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Regional ambition in multilevel democracies
A comparative case study of Scotland, Catalonia and Wallonia

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*** *Work in progress – Comments very welcome* ***

Introduction

Over the last decades, Western European democracies have been affected by deep territorial transformations through a process of decentralization. Regions in formerly unitary European countries have become major centre of politics and regional politicians enjoy powers and fiscal resources affecting citizens' daily life in various policy areas (Marks et al. 2008): education, employment policies, economic development, energy, trade and commerce, immigration, road and transports, housing and, in some regions, the constitutional authority for ratifying international treaties. As a result, in newly regionalized countries such as Belgium, Spain and Belgium, regional parliaments became powerful tiers of government where professionalized careers are conducted. In the wake of those transformations, research on political careers in multi-level systems has significantly increased over the last 15 years, especially in newly regionalized European states (Botella et al. 2010; Fiers 2001; Pilet et al. 2007; Real-Dato et al. 2011; Rodríguez-Teruel 2011; Stolz 2001; Stolz 2003; Vanlangenakker et al. 2013). The time when the springboard model (Schlesinger 1966) – where the national parliament is assumed to be the main political arena – prevailed as the dominant framework for analysis is over. It has been showed that other career patterns exist – where regional politics even prioritizes over national politics – and better explain political trajectories in multi-level systems (Stolz 2003).

While most efforts in the recent literature have been devoted to the identification and measurement of these new career patterns, few studies have focused on the drivers beyond regional ambition. The literature has assumed that regional identity was the main explanatory factor: regionally-oriented career patterns emerge where regionalism is stronger. However, recent studies have found that even though "regionalism hypothesis" as some empirical value (regional politics attracts more professionalized MPs where regionalism is stronger), its effects remain limited. Regionally-oriented professionalized also emerged in regions with weaker identities. Building on this literature, this contribution aims at identifying and describing the factors determining the attractiveness of regional parliamentary offices in three newly regionalized European democracies. For that purpose, this paper analyses comparatively the political trajectories of regional and national members of parliaments from Scotland, Catalonia and Wallonia. Based on 83 narrative interviews with current and former regional and national MPs, the paper shows that the development of regional ambition depends on (1) cultural and emotional attachment to regional Parliaments, (2) the regional policy-making capacity (and the symbiotic relations with local politics), (3) the effect of geographical distance (in interaction with the gender).

The paper is structured as follow. The first section develops the literature review on the development of career patterns in European multilevel democracies. The second section introduces the research design and methodology; the third section presents the empirical results while the fourth section discusses the implication of the findings for broader research.

Regionally-oriented career patterns in European multilevel democracies

The processes of regionalization and federalization are unquestionable trends in European democracies. As stated by (Toubeau and Massetti 2013), "the process of political decentralization has elevated the standing of regional governments in the constitutional architecture of European states and represents one of the single most important transformations in the structuring of political authority. With the process of regionalization, career patterns of parliamentarians in Europe have been profoundly affected. Formerly unitary states like France, the United Kingdom (UK), Italy, Belgium, and Spain have created regional tiers of government that enjoy large scope and depth of powers (Fitjar 2010; Keating 1998; Swenden 2006). While the national parliament used to be the apex of the political systems, the introduction and development regional institutions has created new opportunities for ambitious politicians to develop political careers. Research on political careers in multi-level systems has significantly increased over the last 15 years, especially in newly regionalized European states (Botella et al. 2010; Fiers 2001; Pilet et al. 2007; Real-Dato et al. 2011; Rodríguez-Teruel 2011; Stolz 2001; Stolz 2003; Vanlangenakker et al. 2013), but also in established federations, notably in Germany, Canada and the U.S. (Borchert and Stolz 2011a; Docherty 2011; Dodeigne 2015; Squire 2014). The time when the springboard model (Schlesinger 1966) – where the national parliament is assumed to be the main political arena – prevailed as the dominant framework for analysis is over. It has been showed that other career patterns exist – where regional-oriented prioritizes over national politics – and better explain political trajectories in multi-level systems (Stolz 2003). First of all, regional offices can prioritize over national offices in the "inverse springboard model", e.g. Brazil (Samuels 2003). Secondly, regional and national arenas can be equally attractive inducing movements in both directions in highly integrated political systems, e.g. Belgium and Spain (Dodeigne 2014; Fiers 2001; Stolz 2010; Vanlangenakker et al. 2013). On the opposite, regional and national political arenas have their own dynamics and are 'compartmentalized'. Level-hopping movements are thus quasi absent, e.g. Canada and the United Kingdom (Docherty 2011; Stolz 2010).

In addition to the literature that paid attention to the identification and transformations of career patterns, researchers have furthermore sought to explain why distinct patterns emerge. Following Borchert (2011)'s three A's framework, career patterns are determined by the "availability" of offices (e.g. the number of offices, parliamentarian as well as governmental functions, available at the distinct levels), "accessibility" (determined by the ease of access to offices in terms of intra-party selection and inter-party electoral competition), and "attractiveness" (the properties of the office which are relative to different candidates). Contrary to the US political system which empowers individuals and focus on the individual cost-benefit calculation in the development of careers, the literature on European legislative careers has paid greater attention on political parties. Functioning as gate-keepers of parliamentary offices, their strategies contribute to determine the emergence of certain patterns in European multilevel polities. For instance, in terms of *accessibility* parties' strategies and behavior explain why legislative careers present larger level-hopping movements between regional and national

electoral arenas in distinct Belgian regions and Spanish regions. Besides, in the European literature, the *attractively* of regional parliamentary office is not restricted to the institutional characteristics of the legislature (Squire, 1988; Mayhew 1994; Fiorina 1994; Kat and Sala 1996; Berkman 1994; Berry et al. 2000). The emergence of regionally-oriented career patterns is furthermore explained via the specific context of decentralization in European multilevel democracies. As regionalization is the reflect of an identity-based project for greater regional autonomy, regional identity is a decisive driver. Hence Stolz (2001: 90) hypothesized that "[t]he existence of a regional identity, a regional culture and a regional public arena often constitute incentives for staying in regional politics". He defends that, under the condition that regionalism espouses a process of professionalization of regional politics, regionalism matters for political careers: "two of the most important factors that strengthen the attractiveness of regional parliaments vis-a-vis national parliaments are the existence of a strong regional identity (expressed in an active regionalist cleavage) and high levels of professionalization. Without a regional identity, politicians' motivation to live for politics tends to be dominated by a national perspective" (Stolz 2003: 243). A literature review of empirical studies shows however contrasted confronting positions on the regionalism hypothesis. On the one hand, some authors have found that the stronger the regionalist cleavage, the more attractive the regional political arena for ambitions candidates (Botella et al. 2010; Stolz 2001; Stolz 2003; Stolz 2010). On the other hand, other studies found that regionalism is a poor predictor of career patterns (Botella and Teruel 2010; Comeche-Pérez and Oñate 2012; Vanlangenakker et al. 2013: 365). Recently, I developed a specific comparative research design to investigate more closely the regionalism hypothesis. It covered four multi-level democracies and 4.991 careers regional and national parliamentary careers (Dodeigne, *forthcoming*). It developed a systematic examination of cases of strong regionalism (Catalonia, Scotland, Quebec, and Flanders) and cases of weak regionalism (Castilla-La-Mancha, Wales, Ontario, and Wallonia & Brussels). The findings show that even though regionalism does matter (regional politics attracts more professionalized MPs where regionalism is stronger), its effects remain limited while regionally-oriented professionalized also emerged in case of weaker identities.

Overall, the drivers of regional ambition remain, therefore, poorly understood in the literature. Although the identity factors do have some effects, this "regionalism hypothesis" does not provide a satisfactory answer about the emergence of regional ambition. What make European regional parliamentary offices attractive? To answer this question, we follow Borchert and Stolz (2011b: 282)'s recommendation: "any further research has to acknowledge that the variation in career patterns across countries and regions cannot be put down to the variation of just a few isolated variables". Instead of developing a theory-driven research design, we should first try and identify inductively what create regional careerism. And they argue that such approach should focus on "actors' perception and interpretation of specific institutional configurations that shape career patterns rather than individual features of the polity". My goal is precisely to understand the actors' representations associated to the existence of regional careerism in the three case studies introduced in the next section.

Research design & methodology

Comparative case study: Scotland, Catalonia and Wallonia

This paper develops a comparative case study to identify what is regional ambition. For that purpose, the in-depth analysis of a limited number of cases has been developed to provide a better understanding of regional ambition at 'close range' (Bennett and Elman 2006: 457; Collier et al. 2004: 87). I selected three regions from varying political and institutional contexts but they have in common the existence of a regionally-oriented career pattern. Catalonia and Scotland are "usual suspects" from regional and federal studies while the inclusion of Wallonia offers an interesting "intermediate case". Despite its weaker form of regionalism in comparison to Flanders, it equally shows the development of regional ambition as described below. Such case selection aims to improve the overall comparison and ultimately the robustness of the findings across distinct contexts (Vigour 2005: 184-185).

In Scotland, the legislative career pattern shapes in "alternative" electoral arenas, in which Scottish politicians develop legislative careers either at Holyrood (Scottish parliament) or at Westminster (British parliament). Scotland is furthermore characterized by a strong level of seniority: once candidates manage to get a – regional or national – office, he/she is almost secured to stay for an extensive period of time. In Catalonia and Wallonia, the development of regionally-oriented careers emerges in an "integrated" regional arena. The two regions are indeed characterized by frequent level-hopping movements between elections. Since 1980, 47.8 percent all Catalan level-hopping movements are from the national to the regional electoral arena, 25.7 percent are observed in the opposite direction while 26.5 percent of all level-hoppers have moved in both directions. In Wallonia, we observed a similar pattern: 40.2 percent of all level-hopping movements are observed from the national to the regional arena, 20.8 percent from the regional to the national level and 31.7 in both directions. Even though level-hopping movements show a regional direction in terms of transfers, they should not be overestimated because they mostly represent parties' strategic choices (e.g. about two thirds of all movements are only due to 18 'big names' of Walloon politics moving back and forth to increase the party's vote share, see Dodeigne 2014). Most Walloon and Catalan legislative careers (respectively 71.1 and 87.6 percent) develop at a single level, be it the regional or the national level. Contrary to the Scottish case, the length of legislative service is, however, substantially more limited in these two regions. Yet, the time served in legislative regional office is similar to the national one. In Catalonia, regional and national time spent in office is respectively 6.4 years and 6.8 years; in Wallonia, it is respectively 6.3 years and 7.9 years. In other words, the regional Parliaments of Catalonia and Wallonia attract professional legislators in proportion alike to the national parliament, albeit it is slightly more limited in the Walloon case (Dodeigne, *forthcoming*).

Overall, the three regions expose thus a pattern of regionally-oriented legislators (along with nationally-oriented parliamentarians). This regional pattern shapes, however, differently in Scotland on the one hand, and in Catalonia and Wallonia on the other hand (see also Stolz 2010 on this conclusion).

Institutional characteristics and party systems in the three regions

The Scotland Act 1998 (re-)established the Scottish Parliament. The Parliament is composed of 129 members (MSPs) which are of two types: 73 constituency MSPs (elected in single-member constituencies) and 56 regional list MSPs (elected on regional party lists composed of maximum eight candidates). The Scottish Parliament has a four-year legislative term (Fabre 2010: 193). The party system is composed of an ethnoregionalist party (the Scottish National Party, SNP) and the branches of the three main state-wide parties (Scottish Conservatives, Scottish Labor and Scottish LibDem). Although the Scottish Labour party dominated Scottish politics before and at the beginning of Scottish devolution (the Scottish Liberal Democrats that the Scottish Labor formed a coalition during 1999-2007); the SNP increasingly increased its electoral strength. After having formed a minority government in 2007 (Mitchell et al. 2012: 10-12), the SNP managed to gain an absolute majority of seats (despite the AMS system) in 2011 (Scully 2013).

In Spain, Franco's death opened the Spanish democratic transition (i.e. *the rupture pactada,* see Linz and Stepan (1996)). Catalonia – like other historic communities – followed the *fast-track route* regarding the implementation of regional institutions while they obtained greater powers (Magone 2009: 194-195; Morata 1992). The Parliament of Catalonia is composed of 135 members who are all elected through close party lists in competition in four districts (Barcelona 85 seats, Tarragona 18 seats, Lleida 15 seats, and Girona 17 seats). The Parliament of Catalonia has in principle a four-year legislative term but it is not a fixed term. The party system is composed of two ethnoregionalist parties (CiU and ERC) and the Catalan branches of the two main Spanish state-wide parties (the PSC-PSOE and the PPC). Recent electoral evolution increased the fragmentation of the Catalan party system though. The CiU dominated Catalan regional politics during no less than 23 years ever since 1980. Although the party did not always obtain the majority of seats (only in 1984, 1988 and 1992), the party negotiated political agreement with other parties to govern the *Generalitat* (in 1980, 1995, 1999, 2010 and 2012). The single interruption of the CiU in the Generalitat (2003-2010) was only possible thanks to the formation of a left coalition (PSC-PSOE, ERC, and ICV-EUiA).

In Belgium, the fixation of the linguistic border in 1962-1963 opened a vague of constitutional reforms of the Belgian formerly unitary state. Reforms have been adopted ever since at regular intervals (Reuchamps and Onclin 2009): 1970, 1980, 1989, 1993, 2001, and more recently in 2012. Flemish and Walloon elites have diverging views not only in the magnitude of the reforms of the state, but also about its very nature (Swenden et al. 2009). Following a logic of "agree to disagree", two types of institutions have been created in Belgium: three Communities (the Flemish, the French-speaking and the German-speaking Communities) and three Regions (the Flemish, the Walloon and the Brussels-Capital Regions). The 75 members of the Walloon Parliament are directly elected regional parliamentarians since 1995[1],

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[1] The Walloon Region was created in 1980. During the first period of regionalization, the Walloon assembly was composed of national parliamentarians ("dual office"). In fact, the denomination of the Walloon *Parliament* is a recent evolution that traduces the critical shift that took place in 1995 (unofficially used since 1995 but officially

via a flexible list system and for fixed term of five years. Wallonia is surely a case of weaker regionalism: the former ethnoregionalist party "Rassemblement Wallon" has no parliamentary representation since 1985 (Dodeigne and Renard 2017). With the increasing regionalization, the ethnoregionalist party 'was victim of its own success' (Van Haute and Pilet 2006) while the Socialist party increasingly took over the regionalist cause (Deschouwer 2009). The other parties are composed of the Liberals, Christian democrats, and the Greens.

Narrative interviews

The data was collected via 83 interviews conducted with former and current regional MPs and national MPs in Wallonia, Scotland and Catalonia[2]. The specific techniques to collect data is the narrative interview (Bauer 1996: 2). This type of open interviews aims to gather the viewpoint of parliamentarians on their political trajectory and regional orientation without imposing pre-formulated categories. Categories that would exist "in the minds of many social scientists rather than in the minds of many of the politicians" I wanted to study (Searing 1994: 13). The protocol of interview has been identical in the three fields of investigation. After having presented the goals of my research, I guaranteed the confidentially of the interview and asked the permission to record the meeting. Then, I always started with this clear and simple question to trigger a narrative: 'how did you get into politics, from the very beginning?'. The added-value of such narrative technique is that it produces the interviewees "create the context to be analysed by drawing in what they consider relevant cultural influences. This makes the narrative contextually thick. It provides a sense of speakers' cognitive maps of themselves (and of their selves), both in relation to others and in the specific contexts of their described behaviour" (Patterson and Monroe 1998). In this respect, the data collected constantly deliver cognitive information and provide 'meaning-making'/'sense-making' (Bruner 1996) of the political career of the interviewees and their experience in regional office .

All interviews were conducted in the language of the interviewees: French (Wallonia), English (Scotland), Spanish (Catalonia)[3]. All interviews were face-to-face meetings in private and quiet office (whenever possible) although parliamentarians' agenda and promiscuity of offices sometimes entailed an inevitable presence of other staff members whilst other interviews have had to be conducted in the parliament restaurants. The selection of interviewees is purposeful and not random:"[the] principal analytical goals in this part of the project was not to generalize to the population but to interpret the meaning and function of stories embedded in the interviews" (Ewick and Silbey 2003: 1338). The selection of interviewees aims at

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implemented in the Constitution since 2004).

[2] Although this paper specifically focuses on regional ambitious, conducting interview with (former) national MPs heuristically allows me to better understand what is specific and singular to the regional level.

[3] Conducting interviews in the mother language critically increases the quality of the interviews (content is not altered by the linguistic barrier) while it increases the empathy towards the interviewer who addresses them in their own language. Last not but least, obtaining narratives in the interviewee's language is paramount for the understanding of specific cultural elements (such as 'metaphors). Catalan, not Castellano, is the genuine mother language of most Catalan MPs. They are yet almost equally in Spanish as they are in Catalan.

diversifying the profiles of regional MPs (distinct electoral districts, political experience, political generation, political party and gender). Ultimately, this is the principle of "saturation" (Glaser and Strauss 2009) that defines the number of interviews required as well as the profiles of MPs to be interviewed. The interviews totalize 4.733 minutes that were fully transcribed (verbatim transcription) producing a corpus of 738.380 words to be analyzed with the Nvivo software (QSR International, UK)

Table 1. Interviews conducted (profile of interviewees in the annex).

Regions	Narrative interviews	Data collection	Duration (Minutes)	Corpus (Words)
Wallonia	28	June - September 2012	Mean: 65 Min: 35 Max: 100	Mean: 9.073 Min: 4.842 Max: 13.835
Scotland	29	April - July 2013	Mean: 52 Min: 17 Max: 118	Mean: 9.009 Min: 3.590 Max: 13.831
Catalonia	26	February - May 2014	Mean: 49 Min: 18 Max: 89	Mean: 7.978 Min: 2.152 Max: 12.724
Total	83	June 2012 – May 2014	4.733	738.380

Source: all interviews were conducted by the author.

Firstly, all interviews started with a thematic analysis (Bonanzas 1998). This approach is probably the most popular in narrative analysis because, among other things, thematic analysis permits a straightforward analysis of the empirical material (Riessman 2008: 53). After a preliminary exploratory analysis – whose aims was to identify, organize and merged the variety of themes into a coherent and unique coding book – all interviews were systematically and thoroughly analyzed with a common framework (see coding book in the appendices). This thematic analysis permits an inductive emergence of categories and themes while its creates a comprehensive summary of the richness of the qualitative material. Based on this thick descriptive account of the MPs' narrative, the second step followed the analytical method prescribed by (Demazière and Dubar 2009: 33-45), namely comprehensive understanding.

Their technique is organized around two major principles. Firstly, it assumes that linguistic matters. Language is more than a mere instrumental mean of communication: social representations are embedded in the very specific words we choose to express in everyday interactions (as in narrative interviews). Therefore, "we cannot think of language as neutral" they reflect the environment in which actors interact (Hammack and Pilecki 2012: 79). Paying attention to *what* and *how* narratives are told permit to identity the representations that MPs associate with their regional offices. Secondly, the structures organizing the narratives can be identified and isolated thanks to homolog disjunctions and conjunctions (Demazière and Dubar 2009: 179). In other words, the specific representations actors develop are better identified by the 'structural oppositions' inherently present narratives. For instance, what makes a regional office attractive is defined in comparison to what makes a national office not/less attractive. The goal is precisely to expose this type of oppositions across interviews which allow to identify shared representations across interviewees.

Overall, this technique permits to identify how the multiples themes described by the MPs during interviews are covered by share representations structuring the variety of narrative interviews. In practice, this is an iterative process that necessitates to go back and forth between the emergence of shared representations and the original transcript of the interviews. In this respect, "narratives do not speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; they require interpretation when used as data in social research" (Riessman 2002a, 706). They require the 'active creation of meanings' from the researcher. In their analysis of the territorial rescaling of interest groups six European states, Keating and Wilson (2014) followed a similar conduction and analysis of open interview techniques. They argued that such technique "relies to a larger extent on interpretation but, in our view, yields much richer results. Taken to extremes, it can lapse into postmodern relativism and subjectivism but, done properly, is consistent with rigorous Weberian social science"[4].

Components of regional ambition: analysis

In this section, I present three components describing regional ambition in Scotland, Catalonia and Wallonia: cultural and emotional regional attachment, regional policy-making capacity, the effect of geographical distance (and more precisely its interaction with gender). Some of them are widely shared across all interviewees, others are more disputed or restricted to specific profiles of regional MPs. This will be discussed in the analysis, but I cautiously remind the reader that the goal of this qualitative research is primarily to identify components of regional ambition, not to quantify their frequency.

Cultural and emotional regional attachment

Cultural and emotional regional attachment reflects the narrative told by regional MPs about a distinctive sense of belonging to 'their' assembly. In this respect, this regional attachment is not the mere description of a regional identity, it covers more than that. The sense of belonging refers to what social psychologists conceptualize as the need for "relatedness [which] involves feeling connected (or feeling that one belongs in a social milieu)" (Vallerand 1997: 300). More generally, the sense of belonging is defined as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment". Hence, the terms used in their experience of being elected are not random but refer explicitly to the "honor", "privilege" as well as the "excitement" of being part of their regional parliament, as illustrated in the following quotation:

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[4] During this process, specific attention was paid to the four criteria of qualitative research credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba 1981, Lincoln and Guba 1985). Extensive research stays in three regions allow may permits to identify meaning rooted in the empirical reality. Furthermore debriefing of draft results with peers were regularly organized (seminars and conferences) in order to confront preliminary conclusions (Foster 2004, Guba 1981, 85). The thick description of the empirical material – the details for the four universes being detailed in three chapters – enables other researchers to "transfer" any conclusive results to other case studies based on their sensible judgement. Active citation Moravcsik (2010) permits more to give a detailed account of the specific context in which representation (quotes will illustrate my findings).

> In the mid 80's I was asked by my mentor in the party why I wasn't standing for Westminster Parliament and I said I would think about it, and I didn't think about it for long because it wasn't the place for me [...] I did get elected in 1999 as a regional MSP [erm], and by goodness, for a history graduate, that was quite something! Utterly something [erm] I can remember in the old building, on the day that we all had to come in to take our oaths and affirmations and it's the first time it had happened [...] In three hundred years' time someone is going to read this like I read the seals on the bottom of the declaration of our oath as a history graduate *(laughter)*. (SNP MSP, regional career, woman, elected since 1999).

The sources of this attachment are rooted in the deeper cultural and historical developments of their regions. In that sense, a very strong component of the sense of belonging to the Scottish Parliament is rooted in its old history (before the Act of Union in 1707), but is more particularly connected to the concept of "New politics" connected to the newly established regional institution in 1999 (on that concept, see Mitchell, 2000). The latter aimed to break with the Westminster political style, reputed to be too adversarial and restricting political pluralism. As summarized by Cairney (2011, 3), "[t]he Scottish system was designed, in Lijphart (1999)'s terms, to be a 'consensus' rather than a 'majoritarian' democracy, with a proportional electoral system designed to produce a new party system and foster a sense of cooperation between government, Parliament, 'civil society' and the wider public". Hence, MSPs describe how proud they are of the everyday practices of the parliament that materialized the ideas of New politics in terms of *the openness, accessibility, accountability, and of diversity*. It creates a 'Parliament of the Scottish people, by the Scottish people and for the Scottish people'. It is important to mention that this cultural and emotional attachment is also present amongst the Scottish Conservatives (a party that initially opposed the establishment of the Scottish Parliament). This Tory MSP used the "child metaphor" to describe her attachement: "I am very proud of the institution we have and if need be fiercely defensive of it […] it is a bit like giving birth to a child suddenly it is yours and I have reached the point now where I resent other people criticizing it as one does for example you may have children of your own".

In Catalonia, the Parliament of Catalonia has now entered in its 10th legislative terms since the first regional elections in 1980. The contemporary history of Catalan politics is thus well developed and has given birth to a whole generation of regional political elites that have marked 35 years of Catalan politics on.

> Claro, a my siempre me había interesado la política, pero también había como algo lejano. Entonces, cuando llegué allí, aquí hay sesión constitutiva y empecé yo a llamar por su nombre. La gente que había formado parte de mi infancia, de verlos en la televisión. Entonces, Jordi Pujol, el propio León Cuadras, Jordan Coulón, que no es que fuera gente de mi partido, pero era alguien. ¿No? Es decir, ver a toda esta gente ahí y entre ellos estar yo, formo parte de esto también. ¿No? Me impresionaba mucho (PPC, multilevel career, man, former political generation).

The fact that this quotation is from a member of the PPC proved that this sense of belonging irradiates across party lines (all the political figures that he mentioned were not from his party

but from the CiU, the Catalan ethnoregionalist party). All these political figures, i.e. the "founding fathers" of modern Catalan politics, have thus contributed to shape his sense belonging to regional politics. It has marked his very childhood. Furthermore, this first generation of Catalan politicians was not just any political generation. It is the generation who contributed to the reestablishment and development of the *Generalitat* in the aftermath of Franco's authoritarian regime. The latter having suspended the Catalan institutions of the republic in the 1930s.

In Wallonia, the narrative also refers to a strong regional attachment where regional MPs describe the Parliament of Wallonia as a place where they at "home", "among family" in an "easy-going and cheerful atmosphere with no fuss". This dimension is reinforced by the negative dimension attached to the federal political arena for some Walloon regional MPs. Federal politics is see as more constraining because of the language barrier between Flemish and French-speaking representatives. Secondly, Flemish and Walloon MPs have increasingly more difficulties to understand each other at the federal level – because the two regions are represented as developing distinct political agendas – it is easier to work on political projects between mere Walloon politicians. Even though the latter have diverging policy priorities, they have clearly much more in common in comparison to the ideological oppositions between Flemish and Walloon political visions. However, the narrative of Walloon regional MPs is also more ambiguous regarding the cultural and emotional attachment. There is a limitation – or even absence – of the terms relating to the "honour" and "privilege" as well as the lack of reference to (positive) Walloon history. This cultural and emotional attachment is not as central as in the Scottish and Catalan narratives. A trivial but striking example is the frequent complaints from Walloon regional MPs about the building where is located the Parliament of Wallonia: the choice of the building is considered to have been a default choice, marked by lack of ambition. In other words, a tiny building not worthy of the seat of a 'real' parliament. This example is not that trivial though. For Goodsell (1988: 288), parliamentary buildings are not mere stones and wood, "they perpetuate the past, they manifest the present and they condition the future".

Regional policy-making capacity

Politicians enter politics with defined political goals. As told by many interviewees, initial impetus for standing at elections is about changing society, eradicating poverty, creating the environment for a better economy, addressing the environment issues, etc. In other words, they want to 'make a difference' and 'changing life of the people'. Changing politics requires the institutional policy-making capacity to do so. In this respect, regional ambition arises because parliamentarians consider that their regional institution provides such capacity. According to Scottish, Catalan and Walloon regional MPs, the regional policy-making capacity even presents critical advantages vis-à-vis national institutions. In Scotland, although MSPs consider that the reserved powers at Westminster have an important impact in many aspects of people daily life (e.g. benefits and social security, immigration, and employment are repeatedly cited), they are "wider" and "more diffused" powers (e.g. justice, defense, or foreign Affairs). They argue that

devolved powers in Holyrood are more 'in sync' with the citizens' day-to-day concerns. Policy areas such as education, Health and Social services, Housing, Transport or Local Government are considered highly salient issues for the Scots.

> You can make a difference in Westminster. Of course, you can. But I thought the fundamental things that people talk about on the doorstep, when you chat at the doors…They talk about the local school, they talk about the price of council tax, they talk about the health service not working, or the local primary care facility shutting, or not working for them and **you can't go down to London to fix that. You come up to Edinburgh to fix i**t.

The question of parliamentarians' capacity to deliver to the Scottish people is not only expressed in terms of the relevance of the scope of powers, but it is furthermore enhanced by the 'effectiveness' of the Holyrood's policy-making capacity. The desire of "New politics" in Scotland involved the creation of a 'working parliament' – a committee-based parliament in the Scandinavian or German mould – that would 'deliver for the Scottish people'. The expectations of an innovative Scottish institutional functioning did not, however, deliver all its promises. According to interviewees, it had its shortcomings and limitations such the persistence of party politics and a strong whip system, despite the initial deliberative design of the parliament. Despite these limitations, across all political parties, Scottish MSPs commend the range of policy achievements in hardly four legislative terms (they evoke for instance the success of the smoking ban or the legislation on Adults with incapacity.

In Catalonia and Wallonia, the narrative about the regional policy-making capacity is also present but is more distinctively associated with a profile of MPs, namely those with strong territorial local interests ("trabajar y defender su territorio", "obtenir sa part du gateau"). This can be explained by the accumulation of offices of regional MPs with a local executive mandate. Such profiles put forward the symbiotic association between regional and local powers. Walloon and Catalan regional MPs holding local offices can use their parliamentary office as a lever to obtain policy feedbacks to support their local actions. In that context, regional MPs can influence the debates and legislation to obtain the necessary funding to build a new sport center, to renovate local roads, or to finance a new school in their municipality. All the key powers that are directly relevant to this kind of municipal policies are dealt at the regional level whereas national powers such as external affairs, social security, defense, justice do not have this 'direct and concrete grip' for municipal actions.

> Etant donné que je suis dans la majorité à la ville, que j'exerce des fonctions exécutives, c'est clair que le regard sur la Région et la Communauté est surtout un regard de complément et de levier. [...] Cela ne veut pas dire que j'ai désintérêt pour le régional, j'y consacre beaucoup de temps. Mais il est un fait incontestable que le fait d'être pris de manière chronophage par une fonction mayoral fait que c'est d'abord l'élément à partir duquel, par cercles concentriques, je considère les autres aspects. (cdH, multilevel career and subsequent regional office, man, new political generation).

As illustrated in the above quotation, this type of narrative questions the actual "regional focus" of their ambition. This deputy explains that he considers his regional office as important and

invest a lot of resources to conduct it. Yet, his executive municipal office will ultimately come first. In some more extreme cases, the parliamentary regional office is clearly a simple 'mean' for local ambition, not a regional ambition at all. As clearly advanced by one of the Catalan interviewee "entonces, pues yo, aunque no es lo que más me guste esto [Parlement of Catalunya], pero tengo que estar aquí". This narrative is singular to the Catalan and Walloon cases whereas fully absent in Scotland. In the latter, accumulation of parliamentary offices with other local functions is simply unthinkable. MSPs are full-time parliamentarians and resign from their local office when elected or not seek re-election as councilor at the term of their local office[5].

Distance, gender and regional politics

The last factor nourishing a regional ambition refers to geographical distance of regional parliamentary office in comparison to the national parliament. The inconvenience of "being sent away from home to the capital" during several days a week is perceived as a very demanding task because of the numerous travels and heavy workload involved. It affects private life and constituency work "at home", in the region. As advanced by this Catalan deputy, politics is always about dedication but developing a career in Madrid' dramatically increases this cost: "es verdad que también hay un componente personal en todo esto y la dedicación política en tiempo, pues tiene un costo de oportunidad elevado desde el punto de vista del tiempo" (ERC, regional career, man, new political generation). In this respect, although the negative effects of geographical distant affect all potential aspirants, it is distinctively greater among male than female aspirants. Despite some positive evolution in European societies, women remain far more in charge of family affairs than man.

> *Interviewee*: At Westminster it would be interesting, ok. I mean I have an interest in foreign affairs, [erm] I have an interest in defence because Faslane Housing Trident is in my constituency [*Scottish missiles part of the British nuclear arsenal*]. I have an interest in welfare reform because - you know - the Benefits System supports many people.
> *Interviewer*: So, you were considering to go to Westminster?
> *Interviewee*: No, I mean...at the time when I first was elected, my daughter was 7, you know, whatever anybody says about the 'new man' I have still to find him (*laughter*). And the reality is I couldn't stay away from home nor would I want to ok. The nice thing about the parliament here although I now you know will stay away from during the week [erm] I can be back through in two hours. So, I can go do evening meetings I can go see my family I can do that now that.

The structural geographical – which interacts with gender – has therefore decisive effects on the formation of regional ambition. The most compelling proof of such effect is the absence of such factor in the Walloon case. The latter region has a small territory where most cities are interconnected within short time distance by train and car travels. Furthermore, the seat of the

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[5] See the Fact sheets produced by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) since 1999. Available on line, http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/15441.aspx, last visit on 19th June 2017.

Parliament of Wallonia and the Federal parliament are both located in geographically central areas vis-à-vis the Walloon territory. The effects of geographical distance should, however, not be overestimated in Scotland and Catalonia and call for nuanced considerations. Firstly, in the Scottish Parliament, the women-friendly perspective of regional politics is enhanced by the specific organization of Holyrood according to the principles of "new politics". The organization of the Scottish Parliament (in terms of parliamentary schedule) allows its members to find an equilibrium between private and public life (working hours from 9.00am to 5.00pm and voting decision time being at 5 pm). Even though Westminster's parliamentary agenda was reformed recently, Holyrood still benefits from the halo of a 'modern' place to conduct politics in comparison to the 'older politics of Westminster. A stated by a women MSP: "I had a lot of prejudices against this place about it being an old boys club and everything so". Secondly, in both Catalonia and Scotland, the effects of distance have been reduced due to contemporary evolutions. On the one hand, the introduction of new information and communications technologies (ICT) since the 2000s has permitted to be in permanent contact with regional politics (in comparison to the 1990s). As said by a former national MPs who then moved to Holyrood, there was a time where radios and post letters were the only direct connections with Scottish politics. Similarly, structural development in Spanish transport, such as the establishment of the high-speed train (AVE), has considerably reduced the issue of time and distance from Catalonia to Madrid. Nevertheless, although the situation has improved, the geographical distance remains a dominant component of regional interviewees' narratives.

Discussion

Cultural and emotional attachment

In Spain, Belgium and the UK, processes of regionalization and federalization represent more than the simple 'governance means' for the entrenchment the principles of regional autonomy and subsidiarity – i.e. creating tiers of government 'closer to the people' (Elazar 1987; Teles and Landy 2001). In many regions of newly regionalized systems, regionalism and federalism have permitted the entrenchment of the idea of 'compound representation' that "politically institutionalizes pluralism" (Lancaster 1999: 63). In that context, regional tiers of government permit the institutional expression of the pluralism of regional distinctiveness (Burgess 2006: 101-107). Therefore, regional ambition is associated with the cultural and emotional attachment associated with this regional distinctiveness. This source of attachment finds its origins in the history and making political events of the development of Scottish and Catalan regional politics, and irradiates members of all parties. In this respect, Wallonia offers a more contrasted case. We observed that even though such cultural attachment has been developing, it presents a 'weaker' form. The source of this more ambivalent attachment could be explained by the institutional configuration of Wallonia in Belgium. The Walloon identity and its political expression remain indecisive more than 30 years since the first reform of the Belgian unitary state in 1970. This 'identity indecisiveness' is due to the unsolved cleavage between a Walloon regionally-based project (the Walloon and Brussels Regions would evolve separated) and a

Francophone community-based project (the Walloon and Brussels Regions associate their future into common institutional structures, such as the "Federation Wallonie-Brussels").

The importance of the past should not, however, overlook the importance of the present. In Scotland, the cultural and emotional attachment is connected to the halo of "New politics". The concrete experience of new forms of governance created its darker sides though. For instance, during the first legislative term, MSPs were accused of being more preoccupied by computing their own personal salaries than their working for Scotland. The 'scandal' due to the growing expenses for the new building of the Parliament further gave credence to these criticisms. Moreover, the saliency of 'New politics' evolved since 1999. Hence, some MSPs who were elected since the first legislative term consider that a collective identity has been vanishing: a new political generation of MSPs did not struggle for the establishment of the Scottish Parliament nor experience the historic momentum of "new politics". Besides, this erosion of 'new politics' takes places in a context of increasing domination of the SNP on Scottish regional politics. While Scottish Devolution had been designed to create government coalition as experienced during the first two legislative terms (1999-2003 and 2003-2007), the electoral success of the SNP allowed the party to create single party cabinets (minority government in 2007, and majority government in 2011). As discussed by several MSPs, supporting Devolution to bring politics closer to the Scots was one thing. Ending up with an "institution *of* and *for* the nationalists" where the Scottish parliament has become "platform for independence" is not acceptable. All in all, the declining relevance of the Scottish 'New politics' as well as the electoral dominance of the SNP on the regional electoral arena might jeopardize the attractiveness of the regional offices for ambitious candidates from other (state-wide) parties to develop regional careers at Holyrood.

Regional policy-making capacity

Regional ambition emerged in the three regions because of the attractiveness of the scope of devolved powers. In comparison to national powers, that are perceived as important policy areas but more 'diffused', the regional policy-making capacity is more in sync with the priorities of voters in their daily life. This is an important finding that may help to better explains the parliamentary behaviour of regional MPs in electoral studies. For instance, Andre et al. (2013) analysed the constituency orientation of regional and national MPs based on the PARTIREP cross-national survey in 15 democracies, including 9 nine multilevel polities (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). They found that regional MPs are systematically more likely to invest more time in constituency work than national legislators. Although they unmistakably observe that "regionalization—either through federal design or constitutional reform—reshapes patterns of service responsiveness", they are at odds to explain such transformation. They suggest other researchers "to dig deeper into the effects of regionalization". Our qualitative results unmistakably point out the specific attractiveness of regional powers to explain such parliamentary behavior: they have a direct electoral incentive to invest and prioritize time and resources in policy areas that are more in

sync with their voters' daily priorities. Some nuances are, however, required between three cases analysed.

While this narrative is shared across all Scottish interviewees, it concerns more specifically a municipalist profile of Catalan and Walloon regional MPs. The latter accumulate their parliamentary office with a local executive mandate. This profile of MPs consider that the powers devolved at the regional level are more directly connected to municipalist policy areas with concrete effects in municipalities (i.e. 'short-term' policy areas such as road construction and renovation, schools, environment regulation, sport centers, etc.). This 'municipalist' conception of the regional parliamentary office is, however, not unanimously shared by all regional MPs. On the opposite, some Walloon and Catalan interviewees distinctively raise their voice against such municipal focus. They argue that the profile of 'locally-oriented' parliamentarians jeopardize the overall regional policy-making capacity of the institution. They are less keen in participating and investing their resources on issues that is not directly connected to their local priorities. In Catalonia, they are called "diputado de a pie" and, in Wallonia, "cumulard".

Such profiles exist because it is in the political parties' interest to let develop locally-oriented regional deputies. Indeed, the PR system – and most particularly the close (Catalonia) and flexible (Wallonia) list system – gives an important role to the party leadership in candidate selection procedures. Contrary to the 'classic wisdom' that personal attributes does not a role in close and flexible systems, recent studies have proved the opposite (Reira, 2011; André et al. 2015). In that context, parties benefit from the candidates' local popularity of their position as Mayor and Alderman at regional elections (vote-seeking strategy) while the latter can take advantage of their position as regional MP to accumulate the necessary political and financial resources to accomplish local projects (policy-seeking strategy). If they are successful in this task, the policy feedbacks for their municipality are likely to increase their reelection as Mayor or Alderman (office-seeking strategy). In that case, there is a self-reproducing circle of "vote, policy and office-seeking strategy" that encounters both candidates and political parties' objectives. In Wallonia, where districts are smaller at regional elections, this trend is reinforced by the fact that local popularity constitutes a greater asset than in the larger federal districts.

On the other hand, not only do parties have an electoral interest in recruiting such profile, but that mechanism furthermore permits to recruit a 'passive' cohort of deputies. The latter will focus more closely on their own "local business" while the party will take care of the regional policy agendas. For instance, a Walloon deputy condemned regional MPs with executive municipal offices who actually refrain themselves from questioning too vigorously regional Ministers because they fear alienating them. Regional Ministers have indeed the political and legal authority to grant municipal subsidies. Since the "cumul des mandats" is spread across all political parties – with the notorious exception of the Greens – it affects most MPs, including those from the opposition. This situation has been openly criticized by other regional MPs and political observers in the media. In the Walloon case, it even led to an electoral reform of the status of members of the Parliament Wallonia: the anti-cumul Decree.

The new regulation forbids three quarters of each political group to combine their mandate of parliamentarian with an executive mandate at the local level (mayor, alderman or CPAS/OCMW chairman). In practice, no more than 25 percent of all Walloon deputies of each political group will be authorized to hold concurrently a local mandate and their regional parliamentary mandate (Dodeigne and Vandeleene 2013, 11-12). Interestingly, as soon as the Greens were no longer part of the regional cabinet after the 2014 elections (the party had conditioned its governmental participation to this electoral reform in the previous legislative term), the Walloon parliament decided to open the debates to withdrawn the new electoral reform.

Distance, gender and regional politics

The final factor is connected to the effect of geographical distance which contributes to explain Catalan and Scottish aspirants' ambition to put their name as candidate for regional instead of national elections. To my knowledge, the "distance hypothesis" has received less attention in electoral studies, apart from a few legislative studies looking at parliamentary behavior (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2002; Sigalas, 2010; Fenno, 1978; Heitshusen, Young, and Wood, 2005; Andre, Bradbury, and Depauw 2013). There is, however, hardly anything said about the effects of distance upon aspirants' motivation to become candidates. In other words, "distance hypothesis" in legislative studies has been mainly tested for those who are 'already elected', but not for those 'aspiring to offices'.

Even though distance affects both male and female aspirants to parliamentary offices, it predominantly affects female aspirants. Therefore, it should be referred to an interactive effect of gender and distance. In this respect, regionalism has permitted a greater involvement of women into politics thanks to the geographical proximity that regional institutions offer. Regionalism – as a mean of governance permitting to bring politics closer to the people through the principle of subsidiarity (Elazar 1987, Teles and Landy 2001) – has arguably fulfilled one of its objectives in Scotland and Catalonia. Besides, in Scotland, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament permitted to kill two birds with one stone: the Scottish Parliament has opened new opportunities for entering politics (institution closer to 'home'), but it furthermore opened new opportunities for female aspirants thanks to the organization of a family-friendly parliamentary agenda at the Scottish Parliament. Indeed, why considering paying larger costs to develop national careers when there are attractive and available opportunities to serve 'closer to home'. It thus rejoins Kenny and Mackay (2011)'s argument of a 'contextualized' relationship between gender and regionalism: "that is impossible to read off in any straightforward manner whether a particular form of state architecture provides a 'gendered advantage.' Instead, we argue that the practice and interplay of state architecture and political actors is as important as formal features". As observed by Gray (2006, 38), most has yet to be achieved on that matter, especially through the accumulation of further comparative results.

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