

Think Croatian, act Slavonian:

The Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja as a
regionalist patriot

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Abstract

There has recently been an upsurge of the territorial party competition in Europe, and Croatia has followed the trend. This work, by following the framework of external and internal resources in studying regionalist parties, aims to study the strategy of Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja. To better capture the strategies of regionalist parties, a new categorization of regionalist parties is introduced, relying on the two of the most salient dimensions of territorial party competition, self-government and ethnonational. Juxtaposing those two dimensions produces four categories of regionalist parties: regionalist unionists, regionalist parties *via facti*, regionalist patriot and ethnoregionalist parties. To place the HDSSB in one category, the qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles and self-produced content is performed. The results suggest the HDSSB falls into the regionalist patriot category of regionalist parties, and that allows for the further discussion on this understudied category. The reasons for such a placement are found in the opportunity of HDSSB to refer to the poverty of Slavonia and centralization, as well as in constraints that HDSSB faced: present cleavages, territorial history of Croatia, the role of Slavonia and Glavaš in the Homeland war and HDSSB organizational features. Future research should focus more on the rise of regionalist political parties and their demands for self-government in poor regions and in centralized states.

Keywords: HDSSB; Branimir Glavaš; external resources; internal resources; regionalist patriot

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1. Introduction

One of the primary tools of modernization and consolidation of Western European states, that took place in the 18th and the 19th century, was the abolishment of rights of sub-state authorities (Keating 1997; Bartolini 2000; Keating 2008). They were often seen as an impediment to nation- and state-building processes, since having separate identities was seen as being incompatible with the teleological view that the ultimate aim of modernization process is a homogeneous nation-state whose undivided sovereignty spans throughout its territory. Since they were against the unification of the state, peripheral demands were labeled as being essentially anti-modern (Jović 1992, p.178; Keating 2008, p.62). As Jović argues, regionalist parties demanded partiality where unity should be the strongest, namely in the control of a national territory.

A similar pattern can be observed in Croatia since 1990, as the need for nation- and state-building process, coupled with war gave way to unifying tendencies (Petak 2012, pp.73–74). In order to build national identity and create a sense of national unity, nationalist parties were strongly against any claim of particularity. Especially after the rebel Serbs took over substantial parts of Croatian territory, nationalists were particularly sensitive to movements that demanded empowerment of some piece of national territory (Jović 1992, p.178). Crucially, the fiercest opponent of ‘autonomism’ was the president of Croatia and Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Franjo Tudjman, treating every resistance as subversive and traitorous (Ashbrook 2006, pp.625–629).

Having in mind those circumstances, there is no wonder why only one regionalist party, Istrian Democratic Assembly, by politicizing latent grievances between multicultural Istria and the Tudjman’s regime, managed to attract a substantial number of votes during the 1990s and the early 2000s. But in 2005, the relatively peaceful waters of territorial party competition were once

again muddled. Seeing that he was not in favor of the HDZ leadership, Branimir Glavaš founded the Croatian Democratic *Assembly* of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) in order to compete at the forthcoming local elections in Osijek-Baranja County on 15th May 2005, where his independent county list achieves a first big victory. As he was the most prominent Slavonian member of HDZ, the Assembly attracted a big number of Slavonian HDZ members who formed the basis of the party that later on emerged from the Assembly. The party, which was founded on 6th May 2006, has the same acronym (HDSSB), but first ‘S’ stands for Alliance (*savez*) rather than Assembly (*sabor*).

Their first success at the national level happened in the 2007 elections, where they managed to keep the three MP’s they had before the elections (Table 1). At the 2011 elections, they managed to increase their vote share in both 4th and 5th electoral district by 6 and 5 percentage points, respectively. This brought them the increase of representation by 3 parliamentary seats. Since they were joined by another MP after the elections, they currently hold 7 seats in the Croatian parliament.

Table 1: Votes and vote shares in the 4th and 5th electoral districts at national elections (2007-2011)

	2007			2011	
	4 th	5 th		4 th	5 th
HDZ	65115 (31.20%)	90821 (42.75%)	HDZ	48377 (23.45%)	69929 (32.93%)
SDP	55936 (28.80%)	56721 (26.70%)	SDP/HNS/ID	68188 (33.06%)	68447 (32.23%)
HDSSB	31795 (15.23%)	12757 (6.01%)	HDSSB	44687 (21.66%)	24308 (11.45%)
HSP	16656 (7.98%)	11023 (5.19%)	HSP	9665 (4.69%)	9953 (4.69%)
HSU	10207 (4.89%)	7877 (3.71%)			
HNS	9687 (4.64%)	9160 (4.31%)			
HSS/HSLs	8424 (4.04%)	11766 (5.54%)			

The first electoral success of HDSSB (officially independent) was at the 2005 local elections in Osijek, where Glavaš's independent list came out as a winner with the relative majority of 10537 votes. At the county level, he also won the relative majority of votes, more precisely 33380. By 2009 local elections, first where the head of executive was directly elected, they managed to establish their presence in all Slavonian counties, and increased their vote share in the Osijek-

Baranja County legislative election. Moreover, they won the elections for the head of executive in the Osijek-Baranja County, as well as for the mayor of Osijek. At the 2013 local elections, they managed to increase their vote share in all the counties, most notably in the Slavonski Brod-Posavina County. Even though they surprisingly lost the position of mayor of Osijek, they kept the head of executive position in the Osijek-Baranja County. The results of all local elections since 2005 are reported in the Tables 2 and 3 found in Appendix.

At the 2013 European elections (open-list system; nation-wide electoral district; district magnitude of 12; legal threshold of 5%, D'Hondt) in coalition with HDSSD (a sister party from Dalmatia) and the Greens, HDSSB received 3.01% of national votes (Table 4, Appendix). They achieved the best result in the Osijek-Baranja County (22.48%) and the Pozega-Slavonia County (9.80%). This result testifies on the advantages of territorial concentration of electoral support (Lublin 2009, pp.5–6; Bochslers 2011, pp.232–233), since the party won six seats in the national parliament under the electoral system that divides the country into ten proportional representation (PR) electoral districts, but failed to even pass the legal threshold (5%) in the nation-wide PR district.

A framework for studying regionalist party strategy and electoral success that relies on internal and external approaches to regionalist parties, developed in the landmark volume on regionalist parties edited by De Winter and Türsan (De Winter & Tursan 1998), will also be used to study the strategy of HDSSB. Unlike Istria, Slavonia and Baranja was for several reasons not the most likely candidate for developing a notable regionalist party. Being at the forefront of Croatia in the Homeland war (Croatian war for independence), Slavonians developed strong nationalist feelings towards Croatia, and often emphasized that their sacrifice is the foundation of Croatia's independence. This was later transposed in the strong support for the right-wing parties, most

notably HDZ. Receptive of Tudjman's ideas of national unity and reconciliation, and especially after Istria wanted to proclaim itself as demilitarized zone, Slavonians could hardly be mobilized against the centre. Moreover, being dependent on help from the centre (due to severe losses in the war) should, according to Keating, have led Slavonians to be more in favor of centralization rather than opt for any kind of territorial restructuring of state power that would endanger the inflow of resources from the centre (Keating 1997, p.389). On the other hand, poor economy and high centralization of the state, coupled with favorable institutional structure (electoral system) were argued to facilitate the rise of regionalism that led to demands for the higher degree of self-government (Hechter 1973; Brancati 2007; Lublin 2009).

The defining characteristic of regionalist parties is that they restrict their operation to a single territory within a state (region). After reviewing the relevant literature on regionalist parties in particular and territorial politics in general, I was puzzled by the absence of categorization of regionalist parties that would capture the most important aspects of territorial politics: demand for self-government and ethnonationalism. Following the work of Türsan (Tursan 1998), this study relies on the two most salient characteristics of regionalist parties in developing a new categorization of regionalist parties. The first major dimension of regionalist party competition is the centralist-secessionist dimension, where parties take their position with regard to the level of self-government sought (De Winter 1998, pp.204–208). The second dimension is based on the perceived exclusiveness of appeal of regionalist parties to inhabitants of their own region, and may be named ethnonationalist dimension. Juxtaposing those two dimensions produces the two dimensional space where the four categories of regionalist parties can be located: regionalist unionists, regionalist parties *via facti*, regionalist patriots and ethnoregionalist parties.

The research question that will guide this study is: how did HDSSB respond to the internal and external constraints while devising its strategy of mobilization of Slavonian voters? This thesis, however, goes beyond placing the HDSSB in the proper category, as it uses the case of HDSSB to argue for an understudied category of regionalist parties: regionalist patriots.

The next chapter will briefly discuss the territorial aspect of regionalist parties, and proceed to application of the external-internal resources framework to the case of HDSSB. The third chapter will introduce the two most important dimensions in regionalist party programs which are the background for the new categorization of regionalist parties. The fourth chapter discusses the method applied, namely qualitative content analysis, as well as the data collection process and development of coding scheme. The analysis and discussion of the results in light the framework of external and internal resources follows the two dimensions of territorial party competition. Section is devoted to the category of regionalist patriots, by briefly reviewing other parties in this category, as well as stating the theoretical and policy relevance of this category. The concluding chapter offers an overview of the study, states its relevance and limitations, as well as prospects for the future research.

2. Internal and external approaches to studying regionalist parties applied to the case of HDSSB

2.1. *Concept of a regionalist party*

The literature on political parties that claim to represent inhabitants of a certain territory suggests various labels for those parties. At the beginning of his thesis, Massetti enumerates no less than 16 different labels, which makes it very difficult to engage into comparative study on those parties (Massetti 2009, p.4). Each of those labels might have a slightly different meaning, derived from a different theoretical approach, as well as serving different purposes. Needless to say, labeling those parties differently leads to different case selection, which has a major influence on the comparability of results from various research projects.

On a less pessimistic note, there is a general consensus in the literature on one distinctive feature of those parties. Those parties are inherently territorial, since they operate in a certain sub-state territory, and that serves as the basis for their differentiation from state-wide parties, which run at elections and receive votes throughout the territory of a country (Jović 1992, p.174; Miodownik & Cartrite 2006, p.2; Gómez-Reino 2008, p.15; Dandoy 2010, p.197). Those parties can become territorial in the two ways: on purpose or through electoral outcomes (Jović 1992, pp.177–178). The first group intentionally restricts its organizational and electoral presence to a certain region, with an aim to represent regional interests or represent interests of a population which forms a minority in that region (often the same as majority at the state level). The second group is made up of parties that do aim to cover the entire territory of a state, but they manage to win a substantial number of votes only in one region. Electoral districts where those parties compete are usually clustered together, often located within a region. Therefore, I will adopt the label regionalist for this broad set of parties.

2.2. External approach to the case of HDSSB

Division between external and internal resources of regionalist parties was elaborated and operationalized in Sydney Tarrow's book '*Power in Movements*' (Tarrow 1998), and was adopted by the two volumes on regionalist parties edited by Lieven De Winter, as well as by the subsequent research on the topic (Hepburn 2007a, p.10; Massetti 2009, pp.8–11; Hepburn & Dan Hough 2010, p.9). External approaches seek to examine how the environmental factors influence the strategies and success of regionalist parties. Muller-Rommel develops a framework for analysis of external resources, and he singles out level of decentralization, party system and influential allies as being the most notable ones (Muller-Rommel 1998, pp.25–26). In the conclusion of both volumes on regionalist parties that he edited, De Winter expands the list by adding several additional factors (De Winter 1998, pp.214–221; De Winter et al. 2006, pp.255–263).

The first is cultural, which includes religion, language and common history, which are presumed to move inhabitants of the region toward common sense of identity. Apart from party system, another political factor that De Winter considers is electoral system. Among other notable external resources are European integration, economic development, critical events and specific issues.

2.2.1. History of Slavonia

Past historical developments are an important external resource in region-building efforts, as they often serve as repositories of regional identity (Rokkan & Urwin 1983, pp.131–134; Hroch 2009). Common history of a territorially concentrated group of people adds to their cohesiveness and enables them to define their identity, to position themselves in relation to other regions, as well as towards the nation-state.

From a more constructivist point of view, Liu and Hilton argue that social representations of history, and not necessarily history itself, have an important effect on group identity (Liu & D. J. Hilton 2005, pp.1–2). Social representation of a group’s history is, according to those authors, embodied in its *charter*, which gives an ‘account of the origin and historical mission’ of the group. Rather than being solidly anchored in the facts, charters tend to be renegotiated throughout a group’s history in the light of contextual factors, making charter-devising an open-ended rather than teleological process (Liu & D. J. Hilton 2005, pp.4–5).

In a recent study, Liu and colleagues find that there exists a shared cross-cultural representation of history, and the content which is dominant in all the samples is warfare and political violence in general (Liu et al. 2005, pp.176–179). Having those results in mind, I will, through the discussion on Eastern Slavonia and Vukovar in particular, briefly introduce the most important warfare event in the contemporary history of Slavonia, namely its participation in the Homeland war. There are two symbols that are particularly worth mentioning in the context of the battle for Eastern Slavonia, namely martyrdom and victimhood, since those two symbols, especially when tied to Vukovar, are the main pillars of nation-building process that took place in Croatia (Banjeglav 2012, pp.12–19).

As for the notion of martyrdom, it dates back to the participation of Slavonia in Vojna Krajina, where it earned a flattering epithet of *antemurale christianitatis* (Holjevac 2006, pp.104–105; Grgin 2003, p.88). In 1990s war, operations in Eastern Slavonia and especially the siege of Vukovar required Serbian forces to concentrate at this particular area, and that led to decreasing the pressure on other Croatian cities, and allowed Croatia to recruit soldiers and acquire war material for further resistance. Therefore, Vukovar and Eastern Slavonia are often portrayed as a shield for the rest of Croatia against the kind of aggression that Vukovar was exposed to.

Among many events in wartime Eastern Slavonia that can be connected to victimhood, there is one that left a deep mark on the collective memory of Croats: Ovčara massacre. After the fall of Vukovar, Serbian forces took 200 wounded patients from Vukovar hospital, transported them to a nearby farm, and subjected them to heavy torture. In the days that followed, they were massacred and their bodies were thrown into a mass grave. This event represents the largest mass killing in the Homeland war, and is commemorated every year in what is known as the ‘memory walk’. Moreover, the victimhood and martyrdom of Vukovar, as well as of Eastern Slavonia in general, are often celebrated in the Croatian popular music (Baker 2009).

2.2.2. Territorial history of Croatia

The literature on regionalist parties systematically falls short of accounting for the territorial history of a country when studying ideological positioning and success of regionalist parties. The fact that a country lost a part of its territory (either through war or peaceful secession) might lead to the development of strong anti-regionalist (unionist) feelings among the population in the centre. As Ackren and Lindström argue, Finnish people were very sensitive towards separatist demands coming from Åland islands, since Finnish history is marked by foreign domination and takeovers of Finnish territory (Ackren & Lindstrom 2011, p.15). Similarly, Serbian recent loss of Kosovo and constant demands for strengthening the autonomy of Vojvodina have turned the Serbian population against the peripheral territorial demands (Đorđević 2012, p.188).

During the Homeland war and the subsequent state- and nation-building efforts, HDZ led by the president Tudjman favored a centralized state and undivided nation. This project of ‘national reconciliation’ also included Croatian Serbs (Banjeglav 2012, pp.9–10), but they felt uneasy with turning into the minority, and the HDZ did little to convince them the opposite. As the response, rebellious Serbs cut off the parts of Croatian territory around the town of Knin, in the so called

‘log revolution’, which has later on grown into the full-blown war where the third of Croatian territory was occupied (Bjelajac & Žunec 2007, p.15). Having those circumstances in mind, there is no wonder why the emergence of IDS in Istria was effectively equated with Serbian secessionism by Tudjman and struck a chord with voters (Jović 1992, pp.178–179). IDS was portrayed as ‘autonomist’, or even as a traitor, especially after they expresses their willingness to become an Euroregion, as well as to proclaim Istria as a demilitarized zone (Ashbrook 2006, p.636).

2.2.3. Economy

Economic reasons are commonly mentioned as one of the most important reasons for occurrence of regionalism, and consequentially, success of parties that thrive on regional sentiments (Rokkan & Urwin 1983; Fitjar 2007; Fitjar 2010). There are two main strands in the theory on the link between state of economy and the rise of regionalism.

The first maintains that inhabitants of rich regions are the ones likely to develop regional sentiments (De Winter 1998, p.217; Keating 1997, p.389; Fitjar 2006; Fitjar 2010, p.528). By being more productive than their ‘lazy’ compatriots in other regions, they develop a sense of pride about their accomplishments, and refuse to share their wealth with the rest of the country. This rise of dissatisfaction with being hardworking but always deprived of their share of national budget manifests itself primarily in seeking fiscal decentralization, mostly in a form of keeping tax revenues in the region.

The ‘poor region’ account, based on the ‘internal colonialism’ literature, has emphasized the exploiting nature of central government rule over peripheral territories, and depicts central government as the one to blame for underdevelopment of the region in question (Hechter 1973,

pp.323–324; Williams 1977, p.273; Beatriz & Chaloult 1979, p.86; Fitjar 2010, p.528). This theory was proposed by Michael Hechter, who argued that industrialization will drive the centre and periphery further apart, as centre and periphery play different roles in a national economy (Hechter, 1973: 319-323). Consequentially, this will lead to homogenizing the inhabitants of a region and their turning against central government, regardless of subsidies provided by the central government. Examples of parties that exploited such a relationship with the centre are *Rassemblement Wallon* in Belgian region of Wallonia that existed from 1968 until mid-1980es, and *Partido Sardo D'Azione* from the island of Sardinia (Buelens & Van Dyck 1998; Roux 2006).

The third set of theories focuses on the mechanism of unequal distribution as such, without reference to whether a region is poor or rich. As Geller argues, the simple fact that distribution of resources results in the different level of economic development (there is an ‘unequal diffusion’) will lead inhabitants of a region to develop regionalist sentiments (Geller 1964: 166 in Williams 1977: 275).

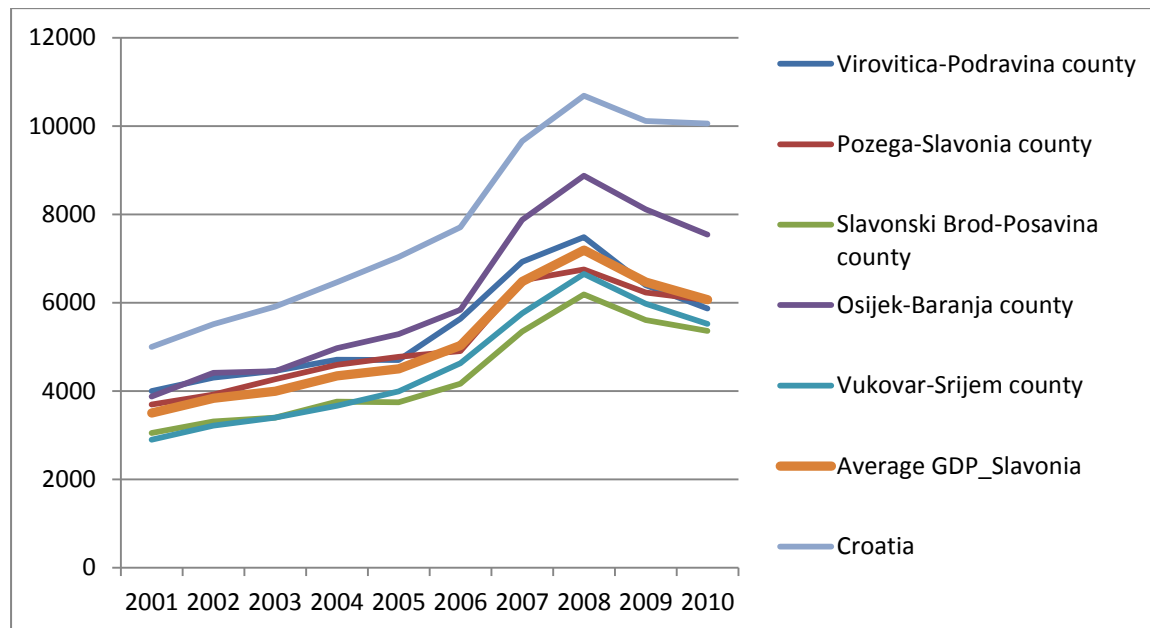
How was the economic relationship between Slavonia and Baranja against the rest of the country structured in the last 22 years? Two macroeconomic measures that are most commonly used in literature on economic voting are GDP per capita and unemployment (Roberts 2008, p.539), and they will be used in an exposition of the economic relation between Slavonia and the rest of Croatia.

Figure 1 illustrates the fluctuation of GDP per capita (in €) in five Slavonian counties, and compares it with GDP per capita of Croatia in general¹. Despite of the relatively short time period

¹ Data are available only for period from 2001, when Croatian Bureau of Statistics started publishing county-level data, until 2010, because county level economic indicators are being published with two-year time lag

covered by this graph, it can be observed that GDP per capita of five eastern counties was constantly under the national average. Difference in GDP per capita between those five counties and Croatia in general has been constant within this time frame. More dynamic view reveals that there has been a constant growth of GDP per capita from 2001 until 2008, with especially high growth between years of 2006 and 2008. 2008 was the year when the global economic crisis started to have an effect on Croatian economy, and one can notice a sharp decline in Slavonian GDP per capita that followed the crisis.

Figure 1: GDP per capita in Slavonia and Baranja (2001-2010)

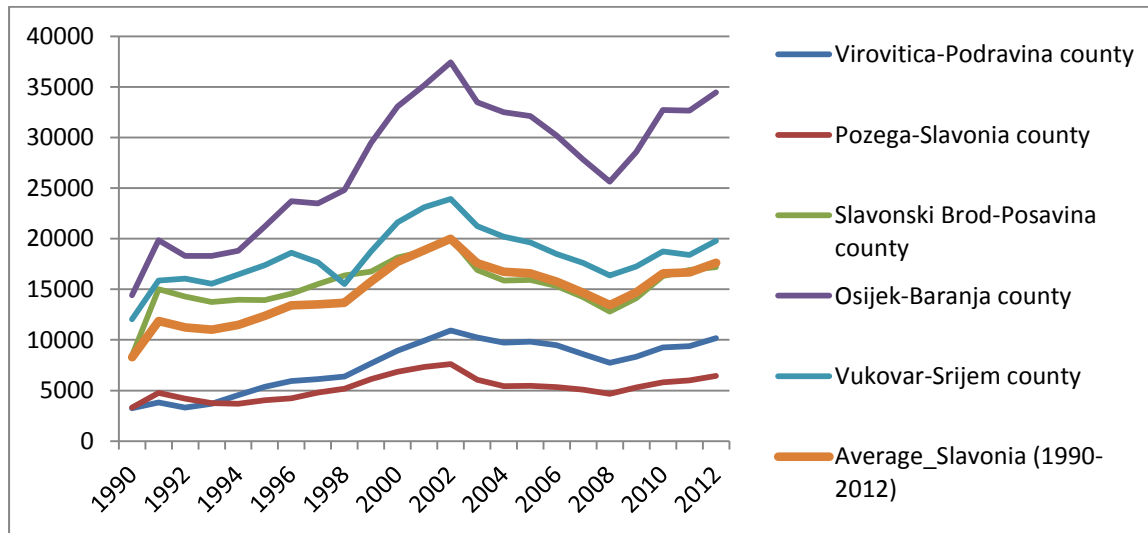


Critics may argue that voters do not perceive the rise of GDP, since this does not directly affect their well-being. Therefore, I will discuss a macroeconomic indicator which is considered to be more proximate to voters, namely the level of unemployment.² Figure 2 reveals the similar pattern as GDP per capita does, since number of unemployed started to drop from 2002 and trend

² Unemployment data are available for county level since 1990, and is measured as the number of unemployed in a single county.

reversed its course in 2008 when the global economic crises started to have an effect of Croatian economy. Being fairly developed region before the war, Eastern Slavonia lost 90% of its pre-war industrial capacity, and that led to rise in unemployment rate to 50% (Smoljan 2010, pp.29–30).

Figure 2: Unemployment in Slavonia and Baranja (1990-2012)



2.2.4. Decentralization

Authors interested in regionalist parties increasingly consider level of decentralization as a factor in the rise of those parties (Muller-Rommel 1998, p.25; Bochsler 2010, pp.809–811), but relationship between those two phenomena is not unidirectional. The first strand of literature argues that political and fiscal decentralization facilitates the rise of regionalist parties, as regionalist parties can get representation (and therefore visibility and experience) once decision-making functions are devolved from central state to local level (Chhibber & Kollman 1998; Brancati 2007, p.158; Brancati 2006, p.681; Muller-Rommel 1998, p.25). Moreover, decentralization increases stakes at the local level, and voters are more inclined to vote on local issues, which leads to the rise of regionalist parties with local voter appeal (Bochsler 2010, pp.810–811).

On the other hand, some authors claim that it is more centralization that leads to the rise of regionalist parties (Heller 2002; Alonso 2012). It is argued that regionalist parties in centralized systems have a preference for decentralization, in order to gain aforementioned benefits that stem from territorial reorganization of state power (Lublin 2011, p.6). To be able to alter the course of decentralization policy, they have to mobilize local voters and achieve representation on the national level. If national governing parties are to reduce the electoral pressure from regionalist parties, they have to embark on the path of decentralization (symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on circumstances) in order to eliminate the peripheral electoral threat (Meguid 2008; Alonso 2012).

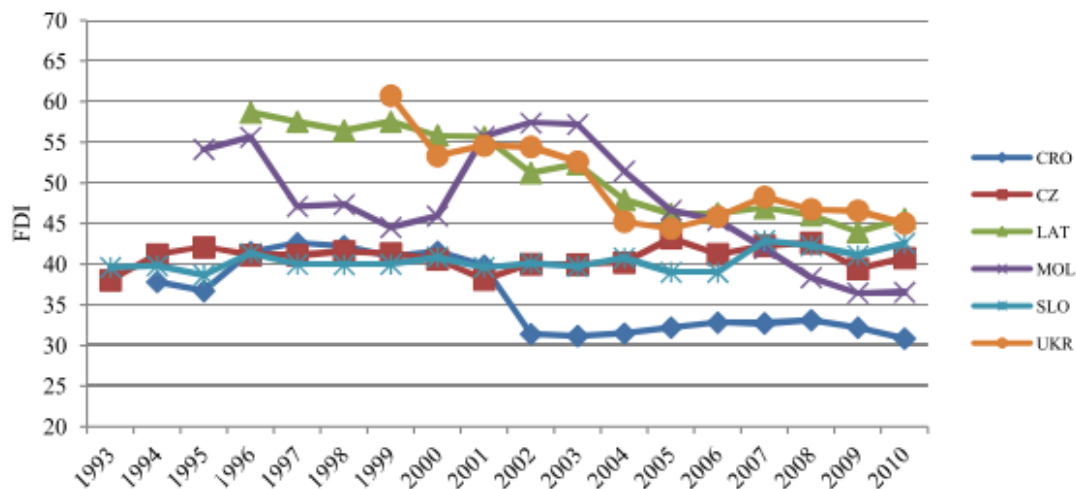
Since 1990, Croatia has been a unitary and centralized state, mostly due to the challenge of war that it faced (Petak 2012, p.77). More importantly, powerful local governments are often seen as an impediment to modernization, as well as to nation-building process (Keating 2008, pp.61–62). Nevertheless, two-tiered system of sub-national government has been introduced, where municipalities, towns and cities represent the local level of government and counties represent regional level (Jurlina-Alibegović & Slijepčević 2012, p.3).

The new government elected in the 2000 elections passed the ‘decentralization package’, with an aim to decentralize decision-making and administration of several policies, such as education and welfare system (Petak 2012, p.78; Ott & Bajo 2002, p.12; Jurlina-Alibegović 2002, p.6; Jurlina-Alibegović & Slijepčević 2012, p.5). Even though local government received new political and administrative powers, sound fiscal decentralization did not follow, and decentralization reform ended up as failure. The biggest problem is the rising number of local units (due to loose criteria for the establishment of those local units) which cannot perform the new functions that were

transferred to them. Therefore, local units depend heavily on various grants from the central government (Ott & Bajo 2002, p.12; Petak 2012, p.79; Bajo & Ott 2001, p.315).

Aristovnik (2012) shows that local government in Croatia was even more dependent on the central state after the 2001 reform package. In his analysis, he relies on an aggregate measure of fiscal decentralization index (FDI), which combines measures of fiscal autonomy (FA) and fiscal independence (FI) of subnational governments, to compare levels of fiscal decentralization by several post-communist countries. According to his calculations presented graphically in Figure 3, Croatia in 1990s scored fairly low on the fiscal decentralization index, but the real drop happened after the 2001 and the adoption of (relatively unsuccessful) decentralization package. Similarly, Jurlina-Alibegović and Slijepčević (2012, pp.12–14) show that the most important revenues of the sub-national units are income tax and grants from the state budget, neither of which can be influenced by the sub-national units.

Figure 3: Fiscal decentralization index in CEE (1993-2010)



Source: Aristovnik (2012, p.12)

2.2.5. Culture

Presence of a distinct ethnic community in a region is likely to lead to emergence of regional sentiments and, consequentially, voting for regionalist parties (De Winter 1998, pp.214–219; De Winter et al. 2006, p.260; Paasi 2009, p.126). Distinct ethnic identity, language and religion (more generally, ‘feeling of belonging’) will lead, *ceteris paribus*, to voters in a region supporting the party that claims to represent the interests of that region. As Bochsler shows empirically, party system nationalization is negatively and substantially influenced by the existence of divisions around ethnic lines (Bochsler 2010, p.17). As for the inhabitants of Slavonia, they do not distinguish themselves ethnically from the rest of the country, and ethnicity did not have major influence on the development of the HDSSB.

Language is another cultural aspect that was found to be important in regional voting choice (Paasi 2009, p.126; Rokkan & Urwin 1983, p.131). Hearl and his colleagues show that language is a good predictor of ethnoregionalist party strength, but only in the regions where such a party exists, since there are regions with distinctive language but with no ethnoregionalist party (Hearl et al. 1996, p.178). As for Slavonians, they do not differentiate themselves from the rest of the country in terms of language.

2.2.6. Value cleavage and Slavonia past voting pattern

Another external aspect in studying regionalist parties are the existing cleavages, as well as party systems and voting preferences that stem from those cleavages (Muller-Rommel 1998, pp.25–26; De Winter et al. 2006, p.256). Existing cleavages may structure party competition to an extent that it is too costly to break loose from this pattern of party competition (Enyedi 2005, p.700; Bornschier 2008, p.5). Even though parties are capable of opening up new cleavages, as well as

downplaying old ones, a structural account of party system can provide a plausible toolkit for analyzing persistence of party systems.

The Croatian party system is strongly influenced by long-term historical developments, and it fits nicely into the Lipset/Rokkan historical account of the formation of party systems (Zakošek & Čular 2003, p.2). The ‘critical juncture’ happened in the Second World War, when Croatian society split between those who aligned themselves with fascist regime of Independent State of Croatia (ustasha), and those who were close to Tito and his resistance movement (partizan) (Henjak 2007: 72-73). Čular and Gregurić gave an overview of how this issue was early on picked up and politicized by Tudjman and Račan, managed to overshadow socioeconomic division, and set the course for future operation of Croatian party system (Čular & Gregurić 2007: 13).

Voters in Croatia do not identify themselves with particular parties, but with ideological blocs that are connected to value cleavage, and rarely vote for a party from the opposite bloc (intra-bloc, rather than inter-bloc volatility on an individual level). The rightist bloc is dominated by the HDZ, while the leftist bloc is dominated by the SDP (Čular & Henjak 2013: 18). Čular and Henjak also note the high costs that defection of a party from this bloc structure entails.

Having in mind the history of Slavonia and especially the events that unfolded in 1990s, it is plausible to observe the voting record of Slavonian voters prior to the emergence of HDSSB. Electoral results in Slavonia from all national elections until 2003 are reported in Table 5 in Appendix. There was a strong dominance of HDZ in 1990s, who continued this domination even after the death of Tudjman. Coupled with the results of extreme-right Croatian Party of Rights

(HSP) who often came third in 1990s Slavonia, this result suggests that Slavonia in aggregate is situated within the rightist bloc in the Croatian two bloc divide.

2.3. *Internal approach to the case of HDSSB*

Apart from external resources, increasing number of studies is devoted to studying internal resources of regionalist parties. In line with the renewed interest in the role of agency in cleavage formation (Enyedi 2005; Deegan-Krause & Enyedi 2010), internal approaches look primarily at the party leadership, which has often been the strong wind in the sails of regionalist parties (De Winter et al. 2006, p.253). Another commonly studied internal resource is regionalist party organization (De Winter 1998, pp.222–226; De Winter et al. 2006, pp.253–255). Regionalist parties tend to have lower degree of encadrement (ratio of members to voters), and they usually resort to patronage politics to secure much needed activists for their activities on the ground. Those parties also differ in their origin, as they might either rise autonomously or be a splinter party from a larger regional or even national party (Strmiska 2003, p.4).

2.3.1. Leadership role of Branimir Glavaš

One of the main internal resources that is believed to influence the strategy and bring an electoral success to a regionalist party is the party leadership. De Winter points out the fact that most of the regionalist parties reviewed in the two volumes that he edited had a strong charismatic leader who was often the founding father of the party and remained the president for a very long time (De Winter 1998, pp.222–226; De Winter et al. 2006, p.253). Referring to the Harmel and Svasand label of ‘father and preacher’, he argues that those leaders usually not only founded the party, but have been the main developers of ideology, organization, and more importantly, they were effective in transmitting this ideology to common people using simple, yet inflammatory,

language. In a way, a leader becomes an embodiment of the movement, and the main reference point for party supporter and opponents.

One of the most famous example is *Lega Nord's* Umberto Bossi, who was able to unite previously distinct northern Italian regions under the umbrella of 'Padania', using a close-to-authoritarian style of leadership, as well as effective communication strategies (Giordano 2000, p.458; Tarchi 2002, pp.125–126). As Agnew argues, Bossi has been by far the most important personality in the movement, and at one instance he was reported to have said: The League is me (Agnew 1995, pp.160–161).

Branimir Glavaš is the most prominent figure in HDSSB, despite the party having a formal president, Vladimir Šišljagić. During the Homeland War, Glavaš had an important military role in Osijek, as he was in charge of organizing and was later appointed as a Commander in Chief of Osijek defense in November 1991, and he held this position until April of 1992. Especially after the fall of Vukovar, Serbian ground forces advanced towards Osijek and managed to seize several villages at its outskirts and was surrounded from three sides. Therefore, Glavaš served as a commander of Osijek defense in the worst period for Osijek, but Serbian forces were eventually kept out of the city.

Apart from his military career, Glavaš had a notable political career before founding HDSSB. He participated at the meeting of the first Executive Committee of HDZ held on 17 June 1989 in Zagreb where the HDZ was founded. In 1993, he capitalized on his military achievements and was appointed to the chief executive position in Osijek-Baranja County in April. With a one-year interruption, he was the head of executive in the county from 1992 until June 2000. During his time as the head of Osijek-Baranja County, he gradually built up his charisma and clientelistic

network and became one of the most influential people in Slavonia, named by various critics as the ‘master of life and death’ in Slavonia.

Despite the fact that Glavaš ‘secured’ 300 votes that kept him as the head of HDZ³, Sanader decided to expel Glavaš from the party in April 2005. Several days before this event, Glavaš announced his new regionalist initiative, in form of HDSSB (Assembly). With his background as a leader of Slavonian HDZ and charisma of a war general, he was able to bring together a group of Slavonia ‘noblemen’, also known as Initial Circle of the Initiative. Moreover, he managed to attract high number of Slavonian HDZ members, who represented the core of what is later to be a political party (Alliance). Apart from his role as ‘founder’, he successfully fulfilled his ‘preaching’ role.

His leadership of HDSSB has been marked by the war crime charges which led to 8-year prison sentence. Two months after the 2005 local elections, a testimony of former Glavaš’s subordinate appeared in *Feral Tribune* magazine, claiming that Glavaš ordered and committed war crimes against Serbian civilians in 1991, and he ended up in prison. It is important to note that Glavaš was a nominee of HDSSB in 2007 national elections, and was elected to parliament while still in custody. Since he managed to get into the parliament and his MP immunity was restored in January 2008, he was released from prison.

Another chapter in the history of HDSSB began in May of 2009, when Glavaš was sentenced to 10 years in prison by county court in Zagreb, but escaped to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) few days before. From this point on, all major decisions with regard to HDSSB are made in BH, as the party elite regularly visit Glavaš and holds consultations with him. Before September 2010,

³ <http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/glavas-iz-pritvora-optuzuje-sanadera-za-kradju-glasova-u-kojoj-je-i-sam-sudjelovao/333001.aspx>

meetings were held in Glavaš house in Drinovci. In June 2010, prison sentence for Glavaš was confirmed (but lowered to 8 years) by Croatian Supreme court, and BH authorities accepted the sentence and arrested Glavaš in September. From then on, he has been imprisoned in BH cities of Zenica and currently in Mostar.

2.3.2. Organizational features

Another internal resource of regionalist parties noted by De Winter and his colleagues is their organizational structure (De Winter 1998, pp.226–230; De Winter et al. 2006, pp.253–254). Yet, it is questionable to what extent organizational aspect has served as an actual resource across different regionalist parties, since there is no uniform organizational framework that those parties follow. Nevertheless, there are some features that they do have in common (De Winter et al. 2006, pp.253–254). With regard to degree of encadrement (ratio of members to voters), they tend to perform rather poorly compared to nation-wide parties. From that fact it follows that they often have to rely on material incentives in attracting members, mostly through patronage networks.

The largest influence on organizational features of HDSSB comes from its origin, namely this party is a splinter of HDZ. When Glavaš formed the party in 2006, he attracted many of Slavonian HDZ members, and they can be found at the leading positions within the party (Glavaš himself, president Šišljagić and MP Drmić). It is arguable to what extent did the fact of being a splinter party of HDZ help HDSSB. They certainly crippled HDZ in Slavonia and managed to attract experienced cadre needed to form a young party. On the other hand, as Čular and Henjak argue, splinter parties of HDZ are often struggling to stay in the parliament once they face their first elections. They see HDSSB as the only splinter party of HDZ that managed to ‘survive and thrive’ (Čular & Henjak 2013, p.25).

In terms of degree of encadrement, they are reported to have 25000 members and 69000 voters in 2011, which is considered to be a respectable figure. Degree of encadrement is nevertheless a double edged sword, since high figure can also mean that party is declining electorally but can still maintain a respectable number of members. Having in mind that the party is on the rise, second explanation seems implausible. De Winter's assertion that high party membership might be a product of patronage network seems to show itself in the case of HDSSB, since Glavaš's network from HDZ times was simply transferred into the new party.

3. Categorization and operationalization of regionalist parties

Comparative work on regionalist parties is impeded not by the lack of categorizations of regionalist parties, but by their relatively big number. There are several dimensions of competition along which regionalist parties can be placed, such as the left-right (Dandoy & Sandri 2007, pp.10–14) and the European integration (Jolly 2007, pp.111–114; De Winter & Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro 2002, pp.490–491) dimensions, which led authors to develop categorizations of regionalist parties based on each of them. Furthermore, Dandoy (2010, pp.199–203) lists several categorizations based on characteristics such as their geographical location in Europe or their origin.

Yet, neither of those dimensions represents the ‘core business’ of regionalist parties, namely the territorial politics. In bringing the territoriality back into the study of regionalist parties, I will follow Jović and Aguilera De Prat, who identify two major aspects of regionalist party programs connected to territory: demanding territorial autonomy, as well as demanding autonomy for the regional population sharing the same identity (Jović 1992, pp.176–177; Aguilera De Prat 2002; in Hepburn 2007b, p.10). Even though those two dimensions of competition are arguably the most salient in programs of regionalist parties, this study is the first to develop a categorization matrix of regionalist parties that combines those two dimensions.

3.1. *Attitudes towards self-government: the centralist – secessionist dimension*

Claim for regional autonomy has been the most important issue of regionalist parties, and they are often considered to have an ‘issue ownership’ of demand for decentralization or any other form of self-government (Daniel Hough 2000b, p.129; Dandoy & Sandri 2007, p.6; Gómez-Reino 2008, p.7). On the demand for decentralization, De Winter notes that “the defining

characteristic of ethno-regionalist parties' programs is undoubtedly their demand for political re-organization of the existing national power structure, for some kind of 'self-government'" (De Winter 1998, p.204). De Winter (1998, pp.205–207) also offers the categorization of ethno-regionalist parties along this dimension, where he proposes five categories which were further refined and reduced to three by Dandoy (2010, pp.203–214).

The first category is that of *protectionist* parties aiming to protect cultural and political rights of a regional population, but not questioning the political institutions of the state. Dandoy refines this category by dividing it between conservative and participationist. *Conservative* are those that aim to preserve a status-quo with regard to their current cultural and political rights. *Participationist* regionalist parties are those who seek more rights to political participation in national politics, but are often restricted to demand for proportional representation or introduction of minority quotas.

The second and third of De Winter's categories were joined by Dandoy into a single category, namely *decentralist* parties. Those parties challenge the present territorial structure of state power, and demand fiscal, administrative and political autonomy in the form of regional executive and legislative institutions. Among these, Dandoy distinguished between: *autonomist*, which demand autonomy to be granted only to their region; *federalist*, which demand federalization of the state involving all sub-state entities; and *confederalist*, which are similar to federalist, but view regions as sovereign entities with the right to transfer competencies to the state.

The final category is *secessionist* parties, which seek independence from the state, and can be divided into the following sub-categories: *independist* parties, aiming to form a new sovereign state; parties that seek to incorporate a piece of external territory to the existing state, namely

irredentist; and *rattachist* parties that demand for breaking away from current state and joining a kin state.

An extension of the self-governance dimension is needed to incorporate those regionalist parties that seek centralization and closer political ties with the centre. Newman (Newman 1997, p.32) proposes a ‘north-south’ continuum, more precisely centralization-sovereignty continuum, with parties at *centralization* pole seeking concentration of power in centralist multi-ethnic state. As Keating (1997, p.389) argues, regionalism does not necessarily lead towards seeking the higher degree of self-government, as poor regions will argue for more centralization to make sure that money transfer from the centre is not interrupted.

3.2. *Appeal towards the population in the centre: the ethnonational dimension*

De Winter’s categorization of regionalist parties based on the self-government dimension is the most influential in the literature, yet it takes for granted that the second major feature of (ethno)-regionalist parties recognized by Türsan, namely exclusive group identity (Tursan 1998, p.5), is omnipresent in regionalist party programs. According to this view, regionalist parties aim to represent or, if necessary, construct a group of people who are tied together by primordial bonds and sense of belonging, rooted in shared practices or common history (Urwin 1983, p.225). In relation to their surroundings, they will be exclusionary and argue for distinctiveness of a group they are aiming to represent. Arguing for group distinctiveness serves the practical purpose of seeking some kind of territorial reorganization of state power, or even separation from a state (Hepburn 2011, pp.505–506).

As with the self-governance dimension, some authors complain that regionalism has been unjustly equated with the exclusive group identity, such as ethnicity (Strmiska 2002, p.2; Gómez-Reino 2008, p.6; Dandoy 2010, p.197). As Gomez-Reino argues, theoretical frameworks which are primarily based on Lipset/Rokkan notion of struggle between two exclusive territorial identifications (dominant against peripheral culture) such as the one of Türsan, do not any longer correspond to the reality. Regional parties may invoke some notion of identity (e.g. on economic reasons) of a certain group in order to back their claims for more political power, but this identity does not have to be exclusive towards members of a centre population. Therefore, it is plausible to talk about the exclusive-inclusive dimension with regard to appeal towards the population in the centre.

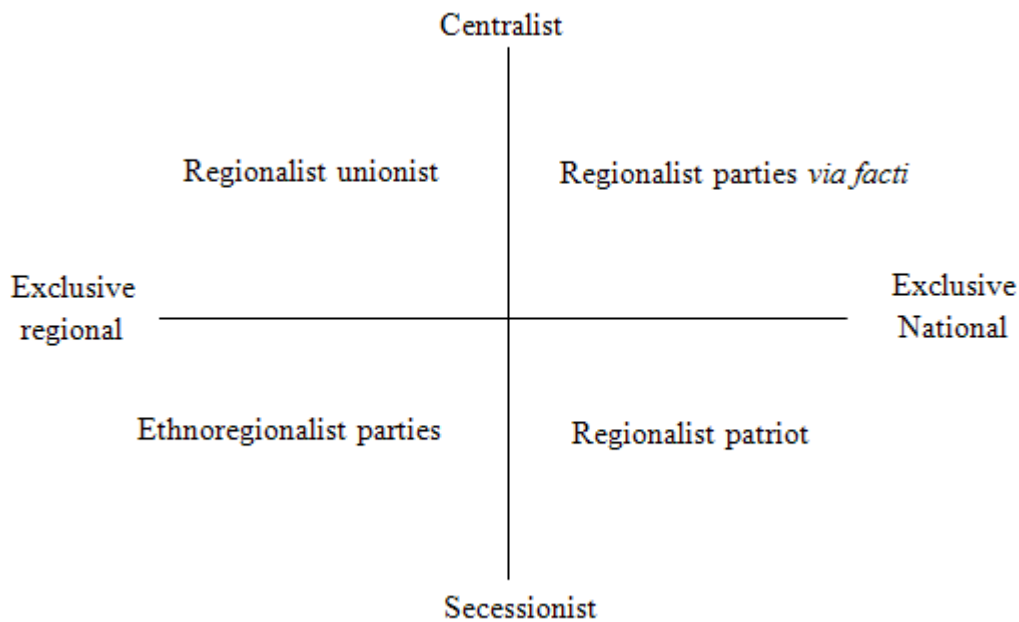
To be operationalized, this dimension has to go beyond duality, to be able to capture the nuances that exist between poles of inclusion-exclusion. As Miley argues, most of the literature on nationalism thinks of different identities in exclusive (binary) terms (are you with ‘us’ or with ‘them’), thus cannot account for identity struggles that occur within a group (Miley 2007, pp.1–4). Rather than having a single identity, people in multinational societies tend to have a dual identity, meaning both ethnoterritorial and national (Moreno et al. 1998, p.1; Moreno 1999, p.65). This was highlighted by Luis Moreno in 1986, while he was working on his PhD thesis on devolution in Scotland and Catalonia. He decided to come up with a survey item that would allow him to capture this duality of identity at the individual level. For this purpose, he developed what will later be known as the ‘Moreno question’ (Moreno 2006, pp.6–9). He faced a sample of Scottish people with 5 alternative choices on their identity: Scottish, not British; more Scottish than British; equally Scottish and British; more British than Scottish; British, not Scottish.

While this survey item was used in a public opinion survey, its essential logic is also valid with regard to party elite opinion. Following Moreno's logic, I will add three middle categories which are missing from the binary exclusive-inclusive category, by breaking down 'inclusive' category to four of Moreno's categories. On the one pole, there are parties which appeal strictly to a regional population. Parties on the other pole would be inclusive towards a population in the centre to an extent that they would appeal only to the population in the centre. In between, there are different degrees of inclusion, from having more regional appeal towards being more inclusive towards the centre population. The five points that help to capture party position on the ethnonational dimension are as follows:

1. Exclusive regional
2. More regional than national
3. Equally regional and national
4. More national than regional
5. Exclusive national

After reviewing the two most important dimensions in party programs of regional parties, juxtaposing them produces the four categories of regionalist parties (Figure 4).

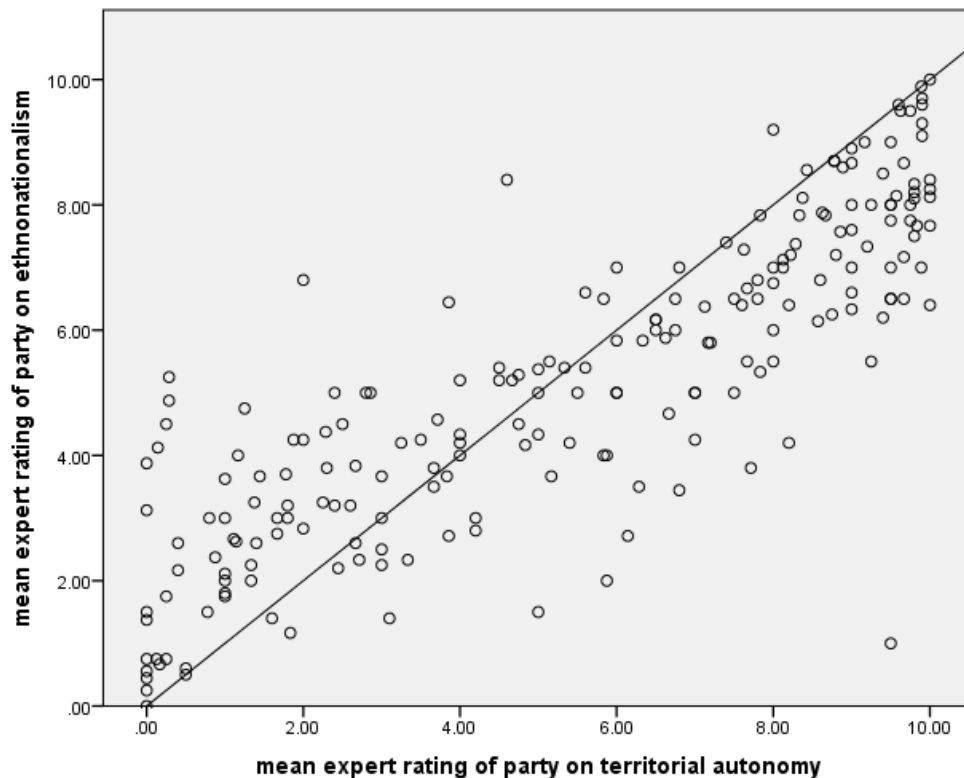
Figure 4: Regionalist party categorization matrix



Relationship between those two dimensions of territorial party competition can be tested empirically by relying on the new dataset by Edina Szöcsik and Christina Isabel Zuber (Szocsik & C. I. Zuber 2012). Data on ethnonational dimension of party competition in 22 states (210 parties) were gathered using an expert survey. The ethnonational dimension was operationalized slightly different than in this work, namely whether a party seeks full congruence of ethnonational identity with borders of a *current* state or with borders of a *new* state (Szocsik & C. I. Zuber 2012, p.3; Szöcsik & Christina Isabel Zuber 2012). The territorial dimension was operationalized similarly as here, by asking an expert about the extent of self-government that a party seeks (Szöcsik & Christina Isabel Zuber 2012). Results show that those two dimensions are strongly correlated $r(208) = .85$, $p < .01$ (Figure 5). The more the parties call for the full

congruence between borders of an ethnic group and a new state, the more self-government they demand.

Figure 5: Correlation matrix between ethnonational and territorial dimension of party competition in 22 countries



3.3. *Four categories of regional parties*

The first category of regional parties that stems from this systematization can, following Massetti, be labeled *regional unionists* (Massetti 2009, pp.6–8). Those are the parties that originated in a region which has recently experienced a rise of regionalist mobilization, but argue against the demands of regionalists by pushing for more centralization or minimal amount of protection for a regional community. One notable example is *Front Democratique des Francophones* (FDF). FDF is a Brussels-based party of Brussels francophones which initially

opposed the transformation of Belgian state into the federation, since they believed this would lead to Brussels being trapped in the Flanders (although they endorse it under the present circumstances). With regard to their connection to the Wallonians, they solidarize with them, but remain the representatives of ‘Bruxellois’ (Buelens & Van Dyck 1998, pp.58–59).

The second category is labeled *regionalist party via facti*, the label adopted from Jović (1992, p.177), who uses this term to describe parties which get substantial number of votes only in one region, but have nation-wide inspirations. From that they draw their appeal to an entire population of a state, but due to the strategic reasons (not to allow wasting of votes and possibility to run organization on low costs), they have focused on a single region. In Jović’s words, ‘municipality is too small and country is too big area for victory’ (Jović 1992, p.177). A good example is the Coastal Party (Kystpartiet) from Norway, founded by whale hunter Steinar Bastesen, and drawing its electoral support from Northern Norway. The party was able to draw electoral support by emphasizing the need to protect the northern fishing tradition against stringent laws produced in Oslo and Brussels. As a conservative party, it relied on family values and the concept of nation (Arter 2008, p.106).

The third group, which combines strong demands for a territorial reorganization of the state power, but does not restrict its appeal to a regional group, is labeled *regionalist patriots*. This category of party is especially likely to originate in regions whose inhabitants do not distinguish themselves in terms of ethnicity, language or culture from the citizens in the centre, but suffer from economic deprivation or otherwise unfair distribution of resources. An example of such a party is *Tierra Comunera-Partido Nacionalista Castellano* (TC-PNC) which runs elections only in the Castilla region by demanding the creation of a distinct Castilian region and granting it level of self-governance beyond mere protection of political rights (Miodownik & Cartrite 2006, p.16).

On the other hand, they evoke Castilian identity which for a long time represented the basis for the construction of the Spanish nation.

The fourth group, which is also the most studied, is labeled *ethnoregionalist* parties. As the label suggests, those parties will be close to the exclusive regional end of the ethnonationalist dimension, as well as argue for a substantial territorial restructuring of state power, or even secession (Tursan 1998, p.5). This category is by far the most studied one, due to its often controversial demands and the electoral success that those parties achieve. Among notable examples, there is the Scottish National Party (SNP), which seeks independence from the Great Britain, invigorated by participation in the devolved Home Rule institutions and oil reserves in the North Sea (Hepburn 2007a, p.65).

One issue that emerges in such categorizations is the issue of cutting points between the categories. On the ethnonationalist dimension this is relatively easy to determine, since there is the middle point, namely equally regional and national appeal. As for the self-government dimension, it may be argued that the crucial jump happens when a party decides to go beyond arguing for more participation at the national level, and starts to demand for power to be transferred to a lower tier of government. Therefore, the cutting point would be between Dandoy's protectionist and decentralist categories. It should also be noted that the segment of this two-dimensional space around the bottom right corner is logically impossible. Parties that would be strongly nationalist would hardly demand secession from the state.

4. Methodology

The analysis of the HDSSB placement along the two dimensions is carried out using the qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles, as well as of self-produced content such as party press releases, prison letters from Glavaš, and official party documents (party manifestos and statutes). This procedure allows me to go beyond the quantitative measures of party placement through manifesto coding or expert surveys, and thus capturing the specific responses of HDSSB to opportunities and constraints faced.

The newspaper articles are selected from one major national newspaper (*Vecernji list*) and the largest regional newspaper (*Glas Slavonije* – Voice of Slavonia). *Glas Slavonije* has a history that might influence its content, namely Glavaš (back then commander of defense of Osijek) took control of this newspaper by force in 1991, and it is still believed to be under his control (Hedl 1996). Sampling techniques in qualitative content analysis aim to be purposeful, rather than random (White & Marsh 2006, pp.36–37; Forman & Damschroder 2008, p.43). Since the aim of the study is not generalizability and transferability, sampling can be made in a way that ensures that all of analytically relevant dimensions are captured. Timing of newspaper articles is therefore restricted to one month before the 2005 local elections and the 2007 national elections. For the 2011 national elections, only articles that were published 15 days before the elections were collected. The time directly preceding the election was chosen since the frequency of party rallies and media reports on parties tends to be highest during that time. Newspaper articles were collected in the archive of National and University Library in Zagreb and ‘Fran Galović’ Library in Koprivnica in the period of 26-29 April 2013.

Self-produced content adds to the depth of the study, since newspapers can influence both the stories that are published and the tone by which the event was covered (positive or negative).

Furthermore, newspapers might not pick up pieces of a party program that are less ‘marketable’ and concentrate only on flashy statements by politicians. Party statute, manifesto and press releases were downloaded from HDSSB (Alliance) web-page⁴, the manifesto of the HDSSB (Assembly) was found in *Glas Slavonije*, and Glavaš’s prison letters were downloaded from his web page⁵.

The categorization matrix developed in the conceptualization section guided the data collection process and served as the basis for an initial data analysis (deductive approach), but the aim was to go beyond the categories that are offered by the theory. As new categories or refinement of those derived from theory might occur during the data analysis process (inductive approach), the categorization matrix is unconstrained, as it allows for new categories to be introduced, and analysis is a mix of inductive and deductive approach (White & Marsh 2006, p.34; Elo & Kyngäs 2008, p.111). Following Hsieh and Shannon, this approach is commonly referred to as the directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p.1281). More broadly, Adcock and Collier refer to this strategy as the fine-tuning of categories (Adcock & Collier 2001, pp.533–534).

Coding scheme developed from this inductive-deductive approach follows the two dimensions, self-government and ethnonational, but adds nuances that are specific to the case of HDSSB. The theme of territorial restructuring of state power is divided into the three sub-themes. The first is the present situation, which includes issues of poor economic development, centralization and over privileging of other regions. The second sub-dimension is the causes of present situation, which are found in war, incapability of HDZ and SDP governments, as well as in the centralization. Solutions, the third sub-theme, encompass demands for fiscal, administrative and political decentralization, as well as for deconcentration, but negate ‘autonomism’. The theme of

⁴ <http://www.hdssb.hr>

⁵ <http://www.branimirglavas.com/>

nationalism is divided into the sub-themes of feelings towards Croatian state and people and their interaction with Slavonian identity, as well as attitudes towards symbols of statehood (Homeland war, Tadjman and generals).

5. Analysis

5.1. HDSSB on the self-government dimension

In order to better understand the claims for self-government that HDSSB puts forward, I will briefly discuss how HDSSB presents the current situation in Slavonia with regard to economy and centralization. Majority of demands made by regionalist parties rely on a certain degree of economic inequality (whether rich or poor) between their region and the rest of the state, and HDSSB is not an exception. As mentioned earlier, Slavonian economic relationship with the centre can be captured by the ‘poor region’ account, and HDSSB successfully picked up on that issue. In the interview that Šišljagić gave to *Glas Slavonije*, he claims that:

“Slavonia and Baranja is the poorest Croatian region, full of minefields, with devastated agriculture, backward economy, with the highest percentages of unemployed that results in young highly educated people leaving to Zagreb or even abroad” (*Glas Slavonije*, 17.11.2007).

Apart from the poor economy, Slavonia is also a part of a heavily centralized state. This situation was shown empirically by Aristovnik’s fiscal decentralization index, which was the lowest among the CEE countries included in the study. Heavy fiscal dependence of local government, where majority of revenues come from taxes and grants, neither controlled by the local government, was used by Ivan Drmić (currently MP) to complain about centralization:

“From 90 billion kuna in the state budget, only 10 billion goes to local government, out of which 5 billion goes to Zagreb. Remaining 5 billion is divided among all other towns and municipalities, which means that local government does not even get back the funds that were taken from it” (*Glas Slavonije*, 6.5.2005.).

Centralization is also depicted as the major cause of poor economic development of Slavonia. Other causes put forward by HDSSB are destruction of infrastructure and major resettlements that happened in wartime and incompetence of HDZ and SDP governments to pull Slavonia out of the poverty, as well as their intentional favoring of Istria, Dalmatia and Zagreb. In the

introduction to HDSSB manifesto, where they spell out the reasons for establishing the party, the Homeland war and its consequences are found to be the primary cause of region's poverty:

“The causes of this (poverty) are consequences of war, that go beyond destruction that took place in the war and direct and indirect damage it produced, and also include the postponement of restructuring of the economy and privatization of industries” (*HDSSB manifesto*, 9.10.2007).

At the rally held in Vukovar, Šišljagić heavily accused the HDZ and the SDP for deepening the impoverishment of Slavonia that started in the war:

We seek a better life for Slavonia and Baranja, which was not brought to us by neither HDZ nor SDP in the past 17 years... governments of HDZ and SDP led to Slavonia and Baranja being the poorest region in Croatia” (*Glas Slavonije*, 6.11.2007.)

Poverty of Slavonia and Baranja, as well as centralization of Croatia, led the HDSSB to develop a response which goes beyond what De Winter and Dandoy refer to as demands for protection (both conservative and participatory). They aim at restructuring the present system of self-government based on counties, by introducing the plan for regionalization of Croatia. Regionalization, which is the most important aspect of their territorial policy, includes abolishment of counties and establishment of five regions: Slavonia and Baranja, Northwest Croatia, City of Zagreb, Southwest Croatia and Dalmatia:

“Existing counties as the forms of territorial (sub-regional) self-government are inadequately equipped for taking over significant decentralized functions, they are too narrow, which leaves them without the capability to lead the developmental policy which requires regional scope” (*HDSSB manifesto*, 9.10.2007.).

The regions that would be created should be equipped with the more extensive powers than those of the current counties, to be capable of performing their developmental role. On the country level, they demand the revival of the second chamber, former House of Counties. Under the new name, the House of Regions, it would act as the representative of regions, by participating in the

tailoring of the state budget. Since Slavonia is an agricultural region, one requirement is transferring Ministry of Agriculture to Osijek. As for the devolution, they often invoke the principle of subsidiarity which serves them as the ground for demanding more political powers for the regions. Regional political institutions that they seek are regional parliament and directly elected head of executive, drawing their inspiration from the ‘historical Italian and Spanish regions’:

“Subsidiarity with regard to vertical division of state power stands for the transfer of powers to low order group of people or institutions. Democratic articulation and representation of region’s interests should be carried out through ‘regional parliament’, House of Regions and state parliament...Regional assembly would be elected at the elections. Head of region executive would be directly elected” (*Manifesto of Assembly*, 2005).

By far the most often articulated aspect of decentralization is the fiscal decentralization, since poverty is perceived to be caused by the limited transfers to the Slavonian local self-government. Fiscal decentralization would make it easier for the regions with newly acquired powers to perform their developmental role and secure the equal development of all Croatian regions. Following two quotes illustrate their demands for increasing the money transfer to the future regions, as well as the simple math they use to argue for this cause:

“State has to allocate to the local government at least 30% of total government revenues, so that the future five regions with significantly more powers than present counties could initiate the development of whole Croatia” (*Glas Slavonije*, 26.11.2011).

“Candidates from HDSSB list in 4th electoral district...sent a message that Slavonia has its own party that demands for 20% of state budget to be invested in Slavonia, since this is the percentage of Croatian citizens that lives at this area” (*Glas Slavonije*, 16.11.2007).

Despite the demands for more extensive self-government put forward, the HDSSB leaders are very reluctant to use the word ‘autonomy’. On the contrary, one of the most often repeated phrases in the articles and self-produced content is ‘we are against autonomism’. In the article

under the title ‘We do not want autonomism, but an improvement of Slavonia and Baranja’, an anonymous member of Initial Circle of HDSSB (Assembly) asserts:

“I believe that the majority of cosignatories signed this initiative out of their hearth and ideals, and that the government misinterpreted the initiative as the ‘will for autonomism’” (*Vecernji list*, 25.4.2005).

Similarly, Glavaš points out the non-separatist nature of his movement, and thus refuting the accusations coming from his political opponents, most notably HDZ:

“They have been calling us ‘autonomists’, destroyers of Croatian state. Our idea of a strong region that demands higher proportion of transfers from the central state treasury was portrayed as the intention of secession... five years ago, this sick project was led by Ivo Sanader” (*Address of Glavaš*, 28.8.2010.).

5.2. HDSSB on ethnonational dimension

The second dimension of a regionalist party program includes the attitudes towards a population in the centre, which range from exclusive regional to exclusive national appeal. To start with, it is worth exploring the relationship of HDSSB towards the Croatian state and the symbols of its statehood, such as Vukovar, Homeland war, the first president Tudjman and Croatian generals. The analysis found that the HDSSB has strong positive feelings toward the Croatian state, up to the point where they might be considered as nationalist. In the press release that followed the joined meeting of the Assembly and the Alliance held in Drinovci (BH), leaders of the party strongly condemned the arbitration agreement between Slovenia and Croatia:

“HDSSB once again expresses its sharp opposition to the arbitration agreement with the Republic of Slovenia, as this represents the severe threat to the national interests of the Republic of Croatia. Signing the agreement in this form stands for the shameless selling of the Croatian territory, which can be compared to the act of treason committed by the chief of Independent State of Croatia (NDH) Ante Pavelić when he signed the Rome treaties in May 1941. According to this agreement, HDZ, Jadranka Kosor (former PM), Milorad Pupovac (representative of Serbs) and others are giving parts of Croatian territory in the same way that Ante Pavelić gave parts of

Dalmatia and parts of Croatian Primorje and Gorski Kotar to Italy” (*press release*, 8.10.2009.).

Their aim of protecting Croatia’s national interests stems from their perceived role of Slavonia as being in the foundation of the Croatian statehood achieved in the bloody Homeland war, where Eastern Slavonia witnessed some of the fiercest battles that took place in the early 1990s. As mentioned earlier, Eastern Slavonia in general and Vukovar in particular served as the shield to the rest of Croatia, since conquering this territory required the Serbian forces to focus their troops there and allowed the Croatian army to regroup. Leaders of HDSSB often referred to the notion of Slavonia as a martyr during the Homeland war. At the HDSSB rally in Đakovo, Vladimir Šišljagić pointed out:

We were dreaming about the rich Croatia, where education is available to all, we were dreaming about the Croatia where our children will find a job after their education and be decently paid for that, and then deservedly retire. In Slavonia, where Croatia was created, we have to bring pride to Croatian people after 20 years, after it has been destroyed by left and right who stole from their people” (*Glas Slavonije* 28.11.2011.).

The Homeland war is deeply embedded into the collective memory of the Croatian people and is a part of the official narrative on how the Croatian state was founded (Banjeglav 2012, pp.10–11). It is therefore useful to look into the HDSSB interpretations of the war and the degree to which their story corresponds to the official narrative, in order to capture the relationship that HDSSB has with the Croatian people. As hinted in the previous quote, HDSSB not only respects the legacy of the Homeland war, but is one of its loudest defenders. The official narrative of the Homeland war emphasizes the defensive and international character of this war, as it is argued that Croatia, as an independent country, was attacked by Yugoslavia, also an independent country. On the other hand, those who claim that the war in Croatia was a ‘civil war’ point to the fact that Croatia, even though declaring independence on 21 June 1991, was not internationally

recognized until January 1992, when the majority of EC/EU countries recognized its independence. Moreover, they claim that only the ethnic Serbs from Croatia stood up against the newly formed Croatian state and that there was no interference from Serbia (back then Yugoslavia). Recently, the current Croatian PM Zoran Milanović gave the statement where he drew the parallel between the Homeland war and the 1917 Finnish Civil war, which was interpreted by many as his recognition of the ‘civil war’ thesis. Soon after this statement, HDSSB issued a press release condemning this act of ‘treason’:

“The statement of the Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, where he regards the war destruction and the atrocities committed towards Croatian people by Great Serbian and četnik aggressors during the Homeland war as the consequences of a ‘civil war’, and not as the criminal aggression of Serbia, Montenegro and so-called JNA on Republic of Croatia, is an act of national treason” (*press release* 17.3.2013.).

Nowhere was the HDSSB defense of dignity of the Homeland war more pronounced as in their statements following Branimir Glavaš being sentenced to 10 years in prison for committing war crimes. As the part of the explanation of its ruling, court argued that in 1990, Croatia was still a part of Yugoslavia and had no legal authority to organize the defense of Osijek. According to HDSSB, court ruling stands for *de facto* criminalization of the Homeland war, as well as Croatians who fought against the Serbian forces:

Accepting this verdict would mean that all the Croatian patriots who before 8 October 1991 took weapons and stood at the bulwark of Croatia became marked not as the Croatian defenders, but as outlaws, members of militia and destroyers of the constitutional order of Yugoslavia” (*Speech by Dinko Burić*, 28.8.2010).

Generals of Homeland war are usually portrayed as heroes among the Croatian public, but recent trial processes that were led against some of them revealed their negative military background as war crime perpetrators (Soldić 2009, pp.1–5). While the imprisonment of Gotovina was decried by majority of the Croatian public, Glavaš was not in such a favorable position. In the HDSSB statements, achievements of generals, as well as their possible guilt, are usually collectivized in

order to make sure that Glavaš remains included into the ‘heroes’ narrative. Issue of sentencing Glavaš is therefore framed as a witch hunt against all Croatian generals, and this was effectively translated into the electoral campaign:

“We were not dreaming of such Croatia, with 300000 unemployed, where people work without getting paid, or cannot live from their salary. Those who gave lives for this country did not die so that Croatian generals would be imprisoned; such as Ante Gotovina in the Hague and Branimir Glavaš in Mostar” (*Glas Slavonije*, 28.11.2011.)

“Vote for HDZ is the vote for my imprisonment! (*Vecernji list*, 4.11.2007)”

Another symbol of the Croatian Homeland war that is commonly mentioned is the first president Franjo Tudjman. With Glavaš being the founder of HDZ in 1989 and his associates being the former HDZ members, it is worthwhile to note his opinion on the HDZ during the 1990s. Part of the reason for HDSSB ‘surviving and thriving’, despite being a splinter party of HDZ is, according to Čular and Henjak, its commitment to HDZ in the 1990s and to the late president Tudjman (Čular & Henjak 2013, p.25). Opinion of Glavaš and HDSSB towards HDZ in the 1990s and towards Tudjman shows itself nicely in the data:

“They all say that they are the founders, but they are not. The founders of HDZ are the 48 people on the lake of Jarun at 17 June 1989. Those are the founders, and all others only joined the movement, to its core which unstoppably ran against the old system... They are just taking other people’s merits. I am very proud of the fact that I was given the honor, at this secret and illegal founding committee, to raise my hand and say ‘yes’ for Franjo Tudjman as the president of HDZ” (*Glavaš interview to javno.com*, 25.5.2009.).

Despite its strong orientation towards the Croatian population in the centre, the statements of the HDSSB do contain appeals to Slavonians, thus moving the party away from the exclusive national pole of the ethnonational dimension. The next two quotes show how the HDSSB refers to the Slavonian population:

“Between the mechanical raising of hands with a sticking plaster on our mouth and the struggle for a better life of Slavonian people and our entire region, we have chosen the more difficult path” (*Glas Slavonije*, 22.4.2005.).

“It is time that Slavonians and Baranians raise their voice and say that they no longer want to live in the misery, with a high level of unemployment” (*Glas Slavonije*, 12.5.2005).

As in the case of decentralization where the HDSSB had to repeatedly refute the accusations of being ‘autonomist’, the case of ethnonational dimension also points to conflict of interests that occurs in the HDSSB demands. Being the founder of the HDZ, Croatian general and one of the closest Tudjman’s allies on the one hand, and trying to put forward his idea of regionalization of Slavonia on the other, Glavaš and HDSSB faces the challenge in trying to reconcile those two seemingly unconnectable facts. Something that would in other circumstances be regarded as yet another demand for more self-government, in Croatian circumstances, marked by strong and successful nation-building project coupled with the idea of unified territory, it becomes a strong credibility constrain that has to be surpassed.

One doesn’t have to go further than the party’s name and symbols to see this tension, since the full name of the party (Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja) contains both reference to Croatia, as well as to Slavonia and Baranja. As Ishiyama and Breuning argue in the recent study, by adopting a certain name, ethnic parties signal to voters the extent to which they are ready to include different identities in their program (Ishiyama & Breuning 2011, p.231). However, in their study on the impact of an ethnic party’s name on the party supporters’ satisfaction with democracy, they only consider the parties that have one or no groups mentioned in their name. Yet, in the case of HDSSB, both identities are present in the party’s name, which testifies on its dual identity. In the data, the struggle with the dual identity is best seen when the

HDSSB demands substantial financial transfers from the state budget, justifying it as the move that would help the entire country.

“‘Slavonia deserves more and Croatia deserves better’, said Dinko Burić. ‘HDSSB knows how to use the wealth of Slavonia and Baranja for the advancement of the country’” (*Glas Slavonije*, 25.11.2011.).

“The proverb ‘Think globally, act locally’ I translate as ‘Think Croatian, act Slavonian’. In other words, without the strong Slavonia, there is no strong Croatia” (*Glas Slavonije*, 28.11.2011).

5.3. Discussion of the results

The analysis of the HDSSB messages suggests that the party should be placed into the regionalist patriot category. On the self-government dimension, it is arguing for a territorial restructuring of state power, while on the ethnonational dimension, it has a stronger appeal to the Croatian identity than to the Slavonian identity. Having in mind the high correlation between the two categories, the emergence of a party such as HDSSB (nationalist appeal and arguing for decentralization) should be a rarity in the territorial party competition. This section aims to show the tensions that result from such placement in the two-dimensional space, as well as the external and internal opportunities and constraints that led to this placement. Nevertheless, HDSSB is not the only party falling into this category, and the section will conclude with an overview of other regionalist patriots.

5.3.1. Self-government dimension

With regard to the self-government dimension, the results suggest that HDSSB goes beyond the second category developed in the conceptualization section, namely protectionism, since it argues for a transfer of political powers and economic planning capabilities to the regional tier of government. This regional tier would be created by joining the existing counties into five regions, with Slavonia and Baranja being one of them, thus aiming for a territorial restructuring of the

state power. Those new regions would require substantial funds to finance newly acquired tasks, collected either by the regions themselves or transferred from the state budget. On top of that, they argue for the revival of the second chamber, this time in the role of representing interests of the regions, rather than the counties, as well as for bringing the Ministry of Agriculture to Osijek.

On the other hand, demands of HDSSB are not strong enough to place this party in the decentralist category as defined by Dandoy (Dandoy 2010, pp.208–210). The ‘mildest’ sub-category in this category in terms of degree of self-government sought, namely autonomist parties, includes parties which seek the full autonomy of their region, and some of the parties placed in this category are *Convergencia i Unio* (CiU) and *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV). The HDSSB is by those standards right to argue that they are not ‘autonomists’. That leaves HDSSB being stuck somewhere in between the first and the second Dandoy’s categories. Rather than as a category that subsumes autonomist, federalist and confederalist parties, I argue that decentralist category should be viewed as a separate category, thus filling the large empty space between protectionist and autonomist parties.

How can the politicization of the self-government dimension be explained using the framework of external and internal approaches? As already hinted, once affluent region of Slavonia saw its post-war economic indicators constantly below the national average. This is mainly the result of the war, subsequent privatization, and both HDZ and SDP governments who failed to bring Slavonian GDP per capita closer to the national average. This explanation does not fit nicely into the dominant view that only rich regions develop regionalist sentiments (Keating 1997, p.389; Fitjar 2006, pp.336–339). Recent rise of regionalism based on economic success, such as that of Catalonia, Flanders and Northern Italy has led researchers to ‘forget’ the developments such as Wallonian and East German regionalism (Buelens & Van Dyck 1998; Daniel Hough 2000a).

While ‘rich region’ theories do have a point, this study found that a poor region can also develop regionalist sentiments. It may well be that the Geller’s ‘unequal diffusion’ account, where regionalism is based on the perception of unequal distribution no matter whether a region is poor or rich, is the most plausible one (Geller 1964: 166 in Williams 1977: 275).

Heavy centralization of the Croatian state also has to be taken into the account. Centralization is not portrayed as the problem *per se*, but is framed as a reason for the economic downturn of Slavonia. But the theory is ambiguous on the degree of self-government that parties in a poor region will argue for. On the one hand, it can be argued that poor regions will aim for more autonomy from the central state to be able to fully realize their economic potential. On the other hand, Keating argues that poor regions will aim for more centralization to make sure that the inflow of state money into the region is not jeopardized (Keating 1997, p.389). The HDSSB opted for the first solution, even though not wanting to go too far, thus keeping the central state as ‘the lender of last resort’.

But why did the HDSSB have to defend its self-government position from the accusations of being ‘autonomist’? As mentioned earlier, there exists a strong anti-autonomist feeling among the Croatian population, and especially among Slavonians, dating back to the 1990s when the third of the Croatian territory was occupied. Being the decorated Croatian general, chief commander of Osijek defense and one of the closest Tudjman’s allies, Glavaš could hardly afford for the HDSSB to be portrayed as ‘autonomist’.

5.3.2. Ethnonational dimension

As the analysis shows, HDSSB has a strong reference to the Croatian state and its population, even to the point where they might be considered nationalists. Particularly strong are the

references to the symbols of the Croatian statehood, as the Homeland war and the generals who led some of the successful military operations are defended against the ‘civil war’ thesis and the criminalization tendencies that stem from this thesis. Furthermore, the first president Tudjman is viewed positively, with the current leadership of HDZ being unworthy of leading the Tudjman’s party. With regard to the territorial sovereignty of Croatia, another point worth emphasizing is their reaction to the arbitration agreement signed between Croatia and Slovenia, which was regarded as the (yet another) sale of the Croatian territory.

On the other hand, HDSSB does not appeal exclusively to Croatians, since their primary goal is to capture the votes of Slavonian voters. The HDSSB appeals to Slavonians, more precisely to their poverty despite once being a successful agricultural region and despite their noble role in the Homeland war, can be explained with regard to both short term and long term plans. In the short run, the HDSSB seeks the maximization of the electoral support in Slavonia, which would give strength to its demands for regionalization in the national parliament. In the long run, since the party aims at creating a single Slavonia and Baranja region, reference to the Slavonian identity and its distinctiveness can be thought of as a part of the region-building process. Having the population with a coherent regional identity facilitates, if not determines, the successful implementation of territorial reform.

Nevertheless, Slavonians are considered at most as a subpopulation of, rather than the population separate from, the population in the centre. In those shifts between the two identities, however, tensions tend to emerge to the surface. Still, the HDSSB leadership has managed to find the response that allows for the effective overcoming of those tensions. Similarly to the English region of Cotswolds, which was portrayed as the ideal version of England (Brace 1999, pp.90–

92), flourishing of Slavonia is presented as the condition for the flourishing of the entire state, and the Slavonian identity is portrayed as the essence of the Croatian identity.

How might those identity struggles and, more generally, HDSSB positioning on the ethnonational dimension be explained within the framework of external and internal resources? With regard to the external constraints, one of the most stringent is the fact that the Slavonian population is not ethnically different from the population in the rest of the country, since the language in Slavonia, the good indicator of ethnicity, is Croatian. Yet, the constraint that drove them further towards the nationalist pole is their history as the border region between Croatia and Serbia (Yugoslavia), and their exposure to conflict which produced the narrative of both martyrdom and victimhood of Slavonians, on behalf of the rest of Croatia. Another external constraint was the inability to break loose from the two-bloc pattern of party competition revolving around value issues, as well as from the voting record for HDZ that Slavonians have. Therefore, HDSSB responded in the only way they could: staying loyal to the rightist bloc and even emphasizing the division further by invoking the principles of Tudjman's HDZ.

As for the internal constraints, leadership role of Glavaš, former Commander in Chief of Osijek defense and founder of HDZ, was a serious credibility constrain in trying to appeal more exclusively to the Slavonian population. Moreover, adopting the nationalist rhetoric with regard to the prosecuted Croatian generals certainly had an instrumental role in portraying Glavaš as yet another Croatian general exposed to the witch hunt led by Sanader's HDZ. Another internal constraint is the organizational origin of HDSSB, namely the fact that it is a splinter party of HDZ, with respect to both party-in-the-central-office and the party-on-the-ground faces.

5.4. Regionalist patriots category and its implications

5.4.1. Other parties from the regionalist patriot category

Another regionalist political party from Croatia falls into this category, namely the Alliance of Primorje-Gorski Kotar (PGS). Similarly to HDSSB, one of the main concerns of PGS is the heavy centralization of Croatia, particularly in the fiscal domain⁶. In light of this concern, they demand regionalization of Croatia and the abandonment of counties⁷. Coupled with fiscal decentralization, deconcentration (transferring some ministries and state agencies to the regional level), as well as with devolution, such territorial reform should increase the efficiency of the state apparatus, especially when it comes to developmental programs. Neither of party documents mentions the specific regional identity, nor is the party known in the Croatian public for its promotion of regional identity (in the extent that would overshadow its national identity).

Another post-Yugoslav country, Serbia, recently experienced the rise of territorial politics. Seeing that Serbia is heavily centralized (Đorđević 2012, p.183), Together for Šumadija (*Zajedno za Šumadiju*) decided to bring this issue into the party competition. The most important point of their program⁸ is decentralization of state power, not only to the region of Šumadija, but to all Serbian regions. On the other hand, this party does not appeal to the specific ‘Šumadian’ identity, and can be regarded as having a national appeal, mostly due to the pronounced anti-autonomist sentiments among Serbian population. The party is affiliated with the national organization of regionalist parties, United Regions of Serbia (*Ujedinjeni Regioni Srbije*)⁹, whose slogan is ‘Strong regions, strong Serbia’.

⁶ http://www.pgs.hr/txtovi/region_hrv.pdf

⁷ http://www.pgs.hr/txtovi/hrv_zemlja_regija.pdf

⁸ <http://ebookbrowse.com/program-zajedno-za-sumadiju-doc-d182110867>

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Regions_of_Serbia

One of the most centralized countries of Latin America, namely Chile (Von Haldenwang 2008, pp.24–27) saw the rise of regionalist party named Regionalist Action Party of Chile (*Partido de Acción Regionalista de Chile* – PAR), which operated in I, II and III Chilean regions. Since the Chilean electoral system favors the two largest parties, PAR had little chance of getting into the national legislature. To more effectively challenge the two major parties, PAR united with the Independent National Alliance into the nation-wide Regionalist Party of the Independents (PRI).

Even though not being a regionalist party, the program of PRI may suggest the platform of its founding party, the PAR. PRI argues that more power should be given to the municipalities and regions, having in mind the principle of subsidiarity. They are primarily disappointed with concentration of revenues in the centre and Chilean binominal party system. They argue for a wider participation and even distribution of resources among the regions, and decentralization (both political and fiscal) is seen as a way to overcome both problems. With regard to the ethnonational dimension, their slogan is ‘*La Patria Somos Todos*’ (Homeland is all of us), which leads to the conclusion that they appeal to Chilean population. Under the heading of ‘National Unity’ (*Unidad Nacional*), their program argues for reconciliation of Chilean society, in order to overcome the divisions that were brought by Pinochet dictatorship¹⁰.

5.4.2. Back to the roots of territorial party competition

Most of the Western European states were exposed to the wave of decentralization reform, and some of them went even further and granted their regions a very wide scope of self-government. Prominent examples include Spain, Italy, Germany, UK and to a certain extent France. The literature on the territorial aspect of party competition has mostly repositioned itself to capture those developments. One consequence is that the decentralization is no longer seen as the

¹⁰ http://www.pricentro.cl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=110

dependent variable, caused by the success of regionalist parties, but as the independent variable which affects the strategies, organization and success of regionalist parties (Masseti & Schakel 2013, p.5; Brancati 2006, pp.657–660). Moreover, due to the increasing stakes at the regional level of party competition, regionalist party scholars have abandoned the analysis of regionalist parties in a single-level party competition, which is characteristic of centralized states, and have repositioned themselves towards studying regionalist parties in multi-level party competition (Deschouwer 2003, pp.213–214; Hepburn 2010, pp.527–528). Those developments resulted in centralized countries and regionalist parties that operate within those countries being left out of the mainstream literature.

Another injustice done to regionalist parties has been equating them with ethnoregionalist parties. The seminal work on regionalist parties, namely *Regionalist parties in Western Europe*, edited by De Winter and Türsan (1998), testifies on this problem. Even though the label *regionalist* stands in its title, right in the introduction of the book Türsan labels this category as ‘ethnoregionalist’ (1998, p.5), and all other authors in this volume accepted this label. Paradoxically, Miodownik (2006, p.2) argues for bringing the territoriality back into the study of territorial politics, but his units of analysis are ethnoregionalist parties, thus effectively eliminating non-ethnic regionalist parties from the discussion. One reason might be that those parties are usually seen as having an exclusive group identity, a notion first established by Lipset/Rokkan account of development of centre-periphery cleavage, and reinforced by the afore mentioned 1998 volume. This is up to a point understandable since there is a high correlation between the two dimensions (0.85). Nevertheless, this work responds to the call of Gomez-Reino (2008, p.6), who argues that not all parties have exclusive group identity, and a new categorization of regionalist parties was

developed to allow for non-ethnic parties from homogeneous states to be included into the study on territorial party competition.

Developments that were described into the previous two paragraphs resulted in the category of regionalist patriots to be severely understudied, especially the parties that operate in centralized states. By looking back several decades ago, one may realize that many federalized countries were once centralized, and that the development of regionalist party was one of the main causes of this decentralization (e.g. Belgium). This process was nicely explained in the recent study by Sonia Alonso (2012). In a nutshell, she argues that once the governing state-wide parties in centralized states perceive that a regionalist party is threatening their survival in one region by capturing its voters, they will respond by initiating devolution program, the most important aim of regionalist parties. This devolution will allow statewide governing parties to credibly portray themselves as decentralists, thus eliminating the ‘issue ownership’ of decentralization that regionalist parties have.

This theory has policy implications for Croatia, Serbia, Chile and other heavily centralized, but ethnically homogeneous countries. Development and strengthening of regionalist parties in those countries may in future compel statewide governing parties in those countries to initiate devolution reforms. Theoretical implication of this possible course of events is that the scholarship on territorial party competition might have to return to its roots, and rediscover decentralization as a consequence of success of regionalist parties. Studying the category of regionalist patriots is worthwhile, since they have already proven themselves as important actors in bringing up the issue of territorial reform in centralized states, and might be a crucial link of future decentralization reforms.

6. Conclusion

The Europe has witnessed an upsurge of territorial politics in the last couple of decades, and Croatia, even though being a young democracy, followed the trend. At the first elections in its history, Croatia saw the rise of a regionalist party, namely Istrian IDS. Having in mind the Istrian history of being for a long time separated from the rest of Croatia and Istria's diverse population, the rise of Istrian regionalism in response to unifying tendencies pursued by HDZ was expectable. Yet, the recent rise of another regionalist party, HDSSB in Slavonia and Baranja came like a bolt from the blue.

As the assistance in systematizing the opportunities and constraints that HDSSB faced while politicizing the territorial dimension of party competition, I used the framework of external and internal resources developed in the seminal volume on regionalist parties edited by Lieven De Winter and Huri Türsan (De Winter & Tursan 1998). From the resources that are external to HDSSB, this work covers Slavonia's history, Croatia's territorial history, Slavonia's economic relationship with the centre, level of decentralization, presence or absence of different culture in the region and the strength of existing cleavages. Among the internal resources studies there are leadership role of Branimir Glavaš and HDSSB organizational features.

To better capture the strategy of HDSSB, this work proposes a new categorization of regionalist parties based on the two most salient dimensions in territorial party competition. The first dimension is the self-government dimension, on which regionalist parties take position depending on the scope of territorial restructuring of the state power that they seek. The second dimension, namely ethnonational, captures the appeal toward the population in the centre, as parties can appeal only to the regional population, have mixed identity or appeal only to the population in the centre. Juxtaposing those two dimensions, even though not being perfectly orthogonal, produced

four categories of regionalist parties: regionalist unionists, regionalist party *via facti*, regionalist patriots and ethnoregionalist parties.

The research question that was set in the introduction is: how did HDSSB respond to the internal and external constraints while devising its strategy of mobilization of Slavonian voters? The results of the qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles and self-produced content suggest that the HDSSB can be placed into the regionalist patriot category of regionalist parties.

The position of HDSSB on the self-government dimension is the demand for regionalization accompanied by devolution and substantial fiscal decentralization, as well as for the revival of the second chamber. On the other hand, the degree of self-government sought is not high enough to place the HDSSB in the autonomist group as defined by Dandoy. This positioning is the result of the external opportunities, such as the unfavorable economic relationship of Slavonia with the centre and the heavy centralization which was framed as the facilitator of economic downturn of Slavonia. As for the constraints, the fact that Slavonia has a record of voting for rightist parties and anti-autonomist atmosphere in the Croatian public kept HDSSB away from demands for autonomy, and even required them to fiercely defend against the accusations of being ‘autonomist’.

The position of the HDSSB on the ethnonational dimension is marked by its dual identity, where the appeal towards the population in the centre prevails over the appeal to Slavonians. The major external constraint against appealing more to the inhabitants of Slavonia is that they are not ethnically and linguistically different from the rest of the population, followed by the narrative of Slavonian victimhood and the role of martyr of Croatia in the war. As for the internal constraints,

since they have to argue for dropping the war crime charges against Glavaš, they maintain strong nationalist rhetoric of defending the Homeland war against criminalization.

One limitation of this study stems from the nature of the data, since newspaper articles and self-produced content does not allow for a detailed review of decentralized tasks and institutional structure that HDSSB argues for. This limitation might be overcome by an interview with HDSSB leaders or looking into the policy proposals and amendments that were put forward by the party MP's.

This study adds to the literature on regionalism and regionalist political parties in several aspects. To my knowledge, this is the first systematic study of the HDSSB, and one of the few that explored regionalism and regionalist parties in Croatia. The HDSSB is a case of economic regionalism, since the most common explanation of regionalism, namely the ethnic distinctiveness, is not present in the case of Slavonia. But contrary to the mainstream study of rich regions and their demands for self-government, this study aimed to show that not only there can be a rise of regionalism in poor regions, but this regionalism can lead to demands for self-government.

On a more conceptual note and with an aim of bringing the territoriality back in, this study proposes the new categorization of regionalist parties, based on two of the most important dimensions of territorial party competition. Using the case of HDSSB, this study elaborates on an understudied category of regionalist patriots, regionalist parties that are most likely to come from ethnically homogeneous countries. Particularly, regionalist patriots that demand decentralization are likely to originate in heavily centralized countries. Future research should give more prominence to those parties, since they have already proven themselves capable of putting the

territorial reform on the agenda in centralized countries, even while facing the constraint of ethnically homogeneous nation, and will certainly play a role in actual decentralization taking place in those countries.

Appendix

Table 2: Results of head of executive elections in the five Slavonian regions (2009-2013)

2009					
Virovitica-Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar-Srijem	Slavonski Brod-Posavina	Pozega-Slavonia	
HDSSB/SDP/ HNS/HSU/SDSS	HDSSB/Green	HDSSB	HDSSB	HDSSB/ HSL	4018 (10.18%)
10979 (25.81%)	56964 (39.63%)		6849 (9.18%)		
HDZ/HSS/ HSL	HDZ/HSP/ HSU/HSS/HSL	HDZ/HSS/ HSP/HSL	HDZ/HSS/ HSL/HSU	HDZ/HSS/ HSP/HSU	18296 (46.33%)
24263 (57.04%)	55793 (38.81%)	53286 (67.85%)	30708 (41.17%)		
HSP	SDP/HNS/DSU	SDP/HNS/ DC/DSU/SDAH	SDP/HNS/ DC	SDP	15603 (39.51%)
5411 (12.72%)	24663 (17.16%)	20481 (26.08%)	20412 (27.37%)		
			HSP		13349 (17.90%)
2013					
Virovitica-Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar-Srijem	Slavonski Brod-Posavina	Pozega-Slavonia	
HDSSB/Greens	HDSSB/Greens	HDSSB/Greens	HDSSB	HDZ/HSS/ HSL	15702 (43.43%)
4072 (11.02%)	53367 (40.86%)	7915 (9.58%)	9705 (14.62%)		
HDZ/HSS/HSL	HDZ/HSP AS	HDZ/HSS/ HSP AS/HSL	HDZ/HSS/ HSPAS/HSL	SDP/HSU	9085 (25.13%)
19463 (52.67%)	29686 (22.73%)	45253 (54.76%)	34243 (51.59%)		
HSP AS/BUZ	SDP/HNS	SDP/HSU/HNS	SDP/HNS	Independent	2736 (7.57%)
SDP/HNS/ HSPD/HSU	HL-SR	ZL/BDSH		J. Gavran	
10070 (27.25%)	21367 (16.36%)	22425 (27.14%)	9041 (13.62%)		
HSP/NSH/HDSS	1591 (4.31%)	6887 (5.27%)			

Table 3: Results of county assembly elections in five Slavonian counties (2005-2013)

2005					
Virovitica-Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar- Srijem	Slavonski Brod- Posavina	Pozega- Slavonia	
HDSSB	HDSSB	HDSSB	HDSSB	HDSSB	-
HDZ/HSLS	HSP	HDZ	HSS/SDP/ HNS/DSSR	HDZ	10967 (31.46%)
HSS/SDP/HNS	SDP/HSS	HSS/SDP/ SBHS	HDZ	SDP	10415 (29.88%)
HSP	HDZ/HSLS	SDSS	HSP	HSS	3365 (9.65%)
HSU	HNS/LS/ SBHS/Greens	HSP	HB	HSP	3016 (8.65%)
2009					
Virovitica-Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar- Srijem	Slavonski Brod- Posavina	Pozega- Slavonia	
HDSSB/SDP/ HNS/HSU/SDSS	HDSSB/Green	HDSSB	HDSSB	HDSSB/ HSLS	2366 (6.17%)
HDZ/HSS/ HSLS	HDZ/HSP/ HSU/HSS/HSLS	HDZ/HSS/ HSP/HSLS/	HDZ	HDZ	15484 (40.41%)
HSP	SDP/HNS/DSU	SDP/HNS/ DC/DSU/SDAH	SDP/HNS/ DC	SDP	14229 (37.13%)
HSPD	Independent Gordan Matković	NSS	HSP	HSP	2181 (5.69%)
HDSS	SDSS		HSS/HSLS/ HSU	HNS/DC	792 (2.07%)

Table 3: Results of county assembly elections in five Slavonian counties (2005-2013) (continued)

2013					
Virovitica-Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar- Srijem	Slavonski Brod- Posavina	Pozega- Slavonia	
HDSSB/Greens 3512 (9.94%)	HDSSB/Greens 41569 (33.40%)	HDSSB/Greens 6407 (8.32%)	HDSSB/Greens 6905 (10.91%)	HDSSB/ Greens 4093 (11.70%)	
HDZ/HSS/HSLS 18023	HDZ/HSS/AS 28296 (22.73%)	HDZ/HSS/HSP 37613 (48.86%)	HDZ/HSP AS/ HSLS 25084 (39.62%)	HDZ/ HSP AS 13999 (40.56%)	
HSP AS/BUZ (51.01%)	SDP/HNS/ZL/ DSSR 8910 (25.22%)	SDP/HNS/HNS/ ZL/BDSH 18851 (15.15%)	Independent Mirko Duspura 8509 (13.44%)	SDP/HSU (28.05%)	9679
SDP/HNS/HSPD/ HSU (25.22%)	HSP/NSH/ HDSS/SP (5.49%)	SDP/HNS/ ZL/BDSH 5633 (7.32%)	SDP/HNS (13.24%)	HSS/HSLS/ SU/ZL (6.28%)	2167
HL-SR 1336 (3.78%)	Independent Anto Đapić (4.74%)	HL-SR 5905 (4.74%)	HSS/SU (9.94%)	Independent J. Gavran (5.80%)	2002

Table 4: Results of European Parliament election (2013)

County	Croatia	Virovitica- Podravina	Osijek- Baranja	Vukovar- Srijem	Slavonski Brod- Posavina	Pozega- Slavonia
HDZ/A-HSP/BUZ	243654 (32.86%)	7984 (46.45%)	12226 (25.64%)	15159 (48.48%)	11350 (40.85%)	7271 (42.53%)
SDP/HNS/HSU	237778 (32.07%)	4168 (24.25%)	12783 (26.80%)	7423 (23.68%)	6110 (21.99%)	4395 (25.71%)
HL	42750 (5.77%)	560 (3.26%)	2076 (4.35%)	862 (2.75%)	777 (2.80%)	578 (3.38%)
HSS/HSLS	28646 (3.86%)	474 (3.92%)	1071 (2.25%)	966 (3.08%)	1669 (6.01%)	504 (2.95%)
Ivan Jakovčić	28445 (3.84%)	80 (0.47%)	483 (1.01%)	216 (0.69%)	389 (1.40%)	82 (0.48%)
HDSSB/HDSSD/Greens	22328 (3.01%)	1413 (8.22%)	10720 (22.48%)	1828 (5.83%)	2535 (9.12%)	1675 (9.80%)

Table 5: Results of national elections in Slavonia (1990-2003)

1990			
1. Beli Manastir (voted: 27645)		2. Osijek I (voted 32072)	
SKH-SDP	11610/3994	HDZ	15611
Independent	5565	HKDS/HDS/SDH-KNS	9797
SS-SSH	2529	-	-
3. Osijek II (voted 32802)		4. Osijek III (voted: 34307)	
SKH-SDP	14284	HDZ	14919
HDZ	13823	SKH-SDP	11983
HDS/HKDS/DSSH-KNS	3735	JSDS	4319
5. Našice (voted: 40945)		6. Podravska Slatina (voted: 45356)	
HDZ	14919/11576	HDZ	22713
SKH-SDP	9633	SKH-SDP	6849/5033
HKDS	5204	Independent	5165
7. Vukovar (voted: 52310)		8. Vinkovci I (voted: 33679)	
SKH-SDP	31762	HDZ	19634
HDZ	19224	SKH-SDP/SS-SSH	8865
-	-	Independent	2419
9. Vinkovci II (voted: 25820)		10. Županja (voted: 27142)	
HDZ	15723	HDZ	13750
SS-SSH/SKH-SDP	6900	HSS/KNS	5515
Independent	2269	SKH-SDP	4818
11. Đakovo (voted: 31442)		12. Slavonski Brod I (voted: 26957)	
HDZ	19362	HDZ	13211

SKH-SDP	4460	SKH-SDP	10245
KNS	3970	HDS	2972
13. Slavonski Brod II (voted: 35364)		14. Slavonska Požega (voted: 45261)	
HDZ	19470	HDZ	24934
HDS/KNS	5646	SKH-SDP	9688
SKH-SDP	4600	HSLs/HDS/SDH/ HKDS/KNS	4318
15. Nova Gradiška (voted: 36552)		16. Daruvar (voted: 36583)	
HDZ	24491	SKH-SDP	20917
SKH-SDP	11369	SS-SSH	7922
-	-	-	-
17. Garešnica (voted: 30244)		18. Virovitica (voted: 30343)	
SS-SSH	11295	HDZ	17098
HDS	9065	SKH-SDP	7666
HDZ	8046	SS-SSH	2832

1992

1. Electoral district (voted: 28303)		2. Electoral district (voted: 47369)	
HDZ	10158 (35.89%)	HDZ	16080 (33.95%)
HSLs	5509 (19.46%)	HSLs	11718 (24.74%)
HNS	4253 (15.03%)	HSP	5105 (10.78%)
3. Electoral district (voted: 37243)		4. Electoral district (voted: 16418)	
HDZ	9991 (26.83%)	Independent	7241 (44.10%)
HSLs	8517 (22.87%)	HDZ	5934 (36.14%)
HSP	5399 (14.50%)	HSLs	1163 (7.08%)
5. electoral district (voted: 38750)		6. electoral district (voted: 44955)	
HDZ	17207 (44.41%)	HDZ	19259 (42.84%)
HSLs	4488 (11.58%)	HSS	5966 (13.27%)
HSP	3747 (9.67%)	HSLs	4897 (10.89%)

7. electoral district (voted: 49025)		8. electoral district (voted: 47630)	
HDZ	21037 (42.91%)	HDZ	19648 (41.25%)
HSP	5977 (12.19%)	HNS	6676 (14.02%)
HNS	5669 (11.56%)	HSLs	6063 (12.73%)
9. electoral district (voted: 47729)		10. electoral district (voted: 43253)	
HDZ	26083 (54.65%)	HDZ	19063 (44.07%)
HSLs	5826 (12.21%)	HDS	6656 (15.39%)
HSP	3381 (7.08%)	HNS	3518 (8.13%)
11. electoral district (voted: 40901)		12. electoral district (voted: 24754)	
HDZ	23999 (58.68%)	HDZ	8465 (34.20%)
Independent	3055 (7.47%)	HSLs	3585 (14.67%)
HSLs	2561 (6.26%)	SDP	3373 (13.63%)
1995			
11. electoral district (voted: 109524)		12. electoral district (voted: 85273)	
HDZ	57054 (53.81%)	HDZ	45263 (54.84%)
HSS/HSLs/HNS/ HND/SDP	40321	SDP/HSLs/HSS/ HNS/HND	22328 (27.05%)
HSP	8655 (8.16%)	HSP	4716 (5.71%)
14. electoral district (voted: 85751)		15. electoral district (voted: 63671)	
HDZ	44853 (53.81%)	HDZ	36001 (58.15%)
HSLs	23607 (28.32%)	HSLs	17479 (28.23%)
HSP	7365 (8.84%)	HSP	5752 (9.29%)
17. electoral district (voted: 81125)			
HDZ	44983 (57.37%)		
HSS/SBHS	17674 (22.54%)		
Independent	9505 (12.12%)		
2000			
4 th electoral district (voted: 262552)		5 th electoral district (voted: 275172)	
HSLs/SDP/SBHS	98084 (38.04%)	HDZ	82872 (30.75%)
HDZ	61957 (24.03%)	SDP/HSLs)	71780 (26.63%)

HSS/LS/HNS	37522 (14.55%)	HSS/LS/ HNS	51342 (19.05%)
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2003			
4 th electoral district (voted: 214859)		5 th electoral district (voted: 220421)	
HDZ	74900 (35.72%)	HDZ	88247 (41.17%)
SDP/LS/LIBRA	38508 (18.37%)	SDP	31659 (14.77%)
HSP	18972 (9.05%)	HSS	19726 (9.20%)

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