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Regionalism Does Matter but Nationalism Prevails.

A Comparative Analysis of Career Patterns in Western Multi-Level Democracies

ABSTRACT

The processes of regionalization and federalization are unquestionable trends in Europe considering the flow of powers from states to subnational levels. In multi-level systems, the patterns of regional and national careers have responded to this structural evolution. In the literature, two positions oppose each other about the effects of regionalism. Some authors argue that it does affect career patterns while other scholars found little evidence of the regionalism hypothesis. Unclear results in the literature are partly due to the limited number of comparative research across country and across time, choice in case selection, and bias of the unit of analysis. This paper seeks to address these three issues based on an original dataset of 4.991 regional and national careers in Belgium (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels), Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Spain (Catalonia and Castilla-La-Mancha), and the UK (Wales and Scotland). The intranational and international comparison proves that regionalism does matter – regional politics attract more professionalized MPs where regionalism is stronger – but the national parliament remains ultimately the most attractive political arena across regions.

KEYWORDS: Regionalism, Political Careers, Career patterns, Multi-Level Systems, Canada, Belgium, Spain, United Kingdom

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Introduction

The processes of regionalization and federalization are unquestionable trends in Europe considering the flow of powers from states to subnational levels (Fitjar, 2010; Keating, 1998; Swenden, 2006). Formerly unitary states like France, the United Kingdom (UK), Italy, Belgium, and Spain have created regional tiers of government that enjoy large scope and depth of powers. In those countries, regionalism remain at the top of the political agenda and regions claim more autonomy, if not independence (e.g. Scotland and Catalonia). Besides, in established federations, where regions were installed with the creation of the federal state, processes of professionalization have taken place at the regional level (e.g. Germany and Austria). Overall, “the process of political decentralisation has elevated the standing of regional governments in the constitutional architecture of European states and represents one of the single most important transformations in the structuring of political authority” (Toubeau & Massetti, 2013). It is of course nothing peculiar to European political systems. The processes of institutionalization and professionalization of regional tiers of government have been studied in other Western democracies of Northern America and most particularly, the Canadian provincial legislatures and the U.S. State Legislatures (Atkinson & Docherty, 1992; Moncrief, 1994, 1998, 1999; Squire, 1988).

The patterns of regional and national careers have responded to this structural evolution. In the wake of those transformations, research on political careers on multi-level systems has significantly increased over the last 15 years, especially in newly regionalized European states (Fiers, 2001; Pilet, Fiers, & Steyvers, 2007; Stolz, 2001, 2003) (Botella, Teruel, Barbera, & Barrio, 2010; Real-Dato, Rodríguez-Teruel, & Jerez-Mir, 2011; Rodríguez-Teruel, 2011; Vanlangenakker, Maddens, & Put, 2013), but also in established federations, notably in Germany, Canada and the U.S. (Borchert & Stolz, 2011a; Docherty, 2011; Squire, 2014). Recent and innovative studies have permitted to renew research on career patterns. The time when the classic springboard model identified by (Schlesinger, 1966) – U.S. Congressmen use their State Legislature office where they first served as ‘springboard’ to the Congress – prevailed as the dominant framework for analysis is over. It has been showed that other career patterns exist – where regional politics prioritizes over national politics – and better explain political trajectories in multi-level systems (Stolz, 2003).

Most efforts having been devoted to the identification and conceptualization of new career patterns, it is now necessary to assess more systematically and comparatively the factors causing distinct political paths. The road to office is complex – especially in multi-level

systems – and a comprehensive analysis of all aspects determining career patterns is beyond the scope of this study. This article is specifically concerned with one but crucial determinant of career patterns, namely the strength of regionalism. While regionalism is at the source of the establishment of regional parliaments, its effects on political careers remain unclear. Two positions confront each other on the regionalism hypothesis. On the one hand, some authors argued that the stronger the regionalist cleavage, the more attractive the regional political arena for ambitious candidates (Botella et al., 2010; Stolz, 2001, 2003, 2010). On the other hand, other studies found that regionalism is a poor predictor of career patterns (Botella & Teruel, 2010; Comeche-Pérez & Oñate, 2012; Vanlangenakker et al., 2013, p. 365).

Despite the respective merits of previous studies, the uncertain effects of regionalism are related to limits in terms of data collection, cases selection and unit of analysis used. Firstly, the number of comparative analysis across regions and countries is still relatively limited in a field dominated by case studies (Patzelt, 1999). And when comparison across regions is performed, there are limitations across time: only a limited number of legislative terms are analysed. Secondly, there is a “selection bias” because regions studied are strong or extreme cases of regionalism (Geddes, 1990). The latter must nonetheless be compared with examples of weak regionalism in order to evaluate its effects on career patterns. Finally, findings are almost exclusively based on level-hopping movements between political arenas. As I developed in a recent article (Dodeigne, 2014), this unit of analysis does not however permit to evaluate the majority of political careers in a region or a country, namely individuals with careers at a single level of government (be it the regional or the national parliament).

Therefore, this article proposes an intranational and international comparative analysis of political careers in four multi-level Western democracies based on systematic examination of cases of strong regionalism (Catalonia, Scotland, Quebec, and Flanders) and cases of weak regionalism (Castilla-La-Mancha, Wales, Ontario, and Wallonia & Brussels). The regionalism hypothesis is tested on an original dataset of 4.991 careers regional and national political parliamentary careers. The findings confirm that regionalism does matter – regional politics attract more professionalized MPs where regionalism is stronger – but the national parliament remains ultimately the most attractive political arena across regions

The article proceeds in three parts. Firstly, I introduce the concept of regionalism and discuss the two positions found in the literature about its impact on career patterns in multi-level systems. Secondly, in the methodology section I develop the comparative research design, the importance of the unit of analysis as well as issues in data collection and data analysis.

Thirdly, I present the results and then discuss the implication of the findings for regional and federal studies.

The Regionalism Hypothesis

An article analysing the impact of regionalism cannot bypass the issue of conceptualization. According to (Swenden, 2006, p. 14): “[r]egionalism refers to a process which leads territorial subunits within or across existing sovereign states to increase their influence. That process may have a socioeconomic, political or cultural driving force or may be a combination of all these factors. As such regionalism is in part a bottom-up process, but the consent of the centre is needed to increase the levels of regional autonomy”. Regionalism is therefore a *process* that “have a *socioeconomic, political or cultural* driving force or may be a combination of all these factors” (my italic). Because it entails political and cultural driving forces, multi-level identity (in terms of regional and national self-identification) as well as ethnoregionalist parties are typical objects of inquiry for students of regional and federal studies. They are part of the core cultural and political expressions of regionalism – albeit not the only ones.

One the hand, a strong regional self-identification associated with a weak self-identification with the national state is more likely to transform into strong regionalism. On the other hand, ethnoregionalist parties are central in the political expression of regionalism. In the bottom-up process described by Swenden, regional/national self-identification alone is indeed not enough to develop into strong/weak regionalism. It requires that political actors construct and articulate this regional sense of belonging into a regional political project. It furthermore requires political actors to convey regional claims of self-rule at the national level. Besides, not only do political actors relay regional demands of autonomy to the central government (bottom-up process), but regional political elites also try and develop a regionalist/nationalist building-process through an active promotion of regional identities (top-down process) (Maddens, Beerten, & Billiet, 1998; Martínez-Herrera, 2002; Miley, 2006; Luis Moreno, 2001; Rocher, 2002; Torcal & Mota, 2013).

A direct effect of regionalism on career patterns is of course the development of new career opportunities with the establishment of regional institutions. Newly created regional positions offered additional career prospects for incumbent national MPs, but it also opened new roads to office for a whole generation of aspirants who did not have hitherto access to parliamentary positions. But beyond new opportunities at the first regional elections, how regionalism does impact career patterns over time? Any students of legislative recruitment cannot bypass the seminal model of the classic springboard that was identified and theorized

by (Schlesinger, 1966). In this model, where rational ambitious candidates seek to obtain the highest positions in the political systems, U.S. Congressmen use their State Legislature office as a 'springboard' to the Congress. Although this so-called 'ladder model' has long served as the dominant framework for analysis, it proved to be of little use once exported to other political systems. In particular in multi-level systems where regional political arenas represent more than a mere stepping stone towards national offices, i.e. where regionalism is stronger than in the mononational U.S. federation.

(Stolz, 2003) identified four career patterns that better explain political trajectories in multi-level systems. First of all, regional offices can be prioritized over national offices in the "inverse springboard model" (e.g. Brazil) (Samuels, 2003). Secondly, regional and national arenas can be equally attractive inducing movements in both directions in highly integrated political systems (e.g. Belgium and Spain) (Fiers, 2001; Stolz, 2010; Vanlangenakker et al., 2013)(Dodeigne, 2014). On the opposite, regional and national political arenas have their own dynamics and are 'compartmentalized', i.e. level-hopping movements are quasi absent pattern (e.g. Canada and the United Kingdom) (Docherty, 2011; Stolz, 2010)(Dodeigne, 2014). In previous studies, most efforts have been devoted to the identification and conceptualization of career patterns, but the effects of regionalism remain unclear.

Two position oppose each other in the literature. On the one hand, some scholars have argued that regionalism directly influence the emergence of career patterns. On the other hand, other authors have found that regionalism is a poor predictor of career patterns. The first position is defended by (Stolz, 2001, p. 90) who hypothesised that "[t]he existence of a regional identity, a regional culture and a regional public arena often constitute incentives for staying in regional politics". He defends that, under the condition that regionalism spouses a process of professionalization of regional politics, regionalism matters for political careers: "two of the most important factors that strengthen the attractiveness of regional parliaments vis-a-vis national parliaments are the existence of a strong regional identity (expressed in an active regionalist cleavage) and high levels of professionalization. Without a regional identity, politicians' motivation to live for politics tends to be dominated by a national perspective" (Stolz, 2003, p. 243). In his comparative work that includes an extensive number of regions from traditional and new federal systems, he found that the Basque country, Galicia, Flanders, Quebec, some northern Italian and eastern German regions present lower movements of regional deputies towards the national parliament (Stolz, 2003, p. 243).

In a more recent analysis of Catalonia and Scotland, (Stolz, 2010) also showed that regionalism create stronger regional career orientations, although career patterns shape

differently (i.e. “alternative pattern” in Scotland and “integrated pattern” in Catalonia). In his in-depth analysis of Brazil, (Samuels, 2003) also demonstrated that most national politicians are not nationally-oriented but regionally-oriented. In another comparative study of France, Spain and the UK, (Botella et al., 2010) also produced interesting findings that tend to validate the regionalism hypothesis. They argued that regional institutions have generated their own and specific values leading to the development of a regional *cursus honorum* (Botella et al., 2010, p. 57). Yet, they focused on regional prime ministers and, therefore, their conclusions have to be put into perspective because the road to government is not as similar as the road to parliament.

On the opposite, other scholars have argued that regionalism is a poor predictor of career patterns. (Vanlangenakker et al., 2013, p. 365) who analysed Flanders and Wallonia clearly refuted the regionalism hypothesis. “In Belgium, regionalism is undeniably stronger in Flanders than in Wallonia. Yet, it is the Walloon Parliament that consistently appears the more attractive one [...] The authors are at a loss to find an explanation for this difference. [Therefore] regionalism, in terms of the sense of regional identity and the strength of regionalist parties, appears to be a poor predictor of the career patterns”. In their study of the political careers of national and regional Spanish MPs, (Comeche-Pérez & Oñate, 2012) also tested the regionalism hypothesis based on career movements between the regional and national political arenas, as well as to the degree of self-identification to the Spanish state and the *Comunidades Autónomas*. They concluded that “MPs develop different careers paths, but without clear-cut regional peculiarities” (Comeche-Pérez & Oñate, 2012, p. 10). Finally, (Botella & Teruel, 2010, p. 22) found counter-intuitive that the Spanish regional premiers who develop the stronger regional career orientation are politicians from state-wide political parties (PSOE and PP) and originate from *Comunidades Autónomas* where regionalism is weaker.

In conclusion, the literature is clearly divided on the regionalism hypothesis. Despite the respective merits of existing studies, inconclusive results are partly due to research limits regarding (1) the comparative design across regions and across time, (2) cases selection, and (3) the unit of analysis. I thus aim at moving the debate forward by addressing these three issues. First of all, the field remains largely devoted to case study analysis (Patzelt, 1999, p. 241). Besides, even when studies are comparative in nature, this is the time scope that tends to be limited. For instance, Stolz (2003)’s research is highly comparative across countries (an extensive dataset that gathers most federal political systems in the world) but his analysis focuses on a single legislative term. As acknowledged by the author himself, this might induce a temporal bias and alter the robustness of the findings (e.g. exceptional or poor electoral

performance directly affects the composition of the legislative term under scrutiny). The in-depth analysis of particular cases excludes this temporal bias but another kind of limitation emerges, namely a selection bias (Geddes, 1990). Most case studies are based on strong or extreme cases of regionalism¹. Assessing the effects of regionalism requires however to analyse regions where regionalism varies and, in particular, a comparison with cases of weak regionalism). Finally, level-hopping movements – e.g. regional MPs moving up to take a seat at the national parliament, and vice-and versa – remain by far the main unit of analysis used to label career patterns. In a recent article, I nonetheless demonstrated the methodological problems of this choice (Dodeigne, 2014). Among other reasons, I showed that level-hopping movements overlook the vast majority of regional and national MPs who develop professionalized careers at a single level of government. This article seeks to address those three issues through the adoption of a comparative research design developed in the following section.

Research design

Comparative research design

Testing the regionalism hypothesis requires a comparative research design encompassing distinct countries and where, ‘all other things being equal’, the strength of regionalism varies across regions. Maintaining ‘all other things equal’ except the variance of regionalism is yet a very complicated task. In that case, intranational comparison constitutes a strategic research solution. As wisely wrote by (Lijphart, 1971, p. 689) in the early 1970s, “comparative intranational analysis can take advantage of the many similar national characteristics serving as controls”. Selecting cases of weak and strong regionalism within countries, the regionalism hypothesis is tested while the effects of other intervening variables are limited thanks to intranational comparison. It is the same national political system with its own political culture, and above all, candidates from all regions compete under (quasi-)identical national electoral rules. Furthermore, the selection of regions across various countries increases the power of generalization of the findings. In other words, the intranational and international comparison permits to reduce two limits previously mentioned, namely that prior findings are primarily based on case studies and that selection bias overlooks cases of weak regionalism.

In today’s world, where all democratic states have a certain degree of decentralization, it is common to read that we live in a world of ‘multi-level governance’. This study is yet more

¹ Although most authors have valid methodological reasons according to their own research agenda.

specifically concerned with multi-level systems where there is a regional tier of government between the decentralized local level and the national government, excluding mere decentralized local bodies. (Marks, Hooghe, & Schakel, 2008, p. 113)'s dataset of 42 democracies over the world has the advantage to not only identify those regional bodies, but also to attribute them a score on the regional authority index (RAI). The population of cases is yet reduced to countries where regional assemblies are directly elected assemblies (e.g. it excludes *Trentino-Alto Adige-Südtirol* in Italy) and where candidates are elected under democratic rules (e.g. it excludes the Russian federation where corruption arguably alter the electoral process). In order to assess the impact of regionalism 'all other things being equal', I furthermore rule out cases with low degree of regional authority and low level of professionalization of regional politics (e.g. *Todofuken* in Japan and *Fylker* in Finland). Finally, to compare cases of strong and weak regionalism, I select countries where regionalism itself is at stake. It thus excludes countries where there are limited demands for regional autonomy. For instance, in Italy a referendum for extended regionalization (*Devoluzione*) was rejected in 2005 by a large majority of two thirds of the voters (Keating & Wilson, 2010, p. 13). Likewise, despite its constitutional decentralized features, the German federation has in practice social demands for state-wide policies while it presents limited claims for increased regional autonomy (Erk, 2008). Similarly, the Swiss and the U.S. federations are often presented as good examples of mononational federalism (Béland & Lecours, 2008; Dardanelli, 2007).

Hence, the case selection is reduced to four multi-level democracies: Canada, Belgium, Spain, and the UK. In addition to the methodological reasons described above, they have the advantage of being Western political systems. It also gathers a manageable number of regions that can be analysed in-depth. In sum, the research design produces a trade-off between scope and depth of analysis. The selection of regions within these countries is proceeded according to two main criteria in line with the definition of regionalism, namely the strength of ethno-regionalist parties as well as multi-level identities.

For the regions of strong regionalism, the choice is relatively straightforward: Catalonia (Spain), Flanders (Belgium), Quebec (Canada), and Scotland (the UK). In those four regions, ethno-regionalist parties are strong political parties – if not the strongest – even though their electoral success might have evolved over time and across regional and federal elections (Lieven De Winter, Gómez-Reino, & Lynch, 2006; L. De Winter & Türsan, 1998; Hepburn, 2010). Moreover, citizens' self-identification with their region is more important in cases of strong regionalism than in any other regions of the country (Deschouwer & Sinardet, 2010; Frogner, De Winter, & Baudewyns, 2008; Henderson, 2005; Lachapelle, 2007; Luis Moreno,

2006). Last but not least, the fact that three of the four regions (Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland) have or are going to organize referenda on independence is surely the best illustration of the strength of regionalism (see table 1)². In contrast, in Castilla-La-Mancha (Spain), Wallonia & Brussels (Belgium), Ontario (Canada), and Wales (the UK) are cases of weak regionalism. I decided to include Brussels (the last of three Belgians regions) because of the common candidatures of Walloon and Flemish MPs at Brussels elections. Furthermore, it permits to present a complete picture of all Belgian regional parliaments.

In cases of weak regionalism, ethnoregionalist parties have no representation in regional nor national parliaments (Magone, 2009, p. 230; Van Haute & Pilet, 2006; Wiseman, 1997). There is however the notorious exception of Wales (*Plaid Cymru*) and Brussels (FDF). The FDF (Federation of the Democrat French-speaking) is yet a party primarily based on the defence on the French-speakers in the (Flemish) surroundings of Brussels and not a party promoting independence for Brussels. In the UK, the Welsh ethnoregionalist party (*Plaid Cymru*) is an ethnoregionalist party that advocates an independent Wales but it constitutes nonetheless a case of weak(er) regionalism. The *Plaid Cymru* have significantly poorer electoral results than its Scottish counterpart (the Scottish National Party), but it also ranks second or third far behind the first Welsh party (Labour). Last but not least, *Plaid Cymru*'s explicit commitment to independence is a recent evolution (at the 2011 party conference): the party used to promote the idea of 'self-government' during decades instead of pure and simple independence (Christiansen, 1998, pp. 130-132). Regarding the second criterion – regional/national identities – a clear distinction emerges between two types of regionalism. Studies have demonstrated that in cases of weak regionalism, citizens self-identify more frequently and more intensively with the national state than their own region, and vice-and versa in cases of strong regionalism (Cameron & Simeon, 1997; Deschouwer & Sinardet, 2010; Drummond, 1987; Frogner et al., 2008; Luis Moreno, Arriba, & Serrano, 1998). Although Welsh self-identify much more with Wales than all other regions of weak regionalism, it is once again not as developed as in the case of Scotland proving than Wales is a case of weaker regionalism in the UK (Curtice, 2013).

[Table 1 about here]

² In Catalonia, the reality of the organization of a referendum is yet debatable in absence of agreement between the Catalanian and Spanish governments.

Despite my efforts to gather similar regions, intranational differences remain inevitable. Because regionalism is precisely more developed in some regions than others, regions like Catalonia, Flanders, Quebec and Scotland have always tried and obtained specific institutional demands leading to asymmetrical federalism (McGarry, 2005; Zuber, 2011). For instance, Catalonia – like other Spanish historical nations – followed a fast-track route for the implementation of its regional institutions enjoying greater power (based on the art. 151 of the Spanish Constitution) whereas Castilla-La-Mancha was granted autonomy on a slow route process with lower authority (art. 143)(Magone, 2009, pp. 194-195). In Belgium, Flanders merged its Community and Regional institutions into the mere Flemish Parliament whereas Brussels and Wallonia share a common Community institution apart from their regional parliaments. In the UK, the denomination of the “Scottish *Parliament*” is not random but reflects its greater authority in comparison of the “National *Assembly* for Wales”. In Canada, Quebec has developed its own judicial system, disposes of a wider scope of fiscal capacity and can carry out its own policies in pension and immigration area for instance (Burgess, 2006). Although the scope of and depth of authority may vary across “sister region”, it does not lead to notorious unbalanced powers. And above all selecting regions from common national political system limits in a better way the inevitable institutional divergences. The regions are therefore to be considered as “relatively similar” political systems (Dogan & Pelassy, 1990, pp. 132-133), except for the strength of regionalism. Let us now turn to the final element that deserves a special attention to test the regionalism hypothesis, namely the unit of analysis.

Unit of analysis

By using level-hopping movements as the unit of analysis, most research investigates – explicitly or implicitly – the *links* between national and regional political arenas (Borchert & Stolz, 2011b, p. 111). However, this approach provides little information about the dynamics *within* political arenas. Based on an individual and longitudinal perspective, where the unit of analysis is the individual political careers per se, I proposed in a recent article a new typology of career patterns. It is based on a matrix that accounts for duration of political careers at the regional and national levels (Dodeigne, 2014). The matrix distinguishes hence four ideal-types of career pattern in multi-levels systems: the national career pattern, the regional career pattern, the multi-level career pattern and the discrete career pattern.

[Figure 1 about here]

The national career and regional career patterns are self-explicit: they are formed of MPs who served respectively in the national and the regional parliament. They started their career at the national and regional parliaments and never moved to another tier of government. The discrete pattern is also formed of regional and national MPs who conducted a career at a single level of government but who were in office for a (very) short amount of time. Contrary to the regional and national patterns that are formed of professionalized parliamentarians, MPs with discrete careers are ‘amateurs’ or ‘citizens-politicians’. The threshold adopted to distinguish discrete careers with professionalized careers is that MPs served (at least) two complete legislative terms. It represents a political experience of about a decade in most advanced democracies. The two legislative terms was adopted because it is similar to the rules fixed by political parties that seek to ensure the rotation of offices to restrict the professionalization of politics (see for instance the Green parties in Europe, Burchell, 2001). Finally, the multi-level pattern represents a particular group of MPs as they are the only ones who acquire political experience at both levels of government.

Hypotheses

Based on the above classification, two kinds of results are expected in terms of intra-regional and inter-regional differences. On the one hand, if regionalism matters for career patterns, level-hopping movements should be more important from regional towards national level in cases of weak regionalism, and vice-and-versa in cases of strong regionalism.

H 1a. Weak regionalism: Level-hopping movements towards national \geq towards regional level

H 1b. Strong regionalism: Level-hopping movements towards national \geq towards regional level

Secondly, where regionalism is stronger (Flanders, Scotland, Catalonia and Quebec), it is expected that regional politics prioritized over national politics in these regions. Not only the regional career pattern should be more important than the national career pattern, but regional discrete careers are expected to be fewer than national discrete careers. Where regionalism is weaker (Wallonia and Brussels, Wales, Castilla-La-Mancha and Ontario), the opposite is expected. Yet, assessing differences between regional and national patterns makes little sense without integrating the availability of positions at the two political arenas. Although the difference of national and regional offices is relatively short in some cases (in Wallonia, Flanders, and Castilla-Mancha, the ratio of national/regional seats available is below 20 percent) or even null (Ontario), the gap is much greater in all other regions analysed (from 33.3

percent until 77.5 percent)³. In other words, the emergence of career patterns must be evaluated in light of the relative availability of seats at the each level of government. For that reason, I propose to use two ratios based on the four career patterns presented below:

- (1) Regional ratio = Regional careers/Discrete regional careers
- (2) National ratio = National careers/Discrete national careers

The higher the ratios, the greater the professionalization of regional and national politics. On the opposite, the lower the ratios, the greater the development of ‘citizens-politicians’ at national and regional levels. If regionalism matters, the regional ratio is expected to be higher than the national ratio when regionalism is stronger. Indeed, regional politics should prioritize over national politics and the regional parliament should attract the most ambitious candidates conducting lengthy careers at the expense of the national parliament.

- H 2a. Weak regionalism: National ratio \geq Regional ratio
- H 2b. Strong regionalism: Regional ratio \geq National ratio

Because regionalism is primarily promoted by ethnoregionalist parties, there are good reasons to believe that, *ceteris paribus*, candidates from those parties are more likely to conduct regional careers instead of national careers. Regional politics is the *raison d’être* of these parties and the “administration of powers and resources allocated to ‘their’ region for its wellbeing and in its exclusive interest” is one of the two missions of regionalist parties according to (Masseti & Schakel, 2013, p. 801). The other mission is that “these parties aim to exert pressure on the state in order to extract transfers of powers from the centre to the periphery”. Yet, I argue that even though this role ‘national’ mission was paramount before devolution, its function has decreased after the establishment of regional parliaments. As it is observed in many regions, media attention has switch to the regional level while the decision to organize referendum on independence is sometimes taken without the national government agreement (Catalonia). It follows that:

- H 3. Ethnoregionalist candidates: regional career pattern \geq national career

For the third hypothesis, it is important to keep in mind that I look at individual careers. It is expected that candidates have distinct career patterns according to party line but it is *not* to say that ethnoregionalist and state-wide political parties refrain from winning national and regional elections.

³ Percentages are indicative of the situation at the latest elections. Seats evolutions are yet frequent over time.

Data

Data is collected for all candidates who were once elected in regional and/or national assemblies. Although the paper is primarily about parliamentary careers, I do take into account government positions as it is common to observe regional MPs called into national government (and vice-and-versa) in Belgium and Spain⁴. At the national parliament, I also recorded offices in the upper house but only for directly elected senators. The starting point for data collection is the last national elections before the establishment of regional parliaments. For Quebec and Ontario, where federal and provincial assemblies were created in 1867, the time scale is however reduced to the early 1990s. The 1993 federal elections were selected because they constitute a rupture in Canadian political life: “[n]ational parties, national politics, and national electoral competition no longer existed in a Canada that was deeply divided and regionally fragmented” (Carty, Cross, & Young, 2000, p. 14). Furthermore, the selection of the 1993 elections makes sense from the viewpoint of parliamentary renewal. The score for the (Pedersen, 1979) index, which assesses the net change of seats between political parties, is exceptionally high in 1993 in Quebec and Ontario (respectively, 62 and 62.5) while it drops to scores between 2.0 and 28.5 afterwards⁵.

Overall, 4,991 careers are coded for Spain (1,530), Belgium (1,685), Canada (1,237), and the UK (539)⁶. Duration of political careers are recorded in number of positions but more importantly according to the real duration in office (in number of months). Indeed, changes during session are very frequent creating very short careers that the number of offices cannot accurately describe. The sources used are official electoral results and parliamentary acts for changes during legislative terms. Most sources are now available online even though archives from Parliament libraries as well as national and regional administrations are necessary before the mid-1990s in Spain and Belgium. Data collection was processed until April 2014 (Quebec), May 2014 (Scotland and Wales), July 2014 (Ontario) and August 2014 (all regions in Belgium and Spain). It thus takes into account the latest elections organized. Although I focus on regional and national careers, the analysis takes into account level-hopping movements from and towards the European level. In other words, I make sure that regional and national careers have

⁴ It contrasts with Westminster-style parliamentary systems – the UK and Canada in this study – where ministers are selected among parliamentary ranks.

⁵ It rises again up to 57.0 in Quebec after the 2011 federal elections (but not in Ontario). *Source*: author’s own calculation for Ontario and (Dodeigne, 2014) for Quebec.

⁶ It also includes MPs who were once elected in a region other the nine scrutinized in this article. This type of profiles remains however very rare accounting for less than 0.5 percent of all careers analyzed.

no interaction with the European Parliament. For the latter, I use the (Høyland, Sircar, & Hix, 2009)'s database which I updated from November 2011 until July 2014.

All careers are classified according to the four career patterns before mentioned. An extra category is yet created due to 'censored data'. It covers newly elected MPs with no prior parliamentary/government experience who cannot be classified into existing categories at the moment. Besides, the category 'others' regroups European political careers as well as the generation of MPs who served in the national parliament until the establishment of regional parliaments but who were not re-elected subsequently (at any levels). It was nevertheless necessary to record them in order to calculate the ratio of national level-hoppers at the first regional elections (see below). A final issue concerns error management. Limiting – if not excluding – errors during data collection is a paramount goal of scientific research, it is nevertheless particularly challenging when dealing with individuals who have names with distinct spellings, accents, inclusion of second names, initials, etc. over time and across levels. A usual example of this is *Las Cortes de Castilla-La-Mancha* recording this female MPs as “Ayuso González, María del Pilar” while the European parliament presents her as “Pilar Ayuso” without accents, inverting names, and excluding second first names and forenames. Therefore, I use an algorithm based on the Levenshtein distance which is a “measure of the number of edit operations that must be performed to transform one string to the other. An edit operation includes character insertion, delete, and substitution” (Cesare & Xiang, 2012, p. 64). In other words, the Levenshtein distance identifies plausible correspondences between several names of candidates. Although the researcher's intervention remains indispensable – all matches must be checked and validated one by one – it reduces significantly the risk of errors when working on thousands of careers.

Findings

The empirical results presented in this section are based on descriptive statistics. The dataset being inclusive of all individual careers (it is not a sample)⁷, all differences detected are indeed significant per se of the variance observed in the nine regions. First of all, the data confirms previous studies that Spain and Belgium (in all regions examined) present integrated political arenas in view of the large percentage of regional and national MPs with multi-level experience (see table 2). By contrast, parliamentarians in the UK and Canada evolve in regional and national political arenas (quasi-)closed to each other. Even though Scotland has a percentage of

⁷ Even in the case of Canada, all careers are recorded for the period under investigation.

multi-level careers alike Catalonia and Castilla-La-Mancha, most of them are due to level-hopping movements at the first Scottish election in 1999. After the first 1999-2003 legislature, level-hoppers constitute clearly an exception, not the rule. Secondly, the UK is the political system where the professionalization of regional and national politics is the most developed. The percentage of discrete careers is particularly low accounting for a clear minority of regional and national MPs in Wales (18.3) and Scotland (19.2 percent) whereas it forms the quasi majority of political careers in Castilla-La-Mancha (56.5 percent), Catalonia (48.3 percent), and to a lesser extent in Brussels (40.4), Quebec (39.3 percent), Flanders (37.8), Ontario (33.9), and Wallonia (25.0).

[Table 2 about here]

Thirdly, the conceptual classification between professionalized politicians with long and established careers (regional and national career patterns) and ‘citizens-politicians’ with short-term political experience (discrete regional and discrete national career patterns) emerged very distinctly (table 3). MPs with discrete careers are hardly in office for a complete legislature, be it at the regional or the national level. On average, they are in office for 1.0 to 1.5 offices (about 40 months of service) in the nine regions. On the opposite, regional and national careers reflect established and professionalized politicians: they serve during three to four mandates with an average duration of 10 to 14 years, except in the UK where they stay much longer, i.e. 16 (Wales) to 18 years (Scotland).

[Table 3 about here]

Based on this data, I now present in details the results for the three hypotheses. The first hypothesis tests whether or not strong regionalism induces more often level-hopping in the direction of the national level, and vice-and-versa in the case of weak regionalism. Table 4 describes hence three kinds of movements: the frequency of movements towards the regional political arena (Nat→Reg), towards the national political arena (Reg→Nat), and MPs who moved back and forth between both levels (integrated). The first clear result is that regional MPs move indeed more often towards national parliaments in cases of weak regionalism than in cases of strong regionalism. The percentages of ‘Reg→Nat movements’ are systematically higher in Castilla-La-Mancha, Wales, Wallonia and Brussels in comparison to their ‘sister’ region. The results are enhanced by the fact that the national parliaments offer less positions than the regional assemblies and, therefore, accessibility and availability of national positions are restricted.

Yet, the effects of regionalism are not as conclusive as expected. On the one hand, Quebec presents more MPs conducting movements towards the national than the regional level. On the other hand, although the ‘Reg→Nat movements’ are higher in Wales, Wallonia and Brussels (in comparison to their sister region), there are ultimately more ‘Nat→Reg movements’ in those regions contrary to the provisions of hypothesis 1. Furthermore, in Belgium, the high ratio of integrated career even shows that both the regional and national levels appear equally attractive (22.4 percent in Flanders, 25.8 percent in Wallonia and up to 53.1 percent in Brussels). Overall, only Spain constitutes a paramount example of the regionalism hypothesis. In Catalonia (strong regionalism), national MPs who try and manage to take up a seat at the *Parlament de Catalunya* form the most important group (n=54, 47.8 percent) whereas in Castilla-La-Mancha (weak regionalism), there are more regional MPs who first served in *Las Cortes de Castilla-La-Mancha* before moving to the *Congreso* and the *Senado* (n=32, 56.1 percent).

[Table 4 about here]

Level-hopping movements in table 4 are yet slightly biased by the high percentage of centrifugal movements at first regional elections. At a time when regional parliaments were newly established institutions full of vacant seats to be populated, national incumbents successfully run at first regional elections creating an unusual ratio of ‘Nat→Reg movements’. They account for 20.8 percent in Scotland, 24.6 percent in Catalonia, and 44.6 percent in Wallonia. In line with previous research, it is therefore worth distinguishing level-hopping movements with and without first regional legislatures.

Controlling for the latter, movements in Scotland and Wales now corroborate the regionalism hypothesis (see table 5): transfers towards London are more frequent in Wales (66.7 percent) whereas Scottish MPs leave more frequently their national position to serve at Holyrood, the seat of the Scottish Parliament (66.7 percent). In Belgium, the regionalism hypothesis is also perfectly verified in Flanders, but contrary to our expectations, ‘Reg→Nat movements’ still constitute the smallest groups of level-hoppers in Wallonia (40.2 percent) and Brussels (27.4 percent). The problem with level-hopping movements is that they strongly depend upon electoral rules (e.g. possibility of dual offices in Scotland and Wales whereas provincial Quebecer MPs must resign before running for federal elections) whilst they often reflect party strategy – especially in PR systems (Borchert, 2011, p. 126) – rather than regional and national individual ambition. Moreover, although Scottish and Welsh movements are in line with the expected results, the very low amount of transfers – respectively, 12 and 9

movements accounting for hardly 4.3 and 6.6 of the careers analysed – strongly limits the production of robust results (e.g. a couple of movements at the next election may counterbalance the current picture). Analysing regional and national careers is thus the second necessary step to assess the regionalism hypothesis.

[Table 5 about here]

In the second hypothesis, it is expected that the regional ratio will be higher than the national ratio when regionalism is stronger. Interestingly, it is however the national parliament that continues to attract the most professionalized MPs across all regions, irrespective of the strength of regionalism (see table 6). In the UK, the ratio is particularly high which implies that once a national candidate manage to enter the parliament, he/she is almost secured to stay for an extensive period of time (4 legislative terms on average). The unique exception is Brussels where the regional ratio (0.9) slightly exceeds the national ratio (0.8). In that region, seats availability probably explain why regional politics predominates, albeit marginally. With a population of hardly 1 million inhabitants, the Brussel-Capital regions Parliament disposes of 89 regional seats (but only 20 national seats) whereas the 6 million Flemish are represented by 124 regional and 102 national MPs and the 4 million Walloons elect 75 regional and 61 national MPs. In all regions examined, it is thus not surprising that the proportion of regional/national seats is the highest in Brussels (77.5 percent).

[Table 6 about here]

Nevertheless, the fact that the national state prevails as the main attractive political centre does not exclude any regionalism effects. Firstly, national ratios are systematically higher in cases of weak regionalism than in cases of strong regionalism. The difference is particularly spectacular in the UK (the national ratio equals 20.5 in Wales but is only of 11.83 in Scotland) but is also substantial in Canada (it is of 3.12 in Ontario and 1.56 in Quebec) and to a lesser extent in Belgium and Spain (the variance is about 20-30 percent). Secondly, despite the predominance of the national parliament, regional ratios tend to be very similar if not equal to the national ratio in cases of strong regionalism. For instance, the national ratios in Ontario and Wallonia are twice as big as the regional ratios whereas the gap between ratios significantly drops in cases of strong regionalism (e.g. regional and national ratios are respectively of 1.37 and 1.56 in Quebec and of 0.72 and 0.99 in Flanders). And even though Scotland presents a relative low regional ratio, the gap between regional and national ratios is radically smaller than in Wales.

The final hypothesis examines intra-case variance and in particular whether differences observed result from specific political parties. As presented in table 7, there are clearly divergent political behaviours between political careers from ethnoregionalist parties and the others. On the one hand, candidates from ethnoregionalist parties develop more often regional careers (the regional ratio is higher than the national ratio) while other candidates have a higher national ratio. The only exception is in the UK (both Scotland and Wales) where Westminster attracts professional MPs irrespective of the kind of political parties. Yet, in that two cases, findings must be considered very cautiously due to small number of observations of ethno-regionalist candidates with a national career pattern: there are 6 SNP and 6 *Plaid Cymru* national careers. On the other, hand, candidates from all other parties present a larger national ratio although they did not defect regional parliaments considering that the regional ratio is not that dissimilar to their ethnoregionalist counterpart (Flanders and Scotland). In Catalonia and Quebec, political behaviours diverge nonetheless more importantly creating a dual picture between the two types of candidates.

[Table 7 about here]

Conclusion

Career patterns are diversified in multi-level systems. Previous research has shown that regional politics has become another attractive centre of politics, if not the most important political arena. While the strength of regionalism is at the basis of the establishment of regional parliaments, its effects remain unclear in the literature. Some authors argue that it does affect career patterns while other scholars found little evidence of the regionalism hypothesis. Inconclusive results in the literature are partly due to the limited number of comparative research across country and across time, case selection bias (cases of weak regionalism are overlooked), and choice of the unit of analysis (most studies are based on the mere level-hopping movements and not on regional and national careers). In the wake of previous studies, this article aimed at moving forward the debate on the regionalism hypothesis based on an intranational and international comparative research that integrates cases of strong regionalism (Catalonia, Quebec, Scotland, and Flanders) and cases of weak regionalism (Castilla-La-Mancha, Ontario, Wales, Wallonia and Brussels). The analysis of 4.991 regional and national careers in those nine led to the conclusion that regionalism does matter but nationalism prevails.

In terms of level-hopping movements, there are generally more national MPs moving to regional institutions in cases of strong regionalism and more regional MPs moving up to national political arena in cases of weaker regionalism. While Catalonia and Castilla-La-

Mancha could be used as ‘handbook ‘examples of the effects of strong and weak regionalism on level-hoppers, results from the other regions are yet not that compelling or even contradicting the expected results. Based on political careers conducted at a single level of government (which form the overwhelming majority of careers identified), findings are much more convincing. In all cases of strong regionalism, there are more candidates developing regional professionalized careers than in cases of weak regionalism. This is particularly the case for members of ethnoregionalist parties who present more regional careers than national careers. Although regionalism does matter, overall the national parliament remains nonetheless the most attractive institution across all regions (except in Brussels for particular reasons due to the seats availability). For students of regional and national studies, the results are highly relevant. More than any formal description of powers, career patterns are indeed considered as key proxy of the genuine balance of powers between regional and national arenas (Squire, 2014). It proves that regionalism, in terms of regional identity and strength of ethno-regional parties, has indeed shaped career patterns in favour of the regional political arena but that the national state has nonetheless retained its central and dominant position.

This conclusion as yet to be put into perspective on three aspects. First of all, the findings regarding the professionalization of regional and national political arenas should not be overestimated because only parliamentary/government offices were analysed. Indeed, office professionalization must be distinguished from individual professionalization. A parliamentary office might appear at first glance little professionalized but individuals holding these offices might be on the contrary professionalized politicians (at the party level, municipal level, administration level, etc.). Although the distinction tends to be less pertinent in the case of Canada and the UK, where parliamentary and government offices constitutes the highest positions of the political systems, the distinction is worthwhile in Spain and Belgium. In other words, they are often “amateur legislators but professionalized politicians” (Jones, 2002).

Secondly, future analysis should assess whether this national dominance has been constant or has evolved over time in the nine regions examined, a goal beyond the scope of this actual study though. Finally, in this article, effects of regionalism were analysed at an aggregate level and across regions and countries. Yet, the way regionalism affects differently actors at an individual level is as much important to understand the genuine meaning of regional and national positions (through qualitative work certainly). In this respect, the fact that the national parliaments remain central might not necessarily be in contradiction with the regionalism hypothesis: national MPs can influence national policy-making in favour of its region, debating on further devolution, and are under a process socialization (once they are in office, they build

and develop network and specialization that constitute structural advantage in comparison to moving to the ‘unknown’ regional political arena). Above all, the prestige and authority of historical national parliaments might simply constitute strong social and political representations working as incentives for ambitious candidates.

The debate about the impact of regionalism on career patterns in multi-level systems was opened in this journal a decade ago. This article aimed to move it one step further but the analysis of career patterns in multi-level systems (with a systematic analysis from local to European levels) remains a underexplored research area to investigate, should anyone want to do so.

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Appendix

Table 1. Summary of cases selection

<i>Strong regionalism</i>	Catalonia	Flanders	Quebec	Scotland
Ethnoregionalist party	Strong	Strong/medium	Strong	Strong/medium
Self-identification	$R > N$	$R \geq N$	$R \geq N$	$R > N$
Ref. on independence	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Weak regionalism</i>	Castilla-La-Mancha	Wallonia & Brussels	Ontario	Wales
Ethnoregionalist party	Inexistent	Weak	Inexistent	Weak
Self-identification	$N \geq R$	$N \geq R$	$N > R$	$R \geq N$
Ref. on independence	No	No	No	No

Figure 1. Career patterns in multi-level systems.

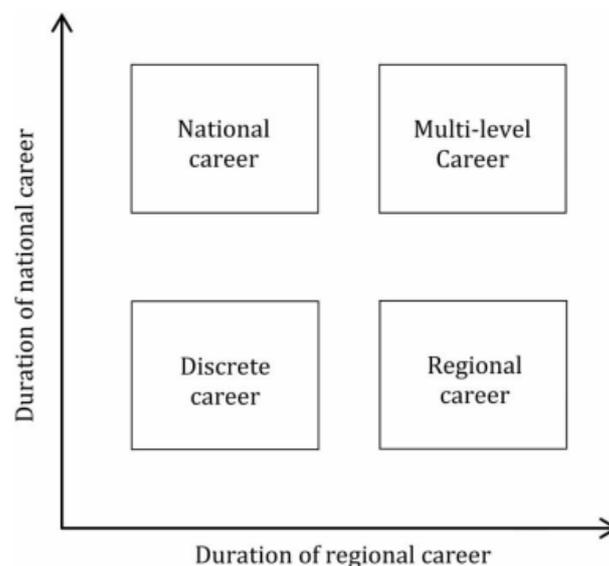


Table 2. Career patterns in cases of strong and weak regionalism

	Catalonia		Scotland		Quebec		Flanders			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<i>Strong regionalism</i>										
Regional career	253	27.9	123	43.8	193	36.6	64	10.6		
National career	96	10.6	71	25.3	103	19.5	137	22.7		
Discrete regional career	327	36.1	48	17.1	141	26.8	89	14.8		
Discrete national career	118	13.0	6	2.1	66	12.5	139	23.1		
Multi-level experience	112	12.4	33	11.7	24	4.6	174	28.9		
All but others	906	100	281	100	527	100	603	100		
Censored career/others	131	-	76	-	119	-	225	-		
All careers	1037	-	357	-	646	-	828	-		
<hr/>										
<i>Weak Regionalism</i>	Castilla-La-Mancha		Wales		Ontario		Wallonia		Brussels	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regional career	59	13.1	54	39.4	187	33.9	37	6.7	85	31.8
National career	74	16.5	41	29.9	162	29.4	76	13.8	10	3.7
Discrete regional career	134	29.8	23	16.8	135	24.5	74	13.4	95	35.6
Discrete national career	120	26.7	2	1.5	52	9.4	64	11.6	13	4.9
Multi-level experience	62	13.8	17	12.4	15	2.7	128	23.2	64	24.0
All but others	449	100	137	100	551	100	379	100	267	100
Censored career/others	44	-	45	-	40	-	149	-	62	-
All careers	493	-	182	-	591	-	528	-	329	-

Note: The percentage is based on the total number of careers except the censored and ‘others’ category.

Table 3. Duration of regional and national careers in cases of strong and weak regionalism

	Catalonia		Scotland		Quebec		Flanders	
	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.
Regional career	126.5	3.4	129.6	2.9	144.2	4.0	133.4	2.9
National career	136.1	3.5	225.6	4.5	142.0	3.7	148.1	3.9
Discrete regional career	37.9	1.2	42.7	1.1	35.6	1.2	51.1	1.2
Discrete national career	39.7	1.2	5.03	1.5	41.6	1.3	38.4	1.3

	Castilla-La-Mancha		Wales		Ontario		Wallonia		Brussels	
	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.	Dur.	Off.
Regional career	120.4	2.7	136.3	3.0	155.3	4.0	142.8	2.9	163.9	3.4
National career	131.1	3.4	202.8	4.0	128.0	3.7	152.2	4.1	126.4	3.8
Discrete regional career	43.6	1.1	47.6	1.1	49.6	1.5	46.0	1.1	49.5	1.1
Discrete national career	35.0	1.2	53.4	1.0	39.97	1.1	37.7	1.3	37.0	1.2

Key: Dur= Duration is calculated in months spent in office. Off. = number of offices served.

Table 4. Level-hopping movements between strong and weak regionalism

	Catalonia		Quebec		Scotland		Flanders			
<i>Strong regionalism</i>	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Reg→Nat	29	25.7	15	62.5	4	12.1	13	7.5		
Nat→Reg	54	47.8	9	37.5	28	84.8	122	70.1		
Integrated	30	26.5	0	0	1	3.0	39	22.4		
Total	113	100	24	100	33	100	174	100		

	Castilla-La-Mancha		Ontario		Wales		Wallonia		Brussels	
<i>Weak regionalism</i>	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reg→Nat	32	56.1	12	85.7	5	29.4	16	12.5	11	17.2
Nat→Reg	16	28.1	1	7.1	11	64.7	79	61.7	19	29.7
Integrated	9	15.8	1	7.1	1	5.9	33	25.8	34	53.1
Total	57	100	14	100	17	100	128	100	64	100

Table 5. Level-hopping movements between strong and weak regionalism

(Excluding first regional elections)

	Catalonia		Quebec		Scotland		Flanders			
<i>Strong regionalism</i>	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Reg→Nat	29	25.7	15	62.5	4	33.3	24	22.4		
Nat→Reg	54	47.8	9	37.5	8	66.7	55	51.4		
Integrated	30	26.5	0	0	0	0.0	28	26.2		
Total	113	100	24	100	12	100	107	100		

	Castilla-La-Mancha		Ontario		Wales		Wallonia		Brussels	
<i>Weak regionalism</i>	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reg→Nat	32	56.1	12	85.7	6	66.7	23	28.0	11	17.7
Nat→Reg	16	28.1	1	7.1	3	33.3	33	40.2	17	27.4
Integrated	9	15.8	1	7.1	0	0.0	26	31.7	34	54.8
Total	57	100	14	100	9	100	82	100	62	100

Table 6. Regional and national ratios

Weak regionalism	Regional ratio	National ratio	Results
Castilla-La-Mancha	0.44	0.62	N > R
Wales	2.35	20.50	N > R
Ontario	1.39	3.12	N > R
Wallonia	0.50	1.19	N > R
Brussels	0.89	0.77	R > N
Strong regionalism	Regional ratio	National ratio	Results
Catalonia	0.77	0.81	N > R
Scotland	2.56	11.83	N > R
Quebec	1.37	1.56	N > R
Flanders	0.72	0.99	N > R

Table 7. Regional and national ratios, by political parties

<i>Ethnoregionalist parties</i>				
Weak regionalism	Regional ratio	National ratio	Results	N
Wales	0.58	All prof.	N > R	31
Strong regionalism	Regional ratio	National ratio	Results	N
Catalonia	0.94	0.88	R > N	453
Scotland	2.38	All prof.	N > R	98
Quebec	1.77	1.44	R > N	258
Flanders	0.79	0.70	R > N	218
<i>Other parties</i>				
Weak regionalism	Regional ratio	Nat ratio	Results	N
Wales	2.63	19.00	N > R	151
Strong regionalism	Regional ratio	Nat ratio	Results	N
Catalonia	0.64	0.79	N > R	584
Scotland	2.66	11.00	N > R	259
Quebec	1.13	1.78	N > R	364
Flanders	0.74	1.13	N > R	442

Key: All prof. = all careers are professionalized, no discrete pattern.

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