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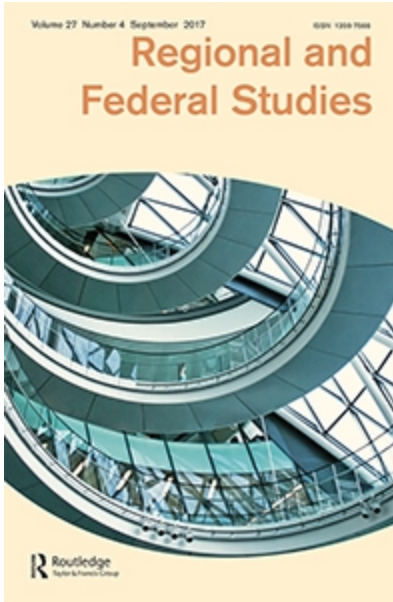
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**TOWARDS A TERRITORIAL POLITICAL CAPACITY APPROACH
FOR STUDYING EUROPEAN REGIONS**

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Manuscripts

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3 The comparative analysis of the sub-national level has become an increasingly prominent
4 feature across the social sciences in recent years and this trend has started to address the general
5 tendency in the past to make an ‘unreflected choice’ of the nation-state as the default unit of
6 analysis (Jeffery 2013). Jeffery and Wincott (2010, p.174), for example, note that the
7 methodological nationalism which characterises these unreflected choices has driven ‘the
8 blinkering of political science to the enduring significance of sub-state social mobilization and
9 political contestation.’ Perhaps one of the most influential studies that has challenged these
10 assumptions has been the Regional Authority Index (RAI) developed initially by Hooghe,
11 Marks and Schakel (2010) and updated by Hooghe et al. (2016). The RAI provides arguably
12 the most comprehensive attempt to systematically compare the sub-national across a wide
13 range of states and has become a key reference point for the analysis of territorial politics. A
14 core objective of the RAI was to ‘provide a reasonably valid measure of subnational
15 government structure that is sensitive to cross-sectional and temporal variation’ and which was
16 robust in terms of transparency, as well as reliability and validity (Hooghe et al. 2016, p.4).
17 The result is that the RAI was designed to be somewhat limited in scope. Hooghe et al. (2016,
18 16) explain that the index ‘excludes informal arrangements’ or contextual factors, such as
19 leadership, political parties, or corruption, which may affect government performance. The
20 main objective of this article is to explore the extent to which it is possible to develop a
21 systematic approach to building these types of factors back into the analysis of the sub-national
22 level via the development of a complementary index or set of measures.
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51 To this end, the article proposes a framework for studying the ‘territorial political capacity’
52 (TPC) of regions in Europe. It is inspired by a four-year cross-national comparative research
53 project on ‘territorial governance in western Europe between convergence and capacity’.¹ The
54 project’s central question was formulated in terms of the tension between convergence and
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3 territorial capacity building in the period of economic crisis starting in 2008. The pressures
4 promoting a harder form of convergence between states are usually presented as economic, in
5 the form of globalisation, European integration (framed as a form of globalisation) and fiscal
6 policy; or epistemic, via the trans-national diffusion of scientific and economic expertise and
7 technical norms and instruments (Dyson, 2014, Jessop, 2007, Knill, 2005; Pollitt, 2001;
8 Bennett, 1991). Pressures of hard and soft convergence and divergence also affect the styles of
9 and rules governing inter-governmental relations; the institutional, material and constructed
10 capacities of sub-national administrations and the reform of regional and local service delivery.
11 The project has furthered comparative reflection on convergence and divergence and
12 elaborated a typology – the *States of Convergence in Territorial Governance* – that provides
13 an operational template for comparing the interplay of exogenous and endogenous dynamics
14 at the territorial level, a framework that accommodates structure, agency and interaction (Cole,
15 Harguindéguy, Pasquier, Stafford and de Visscher, 2015). The main aim of this article is
16 essentially conceptual, however, rather than the presentation of detailed findings from the
17 empirical field work, which have been extensively published elsewhere (Cole, 2014, Cole and
18 Pasquier, 2015, Cole and Stafford, 2015; Harguindéguy, Pasquier and Cole, 2015; Cole and
19 de Visscher, 2016; Stafford, 2016; Pasquier, 2016; Harguindéguy and Rodriguez Lopez, 2016;
20 Harguindéguy and Cole, 2017).

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48 Drawing on the research carried out within the project, the article puts forward a Territorial
49 Political Capacity Index, designed to complement the analysis provided within the RAI. The
50 article needs to be read in the context of the thorough discussion on the indexes of
51 decentralisation presented in the introductory article of this special section, to which the
52 interested reader is referred. Rather like the indexes of decentralization, discussions of political
53 capacity are essentially contestable.
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6 The concept of capacity is generally used to apply to the state, in a rich debate which engages
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8 scholars from political science, sociology, international political economy and international
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10 relations (for example Besley and Perrson, 2009, Dyson, 2014, Enriquez and Centeno, 2012).
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12 State capacity is a polycentric concept that draws on arguments based on resources, institutions,
13
14 implementation, conditionality and processes of governance. We observe that such debates are
15
16 often framed in the negative, in terms of the crisis of state capacity (Le Galès, 1999) and the
17
18 hollowing out of the state (Jessop, 2013). In relation to territorial forms, capacity was
19
20 originally mobilised in more positive terms to refer to building governing capacity,
21
22 conceptualized in terms of resources (material and political); interactions (territorial coalitions
23
24 and networks) and practices (collective action repertoires) (Stone, 1989; Pasquier, 2004;
25
26 Painter & Pierre, 2005; Keating, Hepburn & Cairney, 2009). Building governing capacity
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28 makes real sense in a context of regions as loosely bounded spaces, relying on persuasion,
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30 emulation and the attractiveness of the territorial project (Keating, 1998). Following this brief
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32 presentation of governing capacity as a form of positive mobilization of resources, interactions
33
34 and practices, the main sections deal with the capacity to develop rules and regulations, raise
35
36 finances, interact with central state institutions and mobilise resources; the capacity to
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38 operationalise more informal mechanisms linked to party, leadership and network dynamics;
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40 and the capacity to articulate, negotiate and diffuse a territorial model in a multi-organisational
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51 ---Figure 1 and Table 1 around here---

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54 The proposed framework identifies three main dimensions of territorial political capacity.
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56 Mainly material indicators include institutions and institutional resources. Mixed material and
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58 constructed indicators centre on causal mechanisms of party and leadership capacity. Mainly
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3 constructed indicators are drawn from territorial praxis. Bringing together material, mixed and
4
5 constructed indicators is intended to offer a more subtle and nuanced reading of individual
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7 places, as well as to draw comparisons between types of place. How do we back up the claim
8
9 that these indicators capture territorial political capacity? Bearing in mind the essentially
10
11 contested nature of any conceptualisation, and the simultaneously constructed and porous
12
13 nature of all categorisations, the framework proposed is robust: the first dimension is mapped
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15 onto the Regional Authority Index: (institutions [self-rule], inter-governmental relations
16
17 [shared rule]), the second (party and leadership capacity) uses a coded scale based mainly on
18
19 primary interview data to uncover territorial and multi-level dynamics; and the final one is
20
21 drawn from praxis, as interpreted by discourse and practice as entry points into understanding
22
23 the resilience of territorial models. Our contention is that this range of indicators captures well
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25 the hybrid mix of material and constructed dimensions that is required to understand political
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27 capacity in any one place.
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55 **Research Design**

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3 Our objective, through extensive fieldwork (2012-2015), was to compare four European
4 regions in a period of economic crisis and political reconfiguration. These regions - Andalusia
5 (Spain), Brittany (France), Wales (United Kingdom) and Wallonia (Belgium) - were caught
6
7 between somewhat contradictory pressures for economic and political convergence and the
8 temptation to develop more autonomous forms of regional governance. The central hypothesis
9
10 was the top-down one that converging pressures – especially budgetary retrenchment and the
11 requirements of normative Europeanization - had been intensified by the context of the fiscal
12 and sovereign debt crisis since 2008 (Thorhallsson and Kattel, 2013, Braun and Treib, 2014).
13
14 The internal stability pacts in Germany (Vetter, 2010, Benz and Heinz, 2016), the tighter fiscal
15 steering in France (Cole, 2014), the adoption of new financial and budgetary instruments in
16 Spain (Harguindeguy, Pasquier and Cole, 2015; Ruiz, 2013; Colino, 2013), all suggested that
17 the euro and sovereign debt crises had enhanced central government controls over sub-state
18 governments. Even in Belgium, the impact of new accounting norms (SEC 2010) and audit
19 procedures following the Fiscal Compact treaty had strengthened the role of Federal and EU
20 actors (Cole and de Visscher, 2016). The general conclusion was that economic crisis
21 undermines the territorial capacities of what we labelled as ‘second order strong identity’
22 regions.
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45 The period from 2008 was also illustrative, however, of the resilience of certain territorial
46 models. From this perspective, the ability of cities and regions to respond to economic crisis
47 (by developing a narrative of the common good, by playing on their size, by established
48 practices of cooperation, by routines that have demonstrated their usefulness in the past) is one
49 aspect of their broader political capacity, understood as a hybrid indicator of the material and
50 constructed dimensions of territorial governance (Stone, 1989, Cole and Pasquier, 2015).
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52 Understanding a region requires combining different levels of analysis and distinctive ways of
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3 knowing; broad-based (quasi-statistical) variables facilitate comparison, while the focus on
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5 resilience and capacity requires primary data collection, drilling down into the practices of
6
7 comparable panels of actors.
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12 These four regions governed by social-democratic parties were compared using a ‘most
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14 similar’ logic (Cole, Harguindéguy, Pasquier, Stafford and de Visscher, 2015). They have
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16 variable degrees of decentralised authority: as a minimum, each has a directly elected regional
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18 Assembly. The case for comparison is made on the basis of functional and political similarity
19
20 (economic status, traditions of party control, positioning in relation to central government and
21
22 the EU, the role of territorial identity markers) rather than strict equivalence in terms of size
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24 (Andalusia, with 8,000,000 inhabitants, being much larger than the three other regions, each
25
26 with around 3,000,000). These regions we label as ‘second order, strong identity’: namely, a
27
28 family of regions with a strong sense of their own role which do not look to secure
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30 independence (unlike Catalonia, Scotland or to a lesser degree Flanders), but which use their
31
32 identity markers (and solidarity arguments) to obtain transfers from central government and
33
34 the EU. Collectively the four regions have a distinctive territorial identity, or at least (in the
35
36 case of Wallonia) a developed sense of regional milieu. The four regions exist in states that
37
38 cover the range of logical possibilities for comparison: a loose federal state (Belgium), a hybrid
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40 state with some federal characteristics (Spain), a predominantly unitary state modified by forms
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42 of asymmetrical devolution (United Kingdom) and a decentralised but still unitary state
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44 (France). The EU context provides the core similarity between these states, with three of the
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46 four participating in the euro and signed up to the Treaty on European Stability and Governance
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48 (TSGG). They each sustained a coherent territorial narrative that mixed signifiers from the
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50 centre-periphery and the left-right axes.
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8 Our research design is fundamentally a most similar one, rooted in the ontology of the
9 comparative case study. There is no single comparative case study method. While Yin (2002)
10 frames the comparative case study as part of a positivistic, quasi-experimental design (as
11 Przeworski and Teune [1970] did in their classic work), more constructivist minded scholars
12 such as Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) emphasise cases as bounded phenomena allowing
13 holistic, yet particularistic analysis. The concern for classification and measurement is
14 necessarily less absolute in the comparative case study (than in pure index approaches) but
15 careful case selection allows rather more profound analysis of social phenomena, in this case
16 the response of regions to economic crisis and the adaptation of territorial models to internal
17 and external challenges.
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33 Fieldwork was conducted in these four regions over an 18-month period (November 2012 to
34 May 2014). The research fieldwork consisted in collecting statistical and secondary data on
35 the four regions in comparative context, and, at its heart, organising interviews with territorial
36 actors (around 25 interviews per region). Over 100 semi-structured interviews took place across
37 the four regions, using a common interview schedule (designed to capture the core research
38 questions of convergence and capacity building in a context of economic crisis and political
39 fragmentation). Within each region, functionally equivalent panels were identified, composed
40 of three cognate groups: the public administration group (devolved government, regional or
41 regional state actors), the policy community group (representatives of professional and policy
42 communities in the fields of public finance and secondary education) and the political actors
43 group (elected representatives with competence in two policy fields [budget policy and
44 secondary education], controlled for by party affiliation). A dataset of 102 interviews was
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3 compiled using NVivo 10, a qualitative research software package and deposited with the Be
4 Quali data archive (hereby meeting the criterion of openness and transparency) (Cole, et. al.
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6 2018).
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12 The case selection insisted primarily upon the control of our regions by social-democratic
13 parties. In these regions, party represented a powerful organisational force for mobilisation,
14 party values represented a powerful filter of exogenous changes, and party networks provided
15 an organisational capacity to fight and win elections. In Andalusia, Wales and Wallonia in
16 particular, defensive strategies, based on reviving traditional models and territorial repertoires,
17 were successful. The regional election results renewed the social-democrat compact in all four
18 of the regions during the research process (the victory of PS in Wallonia 2014 and in Brittany,
19 2015; the return of PSOE in Andalucía, 2015; and the narrow return of Labour in Wales in
20 2016). But mapping or coding these dynamics in a meaningful way is extremely challenging,
21 a theme addressed in the next section.
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40 **Comparing Regions: the Regional Authority Index and its Limits**

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45 The starting point for the TPC Index developed within this article, as highlighted in the
46 introduction, is the Regional Authority Index (RAI) produced by Hooghe et al. (2010) and
47 replicated at the local level by Ladner et al (2016) through the LAI (Local Autonomy Index).
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49 The RAI provides a framework for situating models of decentralisation within wider models
50 of sub-national, intermediate or regional tiers of governance. The RAI draws on the study of
51 federalism, notably Elazar (1991), and separates regional authority into two domains: *self-rule*
52 - ‘the authority that a subnational government exercises in its own territory’ and *shared rule* –
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3 ‘the authority that a subnational government co-exercises in the country as a whole’ (Hooghe
4 et al. 2016, p.23). In order to estimate variation in regional governance arrangements across
5 regions and countries the RAI disaggregates both self and shared rule domains into a set of
6 dimensions with measurable indicators (Table 1).
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17 The *self-rule* dimension of the Regional Authority Index might be taken as a proxy for
18 institutions and institutional resources and is thus germane to our enterprise. The self-rule axis
19 is identified in terms of five indicators: institutional depth; policy scope, fiscal autonomy,
20 borrowing autonomy and representation. In the 2016 version of the RAI, Wallonia arrives
21 ahead under the self-rule criteria (19 points), followed closely by Andalusia (18.5 points),
22 Brittany (10 points) and Wales (9 points). The ranking is logical. Wallonia has developed its
23 institutional and budgetary resources and policy competencies as the result of over three
24 decades of developing decentralisation and confederalisation. As one of the most powerful
25 Spanish autonomous communities, Andalusia has also enjoyed a consistent set of self-ruled
26 competencies in strategic sectors like health and education, though its fiscal capacity is more
27 limited and was restrained further under the first Rajoy government (2011-2015). Wales had
28 less far-reaching autonomy than in Wallonia or Andalusia during the 1999-2010 period. In the
29 case of Brittany, finally, the regional Council has no formal regulatory or legislative powers.
30 The NOTRe law of July 2015 changed little in this respect.
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51 On the other hand, none of our regions perform particularly highly in terms of the *shared rule*
52 dimension of the RAI. In the 2016 version of the RAI, Wales and Andalusia arrived ahead (6.5
53 points each on the RAI scale) of Wallonia (5 points) and Brittany (0 point). The French regions
54 in particular appear weak in terms of formal self-rule, though informal influence has long been
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3 observed in organisational sociology (Pasquier, 2012). In each case, key findings about our
4 regions require more sustained, context-specific investigation. The RAI is a very useful
5 instrument as an entry point for more detailed case study analysis, but it is necessary to adapt
6 the index to make sense in a small n. context, the object of the next section.
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14 **Comparing Regions Using TPC: Adapting the RAI to a Small-N Context**

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20 Taken as an aggregate of both its self-rule and shared rule dimensions, the RAI presents a rather
21 broad-brush description of our regions. Hooghe et al. (2016, 21) argue that the focus on legal
22 authority and the minimalism of the RAI is in part driven by the objective to ‘make it possible
23 for researchers to investigate the causal links between the structure of government and its causes
24 and consequences’ (Hooghe et al. 2016, 21). Therefore informal factors and social norms, such
25 as party politics, leadership and territorial models, are left aside from the RAI. Hence, while we
26 propose a scheme that is closely mapped to the weightings in the RAI, three new variables are
27 introduced - party capacity, leadership capacity and territorial models - in order to capture
28 dimensions of self- and shared rule in a small-n context. These are now presented in turn and
29 applied to our four regions.
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45 ***The Party System and the Regional Interest***

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48 More often than not, party dynamics are the principal ‘unseen’ forces at work that are not
49 adequately captured by existing models such as the Regional Authority Index. The presence or
50 not of a powerful regionalist party, the attitudes adopted by national parties to issues of
51 territorial identity, the rewards to be gained by emphasising one or another level of governance:
52 all of these are in part shaped by the party linkage function (Toubeau and Massetti, 2013;
53 Swenden and Manners, 2009). Party capacity attempts to capture the extent to which a region
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3 has a territorial party system and influence over national party system. It is divided into two
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5 variants, reflecting the vertical (reach) and horizontal (scope) dimensions of this phenomenon.
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7 It is subject to temporal dynamics; the conclusions are drawn on the basis of findings from
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9 fieldwork carried out in 2012-2014.
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16 *Vertical party capacity* is backed by an important, if emergent literature (for example Fabre
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18 [2008] and the concept of influence or, in the Spanish case, Villena-Oliver & Aldeguer-Cerdá
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20 [2017]). It indicates the level of involvement of regional party elites in state-wide decision-
21
22 making arenas. Promoting the regional interest through lobbying national parties or national
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24 parliamentary institutions is a classic mechanism of defending a territorial interest at the higher
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26 level. This can manifest itself in several forms. The highest score (3) is that of a strong influence
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28 of territorial parties in national party agendas. This might best be illustrated by interview
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30 evidence. In the words of one powerful PS deputy interviewed in 2013: ‘Breton deputies
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32 represent 10% of the total PS group in the National Assembly. We meet regularly with xxx,
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34 the President of the Breton region who is also Defence minister and we invite the Breton PS
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36 senators along. We have made it clear to the government that if we are not listened we will not
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38 support government bills’. A weaker measure (2) would, for example, concern the French
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40 tradition of dual mandates (*cumul des mandats*) whereby individuals combine local and
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42 national elected positions. Weak and non-existent forms of territorial influence in national
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44 party agendas are signalled by the absence of such informal mechanisms.
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53 *Horizontal party capacity* measures a rather different phenomenon, namely the concept of
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55 stratarchy. Swenden & Maddens (2009) conclude that the regional branches of state-wide
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57 parties have become more autonomous and territorially focused as a response to
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59 decentralization. In Wales, for example, the Labour Party has developed an increasingly
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3 autonomous stance, along with the other Welsh parties (Bradbury, 2009). In Wallonia, the
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5 Socialist Party exists only at the territorial level (Verleden, 2009). In Andalusia, the PSOE-A
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7 ((*Partido Socialista Obrero Español-Andalucía*, Spanish Socialist Workers Party-Andalusia),
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9 is a Socialist bastion that has been run by its own (informal) rules, while also figuring largely
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11 in the national party organisation (Barzelay, 1987). These accounts are confirmed by interview
12
13 evidence. One interviewee in Andalucía complained that after 35 years at the head of the
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15 region, the dominating party ‘seems to control most of the territorial centres of power’ in public
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17 administration and civil society’. Wales, Andalusia, Wallonia and, to a lesser degree, Brittany
18
19 all provide examples of these ‘invisible’ party dynamics. This emergent literature on stratarchy
20
21 and territorial party capacity leads us to propose the following. The highest ranking (3) goes to
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23 the strong territorial party: free to conduct its affairs without interference from the central party
24
25 and exercising single party government. The second highest ranking (2) integrates largely
26
27 converging interview-based evidence for the linkage between parties and territorial institutions
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29 (economy, associations, institutions). Weak territory specific parties (1) and the absence of a
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31 cohesive territorial party system (0) complete the measurement.
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40 Partisan variables were central to understanding territorial dynamics in all four regions. Our
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42 cases revealed many examples of such influence. In Brittany, we observed the far-reach of
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44 territorial elites into national government, especially during the fieldwork period; the PS was
45
46 also at the centre of territorial networks at the time of investigation (Cole and Pasquier, 2015).
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48 The Breton score of 5 thus combines a high measure of vertical reach (3) with a broad
49
50 horizontal scope (2). In Andalusia, the Gonzalez ‘favourite son’ effect had in the past ensured
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52 that the region’s interests were well looked after by Madrid; by 2013, actors from across the
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54 spectrum forwarded party political explanations for the weak relations between regional
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56 government and Madrid during the fieldwork period (Harguindéguy and Cole, 2017) In the
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3 case of Andalusia, the combined score of 5 reflected a continuing measure of national influence
4 in the PSOE (2), with firm party control in Andalusia (3). In the case of Wales, the Labour
5 Party has operated as a veto player for the main political and constitutional developments and
6 maintained a tight grip over power (Wyn Jones and Scully, 2012; Cole and Stafford, 2014),
7 but its vertical reach has depended on governmental and partisan congruence: this justifies a
8 combined score of 4 (3 for horizontal control, 1 for vertical reach). The case of Belgium is
9 rather different, as the nationwide parties disappeared in the 1970s and each main party family
10 (Socialists, Christian Democrats, Liberals) was reconfigured at the level of the linguistic group
11 (francophone or Flemish) (Verleden, 2009). Even in Belgium, however, parties perform a
12 central role, as intra-party bargaining is the only means of ensuring that federation-wide
13 agreements can stick. At the time of fieldwork in early 2014, the Wallon PS combined reach
14 into the Federal level government (2, the Prime Minister di Rupo being a Wallon socialist) with
15 a strong yet contested horizontal influence (2).
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38 ***Leadership Capacity***

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40 A second unseen factor is that of political leadership. Though generally national (and
41 sometimes supranational) in focus, the questions raised by leadership are equally valid at a sub-
42 national level, whether regional, or metropolitan (Borraz and John, 2004). Leadership capacity
43 signifies the extent to which a region has territorial leadership and influence in terms of national
44 political leadership. For the purposes of this exercise, it is divided into two equally weighted
45 components: *Vertical leadership capacity* refers to the degree of influence of regional political
46 leaders in national political and governmental arena. The scale proposed is: 3 – Strong
47 influence of territorial leadership in the national political agenda 2 – Some evidence of
48 influence of territorial leadership in national political agenda 1 – Weak influence of territorial
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3 leadership in national political agenda 0 –Absence of influence of territorial leadership in
4 national political agenda. *Horizontal leadership capacity* is deduced from formal institutional
5 mechanisms, as well as close observation of relationships. The scale proposed is: 3- Territorial
6 political leadership provides strong focus for territorial networks & institutions 2 –Territorial
7 political leadership and limited evidence of providing focus for territorial networks &
8 institutions 1 – Absence or informal territorial political leadership and some evidence of
9 providing focus for territorial networks & institutions 0 – Absence or informal territorial
10 political leadership and no evidence of providing focus for territorial networks & institutions.
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12 In both cases, evidence is drawn from detailed knowledge of specific contexts within the
13 individual regions.
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30 In terms of scoring, leadership that cuts across the self-rule and shared rule dimensions is of
31 particular value for enhancing *vertical leadership capacity*; in Wallonia, Brittany and
32 Andalusia, regional party leaders all performed leading national roles. In such cases, leadership
33 can act as a behavioural proxy for forms of shared rule. In the case of Brittany, the tradition of
34 territorial heavyweights in the national government, exemplified by Jean Yves Le Drian,
35 President of the Brittany region and Foreign Affairs minister in the Philippe government,
36 represented a high level of territorial penetration. A similar mechanism was observed in terms
37 of the influence of the President of Andalusia, Susana Díaz, a leading figure in the national
38 political party, the PSOE. In the case of Wallonia, Elio Di Rupo, President of the PS, was
39 Prime Minister between 2011 and 2014; and Charles Michel (former President of the Reform
40 Movement [Movement réformateur - MR) is currently Prime Minister. In Wales, the
41 emergence of a clearly identified political and partisan leadership, symbolised by the two
42 Labour First Ministers (Rhodri Morgan and Carwyn Jones) sustained the claim for enhanced
43 self-rule, but it was less pertinent in terms of formal shared rule.
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6 Horizontal leadership capacity captures the extent to which devolved institutions are at the
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8 centre for territorial institutions, networks and interests. The horizontal dimension has a hybrid
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10 quality. It refers, in a material sense, to the control of one level of government (typically
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12 regions; intermediate structures such as counties [England], Kreise [Germany] and departments
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14 [France], or city regions) over another (typically local communes). A preliminary score can
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16 be deduced from the self-rule measures of the RAI itself. At the heart of our approach lies the
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18 capacity of devolved and decentralised institutions to act as foci for interactions, as the central
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20 nexus of networks and interests.¹ Our main proxy for this measure is the linkage between
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22 territorial institutions, social and economic interests and civil society that has received
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24 sustained attention by scholars of devolution (Keating, 2013). The extent to which regions (and
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26 their political leaders) are at the centre of territorial networks and interests is a core dimension
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28 of capacity.
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38 Two faces of territorial interest intermediation emerge from our survey. In the most positive
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40 framing, devolved institutions provide a policy relevant space for civil society groups,
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42 associations and economic interests, the case of Wales in particular (Chaney & Sophocleous,
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44 2019). A rather weaker form of capacity might also be observed in the case of Brittany, where
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46 the French region has long adopted a leadership role. The cases of Andalusia and Wallonia
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48 demonstrate that the interplay between institutions and associative or private actors can also
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50 produce conflict of interests, however. The best exemplar is that of Andalusia (Robles Egea
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52 and Aceituno Montes, 2013). One interviewee complained that after 35 years at the head of the
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58 ¹ Formal network analysis uses software packages such as Ucinet, Pajek and Gephi, to connect graphically the actors of a
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60 given territory or policy (Ward et. al. 2011). Such analysis was used by John and Cole (1998), for example, to demonstrate
variation between political leadership configurations in French and English cities. Such social network analysis lies beyond
the scope of this paper, but represents a promising area of further investigation and research.

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3 region, the dominating party ‘seems to control most of the territorial centres of power’ in public
4 administration and civil society’. The PSOE-A has become directly embedded since 2010 in
5 the scandal of the ‘EREs’ (a system of funding used by the *Junta* to pay golden parachutes in
6 mass layoffs) that involved trade-unions, public companies, top-level civil servants and the two
7 former presidents of the *Junta*. Likewise, in Wallonia, the PS-led government finally collapsed
8 in August 2017 in a reaction against a funding scandal linked to inter-communal service
9 delivery. In both these cases, there is a fine dividing line between civil society mobilisation,
10 institutional capacity building and practices of party government.
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26 These results also place the regions with virtually identical scores on the leadership capacity
27 indicator. Overall, Wallonia emerges narrowly ahead of the other regions: at the *time of*
28 *fieldwork* its reach into national level government (Elio di Rupo [2010-2014], Charles Michel
29 [2014-]) was of the highest order, within the constraints of Belgium’s weak federal system.
30 Likewise, the Socialist Party had governed Wallonia for over 30 years, though its leadership
31 was increasingly contested (2). Overall, Wallonia is accorded the score of 4. Andalusia also
32 scores highly (4), justified both in terms of vertical reach (its influence within the PSOE), and
33 its centrality for territorial interactions (interests and institutions). Its failure to obtain the top
34 score might be explained by the contested nature of the PSOE governance model in Andalusia,
35 however, and the limits of its influence in national politics at the time of data collection (2013-
36 14). Brittany obtained a high score - 2 – for the level of territorial influence in national politics,
37 evidenced by interview-based accounts. In terms of horizontal leadership, the 2 score reflects
38 the centrality of the regional council in terms of territorial interactions, in spite of the absence
39 of formal hierarchical leadership over the other layers of local government. Finally, in Wales
40 the emergence of a clearly identified territorial political and partisan leadership (in the form of
41 long-serving Labour First Ministers Morgan and Jones) sustained the claim for enhanced self-
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3 rule (2), but produced a lower score in terms of shared rule (1), producing an overall score of
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8 ***Territorial Models: Comparing Regions through using Qualitative Data Analysis***

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13 Our third level of comparison is that of idiographic representation, where social reality is
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15 subjectively represented. *Territorial models* are considered in terms of legacies of the past and
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17 routines; both require drilling down into the literature (for legacies of the past); into the
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19 qualitative corpus for lexicographical regularities and consistency of idiographical
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21 representations; and into interview data for practices. Though we attribute a score to each of
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23 our regions, based on detailed case specific knowledge, the idiographic comparison mainly
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25 classifies our regions heuristically, in relation to the discourses, routines and practices
26
27 associated with their territorial models. Such analysis only scratches the surface in this paper
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29 and requires further investigation and research. The scale proposed is: 3. Strong, consensus-
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31 based territorial model (the consistency of shared practices and the coherence of idiographic
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33 representations, supported using CAQDAS [the cluster analysis in NVivo], and survey
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35 evidence about regional versus national identities, reported elsewhere (Cole et. al 2015). 2 – A
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37 relatively strong but contested territorial model (extent of divisions demonstrated in the
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39 fieldwork, as we report in section on causal mechanisms), 1 – A weak, contested territorial
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41 model, 0 – The absence of a territorial model.
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52 Uncovering full territorial narratives would require us to drill down into the content of the 102
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54 interviews, which lies beyond the limits of this article. The NVivo software programme does
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56 provide various tools for penetrating the cognitive worlds of our regional panels, however, the
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58 most visual of which is that of the word cloud. For illustrative purposes only, Figure 2 presents
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3 one word cloud – that of Andalusia – to present a visual representation of the most frequent
4 words used in the interviews. The cluster analysis feature of NVivo allows the re-grouping of
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6 core themes in the word cloud and interprets the relationships between them².
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12 --- Figure 2 around here ---
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17 The Andalusian word cloud displays a powerful focus on the region as a recognised and
18 pertinent space³ as well as a strong emphasis on party politics and party competition⁴ and a
19 strong preoccupation with the economic crisis⁵. The cluster analysis identifies the economic
20 crisis, the challenge of employment, the situation of fiscal and budgetary constraint, the
21 operation of political system in Spain and Andalusia and dynamics in education as being the
22 core clusters around which discourse is structured. ⁶ The data is consistent with traditional
23 views of Andalusia as an economically challenged region, marked by party division and a
24 distrust of Madrid (Barzelay, 1987; Coller, 2014; Gómez Fortes, 2010; Hopkin, 2011). The
25 interview evidence in parallel suggested a sharpening of the territorial model in response to
26 economic crisis and the reaffirmation of a form of Mediterranean social democracy as a defence
27 against the neo-liberalism associated with the central government in Madrid.
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45 *The Construction and Practice of Territorial Political Capacity*

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49 In this section, we propose a hybrid idiographical ranking using the mechanisms of legacies of
50 the past (significance and salience), routines and practices. Interviewees were invited to answer
51 a set of questions dealing with the ways of practicing politics in their own regions, and to judge
52 if this praxis was different from other places⁷. This line of questioning was designed as a mainly
53 inductive means of uncovering regularities, both synchronically (by comparing three distinct
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3 groups of actors within and across our four regions) and, where possible, diachronically
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5 (comparing responses to similar questions over time in particular regions).⁸ Given the word
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7 length constraints of this article, much of the reasoning below refers to output published
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9 elsewhere in the public domain (Cole, 2014, Cole and Pasquier, 2015, Harguindéguy and Cole,
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11 2017, Cole and de Visscher, 2016).

16 17 *Legacies of the past*

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21 Historical references are invaluable in indicating the degree of cohesion across accounts, with
22
23 citations from the interviews largely confirming the existing literature. The salience of the
24
25 historical legacy is more or less important depending on the corpus of each case. If each region
26
27 engages with forms of social construction and imagined community building, history ‘matters’
28
29 the most, in order, for Andalusia, Brittany, Wallonia and Wales.

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35 As observed by Linz and de Miguel (1966, 267-319) in their study of the ‘eight Spains’, until
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37 the late-19th Century Andalusia had been characterised by the lack of industrialisation. Western
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39 Andalusia relied heavily on ‘latifundism’ (an unequal division of rural lands where huge parcels
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41 belong to a small group of big landowners) while the Eastern region was based on a
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43 ‘minifundist’ structure of production (signifying a more equal division of lands). The legacy of
44
45 ‘latifundism’ features prominently within contemporary debates and forms a key link with the
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47 present, notably in the discursive register of the PSOE-A (Harguindéguy and Cole, 2017).
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49 Brittany, one of France’s most distinctive regions, also has a very strong claim for historical
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51 pertinence (Pasquier, 2004). Though the symbols of statehood of this former Duchy have long
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53 been suppressed, the region retains many distinguishing characteristics: the European
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55 continent’s only Celtic language, a vibrant cultural movement (music, dance, theatre, costume)
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3 and a tested mode of defending the Breton interest in Paris and Brussels (a model built upon
4 the failure of a more assertively nationalist movement during the inter-war period).
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10 History also matters, of course, for Wallonia and Wales, but in rather different ways. For the
11 Belgian region, embedded as part of the Francophone community, there is a history of
12 communal conflict within Belgium (with the Flemish-speaking Flanders region), giving rise to
13 a more affirmed regional presence from 1993, when Belgium became a Federal State. But there
14 is also a dual division of the francophone space: along policy lines, between partisans of the
15 Wallon and Brussels regions and defenders of the Francophone language community; and in
16 terms of identity markers (where anti-clerical and social class cleavages persist to a lesser extent
17 alongside the centre-periphery one). In the case of Wales, our survey provoked few responses
18 in terms of the political culture question or references to history. Our interviews did reveal
19 forms of othering or 'constructed divergence' in relation to England, whereby the originality of
20 the Welsh project of small country governance and its narrative of social democracy were
21 enhanced by the comparison with 'neo-liberal' England. Many interviewees in Wales and
22 Wallonia converged in defining their own project in terms of rejecting a more powerful
23 neighbour, England or Flanders.
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45 *In the Present: Routines and Repertoires*

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49 The concept of the collective action repertoire was developed by Charles Tilly to uncover
50 historical regularities, practices and routines in forms of social protest (Tilly, 1984). What
51 practices and routines might be identified in our four regions, using the interviews as a primary
52 empirical source?
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3 Though we identified some dissonance, due to the impact of the economic crisis, the Breton
4 territorial model appeared as robust and influential. Our survey in Brittany in 2013 (and that
5 year's social movement) confirmed key features of the territorial action repertoire, most
6 specifically the efficacy of direct relationships with Paris, the instrumental use of identity, the
7 spectre of disorder, the mobilisation of past symbols of Brittany's specificity, the united front
8 of (some) Breton employers and employees in defence of their collective territorial goods. In
9
10 Andalusia, the territorial model has been characterised by the provision of a generous regional
11 welfare state, a strong politicisation, best exemplified by the hegemony of the Socialist Party
12 along with the presence of an extended party clientelist network, a moderate level of
13 nationalism and, last but not least, by a strong involvement of the European Union in terms of
14 regional policy funds (Gómez-Fortes 2010; Coller 2014). If actors diagnosed the persistence of
15 certain routines, these reinforced core features of the territorial model, such as low trust
16 relations and the influence of clientelistic party politics.
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38 In Wales, "routine" did not figure at all as a reference and references to "history" were minimal.
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40 There was, certainly, a recent experience of division in relation to the regional devolution
41 project: introduced by the Labour government in 1999, devolution was steadfastly opposed by
42 the Conservative Party at the UK level. Almost two decades later, all the main UK parties
43 accepted the principle of devolution and the Welsh branches of these parties had moved
44 considerably closer. The case of Wales is thus one of lessening divisions associated with two
45 decades of practice of the devolution model. In Wallonia, finally, narratives of accommodation
46 and practices of compromise were broadly diffused, but partisan politics continued to divide in
47 narrower terms of office and clientelism. One interviewee in Wallonia observed: 'If there is a
48 Wallon style, it is the rather caricatural one of the Wallon Socialist (the PS has been in power
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3 for 35 years), living the good life, pulling the strings and manoeuvring in his own interest'. The
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5 contrast with Flanders was made often in interviews, in reference to a well-organised region
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7 with a clear project, to the detriment of the Wallons, lacking an overall vision. Routines were
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9 mainly interpreted in terms of strategies for coping with state disintegration at the federal level.
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17 Though we attribute a score to each of our regions, based on detailed case specific knowledge,
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19 the idiographic comparison mainly classifies our regions heuristically, in relation to the
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21 discourses, routines and practices associated with their territorial models. The idiographic
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23 comparison classes our regions in terms of their greater or lesser cohesion around a territorial
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25 narrative and the identification of clear routines and practices associated with it. Each region
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27 demonstrated a form of resilience, using the economic and political crisis to reaffirm, or
28
29 redefine the underlying territorial model. The closest approximation to an overarching territorial
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31 model is that provided by the French region of Brittany, to which we attribute the score of 3. In
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33 terms of past and present routines, Breton actors described an endogenous model that has
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35 always sought to build regional consensus, promote collaboration and defend the regional
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37 interest in Paris and Brussels (Cole and Pasquier, 2015). They identify core challenges of
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39 economic modernisation and transition away from an over-dependence on agriculture. Brittany
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41 is followed by Wales, which we also score 3: we observed an elite-level consensus in favour of
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43 the new devolved institutions that cut across natural party divisions (Cole & Stafford, 2014).
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45 In the two other regions, both scored 2, there was much less consensus in relation to past
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47 routines or the current state of territorial relationships. In Andalusia a picture emerged of sharp
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49 partisan competition and contested party control (Harguindeguy and Cole, 2017). In Wallonia,
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51 we also observed a deeply contested mode of territorial governance based on party clientelism,
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53 (even within the ruling PS), and limited linkage on the shared rule axis (Cole and de Visscher,
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3 2016). Such analysis only scratches the surface in this paper and requires further investigation
4 and research. Integrating qualitative data is challenging. It points to inherent limits to the
5 exercise of ranking and rating, which is nonetheless considered to be important in the final
6 section.
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10 11 12 13 14 **Comparing Regions Through Ranking**

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19 Comparing regions revives the traditional division formulated by Windelband and Oakes (1980,
20 165-168) between nomothetic explanations (based on experiments aiming to demonstrate an
21 objective relationship of causality between two phenomena) and idiographic descriptions
22 (focusing on the subjective understanding of social actors *vis-à-vis* a given phenomenon). All
23 indexes involve some form of ranking of regions. Sellers and Lidström (2007, p. 615) justify
24 the LAI as an attempt to give a ‘quantitative translation of qualitative variables’. Such an
25 ambition bears some similarities with our own comparative case study approach, which
26 assumes that a deep knowledge of contexts is the preliminary for ranking. In order to compare
27 like with like: the RAI self-rule and shared-rule clusters of measures are retained. New rankings
28 are introduced for unseen forces: party capacity, leadership capacity and territorial models.
29 While economic profile and territorial identities are acknowledged as potentially important
30 dimensions of territorial political capacity, they are dealt with here as part of the comparative
31 case justification, rather than as formal indicators. The revised framework thus attempts to
32 acknowledge the centrality of the RAI in any exercise of comparing regions, but also to situate
33 institutions in terms of actor constellations and interactions, to take account of contexts and
34 routines and to capture informal data.
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8 In Figure 3, we present the outcome of territorial political capacity as an index based on scores
9 and treated as if were in a large n. design. The ranking in Figure 3 confirms the implicit ordering
10 of the RAI, with Andalusia closely followed by Wallonia, then Wales and somewhat further
11 behind Brittany. The primary cause of these distinctions remains the measures identified
12 within the RAI. Indeed, given the rationale used for the selection of the four regions, it is
13 unsurprising that all four regions end up with relatively similar scores when the three additional
14 variables are combined. However, this hides important subtleties across the regions: for
15 example, Brittany paradoxically has relatively weak formal territorial political leadership, but
16 has demonstrated strong influence on the national political agenda.
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33 **Conclusion**

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36 The article contributes to mixed method dialogues. It is best read at different levels: as a
37 contribution to the comparative case study method; as a fine-grained analysis from four
38 European regions with family resemblances and as a refinement to the conceptualization of
39 comparative territorial capacity, in a manner distinct from, but largely consistent with the
40 Regional Authority Index. It does not claim – like the RAI or LAI- to produce a generalizable
41 conceptual framework that can account for regularities across systemic differences. The limited
42 number of cases does not provide the continuous data required for statistical inference. The
43 rationale for not including informal factors in the RAI was the need for clear validity, reliability
44 and transparency. If the RAI and LAI provide parsimonious instruments combining comparison
45 and causality for a large number of cases, TPC adds value in the context of a small n. research
46 design, which seeks to take better account of qualitative insights, to elucidate unseen forces at
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3 work and to test for the internal consistency of idiographic representations and draw cross-case
4 comparisons. The proposed framework is complementary to the RAI, rather than in
5 competition with it. The RAI encourages breadth and generalisation; TPC prioritises
6 conceptual and comparative depth. Building on the advances of the RAI, our framework favours
7 comparative case study analysis that values conceptualisation based on ‘thick description’,
8 without falling into the trap of ethnographic exceptionalism. It encourages researchers to
9 embrace methodological pluralism as the most convincing way of enhancing our knowledge of
10 comparative regional capacity. While the RAI and TPC can be fruitfully combined, both
11 approaches would benefit from further research into: weighting, linkage and family
12 resemblance and the dynamic linkage between variables.
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28 29 30 **Notes** 31 32 33 34 35

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37 ¹Leverhulme Trust International Network grant (IN-2012-109) on 'Territorial Governance between
38
39 *Convergence and Capacity, 2012-2015*'.

40
41 ² The NVivo cluster analysis feature identifies clusters of similar words. We selected 5 clusters for the case of
42
43 *Andalusia*. This NVivo feature uses Pearson significance tests to identify the correlations between specific
44
45 words in a cluster. In the word map, the most cited words are graphically enlarged.

46
47 ³ 'Andalucía', 'andaluz' and 'andaluces' are translated into English as *Andalusia*, *Andalusian* and *Andalusians*.
48
49 'Autonomas' and 'comunidades' are translated into English as *autonomous* and *community*, and 'junta' as the
50
51 regional government. The 'diputacion'/'dipucaciones' are the provincial government(s), while 'ayuntamiento'
52
53 and 'ayuntamientos' are translated as *local authority/authorities*. 'Sevilla' is translated as *Seville*, 'competencia'
54
55 as *competencies*.

56
57 ⁴ 'Partido' and 'partidos' are respectively translated as *party* and *parties*. The PP and the PSOE are not
58
59 captured by this word cloud, as it excludes words with fewer than 5 letters. For the record, the PP (Popular
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4 Party) was cited in every interview, with 130 references; the PSOE was cited in 23 out of 25 interviews, with
5
6 123 references.

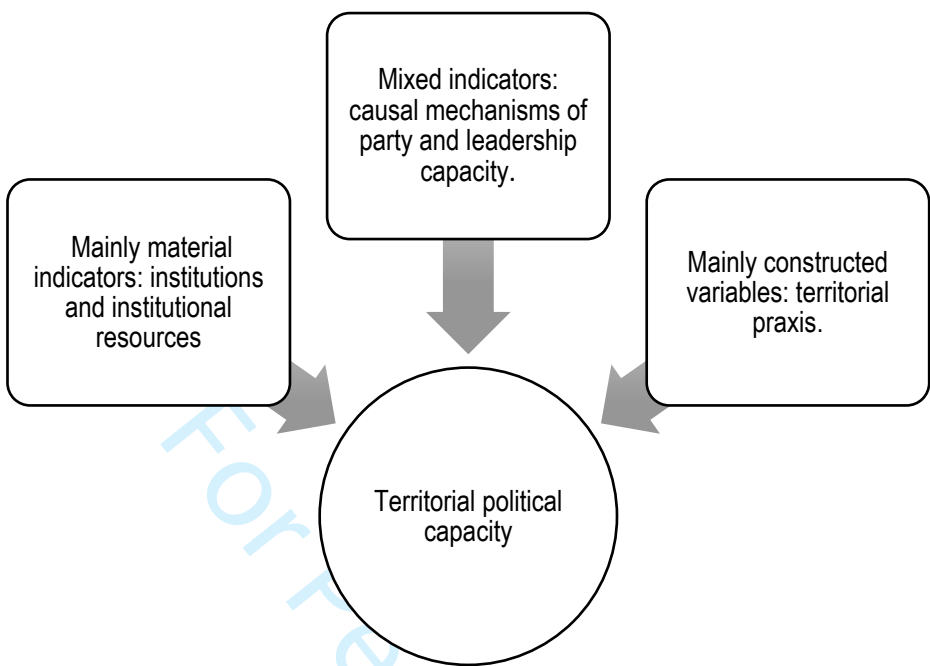
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8 ⁵ ‘economia’ and ‘economica’ are translated as economy and economics; ‘empleo’ as employment and
9
10 ‘trabajo’ as work. ‘deficit’ and ‘recortes’ are translated as deficit and cuts. ‘fondos’, ‘medidas’,
11
12 ‘financiacion’ and ‘recursos’ are translated as funds, measures, finance and resources.

13
14 ⁶ Though there is no formal hierarchy in the clusters, word frequency demonstrates the saliency of specific
15
16 themes.

17
18 ⁷ The precise questions asked were: 1. ‘What are the main traits of the Welsh/Breton/Andalusian/ Wallon policy
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20 style?’ (designed to capture routines and practices from the past) 2. ‘ How best would you characterise current
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22 relationships between the main actors within your region?’ (designed to provide perspectives on intra-regional
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24 relationships).

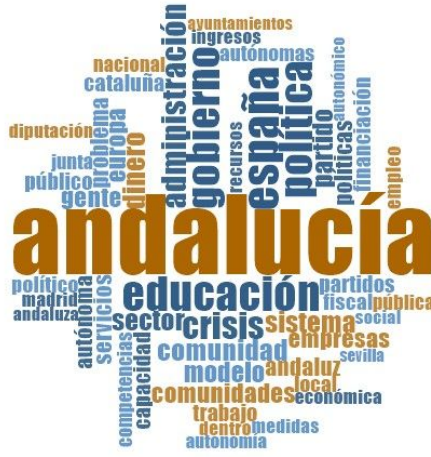
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26 ⁸ In the case of two regions - Brittany and Wales – longitudinal comparison was possible, as these questions had
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28 been asked in previous surveys by the PI. Results are presented in Cole and Stafford (2014) and Cole and Pasquier
29
30 (2015).

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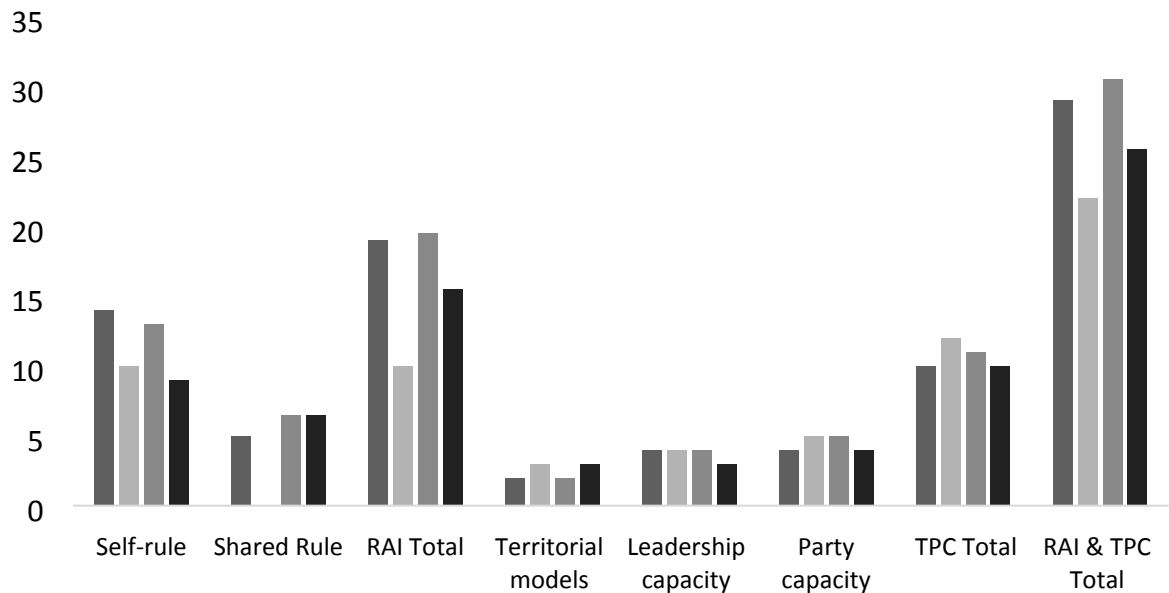
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Figure 3: Four Regions measured by the Regional Authority Index & Territorial Political Capacity Index



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Table 1. The Territorial Political Capacity Framework

Indicator	What's being tested
<i>RAI self-rule axis (Hooghe et al., 2016)</i>	Institutional depth (0-3)- Policy scope (0-4)- Fiscal autonomy (0-4) -Borrowing autonomy (0-2) -Representation: Assembly & Executive (0-4)
<i>RAI shared rule axis (Hooghe et al., 2016)</i>	Law making (0-2) - Executive control (0-2)- Fiscal control (0-2)- Borrowing control (0-2)- Constitutional reform (0-3)
<i>Party capacity - The extent to which a region has a territorial party system and influence over national party system</i> (1) <i>Horizontal cohesion</i>	3- Strong autonomous territorial party at the centre of single- or dominant party government 2 - Strong territorial parties in contested party systems 1 - Weak territory specific parties 0 - Absence of cohesive party system
(2) <i>Vertical linkage</i>	3 – Strong influence of territorial parties in national party agendas 2 – Some evidence of influence of territorial parties in national party agendas 1 – Weak influence of territorial parties in national party agendas 0 –Absence of influence of territorial parties in national party agendas
<i>Political Leadership – The extent to which a region has territorial leadership and influence in terms of national political leadership</i> (1) <i>Horizontal cohesion</i>	3- Formal territorial political leadership provides strong focus for territorial networks & institutions 2 – Formal territorial political leadership and limited evidence of providing focus for territorial networks & institutions 1 – Absence or informal territorial political leadership and some evidence of providing focus for territorial networks & institutions 0 – Absence or informal territorial political leadership and no evidence of providing focus for territorial networks & institutions
(2) <i>Vertical linkage</i>	3 – Strong influence of territorial leadership in national political agenda 2 – Some evidence of influence of territorial leadership in national political agenda 1 – Weak influence of territorial leadership in national political agenda 0 –Absence of influence of territorial leadership in national political agenda
<i>Territorial models – The extent to which a region has developed a clear territorial model, potentially predicated on collective action repertoire or common defined history</i>	3 – Strong, consensus-based territorial model 2 – Relatively strong but contested territorial model 1 – Weak, contested territorial model 0 – Absence of territorial model

Source: author's elaboration

Table 2 Comparing Four European Regions

	Andalusia	Brittany	Wales	Wallonia
Population (2012-13)	8,437,000	3 237 100	3,074,067	3 563 060
Economic status	Traditional agricultural region deeply affected by the onset of economic crisis, with a very high level of unemployment and strong public sector dependency	Traditionally a poor agricultural region, Brittany had risen to the 7 th most prosperous French region in 2000, but its position was declining by the time of fieldwork.	Traditionally a poor heavy industrial region. Wales has suffered from the closure of the coal mines and reduction of steel capacity. Strong public sector dependency	Traditionally Belgium's heavy industry region. Wallonia has suffered from closures in the steel and car industries. Strong public sector dependency
Regional GDP (Eurostat: 2011 figures, to correspond to the phase of project elaboration) EU28 = 100.	Spain: 96 Andalusia: 73	France: 109 Brittany: 89	UK: 105 Wales: West Wales and The Valleys 64 East Wales: 91	Belgium: 120 Brabant Wallon: 119 Hainaut: 79 Liège:90 Luxembourg (BE):81 Namur:86
European axis	Pro-European, recipient of EU structural and CAP funds. Member of the Euro-zone	Pro-European region. Some EU funds, especially CAP Member of the Euro-zone	Massive investment through EU structural funds since 2000. Not in the Euro-zone	Pro-European, recipient of some EU funds. Member of the Euro-zone
Party control (fieldwork)	PSOE-A	PS	Labour	PS
Regime-type	Spain: hybrid state with some federal characteristics	France: decentralised unitary state	United Kingdom: unitary state modified by forms of devolution	Belgium: Loose federal state
Elected Assembly	Yes	Yes, limited powers	Yes	Yes

Source: Population figures are from the following official websites: Andalusia, 2012 Instituto Nacional de la Estadística (2014), "Población de Andalucía", *Cifras oficiales de población resultantes de la revisión del Padrón municipal a 1 de enero*, URL: <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=2915> (last accessed on 11 October 2018).; Brittany, 2012: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1285203> (last accessed 7 October 2018); Wales, 2012 <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National/2012-Based/PopulationProjections-by-Year-Gender> (last accessed 2018); Wallonia, 2013 https://www.iweps.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/iweps_chiffres_cles_2013deg.pdf (last accessed 7 October 2018). Regional GDP figures are from Eurostat. They represent purchasing power standards (PPS) per inhabitant as a percentage of the EU28 average and are calculated on the basis of national averages and NUTS 2 regions <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tgs00006&plugin=1> (last accessed 07 October 2018).