

The Ebb and Flow of Regional Parties:
Political Openings, Behavioral Expectations, and Regional Party Volatility

Dissertation

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By

Michael Cohen, MA
Graduate Program in Political Science

The Ohio State University
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Dissertation Committee:

Professor Marcus Kurtz, Adviser
Professor Richard Gunther
Professor Irfan Nooruddin
Professor Craig Volden

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Abstract

In recent years regional parties have been hard to ignore. From the Lega Nord's emergence in Italy, to regional parties' role in coalition formation in Belgium, to their impact on policy in the United Kingdom, regional parties appear to play an increasingly important role in politics. Regional parties are parties that exclusively represent only a subset of geographic areas in a country. Previous research has primarily focused on structural factors (e.g., social cleavages, economic differences, and institutions) that produce and maintain viable regional parties.

However if regional party success ebbs and flows while structural factors remain constant what else explains their success? While not to dismiss structural factors, parties, party strategies, and policies produce a dynamic effect that impacts regional parties. Voters operate in a world of incomplete information and uncertainty. How will their vote for a regional party affect public policy? Regional parties must have a competitive advantage over other parties in order to attract voters. They need a label and behavioral expectations that differentiate themselves from larger national parties. If voters are choosing between a small party and a larger party that is capable of winning elections, the smaller party is at a disadvantage. However, if the regional party is able to convince voters that its party platform, its ideology (i.e., its label), and its potential impact (i.e., behavioral expectations) are different and unique, it may be able to attract voters and

remain viable. The impetus behind this unhappiness is when allocation of resources is net negative for a region and violates norms of equity.

The core of the analysis centers on the Italian regional party, the Lega Nord. The Lega Nord was selected for study as it represents a paradox to current regional party theories. I, first, use extensive field research I conducted in Italy to trace the causal mechanisms and then test the hypotheses via statistical analysis of six electoral surveys which conducted between 1985 and 2006. Finally, I assess the generalizability of the hypotheses through comparative case studies, specifically in Belgium, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Dedication

**Dedicated to the memory of my Grandfather, Marvin Golden and my Parents
Harlow and Wendy–
Without whom this was not possible**

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Vita

May 6, 1979.....	Born – Cleveland, Ohio, USA
2001.....	B.A. political science and psychology, Washington University
2005.....	M.A. political science, The Ohio State University
2001-2009.....	Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant, The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Political Science

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1996, Umberto Bossi's party Lega Nord had achieved an electoral miracle of sorts when it became the third largest political party in Italy despite running a campaign of secession. While the party ultimately failed in its quest for independence, it remains a potent force, changing how the Italian state and the regions interact.

The impact of regional parties on policies and institutions is pervasive in a number of democracies as we move into the twenty-first century. Regional parties have affected policy in Spain, influenced decisions for devolution in Great Britain, increased government instability in Belgium, and are at the heart of a secession debate in Canada. Regional parties are often at the heart of a pattern of increasing regionalism around the globe. Regional party electoral success can reshape a country's polity. The question is, then, what factors affect regional party success?

Regional parties are parties which exclusively represent only a subset of contiguous areas within a country. They adopt policies that elevate their regional group above the rest of the nation (Brancati 2005). Consequently, they are highly territorialized, more so than any other party family (Caramani 2004).

Previous theories have attempted to explain regional party electoral success in terms of structural explanations. Some theories stress that if a country had either a regional cleavage or a geographically concentrated ethnic cleavage, then regional parties

would succeed. Others propose that while ethnic/regional cleavages are necessary, additional factors like economic differences are needed to explain regional party success. Some have argued that economic differences combined with globalization are producing the wave of regionalism. Finally, others still have theorized that institutional environments such as federalism have biased systems in favor of regional parties. Given these structural factors, according to the conventional theories, there should be very little variation in the level of regional party success without a corresponding change in the structure.

However, regional party success is rarely stable and often exhibits variation even when the structural conditions remain constant. In 1980, approximately 4.1% of India's lower house seats were controlled by regional parties, but by 1998, regional parties' share of seats had more than doubled (Saez 2002). In the United Kingdom, support for the Scottish National Party (SNP) nearly tripled to 30% of the vote in the four years between 1970 and 1974; however, a little less than a decade later, its support was nearly back down to its pre-boom levels (Jolly 2006). This pattern of rapidly shifting success for regional parties can be found in country after country. While regional parties are more likely to be found in ethnically or economically distinct regions, their electoral success often ebbs and flows even when the structural conditions are unchanging.

One prominent paradoxical success story is that of *Lega Nord*, or the Northern League. For most of post-war Italian history, Northern Italy (excepting a few tiny regions) was largely devoid of parties advocating regional autonomy. Italy is a centralized country with minimal ethnic and economic differences which have remained

constant, which previous theories would have predicted to result in constantly low levels of regionalism. However, regionalism and support for regional parties suddenly emerged in the 1970s. By the early 1990s, an umbrella organization of various regional parties emerged in the form of the Lega Nord. Debates on regional autonomy and federalism suddenly became national campaign issues. By 1994, the Lega Nord was strong enough to control several government portfolios and bring down the incumbent Italian government. It was the largest party in Northern Italy in 1996 when it campaigned in favor of secession. Despite this success, by 2000 the party's support was half of what it had been, and rumors circulated of its demise. The Lega struggled to remain relevant for most of the current decade until 2008, when it suddenly and surprisingly re-emerged as one of the largest parties in Italy. The Lega's variable support, however, occurred during a time period when structural factors have stayed constant. Since structural explanations are insufficient in fully explaining changes in a regional party's level of electoral success, an additional explanation must exist.

I offer, as such an explanation, a dynamic theory of regional party electoral success. Governmental policies can engender dissatisfaction in a region. Voters' perceptions that a region is subject to unfair fiscal transfers can allow for a political opening, which regional parties can exploit to their benefit. However, regional party success is dependent on voter perceptions – specifically, their expectations of regional parties' behavior – in order to retain their increased success.

I next will sketch out the layout of this dissertation and how I plan to explore the topic of regional party success.

1.1 Summary of Argument

Throughout this research, I seek to understand the forces behind regional party success (and subsequent failure); that is, the causes of regional party electoral volatility. In contrast to conventional hypotheses, which emphasize structural causes, I propose a dynamic theory to explain the ebb and flow of regional party success.

Regional parties, which exclusively represent only a subset of geographic areas within a country, have been an increasingly important political phenomenon in contemporary Europe. Existing scholarship on the formation, viability and success of regional parties has a structural cast, typically centered on social cleavages or class and socio-economic differences, or on the structure of typically stable political institutions. This comparatively static view, however, clashes with an empirical reality: regional party appeal often ebbs and flows, while structural factors remain inadequate to account for when and how they do (or do not) become institutionalized players in national political party systems.

To provide a better explanation, my hypothesis focuses on the role that political openings and the behavioral expectations of voters play in shaping regional party success. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) note that new parties can emerge and succeed if existing parties fail to address new issues. In addition, voter perceptions of unfair fiscal transfers can also create an opening for a regional party. Psychologists have found that when resources are distributed in unfair or corrupt manners or without public input, the people are unhappy (Tyler 2000). This is especially true if there are strong in-group perceptions

(as would be the case if a region has a strong ethnic identity). Voters in regions with strong ethnic identities are more likely to be upset if they perceive negative fiscal transfers for their state. The perception of unfair fiscal transfers can occur, among other reasons, if there are high levels of corruption or patronage. Patronage tends to be allocated to insiders, which can cause unhappiness with those outside the patronage network. Voters perceive these negative transfers as a violation of procedural justice.

However, these disaffected voters will not necessarily stay with regional parties. National parties, often being larger, tend to be in a better position to deliver promises to voters. Also due to their greater size, national parties are more likely to have a greater number of government portfolios and therefore a greater ability to influence policy. As such, they can attempt to co-opt smaller niche parties such as regional parties, and thereby reduce the electoral support of those smaller parties (Meguid 2005).

Despite this, regional parties have some degree of control over their own electoral fortunes. In order to maintain success, regional parties need to build a platform on multiple dimensions. While regional parties almost always include issues of regional autonomy in their platform, a second salient dimension that connects to their stance on regional autonomy is needed for regional parties to achieve and maintain success. This second dimension usually increases the salience of the core message which the party has issue ownership of, and can therefore increase a party's electoral success. Furthermore, increasing the number of points of disagreement with the national party makes it more costly and difficult for national parties to co-opt regional parties.

As such, regional parties can only maintain their electoral success if voters perceive some level of differentiation between themselves and national parties. This is a function of both the national parties' actions and attempts to co-opt regional party issues, as well as the regional parties' appeals. It is these interactions which lead to the volatility patterns often associated with regional parties.

1.2 Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 summarizes the traditional explanations of why regional parties succeed and fail, and how my explanation differs from them: namely, that parties' policies and platforms influence regional party success. To explore this theory, I first define more formally what regional parties are and why they are important. I then survey previous theories on the topic of regional party success, as well as the more general issue of electoral volatility.

Previous theories have primarily centered on structural theories such as social cleavages economic differences, or institutions. In social cleavage explanations, regional parties exist and thrive in environments in which a region is divided from the rest of the country via ethnic or historical regional divisions. Economic explanations discuss how changes in the economic environment, whether increases in globalization or changes in the relative distribution of wealth, should increase regional party success. Changes in the level of decentralization, one example of an institutional explanation, should likewise affect regional party success.

For both theoretical and empirical reasons, there are reasons to believe that while all of these factors are necessary in explaining regional party success, they are not sufficient to fully explain the success of a regional party. The predominance of a regional party often changes during time frames in which structural conditions remain constant. As such, additional variables are needed to explain variation in the level of regional party success. I theorize that political openings and levels of perceived differentiation effect changes in the level of regional party success.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the case of the Lega Nord, justify why I selected it for study, and provide a thorough historical examination of the Lega using both open-ended elite interviews and secondary material. The Lega is ideal for examination as it represents a case deviant from existing theories. Northern Italy, for the most part, is not ethnically different from the rest of the country, and has been economically wealthier than the rest of the country at least since Italian unification. Italy is a fairly centralized country. Previous theories would dramatically under-predict the Lega's success. To determine why the Lega succeeded, I traced the causal mechanisms theorized to impact the Lega (both my own hypotheses and alternative explanations) as both a plausibility probe and to generate further hypotheses. To examine these hypotheses, I used interviews with politicians, experts, journalists and business leaders as well as historical case analysis.

The analysis reveals that a large segment of the Lega's supporters – namely, those employed in small and medium enterprises (firms with less than 80 employees) located in Northern Italy – were particularly unhappy with fiscal transfers which they perceived as unfair. However, the Lega was only able to maintain that support in the face of co-

optation attempts when it was able to find multiple issues to campaign on, such as joining the European Monetary Union. When the Lega lost the multiple dimensions that had reinforced the salience of its regional demands, its success collapsed. In 1996, the Lega was able to garner over 10% of the vote, but in the following election only five years later, their support was only half that.

To bolster the findings of the previous chapter, Chapter 4 employs statistical analysis of six electoral surveys taken between 1985 and 2006 to analyze what factors impacted individual vote choice. Given the importance that individual perceptions play in vote choice, survey data was selected to examine the ebb and flow of the Lega to avoid ecological fallacies. A series of logit models was then used to test my hypotheses, specifically the role which patronage and differentiation played.

The analysis confirmed some of the traditional explanations, such as the theory that those voters with stronger regional identities were more likely to support the Lega Nord. However, the findings also support the hypotheses that individuals who both were particularly concerned about corruption and viewed the Lega as sufficiently different from other national parties were more likely to support the Lega Nord. The analysis showed that those voters who perceived significant differentiation between the Lega and other parties on multiple dimensions were more likely to vote for the Lega, especially for those outside of the patronage network. Without this perceived differentiation on multiple dimensions, the Lega lost many of its voters to the closest national party (Forza Italia).

Finally, I discuss the conclusions and how they relate to the most recent Italian election. Stories of corruption, namely in the southern regions, helped fuel the Lega's dramatic success, wherein its electoral support doubled from the previous election.

In Chapter 5, I extend the argument to different settings and attempt to assess how other variables might affect the explanation I provide. Four different regional parties were selected for study: the Volksunie in Belgium, the Reform Party and Bloc Quebecois in Canada, and the Scottish National Party in the United Kingdom. The cases were selected to test the theory in a variety of settings.

First, I endeavor to use these cases to determine what the effect patronage and/or perceived unfair fiscal transfers have had on regional party success outside of Italy. Furthermore, I attempt to shed light on the effects behavioral expectations have in environments which vary in their levels of corruption, possibility of inclusion in government, institutional settings, ethnic identity and a party's policy success. I endeavor to determine to what extent any one factor is necessary or sufficient in explaining the variability in regional party success.

The findings indicate that in a number of countries, concerns over corruption and perceived unfair fiscal transfers do lead to increased regional party success. Furthermore, for a regional party to maintain its success, it needs to have some level of differentiation from the national parties. Without it, the regional party suffered losses.

Finally, the chapter argues that while patronage is one route toward a political opening, it is not the only way. As the United Kingdom case demonstrates, there can be other underlying causes behind perceived unfair fiscal transfers and political openings

that can lead to initial success; however, in all cases, differentiation by regional parties is necessary in order to maintain electoral success.

I conclude, in Chapter 6, by drawing out some of the practical and theoretical implications of my theory of regional party success. In particular, I note some of the policy implications and methods of managing some of the regional or ethno-regional tensions that regional parties can exacerbate. Finally, I discuss some of the future research agendas that could be pursued stemming from the findings of this dissertation.

1.3 Concluding Thoughts

This study calls into question the general understanding of regional parties. Regional party electoral success has previously been thought of as a function of fairly static unchanging factors such as regional identity, economic differences or institutions. However, my explanations allow for a far more malleable and dynamic process for regional party success. A country's fiscal policies, most notably its usage of patronage, can have a dramatic effect on regional party electoral success. Furthermore, how national parties interact with regional parties also has an impact on their success. Whether national parties include regional parties in their government or attempt to co-opt their demands can influence regional parties' fortunes. Governments and national parties can diffuse, raise and sway regional party success.

Given that the amount of electoral success achieved by regional parties can impact government stability, state stability and even ethnic tensions, understanding changes in the level of regional party success is crucial. Acknowledging that policies and

voter perceptions affect regional party success opens several different research avenues on the topic. Nonetheless, the first issue is to discuss what regional parties are, what some of the previous theories on regional party success and electoral volatility have been, and why my hypotheses better explain the electoral volatility of regional parties.

Chapter 2: Sources of Regional Party Success

2.1 Introduction

Regional parties are parties that exclusively represent only a subset of geographic areas in a country. Previous research has focused on structural causes (social cleavages, economic differences, and institutions) that produce and maintain viable regional parties. However, the empirical record shows that regional parties' electoral performance and even their existence is anything but static (Caramani 2004). Regional parties often emerge, thrive, and suffer electoral setbacks during a time frame in which structural conditions remain constant.

While structural factors should not be dismissed, the regional and national parties, party strategies, and policies produce a dynamic effect that shapes regional party success. Voters operate in a world of incomplete information and uncertainty, such as how their vote for a regional party might affect public policy. Voters are motivated by issues they care about and will vote for the party they feel has the best chance at making their policy preferences into reality. Regional parties are niche parties,¹ and therefore must gain a competitive advantage over other parties. They need a label and behavioral expectations that differentiate themselves from larger national parties. If voters are choosing between a small regional party and a larger party that will both fulfill their expectations, the smaller

¹ According to Meguid (2005), niche parties are parties that reject traditional class-based orientation politics, have novel appeals relative to pre-existing political traditions, and limit their issue appeal.

party is at a disadvantage (Meguid 2005). However, if the regional party is able to convince voters that its party platform and its potential impact (i.e., behavioral expectations) are unique, it may be able to attract voters and remain viable. However, if they are unable to achieve a sufficient level of differentiation on multiple dimensions, then their electoral success will rapidly decrease. As a result of these factors, regional parties often exhibit high levels of volatility.

This dissertation emphasizes the ways in which political choices, legislation, and perceptions shape the level of success experienced by regional parties. Voters' unhappiness with perceived unfair fiscal transfers, specifically over issues of how mainstream parties allocate patronage, can lead to political openings and dramatic increases in the level of electoral success for regional parties. In addition, a regional party may avoid national party co-optation attempts by stressing multiple policies as opposed to only a single issue, and thereby maintain electoral success.² Without these advantages, their voter base can rapidly flow toward other parties.

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, I will define more fully the concept of what regional parties are and why they are important. Next, I summarize how previous theories have explained their success. Finally, I will describe how voter perceptions, specifically on issues of fiscal transfers and their perceived level of fairness, as well as voter perceptions on regional party differentiation, affect regional party electoral success.

² There are risks for the regional party if it stresses multiple policy issues (thusly dividing their own voter base or watering down their central message). I will return to this point later in this chapter.

2.2 Regional Parties: Definitions and Importance

2.2.1 Definition

Scholars have used a variety of definitions for regional parties. Some definitions focus on where a party has its electoral support, i.e., if a party's electoral support is geographically concentrated. For example, in the United States, the Republican Party is currently far more successful in the South than in other portions of the country. By some definitions, it could be considered a regional party because it has geographically uneven support. However, usage of this definition may obfuscate the uniqueness of regional parties. Under this definition, there is no difference between a "regional" party and a "regionalized" party. Regionalized parties are parties that are territorially concentrated or have uneven territorial support. As such, a regionalized party might not be explicitly focused on the region in which it is more concentrated, and may act in ways to broaden its geographic appeal. Due to this characteristic, the definition of regional party used in this research has an additional component: that a regional party consciously and explicitly limits its potential pool of voters on a geographical basis.

The definition I use for a regional party includes not only the geographic area in which the party competes, but also the issues in its platform. "A regional party is...a party that nominates candidates for elections in a strict subset of the regions of a state (often just one), and explicitly, albeit not necessarily primarily, appeals to this subset" (van Houten 2000: 9). A regional party's platform, ideology, campaign rhetoric, etc., are targeted to a specific, particular region and exclude other regions.

As Brancati (2005: 18) notes, regional parties adopt policies that elevate their regional group over others. They may promote their region's language or demand a greater distribution of wealth for their region at the expense of other regions. Regional parties' names often include the name of the region they purport to represent. For example, the party label for the regional Scottish party is the Scottish National Party. Regional parties are in part defined by having an ideology that exclusively caters to some specific geographic region within a country. Consequently, regional parties may act differently than other parties, as they are unable to expand beyond their limited electoral pool. While national parties may shift strategies and platforms in an attempt to gain votes across the nation, regional parties are unable and unwilling to get votes outside of their circumscribed territory.

Due to this territorial restriction upon their political platform, regional parties cannot exist in regions that encompass the "political center" of a country, a political center being defined as the area holding political power. Regional parties are defined in part by their exclusion of a portion of the country. That means, at least rhetorically, that they consider themselves peripheral to the country's ruling power (i.e., not the core political area).

Often regional parties are vestiges of center-periphery conflicts that occurred during the formation of the nation-state (Gourevitch 1976). While it may be difficult to characterize a latent regional cleavage without being tautological (i.e., since there is a regional party, there must be a regional cleavage), historical differences during the

formation of the state or ethnic differences may provide hints at latent center-periphery cleavages.

Where this research differs from previous definitions is that while a regional party *explicitly* focuses on a regional agenda, it does not necessarily *only* focus on a regional agenda. While regional parties are minor parties that limit their issue appeal, they are *not* single-issue parties. They incorporate a wide range of policies. The SNP in the United Kingdom classifies itself as a socially-progressive party; the VU in Belgium advocated for environmental rights in the 1970s; and the Bloq Quebecois in Canada campaigned against the Iraq War. In particular, as Jolly (2006) notes, often regional parties draw support from the same mechanisms that radical right parties do (e.g., fear of cultural assimilation, economic conditions, or globalization). Consequently, regional parties are not single-issue parties. They often make reference to a multitude of different issues in addition to their core issue of regionalism.

It is important to differentiate regional parties as I define them from ethnic parties. Oftentimes, regional parties are thought of as having an ethnic component to them. As Gunther and Diamond (2003) define them, the principal goal of ethnic parties is to “secure material, cultural and political benefits...for the ethnic group.” Regional parties, by my definition, are instead defined by their focus on the territorial dimension. While regional parties are more likely to appear in regions with a strong ethnic identity, they have been shown to succeed in areas with weak ethnic identity and also to fail in areas with strong ethnic identity (Brancati 2006). As such, while ethnic or linguistic cleavages

may be used to politicize and mobilize voters for a regional party, regional parties are not defined by the presence of an ethnic component.

Regional parties tend to share several further characteristics. First, relative to other party families, regional parties have a much higher electoral territorial concentration (Caramani 2004). Since a regional party is in part defined by having an exclusive ideology, its potential pool of voters and supporters is circumscribed. This means that their voters and elites can only come from a small territorial area, namely, the region they purport to represent.

Secondly, outside of a few cases, regional parties³ tend to have unstable support. For example, De Winter (1998: 214) notes that a number of regional parties often exhibit a similar pattern of “a period of little electoral success...[a] sudden breakthrough of a single party to high levels of support, a period of consolidation, and gradual decline into oblivion.” While regionalism may have increased since the early 1960s (Jolly 2006), regional party electoral support has not monotonically increased. Instead, regional parties have exhibited high levels of electoral volatility.

2.2.2 *Defining Region*

If regional parties are in part defined by making explicit demands to a specific region, how does one define a region? One way is merely to identify it by its functional administrative level. For example, Brancati (2005) defines a region as the “level of government directly below the national level of government in a country.” Others (e.g.,

³ There are a few cases of small, stable, hegemonic regional party support, including the *Sudtiroler Volkspartei* in South Tyrol and the *Union Valdôtaine* in the Aosta Valley.

the European Commission) define region as the level of government between the national and municipal levels. This would include regional economic planning zones (i.e., multi-state water conservation projects, etc.). Other scholars, such as Alfred Stepan (1999), define a region based on its formal and informal power. For example, a territory is a region if it possesses sufficient administrative activities.

However, a crucial part of the construction of region as a political space is regional identity (Keating 1997: 85). Regional identities can influence how salient territorial cleavages are and how easy it is for individuals to mobilize and coordinate with others. "Regional identity may be rooted in historical traditions and myths but in its contemporary form, it is a social construction..." (Ibid.). Regional identity therefore is not limited only to one administrative area or only to historically different ethnic peoples. Groups (i.e., regional parties) can organize and mobilize people based on territorial differences. This socially-constructed definition of "region" allows the exact definition of a region to vary across both space and time. Regional parties can exist in one administrative area (i.e., the *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam*, which represents the region of Tamil Nadu in India) or in multiple administrative areas (such as the Lega Nord, which represents multiple Northern Italian regions).

For purposes of this research, a region is herein defined as one or more administrative units immediately below the national level. While a region can encompass multiple administrative units, it by definition excludes some portion of the country.

2.2.3 *Importance*

Regional party electoral success is important for a number of reasons. Despite their circumscribed (and thereby low) electoral support, they can influence national politics, increase ethnic tensions, and destabilize government.⁴ As electoral success for regional parties increases, there is a corresponding increase in the chances for ethnic conflict and secession (Brancati 2005a). In addition, it has been shown that regional parties' inclusion in government increases government instability in Europe (Brancati 2005b). Regional parties' demands for autonomy are often difficult for national parties to meet, which causes instability for government coalitions or minority governments.

In addition, smaller parties can influence the platforms and policies of larger parties. Meguid (2005) argues that, if they feel threatened, major parties often will enact policies originally promoted by a niche party to improve their own electoral results. The greater the threat a regional party presents to the electoral chances of a major party, the more likely the major party will adopt policies that the regional party advocates. For example, if the regional party advocates increases to regional autonomy, the national party could advocate for and implement decentralization policies to co-opt regional party voters. Sorens (2004) finds that regions with regional parties that advocate for secession are far more likely to receive increases in autonomy. Furthermore, the greater the electoral success had by a regional party, the greater the probability that major parties

⁴ This is not to imply that some level of endogeneity does not exist between the type of regionalism embraced by the public and electoral support for regional parties; however, Brancati (2005a, 2005b) as well as Sorens (2004) do provide evidence that regional parties independently increase some of the outlined issues.

will agree to some of that party's demands. As such, regional parties and their demands can influence governmental policy without even being a part of a government.

Regional parties are also important because they influence the type of demands made in their region. According to Pieter van Houten (1997), the interaction of political parties has a great deal of influence on the type of autonomy demands made by regional parties. In particular, van Houten writes that if a regional party competes against a national party within a given region, the regional party's demands are muted (i.e., the type of demand made is likely to consist of only spending requests). However, when a regional party competes against another regional party, then the regional parties' demands are likely to be stronger.

The reason for this is that when competition occurs between regional parties, rather than against a national party, a regional party has an incentive to "outbid" other regional parties through more extreme demands. In an attempt to differentiate themselves, regional parties will demand more regional power. These stronger demands often include measures to increase a region's control over taxation powers. Permanent changes to how a state collects revenue can result in a more conflictual process, as changes to tax powers can include increased decentralization, creation of federal institutions, or even secession. As a result, regional parties' demands are not only a function of bottom-up social movement pressures, but also top-down party dynamics (van Houten 2000: 23). Regardless of voter perceptions or beliefs on the issue of regional autonomy or secession, regional parties have an effect on the type of demand made by regional autonomy parties. If multiple regional parties are successful, they could compete

against one another and thereby influence the types of demands being made, and ultimately a state's institutions.

These changes to the state structure via decentralization can cause massive and far-reaching effects. Rodden (2006) notes that an increase in a nation's level of decentralization can affect both its economic performance and its level of stability. Increases in decentralization can, under some circumstances, increase a country's level of debt and make the reduction of deficit more difficult (Rodden 2002). Furthermore, increased regional authority can inflame regional tensions. Bakke and Wibbels (2008) note that in countries with high levels of economic inequality increased levels of decentralization increase the chances of civil conflict. Rodden (2006) and Riker (1964) show that excessive decentralization can cause federal institutions to cease to be self-sustaining.

Despite their small size, regional parties have an important influence on the politics of a state (whether by the types of autonomy demands made, government stability or ethnic tensions). As such, researchers need to better understand the situations in which they exist and when their electoral strength will grow. Identifying the causes of both increases and decreases to regional party electoral support is important in understanding their effect on the politics of a state.

2.3 Structural Theories of Regional Party Success

2.3.1 Social Cleavages

Given their importance, there has been a copious amount of previous research on the topic of regional parties. In a seminal piece on regional party existence and success, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) describe how parties represent and mobilize different cleavages of a particular society. Cleavages are often the results of major historical events which leave indelible cracks between different segments of society. In a society where economic cleavages are predominant, parties coalesce along economic lines, with parties representing a particular economic ideology (e.g., right-left ideology). Where territorial cleavages are predominant, voters in the same area will vote for the same party. Therefore, regional party electoral existence and success is a function of the existence and salience of a regional and/or ethnic cleavage.

Lipset and Rokkan (Ibid.) further write that parties have a limited ability to affect the salience of issues. In this argument, cleavages within a society are fairly structural and agents have tremendous difficulty in changing them. However, sometimes party systems “unfreeze,” and pre-existing or latent cleavages gain salience and re-emerge. Regional cleavages can re-appear, and regional parties will appear to represent those interests. For example, if linguistic differences become salient, then parties representing that linguistic cleavage will appear. Hence, regional parties only exist and succeed if there is a pre-existing latent difference, and, given that cleavages are fairly immutable, regional party success is expected to be stable.

The existence of social cleavages (i.e., ethnic, religious, or linguistic differences) can be used to explain the existence of regionally-based parties, but have a harder time explaining variation in regional party success. Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Drummond (2002) both point out that strong social cleavages decrease electoral volatility. A strong regional cleavage, then, is predicted to result in constant level of electoral support for a regional party. However, while latent cleavage may be necessary for success, it does not explain all of the variation in electoral outcomes. The empirical reality shows that a number systems and regional parties have had volatile levels of success over short time frames. For example, regional party success in India has dramatically increased in the past twenty years (Chhibber and Nooruddin 2000). Clearly, something beyond the existence of a regional cleavage is needed to explain rapid electoral change.

2.3.2 Economic Factors

Building on the social cleavage literature, many authors argue that regional parties and regional autonomy movements emerge when both cultural and economic grievances exist. However, the literature has gone in completely different directions in explaining the influence of economic development on regional parties. Some scholars claim that a lack of economic development produces regional parties, while others argue the reverse: that economic success leads to regional parties.

In an important contribution to the underdevelopment-produces-regional-autonomy school, Michael Hechter (1975) predicts that in areas which are culturally separate and economically repressed (through segmented economic opportunities), regional autonomy movements will arise. The more marginalized the region, the more

likely the region will remain ethnically distinct, and the more likely it will make demands for autonomy. As such, one would expect regional parties to appear in areas that are poor and have long histories of being repressed. Regional parties, according to Hechter, should advocate autonomy for their region to help insulate against further oppression and increase their economic opportunities.

Peter Gourevitch (1976) makes the reverse claim: that economic success and prosperity provide incentives for regionalism. Gourevitch divides sub-national regions into two distinct categories: the periphery and the core. The core includes regions where the national government is located; the peripheries are regions that are not the center of political activity. Three factors influence a peripheral region's level of nationalism: political leadership, economic growth and development, and ethnic potential. At a basic level, when political leadership and economic growth is based in the core, there is weak peripheral nationalism. If the core weakens economically and the periphery improves or has a strong economic development relative to the core, peripheral nationalism reemerges. This is particularly the case in regions that have high ethnic potential⁵ or in regions possessing natural resources. Bolton and Roland (1997) later modified this model to demonstrate that the economic differences mean that wealthier regions would pay more taxes in a unified nation than a decentralized one.

Another prominent economic explanation for regional party success is the interaction of economic and cultural factors with globalization. Economic growth is

⁵ Gourevitch does not make clear what he means by ethnic potential. As he builds on the social cleavage literature, he notes that certain voters in certain region have latent ethnic identities that can be mobilized. While this is in theory true, it remains uncertain how one empirically determines the difference between latent and non-existent ethnic identities.

restricted by the size of a nation's market, according to Alesina et al. (2000). "Economic benefits of country's size are mediated by the degree of openness to trade" (Ibid.: 1276). A larger market means there are more people who can buy a region's goods and services, and hence the region will have more economic growth. As such, countries with larger markets are less reliant on openness to trade (i.e., they have enough domestic consumers for domestic businesses to sell to). In this manner, countries can either be small and open to trade or large and less open to trade but still have equal levels of growth.

Alesina et. al. propose that globalization may reduce a nation's incentive to be large because of "heterogeneity" costs, defined as differences between an individual's preferences and the common policy. The idea is that the larger the country, the larger the average distance between common policy and an individual's preferred policy (Ibid.: 1282). According to this theory, if globalization allows a subnational group to have access to a larger market, then it will prefer secession due to "heterogeneity" costs. The reasoning is that if a region can have equal economic growth being a part of a country versus being independent, it will prefer independence because that will give the region the ability to institute domestic policies closer to the region's median voter preferences.

Donald Horowitz (1981) attempts to meld the two streams of economic theories by noting that there may be multiple pathways by which economic differences alter the level of regionalism. In Horowitz's model, secessionism and autonomy movements can emerge in both poorer and richer regions, but for very different reasons.⁶ Wealthier

⁶ Horowitz's (1981) analysis of autonomy/secession movements includes cases from both democracies and dictatorships. A basic underlying assumption of my analysis is that the causal mechanisms are operating in a democratic setting, a point I will return to.

regions may pursue secessionist goals if demands for fiscal autonomy (i.e., decentralization of taxing and spending) are not met, but poorer regions may also push for secession if there is severe discrimination, specifically in terms of taxation or civil service access.

Each of these economic models has a common theme: that economic differences between regions will lead to regional party electoral success. However, there is no identified mechanism for when and how economic differences translate into salient voting issues. We are still missing the micro-causal mechanism for regional party voting.⁷ Consequently, without a specific understanding of why economic differences yield voting preferences, the theories do not explain how structurally unchanging economic differences could allow for the variation in short-term electoral success.

2.3.3 *Institutional Factors*

A third strain of literature focuses on political institutions. Since Duverger, political scientists have recognized that institutions (i.e., electoral laws) influence the chances a minor party has to form and succeed. Recently, Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, in *Formation of National Party Systems* (2004) tackled the age-old questions of what determines the number of parties and whom these parties represent. While they agree to some extent with canonical theories of the importance of electoral laws and social cleavages, they posit an additional variable: the distribution of authority within a

⁷ A number of economic-regionalism works (e.g., Alesina et. al. 2002) have relied on the median voter theorem to translate regional dissatisfaction into support for regionalism. However, it does not incorporate reasons for why regional dissatisfaction would result in regional party support. Furthermore, it does not specify under what circumstances regionalism will be a salient voting issue.

country. In particular, they hypothesize that the distribution of economic and political resources between the national and sub-national levels affects whether parties will aggregate at the regional level (Ibid.: 28). The more decentralized a country, the more likely it is that regional parties will emerge. When regional parliaments gain greater control of political and economic resources, they tend to attract political elites, and party aggregation occurs at the regional level.

Alongside Chhibber and Kollman's work, other institutional variables have been posited to affect regional party formation and success. Filipov et. al. (2004) writes that holding concurrent elections or having a presidential system reduces the incentives to form regional parties. Having regional and national elections that coincide provides an incentive for politicians to coordinate to take advantage of the "coat-tails" effect (lower offices benefiting from the success of upper offices). The presidential office provides another institution that provides incentives for politicians to coordinate together under one national label to ensure control of the office. Brancati (2005), however, writes that alongside concurrent elections and presidential systems, bicameral legislatures actually encourage the formation of regional parties.

While institutions may influence regional party support, regional party support often changes while those institutions remain the same. As such, institutional explanations of regional party success make predictions over the long term, and thereby short-term variation in regional party electoral success remains unexplained. Clearly, other factors beyond institutions must influence regional party support.

2.3.4 *Additional Variables*

Each of the strains of literature discussed above focuses upon a structural component that does not easily explain electoral change if the underlying factors do not change.⁸ While regional parties usually exist in regions with ethnic and/or economic differences from the rest of the country, not all regions with ethnic and/or economic differences have successful regional parties. Regional parties often have varying degrees of success in countries within a time frame that does not include institutional changes. While structural factors may be necessary for regional party success, they are rarely sufficient in explaining the level of electoral success or why that level of success is volatile. To understand the ebb and flow of regional party success in a time frame when structural factors remain constant, additional explanatory factors are necessary.

This research argues that, in addition to structural factors, regional party success is very much influenced by national policies, political party strategies, and voter behavioral expectations. This has important implications, as a regional party's strength and thereby its influence on a country's political system is neither predetermined nor impossible to alter. Regional party strength is very much influenced by policies and dynamic forces. In particular, voters in a dissatisfied region are concerned with party actions. When the status quo is not acceptable and a national party fails to meet a region's needs, are the alternative national parties also unacceptable? Voters' decisions to support a regional party are influenced by their perception of what a regional party's

⁸ Notable exceptions to the structural arguments on regional party success have been Sorens (2004), who examines the role of multi-partyism on regional-secession votes; Jolly (2006), who directly examines the increasing impact of the European Union on regionalism; and Tronconi (2006), who analyzes the effect that political competition has on regional party success.

behavior and impact will be (i.e., will their regional party represent their interests?). As such, the actions, alliances, and strategies of the regional party are important in determining its strength.

Before describing my theory more fully, a few caveats are in order. At the heart of this analysis is an attempt to explain the electoral success of regional parties. As such, the hypotheses laid out are not applicable to regional movements in non-democracies or in unconsolidated democracies. Individual or party actions would likely be very different if there is uncertainty over the continuity of democracy. Therefore, the proceeding theories on the source of regional party success should be considered and evaluated with that limitation in mind.

2.3.5 Theory of Voters

At the heart of my explanation of regional party support is a theory of voting. When and why do voters support certain parties? “With exceptions, the vast empirical literature holds that voter evaluation of parties depends on party positions on issues [platforms]” (Kedar 2005). Voters ultimately care about party positions on issues as they affect policies. Following Downs (1957) and Kedar (2005), the implicit model of voting behavior is that voters are focused on the policy implications of their vote. How does their vote choice affect the policy outcomes that they care about? Voters are weighing the potential impact on salient policy issues which voting for a smaller party can have.

Some voters shift their vote to a more extreme or smaller party in order to shift government formation, and hence policy outcomes (Kedar 2005). However, if the smaller party has limited leverage on the outcome, or if there is less of a perceived difference

between larger and smaller parties, then voters will shift their vote toward larger parties (Meguid 2005). In order to understand when voters will choose a regional party, it is important to take into consideration the circumstances in which voters perceive that national parties are not responding to their concerns, as well as the salience of those issues that regional parties advocate. This dissertation argues that the actions of national parties, the strategic usage of party platforms by regional parties, and incomplete information on the part of the voter all play a role in regional party success.

2.4 Political Openings and Perceptions of Equity

Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue that new parties form and succeed when voters' and activists' preferences change and existing parties do not confront or exploit these new issues. Similarly, Tronconi (2006) notes that lower levels of ideological polarization can increase regional party electoral success. For newer parties or outsider parties to break through electorally, a political opening needs to exist. There needs to be some salient issue or ideological dimension that is unaddressed by the current party system. However, for a regional party to have sudden increases to its electoral success, the grievances must have a territorial dimension.

Previous work, such as that by Bolton and Roland (1997), notes that those in economically wealthier regions will pay higher taxes on average and therefore be more likely to vote for a regional party. In line with previous economic theories of regional party success, the authors argue that greater autonomy for a region would result in lower taxes, greater levels of public goods, or some combination thereof. The assumption in this model is that since a region's voters are receiving fewer resources than they could be,

they will be prefer to change the status quo. However, this assumption ignores the importance of voters' perceptions of equity. How the spending is conducted matters a great deal in terms of individuals' levels of dissatisfaction with the process.

Individuals may be willing to accept outcomes in which they do not personally benefit if they perceive that the process arriving at the outcome is just. Voters' perceptions of the procedural justice and equity of how resources are allocated are important in determining their level of unhappiness with the policy status quo. Procedural justice is the idea that the treatment an individual receives is fair, meaning that the outcome or allocation of resources occurs 1) with the individual's input and 2) in a just manner. Psychologist Tom Tyler's (2000) research notes that individuals rate systems more highly if they believe they are procedurally fair than if they personally benefit from the system. This means that equality or fairness is a central aspect in the acceptance of the outcome regardless of the allocation. Contrary to Bolton and Roland (1997), even if a region is in a net negative position, voters may not be unhappy with the status. One must determine, then, which factors influence a voter's perceptions of equity.

2.4.1 Identity

One important factor that limits a group's interpretation of spending outcomes is identity. "Group boundaries may pose a limit to the effective scope of justice" (Tyler 2000: 123). When individuals are dealing with similar social groups, perceptions of "fairness" and equity are more important in determining the level of satisfaction than are the actual material outcomes. When disputes occur between members of different social

groups, then the distributional outcome is more important. If voters in a particular region have a strong regional identity, then it is less likely for the group to be satisfied based on whether or not the process is “fair.” Instead, their level of satisfaction will be determined more by whether or not they are a net distributional winner. As such, there is an interaction between resource allocation and identity. Consequently, regions that have a strong regional identity and are not net receivers of resources are more likely to be unhappy with the status quo, regardless of whether the process is fair or not.⁹

In theory, then, poorer regions could be unhappy if they, for whatever reason, are excluded from resources and/or there is a perception that they are not getting what they perceive as their fair share. It is possible for poorer regions to support regional parties due to these perceptual issues surrounding fiscal transfers. This finding mirrors Horowitz’s (1984) assertion that there are multiple pathways for regionalism to emerge. Regions with different identities from the rest of the country that are net fiscal “losers” are more likely to support regional parties and regionalism.¹⁰

2.4.2 Corruption

Theories of procedural justice describe that individuals are more likely to voluntarily cooperate, to defer to decisions, and to be satisfied with outcomes if they are arrived at in a fair manner. Two aspects, in particular, are central to individuals

⁹ This could imply that there is a self-reinforcing interaction between regional identity and allocation of resources, in which stronger identity could trigger greater unhappiness with the allocation of resources, which, in turn, could increase the salience of a regional identity.

¹⁰ This finding would also support previous researches finding that regionalism in non-democracies tends to be in poorer regions while higher in wealthier regions in democracies.

perceiving that decisions are fair: neutrality and trustworthiness (Tyler 2000). Neutrality implies that the authority makes decisions based on rules and facts, and avoids allowing personal bias to interfere with the decision. Trustworthiness, specifically with regard to the application of formal rules, is also important. Individuals will react negatively to authority figures and politicians who manipulate formal rules or policies for personal benefit. Corruption in a democratic polity is precisely the kind of practice that interferes with individuals' perception of equity. "Corruption is always a form of duplicitous and harmful exclusion of those who have a claim of inclusion in collective decisions and actions" (Warren 2004). If an individual in a public domain makes a decision for his or her own benefit at the expense of the public, then norms of equity would be violated, and typically there is a perception of corruption. Consequently corruption, especially in the allocation of budgetary spending, would violate norms of equity and therefore result in a situation in which individuals' sole basis for satisfaction is the distribution of the resources.

2.4.3 Patronage

Finally, unhappiness among voters can occur if policies and distributive outcomes occur with little input (for example, if a region is unable to affect policy outcomes). I argue that these perceptions of inequity and unfairness can be specifically triggered by a status quo of patronage, which leads to increases in the level of support for regional parties. "Clientalistic accountability represents a transaction, the direct exchange of a citizen's vote in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods,

and services” (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). These behaviors can exclude those outside of the circle, as benefits are specifically granted to clients and votes are specifically awarded to those providing the benefits. As these resources are allocated based on the exclusion of outsiders and voters have no input into the allocation of the resources, this arrangement can cause voter unhappiness.

Patronage can be a factor that engenders unhappiness specifically in wealthier regions if the country has regional patterns of inequality. This is because not all segments of a country’s population are equally amenable to accepting patronage. Recent research by Calvo and Murillo (2004) suggests that “differences in income levels and private sector alternatives affect a voter’s propensity to accept pork in exchange for support” (Ibid.: 742). Regions with higher incomes, relative to the rest of the country, would receive less of a benefit from patronage. For example, an individual living in a more prosperous area could find a private sector job that pays a higher wage than public employment.¹¹ The wealthier the area, relative to the rest of the country, the less likely patronage is able to match private sector compensation. In order to maintain loyalty, public wages or spending in wealthier areas would have to be higher than the national median wage.

Since patronage could be used to retain the loyalty of a greater number of lower-income voters, given a budget constraint, patronage would be less effective and therefore used less often in richer areas relative to poorer areas. This tradeoff increases as the

¹¹ While this analysis centers on usage of public jobs, patronage can include any targeted private good/transfer/service. In theory, as long as the government has discretion over the allocation and can exclude some entities from receiving the benefit, it could be used as patronage. As Calvo and Murillo (2004: 742) note, “other types of targeted transfers should not impact the basic assumption.”

regional disparity increases, since the larger the difference between private wages and public wages, the less effective patronage becomes in wealthier regions.

In addition, patronage spending needs to be funded from some source. Tax dollars to fund patronage could come from wealthier areas. National parties could tax richer areas and utilize those funds to secure votes in other areas via patronage spending. Voters of a thusly disaffected region may turn to regional parties to alleviate net negative fiscal transfers, especially if the tax dollars are funding patronage in other regions. Increased autonomy with regard to revenue would limit the amount of money being sent to the national level, and therefore possibly decrease the tax burden upon the inhabitants of the region.

In this model, then, patronage is zero-sum between regions. Whatever the state of the budget, those voters in wealthier regions are less likely to be the beneficiaries of patronage but more likely to pay for patronage compared to poorer regions. As the fiscal space (amount of free resources) shrinks, there is increased pressure on national parties to give relatively more patronage to poorer regions in order to maximize the number of voters. Thus, uneven decreases in patronage could actually lead to increases in unhappiness, as it is possible that the majority of the decreases in patronage allocation are occurring in wealthier areas. As long as there are regional patterns to patronage and those patterns have relative weighting (i.e., one region receives more than another), then given the potentially exclusionary nature of patronage, the spending pattern can violate norms of equity and cause voter unhappiness.

In summary, if fiscal transfers are occurring in a perceived “unfair” manner, then voters will be unhappy with the status quo. Norms of equity are violated if decisions are made without input from outsiders, are done with a goal of private gain in mind, or done in a way that violates formal rules. This can occur for any number of reasons, such as corruption or patronage, but when they occur, those regions that are not beneficiaries of fiscal transfers will move to support regional parties.

2.5 Regional Party Differentiation and Behavioral Expectations

Just because voters are unhappy with the status quo and initially shifted their vote away from a national party does not necessarily mean that they will continually embrace a regional party. Regional parties are typically, due to their circumscribed electoral pool, small parties. As such, supporters of a regional party are often taking the risk that their vote will not significantly influence national policy. This may be because the regional party can be left out of government or can only garner minor portfolios in government, or it may not be large enough to shift policy.¹² As a result, the desired policy outcomes (such as issues of greater autonomy) or changes in fiscal patterns may not happen.

There are several reasons voters may choose a regional party despite this risk. The first is a lack of choices among national parties. If national parties’ platforms are ideologically different from what a region would prefer, then voters in that region will

¹² This is not to imply that party system interactions at the sub-national level are unimportant. However, I focus on national politics for two reasons: 1) regional party demands often focus on restructuring of power at the national level (i.e., decentralization), and 2) a number of theories deal with national distributive politics. As a result, there may be limitations to the application of these hypotheses to countries with extreme fiscal decentralization.

seek alternatives. However, as the difference in policy positions between national and regional parties decreases, voters will increasingly prefer national parties. As Meguid (2005) notes, national parties can address the concerns of aggrieved voters by co-opting the core issues of a regional party (or, more generally, a niche party). In the case of regional parties, this includes issues surrounding the call for decentralization. This attempt at co-optation is more likely in cases of higher regional party success. The regional party's initial success, caused by the political openings, would make it more likely that the national party would attempt to increase its own electoral success at the expense of the regional party via co-optation.

Differentiation is a key factor in the viability of a regional party. This can be thought of as a continuous variable, in which case it is the perceived relative difference between party A and other parties on an issue. The farther apart party A is from other parties, the greater the level of differentiation. However, especially in regards to voting behavior, differentiation is more appropriately thought of a dichotomous variable, in which case differentiation is synonymous with issue ownership. Belanger and Meguid (2006) and Bellucci (2008) note that issue ownership, or a long-term issue a single party has a reputation for stressing, can influence vote choice.¹³ Bellucci (2008) proposes that the concept of issue ownership is a separate concept from party competence, defined as a party's ability for problem solving, especially its record for problem solving while an

¹³ Belanger and Meguid (2006) note that issue ownership should only influence vote choice if the issue in question has salience. Therefore, regional parties must not only have issue ownership, but that issue must be salient in order for it to influence vote choice.

incumbent. Regional parties can therefore gain votes through differentiation without the necessity of a reputation through incumbency.

As differentiation/issue ownership can influence vote choice, national parties often respond to rising regional parties with co-optation attempts. However, even if a national party attempts to co-opt a regional party's platform, regional parties are not solely at the mercy of national party actions. Regional parties can counteract the co-optation attempts through their own actions. They can also influence the level of co-optation through party policy positions and other actions to maintain a perceived difference relative to other national parties.

Another influence on the level of differentiation is that of multidimensional appeals. Regional parties can stress issues beyond just the typical single issue of regional parties (i.e., decentralization). For example, regional parties can also stress economic issues from a regional perspective. Regional parties can influence voter perceptions that they not only are different from national parties, but that regional differences exist in a multidimensional space, which would prevent national parties from fully representing and responding to regional dissatisfaction.

Other parties' actions directly influence a regional party's attractiveness to some voters. However, regional parties' strategic usage of multidimensional issues, in turn, can affect their electoral outcome. Hence, both action taken by national parties and actions taken by a regional party influences its level of success. In addition, regional party support may also be an example of a protest vote. If a national party is unwilling to meet some voters' preferences, then regional parties could be the beneficiaries.

Differentiation/issue ownership is expected to only influence vote choice if the issue in question is salient (Belanger and Meguid 2006). A party might be perceived as being different, but unless the issue is particularly important to the voter, it will not influence vote choice. Multidimensional appeals by regional parties, therefore, are a way of influencing vote choice by changing the level of salience of their core issue of regionalism. While regional parties almost always include issues of regional autonomy in their platform, a second salient dimension that connects to their stance on regional autonomy is needed for regional parties to maintain success.

Salience of the issue in question is crucial to translate the perceived differentiation into vote choice. Blanger and Meguid (2008) note that even if a party has an advantage on a particular issue, it will only affect vote choice if the issue in question is salient. Consequently, campaign effects, specifically those related to salience, do affect vote choice. As issues which regional parties have ownership over increase in salience, there should be a similar increase in the regional party's vote totals. By attempting to gain ownership of salient issues by making multidimensional appeals, a regional party is also attempting to increase the salience of its core issue.

A key to successfully making multidimensional appeals is that the issues have positive complementarity (i.e., the issues reinforce one another). If the issues reinforce one another, then the regional dimension may have greater salience in the minds of voters than if only one issue is stressed. For example, the Scottish National Party has adopted a pro-European Union position alongside its secession position. If the United Kingdom becomes more integrated into the EU, Scottish secession becomes less costly and

therefore will have more appeal to voters (Jolly 2006). The two issues have positive complementarities, as the pro-EU position increases the salience of the secession position. Voters perceiving these issues as salient are unlikely to be satisfied by national parties.

Regional parties are at a disadvantage when it comes to increasing the salience of an issue. First, a regional party has fewer resources than competing national parties to communicate its issue. Secondly, regional parties have a harder time creating issue ownership, as national parties can, over time, move to co-opt the issue. National parties have greater levels of resources to campaign with, as well as having the advantage of being a credible option for being in charge of government. However, by linking two issues together, a regional party is not only attempting to increase the salience of the issue but also attempting to gain greater ownership of the issue.

Multiple issues may also be harder for national parties to co-opt. If a national party co-opts one of a regional party's demands, it may put itself at risk of losing some of its voters, thus negating any electoral gains. For example, a national party may have secured a large bloc of voters through the use of patronage in a given region; if the party were to change its policy to limit patronage, it would risk sending fewer resources to its favored region and may lose voters among that group of supporters. If there are numerous issues to co-opt, then there are numerous such points where shifts in a national party platform could result in vote loss among its initial base. For example, the Reform Party, which was located in Western Canada, advocated for both regional autonomy and tighter national fiscal discipline. The Liberal Party would have lost some of its voters if it

co-opted either of the two issues, and consequently was unwilling to attempt co-optation. Thus, a national party faces a constraint in its ability to gain votes via co-optation. The greater the number of issues a national party attempts to co-opt, the greater the likelihood this co-optation would be received negatively by its base. As the risk of losing votes increases, the less viable co-optation becomes.

Given the difficulties that a national party might have in co-opting multidimensional demands, why wouldn't regional parties always make these types of demands? There are several reasons why regional parties may choose to avoid multidimensional appeals. The first is that, just as with national parties, introduction of multiple dimensions could fracture a regional party. Typically, regional parties are unified by a common stance on a regional issue (e.g., greater level of autonomy). However, taking distinct stands on other issues could alienate some potential voters. For example, the initial years of the Scottish National party were marked by a tenuous alliance between those who held widely divergent economic policies (Lynch 2002). Taking an economic stand would have alienated a portion of their electorate.

Secondly, there is a risk of "watering down" the party platform by not solely focusing on the regional party's core issue, especially among smaller opposition parties. Greene (2002) explains that if competition occurs between parties in which there are asymmetric resources, then smaller parties may prefer to have more radical programs in order to attract and retain activists. This is often the case in the initial stages of building and launching a new opposition party. Incorporating other appeals and thereby diluting the core issue in a party manifesto, especially in the early stages of party formation, may

decrease a regional party's ability to recruit activists and may ultimately hurt electoral success. As such, regional parties are often faced with a strategic dilemma, especially in their early years, on whether or not to make multidimensional appeals.

The question may be raised of whether part of a regional party's goal is to have its issues co-opted. For some voters, specifically those voting for a more extreme party in order to move policy toward their preferred position, the answer would be yes. However, for voters that are not acting strategically, or for elites, the answer may be the opposite. Often the policies advocated or implemented by a national party are different from what the regional party preferred. In Canada, though the national parties offered increased political autonomy, the Bloc Quebecois had a preference for outright secession. Co-optation, in this case, could mean a combination of increased political autonomy but decreased electoral support. This may be undesirable to core regional party supporters: once policy concessions are enacted, the ultimate goal of secession may be harder to achieve. De Winter (1998: 235) notes that some national parties may actually prefer to include regional parties in government with the specific goal "to undermine or break the electoral appeal of these parties, by forcing them to make policy concessions."

As such, regional parties may prefer co-optation on some issues, specifically for the acquisition of more resources. For other issues, they may prefer to avoid co-optation, given that they may undermine their electoral support without achieving tangible policy successes. The difficulty in determining which approach to take is that regional parties do not have complete information as to what extent policy concessions will be granted, or what the impact will be on their electoral appeal. This very fact of incomplete

information means that, at times, regional parties may prefer to have their policies co-opted or to join governments, though it later may be considered an electoral mistake.

Whatever the preferences regional party elites and voters may have towards co-optation by national parties, the impact is the same: national party co-optation of regional parties influences regional party electoral success.¹⁴

A regional party joining a coalition government alongside national parties might indicate to its voters that the parties had few policy differences, while eschewing the coalition would signal greater differences. Regional parties which join governments run the risk of being victims of their own success. Orit Kedar (2005) notes that voters will often "overshoot" with their vote towards more extreme parties in an attempt to move policy toward their preferred position. A regional party might join the national government as a coalition member, but extract promises that their policy positions be enacted into policy. In such a situation, those voters who "overshoot" would shift their vote once their policy preferences have been met. Such policy changes may also result in regional parties losing their differentiation from the national parties. Furthermore, passage of policy that achieves some success (e.g., increase in regional autonomy) might reduce the salience of the regional party's issue, and therefore regional party success would suffer.

Notwithstanding whether regional parties are consciously subjecting themselves to co-optation or simply failing to avoid national party co-optation techniques, the

¹⁴ Given that regional parties, despite fears of losing electoral support, may still join the government to pursue the possibility of policy concessions, it's not surprising that Brancati (2005b) discovered that inclusion of regional parties can increase government turnover.

outcome of national party co-optation is that regional party support will decrease. Voters' perceptions of how a regional party's positions are different from the national party influence their decision to vote for the regional party. If a regional party acts contrary to these perceptions or expectations, it may lose its level of differentiation from larger parties and hence its ability to attract a wide range of voters. This creates a dynamic interaction between the national party's decision to co-opt or not, and the regional party's decision to stress multidimensional demands or a single issue. This variation in the perception of behavioral expectations of the regional party (i.e., its level of differentiation versus other parties) by the voter and the level of salience of the issues influences the variation in electoral success and continued viability of the regional party.

2.6 Expectations

The following are empirical expectations based on the preceding propositions. I hypothesize that, *ceteris paribus*, regions unhappy with the distribution of resources are more likely to have successful regional parties. Regions that are net negative payers that also have strong regional identities are more likely to vote for regional parties. In addition, if voters in regions that have net negative fiscal transfers feel that this process violates procedural justice (whether due to corruption or patronage), they are more likely to support regional parties.

Political Openings and Perceptions of Equity Hypotheses

H1 Regional Identity

Strong regional identity should increase the level of success for regional parties, especially in areas that are transfer payers.

H2 Corruption

Increases in concern over corrupt fiscal transfers should lead to increases in regional party success.

H3 Relative Regional

Relative increases in the level of patronage between regions should lead to increased regional party support in regions with higher levels of wealth and/or strong regional identities, and among those outside of the patronage network.

H4 Salience

An increase in the salience of perceived unfair fiscal transfers should increase regional party support.

This effect of perceptions of equity on regional vote choice is expected to continue if the regional party is able to maintain its distinctiveness. As such, the continued success is dependent upon the level of differentiation. As national parties increasingly co-opt regional parties, the less electoral success a regional party will have. However, regional party success should increase if the regional party is able to have a second regionally salient issue on which to campaign. This issue must be complimentary to the party's core stance (typically decentralization issues) and therefore increase the salience of this core issue.

Finally, it should be noted that at the individual level, there is an interactive effect between unhappiness over perceptions of equity and regional party differentiation. At the

individual level, those voters who are both concerned about issues of equity and also perceive a large difference between a regional party and national parties are especially likely to vote for a regional party. Consequently, regional parties can maintain or increase their success among the voters if there is continued unhappiness over the allocation of resources, regional parties are seen as sufficiently different, or a combination of both.

Regional Party Differentiation Hypotheses

H5 Co-optation

National party co-optation reduces the level of differentiation with regional parties and reduces regional party success.

H6 Second Issue

Multidimensional appeals on salient issues by a regional party increase the level of differentiation and increase regional party success.

H7 Interaction

Those voters concerned about unfair net negative fiscal transfers AND viewing regional parties as having sufficient differentiation are more likely to vote for a regional party than those that do not share such views.

2.7 Conclusion

Regional parties are important. They are consciously territorially-concentrated parties that can affect government stability, territorial restructuring, and even ethnic tensions. Previous theories have mainly focused on the structural factors that influence their level of electoral success. Ethnic or economic differences or institutional arrangements have been theorized to determine the salience and success of regionalism. However, regional parties succeed and fail in ethnically and economically divergent

regions, and in both federal and centralized states. Furthermore, regional parties' success often changes in a time frame when structural factors remain constant. As such, other factors are needed to provide an explanation for when and why regional parties will succeed.

Let us review the factors that more accurately explain the variation in the level of regional party electoral success. While regional parties get some support for those only interested in regional identity, they also get support from voters that are unhappy with other policies, in particular over the distribution of resources. Unhappiness over fiscal transfers, specifically over violations of norms of equity, may interact with previous theories such as economic differences or ethnic identity to produce increases in the level of success for regional parties.

However, this initial success can only be continued if a regional party can maintain differentiation from the national parties in the minds of voters. National parties can and do respond to unhappy voters by co-opting a regional party's message. Regional parties can and do respond to these co-optation attempts by making multidimensional appeals on salient issues that reinforce their core regional message. As a result, there is a dynamic interaction between national and regional parties that affects the level of differentiation for the regional party. This dynamic interaction explains the variation in the regional parties' success over time.

Chapter 3: The Italian Paradox

This chapter will provide a qualitative analysis of the rise and fall of the Italian regional party Lega Nord. I draw upon primary and secondary materials alongside personal interviews with Italian elites with several goals in mind. The first is that qualitative analysis can help generate hypotheses. While the theoretical examination provided thus far has touched on possible hypotheses, an exploration of a specific regional party will clarify exactly what the causal mechanisms were for a specific instance of regional party success. Second, this method will help weigh my hypotheses against alternative explanations. Once the hypotheses have been fully fleshed out and examined in this chapter, chapter 4 will use statistical analysis of Italian survey data to test the hypotheses in the Italian context. Finally, chapter 5 explores the generalizability of the hypotheses and findings in other contexts.

This dissertation differs from previous works on regional parties on several levels, most importantly in that it is primarily focused on the non-structural factors that influence regional party success. While structural factors such as ethnicity, economic differences or institutional changes may be necessary conditions, they are not sufficient to explain the ebb and flow that characterizes regional parties. Regional parties' patterns of success tend to follow a pattern of sudden increases and similarly sudden collapses (de Winter 1999). This research focuses on the role perceptions play in regional party success. How does

the perception of unfair distribution of resources ultimately influence the voting patterns of citizens? What roles do voters' behavioral expectations play in vote choice for regional parties? This dissertation argues that, contrary to previous theories, government policies and voter perceptions affect regional party success. While most regional party research has used some combination of case study and quantitative analysis of aggregate data, this research uses primarily (albeit not solely) analysis of survey data. The answer to the question of why individual voters act in a certain manner can be found by examining data that best captures their individual motivations.

3.1 Case Selection: Lega Nord as a Deviant Case

Italy's Lega Nord was selected for examination for a specific reason. It represents, in the Lipset terminology, a deviant case to the existing literature (Lipset et al. 2000). A deviant case constitutes a case that is an exception to the previous research. By selecting a case that goes contrary to the prevailing theories, it is possible to uncover what special factors caused the deviation. This in turn allows for modification of the previous theories.

While the Lega Nord case is a deviant to existing theories, it is not a deviant to the theory I advance in this research. Consequently, the Italian case not only provides leverage on why previous theories are inadequate at explaining the variation that the Lega has exhibited, but it also provides validation for the hypotheses advanced in this dissertation.

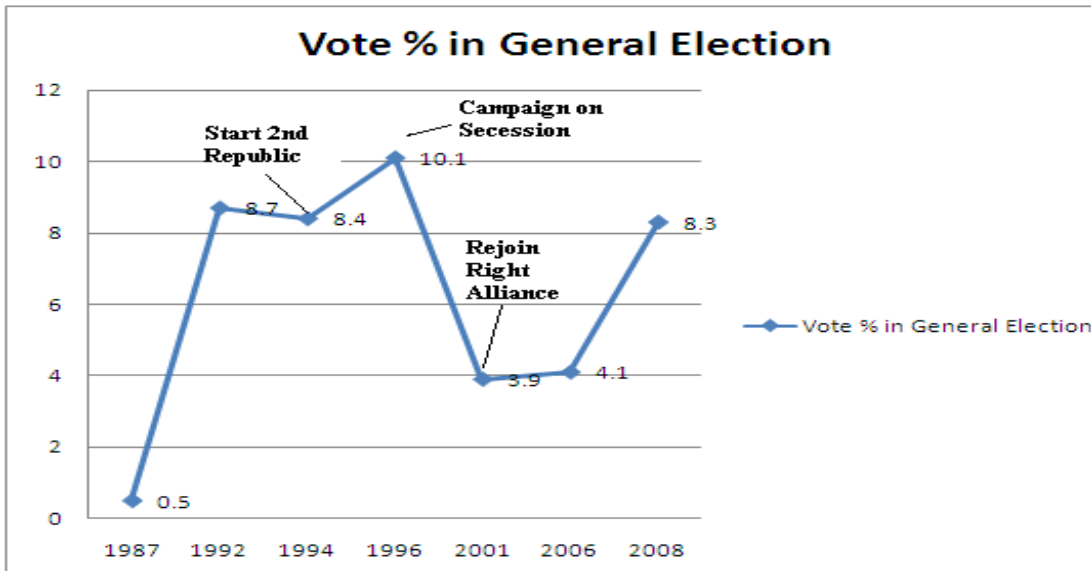


Figure 3.1 Lega Nord Electoral Success 1987-2008 (Source Interior Ministry of Italy)

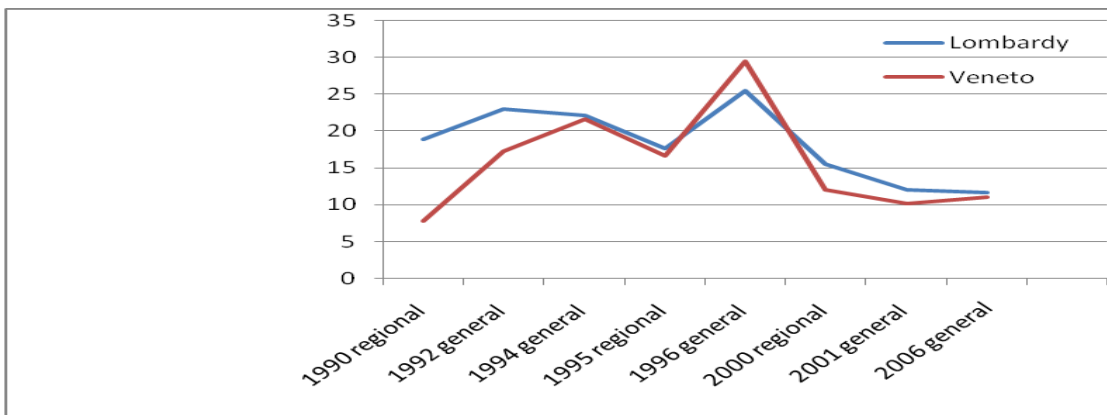


Figure 3.2 Lega Nord Electoral Success in Lombardy and Veneto Regions (Source: Interior Ministry of Italy)

As can be seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the Lega has at times had electoral success; however, that success has been variable. The Lega provides a puzzling case to previous theories, as they would have dramatically under-predicted the Lega's success. Structural theories would predict regional party success based on the existence of such factors as strong ethnic identity, economic differences between regions, or high levels of decentralization. Given the lack of institutional changes, cleavage changes and Italy's previous history of low volatility, previous theories would predict that there should be low levels of electoral volatility for the regional party. For a variety of reasons, Italy does not match the profile of a country where regional parties should succeed.

First, Italy does not have significant internal religious or linguistic differences relative to other countries. The country is predominantly Catholic, and only a few tiny regions do not speak Italian (specifically, French dominates in the Aosta Valley, and German is spoken in South Tyrol). While dialectical differences do exist within the country, they have been declining since unification. As Ruzza (2000) notes, when the country was first unified (around 1871), only 2.5% of the population claimed to speak Italian; it is now the official language of the entire nation.

Additionally, the North was not repressed, nor did it have a history of supporting regional parties. On the contrary, Northern Italy had dominated the early years of the Italian state (Duggan 1994). Even as late as the mid-1940s, it was Southern Italy (specifically Sicily and Sardinia) that had outbreaks of violence over issues of secession. However, in the mid-1980s, it was Northern Italy that was revolting against the central state, rather than Southern Italy. The Lega Nord was able to harness this regional

dissatisfaction and eventually achieved some success. Thus, against prevalent theories' expectations, the Lega Nord was able to succeed in a region that neither was historically marginalized nor had a history of center-periphery conflict.

This is especially important with regard to expectations for electoral volatility. If the Lega's success was simply a function of a regional cleavage or regional identity, it is unlikely that the Northern regions (specifically Lombardy and Veneto) would exhibit the necessary volatility. As Bartolini and Mair (1990) note, one of the defining characteristics of a social cleavage is its stable nature. Given the high levels of volatility the Lega exhibited, additional explanations are needed.

Economic differences do exist between the North and the rest of Italy, but they, too, provide only limited explanatory powers. Contrary to traditional expectations, the Lega's success has been highly variable over a time frame in which the structural conditions were fairly unchanging. Previous theories have noted that regions that are either wealthier or poorer should have greater levels of regional party success. Northern Italy has been wealthier than the rest of the country since unification. In 1970, Lombardy, Veneto and Piedmont (the three biggest Northern regions) all had regional per capita GDP above the national average, and in 1999 they were still far above the national average (Gold 2003: 67).¹⁵ While economic differences may have been a necessary condition in explaining Northern Italy's eventual support for a regional party, a second factor needs to be uncovered to explain the success. If it were only economic conditions

¹⁵ During this time period, the Northeast of Italy (the Veneto region) grew much faster than the Northwest (Lombardy and Piedmont) (Gold 2003: 67).

driving regional party success, then why was it not until the early 1990s that a regional party achieved electoral success? Moreover, why was that success so fleeting?

Finally, theories of institutional changes under-predict electoral success for a regional party in Northern Italy. The Lega's success occurred in a fairly centralized country. While the 1948 constitution made provisions for autonomous regional governments, "this remained a dead letter following the triumph of the Christian Democrats in the 1948 election" (Keating 1998: 61). The Christian Democrats were consistently able to deny power to the regional levels. The issue of regional autonomy was largely ignored until the 1970s, with the exception of several regions that expressed regional dissatisfaction immediately following World War II (e.g., Sicily). The issue of regional autonomy was raised in the 1970s when a wave of Northern Italian discontent led to some nominal institutional changes, but the power held by regional governments was still largely circumscribed by the national legislation (Ibid.: 62). For example, over 90 percent of the regional funds came from the central government, and 70 percent of these funds were specific grants (Ibid.). With local revenue collection constrained and grants from the central government subject to numerous conditions, regional government autonomy was de facto limited. In this stable, fairly centralized setting, institutional theories would under-predict success the Lega achieved.

Also contrary to conventional expectations, the Lega's support remained the same when Italy did decentralize. In 1996, the Italian constitution was changed to give regions far more power outside of reserved matters (Keating 1997: 119).¹⁶ Specifically, regional

¹⁶ Previously, the Italian regions had a very small subset of policies on which they had bureaucratic discretion, such as trash collection or road construction (Keating 1997).

presidents were given the power to hire and fire bureaucratic ministers at the regional level, electoral laws became the purview of regional parliaments, and regional presidents were given far more power to create and enforce legal changes (Bull and Gilbert 2001: 163). In addition to the increases in political decentralization in the late 1990s, there was also a pronounced increase in the level of fiscal federalism (Gold 2003). However, contrary to the traditional expectations of regional party performance in a decentralized system, the Lega's electoral support actually plummeted after these changes.

However, it should be noted that decentralization was not the only institutional change. In 1994, the electoral rules of Italy were drastically changed.¹⁷ Before then, the Italian national elections were governed by a proportional representation formula, which in theory would have benefited smaller parties. In 1994, however, the electoral rules were changed to introduce a greater amount of majoritarianism. The new law allocated three-quarters of the seats in the House and Senate via single-member districts, with the remaining quarter allocated via proportional representation in the House and a complicated proportional allocation in the Senate (Bruneau et al. 2001). While party fragmentation has continued, it has occurred mainly within party alliances. This is in part because vote thresholds were introduced to limit smaller parties, specifically those that were not a part of pre-electoral alliances.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Italian political system before 1994 is commonly referred to as the First Italian Republic, while after 1994 it is commonly referred to as the Second Italian Republic.

¹⁸ In 2005 the electoral rules were changed again to try to introduce further incentives for pre-electoral alliances. The changes re-introduced PR electoral rules but with large "seat bonuses" to the alliance with a plurality at the national and regional levels.

Given that the new rules included both incentives and hindrances to smaller parties; it is unclear precisely what impact the electoral rule changes have had on the Lega.¹⁹ In the first two elections after the rule changes (1994 and 1996), and in the most recent 2008 election, the Lega did as well as its 1992 showing, if not better. Conversely, the Lega suffered several other elections in which it did not meet its 1992 level of performance. In the 2000 election, for example, were cases in which the Lega drastically underperformed. In addition the electoral rules were changed in 2005 back to proportional representation but with seat bonuses to electoral alliances²⁰. Again however the Lega has done both poor (2006 election) and well (2008) election

In summary, the Lega has seen both success and failure in a variety of electoral rules. While the rule changes may have benefited the Lega (at least in seat allocation), it is unlikely that changes in electoral rules drove the ebb and flow of its success, as the party experience both greater and lesser success than before the electoral change.

It should also be noted that institutional changes in general (and specifically with regard to electoral rules) should immediately increase volatility, but as rules stabilize, there should be a decrease in electoral volatility (Roberts and Wibbels 1999). This was certainly the case in Italy: immediately following the electoral changes, there were

¹⁹ It should be noted that there are disagreements on the effect of electoral laws (specifically the level of proportionality) on regional parties. Typically, it is thought that proportional representation systems should benefit smaller parties; however, given regional parties' unique level of geographic concentration, the impact is often indeterminate. As Jolly (2006) notes, several authors have in fact found that proportional representation may decrease support for regional parties. In addition, Italian electoral rules provide benefits to electoral alliances, whose effect on regional party success is unclear. Consequently, the Italian electoral rules include factors that have indeterminate effects on regional parties.

²⁰ Bonuses are allocated to the alliance that wins a plurality of the national vote for the lower house and plurality of each region in the upper house.

dramatic increases in volatility as most of the parties that existed before the changes ceased to exist. However, both before the changes and since then, Italian elections have demonstrated low levels of volatility. One of the few exceptions to this was the Lega, which had a dramatic increase in volatility before the changes to the electoral system, and suffered a dramatic collapse well after the changes.

The question, then, is why the Lega achieved success when it did. Ethnic and economic differences between the North and the rest of the country have always existed. However, it was not until the early 1990s that the regional party achieved national success. Structural theories may provide the necessary conditions for regional party success, but they hardly provide a sufficient explanation. The Lega's success cannot be adequately described by existing theories. Any explanation needs to be able to account for the dynamic and volatile patterns that the Lega exhibited.

One criticism that may be leveled against this case selection is that the Lega Nord is not a "true" regional party and therefore not a deviant case. Despite its youth, the Lega Nord has dramatically changed who it has been aligned with and the position of its policies during its history. For example, in its early years it took on the form of a regionally-based protest movement against the central government. From 1992 to 1994, it was a regionally-based unaligned political party. In 1994, it was an important coalition member with two other right parties. In 1996, it transformed from a party advocating autonomy to a party unaligned with either of the two ideological blocs and demanding secession. In 2001, it changed its autonomy position again when it abandoned its calls for

independence, rejoined a coalition with several right parties, and focused much of its rhetoric on the topic of immigration.

Despite its meandering and often incoherent platforms (e.g., from pro-autonomy to calls for immediate independence to calls for devolution), there have been some attempts to classify the Lega. Some have classified the Lega Nord as a populist party of the radical right/post-industrial right movement (e.g., Kitschelt 1995). Radical right parties advocate economically-right policies (specifically free-market positions), an authoritarian arrangement to politics, and limitations on diversity (often exemplified by attacks on multi-culturalism and immigration) (ibid.). Furthermore, they are often supported by those individuals particularly hurt by the forces of globalization. There is an emphasis on reasserting a reliance on the free market, as well as demands to reduce the social welfare safety net. Finally, the radical right movement or party often directs an anti-statist message at government or political class. Certainly the Lega in its early years focused much of its rhetoric against the corruption of the Italian First Republic and attacked outsiders/immigrants (albeit, in the party's early years the anti-immigration stance was focused on Southern Italians rather than the party's current stance opposing non-Italians) (Bulli and Tronconi 2006).

While the Lega does have a number of radical right characteristics, it does not perfectly match the standard category of a post-industrial radical right party. As Bull and Gilbert (2001) note, the Lega's biggest impact on the Italian political system has been on the issue of decentralization (and hence a territorial focus would classify it as a regional party). In addition, Lega voters were not alienated individuals with social integration

problems, nor were the Lega voters suffering due to economic internationalization and the anxiety that it produces (Gold 2003). The Lega's policy focus and average voter do not match the profile of a radical right party.

I contend that, while the Lega contains radical right aspects, it is accurate to classify it as a regional party. "A regional party is ... a party that nominates candidates for elections in a strict subset of the regions of a state (often just one), and explicitly, albeit not necessarily, primarily appeals to this subset" (van Houten 2000). Throughout its history, the Lega has only been successful in one subsection of the country (the North), and its ideology was regionally exclusive. For example, its party label in its early years translates simply as the "Northern League," a geographically-focused label that excludes other areas within the country. Additionally, the party always promoted an anti-redistributive message. The Lega's repeated demands for federalism and autonomy were important goals, as they would reduce fiscal transfers to Southern Italy. Again, this is a platform that is aimed only at a portion of the country. In the party's early years, there were repeated attempts to halt Southern Italian immigration to the North (Bull and Gilbert 2001). The Lega's early goals and organizational structure were highly influenced by a regional party in the nearby region of Aosta Valley. When it first ran for the European Parliament in 1989, it was as a part of the European Free Alliance, an EU party that represented regional parties.

In 1996, the party label changed to adopt the Lega's new position of pro-independence. Its new name, *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania* (the Northern League for the Independence of Padania), continued the theme of a regional focus with

an exclusive message for a specific subsection of the country. While the party has since drifted further to the right and focused more attention on immigration, the party's label and its focus on autonomy and the North have remained constant. As will be explored, this ideological shift was partly a tactical move, but also partly an outgrowth of the Lega's initial underlying goal of protecting Northern values.²¹ Furthermore, as Hepburn (2009) points out, the Lega is hardly alone among regional parties with a strong anti-immigration stance. In fact, a number of regional parties have mobilized on the issue of immigration (both for and against). Hepburn further argues that "while the issue of immigration is ordinarily associated with radical right parties...this research has shown that the regionalist party family has a different, but no less robust stake in determining the barriers of citizenship and nationality."

The Lega has pushed for and been at the center of the regional issue that now permeates Italian politics (Brueneau et al. 2001). As Sani and Segatti (2001) note, "although [the Lega's] platform has changed somewhat over time, the territorial focus of the Lega's ideology, programs and electoral base has remained constant."

A number of regional party experts confirm the Lega's status as a regional party. Italian researchers such Biorcio (1997) or Diamanti (1995), regional party experts like de Winter and Tursan (1998), Tronconi (2006) or van Houten (2001) and large Northern regional party experts like Sorens (2005) and Brancati (2007) all classify the Lega as a regional, ethno-regional or federalist party. The Cross National Electoral Project (2006) classifies the Lega Nord by ideological family as a regional party. Given that the Lega

²¹ Interview conducted by author in 2007.

appeals to and only contests a subset of territories in Italy via its pro-Northern message, it can ultimately be considered a regional party. Examining the Lega, therefore, can shed light on the dynamics of what influences regional party success.

3.1.1 Observable Implications

While the Lega is a deviant case for existing theories on regional parties, its success would be predicted by my theories of regional party success. As noted earlier, I hypothesize that regional party success is a function of voter perceptions and behavioral expectations. A regional party requires a political opening to achieve its initial electoral breakthrough. Usually this is an issue area that national parties are unable to co-opt, yet has high salience. This occurs if a region with negative fiscal transfers has high levels of regional identity, and/or perceives that the allocation process violates procedural justice. This can occur if the allocation process is perceived as corrupt, or if patronage is being directed toward other areas. As long as these budget processes have high salience, then regional parties should succeed, assuming that regional parties can maintain a level of differentiation from national parties.

If a national party co-opts a regional party's issue area and reduces the level of differentiation between the national and regional parties, it should reduce regional party support. However, a regional party can blunt co-optation attempts through multidimensional appeals, which can maintain the level of differentiation. The level of differentiation is determined through the types of programmatic appeals made by both national and regional parties. As such, the strategic decisions and appeals by national and regional parties interact to produce the electoral volatility that is so often exhibited by

regional parties. In examining the impact these factors had upon the Lega Nord, a chronological examination of the party is appropriate, as the level of differentiation can be different in each election.

For this examination I use both secondary research and semi-structured, open-ended interviews I conducted in Italy. Both provide an avenue for a plausibility test of the causal variables. While this research will test the hypotheses via individual level data in the next chapter, macro-level data provide context for the environment in which the Lega Nord operated during this time period. Elites that were a part of the Lega during its history as well as political and business elites were interviewed to understand what influenced the party's political strategies. These interviews also provided insight as to what effect perceptions of equity and government policies had in each election, and what impact regional party differentiation played. By employing multiple methods between this chapter and the following chapter, I intend to triangulate the sources of regional party success.

In this next section I will lay out how various factors affected the Lega's support during its initial years, during the apogee of its electoral support, and during its rapid decline. Finally, I show how the Lega's recent return to success can be better explained by my hypotheses versus specific alternative explanations for the Lega Nord.

3.2 Rise and Breakthrough of the Lega

3.2.1 *Early Years*

Italy was slow to unify relative to most Western European countries. Its unification did not really begin until the 1850s, and the last major region (the Veneto region) was not added to the state until 1866. In its early years, the newly unified state consciously attempted to develop the state and bring the regions closer together through the creation of one “Italian” identity (Duggan 1994). Piedmont, the northern region which helped unify Italy in the mid- to late nineteenth century, was in charge of overall state policy in the early years of the nation; therefore, a number of the policies of the nation-state initially favored Northern Italy. Heavy taxes imposed in the southern regions helped build railroads in Northern Italy (Ibid.). As a result, southern rebellions against the center were common in the 1870s and 1880s, including one incident in which over 40,000 peasants seized control of Palermo. Ultimately, these rebellions were brutally crushed by northern troops, but southern demands for greater autonomy and independence were a constant feature of the political landscape for nearly a century. Only in 1948, at the constitutional convention, was Sicily granted special autonomy status to appease its nascent independence movement.²²

In the years immediately following World War II, the Northern Italian economy was transformed in two distinct waves of industrialization. The first wave occurred in Northwest Italy in the 1950s and 1960s via large enterprises. Part of what fueled these advances was a huge internal migration of inexpensive Southern Italian labor. Between 1952 and 1963, nearly two million Southern Italians went to the Northern regions (Gold

²² In addition to Sicily, the regions of Sardinia, Aosta Valley, and South Tyrol were also granted special status.

2003: 41). In response, several small regional movements appeared in the North, including the *Movimento Autonomista Padano* (Autonomy Movement of Padania) based in Lombardy, but none achieved electoral success or had a dramatic effect on policy. Despite all these socio-economic changes, the one political constant in the post-war era was the dominance of Christian Democratic Party (DC).

The DC was the center of Italian politics from 1945 to 1992. It was a coalition partner in every government during this time period. The DC's support relied on two factors: Catholicism and patronage. An area that stretched across Northern Italy, often referred to as the "White Zone," was a dense network of Catholic organizations and unions that mobilized in favor of the DC (Ibid.: 56). While support in the North was based on religious vote and Catholic organizations, the DC's support among Southern voters was more patronage-based. Infrastructure projects, bank loans, pensions, and, most importantly, appointments to public jobs were all used to cement voter loyalty. "Access to public sector jobs required DC membership for virtually every appointment, including secretaries, messengers and clerks" (Greene 2007: 290). The DC's entrenched political position and control over the bureaucracy allowed it to collect not only votes, but also financial contributions. In exchange for government contracts and jobs, the DC collected "donations" from DC members. As Greene (Ibid.: 292) notes, the DC's control over the public bureaucracy "yielded a virtually bottomless chest of illicit resources for DC partisan advantage."

Over time, this patronage became more focused in Southern Italy. Since the cost of living is much lower in the south, the real wages of public employment are higher.

Public sector jobs thus offered an income premium and greater security, making them far more attractive than private sector jobs (Alesina et al. 2001). In Italy, the allocation of public employment heavily favored the South. Survey data collected by the Italian government concludes that “the allocation of public employment in Italy is an important source of redistribution between regions, in particular between the North and the South” (Ibid.: 472). Southerners focused more on public jobs and eschewed private jobs when given the opportunity. In fact, the authors conclude that direct transfers created “an equilibrium of dependency” and thus an effective means of patronage. As a result of stable vote banks, Southern politicians gained greater power and access to patronage. This enabled them to shift a greater amount of funds and jobs to their home constituencies, thus reinforcing the cycle (Golden and Picci 2008).

This pattern accelerated in the 1980s. During the 1980s Italian taxes increased 11.6% compared to the OECD average of 2.5 % (Gold: 71). Minimum taxes were employed to reduce tax evasion and pension taxes were increased to pay for the large increase in pension distribution. Tax increases also came via consumption taxes on such products as petroleum (ibid). These taxes in turn were used to fund, among other things, an expansion in public sector jobs and pensions. Regional redistribution in Italy followed the pattern of transferring funds from the wealthier Northern Italy to the poorer Southern Italy. For example in 1986, while the South as a region generated 18% of the total tax revenue it received approximately 35% of the total national expenditures (Gold 2003: 71). Furthermore, Alesina et al (2001) notes that the allocation of public employment was used as a form of redistribution. In 1995 while 12% of total employment in North

was in the public sector, 21% of total employment in the South was in the public sector. In fact “public employment in the South is much higher than in the North in all the categories of employment”. (Alessina et al (2001): 453) Furthermore when taking into account cost of living differences those employed in the South were paid far higher relative to private wages.

However, patronage was not limited to Southern Italy; it also became more focused on the larger industrial firms in the North. “The distance between the DC and small and medium enterprises became even wider when the party adopted increasingly corporatist industrialist policies in the 1970s and 1980s that favored interests of large confederal trade unions and big businesses” (Ibid.: 76). While the DC had supported smaller enterprises in its early years, it shifted resources and policy (e.g., bank lending laws) over time to benefit the larger firms and state enterprises that were able to deliver votes and campaign contributions.

3.2.2 Industrial Districts: Italian Style

In the 1970s, a second wave of economic development, dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), swept through Italy. Small and medium-sized enterprises are defined as firms with fewer than one hundred employees. Often these firms are smaller than 15 people. These enterprises appeared in Northeast Italy (e.g., the Veneto region), Northwest Italy (e.g., Lombardy) and in some Northern Central regions (e.g., Tuscany). They were located in smaller towns, away from major cities. In northern Italy, employment in these smaller-sized firms is fairly common. For example, in

Germany firms with over 100 employees represent 58.6% of the workforce; in Italy, however, they only represent 30.7%. Furthermore, the average German firm has 200 employees, but in Italy the average firm has only 70 employees (Ibid.: 68).

These Italian firms produce and export a wide variety of manufactured goods, such as textiles, clothes, shoes and other leather goods. Nearly one-quarter of Italy's exports come from firms with a workforce of less than one hundred employees (Bull and Gilbert 2001: 73). The firms were successful during this time due to their production method, in which a number of small firms concentrated in one town would produce a good via diffuse cooperation. "Unlike the standard vertically integrated firm, where all stages of the production process are hierarchically organized within a single organization, particular phases of the production process are put out to specialized firms who cooperate with each other in making the product" (Farrell and Knight 2003). This method of subcontracting was handled without formal contracts. Informal social norms, community sanctions on dishonest behavior, and a general culture of cooperation allowed these firms to avoid relying on the legal system (Putnam 1991, Farrell and Knight 2003). The result was that in the 1970s, the production process allowed for large amounts of flexibility, which made the firms highly successful in the world market.

It should be noted that these firms were generally family-run operations. In addition, workers tended to be highly involved in the production process, highly skilled, and were generally compensated well. Unionization were extremely low. Finally, the ease of formation of new firms meant workers had incentive cooperate with management

and vice-versa. The result was that worker-owner relations were far less conflictual than in normal industrial districts (Whitford 2001).

While in the 1970s, the firms were highly successful, their success and profitability was increasingly under strain in the 1980s and early 1990s. A combination of increased competition from other countries with cheaper labor, and growing difficulties in technological research reduced their viability. Furthermore, a lack of local services (e.g., traffic congestion, waste disposal, pollution) hurt the export potential of the SMEs (Whitford 2001). Despite the high need by the SMEs for government services, the DC was unable and unwilling to respond.

By the 1980s, the Italian political system was characterized by high levels of patronage and clientalism. “Far from being neutral, open, and universalistic, channels of access to governmental decision makers were highly politicized, often conforming to the classic clientele and parentela models” (Gunther and Montero 2001: 139). National resources were often distributed to the South in the form of public jobs and pensions (Alesina et al. 2001). In addition, infrastructure funding (e.g., roadways) was neglected around the small and medium-sized enterprises, and instead directed toward areas with larger and better-connected firms. Furthermore, SMEs had a difficulty securing loans, as the DC used both national and local banks to direct loans to firms with political connections (Bull and Gilbert 2001: 87). As a final contributing factor, universities were legally forbidden from participating in research centers. Although the DC turned a blind eye to and even encouraged tax evasion by the SMEs, the lack of proactive DC policies during a time in which the SMEs had a specific need for public goods hurt the firms

(Gold 2003). “In Italy, it was the small and medium-sized firms located in the center-north of the country...that were also least implicated in the DC’s system of pork barrel allocations and patronage distributions” (Golden 2004).

As such those employed/self-employed in these firms were uniquely likely to be angry with the DC and to shift their vote. The close communal ties and strong in-group networks that characterized these Northern firms meant that they were more likely to be unhappy with net negative fiscal transfers. As noted earlier those with strong in group identities, are more likely to be unhappy when relatively receiving less. The fears of globalization induced job loss created an environment of high saliency for the negative effects of the current regime’s policies. Fears that without improvements in infrastructure, access to credit, and other policies to improve technology diffusion the firms would not survive were common (Gold 2003). As such there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that that both owners and their skilled employees had shared interests and preferences over increased state intervention to promote exports. Both were unhappy and fearful that without government intervention to promote exports the result would be employment loss.²³ Both were left out of the patronage circle given the low unionization rates and inability to have large campaign donations. The result was that interests based on sectoral employment influenced vote choice for this particular group. The patronage policies and inefficiencies of the national government had high

²³ The demands among those in skilled export oriented industries for state intervention is not unique. Kurtz and Brooks (2008) label the strategy of the state intervening to promote economic production, specifically export oriented production, “embedded neoliberalism”. In the Latin America context they find that that “..it is skilled labor in these (high value added markets), along with business owners, that we expect to constitute the backbone of the embedded neoliberal coalition. “ (Kurtz and Brooks 2008: 265)

salience among these voters. Consequently if non-DC support was to resonate anywhere, it would be among those employed in small and medium sized enterprises.

As part of a protest against the fiscal regime, several regional parties began appearing in the North. The first of the new wave of Northern regional parties, the *Liga Veneto*, was formed in 1979 in the Veneto region. The party focused on securing for the Veneto region the same level of regional autonomy that several special regions, such as Sicily, had been granted following World War II. As one early member of the Liga Veneto reported, the party “wanted autonomy similar to what the special regions had, (in order) to keep our money....”²⁴

Another regional party, the *Lega Lombarda*, was formed in 1982, just a few years later by Umberto Bossi. A student at the time, Bossi met with the leader of *Union Valdotaïne* (UV), a small regional party from the Aosta Valley. The UV wanted to encourage other regional parties to form in order to contest and win elections at the EU level. Soon thereafter, Bossi launched a journal calling for Lombardian autonomy and created a corresponding political organization which would first contest national elections in 1984. Similar to the motivations behind the Liga Veneto, the original focus of the Lega Lombarda was on autonomy and problems of corruption and taxation. As one Lega Lombardia official noted, “the Lega was born out of problems stemming from taxes. They continually increased during this time.”²⁵ In the first issue of the pro-Lombardian autonomy journal, Bossi himself wrote:

²⁴ Interview conducted by author in 2007

²⁵ Interview conducted by author in 2007

It is as Lombard that we all have a fundamental common interest. In front of this all the reasons for our divisions in parties of whatever color must be subordinate. Italian parties are exploiting us and distracting us from our commitment to the defense of our interests, to serve the interests of the others – and their own in the first place!

–*Lombardia Autonomista*, March 1982

Despite the Northern unhappiness with the status quo, regional parties were unable to attract a significant number of votes. The Liga Veneto was unable to elect a single representative in 1987, while the Lega Lombarda, the more successful of the two, was only able to garner 3% of the vote in Lombardy (about 0.5% of the national vote in the 1987 election). While the various regional movements/parties in the North did try to accentuate regional differences or protest against the central government, they gained very little traction.

Begrudgingly, Northern voters largely continued voting for the same parties in the 1980s that they had voted for in the 1970s. “In the parliamentary elections in 1987, the two major parties (the DC and the *Partita Comunista Italiano*, or “Italian Communist Party”) together garnered over 60 percent of the valid votes. When the strength of the third place party, the Italian Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiano*, PSI), is taken into consideration, the total reached 75 percent, almost the same level of support in 1972” (Sani and Segatti 2001: 167). All told, the level of electoral volatility in the Italian party system was quite low until 1990. In fact, it was often considered one of the paradigmatic cases of a frozen cleavage system [primarily a religious and economic case] (Sani and Segatti 2001).

The one exception to this was there were gains made by the Communist Party (PCI) in several regions, specifically Tuscany and Emilio-Romagna. One particular reason for this was the PCI's ability to improve local services (e.g., trash collections) made the party attractive to a number of those employed in SMEs who were concerned about governmental inefficiencies. Furthermore the PCI's platform of increased decentralization appealed to those wanting improve local services (e.g., those in SMEs) However farther north were a stronger sub-culture of Catholicism dominated the PCI was rejected leaving the DC still firmly in control of areas like Veneto or Lombardy. (Gold 2003) Left-right and religious beliefs constrained the PCI's ability to be successful farther North despite its pro-regional autonomy message even among those in similar occupations (i.e. SMEs).

Beginning in 1990, however, this pattern of supporting the established parties came to an abrupt halt in Northern Italy. The Lega Lombarda was able to garner nearly 19% of the vote in Lombardy's 1990 regional elections. In 1991, in preparation for the 1992 election, the Lega Lombarda fused with the Liga Veneto to form the Lega Nord. Five years after a poor 1987 showing by the various regional "Lega" parties, the Lega Nord won 8.7% percent of the national vote, including 23% in Lombardy and 17.3% in the Veneto region.²⁶ It should be noted that despite corruption being a national problem, the DC's losses were primarily concentrated in Northern Italy. Why was the Lega able to

²⁶ The Lega Nord also ran strongly in other regions: Piedmont with 17%, Liguria 14%, Emilia-Romagna 9% and Friuli Venezia-Giulia with 15.3%. Its attempts at campaigning farther south, for example in Tuscany (3%) or Marche (1.3%), were met with failure.

break through against the DC, and why did the DC primarily lose votes only in the North?

3.2.3 1992: *Breakthrough*

In 1992, for the first time in the nation, the Lega Lombarda collaborated with other regional parties (namely the Liga Veneto, but also the *Piedmont Autonomista* party and other tiny regional parties from other northern regions) (Bulli and Tronconi 2006). This new umbrella alliance was named the *Lega Nord* (Northern League) and elected Umberto Bossi as its leader. It should be noted that the same general organization that ruled the Lega Lombarda controlled the Lega Nord. The party, while initially an umbrella organization, quickly became a highly centralized organization with Bossi in total control (Biorcio 1997).

In the newly-formed Lega Nord's first election, Bossi changed the party platform from the Lega Lombardia's previous focus on Northern Italian culture toward a focus on fiscal federalism. In particular, the party was interested in providing the Northern regions with greater autonomy on fiscal matters, which, according to one Lega Nord expert, would allow for lower taxes. The federalism proposed was envisioned as the creation of three macro-regions (North, Center and South), with regions divided based on economic differences rather than cultural differences (Bulli and Tronconi 2006). The increase in federalism was expected to increase the Northern regions' control over their own resources and increase their own regulation of fiscal matters. The party also focused on the national parties' corruption, often stressing that corruption adversely affected smaller firms.

For example, in its 1992 program, the Lega Nord referred to small and medium-sized firms seventeen times, while larger firms are only mentioned four times, all in a negative context (Bull and Gilbert 2001: 90). The Lega made some neo-liberal reform demands, specifically asking for less intervention and lower taxes by the national government, but they also made strong appeals for local and regional governments to improve infrastructure, such as providing incentives for research and development. It also encouraged fostering linkages between SMEs and universities (Diamanti 1993). Clearly, the Lega was not just making anti-statist rhetoric or pure neo-liberal demands, given that the Lega's preferences included economic intervention by regional governments. By linking corruption and patronage of the central government, they were providing justification for the necessity of federalism. This message targeted, in particular, the small and medium-sized firms which had been excluded from the patronage circle controlled by the central government. The Lega created an association (ALIA) which attempted to attract entrepreneurs by protesting the minimum tax (Gold 2003: 11).²⁷

Northern SMEs' concerns over the patronage problems in Italy had particular salience in 1992. The year before, the Maastricht Treaty had been signed. Under this treaty, Italy would be invited to join the European Monetary Union only if it was able to reduce its deficit. If Italy was unable to control its deficit, it would be unable to adopt the Euro, a situation which SMEs feared would limit their ability to export to the rest of Europe. Consequently, patronage and its effects on the level of deficit had high salience for the SMEs in the 1992 election. Their potential ability to export hinged on the Italian

²⁷ During the early 1990s in an attempt to crack down on tax avoidance, businesses were assessed minimum taxes no matter their tax receipts. (Gold 2003)

government being able to reduce its spending, direct more money towards research, and a reduction of patronage was the SMEs' preferred method (Golden 2004).

The Lega Nord's messages for federalism, reduction of patronage, and reduction of corruption were unable to be co-opted by the national parties in 1992. There were two specific events that reduced the ability of the major national parties to deflect the voters' unhappiness over corruption and patronage. The first important factor was the combined collapse of the Communist Eastern Bloc in 1989 and of the Soviet Union in 1991. Prior to these events, the DC had been able to maintain its support through a platform of anti-communism. "As late as the mid 1970s fear of communism led a leading editorialist to urge moderate voters to keep casting their ballots for the DC, even though they had 'to hold their noses not to smell the stench of corruption'" (Segni and Segatti 2001: 163). Once the threat of communism had passed, however, voters were free to vote on other salient issues, and without their traditional wedge of anti-communism, the Christian Democrats were unable to downgrade the salience of corruption.

Following the collapse of communism in so many European countries, the Italian Communist Party also lost much of its support. The result was that in the 1992 election, the Lega Nord was able to attract ex-Communist and ex-Socialist voters in addition to ex-Christian Democrat voters. In 1994, they were able to again make gains among ex-Christian Democratic voters.

Adding to the national parties' losses due to a lack of wedge issues, the national parties did not move to co-opt the Lega on its calls for decentralization. Before 1992, the national parties, specifically the Christian Democrats, had not seriously attempted to co-

opt the Lega Nord or its regional party predecessors on the issue of decentralization. The far greater electoral threat to the national parties during that time was the Communist Party. Given that the Communist Party was stronger in certain geographically-concentrated areas, the other national parties refused to offer concessions toward decentralization for fear of increasing political power at the local levels and hence strengthening the Communist Party (Gold 2003). Thus, the Lega's calls for decentralization in 1992 caused a slight increase in campaign rhetoric, but the DC primarily ignored the issue rather than attempting to co-opt it (Klingemann et al. 2006). Finally, the national parties were unable to co-opt the issue of patronage. First, both the DC and Italian Socialist Party had been in power while levels of patronage and corruption had increased, and therefore were in poor positions to campaign against those issues. Secondly, as noted, the DC relied on patronage for its support from Southern Italy. As such, the DC was trapped: if it had campaigned against patronage, it would have potentially lost voters who relied on patronage (specifically from the South); while ignoring the issue risked alienating Northern voters. Ultimately, the DC primarily ignored the issue of corruption and patronage.

Below (Table 3.1) is the relative weighting of issue positions from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Klingemann et al. 2006).²⁸ The numbers represent the relative weighting of issue as a percentage of the overall manifesto. Numbers increasing across time signify an increasing focus and hence greater importance of that issue in the party platform. The Right-Left position is a composite of economic positions measured in

²⁸ For purposes of this research, future references to Dieter Klingemann et al.'s (2006) Comparative Manifesto Project will be abbreviated as CMP.

the comparative manifesto, with a larger positive number signifying a more conservative position, while smaller or negative numbers represent more liberal positions. As they are compositions the range in numbers can be extreme.

While there are limitations to using the CMP to measure the exact party positions, Pelizzo (2004) notes that the CMP is still useful in measuring *shifts* in party positions. Given that the analysis within this dissertation focuses on changes to a party position, the CMP data is useful and appropriate. However, using the numbers to represent the exact position of a party should be used with the knowledge that, especially in the Italian context and while making comparisons outside of Italy, there are limitations. Nonetheless the purpose of the CMP numbers is to note the shifts (i.e. when parties become more conservative or stress decentralization relative to previous elections)

1992 Election Party Positions	DC 1987	DC 1992	Lega 1992
Right-Left	4.3	1.2	8.6
Decentralization	1.2	2.7	12.6

Table 3.1 Lega Nord and DC Manifesto Positions in 1992 Election (CMP)

While the numbers should be used with caution, it can be concluded that the DC moved more to a centrist position in the 1992 election (to provide perspective, the Communist Party's right-left position was measured at -26). While there was limited movement toward increased decentralization, the issue received little attention in the

party's written manifesto. It can be concluded that the DC only made very limited attempts at co-opting the Lega on either the right-left issue or decentralization.

In the 1992 election, the Lega operated in an environment in which unhappiness with the corruption and unfair fiscal transfers in North was a salient issue. Furthermore, the Lega had sufficient differentiation from the national parties that were unable or unwilling to co-opt the Lega's positions. The result was that the Lega had its first major electoral success in 1992, when it received 8.7% of the vote in the lower house Chamber and 8.2% in the upper house Senate. As one expert in Milan explained, "the regionalism of Lombardy and Veneto all came together to form the Lega Nord, and they offered something different from the other parties. They offered something against corruption."²⁹ The Lega embedded its criticism of the central government within a specific policy prescription of regionalism that the national parties were unable or unwilling to address.

Who were these voters that defected to the Lega in 1992? As mentioned before, they were primarily ideologically centrist, although highly heterogeneous. Sizeable blocs from the Communist and Socialist parties changed their vote toward the Lega. However, the largest number of voters to change their vote to the Lega came from those who had formerly supported the Christian Democrats (Biorcio 1997).

Volatility was actually fairly low given the circumstances. The Communist Party, which split into two parties following the fall of the Soviet Union, only received 4% fewer votes than it had received in 1987. The Italian Socialist Party's vote share only

²⁹ Interview and translation by author in 2007.

declined about 0.6%. The largest volatility of 1992 election was exhibited by the Christian Democrats, which lost over 5% of its votes, and the Lega Nord, which increased its vote by over 8%.

The Lega's appeals to those associated with small businesses and other artisans were effective. Lega elites drew heavily on these professions, as nearly 80% of their elected officials were connected to small and medium-sized companies (Diamanti 1993: 83). Furthermore, individuals associated with SMEs, artisans and shop keepers were heavily represented in their electorate (Giordano 2001).

The Lega was also popular in those areas in which SMEs were concentrated. Golden (2004) found that that the Lega performed better in districts with heavy concentrations of industrial manufacturing, specifically in districts where there was a heavy concentration of small and medium-sized firms. Specific districts in which the Lega was successful included "Como's silk areas, Cantu's furniture district, Lecco's metalworking district, the textile villages in Val Seriana and the Gandino-Leffe area, Val Imagna (woodworking), Val Calepio (buttons), Palazzolo's textile and engineering district, Botticono (tights and socks) and Lemezzane (domestic appliances)" (Cento and Bull 2001: 76).

Cento and Bull further note that it was the industrial districts populated by small and medium-sized firms that shifted their vote from the DC's Catholic subculture to the territorially-based politics of Lega (Ibid.).³⁰ Abandoning the DC were small and medium

³⁰ It should be noted that this analysis was conducted on the aggregate socio-economic characteristics of the district and did not include direct individual data. In the next chapter I will examine individual level data to avoid possible ecological fallacy problems.

businesses that had been hurt by the DC policies, were less likely to receive patronage, and who could be potentially hurt if Italy failed to join the EMU. Golden (2004) notes that the Lega Nord succeeded precisely in those places in which DC's support declined.

In spite of the widespread corruption and unhappiness, it was only in Northern Italy that the DC suffered serious electoral losses. In Southern Italy, charges of corruption and substandard governmental services did not result in shifts in vote patterns. Those who did shift their vote were in areas that both suffered negative fiscal transfers and perceived that those transfers were neither procedurally just nor beneficial.

In Northern Italy in 1992, the Lega's multidimensional appeals on salient issues allowed it to break through electorally. It had done so with regional rhetoric and with protests against the corruption in Rome (the center). Those in areas with a high concentration of small and medium firms supported the Lega, which allowed the Lega to draw support from a wide ideological spectrum, despite its regional base and right ideological position on a number of issues. Thus, in a short period of time, a regional party had become one of the largest parties in all of Italy.

The unhappiness over corruption among Northern voters reached a boil during the Tangentopoli scandal. The Tangentopoli scandal first broke in early 1992, starting with the arrest of a minor politician, Mario Chiesa, in Northern Italy (Milan) over a kickback scandal. However, shortly before the 1992 election, Chiesa began to accuse other Socialists and Christian Democrat elites in Lombardy of illegal and illicit activities. The investigation continued to gather steam as more national politicians, including the head of the Socialist party, were indicted. The Christian Democrats were equally affected by the

scandal, as the charges decreased their party membership numbers (Gunther and Montero 2001). By 1994, the standing government fell, in large part because a considerable percentage of deputies were under investigation. The fact that the scandal indicted nearly all the national parties made it impossible for those national parties to co-opt citizens angered by the corruption. As the trial continued to increase in salience, more and more voters turned away from the national parties. In 1993, the Lega won the mayoral election in Milan, marking the first time that the Lega controlled an important political position. In 1994, the first election following the full revelation of the scandal, the existing national parties suffered tremendous electoral losses, with several new or reformed parties joining the Lega Nord as the beneficiaries. For all practical purposes, 1994 marked a disappearance of the traditional Italian political parties.

3.3 High Water

3.3.1 1994: Lega in Government

The 1994 election was conducted in a dramatically different electoral environment than the 1992 election. The electoral laws had changed, as there had been a shift from purely proportional rules to a system that allocated seats via a mixture of single-member districts and proportional voting. In addition to different electoral rules, there had been a change in the parties competing at the national level. Between 1990 and 1994, the Lega operated in a political vacuum, without a credible national party rival on the issues of corruption or decentralization. However, nearly all of the parties tainted by the corruption scandal ceased to exist following the 1994 election. The Italian party system not only demonstrated high levels of volatility in electoral outcomes, but nearly

an entirely new party system emerged as the DC, which had been a part of nearly every government in the post-war era, vanished.

One of the most successful of the new parties was *Forza Italia* (FI), led by Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi, one of the wealthiest men in Italy, was able to create a national center-right party virtually overnight. The party campaigned for lower taxes, anti-corruption and privatization of state-owned enterprises. The newness of the party, combined with a history absent of the level of corruption exhibited by previous parties, allowed it some credibility on the issues. In addition, Berlusconi vaguely endorsed increases in decentralization (see Table 3.2). This new national party was well positioned to co-opt some of the Lega's voters.

As the Table 3..2 demonstrates, FI was a far different party than the DC. While the DC had a centrist to right-centrist leaning, FI was clearly a party of the right, spending the vast majority of its manifesto on right-left issues.

Party Positions in 1994	CD 1992	Lega 1994	FI 1994
Right-Left	8.8	8.6	37.9
Decentralization	2.7	12.6	2.2

Table 3.2 Lega Nord and Forza Italia Manifesto Positions in 1994 (CMP)

As mentioned earlier, the new electoral laws provided a number of incentives for parties to enter into pre-electoral alliances (specifically via differing electoral thresholds for parties in larger alliances than those running alone). The obvious strength of Forza Italia, coupled with the new electoral laws, convinced the Lega to enter into a pre-

electoral alliance with FI. While FI entered an alliance with the Lega Nord on ballots in the North, it also made a separate alliance with the *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN), a neo-fascist party based in the South and opposed to decentralization.³¹ While the March 1994 election dealt the Lega an overall percentage of votes similar to the previous election (8.3%), its alliance won a sweeping victory, and the Lega Nord found itself as a part of the governing coalition with Forza Italia.

Since Berlusconi and FI relied on the Lega to maintain a majority, the Lega was able to position itself as a pivotal member of the center-right coalition. The Lega was given five ministries, including three with portfolios: Interior, Industrial and Budget (Gold 2003: 103). Additionally, as part of the conditions for the Lega's alliance, Berlusconi made a promise of increased regional autonomy for Northern Italy.

However, the FI was unable to enact any institutional reforms on the issue of increased decentralization. This was partially because FI's other coalition partner, *Alleanza Nazionale*, refused to support the issue. The AN opposed those measures partly because of its neo-fascist ideology, but also because its electoral support was based in Southern Italy, which was virulently opposed to decentralization for economic reasons. When Forza Italia was unable to pass the Lega's agenda, the coalition government was ended by "the well known *ribaltone* that took Lega Nord out of the coalition government to support the caretaker government of Lamberto Dini" (Cachafeiro 2002: 97). Despite being in power for the first time, the Lega abandoned the coalition less than a year into its

³¹ The Lega and FI submitted candidates under a list labeled *Polo delle Liberta* (Pole for Liberty) in the North, while a separate list, known as *Polo del Buon Governo* (The Pole for Good Government) and including FI and AN, was submitted in the South. Given the geographic isolation of the Lega and AN, voters would have seen either one alliance or the other on a ballot, never both.

rule.

Part of the explanation behind this abdication of power was a growing disillusionment among the Lega's supporters. One former Lega supporter clearly stated that after the Lega joined the coalition with Berlusconi, people lost confidence in the Lega Nord. The Lega did not have enough well-prepared people to send to Rome, and therefore the Lega Nord politicians were unable to represent "the values and morals properly as promised."³² Despite its powerful position within the government, the Lega was unable to win concessions on its regional issues from its coalition partners, which produced unhappiness among its core supporters.³³

The voters which the Lega lost were absorbed primarily by Forza Italia. In the 1994 election, while the Lega's overall electoral result was similar to that of the 1992 election, the regional distribution of votes was different. In the 1993 regional election, the Lega had made gains in urban areas like Milan; however, when FI ran in 1994, the Lega suffered setbacks in many of those urban areas. The Lega was able to mask these decreases by winning more votes in smaller towns in the Veneto region. But the trend of vote loss accelerated as the party's support decreased during non-national elections (namely in the EU parliamentary elections and in the municipal elections). In addition, a number of Lega deputies shifted their party allegiance to Forza Italia while in office. In municipal elections, European parliamentary elections, and even among its own parliamentarians, the Lega's loss was the FI's gain (Tossutti 1996).

³² Interview conducted by author in 2007.

³³ Interview conducted by author in 2007.

3.3.2 1996: *Electoral Pinnacle*

After the Lega left the government, Bossi decided to campaign unaligned with either the left or right blocs. This was a risky maneuver, since running without a pre-electoral alliance meant that there was a possibility the Lega could be locked out of the government. If it were widely believed that the Lega would have no chance at affecting government policy, then voters may have avoided voting for the party. In addition, both the right and left alliances moved to co-opt the Lega's 1994 stance on decentralization. The left alliance, Ulivo, had promised to institute "German-style federalism," while FI also made promises for decentralization (Cento and Bull 2001).

The Lega, however, radically shifted its stance on a number of its positions, the most distinctive of which was a shift towards secessionism for the North, or the area referred to as "Padania." Bossi renamed the party *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania* (the Northern League for the Independence of Padania) to reflect the party's new stance on independence.

Party Positions 1996 Election	Lega 1994	Lega 1996	FI 1994	FI 1996
Right-Left	8.6	17.5	37.9	59.2
Decentralization	12.6	13.8	2.1	3.7
EU	2.2	5.9	3.4	0.0

Table 3.3 Lega Nord and Forza Italia Manifesto Positions in 1994 and 1996 Elections (CMP)

The Lega not only shifted its stance on the issue of autonomy (in this case shifting to secessionism), but also with regard to the European Union. Its 1996 manifesto highly stressed the importance of the European Union (CMP). By coupling independence with joining the European Monetary Union (i.e., switching to usage of the Euro), the Lega was able to make complementary appeals that resonated with part of its base (i.e., those in small and medium-sized firms). SMEs in Northern Italy tended to be export-oriented, leading to fears that if Italy were left outside of the EMU, the SMEs would have a harder time exporting their goods to the rest of Europe (Golden 2004). Furthermore, while the Lega was stressing the European Union theme, its national rival de-emphasized the EU in its own manifesto (see Table 3.3, above).

Adding to the benefits of changing its manifesto, the Lega's decision to eschew the other alliances had a tactical advantage. The Lega, by campaigning alone, could serve "a pivotal role in the new legislature, since its leaders believed that the new parliament would have no stable majority" (Bull and Gilbert 2001: 107). To emphasize this potential

Bossi declared that the Lega would “Center Pole” between the left and right alliances. These campaign shifts on several dimensions allowed the party maintain a distinct image and therefore avoid co-optation despite national party attempts. It further allowed for the potential that the Lega could influence policy by being a coalition maker (i.e., its support was necessary to form a coalition)

The one constant from 1994 to 1996 was that the Lega made explicit appeals to small and medium-sized firms. The Lega maintained its positions in favor of governmental investment in infrastructure, specifically via increases in funding to improve applied research (Lega Nord 1996). In the end, the multidimensional appeals were effective, despite attempts by both alliances to co-opt portions of its policies, and in 1996 the Lega experienced its best electoral success ever.

According to interviews conducted with former party officials and other politicians, the primary consensus on why the Lega changed its stance on multiple issues (from the shift to independence and the pro-EU rhetoric) was that it was for consciously opportunistic and strategic reasons. One expert noted in an interview that the Lega had been hurt by its time in government and wanted to regain its political fortunes. A former Lega member said that “they were doing this [variation in demands] for electoral reasons. Their message and their decisions were done for political reasons.”³⁴

One question that can be raised is the extent to which the Lega’s changes in positions were random, and therefore its success was simply a function of other parties and voter ignorance, or if the Lega consciously selected its positions and was rewarded

³⁴ Interviews conducted and translated by author in 2007.

for them. The Lega was a rigidly controlled organization, with Umberto Bossi making a number of the ultimate decisions singlehandedly (Diamanti 1997). Nonetheless, ex-Lega officials and other elites all noted that the decisions were not random, but instead calculated with electoral success in mind. While competing party actions and incomplete information on the part of the voter (e.g., would the Lega be able to influence policy?) were important functions, the Lega's shifts and decisions, especially in 1996, affected its success. Bossi made the decision to change the Lega into a secessionist party and campaign on the importance for the North to join the European Union, and chose to do so with fewer resources (i.e., without the help of larger parties). The European Union was a salient issue at the time (Gold 2003), as were worries that Italy might not be able to join it. Taken together, the Lega's success appears to be influenced by its actions. I will return to this discussion in the next chapter.

Party	Percentage of Vote from Proportional Portion of Ballot
Democratic Party of the Left	21.1
Forza Italia	20.6
Lega Nord	10.1

Table 3.4 Outcomes for Three Largest Blocs in the 1996 Election (Interior Ministry of Italy)

In 1996, the Lega won 10.1% of the vote, by far its best showing ever. For the first time in its history, it became the largest party in Lombardy. This occurred in an environment in which the other top parties exhibited fairly stable electoral outcomes. The Democratic Party of the Left only increased its vote totals from 20.4% to 21.1%, while

Forza Italia's performance decreased overall from 21% to 20.6%. These numbers do not make it immediately clear where the Lega found its support.

According to Diamanti (1997), the Lega's success came in those districts in which it had historically done well. This shows that there was a deepening of the Lega's success among its core constituents, as opposed to the party making gains in electoral districts where it had not done well. The Lega's best performances were in districts with heavy industrial employment and with diffuse urbanization (mostly small and medium-sized towns away from the dense cities such as Milan), and the Northern districts with a heavy concentration of SMEs: all districts in which it had previously performed well. The party was unable to improve its performance in urban centers. Ironically, this meant that even at the height of its success, the Lega was unable to achieve electoral success throughout the North. More importantly, it implies that despite the changes in its policy positions, and despite the Lega's more radical approach to decentralization by embracing secession, those districts that previously supported the Lega maintained their support, while those that initially had not remained unconvinced.

Though the Lega experienced great electoral success, it was unable to translate that success into political power. *Ulivo* (the left alliance) was able to secure a victory without a need for the Lega. As such, despite holding the fourth largest delegation of voters, the Lega was completely locked out of power. Following this, the Lega's support rapidly declined; in 2001 it received less than half of the votes it had received in 1996.

3.4 Fall of the Lega Nord 1996-2001

3.4.1 Post 1996

Before an examination of the Lega's poor showing in the 2001 election, one must examine the events in the intervening years. There were several factors that led to a change in voter perceptions and ultimately caused electoral problems for the Lega Nord. The first is that between the 1996 and 2001 elections, the Lega stressed populist, neo-right issues far more than it had in the past. A number of their posters and advertisements focused on the issues of prostitution, clandestine immigration and even anti-EU stances (Lega Nord 2001). While the Lega has always had a certain level of flexibility, these shifts from its prior positions were truly remarkable. In addition, following the 1996 election, Italy joined the EMU, thus removing a possible campaign issue for the Lega Nord. Possibly as a result, the party shifted its party platform towards that of a more right-leaning party (Bulli and Tronconi 2006). The party shifted from Euro acceptance to Euro skepticism, from economic liberalism to protectionism, and placed far more emphasis on an anti-immigration stance specifically targeting Muslims.³⁵

Part of what may have motivated these shifts is that the Lega's core constituents were less urban than they had been in the past. Due to party losses in urban areas to Forza Italia, there was significant retrenchment among its voters and among party elites toward the rural areas (Diamanti 1999). One respondent noted that the Lega's focus on immigration was also an outgrowth of its communal Northern roots. "While the party is against the criminality of immigrants, there is also a religious element. [The Lega] is trying to defending the religious community, its values and its way of thinking.... While

³⁵ Previous rhetoric had focused more on Southern Italian immigration.

it is about limiting immigration, it's more about defending Northern values.”³⁶ Hepburn (2009) also notes that the Lega's immigrant policy had been engineered to appease those in small and medium businesses. The specters of crime, joblessness, and changing values have been used by the Lega to demonstrate how the Northern region is adversely affected by policies allowing immigration. While the Lega's new focus on immigration and its reversal on the EU may have been popular among some of its constituents (namely rural Lombardy voters), it was less popular among other segments of its 1996 coalition.

Adding to this, many voters seem to have been disappointed that the Lega had no influence on government policy. Despite its best showing ever, the Lega Nord had been locked out of government. They were shunned by the left government. Those that had strategically voted for the Lega in hopes of policy concessions were disappointed with the outcome. Voters prefer voting for a party that can influence policy (directly or indirectly), and therefore turned away from the Lega.

Finally, regional tensions emerged among the party's elites. While the Lega Nord purportedly represents all the regions in Northern Italy, the party had been under the rigid hierarchical control of party leader Umberto Bossi since its inception. He gave important positions mainly to those loyal to him, specifically those from Lombardy. As a result, in 1998 Fabrizio Comencini and other important elites from the Veneto region left the Lega Nord. Part of their motivation was disagreement over the decision to embrace secessionism. A number of Veneto elites felt that that the Lega was locked out of government due to its stance of secessionism, and that it should change its policy

³⁶ Interview and translation by author in 2007

demands back to federalism to increase its political options.³⁷ Comencini and other disenchanted Lega members felt that Veneto was not being represented by the Lega Nord, given that the party's policies were very different from the views of Veneto voters and that those who controlled the Lega were not from the Veneto region.³⁸ Comencini founded an opposing regional left-center party, the *Liga Fronte Veneto* (Venetian Front League), for the 2000 election. As one party member from the Lega Fronte Veneto noted, “we support regionalism because, while the other parties say federalism, in reality they don't want it.”³⁹

Other regionally-minded elites, led by Giorgio Panetto and Mariangelio Foggiato, founded another regional party in the Veneto, *Progetto Nordest* (Northeast Project), again citing the Lega Nord's lack of Veneto representation. One Progetto Nordest official explained that they “left the Lega Nord because it is a Lombard Party and everyone [in the Lega] is from Milano, nobody is from Veneto. The party is commanded by Milanese. That is the significance behind the name [of our party] The Northeast Project.” Alongside these representation issues, the Progetto Nordest also expressed distinct ideological differences from those of the Lega Nord. In particular, right-left politics influenced the splintering away of these elites. As one Progetto Nordest official put it, “We needed to control the immigration and the Left doesn't want to. We wanted very strong fiscal federalism but the Left didn't want it. These differences... are the reason and the core of

³⁷ Interview conducted in 2007 by author

³⁸ Interview conducted in 2007 by author

³⁹ Interview conducted in 2007 by author

the Northeast Project.”⁴⁰ Much like the 1996 Lega Nord, the Progetto Nordest had multiple points of differentiation from other parties.

Both of these parties cut into the Lega’s vote totals in the Veneto. In 1996, the Veneto region supported the Lega Nord more than any other region (29.6%, outpacing Lombardy’s 25.5%); however, by 2001 the Veneto’s support had shrunk to 10.2%, which was even lower than Lombardy’s 12.1%. This story was mirrored to a lesser extent in other regions: for example, several activists from Piedmont also left the Lega Nord (Giordano: 2003). Analysis reveals that those who switched their vote away from the Lega Nord were significantly likely to favor regional autonomy.⁴¹ The result was that the Lega Nord came to be perceived less as representative of all Northern provinces, and far more as a right party representing only the Lombardy region.

1999 showed the Lega electoral was already on the decline. It polled at only 4.5% in the EU parliament elections and suffered a disastrous result in local elections when it lost in Bergamo, one of his previous bedrocks of support. Following these losses in 2000, it was announced that the Lega Nord would form a pre-electoral alliance with the coalition of the major conservative parties, Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale. This was a marked reversal of the Lega’s independent streak. It also signified a shift away from its secessionist rhetoric. The party changed its stance on autonomy from secessionsim toward devolution. One local expert noted that the success of the Scottish National Party

⁴⁰ Interview and translation by author in 2007

⁴¹ Analysis conducted by author (see Chapter 4)

in 1997 led the Lega to attempt to co-opt a similar message of asymmetric federalism. In fact, the Italian word used to explain the position is literally *devolution*.

Alongside the changes to its stance on autonomy, the party also changed a number of economic policies to match those of the overall alliance with Forza Italia. The reversal and return to the right coalition meant that the differentiation between the Lega Nord and the larger Forza Italia was dramatically diminished.

So it was a combination of factors that eroded the Lega's ability to attract and maintain its voters. Forza Italia's emergence as a right-wing party presented a viable alternative for a number of voters, specifically in urban areas. Second, changes to the level of salience of certain issues, such as EMU membership, hindered the former electoral power of those issues. The Lega's decisions not only to rejoin an alliance with other national parties, but also to change its platforms to match its partners eroded voters' perceptions that it was different from Forza Italia. Its one significantly different position, immigration, alienated some supporters, specifically those from industrial districts that needed the cheap labor. Its policy and organizational staffing by representatives from only one region upset and ultimately alienated its supporters from other regions. Its inability to influence policy decreased its strategic utility. All of these factors contributed to serious electoral losses in the 2001 election.

3.4.2 Italian General Election 2001

In exchange for inclusion in the right coalition and a promise for federalism by Forza Italia, the Lega Nord dropped its immediate demands for secession (Bulli and

Tronconi 2006). Not only did the Lega change its policy stances to match the alliance on decentralization, but it also changed a number of other policy positions to match the official position (see Table 3.5, below). Again, while the exact numbers are not important, it can be seen the Lega’s official manifesto position now matched that of its national ally. This is different from the party’s 1994 experience, when it eschewed changes to its platform to match its allies’ positions.

Party Positions from CMP	Lega 1996	FI 1996	Lega 2001	FI 2001
Right-Left	17.5	59.3	18.7	18.7
Decentralization	13.8	3.7	4.4	4.4

Table 3.5 Lega Nord and Forza Italia Manifesto Positions for 2001(CMP)

While the Lega shifted to the right between the 1996 and the 2001 elections, its national competitor, Forza Italia made a number of shifts in order to win over centrist voters (Biorcio 2002: 93). One of the prominent changes was a shift on the issue of the European Union. While the party had previously held a somewhat undefined position on the European Union, in 1999 it was admitted to the European People’s Party, the largest European political party. This was part of a concerted effort on its part to appear more pro-European Union. The party further moved to incorporate issues of federalism into its platform. Both of those issues had been electoral winners for the Lega in the 1996 election, and FI was eager to co-opt the issues.

The three major parties that compromised the right alliance⁴² did not technically win a greater percentage of votes than they had in 1996. However, the fact that they ran as a unified bloc allowed them to win the majoritarian portion of the ballot, and thereby the election.

Party	1996	2001
Forza Italia	20.4 %	29.4 %
Lega Nord	20.5 %	8.1 %

Table 3.6 Changes in Northern vote share for Forza Italia and Lega Nord (Biorcio 2002)

Party/Alliance	1996	2001
L'Ulivo + RC (Left parties)	44.9%	43.8%
Freedom Alliance	40.3%	45.4%
Lega Nord (joined Freedom Alliance in 2001)	10.8%	

Table 3.7 Changes in Vote Share for Right-Left Alliances for Chamber of Deputies for 2001 election (Interior Ministry of Italy)

As can be inferred from the above tables, though the Lega's alliance won the election, the Lega's own share of votes plummeted in comparison to the 1996 election.⁴³ The party received less than half its 1996 support (3.9% compared to 10.1% in 1996), which is below the threshold for receiving seats from the proportional portion of the

⁴² Forza Italia, the Lega Nord and the Alleanza Nazionale ran as an alliance under the label Freedom Alliance in 2001 but House of Freedom in the 2001 election

⁴³ Outside of the Lega's and Forza Italia's Northern volatility, there were low levels of volatility in the rest of the election. The left alliances received 44.9% of the vote in 1996 and 43.8% of the vote in 2001.

ballot. The Lega's loss was Forza Italia's gain. In particular, FI was able to win over manual workers as well as artisans and entrepreneurs (Biorcio 2002: 97). In addition, FI's policy appeals were effective in attracting more moderate voters, precisely the same group in which the Lega lost votes (Ibid.). Finally, Forza Italia was able to make gains among those voters who favored decentralization and federalism. Ultimately, Bossi and the Lega lost moderate voters on the issue of autonomy to Forza Italia, and lost radical voters to new regional parties like Progetto Nordest.

In the 2001 election, the Lega suffered from a number of problems, such as the inability to find a salient second dimension that resonated with its previously broad coalition, divisions among party elites, and voter disenchantment over the party's ability to influence policy. At the same time, Forza Italia moved to co-opt a number of the Lega's voters, particularly among moderates and entrepreneurs (e.g., artisans). As a result, the Lega had its worst electoral showing since it first ran as a unified party.

3.4.3 Current Trends/ 2008 Election

The Lega Nord's electoral struggles continued after 2001. In 2004, Umberto Bossi suffered a severe illness; many observers remarked that if Bossi passed away, the Lega Nord might cease to exist (Bulli and Tronconi 2006). While Bossi recovered, the Lega's electoral results did not. Its performance was only slightly better in the 2006, when it received 4.1% of the vote.⁴⁴ However, in the 2008 election, the Lega Nord re-emerged as powerful political party in Italy. In only little over a decade, the Lega's

⁴⁴ It should be noted that this outcome is fairly stable relative to the 2000 which is partially counter-intuitive as the 2006 election so the new electoral laws (PR with winner bonuses)

electoral success had varied from an electoral high of 10% down to 4% and in 2008 had climbed back up to 8%.⁴⁵

The Lega's success was centered in those portions of the country in which it had previously done well, with 17.6% of the vote in the Northwest and 22.2% in the Northeast. In particular, the provinces away from urban centers in the North (including Belluno, Treviso, Vicenza, Verona, Sondrio and Bergamo) voted for the Lega (Bordignon 2008). Secondly, similar to the 1996 election, its success came at the expense of Berlusconi's party Forza Italia (Wilson 2009).

Several explanations have been used to understand the Lega's variable support. The first is that there was an increase in the salience of the issues of corruption and immigration (Lewis 2008), as well as taxation. The problems of government corruption and incompetence, specifically in the Southern Italian city of Naples (where the city did not provide garbage collection for months), were featured in a number of party posters for the Lega. In the North, a combination of rising taxes to reduce a deficit and potential job loss in the Northern Region increased the salience of the Lega's fiscal federalism platform (Wilson 2009).

Differences between the North and the South easily could have been on the minds of voters. Furthermore, the issue of immigration, which the Lega has focused on since 2000, had increased in salience, providing further benefit to the party (Bellucci 2008).

⁴⁵ In the 2008 election, Forza Italia joined with the Alleanza Nazionale to form the People for Freedom party, which received 1.2% less than the total vote from the previous election. While the Left Alliance gained about 4%, this was mainly a function of gaining votes from other left parties. The largest Left party in Italy (Democratic) only increased its vote total by 2%.

Hepburn (2009) notes that in Italy, the immigration issue has higher salience than in just about any other European country.

Another factor in the Lega's success was that the alternatives to the Lega were diminished. One of the other regional parties in the Veneto decided not to contest the 2008 election, making the Lega an attractive and unique option. In addition, where the Lega expanded its vote, it often came at the expense of Forza Italia. This may signal that many voters may have left FI for the Lega. Harnetty (2008) notes that the fusion of the *Allianza Nazionale* with Forza Italia may have shifted voters' perceptions and decreased voter loyalty. In addition, this new AN-FI party (People of Freedom) put out a very similar platform to that of the national center-left party (Wilson 2009). Once again, as voters perceived a difference between the Lega and national right party, the Lega was able to achieve electoral success.

It should be noted that despite the Lega's increasing focus on immigration over the years, the issue it promised to address first was increasing the North's control over tax revenues via fiscal federalism (Lewis 2008). After all the changes and shifts the Lega has undergone, it still has a regional autonomy focus and it still achieves success in non-urban provinces when a level of differentiation exists between itself and national competitors.

3.5 Arguments Against Alternative Explanations

As a way of testing my arguments, I will now provide a brief examination of previous theories on the rise of the Lega Nord. In doing so, I hope to show how my

hypotheses explain the electoral success and failure of the Lega Nord better than some of the broad explanations for the success of Lega in the 1980s and 1990s. I have categorized the explanations into five different categories: 1) those that deal with identity, 2) those that explain success via economic concerns, 3) those that center on protest/corruption, 4) Bossi himself and policy instability he introduced, and 5) campaign effects. While all of the theories provide some leverage and some explanation on the rise of the Lega, by themselves they are inadequate in fully explaining both the ebb and the flow of the Lega's electoral success, i.e., both why the Lega succeeded and why it failed.

3.5.1 Identity-based explanations

Identity-based explanations stress that the Lega either was able to harness a latent regional cleavage or was able to construct an identity. For example, Mueller-Rommel (1998) writes that the Lega Nord represented a latent regional cleavage between Northern and Southern Italy. Tambini (2001) went further in arguing that the Lega Nord was able to construct and then exploit an exclusive nationalist ideology. By using images and words to separate the North from other regions of the country, the Lega was able to overcome collective action problems. Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert (2001) concur with the idea that the Lega was able to represent a latent regional cleavage; however, they argue that the party was only able to do so because of leadership (specifically Umberto Bossi's tactical abilities).

While the Northern Italian identity and its differences from the rest of the country are important in explaining why the Lega succeeded, this fails to address several larger

questions. Other regions such as Sicily, which historically have had an independence movement, arguably had more grievances than "Padania," the mythological medieval state that the Lega Nord purports to represent, and is similarly different from the center. Another unanswered question is that if the Lega's success was only built on identity, then why did the Lega's success disappear so rapidly? It is difficult to imagine that a factor such as regional identity would disappear in only a five-year time frame.

Similarly related is the theory that historical experience should result in regional party success. The theory states that if a region has been independent over the course of history, it is more likely to have successful regional party/autonomy movement. Lombardy, previously part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was absorbed in 1859 (Duggan 1994). Claims that the Veneto was illegally forced into the Italian state have been used by various regional parties as a reason for their existence.⁴⁶ The historical experience may have increased regional identity or helped with mobilization by serving as a focal point. While it certainly is a useful explanation as to why the Veneto region in the late 1970s was the first region with a strong regional party, it is insufficient in explaining the Lega's variation over time. If it was only the historical experience, why it was not until the early 1990s that a regional party achieved success, and why has that success been volatile? The historical experience may have been necessary or helpful, but certainly is not sufficient to explain the sources of regional party success.

⁴⁶ Interview conducted by author 2007. The Veneto region was added to the Italian state in 1866. The Veneto historical experience and dialectical differences from the rest of the North were reasons used for the Liga Veneto and later the Progetto Nordest. These differences between the Lombardy staffed Lega Nord and Veneto identity may have been one of the reasons for the adoption of the "Padania" concept by the Lega.

3.5.2 Economic Explanations

Other researchers have explained the rise the Lega in light of the relatively wealthier North. In particular, researchers have theorized that economic differences between the North and South interacted with other factors, namely regional institutions or globalization, to produce support for the Lega Nord. For example, Keating (1996) notes that regional planning institutions coupled with economic differences produced the Lega Nord and the push for regional autonomy. The increase in economic productivity and wealth in the North produced unhappiness with the status quo. However, Keating only notes that this should increase regionalism, not necessarily support for a regional party. As such, the question of why national parties were unable to harness and co-opt Northern preferences for decentralization is left open.

3.5.3 Corruption-based explanations

Explanations focused on governmental corruption also mention that the economic interests of the North led to support for the Lega. Miriam Golden (2004) argues that increased exposure to international trade, interacting with economic wealth and the existing levels of corruption, caused voters to shift their support to the Lega Nord in 1992. According to Golden, support shifted to the regional party because other parties were "not credible in providing macroeconomic policies that would have allowed Italy to partake fully of the opportunities offered by European economic integration" (Ibid.: 138). Golden concludes that the regulatory structure and ultimately the levels of patronage and

corruption were hindrances to joining the European Union, and an impetus to the shifts in the support from the DC to the Lega.

Other researchers (e.g., Gold 2003) highlight the corruption of the Italian governments of the 1970s and 1980s. The fact that the patronage was paid for primarily by Northern Italian tax dollars and went disproportionately to Southern Italy was a major campaign issue seized on by the Lega Nord, and the reason behind their success. These ideas are echoed in my explanations. Patronage and perceptions of inequity over the distribution of resources were important factors in explaining the success of the Lega Nord.

Again, however, an additional factor is needed to explain why these protest votes went to a regional party as opposed to any other party. In the 1980s, some of the protest votes went to the Communist Party. By 1994, there were several new credible national parties that had neither a history of corruption nor a potential threat to Italy's chance of joining the EU. In 1994, Forza Italia had no history of governmental corruption and lobbied for a reduction in taxes as well as changes to the government. Given its lack of a track record, at least in 1994, the Lega did have competition on the right. Furthermore, a new left alliance emerged in 1994, also claiming it would reduce corruption. Why was the Lega credible, relative to the other parties that were not a part of the parties of the First Italian Republic? While this research has noted that unhappiness of unfair distribution of resources (primarily due to corruption and patronage) combined with the high salience of this issue motivated Northern voters, a better explanation of why the Lega benefitted from this issue is needed.

3.5.4 Umberto Bossi's Influence

The fourth explanation centers on Bossi himself. Bossi has been the charismatic head of the Lega Nord since its initial founding. He has controlled the party's organization and has been the driving force behind its policy positions and any changes to those positions. When disagreements arose in the past, those who opposed Bossi's decisions were often expelled from party leadership. The charisma of Bossi is attributed as a determinant factor in the Lega's success; however, Bossi was the head of the party when its vote totals plummeted in 2000 and 2001. As such, while Bossi may have initially helped the party avoid internal splintering, he can not be considered the sole determining factor.

In addition the question often is asked about the policy instability that Bossi introduced. It should be noted that major policy changes followed lack of electoral success. In the late 1980s with the identity based federalism position not finding traction the Lega adopted a position of fiscal federalism. In 1994 following a series of setbacks the Lega left the right coalition and adopted secession. In 1999 following electoral losses the party reversed course again and shifted to a strategy of devolution. When the party maintained success (e.g., from 1992-1994) it avoided shifts. As such there is considerable evidence that the electoral shifts were aimed at improving electoral results. It is possible that Bossi's constant switching of policy positions alienated supporters over time. Did Bossi's switch from anti-corruption to independence within the European Union to immigration negatively affect voters' impressions of him or of his party? To gain

leverage on this question, a better understanding of voter preferences is needed. This alternative explanation will be analyzed in the next chapter.

3.5.5 Campaign Effects

The final conventional explanation of the Lega's electoral success over time focuses on campaign effects. Campaign effects can take a number of different forms. Bellucci (2006) notes that differentiation of an issue, salience of an issue, and competence on an issue can affect the outcome of elections. As noted earlier, differentiation and issue ownership can be thought of as similar concepts: basically, to what extent the party is viewed as different from other parties and closer to the voter's preferred position. The salience of the party's issues is expected to matter as well. As the issue in which a regional party has differentiation increases in salience, the party is expected to perform better. For example, the Lega did better when the issue of corruption increased in salience.

Competency and credibility (e.g., recognized capacity of various parties to deal with an issue and problem solving) should be seen as alternative explanations. The difficulty therein is that competency tends to be evaluated in terms of time in government, which can also influence the level of differentiation. For example, if a regional party joins a government coalition, its level of differentiation from its coalition partners could be reduced. Given the negative attitudes toward government in the Italian context, it may be difficult to ascertain whether the Lega was affected by competency issues, as opposed to differentiation. While the Lega initially had an electoral

breakthrough without the aid of proven competence, research on the Italian context cannot rule out the effects of competence on vote choice. The issue of competence will be returned to in Chapter 5.

Other researchers note that the resources deployed over the course of an election, as well as the quantity of those resources, affects party success. For example, Greene (2006) states that part of the reason hegemonic parties are able to maintain dominance is a resource advantage. He notes that the evaporation of the Christian Democrats' material advantage in the 1980s helped erode support for the party. However, it is unlikely that resources alone were responsible for the short term fluctuations that the Lega experienced. It has always been a smaller party with fewer resources than its national competitors. In fact, this resource imbalance is part of the reason why niche parties, including regional parties, are easier to co-opt. However, when the Lega theoretically had more resources through its alignment with national parties, its success was never greater than when it ran alone in 1996 (or even in 1992). Furthermore, given the Lega's own decision to abandon the government (and eschew potential state resources), it seems unlikely that resources were an overwhelming factor for its electoral success.

3.6 Application of the Proposed Explanation

The initial argument presented in Chapter 2 was that regional parties could succeed if several factors were present. The first requirement is a political opening created by unhappiness over negative fiscal transfers. This can occur if a strong regional identity exists. Furthermore, it can also happen if there is a perception of inequity in the

distribution of resources. If norms of procedural justice are violated, specifically by excluding individuals from the decision process or the decisions violate formal laws, there should be increases in unhappiness. In Italy's case, Northern Italy revolted against negative fiscal transfers to the South. This was partially a function of massive amounts of corruption, an effect of Northern Italy's exclusion from the patronage that was distributed to Southern Italy. As was noted, the salience of corruption and patronage were much higher in the 1980s and early 1990s than they had been up until that point. The Lega was able to harness this dissatisfaction only when both the national parties became discredited and when the Lega put forth a more rounded platform with multiple salient dimensions.

In 1994 and 1996, the Lega operated in a very different environment than it had during the 1992 election. In 1994, the national parties had all but disappeared because they had been so thoroughly discredited. Certainly by 1996, voters had a clear idea that they had different national parties to choose from, untainted from the scandals of 1992 and before. Despite this more hostile political environment, the Lega was not only able to maintain its vote share, but increased its overall vote total. It did this by advocating for issues on multiple dimensions which reinforced its calls for autonomy/secession. In effect, it maintained a level of differentiation versus other national parties on salient issues. However, this differentiation evaporated between 1996 and 2001, such that the Lega went from being the largest party in Northern Italy to a party that did not receive enough votes to get parliamentary seats through the proportional portion of the ballot. The structural factors remained largely unchanged during this time. It is doubtful that Northern Italy's identity had evaporated, and that tight regulations still upset small and

medium-sized firms. The biggest difference between 1996 and 2001 was that for a number of reasons, the behavioral expectations of voters had changed and the Lega lost its distinctiveness.

While conducting field research, I asked a noted expert whether a regional party could be as successful in Southern Italy as the Lega had been in Northern Italy. The answer was that “while in theory it’s possible, in reality it is not. In Sicily and Southern Italy, the national parties are popular and the people don’t want autonomy, only resources. Maybe, maybe if there’s a new political crisis....”⁴⁷ As long as national parties remain popular and there are no salient dimensions of unhappiness with a regional component, a regional party cannot succeed.

In conclusion, then, this examination of the success and failure of the Lega Nord has highlighted several factors. In particular, negative fiscal transfers combined with perceptions of inequity led to its initial success, specifically built on support from those working in small and medium-sized firms. The DC, in its desire to maintain power, dramatically increased its usage of patronage. This patronage (money, but also infrastructure and loans) was directed towards areas and firms that provided the largest bloc of votes and campaign contributions. As a result, specific areas and industrial sectors were left out. Those in the Northern regions, namely those involved in small and medium enterprises, were particularly hurt and hence particularly unhappy with the status quo.

⁴⁷ Interview conducted in 2007 by author.

This unhappiness erupted in the emergence of several regional protest parties/movements in the North. In wealthier areas with histories of autonomy, regionalism took hold where it had previously been largely absent from the discourse. However, a regionally-based party was unable to make its electoral breakthrough in Lombardy and Veneto until a second salient issue emerged. The Lega's usage of corruption as a reason for regional autonomy, combined with the national parties' inability to co-opt the issue, allowed for the Lega's initial success. Only when the Lega was able to maintain a level of differentiation from national parties was it able to achieve success.

In particular, it was able to achieve success among those involved in small and medium-sized enterprises. These individuals were among those most negatively affected by the DC's policies. These groups were left out of the patronage network, and their ability to earn was potentially injured by the DC's policies. As a result, these individuals were the first to leave the DC for the Lega. As they had formed the core of the Lega's electorate since its early years, the Lega continued to shift their manifesto position and policy proposal to suit their needs. The Lega's latest focus on immigration is just another issue that has high salience for those in SMEs (Hepburn 2009). The Lega's success is partially a result of the unhappiness among those in SMEs and the inability of other parties to address those needs.

From the period of 1992 through 1996 (three separate elections), the Lega radically changed its programmatic appeals. For example, it incorporated a pro-Euro position and shifted from a pro-federalism stance to one of secession. These changes

happened in an environment where a strong national party presented a viable alternative for voters. However, despite the emergence of national parties that could co-opt the Lega, it continued to electorally prosper. Despite increased competition and co-optation attempts in the 1994 and 1996 elections, the Lega continued to do as well as it did in 1992. It wasn't until the Lega's level of differentiation eroded and it became apparent that its ability to influence policy was minimal that support for the party flowed to the ideologically closest national party, Forza Italia. The Lega's inability to find a second salient dimension that resonated with voters and reinforced its core position of autonomy occurred at the same time that Forza Italia adopted a number of policy positions to co-opt the Lega. The Lega's position of anti-immigration and its changes to its stance on autonomy, while resonating with some groups within the Lega, pushed other blocs of voters away. As a result, despite all of the structural conditions remaining constant, the Lega's support dropped to the point where questions were raised on the party's future viability.

The Lega's electoral volatility occurred in an environment with low electoral volatility, save for the 1994 election. The Lega's support has increased and decreased far more than the major national right or left parties. Biorcio (2001) notes that the difference between the Right alliance losing the election in 1996 and winning in 2001 was not an increase in voter favorability toward the right, but instead simply a result of coordination between the Lega and Forza Italia. The Lega's electoral success stands in stark contrast to the rest of the Italian system, and in contrast to previously hypothesized factors.

This chapter highlighted how my hypotheses explain electoral vote success. Voter perceptions were critical in explaining the Lega Nord's success and failure. The theoretical underpinnings from the theory chapter appear to hold based on the field research and qualitative data I have presented. However, the question remains whether the story painted at the macro-level holds at the individual level. In the next chapter, I will present a statistical analysis of quantitative data to provide evidence that the causal mechanisms I have described here affected individual vote choice. Specifically, the next chapter analyzes individual-level survey data to test if the preliminary findings hold up under vigorous testing.

Chapter 4: The Lega Nord – An Empirical Examination

In 1982 Umberto Bossi founded in Northern Italy the regionalist party Lega Lombarda (the Lega Lombarda would later become the Lega Nord). By 1994 Bossi's party was a pivotal party in government, commanding several portfolio ministries. The Lega Nord's success at first glance is paradoxical. To analyze the impact of perceptions of equity and regional party differentiation has on regional party success, this chapter uses electoral survey data to analyze vote choice for the Lega Nord. Between the 1980s and the present structural factors like ethnic or economic differences remained largely constant between the wealthier regions in Northern Italy and the rest of the country. Previous theories such as cleavages or economic differences of institutional structures may provide the necessary conditions for regional party success but they can not explain the electoral variation that the Lega experienced. The Lega Lombarda, the predecessor the Lega Nord, was able to garner only 3% of the vote in Lombardy or about 0.5% of the national vote in the 1987 election. However in 1992, the Lega Nord won 8.7% percent of the national vote including 23% in Lombardy. The Lega had its most successful election in 1996 with 10.1% of the national vote, but in 2001 it only received 3.9% of the vote.

In the previous chapter I followed the role that perceptions of equity, and behavioral expectations played in the Lega Nord's ebb and flow. In specific the Lega was able to achieve initial success during a time when the perception of "unfair" fiscal

transfers between the North and the South and corruption triggered Northern Italian unhappiness, a political opening, and the Lega's initial success. Those most upset by the governmental policies in Northern Italy supported the Lega. These groups, specifically those in small and medium enterprises, had strong in-group identities, were not only hurt by the patronage policies by those policies had high salience given the economic conditions and potential loss of employment. The Lega was able to continue its electoral success despite co-optation attempts by national parties, specifically Forza Italia, for several elections. It did this by making appeals on a number of dimensions other than regionalism and by cultivating an image of being different (whether outside of politics or centrist). However following the 1996 election the Lega lost its differentiation from the major national right party and ultimately electoral support. Forza Italia's gains in the North came at the Lega's expense.

This chapter will test how these factors affected the Lega Nord's electoral success. In particular it will examine survey data to determine which factors influenced individual vote choice. Why did a regional party succeed in Northern Italy? I will proceed by first discussing the hypotheses, alternative explanations and the methodologies used for this analysis. I will then use statistical analysis of survey data to examine the rise and decline of the Lega Nord by first establishing that differentiation mattered for the Lega Nord's vote share by examining both the types of appeals the Lega made and the appeals Forza Italia made. Next I will test the hypothesized variables on vote choice for the Lega. I will then examine how the interaction of differentiation and political opening increased the Lega's success and how its absence hurt its success thus

leading to electoral volatility for the Lega. Finally, I will discuss overall conclusions and significance of the findings.

4.1 Hypotheses

This analysis provides systematic assessment on the effect that perceptions of equity and differentiation played in vote choice for the Lega. If a country has regional patterns to fiscal transfers then those in regions that are net payers are expected to vote for regional parties, specifically if they have differing identities or if these transfers fail to meet procedures of justice. For example, this can happen if corruption affects the allocation of resources. The more salient these transfers are the more likely voters will support a regional party.

H1 Regional Identity

Strong regional identity should increase the level of success for regional parties, especially in areas that are fiscal transfer payers.

H2 Corruption

Increases in Concern over Corrupt Fiscal Transfers, should lead to increases in regional party success

H3: Relative Regional

Relative increases in the level of patronage between regions should lead to increased regional party support in regions with higher levels of wealth and/or strong regional identities and among those outside of the patronage network

H4: Saliency

An increase in the saliency of perceived unfair fiscal transfers should increase regional party support

However my argument differs from alternative explanations in that corruption or patronage alone are not the sole cause. Instead unhappiness over fiscal transfers and violations of procedures of justice are important drivers for regional party success however even these have temporary effects as successful regional parties should force national parties to shift their agendas in an attempt to co-opt regional parties. National party attempts to co-opt regional party voters should be successful unless the regional party is able to make multi-dimensional appeals on salient issues that have complementarity to their core message of regionalism (i.e., reinforce the message). In essence unless regional parties can maintain a level of differentiation to national parties they will lose the electoral support they gained from the initial political opening. Multidimensional appeals are especially expected to be effective among those dissatisfied with the status quo over patronage and corruption.

H5 Co-optation

National party co-optation reduces the level of differentiation with regional parties and reduces regional party success.

H6 Second Issue

Multidimensional appeals on salient issues by regional party increase the level of differentiation and increase regional party success

H7 Interaction

Those concerned about unfair net negative fiscal transfers AND view regional parties having sufficient differentiation are more likely to vote for a regional party than those that don't.

As such these hypotheses attempt to account for the electoral volatility the Lega experienced. This would be different from previous research has focused on structural factors and therefore discount the effects parties can have on voter support for regional parties and regionalism. Secondly, some previous research has catalogued regional parties as single issue parties and that the single issue focus is electorally beneficial (de Winter 1998). Contrary to this, my research hypothesizes that regional parties are not single issue parties and in effect multidimensional appeals can be electorally beneficially. As such it has two unique and compelling contributions: 1) on the importance of non-structural factors that affect regional party support and 2) on the importance of multidimensional appeals.

4.2 Argument versus Alternative Explanations

Does my explanation of unhappiness over fiscal transfers and differentiation provide a better explanation for the ebb and flow of the Lega Nord's success than alternative explanations? One set of alternative explanations hypothesizes that Bossi's changes to party's programmatic appeals later hurt its support. For example, Bossi by shifting to a goal of immediate secession in 1996 and then rapidly changing away from that goal in 2001 hurt the Lega among those that were concerned about regional autonomy. One of the more difficult issues to evaluate is mass-elite linkages. Given the lack of panel data tracing individuals over time it's nearly impossible to disentangle if anger at Bossi's policy changes or anger at Bossi himself led to voter exodus from the party. However there is little evidence to support the hypothesis that anger at Bossi led to the Lega's electoral decline. A survey of Lega activists in September of 1996 found that

fully 80% of Lega Nord activists reported feeling of closeness to Bossi (Biorcio 1997). This was far higher than any other Lega Nord figure. At a time when the Lega's electoral appeal was at its highest, Lega Nord activists embraced Bossi.

From 1996 to 2001, voter opinions of the Lega and Bossi in specific declined. Overall, among Lega's supporters, there was a decline in their opinion of Bossi. While in 1996 the median Lega voter had a positive judgment of Bossi (a 9.5 on a scale of 1-10) by 2001 this opinion was far more muted (7.5 out of 10). However even among those that left the party in 2001 there was a fairly neutral opinion of Bossi. The median value among those that left the party was 5.4 and the modal category was 6 (32%). In fact values 4-6 (generally neutral) totaled 66%. In fact, the opinion of Bossi among former Lega supporters was actually statistically higher ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$) than among the general populace which had a median value of 3 and even higher than supporters of the ideologically similar Forza Italia (3.6). This occurred despite both the introduction of secession rhetoric in 1996 but its back tracking in 2000.

Furthermore a second alternative is that the Lega was simply fueled by a strong regional identity. Among those that supported the Lega Nord there were strong feelings for greater levels of both fiscal and political autonomy for the regions. In addition a number of those that switched their vote away from the Lega maintained a strong preference for regional autonomy. In other words pro-decentralization sentiment continued to be strong in Northern Italy, however a number of Lega supporters, for various reasons, were able to find alternative parties for those sentiments.

Finally, an alternative hypothesis (Gold 2003, Golden 2004), is that it was only an increase in the levels of patronage, taxation, and corruption that caused the Lega's success.⁴⁸ As this research will show in the statistical analyses how the government spent resources did influence vote choice for the Lega. As noted earlier by in large the voting patterns for national parties in Northern Italy in the 1980s remained nearly on par with the level achieved in 1970s (Sani and Segatti 2001). While various regional parties did exist in the 1980s (most notably Umberto Bossi's Lega Lombarda) they were unable to attract votes. However beginning in the early 1990s the Lega achieved a breakthrough following a series of corruption scandals and dramatic increases in the relative level of patronage. While my hypotheses note the effects on how and where a government spends resources can affect regional party success it notes that perceptions of differentiation also matter. To examine if it was solely corruption or patronage or if perceptions of differentiation also affected vote choice I will study first how differentiation played a role in the Lega's success and then test more explicitly my hypotheses versus alternatives.

4.3 Research Design

To determine how my hypotheses and the alternative affected vote I analyze a number of post-electoral surveys. Examination of post-electoral survey allows for an understanding of individual micro-level data and therefore is most appropriate for understanding voter behavior. I use six separate surveys that were taken from 1985 to

⁴⁸ In the case of Golden (2004) the patronage/corruption coupled with fears of being frozen out of the European Union led to the Lega's 1992 success.

2006 by the ITANES (Italian National Electoral Survey).⁴⁹ It was not until 1992 that the Lega Nord achieved any sort of relevance on a national level and hence the micro-data was analyzed from before the Lega Nord's foundation and rise to national prominence. The analysis is continued until 2006, the last election with data available. Analysis over several elections allows for better traction as to how the effect of the variables changes over time.

While a number of previous researchers have analyzed the Lega, very few of those attempts have statistically analyzed individual-level survey data to assess the impact of patronage on support for a regional party.⁵⁰ Given the importance perceptions play in vote choice, survey data provide better insight into why individuals made the choices they did. Without the usage of individual level data any analysis runs the risk of falling into the problem of ecological fallacy. An ecological fallacy is when individual characteristics are inferred from aggregate data. In the last chapter it was noted that a number of previous studies made inferences about those that voted for the Lega Nord based on the general demographics of the districts in which it performed well. However this method runs the risk of making faulty conclusions. It is possible that those who lived in industrial districts not employed in industrial sectors voted for the Lega. Furthermore, making inferences on ideological perceptions at the local or regional level may be difficult. Consequently, individual survey data are the best way to get at these answers.

⁴⁹ The ITANES Association in conjunction with the Cattaneo Institute conducted and collected these in-person post-election survey data. I am personally indebted to Paolo Bellucci for access to this data. The specific polls used were from 1985, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2001, and 2006.

⁵⁰ Roberto Biorcio (1997) uses survey data of Lega Nord officials as well as Lega voters for the 1996 election. However this research was completed before the more recent electoral struggles as well as avoids specific analysis of individual perceptions of party platforms.

My principal argument is that perceptions of inequity, behavioral expectations and their interaction increase the likelihood of voting for a regional party (e.g., the Lega). Those unhappy about the negative fiscal transfers are expected to turn away from various national parties and instead vote for the Lega if it has a sufficient level of differentiation from national parties. Differentiation is determined by if the national parties attempt to co-opt the regional parties' issues and if the regional party is able to make salient multidimensional appeals. Multidimensional appeals are expected to blunt co-optation attempts. Do voters' behavioral expectations of the regional party make it a viable choice and thereby overcome their reluctance in voting for a smaller party?

The empirics are divided into four sections. The first section notes the political opening that existed in the early 1990s that provided the opportunity for the Lega to attract votes. The second section establishes when the Lega had a level of differentiation on a 2nd dimension. The level of differentiation is a function of a number of factors including whether parties attempted to co-opt the Lega, what type of appeals did the Lega make, and how both of those affected vote choice. Consequently I will analyze both voter perceptions of the Lega as well as attempts by the largest right national party to co-opt the Lega. After the differentiation is analyzed, in the third section I will conduct a statistical analysis on my hypotheses. Finally, in the fourth section I analyze effects of the interaction of differentiation and perceptions of inequity had on vote choice for the Lega.

4.4 Political Opening

4.4.1 Increasing Salience

While the Lega formed in the early 1980s it had limited electoral success at the national level until 1992. During this early time frame while corruption was a concern

among voters it was not particularly salient, specifically in the 1987 election. For example, in the 1987 election the largest concern of voters for this election surrounded issues of unemployment. Over half (52%) of national and 53% of Northern respondents in the exit poll taken after the 1987 election felt unemployment was the most important problem facing the nation. Among the respondents, issues of corruption were not nearly as salient as pure economic concerns. Only 2% of those surveyed rated problems with the government as the number one priority, problems with the current political system were only number 1 among 2% of voters, and of those surveyed only 0.2% felt problems with the South were the chief concern.⁵¹

These patterns changed beginning in 1990, when the Lega first achieved electoral success. In the regional election in 1990 when asked how serious of a problem was corruption on a scale of 1-4 67% said that corruption was a 4 or a major problem. Those that said it was a very major problem were significantly more likely to vote for the Lega ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$). In addition organized crime, often a salient issue among those rallying against the South, was a major problem for 87%. Between 1990 and 1992 the issue of corruption would continue to become more salient due to a number of other corruption scandals, including the Tangentopoli Scandal. However, before analyzing exactly which groups turned towards the Lega because of the political opening due to the high saliency of corruption I will first examine how the Lega consciously attempted to capture voters

⁵¹ The term “Problems” is taken directly from the survey questions and should be interpreted in a general and ambiguous fashion. However given the open ended nature of the question it does point that relative to the issue of the economy problems of corruption and dissatisfaction with the South was far lower.

through multi-dimensional appeals, specifically those primed over issues of patronage and corruption.

4.4.2 Characteristics of Lega Electorate

As Biorcio (1997) notes voters for the Lega in 1992 largely reflected the overall breakdown of the North in terms of class. As can be seen in Table 4.1 the Lega largely conformed to the overall patterns of the North in terms of their own electorate with the exception that they were over-represented among the urban petite bourgeois and among the urban working class and underrepresented among those in the upper class. In addition a significant portion of the Lega's supporters claimed self-employment. Nearly 21% of those that claimed self-employed living in the North voted for the Lega Nord in 1992.

	North	Lega Voters
Upper class (Bourgeois)	12.3	5.21
Middle class (White collars)	21.68	15.63
Urban petite bourgeois	10.94	17.71
Agricultural petty bourgeoisie	1.76	1.04
Urban working class	52.34	59.38
Agricultural working class	0.98	1.04

Table 4.1 Percent Breakdown of North and Lega Nord Voters by Class in 1992 (ITANES 1992)

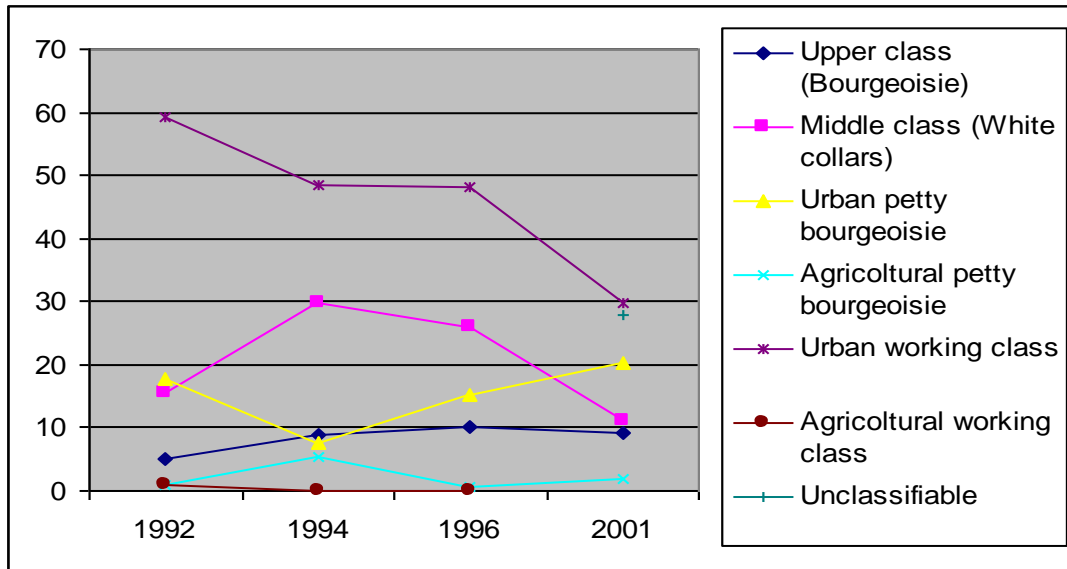


Figure 4.1 Percent Breakdown of Lega Supporters 1992-2001 (*ITANES Surveys 1992-2001*)

As can be seen in Figure 4.1 the Lega coalition contained high levels of support among the urban petite bourgeois during in the 1990s. However support among the middle class and the working class was far more variable (specifically as they groups had sharp declines in the 2001 election when the Lega suffered high levels of losses). Nonetheless while the Lega had support in wealthier regions of Italy, their support was primarily made up of middle class and working class voters. In the next section I show how behavioral expectations influenced vote choice for the Lega.

4.5 Empirics: Behavioral Expectations

Differentiation is a moving target. It partly is influenced by whether a national party co-opts a regional party's platform and partly influenced by the regional party's actions. The greater the relative difference between the Lega's position and other parties the greater the level of differentiation. Only with sufficient differentiation (in the case of

vote choice does the Lega considered significantly different on how it stresses a particular issue? As national parties move to co-opt a regional party the expectation is that, ceteris paribus, the regional party's electoral success should decline. However the regional party, through the use of multidimensional appeals, can blunt the co-optation attempts and thereby maintain, if not increase its electoral success. This section attempts to assess the extent to which the Lega Nord achieved a level of differentiation from the national parties on multiple dimensions. As such I will first analyze the types of appeals the Lega made and the effect it had on vote choice. I will then analyze co-optation attempts made by the largest national right party, Forza Italia, which would have been best positioned to co-opt the Lega's appeals and absorb its supporters.

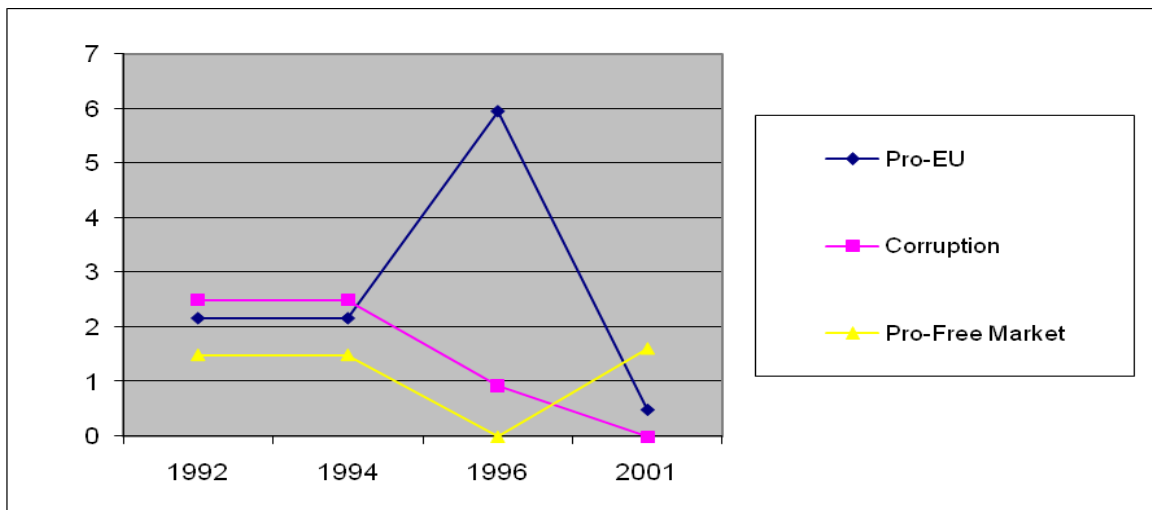


Figure 4.2 Manifesto Changes for the Lega Nord (Comparative Manifesto Project)

As can be seen from the data from Comparative Manifesto Project⁵² the Lega changed which issues it stressed (outside of the issue of regionalism). In its early years it also focused on corruption, in 1996 it also focused on the European Union and in 2001 it focused more on free market reforms. The question though is did the Lega achieve differentiation from other parties on dimensions other than regionalism? When the Lega was successful it did achieve differentiation from other national parties as the following data analysis will show.

In order to examine the hypotheses generated in the last chapter, I analyze a number of surveys of the Italian general (national) elections. The specific elections that were analyzed were the 1994, 1996, 2001 and 2006 elections.⁵³ One of the difficulties in determining if differentiation was achieved is what second dimension should be analyzed. To provide a measure of reliability, variations of the question “Where would you as a voter place the Lega Nord on a left-right spectrum” was used. The question of economic policies and what the perceived expectation of where the Lega was in relation to other parties (i.e. potential alliances) lies at the heart of whether the Lega achieved differentiation on multiple dimensions. Secondly left-right ideology as well as the party’s potential for alliances/government (e.g., influence of policy) would be a consistently salient issue. The Lega is only expected to achieve increased electoral success if that differentiation occurs for a salient issue. Consequently the question of the Lega’s

⁵² The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) compiled the amount each party’s manifesto devotes to a particular subject. As Pelizzo (2003) notes the CMP is particularly useful for measuring shifts in emphasis for party platforms rather than absolute measurements. A larger number represents a greater emphasis

⁵³ The question of voter perception of Lega economic policies was not asked in 1992, the first year the Lega Nord ran as a unified party.

economic ideological position was the issue analyzed. In all case vote choice was measured by vote choice on the PR portion of the ballot.⁵⁴

In the elections that the Lega “succeeded” there was perception that the Lega was different and this difference made voters significantly ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$) more likely to vote for the Lega. When that was absent the Lega did not perform nearly as well.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Electoral Outcome</u>	<u>Differentiation</u>	<u>Perception</u>
1994	8.4%	Yes	Unaffiliated
1996	10.1%	Yes	Center
2001	3.9%	No	Right
2006	4.2%	No	Right

Table 4.2 Comparison of Lega’s Electoral Performance to if it Achieved Differentiation

In 1994 when asked how to describe the political orientation of the Lega Nord nearly 67% of voters did not classify the Lega Nord on a left-right continuum but instead placed it as “unaffiliated”. Despite the fact that the Lega made an pre-electoral alliance with Berlusconi and therefore positioned to join a government of the right, the Lega

⁵⁴ In 2006 the electoral law was changed to eliminate the SMD portion of the ballot. As such to maintain a constant measurement only the PR portion (specifically for the lower house) was used to measure vote choice.

maintained its perception as an outsider among voters. Those that characterized the Lega Nord as unaffiliated were significantly more likely to vote for the Lega Nord and more likely to switch their vote to the Lega in 1994 ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$). Despite a pre-electoral alliance with Forza Italia, the Lega did not change its platform during the election on the issues of economic policy (for example as coded on the issue of intervention in market by CMP) or on the issue of corruption. As a result, among its voters the Lega Nord was perceived as significantly different from other national parties.

Vote Choice	No response	Not applicable	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right	Total
Non-Lega	9.2%	65.9%	2%	2.3%	3.1%	9.2%	8.3%	92.3%
Lega	0	100%	0	0	0	0	0	7.7%

Pearson chi = 46.299 Pr = 0.000 N = 1,198

Table 4.3 1994 Cross Tab of Vote Choice and Self-Placement of the Lega: How would you describe the political orientation of the Lega Nord party?

The not applicable position is possibly a function of the Lega's anti-corruption stance. From its earliest years the Lega campaigned against the central government, specifically on its level of corruption. By positioning itself as outside of the normal political process (e.g., outside of the scandals, patronage, etc.) the Lega was able to achieve a level of differentiation. While analysis was not performed on the 1992 election,

a survey from the 1990 regional election showed that nearly 60% of all voters refused to classify the Lega Lombarda or the Liga Veneto on a left-right dimension. Similarly in 1992 the Lega was able to attract voters from a wide swath of the electorate. Of those that noted specific parties that they voted for in 1987 elections, over 50% of those that switched their vote for the Lega came from the major leftist parties, notably PSI and the Italian Communist party. The Lega's rhetoric helped position it as outside of the normal politics that defined Italy at that time.

In 1996 a similar outcome occurred to 1994 in which differentiation coincided with electoral success. In the election in which the Lega achieved its best electoral success to date, voters that perceived that the Lega was centrist were far more likely to vote for the regional party.

Vote Choice	No response	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right	Refuses to place it	Total
Non-Lega	9.3%	2.4%	2.8%	15.6%	9.0%	16.2%	44.8%	91.1%
Lega	6.9%	3.8%	6.3%	41.1%	13.9%	7.00%	20.9%	7.9%

Pearson chi2= 85.232 Pr = 0.000 N= 2,006

Table 4.4 1996 Cross tab of Vote Choice and Self-Placement of the Lega: Where would you place the Lega Nord: left, centre-left, centre, centre-right or right?

On its face it almost seems paradoxical that a party that as recently as two years been a member of right alliance would be able to be successful among voters that viewed it as centrist. Possibly even more counterintuitive was that in 1996 the party not so subtly

campaigning for the independence of the North (or what it termed “Padania”). This was a dramatic and radical escalation of its previous rhetoric of advocating for federalism. Yet those voting for the Lega viewed it as centrist.

However the Lega did make a conscious decision to try to position itself as a centrist party when it campaigned without any pre-electoral alliances with either the left or right blocs. Furthermore the Lega repeatedly stressed that the party would be a “Polo di Centro” (Center Pole). This stressing of a centrist position via rhetoric and non-alignment had electoral risks. Most parties in Italy in 1996 made pre-electoral alliances because of electoral incentives.⁵⁵ Furthermore it should be noted that there was internal party controversy on the decision. However an alliance would have been difficult with a Berlusconi-led right alliance as in 1994 the Lega’s departure from that alliance caused Berlusconi’s government to collapse. The antipathy between Bossi and Berlusconi was ratcheted up leading into the 1996 election by a series of personal attacks between the two. As a result an alliance with the right coalition for the Lega would have been impractical. However for a time there was consideration that the Lega should try to have an alliance with the left bloc (Tronconi 2006). Eventually, though, Bossi decided that the Lega should maintain its independence from other parties and campaign alone.

This avoidance of alliances with either the left or the right and centrist branding proved electorally successful. When its supporters were asked where they would place the Lega Nord on a left-right dimension they were more likely to perceive it as a centrist party (40%) than non-Lega voters. A chi-square test found that those that perceived that

⁵⁵ It was these incentives, specifically based on vote thresholds and single member districts, that pushed the Lega into a pre-electoral alliance in 1994.

the Lega was centrist in its economic position were more likely to vote for or switch their vote to the Lega ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$).⁵⁶ While after its time in government the perception of the Lega as “unaffiliated” dramatically decreased there was a corresponding increase among those that considered the Lega “centrist”.

As a result the Lega was able to attract a number of former Forza Italia voters. Among those that switched their vote to the Lega in 1996, 42% had voted for Forza Italia in 1994. The next closest party in terms of former party affiliation was the Democratic Party of the Left which represented 13% of those that switched. All told those that supported Forza Italia in 1994 represented 18% of the Lega’s total vote in 1996. In its successful elections the Lega was perceived as significantly different, specifically in areas that it previously had broad appeal. What happened in the elections in which the Lega was less successful, specifically in 2001 and 2006?

Among voters there was a dramatic shift in their perception of the Lega Nord on the left-right ideological dimension. When asked to place the Lega Nord on a left-right spectrum the average Lega Nord voters placed it at 8.2 out of 10 (see below)⁵⁷. Those perceiving the Lega as unaffiliated dropped to 20%. More so than in any previous election the Lega was viewed as neither outside of politics (as signified by its low unaffiliated perception) nor as a centrist party unaligned with either of the two main ideological blocs. While some voters were attracted to the Lega’s far-right appeals, among the majority of its previous voters it was unable to differentiate itself on a second

⁵⁶ Among Lega voters the perception it was unaffiliated decreased dramatically to only 20%. A combination of the Lega’s time in government (and hence part of the political process) probably reduced the Lega’s claim to be unaffiliated.

⁵⁷ In addition the perception of the Lega as outsider was reduced to only about 5% among its voters.

dimension (or at least in way that positively resonated with voters).⁵⁸ Furthermore its attempts at differentiation through far right appeals may have pushed more moderate voters towards other parties. In 2006 the perception of the Lega among its voters continued to crystallize around the idea that the Lega was an ideologically far right party.

Vote Choice	A Left	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L Right	Don't know	Total
Non-Lega	1.2%	0.8%	1.6%	1.4%	4.5%	8.8%	14.0%	16.0%	14.4%	20.2%	15.3%	97.8%
Lega	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%	14.8%	22.2%	25.9%	7.4%	16.7%	5.6%	2.2%

Pearson chi2 = 18.195 Pr = 0.077 N = 2,641

*Table 4.5 2001 Cross Tab of Vote Choice and Self-Placement of Lega: Where would you place the Lega Nord?*⁵⁹

Vote Choice	A Left	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L right	Don't know	Total
Non-Lega	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	2.2%	5.7%	17.3%	20.1%	20.3%	26.4%	4.3%	96.5%
Lega	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%	2.2%	5.3%	18.4%	29.0%	13.2%	29.0%	2.6%	3.5%

Pearson chi2 = 4.110 Pr = 0.967 N = 1,078

Table 4.6 2006 Cross Tab of Vote Choice and Self-Placement of Lega: Where would you place the Lega Nord?

⁵⁸ A chi-square test did not find a significant relationship at the .05 between ideological placement and vote choice for the Lega Nord.

⁵⁹ Note the survey measurements for the Left-Right continuum changed in 2001

This shift to the right was signified by voters changing reaction of Lega voters on the issue of immigration and the European Union. Lega voters were significantly more likely to consider immigration as a very important issue than other voters ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$). Over 88% of Lega voters considered immigration a very important issue (compared to 71% of non-Lega voters) The Lega's rhetoric and immigration focus were far more indicative of a far right party than at any point in its previous history. In addition, when asked how important it was for Italy to be a part of the European Union, Lega voters were not any more likely to consider it an important issue. 40% of non-Lega voters considered inclusion in the European Union very important while 42% of Lega considered it important.

The result is that the Lega lost a number of voters to other national parties. Of those that voted for the Lega in 1996 but did not in 2001, 54% voted for Forza Italia in 2001.⁶⁰ The next largest party that Lega voters switched to voted for the other national right party Alleanza Nazionale which received 8%. As the Lega moved to the right and lost distinctiveness on a number of issues it was Forza Italia above any other party that benefited from the Lega's losses.

4.5.1 Co-optation

One of the questions raised by the Lega's success is what were the national parties doing during this time? Were they attempting to co-opt the Lega Nord during these

⁶⁰ Those that switched their vote tended to view the Lega as more right although there was not statistical significance to this finding.

elections? During most of this time-frame co-optation attempts throughout this period by Forza Italia were constant. FI was a national party that not only positioned itself to co-opt a number of the Lega's issues but also was large enough that it could make changes to the status quo. The FI should have significantly decreased the Lega's vote totals and certainly should have eroded the Lega's unique status

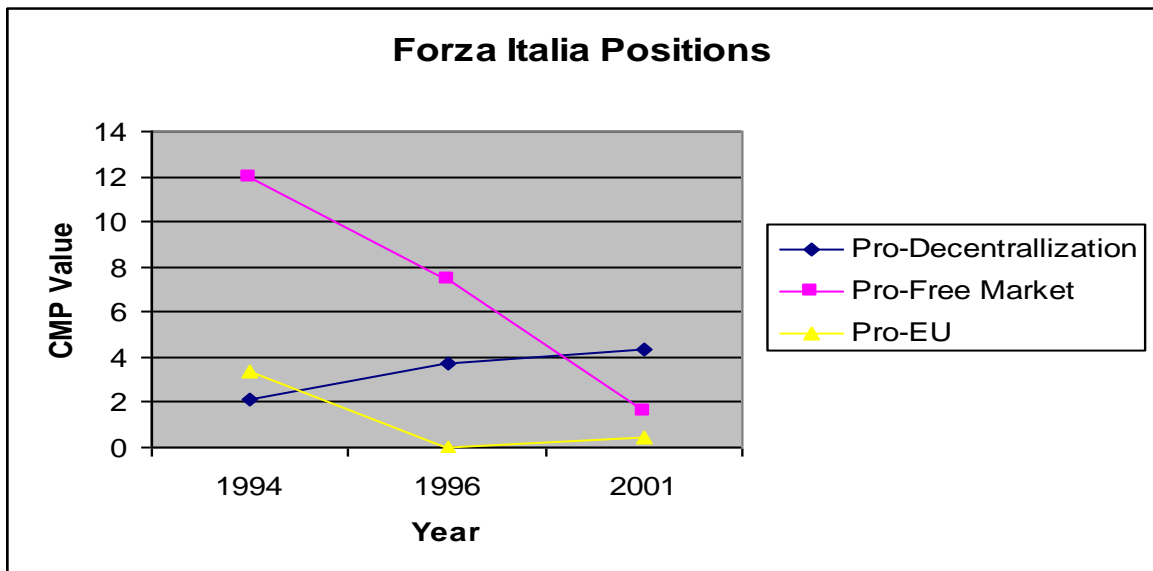


Figure 4.3 Forza Italia Manifesto Positions (Comparative Manifesto)

In 1994 Forza Italia campaigned against corruption at the federal level, against the high taxes, and generally in favor of ideologically right issues. Starting in 1994 and in each subsequent election, FI increasingly stressed the issue of decentralization (Dieter Klingemann et al: 2006). They could do so at least with more credibility than the

Christian Democrats, as the party did not have the history of opposing decentralization measures like the DC did. More important the FI was a right party that campaigned on a pro-free market ideology and against corruption in 1994.⁶¹ For the first time the Lega had to compete for voters with a larger national party that had positioned itself as a viable alternative on a number of the Lega's initial issues.

Despite a national party attempting to co-opt the Lega in 1994, it was able to maintain its vote totals when it received 8.4% of the vote.⁶² Following the 1994 election the Lega entered into a coalition government with Forza Italia. While it did have a number of portfolio positions within government the Lega Nord would leave the coalition after only nine months in power causing the government to collapse. Ruzza (2006) notes that one of the reasons for the Lega abandoning the government was because its partner, Forza Italia, was attracting Lega Nord voters. The Lega suffered serious setbacks in municipal elections with voters changing their vote to the national party, Forza Italia. While it is difficult to compare national and municipal elections, the Lega did suffer electoral setbacks after it began to change its positions in line with Forza Italia's to help pass policies while in government.

In 1996 Forza Italia further stressed in its manifesto a pro-decentralization position. (CMP) Given that FI had just won an election it was certainly a viable national party of the right, and as such did present an alternative to the Lega Nord. Again these co-optation attempts were unsuccessful. Not only did the Lega increase its electoral

⁶¹ It should be noted that Forza Italia's first election was in 1994. Forza Italia, without any association with the previous regime and without any record of time in office may have been seen as a possible alternative that may have been less corrupt.

⁶² I will return to this question later in the chapter.

success from 8.4% to 10.6%, becoming the largest party in Northern Italy, but the Lega's success came at the expense of Forza Italia. The majority of those switching their vote to the Lega were former Forza Italia voters (about 43% of those that switched their vote to the Lega in 1996 voted for FI in 1994).

Finally in 2001 FI's co-optation attempt was successful. Forza Italia continued to advocate for decentralization, positioned itself as a right party, and made pro-European appeals. In 2001 54% of those that switched their vote from the Lega changed their vote to Forza Italia. This successful co-optation was signified in that Forza Italia's voters shared many of the characteristics that the Lega did in 1996. Forza Italia supporters were significantly more likely to be in favor of fiscal decentralization and significantly more likely to be in favor of Italy adopting federal institutions.⁶³ For example 43% of Forza Italia supporters felt it was very important for Italy to increase the level of regional autonomy compared to 36% of non-FI voters. This is not to say Lega voters were indifferent on the issue (almost 85% of Lega voters felt regional autonomy was very important). However the single issue of regional autonomy was not enough to deter voters from leaving the party. The Lega's lack of success was not purely a campaign effect as the Lega's electoral alliance with Forza Italia won the election. The combined electoral output of FI and Lega Nord was approximately the same as it had been in 1996 (Biorcio 2002). However the difference is that with the two parties running on the same ballot in the single member districts the alliance of the right was able to win. The major volatility in the election was not a shift from the left to the right but instead votes from

⁶³ One important distinction though is that Forza Italia voters were not more likely to identify with the regional level (i.e., have strong regional identity), while Lega Nord voters were.

the Lega (which had been outside of the pre-electoral alliance) to Forza Italia. As such the Lega's electoral losses does not represent a campaign effect of widespread rejection of right parties or widespread embracing of the government but instead simply a rejection of the Lega.

The Lega Nord's level of differentiation, no different than its electoral success, ebbed and flowed. During the times when it was electorally successful it was able to capture voters through the perception that it was significantly different on the left-right ideological spectrum. Once that differentiation dissipated its electoral success dissipated. The next section will examine the various overall hypotheses and how they affected vote choice for the Lega Nord.

4.6 Perceptions of Inequity

4.6.1 Data and Measurements

To explore the hypotheses, I analyze survey data from multiple elections to determine which economic sectors and how perceptions affected vote choice. As such I will first analyze how the hypothesized factors, namely concerns over patronage, corruption, and unfair fiscal transfers, affected vote choice for the Lega. I will then compare these results to those of Forza Italia. Finally, I will analyze how differentiation and economic occupation (e.g., groups' particularly aggrieved and primed over patronage/corruption) interacted to increase vote totals for the Lega.

The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted for the Lega Nord in the 1992, 1994, 1996, 2001 and 2006 election.⁶⁴ Voters that claimed to have voted for the

⁶⁴ At the time of writing this dissertation unfortunately systematic survey data was unavailable for the 2008 election. For exact questions and ranges of data see A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix.

Lega Nord were coded as 1 in the proportional representation portion for the House Deputies; those that did not were coded as 0 for each election. From 1994 until 2005 the Italian electoral ballots consisted of both a single member portion of the ballot as well as a proportional portion of the ballot. Benoit et al (2006) notes that for the single candidate portion of the ballot, given the restricted menu options (Italian parties would coordinate to offer a limited number of candidates) there could be large discrepancies between a voters true preferences and the one selected. As such, in order to control for possible distortions, data used is only from the PR portion of the ballot⁶⁵. During this time frame the dependent variable exhibits a great deal of variation as the Lega received 8.7% of the vote in 1992, 8.2% of the vote in 1994, 10.1% of the vote in 1996, 3.9% in 2001 and 4.1% of the vote in 2006.

The independent variables are operationalized as follows. Those in the North are expected to vote for the Lega Nord if they had perceptions of inequity over the negative fiscal transfers. Those employed in the industrial sector because of the high levels of regulations, lack of infrastructure and potential decreased export potential (and hence job loss) are expected to more likely to support the Lega. In particular those in small and medium sized firms were particularly hurt by the governmental policies (Gold 2003). Economic struggles in the 1980s made state inefficiencies particularly salient. To measure those in SMEs a variable (SME) was constructed to capture those employed in industries in small and medium towns where the SMEs were located (unfortunately there was direct variable to capture a workers firm size). Secondly, I identify those generally

⁶⁵ Consequently changes to the Italian electoral laws in 1994 and 2005 should not have an impact on the dependent variable.

working in the industrial sector (Industry). Golden (2004) notes those in the industrial sector were particularly unhappy with the regime's patronage policies and fiscal transfers more generally. In the early 1990s this variable would have also captured those conducted to larger businesses that would have received benefits from the state as well as were more unionized. A third variable (Commerce) was used to identify those that were in the commercial sector.

In addition, perceptions are expected to affect vote choice for the Lega Nord. As noted earlier those embrace the Lega's core message of increase regional autonomy are more likely to vote for the Lega Nord. While not a direct measurement the variable may capture some of measurement of regional identity. Strong concerns about the importance of corruption are expected to be positively related to voting for the Lega. To capture this, a variable was constructed using a survey question which asked to rate what were the two most important issues facing Italy among seven choices (see Appendix A). A dichotomous variable was constructed of those that answered corruption and those that did not. In 2001 a question asked to rank the importance of corruption on a 1-4 scale was used to capture the importance of corruption. As such these variables should capture not only a voter's position but also to the extent of its importance (e.g., salience).

Several alternative explanations were also explored. A number of authors (e.g. Gold 2003, Bull and Gilbert (2001)) note that those self-employed were particularly unhappy over the levels of taxation and support for the Lega was very much a tax revolt. Two variables were used to test this hypothesis. The first was a variable that captured if the individual was self-employed in the North. A second variable was used to measure

unhappiness over taxation. Similar to the corruption variable in 1996 a dichotomous variable was constructed to measure those that ranked taxation as one of the two most important problems while in 2001 a 1-4 scale on the problem of taxation was used. Unfortunately the same question was not asked in repeated elections which necessitate the slightly different measures.

A second alternative is that the Lega benefited from campaign effects specifically anti-incumbency. To measure this alternative hypothesis a variable was constructed to measure unhappiness with the current government. Finally a final potential alternative is that changes to the Lega's platform attracted different individuals than it had previously. In a potential alternative explanation is that a shift to more right wing issues, specifically anti-immigration, changed the appeal of the Lega. As such two variables were used to measure if those supporting the Lega changed either in their concern if immigration was an important issue or self-identification of being conservative.

Several controls were used, the first being level of education attained. In addition gender was also used as a control. Religion has long been an important cleavage in Italian politics (i.e., was a significant predictor of vote choice for the DC) (Bellucci 2009). As such a variable was constructed to measure the level of church attendance. Finally, a dummy variable was constructed to measure if the voter was from Southern. As the Lega Nord did not campaign in Southern Italy (or even appeared on the ballot) the affect of vote choice of the South should be taken into consideration.⁶⁶ Since the dependent

⁶⁶ Given that for most of the models estimated a dummy variable for the South perfectly predicted failure no estimators are given. However in one of the models there were a few Southern Italians that voted for the Lega Nord which allowed for an estimator. Southern Italians do live and work in Northern Italy and therefore some of them may have possibly voted for the Lega. During my field research I met a young man

variable is dichotomous, a logit model was selected to estimate the impact of the independent variables on the decision to vote for the Lega Nord. The number of alternative parties in the Italian context makes a multi-logit model intractable. Furthermore, this research is attempting to examine how voting for a regional party might differ from voting from any other party. As such the dependent variable was constructed and analyzed via in a dichotomous manner. Unfortunately not every survey question appeared in every election. For example, the question about the importance of corruption was only asked in 1996 and 2001. As such several different models were estimated to ensure that inclusion of additional variables did not affect the findings.

As mentioned earlier part of what I argue is well-traveled territory. Italy was a country that had significantly high levels of patronage and corruption and fiscal resources were regionally distributed away from the North towards the South (Golden and Picci 2006). In particular the resources was directed towards Southern Italy (e.g., Newell and Bull (2003) or Alesina et al (2001) and paid for by the wealthier regions in Northern Italy. The accepted fact of high patronage gives me leverage because Italy provides a test case of what happens to a nation's polity when there are regional patterns to the distribution of resources when the distribution is non-inclusive (due to corruption or patronage).

from Naples that identified himself as Southern Italian but since he lived in Florence had dedicated himself to the Lega Nord cause. Nonetheless, Southern Italians are significantly not likely to support this Northern regional party.

4.6.2 Results

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 present the statistical results for the role of patronage and corruption on vote choice for the Lega Nord.⁶⁷ The statistical analysis largely confirms the hypotheses. Those in the industrial sector (especially those employed in SMEs) supported the Lega while it was successful (1992-1996). As noted earlier the Lega was able to attract support from the urban petite bourgeois and they were more likely to be involved in small and medium sized enterprises (i.e., skilled labor) (Biorcio 1997).

In addition those who felt corruption was serious problem also were significantly more likely to vote for the Lega during its most successful election in 1996.

Approximately 31% of those voting for the Lega number one issue were corruption or government inefficiency. After corruption, taxation was the second most cited issue for Lega voters at 19%. Among all parties those that were most concerned about corruption, Lega was the fourth largest party (16% of all voters most concerned about corruption voted for the Lega Nord).

However among all voters most concerned about taxation, the Lega was the 7th largest party (among those most concerned about taxation 7.7% voted for the Lega). As such its' not surprising there was no significant effect of taxation on vote choice for the Lega in 1996 or 2001. Furthermore, there was no significant effect except in 1996 among those self-employed in the North. If it was purely a tax revolt or anger over taxes, taxes should have played a stronger role in the Lega's success. Instead issues like corruption and sectoral employment played larger roles. Those employed in the industrial sections,

⁶⁷ Models in 1992, 1994, 2001 and 2006 were run as rare event models without any changes to the findings.

Variables	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006
Employment	.710** (.326)	.326* (.181)	1.167** (.231)	.678 (.621)	.581 (.530)
Employment Industrial Sector	.887** (.325)	.358 (.663)	.559** (.249)	-.055 (.610)	.368 (.559)
Self-Employed in North		.409 (.250)	.471** (.215)	.312 (.613)	-.143 (.431)
Education	.001 (.091)	-.039 (.091)	.041 (.069)	.171 (.267)	-.004 (.091)
Church Attendance	.389 (.302)	-.051 (.082)	-.097 (.062)	.121 (.158)	.182 (.182)
Male	.365 (.238)	.094 (.249)	.507** (.185)	-.424 (.479)	.443 (.403)
Conservative Ideology		.397** (.103)	.143** (.060)	.183# (.124)	.387** (.093)
Corruption is a Concern/ Important			.447* (.238)	.550 (.440)	
Taxation is a Concern/Important			.227 (.361)	.210 (1.089)	.026 (.128)
Immigration is a Concern			1.049** (.324)	1.088# (.767)	.399* (.218)
Pro Regional Autonomy				2.47** (.757)	
Disapproval Current Government	.434** (.211)			.324 (.272)	
South	-3.75** (1.01)	-4.249** (1.013)			
Constant	-3.66 (.834)	-3.060 (.666)	-3.691 (.495)	-3.62	-7.64 (1.40)
Prob > chi2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.00
Log Likelihood	-232.33	-568.01	-464.74	-89.89	-121.30
Percent Correctly Predicted	.858	.923	.896	.962	.926
Percent Reduction in Error	.00	.00	-.00	.00	.00
N	656	2201	1500	929	1014

Table 4.7 Logit Results for Vote for Lega Nord

Tables Report odd ratios with standard errors in parentheses

** $p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$

* $p_{\chi^2} < 0.1$

Immigration is significant at $p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$ without ideology in model

Note: South dropped from the models in 1996-2006 as it perfectly predicted failure

<u>Variables</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2006</u>
Employment in SME	1.374** (.498)	.525* (.276)	1.138** (.228)	1.08* (.621)	.636 (.495)
Employment Commerce Sector	.575** (.254)	.333 (.661)	.148 (.207)	.207 (.592)	-.579 (.627)
Self-Employed		.107 (.328)	.570** (.216)	-.292 (.629)	%
Education	-.040 (.086)	-.039 (.091)	.009 (.068)	.223 (.282)	-.210 (.122)
Church Attendance	.432 (.304)	-.055 (-.082)	.081 (.061)	.162 (.161)	.312 (.172)
Male	.432* (.240)	(.247)	.536** (.185)	-.257 (.488)	.139 (.477)
Conservative Ideology		.392** (.102)	.153** (.060)	.268** (.136)	.451 (.118)
Corruption is a Concern/ Important			.516** (.237)	.524 (.444)	
Taxation is a Concern/Important			.180 (.362)	.376 (1.118)	-.137 (.160)
Immigration is a Concern/Important			.933** (.325)	.574@ (.777)	.417 (.267)
Pro Regional Autonomy				2.191** (.762)	
Disapproval Previous Government	.400* (.206)			.393 (.292)	
South	-3.755** (1.011)	-4.263** (1.012)	^	^	^
Constant	-3.129 (.759)	-2.996 (.653)	-3.26 (.471)	-5.800 (3.22)	-7.006
Prob > chi2	.00	.000	.00	.00	.00
Log Likelihood	-231.38	-543.784	-467.22	-70.2	-70.2
Percent Correctly Predicted	.860	.923	.896	.959	.970
Percent Reduction in Error	.011	.000	.00	.00	.00
N	656	2201	1500	929	1014

Table 4.8 Logit Results for Vote Choice for Lega for those employed in SMEs

Tables Report odd ratios with standard errors in parentheses

** $p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$

* $p_{\chi^2} < 0.1$

@significant if ideology is dropped from the model

% Self-Employment Dropped From Model in 2006 due to Colinearity

Note: South dropped from the model in 1996-2006 as its perfectly predicted failure

specifically in small and medium firms, were significantly more likely to vote for the Lega as they were particularly unhappy over the distribution of resources. This reinforces the previous analysis of the middle class/working class nature of the Lega's supporters. The Lega was not purely a tax revolt or a revolt of the wealthy. Instead it was unhappiness how those resources were being spent and how the lack of resources potentially could contribute to potential loss of employment. The Lega's platform of asking for state intervention to improve the export potential of Northern firms (e.g., technological diffusion, improvement public services, etc.) seems to have resonated among those working in industrial sectors. As such it is not surprising that in 1996 those that switched their vote to the Lega were most concerned about unemployment ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$).

The Lega's support was also strong among those that felt regional autonomy was important. This particularly striking as this question was asked in 2001 or after the Lega had retreated from its stance of independence. Voters that wanted to increase regional autonomy were more likely to vote for the Lega. While no question on regional identity was asked after 1992 a regional identity a regional identity appeared in 1990. Analysis of a survey from then points that strong regional identity positively affected vote choice for the Lega Lombarda and Lega Veneto (these two regional parties fused to create the Lega Nord) ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$). When asked what level of government a voter identified most with, those that selected the regional level were more likely to be from the North and more likely to vote for a regional party. 93% of those that felt close to the Lega noted that they felt very close ties to the regional level.

Among competing explanations the data suggests that from its earliest years the Lega was able to draw support among those that self-identified as more conservative. Furthermore even in 1996 those concerns with immigration appear to be attracted to the Lega Nord. While the Lega did shift to a more conservative position (Gold 2003) and its voters did view it as being more conservative after 1996, the Lega has always attracted more conservative voters. This point also underscores the importance of behavioral expectations in explaining the Lega's 1996 success. While the average Lega was conservative in this election the average Lega voter also perceived the Lega as more centrist. Similar to Kedar's (2005) finding that voters will strategically vote for parties that have ideologically different positions than their own in order to influence voting. Consequently it appears that the Lega's tactical attempt to position itself in the center was effective. By not aligning itself with either party, the Lega attempted to in a position that it could influence government formation and hence policy. As such a number of voters that despite being more conservative voted for a party that positioned itself as centrist. Consequently it is also not surprising when the Lega failed to influence policy in 1996 a number of voters (mostly likely those voting strategically) shifted their vote. Nonetheless this seemingly dissonant position between more conservative voters and their support for a perceived centrist party is potentially the result the Lega's conscious campaign decisions coupled with strategic voting on the part of the voter.

Interestingly one of the alternatives, in terms of campaign effects, appears to have mixed results. Those unhappy with government competence in 1992 were significantly more likely to vote for the Lega. As noted earlier it was hypothesized that DC and the

Italian government created a political opening for the Lega given the unhappiness in the North over corruption and unfair fiscal transfers. However in 2001, voters unhappy over a government compromised of parties of the left did not shift their vote to the Lega. As will be examined in the next section they shifted their vote to Forza Italia. While more information is needed to study campaign effects, this pattern does appear to conform to the expectation that unhappiness with the previous government is expected to help regional parties only if there was sufficient differentiation between the regional party and national parties.

Finally, predicted probability estimates demonstrate that the effect of some of these variables is considerable. In 1992 when the Lega Nord first achieved a strong electoral showing, a person working in the industrial sector with mean education and self identified as a member of the urban petite bourgeois was 14% more likely than a non-industrial worker not from the urban petite bourgeois with mean education to vote for the Lega Nord. Similarly, in 1996, an industrial worker that was strongly against corruption with median political awareness was 24% more likely to vote for the Lega Nord than a non-industrial worker who was not against corruption. The analysis demonstrates that during the Lega's successful years in 1992, 1994 and 1996 that they were able to attract support from industrialists, those concerned with corruption and those with strong preferences on regional autonomy. In the next section I will compare the results to that of Forza Italia before then examining exactly how the interaction of employment with differentiation affected vote choice for the Lega Nord.

4.7 Forza Italia

As noted the Lega's chief rival was the largest national right party, Forza Italia. How did it do among the groups for whom the Lega competed? To examine this question a logit model was analyzed with vote choice for Forza Italia as the dependent variable. Furthermore all of the independent variables used in the examination of the Lega Nord were used to analyze voting patterns for Forza Italia. The time period examined was from the first election Forza Italia contested (1994) until 2006. The results are listed below in Table 4.9. The defining characteristic for Forza Italia voters is a conservative ideology. In every election since its inception voters that are more conservative are more likely to vote for the party. In addition, during its history it has been able to attract voters in the industrial sector. In 1996 and 2001 those employed in the industrial sector were more likely to vote for FI. Furthermore, those self-employed are more likely to vote for the party in 1994 and 1996.

In effect, the Lega and Forza Italia were often competing for the similar voter blocs with these voters either turning towards Forza Italia or the Lega Nord. While Forza Italia had a wider range of votes (e.g., wealthier self-employed individuals, those concerned with taxation) the two parties did have overlap. In 2001 when a number of Lega voters switched their vote towards Forza Italia, those who switched still cared about corruption ($p_{\chi^2} < 0.1$) but were now switching their vote to Forza Italia. Similarly those in the industrial sector were more likely to switch. This suggests that perceptions, specifically the lack of differentiation on key issues, like corruption or unfair fiscal transfers were important in determining vote choice.

Variables	1994	1996	2001	2006
Employment in Industrial Sector	.203 (.139)	.441** (.160)	.469** (.210)	.341 (.247)
Employment Commerce Sector	.073 (.278)	.219 (.155)	.117 (.200)	.332 (.248)
Self-Employed	.509** (.196)	.357** (.181)	.238 (.258)	-.007 (.214)
Education	-.068 (.042)	.069 (.051)	-.265** (.061)	-.046 (.042)
Church Attendance	.042 (.041)	-.057 (.044)	.078 (.056)	.011 (.160)
Male	-.107 (.121)	-.123 (.128)	-.302* (.167)	-.151 (.193)
Conservative Ideology	.496** (.048)	.576** (.043)	.316** (.042)	.543** (.046)
Corruption is a Concern/ Important		.091 (.195)	.151 (.128)	
Taxation is a Concern/Important		.246 (.274)	.035 (.391)	.140** (.064)
Immigration is a Concern		.246 (.313)	.076 (.165)	.017 (.098)
Pro Regional Autonomy			.051 (.097)	
Disapproval Previous Government			.383** (.095)	
South	.124 (.125)	-.084 (.157)	-.253 (.180)	.086 (.193)
Constant	-2.91 (.126)	-4.109 (.369)	-2.004 (.769)	-4.238 (.633)
Prob > chi2	.000	.000	.00	.00
Log Likelihood	-956.30	-852.23	-480.91	-356.88
Percent Correctly Predicted	.805	.857	.749	.787
Percent Reduction in Error	-.010	-.033	.012	-.025
N	2107	1500	929	1014

Table 4.9 - Logit Analysis of Vote Choice for Forza Italia

Tables Report odd ratios with standard errors in parentheses

** $p_{\chi^2} < 0.05$

* $p_{\chi^2} < 0.1$

4.8 Interaction of Employment and Differentiation

In order to test the interaction of employment sector and differentiation several I estimated several different models for the 1996 election. The 1996 election represents the high point of the Lega's success. It also represents an election in which voters would have a known viable national alternative to the Lega Nord in the form of Forza Italia. In earlier elections the Lega operated against either discredited parties incapable of co-opting the Lega like in 1992 or in 1994 where numerous brand new parties were first elected. The 1996 election therefore represents a case where voters have a known national party (that previously formed a government) and the Lega. As such voters have a clear decision between a regional party and a national party.

The dependent variable was vote choice for the Lega among those not living in the South. I then created a dichotomous variable to capture differentiation. To capture differentiation I constructed a dependent variable based on voter perception of the perceived place of the Lega on a left-right dimension (differentiation). This was done as previously it had been determined that those that had perceived the Lega as a centrist party were significantly more likely to vote for the party (as such the dummy variable was constructed with a 1 capturing a voter who perceived the Lega as centrist).

The second variable is to capture those who have previously been identified as potentially being upset over negative fiscal transfers, specifically unfair negative fiscal transfers. As discussed in Chapter 3 a number of groups were upset over the negative fiscal transfers as they were blamed for a loss of competitiveness and potentially hurting of

exports all of which could have hurt employment prospects. I used several different variables to try to capture those who would have been upset. First a dummy variable was to capture those employed in the Industrial Sector. This would capture generally firms interested in exporting, which the Italian government's spending policies and regulations may have interfered with (Golden 2004). Secondly, a more refined measurement of employment in the industrial sector was used to capture those employed in the industrial sector from medium sized towns. It was these firms that were more likely to be small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This particular group was upset over regulations and governmental policies that underfunded infrastructure in its area (of which the SMEs blamed on the patronage being funneled to Southern Italy). In particular without changes to the spending and regulation changes there were widespread unemployment fears (Bull and Gilbert 2001). A third variable was created to capture those employed in the Commercial Sector (non industrial private sector). More generally it is possible that those generally in the private sector were unhappy with the fiscal transfers.

Finally one of the hypotheses is that that the interaction of the economic situation and the behavioral expectations lead towards vote for the Lega. As such I interacted each of the different employment sector variables with differentiation to create three interaction terms. Three distinct models were estimated to test how each of the employment sectors and their interaction with differentiation affected vote choice for the Lega.

4.8.1 Results

The logit results for the interaction effects can be seen in Table 4.9 with the coefficients and standard errors reported in parentheses. Brambor et al (2006) notes

though that coefficients can be unreliable for logit models with interaction terms and the best way to interpret interaction models is to examine the predicted probabilities. As such predicted probabilities were generated from the logit model (see Table 4.9) as well as a graphical representation in Figures 4.5-4.7 which captures the standard errors.⁶⁸

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Differentiation	1.118 (.249)	.949 (.209)	.716 (.225)
Industry	.798 (.225)		
SME		.846 (.267)	
Commerce			-.366 (.253)
Diff*Industry	-.305 (.373)		
Diff*SME		.306 (.464)	
Diff*Commerce			.854 (.398)
Constant	-2.56 (.156)	-2.39 (1.28)	-2.13 (.130)
Prob > chi2	.000	.000	.000
Percent Correctly Predicted	0.875	0.875	0.875

Table 4.10 Logit Analysis for Vote Choice for Lega in 1996 Election

⁶⁸ Graphs were created following techniques suggested by Braumoeller (2004).

Configuration	Industrial	SME	Commerce
None	7.2%	8.4%	10.6%
Only Employment Sector	14.6%	17.8%	7.7%
Only Differentiation	19.2%	19.2%	19.6%
Interaction	28.1%	43.2%	28.8%

Table 4.11 Predicted Probability of a Individuals voting for the Lega Nord in 1996⁶⁹

Those employed in the industrial sector, specifically those employed in SMEs, were more likely to vote for the Lega than those who were not. In addition, those that had both perceived differentiation and were employed in the industrial sector were far more likely to vote for the Lega than those that were not. An industrialist that had a differentiation perception was 28% more likely to vote for the Lega than those that did not. The specific subgroup of industrialist most likely to unhappy over the fiscal transfers, those employed in SMEs, that perceived differentiation were nearly 43% more likely to vote for the Lega. However those in employed in the Commerce sector alone were not any more likely to vote for the Lega than those that were not.

⁶⁹ Predicted probabilities were calculated using Gary King's Clarify program. As King et al (2000) note Clarify is a statistical tool that can be used to simulate results to estimate the predicted effects.

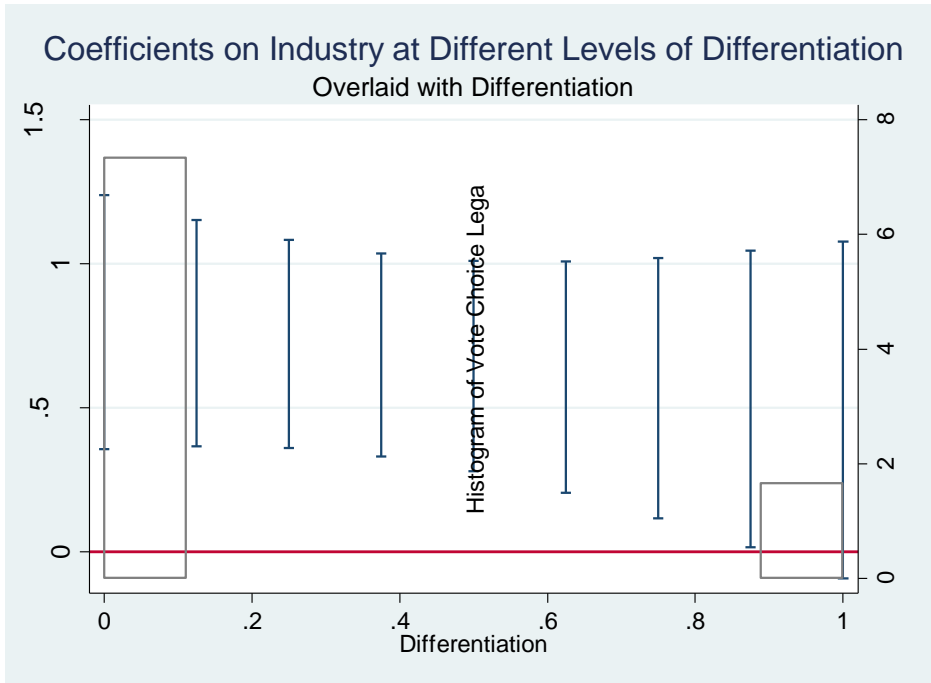


Figure 4.4 Graph of Coefficients on Employment in Industry at Different Levels of Differentiation with Histogram of Outcomes

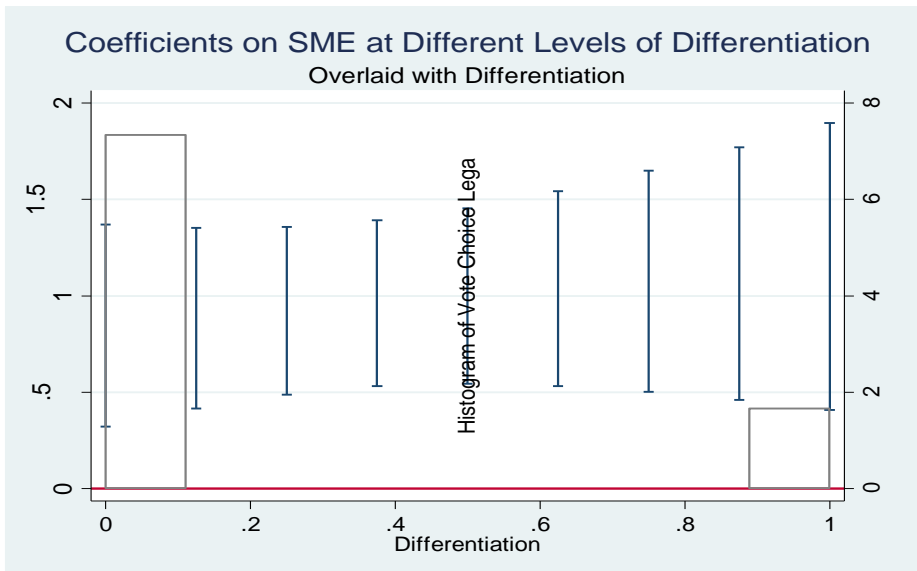


Figure 4.5 Graph of Coefficients on Employment in SME at Different Levels of Differentiation with Histogram of Outcomes

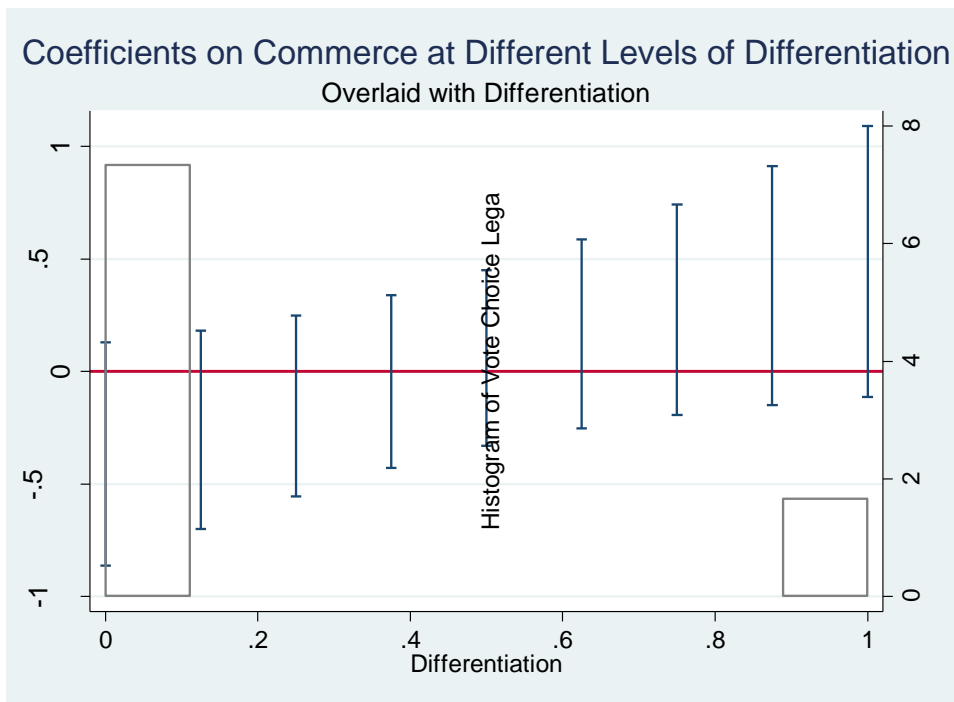


Figure 4.6 Graph of Coefficients on Employment in Commerce at Different Levels of Differentiation with Histogram of Outcomes

The effects of the interaction show two distinct patterns. For those only employed in the industrial sector there are no significant effects. However, the analyses showed that those in employed in the commercial sector became more likely to vote for the Lega only if they had differentiation. While an individual in the commercial sector with perceived differentiation was 7.7% more likely to vote for the Lega an individual in the commercial sector with ideological differentiation was 28.8% more likely to vote for the Lega. The interaction effects of differentiation varied depending on the sector of employment.

4.8.2 Different Strokes for Different Folks

The ideological differentiation threshold to capture votes among those in the Industrial sector, specifically SMEs, is lower. While the likelihood for voting for the Lega among SMEs gets enhanced by perceptions it was not necessary for the Lega to capture their vote. Those in the industrial sector were among the first groups to shift towards the Lega. In particular these groups were particularly attracted to regional autonomy pleas given their export orientation. As such the additional multi-dimensional appeal may not have been necessary.

However among others in the private sector (e.g., commercial) differentiation via a centrist dimension was needed for Lega to attract votes. Only when a voter in the commercial sector had perception that the Lega was centrist (i.e., significantly different from other parties) did he become significantly more likely to vote for the Lega. This is in sharp contrast to those in the industrial sector that did not need the added ideological perception. In 1996 the Lega was able to attract a diverse coalition of voters. Some needed the additional perception of the Lega as a centrist party while other voters (e.g., industrialists) of the Lega did not. As such the Lega's electoral success was built on diverse coalition. Some of the core voters, e.g., those in employed in SMEs, did not require the added dimension and therefore would have been less likely to switch. On the other hand other groups (e.g., those in the commercial sector) would only vote for the Lega as long as it maintained sufficient differentiation.

In 2001 the Lega's level of differentiation disappeared. The groups most likely to leave the Lega Nord were those from the industrial sector concerned about taxation and those from the commercial sector. While those in SMEs still voted for the Lega, FI was able to drain some of the support of the Lega. Part of the explanation of why the FI was successful was that it adopted policy positions of low taxes and fiscal federalism but part centers on the fact that the Lega's ability to influence proved to be untrue in 1996. As such regional party support is caught between core supporters and more fringe supporters that require differentiation for their vote. As such there is a caution that while multiple dimension appeals by regional parties can be beneficial they can also fracture diverse coalitions. The shift to the right resonated with some 1996 Lega voters but was counter-productive in attracting others. Furthermore regional parties expansion rests on shaky foundations given the difficulty in maintaining differentiation. As such it's no wonder that regional parties often crash after having high levels of success. Greater electoral success increases co-optation attempts by national parties and furthermore it means that multi-dimensional appeals by regional parties are more likely to fracture the party. In essence the bigger and more successful a regional party is the more likely national parties will attempt to co-opt. Furthermore success means an enlarged but divided coalition and therefore it will make it more likely different multi-dimensional demands will divide the diverse coalition of interests that make up successful regional parties. In 2001 Forza Italia was able to attract supporters among the Lega's previous supporters and thereby reduce the Lega's electoral success.

Each of the elections in which the Lega did well corresponded to an election where it was able to achieve a certain level of differentiation from other parties. Starting in 1992 the issue of unfair fiscal transfers due to corruption and patronage provided a political opening for the Lega to do well among disaffected groups, specifically those in the industrial sector. In both 1994 and 1996 the Lega was significantly different on the left-right dimension. The Lega by using multi-dimensional appeals on issues of corruption or the European Union was able to maintain and even improve on its 1992 electoral breakthrough. The Lega continued to stress themes that appealed to industrialists and those in the commercial sector.

However once the Lega was unable to harness and attract voters on a second salient dimension a national party was finally able to co-opt the Lega. Hence in 2001 even though 52% of Northern voters felt government inefficiency and 47% of Northern voters felt corruption were very important or fairly important issues, they turned away from a regional party⁷⁰ and towards the national party. Forza Italia attempts at co-optation finally bore fruit in 2001 as the Lega's electoral success flowed to FI. Voters concerned with corruption and "unfair" transfers were salient issues in Northern Italy throughout this time period. The Lega was able to have huge electoral gains initially due to this priming and sustained this through multi-dimensional appeals to achieve differentiation. Ultimately in 2001 it lacked the political space as the national party co-opted the Lega's positions and thereby decreased its electoral success.

⁷⁰ In addition to the loss of differentiation, it is possible there was a decrease in the saliency of the corruption issue in the 2001 election. However the point remains that without a credible salient second dimension regional parties are unable to maintain electoral success.

Year	Electoral Success	Voter Perceptions
1990	(1987 .5%) 1990 18.7% Lombardy (1992 8.7% all of Italy)	Perceived Unaffiliated 60% of all Voters
1994	8.4%	67% of Lega Voters claim party unaffiliated (higher than national average)
1996	10.1%	20% of Lega Voters claim party unaffiliated but 40% claim its moderate
2001	3.9%	20% of Lega Voters don't know left-right placement, but among its voters 50% rate it center right to right (average of 8 out 10).
2006	4.2%	73% of Lega voters view it as center-right to right. With an average of 8.2 out of 10.

Table 4.12 Summary of Findings

4.9 Conclusion

The prevailing theories on regional parties are that they are able succeed based on structural characteristics. If a country has salient ethnic or cultural cleavages or if it has economic differences or if there is a decentralization of power then regional parties thrive. Without those characteristics regional parties should not succeed. The Lega Nord is a paradox to those prevailing theories. It succeeded in a region without historical grievances, without major ethnic cleavages, in a place that had not changed its economic position relative to the rest of the country and at a time when there were no institutional

changes to the level of centralization. Furthermore it has exhibited high levels of volatility over the course of its brief history. Its success and failure cannot be solely attributed to deterministic structural characteristics.

The Lega Nord initially succeeded at a time in Italy when high levels of patronage were being distributed to Southern Italy and corruption riddled governmental spending policies. The Lega Nord's breakthrough success was tied to issues of corruption and regional autonomy. Early on national parties were unable to co-opt the Lega Nord because they were at the center of several corruption scandals. Later on, despite the rise of a national party that was well positioned to co-opt Lega voters, the Lega maintained its electoral success. It was only when the Lega was unable to find and exploit a second issue outside of regional autonomy/secession that resonated across the entire North and among its voters that it lost its differentiation and suffered electoral losses. One question that may be raised is whether these findings are generalizable: Is the Lega Nord unique or are the findings applicable to other regional parties in other countries? The analysis of the Lega points to a specific way in which regional parties in wealthier regions might succeed. In the next chapter I will examine the propositions raised in Italy to other regional parties in other countries.

Chapter 5: Extending the Argument

The argument developed so far is that, contrary to traditional regional party theories, additional factors such as political openings and voter perceptions can lead to regional party success. Given that political openings and voter perceptions are malleable and dynamic, the result is that regional party success can be volatile, again contrary to previous theories.

In the previous two chapters, I have explored how those factors influenced the electoral success of the Lega Nord. In the case of Italy, perceptions of unfair fiscal transfers caused by massive corruption influenced the electoral rise of the Lega. It was able to continue its success by making multidimensional appeals, such as a pro-European Union stance, to maintain a level of differentiation. However, for a combination of reasons, this differentiation eroded, resulting in massive electoral losses.

A question remains: is the Lega Nord unique? In other words, are the sources of the Lega Nord's electoral success applicable to other regional parties in other countries? Generalizations only from the Italian context may be difficult, as both the Lega Nord and Italy in general have unique features. For example, the Lega has undergone numerous and radical ideological changes. Secondly, Italy tends to rank as one of the more corrupt developed nations (Bull and Newell 2003). It was this high level of corruption that helped influence voters to abandon their traditional parties. In fact, it was this high level of

volatility, specifically between 1992 and 1994, and the causes behind that volatility which helped create an opening for the Lega.

As such, the question is whether the hypotheses which explained regional party volatility in Italy can be extended to other countries and other regional parties. Do perceptions of inequity have equal impact on regional parties outside of Italy? To what extent are a political opening and differentiation necessary or sufficient for success to occur? Do my hypotheses explain regional party volatility better than alternative explanations?

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, I will describe the methodological challenges posed by generalizing that question, and how my selection of cases addresses some of these concerns. Second, I will review the expected empirical outcomes and how they differ from alternative explanations. Third, I will present the empirical findings through quantitative and qualitative evidence from several brief case studies before I conclude with the implications.

5.1 Methodological Issues and Challenges

5.1.1 Methodological Challenges

There are several problems involved in testing the proposed arguments in a cross-national setting. First, it is difficult to objectively measure and compare levels of corruption. As Kurtz and Schrank (2007) note, cross-national measurements involving good governance are often suspect and highly correlated with economic growth. Furthermore, the subjective interpretation of corruption, and the voters' reactions to it, may vary from country to country. An episode of corruption that emerges with salience in

Canada might not necessarily be as prominent in Italy. Consequently, an “objective measurement” of corruption would probably not capture the situations in which voters perceive that patronage and/or unfair fiscal transfers are important enough to be a salient voting issue.

A further problem in cross-national comparisons is that voter perceptions are equally important in determining the level of regional party differentiation. As noted earlier, this is a moving target: the actions both of national parties and the regional party matter. The regional party’s policy positions as well as the national party’s positions matter in terms of whether a political opening exists, whether co-optation is attempted, and whether the regional party is making multidimensional appeals. While the argument is that a second regionally-salient issue by a regional party may help avoid co-optation, there are a multitude of possible issues a regional party could take a stance on. Simple monitoring of a regional party’s stress on other issues would not measure if those issues resonated and were salient.⁷¹ As such, several case studies will be used to obtain leverage on the question of whether my hypotheses explain the variation in electoral success more accurately than alternative explanations.

5.1.2 Scope

Before examining which cases will be studied, it is important to note the potential limitations these hypotheses may have in explaining regional party success. While the

⁷¹ The difficulty in determining what a second issue is, while simultaneously doing so in a non-tautological manner (i.e., the regional party succeeded because it found a salient issue and vice-versa). However, this stresses the need for individual case studies, as opposed to a large N analysis, as careful consideration must be made of what is salient for each country and each election.

theory does have broad implications, there are some limitations to its application. To begin with, the hypotheses are only applied to stable democracies. Regional parties are sometimes associated with violent civil wars or low levels of political violence. Under those circumstances, factors beyond those considered here may influence vote choice and government actions. Certainly if regional parties have been banned, or if voting for regional parties may spark violence, regional party support may vary from what the previously mentioned hypotheses would predict.

Secondly the theory is also restricted to cases in which regional parties are only competing against other regional parties. The theory assumes that regional parties are at a natural disadvantage against other parties and therefore special circumstances need to be present to overcome these inherent problems of competing against a national party. As such some meaningful national party presence is necessary for the theory to be applicable.

This theory also is restricted to exclude countries with cross-regional voting laws. Some countries, notably Turkey, Indonesia and Mexico, require parties to compete in a certain number of regions. These laws are specifically designed to avoid parties from running on a regional basis. In this model, the institutional burdens are typically too great for regional parties to succeed.

Finally, the theory is only being tested in countries with parliamentary systems. Brancati (2005) and Filipov et al. (2004) note that presidential systems decrease the likelihood of regional party support. Furthermore, a number of the hypotheses in this research deal with issues of how parties interact with one another. In parliamentary

systems, parties might coordinate, co-opt, or avoid one another, as well create and end a government differently than parties in a presidential system. As such, the incentives of both parties and voters may be different, and therefore the hypotheses might not be applicable.

The scope condition does include both countries with regional parliaments and those countries without regional parliaments. As Chhibber and Kollman (2004), Brancati (2005) and Ziblatt (2004) note, regional parliaments increase the power of regional autonomy and increase the likelihood of regional party electoral success. However, regional parties also exist in countries that do not have regional parliaments. For example, the Scottish National Party existed before the creation of the Scottish Parliament. Hence, regional parliaments are not necessary for the hypotheses; they only increase the chances of regional party success.

5.1.3 Case Selection

With these limitations in mind, study cases were selected to maximize variation in the level of corruption/patronage, institutional settings (electoral rules, level of decentralization, etc.), strength of regional identity, and the party's potential for having a government portfolio. As noted earlier, regional parties exist and succeed in countries with varying levels of corruption and varying levels of economic wealth. Regional parties, for example, exist and succeed in Belgium, which has high levels of patronage in both the poorer and wealthier portions of the country. They also exist in countries with lower levels of corruption/patronage, like the United Kingdom (Bull and Newell 2003). As such, case studies in this chapter will attempt to assess two different questions.

The first is whether perceptions of unfair fiscal transfers in combination with voter behavioral expectations lead to variation in the level of electoral success for regional parties. The Italian context shows how regional patterns of patronage, coupled with corruption, provided a political opening for a regional party to greatly increase its electoral success. Do regional patterns of perceived unfair fiscal transfers have that effect elsewhere? Four case studies of regional parties were selected to help answer these questions in three separate countries: the *Volksumie* in Belgium, the Reform Party and *Bloc Quebecois* in Canada, and the Scottish National Party in the United Kingdom.

Until recently, Belgium was ruled by a partocracy similar to Italy's (De Winter 2007). Belgium was selected as a case study as it is often considered a country with high levels of corruption and similar party structure to Italy, at least as perceived by the local populace (Bull and Newell 2003). As such, Belgium represents a policy environment similar to Italy's, which allows an exploration of how the policy environment affected regional party success. The regional party *Volksumie* will be studied in particular, as it was one of the most influential regional parties in Belgium.

Canada, much like Italy, had witnessed a dramatic rise in regional party success in the early 1990s, albeit in several different areas of the country. The *Bloc Quebecois* arose in a region linguistically different than most of Canada, while the Reform Party emerged in the ethnically similar areas of Western Canada. Canada provides contrast to Italy both in the type of electoral laws (single member districts) as well as the potential for being a coalition partner (very low, at least relative to a regional party in Italy or Belgium). Canada also represents a case with some corruption or perceived corruption, but less than

Italy or Belgium. As such, the effects of much lower levels of patronage/corruption on regional party success can be measured.

The final case selected is the Scottish National Party, which has been one of the more influential regional parties in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is considered to have lower levels of corruption (Collins and O'Shea 2003), and is a centralized country. Furthermore, the party is based in a region with a long history of a strong regional identity. As such, previous theories would predict that the party should exhibit low levels of electoral volatility, though this has not been the case.

In conclusion, the four cases provide variation in the institutional settings (different electoral rules, differing levels of centralization), differences in the levels of patronage/corruption, and finally in the level of regional party success, which helps illuminate how my argument explains regional party electoral volatility in a variety of settings.

5.2 Observable Implications

If the effects of political openings, perceptions of equity, and regional party differentiation are not limited to the Lega Nord, then we should be able to observe several things in these case studies. Increases in the perception and salience of corruption and unfair fiscal transfers (e.g., patronage) should also increase regional party success.

A political opening is necessary for initial success, but in order for that success to continue, regional parties must maintain some level of differentiation, and those issues must remain salient. National parties' attempts at co-optation, whether via party platform change or inclusion of regional parties into government, should reduce regional party

support, *ceteris paribus*. However, if regional parties are able to maintain a distinctiveness relative to national parties by having a second regionally-salient issue, the national attempts at co-optation should be blunted, and regional parties should not see decreases in their level of electoral success. Over the next four cases, I will explore these expected observations and how they affect regional party success. I will then conclude by examining whether these factors explain regional party variation and what other factors influence vote choice for regional parties.

5.3 Belgium: The Volksunie

The Volksunie (VU) was one of the most influential regional parties in Belgium. Founded in 1954, it “represents the political expression of the oldest regionalist movement in Belgium, and the first one to be successful. To some extent, the electoral success of the VU stimulated regionalist movements in [the rest] of the country” (de Winter 1998: 28). The VU instigated and influenced the Belgian transformation from a centralized state to a federalized one.

Located in a region that was ethnically different and economically wealthier, and in a country that became more decentralized, the VU should have been well-positioned to maintain consistent electoral success. Until the VU began to achieve success, Belgian politics were marked by low levels of electoral volatility. However, the VU’s electoral success was highly volatile. To determine why this regional party’s success was so variable despite the structural advantages, I will first analyze what factors led to the VU’s initial success and its later decline before I draw general conclusions.

For most of history, Belgium was a highly centralized state. From the very beginning of the state in 1830, there has existed a cultural cleavage between the southern Walloon region that spoke French and the northern region that spoke Flemish. However, until recently the major politicized cleavages in Belgium were focused around disagreements between the church and state, though there were also economic disagreements (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Regional disagreements began to be more salient when, for the first time in Belgian history, the Northern Flemish region became the wealthier of the two regions. Wallonia had industrialized before Flanders, and consequently had been both economically and politically dominant (De Winter 1997). Following World War II, Flanders experienced a surge in economic growth via export-oriented small and medium-sized firms, which led to a reversal of fortunes between the regions. At the same time, Wallonia began to de-industrialize and suffer economic setbacks as its older industries became less competitive.

This new economic reality resulted in divergent preferences between the two regions. The newfound wealth translated into new political demands as the Flemish pressured the state for increased language recognition (e.g., Flemish became a co-equal national language to French). At the same time, the Walloon population began to demand increased state intervention to protect the declining industries in the Southern region. This was in direct opposition to the demands of the Flemish population, which preferred less state intervention and greater regional autonomy in order to protect their export-oriented businesses. Despite these differences, it was not until corruption became a more salient issue that the VU experienced increased electoral success.

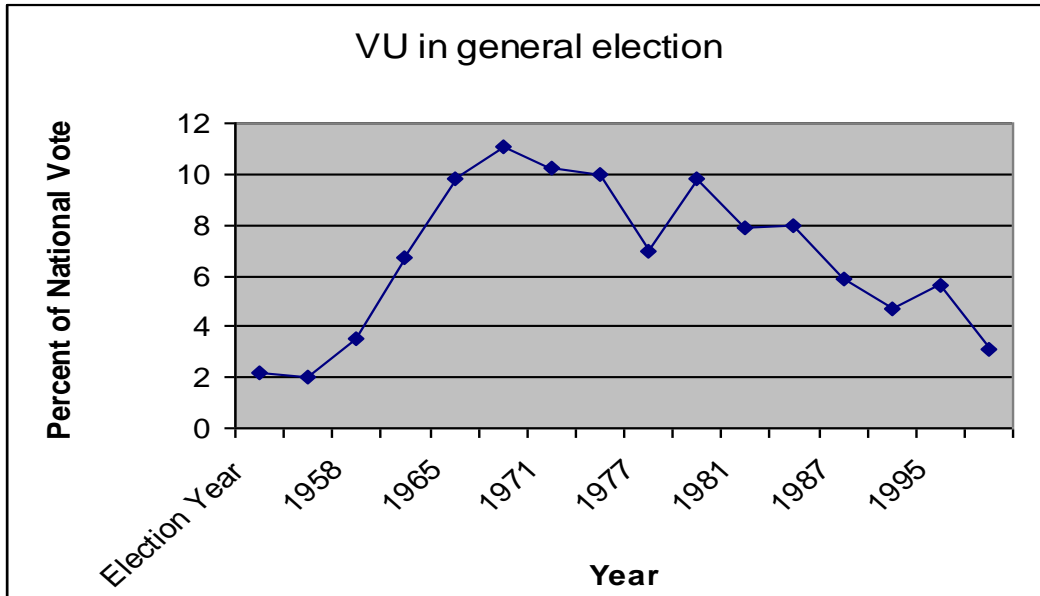


Figure 5.1 Electoral Support for VU in General Elections over time (de Winter 1998)

5.3.1 The Rise of the VU: Political Openings

For nearly six decades, the Belgian political system was highly stable. Despite having a proportional representation system, only three major parties (the Christian Democrats, Liberals and Socialists) were relevant until the 1960s (De Winter and Dumont: 1999). In fact, Blondel (1968) went so far as to say that Belgium had only two and a half effective parties until 1965, when the VU first achieved its breakthrough.

Given the frozen party system and low electoral volatility over time, the government built policies and even organized society around the three parties, with the goal of fostering consociational stability. This embedding of the parties into society was referred to as “pillarization” in Belgium (Hooghe 2004). Basic social functions were organized and funded along party membership lines. For example, unions and the health

care industry (including hospitals) were organized along party lines. Party penetration in Belgium formed a partocracy (similar to what had existed in Italy), in which parties dominated the government (Ibid.). As a result, these three parties had extensive access to patronage for their supporters.

Parties could influence “social security transfers, draft exemptions, [education and] scholarship, tax reductions, rapid telephone connections, car license plates, divorce, adoption, immigration, legal support, the annulment of traffic fines” (De Winter 1999: 192). It is not surprising, then, that clientalistic connections existed between voters and politicians. For example, 1 in 4 voters made appeals for clientalistic services, and in 1 in 2 voters cast their ballot for the politician with whom they had direct contact (De Winter 2003: 97). Even as party identification declined in the 1970s and 1980s, membership levels stayed constant (de Winter 1992). In addition to controlling services, the parties also controlled promotion of civil servants and judges. As a result, nearly 70% of civil servants had party membership cards (Maesschalck and van de Walle 2006). In summary, paralleling the Italian system, firmly entrenched parties provided extensive patronage, whether in the form of jobs or services, to voters.

This was particularly true in the Walloon portion of Belgium, which had levels of clientalistic activities which were relatively much higher than Flanders (De Winter 2003). The result was a political opening for a regional Flemish party that addressed the dissatisfaction among its voters. While the Flemish regional movement had been focused on cultural issues (specifically language rights) for most of its history, this changed in the 1960s as fiscal transfers and patronage became more salient. In fact, these two issues

were precisely the two issues the VU stressed. The Flemish regional movement argued that a large percentage of the transfers were “not justified by demographics or unemployment” (van Houten 1999: 95). The fiscal transfers were viewed as unfair, and the VU attempted to capitalize on the issue. Much like the Lega, the VU operated in a political environment in which some voters were left out of the patronage network and felt that these unfair fiscal transfers had high salience.

Also like the Lega, the VU operated in a political environment of corruption and patronage. As this issue grew in salience, the VU began to see its electoral success increase. When it was founded in 1954, it was unable to win more than 3.5% of the vote. Starting in 1965, however, the VU would achieve continuously higher results over each election. The party’s best performance ever was in 1971, when it won nearly 1 in 5 votes in Flanders.

The VU’s core issue during this time focused on autonomy for the Flemish-language community with a goal of creating a federal country. However, starting in 1965, the VU began to incorporate other issues in addition to the original issue of autonomy. The party’s manifesto stressed opposition to corruption, party patronage, and the “pillarization” of Belgian politics. Secondly, the party shifted from a fairly centrist economic position to a center-right position. These moves were related, as the party attempted to link corrupt patronage practices to government intervention in the economy. Much like the Lega Nord, the VU stressed the issue of corruption and “unfair” fiscal transfers during its initial electoral breakthrough. Interestingly, the party did not limit itself to economic or autonomy issues, but made environmental issues one of its central

planks as well. The VU became the first Belgian party to hold a congress on the topic (in 1965) and the first to have it embedded in its platform (de Winter 1998).

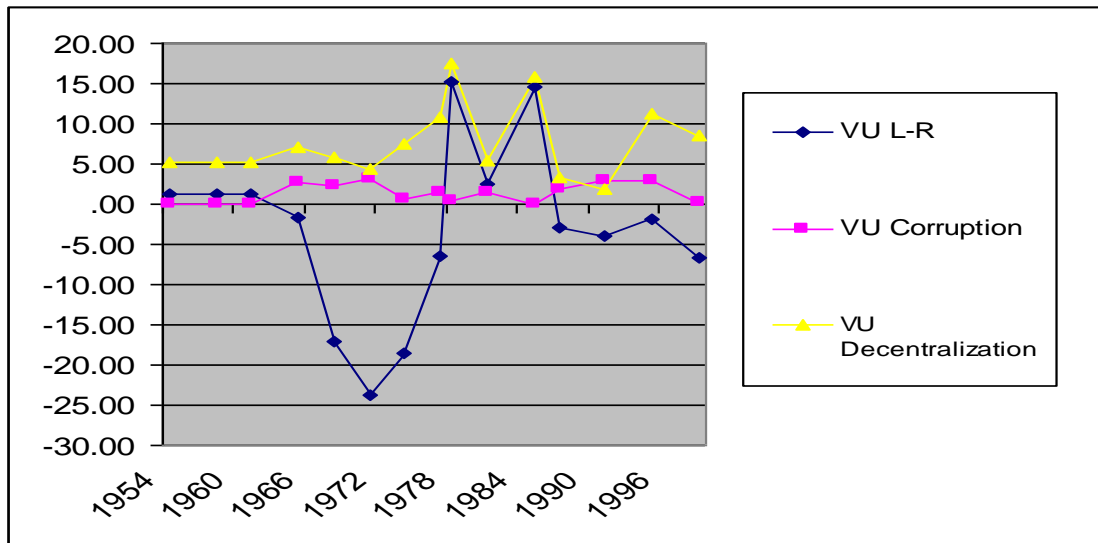


Figure 5.2 Manifesto Positions of VU Over Time (CMP)

The VU's electoral growth came from two demographics: 1) those concerned with Flemish autonomy, and 2) non-pillared voters (non-liberal, non-socialist, non-Catholic). Those outside of the patronage network were particularly attracted to the VU (De Winter 1998). Voters in Flanders felt that patronage policies and further state intervention would hurt the Flemish economy, especially the small and medium-sized enterprises (van Houten 1999). As such, professionals, shopkeepers, and others in small and medium enterprises were over-represented among VU voters. In addition, as a result of the anti-patronage message, the VU was able to attract from a wide ideological swath

(i.e., both right- and left-leaning voters) (Ibid.). Consequently, the VU's support more than tripled over the course of ten years: its support in Flanders increased from 6% of the vote in 1961 up to 19.4% in 1971.

5.3.2 Co-optation Attempts

Co-optation is expected to reduce regional party success unless the party can maintain differentiation on multiple dimensions. As a result of the VU success and the more generalized growth of regionalism in Belgium, the national parties were forced to react. Initially, the national parties had avoided co-optation of either the decentralization issue or the patronage issue, to the electoral benefit of the VU (de Winter 1998: 43).

However, as happened in Italy, the political opening and the support from the traditional parties collapsed in tandem. Fissures within the national parties led them to split along regional lines. First, in 1968, the Liberal party split into two separate parties. The Christian Democrats and Socialists did likewise in the mid 1970s. As a result, in the 1970s the VU began to compete against new parties (the fragments of former national parties) that had adopted decentralization and regionalism into their manifestos.

However, the party was able to remain successful for several elections. While 1971 witnessed the VU's electoral high point with 11.1% of the overall vote in Belgium, it was able to stabilize its electoral performance, dropping only to 10.2% and 10.0% in 1974 and 1977, respectively. It was not until the VU participated in the national government in 1978 that it would see serious electoral decline.

5.3.3 *Decline: Death by Success*

The fact that the party radically shifted its manifesto seems to suggest that it at least attempted to maintain differentiation from other parties. As the CMP shows (see Figure 5.2), following the 1971 election the VU quickly shifted from a right party to a left-leaning, “socially progressive party” (De Winter 1997). In addition, the party shifted toward a more extreme stance on federalism, specifically that Flanders should have certain constitutionally-enshrined autonomy rights. The VU linked these two issues by arguing that autonomy was a way of keeping more money within the region for Flemish social welfare services. As with the Lega Nord, it was electoral problems that preceded the party’s changes in its party platform (specifically on right-left issues) in attempt to maintain differentiation.

However, this period of stability ended in the 1978 election. There were two separate events that caused the VU to lose nearly one-third of its vote in 1978. In 1977, the VU participated for the first time in a national government. The VU joined the government in hopes of enacting policy that would lead to increased autonomy for Flanders. While the government did pass legislation to increase autonomy for Flanders, many voters felt that the party 1) did not achieve enough policy concessions, and 2) that the VU had changed their economic position to a more centrist position (de Winter 1997: 44). The VU’s compromise on the political autonomy dimension, which fell short of full federalism, resulted in a number of disillusioned voters. Furthermore, as part of an extensive coalition, the VU had to enact centrist economic policies, which negated its new position as a socially progressive party. Van Houten (1999) notes that unhappiness

over budget policies that the VU agreed to while in government particularly resulted in unhappiness among its constituents.

Partly as a result of voter disenchantment with the VU's time in government, several new protest parties emerged to provide viable alternatives for VU voters. A faction of VU politicians left the party to form *Vlaam Blok*. This new regionally-based right-wing party campaigned for separatism and anti-immigration measures. Many of those who left the VU for Vlaam Blok were those concerned with patronage (i.e., shopkeepers, small business owners) (de Winter 1997). Adding to the threat of co-optation on decentralization and the right, the Green Party emerged during this same time frame, and was able to co-opt VU's message on left-environmental issues. As the Green Party also stressed decentralization, it was also able to gain VU voters. As a result of the increased party options and decreased differentiation, the VU was not able to achieve in the 1978 election the same electoral results it had previously won (decreasing from 16.2% to 12.8% of the Flemish vote).

5.3.4 Last Grasps and Dissolution

In order to prevent further losses after the 1978 election, the VU changed its platform on a number of issues. The party shifted on the issue of autonomy from a goal of a simple federal system to that of a confederal system. It also shifted again on the right-left dimension to that of a left-liberal position. As noted in the CMP (see Figure 5.2), the party shifted to the center of the political spectrum from its formerly leftist position. While the VU was unable to return to its previous levels of electoral success, it retained some of its support. As a result of that electoral support, it was asked to join the

government in 1988. That same year, the Belgian government reached the point where the major parties accepted the creation of a federal state. As such, the party decided to rejoin the government in hopes that it could enact policy changes to increase its support.

From 1988 through 1991, the VU supported the legislation that officially turned Belgium into a federal country. In other words, the VU was able to help deliver the policy that was initially at the center of the party's platform. However, as in 1978, the party was electorally punished for its time in government. As soon as the issues that had made the VU unique were enacted into policy, voters, activists and politicians focused on other issues and turned toward other parties (de Winter 2006: 38). Voters satisfied on the regional autonomy dimension moved their votes to larger parties. The party fractured; some activists left for the larger Flemish Liberal Party (which had radicalized its decentralization agenda after 1991), others moved to support the larger, right regional party Vlaams Blok, and some left for the Green Party. The VU had achieved its policy success, and thereby lost its differentiation from larger parties. In 2003, after receiving only 3.1% of vote, the VU dissolved into two separate parties, the Vlaams National and SPIRIT, due to ideological differences between the party factions over economic issues.

5.3.5 Conclusion

Much like the Lega Nord, the Volksunie was a regional party that appeared and initially thrived in a wealthy region of the country. Its success was fueled partly by the desire for regional autonomy, but also unhappiness over fiscal transfers. In particular, those outside of the patronage system and those who perceived that the fiscal transfers were unfair were important supporters during the VU's electoral growth phase. This

unhappiness over unfair fiscal transfers and the demand for decentralization went unaddressed by the national political parties. This provided several salient political issues (i.e., a political opening) for the VU to exploit. The VU shifted from its initial focus solely on autonomy to include other issues, including corruption, the environment and right-left issues. The result was a dramatic increase in electoral support in a country that previously had been noted for low levels of electoral volatility. However, its support began to decline not when other parties began to co-opt its demands, but after its time in government in 1978. That time in government reduced its differentiation via policy compromises, reduced behavioral expectations given its policy success, and increased competition as new parties siphoned off votes. The VU was caught in a position where it no longer was able to present a unique vehicle for Flemish demands. The VU was able to maintain its electoral support in the 1980s by changing its platform again to include multiple dimensions, in particular by radically shifting to the left and making more extreme regional autonomy demands.

The VU case study also sheds some light on the importance of differentiation as opposed to an alternative explanation of campaign effects, specifically party competence. Bellucci (2006) notes that party competence, or “the short term policy handling reputation of the [party],” has an important effect on vote choice in elections. It is difficult to disentangle whether the Lega Nord lost support during its time in government in 1994 because of a loss of differentiation or because the Lega failed to competently implement its campaign promises. However, the VU provides some insight into the question. The VU was in government twice (1978 and again from 1988 to 1991), and

both times was able to help pass legislation that increased the level of regional autonomy. Unlike the Lega, it was able to achieve policy success. However, after both times in government, the party was punished at the polls. The VU was not rewarded for its competency: instead, it suffered due to a loss of differentiation.

Ironically, the VU's electoral success in many ways led to its political demise. As one of the largest regional parties, the VU was invited into government to help forge a national compromise to create a federal Belgium. However, instead of being rewarded for implementing policies that it had promised to deliver, the VU was punished electorally. Voters left the VU for parties that were able to differentiate themselves from the new status quo, such as parties that had a radical right agenda (e.g., Vlaams Blok). Without differentiation, the VU declined in electoral support, and by the turn of the century the party had actually ceased to exist.

The VU achieved its initial success in a centralized country, in a region that historically hadn't supported regional parties. Furthermore, its success was not attributable to competency or campaign effects. As was the case for the Lega Nord, while patronage provided a political opening and allowed for increased electoral support, a lack of multidimensional appeals allowing the party to differentiate itself led it to suffer massive electoral losses.

5.4 Canada and Regional Parties

Canada is a decentralized country with a plurality voting system (i.e., first past the post), and it has a major linguistic cleavage (the Quebec province speaks French, while

the rest of the country primarily speaks English). Furthermore, for most of modern Canadian history, electoral stability and low volatility has been the norm. For example, from 1935 to 1957, the Liberal Party won five consecutive elections. Leading up to 1993, the Conservative Party⁷² had won successive elections. As such, the traditional expectation would be that Canada should have successful regional parties, specifically in ethnically distinct regions, and those regional parties should have fairly stable levels of success.

While regional parties have emerged at the provincial level, specifically in Quebec to defend the French-speaking community, they had rarely made an impact at the national level until 1993. Canada has often been described as a “two party plus system,” with a left and right party dominating and protest parties appearing and disappearing. In the two decades prior to the 1990s, regional cleavages did not translate into electoral success. During the 1970s and 1980s, for example, the third largest party at the national level was the New Democratic Party, a leftist political party.

The previous status quo of stability, low volatility, and low levels of national regional party success abruptly changed in 1993. In that year, Canada experienced a seismic shift in its political system, when, for all practical purposes, the governing party disintegrated and was replaced by two regional parties. The Conservative Party lost 165 of its 167 seats. The Bloc Quebecois (BQ), a regional party representing Quebec, and the Reform Party, a regional party representing the Western provinces, together garnered nearly 33% of the total national vote. This was a significant divergence to the party

⁷² The official name for the old Conservative Party was the Progressive Conservative Party however for purposes of this section I will refer to it simply as the Conservative Party.

system. We will explore what factors made the 1993 election so different than any previous year and why the parties exhibited varying levels of success thereafter, especially as structural factors remained fairly constant during this time.

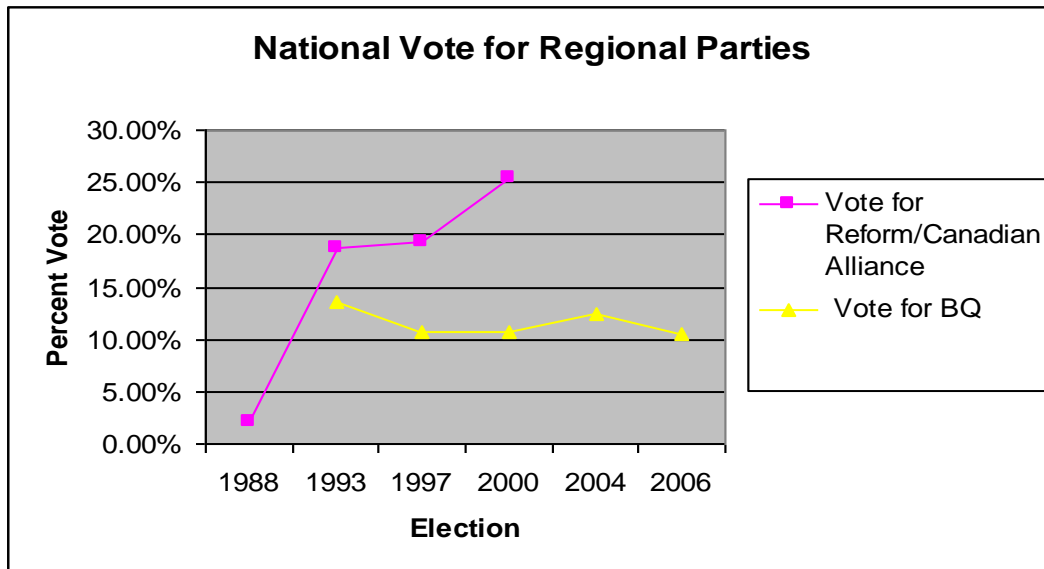


Figure 5.3 Variation in Support for Regional Parties in National Elections in Canada 1998-2006 (Source Belanger 2007)

5.4.1 Setting the Stage for 1993: Political Openings

Regional parties in 1993 succeeded in two separate and distinct regions: Quebec and the Western Provinces. The Bloc Québécois received 49% of the vote in Quebec, while the Reform Party received 38% of the vote in the Western provinces (Belanger 1994). The catalysts behind both were the negotiations over a new power-sharing arrangement and perceived unfair fiscal transfers. Governmental policies and actions helped foster an environment in which regional parties had regionally salient issues to

exploit (specifically, unfair fiscal transfers). I will first discuss the grievances in Quebec before shifting to the grievances in the Western provinces.

Voters in Quebec have had longstanding grievances with the rest of Canada over political representation and linguistic rights. The salience of these grievances increased at the national level in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1982, the Liberal Party made an initial attempt to pacify unhappiness in Quebec via a new constitutional agreement, but the efforts were met with failure. However, instead of turning to a regional party, Quebec overwhelmingly voted for the national alternative, the Conservative Party, and in particular for the head of the Conservative Party, Quebec native Brian Mulroney. Mulroney campaigned on claims that he could address the concerns of Quebec and end the national disunity. His first attempt in 1987, the Meech Lake Accord, would have granted Quebec the status of a “distinct society,” and increased both its political autonomy and its political power. While Quebec supported the Accord, it failed ratification in two provinces. As a result, “many Quebecers reacted with frustration and anger at what they believed was rejection by the rest of Canada” (Clarke and Kronberg 1996: 457).

This failure was blamed on the Conservative Party. In protest, an important Conservative cabinet minister, Lucien Bouchard, resigned and formed the Bloc Quebecois. In the meantime, Mulroney again tried to strike an accord that all sides could agree on with the Charlottetown Accord. This accord would guarantee not only distinct language rights, but would reserve 25% of seats in the House of Commons for Quebec (Johnston 1993: 44). While the other national parties (the Liberal Party and the New

Democratic Party) endorsed the deal, voters decisively rejected it in October of 1992. Quebec voters were left unhappy with their political situation and with a distinct lack of national party options. Both the Liberal and Conservative parties had been unable to deliver on Quebec's desire for increased autonomy, meaning that neither was in a position to co-opt a potential regional party. Lack of national party options combined with unfulfilled political demands provided a political opening for a new party in a region with ethnic differences.

The various attempts at appeasing Quebec only served to increase unhappiness in Quebec and also in the Western Provinces. The Western Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia), while neither ethnically nor linguistically distinct from the political center like Quebec, also had a number of grievances with the center. Their grievances focused on two issues: economic policies and lack of political power. In particular, the Western provinces were upset about a series of policies that favored Ontario or Quebec voters at the expense of the West; in addition, they lacked the political power to influence the situation.

While the Western Provinces did not have the linguistic cleavage to rally around, they did have a history of regionalism and support for regional parties. For example, from 1935 to 1958, the Alberta-based Social Credit Party was able to achieve some success. The party appealed to "right and populist farmers, independent entrepreneurs, and others who felt economically threatened by the power of large financial interests and corporate

capitalism” (Patten 2007: 62).⁷³ The Social Credit emerged earlier, as a protest over economic policies that were perceived to benefit the center. Lipset (1990) notes that a quasi-colonial relationship existed between the Western periphery and the center. It specifically was this asymmetrical political power between the two regions that resulted in Western regionalism during this period. However, support for the Social Credit party waned as voters switched their support to the national Conservative Party.

Following the period in which the Social Credit party was able to achieve some success, the Liberal Party continued to enact a number of policies that cemented the Western provinces’ antipathy toward the Liberal Party. Between 1960 and the early 1980s, the Liberal Party enacted a number of policies that helped Ontario at the expense of the resource-rich west. In particular, the National Energy Program and Petroleum Gas Revenue Tax were instituted by the national government to provide cheaper gas and greater domestic spending in provinces other than the West. The Western provinces, where most of the energy is mined and produced, had net negative fiscal transfers as a result of these patronage policies (Tossutti 1996). In addition, the Bank of Canada instituted high interest rates in the 1980s to protect against inflation in Eastern Canada, but “was blamed by the [Reform Party] founders for precipitating the collapse of the oil boom and causing bankruptcies and high unemployment in Western Canada” (Ibid.). These economic policies helped individual voters in the center of the country but left the

⁷³ The Social Credit Party’s anti-corporate stance has also been interpreted as more of a leftist party position. While it is outside the purview of this dissertation to settle this debate, either interpretation seems to agree that the party protested the economic policies of the national government.

West on the outside of the benefits, creating tensions between the West and the rest of the country.

These feelings of exclusion were reinforced by the Conservative governments' attempts at appeasing Quebec. The Reform Party was created in 1987 during the development of the Meech Lake Accord, under the slogan "The West Wants In" (Belnager 2004). Western voters felt that plans to increase Quebec's political power would come at their expense. This feeling was crystallized when the Mulroney government awarded a major defense contract to a Quebec company over a company located in Winnipeg. (Johnston et al. 1996). As the Conservative government attempted to grant more political power to Quebec, the Western Provinces grew more dissatisfied. The end result followed the failure of the Charlottetown Accord. While the voters in Quebec felt that not enough political power had been offered, voters in the West felt that too much political power had been offered to Quebec (Clarke and Kornberg: 1996). This unhappiness was directed at the party that the West had previously supported, the Conservative Party. As a result, a political opening also existed in the West, where voters were unhappy with perceived unfair fiscal transfers and were in an environment in which both national parties seemed unpalatable.

5.4.2 The "New" Regional Parties: Differentiation

According to my hypotheses, regional parties can succeed if they can achieve differentiation. Did the Canadian regional parties attempt to gain issue ownership of

salient issues or attempt to increase the salience of regional issues? To examine this question, I will present a quick overview of the platforms of the new regional parties.

The BQ was founded as a secessionist party with the goal of an independent Quebec. In fact, in 1993 it publicly campaigned that if Quebec successfully seceded, the party would disband (Gagnon and Herivault 2007). Despite the focus on independence, it also made a number of appeals on other issues. As the Comparative Manifesto noted (see Figure 5.4), the BQ was initially a moderate party, although it had a number of pro-environmental issues in its platform.

The Reform Party, while not a secessionist party, also had regional autonomy at the center of its platform. The party focused its regional autonomy demands on increased fiscal decentralization. This was in part motivated by what was perceived as corrupt practices of awarding of federal contracts. The Reform Party claimed that federal contracts were given to political supporters, while the West was left outside (Laylock 2002). As noted in the CMP (Figure 5.4), the Reform party stressed corruption more than any other party. The Reform Party also coupled its calls for fiscal decentralization with right economic issues, namely conservative economic policy. Fiscal decentralization, according to the party, would decrease taxes, force cutbacks in welfare expenditures, and increase deficit reduction (Clarke and Kronberg 1996). The Reform Party was the most economically right party in Canada in the 1993 election.

In the 1987 election, the Reform Party only campaigned in Western provinces, but 1993 election it also campaigned in parts of Western Ontario. In both elections, however, the party consciously avoided campaigning in Quebec. The party attempted to

present itself as a pan-English party, and thereby excluded French-speaking portions of Canada (Tossutti 1996). In 1993, the party used exclusive language and conscious decisions to territorially restrict its campaign appeal. Consequently, it qualifies as a regional party in that election. In future elections, the Reform Party would change its party label, first simply renaming itself the Canadian Alliance. In 2003, it would change its party label again, merging with the remnants of the Conservative party in order to shed its Western regional party image. However, for the 1993 election, the Reform party was a regional party.

Previous theories would have predicted that Canada as a country should have strong regional party support, specifically in Quebec. This support should not vary, given the country's level of decentralization and linguistic cleavages. The 1970s and 1980s held true to this prediction: while there was regionalism in various parts of Canada, regional party success at the national level was fairly low. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, regional issues and corruption/unfair fiscal transfers increased in salience. Regional parties succeeded both in areas with ethnic differences (Quebec) and without (Western Provinces) by making multidimensional appeals. In the next section, I will rigorously test the initial conclusions on the causes for the 1993 shift in regional party fortunes.

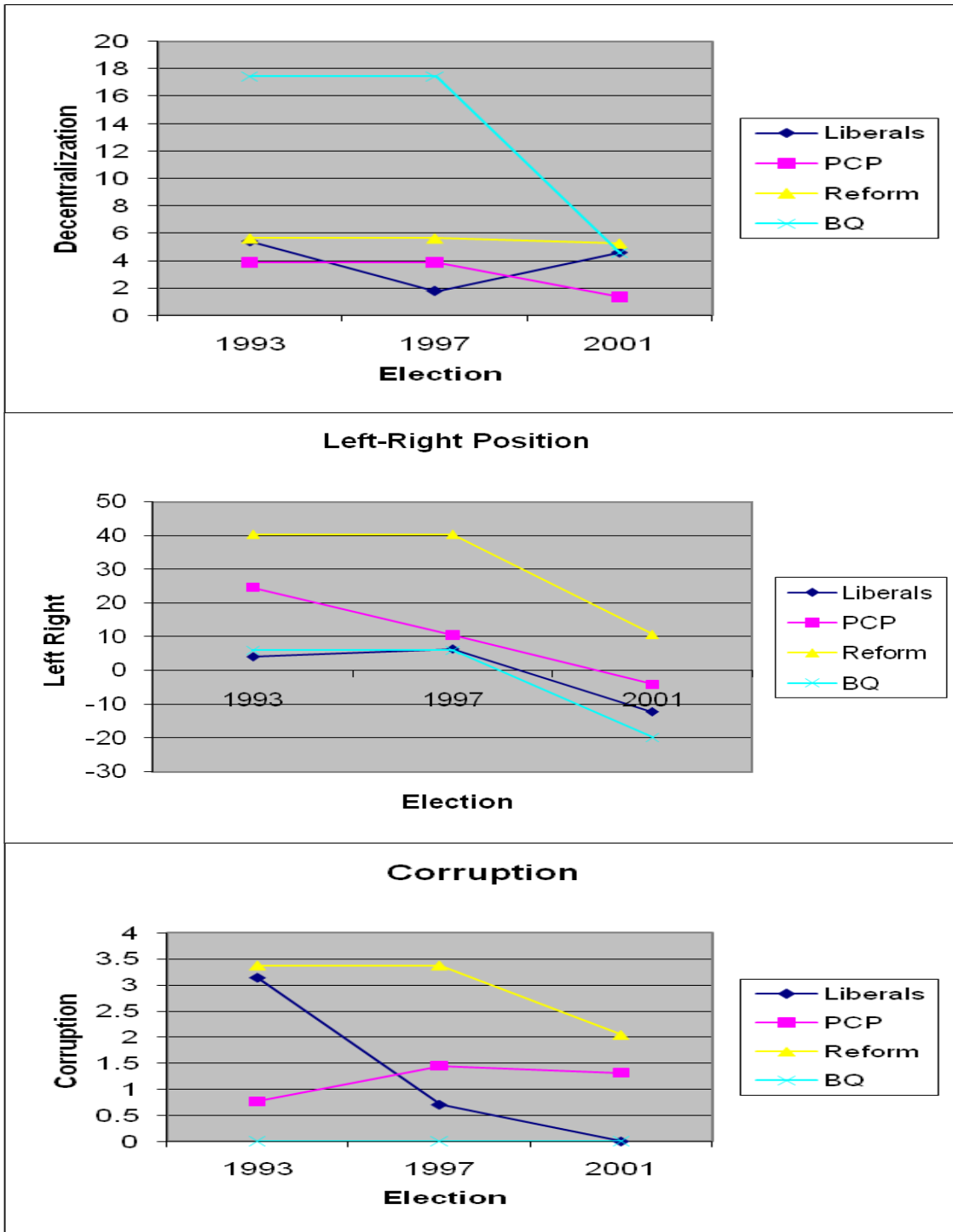


Figure 5.4 Party Positions in Selected Canadian Elections (CMP)

5.4.3 Empirics: 1993 Election

Why did voters shift their support to regional parties in Canada's 1993 election?

Do the hypotheses used to explain the Lega Nord's regional party success apply in a country with lower relative levels of corruption? In order to answer this question, I perform an analysis of post-election survey data conducted by the Canadian Election Study in 1993. The dependent variable is vote choice for a regional party. Voters that voted for a regional party (i.e., either Bloc Quebecois or the Reform Party) were coded as 1, and 0 otherwise. In addition, I perform analyses on vote choice for the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party separately to determine if different factors influenced votes for the different parties. Since the dependent variables are dichotomous, a logit model was selected to estimate the impact of the independent variables on the decision to vote for the regional parties.

The independent variables are operationalized as follows (see Appendix B). The two groups of hypotheses center on political openings and differentiation. A political opening is an issue area that is salient among the public. In particular, inequity perceptions (unfair fiscal transfers), relative regional patterns of patronage, and strong regional identities are expected to provide regional parties with a political opening.

Several different variables were used to measure these hypotheses. First, a general indicator that measured positive and negative feelings about the Canadian national civil service was used. The expectation is that if there was the perception that the civil service was being used for patronage, there would be a significant negative perception of the service among regional party voters. Secondly, another question measured trust in

government. Negative feelings of trust would be symptomatic of corruption, or, at minimum, unfair policies. Those that had a negative view of the government in general or those employed by the government are expected to be more likely to vote for a regional party.

Two separate variables were used to capture the inequity hypothesis (i.e., whether perceptions of unfairness over the distribution of resources increase regional party support). The first variable captures perceived fiscal costs, measuring whether respondents felt that the costs of federalism were unfair. The second variable measures whether respondents felt that the benefits of federalism were unfair. Increases in both variables (i.e. perceived high levels of unfairness) are expected to increase regional party support.

Another group of hypotheses centers on regional party differentiation. Regional parties are expected to achieve success based on national party co-optation attempts and the regional party's ability to make multidimensional appeals. Only if the regional party was able to differentiate itself from national parties would it achieve electoral success. Several different variables were used to attempt to measure the level of differentiation had by the regional parties. A general question was used to measure a voter's perception of the lack of actual choice among parties with regard to policies. If voters felt that previous national parties' policies were not significantly divergent, then regional parties would have an advantage, as multiple issues would be left unaddressed.

Finally, a variable was used to capture ethnic/regional differences. Strong regional identity is expected to increase regional support. In particular, it is expected to increase

regional party support if voters view the party as unique, and therefore the only party able to represent the regional differences. If the regional party is able to achieve differentiation on a regional issue, it will achieve success. The question asked to capture this concept was whether voters either felt that the Western Party was the only defender of English speaking portion of Canada, or that the BQ was the only defender of Quebec.⁷⁴

Finally, income and education were used as control variables. Table 5.1 presents the results (see below). The analysis largely supports that individuals who voted for either of the regional parties were affected by inequity, relative patronage, and differentiation variables.

While distrust in the government has no effect on vote choice, feelings towards the civil service had a specific impact. The more negative an individual's perception of the civil service, the more likely that individual was to vote for a regional party. Those who voted for the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois were significantly unhappy with the civil service.

The Western Party in particular linked corrupt federal contracts and services to the necessity for increased regional autonomy. Interestingly, while the Western Party made corruption one of the key themes of its campaign, the BQ did not explicitly single out the topic (see Figure 5.4). Nonetheless, the issue did have a significant effect on voters' choices for both of the regional parties.

⁷⁴ Unfortunately there was no separate question to measure salience of the issue versus simple issue ownership. Theoretically, they are distinct concepts. However, for this empirical test, the two concepts are combined. It should be noted that only salience in combination with differentiation is expected to affect vote choice (Balanger and Meguid 2008).

Perceptions of resource distribution were also an important factor in vote choice. As with the Lega Nord, the taxation hypotheses (i.e., whether the distribution of taxes affects voter decisions) failed to affect vote choice. For the Canadian regional parties, the costs (i.e., distribution of taxes) were not related to vote choice. However, while taxation and the perceived costs of federalism did not affect vote choice, the distribution of resources (i.e., the benefits of federalism) did matter. Those who felt that the benefits of federalism were unfair were significantly more likely to vote for their respective regional party. Again much like the case for the Lega, a voter's decision to vote for a regional party was influenced by the voter's perception of how money was spent. When voters felt that distribution of spending was unfair, they turned toward regional parties.

Finally, the data provided a confirmation of my expectations for the differentiation hypotheses. Lack of party choice had a significantly positive effect on vote choice for the BQ, but not for the Reform Party. This may have been the case because the Reform party had competed in the previous election in 1988. In both cases, those who saw the respective regional party as the sole defender of their region (defender of Quebec for the BQ and defender of English-speaking areas for the Reform Party) were more likely to vote for the regional party. When a regional party is viewed as unique for the region it purports to represent (i.e., significantly different from other parties), it will have more success.

Variable	Regional (Reform and BQ)	Reform Party	Reform Party	Bloc Quebecois Party	Bloc Quebecois Party
Are the costs of federalism unfair?	.244 (.203)	.138 (.253)	.216 (.232)	.577 (.526)	.163 (.282)
Are the benefits of federalism unfair?	.655** (.222)	.464* (.279)	.510** (.258)	.234 (.581)	.561* (.325)
Feelings towards Civil Service	-.034** (.004)	-.025** (.005)	-.029** (.004)	-.028** (.009)	-.019** (.005)
Level of Government Trust	-.096 (.181)	-.025 (.221)	-.105 (.202)	-.832 (.448)	-.047 (.244)
Do you feel you lack choices in parties?	.301* (.159)	.074 (.195)	.105 (.178)	.427 (.398)	.411* (.222)
Does this party protect English speakers		2.33** (.225)			
Does the party you vote for protect Quebec				6.21** (.471)	
Level of Education	-.031 (.042)	.031 (.053)	-.037 (.047)	.179 (.110)	-.004 (.056)
Level of Income	.110** (.036)	.151** (.045)	.136** (.041)	.122 (.091)	.002 (.049)
Constant	-1.59 (.874)	-2.75 (1.08)	-1.93 (.100)	-4.91 (2.25)	-3.09 (1.21)
Percent Correctly Predicted	.675.	.823	.769	.963	.863
Percent Reduction in Error	.081	.222	-.041	.722	.000

**Significant at .05

*Significant at .1

Table 5.1 Logit Model for Regional Party Support in Canada in 1993

In both cases, the regional parties utilized multiple issues to obtain differentiation. The BQ differentiated itself from other parties not only through its secessionist rhetoric but also via a strong leftist position. As a result, neither the Conservative party and its economically right position nor the Liberal party and its centrist economic and pro-centralization positions could co-opt the BQ. The Reform Party also differentiated itself on multiple dimensions. It advocated for increased autonomy, but also advocated for fairly right economic and social positions (e.g., deficit reduction and anti-multicultural positions). Nearly 75% of Reform voters were former Conservative party voters (Tossutti 1996).

As a result of this differentiation, the national parties suffered large defeats in both Quebec and the Western Provinces in 1993. The Liberal Party was poorly positioned to co-opt the autonomy demands and right position of the Reform Party, as that would have gone against the demands of its own core supporters. The Conservative Party was in an even worse position, as the opposing demands of the BQ and Reform party with regard to giving power to Quebec put the Conservatives in a no-win situation. The end result was a dramatic electoral success for the two regional parties and a historic collapse for the governing Conservative Party.

5.4.4 Shifting Fortunes Post 1993

Regional party success is expected to continue only if the regional party is able to maintain a level of differentiation. Both of the Canadian regional parties experienced variable levels of success following their initial success of 1993. The Reform party was

quite successful well beyond the 1993 election. Its electoral support continued to increase in the 1997 election. Without a national alternative on the right, there was no party positioned to co-opt both the autonomy demands and economically right positions of the Reform party. Furthermore, the Reform party began to downplay its image as only a Western party and portrayed itself more as a non-Quebec/Pro-English Canada party. This trend continued: in 2000, the party changed its label to the National Alliance in order to increase its chance of success in Ontario (Belanger 2007). Eventually, the leadership of the Reform/Canadian Alliance decided to run as a fully national party. So the party changed its label again and merged with the remains of the crippled old Conservative Party, forming a new Conservative Party of Canada. This change in label and de-emphasis of pro-Western policies was enough to satisfy both the Quebec voters and Canadian voters in general, as the newly formed party would win the 2006 election.

The BQ's success after 1993 was more variable. After the 1993 election, the BQ was actually the second largest party in Canada, gaining 54 seats. Since then, with the exception of the 2004 election, the BQ's fortune has declined. In both the 1997 and 2000 elections, the BQ lost votes to the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party was able to co-opt some votes via a shift in its own position on decentralization (the party pushed for further increases in autonomy) and an economic shift to the left. In addition to co-optation efforts by a national party, the BQ suffered internal leadership battles. The result was two consecutive elections with diminishing vote totals.

The 2004 election saw a reversal of the party's fortunes. The BQ capitalized on a series of corruption scandals that plagued the Liberal government. In particular, the

Liberal government was accused of using the Public Works Department as a source of funds for Liberal supporters, who repaid the favor with campaign donations (Gagnon and Herivault 2007). Within a month of the publication of the corruption report, the Liberals' popularity decreased by nearly 20 percentage points in Quebec, and the BQ regained its 1993 level of popularity (Ibid.).

However, this result was temporary, as the BQ declined again in the 2006 election. In 2006, the BQ lost ground to the newly reformed Conservative Party (composed largely of the former Reform Party). As opposed to the party that was devastated in 1993, the 2006 version of the Conservative Party was able to convince Quebec voters that it was able to address both the fiscal imbalance and the region's demands for autonomy (Ibid.). Given the regional parties' lack of multidimensional issues, specifically corruption, national parties were over time able to co-opt the regional party's positions, which resulted in vote loss.

5.4.5 Conclusion

Canada was selected as a case in an attempt to gauge how political openings, corruption, and behavioral expectations affected regional party success outside of Italy. Canada, as a decentralized country with ethnic cleavages, is expected to have high success in a region with ethnic differences. However, previous theories would predict stable electoral outcomes. Despite this, in the 1990s Canada experienced high level of regional party electoral volatility. This happened in a country without changes to its institutions and with a previous history of low levels of electoral volatility.

The increases in regional party success in Canada were in part fueled by perceptions of corruption and unfairness of the distribution of federal resources. As a result of failed attempts at institutional change by both the major national parties, a political opening existed in the form of highly salient, regionally-linked issues that allowed for the Reform and Bloc Quebecois parties to thrive. Even in a country that has far less national patronage and corruption than Italy, regional parties still benefited from voters upset about fiscal transfers. Furthermore, the 1993 election was not a unique event. The effects of corruption also helped the BQ in 2004.

Both of these regional parties also benefited from multidimensional appeals. In the case of the Reform Party, its explicitly conservative ideology on both economic and social issues allowed it to supplant the national Conservative party as the dominant party of the Western Provinces. In Quebec, the BQ's center-left message allowed it to gain votes from the Liberal Party.

It should also be noted that regional party success occurred both in regions with linguistic differences (Quebec) and in regions without ethno-linguistic differences (the Western Provinces). While not to dismiss ethnic differences as an important factor in explaining vote choice, the fact that both regional parties succeeded nearly simultaneously does show that there are limitations to ethnic explanations for regional party success. Ethnic potential did not allow Quebec to have a nationally viable regional party before regional parties emerged in the West: in fact, they only had a nationally representative regional party after unhappiness over the distribution of political and fiscal resources became more salient.

One alternative explanation involves the question of competency. Did the failure of the national governments (whether Liberal, Conservative or both) in the 1980s increase regional party success? As noted, their failures did play a role both by increasing the salience of the issues as well as discrediting the national parties. When the national parties were unable to demonstrate their superiority to regional parties in producing tangible policy results, it provided a political opening for regional parties to take advantage of.

The sudden increase in regional party success in Canada occurred in an environment of few institutional changes, and in parts of the country that had differing levels of linguistic differences. In Quebec, a regional party was able to succeed against national parties when given a political opening. Its center-left ideology and anti-corruption platform increased its level of success in both 1993 and 2004. The Reform party, by comparison, was able to harness anger over distribution of resources and corruption in 1993. Given the inability of the Liberal party to successfully co-opt its issues, the Reform party (and later Canadian Alliance) continued to increase its success over time. While initially a regional party, the Reform party evolved, changed labels, and eventually merged with other parties to form a national party. Despite operating in an environment very different from Italy in terms of levels of corruption, centralization, and linguistic differences, political openings and behavioral expectations influenced regional party electoral volatility.

5.5 Scottish National Party

The Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed in 1934 by the merger of two other regional parties, the Scottish Party and the National Party. For most of its history, the SNP languished as a minor party, earning less than 5% of the vote in Scotland until 1970 (see Figure 5.6 below). However, the SNP in the 1970s experienced a dramatically different outcome. In 1970, it received over 10% of the Scottish vote, nearly double its previous high (Dardanelli 2005). In October of 1974, the SNP had its best ever electoral result with 30% of the Scottish vote, which made it the second largest party in Scotland. However, this support was short-lived: the SNP would not again receive over 20% of its region's vote until 1992. As a result of its 1974 electoral success, the SNP has had a large role in influencing national parties' policies. As Dardanelli (2005) writes, "It is widely accepted in the literature that Labour's change of policy [devolution] was a direct consequence of the electoral threat represented by the rise of the SNP" (Ibid.: 31). The Labour Party adopted its policy of decentralization in 1974 and implemented the policy in 1997, in large part because of the electoral threat of the SNP.

As with the previous case studies, the Scottish National Party is a regional party that experienced high levels of electoral volatility. The SNP was founded in a region with a strong ethnic identity, and for over 50 years competed against the same national parties under the same electoral rules in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, the SNP has experienced a great deal of electoral volatility over the course of its history.

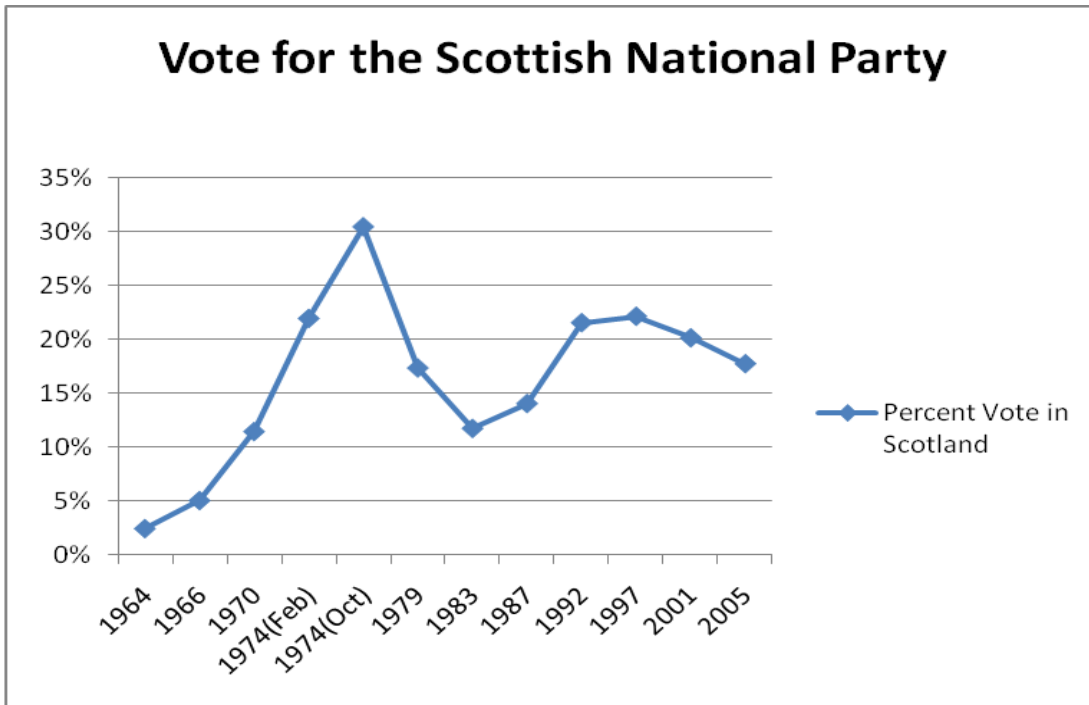


Figure 5.5 Scottish National Party Electoral Success (Source Dardanelli 2005)

Previous theories of regional party success do not fully explain the SNP's success. Change in the level of success for the SNP was not simply a function of overall increasing electoral volatility in the United Kingdom. Electoral volatility is expected to increase if there are changes to a country's electoral rules or fiscal space, or if a country has weak social cleavages (Nooruddin and Chhibber 2008). Without these factors present, regional party electoral support is not expected to vary. However, over the past 40 years the United Kingdom has experienced dramatic short term fluctuations in the level of electoral support for regional parties, despite these factors being relatively constant.

Furthermore, theories of regional party support do not adequately explain the SNP's electoral fortunes. While in 1997 there was a decentralization of political authority, the SNP's variable electoral results occurred well before the institutional changes took place. Likewise, Scotland's economic position relative to the rest of the country has not dramatically shifted. While there has been a long term trend toward increased regionalism and even secessionism in Scotland due to the European Union (Jolly 2006), an explanation is needed for the electoral success the SNP has experienced. Finally, the SNP is deeply rooted in an ethnic cleavage (Scottish nationalism) and therefore is not expected to radically shift.

Examining the ebb and flow of the SNP's success allows leverage on two questions. The first question is what causes regional party electoral volatility in a general sense. To explore the question, two time periods will be analyzed: the rise and rapid decline of the SNP in the 1970s, and its re-emergence in the 1990s. A particular focus will be on how political openings, behavioral expectations, and regional party differentiation affected this regional party's success.

An examination of the SNP also provides important contrasts to the previous cases. In the previous examples, patronage and corruption caused a political opening for regional parties to exploit. However, unlike the previously explored regional parties, the SNP operated and continues to operate in a country without an extensive problem of patronage or corruption. The United Kingdom is a country with relatively low levels of patronage and corruption compared to the rest of the world (Doig 2003). Does the inequity hypothesis (i.e. unhappiness over fiscal transfers) still influence vote choice

without issues of corruption playing a large role? This case was analyzed in order to determine whether a political opening can exist to help a regional party without the presence of patronage or corruption. Furthermore, if corruption or patronage are not large issues, do multidimensional appeals still influence vote choice for regional parties?

Given these two questions, exploring the SNP allows for further testing of the overall hypotheses. It also allows an exploration of the limitations of understanding regional party success only through the lens of corruption. To this end, I will analyze the SNP's initial rise to success in the early 1970s and its dramatic drop in the late 1970s. I will then use survey data to analyze the SNP's electoral success in the 1997 election despite co-optation attempts by the national party.

5.5.1 The SNP and the 1970s

In the 1970s, the Scottish National Party experienced an extreme boom-and-bust electoral success cycle. Its support nearly tripled from 11% in 1970 to over 30% in the October 1974 general election. In fact, the SNP has yet to equal its 1974 vote totals. However, this electoral success was fleeting. By 1983, its support was nearly back to the 11% of 1970. During the postwar era, most other parties in the United Kingdom had generally low levels of electoral volatility (Bartolini and Mair 1990). What explains this drastic variation in the level of the SNP's electoral success?

Before the late 1960s, the Scottish National Party had consciously avoided becoming a multi-issue party. As noted earlier, multiple dimensional appeals might be avoided as they can cause internal divisions. The fusion of the Scottish party and

National Party had produced internal inconsistencies on matters other than the issue of independence. The Scottish Party was founded as a right-wing party much like with the Conservative Party, while the National Party was founded as a left-wing party more in line with the Labour Party (Lynch 2002). As a result, when the two parties merged, the new leadership avoided issues that could cause internal division. These divisions were so severe that the SNP did not even take a stance on World War II (History of the SNP 1991). Over time, however, these internal divisions began to dissipate. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the resistance to multiple issues faded for two reasons: 1) the discovery of the North Sea oil, and 2) the branding of the SNP as a Social Democratic Party (Lee 1976).

The discovery of North Sea oil, and revenue generated from the oil in the early 1970s, was consciously used by the SNP to complement its initial calls for independence (Lynch 2002). In particular, the SNP launched an “It’s Scotland’s Oil” campaign in 1972 to stress the benefits oil could have for an independent Scotland. As the head of the SNP asserted in 1972, “arguments in financial terms against self-government are going to lack credibility in the future, Scotland’s oil resources are recognized as an immense economic magnitude” (Scots Independent 1972). The salience of the issue of oil and potential revenue from oil particularly increased after the oil embargo of 1973.

The North Sea oil also helped the SNP brand itself on the right-left continuum. The possibility of funding social programs allowed the SNP to begin staking out a position as a left party. In 1974, for the first time, it declared itself a Social Democratic party and began to make specific appeals to unions (Lynch 2002: 133). In fact, the SNP

not only made appeals to unions, but attempted to establish Scottish trade unions (Ibid.). The increased salience of oil and the potential usage of the oil for social democratic policy purposes helped the SNP achieve electoral results it has not since equaled. The SNP was able to argue that that Scotland was receiving less government spending than it felt it deserved. In essence, the arrangement imposed by the national government on the gains from the oil resources had resulted in fewer fiscal resources being spent on Scotland. Furthermore, these unfair fiscal transfers were linked to social policy. As with previous case studies, unfair fiscal transfers in combination with multidimensional appeals helped this regional party succeed.

The national parties had varying responses to the SNP's success. The Conservative Party (traditionally the second largest national party in Scotland in the 1970s) incorporated into its platform support of some level of devolution. Specifically, in 1968, the party proposed the creation of self-government, although it remained non-committal in terms of how such a policy should be implemented (Dardanelli 2005). The Conservative electorate was, at best, divided on this topic. This policy changed under Thatcher to make the party far more anti-devolution before the 1979 election (Meguid 2008).

The Labour Party (traditionally the largest national party in Scotland) also moved to support some level of decentralization for Scotland. In 1974, the Labour Party officially adopted the position of pro-devolution (Meguid 2008) and placed a devolution

referendum on the ballot in 1979.⁷⁵ It was in the face of these co-optation attempts by both the Labour Party and, to a lesser degree, the Conservative Party that the SNP was able to achieve such high electoral success in 1974. In fact, the SNP's vote totals increased nearly 50% in 1974. Despite co-optation attempts by the national parties, the SNP maintained and increased its electoral support by introducing several salient issues to its programmatic appeal that directly reinforced its core message of independence.

However, in the very next election the SNP's support plummeted to 17.3%, just over half its former level of support. Even more striking was the party's loss of nine of its eleven seats. Its supporters went to both the Conservative and Labour Parties. There were several reasons changes to the level of electoral success. The first is that there was general disillusion over the electoral potential of the SNP (Lynch 2006). While the SNP achieved 30% of the 1974 vote in Scotland, it only received eleven seats. In contrast, the Labour Party won forty seats with 34% of the vote, and the Conservative Party, with a smaller percentage (24.7%), won five seats more than the SNP. Secondly, the SNP had recently lost a crucial referendum on the issue of devolution. In 1979, the Labour Party put a referendum on the ballot to increase Scotland's autonomy. After substantial debate, the SNP agreed to support the measure, but despite the support of both the SNP and the Labour Party, the referendum was defeated, albeit narrowly. Similar to previously examined cases, the regional party suffered from general disillusionment after it failed at

⁷⁵ Within the Labour Party, there was severe disagreement on devolution for Scotland, and the party was unable to maintain unity on the issue. As a result, the positions of party members and the official position of the party differed during this time period.

influencing policy. In this case, potential voter doubts over the SNP's potential may have played a role in reducing the regional party's appeal.

In addition to the increased doubts about the SNP's effectiveness, its differentiation on economic issues was also reduced. In particular, there was an erosion of the SNP's social democratic image in 1979 (Dardanelli 2005). This was partially a result of a sharp preexisting division between leftists and non-leftists within the party. Even among the SNP's parliamentarians there was constant public airing of differences about economic policies, which blurred the party's actual position.⁷⁶

Adding to the SNP's struggles was external pressure on the SNP's attempt to create a Social Democratic image. In 1974, the SNP voted against the Labour government and helped bring it down. In retaliation, the Labour party disputed the image of the SNP as a left party, often referring to the regional party as "Tartan Tories." As such, voter perceptions that the SNP was a party of the left decreased. Finally, it is possible that, given the economic recession Britain was experiencing at the time, regional issues became less salient.

As a result, the SNP had far less electoral success in 1979. It only won 17% of the vote and received only three seats in the parliament. These poor electoral results continued throughout the 1980s; the SNP was able to retain only a fraction of the electoral results it has obtained in the 1970s. In 1992, however, the SNP regained some of its success, receiving 21% of the vote. As a result of this electoral success, the 1997

⁷⁶ In addition to internal conflict over right-left issues, there was intense internal disagreement on whether the SNP should support devolution or independence.

election featured a dynamic interaction of national parties trying to co-opt and defuse the rising electoral threat and the SNP trying to avoid co-optation.

5.5.2 *The SNP and Devolution (1997- 2001)*

As Meguid (2005) predicts, a rising niche party should result in the threatened national parties attempting to co-opt the rising party’s policy positions. This is precisely what happened in 1997 (see Table 5.2, below). All the national parties increased their support for devolution policies. Both the Labour and Liberal Democratic parties signed on to a specific policy of issuing a referendum for a Scottish parliament as well as the possibility for increased taxation powers for Scotland. While the Conservative Party had been hostile to the idea of devolution under Thatcher, in 1997 it moved to embrace certain aspects thereof. Given that all three national parties moved to co-opt the issue of devolution from the SNP, the expectation would be that the SNP should have had less electoral success. This did not happen: instead, the SNP maintained its electoral output, moving from 21.5% to 22.1% of the vote.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>LDP</u>	<u>Conservative</u>
1992	3.3	3.2	0.7
1997	5.4	4.5	4.0

Table 5.2 Manifesto Changes for National Parties on the Issue of Decentralization (Comparative Manifesto Project)

Before discussing the SNP's actions in response to the co-optation attempts, it is important to place the Scottish voter in context relative to the rest of the country. Scottish voters since the 1970s have been primarily motivated by two major issues: regional autonomy and redistribution of wealth (Lynch 2005). The 1997 election was no exception to this pattern.⁷⁷ For example, to measure support for redistribution, voters were asked "How much do you agree with the statement that income/wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary working citizens?" In Scotland, 71% of those asked either agreed or strongly agreed that government should redistribute wealth to working citizens. This is compared to England, where only 59% of voters agreed or strongly agreed with redistribution of wealth. Furthermore, Scottish voters strongly supported increased autonomy. When asked about Scottish autonomy, 80% of those surveyed in Scotland felt that a change in the status quo was needed, with the median position advocating limited autonomy and a parliament (about 50% of the voters).

There was significant overlap on these two issues. Of those who felt that Scotland should have a parliament with taxation powers, 76% agreed or strongly agreed with the redistribution of wealth. Of those who agreed or strongly agreed with redistribution, 47% agreed that Scotland should have a parliament with taxation powers. In fact, nearly 34% of those interviewed in Scotland agreed with both increased redistribution and the implementation of a Scottish parliament. The data clearly indicates that the average Scottish voter was to the left of the average English voter, and more in favor of Scottish autonomy than the average English voter.

⁷⁷ All data are from the 1997 British Election Survey unless otherwise specified.

Given the general characteristics of the Scottish voter, we can determine which issues and factors increased the likelihood of a voter to choose the SNP. In order to understand the exact effect various factors had on vote choice for the SNP election, a statistical analysis was conducted using the 1997 British Election Survey. For the analysis, I use a multinomial logit model to analyze which factors influenced voting for the SNP, as compared to the other major national parties. The dependent variable is vote choice: when did voters select the SNP as opposed to the major national parties (the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party)?⁷⁸ As opposed to previous

The independent variables are operationalized as follows (see Table B.3 in the appendix for descriptive statistics). Political openings can occur when norms of equity (e.g., fairness) are violated. To measure this issue, the question “Does England benefit more from Scotland economically?” was used (noted in Table 5.3 as England Benefit). The question is used to measure the extent of perceived fiscal transfers. Excluding the issue of oil, Scotland receives more fiscal resources than it sends to the rest of the nation, specifically England; however, voter perceptions do not necessarily follow reality.

To measure the differentiation hypothesis, the question “How different is the SNP from its closest rival?” was used to measure to what extent a voter viewed the SNP as different. Further variables were included to measure a voter’s ideological stance on redistribution of wealth and level of autonomy for Scotland. Finally, two controls were

⁷⁸ As opposed to the two previous example, the United Kingdom represents a political environment with a limited number of political parties as well as all national parties competed in Scotland (e.g., similar political environments) consequently a multilogit model was used.

used: the first is a dummy variable constructed to capture whether a voter had a government job or government contract job, and the second is income.

The results of the multinomial logit are presented in Table 5.3. The statistical analysis largely confirms the prediction that patronage, specifically government jobs, is not a source of vote choice in the United Kingdom, but behavioral expectations still play a part in vote choice for regional parties.

Variable	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Dems
Employment in public sector	-503 (.731)	-.194 (.441)	.460 (.569)
SNP Different	.855** (.347)	.657** (.198)	.764** (.293)
England Benefit	-1.45** (.047)	-.438 (.454)	-1.03* (.579)
Pro-Centralization	2.57** (6.52)	1.17** (.256)	1.41** (.316)
Anti-Redistribution	.083** (1.18)	-.496** (.230)	-.211 (.300)
Level of Income	.083 (.070)	-.005 (.047)	.048 (.060)
Constant	-12.15 (2.09)	-1.57 (.925)	-4.85 (1.33)

Base Comparison = The SNP

Multinomial logistic regression

Number of obs = 176

LR chi2(21) = 157.75

Prob > chi2 = 0

Log likelihood = -135.92443

Pseudo R2 = 0.3672

****Significant at .05**

***Significant at .1**

Table 5.3 Multinomial Logit Analysis of the 1997 UK Election

Individuals who felt that England benefited more from Scotland being in the United Kingdom than Scotland benefited from being a part of the United Kingdom were more likely to vote for the SNP in comparison to the other national parties. The SNP had run on a platform that Scotland was a net provider rather than net benefactor, while the Labour and Conservative parties made the reverse argument (Lynch 2006: 207). As with the previous case analyses, when a voter perceives that his/her region is not benefitting, he/she is more willing to vote for a regional party. The perceptions of unfair fiscal transfers in this case benefited the regional party.

This effect was strong, despite the lack of patronage or corruption in the British system. Those who identified themselves as having a public job were not any more likely to vote for any national party as opposed to the Scottish National Party. Given that the UK is considered a country with relatively low levels of corruption and patronage, this is not surprising. In addition, during the 1997 campaign the SNP specifically campaigned for an increase in government jobs (specifically an increase in healthcare workers) (Lynch 2006). This case study shows us that unhappiness over fiscal transfers is not dependent on the existence of patronage or corruption, and instead can have an effect independently.

Differentiation did matter in vote choice for the SNP. The clearest example was when voters were asked how different the SNP was from the closest perceived national party. Typically, when asked which party the SNP was closest to, the answer given was the Labour Party (approximately 4 out of 5 voters responded with this answer). However, the more the SNP was viewed as different from the national party, the more successful

the SNP was (see Figure 5.8 below). The effect of differentiation, controlling for all other variables, is startling. Voters who preferred only autonomy and median levels of redistribution but did not perceive any level of differentiation for the SNP were only 3.7% more likely to vote for the regional party. However, those who perceived that was a great level of difference between the SNP and other parties were 12.2% more likely to vote for the SNP than someone who did not. Those who felt that the SNP was not even close to any other parties were 20.1% more likely to vote for the SNP. In other words, even if the person was not heavily in favor of independence for Scotland (a different position the SNP held v. Labour), those that viewed the SNP as very different were significantly more likely to vote the SNP than for any other party.

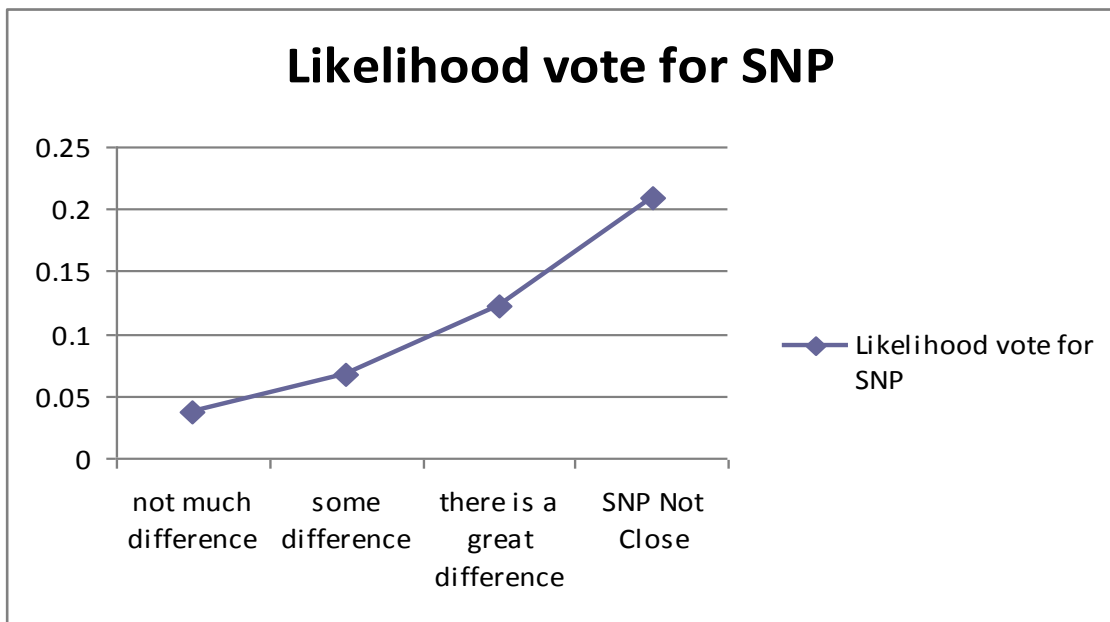


Figure 5.6 Predicted Probabilities of Effect of Differentiation on Vote Choice

The SNP also benefitted by being a regional party that was socially democratic. By positioning itself on two dimensions, it was able to make gains. First, the SNP, as a secessionist party, positioned itself to attract voters who wanted more autonomy (if not independence) for Scotland. Those who were in favor of a strong central government were significantly more likely to vote for a national party. Conversely, as voters favored increased levels of autonomy (with the extreme choice being independence), they became more likely to vote for the SNP rather than any other national party. In 1987, the SNP began to use the European Union to make independence more palatable (Jolly 2006, Lynch 2006). In particular, Jolly (2006) notes that the European Union caused voters who previously had only supported autonomy to shift their support to pro-independence. With the EU, many of the deterrents to Scottish independence (renegotiating trade ties, the need for a central bank, etc.) were ameliorated, and therefore the SNP reduced the negative stigma of independence.⁷⁹

In addition to the autonomy dimension, the issue of redistribution was also beneficial for the SNP, especially relative to what was formerly the second largest party in Scotland, the Conservative Party. Those who identified as being more in favor of governmental redistribution were significantly more likely to vote for the SNP relative to the Conservative Party. Voter perceptions of the SNP shifted dramatically to the left in 1997, particularly among working class voters (Lynch 2006). This was partly a result of opposition to the poll tax the Conservative Party had passed during the 1980s. The

⁷⁹ It is unclear whether an independent Scotland would automatically be granted independence within the European Union. However, as Jolly (2006) demonstrates, the SNP pushed this belief and a number of voters accepted it. At least for electoral politics, the truth of the statement is less important than the SNP's effective usage of the EU to gain acceptance of its independence platform and votes.

Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher had instituted regressive taxes and decreased spending on social welfare, which decreased the level of fiscal transfers to Scotland. A political opening from the Conservative party's shift to the right meant that the SNP had one fewer national party to contend with.

The 1997 election is a good example of how multiple issue areas affected electoral success. In 1997, the SNP was faced with three separate national parties that had moved in their manifesto to adopt various forms of decentralization. The analysis provided shows that the SNP's rise to become the second largest party in Scotland after its precipitous decline in the 1980s was a function of the party's embrace of two issues: increased autonomy and a solid left position. According to Jolly (2006), the SNP used the EU as a way of increasing public acceptance of increased autonomy and even independence. However, a second factor in their popularity was their solid left position. This position allowed them to gain votes that had previously gone to the Conservative party.

The major electoral problem the SNP faced in 1997 (and continues to face today) was competition against the largest left national party, the Labour party. Voters of the left still preferred Labour to the SNP, and Labour support for devolution may have also co-opted some of the SNP's support. If voters did not perceive a major difference between Labour and the SNP, they preferred the Labour party. Only when the perceived level of differentiation between the two increased did voters turn away from Labour and toward the SNP.

5.5.3 Conclusion

The preceding analysis of the Scottish National Party shows three things. First is the continuing theme of the ebb and flow of electoral success for regional parties. Not to discount previous explanations, including institutional change, economic differences, or ethnic cleavages, it is clear that regional party success can quickly shift while those structural factors stay constant. Even given Scotland's strong regional identity, the SNP's success went from 11% in 1970 up to 30% in 1974 back down to 12% in 1983 and back up to 22% in 1997. These short-term fluctuations require explanations beyond the conventional theories.

Secondly, this analysis attempts to complement previous analyses. While patronage and corruption are one pathway for regional parties to succeed, this analysis shows that they are not the only path. The fiscal transfers that can affect regional party success encompass far more than corruption and patronage. In the case of the United Kingdom, the SNP has been most successful when it was able to convince voters that the United Kingdom was benefiting fiscally more from Scotland than Scotland was benefiting from the UK. In the early 1970s, the North Sea oil provided specific context to those claims and provided a political opening for the regional party to exploit. Even into the 1990s, when the North Sea oil issue had lost its salience, the issue of fiscal transfers remained an important source of regional party success.

Finally, this analysis shows that behavioral expectations affect regional party success. In the late 1970s, the SNP lost its distinctiveness on the right-left dimension due to national party maneuvers and internal fissures. The SNP was only able to make a

successful comeback when it was able to rebrand itself as a left party, and the Conservative party provided a political opening by shifting to the right. But in 1997, despite every national party attempting to co-opt the SNP on the regional autonomy dimension, the SNP was able to maintain its electoral success. This was a direct result of the SNP's ability to maintain some level of differentiation through multidimensional appeals. As voters increased the degree to which they viewed the SNP as different from other national parties, they turned away from the closest national party and toward the regional party.

5.6 Extending the Argument

This chapter extends the theory of the effects of political openings and voter behavioral expectations on regional party success. The Lega Nord is often thought of puzzling and unique due to its electoral volatility and its constant shifts in party platforms (from autonomy to independence, from pro-EU to anti-EU, or from fuzzy centrist to radical right). However, this chapter has shown that variations in electoral success or in programmatic appeals are not unique to the Lega. The Belgian VU shifted from pro-autonomy to independence, and from center-right to center-left. It went from being electorally irrelevant to being an important member of government before ultimately dissolving. The Canadian Reform and BQ parties' electoral success suddenly changed in a highly stable environment, as a political opening caused by corruption and unhappiness over federal reforms helped both regional parties. In the UK, this historically has also had low levels of electoral volatility, witnessed high levels of volatility for the SNP. While initially the SNP refused to take positions on anything other than secession, it was able to

succeed when a combination of dissatisfaction over the allocation of oil-related resources and branding itself as a socially progressive party allowed it to achieve high levels of success.

Despite variation in electoral rules, coalition potential, amount of patronage/corruption, ethnic differences, and countries, all the case studies showed that my proposed theory can be generalized. The theory notes that regional parties will see increases in the level of their success when supplied with a political opening. Political openings can occur when there is increased unhappiness over allocation of resources, and specifically when there are increases in the perception among voters that their region is not receiving a fair amount of resources. This is often, though not always, the result of government allocating resources via patronage or corruption. Despite corruption not being as serious of an issue in other nations as it was in Italy, it still was a major motivator of voters in a number of the cases. Furthermore, even in countries without massive amounts of corruption, such as the UK, unhappiness over the distribution of resources still increased regional party success.

However, the theory also notes that for regional electoral success to continue, a regional party needs to maintain a level of differentiation from other parties on multiple dimensions. Without this differentiation, co-optation occurs and electoral support declines. In all of the cases analyzed, multidimensional appeals (typically on a right-left dimension) were stressed to differentiate the regional party. If an issue lost its salience, or if a regional party lost its differentiation due to co-optation or joining a government (as was the case of the VU), the regional party success ebbed.

This explanation proved to be superior to a number of alternative explanations. In all cases, variation in regional party support occurred while structural factors such as economic differences or institutional change (e.g., electoral laws, level of decentralization) remained constant. The variation also happened in countries that were largely lacking in high levels of electoral volatility or shrinking fiscal spaces. My explanation, which involves dynamic voter perceptions (specifically on patronage, corruption, and the equity of fiscal transfers) and the interaction of party positions, appears to have more explanatory power than a number of alternative theories.

Furthermore, neither linguistic nor ethnic differences appeared to have a systematic effect on limiting electoral volatility (i.e., variable levels of success). The VU, BQ and SNP, all of which claim to be representing a distinct ethnicity, exhibited high levels of volatility. A lack of ethnic differences did not prevent the Lega or the Western Party in Canada from having high levels of electoral success. This is not to say that ethnic differences don't affect regional party formation or even that party's success, but they don't appear to be a sufficient factor in explaining variation in the levels of regional party electoral success.

One alternative explanation not previously addressed in a direct manner is campaign effects, competency in particular. Bellucci (2008) writes that competency (e.g., how voters view a party's ability to enact policies) can have an effect independent and separate from issue ownership or differentiation on vote choice. How did competency affect vote choice for regional parties? The VU in Belgium was the only party of the four studied that had experiences in government. As opposed to the Lega, it was highly

successful in helping to pass legislation that actually achieved its campaign promises, which were to increase the level of regional autonomy. However, the VU was not rewarded for its ability to enact change. In the elections following both of its experiences in government, the VU experienced heavy losses. This is similar to the Italian case study, in that the Lega experienced losses when it was part of government, and only through radical manifesto and alliance changes did the party reverse these losses. These losses may be a result of a loss of differentiation, or they may simply be a result of the issues losing some level of salience once they were enacted into policy. Regardless, it does seem to indicate that regional parties do not benefit from competency.

There may be some evidence that regional parties might lose some credibility when it comes to referendum. In both the cases of the United Kingdom and Canada (specifically Quebec), referendum losses on the topic of regional autonomy/secession seemed to precede electoral losses. It may be the case that the regional party is seen as having lost competency in furthering the cause of regional autonomy, or it may be the case that the referendum loss caused the issue of regionalism to decrease in salience. Further research should be considered on the effects of referendum on regional party support.

A final issue that this analysis has indirectly dealt with is how regional parties are affected by electoral rules, specifically single member majority districts versus proportional representation. *Ceteris paribus*, proportional representation is expected to benefit smaller parties due to the lower thresholds. However, as regional parties are by

definition territorially concentrated, the normal hindrances that plurality voting systems place on smaller parties might not apply.

The previous analysis hints at the different roles played by electoral laws in terms of a party's potential for taking part in a government. In a proportional representation system, given the increased likelihood for numerous parties, a regional party becomes more likely to take part in government. As a part of government, a regional party is at risk from loss of differentiation. However, in single member district systems, regional parties are less likely to take part in government. Furthermore, given the reduced number of parties, regional parties may better capture protest votes (voters simply voting against the status quo). As such, both systems of electoral laws may have very different causal mechanisms for increasing regional party electoral success.

In summary, while structural conditions such as economic or ethnic differences are necessary for regional party existence, their electoral volatility requires a different explanation. In particular, non-structural factors such as perceived "unfair" fiscal transfers, specifically patronage, help create political openings for a regional party. However, electoral declines and further electoral volatility can occur if the party is unable to achieve differentiation on multiple issues, a function of the dynamic interaction of national and regional parties' platforms and voter perceptions. The ebb and flow of regional party success, therefore, is also a function of dynamic non-structural factors.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In 1996, Umberto Bossi stood on the banks of the Po River as he and his party symbolically signaled the North's desire for separation from the rest of Italy by founding the new state of Padania (Bull and Gilbert: 111). While the Lega fell far short of its goal for independence, 1996 capped a remarked ascendancy for the party. A decade before, a powerful regional party in the industrial heartland of Italy would have been nearly unthinkable, as Italy had been well documented for its frozen cleavage structure and low electoral volatility. Yet, a decade after Bossi's procession on the banks of the Po, the Lega Nord would only be seated in parliament through alliances. The explanation of the rise and fall of the Lega Nord is part of a larger question of what explains the electoral volatility of regional parties.

Since 1945, there have been over 200 ethnically- and territorially-based political parties in Western Europe alone (Tossutti 1996). In many cases, these parties' success has shifted far more rapidly than structural conditions would have predicted. This is not a trivial matter, as increases in the level of electoral success can greatly affect a country's polity. Increases in the level of electoral success for regional parties can increase the incentives for national parties to attempt to co-opt regional party platforms, which might include issues like restructuring for the state (e.g. decentralization). Increases in the level of success for regional parties can also increase the chances for ethnic or regional

violence. As such, understanding the phenomenon of regional party electoral volatility is important for understanding the increasing likelihood for policy and political change in a system.

In this dissertation I have argued that dynamic non-structural factors, specifically political openings and the voter behavioral expectations, have powerful influence on a regional party's electoral success. Negative fiscal transfers, specifically when these transfers violate norms of equity (often times due to relative increases in the level of patronage or increases in corruption) tend to upset voters. This can lead to dramatic increases in regional party success. However, this new equilibrium of voting for a regional party is unstable, as national party co-optation attempts and a regional party's multidimensional appeals constantly interact to determine the level of regional party success.

This conclusion will be divided into two sections. The first will summarize the major theoretical and empirical findings of the study. It will explore whether these findings have implications for more general phenomena and public policy, and what the findings mean in terms of how regional parties normatively influence democracy. The second section will consider possible extensions to the theoretical and empirical findings. In particular, I will examine how my findings might interact with state recalibration (whether in the form of increased autonomy to the sub-national level or increases in the level of supra-national authority). In addition, I will consider to what extent my findings for regional parties are generally applicable to other niche parties.

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Empirical Findings

This dissertation has focused on how non-structural factors can affect the ebb and flow of regional party electoral success. In Chapter 2, while I note that structural factors like ethnic differences, economic differences or institutional differences can affect regional party success, I argue that they are insufficient to explain the rapid fluctuations that often characterize regional parties. Building on different literatures, I show that regional parties located in wealthier regions often will exploit unhappiness over fiscal transfers that violate norms of equity. This can occur if fiscal transfers are influenced by corruption or the perception of corruption. This can also be the case if regional patterns of patronage emerge, often due to unequal distributions of wealth, causing some regions to be less involved in the patronage network. As a result, there can be a political opening which can allow regional parties to capture a large number of voters.

However, this success increases the incentives for national parties to co-opt a rising niche party (Meguid 2005). National parties, given their superior resource advantage as well as the increased likelihood for government formation, are positioned to co-opt regional party voters by shifting their own platform closer to that of the regional party. However, not all national party attempts to co-opt a regional party are successful. Regional parties can use multidimensional appeals to block co-optation attempts. Multidimensional appeals increase the salience of the core message of the regional party (e.g., regionalism issues) and provide disincentives for national parties to attempt to co-

opt both messages. Basically, multidimensional appeals can increase the level of differentiation between regional parties and national parties.

Chapters 3 and 4 examined these hypotheses in the Italian context. Qualitative data involving interviews and historical analysis came to conclusions similar to those drawn by quantitative survey data. For most of post-war Italian history, regional parties had limited national level success. However, increases in Southern-directed patronage, increases in the salience of corruption, and a political system that avoided co-opting Northern demands for regional autonomy resulted in a political opening that the newly formed Lega Nord was able to exploit. Its anti-corruption and anti-state message reinforced its core message of regional autonomy, which allowed for its initial breakthrough in the early 1990s. The perception that resources were being unfairly allocated, that the North was a net payer, and that Northern voters, specifically those in small and medium enterprises, were politically sidelined created a political opening for a regional party.

The sudden increase in the Lega's vote totals were expected to cause immediate decreases for the regional party, as national parties would co-opt the Lega's issues. While the newly emerged Forza Italia attempted to co-opt the Lega's positions, the Lega was initially able to stabilize and even improve upon its previous successes. The Lega, through varying appeals such as anti-corruption in 1994 and pro-EU and perceived centrist position in 1996, was able to avoid co-optation and even gain votes from Forza Italia. However, once the Lega was no longer able to maintain multidimensional appeals that had complementarity with its core message, and after voters noted the party's

inability to influence policy in 1996, there was further electoral volatility. Nearly half the Lega's voters exited the party, mainly for the national right party, Forza Italia. Whether it was the Lega's inability to find salient issues that would not have fractured the party, critical missteps by the party leadership that undercut its status as a party of the entire North (as opposed to just Lombardy), or some combination of factors, the Lega was unable to maintain a second salient dimension, which resulted in massive electoral losses.

Chapter 5 examined regional party electoral volatility in a number of different settings to determine if the hypotheses were specific to the Italian electorate or if they had application in different settings. In all four of the cases, despite variations in the types of electoral rules, ethno-linguistic differences, length of time of regional party existence, levels of corruption and patronage, or inclusion in government, perception over the unfair distribution of resources resulted in increases in electoral success. In particular, a political opening in which national parties are unable or unwilling to address perceived inequities appears to be necessary for initial regional party successes. While in a number of cases patronage and corruption were catalysts for the initial success, they were not necessary: in Scotland, oil distribution proved to be an effective salient issue for the Scottish National Party.

Once a regional party achieves success, it becomes likely that national parties will attempt to co-opt the bloc of voters. Increased success also could lead to heightened voter expectations that the regional party can influence policy (whether by drawing away votes from national parties or by becoming a more attractive potential member of a government coalition). If the regional party can maintain the difficult task of sustaining differentiation

versus the national parties on multiple dimensions without dividing its own party, then it can continue to improve on its electoral success. As such, regional parties will not adhere to single issues, but often advocate and change positions on multiple policy positions to try to keep a level of differentiation. Without this differentiation, electoral success will flow away from the regional party to other parties. This happened in Belgium, Canada and the United Kingdom, despite the variations in the settings.

This dissertation has contributed to the understanding that dynamic processes such as party systems and government policy do influence regional party success and volatility. Regional parties are an increasingly important political phenomenon in the developed world. Indeed, they have affected government stability, as in India; they have had the potential for secession or regional cleavage (e.g., Spain, Belgium, and Canada); they can affect governability; and they can increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict. However, previous theories have centered their theories on regional party success on structural explanations. According to these conventional theories, a country's ethno-linguistic cleavages, economic differences or institutional configuration should determine the level of regional party success. Furthermore, previous theories on electoral volatility note that regional parties should not exhibit high levels of change in their electoral support given their cleavage roots, or at least should not change without corresponding institutional changes.

This research has shown that the manner in which a country distributes wealth can influence regional party support. In addition, other parties' reactions to the regional party, what other positions the regional parties may have, and the interaction of these factors

also influences the level of electoral success for the regional party. Regional party success, and therefore potential for ethnic or regional conflict, is not a deterministic process. Instead, it is very much in the hands of politicians and policy makers, as it is a function of policies and national politics.

6.1.2 Regional Parties and Democracy

Given this research, several broad normative implications of the effects of regional parties on democracies can be extrapolated. Previous research (e.g., Brancati 2008) has noted at the broad macro level that regional parties can destabilize governments, increase ethnic tensions, and even foster intra-state conflict. This research has noted that at the micro level, regional parties can adversely affect the workings of democracy. Their success coincides with and is predicated on different regional identities. As a regional party is more successful with a stronger and clearer identity, it is no wonder that regional party elites will attempt to increase the salience of distinctive identity issues. Strong, politically salient identities are often the recipe for future tensions and conflict.

Furthermore, regional parties are often the protest of wealthier provinces that would prefer to provide less redistribution to poorer regions. If we are to assume that a democratic nation-state has certain normative obligations to provide for its more needy citizens, regional parties can be a political veto player with an explicit preference for preventing the government from meeting these obligations. Strong regional parties may limit transfers and therefore be a source of increased inequality within a country.

Decentralized states with strong inequality tend to be at higher risk for civil rebellion and civil conflict (Rodden and Wibbels 2008).

While a regional party's potential for harm is very real, regional parties may serve some positives within a democratic polity. First, they may raise new issues into the national process, and via their success force national parties to implement policies to address their concerns. In this way, regional parties may be a mechanism for breaking up stagnant political systems that offer little party choice for voters. If voters are seeking out new parties with lower possibilities of achieving victory, it is only because their issues and concerns are unaddressed by major parties.

As was the case in the Lega Nord and in a number of other regional parties, a particular concern that fuels regional parties is corruption and patronage. If regional parties are able to successfully provide an electoral incentive for national parties to reduce or change their behavior in regards to corruption or patronage, then they may serve a public good for democracy. Without the threat of vote loss to regional parties, national parties may have little incentive to deviate from democratically harmful practices such as patronage or corruption.

Regional parties in this sense serve both positive and negative functions. They exist to help facilitate the transmission of new issues into the political arena. They may also serve as the proverbial "canary in the coal mine," in that their success is often the result of voter unhappiness with national parties' behaviors in regards to corruption or patronage. However, if national parties are unable to address regional grievances and

regional parties achieve too much success, their ability to thwart redistribution and their potential to increase regional tensions can potentially destabilize a democratic polity.

6.2 Extensions

6.2.1 Implications for Regional Party Success

One question that might be raised is the extent to which parties create a stable equilibrium in terms of the division of power within a country. This can be a difficult proposition. Simply co-opting regional parties' demands can lead to decentralization or increased political autonomy. While this might decrease initial regional party success, it might only be a temporary setback. Increased regional autonomy over time can lead to increased regional party electoral success in the future (Brancati 2008). Despite the VU's electoral collapse, regionalism continued to increase in Flanders and in the rest of Belgium. As such, the initial regional party success might lead to a catch-22 in which regional parties might initially suffer setbacks, but the "solution" to the pressures of regionalism might set the groundwork for future success.

There may be several ways in which governments and national parties can avoid such a reinforcing cycle. The first is that if a government does implement decentralization policies, these policies should be accompanied with changes to electoral laws that would undermine the ability for regional parties to succeed, such as cross-regional voting requirements. Thus a government can address some of the concerns of regional autonomy advocates, while at the same time addressing some of the shortcomings that regional parties might bring.

6.2.2 European Union

A second extension of this research fits into recent research on the effect the European Union has had on regionalism. Jolly (2006) notes that the European Union, specifically its salience, has increased the support for regionalism. In addition, he notes that regional parties have embraced the European Union more so than any other party family, as it provides them an opportunity to increase their own electoral success. This research has shown that a second salient issue can have a strong effect on regional party success. The European Union provides a specific campaign issue that regional parties can use to raise the salience of their core message of autonomy or secession. This research provides an explanation for why an increase in the salience of the European Union has resulted in a corresponding increase in regional party support.

The one caveat to the European Union as an engine for regional party electoral success involves patronage. The European Union budgetary constraints and its constraints on targeting specific sectors might reduce the possibility for patronage, if only regionally-directed patronage. This research has shown that patronage is one of the central rallying factors that might lead to an initial electoral breakthrough for a regional party; therefore it may be the case that this factor might be reduced by the European Union.

Given the combination of these factors, the European Union might have an uneven effect on regional party electoral success, ultimately increasing the support of established regional parties but undermining nascent ones. Future research could prove fruitful on this topic.

6.3 Future Questions

6.3.1 Voters and Niche Parties

This research suggests a particular theory for regional party voters that could potentially be expanded to other parties. While some regional party voters are motivated by pure identity politics, many are not. These voters are motivated by two separate factors: namely, concerns over fairness and the voters' behavioral expectations of parties. If a government creates policies, specifically in the distribution of resources, that violate norms of equity and fairness, then voters will look to alternatives. Regional parties, because they are smaller, must demonstrate both a level of differentiation through multiple policies and the ability to enact those policies.

One question that can be raised, then, is to what extent other small or niche parties operate on a similar basis. Meguid (2005) notes that niche parties like Green parties or Extreme Right parties also have a difficult time overcoming their limitations as “smaller parties.” To what extent do these parties employ multidimensional appeals⁸⁰ to strengthen their issue ownership and salience of their core message? To what extent do issues of “equity” in the implementation of policies related to their core issue affect their voting patterns? For example, is it the policy itself that is important, or is it the process by which the policy is passed, or some combination thereof? Understanding these questions would lead to a broader understanding of what factors affect electoral success, specifically in regards to smaller parties. In addition, while it is assumed that niche parties are at a disadvantage during campaigns due to a lack of resources, it is unclear if they

⁸⁰ Environmental issues for Green parties, and typically immigration or multi-cultural issues for Far Right parties.

compensate for that by utilizing different campaign tactics. How do niche parties' campaign tactics differ from national parties?

This is especially important with regard to the question of coalition formation. What effect will including Green or Far Right parties in a government coalition have on the electoral support of these parties? In the case of regional parties, inclusion in government at times led to loss of differentiation and therefore vote loss. Do similar patterns emerge for other small parties or are regional parties unique in this regard?

6.3.2 Regionalism in Democracies versus Non-democracies

While one future research agenda might focus on applying the issues addressed here to other types of parties, a second research agenda could focus on deepening the research questions with regard to regionalism. This dissertation has focused on how regional parties and regionalism in general operate in consolidated democracies. What are the sources of regional party volatility or support for regionalism in countries with less democratic governments?

Governments ultimately must rely on supporters. Without the approval of their core supporters, a government is unable to maintain its rule. Assuming that rulers prefer re-election (i.e., survival), they must act in a manner that will maintain loyalty among their supporters. According to Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2000), leaders can spend revenue in a manner that will maintain or improve support. This spending can take the form of private or public goods. "Private benefits are distributed only to members of the winning coalition and diminish in value to individual coalition members as the size of the group expands. Consequently, as the size of the coalition increases, leaders are expected

to shift their effort to the provision of public goods that benefit all in society” (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2000: 4). Depending on the size of the coalition needed to maintain the stability of rule, the type of spending and the location of the spending may be very different. Patronage can increase support for a government as there are electoral benefits to using patronage in the poorer regions of a democracy, but this calculus does not necessarily hold in non-democracies. In fact, support among the wealthiest may be more important in non-democracies. In such a scenario, it may be poorer regions that would be more likely to support regionalism or regional “parties” due to patronage. While understanding the sources of change in the level of regional party success in the developed world is important in its own right, these theories can and should be tested outside of that environment.

6.3.3 America and Regional Parties (or lack thereof)

One of the interesting questions unexplored in this research involves the United States. Why does the United States lack successful regional parties? The United States historically has had deep-seated regional differences. While in the modern age it seems almost unfathomable, the United States once suffered a violent civil war between states. This civil war left a deep division in the political voting landscape: for over a hundred years following the American Civil War, “The Solid South” voted for the Democratic Party. Adding to this legacy of regional tensions is a very real economic inequality between various regions within the United States. For example, New England had an is far wealthier than the South. This inequality, combined with federal social welfare

programs, results in negative fiscal transfers from wealthier coastal states to the South (along with other areas). Given these structural conditions, one might expect the United States to have successful regional parties.

One of the reasons for the lack of regional party success is due to the United States' presidential system. Numerous researchers (such as Filipov et al. 2004 and Brancati 2008) note that presidential systems reduce the likelihood for regional party formation. A regional faction has an incentive to coordinate with ideologically similar factions in order to gain access to the political power the presidency offers. For example, the South maintained a veto over the Democratic Party's presidential nominee in the first half of the twentieth century (Key 1949: 317). If the South had supported regional parties, they would have had less influence at the national level.⁸¹

While the presidential system may dampen regional party formation and success, it is not a sufficient explanation for the current lack of regional parties. In the nineteenth century, a number of regional parties existed within the United States. The Anti-Masons Party of the 1820s and 1830s, located in the Northeast, was able to achieve some success. In addition, the Republican Party as initially conceived can be argued to be a regional party. In the years before the Civil War, the party nominated and elected officials only in a portion of the country (the North). This was primarily a function of an exclusive ideology about slavery. The party explicitly campaigned to limit slavery, which was antithetical to the voting populace of the South during this time frame. With its strong

⁸¹ One obvious exception was Strom Thurmond's challenge to Harry Truman in the 1948 election. However, Thurmond generally only received support in areas without a strong Republican presence. It was essentially only in areas where Democrats were assured of winning that Thurmond received support (Key 1949).

stance on slavery, the Republican Party essentially declared itself a regional party via an exclusive appeal.

Why did the Republican Party succeed when it did, and what has changed between the nineteenth century and today that accounts for the differing levels of regional party success? While further exploration is needed, a cursory analysis points to several factors to explain the variation. The first is that, as Chhibber and Kollman (2000) note, the United States, specifically after the New Deal in the 1930s, increased the level of political and fiscal centralization. As the level of centralization increases, the level of regional party success decreases. In the nineteenth century, local politics (specifically state politics) had far more relative authority and resources compared to the federal level; it is not surprising that politicians aggregated at the level where political and fiscal resources resided.

However, in addition to this structural change, a number of non-structural events occurred that helped the Republican Party achieve success. In the 1850s in particular, there existed a political opening for a regional party. Both the Whig and Democratic parties embraced similar pro-slavery positions. In addition, both parties refused to take anti-Catholic positions. At the time, anti-Catholic sentiments were an important ideological issue, as one party in the 1850s (the Know Nothing Party) was able to turn anti-immigrant sentiments into electoral votes. Finally, there were a number of corruption scandals afflicting the Taylor presidency that hurt the Whig Party (Holt 1992).

The Republican Party positioned not only itself regionally (via an opposition to slavery) but also made overt anti-Catholic positions. As a result, the party absorbed the

majority of Know Nothing voters as well as disaffected Whig voters. Combined with the divisions within the Democratic Party, the newly formed Republican party was able to win the Presidency and achieve electoral success.

One interesting idea Holt (1992) raises is about the role of ballot accessibility in the decision to form alternative parties. In the 1970s, a number of Republican activists ideologically opposed to the current leadership were confronted with a question of what to do, specifically with regard to the morbid electoral results in the 1976 election. These activists could either form a separate party or attempt reform the Republican Party. Ultimately, the more conservative activists were able to change the party structure by winning primaries and electing their ideologically preferred candidates. This was only possible due to the open list ballot system that allowed the activists to directly influence a party's nominee. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, U.S. parties used de facto closed ballots. Parties literally controlled who received ballots, and consequently those that disagreed ideologically with the party leadership were unable to influence the party nominations. By necessity, new parties were needed in order to get the preferred candidates on the final ballot.

Consequently, why the United States currently has a lack of regional parties is in many ways over-determined. The current institutional configuration of a more centralized presidential system provides a powerful disincentive for regional party formation, let alone success. However, when national parties allowed for a political opening in the past, a regional party was successful when it was able to differentiate itself on multiple dimensions (i.e., anti-slavery, anti-Catholic) and was able to operate in an environment of

national party corruption. The role of open versus closed ballots may also explain the lack of current regional parties and should be investigated further. In addition, further research should investigate why regionally salient issues have remained dormant in the United States. Nonetheless, as long as national parties do not ignore issues and regionally salient issues remain dormant, it seems unlikely that regional parties will succeed in the United States, especially given the structural conditions.

Regional party electoral support is an important phenomenon. It can influence a country's policies, polity and its very existence. While not to discount structural factors, they are not the only factors that affect regional party electoral volatility. Policies and party platforms also affect regional party support. As policy makers, academics, and government officials consider how to deal with regional tensions, this research notes that issues of corruption and party systems need to be taken into consideration when dealing with regional parties.

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Appendix A

Survey Data Questions Used for Italian Case

Variable	Question	Range
Employment Industrial Sector	In what sector of the economy do you work?	0-1 (1 = Industry, crafts)
Employment Commerce Sector	In what sector of the economy do you work?	0-1 (1=commerce, tourism)
Corruption/Immigration is a Concern- 1996	Among the following problems, which do you feel is the most serious in Italy? (Choices included inflation, unemployment, inefficient public services, immigration, public corruption, taxes, justice, none)	0-1 (Those that marked Corruption as either the two most serious. Same for immigration)
Religiosity	How often do you go to Church?	1-4 (1 never 4 weekly)
Corruption is a Concern - 2001	According to you, how important is corruption in the case of Italy?	1-4 (1 not very important 4 very important)
Previous Government (1992)	How well of a job did the previous government manage the economy	1-4
Taxation is a Concern- 1996	Among the following problems, which do you feel is the most serious in Italy?	0-1 (Those that marked Taxation as either the two most serious)
Taxation is a Concern - 2001	According to you, how important is the problem of taxes in the case of Italy?	1-4 (1 not very important 4 very important)
Municipal Size	Size of municipality where you live	1-6
Education Level	Please identify the level of education attained	1-7
Class	Please identify the class you belong to	1-6

Table A.1 Italian Variable Descriptions

1990 Questions

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
National Importance of Political Corruption	1500	3.45	1.21	1 (not at all)	4 (very)
National Importance of Inefficient Public Services	1500	3.4	1.05	1 (not at all)	4 (very)

Table A.2 1990 Corruption Questions

1996 Survey Questions

(Source of Corruption/Taxation is a Concern Variables)

I would like to know more about your views on seven social problems. Among the following problems, which do you feel is the most serious in Italy? Before answering allow me to read the list.

First	Second	Total	
5.8	10.7	16.5	Inflation, price rises
57.5	17.5	75.0	Unemployment
4.9	12.0	16.8	Inefficiency of public services
5.1	8.9	14.0	Immigration
11.4	18.5	29.9	Public corruption
8.4	16.3	24.6	Taxes
5.6	12.0	17.6	Justice
0.3	0.8	1.1	None
1.1	3.3	4.4	Don't know / no response
100	100		Total (N=2,502)

Table A.3 1996 Corruption Questions

Appendix B

Survey Data Questions Used for Chapter 5

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Fedben (The Benefits of Federalism are unfair)	1330	1.797744	.4018329	1	2
Fedcost (Costs of Federalism are unfair)	1333	2.762941	0.425439	2	3
Lackchoice (Parties don't give real choice for policies)	1438	1.62	.484	1	2
civservice~o (How positive of a feeling towards the Civil Service do you feel?)	1238	46.16478	19.89009	1	100
Englishprt (The Reform party that only part that can protect English speakers)	1469	0.1640572	0.370454	0	1
qbcprotct (The BQ is the only party that can protect Quebec)	1469	0.1048332	0.306443	0	1
Income	1371	5.01167	2.339414	1	9
Educ (Education)	1463	5.275461	1.983514	1	8

Table B.1 Descriptive Statistics Canada

Variable	Regional (Reform and BQ)	Reform Party	Reform Party	Bloc Quebecois Party	Bloc Quebecois Party
Are the costs of federalism unfair?	1.276 (.416)	1.24 (.42)	1.14 (.42)	1.17 (.42)	1.78 (.42)
Are the benefits of federalism unfair?	1.93 (.40)	1.66 (.40)	1.59 (.40)	1.75 (.40)	1.26 (.40)
Feelings towards Civil Service	.97 (19.48)	.97 (19.47)	.97 (19.48)	.98 (19.47)	.97 (19.4)
Level of Government Trust	.91 (.42)	.96 (.42)	.976 (.42)	.95 (.41)	.43 (.41)
Do you feel you lack choices in parties?	1.35 (.49)	1.11 (.49)	1.03 (1.96)	1.51 (1.96)	1.19 (1.96)
Does this party protect English speakers			10.26 (.357)		
Does the party you vote for protect Quebec					497.3 (.339)
Level of Education	.97 (1.97)	.963 (1.96)	1.03 (1.97)	1.00 (1.97)	1.42 (1.97)
Level of Income	1.12 (2.31)	1.15 (2.31)	1.16 (2.31)	1.00 (2.31)	1.13 (2.31)
Percent Correctly Predicted	.675	.823	.769	.963	.863
Percent Reduction in Error	.081	.222	-.041	.722	.000

B.2 Odds Ratios for Logit Analysis for Regional Vote Choice in 1993 Canadian Election

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation	Min	Max
Pubjob (Public Sector Job)	.263	.443	0	1
SNP Different than X Party	2.14	.608	0	3
Engben (England benefits more from Scotland Economically)	.517	.401	0	1
Pro-Centralization (Against Scottish Independence)	3.14	1.2	1	5
Antiredis (Against Redistribution of Wealth)	2.16	1.007	1	5
Income	6.88	4.758	1	16

Table B.3 – Descriptive Statistics 1997 British Election

Appendix C

Field Research Interviews

From January until June of 2007 I conducted interviews in Italy. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. Interviews were open ended semi-structured. Those interviewed consisted of low to medium ranked individuals in a number of different parties, journalist, academics, and business elites. Due to internal review board requirements individuals interviewed were granted anonymity.

Appendix C.1