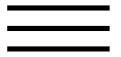


'Padanian' nationalism" the political project of the Lega Nord in Italian politics.

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Italian regionalism or "Padanian" nationalism" the political project of the Lega Nord in Italian politics

Benito Giordano

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### Abstract

The resurgence of regionalist political parties has had a considerable, though variable, impact on contemporary European politics in recent decades and there are numerous examples of such parties across Europe. In Italy, there are several regionalist parties, however, it is the emergence in the last 15 years or so, of the Northern League (Lega Nord) (LN) political party, in the North of Italy, which has given a new impetus to debates about the significance of regionalism in Italy as well as across Europe. This paper discusses the different approaches to defining regionalism as well as the common features and driving forces of contemporary political regionalist projects. It then focuses upon the political discourses of the LN in order to discuss the ways in which the party resembles other regionalist projects, while having certain key, distinct and rather unique differences. This is because the LN's political project is not based in an area that has

historic claims to nationhood. Instead, the LN has attempted to invent an ethnicity for the North of Italy (or "Padania"™) in order to justify its political claims for the protection of the economic interests of the region. "Padania"™ (which is the Latin term which refers to the basin of the River Po), has never "existed"™ as an administrative or political unit but the LN has attempted to construct (and invent) a geography and a history in order to justify its territorial and political claims.



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## Keywords

Italy; Lega Nord; Regionalism; "Padania"™

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structure.

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