THE IMPACT
OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ON
ETHNOREGIONALIST PARTIES

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I. **INTRODUCTION**

A. **Ethnoregionalist parties and the European Union: a neglected link**

The analysis of the impact of European integration on ethnoregionalist parties (ERPs) in Europe has up until now received very little scholarly attention. This lacuna is partially due to the lack of comparative research treating this group of parties as a genuine European party family. Most comparative analyses of European parties just omit this family, in spite of the fact that, for different reasons (see below) one can expect that the impact of European integration to be particularly strong on this party family, the fact that the Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe/European Free Alliance defines itself (together with the EPP, PES, ELDR, EFGP) as a genuine European political party (conform to art. 138a of the European Union-Treaty), and that the other four europarties treat the DPPE-EFA as a genuine europarty[1]. This neglect is reinforced by the feeble representation of ethnoregionalist parties in terms of seats in the European Parliament, which is in the first place due to the relatively small size of the regions in which they compete for votes (De Winter & Türsan, 1998)[2]. Finally, ethnicity in modern societies is often seen as an anachronism and particularly within the context of an integrated Europe and gradual functional disappearance of the old nation-states.

However, for this party family, European integration is highly significant, as this process radically modifies -and generally in a positive way- the structure of opportunities of regions and ethnoregionalist parties.

B. **Definition of Europeanisation of political parties**

Drawing from a variety of approaches to the study of Europeanisation and of political party change[3], we would like to define the process of Europeanisation of political parties as follows:

> *Europeanisation of political parties can be defined as the dual, gradual, interactive and differentiated process of the emergence and development at the European level of distinct political parties (in terms of party in the electorate, party in office, party organisation, party policy preferences), party system(s), party government and linkage systems, the growth of policy networks permitting a partisan element in the elaboration, decision-making and implementation and legitimisation of authoritative European rules, through bottom-up, top-down and elitist interactions, and, at the same time, at the national and subnational level, the gradual and differentiated process of adaptation of parties, party systems and party governments and linkage systems to the development of parties at the European level, in, on the one hand, a direct way through multilevel interaction within these Europarties, and, on the other hand, indirectly by adapting to the effects that the wider process of development of European institutions and policies have on the national and regional structure of opportunities and constraints in which domestic parties operate. This adaptation will differ between parties and countries depending on the nature of existing national cleavages structures, the political and administrative cultures and institutions, party organisational structures, the predominance of office, vote, and policy seeking objectives, and concrete (bargaining) opportunities regarding (continued) government participation.*

Hence, the necessity to define this process in a multilevel, multidirectional, multidimensional and multidisciplinary way indicates that the task of studying the Europeanisation of parties, even of a single and "small" party family, is a gigantic task of uncommon complexity to party researchers[4], that in

practice only can be handled by a network of researchers, preferably constituted of specialists in a particular party per country. Hence, in this paper, we will only try to make a modest contribution to the field. First we present an overview of the theoretical arguments regarding the different types of effects that European integration may have on ethnoregionalist parties, that are typical for this party family. We will omit theories and hypotheses on general impact of European Union on all types of domestic parties, as Ladrech (2000), Bartolini (1999), Katz (1999) and others have formulated them. In a second part we will present some partial empirical data on the adaptation of ethnoregionalist parties to European integration. In a later stage, we will formulate some hypotheses regarding the different impact Europeanisation may have on different types of ethnoregionalist parties, following the line of Marks (1999).

C. **Definition of ethnoregionalist parties**

From the plethora of labels and definitions that one finds in the literature, we prefer to use the term "ethnoregionalist" parties that we define on the basis of the two common denominators that unite them: 1) a subnational territorial division; 2) a population that the ethnoregionalist party pretends to constitutes a category that is culturally distinct and has an exclusive group identity. Their programmatically most defining characteristic is their demand for empowerment of the ethnoregional collectivity (De Winter, 1994: 28; Türsan, 1998: 5). This demands thus calls for the reorganisation of the power structure of the national political system, for a certain degree of self-government for the region. This degree can vary from cultural protectionism to straigthforward separatism (De Winter, 1998).

Viewed from the perspective of a process of transfers of competencies from the national level to a higher level (and in federal and regional states, also competencies that belong to the regions and federal states), European integration undoubtedly constitutes an amplification of the "democratic deficit" defined in terms of distance between decision-makers and the beneficiaries of public policies[5]. Thus, more than for other party families, European integration strikes at the heart of the cleavage on which this party family is build, i.e. the empowerment/dispowerment of a higher level decision-making centre and the regional periphery opposition.

However, for a variety of reasons, as integration proceeded these parties have not turned into Euroscepticals, rather on the contrary. In fact, in some recent analyses the use of the European Union context as a resource is considered as one of the defining and innovative aspects of "neo-nationalism" (McCrone 1998).

II. **POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON ETHNOREGIONALIST PARTIES**

A. **The European Union as a constraint on the development of ethnoregionalist parties and their constituency**

1. *The European Union as a threat to regional empowerment*

Historically, the founding fathers of European integration were strongly anti-nationalist, as nationalism in all it forms was considered as the main cause to the "European civil war" that ran from 1933 to 1945 (Hobsbawm, 1992). The European Coal and Steel Community intended to put the basic industry necessary for (French and German) re-armament under supranational control. The creation of Euratom was inspired by similar objectives. European integration essentially aims at diminishing the sovereignty of the national state and therefore the ambition of some historic regions to become new states in the 19th century sense may appear anachronistic.

European integration represents a process of centralisation of the decision-making process. Initially restricted to the economic activities linked to re-armament, this centralisation has spread into other sectors of economic and monetary policy making, recently starting to include aspects of foreign policy, national defence and internal security. This process should logically widen the gap between, on the one hand, regional populations and beneficiaries of public policies and, on the other hand, the main decision-making centres regarding policies relevant to the populations that ethnoregional parties want to empower.

In addition, European integration and economic globalisation may exacerbate territorial disparities, further peripheralise marginal regions and reinforce the stronger regions (in the "golden triangle" or "blue banana"). The accentuation of these regional disparities and occurrence of asymmetrical shock can not anymore be countered by public intervention: regions can not devaluate their currency in order to restore competitiveness, European Union competition policy prohibits state subsides to ailing industrial sectors concentrated in certain regions, the use of deficit spending and the manipulation of interest rates have severely been restricted by the convergence criteria of the Maastricht Treaty (De Grauwe, 2000). In spite of the rhetorical and genuine efforts for European Union regional and structural funds policy, the budget for reducing regional disparities remains on the average below 2% of GDP of European Union member states. In addition, economic disparities are reinforced by political ones: in the most marginal regions -in which European Union regional policies constitute a considerable part of the Gross Regional Product- party political ethnoregional mobilisation is generally weak, while ethnoregionalist parties tend to flourish most strongly in the richer regions (Fearon & Van Houten, 1998).

European integration poses also a series of political and constitutional challenges to the regions, as European Union competencies also affect those policy domains devoluted to regions in federal states[6] (hence the insertion of art. 146 of Maastricht Treaty allowing regional ministers to represent their country in the Council of Ministers for matters decided in their country on the regional level). In addition, the most important channel of access of regions to the European Union decision-making process is their national government. The better regional interests are integrated in the national policy making system, the better they will be looked after in Brussels (Keating, 1998: 166).

Whitehead (1996) argues that the desire of uniformity in European structures may cause countries with asymmetrical federalism (like Spain and Belgium) to revise their structures of authority between regions and the centre, through for instance a standardised interpretation of the concept of subsidiarity. Inevitably, the most empowered regions would loose in this process.

Finally, some authors like Milward (1992: 3) argue no less that European integration has rescued the ethnoregionalist parties main enemy, i.e. the nation-state: "without the process of integration the West European nation-state might not have retained the allegiance and support of its citizens in the way that it has. The European Community has been its buttress, an indispensable part of the nation-state's post-war construction. Without it, the nation-state could not have offered to its citizens the same measure of security and prosperity which it has provided and which has justified its survival". The rescue of the nation-state in the context of increased post-war interdependence required the delegation of competencies. The nation-states followed a strategy of integration because this was "(...) one way of formalising, regulating and perhaps limiting the consequences of interdependence, without forfeiting the national allegiance on which its continued existence depends" (Milward, 1992: 19).

Thus European integration implies a variety of changes that constrain the emancipation of "nations without states" and the expansion of their main representatives, the ethnoregionalist parties. Hence, it comes as no surprise that at the take off of this process some main ethnoregionalist parties opposed European integration given the perspective of the widening of the gap between regional populations and supranational decision-making centres (Lynch, 1998). However, as Europeanisation of decision-making expanded and accelerated, paradoxically their Eurosceptical position gradually evolved into a rather strong europhile stand.

2. *The feeble European integration of ethnoregionalist parties as a party family*

At this moment, the most concrete form of European integration of the family of ethnoregionalist parties is the Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe-European Free Alliance that rallies most regionalist and autonomist parties in Europe (see Table).

The co-operation between ethnoregionalist parties in the European Parliament underwent different phases that illustrate well the problems with founding a genuine transeuropean party (Lynch, 1998). After the 1979 elections, the members of the DPPE-EFA formed a technical group with some extreme-left parties. In the following legislature, this group was enlarged with the greens (the "Rainbow" group). Only in the 1989-1994 legislature, a homogenous ethnoregionalist parliamentary group was formed. From 1994 to 1999, the remaining three MEPs representing DPPE-EFA parties joined the French and Italian radicals (the European Radical Alliance group), while in the current parliament, the ten MEPs of the DPPE-EFA joined the green group (that now counts in total 48 MEPs). In short, apart from one legislature, the DPPE-EFA representation in the European parliament has never been sufficiently strong to form a genuine ethnoregionalist parliamentary group. In addition, in most cases, the ethnoregionalist MEPs constituted a small minority in the group they joined[7]. Thus, given the lack of representation in the European Parliament, most parties of the DPPE-EFA have been excluded from the party integration opportunities that the parliamentary arena offers (Hix & Lord, 1997).

In addition, several important ethnoregionalist parties prefer to adhere to other parliamentary groups, which further undermines the representative character of the DPPE-EFA. After the 1999 elections, there are in fact ten MEPs belonging to ethnoregionalist parties that are not member of the

DPPE-EFA, thus as much as those that currently belong to the DPPE-EFA parties. The most notorious outsiders are the Lega Nord, the CiU, the SFP, the StVP and EH. Note however that the current numerical balance between DPPE-EFA members and non-members is unprecedented, indicating an evolution in favour of the DPPE-EFA. The preceding parliament, for example, counted only three ethnoregionalist MEPs belonging to the DPPE-EFA against eleven non-members.

In short, at the level of the European Parliament, the DPPE-EFA is neither inclusive as transnational party, nor predominant in the definition of the political outlook of the parliamentary group to which it belongs. This constitutes a serious handicap in comparison with other European party families that are clearly more inclusive and homogenous, and thus more representative of the ideological tendency they articulate[8].

3. *The limited extraparliamentary access of ethnoregionalist parties to European Union-decision-making*

While the four other party families have privileged extraparliamentary[9] access to the European Union-decision making bodies (Council and Commission), due to their participation in national executives and their nomination influence on the commission, these channels of influence and co-ordination are not open to ethnoregionalist parties, as currently (apart from the Lega) no ethnoregionalist party participates in national government, and very few have done so in the past, at least for a significant period (De Winter, 1998: 236)[10].

Due to this absence in the major European Union-decision making bodies, the DPPE-EFA does not hold europarty summits before the European Council, and therefore lacks a forum of informal integration of party leaders and their strategies, as well as an opportunity for gaining visibility as a party family, for voicing its visions on European Union and other matters, and for credit claiming. Only in November 2000, the DPPE-EFA organised its first conference of party leaders and ministers in regional and big city executives.

A paradoxical consequence of this absence of ethnoregionalist parties in national governments is that it pushes ethnoregionalist parties to support even more supranational federal decision making models, but in the form of a federal model in which the regions are recognised, as well as a fully empowered European Parliament (in which the ethnoregionalist parties are fairly represented).

4. *The potential negative impact of future developments*

A number of future institutional developments of the European Union may further weaken the representation of ethnoregionalist parties and their regions.

a) *Enlargement*

Although the EFA is traditional transeuropean and therefore in principal supports the enlargement of the European Union to the East-European countries, it is opposed to its present conditions of enlargement, especially the freezing of the maximum number of MEPs to 700 (raised at the Nice

summit). As the EFA MEPs are usually elected on marginal seats (the last rest seats to be attributed in the constituency), an enlargement with no linear expansion of the number of MEPs would reduce the number of available seats in the constituencies in which they compete, and thus decimate the parliamentary representation of the EFA (and probably also of the Greens and some liberal parties).

In addition, the new candidates do not fit well the rokkanite cleavage world, especially regarding the centre-periphery cleavage. Apart from some problems of protection of cross-border minorities, all current east-European countries are "nations with a state". Thus, instead of being representatives of a relevant cleavage in one third of the European Union members (5/15), the relevance would be reduced to one fifth or less. In addition, the new europarty statutes may (although the most recent proposals tend to be more lenient) request representation in one third of member countries, at national or regional level: with fifteen countries this is means getting MEPs elected in five countries, an attainable threshold for the DPPE. Under a hypothetical enlargement to 24, representation in at least eight countries will be the norm, and thus highly problematic given the general absence of significant ethnoregionalist parties in Eastern Europe[11].

b) *Common pool of Eurodeputies*

The suggestion of the creation of a common pool of MEPs that would be elected in transeuropean or transborder constituencies (cf. report 1998 Anastassopoulos on common electoral principles) would strongly reduce the number of ethnoregionalist party MEPs (under the likely condition that this pool of European MEPs would be deducted from the maximum of 700), given the marginal character of most ethnoregionalist parties seats.

c) *The European Party Statute*

The report of the European Court of Auditors (13/2000) and the recommendation of the Group of Eminent Persons on the statute for members (June 2000) have strongly criticised the way of financing MEPs, EP-groups, europarties. The current system is highly questionable and vulnerable to abuse, fraud, exploitation and personal enrichment. This makes the European Parliament, the EP-groups and europarties highly vulnerable to critique and even legal action, especially in the post-Cresson transparency and clean hands public mood. The EFA has, more than other europarties, been exclusively dependent on EP-subsidies to support its activities as an europarty, an improper use of EP-funds that will become less and less possible. Therefore, it will become even more dependent of the willingness of the European Union to finance directly the Europarties, which is the ultimate aim of the proposal of installation of a European statute.

In any case, given the rather proportional allocation of EP subsidies to groups, and given the fact that the same parliamentary work is shared by much less MEPs in the EFA than for instance in the PES or EPP, all parliamentary assistants allotted to EFA MEPs do in fact perform assistance to their MEPs, while in the larger europarties often one of two dozen of "parliamentary" assistants work exclusively for the development of the europarty, and not at all for the group. However, parliamentary assistants of the EFA do party work "on the side" of their parliamentary work, this is even the case for the Secretary General of the EFA who follows a number of EP commissions. Thus, if the new eurostatute would consolidate the present allocation of staff to the europarties while exerting stricter control on the use of EP-resources, the

EFA may have fewer personnel at its disposal than under the present arrangement.

d) *Enforced intergovernmentalism*

A common europessimistic view is that European Union will return to being an intergovernmental organisation, especially after enlargement. This backlash would empower national parties and weaken the europarties. While some national parties (especially those with a permanent government status) may welcome this development, for the ethnoregionalist parties this re-empowerment of national governments and their supporting parties would be a backlash for their own expansion, given the fact that the federal development of the European Union has always been considered as a way to get around the national state, and to relatively empower the regions and ethnoregionalist parties. Hence, not only European Union-integration, but also its potential modes of disintegration can influence party families in different ways[12].

B. **The European Union as an opportunity for the development of ethnoregionalist parties and their constituency**

1. *Rendering void arguments against Kleinstaaterei*

European integration, together with other forms of international integration and co-operation, the enlargement of scale of traditional state functions, and the globalisation of economic activity, have weakened the classical arguments against *Kleinstaaterei* (Hobsbawm, 1992: 31).

First, the creation of customs and a monetary union has brought economies of scale within reach even for small producing countries. Their products have gained access to large markets, while also international producers have found small countries attractive for investments, as long as they were part of an open economy and supportive of business interests by specific development programs.

Second, for those regions that aspire independence, the introduction of the euro solves the problem of monetary transaction costs that a new independent region-state would face, creating its own currency and defending it on international markets, during a transition period most likely characterised by turmoil and disorder typical for separatist processes. Katz (1999) argues that reduction of national sovereignty, (especially the cession of control over monetary policy to the European Central Bank) might be expected to undermine the position of the state both as the primary object old political identity and loyalty.

Finally, the success of NATO indicates that in the nuclear age, even former European superpowers like France and the UK have to appeal for their defence to a larger international co-operation in order to perform this function essential to the classical nation-state. In a certain sense, also large countries have become *Kleinstaaten*, not capable anymore of performing classical state functions in a satisfactory way.

Hence, the new international institutional context, on the one hand, has been a successful answer to the incapacity of West-European nation-states to guarantee their physical and economic security

permitted states to survive and prosper (Milward, 1992), (and not only small ones like the Benelux, Denmark and Ireland, but by now also the larger ones) while, on the other hand, it has reduced the economic and military costs of the option of "independence within Europe" and thus, but while temporarily rescuing the nation-state, it has eroded its long-term main raison-d'être.

2. *European Union and regional development*

Europe has massively invested in regional policies that accord to the poorest regions a substantial economic support, which they otherwise would not have obtained from the state to which they belong.

These programs have reinforced the regions as a relevant decision-making level, even in states where regions did not exist or lack significant competencies (Keating, 1998: 176; Keating and Jones, 1995; Le Galès and Lequesne, 1998). The European Union regional policies require solid partners at the regional level, in the phase of policy preparation as well as its implementation. Apart from political partners (like regional and local executives), the European commission invites also interest groups to participate in these phases. The regions are thus forced to constitute themselves as competent actors to represent their regional interests in Brussels, and this through a multitude of channels of access to European Union decision-making (Commission, Council, Parliament, Committee of the Regions and other forms of co-operation between regions and cities, lobbies, etc.). This decision making model facilitates or reinforces policy networks between political, socio-economic, administrative actors, at the regional level as well as at the (inter-)communal, transregional and transborder level[13]. Katz (1999) argues that under the old regime, regions within a single state would often be in competition with one another over resources or regulatory decisions. However, when the questions transcended national boundaries, they would be forced to make common cause, if only because the negotiations would be made on a state-to-state basis. Under the European Union-regime, the ability of national governments both to make decisions or conduct negotiations or to enforce decisions or compromises within their borders (in the face of potential flight to another European Union country) has been severely reduced. Katz argues that this has resulted in the formation of cross-border alliances of regional interests in competition with other cross-border- alliances, both to influence policy made at the European Union level, and particularly, in the case of those who expect to lose at the national level, to have the locus of decision shifted to an arena in which they expect to be relatively, stronger (Katz and Wessels, 1999: 239-240). Also, the European Union opens the possibility of appeal or renegotiation of decisions reached at the national level.

At the symbolic level, this decision-making process has projected regions and regional politicians into the European arena, presenting them as important participants in the European Union policy process[14]. They allow regional politicians to take credit for attractive European Union subsidies, even those that would have come in any case simply by the working of the relevant eligibility rules (Keating, 1998: 170). In the regions in which an ethnoregionalist party is hegemonic or predominant, the leaders of these parties cash in the symbolic dividends, while in the regions with feeble ethnoregionalist mobilisation, state-wide parties take most credit. Thus the European Union institutional development may alter established career patterns, promoting the attractiveness of regional office holding.

Morlino (1999) and Ladrech (2000) argue that on the one hand, the role of national party leadership in the European Union governing bodies is weak: the decisive communication and exchange networks connect the European Union-bureaucracy, the domestic and European interest groups, the country-specific bureaucratic branches, and the experts in the field. In the implementation process of European social and economic policies at local and regional levels, local institutions, and in some cases local and regional politicians, are able to preserve a large space for policy definition and innovation with opportunities for bargaining and making new proposals by directly entering the European Community arena. Local political leaders with entrepreneurial skill have day-to-day possibilities of performing a key role in these European policies. Also, these levels of government seem to develop and diffuse know-how regarding European Union-matters that is much more developed than that of political personnel at the national level.

When a policy decision-making level gains in importance in terms of issue salience and prestige, political and socio-economic actors will gradually pay more attention to it, in terms of political personnel and campaign resources, and will tailor their programs to respond better to socio-economic as well as identity demands of the region[15]. If we follow Newman's (1994: 41) logic, who claims that the creation of regional policies by European states in the 1950s and 1960s rather than their policy centralising tendencies, were at the basis of the breakthrough of ethnoregionalist parties in the 1960s and 1970s, we can expect that the European Union recognition of the regions through its cohesion policy making process, will have the same effect. In fact, in both cases the objective was the same: to reduce unequal regional development. The states tried to enhance the fair distribution of the benefits of the expanding welfare state, the post-war economic recovery and boom, while the structural and cohesion policy of the European Union is an attempt to help the weaker regions of Europe to bridge the development gap with the richer regions whose fortune would be further enhanced by the realisation of the Internal Market. But contrary to the centralised and technocratic regional development programs of the national states in the 1960s, the European Union has from the beginning tried to incorporate regional actors. The principle of subsidiarity and additionality but also the necessity of lobbying are additional elements that may give regional cohesion policies a stronger supportive impact on the development of ethnoregionalist parties than the preceding national waves of regional policies[16].

Finally, the launching of the principle of subsidiarity, which was originally intended only to regulate the division of competencies between the European Union and the national states, has been seized by the Committee of the Regions and other regional platforms, as to be applicable (and by now justiciable) also to the division of competencies between regions, on the one hand, and the European Union as well as the national states, on the other hand.

3. *Shift towards territorial representation*

Bartolini (1999) argues that, generally, the European Union will make the territorial type of political representation more important vis-à-vis the electoral (and maybe) interest representation modes. Thus, ethnoregionalist parties, as inclusive, catch-all spokespersons of the interest of the entire regional population, should be more favoured by this new predominance of the territorial mode, in comparison

with traditional parties that represent crossregional categorical or ideological electorates.

4. *European elections as a springboard for the mobilisation of ethnoregionalist parties*

According to Lynch (1996), most ethnoregionalist parties obtain generally better results at the European elections than at the parliamentary elections in their country. Several factors can explain this better performance at the European level:

1) Even when amongst new parties, ethnoregionalist parties are the least vulnerable to the sanctions imposed on third parties by a majoritarian electoral system -given that by definition the electorate of a ethnoregionalist party is territorially strongly concentrated and therefore controls more often a relative majority in a number of single-member constituencies- the electoral systems in use at the European elections are in most cases less disadvantageous to ethnoregionalist parties than the one used for general elections.

First, at the European elections, the average size of constituencies (in terms of seats to be conquered), is in all countries with significant ethnoregionalist participation larger than for general elections. This larger size should reduce strategic voting and enhance the proportionality of the allocation of seats (Lijphart, 1994: 98-100).

Second, France, Great Britain and Italy (for three-quarters of the seats) are the only European countries using a plurality system for their general elections. But for the European elections, these three countries have adopted a multi-member system (Great Britain for the first time in 1999).

These differences in electoral rules (larger constituencies and generalisation of the use of proportional representation) should work in favour of ethnoregionalist parties: with an equal number of votes at the European and general elections, they should receive a number of seats in Strasbourg more in proportion to their electoral support. Still, most regionalist parties believe that there is an even better alternative: an electoral system with constituencies that would coincide with the region.

In fact, if one compares the degree of disproportionality (the percentage in terms of votes minus the percentage in terms of seats) at the 1999 European elections to the preceding general elections, the degree of disproportionality is -for all ethnoregionalist parties except for the SFP- lower at the European elections. Thus also for hegemonic or predominant ethnoregionalist parties, that we could expect to profit from under a more disproportional system.

2) The European elections facilitate the formation of cartels between ethnoregionalist parties of different regions[17] that for the general elections necessarily run separately. At the 1999 elections, one finds two significant ethnoregionalist cartels (in terms of seats): the Coalición Europa (comprising the Coalición Canaria, the Partido Andalucista, the Union Valenciana and the Partido Aragonés) and the Coalición Nacionalista Europa de los Pueblos (comprising the Partido Nacionalista Vasco, Eusko Alkartasuna, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya and Unió Mallorquina)[18]. Given the nation wide constituency used for these elections in Spain, the formation of such electoral "coalitions" was the most efficient way to fight the dilution of votes for these parties.

3) Turnout at the European elections is noticeably lower than for general elections. Ethnoregionalist parties seem to profit from this lower turnout as their voters participate more eagerly at

the European elections than those of their statewide competitors. The ethnoregionalist electorate in fact displays a number of socio-political characteristics that enhances participation: young voters, men, a high level of education attainment, (new) middle class origin, are -or were[19]- overrepresented (Blondel, Sinnott & Svensson, 1998: 200-215; De Winter, 1998; Ackaert & De Winter, 1993, ICPS, 1998). The typical voter of these parties corresponds to the "new voter" of the area of "citizen politics" or "new politics", of the "dealigned protest voter" who is most likely to abandon traditional parties.

4) As European elections are often considered as "second order elections"[20], in which citizens' votes are determined more by parties' national programs and governmental performance rather than their stands on European issues, parties that do not govern at the national level (which is the case for most ethnoregionalist parties) tend to obtain a better result at the European than at the national elections. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, European elections offer the opportunity for dissatisfied followers of governing parties to manifest their disagreement with government policies[21]. This mid-term anti-incumbent party vote is facilitate by the fact that the consequences of voting rebellion are less decisive, as the European elections do not affect the formation of national executives. Thus, in European elections, the electorate of traditional parties is more open for alternative views and messages of the smaller opposition parties. The transfer of votes provoked by the malaise towards governmental parties -illustrated at the last European elections by the flagrant defeat of the social-democratic parties in most of the 13 countries in which this family participates in the national government- works partially in favour of ethnoregionalist parties.

5) Finally, for ethnoregionalist parties campaigning for European elections is comparatively cheaper than for general elections. As mentioned above, the number of constituencies is smaller, often coinciding with the entire region (or the entire country). These parties have to recruit fewer candidates, and can focus their campaign resources on a few top leaders. In addition, the European Parliament allocates generous subsidies to parties that obtained seats in the outgoing Parliament. This can neutralise or attenuate certain imbalances provoked by the lack of a system of public party finance at the national level.

While Lynch (1996) formulated his hypotheses on the basis of an inquiry that included only four ethnoregionalist parties, De Winter's (2000) analysis[22] shows that for the entire 1979-1999 period most ethnoregionalist parties indeed obtain better results at European than at general elections. Thus, generally ethnoregionalist parties also get a more proportional share of offices in the European Parliament in comparison with their national legislature[23], and this seems also to hold for their representation in the Committee of the regions, as in many countries, the centre has been generous to allot in a disproportional way (in comparison to regional population size) seats also to the smallest historical regions (like Val d'Aoste) which are usually captured by the main ethnoregional party.

5. *Positive attitudes of ethnoregionalist party voters towards European Union*

Bartolini (1999) formulates the hypothesis that electorates of traditional parties are more divided than ethnoregionalist parties on the European Union-integration dimension as on other cleavages, like the left-right? If this is the case, ethnoregionalist parties should profit from the decline left-right cleavage and

politicisation of the European Union cleavage.

The more positive attitudes of ethnoregionalist party electorates and parties can be due to their socio-demographic background characteristics (De Winter, 1998) but also to the catholic origin of most ethnoregionalist parties. Catholicism internationalism has always favoured more pro European Union-attitudes than protestant nationalism (Bartolini, 1999: 42). On the other hand, the "government thesis" suggests that ethnoregionalist party voters would be more European Union-sceptical, voters in favour of the government parties will tend to be more pro European Union given the fact that their parties and leaders play a prominent role in the intergovernmental decision-making in the European Union, while opposition party leaders are excluded.

Win the empirical section, we will verify which hypothesis is supported most by empirical data.

6. *European demonstration effects*

Transnational demonstration effects refer to the impact of the success of ethnoregionalist/nationalist movements in one state on the development of self-confidence of similar movements in other states and eventually to the founding of a genuine party. At the European level, these demonstration effects are strongest if contacts between such movements are institutionalised, as is for instance the case of the European Free Alliance. The European parliament offers to the ethnoregionalist parties an arena for organising meetings, co-operation and the elaboration and articulation of a common program. The Committee of the regions offers similar opportunities. Such cross-national inter-regional networks can provide weaker movements with logistics, programmatic support, political status and prestige, and, last but not least, boost their morale. Also, as in the case of the green parties, good performance in European elections may have diffused their credibility (Mair, 1999).

III. **ETHNOREGIONALIST PARTY ADAPTATION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

A. **Pro-EU ideological change**

From the arguments regarding the predominantly positive effect of the European Union on ethnoregionalist parties, one could assume that in comparison with their main competitions, most ethnoregionalist parties would tend to be more pro-EU, given the fact that the European Union offers added value in terms of offices (EP and Committee of the Regions), votes (following their pro-EU electorates) and policy (empowerment of regional actors, and the development of a European Union regional policy). In fact, recent inventories of anti-EU parties do not contain a single ethnoregionalist party (Taggart, 1998; Mair, 1999; Raunio & Wiberg, 2000).

We will verify these hypotheses looking at the EFA programmatic profile regarding European Union integration, the expert placements of ethnoregionalist parties and their competitors on an European Union integration scale and the European Union-attitudes of ethnoregionalist party electorates over time.

1. *The official position of the European Free Alliance towards the European Union*

In spite of all the aspects of European integration that undermine the interests of the target publics of ethnoregionalist parties, these parties have adopted -at least since the first direct elections to the European Parliament- favourable attitudes towards European integration.

The objectives of the DPPE-EFA with regard to European integration are the following: the construction of an European Union of free peoples living in solidarity, founded on the principle of subsidiarity; the defence of human rights and rights of peoples, and more in particular the right to self-determination; the protection of the environment and a sustainable development; the construction of a just society based on solidarity and progressive policies, social cohesion and equality of chances for all citizens; the participation in European politics of parties that, due to their dimension, the electoral system or the size of the territory they represent, are excluded from representation.

The principles and demands formulated in the EFA's manifesto prepared for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference[24] offer a more precise image of this party's pro-integrationist and federalist stands: more supranationality in European Union decision-making, a social Europe parallel to the European Monetary Union (including social convergence criteria); a common defence and foreign policy beyond simple intergovernmentalism; enlargement of the European Union, but in concentric circles, allowing to associate countries that cannot fulfil immediately all criteria, the centre states (the EMU countries), co-operating on the basis of federalism; bicameralism: a directly elected Senate of the Peoples and Regions, a sort of combination of the Committee of the Regions and the Council of the Regions; an elected European government by a majority in the two chambers; the right of initiative of European, national and regional parliaments as well as the Committee of the Regions; the creation of consultative committees of MEPs, MNPs and regional MPs to improve co-operation between different parliaments; in the short term, the representation of the regions in the Council of Ministers for the matters that are devoluted in their country to the regional level, splitting the votes of the states in the Council of Ministers between regions; assuring the direct access of regional authorities and the Committee of the Regions to the European Court of Justice. However, they favour some intergovernmental decision rules: the use of unanimity rule for cultural and citizenship matters and installing an alarm bell mechanism available to regional assemblies that want to block European decisions that hurt vital interests of regions.

The ethnoregionalist parties that are not member of the DPPE-EFA but of one of the main europarties are equally in favour of integration, and in general more strongly so than the official line of their host party. However, even if about all ethnoregionalist parties are now defending European integration, large divergences between these parties exist concerning the model of further integration the European Union should pursue. Not all ethnoregionalist parties are euro-enthousiasts. Some, like the Lega Nord, the SNP and the BNG are less in favour of the creation of a supranational Europe and promote rather an intergovernmental or confederal model in which their regions would constitute a proper Nation-state. In addition, even when many parties evoke an Europe of the Regions, a federal model with only two levels (Europe and the regions) is not explicitly advanced. So the end of the state to which they belong is not (yet) announced, though nearly all ethnoregionalist parties do demand a stronger presence of their region in the delegations representing their country within European Union-institutions.

Concerning the division of competencies between Europe, the state and the region, the positions of ethnoregionalist parties vary between two poles: on the one hand, the desire to transfer massively entire policy sectors to the European level (generally competencies that at this moment still are exercised by the states, but whose scope is too transnational or comprehensive to be efficiently exercised at the regional level, like defence and foreign policy, monetary and fiscal policy, large scale public works, the environment, security etc., but also employment policy), and on the other hand, the expansion of the competencies of the regions at the cost of the European Union, a position rarely defended in spite of the fact that in most electoral manifestos and ideological charts, lipservice to the sacred basic principle of subsidiarity is regularly paid (and not surprisingly is interpreted only in its bottom-up version).

2. *The evolution of European Union-attitudes of individual ethnoregionalist parties*

Ray's (1999) expert survey data on the European Union-attitudes in the 1984-1996 period indicates:

1) that the regionalist party family is the most pro-European of all European party families, with an average, for the entire period, of 5.82 on a 7 point scale (from 1: "strongly opposed", to 7: "strongly in favour"). This is already the case in 1984 and 1988. In 1992, the ethnoregionalist parties are beaten by Conservative parties and Social Democrats, the latter remaining ahead also in 1996. If we look only at the five countries in which regionalist parties exist, the most-outspoken pro-EU attitudes of ethnoregionalist parties are confirmed only for 1984, as since 1988 they are systematically beaten by the Social democrats.

2) Country analysis shows that in none of the five countries in which regionalist parties exist, they are the party family with the most pro-EU attitudes in the entire period. In Belgium the three traditional parties are more pro-EU than the VU and FDF; in Spain the regionalist family is beaten by the conservatives, liberals and social democrats, in Italy by the liberals, christian-democrats and social-democrats, in the UK by the liberals, and in Finland by the conservatives.

3) Thus, if we select only the five countries in which regionalist parties exist, they are (apart for 1984) systematically beaten by social-democrats.

4) If we take all countries together, the regionalists are the most homogenous party family in terms of standard deviations of their European Union attitudes. However, in the five countries in which regionalist parties exist, the greens are most cohesive, followed by the social-democrats, and only then come the regionalists.

5) The regionalist party family has grown gradually more pro European (from 5.65 in 1984, 5.73 in 1988, 5.96 in 1992 and 1996. But apart from the greens (that have become more sceptical in these countries), all other families have also become more pro-EU (christian-democrats remain about status quo), the conservatives the strongest.

To conclude, generally speaking the regionalists are surely pro-European, but within the relevant countries, they were European Union-champions only in the very beginning, while differences with traditional parties have declined over time. Hence, one cannot claim that the regionalist parties have made a major shift in favour of the European Union, they were already in favour, just have grown even more so, but not as dramatically as some other families, that have caught up with them (especially the Social-

democrats).

While the existing expert data of Ray are surely a valuable source for placing domestic parties on a European Union integration scale, the reliability of retrospective expert surveys has been questioned (Budge, 2000) and therefore they clearly have to be complemented by longitudinal content analysis of party policy statements, like the manifestos for the European elections since 1979, which could be coded following the new scheme developed by Hix (1999) or Goldmann's project (2001) content analysis of the national and party positions (on the SEA, TEU and Amsterdam Treaty)[25].

B. **Shifts of ethnoregionalist party voters' attitudes**

When comparing the ethnoregionalist parties as party-in-the-electorate, with other party families, one should use data collected at the regional level, i.e. at the level of the ethnoregionalist parties' target electorate, rather than national level data (De Winter, 1998)[26]. This is even more necessary for the comparison of the European Union attitudes of voters. Most ethnoregionalist parties are active in interface regions, bordering with other states, or have particular links with the populations across the state border. This border-proximity probably has a transnational socialising effect on the entire population of the border region, while part of the national electoral may be very isolated, being not close to any other nation (cf. the northern peripheral regions of Italy vis-à-vis the South). Or Flanders' close cultural ties with the Netherlands, the Swedish population in Southern Finland vis-à-vis Sweden and Denmark, or Catalonia and the Basque Country vis-à-vis their linguistic sister regions in France.

Given the fact that the small size of ethnoregionalist parties' scores in national surveys of the Eurobarometers, one has to be careful interpreting the results. In fact, only the magnum Eurobarometer of 1996 (overall population size = 65.178) offers sufficient numbers for most ethnoregionalist parties. So only for 1996 we can test systematically whether the hypothesis of a pro-EU ethnoregionalist party electorate holds, in comparison with the electorates of non-ethnoregionalist parties.

The hypothesis is confirmed for Flanders, as the VU voters[27] display the most pro European Union attitudes but the Greens obtain about the same score. In Brussels, we had to run the analysis on party proximity (rather than vote intention), as this produced more FDF sympathisers[28]. The FDF is clearly beaten by all traditional Francophone parties!

For Finland, we selected the two mega-regions in which the SFP is clearly strongly represented (over 5% or more, i.e. Uusimaa and Voili-Suomi). The SFP is clearly beaten by the Conservatives (KOK), but also by the Social-Democrats and the Greens. In Italy we can only check for the Lega Nord in the northern provinces. There the LN is clearly beaten by the various christian-democrat formations, the Greens, the PDS as well as Forza Italia. Thus basically, it is the most eurosceptic of the main formations! This distrust towards the European Union was already noticeable in a 1992 survey (Diamanti, 1993).

In Scotland, the SNP electorate is more Eurosceptical than the electorates of all main parties! In Wales, the PC is however the most pro-EU party together with the liberal-democrats.
In Spain:

- the PA is the most pro-EU party in Andalucia, together with the PSOE,

- in Aragon, the PAR is beaten by the PSOE,

- in the Canary Island, the CC is the least pro-EU party,

- in Catalonia, the most pro-EU party is the PSC-PSOE, followed by the CIU, while the independist ERC is the least, together with the IU,

- in Galicia, the BNG is beaten by the PSOE,

- in Valencia the UV is the least pro-EU party,

- in the Basque country the EA is the most pro-EU party, followed by the PSOE, then the PNV, while HB is the least pro-EU party.

Hence the analysis of target electorates shows that most ethnoregionalist parties are not EU-champions at all, contrary to their ideological profile and discourse of their leaders (and scores on the Ray survey). Thus they seem to be out of line with their electorates. The ease they seem cope with this representational deficit can be related to the fact the EU-matters generally do not matter very much to their electorates, and therefore the party leadership is allowed to adopt more pro-EU attitudes on this low saliency dimension.

Of course, the traditional parties' position is also determined by the attitudes of their electorates in other regions, therefore if one makes the analysis at the national level, one finds that:

- in Spain the CiU is the most pro-EU party together with the PSOE, while most of the smaller formations are also more pro-EU than the PP,

- in the UK the PC is together with the Labour party the most pro-EU, followed by the SNP ex aequo with the liberal-democrats,

- in Belgium the VU is the most pro-EU together with the two green parties but the FDF remains most sceptical (but less than the Vlaams Blok),

- in Finland, the SFP stands ex aqua with the greens, but is beaten by the conservatives and the social-democrats,

- while in Italy the LN is ex aequo with the AN but beaten by everybody else apart from the communists (RC).

Thus, the analysis at the national level enhances the EU-standing of a number of ethnoregionalist parties, but still they are not the outspoken champions as they pretend.

To what extent have ethnoregionalist parties relative EU-attitudes evolved over time. One would expect that they would have become more pro-EU and more so than the traditional party families (given their supposed conversion to the European Union after the invention of the Europe of the Regions). Given the problem of small numbers, we merged two or three Eurobarometers held just before or after the European elections, as only these contain data on party preferences.

In Belgium, in the 1978-1979 period[29] the Flemish socialists were slightly more pro-EU than the VU, while the liberals and christian-democrats are less (in the Flemish constituencies without Brussels). In Brussels, the FDF was the second most pro-EU party after the Brussels Liberals, followed by the socialists and christian-democrats. In Scotland the SNP was the least pro-EU party (while the

conservatives are the most!). Also in Wales the PC was the least pro-EU, while the conservatives and the liberals were the most. Thus only in the case of the SNP and PC, there seems to be some thorough change in favour towards Europe.

In 1989[30] (but only with 9 respondents)[31], the Lega was the least pro-EU of all Italian parties. In the autumn of 1994, the most pro-EU parties were the PPI, PDS and RC, then the LN, and the least were FI and the AN[32].

C. **Organisational change**

One of the most evident organisational changes to be expected of the ethnoregionalist parties turning more pro-EU would be the empowerment of European Union-officeholders. To what extent have MEPs, members of the Committee of the Regions, national MPs specialising in European Union-questions, and other European Union-party experts and spokesmen party been included into the leading party bodies (Raunio, 2000).

Unfortunately, due to the traditional and recent neglect of ethnoregionalist parties in the comparative study of political parties, we have only very little data at hand for checking this hypothesis without going into extensive data collection[33].

In the 1960-2000 period, organisational empowerment of European Union-officials in the VU appears from the inclusion in the party executive (*Partijbestuur*) between 1988 and 1991, and since 1994, ex officio the group leader of the VU in the European Parliament (where the size of the group varies between 1 and 2 MEPs....), and since 1989 in the larger, and more powerful, Party Council (*Partij Raad*). But also most other Belgian parties have included their MEPs or a delegate of them into their highest decision making body, and usually, the main parties did so earlier than the VU. In the FDF the MEPs have been included since the beginning, as party statutes have always included all MPs (of any type) in the *Comité Permanent*.

In Spain, the situation seems to be as follows:
- CDC: a spokesperson of the EP group (at least since the 1995 statutes, and not before 1986, Marcet 1987) sits in the national executive,
- ERC: the statutes do not seem (according to Molas, 2000: 82) to include MEPs (at this moment they do not have any), but the responsible person for International Contacts is current member of the *Executiva National*, as well as alderman of Barcelona and former delegate to the EFA),
- PNV: no mentions in the 2000 statutes (not for executive, not even for national congress). The present MEP is not member of the national or regional party Executives,
- EA: the current MEP is also Secretary General of the Party and member of the national executive (*Ejecutiva Nacional*), but not ex officio, while the person responsible for the International Relations is so,
- BNG: the current MEP is member of the executive *Comisión Permanente*[34].

In the SNP, one of the 2 MEPs is member of the NEC (as one of the 10 elected members, but not

ex officio, as are the "national office bearers"). In the Lega Nord, there is one EP-group representative in the *Consiglio Federale* (according to the 1998 statutes). In the UV, their only MEP is member of the Comité Fédéral (but, according to 1997 statutes, not ex officio)[35]. In the StVP all types of MPs are member of the Party Commission (*Parteiausschuss*), but not of the *Parteileitung*. In the PsdAz, MEPs not officially member of *Direzione Nazionale*, but a representation of MEPs is granted for the *Consiglio Nazionale*. Finally, in the SFP, the current MEP is not member of the *Centralstyrelsen*.

Generally, MEPS of ethnoregionalist parties are member of their party's top leadership organs, but often not ex officio. Thus their representation is little institutionalised. On the other hand, they all serve as the specialist, policy initiators and spokesman for their party on European matters. Still, like in most traditional parties, there seems to be little communication between the party on the ground and their representatives in Brussels.

Thus, some major data collection work is still to be done, in the line of Katz & Mair, especially for the earlier periods. In addition, the formal inclusion of European Union-officials in the leading party bodies is just a very small part of the picture. It does not tell us to what extent has their actual influence increased in the party. What is the prestige, influence, authority, network integration of European Union-officers within the party organisation? We will try to answer this question the following months through interviews with ethnoregionalist party MEPs as well as with longstanding party apparatchicks of the respective ethnoregionalist parties. European Union-officials may be ex-officio unimportant, but de facto be important through interlocking directorates. They may hold an "insignificant" seat in the European Parliament, but also hold important national or regional offices, and as such be represented in the parties' highest decision-making bodies, and therefore contribute to the oligarchisation of the party decision-making in European Union-matters (cf. the Mair thesis). Thus, we have to examine the *cumul des mandats* at, on the one hand, the European Union level, and on the other hand the national and regional public office, as well as the non-elected intraparty leadership positions.

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IV. CONCLUSION

The process of europeanisation is particular relevant to ethnoregionalist parties, that, as it were,

"own" problems related to centre-periphery cleavages, the division of policy competences between territorial decision-making levels. Thus, more than for other party families, European integration strikes at the heart of the cleavage on which this party family is build, i.e. the empowerment/dispowerment of a higher level decision-making centre and the regional periphery opposition.

For a variety of reasons, as integration proceeded these parties have not turned into Euroscepticals, rather on the contrary. This is due to the fact that the opportunities for the development of ethnoregionalist parties and the empowerment of the regional populations they represent outweigh the constraints europeanisation poses. This europhile stands can be noticed in their multilevel federalist institutional arrangements, and the attitudes of the party elites. However, their electorates seems to be less euro-enthusiastic.

Like is the case with the study of the effects of europeanisation on other party families, some major data collection work on organisational changes is still to be done, in the line of Katz & Mair, especially for the earlier periods. Also the evolution of the positions of these parties in a three-dimensional space (type of autonomy sought, left-right, european integrationism) requires more detailed analysis. Also shifts in multilevel career patterns and planning can further reveal the impact of europeanisation on party elites.

Table
The Democratic Party of the Peoples of Europe-European Free Alliance as a representative of a European political family *(November 2000)* (in brackets the number of MEPs, and for non-members of the DPPE-EFA, the parliamentary groups to which they belong)

Bloque Nacionalista Galego (1)	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (2, PLDR)
Eusko Alkartasuna (1)	Coalición Canaria (1, PLDR)
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	Euskal Herritarrok (1, non-inscrit)
Fryske Nasjonale Partij	Lega Nord (4, Groupe Technique & non-inscrit)
Mouvement Région Savoie	Svenska Folkpartiet (1, PLDR)
Partei Deutchsprachiger Belgier	Süd-tiroler Volkspartei (1,PPE)
Partido Sardo d'Azione	
Partit Occitan	
Plaid Cymru (2)	
Scottish National Party (2)	
Slovenska Skupnost	
Union Démocratique Bretonne	
Union für Südtirol	
Union du Peuple Alsacien	
Union Valdôtaine (1)*	
Unione di u Populu Corsu/Scelta Nova	
Unitat Catalana	
Volksunie (2)	
Eusko Alderdi Jertzailea - Partido Nacionalista Vasco (1)**	
Partido Andalucista (1)	
Ligue Savoisienne***	
Veneti d'Europa***	
Libertà Emiliana-Nazione Emilia***	
Vinhozito-Rainbow***	

(Source: DPPE-EFA; Group Greens-EFA)
* In July 2000, Mr. Caveri, the leader of the Union Valdôtaine (founding member of the EFA) succeed a MEP of the Prodi list. He decided to continue to sit with the group of his predecessor, the ELDR!
** The PNV abandonned the EPP in 1999 and obtained observer status in the EFA. Others have also ask for observer status: the Partit Socialista de Mallorca-Entesa Nacionalista, Bloc Nacionalista Valencià
*** Since November 2000

NOTES

1. Cf. the co-signing of the five party secretary-generals of the appeal to the Commission for drafting a European Party Statute (17/2/2000).

2. These parties exist however in nearly all European Union member states. In several of them, they are party system relevant, either in terms of the size of their electoral support, or in terms of participation or blackmail potential in the formation of government coalitions between statewide parties. Second, in Belgium and Italy, ethnoregionalist parties has contributed to the demise of existing party systems and in the long run may contribute to the break-up of these countries. Finally, they seem capable, together with the Greens and the populist right-wing parties, to cash in to the recent increases of public dissatisfaction towards the established political elites and traditional political parties (Müller-Rommel, 1998; Norris, 1999).

3. Directly or indirectly inspired by the work (often in progress) of and/or conversations with: Stefano Bartolini, Elisabeth Bomberg, Sergio Fabbrini, Richard Katz, Michael Keating, Robert Ladrech, Gary Marks, Leonardo Morlino, Wolfgang Müller, Tapio Raunio, and Kaare Strøm.

4. Only those working on parties in federal systems may face similar problems (Deschouwer, 2000).

5. Or as evoked by the Lega as "un centralismo mostruoso perché ancora più lontano e incontrolabile di quello odierno".

6. Spain for instance does not at all offer European Union-representation of regions in matters in which they have (shared or exclusive) competence. For instance, the Basque country has nearly all competencies of normal state except money and defence (that will be transferred upwards anyway), but excludes this empowered regions from representation through the Spanish European Union representation in Council. While the British ministers do allow once in a while a Scottish or Welsh minister to accompany them to Brussels, and Germans seem to have some rotation system allowing at least one regional minister (representing the Länder) to accompany the Bundesminister.

7. Apart from the Rainbow group in the 1989-1994 period that comprised nine EFA MEPs on a total of 15.

8. Finally, the fate of the EFA has for two decades been strongly dependent on the support of the Volksunie, in terms of ideological sophistication, strategic insight, persistence and material resources (finance and personnel). The internal crisis of the VU in the 1990s about its raison-d'être and its future, also threatened the survival of the EFA-co-operation (De Winter, 1998). Most recently, this dependency is in decline, as the numerical weight of VU in the EFA has declined in relative terms, while also a number of key positions in the EFA have now shifted to other parties. But the presidency is still in the hands of the VU.

9. And in the parliament, they are marginal given the dominance of large coalitions between EPP & PSE.

10. This absence is not compensated by their rather fair representation in the Committee of the Regions and in the European Parliament.

11. EFA officials argue that the current lack of EFA-members in East-Eastern Europe is due to the fact that the EFA is afraid of allying itself with politically incorrect parties that would harm its image (in a much stronger way than it harms the traditional party families, cf. the criticism formulated when the Lega was EFA member and joined a government with the AN). In addition, they claim to follow political developments in these countries closely and explore the market of potential new EFA members.

12. Bartolini (1999: 34) argues that the current degree of integration is a status quo that is positive for liberal and conservative parties, but negative to social democrats that want to go beyond common market and create social Europe and expand European Union powers into the political management of the economy and welfare state. Hence, the latter parties may tend to boost their integration given the fact that they also would like the European Union to become more integrated and federal, while other party families can be happy with a interparty co-operation that does not call for loosing part of the parties and countries sovereignty. The current state of the Union is suboptimal and undesirable for the ethnoregionalist parties, as they are in fervour of a stronger integrated Europe (and therefore a weakening of the state levels), but they also want a stronger involvement of the regions in European Union decision-making.

13. Cf. the number of regional and town networks, the number of associations created to lobby the Commission, and of other Community institutions as well.

14. The leaders of the Catalan and Flemish governments tend to travel with the attitude of a head of state and are frequently treated in this manner (Malloy, 1995: 9).

15. Cf. the evolution of the traditional parties in Belgium (De Winter & Dumont, 1999) and Spain (Colomé, 1989).

16. With the insertion of regional political and civic society actors into the European decision making process, and the extension of the subsidiarity principle to the regions, the regional level also contributes to the legitimisation of the integration process and therefore tends do reduce the democratic deficit.

17. At the 1989 European elections, the Corsican (Unione di u Populu Corsu) and Brussels (Front Démocratique des Francophones) ethnoregionalist parties formed an electoral alliance with green lists (Olivesi 1998). At the 1984 European elections, the Union Valdôtaine formed a cartel with the Partito Sarde d'Azione.

18. Another cartel, the Union de Regiones (comprising regionalist formations of Almería, Baleares, Castilla-La Mancha, Canarias and Madrid [!]) obtained only 0,04% of the votes.

19. Yet, after one or two decades, most of the specific sociodemographic features of the ethnoregionalist electorates tend to fade away (De Winter, 1998: 232-234).

20. Reif, 1985; Van Der Eijk & Franklin, 1996. For a recent empirical critique of this model, see Blondel, Sinnott & Svensson, 1998.

21. At the general elections, on average 62% of the incumbent governing parties loose votes at the next general elections (Müller & Strøm, 1997: 744).

22. Analysis of the performances of most significant ethnoregionalist parties (those that obtained in 1999 at least 5% of the votes in their region) at the European and general elections since 1979 (or since the adhesion of their country to the European Union) comparing their scores measured at the level of the region.

23. Regionalist parties are overrepresented in terms of seats, in comparison to the share of vote at the European elections in 1999, in Belgium, the UK, underrepresented in Spain and France, while equally represented in Italy. But given the fact that most regionalist parties do better at the European elections than at the national elections, one could say that in office terms, the European Parliament (at least in 1999) is relatively more beneficial to regionalist parties. But this good result in 1999 is due to the major increase in seats (from 14 to 20) as many regionalist parties hold the last marginal seat.

24. This is still the most valid and elaborated EFA-view on institutional questions.

25. For some of the scarce case studies of the European Union-attitudes of ethnoregionalist parties, see Beyers & Kerremans (2001) on the VU, Lega (Diamanti, 1993), Lynch (1996) on the VU, the Union Démocratique Bretonne, the SNP and PC; Macartney (1990) on the SNP.

26. Ethnoregionalist parties usually do not intend to capture votes in the entire electorate of a state, but try to maximise their electoral support in the region or from ethnic groups on which they focus. Therefore, the success of a nationalist party should not be measured in terms of the proportion of the national vote, but only in terms the proportion of the targeted electorate, the votes of the region they pretend to represent. This type of measurement offers a more precise appreciation of the electoral success of ethnoregionalist parties.

27. Voters are defined in terms of voting intention for next general election.

28. Eight instead of four, probably due to the fact that for all but local elections, since 1993, runs all elections in a cartel with the Francophone liberals.

29. EB 10, EB11, EB12 (fall 1978, spring and fall 1979 respectively).

30. For Spain in 1989 there seems to be something wrong with the representation of the regions (underrepresentation of Catalunya, Basque, etc.) as well as with the coding of ethnoregionalist parties.

31. But note that in the entire 1988-1992 period, there are only 19 Lega voters in the Eurobarometers containing party preference data!

32. Also in the pre-electoral spring 1994 survey, those that voted LN in the previous national elections were amongst the most sceptical (but for different dependent variable: European Union-membership good/bad thing).

33. The Katz Mair Data handbook contains organisational data on the VU -which just has been updated by (Bernollet, De Neve, 2000)-, but not on the FDF, while data on ethnoregionalist parties in Italy and the UK are lacking from those country chapters, Spain is absent all together, while the SFP is included in the Finnish chapter (but not for the relevant period (post-1995).

34. As well as the Consello Nacional.

35. But all regional and national MPs (=1) are represented in the *Conseil Fédéral*, while in the 1993 statutes they were also ex officio member of the executive.

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