

Chapter 1

Theoretical background

The task of this chapter is to outline the theoretical framework of this work. It constitutes the indispensable starting point for the empirical analysis to be carried out in the second and in the third part of the book. In the following pages, I review the basic elements of the theory concerning the nationalisation of politics as it has been studied and problematised over the past fifty years.

What is vote nationalisation? How have scholars studied it? Is it just a conceptual definition or is it also a historical process? And, if it is also a historical process, when did it happen? Which were the factors that generated it?

These questions are only some of the issues that are addressed in this chapter. Moreover, this chapter does not exclusively deal with the theoretical aspects of the current research, since it is also devoted to underline the main limits of previous studies on the topic that this book tries to overcome and solve.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: the first section, ‘A multidimensional concept’, briefly presents the different conceptualisations used in the literature to define this phenomenon and gives account of the main debated points among scholars; finally, it provides a theoretical clarification of what vote nationalisation means. The second section, ‘The historical process of nationalisation in Western Europe’, analyses, by adopting a macro-sociological approach, the historical process of nationalisation in the specific context of Western Europe, which is the spatial context covered by the research. The third section, ‘Historical sources of deviations: Parties for religious, territorial and agrarian defence’, explores the most relevant deviations, which have differentiated the territorial configuration of national party systems, thus determining a partial or total failure of the nationalisation process. Finally,

the fourth section, ‘Limits of previous studies’, lists and briefly reviews the previous empirical research on the topic.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT

Generally defined as ‘the uniformity or universality of attitudes and political behaviour within nations’ (Caramani 1996: 206), and strictly related to the process of homogenisation of political characters, the term ‘nationalisation’ assumes a polyhedral physiognomy, characterised by numerous viewpoints and perspectives, and it has been conceptualised in different ways by the scholars who have dealt with the topic. As Morgenstern and Pothoff emphasise, the concept of nationalisation has ‘suffered from a conflation of terms and imprecise, if not ambiguous, definitions’ (2005: 18).

The theory of the nationalisation of politics first developed in the American setting and originated from Schattschneider’s (1960) analysis on the genesis of the US party system, where the term ‘nationalization of politics’ can be originally found.

Analysing the US party system, where, for more than thirty years (from 1896 to 1932), national political life was dominated by the Republican Party, Schattschneider notes that the electoral support for the two major parties was characterised by strong territoriality, with the Democratic Party dominating the southern states but not able to compete with the Republican Party in the rest of country, so much that in 1896, there was a real competition between the two parties in only six states, thus creating uncertainty about the final result, while in all the other states the apparent supremacy of either the Democratic or the Republican Party did not allow for competitive spaces. This situation radically changed in 1932, when the high degree of territoriality of American politics dissipated because, since that moment, it has been dominated by national rather than local questions: the Depression and the New Deal first, and later World War II and the Cold War, shifted the attention of voters towards national issues. Therefore, according to Schattschneider, nationalisation of politics consists of the turn from local (‘sectional’ in the author’s words) to national politics, and it is meant as an increased competitiveness¹ of elections, with the main national parties contesting elections in each state.

As underlined by Caramani (1996: 207–8), from Schattschneider’s reflections it derives that nationalisation is composed of three different elements: a *dynamic* element (nationalisation as an historical-temporal process), a *social* element (nationalisation as a structural and cultural change) and a *spatial*² element (nationalisation as an increasing similarity between geographical areas and territorial-administrative units within nations).

Later on, other authors deal with the theme of nationalisation of politics. Stokes (1965; 1967), like Schattschneider, regards the phenomenon as the progressive increase in the importance of national issues and empirically tests his hypotheses by analysing turnout rates and party votes in the United States and Great Britain. Moreover, he introduces a further dimension to operationalise the concept of nationalisation, that is, the correspondence of the change (in turnout levels and votes for a given party) from one election to the next one between the national level and a given number of constituencies. Thus, the higher the number of territorial units that show a change against the national trend (i.e., a party loses votes at national level but grows in many local constituencies), the lower the level of nationalisation.

An instrumental study on this topic is the systematic clarification provided by Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale (1984). Moving from the discussion of Schattschneider's and Stokes's contributions, the authors distinguish three different and coexisting aspects of the concept of nationalisation. First, it is a process of convergence in the levels of partisan support, namely of progressive homogenisation of turnout and support for political parties. Second, the concept of nationalisation expresses the propensity of the electorate to refer to political forces, issues and leaders located at the national level, rather than at the local one: it concerns the tendency of voters to be influenced by national political stimuli as, for example, national political leaders rather than local candidates. Third, nationalisation means a uniform response of voters to these stimuli coming from the national level: the response (operationalised as the swing between two subsequent elections) could be uniform or nonuniform. In the case of perfect nationalisation, a party that, for example, increases three points at national level compared to the previous election has a similar increase also in all the territorial units of that country.

As far as the first aspect is concerned, nationalisation has to be considered a macro-phenomenon, namely a process affecting the macro-level, thus implying increasing similarity among territorial units and not among individuals. Many authors emphasise this aspect in their definition of the concept. In his study on the nationalisation of the American politics,³ Sundquist (1973: 332–37) states that it means 'the convergence of party strength' characterised by a reduced variance around the average of the two largest parties' votes across states. Agnew (1987; 1988) links the first and the second dimensions of Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale's definition, identifying nationalisation as the process through which 'allegiances are transferred from the local to the national community and the major political parties receive support that is equally distributed across the national territory and fluctuates in equal proportion across all voting units' (Agnew 1988: 307).

The third dimension (the type of response) is the most problematic and has been used by Stokes and later by Katz (1973) as an indicator of the

second dimension (the source of influence). Katz criticises Stokes's model, according to which uniform swings indicate responses to national forces, arguing that, through Stokes's model, national effects are underestimated, since nationalisation can also be extended to cover 'the degree to which different areas respond to the same electoral forces, whether or not the effects of these forces are numerically identical across space' (Katz 1973: 817). In other words, according to this interpretation, even nonuniform swings could be responses to national forces.

The problem arising from this threefold definition is therefore that, while the first aspect (related to the vote) is easily measurable through various indicators⁴ and does not leave room to misleading interpretations, this does not happen for the other two aspects. Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale believe that both Stokes and Katz confuse the second dimension with the third one and, by crossing the second aspect with the third one, propose a typology where four possible situations come out. Two cases are very clear: that of typical nationalisation (forces located at national level and uniform response of the voters) and that of typical localisation of politics (nonuniform responses to locally based factors). Two other cases are instead less easily interpretable: the case of 'coincidence' (local forces and uniform response), though difficult to verify, and that of 'mediated national influences', in which nationally located stimuli are followed by nonuniform responses of voters. Since there is not a way to empirically clarify the source of stimuli (if national ones or local ones), it will be impossible to interpret the case of nonuniform swing between the territorial units of a given country (it cannot be indeed established if the causal political factors come from the national or the local level). Regarding the second and the third aspects of the definition by Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale (1984), measuring the level of nationalisation is therefore problematic. For this reason, according to Caramani (2004: 42), the homogeneity of electoral behaviour (the first aspect) is a parsimonious indicator of the nationalisation of broader political aspects.

Morgenstern, Swindle and Castagnola (2009: 1322) effectively epitomise this lengthy discussion by distinguishing between a *dynamic* dimension of nationalisation, that is, 'the degree to which a party's vote in the various districts changes uniformly across time' (the third aspect in Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale's definition as well as Stokes's definition), and a *static* or *distributional* dimension of nationalisation, namely, 'the degree to which a party has broad appeal across the nation' (the first aspect in Claggett, Flanigan and Zingale's definition as well as Schattschneider's viewpoint). The dynamic dimension focuses on the comparison of parties' votes between two subsequent elections, while the static or distributional dimension compares parties' votes across districts in a given election.

Recently, Lago and Montero (2014: 193) summarise another controversial issue related to the concept of nationalisation, by stating that ‘the nationalization of party systems can be both understood as a process or as an outcome’. Contributions about nationalisation conceived as a process are provided by Caramani (2004), whose deep analysis about the historical process of nationalisation in Western Europe will be reviewed in the next section; by Cox (1997), who calls it ‘party linkage’, namely, the process by which politicians contesting elections in different districts get to run under a common party label; and, similarly, by Chhibber and Kollman (1998: 330), according to whom ‘party aggregation’ is defined as the process by which politicians coordinate candidates and/or voters in order to aggregate votes across districts and to create national parties.⁵ Nonetheless, Lago and Montero prefer to consider nationalisation as an outcome that ‘involves the replacement of local parties with national parties’ (2014: 194), or, according to Kasuya and Moenius (2008: 126), nationalisation ‘refers to the extent to which parties compete with equal strength across various geographic units within a nation. Strongly nationalised party systems are systems where the vote share of each party is similar across geographic units (e.g., districts, provinces, and regions), while weakly nationalised party systems exhibit large variation in the vote shares of parties across sub-national units’.

In this study, I adopt a ‘distributional’ definition of vote nationalisation, meant as *the level of territorial homogeneity of party support*. Moreover, throughout this study, nationalisation will be mainly considered as an outcome based on election results (the level of vote nationalisation in a given country at a given election). It concerns within-country territorial variations of party support, and it can be measured at party level or country level, by aggregating the scores of the parties that contest the election in a given system. The more the support for a party (or a group of parties) is homogeneous among the territorial units of the country, the more that party (or that party system) is nationalised, and vice versa. From this conceptualisation it derives that vote nationalisation is a matter of degree (a party can have a high or a low level of vote nationalisation and so does a country). However, the ‘process’ perspective will not be discarded. The historical process of nationalisation of politics in Western Europe is a crucial starting point of this study, as I show in the next section. Moreover, the ‘process’ perspective will be adopted whenever there will be a comparison of trends of nationalisation or denationalisation over time, related to individual countries or the overall sample.

As regards the scope of nationalisation, I agree with Caramani (1996: 208), according to whom the two concepts of nationalisation of politics and nationalisation of the vote are in a relationship of genus and species, and, therefore, we can infer the first from the second, the vote being an important catalyst of

other political behaviours. Furthermore, I prefer to use the term ‘vote nationalisation’ instead of the conventional ‘party system nationalisation’ so as to emphasise that this book studies the levels of nationalisation resulting from election results and not simply from party’s territorial coverage: according to this latter, a party system is nationalised if parties present lists or candidates in each district, while vote nationalisation implies that parties receive similar share of votes in each district.

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF NATIONALISATION IN WESTERN EUROPE

In the specific European context, the most systematic contribution about the vote nationalisation process, from both a theoretical and an empirical point of view, is provided by Caramani (1996; 2004). His conceptualisation of vote nationalisation is primarily influenced by Rokkan’s definition of ‘politicization’. Rokkan does not directly address the issue of nationalisation in his works, but, analysing the move towards the national integration of Norwegian politics, he identifies four steps of change, the last one being that of ‘politicization’, namely, ‘the breakdown of the traditional system of local rule through the entry of nationally organised parties into municipal elections’ (Rokkan 1970: 227).

According to Caramani, the nationalisation of politics is a major long-term political phenomenon which deals with the historical evolution from highly localised and territorialised politics – that characterised the early phases of electoral competition – towards the formation of national electorates and party systems and carried out through the progressive reduction of the territoriality of political cleavages. Quoting a meaningful extract at the beginning of his work (2004: 1):

Through nationalization processes, the highly localised and territorialised politics that characterised the early phases of electoral competition in the nineteenth century is replaced by national electoral alignments and oppositions. Peripheral and regional specificities disappear and sectional cleavages progressively transform into nationwide functional alignments. Through the development of central party organisations, local candidates are absorbed into nationwide structures and ideologies. Programs and policies become national in scope and cancel out – or at least reduce – the scope of local problems, with the most relevant issues being transferred from the local to the national level. These processes of political integration translate in the territorial homogenization of electoral behaviour, both electoral participation and the support for the main party families. Nationalization processes therefore represent a crucial step in the structuring of party politics.

The starting point of Caramani's analysis is represented by Rokkan's (1970) macro-sociological study on the territorial structuring of the European party systems as well as by previous empirical analyses about regional differentiation in Western nations (Rose and Urwin 1975; Ersson, Janda and Lane 1985) and the substantial set of studies on the nation-building process and the consequent centre-periphery conflict in Europe (Daalder 1966a; Tilly 1975; Torvik 1981; Rokkan and Urwin 1982; 1983; Flora 1999).

As far as the timing of the process is taken into account, the formation of national electorates and party systems and the progressive homogenisation of party support in Europe took place in the early phases of development of electoral competition, between the end of the nineteenth century and World War I. By the 1920s, the electoral competition was already fully nationalised, and the period after World War II brought about a long pattern of fundamental stability of territorial configuration with only a slight tendency towards further nationalisation (Caramani 2004: 73–81). Caramani brings much empirical evidence to support this finding, concluding that the timing of the process is directly related to the famous 'freezing hypothesis' formulated by Lipset and Rokkan (1967: 50), according to whom, around the 1920s cleavage structures and the related partisan alignments crystallised and remained stable in the following decades. This finding proves consistent with the research by Rose and Urwin (1975: 45) who emphasise that 'nationalization of party competition had already occurred by the start of the postwar era'.

The timing of the process is crucial to understand its causal factors and their role in shaping the process. As far as these causal factors are concerned, Caramani's theoretical scheme is based on the three fundamental dimensions concerning the structuring of the political space: state formation, democratisation and nation building (2004: 195).

To begin with, the process of state formation has historically concerned the definition and the closing of external state boundaries and the related definition of the citizenship. There are two different types of boundaries: geographical and sociocultural ones. The geographical boundary building regards the definition of the territorial space on which the state is sovereign, while the sociocultural boundary building entails the delimitation of the membership in the state community and the development of a national identity. In the nation-state, these two dimensions are merged in the concept of citizenship. Using Hirschman's terminology (1970), this strengthening of external boundaries resulted in a reduction of the *exit* options.⁶

Second, the process of democratisation concerns the development of mass politics and party competition through the diffusion of the institutional channels of representation⁷ and the progressive extension and equalisation of voting rights to previously excluded citizens. Quoting Hirschman again, democratisation favoured the development of territorial *voice* channels.

Finally, the nation-building process refers to the centralising effort, led by the nation-building elites, to penetrate the country's peripheries and achieve their political mobilisation, economic integration and cultural standardisation. Through the nation-building process, therefore, the different geographical areas of a given country become more homogeneous⁸ and 'issues, organisations, allegiances, and competences' are progressively dislocated from the local to the national level (Caramani 2004: 32). By doing so, political cleavages, which shape the expression of *voice* in the political system and structure the constellations of party alliances and oppositions, lost part of their former territoriality.⁹ As the nation-building process is successfully carried out, the old territorial lines of conflict (originated by ethnic, linguistic or religious divisions), characterising the early phases of electoral competition, are replaced by functional cleavages¹⁰ that cut across territorial units, thus opposing segments of population into the same territory according to interest and ideologies instead of set against different territories of a given country. Nationalisation of politics therefore consists of the weakening of internal territorial boundaries (cleavages) or, using Hirschman's terminology again, in the reduction in the territoriality of *voice* options.

These three macro-processes (state formation, democratisation and nation-building) and their political consequences (reduction of exit options, development of internal voice channels and progressive reduction of their territoriality) structured the European political space and fostered the evolution of European countries towards the emergence of a nationalised pattern of electoral competition.

Nonetheless, these processes have not always been entirely successful: in some polities, the nationalisation process has not been fully achieved, while in some others, it has completely failed, thus leading to the exit option¹¹ or to the territorial expression of voice, as the next section shows.

As mentioned before, the expression of voice in a political system is shaped by the structure of constellations of party alliances and oppositions arisen from social cleavages. The genesis and evolution of party systems in Europe during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century can be explained by the interaction between two processes of revolutionary change: the National Revolution and the Industrial Revolution (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

The National Revolution is the precondition for the deepest and bitterest cleavages since such cleavages are based on values and cultural identities: the centre-periphery cleavage and the state-church one. These two cleavages triggered the rise, first in Britain and then in other European countries, of Liberal and Conservative parties which contributed – in a more relevant way than all other parties – to nationalise the electoral competition, as well as of

ethnoregionalist and religious parties which were responsible for the major deviations from the pattern of homogenisation.¹²

The Liberal parties were the main actors in the historical evolution towards the centralisation of the state, the integration and cultural standardisation of the peripheries, the democratisation of political institutions and the secularisation and separation of government from religious influences (Caramani 2004: 199). The Liberals, therefore, embodied the 'centre'¹³ and the 'state' sides in the two cleavages emerged from the National Revolution.

On the other side, the Conservative parties represented the reaction of the aristocratic elites, which aimed at restoring the royal authority weakened by constitutionalism and parliamentarianism and at preserving the old order threatened by liberal reforms. Moreover, the Conservatives strived against the secularisation carried out by the Liberals and supported the religious moral order and church's privileges. By emerging within the political space well before other party families, the Liberals and the Conservatives took part in the early phases of electoral competition, attempting to mobilise that small portion of citizens who had the right of vote, thus being the first parties to spread throughout the European countries their (still embryonic) forms of party organisations and thereby playing a central role in the nationalisation of the electoral competition. This point can be easily understood by considering that the opposition between Liberals and Conservatives was of a nonterritorial but of a functional nature, namely based on specific interests (liberal and secular reforms versus the defence of aristocratic and ecclesiastic privileges).

Therefore, before the inclusion of mass working electorates and the spread of Social Democratic parties, towards the end of the nineteenth century, many Western European countries had already experienced the development of a nationwide party competition, based on the functional opposition between Liberals and Conservatives.

Although less decisive than the National Revolution, even the Industrial Revolution, with its related cleavages (rural-urban and class ones), has been an important determinant of the nationalisation process. The industrialisation has produced a massive demographic migration from the peripheries towards the urban and industrial centres, bringing into contact masses of individuals coming from different regions in the same new industrial environment. Furthermore, the parallel development of new forms of mass communications has had a substantial impact on the transformation of cleavages from territorial into functional ones. Social divisions have persisted, but they have been much more cross-cutting and did not project themselves on the territory.

In the wake of this historical transformation, a strong factor of vote homogenisation was the rise of Socialist and Social Democratic parties

which stemmed from the class-cleavage and developed between the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. After the enlargement of voting rights to previously excluded citizens, these parties mobilised large masses of newly enfranchised workers, and in a few years they reached a stable level of support, around 30 per cent (Caramani 2004: 212), thus becoming crucial actors of Western European politics. Like their electoral growth, their territorial spread and the homogenising effect on the overall level of vote nationalisation were rapid. After the entering of Social Democratic parties, which were an expression of the class cleavage, ‘a homogenizing cleavage’ (Caramani 2004: 196), the European political space definitely structured in functional terms,¹⁴ leading to the predominance of a left-right pattern of competition between these parties and the Conservatives and ‘bourgeois’ coalitions which contested the extension of voting rights to the working classes and the growth of the welfare state.

It follows that Western European electorates and party systems became increasingly homogeneous under the pressure of two main factors, one related to macro-sociological factors and the other related to parties’ competitive strategies. On the one hand, there was the supremacy of the functional left-right conflict and the consequent reduction of the territoriality of political cleavages (Caramani 2004: 247), determined by the process of cultural integration and then reinforced by that of social mobilisation. On the other hand, there was the spread of electoral competition carried out by the two historical families of Liberals and Conservatives that started to contest each district and challenge each other in the respective strongholds, thus drastically reducing the territoriality of the vote.¹⁵ On this latter point, Caramani (2004: 231) argues that the process of nationalisation is also ‘the result of political parties themselves and of their strategic-competitive action aiming at winning the highest number of seats’.

Moreover, other intervening institutional factors, such as the extension of suffrage and the incorporation of the masses into political life (enfranchisement), as well as the introduction of proportional electoral formulas in Europe, only took place after the achievement of a nationalised competition. The enfranchisement extended the process of nationalisation to the masses, but it was the result of the supremacy of earlier processes triggered by the National and, to a lesser extent, by the Industrial Revolution rather than of mass politics through the extension of suffrage. At the same time, PR systems were introduced after World War I, when nationalisation processes were already attained. ‘Rather than having been a factor of homogenization of party support, therefore, PR appears to have been a factor of *stabilization*¹⁶ of territorial configuration in Europe’ (Caramani 2004: 246).

HISTORICAL SOURCES OF DEVIATIONS: PARTIES FOR RELIGIOUS, TERRITORIAL AND AGRARIAN DEFENCE

After having analysed the historical process of formation of national electorates and party systems in Europe and having detected the main determinants of this process, by following Rokkan and Caramani's macro-sociological framework, this section focuses on the deviations from the main pattern of nationalisation, namely, the long-lasting variations in the within-country territorial configurations of party support. The following pages aim at identifying the most important sources of diversity in the territorial structures of Western European party systems and at looking for the existence of some common patterns and regularities that have concurred to determine the total, or partial, failure of the nationalisation process in these contexts.

In the European landscape, three major sources of deviations from the main pattern towards territorial homogeneity have emerged: parties for religious, territorial and agrarian defence.

Parties for religious defence

Parties emerged to defend the church's interests were the result of the National Revolution (and especially of the state-church cleavage). The diffusion and the electoral fortunes of these parties greatly vary across Europe. The critical juncture for the subsequent differentiated development of these parties was the Reformation (Rokkan 1970: 116). In homogeneously Protestant countries (like Britain and Scandinavia), the state-church conflict was resolved long before the advent of mass democracy and democratisation: the Reformation led to the development of national churches in opposition to the Roman Catholic one. Temporal and spiritual institutions were therefore allied 'in the defence of the central nation-building culture' (Rokkan 1970: 112). This historical development has facilitated the diffusion and the penetration throughout the country of the national culture and language (also thanks to the translation of the Bible in national languages) and prevented the rise, in Britain as well as in the Scandinavian countries, of large Protestant parties for the defence of the national church. In these contexts, the alliance between the nation builders and the church has been challenged by the rise of peripheral nonconformist movements of religious dissidents with orthodox Protestant beliefs, emerged as a reaction against the secularised tendencies of the ruling elites. These movements, although in many cases have only been peripheral minorities, have been the only source of 'religious' deviation in homogeneously Protestant countries.

Conversely, in the Counter-Reformed countries, the protection of Catholic Church's interests has led to the formation of parties for religious defence (as the large Christian Democratic parties of Austria, Belgium and Italy) or to the inclusion of religious issues into the political manifestos of broad conservative fronts (like in France or Spain). In all these homogeneously Catholic countries,¹⁷ parties for religious defence have represented the 'right' side of the functional Liberal-Conservative opposition,¹⁸ and, as a result, just like the Conservative parties, have shown high levels of vote nationalisation.

The most important source of territorial deviation among the parties emerged for religious defence can be found in the religiously mixed countries (Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland). Here both Catholic and Protestant parties have emerged, and the religious affiliation has acquired strong territorial connotations, with the Catholic minority being rooted in some areas (Bavaria in Germany, the southern provinces of Limburg and North Brabant in the Netherlands, the southern cantons of Switzerland) and the Protestant majority in the rest of these countries. As a consequence, these kinds of confessional parties have exhibited heterogeneous territorial configurations of support. On the contrary, the interconfessional parties of these religiously mixed countries (as the Christian Democratic Appeal in the Netherlands) have been very homogeneous from the territorial viewpoint, since their appeal to religious values has cut across the cleavage between Catholics and Protestants.

Parties for territorial defence

The second major source of territorial deviation in Europe, and undoubtedly the one accounting for the largest within-country territorial differences, has been represented by the ethnoregionalist party family,¹⁹ stemming from the centre-periphery cleavage, which in turn resulted from the National Revolution.

The process of nation building generated territorial and cultural conflicts that sometimes have been solved through secessions and boundary changes (e.g., the dismemberment of the Hapsburg Empire, the Irish secession from England in 1922, the secession of the Catholic Belgian provinces from the Low Countries in 1830) and in some other countries have led to the formation of territorial parties that have survived the nationalisation process. According to Caramani (2004: 185), parties for territorial defence include parties originating from the centre-periphery cleavage that have emerged in the process of state formation and nation building (e.g., the Basque Nationalist Party); parties born from ethno-linguistic cleavages (e.g., the Flemish People's Union); parties claiming stronger administrative autonomy but not centred on cultural identity (e.g., the Italian Northern League); parties created as local branches of larger national parties or allied with them (e.g., the Bavarian

Christian-Social Union). Although the supremacy of the left-right dimension has favoured the nationalisation of party systems all over Europe, cultural cleavages have survived the advent of class politics and have hindered the process of national integration. Parties that stemmed from ethnic and linguistic cleavages – the main survivors of preindustrial cleavages (together with the aforementioned religious cleavage) – have become the main sources of territorial diversity in Europe.

Many factors and conditions have been emphasised by the literature to account for the emergence and the survival of territorial parties in Europe (see in particular Rokkan 1970; Torvsik 1981; Rokkan and Urwin 1982). Among all these explanations, a set of common factors must be considered for the birth and consolidation of territorial oppositions: (a) the cultural fragmentation of the country (religious and/or ethnolinguistic fragmentation); (b) a strong concentration of the counter-culture within a distinct and clear-cut territory; (c) the presence of few and tenuous ties of communication and alliance towards the national centre and of more and stronger ties towards external centres of cultural and/or economic influence; (d) a low degree of economic dependence from the political centre/metropolis; and (e) a polarising cleavage structure (in particular, urban-rural and religious cleavages reinforcing the centre-periphery one). An accumulation of such conditions makes the emergence and survival of federalist, autonomist, separatist movements and parties more likely to occur.

All countries where parties for territorial defence have emerged are characterised by cultural heterogeneity. Most of them are heterogeneous from an ethnolinguistic standpoint: Belgium (with the linguistic split between the Dutch-speaking Flanders and the French-speaking Wallonia), Spain (with the Castilian challenged by many peripheral dialects and languages, above all Catalan and Basque), Finland (with the sizeable Swedish-speaking minority), and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain (with the ethnic claims of peripheral nationalisms in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Italy (with the German and French-speaking minorities, respectively, concentrated in the two border regions of Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta). Moreover, Switzerland is a heterogeneous country both in religious and in ethnolinguistic terms (although only the religious dimension has been translated into the party system). In all these countries, the ethnolinguistic groups are concentrated in clear-cut territories. In many of them, the peripheries have been tied to external centres of cultural and/or economic influence (Germany and France for Switzerland, the Netherlands and France for Belgium, Sweden for Finland, Austria and France for two Italian regions, Ireland for Northern Ireland). In many cases, the peripheries are economically prosperous and industrialised while the political centre is backwards (it is the case of the northern regions in Italy, the Catalan and Basque regions in Spain,

the Flanders region in Belgium). Finally, the polarising cleavage structure reinforces the territorial cleavages in some countries (as in Belgium), whereas in other cases the criss-crossing of cleavage lines dampens the territorial oppositions (as in Switzerland).

Parties for agrarian defence

The last major source of deviation from the main pattern towards the formation of nationalised party systems in Europe was represented by the rise of agrarian parties which have stemmed from the urban-rural cleavage.

The critical juncture for the beginning of this process was the Industrial Revolution: it produced a spectacular growth of world trade, the spread of new technologies and the widening of the markets through the opening of the old protectionist barriers, and, as a consequence, it triggered increasing mass migrations towards the industrial cities. As stated by Rokkan (1970: 107), this process ‘generated increasing strains between the primary producers in the countryside and the merchants and the entrepreneurs in the towns and the cities’. This cleavage was characterised by a hard core of economic conflict (disputes over the commodity market, the tariff barriers and the prices of agricultural products), but it also reflected ‘an opposition between two value orientations: the recognition of status through *ascriptions and kin connections* versus the claims for status through *achievement and enterprise*’ (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 19).

Parties for agrarian defence²⁰ did not emerge everywhere in Europe but only in some countries where certain conditions occur. The first two conditions were the structure of alliance formed by the central core of nation builders and the organisation of the rural society at the time of the extension of suffrage. These two conditions were closely related. Agrarian parties were movements for the defence of small and medium-sized units of production against the predominance of the cities into the national political life. Therefore, ‘agrarian interests were most likely to find direct political expression in systems of close alliance between nation-builders and the urban economic leadership’ (Rokkan 1970: 126) and in systems where land tenure was not dominated by large estates. These two fundamental requirements rule out many countries from the possibility of emergence of agrarian parties: in Britain, Germany, Spain and Austria, land ownership was organised in large estates and ‘the concentration of power and the social role of great landowners put the landed economy in a much stronger position’ (Caramani 2004: 219) and increased the centre-builder’s payoffs of alliances with landowners.²¹

In addition, there were cultural and religious conditions to be respected: parties for agrarian defence developed ‘where there were important cultural

barriers between the countryside and the cities and much resistance to the incorporation of farm production in the capitalist economy of the cities' and also 'where the Catholic Church was without significant influence' (Rokkan 1970: 128). These cultural and religious factors were absent in some other countries, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, which instead fitted the first two aforementioned conditions, since the centre-builders were allied with urban interests and family-size farming predominated.²² Nevertheless, in both countries, small farming was closely tied to urban economy (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 45). Moreover, the religious condition leaves out France²³ and Italy,²⁴ where the Catholic Church acted as an agency of rural mobilisation in the countryside, including the defence of rural interests into large Catholic-Conservative fronts which rarely found direct political expression through the emergence of peasant parties.²⁵

The third and last important condition for the emergence of agrarian parties in Europe was the weakness of the cities at the time of the decisive extension of the suffrage. Only a few countries comply with all these circumstances: the Scandinavian ones²⁶ and the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. While in some other countries small farmers' and peasants' parties emerged during the interwar period but rapidly disappeared after World War II, or were absorbed by broader Catholic-Conservative fronts (Caramani 2004: 220),²⁷ it is only in Scandinavia and Protestant Switzerland that large and time-resistant agrarian parties have developed.

The largest European agrarian party has been the Finnish Agrarian League, and, even today, its successor (the Centre Party) is usually the first- or the second-largest party in the country. In the other three Scandinavian countries, there have been strong traditions of independent peasant representation and widespread rejection of the cultural influence of the encroaching cities. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the agrarian movements have initially been included into broad 'Left' fronts including nonconformist religious dissidents and radicals against the urban and conservative centre-builders.²⁸ More specifically, in Denmark a genuine agrarian party has never emerged since the urban radicals have left the original opposition front and the Liberal Left (*Venstre*) has remained an agrarian-based party; on the contrary, in Sweden a distinct party for the defence of the agrarian class emerged, but its interests were threatened by the uniquely rapid transition of the country from agrarian to modern industrial society and by the consequent internal migration of the population from the rural to the urban areas (Hancock 1980: 186–87; Christensen 1997: 395); finally, in Norway the agrarian party had their strongholds in the western and southern peripheral regions, where the agrarian claims welded themselves with the three historical 'counter-cultures'²⁹ (Rokkan 1967; Rokkan and Valen 1970; Aarebrot 1982).

Out of the Scandinavian context, a large rural party has only developed in Switzerland, where the need for protecting the farmers' interests against the urban predominance has led to the formation of the Farmers, Artisans and Citizens' Party (later Swiss People's Party), deeply rooted in rural Protestant areas around Zurich and Berne.

Once they have emerged and consolidated into the national party system, these large agrarian parties have substantially contributed to reduce the within-country territorial homogeneity and to deviate from the vote nationalisation pattern. Yet, the overall territorial impact of this cleavage has massively reduced through time: in the wake of the urbanisation process and the continuous decline of the rural population, the Nordic agrarian parties have transformed since the 1950s into 'centre' parties with a broader interclass appeal, emphasising new issues such as environmentalism and power decentralisation to regional authorities (Knutsen 2004: 155); in Switzerland the agrarian party transformed itself into a right-wing populist and Conservative Party in 1971. Accordingly, both in the Scandinavian and in the Swiss cases, the territorial support for these parties has become far less heterogeneous and no longer able to develop a substantial failure of the nationalisation process.

LIMITS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Although the issue of vote nationalisation has long and deep roots in both the American and the European scholarly traditions (*see* the above sections), Jones and Mainwaring (2003: 139) stated the necessity to address 'an under-analysed issue in the comparative study of parties and party systems: their degree of nationalization'. It seems that their appeal has been successful: during the past years, scholars have paid increasing attention to vote nationalisation, with the publication of several articles on the topic. Yet, many of these articles have a predominant methodological purpose since their main goal is to propose new measures of vote nationalisation. Amongst such articles, we can remember the ones by Cox (1999), Moenius and Kasuya (2004), Kasuya and Moenius (2008), Bochsler (2010), Golosov (2014), Lago and Montero (2014) and Morgenstern, Polga-Hecimovich and Siavelis (2014).

Regarding the articles that bring about some empirical findings, some of them treat vote nationalisation not as an outcome but as a predictor, exploring its ability to affect the scope of public policies (Crisp, Olivella and Potter 2013), the composition of central government expenditures (Castañeda-Angarita 2013), the provisions of the public healthcare service (Hicken,

Kollman and Simmons 2016), or the consequences for foreign direct investment (Simmons et al. 2016), or deal with vote nationalisation as a contextual feature affecting individual voting behaviour (Maggini and Emanuele 2015; Morgenstern, Smith and Trelles 2017).

Moreover, many of the empirical works devoted to study vote nationalisation and its determinants do not specifically focus on Western Europe but on Latin America (Jones and Mainwaring 2003; Harbers 2010; Alemán and Kellam 2016; Su 2017), Africa (Goloso 2016a), Eastern Europe (Nikoleny 2008; Sikk and Bochsler 2008), federal systems of government (Chhibber and Kollman 1998; 2004; Roberts and Wibbels 2011) or cross-regional studies mixing together democratic and authoritarian regimes (De Miguel 2016; Lago and Lago 2016; Goloso 2016b).

The articles related to Western Europe generally aim at disentangling some specific elements associated to vote nationalisation, such as the link between decentralisation and vote nationalisation (Lago and Lago 2010; Lago 2011; Schakel 2012; Simón 2013) or the relation between institutional arrangement (in terms of executive system and electoral system) and vote nationalisation (Morgenstern, Swindle and Castagnola 2009; Goloso 2016c). All these contributions rely on Western Europe and reach some important achievements but do not provide a comprehensive explanation concerning the empirical determinants of vote nationalisation.

The only published work that tries to achieve such a result is *The Nationalization of Politics* by Caramani (2004). His comparative analysis relies on Western Europe and studies the processes of formation of national electorates and party systems since the early phases of electoral competition. Nevertheless, Caramani's work has some serious flaws that this book tries to overcome and solve, as shown in the next chapter, which is devoted to outlining the research design of this book.

First of all, Caramani's analysis – as well as most of the ones cited earlier – is based on indicators of vote nationalisation that are biased for a number of reasons, thus undermining the reliability of his empirical results. On the contrary, this book relies on the sPSNS, recently developed by Bochsler (2010) and generally considered the most reliable measure of vote nationalisation. Second, Caramani's data do not go beyond the mid-1990s, while this book covers all general elections held in Western Europe until 2015. Therefore, Caramani's work is not able to take into account many relevant social, institutional and political changes that have occurred in Western Europe during the past two decades. Third, and foremost, Caramani's work remains on a purely descriptive level, and it does not provide an empirically based explanation about the determinants of vote nationalisation – a gap that is eventually filled by part III of this book.