Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

D7.3 Explaining Regionalist Actors' Framing Strategies and their Electoral and Political Consequences

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Summary

This report builds on the analysis in Deliverable 7.2 (Elias *et al.*, 2020) of how regionalist actors frame their demands for territorial empowerment. It draws on interviews with regionalist parties and civil society actors in Work Package 7's 12 case study regions, as well as analysis of primary and secondary sources, to explore i) what factors shape regionalists' justifications (or framing) of their territorial demands, and ii) the electoral and political consequences of regionalists' framing strategies. Our analysis results in the following key findings:

- **Structural factors are of limited utility in explaining regionalist actors' framing strategies**. Whilst the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of regions provide the broad context in which regionalist actors mobilise, there are not necessarily translated into arguments in favour of territorial re-structuring. Whether or not this happens depends on the **agency of regionalist actors in mobilising structural territorial inequalities into political debate**. Regionalist actors perceive the cultural and socio-economic differences between centres and peripheries in a range of ways, redefining and reframing them differently in different places, and select which aspects to draw on in arguments for territorial empowerment.

- Especially influential in this respect are **the political contexts in which regionalist actors operate.** Political incentives and constraints are thus key drivers of regionalists' framing strategies. But the nature and impact of such factors are complex and inter-linked, and shift over time as political contexts change.

- Nevertheless, our analysis reveals **a set of political incentives and constraints that come into play across our cases to different degrees, albeit with different consequences for how regionalists frame their territorial demands**. The territorial structure of the state (i.e. the way in which the state organises political authority across its territory) provides a common focus for regionalists' political grievances, and changing the territorial status quo in some way is the core purpose of all regionalist actors. But within this framework, shorter-term dynamics often push and pull regionalist actors in different directions. Electoral and political incentives are especially important in this respect. For example, regionalists will often justify their territorial demands in ways that appeal to voters; our findings thus evidence the impact of public opinion on regionalist actors' choice of framing strategies (leading them to emphasise or downplay arguments for territorial empowerment). The analysis also points to the desire by these actors distinguish themselves from other (regionalist or state-wide) political parties, and/or position themselves as possible coalition partners to other political parties; such goals also inform choices about how territorial demands are framed.

- We also find evidence of **the role of ideology, and especially left-right values, in shaping the broad repertoire of frames that regionalists draw on** (although political factors are found to be more important in determining the scope and salience of different frames).

- However, assessing the **impact of regionalists' framing strategies for their electoral and political relevance is not straight forward**. Decisions about how to frame territorial demands are often driven by the pursuit of electoral/political appeal, and in some cases have increased a regional actor's electoral and/or political status. But there is no clear 'winning formula' either, with different constellation of factors in different cases leading to different electoral/political outcomes.

Locating D7.3 within broader IMAJINE research

This report draws on and complements data generated by other IMAJINE research as follows:

- A key achievement of **WP2 Analysis of Territorial Inequalities in Europe** was to produce new data on territorial inequalities - or, as described in Deliverable 2.1, "the distribution of economic wellbeing" (Fernandez-Vazquez *et al*., 2018a: 7) within sub-state territories. This work evidenced the presence of important territorial inequalities within regions, in relation to income, poverty, educational inequalities, immigration or ageing (for an overview, see Fernandez-Vazquez *et al.,* 2018b); the data also showed the presence of such inequalities in several of the cases in our study. This report considers to what extent the presence of such territorial inequalities shape the arguments used by regionalist actors to justify (or frame) their demands for territorial empowerment. On the one hand, there is a clear resonance between many of the issues regionalist actors invoke in their political documents – especially arguments invoking inequalities in welfare, education and health - and the dimensions of territorial inequalities identified in the WP2 data. Regionalists are thus highly aware of the multi-dimensional spatial inequalities that characterise the territorial contexts in which they mobilise. On the other hand, this report highlights the different salience given to these different inequalities in different regionalist discourses, as well as the variability in the way in which territorial inequalities are framed. The kinds of territorial inequalities talked about, and the ways in which these are framed, thus varies across time and space in response to the shifting political contexts in which regionalists make and try to advance their territorial demands. Furthermore, a key finding from the analysis presented here is that these aspects of "economic wellbeing" are consistently conceived in centre-periphery terms, e.g. in terms of the inequalities facing the citizens of the territory vis-à-vis those living elsewhere in the state. In this way, whilst regionalist actors are undoubtedly concerned with inequality at the level of individual citizens *within* the region, they politicise these issues within the framework of sub-state vs state spatial relations, and advance 'their' territory's empowerment as the solution to tackling these. Thus whilst WP2 evidences the existence of territorial inequalities within Europe's regions, our findings highlight the different spatial scales that matter to regionalist actors focused first and foremost on region-state, rather than intra-regional, power relations.

- In this way, this report adds to the evidence collected by IMAJINE research of experiences and perceptions of spatial inequalities from different actor and spatial perspectives, and which underlines the importance of understanding the societal and political contexts in which such perceptions are formed. **WP5 Migration, Territorial Inequalities and Spatial Justice** provides such evidence from the perspective of two social groups in regions that experience migration: permanent residents and migrants. A key finding of that work is that the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequalities is highly variable and fluctuating over time, reflecting different dynamics, in different locations, at different points in time (Ulceluse *et al*., 2020). This report complements this work by investigating regionalist actors' perceptions and experiences of migration. We find that regionalist actors have paid more or less attention to

migration, and linked it to their territorial demands in different ways that reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the region and different (and shifting) political pressures over time. We thus provide complementary evidence of the complex relationship between regionalist mobilisation and migration, with both positive and negative experiences being found in different cases, informing different kinds of justifications for territorial empowerment.

- Finally, future work can further explore factors driving regionalist actors' framing strategies by drawing on broader IMAJINE research. In particular, a key finding of D7.3 is that regionalist actors' framing strategies take into account, and often seek to respond to, trends in public opinion. **WP4's Experimental Survey on Solidarity and Territorial Cohesion** provides a further opportunity to explore the resonance of regionalist actors' framing strategies with public preferences in our case study regions. The survey's design was closely informed by WP7's conceptualisation of territorial demands and frames, and has collected data on citizens' preferences for different types of decentralisation, attitudes towards greater transfer of powers to subnational levels on a set of policies, and on whether certain political, cultural or socio-economic justifications of territorial empowerment are also shared by citizens. This enables future analysis to investigate the extent to which regionalist actors' own justifications for territorial empowerment align with voter perceptions of territorial inequalities and preferences on multi-level governance and political autonomy. Given the general paucity of comparative public opinion data on territorial preferences, such an analysis will be highly original and provide significant new insights into the political context in which regionalist actors seek to mobilise support for territorial re-organisation.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	Aberystwyth University
IGSO-PAS	Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences
RUG	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
TUD	Technische Universität Dresden
UNIBAS	Universität Basel
UNISI	Università degli Studi di Siena

For acronyms of regionalist actors included in WP7, see Appendix 1.

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

Regionalist actors are, by definition, rooted in the centre-periphery cleavage: they share a commitment to reforming the territorial structure of the state in some way, in order to protect and advance the interests of a community that is distinctive in some way (De Winter, 1998; Alonso, 2012). Work Package 7 aims to better understand these actors' perceptions of the differences and inequities between centres and peripheries, and the ways in which these inform calls for territorial re-structuring. To this end, and through a qualitative content analysis of regionalist actors'[1] political discourses in 12 European regions,[2] Deliverable 7.2 identified the ways in which these actors perceive territorial inequalities and how these inform their calls for territorial empowerment (Elias *et al*. 2020). Such calls have in common their aim to challenge (and alter) the relationship between the region[3] and other territorial levels, in order to protect and/or advance the territory's interests in some way. But such calls can also take myriad forms, and in Deliverable 7.2 we provided evidence of the range of such territorial demands. These encompass more radical goals such as independence from or a fundamental transformation of existing political structures, to more moderate demands (e.g. for more political autonomy from, or for policy intervention by, the state but within existing territorial structures).

In Deliverable 7.2, we focused specifically on how regionalist actors *framed* these territorial demands. The act of framing is widely acknowledged to have a core function in political communication; it relates to how different actors define a particular problem, and direct attention to certain causes and consequences in order to convey what is at stake on a specific issue (Helbling, 2014: 23). Deliverable 7.2 thus sought to understand how regionalist actors defined and experienced territorial inequalities and explored "which justifications are related to which positions" (Helbling *et al*., 2010: 498). Our analysis of the ways in which regionalist actors framed their territorial demands over the period 1990-2018 led to the following key findings:

- Regionalist actors' perceptions of territorial inequalities have focused on political and socio-economic realities, with much less attention paid to cultural and environmental considerations. In the majority of our cases and increasingly over time, perceptions of political unfairness and

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[1] Although the original IMAJINE project referred to 'autonomy movements', we made the case in Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al*., 2018: 6-7) for using the terminology of 'regionalist actors' instead. We define regionalist actors as political parties and civil society organisations that mobilise below and against the state, in an attempt to empower 'their' territory in some way, and in the name of a sub-state territorial community that is considered to be culturally, socio-economically, and/or politically distinctive.

[2] This analysis includes 39 regionalist parties and coalitions, 14 civil society organisations and coalitions and 8 coalitions of parties and civils society actors in twelve regions across eight European countries: Scotland and Wales (UK); Catalonia and Galicia (Spain); Corsica (France); Bavaria (Germany); Aosta Valley, Northern Italy and Sardinia (Italy); Friesland (Netherlands); Kashubia (Poland); and the Hungarian minority/the Szeklerland (Romania). The selected actors are listed in Appendix A.

[3] We use the term 'region' to refer to the sub-state territorial level, although in practice regionalist actors conceptualise this level differently, e.g. as a region, nation or homeland (see Elias *et al*., 2020: 68).

socio-economic injustice have thus underpinned regionalist actors' demands for the empowerment of 'their' territory in order to create a fairer, more just set of territorial relationships. In only a few cases - Kashubia and Szeklerland - do we find cultural justifications for territorial empowerment predominating, reflecting the specific concerns in those places for the recognition and protection of a particular cultural/linguistic group.

- These political, socio-economic and (to a much lesser extent) cultural arguments have been used to justify the full range of territorial demands outlined above. But we also find evidence of a general shift in the kinds of demands made over time. Regionalist actors tended to pursue more 'moderate' strategies of territorial empowerment during the 2000s, focused on giving more autonomy to the region or getting the state to take policy action in the territory, but within existing territorial structures. In the last decade, more 'radical' demands have become more prominent (and especially calls for independence from the state). Regionalist actors are often, however, found to be highly pragmatic and pursue long- and short-term territorial goals simultaneously in order to change (and improve) perceived territorial inequalities and injustices.

The aim of Deliverable 7.3 is to **identify the factors informing, and the political and electoral consequences of, how regionalist actors frame their demands for territorial empowerment.** The analysis presented here is exploratory in nature. Reiter (2013: 4-5) argues that exploratory research in the social sciences should seek both to evaluate the usefulness of existing explanations of the world and provide new and overlooked explanations. In this report, we thus draw on existing scholarship on regionalist mobilisation to develop a framework for explaining regionalist actors' framing strategies and their political and electoral consequences. We distinguish between three broad sets of factors that may be expected to shape such strategies:

i. **the structural characteristics of peripheries vs. centres** (including cultural features and socioeconomic status of the region);

ii. **opportunities and constraints arising from institutional/political environments** (such as the structure of the political system, being in government, dynamics of party competition and the impact of public opinion); and

iii. **factors internal to regionalist actors themselves** (such as their ideology).

This framework provides the starting point for the empirical analysis presented here and draws on detailed case study reports for each of the WP7 regions. These were compiled on the basis of a total of 55 semi-structured interviews[4] (see Appendix 2) and an analysis of secondary

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[4] The conduct of interviews was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The original intention had been to undertake face to face interviews in each case, and fieldwork had commenced in some cases prior to restrictions on travel and interaction. With such restrictions in place, we sought to conduct interviews virtually wherever possible; however, response rates and interviewee availability were generally lower. As a result, the total number of interviews conducted was lower than had originally been envisaged. There is also variability across cases: at

literature on specific regionalist actors/cases. Following a common structure, each report considered i) to what extent the factors proposed by the explanatory framework explain what territorial demands regionalists purse and how these are framed; and ii) whether any other factors or unexpected patterns of influence could be identified to explain regionalists' territorial demands and frames.

This report provides a comparative analysis of these case study findings. The discussion that follows considers each broad set of factors in turn. Each section starts by outlining the expected impact of each set of factors on regionalist actors' territorial demands and frames, and then proceeds to evaluate their capacity to explain the territorial strategies evident in our cases. We start by considering the impact of structural territorial inequalities on regionalists' framing strategies; however, we find no evidence of a direct linkage between the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the places in which regions mobilise and the content of and shifts over time in the arguments that regionalists use to justify their territorial demands. Instead, our findings evidence the agency of regionalist actors in mobilising territorial differences in political debate. Especially important in this respect are the political contexts in which regionalist actors operate. We thus find political incentives and constraints to be key drivers of regionalists' framing strategies, although the nature and impact of such factors are complex and inter-linked, and shift over time as political contexts change. We also find evidence of the role of ideology, and especially left-right values, in shaping the broad repertoire of frames that regionalists draw on, although here too political factors are found to be more important in determining the scope and salience of different frames.

Evaluating the impact of regionalists' framing strategies on their electoral and political relevance is not straight forward. Decisions about how to frame territorial demands are often driven by the pursuit of electoral/political appeal, and in some cases such strategic choices have increased a regional actor's electoral and/or political relevance. But there is no clear 'winning formula' either, because different constellation of factors in different cases lead to different electoral/political outcomes. We thus conclude that assessments of the factors explaining regionalist actors' framing strategies and their electoral and political consequences, need to be situated in space and time and grounded in the socio-economic, cultural and (especially) political contexts in which such decisions are made. It is only from this perspective that the nature and consequences of regionalist actors' perceptions of spatial inequalities can be fully understood.

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least one interview was conducted for all cases, whilst in some cases the original interview quota was achieved. In the former cases, we sought to engage more widely with the secondary literature on the case to inform our analysis, and to supplement the analysis with the primary sources collected as part of the work undertaken for Deliverable 7.2.

2. Explaining regionalist actors' territorial demands and frames and their political and electoral consequences

2.i. The structural characteristics of peripheries vs. centres

As noted in Deliverable 7.1, it has long been argued that regionalist mobilisation in Western Europe is rooted in the structural differences between peripheries and centres within a state, observed along economic, cultural and political dimensions (e.g. Rokkan and Urwin, 1983; Keating, 1988). The impact of these characteristics on the mobilisation and subsequent electoral performance of regionalist parties has been much studied in the scholarly literature, albeit resulting in different conclusions about the relative importance of uneven economic development and cultural differentiation between the centres and peripheries of states (Gourevitch, 1979; Gordin, 2001; Tronconi, 2005; Fitjar, 2010). Nevertheless, it may, on this basis, be expected that **the structural context within which regionalist actors mobilise may influence the kinds of arguments used by regionalist actors in a given case to justify their territorial demands.**

Several authors have asserted a linkage between the cultural, economic and political characteristics of regions and regionalists' territorial discourses. Some scholars have pointed to the cultural/linguistic features of regionalist actors' external environments. Nagel (2004: 58), for example, observes that whilst Scots Gaelic is very much a minority language in Scotland, Catalan is very widespread in Catalonia; this is seen to contribute to language being a highly salient issue in the latter, where dual identifies – Catalan and Spanish – coexist and are often in tension. From this, we might expect that in regions with their own language, regionalists will place particular emphasis on arguments about linguistic distinctiveness when making the case for territorial change; in our coding scheme, this would equate to the use of the 'linguistic distinctiveness' frame. Tronconi (2005: 88) advances a similar expectation in relation to a territory's historical legacy, where a past experience of territorial autonomy or autonomous political institutions can provide "a legacy of historical memory that can be shared and used in nationalist propaganda" (see also Siroky and Cuffe, 2015). In our coding scheme, this would equate to the use of 'historical distinctiveness' arguments to justify territorial demands.

More recent work has focused on the economic characteristics of sub-state territories. One factor is the economic status of the territory (i.e. whether it is rich or poor) relative to the state as a whole. Dalle Mulle (2017), for example, examines the political discourses of secessionist parties in the relatively wealthy regions (vis-à-vis the state) of Scotland, Flanders, Catalonia and Northern Italy. He argues that economic conditions have shaped the broad contours of regionalist parties' territorial narratives in these places. A shared "nationalism of the rich" discourse is thus rooted in a fundamental set of economic and social grievances in these places and gives rise to a common set of arguments about economic exploitation and political marginalisation. Furthermore, whilst in some of these cases (Scotland and Catalonia), it is

economic status relative to the centre that matters, in others (Flanders and Northern Italy) economic status relative to other parts of the state's is also important; in the Flemish case, for example, "differing economic structures of the two halves of [Belgium, i.e. Flanders and Wallonia] have for a long time entailed divergent interests and agendas" (Dalle Mulle, 2017: 90). In contrast, there is much less research on how being a relatively poorer region may inform the territorial discourses of regionalist actors. The exception here is the work by Massetti and Schakel (2015) who find some evidence of an 'internal colonialism' discourse in such places. Drawing on the work of Hechter (1975), such discourses are expected to denounce the state's unequal distribution of resources between centres and peripheries, leading to uneven economic development and under-investment in the latter.

A further socio-economic factor to consider relates to the presence of other kinds of territorial inequalities, or – as described in Deliverable 2.1 - "the distribution of economic wellbeing" (Fernandez-Vazquez *et al*., 2018a: 7) within sub-state territories. The work undertaken as part of IMAJINE's Work Package 2 has evidenced the presence of important territorial inequalities within regions, in relation to income, poverty, educational inequalities, immigration or ageing (for an overview, see Fernandez-Vazquez *et al*., 2018b). This data shows the presence of such inequalities in several of the cases in our study. However, it is unclear to what extent (and how) these translate into the territorial discourses of regionalist actors. If they matter, one would expect to see these issues cited in support of demands for territorial change, especially through the use of 'social justice' frames that capture such spatial dimensions of economic wellbeing and inequality.

Our findings

a)   Cultural characteristics of regions

Following Fitjar (2010), and as we note in Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al*., 2018: 12-13), there is an indigenous language that is different from the dominant language of the state in most of our cases (the exceptions being Bavaria and Northern Italy). In many of these cases, there has also been an important linguistic dimension to regionalist mobilisation. For example, the defence and promotion of 'their' language was a key motivation in the creation of the Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczé Zrzeszenié (KPZ) in Kashubia and Plaid Cymru (PC) in Wales, whilst the Union Valdôtaine (UV) in Aosta Valley was created in "defence of a peculiar condition of plurilingualism" (UV_1). Even in Bavaria and Northern Italy, there are regional dialects which have historically been incorporated into territorial narratives in both places (on the latter, see Agnew and Brusa, 1999). However, our cases also vary considerably in terms of the usage of the territorial language. For example, whilst in Galicia about 90% of people declare themselves as speakers of Galician (Real Academia Galega, 2004), in Scotland only 1.7% of the population report having some Gaelic language skills (National Records of Scotland, 2015: 6). Some cases are also experiencing important shifts (and especially decline) in minority language use, such as Aosta Valley, Catalonia and Corsica; in the latter, for example, the Corsican language went

from being spoken by 68% of the island's population in 1999 to 28% in 2012 (Moracchini, 2005; Collectivité Territoriale de Corse, 2013: 50). In other places, like Kashubia and Friesland, the role played by language in defining territorial identity is becoming less important; in the former case, for example, it was noted by one interviewee that "language is losing its importance as a determinant of Kashubian identity, and the question of origin, that is to say, family roots and place of birth, is gaining ground" (KPZ_1).

In this variable context, what is striking is **the lack of clear linkage between the presence/status of the territorial language/dialect and regionalist actors' use of frames**. In regionalist actors' territorial discourses in general, we find relatively little use of arguments about 'linguistic diversity' to support claims for territorial change; out of all the frames used in the dataset, these only account for 1.42%; when we narrow this down to only consider the cultural frames used, those citing the need to protect or promote linguistic diversity represent 23.6% of culturally orientated arguments (see Deliverable 7.2, Elias *et al.*, 2020: 68). Beyond this general picture, there is important variation here that should be acknowledged: such frames are more evident on some cases – such as Aosta Valley, Kashubia and Szeklerland – where language is a key dimension of group identification and where concerns about protecting the language are particularly prominent.

However, neither in these specific cases or more generally can the salience of the 'linguistic distinctiveness' frame (and shifts in its visibility over time) be linked directly to shifts in language use. Rather, **the extent to which territorial demands and frames are linked to linguistic issues is better explained by more political factors.** A key consideration here is the extent to which there are already policy provisions in place to protect and advance use of the minority language. Whilst in most of our cases such provisions mean that language is no longer an issue of political contention, in cases where such provisions are absent – such as Szeklerland and Kashubia – demands for political autonomy continue to be linked to language status and/or use. For example, in the former case, calls for greater political autonomy are often framed as a way of securing and widening language rights for the Hungarian minority and where Hungarian is the dominant language in the everyday life of that community. In Kashubia, whilst progress has been made to recognise and promote the Kashubian language since the collapse of communism, regionalist actors disagree about the sufficiency of existing cultural autonomy provisions; Kaszëbskô Jednota (KJ) in particular consistently calls for greater political autonomy in order to further strengthen the Kashubian language (KPZ_1, KPZ_2, KJ_1, KJ_2). Furthermore, we discuss below how political considerations (such as shifting dynamics of party competition, and the popular and/or electoral appeal of such claims) also lead regionalists in several of our cases to downplay cultural (and especially linguistic) arguments. In sum, it is arguably these political pressures, rather than the existence of a distinctive language in and of itself, that informs whether, and the extent to which, language-related arguments feature in regionalists' framing strategies.

As we also note in Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al.*, 2018: 12-13), most of our cases also have experience of past autonomy and/or independence. For example, Scotland was an independent crown until the 1707 Act of Union that led to the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (Keating, 1996), Bavaria was an independent monarchy until 1871, and Szeklerland enjoyed a separate legal status under the rule of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Habsburg Empire and in communist Romania for some time. For many regionalist actors, such historical legacies remain an important part of their nation-building projects. Thus on the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, Winnie Ewing (who was elected as the Scottish National Party (SNP)'s first Member of Parliament in 1967) declared that "the Scottish Parliament, which adjourned on March 25, 1707, is hereby reconvened" (McCrone, 2020: 39). Meanwhile, in 2014, the Catalan government (led by Convergència i Unió (CiU)) created a year-long programme of activity to commemorate the fall of Barcelona (and the subsequent abolition of Catalonia's self-governing institutions) during the War of the Spanish Succession (Balcells, 1996).

However, we find no evidence that these historical legacies translate directly into the kinds of frames used by regionalists to justify their territorial demands. With regard to the former, there is no simple relationship between past territorial status and the demands made by actors in the time period considered by our study. In relation to the frames used, the argument about 'historical distinctiveness' is amongst the least used across our cases; **the experience of past autonomy and/or independence is thus not an important justification for present-day calls for territorial change**. Closer inspection of one case where such frames are present – Bavaria – also serves to confirm that **the fact of having a historical legacy is, in itself, not sufficient to guarantee that history-focused arguments feature prominently in regionalists' framing strategies**. Thus, for example, Bavaria's history has been a consistent point of reference in the Bayernpartei's (BP) territorial narrative and provides the basis for its claim to Bavarian independence (Eichmüller, 1997; Bossaert and Cobbaert, 2013: 187; BP_2). However, the use of 'historical distinctiveness' frames have also fluctuated over time, being particularly prominent in the early 1990s, disappearing and replaced by vaguer references to 'Bavarian identity' from the mid 1990s until the early 2000s, and then returning to the party's discourse from the early 2000s onwards. Driving these shifts are, rather, political factors. In the early 1990s, such an argument was used as part of a broader argument that Bavaria should reconsider being part of the Federal Republic of Germany after re-unification; since the 2000s the re-emergence of this frame was inspired by the party's 50th anniversary and a subsequent process of reflection on the party's goals, as well as by the growing popularity of regionalist movements in other historic European nations such as Scotland and Catalonia (BP_1, BP, 2). This example suggests that whilst the historic experience of self-government is a discursive resource available to regionalist actors, the extent to which this is used to make the case for territorial change is informed by more contextual political factors.

b) Socioeconomic status of regions

We also summarise in Deliverable 7.1 the variability across our cases with regard to their economic situation relative to the rest of the state. Table 1 below provides a more detailed overview of these regions' GDP per capita relative to the state average.

Table 1 Regional GDP per capita, as % of state GDP per capita (2007-2018)[1]

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Aosta Valley	132%	131%	129%	133%	133%	138%	132%	133%	132%	133%	134%	136%
Friesland	73.5%	71.9%	71.1%	71.3%	73.2%	73.6%	72.4%	73.4%	72.4%	70.5%	69.8%	69.4%
Corsica	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	84.4%	83.2%	82.0%	82.2%
Sardinia	76.1%	75.9%	76.4%	75.4%	74.8%	77.1%	75.4%	75.7%	78.1%	74.4%	73.1%	74.2%
Catalonia	123.0%	119.0%	117.4%	118.3%	117.6%	120.1%	120.1%	122.5%	124.7%	123.2%	121.0%	120.3%
Scotland	99.1%	99.2%	99.8%	98.4%	98.9%	100.6%	101.5%	102.2%	101.1%	96.3%	95.2%	95.2%
Bavaria[2]	107.1%	103.9%	104.0%	105.6%	107.2%	108.5%	107.8%	109.3%	111.3%	110.5%	110.1%	109.8%
Wales	78.3%	74.3%	74.8%	75.1%	76.5%	77.9%	77.6%	76.7%	78.6%	78.0%	76.8%	77.0%
Galicia	89.8%	89.1%	88.8%	90.0%	89.5%	90.6%	91.0%	91.7%	93.6%	92.3%	91.5%	91.7%
Northern Italy[3]	121.4%	118.5%	115.7%	117.7%	118.3%	118.8%	119.1%	120.8%	123.0%	121.1%	119.9%	120.0%
Kashubia[4]	NA	NA	NA	97.5%	97.6%	100.0%	98.3%	98.3%	100.5%	99.5%	98.0%	98.6%
Szeklerland[5]	102.8%	92.3%	91.3%	93.0%	90.2%	98.6%	95.1%	95.3%	97.4%	97.6%	96.3%	97.0%

Source: Eurostat.
Notes:
[1] The selected time period reflects the availability of the Eurostat data, and which begins in 2007.
[2] Data for Bavaria are calculated based on the average of the results of its NUTS 2 regions (7 in total).
[3] Data for Northern Italy are calculated as an average of the data for Veneto, Lombardy and Piemonte regions.
[4] Data for Kashubia are those of Pomorskie region
[5] Data for Szeklerland are those of Centru region.
[6] Relative status defined as follows: rich if a region has a GDP per capita of more than 105% of the state's GDP per capita; average if a region has a GDP per capita of more than 95% and less than 105% of the state's GDP per capita; poor if a region has a GDP per capita of less than 95% of the state's GDP per capita.

According to this data, four of our case study regions (Aosta Valley, Catalonia, Bavaria and Northern Italy) can be considered to be 'rich' regions. Five regions (Friesland, Corsica, Sardinia, Wales and Galicia) are 'poor' according to this data. A further three regions (Scotland, Kashubia and Szeklerland) are considered 'average' in the sense that there is no significant or consistent difference in their economic status relative to the state for the time period considered.

To some extent, we find evidence that being richer than the state provides the context for what Dalle Mulle (2017) refers to as a discourse of a "nationalism of the rich" (see above). For example, our analysis confirms the presence in the Lega Nord's (LN) territorial discourse of arguments relating to economic exploitation of the rich North by the poor South, mostly to underline the typical northern characteristics of efficiency, productivity, in contrast with the laziness and wasteful attitudes of Rome and of the southerners. In claiming fiscal federalism, for example, the party argued that having control of the region's own resources was the only way to improve services: "Padania's taxes should remain in Padania, in order to improve

infrastructure, services, and our people's security" (LN, 2008: no page number). Indeed, this socio-economic context is identified by one interviewee as a defining feature of the party's distinctiveness: "our strong identity is not a cultural or linguistic identity, it is a socio-economic one" (LN_1).

A similar discourse is evident in other richer regions. In the case of Catalonia, for example, references to so-called 'fiscal plundering' (in reference to the region's sustained fiscal deficit) are made by some regionalist actors (like Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Omnium Cultural (OC)) during the 2000s, although these often take a softer tone and are linked to demands to reduce the fiscal deficit resulting from the territorial distribution of resources. Similarly, in the case of the Aosta Valley, and in line with that observed by Massetti and Sandri (2012), the UV has increasingly shifted from a discourse defined by cultural themes to one that can be described as a 'selfishness of the affluent'. As an interviewee explained:

> In the more recent years, the regionalism has become mainly a defensive regionalism of our economic and societal achievements, not just of defence of the wealth. It is the defence of a model of development that has given great results such as the increase of the levels of life and the economic structure of the region (UV_ 1).

The significance of being a 'richer' region should not, however, be overstated. In the LN case, for example, its arguments about economic exploitation featured alongside other more political themes such as criticism of the Italian state's inefficient bureaucracy and the corruption of the political class; together, these responded to public discontent with the socio-economic and political status quo: "we gave voice to something that already existed...the Lega gave them political representation" (LN_1). Indeed, the resonance of such arguments with public opinion were a key source of the LN's electoral appeal during the 1980s and 1990s (Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro, 2000: 84; Diamanti, 1993: 119), pointing to the political instrumentality of the use of such economic arguments. Moreover, whilst the economic data suggest the relative stability of Northern Italy's economic status, the LN's use of socio-economic arguments declines over time, and in tandem with a shift in the LN's territorial demands away from independence and/or federalism, towards a much vaguer "sovereigntist" position. As we argue below, these shifts in frames and territorial demands were informed by the party's changing political and electoral ambitions under the new leadership of Matteo Salvini, and who aimed to broaden its appeal beyond Northern Italy (and indeed to reach out to voters across Italy). In Catalonia and Bavaria, whilst similar discourses anchored in the region's socio-economic status are to be found, they are minoritarian (with other socio-economic and (especially) political frames being significantly more important).

In relatively poorer regions (Friesland, Corsica, Sardinia, Wales and Galicia), the evidence of the impact of socio-economic status on regionalist actors' choice of frames is more complex. On the one hand, we find mixed evidence of an "internal colonialism" discourse as expected by Massetti and Schakel (2015). Such a narrative is completely absent in Friesland, and only

marginally used in the Corsican case. In Galicia, such a theme featured in the Bloque Nacionalista Galego's (BNG) discourse in the 1980s – with colonialism identified as the cause of the region's economic backwardness and posited as a justification for "freedom for Galicia" (Máiz and Ares, 2018); however, from the 1990s onwards and as the party sought to broaden its electoral appeal, the party's more moderate claim for Galician autonomy in a 'pluri-national Spain' was increasingly framed in political terms (and especially in terms of the Galician nation's sovereignty to decide for itself on how it is governed). Socio-economic frames, when used, were articulated more in terms of the damaging policy approaches of the Spanish state and the EU rather than relative economic status *per* se. In Sardinia, as in Galicia, economic grievances were especially important in regionalist mobilisation from the 1950s to the 1980s, and especially the idea of the exploitation of Sardinia's economic and agricultural resources and the lack of consideration given by state-wide policy to the socio-economic specificities of the region (Pala, 2016: 93). However, the idea has declined in salience in the Partito Sardo D'Azione's (PSdAz) discourse over time, even though it remains a key theme for its competitor within the regionalist political space, the Sardigna Natzione Indipendentzia (SNI): "The relationship between Sardinia and Italy is not discriminatory, it is a relationship of domination" (SNI_1). In Wales, such an argument has become increasingly salient within PC in recent years, with the party's current leader, Adam Price, being its clearest proponent; he has thus characterised Wales as "a post-colonial country still waiting to be decolonised" (Price, 2009: no page number). In sum, the salience of 'internal colonialism' frames has waxed and waned over time, in spite of the relative stability of these regions' economic under-performance over time.

We also find some evidence that objective measures of a region's economic status do not always coincide with popular perceptions of relative economic status. In the case of Szeklerland, for example, whilst the data in Table 1 suggests there is no significant or consistent difference in their economic status relative to the state, two interviewees from the Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (RMDSZ) and the Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt (EMNP) stated that it is a widespread perception in the Romanian public that Szeklerland is a poor region reliant on central state funding (RMDSZ 1; EMNP 1). Such a perception informs their framing of demands for greater political autonomy, with both parties frequently arguing that the region has been disadvantaged by the central state. Accordingly, both interviewees justified their demand for political autonomy in Szeklerland by the need for a fairer regional allocation of state funds and greater competencies to decide on how to use these funds.

A further confirmation of the limited explanatory capacity of a region's relative economic status derives from the fact that we find some socio-economic arguments in use across most of our cases, regardless of their socio-economic status. Most striking in this respect is the common and increasing use of social justice frames across regions, both in the form of very general arguments that view social justice as a goal to be achieved and more concrete ones that refer specific welfare or wellbeing policy challenges (see Elias *et al.*, 2020: 61). A similar

consistency is found in the use of arguments about economic prosperity and (albeit not as frequently used) socio-economic distinctiveness and territorial cohesion.

A region's socio-economic status thus has limited capacity for explaining how regionalist actors frame their territorial demands: whilst it may provide the broad parameters for regionalist actors' territorial discourses, it cannot fully account for them. The extent to which territorial discourses are a function of levels of intra-regional territorial inequalities is less easy to disentangle. On the one hand, it is not possible to establish a correspondence between the kinds and degrees of intra-regional territorial inequalities revealed by the data from Work Package 2 (Fernandez-Vazquez *et al.*, 2018b) and the types of frames used by regionalist actors in our cases. On the other hand, there is a clear resonance between many of the issues regionalist actors invoke in their political documents, and the dimensions of territorial inequalities identified in that data. This is evidenced, for example, by demands in many cases for greater self-rule or policy intervention in relation to welfare, health and education policies in order to tackle what are perceived to be particular societal inequalities in these areas. As noted above, the growing use over time of social justice frames across most of our cases is also indicative of regionalist actors' desire to tackle perceived territorial inequalities and injustices; such issues become especially important in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis (see discussion below). What is striking, however, is that in both respects, these aspects of "economic wellbeing" (Fernandez-Vazquez *et al.*, 2018a: 7) are consistently conceived in centre-periphery terms, e.g. in terms of the inequalities facing the citizens of the territory vis-à-vis those living elsewhere in the state. In this way, whilst regionalist actors are undoubtedly concerned with inequality at the level of individual citizens, they politicise these issues within the framework of sub-state vs state spatial relations, and advance 'their' territory's empowerment as the solution to tackling these.

Based on the discussion above, we thus find that **structural characteristics of regions – the existence of a minority language or a history of past autonomy/independence, or its relative economic status - cannot fully account for regionalist actors' territorial discourses**. Whilst these dimensions of territorial inequality are present and provide the context in which regionalists mobilise, these do not necessarily translate into the arguments used by regionalists to justify their territorial demands. More important in this respect are other (especially political) factors as determinants of how regionalists choose to frame their territorial projects. The next sections consider such factors in more detail.

2.ii. Incentives and constraints posed by institutional and political environments

As noted above, a second set of external constraints on regionalist actors' framing strategies is expected to derive from specific features of the political system within which these actors operate. These relate to the institutions that structure territorial relations within the state, how actors interact with each other within these structures, and the extent to which

regionalists' framing strategies resonate with broader popular concerns and priorities. In this section, we consider each of these factors in turn.

Territorial structure of the political system

The core goal of regionalist actors is to empower the territory that they represent in relation to higher levels of government. The ways in which demands for territorial change are framed will thus inevitably be defined in relation to existing territorial structures, which need to be reformed or re-structured in some way that better enables the territory in question to protect/advance its identity and/or interests. **Regionalist actors' territorial discourses are therefore expected to be strongly defined in relation to, and with the aim of overcoming, the constitutional/institutional reality within which these actors operate at any given moment in time.**

What exactly this 'reality' is will vary between cases and actors and will reflect perceptions at any given time of how extant frameworks facilitate or constrain regionalists' territorial goals. For example, in Corsica, traditional clans' monopoly on representation within the French parliament, and the absence of a regional tier of government before 1982, provided the context for moderate Corsican nationalists to strongly denounce the island's political marginalisation and demand 'an internal statute of autonomy' for the Corsican nation within a 'democratic and progressive Europe of the Peoples' (Hepburn and Elias, 2011: 866). Dalle Mulle (2017) finds similar evidence of a discourse of "political marginalisation" amongst independentist parties in Scotland, Northern Italy, Flanders and Catalonia. In these places, justifications for secession are characterised by "a general sense of neglect, the idea of being different and having divergent interests from the rest of the country, have been sufficient to provide a breeding ground for these parties to formulate their arguments and obtain substantial support" (ibid., 154).

Our findings

As we summarise in Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al.*, 2018: 12), our cases provide variation in terms of the kinds of models adopted by the state to manage territorial diversity within its borders (Basile, 2019: 28-34). For the period 1990-2018, our cases thus include unitary states (where powers and competencies are not shared across territorial authorities, and political authority is concentrated at the central, national level); decentralised states (i.e. political systems resulting from top-down, reversible processes of decentralization in which the central government has transferred powers and resources to sub-national levels) and federal states (where the division of power between regional/state levels is specified and guaranteed by the constitution, where territorial interests are formally represented at the level of the state, and where a constitutional court adjudicates on the exercise of power between different territorial levels). A key finding of our analysis in Deliverable 7.2 (Elias *et al.,* 2020: 49), however, is the strong use of the 'dissatisfaction' frame - capturing arguments expressing discontent with the territorial status quo - across most of our cases and regardless of the territorial model of state

in place. However, specific expressions of this dissatisfaction assumed myriad forms, with the territorial status quo denounced for being *inter alia* un-democratic, corrupt, inefficient, exploitative, unfair, unjust or prejudicial. We also found evidence of such a frame often featuring alongside arguments attributing blame for the territorial status quo.

This finding arguably reflects the fact that regionalist actors, by their very nature, exist to challenge and change the territorial status quo (De Winter, 1998). On the one hand, the articulation of dissatisfaction frames has reflected specific characteristics of regionalists' political environment, as evidenced by the persistent critique of corruption and clientelism in the narratives of Corsican nationalists and the Northern Italian LN (with reference to the clans controlling island politics in the former case, and the perceived dominance of Southern Italian interests in central state institutions in the latter). We also find dissatisfaction frames used in cases where calls for modifying the status quo have not been met, with such arguments used to justify a range of territorial demands. The versatility of such an argument is most clearly evidenced in the Spanish context: arguments about the failings of the territorial status quo have been a consistent theme for both Catalan and Galician regionalists over the period of analysis and have been linked to different territorial demands over time and in both places. For example, Spain's "state of autonomies" territorial model is enshrined in the 1978 Spanish Constitution, and recognises the rights of the so-called "historic nationalities" of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia to enhanced political autonomy. In practice, however, the implementation of this model during the 1990s and early 2000s by successive Spanish governments was interpreted by regionalist parties in these regions as a threat to their rights of self-government. Such a perception informed Catalan and Galician regionalist parties' territorial re-positioning during these years, with our data confirming their move away from demands for more self-rule within Spain to more radical calls of fundamental territorial reform and "another state model" (Elias and Mees, 2017: 144). In Catalonia in particular, frustrated attempts at enhancing the region's self-rule in the late 2000s contributed to territorial radicalisation in more recent years. Growing mobilisation in favour of Catalan independence has thus been framed in terms of increasing dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo, albeit increasingly alongside arguments about the lack of a democratic process for recognising the sovereignty of the Catalan people (and their right to decide on how they are governed). The Catalan crisis has also had repercussions for regionalists elsewhere, with one BNG interviewee justifying his own party's recent calls for an independent Galician Republic on the basis that it provided further evidence that the Spanish state was no longer fit for purpose: "The state's structure is in crisis as a result of the Catalan case. Which affects, by extension, the other unresolved national conflicts in the Spanish state" (BNG_2).

One might expect, on this basis, that where regionalist actors' territorial demands are met, a decline in arguments expressing dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo might be expected. We find little evidence of such a pattern, however. For example, we have three cases that have experienced a major change in the territorial model of the state during the period of analysis. Decentralisation reforms in Poland and the UK led to the creation of a new regional

tier of government in Kashubia in 1998, and in Scotland and Wales in 1999. In each case, this satisfied key demands made by regionalist actors in the years prior to the reforms. Thus in Kashubia, the newly created Pomeranian voivodeship had the desired effect of "bringing together all Kashubians" (KPZ_2) as opposed to being divided between three voivodships up until that point. In the UK, calls for devolution were the most prominent in the political documents of both the SNP and PC in the mid 1990s, and the exclusive demand of other campaigning organisations like Ymgyrch Senedd i Gymru (YSG); these calls were framed both in terms of dissatisfaction with the functioning of the unitary British state and as a solution to the perceived 'democratic deficit' in UK politics.

However, whilst such decentralisation reforms had the short-term effect of shifting regionalists' attention onto working within the new regional structures, dissatisfaction also re-emerges in these new institutional contexts. In Kashubia, such an argument was taken up primarily by a new organisation –KJ - created in 2011 to argue for greater recognition and rights for the Kashubian nation, as well as further regional self-government (KJ_1, KJ_2). In Wales, PC interviewees recalled the way in which the limitations of the devolved arrangements became clear very quickly after 1999, re-affirming the party's focus on demanding a parliament with legislative powers as the model of self-rule (PC_1, PC_2, CY_1). Interestingly, the way in which this demand was framed was consistent with the pre-devolution period, with arguments expressing dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo and the democratic quality of the existing arrangements predominating. Moreover, in both Wales and Scotland, both PC and (especially) the SNP have consistently conceived of devolution as a step on the path towards their ultimate goal of Welsh/Scottish independence; from this perspective, anything less has inevitably been insufficient.

A similar trend towards discursive stability, rather than change, is found in other cases. Thus in the Italian case, constitutional reform in 2001 led to a further decentralisation of powers to the country's regions. In Northern Italy, the LN responded by moderating its territorial position, shifting from independence to calling for even greater self-rule; however, it justified this new demand by drawing on well-established arguments to the effect that regionalism offered the only way to overcome the structural inefficiencies of the Italian system and to enhance the quality of the democratic institutions. In the Aosta Valley (a region which already enjoyed high levels of self-rule as a result of its special status in the Italian constitution), the UV adopted responded more cautiously, with a discourse nevertheless re-packaging a core concern to protect its existing powers because "very often these reforms may raise difficulties for the differentiated regionalism of the special statute regions" (UV_1). In Sardinia, whilst the PSDAZ perceived the reform positively as advancing towards its ultimate goal of a federal Italian state (PSDAZ_2), the SNI considered it as further proof of the need for an independent Sardinia: "…any reform that does not recognise the problem of the Sardinian nation for us does not change anything" (SNI_1).

The territorial structure of the state thus provides a key focus for regionalist actors' territorial demands, with these being defined in relation to and with the aim of overcoming the territorial status quo. The way in which regionalists frame such demands, however, is remarkably consistent across our cases, regardless of the nature of the territorial model in place: frames articulating dissatisfaction with existing ways of organising territorial relationships reflect the core business of this set of actors, with specific variants of this argument reflecting context-specific grievances in different places. In this respect, regionalists share a fundamental conviction that 'their' territory is somehow losing out from the existing political union (Sorens, 2008: 310). It is arguably other political pressures that dictate how salient such frames are in a regionalist actor's territorial discourse, and what other frames are drawn upon to complement this core theme of regionalist mobilisation in all of our cases.

The opportunities and constraints of contesting elections and entering government

Many regionalist actors, and regionalist political parties in particular, have sought to advance their territorial interests through contesting elections (at regional, state and/or European levels) and entering government at the regional and (less frequently) at the state level. The extent to which regionalists have been successful in making the shift from 'protest to power' varies significantly from place to place (Elias and Tronconi, 2011a). Nevertheless, for this sub-set of regionalist actors, the territorial politics literature leads us to expect that **engaging in electoral politics and aspiring (and managing) to enter government office will impact on regionalist parties' territorial strategies.** Most evidenced is the influence on these actors' territorial demands. Vote-seeking and office-seeking regionalist parties have thus been shown to moderate their territorial demands, whilst a similar trend has been linked to parties entering government (Elias, 2009b; Elias and Tronconi, 2011a,b; Bochsler and Szöcsik, 2013). The literature says little, however, about how such electoral/political aspirations may also impact these actors' framing strategies. That such goals may have a bearing on such strategies is suggested by Elias (2015: 87), who considers the impact of electoral decline on ERC's territorial discourse during the 1980s. She notes that ERC's loss of votes and representation in the Spanish Congress in the 1986 election constituted "an external shock" that led to substantial strategic re-alignment over the next decade; the party replaced calls for the expansion of Catalan autonomy with a commitment to Catalan independence, with an initial framing of secession in terms of the defence of Catalan identity giving way to more relevant "quality-of-life arguments grounded in long-standing commitments to equality and social justice" (ibid).

Our findings

The majority of regionalist actors in our analysis are political parties who have sought to advance their territorial agendas by contesting elections in order to gain representation in political institutions at regional, state and European levels, either directly themselves or as part of electoral coalitions with other actors. Whilst in Deliverable 7.1 we use this electoral criterion to differentiate between regionalist parties and civil society organisations, in practice some

civil society organisations in our study have indirectly participated in elections periodically; this is the case, for example, for members or ex-members of the ANC, OC and Sumate in Catalonia who formed part of the Junts x Catalunya (JxC) electoral list in the 2015 regional elections.

We consider, firstly, the impact of competing in elections on regionalist actors' territorial discourses. We find evidence in our cases of the way in which electoral incentives can shape not only regionalist actors' territorial demands, but also their use of frames. For example, in both the Welsh and Galician cases, regionalist parties during the 1990s focused on broadening their electoral appeal and adjusted their territorial discourses in an attempt to make themselves more attractive to voters. In PC's case, this involved making a stronger case for territorial decentralisation and positioning itself as a future of party of Welsh government (PC_1, CY_1); the party thus adopted detailed proposals for a Parliament for Wales and emphasised the concrete policy difference it (and by extension the party) could make to people's lives (Plaid Cymru, 1997). Such a strategy helped establish PC's credibility as a party that put Wales's interests first, and helped it achieve its best ever electoral performance in the first elections to the newly established National Assembly for Wales in 1999 (28.4% of the vote, compared to 9.9% of votes in the 1997 general election (Elias, 2009a: 47). The BNG, in contrast, moderated its territorial demands, abandoning its calls in the 1980s for 'national liberation' at the hands of the Galician working class (Barreiro Rivas, 2003: 116-21) and calling instead for a greater self-government for Galicia within the framework of a "Spanish pluri-national state" (Bloque Nacionalista Galego, 1993: 5). As noted above, such a strategy was also accompanied by a shift in frames away from those referencing Galicia's status as an internal colony of Spain, to an assertion of the Galician nation's sovereignty and its right to decide on its governing arrangements. This discursive shift has been credited with enabling the BNG to improve its electoral standing in Galicia, and its representation in the Galician parliament, during the 1990s (Elias, 2009b; Máiz, 2003).

Secondly, we consider the impact of being in government on regionalist actors' territorial discourses. Amongst the regionalist political parties in our cases, there is considerable variation in terms of experiences of being in government. Only the Northern Italian LN and the RMDSZ in Szeklerland have been in government at the state level during the period of our analysis. At the regional level, some parties (like the UV and CiU (and its successors)) have been in regional government for most of the period of analysis, whilst only the BP and ANOVA (and the latter's various electoral coalitions) have never succeeded in crossing the threshold of sub-state government; the remainder (including ERC, LN, BNG, PC, SNP, Fryske Nasjonale Partij (FNP) and moderate and radical Corsican regionalist parties) have shifted between being parties of opposition and parties in regional government.

In several of these cases, the new gains in electoral support resulting from the moderation of territorial discourses (see above) provided new opportunities for regionalist actors to enter into government, especially at the regional level. The case of ERC in Catalonia is illustrative of such a trend. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the party sought to broaden its electoral

appeal by calling for an increase in Catalan self-government rather than independence, and in order to achieve social justice and welfare reform. Such a discourse contributed to the party's improved electoral performance during this period, and after the 2003 Catalan election, provided for sufficient ideological common ground with the state-wide Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya and Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds to form a left-wing regional governing coalition committed to reforming Catalonia's Statue of Autonomy (Elias, 2015: 88; Obradors *et al*., 2007).

We find evidence of the impact of being in government on regionalist actors' framing strategies in some of our cases. One such case is that of the SNP, which became a governing party in Scotland in 2007 (and still retains this position). From this position, the SNP sought to build support for its long-term goal of independence by demonstrating its capacity for 'good government' and building confidence in independence as "a natural progression" (McAngus, 2016: 11). A key part of this strategy was to frame this territorial project in terms of the kind of country that Scotland could become, namely a more prosperous, just and peaceful society; framing independence in such socio-economic terms was a deliberate strategy for making Scottish independence more relevant to Scottish voters (Elias, 2019: 11, 13). In this way, the SNP sought to use its governing status to build support for independence incrementally and on the basis of its track record in office.

We also find evidence across a larger number of cases of the shifting salience of particular frames as a result of being in/out of government. We note above the particular prominence of arguments expressing dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo in these actors' territorial discourses; entering government often results in a marked decline of such arguments, whilst regionalist parties that have exited government often return to such rhetoric from the opposition. There are several examples of such an impact of shifting status within the political system. Firstly, the LN formed part of a state-wide coalition with various right-wing parties in 1994. One interviewee described the compromise that was reached in order to do so as follows:

> The agreement of 1994 was not easy, and in particular that with [Alleanza Nazionale (AN)]…We finally found a synthesis that allowed us to form a government, and that was to put together the federalist demands of the LN with the presidentialism promoted by AN. In other words, the direct election of the president of the Republic that strengthens national unity, alongside a reinforcement of territorial demands. This was the agreement that joined together two political forces with two different perspectives, but a common goal: changing the state (LN_1).

However, the party eventually withdrew from this government out of fear for the erosion of its distinctive political profile and electoral standing (Elias and Tronconi, 2011b: 514), a move that was followed by the adoption of a new secessionist strategy based on a demand for an independent Padania and a return to traditional frames whereby the party presented itself as a party fighting against the corrupt system of "Roman" parties (Bulli and Tronconi, 2011: 57).

Similarly in 2011, the LN's exit from central government allowed it to re-assert its critique of a centralist and unaccountable Italian central government that systematically favoured the South to the disadvantage of the Northern economy (Dalle Mulle, 2017: 99). Secondly, in Galicia, the BNG's exit from regional government in 2009 was the catalyst for internal discussions about how to re-connect with the Galician electorate, eventually leading the party to abandon its goal of Galician autonomy within a Spanish pluri-national state and call for the creation of a "Galician Republic" (Bloque Nacionalista Galego, 2016b: 6). But this shift of status also led to a strong re-emergence of frames articulating dissatisfaction with, and attributing blame for, the territorial status quo. A similar increase in use of such frames is found amongst other regionalist parties out of government.

In these examples, however, as well as in other cases where regionalist actors have lost their governing status at different times (e.g. CiU and ERC in Catalonia, PC in Wales) other factors are also found to intervene at the moment of exiting government office to shape shifts in framing strategies. These include dynamics of party competition and patterns in public opinion, as well pressures from within the regionalist actors themselves. These are considered in more detail below.

Competition with other political actors

Most of the territorial politics literature has focused on the competition between political parties in two respects: between regionalist and state-wide political parties, and (to a lesser extent) between regionalist parties themselves. However, recent studies have pointed to the broader scope of competitive dynamics on territorial issues, where the actors implicated include civil society actors as well as political parties and where the implications can be seen on regionalist actors' framing strategies as well as their territorial demands (Crameri, 2015; Keating and McEwan, 2017; Della Porta *et al.*, 2017; Basta, 2018). This literature leads us to expect the impact of these complex dynamics of interaction to play out as follows.

i. Competition between regionalist and state-wide political actors

There is considerable evidence of the way in which the responses of state-wide parties and their regional branches to the territorial demands and arguments of their regionalist counterparts have forced the latter to shift their territorial discourses. Such responses have tended to take one of two forms. Firstly, regionalists' territorial strategies have been constrained by state-wide actors adopting accommodative strategies (i.e. they make similar demands and justify them in a similar way, see Meguid, 2001: 10) with the aim of undermining regionalists' 'ownership' of such an agenda. The incentive for state-wide parties to behave in such a way has been especially strong in contexts where they (and especially their regional branches in sub-state territories) have faced strong electoral/political pressure from regionalist actors (Alonso, 2012; Detterbeck and Hepburn, 2018). It is a strategy that poses a dilemma for regionalist actors, who may find that their territorial demands and/or discourse is no longer distinctive and creates a pressure to differentiate themselves from their state-wide

competitors. In response, regionalist actors may modify their territorial demands as well as how they frame them, in an attempt to make a distinctive case for territorial empowerment.

Secondly, some state-wide parties have adopted adversarial strategies (i.e. they advocate different territorial demands and justifications for them, see Meguid, 2001: 10) in order to emphasise disagreement with, and opposition to, the regionalist narrative. As with state-wide actors' accommodative strategies, this may have implications both for regionalist actors' territorial demands and how these are justified. For example, in secessionist conflicts, the way in which advocates and opponents of independence frame and counter-frame this issue has been found to impact on evolution and eventual outcome of such debates (Della Porta *et al.*, 2017; Muro and Woertz, 2017).

Our findings

Our analysis finds that dynamics of party competition between regionalist and state-wide actors matter in most of our cases, but in many different ways. When state-wide actors **have developed an accommodative strategy, we find evidence in some places of regionalist actors responding by changing not only their territorial demands, but also the frames they use to justify these.** In Galicia during the 1990s and early 2000s, for example, the Galician branch of the right-wing Partido Popular emphasised a discourse of Galician national difference (based on identity, cultural and linguistic markers) in order to close off this political space for the BNG. This was a key factor in the BNG shifting its own territorial discourse during this period to emphasise political and socio-economic justifications for enhanced political autonomy for Galicia (Máiz and Ares, 2018). Our data confirm that arguments about the policy and efficiency gains of greater self-government, and the need for institutions and resources that can better focus on "the socio-economic peculiarities of our country" (e.g. Bloque Nacionalista Galego, 2004: 47) become much more prevalent over this period.

In post-devolution Wales, the Welsh Labour Party also re-branded itself as a 'Welsh' party, which in this case meant committing to increasing Welsh self-government and pursing more left-wing policies than the UK Labour Party. One response from PC was to clarify its own territorial aspirations by replacing its vague commitment to "full national status in Europe" to Welsh independence. But finding distinctive and relevant arguments to make the case for this long-term goal has proved a lot more difficult, and this is arguably a key factor in explaining PC's on-going struggle to challenge Welsh Labour's electoral hegemony in Wales. This challenge is summarised by current PC leader, Adam Price, as follows:

> [The] creation of Welsh Labour was a masterstroke. I think the reason for the success of the Labour Party is not to do with a re-invention of social democracy but because they completely stole Plaid's intellectual territory. [The] 'One Wales' [coalition agreement between PC and Labour in 2007] then allowed them to continue down that road, ironically, in many ways and Plaid hasn't fully been able to recover, re-position itself since then, so it was a very successful re-brand. (Eirug, forthcoming 2021: no page number)

When state-wide parties have adopted adversarial strategies, we also find evidence in some places of regionalist actors responding by changing their framing strategies. In Catalonia, for example, the state-wide parties' attitudes towards the 'Catalan question' in recent years has informed how a growing number of regionalist actors have framed their calls for Catalan independence. The electoral breakthrough of Ciudadans in the 2006 Catalan elections was arguably a key development in this respect; the party introduced a new territorial discourse into that political space, one that adopted a strong anti-Catalan and pro-Spanish position and advocated re-centralisation (Gomez, 2012; Rico and Lineira, 2014). In response, in subsequent years other state-wide parties have also adopted a more hard line approach to territorial conflict in Catalonia, including refusing to support the holding of a legal referendum on Catalan independence. In such a context, regionalists' convergence around the demand for independence has been increasingly justified using arguments about democracy, both in terms of framing a referendum as a democratic act and criticising the Spanish state for overseeing a reduction in democracy (see also Dalle Mulle, 2017: 41). The growth of Spanish nationalism amongst state-wide parties is also regularly denounced by the BNG in its territorial discourse, which it regularly blames for the "context of political crisis within the state", and in response to which the party has concluded that "the best way to confront [this] is by going down the route of sovereignty" (BNG_2).

ii. Competition between regionalist actors

At the same time, competition between regionalist actors has been shown to create a pressure on individual actors to distinguish themselves from their rivals. Most scholars have emphasised the ways in which regionalists have responded by adopting more or less radical territorial positions (Massetti, 2009: 516; Massetti and Schakel, 2016; Elias, 2015: 87). But more recent work has also provided evidence of the impact of inter-regionalist dynamics on these actors' framing strategies. For example, Della Porta *et al.*, (2017: 210-11) argue that whilst the Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir (PDD) first pushed the "right to decide" frame in the context of attempts to reform Catalonia's statue of autonomy in the mid 2000s, this – and its linkage with arguments about achieving social justice – resonated with and were taken up by other political parties and civil society organisations in subsequent years, and became inextricably linked with the escalation of territorial demands in the form of calls for Catalonia's independence from Spain. Dynamics of competition between civil society organisations may also thus be expected to have a bearing on actors' framing choices.

Our findings

We summarise in Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al.*, 2018: 12-13) the variability across our cases in terms of the number and type of actors within the regionalist movement for the period 1990-2018. In only two cases – Northern Italy and Friesland – is this movement composed of a single regionalist actor, namely the LN and FNP respectively. In the remaining cases, the regionalist movement is composed of multiple actors, and these are the focus of our discussion here. But

we also find in these places considerable variation in terms of the composition and evolution of this intra-movement plurality over time, with different implications for regionalist actors' framing strategies.

In two cases – Bavaria and Catalonia– some regionalist actors have been present, and have competed with each other, for the duration of the period analysed. In Bavaria, for example, the BP has been faced by the electorally hegemonic Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (CSU), which has governed Bavaria for decades and frequently participated in federal governments with its sister-party the Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU). The history of the BP and the CSU is one of "fierce competition" (Sturm, 2018: 92). Given that "we aim at the same electoral groups" (BP_2), the presence of the CSU has inevitably informed the BP's territorial strategies over time. In particular, the CSU has successfully established itself as a strong defender of Bavarian identity and interests within the German federal system (Hepburn, 2008). In response, the BP has sought to differentiate itself by adopting a more radical pro-independence position, but also by consistently framing this goal by blaming the CSU for its failures to stand up for Bavaria regional and federal politics. However, such a discourse has had minimal impact on the BP's electoral appeal; it remains a marginal political force in Bavarian politics in the face of CSU's highly "efficient regional identity politics" which reconciles the defence of territorial interests with a federal role for Bavaria (Sturm, 2018: 91).

In Catalonia, in contrast, dynamics of competition between electorally and politically unequal regionalist parties have had different consequences. In the 1990s, CiU enjoyed a hegemonic position within the regionalist political space and prioritised enhancing Catalan self-government within Spain; this led ERC to downplay its secessionist ambitions and focus on calls for more self-rule in the shorter term, but also to make the case for territorial reform with distinctive left-orientated arguments about social justice that were little used by their rival. Since the 2000s, the dynamics of competition between these two actors have become considerably more complex in the context of much greater contestation within the regionalist movement (discussed further below), and as they compete with each other to 'own' the issue of Catalan independence. The growing hegemony of ERC within this movement and its re-assertion of its commitment to independence, generated new pressures on CiU's own territorial discourse; this was acknowledged by one interviewee as follows: "we start with the 'right to decide' in 2010, then Catalonia as a 'new state in Europe'…We have gone from neutral terms…to everybody saying a social and just Republic, absolutely left, with ERC's colours!" (CiU_2: 54). CiU's response is evident not only in the appearance of demands for Catalan independence during this period, but also a replacement of frames emphasising territorial cohesion and efficiency with that advocating Catalan sovereignty and the people's 'right to decide'.

In most other cases, intra-movement dynamics of competition become important with the appearance of new regionalist actors. As predicted by Massetti (2009: 516) and others, this often prompts a radicalisation in territorial demands. For example, in Sardinia, the emergence

of new pro-independence parties from the mid 1990s led PSDAZ to increase the prominence of demands for independence in its own election programmes after 2001. Similarly in Galicia, the creation of ANOVA in 2012 with an unambiguously secessionist programme placed pressure on the BNG to shift its own position, leading the latter to call in 2016 for the creation of a Galician Republic (Bloque Nacionalista Galego, 2016b: 6). But radicalisation does not always mean the emergence in secessionist claims; in the Szeklerland, increasing intra-ethnic competition during the 20002 led to a growth in calls for greater political autonomy, in contrast to the historical emphasis of the RMDSZ on calls for policy intervention by the state in the territory.

However, we also find evidence that competition between regionalist actors informs the selection of frames used to justify territorial demands. For example, we note above in relation to the Catalan case, how CiU has increasingly adopted some of the arguments used by its rival, ERC, to make the case for Catalan independence. This is in the context of a profusion of pro-independence organisations since the mid-2000s, which have significantly impacted the terms of the debate on secession. A clear example of this is the irruption of the PDD in 2006, which started mobilising the sovereignty frame to assert Catalonia's 'right to decide' on how it is governed. This was quickly adopted by ERC and, eventually, most regionalist actors in Catalonia, alongside arguments justifying independence in terms of creating a social and just Republic (see above). Our data thus evidences the way in which pro-independence parties and civil society organisations in Catalonia coalesce around a shared discourse defined by a desire to exercise sovereignty in order to achieve social justice for the territory.

In Scotland, the latter frame is also widely shared across the pro-independence movements. However, in this instance, it is co-operation, rather than competition, that has characterised the interactions of different actors within the regionalist political space. For example, Women for Independence (WFI) was established in 2012 to campaign for Scottish independence, gender equality and social justice; they are supported by the SNP, with some of the latter's members occupying WFI leadership positions. Such collaboration is widespread within the pro-independence movement, which predominantly features organisations with a left-leaning ideological profile; the result is a convergence around independence narratives that contain a clear redistributive and progressive dimension (Della Porta *et al*., 2017). Our analysis thus points to the role of dynamics of co-operation, as well as those of competition, between regionalist actors as drivers of territorial discourses, although this is an under-studied aspect of regionalist mobilisation.

Finally, in one of our cases – Corsica – the presence of an armed group (the Fronte di Liberazione Naziunale di a Corsica (FLNC)) on regionalist actors' strategies must be considered. Historically, support for political violence has been a key factor constraining political and electoral co-operation between radical and moderate nationalist groups on the island. Indeed, according to one interviewee (PNC_2), it was the FLNC's ceasefire in 2014 and subsequent process of disarmament that facilitated agreement on the first ever nationalist governing

coalition in the Corsican Assembly in 2015. However, we find little evidence of any impact on how either radical or moderate actors frame their territorial demands although we also have limited data given that the timescale of our study ends in 2018, four years after the end of the FLNC. Rather, what is striking is the commonality and relative stability of frames used by both camps: political frames predominate for both groups (and specifically arguments articulating dissatisfaction with and attributing blame for the territorial status quo, as well as claims about the democratic quality of a political system dominated by clientelism) followed by socio-economic ones (focused on economic prosperity and social justice). Moreover, both groups have used these frames to justify a range of territorial demands, including radicals' calls for independence and demands by both radicals and moderates for greater self-rule for Corsica. In this sense, whilst the historic presence of an armed group has shaped the composition of the regionalist movement, it has had a less discernible impact on the arguments used by different actors in the movement to make the case for territorial change.

The constraints of public opinion

An extensive literature on the strategic behaviour of political parties has shown that when one party has an issue that strongly appeals to the public it will give greater emphasis to it, while another party which does not have such an advantage will prefer to focus on other more appealing issues (Riker, 1993; quoted in Elias, 2009a: 37). Social movement studies have made a similar observation with regard to movements' choice of framing strategies, whereby the degree to which a frame resonates with broader concerns or priorities of the general public strongly conditions its likelihood of success in mobilising citizens to collective action (Koopmans and Statham 1999; Benford and Snow, 2000: 620). **The resonance of territorial frames with public opinion is thus expected to constitute a "discursive opportunity"** (Giugni, 2009: 364) for regionalist actors.

Scholars of territorial politics have mainly focused on how public opinion can constrain the territorial demands that regionalist actors (and regionalist parties in particular) can credibly support, but it may also impact on how regionalist actors frame their territorial demands. For example, there is some evidence that citizens' national identification has a bearing on the extent to which regionalists can appeal to voters using identitarian arguments. Máiz (2003: 28) argues that during the 1980s, the Bloque Nacionalista Galego's (BNG) "purist nationalist discourse of exclusion centred on drawing the frontier between "us" and "them"…ignored the moderate and overlapping perceptions of identity that most Galicians have of themselves"; such a narrative contributed to the party's limited electoral appeal in that period, a situation which only changed with a shift to a more inclusive discourse which sought to appeal to all Galicians regardless of whether or not they defined themselves as being 'Galician'. In contrast, Dalle Mulle (2017: 172) argues that Flemish regionalist actors successfully exploited identity contestation to present Flanders as an alternative community of solidarity that can underpin a better model of welfare provision.

Public opinion on non-territorial issues and political controversies may also have a bearing on the relevance and/or credibility of regionalist actors' framing strategies. For example, growing dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy and corruption scandals in Belgium during 1990s meant regionalist parties' arguments about the need for better democracy and governance resonated particularly strongly (Dalle Mulle, 2017: 88). To the extent that such events or trends are also present in our case studies, they may also be expected to have an impact on regionalist actors' territorial demands and frames.

Our findings

In this section, we focus our discussion on the impact of public opinion in so far as it relates to a) territorial preferences; b) subjective national identities; c) preferences on other (non-territorial) issues.

a) Territorial preferences

Scholars of regionalist mobilisation have argued that citizens' territorial preferences (i.e. what kind of territorial model they would prefer for the state and/or sub-state) often constrain the kinds of territorial demands that regionalist actors can make (Elias, 2015; Elias, 2019). However, much less attention has been paid to whether such preferences also inform regionalists' framing strategies. Our data finds some evidence of such an impact, albeit confined to a limited number of cases.

In Scotland, for example, we have argued elsewhere (Elias, 2019: 13) that consistently low levels of popular support for Scottish independence during the 2000s led the SNP to re-think its territorial strategy. The result, as we note above, was a territorial discourse that sought to be more relevant to Scottish voters by placing much more emphasis on the socio-economic benefits that secession would bring. Indeed, our data confirms an increase in the party's usage of socio-economic frames from 2000 onwards, with independence presented as the only option for creating a richer, fairer Scotland. As argued in the party's 2015 general election manifesto:

> Our ambition is to build a prosperous Scotland, with this prosperity used to create a fair, confident and outward-looking nation. A nation where all Scots can flourish. A nation that treats its citizens with dignity and respect. A nation that plays its part in securing a more just and peaceful world. An Independent Scotland. (Scottish National Party, 2005: 24).

In Wales, past experiences have also made PC particularly sensitive to public support for its territorial demands. Consequently, during the 2000s, public opinion data on constitutional preferences informed the low prominence of PC's independence demands and its strong emphasis instead on a full parliament for Wales with legislative powers. In this context, its arguments for greater self-rule were strongly associated with the quality of the democratic and political system and dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo frames. In this vein, the party's manifesto for the 2007 Welsh Assembly election noted that: "It is the inalienable right

of the people of Wales to decide our own future, to decide where power should be exercised, by whom and for which purpose" (Plaid Cymru, 2007: 36).

In Catalonia in contrast, a key consideration for regionalist actors has been the fact that 80% of people favour holding a referendum to resolve the territorial question (Ara, 2018). This has informed the emphasis by pro-independence actors of frames about the quality of democracy, where what is being claimed is a fair and transparent process for allowing Catalans to decide for themselves on how they are governed.

b) Subjective national identification

Our analysis finds limited evidence of the impact of citizens' national identification on regionalists' territorial discourses. This is arguably for two reasons. Firstly, data on subjective national identification (and the degree to which citizens in our case studies identify themselves as belong to the sub-state and/or state-level national community) is not available for all cases. Secondly, this was generally not raised by interviewees as an important issue. An exception here are the Welsh and Catalan cases, where a clear case was made by several interviewees for *not* framing the case for Welsh/Catalan independence in terms of a distinctive territorial identity:

> When you speak to a lot of people who are interested in independence for Wales, they are interested because Wales is like anywhere else. It's not because we're different. It's not because we have a different culture. Of course we do have a different culture, but everywhere has a different culture….you know, the reasons for the fact that we want independence are the same reasons as were we to come from somewhere else…. Therefore, I think that is one of the reasons why you don't see much stuff about Welshness or something like that, because that's the whole issue. There's nothing exceptional about Wales. That is why we deserve an independent state. (YC_2)

In Catalonia, where dual identities prevail (i.e. Catalans identify themselves as both Catalan and Spanish) (ICPS, 2020), it is perceived to be similarly difficult to frame territorial demands in terms of a distinctive Catalan identity. Interviewees from PDD, Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP) and ERC thus talked about their fear of being labelled an 'ethnic' party, and that identitarian aspects could alien potential supporters (PDD_1, CUP_2, ERC_2). In response, ERC and others have sought to present their case for independence in explicitly non-identitarian terms:

> The confrontation of national belongings is a lost cause where you won't win or lose. On the contrary, we would all lose today. The construction of the Catalan republic must transcend these questions. Catalanity is our common heritage, that we must put at the service of all people. Each of them from their identity: we don't ask anyone where they come from, but we agree on where we want to go. So this social constitutional patriotism is to see the country not only from the perspective of culture or language, but in terms of hospitals, schools, or affective rights. (ERC_2).

c) Public opinion on non-territorial issues and controversies

We also find evidence of regionalist actors adjusting their use of frames to take public opinion on other, non-territorial issues, into account. Such **issues are often highly context-specific**. In Corsica, for example, a survey from 2012 revealed not only very low levels of support for Corsican independence, but also the identification of socio-economic issues – and specifically employment and inflation – as the most important issues facing Corsican citizens; this corresponds with a growing emphasis in the territorial discourses of both moderate and radical nationalists for policy action in these areas, and the use of social justice frames, whereby territorial change is justified by arguments to do with welfare and the need to provide better public services. In Friesland, in contrast, when mining and the extraction of minerals became an important issue in broader society, the FNP responds in its own discourse with a greater use of sustainability frames (arguing against extraction in principle) and social justice frames (calling on the Dutch state to give fairer compensation to the Friesian property owners affected by this activity). Meanwhile in Galicia in the early 2000s, a key event that dominated public opinion was the so-called 'Prestige' crisis, caused by an oil tanker that sank off the Galician coast with serious environmental and economic consequences. This led to the appearance in the BNG's political documents of calls for new regional competencies in the area of environmental protection, as well as a strong emphasis of frames attributing blame for the crisis on the PP in government at the regional and state levels. In this way, the party sought to tap into widespread public consternation at the governmental responses to the crisis: "the *Prestige* years…helped to demonstrate Galicia's position, the state doesn't care about us" (BNG_1).

In the case of Northern Italy, public opinion in relation to corruption is also found to affect regionalist territorial discourses. During the 1990s, and in the context of political turmoil caused by political corruption scandals, the LN successfully capitalised on a general sense of dissatisfaction with the political system with a discourse focused on the inefficiency and corruption of 'thieving Rome' (LN_1). It is in this climate that the party also advanced its claims for independence for the Northern Italian region of Padania.

Other changes in regionalist actors' external environments

Within its broader aim of understanding how regionalist actors frame calls for territorial empowerment, one of the specific goals of this work package is to evaluate the "impact of the economic crisis and other societal challenges" on the territorial claims advanced by different actors. There has been little systematic study of the impact of such challenges on regionalist actors' territorial strategies, with the exception of a few studies that have attributed renewed territorial tensions in some pluri-national states to the central government's approach to managing austerity politics (Muro, 2015; Elias and Mees, 2017; Béland and Lecours, 2019). These studies nevertheless flag up the importance of broader or longer-term developments in regionalist actors' external environments, and which may (directly or indirectly) influence their

territorial strategies. Other work has also pointed to the impact of more episodic or discrete events that may similarly prompt regionalist actors to reflect on, and change, their quest for territorial empowerment (Huszka, 2014; Basta, 2018). These changes to regionalist actors' external environments may be common to all case studies (e.g. the financial crisis) or case specific (e.g. German re-unification, Brexit).

In general, regionalist actors are **expected to respond to developments or events that are perceived to have a transformative impact on their political landscapes or establish new parameters for action**. To the extent that these are perceived to have an impact on their territory's needs and interests, there may be a parallel shift in territorial demands and justifications of them. With regard to the latter, two distinct framing responses have been suggested in the literature to date. On the one hand, we might expect a clear change in actors' territorial discourse. Social movement scholars have termed such a change "frame transformation" (Snow, 2004: 393) whereby a dramatic re-constitution takes place in the way in which the object of orientation is seen. For example, in her study of the framing strategies of Slovenian, Croatian and Montegrin independence movements, Huszka (2014: 185) finds evidence of such "frame shifts" induced by "events that pro-independence politicians felt compelled to respond to". On the other hand, other work leads us to expect discursive responses that draw on already-existing frames which may be re-packaged or re-asserted (Basile, 2019; Dalle Mulle, 2017: 36).

Our findings

We focus here on 2008 global financial crisis, migration flows, and events specific to particular cases.

a) Global financial crisis 2008.

Existing scholarship has sought to attribute to the 2008 financial crisis a clear radicalising pressure on actors' territorial demands. Such an argument has predominantly been made in relation to Catalonia. It has been argued, for example, that CiU's focus on demanding greater fiscal autonomy in the 2010 Catalan election successfully tapped into a growing resentment against the Spanish government's deficit reduction policies (Elias, 2015: 90). Others have noted that the recession and subsequent politics of austerity also contributed to the movement's secessionist turn in more recent years (Béland and Lecours, 2019).

Our findings, however, provide mixed evidence of the impact of the financial crisis on regionalists' framing strategies. Such an impact is clearly visible in some places. Staying with the Catalan case, for example, several regionalist actors mobilised in direct response to both territorial grievances and against the austerity policies implemented by the central and regional governments. The anti-capitalist left and pro-independence party, Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP), is one such case and first contested regional elections in 2012. The

party drew support from both secessionists and the so-called *indignados*[5] movement, with many of its members participating in both (although one interviewee also argued that the territorial protests were perceived as being more salient than the economic ones (CUP_1)). For the CUP:

> The arbitrary distinction between social and national liberation must give way to understanding that the right to self-determination in order to make effective political, economic and cultural independence of the Catalan countries cannot be fully achieved without overcoming the patriarchal-capitalists model of social relations. These are two inseparable processes' (CUP, 2012: no page number).

Similarly, Sumate was created in 2013 as a civil society organisation representing Spanish speakers in support of Catalan independence. Our data reveals the overwhelming presence of social justice frames in its discourse, reflecting the strongly working-class profile of its members, a sector of society which had been particularly negatively affected by the financial crisis.

On the other hand, we find evidence that the financial crisis led regionalist actors to draw on already-existing frames, but to link them in new ways to the perceived impacts of the crisis. In Northern Italy, for example, it provided an occasion for the LN to re-rehearse long-standing complaints about the region's excessive fiscal transfers to poorer Southern regions (Dalle Mulle, 2017: 96-7) (see above). In several cases, we also see a tendency to make increased use of frames attributing blame for the political class's handling of the crisis and its effects, as well as social justice frames that invoke the damaging impact of the crisis on citizens' socio-economic wellbeing (with the exact grievances reflecting the specific conditions in different cases). In Bavaria, for example, the crisis served to increase the BP's determination to secede from Germany and provided new reasons to criticise the central government on account of its attempts to centralise decision-making on taxation and financial transfers to the Federal or European levels. This finding is echoed in Catalonia, where regionalist actors' criticism of Madrid for Catalonia's socio-economic difficulties reflect long-standing grievances against the fiscal structure of the Spanish state (Béland and Lecours, 2019: 6). In this sense, the economic crisis seems to have increased the resonance of these frames among the general public and helped to make the case for Catalan independence more convincing. This tendency to rely and rehearse existing frames is confirmed by one BNG interviewee as follows:

> The [BNG] maintained, since the autumn of 2007, a line of argument on the crisis that was quite coherent in so far as it focused on housing and the defence of productive sectors [of our economy]. And we linked, as we always do, as has always been done from the perspective of Galician nationalism, criticism with proposals for alternative social and economic policies,

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[5] The *indignados* (outraged) is a social moviment born in Spain as a reaction to socioeconomic precariousness brought about by the austerity policies implemented in response to the global finacial crisis. It is considered to be the precedent and inspiration for the Occupy movements in the United States (Castañeda, 2012).

and the defence and increase of self-government in the name of Galician sovereignty. And we tried to explain how this lack of sovereignty, the lack of capacity to decide on economic and political matters…creates in Galicia consequences that are even worse than in other places. (BNG_1).

However, in other cases – including Kashubia, Szeklerland, Friesland and Wales – there are very few instances of the financial crisis being linked to demands for territorial empowerment. This is not to say that the impact of the crisis was ignored in these places; rather, territorial empowerment was just not perceived as the solution to the crisis's consequences. In Wales, for example, reflections on the impact of central government austerity policies led PC to propose different policy measures that could be taken within the existing National Assembly for Wales framework (rather than calling for greater competencies for this body or for independence). In Szeklerland, rare mentions of the crisis were made as part of a broader critique of the economic condition of the state and did not lead to any specific calls for territorial re-organisation. Regionalist actors' responses to the financial crisis have thus been different in different places, a finding that re-affirms the importance of understanding the specific context in which these actors experience and perceive such external 'shocks'.

b) Migration

Scholars have argued that migration flows pose a distinctive challenge for sub-state nations. In particular, the growing presence of cultural diversity in their 'homelands' resulting from migration presents regionalist actors with what Jeram *et al* (2016) have called a "paradox of legitimation": too much internal diversity may undermine these actors' claim to cultural distinctiveness. This fear of becoming a minority within their own territory occurs in the context of regions usually having very few tools to manage migration flows. Faced with this challenge, scholars have examined regionalists' reactions to immigration. Franco-Guillén (2015) suggests that regionalist actors will develop an inclusive discourse towards immigration in order to attract newcomers to their movements' ranks once migrants acquire political rights. But regionalist actors may also react in the opposite way, by rejecting immigration and calling on the state to implement a stricter immigration policy.

Many of our cases have experienced migration flows into their territories, and we find evidence of both types of reaction to this trend. In Catalonia, for example, regionalist actors have downplayed the cultural justifications for their territorial demands in order to avoid that immigrants feel excluded from the nation-building process. One ERC interviewee phrased this approach as follows: "Each of them from their identity: we don't ask anyone where they come from, but we agree on where we want to go" (ERC_2). Similarly for Sumate, whose membership is not only predominantly working class (as noted above) but also composed of Spanish speakers often with strong family ties to the rest of Spain (Sumate, no date). In Italy, the Aosta Valley has undergone a similarly profound societal transformation as a result of increasing migration, especially from southern Italian regions (Sandri, 2012). As noted by one interviewee: "In the 1990s, there was the introduction [into the Valley's society] of people who were less

interested in cultural issues" (UV_1). As a consequence, and in order to broaden its electoral appeal, the UV increasingly shifted its framing of its territorial demands away from the defence of the French language (as the historical language of the Aosta Valley) in two directions. On the one hand, it has adopted a broader focus on the region's territorial distinctiveness as something to be defended (from de-population and environmental challenges) and promoted (in terms of its agricultural and touristic potential) by all the region's inhabitants regardless of origin (UV_2, UV_3). On the other hand, more emphasis has been placed on socio-economic frames as part of a catch-all cross-class strategy aimed at protecting the region's fiscal privileges (Massetti and Sandri, 2012: 101). As noted by another interviewee:

> The Valdostan people themselves began considering [cultural issues] less important and socio-economic interests prevailed...All the economic policies become more important than...the identity issue...[especially] when the resources started to decrease in 2008 [as a result of the financial crisis]. (UV_1).

In contrast, in Bavaria, Corsica and Northern Italy, we find the opposite response to migration flows into the region. In the former case, the BP claimed more competencies over migration during the late 1990s as a result of the Yugoslav wars. In more recent years, the influx of asylum seekers (and dissatisfaction with the federal government's handling of it) was criticised heavily and led the party to call for a refined immigration policy. In Corsica, immigration (especially from mainland France) is seen as a problem for the nation building project. This is evidenced by the presence of territorial demands related to language protection and recognition, as well as limitations to the rights of newcomers (such as residence permits or limitations on the right to buy a house on the island). As one interviewee explains:

> 'We receive 3500 people every year [Corsica has about 200.000 inhabitants]. If nobody worries about it, there is no reason why those who arrive here decide by themselves to become Corsican […] And this is part of our political discourse: first, with language: its co-officiality and its compulsory teaching from kindergarten to University. That's the first thing; culture. So that children that arrive in Corsica learn to speak Corsican first. Second, we ask for the implementation of a 'status of residency' [for people living on the island for more than 10 years) regarding the acquisition of housing […] so we can limit migratory flows because those who arrive… there is nothing social in this, it's not for Corsica that they come, it's for being in Corsica, which is different.' (CF_1)

In Northern Italy, the LN has pursued a different (and unique in this study) trajectory on the issue of immigration. The party has long been preoccupied with immigration (Ignazi, 2005). Recently, however, the party has increased its discussion of the issue at the same time as it has shifted its attention away from territorial demands; from this perspective, the LN has also broadened its understanding of the 'we' to be defended against such immigration flows, from the Padanian territory to that of Italy as a whole. This reflects the broader shift in the LN's ideology and political ambitions, from being a party representing the interests of a distinctive territorial community in Northern Italy to being seen as a state-wide political party with pan-Italian political appeal (Albertazzi *et al.*, 2018).

These examples (with the exception of the LN) focus on cases where the challenge relates to migration into the region, and in this respect reflect the focus of the scholarship in this area. But our data also provides insights into regions that experience migration flows in the opposite direction, namely emigration from the region. Galicia is such a case. Galicia has a long history of emigration, which contributed to the steady decline in its (aging) population during the twentieth century (Rodríguez Galdo *et al.*, 2010). Generally attributed to the structure of Galicia's economy and the lack of attractive employment opportunities (Barreiro, 2012: 26), the level of emigration accelerated as a consequence of the 2008 financial crisis as young people in particular left to seem work elsewhere in Spain and internationally (González Laxe *et al.*, 2018). This has been a key issue in the BNG's territorial discourse throughout the period of analysis but has gained prominence in the last decade: "The drama of youth emigration…is a structural problem and a problem for the future. For us, this is an emergency, putting an end to this emigration. Because if not, we'll be left as a country of pensioners and retired people and that has no future" (BNG_2). The BNG's territorial discourse has consistently framed this issue as part of a broader critique of Spanish and European economic policies and their damaging impact on the Galician economy and society, with the solution being a different policy approach in the short-term and Galician sovereignty in the long term. The party's manifesto for the 2016 Galician elections is typical in this respect:

> Any change in Galicia's institutional status must be guided by the objective of securing the capacity of our nation to take political decisions, departing from the following principles: deciding for ourselves on Galicia's economic and productive structures in order to promote economic growth and adequate jobs according to our potential and capacity; an exclusive right to plan, direct and manage those public services linked with welfare in order to provide services that are adequate for our specificities. (BNG, 2016a: 9).

The implications of regionalist mobilisation elsewhere in Europe

Our content analysis of political documents (see Deliverable 7.2) provides evidence of the way in which many regionalist actors justify their territorial demands by making comparisons to regionalist mobilisation, or to the territorial status of, sub-state territories elsewhere in Europe. The Bavarian BP is a case in point, with the party frequently making references to Scotland and Catalonia to show how tendencies of regional autonomy become accepted throughout Europe and aligning itself with such a trend. For example, when the Scottish Independence Referendum was announced, the party declared: "Our Scottish friends provide evidence, not only of the strength of their will to self-determination…they are a beacon of hope for all independence movements in Europe" (Bayernpartei, 2012: no page number).

Further analysis points to the additional ways in which such territorial developments elsewhere in Europe inform specific actors' territorial discourses in different places. We note above, for example, how Galician regionalists have been very aware of events in Catalonia during the 2010s and the perceived crisis of the Spanish state that has ensured. One BNG interviewee elaborated on how this has changed the context for Galician nationalism as follows: [The

Catalan crisis] has resonance in two ways. It resonates because it conditions the nationalist response…It's also influential in the sense that it inspires certain anti-nationalist and anti-Galician sentiments which are now openly visible…In the Galician case, this expresses itself as, well, a rejection of the basic consensus…that existed over the existence of a Galician identity, and a language which should exist" (BNG_1).

Whilst Galician interviewees were also, however, aware of the differences between the two contexts (BNG_1, BNG_2), in other cases we find evidence of a more direct connection between, and influence of, the territorial strategies adopted in other places. The Welsh case is illustrative of such linkages, and most clearly in relation to Scottish referendum on independence held in 2014. Interviewees from both PC and Yes Cymru (YC) commented on the wide-ranging impacts on regionalist mobilisation in Wales: it raised the profile of and normalised independence as an issue and placed the constitutional integrity of the UK firmly on the political agenda, and made it more urgent to think about Wales's status within the UK were Scotland to secede in future (PC_1, CY_1). YC in particular would not exist were it not for the referendum: the organisation was established to support the pro-independence campaign in the referendum, and there has since been a high level of contact between the two movements to share experiences, and advise on organisational structures and strategies (YC_1, YC_2). This led, for example, to the translation of frames used to justify Scottish independence into YC's own discourse, and informed specific decisions such as that to avoid arguments about Welsh distinctiveness (history, identity and language) that could be divisive when making the case for secession (YC_1).

c) Other changes to regionalist actors' operating environments

In this section, we focus on context-specific developments that have had an important bearing on regionalist actors' territorial demands and frames. For regionalist actors in Kashubia and Szeklerland, a major factor was the collapse of communism and the subsequent creation of new democratic institutions. For regionalist actors in both cases, interest organisation and mobilisation only became possible as a result of democratization; in this sense, territorial democratization was a precondition of regionalist activity, and provided the crucial context in which territorial claims could be made at all. In Kashubia, for example, the opportunities for political mobilisation in defense of Kashubian distinctiveness were very limited during communist rule from 1944 to 1989; it was also prohibited to teach the Kashubian language in schools (in contrast to other languages of recognised ethnic minorities in Poland including Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Slovaks). The transition to democracy was therefore decisive for the development of the Kashubian movement: new political and institutional opportunities were created that enabled a shift from narrow folklore and cultural activities to broader socio-political activism.

The fall of communism also had important repercussions in the Bavarian case, with the reunification of Germany in 1990 constituting a major development to which the BP responded in its territorial discourse. The impact is not to be seen in the BP's territorial demands; the party's long-held commitment to Bavarian independence (Eichmüller, 1997: 33) continued to be a prominent claim throughout the 1990s. Rather, it is in the frames used to justify this demand that change is evident. In particular, the implication of re-unification on Bavaria's relative economic status within Germany – and specifically the shift to being a net-contributor within the country's financial compensation mechanisms – emerged as a key grievance that would remain a prominent theme in subsequent decades: "This asymmetry strongly impacted Bavaria at that moment, when it became a net payer. It was not a topic as long as we were recipients…" (BP_2).

In Scotland and Wales, the recent Brexit process has also had a major impact on their operating environment. In line with regionalist actors' commitment in both cases to 'independence in Europe', they campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU in the referendum held in June 2016. The different referendum results in both places, however, has had different implications for regionalists' territorial positions. In Scotland, the fact that a majority voted to remain in the EU legitimised Scottish regionalists' demands for a second referendum on independence, based on the argument that Scotland was being "taken out of the EU against our will" (Scottish National Party, 2016, 24). The Brexit referendum has thus driven renewed calls for 'independence in Europe'. It also, however, prompted increased demands for shared rule, with the Scottish National Party (SNP) in particular arguing that Scotland should have a voice in the Brexit negotiations. Furthermore, we find evidence of a clear increase in arguments expressing dissatisfaction with, and blaming, "the most incompetent Westminster government for generations" (Sturgeon, 2018) for the Brexit decision and process.

In Wales, in contrast, the majority of voters supported leaving the EU, a result which was described by one interviewee as being "traumatic" (CY_1), whilst another recalled their shock at being so out of touch with public opinion on the issue (PC_1). In response, however, PC (like SNP) also re-affirmed its commitment to 'an independent Wales in Europe' (Plaid Cymru, 2016) and sought to ensure Welsh interests were represented in Brexit negotiations (Plaid Cymru, 2017); such demands were similarly framed with arguments expressing dissatisfaction with the democratic process for discussing the implications of Brexit for Wales. PC has also sought to develop a post-Brexit vision for Wales, arguing that Brexit clarified the need for independence. In this way, the party has sought to present Brexit, alongside developments in Scotland and Northern Ireland, as "a crisis of the British State" (Independence Commission, 2020: 11). For its part, YC has similarly framed the post-Brexit context in terms of dissatisfaction with, and attributing blame for, the process of negotiating the UK's exit from the EU. One interviewee thus argued that Brexit had served to highlight the stark problems with, and weakened levels of trust in, the UK political system and its concerns for Welsh interests, thus strengthening the case for independence (YC_1).

2.iii. Factors internal to regionalist actors

If external factors constitute the operating environment within which regionalist actors operate, it is necessary to look inside the actors themselves to get a full understanding of why parties respond strategically to their environment in the way they do (Rovny, 2015; Elias, 2015; 2019; Elias and Mees, 2017). We focus in particular here on actors' ideological values as a constrain on framing strategies.

A political actor's ideology can be understood as the core set of beliefs that constitute its identity and which allows it to distinguish itself from other political actors. In general, the literature on political parties understands party ideology to be rooted in, and shaped by, the social cleavages in relation to which political parties mobilise: "political parties are organisations with historically rooted orientations that guide their response to new issues" (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 434). Whilst ideology is not immutable, it is nevertheless expected to serve as an enduring touchstone of identification for party elites, members and voters.

A regionalist actor's ideological values are thus widely accepted to be rooted in the centre-periphery cleavage around which it mobilised (Massetti, 2009: 501). In other words, it is assumed that the territorial dimension constitutes the primary ideological dimension for regionalist actors, since what defines this party family is a shared commitment to reforming the territorial structure of the state in some way (De Winter, 1998; Alonso, 2012). This ideological inheritance has been shown to constrain which territorial positions an actor can credibly hold (Elias, 2015; Mees, 2015). But ideological values are also expected to inform regionalist actors' choice of frames.

Such an expectation is consistent with the contention in the social movement literature that frames are typically comprised, at least in part, of strands of one or more ideologies; from a framing perspective, therefore, ideologies constitute "cultural resources that can be tapped and exploited for the purpose of constructing collective action frames, and thus function simultaneously to facilitate and constrain framing processes (Snow and Benford, 2000: 9). A recent case study of the Flemish Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliante (N-VA) exemplifies such a rhetorical strategy at work, with the party framing all other policy issues explicitly in territorial terms. It is thus argued that the party's discourse has been able to draw on "multiple ideological references and to deal with various issues, but it has at the same time used the nationalist master frame as a glue holding together these various frames…, whereby references to populism, neoliberalism, conservatism, and related political, economic and cultural issues become grounded in an overarching centre/periphery conflict" (Abts *et al.*, 2018: 52).

Regionalist actors have also, however, taken an interest in issues beyond the territorial dimension and positioned themselves along other ideological dimensions. The left-right axis has been identified as being particularly important in this respect (Alonso, 2012; Elias *et al.*, 2015; Massetti and Schakel, 2015), but this does not exhaust the range of ideological values that have been incorporated into regionalist actors' agendas (e.g. ecological protection,

sustainable development; or xenophobia and opposition to immigration) (see Elias, 2009a: 31; Massetti, 2009). Elias *et al.* (2015) have argued that such plural ideological profiles may be subsumed into (and linked to) the territorial dimension by means of issue framing strategies. **Regionalist actors' ideological profile is therefore also expected to constrain the frames it deploys to justify its territorial demands, and where these may reflect a broader set of ideological commitments beyond the territorial one.**

Our findings

In so far as ideological values inform regionalists' use of frames, our findings point to the particularly strong influence in many cases of actors' left-right profile on how demands for territorial empowerment are justified. This is especially the case for many of the regionalist parties in our cases, and who have positioned themselves on the left-right ideological dimension: the BNG, ERC, CUP, PC and SNP thus conceive of themselves as left-wing parties, whilst others – CiU, BP, RMDSZ – have pursued a more right-wing policy agenda. For the former, the left-wing dimension informs the specific policy areas in which more self-rule competencies are sought, and the frames employed to justify their territorial demands. We find evidence, for example, of a much greater use of social justice frames reflecting their commitments to values such as fairness and equality. This is especially striking in relation to the frames used to justify calls for independence in these cases. For parties such ERC, CUP, SNP, Radical Independence Campaign (RIC), PC and the BNG, the goal of independence is thus inextricably linked with an aspiration to fundamentally change the socio-economic structures of society. In its most extreme form, parties like the CUP advocate 'Independence to change everything', whereby independence is conceived as the means for transforming socio-economic relations towards a more socialist model of society: "Let's make of our emancipatory process a tool in order to break radically with the continued dispossession of the popular classes, by economic elites, and the exploitation of women" (CUP, 2012). A less radical social-democratic version of this agenda is espoused by parties like the SNP, PC, ERC and BNG, where independence will provide the territories in question with the means of implementation social policies to tackle unemployment, ensure equal rights to all people, and improve the distribution of resources.

As noted above, we have fewer actors in our study that have positioned themselves as right-wing. In Catalonia, we find that the centre-right CiU makes less use of social justice frames to justify its territorial demands than its left-wing counterparts, ERC and the CUP; instead, in general it relies more on those to do with political efficiency and economic prosperity. This is consistent with the party's attempts at projecting an image of 'order' and 'know how' whilst it occupied the office of Catalan government during the 1990s and early 2000s and calls for further self-rule linked to the need to ensure better economic growth for Catalonia. The latter frame continues to feature prominently as CiU and its successor parties shifted to a more pro-independentist position in more recent years, with the economic viability of a future independent Catalonia a key theme:

> The majority of economic indicators prove Catalonia's capacity to position itself in the avant-garde of economic progress, not only at the European level, but also globally, and that's why we can state that, currently, Catalonia already has the capacity to prosper by its own means. (Junts pel Sí, 2015: 17)

In cases where regionalist actors do not position themselves in left-right terms, we find the frames associated with such positions – social justice frames amongst left-wing parties, and efficiency and prosperity frames amongst right-wing parties - much less present. This holds for the Corsican radical and moderate nationalist parties, the Sardinian PSDAZ, the RMDSZ in Szeklerland,[6] as well as for the majority of civil society organisations in our study (including in Wales, Catalonia and Kashubia). Some interviewees reflected on the strategic nature of the decision to avoid such a left-right discourse. For example, a PSDAZ representative argued that:

> The PSDAZ has been basically indifferent to the left-right distinction, and for this reason it has made alliances with both left and right. An independentist party seeks to achieve a government that is genuinely independentist and within this government there could be more or less conservative forces (PSDAZ_2).

A similar argument was advanced by YC in Wales, where avoiding being associated with any left-right position or be associated with particular values or politics was deliberate so as not to detract from the core focus of generating support for the principle of independence for Wales. The implications for the organisation's pro-independence arguments are evident in our data, with an almost exclusive reliance on political frames that express dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo, flag up the potential of independence in a wide range of policy areas, and reference other successful small states as examples to be emulated: 'You might think that Wales is too small to be independent, but some of the most prosperous, most equal, and happiest countries in the world are small nations.' (YC, 2017: 10).

3. Conclusions

This report contributes to IMAJINE's central aim of enriching the empirical knowledge base on territorial inequalities in Europe. It does so by complementing macro-scale multi-scalar quantitative analyses of territorial inequalities with in-depth qualitative analysis of how and why actors – in this case regionalist parties and civil society actors in 12 European regions – perceive and mobilise around territorial inequalities. The report thus adds to the evidence collected by IMAJINE research of experiences and perceptions of spatial inequalities from different actor and spatial perspectives.

The specific focus here has been on how regionalist actors experience such territorial inequalities, and how this informs the justifications they advance for territorial empowerment. The analysis undertaken is exploratory and has sought to evaluate the utility of existing

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[6] Whilst the RMDSZ is often referred to as a right-wing party, interviewees stressed the party's reluctance to define itself in left-right terms and rejected such an ideological framing of its territorial demands.

explanations of regionalists' framing strategies as well as identify new or under-studied factors that may come to bear on such territorial discourses. A key finding is the limited influence of structural factors **in explaining how regionalist actors choose to frame their territorial demands.** In other words, whether or not a region has a minority language or a history of past autonomy, whether it is rich or poor relative to the state as a whole, or whether it has high levels of intra-regional territorial inequalities, is a poor indicator of the kinds of justifications regionalist actors advance in support of their territorial demands. Whilst the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of regions provide a broad context for regionalist mobilisation, and these are often important dimensions of regionalists' nation-building projects, these dimensions of territorial inequalities do not necessarily translate into arguments for territorial empowerment. Structural factors alone, therefore, cannot adequately explain the variable ways in which regionalist actors in Europe have sought to make the case for territorial empowerment.

Instead, we argue that political pressures are most important in shaping regionalist actors' framing strategies. In particular, different political incentives and constraints – such wanting to appeal electorally or to enter into government, dynamics of party competition, and trends in public opinion – are better able to explain what kinds of frames regionalist actors use to justify their territorial demands. Internal factors, such as whether an actor positions itself in left-right terms – also has a bearing on the kinds of frames used in this respect. Our analysis thus underlines the way in which regionalist actors play a key role in making sense of structural inequalities between centres and peripheries, translating these into political, socio-economic and (to a much lesser extent) arguments about (un-)fairness and (in-)justice in order to make the case for territorial re-structuring.

This is an important finding in two respects. Firstly, whilst macro-scale and multi-scalar quantitative analysis can provide new insights into different kinds and locations of territorial inequalities, our findings show that actors often have different perceptions of the *kind* of inequalities that matter, and *how* these matter. Accounting for this requires taking seriously the societal and (especially) political contexts in which such perceptions are formed. Secondly, such a finding confirms the limitations of the structural explanations for regionalist mobilisation and electoral performance that continue to dominate the scholarship on this family of actors. Our findings underline the highly contested nature of territory in pluri-national states, the role of regionalist movements as key "entrepreneurs" in mobilising territorial differences in political debate (Türsan, 1998: 6), and provide the first systematic comparative evidence of how centre-periphery differences actually matter to these actors in pursuit of the empowerment of 'their' territory.

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Appendix 1 – Overview of Cases and Regionalist Actors

State	Region	Actors: Parties and civil society organisations	Type of actor	WP7 partner
France	Corsica	Corsica Nazione (CN)	Party	AU
		Corsica Nazione Indipendente (CNI)	Party	
		Corsica Libera (CL)	Party	
		Accolta Naziunale Corsa, A Chjama Per l'Indipendenza, Corsica Nazione, Corsica Viva, Cuncolta Indipendentista, I Verdi Corsi, Partitu Per l'Indipendenza, Per a Suvranità (VVAA)	Mixed Coalition	
		a Cuncolta Naziunalista (aCN)	Party	
		U Partitu di a Nazione Corsa (PNC)	Party	
		Unione di u Populu Corsu (UPC)	Party	
		Femu a Corsica (FAC)	Party (Party coalition)	
		U Partitu di a Nazione Corsa European Elections (PNC EE)	Party	
		U Partitu di a Nazione Corsa Régions & Peuples Solidaires (PNC RPS)	Party	
		Unione Naziunale (UN)	Party	
		Pè a Corsica (PAC)	Party (Party coalition)	
		Unione per una suluzione pulîtica (UPSP)	Party (Party coalition)	
Germany	Bavaria	Bayernpartei (BP)	Party	
Italy	Aosta Valley	Union Valdôtaine Progressiste (UVP)	Party	UNISI
		Union Valdôtaine (UV)	Party	
		Stella Alpina (SA)	Party	
		Autonomie Liberté Participation Écologie (ALPE)	Party (Party coalition)	
		Mouv'	Party	
		Autonomie per l'Europa (ApE)	Party	
	Northern Italy	Lega Nord (LN)	Party	UNISI
	Sardinia	Partito Sardo D'Azione (PSdAz)	Party	
		Sardigna Natzione Indipendentzia (SNI)	Party	UNISI
		Partito Sardo D'Azione - Sardigna Natzione Indipendentzia (PSdAz-SNI)	Party (Party coalition)	

State	Region	Actors: Parties and civil society organisations	Type of actor	WP7 partner
		indipendèntzia Repùbrica de Sardigna (iRS)	CSO	
Netherlands	Friesland	Fryske Nasjonale Partij (FNP)	Party	RUG
Poland	Kashubia	Kaszëbskô Jednota (KJ)	CSO	IGSO-PAS
		Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczé Zrzeszenié (KPZ)	CSO	
Romania	Hungarian Minority/ The Szeklerland	Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt (EMNP)	Party	UNIBAS
		Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (RMDSZ)	Party	
		Erdélyi Magyar Néppárt - Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség (RMDSZ-EMNP)	Party (coalition)	
		Magyar Polgári Párt (MPP)	Party	
		Székely Nemzeti Tanács (SZNT)	CSO	
Spain	Catalonia	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (CDC)	Party	AU
		Convergència i Unió (CiU)	Party (coalition)	
		Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català (PDeCAT)	Party	
		Junts x Catalunya (JxC)	Mixed Coalition – electoral list – Party.	
		Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)	Party	
		Junts pel Sí (JxS)	Electoral List	
		Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP)	Party	
		Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC)	CSO	
		Omnium Cultural (OC)	CSO	
		Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir (PDD)	CSO	
		Sumate (SUMATE)	CSO	
		Estatut Jo Sí (EJS)	CSO	
		Diguem No al nou Estatut (DGM)	CSO	
	Galicia	ANOVA	Party	AU
		Alternativa Galega de Esquerda (AGE)	Electoral list	
		Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)	Party	
United Kingdom	Scotland	Scottish Independence Convention (SIC)	CSO	AU
		Scottish Constitutional Convention (SCC)	CSO	
		Scotland Forward (SF)	CSO	
		Yes Scotland (YS)	CSO	
		Scottish National Party (SNP)	Party	
		Radical Independence Campaign (RIC)	CSO	
	Wales	Parliament for Wales Campaign (YSG)	CSO	AU
		Plaid Cymru (PC)	Party	
		Cymru Yfory (CY)	CSO	
		Yes Cymru (YC)	CSO	
		Yes for Wales 1997 (YW1997)	CSO	
		Yes for Wales 2011 (YW2011)	CSO	

Appendix 2 – List of Interviews

Reference	Date and place	Actor acronym	Role within the organisation
Aosta Valley			
UV_1	Online, 3 April 2020.	UV, ALPE	-Member of the regional executive (1993-1998) - President of the regional council (1998-2002) - President of the Region (2002-2003) - Policy officer - Founder of Vallée d'Aoste Vive, then merged into ALPE (until 2013) - Professor of Public Law
UV_2	Online, 25 June 2020.	UV	Mayor of Aosta (2000-2010)
UV_3	Online, 22 July 2020.	UV	Mayor of Verrayes (2005-2019) Current president of UV (2019-) Current President of Aosta Valley (2020-)
Bavaria			
BP_1	Telephone, 3 February 2020	BP	Former chairman of the BP
BP_2	Telephone, 29 January 2020	BP	Chairman of the BP
Catalonia			
CSU_1	Telephone, 4 February 2020	CSU	Strategist in the CSU

ANC_1	Barcelona, 6 March 2020	ANC	President
CiU_1	Online, 12 March 2020	CiU	MP at the Spanish Parliament
CiU_2	Barcelona, 2 March 2020	CiU	President of PDECAT
CiU_3	Online, 13 March 2020	CiU	Historic member. Former regional minister of Home affairs.
CUP_1	Barcelona, 5 March 2020	CUP	Member of the national secretariat
CUP_2	Online, 1 May 2020	CUP	Ex-member of the national secretariat
DGM_1	Barcelona, 6 March 2020	DGM	Former member of DGM and SI
ERC_1	Barcelona, 4 March 2020	ERC	Secretary of Political Action, ERC
ERC_2	Barcelona 2 March 2020	ERC	Secretary for electoral analysis and strategy
ERC_3	Barcelona, 4 March 2020	ERC	MEP. Secretary for international affairs
OC_1	Online, 6 May 2020	OC	Member of the national board. Director of institutional relations.
PDD_2	Barcelona, 4 March 2020	PDD	Former spokesperson
Corsica			
CF_1	Online, 22 October 2020	CF	Member of Core in Fronte

PNC_1	Online, 26 October 2020	PNC	Member of PNC executive committee
PNC_2	Online, 23 October 2020	PNC	Member of PNC executive committee
FAC_1	27 October 2020	FAC	Member of FAC executive committee
FAC_2	30 October 2020	FAC	Secretary of International relations, FAC
Friesland			
FNP_1	?? January 2020	FNP	- Member of the Provincial Assembly for the FNP since 2011 - Ideologue of the party in recent years
FNP_2	?? January 2020	FNP	- Assistant to the FNP-group in the Provincial Assembly since 2003
FNP_3	?? January 2020	FNP	- Former member of the Provincial Assembly for the FNP (1980-1988) - Former senator for the Independent Senate Fraction (OSF) (2003-2011)
FNP_4	?? January 2020	FNP	- First and only provincial executive for the FNP (2011-2019) - Party leader since 2003
Galicia			
BNG_1	A Coruña, 2 December 2019	BNG	- Former member of regional parliament (2005-2013) and Spanish Parliament (2000-2004)
BNG_2	Santiago de Compostela, 4 December 2019	BNG	- Representative in regional parliament (1993-2009)

BNG_3	Santiago de Compostela, 5 December 2019	BNG	- Former party spokesperson (2013-2016)
BNG_4	Santiago de Compostela, 9 December 2019	BNG	- Representative in regional parliament (2004-present)
BNG_5	Santiago de Compostela, 10 December 2019	BNG	- Former party member.
ANOVA_1	Santiago de Compostela, 11 December 2019	ANOVA	- Senior party member.
Kashubia			
KPZ_1	Gdańsk, 13 March 2020.	ZKP	ZKP activist, scholar, Kashubian Institute Executive, former Editor-in-Chief of the ZKP monthly "Pomerania"
KPZ_2	Gdańsk, 12 March 2020.	ZKP	− ZKP activist, regional government official, former President of ZKP, Civic Platform (political party) member
KJ_1	Wejherowo, 12 March 2020.	KJ	KJ activist, journalist, former County Executive, former County Council Member, former president of ZKP, owner and manager of a Kashubian primary school
KJ_2	Wejherowo, 13 March 2020.	KJ	KJ activist, scholar, former Member of the City Council
Northern Italy			
LN_1	Online, 6 April 2020.	LN	- Former elected representative - Former Ministry of the Welfare (2001-2006) and Home Affairs (2008-2011)

			- Former party federal secretary (2012-2013) - Former President of Region Lombardy (2013-2018) - Currently editorialist for Italian newspapers (Il Foglio, Huffington Post)
LN_2	Online, 10 April 2020.	LN	- Former elected representative - Former President of Region Piedmont
Sardinia			
PSDAZ_1	Oristano, 16 August 2019.	SAR, PSDAZ	Former Secretary of the PSDAZ Mayor of the town of Bauladu (1964-1984) Member of regional council in the 1980s
PSDAZ_5	Online, 23 April 2020.	SAR, PSDAZ	Former secretary of the PSDAZ (2009-2014)
SNI_1	Online, 6 April 2020.	SAR, SNI	Leader of SNI
iRS_1	Online, 24 June 2020	SAR, iRS* *Currently not affiliated	Founder of iRS and ProgreS in 2011. Currently not affiliated. Professor of Semiotic at the University of Cagliari.
Scotland			
WFI_1	Glasgow, 10 March 2020	WFI	WFI national co-ordinator.
Szeklerland			
RMDSZ_1	Online, 23 April 2020	RMDSZ	Former MP of the RMDSZ from Szeklerland
EMNP_1	Online, 28 April 2020	EMNP	Former president of EMNP, current executive president

MPP_1	Online, 30 April	MPP	Current president of MPP
Wales			
PC_1	Online, 18 November 2020.	PC	Former member of National Executive Committee
PC_2	Online, 4 December 2020.	PC	Member of National Executive Committee
YW1997_1	Online, 9 December 2020.	YW1997	Former member of Steering Group
YW2011_1	Online, 11th December 2020.	YW2011	Former member of Steering Group
YSG_1	Online, 2 December 2020.	YSG	Former member of Executive Committee
CY_1	Online, 26 November 2020.	CY	Former board member.
YC_1	Online, 18 November 2020.	YC	Member of Central Committee
YC_2	Online, 25 November 2020.	YC	Member of Central Committee