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Italy and Spain Compared**

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Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials
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Italy and Spain Compared**

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Comparative research on multi-level politics has highlighted many of the core dynamics of regional party competition, electoral behaviour, coalition formation, and party organisation (Hough et al, 2003; Hough and Jeffery, 2006; Swenden and Maddens, 2009; Hopkin and Van Houten, 2009; Stefuriuc, 2009). Meanwhile, scholars of regionalist parties have compared their organisation, strategies, and objectives (Tursan and De Winter, 1998; De Winter et al, 2006; Hepburn, 2010), while others have focused on the varying response of statewide parties to these regional challengers (Roller and Van Houten, 2003; Swenden and Maddens, 2009; Hopkin and Van Houten, 2009). Yet political scientists have rarely sought to link changes in the balance of territorial power with broader shifts in the role and structure of parties in contemporary democracies. These include the growing reliance of parties on the resources and legitimacy of the state (Katz and Mair, 1995); a continued process of partisan de-alignment (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002); a sustained fall in party membership (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001); the declining capacity of parties to aggregate social demands (Schmitter, 2001); and greater internal party democracy (Hopkin, 2001). More recently, scholars have noted the growing power of executive leaders in advanced democracies that are becoming *de facto* “presidentialised”. This is occurring in entrenched parliamentary systems, including countries characterised by coalitional politics, and often in the absence of formal institutional changes (Poguntke and Webb, 2005). The study of presidentialisation has so far been limited to the national level, yet remarkable processes of state decentralisation in Europe (Marks et al, 2008) have given greater resources and visibility to sub-national leaders (Swenden and Maddens, 2009). Studies of local politics have noted the rising trend in direct election of mayors (Magre and Bertana, 2007), and the impact of these institutional changes on the relationship between executive leaders and supporting parties (Fabbrini, 2001), but this analysis has never been extended to the regional level. Although some authors have noted the emergence of party “barons” in the Spanish regions (Van Biezen and Hopkin, 2006), or powerful directly elected presidents in Italian regions (Fabbrini and Brunazzo, 2003), no study so far has explored the relationship between presidents and parties at regional levels of government.

Poguntke and Webb (2005) argue that the process of presidentialisation in advanced democracies is being driven by a complex combination of factors: changes in the structure of mass communication and political campaigning; the growing internationalisation of decision-making; the erosion of traditional social cleavage politics; and the need for greater coordination of increasingly complex and sectoralised states. The authors argue that executive leaders are increasingly autonomous from the demands of their own parties, and increasingly powerful within their executives, while competitive elections are increasingly personalised around them. These inter-linked processes are described as the Party, Executive, and Electoral faces of presidentialisation. While this picture appears broadly plausible and borne out by many national case studies, it does posit a series of analytical questions about the precise dynamics of presidentialism. To what extent is presidentialism a process of gaining autonomy from parties, rather than

growing personal control over these parties? What is the precise relationship between executive and party control, are these interdependent or does one lead to the other? Are political parties an enabling or constraining force for presidentialisation? Also relevant is whether formal rules to strengthen presidents are more important than informal changes in political practice, and whether coalitional politics or factional differences can still present a significant constraint on presidentialised leadership. Other questions to consider are more specific to regional politics. The tendency to build up strong local coalitions of support for individual mayors is common in local politics (Fabbrini, 2001), but is it always feasible in “meso” level governments that contain a larger set of competing territorial interests? To what extent is presidentialism an outcome of the nominating capacity of regional presidents, and is clientelism a relevant party of the explanation? Can regional presidents successfully pursue autonomist strategies without undermining their relationship with the national party, and does this relationship pose real limits to their autonomy? Are presidents increasingly able just to govern *past* parties (Poguntke and Webb, 2005), or are these rival forms of political authority locked in a bitter struggle for supremacy (Calise, 2006)? The case studies of Italian and Spanish regions in this article will address some of these questions by focusing on the executive and party faces of presidentialism. The picture that emerges is complex and hinges on the role of presidents in factional and coalitional politics, as well as the perceived organisational and electoral threat that presidents pose to the continuity or vitality of regional party organisations. As a result, relations between parties and presidents differ widely, and parties can have both an enabling and a constraining effect on presidentialisation.

This article compares the dynamics between regional presidents (executive leaders) and political parties in Italy and Spain, consolidated democracies that have undergone significant but incomplete processes of regionalisation. Regional governments in Spain have been given greater autonomy in a wide range of policy areas, and many of the financial resources needed to carry out these tasks (Beramendi and Maiz, 2004). Despite the strong potential for policy divergence, Spanish regions have remarkably similar political systems. All are parliamentary regimes, where the regional president is nominated and replaced by the legislature, with parliamentary candidates elected on closed party lists to serve four year terms. Italian regions have more policy autonomy since the 1990s, but levels of institutional performance vary widely (Putnam et al, 1993). Most regions are still constrained by their reliance on the national level for financial resources, as well as the slow judicialised process of determining the scope of new regional competences (Roux, 2008). Yet Italian regions have very different political systems to the national level, with the direct election of regional presidents since 1995. Presidents are able to nominate their executive without any formal input from the legislature, and any vote of censure leads to the simultaneous dissolution of all regional organs (presidency, executive, legislature). Voters cast separate ballots for the presidency and the legislature, with the former elected on a regional list, while the latter are elected on provincial lists through preference voting. These lists are tied together so that the

parties supporting the president are guaranteed a majority in the legislature, through the allocation of a variable bonus to the winning coalition. The outcome is a “semi-parliamentary” system that is neither presidential nor parliamentary in a classic sense (Fabbrini and Brunazzo, 2003), inspired by a similar system used for the direct election of mayors in Italy (Fabbrini, 1993). This contrasts sharply with the national level, where Italy remains a classic parliamentary democracy (at least in formal terms), with a pre-eminent role for party groups in decision-making. In the Italian case, we can analyse the dynamics of presidentialism in a political system where this has been facilitated by changes to the organisation of regional government, but must also contend with a political context characterised by prominent and powerful national party leaders. In the Spanish case, we can analyse similar dynamics in a political system that is very much parliamentary in formal terms, yet subject to strong presidentialising tendencies within both statewide parties and the national government (Van Biezen and Hopkin, 2005).

The case studies in this article reflect findings from a broader research project that compared party politics in large Italian and Spanish regions. The Italian case studies compared a southern region governed by the centre-left coalition (Campania) with a northern region governed by the centre-right coalition (Lombardia). The Spanish case studies compared a southern region (Andalusia) governed by the centre-left Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), with a northern region (Galicia) governed by the centre-right Popular Party (PP). The project involved extensive archival analysis of local and national editions of Italian and Spanish newspapers, in particular (but not exclusively) *La Repubblica* and *El Pais*, to establish a clear process tracing of events in the regions concerned. This archival analysis was supplemented and reinforced by 46 in-depth interviews, mainly with regional politicians (usually current or former members of the regional legislature), but also with political advisers and journalists.¹

The findings note the effective interdependence of executive and party control in regional governments, as regional presidents use their political visibility and nominating capacity to build a personalised control over their respective party organisations, even in the absence of formal party control (as in Italy). But parties can also significantly constrain the leadership capacity of regional presidents, particularly when acting as veto players in the legislature. These constraints are most evident where government is characterised by complex coalitions, in which other parties feel threatened by the power of regional presidents and seek to counter-act this through disruptive mechanisms of political differentiation. Regional presidents can build a strong consensus by developing autonomist strategies and mediating in factional or coalitional disputes within their party or coalition. Yet they are also constrained by the need to avoid diverging from the strategic priorities of the national leadership, whose support is necessary to allow the personalised

¹ The in-depth interviews were carried out in Naples (12), Seville (9), Milan (11), and Santiago de Compostela (13) between February and November 2007. The list of interviewees can be requested from the author.

party control of regional presidents to remain resilient. These complex trade-offs suggest that regional presidents have gained greater autonomy by controlling regional branches of their statewide parties, but that the national context in which both presidents and parties operate still imposes a limit to exercising this autonomy. All regional presidents in these case studies spent significant periods of time in service at national level, culminating either in an unsuccessful bid for the national leadership or an unsuccessful stay as party leader. Their entry into regional politics was a way to develop an independent powerbase, while keeping a distance from new and unfamiliar alignments in national politics. All these regional presidents faced the vexed problem of succession, but handled it with varying degrees of success. The remainder of this paper will analyse the Italian and Spanish case studies in turn, followed by some comparative conclusions.

CAMPANIA

Antonio Bassolino was directly elected as regional president of Campania in 2000, with the support of a broad-based centre-left coalition that stretched from far left parties to centrist politicians that had recently been aligned with the centre-right coalition. Bassolino was comfortably re-elected in 2005 at the head of a similar coalition. The numerous parties supporting his leadership bid obtained 54.2% (2000) and 61.6% (2005) of the party vote, so Bassolino's personal appeal played only a limited role in securing electoral victory. Yet his deft management of coalitional politics and capacity for political aggregation should not be ignored in any explanation of centre-left electoral success in Campania, and contributed to securing his own comfortable re-election in 2005. Bassolino's mediating style of leadership allowed the centre-left coalition to win control of most key sub-national governments during the 2000s, including the largest municipalities and provinces in the region. This system of power was based on an over-extended governing coalition with little internal coherence, which proved to be a significant constraint on Bassolino's capacity for strong leadership, and produced a regional government that was both weak and clientelist, adding to many of the structural problems already afflicting the region. Although Bassolino remained as regional president until his second term ended in 2010, his political credibility in later years was undermined by numerous cases of mismanagement and corruption in the sub-national governments of Campania, and by the abject failure to resolve a serious refuse management crisis in the province of Naples.

Bassolino was elected regional president after significant experience in both national and local politics. Both proved vital to maintaining a controversial system of power in place at regional level, while securing sustained backing from national leaders. A native of the region, Bassolino had been a prominent national parliamentarian of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). He led a failed bid for the leadership of its main successor party, the Party of the Democrats of the Left (PDS), having earlier fought to prevent the fragmentation of the PCI along ideological lines. Bassolino hailed from the "Left" faction of the PCI, some of whose members joined the reformist PDS, while others formed the more

radical Party of Refounded Communists (PRC). Bassolino returned to Naples in as PDS “party commissar” in 1993, given the responsibility of rooting out corruption in the local party organisation. He used this as an opportunity to launch a successful bid to become the first directly elected Mayor of Naples in 1993, campaigning on a platform of clean government and urban renewal, and nominating an entirely “technical” executive that excluded party politicians. He was re-elected in 1997 with a landslide victory (Allum and Cilento, 2001). On the surface this looks like an example of a leader governing *past* parties, but in practice Bassolino used the opportunity to build a team of close collaborators within the Naples PDS (which accounted for 60% of the regional party). The Naples PDS had been a factionalised and demoralised organisation, leaning towards closer collaboration with progressive elements of the Christian Democrats (DC), and drawn largely from the “Right” faction of PCI. While never entirely suppressing the factional differences of the PDS or its successor party DS, and without standing for any internal party positions, Bassolino set about establishing a close personal control over the party organisation, initially as mayor of Naples and later as regional president. Radical DS factions were reassured by Bassolino’s ideological proximity, demonstrated by his support for the failed Cofferati-Berlinguer leadership bid in 2001, as well as his close personal ties to PRC leader Fausto Bertinotti. Reformist DS factions were reassured by Bassolino’s subsequent loyalty to the Fassino-D’Alema DS leadership, and his support for party integration with progressive DC politicians at national level, culminating in the merger to form the Democratic Party (PD) in 2007. Both factions were equally keen for government nominations, which Bassolino had the (almost exclusive) power to dispense as executive leader. Yet his control never extended to the province of Salerno, where Enzo De Luca, a directly elected DS mayor with populist leanings, had carved out an independent powerbase within the party and territory. DS also remained weak in the more sparsely populated inland provinces of Caserta and Benevento, dominated by former DC powerbrokers. This required Bassolino to engage in complex coalitional trade-offs to advance and sustain his regional leadership.

Bassolino’s decision to stand as regional president in 2000 occurred without prior agreement of the governing parties (Allum and Cilento, 2001). Although the 1995 regional election had been won by the centre-right coalition, a coordinated series of defections by key DC powerbrokers led to the constitution of an alternative centre-left coalition in 1999. Local powerbrokers are a feature of regional politics in Campania, sustained by preference voting in sub-national elections (Calise, 2006), and an intensely clientelist and somewhat corrupt form of distributional politics (Allum and Allum, 2008). The moving force behind the 1999 defections was Clemente Mastella, leader of Udeur and a local powerbroker in Benevento. Also active in recruiting politicians for the centre-left was Ciriaco De Mita, regional leader of the Italian Popular Party (PPI) and a former national DC leader, who was the main powerbroker in Caserta. At regional level, PPI and its successor party DL became dominated by an alliance of local powerbrokers that responded to the leadership of De Mita. The latter became engaged in intense

competition for personnel and votes with the rival factional alliance led by Mastella. This competition prevented either group from nominating an agreed candidate for the regional presidency, allowing Bassolino's self-nomination to fill the vacuum (Allum and Cilento, 2001). The price to pay was that both factional leaders sought excessive protagonism in the subsequent centre-left governments. Both factional leaders insisted on their right to nominate powerbrokers from their alliance to key positions in the regional executive and related agencies (formally a right of the regional president), largely to ensure the continued vitality of their faction and prevent defections. Bassolino was obliged to fill his regional executive mainly with party politicians rather than technical experts. Although the regional president ensured that members of his executive were not concurrently members of the regional council, this did not guarantee their loyalty as most members of the executive continued to take orders from faction leaders. It also produced a lack of coordination within the regional government, as the legislature blocked a series of political initiatives advanced by the executive, with no "over-lapping" politicians to support government proposals in the legislature.

Processes of government formation in 2000 and 2005 were turbulent and protracted, with perennial crises and continual resignations, generally on request of factional leaders pushing for more (or better) positions for their collaborators. Where Bassolino exercised his discretion in appointments, this was seen as an attempt to undermine party prerogatives rather than as an attempt to assert coherent leadership. This even had a self-fulfilling effect, as some modernising PPI/DL politicians began to align themselves with Bassolino rather than De Mita, particularly in the city of Naples. Although the centre-left coalition comfortably won the 2000 regional election, it was only by the middle of the legislature that the executive had the support of all parties and was able to govern with a modicum of stability. The 2005 election was a crushing victory for the centre-left that nevertheless ushered in a period of even greater turbulence. DL had narrowly surpassed DS to become the largest party in the region, yet Udeur also increased its support, so both De Mita and Mastella were keen for more posts to support their growing factional alliances. This support was only obtained by exacerbating the clientelist tendencies of the regional government and by eliminating any remaining technical experts from the regional government or its associated agencies and bodies. Governing stability was not improved. Instead, the smaller parties propping up the coalition began to revolt against the primacy of the big three (DS, DL, Udeur), and sought to disrupt legislative proceedings. These had always been problematic in the region, given the tendency for parties or politicians opposed to a particular measure to simply boycott the legislature, ensuring a lack of quorum and suspending sessions. Legislative paralysis occurred even before the refuse management crisis and related corruption scandals reached their critical peak in 2008, which saw ordinary regional decision-making effectively grind to a halt.

Despite strong pressure from the national leadership, particularly the new PD leader Walter Veltroni, Bassolino never resigned as regional president and served out his

full term, while maintaining an influential position within the Naples PD. In the last years of his regional government, Bassolino's political freedom of manoeuvre was somewhat enhanced after Ciriaco De Mita and Clemente Mastella abruptly left the centre-left coalition in 2008, albeit for different reasons. Whereas De Mita left the PD after Veltroni blocked his re-election to the Italian Parliament, Mastella brought down the Prodi government in 2008 and later saw his personalised control of the Udeur organisation (and its finances) become the object of corruption investigations. Both factional leaders shifted their remaining support behind the centre-right coalition in Campania, which comfortably won the 2010 regional election. yet now governs with many of the same kinds of internal tensions and contradictions that characterised the Bassolino decade. This includes a bitter struggle for political personnel and financial resources between parties that are often mere vessels for the development of personal factions (Calise, 2006). Yet Bassolino's loss of political credibility became apparent with the decision to field his regional DS rival, Enzo De Luca, as centre-left candidate for regional president in the 2010 election.

LOMBARDY

Roberto Formigoni was first elected regional president of Lombardy in 1995, with the support of a centre-right coalition that included Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia (FI) and Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance (AN), but did not extend to Umberto Bossi's Northern League (LN), which had recently brought down the first Berlusconi government. Formigoni was comfortably re-elected with LN support in the 2000, 2005, and 2010 regional elections. Formigoni's tenure as regional president of Lombardy shows differences as well as similarities with the tenure of Bassolino in Campania. Although the Lombard president has been more successful in ensuring a coherent regional government with clearer leadership, this is also significantly constrained by the terms of coalitional politics. Not only is the LN keen to differentiate itself from Formigoni and reluctant to fully recognise his coalitional leadership, the regional president is also obliged to conform to coalitional choices imposed by the national party leader. Formigoni's powerful position in regional politics was secured through a growing personalised control of FI at regional level, and later its successor People of Liberty (PDL). Yet this type of control means his choices require a degree of consensus that prevents any real deviation from the strategic preferences of Berlusconi. In this respect, Formigoni is more restrained by his own party than Bassolino was in Campania. The latter was given a free hand to govern so long as this proved electorally successful, and any governing problems did not contaminate the national political debate, which only happened after the Naples refuse crisis exploded.

Before standing as regional president, Formigoni had been a DC parliamentarian with close ties to the ancillary business group *Comunione e Liberazione* (CL), particularly strong in the Catholic "sub-culture" of the region of Lombardy. Both Formigoni and CL survived the corruption scandals of the 1990s relatively unscathed, and the Lombard politician was among the founders of CDU, a DC splinter party allied with Berlusconi. Formigoni's decision to enter regional politics occurred soon after his failure to obtain the

leadership of CDU, prompting the need to construct a new powerbase from which to advance his political career. Formigoni only joined Forza Italia in 1998 and was not among the initial business group linked personally to Berlusconi, which soon constituted a “liberal” faction that dominated the early regional party. Formigoni’s tenure saw him promote an alternative faction, composed largely of former DC politicians close to CL, but also cultivate close ties to former Italian Socialist Party (PSI) politicians in Forza Italia. This produced tensions with the liberal faction, then led by FI regional coordinator Paolo Romani, which saw its role in the regional government becoming diminished. This long factional struggle reached its high-water mark in the 2000-5 legislature, when Romani’s faction boycotted the regional legislature, while Formigoni’s faction boycotted the regional party. This produced some paralysis in the regional legislature, as it coincided with a simultaneous boycott by LN, producing a lack of quorum. This struggle was eventually resolved in favour of Formigoni’s faction, which came out on top after the 2005 regional elections and proceeded to shut out the liberal faction from key party and institutional positions, leading to the resignation of Romani as regional coordinator in 2006. Formigoni achieved his control without needing to hold internal party posts, showing the resilience of informal ties in Italian party politics.

Formigoni’s control over FI in Lombardy was founded on his capacity for party nomination to institutional posts and a wide array of public bodies, often used selectively to help his supporters. Yet his leadership within the executive depended on also recognising the nominating capacity of other coalition partners. LN, AN, and UDC made their own nominations to posts on the regional executive, while Formigoni only determined the posts allocated to FI. Formigoni chose most of his executive from among existing regional councillors, who then held both posts simultaneously. This common practice was discouraged by the 1995 and 1999 institutional reforms, which sought to more clearly separate the functions and composition of regional executives and legislatures (Vassallo and Baldini, 2000). The lack of separation in Lombardy had the positive effect of ensuring greater coordination between the activities of executive and legislature. Since regional legislation had the input of key members of the legislature, it was often adopted quickly so long as there were no major party conflicts. AN and UDC were the smaller parties in the regional coalition, and having been granted a substantial number of political posts, generally acquiesced in the leadership role of Formigoni. In contrast, LN sought to differentiate itself from Formigoni and often sparked conflicts with his leadership, most bitterly over the dismissal of the LN Health Minister Alessandro Ce. LN adopted the tactic of boycotting the regional legislature or threatening to vote against the government. LN held the parliamentary balance of power after the 2000 regional election, despite not having been necessary for coalitional victory, because of the erratic allocation of bonus seats under the regional electoral system. Formigoni had sought to avoid including LN in the 2000 pre-electoral coalition, but Berlusconi and other national leaders imposed this as part of a broader coalitional agreement with LN that extended to general elections (Wilson, 2009). Although LN soon developed a strong blackmail potential in both regional

and national legislatures, it also saw its distinctive position threatened by Formigoni, who adopted strident positions in favour of greater policy and fiscal autonomy for the region, and advanced his own proposals on a federal reform of the Italian state. This allowed Formigoni to appropriate many LN demands on the issue that most defined their *raison d'être* as a political movement. Formigoni couched his autonomist demands in more constructive and institutional terms, appealing to moderate voters alienated by the political vulgarity and extremism of LN. Nevertheless, the objective of greater regional autonomy also provided a useful glue to hold together the governing coalition and project a common sense of purpose. The competitive dialectic between FI and LN in Lombardy initiated several federal reform proposals that were later adopted by the centre-right government at national level, including the system of fiscal federalism that is currently being negotiated in the Italian parliament.

Relations between Formigoni and LN improved greatly in the 2005-10 legislature, with no substantial legislative paralysis and more harmonious inter-party relations. Formigoni recognised that LN support was now indispensable to his continued electoral victory, after a nationwide swing against the centre-right in the 2005 regional elections, that saw centre-left governments victorious everywhere except the LN strongholds of Lombardy and Veneto (Di Virgilio, 2006). LN no longer saw the regional president as an existential threat to their movement, with their core support holding up well in contrast to the decline in FI support. Also crucial to this pacification was Formigoni's decision to relent on the idea of fielding a "personal list" in the 2005 regional elections, which would have increased his personal power within the governing coalition (Mazzoleni, 2005). Strong pressure from Berlusconi also contributed to this decision, with the Prime Minister increasingly a hostage of LN demands. The 2010 regional elections saw LN support reach unprecedented levels, improving on their already exceptional support in the 2008 general election. LN became the largest party in Veneto (where they fielded a presidential candidate), and in Lombardy they came close to beating PDL into second place. The result is a more turbulent current legislature, where LN is less willing to recognise the leadership role of Formigoni, and more willing to openly contest his decisions. There have been no serious breaches yet in Formigoni's personal control over the regional PDL (indeed he controls his own recognised faction), or any concrete attempts to bring down the regional government, yet the leadership position of Formigoni remains dependent on the vagaries of coalitional politics at national level. Coalitional politics poses a very real constraint on the leadership capacity of regional presidents in Italy, now more so than in the 1990s, when corruption scandals in the governing parties diminished their credibility and created a power vacuum filled by directly elected leaders at sub-national levels (Fabbrini and Brunazzo, 2003).

ANDALUSIA

Manuel Chaves became regional president of Andalusia in 1990, after standing as PSOE candidate in the elections of that year. He stood again in the next 5 regional

elections (1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008), before leaving the post of regional president in 2009 to become Spanish Minister for Territorial Policy. Chaves nominated a close collaborator, José Antonio Griñán, as his successor in the regional party and government. Chaves certainly benefited from the powerful position of PSOE in Andalusia, where it has never lost a regional election, yet he also shaped that position by leading the party through moments of serious crisis in the 1990s, including factional divisions, legislative paralysis, and electoral decline. Key to his executive leadership capacity was formal party control. In contrast to Italy, this remains necessary in Spain because the party in central office holds a very tight control over all elected representatives, and has the exclusive capacity to nominate candidates for public office on the basis of closed electoral lists (Van Biezen and Hopkin, 2006). Although regional presidents are nominated by the parliament rather than directly elected, all parties campaign with a presidential candidate, and in cases of coalition it is unusual for the president not to be from the largest party. This creates a form of *de facto* direct election in regional politics that is very similar to the national level.

Chaves stood as regional president while a national parliamentarian and government minister, close to the PSOE Secretary-General Felipe Gonzalez and his powerful deputy Alfonso Guerra, all natives of Andalusia. Although PSOE comfortably won the 1990 regional election, Chaves entered regional politics in an inauspicious moment, as factional struggles began to surface in the long-governing party. Described as a struggle between older socialists led by Alfonso Guerra (*guerristas*) and younger social democrats seeking party renewal (*renovadores*), these factional disputes also took on personal and territorial dimensions. Andalusia was a key battleground in symbolic terms (as the political fiefdom of Guerra) and practical terms (it accounted for 25% of votes in the party congress). Factional conflict had already brought down Chaves' predecessor as regional president, who had dismissed many supporters of Guerra from the regional executive, so was later removed from party office and as candidate for the 1990 regional election. Chaves' first moves in this factional dispute were aimed at conflict mediation, attempting to hold together his nascent regional executive in the midst of bitter in-fighting. A turning point came in candidate selection for the 1993 general elections: *guerristas* set about purging party lists of anybody suspected of weak loyalty to their leaders; suspicions were aroused that Guerra sought control of the national party; and many PSOE regional parliamentarians began to defect to the *renovadores*. Chaves began to discreetly operate in favour of the *renovadores* at regional level, excluding older *guerristas* from his regional executive in 1994, and standing himself as candidate for regional secretary-general. Until then the *guerrista* Carlos Sanjuan had held the post, dividing party and institutional control in Andalusia. Chaves defeated Sanjuan with 64% of votes in the regional congress. This set off a chain reaction whereby the *guerristas* were eventually defeated as an organised faction throughout Spain. In Andalusia, Chaves was able to project the role of regional president as a unifying figure of authority that transcended parties and factions, while asserting the benefits of unifying party and institutional control. His growing personal

control over the party organisation was very much linked to his nominating capacity as regional president, but also a general willingness to tolerate internal pluralism and a light-handed intervention in local disputes. These were mostly managed by his subordinates in relatively autonomous provincial units, with only unresolvable issues passed to Chaves for final arbitration. This contrasted with the obsessive top-down control of the *Guerrista* faction, and allowed the regional president to avoid becoming heavily entangled in parochial internal problems of limited electoral benefit.

Chaves soon secured an unchallenged leadership within the regional party, as evident from plebiscitary levels of support for his subsequent re-election as secretary-general in regional party congresses. Yet the regional president also had to contend with declining support for PSOE in the 1990s, as a result of governing fatigue and corruption scandals, mainly at national level. This influenced the 1994 regional election, where PSOE lost its absolute majority and became unable to govern due to the intransigence of United Left (IU), which formed a parliamentary coalition with the centre-right PP to obstruct the PSOE minority government at every turn. Chaves dissolved the legislature after little more than a year and coincided the forthcoming regional election with the 1996 general election, a pattern repeated for all subsequent regional elections in Andalusia. This proved an excellent strategic move, as PSOE voters were more inclined than those of other parties to vote exclusively in general elections. PSOE improved its performance in the 1996 regional election, while IU was harshly punished by its voters for the parliamentary alliance with PP (Montabes and Torres, 1998). To secure a majority, PSOE formed a governing coalition with the small regionalist Andalusian Party (PA) that lasted for two full legislatures. Coalitional politics proved highly advantageous to PSOE as the larger and more visible party (Montabes et al, 2006). PSOE restored its absolute majority in the 2004 election (and retained it in 2008), while PA lost all its seats after the 2008 election. A more serious threat to Chaves' leadership came from the national level, as the resignation of Gonzalez in 1997 triggered internal divisions and the emergence of a divided leadership of Josep Borell (PM candidate) and Joaquin Almunia (secretary-general) (Hopkin, 2001). In response, PSOE regional 'barons' sought to substitute collectively for the lack of strong national leadership, providing internal continuity while securing a greater degree of autonomy for themselves (Mendez, 2000). Chaves performed an instrumental role as PSOE leader in the largest Spanish region, rallying the party behind the election of Zapatero in 2000, despite having earlier backed his rival Jose Bono (regional president of Extremadura) in the leadership election. This transitional mediating role was recognised by Zapatero in the decision to nominate Chaves to the honorary post of PSOE President. More substantially, Chaves' backing ensured significant autonomy in the handling of the regional party. The subsequent process of internal renewal complied with national demands for generational and gender change, but was handled almost entirely in Andalusia by Chaves and his lieutenants, ensuring a strict lid on internal dissent and continued control in setting the priorities of the regional government.

Chaves' ability to dominate regional politics rests partly on his mediating capacity

and ability to project a unifying vision of regional leadership, while ensuring close party control through a network of loyal collaborators. It is also the fruit of a constructive relationship with the national leadership. Zapatero proved more willing than most of his predecessors to recognise regional party autonomy (perhaps out of necessity, given his own highly contested leadership election). Although PSOE electoral successes in 2004 and 2008 contributed significantly to the re-election of Chaves, the latter did not merely ride the coat-tails of a resurgent national PSOE, as he also won the 1996 and 2000 regional elections that coincided with PSOE defeat at national level. The success of the regional president rested partly on his capacity to project an autonomist vision for PSOE Andalusia, tied to the expansion of self-government and an active role for government in the regional economy. Close relations with the central government were justified less on partisan lines and more on the need for infra-structural investment in Andalusia as a poorer region subject to historical neglect. The pursuit of autonomy was exemplified in the reform of the regional statute of autonomy in 2007, which was almost as ambitious as its Catalan counterpart (Keating and Wilson, 2009). The autonomist narrative of PSOE was partly appropriated from the nationalist narrative of PA, including its favoured writers, myths and symbols. The effect on PA over time was disastrous, as the regionalist party found itself having to adopt more extreme positions to differentiate itself from PSOE (Montabes et al, 2006). This culminated in the incoherent opposition of PA to the Andalusian statute reform, which triggered its electoral and organisational collapse. Chaves heavily shaped the autonomist politics of his region, with significant advantages to his own party, which was able to personify institutional leadership in Andalusia at a time of growing tensions over resource allocation and the extent of regional autonomy.

GALICIA

The ascendancy of Manuel Fraga as regional president of Galicia shows considerable similarities to his Andalusian counterpart, despite their opposing political affiliations and contrasting political backgrounds. The similarities are most evident in their ability to construct successful political machines out of regional parties that had become riven by factional conflict. Fraga constructed a unifying vision of regional leadership that transcended internal divisions, and pursued an autonomist strategy that provided a common purpose for regional government and marginalised opponents as unsuitable for advancing regional autonomy. Yet despite his considerable successes, Fraga was eventually defeated in his fifth regional election, and presided over a party that remained heavily factionalised despite his own uncontested leadership. This was partly due to Fraga's unwillingness to handle the question of party change and factional divisions in a direct manner, and partly a result of his very success in dominating regional politics and projecting a powerful autonomist narrative, which forced rival opposition parties to ally together more effectively to oust PP as the dominant governing force in the region.

Fraga first stood as regional president in the 1989 election and soon secured an absolute majority for the PP. He had recently founded this party at national level but

immediately handed the reins to a younger successor, Jose Maria Aznar, who unlike Fraga was untainted by collaboration with the Franco regime. Fraga had also been a founder of Popular Alliance (AP), the predecessor to PP and largely a party of Franco-era notables. The decision to return to his native region hinged on a desire for Fraga to allow his successor a free run in national politics, and a valiant attempt to bolster the standing of PP in a region where it had been unseated two years earlier by an unlikely alliance of PSOE and conservative Galician nationalists. As a visible national figure, Fraga was in an ideal position to campaign electorally for the Galician PP, which he constructed as a loose alliance of former AP notables, conservative Galician nationalists, Christian democrats, and centrist liberals. Fraga held this alliance together by projecting an autonomist vision that hinged on greater regional policy autonomy, active promotion of the Galician language, and a territorialised reform of the Spanish state. It also implied the continuation of party-clientelist ties of resource distribution that did much to favour the standing of PP politicians, but rather less for broader socio-economic development in the region (Maiz and Losada, 2000). PP secured four successive majorities in the regional legislature (1989, 1993, 1997, 2001), and on three of these occasions a majority of votes. The regional legislature was no longer fragmented, with only three parties winning seats: PP, PSOE and the leftist Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG). A raised electoral threshold in 1993, approved by the PP largely for partisan gain, prevented the rise of new rivals or the resurgence of old ones. The Galician electoral system also over-represents the least populated eastern provinces where PP support is strongest, while the often determining role of Galicians abroad in regional elections contributes to disproportionately enhancing the share of seats won by PP (Pallares et al, 2006). Although PP grouped together politicians from a wide range of different parties, Fraga was less concerned about asserting strict internal control and more concerned with ensuring personal loyalty. This did not prevent the emergence of strong factional divisions within the regional party, although all concerned took care to profess their absolute loyalty to Fraga. The latter was content to play these factions off against each other when it suited him, but avoided taking explicit positions that might compromise his unchallenged leadership. This made an ageing Fraga unable to hand over the reins to a unifying successor, delaying his departure for several elections, with the result that there was no replacement in the regional leadership until Fraga's defeat in the 2005 regional election at the age of 83.

Factional divisions in the Galician PP revolved around the presence of provincial "barons", influential in Galicia through their control of provincial governments that distribute funds, often on a selectively partisan basis, to the array of small and dispersed municipalities that characterise this predominantly rural region (Maiz and Losada, 2000; Keating, 2001). These powerbrokers formed a series of factions for dominance in the regional party, with the hope of succession when Fraga retired from the political scene. This departure was delayed on several occasions, with the justification that internal divisions were too bitter to allow a chosen successor to emerge. The factions became known as the *galleguistas* and the *Espanolistas*, and transcended earlier differences in

the background of PP politicians. The *galleguistas* were stronger in rural Galicia, supported greater regional autonomy within both party and government, more actively favoured the development of the Galician language, and were attached to conservative paternalism reinforced by clientelist ties. The *Espanolistas* were stronger in urban Galicia, less concerned about regional autonomy and development of the Galician language, and promoted a more liberal and free-market vision of economic development (Keating, 2001). As with any factions, these often hinged on personal divisions and developed into territorial powerbases, making it hard for any group to gain full ascendancy. Territorial powerbases became reinforced through a tendency to delegate candidate selection to powerful provincial ‘barons’, resulting in a regional executive composed of different factions that only Fraga could be trusted to balance fairly. The prevalence of clientelist politics and weak economic development in a region governed by a former Francoist Minister encouraged parties on the centre-left to unite much more strongly to oppose PP rule.

PSOE and BNG had earlier been divided over their positions on regional autonomy and their broader ideological positions, with BNG tending to radical nationalist positions and socialist economic policies, while PSOE was weakly supportive of greater regional autonomy as the basis for economic development, and supported free market economic policies with a social safety net. As BNG gained support and moved closer to PSOE on socio-economic issues, PSOE moved closer to BNG on the question of regional autonomy (Maiz, 2003). This was partly a response to the autonomist drive of Fraga’s PP, which appropriated many of the myths and symbols of Galician nationalism to support his conservative project (Lagares, 2003), and left PSOE rather isolated in its attachment to centralism (Jimenez, 2003). Although differences on the extent of regional autonomy remained between PSOE and BNG, these parties allied closely to overthrow PP governments in the main Galician municipalities. This process of coalition testing was eventually transposed to regional level after the 2005 election, when PSOE and BNG swiftly formed a governing coalition to remove Fraga from office (Pallares et al, 2006).

Although PP remained the largest party in Galicia, factional disputes and an ageing leadership had undermined its cohesion by the 2005 election. Subsequent exclusion from regional and key provincial or local governments weakened the clientelist ties that the various factions had previously exercised. This was to prove most beneficial to the *Espanolista* faction, which gained a clear ascendancy over the *galleguistas*. Whereas Fraga had not intervened actively in advancing a particular faction, many of his positions on autonomy were closer to those of the *galleguistas*. As national leader, Aznar was unwilling to intervene in the politics of a region dominated by his mentor Fraga. What shifted the balance of power was the designation of Mariano Rajoy as future PP leader in 2003, which turned a regional dispute into a potentially treacherous attempt to challenge the new national leader, who had always been aligned with the *Espanolistas*. Although structural differences in the nature of political patronage across urban and rural areas of Galicia have not disappeared, these no longer form a component of a larger factional

struggle for leadership, even when the PP returned to power after winning the 2009 regional election. Intra-party factionalism was perhaps an inevitable by-product of an ambitious attempt by Fraga to construct a loyal personal party able to secure electoral success and governing unity in a matter of months. While this says much about the role of executive leadership in party organisations at regional level, it also demonstrates that parties and their factions can later significantly constrain the choices and behaviour of regional presidents.

CONCLUSIONS

This article demonstrates that regional presidentialism is occurring in political systems with both direct and indirect election of executive leaders, and applies to both single party and coalitional governments. This reinforces similar findings in the study of presidentialism at national level (Poguntke and Webb, 2005). However, the case studies of Italian and Spanish regions outlined here shed more substance on the precise relationship between the executive and party faces of presidentialism. Not only are these effectively interdependent and mutually reinforcing, but in all cases party control (governing *through* parties) is more important than autonomy from parties (governing *past* parties). Formal party control is necessary in the Spanish cases, where the party in central office remains predominant within all levels of the party organisation, while informal mechanisms of control characterise the Italian cases, where the party in public office is dominant at sub-national levels. Coalitional partners not affiliated to the president's party can have a constraining and even disruptive effect on executive leadership, particularly when they feel threatened by presidential power. Parties can and do exploit their veto power in the legislature, as a way to frustrate growing presidential influence within the executive. Nevertheless, regional presidents are able to assert a highly personalised control over regional branches of their statewide parties, by mediating in factional disputes and using their nominating capacity to advance supporters. Since personalised control rests on a form of intra-party consensus that would be shaken by serious divergence from the national leadership, this obliges regional presidents to comply with the latter on strategic choices. Regional presidents can sometimes use their authority to mediate in party conflict at national level, which makes national leaders more willing (or even obliged) to tolerate their growing personal power. Regional presidents can hold together broad coalitions of support by projecting an autonomist discourse that provides a narrative for political office, obfuscates problematic governing styles (e.g. widespread clientelism), and personifies regional authority in negotiations with other territorial levels. This autonomist drive is not equally strong in all cases, and appears weakest in mainland regions of southern Italy. The case of Campania highlights party differences and territorial tensions between the provinces, whose powerbrokers are keen to resist over-centralisation at regional level. Also relevant is the widespread perception that fiscal autonomy and federal reform are designed to benefit northern Italy and penalise the South, especially since these are key demands of the Northern League. Control of regional governments is an

attractive career path for prominent politicians that are excluded from leadership positions at national level. Yet the highly personalised system they tend to develop in office can present problems of political succession, which are not always handled effectively.

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