

From class to region: How regionalist parties link (and subsume) left-right into centre-periphery politics

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Abstract

The primary dimension of political contestation for regionalist parties is the centre-periphery dimension but they are pressured to adopt positions on the left-right dimension by competition with state-wide parties. We argue that the relative economic position of a region is a key variable for explaining how regionalist parties adopt left-right positions and link them to the centre-periphery dimension. Based on a quantitative analysis of 74 regionalist parties – distributed in 49 regions and 11 countries – over four decades, we find strong evidence that regionalist parties acting in relatively rich regions tend to adopt a rightist ideology, while regionalist parties acting in relatively poor regions tend to adopt a leftist ideology. A qualitative illustration of two paradigmatic cases, the *Lega Nord* (LN) and the Scottish National Party (SNP), appears to support our interpretation that left-right orientations are subsumed into centre-periphery politics through the adoption of two ideal types of regionalist discourse: one labelled as ‘bourgeois regionalism’ (Harvie, 1994) and one labelled as ‘internal colonialism’ (Hechter, 1975).

Keywords

Centre-periphery, left-right, party competition, regionalist parties, socio-economic region

Introduction

Regionalist parties can be considered the political manifestation of the existence and relevance of the centre-periphery cleavage in a given political system (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Rokkan and Urwin, 1983). Their ideology originates from the defence and promotion of territorially defined identities and interests, and is programmatically centred on self-government claims (De Winter, 1998a: 204–205). A great deal of their political struggle, therefore, consists of trying to push the territorial dimension into the political agenda, thus making it a salient dimension of party competition. However, even when they manage to do so, traditional left-right politics surely does not vanish. As a consequence, just as state-wide parties need to come to terms with what for them is a secondary (and perhaps divisive) dimension – the centre-periphery one – regionalist parties undergo systemic pressure to take into consideration what for them is also a secondary (and perhaps divisive) dimension – the left-right one. This is particularly the case

for competition at the regional level, where regionalist parties might have some chance of getting into office (Elias and Tronconi, 2011; Tronconi, 2014) and are therefore expected to outline their programmatic platform across a wide range of policy areas. However, they might also be pushed to position themselves in the national arena, where important decisions on socio-economic policies are taken.

This article aims to investigate how regionalist parties position themselves along the left-right dimension and whether this dimension is somehow linked and subsumed with the centre-periphery one. Using a novel cross-sectional and longitudinal dataset – which includes

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ideology scores for 74 regionalist parties distributed across 49 regions and 11 countries and participating in national and/or regional elections held between 1970 and 2010 – we undertake a quantitative analysis which allows us to investigate the main determinants of regionalist parties' positioning on the left-right dimension. In particular, in this analysis we focus on the role of the relative economic status of the region (*vis-à-vis* the national average). Since economic issues represent the heart of the left-right divide (Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Wagner, 2011), a correlation between left-right positioning and the relative status of the regional economy would represent a strong indicator of the presence of a context-dependent link between the two dimensions. Indeed, we find that regionalist parties in relatively poor regions position themselves overwhelmingly to the left and, vice versa, regionalist parties in relatively rich regions position themselves overwhelmingly to the right. We also provide a qualitative illustration regarding two paradigmatic cases – the Lega Nord (LN) and the Scottish National Party (SNP) – in support of our interpretation of the quantitative analysis' results. Although only a wider and more systematic study of 'framing' can produce the final evidence, our analysis provides support for the thesis that regionalist parties tend to subsume their left-right ideological orientations into centre-periphery politics. They appear to do so by developing two types of regionalist discourse: a) the 'bourgeois regionalism' discourse (Harvie, 1994), which is based on grievances of exploitation by state policies that directly (territorial transfers) or indirectly (welfare) drag resources from the wealthy (and supposedly hard-working) region to send them to other poorer (and supposedly self-indulgent) regions; and b) the 'internal colonialism' discourse (Hechter, 1975), which is based on the idea of uneven development due to state choices which favour the economic development of certain regions at the expense of others, without providing enough direct (investments) or indirect (welfare) transfer of resources to close the development gap or to limit the output differential.

In the next section we discuss the literature on regionalist parties' ideological positioning and outline our analytical framework and related hypotheses. In the following section we discuss our dataset and coding. We then present the descriptive statistics and the results of our multivariate analysis, outlining the main factors of left-right positioning and the links with the centre-periphery dimension. We follow that with a qualitative illustration concerning two exemplifying cases to explore the nature and logic of those links. We end with a brief summary and discussion of our main findings.

Analytical framework and main hypothesis

By definition (De Winter, 1998a: 204–205; De Winter et al., 2006a) – and as confirmed by recent empirical studies (Alonso, 2012: 40) – the centre-periphery cleavage

represents the origin of regionalist parties and the basis of their core ideology. These parties are ideologically and programmatically focused on both the symbolic/identitarian (i.e. recognition of regional peculiarities, minority ethnic groups or minority nations) and substantive questions (attribution of institutional powers/resources to 'their' region) stemming from this originating cleavage (Dandoy, 2010). At the same time, the scholarship has widely acknowledged that regionalist parties do not remain (and, often, are not even born as) single-issue 'prolocutors' (Lucardie, 2000). Many of them, more or less reluctantly and more or less clearly, develop a multi-issue and multi-dimensional ideology (Newman, 1997; De Winter, 1998a; Massetti, 2009; Newman, 1996). Yet, given the paucity of comparative studies on regionalist parties' ideology (Gomez-Reino et al., 2006: 252), there are still many moot points on the determinants of their ideological positioning both along their primary (centre-periphery) dimension and, even more, across the primary and secondary (left-right) dimensions.

Some scholars pointed out that the links between the centre-periphery and left-right dimensions can be deeply influenced by the specific national and regional contexts, which shape social characteristics of the regionalist movements and the dynamics of party competition (Coakley, 1992). Others even reject the possibility of generalizations, claiming that whether regionalist movements and parties will take a leftist or rightist colour depends on idiosyncratic critical junctures related to past historical events (Erk, 2005, 2009).¹ However, other studies suggest that some context-dependent factors are not incompatible with generalization. In particular, Massetti (2009) advances the hypothesis that, due to the dominant position of socio-economic issues in left-right ideologies (Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Wagner, 2011), the relative status of the region (i.e. whether the region is relatively better off or worse off *vis-à-vis* the whole state) might deeply affect the left-right 'colour' of its regionalism. In other words, regionalist parties might 'read' left-right politics through the prism of their territory and, in turn, as also suggested by Gourevitch (1979) and Horowitz (1985), this prism can be strongly affected by the relative economic status of the region. Regionalist parties in relatively poor regions are, arguably, more attracted by Marxist/neo-Marxist (e.g. Gramscian) theories of territorial division of labour (Nairn, 1977) or dependency theories recalibrated within the scope of nation-states, such as 'internal colonialism' (Hechter, 1975); while regionalist parties in relatively rich regions are, arguably, more attracted by neo-liberal discourses on the need/right of individual regions to compete in world markets, free from the oppression of state taxation aimed (also) at territorial transfers (Harvie, 1994).² In short, the putative subsuming of the economic left-right dimension into the centre-periphery dimension involves the translation of the idea of economic competition

between socio-economic classes into competition between regions. Following this insight, we expect a correlation between the relative economic status of the region and the left-right positioning of regionalist parties. Regionalist parties in relatively poor regions tend to position themselves to the left, while regionalist parties in relatively rich regions tend to position themselves to the right.

In order to properly evaluate the presence and strength of this link we need to include in the analysis other factors, either related to the specific centre-periphery stance adopted by regionalist parties or to the structure of the electoral market, which might also affect regionalist parties' left-right positioning. First, we look at regionalist parties' radicalism on their primary (centre-periphery) dimension. Drawing on the empirical findings of previous studies (De Winter, 1998a: 211; Gomez-Reino et al., 2006: 250–251; Massetti, 2009: 517), we expect that leftist positions are linked to radical (secessionist) stances on the territorial dimensions, while rightist positions are linked to moderate (autonomist) claims. Then, we look at the left-right positioning of two types of competitors: the dominant state-wide party in the region and other regionalist parties in the region. The position of the dominant state-wide party in the region is used as a proxy of the regional median voter and, therefore, represents an important indicator of the electoral (left-right) demand. We expect regionalist parties to compete with state-wide parties mainly on the centre-periphery cleavage while adapting to the dominant left-right orientations of the regional electorate. Therefore, we expect them to follow the dominant state-wide party in the region in their left-right positioning. In contrast, we expect that competition with other regionalist parties occurs predominantly on the left-right dimension. Therefore, the left-right position of other regionalist parties competing in the same region represents an indicator of the electoral offer and, in particular, of the (left-right) space which is free from direct competitors. Indeed, we expect regionalist parties to occupy free space rather than replicating the same left-right positioning as other regionalist competitors.

Regionalist parties' dataset

We define regionalist parties according to four criteria. First, they are self-contained political organizations that contest elections. Secondly, they are organizationally present and/or field candidates only in a particular sub-territory (region) of the state. Thirdly, the territorial limitation of their political/electoral activity is a consequence of their explicit objective of defending only the identities and interests of 'their' region. Fourthly, as stated by De Winter (1998a: 204), regionalist parties' core mission is to achieve/protect/enhance "some kind of [territorial] self-government" for their homeland. The first criterion excludes regional parties that formally or de facto act as regional branches of a state-wide party.³ The second criterion

excludes state-wide parties that are in favour of decentralization or federalization of the state. The third criterion excludes parties that are momentarily present only in one or few regions (maybe because they are new) but with clear state-wide ambitions. The fourth criterion excludes ethnic parties that are not primarily interested in self-government claims for the region but, rather, in ethnic community rights.⁴

In order to identify regionalist parties and to be able to classify them according to their ideology we proceeded in several steps. First, we collected regional vote shares⁵ for regional and national elections in 19 Western countries⁶ to create an initial dataset. In a second step we looked at the territorial concentration of the vote and we made use of secondary sources, party internet sites and party manifestoes and documents to determine whether a party can be considered as regionalist. We also applied a relevance criterion; we include in our dataset each regionalist party which obtained at least 1% of the vote and/or one seat in one national or regional election.⁷ For a number of parties we were not able to identify their ideology on the centre-periphery dimension (i.e. we are not sure they could be considered as regionalist parties), and this led to the exclusion of six countries.⁸

We look at regionalist parties participating in regional and national elections because the population of regionalist parties is different across the electoral arenas. Indeed, 54 parties participate in national elections whereas 70 parties participate in regional elections (see Appendix A). Four parties participate only in national elections whereas 20 parties participate exclusively in regional elections (50 parties participate both in national and regional elections).

Party competition and positioning on the left-right and centre-periphery dimensions may be different across electoral arenas. For regionalist parties both the national and regional electoral arenas are usually very important: the national political level because that is where decisions with regard to decentralization are taken; and the regional level because that is where they can also aim to govern, accessing patronage resources and using regional institutions to further ethno-territorial demands. Hence, at the national level regionalist parties may prioritize their position on the centre-periphery dimension whereas at the regional level they may want to emphasize their position on the left-right dimension. Which objective prevails in the end is difficult to deduce a priori and we opt to include both types of elections.

The coding scheme for the left-right dimension, which is reported in Table 1, is a reformulation of similar taxonomies proposed in earlier works (De Winter, 1998a; Massetti; 2009; Tronconi, 2009).

The main difference with previous classifications consists in the possibility of reducing the six-category scale to a dichotomous variable (left and right), which is crucial for testing the main hypothesis presented in this article.

Table 1. Classification of regionalist parties on the left-right dimension.

| | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| Right | 1 | Radical right | 6 | Combining market oriented economic policies with xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies |
| | | Mainstream Right | 5 | Bourgeois (Conservative or Liberal) parties supporting market oriented policies |
| | | Centrist, right leaning | 4 | 'Broad church' parties with more prominent rightist tendencies |
| Left | 0 | Centrist, left leaning | 3 | 'Broad church' parties with more prominent leftist tendencies |
| | | Mainstream Left | 2 | Socialist, social-democratic and green parties supporting state-oriented economic policies |
| | | Radical left | 1 | Marxist parties, or parties with influential Marxist components |

This objective was achieved by identifying prevailing left or right tendencies within 'centrist' parties, thus dividing the 'centre' class into two categories ('Centrist, right leaning' and 'Centrist, left leaning').⁹

The information on which the coding was conducted comes overwhelmingly from recently published secondary sources that provide longitudinal analysis of the individual parties, usually covering almost in full the historical period that we consider: 1970–2010. These sources provide qualitative accounts of the ideological development of regionalist parties and are, therefore, very valuable for tracking their ideological positioning, as well as longitudinal changes. Appendix A provides a list of all coded parties and their average scores (since party position can change over time) for the whole period considered. Appendix B presents a brief discussion of the coding procedure, including examples, and provides a list of references used for the coding. Appendix C validates our scores with the Chapel Hill expert survey (Bakker et al., 2012) and the expert survey conducted by Szöcsik and Zuber (2012), as well as with scores derived from the party Manifesto Project Database (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006).

Results

In Table 2 we report the distribution of regionalist parties along the left-right dimension, on the basis of their average scores in the considered timeframe. Three considerations are in order. First, once the left-right space is dichotomized, we find the same exact number of regionalist parties on the two sides of the divide. This empirical finding appears to confirm that regionalism, in general terms, does not have a systematic predisposition to link itself either with a leftist or rightist ideological position.

Secondly, like for state-wide parties, mainstream and centrist positions are remarkably more common than radical (especially radical right) ones. Thirdly, 'centrist' positions (summing up left and right leaning ones) are adopted in more than 40% (nearly 45% in national elections) of cases. In other words, almost half of the parties are not strongly characterized in their left-right ideology. Since 'position' can be seen as determined by various combinations of 'salience' and 'direction' (Basile, 2015), we can say that some of the parties coded as 'centrist' might have engaged, to various degrees, into a 'blurring' strategy. These data could be, therefore, interpreted as an indication

of a prudent approach, adopted by many regionalist parties, in taking a stance on a secondary dimension (in this case the left-right one).

However, also for centrist 'broad Church' parties, such as the rally parties of the ethno-territorial German speaking minorities in Italy (SVP) and Belgium (ProDG), or other inclusive parties that have become the symbol of regional governments (like the CiU in Catalonia, PNV in the Basque Country and, more recently, the SNP in Scotland), the established literature clearly indicates the predominance of left or right leaning components. In addition, a solid majority of cases adopts very clear leftist or rightist positions. Therefore, the third and final consideration is that the general trend amongst regionalist parties is to engage in party competition beyond the original centre-periphery dimension and to position themselves on the usually more salient (at a system level) left-right dimension. The analysis that follows aims to investigate whether the adoption of a left-right position can be linked to centre-periphery politics (subsuming strategy) or if it is totally independent (two-dimensional strategy).

Multivariate analysis

We now turn to a multivariate analysis in order to explore in how far the economic status of the region can predict a regionalist party position on the left-right dimension. We operationalize the state of the economy of a particular region by calculating the GDP of a region *relative* to the GDP as a country as a whole (Eurostat). Percentages above 100% indicate that a region is doing well compared to the country as a whole, whereas percentages below 100% indicate that a region is economically lagging behind the rest of the country.

We coded regionalist parties on their centre-periphery positioning based on the crucial distinction between moderate/autonomist vs radical/secessionist stances, where the former do not question the territorial integrity of the state while the latter do (Masseti and Schakel, 2013a, 2013b). We also introduce three control variables on competition from statewide and other regionalist parties. The statewide party competition dummy variable measures whether the main (largest) state-wide party can be found on the left (= 0) or on the right (= 1). To determine the main (largest) state-wide party we look at regional vote shares for a particular election year (Schakel, 2013) and determine

Table 2. Number (and percentages) of regionalist parties participating in national and regional elections per position on the left-right dimension.

| | Left | | | Right | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Clearly Left | | Centrist | Clearly Right | | |
| | Radical Left | Mainstream Left | Left Leaning | Right Leaning | Mainstream Right | Radical Right |
| National elections (N = 54) | 6 11% | 12 22% | 9 17% | 15 28% | 9 17% | 3 6% |
| Regional elections (N = 70) | 7 11% | 16 23% | 12 17% | 18 26% | 14 20% | 3 4% |

Table 3. Predicting when a regionalist party is on the right.

| | National elections | | | | Regional elections | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------|--------|------|--------------------|------|--------|------|
| | min | max | change | sig. | min | max | change | sig. |
| Economic status of the region | 0.12 | 0.95 | 0.83 | * | 0.14 | 0.97 | 0.83 | * |
| Centre-periphery position dummy | 0.60 | 0.16 | -0.44 | * | 0.70 | 0.42 | -0.28 | * |
| Main statewide party on the right | 0.60 | 0.73 | 0.13 | * | 0.70 | 0.75 | 0.05 | |
| Other regionalist party on the left | 0.60 | 0.81 | 0.22 | * | 0.70 | 0.79 | 0.09 | |
| Other regionalist party on the right | 0.60 | 0.55 | -0.05 | | 0.70 | 0.41 | -0.29 | * |
| Number of observations | | | 391 | | | | 411 | |
| Number of parties | | | 63 | | | | 81 | |
| Wald chi ² | | | 16* | | | | 19* | |
| Log pseudolikelihood | | | -204 | | | | -230 | |
| McFadden R ² | | | 0.22 | | | | 0.17 | |
| Adjusted count R ² | | | 0.51 | | | | 0.40 | |

* $p < 0.05$.

Note: The table shows the results of logit models whereby the dependent variable reflects whether the regionalist party is left (=0) or right (=1). We show the probabilities for being a right party when the independent variables go from their minimum to their maximum while all other variables are held at their median (categorical variables; except for main statewide party which is set at left) or their mean (economic status of the region). Detailed model results are available upon request.

left-right position via the data from the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project for years before 1999 (Budge et al., 2001; Volkens et al., 2012) and from the Chapel Hill expert survey for 1999 and later (Bakker et al., 2012). Two regionalist party competition dummy variables indicate whether there is one (or more) regionalist party on the left or on the right participating in elections within the same region (0 = no; 1 = yes).

We analyse the left-right ideology of regionalist parties with two variables, a (robust) dichotomous variable and an ordinal/categorical variable with six categories (see Table 1). The binary variable is analysed with the help of a logit model whereby we use party clustered standard errors (positions are coded for each national and regional election and positions are clustered in parties). Theoretically speaking, an ordered logit model would be the preferred model for the ordinal/categorical variable. However, Brunt tests reveal that the parallel regression/proportional odds assumption is not met. That is, the relationship between each pair of outcome groups is not the same and each comparison requires its own model. We therefore opt for multinomial logit models with party clustered standard errors which

do not assume a rank order between the categories. According to Hausman and Small-Hsiao tests, these models appear not to violate the independence of irrelevant alternatives assumption. The unit of analysis is a party participating in a particular region election year. Only when a regionalist party obtains 1 percent vote share in a regional and/or national election at the regional level it is included and we only look at elections taking place in 'core-regions', that is those regions for which the regionalist party demands decentralization or seeks to govern in its best interest. Some regionalist parties are multi-regional, in the sense that they participate in more than one 'institutional' region (e.g. the LN in the 'Padania regions' in Italy and the PDS in the Eastern Länder of Germany). In these cases, each party's institutional region is analysed separately (therefore the number of parties in Tables 3 and 4 is higher than in Tables 1 and 2 or in Appendix A). Appendix D provides descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables.

In Tables 3 and 4 we show predicted probabilities for a particular ideological position of regionalist party on the left-right dimension. These probabilities are obtained by

Table 4. The effects of the relative economic position of a region on the left–right position of regionalist parties.

| | National elections | | Regional elections | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| | 1 SD | 2 SD | 1 SD | 2 SD |
| Radical left | –0.21 | –0.41 | –0.15 | –0.27 |
| Mainstream left | –0.16* | –0.25* | –0.17* | –0.29* |
| Centrist left leaning | –0.05* | –0.08* | –0.12* | –0.18* |
| Centrist right leaning | 0.23 | 0.38 | 0.16 | 0.20 |
| Mainstream right | 0.09* | 0.14* | 0.09 | 0.12 |
| Radical right | 0.11* | 0.21* | 0.19* | 0.41* |
| Number of observations | 391 | | 411 | |
| Number of parties | 63 | | 81 | |
| Wald chi ² | 96* | | 111* | |
| Log pseudolikelihood | –556 | | –586 | |
| McFadden R ² | 0.12 | | 0.11 | |
| Adjusted count R ² | 0.28 | | 0.29 | |

*p < 0.05.

Note: The table shows the results of a multinomial logit model which estimates the probability that a regionalist party is radical left, mainstream left, left of centre, right of centre, mainstream right or radical right. It shows the changes in probabilities for being a type of party when the relative economic position of a region (% of national average) goes from one or two standard deviation(s) below to one or two standard deviation(s) above the mean (98% ± 24% / 48%) while all other variables are held at their median (categorical variables; except for main statewide party which is set at left). Detailed model results are available upon request.

using the `prvalue` and `prgen` command available in the `SPost` package for Stata developed by Long and Freese (2006). Confidence intervals for the changes in probabilities are obtained by a bootstrap percentile method with 1000 replications. The bootstrap method is more robust for ‘noisy’ data than, for example, the delta method, and does not require an assumption of normality because bootstrapping resamples from the dataset and treats the sample as the population. The bootstrap method is not often used because although it “frequently provides better estimates of the confidence interval bounds, it is computationally intensive” (Long and Freese, 2006: 127).

In Table 3 we estimate probabilities whether regionalist parties position themselves on the right when a particular independent variable goes from its minimum to its maximum while all other variables are held at their median (dummy variables) or their mean (economic status of the region). Our main hypothesis concerns the impact of the economic status of the region. As reported in Table 3, where the regional economy is relatively strong there is a significantly higher probability that a regionalist party adopts a right position on the left–right dimension. For both national and regional elections, the probability that a regionalist party places itself on the right increases by 83 percentage points when relative regional GDP goes from 35 to 162 percent of statewide GDP.

The hypothesized link between centre–periphery radicalism and left–right placement also appears to be substantiated. When a party is moderate on self-government

there is a 44 percent increased probability that the party adopts a position on the right. For regional elections, the ‘linkage’ between center–periphery positions and left–right positions is weaker and radical parties have a 28 percent lower probability of placing themselves on the right. Party competition from statewide and other regionalist parties matters too. When the main (largest) statewide party in the region can be found on the right, there is a 13 percent higher probability (for national elections) that a regionalist party can also be found on the right. Since in most cases the state-wide parties are the dominant actors, this is a strategic move which follows the electoral demand (i.e. trying to be close to the median voter in terms of left–right positioning) and might heavily overlap with the ‘socio-economic region’ logic discussed above. As an example, the leader of the *Ligue Savoisiennne* (LS), Patrice Abeille, stated:

from the political point of view, you know that Savoy, similar to all the mountainous countries, is dominated by the conservative or ultra-conservative tendency. As an example, at the last legislative elections [in 1997] eight RPR-UDF MPs were elected out of eight districts. A left-wing autonomist movement would have no chance of success here. (quoted in Roux, 2006b: 110).

On the other hand, regionalist parties also need to look at how the ‘offer side’ of the electoral market is structured. In this case, it makes more sense for them to pay special attention to the positioning of other regionalist parties, in order to identify the ‘free space’. Our analysis shows that when other regionalist parties are present in the region it will affect the left–right position and there is a 22 percent higher probability (for national elections) of being on the right when the other regionalist party is on the left, whereas the probability of being on the right decreases by 29 percent (for regional elections) when the other regionalist party is on the right. Indeed, the occupation of different segments of the left–right continuum by regionalist parties competing in the same region is rather common, e.g. the Basque Country, Catalonia, Aragon, Faroe Islands, Corsica, Sardinia, Val d’Aosta, etc.

In Table 4 we provide the results of a multinomial logit analysis to explore how far the linkage between economic status and left–right ideology holds when using this more fine-grained coding. Table 4 displays change in probability in left–right positioning when the relative state of the economy of the region (percent of national average) goes from one or two standard deviation(s) below to one or two standard deviation(s) above the mean (98% ± 24% / 48%).

The results are quite similar for national and regional elections. When the relative economic position of a region improves, there is a higher likelihood of finding ‘mainstream right’ and ‘radical right’ parties, whereas the probability of finding ‘mainstream left’ and ‘centrist left leaning’ parties decreases.¹⁰

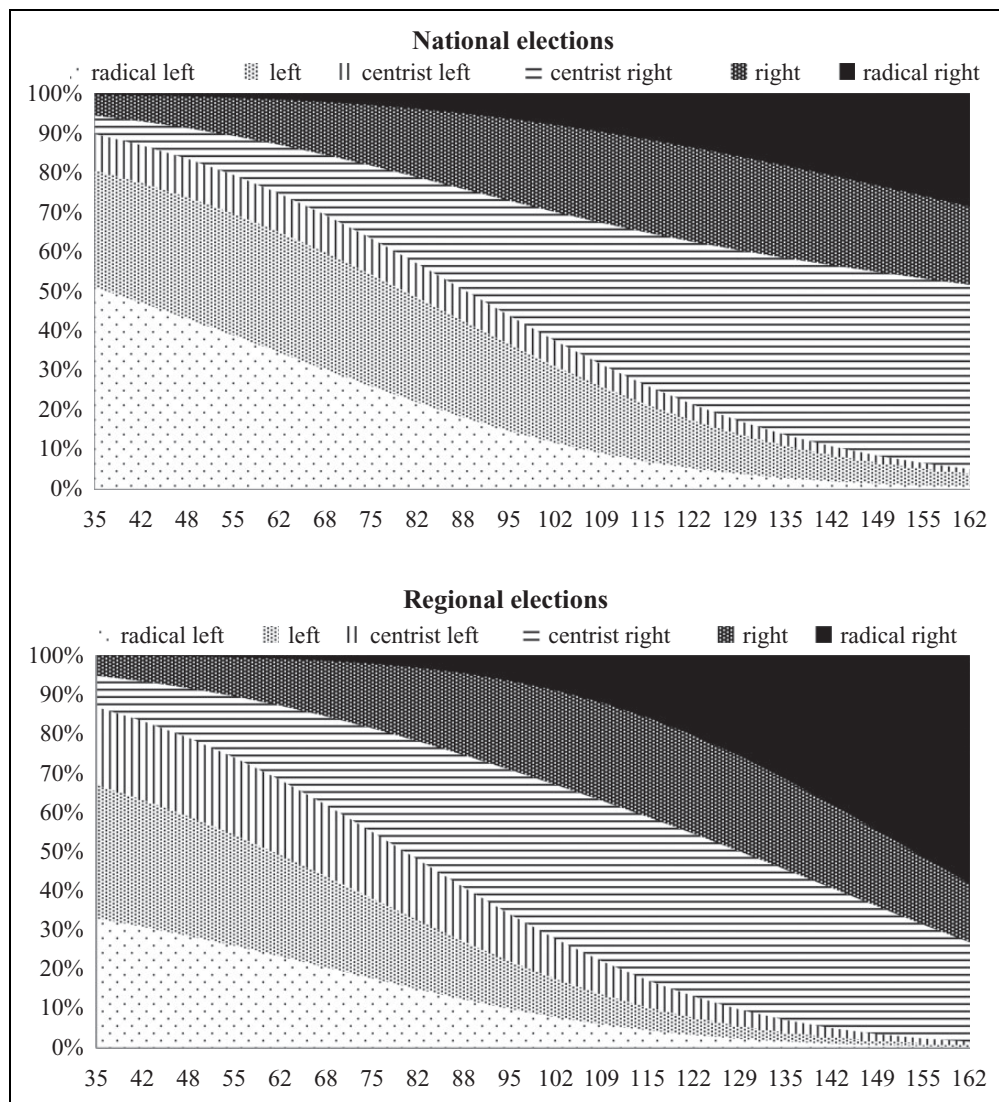


Figure 1. A. National elections. B. Regional elections.

This figure shows the probabilities of particular positions on the left-right dimension when the relative economic position (percent of national average) of a region goes from its minimum (35%) to its maximum (162%). The estimates are based on the model presented in Table 4.

In Figure 1 we plot changes in probabilities for positions on the left-right dimension when the relative position of the regional economy goes from its minimum to its maximum. Figure 1a displays the probabilities for national elections and Figure 1b for regional elections. We do this to show in visual form the results presented in Table 4 and to get a better understanding of how the probabilities change for the values in between the minimum and maximum values of the regional economy variable. The patterns in the figures confirm previous findings. Overall, the multinomial logit analysis supports the results of the logit models and the relative economic position of the region vis-a-vis the country as a whole is a very strong predictor on the question of whether a regionalist party adopts a left or right position.¹¹

We now turn to a qualitative illustration to observe how regionalist parties do indeed 'subsume' their left-right position into a centre-periphery discourse.

A qualitative illustration of the nature and logic of issue linkage: Strategic subsuming?

The most important finding of the analysis presented above is the extremely strong and significant correlation between the relative economic status of the region (relatively 'rich' vs relatively 'poor' regions) and the left-right ideological orientations of regionalist parties. Here we present qualitative data on two paradigmatic cases which indicate that this correlation can be interpreted as the result of a systematic process of subsuming left-right orientations into the

centre-periphery (regionalist) discourse. Incidentally, the qualitative illustration is also interesting in respect to the link between centre-periphery radicalism and left-right positioning.

As far as the link between economic status and left-right positioning is concerned, the basic logic of the subsuming process is rather straightforward and is informed by electoral strategy: the regionalist party orientates itself towards the left or towards the right depending on which type of economic discourse arguably suits best the construction of coherent regionalist grievances and claims. The regionalist perspective tends to amplify the differences between the region and the rest of the state, while playing down internal (intra-regional) differences. This leads many regionalist parties to identify the whole region as a strongly characterized socio-economic entity on the basis of the prevailing features in the regional socio-economic fabric, thus substituting the concept of socio-economic class with that of socio-economic region. In order to present the main differences between the subsuming of a rightist as opposed to a leftist ideological orientation into a regionalist discourse, as well as the implicit¹² but clear centrality of the underlying concept of 'socio-economic region' in these subsuming processes, we present extracts from electoral manifestos of the *Lega Nord* (LN), a party representing the relatively rich regions of Northern Italy, and of the Scottish National Party (SNP), a party representing a region of the UK (Scotland) that has experienced long-term industrial decline and has traditionally lagged behind the national average of economic output.¹³

A policy based on extensive public expenditure cannot, by any means, be called as 'social' because it undermines the basis of the economy. It produces: 1) low development; 2) high unemployment; 3) loss of competitiveness for businesses ... Mrs Thatcher and Reagan stopped the growth of public spending. Here [i.e. in Italy], public finances are out of control, producing an increase in taxation and public debt ... In order to reduce public expenditure you need to eliminate useless expenditures, privileges and the 'nanny state' logic. To do that, you need structural reforms and the most important reform is the federalist one ... Like in the U.S.A. and Switzerland, the creation of true fiscal autonomy for local institutions triggers mechanisms of competitiveness and accountability. (*Lega Nord*, 2001: 3–5)

Scotland today is in a state of crisis, with our economy decimated by the policies of successive London Governments. Unemployment has soared ... Industrial production has fallen far more than in other countries. The UK's Regional Policy has failed to secure long-term jobs for Scotland ... The British political system offers Scotland no hope of improvement. A further term of Thatcherism will devastate the Scottish economy, concentrating more wealth and power in the South East of England. The weak and divided Labour Party is powerless to protect Scotland ... But there is an alternative – to choose

Scotland. Never has the need for an independent Scottish Parliament and a Scottish Government been greater. Only with our own Government will Scotland have the will and the resources to reverse our economic decline and end mass unemployment ... Only a Scottish Government will be able to tackle the appalling social conditions in which many of our people have to live. (SNP, 1983: 1)

We are working hard for economic recovery and new jobs ... However, the London parties' proposed cuts pose a threat to this recovery ... At this election, more votes means more Nats [i.e. Nationalists], and more Nats means less cuts. Local services and recovery can and must be protected ... Running through this manifesto is the SNP vision of a new future for Scotland, independent, socially just and economically secure. (SNP, 2010: 5–6)

As the quotations show, regionalist parties acting in regions that are relatively wealthy (vis-a-vis the state's average) might be pushed to adopt a regionalist discourse which primarily insists on the disadvantages of state intervention in economic matters, and which denounces the loss of regional resources that are transferred to poorer regions via solidaristic and/or developmental state policies. They tend, therefore, to be ideologically oriented towards the right. The LN is by no means an isolated case of that type of regionalism that Christopher Harvie labelled as 'bourgeois regionalism' (Harvie, 1994).¹⁴ The overwhelming majority of the main regionalist parties representing relatively rich regions, such as Flanders, Brussels, Catalonia, the Basque Country, South Tyrol, Val d'Aosta, Savoy, etc. appear, albeit with their own specificities, to combine an anti-tax, pro-market and pro-business position with their own individual regionalist stance (Barbera and Barrio, 2006; Buelens and Van Dyck; 1998; De Winter, 1998b; De Winter et al., 2006b; Marcet and Argelaguet, 1998; Massetti and Sandri, 2012; Pallaver, 2007; Perez-Nievas, 2006; Roux, 2006b). Symmetrically, regionalist parties acting in relatively poor regions might be pushed to adopt a regionalist discourse that insists on the importance of developmental policies/investments and on welfare provisions, denouncing the disinterest of the state in creating the conditions for regional development (e.g. infrastructural investments, attention to specific economic sectors, etc.) and the damages inflicted to their regions by right-wing policies aiming at reducing solidarity and welfare. They are, therefore, inclined to incorporate and maybe subsume a leftist ideology, which often translates to the adoption of a regionalist discourse falling within Michael Hechter's 'internal colonialism' (Hechter, 1975). This is not a peculiarity of the SNP. It applies to many other regionalist parties in relatively poor regions, such as Wales, Wallonia, Galicia, Andalusia, Brittany, Corsica and Sardinia (Buelens and Van Dyck, 1998; Elias, 2009; Gomez-Reino, 2006; Hepburn, 2009; Montabes et al., 2006; Olivesi, 1998; Roux, 2006a, 2011; Van Morgan, 2006).

The two examples reported above can also be illuminating in regard to the second important correlation that we found in descriptive statistics and in the multivariate analysis (see Table 3). Rightist regionalist parties acting in relatively rich regions might be satisfied with the protection of regional wealth through fiscal federalism, thus challenging the centralist tendencies of the state in terms of welfare and redistributive policies but without necessarily putting into question the territorial integrity of the state. In contrast, leftist regionalist parties acting in relatively poor regions are presented with a tougher choice: either they construct a radical critique of the state, blaming it for the underdevelopment of their region and demanding secession, or they put themselves into a somehow contradictory position, i.e. accepting their condition of (economic) dependency vis-a-vis the central state while still challenging it from a (moderate) regionalist perspective. The latter option might produce a shift in the focus of the regionalist struggle from demands for the transfer of competences to demands for the transfer of resources. In turn, this shift of focus leaves regionalist parties particularly exposed to competition from state-wide parties (particularly leftist ones). Indeed, while secessionist leftist parties can radically criticize leftist state-wide parties for their failure to draw resources into the region (see the above extract from the SNP's 1983 manifesto), autonomist leftist parties have no option but to remain subaltern to leftist state-wide parties, as the latter represent their only chance to see transfers of resources based on redistributive policies adopted by the central state.

Discussion

In this article we set out to explain how regionalist parties position themselves on the left-right dimension and whether and how this dimension of party competition is linked with the centre-periphery one. To start with, our data show that regionalist parties do take a position on left-right politics. However, the fact that they can be found everywhere along the left-right spectrum (from the radical left to the radical right) confirms that this dimension of political contestation is a secondary one, not a primary and characterizing one, for the regionalist party family. In addition, the fact that well over 40 percent of regionalist parties adopt centrist positions suggests that the left-right dimension could be potentially divisive for them, leading many of these parties to adopt a prudent positioning that avoids strong leftist or rightist stances. In these cases, we cannot exclude the possibility that regionalist parties engage in some kind of 'blurring strategy'. Only in-depth analysis can properly investigate the contours of the four strategies presented in the introduction, exploring and discussing the empirical grey areas between them.

The main challenge of this article was to find linkages, within regionalist parties' ideological elaboration, between the centre-periphery and left-right dimension. Although we acknowledge the complex and deeply contextual nature of these linkages, we found strong evidence in support of the generalizability of an important link: namely the economic status of the region vis-a-vis the state. Our analysis shows very clearly that regionalist parties in relatively rich regions tend to develop a rightist ideology, while regionalist parties acting in relatively poor regions tend to adopt a leftist ideology. Whether the identified linkage entails a generalized subsuming of left-right orientations into centre-periphery politics can only be proved via a wide and systematic analysis of 'framing'. In this article, we have provided a qualitative illustration, concerning two paradigmatic cases (the LN and the SNP), which supports our interpretation that the subsuming of left-right orientations into centre-periphery politics manifests itself in the emergence of two ideal-types of regionalist discourse: the 'bourgeois regionalism' type (Harvie, 1994) is particularly suitable for parties acting in relatively rich regions; while the 'internal colonialism' type (Hechter, 1975) suits parties acting in relatively poor regions. We have used the term 'subsuming' here to refer to the framing of issues belonging to the secondary (left-right) dimension in terms of the core (centre/periphery) dimension. Such framing, in our view, induces an almost automatic positioning along the secondary dimension on the basis of considerations that pertain to the primary dimension. However, we remain agnostic on whether subsuming always entails an attempt by regionalist parties to 'erase' the secondary (left-right) dimension, as stated by the editors in the introduction to this special issue (Elias, 2015). Finally, the fact that regionalist parties appear to subsume the left-right dimension into the centre-periphery one (rather than vice versa) substantiates the hypothesis put forward in the introductory article, precisely in the terms expressed by the editors of this special issue, i.e. which dimension is subsumed into which dimension does not depend on the relative salience of the dimensions at a systemic level but, rather, on their relative salience at the party level. However, our analysis also confirmed a general correlation between radical regionalism and leftist positioning (and between moderate regionalism and rightist positioning) which fits into a systemic pattern of positioning that has emerged in some national party systems, such as Spain and the UK (Alonso, 2012). These findings, therefore, call for further comparative research into how the different mechanisms – operated by regionalist and state-wide parties – of linking left-right and centre-periphery politics interact at a systemic level.

Appendix A

Positioning of regionalist parties

| Party | Country | Core region | National election | | | Regional election | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-----------|------|--------|--------|
| | | | years | lr | dum_lr | dum_cp | years | lr | dum_lr | dum_cp |
| Action démocratique | Canada | Quebec | – | – | – | – | 1994–2008 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Alsace d'Abord | France | Alsace | 1997–2002 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1992–2010 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Coalición Agrupaciones Independientes de Canarias | Spain | Canarias | 1986–1989 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1987–1991 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Accolta Naziunale Corsa | France | Corse ¹ | 1993–2002 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | – | – | – | – |
| Aralar | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | 2004–2008 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 2005–2009 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Bloque Nacionalista Gallego | Spain | Galicia | 1977–2008 | 1.50 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1981–2009 | 1.63 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Bayernpartei | Germany | Bavaria | 1987–2009 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1970–2008 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Bloc Québécois | Canada | Quebec | 1993–2008 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | – | – | – | – |
| Coalición Canaria | Spain | Canarias | 1993–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1995–2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Centro Canario | Spain | Canarias | 2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Coalicion Extremena | Spain | Extremadura | 1996 | 3.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1995–1999 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Chunta Aragonesista | Spain | Aragon | 1989–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1987–2007 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Corsica Nazione | France | Corse ¹ | – | – | – | – | 1998–1999 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Convergència I Unió | Spain | Cataluna ³ | 1979–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.22 | 1980–2010 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.22 |
| Die Freiheitlichen | Italy | Trento-Alto Adige ⁴ | 2006–2008 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1993–2008 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Eusko Alkartasuna | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | 1989–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1986–2009 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Euskadiko Ezkerra | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | 1977–1989 | 1.20 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1980–1990 | 1.25 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya | Spain | Cataluna ³ | 1979–2008 | 2.60 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1980–2010 | 2.56 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Extremadura Unida | Spain | Extremadura | 1982–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1987–2003 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fédération Autonomiste | Italy | Vallée d'Aosta | – | – | – | – | 1998–2008 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Front Démocratique des Francophones | Belgium | Bruxelles ⁵ | 1965–1991 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1989 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Fólkaflokkurin | Denmark | Faroe Islands ⁶ | 1971–2007 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.20 | 1970–2008 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.25 |
| Fryske Nasjonale Partij | Netherlands | Friesland | – | – | – | – | 1970–2007 | 3.30 | 0.30 | 0.00 |
| Herri Batasuna | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | 1979–1996 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1980–2001 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Inuit Ataqatigiit | Denmark | Greenland ⁷ | – | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1979–2009 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Independentia Repubrica de Sardigna | Italy | Sardegna | – | – | – | – | 2004–2009 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Lega Nord | Italy | 'Padania' regions ⁸ | 1983–2008 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.13 | 1980–2010 | 5.29 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Ligue Savoisiennne | France | Rhone-Alpes | – | – | – | – | 1998 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Lega dei Ticinesi | Switzerland | Ticino | 1991–2007 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1991–2007 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Movimento per le Autonomie | Italy | Sicilia | 2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 2006–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie | Belgium | Vlaams Gewest | 2003–2010 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 2004–2009 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Partido Andalucista | Spain | Andalucia | 1979–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1982–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Partido Aragonés | Spain | Aragon | 1979–2008 | 4.67 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1983–2007 | 4.57 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Partiu Asturianista | Spain | Asturias | 1989–2004 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1987–2003 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Partito Autonomista Trentino Tirolese | Italy | Trento-Alto Adige ⁴ | – | – | – | – | 1988–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Plaid Cymru | United Kingdom | Wales ⁹ | 1970–2010 | 2.36 | 0.00 | 0.82 | 1999–2007 | 2.67 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Partido Comunista de las Tierras Vascas | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | – | – | – | – | 2005 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus | Germany | East German Länder ¹⁰ | 1990–2005 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1990–2006 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Parti Nationaliste du Quebec | Canada | Quebec | 1984 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | – | – | – | – |
| Partido Nacionalista Vasco | Spain | Pais Vasco ² | 1977–2008 | 4.50 | 1.00 | 0.40 | 1980–2009 | 4.33 | 1.00 | 0.33 |

(continued)

Appendix A. (continued)

| Party | Country | Core region | National election | | | Regional election | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------|--------|-------------------|-----------|------|--------|--------|
| | | | years | lr | dum_lr | dum_cp | years | lr | dum_lr | dum_cp |
| Partito Popolare Trentino Tirolese | Italy | Trento–Alto Adige ⁴ | – | – | – | – | 1973–1978 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Parti Québécois | Canada | Quebec | – | – | – | – | 1970–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Partido Riojano | Spain | La Rioja | 1993–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1983–2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Partido Regionalista de Cantabria | Spain | Cantabria | 1993 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1983–2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Partido Regionalista Extremeño | Spain | Extremadura | 1993 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1991 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Partit Socialista de Menorca | Spain | Islas Baleares | 1979–2004 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1983–2007 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Partit Socialista de Mallorca (-EN) | Spain | Islas Baleares | – | – | – | – | 1983–1995 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Partito Sardo D'Azione | Italy | Sardegna | 1979–2008 | 3.00 | 0.17 | 0.83 | 1974–2009 | 2.88 | 0.13 | 0.75 |
| Pro deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft | Belgium | Deutsche Gemeinschaft | 1974–1999 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1974–2009 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Quebec Solidaire | Canada | Quebec | – | – | – | – | 2003–2008 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Rassemblement Valdôtaine | Italy | Vallée d'Aosta | – | – | – | – | 1973 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Rassemblement Wallon | Belgium | Communautaire française | 1971–1991 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | – | – | – | – |
| Scottish Greens | United Kingdom | Scotland | 1992–2010 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1999–2007 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Sardegna Natzione | Italy | Sardegna | 1996–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1994–2009 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Scottish National Party | United Kingdom | Scotland | 1970–2010 | 2.64 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1999–2007 | 2.67 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Skånepartiet | Sweden | Skåne | – | – | – | – | 2002 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Sjálvstýrisflokkurin | Denmark | Faroe Islands ⁶ | 1971–2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.21 | 1970–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.25 |
| Scottish Socialist Party | United Kingdom | Scotland | 2001–2010 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1999–2007 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Süd-tiroler Freiheit | Italy | Trento–Alto Adige ⁴ | – | – | – | – | 2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Südtiroler Volkspartei | Italy | Trento–Alto Adige ⁴ | 1972–2008 | 4.27 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1973–2008 | 4.25 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Tjóóveldi | Denmark | Faroe Islands ⁶ | 1973–2007 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1970–2008 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Union Democratique Bretonne | France | Bretagne | 1981–2007 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1986–2010 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Unió Mallorquina | Spain | Islas Baleares | 1993–2008 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1983–2007 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Union Nationale | Canada | Quebec | – | – | – | – | 1970–1985 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Unione di u Populu Corsu | France | Corse ¹ | 1986–1997 | 3.50 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 1982–1999 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Unión Renovadora Asturiana | Spain | Asturias | – | – | – | – | 1983–2003 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Unió Valencia | Spain | Valencia | 1986–2000 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1987–2007 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Union Valdôtaine | Italy | Vallée d'Aosta | 1972–2008 | 4.18 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1973–2008 | 4.13 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| Union Valdôtaine Progressiste | Italy | Vallée d'Aosta | – | – | – | – | 1973–2008 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Union für Südtirol | Italy | Trento–Alto Adige ⁴ | 1996–2008 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1993–2008 | 4.75 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Vallée d'Aoste Vive | Italy | Vallée d'Aosta | – | – | – | – | 2008 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Vlaams Belang | Belgium | Vlaams Gewest | 1978–2010 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1995–2009 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Volksunie | Belgium | Vlaams Gewest | 1971–1999 | 3.00 | 0.30 | 0.60 | 1995–1999 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Western Canada Concept | Canada | 'Western Canada' ¹¹ | – | – | – | – | 1981–2009 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |

¹The Corsican name for Corse is Corsica; ²the Basque name for Pais Vasco is Euskadi; ³the Catalan name for Catalonia is Catalunya; ⁴the German name for Alto-Adige is Süd-Tirol; ⁵the Dutch name for Bruxelles is Brussel; ⁶the Faroes name for Faroe Islands is Føroyar; ⁷the Inuit name for Greenland is Kalaallit Nunaat; ⁸the 'Padania' regions include Emilia Romagna, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte and the Veneto; ⁹the Welsh name for Wales is Cymru; ¹⁰the East German Länder include Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt and Thüringen. The Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus was considered to be a regionalist party until 2007 when it reformed itself into Die Linke; ¹¹'Western Canada' includes Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Table shows average scores across region*election years.

lr = position left-right dimension; 1 = radical left to 6 = radical right.

dtr = dummy left-right dimension; 0 = left; 1 = right.

dcp = dummy centre-periphery dimension; 0 = autonomist; 1 = separatist.

See Table 1 for coding of the positions of regionalist parties on the left-right dimension.

Appendix B

Coding left-right positions

The most widely used datasets for the comparative analysis of political parties' ideological positioning – the Manifesto Project Database (MRG/CMP) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) – only include a very small group of regionalist parties (see Appendix C). In order to place parties on the left-right dimension, we resorted to our own coding, primarily based on secondary sources (see Bibliography below). We code regionalist parties on a scale with six classes, which can be reduced both to a dichotomous (left (1–3) vs right (4–6)) or to a three-class categorization (clearly left (1–2), centrist (3–4), clearly right (5–6)). Below we illustrate how specific case studies as well as comparative classifications by De Winter (1998a), Massetti (2009) and Tronconi (2009) have guided our coding. We will now present a couple of examples falling into each category and then we will give examples of cases with longitudinal changes across categories.

Examples of coding. *Radical left* (1) parties are Marxist parties, or parties with influential Marxist components. *Herri Batasuna* (HB) and the *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (PDS) can be considered typical examples of parties with an ideology dominated or strongly influenced by Marxism, and both are consensually described to be extreme or radical left (Hough and Koss, 2009; Izquierdo, 2011: 232–234). Tronconi (2009: 45) coded HB as extreme left and Massetti (2009: 507) coded both HB and PDS as radical left.

Mainstream left (2) parties are socialist, social-democratic or green parties which (actively) support state-oriented economic policies. We coded *Rassemblement Wallon* (RW) as a mainstream left party since it 'strongly believed in an active state' (Buelens and Van Dyck, 1998: 53) but is not dominated by Marxist components. Similarly we coded the *Chunta Aragonesista* (CHA) as mainstream left as this party stresses both its regionalist and leftist (non-Marxist) ideology (Baras et al., forthcoming). Tronconi and De Winter coded RW respectively as left and centre-left/left (De Winter, 1998: 209; Tronconi, 2009: 45); Massetti coded CHA and RW as mainstream left (Massetti, 2009: 507).

Centrist, left leaning (3) parties are 'broad churches' which are inclusive but which show a predominant leaning towards the left. The *Partiu Asturianista* (PA) was coded as centrist for its explicit ambition to draw 'Asturianistas' from all ideological orientations. For European elections it has joined both left-oriented regionalist (1989) and right-oriented regionalist (2004) coalitions. In 2007 it has entered a coalition with the centrist (but right leaning) *Unión Renovadora Asturiana* (URAS). Another indication of PA's centrist positioning came in 1995, when the PA could have been decisive for the birth of a PSOE-led

regional government but preferred to abstain, thus giving way to the PP. The leaning towards the left was identified because the PA was founded by a group of old members of the PSOE who have maintained control of the party throughout and have always restated its progressive character (Baras et al., forthcoming). The *Bloc Québécois* (BQ) is another example of a centrist regionalist party which has a leftist leaning. The party was founded by former members of both the progressive-conservative and the liberal party, and aimed to unite pro-independence Québécois from all ideological orientations. However, leftist (social-democratic) components are predominant in the party (Bickerton and Gagnon, 2013: 179). The BQ and PA were not previously coded in comparative analyses.

Centrist, right leaning (4) parties are 'broad churches' which are inclusive but which show a predominant leaning towards the right. *Unió Mallorquina* (UM) was coded as centrist because, like many other regionalist parties in Spain, it originated from the disintegration of the centrist state-wide *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD). Its centrist vocation is testified further by its brief affiliation with the (short-lived) centrist state-wide party *Partido Reformista Democrático* (PRD) and by its capacity for entering regional government coalitions with both right and left parties. Yet, the UM inherited the right leaning orientations of the UCD and its electorate has been much closer to the PP's than to the PSOE's (Baras et al., forthcoming). The Prodeutsche Sprachige Gemeinschaft (ProDG) was also coded as centrist because it aims to be a rally party for the whole German speaking population of Belgium. However, its origin as a splinter from the Christian democratic party and its competition for votes with the Christian democratic and liberal party testify to a rightward leaning (Van Ingelgom, 2008: 5–8). The ProDG was not coded in previous comparative works, while the UM was coded as centre party by Massetti (2009: 511).

Mainstream right (5) parties are bourgeois (Conservative or Liberal) parties which support market oriented policies. The *Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie* (NVA) is described by De Winter (2006: 36) as a party with a clear pro-market (pro-entrepreneurs) ideology which places itself in between the Liberals, Christian Democrats and the *Vlaams Blok*. The *Folkflorkkurin* (FF) is considered a liberal conservative party that "developed a conservative social and economic program and was mainly representing private business and the fishing industry" (Ackren, 2006: 225). No comparative work coded the FF, while Massetti (2009: 507) coded the N-VA as mainstream right.

Radical right (6) parties support market oriented economic policies but in contrast to mainstream right parties combine it with xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies. As a result, these parties are widely considered to be radical right by referring to this combination of policies. The *Vlaams Belang* (VB) is widely recognized as a radical-right party (Buelens, 2011: 283). Like most radical right

parties, the VB has a mixed profile on the socio-economic left-right dimension: it displays ‘welfare chauvinism’, while it clearly supports “liberal measures, like privatization, reduction of taxes for small and medium enterprises, etc” (De Winter et al., 2006b: 63). The *Alsace d’Abord* (AA) boasts a very similar ideology in which regionalism and radical right themes are combined: “le parti Alsace d’abord combine une doublé identité: régionaliste dans la promotion des intérêts de l’Alsace, et de droite extrême” (Delwit, 2005: 78). Tronconi (2009: 45) coded the VB as extreme right. Massetti (2009: 511) coded both the VB and AA as radical right.

Longitudinal changes. We were able to detect changes in left-right ideological positioning for 17 out of 74 parties (about 23 percent). Most changes occurred within the leftist (1–3) or rightist (4–6) positions, while five parties leapfrogged across the left-right divide. Amongst these five parties, only two parties (*Volksumie* (VU) and *Partito Sardo D’Azione* (PSdAz)) moved between clear stances on the left and on the right while three parties (*Fryske Nasjonale Partij* (FNP), *Partido Regionalista de Cantabria* (PRC) and *Unione di u Populu Corsu* (UPC)) are centrist parties which have moved from centrist left leaning (3) to centrist right leaning (4) or vice versa.

Longitudinal changes within the left (1–3): The Scottish National Party (SNP) has been, most of the time, a ‘broad church’ for Scottish nationalists of all ideological orientations. It stressed its leftist (non-Marxist) stance (2) only in the period from 1984 to 2001. However, even before 1984 (at least starting from the election of Billy Wolfe as leader in 1969) and after 2001, it had a leftward leaning (3) (Lynch, 2002, 2006, 2009). The *Union Democratique Bretonne* (UDB) was born with an ideology strongly influenced by Marxism (1): “From the 1960s to the mid-1980s, UDB’s program was influence by Marxism and third world ideology” (Pasquier, 2006: 90). However, it has subsequently softened its ideology, adopting a mainstream left position consisting of a mix of social-democratic and green stances (2) (Pasquier, 2006: 91).

Longitudinal changes within the right (4–6): The *Südtiroler Volkspartei* (SVP) was born as a conservative party (5) dominated by the urban (Bozen’s) bourgeois until 1957. With the rise of the rural (agrarian) section, the party became more centrist (4) and more concerned with regionalist claims. In the period considered in this article the party has changed its position again. In the 1970s it moved again to the right (5), undergoing leftist splits and styling itself as a tough anti-Communist party, while from the 1980s onwards it has reacquired its role of rally party, representing the German speaking people of all social classes and all ideological orientations (4) (Holzer and Schwegler, 1998: 165–166; Pallaver, 2006: 167). The *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) reemerged from Franco’s dictatorial regime as a regionalist party with a classic Christian-democratic

ideology (5). However, since the 1990s the PNV has started a process of radicalization of the centre-periphery issue and has gone back to a more centrist position (4) (Perez-Nievas, 2006: 50–51; Ugarte and Perez-Nievas, 1998: 93–96).

Longitudinal changes across the left-right (leapfrogging): The VU represents an exception as it is one of the two parties that leapfrogged across the left-right divide, adopting both clearly rightist and leftist positions. De Winter (1998: 209) classifies it as right in the 1950s, centre-right in the 1960s, centre-left in the 1970s, centre in the 1980s and left in the 1990s. Tronconi coded it as centre in the early 1980s and early 1990s, and as right in the mid-1980s and mid-1990s. In the period considered in this article (since 1970), we code the party as centrist in the 1970s and 1980s, with leftist leaning in the 1970s and rightist leaning in the 1980s. The leftist leaning in the 1970s is justified by the massive intake of leftist members after the 1968 social movements and the increasing tensions with the right wing section of the party which eventually walked out in 1978. The right leaning in the 1980s is justified by the rightward repositioning in socio-economic policies, while adopting leftist positions on environmental and other ‘new politics’ issues (De Winter, 1998b: 33–34). We code the VU as mainstream left (2) in the 1990s because the then party leader “radicalized the party program towards the left and green spectrum ... locating the VU somewhere between the Ecologists and Socialists” (De Winter, 1998b: 34).

Secondary sources used for the coding

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Parties' websites

| Party name | Party website address |
|--|---|
| Action democratique | http://www.adq.qc.ca/ |
| Alsace d'Abord | http://www.alsacedabord.org/ |
| Ålands Framtid | http://www.alandsframtid.ax/ |
| Accolta Naziunale Corsa | http://www.anc-corsica.com/ |
| Aralar | http://www.aralar.net/eu |
| Bloc Nacionalista Valencià | http://bloc.compromis.ws/ |
| Bayernpartei | http://landesverband.bayernpartei.de/ |
| Bloc Quebecois | http://www.blocquebeois.org/horizon2015/accueil.php |
| Coalición Canaria | http://www.coalicioncanaria.org/web_2010/index.php |
| Centro Canario | http://www.centrocanario.org/ |
| Chunta Aragonesista | http://www.chunta.com/ |
| Corsica Nazione | http://www.corsica-nazione.com/ |
| Convergencia i Unió | http://www.ciu.cat/ |
| Die Freiheitlichen | http://www.die-freiheitlichen.com/ |
| Eusko Alkartasuna | http://www.euskoalkartasuna.org/es/?l=es&l=es |
| Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya | http://www.esquerra.cat/ |
| Extremadura Unida | http://extremaduraunida.es/eu/ |
| Fédération Autonomiste | http://www.federationautonomiste.org/ |
| Front Democratique des Francophones | http://fdf.be/ |
| Fólkaflokkurin | http://folkaflokkurin.fo/xa.asp |
| Fryske Nasjonale Partij | http://www.fnp.nl/ |
| Inuit Ataqatigiit | http://www.ia.gl/da/ |
| Independentia Republica de Sardinia | http://www.irsonline.net/ |
| Lega Nord | http://www.leganord.org/ |
| Ligue Savoisiene | http://notre.savoie.free.fr/ |
| Lega dei Ticinesi | http://www.legaticinesi.ch/ |
| Movimento per le Autonomie | http://www.mpa-sicilia.it/home.php |
| Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie | http://www.n-va.be/ |
| Parti Quebecois | http://pq.org/ |
| Partido Andalucista | http://partidoandalucista.org/ |
| Partido Aragonés | http://www.partidoaragones.es/proyectos/Autogobierno.htm |
| Partiu Asturianista | http://www.asturianista.as/ |
| Progetto Nordest | http://www.progettonorddest.org/ |
| Partido Nacionalista Canario | http://www.pnc-canarias.eu/ |
| Partido Nacionalista Vasco | http://ej-pnv.eu/esp/index.php |
| Partito Autonomista Trentino Tirolese | http://www.patt.tn.it/ |
| Partito Sardo d'Azione | http://www.psdaz.net/ |
| Partido Riojano | http://www.partidoriojano.es/ |
| Partido Regionalista de Cantabria | http://www.prc.es/ |
| Partido/Coalicion Regionalista Extremeño/a | http://prex-crex.blogspot.com/2006/09/el-hueco-regionalista-extremeo-i-los.html |
| Pro duetschsprachige Gemeinschaft | http://www.prodgb.de/de/aktuelles |
| Partit Socialista de Menorca | http://elecciones.psm-menorca.org/ |
| Plaid Cymru | http://www.partyofwales.org/?force=1 |
| Partit Socialista de Mallorca (-EN) | http://www.pensadiferent.cat/ |
| Quebec Solidaire | http://www.quebecsolidaire.net/ |
| Scottish Greens | http://www.scottishgreens.org.uk/uploaded/Holyrood2007.pdf |
| Sardegna Nazione | http://www.sardignanazione.it/ |
| Scottish National Party | http://www.snp.org/ |

(continued)

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| Party name | Party website address |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Skånepartiet | http://www.skanepartiet.org/ |
| Sjálvstýrisflokkurinn | http://www.sjalvstyri.fo/sjalvstýrisflokkurinfo/ |
| Scottish Socialist Party | http://www.scottishsocialistparty.org/ |
| Südtiroler Freiheit | http://www.suedtiroler-freiheit.com/ |
| Südtiroler Volkspartei | http://www.svp.eu/de/ |
| Tjóðveldi | http://www.tjodveldi.fo/ |
| Union Democratique Bretonne | http://www.udb-bzh.net/ |
| Unió Mallorquina | http://www.uniomallorquina.info/ |
| Unione di u Populu Corsu | http://www.p-n-c.eu/ |
| Union für Südtirol | http://www.buergerunion.st/ |
| Unión Renovadora Asturiana | http://www.uras.es/ |
| Unió Valencia | http://www.uniovalenciana.org/ |
| Union Valdôtaine | http://www.unionvaldotaine.org/homepage.asp |
| Vallée d'Aoste Vive | http://www.aostaviva.it/ |
| Vlaams Belang | http://www.vlaamsbelang.be/ |
| Western Canada Concept | http://www.westcan.org/ |

Note: Websites were consulted between January-May 2012.

Appendix C

Validation of left-right positions of regionalist parties

To validate our position scores of regionalist parties on the left-right dimension we calculate Pearson correlations between two expert surveys and scores derived from the Manifesto Project Database (see Table C1). From Table C1 we may observe that the Pearson correlations reach satisfactory levels of statistical significance and indicate that the left-right position scores from various sources are highly correlated with our scores.

Table C1. Validation left-right scores.

| Our scores | EPAC | CHES | MRG/CMP |
|----------------|-------|-------|---------|
| Six categories | 0.85* | 0.82* | 0.74* |
| Dummy | 0.75* | 0.77* | 0.51* |
| N parties | 26 | 14 | 18 |

* $p < 0.01$

Table shows Pearson correlation coefficients between our position scores and two expert surveys and positions derived from party manifestoes. For comparison with EPAC and CHES we calculated averages of our scores for the 2000s and for MRG/CMP we took averages since the 1970s.

Sources

EPAC = Ethnonationalism in Party Competition.

Szőcsik and Zuber (2012).

EPAC Left-Right question (eco): “Parties can be classified in terms of their stance on economic issues. Parties at one end of the spectrum, want government to play an active role in the economy. Parties at the other end of the spectrum, emphasize a reduced economic role for government: privatization, lower taxes, less regulation, less government spending, and a leaner welfare state.” Scores may range between 0 (left) and 10 (right).

CHES = Chapel Hill Expert Survey.
Bakker et al. (2012).

CHES Left-Right question: “LRECON = position of the party in YEAR in terms of its ideological stance on economic issues. Parties can be classified in terms of their stance on economic issues. Parties on the economic left want government to play an active role in the economy. Parties on the economic right emphasize a reduced economic role for government: privatization, lower taxes, less regulation, less government spending, and a less welfare state. 0 = extreme left ... 5 = center ... 10 = extreme right.”

MRG/CMP = Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project.

Volkens et al. (2012)

MRG/CMP Left-Right: we took the scores of the variable ‘Rile: Right-left position of a party’ as given in Laver and Budge (1992).

Appendix D

Descriptive statistics

Table D1. National elections.

| | Mean | Median | St. dev. | Min | Max |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| Ideology left-right | 3.32 | 4 | 1.51 | 1 | 6 |
| Ideology left-right dummy | 0.52 | 1 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Economic status of the region | 97.97 | 97.39 | 23.73 | 35.04 | 162.26 |
| Ideology centre-periphery dummy | 0.39 | 0 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| Main state-wide party on the right | 0.43 | 0 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Other regionalist party on the left | 0.36 | 0 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| Other regionalist party on the right | 0.34 | 0 | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |

Table D2. Regional elections.

| | Mean | Median | St. dev. | Min | Max |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| Ideology left-right | 3.40 | 4 | 1.51 | 1 | 6 |
| Ideology left-right dummy | 0.54 | 1 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Economic status of the region | 97.13 | 95.59 | 22.89 | 35.04 | 158.10 |
| Ideology centre-periphery dummy | 0.38 | 0 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| Main state-wide party on the right | 0.54 | 1 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Other regionalist party on the left | 0.34 | 0 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| Other regionalist party on the right | 0.40 | 0 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |

The number of observations is 311 for national elections and 411 for regional elections.

Appendix E

Results ordered logit models

Table E1. The effects of the relative economic position of a region on the left-right position of regionalist parties.

| | National elections | | Regional elections | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| | 1 SD | 2 SD | 1 SD | 2 SD |
| Radical left | -0.10* | -0.22* | -0.09* | -0.22* |
| Mainstream Left | -0.16* | -0.27* | -0.19* | -0.31* |
| Left of centre | -0.03* | -0.05* | -0.06* | -0.07* |
| Right of centre | 0.07* | 0.11* | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| Mainstream Right | 0.13* | 0.24* | 0.22* | 0.34* |
| Radical right | 0.08* | 0.18* | 0.11* | 0.26* |
| Number of observations | 391 | | 411 | |
| Number of parties | 63 | | 81 | |
| Wald chi ² | 18* | | 15* | |
| Log pseudolikelihood | -627 | | -653 | |
| McFadden R ² | 0.04 | | 0.04 | |
| Adjusted count R ² | 0.10 | | 0.13 | |

*p < 0.05.

The table displays the results of an ordered logit model which estimates the probability that a regionalist party is radical left, mainstream left, left of centre, right of centre, mainstream right or radical right. Shown here are the changes in probabilities for being a type of party when the relative economic position of a region (percent of national average) goes from one or two standard deviation(s) below to one or two standard deviation(s) above the mean (98% ± 24% / 48%) while all other variables are held at their median (categorical variables; except for main statewide party which is set at left). Detailed model results are available upon request.

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Notes

1. In her comparative study of Belgium, Italy, Spain and the UK, Alonso (2012) follows Erk (2005, 2009) in providing ad hoc historical accounts to explain why the link between left/periphery and right/centre applies to Spain and the UK, but not to Belgium and Italy.
2. For a small minority of regionalist parties, such as the Vlaams Belang (VB), which developed a radical-right ideology, the link between the socio-economic status of the region and their left-right positioning can be more complex and indirect. Besides resenting transfers of resources to relatively poorer regions, these parties strongly oppose the disproportional concentration of non-national immigrants in their (economically more attractive) region (De Winter et al., 2006b).
3. We exclude parties such as the Bavarian CSU, the Northern Irish UUP and the UPN in Navarra because they act de facto as regional branches of state-wide parties.
4. We exclude ethnic parties, such as the Finnish SFP, because they focus on community rights, not on territorial self-government (Tapio, 2006). We also exclude parties representing opposing ethnic groups in Navarra and Northern Ireland because the focus of their politics is ethnic competition rather than self-government claims.
5. In the case of electoral coalitions where the regionalist party is a junior party we used the seat allocation within the coalition to assign vote shares to the different coalition partners. When regionalist parties coalesce for elections and we could not use the seat allocation as a mechanism to allocate vote share (for example when the electoral coalition obtains one seat) we allocated the total vote share to the senior party.
6. Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.
7. Regionalist parties do participate in Greece and Japan but they fail to reach the relevance criterion.
8. Australia, Austria, Finland, Norway, Portugal and the United States.

9. Tronconi (2009: 45) and Massetti (2009: 507) identified five categories, while De Winter (1998a: 209) opted for a non-symmetric taxonomy consisting of six categories, which included the 'extreme left' class but not (perhaps for lack of qualifying empirical cases) the 'extreme right' class. All three classifications included a 'centre' class.
10. Ordered logit models reveal that with an improving relative economic position of a region there is a higher likelihood of finding parties on all the positions of the right (with the exception of the centrist right leaning parties in regional elections) and a lower likelihood of finding leftist positions of any sort. Results are provided in Appendix E.
11. The results are highly robust when we change the other variables to non-median values. Detailed results are available upon request.
12. The concept of socio-economic region remains implicit in most but not in all cases. One of the exceptions is the reference to 'class nationalism' by the *Partido Andalucista* (PA) in the 1980s (Montabes et al., 2006: 218).
13. It is worth pointing out that, especially in the early 1970s, the SNP has also lobbied on the issue of petroleum in the North Sea, claiming that Scotland benefited only marginally from the discovery of the oil fields and that with independence the resource would be at the disposal of the Scots only (Lynch, 2001: 123). However, the SNP has never developed a stable or predominant 'bourgeois regionalism' discourse.
14. Right-oriented regionalist parties, and radical right regionalist parties in particular, often accompany criticism of state (cross-regional) solidarity with a rhetoric emphasizing intra-regional solidarity, which can be considered as expression of 'welfare chauvinism' (Kitschelt, 1995; Mudde, 2000).

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