10 Comparisons

The previous chapters presented an overview of the development of regionalism after regionalisation in Spain, France and the United Kingdom separately, and in regional case-studies of Galicia, Brittany and Wales. To find out more about the differences in development between them and the impact of differences in state tradition between the three countries and the differences in regional autonomy and territorial administrative systems in the three countries, this chapter makes a comparison of the findings between the three states, and a comparison between the three regional case-studies.

10.1 Comparing states

Territorial management traditions

Spain, France and the United Kingdom have different histories when it comes to managing ethnic conflicts and regional identities. In France the 1789 revolution had provided the circumstances for a radical break with provincial privileges and later, in the 19th Century, an effective nation-building strategy. This was built on relative consensus concerning the values of national unity and the need to systematically address centrifugal threats to that national identity. This was combined with a state idea in which the integrity of the Hexagone as state territory played an important role and, which could not easily adapt to the loss of any part of that indivisible territory by external or internal threats. This is combined with a strong wish to maintain the principle of equality of citizens and refusals to award privileges to groups of citizens based on criteria such as religion, language or ethnicity. As a result the French approach has consistently been one aimed at the denial or assimilation of regional ethnic or cultural communities and regional identifications that were deemed a threat to national unity. In a way the introduction of directly elected regional councils in 1986 constituted a historical break with this approach. However, in terms of regional autonomy and recognition of regional differentiations compared to the other two states in this research, it was a very modest step.

By contrast, the United Kingdom has not had a missionary nation-building ideology (Keating, 1988, p.71). There may have been a degree of denigration and restrictive actions against certain aspects such as the Welsh language, but, on the whole, policies were characterised more by practical neglect rather than active suppression. It was mostly the influx of English migrants and economic and social integration into England that caused the decline of the Welsh language in Southern Wales. At the same time, anom-
lies like the preservation of Scottish legal institutions, including separate bank notes, were accepted without much resistance, and the British state adapted fairly smoothly to the loss of Ireland. Although different governments have applied different policies, the relatively benign and pragmatic acceptance of regional differences, including differentiated treatments of groups based on those differences, has been a constant. This is illustrated by the fact that, for some time now, the election manifestos of all parties have been published in Welsh. Even though virtually everyone in Wales can read English, all parties took the pragmatic approach that publication in Welsh might yield more votes, and none thought that this might be a step bringing national unity in jeopardy. Against this background, the introduction of regional autonomy in Scotland, Wales and London, involving considerable differences as regards competencies which reflected public demand, and the choice not to push devolution through in England because of a lack of public demand, has been a continuation of this pragmatic approach.

In Spain the history of the management of territorial ethnic conflicts has again been different. In contrast to the United Kingdom, the repression of centrifugal regional cultures and tendencies has been central to many of the regimes that have ruled Spain over the past centuries. However, policies to make the territory of the state congruent with that of the nation have been much less successful than in France, resulting in a much more fragmented Spain, and in politicised regionalism as a more pressing issue. In contrast to the United Kingdom, changes have not been implemented gradually, but through revolution and radical changes of regime. Unlike in France, there was not one revolution that set a stable and sustainable territorial structure and approach used by all subsequent regimes, but a series of revolutions and complete reversals of policies. Whereas some regimes, like that of Franco, were adamantly repressive towards regional identities and all that was deemed a threat to national unity, other governments like the Second Republic and the governments after Franco, actively adopted an accommodating stance towards regionalist demands. As a result the values of regional autonomy and a recognition of regional differentiations are a central part of the present Spanish state.

The significant differences in approaches towards questions of national unity, cultural diversity and the response to regionalist demands should not obscure the fact that, in all three states, heated debates on those issues keep figuring prominently on the political agenda, with persistent differences between the political movements. In the positions and developments, similar patterns and significant differences can be distinguished between Spain, France and the United Kingdom, and those will be discussed below. However, the differences in state tradition and approach towards regionalism are considerable, and have produced different modes of regionalisation. The effects of those differences are also going to be discussed in this chapter.
Subjective regional identities, or 'regional consciousness' exists and in all regions of Spain, France and the United Kingdom, nearly all inhabitants at least identify to a certain degree with their administrative region. However, we should not immediately read too much into this, as a number of the surveys presented in the previous chapters show that respondents tend to identify with almost all the territories featured in the questions, especially those smaller in size and appreciated as 'closer', like local and regional territories. The only territory included in surveys to which many do not feel any sort of attachment is a 'far' and controversial area like 'Europe'. What this shows is that it is more useful to consider expressions about regional identifications in comparison to each other.

Because of the differences in questions and because of our research questions, it is more useful to compare balances between regional and national identification than regional identities in absolute terms. In fact, in none of the three countries is 'balance' the right term, as regional and national identities are for the largest part overlapping identities. In all regions a majority of the inhabitants combines a regional consciousness with a national consciousness. This includes regions with high profile regionalist conflicts like the Basque Country, Scotland and Corsica. There are, however, a number of differences, not only between regions within states, but also between states. In Spain and France, an exclusive regional identity is a marginal position, although in France national identities are generally more important, and in Spain regional and national identities are more or less equally important. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, a considerable section of the population only identifies itself as Scottish, Welsh or English, and not as British. The same does not apply to identification with the English regions. However, when examining Wales, Scotland and England, the United Kingdom seems to be a more fragmented state in terms of regional identifications than France and Spain. However, for Scotland and Wales this was already the case before devolution, and it is more interesting to look at developments since the respective moments of regionalisation.

When distinguishing general trends in regional and national identifications since regionalisation, a similar pattern emerges. In Spain and France little changed as regards the strengths of regional and national identities. If anything, there were increases in the regional consciousness equal to or combined with, a national identity, but not at the cost of national identities. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, that is in England Scotland and Wales, there has been an increase in the percentages of those who do consider themselves Scottish, Welsh or English, but no longer British. In Scotland this was already a mainstream position, but in Wales and England in particular Welsh and English exclusive, non-British, identities have emerged since regionalisation. This increased tension between regional and national
identities and a discovery that regional identities are incompatible with national ones is something that did not happen to the same degree in France and Spain, and not at all on a state level aggregate. As described in chapter 8, regionalisation, or devolution in the United Kingdom highlighted the multinational character of the state, and the awareness of this in England as well. The preceding debate was held in terms of awarding autonomy to peripheral nations. Initially only the territories recognised as the United Kingdom's constituent nations, that is Wales, Scotland (and Northern Ireland) were assigned regional autonomy, while London followed later, and the English regions are still waiting for the change to take place. As a result, regionalisation can be perceived as something based on regional identities and regionalist demands. In France and Spain regionalist demands from Corsica, Brittany, Catalonia and the Basque Country also played an important role, but regional autonomy was also awarded to all other regions in one fell swoop.

Political regionalism

Whereas, for the most part, regional consciousnesses, as expressed in the surveys used here, have remained relatively stable since regionalisation, there have been more significant changes in public opinions on regional autonomy. Some trends are even universal for all states. The clearest example is the quick acceptance of regional autonomy after it is introduced, even though it had been controversial beforehand, and even though the desire for autonomy had been fulfilled. In Spain the preference for a return to a centralised state has dropped in popularity, and has continued to decrease gradually until now less than 10% of the population wants a return to a situation without regionalautonomies. The same applies in Scotland and Wales, where opposition against any form of devolution dropped almost immediately after the moment of regionalisation. In the case of France, no data is available for the moment before regionalisation, and opinions on regionalisation have not changed much over time since. However, a very large proportion of the population are positive about regionalisation. This means that most people accepted regional government as an arrangement after it was introduced, despite it having been controversial or unpopular before. This indicates that regional autonomy, which is not the same as a particular regional government with a particular political colour, can gain legitimacy rather quickly. The English regions were, of course, not included in the wave of regionalisation, and are still positive about the status quo.

The trends in the regions that did receive regional autonomy indicate that the increased legitimacy does not just consist of a shift from preferences for one level of status quo to a preference for a new status quo. In some regions, there was primarily a shift from opposition to regionalisation to an acceptance and satisfaction with the arrangement that was introduced. In other instances, most clearly in both Scotland and Wales, there was a shift
towards preferences for more regional autonomy. Remarkably, in France, where each region received the same level of relatively modest degrees of autonomy, the differences between regions as regards desire for more autonomy are small. In almost all regions, a majority are in favour of further regionalisation. In Spain and the United Kingdom, where regional autonomies are already at a higher level, the differences between regions are larger. In Spain in particular there are huge differences, with majority support for independence or increased autonomy in some regions and the same for the status quo in others. In total, there is considerable support for secession in just a few regions, namely Scotland, Catalonia and the Basque Country. There has, however, not been a real increase in the demand for independence since regionalisation in those regions in which it now has some support and in which it was already relatively popular before regionalisation. So, while regional autonomy gained legitimacy rather quickly after its introduction, including shifts towards demands for further autonomy, predictions that regionalisation would stimulate separatism seem to have been premature. However, the strength of regionalism, and separatism, is not just expressed through public opinions but also, and perhaps more importantly, through the capacities of political movements to mobilise support.

In no region in Spain, France or the United Kingdom has regionalisation had the effect of weakening regionalist political parties in terms of election results. In some regions, regionalism remained stable, in others it became stronger, and in others regionalist parties emerged after regionalisation where there had been none before. This applies to all three states. Of course, there are huge differences in the kinds of voting percentages regionalist parties obtain. If we compare the results at regional elections, which in terms of electoral system are more alike in the three states than the national elections, the pattern is different in the three states. In France, there is a large number of regionalist parties, in a large number of regions, but all have achieved unimpressive elections results, except Corsica where the regionalist parties combined manage to obtain around 15-20% of the votes. In Spain a large number of regions have regionalist parties that have obtained similar percentage scores, and much more in some regions. In Great Britain, both Scottish and Welsh regionalists have also scored higher percentages. However, there are no regionalist parties in England apart from in Cornwall. Nevertheless, these differences existed to a degree before regionalisation, and it is more useful to look at developments after regionalisation.

In Spain participation at elections and the results of regionalist parties exploded after regionalisation in the early 1980s. In the regions where regionalism was already present before, the share of the vote increased after regionalisation, and sometimes grew quite spectacularly, as in the Canary Islands and Galicia. It was only in Andalusia that the number of votes remained at the level they had been before regionalisation. One aspect that has been at least as remarkable is the emergence of regionalist parties in every
single region of Spain, although in some cases they only achieved marginal election results. However, in other cases where regionalism was a completely new phenomenon, like in Cantabria, a regionalist party emerged as a serious competitor at regional level. Of course there are significant differences in the autonomy goals of those parties, and here we lump separatist and more moderate regionalists together. Nevertheless, regionalisation did stimulate the emergence of political parties which prioritised regional interests almost everywhere. In France a large number of new regionalist parties also emerged after regionalisation. On the other hand, existing parties started to participate at elections more regularly. However, as mentioned before, all remained marginal with the exception of Corsican parties. Only in a few cases – Alsace, Brittany, Corsica, Provence – did the administrative regions more or less coincide territorially with the regionalists’ ‘homelands’. All other regionalist parties defend territories which are considerably smaller or larger than the administrative regions. In no administrative region where there had not been a regionalist party before regionalisation, did one emerge afterwards. This was in contrast with developments in Spain. In Great Britain, like in France, no new regionalist parties emerged in regions without regionalism before 1999. This is not surprising because, after all, no regional elections were introduced in the English regions apart from in London. In Scotland and Wales, regionalism increased in strength after regionalisation, in the first place because of the higher results and more prominent position for the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru in the Scottish and Welsh elections. At general elections the SNP even became weaker, but because of the much better results at regional elections, and the emergence of new parties, like the Scottish Socialist Party, which had strong regionalist elements in their programmes, it would be hard to argue that regionalism in Scotland weakened after devolution.

One of the general developments, not just in Scotland and Wales, but in all regions studied here, is that regionalist parties do much better at regional elections than at elections for national parliaments in Madrid, Paris or London. Some regionalist parties, in France and Spain, do not participate in general elections, because they are not interested in the national political arena, because they do not foresee results that are worth it, or because they do not have the resources. However the threshold for participation and success at regional elections is smaller. Others, that do participate at both levels, do considerably and consistently better at regional elections. This is such a universal outcome that general rules must apply which are not specific to particular regions. The reasons may be differential abstention or dual voting (Pallarés & Keating, 2003). Higher abstention at regional elections, with more tenacious regionalist voters, would not explain the whole difference in most cases. Dual voting, choosing a state-wide party at state-wide elections and a regionalist party at regional elections does provide an explanation, but can be based on a variety of motivations. Voters may consider smaller parties
because the elections are perceived as less important, voters may express their discontent with state-wide governments by voting for another party at regional elections mid-term, and voters may judge regional parties as being better adapted to the regional arena and the defence of regional interests than state-wide parties. Moreover, voters might consider voting for regionalist parties because they are serious candidates for government positions at regional level, while nationally this is usually not the case. An examination of the reasons applicable to all regions would be going too far. What is clear, however, is that the introduction of regional elections has provided regionalist parties with fruitful hunting grounds. As a result, the regionalist parties that remained stable at national elections, often became stronger overall through their more competitive performance at regional elections. This is particularly the case in Scotland, Wales, Corsica, and a number of Spanish regions. In a number of regions in Spain, but recently in Brittany as well, regionalisation gave regionalist parties an opportunity to assume government responsibilities in regional governments. This has not yet happened in Scotland and Wales. However, there too, as in many other regions of Spain, regionalist parties have become more serious competitors with at least a chance of obtaining government positions at some stage. Before then they were only able to send a few representatives to the parliaments in their state capitals without having much chance of joining governing coalitions. So, the presence of regional elections and regional governments gave many regionalist parties the opportunity to become more competitive.

One region which lost prominence among regions with regionalist demands after regionalisation was Occitania in France, although it must be said that this region had never been very successful at elections before then either. The quest for an autonomous Occitania as a whole was not helped by the introduction, and acceptance as a general model, of the smaller administrative regions. As a result, there has been some fragmentation of the Occitan movement. However, in other instances where the territories of administrative regions did not match the territorial claims of regionalists, regionalist protest has been stimulated, for instance in Savoy or Cornwall. In those cases, especially in France where historical or cultural considerations were less important when drawing the regional boundaries, regionalisation provided regionalists with a new political project. The demand to acquire a ‘region of their own’, just like the other regions, was used to mobilise support, but did not usually lead to many votes being won. According to the examples in this research this kind of demand to become an administrative region is more prevalent in regions that are smaller than the average region and part of a larger administrative region, Cornwall or Savoy for example. Relatively much larger regions like Occitania are less successful in this or the movement gets fragmented. Another example of this pattern would be Padania, much larger than the ‘standard’ Italian regions, and even after some Lega
success, the entities used in the federalisation of Italy, enforced by the Lega Nord, have remained the smaller, standard regions.

10.2 Comparing regions

Regional institutionalisation

The three regions analysed here, Galicia, Brittany and Wales, were not created from scratch by regionalisation. All three already had a long history of regional institutionalisation and perceptions of a territorial, symbolic, institutional shape and regional consciousness already existed before regionalisation. To different degrees regionalisation has added to the maintenance and alteration of those regional identities, and introduced new aspects in the form of regional governments, elections and political debates.

In Spain and the United Kingdom, taking account of the location of historical boundaries, or allowing regions to form territories in accordance with existing territorial conceptions of ‘Galicia’ and ‘Wales’, produced administrative regional boundaries that coincided with the regional boundaries preferred by regionalists. As a result, there has been no political activity related to the territorial extent of those regions. In France, historical considerations played a minor role in establishing the regional boundaries, and Brittany ‘lost’ a département, including its historical capital. The functioning in practice for two decades of the new administrative territorial division has not in any way replaced the idea of the historical territory of Brittany, and both the political demands and public preferences for a Brittany of five départements have not faded away. It appears that rather than weakening the regionalist movement, the division of historical Brittany has provided the regionalist movement with an extra rallying point.

In all three regions, existing regional symbols, like a flag, were adopted by the new regional institutions. A completely new logo was designed only in Brittany, without historical references and in contrast to the reproduction of the red dragon in the Welsh Assemblies’ logos. However, even in Brittany regional governments started to fly the older black-and-white Breton flag. Still, the initial preference for a new logo and flag reflected the wish to separate the regional administrative institutions from the image of historical Brittany and regionalism, whereas this link of historical continuity was focused on keenly in Galicia and Wales. In this way, regional administrative institutions have become instruments for the reproduction of regional symbols. Apart from the reinforcement of the role of the region’s capital as a symbol of the region, and the emergence of the regional president, or first minister, as representative outside the region, regionalisation did not add many new elements to the existing regional iconographies.

One element which is often stressed in relation to regionalism and ethnic differences, and which binds those three regions is that they all 'have'
their 'own' language. In Galicia there is Gallego, in Wales Welsh, and in Brittany Breton, and Gallo as well. However, the role of those languages in the regionalist conflict and as regional symbols, and the approach to them by regional authorities is very different. All three main regional languages – Gallo is another story – are generally excepted and appreciated as regional symbols, and can be used by regionalist movements to stress regional distinctiveness. Indeed, for the three main regionalist parties, namely the Bloque Nacionalista Galego, Union Démocratique Bretonne and Plaid Cymru, the advance or defence of the regional language is a key political goal. In all three regions the regional language is one of the most important symbols of regional distinctiveness. This is not necessarily related to the actual usage and knowledge of the language. Whereas in Galicia almost everyone has some knowledge of Gallego, Welsh and Breton are spoken by small minorities. And spatially, the knowledge of Gallego is more or less evenly spread over the region, whereas the usage of Welsh and Breton in everyday life is concentrated in small rural areas. These differences are not related to the usage of the regional language as an element that distinguishes the region. Wales and Brittany are presented as distinctive because of their language just as much as Galicia is. The differences in actual usage do, however, explain differences in usage of the regional language in regional political and administrative institutions and linguistic policies, but only partly. In Galicia, Gallego is used as a first language by Galician politicians of all parties in debates, statements and manifestos, and by the regional administration in its communication with citizens. In both Wales and Brittany the situation is different, but mainly national legislation has caused the differences between the two. Whereas the Welsh administration and political arena is, at least formally, completely bilingual, the usage of Breton in regional administrative publications and debates is negligible. Similarly, the regional administrations’ policies on the regional language do not reflect the actual day-to-day usage of the language either. In Galicia and Wales, education in Gallego and Welsh is compulsory for particular age groups, whereas in Brittany it is not. Whereas regional authorities in all three regions claim that they protect the regional language, there are significant differences. In Galicia and Wales there is an aim, although not always drastically pursued in practice, to create a bilingual region and stimulate the use of the regional language in everyday life. In Brittany linguistic policies are directed more towards preventing the disappearance of Breton and towards its protection as part of the region’s heritage. Nevertheless, in all three regions regionalisation meant the presence of a government more dedicated to linguistic policies than national governments previously used to be.

Regional identifications compared with national identification in Galicia, Brittany and Wales are markedly different (see table 10.1). In Wales, the percentage of those that would not describe themselves as British at all is relatively large, whereas in Galicia and Brittany only a very small group does not consider itself to be Spanish or French at all. This is connected to the
support for independence, as can be seen by a comparison with table 10.2 (while noting that the figure there for Brittany indicates support for 'autonomie', not for full independence). This is to be expected, as mostly only those that have no or hardly any attachment to the state as a whole, will go as far as to support secession. However, as the election results have shown, the demands for autonomy are not directly translated into election results of regionalist parties, because both Galician and Welsh regionalist obtained good election results and, until very recently, both demanded an extension of regional autonomy and full recognition of their region's status as a nation, although this was not concretely expressed as independence. This also means that those who do not share the final long term autonomy objective of regionalist political parties vote for them, especially during regional elections.

Table 10.1 Regional and national identities in Galicia, Brittany and Wales, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Galicia, 2002</th>
<th>Brittany, 2001</th>
<th>Wales, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galician/Breton/Welsh, not Spanish/French/British</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Galician/Breton/Welsh than Spanish/French/British</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Galician/Breton/Welsh and Spanish/French/British</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Spanish/French/British than Galician/Breton/Welsh</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish/French/British, not Galician/Breton/Welsh</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Political space

One of the main elements of regionalisation has been the introduction of directly elected regional assemblies, and therefore of regional elections. Those come with a spin-off of regional election campaigns, regional candidates and regional manifestos, and focus attention on regional politics. However, the presence of regional elections does not always result in a separate regional political arena, or political space, and sometimes regional elections remain stuck as second-order elections. On the other hand, distinct political spaces sometimes emerge or persist without political elections at that level. Indeed, after regionalisation and the introduction of direct elections, Galicia, Brittany and Wales developed separate political spaces to different degrees.

Those differences cannot be directly explained by differences in electoral systems, because the electoral systems for regional elections in those three regions are remarkably similar. All three use a system of proportional representation based on rather large constituencies (provincias in Galicia, départements in Brittany, and regions in Wales), although in Wales this
is a mixed system which includes smaller single member constituencies. However, whereas in Galicia and Wales regional elections developed into political events with their own regional topics, personalities and stakes, regional interests and agendas in Brittany have competed with national and departmental ones. In Galicia and Wales, national political heavyweights ‘help’ in regional election campaigns with visits, and the unpopularity of a national government does not help the election results of its party at regional elections although, on the whole, Galician and Welsh elections are regional events. In Brittany, regional elections and considerations of national dimensions dominate and the elections are, to a large degree, mid-term tests of national governments. At the same time, campaigns are characterised by the discussion and defence of the interests of the départements almost as much as those of the region as a whole. The latter was reduced with the introduction in 2004 of region-wide proportional representation, which shows that electoral systems do matter.

One important explanation for the differences between Galicia and Wales on the one hand and Brittany on the other hand is the timing of elections. In France all regional elections are held at the same moment, making it an important national event. In Galicia regional elections are held at a different moment than in other Spanish regions, and in Wales they are only held at the same time as Scottish elections, making them important regional events, which are either followed or ignored by the rest of the country. It should be noted that most of the other Spanish regions elect their regional parliaments at the same time, and those regional elections are much greater events and exude a national resonance as a popularity test for the government in Madrid. The fact that regional councils in France have relatively few powers, and legislative powers and ambitions have remained in Paris also has an impact on the lack of development of regional elections in France as independent important events. However, the competition from another spatial level, namely the départements, has had an impact as well. Regionalisation has meant that the regional councils received more powers and regional elections were introduced. However, at the same time, the powers of the départements were also extended and they kept their direct elections, that is the cantonales. The departmental councils remained an important administrative level, and the regions were simply added as a new extra administrative level. In Galicia and Wales there are no similar other administrative territories at meso level which compete with the region. As a result, the constituencies remained only that, whereas in Brittany the existence of départements as constituencies at regional elections and as important administrative territories in their own right, facilitated their ‘intrusion’ into regional election campaigns. One important element in this was the lack of regionalisation of the party system.

A regionalised party system and organisation is not just a sign of the emergence of a regional political space, but also a factor that contributed to its development. More independent regional parties put more effort into fo-
cusing political debates on regional issues and interests than national parties do. Even before regionalisation, the parties that did well differed from the national pattern in all three regions: centre-right domination in Galicia, Labour hegemony in Wales, and a relatively strong position of the centre-right with a centrist and Christian-democrat accent in Brittany. However, after regionalisation, a distinct party system developed, namely a three party system in which the Partido Popular, PSOE and BNG continued to be the only significant parties, and a four party system with Labour as the largest, and Plaid Cymru as the second party in Wales. In Brittany the pattern remained much the same. However, a development which was at least as significant was the development and regionalisation of party organisations. Territorially, the region developed into the main level of party organisation below state level in Galicia and Wales. All state-wide parties developed relatively autonomous regional organisations, responsible for regional manifestos and policy, but also as main organisational building blocks of the state-wide parties. The Galician and Welsh sections of the PP, PSOE, Labour, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats all adopted a name that expressed their relative independence. With large numbers of full-time elected politicians in the regional assemblies, and additional regional party headquarters, they developed a relatively mature regionalised party organisation. In Brittany this did not happen. With the introduction of regional elections regional party sections were on paper organised by the main state-wide parties, but those remained ad hoc conferences to prepare particular regional elections or meetings of regional politicians. The key organisational territories at meso level continued to be the départements as before, with the exception of Les Verts, which emerged as a party at more or less the same time as regionalisation. The other state-wide parties stuck to their organisation in départements, and nothing so much as regional headquarters emerged. An organisation such as the PS’s BREIS was influential, but only as a policy discussion platform and did not have much organisational or infrastructural capacity. One element that has been an obstacle to the regionalisation of the French party system has been the system of cumul des mandats, the combination of political elected positions, which in that form does not exist in Spain and the United Kingdom. As most regional councillors are also mayor, municipal councillor, departmental councillor, or national député, regional interests might be represented through this system. However, there is less encouragement for the development of levels of administration that present an independent image, organisation and sets of policy preferences, which sometimes strategically go against national proposals. However, this is just one aspect of the multi-layered administrative territorial structure in France, part of one national political space, which stands in contrast to the development of strongly profiled and diverging regional political arenas in Spain and the United Kingdom.

One instrument in the development of a regional political space is the existence and popularity of regional media, and their dedication to re-
porting on regional politics. Regional media are present in all three regions, but between Galicia, Brittany and Wales there are significant differences in their popularity, focus on regional politics and their territorial focus. In Galicia, regional media, both newspapers and regional television, are very popular, pay lots of attention to regional politics, and focus on the same territory as the administrative region Galicia. In Brittany, the regional newspapers are by far the most popular as well, but those, as well as regional television, focus on other meso-level territories like the département and ‘Grand-Ouest’ more than on Brittany. The approach has hardly ever been to report on the workings of the Breton regional council as regional politics. In Wales, newspapers and television stations with a focus on Wales and attention for regional politics are certainly available, only are not very popular among the inhabitants of Wales. These differences have had an impact on the development of their regions as political spaces, and especially on the connection between regional political arena and regional citizens. There has been an impact of regionalisation, directly and indirectly, on the development of regional media as well. In the first place, regional governments have directly funded, or even founded, regional media. This is especially the case with regional television stations. In Brittany the regional council provides some funding of France 3 Ouest, while in Galicia TVG was initiated completely by the regional government. The Galician Xunta even subsidises the regional language daily newspaper Galicia Hoxe. In Wales, S4C already existed and is funded by the UK government. These differences seem highly related to which policy fields are transferred, and how much freedom regional authorities have in spending their money. Indirectly, regionalisation has also changed the regional media. Regionalisation may stimulate the founding of regional media, for instance as happened with the, unsuccessful, introduction of Welsh editions of British tabloid newspapers. A much clearer change has been the effect on the content of reporting, and the increased attention after regionalisation for the region as political arena, and regional administrators as political actors. This happened in Galicia and Wales, but not in Brittany, because of the lack of regional media with a principally Breton focus, and because of the infrequency of political debates of the regional council, with just a couple of plenary sessions per year.

*Political regionalism*

Like regional identities, preferences for regional autonomy among the population differ between Galicia, Brittany and Wales. Unfortunately, the people in Brittany were not asked about their support for full independence, but this is most likely a very small group. In Wales this demand has more public support than in the other regions, but remarkably, the return to the centralised state and abolishment of regional autonomy as well. With a very low support for this option in Brittany, there seems to be some relationship between the
degree of autonomy and the opposition against regional autonomy, with more opposition against more far-reaching autonomy arrangements. This can, however, not be proven by the data. The topic of this study is the development of those preferences after regionalisation, and in that case a similarity between all three regions is the drop in support for a centralised state.

Table 10.2 Preferences for regional autonomy in Galicia, Brittany and Wales, %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Galicia, 2002</th>
<th>Brittany, 2001</th>
<th>Wales, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence/autonomy</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase regional autonomy further</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain present level of regional autonomy</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised state without regional autonomy</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/NA</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2002, Cole, Jones et al., 2004.

a In Brittany people were not asked for their support for independence, which was presupposed to be very low, but instead whether Brittany should ‘become autonomous’, considered to be thought of as an almost similarly large step in France.

Theories about the development of regionalism after regionalisation propose that regionalism either fades away, because most voters are satisfied with the regional autonomy obtained and the regionalist movement becomes redundant because it served its purpose, or that regionalism will grow because of the more favourable political opportunity structure offered by regional elections and the emergence of stronger and more exclusive regional identities. Neither of those two contrasting paths was followed completely in all three regions. In terms of election results, regionalism became stronger in Galicia and Wales, while it more or less stagnated in Brittany. The main growth of electoral regionalism in Galicia and Wales happened in the form of much better election results at regional elections than previously at national elections; BNG and Plaid Cymru found a platform where they could become serious competitors of the main Spanish and British parties. This means it was indeed a better political opportunity structure that allowed them to become bigger parties.

What did not happen was the falling apart of the regionalist movement, and its weakening because of splits between radicals and moderates. In all three regions the introduction of regional autonomy inspired internal debates within the regionalist parties, and in all three cases extremists left the party to form their own movement. However, those splinter groups disappeared, did not participate at elections, turned to violent actions, or remained marginal, while the main regionalist parties were not affected. In Brittany and Wales the UDB and Plaid Cymru remained the main regionalist party, and its status as such became even more clear cut. In Galicia, regionalisation led to a
gradual process of amalgamation in which The BNG remained the dominant regionalist party.

These internal discussions did inspire changes of policies and strategies. After regionalisation regionalist parties were confronted with the choice of either to keep campaigning primarily for further autonomy, and thus against the present regional autonomy arrangement, or to adapt to the new situation and defend the regional interest within the new democratic regional political arena. Although neither option excludes the other, the internal debates were fought along those lines.

The outcomes in terms of strategy and ideology adaptations were similar in all three cases, opting for adaptation of strategies and objectives to the new situation of regional autonomy. Only in Brittany was there no change to the autonomy goal of the main regionalist party, the UDB, and the ideological moderations of that party were influenced by considerations other than those of regionalisation. Different strategies were tried out at regional elections with, different types of electoral coalitions, but without any major change of strategy or autonomy objective. In Galicia and Wales the BNG and Plaid Cymru both opted to make an effort to become more respectable and mainstream parties after regionalisation, that could be entrusted with the responsibilities of regional government. Previously government positions had never been realistic, regional elections and regional governments made this a more realistic option. Both the BNG and Plaid Cymru shifted the emphasis from being an outside pressure group to being a more mainstream political party competing for government positions. To do so they chose to extend their voter potential by adapting and moderating their views. Neither really changed their regional autonomy goals initially, but put more emphasis on intermediate goals, like changes to the autonomy statute or the introduction of full legislative powers for the regional Assembly. This led to the adaptation of the existing autonomy arrangement as a realistic next step being added to more long-term regionalist goals. As shown by surveys, those intermediate demands could count on considerable public support, and much more than the more radical goals had previously generated. Nothing happened along these lines in Brittany. Regionalisation was still a modest step, combined with decentralisation towards the départements, and insufficient for the UDB to reconsider its autonomy goal. And no Breton political arena emerged in which the UDB could become a much more mature party than before. Instead it remained very much a party that relied on activities like demonstrations and publications to put pressure on policy makers.

One rhetoric element that was used in all three regions was the comparison with other, more advanced regions in terms or autonomy, to argue for obtaining the same arrangement. However, whereas in Brittany the examples were mostly international ones, outside France, and in the case of Galicia and especially Wales there were also examples from within the same state were available. Asymmetrical autonomy arrangements in Spain and the
United Kingdom had created a situation in which Galician regionalists could stress the need to keep being included in the ‘elite’ group of historical nationalities – the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia – while those in Wales could challenge the fairness of not being treated the same as Scotland. This proved a very persuasive and attractive argument, and focused the political agenda on a next step of autonomy. In Brittany it was deemed too risky to point to Corsica, which was still strongly associated with violent terrorism, and the UDB no longer strives for parity with Corsica, and so this issue was never seriously debated as a flaw.

In one way the development of Plaid Cymru and BNG’s strategies did not develop in parallel. Whereas both initially chose for a moderation of their political message, Plaid Cymru chose to make full independence its ultimate autonomy objective four years after regionalisation. This step was taken after election results were perceived as disappointing, in an attempt to appease a discontented membership, not as a strategy to obtain more votes. Adopting independence as a goal can be seen as radicalisation, but in other ways the moderation to adapt to the new Welsh political arena and obtain more votes remained in place, reflecting the internal tensions between impatient core supporters and those who preferred the approach of gradually expanding influence through the Welsh Assembly. Similar tensions exist within the BNG, but continuous electoral growth or the novelty of government participation kept most people happy with the strategy of moderation.

One remarkable development after regionalisation in all three regions, but one which again was much stronger in Galicia and Wales than in Brittany, was the adoption of regionalist discourses by the regional sections of state-wide political parties. In Brittany this was mostly restricted to the adoption of the Gwenn-ha-du flag and other Breton symbols and the publication of manifestoes and statements in support of the ‘reunification’ of Brittany or decentralisation. In Galicia and Wales the regional sections of the PP, PSOE, Labour and the Conservatives started to emphasis their dedication to regional interests and identities, and the fact that their party differed from its national counterpart. This was a reaction to the need to adapt themselves to the requirements of regional elections, where regional interests had to be defended, and the presentation of a more Welsh or more Galician image was chosen as a way to convince voters they could be trusted with defending the interests of the region, if need be against those of the national government. In some cases this also involved the adoption of elements of regionalist discourses, including demands for more regional autonomy. An element specific to Wales in this debate has been the contrasting opinions on further autonomy between Welsh MPs and Welsh AMs. Wales has a relatively large number of seats in Westminster, and this institutionalised overrepresentation would most likely end if Wales were to acquire autonomy similar to Scotland. Furthermore, there has been a more general discussion on what has become known as the ‘West Lothian question’. Legislative powers for Scotland, and
Wales, and not for England or English regions, can result in awkward situations in the Westminster Parliament. Neither overrepresentation, nor the presence of legislative powers in some regions and not in others are issues that affect France and Spain.

In all three states the conservative centre-right parties (PP, RPR/UMP, Conservatives) have generally been the most persistent defenders of national unity and centralisation, whereas the social-democrat centre-left parties (PSOE, PS, Labour) have been more accommodating as regards regional autonomy. This general pattern is mirrored in all three regions. The centre-right parties have kept national unity as a basis, although they have combined it, to different degrees, with regional and even regionalist discourses. Most internal debates on this issue have occurred within the centre-left parties, in all three regions. There has always been a tension between striving for socio-economic and legal equality of all citizens within the state, and the wish to accommodate, not crush, cultural differences and demands for regional autonomy. Because of different state traditions, these debates focus on different topics in the different states, and the adherence to equality is much stronger in France than in post-Franco Spain and pragmatic Britain. However, in all three cases the tensions between state-wide equality and cultural diversity are clearest within the social-democrat parties. This debate is related to economic differences between regions. In Galicia, a relatively poor region, socialist President Emilio Pérez Touriño has to balance the establishment of a Spain as 'nation of nations' with a defence of interregional financial solidarity. The same applies to considerations relating to the promotion of Welsh nationhood and political autonomy, and the regional funding system and its disadvantages for relatively regions such as Wales. In Brittany this is less of an issue, and because regional administrations have much smaller budgets there is less room for the redistribution of wealth or the augmentation of interregional differences through regional administration.

10.3 Conclusion

Before doing empirical research, the entities to be studied need to be selected, and a choice for particular cases may influence the result of the research. Here, the three states were selected because of their pronounced differences in state traditions. This resulted in clear differences in the method of regionalisation, and clear differences in the effects on regionalism, which can partly be traced back to those differences in state tradition and regionalisation. The choice of Galicia, Brittany and Wales as regional cases has had an impact on the conclusions that can be made from this research. A choice for regions with more advanced regionalist politics, such as Scotland, Corsica and the Basque Country would have shed a different light on the development of regionalism. Because of a number of factors, such as large differences in the development of regionalism before the moment of regionalisa-
tion, or the use or not of violent methods by regionalist movements, would have made a comparison between those three regions more difficult. A choice for more ‘artificial’ regions without any regionalism before regionalisation would have produced a different kind of research, and would have made answering the main research questions more difficult. Looking back, the three regions chosen have offered a relatively good opportunity to study the effects of regionalisation on regionalism specific for the states they are part of, and facilitated a relatively useful comparison between the three regions. At the same time, the inclusion of all regions in the chapters of Spain, France and the United Kingdom as a whole, offered some insight in the developments in other regions.

Despite the differences between Spain, France and the United Kingdom and differences in regional autonomy arrangement, there have been a number of similarities in the way in which regionalism developed. First of all, regionalisation was quickly accepted by most former opponents, both among politicians and in public opinion. At the same time, support for further autonomy increased in many cases, which means a shift took place in the preferences for the level of autonomy regions should have after regionalisation. In all cases regional identities were combined by most people with national identities, although both remained relatively stable after regionalisation. Also, regionalist parties have obtained better election results at regional elections than national elections, and their voting percentages have gone either up or remained stable. However, there have been a number of different developments as well, especially if we look in more detail at the development of political parties at the regional level.

It appears that the emergence of regional political space has been a critical factor. The regional case studies show that the development of a distinct regional political arena, and the reactions of political parties to regionalisation, can be explained to some degree through differences in regionalisation, related to different state traditions. This comprised of differences in levels of regional autonomy, degrees of asymmetry in autonomy between regions, the relations between different levels of administration, and the usage of historical and cultural criteria for the rationalisation and spatial demarcation of regional autonomies. The most remarkable trend in regional identities, the increase of exclusive, non-British, Scottish, Welsh and English identifications, which did not happen in France or Spain, can be explained through the strongly asymmetrical form of regionalisation in the United Kingdom, in which regional autonomy became something of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, thus emphasising the plurinational character of the state. Particularly the persistence of the départements as administrative and democratic entities, and the relatively restricted decision-making powers of regional authorities in France explain the differences in development of regional political arenas in Galicia and Wales, and in Brittany. In Wales and Galicia they provided an incentive and opportunity for regionalist parties to
change strategies and mobilise support more successfully, and stimulated other political parties to adopt regionalist positions. In their reaction to the introduction of regional autonomy the similarities between regional political actors in Wales and Galicia are striking, from the moderation of regionalist discourses by regionalist parties to the adoption of more regionalist programmes by the main state-wide parties. However, differences like the adoption of a more radical autonomy goal in Wales, in reaction to disappointing election results and party membership pressure, demonstrates that not everything can be explained by the introduction of regional autonomy. Moreover, when examining differences, and similarities, between states, we should not forget the enormous differences within states, where political regionalism was strengthened in regions and emerged or stayed absent in others. Still, the differences between Spain, France and the United Kingdom are striking, not just as regards the level of support for regionalism, but also as regards the development of regionalism after regionalisation.