DEFINING MODERN EUROPEAN REGIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH ITALY
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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ABSTRACT

Mary Katherine Rouleau: Defining Modern European Regional Identities
through Italy and the United Kingdom
(Under the direction of Tobias Hof)

The following thesis defines regional identity and describes the historical development of regional identity in Italy and the United Kingdom. Case studies of those nations (Piedmont, Calabria, Scotland, and England) are used to illustrate different components of regional identity and compared. This study is guided by how the concepts of regional identity challenge their nation's political-administrative and socio-economic centrality as relating to factors including history of both the nation and region, religious affiliation and importance, and politics. This research synthesizes information to ultimately contribute to constructivist analyses of international politics.

This thesis is dedicated to my colleagues in the Trans-Atlantic Masters program at Chapel Hill,

the University of Bath, and the Università degli Studi di Siena.

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CHAPTER 1: REGIONAL IDENTITY

Introduction

This project studies the relationship between national and regional identities in the United Kingdom (UK) and Italy, by studying the cases of Scotland, England, Piedmont, and Calabria. Clashes between national and regional identities have resulted in tension between these countries' regions and the state. For example, the Veneto and Lombardy regions held referendums in 2017 to determine the amount of support for autonomy from Rome in which overwhelming majorities voted in the affirmative, although with low turnout (58 and 40 per cents, respectively) (Agence France-Presse, 2017). In Scotland, an independence referendum to leave Britain was held in 2014 with a high turnout of 85 per cent, resulting in a 'No' vote at 55 per cent (BBC News, 2014). A second referendum is expected to be held before the 2021 Scottish elections, therefore leaving Scotland's political affiliation with the UK an open question (Bews, 2017). These examples and others discussed throughout this paper highlight the constant struggle of these regions within their countries over the past 170 years and bring to mind several questions. What is regional identity? How did regionalism develop in Italy and the UK? How are European regional identities affected by the European Union? What is the importance of referenda and election results as reflections of regional and national identities? And lastly, what are the similarities between Italian and British regional identities as case studies of European regional identities?

The following thesis will attempt to answer these questions through studying the historical development of British and Italian regional identities. The first chapter begins by defining the concepts of national and regional identity by highlighting the contributing factors to regional identity. Next, the second chapter consists of two sections, one of which describes the history of Italian regional identity from the 19th century, with a focus on Piedmont and Calabria. Following Italy, the second section of the chapter illustrates British regional identity since the 19th century, with a focus on England and Scotland. As such, the historical compilation represents the largest portion of this report. The third chapter responds to the last question above by comparing the regional identities examined in the previous chapter, focusing on similarities between regional identity factors. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the answers to the above questions and again describes the importance of regional identities to the political landscape of Italy and the UK.

This research utilized a variety of sources to address the extent of the paper. The vast majority of research came from academic articles with research specific to regional identity regarding Italy, the UK or both. Thus, comparative identity research was important to include, as was literature on national identity. Other information in the research focused on the incorporation of regional identities into the nation, the role of regional identities in Europe, in addition to multiculturalism and ethnicity. To deepen the understanding of these countries' history outlined in the second section, books on the history of Europe, Italy, and Britain since the Industrial Revolution were consulted. Lastly, it was necessary to supplement the historical research with updated information, for which a few recent news articles were utilized.

1.1. Definition of Regional Identity

Before providing a definition of regional identity, it is necessary to first define national identity, because regions are sub-units of nations. A nation-state is, in the modern sense, a fixed territory which has sovereign administration (the right to hold and exercise authority) over that territory, legal and political independence, and legitimacy (McCormick, 2011, pp. 2, 15). As nation-states dominated the 20th century, scholars and political scientists conceptualized the meaning of national identity. Some scholars argued that the scope of national identity is comprised of "sources of national pride, characteristics which distinguish a country from its neighbors, the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, [and] the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad" (Wallace, 1991, p. 65). These broad concepts are uniquely shaped by a nation's class and economic activity, individuals' conceptions of history, political structure, and historical development (Nairn, 1981, p. 88). National identity also encompasses how the people feel or know their nation to be, as it legitimizes how the government acts in the name of its national interest. States rely on their citizens' personal commitment to the state for social and economic purposes such as taxation, military and management of the economy – all the most important aspects of a state (Wallace, 1991, p. 66). A later section will explore how a strong sense of regional identity potentially leads to an outsized influence on a nation, as Piedmont in Italy and England in the UK prove.

This thesis uses Woods' (1995) definition of regional identity as a form of protest "against political-administrative and socio-economic centrality" usually based on a region's perception of sovereignty, as a guide to determine a region's relative strength or weakness (Woods, 1995, p. 189). A strong regional identity therefore results in undermining national

policies that allow for sociocultural autonomy and federal political organization, in some cases leading to "outright separatism" (*ibid*). In this sense, the existence of strong regional identities creates constant vulnerability for the nation.

Anderson (2016) argues the concepts of nation and region are basically imagined political communities which are "limited and sovereign", based only on scale and recognition of the commonality between members, limited by nothing except boundaries of other nations who perceive themselves in the same way (p. 2). This is to say that components of identity are the same factors in a national and regional context, with only a difference of scale. National and regional identities contribute to 'soft' power (influence not requiring force) through education, communication, cultural traditions, language, and innovation (Wallace, 1991, p. 78). The definitions of identity do not include physical features, suggesting identity is tied specifically to peoples and experience of living via values, education, language, religion, etc., rather than places. (BBC, GCSE Media Studies). Comments from the UK's Office for National Statistics (2011) describe divisions between ethnicity, language, and religion as pertaining to national and regional identities. Lastly, regional commonalities such as traditional dress and linguistic accents or dialects are other sources of cultural identity and political legitimacy used at the local rather than state level (Woods, 1995, p. 199).

1.2.   Contributing Factors to Regional Identity

Regional identities are shaped by "historical legacy, political action, cultural specificity, ethnicity and spatialized social relations" (Morgan, 2002, p. 807, citing Rokkan and Urwin, 1982; Allen et al., 1998; Keating, 1998; Tomaney and Ward, 2000). These broad categories include

factors such as: a charismatic leader, civil society groups (e.g. associations with political groups, unions, etc.), political movements and active political parties, dependence on federal government such as subsidies, simple confidence in local, regional, and national governments, and lastly, religious dynamics (Corner, 1975, p. 6). As historian Paul Corner writes in his discussion on the rise of Italian fascism in the early 20th century, determinative characteristics of a local or regional identity contributed greatly to national identity insofar as the provincial fascist organizations provided the "basis for the affirmation of fascism at a national level" (p. ix). In regard to economic factors, national governments face disappointment and anger from regions when the distribution of public goods is perceived as unequal, mismanaged or as a result of corruption (Woods, 1995, p. 194).

Global cities like London and Rome undermine and strengthen national identity. On the one hand, these cities weaken national identity by sheer strength of the regional identity they form. Global cities become centers for tourism and international business, which attract outsiders in such quantity that the culture of the cities absorbs aspects of foreign culture and absorbs aspects of surrounding regional identities into its own. The unique mix of native identity shifted by foreign identities (viewpoints, culture, political identity and history) have the potential to weaken the host's local, regional, and ultimately national identity over time. On the other hand, global cities strengthen regional and national identity because strong identification with the city highlights the native aspects of identity from the new, emphasizing socio-cultural traditions, language, and religion. Regional "disparities and convergence" constructed by different groups in power throughout history, such as the power that shifts between global cities, shifts the culture and therefore identity (González, 2011, p. 63).

Furthermore, identity formation at all levels represents "state spatial strategies" which "influence the geographies of social and economic relations" (Gonzàlez, 2011, p. 63). The cultural political economy that emerges from the combination of identity is upheld by language, myths, and state actors' "power to construct and disseminate discourses that potentially translate or influence policy" (*ibid*). One of the most important places supranational, national, regional and even local identity is perpetuated (and where different levels of identity are incorporated and challenged) are schools, used to envelop each generation in a community's current conception of identity (Kowalczyk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 424). To this point, schools teach "memory of language, traditions [and] stories" to maintain "homogeneity of the nation", meaning national identity. Fitjar (2010) argues that education "aim[s] to reduce the significance of regional identities in the peripheries" (areas further away from a nation's administrative center), but schools may promote regional and local identities. For example, the region's history and dialect may be taught if curricula is not strictly mandated at a national level (p. 527).

CHAPTER 2: REGIONS

2.1   Italian Regional Identity, 1850 to Present

The process of constructing a national Italian identity began in the mid-19th century. According to historian David Gilmour (2012), a "cultural" Italy existed prior to 1850, but there was neither a "political *patria* [fatherland]," nor political Italian nation-state (p. 121). Average Italians were not literate through at least the latter half of the century and thus lacked access to novels that celebrated national identity, funds to go to an opera, or have art in their home – and thus could not be exposed to some cultural forces shaping national identity (Gilmour, 2012, p. 234).   Literacy and access to information was a challenge for unification because national movements by definition require full mobilization of society by way of journals, literature, educational and cultural institutions.   Hence, the Italian movement proceeded slowly because "the most traditional, backward, or poor [people], a larger proportion…than elites…were the last to be involved" as that cohort took longer to engage (Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 90).

During this period various Italian regions vacillated between control by France under Emperor Napoleon III and Austria under the Habsburg dynasty. Napoleon III undertook several actions to solidify French dominance over the peninsula including changing its name from the Cisalpine to the Italian Republic (Gilmour, 2012, p. 130). He also renamed various states and redrew boundaries to create three new macro-regions: Piedmont, Tuscany, and the Two Sicilies, representing Northern, Central, and Southern Italy. The "North" and "South" macro-regions are comprised of the Aosta, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Trentino,

Venice and Veneto regions (North) and Calabria, Puglia, Basilicata, Campania, Molise, and Sicily (South) respectively. Napoleon III's plans for a cohesive state were complicated by the states' history of independence, having not been ruled by one entity since the Roman Empire (Fitjar, 2010, p. 525).

Author Alessandro Manzoni wrote of a unified Italy in his book *I Promessi Sposi* (1827) although one did not yet exist. Manzoni imagined Italy would have a national identity from shared "…language, memories and Catholicism" (Gilmour, 2012, p. 152). Just before 1850, the Southern Italian politician Massimo d'Azeglio described his vision as "independence for the whole peninsula – independence, but *not* unity" [emphasis added], which speaks to the political-administrative separation in Woods' (1995) definition of regional identity (Gilmour, 2012, p. 149; p. 189). Giuseppe Mazzini's *Risorgimento* movement in the 1860s endorsed political unification of Italy, appealing to a "spirit of sacrifice", suffering, and passion to foster Italian identity (Gilmour, 2012, p. 236). However, like d'Azeglio, some intellectuals "accepted and… revered [Italy's] political disunity and consequent diversity and cosmopolitanism" through the development of Italy during the *Risorgimento* period from 1861 to 1922 (Gilmour, 2012, p. 122).

Camillo Benso, the Count of Cavour, was also involved in shaping Italy both as a military commander and diplomat. Cavour's mission was to expel the Austrians from the peninsula and then unify the North (consisting of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Venetia, still under Austrian rule) and then "[turn] the new Italian kingdom into a prolongation of Piedmont", although he failed at repelling the French or Austrians during their Italian occupations (Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 72; Gilmour, 2012, pp. 186-187). Cavour was also motivated to create an Italian nation state to

enlarge Piedmont's political power and thus repay its large debt (Gilmour, 2012, pp. 179; 243). From an identity perspective, he only sought "one official language" but did not repress the persistence of dialects within Italy, which allowed space for regional identities to continue without linguistic restrictions. By doing so, Cavour's ideas reflected those of many intellectuals at the time and thus perpetuated socio-cultural regionality.

By 1861 Italy was reclaimed from the foreigners, and the Kingdom of Italy was created. Italy was now the whole peninsula, missing only a central piece which included Rome. Immediately after unification, Italian governments spent two decades (1860-1880) trying to "cultivate the nation's founding myth" from which to nurture national identity which was never quite accomplished – as demonstrated by persistent regionalism to the present day (Gilmour, 2012, p. 258). The architects of unification faced several problems: competing regional identities, trepidation over becoming unified, and no plan to achieve the goal as the ancient Roman Empire seemed to be the only example of an Italian national identity (Gilmour, 2012, pp. 150-151). Part of the difficulty was a total lack of "symbols or rituals that other European nationalities possessed through inheritance" such as a historic national flag or relationship between the Church and the monarchy. Establishing national identity was even more complicated given that varying identities already existed: secular and religious, urban and rural, and the macro-regions of North and South (p. 276).

Unification was further complicated by different visions of the new state's structure: the North expected strong centralization whereas the South expected a looser federalist approach (Duggan, 2015, p. 23). Some proposed a federation of Italian states under the control of the Roman Catholic Pope (Gilmour, 2012, p. 154). Elites opted towards centralization, angering

Southerners who realized the country would be shaped overwhelmingly by the elites of one region – Piedmont, and incited resistance. For example, some criticized the prominent role of Piedmontese elites including writer Carlo Cattaneo, who believed the Piedmontese only wanted to gain power and doubted a united nation was necessary (Gilmour, 2012, p. 153).

From other perspectives, progressive, "prosperous and liberal" 19th century Piedmont was "the only [region] capable of welding and leading" the whole Italian peninsula (Gilmour, 2012, p. 124). Piedmont's economic strength contributed to its strong regional identity (Fitjar, 2010, p. 528, citing Gourevitch, 1979; Fitjar, 2006). In fact, the reputation of Piedmont was such that many people from Tuscany (Central Italy) and other regions of Northern Italy immigrated to the capital city of Turin (Gilmour, 2012, p. 180). As a result, Piedmont benefitted from its strong political-administrative structure, elites who attracted high culture to the region, and the additions of local and regional identities offered by the migrants. During and immediately after unification, Piedmont succeeded in creating a collective regional identity by breaking up communal organizations, collectively-held land, and claiming land of non-economic institutions such as the Church (Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 189).

Piedmontese influence was apparent in the new Italian state because of their overrepresentation in the new institutions. Piedmont was the only region with a "tradition of military and state service" serving Italian regions beyond its own (Gilmour, 2012, p. 118). The Piedmontese were stereotypically thought to be sensical and precise, and the Turinese people honest, austere, aloof, and frugal (Gilmour, 2012, pp. 15; 18). Furthermore, the traditional title of the Piedmontese ruler, King Victor Emmanuel, remained in the new Kingdom of Italy when King Victor Emmanuel II began his rule. In addition the Piedmontese Statuto Albertino

Constitution was kept, affirming Italy was "constitutionally still Piedmont with a new name" (Gilmour, 2012, p. 203).   These socio-economic and political factors were the foundations of Piedmontese power in Italy.

During the mid-19th century, the Piedmontese capital Turin was "the most military city in Italy" and thus a potentially excellent place to base an army (Gilmour, 2012, p. 228). Military power reinforced political power by providing the government with the means to enforce its policies by force if necessary, and to defend its territory from foreign power, which made it key to supporting Piedmont's strong regional identity. However, Turin was not selected to be the capital because it was considered too close to the French border and would have been perceived as another Piedmontese move to gain power (Gilmour, 2012, p. 205). Florence was declared the new capital because of its cultural importance but also as a matter of convenience, as Rome remained under Papal control. Piedmont's pride was offended by the selection of Florence so deeply that subsequent riots resulted in over fifty deaths.   Rome became the capital after French forces left to fight the Prussians in 1870, thus leaving the Pope without any protection. The city was then conquered by Giuseppe Garibaldi and united with the rest of the Italian kingdom (Gilmour, 2012, p. 208).

Despite the conquest of Rome, the role of the Church posed an additional challenge of unifying Italy. The Vatican would not recognize Italy, and the lack of recognition hindered Italy's "cohesion and consolidation" (Gilmour, 2012, p. 143). In fact, Mazzini noted "the papacy had been one of the chief obstacles to Italian unity in the past" (*ibid*). First, the vast majority of Italians were Catholic and thus obliged to follow the stance of the Church; and secondly, the Church represented the only longstanding and consistent national institution of Italy so a choice

to accept the state was at odds with the strength of religious affiliation (Gilmour, 2012, p. 254).

Pope Pius IX contributed to the Church's view of the Italian state by denouncing liberal ideas including secular education and separation of church and state, stating that the Pope was not obliged to "come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization" in his book *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) (cited in Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 106). The firm position of the Church, including Pius IX's book, resulted in anti-clericalism "more militant and passionate in proportion to the 'backwardness' of the country", popularizing the central government's wish for a more secular state (Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 273).

The Catholic Church had a contentious relationship with the Italian state, in part because the Pope, the head of the Church, lives and works in Vatican City within Rome – an exceptional case of Italian regional political autonomy. Italy formally separated from the Church because it's "morality had always derived from the Church's teachings" (Kowalczyk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 430). The contention continued into the 20th century, until a political reconciliation between them was signed in 1984 acknowledging "Catholicism was not the official religion of the Italian state and that…teaching Catholicism in state schools was no longer compulsory" (*ibid*). This agreement demonstrates the long-standing power of religion in Italian identity, the value of schools in crafting strong identities, and how contradictions exist within regional and national identities.

Dramatic political changes in Italy continued into the 20th century. Liberal, but often corrupt governments under the Savoy monarchy attempted to transform Italy into a colonial power. Moreover, Italy's disastrous involvement in World War I narrowly preceded the rise of

fascism under Benito Mussolini and his dictatorship until the end of World War II. Additionally,

the post-war period saw the end of the Kingdom of Italy and the beginning of the First Republic

(Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 73).

The fascist period is prominent in the history of Italian national identity because it was

the closest Italy had been to forming a strong national identity, albeit through overwhelming

central authority and continued challenges in the South. The regime strengthened identity by

propagating courage, discipline and strength (*romanità*, or Roman values), reviving Italian

medieval-period and ancient Roman architecture, and emphasizing ancient Roman myths

(Gilmour, 2012, pp. 307-309). This cultural campaign prioritized frequent use of symbols,

restoration of ancient buildings in Rome and supported theatre and cinema to disseminate its

messages (p. 309). In combination, an Italian historian named Alberto Mario Banti cited by

Gilmour (2012) wrote these actions "made Italy feel more united than ever before" although

this is observation is contended by anti-fascist historical perspectives (p. 315). Another aspect

of Italian fascism was external expansion. For Mussolini this meant both conquering new

territories and fostering national identity, sending the Italian army to fight and occupy Ethiopia

in the second Italian-Ethiopian war (1935-1936), where Italy had a short-lived occupation.

Engaging in war was (and is) considered a valuable tool for creating national pride and

unification, which it did for the Fascist party and Italian identity (Corner, 1975, p. 233).

While Mussolini's regime attempted to create a more cohesive national identity, the

South did not fully support it. The fascist regime was comprised almost exclusively of

Northerners in Rome, and "did virtually nothing to develop the Southern economy" except for

the benefit of the Fascist Party and in some cases the *Carabinieri* (police) (Gilmour, 2012, p.

316). The struggling Southern economy allowed organized crime to challenge the regime's

political-administrative and socio-economic power because the organizations were able to

provide people the necessary economic protection that the legitimate government could not.

Mussolini recognized the mafia's threat to the state during his attempts to unify Italy but failed

to destroy the organizations or the challenge to administrative and socio-economic centrality.

Obstacles including identifying all the members of the mafia, tight-knit families, and *omertà*

(mafia vow of silence) made eliminating the threat nearly impossible. Organized crime was so

ingrained in Southern Italian society that other types of pressure were needed to change the

parallel state under organized crime besides repression, such as government encouragement of

legitimate economic opportunities (p. 317).

Post-war Italy was challenged by "the depth of the crisis of the centralized party-state

system" according to Woods (1995, p. 188). After Mussolini's regime and the horrors

committed in its name (anti-Semitism, suppression of anti-fascist viewpoints, war crimes, the

associated violence of the government, etc.), most Italians no longer cared to identify with a

nationalistic identity (Gilmour, 2012, p. 236). Italian political parties kept some level of national

cohesion, specifically through the Christian Democrat party at the ideological center (Woods,

1995, p. 189). In 1948, the Constitution of the Italian Republic replaced the old Statuto

Albertino Constitution, designating specific Northern and Southern regions as autonomous,

including Sicily and Trentino-Alto Adige, although not Piedmont or Calabria (Gilmour, 2012, p.

203; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). This autonomy is a clear indication of the state accepting

the protestations of the North and South's political-administrative power.

There were additional complications with creating a national identity due to the economic reality of Italy. Attempts to balance the Northern and Southern economies through the "concentration of political authority and resources at the center" were made, seeing as wealth historically has overwhelmingly been in the North (Woods, 1995, p. 188). Concurrently, the "centralism of the modern state engender[ed] the perception of 'geopolitical' distance, sociocultural difference, and socio-economic dependence" between regions and what real connection people felt to the national government (*ibid*). In more specific terms, the North stereotypically "represent[ed] development, rationality, and modernity", whereas the South was "backward" and "archaic" (Kowalcyzk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 431). A group called the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* began efforts in 1950 to economically unify Southern Italy with the North but was ultimately unsuccessful (González, 2011, p. 63).

In contrast to the Northern regions, Southern Italy has historically been the more rural, feudal, and ethnically varied region within the country (Gilmour, 2012, p. 75).   The Southern Question (*La Questione Meridonale*), or how to lessen the socio-economic disadvantages of Southern Italy, rose immediately upon unification (González, 2011, p. 63). The South sought more political autonomy and social justice, which it has only moderately achieved in the one and a half centuries since (Gilmour, 2012, p. 242). The same challenges remain, including unemployment, low incomes, and persistent organized crime (in Calabria, the 'Ndrangheta mafia organization has been active from unification to the present) which are discussed below (Perry, 2018; Sergi, 2017). These challenges incentivize the South to protest against state centrality because it has only provided limited benefits or none at all.

Parts of Southern Italy, including Calabria, still operate under a parallel political and economic system.   The Italian government still has not succeeded in compelling Southern Italians to adopt a stronger national identity.   Rather than a legitimate economy, the region runs more or less within a "grey economy" (a mix of legitimate and illegitimate business and economic pursuits) plus organized crime bases (Bosoni, 2016). These factors operate as 'push' factors for residents, contributing to the migration trend of Southerners moving North for better work opportunities despite the cultural differences between North and South. Results of this migration historically is an increased Northern population and increased demographic and economic challenges to both North and South, for opposite reasons, as documented by research on the topic (Kowalczyk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 426, citing the Ministero dell'Instruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca et al., 2004, p. 6).

Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, financial inequality between the North and South continued. Immigration from Southern Italy to Northern Italian cities continued in part because of this, with a severely diminished young population in the South due in part to the lack of economic opportunity (Paoli, 2016, 113). The Northern League and Forza Italia in particular perpetuated a myth that Northern Italians paid higher taxes so the national government could distribute the money to the 'corrupt' South – an allegation that at least was partly true. However, these myths harmed Italian's fragile national unity, creating resentment between regions and makes false enemies of fellow Italians.

Partly as a response to this, Italy increased its connection to Europe, helping to establish the European Economic Community (1957) and the EU (1993), which changed Italian politics and the political relationship between its regions and the state. Specifically, Piedmont and

Lombardy (Northern regions) and Tuscany (a Central region) became wealthier and made national politics less relevant as they created more political and economic autonomy for themselves, marking the strength of those regions by Woods' (1995) definition by overcoming the centrality of state to some extent (p. 189). The growth of the EU reduced Southern Italians' feeling of belonging to a unified Italy as it undermined the narrative of agrarian Southern Italy (the *Mezzogiorno*), as it became just "one of many 'underdeveloped' regions" within the EU instead of a unique economic underperforming region of Italy (González, 2011, p. 66). Interventions by the Italian government to aid the Mezzogiorno ended in 1992, when the central government more or less accepted the Mezzogiorno's inequality with the rest of Italy and its ability to change the economic reality of it after so many decades.

The European Union (EU) has contributed structural funding to regions like Calabria as they do for less developed regions throughout Europe in order to make the regions less dependent on the state (Fitjar, 2010, p. 530). Research finds structural fund expenditures do not have a statistically significant effect on regional identity, meaning that the existing identity does not change as a result (p. 538). Therefore, supranational intervention has not necessarily made Calabria or other Southern Italian regions feel affiliated more with Europe over Italy whilst ties to Rome remain weak.

Northern Italian regional identities may be associated with stability and 'Europeanness' (generally pro-European leanings), as instability and backwardness define Southern Italian identities (Kowalski and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 427). Strong regional identities in Piedmont and Liguria led to the formation of the Northern League party (*Lega Nord*, recently renamed the

League), which advocated for Northern Italy's economic interests with anti-Euro currency and immigration platforms. Additionally, the League sought political federalism as Southern Italy did in the 19th century but "as a means of economically protecting the North" from the South (Kowalczyk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 431). Moreover, the party promoted (and promotes) ethnic and cultural local differences, perpetuating an identity of Northern separateness – even xenophobia.

Insofar as regional identity intertwines with national identity, politics continue to be a critical factor. Between 1945 and 1994, the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party were the largest parties in Parliament as a rebuke to fascism (Ministry of the Interior, n.d.). After the collapse of that political tradition in the mid-1990s, the lack of a center or communist party allowed small (often regional) parties to gather more votes and influence policy. Now the political environment seems to be shifting again, with the most-successful parties winning close to entire macro-regions rather than various regions throughout the country.

In the 2018 parliamentary election center-right opposition parties, the League (formerly the Northern League) and Forza Italia received higher proportions of the vote than the Five Star Movement (M5S) or center-left parties (namely, the Democratic Party) in Piedmont, all of whom are national parties (La Repubblica, 2018). M5S gained popularity largely due to the component of its platform featuring extremely anti-immigration views (Horowitz, 2017). In Calabria, M5S and center-right parties won a higher proportion of the vote, which again demonstrates the extent of political division between the Northern and Southern regions (*ibid*).

These results also demonstrate a general conservatism in Italian identity as the results split the country essentially in half.

2.2   British Regional Identity, 1850 to Present

This section examines the historic development of British regional identity since the mid-19th century through political-administrative and socio-economic factors. Politically, the UK began to form as a result of Scotland and Wales joining England by the 1707 Act of Union, followed by Ireland through the 1800 Act of Union. After Northern Ireland separated from the Republic of Ireland in the 20th century, the 1800 Act of Union maintained its validity, keeping Northern Ireland part of the UK. The Republic of Ireland joined the UK under the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty after its war for independence but after the declaration of the Irish Free State by the Republic in 1922, the nation formally withdrew from the UK in 1949 (Huici et. al, 1997, p. 100). Thus, the modern United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (The Guardian, 1999). As this evidence shows, UK was not politically consistent between the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries in the cases of Ireland and Northern Ireland, largely to due to their "institutional… [and] cultural history" (Nairn, 1981, p. 102; Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 84). As discussed further on, each of the regions within the UK are now devolved from the central government, meaning each has its own political-administrative competencies except for England, which has chosen to remain under the British government in Westminster (London). This political fact limits Woods' (1995)

conception of regional identity because the regions operate under a devolved, rather than federal, structure.

Historically, British identity was developed by the World Wars, the British Empire, its monarchy, and industrialization (Maguire, 2017; Nairn 1981, p. 29). The experience of the wars, Wallace (1991) explains, "reinforced [British] solidarity and revalidated the symbols of national identity" (p. 67). Additionally, a long-lasting parliamentary tradition, common law (in lieu of a constitution), and sense of English exceptionalism have been inherent to British political identity from the Victorian age to the present (Wallace, 1991, p. 69). Perhaps its history and traditions are why the British government has not "impose[d] a uniform culture, language, or way of life" (Nairn, 1981, p. 12). Linguistically, English is the official language of the UK, whilst regional dialects (Scottish, for example) remain present and commonly used to some extent, one of the cornerstones of strong national identity.

Insofar as religious identity, the UK is Christian with a variety of denominations. The Anglican Church's (or Church of England's) identity may be considered "essentially Protestant and liberal" in its religious and political outlook, and is headed by the British monarch, a tradition begun by King Henry VIII in an effort to prevent contradictions between church and state (Wallace, 1991, p. 70). Another church derived from Protestantism is the Church of Scotland, maintaining "their own religious, cultural, and legal institutions" when they joined the UK in 1707 (p. 106).

In terms of economic factors shaping British national identity, the nation benefitted disproportionally from the Industrial Revolution because it had established trade relationships and raw materials; the strength of their imperial economic power resulted in the narrative of a

strong national identity (Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 39). Moreover, Britain had trading advantages because it lacked a large protectionist peasant class and thus political repercussions in pursuit of open trading policies with other nations. Wide-reaching trade led to Britain's status as the "greatest exporter of industrial products" of the early 20th century, augmented by the Commonwealth of Nations which is an organization of former Imperial territories working with the UK to promote "development, democracy, and peace" (*ibid*; The Commonwealth).

Regional disparities of wealth within England during the mid-20th century concerned the UK government, who instituted 'one-nation' policies in 1945 in an attempt to achieve political, economic, and social equality – essentially a cohesive English identity – and expand its political-administrative centrality (González, 2011, p. 65). These actions are unsurprising given the war, when governments consolidate to centralize and utilize power efficiently as well as placate potential internal dissent; the policies focused on regions from a belief that "regional equity itself was a legitimate welfare objective…justified on national economic efficiency grounds" (*ibid*). Incentives were used to establish manufacturing industry in Northern England and redirected government expenditures to less-advantaged regions (*ibid*). Furthermore, Westminster adopted a top-down economic approach by focusing on creating cheap labor pools and more markets. As a result, dependent regions "developed clientelistic relationships around regional subsidies" such as employment by the state (*ibid*). By Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's era decades later in the 20th century, Northern England, Scotland and Wales experienced "intense de-industrialization" which widened financial and resource gaps in England (González, 2011, p. 67). Furthermore, England's political identity resulted in a Labor North and Conservative South that the British government could not reconcile.

Most of British wealth is based in England, and the region has a historical political tendencies towards the Conservative party. During Thatcher's era, the Conservative party was known to promote an exclusivist regional identity, regressive in the sense that it inflated the already-established sense of English superiority (Erlanger, 2017). Hence, even England has not been "a uniform and homogeneous [political] region", which presented a challenge to the UK's construction of national identity (*ibid*). In contrast to the Thatcher era, English identity under Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labor became more inclusive and pro-European, claiming that any concept of North or South ignored "disparities *within* regions" (author's emphasis) (Morgan, 2002, p. 799). This perception of regional identity was not a protest of British government, but a reaction to internal regional factors.

Modern Scottish nationalism began with the advent of Scottish industries such as ironworking, engineering, and shipbuilding in the 19th century as Scottish technology and higher education systems were at the forefront of modernization in the 19th century (Nairn, 1981, p. 113; Hobsbawm, 1975, p. 42). Scotland was also culturally developing in several ways. Scottish identity was stereotypically seen as "cramped, stagnant, backward-looking, parochial" and heterogeneous (Nairn, 1981, p. 131). Another stereotype, Kailyardism, of a Scotland "consisting wholly of small towns full of small-town 'characters' given to bucolic intrigue and wise sayings" also became popular (p. 158). Kailyardism is associated with "symbols, slogans, ornaments, banners, saying and sentiments", but conducive to a strong regional identity (p. 162).

Another critical piece of Scottish identity is the literature written by Sir Walter Scott in the first half of the 19th century, J.M. Barrie, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others (Nairn, 1981,

p. 115). For example, Scott wrote extensively on Scottish history in <u>Tales of a Grandfather</u> (volumes released from 1828-1830) and fictionalized the 1745 Highlands Rebellion in <u>Waverley</u> (1814). Scott also romanticized the Scottish landscape in several poems including <u>The Lady of the Lake</u> (1810), all of which contributed to the propagation of Scottish national myths and figureheads (BBC,b). Politically, Scottish regional identity grew in 1928 with the formation of the National Party of Scotland (the forerunner to today's Scottish National Party) (p. 95). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Scotland has grown more independent from the UK due to North Sea oil, the perceived decline of the English political system (which presents an opportunity for further autonomy), and the "quasi-national legacy of North Britain" (*ibid*).

Scottish devolution is a consequence of its strong regional identity. The region has held consequential powers for decades, such as control of its educational system. Joining the UK in 1707, Scotland "resigned statehood but preserved an extraordinary amount of…institutional and psychological baggage", thus the region never adopted an English identity (Nairn, 1981, p. 129). When the regions requested more political autonomy in the late 20th century, the Scotland and Wales Bill of 1976 did not grant them more extensive powers, even 200 years after the Act of Union. As Harris (2014) noted, independence requires "real decentralization of power and an end to regional inequities". Foreign policy is the most consequential limitation of Scottish political power, as it falls under the purview of Westminster for all of its devolved governments.

Scotland is unique as a devolved nation but also within Britain due to the political competencies ceded to it, such as the fact that components of Scotland's legal and educational systems are relatively independent from the rest of Britain (Huici et al., 1997, p. 101). At

present, the Scottish Parliament "has primary legislative competence over most 'domestic' policy issues" which is a privilege that none of the British regions have been given (Mackinnon, 2015, p. 47). For example, under the Scotland Act of 2012 Scotland's government acquired borrowing powers from the British government, which then increased by several hundred million pounds sterling under the Scotland Act of 2016 (The Scottish Government, 2018). Other powers granted to Scotland include the power to hold elections for the Scottish Parliament, its transportation system, and increased social security competencies. Scottish policies differ from the English generally in having a larger commitment toward social justice issues (p. 74, citing Scott and Mooney, 2009). Although the British government alone has control over foreign policy matters, Westminster consulted with all devolved nations before beginning negotiations with the EU following the 2016 referendum which acknowledges regional concerns and thus lessens potential protests over the results of the negotiations (Raikes, 2017, p. 16).

Electoral results demonstrate regional and national trends in identity, as specified in Nairn's (1981) definition of national identity (p. 88). Over the last seventy years of general elections, the Conservative (Tory) or Labor parties have both been successful in Britain, which suggests shifting political identities; notably, the Conservative party has formed two more governments than its rival (Audickas, 2017, pp. 6; 10). In regard to proportion of those votes, England historically trends towards the Conservative party, whereas Scotland trends towards the Labor party (pp. 16; 20). These political differences suggest that England has competing internal identities, therefore lacking a coherent regional political identity in contrast to the consistency of Scotland's political identity.

The 2016 referendum, resulting in a narrow majority wishing to 'Leave' the EU, was an aberration of English national identity as a people typically associated with pragmatism, commonsense, and political stability (Erlanger, 2017). This drastic decision affected British identity as it forces insularity and separation from Europe in a very high-pressured situation. The 'Leave' voters' main concerns were immigration, job opportunities, and perception that leaving the EU would allow for more domestic spending within the UK. Nairn's 1981 observation that "the English political universe is…not democratic; constitutional, not populist; conservative, not radical in either a right-wing or left-wing sense" fails to apply to the present (p. 298). In fact, the referendum victory for the 'Leave' campaign was led by a right-wing populist party (the UK Independence Party, UKIP), and is a radical departure to leave such an important international and regional organization the country has been involved in for decades. This result was Thatcherite in its British nationalism and a protest of the political-administrative centrality of the EU as well as the extent to which the UK contributes and has conceded aspects of its sovereignty to the organization.

Xenophobic undertones in English politics were clearly relevant with the success of the UKIP platform, but were not present in Scotland. UKIP did not gain a foothold before or during the 2016 referendum in Scotland, as a majority in all counties voted to 'Remain'. One reason for this difference may be because of regional identity; only 6.8 per cent of the population were born outside the UK, as opposed to 11 per cent of England's population according to the latest available statistics from 2016 (Office of National Statistics, 2012). On one hand, increased non-EU immigration (far more frequent over the past two decades than EU immigration) may have resulted in xenophobic attitudes (O'Leary, 2018). On the other hand, immigration to the UK

from the EU has been in demand since 2003 (a result of lowered barriers to movement between Europe and the UK under EU regulations), could also be seen as threatening British national identity, as right-wing anti-immigration positions resulted in a decline in EU migration to the UK following the referendum (O'Leary, 2018).

Research finds the English believe that Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales received the most benefits from devolution. The latter three have been able to offer "more substantial incentive packages" to foreign investors and thus have competitive advantage in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) (Morgan, 2002, pp. 800-801). Although political power of devolved governments is limited, they have the ability to set taxes on business (or adopt corporate-friendly regulations) which Ireland in particular has done for the technology sector. Economics are only one challenge devolution creates – ideally, political devolution reduces the democratic deficit that occurs under one government (Morgan, 2002, p. 805).

Northern England is economically discontent with the UK as its businesses do not benefit from the favorable foreign direct investment Scotland and Wales enjoy (Raikes, 2017, p. 12). Areas of the sub-region are 50 to 60 per cent more dependent on the EU than London and supported a pro-European British identity by voting to 'Remain' during the 2016 referendum (BBC News, 2016).   Furthermore, every Scottish county voted to 'Remain' which suggests Northern England and Scotland do not object to the political-economic centrality requested by the EU. Londoners voted to 'Remain' at a similar level, indicating similar concerns about the political-economic ramifications of leaving the EU (Audickas, 2017, p. 81).

It is noteworthy that British political devolution only began in earnest towards the end of the 20th century to reduce perceived democratic deficits at the regional level (Morgan, 2002, p. 798). The political aspect to this evolution of national identity is interesting because it reached a point wherein Anglocentric 'Britishness' meant "a devolved and multicultural polity" more than Englishness; revealing the English state (Westminster) is no longer the sole defining aspect of the UK. The 1960s saw Britain modify its response to nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales, although it responded differently in accordance to the strength of the two movements which resulted in different outcomes (Nairn, 1981, p. 61). Without strong Scottish demands, Westminster would never have granted Scotland autonomy because it affects the inherent structure of the UK, but yet it did – providing evidence relevant to Woods' (1995) assertion that effective regional protestations can result in concessions from the central state.

Accelerated devolution by way of territorial disintegration would demonstrate state decline, and thus weaken national identity (Nairn, 1981, p. 14). The current British political climate, seeking consistency from chaos, makes it likely that the state will continue balancing its regions rather than outright separation as the Republic of Ireland did. One may view the British regions as an evolution, rather than decline, of the British state especially as the UK continues separation negotiations with the EU through 2020. Should the UK becoming un-united it may create a "modern, European multinational state" with different (but not necessarily oppositional) cultural, economic, and political identities (Nairn, 1981, p. 91).

CHAPTER 3: REGIONAL IDENTITY

Although there are many differences between the development of Italian and British national and regional identities, this section illustrates the similarities between them. To begin, both countries have historically "split into two macro-regions, creating a North/South divide", as defined for Italy in Section 2.1, and defined for the UK as Scotland and England (González, 2011, p. 62). These macro-regional divides are interesting because they focus on the premise that peripheries resist or differ from the central state, which provides another perspective to the idea that strong regional identities result in protest against political centrality (Woods, 1995, p. 189). Theoretically, regional identity should be weak if state sovereignty is evenly applied over a territory, as nothing should be allowed to challenge state power (Anderson, 2016, p. 19). Prominent regional identities in both case studies indicate that sovereignty has not been evenly distributed or is very weak, and thus allowed state power to be challenged by strong regions.

The existence of these macro-regions led to allegations of political and social injustices and increased demands of secessionist movements. The British response to devolution began in the 20th century as discussed in Section 2.2, whereas the Italian response resulted in a people who identify more with their regional government or pseudo-government (such as organized crime groups in Southern Italy), but did not receive real autonomy from the central state. Additionally, the consequences of the Italian model include lower national unity than it might

be otherwise if the central government and regions cooperated more closely and means the Italian government must accept a certain level of regional diversity.

Italy and the UK have right-wing movements within their political party systems. In the UK, UKIP led the 2016 referendum campaign to leave the EU whereas Italy's populist party M5S was also critical of the EU, anti-immigration, and against remaining in the Eurozone until elected. The popularity of these right-wing views were results of the dramatic number of refugees and political asylum seekers from North Africa to Europe in the early 2010s (Horowitz, 2017). For Italy, having a history of Southern migration to the North, anti-immigration policies connect to a "racialized narrative about Southerners [Africans] ...overlaid onto new immigrants" (Kowalcyzk and Popkewitz, 2005, p. 432). This consistent xenophobic and nationalistic messaging makes it difficult for nations to promote an inclusive national identity that by definition must reflect both the values its seeks to promote abroad, and how its people want their nation to be (Wallace, 1991, p. 65).

In the March 2018 elections most Italians voted for center-right parties, with a combined 37 per cent of the vote (La Repubblica, 2018).   M5S, a right-wing party, did not receive a majority threshold for the Italian Parliament but did win a noteworthy 32 per cent of the vote as a single party (La Repubblica, 2018). The 2018 election proved the persistent North/South divide in Italy, as the majority of the South (including Sicily) voted for M5S, whereas the North mostly voted for the League as discussed in Section 2.1 (Boeri, 2018). As a result, a right-wing party coalition may govern Italy next in accordance with an anti-European platform, straining Italian connections with Europe rather than encouraging European

international cooperation (Erlanger, 2018). However the head of M5S, Luigi di Maio, is more moderate than the party's former leadership and recently stated the party will not commit to Euroscepticism or to leaving the Euro currency – both opposite positions to the platforms the party was elected to (Zampano, 2018). As a founding member of the EU, Italy is in a different position than the UK; since the EU is their own political project, Italy may have more political capital to lose than even Britain if they decide to leave.

In both Britain and Italy, "sub-cultural identification has been essential in shaping party alignment, voting behavior, and ideological orientation" (Woods, 1995, p. 196). Regional biases in Italy are attributable in some cases to systemic dysfunction, such as the parallel legitimate and illegitimate political-economic structures in Southern Italy, including patron-client networks. There are still "sporadic outbreaks of regional resentment" in Calabria and other Southern regions because of economic issues (Woods, 1995, pp. 198, 200). Fitjar (2010) contends that "regional identities are likely to be stronger in economically developed regions and in regions with highly distinctive voting behavior" as Piedmont and Calabria prove (p. 522). In contrast, England's economy is not nearly as dysfunctional as the Italian in terms of GDP and unemployment rate.

Both nations also have cultural history related to class identity. Italy has been associated with having an industrial North and agrarian South since the Industrial Revolution (World Factbook, 2018). As previously mentioned, Italian economic migration is generally South to North, whereas British (specifically English) economic migration tends to be North in the context of Scottish migration to England to the South (i.e. to greater London), where the

wealth is concentrated. British attempts to equalize or lessen economic inequality between regions has largely failed or been unsustainable. To these points, in the latest 2018 figures available, the highest employment rate in the UK was in Southwest England rather than in the North (Morgan, 2002; Office for National Statistics, 2018). Sub-regionally, Northeast England is considered 'Britain's Mezzogiorno', as it is historically the poorest area of England (Morgan, 2002, p. 807 citing Rowthorn, 1999). Northeast England has a strong sense of regional identity, as described by Fitjar (2010), "poor regions are more likely to create cohesion if they feel like they have treated unfairly, increasing regional identity" (p. 528, citing Lafont, 1967; Hechter, 1975).

Language is an important factor in the formation of regional and national identity as well according to Wallace's (1991) definition, which both Italy and Britain have cultivated successfully. The overwhelming majority of both populations speak the official language or has proficiency, indicating language as one of the strongest areas of national identity. All regions in the UK and Italy speak the primary official language of their respective country (English and Italian, respectively), and in some cases their own regional dialects. For example, Scottish and Scottish Gaelic are spoken in Scotland as are local dialects in both Piedmont and Calabria in Italy (Fitjar, 2010, p. 522). Therefore, it may be said that British and Italian identities (official through school or through informal sources) are strong enough to affect at least that level of cultural cohesion. Dialects are taught at some schools but predominately taught outside of official institutions, such as by one's family and community, so maintaining a dialect through multiple generations speaks to the strength of regional identities in those places.

Linguistic dialects are considered "the most prominent manifestation of Italian diversity" (Gilmour, 2012, p. 29). In fact, until Dante Alighieri's *La Commedia* and increased production of books (along with the country's overall literacy), there was no national form of written or spoken Italian except for the regional dialects. The modern Italian language is based on Tuscan (Florentine) Italian, and only spoken nationally after Italian unification in 1861, in another example of protest against the administration of the state – but necessary to learn in order to communicate throughout the country without learning multiple dialects (Gilmour, 2012, p. 33). Presently, the Piedmontese dialect is spoken by at least half of the region's population (Fitjar, 2010, p. 524). As recently as 2000, two-thirds of Italians spoke their regional or local dialect at home, which contributes to the maintenance of regional identity. In the UK, English is the main language for 92 per cent of residents, which also proves the dominance of the British state, not to mention the global reach of English (Office of National Statistics, 2012). English is the dominant language of Scotland, but Scottish is spoken in Eastern Scotland and Northern England in addition to the majority of Lowlanders (Scots) (Anderson, 2016, p. 89, citing Seton-Watson, 1997, pp. 30-31).

Another method to analyze the strength of national identity is polling. The European Commission conducted public opinion polls to investigate how attached the people feel to their country. People who felt "very attached" to their country may be interpreted as a national base as they felt the strongest identification with the state, and therefore a guide to the strength of national identity. From 2002 to 2017, polling indicated the number of individuals in the UK feeling "very attached" to the country was around 50 per cent (European Commission). The same category reached peaks of 58 and 59 per cent in 1999 (first poll) and in 2016,

standing at 52 per cent in 2017. The 2016 peak was most likely a result of increased nationalism by citizens voting to 'Leave' the EU in the referendum. The historical fluctuation in the "very attached" category for Italians polled was between 41 and 64 per cent. The last three annual polls stabilized around 50 per cent, with the 2017 poll falling slightly to 49 per cent. Based on these results and presumption that this polling accurately represents the national base, the UK presently has a slightly higher sense of national identity than Italy.

Regional and national identities are also comprised by sport, like soccer. On a national (but internationally renowned) level, Italy has a highly-regarded football league named Serie A, as England has the English Premier League. Identification with a soccer club is based often on regional or local community and thus reinforces and even strengthens regional identity. For example, in Piedmont one may support the Juventus Turin team while a Calabrian may support the Crotone team. Likewise in England, one may support one of several London-based teams, such as Arsenal or Chelsea, or sub-regional team like Manchester City. Scotland's soccer league is the Scottish Premiership, which like the English and Italian teams is based on local clubs, including Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee. Regional identity also connects to sport when specific values are associated with one's club and also when people identify with the history of a club, because that history is part of the region's history and development.

Religion too plays a part in all levels of identity and is important to understanding the UK and Italy. Modern Italy is about 80 per cent Christian, with the remaining 20 per cent a combination of Muslim, agnostic, or atheist (World Factbook, 2018). 59 per cent of British people identify as Christian although the statistic has been declining since 2001 (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Furthermore, unlike Italy and the rest of Catholic Europe, the main

religion in the UK is Protestantism, as briefly discussed in Section 2.2. The English follow the

Church of England whilst the rest of the UK diverges regionally, such as the Church of Scotland

(Scottish Government). Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, identification with the Church

of England decreased (Erlanger, 2017). Despite this reduced identification, religion is seen

positively within the UK as proven by Protestant parties' rise in power after 1945. This evidence

confirms a connection between religious and political aspects of national identity, particularly

as the parties advocated for nationalism and liberalism, as does the creation of the Church of

England. Religion still presents its difficulties within Britain, foremost with the Irish question in

the latter decades of the 20th century, although that is outside the scope of this thesis. In

contrast, the Catholic Church is not regionally divided within Italy, with almost all churches

under the Roman Catholic denomination. Furthermore, politically, the Catholic Church has

maintained its conservative identity over time, which provides consistency in the religious

aspect of national and regional identities (Hobsbawm, 1987, p. 91). Overall due to regional

variations of Christianity, the UK has distinguishable regional differences, but Italy has one

central church, and therefore a common aspect of identity.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the relationship between national identities in the UK and Italy. The research and evidence was analyzed through the framework of Woods' (1995) conception that regional identity forms in response to the political-administrative and socio-economic centrality of a nation-state. Contributing factors to regional identity were defined prior to the case studies, including the political structure and electoral choices of regions, historical development of the region, language, and religion. An overview of the development of regional identities followed, including the supranational aspect to the regional and national identities as explored through the EU's effects on the regional case studies. The research found that EU policies and funding have been very influential in many aspects of regional identity, including structural funds that have relieved poor regions to open immigration policies.

Electoral results were also prominent in the case studies and discussed at some length, particularly Italy's 2018 parliamentary election and the UK's 2016 referendum on leaving the EU, regarding the proportion of votes and the general political leanings of the regions (e.g. center-right, moderate). Both elections were found to be victories of right-wing parties, indicating national and regional turns to conservatism, with the notable exception of Scotland who has thus far maintained a moderate or center-left political position. Finally, the last chapter examined a variety of similarities between Italian and British identities as representatives of European states. The research found similar levels in the strength of

national identity from citizens in both countries from European Commission polling. Additionally, this section explored how sports reflect regional identities, the strength of national identity from a linguistic perspective, and how the religious aspect of identity differs for each region – for example, the same Catholic Church in Piedmont and Calabria, but two different denominations (Church of England and Church of Scotland, respectively) for England and Scotland. Furthermore, the section reviewed how the national governments have responded to these regions, from devolution in the British case studies to political autonomy or being undermined by a parallel state in the Italian cases. Ultimately this thesis' assessment is that regional identity remains critical as nations struggle to define a clear national identity that encompasses their disparate parts, often led by the nation's peripheries.

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