

Scrutinizing Relative Territorial Identity Measures

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Territorial politics research often emphasizes the importance of relative state/substate identities. Conventionally, researchers capture relative national identity through the Linz-Moreno question, but previous research demonstrates the limitations of this measure. Many researchers now use Relative Territorial Identity (RTI) as an alternative. However, the potential limitations of this approach are yet to be explored. I provide that examination here. After reiterating the limits of the Linz-Moreno question, I use data for England, Scotland, and Wales to highlight that RTI has similar issues to the Linz-Moreno (linearity, intensity, dual identity). Following this, I use data from Flanders and Wallonia to demonstrate the limits of conflating attachment and identity when using RTI, as respondents treat the concepts differently. Overall, these results highlight the limits of existing measures of relative identity, which have important implications for how researchers examine substate territories.

Territorial politics researchers often attempt to measure national identities and understand the role that they play in substate territories. While some researchers examine the content of state and substate identities (Haesly 2005; McCrone and Bechhofer 2015; Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021), others examine their political implications. Such analyses include how national identities can create a sense of unity in a territory (Henderson and McEwen 2005), associate with turnout in elections (Henderson and McEwen 2015), or connect with attitudes towards constitutional preference (Serrano 2013; Guinjoan 2021; Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021), left–right self-placement (Galais and Serrano 2019) or Europe (Henderson et al. 2020).

While researchers employ a variety of measures for examining identities, surveys represent the “backbone” of political behaviour research (Abdelal et al. 2006, 4). Conventionally, the most common survey measure for capturing relative state/substate identities has been the Linz-Moreno scale (Moreno 1995). Despite its popularity, Guinjoan and Rodon (2016) argue that the measure has some critical issues. They highlight that the Linz-Moreno scale struggles to capture a linear

trade-off between state and substate identities, underestimates state identity intensity, and overstates the size of the (ambiguous) dual identity category.

Consequently, many researchers now use Relative Territorial Identity (RTI) measures as an alternative (e.g., [Henderson et al. 2014](#); [Galais and Serrano 2019](#); [Henderson et al. 2020](#); [Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021](#)). To create RTI measures, researchers capture state and substate identities on separate scales, and then subtract the former from the latter to create a scale that ranges from “only identify with the state” to “only identify with the sub-state territory.” However, despite its growing use, researchers are yet to examine the limitations of RTI in detail.

I address this here in three steps. First, I reiterate the issues of the Linz-Moreno measure. Second, I explore whether RTI has similar issues (using data for England, Scotland, and Wales) by examining its association with identity centrality (i.e., whether someone prioritizes their territorial identity over their other group identities). Third, as some researchers treat identity strength and attachment scales as interchangeable when creating RTI scales, I explore whether this is the case (using data for Flanders and Wallonia).

The principal contribution of this analysis is to highlight that the relationship between state and substate identities is more complex than is captured by existing measures of relative identity. Not capturing this complexity can result in incomplete and/or inaccurate conclusions about the drivers of important events in multi-nation states, such as Brexit or potential independence bids in substate territories like Scotland or Catalonia. First, I find that the likelihood of considering a state or substate identity “central” to how one defines themselves does not change in a linear or symmetrical fashion. Second, I argue that future researchers should not treat “dual identity” as a singular category, because those who report strong-but-equal state and substate identities are very different (in both identity centrality and political attitudes) to those with weak-but-equal identities. Finally, I find a statistically significant difference between responses on attachment and identity scales, and thus suggest that future researchers should avoid conflating the two in their analyses. Overall, my findings should encourage future researchers to move beyond singular measures of territorial identities, which will help capture the complex, nonlinear, and potentially unexpected configurations of state and substate identities.

Capturing Identity

Individuals belong to several distinct social groups, such as their race, class, and gender ([Tajfel 1981](#)). Of these groups, individuals can claim (or are assigned) membership of some ([Chandra 2012](#)). Among these different identities, many researchers examine “national” identification. According to [Citrin et al. \(2001\)](#), national identity has three dimensions: Identification as a member of the nation

(self-categorization), identification with the nation (affection), and its normative content (what membership means). While some researchers examine more than one dimension (e.g., [Miller and Ali 2014](#); [McCrone and Bechhofer 2015](#)), it is common for researchers to focus on either self-categorization (e.g., [Henderson et al. 2020](#)), attachment (e.g., [Galais and Serrano 2019](#)), or the normative content (e.g., [Haesly 2005](#)) when operationalizing national identity.

Currently, large-scale comparative surveys that cover more than one dimension of national identification tend to focus on the state-level. For example, the 2013 International Social Survey Programme defines “national” identities as attachments to the country, by which they mean state ([ISSP Research Group 2015](#)). The conflation of nation and state is common in existing research, which treats the nation-state as the “natural social and political form of the modern world” ([Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002](#), 302).

Such focus on the state presents conceptual and practical limitations for researchers. Not all states contain a singular “nation”; as some are multi- or plurinational ([Cetrà and Swenden 2021](#)), and substate identities can play an important role in both the politics of the substate territory and the state as a whole (see [Henderson and McEwen 2015](#); [Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021](#)). Thus, ignoring substate identities, or relegating them to “regional” identities, may lead researchers to inaccurate conclusions about the politics of multi-national states.

Within such territories, many individuals hold dual state and substate identities ([Mendelsohn 2002](#)). Identities may have different political implications when held in different combinations ([Onuch and Hale 2018](#)), and these implications may differ across territories. For example, [Henderson et al. \(2020\)](#) found that relative state/substate identities had a different effect on vote in the 2016 EU referendum in England than they did in Scotland or Wales. Consequently, examining substate territories requires capturing how state and substate identities interact.

Linz-Moreno Measure

Conventionally, the Linz-Moreno question has been the most popular measure for capturing relative national identity within substate territories (see [Guinjoan and Rodon 2016](#) for further discussion), and it remains a popular measure among contemporary researchers (e.g., [Serrano 2013](#); [Rodon and Guinjoan 2018](#); [Guntermann et al. 2020](#); [Guinjoan 2021](#)). The measure asks respondents to indicate the extent to which they identify with both the state and substate territory simultaneously (see [table 1](#) for an example).

[Guinjoan and Rodon \(2016\)](#) argue that the Linz-Moreno scale has three key issues: Linearity, intensity, and dual identity. The first two they test together, arguing that the Linz-Moreno question struggles to capture the trade-off and relative intensity of state and substate identities. Capturing the relative intensity of

Table 1. Results for Linz–Moreno scale within the 2021 Welsh Election Study (post-election wave)

Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?	
	%
Welsh not British	17.94
More Welsh than British	20.62
Equally Welsh and British	23.05
More British than Welsh	12.84
British not Welsh	19.42
Other	6.13

Source: 2021 Welsh Election Study (post-election wave). *N*: 3,984. Analysis weighted.

national identities is important because individuals may report a national identity without feeling enthusiastic about it (Fenton 2007), and identities of different intensities can have vastly distinct political implications (see Miller and Ali 2014). The third issue is that the dual identity category is ambiguous, particularly as it contains many individuals who prioritize their state identity when asked to rate the strength of their territorial identities on separate scales.

To support these claims, I use data from the 2021 Welsh Election Study (WES), which was collected around the 2021 Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament election (6th May). The survey contains three waves (pre-election, campaign, and post-election). The post-election wave (*N*: 4,087) includes the Linz–Moreno question (above), and it also asks individuals to report how much they think of themselves as Welsh, British, or English on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very strongly).

Previous research has found that the survey protocol, question order, and language may influence responses (see Cussó et al. 2018). The survey was collected online, which may help limit the awkwardness that some people feel when responding about their identity to another person. The identity scales are placed before the Moreno question, which should avoid priming respondents to treat the identities as competing. Finally, the survey was administered in English, which (given the connections between Welsh nationalism and the Welsh language) may avoid inflating Welsh sentiment.

Overall, the trade-off in the intensity of state and substate identities is not linear (figure 0). British identity is far stronger among the “more Welsh” group than Welsh identity is among the “more British” group. Furthermore, those who report a singular identity still tend to have some degree of dual identity, which is particularly evident among the “Welsh not British.” These results are consistent with Henderson and Wyn Jones (2021) who found that those who report a

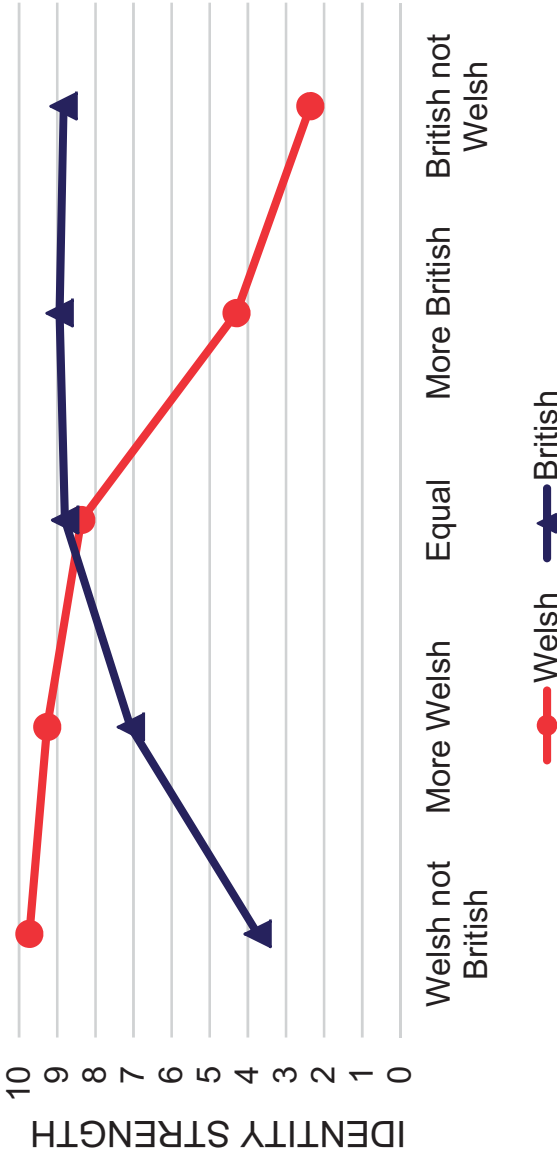


Figure 1. Mean strength of Welsh and British identities in each category of the Linz-Moreno scale.

Source: 2021 Welsh Election Study (post-election wave). N: 3,958. Analysis weighted.

singular “English” identity on the Linz-Moreno scale still tend to report a moderate sense of Britishness on the 0–10 scale. Thus, the Linz-Moreno question may obscure asymmetrical identity intensity across the scale.

In addition, the “equal” category is ambiguous. The majority of those within the “equal” category do report the same level of Welsh and British identity on the identity scales in the 2021 WES (59.61 per cent), but the intensity of this dual identity is unclear. Overall, 39.3 per cent of those within the “equal” category report very strong identity (10/10) on both scales, but this still means that 60 per cent of this category report a variety of other identity configurations. Consequently, one cannot infer the strength of someone’s dual identity from the Linz-Moreno scale alone.

Relative Territorial Identity

Considering these issues, many contemporary researchers now use RTI as a replacement for the Linz-Moreno scale (e.g., [Henderson et al. 2014](#); [Galais and Serrano 2019](#); [Henderson et al. 2020](#); [Henderson and Wyn Jones 2021](#)). To create RTI measures, researchers require state and substate identity to be captured separately on scales that ask respondents to position themselves somewhere between low and high identity (see [Sinnot 2005](#) for more on identity scales). Researchers then subtract a respondent’s score on the state identity scale from their score on the substate scale, which creates a new scale that ranges from “only state” to “only sub-state.” The benefit of RTI is that it supposedly avoids the overestimation of dual identity found within the Linz-Moreno scale (see [Guinjoan and Rodon 2016](#)).

One limitation with this approach is that it does not necessarily capture the importance of an identity.¹ Someone may state that they have a strong national identity when asked in a survey, but this does not mean that this is their primary identity ([Rosie and Bond 2008](#)). Individuals identify with numerous groups, and some of these groups will be more important to our sense of self ([Chandra 2012](#)). These identities are “central” in that they are more likely to come to mind when we think of ourselves ([Cameron 2004](#)). Previous research ([Rosie and Bond 2008](#); [McCrone and Bechhofer 2015](#)) has found that state and substate identities tend to be some of the most selected markers in Britain.

I investigate RTI by examining its relationship with identity centrality in the constituent nations of Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales), which allows for the examination of majority (England) and minority (Scotland, Wales) territories. This is important because majority groups tend to have different relationships with the state than minority groups ([Staerklé et al. 2010](#)). Indeed, previous research has found that Englishness and Britishness align more closely with one another than Britishness does with either Scottishness or Welshness (see [Henderson and Wyn](#)

Jones 2021), which may be due to the close political, cultural, demographic, and institutional connections between “England” and “Britain” (Kumar 2010). Consequently, a thorough examination of RTI requires exploring how it performs in different kinds of substate territories.

I use data from wave 20 of the British Election Study Internet Panel (BESIP). The BESIP is an online panel survey (conducted in English) that contains 21 waves (at time of writing), with the most recent collected in May 2021. The BESIP regularly includes identity scales (but not a Linz-Moreno question), which it measures on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very strongly).² Wave 20 (June 2020) is the only wave to include identity centrality questions, which were the first question of an original battery fielded at the end of the survey to sizeable samples from each nation (6,637 from England, 2,730 in Scotland, 1,804 from Wales).³ Like previous research⁴ (e.g., Rosie and Bond 2008; McCrone and Bechhofer 2015), I capture identity centrality by asking individuals to indicate the three markers of their identity (from a list of fifteen whose order was randomized) that they consider to be the most important when describing themselves.

I examine the association between RTI and identity centrality via two separate logistic regression models (one for state and one for substate centrality) in each territory. I recode the identity centrality variables to indicate whether someone chose the identity or not (chose another identity or don’t know). I do not exclude the “don’t know” responses in order to avoid inflating the proportion of people who select either national identity category in a territory. As in previous research (Rosie and Bond 2008; McCrone and Bechhofer 2015), national identity categories are among the most popular and those in Scotland and Wales are more likely to prioritize their substate identities than those in England (table 2).

I create three RTI scales by subtracting a respondent’s score for Britishness from their score for Englishness/Scottishness/Welshness, which I present in figure 1.⁵ I include a cubic function (RTI^3) to account for possible non-linear effects. Each logistic regression model controls for age (interval variable), gender (male, female), education (university degree or not), social grade (ABC v DE), ethnicity (white British or not), and religion (Catholic, other Christian denomination, other religion, no religion). I weight analysis by the BESIP’s weighting variable.

Overall, these results highlight that RTI suffers from the same issues as the Linz-Moreno question. First, RTI has large issues with linearity. Despite reflecting the strength of one identity relative to another, moving along the scale does not associate with a consistent level of change in identity centrality (figure 2). For all three substate identities (and Britishness in England), the proportion of those who say that their identity is central increases dramatically 1-point around the equal identity category. On either side of this flux point, the changes in identity centrality are far smaller. One surprising result is that the proportion who say “being English” is central falls among those with the most singular English

Table 2. Identity centrality in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Percentage who select an identity as one of their top three markers (rather than selecting another identity or responding don't know)

	England	Scotland	Wales
Being British	24.28	18.23	25.19
Being English/Scottish/Welsh	26.35	50.75	39.08
Being a parent	37.81	36.32	40.61
Being a partner/spouse	29.96	30.06	33.37
Your gender	25.84	22.43	21.42
Your occupation	24.38	20.82	18.74
Your age group	24.22	20.83	23.1
Your social class	8.34	7.75	10.2

Note: Other options (religion, ethnicity, being a Leaver, being a Remainer, sexuality, and other) all below 10 per cent in all three countries, so are not displayed here. See [Online Appendix](#) for full list.

Source: British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 20 (England *N*: 6,637, Scotland *N*: 2,730, Wales *N*: 1,804).

identities, although it is possible that this is due to the very low number of responses within this category. There are some linear effects for Britishness in Scotland and Wales, but even these only emerge partway along the scale.

Second, individuals on either side of the RTI scale place different levels of importance on their preferred national identity. Those at the relative state/substate extremes are the most likely to say that their state/substate identity is central in all three territories, despite the lower level of substate identity centrality in England. However, outside of the most extreme values, British identity centrality is lower among those who prioritize their British identity than substate identity centrality is among those who prioritize their English/Scottish/Welsh identity. This suggests that territorial identities may be more important to the latter group. Thus, the relationship between RTI and identity centrality is not entirely symmetrical.

Such patterns may emerge because these individuals are either not responding to the centrality question or are selecting another identity. Overall, non-response on the identity centrality question fluctuates across the RTI scale in all three territories (see [Online Appendix](#)). In England, those with equal English and British identity are slightly more likely to say “don't know” on the centrality measure, but there is no consistent pattern in Scotland or Wales. In either case, RTI scales do not acknowledge the asymmetrical levels of importance that state and substate identifiers place on their identities.

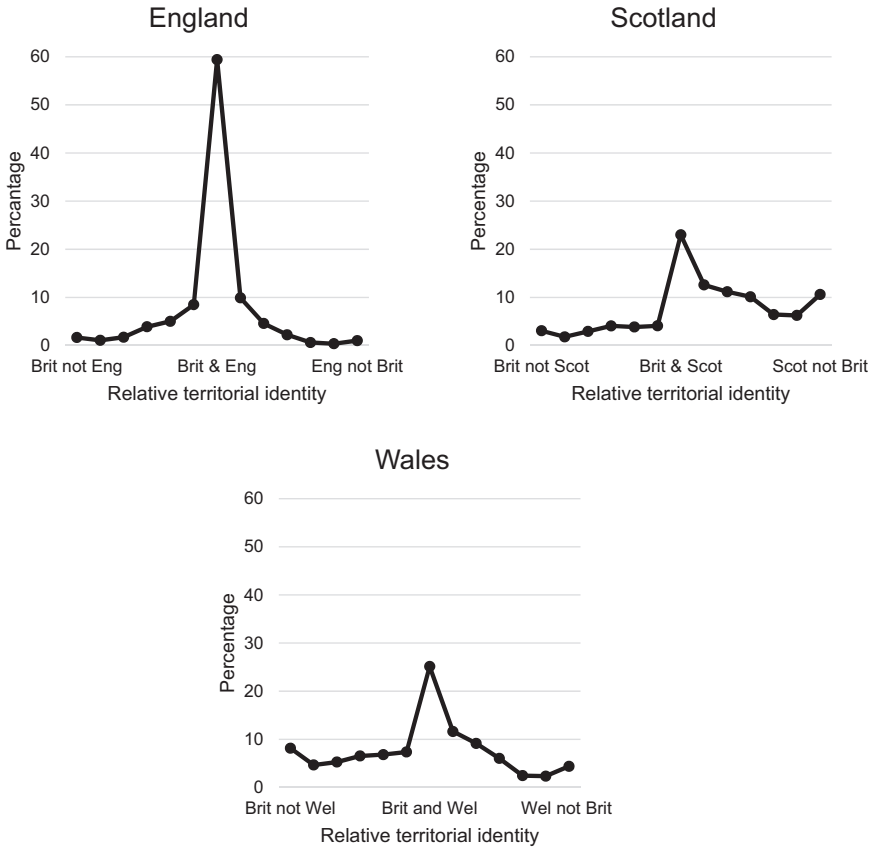


Figure 2. Distribution of RTI in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Source: British Election Study Internet Panel (England *N*: 6,417, Scotland *N*: 2,654, Wales *N*: 1,768).

Third, dual identity remains ambiguous when using RTI. As with the Linz-Moreno scale, RTI collects dual identifiers into one category. Equal state/substate identity is the most popular RTI category in all three territories (see [figure 1](#)), although it is by far the most prominent in England. The issue here is that this “equal” category includes a wide range of identity strengths. I explore this by dividing equal identity into four levels: low (1–1 to 4–4 combined due to low sample size), 5–5, 6–6, and 7–7. Around half of equal identifiers report “very strong” identities in all three territories, but 20 per cent report moderate to weak (scale mid-point or below) identities ([table 3](#)).

Failing to capture this variation is an issue if there are differences between those with equal strong or equal weak identities. I explore this in two steps. First, I use

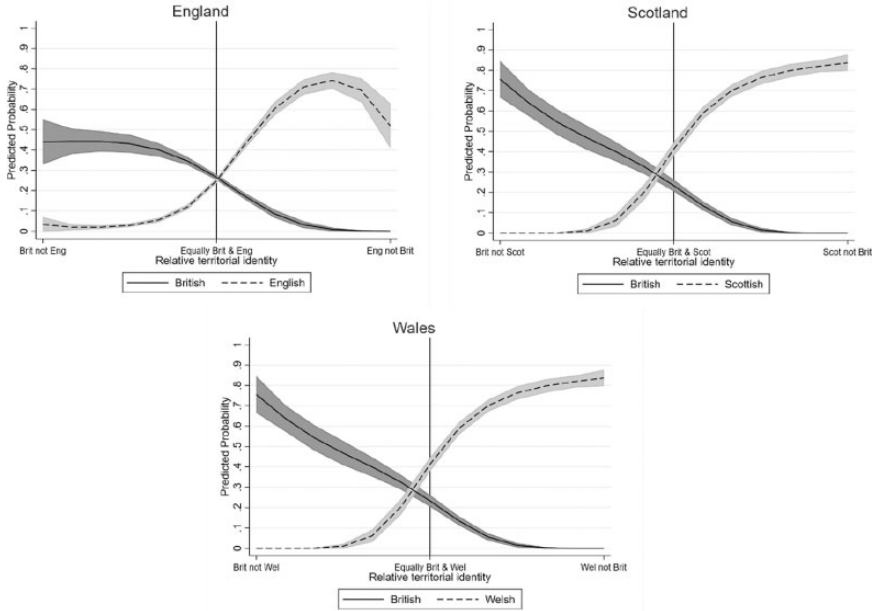


Figure 3. Predicted probability of considering a national identity one of the three most important markers of your identity (i.e. central) by RTI in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Source: British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 20 (England N: 5,528, Scotland N: 2,323, Wales N: 1534).

Table 3. Levels of equal identity in England, Scotland, and Wales

Equal identity on 1–7 scale	England		Scotland		Wales	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1–1 to 4–4	750	20.04	122	20.1	83	21.39
5–5	555	14.55	78	9.84	62	12.92
6–6	773	18.83	123	18.26	66	15.01
7–7	1893	46.59	314	51.8	218	50.68

Source: British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 20.

Note: 1–1, 2–2, 3–3, and 4–4 recoded together due to low sample size.

identity centrality as the dependent variable in separate logistic regression models for each level of equal identity in each territory. Second, I test the association of dual identity with left-right self-placement and vote in the 2016 EU referendum. I focus on these because previous researchers have used RTI to explore the association between relative identity and both of these issues (e.g., Galais and Serrano 2019; Henderson et al. 2020). I use vote in the 2016 EU referendum (0: Remain, 1: Leave) as the dependent variable in separate logistic regression models, and left-right self-placement (0: left, 10: right, normalized between 0 and 1) as the dependent variable in separate OLS regression models.

First, the designation of those who report the same level of state and substate identity strength as “equal identifiers” appears questionable. In Scotland and Wales (but not England), the proportion of equal identifiers who consider “being Scottish/Welsh” to be central increases drastically as the strength of their equal identities increases (figure 3). In contrast, the changes for “being British” are far less pronounced. As a result, over 60 per cent of those with very strong dual identity consider their Scottish/Welsh identity to be central, which is approximately double the amount that consider their British identity to be central. Thus, even though these individuals reported the same (very strong) level of British and Scottish/Welsh identity, many of them ultimately prioritize the latter.

Second, those with weak equal identities appear to have different political attitudes to those with strong equal identities. For example, Leave voting increases with the strength of dual identity in England and Wales, but not Scotland (figure 5). All of these differences are statistically significant in England, which suggests that we may generalize them to this population. Only the difference between weak dual identifiers and very strong (7–7) dual identifiers is significant in Wales, which is likely due to the lower sample size. Different levels of dual identity also associate with different ideological self-placements in all three territories, albeit to a lesser degree than Brexit vote. The differences between the weak and the very strong dual identifiers are significant in all three territories, but particularly England. Why these patterns emerge is beyond the scope of this article, but these results emphasize that RTI obscures substantive differences among a large proportion of respondents.

Relative Territorial Attachment versus RTI

A further issue with current applications of RTI is that some researchers use measures of “attachment” when attempting to capture “identity.” For example, Galais and Serrano (2019) and Guntermann et al. (2020) discuss “identity” but use measures of “attachment.” As discussed, Citrin et al. (2001) argue that national identification includes three different components: Identification as (self-categorization), identification with (affection), and normative content (meaning). In this

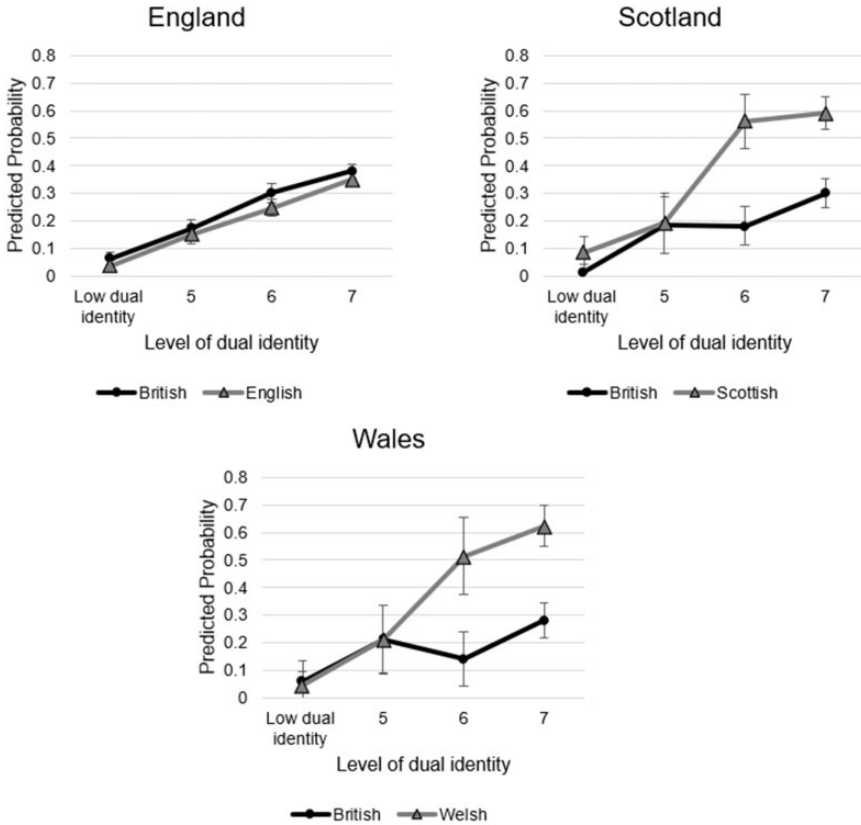


Figure 4. Predicted probability of considering a national identity central by level of dual identity in England, Scotland, and Wales. Source: British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 20 (England N: 5,528, Scotland N: 2,323, Wales N: 1,534)

context, the difference between “identity” and “attachment” measures is that identity measures capture our acknowledgement of group membership, whereas attachment measures capture the affection we feel towards the group (Knez 2005). These concepts may correlate, but they are not identical. For example, it is conceivable that someone may move to Scotland from elsewhere, become attached to Scotland, but never consider themselves Scottish.

Previously, Mendelsohn (2002) argued that attachment and identity are not identical by examining aggregate-level data. I build on this work by exploring whether the same individuals respond differently to attachment and identity scales. Unfortunately, neither the WES nor BESIP measure attachment. Consequently, I analyze data for Flanders and Wallonia from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study, which asks respondents to place themselves on two separate identity (0: very

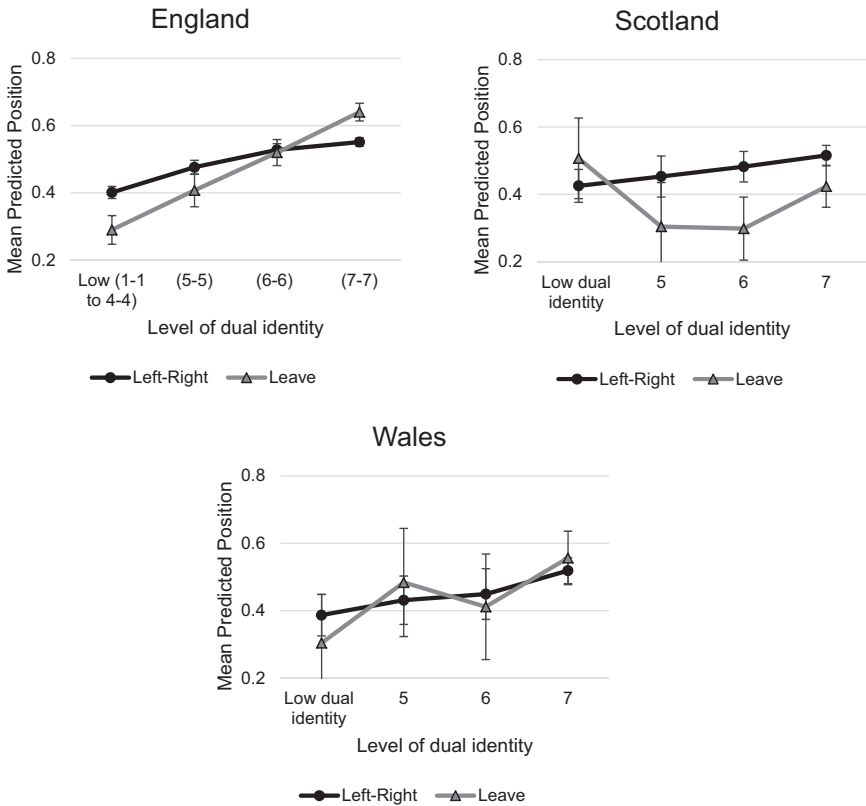


Figure 5. Dual identity and political attitudes in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Source: British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 20 [England N : 4,474 (Left-Right) 4,878 (Brexit), Scotland N : 1,937 (Left-Right) 2,075 (Brexit), Wales N : 1,242 (Left-Right) 1,362 (Brexit)].

weakly, 10: very strongly) and attachment (0: not at all, 10: very strongly) scales. The survey was conducted online and, to my knowledge, it is the only dataset that measures both identity and attachment in two representative samples of substate territories (Flanders N : 1,017; Wallonia N : 1,018).⁶ Unlike the BESIP and WES, the questionnaires for Flanders and Wallonia are in different languages (Dutch and French respectively), which reflects the linguistic differences in these territories.

Overall, responses on these scales do correlate positively with one another (table 4). To explore the differences between responses on the attachment and identity scales, I conduct a set of paired t -tests. I subtract an individual's score on the identity scale from their score on the attachment scale, and then determine the extent to which these differences are distinct from zero (i.e., no difference between

Table 4. Correlations between attachment and identity scales in Flanders and Wallonia

		Belgian attachment	Substate attachment
Flanders	Belgian identity	0.6893	
	Flemish identity		0.6395
Wallonia	Belgian identity	0.7269	
	Walloon identity		0.5834

All values $p < 0.001$.

Source: 2014 Belgian National Election Study [Flanders N: 954 (Belgian) 953 (Flemish). Wallonia N: 952 (Belgian) 948 (Walloon)].

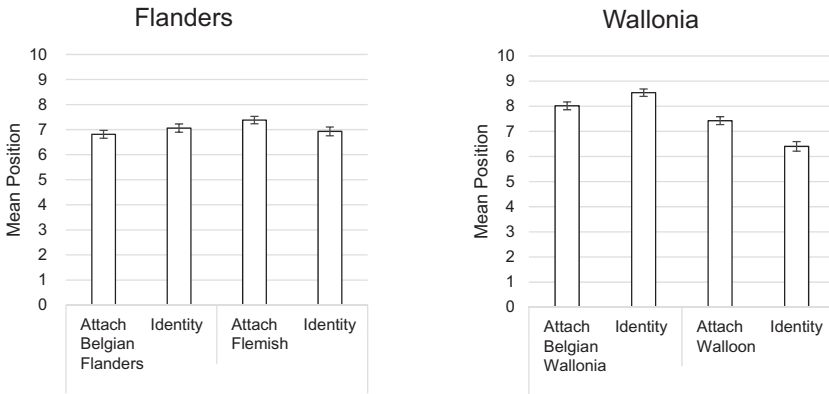


Figure 6. Mean results from paired *t*-test in Flanders and Wallonia.

Source: 2014 Belgian National Election Study [Flanders N: 954 (Belgian) 953 (Flemish). Wallonia N: 952 (Belgian) 948 (Walloon)].

the responses on either scale). I do not weight the analysis because the purpose is to compare specific responses on two scales. I display the means of these scales in [figure 6](#).

In both Flanders and Wallonia, substate attachment is higher than substate identity, while state attachment is lower than state identity. These differences are largest in Wallonia, but they are statistically significant in both territories. The mean differences do not appear large, but they correspond to large differences in the distributions of relative identity and relative attachment ([table 5](#)). For example, individuals are far less likely to prioritize “Belgium” when using attachment measures. The equal category is also far larger, particularly in Wallonia. Thus,

Table 5. Differences in relative identity and relative attachment scales in Flanders and Wallonia

		Attachment		Identity		
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Flanders	Prioritize state	183	18.89	Prioritize state	318	32.78
	Dual	377	38.91	Dual	315	32.47
	Prioritize substate	409	42.21	Prioritize substate	337	34.74
Wallonia	Prioritize state	330	34.3	Prioritize state	556	57.74
	Dual	483	50.21	Dual	331	34.37
	Prioritize substate	149	15.49	Prioritize substate	76	7.89

Source: 2014 Belgian National Election Study.

attachment measures appear distinct to identity measures, and using them as interchangeable may lead researchers to understate state identities.

Conclusion

Overall, this study emphasizes that existing measures of relative state/substate identity are not enough to capture the complex relationship between state and substate identities. Failing to capture this accurately is an issue because it may lead us to form inaccurate conclusions about how these identities relate to politics in multi-nation states. While researchers now use RTI measures as a replacement for the Linz-Moreno scale, this approach has critical limitations. First, given the nonlinear association between relative identity strength and identity centrality, RTI measures do not necessarily capture the linear trade-off between state and substate identities that some researchers may expect. The relationship between relative identity and identity centrality is not symmetrical either, as those who prioritize their state identity are less likely to say that their preferred national identity is central. Going forward, future researchers seeking to measure territorial identities may account for this by broadening the measures of territorial identities that they include in their surveys.

In addition, the dual identity category remains ambiguous. Equal state and substate identity is the most popular category in all three territories. However, there are large differences between those with weak-but-equal identities and those with strong-but-equal identities in both identity centrality and political attitudes. In particular, those with very strong (but equal) state and substate identity in Scotland and Wales are more likely to consider their substate identity central, which suggests that identity scales may be obscuring the tendency for individuals to prioritize one territorial identity over another (something [Onuch and Hale 2018](#)

suggest in their study). To address this, future researchers should endeavour to separate those with weak-but-equal identities from those with strong-but-equal identities.

Finally, existing operationalizations of RTI that use attachment measures may deflate state identities. In both Flanders and Wallonia (but particularly the latter), Belgian “attachment” was significantly lower than Belgian “identity,” while the opposite was then true for substate attachment versus identity. As a result, relative territorial “attachment” scales appear to potentially privilege the substate territory, while the reverse is true for relative territorial “identity.” These results stress that identity and attachment are not identical terms to survey respondents, and future researchers should be careful to avoid conflating them in their analyses.

Capturing this complexity may require including additional dimensions of identification in our analyses. One of the most important may be how individuals understand these place identities. Previous research demonstrates that there are multiple competing understandings of the meaning of state and substate identities. For example, [Cussó et al. \(2018\)](#) discusses how “Spanish” can refer to the geographic location, official designation (i.e., citizenship), or the “nation.” Such distinct understandings of a label may help explain why individuals report equal identity, yet ultimately prioritize one over the other. Admittedly, this is difficult to explore in the short-term because few surveys include such measures. One alternative may be to include constitutional preference, which can serve as an (imperfect) proxy for how a person views the position of the substate territory within the state.

How different dimensions of relative identity fit together requires further analysis, particularly as individual-level conceptions of identities may differ from those expected by researchers ([Abdelal et al. 2006](#)). One method for capturing these unexpected associations is to take an inductive approach. Inductive methods, like exploratory factor analysis or latent class analysis, allow researchers to examine how responses on an array of variables fit together without presupposing their configuration. For example, [Bonikowski and DiMaggio \(2016\)](#) use latent class analysis to separate individuals in the United States into four “nationalist” categories based on four different dimensions of their national identity. These techniques are more complex, but the results in this note emphasize that single measures often fail to capture the nature of relative identities accurately. Taking a broader approach and including other dimensions of national identities may improve the accuracy of our accounts of identities across substate territories.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* online.

Notes

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1. Identity strength and identity centrality do associate positively with one another. However, not all individuals with very strong national identity consider it to be central to how they define themselves, particularly among state identifiers (see [Online Appendix](#)).
2. There are few substantive differences between how someone responds on the WES's 0–10 scale to how they respond on the BESIP's 1–7 scale (see [Online Appendix](#)).
3. All residents could respond, with around 95 per cent of those who respond being born in the United Kingdom (see [Online Appendix](#)).
4. These studies ask people to pick their top three identities (in order) over three separate questions. However, survey space requirements required condensing this into one question.
5. I treat these measures as continuous indicators in the model, as is the standard in the literature (see Galais and Serrano and [Henderson et al. 2020](#)). As a robustness check, I run separate models where RTI is treated as an ordinal indicator (i.e., each level on scale is treated as a separate category), and the results are virtually identical (see [Online Appendix](#)).
6. Data is also present for Brussels but given the different level of analysis (city versus region/nation) I do not include it.

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