Substate Nationalists And European Integration:

Friends, Foes, Or Something In Between?

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the relationship between substate nationalist parties with the European Union and their support for European integration. Building off the political psychology literature on elite cues and mass beliefs, the analysis will utilize party manifestos for European Parliament elections from 1979 until 2014. Indicator variables for decentralization, support for European integration, and opposition to European integration are contained in the Euromanifesto Studies dataset and will be the variables utilized in the time series regression analysis. The first section of this thesis will introduce substate nationalist parties in their complexity, along with the conclusions reached about the family of substate nationalists by the established literature. The second section will discuss the data and methodology. The third section will present and discuss the results from the regression analysis. Finally, the fourth section will conclude with a more in-depth discussion of the regression analysis results and implications for the field going forward. It will be shown that substate nationalist parties are not supportive of European integration as the literature claims them to be.

Lay Summary

This thesis investigates the relationship between European political parties that advocate for more self-government for their home region and their support for increased authority for the European Union. To do so, European Parliament election year manifestos for these substate nationalist parties are analyzed using a statistical model in order to identify trends and significant relationships. It finds that substate nationalist parties in the 1980s and 1990s were more likely to be supportive of the European Union the more they advocated for increased self-government. Starting in 2004, this positive relationship vanished. Knowing that many substate nationalist parties now oppose European integration is vitally important for European policymakers as the European Union faces a growing tide of Eurosceptic parties.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished, and independent work done by the author, Cory Vincent.

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EU   European Union

EEC   European Economic Community

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I would like to thank Professor Richard Johnston for his guidance as my supervisor. The quality of this thesis would be far poorer without his advice and attention to detail. I would also like to thank Professor Andrew Owen, who gave me invaluable help when I was hopelessly lost in my attempts to use the statistical software for the regression analysis. Finally, I would like to thank my parents who have supported me throughout my entire academic journey, which has culminated in this thesis.

Dedication

To Lauren, Annie, and Maximillion, who inspire me, encourage my work, and inject much-needed levity into my life.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the 1970s and 80s a growing phenomenon of substate nationalist political parties in developed democracies vocally advocating secession as their primary policy platform inspired a wave of scholarship. However, as the secessionist projects failed to achieve their desired independence in places like Quebec, the Basque Country, and elsewhere, and then subsequently lost electoral support, scholarly interest in the subject waned. Jason Sorens, who conducted the first cross-sectional quantitative study on secessionist movements in 2005, lamented that social science literature had not "picked up" where it left off in the 1970s[1]. However, with the resurgence of secessionist parties across the developed world, scholarship on the matter has multiplied in the past decade.

In the hope of adding to this growing body of political science literature, this thesis will focus on one salient issue of substate nationalist politics: its relationship with European integration. The process of European integration began when the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 establishing the European Economic Community, the precursor to the contemporary European Union.[2] Little more than twenty years later in 1979, European integration advanced further with the addition of a democratically elected political body, the European Parliament. As a consequence, a supranational level of politics was laid on top of the national and local. Through their elected representative to the European Parliament, the only directly elected body in the European Union, European citizens could now voice their opinion on continental-wide

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[1] Sorens, J. 2005. "The Cross-Sectional Determinants of Secessionism in Advanced Democracies". *Comparative Political Studies, 38*(3), 304-326.
[2] Interchangeably referred to as the "EU" from this point forward.

issues. The economic and political weight that the EU has acquired on the world stage underscores the significance that its political developments possess. However after decades of gradual integration, opposition, or euroscepticism, is growing in popularity as the European populace experiences one crisis after another. Against this backdrop, substate nationalist political parties are proliferating at the national and supranational levels. Only three substate nationalist parties were elected to the European Parliament in its first election in 1979, whereas fifteen parties were elected in 2014, many of them formed after the first European Parliamentary election. Across time periods and unique national contexts, substate nationalist parties share two characteristics in common: 1) they lay claim to a substate territory on behalf of the community they represent; and 2) they claim their respective community is ethnically distinct.[3] Political parties such as the Bavarian Christian Social Union and the Socialist's Party of Catalonia are regionally based parties that at times are fierce, vocal advocates for increased regional self-government. However, they do not claim ethnic distinction from the majority ethnic group of their nation-state.

Despite their growing presence, the motivations and policy ambitions of substate nationalist parties are less understood relative to other party families in the European Union. Do substate nationalists support a European army? Is there a consensus amongst the party family concerning European Union monetary policy? The academic literature and press have paid little attention to substate nationalists on these questions and many more. Thus, this thesis will contribute to demystifying substate nationalist political parties within the European Union. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following question: does a substate nationalist political

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[3] Gómez-Reino, M. 2014, in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 120.

party's desired degree of self-governance from its respective European Union member state affect its support for European integration at the European Parliamentary level of politics, and if so, how?

This thesis will demonstrate that there are identifiable relationships, both positive and negative, between substate nationalist advocacy for increased self-government and support for European integration. First, this thesis will establish a general understanding of what substate nationalism consists. Then, it will provide a brief overview of how substate nationalists are assumed to position themselves politically in an integrated Europe. Next, substate nationalist parties will be shown to not only be invested in center-periphery politics, but also the politics of the traditional left-right divide. Following this, the claims posited by previous studies will be explained and contrasted against one another, showing the disagreements that have emerged between scholars. The methodology and data will then be discussed to ground the time series regression analysis upon which this analysis is centered. Finally, the results of the regression analysis and the implications of it will establish that substate nationalist parties are less supportive of European integration than academics have purported in the past. In a break with the established literature, this thesis will show that in the new millennium there is no identifiable relationship between center-periphery extremity nor left-right extremity and support for European integration.

1.1 Substate Nationalism

Before one can investigate substate nationalism, nationalism itself must first be understood. A term as broad and with as complicated a history as nationalism cannot be explained in a single work, but this thesis hopes to provide a brief, yet sufficient overview. Nationalism as a political phenomenon is weighed down by the connotations of violent Fascist nationalism during World War II. However, nationalism comes in numerous variations with differing degrees of intensity. Before the slaughter of the Second World War, Max Weber asserted that the fundamental idea of the nation, the large political grouping of people sharing a common culture and set of values, is "anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group".[4] In our modern era, nationalism certainly builds upon Weber's concept by adding a statist element, which idealizes state-centered "ties that bind". From this perspective, the state envelops the nation and protects its distinct way of life from outside interference.[5] A variant of nationalism, substate nationalism seeks to form a state for its own national group. These substate nations identify as stateless, not in the sense of existing outside of the state, but within one with which they do not feel is their own. Common to all is a historical state or collection of states in which their respective national group formed. In the contemporary world, they exist as a minority cultural, religious, linguistic, or racial group within the nation-state,

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[4] Weber, Max. ed. by Kalberg, S. 2008. *Max Weber: Readings and commentary on modernity.* Malden, MA: Blackwell. 228.
[5] Howe, Paul. 2005. "Nationalist Idealisation and the State". *National Identities,* 7(1), 80.

distinct from the majority national group. Substate nationalists demand that their right to self-determination be recognized as equal to that which the majority ethnic group has enjoyed.

In order to become a nation possessing their own state, secession from the central state must occur. In developed democracies, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) contend that the center-periphery manifests in an electoral cleavage resulting from the national revolution that took place in many European countries during the nineteenth century, and for some even earlier.[6] Substate nationalist political parties that contend for representation of the periphery electorate position themselves against political parties in the center. Despite originating from a shared political cleavage, the members of this "family" of parties do not all share the same political objective. Some advocate for increased autonomy, others a transformation of the state framework to a federal system, and some are vehement in their demand for secession. All three varieties respond to a central state constitution. Constitutions have been instrumental in cementing the nation-building process for the majority ethnic group and are "interpreted by the minority nationalists as an instance of majority national nationalism".[7] The central constitution frames the debate between national party centralists and substate nationalists. The repatriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982 and the subsequent failure of the Meech Lake Accords in 1990 signalled to many Quebec federalists that a reciprocal and accommodating relationship with the Canadian state was unattainable. Since, autonomist Quebecois nationalists have captured the fervor that federalists previously enjoyed. In Spain, the political story diverges down two trajectories. The 1978 Constitution found support from Catalan nationalists, content with advocating for increased

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[6] Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction", in Lipset and Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, 14.
[7] Lluch 334.

autonomy. In 2010, after the Spanish Supreme Court struck down enhanced autonomy laws for the region, Catalan nationalists quickly agitated for independence. In Basque Country, many Basque nationalists were initially opposed to the Constitution, but violent separatists and a Spanish state willing to cede more autonomy to Basque Country have left the vast majority of Basques opposed to secession. The last is considered the most "extreme" of the variations of substate nationalism. It is also the strain of substate nationalism that most clearly and vocally incorporates a statist ideology into its policy platform by pursuing the objective of a separate state for its respective subnational group.

1.2   Europe of the Regions?

The incorporation of the statist element in substate nationalism places political parties in confrontation with their respective national, centralizing party counterparts. Center-periphery contestation in developed democracies occurs most frequently and prominently within the European Union. The political debate over identity at the regional, member-state, and European Union-wide levels is occurring at the same place and time, and even with several of the same political figures. To demonstrate this tri-faceted interaction, one needs only look to Spain where the Catalan secessionist movement claimed to the Catalan electorate that becoming an independent state would not jeopardize the region's EU membership, yet still "free" them from Spanish "oppression". In direct rebuke to the secessionist Catalan parties, the President of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker publicly said that he "would not like a European Union in fifteen years that consists of some 98 states", referring to the 98 major regions

composing the EU.[8] The European dimension of this state-substate struggle can be found in numerous other cases. Positioning by the Catalan nationalists is just one example that shows the salience of European Union membership for substate national groups, especially if by identifying with Europe they can ultimately distance themselves from the central state they wish to leave.

The EU in turn could potentially benefit from the state-substate conflict. Some scholars and policy makers believe that European integration could likely hinge upon a critical number of Europeans deciding that the EU can provide better redress to their political problems than existing national politics.[9] Proponents of this view imagine a capable supranational leviathan that remains entrenched in the local sphere close to everyday Europeans. However, others fear the unraveling of several member states into "micro" states could undermine the developing European integration process. As Gómez-Reino (2014) demonstrates, the substate nationalist parties may not be the steadfast allies of European integration some see them to be as they compose only the fourth-most pro-EU political party family, behind the Socialists, Liberals, and Christian Democrats.[10] The European Parliamentary-level party family is composed of pro-EU and Eurosceptic parties, making the collective stance on European integration more heterogeneous than other party families. Moreover, identification with a European identity can fluctuate over time, as Italians have shown over the past thirty years. Italian voters identified more with their region and Europe during the 90s and early 2000s. [11] However, in the most

[8] Pérez, C. 2017, October 13. Catalan Crisis: Juncker. *El País*. December 9, 2018 from https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/10/13/inenglish/1507907261_402876.html.
[9] Messina, A. and Gould, A. 2014. *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 9.
[10] Gómez-Reino, M. 2014 in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 122.
[11] Tossutti, L.S. 2002. Between Globalism and Localism, Italian Style. *West European*

recent Italian national election voters from throughout the country propelled a historically

Northern substate nationalist party into a governing coalition which campaigned on an anti-

European integration platform. In short, there is plenty variation and little clarity amongst the

substate nationalist family in regards to its European integration position.

Given the logic that a more competent European Union would undermine member state

authority and purpose (i.e. providing redress to its citizens) some scholars have stressed that on

average substate nationalist parties are supportive of the European Union.[12] Jolly (2007) traces

the Scottish National Party's rhetoric and its militants' perception of the EU from 1979 through

1997 in order to examine this regional-European interaction. During the Scottish independence

debate, party officials used Scotland's membership in the EU as a means to diminish fears of

economic cost to the region via secession.[13] Thus, the secession option became more palatable to

the risk-averse Scottish voter as economic consequences could be mitigated through continued

access to the common market. The salience of the EU variable in the Scottish independence

debate is evidenced in the prominent "independence in EU" statement that the party used to

decrease anxiety over secession and increase support for leaving Great Britain.[14] As Jolly (2014)

also comments, similar tactics have been used in other regional elections across the EU.

However, given the intuitive logic that the EU could aid substate nationalists in their struggle for

increased autonomy by undermining the traditional role of the state, many scholars are puzzled

as to why the party family is not more supportive of European integration efforts. Some scholars

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Politics, 25(3), 51-76.
[12] Jolly, Seth. 2014 in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism,
ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 82.
[13] Ibid 91.
[14] Ibid 97.

have sought to examine how substate nationalist parties exist at the intersection of multiple electoral cleavage issues, not only as a party in the center-periphery fight.

1.3   The Left-Right Political Divide

The center-periphery cleavage may be a substate nationalist party's *raison d'être*, but this does not preclude it from approaching political issues just as much from its position on the left-right political spectrum. While the political party family is found along the entire spectrum from far-left to far-right, most substate nationalist parties are center-left.[15] Substate nationalists often advocate for more redistribution and greater acceptance of cultural diversity. For example, the Welsh party Cymru Plaid argues that Welsh voters have distinct political values from English voters; the Welsh are against austerity, Welsh voters desire a socialist economic structure over a neoliberal one, and that the Welsh people embrace multicultural principles to a greater degree than the English. Cymru Plaid attempts to make the case that the more left-wing Welsh voters are not represented by more right-leaning English parties. Its push for Welsh independence makes it denounce left-wing Labor for the dominance of English voters within the party. Territorially linked identity and social policy like the ones advocated for by Cymru Plaid are key components of many substate nationalist platforms, but the ideological position of each party influences how it frames its policy objectives. Parties on the right side of the spectrum, like the Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliante in the Flanders region of Belgium, generally advocate for lower taxes and a business-friendly environment. The Flemish party claims Flanders needs more autonomy
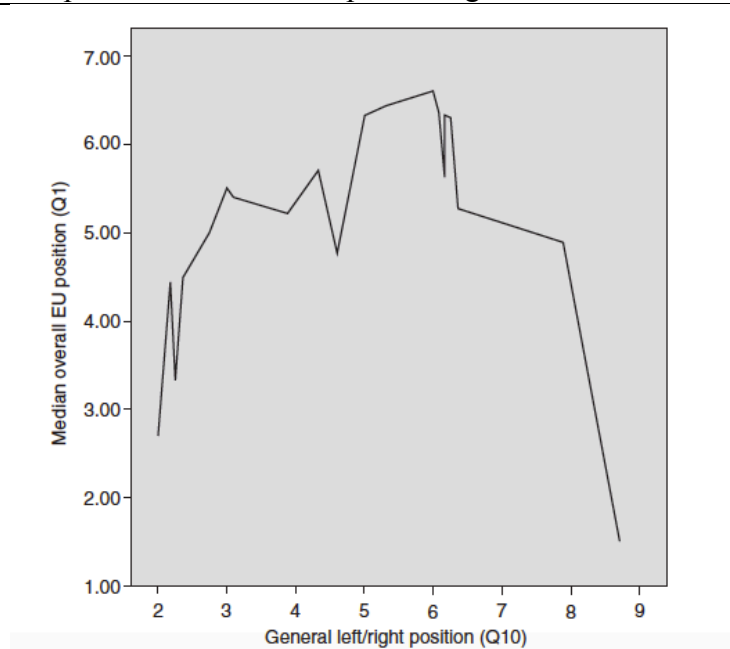
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[15]Gómez-Reino, M. (2014) in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 124.

from Belgium, because the central state forces it to subsidize the heavily unionized, "lazy"

Francophone region of Wallonia and in doing so, Belgium infringes on Flemish sovereignty.[16]

Both left and right wing policies are pitched as an expression of the values unique to the substate

nationalist group and are framed as politics of

substate solidarity against the central state.[17]

Not limited to the national theater, the
left-right cleavage also plays a role in a
party's likelihood to support or oppose
European integration. Based upon the survey
and measurement developed by University of
North Carolina Chapel Hill, party ideology
has been shown to be a powerful predictor of
positions towards European integration within
the substate nationalist political family (refer
to figure 1). Centrist parties are most likely to
support increased European integration while

Figure 1. Regionalist party family left-right placements and positions toward European Integration.

Gómez-Reino, M. (2014) in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 126.

extreme left-/right-wing parties are conversely, more likely to be Eurosceptic. Far-left parties

have historically opposed European integration for its support of capitalist ideology and lack of

redistributive policies. These parties cue to their voters that the European Union leaves them

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[16] Béland, Daniel and André Lecours. 2010. "Does nationalism trigger welfare-state disintegration? Social Policy and territorial mobilization in Belgium and Canada." *Government and Policy, 28. 420-434.*
[17] Gomez-Reino 125.

more economically insecure and vulnerable to captialist predation.[18] Far-right parties have opposed the EU for its perceived threat to (sub)national social cohesion and trumpet their opposition as a defense of subnational soveriegnty.[19] One prominent political event, the Constitutional Treaty of 2005, caused Spanish substate nationalist parties to be evenly split in number in Spain's referendum on the Treaty; although all are pro-EU, left-wing parties voted against the Constitution and right-wing parties voted in favor.[20]

A geographic divide further underlines the differences within substate national party family; those of Western Europe are the most Eurosceptic and those of Eastern Europe are the most pro-European.[21] A proper explanation for this divergence falls outside the scope of this thesis. In brief, though, Central and Eastern European substate nationalists dreamt of a "return to Europe" after the fall of communism. For these parties, the European Union represents a tangible solution to the violence caused from centuries-old conflict over irredentist border skirmishes.[22] Substate nationalist parties from the former Soviet Union satellites states still hold that the European Union is the best vehicle through which to maintain European cohesion while also aiding substate nationals peacefully pursue self-determination. With all of these schisms within the EU-level party family, it bears keeping in mind that many parties are on an increasingly pro-European or Eurosceptic trajectory, continuously evolving and transforming their position on European integration.

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[18] De Vries, Catherine and Erica E. Edwards. 2009. "Taking Europe to its Extremes: Extreme Parties and Public Euroscepticism". *Party Politics*, 15:1, 22.
[19] De Vries and Edwards. 22.
[20] Gomez-Reino127.
[21] Gómez-Reino, M. 2014, in *Europe's contending identities: supranationalism, ethnoregionalism, religion, and new nationalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 130
[22] Keating, Michael. 2004. "European Integration and the Nationalities Question". *Politics and Society*, 32:3, 372.

1.4   Disagreements in the Literature

In the hopes of understanding these multiple intra-party family nuances, researchers have employed various methodologies, though this has at times produced contradictory results. In decade following the first study on EU-level party families and European integration[23] (1996), both qualitative and quantitative political science studies agreed that the substate nationalist party family was "unambiguously and unanimously" supportive of European integration.[24] At the turn of the millennium, as demonstrated by De Winter and Gomez-Reino (2002), "almost all ethnoregionalist parties defend European integration" and that the EU party family "has produced a new political agenda reflecting the Europeanization of party goals".[25] Jolly (2007, 2014) reaffirmed the pro-European position of substate nationalist parties through a quantitative analysis.

Qualitative approaches to this intersection of EU integration and substate nationalism portray a more strained relationship. Massetti (2009) contends a qualitative categorization illuminates the nuanced reality that substate nationalist parties are not as monolithically supportive of increased European integration as Jolly (2014) asserts. Massetti (2009) temporally divides the party family's position on the EU into three distinct phases of EU development: the European Economic Community market-focused era in the 1950-1970s; the social policy era associated with the birth of the European Union in the1980s and 1990s; and finally the

[23] Lynch, Peter. 1996. *Minority Nationalism and European Integration.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
[24] Hix, Simon and Christopher Lord. 1997. *Political Parties in the European Union.* London: Macmillan, 27.
[25] De Winter, Lieven and Margarita Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro. 2002. "European Integration and Ethnoregionalist Parties". *Party Politics*, 8:4, 497.

constitutional and neo-liberal EU from the 2000s until present-day (see Table 1).

The precursor to the European Union was the European Economic Community which

was established to accomplish two objectives: 1) prevent another devastating war between European powers; and 2) facilitate economic growth. The Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 establishing the free movement of goods and workers, a common agricultural policy, a social fund for increasing employment, a common energy policy, the European Commission, and much more. The European Economic Community had little desire and even less directive to involve itself in the internal

Table 1. Phases of EU development.

	Pro-integration	No Position or ambiguous	Against integration
First phase: economic and free-market Europe (1950s-70s)	CSU, UV, SVP, FDF, VU, RW, UVP, SDLP		CNP, PC, SF, UUP, DUP
Second phase: progressive and regional Europe (1980s-90s)	SNP, SDLP, CSU ERC, EA, OC, RW, UVP, CHA, PA, CiU, FDF, UM, CDN, UV, PRC, PR, VU, PNV, SVP, CC, UPN, UnV, LN (1990-98), PAR, PSd'Az, UPC (90s)	BNG (1990s), UPC (1980s)	HB-Ba, SF, PDS, BNG (1980s), VB, dF UfS, DUP, LT, LN (since 1998) UUP, EE
Third phase: constitutional, progressive, and neo-liberal Europe (2000s)	SDLP, PA, UM, CDN, UV, FA, PRC, PR, CC, SVP, UPN, PAR, MpA	PC, CSU, PNV, CiU, LN (2008)	HB-Ba, SF, BNG, VB, dF, UfS, DUP, LT, LN, UUP, ERC EA, SNP, Ar, CHA

Massetti, Emanuele. 2009. "Explaining Regionalist Party Positioning in a Multi-dimensional Ideological Space: A Framework for Analysis." *Regional and Federal Studies*, 19:4-5, 521.

affairs of member states. Thus, substate nationalist parties either supported or opposed European

integration for its nearly complete focus on market economies. During the second period, the

European Regional Development Fund was reformed in 1983 to increase funding to less

economically developed regions in the European Economic Community.[26] The substantial

funding and the creation of the European Committee of the Regions signaled in a symbolic and

tangible manner that the European Union (formerly EEC) was an ally for the peoples of its

regions. Thus, many substate nationalist parties allied themselves with the politics of European

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[26] EU Factsheet p 8.

integration in the hopes of furthering what they believed to be a "Europe of the Regions".[27]

However, at the start of the new millennium a new phase in European integration commenced,

one that has redirected funding from Western regions to the new Eastern European member

states and committed itself to a European Union of constitutions.

The current European Union constitution, the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, gave the EU a

voice in foreign policy through the office of the High Representative, made the Charter of

Fundamental Rights legally binding, and created various democratically elected institutions with

enhanced authority.[28] Europe of the Regions appeared to be replaced with a supranational

bureaucratic and legal network settling on top of the nation-state, furthering the subsidiary

position of the region. For the first time, the European Union asserted supremacy over nation-

states. Some substate nationalists now saw their national groups as caught in both the nation-

state and in the EU. Subsequently, this third period thus witnessed a "dramatic reduction in pro-

integration parties and a substantive increase in anti-integration ones, so that the regionalist party

family is evenly divided".[29] Interestingly, center-left substate nationalist parties have taken a

Eurosceptic turn, while center-right and mainstream right parties have remained largely

supportive of additional integration.[30] Unlike previous studies, Massetti (2009) analyzes the

largely unaccounted for center-periphery cleavage as a factor in support or opposition to

European integration (see Table 2). It is through his qualitative categorization of the time periods

that Massetti finds that "the majority of autonomist parties still support European integration,

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[27] Massetti, Emanuele and Arjan H. Schakel 2016, in *Handbook on Cohesion Policy in the EU.* "Buying Support for Europe: The Impact of Cohesion Funds on Regionalist Parties' Positions on European Integration". Northampton: Edward Edgar Publishing 9.

[28] EU factsheet http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.5.pdf.

[29] Massetti, Emanuele. 2009. "Explaining Regionalist Party Positioning in a Multi-dimensional Ideological Space: A Framework for Analysis." *Regional and Federal Studies*, 19:4-5, 521.

[30] Ibid 522.

while the overwhelming

majority of secessionist parties

have opposed it in recent

years".[31] The extremity of the

substate party's position on the

center-periphery cleavage may

be a by-product of the left-right

cleavage as much of the

literature implicitly or

explicitly assumes. However,

Table 2. Regionalist Party Positioning on centre-periphery dimension on European integration (2000s)					
	Autonomist (moderate)	Autonomist (assertive)	Secessionist (ambiguous)	Secessionist (committed	Secessionist (violent)
Against further integration		PDS, LN, DUP, UUP, LT, CHA	BNG, ERC	SNP, EA, VB, SF, dF, UfS, Ar	HB-Ba
No position, ambiguous, or deeply divided		LN (2008), CSU, CiU	PNV, SG	PC	
In favor of further integration	PSd'Az, PA, PAR, PRC, PR, MpA, UM, CC, UPN	UV, FA, CDN, SVP		SDLP, N-VA	
Recreated from: Massetti, Emanuele. 2009. "Explaining Regionalist Party Positioning in a Multi-dimensional Ideological Space: A Framework for Analysis." *Regional and Federal Studies*, 19:4-5, 521.					

Massetti (2009) concedes that such a simple dismissal of this important cleavage ignores that

several secessionist parties have critiqued the EU for its constitutional structure after the EU

constitution (2005) and Lisbon Treaty (2007) were signed. These particular parties expressed

that an increasingly politically integrated Europe would raise additional obstacles for a

secessionist project. In other words, to secede from the nation-state yet remain a member of a

further integrated European Union would be akin to leaping out of the frying pan and into the

fire.

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[31] Ibid 523.

Chapter 2: Data and Methodology

This thesis posits that a logical manner to investigate a political party's stance toward European integration is to examine how it discusses the issues with voters. Conveniently, political parties publish election manifestos before each election, with few exceptions, in which they express their position on salient issues in great detail. Implicit in the choice to examine parties' manifestos is to examine cues made by political elites to influence the voting masses through the political party apparatus. The rich body of political psychology literature, which addresses elite cues, is grounded on Philip Converse's seminal work, *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics*. He theorized that the political masses are largely "innocent" or free from the long arc of political ideology. However, "elite decisions over time can depend in a vital way upon currents in what is loosely called 'the history of ideas'" and that these decisions "in turn have effects upon the mass of more common citizen".[32] Hence, political parties have a vital role to play in political discourse and great authority in how the masses participate in politics. Since Converse (2006), political science has added nuance to the analysis of elite cues and information diffusion for mass political decision-making. One point of agreement amongst these studies is that "mass publics frequently use cognitive shortcuts or information cues in order to determine their views on relatively unfamiliar objects", with many of the cues being the opinions proffered by trusted political elites.[33] In fact, Sanders and Toka (2013) demonstrated that the cue given by the political party a voter supports has the most influence on that voter's political

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[32] Converse, Philip E. 2006. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics (1964)". *Critical Review*, 18:1-3, 66.
[33] Sanders, David and Gabor Toka. 2013. "Is anyone listening? Mass and elite opinion cueing in the EU". *Electoral Studies*, 32:1, 23.

position.[34] Furthermore, Peterson et al. (2010) argue that political competition during an election campaign can frame issues in a manner that best illuminates the connection between the voter's value orientation and the political position agreed upon by the political party.[35] However, the information diffused from elites to the masses is not always unified. When elites break with the consensus that European integration is a net benefit for their voters, euroscepticism emerges.[36] Subnational political arenas are potentially fertile ground for euroscpeticism to flourish.[37] Hence, an analysis of party manifestos will reveal if substate nationalist parties are mostly signaling their voters to support European integration or oppose it, and in which contexts there might be a relationship between substate nationalism and European integration.

The Comparative Manifesto Project's (CMP) European Election Studies 1979-2014 dataset has analyzed every party manifesto published by a substate nationalist party that has earned a seat in the European Parliament. It provides unique opportunities for the analysis of substate national political parties within the European Union - thirty-three to be exact.[38] Substate nationalist parties, due to their regionally based constituencies and corresponding lack of nation-wide elector appeal, often have fewer elected officials than the parties of the traditional left and right. Thus, few datasets include substate nationalist parties, let alone a number as large as thirty-three. The Euromanifesto Studies data not only provides researchers with cross-sectional data for distinct elections, but also is a compilation of longitudinal data on party manifestos concerning a

[34] Sanders and Toka, 23.
[35] Peterson, Michael Bang, Rune Slothuus, and Lise Togeby. 2010. "Political Parties and Value Consistency in Public Opinion Formation". *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 74:3, 546.
[36] Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2005. "Calculation, Community, and Cues". *European Union Politics*, 6:4, 437.
[37] Hooghe and Marks, 437.
[38] Schmitt, Hermann, Daniela Braun, Sebastian A. Popa, Slava Mikhaylov, and Felix Dwinger. 2016. *European Parliament Election Study 1979-2014, Euromanifesto Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5102, Data file Version 2.0.0, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4232/1.12830*. 7.

comprehensive list of salient political issues. Political scientists utilize the Euromanifesto Studies data as manifestos "reflect indicators of issue emphases and policy position at a certain point in time".[39] As it is compiled in longitudinal fashion, researches are able to analyze changes in these indicators from one election to the next, adding depth to the understanding of electoral politics in numerous political theaters. In addition to measuring policy position and issue emphasis, the Euromanifesto Studies lays a common framework from which to measure parties from different ethnic, cultural, and geographical contexts. Ultimately, the Euromanifesto Study is a valuable source of information for political parties, and for substate nationalist variants in particular.

The Euromanifesto Studies measures arguments within the manifesto by breaking up the document into comprehensible quasi-sentences.[40] Each quasi-sentence can have one or multiple arguments corresponding to one or more salient political issues. For example, the following sentence contains two arguments: "we make a stand for a more democratic Europe with more rights for the European Parliament". One argument supports for more forms of democratic input for the European Union and the second argument advocates for increased powers for the European Parliament. Both arguments, as they are positive for their respective indicator variables, increase the positive measurement. Negative arguments, such as one that calls for a decrease in European Parliament rights, would increase the negative measurement for the variable concerned with an expansion of European Parliamentary powers. To be clear, these are two separate measurements for the same indicator variable. This is useful as some political issues are quite complex. A party may want the European Parliament to have more authority over a variety of policy areas, but may want it to have less or no right to interfere in agricultural policy.

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[39] Ibid 7.
[40] Ibid 24.

Though some other indicator variables are composite measurements, which will show the net measurement of positive and negative arguments. One such variable is the left-right composite variable. All relevant indicator variables for left and right wing ideological differences are added together to produce the net left or right leaning tendency of the party from a particular manifesto. Finally, the Euromanifesto Studies also divide arguments into their corresponding national and European levels. For the analysis in this thesis, one can analyze a substate nationalist party's stance towards decentralization at both its national context and for the European Union. Ultimately, the Euromanifesto Studies 1979-2014 dataset is rich in comprehensive information and measures the data so an analysis can be flexible and precise in regards to the concerned variables.

That is not to say that the CMP data is not without potential sources of error. Given its prominence in political science election research the CMP has come under scrutiny for a variety of conceivable and verifiable faults. The manifestos themselves are a major source of concern for researchers. Volkens (2007) contends that "not every party publishes an election program, secondly, not all policy areas are mentioned in all of the programs, and, thirdly, many programs are short".[41] Gemenis (2013) also warns that "third-party users of the CMP data should be aware that the estimates are often based on the coding of proxy documents and should discuss whether this has implications for their inferences".[42] The inclusion of proxy documents when party manifestos are unavailable or are not produced is problematic for its potential to skew the data. In one illustrative case, researchers found that had the CMP coded speeches made by Greek

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[41] Volkens, Andrea. 2007. "Strengths and Weaknesses of approaches to measuring policy positions of parties." *Electoral Studies*, 26:1, 109.
[42] Gemenis, Kostas. 2013. "What to Do (and Not to Do) with the Comparative Manifestos Project Data". *Political Studies*, 61:1, 9.

PASOK party leaders in place of the party's manifesto, the results would have shifted to the by 20 points to the center.[43] The parties concerned in this thesis have all published manifestos in each election in which they competed. The Euromanifesto study's approach to which parties are relevant has the potential to exclude parties, some of which garner significant popularity and yet fail to win a seat in the European Parliament. These excluded parties participate in the political conversation, influencing mainstream and "niche" parties alike during the electoral campaign.[44] Furthermore, researchers using the Euromanifesto Study recognize that "problems arising from coding error are not solved by using the CMP's aggregate left and right categories or the additive scale constructed from these".[45] Often times only one coder is responsible for the coding of a manifesto;[46] the average correlation for a coder, after receiving training, with a master copy is 0.83.[47] In acknowledging this potential source of error in the dataset, this thesis will build upon pre-existing work in the literature. The general trends and relationships found through time series regression analysis will be situated within the parameters of the already existing body of knowledge produced by scholars in the field.

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[43] Gemenis 8.

[44] For a more in depth discussion of this point, refer to: Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. "Competition between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success". *American Political Science Review* (99): 347-359.

[45] Mikhaylov, Slava, Michael Laver, and Kennet R. Benoit. 2012. "Coder Reliability and Misclassification in the Human Coding of Party Manifestos". *Society for Political Methodology*, 20:1, 90.

[46] Volkens 115.

[47] Volkens 118.

2.1   Variables

In the aim of discerning generalizable relationships from amongst a large pool of observations - thirty-three political parties across nine elections spanning thirty-five years - time series regression is the most appropriate approach. It provides the flexibility to examine the interaction between political contexts specific to time periods within the data and political issues which continue to be significant across the time periods of interest. Furthermore, relationships found through regression analysis can be useful in complementing qualitative studies that offer causal claims through the comparative method or monograph approach. For the regression analysis of the relationship between substate nationalist parties and European integration one variable for decentralization, one variable for opposition to increased integration, and a composite variable for support and opposition to EU integration were chosen. Decentralization was measured by positive mentions of four concepts: territorial subsidiary principle; increased autonomy in policymaking or economics; support for local customs and symbols; and special consideration for sub-national areas.[48] European integration was measured in two variables. The first was a simple score given by the coder responsible for that party's manifesto analysis on the quantity of positive mentions of increasing the responsibilities and scope of power of the European Parliament and other institutions composing the European Union. The second variable measuring support for European integration was a net aggregate score of each variable measuring various European Union-related issues, such as expanding the power of the European Parliament, support for a European Union military, increased EU regulatory authority, etc. The

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[48] Schmitt et al, 27.

measurement pertaining to euroscepticism is coder-assigned for general mentions of opposition to expanding the scope of European Union responsibilities and authority. The control variable of left-right extremity is a manipulated variable, which originally scored from -100 (left most score) to +100 (right most score). The manipulated variable is the absolute value of the original measurement, rendering the manipulated measurement 0 to 100. This new measurement allows the regression analysis to measure the correlation between degree of extremity along the left-right political spectrum, consistent with the claim made by Jolly (2014) and Gomez-Reino (2014) that more centrist parties support European integration while more extreme parties oppose increase integration. Further control variables include each individual political party and each election year.

Chapter 3: Results

Table 3: Fixed Effects Times Series Regressions						
	Decentralization (70s-80s)	Decentralization (80s-90s)	Decentralization (2000s)	Ideological Extremity (70s-80s)	Ideological Extremity (80s-90s)	Ideological Extremity (2000s)
Support for Integration	-0.02 (0.76)	-0.16 (0.16)	0.11 (0.14)	-0.09 (0.13)	0.009 (0.06)	-0.002 (0.06)
Opposition to Integration	-0.29 (0.58)	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.11)	0.16 (0.10)	0.09* (0.05)	0.003 (0.05)
Composite pro/anti EU score	1.02 (3.19)	1.41** (0.69)	0.29 (0.60)	-1.63*** (0.56)	-0.16 (0.26)	0.15 (0.26)
Note: Values are fixed-effects time series regression coefficients; standard errors are in parentheses. *Statistically significant from zero at the 90% confidence interval. ** Statistically significant from zero at the 95% confidence interval. ***Statistically significant from zero at the 99% confidence interval.						

Table 3 presents the results of a fixed effects time series regression for three different time periods corresponding to distinct periods in European Union development. The findings from party election manifestos corroborate the preexisting research in the field, though with some qualifications. The assertion put forward by Gomez-Reino (2014) and Jolly (2007, 2014) that European integration is primarily a centrist political project that elicits far-left and far-right opposition is confirmed. However, the periodization of the manifestos substantiates the work done by Massetti (2009). The variable for composite EU support and opposition and the simple coder variable for opposition to European integration capture and increased likelihood of a party opposing European integration the more ideologically extreme it is on the left-right political spectrum. More specifically, there is a strong relationship between opposition to EU integration and ideological extremity in the first period, prior to social and regional funding policies

implemented in the mid-1980s. During the second time period of the mid-80s until 2000, this same relationship exists, but it is much weaker. During this second period the variable for desired decentralization or self-government reflects a strong relationship between increased mentions for more decentralization at the member-state level and increased support for European integration. This suggests that substate nationalist parties did coalesce behind bolstering European Union both in voting records and in campaign rhetoric during the period of European Union social and regional policymaking. Interestingly, these relationships disappear during the current era of European integration. This lack of a statistically significant relationship with any of the three variables lends support to the causal claim put forth by Gomez-Reino (2014) and Massetti (2009): the shift in EU focus from redistributive regional funding to neoliberal economic policies and supranational constitutions provoked many substate nationalist parties to become Eurosceptic.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Does a substate nationalist political party's desired degree of self-governance from its respective European Union member state affect its support for European integration at the European Parliamentary level of politics, and if so, how? The political science literature at the start of the new millennium was confident that substate nationalists were by and large supporters of increased European integration. The European Union appeared to be a natural ally for substate nationalists against nation-state centralists. If more power and authority were transferred to the supranational entity, then nation-state would be undermined, weakening the case for national unity and strengthening the potential for secession. An analysis of party manifestos in European Parliamentary elections from 1979 until 2014 appears to tell a much different story. Contrary to the consensus in the academic literature, only the mid 80s and the 90s experience any positive relationship between decentralization fervor and support for European integration. The other story that the analysis tells is that far-left and far-right substate nationalists were more likely to oppose European integration during the early years of the European Parliament. In the contemporary era, neither relationship exists. The loosely-knit party family of substate nationalists are divided in their support for European integration. Thus, the view that substate nationalists are staunch allies of the European Union is unfounded.

What does this imply for European integration? Firstly, one can reasonably concur that the European Union's current integration trajectory is causing eurosceptic parties to grow in number. The EU's foray into policy domains once left to the member-states is causing unrest. Voters can reward or punish governments at the national level for their actions and performance. Europeans can currently only directly elect members to the European Parliament, with arguably

most of the power still held by the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. Secondly, the European Union is integrating in a way that pulls authority from the national to the supranational level. "Europe of the Regions" not only is unlikely under this integration scheme, but it also could be a destabilizing force. Decision making with 28 member states is already a cumbersome political exercise; a body composed of 98 represented members could be catastrophic for decisive political leadership. Third, the substate nationalist party family is not a dependable bloc of votes for European integration. With increased regional funding for regions that these specific parties represent could change this dynamic, as it did during the 1980s and 90s. However, the prioritization of supranational authority over regional concerns could have long-term effects for this relationship.

Could a greater understanding of the relationship between substate nationalist parties and the European Union be gained through different methodological means? This thesis established that there is no general relationship between substate nationalist parties and the European Union beginning with the 2004 European Parliament election. Quantitative methods of analysis like the ones used here are useful in illuminating relationships, especially if researchers and policymakers are intent on understanding large groups of similar parties. Causal factor and claims for individual parties may be better elucidated through qualitative studies. The context to which one substate nationalist party is responding could be radically different from the contexts in which other parties are situated with the European Union may be seen as an ally in one and a foe the other. Future research should approach individual parties through a comparative lens in order to determine which particular factors are causing each party to either support or oppose further European integration. Massetti (2009) does demonstrate by way of qualitative analysis that secessionist parties are oftentimes more extreme on the left-right political spectrum. While

this thesis does demonstrate that extremity on the left-right political spectrum does increase a party's likelihood to be eurosceptic, the relationship between secession and support for European integration could not be definitively established. It seems reasonable that a manifesto containing more positive mentions of increased self-government would receive a higher measurement for decentralization. However, there is no distinction between a mention of secession and a mention of increased autonomy short of secession in the Euromanifesto Studies coding. Going forward the scholarship should incorporate both methodologies to uncover not only this potential relationship, but others as well.

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Appendix

List of Parties Studied	
Country	**Party Name**
Denmark	Siumut
	Folkebevægelsen Mod EU
Belgium	Niews-Vlaams Alliante
	Fédéralistes Démocratique Francophones-Rassambkement Wallonie
	Front Démocratique de Francophones
	Vlaams Blok
	Spirit
	Centre Democrate Humaniste
United Kingdom	Democratic Unionist Party
	Ulster Unionist Party
	Plaid Cymru
	Scottish National Party
	Social Democratic and Labour Party
	Sinn Feín
France	Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions
	Rassemblement pour la France et l'Independence de Europe
Spain	Eusko Alkartasuna
	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
	Batasuna
	Bloque Nacionalista Galego
	Agrupación Ruiz-Mateos
	Por la Europa de los Pueblos
	Europa de los Pueblos
	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
	Coalición Canaria
Finland	Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue - Svenska Folkpartiet
Slovakia	Strana Mad'arskej Kumunity
Italy	Lega Nord
	Sudtiroler Volkspartei
Lithuania	Lenku Rinkimu Akcijos
Romania	Uniunea Democrata Maghiara din Romania