

## **NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ETHNO-REGIONAL PARTY TYPES**

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### ***Abstract***

*This article tries to expand the analysis of ethno-regional parties by linking their strategies more closely to the prevailing structures of identity (national and regional feelings of belonging). It is based on four regional case studies (Wales, Scotland, Flanders and Bavaria) with successful ethno-regional-parties (respectively Plaid Cymru, Vlaams Blok/ Vlaams Belang, Scottish National Party, Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern). It analyses the implication of the configuration of these two identities on the style of campaign and the degree of radicalism of these parties, using de Winter's scale of ethno-regional party programs as an indicator of radicalism. The identity structure of the electorate has a decisive influence. This influence is non-linear. The most radical forms of parties on de Winter's scale coexist with either very strong or very weak regional identities. In case of a strong regional identity, a strong national identity acts as a moderating factor.*

### **1. Introduction**

As globalisation and anti-globalisation movements shaped much of public debate during the last ten years, global issues have taken a central place in research. Tarrow has largely analysed these new cycles of contention and has pointed to a vital group of activists, which he labelled "rooted cosmopolitans"<sup>1</sup>. These people hold global ideas but remain deeply attached to and rooted in their local community and always use the prism of their community to gauge change and values.

This phenomenon of grasping the global context through the local prism is not entirely new (Tarrow mentions his father as a historic example) and can be seen in the ethno-regional parties which

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<sup>1</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *The new transnational activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), foreword.

emerged in the wake of the civil rights movements as local interpretations of global ideas<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. The identity structure as a predictor of Ethno-Regional Party types<sup>3</sup>**

Research on ethno-regional parties in established Western democracies has tended to focus on the supply side that is to say on party programmes. In this article we try to show that programmes depend largely on the demand side, that is to say, the configurations of identity in their homelands and the campaign opportunities they offer. Our analysis will focus on individual declared identities (national/ regional) in four specific cases.

These cases have been selected to cover a broad range of successful ethno-regional parties operating in stable Western European democracies without ethnic terrorism or warfare. We consider a successful party a party that has had elected representatives in at least two successive general elections during the time-frame of our analysis (1991-2003) and has been taking part in elections for at least ten years without hiatus. We limit ourselves to stable democracies in Western Europe (i.e. dating back at least to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War) that have developed a solidified party system long before our observation period to ensure that Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage analysis including the freezing hypothesis are applicable to our cases. On practical grounds we had to limit the analysis to parties polling enough support to be measured in standard national polling samples.

Our sample tries then to represent a maximum diversity of country party systems, political positioning inside the party

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<sup>2</sup> Fernand Dumont, *La vigile du Québec*, (The vigil of Quebec) (Montréal: Hurtubise, 1971), 49-108.

<sup>3</sup> The Data used in this article were made available by their respective collectors through the named distributors. The author is very grateful for having been able to work on such rich and well-documented databases. Neither the original collectors of the data nor the distributors bear any responsibility for the analysis or interpretation presented in this paper. The usage of the data does by no means imply any form of endorsement or validation of the interpretation by any of the collectors or distributors.

system and on general policy, position on de Winter's scale and identity configuration.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) works in the classic bi-partisan political system of Great Britain and can be seen as a potential governing party in Scotland. It is generally regarded as being social-democratic on most issues. DeWinter classifies the SNP as Euro-federalist party. As we will show in Scotland, regional identity dominates national identity.

*Plaid Cymru* (PC) belongs in the same political system as the SNP, it positions itself as a possible partner in government. It is generally considered to be close to green parties on most issues. DeWinter's classification of PC is Euro-federalist based on its programme while its actual policies seem closer to a national-federalist party. Welsh identity is, on first impression, close to a conflicting situation with national identity although closer examination changes this assessment.

The *Vlaams Blok/ Vlaams Belang* (VB) evolves in multi-partisan Belgium and positions itself as an anti-system party. It is generally considered to be right-wing extremist. In DeWinter's classification the VB is ranked as secessionist. Flemish identity is in a close confrontation with national identity.

The *Christlich Soziale Union* in Bayern (CSU) is part of the German political system that Duverger called a two-and-a-half party system as although it is multi-partisan it generally operates as if it were bi-partisan. The CSU is, on the one side, Bavaria's natural governing party (being in government since 1957 and only recently forced to enter a coalition after 35 years of absolute majorities) and on the other hand it is closely allied to the *Christlich Demokratische Union* (CDU) and thus a regular member of German governing coalitions. This association prevents any direct political contests between the two parties although the CSU retains all attributes of a political party and regularly differs with its counterpart. Bavarian identity is strong against national identity.

While being very diverse in their ethno-regional agenda and their general policy positioning, their common point is to heavily rely on the national identity issue to attract voters. One key to explaining this diversity lies in the different identity structure partially within the ethno-regional electorate, but even more so outside it.

After a review of the current state of the art, we will first analyze the structures of identity in our four cases then put forward the anticipated effects of this structure on their conditions of success as a political party in their party systems<sup>4</sup>. Then we will confront our predictions with reality before making some amendments to our hypothesis to conclude on a globally positive tone.

### 3. State of the art

Our approach tries to expand on the program-centered analysis by de Winter<sup>5</sup>. De Winter delivered the most succinct but still most accurate definition of an ethno-regional party as being a party "which postulates the fundamental social difference of a part of the general population and demands by virtue of this difference a special treatment of this group's needs and demands". On the base of the form this special treatment has to take in state organization, he classified the parties on a six point scale from "spokesperson" or "caretaker" party, trying to make the people heard, "autonomist party", demanding certain autonomous bodies to manage the intracommunitary affairs, to "national-federalist parties", demanding a complete reorganization of the national order on federalist and decentralized principles, "euro-federalist parties" demanding independence inside the European Union, the most radical: "secessionist parties", that simply demand complete

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<sup>4</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, *The logics of party formation : ecological politics in Belgium and Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Lieven De Winter, *Non-state wide parties in Europe*. (Barcelon: Institut de ciències polítiques i socials, 1994), , De Winter, Lieven, Türsan, Huri (eds.). *Regionalist Parties in Western Europe*. (London: Routledge, 1998), 5-12.

independence from all other institutions, and "irredentist parties", that demand the incorporation into another existing nation-state. Our argument is that, based on the configuration of declared national identity, the character of a successful ethno-regional party in its campaigning and its stance on national organization can be predicted in general terms.

This argument is based on a specific reception of Rokkan's cleavage theory<sup>6</sup> considering the basis of the party system to be a social cleavage that is a full-grown societal divide. A party alone would be merely representing such a divide. Inglehart<sup>7</sup> among others has popularized the concept of an attitude cleavage, that would rely less on social structure but more on political orientation and attitudes.

In our study we focus on parties that Rokkan's terms rely on the political premodern cleavage of center and periphery epitomizing the conflicts in the process of nation-building. The specificity of ethno-regional parties is that they emerge at a point of time when the nation-building process can be considered completed. Inglehart<sup>8</sup> has taken stock of these movements as he conceptualized their emergence in the 1970s by a conjunction of remaining vestiges of the defeated peripheral structures (Rokkan's cleavage) with the influx of new post-materialist groups keen on autonomy and self-fulfillment (post-materialist attitude cleavage). Generational change has, since the early 1970s, contributed to strengthen the latter group. We will thus concentrate on expressed attitudes towards the local identity and not the structural characteristics Rokkan<sup>9</sup> stressed. To pinpoint

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<sup>6</sup> Stein, Lipset Rokkan, Seymour (eds.). *Party systems and voter alignments : cross-national perspectives* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution : changing values and political styles among Western publics* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Inglehart, *Silent Revolution*, chapter 9.

<sup>9</sup> Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, elections, parties: approaches to the comparative study of the processes of development* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970), 181-226.

Rokkan, Stein. *State formation, nation-building, and mass politics in Europe : the theory of Stein Rokkan : based on his collected works*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

the ethno-regional audience we will concentrate on attitudes towards pre-political identity<sup>10</sup> considering that the replacement process that took place in the 1970s has not been reversed.

On the basis of this analysis we will work on the declared national identity of random samples of the population in our four diverse examples of ethno-regional parties. These declared identities represent at the same time an attitude cleavage as it is a fundamental ideological orientation, and an indicator for the existence of a material cleavage in the literal acceptance of Rokkan's cleavage theory.

Our hypothesis is that ethno-regional parties have to rely on the attitudinal cleavage and mobilize it adequately to maximize their electoral success. Their attitudinal cleavage is the value of the small, regional identity as a focus of autonomy and self-determination.

#### **4. The identity structure – a continuum**

The configuration of identity from dependent to conflicting identities takes several ideal-typical forms although as a continuum the cut-off points are fuzzy and most cases range in between these types. The first type would be a dominant identity, where one identity would be universally shared, while the other would be irrelevant. The second type would be a strong identity, where one identity would be almost universally shared, while the other would be significantly shared though much less than the first one and in fact be nested within it.

The third type would be truly twinned identities where both identities cover almost the same very large proportion of the population. The fourth type would be conflicting identities where both identities can claim a significant proportion of the population without much overlap and without either being able to claim a majority. The final type would be irrelevant identities, where both identities are only shared by a few individuals and the great majority would identify with neither group.

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<sup>10</sup> Oddbjørn Knutsen, Scarbrough, Elinor, "Cleavage Politics". In *The Impact of values.*, eds. Van Deth, Jan Willem, Scarbrough, Elinor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 493-531.

Our cases reflect the time and space of our survey data (1991-2003). They may evolve and have been chosen as they situate themselves at interesting intervals on the continuum, as we will show.

## 5. Measuring identities –issues and functional equivalence

The measurement of identities has been a concern to many empirical studies since at least the 1970s. As most interrogations were national, the methodological apparatus developed was generally country specific. Our datasets mainly stem from this type of research carefully monitoring the national context, nonetheless the general purpose of these modules is generally the same (measuring territorial identities) and the cultural contexts are sufficiently close (old and stable Western European Democracies) to admit a general comparison of the result patterns following Harkness, van de Vijver and Mohler<sup>11</sup>. On this basis we may consider that the general national modules are functional equivalents.

These classic national items are supplemented by the Moreno-scale which asks whether the respondent puts forward only his regional or national identity, one more than the other or both equally. It serves to measure the relative hierarchy of two conflicting identities, and is employed as well in Belgium and in the United Kingdom. This indicator provides opportunities for a more detailed comparison for three of our four cases.

To supplement the simple national modules asking either to give relevant identities or to assign grades of affection to different identities and the transnational indicator we will also take into account specific items to broaden our understanding of the cases without taking them directly into a comparative view.

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<sup>11</sup> Janet A. Harkness, van de Vijver, Fons J.R., Mohler, Peter Ph. *Cross-cultural Survey methods* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2002).

## 6. Four distinct positions on the identity continuum

### *Scotland - "Scottish first"*

The first case is Scotland, one of the polar positions in our continuum: . When presented with a list of possible identities (including all British component nationalities, European, British and an explicit category for other identities) and the option to choose as many or few as they think appropriate, about nine out of ten Scottish respondents choose "Scottish" as one of their identities, relegating British identity far away to the second place (at about 50%). The gap is even larger when respondents are asked to rank their identities. About eight out of ten Scots pick the Scottish identity as their dominant (e.g. the one they think best describes them). Even those which declare themselves as much Scottish as British prefer the Scottish identity in same proportions.

**Table 1. Moreno-Scale Scotland<sup>12</sup>**

Moreno Scale – Q: Do you consider yourself as:				
	1999	2000	2001	2003
only Scottish not British	32	37	36	32
more Scottish than British	34	30	31	33
as Scottish as British	23	21	23	22
less Scottish than British	3	3	3	4
not Scottish only British	4	4	4	4
Other	3	4	3	4
refusal/ d.k.	1	1	0	1
N	(1482)	(1663)	(1605)	(1508)

The results on the Moreno-Scale largely confirm the trend and even amplify it. While roughly a third of the Scottish consider themselves as only Scottish and another third as more Scottish than British only about one Scottish in twenty considers himself to be either only British or more British than Scottish. The

12 The data sets used are based on the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey. For complete data statement and acknowledgements please refer to the references section.

remaining rough quarter of the Scottish rank both identities on the same level. All these indicators give the image of a clearly dominant Scottish identity. The Scottish identity is the basic identity almost all Scots share. While a large number consider themselves to be also British the emphasis is on "also", as the Scottish identity is independent from the national identity and in fact sometimes seems to condition it.

### ***Flanders - "Divided identities"***

The second case represents the opposite pole of our continuum: Flanders. The Flemish were asked to choose the community they feel most attached to and subsequently to choose a second one (the choice included Belgium, the three regions and the three communities, the province and the municipality). While a solid majority of about 55% chooses Belgium as the most important entity, roughly half as many (25% to 30%) choose the Flemish region and linguistic community (the combined entity was a single option). Among those Flemings having chosen Belgium as their primary community, about 55% choose the Flemish community as their second community, while 60% of those

**Table 2. Moreno Scale Flanders<sup>13</sup>**

Moreno Scale – Q: Do you consider yourself as:			
	1995	1999	2003
Only Fleming, not Belgian	4	6	6
More Fleming than Belgian	23	23	23
As Fleming as Belgian	44	42	43
Less Fleming than Belgian	17	15	15
Not Fleming, only Belgian	11	13	12
d.k./ refusal	1	1	1
N	(2099)	(2179)	(1213)

having chosen the Flemish community choose Belgium as their second community. At the bottom line more than 75% of

<sup>13</sup> The data sets used are based on the ISPO federal election studies. For complete data statement and acknowledgements please refer to the references section.

Flemings choose Belgium in first or second position and about 60% the Flemish region and community. Roughly half the respondents choose Belgium and the Flemish region and community in either order.

On the Moreno-Scale most Flemings (about 45%) choose the median position, declaring that they are as Belgian as Flemish, a bit less than a quarter declares that they are more Flemish than Belgian while about one in seven declares himself more Belgian than Flemish. The extreme poles are more developed: about one in eight Flemings declares to be only Belgian and not Flemish while only one in twenty declares to be only Flemish and not Belgian. The groups favoring both identities are roughly the same size, but the Belgian side seems more radical in downplaying any Flemish connection as "Belgian only" is about twice as frequent as "Flemish only".

**Table 3. How often do you feel Belgian by “How often do you feel Flemish” – Flanders 1995**

<b>Feeling Belgian</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often or Always</b>
Feeling Flemish			
Never or Seldom	5.6	5.5	8.2
Sometimes	3.2	15.4	14.4
Often or Always	5.4	13.0	29.4

N = (2069)

A third indicator is the feeling of being Flemish and Belgian. The general frequency is quite similar. The two indicators are moderately but significantly positively correlated but there are two interesting groups: the groups declaring either feeling almost constantly Flemish and almost never Belgian and vice versa. The first group is very small, representing about 5% of the respondents, while the second group totals just above 8% of the respondents. It is rare to regularly feel Flemish and never Belgian, the opposite is more frequent. This implies that feeling at least sometimes Belgian seems to be more essential to feeling often Flemish than the opposite. The implication is that the

Flemish identity is more a supplement to the Belgian identity (though they are tied closely together) than a real stand-alone identity, as neither the Moreno-Scale nor this indicator showed a clear independence of the two identities or a dominance of Flemish identity. Nonetheless there is a small fringe of about 5% of respondents who explicitly refuse the Belgian identity and declare a strong Flemish identity as well on the Moreno-Scale as on the feeling indicator. This group may be the nucleus of a contention of the Belgian hegemony over the identity landscape which at the moment of our surveys is still very stable.

### ***Bavaria -A strong but not dominant regional identity***

The two other cases represent the middle ground of the continuum. the Bavarian case is closer to the Scottish case. The national identity measures are quite different from those in the other examples as the Moreno-scale is not available. Asked to rate their connection to different entities from their town to Europe, 39% of all Bavarians rate their relation to their state (Bavaria) as very strong ( 10 points above the German national average)<sup>14</sup> while 24% rate their connection to Germany as very strong, in line with the national average.

The Bavarian specificity persists if we consider the links between the two types of connections. While the general patterns in Germany are relatively homogeneous the Bavarian patterns are very dissimilar. In Germany (outside Bavaria) 55% of those declaring being very attached to their Land declare being very attached to Germany. Conversely these Land oriented people represent 56% of those declaring being very attached to Germany. The Bavarian pattern differs somewhat on the first point as less than half (47%) of the Bavarians who declare themselves very attached to Bavaria declare also being very attached to Germany. More importantly this group represents three quarters of those Bavarians declaring being very attached

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14 Considering the size of the sample the Chi<sup>2</sup> is significant at the 0.1% threshold.

**Table 4. Connection to state by connection to Germany**

				Connected to: Germany			Total
				Strongly connected	Moderately connected	Scarcely connected or unconnected	
Bavaria							
Bavaria	Connected to: state	Strongly connected	Count	138	126	32	296
			% within Connected to: state	46.6	42.6	10.8	100
			% within Connected to: Germany	75.4	32.7	16.8	39.1
	Moderately connected	Count	37	221	82	340	
		% within Connected to: state	10.9	65.0	24.1	100.0	
		% within Connected to: Germany	20.2	57.4	43.2	44,9	
	Scarcely connected or unconnected	Count	8	38	76	122	
		% within Connected to: state	6.6	31.1	62.3	100.0	
		% within Connected to: Germany	4.4	9.9	40.0	16.1	
	Total	Count	183	385	190	758	
% within Connected to: state		24.1	50.8	25.1	100.0		
% within Connected to: Germany		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
Rest of Germany	Connected to: state	Strongly connected	Count	782	470	184	1436
			% within Connected to: state	54.5	32.7	12.8	100.0
			% within Connected to: Germany	56.3	17.0	14.7	26.6
	Moderately connected	Count	427	1686	464	2577	
		% within Connected to: state	16.6	65.4	18.0	100,0	
		% within Connected to: Germany	30.7	61.0	37.0	47.7	
	Scarcely connected or unconnected	Count	181	607	606	1394	
		% within Connected to: state	13.0	43.5	43.5	100.0	
		% within Connected to: Germany	13.0	22.0	48.3	25.8	
	Total	Count	1390	2763	1254	5407	
% within Connected to: state		25.7	51.1	23.2	100.0		
% within Connected to: Germany		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

(cumulative data file 1998-2002 consisting of two waves showing almost no difference)<sup>1</sup> to Germany. These differences cannot be entirely explained by the size of the subgroups<sup>2</sup>. Thus we must conclude that the affiliation with Bavaria is not only more widespread than the affiliation with Germany as a whole, but that the Bavarian identity seems to precede the German identity, although they remain forcefully positively correlated.

The fact of declaring oneself very attached to one identity and not to the other is another proof of this link and of the forcefulness of the Bavarian identity. Both groups total only about 5%, there is no distinctly Bavarian group considering itself only Bavarian and rejecting the German identity. We thus have a situation that resembles the Scottish case except that the Bavarian identity cannot claim to prevail on the German identity. Especially the link between both identities seems largely intact, while in the Scottish case the Scottish identity seems to have acquired a larger autonomy.

### ***Wales - competing identities and polarization***

The Welsh case is generally speaking closer to the Flemish case but has been undergoing some changes in the period covered (1997-2003). If at the beginning of the period a large majority of about 70% of respondents pick the "British" identity among the same list of the British apparatus submitted to the Scottish, this proportion drops below 60% in 2003. At the same time the proportion of respondents picking the Welsh identity list has risen from 65% to 70%.

While globally the British identity is slightly receding it remains at the same point when respondents are asked to choose their dominant identity. A majority (55%-60%) chooses the Welsh identity while a large quarter (25%-30%) chooses the British identity.

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1 The data sets used are based on results of the Political Attitudes, Political Participation and Voter Conduct in United Germany programme. For complete data statement and acknowledgements please refer to the references section.

2 A simulation of a random distribution considering these two distributions anticipated a gap of about 15 points between the two proportions which is only half as important as the observed gap (29 points if exact proportions are used and not rounded figures).

On the Moreno scale the population splits into roughly four quarters: the first declaring to be only Welsh and not British, the second more Welsh than British, the third equally Welsh and British and the last quarter chooses either being more British than Welsh or only British not Welsh.

Up to this point the Welsh identity seems somewhat more dynamic if not necessarily stronger than the British identity, but observing the pride taken in those identities the competition is getting even closer.

**Table 5. Pride of being British by pride of being Welsh 1997 (percent of global sample)<sup>3</sup>**

Pride of being Welsh	Very proud	Pride of being British		
		Somewhat proud	Not very proud or not proud at all	Not Welsh
Pride of being British				
Very proud	24.2	4.1	1.0	6.7
Somewhat proud	22.4	9.1	1.1	6.0
not very proud or not proud at all	7.8	2.8	1.1	2.0
not British	7.6	1.2	0.3	2.4

N=(686)

The pride of being British and the pride in being Welsh share a weak but significant positive correlation. The general level of pride is higher in the Welsh identity than in the British case. Roughly a quarter of the respondents are very proud of being Welsh and very proud of being British while another quarter declares being very proud of being Welsh and somewhat proud of being British. If we include the respondents somewhat proud of being Welsh and either somewhat or very proud of being British, 60% of the respondents cluster in the left upper corner of table 5. Their statistical relation remains weak as it is frequent to rank the British identity one degree lower than the Welsh identity. This is another testimony to the strength and dynamic of the Welsh identity as even in this configuration, being Welsh is deliberately

<sup>3</sup> The data set used is based on the Welsh Referendum Study. For complete data statement and acknowledgements please refer to the references section.

ranked higher by large parts of the population. Besides these, there are four groups which make the situation more contentious. About 8% of the respondents declare themselves very proud of being Welsh and not proud of being British and 5% declare the opposite. These groups are similar to the extreme groups found in Flanders but their relative size is reversed. On top of this we have two groups of about 7% who declare themselves very proud of being Welsh/ British and explicitly refuse the other identity. They do not alter the balance of the two identities but show a stronger polarization than in the Flemish case.

The Welsh situation has a much higher conflict potential than the Flemish, as the relative strength of the Welsh identity compared to the British is higher and progressing.

In Wales both identities are close contenders for dominance in the hearts of the people, with a slight edge for the Welsh identity. There seems to be no established dominance.

## **7. Anticipated effects of identity structure**

As ethno-regional parties are late-comers to the political systems of Western Europe which took their classic shape during the interwar years, they have had to find a window of opportunity to successfully launch<sup>4</sup>. In our four cases parties have been successfully launched as they found their window in substance (identity as their core message) and on its form (articulation and campaign). We will focus on the influence of the attitudes on the substance of the message (declared identity) on the form (successful campaign strategies to mobilize these attitudes and their articulation in policies).

On the basis of Marcus'<sup>5</sup> analysis of emotional cues in political campaigns, we are to expect different communications strategies in our four cases which in turn have the power to modify the political orientation that stem from the identity situation.

In the case of strong and dominant regional identities, an ethno-regional party would be able to claim the high ground on identity

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<sup>4</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, *The logics of party formation*.

<sup>5</sup> George Marcus, *The sentimental citizen: emotion in democratic politics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2002).

questions. In the case of a situation of dominance in ideology or identity Marcus' analysis points at a form of positive campaigning to strengthen established identities. A policy-centered campaign may prove effective as the ideological (in our case identity) dominance ensures that policies based on this ideology appeal to large parts of the electorate. On de Winter's scale such a party might as well be euro-federalist or secessionist. It may be this radical, as its claim to a specific regional identity is commonly shared and the weakness of national identity does not require accommodating the nation state. Scotland largely fits this situation.

If regional identity is a bit less dominant and central identity stronger, we would expect a party to be more moderate in tone and in aim. Marcus would lead us to expect positive emotional cues for the region while at the same time paying at least lip service to the national level. This would aim at comforting the attitudes of regional identifiers while at the same time not alienating voters with dual identities. This dual approach would make a national-federalist party the most probable situation as it permits stressing local identity without requiring a claim to a very special status of region. Bavaria can be seen as a case for this situation.

An even weaker regional identity might be condemned to be even more moderate to remain acceptable to the majority, a majority more attached to the national level. In this case a spokesperson party with only mild campaigning would be the most probable outcome. This would be one option in the case of Flanders. In Marcus' analysis negative campaigning mainly destabilizes existing allegiances and gives the opportunity for an ulterior realignment which in the case of a weak regional identity would point towards hard negative campaigning on identity themes to realign these allegiances. This hard campaigning would best fit with an aggressive agenda on de Winter's scale ranging from secessionist to irredentist. This would be a second option in the case of Flanders.

If regional identity has a slight edge over national identity this negative campaigning on central identity would in Marcus'

framework tend to be supplemented by a general positive campaign on the regional identity with general cues to values that the region should represent. This necessity to provide positive values could tend towards a bit of moderation on de Winter's scale to maintain a form of respectability, leading to expect a secessionist party or possibly a euro-federalist party, in case one of the positive values articulated for the region were openness to Europe. Wales would be expected to fall into this category.

**Table 6. Party types predicted from identity structure**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Situation of regional identity with respect to national identity</b>	<b>Predicted campaign style</b>	<b>Predicted party position on de Winter scale</b>
Scotland	Dominance	Policy centered aggressive	Euro-federalist to secessionist
Bavaria	Strong, not entirely dominant	Positive emotional respect for national identity	National-federalist
Flanders	Weak	Mild campaigning	Spokesperson
Flanders	Weak	Heavy negative emotional aimed at national identity	Secessionist or irredentist
Wales	Slight advantage	Heavy negative emotional against national identity, positive emotional aimed at regional identity	Secessionist or possibly euro-federalist

## **8. Confronting reality with prediction - a satisfying fit with one rogue case**

Our analysis will rely on the data and results made by scholars of the different national party systems and the ethno-regional parties studied.

### **Scotland - the SNP: gradualist approach and policy focus**

The situation in Scotland largely conforms to the expected result. After the Scottish National Party (SNP) experimented more

militant strategies in the 1980s it refocused on a gradualist strategy in the 1990s. The party returned to economic policy as a main focus not unlike its policies in the 1970s<sup>6</sup>, when the aim was to prove the economic viability of an independent Scotland which had been largely disputed. Finlay<sup>7</sup> offers a comprehensive analysis of these arguments and comes to a conclusion leaning towards a benefit of devolving powers to the Scottish level. Besides this assessment of economic viability there has been an assessment of political viability of the independence project resulting in a policy called "Independence in Europe" advocating membership in the European Union in case of independence and a gradualist path to independence based on the Quebec model<sup>8</sup>.

The SNP also expanded its platform to acquire a complete slate of public policies to be implemented in case of an electoral victory, which Lynch largely links to Alex Salmond's leadership<sup>9</sup> (Lynch 2002). In 2003 the SNP launched a campaign called "a penny for Scotland" proposing to use the tax varying power of the Scottish Parliament to undo a one point income tax cut by the British government and to use it for Scottish welfare policies. Although in the short term it proved a program difficult to sell to voters as it represented a tax hike, in the long term it gave the SNP credentials as a party of good and responsible government not forgetting financing its campaign pledges<sup>10</sup>. The situation and strategy of the SNP largely conforms thus to what we expected in the analysis of the opportunities based on the identity configuration.

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish National Party. *SNP and you: aims and policy of the Scottish National Party*. 4th ed. (Edinburgh: SNP), 5-14.

<sup>7</sup> Richard J. A Finlay, *Partnership for good ? : Scottish politics and the Union since 1880* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Lynch, "Scottish Independence, The Quebec Model of Secession and the Political Future of the Scottish National Party". *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11 (Oct 2005):503-535.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Lynch *SNP : the history of the Scottish National Party* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Lynch, *SNP : the history*. Lynch, "Scottish Independence."

## **Flanders - a successful party more radical than predicted**

During the time covered by our analysis we see in the Flemish case the demise of the *Volksunie* which, in its final phase, followed a strategy resembling the first one predicted (moderate spokesperson party) although being less moderate than expected. The party had entered a downward spiral in electoral support in the 1980s and ended its existence in 2001 in a leadership clash although its electoral support seemed to have stabilized in the late 1990s at a level around 8% of Flemish voters showing even signs of recovery in 1999. Splinter groups have subsequently associated with traditional parties but these alliances proved to be short-lived.

The very radical strategy seems to have been adopted by the *Vlaams Blok* (dissolved and refounded in 2004 as *Vlaams Belang*). Gijssels<sup>11</sup> delivered a thorough analysis of *Vlaams Blok's* rhetoric and propaganda material, clearly establishing its credentials as a party of the extreme-right. In the scandal-ridden Belgium of the 1990s attacks against the probity of Brussels elites struck a sensitive cord with the electorate. Breuning and Ishiyama<sup>12</sup> have analyzed the rhetoric and campaign used by both *Vlaams Blok* and *Volksunie*. The *Vlaams Blok* persistently took a very militant stand, slashing out at the central institutions and serving the classic right-wing extremist audience with attacks on foreigners and seculars<sup>13</sup>. This extreme position has been confronted by ostracism on all levels and by all parties resulting in an almost complete isolation of the *Vlaams Blok*<sup>14</sup>.

Apart from strong anti-Belgium and anti-Immigrant rhetoric the *Vlaams Blok* maintained the demand for an independent Flanders

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<sup>11</sup> Hugo Gijssels, *Le Vlaams Blok* (The Vlaams Blok). (Bruxelles : Espace des Libertés, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Marijke Breuning, , Ishiyama, John T. "The rhetoric of nationalism : rhetorical strategies of the Volksunie and Vlaams Blok in Belgium, 1991-1995". *Political Communication*, 15 (Jan. 1998): 5-26.

<sup>13</sup> Marc Swyngedouw, "L'idéologie du Vlaams Blok : L'offre identitaire".(Vlaams Blok Ideology : the identitarian offer). *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, 5 (Jan. 1998): 189-203.

<sup>14</sup> Cas Mudde, "One against All, All against one!: A Portrait of the Vlaams Blok". *Patterns of Prejudice*, 29 (January 1995): 5-28.

that should not be part of the European Union<sup>15</sup>. The extension of the negative rhetoric on immigrants (and in fact it being the most noticed feature of *Vlaams Blok* rhetoric) was not warranted by the initial analysis but it enabled the *Vlaams Blok* to break out of the small ghetto it otherwise might have been confined to. On balance the analysis of the identity situation predicted a different party from the one *Vlaams Blok* (and *Vlaams Belang*) is, but not so unlike it: vigorously radical in program and rhetoric and isolated from the other parties. Except for the anti-immigrant appeal and thus a difference in size, this resembles the *Vlaams Blok*.

### **Bavaria - CSU: strong in Bavaria, present on the federal scene**

The Bavarian case presents us with a long tradition of a party firmly routed in the local sphere with disproportionate power on the federal scene. The Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU) is Bavaria's structural governing party. The CSU puts its main rhetoric accent on valorizing Bavaria in its dichotomy of the traditional more agricultural structure and the large modernization policies.

Valuing Bavaria and anything Bavarian, the CSU rarely resisted snapping at the federal government especially when it could mobilize another fundamental opposition and embed it in a Bavarian context<sup>16</sup>. The deep Christian (mainly catholic) tradition in Bavaria regularly gave the CSU ammunition against secular politicians and progressive legislation<sup>17</sup>. At the same time the CSU remained very active in national fields like the *German Question* up to the *Reunification*, deploying hard rhetoric against

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<sup>15</sup> Marc Spruyt, *Grove Borstels: stel dat het Vlaams Blok zijn programma realiseert, hoe zou Vlanderen er dan uitzien?* (New Brooms: Imagine the Vlaams Blok realized its program: what would Flanders look like?). (Leuven, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Herbert Riehl-Heyse, *Christlich-Soziale Union : die Partei, die das schöne Bayern erfunden hat.* (Christlich-Soziale Union: The party, which invented beautiful Bavaria) (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1979).

<sup>17</sup> Heinrich Oberreuter, „Konkurrierende Kooperation - die CSU in der Bundesrepublik“. (Concurrence and Cooperation - the CSU in the Federal Republic of Germany). In *Geschichte einer Volkspartei - 50 Jahre CSU.* (History of a popular party -50 years CSU), Hanns Seidel Stiftung (Grünwald: Atwerb, 1995): 319-332.

communism while stressing the desire to reunite Germany<sup>18</sup>. Another field of action was European integration where a mix of Gaullist sovereignty preserving politics and integrationist agenda to strengthen the "Christian fortress against communism" was personified by Franz-Josef Strauss, longtime party chairman and Bavarian prime minister<sup>19</sup>. These policy engagements largely surpass the mere lip-service to national identity that was expected as it entailed some real political action. Lately the CSU came to the front as an advocate for decentralization and federalism in unified Germany by, for example, demanding cutbacks on the compensation program between richer and poorer states (*Länderfinanzausgleich*) partly to enable more regional competition and partly to ease charges on the Bavarian budget<sup>20</sup>.

Taken in its entirety the CSU seems to be more attached to the national level than it was expected from the analysis of the identity situation. Although action (e.g. *Länderfinanzausgleich*) is more federalist than rhetoric (e.g. *German Question*). This difference taken into account the CSU largely conforms to the shape of the party predicted from the identity configuration.

### **Wales - *Plaid Cymru* - a much more moderate party than expected**

The Welsh case is truly rogue as the party is very far from what has been predicted. Instead of finding a party running aggressive smear campaigns putting it in isolation, we find *Plaid Cymru*. This party is quite moderate in its communication strategies. While denouncing politics in Westminster, the general tone is not

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<sup>18</sup> Dieter Blumenwitz, „Die Christlich-Soziale Union und die deutsche Frage“ (The Christian Social Union and the German Question). In *Geschichte einer Volkspartei - 50 Jahre CSU*. (History of a popular party -50 years CSU), Hanns Seidel Stiftung (Grünwald: Atwerb, 1995): 333-366.

<sup>19</sup> Stefan Finger, *Franz-Josef Strauß - Ein politisches Leben* (Franz-Josef Strauss - a political life) (Munich: Olzog, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Heinrich Oberreuter, „Speerspitze der Opposition – die Rolle der CSU seit 1998“ (At the head of opposition – the role of the CSU since 1998). In *Der Kampf um die politische Mitte – Politische Kultur und Parteiensystem seit 1998*. (The battle for the political center- political culture and the party system since 1998) (Munich: Olzog, 2002), 89-101.

that of fundamental evil, but that of fundamental differences that make it impossible to treat the Welsh case adequately in the current party system (the whole of this section is largely dependent on McAllister's recent study of the party<sup>21</sup>).

*Plaid Cymru* historically focused on cultural and heritage subjects which still shape its myths. Economic policy generally played a secondary role. While *Plaid Cymru* still remains committed to a policy of independence in Europe much like the SNP its recent policy decisions put more emphasis on extending devolution one step at a time.

Moderation also opened up the doors of power for *Plaid Cymru* which after the 2007 elections to the Welsh Assembly signed a coalition agreement with the Welsh Labour Party. This moderate rhetoric and the gradualist approach make *Plaid Cymru* in the short term more of a national-federalist party than a euro-federalist and the focus on cultural and heritage clearly contradicts our first analysis. This calls for a thorough search for overlooked indicators of the different landscape.

## **9. The specificity of the Welsh case**

Thorough analysis of the Welsh case shows why our prediction was erroneous and needs to be amended. The Welsh case lacks the homogeneity we could assume in the three other cases and which fundamentally changes the identity situation and the space in which *Plaid Cymru* operates.

The divisive factor in Welsh society is the knowledge of the Welsh language. In the surveys about 15% of the respondents claimed fluency in Welsh. This group decidedly differed by their national identity, as measured by the national apparatus, as 80% to 85% of this group declared Welsh as their primary or only identity (90% choose it as part of their identities) while only about 50% to 55% of those claiming not to speak Welsh do so. This group differs on many indicators of identity. For the Welsh speakers the two characteristics that rank highest for being "a real Welshman"

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<sup>21</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru - The Emergence of a Political Party* (Brigend: Seren, 2001).

are first speaking Welsh and secondly living in Wales while for the non Welsh-speaking it is being born in Wales followed by having Welsh ancestors and on a par be living in Wales.

*Plaid Cymru* has historically concentrated on the Welsh speaking population. The fact that its English name component ("the Party of Wales") almost entirely slipped past public attention bears testimony to this. This concentration has been historically analyzed by Balsom, Madgwick and Van Mechelen<sup>22</sup> noting that *Plaid Cymru* could claim as much as 20% of the vote among Welsh feeling Welsh speakers in 1979 but at the same time was so unsuccessful among English speakers that it was hardly measurable in the sample (resulting in a net share of the vote of 7%).

In 1979 Balsom had already analyzed the *Plaid Cymru* support in detail<sup>23</sup> pointing to the fact that the support for *Plaid Cymru* was concentrated among voters speaking Welsh and living in the north and west of Wales, the regions where according to census figures still lived the highest proportion of Welsh speakers. *Plaid Cymru* was a party only strong in Welsh-language cultural context among those integrated into this culture and even then *Plaid Cymru* was no match for the Labour Party. According to our data the situation has evolved since, as *Plaid Cymru* can now claim to be the largest party among those fluent with the Welsh language, almost doubling its support in the Welsh language group since the late 1970s (to about 40%) with a notable decline of support for Labour (dropping from about 60% to the vicinity of 30%).

If we consider the actual constituency of *Plaid Cymru* being only the Welsh language group (in accordance with the literature) we see the interest of a focalized positive campaign to establish protection for the group. The Welsh language group considers itself Welsh in proportions even unseen in Scotland thus there is

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<sup>22</sup> Denis Balsom, Peter Madgwick, Denis Van Mechelen, *The Political consequences of Welsh identity* (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Denis Balsom, *The Nature and distribution of support for Plaid Cymru* (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 1979).

no need to claim Welshness, it's almost a natural feature of those speaking Welsh.

The aspect of being a structural minority within the claimed homeland made any claims to secession of the Welsh-speaking parts problematic, thus a concentration on preservation and extension of the cultural parameter becomes the major first step in order to attain at least survival and equal opportunities for the group *Plaid Cymru* thinks of representing.

As the link between speaking and feeling Welsh has not weakened in recent years (cf. Balsom 1979 and McAllister 2001), a massive extension of Welsh speaking may result in a larger potential constituency for *Plaid Cymru* and with credentials of having fought for the preservation of Welsh heritage in past and present this might in the long term prove a way of extending the real support for *Plaid Cymru*. *Plaid Cymru* has been very active in demanding a Welsh language television channel and has recently succeeded in imposing learning the Welsh language in all schools in Wales<sup>24</sup>.

## 10. Conclusion

The relative and absolute strength of local and national identities in the constituency influence campaigns (in their general appeal) and the program (in its stance towards the central state) of ethno-regional parties, confirming that they at least partially mobilize on a center-periphery attitude cleavage.

Radical demands as measured on de Winter's scale rises on both ends of the spectrum, while campaigning becomes consistently more positive when the strength of local identity increases as the party has more to gain to affirm general attitudes towards the region and the central state than to shake them. In case of a weak local identity, a radical campaigning tone, which is more credible with a radical reorganization agenda, is possible while a strong local identity may make independence a realistic outcome depending on the strength of the national identity. A strong national identity (coupled to a strong local identity) makes

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<sup>24</sup> cf. McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*.

moderate stances more likely, in order to be acceptable to a large audience.

Wales contains two groups (Welsh speakers and Anglophones) who both have a strong identity. Thus in order to be successful defending the interest of one group without being unacceptable to the other group is an essential part of the positioning of the ethno regionalist party in the party system.

**Table 7. Party types predicted from identity structure and existing parties**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Situation of regional identity with respect to national identity</b>	<b>Predicted party position on de Winter scale</b>	<b>Observed Party</b>	<b>Observed position on de Winter scale</b>
Scotland	Dominance	Euro-federalist to secessionist	Scottish National Party (SNP)	Euro-federalist
Bavaria	Strong, not entirely dominant	National-federalist	<i>Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern</i> (CSU)	National-federalist
Flanders	Weak	Spokesperson	<i>Volksunie</i> (VU) – defunct	Spokesperson
Flanders	Weak	Secessionist or irredentist	<i>Vlaams Blok / Vlaams Belang</i> (VB)	Secessionist
Wales	Slight advantage	Secessionist or possibly euro-federalist	<i>Plaid Cymru</i> (PC)	nominally euro-federalist in fact more national-federalist

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