



Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

D7.4 Work Package 7 – Summary Report

Version 1.2

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
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| AU | Aberystwyth University |
| WP | Work Package |



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Summary

This report summarises the key empirical findings emerging from Work Package 7 and reflects on their implications for conceptualisations of spatial justice. The key findings can be summarized as follows:

- Regionalist actors' claims for territorial empowerment are predominantly framed in terms of i) addressing political and socio-economic inequalities and injustice, and ii) creating a different (and better) future for 'their' region.
- Such territorial claims and framing strategies are influenced primarily by the political contexts in which regionalists mobilise, and especially by the need to build popular support for territorial change and fend off competition from other political actors on territorial issues.
- There is no 'winning formula' in terms of the impact of regionalists' framing strategies on their political and/or electoral relevance; the different constellation of political factors in different contexts leads to different electoral/political outcomes in different places.
- These empirical findings suggest that any conceptualization of spatial justice must i) take into account more than simply economic indicators, and ii) go beyond a consideration of the distribution of goods to also account for the decision-making structures that accompany such patterns of distribution (and specifically the degree to which such structures afford their territory adequate influence).



Locating D7.4 within broader IMAJINE research

Work Package 1 provided the conceptual context for the work undertaken by Work Package 7. In particular, Work Package 7 has sought to respond to the need identified there to better understand experienced and subjective realities of territorial inequalities and spatial justice in Europe (Weckroth et al., 2018a: 31). As detailed in Deliverable 7.2, our work also drew directly on this early conceptual work to develop the coding schemes used to categorise regionalist actors' justifications of their territorial demands. The empirical findings of the subsequent analysis flagged up the multi-dimensional perspectives on spatial relations articulated by regionalist actors, and the ways in which these perspectives serve to map out visions of different (and better) regional futures that can be achieved through territorial empowerment.

In this way, Work Package 7, along with **Work Packages 5 and 6**, has contributed to IMAJINE's overall aim of evidencing the differentiated ways in which different actors and organisations perceive and understand territorial inequalities and injustice. As noted above, our findings – as do those of the other work packages - highlight the multi-dimensional nature of such inequalities and stress the agency of actors in selectively choosing different dimensions of such inequalities to frame their political projects. Furthermore, and along with Work Package 6, the work undertaken by Work Package 7 has focused on the different solutions proposed to address such inequalities; whilst Work Package 6 approaches this from the perspective of policy-makers, the insights here focus on regionalist actors' efforts to frame territorial empowerment as a means to creating a different and better future for 'their' territory. Our findings, as do those of WP6, underline the highly contextual nature of such solutions, as different actors act according to their own beliefs and the specific (and often multi-level) political and institutional arenas in which they operate. In this respect, our findings complement the objective indicators of territorial inequalities provided by and analysed in **Work Packages 2 and 3**: they point to the subjective ways in which regionalist actors select the dimensions of inequality and injustice to make salient in their political discourses, and evidence the different spatial scales that matter for regionalist actors focused first and foremost on region-state, rather than intra-regional, power relations. These insights fed into the design of the survey questions for Work Package 4, and the different policy scenarios prepared for WP8 for use with policy-makers and political actors.

In this final deliverable for Work Package 7, after summarizing the key empirical findings, we also reflect further on whether they can add to arguments emanating from **Work Package 1** regarding the potential limitations of approaches to territorial inequality and spatial justice that focus primarily on economic

indicators (Weckroth et al., 2018a). In doing so, we argue that any effort to develop more equal and just social arrangements across Europe must start from a perspective that takes account of more than simply economic indicators, such as the distribution of wealth, income, and other material resources. However, there is also arguably a need to reconsider and potentially expand on certain aspects of the conceptual arguments advanced as part of Work Package 1, by going beyond an understanding of spatial justice that simply compares the distribution of different social goods (whether understood as material resources or nonmaterial goods such as capabilities or real freedom). From the perspective of regionalist actors, it is not simply the distribution of such goods – be that in the form of income, capital, access to services, quality of infrastructure, clean environment or human rights (Weckroth and Moisiso 2020: 190-1) – that matters, but rather the decision-making structures that accompany such patterns of distribution, and specifically the degree to which such structures afford their territory adequate influence. In sum, for certain European actors the challenge of addressing inequality and injustice is one that not only raises questions of ‘what’ – i.e. *what* should be fairly distributed and hence should be used as our metric for assessing the merits of different social arrangements. For these actors it is also essential to address the additional questions of ‘who’ and ‘how’ – i.e. *who* should be able to influence decisions regarding the distribution of vital goods and *how* should those decisions be taken.



1. Introduction

This report reviews the work undertaken for Work Package 7 and brings together the empirical findings from Deliverables 7.2 (Elias et al., 2020) and 7.3 (Franco-Guillén and Elias, 2021) in order to consider i) the extent to which, and under what conditions, regionalist actors attempt to provide alternative solutions to achieving territorial, economic and social cohesion; and ii) to what extent the framing strategies of autonomy movements impact upon their political/electoral relevance. From a comparative analysis of regionalist political parties and civil society actors in the twelve European regions examined by this work package, four key findings emerge:

- Firstly, regionalist actors' perceptions of territorial inequalities have predominantly focused on political and socio-economic realities, with much less attention paid to cultural and environmental considerations.

- Secondly, perceptions of political, economic and (to a much lesser extent) cultural inequalities and injustice have translated into a range of different demands for territorial empowerment; the nature and scope of territorial change claimed also varies across cases and actors, as well as over time. Regionalist actors thus propose a range of solutions for tackling territorial inequalities and injustice, but what they have in common is a core commitment to empowering the region vs. the rest of the state.

- Thirdly, such perceptions and territorial claims are less influenced by the structural characteristics of the regions themselves, but rather respond to the political contexts in which regionalists mobilise and seek to advance their territorial projects. Political considerations – including the need to build popular support for territorial change and fend off competition from other regionalist and non-regionalist political actors on territorial issues – thus shape what kinds of territorial claims these actors make, and the kinds of arguments they use to justify them.

- Fourthly, this highly contextual nature of regionalists' territorial discourses makes it difficult to determine the impact of different framing strategies on regionalists' electoral and political relevance; from this qualitative analysis, there is thus no clear 'winning formula', with the different constellation of factors in different cases leading to different electoral/political outcomes in different places. Instead, regionalists adjust their framing strategies to different contexts, reflecting the different pressures that come to bear on them in different places and at different times.

Additionally, we reflect on these findings in view of the IMAJINE project's broader attempts at conceptualizing spatial (in)equalities and (in)justice, and in this regard we advance two key arguments:

- Firstly, from the perspective of the regionalist actors studied here, it seems that any effort to develop more equal and just social arrangements across Europe must start with a conceptualisation that takes account of more than simply economic indicators, such as the distribution of wealth, income, and other material resources.

- Secondly, the critique of existing social and political arrangements advanced by regionalist actors cannot be fully captured by a perspective that simply compares the distribution of different social goods across different territories, regardless of whether we adopt a traditional focus on material resources or a broader focus on nonmaterial goods such as opportunities or capabilities. It is not simply the distribution of such goods – be that in the form of income, capital, access to services, quality of infrastructure, clean environment or human rights (Weckroth and Moisiso, 2020: 190-1) – that concerns these movements, but rather the decision-making structures that accompany these patterns of distribution, and specifically the degree to which such structures afford their territory adequate influence.

2. Overview of Work Package 7

Work package 7 has focused on regionalist mobilization in 12 European regions, with the aim of understanding: i) how regionalist political parties and civil society actors have perceived territorial disparities and inequalities; ii) whether or not demands for territorial empowerment are justifiable on the grounds of socio-economic (in)justice; and iii) the extent to which regionalist movements propose their own solutions for achieving a different (and better) regional future. In order to meet this aim, Deliverable 7.1 (Elias *et al.*, 2018) defined and identified the regions and regionalist actors included in the study, and located the study in a broader territorial politics literature which has paid relatively less attention to the ways in which regionalist actors have justified their demands for territorial empowerment. Deliverable 7.2 (Elias *et al.*, 2020) developed the methodological approach adopted to explore these issues, namely the qualitative content analysis of political documents using an original coding scheme in order to identify the range of territorial demands that regionalist actors make and the different ways in which such demands are justified (or framed). The analysis included 61 regionalist parties and civil society, and a total of a total of 581 documents were selected for analysis (see Elias *et al.*, in press, for an overview). Deliverable 7.2 reported on the key findings of this analysis, for the period 1990-2018. Building on this analysis, Deliverable 7.3 drew on interviews with regionalist political parties and civil society organisations, as well as analysis of primary and secondary sources, to explore i) what

factors shape regionalists' justifications (or framing) of their territorial demands, and ii) the electoral and political consequences of regionalists' framing strategies.

A key overarching conclusion we draw from this work (and one that we return to in the more conceptual discussion in the next section) is the value in examining subjective experiences and understandings of territorial inequalities and spatial injustice. Doing so exemplifies the ways in which plural understandings of justice, well-being and quality of life develop and manifest themselves differently in various spatial contexts, which in turn respond to highly contextual incentives and constraints. Any effort to understand spatial justice thus needs to be sensitive to, and anchored in, the experiences of specific actors in specific places. This creates an inevitable tension in trying to make sense of the rich data generated by the WP7 methodology, between identifying general trends across actors and cases, and recognising the highly variable ways in which regionalist actors perceive territorial disparities and inequalities.

Two key findings emerged from a comparative analysis of the data as provided in Deliverable 7.2. Firstly, regionalist actors' perceptions of territorial inequalities have predominantly focused on political and socio-economic realities, with much less attention paid to cultural and environmental considerations. In most places, it is thus perceptions of political unfairness and socio-economic injustice that have underpinned regionalist actors' demands for the empowerment of 'their' territory, in order to create a fairer, more just set of political and socio-economic territorial relationships. This is a striking finding given that cultural claims often featured prominently in past waves of regionalist mobilization in many places (e.g. Catalonia, Wales and Corsica) and that several regionalist parties have been portrayed by scholars as 'eco-nationalist' (e.g. Plaid Cymru in Wales, the Bloque Nacionalista Galega in Galicia, and various regionalist parties in Sardinia) (Elias et al., 2020: 21-2, 28). There are two notable exceptions to this general finding: in Kashubia and Szeklerland, cultural arguments (focused on the need to protect and advance the territorial community's linguistic and historical distinctiveness) continue to be salient, and reflect the fact that (unlike in most other cases) these aspects continue to be highly contested dimensions of mobilisation.

Secondly, perceptions of territorial inequalities and injustice have translated into a range of very different demands for territorial empowerment; the nature and scope of territorial change claimed also varies across cases and actors, as well as over time. Particularly striking is the trend whereby regionalist actors have shifted from pursuing 'moderate' strategies of territorial empowerment during the 2000s (e.g. demands for more autonomy or self-government), to more 'radical' strategies in the last decade (including independence). For example, demands for independence constituted 18% of all territorial demands made in the 2000s, increasing to 38% in the 2010s (Elias, 2020: 39-40). Even in cases – such

as Friesland, Kashubia, Szekerland and South Tyrol - where calls for independence have always been absent, the same general trend towards radicalisation is evident (e.g. with calls for more self-rule being replaced by calls for more far-reaching constitutional change such as federalization or the re-drawing of existing regional administrative boundaries to better reflect the spatial distribution of the regional group). In this respect, our data evidences the growing pressure on the stability and integrity of many of Europe's plurinational states in recent years. However, we also find that regionalists (and regionalist parties in particular) are often highly pragmatic and pursue long- and short-term territorial goals simultaneously in order to change (and improve) their territorial reality. The Sardinian Partito Sardo D'Azione (PSdAz) exemplifies such pragmatism, with the party pursuing the goal of 'independentist federalism' alongside a project of 'pragmatic autonomism' focused on enhancing Sardinian self-rule and increasing the policy intervention of (primarily) the Italian central government in specific areas of importance to the island (Elias et al., 2020: 42). What nevertheless unites regionalists is the belief that 'their' territory is the appropriate scale for addressing territorial inequalities and achieving a fairer, more just future for their citizens.

As we note in Deliverable 7.2, these findings indicate that regionalists' understandings of territorial relationships are thus broader than the socio-economic concerns invoked in policy and practitioner conceptualisations as identified in Deliverables 1.2 (Weckroth and Moisiso, 2018b) and 1.4 (Weckroth *et al.*, 2018c). They also, however, reveal a clearer consensus than is found in this work on the most appropriate level for addressing territorial inequalities, unfairness and injustice: regionalist start from, and seek to redress, inequalities and injustices between 'their' region and the state. Whilst other IMAJINE work packages have evidenced the presence of intra-regional socio-economic inequalities, we do not find evidence that these are mobilized to make the regionalist case for territorial empowerment.

A key argument advanced in Deliverable 7.3 (Franco-Guillén and Elias, 2021) is that this regional context is also crucial for understanding the drivers of regionalists' demands for territorial empowerment. In this analysis, we consider a large array of different structural, political and intra-actor factors that might be expected to come to bear on how regionalists choose to justify their territorial claims. In contrast to much of the scholarly literature on regionalist mobilization, we find little evidence that it is the structural characteristics of the regions themselves (i.e. whether there is a minority language, or whether a region is relatively richer or poorer than the rest of the state) that matter in this respect. Whilst such structural characteristics clearly provide the broad context for regionalists' territorial projects, other factors are much more important in shaping the specific type of arguments deployed to make the case for territorial empowerment.



Crucial here is the agency of regionalist actors: regionalist actors perceive the cultural and socio-economic differences between centres and peripheries in a range of ways, redefining and reframing them differently in different places, and select which aspects to draw on in arguments for territorial empowerment. Especially influential are the political contexts in which regionalist actors operate, even though political incentives and constraints are also complex, inter-linked and shift over time as political contexts themselves change. There are various factors that come into play here, including the territorial structure of the state (which provides a common focus for regionalists' political grievances), electoral and party-competition dynamics (as regionalists compete to win votes and make themselves distinctive from other political actors), and the need to respond to public opinion (as it relates to constitutional preferences, but also non-territorial issues like the financial crisis and migration). The strategic responses of regionalist actors to these competing political pressures are also shaped by ideology, and especially left-right values: ideological values define the broad repertoire of frames that regionalists draw on to make the case for territorial empowerment.

In sum, these findings lead us to conclude that regionalist actors have understood and perceived territorial inequalities and injustices in different ways in different places, and these have encompassed encompass socio-economic but also political (and to a much lesser extent) cultural dimensions. Such variability reflects the highly contextual nature of regionalist mobilization, where different actors choose to emphasize different kinds of arguments for territorial change in response to specific dynamics at work in the (multi-level) political arenas in which they operate.

This makes it difficult to determine the impact of different framing strategies on regionalists' electoral and political relevance: strategies that have been electorally and politically successful in some places have been less effective elsewhere. For example, in some cases (such as Galicia and Wales) using different framing strategies enabled regionalist parties to broaden their electoral appeal during the 1990s; in contrast, in other cases (such as Bavaria) shifts in frame use have had little electoral impact over time (Elias et al., 2021: 16). Likewise, the link between frame use and being in government also varies from case to case. In Catalonia, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya's increased use of arguments about social justice and welfare reform to justify its calls for greater self-rule during the late 1990s was a key factor in enabling it to enter regional coalition government with other state-wide left-wing parties in 2003. In contrast, in the Scottish National Party's (SNP) case, it was only *after* entering regional government that such frames became increasingly used, whilst in other cases entering regional government had no discernible impact on parties' framing strategies (Elias et al., 2021: 16-17). These examples point to the difficulty of establishing, from these qualitative findings, a clear 'winning formula' whereby regionalist actors can adjust their justifications of territorial empowerment in order to achieve

electoral/political impact. Instead, our findings point to a different constellation of factors in different cases leading to different electoral/political outcomes. Assessments of the factors explaining regionalist actors' framing strategies and their electoral and political consequences thus need to be situated in space and time and grounded in the socio-economic, cultural and (especially) political contexts in which such decisions are made. It is only from this perspective that the nature and consequences of regionalist actors' perceptions of spatial inequalities can be fully understood.

3. Implications for conceptualising spatial justice

The preceding sections have offered an overview of the main empirical findings to arise from the work package's analysis of the nature of regionalist actors' demands for territorial empowerment, and the perceptions of inequality, unfairness and injustice underpinning those claims. In this section, we turn to reflect on what insights these findings can offer with regard to the broader concerns of the IMAJINE project. We focus in particular on how some of the empirical evidence gathered through our study of contemporary European regionalist actors can inform and add to earlier efforts to interrogate, unpack and potentially modify our understanding of concepts such as territorial inequality and spatial justice.

3.1 The territorial claims of regionalist actors

The empirical analysis of regionalist actors' territorial claims has encompassed the study of both regionalist parties and civil society organisations. Our first contention is simply that there is value in examining the arguments and claims of social movements that advance criticisms of existing social and political arrangements, not only in order to develop a better understanding of those movements themselves, but also with an eye on assessing the strength or appropriateness of existing conceptualisations of notions such as (in)equality or (in)justice. We see this clearly when we consider the approach adopted in a series of key works that have made significant contributions to contemporary understandings of such concepts.

For example, Iris Young's (1990) critique of the overly narrow perspective afforded by traditional distributive approaches to social justice was based on a close examination of the claims advanced by 'new group-based social movements' associated with left politics in America during the 1970s and 1980s – 'such movements as feminism, Black liberation, American Indian movements and gay and lesbian liberation' (1990: 3). In studying these movements, Young's aim was to ask: 'What conceptions of social justice do these new social movements implicitly appeal to, and how do they confront or modify

traditional conceptions of justice' (1990: 3)? A similar approach has also been pursued by other critical theorists, such as Nancy Fraser (1995, 2005, 2009). However, a focus on the claims of different social movements is also evident in the work of more 'mainstream' theorists. For example, Will Kymlicka's liberal defence of minority rights and multiculturalism is largely based on a careful engagement with the arguments of particular national minorities, indigenous groups and immigrant communities (Kymlicka 1995, 2001, 2007).

In light of such works, and with an eye on the IMAJINE project's general concern with seeking to unpack and potentially revise working understandings of concepts such as territorial inequality and spatial justice, the insights afforded by this WP into the concerns of contemporary European regionalist movements have the potential to make an important contribution. Following Young's example with regard to American social movements, consideration of the claims and arguments of the regionalist movements studied can help us to interrogate further what types of elements need to be taken into account as part of the effort to build a more equal and just European social model.

3.2 Conceptualising justice

An important question that was raised by the work emerging from WP1 was the degree to which the challenge of achieving more equal and just social arrangements across Europe can be adequately pursued from a perspective that focuses primarily on economic indicators, such as the distribution of wealth, income, and other material resources (Weckroth et al. 2018a). Moreover, it was suggested that there may be grounds to 'go beyond the narrow economic perspective' by acknowledging the 'multidimensional' questions posed by the concepts of spatial justice and territorial cohesion (Weckroth et al. 2018a: 29). On this basis, later outputs have gone on to argue that there is a need to adopt a broader perspective that also emphasises the significance of factors such as 'recognition, participation and human agency' (Weckroth and Moisiu 2020: 190). What insights with regard to these important questions can be gleaned by considering the claims of the regional movements studied as part of WP7? To what extent are the perceptions of inequality and injustice that underpin these claims captured adequately by a purely economy-focused perspective?

Overall, the WP's analysis demonstrated that perceptions of socio-economic inequalities or injustices are clearly a prominent feature of the arguments advanced by contemporary regionalist movements and that these relate both to the economic condition of their territory in relation to others (either within the state or across the EU) as well as the relative economic well-being of individuals living within the territory (Elias et al. 2020: 44-5). Moreover, the analysis demonstrated that such socio-economic

concerns have increased in significance over time (Elias et al. 2020: 44-5). Yet, arguments pointing to perceived socio-economic injustices are not the only type advanced by the actors studied, nor are they the most widely used. Significantly, overall, a much greater emphasis seems to be placed on arguments that claim a degree of political inequality or unfairness (Elias et al. 2020: 44-5), for example with regard to the quality of representation or influence over decision-making afforded to the territory's inhabitants. Furthermore, while perhaps not as prominent overall as one may have expected, arguments that stress cultural considerations are also deployed by these movements and in certain cases – such as Kashubia and Szeklerland - they can be viewed as the main issue of concern (Elias et al. 2020: 67). Moreover, there was evidence in certain cases, for example Catalonia and Corsica, of demands for the recognition of particular regional identities, languages or cultures being linked with broader political or socio-economic considerations. In sum, consideration of the type of arguments advanced by regionalist actors highlights how relevant inequalities or injustices are not merely economic in nature. Hence, from the perspective of these actors it would seem that any effort to develop more equal and just social arrangements across Europe must start with a conceptualisation that takes account of more than simply economic indicators, such as the distribution of wealth, income, and other material resources.

Indeed, what is striking when we consider the nature of the discourses employed by regionalist actors is the degree of overlap that exists with Nancy Fraser's tripartite conceptualisation of justice (2005, 2009), which was discussed in an earlier IMAJINE output (see van Vulpen and Bock 2020). According to Fraser, overcoming injustice calls on us to dismantle institutionalised obstacles that prevent certain individuals or groups from being able to participate fully in social life (2005: 73). To achieve this, she argues that it is necessary to work across three different fields in order to address three distinct types of obstacles. First, it is necessary to focus on the 'economic dimension' by addressing questions relating to the distribution of wealth, income, resources and positions of reward. Second, it is necessary to focus on what Fraser describes as the 'cultural dimension' by addressing instances of status inequality and 'institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value' (2005: 73). Third, there is the 'political dimension' that is concerned with ensuring democratic representation for all in governance structures and a voice in decision-making procedures (Fraser, 2005: 74-5). Overall, based on the evidence of this WP, it seems that this type of multi-dimensional conceptualisation of inequality and injustice is more likely to capture the different types of concerns and criticisms that feature as part of the arguments advanced by contemporary European regionalist actors than one that focuses solely on economic concerns. Moreover, if we consider possible future trajectories, it would be advisable to allow for the fact that additional considerations, alongside the economic, cultural and political dimensions emphasised by Fraser will need to be drawn into our conceptualisation. While environmental arguments did not feature

prominently in the claims of injustice and inequality advanced by regionalist actors during the period of this study (1990-2018), it is possible that a growing awareness of the regionally specific impact of climate change, for example linked to instances of flooding or drought, may prompt them to place much greater emphasis on this dimension.

3.3 The limits of a distributive perspective

A further point that is worth reflecting upon is the manner in which the arguments of regionalist actors potentially challenge the basic logic that has traditionally underpinned how both policy-makers and political theorists conceive of the challenge of seeking to promote greater equality and justice – this was famously described by Young (1990) as ‘the distributive paradigm’.

According to this perspective, securing equal and just social arrangements is essentially a matter of ensuring a fair and proper distribution of various benefits and burdens among society’s members (Campbell, 2010: 15). Thus, inequality or injustice may be regarded as arising in situations where certain individuals or groups possess less or more social goods than others. Young (1990: 18) elaborated on the nature of this perspective as follows:

‘Most theorists take it as given, then, that justice is about distributions. The paradigm assumes a single model for all analyses of justice: all situations in which justice is at issue are analogous to the situation of persons dividing a stock of goods and comparing the size of the portions individuals have. Such a model implicitly assumes that individuals or other agents lie as nodes, points in the social field, among whom larger or smaller bundles of social goods are assigned’ (Young, 1990: 18).

Over the years this distributive logic has been most evident in work where the focus has been primarily on what was described above as the ‘economic dimension’, where proposals have been primarily concerned with the distribution of scarce material goods, such as wealth, income or resources or social positions, particularly jobs. However, as Young argued, the distributive approach to justice is not only evident when the focus is on material goods. The same basic logic usually underpins the discussion when the focus turns to the availability or not of other nonmaterial social goods such as rights, opportunity, power and self-respect (Young, 1990: 16). In such instances, a different type of ‘metric’ for evaluating the justice of social relations is applied, yet the basic logic of distribution remains (Fraser, 2009: 32).



These observations are relevant when we reflect back on some of the themes that arose in earlier IMAJINE outputs that critically analysed how European policy-makers have engaged with concepts such as territorial cohesion and spatial justice. In their early literature review Weckroth et al. (2018b) highlighted how there has been a tendency to understand territorial cohesion as primarily an economic question that is mainly concerned with the redistribution of resources to disadvantaged regions. This type of approach was critiqued as being overly narrow and it was posited that engaging with a broader notion of spatial justice brought into focus a wider range of social goods including equal access to services, facilities or infrastructure, health or expressions of identity and culture (Weckroth et al 2018b: 19). Later, this contention was developed further when it was suggested that it would be possible to better capture and appreciate these types of broader concerns if there was a shift from interpreting justice as being primarily concerned with the distribution of resources and the focus was instead placed on the degree to which people or territories possessed particular capabilities (Weckroth et al., 2018b: 19; Weckroth and Moisiso, 2020: 190). Yet it is important to appreciate that despite such a move, the approach to justice being employed remains one that is distributive in terms of its basic logic. The type of ‘metric’ used to evaluate the justice of social relations may have shifted from resources to broader notions such as capabilities or real freedoms, yet the basic calculation remains one where different social goods are treated ‘as some thing or aggregate of things that some specific agents possess in certain amounts’ and then different patterns of distribution of that good are compared (Young, 1990: 24).

This is all relevant in the context of this WP when we consider what Young (1990) suggested was one of the fundamental weaknesses of an approach to inequality and injustice that tends to frame the issue as solely a matter of distribution. The problem is that such an approach ‘tends to obscure the institutional context within which those distributions take place’ (1990: 21-22) and, importantly, that it can ‘de-emphasize’ the significance of questions relating to ‘decision making structures’ (1990: 23). As a result, ‘issues of the just organization of government institutions, and just methods of political decision-making, rarely get raised’ (1990: 22). These are themes that resonate in relation to the claims and arguments of the regionalist actors studied as part of this WP. For these actors, how their respective territories and the people that live in them compare with other parts of Europe in terms of the resources, services and life opportunities available is clearly a cause of concern. However, the nature of their critique of existing social and political arrangements is not fully captured by a perspective that simply compares the distribution of different social goods, regardless of whether we adopt a traditional focus on material resources or a broader focus on nonmaterial goods such as opportunities capabilities or real freedom. It is not simply the distribution of such goods – be that in the form of income, capital, access to services, quality of infrastructure, clean environment or human rights (Weckroth and Moisiso, 2020: 190-1) – that



concerns these movements, but also the decision-making structures that accompany such patterns of distribution, and specifically the degree to which such structures afford their territory adequate influence. Indeed, even when the focus of these movements is squarely on economic themes, the claims and arguments they advance are not primarily concerned with critiquing the current distribution of wealth or resources in itself. Arguably of more concern is what such patterns of distribution say about current decision-making structures and the lack of political influence and power afforded to their territory (Elias et al., 2020: 75).

In sum, what we see from considering the rationale that underpins the arguments of the regionalist actors is that for certain European actors the challenge of addressing inequality and injustice is one that not only raises questions of ‘what’ – i.e. *what* should be fairly distributed and hence should be used as our metric for assessing the merits of different social arrangements. For these actors it is also essential to address the additional questions of ‘who’ and ‘how’ – i.e. *who* should be able to influence decisions regarding the distribution of vital goods and *how* should those decisions be taken. As Young has demonstrated, these institutional questions that foreground issues of decision-making structures are not always easily captured when we work with a conceptualisation of equality and justice that is primarily distributive in terms of its basic logic. However, from the perspective of the regionalist actors studied by WP7, addressing such questions should be an essential part of the process of developing a more equal and just European social model.

4. Conclusion

The primary aim of this report has been to review the work undertaken as part of Work Package 7 and to summarise the main empirical findings from Deliverables 7.2 (Elias et al., 2020) and 7.3 (Franco-Guillén and Elias, 2021) in order to consider i) the extent to which, and under what conditions, regionalist actors attempt to provide alternative solutions to achieving territorial, economic and social cohesion; and ii) to what extent the framing strategies of autonomy movements impact upon their political/electoral relevance. With regard to these questions, it was demonstrated that the comparative analysis of regionalist political parties and civil society actors undertaken as part of this work package has led to four key findings:

- Firstly, regionalist actors’ perceptions of territorial inequalities have predominantly focused on political and socio-economic realities, with much less attention paid to cultural and environmental considerations.

- Secondly, perceptions of political, economic and (to a much lesser extent) cultural inequalities and injustice have translated into a range of different demands for territorial empowerment; the nature and scope of territorial change claimed also varies across cases and actors, as well as over time. Regionalist actors thus propose a range of solutions for tackling territorial inequalities and injustice, but what they have in common is a core commitment to empowering the region vs. the rest of the state.

- Thirdly, such perceptions and territorial claims are less influenced by the structural characteristics of the regions themselves, but rather respond to the political contexts in which regionalists mobilise and seek to advance their territorial projects. Political considerations – including the need to build popular support for territorial change and fend off competition from other regionalist and non-regionalist political actors on territorial issues – thus shape what kinds of territorial claims these actors make, and the kinds of arguments they use to justify them.

- Fourthly, this highly contextual nature of regionalists' territorial discourses makes it difficult to determine the impact of different framing strategies on regionalists' electoral and political relevance; from this qualitative analysis, there is thus no clear 'winning formula', with the different constellation of factors in different cases leading to different electoral/political outcomes in different places. Instead, regionalists adjust their framing strategies to different contexts, reflecting the different pressures that come to bear on them in different places and at different times.

Subsequently, the report went on to reflect on whether these findings can offer any useful insights with regard to the broader concerns of the IMAJINE project. In particular, the report focused on how some of the empirical evidence gathered through this work package's study of contemporary European regionalist actors can inform and add to earlier efforts to interrogate, unpack and potentially modify our understanding of concepts such as territorial inequality and spatial justice, and in this regard two key arguments were advanced:

- Firstly, from the perspective of the regionalist actors studied here, it seems that any effort to develop more equal and just social arrangements across Europe must start with a conceptualisation of spatial (in)equality and (in)justice that takes account of more than simply economic indicators, such as the distribution of wealth, income, and other material resources.

- Secondly, the critique of existing social and political arrangements advanced by regionalist actors cannot be fully captured by a perspective that simply compares the distribution of different social goods across different territories, regardless of whether we adopt a traditional focus on material resources or

a broader focus on nonmaterial goods such as opportunities or capabilities. It is not simply the distribution of such goods that concerns these movements, but rather the decision-making structures that accompany these patterns of distribution, and specifically the degree to which such structures afford their territory adequate influence.

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