



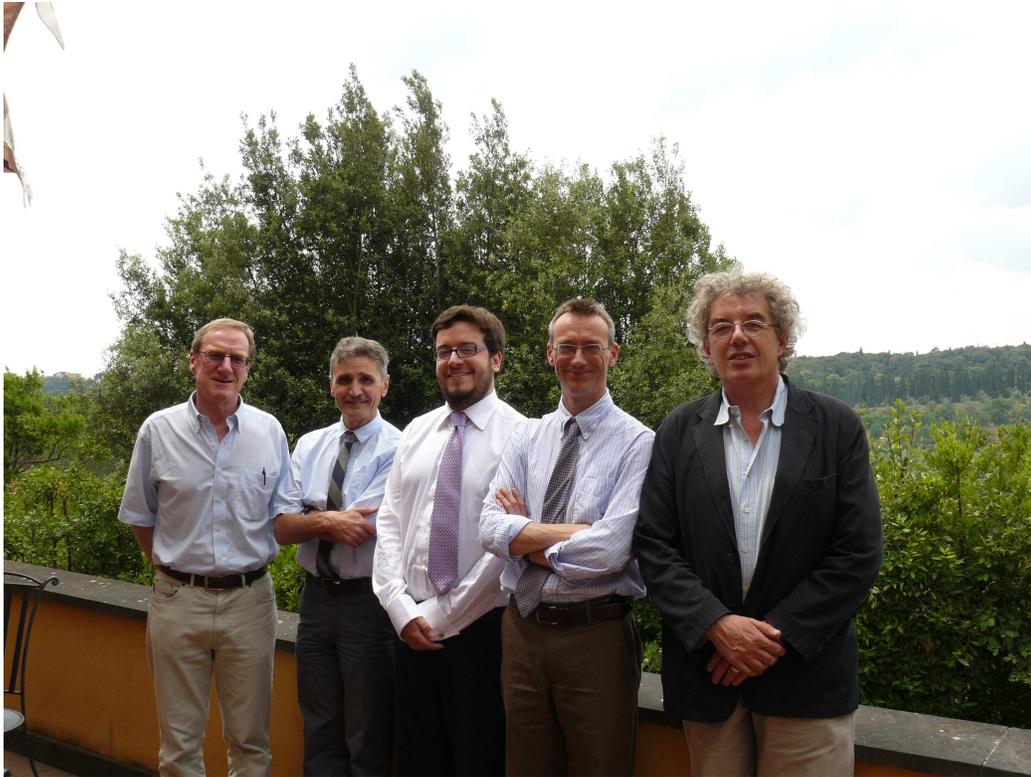
# Multi-level Party Politics in Italy and Spain

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## Abstract

This thesis undertakes an empirical exploration of multi-level party politics in Italy and Spain since the 1990s, with a particular focus on the regional level of party organisation and electoral competition. It finds that statewide parties have adopted different territorial strategies to confront the common challenge of multi-level coordination in a decentralised political system. Regional branches of statewide parties increasingly respond to the competitive pressures emerging from sub-national party systems, rather than the preferences of the national leadership, although the interests of national and regional elites may often coincide. Regional party systems in both countries are diverging in their structures of competition, not only from the national level but also from each other. This is closely related to the different types of electoral challenge posed by the main non-statewide parties in these regions. The methodological design consists of two national frameworks and four regional case studies, two in Italy (Campania, Lombardia) and two in Spain (Andalusia, Galicia). These are linked through the use of comparable empirical indicators over a similar timeframe. The national frameworks required the compilation of a new data-set on regional elections in Italy and Spain, a detailed analysis of party statutes and their evolution, and a full exploration of the secondary literature in different languages. The regional case studies required extensive archival analysis of the main national newspapers and their regional editions, reinforced by a series of in-depth interviews with political actors in all four regions. The case studies found strong empirical evidence concerning the distinctive character of presidentialism at regional level; the continued importance of clientelism in shaping political relations at sub-national levels; the pursuit of autonomist strategies by regional branches of statewide parties; the variety of competitive strategies adopted by non-statewide parties; the role of regional arenas as battlegrounds for national factional disputes; and the importance of local coalition testing for subsequent coalitional choices at regional level. The comparative conclusions serve to consolidate these findings, as well as to reflect on further avenues for research in this rapidly developing field.



**Alex Wilson** graduated in Modern History from the University of Oxford (2002), studied for a Master's (M.A.) in European Political Studies at the College of Europe in Bruges (2003), worked for the European Commission (2003) and the House of Lords EU Select Committee (2004), then began his doctoral studies at the EUI in September 2004. Alex's research interests include party politics, territorial politics, the political dynamics of federalism and regionalism, institutional change, and the study of European political elites. He is an expert on Italian and Spanish politics, and has published several articles in international journals (*West European Politics, Regional and Federal Studies*). He is actively involved in the ECPR Standing Group on Federalism and Regionalism, and also organized two ECPR Summer Schools on Political Parties, held at the EUI in 2007 and 2008. Alex is currently working on three international research projects at the EUI. The first project compares institutional change in advanced European democracies, and is part of the broader SIEPOL project coordinated by Adrienne Heritier and Peter Mair. The second project analyses different aspects of devolution and policy-making in the UK and Italy, and is coordinated by Michael Keating. The third project involves the construction of a research database on political parties, and is coordinated by Luciano Bardi and Peter Mair. It will be known as the Observatory on Political Parties and Representation (OPPR), and forms part of the EU Democracy Observatory (EUDO), based in the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. Alex is also Lecturer in EU Politics at the James Madison University, where he designs and teaches several MA courses on EU politics and policy-making. In 2009 he also taught an undergraduate course on "Modern Democracies" at the Gonzaga University in Florence.