

Towards European Degeneration or European Unification?



A quantitative analysis of regionalist party positioning

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1 Introduction

In May 2014, citizens from twenty-eight member-states elected 766 representatives for the European Parliament. The first European parliamentary election since the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. With the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has further developed the process of European integration and unification. With this in mind, the election and outcome was perhaps the most important act of European democracy since the creation of the European Community of Coal and Steel in 1951. However, how would this process look like in the upcoming years considering the possible challenges that Europe is currently facing? While an era of integration and unification is set, so too do we see an ever increasing demand for decentralisation and independence in numerous regions across Europe. Scotland has held a referendum for independence from the United Kingdom in September (UK government, 2014). Catalonia wants a referendum but it is likely to be forbidden by the Spanish Parliament (Kassam, 2014). South Tyrol even held an online referendum on secession from Italy with a staggering 92 percent who voted for the secession as a result (Hepburn, 2014). The process of European integration which is characterized by the diminishment of borders is actually facing the demand, by regionalist forces, of creating even more borders. Furthermore, although nation-states remain most important for European integration, regions and local governments are becoming increasingly important. Regions are in fact responsible for the management of nearly 80 percent of EU policy. Therefore, regional actors can provide information to the European Union about the effects of these EU policies (AER, 2006).

So, for the European Union and thus also for us, it is very important to understand and know the positions of these regionalist actors towards European integration. Overall, they could be the future leaders of newly created nations, which in turn could seriously affect current national and thus the European economy. Catalonia for instance, contributes twenty percent of the Spanish GDP (Europa-nu, 2014). What happens if Catalonia held a referendum for the secession of Catalonia from Spain and they succeed and become an independent nation? Will they become part of the European Union or not? The same goes for Scotland, Bavaria and all those other regions in Europe that are striving for more autonomy or secession. Therefore, it is important for us, to not only know the position of these regionalist forces, but also to understand and predict the position of these regionalist actors.

The actors that are taken as the focus of study are of course the actors that strive for this decentralisation/independence and are capable of setting future policy towards European integration, i.e. regionalist political parties. This is typically important, because of the minor academic attention for regionalist party behaviour and the large disagreements between possible predictors of party positioning on European integration. Moreover, research also shows a large discrepancy on the actual positions of the parties under consideration.

One might expect that non-mainstream parties or fringe parties, such as regionalist parties, are opposed to European integration (Taggart, 1998). However, research shows that it is quite the opposite when looking at regionalist parties (Jolly, 2007). When scholars adopt a rational-choice perspective, it would even be very likely that regionalist parties are in favour of the European Union and European integration. For decades, Europe has invested in regional policies by funding multiple projects that seems beneficial for the region under consideration. Furthermore, the European Commission is giving regional political movements the possibility to engage in the decision-making processes. European integration extends the possibilities for these regional actors, e.g. share of seats in the European Parliament, more control in the Committee of the Regions (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002). This is also argued by Jolly (2007). His research shows that regionalist parties are, as he defines it, Europhile. According to his analysis: 'Regionalist elites will continue to utilize European integration to increase the legitimacy and validity of their movements, and, in a context of constitutional crisis at the European Union level, Euro-enthusiast will no doubt appreciate support from an unlikely source.' (Jolly, 2007:124-125). However, this is a rather bold statement. Research demonstrates that regionalist parties are not per se Europhile (Masseti, 2009b).

In fact, I would argue that regionalist parties could also adopt a Euro-sceptic position by following the same earlier mentioned rational-choice perspective. Regionalist parties represent a specific region within nation-states, e.g. Spain and Italy, where their power is vested within the constitution of their nation-state. The European Union cannot reform national constitutions with regard to the autonomy or independence of regions. Therefore, although the earlier given possibilities are present they do not give these parties the possibility to reform the status of the region they represent. Moreover, opposition from regionalist parties is more likely because the European integration process is a process that is opposite towards the demands of the regionalist parties. European integration is characterized by the diminishment of borders in order to create a, as I would describe it, 'United States of Europe'. While regionalist parties are actually demanding the creation of borders. Therefore, in sum, regionalist parties are not per se Europhile, they can position themselves on both sides of the spectrum. Something that is accepted by a research conducted by Massetti (2009a; 2009b) who has showed that regionalist parties are found at both ends, either supporting or opposing European integration.

However, if there is no relation between regionalist parties being per se in favour or opposed towards European integration, what causes them to be either in favour or opposed to European integration. A great part of the literature surrounding this topic has been conducted. However, it is merely conducted by adopting a qualitative method. Although this is extremely important in generating explanatory variables for the respective positions of these actors, it is not that desirable in testing these possible explanations. This thesis uses these qualitative studies as a basis from which a dataset, consisting of six independent variables has been constructed. This thesis is thus one of the few analysis that seeks to use

a larger N study to address the various positions of regionalist parties and their relation with the European Union. This ultimately leads to the research question of this thesis:

- *What explains regionalist parties to be either opposed to or in favour of European integration?*

After an extensive literature review, research has shown that the literature on regionalist parties and their relation with the EU can be categorized into two perspectives: the individual and environmental perspective. The first, the individual perspective, consists of core party characteristics that have been deliberately adopted or chosen by the parties themselves, which in turn is assumed to influence party policy programs. Due to these characteristics they are bound to position themselves either in favour or opposed to European integration. In this research, characteristics that are defined as being part of the individual perspective are parties' regionalist demands and their political ideology. They are characteristics that are a part of the party from the beginning and are at the core for party policy programs. The second, the environmental perspective, consists of characteristics that are assumed to influence party policy positions, but are out of the control of political parties. For example, as will be shown later on, euro-party membership is expected to influence party policy positions. It is argued that due to a socialization effect, it influences party policy position on European integration. In this research, characteristics that are defined as being part of the environmental perspective are regional government participation, euro-party membership, geographical location and type of regional electoral system.

It is clear that there are numerous theories that try to explain regionalist party position on European integration. However, as earlier mentioned, it is questionable whether theories hold up when examined over a larger number of cases. Therefore, in order to test these posited theories, a quantitative analysis is being conducted. I have constructed a dataset covering the different characteristics essential for answering this question over the last decade, i.e. 2000-2010. This time-span is chosen because of the fact that information and party positions are relatively up-to-date. Moreover, a ten-year time-span is chosen so exogenous shocks are better overcome. For example, if a specific year is chosen, party position could be influenced by numerous other factors, e.g. elections, referenda, votes on European Treaties or public opinion.

In order to test the characteristics seen as possible influential factors for regionalist party positioning on European integration, this thesis will be followed by a chapter, which first is devoted on the theoretical assumptions made on this topic. Which assumptions are mentioned? Which can be tested and why? That chapter will be followed by a chapter which states the methods chosen for research as well as how the variables and concepts used in this research are operationalized and defined. Next is perhaps the most important part of this research, the analysis. This is divided in two parts. The first part will show the descriptive statistics used in this research, accompanied with a preliminary test of hypotheses, based on common-sense. The other part can be described as the hypotheses-testing phase wherein the quantitative

models are presented and hypotheses are accepted or rejected. This will be followed by a summarizing overview, conclusion and discussion for future research that can be derived out of the results.

2 Theoretical Framework

Political parties are seen as the cornerstone of representative democracy. They are, amongst others, necessary in building and aggregating support among citizens and interest groups; they integrate multiple conflicting goals/demands into coherent policy programs; they educate citizens; simplify choices for voters; mobilize people to participate and foster stability in government (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Norris, 2005). It is even argued that modern day democracy could not function without the presence of political parties. They adopt a certain position on how they think their society should look like. These positions can be derived out of a different set of characteristics which is expected to influence party policy programs and thus also their opinion/position on the European integration process. As earlier mentioned, party characteristics can be divided into two larger perspectives: individual/internal characteristics and external/environmental characteristics. Individual party characteristics are characteristics that are deliberately adopted or chosen by the parties themselves, which in turn is assumed to influence party policy programs, i.e. the agency of the party in question. For example, the PvdA in the Netherlands deliberately chose to adopt a social-democratic ideology, PvdA policy programs are therefore influenced by social-democratic values. The other perspective consists of environmental characteristics. These characteristics are assumed to influence party policy programs, but are out of the control of the political parties. They alter current party policies. For example, as will be shown later on, government participation is expected to influence party policy programs. Parties participating in government will moderate their position on European integration since they are being held accountable for European policies affecting their country or region. Given these differences in perspectives, we now turn to the first perspective, i.e. the individual/internal perspective.

2.1 Individual perspective

After an extensive literature review, several characteristics are classified as individual characteristics and therefore placed within the individual perspective, i.e. parties' regionalist demand and placement on the LR-axis. However, before we analysis how these characteristics could influence regionalist party positions on European integration, it is important to know exactly what a regionalist demand is.

Regionalist parties originated out of a feeling of being underrepresented and are at odds with the state they are living in. They all share the demand 'for political reorganisation of the national power structure, or for some kind of self-government.' (De Winter & Türsan, 1998). The demands however, could vary across time and space and are present in all sorts of gradations all having different consequences. Although there are all sorts of different demands, ranging from just demanding more cultural acknowledgments to irredentist claims, which favours the annexation to another state/region¹, the most common typologies are focused on two of the most common demands for regionalist parties, i.e. autonomy and secession (De Winter & Türsan, 1998).

¹ For example, the state of affairs in Eastern Ukraine and their demand to become part of the Russian Federation.

Autonomist parties can be divided between moderate and assertive autonomist. Assertive autonomist parties are those parties that are actively trying to extend the autonomy for their region, e.g. actively requesting for federal or confederate reforms. Moderate autonomist parties tend to make protectionist claims such as the preservation of a particular language or culture instead of trying to alter the political system. However, while they do not openly request political reform, they do support the requests of the assertive autonomist parties (Masseti, 2009a; 2009b).

Secessionist seeking parties are divided along three options: ambiguous, strongly committed and violent. The latter is rather straightforward: These parties are frequently linked with terrorist organizations that tend to overthrow the central government in order to reach independence for the specific region. The political parties operate as the political chapter of the terrorist organization. On the other hand, ambiguous secessionist parties adopt a position where they do not openly and actively mention independence as their core goal. This is done by the strongly committed secessionist parties. These parties keep their core demands upfront in their policies and discourses (Masseti, 2009a; 2009b).

However, numerous researchers have posited that, through the variation between regionalist parties with respect to their regionalist demands, their position on European integration could also vary as it is expected amongst those researchers that parties' regionalist demands influence the position and direction of those parties with respect to other policies and discourses. How this relation can occur is explained in the upcoming.

2.1.1 Regionalist demands

According to Massetti (2009a; 2009b) and Szöcsik (2013), Euro-sceptic attitudes are more common or are more expected in cases where the core goals are more radical, i.e. secessionism or violent secessionism. A Euro-sceptic approach is adopted when regionalist parties favour independence/secessionism, simply because their core goals are not feasible within the framework of Europe and their goals are not supported by the actors that are important within the European Union (Szöcsik, 2013). Actors within the European Union, such as the member states, will oppose secessionist claims for regions, as this would create a precedent for other parties that seek independence, perhaps even within their own country. For example, Spain will probably never support claims for independence in Scotland or Wales, because this will give the Basque regionalist parties in favour of independence an incentive to proceed with their struggle for their independence as well.

Other scholars (Loughlin, 1996; Lynch, 1996; De Winter & Türsan, 1998; Marks & Wilson, 2000; Jolly, 2007) however, clearly state that this expected relationship is not present. According to De Winter & Türsan (1998), the process of European integration has made the regionalist demands more viable, even for those parties that demand regional independence. As they argue: 'European integration weakens the national state 'from above', as many competences pass to 'Brussels'. Independentis parties hope that the decline of decision-making relevance of the state will facilitate its demise.' (De Winter &

Türsan,1998:221). Secessionist seeking parties will opt for further European integration because it will be beneficial for the regional economy. Similar to the argumentation of Lynch (1996), where support for the European Union is seen as a mechanism for independence seeking parties to avoid economic dislocation (Lynch,1996 in Jolly,2007). However, this can only be beneficial for regions that tend to have developed a richer economy in comparison to the nation-state.

In line with former statements, Loughlin (1996) states that further European integration expands the opportunities for regionalist movements and enhances the power roles of those regions. Therefore, the expectation would be that even the most radical regionalist parties (secessionist or violent secessionist) would adopt a pro-European integration position, as it would facilitate the instruments/opportunities to reach their core goal. Furthermore, Marks & Wilson (2000) argue that regionalist parties will support the process of European integration as it can facilitate the process of decentralization from the nation-state. Economic integration will be supported because the process towards one European market will dismiss the chance of being excluded from the market (Marks & Wilson,2000).

In sum, two positions on the relation between parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration can be discerned and thus, two hypotheses could be stipulated. The first hypothesis² can be derived out of the theories posited by Loughlin (1996), Lynch (1996), De Winter & Türsan (1998), Marks & Wilson (2000), and Jolly (2007) and thus assumes that:

H1: There is no relationship between the degree of parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration

The second hypothesis is derived out of the arguments posited by Massetti (2009a; 2009b) and Szöcsik (2013) and thus assumes that:

H2: Regionalist parties who have adopted a more radical goal are more likely to oppose European integration.

If the relationship, mentioned by Massetti (2009a; 2009b) and Szöcsik (2013), is not present, regionalist demands are not the prime forces for party positioning on European integration. Other predictors have to be present which influences parties' position on this domain. Moreover, even if regionalist demands can explain party position rather crudely, the relationship could not always be such a straightforward linear relation, as was mentioned earlier by Szczerbiak & Taggart (2003). This other possible factor is an important factor in defining and allocating political parties namely, their position on the LR-axis.

Parties simplify the choices for voters by adopting a certain position on all domains related to the political process and thus also issues that are concerned with European integration (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000). These positions are derived from a certain ideology, a set of interrelated ideas and

² Although this hypothesis can be defined as a null-hypothesis and thus doesn't have to be stated in this framework so open, it is mentioned because of the number of theoretical arguments of different researchers.

values that defines how the world should be ‘governed’ (Heywood, 2007). However, regionalism, the main defining element of regionalist parties is a thin-centred ‘ideology’, such as nationalism and ecologism. The narrow range of these –isms cannot ‘provide a reasonably broad, if not comprehensive, range of answers to the political questions that societies generate.’ (Freeden, 1998:750). They are limited in scope and ambitions and are incapable of providing solutions to all political and societal questions (Freeden, 1998). Regionalist parties therefore, have to align themselves with ‘full-fledged’ ideologies to provide the answers to the questions stemming from society. These ideologies, e.g. socialism and liberalism, are most often ranged on a horizontal line from left to right, i.e. the LR-axis, and could also have an impact on the positioning of regionalist parties on European integration. Which kind of impact is possible, is featured in the upcoming part.

2.1.2 Placement on the LR-axis

According to some (Marks & Wilson, 2000; Marks et al, 2002; Marks & Steenbergen, 2004), when new issues arise, it is these ideologies that shape the positioning of political parties. With respect to European integration, positioning matches the ideological position on the domestic level (Marks & Wilson, 2000). ‘Political parties are not empty vessels into which issue positions are poured in response to electoral or constituency pressures, but are organizations with embedded ideologies.’ (Marks et al., 2002:586). This school of thought concerning European integration did not always prevail. After the Second World War, at the beginning of the European integration process, integration was seen to take place among states, rather than a contest within states. It was the outcome of foreign policies of several European states (Marks & Steenbergen, 2004). It started in the aftermath of World War II by encapsulating Germany in institutional frameworks controlled for by other European states in order to regain peace and stability at the European mainland (Lieshout, 2007; Cini & Borragán, 2010). After the devastation of the War, ‘cooperation with neighbouring states was essential,’ (Cini & Borragán, 2010:2), and one important aspect was mutual economic cooperation. However, as economic integration increased, political integration had to follow in order to steer, control, and protect further economic integration.

Nowadays, European integration can therefore be defined as a process of economic and/or political integration. Economic integration is mainly about the removal of tariff barriers between countries and to create one single market. Political integration is more involved with supranational governance. Strengthening the decision-making powers and processes of the European Union and its institutions in order to create an ultimate supranational government (Marks & Wilson, 2000; Marks & Wilson & Ray, 2002).

However, as the integration process continued and more domains, formerly in possession of states, were transferred to these European supranational institutions, national actors such as political parties were contesting each other on this ‘new’ issue more and more (Taggart, 1998). This triggered a completely new research debate about the position of parties with regard to European integration and was primarily focused at the relation between the domestic left/right contestation and their stance on European

integration. According to Marks & Steenbergen (2004), ‘political actors have an incentive to interpret new issues in the light of existing cleavages such as the left/right ideological dimension.’ (:3). One possible reason for this is that political parties are rational actors, that are trying to keep the political landscape as simple as possible, thus incorporating new issues into the existing left/right divide (Marks & Steenbergen, 2004). Where an ideology and thus also political parties are located depends on their ideas and values concerning economic and socio-political issues. An ideology that is more averse towards the freedom of economics, e.g. socialism and communism, is located at the left of this political landscape. An ideology/party that is more averse to state intervention and wants to liberate the free market from government regulation is primarily located at the right side of the landscape, e.g. liberalism (Slomp, 2000).

A literature review revealed that there are three³ different directions on how party placement on the LR-axis could influence party behaviour towards European integration, i.e. the regulation model, the Hooghe-Marks model, and the Hix-Lord model. Each model envisions a different relationship and defines or focuses on another aspect of the left/right divide or European integration. Which model is focusing on which aspect is further elaborated hereafter.

2.1.2.1 The Regulation model

The regulation model emphasizes that European integration issues are incorporated into the domestic left/right dimension. It defines European integration solely as an economic process and not as a process of both sorts. As earlier explained by Slomp (2000), the left side of the political landscape favours European economic regulation whereas the right favours the liberalization of the European market and less interference in this European market. Therefore, this model expects that support is drawn from parties that are located on the left scale of the landscape when European integration, i.e. economic integration, leads to economic regulation. On the contrary, right-wing parties will support European integration when policies are leading towards less economic regulation. In this respect, the political aspect of European integration is in this case not important for positioning on European integration. With this in mind the next hypothesis that could be stipulated is as follows:

H3 (regulation model): Left-wing parties will support European integration when integration is focused on economic regulation whereas right-wing parties will support European integration when integration is less focused on economic regulation

If the relationship between parties’ position on the LR-axis and their position on European integration is actually highly likely and we see that support for European integration is more likely to stem from

³ The ‘international relations’ model is actually another possible solution, but is not important for this research. This model assumes that positions regarding the dimension of European integration is a response of pressures stemming from the national government (Hoffman, 1966 in Marks & Steenbergen, 2002), the producer groups (Moravcsik, 1998) or from politicians and bureaucrats (Haas, 1958 in Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). Although, each theory adopts a different main actor it is clear that, according to them, the left/right dimension is not a force that influences party position on European integration. Domestic parties position themselves accordingly since they are forced by other actors to do so.

left-wing parties, can we infer that European integration is more likely to be focused on economic regulation. However, if this relationship is present, it could also be that another model is right, i.e. the Hooghe-Marks model.

2.1.2.2 The Hooghe-Marks model

The second possible relation and outcome between political ideology and European integration position stems from Gary Marks and Liesbeth Hooghe (1999; 2001). According to them, there are two dimensions prevalent for the relation. The left/right dimension ranges from social democracy to market liberalism and the European integration process that ranges from nationalism to supranationalism (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). These dimensions are neither subsumed into a single dimension (left/right dimension) or remain orthogonal to each other (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). They assume that left-wing parties are more likely to become Europhile as the integration process focuses on market regulation. They support regulated capitalism in order to reach their social and post-material values, e.g. environmental, social. Within that same process, right-wing parties will be more euro-sceptic as they oppose regulation. Right-wing parties will only support European integration to minimize European regulations, and once this is achieved, right-wing parties will become sceptic of further European integration (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). This model accepts that both sorts of integration are possible, but that economic integration is the prevalent one. As earlier mentioned, right-wing parties will be in favour of European integration, but once their goal is achieved, they abominate further European integration, because that means more political integration (supranational government formation), an issue neoliberals reject (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). The hypothesis associated with this model could be stipulated, as is done hereafter:

H4 (Hooghe-Marks model): Left-wing parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration than right-wing parties as right-wing parties tend to be more averse as the integration process more frequently incorporates political integration

However, we still could only infer that European integration is more focused on economic regulation. We cannot make claims about which model can be accepted. One model that perhaps could overcome that problem is the Hix-Lord model.

2.1.2.3 The Hix-Lord model

This model is presented by the scholars Hix and Lord (1997), who have presented in their book '*Political Parties in the European Union*' another model that is concerned with the left/right dimension and the process of European integration. Where the previous models assumed that European integration was subsumed into the left/right dimension or that European integration was purely economic, the 'Hix-Lord' model assumes that both dimension are orthogonal from each other. The left/right dimension consists of economic issues whereas, European integration issues are mainly about state sovereignty and supranational governance, thus the focus of integration is in this case more on the political aspect. Political ideologies on the other hand are concerned with the 'allocation of values among functional

interest.’ (Hooghe et al, 2002:971). However, this model and the expected outcome, the inverted U-curve, is actually a combination of an ideological perspective and the nature of party competition. It expects that euro-scepticism is found at the ‘ideological extremes’, at both ends of the left/right axis.

The ideological perspective envisages that European integration and party position is all about the role of ideology. The foundation of the European Union and the frameworks and institutions constructed to support European integration are actually ideologically rooted. According to Haas (1958 in Hooghe et al, 2002), the EU is designed by political actors that were located at the domestic level primarily at the centre and right side of the left/right axis, with some minor support of the left. Ideologies positioned at the extremes would therefore be opposed to further European integration, simply because their ideas of European integration are not in concordance with the prevalent/dominant ideologies that shaped the European integration process. Support for European integration is therefore expected to decline when the distance from the centre is increasing. What else should be noted is the position of left-wing parties. As participation of left-wing actors in the establishment of the EU was perceived to be more limited than centre- and right-wing parties, opposition to European integration should be seen at an earlier stage on the left side of the axis. The distance for left-wing parties to adopt a sceptic perspective is smaller than for right-wing parties. The next hypothesis is therefore associated with the Hix-Lord model and could be stipulated as follows:

H5 (Hix-Lord model): Centre and right-wing parties are more likely to support European integration whereas opposition is mainly drawn from the extremes and earlier seen at the left side on the axis.

However, results showing this U-curve does not have to mean that the Hix-Lord model can be accepted. It could also be expected if we were to follow a less essentialist approach, such as party competition. According to Hix & Lord (1997) and Marks & Steenbergen (2002), major parties always try to incorporate new issues into the status quo, the current left/right dimension. They ‘*have little incentive to rock the boat.*’ (Hooghe et al, 2002:968). However, issues such as European integration are rather complex to subsume into the left/right contestation and major parties are therefore taking a moderate pro-integration stance, leaving more radical or Eurosceptic positions located at the ideological extremes (Marks & Steenbergen, 2002). Therefore, if there is no relation between parties’ position on the LR-axis and their position on European integration, but we do see the U-curve, than it is more likely that we can accept the influence of the magnitude of a party as a predictor for their position on European integration.

Although these above-mentioned individual characteristics of regionalist parties, i.e. their regionalist demand and their position on the LR-axis, could have an effect on their position on European integration, research shows that these could not explain all parties’ position on European integration, because there are parties that behave differently when is expected that they behave alike. For example, both the ‘Ulster Unionist Party’ in Northern Ireland and the ‘Südtiroler Volkspartei’ in Italy share the same autonomous demands as well as the same political ideology (Massetti, 2009a; 2009b) however, the UUP is against

further European integration and the SVP is in favour of further integration. There has to be something else that could predict or contribute to parties' position. One of the most frequently elaborated characteristic other than ideology or regionalist demand is perhaps whether parties participated in government. This characteristic is, as well as the other characteristics below, part of the other perspective, i.e. the environmental/external perspective. This perspective consists, as earlier explained, of characteristics that are not chosen by the parties themselves. Or in other words, these characteristics unwittingly influence party positions.

2.2 Environmental perspective

As was mentioned above, the environmental perspective consists of characteristics that influence parties' position on European integration indirectly. The parties are more or less forced to alter their position as will be explained hereafter when we analyse the different factors which influence their position on European integration. The factors that are defined as being part of the environmental perspective are: government participation, membership in euro-parties, geographical location and type of regional electoral system.

2.2.1 Government participation

After parties made a choice to stay in opposition or to participate in government, it is expected that it alters party policy programs. Participation in or the exclusion from government is thought to have a significant impact on party positioning with respect to European integration. When parties participate in government or support the government, it would be likely that they adopt a more pragmatic/moderate or in favour of position towards European integration instead of a more radical or Eurosceptic position as they are now seen as responsible and accountable for the relation between the European Union and the nation-state and/or region (Marks et al, 2002; De Winter & Türsan, 1998).

Furthermore, although the European Union is seen as a semi-supranational organization, there still rests considerable power with the respective member states and thus the national governments. Negative attitudes towards a specific EU policy, tends to be concentrated around parties situated in the opposition at the national level, governmental parties on the other hand are trying to defend it. However, what about pro-integration parties situated in opposition? Even these parties have to be critical towards EU policies and governmental policy since it is dangerous to simply accept all policies (Sitter, 2002).

Furthermore, politics, especially in a multi-party system, is a process of bargaining and coalition formation. When parties are able to participate in government, they have to work with other parties and policies are therefore faced with compromise. With respect to these processes, attitudes are likely to change into a more moderate position leaving extreme or negative positions to parties situated in the opposition (Elias, 2008). Finally, government participation enables parties to become familiar with the rules of conduct/procedures of the European Union and it is expected that this relationship will alter party attitudes into a more pragmatic/moderate stance (Ibid.).

However, research on this topic is perhaps of no importance with respect to this study on regionalist party behaviour. Besides the Lega Nord, no regionalist party did accomplish the participation in national government. This is mainly due to their limited base of voters. For instance, the CiU, PNV, UPN or CC are possibly only the biggest party within their region, whereas the PP and the PSOE receive support throughout the whole of Spain.

So perhaps it is better to look at government participation in some other manner, something that is until now a great lacunae within the theory of the relation between government participation and party attitude to European integration. Over time, regions have strengthened their position with European institutions and regions have gained some autonomy about legislation. Moreover, regions are in fact responsible for the management of nearly 80 percent of EU policy (AER, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between government participation and European integration is also present at the regional level in a similar manner as is expected between national government participation and party position on European integration. In this case, a positive relation between parties that are part of their regional government and their position towards European integration is assumed. The envisioned hypothesis regarding this theory could therefore be stipulated as follows:

H6: Regionalist parties participating in regional government are more likely to be in favour of European integration than regionalist parties in opposition.

2.2.2 Euro-party membership

Another possibly important environmental characteristic that is still missing in the framework is concerned with the impact of membership in so-called *Europarties*. This could have an influence since membership will lead to a process of socialisation. One of those researches that attempted to show the influence of membership is Ladrech (2000). He has studied the process within the ‘Party of European Socialists’ (PES) and has found a ‘*top-down influence*’ of the Europarty on the domestic/national party. This process can best be described as following: ‘This top-down influence is a consequence of interaction with like-minded people, resulting in a policy/programmatic diffusion through a mutual exchange of information and ideas, which may trickle down and be incorporated on the level of the individual party.’ (Elias, 2008:40). Whether this socialisation process actually makes parties more positive towards Europe is still up for debate. According to Elias (2008; 2009), membership in Europarties only reinforces existing attitudes towards European integration or the incorporation of values that are complimentary to the existing norms of the domestic party. Others like De Winter & Gomez-Reino (2002) are stating that it actually could alter the attitudes of those parties to European integration. Their research is focused specifically on regionalist parties and their respective Europarty, the EFA, and they argue that membership in this alliance has ‘turned the most Eurosceptical parties (...) into what we might call ‘Eurorealists’ (De Winter & Gomez-Reino, 2002:493). According to them, membership of the EFA will allow member parties to adopt a more sophisticated/moderate European policy agenda.

This thesis cannot test all these posited claims concerning the influence of Euro-party membership on party position on European integration, for a number of methodological reasons. First, this thesis aims at making probabilities based on their absolute position throughout a ten-year time-span. For example, a party is coded in favour of European integration when it consistently is in favour throughout those ten years. Without taking into consideration whether they become a member of a Euro-party or whether they strengthen or reinforce their position on European integration. However, we are able to look at the effects between parties that are a member of a Euro-party and parties that are not a member of a Euro-party. According to De Winter & Gomez-Reino (2002) parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration when they are a member of a Euro-party, in this case the EFA.

What must be stated here is the distinctiveness of regionalist parties. It is not the case that regionalist parties only can become a member of the EFA. As previously mentioned, although regionalist parties share one similarity, i.e. demand for some kind of self-government, they differ in many respects. One of those differences is of course their political ideology which as is explained, could influence European integration attitudes. However, it is also possible due to this differences in political ideology that they become a member of a distinct set of Europarties. For example, before the Scottish National Party (SNP) became a member of the EFA in 1989 it joined the ‘Group of European Democrats for Progress’ (Kernalegenn, 2013). The Südtiroler Volkspartei on the other hand, joined the ‘European People’s Party’, a group that consists of Christian Democratic parties and never enlisted membership in the EFA. Therefore, it is not the case that this process of socialisation only occurs within EFA membership. It could also occur, if the theory and hypothesis is valid, due to their membership in other Europarties. However, there are also euro-parties that oppose further European integration, i.e. the EAF and AECR (AECR, 2014, EAF, 2010). In this case it is expected that parties are more likely to oppose further integration. The hypotheses could thus be stipulated as follows:

H7: Regionalist parties that are a member of a Euro-party that is not openly opposing European integration are more likely to be in favour of European integration

2.2.3 Geographical location

One of the last characteristics dealt with in this framework and part of the environmental perspective, assumes that the geographical location of a political party influences their position on European integration. As is posited by Massetti (2009b), states can be characterized as either Europhile or Eurosceptic, which in turn could bias the positions of the parties under consideration. This could be explained by the fact that parties are always trying to mirror public opinion, since this is their best chance of maximizing their vote share. For example, if Spain is a traditionally Europhile country, estimates of public opinion could influence the position of parties towards being more likely to be in favour of European integration. Moreover, if parties tend to be located in Eurosceptic countries, estimates will show a lower level of positivity towards European integration. The hypothesis concerned with the effect of geographical location and party position on European integration could thus be stipulated as follows:

H8: Regionalist parties located in traditionally Eurosceptic countries are more likely to oppose European integration than parties located in traditionally Europhile countries

2.2.4 Regional electoral system

The last variable which can be characterized as an being part of the environmental perspective, is the type of electoral system within a region. Electoral systems differ across Europe, thereby influencing the possibilities for parties to adopt specific positions. According to Dow (2001), parties in majoritarian systems, e.g. in the United Kingdom, tend to position themselves closer to the ideological centre than those in proportional systems. Proportional systems are characterized with more ideological space for political parties, making it more likely that they could adopt euro-sceptic attitudes towards European integration. The hypotheses concerned with the impact of electoral systems on party position are as follows:

H9: Regionalist parties located in regional proportional systems are more likely to oppose European integration than regionalist parties located in regional majoritarian systems

2.3 Recapitulation

In sum, party characteristics can be categorized with having two options. Either they are a part of the individual perspective, i.e. it is a characteristic that is deliberately chosen by the party, or it is a characteristic that is a part of the environmental perspective, i.e. it is a characteristic that influences party positions unwittingly.

In order to understand the positioning of regionalist parties on European integration, each of these perspectives and hence, their characteristics should be sufficiently tested in order to clarify the expected relationship and to determine which perspective and characteristic is most important for the positioning of regionalist parties. With respect to the influence of parties' regionalist demand, many scholars have tried to test the expected relationship but failed to do so or did not convince others with their arguments. For example, Massetti (2009a; 2009b) has shown that there could be a correlation between a regionalist demands and European integration however, the articles did not show whether these findings were statistically significant.

Parties' placement on the LR-axis is perhaps the most cohesive and comprehensive part of this framework however, all of these models have looked at parties in general instead of regionalist parties in particular. Do regionalist parties behave in the same manner as 'main-stream' parties, since their ideology, e.g. liberalist, socialist, Christian-democratic, is not their prime force of existence? I would expect that perhaps both factors (regionalist demand and LR-placement) influence the position on European integration, but in order to argue that, I have to test both factors simultaneously in order to preach about it. Furthermore, what is the probability for regionalist parties to adopt a position that is in favour of European political integration if they were secessionist? Or when they are positioned on the right side of the spectrum?

The expected relation argued by the theories positioned in the last approach also deserves attention. Is government participation at the regional level also an important factor for the positioning of those parties? The accountability and responsibility is perhaps lower than parties that are in office at the national level however, as the European Union is nowadays more focused on decentralization and working together with regions and thus also their regional governments, regional government participation could also be an important factor. Will their membership in Europarties shift their opinions regarding European integration or not? In addition, if it does, is it a great influence? Is the type of regional electoral system influencing regionalist party position on European integration?

As became clear in this chapter, there are multiple theories, which consists of explanatory factors or independent variables, present in previous research on (regionalist) party position on European integration. Therefore, table 1 is compiled which provides an overview of the explanatory variables, hypotheses and assumed correlation with regionalist party position on European integration.

Table 1: Table with explanatory variables and hypotheses

School/nature of variable	Explanatory variable	Hypothesis	Assumed relation in existing research
Individual	Regionalist demand	<i>H1: There is no relationship between the degree of parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration</i> <i>H2: Regionalist parties who have adopted a more radical goal are more likely to oppose European integration.</i>	- Positive
	LR-axis	<i>H3 (regulation model): Left-wing parties will support European integration when integration is focused on economic regulation whereas right-wing parties will support European integration when integration is less focused on economic regulation</i> <i>H4 (Hooghe-Marks model): Left-wing parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration than right-wing parties</i> <i>H5 (Hix-Lord model): Centre and right-wing parties are more likely to support European integration whereas opposition is mainly drawn from the extremes and earlier seen at the left side on the axis</i>	Both Positive and Negative Negative Curvilinear (U-curve)
Environmental	Government participation	<i>H6: Regionalist parties in government are more likely to be in favour of European integration than regionalist parties in opposition</i>	Positive
	Euro-party membership	<i>H7: Regionalist parties that are a member of a Euro-party that isn't openly opposing European integration are more likely to be in favour of European integration</i>	Positive
	Geographical location	<i>H8: Regionalist parties located in traditionally Eurosceptic countries are more likely to oppose European integration than regionalist parties located in traditionally Europhile countries</i>	Positive
	Electoral system	<i>H9: Regionalist parties located in proportional systems are more likely to oppose European integration than regionalist parties located in majoritarian systems</i>	Negative

3 Methodology

Now that it is clear which theories and hypotheses are tested in this research can we address, amongst others, what sort of data is gathered for analysing the hypotheses and which methods are chosen for research. However, before that is done, it is important to clarify which cases are used in this analysis.

3.1 Case selection

The cases used in this research are derived out of a study conducted by Massetti (2009a; 2009b). His research has studied 43 regionalist parties scattered across Western Europe. Massetti (2009b) incorporated ‘all regionalist parties which have been (or were) active in the period from the end of WWII to today⁴ and achieved a minimum of electoral relevance were selected.’(Massetti, 2009b: 257). This research has studied all parties that had representatives to the regional assembly during at least, three consecutive occasions. However, when new parties have emerged which could not have contested during three consecutive elections, the criterion for the party to be taken into consideration was either getting a representative during two occasions or getting into office at the first election. However, when a regional assembly does not or did not exist, the earlier criteria holds for the central parliament (Massetti, 2009b).

This study is chosen because it is one of the only sources of information for all these parties with respect to their regionalist demand and their position on European integration. However, there are some adjustments regarding the sample size that have to be taken into consideration which reduces the number of cases. This thesis deletes eight out of the forty-three cases from consideration. The first party that is deliberately deleted from this study is the ‘*Lega dei Ticinesi*’ because the party is not located within the European Union, i.e. it is located in Switzerland therefore not eligible for this study. The remaining seven parties that are also taken out of consideration are taken out because they were not present in the study of Massetti (2009b) for the time-span under consideration concerning their position on European integration. The parties that were deleted due to this reason are Rassemblement Walloon, Front Démocratique des Francophones, Unió Valenciana, Unione di u Populu Corsu, Union Valdôtaine Progressiste, Volksunie, Euskadiko Ezkerra. After these adjustments, the parties/cases present in this thesis are as shown in Table 2:

⁴ Today means at the time of writing of Massetti (2009b). So in this case in 2009.

Table 2: Full list of regionalist parties analysed in this study

Country	Region	Party Name	Party Abbreviation
Belgium	Flanders	Vlaams-Blok-Belang	VB
Belgium	Flanders	Nieuwe Vlaamse Alliantie	N-VA
Germany	Bavaria	Christliche-Soziale Union in Bayern	CSU
Germany	Eastern Germany	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	PDS/Die Linke ⁵
Italy	Northern Italy	Lega Nord	LN
Italy	South Tyrol	Die Freiheitlichen	dF
Italy	South Tyrol	Südtiroler Volkspartei	SVP
Italy	South Tyrol	Union für Südtirol	UfS
Italy	Sardinia	Partido Sardo D'Azione	PSd'Az
Italy	Sicily	Movimento per l'Autonomia	MpA
Italy	Aosta Valley	Union Valdôtaine	UV
Italy	Aosta Valley	Fédération Autonomiste	FA
Spain	Aragon	Chunta Aragonesista	CHA
Spain	Aragon	Partido Aragonés	PAR
Spain	Galicia	Bloque Nacionalista Galego	BNG
Spain	Catalonia	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya	ERC
Spain	Catalonia	Convergència I Unió	CiU
Spain	Basque Country	Eusko Alkartasuna	EA
Spain	Basque Country	Aralar	Ar
Spain	Basque Country	Herri Batasuna	HB-Ba ⁶
Spain	Basque Country	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	PNV
Spain	Andalusia	Partido Andalucista	PA
Spain	Cantabria	Partido Regionalista Cantabria	PRC
Spain	Rioja	Partido Riojano	PR
Spain	Balearic Islands	Unió Mallorquina	UM
Spain	Canary Islands	Coalición Canaria	CC
Spain	Navarre	Unión del Pueblo Navarro	UPN
Spain	Navarre	Convergencia Democrática de Navarra	CDN
United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	Democratic Unionist Part	DUP
United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	Ulster Unionist Party	UUP
United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	Sinn Fein	SF

⁵ Merged into 'Die Linke' in 2007 with one other party called 'Arbeit & Soziale Gerechtigkeit-Wahlalternative or 'WASG' (Die Linke, 2014).

⁶ Was forbidden in 2003 due to affiliation with the terrorist group ETA. The party proceeded under alternative names such as EHAK, the communist party of the Basque Country during the regional elections in 2005, followed by de BNA, the Basque Nationalist Action, during de municipal elections in 2007, and as the International Initiative during the European parliamentary elections in 2009 (Leonisio, 2012:46).

United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	Social Democratic and Labour Party	SDLP
United Kingdom	Scotland	Scottish National Party	SNP
United Kingdom	Scotland	Scottish Greens	SG
United Kingdom	Wales	Plaid Cymru	PC

Now that it is clear which cases are used and tested in this research can we proceed with another important element of this chapter, i.e. which data is gathered and why.

3.2 Data

The dataset for analysing the parties regarding their position on European integration as well as their position on the independent variables is compiled by conducting an extensive analysis of expert surveys and literature review. All the information derived out of these possibilities are incorporated in my own dataset which will allow the researcher to study the posited relation between the main independent variables and the dependent variable.

The usage of expert surveys and literature review is chosen because these are less prone to biased estimates when comparing them to other options for information gathering. For example, mass public surveys conducted to identify parties' positions could bias the results extremely as the knowledge of the 'general public' is limited with respect to national politics (Benoit & Laver, 2006).

Literature review has to be conducted because it is the case that not all parties present in this research are mentioned in other datasets or that existing datasets lack the position of the regionalist parties under consideration. For example, there are datasets which incorporated some of the regionalist parties. However, these datasets did not incorporate the attached ideology of the regionalist parties or whether they are a member of a euro-party. Literature review and in-depth knowledge is therefore needed in order to locate the parties on the posited variables.

Expert surveys are extremely important because these are surveys conducted by researchers which are expected to have an extensive knowledge of the parties they study. Furthermore, these surveys are extremely helpful in locating the parties with respect to our dependent variable. Determining parties' position on European integration is extremely hard when only conducting for example, a literature review or manifesto analysis. Expert surveys incorporate numerous instruments for coding and thus is more valid to use. For example, Massetti (2009b) has coded all parties under study with respect to their position on European integration. His coding depended, amongst others, on interviews, academic articles, party campaigns, voting and position regarding European Treaties.

Although it is clear that there are some strengths with these approaches. There are also some weaknesses or limitations present or possible that should be addressed. Expert surveys are of course analyses of political parties conducted by experts within several political systems. At first, this would seem a good start for the location of political parties with respect to for example political ideology or their position

on European integration, since they are perceived to know the most of these political parties. However, judging political parties may vary between experts which could seriously trouble the reliability of the findings (Marks et al., 2007). Secondly, although they are called ‘experts’ their knowledge about parties could vary between parties. For instance, one party is frequently mentioned and highly visible in their political system whereas, a minor or small party is less visible, making it very hard to have an equal amount of information about all parties, which could lead to biased estimates (Marks et al., 2007; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007). Furthermore, party manifestos, one of the instruments which are being used by experts to locate the parties, are written and conducted to posit political parties positively in times of elections. Information that is not salient for those parties or that is with respect to their tactical considerations not ‘smart’ to focus on, will possibly be underexposed or merely mentioned in their program, since that could impact their share of votes (Marks et al, 2007).

However, despite the fact that there are several possible flaws with this type of data extraction, these approaches are best suited for the purpose of this research. It is an important source for the topic of this thesis and numerous researches has been conducted in order to test whether the weaknesses of this data-source were really influencing the results. Cross-validating and evaluating an approach with alternative instruments has shown that the results, with regard to party position, were consistent and that they’ve converged with alternative measures. In sum, the possible flaws did not influence the results in a way that they were problematic and that the results differed significantly from other possible approaches (Marks et al., 2007; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007; Hooghe et al., 2010; Bakker et al., 2012).

Now that we know which types of data is used which enables us to compile a dataset, can we proceed with the operationalization of the variables and the position of the parties under study.

3.3 Operationalization

In this part of the study, several aspects are highlighted. First, a general definition and clarification of the dependent variable is given before the position on European integration of the parties is given. This will be followed by the factors that are located within the individual perspective. Here, it will be made clear which type of data is used for coding the parties under study as well as an outline of the different positions of the parties with respect to the individual factors. After this has been done, the same will be conducted with respect to the factors located within the environmental perspective.

3.3.1 European integration

What became clear regarding the definition of European integration was the fact that the literature was not like-minded on the meaning of this concept and that European integration was interpreted in a whole set of different manners. In essence, European integration is seen as a process for ‘building unity between European countries and peoples. Within the European Union it means that countries pool their resources and take many decisions jointly. This joint decision-making takes place through interaction between the EU institutions.’ (European Union, 2014). This process towards unity started primarily as

an economic instrument to prevent future wars on the European mainland. The idea was that war was unlikely to begin if countries were dependent of each other through trade because they had mutual disadvantages if they were to go to war. The economic integration however, needed some sort of political integration to steer and control the process of political integration. European laws had to be drafted and national power had to be transferred to the European Union in order to help the process of economic integration.

However, as earlier mentioned it is near to impossible to differentiate between party position on economic integration and party position on political integration. Economic integration entails political integration and vice versa. Moreover, how is economic and/or political European integration defined by the parties under consideration. Each party defines or focuses on different elements of European integration because they each have different goals. This can be overcome if we don't differentiate between both. For this variable, the study initially planned to use amongst others, the Comparative Party Manifesto Project, also known as the CPMP, the CHES, and literature review. However, preliminary research regarding this variable showed a large inconsistency in these datasets on the position of political parties regarding European integration. Furthermore, there was a large sum of data missing with regard to party position on European integration to create a sufficient dataset for this study. The author therefore shifted his attention to extract his data from the study of Massetti (2009b), with respect to European integration position. Massetti (2009b) has coded the European integration variable of the parties in the 2000s. He coded the parties under consideration either as 'anti', 'ambiguous' or 'pro' by means of an extensive research of party manifesto's over time; numerous interviews with representatives of the parties; academic articles; and party campaigns, voting and position regarding European Treaties such as the Lisbon Treaty and the Constitutional Treaty. However, a new problem occurred if using the exact data of his study. If the exact positions of these parties were taken there would be a large inequality in the number of cases per category. To be exact, the category 'ambiguous' would only consist of five cases, which in turn could violate assumptions and affect the validity of the results.

One option to overcome this problem is to dichotomize the possible outcomes into 'anti' and 'pro' and if possible, to relocate the parties previously coded by Massetti (2009b) as 'ambiguous'. The parties that are coded as 'ambiguous' are respectively the CSU, PNV, CiU, SG, and PC.

Although the PNV is coded as ambiguous, Massetti (2009b) states that '*In December 2004 the PNV's Annual Conference passed a resolution in favour of the European Constitution.*' (Perez-Nievas, 2006:53 in Massetti, 2009b). Furthermore, the PNV participated in the 'yes'-camp in the campaign for the ratification of the EU Constitution (Aparicio-Romero, 2006:70 in Massetti, 2009b). A better placement of this party is therefore as being in favour of European integration. The same was true for the CiU, who also participated in the 'yes'-camp in the campaign for the ratification of the EU Constitution. The party is therefore, also coded as being in favour of European integration. Moreover, the CSU leans towards

pro-European integration stances (Masseti, 2009b). Therefore, this party is according to my opinion better located if they are located as being pro-European integration. Plaid Cymru is actually in favour of further integration although it wants more autonomy and status for Wales within the European Commission (Masseti, 2009b). It is the most pro-EU party in Wales (De Winter, 2001). So, this party is also better located if coded as being pro-European integration. Finally, an explanation for coding the Scottish Greens as ‘ambiguous’ towards European integration is not done in Massetti (2009b). However, an extensive literature review shows a rather different picture of the position of the SG. In fact, the SG is very critical of the European project and thereby better located when being coded as anti-European integration (Hamilton, 2002; Hepburn, 2007; 2008). So, all in all it is better to collapse the category ‘ambiguous’ because of the sketchy locating of parties as being ‘ambiguous’.

This defines the dependent variable as a nominal variable called ‘euro-int’ in this study. Table 3 features the location of the parties under consideration with regard to their position on European integration.

Table 3: Party position on European integration

ANTI	PRO
VB, PDS, LN, dF, UfS, CHA, BNG, ERC, HB-Ba, EA, Ar, DUP, UUP, SF, SNP, SG	N-VA, SVP, PSd’Az, MpA, UV, FA, PAR, PA, PRC, PR, UM, CC, UPN, CDN, SDLP, PNV, CiU, PC, CSU

Now that it is clear which parties are positioned as being opposed to or in favour of European integration, can we look at the characteristics within the individual perspective.

3.3.2 Individual perspective

3.3.2.1 Regionalist demand

One of the most important concepts to define in this research is of course the definition of regionalist parties. At first glance, one would expect that it is a rather straightforward and easy to grasp concept. However, the terminology showed something different, e.g. ethnoregionalist (De Winter & Türsan, 1998), ethno-regionalist (Dandoy, 2009), minority nationalist (Keating & McGarry, 2001), regional minority nationalist (Olsson, 2007). There is however one feature on which these researchers agree and is best elaborated by Hix & Lord (1997): ‘they advocate a reform of the territorial structure of the state in which they operate.’ (:44). Which possible reforms they could advocate for however, is still up for debate and ranges from just demanding more rights for cultural protection (De Winter & Türsan, 1998) to rattachist goals (Dandoy, 2009). However, the goals that are most common are the autonomist and secessionist ones. These can be differentiated into five different demands/positions, i.e. moderate autonomist, assertive autonomist, ambiguous secessionist, strong secessionist, and violently secessionist (Masseti, 2009a; Massetti, 2009b).

The different demands across our cases should also be incorporated in the dataset because it is important for testing the posited theories/hypotheses concerning the influence of the demands on their position on

European integration. As earlier mentioned, the study of Massetti (2009a; 2009b) is the baseline of this research with respect to the number of regionalist parties and different possible degrees of regionalist demands. The classification of Massetti (2009b) would therefore be used in order to locate the demands of the parties under study. Whether parties are coded as demanding autonomy or secession through a moderate, assertive, ambiguous, strong, or violent manner depends on the research of Massetti (2009b). As has been done with regard to the dependent variable of this research, Massetti (2009b) has studied the parties also extensively with regard to their regionalist demand. He has conducted and studied amongst others interviews, manifesto's, behaviour, media coverage, and referenda proposals. Because of the limited time span, this research will not adopt a whole new literature review and analysis in order to come up with the same results. The variable will be called 'regdem' and is a five-point scale on an ordinal level; moderate autonomist (1), ambiguous autonomist (2), ambiguous secessionist (3), strongly committed secessionist (4), and violent secessionist (5). Table 4 shows the position of the parties under consideration.

Table 4: Party position on regionalist demand

Moderate Autonomist	Assertive Autonomist	Ambiguous Secessionist	Strongly committed Secessionist	Violent Secessionist
PSd'Az, MpA, PA, PAR, PRC, PR, UM, CC, UPN	PDS, CSU, LN, SVP, UV, FA, CDN, CHA, CiU, DUP, UUP	BNG, ERC, PNV, SG	N-VA, VB, dF, UfS, EA, Ar, SNP, PC, SDLP, SF	HB-Ba

3.3.2.2 LR-axis

Now that we have operationalized the main elements that are of importance in this research, will it be able to look at the other concepts significant in this research and which are being posited in theories and hypotheses as the predicting forces for parties' position on European integration. One of those is their position on the LR-axis and depends on their political ideology. As earlier mentioned, a political ideology serves as a framework which is adopted by political parties to position oneself on a range of different issues, which in turn can be used to place the parties on the left-right axis. So, it is needed to research the parties under study with respect to their ideology, before they can be placed on the LR-axis.

For this variable, extended literature review is needed in order to classify the regionalist parties since no suitable dataset is present which consists of all the parties under consideration. The author will classify the parties by himself by studying numerous scientific articles and party websites Parties are than located along ten different ideologies. These ideologies can be defined as: extreme left, socialist, green, social democratic, Christian democratic, liberal, agrarian, protestant, conservative, or extreme right.

After the extensive literature review, research has shown that no party in this study is attached to any agrarian ideology. Therefore, the category is omitted from this research. Parties are than allocated as is shown in table 5. See table 1 in the Appendix for a full list of references concerning parties' ideology.

Table 5: Party position on political ideology

Extreme left	Socialist	Green	Social Democratic	Christian Democratic	Liberal	Protestant	Conservative	Extreme right
Ar, HB-Ba, SF	BNG, PDS, PA	SG	CHA, EA, ERC, SNP, SDLP, PC	CDN, FA, MpA, SVP, UPN, CSU, PNV	CC, UM, CiU	DUP	UUP, N-VA, PAR, PSd'Az, PR, PRC, UV	dF, LN, UfS, VB

Now that this is done, will it be able to place to parties on the LR-axis. Parties coded as extreme left are those parties that are coded as radical/extreme left in the earlier part of the analysis when looking at the type of ideology of each party. This position within the variable 'LR-axis' is coded as '1'. Parties that have adopted a socialist, social-democratic or green ideology are coded as mainstream left. This position within the 'LR-axis' is coded as '2'. Parties that have adopted a conservative position as ideology are coded as '3' or 'centre' within the 'LR-axis' variable. Although sometimes conservatism is defined as a right-wing ideology, conservatism is this time coded as being positioned around the centre on the LR-axis. This is the case, because conservatism, as is sometimes argued, is actually the rejection of any ideology, both left or right. It's considered to be rational and realistic without dogmatic beliefs (Heywood, 2007; Oakeshott, 1962). Most of the parties that are coded as a party attached to conservatism are parties that are openly rejecting any ideology because the only important goal is their regionalist claim or don't adhere to any ideology at all because they lack ideological consistency. Parties coded as mainstream right were given the value '4' within the 'LR-axis' variable are either attached to the liberal, protestant or Christian democratic ideology. Parties coded as extreme-right are attached to right-wing populism or extreme-right wing/anti-immigrant ideologies. These are given a '5' as a value and of course located within the box 'radical/extreme-right'. In sum, the 'LR-axis' variable is an ordinal or interval-like variable with a 5-point scale, featured in Table 6:

Table 6: Party position on the LR-axis

Extreme left	Mainstream Left	Centre	Mainstream Right	Extreme right
Extreme left	Socialist, Green, Social Democratic	Conservatives	Christian-Democratic, Liberal, Protestant	Extreme right
Ar, HB-Ba, SF	BNG, PDS, SG, ERC, EA, CHA, SNP, SDLP, PA, PC	UUP, N-VA, PAR, PSd'Az, PR, PRC, UV	DUP, CDN, CSU, FA, MpA, PNV, SVP, UPN, CC, CiU, UM	dF, LN, UfS, VB

Now that it is clear which are the positions of the parties with respect to the individual factors can we proceed with their positions with regard to the environmental perspectives, i.e. regional government participation, euro-party membership, country profile and regional electoral system.

3.3.3 Environmental perspective

3.3.3.1 Regional government participation

Participation in government is a rather tricky variable when looking at regionalist parties. Regionalist party support, as is explained earlier, tends to be concentrated within the region they represent. This will result in few parties that will participate in national elections and when they do, it is probable that they would get a minor share of votes, since their support is not spread over the whole country. This in turn will lead towards a minor chance of regionalist parties participating in national government. However, regionalist parties do have a significant possibility to participate in regional election, their vote share is more equally distributed, making it more viable for those parties to participate. Furthermore, as earlier mentioned, the relation between the region and the European Union has gained significance and the political bodies present in those region are of importance for that relation and is the main source of communication between the powers in Brussels and the ones in the respective regions. This thesis won't therefore focus on participation in national governments, but is more focused on the participation in regional bodies of power/government.

In order to create this variable, multiple sources were used to obtain the information needed to classify the parties as either participating in or opposing the government. One dataset for example, is the data stemming from 'Parties and Elections in Europe'. This is a comprehensive database about notable national and European elections first started in 1945. It currently contains results of elections from all European countries and subdivisions. The variable is nominal and is called 'govpart' and divided between no regional government participation/opposition (1) and regional government participation (2). Because there is a ten-year time-span, parties can be both in opposition or in government throughout the time under study, 2000-2010. To overcome this problem, parties are coded, according to their duration in government/opposition. For example, when party X participated for only four years, party X is not being classified as a participant of government. However, when party X participated for six years, the party is coded as being a government participant. This in turn will result in a table of parties as is presented in Table 7. See table 1 in the Appendix for a full list of references.

Table 7: Party position on participation in regional government or not

Opposition against government	Participation within government
VB, PA, CHA, HB-Ba, Ar, UM, CiU, BNG, PR, FA,	N-VA, PAR, PNV, EA, CC, PRC, ERC, UPN, CDN,
PSd'Az, MpA, dF, UfS, PDS, SG, SNP, PC	UV, LN, SVP, CSU, SDLP, DUP, UUP, SF

3.3.3.2 Euro-party membership

The research will be extended by looking at data about which regionalist party surveyed is a member of one of the Euro-parties⁷ and whether membership changed their position on European integration. Research will be conducted by looking at information derived out of literature available on Euro-party websites and scientific journals. This variable is important because membership is expected to have an impact on regionalist party stance on European integration, as is posited in the theoretical framework. The variable is called ‘euromemb’ and is nominal where non-membership is coded as ‘1’ and membership is coded as ‘2’. The same problem arises with this variable as was the case with government participation. Parties can shift their membership and as will be shown, they did. So, when parties were a member of a Euro-party for five years or more, they are coded as being a Euro-party member, and if less, respectively as non-members. Parties could also have a status as an observer. Parties are in this case also coded as a member of a Euro-party. Although they can’t vote and fully participate as full members, they still receive the benefits necessary for the socialization process to occur, as posited in the theoretical framework. With this in mind nineteen parties are coded as being a member of a euro-party whereas fifteen parties are coded as not being a member of a euro-party, as is seen in Table 8. One party, however, is omitted from this analysis with respect to euro-party membership as an influential factor. The Lega Nord was a member within several euro-parties which rejected European integration. However, since this is the only party that can be coded as being a member within outspoken Euro-sceptic euro-parties which aren’t active anymore, the party is omitted from this research. See table 1 in the Appendix for a full list of references.

Table 8: (Non) membership within Euro-parties of parties

MEMBER	NON MEMBER
PDS, CHA, BNG, ERC, EA, SF, SNP, SG, UUP, PSd’Az, SVP, UV, UfS, PA, SDLP, CSU, PNV, CiU, PC	VB, HB-Ba, DUP, Ar, dF, N-VA, MpA, PR, PRC, UM, CC, FA, PAR, CDN, UPN

3.3.3.3 Geographical location

As became clear, countries can be defined as being primarily Eurosceptic or Europhile. This variable is, of course, nominal and consists of two options, Eurosceptic (1) and Europhile (2) and is called ‘cntryprfl’. The information relevant for this research can be derived by using different instruments. One of those is the use of the ‘Eurobarometer’. This large public opinion survey dataset shows the opinions of citizens of European countries regarding their position on European integration. If public opinion is against European integration, the respective country will be coded as Eurosceptic. If public opinion is pro-European integration, the respective country will be coded as Europhile. Another approach that can

⁷ European political parties are: ‘European People’s Party’, ‘Party of European Socialist’, ‘Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe’, ‘Greens’, ‘Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists’, ‘The Party of the European Left’, ‘Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy’, ‘European Democratic Party’, ‘European Free Alliance’, ‘European Alliance for Freedom’, ‘Alliance of European National Movements’, ‘European Christian Political Movement’, ‘EU Democrats’ (European Parliament, 2014c; European Parliament, 2014d). Of these parties, two of them openly oppose European integration, i.e. the Alliance of European Conservative Reformist (AECR, 2014) and the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF, 2010).

be used is by looking at the positions of all political parties within a specific European country. If parties within a country are primarily against European integration, we can make a claim that the specific country is Eurosceptic and vice versa. For this research, the public opinion within each country is used. ‘Eurobarometer’ is used because it can be more sincere. For example, parties can strategically adopt certain positions in order to remain visible within a political space. Moreover, and as earlier claimed, positions of parties depend on so much factors besides their ideological position. Therefore, the researcher thinks that the ‘Eurobarometer’ is better for establishing the profile of a country regarding their position on European integration. For this study, the research will focus on whether the public opinion trusts the European Union. Trust in the European Union is used for this variable because it is expected that countries that are traditionally sceptic against the European Union are traditionally also more distrustful against the European Union. In order to prevent the influence of exogenous shocks, the study is taking the sum of public opinion research throughout the first halve of the decade under study, i.e. 1999-2005. In order to test whether the findings of own research is applicable/valid, the findings will be compared to another study that also takes into account traditional Eurosceptic or Europhile countries, i.e. Massetti (2009b).

According to Massetti (2009b), the United Kingdom is the only traditionally Eurosceptic country whereas Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain have been defined as traditionally Europhile⁸. However, research on public opinion by using Eurobarometer has resulted in a slightly different coding. Namely, according to the authors’ study, the United Kingdom is accompanied by Germany as an Eurosceptic country, leaving Belgium, Spain and Italy as traditional Europhile. This results by the following; since, traditional feelings have to be studied throughout various years in order to prevent the influence of exogenous shocks as well as to safeguard the level of validity and significance, public opinion is measured in each year from 1999-2005. Countries are defined as traditional Eurosceptic/Europhile when their level of trust in the European Union, a major influential factor on euro-sceptic or euro-phile attitudes, is below or above 50 percent. With this in mind, Germany and the United Kingdom are coded as Eurosceptic in each year. Italy is coded as Europhile each consecutive time and Belgium and Spain are ones coded as Eurosceptic, respectively in 2004 (Belgium) and 2005 (Spain). With this in mind a new table, Table 9, can be created showing whether parties are located either in traditionally Eurosceptic or Europhile countries.

Table 9: Party position on geographical location

Traditionally Eurosceptic	Traditionally Europhile
PDS, DUP, UUP, SF, SNP, SG, SDLP, CSU, PC	VB, LN, dF, UfS, CHA, BNG, ERC, HB-Ba, EA, Ar, PAR, PA, PRC, PR, UPN, UM, CC, CDN, SVP, PSd’Az, MpA, UV, FA, N-VA, PNV, CiU

⁸ Massetti (2009b) also mentions France and Switzerland but are taken out of this research, because there are no cases in this research located in those states.

3.3.3.4 Regional electoral system

The final variable is the type of electoral system within the region of consideration, i.e. a proportional system or a majoritarian system. This is a nominal variable and is being called ‘ELECSYS’ in the dataset. Obviously, it contains of two possibilities were majoritarian systems are coded as ‘1’ and proportional systems are coded as ‘2’. To contain the information into the dataset, again an extensive literature review has been done, this time on the type of electoral system within each region. Table 11 features the position with respect to whether they are located in regions with a proportional or a majoritarian type of electoral system. For a full list of references, see table 1 in the Appendix.

Table 11: Party position on regional electoral system

Proportional	Majoritarian
dF, UfS, PDS, VB, DUP, UUP, SF, CHA, BNG, ERC, HB-Ba, EA, Ar, SVP, N-VA, SDLP, PAR, PA, PRC, PR, UM, CC, UPN, CDN, CSU, PNV, CiU	LN, SNP, SG, PSD’Az, MpA, FA, UV, PC

In sum, all these variables, necessary for further investigation, besides parties’ regionalist demand, with respect to their relation on regionalist party position on European integration has to be and is compiled or made by the author himself.

3.4 Method

Now that the dataset is created, it becomes possible to analysis the variables. It’s important to look into the type of methods available for this study. In order to test the aforementioned hypotheses derived out of the theories and to contribute to existing literature, this research adopts a quantitative method of analysis. Quantitative research is a better method if there are many cases, e.g. more than two, and is better equipped to provide correlational causes, which makes it more probabilistic (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006).

There are several distinct techniques used which can be qualified as being quantitative. One of those techniques is called multiple regression or regression analysis and is perhaps the most frequently used technique. This technique makes it possible for researchers to study the effects between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable and assumes a rather linear relationship. However, one of the criteria for conducting a multiple regression is the fact that the dependent variable is defined as a continuous variable, also known as a quantitative variable, i.e. interval or ratio (Allison, 1999). For this research, the dependent variable cannot be coded as a continuous variable, since it is differentiated between ‘anti’ and ‘pro’. Actually the dependent variable is defined as a categorical or discrete/qualitative variable. It is actually a nominal variable and in this case, a bivariate logistics regression is the best technique for conducting a quantitative analysis. After this regression has been made, a multivariate regression is conducted with the variables that are found to be statistically significant. In this case, it is possible to see which variables influence parties’ position on European integration the most.

Now that it is clear what the position of the parties is with respect to the dependent variable as well as their positions with regard to the individual and environmental perspective a summary be given on the descriptives of the variables used in this research. The results are shown below in table 11, which consists of the valid number of cases, the possible minimum and maximum outcome, the number of missing cases per variable, the mean and the standard deviation of each variable.

Table 11: Descriptive information concerning all variables⁹

Level	Name	Label	N	Min.	Max.	Missing	Mean	Std. Dev.
Dependent	European Integration	Position of party on European integration	35	0	1	0 (0,0%)	,5143	-
Individual	Regionalist demand	Degree of regionalist demand	35	1	5	0 (0,0%)	2,514	1,2455
	Ideology	Type of party ideology	35	1	9	0 (0,0%)	5,371	2,5098
	LR-axis	Party placement on the LR-axis	35	1	5	0 (0,0%)	3,0857	1,19734
Environmental	Government Participation	Party participated in government (or not)	35	0	1	0 (0,0%)	,4857	-
	Euro-party membership	Party is a member of a Euro-party	34	0	1	1 ¹⁰ (2,86%)	,5588	-
	Geographical location	Party is located in traditionally Eurosceptic or Europhile country	35	0	1	0 (0,0%)	,7429	-
	Type of regional electoral system	Party is located in majoritarian or proportional system	35	0	1	0 (0,0%)	,7714	-

⁹ Nominal variables with only two cases are converted into dummy variables.

¹⁰ The Lega Nord is deliberately omitted from this variable because of their participation within former Eurosceptic Euro-parties.

4 Analysis

In this chapter the relationship between the different independent variables and the dependent variable will be studied using several binary logit regression models. However, before running these models it is important to report some descriptive statistical information since it's pivotal in quantitative analysis. These descriptive information is shown in table 12 and reports the percentages with respect to the different variables and whether parties are opposed to or in favour of European integration. Although no significance or probability can be given with these percentages/values, it's rather useful since it allows the researcher and reader to preliminary think whether a possible linkage between the predictors and the dependent variable is likely.

Table 12: Descriptive statistical information, i.e. percentages, of all explanatory variables

Characteristics		Party position on European integration	
		Anti	Pro
Regionalist demand	Moderate Autonomist	11,1%	88,9%
	Assertive Autonomist	45,5%	54,5%
	Ambiguous Secessionist	75,0%	25,0%
	Strongly committed Secessionist	70,0%	30,0%
	Violent Secessionist	100,0%	0,0%
LR-axis	Extreme Left	100,0%	0,0%
	Centre Left	70,0%	30,0%
	Centre	14,3%	85,7%
	Centre Right	18,2%	81,8%
	Extreme Right	100,0%	0,0%
Government participation	Opposition	55,6%	44,4%
	Participation	41,2%	58,8%
Euro-party member	No	40,0%	60,0%
	Yes	52,6%	47,4%
Geographical Location	Traditionally Eurosceptic	66,7	33,3%
	Traditionally Europhile	42,3%	57,7%
Type of Electoral System	Majoritarian	37,5%	62,5%
	Proportional	51,9%	48,1%

4.1 Descriptives

The first two hypotheses were concerned with parties' regionalist demand as an influential factor on party positioning on European integration. The first hypothesis assumed that there is no relation between the degree of parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration, while the other hypothesis expects that parties who have adopted a more radical goal are more likely to oppose European integration. Based on this descriptive statistical information can we infer that the second hypothesis is more likely to be accepted than the first hypothesis. If we were to follow the given percentages, we see a clear trend that as the demand increases so to increases the likelihood of being opposed to European integration. Almost 90 percent of the regionalist parties that can be characterized as moderately autonomist are in favour of European integration, while 75 percent of the ambiguous secessionist parties are already opposing European integration.

The hypotheses concerned with the LR-axis as a predictor also deserves some attention. If the regulation model is true, European integration in the 2000s is more likely to be focused on less economic regulation.

The table clearly shows that support is mainly drawn from parties located at the centre and right side of the axis. Judging from what we see in the table, it appears unlikely that the Hooghe-Marks model is can be accepted. They expect that right-wing parties are more likely to be averse to integration than left-wing parties. Obviously, this is not the case with respect to the percentages shown for the regionalist parties under consideration. The Hix-Lord model is also shown in the table. It clearly shows that support for European integration is more likely to be found around the ideological centre. Opposition is more likely to be found at the ideological extremes and more likely to be found at an earlier stage on the left scale of the LR-axis. However, whether these expected relations are actually present and whether they didn't occur by coincidence cannot be stated so far. In order to do this, a model should be conducted to statistically test this relation, which is of course done in the next part of this chapter.

Although no hypotheses can be preliminary accepted, it's harder to make claims that coincide with the posited hypotheses regarding the influence of regional government participation, Euro-party membership, geographical location and type of regional electoral system. For example, it is posited in hypothesis 7 that parties situated in regional government are more likely to be in favour of European integration. One can substantiate that hypothesis by looking at the percentages given in table 13. However, according to my view, the distribution is rather evenly distributed. With only 55,6 percent of oppositional parties being opposed to European integration no outspoken majority is present.

The percentages concerning Euro-party membership even contradict hypothesis 8 which assumes that Euro-party members are more likely to be in favour of European integration than non-members. On the other hand, hypothesis 9 assumes the same relation as positioned with the percentages shown concerning the allocation of parties situated in Europhile and Eurosceptic countries and their position on European integration. Eurosceptic regionalist parties are more likely to be found in traditionally Eurosceptic countries. The last percentages which belongs to hypothesis 10 is also hard for preliminary acceptance or rejection. Although, it is shown that parties located in majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to be in favour of European integration, the allocation of percentages, specifically when looking at the distribution of regionalist parties in proportional systems, is rather evenly distributed.

Whether these relations hold up when inserted into the models will be discussed in the next part of this chapter. Now that we have a clear picture of the different positions of the parties under consideration, based on the descriptive data in the previous chapter and section, can we proceed with the next step. This step means testing the theories and hypotheses by presenting the results of the binary logistic regression models.

4.2 Inferential statistics

The results of the analysis are shown below. The table consists of a summary of the relevant values and results for each binary logistics regression model.

Table 13: Synthesized table of the binary logit models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Constant	2,316	-4,065	-,223	,405	-,693	,511
Reg. Dem	-,901***	0,406				
LR-axis ¹¹		1,579***	4,850			
Govt.Part.			,580	1,786		
Europart. Memb.				-,511	,600	
Country Profile					1,003	2,727
Elec.Sys.						-,585
N	35	35	35	34	35	,557
Initial -2 Loglikelihood Hood	48,492	48,492	48,492	48,492	48,492	48,492
-2 Loglikelihood Hood	39,931	31,670	47,765	46,477	46,883	47,978

*=p<0,10, **=p<0,05, ***=p<0,01

¹¹ This variable is recoded from a 5-point scale to a 4-point scale. As was already shown earlier, a curvilinear relation is present, because both extremes behave similar. To prevent that from interfering with the results, since there is no linear relation posited and bivariate analysis couldn't overcome this problem, extreme right and extreme left is subsumed into one category labelled '1'.

4.2.1 Individual perspective

4.2.1.1 Regionalist demands

The first hypotheses, which assumes that the position of regionalist parties on European integration is influenced by a certain standpoint on a given variable, is predicting the influence of the prime existing force of regionalist parties, i.e. their regionalist demand. The hypotheses concerned with the influence of a regionalist demand on party positioning on European integration are as following:

H1: There is no relationship between the degree of parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration

H2: Regionalist parties are more likely to be opposed to European integration when their regionalist demand radicalizes

After running a binary logistics regression with regionalist demand as the independent variable, results regarding the above-mentioned hypotheses could be stipulated as follows. It is shown and thus can be accepted based on these results, that regionalist parties' regionalist demand influences these parties with respect to their position on European integration. The value of the logged odds coefficient is $-.901$ which tells us that the logged odds of being in favour of European integration decreases by $.901$ for each 1-point increase on the regionalist demand variable. Moreover, the odds ratio is $.406$, which shows that an one-unit increase of parties' regionalist demand decreases the odds of being in favour of European integration by 59,4 percent. It is also presented that the above-mentioned relation is statistically significant ($p\text{-value}=0,009$) when holding a $p\text{-value}$ threshold of $<.01$. With this in mind, it can be inferred that the first hypothesis should be rejected and the second hypothesis must be accepted. Regionalist parties are indeed more likely to be opposed to European integration when their regionalist demand radicalizes.

4.2.1.2 LR-axis

The other model which shows a statistically significant relation, a minimum $p\text{-value} < 0,10$, between a variable and regionalist party position on European integration is model 2 in table 13. These results showed a statistically significant relation between party position on the LR-axis and their position on European integration. However, which of the positioned hypotheses concerned with party placement on the LR-axis could be accepted or rejected? In sum, there are three hypotheses concerned with the influence of party placement on the LR-axis and their position towards European integration, i.e. hypothesis 3-4-5.

H3: Left-wing parties will support European integration when integration is focused on economic regulation whereas right-wing parties will support European integration when integration is less focused on economic regulation

H4: Left-wing parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration than right-wing parties

H5: Support for European integration is more likely to be found around the ideological centre and more early on the right side whereas opposition is more likely to be found at the ideological extremes

When looking at the results it can be derived and argued that the Hix-Lord model is more likely to be true. The results show, by means of the logged odds coefficient of 1,579 and the odds ratio of 4,850, that right-wing parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration than parties situated near the extremes or even on the left-side of the LR-axis. For each 1-point increase on the LR-axis, where extremes are coded as 1, left as 2, centre as 3, and right-wing parties as 4, the logged odds of being in favour of European integration increases by 1,579. Moreover, an one-unit increase on the LR-axis increases the odds of being in favour of European integration almost fivefold (485 percent). For sure, we can accept the fifth hypothesis incorporated in this study: *Support for European integration is more likely to be found around the ideological centre and more early on the right side whereas opposition is more likely to be found at the ideological extremes.*

The fourth hypothesis cannot be accepted based on the bivariate analysis. The results have clearly shown that left-wing parties aren't more likely to be in favour of European integration than right-wing parties. With respect to our third hypothesis, a rejection cannot be made until more research is conducted. As was mentioned earlier, the third hypothesis expects that support for European integration is extracted from left-wing parties when European integration is more focused on economic regulation and from right-wing parties when integration is much less focused on economic regulation. However, it is not clear in this research whether European integration in the 2000s is more focused on less or more economic regulation. Although it is highly likely that European integration in the 2000s is more focused on less economic regulation, because we see a clear support stemming from right-wing parties. Future research should therefore be conducted to look at the focus of the European integration process in the 2000s.

In sum, the factors defined as being part of the individual perspective have shown a statistically significant relation with party position on European integration. This is, however, not the case with respect to the factors situated in the environmental perspective, as will be shown below.

4.2.2 Environmental perspective

It is shown in table 13, that there is no statistically significant relation between the variables, that are a part of the environmental perspective, and party position on European integration. However, if we return to the descriptive statistical information we see that regionalist parties in government area slightly more likely to be in favour of European integration whereas oppositional parties are more likely to be opposed to European integration. This makes sense if we refer to the hypothesis which assumes that regionalist parties located as being regional government participants are more likely to be in favour of European integration than oppositional parties. It also holds when looking at the logged odds (.580) and odds ratio (1,786) however, the hypothesis cannot be accepted because it was not statistically significant.

A similar story applies when looking at the influence of euro-party membership on party position on European integration. The hypothesis assumes that regionalist parties that are a member of a Euro-party that isn't openly opposing European integration are more likely to be in favour of European integration. Based on the descriptive discussion we expected a positive relationship between membership in a Euro-party and party position on European integration. The results in the model showed the same positive relationship however, it was not statistically significant.

The same is true for hypothesis eight which assumes following: *Parties located in traditionally Eurosceptic countries are more likely to oppose Eurosceptic countries than parties located in traditionally Europhile countries and vice versa.* This positive relationship is shown in the descriptive discussion and even in the bivariate model. However, the results were not statistically significant so the hypothesis cannot be accepted.

The last hypothesis that is tested in this study is concerned with the influence of the type of regional electoral system on regionalist party position on European integration, i.e. hypothesis 10. It assumed that parties who operate in proportional systems are more probable to oppose European integration than parties who are situated in majoritarian systems and *vice versa.* The results again show that it is likely that the type of regional electoral system influences regionalist party position on European integration, the logged odds is -0,585 and odds ratio is 0,557. However, whether this isn't based on coincidence cannot be argued. The p-value surpasses the minimum threshold by far with a value of 0,479. Therefore, hypothesis 9 cannot be accepted.

4.2.3 Multivariate logistic regression

Now, that we know which variables influence regionalist party position, i.e. degree of regionalist demand and party placement on the LR-axis, can we conduct a multivariate logistics regression to clarify which independent variable is most influential in party positioning on European integration. The results of this regression is summarized in table 14 hereafter.

Table 14: Summary of the multivariate logistics regression

	Coefficient	Exp. (B)
Constant	-3,320	
Reg. Dem.	-,171	,843
LR-axis	1,452*	4,273
N	35	
Initial -2 Loglikelihood	48,491	
-2 Loglikelihood	31,527	

*= $p < 0,10$, **= $p < 0,05$, ***= $p < 0,01$

Looking at table 14 it is clear that party placement on the LR-axis is most influential in regionalist parties' position on European integration. It can even be argued that at first it was already expected to be the prime force for regionalist parties to position themselves on European integration. Although parties' regionalist demand is an important element of regionalist parties, as was mentioned earlier, this demand cannot 'provide a reasonably broad, if not comprehensive range of answers to the political questions that societies generate.' (Freedon, 1998:750). It seems that party position on European integration is based on their attached ideology and thus their placement on the LR-axis.

In sum, and as is shown in table 14, the factors within the individual perspective are regionalist parties' prime forces for their position on European integration. Within the individual perspective, parties' place on the LR-axis is the most influential factor for their position. Table 15 shows a full overview of the different independent variables and hypotheses and whether these variables can be accepted as actually being explanatory variables as was posited by their respective theories and hypotheses

Table 15: Overview of the different posited hypotheses

Level	Independent variable	Hypothesis	Bivariate Model	Multivariate model	
Individual	Regionalist Demand	<i>H1: There is no relationship between the degree of parties' regionalist demand and their position on European integration</i>	Rejected		
		<i>H2: Regionalist parties who have adopted a more radical goal are more likely to oppose European integration.</i>	Accepted	Rejected	
		<i>H3 (regulation model): Left-wing parties will support European integration when integration is focused on economic regulation whereas right-wing parties will support European integration when integration is less focused on economic regulation</i>	Rejected		
	LR-axis	<i>H4 (Hooghe-Marks model): Left-wing parties are more likely to be in favour of European integration than right-wing parties</i>	Rejected		
		<i>H5 (Hix-Lord model): Centre and right-wing parties are more likely to support European integration whereas opposition is mainly drawn from the extremes and earlier seen at the left side of the axis.</i>	Accepted	Accepted	
	Environmental perspective	Government participation	<i>H6: Parties in government are more likely to be in favour of European integration than regionalist parties in opposition</i>	Rejected	
		Euro-party Membership	<i>H7: Regionalist parties that are a member of a Euro-party that isn't openly opposing European integration are more likely to be in favour of European integration</i>	Rejected	
		Geographical location	<i>H8: Parties located in traditionally Eurosceptic countries are more likely to oppose European integration than parties located in traditionally Europhile countries</i>	Rejected	
		Regional Electoral System	<i>H9: Parties who operate in proportional systems are more likely to oppose European integration than parties who operate in majoritarian systems</i>	Rejected	

5 Conclusion and discussion

In an era of European supra-nationalization on the one hand and the demand for regional decentralisation on the other, it is pivotal for the academic world to look at the behaviour of regionalist parties. In fact, regionalist party behaviour could seriously challenge further European integration. Regional parties throughout Europe has gained a considerable share of votes, so it is extremely important to expose the direction of these regionalist parties and the perceptions they perceive towards European integration. After a review of the literature it became clear that regionalist parties are not per se Europhile as was previously assumed (Hix & Lord, 1997, Jolly, 2007). In fact, regionalist parties behave rather similar than central parties, i.e. parties that are not demanding the reform for a specific region within or outside their current nation-state, with regard to their position towards European integration. Over time, numerous academics have tried to explain parties' position on European integration. This research has tried to extend current academic knowledge by taken into account new possible indicators. It not only incorporated existing indicators such as the regionalist demand or parties' position on the LR-axis, but it also analysed the effects of previously underexposed indicators such as euro-party membership, regional government participation and the effect of regional electoral systems.

After analysing all these variables as possible influential factors on regionalist parties' position on European integration, it became clear that there are a few characteristics which can give an answer to the research question: *What explains regionalist party positioning on European integration?*

The results have shown that the most important indicators for regionalist parties' position on European integration were their individual characteristics. The indicators that were most frequently looked at when studying party positions on European integration, namely parties' regionalist demand and party placement on the LR-axis. It is shown that regionalist parties who have adopted a more radical regionalist demand, e.g. secession, are more likely to oppose European integration than parties who have adopted a much less radical demand, e.g. more autonomy. However, the multivariate logistic regression showed that the most important indicator for regionalist party position on European integration was in fact their position on the LR-axis. It is shown that parties placed at the outskirts of the LR-axis, are more likely to be opposed to European integration than parties situated around the centre whereas parties on the left-side of the axis are more early prone to be opposed to European integration than on the right-side of the spectrum.

Although these results are the most prominent and perhaps also the most important for this study, we cannot disregard the effect of the other non-significant posited explanatory variables. It has been shown that the other indicators, i.e. the factors within the environmental perspective, behave as was posited by the theories and their associated hypotheses.

However, this could be based by coincidence, which could be contributed to the number of cases used in this study. This is also immediately the most important advice for future quantitative research. When

conducting a quantitative analysis, the number of cases must be increased in order to prevent the problems that occurred during this research such as a low level of cases within a specific category or an increased chance in finding non-significant relations. Extension of the number of cases is at first best by incorporating more regionalist parties within more countries. However, new research regarding party position on European integration can also be conducted by looking at ‘normal’ parties. What causes political parties in general to be opposed or in favour of European integration? Although it becomes harder to incorporate the regionalist demand as a possible predictor, it becomes easier to look at the other predictors and their effect on European integration position, because it is much easier to extract data. For example, usage of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey or the Comparative Party Manifesto Project becomes much easier. Furthermore, besides parties’ regionalist demand, the posited indicators and theories are not indicators which could only be applied to regionalist parties. Most theories are subtracted from research that is not specifically focused on regionalist parties.

All in all this research has bridged the gaps between numerous posited theories and the lack of quantitative analysis within this field. It furthermore has extended research on important subjects that weren’t taken into account in previous research, i.e. euro-party membership, regional government participation and type of regional electoral system. It would be particularly interesting when future research takes these indicators into account as well. Furthermore, it should encompass a larger number of cases when conducting a quantitative analysis. Moreover, future research should also take in mind the importance of a clear and genuine definition of European integration and regionalist demands. As became clear in this research a clear cut definition of European integration and the way parties’ position on European integration was defined is perhaps a research on its own. With respect to regionalist demand, there is an indefinite amount of literature surrounding the typology of regionalist demands. For the time being, we’re at least certain that the regionalist demands, political ideology and party placement on the LR-axis used in this research have an influential effect on regionalist party position on European integration. However, whether these influences will result in a dramatic change of the European integration process and ultimately the European Union as a whole is still to be seen.

6 References

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7 Appendix

Table 1: Full list of references per variable, besides party position on European integration (Masseti, 2009b), regionalist demand (Masseti, 2009b) and geographical location (Eurobarometer 1999-2005).

<i>Party</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Govt. Part</i>	<i>Euro-party</i>	<i>Electoral System</i>
<i>Ar</i>	Leonisio, 2012	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>BNG</i>	Elias, 2008	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>CHA</i>	Friend, 2012	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>CSU</i>	Freedden, 2001; Sagar, 2009	Bavarian government, 2014	European People's Party, 2014	Federal Returning Officer, 2014
<i>CC</i>	EES, 2014	Nordsieck, 2014	Sagar, 2009	Oliveira, 2009
<i>CDN</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	-	Oliveira, 2009
<i>CiU</i>	Magone, 2004; Walker, 1991	Nordsieck, 2014	EPP, 2014; Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>DUP</i>	Sagar, 2009	Archick, 2014; Nordsieck, 2014	-	NIGS, 2014
<i>ERC</i>	Hassan, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>EA</i>	Hassan, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>FA</i>	Sandri, 2012	Nordsieck, 2014	-	Oliveira, 2009
<i>dF</i>	Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2014	Nordsieck, 2014	-	Oliveira, 2009; Woelk et al.; 2008
<i>HB-Ba</i>	Gould & Messina, 2014	Nordsieck, 2014	Leonisio, 2012	Oliveira, 2009
<i>LN</i>	Gaffney, 2003	Nordsieck, 2014	Kubusova, 2006; Phillips, 2009, European Parliament, 2014c	Oliveira, 2009
<i>MpA</i>	Arens, 2013	Arens, 2013; ARS, 2014	Sagar, 2009	Oliveira, 2009
<i>N-VA</i>	Ide, 2013	Nordsieck, 2014; Vermeersch, 2004	Kernalegenn, 2013	Politics.be, 2014
<i>PDS/ Die Linke</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	European Left, 2014	Federal Returning Officer, 2014
<i>PA</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PAR</i>	Chunta Aragonesista, 2012	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PNV</i>	Conversi, 1997	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PRC</i>	Libbrecht et al., 2013	Nordsieck, 2014	Terry, 2014	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PR</i>	Safran & Maíz, 2000	Nordsieck, 2014	Terry, 2014	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PSd'Az</i>	Seddone & Giovannini, 2014	Regione Autonoma de Sardigna, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>PC</i>	Hassan, 2009	Party website; Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Owen, 2007; National Assembly of Wales, 2014
<i>SF</i>	Ray, 1999	Archick, 2014; Nordsieck, 2014	European United Left, 2014	Northern Ireland Government Services 2014
<i>SDLP</i>	Party website	Archick, 2014; Nordsieck, 2014	Party of European Socialist, 2014	Northern Ireland Government Services 2014
<i>SG</i>	Party website	Black, 2012; Nordsieck, 2014	European Green Party, 2014	Scottish parliament, 2014
<i>SNP</i>	Hassan, 2009	Black, 2012; Nordsieck, 2014; Party website	Kernalegenn, 2013	Scottish parliament, 2014
<i>SVP</i>	Guibernau, 2007; Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	European People's Party, 2014	Oliveira, 2009; Woelk et al.; 2008
<i>UUP</i>	Sagar, 2009	Archick, 2014; Nordsieck, 2014	ECR, 2014, European Parliament, 2014b	NIGS, 2014
<i>UM</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	Terry, 2014	Oliveira, 2009
<i>UPN</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014	-	Oliveira, 2009
<i>UfS</i>	Masseti, 2009a; 2009b	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009; Woelk et al.; 2008
<i>UV</i>	Sandri, 2012	Nordsieck, 2014	Kernalegenn, 2013	Oliveira, 2009
<i>VB</i>	Sagar, 2009	Nordsieck, 2014; Vermeersch, 2004	European Parliament, 2014a	Politics.be, 2014