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Ethno-regionalist parties and their voters: A cross-national perspective

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Abstract

The recent developments in Scotland and in Catalonia have emphasised the increasing weight of ethno-regionalist parties and their voters in the national political arena. Especially in the European Union, where the inclusion of regional entities in the decision-making process is increasingly promoted, ethno-regionalist parties have gained in popularity. While the academic literature has so far mainly focused on defining regionalism and ethno-regionalist parties, on explaining the electoral success of these parties and on describing the favourable grounds for such movements to grow, the demand-side perspective has been largely overlooked. The present research thus directs the attention to the voters of these parties and investigates to what extent their electoral behaviour differs from the behaviour of state-wide party voters. Using the European Values Study 2008, I show how the choice of ethno-regionalist parties is principally determined by the individual position on the centre-periphery dimension, which I have based on the feeling of closeness to a particular geographical entity. The results also suggest that the centre-periphery dimension is a useful criterion to distinguish between ethno-regionalist and state-wide party voters; this confirms that the centre-periphery conflict line continues to structure the party competition in areas with a strong regionalist reality.

Keywords: ethno-regionalist parties, state-wide parties, centre-periphery cleavage, regionalism, subnational identity, electoral behaviour, issue dimensions.

Die jüngsten Entwicklungen in Schottland und Katalonien haben das zunehmende Gewicht ethnoregionalistischer Parteien und ihrer Wähler in der nationalen politischen Arena deutlich gemacht. Insbesondere in der Europäischen Union, wo die Einbeziehung regionaler Einheiten in den Entscheidungsprozess zunehmend gefördert wird, haben ethnoregionalistische Parteien an Popularität gewonnen. Während sich die akademische Literatur bisher hauptsächlich auf die Definition von Regionalismus und ethnoregionalistischen Parteien, auf den Wahlerfolg dieser Parteien und auf das Wachstum solcher Bewegungen konzentriert hat, wurde die Perspektive der Nachfrageseite weitgehend außer Acht gelassen. Die vorliegende Untersuchung lenkt daher die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Wähler dieser Parteien und untersucht, inwieweit sich ihr Wahlverhalten von dem der Wähler staatsweiter Parteien unterscheidet. Anhand der European Values Study 2008 zeige ich, wie die Wahl ethnoregionalistischer Parteien hauptsächlich durch die individuelle Position auf der Zentrum-Peripherie-Dimension bestimmt wird, die auf dem Verbundenheitsgefühl zu einem geografischen Raum basiert. Die Ergebnisse deuten auch darauf hin, dass die Zentrum-Peripherie-Dimension ein nützliches Kriterium ist, um zwischen den Wählern von ethnoregionalistischen und staatsweiten Parteien zu unterscheiden; dies weist darauf hin, dass die Zentrum-Peripherie-Konfliktlinie weiterhin den Parteienwettbewerb in Gebieten mit einer starken regionalistischen Realität strukturiert.

Schlagwörter: ethnoregionalistische Parteien, staatsweite Parteien, Konfliktlinie Zentrum-Peripherie, Regionalismus, subnationale Identität, Wahlverhalten, Issue-Dimensionen.

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List of abbreviations¹

BNG	Bloque nacionalista galego/Bloque Nacionalista Gallego (Galician Nationalist Bloc)
CC	Coalición Canaria (Canarian Coalition)
CHES	Chapel Hill Expert Survey
CiU	Convergència i Unió/Convergencia y Unión (Convergence and Union)
CMP	Comparative Manifesto Project
DPS	Dvizhenie za Prava i Svobodi (Movement for Rights and Freedoms)
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EAE-ANV	Eusko Abertzale Ekintza/Acción Nacionalista Vasca (Basque Nationalist Action)
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya/Izquierda Republicana de Cataluña (Republican Left of Catalonia)
EVS	European Values Study
FMI	Fraction Missing Information
K-EUR	Konstitutsioonierakond/Конституционная партия (Estonian Constitution Party)
LLRA	Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija (Lithuanian Polish Election Action)
LN	Lega Nord (Northern League)
MKP-SMK	Magyar koalíció pártja/Strana maďarskej koalície (Party of the Hungarian Coalition)
N-VA	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (New Flemish Alliance)
PA	Partido Andalucista (Andalucian Party)
PC	Plaid Cymru/The Party of Wales
PNV	Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea/Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)
RVI	Relative Variance Increase
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SF/IE	Sinn Féin/Sinn Fein (Republic of Ireland)
SF/NIR	Sinn Féin/Sinn Fein (Northern Ireland)

¹ Abbreviations, official party names and their translation taken from Döring and Manow (2021) and other academic sources used in the thesis.

SFP-RKP	Svenska Folkepartiet i Finland/Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland)
SNP	Scottish Nationalist Party
SVP	Südtiroler Volkspartei/Partito Popolare Sudtirolese (South Tyrol People's Party)
UDMR	Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség/Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania)
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
VB	Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)

1.Introduction

This master thesis is going to focus on the voters of ethno-regionalist parties and investigate which issue dimensions define their electoral behaviour, and to what extent they do so. Besides the other major party families that have emerged along the Rokkanian cleavage lines (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), we can observe the emergence of a group of non-state wide parties in Europe that build their electoral success on the division centre-periphery, thus developing a strong regional identity and focusing on the promotion of specific local interests. Their definition varies to a great extent in the academic literature – peripheral parties (Alonso 2012), regional parties (Cartrite and Miodownik 2016), or also stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (Hepburn 2009) – yet most studies seem to use the notion ‘ethno-regionalism’ when discussing this group of non-state wide parties. In this thesis, I will therefore make use of the definition provided by Fagerholm who identifies an ethno-regionalist party as *"a party that is a member of at least one of the two interrelated sets of (i) parties that serve the particular interests of one or a few ethnic categories and (ii) parties demanding some kind of territorial self-government"* (Fagerholm 2016, 308).

The importance of studying ethno-regionalist parties and their potential of attraction can be explained by the weight this party family has in various European countries, such as Spain, Scotland, Belgium, Romania and many others. Several studies have indicated that the European Union has increasingly promoted the inclusion of regional entities in the decision-making process and thus empowered their role not only in the European political space, but also in the national arena (De Winter and Türsan 2003; Jolly 2007, 2015). Jolly (2007, 2015) has advanced the ‘viability logic’ to explain this phenomenon, that *"lies at the heart of regionalist Europhilia"* (Jolly 2007, 111): the European Union (EU) countervails national sovereignty and allows for the coexistence of multiple subnational groups with different identities. The recent developments in Catalonia and in Scotland have demonstrated that claims of self-determination, here in the form of secession, are ideally realised within the European framework. In these two regions, the political parties fighting for the ‘Independence within Europe’ have recognised the potential that the EU holds to protect their rights and differing identities (Anderson and Keil 2016). They are empowered by the EU, and thus gain in influence and in ability to defend the specific interests of their constituencies.

Political representation and the policy congruence between citizens and their representatives have often been identified as the two basic principles of democracy, and can also serve as an indicator of democratic quality (Rosema, Denters, and Kees 2011). In this context, ethno-regionalist parties as intermediary actors are relevant, because they promote the specific interests of those citizens who feel neglected by state-wide parties and thus seek another form of representation at the regional or European level.

1.1 Research questions

My overall aim is to assess what encourages citizens in regions with a strong subnational identity to prefer an ethno-regionalist over a state-wide party. More concretely, the questions I would like to address in this thesis is which issue dimensions determine the choice of ethno-regionalist parties, and assess whether the association between issue dimensions and party choice could help to refine the notion of ethno-regionalist party voters. My objective is to conduct a cross-national study, including the European countries where a significant regionalist reality is present. The research questions are thus the following:

Which issue dimensions determine the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters? And to what extent is their electoral behaviour different from the rest of the electorate?

The research questions have an exploratory and a confirmatory scope. Firstly, the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters has, to my knowledge, never been studied in a comparative manner at the European level. If the results are satisfactory, the profile of the European ethno-regionalist party voter could be better defined. The academic literature has in this regard focused largely on defining regionalism and ethno-regionalist parties, on explaining the reasons for the electoral success of these parties and on describing the favourable grounds for such movements to grow (Jolly 2015; Mazzoleni and Müller 2017; De Winter and Türsan 2003). Thereby, the demand-side perspective has been overlooked to a large extent. Secondly, it will be examined to what extent the economic, socio-cultural and centre-periphery issue dimensions have a determinant influence on voting, an approach previously assumed by Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim (2015) in comparing subnational elections in Catalonia and Québec.

The dependent variable of this thesis is the electoral behaviour or party choice, that is to say whether a person voted or not for an ethno-regionalist party. I will test if this party choice is determined by the relevance of certain issues among ethno-regionalist party voters, which are not as prevalent to voters of state-wide parties. Starting from the premise that the political space is multidimensional, I follow the large strand of literature that suggests that different ideological dimensions define the electoral behaviour. Besides socio-cultural and economic ideological factors, that are generally accepted determinants of vote choice (Kriesi et al. 2008b), scholars have observed the effect of a third dimension which helps to explain the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters (Lancaster and Lewis-Beck 1989; Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim 2015). Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim (2015) propose a three-dimensional ideological model of vote choice, assuming that the centre-periphery, economic and socio-cultural ideological dimensions equally determine the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters. While they assume that each one has a determining and independent influence on the voting behaviour, in my analysis I consider the possibility that the axes have different effect sizes. Premised on the findings by Massetti and Schakel (2015) and Alonso (2012), I will test whether centre-periphery is indeed the principal dimension of political competition for ethno-regionalist parties and consequently for their voters. I thus argue that, compared to the voters of state-wide parties, the voters of ethno-regionalist parties orient themselves at an additional ideological dimension when thinking about their party preferences. Given that their electoral behaviour is a rather understudied area, the added value of this thesis is that it aims at providing a better understanding of the contextual dimensions that determine voting behaviour. By assuming that ‘ethno-regionalist’ voting behaviour is different from ‘state-wide’ voting behaviour, this study attempts to illustrate what factors are decisive in this distinction. Building on the existing literature on the determinants of vote choice, it will be verified if the addition of this third ideological dimension could help to better explain the vote motivations of ethno-regionalist party voters.

In reference to Pitkin (1967), I take the concept of substantive representation as a starting point because I presume that ethno-regionalist parties act in the interest of the represented. Other studies have also examined the promotion of forms of descriptive representation when it comes to the engagement of minority groups in the national legislature, as the elected share some characteristics with the electorate, such as

ethnicity, geographical origin, language or culture. The minority candidates would communicate with their constituents through their common minority experience and simultaneously feel responsible to act on their behalf (Sobolewska, McKee, and Campbell 2018). While keeping in mind the high explanatory capacity of the criterion of shared experience, I will in the present case focus on substantive representation which is an ‘acting for’ form of representation: it implies that citizens make their vote choice based on parties’ policy positions, and not based on similarities with the representatives. Further, it is very complex to find empirical proof for descriptive representation, especially when the units of analysis are not state-wide parties and are thus not equally represented in every region of the state.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The present thesis is structured in seven chapters. After this first introductory section, I will delve into the theoretical considerations that provide the background to the analysis. Starting with the classical cleavage theories, I will explain how the contemporary political space is structured and to what extent the territorial dimension of party competition impacts regional realities. In spite of the decline of the predictive power of the traditional political cleavages, I argue that the centre-periphery cleavage has turned into a proper ideological dimension that can help explain voting behaviour, along with the socio-cultural and the economic dimension. Next, I will synthesise the three guiding hypotheses, which regard the dimensionality of the political space of ethno-regionalist party voters, the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on party choice, and the interaction effect between the socio-cultural and the centre-periphery dimension. In the fourth chapter, I will clarify what data I will use for the empirical analysis and why, describe the categorisation of the political parties and spell out the operationalisation of the issue dimensions. Subsequently, I will discuss the empirical analysis, first by relying on descriptive statistics and then on multivariate statistics. By using a logistic regression model, I will lay out the conclusions I can draw from the calculations. The final results will then be discussed in more detail in the final two chapters in order to wrap up the investigation and reflect on the findings.

2. Theoretical considerations

Following Kriesi et al. (2008b) and other scholars who have analysed the dimensionality of the contemporary political space (Alonso 2012; Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim 2015; Wagner and Kritzing 2012), one can assume that the structure of the political space has a determining impact on party strategies and voting behaviour. For this reason, in this section I will first describe the emergence of the centre-periphery conflict by relying on the classical cleavage theories. Then, I will explain whether and to what extent this conflict impacts the political competition between state-wide and ethno-regionalist parties and electoral choices. By elaborating on the use of ideological dimensions to analyse voting behaviour, I will show why it is important to include the centre-periphery dimension, next to the economic and socio-cultural dimension, when discussing the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters.

2.1 Cleavage theory and the territorial dimension of party competition

Are ethno-regionalist parties different from state-wide parties? By the same token, to what extent are ethno-regionalist party voters different from voters of state-wide parties? The main hypothesis underlying this thesis is that in territories with a prominent regional identity the centre-periphery conflict is particularly strong, influencing parties' positioning in the policy space and simultaneously the electoral behaviour of voters. The redefinition of interests along territorial lines goes back to the classical cleavage theories, which explain the emergence of national party systems as a response to the materialisation of dividing conflict lines in society. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identify four critical lines of cleavage underlying party support. Historically, the Industrial revolution provoked conflicts between the 'landed interests' and the industrial entrepreneurs, and between owners/employers and labourers. The so-called National revolution, on the other hand, generated conflicts between the nation state and the church, and between the 'central nation-building culture' and the 'subject population'. Along these four lines of cleavage, political parties were eventually formed to safeguard the interests of their constituencies. The scholars identify cleavages on the basis of three characteristics: 1) the constitutional basis is the division between social groups; 2) the social groups recognise their collective identity; 3) the structural division is organised coherently by a political actor who is willing to politically represent the constituency

and thus translate the cleavage into politics. These features can help recognise new conflict lines that structure contemporary politics.

This created the basic structure of party competition in Europe. The classical cleavages were frequently used to explain partisan alignment and party preferences because they reflected the ideological divisions in Western societies. The competing social groups provided a coherent electoral base for the political parties, where workers for instance were attracted by the political programme of social democratic parties. Cleavage-based voting thus predicted a certain electoral stability; Lipset and Rokkan (1967) described Western party systems as 'frozen' when talking about their durability. However, the ongoing transformations of contemporary industrial democracies induced a gradual decline of the predictive power of the traditional political cleavages. While social-group-based voting as a whole has become less useful in examining partisan preferences, the constant decline of class and religious voting has been especially important in the second half of the 20th century (Dalton 1996). The emergence of new issues contributed significantly to the erosion of the traditional cleavages, which partially lost their ability in explaining electoral behaviour. This was accompanied by dynamics of secularisation, the rise of globalisation and the diffusion of education and knowledge, which set in motion a process of far-reaching value change. Labour market transformations and changes in societal class structures additionally contributed to blur the lines between the competing social groups, thus reconfiguring the political space (Albright 2010; Best 2011; Kriesi 1998; Kriesi et al. 2008a). The electorate decreasingly identifies with fixed social categories, meaning that *"fewer people are integrated into stable and bounded social structures"* (Dalton 1996, 331), which implies that other exogenous factors have become more decisive for vote choice than long-term party attachments, notably the emergence of new issues as environmental protection and immigration.

To capture these novel political dynamics, the traditional left-right dimension has revealed itself insufficient. Although it is still frequently used for comparative purposes between party and voter positions, Albright (2010) has shown that it has become increasingly difficult to summarise voter-party linkages with the standard left-right scale. It does capture positions on class and religious cleavages but is at the same time less useful to describe regional, linguistic or similar conflicts. Further, the above-mentioned systemic changes have instigated political parties to take rather vague

ideological stances to keep the traditional electoral base and attract new potential voters. In practice, it has become increasingly difficult to locate a party on the standard left-right scale since political competitions has become too complex to be condensed into one axis. Albright thus suggests that additional policy dimensions are necessary to complement the ‘classical axis of competition’.

2.1.1 Ideological dimensions to explain voting behaviour

As evidenced in the previous paragraphs, it appears plausible that the determinants of voting behaviour have changed since the seminal contributions of Lipset and Rokkan. The question which needs to be addressed now is how we can analyse contemporary patterns of electoral choice. Dalton (1996) argues that, in spite of the above-mentioned transformations of the political space, political and social divisions continue to exist in Western societies and that political parties build their platforms around these party differences on the relevant socio-economic issues. Although the influence of social group identity originating in the political cleavages has diminished, the issues associated with these cleavages have become pivotal for voting choices. For instance, the author shows that economic issues or the abortion issue continue to be linked to partisanship, irrespective of the decreasing strength of long-term party attachments. The electorate has become more volatile and responds more to short-term factors, like candidate images and issue position, rather than to the traditional group-based appeals (Dalton 1996).

Similarly, Kriesi et al. (2008b) do not reject the classical cleavage theories, but conclude that the conflict lines identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) can be reduced to a socio-cultural and an economic dimension, and that these dimensions are still relevant in today’s societies. The new emerging structuring conflicts would merely transform the meaning of the two dimensions and not substitute them. In this view, they perceive the political space as two-dimensional where past political conflicts are related to the emergence of novel cleavages. The authors see globalisation as having a revolutionary impact on our political space, as it does not have the same consequences for all citizens, but divides them into two opposing groups. The ‘losers’ of globalisation feel threatened by the effects of globalisation, such as the weakening of national boundaries. Conversely, the winners of globalisation benefit from these effects in terms of new opportunities and enhanced mobility. Kriesi et al. (2008b) term this new

antagonism an opposition between ‘integration and demarcation’, contrasting defensive/protectionist and more open/integrationist positions. The translation of this conflict into politics relies on the militancy of political parties, which thereby occupy a crucial role in restructuring the political space. More specifically, the parties’ strategic choices are strongly related to the changing preferences of voters, provoked by the ongoing globalisation processes, and they act in view of mobilising the citizens’ vote.

Taking these considerations into account, it appears evident that vote choice cannot be analysed without reflecting on economic and socio-cultural issues. Furthermore, the fact that the unidimensional left-right scale has proven unsuitable to capture all the complexities of political competition reinforces the assumption of a multidimensional political space. Massetti and Schakel (2015) empirically show that the unsuitability of the left-right scale for comparing political behaviour holds also true for ethno-regionalist parties. By tracking their ideological positioning during the years 1970-2010, they find that the parties position themselves all along the left-right spectrum. This implies that the classical left-right scale cannot serve as good measure of comparison between ethno-regionalist parties and thus does not typify the ethno-regionalist party family. In fact, the authors propose that the left-right orientations of ethno-regionalist parties are context-dependent and are affected by the relative region’s economic status: ethno-regionalist parties in poorer regions may support a more left-wing ideology, relating to the ‘internal-colonialism’ type of regionalism, where the low economic development is traced back to the wrongdoings of the central state. Ethno-regionalist parties in richer regions, on the other hand, may be more attracted by a right-wing neo-liberal discourse and refer to an ideal-type of ‘bourgeois-regionalism’, which is based on the idea of exploitation by the state. The economic conditions of the region where the party competes electorally are therefore significant in producing a particular type of regionalist discourse and are a decisive factor in the relations between the periphery and the centre. Ethno-regionalist parties thus subsume the left-right dimension into centre-periphery politics, by ‘framing’ traditional left-right issues, such as just economic development or capitalism, in terms of the political opposition between the centre and the periphery. The two paradigmatic cases Massetti and Schakel (2015) discuss are the Italian Lega Nord and the Scottish National Party (SNP). The former is active in a relatively wealthy region and is thus predisposed to oppose state intervention in the economy and the redistribution of resources in a solidaristic manner. It thereby

combines anti-tax, pro-business and pro-market positions, with demands for structural reforms and fiscal autonomy. The SNP, in turn, seeks to represent the concerns of a poorer region that partially depends on the state and its promotion of regional development. Issues like public investments and welfare expansion are emphasised, while the state is condemned for hampering the economic progress. In this context, centre-periphery constitutes the core dimension of political competition for ethno-regionalist parties, whereas left-right forms the secondary dimension; in other words, the location on the secondary dimension is contingent on the positioning on the core dimension.

In a similar way, other authors suggest that the centre-periphery cleavage defines the political space in societies with strong regional identities and that it is one of the relevant issue dimensions, along which ethno-regionalist parties position themselves (Elias, Szöcsik, and Zuber 2015; Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim 2015). Alonso (2012) speaks of peripheral parties to indicate those political actors, who stand in opposition to the centre and promote specific territorial demands: *"they want political control over the peripheral territory that they claim to represent. According to their view, this territory is, by history and culture, different to the rest of the state territory and, therefore, should be treated as different and should be allowed to remain different"* (Alonso 2012, 1). In reaction to their electoral growth since the Second World War, some state parties strategically adapted their policy programmes and devoted more attention to issues of regional autonomy and political devolution, issues which had previously been monopolised by peripheral parties. As an example, Alonso cites Belgium which formally became a federal state only in 1993. Its post-war institutional structure had had significant unitary traits and which were then progressively substituted with major federal elements. In spite of the fact that the peripheral parties initiated the reforms of political devolution, other political actors adopted their political agenda and advanced their demands, for tactical electoral reasons. Incorporating these pro-periphery issues into the agenda of mainstream parties is primarily a means to expand the electoral base, or in some cases a necessary move to appease the electoral conflict. Peripheral parties similarly behave as vote-maximising actors to keep up with their political competitors, meaning that they intend winning as many votes as possible to expand their leverage power. Although their precise 'constitutive mission' did initially set them apart from other party families, the dynamics of electoral competitions required them to adapt and

diversify their offer in a certain sense (Alonso 2012). To be able to compete in electoral contests, ethno-regionalist parties have thus adopted a multi-dimensional ideology, in the sense that they learned to position themselves on more than one issue dimension (De Winter and Türsan 2003). Alonso has identified three ways peripheral parties have diversified their issue portfolio: converging towards the issue profile of state parties, campaigning on previously neglected non-mainstream issues, such as the environment, or emphasising valence issues, like corruption issues. Once they additionally focus on policies beyond the centre-periphery conflict, they start extending their issue repertoire and address those questions that fall outside their traditional area of competence, in other words questions that do not regard only the regional empowerment but relate to the whole political system (Alonso 2012).

2.2 The centre-periphery dimension

In light of these reflections, I hypothesise that regional party politics in Europe are structured along three dominant issue dimensions, which are important in determining voters' electoral behaviour as they are provided with a set of options to choose from. In this three-dimensional space, I will examine whether and to what extent the centre-periphery dimension prevails over the other dimensions for voters of ethno-regionalist parties. The academic literature suggests that it constitutes the 'core ideology', or even the *raison d'être* of these parties, inducing them to prioritise centre-periphery issues in their political agendas (Alonso 2012; Massetti and Schakel 2015). Unlike the other traditional conflict lines, the centre-periphery cleavage has persisted over time, and I hypothesise that it has turned into a concrete issue dimension, exercising a determining impact on vote choice. Various factors explain this temporal persistence, or re-emergence in some cases, of the ethno-territorial conflict, which has strengthened the effect of social identity on voting in certain regions. As discussed above, while the decline of religious and class voting over the second half of the 20th century has been shown, I suggest that social-group-based voting is still very present in societies with strong regional identities. Türsan (2003) argues that identity politics have again become a mobilising force in the post-Cold war era. More often than not, ethnicity is the trigger for intra-state conflicts which result in unstable political regimes. Even if nationalist sentiments have been somewhat contained in Europe, the implications of this "*second wave of ethnic revival*" (Türsan 2003, 2) are still tangible. Regionalism and ethnicity are increasingly relevant in some political systems, such as Spain or the United Kingdom,

where it becomes difficult for the central state not to address these phenomena. This translates into growing electoral support for ethno-regionalist parties and the introduction of federalist elements in the state structure, which are instrumental in accommodating the requests of regional autonomy (Alonso 2012). As Brancati (2008) has shown, the adoption of institutional reforms on political decentralisation can provoke a chain reaction, in the sense that, on the one hand, they are promoted by regional parties, but simultaneously increase their strength because they have more chance of governing. Martinez-Tapia (2008) gives a bottom-up and a top-down explanation to illustrate the revival of the ethno-territorial conflict. The first builds on the shift toward postmaterialist values in Western countries. As the post-war consensus levelled off, the growing politisation in society clashed with the existing political system. New social movements criticised the Keynesian 'over-dimensioned state' and urged for a new sociopolitical order. Against this background, regional identities, that were naturally present in some territories, resuscitated and were mobilised by some political parties. This process of value change thus gave rise to a *"a novel form of sociopolitical protest within which ethno-territorial claims are transformed into anti-centralism according to a process of generalized challenge to traditional authority structures that are outdated as well as inefficient"* (Martinez-Tapia 2008, 2). The second explanation discusses the role of regional political elites in reanimating the ethno-territorial demands. Economic development and processes of modernisations in the second half of the 20th century engendered new policy objectives. Claims for political and administrative decentralisation became louder, which contributed to building up the tensions between the centre and the periphery.

Based on the academic literature, I would add a third explanation for the high topicality of the centre-periphery dimension, whereby the process of European integration facilitated the survival or the re-emergence of regionalist movements. Jolly (2015) defines European integration as a process of economic and institutional integration, which is supposed to have an even stronger impact on the weakening of national boundaries than globalisation has. First and foremost, the European Union represents an economic opportunity that promotes the economic development of peripheral regions, that may be neglected by the central state. In this context, more decentralisation is a way of reducing the state's control over the local entities. Secondly, regionalist groups have the chance of participating actively in European fora and of using the legal instruments

available to them in order to defend their interests. Third, ethno-regionalist parties can cooperate at the transnational level to promote their policy proposals and induce a certain degree of change from above. Briefly put, the perspective of a 'Europe of the Regions' fosters the viability of sub-national groups, and the empirical evidence provided by the scholar shows that a more integrated Europe enhances the probability of regionalist parties to compete in national elections and be successful (Jolly 2015).

3. Hypotheses

In order to answer the question of what issue dimensions determine the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters, and to what extent their electoral behaviour is different from the rest of the electorate, I will in the following paragraphs illustrate the guiding hypotheses of this analysis. Building on the theoretical considerations in the previous chapter, I will apply the insights on the ethno-regionalist party family and the impact of the structure of the political space on party behaviour to voting patterns. As observed in the case studies by Stefanova (2014), Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim (2015) and Lancaster and Lewis-Beck (1989), the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties exhibits several particular characteristics that sets it apart from the rest of the electorate. The electoral preferences of voters are generally determined by economic interests, political attitudes, ideology or social identities, but ethno-regionalist party voters are additionally confronted with the dominant presence of the centre-periphery conflict line. Against this background, I formulate one set of hypotheses (H1a, H1b) on the joint influence of the socio-cultural, the economic and the centre-periphery issue dimension on party choice, and an interaction hypothesis (H2) on the expected effect of the centre-periphery dimension on party choice, when interacted with the socio-cultural dimension. I expect that, in this setting, the centre-periphery issue dimension is indeed the main factor determining whether a voter votes for an ethno-regionalist or a state-wide party. Further, I anticipate that this effect increases when considering the link between the socio-cultural and the centre-periphery dimension, where immigration preferences can be a decisive factor in the choice of ethno-regionalist parties. The fact

that both the issue of immigration and the centre-periphery dimension build on questions of identity makes an interaction between the two factors likely.

3.1 Measuring the use of ideological dimensions

In a first step, I will examine if and to what extent 1) the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties is structured along an economic, a socio-cultural and a centre-periphery dimension, and whether 2) the impact of the centre-periphery dimension is stronger for ethno-regionalist party voters than it is for voters of state-wide parties. This reflects the three-dimensional perspective which has been devised by Medeiros, Gauvin, and Chhim (2015) to explain party choice in Québec and Catalonia. The authors conceptualise the economic, socio-cultural and centre-periphery ideological dimension as three separate axes since they supposedly have an independent impact on voting. Whereas they consider that the three dimensions have an equal impact on voting, I am making the assumption that the centre-periphery conflict is the 'core ideology' of the ethno-regionalist party family and therefore test the impact of the corresponding dimension on party choice. As suggested by Alonso (2012) and Massetti and Schakel (2015), centre-periphery is the primary ideological dimension for ethno-regionalist parties in the multi-dimensional space of political competition, while it is only secondary for those state-wide parties who need to compete against them. Ethno-regionalist parties can indeed be perceived as *"the political manifestation of the existence and relevance of the centreperiphery cleavage in a given political system"* (Massetti and Schakel 2015, 866). This characteristic pushes them to promote more pro-periphery issues in their political discourse which inevitable influences the voting behaviour and the party choice of their core constituency².

Although Alonso (2012) and Massetti and Schakel (2015) recognise the primacy of the centre-periphery cleavage, I would argue that their assumption of a two-dimensional policy space is not well suited for the analysis of party and voting behaviour. They only include the centre-periphery and left-right dimension in their studies and thereby neglect the weight of socio-cultural issues, which contrasts other academic inquiries discussing the relevance of cultural dynamics (Inglehart 1990; Kriesi et al. 2008a). The significant transformations contemporary society is undergoing are spurred by new socio-political

² Tendentally, ethno-regionalist parties suffer less from electoral volatility than other parties, as they can count on a solid electoral base in the relative region (Stefanova 2014).

factors and intergenerational replacement, provoking a profound process of value change. In this context, education, among other factors, has a key role to the extent that younger generations with better educational opportunities may move towards a more culturally liberal orientation, thereby challenging the political views of the older generation. These shifts are not captured by the traditional left-right scale, which has become inadequate in interpreting contemporary political dynamics, as I have described in the previous chapter. I thus hypothesise that a three-dimensional framework, where the centre-periphery dimension occupies a dominant position, is more suitable for the type of analysis I am undertaking. Based on these considerations, I have formulated Hypothesis 1a and 1b as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: The party choice of ethno-regionalist party voters is jointly determined by a social-cultural, economic and centre-periphery ideological dimension.

Hypothesis 1b: The effect of the centre-periphery ideological dimension on party choice is stronger for ethno-regionalist party voters than it is for voters of state-wide parties.

3.2 Linking the socio-cultural and the centre-periphery dimension

In a second step, I will investigate whether the issue dimensions are completely independent in determining the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties, or are in a certain sense linked to each other and thus reinforce the impact they have on party choice. The background to this second hypothesis are the findings by Pardos-Prado (2012), who has examined the link between immigration preferences and the centre-periphery dimension in Spain. Pardos-Prado suggests that there is a connection between the electoral effect of immigration and the centre-periphery dimension because both revolve around similar “*material and identity concerns*” (Pardos-Prado 2012, 504). The author does not deny that the issue of immigration is part of the confrontation between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values which makes up the cultural axis in the European political space, but additionally argues that immigration interrelates with the centre-periphery issue dimension in regions where the centre-periphery cleavage is particularly strong. In sum, he finds that for voters of pro-decentralisation parties, immigration preferences are relatively more important when

making their vote choice, because those preferences address the debate on the competition for resources and on identity recognition that are usually related to demands of decentralisation. More specifically, Pardos-Prado ascertains that the proximity between voters and parties on the immigration issue has a relatively stronger impact on the choice of parties promoting pro-decentralisation positions. Moreover, this proximity component appears to be more decisive when immigration and decentralisation preferences are more ‘coherent’, meaning that an anti-immigrant is associated with a pro-decentralisation attitude and vice versa.

These considerations are the premise for the second hypothesis, because they imply that immigration attitudes interfere with the relation between the centre-periphery dimension and party choice. I hypothesise that the interaction between immigration attitudes and positions on the centre-periphery dimension encourages individuals with pro-decentralisation stances to vote for ethno-regionalist parties. Put differently, I expect a positive electoral effect of more anti-immigration attitudes on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties. Although the focus in Pardos-Prado (2012) is on the opposition centralisation/decentralisation, I argue that positions on the centre-periphery issue dimension can also be measured by referring to cultural elements, feelings of belonging and identity aspects (Alonso 2012, 25). In doing so, I address the identity concerns voters of pro-decentralisation parties might have, according to Pardos-Prado. Hypothesis 2 is thus the following:

Hypothesis 2: The effect of the centre-periphery dimension on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties is stronger when taking into account the immigration preferences of individuals.

4. Research design

Since the focus of this thesis is on voters, the empirical analysis will use survey data to analyse the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters. The European Value Study 2008 (EVS 2016) has been found suitable for the purposes of analysis. First, it includes Belgium and Northern Ireland, entities with a strong regionalist identity which did not participate in the most recent EVS survey of 2017. To expand the sample, and to include those citizens that support parties like the Belgian New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) and the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), it was deemed necessary to fall back on the 2008 data. The conclusion of the thesis will address the potential limitation that a focus on 2008 data may bring to the substantive conclusions. Second, the EVS questionnaire covers questions which correspond to the three ideological dimensions of political competition. By relying on the academic literature, I will clarify which survey questions are used to compose the indicators of the ideological dimensions and why they are selected for the analysis, and thereby show that the EVS is the most suitable instrument for the purpose of this thesis. Other cross-national survey which are frequently used to examine voting behaviour, such as the European Social Survey (ESS 2020), the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2020) and the European Voter Study (Schmitt et al. 2020), only partially fulfil these requirements. Third, and most importantly, the EVS asks about the vote choice and the party preferences of the respondents, who are provided with a list of political parties including various ethno-regionalist parties. These parties are often excluded from the list of options to choose from in other surveys, which focus exclusively on the main national parties.

The EVS 2008 thus provides the necessary data to examine the issue dimensions defining the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters. The data was collected between 2008-2010 in 47 countries/regions, out of which I will consider those countries/regions that were part of the European Union at the time the questionnaire was administered³, because, as I have previously illustrated, the process of European integration has contributed to the persistence or the revival of ethno-regionalist parties. I

³ This excludes, among others, Croatia where the fieldwork was conducted from 31.04.2008-31.10.2008. The country became an EU member only on 01.07.2013. Two prominent ethno-regionalist parties in Croatia are the Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) and the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS).

thus assume that the EU has indirectly strengthened regional identities and that this has led to the continuing importance of social-group-based voting in certain regions. The data for the EVS 2008 was collected by drawing random probability samples with a net sample size of 1,500 from the whole population, in order to minimise bias; the only limitation was age, since only persons of 18 years or older were eligible. The standardised questionnaire was administered in form of a face-to-face interview and conducted in one of the respective national languages. It is interesting to note here that the English Master questionnaire had to be translated for each language spoken in the country/region that was used as a first language by more than 5% of the population. The questionnaire was for instance administered in Flemish and in French in Belgium, and in Romanian and Hungarian in Romania (EVS 2010), a fact which already indicates the presence of subnational groups in these two countries.

The following paragraphs will focus on the operationalisation of the dependent variable, which is party choice, and of the independent variables, which are the socio-cultural, the economic and the centre-periphery issue dimension. Then, I will briefly explain how I will go about the statistical analysis, what factors need to be taken into consideration and how I will prepare the data for the analysis.

4.1 Operationalisation of the dependent variable: party choice

The outcome variable is whether the respondent has chosen an ethno-regionalist party over a state-wide party. I will operationalise it as a variable with three values, taking the value of 0 if the respondent has given no answer or has answered ‘don’t know’/‘not applicable’, 1 if the respondent opted for a state-wide party and 2 for an ethno-regionalist party. In the EVS questionnaire, the respondents are first asked whether they would vote or not and then about their actual vote choice. The exact wording is as follows: “Q75 If there was a general election tomorrow, can you tell me if you would vote?”, “Q75a IF YES: which party would you vote for?”, “Q75b IF NO: Which party appeals to you most?”⁴. These questions capture not only the preferences of those respondents willing to vote, but also of those that would not necessarily go and cast a

⁴ Whereas in all countries/regions respondents were generally provided with a list of parties competing in national elections, the modality was slightly different in Belgium and in Italy. In Belgium, respondents were shown the list of parties competing in the upcoming regional elections; in Italy, on the other hand, respondents were confronted with the list of parties that had competed in the last European Parliament elections. In these two cases, it was evidently deemed useful to take the closest electoral contests as reference, to increase the accuracy of the responses.

ballot if general elections were held the next day. Table 1⁵ illustrates the distribution of party preferences for ethno-regionalist parties covered by the EVS 2008. As appears clearly from the table, the distribution varies greatly between countries. It ranges from only 2 respondents choosing the Spanish Andalucian Party (PA), to 87 choosing the Northern Irish DUP. These numbers do not necessarily reflect the actual vote shares of these parties, but still provide an indication of their electoral success in the respective countries/regions. Further, this is another reason why a cross-country comparison is more suitable in studying the voting patterns of ethno-regionalist voters, because the sample is evidently larger. It must be taken into account in the analysis that in some countries the support for ethno-regionalist parties is exceedingly larger possibly overstating the actual strength of the party in that country/region: in Northern Ireland, for instance, 81.19% of respondents have reported a party preference for an ethno-regionalist party.

4.1.1 Party categorisation

For the compilation of Table 1, I have taken the following considerations into account. As a reminder, I will refer to Fagerholm's definition in this thesis, who identifies an ethno-regionalist party as *"a party that is a member of at least one of the two interrelated sets of (i) parties that serve the particular interests of one or a few ethnic categories and (ii) parties demanding some kind of territorial self-government"* (Fagerholm 2016, 308). Under this definition fall regional, regionalist and ethnic parties. Regional parties represent the single interests of a particular territory, whereas regionalist parties are additionally seeking for some sort of self-government or for other forms of autonomy. Ethnic parties, in turn, secure their electoral support from a specific ethnic group, whose population can or cannot geographically overlap with a sub-national entity. Fagerholm groups them inside a single party family as they share some important characteristics, such as policy positions and similar origins, given that they have *"their origins in the centre-periphery-cleavage – or, more precisely, in the struggle for self-determination and recognition"* (Fagerholm 2016, 322). In line with Fagerholm, I will assemble them a single party family, because regional, regionalist and ethnic parties have similar features and thus cannot be clearly distinguished.

⁵ For reasons of simplicity, the official abbreviations and the English translations of the party names will be used in the table and throughout this thesis. The abbreviations, official party names and their translation are taken from Döring and Manow (2021) and other academic sources used in this thesis, and are reported fully on Page 7.

Table 1. Frequency and within-country percentages of respondents choosing an ethno-regionalist party in Q75a or Q75b.

Party	Frequency	Within-country percentage
BE: Flemish Interest VB	63	4.75 (11.15)
BE: New Flemish Alliance N-VA	85	6.41(11.15)
BG: Movement for Rights and Freedoms DPS	112	11.93 (11.93)
EE: Estonian Constitution Party K-EUR	9	0.59 (0.59)
FI: Swedish People's Party SFP-RKP	13	1.15 (1.15)
IE: Sinn Fein SF/IE	56	5.53 (5.53)
IT: Lega Nord LN	70	8.06 (8.52)
IT: South Tyrol People's Party SVP	4	0.46 (8.52)
LT: Lithuanian Polish Election action LLRA	29	1.93 (1.93)
RO: Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania UDMR	56	3.76 (3.76)
SK: Party of the Hungarian Coalition MKP-SMK	87	5.77 (5.77)
ES: Galician Nationalist Bloc BNG	4	0.43 (5.26)
ES: Canarian Coalition CC	4	0.43 (5.26)
ES: Basque Nationalist Party PNV	10	1.07 (5.26)
ES: Basque Nationalist Action EAE-ANV	8	0.86 (5.26)
ES: Convergence and Union CiU	11	1.18 (5.26)
ES: Republican Left of Catalonia ERC	10	1.07 (5.26)
ES: Andalucian Party PA	2	0.21 (5.26)
GB-GBN: Party of Wales PC	5	0.47 (2.15)
GB-GBN: Scottish National Party SNP	18	1.68 (2.15)
GB-NIR: Democratic Unionist Party DUP	87	28.71 (81.19)
GB-NIR: Sinn Fein SF/NIR	47	15.51 (81.19)
GB-NIR: Social Democratic and Labour Party SDLP ⁶	64	21.12 (81.19)
GB-NIR: Ulster Unionist Party UUP	48	15.84 (81.19)

Note: Total percentage of respondents in country choosing an ethno-regionalist party in parentheses.

⁶ The SDLP is a lesser-known Northern Irish ethno-regionalist party which advocates Irish reunification.

Furthermore, Fagerholm's definition largely overlaps with Jolly's interpretation of regionalism, where he includes "*all sub-state national movements that aim for some form of territorial autonomy within or outside the traditional state. These movements can justify their goals with a variety of ethnic, cultural, political, economic, or social claims*" (Jolly 2015, 7). Although Jolly speaks of movements and not political parties, their understanding is comparable because of their reference to territorial self-government/autonomy and to ethnic/cultural elements. However, this slight divergence in terminology shows that the identification of regionalist phenomena and the definition of the ethno-regionalist party family is still very unclear in the academic literature. That is another reason why Fagerholm's definition will be taken as point of reference for this study, because it uses the terms we also find in the academic literature. By following his approach, I will take into account all ethno-regionalist parties in the European Union, independently from their declared scope, that compete in regional, national and/or European elections and where data is available. Based on the assumption that the European Union is indeed generating a political momentum for regionalist parties (Jolly 2007, 2015), only political parties active in EU Member States will be considered.

4.1.2 Party categorisation in the EVS 2008

To examine if ethno-regionalist parties are included in the list of parties survey participants can choose from, the political parties mentioned in the questionnaire are sorted into two groups according to the considerations listed in the previous section, where ethno-regionalist parties take the value 2 and state-wide parties take the value 1. For purposes of party classification, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) are generally used as they provide a comprehensive overview of the political party landscape. I thus propose to use the 2006 CHES (Hooghe et al. 2010) as one of the categories used to code the political party or alliance is 'ethnic and regional parties', combined with the CMP data (Volkens et al. 2020) where the category of reference is also 'ethnic and regional parties'. Seeing that this categorisation excludes some parties which are commonly covered by studies on ethno-regionalist parties (e.g. the Spanish Basque Nationalist Party, the Bulgarian Movement for Rights and Freedoms, among others), it is deemed necessary to include the classifications used in two other scholarly articles (Jolly 2007; Massetti 2009) to get a complete coverage. Although the CHES and the CMP constitute the main sources for

the classification, they are considered too narrow when compared to the samples of other important academic contributions in the field of research.

It is worth underlining that not the most recent data available is used to devise the classification of parties, but instead data preceding the fieldwork for the EVS 2008, since the party family categorisation could potentially change over time. Research has shown that party elites systemically alter their policy positions to respond to changes in voter preferences, policy shifts by other parties and election outcomes, among others (Adams 2012). Voters have been found to respond to these transformations and adapt their party preferences accordingly (Seeberg, Slothuus, and Stubager 2017). Under certain circumstances, such changes in policy positions can result in a full metamorphosis of a party's identity⁷.

For these reasons, it is important to take the data of the elections preceding the start of the fieldwork of the EVS as reference. For instance, in the case of the CMP data, the categorisation in party families is renewed every time a political party issues its electoral manifesto before the relative country's general elections. It is thus necessary to verify that the political manifesto of a given party has been coded in the context of an election that took place before the start of the fieldwork for the EVS 2008 in the relative country.

4.2 Operationalisation of the independent variables: determinants of vote choice

The main determinants of electoral behaviour this thesis focuses on are the socio-cultural, the economic and centre-periphery ideological dimensions. For reasons of data availability, I will measure the centre-periphery dimension using one single survey question, whereas I will rely on factor analysis for the operationalisation of the socio-cultural and the economic dimension. Factor analysis is a widely used technique when investigating the dimensionality of the political space or the use of ideological dimensions in party and voter behaviour (see case studies in Kriesi et al. 2008b). In the present case, I consider it suitable because it 1) extracts from the data the information necessary for the analysis, 2) reduces the size of the data set retaining only the necessary information, 3) simplifies the dataset and 4) allows to better examine the

⁷ As an example, we can cite the Italian Northern League, which started out as a regionalist party, but changed its political strategy over time. Its electoral base was rapidly expanded up to comprising the whole national territory.

structure of the observations and the variables (Abdi and Williams 2010, 434). My approach follows that of Wagner and Kritzinger (2012) among others, who associate age group differences with the use of ideological dimensions in Austria. They use a pre-electoral survey to measure the position of voters on the socio-cultural and economic ideological dimensions. First, they filter the questions which they deem theoretically relevant for either dimension. Instead of using single issue items, they create composite indicators out of a series of questions which are theoretically relevant for either the socio-cultural or the economic scale. They then resort to Principal Components Analysis to generate the new variables representing the two ideological dimensions, which are lastly used as independent variables in the statistical model.

Based on these considerations, the starting point to generate the scales for the socio-cultural, the economic and the centre-periphery dimension is the selection of suitable and theoretically relevant questions. I will hereby take the studies by Kriesi et al. (2008b), Wagner and Kritzinger (2012) and Medeiros, Gauvin et al. (2015) as a point of reference. The definite selection of the items used depends on the data availability and the results of the factor analysis as discussed next.

In terms of the socio-cultural dimension, the relevant issue positions are those on same-sex couples/marriage, abortion, severity of criminal punishment, disciplining children, and immigration. As a first step, the items in the EVS 2008 on the above issues are selected and reverse coded, if necessary, so that lower values stand for cultural liberalism and higher values indicate a more culturally conservative stance. The items are then rescaled so that they all range from 0 to 1. The correlation matrix of the relevant items gives a first comprehensive overview of the intercorrelation within the subset. By dropping those items with a low score, the value of Cronbach Alpha amounts to 0.84. I then conduct a factor analysis which shows that the socio-cultural dimension is actually composed of two separate factors. Taking the first two factors with Eigenvalue larger than 1, I can conclude that the dimension is majorly determined by a first set of items on immigration and a second set of items on homosexuality/abortion. This means that not all items that determine a person's positioning on the socio-cultural dimension are captured by one factor. For this reason, I will use two factors in the statistical models as indicative for the socio-cultural dimension.

The economic dimension is related to issues of free-market economy, privatisation of public services, state intervention in the economy, and redistribution. As for the operationalisation of the socio-cultural dimension, the relevant items are reverse coded to have lower values stand for an economic liberal perspective. The items are rescaled to a 0-1 scale. By following the same steps as above, the resulting Cronbach Alpha is 0.63 and does not increase by dropping those items that weakly correlate with the other items in the subset. One explanation for a relatively lower value of Cronbach Alpha may be the ideological inconsistency of citizens' economic views: Converse (2006) has suggested that great parts of the electorate do not have meaningful, or coherent, beliefs, meaning that their opinions are often contradictory. They might, for instance, position themselves on the far left of the political spectrum but still support privatisation measures. Otjes (2018) comes to a similar conclusion and shows empirically that the economic policy preferences of European citizens are not very coherent with the conventional left-right scale. Furthermore, another reason for a lower Cronbach Alpha could be that the EVS 2008 contains fewer items to measure the economic positioning of the respondents. Nonetheless, the factor analysis gives one factor with Eigenvalue greater than 1; the factor loadings are highest for the items on state control of the private sector and privatisation versus government ownership.

Lastly, the centre-periphery dimension can be operationalised in three different ways: in terms of institutional preferences, regarding the reorganisation of state structures; fiscal preferences, in relation to fiscal redistribution within the state; and cultural preferences, dealing with questions on the preservation of culture and group identity (Alonso 2012, 25). In this thesis, I will focus on the cultural preferences, laying the focus on regional identity. As Bornschier (2007) suggests and Lipset and Rokkan (1967) have before him, an element of collective identity is central to the development of a political cleavage. Especially when talking about the centre-periphery conflict, the territorial identity and feeling of closeness to the region of origin is particularly strong (Hepburn 2009). Concerning the available items in the EVS 2008, the difficulty consists in the fact that it majorly contains queries on the national identity of the individual (e.g. Q72 How proud are you to be a [COUNTRY] citizen?), which do not directly measure this feeling of belonging, or regional attachment, the above-mentioned authors link to the centre-periphery dimension. Including these items would increase the risk of low measurement validity, as it would measure national instead of regional identity. Based on these

considerations, I will consider only one item for the centre-periphery dimension, and not conduct a factor analysis as for the socio-cultural and the economic dimensions. By merging the answers to the questions “Q69 Which of these geographical groups would you say you belong to first of all?” and “Q70 And secondly?”, I obtain a variable with three outcomes that takes the value of -1 when the respondents feel like they belong more to their country than to their locality/town/region, 0 if the answer is mixed, and 1 if the respondents feel closer to their locality/town/region than to their country.

Table 2 lists the items that are used for the composition of the independent variables. For detailed information, Tables A1-A6 in the Appendix show the correlation matrices, which items had been initially selected and then dropped in the process, the calculation of Cronbach Alpha and the rotated factor loadings of the factor analysis.

4.3 Methodology

The first and second set of hypotheses will incorporate the independent variables as illustrated in the previous paragraph. For this, I will use a **multinomial logistic regression model**, given that the dependent is a categorical variable with unordered response values (0 if no response to Q75, 1 if a state-wide party is chosen, 2 if an ethno-regionalist party is chosen). Further, this model permits to compare the probability of voting for an ethno-regionalist party to the probability of voting for a state-wide party, which allows me to test Hypothesis 1b.

With a discrete dependent variable, the assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of linear regression are violated, because 1) the association between X and Y is not linear, and 2) the variance of the error terms is nonconstant and hence they are not normally distributed. On this account, it seems reasonable to use a nonlinear probability model which has the advantage of predicting probabilities not less than 0 and not greater than 1. It is estimated using maximum likelihood instead of least squares, meaning that the resulting parameters are interpreted as increasing/decreasing the probability of being in one category, compared to the other categories.

Table 2. Items in the EVS 2008 used for the composition of the independent variables.

Question	Item	Dimension
Q21 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	v102. When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [NATIONALITY] people over immigrants	Socio-cultural
Q47 How would you feel about the following statements? Do you agree or disagree with them?	v154. Homosexual couples should be able to adopt children	Socio-cultural
Q48 People talk about the changing roles of men and women today. For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how much you agree with each. Please use the responses on this card.	v160. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works	Socio-cultural
	v161. A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children	Socio-cultural
Q68 Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card.	v240. Homosexuality	Socio-cultural
	v241. Abortion	Socio-cultural
Q76 How about people from less developed countries coming here to work? Which one of the following do you think the government should do?	v266. 1 Let anyone come who wants to; 2 Let people come as long as there are jobs available; 3 Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here; 4 Prohibit people coming here from other countries (reversed)	Socio-cultural
Q78 Please look at the following statements and indicate where you would place your views on this scale?	v268. 1 Immigrants take jobs away from natives in a country; 10 Immigrants do not take jobs away from natives in a country	Socio-cultural
	v269. 1 A country's cultural life is undermined by immigrants; 10 A country's cultural life is not undermined by immigrants	Socio-cultural
	v270. 1 Immigrants make crime problems worse; 10 Immigrants do not make crime problems worse	Socio-cultural
	v271. 1 Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system; 10 Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system	Socio-cultural
	v272. 1 In the future the proportion of immigrants will become a threat to society; 10 In the future the proportion of immigrants will not become a threat to society	Socio-cultural

Table 2. Continued

Q79 Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding immigrants living in your country:	v274. Because of the number of immigrants in [COUNTRY], I sometimes feel like a stranger	Socio-cultural
	v275. Today in [COUNTRY], there are too many immigrants	Socio-cultural
Q58 On this card you see a number of opposite views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale?	v194. 1 Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves; 10 The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for	Economic
	v195. 1 People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefit; 10 People who are unemployed should have the right to refuse a job they do not want	Economic
	v196. 1 Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas; 10 Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst in people	Economic
	v197. 1 The state should give more freedom to firm; 10 The state should control firms more effectively	Economic
	v199. 1 Private ownership of business and industry should be increased; 10 Government ownership of business and industry should be increased	Economic
	v253. A locality or town where you live – B region of country where you live – C [COUNTRY] – D Europe – E the world as a whole	Centre-periphery
Q69 Which of these geographical groups would you say you belong to first of all?		
Q70 And secondly?		
	v274. A locality or town where you live – B region of country where you live – C [COUNTRY] – D Europe – E the world as a whole	Centre-periphery

In logistic regression, notably, the parameters are the change in the natural logarithm of the odds for a one-unit change in X, which makes their interpretation not very intuitive. The equation for a dependent variable with three categories can be written as:

$$L_1 = \ln \left(\frac{P(Y = 1)}{P(Y = 0)} \right) = \beta_{01} + \beta_{11}X_1 + \beta_{21}X_2 + \varepsilon_1$$

$$L_2 = \ln \left(\frac{P(Y = 2)}{P(Y = 0)} \right) = \beta_{02} + \beta_{12}X_1 + \beta_{22}X_2 + \varepsilon_2$$

where 0 indicates the reference category, L_1 the logit coefficient for category 1 and L_2 the logit coefficient for category 2. The coefficient have then to be converted to probabilities in a second step for the interpretation of the outcome (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2016).

There are several model assumptions for logistic regression. First, and as already suggested by the equation, the relationship between the independent variables and the logit of the dependent variable is linear. If this is not the case, transformation of one of the independent variables may be necessary. Second, the model should be correctly specified, or simply put, all meaningful variables should be included and unnecessary variables excluded. Third, the intercorrelation between the independent variables should be kept at a low so that there is no or little multicollinearity in the model. Fourth, each observation needs to be independent from the other observations and if the data structure is nested, ulterior specifications need to be made to the model. This is the case when data from multiple individuals is collected and they are part of smaller groups, for instance. Also, difficulties could arise with influential observations present in the data, given that logistic regression is relatively sensitive to outliers. The detection of potential outliers is essential to avoid incorrect inferences from the model: particularly in case they change the results significantly, it is important to deal with them during the modelling process (Hilbe 2009; Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2016).

4.3.1 Preparing data for the analysis

Before delving into the analysis, it is essential to examine the data structure to avoid drawing wrong conclusions from the final results. First and foremost, an important question to address is how to handle the missing values on the independent variables,

which have resulted from respondents either not knowing an answer or refusing to respond. By combining several items in the factor analysis, the number of missing values on the independent variables is even higher. I here refer to multiple imputation using chained equations (MICE), which is just one of the many techniques when analysing data containing missing values, but suitable when dealing with a categorical dependent variable. To understand what kind of method to use, it is preliminary to look at the missing data mechanism present in the data. The academic literature distinguishes between three ‘missingness mechanisms’:

- 1) missing completely at random (MCAR), where missingness is not determined by the values of the data;
- 2) missing at random (MAR), where missingness is not determined by the unobserved values, but by the observed values of the data;
- 3) missing not at random (MNAR), where missingness is determined by the unobserved values of the data.

In the present dataset, the patterns of missingness among the independent variables do not indicate an underlying coherent structure, determining which values are missing and which are not, and MNAR can thus be excluded. Little’s χ^2 test statistic (Li 2013) results in a p-value of less than 0.05 which rejects the null hypothesis that the missing data is MCAR. I can conclude that the missing data is MAR and that therefore multiple imputation by chained equations is the most suitable method to deal with the missing values. Contrary to other missing data techniques, it randomly draws multiple imputations from a distribution of imputations and includes error variance in each imputation, which can reveal to be more effective in hypothesis testing studies. In the statistical software Stata, the specification of the command ‘mi estimate’ is thus required before running the logistic regression to fill in the missing values and obtain better estimates of the parameters in the model and of their standard errors (Little and Rubin 2020; Lodder 2014; UCLA 2021).

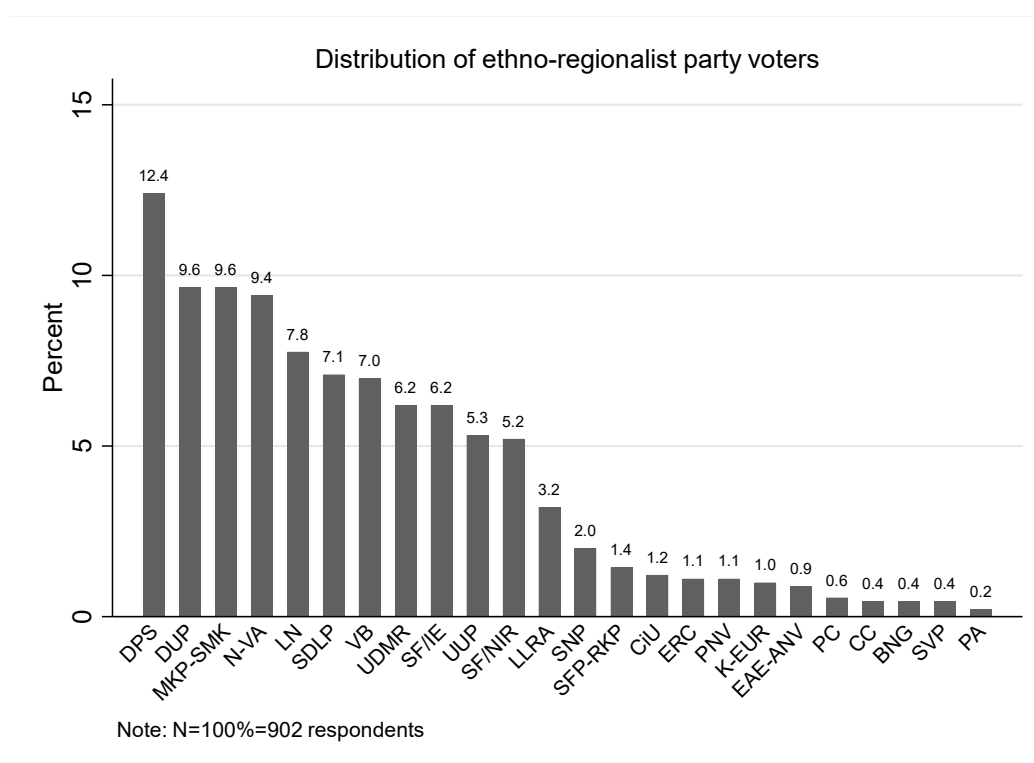
5. Empirical analysis

In the following paragraphs, I will lay out the steps I have undertaken for the empirical analysis of the data. By looking first at descriptive statistics, I aim to get an overview of the dependent and the independent variables, and of the relationship between them. Next, the subsection on multivariate statistics contains a multinomial logistic regression model which will help to understand the sizes and the direction of the effects of the issue dimensions on party choice. Plots of the marginal effects of the statistical model will help with the interpretation of the results.

5.1 Descriptive overview

I will first rely on descriptive statistics to explore the data under analysis and check if there are any anomalies present, that need to be taken into consideration in the multivariate analysis. As a reminder, the **dependent variable** results from answers given to Q75 of the 2008 EVS, where respondents are asked about their party preferences. The answers are coded into three categories, namely non-response, state-wide parties and ethno-regionalist parties. Figure 1 is a bar graph showing the distribution of ethno-regionalist party voters across the different parties included in the EVS 2008. The x-axis displays the abbreviations of the party names, and the y-axis indicates the percent distribution. In total, 902 respondents in the sample have chosen an ethno-regionalist party (100%). Interestingly enough, out of the total number of respondents, 12.4% supports the Movement for Rights and Freedom (DPS), a party representing the Turkish minority in Bulgaria which is often overlooked in studies on sub-national movements. The “usual suspects”, like the Scottish National Party (SNP) or the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), have a much lower response rate. This is evidently dependent on the EVS sample, but it is useful to notice that the subset I will refer to in this thesis is composed of very diverse parties, some of whom are not necessarily prominent in the academic literature.

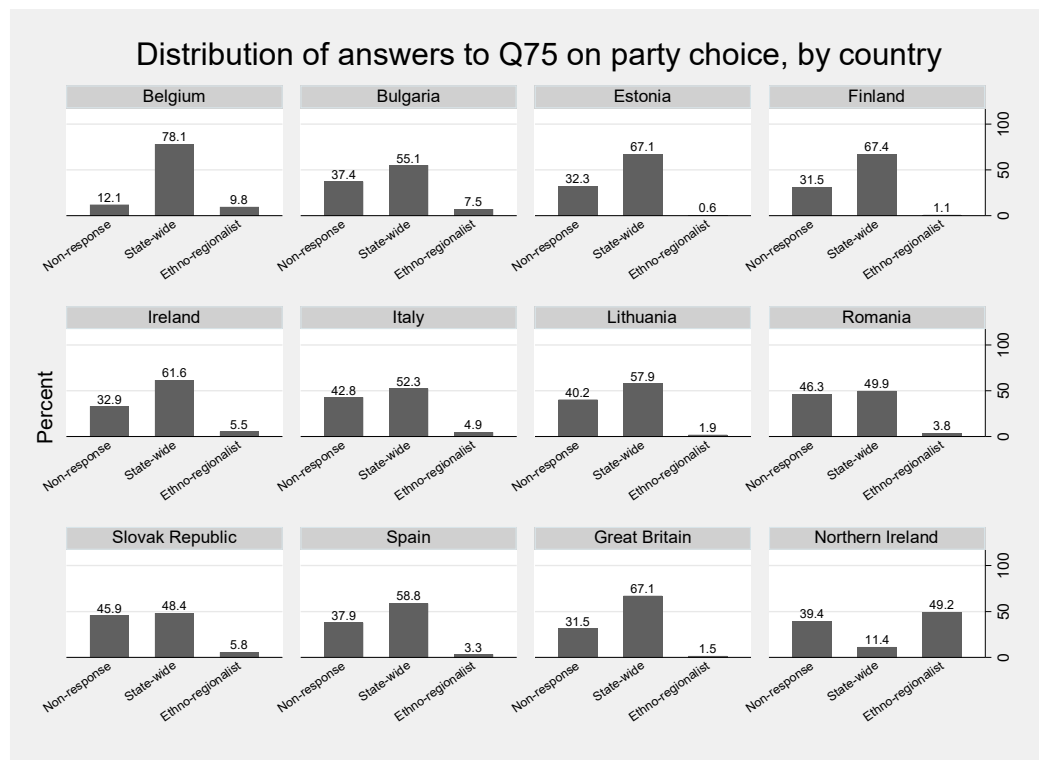
Figure 1. Distribution of ethno-regionalist party voters.



To better understand the proportion of voters in each country, I have plotted the three outcomes of the dependent variable across those counties/regions where ethno-regionalist party voters could be identified⁸. The bar graph (Figure 2) shows that the proportion of state-wide party voters is greater in nearly all countries, whereas the share of ethno-regionalist party voters ranges from 0.6% in Estonia to 9.8% in Belgium. The exception proves to be Northern Ireland where the share of ethno-regionalist party voters clearly dominates over the rest with 49.2%. Northern Ireland is a very peculiar case, and I argue that this trend is not only determined by the party categorisation I have used in this thesis, but also by two other factors. First, the total number of respondents in each country varies greatly, from 500 in Northern Ireland to about 2,000 in Germany. The sample size is certainly also determined by the population size, because the sampling resources are limited in smaller nations; too small a sample might, however, not reflect the composition of the population as a whole (Lynn et al. 2007). Second, the proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland who have refused to answer Q75 is rather large (39.4%), similar to the proportion we find in Italy, Lithuania, Romania and the Slovak Republic. This suggests that political opinions are a sensitive subject in some countries, but the rather small sample size in Northern Ireland means that only very few

⁸ Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden are thus excluded from this graph.

Figure 2. Distribution of answers to Q75 on party choice, by country (non-response, state-wide party, ethno-regionalist party).



respondents have actually provided an answer on their party choice. These factors could potentially distort the representative sample of the Northern Irish population and for this reason, I will also test for the robustness of the final results of the multivariate analysis by excluding this region from the sample.

Another aspect that immediately stands out is that the great majority of respondents in Belgium has given an answer to Q75 (87.9%), whereas in the other countries/regions only 50-70% of respondents have done so. The high non-response rates are grounds for pursuing a multinomial logistic regression model, as a dependent variable with three categories allows to also include the respondents who have not given an answer. Using a dichotomous variable, on the contrary, would mean to simply leave out those respondents and to base the statistical models on a very reduced sample.

The **independent variables** I use represent the three issue dimensions: the socio-cultural and the economic dimension, which stem from the factor analysis as explained in the previous chapter, and the centre-periphery dimension, which is linked to items on the respondents' feeling of belonging. Before illustrating the variables graphically, the first step is to check the correlation between them and to assess whether there is a

problem of multicollinearity, which would violate an assumption of logistic regression, as previously stated. Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation matrix between the socio-cultural, economic and the centre-periphery dimension. The correlation coefficients are considerably close to 0, suggesting that the level of multicollinearity is practically non-existent, and that the assumption of independence between the independent variables holds.

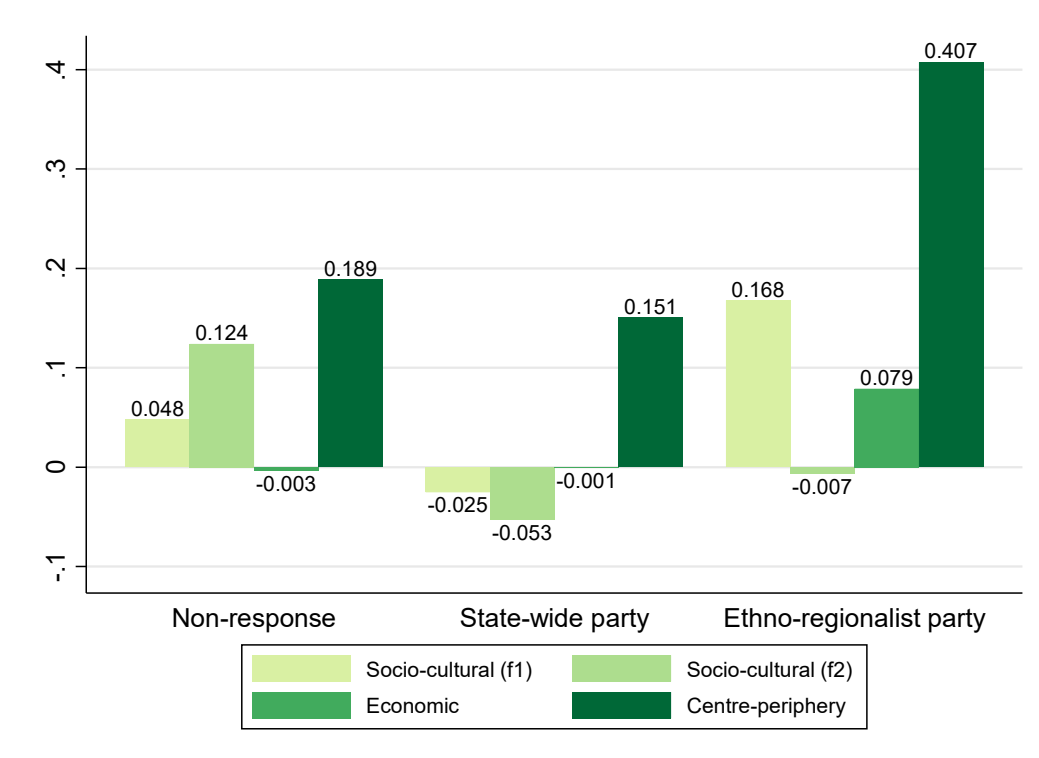
Table 3. Pearson correlation matrix of the socio-cultural dimension (factor 1 and 2), the economic and the centre-periphery dimension.

	1	2	3	4
1 Socio-cultural dimension (factor1)	1.0			
2 Socio-cultural dimension (factor2)	0.072	1.0		
3 Economic dimension	0.027	-0.079	1.0	
4 Centre-periphery dimension	0.054	0.029	-0.010	1.0

When looking at the bivariate relationship between party and issue dimensions, the expectation is that ethno-regionalist party voters represent more pro-periphery positions than the other respondents. Figure 3 presents the mean position on the three issue dimensions of respondents who have not expressed a party choice, of those who have chosen a state-wide party and of those who have chosen an ethno-regionalist party. Factor 1 of the socio-cultural dimension ranges between -1.84 and 2.50, factor 2 between -1.74 and 2.21; the economic dimension varies between -1.52 and 1.91; and, lastly, the centre-periphery dimension goes from -1 to 1. Here needs to be remembered that lower values indicate socio-cultural liberalism, redistributive economic views and pro-centre positions, whereas higher values stand for socio-cultural conservatism, free-market economic views and pro-periphery positions. From the graph it is immediately apparent that, as expected, ethno-regionalist party voters position themselves more on the pro-periphery side along the *centre-periphery dimension*. With a mean position of 0.407 is the gap to the other respondents rather large. What is also interesting is that the individuals who have not expressed a party choice feel closer to the periphery, than those who have chosen a state-wide party.

Concerning the *socio-cultural dimension*, we can say that for both factor 1 and 2 state-wide party voters show more culturally liberal orientations, meaning that they have

Figure 3. Mean of the positions on the socio-cultural dimension (factor 1 and factor 2), economic and centre-periphery dimension.



slightly more open-minded positions on issues like immigration, homosexuality, abortion and gender equality. On the contrary, ethno-regionalist voters have expressed more restrictive views on immigration (factor 1), a trend which somewhat supports the expectation advanced in Hypothesis 2. The respondents with no party choice are similarly more conservative about homosexuality/abortion (factor 2). Further, it appears that ethno-regionalist party voters have more conservative positions along the *economic dimension* than the rest of the respondents. It could thus be suggested that they relate to a more ‘bourgeois’ type of regionalism based on neoliberal ideas, opposition to state intervention in the economy and promotion of pro-market positions (Masseti and Schakel 2015).

Certainly, the conclusions that can be drawn from Figure 3 are very vague because the mean position masks any country-level differences and lumps together voters of very diverse political parties. Especially the category of state-wide parties is extremely heterogeneous, since it contains parties from the whole political spectrum without differentiating between different ideologies. This, however, does not undermine the most evident result from this figure which is that ethno-regionalist party voters show by far more pro-periphery positions. Resorting to the multivariate analysis in the next

subsection, I will show if and to what extent certain positions determine the probability of choosing or not choosing a given party.

5.2 Multivariate analysis

The output of the multinomial logistic regression is presented in Table 4. The dependent variable of all models is party choice, coded into the three possible outcomes (non-response, state-wide party, ethno-regionalist party). The category ‘non-response’ is taken as base category, meaning that the coefficients of the other two categories need to be interpreted as relative to the base category ‘non-response’. To take into account the nested data structure, I use the cluster option in the statistical software Stata to indicate that the observations are clustered into different countries.

Model 1 will test Hypotheses 1a-1b, namely if a three-dimensional political space will allow for a more precise definition of the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties. It will investigate the sole effect of the socio-cultural, economic and centre-periphery dimensions on party choice, without any control variables. Model 2 additionally includes control variables typically used in survey data analysis, such as age, gender and education, as well as measures of government trust and satisfaction with government performance, since it could be argued that an individual with a low level of satisfaction could feel more distant from the centre and thus be more likely to support an ethno-regionalist party. Model 3 adds the interaction effect hypothesised in Hypothesis 2, where the positioning on the centre-periphery dimension is interacted with factor 1 of the socio-cultural dimension. For each model, I display the parameter estimates for choosing a state-wide party relative to no party choice in the first column, and the parameter estimates for choosing an ethno-regionalist party relative to no party choice in the second column. As I use multiple imputed data, the model outputs are slightly different than those from standard logistic regression; for instance, while most statistical programmes report Z and X^2 statistics for standard logistic regression, with multiple imputed data t and F statistics for inference are calculated. For this reason, I report the Relative Variance Increase (RVI) and the Fraction Missing Information (FMI) at the lower end of the table. The RVI indicates the increase in the variance of the estimates because of the missing values, relative to the variance in the estimates had the data been complete. By this reasoning, the closer the value is to 0 the better. The FMI is linked

Table 4. Results of the multinomial logistic regression model.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist
Socio-cultural (factor 1)	-0.072** (0.028)	0.134 (0.097)	-0.058* (0.028)	0.133 (0.093)	-0.062* (0.029)	0.133 (0.098)
Socio-cultural (factor 2)	-0.263*** (0.062)	-0.215 (0.154)	-0.296*** (0.063)	-0.276 (0.152)	-0.296*** (0.062)	-0.276 (0.153)
Economic	-0.017 (0.034)	0.156 (0.108)	-0.067* (0.034)	0.142 (0.113)	-0.067* (0.033)	0.139 (0.111)
Centre-periphery	-0.079* (0.034)	0.560*** (0.129)	-0.059 (0.033)	0.567*** (0.134)	-0.058 (0.033)	0.561*** (0.135)
Age			0.010*** (0.002)	0.004 (0.006)	0.010*** (0.002)	0.004 (0.006)
Male			0.263*** (0.042)	0.340* (0.146)	0.264*** (0.042)	0.341* (0.146)
Education			0.105*** (0.021)	-0.053 (0.101)	0.105*** (0.021)	-0.053 (0.101)
Government trust			-0.189*** (0.033)	-0.147 (0.121)	-0.190*** (0.033)	-0.147 (0.120)
Government satisfaction			-0.016 (0.020)	0.017 (0.043)	-0.016 (0.020)	0.018 (0.043)
Centre-periphery *					0.028 (0.023)	0.051 (0.078)
Socio-cultural (factor 1)					0.331 (0.188)	-2.807** (0.861)
Constant	0.606*** (0.091)	-2.931*** (0.374)	0.328 (0.189)	-2.806** (0.862)		
N	40465		40465		40465	
Number of imputations	20		20		30	
Average RVI	0.072		0.112		0.173	
Largest FMI	0.155		0.167		0.280	

Standard errors in parentheses: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. RVI stands for Relative Variance Increase, FMI stands for Fraction Missing Information. The base category 'non-response' is not reported.

to the RVI and is equal to the proportion of the total variance that is caused by the imputed missing values. Its value suggests the number of imputations that should be calculated for greater stability of the results: the percentage value should roughly match the number of imputations used (UCLA 2021). The following table is useful to interpret the statistical significance of the parameters and the direction of the effects, but I will subsequently plot the figures of the marginal effects to make the results of the logistic regression more tangible.

Model 1 suggests that the effect of the *socio-cultural dimension* is significant only for the choice of state-wide parties and, in line with Figure 3, supports the argument that citizens with culturally liberal views are more likely to choose a state-wide party. The *economic dimension* is statistically significant for neither category, but, again in line with Figure 3, it appears that respondents who show more economically conservative positions are more probable to choose an ethno-regionalist party. Also, the *centre-periphery dimension* is statistically significant for both categories, but the direction of the effect is opposite: as expected in Hypothesis 1b, the centre-periphery dimension has a relatively stronger impact on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties, in the sense that it increases the likelihood of preferring an ethno-regionalist party. Conversely, the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on the party choice of state-wide parties is relatively weaker and negative. In other words, respondents who feel closer to their region are more likely to choose ethno-regionalist party and less likely to choose a state-wide party.

Turning to **Model 2** now, the inclusion of control variables changes the parameter estimates only to a small and thus negligible extent, since the strength and the direction of the effects are almost unaltered. This confirms that the conclusions I am drawing from this multivariate analysis are not the result of differences in age, gender, education, government trust and government satisfaction between the respondents. Interesting to notice here is that the effect of the control variables differs only slightly between the two categories. Concerning education, it appears that a higher education level makes the choice of state-wide parties more likely. Also, the hypothesised effect of government trust and government satisfaction on party choice, namely that a person with lower levels of trust and satisfaction is more likely to choose an ethno-regionalist party, does not occur or occurs only to a very small extent. Nonetheless, all controls,

except the gender variable, are statistically significant only for the supporters of state-wide parties.

Similar to Model 1, respondents with more *economically and culturally liberal positions* tend to favour state-wide parties. By including the control variables, the parameter estimates of the socio-cultural and economic dimension become statistically significant. We can further say that the *centre-periphery dimension* continues to be the only variable that has a strong impact on the choice of ethno-regionalist parties, whereas the effect of the other dimensions can be neglected. This disproves Hypothesis 1a, suggesting that the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties is not jointly determined by the three issue dimensions.

Looking at **Model 3**, the *interaction effect* between the socio-cultural dimension (factor 1) and the centre-periphery dimension is statistically significant for neither category. Nonetheless, the coefficient is positive, suggesting that there is some support for Hypothesis 2: the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties is slightly stronger when accounting for individual immigration preferences. Aside from this, we can safely say that the incorporation of the interaction effect has not substantially changed the parameter estimates. The considerations that can be drawn here are thus the same as in Model 1 and Model 2: more *economically and culturally liberal opinions* are linked to a higher probability of choosing a state-wide party, whereas a more pronounced *pro-periphery position* can be associated with a higher probability of choosing an ethno-regionalist party. Statistically significant are the socio-cultural dimension (factor 1 and 2) and the economic dimension for state-wide party voters and the centre-periphery dimension for ethno-regionalist party voters. Moreover, the estimates of the control variables are unchanged.

5.2.1 Interpreting the marginal effects

Based on these considerations, I will plot the marginal effects of Model 3 for an easier interpretation of the results of the multinomial logistic regression.

Figure 4 shows the predictive margins along with the confidence interval for the independent variables: factor 1 and factor 2 of the socio-cultural dimension, the economic and the centre-periphery dimension. The x-axis represents the scale of the

Figure 4. Predictive margins for the socio-cultural (factor 1 and factor 2), the economic and the centre-periphery dimension on the three outcomes of the dependent variable.

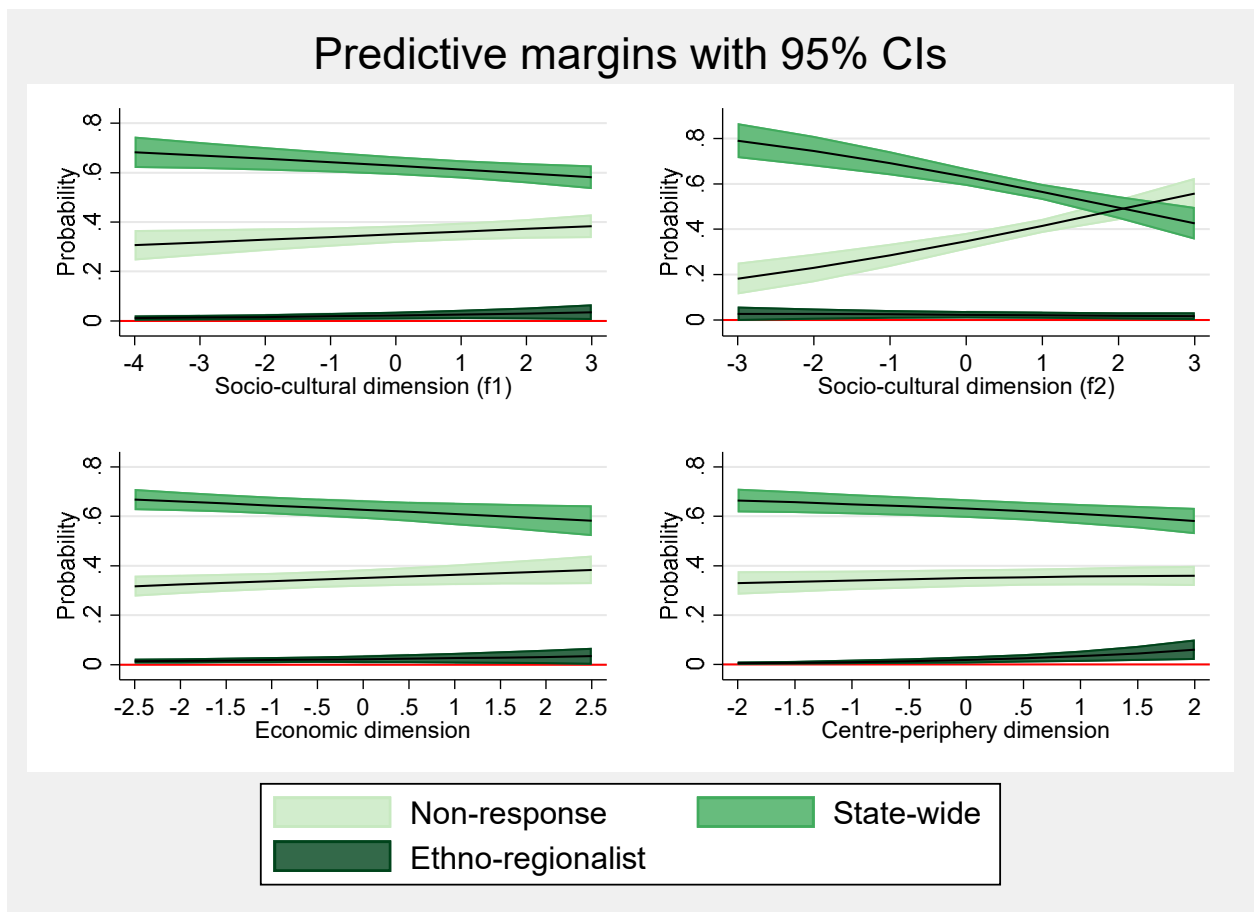
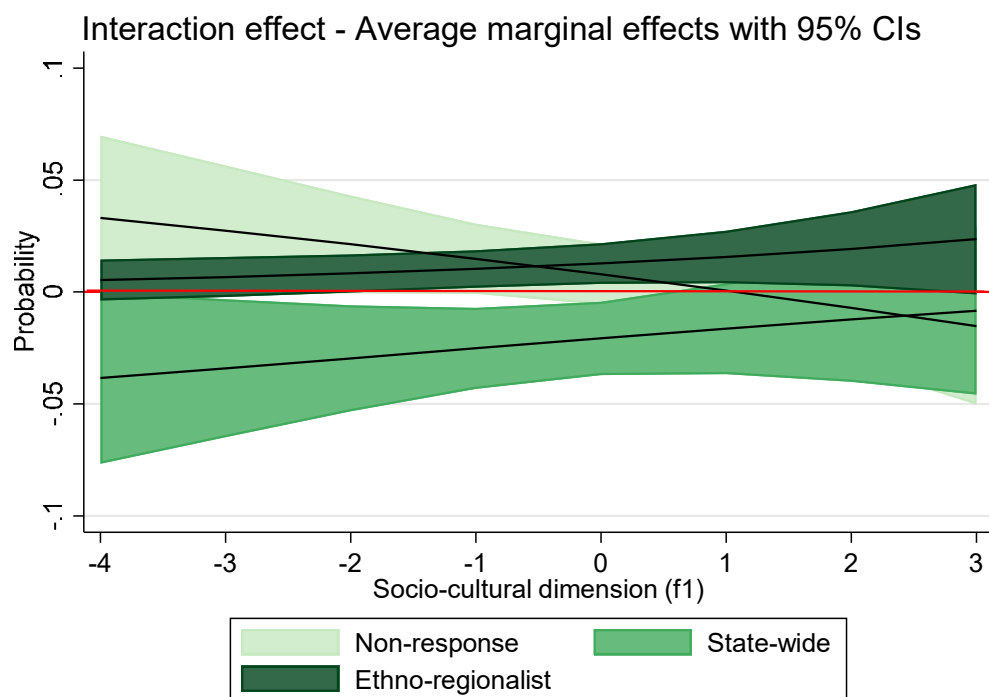


Figure 5. Interaction effect - Average marginal effects of the centre-periphery dimension on the three outcomes of the dependent variable.



relative issue dimension, the y-axis shows the change in probability for a one-step change in the independent variable. The four graphs allow to compare the effect sizes of the issue dimensions on party choice, and additionally give us more information on those respondents who have not declared their party preferences. What is striking at first sight is that the slope of the probability of choosing an ethno-regionalist party is comparatively flat and is close to 0 in all four graphs. This could indicate that respondents have not picked ethno-regionalist parties out of ideological reasons, but that their choice can be explained by other factors; one explanation could be that respondents who are confronted with the centre-periphery conflict support a given party because they share certain experiences or characteristics that might increase the attachment to said party (Mansbridge 1999; Sobolewska, McKee, and Campbell 2018). Further, it is interesting to notice that the effects of the issue dimensions on the probability of non-response and of choosing a state-wide party are consistently opposite; this trend is most evident for factor 2 of the socio-cultural dimension. Put differently, with more culturally and economically conservative views the probability of choosing a state-wide party decreases, whereas the probability of giving a non-response increases. This dynamic is reversed when it comes to the centre-periphery dimension: the closer respondents feel to their region, the less likely they are to pick a state-wide party and the more likely they are to give a non-response.

Figure 4 further provides some more insights on the first set of hypotheses. The graphs show once more that the effect of the socio-cultural and the economic dimension compared to the impact of the centre-periphery dimension is rather limited on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties. There is thus no clear evidence that the political space for ethno-regionalist party voters is composed of three dimensions (Hypothesis 1a). Concerning the hypothesised effect that the centre-periphery dimension has a stronger impact on the party choice of ethno-regionalist parties (Hypothesis 1b), it can be argued that the effect grows in strength the farther the individual position is on the pro-periphery side. In other words, the change in probability along the centre-periphery dimension is not linear but slightly curved towards the positive end of the scale.

Figure 5 represents the average marginal effects of the centre-periphery dimension for each observation of the socio-cultural dimension (factor 1). In other words, the figure shows what effect a one unit change in the centre-periphery dimension has on the probability for each value of the socio-cultural dimension. As expected in Hypothesis 2

and preliminarily confirmed by Table 4, the interaction has a slight positive effect on the choice of ethno-regionalist parties. From the graph we can also see that the interaction effect is statistically significant for the values between -1 and 2 on the socio-cultural dimension for voters of ethno-regionalist parties. This means that the effect of the centre-periphery dimension is stronger on party choice, when the individual position on the socio-cultural dimension is not located at the two extreme ends of the scale. Nonetheless, the changes in probability are rather small when compared to Figure 4, which indicates that the interaction effect has a very limited impact on party choice.

In sum, there appear to be some consistent trends when looking at the output of the multinomial logistic regression and at the predictive margins:

First, the centre-periphery dimension is statistically significant and has a strong impact on the party choice of ethno-regionalist party voters, in the sense that it increases the likelihood of a successful outcome. The centre-periphery dimension continues to be significant when re-running the model and taking ‘state-wide party’ as base category, as shown in Table A7 in the Appendix. This means that the centre-periphery dimension is also significant in the choice state-wide vs. ethno-regionalist party. On the contrary, the effect of the other dimensions is comparatively limited and, if we look at the statistical output, not significant. While having to reject Hypothesis 1a, there is evidence for Hypothesis 1b: the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on party choice is stronger for ethno-regionalist party voters than it is for voters of state-wide parties. Also, the direction of the effect is opposite for the two categories. This suggests that a measure of citizens’ national or subnational identity, or more specifically their feeling of belonging to a national or subnational entity, allows us to distinguish between state-wide and ethno-regionalist party voters.

Second, there is some support for Hypothesis 2. The interaction has a slightly positive effect on the choice of ethno-regionalist parties, and is statistically significant for some of the values of the socio-cultural dimension.

Third, the overall image that emerges is that respondents with more culturally and economically liberal positions prefer state-wide over ethno-regionalist parties. In the case of state-wide party voters, the effect of the socio-cultural dimension on party choice prevails over the effect of the economic dimension. The weak impact of the

economic dimension could reflect the ‘incoherent economic policy preferences’ of European citizens (Otjes 2018); or it could simply be caused by the higher number of items in the EVS 2008 to measure positions on the socio-cultural dimension. Nonetheless, it could be argued that state-wide party voters position themselves in a two-dimensional political space, as already proposed by several academic studies (Kriesi et al. 2008b, among others), in spite of the inclusion of the centre-periphery dimension. It could thus be advanced that the centre-periphery is an additional third dimension because it does not ‘take anything away’ from the socio-cultural and the economic ideological dimensions.

5.2.2 Checking for robustness of the results

Lastly, I will check for the robustness of the results by conducting the same models as above first with a reduced sample, excluding Northern Ireland, and second using the data from the EVS 2017 (EVS 2020).

Firstly, and as already mentioned before, an important point to address is the presence of outliers in the data. In other words, it is necessary to assess whether the presence of extreme cases could potentially distort the final results. As shown in the previous chapter, extreme cases refer to countries/regions such as Northern Ireland where the number of respondents supporting an ethno-regionalist party is particularly high. I thus re-run the models excluding Northern Ireland from the sample, which evidently leads to a smaller N and most importantly reduces the already small number of ethno-regionalist party voters from 902 to 656. Nonetheless, the results do not change substantially; the only changes that can be identified regard factor 2 of the socio-cultural dimension and the economic dimension: across the three models, the parameter estimates for ethno-regionalist party voters have decreased, suggesting that ethno-regionalist party voters from Northern Ireland have tendentially more conservative views towards issues of homosexuality and abortion, and the functioning of the economic system. Still, these small changes are not statistically significant and do not contradict the conclusions that can be drawn from the statistical models using the complete sample (see Appendix, Table A8).

Secondly, I conduct the same analysis with the data from the EVS 2017. As already pointed out, Northern Ireland and Belgium, where regional identities are relatively

strong, have not participated in the EVS 2017, which is why I do not expect that the results using the 2017 data will have a very high statistical significance. For this reason, I will merely focus on the effects of the issue dimensions on party choice and not consider their statistical significance. For the analysis, I proceed in the same way as explained in the previous chapter on the research design. I first categorise the political parties active in states part of the EU at the time of the data collection in state-wide and ethno-regionalist. Then, I select the items in the questionnaire that correspond to the three dimensions. Next, I conduct a factor analysis for the socio-cultural and the economic dimension, and link the centre-periphery dimension to the question on the feeling of belonging as in the EVS 2008 (see the Appendix for more information on the ethno-regionalist parties in the EVS 2017, the correlation matrices of the available items, the question wording of the selected items and the factor analysis). Due to the missing data pattern and the subsequent checks, I opt again for multiple imputation with chained equation. The output of the multinomial regression model is depicted in Table A16 in the Appendix.

Overall, we can say that the results are somewhat in line with the results we get using the EVS 2008. The direction of the effects is similar, that is to say respondents with more *socially and economically conservative positions* who feel *closer to the periphery* are more likely to pick ethno-regionalist parties. Inversely, respondents with more *socially and economically liberal positions* who feel *closer to the centre* are more likely to choose a state-wide party. The gap in the log-odds between the two categories is largest for factor 1 of the socio-cultural dimension and for the centre-periphery dimension, indicating that these two dimensions are decisive for the distinction between the two party families. The hypothesised effects regarding government satisfaction and trust, and the interaction effect do not occur, as it was the case with the 2008 data. Further, as expected, the statistical significance is low for nearly all the parameter estimates, except for factor 1 of the socio-cultural dimension.

These robustness checks show that the conclusions that can be drawn remain approximately the same when varying the sample and the data used. This largely confirms the present empirical analysis and endorses the hypothesis of the existence of a third dimension for the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties.

6. Discussion of results

The empirical analysis in the previous chapter allows for two overarching conclusions: 1) the centre-periphery dimension is indeed strongly influential on the choice of ethno-regionalist parties; 2) the impact of the socio-cultural and the economic dimension is rather limited on the choice of ethno-regionalist parties, when compared to state-wide parties. These dynamics could be explained by different factors.

In the first place, it could be suggested that one of the few distinctive features of the ethno-regionalist party family is its emphasis on the centre-periphery dimension, and that citizens perceive it as such. Ideological issues, such as immigration, homosexuality, abortion, redistribution of resources and privatisation, among others, might not be as important for supporters of ethno-regionalist parties when they make their vote choice. This rather simplistic conception would contradict other academic findings that I have referenced in this thesis: De Winter (2003) argues that the ethno-regionalist identity cannot solely account for party choice, but is defined by the strength of other identities. Citizens are still confronted with their own class or religious alliances when deciding who to vote for, despite the recent decline in social-group based voting. Similarly, other authors indicate that the voters of ethno-regionalist parties are equally concerned with socio-cultural and economic issues (Alonso 2012; Medeiros, Gauvin and Chhim 2015). Their findings are building on the premise that ethno-regionalist parties have been pushed to expand their issue repertoire by the dynamics of electoral competition. Put differently, ethno-regionalist parties had initially been created to promote pro-periphery issues in the political arena, but then have gradually started to position themselves on other issue dimensions to improve their chances in the political competition. When using the data of the EVS 2017, we see that the socio-cultural dimension indeed gains in significance, which could indicate that the centre-periphery dimension is not sufficient for defining the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties. On the whole, we can say that the results are not unambiguous: while it is clear that the centre-periphery dimension is decisive for the choice of ethno-regionalist parties, there are still some signs that the other two issue dimensions are also relevant. We could explain their limited relevance by linking the ethno-regionalist vote with forms of both substantive and descriptive representation, where citizens vote for ethno-regionalist parties because

they identify with the positions the parties promote and because they share common characteristics and experiences with the party candidates.

In the second place, it could be argued that the grouping of ethno-regionalist parties and their voters is too broad and that the group is too heterogeneous to make the conclusions that can be drawn from this study generalisable. The quick solution to this would be to simply restrict the sample and concentrate on either ethnic or regionalist parties, for instance; this, however, raises definitional issues because, as pointed out before, the categorisation of these parties is not clear in the academic literature. Taking the findings from the present empirical analysis as a starting point, future studies could further explore the definition of these party families. It is argued here that the centre-periphery dimension is a valid measure to distinguish between the voters of state-wide and the voters of ethno-regionalist parties; following on from this, one could check whether the centre-periphery dimension is also useful to distinguish between state-wide and ethno-regionalist parties, or between ethnic and regionalist parties.

And lastly, although the EVS 2008 offers the most suitable available data, for the reasons I discussed in the fourth chapter, it lacks some important elements. Concerning the independent variables, the data set offers several items to measure the socio-cultural dimension, only a few items to measure the economic views, and not more than one item that could be linked to the centre-periphery dimension. By relying only on the feeling of closeness to a political entity to measure the position on the centre-periphery dimension, other components of this issue dimension are excluded, such as institutional and fiscal preferences (Alonso 2012, 25). Another potential issue with using such a question in a statistical analysis is discussed by Billiet (2001): the possibility of complementary or several identities makes it difficult to categorically divide the respondents into two groups, those that do and do not identify with their country. Concerning the dependent variable, it has been suggested that indicators on the 'propensity to vote' or 'party attractiveness' are more suitable for studies on party preferences, where the respondents can rate the likelihood of them voting for a certain party. These questions have proved useful especially in the presence of smaller parties (Pardos-Prado 2012; van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000), and also address the issue of strategic voting, where the voter chooses not to 'waste' his or her ballot on a party which is less likely to win, and casts it instead for another party with more chances of success (Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson 2018). Especially in the case of

ethno-regionalist parties, which generally have less chances of entering the national parliament, the possibility of strategic voting could be even greater.

Taken together the above considerations, we can draw some important conclusions from the present thesis but also raise some additional research questions. Further analyses could help solve the doubts regarding the dimensionality of the political space ethno-regionalist party voters position themselves in, the definition of the ethno-regionalist party family, and the composition of the centre-periphery dimension. Nonetheless, the greatest difficulty might remain the lack of cross-national data to measure individual positions on the centre-periphery dimension, for instance data on national/subnational identity, the use of minority languages, views regarding the organisation of state institutions (e.g. federalism, centralisation vs. decentralisation), fiscal preferences (e.g. redistribution of state resources), or cultural preferences (e.g. protection of minority rights). As shown by the present thesis, data collection on these aspects could provide valuable insights on the electoral base of ethno-regionalist parties which occupy a rather small but important position in the European Union.

7. Conclusion

The present thesis provides important observations on a topic that is largely unexplored in the academic literature. Very little has been written about ethno-regionalist parties, their behaviour and their voters in a cross-national perspective, and my study contributes to filling this gap. Building on the distinction between state-wide and non state-wide parties, I have attempted to describe and analyse the ethno-regionalist phenomenon in Europe. By recognising its importance in the national political systems, I assume that some citizens feel neglected by state-wide parties because they do not represent the specific interests and needs that may originate in a distinct regional identity.

While most studies out of the rather limited bulk of literature on ethno-regionalism deal with political parties, I have analysed the electoral base of these parties and asked myself what issue dimensions define the electoral behaviour of ethno-regionalist party voters, and to what extent their electoral behaviour is different from the rest of the electorate. The overall aim was to define the profile of the ethno-regionalist party voter, by looking at three issue dimensions, namely the socio-cultural, the economic and the centre-periphery dimension. Following the line of thought on the unsuitability of the left-right dimension to capture contemporary political dynamics, I have hypothesised that the political space of ethno-regionalist party voters is defined by an additional third dimension which distinguishes them from state-wide party voters (Hypothesis 1a). Since ethno-regionalist parties have *“in one way or another, their origins in the centre–periphery-cleavage – or, more precisely, in the struggle for self-determination and recognition”* (Fagerholm 2016, 322), the scope of the present analysis was to test whether this predominance of the centre-periphery dimension is also embodied by the parties’ electoral base. I have further hypothesised that the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on party choice is stronger for ethno-regionalist party voters than it is for voters of state-wide parties (Hypothesis 1b), and that this effect is even stronger when accounting for individual immigration preferences (Hypothesis 2).

The analysis shows that the voters in regions with a strong subnational identity are confronted with a centre-periphery dimension when making their party choice. However, it does not emerge clearly from the results whether and to what extent the socio-cultural and the economic dimension influence the choice of ethno-regionalist

party voters; put differently, the results do not tell us whether and to what extent voters pick ethno-regionalist parties for their ideological positions on the socio-cultural and economic dimension. This could indicate that individuals vote for an ethno-regionalist party to achieve both substantive and descriptive representation, in the sense that they elect representatives not only for their ideological positions, but also because they have certain things in common, like the cultural background, origin, language, among others; in other words, they elect representatives who act for them as well as stand for them. Further, the fact that the centre-periphery dimensions somewhat prevails over the other dimensions in determining the party choice confirms the assumption that voters recognise the centre-periphery dimension as the ‘core ideology’ of ethno-regionalist parties.

Another important conclusion that we can draw from this study is that an individual’s position on the centre-periphery dimension makes them more or less likely to prefer a state-wide over an ethno-regionalist party or vice versa. The results also confirm that state-wide party voters position themselves in a two-dimensional political space, which is in line with other academic studies that discuss the importance of a socio-cultural and an economic dimension in seizing political preferences. It is interesting to notice here that the addition of the centre-periphery dimension does not ‘take anything away’ from the other two, since both continue to have a significant impact on the choice of state-wide parties.

The cross-national nature of the data I have used for the analysis increases the generalisability of the findings, which should, however, be verified in future analyses. The difficulties I have encountered with using the EVS 2008, which I have discussed at length in the previous chapters, make further tests necessary. Although I have checked for the robustness of the results, the operationalisation of the centre-periphery dimension still remains an important question since this issue dimension embraces many differing aspects. This thesis, however, offers a significant point of departure which encourages future research on the definition of this issue dimension.

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Appendix

Table A1. Pearson correlation matrix of items for socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2008).

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	v54	1.00													
2	v57	0.33	1.00												
3	v102	0.17	0.20	1.00											
4	v103	0.08	0.16	0.23	1.00										
5	v154	0.10	0.26	0.27	0.17	1.00									
6	v159	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.19	1.00								
7	v160	0.08	0.14	0.17	0.18	0.22	0.37	1.00							
8	v161	0.10	0.20	0.23	0.20	0.25	0.16	0.39	1.00						
9	v162	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.04	0.20	0.35	1.00					
10	v163	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.18	0.04	0.04	0.16	1.00				
11	v164	0.00	-0.03	-0.06	0.03	-0.02	0.18	0.03	-0.04	0.12	0.36	1.00			
12	v165	0.05	0.10	0.12	0.11	0.19	0.27	0.14	0.09	-0.04	0.14	0.23	1.00		
13	v166	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.16	0.12	0.25	0.09	0.07	0.02	0.22	0.34	0.45	1.00	
14	v180	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.07	0.03	-0.02	0.02	0.03	1.00
15	v201	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04
16	v202	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
17	v204	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.10
18	v240	0.15	0.39	0.31	0.24	0.51	0.19	0.27	0.36	0.14	0.06	-0.05	0.15	0.14	0.15
19	v241	0.07	0.17	0.21	0.19	0.31	0.19	0.26	0.28	0.16	0.10	0.02	0.11	0.11	0.13
20	v266	0.15	0.07	0.24	0.09	0.13	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.05	0.01	0.06
21	v268	0.19	0.16	0.40	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.17	0.19	0.07	0.03	-0.03	0.11	0.09	0.11
22	v269	0.19	0.10	0.26	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.14	0.13	0.09	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.09	0.08
23	v270	0.17	0.09	0.27	0.11	0.15	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.03	-0.02	-0.02	0.08	0.04	0.05
24	v271	0.17	0.09	0.32	0.12	0.17	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.05	0.01	-0.01	0.08	0.03	0.06
25	v272	0.20	0.11	0.35	0.15	0.20	0.12	0.16	0.16	0.08	0.02	-0.02	0.10	0.06	0.09
26	v274	0.15	0.04	0.20	0.11	0.05	0.09	0.13	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.07
27	v275	0.16	0.02	0.29	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.17	0.15	0.09	0.01	-0.03	0.07	0.04	0.10
28	v292	0.13	0.10	0.21	0.03	0.12	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.06

Note: items in bold have been selected for factor analysis.

Table A1. Continued.

		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
15	v201	1.00													
16	v202	-0.35	1.00												
17	v204	0.06	0.05	1.00											
18	v240	0.07	0.03	0.10	1.00										
19	v241	0.04	0.03	0.15	0.51	1.00									
20	v266	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.10	0.11	1.00								
21	v268	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.25	0.21	0.39	1.00							
22	v269	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.18	0.18	0.36	0.56	1.00						
23	v270	0.07	0.03	0.03	0.13	0.10	0.36	0.49	0.52	1.00					
24	v271	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.15	0.14	0.40	0.54	0.53	0.63	1.00				
25	v272	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.20	0.18	0.42	0.57	0.59	0.60	0.68	1.00			
26	v274	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.11	0.13	0.30	0.36	0.44	0.34	0.35	0.42	1.00		
27	v275	0.04	0.02	0.09	0.13	0.19	0.41	0.45	0.48	0.45	0.47	0.55	0.60	1.00	
28	v292	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.10	0.02	0.19	0.21	0.16	0.19	0.22	0.23	0.08	0.13	1.00

Note: items in bold have been selected for factor analysis.

Table A2. Cronbach Alpha of socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2008).

Item	Observations	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
v102	39596	+	0.593	0.458	0.028	0.838
v154	38338	+	0.476	0.363	0.030	0.841
v160	38517	+	0.411	0.304	0.031	0.844
v161	37244	+	0.437	0.335	0.031	0.842
v240	36641	+	0.555	0.434	0.029	0.838
v241	38800	+	0.491	0.374	0.030	0.841
v266	38874	+	0.517	0.434	0.030	0.837
v268	39368	+	0.707	0.633	0.028	0.824
v269	38833	+	0.671	0.589	0.028	0.827
v270	38844	+	0.631	0.552	0.029	0.830
v271	38186	+	0.672	0.599	0.028	0.827
v272	37895	+	0.737	0.674	0.028	0.822
v274	39460	+	0.548	0.449	0.029	0.835
v275	38279	+	0.664	0.585	0.028	0.827
Test scale					0.029	0.844

Note: Test scale = mean (unstandardised items).

Table A3. Factor analysis and factor loadings of socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2008).

Method: principal factors

Number of observations = 27,719

Retained factors = 6

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	4.469	3.113	0.809	0.809
Factor2	1.356	0.963	0.246	1.055
Factor3	0.393	0.230	0.071	1.126
Factor4	0.163	0.085	0.030	1.155
Factor5	0.078	0.015	0.014	1.170
Factor6	0.063	0.098	0.011	1.181
Factor7	-0.035	0.017	0.006	1.175
Factor8	-0.052	0.014	0.010	1.165
Factor9	-0.066	0.060	0.012	1.153
Factor10	-0.126	0.024	0.023	1.130
Factor11	-0.151	0.009	0.027	1.103
Factor12	-0.160	0.015	0.029	1.074
Factor13	-0.175	0.058	0.032	1.042
Factor14	-0.233	.	0.042	1.000

Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Rotation: orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Uniqueness
v102	0.359	0.317	0.100	0.077	0.229	-0.041	0.701
v154	0.159	0.562	-0.006	0.003	0.038	-0.118	0.644
v160	0.092	0.354	0.135	0.365	0.002	0.006	0.715
v161	0.081	0.426	0.095	0.362	0.037	0.008	0.670
v240	0.136	0.725	0.036	0.047	0.025	0.016	0.451
v241	0.111	0.570	0.123	0.066	-0.021	0.084	0.636
v266	0.467	0.081	0.236	-0.050	0.115	-0.055	0.702
v268	0.654	0.196	0.167	0.082	0.193	0.106	0.450
v269	0.664	0.113	0.237	0.049	0.015	0.155	0.463
v270	0.741	0.053	0.076	0.001	-0.014	-0.040	0.441
v271	0.792	0.079	0.061	-0.007	-0.002	-0.055	0.360
v272	0.784	0.131	0.183	0.043	0.003	-0.021	0.332
v274	0.416	0.049	0.552	0.049	-0.001	0.045	0.516
v275	0.537	0.094	0.551	0.047	0.033	-0.034	0.395

Table A4. Pearson correlation matrix of items for economic dimension (EVS 2008).

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	v194	1.00							
2	v195	0.25	1.00						
3	v196	0.29	0.25	1.00					
4	v197	0.29	0.15	0.26	1.00				
5	v198	0.00	-0.04	0.04	-0.01	1.00			
6	v199	0.28	0.16	0.26	0.43	0.03	1.00		
7	v201	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04	1.00	
8	v202	0.01	-0.01	0.00	0.04	0.03	0.04	-0.42	1.00

Note: items in bold have been selected for factor analysis.

Table A5. Cronbach Alpha of economic dimension (EVS 2008).

Item	Observations	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
v194	39659	+	0.671	0.407	0.019	0.566
v195	39511	+	0.594	0.285	0.023	0.630
v196	38937	+	0.629	0.392	0.021	0.577
v197	37890	+	0.672	0.414	0.019	0.564
v199	36686	+	0.655	0.425	0.020	0.563
Test scale					0.021	0.633

Note: Test scale = mean (unstandardised items).

Table A6. Factor analysis and factor loadings of economic dimension (EVS 2008).

Method: principal factors Number of observations = 35,243
Retained factors = 2

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	1.2559	1.15228	1.4022	1.4022
Factor2	0.10362	0.22506	0.1157	1.5179
Factor3	-0.12145	0.01812	0.1356	1.3823
Factor4	-0.13957	0.06328	0.1558	1.2265
Factor5	-0.20285	.	0.2265	1

Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Rotation: orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
v194	0.375	0.357	0.732
v195	0.201	0.371	0.822
v196	0.344	0.363	0.750
v197	0.549	0.185	0.664
v199	0.542	0.185	0.673

Table A7. Results of the multinomial regression model, taking ‘state-wide party’ as base category.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Non-response	Ethno-regionalist	Non-response	Ethno-regionalist	Non-response	Ethno-regionalist
Socio-cultural (factor 1)	0.072** (0.028)	0.206* (0.094)	0.058* (0.028)	0.191* (0.090)	0.062* (0.029)	0.175 (0.094)
Socio-cultural (factor 2)	0.263*** (0.062)	0.049 (0.158)	0.296*** (0.063)	0.020 (0.156)	0.296*** (0.062)	0.020 (0.157)
Economic	0.017 (0.037)	0.173 (0.108)	0.067* (0.034)	0.210 (0.110)	0.067* (0.033)	0.206 (0.109)
Centre-periphery	0.079* (0.034)	0.639*** (0.132)	0.059 (0.033)	0.626*** (0.138)	0.058 (0.033)	0.619*** (0.139)
Age			-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.006 (0.007)
Male			-0.263*** (0.042)	0.077 (0.145)	-0.264*** (0.042)	0.077 (0.145)
Education			-0.105*** (0.021)	-0.158 (0.099)	-0.105*** (0.021)	-0.158 (0.099)
Government trust			0.189*** (0.033)	0.042 (0.121)	0.190*** (0.033)	0.043 (0.121)
Government satisfaction			0.016 (0.020)	0.033 (0.047)	0.016 (0.020)	0.033 (0.046)
Centre-periphery * Socio-cultural (factor 1)					-0.028 (0.023)	0.023 (0.079)
Constant	-0.606*** (0.091)	-3.537*** (0.382)	-0.328 (0.189)	-3.134*** (0.849)	-0.331 (0.188)	-3.138*** (0.848)
N	40465	40465	40465	40465	40465	40465
Number of imputations	20	20	20	30		
Average RVI	0.072		0.112		0.173	
Largest FMI	0.144		0.167		0.280	

Standard errors in parentheses: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. RVI stands for Relative Variance Increase, FMI stands for Fraction Missing Information. The base category ‘state-wide party’ is not reported.

Table A8. Results of the multinomial regression model, excluding Northern Ireland from the sample (EVS 2008).

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist
Socio-cultural (factor 1)	-0.068* (0.027)	0.136 (0.119)	-0.050 (0.029)	0.150 (0.119)	-0.055 (0.028)	0.130 (0.132)
Socio-cultural (factor 2)	-0.266*** (0.061)	-0.292 (0.183)	-0.297*** (0.062)	-0.305 (0.198)	-0.297*** (0.062)	-0.311 (0.197)
Economic	-0.015 (0.038)	0.055 (0.099)	-0.064 (0.035)	0.046 (0.099)	-0.064 (0.034)	0.047 (0.098)
Centre-periphery	-0.079* (0.034)	0.650*** (0.141)	-0.059 (0.033)	0.663*** (0.141)	-0.058 (0.033)	0.661*** (0.144)
Age			0.010*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.007)	0.010*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.007)
Male			0.262*** (0.042)	0.451** (0.152)	0.262*** (0.042)	0.453** (0.152)
Education			0.104*** (0.021)	0.012 (0.109)	0.104*** (0.021)	0.011 (0.109)
Government trust			-0.185*** (0.033)	-0.231 (0.130)	-0.186*** (0.033)	-0.231 (0.130)
Government satisfaction			-0.017 (0.020)	0.061 (0.033)	-0.017 (0.020)	0.060 (0.033)
Centre-periphery * Socio-cultural (factor 1)					0.023 (0.021)	0.050 (0.109)
Constant	0.618*** (0.091)	-3.270*** (0.328)	0.347 (0.192)	-3.272*** (0.992)	0.345 (0.191)	-3.274** (0.992)
N	39965		39965		39965	
Number of imputations	15		15		25	
Average RVI	0.075		0.136		0.165	
Largest FMI	0.114		0.199		0.258	

Standard errors in parentheses: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. RVI stands for Relative Variance Increase, FMI stands for Fraction Missing Information. The base category 'non-response' is not reported.

Table A9. Pearson correlation matrix of items for socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2017).

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	v24	1.00											
2	v26	0.44	1.00										
3	v37	0.27	0.25	1.00									
4	v72	0.12	0.17	0.17	1.00								
5	v73	0.19	0.27	0.23	0.5	1.00							
6	v74	0.14	0.18	0.17	0.67	0.55	1.00						
7	v75	0.23	0.3	0.25	0.51	0.58	0.54	1.00					
8	v76	0.2	0.25	0.21	0.33	0.42	0.35	0.54	1.00				
9	v77	0.16	0.2	0.16	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.49	0.55	1.00			
10	v78	0.2	0.24	0.19	0.3	0.38	0.31	0.5	0.71	0.6	1.00		
11	v80	0.33	0.28	0.34	0.26	0.37	0.29	0.37	0.32	0.25	0.3	1.00	
12	v81	0.2	0.26	0.24	0.35	0.41	0.36	0.52	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.38	1.00
13	v82	-0.24	-0.4	-0.28	-0.26	-0.37	-0.28	-0.4	-0.36	-0.26	-0.34	-0.37	-0.35
14	v95	0.09	0.09	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.15	0.11	0.11	0.1	0.12	0.12
15	v110	0.04	0.02	0.01	0	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.05
16	v111	-0.01	0	0	-0.01	0.01	-0	0	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0	0
17	v114	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.12	0.09
18	v153	0.26	0.49	0.31	0.31	0.42	0.3	0.46	0.36	0.31	0.34	0.4	0.41
19	v154	0.14	0.28	0.22	0.28	0.35	0.29	0.36	0.27	0.24	0.24	0.26	0.31
20	v184	0.31	0.16	0.25	0.12	0.17	0.15	0.18	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.37	0.16
21	v185	0.29	0.21	0.31	0.2	0.25	0.21	0.27	0.22	0.2	0.21	0.46	0.27
22	v186	0.28	0.16	0.24	0.15	0.18	0.18	0.2	0.17	0.13	0.17	0.38	0.18
23	v187	0.28	0.18	0.25	0.16	0.2	0.19	0.21	0.18	0.13	0.17	0.42	0.18
24	v219	-0.27	-0.2	-0.29	-0.12	-0.21	-0.13	-0.21	-0.19	-0.13	-0.19	-0.37	-0.17

		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
13	v82	1.00											
14	v95	-0.1	1.00										
15	v110	-0.07	0.04	1.00									
16	v111	2E-04	-0.01	-0.38	1.00								
17	v114	-0.05	0.103	0.092	0.018	1.00							
18	v153	-0.64	0.158	0.058	-0.02	0.085	1.00						
19	v154	-0.43	0.141	0.033	-0.02	0.106	0.604	1.00					
20	v184	-0.22	0.078	0.073	0.003	0.041	0.209	0.107	1.00				
21	v185	-0.28	0.121	0.048	-0	0.101	0.307	0.221	0.411	1.00			
22	v186	-0.24	0.065	0.116	0.017	0.069	0.203	0.135	0.474	0.505	1.00		
23	v187	-0.25	0.06	0.096	0.023	0.081	0.23	0.133	0.48	0.501	0.703	1.00	
24	v219	0.251	-0.11	-0.05	0.002	-0.05	-0.26	-0.12	-0.36	-0.3	-0.3	-0.33	1

Note: items in bold have been selected for factor analysis.

Table A10. Cronbach Alpha for socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2017).

Item	Observations	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
v24	39079	+	0.495	0.395	0.023	0.846
v26	39844	+	0.523	0.427	0.023	0.845
v37	38221	+	0.460	0.397	0.024	0.846
v72	40240	+	0.536	0.473	0.024	0.843
v73	39574	+	0.633	0.575	0.023	0.839
v74	40191	+	0.569	0.506	0.023	0.842
v75	40510	+	0.692	0.640	0.023	0.836
v76	39370	+	0.605	0.548	0.023	0.840
v77	40271	+	0.539	0.487	0.024	0.843
v78	39530	+	0.584	0.527	0.024	0.841
v80	40639	+	0.641	0.578	0.023	0.838
v81	40738	+	0.613	0.555	0.023	0.840
v95	40533	+	0.308	0.199	0.025	0.855
v110	41221	+	0.227	0.089	0.025	0.865
v114	38331	+	0.259	0.145	0.025	0.857
v153	38154	+	0.676	0.604	0.022	0.836
v154	39717	+	0.532	0.451	0.023	0.843
v184	39679	+	0.452	0.393	0.024	0.846
v185	39893	+	0.573	0.501	0.023	0.841
v186	39667	+	0.513	0.442	0.024	0.844
v187	39526	+	0.527	0.457	0.024	0.843
Test scale					0.024	0.851

Note: Test scale = mean (unstandardised items).

Table A11. Factor analysis and factor loadings of socio-cultural dimension (EVS 2017).

Method: principal factors

Number of observations = 27,933

Retained factors = 9

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	5.832	4.069	0.705	0.705
Factor2	1.763	1.005	0.213	0.918
Factor3	0.757	0.044	0.092	1.009
Factor4	0.713	0.415	0.086	1.095
Factor5	0.298	0.152	0.036	1.132
Factor6	0.146	0.030	0.018	1.149
Factor7	0.117	0.083	0.014	1.163
Factor8	0.034	0.022	0.004	1.167
Factor9	0.012	0.039	0.001	1.169
Factor10	-0.028	0.020	-0.003	1.166
Factor11	-0.048	0.023	-0.006	1.160
Factor12	-0.071	0.017	-0.009	1.151
Factor13	-0.088	0.007	-0.011	1.141
Factor14	-0.095	0.008	-0.012	1.129
Factor15	-0.103	0.020	-0.013	1.117
Factor16	-0.123	0.014	-0.015	1.102
Factor17	-0.137	0.015	-0.017	1.085
Factor18	-0.152	0.007	-0.018	1.067
Factor19	-0.159	0.014	-0.019	1.048
Factor20	-0.173	0.047	-0.021	1.027
Factor21	-0.220	.	-0.027	1.000

Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Rotation: orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9	Uniqueness
v24	0.155	0.313	0.061	0.164	0.461	0.069	0.001	-0.010	0.009	0.630
v26	0.190	0.145	0.110	0.374	0.453	-0.018	-0.016	0.015	-0.010	0.585
v37	0.143	0.276	0.121	0.255	0.188	0.200	-0.059	-0.036	0.017	0.744
v72	0.219	0.086	0.708	0.118	0.010	0.006	-0.007	-0.004	0.028	0.429
v73	0.321	0.130	0.580	0.240	0.069	0.067	0.031	-0.001	-0.046	0.474
v74	0.220	0.124	0.738	0.107	0.015	0.000	0.006	-0.014	0.006	0.380
v75	0.496	0.135	0.527	0.237	0.100	0.046	0.005	0.064	-0.025	0.385
v76	0.746	0.110	0.209	0.130	0.050	0.012	-0.009	-0.047	-0.021	0.366
v77	0.663	0.071	0.234	0.114	0.022	0.021	0.020	0.062	0.042	0.481
v78	0.784	0.110	0.160	0.098	0.046	-0.005	0.008	-0.027	0.003	0.335
v80	0.238	0.463	0.222	0.239	0.148	0.267	0.055	0.014	-0.017	0.526
v81	0.506	0.125	0.301	0.247	0.069	0.158	0.026	0.127	-0.005	0.530
v95	0.080	0.055	0.110	0.152	0.018	0.074	0.175	-0.048	0.063	0.913
v110	0.052	0.136	-0.018	0.038	-0.020	-0.042	0.215	0.031	-0.033	0.927
v114	0.047	0.080	0.068	0.079	-0.067	0.049	0.254	0.001	0.003	0.909
v153	0.275	0.182	0.238	0.677	0.147	0.031	0.014	0.009	-0.004	0.353
v154	0.178	0.089	0.242	0.606	-0.013	0.016	0.012	-0.013	0.012	0.534
v184	0.092	0.615	0.071	0.061	0.146	0.095	0.013	-0.048	0.009	0.572
v185	0.149	0.591	0.136	0.195	0.061	0.196	0.011	-0.006	0.042	0.528
v186	0.088	0.780	0.077	0.056	0.012	-0.051	0.007	0.018	-0.003	0.371
v187	0.077	0.788	0.095	0.062	0.031	-0.033	0.001	0.008	-0.015	0.357

Table A12. Pearson correlation matrix of items for economic dimension (EVS 2017).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 v103	1.00														
2 v104	0.23	1.00													
3 v105	0.24	0.20	1.00												
4 v106	0.08	-0.01	0.06	1.00											
5 v107	0.24	0.14	0.24	0.09	1.00										
6 v108	0.07	0.07	0.12	0.09	0.08	1.00									
7 v109	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01	-0.53	1.00								
8 v110	-0.05	0.01	-0.03	-0.08	-0.04	0.07	-0.02	1.00							
9 v111	-0.04	0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.05	0.05	0.00	-0.22	1.00						
10 v133	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.11	0.10	0.05	-0.02	0.00	0.00	1.00					
11 v136	0.09	0.13	0.01	0.07	0.08	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03	0.00	0.34	1.00				
12 v139	0.16	0.04	0.11	0.26	0.14	0.05	-0.01	-0.10	-0.05	0.33	0.27	1.00			
13 v218	0.09	0.14	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.00	-0.02	0.03	0.01	0.10	0.17	0.09	1.00		
14 v221	0.20	0.08	0.11	0.30	0.18	0.05	0.01	-0.10	-0.07	0.16	0.14	0.32	0.19	1.00	
15 v222	0.12	0.08	0.01	0.10	0.08	0.01	-0.03	0.02	0.01	0.15	0.19	0.11	0.20	0.34	1.00

Note: items in bold have been selected for factor analysis.

Table A13. Cronbach Alpha of economic dimension (EVS 2017).

Item	Observations	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
v103	40374	+	0.539	0.339	0.010	0.599
v104	40261	+	0.472	0.250	0.011	0.623
v105	39894	+	0.424	0.237	0.011	0.622
v107	37921	+	0.480	0.291	0.011	0.611
v133	35957	+	0.512	0.316	0.010	0.606
v136	36532	+	0.497	0.324	0.011	0.605
v139	35935	+	0.558	0.359	0.010	0.596
v218	40610	+	0.418	0.223	0.011	0.622
v221	39561	+	0.556	0.389	0.010	0.592
v222	40163	+	0.417	0.277	0.012	0.615
Test scale					0.011	0.634

Note: Test scale = mean (unstandardised items).

Table A14. Factor analysis and factor loadings of economic dimension (EVS 2017).

Method: principal factors

Number of observations = 31,383

Retained factors = 4

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	1.545	1.054	1.015	1.015
Factor2	0.490	0.247	0.322	1.337
Factor3	0.244	0.099	0.160	1.497
Factor4	0.145	0.204	0.095	1.592
Factor5	-0.060	0.024	-0.039	1.552
Factor6	-0.084	0.068	-0.055	1.498
Factor7	-0.152	0.007	-0.100	1.398
Factor8	-0.159	0.027	-0.104	1.294
Factor9	-0.185	0.076	-0.122	1.172
Factor10	-0.262	.	-0.172	1.000

Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Rotation: orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Uniqueness
v103	0.1299	0.4405	0.1572	0.0428	0.7626
v104	0.075	0.3359	0.0609	0.2304	0.8248
v105	0.0308	0.454	0.046	0.002	0.7908
v107	0.1202	0.3886	0.1285	-0.036	0.8167
v133	0.5153	0.0482	0.1108	0.0417	0.7181
v136	0.476	0.0291	0.1466	0.185	0.7169
v139	0.4873	0.1474	0.2096	-0.1151	0.6837
v218	0.1329	0.0986	0.2812	0.2198	0.8453
v221	0.2379	0.1692	0.497	-0.0477	0.6655
v222	0.1642	0.015	0.4461	0.1455	0.7526

Table A15. Items in the EVS 2017 used for the composition of the independent variables.

Question	Item	Dimension
Q6 On this list are various groups of people. Could you identify any that you would not like to have as neighbours? Q8 I would like to ask you how much you trust people from various groups. Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all?	v24. Immigrants/foreign workers.	Socio-cultural
	v26. Homosexuals.	Socio-cultural
	v37. People of another nationality.	Socio-cultural
Q25 For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?	v72. When a mother works for pay, the children suffer.	Socio-cultural
	v73. A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children.	Socio-cultural
	v74. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.	Socio-cultural
	v75. A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.	Socio-cultural
	v76. On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.	Socio-cultural
	v77. A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.	Socio-cultural
	v78. On the whole, men make better business executives than women do.	Socio-cultural
	v80. When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [NATIONALITY] people over immigrants.	Socio-cultural
Q26 For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? Q28 Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which five would you say are the most desirable for a child to have? Please choose up to five!	v81. When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.	Socio-cultural
	v95. Obedience.	Socio-cultural
Q34 If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? - Q35 And which would be the next most important?	v110. A maintaining order in the nation; B giving people more say in government decisions; C fighting rising prices; D protecting freedom of speech.	Socio-cultural
Q37 Here are two changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or you do not mind.	v114. Greater respect for authority.	Socio-cultural

Table A15. Continued

Q44 Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card.	Q51 Now we would like to know your opinion about the people from other countries who come to live in [your country] - the immigrants. How would you evaluate the impact of these people on the development of [your country]?	v/53. Homosexuality.	Socio-cultural
		v/54. Abortion.	Socio-cultural
		v/84. 1 Very bad; 2 Quite bad; 3 Neither good, nor bad; 4 Quite good; 5 Very good.	Socio-cultural
Q52 Please look at the following statements and indicate where you would place your views on this scale?		v/85. Immigrants take jobs away from [NATIONALITY] - Immigrants do not take jobs away from [NATIONALITY].	Socio-cultural
		v/86. Immigrants make crime problems worse - Immigrants do not make crime problems worse.	Socio-cultural
		v/87. Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system - Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system.	Socio-cultural
Q32 On this card you see a number of opposite views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale?		v/03. Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves - The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.	Economic
		v/04. People who are unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefits - People who are unemployed should have the right to refuse a job they do not want.	Economic
		v/05. Competition is good - Competition is harmful.	Economic
		v/07. Private ownership of business and industry should be increased - Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.	Economic
		v/33. Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor.	Economic
Q39 Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy. Use this scale where 1 means "not at all an essential characteristic of democracy" and 10 means it definitely is "an essential characteristic of democracy"			

Table A15. Continued

Q61 To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of the following groups living in your country:	v/36. People receive state aid for unemployment.	Economic
	v/39. The state makes people's incomes equal.	Economic
	v2/8. Unemployed people.	Economic
Q62 What should a society provide? Please tell me for each statement if it is important or unimportant to you:	v221. Eliminating big inequalities in income between citizens.	Economic
	v222. Guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all, in terms of food, housing, clothing, education, health.	Economic
	v/64. Your town or city.	Centre-periphery
Q45 People have different views about themselves and how they relate to the world. Using this card, would you tell me how close do you feel to...?	v/65. Your [country, region, district].	Centre-periphery
	v/66. [COUNTRY].	Centre-periphery
	v/67. [Continent; e.g. Europe].	Centre-periphery
	v/68. World.	Centre-periphery

Table A16. Results of the multinomial regression model with the data of the EVS 2017.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist	State-wide	Ethno-regionalist
Socio-cultural (factor 1)	-0.050 (0.123)	0.474** (0.155)	-0.212* (0.094)	0.293* (0.142)	-0.226* (0.098)	0.324* (0.134)
Socio-cultural (factor 2)	-0.020 (0.100)	0.131 (0.202)	-0.014 (0.092)	0.063 (0.190)	-0.011 (0.092)	0.071 (0.190)
Economic	-0.028 (0.109)	0.066 (0.165)	0.065 (0.121)	0.153 (0.171)	0.066 (0.120)	0.159 (0.170)
Centre-periphery	0.025 (0.396)	1.235 (0.654)	0.023 (0.337)	1.185 (0.618)	-0.019 (0.033)	1.325* (0.614)
Age			0.022 (0.014)	0.027 (0.014)	0.022 (0.014)	0.027 (0.014)
Male			0.116 (0.078)	-0.031 (0.133)	0.115 (0.078)	-0.036 (0.135)
Education			-0.129* (0.058)	-0.188** (0.070)	-0.129* (0.058)	-0.187** (0.070)
Government trust			-0.507*** (0.107)	-0.455*** (0.128)	-0.508*** (0.107)	-0.456*** (0.129)
Government satisfaction			0.099 (0.087)	-0.009 (0.080)	0.100 (0.087)	-0.008 (0.080)
Centre-periphery * Socio-cultural (factor 1)					-0.148 (0.131)	-0.514* (0.202)
Constant	1.701*(0.687)	-2.493*** (0.749)	2.270* (1.107)	-1.513 (1.230)	2.274* (1.107)	-1.547 (1.231)
N	41221		41221		41221	
Number of imputations	10		10		15	
Average RVI	0.184		0.377		0.450	
Largest FMI	0.098		0.105		0.118	

Standard errors in parentheses: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. RVI stands for Relative Variance Increase, FMI stands for Fraction Missing Information. The base category 'non-response' is not reported.

