities!

The confusing way in which the term ethnicity is sometimes used is illustrated by a demographical section of *A New Social Atlas of Britain* (Dorling, 1995, pp.40-53). It presents an overview of the composition of the population of the United Kingdom categorised according to ethnicity. The various ethnic groups to which one can belong include England, Scotland, Wales, North-Ireland, Ireland, the Caribbean, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (Dorling, 1995, p.42). Apart from the fact that the place of birth, a territory, is used to categorise those groups it is striking that categories such as Welsh and Scottish are placed alongside Indian and Caribbean. If such a demographic study had been performed in a state like India, with a mass of languages and religions, or the Caribbean, with a large number of different states, ‘Indian’ and ‘Caribbean’ would have undoubtedly been split up into many different ethnic groups that, from a UK point of view, are part of one Indian or Caribbean ethnic group. Moreover, allocating ethnic labels to people in this way disregards the fact that people may consider themselves as
both Caribbean and English, Indian and Scottish, or indeed Jamaican and British. It thus creates a parallel exhaustive multiplicity of ethnicities that does not reflect reality.

People have a whole range of ‘identity attributes’ (Gore, 1984, pp.261-262), regional, local or European for instance, or non-territorial, such as class or gender. When discussing divisions between social groups in terms of ‘we’ and the ‘other’ this does not mean that the ‘we’ cannot coincide with the ‘other’ on an individual level. We have multiple identities which exist at the same time and, as Knight puts it, we have ‘the astonishing ability to ‘flick a switch’ in our minds’ and change between the different scales of territory we have ties with\textsuperscript{13} (1982, p.515). Some identities may overlap, such as ‘Catholics’ and ‘citizens of the Netherlands’, while others are mutually exclusive. Multiple identities may be ‘nested’ as well, in the case of identities at higher and lower orders or spatial scales. The same is often true of multiple spatial identities, ‘situated within a hierarchy of geographically based identities that coexist and sometimes compete’ (Kaplan, 1999, p.31). Nested identities are often not mutually exclusive but complementary identities. For instance, we can combine an Amsterdam, Dutch and European identity. Sometimes, identity categories that are in some instances parallel or mutually exclusive identities become nested identities in other situations. Examples are Irish-American, Italian-American or Mexican-American identities, or the above-mentioned example of Catholics in the Netherlands, who developed into a \textit{zuil} or ethnic group within the larger Dutch national identity (Knippenberg, 1999). In other instances, identities may be incompatible, and identities that were once complementary can develop into incompatible ones, or they may become more complementary than they once were. In those cases of incompatibility, people make a choice between groups, although this can be situational as well, for instance when people pick a national team to support during a football match between two nations they identify with, and between which they are in other circumstances not always pushed to choose. In other instances, people may not go as far as making a hard choice between two entities, but will prioritise one over the other, and identify with two groups with different levels of intensity (Diez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001).

In one state spatial identities can also be asymmetrical. In Canada, someone from Quebec may perceive a conflict between his or her Québé-

\textsuperscript{13} This in contradiction with those that see an immediate internal problematic in the handling of more than one identity at the same time, encapsulated in the popularised psychological concept of the ‘identity crisis’. Castells for instance states: “For a given individual, or for a collective actor, there may be a plurality of identities. Yet, such a plurality is a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action” (1997, p.6). I would switch verbs here, in the sense that for a given individual there \textit{is} a plurality of identities, and that this \textit{may} be a source of ‘stress’ or conflict, but that in many instances we are able to ‘flick a switch in our minds’ without much difficulty.
cois and Canadian identities in a way someone from British Columbia does not with his or her English Canadian or British Columbian and Canadian identities. On the other hand, such asymmetries are not fixed, and more correspondence between the spatial identities of in this case Québécois and English Canadians may emerge (Kaplan, 1994). With this context in mind, Keating (2001) has introduced the concept of plurinationalism, referring to the coexistence within a political order of more than one national identity, which is not necessarily symmetrical within that political order, nor as separate parallel national groups, but with multiple national identities. Keating presents this concept of plurinationalism as an answer to political implications of a world where identities, including national ones, are increasingly fluid and pluralistic, and the classic doctrine of sovereignty is becoming more and more untenable. While doing so it includes the concept of nation as well in an adaptation to a new social reality.

2.3 Regional autonomy, regionalism and state responses

The following section focuses on the political autonomy of regions, its different appearances, the processes of distributing and transferring autonomy spatially, and the state, European and global contexts. Because regionalisation is not always implemented as a policy of accommodation of regionalist demands, those concepts are dealt with as separate subjects. The demands of regionalist movements, and possible state responses, are discussed thereafter.

Regional autonomy and the regionalisation of the state

The creation of administrative sub-divisions by the state is an exercise of territoriality par excellence because the political power to organise (state) territory by a central authority is used to construct new territories. Sack notes that the number of autonomous territorial units in the world has declined enormously since prehistoric times. Those autonomous units have also increased in size. At the same time, these fewer and larger autonomous units have become increasingly subdivided and fragmented into varied territorial sub-units (Sack, 1986).

Grigg has argued that regionalisation is similar to classification. Classification groups objects into classes. Moreover, regionalisation, which is understood as the classification of areas, treats regions as areal classes (Grigg, 1965, pp.465-466). In its broadest interpretation, regionalisation can be viewed as a process of region formation. In the context of this research, this is narrowed down to the more precise and most commonly used meaning of the word regionalisation in relation to the formation of administrative regional sub-units of a state. But even this more restricted understanding of regionalisation has been given different interpretations. Regionalisation may describe just the process of dividing a state into regions and the drawing of
boundaries (Van der Jagt, 1983, p.3). However, it often also includes the creation of authorities with certain competencies in those regions. In this sense, regionalisation also refers to the enlargement and empowering of the regional institutions of existing regions. Loughlin even passes over the creation of a division into regions when interpreting regionalisation as 'the regional policies of the state towards the regions' (1993, p.238). What becomes clear, however, is that regionalisation as the creation of sub-units in a state is, in essence, a top-down process. It does not refer to the demands of the population of the region or its agents, but to the actions of the state government or another central authority. This distinguishes regionalisation from regionalism, because regionalism denotes a bottom-up process, ideology or movement (Loughlin, 1993,1999).

If we incorporate those considerations into this research, regionalisation is interpreted as the division of a state's territory, or a part of it, into regions by a central authority, and the subsequent process of the transfer of administrative capabilities and political powers to regional authorities and institutions.

The understanding of regionalisation as a top-down process does not mean that regionalisation cannot be stimulated by demands 'from below', or even from an entity above the state, like the European Union. These demands can be the main impetus for the regionalisation, but there are many dimensions that may call for a process of regionalisation. Sharpe (1993) distinguishes five groups of factors that have an impact on the emergence of a regional level of government. First, there is a 'rational-functional' set of motives. As a result of urbanisation, urban centres and whole metropolitan areas have grown continuously, making existing local government structures inadequate. Furthermore, the expansion of activities of the state during the twentieth century went hand in hand with the growth in responsibilities at local levels of government. The existing fragmented local structures made it hard to execute these tasks effectively. Sharpe presents ideological motives as a second set of motives for regionalisation. Regionalisation as a form of decentralisation is seen as a way of safeguarding democracy as opposed to fascist or totalitarian centralisation. Alternatively, a strong sub-state level of government can be seen as an instrument to defend the equality of the rural and peripheral populations with those living in urban centres. A third group of factors are 'sectional interests'. Political parties, individual politicians and notables, and public bureaucrats may benefit from the creation and enlargement of a regional level and support regionalisation because of this. Fourth, regionalisation may be to the advantage of the political centre. The transfer of responsibilities, and taxation capacities, to the regions, means less expenditure at the central level, which can be claimed as 'tax cuts' in their campaigns. It also means that the central government is no longer directly responsible for tasks that were previously held by the centre. This not only leads to the decentralisation of competencies, but to political risks as well. A
fifth causal factor can be the pressure from regional ethnic nationalism, or regionalism. Then, the accommodation of the claims for autonomy by these regionalists, through the implementation of a policy of regionalisation, is seen as a way of weakening protests and of satisfying the majority in the region (Sharpe, 1993, pp.3-26). This presumption touches the heart of this research, and will be discussed in following sections of this chapter.

Another, more cynical view might be that reforms in the form of regionalisation occur partly because it simply fits the current fashion of government (Loughlin & Peters, 1997, p.42). Whether or not this plays an important role, waves of regionalisation and arguments used during its implementation have been discernible during recent decades. While, in the 1970s and early 1980s, the regionalisation process was mainly inspired by considerations of national integration and modernisation, the strong development of European integration since the mid-1980s have stressed the usefulness of a regional government in both the European and national context (Bullmann, 1997, p.17). Using economic considerations rather than bureaucratic ones, Loughlin and Peters distinguish a first wave between 1953 and 1973, a period of economic expansion and a regional policy as part of macro-economic planning and the territorial dimension of the welfare state. Between 1973 and the early 1980s ‘rolling back the state’ was the adage in these times of economic recession, and regionalisation became included in efforts to improve efficiency. A final period, since the mid-1980s, is characterised by global economic restructuring, European integration and a resulting change of the nature and functions of the state (1997, p.42).

The autonomy continuum

Political regionalisation involves the transfer of power from state level to regional level, a process also encapsulated by the term decentralisation. The diffusion of political power can be approached by focusing on individuals and groups and the access they have to power, or by looking at the distribution of power by studying where power is located spatially. The geographical distribution of power refers to the degree and manner of decentralisation of power within the state to different types of sub-national governments (Pad- dison, 1983, p.5).

'De-centralising' something means 'un-centralising' it and in order to decentralise something, it first has to have a certain measure of centralisation. Thus decentralisation can be regarded as following on from earlier processes of centralisation. These processes of centralisation can usually be traced back to the development of the state. The first centralising measures were taken to ensure reliable taxation by forming a bureaucratic organisation (Rousseau & Zariski, 1987, pp.4-5). Both the absolute state of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and the industrial state were characterised by progressive centralisation of the decision-making system. In particular, national gov-
ernments in industrial states acquired wider powers. Contemporaneous processes such as urbanisation and cultural standardisation accompanied this process of centralisation of polity (Deutsch, 1954, pp.20-24, Paddison, 1983, p.23). The central state obtained more and more powers and responsibilities, thus providing the governing forces at the centre with better and broader control over their citizens.

However, more recently this trend of ongoing centralisation appears to have been reversed, and there seems to have been an increase in decentralisation (Sharpe, 1993). Smith offers a definition of decentralisation:

It is concerned with the extent to which power and authority are dispersed through the geographical hierarchy of the state, and the institutions and processes through which such dispersal occurs. Decentralisation entails the subdivision of the state's territory into smaller areas and the creation of political and administrative institutions in those areas (Smith, 1985, p.1).

A distinction can be made between two main types of decentralisation: territorial decentralisation and functional decentralisation. The former refers to transfers of competencies to a public body with a general assignment within an area, the latter to the transfer of competencies to a public or private body with a specialised assignment (Snellen, 1983, p.34). If decentralisation of a set of specific functions to a number of regions is interpreted as territorial decentralisation, it is clear that territorial decentralisation is the kind of decentralisation that is involved in regionalisation, which is by definition territorial. The concept of functional decentralisation is therefore of less interest to this research.

All transfers of competencies and tasks to a lower spatial level are included in the concept of decentralisation, not only those generally understood as regionalisation. This would make the Jacobin structure of administration relatively decentralised, because it involves a lot of competencies and tasks for the lower levels of administration – the départements and communes in France, where the Jacobin structure originated and was realised most rigorously. However, a distinction is often made between decentralisation and deconcentration - and between centralisation and concentration. Decentralisation then refers to the transfer of powers to decide on local or regional affairs, mostly by a directly elected authority, more or less autonomously, whereas deconcentration is the transfer of powers to representatives at local level, appointed by the central authority to implement its decisions (Vié, 1982, pp.11-12). Whereas decentralisation is associated with decision-making powers in which regional or local governments have some discretion in the interpretation and implementation of the tasks they are responsible for, this discretion is much less in the case of deconcentration and relates to the implementation of decisions from and under close supervision a higher organ
of government (Paddison, 1983, p.28). Mahon argues that the difference between 'administrative decentralisation' and 'political decentralisation' is central to this distinction (Mahon, 1985). Deconcentration involves just the transfer of administrative powers and the regional and local officials are representatives of governing and legislative powers at national level. Decentralisation involves the transfer of both political and administrative powers (Mahon, 1985, pp.50-51, pp.201-206).

Put simply, decentralisation goes further than deconcentration. While deconcentration involves the transfer of power to regional or local organisations still under strict control of the central state's authorities, decentralisation also includes the transfer of some autonomous decision-making powers to regional or local authorities. Central to this is the idea that decentralisation is a process that gives regional and local authorities a higher degree of autonomy. In general terms, autonomy can be defined as 'an organisation's capacity to define and pursue, on an ongoing basis, a politically relevant agenda' (Stone Sweet & Sandholtz, 1998, p.10). This capacity, when used with regard to territorial decentralisation, is linked to a particular territory. It is then the territorial community that carries the autonomy (Loughlin, 2000, p.10), and the territory can be said to 'have' the autonomy. However, just as the relationship between sovereignty and territory in the nation state is built on the connecting link of the people in the territory (Gottmann, 1973, p.4), the people living in the regions form the link between autonomy and the region.

When defined as a capacity, autonomy comes in degrees, and one organisation or territory can have more autonomy than another. This means that the territorial distribution of power in a state can be assessed by locating territories on a spectrum of autonomy (Paddison, 1983, p.29). This may not always be an unambiguous task, because different sub-state territorial levels may have different degrees of autonomy, and within those levels different territories may be placed in different phases on the continuum. In most cases different types of regional administration or government can be regarded as steps or phases in this autonomy continuum. Generally, centralisation means the least regional or local autonomy, followed by deconcentration, decentralisation and federalisation as phases with increasing degrees of autonomy, and finally secession or independent statehood as the highest degree of autonomy a region can obtain.

This only applies in a general sense, as some regions in a federal system may have less autonomy in certain respects than regions in a non-federalised state. Moreover, the capacity of the governments of some regions to pursue their political agendas independently may, in some ways, be greater than some independent states. However, federalisation of territorial autonomy is, to a certain degree, also characterised by the way powers are divided between the state and regional government, and how this is guaranteed (Wheare, 1963).
Whereas the process of decentralisation extends the autonomy of a region beyond the autonomy that is brought about through deconcentration, federalisation takes the process a step further. In a federal state there is no clear dominant state level hierarchy nor a regional level with very restricted powers. This is reflected in Wheare’s definition of the ‘federal principle’ as ‘the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent’ (Wheare, 1963, p.10). The same is true of a more elaborate definition by Graham Smith:

In distinguishing federation from other forms of state organisation most commentators consider it as a decentralised political system possessing a constitutional government in which constituent territorial units are involved in a politics of accommodation. The nature and scale of the division of powers between the centre and the region can be distinguished from other forms of political devolution by virtue of the fact that regional autonomy and representation are not only more devolved but are constitutionally guaranteed. The centre does not have the judicial right to abolish, amend or redefine its territorial units (Smith, 1995, p.7).

Although types of regional government like deconcentration, federalisation and independence do not always fit exactly into the sequenced nature of the scale of autonomy in reality, they can be regarded as different phases in a regionalisation process because they are often presented and regarded as milestones on the path of decentralisation with a certain symbolic value. Establishing an agreement of federalisation is one such event, although the threshold between federalised and not federalised is sometimes not that clear, and the political autonomy of the regional government involved may not change at all. As political decentralisation mostly includes the introduction of some form of democratic representation, mostly through regional or local elections, the introduction of regional elections can also be a clear milestone, again not necessarily related to an increase in autonomy in practice. However, it is not necessary for a decentralising territory to take those steps one at a time in an evolutionary process. Sometimes this is the case, for instance in Belgium which moved in a number of steps from centralisation to federalisation in a couple of decades (Hooghe, 1993). It is possible, however, for the region of a state to jump from a situation of limited deconcentration to full independence without passing through the other phases.

The possibility of asymmetrical regionalisation complicates a classification of a state and its sub-units on a scale of autonomy. This is where some regions receive a larger degree of autonomy than others. A good example is Italy, where peripheral regions such as Sicily, Sardinia, Valle d’Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia have more powers and more
autonomy than the other regions. The United Kingdom could now also be regarded as regionalised at a highly asymmetrical level, with Scotland and Northern Ireland having regional governments with extensive decision-making capacities, Wales having some regional autonomy, and the English regions having no permanent regional political autonomy whatsoever. Often asymmetrical governments are introduced because demands or needs for more autonomy are not equally strong in all regions of the state. Debates on whether or not asymmetry should be desirable (see Keating, 1998c) focus mostly on whether or not making exceptions actually increases the distance between the regions with and without a special position, and whether it generates demands for the same degree of autonomy to be assigned in other regions.

Regionalisation and state traditions

The differences between states in the way they organise their administrative territorial structure and the kind of regional autonomy used is to some degree related to differences in enduring state traditions. Apart from rational considerations of administrative efficiency and conflict resolution, national states also have certain value systems that underpin the structuring of the state and the social and political bases of society in general. These basic values are reflected in the way power is territorially distributed within the state and with which objectives. Those values are largely based on ideological currents and are therefore not fixed for a particular state. Furthermore, the values behind the state structuring of new states may differ considerably from those of stable nation states (Paddison, 1983). Leemans highlighted a number of examples of objectives pursued in the territorial distribution of power of various states in various phases of development, that is national unity, democratic government, local autonomy, administrative efficiency and social and economic development. His model contains all these phases, although they vary substantially in importance and influence. In this model ‘France at the time of Napoleon’ is, for instance, characterised by a very high weight attached to administrative efficiency and national unity, and very little to the other objectives (Leemans, 1970, p.28).

Characteristic basic values cannot just be noted for particular phases of state formation. There are also notable differences between states, in the way the concept of the state is understood, decisions are taken and implemented, state and society relate to each other, and in the way the state is structured territorially. If such features of the state are enduring and characteristic of one or a number of states, it is possible to speak of ‘state traditions’. In this perspective the state is not just viewed as a set of organisations, that is as an actor with goal-oriented activities. This more macroscopical view looks at the state’s organisational configurations and overall patterns of activity which affect political culture and encourage some kinds of group
formation and certain collective political actions, as well as facilitating the raising of certain political issues (Skocpol, 1985).

Loughlin (1993) approaches the way in which states are territorially structured through a number of major state traditions. While concentrating on Europe, Loughlin distinguishes an Anglo-Saxon, a Germanic, a Napoleonic and a Scandinavian tradition or ‘family of states’. This attempt to distil the stable essence from the basic values that underlie the objectives behind state structuring into distinct traditions and groupings of matching states focuses on ‘dominant logics’ in the organisation of social systems and is an illustration of the diversity of institutional forms and policy styles in Western Europe. Features that make those traditions different include the presence of a legal basis for the state, the relations between state and society, and the basis of policy style (Loughlin, 1993, p.231):

Table 2.1 Four state traditions and administrative reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there a legal basis for the “State”</th>
<th>Anglo-Saxon</th>
<th>Germanic</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Scandinavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-society relations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of political organisation</td>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>Organicist</td>
<td>Antagonistic</td>
<td>Organicist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of policy style</td>
<td>Limited federalist</td>
<td>Integral/organic federalist</td>
<td>Jacobin, “one and indivisible”</td>
<td>Decentralised unitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incrementalist “muddling through”</td>
<td>Legal corporatist</td>
<td>Legal technocratic</td>
<td>Consensual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“State power” (US); local government (UK)</td>
<td>Cooperative federalism</td>
<td>Regionalised unitary state</td>
<td>Strong local autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of decentralisation</td>
<td>Political science/sociology</td>
<td>Public law</td>
<td>Public law</td>
<td>Public law (Sweden); organisation theory (Norway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant approach to discipline of public administration</td>
<td>UK; US; Canada; Ireland</td>
<td>Germany; Austria; Netherlands; Spain; Belgium</td>
<td>France; Italy; Portugal; Greece</td>
<td>Sweden; Norway; Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Loughlin, 1993

Loughlin and Peters (1997) link those four identified state traditions to variations in outcomes and interpretations of administrative reform, particularly regionalisation. They assign an important role to the territorial structuring of the state and the way these state traditions help shape the ways in which relations between the state centre and the regions are conceived. This adds to explanations of the existence of different types of territorial organisation of states. The degree and way of decentralising a state are therefore not only influenced by practical considerations but also depend strongly on certain basic values which are behind state structures, values often embedded in discernable state traditions.
Not all features are equally important as regards differentiating between each individual state tradition. While the absence of a legal basis for the state is an important characteristic of the British state tradition, it does not play a role in setting the other traditions apart. The typology used by Loughlin provides the dominant logics of a number of state traditions applied to a particular state (Loughlin, 1993, p.232). It does not take subordinate logics into account. For some states this is less problematic than for others. Certain states are the prime examples of one particular state tradition, both by having stable and clearly distinguishably characteristics, and by having been a clear-cut example for other states to build their state structure on. This is also implied in the naming of the ‘families of states’. Types of states are often named after one country, which is acknowledged as the model for the whole family (Lalenis et al, 2002). France is obviously the foremost ‘French’ state and Germany is the flag-bearer of the Germanic tradition. However, other states contain more features from different state traditions, up to the point where it is difficult to speak of one dominant logic which would result in a ‘hybrid’ state. When focusing on those states, features that are subordinate to the main tradition need to be taken into account and this undermines the simplicity of a simple typology, but also strengthens the applicability for all states concerned.

**Political regionalism, territoriality and control**

The elaboration in section 2.2 of identifications with territorial communities at different spatial scales can immediately be included in analyses of the relations between those coexisting identifications and the possible conflicts. Before we proceed to a discussion of these conflicts, we will focus on an intermediate step between identification with territorial groups, and conflicts between territorial communities and identifications at various scales.

Territorial communities not only identify with a particular territory by claiming that they belong there, but also by laying claim to domains. A domain is a particular place with restrictions on access. According to Van der Wusten, a territorial domain is attached to a nation (Van der Wusten, 2001, p.9). Nations explicitly claim a particular geographic territory instead of merely occupying space (Anderson, 1986, p.117). This can be expressed by statements such as ‘we’ do not only belong ‘here’; ‘here’ is ‘ours’.

Claims for more control over the space that territorial communities occupy differ considerably, and not all communities make such claims. Sack (1986) argues that territoriality can be the most efficient strategy for enforcing control, and power is very often exerted over a specified territory. This is in line with the role of territory in the managing of accessibility to preserve security (Gottmann, 1973, pp.7-9). This strategy of inclusion and exclusion is sometimes spatially congruent with existing group identities which are also based on the inclusion of members (‘we’) and the exclusion of ‘others’. If,
however, there is a group within the larger territory that in the first place has its own identity and does not identify with the rest of the community as a whole, this may lead to disputes over control of territory. This is an expression of the wish to couple a feeling of distinction connected to a particular territory with instruments of power to control what is believed to be its own territory. However, conflicts might also arise if divisions between communities are not that sharp, and conflict over territorial control deals with issues of control over specific topics or degrees of autonomy. When this applies to feelings in a region within a state, those attempts to gain control are known as regionalism. Schobben presents a definition of regionalism as

a term used to describe ideologies or political movements that stress a particular regional identity. It is carried by the inhabitants of a specific area and it is in this sense essentially of 'bottom up' origin. Important is the feeling of togetherness of the inhabitants. ... This feeling can go as far as to cause an attempt to get ‘externally’ a certain measure of autonomy. Then there is a political movement (2000, p.30, translation FS).

Defined like this, the term regionalism is reserved for movements or tendencies carried by the feelings of the population of particular territories. This is something it has in common with other terms which describe expressions of feelings of togetherness such as nationalism.

The French Revolution in 1789 is often referred to as the moment when state and nation were first linked together. However, it is possible to trace back a steady development towards this connection. In the medieval Christian world, a trend developed in which the defence of the faith, the Christian political community, was linked to the defence of one’s ‘fatherland’, by the acceptance of the concept of patria (Gottman, 1973, p.34). However, Kantorowitz (1957) describes how, in the thirteenth century, the use of patria in the defence of the Holy Land was extended with ad defensionem natalis patriae, for the defence of the native fatherland. Thus a communis patria developed and the expression pro patria mori got a new significance, as a basic tenet of nationalism. In the thirteenth century, the patria was the common fatherland of all subjects to the Crown, and loyalty to the fatherland meant loyalty to the monarch. In the eighteenth century, the idea that state sovereignty lay with the ‘people’ instead of with the monarch developed, and was laid down in the American Constitution of 1787. The French Revolution established the idea that the people constitute the nation, which is the fount of sovereignty and state legitimacy. This provided an explicit link between state territory and the nation, and pro patria mori became official policy, written in law (Gottman, 1973).

Gellner’s definition of nationalism reflects this connection between state territory, ethnic or national identity, and political legitimacy:
Nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state ... should not separate the power-holders from the rest (1983, p.1).

Kedourie notes that “national self-determination is, in the final analysis, a determination of the will; and nationalism is, in the first place, a method of teaching the right determination of the will” (Kedourie, 1960, p.81). Nationalism thus also refers to movements, directly based on this theory of nationalism and the nation state. As formulated by Smith, nationalism refers to “an ideological movement aiming to attain or maintain autonomy, unity and identity for a social group which is deemed to constitute a nation” (A.D. Smith, 1991, p.51). There are several other, slightly different, definitions of nationalism as a movement, but most stress the political character of its aims and the incompatibility with other nations and nation states dominated by them. This means that nationalism can be both a sentiment of a nation with its ‘own’ state, and that of a ‘nation without a state’ whose intention is to acquire one of its own. It is this last type of nationalism, sometimes also called ‘regional nationalism’ (e.g. Dekker et al, 2003, Keating, 1988), that conceptually overlaps with regionalism. Both refer to the pursuit of more autonomy for a territorial community and a region that is a part of a state (or of several states). This considerable conceptual overlap of the concepts of regionalism and nationalism is challenged by some, especially in colloquial usage of the terms and in politics. Often a qualitative distinction is made between more advanced nationalisms and movements that are ‘only’ regionalist. This reflects a distinction between both concepts based either on a sharp distinction between the communities the movements represent, a nation and region, or between their aspirations, independent statehood and some degree of autonomy less than independence. As discussed above, the term region can refer to various spatial levels, including that of the nation state, and is therefore

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14 For instance definitions by Breuilly: “The term ‘nationalism’ is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments … a political doctrine built upon three basic assertions: (a) that a nation exists with an explicit and peculiar character; (b) the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values; (c) the nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty” (cited in Williams, 1994, p.27), Minogue: “Nationalism is a political movement which seeks to attain and defend an objective we may call national integrity .. it is a political movement depending on a feeling of collective grievance against foreigners” (cited in Williams, 1994, p.27), or by Kedourie: “Nationalism […] holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government” (Kedourie, 1960, p.9).
not regarded here as incompatible with a nation. Moreover, when using the terms regionalism and nationalism colloquially to describe a single nation, region or state, the maintenance of a clear distinction between both may be practical. However, because the understandings of the concept of nation and nationalism can be very different in different states and nations, colloquial usages differ as well. In the United Kingdom, ‘nation’ almost always refers to Scotland, England and Wales, and ‘region’ to their administrative subdivisions. In France, ‘nation’ refers almost always to the level of the state, and region to its sub-divisions. As a result, in the United Kingdom movements both with and without a clear aspiration to be independent are also labelled as nationalist, whereas in France this term is reserved for those movements that aim to achieve an independent state. It will therefore be difficult to maintain a clear distinction between regionalism and nationalism when discussing movements in different states. With both understood as overlapping concepts, there is a difference in the sense that usually a wider range of autonomy goals is covered by the term regionalism. Because reactions to regionalisation may take many forms, from separatism to demands for more modest autonomy arrangements, this research analyses the dynamics of regionalism, which might overlap with those of nationalism. The following section discusses the claims that are made by regionalist movements, and possible responses of the state.

Regionalist claims, aims, actions and state responses

A key feature of regional is the aim for more regional autonomy, but as autonomy comes in degrees, and in different forms, regionalism can produce different sorts of demands. Several disciplines have produced an even larger number of classifications of regionalist demands (e.g. Coakley, 2003a, pp.7-8, Gurr, 1993, pp.15-23, Mikesell & Murphy, 1991, pp.582-588, Roessingh, 1995, pp.44-45, Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, pp.140-142), and although there are substantial differences between them, some basic comments are applicable.

Coakley (2003a) makes an initial distinction between demands for individual rights and demands for group rights. The former refers to instances when a group demands equality of all citizens within a state. Coakley cites the examples of Catholics in Ireland, at one stage prohibited by law from owning or bequeathing property, from voting and from occupying a whole range of public sector positions, and of serfdom among Estonians and Latvians subjected to their German masters. Such demands for individual rights of equality are to be distinguished from demands for group rights, which paradoxically demand recognition of the separateness and difference of a group. As the removal of formal disabilities and the establishment of the principle of individual equality before law was an essential component of the transition to modern statehood, contemporary regionalism mainly focuses on demands for group rights acknowledging the distinctiveness of the group.
With regard to group demands, in general terms, regional minority demands can have cultural and political components. Sometimes a hierarchical distinction is made between both, when movements demanding cultural rights are regarded as less radical than those demanding political autonomy. Although, in general, this holds ground because most movements with political demands also have cultural demands, it is not necessarily the case because there are a lot of movements that have only cultural demands. For example, political movements may later focus on cultural issues as well in order to further their political case, as in some instances cultural demands may be more ‘radical’ than some political demands.

If one examines the different demands for political autonomy, it is possible to come up with different degrees of what Rokkan and Urwin (1983) have called ‘stages of escalation of peripheral aims’. In this way Rokkan and Urwin draw up a categorisation that broadly differentiates, on a scale of ‘escalation’, between full integration, cultural demands aimed at the preservation and accentuation of the distinct identity of the group, and demands for different degrees of political autonomy for the region, climaxing in full independence (separatism) or transfer to a neighbouring state (irredentism) (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, p.140-142). In such broad terms this is a useful distinction, but in practice most movements combine a number of different demands that would fall into different categories. Moreover, it is hard to determine the ferocity of a region’s demands because not all inhabitants of the region have the same opinion, the same link to their region, and the same desired outcome, and there may be several regionalist movements, or different factions of movements, with different demands. Rokkan and Urwin (1983) also make a distinction between regionalists’ long-term objective and the final outcome of the process of transfers of autonomy, and intermediate strategic aims. Although it is certainly true that in a democracy regionalist political actors, like most political parties, tend to adapt their message to their potential voters, the value of pointing out a desired ‘final outcome’ should not be exaggerated. Not all regionalist movements have a clear picture of a ‘final outcome’, and demands are not always reflections of a long-term strategy to reach a distant goal, but often pragmatic objectives designed to reach feasible next steps. Moreover, just like strategic short-term goals, ‘final objectives’ may change over time, and when a final outcome is actually realised, this may be a reason to decide that the outcome in question was not that final after all, and that further goals can be formulated.

Regionalist movements may use different actions to reach their goals and make their demands heard. A first distinction of means to pursue their goal is that between violent and democratic action. There are a number of regionalist movements that do use violence and, while the use of violence is restricted to a very small part of the total regional community, it may have
large impacts on both the region and the whole state. Regular use of violence effectively puts the issue on the political agenda, both within the region and within the whole state. The IRA and ETA certainly keep the governments in London and Madrid occupied with finding a solution. Logically, it is the most extreme demands that are brought to people’s attention using violent means, mostly by those pressing for full independence. The presence of extralegal and violent regionalist organisations is, however, not always a reliable measure of the strength of regionalism within a region. It is always a small section of the population that resorts to violent means, and mostly there are more moderate regionalist movements alongside to the most extreme ones. The use of violence may also lead a large part of the population to turn against the regionalist arguments. Absence of violence is no sign of weakness, as is shown for instance in Scotland, where regionalist arguments are widely supported, but pursued only through democratic means. In a democracy, the founding of a political party is a less radical way of putting forward regionalist demands and of mobilising support. Competing at political elections can be carried out either by the regionalist party itself or in alliance with another party. Regionalist parties may present candidates at all elections, or choose to participate only in regional or only in national elections, for ideological, financial or strategic reasons. They may also choose to avoid elections at all, as long as those do not produce a regional government with the desired level of autonomy. The strategy used depends highly on electoral system, but also on the organisation and aims of the regionalist movement.

Regionalists direct their demands mostly at the central state government because, in most cases, decisions on transfers of autonomy from one level of government to another are still taken at state level. There are several ways in which the state can react. Apart from ignoring the demands, basically the state’s response can consist either of a strategy of coercion or accommodation. Extreme coercive responses are those that attempt to eradicate ethnic differences: genocide, expulsion and regulated population exchange (Roessingh, 1995, p.47). Harsh measures can also be aimed at the most active militants, in the form of the death penalty, long imprisonment or torture. There are, however, also subtler responses which are aimed at reducing ethnic demands. The state may use propaganda to discredit the regionalists, or employ censorship. For instance, it was for a time illegal in the United Kingdom and Ireland to broadcast interviews on television and radio with members of Irish republican organisations (Storey, 2001, p.105). Active denial of the existence of ethnic minority groups also fits into this category. For example, according to Lijphart, a French representative stated at the League of Nations that, ‘France had not signed any Minorities Treaty because she had no minorities. To find minorities in France, they would have to be created in imagination’ (cited in Lijphart, 1977, p.54). Another strategy is that of nation-building. As the regional identity is that of an imagined community, which can emerge or disappear, this strategy tries to tone down the feeling of re-
gional distinctiveness by stressing the commonalities within the nation state. Stimulating the feeling of national unity and trivialising internal differences through assimilation reduces the support for regionalists who stress internal differences (Coakley, 2003b, pp.296-298). Nation-building often takes the form of an ever-present phenomenon (Billig, 1995), and is not always a direct response to regionalist demands. Direct responses that involve the application of strategies of assimilation include a prohibition or restriction of the usage of regional languages or of the practice of regionally concentrated religions.

By contrast, the state can also pursue a policy of accommodation of regionalist claims. These may or may not involve political autonomy for the region. Granting some cultural autonomy, or generally allowing the usage of regional language, are strategies of accommodation. A good example of an accommodation strategy is the institutionalisation of religious differences in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, resulting in 'verzuiling'. Initially, in the eighteenth century, Catholics and Jews were treated as second-class citizens with a view to creating a uniform Calvinist nation. However, religious heterogeneity persisted. This was regarded as a threat for the unity of the Dutch nation, and instead of elimination or marginalisation, religious differences were accommodated and institutionalised, thus strengthening national cohesion (Knippenberg, 1999, Knippenberg & De Pater, 1988). Such measures can be taken either using the non-territorial or personal principle or the territorial principle. The personal principle is based on the voluntary choice of everyone throughout the territory. This may be adequate in territories with ethnically mixed populations and may avoid problems of demarcation of the territories of ethnic communities (Markusse, 2001, pp.250-251). However, regionalist demands are nearly always explicitly territorial, and policies of accommodation are therefore mostly territorial. This especially applies when political autonomy is granted, since a regional government or administration is inherently territorially based. The most far-reaching form is to allow secession of the region. There are several less drastic stages involving the transfer of political autonomy to the region. The different degrees of autonomy that can be given to regions, from decentralisation to independence, have been discussed above as an option for guaranteeing those rights legally in a federal arrangement, and to transfer them in different measures to different parts of the state in an asymmetrical arrangement.

There are differences between states in the way they respond to regionalist demands, and the form of regional autonomy they prefer, as described in section 2.3.3 related to enduring state traditions. Those differences between states do not only account for different approaches to regional autonomy, but also to the willingness to recognise regional identities and cultural diversity. Those differences can be quite significant, and source for different understandings of terms like 'nation', 'region', 'people' and 'country'. For instance, the United Kingdom is characterised by a relatively high toler-
ance and recognition of cultural diversity. This is reflected in a common recognition of Scotland and Wales as nations. In contrast, in France the recognition of Corsica as nation or ‘people’ is highly controversial, and in no way formally recognised. The same applies for the formal recognition of cultural diversity within the state and the avoidance of ethnicity or identity based criteria in its approach to citizens. This applies to perspectives on cultural pluralism in a broader sense as well, in the approach of immigrants for instance, with a British emphasis on ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘race relations’, and the French highlighting of republicanism and citoyenneté (Favell, 2003, p.13). More ambiguous is the approach for instance in Spain, where Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia are recognised as ‘nationalities’, and debates are held over whether they should be recognised as nations. Such differences between states in approaches to regional identities and cultural diversity are not necessarily reflected in higher or lower degrees of autonomy. The United Kingdom for instance has long been one of the most centralised states of Europe, despite its tolerance towards plurality and the recognition of Scotland and Wales as nations (Keating, 2001, pp.102-123). However, when regional autonomy was introduced, the recognition of cultural diversity and nationhood of Scotland and Wales played an important role in the design of the British territorial structure.

2.4 Analysing regionalism after regionalisation

The two sections above discussed regionalism and regionalisation, largely along lines of what could be called their respective building stones, a feeling of identity and autonomy. It has been shown that a regional identity is based on the construction of social groups through separation, that is of ‘we’ and the ‘other’. Such groups are ‘imagined’ as a community, and this process is aided by the use of symbols which are often used to define the group objectively. A strong feeling of regional identity, thought of as ‘we’, and a weaker identification with the rest of the population of the state and the nation state as such, portrayed as the ‘other’, can be the foundation for the expression of dissatisfaction with the distribution of political power between state and region. As mentioned above, one of the responses of the state to regionalism is accommodation through regionalisation. This is based on the creation of administrative or political regions and a transfer of autonomy. Autonomy comes in degrees, and different steps in the process of regionalisation involve, in the first place, some form of autonomy, although some milestones, such as federation or independence are thresholds in this process. The next section first discusses the existing literature relating to explanations of the emergence and development of regionalism and nationalism. This is followed by an analytical framework for the analysis of regionalism once regionalisation has been proposed.
Explanations of regionalism

Several theories and models have been designed to explain the emergence of regionalism. For some time, regional or sub-state identities and movements were seen as out of date and a faint protest against the inevitable triumph of the nation state. Over time, the scale of territorial communities had shown a consistent growth, and it was only logical to think that this growth would just continue, with states and bigger entities dominating. This led Gellner to note that, 'one of the obvious features of the modern world is the increase in the scale of social political units' (Gellner, 1978, p.133). Deutsch’s modernisation theory supports this thought. It claims that the world consists of cultural communities bound by relative barriers of communication, and not by one particular ingredient of nationality, like language. Nations are the direct results of major changes in the possibilities for social communication. Modernisation and the increasing role of the state made it possible to nationalise this type of communication. Through social mobilisation, cultural standardisation and growing political participation, the nation state became the basis for the dominant cultural community in the whole state-territory (Deutsch, 1953). This explanation of the rise of nationalism is part of a modernist view on nationalism. Although different authors have accentuated different aspects, such as the emergence of uniform educational infrastructures (Gellner, 1983), bureaucratisation and the standardisation of languages (Hobsbawm, 1990), or the spread of ‘print-capitalism’ (Anderson, 1991), the common idea is that nationalism is a historically recent phenomenon linking politics and culture, and emerging in a context of industrialisation and an expansion of state infrastructure.

This is mostly pitted against a primordialist view on nationalism, which holds that culture and social structure are not engendered by modernity, but that nations emerge from existing ethnic communities (e.g. Connor, 1978, Smith, 1986). Sometimes a division is made between more ‘radical’ primordialists who insist on the prehistoric and biological or ‘natural’ origins of ethnic communities, a perennialist view which accepts the prehistorical but not the biological origins of ethnic communities, and an ethno-symbolist current that accepts an influence of modernity in linking culture and politics and the transformation of ethnies into nations (Özkirimli, 2000, Smith, 1998). Their commonality is, however, the formulation of a critique of modernist explanations of nationalism, through the insistence on the importance of the survival of ethnic ties in the constitution and cohesiveness of nations.

Although the debate between modernists and primordialists is mainly concerned with the historic emergence of nationalism, it also led to different views on the survival or resurgence of regionalism or regional nationalism. It is incorporated into the modernisation theory by regarding regionalism as a result of differences in access to the developing standardised central high culture and deficiencies in the assimilation of a group into the
national political community (Deutsch, 1953). Another way of borrowing from modernism is through its focus on the role of state infrastructures in the construction of national community. The survival or introduction of such infrastructures in non-state territories, albeit with similar functions, could influence the construction of regional communities, and the development of regional ‘high cultures’, to use Gellner’s terminology, for instance through a regionalised education (cf. Gellner, 1983) or media (cf. Anderson, 1991) structure. Primordialism, on the other hand, sees regionalism simply as the struggle of ethnic groups which have existed for a long time and which are examples of the incompleteness of the self-determination process, with ‘people becoming cognizant of historic and contemporary self-determination movements’ as one possible explanation for their resurgence. Connor cites as a common demand, ‘if that people has a self-evident and inalienable right of national self-determination, then why not we?’ (Connor, 1978, p.29). The shortcomings of this approach are of course that it does not offer an explanation for the emergence of a community, or ‘people’, it does not explain why a certain group is referred to as ‘we’, but simply takes them as a given.

‘Uneven development theories’ have another view on the existence of tension between centre and periphery within a state. This approach holds that regionalism is linked to the struggle of a peripheral group to free itself from structures of economic oppression, and a concealed class conflict. Michael Hechter’s (1975, 1985) theory of ‘internal colonialism’ explains nationalism as the existence of a hierarchical and cultural division of labour. This occurs when a peripheral area of the state, with a population that is culturally different from the people in the core area of the state, is economically and politically controlled from this core area, resembling a colonial situation. This induces individuals either to leave the peripheral group, or to realise that they share vital interests with its members and thereby adopt a nationalist identity. This is based on the premise that solidarity groups are formed by individuals sharing material interest. Others, like Nairn (1977), approach regionalism as a peripheral bourgeois-led movement. Uneven development between centre and periphery leads elites in the peripheries, which are dominated from the core-area of the state, to mobilise popular support to defend the backward region from uneven development.

However, not all regions with active regionalist movements can be characterised as relatively deprived. This has lead to a completely contrasting theory of regionalism as stemming from relative economic advancement, not deprivation. This hypothesis suggests that regionalism is more likely in regions that are economically better off than other parts of the state (e.g. Gouvevitch, 1979, Harvie, 1994a). It argues that a ‘go-it-alone’ strategy is simply more credible in economically more developed regions, which could survive on their own economically. However, while not all cases of regionalism are poor regions, they are not all wealthy either. Rokkan and Urwin (1983) propose an approach that is intended to overcome that problem.
Their ‘centre-periphery model’ suggests that tension between centre and periphery can be the result of a territorial imbalance in any or a combination of three major social dimensions – economy, culture and politics. They note that it is not always a weak peripheral position on one of these dimensions that triggers a conflict. Sometimes a relatively strong position can be a reason for protest, if the relationship with the centre on the other dimensions does not reflect this position. Different combinations of economical, cultural and political power relationships lead to different potentialities of conflict. Similarly, Gurr (1994) focuses on the intensity of ‘competition and inequalities’ among groups as an explanation for regionalist conflict.

By focusing heavily on economic considerations, many of those explanations have made themselves vulnerable to criticism which exposes not only that they do not explain all cases, but also that they disregard other factors. However, apart from being examples of economic determinism, a major flaw of many of those theories is that the existence of an ethnic community is taken for granted. This applies to many other explanations of regionalism that have been identified. It is similar to examining the conditions which caused the ‘people’ to revolt, rather than focussing on the crucial issue of establishing which conditions define the ‘people’ and identify them as ‘people’. If we examine what triggers a cultural group to become active without paying attention to how this happens and the circumstances in which that cultural group has come to be differentiated from others, we are bound to leave many cases unexplained. However, to be fair, our task here is less ambitious than to provide an all-encompassing theory of the occurrence of regionalism. Our focus is on the effect of one particular aspect, regional autonomy, on regionalism.

Towards an analytical framework

The general drift of those who propose regionalisation as an effective means to accommodate regionalism is formulated by Bogdanor (1999, p.194), who states that if there are powerful centrifugal forces at work, ‘it might well be that the best way to strengthen national unity is to give way to them a little so as the better to disarm them’. Numerous studies similarly present regional autonomy as an attractive way to resolve ethnoterritorial conflicts (e.g. Gurr, 1994, Lapidoth, 1997, McGarry & O’Leary, 1993, Rudolph & Thompson, 1985). The belief is that this ‘giving way a little’ may cause a split within the regionalist camp, resulting in the isolation of extremists. It is also argued that people who support regionalism are motivated (as well) by a remoteness and lack of responsiveness, and that this is addressed by regionalisation through the subsidiarity principle (Bogdanor, 1999, Lapidoth, 1997). However, in more general terms, the feeling is that most people will be satisfied by a compromise that involves the recognition of regional distinctiveness.
Billig (1995) has introduced the term ‘banal nationalism’, to point at the constant and habitual reproduction of established nations in everyday life, that is ‘flagging the homeland daily’. He contrasts this with ‘hot’ nationalism, which refers to the efforts made to achieve territorial autonomy or independence, a force which creates nation states or which threatens the stability of existing states, and is ‘extraordinary, politically charged, and emotionally driven’ (p.44). This distinction of a ‘banal’ everyday-life nationalism has been used to clarify the accommodating and pacifying effect of regionalisation. When she discusses Catalanism, Cramer (2000) argues that the introduction of regional autonomy can appease large sections of the regional population, and replace a ‘hot nationalism’ based on a fight for independence with a ‘banal nationalism’ which is geared towards the maintenance of a cultural regional identity, albeit no longer with separatist ambitions. In that case, ‘banal nationalism’ has taken over ‘too soon, when the nation is still subordinate to a larger state’ (Cramer, 2000, p.152). The question is, of course, whether ‘banal’ and ‘hot’ nationalism are mutually exclusive conditions of nations or regions, with ‘banal nationalism’ simply taking over from ‘hot nationalism’ after the establishment of a nation state, and sometimes ‘too soon’, or whether ‘banal’ nationalism refers to the maintenance and construction of territorial identities to which the extraordinary, politically charged, and emotionally driven outbursts of ‘hot nationalisms’ appeal. I tend to agree with the latter. Billig’s contribution to the understanding of nationalism lies in focusing our attention on the institutionalised, habitual, everyday production and reproduction of national identity. In other words, the nation as imagined community is imagined on a daily basis, before and after the establishment of a nation state.

However, it is true that the moment of regionalisation is, like the attainment of statehood, a watershed in the life of a regionalist political project. Van der Wusten and Knippenberg (2001) stress the recursive dimension of ethnic politics. Stages in which the conditions for conflict are set, in which action takes place, and in which re-arrangements are made or actors repositioned, may be followed by a new episode. In this way, the outcome of one cycle shapes the starting conditions of a new round of regionalist conflict. Hooghe (1992) also points to the cyclical pattern of the appearance and development of regionalism. Protest is triggered either by new reasons for grievance for the social group, or when new opportunities are present. This is followed by mobilisation of the population. A retreat from collective action and disintegration of the protesting organisation occurs ‘when their immediate demands are satisfied, when they become tired of costs and risks or when it becomes too dangerous’ (p.35). This concludes the cycle, but the regionalist movement has been altered permanently: ‘New types of participants may have been socialized, new actors may have emerged, new themes may have been introduced and new forms of collective action may have come more or less institutionalised’ (p.35). At the same time, the moment of re-
gionalisation marks the conclusion and outcome of one cycle, and the starting point of a new episode, with altered conditions and in a changed arena.

With a view to understanding regionalist politics, Van der Wusten and Knippenberg (2001) suggest an analytical separation between, on the one hand, the construction and maintenance of the imagined community, ‘a struggle for the contents of the hearts and minds of a following and an appreciation of the result of its projection on the real world’ (p.275) and, on the other hand, the politicisation and mobilisation of the members of the imagined community to acquire support for the political project of obtaining an increased level of regional autonomy

If this distinction is applied, regionalism (and nationalism) is no longer seen solely as the expression of political demands of a territorial community which existence is taken for granted, nor as an inevitable outcome of the construction of an imagined community. As the politicisation builds on the identity construction, both are related parts of regionalism, although they can be analysed separately, and both can be influenced by the introduction of regional autonomy.

Regionalisation and the establishment of regional identities

The metropolis of Greater Holland, or Rim City, as the case may be, are not entities that appeal to the imagination of their inhabitants. They may well possess some economic and social geographic cohesion, but there is nothing which symbolizes or incorporates this cohesion. There is no object, no symbol or metaphor, no narrative that stands for this metropolitan agglomeration. There is no Greater Holland or Rim City hero, statesman or martyr. And this is directly connected to the former point; there is no administrative unit that is co-terminous with this urban area. ... Greater Holland or Rim City will not come to life in this form, not before some administrative entity will shape the actual economic and social-geographic structure, and the inhabitants will be aware that their personal destinies are in many

15 This is similar to the distinction made by Orridge & Williams (1982) between ‘pre-conditions’ as the foundations of national identity, and ‘triggering factors’ of autonomist nationalism, although their focus is more on objective preconditions than the construction of regional identity as a process. On the basis of similar objectives, Lecours (2000) and Máiz (2003) distinguished three dimensions. Lecours focuses heavily on socio-economic interests by adding an intermediate category of ‘interest definition’ to a first process of creation, transformation and crystallisation of ethnic identities, and a third process of the politicisation and mobilisation of ethnic identities. Máiz names three prerequisites for the analysis of a nation-building process: ethnic preconditions as the outcome of a process of selection, filtering and invention, a political opportunity structure, and political mobilisation. The latter two dimensions are in fact a sub-division of the regionalist politicisation and mobilisation and the possibilities to do so successfully.

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ways bound up with the outcomes of city politics (De Swaan, 1993, pp.81-82).

It should be clear that it is not impossible for a territory to come to life and be a part of concerns over people’s destinies without being an administrative entity. However, what Abram de Swaan argues is that administrative and political entities control a range of symbolic resources which can evoke or maintain a sense of identification and that it involves a process of inclusion and exclusion, in which the region and its population are contrasted with other regions and territories at other spatial levels, most notably the central state. In this way, the drawing of administrative and political boundaries, where they did not exist before, or the deepening of existing boundaries by attributing to them the function of separating administrative and political authorities from each other, facilitates the drawing of boundaries between social groups, or even the creation of new ones. This is similar to what Bourdieu says when discussing the construction of regional identities:

_Tout le monde s'accorde pour observer que les 'régions' découpées en fonction de différents critères concevables (langue, habitat, façons culturelles, etc.) ne coïncident jamais parfaitement. Mais ce n'est pas tout: la 'réalité', en ce cas, est sociale de part en part et les plus 'naturelles' des classifications s'appuyant sur des traits qui n'ont rien de naturel et qui sont pour une grande part le produit d'une imposition arbitraire, c'est-à-dire d'un état antérieur du rapport de forces dans le champ des luttes pour la délimitation légitime. La frontière, ce produit d'un acte juridique de délimitation, produit la différence culturelle autant qu'elle en est le produit. … L'acte de catégorisation, lorsqu'il parvient à se faire reconnaître ou qu'il est exercé par une autorité reconnue, exercé par soi pouvoir: les catégories 'ethniques' ou 'régionales', comme les catégories de parenté, instituent une réalité en usant du pouvoir de révélation et de construction exercé par l'objectivation dans de discours_16 (Bourdieu, 1980, p.66).

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16 ‘Everyone agrees that the ‘regions’ divided up in function of different conceivable criteria (language, habitat, cultural manners, etc.) never coincide perfectly. But that is not all: the ‘reality’, in this case, is social through and through and the most ‘natural’ classifications are based on features that have nothing natural and that are, to a great extent, the product of an arbitrary imposition, that is to say of a previous state of the relations of power in the field of struggles over the legitimate delimitation. The frontier, that product of a legal act of delimitation, produces cultural difference as much as it is produced by it. … The act of categorisation, when it attains recognition or when it is exercised by a recognised authority, exercise by itself power: the ‘ethnic’ or ‘regional’ categories, like the categories of kinship, institute a reality by using the power of revelation and construction exercised by objectivation in discourse’ (translation FS).
Thus, the construction of administrative and political territories is, in itself, an act of social and cultural boundary making, although it also creates an infrastructure that can be used for the ‘revelation’ and ‘construction’ of regional identities. With regard to the influence of political institutions on the creation and transformation of territorial identities, Lecours (2000, 2001) refers, to an ‘independent’ effect of political institutional development, which unites populations that have not previously formed territorial communities and which provide increased political significance to those that are well established. Most significantly, it limits the potential of regional identities for fluidity and gives them a certain sense of irreversibility. On the other hand, it introduces and structures political elite competition conducive of the further development of regional identities. This should, however, not be regarded as an inevitable outcome, but as a possible result with different features in different places.

Regionalisation might, in this way, have an impact on regional identity construction, although some analytical tools are required to comprehend the relationships between administrative regionalisation and the dynamics of a region as a social category. Anssi Paasi (1986, 1991, 1996) provides a basis for the analysis of regional identity construction by conceptualising it as an institutionalisation process. According to Paasi

The institutionalization of a region is a socio-spatial process during which some territorial unit emerges as a part of a society and becomes established and clearly identified in different spheres of social action and social consciousness (1986, p.121).

This is not restricted to territorial communities of a particular size, or to ‘new’ regions, but also to the development, and eventual disappearance, of relatively well-established regional identities. Based on this interpretation of the institutionalisation of regions, Paasi distinguishes four simultaneous ‘stages’ or ‘processes’ during which the region takes on a territorial, a symbolic, and an institutional ‘shape’, and becomes established as part of a regional system and regional consciousness. The territorial dimension refers to the establishment of regional boundaries, not just formal, but also in social practice, and its identification as a distinct unit, inside and outside the region. The symbolic dimension refers to the production and reproduction of symbolic significance of the region, the ‘content’ of regional identification, through the use of territorial symbols. Linked to the symbolic ‘shape’ of the region is the emergence of regional institutions spreading and maintaining the regional image, those organisations and institutions that carry out the communication of territorial identities. Finally, Paasi distinguishes a fourth dimension of the continuation of this institutionalisation process once the region has become ‘established’. These stages do not necessarily follow each other neatly in this order, and are instead interrelated. This implies that the
development of the territorial, symbolic and institutional dimensions of the institutionalisation process continue to characterise the construction and maintenance of regional identities once they have come established, and this is the fourth dimension. Thus, the first three dimensions can be used as analytical categories for the dynamics of regional identity formation of new or not yet fully established regions, if a regional identity ever reaches such a final state, and of those which already have more established ‘shapes’.

Of course the term institutionalisation does not only refer to formal institutions and organisations, but they are often part of the institutionalisation process. The administrative construction of a region through regionalisation is, in fact, one of the clearest and most concrete social practices by which a region can be produced and manifest itself. It entails the designation of more fixed boundaries with an increased level of irreversibility over the territorial shape of the region through the act of formal demarcation. These boundaries may be completely new, or more concrete ones in the case of the territorial institutionalisation of a regional identity with a less established and defined territory. Alternatively, in the case of boundaries which have already been identified and recognised, this may mean their confirmation in formal practice or as a potential source of conflict if formal boundaries do not coincide with the ones already established. This potential for conflict is particularly high if different boundaries are intended to demarcate the territory of the same imagined community. In this respect the usage of similar territorial symbols, most of all the same name, will be of particular importance.

The creation of regional administrations also means the creation of institutions that create, adapt and spread symbols of the region, and not only its name. As symbolic environments tend to narrowly fit institutional ones, the introduction of regional administrative institutions means increased opportunities to produce and reproduce the region in language and images (Dijink & Mamadouh, 2003). This may consist simply of the adoption of existing images, their adaptation to fit a more formal role, or the creation of completely new images related only to regional administration.

Thirdly, the creation of regional administrations can lead to the emergence of other types of regional institutions, either through policies and subsidies, or as unintended consequences, for instance in media, education or civic society. These can, in turn, be sources for the usage of regional symbols, and the confirmation of the territorial shape of the region.

The politicisation of regional identities and mobilisation of support

I believe that federalism might create a temporary stability, a framework in which further demands can be articulated and additional rights can be granted, but its is unlikely to be a once and for all stable, durable solution (Linz, 1997, p.22).
As Juan Linz postulates, federalisation, or in a broader sense regionalisation, does not automatically mean an immediate end to regionalist politics, but an alteration of the context in which political demands are formulated. It brings about a change in the framework in which demands are articulated and political support is mobilised. Regionalisation therefore alters the external conditions in which regionalist politicians pursue their political project. This may have a direct impact on their objectives and the chance of realising them successfully, or through an impact on their internal resources, such as funding, organisation and leadership, and on opportunities for the mobilisation of support. In the social movement literature the concept of political opportunity structures has been introduced to analyse the factors that further or restrain the capacity of movements to engage in their activities (Kitschelt, 1986).

Tarrow (1994, pp.86-89) mentions four types of opportunities: access to participation and the gaining of partial access to power, instability of ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and divisions among elites. Such factors are not all influenced to the same degree by regionalisation, but they do all focus on changes in political opportunities. Another factor is the strength of the state, interpreted by Máiž (2003a) to include the degree of decentralisation, where a more centralised state attracts the incorporation of actors into the centre, and decentralisation provides opportunities for political action at decentralised units. Regionalisation forms a major change to the political infrastructure, particularly at regional level. Much of the literature focuses on political opportunity structures related to protest movements, but regionalist politics cannot always be seen as such. For instance, Linz (1997) also mentions the importance of the presence of a regional government as an opportunity for regionalist parties to actually control regional government, and through it have access to patronage to build up a party machine. Regionalist movements do not just aim to influence politics as outsiders, but can also be incorporated into the established political arena, sometimes at state level, but much more easily at regional level. In this way the region, by developing the characteristics of central government at a lower spatial scale, can become a base from which to challenge the central government at state level itself. The opportunities to influence policies and mobilise support is then also related to the presence of a political arena at regional level. Keating (1997) talks in this respect about regions as political spaces, when they provide “an arena for political debate, a frame for judging issues and proposals, and a space recognized by actors as the level where decisions may legitimately be taken” (p.390). Although the existence of a political space does not necessarily correspond with the existence of a regional government, in most cases the introduction of a regional level of government will stimulate the appreciation of a region as a political space in its own right. According to Keating (1997), the constitution of a political space depends on a sense of identity, the presence of a regionally adapted party system, an electoral sys-
tem focusing the debate on regional priorities, and the existence of regional media.

Apart from resources provided by political contexts and access to a political arena, Kitschelt (1986) mentions the possibility of a ‘demonstration effect’ as one of a number of aspects of political opportunity structures. Others have also highlighted this ‘domino theory’ or contagiousness of ethnic demands (see Lijphart, 1977, pp.53-64, Van der Wusten & Knippenberg, 2001, p.279). Moreno (2001b) describes this as ‘ethnoterritorial mimesis’, the way certain pioneering regions imitate the powers, institutions and symbols of the state, while others in turn use those front-running regions as references. This may lead to the politicisation of regional identities with hitherto no regionalist ambitions at all. This is particularly true in the case of asymmetrical regionalisation, where some regions can refer to the privileged status of others. The concrete example set by one region may be a factor stimulating action by an initially passive regional community.

Many statements have therefore been made which suggest that regional identity may be stimulated by regionalisation. The extensive discussion of regional identity and of feelings of distinctiveness being at the root of regionalism earlier in this chapter, support those points of view that suggest that regionalisation does not make regionalism redundant, but forces it to move on to another episode. Observations on the cyclical nature of regionalist politics (Hooghe, 1992, Van der Wusten & Knippenberg, 2001) and on the many different ‘stages of escalation’ available between modest regionalisation and secession (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983) underline this possibility. A few other statements that support developments in this direction have also been mentioned. On the other hand, it is also claimed that regionalists, or at least some of their supporters, are happy with regionalisation and that the movement will disintegrate or disappear.

On the one hand there are those hypotheses that state that regionalisation accommodates political regionalism. In the first place, the introduction of regional autonomy and a debate on new objectives might bring about a split within the regionalist movements, isolating extremist and in general weakening the movement. Second, regionalisation is supposed to address problems that lie behind support for regionalism, like remoteness and a lack of responsiveness from the state government. Third, regionalisation as a compromise solution might satisfy most of those that support regionalism and make them focus on other issues. In contrast, there have been hypotheses put forward how in various ways regionalisation might actually strengthen regionalism. First, the introduction of political regions might unite populations and create new communities, or give previously existing ones a political significance and more of a sense of irreversibility. Second, regional identifications might also be strengthened by regionalisation because it creates regional administrative entities with control over symbolic resources to produce and reproduce regional communities, and political actors with an
interest in furthering the development of regional identities. Thirdly, regionalisation is regarded to influence the political opportunity structure of regionalist movements, through changed access to participation and to political power related to the development of the region as a political space. Finally, the introduction of regional autonomy, especially in asymmetrical structures may create a demonstration effect where some regions wish to resemble and imitate the powers, institutions and symbols of the state, or of other, more advanced regions.

This research aims to provide some insight into the direction in which regionalist movements develop after implementation of regionalisation policies. It does not intend to judge which response by the state to regionalism is preferable. Those policies may, in the first place, be implemented to accommodate regionalist movements, but this is not necessarily the case. Such decisions may have been based on other arguments. Just as other considerations may have motivated decision takers at state level, there are always issues that will preoccupy inhabitants and voters in the regions. Obviously, regionalist movements are only one kind of political expression within a state and within a region (Urwin, 1982a, p.424). Politicisation of the regional identity and mobilisation of support occurs mostly in a situation of rivalry with other projects. While people may value regionalist points of view, they may also have other priorities that call for their attention and support. On the one hand, this notion stresses the value of even rather small percentages of electoral support. People may find it too great a step to vote for a single-issue party, as a regionalist party often is perceived, and election results may not reflect the full sympathy for regionalist ideas. On the other hand, this keeps us from overrating the impact of regionalist movements when focusing on this specific aspect of regional politics.