

## What Do Subnational Offices Think They Are Doing in Brussels?

GARY MARKS, RICHARD HAESLY and  
HEATHER A.D. MBAYE

The past decade-and-a-half has seen an explosion in the number of offices established by subnational governments at the heart of the European Union. The first such offices were set up by English local authorities and German Länder in 1984, and for several years they went virtually unnoticed. In 1988 there were 15 such offices. By the end of 1993, the time of the first systematic survey of such offices, there were 54 (Nielsen and Salk, 1998; Marks et al., 1996; see also Keating, 1995: 14; Mazey and Mitchell, 1993: 97–100). Today there are over 160. Such offices serve no official EU function. They are not mentioned in the treaties; they play no formal role in the policy process. They are part of the subterranean political world of multi-level governance that lies beneath and beyond EU treaties.

Are subnational offices decorative or are they substantively important? What do subnational governments hope to gain by funding offices in Brussels? Are they listening posts to detect upcoming legislation? Are they means to situate particular regions and localities in European networks of similar (or different) actors? Finally, and for our purpose most importantly, are they intended to influence policy making in the EU?

Answers to these questions promise to deepen our understanding of the politics of multi-level governance in the EU. We know that supranational institutions exert real authority in EU decision making, and we also know that the authority of subnational governments has grown to significant proportions across several EU countries (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). We know far less, however, about how subnational and supranational actors connect.

### OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY AND DATA

This article analyzes the activities and goals of subnational offices in the European Union with the help of a new data set collected in 1999 by a

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Gary Marks and Heather A.D. Mbaye, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Richard Haesly, California State University, Long Beach

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working group led by Gary Marks and François Nielsen on 'regions in the EU' at the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for European Studies. The survey, which replicates a survey conducted by Jane Salk in 1993 (Nielsen and Salk, 1998, Marks et al., 1996), was sent to all 165 EU regional offices with formal representation in the European Union. Ninety-one offices responded to the questionnaire – a response rate of 55 per cent. Regional offices from all member states, with the exception of Portugal (which has only one regional office) responded to the survey. Austria, with 10 of 12 offices responding, and Denmark, with 9 of 10 offices responding, stand out as particularly compliant. Less accommodating were the regional offices from Belgium (1 of 7 offices). Appendix A lists the offices that responded to the survey.

TABLE 1  
PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE ACTIVITIES

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
To gain information about upcoming EU legislation relevant to your region	4.4	1.0
To gain information about funding opportunities for your region	4.7	0.8
To build ties with other regional or local representations	3.9	0.9
To act as a liaison between groups in your region and EU institutions	4.2	1.0
To explain your region's position on issues to EC decision-makers	4.1	1.0
To promote awareness of your region in Brussels	3.8	1.0
To increase knowledge in your region about the European Union	4.0	1.0
To respond to requests for information or assistance from people in your region	4.4	0.9
To influence decision-making in the EU in favor of your region	4.0	1.2
To gain more influence for regions more generally in the European political process	3.2	1.3

Key: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

Subnational offices are as diverse as the regions and localities they represent. In federal and federalizing political systems, representation in Brussels is dominated by regional governments. Thus one finds every German and Austrian *Land* and all three Belgian regions represented in Brussels along with most Spanish *comunidades autónomas*. In countries with a weaker regional tier, representation usually consists of a mixture of local and regional units. In France, most offices represent *régions*, but

several *départements* also have offices. In the United Kingdom, local authorities, regional quangos, regional enterprise organizations, national local-authority organizations, universities, and elected regional assemblies fund offices representing individual local authorities, regional groupings of local authorities, a national local-authority organization, alongside offices representing the North of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. From July 1999, the elected Scottish executive shared a new location, Scotland House, with Scotland Europa, a conglomerate of Scottish public and private organizations that has represented Scottish interests in Europe since 1992. In unitary systems such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, local governments (or associations of local governments) predominate.

Slightly more than two-thirds of all offices in Brussels represent a region rather than a smaller territorial unit, and two-thirds represent a single subnational government rather than two or more subnational governments. Single regional offices predominate, making up 53 per cent of all offices, and 56 per cent of respondents to our survey. A standard goodness-of-fit test confirms that our sample matches the distribution of offices in the universe of cases on these variables.<sup>1</sup>

Our survey provides detailed information on the size, expenditure and staffing of subnational offices. The survey also poses a battery of questions concerning the goals and activities of subnational offices. For example, each office is asked to assess the importance of gaining information about upcoming EU legislation relevant to their home region or locality on a five-point scale from 'not at all important' to 'very important'. In addition to information-gathering, we ask each office to evaluate the importance of other goals, such as forging ties with other regions, acting as a liaison between their region and the EU, influencing decision making in the EU, and increasing the influence of regions generally in the EU. A second set of questions assesses the importance of 11 discrete policy areas to the office (e.g., competition, agriculture, the environment, citizenship). A third set of questions asks each office to rate its effectiveness in playing certain roles in the EU. Finally, each office is requested to detail the level and frequency of its interaction with other organizations within the EU, including all 23 EU Directorates, COREPER, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the permanent representations of member states, and the other 161 EU regional offices.

GATHERING, EXCHANGING, MEDIATING AND PROVIDING  
INFORMATION

Why should a subnational government spend resources for an office in Brussels? Subnational offices have been likened to unofficial embassies, but the bread-and-butter work of an embassy – representing citizens in a foreign land – does not apply. Few subnational offices help home companies export their services or products. The main functions that have been ascribed to subnational offices in the literature have to do with information: they gather information concerning EU legislation; they exchange information in subnational networks; they mediate information to their respective home territories, and they provide information to EU decision makers.

*Information Gathering*

Most previous analyses have argued that information gathering is the prime goal of subnational offices (Marks et al., 1996: 58; Jeffery, 1996; Mitchell, 1994; John, 1994b). Subnational governments have a strong incentive to be informed about EU legislation in order to incorporate it into their own laws and practices and in order to monitor compliance in their own territories (John, 1994a). In addition, a subnational government is likely to have a strong interest in knowing what is in the policy pipeline. This cannot be gleaned by reading the newspapers. Coordinated information gathering is particularly important in the European Union because the legislative process is complex and murky. Legislative proposals may originate in unexpected places within the Commission; the European Parliament is relatively unstructured by parties and is difficult to read; the Council of Ministers debates behind closed doors.

Peter John observes that information gathering is at the base of a 'ladder' of subnational office participation that includes seeking funding opportunities, participating in trans-national networks, and seeking political influence (1994a). At minimum, subnational offices are expected to be listening posts, or early warning stations, for their sponsors (John, 1994b). Information gathering is the *sine qua non* of subnational office activity in the European Union.

*Networking*

Opening an office in Brussels places governments from diverse territories in close proximity (Salk, Nielsen and Marks, 2001; see also Hooghe and Marks, 1996; Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996; Marks, 1993: 403–6). This lowers the transaction costs of informational exchange and facilitates dense cooperative networks. Association among regions takes many

forms: there are, for example, numerous networks encompassing regions with similar economic profiles (e.g. the Four Motors), regions with similar political or geographical situations (e.g. Association of European Frontier Regions), and neighbouring regions (e.g. the three Alps associations) (Benz, 1998; Bachtler, 1997; Constantelos, 1996; Jones, 1995; Keating and Jones, 1995; Keating, 1995; Leonardi and Nanetti, 1990).

Regions also form consortia to apply for and administer EU cohesion funding, including multi-regional Community Initiatives such as RESIDER (steel-making areas), RETEX (textile and clothing industry), and RECHAR (coal-mining regions).<sup>2</sup> The Commission's INTERREG programmes are specifically intended to encourage regional networks across different countries.<sup>3</sup>

Networks among subnational offices tend to be flexible and problem-oriented (Benz, 2000). They routinize informational exchange, and thereby diffuse best practices among connected regions. As Arthur Benz has noted, the fluidity of subnational networks suggests that they are more oriented to ad hoc information sharing than exercising political muscle (Benz, 1998: 120). Yet networks can be more than sites for information sharing. As in the case of the association of Objective 2 regions, which in 1992 mounted a campaign for Objective 2 funding, such networks can serve as transnational political lobbies.

#### *Liaising Between the Region and the EU*

Subnational offices mediate between their home territories and the European Union. The flip side of gathering information from European actors is conveying information to people back home: elected subnational representatives, civil servants, firms, public organizations and citizens. Officers of subnational offices often think of themselves as intermediaries between their region or locality and the European Union, and they realize that one way to show value for money is to locate and inform key actors in their home territory. Their job regularly takes them to their region as well as to Brussels (John, 1994b).

As the 'single biggest meeting point of commercial and other economic interests outside Washington, DC,' Brussels is a major lure for private and public interests (Jeffery, 1996: 195; see also Hull, 1993: 85–8; Mazey and Richardson, 1993: 5–9). A vast amount of EU legislation bears directly on regions and localities. Subnational offices access information about the EU policy process and assist home constituencies in using it. In addition, subnational offices help those at home negotiate the complex European policy terrain and channel them to relevant Commission officials or parliamentary representatives.

### *Influencing Policy*

Finally, subnational offices may seek to influence EU policy making. Information gathering and the exercise of political influence are not entirely different activities. They lie on a single continuum describing the direction of informational flow. Van Schendelen (1993) argues that stimulation and transmission of information are at the core of political influence: 'The lobbyist's *need to inform* public authorities indicates his fear that, otherwise, formal decision-making will be based on insufficient information, i.e. on misconceptions and false interpretations', (Van Schendelen, 1993: 2f; see also Bomberg and Peterson, 1998: 232–3; Hull, 1993: 91–2; Mazey and Richardson, 1993; Zeigler and Baer, 1969: 11; Milbrath, 1963).

Charlie Jeffery has observed that the 'core function' of British and German regional offices 'is to act as an information channel between the home base and ... European institutions' (1996: 192). But this, as Jeffery stresses, covers a host of possibilities from a 'reactive' strategy of passive information gathering to a proactive strategy of feeding information to relevant policy makers early in the decision making process 'to shape policy in favor of the region concerned' (1996: 192).

In general, scholars of subnational politics have been cautious about attributing political influence to regional offices. In his evaluation of the politics of EU regional policy, Ian Bache emphasizes the continued gatekeeping role of national governments and stresses the variability of regional influence across different issues and at different stages of the policy process. Bache observes that 'On occasions, the consequence of national government gatekeeping is a political arena characterized less by multi-level governance than by *multi-level participation*: actors from subnational and supranational levels participate, but do not significantly influence decision-making outcomes' (1998: 155, author's italics; Bache et al., 1996). Martin and Pearce conclude their survey of Scottish, Welsh and English subnational governments by noting that 'Rather than seeking to shape policies, most see their role as ensuring that they are sufficiently well informed to be able to respond to future policy initiatives' (1999: 47). However, there are grounds for expecting variation in the extent to which subnational offices attempt to influence EU policy. Charlie Jeffery finds that offices representing German Länder are politically proactive on account of their resources and entrenched domestic position, their clear European mission, and their precisely delineated role in a strong regional government (1996).

## SUBNATIONAL OFFICES IN BRUSSELS

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## EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY

Table 1 presents mean self-evaluations of the importance of ten activities for subnational offices. Where the difference between two scores is 0.3 and their standard deviation is 1.2 or less, one can be confident at the 95 per cent level that the difference is not a statistical artifact. By and large, the picture presented here is consistent with the expectations of the literature. The activities that subnational offices regard as most important have to do with information gathering, while those concerned with gaining political influence, particularly for all regions, are perceived as less important. It is noteworthy that variation among offices on their political activities is consistently greater than that for their more routine endeavours.

How do these disparate activities fit together? Do they fall into the bundles that we describe above? Table 2 summarizes the results of an exploratory factor analysis for the ten items listed in Table 1. Our expectation that there are a limited number of distinct objectives is strongly confirmed. The pattern identified in Table 2 is unusually crisp. Three factors emerge, and there is almost no overlap among them when we adopt conventional cut-off points in specifying factors (Eigenvalue=1) and loadings (0.4).

TABLE 2  
FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SUBNATIONAL OFFICE OBJECTIVES

	<i>Exerting Influence</i>	<i>Liaising</i>	<i>Networking/ Information Gathering</i>
Influence EU decision making	.86		
Explain subnational position to EU decision makers	.82		
Gain influence for regions generally	.79		
Provide knowledge/assistance to people in region		.81	
Liaise between subnational and EU actors		.67	
Increase knowledge of EU in region		.64	
Gain information about funding.		.52	.40
Build ties with other regions or localities			.65
Gain information about upcoming legislation			.60
Promote awareness of region in Brussels			.58
Variance explained	28%	19%	12%

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
All factors with an Eigenvalue equal or greater than 1 are listed.  
All factor loadings greater than or equal to .4 are shown.

The first factor, accounting for 28 per cent of the variance, loads heavily on responses to the three items that tap political influence: influencing decision making in the EU; explaining subnational positions to EU decision makers; and gaining influence for regions generally in the European political process. Pearson correlations among these three items are relatively high, ranging from 0.49 (sig>0.001) to 0.73. This factor taps common sources of variation among regional offices more efficiently than any other factor. Hence, if one is interested in how regional offices vary, the logical place to begin is with the importance they place on gaining political influence. This was the variable that we were most interested in when we designed the survey, and it is more powerful than any other in distinguishing the goals of subnational offices.

The second factor we identify, accounting for 19 per cent of the variance, concerns the role of an office in liaising between the home region and Europe – by providing people in the region with information or assistance, by facilitating contacts for local actors at the European level, and by increasing knowledge of the EU in the region. The third factor, which accounts for 12 per cent of the variance, taps basic objectives having to do with information gathering and networking. These are the bread-and-butter activities common to almost all subnational offices – finding out about upcoming legislation, networking with other regions, finding out about funding opportunities, and promoting the region in the EU.

Scores for individual offices across the list of items in Table 1 are generally positive, as one might expect. But there are some noteworthy exceptions. We find weak, *negative* associations between the importance attached to gaining political influence and certain other activities. Offices that emphasize political influence as a goal are *less* likely to report that finding funding opportunities is important to them, *less* likely to report that building ties with other regional or local representations is important to them, and *less* likely to report that responding to requests from people in their region is important to them.

So, to summarize, subnational offices perceive distinct bundles of activities as being significant to them in Brussels; the weight attached to various kinds of political activity is generally less than that for bread-and-butter activities having to do with information gathering and dissemination; the extent to which regional offices regard political activities as being significant varies more than that for other activities.

In the remainder of this article we will focus on political activities. The pattern of responses we elicited from subnational offices concerning political influence is distinct from that for other goals we identified, and an explanation of this phenomenon has some interesting implications for our understanding of multi-level governance.

## EXPLAINING VARIATION: WHICH KINDS OF OFFICES PURSUE POLITICAL INFLUENCE?

To what extent do subnational offices pursue political influence? Is variation on this dimension of activity structured in an intelligible way?

We have two expectations. First, we expect that larger, better funded, offices will be best placed to take on the goal of influencing EU policy. Several recent studies have investigated the effectiveness of regions and regional offices to affect outcomes in EU policy-making (e.g. Bache and Jones, 2000; Martin and Pearce, 1999; Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; John and McAteer, 1998; Smyrl, 1997; Jeffery, 1996; McAteer and Mitchell, 1996; Bomberg, 1994). McAteer and Mitchell (1996) and Bomberg (1994) argue that resource-rich offices will be able to afford a larger, more professional staff and, hence, will lobby more effectively. Along similar lines, Jeffery (1996) suggests that larger offices can exploit economies of scale and specialization in seeking political influence.

There are wide variations among subnational offices in funding, office space and number of employees. The bottom quartile of subnational offices are located in offices smaller than 720ft<sup>2</sup> (80m<sup>2</sup>) and have budgets less than €150,000. The top quarter inhabit offices of at least 2457ft<sup>2</sup> (273m<sup>2</sup>) with budgets exceeding €337,000. Are larger, richer offices more likely to be shapers as well as takers of policy?

Our second expectation is that offices representing regions that are entrenched in their domestic politics will be more likely to try to influence, not just respond to, European policy making. Charlie Jeffery makes the connection between the influence exerted by a subnational government within its member country and the influence it exerts in the EU (Jeffery n.d.). In prior research on an earlier survey of subnational offices, Marks, Nielsen, Ray and Salk found that the greater the scope of a region's policy competence in its national arena, the more likely a region was to be represented in Brussels (1996). A survey of subnational governments in Britain undertaken by Steve Martin and Graham Pearce found that first-tier authorities – Scottish regional councils, English and Welsh county councils – were much more confident of their ability to influence EU policies than smaller, weaker second-tier authorities – shire districts and London boroughs (1999).

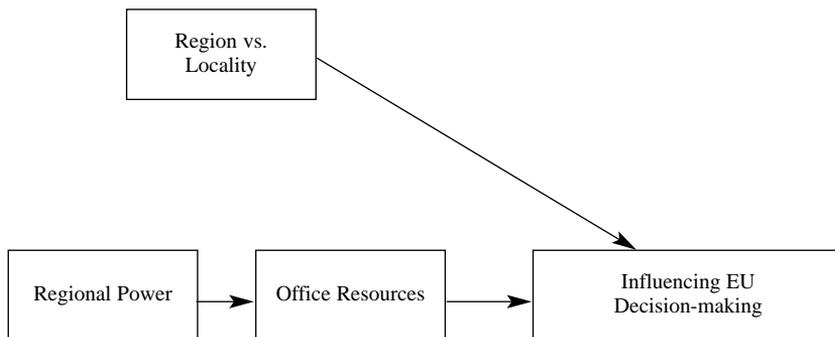
Strong regions have both more to gain by trying to influence EU policy and more to lose if they do not. They have more to gain because many EU policies lie within their competence. They have more to lose because if they are unable to operate effectively in Europe they face the prospect of being outflanked by national governments. While subnational governments in many EU countries have established prerogatives in their

respective national arenas, they are not entrenched at the European level.

European integration is both an opportunity and a threat for regions, and especially for regions that exert considerable competencies in their national polities. Chris Ansell, Craig Parsons and Keith Darden have pointed out that European integration has expanded the coalitional possibilities of subnational and national actors beyond the national state (1997; see also Marks, 1993). Either national or subnational actors can be outflanked. Our hypothesis is that the resources of a subnational government in the national arena underpin its ambitions in Europe. Hence, we expect that (1) offices representing regions will be more oriented towards gaining political influence than those representing subregional tiers of government; (2) offices representing more powerful regions will be more oriented towards gaining influence than those representing less powerful regions.

Our two lines of hypothesizing describe a single causal model in which powerful regions establish large, well financed, offices in Brussels which have the resources and clout to influence EU policy making. So, to summarize, we expect to see the relationships indicated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1  
BASIC MODEL



#### EVIDENCE

Let us take the elements of Figure 1 in turn. We estimate the power of a subnational government by adapting an index of regional governance covering all EU countries for 1950 to 2000, which was developed independently of our regional office survey (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). The index measures the authority of a region in its domestic polity by scoring the character and scope of policy competencies exercised by the

regional government, the extent to which that government shares legislative and executive power with national institutions, and whether the regional government is responsible to a directly or indirectly elected legislature (see Appendix C).

Figure 2 reveals that the greater the authority of a region in its national polity, the better financed is its office in Brussels. Offices set up by subregional (i.e. local) governments, and by regions scoring one to three on our 12-point scale spend, on average, around €200,000 per year, while regions scoring seven or more, i.e. those in Germany, Belgium, Austria, and the extraordinary regions in Spain, spend €447,000, on average.

FIGURE 2  
OFFICE EXPENDITURES BY TYPE OF REGION

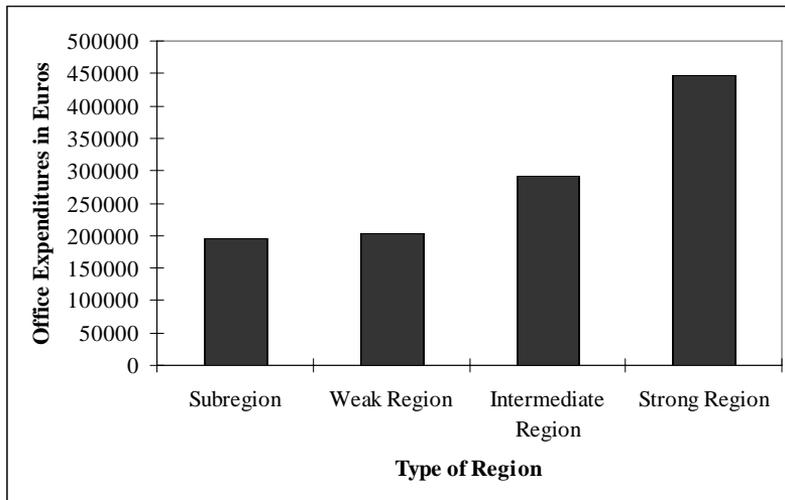
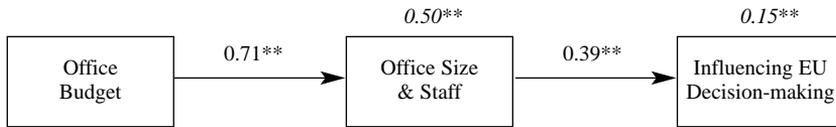


Figure 3 presents a simple structural equation model that reveals (1) the close association between the funds devoted to a subnational office and the size of its footprint and its staffing, and (2) the effect that these have for the importance an office attaches to gaining political influence over EU decision making. We combine office size and the number of staff in an index because the correlation between them ( $r = 0.57$ ) vitiates the independence assumptions of multiple regression. The index explains 15 per cent of variation on our dependent variable.<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 3  
RESOURCES AND INFLUENCE



**Legend**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

Italicized figures are squared multiple correlations.

Non-italicized figures are standardized regression weights estimated by full information maximum likelihood.

Relative fit index = 0.998

N = 93

We can probe further when we compare averages for the importance of EU lobbying across different *types* of office (Table 3). Our expectation is that we should see a contrast between regional and subregional offices, and this is what we find. On a five-point scale, the mean response of regional offices is 4.2, while that for subregional offices is 3.4. We also find that single regional offices have the highest mean score (4.3), higher even than pluriregional offices (4.1). Single regional offices include the giants among their kind, the 1000<sup>2</sup> metre offices of the most powerful regions in Europe, such as Catalonia, the Basque country, and North-Rhine Westphalia. Each of the German *Länder* and Spanish *comunidades autónomas* have their own offices; regions that band together in pluriregional offices tend to be weaker.

But the sharpest contrast in Table 3 is not among regional offices, or between regional and local offices; it is among local offices. These offices vary greatly in a way that we did not expect. Offices representing multiple localities are far more oriented to political influence (mean score = 4.1) than offices representing single localities (mean score = 2.1). So we must refine our initial hypothesis. It is not the case that regions, and regions alone, are intent on pursuing political influence in the EU. Localities do the same if they can gain through strength of numbers what they lack in individual strength. The finding is confirmed when we turn to individual cases. Several offices representing collections of local governments, such as the Association of Danish County Councils, the Europe Bureau of Bavarian Communes, and the Association of Netherlands' Municipalities,

TABLE 3  
IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE BY TYPE OF OFFICE

<i>Office Type</i>	<i>Regional Level</i>	<i>Sub-Regional Level</i>	<i>Total</i>
Single Government Office	4.3 <sup>a</sup>	2.1 <sup>b</sup>	3.9
Combined Government Office	4.1 <sup>c</sup>	4.1 <sup>d</sup>	4.1
Total	4.2	3.4	4.0

<sup>a</sup> n = 49, standard deviation = .97

<sup>b</sup> n = 10, standard deviation = .99

<sup>c</sup> n = 12, standard deviation = 1.2

<sup>d</sup> n = 19, standard deviation = 1.1

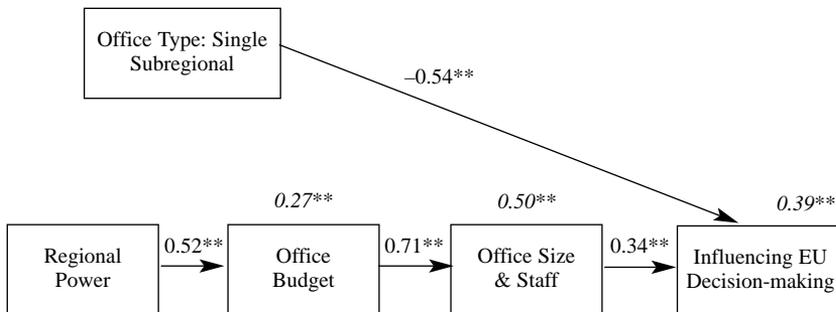
regard political influence over EU decision making as extremely important, scoring five on our five-point scale.

The simplest way to capture variation among types of office is to create a categorical variable for the most distinct type, that is, offices representing single localities. This variable is a powerful influence in the structural equation model depicted in Figure 4. Our initial hypothesis – that stronger regions pump more money into their Brussels offices to better influence EU decision making – is also confirmed. Every arrow in the full model is significant at the 0.001 level. The model as a whole appears to be both parsimonious and powerful, explaining 39 per cent of variation in the extent to which subnational offices pursue political influence. Estimates of model fit are high.

The extent to which subnational offices wish to gain political influence varies, and it does so in an intelligible way. Our expectation that subnational offices serve diverse purposes depending on the power and ambitions of the subnational governments supporting them is confirmed. Entrenched regions try hard to influence political outcomes in the European Union. This is consistent with multi-level governance analyses of linkages between governments beneath and above national states.

But the survey we have undertaken challenges us to extend the study of multi-level governance to local authorities. It is not true that local offices are always less oriented to gaining influence than regional offices. And it is not true that the sharpest divide among offices separates those representing regions from those representing subregions. Offices representing associations of local authorities are no less politically oriented than offices representing groups of regions.

FIGURE 4  
FULL MODEL



#### Legend

\*\* significant at the .01 level

Italicized figures are squared multiple correlations.

Non-italicized figures are standardized regression weights estimated by full information maximum likelihood.

Relative fit index = 0.995

N = 93

#### CONCLUSION

Are subnational offices primarily listening posts – to alert regional decision makers to upcoming legislation, to gain information about funding opportunities and promote awareness of their region? Or are regional offices something sterner, part of an attempt to steer, as well as react to, EU decision making? Do they try to shape policy as well as gain information about it? In their own estimation, many subnational offices do both.

If the yardstick for political influence is shaping the European Union's constitutional structure, then there can be little doubt that subnational offices are rarely decisive actors. But if one is interested in the flow of policy, including authoritative decision making in environmental policy, cohesion policy, social affairs and telecommunications – areas that subnational offices single out as important to them – then large subsets of subnational offices aim to shape decision making.

The aggregate resources devoted by subnational governments to representation in the EU are comparable to those committed by national governments. While individual subnational offices are puny in relation to the representations of national governments in Brussels, an aggregate picture tells a different story. The ten German offices that responded to our survey employ 77 full-time staff in total, and the seven Spanish offices that responded employ 60 full-time staff. Assuming a random distribution of respondents among all 16 German and 17 Spanish offices, we would expect to find a total of around 120 full-time staff for German offices, and around 145 for Spanish offices. In 1999, Neil Nugent estimated that the permanent representations of the larger member states were staffed by 30 to 40 officials, plus back-up support (1999: 149).

Subnational offices do not have formal competencies in the EU, so to the extent that they exercise influence, it will be soft. Rather than examine particular policy decisions, we have approached the offices themselves. Our analysis shows clearly that many do regard gaining influence over EU decisions as an important goal and that variations are structured in an intelligible way.

One must pay detailed attention to the national position of subnational governments in order to explain such variation. Subnational governments are institutionally determined in their respective domestic arenas. The action for subnational offices is rooted in their respective domestic polities where we find subnational governments operating alongside – and sometimes against – national governments to increase their resources, to gain greater political autonomy, or to avoid being outflanked by the imposition of EU policies that national governments have bargained over their heads. What matters to subnational actors is how the European Union impinges on their authoritative competencies, and these competencies find their meaning in national polities. There is no overarching framework for subnational governance in Europe. This is one of the distinctive features of the EU, and the activities of subnational offices reflect this. If, as Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the US House of Representatives once said, all politics in the United States is local, one should not be surprised that multi-level governance in the EU is equally local (see, for example, John and McAteer, 1998; McAleavey and De Rynck, 1997; Sutcliffe, 1997; Bullmann et al., 1994; Goldsmith, 1993; Batley and Stoker, 1991).

The larger and better funded an office the more likely it is to assert political influence as a goal. Regions that are entrenched in their respective national polities are most intent on influencing European decision making. But, to our surprise, offices representing associations of local governments also aim for influence. We know less about the

European concerns and activities of local authorities than we do of regional actors. Perhaps it is time 'to bring the local back in' to the study of multi-level governance.

## APPENDIX A

## LIST OF SUBNATIONAL OFFICES RESPONDING TO SURVEY

*Austria*

Burgenland Verbindungsbüro  
Representation of the Länder  
Land Kärnten Verbindungsbüro  
Land Niederösterreich  
Oberösterreich Verbindungsbüro  
Österreichischer Städtebund  
Land Salzburg Verbindungsbüro  
Steiermark Büro  
Vienna Business Promotion Fund  
City of Vienna Business Promotion Fund

*Belgium*

Ministry of the Flemish Community

*Germany*

Beobachter der Länder  
Informationsbüro Baden-Württemberg  
Europabüro der Bayerischen Kommunen  
Verbindungsbüro der Freien Hansestadt Bremen  
Verbindungsbüro Niedersachsen  
Vertretung Nordrhein-Westfalen  
Vertretung Rheinland-Pfalz  
Verbindungsbüro Saarland  
Informationsbüro Sachsen  
Verbindungsbüro Sachsen-Anhalt

*Denmark*

Aalborg E.U. Office  
Aalborg Development Agency  
Aarhus E.U. Office  
Association of Danish County Councils  
Copenhagen City  
Eura Ringkøbing Amt A/S  
Frederiksborg E.U. Office  
Odense Denmark E.U. Office  
South Denmark

## SUBNATIONAL OFFICES IN BRUSSELS

17

*Spain*

Instituto de Fomento de Andalucía  
Gobierno de Aragón  
Oficina de Asuntos Europeos del Principado de Asturias  
Deputación de Barcelona  
Junta de Castilla y León  
Patronat Catala Pro Europa  
Fundación Galicia Europa  
Instituto de Fomento de la Region de Murcia  
Delegación del Gobierno de Navarra  
Euskadiren Ordekaritza (Delegación del Pais Vasco)

*France*

Bureau Alsace  
Centre Atlantique  
Antenne de la Collectivité Territoriale de Corse  
Association de la Coopération entre la Bretagne et les Pays de la Loire  
Association des Régions Françaises du Grand Est  
EURODOM  
Délégation de la Région Île de France  
Bureau de la Délégation Lorraine  
Antenne Basse-Normandie  
Région Haute-Normandie  
Conseil Régional de Picardie  
Délégation Générale de la Région Rhône-Alpes  
Association Grand Sud

*Greece*

Region of Epirus

*Italy*

Regione Lazio Quinta Regionale  
Regione Liguria Ufficio di Bruxelles  
Regione Toscana  
Unioncamere Piemonte  
Veneto

*Ireland*

Dublin European Representative Office  
NASC – West Ireland EU Liaison

*Netherlands*

Oost Nederland  
Regio Randstad

*Sweden*

East Sweden  
Mid-Sweden  
North Sweden  
South Sweden  
West Sweden

*Finland*

Helsinki Office in Brussels  
Association of Finnish Local Authorities

*United Kingdom*

Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels Office  
Cheshire  
Essex County Council  
Lancashire Enterprises  
Local Government International Bureau  
Association of London Government  
Association of Greater Manchester Authorities  
Merseyside Brussels Office  
East Midlands Regional European Office  
Reading and Thames Valley  
West of England in Europe  
Scotland Europa  
Scottish Executive  
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities  
West of Scotland European Consortium  
Wales European Centre  
Yorkshire and Humberside European Office

*Other*

Délégation de la Polynésie Française  
Lapland

APPENDIX B  
REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2000

	<i>Constitutional federalism</i>	<i>Role of regions in central government</i>	<i>Regional elections</i>	<i>Summary score</i>
	(0–4)	(0–4)	(0–2)	(0–10)
Austria	4	2	2	8
Belgium	4	2	2	8
Denmark	0	0	0	0
Finland	0	0	0	0
France	2	0	2	4
Corsica	3	0	2	5
Germany	4	4	2	10
Greece	1	0	0	1
ireland	0	0	0	0
italy	3	1	2	6
Netherlands	1	0	2	3
Portugal	1	0	0	1
Madeira and the Azores	3	0	2	5
Spain (Régimen ordinario)	3	1	2	6
Spain (Régimen extraordinare)	4	1	2	7
Sweden	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom	1	0	0	1
Scotland and Wales	3	0	2	5

Appendix B measures regional governance along two dimensions: the extent to which a regional government exercises authority independently from central government, and the extent to which a regional government participates in national or European decision making.<sup>5</sup> We apply Daniel Elazar's notion that federalism combines self rule (autonomy) with shared rule (power sharing) (Elazar 1987). We evaluate self rule by scoring *constitutional federalism* and *regional elections*. We evaluate shared rule by scoring the *role of regions in central government*.

### I. Constitutional Federalism

Constitutional federalism taps the formal scope of regional government within the state as a whole. We assign one point for each of the following characteristics:

- existence of a functioning regional tier of government
- extensive authoritative competencies, including two or more of the following: authority to tax; control over police; education policy (including tertiary education); cultural policy; transport and communications policy; economic development; local government; and authority to determine regional political institutions (e.g. administrative hiring, budget process, timing of regional elections)
- specific regional competencies that are constitutionally guaranteed

- federal state in which constitutional change is co-decided by the central state and regions.

These features are usually, but not always, cumulative. That is to say that the first characteristic is a requisite for the second, the second a requisite for the third, and the third a requisite for the fourth.

## II. Role of Regions in Central Government

We distinguish two kinds of power sharing. First, regions can share rule because they collectively constitute a national legislature, usually a second chamber composed of representatives of regional parliaments or regional executives. Second, regional governments may share executive power to the extent that regional ministers and civil servants regularly negotiate legislation or executive decisions with their counterparts in central government.

- legislative power sharing:
  - 1 = a chamber in the national legislature composed of representatives of regional governments or parliaments *without* wide-ranging legislative veto power
  - 2 = a chamber in the national legislature composed of representatives of regional governments or parliaments *with* wide-ranging veto power
- executive power sharing:
  - 1 = regular intergovernmental meetings between central state and regional executives *without* authority to reach binding decisions
  - 2 = regular intergovernmental meetings between central state and regional executives *with* authority to reach binding decisions

## III. Regional elections

We distinguish between indirect and direct elections:

- 1 = the regional assembly is *indirectly* elected
- 2 = the regional assembly is *directly* elected

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## NOTES

1. The goodness-of-fit test produces a test statistic,  $G^2 = 2.87$ . This statistic has a  $\chi^2$  distribution, with three degrees of freedom. At all standard levels of significance, we are unable to reject the null hypothesis that our sample is similar to the distribution of all 165

- subnational offices across these two variables.
2. In 1999, Community Initiatives were redesigned under an enlarged INTERREG programme with three strands – to encourage the creation of cross-border social and economic centres; to promote European integration through the formation of large groups of European regions; and to improve the effectiveness of regional development through large-scale information exchange (Inforegio, 2001).
  3. In its outline for a regional office (Scotland Europa), the Scottish Development Agency summarizes the logic of networking from this angle: 'Networking with contacts made through the other regional representative office is likely to be a significant part of the activities of many participants, particularly in the light of the Commission's propensity to fund transnational collaborative projects' (quoted in Mitchell, 1994).
  4. The index for office size and the number of staff is computed as the sum of values for each variable along five intervals. Missing values for office size and number of staff are cross-imputed.
  5. We define 'regions' as the most authoritative tier of intermediate government. This level of governance is equivalent to NUTS 1 or NUTS 2 regions in the European Union's categorization (*Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques*). Regions in our analysis range from Valle d'Aosta with a population of 119,000 to the 17.9 million in the case of North Rhine-Westphalia – a range that is similar to that among states in the United States. The regional level may shift over time in a country if regional institutions are reformed. This is the case for Belgium, where the region replaced the province in the early 1980s as the dominant meso level of government.

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