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**ETHNO-REGIONALIST PARTIES AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION:**  
**THE CASE OF THE UNION VALDOTAINE**

**(«Les partis ethno-régionalistes et les conséquences de la participation au pouvoir: le cas de l'Union Valdôtaine»)**

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Aosta Valley in Northern Italy has a long tradition of political independence and administrative autonomy because of its strategic geographical position within the Alps. From 1034, the province of Aosta belonged to the Dukedom of Savoy. However, it was annexed by the Italian government at the end of the XIX century, during the process of unification of the Kingdom of Italy. This specific development prompted the “invention” of a more concrete notion of the *Valdôtaine* nation, as a predominantly French-speaking community - at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 94.6% of the population of the Aosta valley was French-speaking (Woolf, 1996: 32) – became a concentrated linguistic minority within the new unitary Italian state being constructed. The political claim for the right of self-determination and autonomy of the French-speaking community arose during the interwar years as a result of the fascist process of standardization and Italianization. These processes served to strengthen the autonomist and linguistic claims of the French-speaking community in this mountain region, and to consolidate the minority nationalist movement. Even though a Franco-provençal dialect (*patois*) has been widespread among the mountain population and the city elites during the last five centuries as well as French, the centrality of the French language as the core identifier of this new autonomist sentiment was strengthened during the Second World War (Table 1). During the resistance against Nazi-fascists, the need for shaping a common language as a symbol of a community fighting against the external threat of fascism led the Aosta Valley elites to the choice of the consecration of French as the constitutive element of the *Valdôtaine* identity.

### **Table 1 about here.**

The Union Valdôtaine (UV) was founded in 1945. Rooted in the resistance antifascist autonomist movements, the UV was created as a regionalist trans-party association and become a fully-fledged political party only in 1949. The association was then focused on a single basic goal: to negotiate with the central government the Autonomy Statute for the Aosta Valley. Over a period of twenty years, the UV established itself as the main representative for autonomist political claims within this region; the party acquired a hegemonic position within the Aosta Valley’s political system and secured the monopoly of the outward representation of the region’s interests in the Italian and European parliaments

The UV was in its first years an autonomist party with slight tendencies towards irredentism, easier to assimilate with anti-system parties than with regionalist parties. The party’s political programmes claimed for the autonomy of the region within a unitary state, but the UV was also composed by few internal factions that still fought for achieving the complete independence from the Italian state. Later on, the party integrated some typical features of ethno-regionalist parties. With this term are designed the parties that not only claim for the autonomy of a region or a community, but also

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<sup>1</sup> A modified version of this paper is going to be published as a chapter entitled: «*Minority nationalist parties: the case of union Valdôtaine*», in ELIAS, A.; TRONCONI, F. (2008), *Minority Nationalist Parties and the Challenges of Political Representation: A Framework of Analysis*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press (forthcoming, June 2008).

base these claims on the existence of ethnic cleavages within the considered area. The emphasis was put on concepts of opposing ethnic groups and nations rather than on concepts of linguistic minorities and administrative and political autonomy (De Winter, 1998). In general, the same party can be qualified both as autonomist and ethno-regionalist (De Winter, 1998), but in this case the two elements of autonomist requests and ethnic claims are separated and were integrated in the UV's ideology in two different moments. The shift undergone at the ideological level from an autonomist party to an ethno-regionalist party has been accompanied with a change at the organizational level from a personalized and liberal pre-fascist organization to a party featuring complex, modern and managerial structures.

In this context, in order to examine the patterns of further development of this party, it is useful to apply the heuristic tools of Pedersen's model and the notion of "*party lifespan*" as amended by Deschouwer (Pedersen, 1982 and Deschouwer, 2004). In this case, as the UV develops its electoral strength it passes five critical junctures. The thresholds defined by the model are the threshold of *declaration*, the threshold of *authorization*, the threshold of *representation*, the threshold of *relevance* and the threshold of *governance*. It is important to underline that the four stages identified by Pedersen are based on the assumption that a party can go backward as well as forward in the lifespan continuum.

Moreover, as the basic hypothesis of the model is that the aim of any party is to participate in electoral competition and gain political representation, it is possible to assume that the four *thresholds* are generally consecutive (Deschouwer, 2004). In the case of the UV, this is particularly true: the party gained political representation in 1949 and never lost it, thus crossing the threshold of representation definitively. Then, the most interesting phases to be analyzed become the threshold of relevance and governance, which can provide some interesting tools to understand what kind of party's internal and external adaptations have been implemented as a consequence of electoral successes and failures.

Therefore, I will give a descriptive account of the UV's lifespan from 1945 to 2006 and I will try to analyze the factors that have led to this specific lifespan pattern. Furthermore, I will try to examine the consequences in terms of internal organization and political goals of the evolutions in the electoral fortunes of the party. The party's political goals have fluctuated from being a policy-seeking party to becoming a vote-seeking party to consolidating its office-seeking nature. Thus, I will try to link these internal transformations in terms of organization and goals to the changing electoral fortunes of the party and I will try to weight the effects of the mentioned external evolutions on the internal functioning of the UV. Finally, I will also analyze the degree of UV's success in terms of policy impact, examining how the UV has met its goals and describing the ways in which the UV's political strategies implemented at regional, State and European levels have increased the institutional, political and financial autonomy of the *Valldôtaine* minority nation.

## 2. The lifespan of the Union Valdôtaine

### 2.1 *The thresholds of declaration and of authorization*

The UV was founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1945, with the legal permission of the allied governments. The UV was created mainly by members of the Italian mainstream parties: the Democrazia Cristiana (DC-Christian Democrats) and the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI-Socialist Party). In fact, the UV was created as an inter-party cultural and political association that admitted members “without distinction of political ideology” (art.2, UV Statute of 1945). The party established permanent organizational structures and mobilised within the regional and state-level political arenas in order to influence the political debate among mainstream Italian parties on the design of the new autonomous regional institutions. For example, in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, consistent with its role as outsider and as protest association, the UV ordered its members and supporters to nullify their votes by writing the word “*Plébiscite*” on the ballots, in order to dispute the territorial autonomy provisions set up at the end of the war by the Italian government (see *infra*, paragraph 4.2) and ask for broader self-government institutions.

However, it would be a further three years before the UV declared its intention to participate in elections. This is due to the fact that the UV was initially constituted as a non-party association and that the association did not dispose at the time of the personnel and financial resources to compete directly in the electoral competition. Instead, the UV supported independent civic lists that competed in the local elections of 1946 and that gained exceptionally good results<sup>2</sup>. A new Special Autonomy Statute was adopted by the Italian parliament in 1948, thus increasing the scope of the exclusive competences of the Aosta Valley Region and finally guaranteeing its bilingualism by law. Nevertheless, the Special Statute needed many specific implementation laws in order to make the autonomy provisions effective. The nation-wide Italian parties seemed unable or uninterested in defending these needs as strongly as the UV. Moreover, the good results achieved in the local elections in 1946 showed that the electorate was ready to support a new autonomist party aimed at representing the specific interests of the Aosta Valley people. Thus, in 1949 the UV changed its statutes (art. 2) to become an independent political party and announced its decision to participate in the regional electoral competition. Shortly after this announcement, the party presented its official symbol and the signatures necessary to obtain the legal authorization for competing in regional elections.

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<sup>2</sup> Within a pure PR electoral system, the electoral coalition formed by the communist, the socialist and the republican parties gained the majority of votes in 8 municipal councils (*conseils communaux*) over 45, while the civic lists supported by the UV gained the majority of votes in 55 municipal councils over 45 and the DC won in 11 municipal councils.

## 2.2 The threshold of representation

The UV passed the threshold of representation on the regional level in 1949. With a majority uninominal regional electoral system having been approved by the Italian parliament in January 1949<sup>3</sup>, the UV's list gained the majority of votes and obtained 28 seats out of 35 in the Aosta Valley's regional assembly. Since then, and in spite of variable electoral performances, the UV has never lost its representation within the regional assembly (see Table 3). The UV achieved very good results during the 1950s and the early 1960s (see Table 2 and Figure 1). The UV reaped the benefits of this first-past-the-post system based on a single constituency whose boundaries overlapped with the territorial distribution of the region's French-speaking community.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the UV's electoral results declined and were the lowest in its history (see Table 2). One factor explaining this electoral decline was the change in the electoral system to one of proportional representation in 1963<sup>4</sup>. This had the effect of forcing the party to count only on its own electorate forces, because the UV could not rely any more on the votes allocated to the other parties of the electoral alliances made with State-wide parties under the majority electoral system (mainly Christian Democrats, communists and socialists). The Aosta Valley region obtained the competence to define autonomously its electoral system in 1989 and chose to maintain the PR system adopted previously in 1963 and the indirect election of the president of the Region<sup>5</sup>.

The UV's electoral performance was also affected, however, by the creation of new political parties that campaigned directly for the regionalist vote. Rival autonomist parties were established when internal factions within the UV split to create the *Rassemblement Valdôtain* (RV) in 1966, and later the *Union Valdôtaine Progressiste* (UVP) in 1971. The UV also faced increasing competition from the regionalist wing of the state-wide Christian Democrats (DC). The regionalist faction of the DC split in 1970 to establish a new party, namely the *Democratichi Popolari* (DP).

After a period of adaptation and transition (see Table 2), the UV began to increase its electoral share from the late 1970s onwards. The UV regained control over the minority nationalist political space in 1976, with the break-away groups being re-incorporated into the party. Since then, the regional electoral results of the UV followed a constant growth trajectory, which has seen the party increase its vote share by an impressive 36% in 25 years. Over the last thirty years, therefore, the UV has been an extremely successful party at regional level; whilst the party came close to securing an absolute majority of votes and seats within the regional parliament several times during this period, this was finally achieved in 2003.

### Table 2 about here.

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<sup>3</sup> President of the Republic's Act 8 January 1949 n°2. The uninominal majority system (first-past-the-post) was corrected with the mechanism of *panachage*, which allowed the distribution of the votes of preferences among different lists. Therefore, the voter could vote at the same time for one list and give his preference to a specific candidate on a different list.

<sup>4</sup> National Law 5 August 1962 n°1257.

<sup>5</sup> Constitutional Law n° 3/1989 and Regional Law n°3/1993. The president of the regional government is elected by the regional assembly among its members with secret ballot and simple majority vote.

**Table 3 about here.**

**Figure 1 about here.**

At the state level, the UV only began competing in elections to the Italian Parliament in 1948<sup>6</sup>. Since then, the UV gained at least one of the two seats reserved to the Aosta Valley constituency on the basis of the Special Statute (art. 47). In fact, the Special Statute and the Italian Constitution (art. 57) guarantee to the Aosta Valley population, in terms of political representation, one representative in the Italian Chamber of Deputies and one senator in every election, by defining the Valley as a single constituency. The results in state-level electoral competitions have been generally good, with the party regularly polling at least 30% of the votes (on average, the UV gained 44,7% of the votes between 1958 and 2006 – see below Table 4). This is mainly due to the fact that the electoral system of the Aosta Valley for state-level elections has always been a pure uninominal majority system with single ballot. In other words, since 1948<sup>7</sup>, the seats for deputies and senators have been allocated in a first-past-the-post race. This territorially concentrated party took advantage from the majority system because of the small size and the shape of the single constituency, defined to follow the territorial distribution of the French-speaking community. Being the party that claimed to defend the interests of this linguistic minority, the UV gained easily the majority of votes within the constituency and accessed political representation in the state assembly. The state-level electoral formula for the Aosta Valley's constituency has not changed substantially since 1948, adding a trend of stability to the regional political system.

**Table 4 about here.**

Nevertheless, at state level it is not possible to identify a pattern of electoral growth during the last thirty years similar to the one described at regional level. The results have been rather fluctuating, even if generally high, ranging from a minimum of 32% to a maximum of 55%. During 1960s and early 1970s, greater electoral competition within the Aosta Valley also impacted negatively on the UV's electoral performance, although the party's electoral share was recuperated by 1976. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year period of monopoly of outward representation in the Italian assembly. This was only compromised in 2006, when there was a decline in votes and the UV passed from 35% electoral preferences to 30,7% (see Table 2 above). This recent electoral decline reflects the

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<sup>6</sup>The UV entered the competition for the election of the Aosta Valley representatives to the Italian parliament only in 1958, because the deputy and senator elected in the 1948-1953 and the 1953-1958 legislatures were founding members of the UV that later chose to join the DC when the Union constituted itself as an independent party in 1949. In 1958, the UV decided to run with independent candidates for the posts of deputy and senator because the party obtained the electoral support of the left parties (PCI and PSI), which bargained a temporary electoral alliance with the UV.

<sup>7</sup>The N.L. 5 February 1948 n°26 defined the specific rules for the Aosta Valley constituency, while for the rest of the state a pure proportional representation system was adopted. The national system was transformed in a mixed majority electoral system with proportional corrections in 1993, but the Aosta Valley region kept a pure majority system with a uninominal constituency. The region's votes were not taken into account in the distribution of the 155 seats allocated with proportional system at the state-level in the Chamber, nor of the 83 seats allocated according to the proportional correction in the Senate. After the reform of Italian electoral laws in 2006, the votes of Aosta Valley are not counted in the allocation of the majority bonus both in the Chamber and in the Senate according to the new mixed proportional electoral system.

fact that the Union Valdôtaine has lost some of its support due to competition with left-wing parties and other smaller regionalist parties in the region. This fact contrasts with the ever stronger stability of UV's control over the regional assembly.

Thus, the UV's results show strong variations among regional and state-level elections and its electorate changes according to the type of the election. If one looks at Figure 1 one may see that, even though the UV's higher results in state elections are probably linked to the functioning of FPTP system, the electoral trends at state-level do not correspond to those at regional level. From 1958 to 1968, the electoral results in state-level elections are rather stable, while the results in regional elections are clearly declining. From 1968 to 1978, the electoral defeats are more evident at regional level than at state level. From 1978 to 2006, the UV's electoral growth on regional elections is rather striking, while the results at state level were rising slightly and then falling again<sup>8</sup>.

At the European level, the UV has dominated electoral competition for the European Parliament since the first direct elections held in 1979. The UV has always polled over 30% of all votes cast in the Aosta Valley. However, due to the inclusion of the Aosta Valley region a bigger electoral constituency for the North-Western Italy<sup>9</sup>, the UV's list has never passed the threshold of 50,000 votes necessary to gain a seat in the EU Parliament on its own. Until in 1999, the UV has always made electoral alliances with the Sardinian *Partito Sardo d'Azione (PSdAz)* as part of the list "*Federalismo*". In 1999, the UV's candidate Luciano Caveri, because of its personal political link with the centre-left list's leader Romano Prodi, decided to run in the European electoral competition with this centre-left list called "*I Democratici*" and entered the European Parliament in 2000 as a substitute for one of the resigning MEPs of PDS (Partito Democratico della Sinistra- Democratic Party of the Left). This gave the UV, and the Aosta Valley, its first and only political representation at European level. Even though the party has been a member of the EFA (European Free Alliance) since 1982, the UV sat with the European Liberal Democrats (ALDE) within the European Parliament, a choice that reflected the fact of the UV's alliance with the centre-left in the 1999 European elections.

The UV's strong electoral performance in elections at all three territorial levels has been the result of the transformation of the regional party system. When the competitiveness of the party system is examined, one can see that, from 1945 to the late 1960s, the Aosta Valley political system was rather competitive: the distance between the two main parties in terms of votes was in average 7,7% during the 1950s and remained lower than 10% during the 1960s and 1970s (Tronconi, 2005). This fact shows that the slightly fluctuating electoral results of the UV during this period were also the consequence of its nature of new party entering the electoral competition. The more recent elections, from 1990 to 2006, show a very different pattern (see Table 8). The party competitiveness of the Aosta Valley political system is now among the lowest in Italy. Since the 1990s, the distance between the

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<sup>8</sup> The curve drawn on the basis of regional electoral results for the period 1948-2006 is "V" shaped, while the curve drawn on the basis of state electoral results for the same period is "M" shaped, converging only in 1973-1978 drastic electoral drops both at state and regional level.

<sup>9</sup> National Law 24 January 1979, n° 18.

two main parties has increased from 8,5 to 22,7 and the UV has always been the party with the higher electoral result during this period. This fact suggests that the UV has become a dominant party within the regional political system.

Moreover, the analysis of data concerning the effective number of parties (ENP) shows that until 1990 the regional party system was characterized by a high number of actors competing in the electoral contest, well above the state-level average (Tronconi, 2005). This was a consequence of the presence of few regionalist parties in addition to the state-wide parties. From 1995 to 2000, the ENP of the Aosta Valley has declined by almost three points, a trend which is the reverse of that at the state-level. The transformations occurred in the Italian party system during the 1990s and the dissolution of the DC strengthened the relative weight of the UV, positively affecting its electoral performance. In addition, even if the Aosta Valley party system has never been completely separate from the Italian one because of the constant presence of state-wide parties, the regional voting is very distinct. The UV is present only in this specific constituency and historically focussed its action in winning regional elections. We may see that the distinctiveness of regional voting has always been the highest in Italy and has increased over the years (from 38% in 1983 to 69,5% in 1998; Tronconi, 2005).

**Table 8 about here.**

### **2.3 *The threshold of relevance***

On the regional political level, the threshold of relevance was crossed by the UV immediately after its foundation. The UV forced other parties to respond to its claims when it entered indirectly<sup>10</sup> the first temporary regional government set up by the Italian Prime Minister in 1946. Moreover, the UV strongly influenced the results of local and state-level elections in 1946 and 1948 by supporting independent and civic lists. In this sense, the UV thus passed the threshold of relevance before it passed the thresholds of declaration, authorisation and representation.

After competing directly in 1949 regional elections, the source of the UV's relevance changed: it participated in the formation of the first elected government, obtaining not only 3 regional ministers out of 7 but also the presidency of the "Giunta". From 1954 to 1959, the party's vote share declined, and the UV was confined to an opposition role. Nonetheless, the party, even when not in government (from 1966 to 1974), has always been considered as possible coalition partner because it had governed before and because it allied both with left parties and with DC – both in terms of electoral alliances and governing alliances. In fact, during this period the UV formed several parliamentary and governing alliances<sup>11</sup> with the DC (in 1949 and 1975) but also with communists and socialists (in

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<sup>10</sup> The first regional government was formed by 25 MPs, 5 per each of the main Italian parties (DC, PCI, PSI, *Partito d'Azione*, *Partito Liberale*) nominated by the Italian Prime Minister. The UV's regional MPs were at the same time members of other mainstream parties and were nominated on the basis of their affiliation to the latter.

<sup>11</sup> In general, the parliamentary alliances within the Aosta valley regional assembly correspond to the governing alliances within the regional government, with the two exceptions of the UV's external support to the DP-socialist government (1970-1973) and of the DC's external support to the UV-PSI government (1974-1975).



1954, 1959 and 1963) and was therefore considered as willing to make electoral alliances with both these parties according to contingent electoral strategies. As a party that claimed to defend the interests of the linguistic minority in this region, the UV was competing with the two most powerful state-wide parties at the time, the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party (which, at regional level, took part in the regional cabinet from 1959 to 1966), and tried to play a pivotal role in the formation of the electoral alliances.

At the state-level, the UV's minimal numerical presence in the Italian parliament never allowed the party to acquire coalition potential. In general, the UV's MPs gave their support to the great majority of the Italian governments in votes of confidence between 1948 and 2006 (Riccavand, 2000). Regarding policy relevance on the state level, the role of UV has been undoubtedly marginal given its minimal electoral strength, but not irrelevant. The UV managed to work with other mainstream parties, rather than other minority nationalist parties representing other linguistic minorities, to push for regionalist issues. In this respect, the UV's strategy at the state-level has differed from that of, for example, the Südtiroler Volkspartei (SVP). The SVP has usually pursued more independent strategies of action at state level; most recently, for example, during the parliamentary crisis of February 2007<sup>12</sup> the SVP negotiated individually with the Prodi II cabinet for further fiscal autonomy. On the contrary, the Union has tended to collaborate more often with traditional parties, especially with the Socialists and the Communists during the 1970s and the 1980s, for the legislative implementation of the financial autonomy of the Aosta Valley region. The political relationship between the UV's MP Luciano Caveri (Italian Deputy from 1987 to 2001) and the PC-PDS leadership (especially with the "*Ulivo- I Democratici*" coalition's leader Romano Prodi) during the last 15 years has strengthened the policy impact capacity of the UV at state level. Nevertheless, this special relationship at state level between the UV and the centre-left electoral and parliamentary cartel has been severely weakened after 2001, when the UV's newly elected senator, Auguste Rollandin, leader of the right faction of the party, entered the mixed parliamentary group called "Group for the autonomies".

#### *2.4 The threshold of governance*

With the exception of the 1954-1959 legislature and of the period between 1966 and 1974, the UV has always participated in the formation of governments on the regional level (see Table 5 and Table 6 below). Even though the UV has never formed a single party government, it has been the senior coalition partner in the majority of the 25 regional governmental coalitions ("Giunte") that have been in power until 2007. After moving from a protest position directly to government in 1949, the Union moved backwards over this threshold during the 1960s and the early 1970s, being excluded

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<sup>12</sup> On February 20, the Senate did not approve (two votes shy of the required majority of 160 votes) the law project for funding the Italian troops in Afghanistan, thus withdrawing the centre-left parliamentary majority's support to the government foreign policy. The Prime Minister resigned the day after. Prodi, after obtaining the new investiture as Prime Minister from the President of the Republic, gained the vote of confidence of the Senate on February 28 for 162 to 157 votes and the vote of confidence of the Chamber for 342 to 253 votes on March 2.

from executive formation seven times in twenty years. The threshold of governance is the only critical juncture that has been crossed backwards by the party at regional level. In the last seven cabinets, the number of portfolios allocated to the UV has grown rapidly and since 1993 the party has nominated 7 regional ministers out of 8 (Table 5). In the last fifteen years, the party has obtained 80% of government portfolios and all the presidency posts (Table 7). The trend of recent consolidation of the UV's regional political power is even more evident in comparison with the previous period. From 1946 to 1993 the party held 25% of the total amount of portfolios and 36% of the presidencies of the regional government. The regional government has begun to be considered as being one with the party; the UV has also succeeded in penetrating the regional and local public administration, thus developing some traditional “*cartelization*” mechanisms (Martial, 1996; Curtaz, 2006).

**Table 5 about here.**

**Table 6 about here.**

**Table 7 about here.**

At the state-level, the UV's minimum numerical presence in the Italian parliament never allowed the party to be considered as relevant for the formation of the Italian government. Nevertheless, the party always tried to take advantage of its marginal position in the Italian parliament in order to cross the threshold of governance. This was achieved only once, when the UV's votes were decisive for securing the vote of confidence in, and the parliamentary majority of the D'Alema II government in 1999. From December 1999 to June 2000, the regional representative to the chamber, Luciano Caveri, became the first and sole Aosta Valley member of the Italian government ever, after being nominated State Secretary for the Presidency of the Council.

### **3. Changes in party organization**

The UV organized five party congresses between 1946 and 1947 (*assemblées du peuple valdôtain*), with the participation of about 2500 grass-roots members per congress coming from the first local branches created during the previous year. The aim of these congresses was to define the first political programme of the party, to design the candidates for the local and state elections (who would have run indirectly within mixed civic lists) and to aggregate social consensus on the autonomy issues. The party on the grounds played a major role in building the first organizational structures and in defining the main political goals. When the party won the regional elections in 1949, the internal organization of the UV underwent a first and limited organisational change in order to manage the responsibility for the new political and administrative tasks. The secretarial staff of the party was increased, as well as the staff employed for parliamentary work.

During the subsequent two decades (1950-1970), in contrast, wider transformations were realized within the party, resulting in a clear shift of power away from party on the ground to the party in public office (see Table 9). On one hand, the *Mouvement* was progressively endowed with even

more simple central direction structures – the main political decisions were taken directly by the president of the party that, at the time, was also the president of the region and were implemented by the central direction without almost any consultation of the general assembly of the members. Until 1950, the distinction between the “legislative” and the “executive” branches of the party central direction was absent (Di Capua, 1994:160). The party gravitated around the charismatic figure of its first chairmen, Séverin Caveri, who held the presidency from 1946 to 1973 (see Table 11 below). Some scholars have applied to the UV’s initial organizational typology the concept of “liberal pre-fascist” organization (Martial, 1996: 833), because the organizational structure of the UV reminded the form of liberal Italian parties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were endowed with weak extra-parliamentary structures, strong leadership and narrow assembly organs. This centralized, hierarchical organisation with a weak role for party militants, typical of the cadre or “caucus” party, persisted over time.

On the other hand, since the 1950s the UV was affected by some important but informal and practical transformations. The consolidated cadre-party internal structure was radicalized and the party in public office progressively strengthened its position. By the end of the 1960s, almost all the members of the party’s executive organs also held political mandates and therefore the party was dominated by the party in public office. This development was the direct result of the passing of the threshold of representation on the regional level: the UV chose to concentrate the decision-making power in the hands of its president and of the UV regional representatives in order to consolidate the fluctuating electoral results of the party during the 1960-1970 period. The regional parliamentary group designed the party agenda and for several years the figures of the party chairman and of the regional Prime Minister were represented by the same person, Séverin Caveri.

**Table 9 about here.**

From 1949 to 1976, the party council, the *Comité Central*, was formally responsible for main decisions with regard to the electoral programme, the selection of candidates and the election of the party leader. The main function of the assembly of the local delegates was thus to elect the party council. Moreover, the council was led by the party executive, the *Comité Exécutif*, composed by the president, three members elected by the party council and all the regional and state-level MPs. The executive committee could take decisions that the council may ratify later and in practice exerted the leadership of the party well beyond the day-to-day decisions. As the executive committee did not meet on regular basis according to the party statute but at the will of the president of the party, very often the committee was compelled to implement political decision taken directly by the president (Proment, 1995: 64, 90). The weight of MPs and regional government members within the party council and the executive committee was overwhelming and the power of designing the party agenda and take final decisions was monopolized by the party in public office through informal rules and procedures (Martial, 1996: 823).

Although this cadre party model probably eased the UV’s smooth adaptation to political representation, it infringed heavily on the lack of internal democracy and proved to be unable to

contain internal fights and party ruptures. These tensions occurred principally during the period of electoral instability in the late 1960s. They were linked, on one hand, to the vote-seeking goal of the party, and were prompted by a lack of agreement with regard to the best electoral strategy to be adopted in an attempt to recuperate the party's electoral appeal. On the other hand, they also reflected protests by some groups of the party elite against the authoritarian and personalistic management of the UV's president Séverin Caveri.

These tensions were an effective challenge to the UV's party organization, since they prompted the third and main wave of internal organisational reforms implemented by the UV. The party's statutes were reformed for the first time in 1974, when the incompatibility between the chair of party president and posts of regional cabinet president, of regional minister and of state-level MP was introduced. In 1976, at the time of the re-incorporation of three regionalist movements into the UV, further changes saw the party's assembly, the *Congrès National* meeting every five years, was designed as the highest organ and constitutive power of the party, gaining the formal power to decide the party political programme and to elect the president. Relations with local branches and civil society were also improved and their decision-making responsibilities increased. The most important change was the introduction of detailed electoral regulations for the selection of political personnel. The number of elected members of the party council was increased. However, the regional Prime Minister, regional ministers and regional and state-level MPs were still given the right to sit in the executive committee, although with just a "consultative" vote power.

As a result of these organisational reforms, the UV became a considerably more complex political party that increasingly resembled a traditional mass party (see Table 9). The party in public office and the figure of the party president remained important features of the UV's organisational structure after these reforms. The separation between the party in central office and the party in public office remained weak within the UV. Nevertheless, these reforms represented a significant change from a personalized and liberal pre-fascist organization to more modern structures, featuring complex arrangements (Martial, 1996: 833). The UV also undertook to democratise its internal decision-making procedures.

A last wave of organisational reform was implemented in 1996-1997. These were not the direct result of crossing any threshold, but were a consequence of a period of political scandals linked to the UV's intelligentsia that caused a strong internal crisis within the party. The charismatic "*Unionist*" president of the Aosta Valley regional government, Auguste Rollandin, was then involved in two major legal scandals for bribery in 1991 and pronounced guilty by the regional section of the First Instance Court in 1992. The scandal caused strong reactions of disillusionment with, and contestation of, the centralized mode of leadership chosen by the party, among the rank-and-file members as well as among the party elites. The need for clearer separation between the purely political bodies of the party and the members charged with "administrative" tasks (regional and state-level MPs, members of regional government) was stronger than ever. Local branches, led by the new party president Charles

Perrin and federalist theoretician Bruno Salvadori, requested the creation of a system of balance of power between the party in central office and the party in public office, whose role in the decision-making process was predominant. In the 1997 statute reform, the total incompatibility with the charges of regional government president, of regional minister, of regional and state-level MP was extended to all the components of the executive committee. The UV's regional representatives and the major of Aosta were banned from the membership of the executive committee, now called *Comité Fédéral*. They could participate in the party's "legislative branch", the *Conseil Fédéral*, but not in the executive body. A weekly meeting among the regional parliamentary group, the state-level MPs and the president of the party was also set up in 1997.

The 1997 reforms constituted a first attempt to re-equilibrate the power of the party in public office within the UV's organizational structure. However, after gaining the absolute majority in the regional assembly in 2003, the statutes of UV were changed again. Article 26 of the statutes has been transformed in order to allow the party in public office to further strengthen its power: the president of the regional government, the state-level MPs and the party chairmen within the regional assembly became "membres de droit" of the executive committee, while regional representatives, regional ministers and the major of Aosta may participate but without the right to vote.

If one looks at membership and leadership figures (Table 10 and Table 11), one sees that the pattern of UV's organization as leader-dominated party has been reinforced by the limited dimensions of the militant and passive members' strata. Although the membership has increased from 1977 to 1990, the number of members as a proportion of the electorate (M/E) has been constantly low (Table 10). The data concerning the UV's membership are available only after 1977 and after showing a peak at the end of the 1990s (about 4200 members in absolute terms), the number of members slowly decreased by around 1,500 between 1990 to 2005. In relative terms, the UV's membership has been good but not exceptional. It passed from about 7% of the UV's electorate in 1988 to 12% in 2005, but this fact was mainly due to its growing electoral strength. The decline of the membership since 1992 has been accompanied by the decrease of the degree of encadrement of the voters (Martial, 1995). However, the party leadership has been relatively stable over time: there have been nine UV presidents over a period of 60 years (Table 11)<sup>13</sup>. The first president led the party for more than thirty years and the following two for nine and twelve years respectively. Therefore, the personal charisma of the chairman has always been fundamental in the party's organization.

**Table 10 about here.**

**Table 11 about here.**

On the basis of these membership data, I may assume that the process of party reform and modernization implemented during the 1970s and the 1990s has been sound and effective, but not

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<sup>13</sup> Séverin Caveri (1946-1973); Mario Androne(1974-1975); Joseph-César Perrin (1975-1984); Alexis Bétemps (1984-1997); Charles Perrin (1997-1998); Auguste Rollandin (1998-2001); Aurelio Marguerettaz (2001-2003); Manuela Zublena (2003-2006); Guy Césal (2006-).

enough ambitious to transform completely the very nature of the UV's organization. The internal structures have been partly democratized and the interaction between the party in central office and the party on the ground has been enhanced. The party did not dispose of a highly "*mobilisable*" membership and the overall size of the party is well under the average of other European ethno-regionalist parties (De Winter and Gomez-Reino, 2006). The UV remained substantially a cadre party, in which the party in public office keeps the control over the party's agenda and in which the extra-parliamentary action is rather underdeveloped. The relative weight and the relations among the three components of party organisation did not completely change over time.

#### **4. Changes in party goals and the policy impact of the Union Valdôtaine**

##### **4.1 *The shifts in ideology and party goals: from traditionalism to ethno-regionalism***

When the UV was founded in 1945, it was constituted as a national collective movement in which the pro-autonomy wings of the mainstream state-wide parties worked together in order to achieve the main goal of gaining political autonomy. The movement's ideology was strongly linked, in its first years, with the values of catholic anti-modern traditionalism. The UV represented the people of the Aosta Valley, which was seen as one cohesive entity formed by the two linguistic minorities and the few immigrants coming mainly from the Northern Italy, but who were generally well integrated in the region. The references to culture and identity were linked to a set of traditional values founded on the French language and on social conservatism. The "*ancien régime*" social model was combined with themes of territorial identity and the proposition of pre-industrial economic models. At this point, the main territorial demands of the party were focussed on securing administrative autonomy for the French-speaking minority. It was only later, in the 1960s and 1970s that a more ethnic dimension would be added to this discourse, which defined the people of the Aosta Valley as a distinct ethnic group. Having started its political career at the margins of the party system, the Union has been a policy-seeking party during the first years of its presence in the regional political system, from 1946 to 1949. It did not enter directly the electoral competition, but the party worked alongside state-wide parties in order to represent the interests of the local linguistic minority.

After deciding to enter directly the electoral competition at regional level in 1949, the UV's goal changed from policy-seeking to vote-seeking. In order to meet this goal, the UV understood the need for clearly differentiating itself from the traditional parties; the party thus undertook to situate itself more clearly on the centre-periphery cleavage, whilst the latter continued to be predominantly defined in terms of their position on the traditional left-right ideological axis. The UV modified its territorial demands and, whilst the party's aim had always the achievement of autonomy and the protection of bilingualism, the party isolated its irredentist and pro-annexionist factions (Pallaver, 2006)). The UV continued to prioritise vote-seeking when it began to compete in state elections in 1958 and in European elections in 1979. Thus, whilst initially policy influence from outside political institutions

was the priority for the UV, the decision to compete in elections at different territorial levels increased the importance of vote-seeking in order to exercise policy influence within regional and state-level democratic institutions.

Having achieved political representation at all the three territorial levels - regional (1949), state (1958), and European (2000) – the party further adapted its political goals to its new status. At State and European level the party continued to aim principally at obtaining electoral success, because its relative weight within the State and European political arenas was almost irrelevant and the UV hardly possessed the negotiating power necessary to influence the policy outcomes. At the regional level, in contrast, the UV mainly pursued policy goals, in order to influence the regional legislative production for implementing as rapidly as possible the legal provisions of the autonomy statute. As noted above, in 1949 the UV very rapidly moved from opposition to potential and actual government within the regional political arena, thus becoming a new governing party. With the goal of office incumbency having been achieved, the UV had a major role in shaping policy-making within the regional assembly. These goals were periodically re-assessed as a result of the UV's fluctuating electoral fortunes in the subsequent twenty-year period; when the UV did not take part (potentially or actively) in the formation of the regional government between 1954 and 1974, vote-seeking became once again a priority, as a means to re-enter government office and re-gain control over the policy-agenda.

Entering into government, however, had a negative impact on the UV's electoral performance. After having been the senior coalition partner in the 1949-54 and 1959-66 regional cabinets, the UV suffered a series of electoral failures at the regional and state levels. As noted above, one consequence of this was to trigger the emergence of internal tensions over the UV's electoral strategy that, in turn, led to several groups splitting from the UV to form rival regionalist parties. The creation of the DP in 1970 placed a new pressure on the UV to re-examine its political programme. The DP proposed a political project that conceptualised the Aosta Valley as a society without any ethnic or linguistic distinctions – insisting within its political and electoral programmes on the concept of territorial specificity and distinctiveness rather than on the concept of ethnic distinctiveness, but claiming with equal force the need for wider autonomy for the Aosta Valley. This diverged from the UV's programme of defending the linguistic minority's interests through autonomist claims. The UV's response was to redefine its ideology and political demands in order to restore internal order and recover its power position within the regional political system. As such, the UV began to adapt to power only after having lost it, as a direct consequence of electoral failures and the passing back over the threshold of governance. The UV reacted to the DP competition on the regionalist arena with the radicalization of its own ideology.

Between 1966 and the congress of the reunification in 1976, the UV defined a new political programme that has been elaborated in the subsequent thirty years. The shifts in party ideology and in party goals proceeded in a parallel way. The new paradigm was based on three constitutive elements: the Aosta Valley's historical and cultural *particularisme*, federalist theories and the construction of a

separate ethnic identity for the region<sup>14</sup>. The UV's elites attempted to reconstruct the autonomist identity of the Aosta Valley through the centuries and generated a burgeoning literature that interpreted the history and the traditions of the region instrumentally (Zanotto, 1968 and Colliard, 1965). In fact, there were new attempts to re-assert the sense of distinctiveness, in such a way that contradicted the DP's territorial and non-ethnic claims. Federalist theories – especially those associated with the figure of Emile Chanoux, a federalist intellectual killed by the fascists in 1944 – inspired the UV to formally commit itself to “global federalism” in its 1976 party congress. With the launching of a process of regionalization in Italy in 1970, the UV demanded a federal structure for the Italian Republic. In subsequent debates on the constitutional organisation of the Italian state, the UV has continued to demand the transformation of Italy into a federal state.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the concept of ethnicity became the main feature of the UV's political programme in subsequent years: the autonomist tradition of the region was thus linked to the existence of a specific ethnic group and not only of a linguistic minority.<sup>16</sup> The concept of Aosta Valley's native “people” was also further developed during this period, as was the theme of an external threat to this regional identity from the centralistic Italian government, unaware or uninterested of the Aosta Valley specificity. The UV claimed not to belong to the right or left parts of the political spectrum - “*ni droite ni gauche*” (neither left nor right) - but to the federalist and ethnic political traditions. This process of ideological change was also explicitly linked to the party's electoral goals, namely the “reconquista” of the regional power and the achievement of the absolute majority at the regional elections in the long term perspective, in order to become the “*Maîtres chez nous*” (Martial, 1996: 830).

This process of ideological re-positioning did not generate tensions between vote-seeking and the dilution of core party values. On the contrary, the UV's programmatic changes served to strengthen its electoral position, and the party rapidly re-gained access to regional government and stabilized its political representation at regional and state level from the late 1970s onwards. Upon first consideration, this is surprising not least because, during the last 50 years, Italian immigration into the Aosta Valley has increased enormously, and has significantly transformed the linguistic make-up of the region (see Table 1 and Table 12). The UV's re-assertion of the historical, linguistic and ethnic particularity of the Aosta Valley thus coincided with a trend whereby the traditional elements of the regional identity begin to lose their actual weight (Cuaz, 2003: 8).

**Table 12 about here.**

There are several reasons why the UV has succeeded in reconciling its ethnic-linguistic nationalism with an increasingly ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous regional community in

<sup>14</sup> Salvadori B. (1968). *Pourquoi être autonomiste*. Aosta: Musumeci Editore.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, in 1991 the UV's MPs presented an independent, spontaneous proposal for the federalization of Italy. The outcomes of UV's isolated federalization claims have been rather poor and the discussion of the law project reached a deadlock in the Constitutional Committee (Constitutional Law project n° 6042, 23.10.1991).

<sup>16</sup> For instance, the regional historical archives published between 1973 and 1975 a series of historical reviews that draw an alleged *summa* of the Aosta Valley's traditions based on the ethnic nature of the regional identity (*Cahiers sur le particularisme valdôtain*, Archives Historiques Regionales, 1973-1975).



the Aosta Valley. Firstly, the party declared itself willing to embrace Italians from other regions who shared the same political and value objectives. This “strategy of inclusion” aimed to garner electoral support from inhabitants of the Aosta Valley regardless of their ethnic origins. At the same time, however, the UV actively promoted a nationalist discourse that focused on the ethnic community, the language, the history and the geography of the region, and adopted more simple and *folkloristic* rhetoric that could be more shared by people belonging to different ethnic and linguistic groups. The party supported the creation of specific bodies for the defence of the regional ethnic identity (*Comité des Traditions*), introduced the teaching of regional history and civic culture in primary and secondary schools, and promoted French language teaching through civil service institutions.

Secondly, the UV claimed to be the representative of the interests of the Aosta Valley people against the external threat posed by the central state to regional autonomy. Many Italian immigrants accepted the UV’s political programme because they benefited from the policy outcomes implemented at regional level by the Union Valdôtaine (Cuaz, 2003:12). The political autonomy of Aosta Valley guaranteed the economic and social wealth of the region, especially after the enormous increase of the financial revenues enhanced in 1981, and the UV was the only party whose political action was specifically and formally aimed at achieving this goal.

Thirdly, the UV has managed to deliver these policy benefits because it has been very successful in consolidating its electoral dominance within the region. For example, the UV has joined different electoral coalitions at the local level, and at regional and national level the party has cooperated further with state-wide parties (mainly from the left) in order to maintain the control over the regional political system (Curtaz, 2006). The UV has also penetrated the vast majority of political, economic and social bodies within the region. The “*cartelization*” of the party has enhanced the UV’s ability to cultivate a stable electoral constituency. Since the 1980s, for example, the regionalist trade union Syndicat Autonome Valdôtain des Travailleurs (SAVT) has played an important role in political recruitment for the UV and the mobilisation of the party’s electoral base. To summarise, the UV successfully expanded its electoral support outside the French-speaking minority, and has contributed to the foundation of a civic sentiment of belonging to the regional community based on the shared acceptance by all the parties of the principles of autonomy and of the importance of the Aosta Valley’s Special Statute (Cuaz, 2003:13).

Nevertheless, some tensions between office-seeking goals and policy-seeking goals arose when the party entered the government coalition at state level in 1999. The party played on the centre-left governmental coalition’s weakness in terms of parliamentary majority to strengthen its relevance within the national arena. However, instead of supporting the new government without entering directly the governing coalition and of exploiting this pivotal role in terms of policy influence, the UV preferred to appoint one of its MPs at a ministerial office. Eager to gain, at last, political offices at state level, the UV entered into government.

#### 4.2 The policy impact of the Union Valdôtaine

As noted above, the UV was created in 1945 with the aim of securing autonomy for the Aosta Valley within the Italian state. However, the first provisions for the Aosta Valley's administrative, fiscal and economic autonomy were passed by the Parri Government on 7 September 1945 (the Royal Lieutenant Acts n° 545 and 546), before the establishment of the UV. These acts were the result of the negotiations developed between the Aosta Valley *maquisards*<sup>17</sup>, the Liberation Committee and the allies during the last months of the war. Nevertheless, the privileges granted to the region were substantially more limited than those requested. The UV was established on the basis of popular discontentment with the autonomy settlement, and the perception that the statute had been imposed upon the region by the Italian state, rather than negotiated with the region's inhabitants.

The role of UV in negotiating changes to the Aosta Valley's statute of autonomy between 1945 and 1948 was important, but not determinant. Although the UV played a role in shaping the final content of the autonomy statute for the region adopted in 1948, the determinant role within the negotiations at state-level was played by Federico Chabod (*Partito d'Azione*), who was the first president of the temporary regional government between 1946 and 1947 and was very well connected with the Italian elites in Rome. He led the negotiations within the Constituent Assembly in 1947 (Boiardi and Di Capua, 1994). The outcomes of the formal and informal interactions of the UV with the Constituent Assembly Committee and the Italian government undoubtedly influenced the shape of the final text, but in practice the main role belonged to President Chabod and partly to Emilio Lussu, the Assembly's *rapporteur* for the project of autonomy statute. The new Special Statute for the Aosta Valley was adopted by the Italian Parliament with the Constitutional Law n°4 on 26 February 1948, thus increasing the scope of the exclusive competences of the Aosta Valley Region. This success was widely recognized, however, as the result of the work of the elites that participated in the foundation of the Union Valdôtaine, thus disregarding the significant role of President Chabod.

However, the Special Statute needed many specific implementation laws in order to make the autonomy provisions effective. According to a sentence of the Italian Constitutional Court of 1963, the Region could exert the administrative competences attributed on the basis of its Statute only when the Italian parliament has adopted framework laws concerning these competences. In this context, the Union played a major role in the negotiations at state and regional level and has been the key actor in the agreements concerning the two main negotiating packages with the central government: the financial autonomy of the Region and the allocation of further administrative competences. The first was achieved with the adoption in 1981 of the state law<sup>18</sup> that set up the permanent allocation to the Region of the 9/10 of the fiscal revenues collected by the State within the Aosta Valley territory. The regional budget, negotiated every year with the central government, increased from 188 million Lire in

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<sup>17</sup> These were the French speaking resistance fighting German occupation during World War II.

<sup>18</sup> N.L. 26 November 1981 n°690, modifying the N.L. 6 December 1971 n° 1065 that defined the principle of national fiscal revenues apportion to the Aosta Valley Region, but without fixing any technical rule.

1980 to 2.778 million in 1998, and to 1.939.000 euros in 2003 (Cuaz, 2003). These legal provisions finally allowed the region to have complete control over the administrative competences allocated by the Statute<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, the UV's MPs at state-level highly mobilized in order to push the Italian parliament to adopt the implementation laws necessary to the effective enforcement of the provisions of the Special Statute. Between 1978 and 1989, the implementation laws concerning the complete transfer of administrative competences to the Region were adopted<sup>20</sup>. In 1993 the Constitutional Law n° 2/1993 reformed the Special Autonomy Statute (art. 48 *bis*) and compelled the central government to adopt the implementation regulations necessary for harmonizing state legislation with regional legislation<sup>21</sup>.

Furthermore, the UV's MP in the Italian parliament, Luciano Caveri played a major role in the process of adjustment of the state law concerning regional elections and actively contributed to the adoption of the Constitutional Law n°3 of 12 April 1989 that allocated the competence of choosing autonomously the regional electoral system to the five Special Autonomy Regions. Under the sway of the UV's majority, the regional assembly adopted its own electoral law in 1993. The more specifically ethnic and linguistic claims were also enforced effectively, with the practical implementation of the bilingualism in the public administration and with regard to the primary and secondary education structures<sup>22</sup>. The UV was therefore institutionalized within the regional political system as the "champion" of the Aosta Valley rights.

It is important to underline that the fact that the UV has met all of its goals pretty early within its lifespan continuum had not a negative effect on the party. It cannot be said that the UV, like the Volksunie, has been a victim of its own success. Rather, even though the UV realized the most important part of its autonomist claims with the adoption of the Special Statute in 1948, it was able to campaign for implementation laws in order to guarantee its control over the regionalist and autonomist agenda within the regional political arena. Later on, the UV modified its ideology in order to radicalize its political requests. Having achieved its main goals, the party simply requested for more from the central state. This strategy has paid off in electoral terms because the UV has consolidated its hegemony within the regional political system and monopolized the representation of the Aosta Valley within the Italian parliament. Undoubtedly, the success of this scheme of ideological radicalization is also linked to the progressive cartelization of the party and to the parallel growth of the social and economic wealth of the Aosta Valley region, as noted above. Insisting on the external threat from the central state to the Aosta Valley autonomy, which is at the source of the well-being of the region, the UV has guaranteed its political survival and has not been compelled to change soundly its

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<sup>19</sup> The Aosta Valley Region is competent for the direct management of health services, education institutions (among which the Aosta Valley University set up in 1998), Local Authorities, transports and Prefect functions.

<sup>20</sup> National Law 16 May 1978 n°186 and Legislative Decrees 182/1982, 27/1985 and 28/1989.

<sup>21</sup> A special committee (*Commissione Paritetica*), formed by six members (three nominated by the central government and three by the regional assembly), was set up in order to discuss these issues.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, the adaptation of the ministerial school programmes to the regional cultural and linguistic reality was defined in 1978 (N.L. n° 196/1978).

organizational structure. The Union has also been able to prevent its autonomist agenda from being integrated by mainstream Italian parties. By maintaining this differentiation, the party has consolidated its electoral hegemony within the Aosta Valley.

### **5. Conclusions: the UV as a dominant minority nationalist party**

The pattern of the UV's lifespan has been very peculiar. The Union Valdôtaine is a relatively new party, founded almost a century after the creation of traditional Italian parties during the 19th century. Nevertheless, in the perspective of the party lifespan evolution, it can be described as an extremely successful party. The UV's policy goals were implemented during the first twenty years of its presence in the Aosta Valley political system and the realization of the new set of further autonomy goals designed by the party programmes at the end of the 1970s is on its way. All the classical party lifespan critical junctures at regional, state and European levels were crossed in a relatively short period of time, and in most cases they never have been crossed back. In terms of vote seeking, after its fluctuating results during the 1960s and the 1970s, the party has become a market leader at regional level and consolidated its monopoly over the outward representation within the Italian parliament during the 1980s. The electoral success and consequent dominant position of the party at regional level remains solid today. The party has been very successful in terms of office seeking as well: the UV led the last six regional cabinets and has dominated the government formation processes since 1974. Therefore, the UV can be described as a dominant minority nationalist party, given its hegemonic position within the Aosta Valley.

The UV's lifespan prompted the party to adapt its organisational structures and party goals at different junctures in its evolution. Thus, for example, whilst crossing the threshold of representation led to the dominance of the party by the party in public office, subsequent electoral decline during the 1960s and 1970s prompted attempts at democratising the UV's internal organisation. In essence, however, the UV retains many of the features of a cadre party - weak extra-parliamentary structures, dominant party leadership and narrow assembly organs. During these two-decades, the UV also re-prioritised its party goals, between office-seeking and vote-seeking (the latter being emphasised when the party failed to retain its government office at the regional level). These adjustments to power when out of power, plus the development of deep roots in society and appeal to immigrants, have been the most important factors in securing that the UV has succeeded in retaining its hegemonic position within the Aosta Valley, despite its key territorial demands having been achieved very early on in its lifetime.

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## Tables.

**Table 1. Population development in Aosta Valley (1848-2001).**

<b>Year</b>	<b>habitants</b>	<b>% of immigrants</b>
<b>1848</b>	81082	1,9
<b>1861</b>	85481	4,7
<b>1901</b>	83529	-
<b>1921</b>	82769	-
<b>1931</b>	83479	-
<b>1951</b>	94140	23,1
<b>1961</b>	100959	26,1
<b>1971</b>	109150	31,3
<b>1981</b>	112353	31,7
<b>1991</b>	115939	37,4
<b>2001</b>	119273	42,1

Source: Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste (1990). *Aperçu synthétique*. Aosta : Bureau de Presse de la Présidence du Gouvernement; Woolf (1995); Istat (2001). *Censimento Generale 2001*. The definition of «immigrants» encompasses foreign citizens as well as people born in Italy outside the Aosta Valley region.

**Table 2. Electoral performance of UV (in % of Aosta Valley vote).**

	<b>European</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Regional</b>
1949			43,6
1954			29,2
1958		51,1	
1959			51,4
1963		51,2	20,4
1968		47,7	16,6
1972		47,9	
1973			11,5
1976		32,1	
1978			24,8
1979	37,5	45,8	
1983		38,8	27,1
1984	24,8		
1987		55,2	
1988			34,2
1989	36,4		
1992		49,6	
1993			37,3
1994	32,3	54,1	
1996		48,6	
1998			40,1
1999	45,9		
2001		34,9	
2003			47,2
2004	37,5		
2006		30,7	

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006).

**Table 3. Members of Regional Parliament divided by legislature and by party (1949-2006, number of seats over 35).**

Year/ party	DC	PCI-DS <sup>1</sup>	UV	DP-ADP <sup>2</sup>	PSI-PSU	Other Reg. (RV, UVP, FA)	Greens (NSVA, LA) <sup>3</sup>	Right (MSI,FI, LN, CdL)	Other
I-1949	13	4	<b>15</b>	-	3	-	-	-	-
II-1954	21	4	<b>1</b>	-	6	-	-	-	3
III-1959	7	4	<b>16</b>	-	5	-	-	-	3
IV-1963	13	9	<b>7</b>	-	2	-	-	-	4
V-1968	13	7	<b>6</b>	-	4	2	-	-	3
VI-1973	7	7	<b>4</b>	8	3	3	-	1	2
VII-1978	7	7	<b>9</b>	4	1	1	-	-	6
VIII-1983	7	6	<b>9</b>	4	3	-	1	1	4
IX-1988	7	5	<b>12</b>	4	3	-	1	1	2
X-1993	5	3	<b>13</b>	2	1	2	3	3	1
XI-1998	-	3	<b>17</b>	-	-	9	3	3	-
XII-2003	-	4	<b>18</b>	-	-	7	3	3	-

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006) and from Presidency of the Regional Council of the Aosta Valley (quoted in Gillo, 1995). Notes: 1: The local PCI was transformed in PDS in 1990 following the reform of the national party; 2: The DP became ADP in 1984 following the integration of a part of the UVP. *Fédération Autonomiste (FA)* was founded in 1996 by a faction of ADP; 3: NSVA: Nuova Sinistra Valle d'Aosta; LA : L'Arcobaleno.

**Table 4. Parliamentary elections 1948-2006: Aosta Valley Members of Italian Parliament**

Year	1948		1953		1958		1963		1968		1972		1976		1979		1983		1987		1992		1994		1996		2001		2006	
Mandate	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S
DC	1	1	1	1					1	1																				
PCI-DS													1													1			1	
UV					1	1	1	1					1		1		1	1		1		1		1			1			
DP-ADP											1	1			1		1		1		1		1							
PSI-PSU																														
Regionalist																												1		1
Greens																														
Right																														
Other																														

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006). Note: C= Aosta Valley Representative in the *Chamber* of Deputies; S= Aosta Valley Representative in the *Senate*

**Table 5. Regional executive power in Aosta Valley (1949-2006)**

<b>Government</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>President of the Giunta</b>	<b>N of ministers of UV</b>
I	21.05.1949-08.07.1954	<b>Séverin Caveri (UV)</b>	<b>3/7</b>
II	08.07.1954-08.12.1954	<b>Séverin Caveri (UV)</b>	<b>6/7</b>
III	09.12.1954-16.06.1959	Vittorino Bondaz (DC)	0/8
IV	17.06.1959-24.11.1963	<b>Oreste Marcoz (UV)</b>	<b>4/8</b>
V	25.11.1963-30.05.1966	<b>Séverin Caveri (UV)</b>	<b>4/8</b>
VI	31.05.1966-20.05.1968	Cesare Bionaz (DC)	0/8
VII	11.06.1968-01.07.1969	Cesare Bionaz (DC)	0/8
VIII	07.10.1969-07.04.1970	Mauro Bordon (DC)	0/8
IX	15.05.1970-04.07.1973	Cesare Dujany (DP)	0/8
X	19.07.1973-15.11.1974	Cesare Dujany (DP)	0/8
XI	20.12.1974-18.10.1975	<b>Mario Andrione (UV)</b>	<b>3/7</b>
XII	18.10.1975-18.07.1978	<b>Mario Andrione (UV)</b>	<b>2/8</b>
XIII	26.07.1978-20.07.1983	<b>Mario Andrione (UV)</b>	<b>4/8</b>
XIV	21.07.1983-04.01.1984	<b>Mario Andrione (UV)</b>	<b>4/8</b>
XV	04.01.1984-18.07.1984	<b>Augusto Rollandin (UV)</b>	<b>3/7</b>
XVI	18.07.1984-26.07.1988	<b>Augusto Rollandin (UV)</b>	<b>4/8</b>
XVII	27.07.1988-25.06. 1990	<b>Augusto Rollandin (UV)</b>	<b>5/8</b>
XVIII	25.06.1990-03.06.1992	Gianni Bondaz (DC)	0/8
XIX	10.06.1992-22.06.1993	Ilario Lanivi (ADP)	<b>4/9</b>
XX	30.06.1993-29.06.1998	<b>Dino Vierin (UV)</b>	<b>5/9</b>
XXI	30.06.1998-18.12.2002	<b>Dino Vierin (UV)</b>	<b>6/8</b>
XXII	18.12.2002-07.07.2003	<b>Robert Louvin (UV)</b>	<b>7/8</b>
XXII	08.07.2003-04.07.2005	<b>Charles Perrin (UV)</b>	<b>7/8</b>
XXIV	04.07.2005-22.02.2006	<b>Luciano Caveri (UV)</b>	<b>7/8</b>
XXV	22.02.2006-	<b>Luciano Caveri (UV)</b>	<b>7/8</b>

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006). Note: *UV*: Union Valdôtaine; *DC*: Democrazia Cristiana; *ADP*: Autonomisti Democratici Progressisti .



**Table 6. Composition of the Aosta Valley Regional Government (1949-1983)**

1949- 1954	1954 (6-12)	1954- 1959	1959- 1963	1963- 1966	1966- 1968	1968- 1969	1969- 1970	1970- 1973	1973- 1974	1974- 1975	1975- 1978	1978- 1983
UV- DC	UV- PSI	DC- PLI- PSDI	UV- PC- PSI- PSDI	UV- PC- PSI	DC- PLI- PSI- PSDI- Ligue	DC- PSU- RV	DC- PSI- PSDI- RV	DP- PSI- PSDI- MAV *	DP- PSI- UVP- PC	UV- UVP- RV	UV- UVP- RV- DC- PSI	UV- UVP- DC- DP
I												

**Composition of the Aosta Valley Regional Government (1983-2006)**

1983- 1984	(01-07) 1984	1984- 1988	1988- 1990	1990- 1992	1992- 1993	1993- 1998	1998- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2005	2005- 2006	2006-
UV- DC- DPUV P	UV- DC- ADP	UV- DC- ADP	UV- DC- ADP PSI	DC- PSI- PRI- ADP	UV- ADP- PCI/ PDS	UV- DS- Verdi	UV- DS- FA	UV- DS	UV- DS	UV- DS	UV- FA

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006). Note: UV: Union Valdôtaine; DC: Democrazia Cristiana; RV: Ressement Valdôtain; UVP: Union Valdôtaine Progressiste; MAV: Mouvement Autonomiste Valdôtain; DP: Democratici Popolari; DPUVP: Fédération DP-UVP; ADP: Autonomisti Democratici Progressisti; PCI: Partito Comunista Italiano; PCI/PDS: Partito Comunista Italiano/ Partito dei Democratici di Sinistra; DS(GV): Democratici di Sinistra (Gauche Valdôtaine); PSI: Partito Socialista Italiano; PSDI: Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano; PRI: Partito Repubblicano Italiano; PLI: Partito Liberale Italiano; PSU: Partito Socialista Unificato; FA: Fédération Autonomiste-Federazione Autonomista, Ligue: Raggruppamento Indipendente Valdostano et Campagnards Valdôtains. \*External support of the UV to the regional government.

**Table 7. Members and Presidents of the Regional Government divided by party (percentage, 1946-1993)**

	DC	PCI-PDS	UV	PSI	Other	Total
<b>Members of the Giunta</b>	36,2	7,2	<b>24,6</b>	13	19	100
<b>Presidents</b>	36,3	-	<b>36,3</b>	-	27,4	100

**Members and Presidents of the Regional Government divided by party (percentage, 1993-2006)**

	DC	PCI-PDS	UV	PSI	Other	Total
<b>Members of the Giunta</b>	-	10,2	<b>79,6</b>	-	10,2	100
<b>Presidents</b>	-	-	<b>100</b>	-	-	100

Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006).

**Table 8. Competitiveness and effective number of parties in Italian regions**

	1970-1990		1995-2000	
	competitiveness	ENP	competitiveness	ENP
<b>Aosta Valley</b>	<b>8,5</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>22,7</b>	<b>3,7</b>
<b>Italy</b>	14,9	3,7	8,8	6,1
<b>Spec.Statute Regions</b>	12,8	4,4	9,6	6,0

Source: Tronconi (2005: 21).

**Table 9. Organizational structure of Union Valdôtaine (1945-2006)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>UNIT 1 Assembly</b>	<b>UNIT 2 Direction organs</b>	<b>UNIT 3 Executive organs</b>	<b>UNIT 4 Executive organs II</b>	<b>UNIT 5 Executive organs III</b>	<b>UNIT 6 Control organs</b>
1945 I Statutes	General assembly	Direction Council	Executive Committee	none	none	Collège des syndics
1974 II Statutes	General assembly	Central Committee	Executive Committee	none	none	Collège des syndics
1976 III Statutes	National Congress	Central Committee	Executive Committee	none	none	Prud' hommes
1984 IV Statutes	National Congress	Central Committee	Executive Committee	Secretary General	none	Prud' hommes
1989 V Statutes	National Congress	Central Committee	Executive Committee	Secretary General	Direction Bureau	Prud' hommes
1993 VI Statutes	National Congress	Central Committee	Executive Committee	Secretary General	Direction Bureau	Prud' hommes
1997 VII Statutes	National Congress	Federal Council	Federal Committee	none	none	Prud' hommes

<b>Year</b>	<b>UNIT 7 Other organs</b>	<b>UNIT 8 Other organs</b>	<b>UNIT 9 Other organs</b>	<b>UNIT 10 Coordin. Organ</b>	<b>UNIT 11 Local Assembly</b>	<b>UNIT 12 Local Direction organ</b>
1945 I Statutes	none	none	none	none	yes	yes
1974 II Statutes	none	none	none	none	yes	yes
1976 III Statutes	Political Commissions	Youth organisation	none	none	yes	yes
1984 IV Statutes	Political Commissions	Youth and Women organisations	Officials Conference	none	yes	yes
1989 V Statutes	Political Commissions	Youth and Women organisations	Officials Conference	none	yes	yes
1993 VI Statutes	Political Commissions	Youth and Women organisations	Officials Conference	none	yes	yes
1997 VII Statutes	Political Commissions	Youth and Women organisations	Officials Conference	Weekly meeting	yes	yes

Source: UV Archives.

**Table 10. UV membership in absolute and relative terms (membership rate, 1977-2005)**

<b>Year</b>	1977	1978	1983	1987	1988	1989	1992	1993	1994	1998	2002	2003	2005
<b>Members</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>2893</b>	<b>3318</b>	<b>3921</b>	<b>4108</b>	<b>4217</b>	<b>3878</b>	<b>3707</b>	<b>3180</b>	<b>2964</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>2814</b>	<b>2862</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	8081	18318	20495	20495	26960	26960	26960	30312	30312	33311	33311	35297	35297
<b>% of electorate</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>6,3</b>	<b>6,2</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>6,6</b>	<b>6,4</b>	<b>7,0</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>9,5</b>	<b>11,2</b>	<b>11,9</b>	<b>12,5</b>	<b>12,3</b>

Source: UV Archives and Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006).

**Table 11. Party chairmen since 1945.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>1946-1973</b>	<b>Séverin Caveri</b>
<b>1974-1975</b>	<b>Mario Andrione</b>
<b>1975-1984</b>	<b>Joseph-César Perrin</b>
<b>1984-1997</b>	<b>Alexis Bétemps</b>
<b>1997-1998</b>	<b>Charles Perrin</b>
<b>1998-2001</b>	<b>Auguste Rollandin</b>
<b>2001-2003</b>	<b>Aurelio Marguerettaz</b>
<b>2003-2006</b>	<b>Manuela Zublena</b>
<b>2006-</b>	<b>Guido Césal</b>

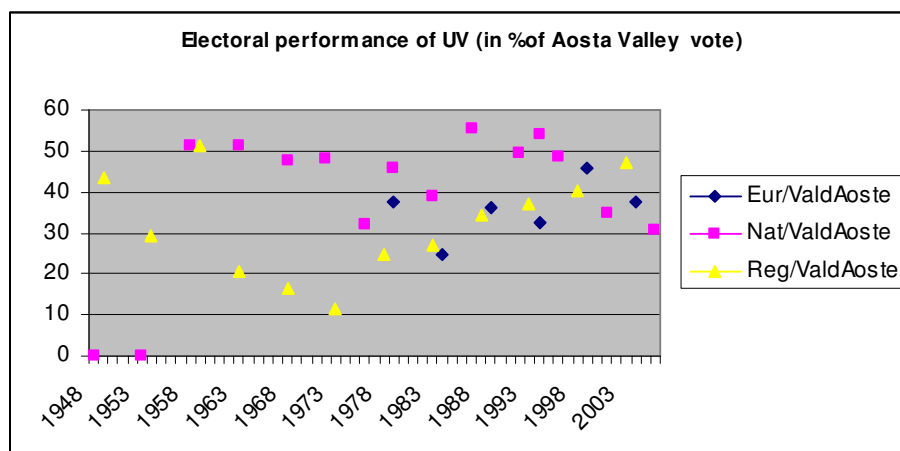
Source: UV Archives.

**Table 12. Population development in Aosta Valley according to linguistic groups (%)**

	Italian	Franco-provençal	French	Calabrian	Piedmontan
1980	49,9	50,2	8,6 <sup>1</sup>	-	-
2001	71,58	15,37	0,99	1,12	1,02

Source: Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste (1990). *Aperçu synthétique*. Aosta : Bureau de Presse de la Présidence du Gouvernement; and Fondation Emile Chanoux (2001). *Une Vallée d'Aoste bilingue dans une Europe plurilingue*. Aosta: Tipografia Valdostana. Note: 1. Almost all of the French-speaking people also speak the Franco-Provençal dialect. The two groups are in fact melted.

**Figure 1. Electoral performance of UV (in % of Aosta Valley vote).**



Source: Compiled from data from the Aosta Valley Regional Council (2006).