

## “The Regionalisation of Political Culture”<sup>1</sup>

Abstract (500 words)

Political culture research typically focuses on the nation-state, comparing how citizens or institutions of states vary in their political norms. When we look for heterogeneity within regions, we tend to explore heterogeneity among states, rather than within states. We know that EU member states have embarked on processes of decentralization and devolution and that the EU itself offers to regions a distinct capacity to govern. It is worth exploring the degree of uniformity among regions within Europe, and any patterns to the heterogeneity that we find. Using data from the International Social Survey Programme and European Social Survey this paper explores the extent to which we can speak of the regionalisation of political culture.

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## “The Regionalisation of Political Culture”

Political culture research helps us to understand the relationship between individuals and the state. It covers subjective orientations to the state, the norms by which the state treats its citizens, the pathways for democratic participation and voice within a polity and the institutions that structure political life. It has become commonplace to note that the authority of the nation-state is eroding from above and from below. As governments seek to balance their budgets, whether due to legislation obligating them to do so or because of political will, they have off-loaded responsibilities both jurisdictional and financial to lower orders of government. Among EU member-states France, the Czech Republic and Italy have pursued decentralization reforms, the UK Parliament has devolved power to three sub-state legislatures in 1999 and both Belgium and Spain have pursued ‘federalising’ reforms. It is reasonable to assume that the federalisation of the state, a devolution of its responsibilities and/or the offloading of financial obligations or service delivery to the regional level would affect the relationship between citizens and the state. All of this suggests that regions might be more important to our understandings of political culture than they were before, but we do not have a very clear sense of how important regions were to political culture in the first place.

Political culture research focuses on the nation-state. Research that popularized the concept by combining a focus on subjective orientations and large-scale datasets was concerned primarily with attitudes towards the nation-state. In part this reflects the motivations of early researchers particularly concerned with the stability of democracy. Not only was sub-state political life ignored, a sense of identification to any entity other than the state, whether a sub-state jurisdiction, town, nation, ethnic, religious or linguistic group was seen as a cause for concern. Attachment was deemed to be zero sum, and a lack of attachment to the state was seen as a risk factor for democratic instability. The state, and only the state, set the boundaries for a political culture. That one might have political cultures within a single state, for example in sub-state polities, or across states, for example among countries of a shared linguistic group, was not considered. There are, of course, a number of problems with this.

First, federal states are likely to have multiple political cultures. If each state, by its institutions, inculcates specific attitudes and behaviours in its population, then institutional boundaries could reasonably become cultural boundaries. Second, even in the absence of a federal architecture we might find multiple political cultures within a state. Political culture has been predominantly concerned with the nation-state, typically ignoring pluri-national states, even though we know that stateless nations, for example, often had institutions of socialisation with the capacity to generate among citizens a sense of state-like attachment and to inculcate particular orientations to the state. Third, the constraints on the nation-state, through the expansion of sub-state and supra-state political authority, means that approaches to political culture centred solely on the state might miss a significant aspect of citizen-state relations. Together these offer grounds for

acknowledging the role of regions within political culture, examining carefully the territorial scale of political culture.

We can 'regionalize' political culture in two senses. First, we can change the methodology we use to identify and explain political cultures by recognizing the role of the sub-state unit in the generation of political cultures. In federal polities, for example, we can imagine that we might have an over-arching political culture and then a distinct sub-culture in each sub-state polity. We could, then, ask questions about trust and civic duty specifically related to the sub-state polity. Second, we can recognize that certain events – devolution, institutional reform, the relevance of regional and supra-state governments encourage us to re-conceptualise political culture, to re-envision the relationship that individuals have with the state and their fellow citizens.

This paper explores the relevance of regions to political culture by performing three discrete tasks. First, I outline how we might re-conceptualise and measure a regionalised political culture. Second, I address three key questions related to the regionalisation of political culture: what a regionalism of political culture might look like, how we might identify the boundaries of regional political cultures and what impact regionalised political cultures might have. Third, using existing evidence at our disposal I explore whether we have evidence of regional political cultures within Europe.

### ***Regionalism and political culture***

The state-focused approach to political culture typically concerns itself with subjective orientations to the state (Almond and Verba 1963, Almond 1982) although Foster (1982) notes that this approach reflects the American preference for survey work. European approaches to political culture are more inclusive, Foster notes, focusing on the 'philosophy of the state' and thus pay greater attention to the rhetoric of public debate rather than the aggregated views of citizens.<sup>2</sup> It would be wrong to assume that this distinction operates purely on continental grounds but instead that researchers are divided between those who treat political culture as an aggregate of citizen attitudes and, for some, behaviours (see inter alia Verba 1965, Inglehart 1990), and those who see it as the property of the political system as a whole. An inclusive definition of political culture includes each of these, capturing the relationship, both perceived and actual, between citizens and the state, and the relationship, both perceived and actual, among citizens. Such a definition allows both for the subjective evaluations of citizens, their political behaviour and the institutions that structure their political lives.

Despite criticism of political culture (Whitefield and Evans 1999, Jackman and Miller 1996a 1996b, Reisinger 1995), some of it self-directed by those who conduct political culture research (Inglehart 1977, 1988, Kavanagh 1972, Lane 1992) advocates note it can be redeemed through careful and conscientious application. Elkins and Simeon point out, for example, that political culture can only really be identified after structural factors have been taken into account, that it should be used only comparatively, that the concept can be used neither to explain macro political developments nor micro-level voting decisions but instead is most helpful when exploring meso-level phenomena such as

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<sup>2</sup> Franklin and Braun, for example, equate political culture with zeitgeist (Franklin and Braun 1995)

institutional creation and the generation of public policies (Elkins and Simeon 1979). Typically comparative approaches contrast the political cultures of different nation states, and thus Germany is compared to France, and Canada to the United States. Variations within a single 'culture' tend to compare nation-states that share a particular trait, whether religions, political or structure. Thus we have research grouping together as a single culture historically Catholic countries, Communist countries, Scandinavian democracies or members of British Empire. While the general trend is to ignore variation within states, we identify an increasing focus on cultural heterogeneity and political culture. The following section explores the different clusters of research that address heterogeneity within the political culture of a single nation-state.

Different applications of political culture possess varying tolerance for heterogeneity within the boundaries of a single culture. Typically, works by scholars in the 1960s and 1970s highlighted the inevitability of variation between the views of elites and the views of masses (Pye and Verba 1965) or between the values espoused by institutions and those held by the electorate (Kavanagh 1972). Indeed much of the primary impetus for early works was the danger posed to democracy by a poor fit between institutions and electorate. Such research points to what we might refer to as vertical heterogeneity, between the values of governance and the values of the populace. Here heterogeneity is viewed as threat to political culture, a source of instability and something to be managed and minimized. Wildavsky holds a different view, arguing that political culture emerges from the very conflict and interaction of different cultural approaches to politics within the boundaries of the state. This distinction is not between the danger or benefit of heterogeneity within political culture, but between conceptions of culture. For Wildavsky, multiple approaches to political life are necessary for a political culture to exist. These unique approaches are in and of themselves not cultures, but fragments of a greater whole. But what does recent research say of this? Do we have evidence of multiple political cultures within a single nation-state or are these examples of heterogeneity within a single political culture? What are the necessary structural conditions for heterogeneous or multiple political cultures?

When Gemie (1994) refers to anarchist political culture, and Waters identifies a distinct political culture for conspiracy theorists (Waters 1997), should we consider these distinct political cultures?. Admittedly these views can contain a coherent vision of the citizen-state relationship but they are no more distinct than the views of libertarians or social democrats. Here, political culture is used as a proxy for the ideological views of individuals. This is most obvious when Telford and Lazar suggest that public support for left-wing social policies and right-wing economic policies proves that Canada, for example, has two political cultures (Telford and Lazar 2002). These are examples not of distinct political cultures but of the fragments within a single political culture relevant to its generation. Not all the examples are so clear cut.

The largest body of research on cultural heterogeneity deals with the political cultures of regions. Here, regions are seen as more than geographic clusters. Rather, the demographic characteristics of a region's population, economy and political institutions are seen capable of generating distinct political cultures. Russett (1968) identified four

criteria for regions: separation or isolation, usually geographic; a sense of homogeneity in terms of economy, demography, religion or political preference; a sense of loyalty or identity to the region; and the region as a seat of political control. Devine's criteria are similar, relying on identity, belief, symbolism and rule (Devine 1972). Inglehart and Carballo (1997) refer to 'coherent cultures' rather than regions but here too they look for a shared economy, language, religion and immigration. In each case the language used to identify regional political cultures relies on objective and subjective factors, an approach familiar to students of nationalism who distinguish between objective and subjective markers of nationhood.

Literature on regional political cultures grounds itself in demographic heterogeneity, whether due to variations in ethnicity brought about by immigration or due to economic circumstance. Much of this work is North American, where immigration coincided with institutional creation. Research on the arrival of inhabitants to New France (Hartz 1964), Puritans to Massachusetts (Fischer 1989) and revolutionary era migration of the United Empire Loyalists (Bell 1970) suggests that these culturally coherent groups influenced nascent political institutions with their distinct approaches to public life. Their impact is contested in a Canadian context but it sits alongside research linking homogeneous waves of immigration throughout the American west to create distinct regional political cultures in the United States. By far the best known of these is Elazar's three cultural groups – moralistic, traditional and individualistic - in the United States. Elazar's three political cultures have been subjected to rigorous quantitative investigation, some of it confirming Elazar's original research (Sharkansky 1970, Schlits and Rainey 1978), some suggesting that his impressionistic approach is either outdated (Miller, Barker and Carman 2005) or was never very accurate in the first place. Several studies employ political culture as independent variable, evaluating its impact on budgets (Koven and Mausolff 2002, Koven and Mausolff 2002) public opinion (Erikson, McIver and Wright 1987, Weakliem and Biggert 1999) and the implementation of particular policy innovations (Mead 2004), a use, it should be noted, criticised by Elkins and Simeon. This latter approach is similar to the use of veto points in public policy literature in that researchers appear to treat the distinct political cultures of different sub-state units as potential veto points themselves.

Beyond Elazar's three cultures, other research seeks to determine whether we might identify an 'urban west' (Moon, Pierece and Lovrich 2001) or a 'mountain west' (Alm, Burkhart, Patton and Weatherby 2004). In the UK, Curtice distinguishes between north and south Britain, pointing out that even when we control for variations in economic wealth and demography we can still distinguish between an optimistic south and a pessimistic, low efficacy north (Curtice 1992). Austrian and German research explores the existence of distinct political cultures, and, in the case of Germany, whether *länder* cluster into east and west political cultures (Niedermayer and von Behm 1996, Ulram and Plasser 2003). Most of these studies focus on a single state.<sup>3</sup> Silver and Dowley (2000),

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<sup>3</sup> Most of this research explores heterogeneity within a single sovereign state but assumes sub-state units are homogeneous. Elazar, for example, assigned each sub-state unit to one particular regional culture, but a handful of studies attempt to identify regionalism within a single American state Alm, Burkhart, Patton and Weatherby 2001, Alm, Burkhart, Patton and Weatherby 2004) or Canadian province (MacDermid 1990).

for example, were able to identify one previous cross-national study of cultural heterogeneity grounded in ethnic differences (Lipset 1996).

We know of course that ethnicities cluster not just within states but across states. At the supra-state level, a common language or religion are perceived capable of creating trans-boundary cultural boundaries, prompting Inglehart and Carballo to ask whether there is such a thing as a Confucian political culture, or a Latin American political culture (Inglehart and Carballo 1997). But why do these regional political cultures exist?

In much of this research, ethnicity is the key variable in the production of regional political cultures. For Pye and Verba ethnicity was a potential fault-line within society, luring people towards a social group at the expense of attachment to the state (Pye and Verba 1965). As Foster (1982) explains, “Once an ethnic identity gains such wide or intense support that it rivals that of the dominant social order and thus challenges the legitimacy of the central leadership, the stage of potential political conflict has been reached” (564). His definition of ethnicity is comprehensive including race, religion, language, territory, loyalty and identity. Much of this research implicitly sees ethnic groups bound not (only) by a shared private culture but a shared public culture of governance that, should certain groups represent a significant proportion of a polity, might affect the political culture. Such claims are made explicitly in research on stateless nations, where control of agents of socialisation such as education are perceived to be key to the generation of distinct political cultures within nation-state. For this reason we see research querying the existence of distinct political cultures in Scotland and Wales (Dickson 1996, Miller, Timpson and Lessnoff 1996), Catalonia and the Basque region (Martinez-Herrera 2002, Montero and Torcal 1990), Flanders and Wallonia.

The second body of research explores the impact of institutions on cultural heterogeneity and focuses primarily on the capacity of federalism to engender regional political cultures. As Lieske (1993) argues, federalism allows sub-state regions to “institutionalize their cultural preferences” (891) and so it is possible for us to imagine the existence of multiple political cultures within a single state. States linked in empire are also expected to have elements of a common political culture (Russett 1967). Part of this explores the impact of institutional change, such as devolution or regional re-organization, and a second sub-set deals with federalism.

The suggestion from such research is that institutions bring with them norms of governance that become the boundaries of new political cultures. New sub-state institutions are thus able to create new political cultures, and thus can lead to greater variation of political cultures within a single state. New supra-state institutions can likewise bring new norms of governance, and provide a homogenising influence across sovereign states. Likely the best known example of this top-down literature is Putnam’s examination of regional re-organization in Italy, which he argues had a minimal effect on political culture because of the pre-existing variations in social capital between north and south (1993). Additional research focuses on German unification and its capacity to homogenize the values of German voters (Gualini 2004), and the potentially unifying

impact of the European Union (Keating 1997). Morgan (2003) thus wonders whether new supra-state rights paradigms are changing approaches to governance. Sometimes institutions and demography are seen to be mutually reinforcing, creating sub-state and trans-boundary political cultures that in certain cases coincide with political boundaries and in others seem to pay them little regard (Russett 1968, Franco 1976, Engelen 2004, Garreau 1981).

We thus have two key approaches to cultural variation within polities, the first grounded in regions which are themselves often the product of ethnic boundaries, a second that focuses on the regional boundaries created or reinforced by institutions. Here regions can exist within a single polity or across polities. In light of these literatures it is worth asking what methodological and conceptual lessons we might identify. Typical approaches to regional political cultures identify the political sub-units of a polity and then determine whether there are statistically significant variations in terms of policy support or public opinion (Simeon and Elkins 1974, Brown, McCrone, Patterson and Surridge 1999). The assumption here is that the political boundaries of jurisdictions map perfectly to the boundaries of variant cultures. Sometimes these are then used to identify cultural maps (Inglehart and Carballo 1997). In such research there is little attention to how regions might function. An alternative approach is to identify the issues that might divide regions and then to identify regions, usually by cluster analysis, based on the fault-lines of opinion or behaviour (Russett 1968, Curtice 1992, Lieske 1993, Henderson 2005). *Why* these regions might produce distinct preferences or views of public life is typically under-explored. Efforts to do so seek to tease apart the impact of individual characteristics and the larger culture.

A sub-set of research attempts to distinguish between the characteristics of individuals, compositional effects, and the culture of the aggregate, contextual effects. If we find that contextual effects matter even once we have controlled for compositional effects, then we can say with confidence that place matters (De Leon and Naff 2004, Erikson, McIver and Wright 1987), place in this case being a proxy for territorially-grounded political cultures. The easy way to do this is to identify particular attitudes or behaviours as the dependent variable and to control for both personal demographic traits and region in the regression analysis. If region remains a significant predictor of attitudes even once we have controlled for individual characteristics then we can say that region matters. In a variation of this, Silver and Dowley (2000) calculate what individual preferences should be, identify what individual preferences are, and the measure the gap. Regions that had larger gaps between observed and expected results are deemed to possess distinct political cultures.

Much of this research provides us with a very rich description of empirical reality and devotes less attention to conceptual questions: why do regional political cultures exist, by which means are values transmitted in regional political cultures, what explains the continued or increasing salience of regions? Many of these questions are ignored not just by regional literature but by the larger political culture literature, a point made by many of the concept's critics (Johnson 2003). Some of the research hints at possible answers.

Biggert (1999) and Gregory (1983) seek to identify possible causes of regionalisation, pointing to cross-cultural contact encouraged by supra-state institutions. Russett suggests that colonial legacies or trade relationships might likewise encourage supra-state regions. There is far less attention to the possible causes of regional cultures within existing polities.

In light of this literature it is worth asking what regional political cultures look like, why they exist, and how we might know if we have them. The remainder of the paper first, identifies the conceptual terrain for a regional approach to political culture and second, explores data at our disposal to determine what evidence we have of regional political cultures. The following section focuses on a number of questions we might ask if we are to define, understand and measure regional political cultures.

***What are regional political cultures?***

Kreimer (2001) notes that state governments provide “competing set of norms”. These competing norms are credited with creating distinct political cultures. If this is the case, then the existence of multiple governments within a single state has the capacity to produce multiple sets of norms; each discrete group of citizens has in its possession the capacity to maintain a singular political culture. State boundaries are thus relevant to cultural boundaries. In this view, federalism has the capacity to generate multiple political cultures within a single state, and institutional creation such as devolution or regional reorganization likewise can generate regional political cultures. Here, regional political cultures exist at the sub-state level and might vary from state political cultures that unite all citizens within the boundaries of the sovereign states, regardless of province or nation or territory of residence. There is another way to look at this. The rise of the supra-state level has the capacity to generate a unified political culture across borders. Here we can cluster together countries that share not a language or religion or colonial experience but supra-state institutions of governance. This is why researchers might seek to identify a coherent European political culture. In this scenario, the independent states are themselves regional political cultures to a unified supra-state culture. The very existence of regional political cultures can be grounded in the institutional architecture of a single state or multiple states. When we speak of regional political cultures we should thus distinguish between sub-state regional cultures and state regional cultures that exist within supra-state groupings.

***Can we distinguish among regional political cultures?***

Thus far the paper has equated regions within a unitary state to regions in federal states. We know, however, that the two are distinct. If political cultures have at their centre a state, then each new state has the *capacity* for a distinct political culture. One might ask, though, whether in the absence of a sovereign state we can have political cultures? Where does one region end and another begin? Existing research distinguishes between jurisdictional boundaries and functional markers of difference. For improved clarity we should distinguish among three variations to the political cultures of sovereign states. In large countries we can expect regional variations in the state political culture. Variations in demography can encourage individuals to have different attitudes to the state. Such variations might not stem from discrete, internally coherent approaches to political life but from differential treatment at the hands of governing institutions, something that



might affect subjective evaluations of the state. This, simply put, is regionalism within a single state political culture. In contemporary politics we should distinguish this from the political cultures that exist within bounded political jurisdictions at the sub-state level, whether cantons or länder or provinces. These we might label sub-state political cultures. Third, we should distinguish these from political sub-cultures, or what we might call identity political cultures. If political cultures are imagined communities within politics then sub-cultures are typically viewed as products of social interaction. Here we might expect greater contact among members and a greater level of attitudinal and behavioural homogeneity. The boundary is perceived rather than jurisdictional. The literature employs the label sub-culture when it refers to anarchist political cultures, for example. There are, however, other examples of groups in possession of coherent cultures of governance, of which stateless nations and Aboriginal bands are the best example. The lines between each of these are, of course, hazy. Russett (1968) notes that identifying regional boundaries is a tricky task. Quoting the National Resources Committee 1935 report he points out that “regional boundaries are usually indefinite, being zones rather than lines” (320). Last, we should acknowledge that all political cultures are political communities with centres and peripheries within which we will find attitudinal variation. For the sake of brevity the remainder of the paper refers to regional political cultures as a short form for each of these three types of cultures.

***What is the impact of regional political cultures?***

Typically when we look for evidence of regionalism we are looking for evidence of variation; regional political cultures might exist if we have varied political preferences across different territorial jurisdictions in a single state. The impact of this is obvious, for we could expect greater policy variation than if citizens lived within a homogeneous, unitary state. Regional political cultures might have other effects.

Inclusive definitions of political culture rely both on the subjective and objective nature of citizen-state relations. Because subjective definitions rely primarily on trust and efficacy, objective measures tend to rely on the institutions that structure daily life. These should include (although frequently do not) formal pathways for voice, including petitions, elections, referendums and citizens assemblies. What such approaches miss, however, is a measure of the objective salience of the state. If we are looking to test for the existence of regional political cultures we must then focus on the comparative salience of different levels of government. A salient sub-state polity might have two clear impacts on political culture. First, research typically assumes that our interactions with the state affect our generalized political attitudes: if we are satisfied with our dealings with politicians in Westminster then we will feel that politicians can be trusted. What no one has yet determined, however, is whether our interaction at the sub-state level affects our generalized political attitudes. In some cases it might be our interactions with sub-state politicians that affect our sense of trust or efficacy, an impact that would increase if regions are increasingly perceived to be salient political communities.

The regionalisation of political culture should be treated carefully. For some, regionalisation might mean an increased heterogeneity of views, regionalisation a proxy for territorially-grounded variety. Here, the task would be to determine whether individual or contextual effects serve as sources of variation. Another approach is to

argue that regionalisation has the capacity to change how we understand political culture. The capacity for multiple inputs, for individuals to exist within multiple political cultures, must take us away from the typical homogeneous state-centred approach that we tend to employ. Research in nationalism studies has long argued the individuals have multiple and nested identities. What we might consider is that individuals likewise exist within multiple and nested political cultures.

### **DO REGIONAL POLITICAL CULTURES EXIST?**

Having outlined how we might approach the task of identifying regional political cultures it is worth testing this against available empirical evidence. The following section relies on two datasets that contain questions about region of residence and typical questions about political life. At present we lack the empirical data to test whether individuals have different levels of trust or efficacy to the sub-state level of government, as the questions posed are either phrased to probe generalized attitudes or state-level institutions and actors. We also lack the capacity to determine whether experiences of sub-state political life are more likely to affect generalized attitudes than state-level experiences. We can, however, probe for regional identity and attitudinal variation.

We know of course that the sub-state level of government can be more important, controlling funding, or dealing with areas of jurisdiction that have a greater impact on an individual's daily life but if people do not view the region as a meaningful political community then objective salience might be unimportant. Indeed older political culture research tends to suggest that this is the norm, that the sub-state level may be in charge of service delivery but it is not the primary political community for individuals. If we ignore objective measures of regional salience such as jurisdictional control or budgets and focus instead on subjective factors we can identify two approaches to measure the salience of regions as political communities, focusing on regional identity and perceived relevance of regional institutions. The following results focus on European states for they provide us with a mix of federal and unitary polities, pluri-national entities and nation-states, EU members and those outside, which might enable us to account for any patterns in the appearance of regional political cultures.

A first way to identify the potential salience of regions is to explore regional attachment among individuals. If individuals are more attached to their region than the larger state, we *might* have preliminary evidence of a regionalisation of political culture. The 2003 ISSP dataset on national identity asks a number of questions about sense of belonging, civic and ethnic markers of nationalism and national pride. The survey includes a question that pits state and sub-state identities against each other but it is asked of respondents in only a few countries. In all countries respondents were asked about their degree of attachment to the continent, to the country, their region and town. These are four separate questions in which respondents could indicate that they felt very close, close, not very or not at all close to each of the four entities. We can identify mean scores for state and regional attachment by recoding each of the variables so they vary from 0 to 1, with 1 implying greater attachment and 0 none at all. If we treat the level of

aggregate attachment to the state as the base line, and compare it to aggregate attachment to the region, we can identify states where regional attachment is higher or lower.

Table 1 about here.

The results in table 1 are, in some cases, unsurprising. In nine of the twenty-two countries included in the dataset (the eight in table 1 and Canada) attachment to the region is greater than attachment to the state. We see predictable trends, with greater regional attachment in multi-national states such as Spain, and greater state attachment in unitary states such as France. We have reasons to be cautious about employing state-level measures. We know, for example, that regional attachment in Scotland and Wales is high but in England is lower. English respondents dwarfed Scottish and Welsh respondents in the British sample and therefore their lower degree of attachment is seen as characteristic of the state as a whole. If we explore regional attachment within states, we get a better sense of the diversity that exists.

Figure 1 about here

The ISSP dataset includes variables on region of residence. In some cases these conform to existing jurisdictional boundaries. In the other cases, the regions are municipal level boundaries. The results have been recoded so that they represent the regional administrative units within the polity. This ensures that the regions are functional rather than arbitrary boundaries identified by pollsters. Figure 1 displays the total range in regional attachment among the regions of European states. In four cases (Bulgaria, the Czech republic, Latvia and the United Kingdom) the variations among regions are statistically significant. For the most part variation occurs within the level of state attachment. In Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Slovakia and Slovenia each of the regions express greater attachment to the state, but vary in the extent to which state attachment outstrips regional attachment.

Perceived authority provides a second test of salience. The generation of regional political cultures is linked to the operation of regional institutions. We might say that regional political cultures exist, for example, if the region is perceived to be the appropriate level of decision making for different policy areas. The 2002 European Social Survey asked respondents whether the international, European, state or regional level were the appropriate level for eight policy areas, the environment, organized crime, agriculture, defence, social welfare, development aid, immigration and interest rates.

Table 2 about here

The results in table 2 identify the level of government deemed most appropriate for each policy area. We can draw three conclusions from the results. First, in no case was region deemed to be the appropriate level of activity. Second, the state is not deemed to be the pre-eminent political actor in all cases. For the environment, organized crime and development aid a majority of countries believe that the international level is the most appropriate venue for policy creation. Views on immigration are split between those who believe the state to be the most appropriate actor and those who believe the international level is more appropriate. Only with social welfare does a plurality of respondents in each country believe that the state should determine policy. Third, there are interesting differences among European countries about the relevance of the European level of decision-making. Some European members such as Belgium, Germany or the Netherlands are more supportive of the European Union, believing that it should decide

policy for agriculture, defence and interest rates. Most of the other member states in the sample did not believe it to be the appropriate level of decision-making for any of the policy areas in this study.

The lack of support for regional control leads us to examine variations in support by region rather than by state. If we look at support by region we are able to identify particular policies and particular sub-state units where regions are deemed the most appropriate locus of policy decision making. For the most part this includes agriculture and immigration but interesting here is that this includes regions within decentralized or federal polities such as Galicia, the Basque country, Navarra and Aragon in Spain or Piemonte, Veneto, Friuli, Lazio or Calabria in Italy. Agriculture is the policy area deemed most relevant to the regional level. In Northern Ireland a plurality of respondents believed the regional level to be the most appropriate venue of decision making for the environment, organized crime, agriculture and social welfare. Most interesting, though, are the results that we expect to see but do not. There is not a plurality of support for regional decision making in Scotland and Wales, Catalonia, in any of the Germany länder, in Flanders or Wallonia. We must question, then, what regional salience means if a plurality of respondents still believe the state or supra-state level to be the most appropriate level of government. This is, of course, a particularly stringent test for regional salience. The policies listed are those most likely to be coordinated at an international level. Missing are, for example, education or language, two areas that we might expect respondents to place at the hands of the region.

Having tested for regional salience we can now turn to regional variation. The results above suggest that different regions possess different levels of support for regional decision making. Equally relevant to discussions of regional political culture is whether regions house distinct approaches to political life. Here we can look at variations within a single state. If we want a more comprehensive test of regional variation, though, it seems more helpful look at regions within a larger geographic area. It is one thing for us to say that respondents in different German länder hold disparate views of political life. It is another for us to say that the sub-state units of European countries cannot be distinguished from one another, cannot be clustered into state groupings but instead exist in a jumbled mix of preferences, with state borders mattering little to political values. The remainder of the analysis relies on the 2002 European Social Survey. Respondents were coded as resident in one of the 202 regions. To minimize the number of regions under examination the analysis focuses primarily on the older EU members in Western Europe, but includes also Norway and Switzerland. The analysis therefore excludes the Czech republic, Poland, Slovenia, Hungary.<sup>4</sup> It also excludes any region with fewer than 100 respondents as the margins of error would make it difficult for us to identify political views reliably.

In an effort to determine whether we can detect regional variation we have created two indices of political views of the state. These are among the traditional 'subjective orientations to the state' preferred by older political culture research. The first of these is a measure of trust composed of four items probing trust in parliament, politics and

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<sup>4</sup> It excludes Israel, a non-European country included in the ESS.

politicians. The second is a measure of civic duty that contains questions linked to ideal citizen behaviour. Details on the creation of these variables and alpha scores are contained in the appendix. Before we explore regional variation it is worth detecting where average scores are for the countries that remain in the dataset. Diagnosing the extent of attitudinal heterogeneity among regions must be preceded by an effort to establish the extent of attitudinal heterogeneity among the constituent states of Europe. If, for example, all of the states are clustered in the same part of the graph, but their regions are spread across the indices, then we can say that regional cultures might exist.

Figure 2 about here.

Figure 2 provides a mapping of ideological views according to two traditional measures of the political culture. This technique is employed frequently by Inglehart when he tests for cultural groupings among states. The results cluster the Scandinavian democracies towards the top right of the graph, indicating that their respondents are high in both political trust and civic duty. UK and Belgian respondents are low in civic duty but possess average scores of political trust. Portugal, at the top left of the graph, is characterised by high civic duty and a very low sense of political trust. We have evidence, then, of the extent of cultural heterogeneity within Europe, but the results are as we might have expected.

We can create a similar ideological map employing regions as cases. If we are looking for evidence of a regionalisation of political culture, it is worth determining what our map might look like. First, we would expect the regions of a single state not to be clustered tightly but to be spread fairly loosely around the state datapoint. Second, we would expect areas with higher degrees of regional attachment, where regional salience is stronger, to be less proximate to the remaining regions in the state. We should make no assumption that such regions will not be close to the original state point. In some states, such as the United Kingdom, the sub-state units with strong regional attachment are minorities within the state, housing a small proportion of the population. In other polities, however, sub-state units with strong regional attachment might occupy a greater proportion of the population and therefore might better account for aggregated state scores on our two factors. Third, we should expect some difficulty drawing easy boundaries around the regions of a single state. If political culture has become regionalised, then we might expect that the regions of Italy, Germany, Belgium, Britain and Sweden to be positioned relatively fluidly on the map.

Figure 3 about here

The results in figure 3 confirm some of what we might expect of a regionalised political culture. In certain cases the regions of a single state are clustered loosely, rather than tightly around a single point. We can see Portuguese regions clustered in the top left of the scatter plot, Norwegian regions clustered in the top right, and British regions clustered in the bottom centre. These clusters approximate the positions in figure 1. This confirms the extent of heterogeneity within a single state but serves also as a reminder of the overwhelming state pull of regions. That we are able to identify a Norwegian cluster, a Swedish cluster, a Portuguese cluster, an Irish and a British cluster confirms that regional political cultures are unlikely to supplant state political cultures as engines of political socialisation. There are, of course, obvious exceptions. The data point for Wallonia is on one side of the British cluster, with the datapoint for Flanders on the other

side. Second, we can also see that in certain cases, particular regions are cut off from the main cluster. The Algarve region is located far closer to the UK cluster than to other Portuguese regions. Although UK immigration to the Algarve hovers at approximately 20% of the regional population we should not assume that we are witnessing a contemporary example of Elazar's ethnically homogeneous migrant cultures. Those regions least proximate from their state counterparts do not, however, appear to be those where regional attachment or nationalist sentiment runs high. In a sense this is a more encouraging sign of regional political cultures, for they are not solely the result of nationalist regions.

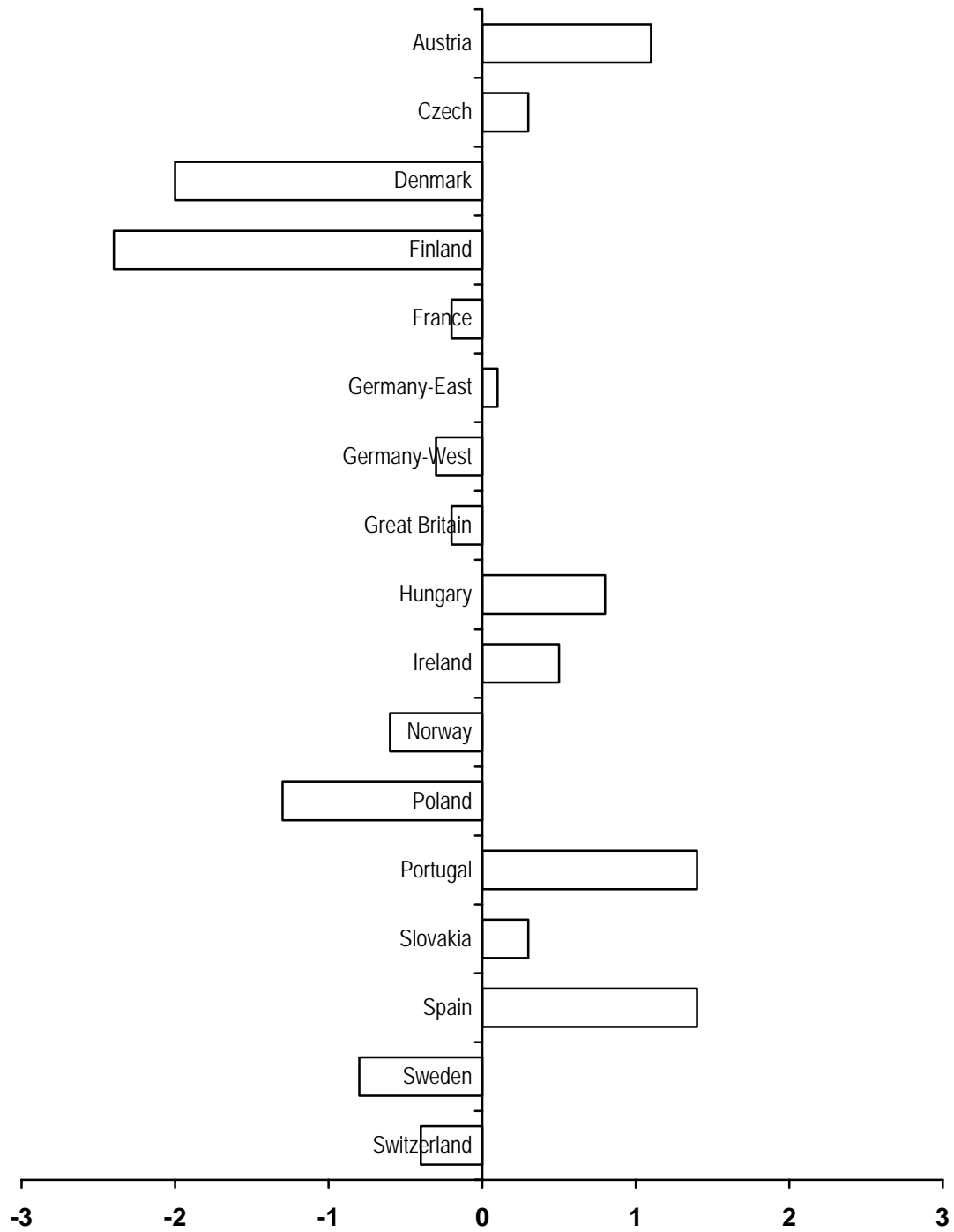
Third, we can see a clustering of regions of the sort Inglehart might expect. The regions within the Scandianvian welfare states tend to cluster together, for example. The non-EU members Switzerland and Norway appear clustered together, although worryingly their levels of trust and civic duty are higher than for most of the regions of EU member states. The Irish regions are clustered in an arc around the British regions. If Russett argues that colonial ties might explain regional cultures then certainly we have reason to investigate this relationship further.

Fourth, much of the research on regional political cultures has turned itself to the European dimension, asking whether we can see the emergence of a European culture and, if so, what its chief characteristics might be. Most striking in this graph, then, are the boundaries we are not able to draw. The regions of Italy, Spain, Austria and Germany are so mixed together that it is impossible to identify an Italian cluster of regions, or an Austrian cluster and so on. Instead we appear to have evidence of a continental EU political culture. We are, of course, missing French respondents, for they did not answer each of the questions used to create the trust and civic duty factors. Our inability to assign the regions to state clusters suggests, however, a cluster of European regions. This should not be mistaken for homogeneity, as the regions are not clustered tightly around a single centre. Instead they point to the creation of a heterogeneous and regionalised political culture in Europe.

If we have some evidence of a regionalisation of political culture, what type of evidence would we require in order to provide more compelling results? First, we require quantitative datasets that ask the typical battery of trust, efficacy, satisfaction and confidence questions with respect to the state *and* the sub-state level. Second, such datasets must be comparative, for this will enable us to determine whether this is a general effect or a function of nationalist movements in certain states but not in others. In order for us to detect a regionalisation of political culture it must be discernible not just in multinational states but in demographically homogeneous ones, not just in federations or in polities occupying large territories but also in compact unitary states. Third, such datasets should include more than just European countries. If we want to argue that the European Union has emphasized the importance of regional political cultures then we need to establish that such patterns are not occurring elsewhere. Fourth, we need measures to test the salience of regional political life, not just whether it operates according to distinct cultural norms but whether it is more salient in forming individual

preferences. Regions can be relevant not just because they are different but because they are perceived to be the primary political community.

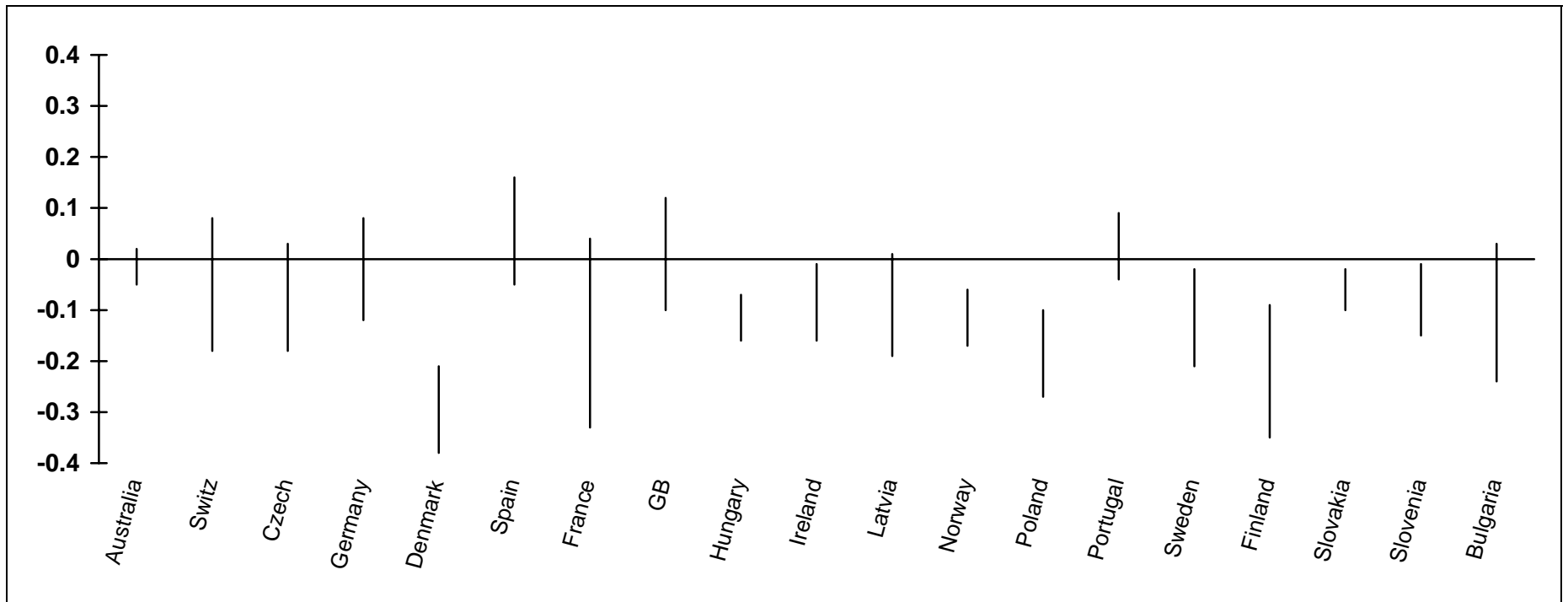
Table 1: Regional attachment, by country



Source: ISSP 2003



Figure 1 Variations in regional attachment relative to state attachment



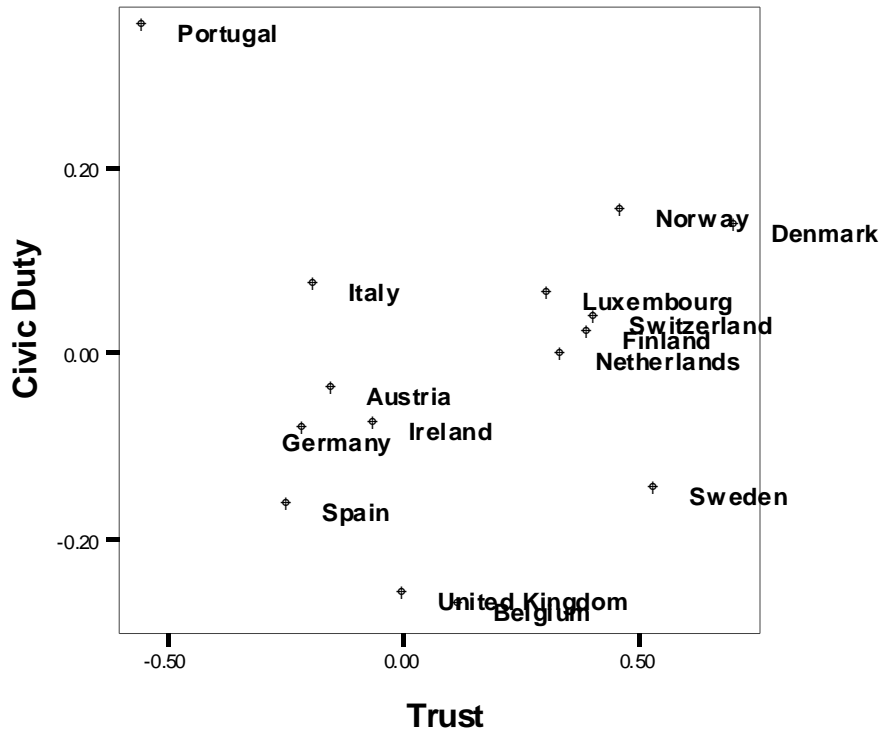
Source: ISSP 2003. Positive numbers imply greater attachment to the region.

Table 2: Appropriate level of government for policy decisions, by country and sector

	Environ't	Organised crime	Agriculture	Defence	Social welfare	Develop't aid	Immigration	Interest rates
Austria	I	I	S	S	S	I	S	S
Belgium	I	I	E	E	S	I	I	E
Czech Republic	I	I	S	I	S	I	I	S
Denmark	I	I	S	E	S	S	S	S
Finland	I	I	S	S	S	I	S	S
France	I	I	S	E-S (tie)	S	I	I	E
Germany	I	I	E	E	S	I	S	E
Greece	I	I	S	S	S	I	I	S
Hungary	S	I	S	S	S	I	S	S
Ireland	S	S	S	S	S	I	S	S
Italy	S	I	S	S	S	I	S	E
Luxembourg	I	I	E	E	S	I	I	S
Netherlands	I	I	E	E	S	I	I	E
Norway	I	I	S	S	S	I	S	S
Poland	S	I	S	S	S	I	I	S
Portugal	I	I	S	S	S	I	I	S
Slovenia	I	I	S	S	S	I	S	S
Spain	I	I	S	S	S	I	I	S
Sweden	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S
Switzerland	I	I	S	S	S	I	I	S
United Kingdom	I	I	S	S	S	I	S	S

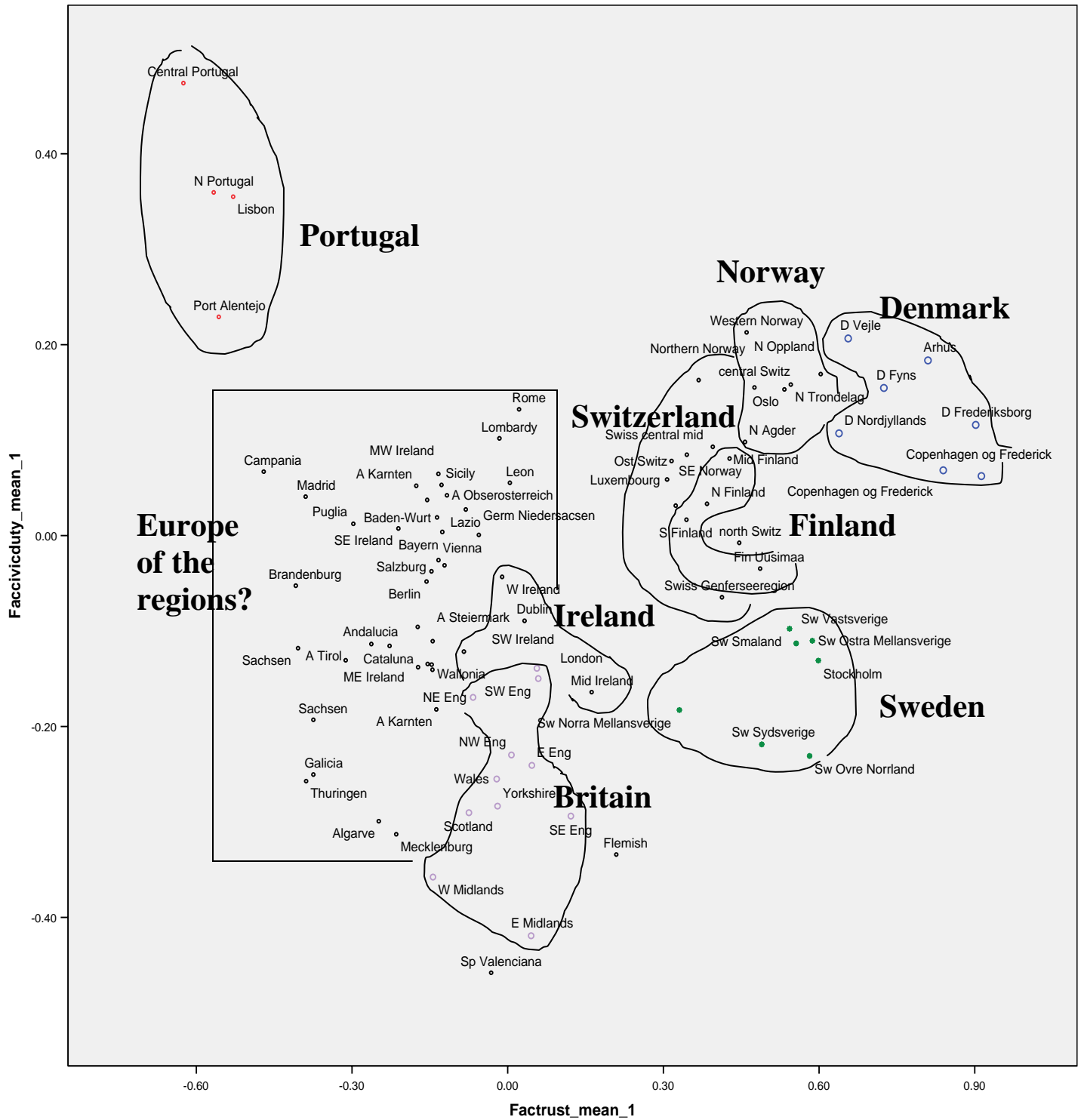
Source: ESS 2002. I=international E=Europe S=state R=region. Results indicate plurality of responses for a particular level of government.

Figure 2: Ideological map of Europe, by country



Source: ESS 2002

Figure 3: Ideological map of Europe, by region



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