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Ethno-Regional Parties Cannot Be Everything to Everyone: Electoral Risks of a More Diverse Issue Agenda

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ABSTRACT This note suggests that should ethno-regional parties broaden their agenda, they could be electorally punished. Literature suggests an electoral incentive to a broader party issue agenda, even for some ‘niche’ parties. However as quintessential ‘niche’ parties due to their limited ability to be competitive with the general electorate, we argue ethno-regional parties can only gain votes by specializing on a narrow, concentrated set of issues. They will have limited success when engaging in broad or diverse issue competition with mainstream issues. Using over 40 years of electoral data from eight advanced capitalist democracies, our main empirical finding is that, as Ethno-regional parties broaden or diversify their issue agenda they are likely to lose subsequent vote share.

1. Introduction

Vote-seeking parties face a variety of incentives to shift their programmatic offers (Adams, 2012). Vote loss (Meyer & Wagner, 2013), for example might lead a party to re-evaluate its campaign strategy. Yet not all parties need to respond to incentives in an identical way. Mainstream parties compete for the median voter, whereby niche parties need tend to be more concerned with their electorate (Ezrow et al., 2011). Besides shifting positions, an alternative concept of programmatic offers is through which issues a party chooses to emphasize (Meyer & Wagner, 2019). Under certain conditions, niche parties can alter their programmatic offering—issue diversity/specialization: the number of issues that they emphasize—to achieve electoral gain (Bergman & Flatt, 2020).

This research note explores the difficulty that ethno-regional parties would face in pursuing an issue diversification strategy. Ethno-regional parties (ERP) are defined by their advocacy on behalf of an ethnicity or region (Müller-Rommel, 1998). While previous studies have examined their engagement with multiple issue dimensions (Alonso et al., 2015) and under what conditions they perform well (De Winter et al., 2018; Lublin, 2014), we here seek to connect how specialized an ERP is on a narrow set of issues to its electoral success in a variety of advanced capitalist democracies that vary in their

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party system size. Our conclusions suggest that in larger party systems, a strategy of issue specialization (up to a point) helps these parties define their electoral niche and succeed electorally. While previous research makes clear the incentives ERPs have in altering their agenda (Meguid, 2023), future research should factor in the electoral consequences of doing so.

2. Ethno-Regional Parties

Saliency theory asserts that political competition forms around parties campaigning on issues on which they have an advantage (Budge & Farlie, 1983) with competence on such issues resulting in electoral victories (Green & Jennings, 2012; Lachat, 2014). In contrast to these mainstream parties, who focus on the day-to-day governance of a country, its economy, and foreign policy, niche parties focus on issues largely untouched by party competition by raising novel issues that seldom coincide with existing lines of political division, cross-cutting across standard partisan boundaries, and campaigning on a *uniquely narrow* set of issues (Meguid, 2005). Ethno-regional parties belong to this ‘niche’ category, targeting voters of a specific region or ethnicity, ‘*challeng[ing] the working order and sometimes even the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition of their cultural identity*’ (Müller-Rommel, 1998, p. 19). They are party system relevant in many countries throughout the world (De Winter et al., 2018) and cross-cut traditional ideologies, some far-left, others far-right, and others ideologically centrist in pursuit of their decentralization-policy goals (Mair & Mudde, 1998, p. 222; Meguid, 2008). Similar, then, to mainstream governing parties, their goals have been characterized as policy-seeking, office-seeking, or vote-seeking (Tronconi, 2015).

Many existing explanations of ERP success cite factors beyond the parties themselves. When mainstream parties dismiss or accommodate ERP owned issues, ERPs perform worse, while when they take on adversarial positions ERPs perform better (Meguid, 2008, p. 74). Systemic and legal requirements such as geographic concentration, thresholds, and ballot access can also affect ERP success, with the former benefitting them and the latter two harming their success (Lublin, 2014). The level of European integration and decentralization also affects their success (De Winter et al., 2018), with ERPs less likely to contest national elections once their devolutions goals are successful (Meguid, 2018).

3. Challenges for Niche Parties to Broaden Their Agenda

Political parties have incentives to alter their agenda in response to a number of factors: shifts in competitor’s agendas (Adams & Somer-Topcu, 2009), changes in public opinion (Adams et al., 2006), and past electoral results (Budge, 1994; Meyer & Wagner, 2013) among others. While this literature tends to focus on mainstream parties, following Bergman and Flatt (2020), and in contrast to the previous section, we argue that ERPs have agency in their own electoral success.

Niche parties are known to suffer electoral losses when they alter their ideological profile (Adams et al., 2006). Besides positional shifts, a party might also alter the emphasis it places on one or more issues (Greene, 2016; Meyer & Wagner, 2019). A party might broaden its appeal instead of altering its positional agenda (Somer-Topcu, 2015).

Bergman and Flatt (2020) demonstrate that nationalist parties are indeed able to electorally benefit from doing so.

While niche parties might face incentives to broaden their agenda, the success of this electoral strategy is not a forgone conclusion. Bergman and Flatt (2020) have noted that only should a 'niche' party be credibly able to commit on non-niche issues, could such a strategy lead to electoral success. They argue that nationalist parties are able to credibly commit on multiple dimensions, but green parties cannot, as the ecological issues are uniquely associated with green parties (J.-J. Spoon et al., 2014; Walgrave et al., 2012). Just as green parties that expand their profile beyond ecological issues risk losing electoral support (Bergman & Flatt, 2020), should ERPs expand their profile beyond their core issues, they too could lose electoral support. Should an ERP stake out a firm left-ward economic stance, they might, for example, alienate some of their more right-leaning constituents. A more electorally viable strategy in the ERP literature, is known as 'outbidding', whereby ERPs stake out more extreme positions focusing on the decentralization dimension (Zuber, 2013).

4. Party Systems Moderate the Impact of Issue Specialization

One must consider whether indeed the territorial dimension matters for electoral outcomes. As multi-member districts tend to produce a greater number of parties represented, so too does the number of issue dimensions represented (Lijphart, 1999, p. 88). At one end of the spectrum, electoral systems with few parties dissuade voters from casting votes on marginal issues (Riker, 1982). ERPs are not bound by the borders of conventional ideologies. In countries with a strong tendency of ethno-nationalism, voting behaviour is shown to be independent of other issues (Tilley et al., 2021) with ERP voters showing lower rates of defection (Allen, 2017) and ERPs enjoying less accountability after taking part in coalition governments (Aha, 2021).

Electoral systems that allow for multiple parties lack psychological and mechanical centripetal forces (Cox, 1997) allowing for greater electoral success of smaller and niche parties (Ezrow, 2010). In these systems, issue salience and ownership frame political competition (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Meguid, 2008; Rovny, 2012). This stands in contrast to the two- and three-party systems that served as the focus of Meguid's (2008) case studies, in which mainstream party strategy was at the root of ERP electoral success or failure.

In larger party systems, voters might be aligned more along an ethnic or regional divide though social or economic dimensions maintain their importance in predicting voting behaviour (Medeiros et al., 2022). Taking a position on other issues then, might dissuade potential voters. In such a system, seeing as parties need to differentiate themselves from each other in order to attract voters (J. Spoon & Klüver, 2019), an ERP becoming more similar to its competitors will result in losses. Just as when greens go above and beyond their owned issues, electoral fortunes might be damaged, so too, might be the fate of ERPs (Bergman & Flatt, 2020). Parties thus have electoral incentives to become even more 'niche' in larger party systems (Meyer & Wagner, 2013) to counter this risk. By shifting the debate to issues on which parties have a non-centrist position through speeches, debates, and manifestos, the media and voters can focus on the issues on which a party has an issue-advantage (Rovny, 2012).

Implicit in the above discussion has been the notion that an ERP is an issue owner of the issue of decentralization. Let's alter the example at the conclusion of the previous section

with and ERP staking out a clear economic stance. Indeed, this has the potential to alienate some voters. However, if another ERP contests the election on the interests of the same ethnic group, then ethno-territorial-interested voters could find a *still* specialized party to represent their policy priorities. Take for example the case of Basque interests in Spain. After the November 2019 Spanish election, the Basque Nationalist Party entered into a confidence and supply relationship with the left-wing Sanchez government. In the subsequent 2023 election, the party had lost over 10,000 votes. In contrast, the EH Bildu, also representing Basque interests, remained neutral on the Sanchez government and gained more than 50,000 votes. At the party-system level, then, the overall popularity of ERPs can only be harmed through issue diversification if there are no other ERPs to which voters can select.

An alternative approach to this ‘underbidding’ of ethnic-issues would be the strategy of ‘outbidding’ (Zuber, 2013), whereby parties adopt more radical strategies as means of differentiating themselves within the ethnic group. Outbidding and specialization are related though not identical. A party with a minor part of their platform arguing for succession versus devolved education policy would be equally specialized, though one is surely more extreme on the decentralization dimension. Should decentralizing outbidding be an electorally successful strategy, then we should also see that, even when ERPs compete, specialization would lead to greater vote share and diversity to losses.

That said, we still argue for a conditional effect in such cases, as research in advanced democracies has found that position-taking on decentralization is either secondary to—such as in Belgium (Medeiros et al., 2022)—or subsumed into—such as in Spain (Field & Hamann, 2015), Italy and the UK (Masseti & Schakel, 2016)—traditional dimensions of competition. Cross-nationally, outbidding is shown to be less present in situations when parties place stronger salience on the economic dimension (Zuber & Szöcsik, 2015).¹ This test here will be the first cross-national examination of the effectiveness of ‘outbidding’ specialization strategies.

In sum, *ethno-regional parties will gain (lose) votes through a strategy of issue specialization (diversification) in large party systems without alternative ethno-regional parties.*

5. Data and Operationalization

Key to the conception of a niche party is a limitation of issue appeals (Meguid, 2008). To determine the breadth of issues appeals we use issue salience data provided by MARPOR (Lehmann et al., 2024). This dataset hand-codes election manifestos by assigning each ‘quasi-sentence’ into one of 56 issue categories and provides researchers with the most comprehensive time-series measures of party’s issue emphasis using a standard coding scheme across time and space. We utilise Bischof’s *specialization* operationalization (2017) that aims to operationalize the concept of a ‘condensed offer’. This descriptive measure of the narrowness of a party issue profile focuses on hitherto peripheral, destabilizing, and non-economic niche issues such as Euroskepticism, nationalism, environmentalism, ethno-regionalism, and agrarian issues.² In short, Bischof (2017) notes that since perceptions of party issue salience do not completely change from one election to the next, a party’s *specialization* in election, t , is the average specialization of the manifesto at election t and $t-1$ so as to limit the impact of noise in the data and to account for the path-dependent nature of party issue appeals. Niche issue segments are logged to better account for the psychological perceptions of party change across time (Lowe et al.,

2011): the perceived size of a difference is proportional to the quantity already present. For example, voters should perceive a 10% increase in salience of regional issues as being greater if a party had only devoted 2% of its manifesto salience to regional issues than if it had already devoted 20%. A logarithmic measure narrows this later example increase in issue focus to be mathematically less, with the former being measured as $(\log 12 - \log 2 =) 0.78$ and the latter as $(\log 30 - \log 20 =) 0.18$. As our argument models the effects of a change in specialization, we take the first difference of this *specialization* measure, representing the change in the focus of a party offering. Bischof (2017) also proposes a measure of *nicheness* that aims to operationalize the concept of ‘market share’ in which each niche issue segment is compared to the rest of the offerings within the system. As party would have a high *nicheness* score if it were the only party with a high focus on an issue segment. Even though these operationalizations are correlated at $r = 0.48$ ($p < 0.001$) within our sample, we do not expect this operationalization to be significant, as we have argued ERP prospective voters only focus on the offering of the potential ERP party itself and not its competitors. Given such high correlation, we consider our analysis to be a hard test if indeed changes in *specialization* are found to be significant in affecting vote share but changes in *nicheness* are not.

The key dependent variable—*vote share change*—is measured as the difference in the party’s parliamentary vote share between the general election of interest, t , and the one immediately preceding it, $t - 1$. Positive (negative) values indicate a vote gain (loss). This data is obtained directly from the MARPOR dataset.³

The empirical models include controls that have been found to correlate with electoral performance. An *incumbent* dummy measures if the party was participating in government the year before the election t from the ParlGov database (Döring & Manow, 2016).⁴ Incumbents are twice as likely to lose votes as the opposition (Powell & Whitten, 1993; Rose & Mackie, 1983) for several reasons beyond policy shifts (McDonald & Budge, 2005): unreliability in fulfilling past campaign promises (Downs, 1957, p. 104), disappointing previously supportive interest groups, perceived abuse of office, and increased media attention and scrutiny (Rose & Mackie, 1983). We also control for *party size* using lagged vote share, as, all else equal, larger parties have more votes to lose.

Following Ezrow (2008, 2010) we operationalize party system size using the effective number of parliamentary parties, *ENPP*, developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) calculated from the MARPOR dataset. As our hypothesis were conditional on the number of channels for political representation (Ezrow, 2010) party system offerings and how crowded the party space is (Ezrow, 2008), we interact ENPP with the change in change in issue specialization to determine the conditionality of the effect on vote share based on the electoral system’s permissiveness. Our other conditional variable—*multiple ERP*—was identified at the party-election level. If a party within an election had competition for its same ethno-regional group, these were coded as 1. About 1/3 of our cases fall into this category consisting of relevant party-elections in Wallonia, Basque Country, and Catalonia.

Our sample consists of all advanced industrial parliamentary democracies with Ethno-regional parties coded within the MARPOR⁵ dataset including all elections between 1968 and 2020. In total, our data includes 152 party observations⁶ taking part in 64 elections, with a cross-sectional and longitudinal structure. The non-independence of these observations is accounted for through use of a three-level random coefficients model with party-election observations nested in elections nested within

countries.⁷ The dependent variable is first-differenced, which reduces the need for additional controls for autocorrelation (Beck & Katz, 1995; Plümper & Troeger, 2007) and party-level time-invariant independent variables that might impact party success such as strength of partisanship, local or civic embeddedness, and national or regional institutional factors (Plümper et al., 2005). The first-difference approach also aligns with the dynamics of the argument, focusing on the *change* in electoral strength rather than the level of vote shares. When using interaction and conditional effects, we are sure to include all base terms in our regression analysis to discern whether a measured effect can be attributed to the conditional relationship or a constituent term (Brambor et al., 2006).

Table 1. Three-level model estimating effect on change in vote-share

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Δ -specialization	-6.991** (2.713)	-9.900* (4.131)	
ENPP	0.324** (0.125)	0.199 (0.142)	0.272* (0.124)
Δ -specialization * ENPP	1.779*** (0.532)	2.618** (0.884)	
vote-share _{t-1}	-0.062* (0.030)	-0.074* (0.031)	-0.092** (0.031)
incumbent	-0.664 (0.403)	-0.894* (0.445)	-0.386 (0.411)
specialization _{t-1}		-2.918 (1.586)	
Δ -specialization * specialization _{t-1}		3.427 (10.066)	
ENPP * specialization _{t-1}		0.734 (0.379)	
Δ -specialization * ENPP # specialization _{t-1}		-1.325 (2.357)	
Δ -nichelessness			-0.627 (1.544)
Δ -nichelessness * ENPP			0.344 (0.379)
Constant	-0.917 (0.588)	-0.404 (0.643)	-0.646 (0.577)
N (country)	8	8	8
ln(Country-Variance)	-16.057 (8.443)	-15.534 (8.677)	-15.630 (9.298)
N (elections)	64	64	64
ln(Election-Country-Variance)	0.542 (0.109)	0.534 (0.111)	0.523 (0.116)
N (observations)	152	152	152
ln(residual-Var)	-0.234 (0.079)	-0.257 (0.080)	-0.165 (0.081)
Log likelihood	-252.669	-250.023	-258.211

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Dependent variable is change in vote share; standard errors in parentheses.

6. Empirical Results

Our empirical results are presented on [Table 1](#). Model ‘a’ is our primary model and as noted above, our focus is on the bolded interaction term. The Δ -specialization coefficient, however, notes the electoral impact of an ethno-regional party increasing its issue specialization in a party-system with zero parties. This coefficient is significant and negative. This hypothetical is unrealistic but can serve as a base from which to compare the observed significant positive interaction effect, which indicates that as party system size increases, one expects this negative effect of specialization to decrease—and eventually turn positive. To identify this estimated positive electoral effect of specializing, [Figure 1](#) presents the marginal effects of specialization overlayed with a histogram showing the density of the data. Here we are looking to see the electoral impact of increasing specialization. A vote loss of specialization would only be predicted until a party system had effectively two parties, yet this is not observed within the sample. The positive slope of the plot depicts the positively-signed interaction effect. We can see that ethno-regional parties, on average, are no longer estimated to lose votes on average when pursuing an issue specialization strategy when the party-system size reaches ENPP of and this effect becomes significant around an ENPP of 4.75.

Model ‘b’ on the table indicates that this effect is not infinite in nature. Our base model predicts that an ethno-regional party in a large party-system could theoretically just infinitely increase its vote share by marginally increasing its issue specialization. Model b includes an additional interactive term to identify at what levels of specialization an ERP could be predicted to gain votes via issue specialization. The negative interaction term indicates that the positive effect of base interaction has limits. Calculating these effects for an ERP in a party-system with ENPP of 5 indicates that if a party has a specialization greater than about 0.5 (94th percentile), further specialization no longer statistically predicts a vote increase. In party systems with ENPP 6 or greater, a specialization of

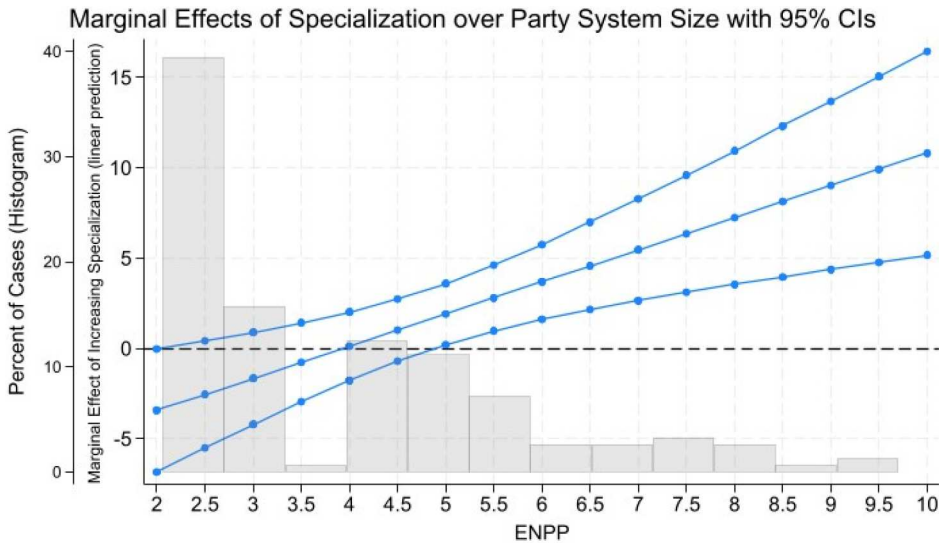


Figure 1. Impact of specialization varying party system size

greater than about 0.6 (97th percentile) is when a specialization effect can no longer be predicted to be electorally successful.⁸

Model ‘c’ uses a measure of party issue specialization by also accounting for other parties within the system. The ‘niche-ness’ measure then analyses whether electoral success is only viable if ERPs make themselves more focused on specific issues *as compared to other parties*. The non-significance of the interaction term suggests that being more focused than others in the system is *not* a strategy for electoral success. Instead, ERP need only be concerned with their own (and previous) levels of issue focus should their goal be electoral gain: an effect that we have argued is related to the highly-attentive focus of their potential electorate on just the ERP and not the larger party system (Aha, 2021; Tilley et al., 2021).

On appendix Table 3, we include further analyses and robustness checks. Model ‘d’ includes a *Multiple ERP* interaction: only on the uninteracted coefficients (of elections with a single ERP per constituency) is our argument supported. Appendix figure 1 displays these results graphically, indicating that in the *Multiple ERP* case, there is no detectable effect of issue specialization on vote share changes. Thus, while the potential for ethnic outbidding as an electorally successful strategy might be viable in systems with multiple ERPs, we find no evidence to suggest success with a strategy of issue specialization. Models ‘e’ and ‘f’ include controls for mainstream party behaviour,⁹ which Meguid (2008) suggests is a significant factor in explaining ERP vote share. Our key interaction variable remains unaffected by these additional controls.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we sought to measure the electoral effects of ethno-regional parties altering their issue profile. Expanding beyond country-case studies, our analysis includes election results from 64 elections in 8 countries varying in their party-system size. We found that as ethno-regional parties without other ERP competitors narrow (broaden) or specialize (diversify) their issue agenda within reasonable limits they gain (suffer) electorally. We also provided support for the perspective that ERPs have agency as it relates to their own electoral fortunes, in that their success is not wholly the result of the actions of other parties.

Previous studies have identified incentives for ERPs, and parties more broadly (Somer-Topcu, 2015), to broaden their agenda, such a vote loss (Meyer & Wagner, 2013) or appeasement (Meguid, 2023). We demonstrate here that contrary to expectations, EPRs haven’t recorded electoral gains when doing so (Lublin, 2014, Chapter 8). While previous research noted that proportional and majoritarian systems have no significant effect on ERP vote share (Lublin, 2014, Chapter 10), evidence presented here that suggests that the relationship between party systems and electoral success is conditional on issue breadth.

Admittedly, our empirical section was analysed at the election level. We are unable to provide evidence that indeed voters had perceived the change in issue specialization of the ERP. Future research should validate whether indeed voters are able to differentiate between parties that offer a narrow or broad agenda to allay the potential critique of the ecological fallacy in our findings and examine respondents’ dynamic perceived shifts in the issue agenda. Relatedly, future research could examine whether voters perceive ERPs as ‘outbidding’ one another, and whether such strategies are electorally beneficial. Along these lines, we here assume that voters perceive the party as unitary in its level

(and changes) to specialization. We make no comment on the candidate-level or constituency-level agendas, though certainly such differences exist. Within-country studies could examine whether such differences as it relates to issue breadth have an electoral impact at the subnational level. Furthermore, our country sample of interest was focused on Advanced Capitalist democracies. The role of niche party competition and Ethro-regional parties in Central and Eastern Europe, for example, has been less thoroughly researched.

Notes

1. On [Appendix Table 4](#), we investigate whether positional outbidding does occur; we find limited evidence of this practice within our dataset: yes in Catalonia, mixed in Basque Country, not present in Wallonia.
2. The MARPOR categories that Bischof (2017) uses are included the [Table 1](#).
3. As both the key independent and dependent variables are first-differences, a party must be in the dataset for two consecutive elections in order to be included in the empirical model.
4. Updated by hand using government websites.
5. Finland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Israel.
6. Listed on [Appendix Table 2](#).
7. These also serve to control for electoral system, as Lublin (2014) notes these also might have effects on ERP electoral success.
8. Noting the few cases that have specialization values beyond these might suggest that parties themselves have not found further specialization to be electorally valuable and pursue other electoral strategies.
9. Coding details provided in Appendix after [Appendix Table 3](#).

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on Contributors

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Appendices

Table A1. Issue segments and their corresponding MARPOR codes

Issue Segment	MARPOR Codes
Ecology	Per 501 (Environmental Protection) Per 416 (Anti-Growth Economy: Positive)+ Per 410 (Productivity: Positive) Per 106 (Peace: Positive)
Agrarian Regional	Per 703 (Farmers) Per 301 (Decentralization)+ Per 302 (Centralization) Per 706 (Non-economic Demographic Groups)
Extreme Right	Per 601 (National Way of Life Positive)+ Per 602 (National Way of Life: Negative) Per 607 (Multiculturalism: Positive)+ Per 608 (Multiculturalism: Negative) Per 605 (Law and Order)
Eurosceptic	Per 406 (Protectionism: Positive)+ Per 406 (Protectionism: Negative) Per 108 (European Community/Union: Positive)+ Per 110 (European Community/Union: Negative)

Source: Bischof (2017).

Table A2. Ethno-regional parties included in analysis

Country	Party (English Names)	Observations
Finland	Swedish People’s Party	14
Belgium	Walloon Rally	5
	Democratic, Federalist, Independence	11
	Peoples’ Union	9
	New Flemish Alliance	4
Italy	South Tyrolean People’s Party	2
Spain	Basque Country Unite	3
	In Common We Can	1
	In Tide	1

(Continued)

Table A2. Continued

Country	Party (English Names)	Observations
	Valencian Style	1
	Convergence and Union	9
	Basque Left	4
	Basque Nationalist Party	14
	Basque Solidarity	5
	Aragonese Party	5
	Catalan Republican Left	14
	Andalusian Party	5
	Canarian Coalition	9
	Galician Nationalist Bloc	5
	Aragonist Council	1
	Navarrese People's Union	1
	Together for Catalonia	1
	More Commitment	1
Great Britain	The Party of Wales	2
	Scottish Nationalist Party	5
	Democratic Unionist Party	5
Canada	Quebec Bloc	8
New Zealand	Maori Party	5
Israel	United Arab List	2
		Total: 152

Note, not all parties that participate in an election are included with the Manifesto Project database. The threshold for inclusion varies by nation (<https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/questions#:~:text=All%20parties%20that%20gained%20at,suddenly%20lost%20all%20its%20seats.>) and are based on national thresholds. The categorization of parties as Ethno-Regional is publicly available as well and documented on the Manifesto project website (https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/down/papers/Manifesto_Project_Party_Family_Handbook.pdf). Key to such classification are 'federalism and decentralization are often on the agenda; it is difficult to identify a unifying political or economic ideology because ethnic and regional parties differ within and across countries'. Thus, while most parties in Belgium, for example, run only in specific regions, these are not classified as ERP because not all have a policy focus on the centralization-decentralization dimension and can reasonably be classified as socialist, Christian democratic, or liberal, for example, given their incorporation into 'international party association or a European party group' or 'their name'.

Table A3. Robustness with multiple ERPs and mainstream strategy variables

	(d)	(e)	(f)
Δ -specialization	-5.573 (3.761)	-8.295** (2.735)	-6.282* (2.688)
ENPP	0.354** (0.128)	0.328 (0.168)	0.326* (0.130)
Δ -specialization * ENPP	1.673* (0.655)	2.086*** (0.534)	1.601** (0.526)
Multiple ERP	0.496 (0.522)		
Multiple ERP * Δ -specialization	4.071 (6.878)		
Multiple ERP * ENPP	-0.139 (0.143)		
Multiple ERP * Δ -specialization * ENPP	-1.359 (1.473)		

(Continued)

Table A3. Continued

	(d)	(e)	(f)
vote-share _{t-1}	−0.070* (0.033)	−0.023 (0.038)	−0.075* (0.033)
incumbent	−0.832* (0.414)	−0.190 (0.556)	−0.415 (0.428)
DIDI		−0.022 (1.269)	0.223 (1.018)
DIAC		<i>base</i>	<i>base</i>
DIAD		−1.479 (0.975)	−1.240 (0.848)
ACAC		0.347 (0.597)	0.635 (0.567)
ACAD		−0.049 (0.923)	0.218 (0.757)
ADAD		−1.386 (0.876)	−0.622 (0.794)
0–0			0.222 (0.795)
0–DI			−0.493 (0.981)
0–AC			−0.051 (0.894)
0–AD			−0.800 (1.179)
Constant	−0.948 (0.593)	−0.865 (0.880)	−0.907 (0.711)
N (country)	8	7	8
ln(Country-Variance)	−16.028 (8.321)	−16.510 (7.363)	−16.019 (7.911)
N (elections)	64	41	64
ln(Election-Country-Variance)	0.540 (0.110)	0.799 (0.127)	0.538 (0.111)
N (observations)	152	111	152
ln(residual-Var)	−0.252 (0.080)	−0.407 (0.089)	−0.274 (0.080)
Log likelihood	−250.750	−177.436	−248.535

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Dependent Variable is change in vote share; standard errors in parentheses.

Meguid Codings

Meguid (2008, chapter 3) suggests that mainstream party behaviour impacts the electoral success of ERP. Following the coding suggestions from this text, we code three strategies of mainstream parties using the manifesto project dataset categories of 301 (decentralization) and 302 (centralization):

- Dismissive (DI): Mainstream party decreasing its salience of ethno-territorial issues $\text{abs}(\text{per301}_t + \text{per302}_t) - \text{abs}(\text{per301}_{t-1} + \text{per302}_{t-1}) < 0$
- Accommodation (AC): Mainstream party increases its salience of decentralization more $(\text{per301}_t - \text{per301}_{t-1}) > (\text{per302}_t - \text{per302}_{t-1})$
- Adversarial (AD): Mainstream party increases its salience of centralization more $(\text{per302}_t - \text{per302}_{t-1}) > (\text{per301}_t - \text{per301}_{t-1})$

The six permutations of the mainstream left and mainstream right party result in possibilities of DIDI, DIAC—taken as the base given that Meguid’s (2008, p. 74) findings suggest this is the combination most damaging to ERPs—DIAD, ACAC, ACAD, ADAD

Country	Centre-Left	Centre-Right
Belgium (Flanders)	Flemish Socialist Party, Socialist Party Different*	Party of Liberty and Progress, Flemish Liberals and Democrats*, Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats*
Belgium (Wallonia)	Francophone Socialist Party	Liberal Reformation Party, Liberal Reformation Party—Francophone Democratic Front*, Liberal Reformation Party—Francophone Democratic Front—Citizens’ Movement for Change*, Reform Movement*
Finland	Finnish Social Democrats	National Coalition
Italy	Italian Communist Party, Democratic Party of the Left*, Rose in the Fist*, Democratic Party*	Christian Democrats, Daisy—Democracy is Freedom*, Go Italy*, People of Freedom*1
Spain	Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party	Popular Alliance, People’ Party
Great Britain	Labour	Conservative
Canada	Liberal Party of Canada*	Progressive Conservative Party*, Conservative Party of Canada*
Israel	Israeli Labour Party*, Israeli Labour Party- Democratic State*	The Consolidation*
New Zealand	New Zealand Labour Party*	New Zealand National Party*

—0-0: Neither party shifting its ethno-territorial issue salience.

—0-DI: One party did not shift while the other engaged in a dismissive strategy.

—0-AC: One party did not shift while the other engaged in an accommodation strategy.

—0-AD: One party did not shift while the other engaged in an adversarial strategy.

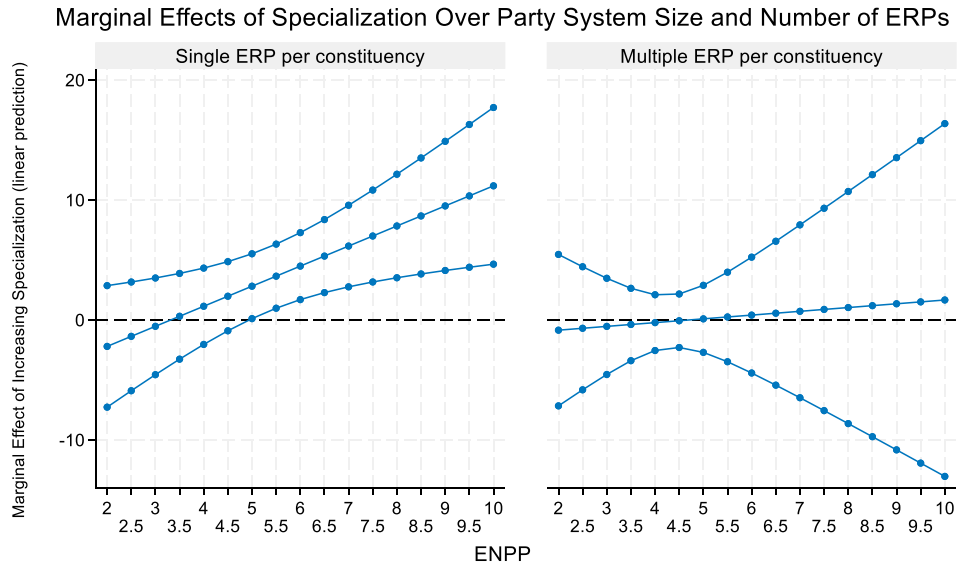


Figure A1.

Table A4. Differences in decentralization position (per301–per302) when multiple EPRs compete.
*Note, these are basically the per301 saliences as the largest per302 was ~0.1

				Decentralization Position			Number of Overlapping Elections		t-value	
Catalonia	Catalan Republican Left			13.185			2		145.41***	
	Together for Catalonia			24.957						
	Catalan Republican Left			24.842			2		17.988*	
	In Common We Can			4.785						
	Catalan Republican Left			19.261			10		3.303**	
	Convergence and Union			13.651						
	Basque Country	Basque Nationalist Party			12.414			4		2.171+
		Basque Country Unite			21.344					
Basque Nationalist Party				15.781			6		2.808*	
Basque Solidarity				10.2						
Wallonia	Francophone Democratic Fron			11.116			6		0.829	
	Walloon Rally			8.943						
	+ $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$									