

# Denationalization of Elections?

## Tracing the developments in the conceptualization and measurement of nationalization of the vote

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### Abstract

Nationalization of elections refers to a situation whereby parties compete across the statewide territory where they win equally sized vote shares. This chapter traces the development in the conceptualization and measurement of nationalization of elections. Nationalization is often broken down into a distributional and temporal dimension and scholars assess the extent to which vote shares (static nationalization) and vote share swings (dynamic nationalization) are similar across the territory. Initially, the focus was restricted to parties and national elections but recent studies have broadened the scope to include regions and regional elections. The argument put forward in this chapter is that this development entails more than including different types of units of analysis into the study of territorial heterogeneity in the vote.

The inclusion of regional elections induces scholars to study the linkage or spill-over between national and regional electoral arenas. This linkage is analyzed by regional election scholars who take the second-order election model as their starting point. This model compares the outcomes of a regional election to those of a previously held national election with the hypothesis in mind that national politics drives regional electoral dynamics. However, a caveat of this approach is that it overlooks the possibility that the regional voter may respond to stimuli arising from the regional electoral arena. In addition, the second-order election model precludes the possibility that regional dynamics may spill-over into the national electoral arena. Therefore, this chapter claims that denationalization of the vote should be studied in a multilevel electoral context which involves studying dynamic and static nationalization for both parties and regions in both regional and national elections as well as examining the extent to which electoral dynamics spill-over back and forth between regional and national electoral arenas.

## 1. Introduction

The title of this chapter may appear counter-intuitive as the predominant view in election research is that elections are nationalized. A nationalized party system is one whereby parties win more or less equally sized vote shares across the statewide territory. Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal study planted the seed for a nationalization hypothesis by arguing that the development of national party systems during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries went along with a decreasing salience of a territorial or center-periphery cleavage. This view has become deeply entrenched in the literature over the past four decades. Although the 1970s saw a renewed vigor of peripheral identities which prompted scholars to look for their impact on voting behavior (Rose and Urwin 1975; Rokkan and Urwin 1983), these authors did not find an impact: "electorally, contemporary peripheral mobilization has not been very successful" (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: 165).

Recently, a group of regional election scholars started to challenge the nationalization hypothesis by pointing out that there is the "possibility that elections to regional parliaments might be, or have become, an arena in which voting behavior diverges from the 'nationalized' patterns of statewide elections" (Jeffery 2010: 138). Hence, scholars started to look at regional elections and there they do find traces of denationalization. Reporting on contributions to an edited collection on regional elections in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, Jeffery and Hough (2006: 250-251) conclude that many sub-state elections appear to be nationalized but this is less the case for countries where there are territorial cleavages. Schakel and Dandoy (2013: 287-288) study the regional vote and they find that elections in regions in Belgium, Denmark (Faroe Islands and Greenland), Italy (special regions), Spain (historic regions), Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) are denationalized. Regional elections in Austria, France, Greece, the Netherlands and Norway are nationalized whereas they find traces of both nationalization and denationalization in the regional vote in Germany, Denmark (Amter), Italy (ordinary regions), Spain (non-historic regions), and Sweden.

The abovementioned literature on nationalization of the vote can be characterized as a continuous search for territorial heterogeneity in the vote. As can be expected within an emerging field of research, this search comes along with a significant debate on the conceptualization and measurement of nationalization of elections. This chapter provides an overview on how scholars have addressed conceptual and methodological challenges in the study of (de)nationalization of the vote. The second and third section discuss the conceptualization and measurement of respectively national and regional elections. I will argue that studying the territorial heterogeneity of both the regional and national vote involves the conceptualization of a multilevel electoral system. Analyzing denationalization of the vote in a multilevel electoral system raises questions about (1) the differences in voting decisions across the territory as well as differences in vote choice between national and regional elections and (2) whether and how electoral behavior at the regional and statewide levels are linked to each other. In the final section I point out future challenges in the study of nationalization of elections.

## 2. Conceptualizing and measuring nationalization of national elections

Nationalization scholars are concerned with explaining the formation of national party systems and electorates which results in a territorial homogenization of electoral behavior whereby the same parties compete across the whole territory (Chhibber and Kollman 2004: 4) and whereby the parties receive similar vote shares across the territory (Caramani 2004: 1). One can differentiate between a temporal and a distributional dimension of nationalization which have been aptly labelled by Morgernstern, Swindle and Castagnola (2009) as respectively dynamic and static nationalization. Dynamic nationalization is concerned with the extent to which vote share swings between elections

are similar across regions.<sup>1</sup> In this view, a party is highly nationalized when its support in all regions moves together but its nationalization is low when the party's support moves up in some regions and moves down in other regions. Static nationalization considers the degree to which there is a homogenous distribution of vote shares across different regions at a single point in time. According to this perspective a party is highly nationalized when it receives similar amounts of support across the regions of the country but its nationalization is low when its support is concentrated in one or few regions.

An example can illustrate the dynamic and static dimensions of nationalization. In table 1 one may observe the election outcomes for four parties across two subsequently held elections (election *t-1* and election *t*). Party A receives similarly sized vote shares across the four regions and is highly nationalized from a static perspective. In contrast, party D receives all its votes in one district and is therefore highly denationalized. The weighted Party Nationalization Score (PNSw) developed by Daniel Bochsler (2010) measures static nationalization whereby a score of 0 indicates that a party is fully denationalized whereas a score of 1 indicates full nationalization (see annex). Party A receives a score of 1.00, party B scores 0.45, party C scores 0.38, and party D obtains a score of 0.25.<sup>2</sup> Dynamic nationalization scores are based on vote share swings and these are displayed at the bottom of table 1. Party A is also fully nationalized from a dynamic perspective because its vote share swings are similar in direction and magnitude across the four regions. Party B is least nationalized because its vote share swings are most dissimilar. This can be easily seen by calculating for each party the mean absolute deviation from the average (national) swing whereby higher scores indicate denationalization (see annex). Party A scores 0, party B scores 3.75, party C scores 2.50, and party D scores 1.88. The example illustrates that the two dimensions of nationalization are not only conceptually but also empirically unrelated. Party A is highly nationalized in both the static and dynamic dimensions whereas party D is highly denationalized from a static perspective but it comes in second place (after party A) as the most nationalized party on the dynamic dimension.

[Table 1 about here]

Most authors acknowledge that nationalization entails both a dynamic and static dimension but earlier studies –mostly with a focus on UK and US elections– focus on dynamic nationalization (Claggett, Flanigan, and Zingale 1983; Katz 1973; Kawato 1987; Schattschneider 1960; Stokes 1967) whereas later studies –with a predominant focus on elections taking place in Europe– look at static nationalization (Bochsler 2010; Caramani 2004; Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Jones and Mainwaring 2003). Considering that there are two conceptually and empirically unrelated dimensions of nationalization it is not surprising that the operationalization of nationalization has produced two types of measurements: (1) indices based on the change in vote share between two or more subsequent elections and (2) indices based on differences in vote shares across territorial units for one election. For both types of indices, authors debate on the question how to produce nationalization scores which are comparable across countries and across elections. For example, vote shares (and swings) are highly dependent on the size of parties and the number and size of territorial units. The example displayed in table 1 assumes that each region contains the same number of voters. When the size of region 1 is five times larger than the other regions then the PNSw-scores for party A decreases from 1.00 to 0.95, for party B from 0.45 to 0.23, and for party D from 0.25 to 0.13

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<sup>1</sup> The territorial heterogeneity in the vote can be studied according to any kind of territorial unit or jurisdiction such as districts, constituencies, and localities. I opt to choose the word region throughout this chapter because I will discuss regional elections below.

<sup>2</sup> These scores are calculated with the help of an excel file published on the website of Daniel Bochsler (<http://www.bochsler.eu/>) which contains a macro to derive party nationalization scores. The PNSw corrects for party size and the size of districts (the example in table 1 assumes that regional electorates are of equal size).

but the score for party C increases from 0.38 to 0.67.<sup>3</sup> Daniel Bochsler's measurement picks up this difference because his party nationalization indicator is specifically designed to weigh more heavily voting that takes place in larger territories (Bochsler 2010: 161). This is a defensible position but it does mean that it is less likely that denationalization of a small area is going to be noticed (Schakel 2013a).

The largest progress in developing measures concerns indicators for static nationalization (see for good overviews Bochsler 2010 and Morgernstern, Polga-Hecimovich, and Siavelis 2014) but these have been criticized because they leave out the dynamic component of nationalization. Few studies examine both dimensions of nationalization simultaneously with an important exception of the work by Scott Morgernstern and co-authors (Morgernstern and Potthoff 2005; Morgernstern and Swindle 2005; Morgernstern, Swindle and Castagnola 2009). These studies apply models based on the analysis of variance whereby total variance in vote shares is allocated to three sources: variation across districts, variation across elections (swings), and residual variation which is thought to result from the effects of candidate or district characteristics on elections at a given time (Morgernstern and Potthoff 2005). However, these models have limited applicability because an important prerequisite for comparability is that the territorial boundaries of constituencies do not change (Caramani 2004: 59). Furthermore, dynamic nationalization indicators cannot be applied to parties which enter or exit the electoral arena and, recently, new parties have won large vote shares in many elections. In addition, these models do not allow deriving party system or country scores for large party systems. This is because dynamic nationalization indicators have been developed for two-party systems (i.e. the UK and US) where the results for the two parties are tightly connected (one party's loss is another party's gain). Thus, a nationalization score for one party automatically translates into a score for the whole party system. The link between dynamic nationalization scores for parties and an aggregate score for the party system is more complex in case of multi-party systems with three or more parties.

The discussion on the appropriate measurement of the various dimension of nationalization is continuing and measurement is improving (Bochsler 2010; Morgernstern, Polga-Hecimovich and Siavelis 2014; Mustillo and Mustillo 2012) but recent scholarship has laid bare one important caveat underlying the nationalization literature. Previous studies have been criticized on the ground that they incorporate 'methodological nationalism', a set of assumptions that establish the nation-state as a 'natural' unit of analysis (Jeffery and Wincott 2010). The nationalization of electoral politics is a modernization paradigm which story "depicts the integration of the mass population into a shared national, statewide political life inter alia through processes of cultural homogenization and linguistic standardization and the nationalization of political participation through electoral competition for office in national parliaments" (Jeffery 2010: 137). The critique of 'methodological nationalism' has induced scholars to look at *regional* elections in addition to, or instead of, a focus on *national* elections (see also Swenden and Maddens 2009: 4-5).

### 3. Conceptualization and operationalization of nationalization of regional elections

Nationalization scholars have taken up an interest in regional elections because many countries introduced electoral institutions at the subnational level over the past four decades. Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010) created the regional authority index measuring authority for regional tiers in 42 countries between 1950 and 2006. They observe that regional authority has grown steadily since 1970 and note that the biggest driver of the growth of regional authority have been the proliferation

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<sup>3</sup> The scores can be reproduced (see annex) by setting the total number of votes for region 1 at 500 which means that the number of votes for party A increases from 25 to 100 and party B receives 400 instead of 75 votes. The number of votes received by the four parties in the other regions remain the same.

of elected institutions at the regional level. Out of 42 countries 16 had directly elected regional assemblies in 1950 or when they became democratic. By 2006, an additional 12 countries had introduced regional elections, and three of the original 16 had established elections to a newly created regional tier (Hooghe, Marks and Schakel 2010: 52-68). The growth in regional electoral institutions has been particularly noticeable in Europe. Schakel and Dandoy (2013) note that since 1970, nine out of 13 West European countries have introduced regional elections: Belgium (Germany Community in 1974, Brussels in 1989, and Regions in 1995), Denmark (1974), France (1986), Germany (Eastern *Länder* in 1990), Greece (1994), Italy (ordinary regions in 1970), Norway (1975), Spain (1980-1983), and the United Kingdom (Scotland and Wales in 1999 and London in 2000). The former post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe account for the lion's share of the continued growth in regional electoral institutions during the 1990s (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia) and 2000s (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic) (Schakel 2017).

Survey research provides evidence for the hypothesis that regional elections rather than national elections may be the place where denationalization of electoral behavior can be found. Studies on the regional voter in the US (Ebeid and Rodden 2006), Canada (Cutler 2008), Germany (Völkl et al. 2008), Spain (Lineira 2011), and the UK (Trystan, Scully and Wyn Jones 2003) suggest that voters can compartmentalize the regional electoral arena from the national electoral arena and make different kinds of judgments in each arena. These studies provide direct evidence that many regional voters base their vote choice on factors arising from the region be it regional campaigns (Cutler 2008), territorial identity (Wyn Jones and Scully 2006), or more broadly defined territorial interests (Paterson et al. 2001). Further indirect evidence denationalization of the regional vote is provided by researchers who apply the second-order election model to regional elections. These studies show that second-order election effects decline for regions with more significant decision-making powers and for regions with distinctive territorial identities (Jeffery and Hough 2009; Schakel and Dandoy 2013; Schakel and Jeffery 2013).

These observations have opened up a research agenda on the nationalization of the regional vote. Inspired by work on European elections, regional election scholars often use the second-order election model as a starting point for their analyses. This model found its birth with the influential study by Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980) on the first direct election to the European Parliament in 1979. They compared the outcomes of the European election to the results of the previously held national elections and observed that turnout was lower and that parties in national government lost vote share while opposition, small and new parties won vote share. Reif and Schmitt proposed that this kind of behavior was brought about by being 'less at stake' in second-order, European elections compared to first-order, national elections. Because a second-order election is less important voters do not care to turn out and those voters who do turn out tend to use their vote to signal their dissatisfaction with parties in national government by rewarding parties in national opposition and small and new parties.

It is important to note that in a second-order model perspective, regional elections can still be considered to be nationalized elections. A useful way to illustrate this point is to differentiate between the type of response in electoral behavior which can be uniform or non-uniform and the location of the stimulus driving electoral behavior which can be based at the national or regional level. Table 2 displays the various combinations between the type of electoral behavior and the location of stimuli.

[Table 2 about here]

From table 2 it can be seen that second-order election effects can be placed in cell A: (dis)satisfaction with national policy constitutes a national stimulus which produces uniform vote share swings across

the territory away from parties in national government towards opposition, small and new parties. Paradoxically, when regional elections are second-order they will display dissimilar outcomes to national elections which, in principal, would be a sign for denationalization. However, it would be wrong to conclude that second-order elections are denationalized elections since voters take their cues from the national political arena while casting a regional vote, i.e. they base their vote choice on the governmental status of parties at the statewide level. In other words, when regional elections are second-order they can still be conceived as nationalized elections.

Table 2 also illustrates that territorial heterogeneity in voting behavior should not be equated with denationalization. Many nationalization scholars take uniformity in electoral behavior as an indication that voters respond similarly to national factors (cell A) whereas dissimilar electoral behavior are thought to be produced by regionally based factors (cell D). However, various regionally based stimuli may result in uniform voting across the territory (cell B). For example, a national party faces electoral decline in two regions but in one region this is because voters are dissatisfied with the party's performance in regional government whereas in another region this is because a party failed to compile a list of candidates who are popular in the region. Non-uniform electoral behavior may be the result of the same national stimulus (cell C). For example, a prime minister popular in one region but not so popular in another region may constitute a national factor leading to a vote share loss in one region but a vote share gain in another region.

In sum, uniform and non-uniform electoral behavior may find their cause in stimuli located at the regional or national level. It is therefore important to conceptually differentiate between homogeneity of electoral behavior and the location of stimuli producing a response in electoral behavior (Caramani 2004: 36). Yet, many authors study nationalization of elections while using indicators for territorial homogeneity in electoral behavior. An implicit assumption is that it is (highly) unlikely that independent regionally based factors produce the same outcome (i.e. cell B). In addition, in case of non-uniform responses one can at least say that regionally based factors have an impact (Caramani 2004: 39). When electoral behavior is territorially differentiated it means either that a regional factor distorts the homogenizing effect of a national factor (cell C) or that regional factors dominate over national factors (cell D).

Studying denationalization requires that regional elections are analyzed on their 'own terms' rather than treating them as functions of national elections as the second-order election model does (Jeffery 2010; Schakel and Jeffery 2013). Such an approach requires that regions are taken as a unit of analysis which means that the conceptualization as well as the operationalization of nationalization will change (Schakel 2013a). Traditionally, the individual political party is taken as the unit of analysis and nationalization scores refer to parties. Electoral data is collected at the electoral district or constituency level which is the lowest territorial level where electoral results are administered.<sup>4</sup> When the region becomes the unit of analysis nationalization scores should be derived for regions and electoral data should be aggregated to the regional level. An important difference between party and region nationalization scores is that party scores are derived by observing heterogeneity in the vote across regions within parties whereas region scores evaluate differences in the vote across parties within regions (i.e. differences within columns versus within rows in table 1).

The difference can be illustrated by the example provided in table 1 which displays dissimilarity scores (DIS) for regions (Johnston 1980; Pallarés and Keating 2003; Schakel 2013b). These scores can be derived by subtracting a party vote share from the party vote share at the national level, taking

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<sup>4</sup> The Constituency-Level Elections Archive (<http://www.electiondataarchive.org/>) and the Global Elections Database (<http://www.globalelectionsdatabase.com/>) are examples of data collection efforts whereby national electoral data is collected at the constituency level.

the absolute value of the difference, summing the differences across parties, and dividing the sum by two because one's party gain is another party's loss (see annex). Dissimilarity scores vary between 0 per cent –no dissimilarity– to 100 per cent –completely dissimilar– and denationalization of regions is indicated by higher dissimilarity scores. In both elections  $t-1$  and  $t$ , region 4 is the most denationalized region (scores of respectively 56.3 and 52.5 per cent) and region 3 is the most nationalized region (scores of respectively 18.8 and 17.5 per cent).

Regional election scholars have paid most attention to static nationalization. This is not surprising since they are often interested in the question why particular regional party systems are different. Few scholars look at dynamic nationalization for regions and, when they do, they do so without developing an index or indicator (Deschouwer 2009; Pallarés and Keating 2003).<sup>5</sup> Dissimilarity scores for vote share swings can be calculated in a similar way as for vote shares. Party vote share swings can (theoretically) vary between -100 and +100 per cent and potentially produce absolute vote share swing differences ranging from 0 up to +200 per cent. In order to make sure that scores vary between 0 –perfect synchronicity between vote share swings– and 100 –total and opposite volatility–the sum of absolute vote share swing differences is divided by 2 (see annex). This measure takes into account the similarity in both the magnitude and direction of the vote share swing. From a dynamic perspective, region 3, with a score of 6.25 per cent, is most denationalized and region 2, with a score of 1.25 per cent, is least denationalized. The example in table 1 reveals that, just like for parties, static and dynamic nationalization for regions are also empirically unrelated. Region 3 is the most nationalized from a static perspective but is the least nationalized region from a dynamic viewpoint.

Until so far, I have argued that the inclusion of regional elections into the study of nationalization involves changing the unit of analysis from the party to the region. Since party votes shares add up to 100 per cent in all regional party systems, nationalization scores can be easily derived via a dissimilarity index. Party system nationalization scores are obtained by aggregating the nationalization scores for the units of the party system. Nationalization indices for parties weigh parties by their size with the idea that the nationalization of larger parties is more important than the nationalization of small parties. In the example presented in table 1, election results in the regions are compared to the outcome at the national level which is equal to the average result for the four regions. In empirical reality, it is highly unlikely that each region contains an equal number of voters. Hence, the analyst is confronted with the question whether a more proper benchmark would be to weigh regions by their size. This benchmark would then more closely reflect the outcome if national instead of regional elections would have been held.

Taking the region as a unit of analysis is not only a matter of operationalization. The inclusion of regional elections into the study of nationalization also has conceptual and theoretical ramifications. The example displayed in table 3 is illuminating. Table 3 shows the outcomes for three parties and three regions for two consecutive national and regional elections. Dynamic and static nationalization can be studied for national and regional elections separately and nationalization scores can be compared between national and regional elections. For example, static nationalization scores for parties or regions for national elections  $t-1$  and  $t$  can be compared to the scores for regional elections  $t-1$  and  $t$ . Dynamic nationalization scores for parties or regions based on vote share swings between national elections  $t-1$  and  $t$  can be compared to those based on the swings between regional elections  $t-1$  and  $t$ .

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<sup>5</sup> One important exception is Lori Thorlakson (2007) who utilizes a modified Downs' (1998) index of party localization. The building stone of this index is derived by subtracting a regional vote share swing between election  $t$  and a previously held election  $t-1$  from the vote share swing at the national level and by taking the absolute value of this difference.

Interestingly, table 3 reveals that the study of nationalization in multilevel electoral system can involve more types of comparison which comprise contrasting outcomes across types of elections. Second-order election scholars compare the outcomes of a regional election to a previously held national election. Hence, these scholars compare regional election at time  $t$  to a national election held at time  $t-1$  with the hypothesis in mind that national politics impact on regional election outcomes. For example, party C in region 3 gains 10 per cent vote share when regional election  $t$  is compared to national election  $t-1$ . This may be caused by voter dissatisfaction with the performance of parties A and/or B in national government which both lose five per cent vote share. From table 3 it becomes immediately clear that one can also compare national election  $t$  to the previously held regional election at time  $t-1$ . In this comparison party C also wins an additional 10 per cent vote share in region 3 and this may be caused, for example, by voters who positively evaluate the performance of party C in regional government. Hence, the study of dynamic nationalization in multilevel electoral systems should not only consider the extent to which national politics spills over into the regional electoral but should also examine the possibility that regional politics flows into the national electoral arena.

Furthermore, the example in table 3 also reveals a possible caveat in regional election studies which take the second-order election model as their starting point. Party C increases its vote share with 10 per cent when regional election  $t$  is compared to the previously held national *and* regional election. The question arises whether this gain in vote share can be ascribed to second-order election effects – i.e. dissatisfaction with the performance of parties A and B in *national* government– or to regional election effects –i.e. satisfaction with the performance of party C in *regional* government? In other words, one can only be certain that one observes nationalization when second-order election effects are separated from the impacts of stimuli originating from the regional electoral arena.

#### 4. Discussion

This chapter set out to provide an overview of the development in the conceptualization and measurement of nationalization of elections. Nationalization can be broken down into dynamic and static nationalization, i.e. the extent to which vote share swings respectively vote shares are similar across the territory. The initial literature has focused on the nationalization of parties for national elections but more recent research has broadened the study of nationalization to include regions and regional elections. This has spurred a further development in measurement while indices developed for parties cannot be directly applied to regions. More importantly, the inclusion of regional elections induce scholars to conceptualize political systems as multilevel electoral systems whereby nationalization can be studied for different units of analysis –i.e. parties, regions, and party systems– but also for national and regional elections. In addition to asking why is one party (or country) more nationalized than another one can also ask why does the vote differ across regions? Moreover, analyzing the territorial heterogeneity in the vote in a multilevel electoral system also induces one to ask the question whether and how electoral competition at the regional and statewide levels are linked to each other.

Studying nationalization of the vote in a multilevel electoral system has two important implications. First, different causal models are likely to underlie dynamic and static nationalization, nationalization of parties and regions, and spill-over between regional and national electoral arenas. Some variables, such as regional authority and territorial cleavages, may be important for all aspects of nationalization, whereas other variables may impact different aspects of nationalization. For example, electoral systems (proportional or majoritarian rule) affect static nationalization whereas executive systems (parliamentary or presidential systems) impact dynamic nationalization (Morgerstern, Swindle and Castagnola 2009). Second-order election research shows that the timing



of regional vis-a-vis the national electoral cycle impacts the extent of spill-over between national and regional electoral arenas (Jeffery and Hough 2001).

A second implication of studying nationalization of the vote in multilevel electoral systems is that it entails a significant data collection challenge (Jeffery and Schakel 2013). The prominence of methodological nationalism in the study of nationalization of electoral politics has meant that scholars have mainly looked at national elections and parties. The inclusion of regional elections turns the analytical lens from parties towards regions and from national to regional elections. This not only requires the collection of aggregate election data for hundreds to thousands of regions but also necessitates collecting individual level data in the regions in order to be able to study whether regional or national stimuli drive the regional vote (Caramani 2004: 39). Regional election surveys are relatively scarce and national election surveys very often do not contain a region identifier for respondents and thereby preclude an analysis on the regional voter. When surveys do include a region identifier for respondents –e.g. such as the European Election Surveys and the Eurobarometer– then sampling strategy prevents analysis. The total number of voters per region is too low or when the numbers are sufficiently high enough then it often appears that these voters are not representative for the regions because they are not randomly selected from the regions.

Finally, the study of nationalization of the vote in multilevel electoral systems also provides insights into how democracy functions in a multilevel context. Regional elections are on the rise and one may question the added value of holding regional elections when they are second-order. In case regional elections are subordinate to national politics they are about national and not regional issues. Regional elections have also gained importance through the decentralization of authority towards regions. Differing regional election outcomes may result in significant policy divergence across the territory which may increase inequality by posing a hefty challenge to (fiscal) solidarity and by hampering a uniform implementation of welfare state policies across regions.

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Table 1: The measurement of dynamic and static nationalization.

Election $t-1$					
	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	DIS-static
Region 1	25	0	75	0	50,0
Region 2	25	75	0	0	43,8
Region 3	25	50	25	0	18,8
Region 4	25	0	0	75	56,3
National	25	31,25	25	18,75	

  

Election $t$					
	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	DIS-static
Region 1	30	0	70	0	45,0
Region 2	30	70	0	0	42,5
Region 3	30	40	30	0	17,5
Region 4	30	0	0	70	52,5
National	30	27,5	25	17,5	

  

Vote share swings between elections $t$ and $t-1$					
	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	DIS-dynamic
Region 1	5	0	-5	0	5,00
Region 2	5	-5	0	0	1,25
Region 3	5	-10	5	0	6,25
Region 4	5	0	0	-5	3,75
National	5	-3,75	0	-1,25	

*Notes:* a hypothetical example of election results for four parties competing in four regions for two consecutive elections.

Table 2: Type of electoral behavior and location of stimuli.

Type of electoral behavior	Location of stimuli	
	National	Regional
Uniform	<b>A: Nationalization of elections</b> A national stimulus produces the same (swing in) vote shares across the territory	<b>B: Coincidence of denationalization of elections</b> The responses to different regional stimuli produce the same (swing in) vote share across the territory
Non-uniform	<b>C: Mediated nationalization of elections</b> A national stimulus produces dissimilar (swings in) vote shares across the territory	<b>D: Denationalization of elections</b> A regional stimulus produces dissimilar (swings in) vote shares across the territory

Notes: this table is adapted from Clagett, Flanigan, and Zingale (1984: 82) and Caramani (2004: 37).

Table 3: Elections in a multilevel electoral system.

	National election $t-1$			Regional election $t-1$		
	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party A	Party B	Party C
Region 1	45	50	5	50	50	0
Region 2	33	34	33	33	34	33
Region 3	15	15	70	15	15	70
	National election $t$			Regional election $t$		
	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party A	Party B	Party C
Region 1	45	45	10	45	55	0
Region 2	33	34	33	33	34	33
Region 3	10	10	80	10	10	80

Notes: a hypothetical example of election results for three parties competing in three regions for two consecutive national and regional elections.

## Annex

The formula for calculating the weighted Party Nationalization Score is:

$$PNSw = 2 \frac{\sum_1^d \left( v_i \left( \sum_1^i p_j - \frac{p_i}{2} \right) \right)}{\sum_1^d v_i \sum_1^d p_i}$$

whereby  $d$  stands for the territorial units  $[1; \dots; i; \dots; d]$ , ordered according to the increasing party vote share of party  $p$ . Each territorial unit  $i$  has  $v_i$  voters, and  $p_i$  of them vote for political party  $p$ .

The formula for calculating the mean absolute deviation is:

$$\text{Mean absolute deviation} = \frac{1}{n_j} \sum_j^n |(X_{ijt} - X_{ijt-1}) - (\bar{X}_{it} - \bar{X}_{it-1})|$$

whereby  $X_{ijt}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  in territorial unit  $j$  in election  $t$  and  $X_{ijt-1}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  in territorial unit  $j$  in the previously held election  $t-1$ . Average (or national) vote shares are indicated by  $\bar{X}$  and  $n_j$  is the total number of territorial units.

The formula for calculating static dissimilarity scores for regions is:

$$\text{Static dissimilarity score} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i^n |X_{ij} - X_{ik}|$$

whereby  $X_{ij}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  in territorial unit  $j$  and  $X_{ik}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  at the national level ( $k$ ).

The formula for dynamic nationalization scores for regions is:

$$\text{Dynamic dissimilarity score} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i^n |(X_{ijt} - X_{ijt-1}) - (X_{ikt} - X_{ikt-1})|$$

whereby  $X_{ijt}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  in territorial unit  $j$  in election  $t$  and  $X_{ijt-1}$  is the vote share won by party  $i$  in territorial unit  $j$  in the previously held election  $t-1$ . National level vote shares are indicated by  $k$ .