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The Europhile Fringe?

Regionalist Party Support for European Integration

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between European integration and regionalist parties is still a largely unexplored area of research. In this paper, I evaluate whether regionalist parties perceive the European Union (EU) as an ally or an enemy. Using expert surveys, I assess the views of regionalist parties on European integration and I find that regionalist political parties are consistently pro-EU across time, space, and issue area. I find further support for this finding in a case study of the Scottish National Party.

KEY WORDS

- Euroskepticism
- multi-level governance
- regionalist parties

In a Europe characterized by multi-level governance, regionalist political parties can frame the European Union (EU) either as an ally against the central state or as yet another foreign power threatening local autonomy. In one line of reasoning, European integration decreases the necessity for traditional large states, making smaller, more homogeneous states more viable (Alesina and Spolaore, 2003). Hence, the EU may be an unwitting ally of subnational groups against central governments, thereby encouraging regionalist parties to be Europhiles. On the other hand, regional political entrepreneurs may exploit fear of yet another foreign authority encroaching on local sovereignty or xenophobia to convince voters to leave mainstream parties and support alternative parties. By this logic, regional political entrepreneurs would be highly Euroskeptic in order to attract these voters. In this paper, I directly test these two competing hypotheses and find that regionalist parties are Europhiles. With a detailed case study of Scottish National Party official party rhetoric, I also show that it is in fact the viability logic that motivates their Europhile attitudes.

Typically, fringe, or non-mainstream, parties are theoretically and empirically seen as Euroskeptic (Taggart, 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001; Aspinwall, 2002; Marks, 2004). But, in these models, little attention is given to the regionalist party family, which may serve as an exception to the extremism or non-mainstream Euroskeptic findings. By researching their attitudes toward European integration, I seek to understand whether regionalist parties frame the EU as an ally or as an enemy. This research contributes to the growing literature on party positioning on the EU by concentrating on an under-studied party family, the regionalist political party (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Marks et al., 2002; Hooghe et al., 2004; Marks et al., 2006). Also, though topically limited in its focus on European integration, this analysis of Scottish National Party (SNP) manifestos contributes to the party manifesto literature because the Scottish National Party is typically excluded from both manifesto collections and analyses (Budge et al., 2001). Finally, this research project extends the multi-level governance literature by focusing attention on the interaction between the supranational and subnational levels (Marks and Hooghe, 2000; Hooghe and Marks, 2001).

First, I outline the two competing hypotheses regarding regionalist attitudes toward European integration. Second, I introduce the expert survey data and present the analysis of regionalist political party attitudes toward the European Union. In this section, I replicate a prominent earlier study (Marks et al., 2002) and extend the end point of the time series from 1996 to 2002. Finally, I consider the official positions of the Scottish National Party on European integration as a plausibility probe for the causal mechanism. To preview the analysis, I find that regionalist political parties are not

Euroskeptic; rather, they are generally supportive of the European project. Further, with the Scottish case, where the Scottish National Party explicitly uses the European Union to frame independence as a more viable constitutional option to garner support for its movement, I find that the viability theory lies at the heart of regionalist Europhilia.

Competing hypotheses

Despite the recent attention to multi-level governance in Western Europe, scholars have neglected the interactions between the subnational and supranational levels. In fact, this neglect implies a null hypothesis for this study, simply that regionalist parties have no consistent position on European integration. But two competing hypotheses predict diametrically opposed attitudes toward European integration. First, the European Union makes smaller states more viable by diminishing the advantages of larger state size,¹ yielding the theoretical result of a smaller optimal size of states in Europe under the umbrella of the European Union and a system of free(er) trade (Alesina and Spolaore, 1997; Bolton and Roland, 1997; Alesina and Wacziarg, 1998; Alesina et al., 2000; Wittman, 2000; Casella and Feinstein, 2002; Alesina and Spolaore, 2003). In the past, '[t]he types of arguments used against minority nationalist and regionalist demands have often centered around the impracticalities of upsetting administrative and political traditions constructed around central institutions' (Lynch, 1996: 12). Thus, for regional political entrepreneurs, European integration increases the credibility of demands for greater autonomy, ranging from independence to devolution to cultural rights, and therefore their parties' credibility. In return, this factor provides incentives for regionalist political parties to be pro-European Union or Europhiles.

Astute regional political entrepreneurs utilize these trends to argue more convincingly that the region is less dependent on the rest of the country by 'fram[ing] their demands in European terms' (Keating, 1995: 7). In Scotland in the 1970s, for instance, the Scottish National Party (SNP) could not convince factory workers that seceding from the United Kingdom would not result in even more unemployment if access to the British market was blocked (Esman, 1977: 266–7). In the 1980s, though, former MP Jim Sillars convinced the SNP to support a pro-EU position as a 'mechanism to avoid economic dislocation in the event of secession from the UK' (Lynch, 1996: 39). Similarly, Scottish MP Gordon Wilson described the SNP's support for the European Union as 'a first class way of pushing the advantages of political independence without any threat of economic dislocation. Within the common trading umbrella the move to independence can take place smoothly and easily' (Lynch, 1996: 38).

Thus, activists use the EU to negate the arguments against autonomy based on fears of economic upheaval (Gallagher, 1991).

From a different perspective, Gary Marks and co-authors also hypothesize that regionalist parties will be Europhiles (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Marks et al., 2002). They derive hypotheses about party family positions on European integration from the classic cleavages that structure party competition in Western Europe: class, rural–urban, religious, and center–periphery (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Contesting the center–periphery cleavage, regionalist political parties should be more supportive of European integration precisely because the EU threatens national sovereignty (Marks and Wilson, 2000). Furthermore, the EU may be a friendlier environment for subnational groups because the European Union is multicultural, with no single dominant or pan-European identity (Lynch, 1996: 15), where the group will be one of many minorities in Europe rather than a permanent minority in its home country (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 438–9). These considerations lead regionalist political parties to be more pro-EU, *ceteris paribus*. Based on these arguments alongside the viability logic, regionalist political parties will support the European Union as an ally against the national state, yielding Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1. Regionalist political parties are likely to be strongly supportive of European integration because market integration makes small states or autonomous regions more viable economic entities.

However, an alternative hypothesis exists. It may not be that regional groups embrace the EU as a means of making smaller independent countries more viable. Rather, it could simply be that some regional groups are the focal point for opposition to globalization and European integration (Van Houten, 2003: 113–18). In addition to yet another distant government informing regions what to do, increased labor mobility from outside Western Europe threatens the cultural homogeneity of regions. In other words, integration creates new representation demands, such as a fear of economic competition or immigration, which regionalist parties rise to meet. Similar to the political entrepreneurs of the radical right parties (Kitschelt, 1995), regionalist political parties may use this opposition as a mechanism to draw support to their movement.

In addition, political elites within regionalist parties might oppose European integration for strategic reasons, as fringe parties. Whereas mainstream parties have little incentive to ‘rock the boat’ on European integration, extreme or fringe parties desire to restructure the dimensions of contestation to try to gain electoral votes (Taggart, 1998: 382; Hooghe et al., 2004: 123). Thus, because fringe parties know mainstream or government parties are all pro-EU, regionalist parties may oppose European integration simply to establish

themselves in voters' minds as different from the establishment. Strategic reasoning, fear of cultural assimilation or economic competition, and animosity towards immigrants each could factor into supporting fringe parties. Regionalist political parties could therefore try to mobilize electoral support from these voters by framing the EU in negative terms of fear and loathing. In contrast to the first hypothesis, therefore, this logic yields Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2. Regionalist political parties will be strongly Euroskeptical, either because immigration and economic competition threaten the cultural homogeneity of the regional community or for strategic reasons, i.e. to restructure the dimensions of contestation to gain electoral votes.

Although both theories seem feasible, there is qualitative evidence that the viability theory and Hypothesis 1 are correct. As mentioned above, the Scottish National Party adopted a policy of independence in Europe in the 1980s, precisely because the EU allowed for political autonomy without fear of economic dislocation (Lynch, 1996: 38). Similarly, in 1989, the Plaid Cymru supported a policy of independence in the EU, while encouraging the EU to evolve into a true Europe of the regions (Lynch, 1996: 76). Across Europe, Kurzer finds that regional politicians are generally enthusiastic about a federal Europe (1997: 43). Further, regionalist political parties apparently do not fear the loss of regionalist identity to a supranational European identity (Lynch, 1996: 198–9).

However, these studies do not conduct systematic empirical tests of these two hypotheses. Also, they cannot establish whether regionalist parties are more or less supportive than other party families, rather just whether they are enthusiastic or not. With expert survey data and regression analysis, I will establish a ranking of party families regarding positions on European integration. In doing so, I show that the regionalist family is highly supportive of European integration, especially compared with all other non-mainstream party families, and are much closer in attitudes to the mainstream party families.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand whether variation in support for European integration within the regionalist party family occurs and whether this variation is temporal or issue based. As the EU evolves from simply the 'negative integration' of opening markets to the potential 'positive integration' of social and welfare policy (Scharpf, 1996: 15), party families may change their level of support for the European project. For instance, social democratic parties have become more supportive of European integration as the agenda has turned from simply market integration to 'regulated capitalism', while right-wing parties have gone in the opposite direction (Hooghe et al., 2004: 129). It could be that some regional groups

supported a form of ‘independence in Europe’ as long as the integration was mainly economic in nature, yielding economic benefits without threats to political sovereignty, but, when economic integration was completed and attention turned to political matters, the groups perceived a greater threat. With data on political and economic integration available over time, I also test these propositions and find that regionalist political parties are consistently Europhile across issue area, region and time. After this statistical analysis, which yields significant support for Hypothesis 1, I turn to the case study of Scotland. With this detailed study of Scottish National Party rhetoric, I demonstrate that it is in fact the viability logic that explains this consistent pro-EU position.

Data and methods

To evaluate these hypotheses, I utilize expert evaluations of party positions on the European Union as the dependent variable. Collected by scholars at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, the surveys request country experts to evaluate each party on several key questions, including each party’s position on European integration. Leonard Ray’s original survey covered the following years: 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1996 (Ray, 1999). The UNC Chapel Hill Center for European Studies replicated the surveys in 1999 and 2002 (Marks et al., 2006).² The values for this variable range along a seven-point scale from strongly opposed to European integration to strongly in favor. Following Marks et al. (2002), I rescale the variable from 0 to 1 for ease of interpretation.

Several factors contribute to the decision to use these particular data. Most significantly, the surveys cover a wide range of years and political parties, including 21 regionalist political parties across 5 West European countries. Neither the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge et al., 2001) nor inferred party positions from Eurobarometer individual-level surveys provide nearly this coverage of regionalist political parties because of their small national vote shares.³ Table 1 lists the parties from the UNC expert survey and their vote shares in the national election prior to the survey years. The table demonstrates that the majority of regionalist political parties are merely fringe parties at the national level. By not competing throughout the entire country, even larger regionalist political parties have relatively small national vote shares, which explains their exclusion from most data sets such as the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge et al., 2001).

Finally, when compared with other available data sets for the years collected, the expert surveys prove to be reliable and valid measures for

Table 1 Average national vote shares of regionalist political parties (1984–2002)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>National vote share</i>	<i>Elections contested</i>
Belgium	Francophone Democratic Front (FDF)	4.12	5
	ID21 (ID21)	0.00	1
	People's Union (VU)	6.61	6
Finland	Swedish People's Party (SFP)	5.23	6
Ireland	Sinn Fein (SF)	2.90	6
Italy	Northern League (LN)	5.77	6
	Sardinian Action Party (PsDA)	0.70	1
	South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP)	1.70	1
Spain	Andalusian Party (PA)	0.56	5
	Aragonese Regionalist Party (PAR)	0.12	5
	Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)	1.45	6
	Basque Solidarity (EA)	0.17	5
	Canarian Coalition (CC)	0.99	2
	Catalan Republican Left (ERC)	0.51	5
	Convergence and Union (CiU)	4.55	6
	Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG)	0.60	6
	Herri Batasuna (HB)	0.95	5
	Initiative for Catalonia (IC)	0.00	1
	Valencian Union (UV)	0.21	5
United Kingdom	Plaid Cymru (Cymru)	0.50	6
	Scottish National Party (SNP)	1.67	6

political party positions on European integration (Ray, 1999; Marks et al., 2002; Marks et al., forthcoming). This combination of practical availability and statistical reliability and validity makes the expert survey the best available data set for this research.

Analyzing the data

To evaluate the first two hypotheses, or whether regionalist political parties are Europhile or Euroskeptic, I initially compare the regionalist party family with other party families in Western Europe. Figure 1 demonstrates that regionalist political parties are consistently more pro-EU than are other small party families, such as the greens, the extreme left, or the extreme right, and nearly as favorable to European integration as mainstream party families, such as the Christian democrats, the liberals, and the socialists.

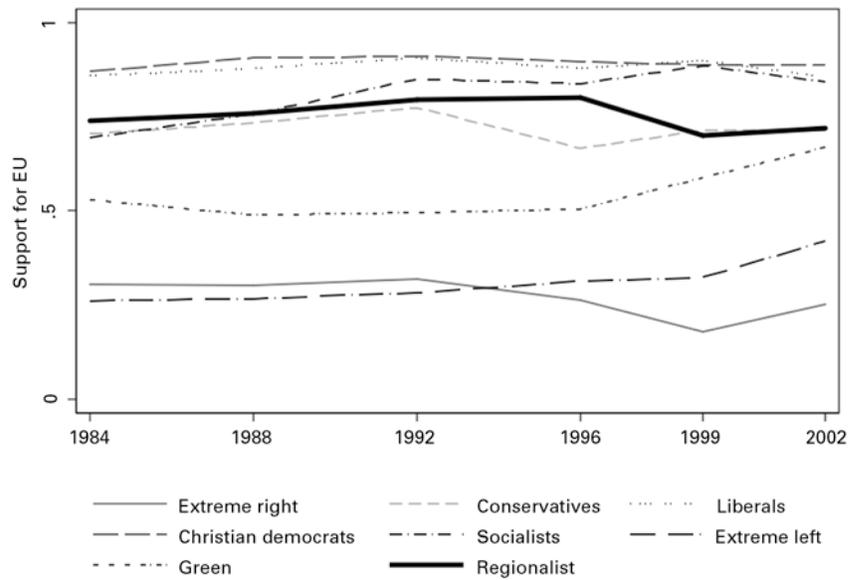


Figure 1 Support for the European Union by party family.

This graph merely shows the bivariate relationship, though, and does not control for other potential explanatory factors. Nevertheless, Figure 1 provides preliminary support for Hypothesis 1, which predicts that regionalist political parties will be strongly supportive of European integration.

To test the two hypotheses more systematically, I replicate a prominent earlier multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis on the attitudes of European party families toward European integration (Marks et al., 2002). The model is fairly straightforward, with several dummy variables included to explain variation among the party families, countries, and years. The other explanatory variables are *Median Supporter* position, *Left/Right Extremism*, *Electoral Support*, and *Government Participation*. Following Marks et al. (2002), *Median Supporter* position is interpolated from Eurobarometer data as the median position of self-identified party supporters. A higher *Median Supporter* position should be positively related to party position, because parties either cue or follow their voters (Carrubba, 2001). In the model, they operationalize 'mainstream' parties in three different ways, in terms of left-right ideological position, vote shares, and government inclusion (Marks et al., 2002: 588). *Left/right extremism* is measured as the squared distance between the particular party and the average position for all parties in the same country and year and is expected to be negatively related to support for European integration. *Electoral Support* is simply the party's vote share in the national election prior to the survey year, and *Government Participation* is

a dummy variable for whether the party has ever been in a government coalition since 1965. Both of these variables are predicted to be positively related to support for integration (Marks et al., 2002). These predictions follow the theoretical and empirical literature on party positioning on European integration.⁴

In Table 2, Model 1 simply replicates the earlier Marks et al. (2002) model.⁵ Notably, the series of party dummies are the strongest predictors, even more than the country dummies. The rest of the variables behave as predicted, except for *Government Participation*, which is insignificant. Considering the high correlation between vote share and government participation, in addition to the wide array of dummy variables, this result is not surprising despite the theoretical expectations.

This model explains much of the variation in party positioning on European integration, as reflected by the high adjusted R^2 ; however, for the purposes of this paper, it has a missing data problem that affects regionalist parties particularly adversely. *Median Supporter*, interpolated from Eurobarometer data, hits the small fringe parties hardest in terms of missing data for precisely the same reasons that inferring party positions from Eurobarometer data is problematic for small parties. The individual-level survey simply does not poll enough regional respondents who favor these small parties to yield usable data. For example, this variable drops 32% of the cases in the 1984–96 sample (174/545 parties), with 18% of these being regionalist parties, 14% green parties, and 6.4% extreme right. Overall, 45% of the regionalist parties drop from the regression model owing to missing data in the *Median Supporter* variable.

So, to increase the number of regionalist parties in the sample, I drop this variable in Model 2. The explanatory power of the model decreases, as measured by adjusted R^2 , but it is still quite high. Among the party family variables, only one change in significance occurs. The *Green* party dummy variable becomes significant with the exclusion of *Median Supporter*. As expected by Marks et al. (2002: 587), the model shows that the greens are slightly more favorable to European integration than are the reference category, the extreme left or the communists. Besides the *Green* variable, several country and year variables become insignificant, though generally of the same sign as in Model 1, but these variables have only minor effects on the dependent variable vis-à-vis the party family variables anyway. Importantly for this paper, the regionalist party family dummy remains positive and statistically significant with more cases.

In Model 3, I extend the time series using the most recent expert surveys (Marks et al., 2006).⁶ In general, the results of this model look very similar to those from the earlier period. Recalling that the reference category is the extreme left, the significant negative coefficient on the *Extreme Right* family

Table 2 Multivariate OLS analysis of party position on european integration

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Model 1</i> <i>1984–96</i>		<i>Model 2</i> <i>1984–96</i>		<i>Model 3</i> <i>1984–2002</i>	
	β	(S.E.)	β	(S.E.)	β	(S.E.)
<i>Party family</i>						
Extreme right	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.01	(0.05)	-0.09**	(0.04)
Conservative	0.15**	(0.05)	0.33**	(0.05)	0.23**	(0.04)
Liberal	0.36**	(0.04)	0.50**	(0.04)	0.41**	(0.03)
Christian democratic	0.36**	(0.05)	0.47**	(0.05)	0.39**	(0.04)
Social democratic	0.29**	(0.04)	0.40**	(0.04)	0.33**	(0.04)
Green	0.05	(0.05)	0.19**	(0.05)	0.20**	(0.04)
Regionalist	0.29**	(0.05)	0.38**	(0.05)	0.27**	(0.04)
Protestant	0.07	(0.05)	0.10	(0.05)	0.06	(0.04)
Agrarian	0.19**	(0.06)	0.34**	(0.07)	0.19**	(0.05)
<i>National location</i>						
Austria	-0.07	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.08)	0.06	(0.05)
Belgium	-0.07*	(0.03)	0.07	(0.04)	0.08**	(0.03)
Germany	-0.15**	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.05)	0.03	(0.04)
Greece	-0.01	(0.07)	0.14	(0.09)	0.11*	(0.05)
France	-0.21**	(0.04)	-0.08	(0.04)	-0.04	(0.04)
Finland	-0.10	(0.05)	-0.08	(0.06)	0.00	(0.04)
Ireland	-0.25**	(0.04)	-0.12*	(0.05)	-0.11**	(0.04)
Italy	-0.16**	(0.04)	0.06	(0.04)	0.07	(0.04)
Netherlands	-0.22**	(0.04)	-0.06	(0.04)	-0.03	(0.04)
Portugal	-0.28**	(0.07)	-0.14	(0.09)	-0.06	(0.05)
Spain	-0.12*	(0.05)	0.07	(0.06)	0.15**	(0.04)
Sweden	0.01	(0.05)	0.05	(0.06)	-0.01	(0.04)
UK	-0.12**	(0.04)	-0.06	(0.05)	-0.00	(0.04)
<i>Left/Right Extremism</i>	-0.60**	(0.15)	-0.92**	(0.17)	-0.87**	(0.14)
<i>Median Supporter</i>	0.78**	(0.07)	-	-	-	-
<i>Electoral Support</i>	0.004**	(0.001)	0.003**	(0.001)	0.002**	(0.001)
<i>Govt Participation</i>	-0.05	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)	0.07**	(0.02)
1984	-0.05*	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)
1988	-0.04	(0.02)	0.00	(0.03)	0.01	(0.03)
1992	-0.04	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.03)	0.00	(0.02)
1999	-	-	-	-	-0.02	(0.02)
2002	-	-	-	-	0.00	(0.02)
Constant	0.09	(0.05)	0.42	(0.05)	0.41	(0.04)
Adjusted R^2	0.80		0.70		0.65	
N	260		276		499	

Notes: Reference values for category variables are: communist/extreme left, Denmark, non-government party, and 1996.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

variable suggests that either the extreme left has moderated its position or the extreme right has become more extreme. Or, as Figure 1 graphically shows, both may have occurred. Another difference is that the *Government Participation* variable is now significant in the predicted positive direction. This result bolsters the theoretical arguments regarding mainstream parties being more supportive than fringe or outsider parties of European integration (Taggart, 1998; Marks et al., 2002).

But, although the regression results confirm the relative stability of the coefficients with the addition of new cases in the time series, they are difficult to interpret considering the number of variables in the model and the need to compare to the reference categories. Plus, the dummy variable coefficients do not incorporate the national (country or year) or electoral (*Electoral Support, Government Participation, Left/Right Extremism*) context in which each party resides. Thus, to compare the effects of the party dummy variables, and to rank order them simultaneously, I predicted party positions on European integration based on Model 3. Averaged by party family, I present these predicted values in Figure 2.

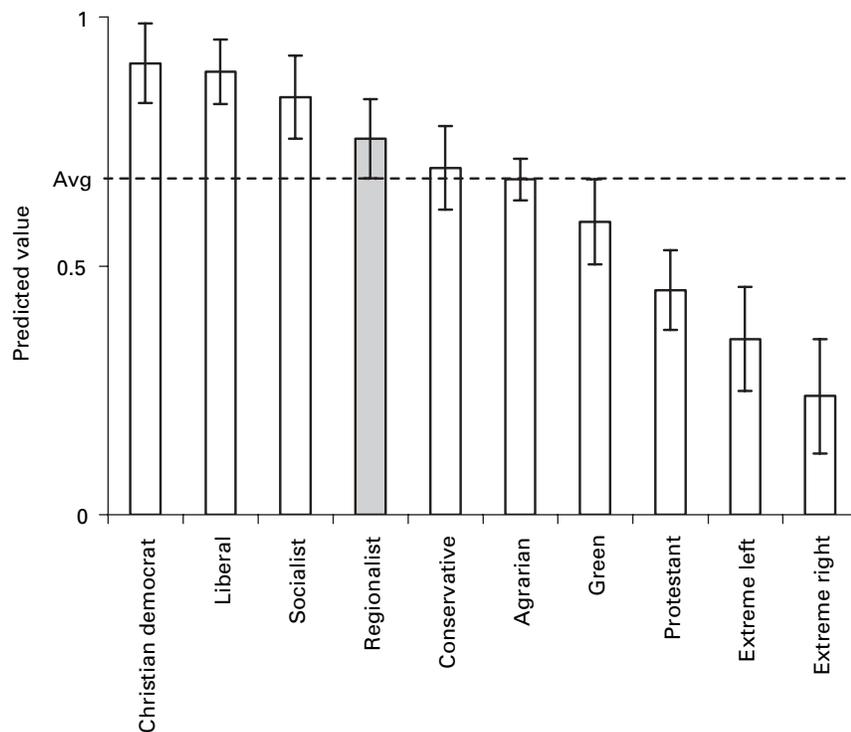


Figure 2 Predicted position on European integration, by party family.

This figure clearly demonstrates that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, regionalist political parties are highly supportive of the European Union and hold similar attitudes as the mainstream parties. And in fact, regionalist parties are more pro-European than the mainstream conservative parties. Based on Model 3, none of the other fringe parties are above the EU mean. The whisker, which reflects the standard deviation around the mean, also shows a tighter, more coherent party family, at least in support for European integration, than most other party families. Only the liberals and the agrarian parties have smaller standard deviations. Certainly, Euroskeptic outliers exist, such as Herri Batasuna in the Basque region of Spain. But Herri Batasuna is the most extreme left-wing regionalist party in Europe and actually the most left-wing party in Spain. Thus, *Left/Right Extremism*, one of the included predictors, explains this outlier.

Because the previous analysis relies on aggregated data at the party family level and pooled time series data, respectively, these results do not conclusively answer whether variation among regionalist political party positions occurs over time or across issue areas. To analyze the robustness of the *Regionalist* party family dummy variable over time, I split the sample by survey year and ran separate regressions for each year, based on Model 3 without the year dummy variables.⁷ In each regression, the *Regionalist* variable is significant and positive, except for 2002. In this case, as represented in Figure 1, regionalist parties and the reference category, extreme left parties, are closer together than in previous years, yielding a positive but statistically insignificant coefficient. More significantly, though, the rankings based on predicted values remain remarkably consistent. In each case, the regionalist family is the fourth most pro-EU party group, after liberals, social democrats and Christian democrats. Also, in each year, regionalists are above the EU average for all parties. This consistently strong support, compared with other fringe parties, demonstrates that the regionalist party family remains remarkably consistent in its Europhile positions over time.

In addition to time, it may be that variation in position for regionalist political parties occurs across issue areas. For instance, Marks et al. (2002: 587) contend that regionalist political parties will be strongly in favor of economic integration but only moderately supportive of political integration. To analyze the consistency in pro-EU attitudes across issue areas, I consider the party positions on three aspects of European integration – a general EU question, the powers of the European Parliament (EP), and the internal market.⁸ Not surprisingly, for all parties in Western Europe, these three aspects of integration are highly correlated. For example, the correlation coefficient between the EP and internal market questions is .68. Among regionalist parties, though, these correlations are even higher, with a correlation

coefficient of .96 between EP and internal market positions. This extremely high correlation suggests that, for these parties at least, support for political and economic integration go hand in hand. These simple statistics indicate that regionalist political parties are generally as consistent in their support for European integration across issue area as they are across time and space.

This data analysis yields several conclusions. First, I find that regionalist parties are in fact Europhiles, supporting Hypothesis 1. I do not find evidence to support the main alternative hypothesis according to which regionalist political parties seek to increase electoral support by mobilizing anti-EU sentiments (Hypothesis 2) or the null hypothesis that regionalist parties have no significant, consistent position on European integration. Second, I find little evidence to show that support for integration among regionalist political parties significantly varies across time, space or issue area. But although this analysis establishes the Europhile nature of regionalist parties, it does not clarify the causal mechanism underlying this relationship. In the next section of the paper, I explore the causal mechanism with a detailed case study of Scottish National Party rhetoric.

The SNP and the 'Independence in Europe' policy

To complement the cross-sectional analysis above, I consider the official positions of the Scottish National Party on European integration. The SNP provides fruitful ground for this research because it is not only one of the more electorally successful regionalist political parties but also one of the few that actively promotes independence. Following the logic outlined in *Designing Social Inquiry* (King et al., 1994), I maximize the observations in this case by looking at the evolving SNP position over time. Analysis of this single case may not confirm or disconfirm the main hypotheses, but it provides a 'plausibility probe' of the theory.

Consistent from the *Policy of the Scottish National Party of 1947* to the most recent election manifestos (Scottish National Party, various years), the Scottish National Party's main identifiable goal is independence from the United Kingdom.⁹ In the *Policy of the SNP (1947)* and the *Constitution and Rules of the SNP (1949)*, the aim is explicitly stated: 'Self-Government for Scotland – that is, the restoration of Scottish National Sovereignty by the establishment of a democratic Scottish government, freely elected by the Scottish people'. At this early stage, and in the aftermath of World War II, the realization that independent countries cannot escape international ties and commitments is apparent (Scottish National Party, 1947: 4). But, realizing that isolationism was not a viable strategy even at this early stage, the

SNP's international concerns centered on the British Isles for most issue areas rather than Europe.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s, the SNP's position on a 'European Union' shifted from a positive view to a negative one (Lynch, 1996: 27–30).¹⁰ In the 1960s and 1970s, the negative linkage can be traced to a lack of representation and fear of economic dislocation (see, for example, Scottish National Party, 1976). They feared that a common market would hurt Scotland and argued that Scotland needed independence prior to joining in order to negotiate the best possible deal for Scotland (Lynch, 1996: 31). In the 1974 pamphlet *SNP & You*, the SNP complained particularly that the EU was 'highly bureaucratic, centralist, and undemocratic – remote from the control of ordinary people' (Scottish National Party, 1974c: 6). This rhetoric is very consistent with the expectations of Hypothesis 2. However, since the Labour Party was pro-EU and electorally dominant in Scotland, it also corresponds to the strategic theories regarding fringe parties, which suggest that fringe parties will take extreme positions to differentiate themselves from their more popular competitors.

By 1979, the SNP was softening its anti-EU stance. But complaints about the European Union were more specific in the 1979 election manifesto. Consistent with later manifestos, the SNP complained that the European Union had tried to 'virtually take over Scotland's fishing grounds' (1979: 5). The SNP also complained about unfair subsidized agricultural competition from other EU member countries (1979: 8). But, in the conclusion, the party endorsed negotiations with the European Union to resolve these complaints and guarantee Scottish control of energy resources and fishing limits (1979: 28). Only if such negotiations failed would the SNP oppose membership in a referendum campaign.

The 1987 party manifesto shows a remarkably different stance on European integration (Scottish National Party, 1987). Although the SNP continued to warn against centralist tendencies in Brussels, it recommended membership in the European Union. Perhaps because of the major change in policy, the SNP listed several reasons why it supported membership in the European Union for an independent Scotland. Noting the influence and availability of regionalist and social funds, it demanded a direct voice within the EU, which would be achieved by independence within the European Union. Beyond securing funds and support, the SNP guaranteed protection for the fishery industry as well as other Scottish interests, such as agriculture and industry (Sillars, 1986: 187; Scottish National Party, 1987). Finally, a seat at the table would allow Scotland to contribute more to European affairs (Scottish National Party, 1987).

In addition to these reasons, party elites saw the issue as a way to distance themselves from the Tories, a sharp contrast to the strategic logic of anti-EU

rhetoric in the 1970s (Lynch, 1996: 38–9). Utilizing the viability logic, Jim Sillars, a former SNP MP, argued that only by endorsing a strategy of ‘Independence in Europe’ could the SNP credibly argue that independence from the UK was a viable option (Sillars, 1986: 186). This policy would guarantee mobility of labor and trade between Scotland and England after independence, thus negating a key argument of independence opponents. These factors contributed to the SNP’s newfound support for European integration.

The SNP’s policy of ‘Independence in Europe’ was in full swing by the regional elections of 1990, with the 1990 manifesto making it clear that the EU is at the heart of the SNP independence strategy: ‘Scotland’s future lies as an independent member of the European Community. . . . we can and must achieve the premier league status of an independent and equal partner in the European family of nations’ (Scottish National Party, 1990). More recent manifestos continue the push for ‘Independence in Europe’, including a defense of the SNP’s ‘Independence in Europe’ policy, in which it claimed that legal opinion supports its assumption that an independent Scotland would continue to be part of the European Union, as a successor state (Scottish National Party, 1992, 1997).

But it is in the 1997 manifesto that the viability argument becomes most evident. Noting the success of small European countries and of small countries in general (‘25 out of the 35 most prosperous nations are *small* nations!’), along with a presumed favorable distribution of North Sea oil revenue after independence, the SNP highlights that an independent Scotland would be the eighth-richest nation in the world.

In the 2000s, the SNP continues to support membership in the EU, but also reject the possibility of a super-state headquartered in Brussels (Scottish National Party, 2001). In the 2001 manifesto especially, the European Union receives much more attention than it had in previous manifestos. Although the ‘SNP stands for Scotland in Europe’ and it admits real advantages in membership, the SNP outlines areas in which it would not support further policy shifts to the European level, including natural resources and taxation.

Significantly, though, the SNP pays great attention to its potential representation effectiveness within the EU for an independent Scotland compared with a region of the UK, in terms of Commissioners, members of the European Parliament, and the Council of Ministers (2001, 2003). This lack of representation at the EU level became more significant in the run-up to the EU Constitution. In fact, the SNP opposed the Constitution in part because it lacked effective representation in one of its key issues, the Common Fisheries Policy (2005b). These positions suggest that I should revisit the question of whether support varies across issue areas in future expert surveys of party positions.

Over time, the official SNP position on European integration evolved from opposition to support. Throughout the era of support, though, the SNP continued to point out areas of disagreement with the EU. However, rather than return to opposition, it focused on the ability of an independent Scotland to challenge those policies only as a full-fledged independent member of the European Union. Consistent with the size of nations or viability logic, it argued that small states can succeed and even thrive in an interdependent Europe, providing support for theories underlying Hypothesis 1.

Conclusion

Unlike other fringe parties in Western Europe, regionalist parties are Europhile. They are pro-EU across time and issue area. The existence of this Europhile fringe party family contradicts the expectations of the mainstream versus fringe party theories on support for European integration. Ideologically, regionalist parties locate across the left-right spectrum and they are rarely included in governments. Yet, as a family, they are consistently pro-EU. These conclusions are, however, consistent with the theoretical predictions of this paper and earlier work on cleavage theory (Marks et al., 2002), as well as the qualitative work on regionalist political parties (Lynch, 1996; Kurzer, 1997).

But why is this party family different from other fringe parties? In the case of Scotland, regional elites clearly favor European integration because it creates a more favorable political opportunity structure for their subnational autonomy movements. This finding bolsters earlier work on Scottish citizens that finds Europhiles as well as instrumental Europeans among the population (Haesly, 2001). In his Q-sort experiment, Haesly finds some Scots to be Europhiles, or to have a European self-identity, whereas others were merely instrumental Europeans. As with the Scottish National Party, support among instrumental European Scots derives from the perception that European integration delivers economic benefits or potentially even provides an opportunity for Scotland to be an independent nation (Haesly, 2001). Both the statistical results and the in-depth analysis of Scottish National Party rhetoric confirm that regionalist parties may also be fairly characterized as instrumental Europeans, if not Europhiles.

A supranational organization and subnational autonomy movements may seem strange bedfellows, but instrumentally their interests align. Regionalist elites will continue to utilize European integration to increase the legitimacy and validity of their movements, and, in a context of constitutional crisis at

the European Union level, Euro-enthusiasts will no doubt appreciate support from an unlikely source.

Notes

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- 1 In historical terms, several factors encouraged economically larger states, including market size, economies of scale for public goods, insurance for regional economic shocks, and security (Alesina and Spolaore, 2003). But each of these advantages of large states vis-à-vis small states is diminished within the supranational structure of the European Union (Jolly, 2006). According to Alesina and Spolaore, then, the optimal size of a state 'emerges from a trade-off between the benefits of scale and the costs of heterogeneity in the population' (2003: 175). With fewer benefits of large state size, European regions may see themselves as more capable of providing sustained economic growth than the traditional nation-states (Newhouse, 1997: 69), yielding political separatism as an unintended consequence of economic integration (Alesina and Spolaore, 1997: 1042).
- 2 For more technical information on the data set as well as access to the data, codebooks, and questionnaire, see <http://www.unc.edu/~gwmmarks>. I conducted the data analysis with Stata9.
- 3 Whereas the expert survey attempts to include any party in the most recent election, the Manifesto Project includes only electorally significant parties. Although regionalist political parties are often significant electoral contenders at the regional level, even for national offices, their aggregate national vote totals are generally too low to warrant inclusion in the data set. Thus, not even relatively significant regionalist political parties, such as the Scottish National Party or the Plaid Cymru in the United Kingdom, are included (Budge et al., 2001). Similarly, the Eurobarometer and other multinational surveys do not yield sufficient survey respondents in each region to allow for a study of regionalist political parties. Thus, as with manifesto data, the logistical problems complicate, or even preclude, any analysis of regionalist political parties' views using Eurobarometer survey data.
- 4 Empirically, mainstream parties, or parties in the government, are relatively absent from lists of 'soft' or 'hard' Euroskeptic parties in Western Europe (Taggart, 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001). Mark Aspinwall (2002) argues

that centrist parties support the EU as a 'fait accompli' and perceive it as a positive development in European history; the extreme left and right oppose European integration for different reasons. Extreme left-wing parties oppose the EU on the basis of either 'old politics' anti-market socialism or 'new politics' anti-centralist activism, whereas right-wing parties oppose any attempts to diminish the state's autonomy, in cultural or economic terms (Aspinwall, 2002: 86–7).

- 5 Carole Wilson graciously provided her data and code to replicate their results. The only minor difference between the replicated results, as shown in Model 1, and the original model is the sign of the *Government Participation* variable and the constant. I flipped the reference category in the dummy variable coding for government participation, so that 1 is government participation and 0 is non-government party, for ease of interpretation. In the original, the coefficient represents non-government parties, with government parties as the reference category. Since the coefficient is statistically insignificant in their model, the point is minor, but, considering the perfect match of the rest of the replication, worth mentioning.
- 6 Beyond these two extensions, I considered other improvements to the Marks et al. (2002) model. A look at the dependent variable in a histogram shows that the variable may be censored at the endpoints. To correct for this problem, I ran Model 3 again with Tobit. In addition, OLS assumes independence across units, but this is unlikely to be the case considering the importance of national context. Hence, I ran the model with robust standard errors, clustered at the country level. The results were robust across these alternative specifications, so I presented the OLS results for comparability with the replicated model.
- 7 These models and predicted value tables are available upon request or are replicable from the expert survey data, simply by using Model 3 and splitting the sample by year.
- 8 In the survey, experts evaluate party positions on several EU issues, including European Parliament, internal market and several policies, including on employment, agriculture, cohesion, the environment, asylum, and foreign affairs. None of the questions directly corresponds to either economic or political integration per se, but the internal market question seems closest to 'negative integration' and the EP question may serve as a proxy for extending political integration.

The wording of the questions is as follows:

General EU: 'First, how would you describe the general position on European integration that the party's leadership has taken over the course of 2002?'

European Parliament: 'First, take the position of the party leadership on the powers of the European Parliament. Some parties want more powers for the European Parliament. Other parties are opposed to expanding further the powers of the European Parliament. Where does the leadership of the following parties stand?'

Internal market: 'Next consider the internal market. Some parties wish to strengthen EU powers to eliminate market barriers (i.e. free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor). Other parties oppose strengthening EU powers in this area. Where does the leadership of the following parties stand?'

- 9 The most recent SNP manifestos are available at the SNP website (www.snp.org). SNP headquarters provided copies of the manifestos from 1979 to 1992. Earlier official documents were obtained directly from the National Library of Scotland.
- 10 Over time, the nomenclature of the European Union as used by the Scottish National Party changes from the European Economic Community or the Common Market to the European Community to the European Union. For ease of reading, I use European Union throughout.

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