REGION AND STATE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

NATION-BUILDING, REGIONAL IDENTITIES AND SEPARATISM

EDITED BY

JOOST AUGUSTEIJN AND ERIC STORM

Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe

Also by Joost Augusteijn

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THE CULTURE OF REGIONALISM: Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890–1939

Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe

Nation-Building, Regional Identities and Separatism

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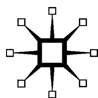

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The history of regionalism and separatism has generally been studied as two distinct phenomena, each with their own specialists and traditions. Bringing the two together in one volume and comparing them is therefore an unusual occurrence. The seeds for the comparative analysis lying in front of the reader were laid in the History Department of Leiden University, where a few years ago researchers were grouped along the lines of their research interests. The history of political culture and national identities was the subject of one of the resulting theme groups, whose members were then stimulated to develop a new research agenda. The editors of this volume, who had specialised, respectively, in southern European regionalism and Irish separatism in the period up to the First World War, found each other in the idea that these two phenomena might actually be two sides of one coin, and decided to put this notion to the test. This led initially to the organisation of a symposium entitled 'Nation-building, regional identities and separatism in West- and Central-Europe 1890–1914', held at Leiden University on 15–16 January 2010. The current volume is based on the papers and discussions at this symposium.

The book would, however, never have seen the light of day without the support of several more people and institutions. The conference and therefore also this book were made possible by the support of a long list of organisations, including the KNAW (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences), the Huizinga Institute (Research Institute and Graduate School for Cultural History), the Europaeum (an association of leading European universities), the Leiden University Fund and Leiden University Institute for History. We would also like to thank Joep Leerssen, Peter Pulzer, Pasi Saukkonen, Karl Ditt, Tom Verschaffel, Henk te Velde and Henk Kern, for their highly stimulating comments, and Gaiwin Eley and Iris Krul, for their practical support in making the symposium a success.

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1
Introduction: Region and State

Joost Augusteijn and Eric Storm

While nations belonged to the future, regions were something from the past. At least, until recently, this was the view of the nineteenth-century nation-building process. In it, older regional identities were slowly replaced by a modern and intense identification with the nation and implicitly the state. It was, however, acknowledged that the assimilation of the periphery into the nation had its limits. Areas or ethnic groups with a strong sense of identity could oppose the nation-building efforts emanating from the state's centre. In fact, in the decades before 1914, some regional movements within various European states increasingly demanded political autonomy, home rule or even independence. This was generally seen as a logical development as more self-confident ethnic minorities or 'oppressed nations' started to apply the nationalist programme and rhetoric to their own situation and clamoured for more political rights. Thus, Norway seceded from Sweden in 1905, Eastern European 'nations', such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Baltic States, gained independence in 1918 and Southern Ireland followed in 1921. In other 'unhappy regions', such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, Flanders and Brittany, strong regional movements developed that demanded political autonomy and sometimes independence.

In this understanding, regional identities either disappeared by becoming assimilated into the existing nation-state or evolved into (would-be) nations. Recent studies have, however, made clear that identities of regions with no separatist inclinations also became increasingly well defined towards the end of the nineteenth century. Thus at the same time that unhappy regions began to develop a stronger sense of identity in support of their political claims to autonomy or even national independence, a more culturally inspired regionalism, which in general supported the centralised efforts to build up a nation-state, gained ground. Such regional movements also used similar mobilising instruments as the aspiring nationalists did. All over Europe, young intellectuals and activists generated a widespread interest in local folklore, traditional crafts, vernacular buildings, dialects and typical landscapes. By preserving what was seen as typical for a specific region

within the nation, they were consciously defining and often inventing the identity of such regions. The rise of this type of regionalism has recently been interpreted as part of a new phase of the nation-building process following the largely elite and state-based efforts of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The interest in regional identity, which could thus either support the efforts of the central government to build up a nation-state or strive for a separate political entity, reached its zenith during the decades preceding the First World War.

This volume explores how these developments related to each other, starting from the premise that the processes of creating regional identities, whether they were centrifugal or centripetal in nature, were essentially similar in nature throughout Europe and thus constituted a transnational phenomenon. Our understanding of the way regions related to nations would therefore greatly benefit from an international comparative analysis. The outcome of the identity formation process could, however, be very different, and the question underlying this analysis is why some regions merely preferred to create a distinct identity, as an indispensable but unique part of the fatherland, whereas others stressed that their separate identity was threatened by prolonging the link with the existing centralised political system? In other words, how can we explain that regionalism with a political objective developed in the Spanish Basque Country but not in its French counterpart just across the border? Or why did political regionalism develop in Brittany but not in French Flanders, another French region with a clearly distinct language and culture?

The objective here is twofold: first, to provide an overview of the current state of research regarding regional identity construction and regionalist and separatist movements in Europe; and second, to challenge existing conceptions and provide new insights through an in-depth comparison of different movements and countries. As the emergence of regional identities in their more extreme forms has generally been associated with the multi-ethnic empires of Eastern Europe, the focus in this volume will be on Southern, Western and Central Europe, where presumably the creation of strong unitary nation-states prevented the emergence of strong regional movements. Although these movements generally did not succeed in revising existing boundaries, they still had an enormous but neglected impact. Most authors begin their analysis of the relationship between states and regions in the early nineteenth century, while the First World War constitutes their endpoint. The emphasis will, however, be on the period 1890–1914, which can be considered the first golden age of regionalism.

Defining the various relationships between nations and regions

Regionalism is a highly ambiguous term; it commonly relates to part of a country but can also denote much larger areas, such as Central Europe or

Southeast Asia, which encompasses various countries. Regionalism in this volume only refers to the smaller sub-state regions. However, even at this sub-state level, the term regionalism has been applied to a variety of movements, ideologies and policies. Moreover, with all the variations within Europe and the different historiographical traditions and terminologies, it is very difficult to establish unequivocal labels that define the different movements or groups that showed an interest in regional identities. It is, nevertheless, important to try to establish some clarity. We will therefore distinguish between particularism, decentralisation, *Landespatriotismus*, nation-building, cultural regionalism, political regionalism and separatism.

The first of the often interrelated currents that during the nineteenth century showed a clear interest in the regions were the particularist movements that defended the rights and privileges of the ancient provinces against the encroaching modern (nation-)state. A very visible example of this constitutes the massive revolt in the Vendée of 1793, which was a reaction against the introduction of conscription by the First Republic and other revolutionary measures that were proclaimed in the name of the French nation. The activities of these particularist movements – some of which, such as Carlism in Spain, even survived the nineteenth century – were not motivated by their wish to respect a specific regional identity but by their wholesale defence of ancient rights, and the term regionalism therefore does not apply to them.

Other groups pleaded for decentralisation. Like the particularists, they favoured a stronger political position for the region, but they did not oppose the modern state. They merely wanted to reform the existing public administration. Many nineteenth-century activists and authors wanted the regions to share in the benefits of the modern state while at the same time defending decentralisation or devolution as the best solution for the developing state structures. For conservatives or moderate liberals, this was generally intended to reinforce the position of the local and regional elites. However, there was also a more democratic interpretation, as in the eyes of many progressive thinkers decentralisation or federalisation would strengthen the bond between the citizens and the state by stimulating self-government, especially on a municipal and provincial level. As a consequence, pleas for decentralisation generally had little to do with a growing awareness of a regional identity.

A term more clearly related to the creation of local identities is region-building. Understandably, the existence or creation of (elected) regional or provincial administrations as part of an evolving state structure invited a competition for power, influence and resources between various groups within and without these sub-state governing bodies in which it was quite logical to base claims on their supposed intimate bond with the region's inhabitants and interests. The contributions of Timothy Baycroft, Stefano Cavazza, Siegfried Weichlein and Peter Haslinger (chapters 4–7) in this volume show that the rather subtle and almost unconscious process of

region-building grew more pronounced after the role of the state became more important at the end of the nineteenth century. Since all kinds of services were organised by regional authorities, the population became more aware of its institutions and borders, and of the importance of the province, *Land*, county or department, resulting in a kind of *Landespatriotismus* ('regional pride'). Nonetheless, in this struggle over regional power, very few used the argument that the area concerned deserved a special regime in order to protect its collective identity. Therefore region-building must also be distinguished from regionalism.

Apart from these particularist, decentralist and region-building currents, some local elites, who wholeheartedly participated in the nation-building process, also showed a special fervour for the region. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the interest in the historical, archaeological and geographical background of the region increased rapidly, often as a consequence of a romantic search for the roots of the nation, leading to the foundation of learned societies and associations. Although sometimes these groups were supported by local and national authorities, in general they were the result of private initiatives. The writings of these amateur scholars and the lectures they organised were mainly intended for a small élite of local notables. Even in regions with a distinctive language, memories of independent statehood and a strong awareness of a distinct past, such as in Catalonia, Flanders and Frisia (see the contributions of Josep Fradera, Maarten Van Ginderachter and Goffe Jensma: chapters 8, 12 and 13), these associations almost always considered their region from a national perspective. In general, it was the historical contribution of their region to the greatness of the fatherland that mattered, not the specific identity that distinguished the region from the whole. In this way the interest in local heritage was part of a nation-building effort.

Only after about 1890 did these local associations develop a full-blown regionalism. The nature of their fascination for regional identities changed when young middle-class members began to try to reach a broader audience. This required other forms of expression and sociability. Instead of promoting scholarly studies, they tried to mobilise the middle and lower classes by encouraging them to participate in what were essentially recreational activities, such as excursions and festivals, which celebrated a shared identity not always based on a mythic past but mainly on expressions of contemporary popular culture, including folklore, handicrafts and popular traditions (see for the ideological background to this shift the contribution by Eric Storm: Chapter 3). To ensure success it was important that this regional identity was unique and thus differed as much as possible from that of other regions.

In most cases the subsequent rise in support for regionalism remained restricted to a celebration of its cultural traits that supported the nation-state they were part of. We will henceforth label this 'cultural regionalism'. In some cases it formed the crucial underpinning that allowed a more

assertive political regionalism to come into being. Only on the basis of the newly defined idiosyncratic collective identity was it possible to claim a special regime – or even autonomy and, in some cases, independence – that would respect the true nature of the region. We therefore argue that although constituting different forms, cultural regionalism and political regionalism – and even political regionalism in the radical form of separatism – are essentially similar in nature. They use the same forms and methods to construct a distinctive regional identity but differ in the goals they want to achieve, ranging from a regionalised nationalism – supportive of the existing nation-state – to some form of autonomy or complete independence.

Structure of the book

On basis of its underlying premise, this volume attempts to answer two sets of research questions. The first concerns the transnational process of the creation of regional identities. How exactly did the region relate to the (nation-)state and to what extent did the nation-building process influence the creation of regional identities? What were the main similarities and differences between regions, regional movements, countries and parts of Europe? And how can they be explained? Are differences between countries minimal or did their specific circumstances really have a serious impact on the process of regional identity formation within their borders?

The second set of questions is related to the similarities and differences between cultural and political regionalism. Are they really two closely related transnational phenomena or do we have to distinguish between various variants or types? Is political regionalism or separatism always accompanied, or even preceded, by cultural regionalism or is this not necessarily the case, and could the two forms even coexist in one and the same region, or even in one individual, as forms of nested identities? Are the ways in which regional identities are constructed by both cultural and political regionalists similar or maybe even almost identical? And why did political regionalism fail to develop in some countries at the end of the nineteenth century while cultural regionalism began to flower?

These questions are answered in 13 chapters by specialists who provide updated overviews of how nation-building, regionalism and separatism interacted in the various countries of Southern, Western and Central Europe, and deepen our understanding of these phenomena by comparing various cases. Each chapter focuses on a specific aspect of these interactions. Thus, while giving an overview of the rise of regionalism throughout Europe, we also develop different perspectives and sub-themes. In this way the chapters show that the debate on how to interpret and analyse the creation of regional identities in a transnational and comparative framework is far from over yet.

The structure of this volume follows both a geographical and a thematic pattern. After a more programmatic and transnational first part, we present the chapters in geographical order, joining case-studies on similar states or regions as much as possible. Thus the transnational section is followed by studies of France and Italy as examples of centralised nation-states, and the German and Austrian-Hungarian empires as much more loosely organised entities, which logically resulted in a different relationship between the regions and the state. In the remaining chapters the process of regional identity creation in Spain, the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands is reviewed, while focusing on more thematic issues, such as the integrating role of colonial empires, interregional competition, religion and language.

Part I contains two chapters with a clear transnational perspective. These provide the more programmatic background to this volume. In Chapter 2, Xosé-Manoel Núñez defines the constructed and contested concepts of region and regionalism, and discusses the complicated relationship between regionalism and nationalism, thereby touching on the relevant historiographical debates and developments in this area, which witnessed a shift from the study of the 'social preconditions' of nationalism to the 'cultural processes of identity-building' that favoured the study of all types of collective identities and of nation-building from below. In Chapter 3, Eric Storm analyses the transformation that took place around 1890, when the interest in a distinct regional culture, at both a local and a national level, increased sharply. On the basis of a comparative study of the intellectual roots of regionalism in Germany, France and Spain, he argues that it was not the national contexts or the modernisation of society but a transnational crisis of reason which produced a new emphasis on cultural factors and collective identities among both the prophets of the new nationalism and the representatives of a new regionalist culture.

The issue of decentralisation, which dominated the debates on the relationship between the region and the state in France and Italy, is central to Part II. In Chapter 4, Timothy Baycroft challenges the notion that France is the archetypical successful unitary nation-state. He asserts that the weakness of the political regionalists was not inherent but contingent on the political and economic structure as well as various political divisions on a national level. This allowed the French state to successfully incorporate expressions of cultural regionalism in a policy of unity in diversity towards the end of the century. Although Italy was not as successful as France in integrating the periphery, the centralised state, which was introduced after the unification of the country in 1861, was not seriously challenged either. In Chapter 5, Stefano Cavazza argues that this was due to the fact that municipal identities remained the focus for political power. Although cultural regionalism, in the form of a new interest in dialects, folklore and popular traditions, came to the fore at the end of the nineteenth century, the demand for more local autonomy by local elites and national politicians was, as in France, more a

plea for administrative reform and decentralisation than a form of political regionalism.

Part III deals with continental empires. Although the German Empire is often compared to Italy, the political system of these two new states differed profoundly, as Siegfried Weichlein shows in Chapter 6. Under Bismarck, Germany had become a conservative federal state with a decentralised power structure. Regional identities, however, rarely coincided geographically with the smaller political entities or *Länder*. Weichlein shows how the history of unification gave rise to different forms of regionalism both within the old *Länder* and between them, but also how national lines of communication created an attachment to the unitary state among most parties and groups, which prevented any political regionalism from developing. In Chapter 7, Peter Haslinger discusses the effects of the very complicated and diverse institutional framework of Austria-Hungary on the development of regionalism. The ethnic make-up was extremely complex, and state and provincial borders only rarely coincided with cultural frontiers. Thus, except for Hungary, where the Magyar elites tried to assimilate a number of minorities into a greater Hungarian nation with limited success, the rather haphazard state- and region-building activities of the central government and provincial institutions made little progress. Regional identities did develop in a form of 'nationalisation from below' but, until the state was broken up in 1918, no significant demands for independence were expressed in the different parts of Austria.

The main focus of Part IV lies on the role of colonial empires in the creation of regional identity. In Chapter 8, Josep Fradera explains the connection between the weak centralised state in Spain and its failure to integrate the empire into its structures. The less than generous approach to the integration of the (Spanish-speaking) inhabitants of the colonies led to demands for independence in South and Central America. The subsequent conflict left a weak, divided and almost bankrupt Spain. As a consequence, the nation-building process made little progress. The commercial and administrative ties with the remaining colonies of Cuba and the Philippines functioned for a long time as an integrative factor, tying the elites in the Iberian periphery to a common colonial enterprise. However, the loss of these last colonies in 1898 enabled Catalan and Basque regionalism to become mass movements with political demands. In Great Britain the imperial project was much more successful and it helped, as Andrew Newby shows in Chapter 9, to integrate Scotland into the United Kingdom. Although, inspired by the Irish example, some pleas for political autonomy were voiced, this had more to do with a demand for decentralisation than with the wish to sever the profitable ties with England and the colonies. Nonetheless, the Scots continued to consider themselves a separate nation and an equal partner in the union. The rivalry with England even strengthened this sense of nationhood, but it hampered the development of smaller regional identities within Scotland.

Part V compares competing regional movements within one country, focusing on the United Kingdom and Belgium. In Chapter 10, Robert Colls contrasts weak regionalism in Northumbria with the strong Irish movement. He addresses the role of religion, the distance to London, the level of economic and political integration, the lack of social equality and the impact of political unrest to account for the differences. According to him, it was the events surrounding the Easter Rising of 1916 that definitively turned Irish regionalism into nationalism, a catastrophic event which could never have taken place in Northumbria. In Chapter 11, Joost Augusteijn takes a closer look at the development of Irish identity. He asserts that although Irish nationalism could be seen as a very logical outcome of the country's history, regionalism and separatism were not mutually exclusive demands at least until the home rule crisis of 1912–1914. The great majority of the activists of the various Irish cultural and political movements wanted to strengthen Irish identity, which, just like the Scots, they saw as nationalism, but at the same time they accepted the link with Great Britain. The interesting outcome of the Irish turn to separatism was the conversion by Northern Irish unionists to a regionalist stance. However, apart from the development of this Northern Irish identity, the continuous rivalry with Great Britain seemed to be an obstacle for the development of distinct regional identities within Ireland, just as in Scotland.

A similar retardation of local identities took place in Belgium as a result of the competition between Flanders and Wallonia. In Chapter 12, Maarten Van Ginderachter places some question marks over the attempts to distinguish between nationalism and regionalism, and then focuses on the little-known Walloon movement, which started as a literary and folkloric scholarly society in the 1850s. With the rise of the Flemish movement and its demand for the official recognition of the Flemish language, the organisation of *wallingants* transformed into a defensive association that wanted to protect the dominance of the French language and the liberal high culture in Belgium against the presumably provincial and clerical *flamingants*. Failing in this aim, it eventually reverted to a regional nationalism in the French-speaking part of Belgium with all the paraphernalia of a nation: a flag, an emblem and a national holiday.

Part VI deals with the role of language and religion. At first sight it might seem that the existence of linguistic and religious differences would be a stimulus for the creation of a distinct regional identity. However, the relationship between these clearly discernable features and regional movements is often much more complicated. In Chapter 13, Goffe Jensma shows that Frisian intellectuals who were frustrated by the increasingly peripheral role of their province came to celebrate their distinct linguistic and cultural background but never developed a clear political movement. The polarised political system in the Netherlands, known as pillarisation, more or less neutralised regional feelings by forcing elites to cooperate on a national

level, despite the marginalisation of their region. In Chapter 14, James Bjork presents a detailed case study of the role of the Catholic Church in defining more clearly delimited regional identities, focusing on the diocese of Breslau, which encompassed more or less the Prussian province of Silesia. The various pressures of state, diocese and linguistic boundaries created a kaleidoscope of attitudes among the local clergy, which found among them German and Polish nationalists as well as Silesian regionalists.

Given the fact that international comparative studies in this field are almost non-existent, and that the various national historiographical traditions in this area differ in their approaches and definitions, this book provides a first attempt at integrating the study of regional identity formation within Europe. We are convinced that the new perspectives presented here will be useful to all those interested in the complex relationship between regions, nations and states in nineteenth-century Europe and we hope that it will inspire further transnational research in this field.

Part I

Transnational

2
Historiographical Approaches to Sub-national Identities in Europe: A Reappraisal and Some Suggestions

Xosé-Manoel Núñez

The general shift in the historical analysis of territorial identities, nationalism and ethnicity that has taken place in the European social sciences over the past 20 years has led historians from structuralism to postmodernism, and from privileging the study of the 'social preconditions' of nationalism to researching the cultural processes that gave rise to modern identities. This development has also affected the study of regionalism and localism. A parallel phenomenon that helped focus research on these sub-national identities was the need to study the dynamics of nation-building from below, by lowering the level of analysis and adopting a micro-historical outlook. This approach uncovered multiple hybrid identities and national imaginaries perceived through the mirror of local realities. Contrary to the assertions of the classic approaches to nation-building (beginning with Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen)*, it revealed that becoming national did not necessarily mean ceasing to be local or giving up one's hometown pride.[1]

The basic questions in current research on nationalism may also be applied to regions, regional identities and regionalism. What came first: the regions or the regional identity? Are regions given, pre-existing entities, or are they rather a construct of regionalist doctrines and movements? Why are some regions successfully constructed or even invented while others are not? Are regional identities complementary to or opposed to national identities? The questions could be broadened by relativising the term 'regionalism' and including other territorial variables in it. Is localism a complementary phenomenon to regionalism, or is it more compatible with state nationalism, which tends to enhance local (and urban) identities, seeing them as less threatening to the monopoly of sovereignty?

It is not the purpose of this chapter to offer a historiographic overview of recent literature on regionalism in Europe. Any attempt at an exhaustive compilation is doomed to failure given the huge amount of literature dealing with particular territories across the Continent. Rather, I will first point out

some specific problems concerning the definition of regionalism as an object of study. Second, I will propose some patterns for establishing what regions and regionalism are and how to distinguish them from nations, nationalism and 'separatism'. And, third, linked to these suggestions, I will point out some problem areas and suggest some themes for further research.

Definition

Regionalism was an extremely diffuse concept before 1914. The term was coined at the end of the nineteenth century and applied principally to the French situation (although in the 1880s the term was also being used in public debates in Spain).[2] In 1911 the founder of the *Fédération Régionalist Française*, Jean Charles-Brun, stated that the term 'regionalism' was successful precisely because of its lack of precision. There was the specific regionalism 'of the regionalists themselves', but also that of 'everybody' else. By that time, 'regionalism' meant everything that questioned the 'excesses' of state centralism, and included everything from the revival of sub-state folk cultures, local and provincial architecture and arts, the organisation of local fairs and the demand for administrative decentralisation, up to the more ambitious political goals of the early Breton nationalist groups.[3] This broad category, although centred more on the demands of stateless nationalist movements of East, Central and Western Europe, was taken up again by the French historian Charles Seignobos, who used the label 'autonomism' to differentiate political demands for self-government from cultural claims, while still including Lithuanian supporters of independence and Catalan moderate nationalists and regionalists in the same group.[4]

Regionalism and, to some extent, localism have played a highly ambiguous role in European history. Regional identities helped fashion the national states that arose in the nineteenth century.[5] Yet the resilience of some territorial identities forged during the pre-modern period also contributed to the later emergence of several sub-state nationalisms opposed to the existence of a single nation, identified with the territory of the state, and advocating self-determination for their specific territories. In fact, regionalist forerunners generally precede or even accompany sub-state nationalisms. The many examples of this, from Catalonia to Brittany and Flanders, make good case-studies in the ambiguous processes of region-building and nation-building.

What is a region? No definitive answer can be given to this question. A clear definition of what a region is seems as complex and elusive as defining what a nation is. Geographers, economists and social scientists all indicate that no single definition of region can be agreed upon: they are economic entities, historical territories, frontier areas and geographical units bounded by natural features. But they are also a form of collective

identity. A region can be described as an imagined or established smaller territorial part of a bigger whole, either with administratively defined borders (*département*, *Land*, county, *rayon*, *oblast*, *eparphia* and so on), or linked to emotionally defined spatial categories that become the object of nostalgia and may act as links between the individual and collective sentiments of belonging,[6] such as *Heimat*, *paese*, *terruño* or *kraj*. These may be considered an extension of the landscape and characteristics of the space that defines everyday experiences.[7]

What is regionalism? To what extent is it possible to differentiate regionalism from nationalism analytically? Most authors rarely identify any differences between them, basically because regionalism has been given little attention in the 'classic' nationalism studies.[8] John Breuilly referred to nationalism and regionalism as 'a form of politics' in his *Nationalism and the State*.[9] The term 'regional nationalism' refers to sub-state nationalist movements, going all the way from the Irish and Czech movements in the nineteenth century to the Flemish, Macedonian or Sardinian movements in the twentieth century. It is a commonly used term among historians and political scientists, and even specialists such as Michael Keating use regionalism and minority nationalism quite interchangeably.[10] 'Regionalist' is used by most Francophone authors – except for the Québecois – to refer to ethno-nationalist movements in Europe, particularly in Western Europe. Some scholars, primarily political scientists, have argued that regionalism has three characteristics in common with minority nationalisms:

(1) the shaping of a territorially bound collective identity;
(2) the development of a cultural, economic or political centre/periphery conflict with the state; and
(3) the existence of social mobilisation and/or political organisations of a territorial (i.e. regional) character.

Thus, regionalism and minority nationalism could be considered as two parallel products resulting from the existence of both an ethno-territorial conflict and social mobilisation, with diffuse lines of demarcation.[11] These lines tend to be flexible and they evolve. Yet two common underlying elements are ethnic mobilisation – understanding ethnicity broadly as a social construction of differences based on some extremely malleable combination of primordial elements, from language to material culture – and a demand for the territory of interest to be considered a political unit.

What then is left for the term 'nationalism'? Is one to assume that regionalism always serves as the first expression of an ideology that may develop further, into a minority or sub-state nationalism? Or is it doomed to be a different phenomenon, intrinsically linked to state nationalism?

Under the influence of modernisation theory, classical definitions of nationalism presupposed that an increase in social communication and a weakening of local and regional identities were necessary preconditions for nation-building. Regional identities (or any defence of them) were therefore implicitly perceived as pre-modern vestiges of the *ancien régime* and opposed to national identities.[12] The modern form of collective identity, which was also linked to the legitimacy of power, was to be the nation, which was to become the basis of sovereignty. The regions would remain only as areas of traditional culture, folklore, rural mores and so on. In fact, the French Jacobin version of nation-building supposedly attempted to erode any form of pre-national territorial identity, as the whole country was to assimilate into a unified and codified culture. This perspective permeated historical research on the topic until the early 1990s, holding that the survival and maintenance of mesoterritorial or medium-range identities and of any form of regional claims during the modern period should be seen as a symptom of weak nation-building and a possible forerunner of minority nationalism. Similar positions resulted from some of the debates during the 1980s and early 1990s regarding Italian and Belgian historiographies of nation- and state-building in the modern period. All of them stressed the theory that their countries had experienced weak nationalisation, expressed in the survival of sub-national loyalties, the existence of 'centrifugal' tensions between the 'centre' and the 'periphery' and a relatively weak penetration of national symbols and cultures.

In historiographies of other countries the point of departure for analysing the relationship between regionalism and nationalism was not very different. Sub-national, and particularly regional, assertiveness was regarded as a symptom of weak nation-building and unfulfilled state modernisation. This assumption has decisively influenced French and Spanish academic research on the national question. In the Spanish case for instance, historical studies of Basque, Catalan or Galician nationalism led historians in other Spanish regions to highlight any form of territorial affirmation and/or local claim for autonomy by applying the same explanatory scheme to all cases. Something relatively similar happened to France in the 1970s: the model applied to Brittany seemed to be valid for many other territories. Regionalism was seen as a forerunner of minority nationalism and, regardless of ideology, all possible predecessors (including federal republicans, monarchists, cultural folklorists and so on) were lumped into regionalism as a sort of catch-all movement that would surely result in the emergence of a new sub-state nationalism. Perhaps only the British historians, who were very aware of the different nature of the national question on their island(s) and were convinced that British historical development was exceptional in this, regarded the concept of unity in diversity as a natural outcome of the persistence of an imperial polity. The survival of an imperial identity, now reduced to its insular core, would still allow for the integration of different nations within

a common polity in much the same way as the Austro-Hungarian or the Ottoman empires had managed to maintain regional and territorial diversity within their borders before the First World War.[13]

Specialists in the field are well aware of the implications of recent historical research which has undermined the classical assertion of region-building as being in opposition to nation-building, and some have even theorised that nation-building may also imply building regional or local identities, to the point that the former may depend heavily on the latter, or vice-versa. Collective identities may be regarded as a series of overlapping and complementary concentric spheres that result from dynamic historical processes,[14] as do all forms of collective identity. In many cases, nationalist movements, nationalising states (as Rogers Brubaker puts it[15]) and long-established nation-states that carried out nation-building policies also reaffirmed local and regional identities in order to strengthen the roots of national identity among the population. Moreover, this phenomenon occurred in diverse currents and varieties of nationalism, as can be seen, for example, in nineteenth century Germany and, to some extent, France. Promoting regional symbols and patterns of identity was regarded as a way of promoting national identities at the grass roots level. The case of Wilhelmine Germany demonstrated this: love for the *Heimat* implied love for the *Vaterland*, as the *Heimat* – a concept also invented at the end of the nineteenth century – could be extended to a local, classless national community.[16] This was far from being strictly a 'bourgeois' phenomenon. From the Social Democrats to the Nazis, many social and political actors played the regionalism and *Heimat* card, and continued to use similar packaging of local identity images to give support to divergent worldviews.[17] Lest the *Heimat* model be taken as generalised throughout Western and Central Europe, it is important to note that this was not always the case with other European nation-states. Stéphane Gerson has pointed out that in the French case the increasing concern with the cult of 'local memories' expressed by local elites, librarians, antiquarians, obscure historians and 'middling provincials', was not able to supersede the big debates – Monarchy versus Republic, for instance – that affected French political life during the nineteenth century. Still, nostalgia and archaeological curiosity were very often linked with a preference for the social models that were implicitly or explicitly identified with that past.[18]

Although under certain conditions some forms of regional identity can come into conflict with the national identity, this does not always happen. Regional identities can be sustained by a more or less invented historical tradition, or they may be founded on common cultural traits, fostered by the prior existence of collective political institutions and the production of symbolic frames of meaning that help members of the region to identify themselves as members of a community.[19] The relationships between empire-, nation- and region-building are not fixed, but are subject to constant change over time. In general, not all forms of collective identity have a

similar political dimension, and not all expressions of local and regional identity are infused with present-day political consequences, such as the claim for self-determination, which is exclusively in the realm of nationalism and national identities, and may turn into open separatism. The same could be said regarding the emotional aspects of territorial identity. Sentiments of belonging may be concentric and can be shared by individuals. But not all of them possess the same level of emotional appeal. To express it quite brutally, very few people in recent centuries have died for their city, for their *Heimat* or for their region, but millions have sacrificed their lives for their fatherland, for their nation. The nation is invested with sacredness and strong emotional ties, while this is not always the case with sub-national identities. Yet it could be argued that, in dying for the nation, many soldiers also died for the tangible and familiar meanings of the homeland, associated with the places they had experienced. This gave common people concrete reasons to fight: to defend their homes and families as an expression of their nation.[20]

Patterns and boundaries

Concerning definitions and concepts to be used in the study and classification of regionalisms and nationalisms (and their respective movements), I would suggest some further points for discussion.

1. Some authors, particularly political scientists but also historians, have put forward the thesis that regions are solely political-administrative entities. Every territorial community that does not meet this definition would fall into the category of mere ‘ethnies’, as defined by Anthony Smith. However, defining a region as a territory embodied with political-administrative institutions can be excessively reductionist. The term ‘region’ existed before the vindication of decentralisation, and – although this is not an attempt to claim a new *Begriffsgeschichte* of the term – may be independent of the demand for political decentralisation and the claim of possessing representative or administrative institutions that span the region.[21] The region may be merely a cultural or ethnocultural concept, imbued with a religious character, possessing relatively shifting territorial limits. This concentric sphere of territorial identification does not necessarily have to be defined in ethnic terms. A broader definition of regionalism could include the culture that upholds and therefore shapes in the public sphere the existence of a region as an imagined community. This community may or may not make political claims, but is located somewhere between the nation (subject of sovereignty and territorially broader) and the local sphere (the space of human experience and daily interaction).

2. If a certain regionalism demands political-administrative decentralisation, we could classify it as a 'political regionalism' or even as a 'regionalist movement'. However, there are many regionalisms, or regional/mesoterritorial claims, sometimes labelled as 'cultural regionalisms', where political aims do not occupy the centre of their agenda, and the main channel of expression is cultural (be it historiographic, folklore-based and so forth).[22] In general, they do advocate the existence of an historical, ethnocultural or simply 'functional' territorial entity that is integrated within a national narrative (stateless or not). A better label to describe this cultural regionalism would be the term 'regionalised nationalism', which was coined by Anne-Marie Thiesse for the French case (*nationalisme régionalisé*).[23]

   The difference between the two categories involves more than just a mere nuance. In the first case, the claim of some form of self-government and/or decentralisation is central to the agenda, although the particular circumstances may also mean that regional vindication becomes an alternative way of claiming the existence of the nation. This would happen in a context marked by ethnoterritorial concurrence within the same territory of two different ethno-nationalisms seeking to monopolise the framing of territorial identity. Thus, Basque nationalism in France has tended to adopt a regionalist agenda in order to counteract French nationalism (whether regionalised or not), while Spanish nationalists in Navarre or Alava have tended to stress regionalism or provincialism as a strategy for competing with Basque nationalism, by proclaiming the peaceful coexistence of local and regional identities with the Spanish identity.[24] In the second case, that of 'regionalised nationalism', the political agenda emphasises the strength of the 'greater' nation by fostering local, provincial or regional layers of identification. Here, the nationalism of the *petite patrie* and the *pays*, of the *Heimat*, the *regio* and the *rodina* may be compared with the nationalism of the *terruño* or of the *povo mais português de Portugal*, to quote several European examples.[25]

   However, even in this last case, the images, discourses and distinctive arguments which were used to define the *Heimat*, *petite patrie* or *terruño*, and originally intended before 1880–1890 to emphasise their peculiar contribution to the national glory or how they represented the best qualities of the national body and the national spirit, may generate potential mid- and long-term territorial conflicts of loyalty with the nation over time. These discourses can be based on the territorial history, the culture, the language or dialects, the folklore, the domestication of nature, the creation of landscape images and so on. Though those narratives were initially conceived as parts of a broader narrative, their autonomous development may be subject to reinterpretation by new actors, by those who *imagined* the territory in each historical circumstance.[26] Everything depends on who takes up the task of reinterpreting

those cultural materials, with which ideological tenets they are combined and within which political cultures they are embedded. The critical issue then is *who* the regionalists are, and *why* they are waving the territorial flag? The particular interests of the actors can lead to very different consequences. The more such mobilisation succeeds in gaining adherents and social acceptance, the more regionalism will be re-fostered as a self-propelling, low-cost strategic argument for political mobilisation. Some recent twentieth century examples include the Northern League in Italy, whose invention of the 'Padanian nation' relies not on a 'strong' nationalist narrative but rather on 'light' secessionist rhetoric,[27] regionalism in the French Savoy and the short-lived resurgence of Moravian regionalism in Czech lands during the 1990s.[28]

3. A crucial difference between nationalism and regionalism is the demand for political sovereignty. Regionalists do not claim their defined territory to be the subject of collective political rights. They may ask for decentralisation, self-government, political autonomy, even federalism, but they do not consider their territory to be sovereign and inherently deserving of the right to self-determination. However, historical reality contains several cases of greater complexity. Some examples of 'regionalised' state nationalism that developed as a reaction to a centrifugal sub-state ethnonationalism have evolved into their own separate sub-state nationalisms and maintain an ambiguous relationship to the nation they are actually representing, as illustrated by the Wallonian regionalist movement since its birth in the nineteenth century.[29] On several occasions, regionalist claims were cloaked with an 'ethno-nationalist' rhetoric and vice-versa. Catalan nationalists before 1918, and even Czech and Irish nationalists before 1914, did not always openly play the card of full-fledged ethnonationalism; they presented themselves in more ambiguous terms. This was more a question of strategy than of any long-term structural condition that would lead some movements to be 'association-seeking' rather than independence-seeking. In my view, 'separatism' is not necessarily a criterion for establishing a typological divide between regionalists and nationalists, since independence may move on or off the agenda of the political elites of a nationalist movement (particularly from 1880 to 1914, but also later on) depending on the international circumstances and the state's political opportunity structure. Within a nationalist movement, one tendency may be hegemonic over another, while pro-autonomy and pro-independence currents can vary over time within more or less diffuse lines of demarcation.[30] This divergence of political strategies concerning the level of self-government to be attained by a sub-state nation reflected the coexistence of different worldviews within nationalist movements, but it did not always imply a break with the existing empires or polities they belonged to.[31] Certainly, at different moments the short-term political strategies developed by regionalist and pro-autonomy nationalist

movements may seem similar. Catalan moderate nationalists in the 1910s and 1920s may be compared to the Sardinian regionalists of 1918–1922 as far as their home-rule claims within a composite state were concerned. Yet, there was little doubt that the theoretical basis of Catalan 'moderate' nationalism was different from the Sardinian one: they considered their territory to be a nation, which had then the right to decide over its incorporation in a greater unit. Sardinian regionalists never came to define Sardinia as a nation, but as a peripheral region that was a specific part of the Italian nation.[32]

4. Another fundamental difference relates to the degree of discursive articulation, the density of the frames of meaning and the cultural and historic narratives. The regionalists' discourses as well as their repertory of images concerning the mythical past, the specificity of their culture and the collective awareness of 'regionhood' were much weaker and less articulated than those of (sub-state) nationalists.[33] This is in part due to the contradiction involved in claiming that a territory represents a *specific difference* based on a mixture of organic, historic and cultural arguments, while maintaining its compatibility with and ultimate *subordination* to a wider concentric identity that is considered hierarchically superior. The territorial identity is supposed to be amicably integrated within the wider identity, which is imbued with its own self-affirmation discourse. Regionalist narratives are always expected to be implicitly or explicitly subordinate to a broader national narrative with which they are to merge in a harmonious way. Yet regionalists are constantly confronted with a long-term contradiction: how to combine an emphasis on the specific difference of a territory with the ultimate subordination to a wider sphere of identification. In contrast, national(ist) narratives are autonomous and mostly self-referential, though obviously not less invented or performative than regional(ist) narratives. Such were the theoretical complexities that confronted the intellectuals and political leaders of regionalism at the end of the nineteenth century concerning the precise limits of 'region' and 'nation'. There are cases throughout Western Europe that illustrate how one process of region-building turned into full-blown nation-building while another did not, how regional and national identities are shifting and are sometimes contradictory over time and also how different social actors constructed different concepts of the region that partially evolved into independent national narratives.[34]
5. An additional point is that the nation also created the region. With the advent and consolidation of the modern nation as the supreme principle upon which to base the territorial legitimacy of power, other territorial loyalties of different extent and nature, which had coexisted as political bodies within the organic order of the early modern composite monarchies, had to be re-structured and subjected to a new hierarchy. The emergence of the nation at the end of the eighteenth century